**WHAT IS THE TOP ENGLISH FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD’S SUPREME LORDSHIP OF HIS SUPERIORITY OVER HIS 2 TOP APPOINTED AUTHORITIES CONCERNING THE LORD JESUS CHRIST ENDURING THE CROSS & THE LORD STEPHEN CHRIST ENDURING THE STONING IN THE HOLY BIBLE**

**VOLUME 3**

**GENESIS 19:19: BEHOLD, YOUR SERVANT HAS FOUND FAVOR IN YOUR SIGHT: FOR BEHOLD AS USED HERE, SEE COMMENT ON “I PRAY YOU” IN 19:2. LOT REFERS TO HIMSELF AS YOUR [SINGULAR] SERVANT AS IN VERSE 2. SEE THERE FOR COMMENTS. LOT SOFTENS HIS REFUSAL TO LEAVE THE VALLEY BY RECOGNIZING THE KINDNESS THE ANGELS HAVE SHOWN TO HIM AND HIS FAMILY. YOUR SIGHT IS ALSO SINGULAR. THIS WHOLE EXPRESSION WAS FIRST USED IN REGARD TO NOAH IN 6:8, “IN THE EYES OF THE LORD.” SEE THERE FOR COMMENTS. YOU HAVE SHOWN ME GREAT KINDNESS IN SAVING MY LIFE BEGINS LITERALLY “YOU [SINGULAR] HAVE MAGNIFIED YOUR [SINGULAR] MERCY.” LOT REPEATS WHAT HE HAS JUST SAID USING DIFFERENT WORDS. THE SENSE IS THE SAME AND FORMS A PARALLELISM. BUT I CANNOT FLEE TO THE HILLS, LEST THIS DISASTER OVERTAKE ME, AND I DIE: LOT ARGUES THAT THE HILLS ARE TOO FAR AWAY. HE WOULD BE KILLED IN THE DESTRUCTION BEFORE HE COULD REACH THEM. OVERTAKE MEANS THAT THE EFFECTS OF THE DESTRUCTION WILL SPREAD OUT MORE QUICKLY THAN LOT CAN RUN FROM THEM, AND THE DESTRUCTION WILL REACH HIM BEFORE HE CAN BE AT A SAFE DISTANCE. DISASTER TRANSLATES A WORD MEANING EVIL, DISTRESS, OR MISERY, AND REFERS TO THE DESTRUCTION OF SODOM. WE MAY ALSO TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “BUT I CANNOT REACH THE HILLS BEFORE YOU DESTROY SODOM, AND I WILL BE CAUGHT IN IT AND DIE” OR “BUT THE HILLS ARE FAR AWAY … AND WHILE I STILL HAVE A LONG WAY TO GO, THE TOWN WILL BE DESTROYED AND I WILL DIE WITH IT.”**

**GENESIS 19:20: BEHOLD, YONDER CITY IS NEAR ENOUGH TO FLEE TO: LOT OFFERS ANOTHER POSSIBILITY THAT WILL BOTH KEEP HIM IN THE VALLEY AND IN A CITY. BY NOW LOT IS NO LONGER REGARDED AS A PASTORAL NOMAD BUT A CITY DWELLER. BEHOLD IN THIS CONTEXT IS A MEANS OF DRAWING ATTENTION TO SOMETHING, WHICH MAY BE TRANSLATED “LOOK” OR “DO YOU SEE …?” YONDER CITY IS “THAT CITY” OR “THAT CITY OVER THERE.” IT IS NEAR ENOUGH THAT LOT BELIEVES HE WOULD REACH IT BEFORE THE DESTRUCTION OF SODOM BEGINS. THE HEBREW WORD TRANSLATED CITY MAY BE USED TO REFER TO A LARGE METROPOLIS OR A SMALL SETTLEMENT. THE REFERENCE HERE IS TO A SMALL TOWN PROBABLY ENCLOSED BY A WALL. IN MANY PARTS OF THE WORLD THE TERM FOR “VILLAGE” MAY BE MORE APPROPRIATE FOR THIS SMALL SETTLEMENT THAN “TOWN” OR “CITY.” THE FIRST PART OF THE VERSE MAY BE RENDERED, FOR EXAMPLE, “LOOK, SIR, THAT TOWN OVER THERE IS NEAR ENOUGH FOR US TO REACH IN TIME.” ONE TRANSLATION EXPRESSES IT LIKE THIS: “DO YOU SEE THAT VILLAGE OVER THERE? IT’S QUITE CLOSE, AND I CAN GO THERE.” AND IT IS A LITTLE ONE DESCRIBES THE TOWN AS BEING SMALL; ACCORDINGLY, TEV SAYS “THAT LITTLE TOWN.” LET ME ESCAPE THERE: LOT SPEAKS IN THE FIRST PERSON, BUT IN MANY LANGUAGES, IT WILL BE NECESSARY IN THIS CONTEXT TO USE THE PLURAL, SINCE HE IS ACCOMPANIED BY HIS FAMILY MEMBERS. ESCAPE TRANSLATES A DIFFERENT WORD THAN THE ONE USED REPEATEDLY SINCE VERSE 17, ALTHOUGH THE SENSE DOES NOT CHANGE HERE. IS IT NOT A LITTLE ONE? THIS EXPRESSION IS INSERTED INTO LOT’S PLEA TO THE ANGELS. THIS IS THE SECOND TIME HE CALLS ATTENTION TO THE SMALL SIZE OF THE TOWN, AND IS THE NARRATOR’S WAY OF EMPHASIZING THE WORD PLAY BETWEEN HEBREW MITS̀AR “SMALL” IN THIS VERSE AND TSÒAR “ZOAR” IN VERSE 22. MOST TRANSLATIONS CANNOT PRODUCE AN EQUIVALENT PLAY ON THESE WORDS. HOWEVER, TRANSLATORS MAY HELP THEIR READERS UNDERSTAND IT BY ADDING A NOTE AT VERSE 22 SUCH AS THAT IN TEV, “ZOAR: THIS NAME SOUNDS LIKE THE HEBREW FOR ‘SMALL.’” AND MY LIFE WILL BE SAVED IS LITERALLY “THAT MY SOUL [HEBREW NEFESH] MAY LIVE.” FOR A SIMILAR USE OF NEFESH, SEE 12:13. IF THE PLURAL IS USED IN LOT’S PLEA TO THE ANGELS, WE MAY OFTEN TRANSLATE “LET US GO THERE TO SAVE OUR LIVES,” “LET US ESCAPE TO THAT PLACE TO BE SAFE,” “… SO WE WON’T DIE.”**

**GENESIS 19:21: HE SAID TO HIM: THAT IS, “THE ANGEL SAID TO LOT” OR “ONE OF THE ANGELS SAID TO LOT.” I GRANT YOU THIS FAVOR ALSO TRANSLATES THE HEBREW IDIOM “I HAVE LIFTED UP YOUR FACE,” WHICH HAS THE SENSE “I WILL DO WHAT YOU ASK ME,” OR “I WILL GRANT YOUR REQUEST” (NEB). IN SOME LANGUAGES IT WILL BE SUFFICIENT TO MAKE THIS RESPONSE A SIMPLE “ALL RIGHT,” AND READERS WILL UNDERSTAND THAT THIS MEANS THAT LOT’S REQUEST IS GRANTED. SOME TRANSLATIONS MAKE THE RESPONSE FIT THE ACTUAL TERMS OF LOT’S REQUEST BY SAYING “ALL RIGHT, YOU CAN GO THERE.…” THAT I WILL NOT OVERTHROW THE CITY OF WHICH YOU HAVE SPOKEN IS THE FAVOR THE ANGEL WILL DO FOR LOT. NOTHING HAS BEEN SAID ABOUT DESTROYING ANY CITIES OTHER THAN SODOM AND GOMORRAH. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT ZOAR, BEING CLOSELY LINKED TO THE LARGER PLACES, WAS ALSO TARGETED FOR DESTRUCTION UNTIL LOT’S SPECIAL PLEA. A NUMBER OF TRANSLATIONS, INCLUDING TEV, SHORTEN THE FINAL CLAUSE TO “THAT TOWN” OR “THAT VILLAGE.” OVERTHROW THE CITY: IN REFERENCE TO ZOAR THIS MEANS TO TEAR DOWN, OVERTURN, AND SO DESTROY. OF WHICH YOU HAVE SPOKEN MAY SOMETIMES BE RENDERED BY “THAT CITY” OR “THAT LITTLE TOWN YOU MENTIONED.”**

**GENESIS 19:22: MAKE HASTE, ESCAPE THERE: THIS TRANSLATES THE COMMAND FORM OF TWO VERBS. THE COMMAND IS ADDRESSED TO LOT IN THE SINGULAR, BUT IN TRANSLATION IT MAY HAVE TO BE IN THE PLURAL. THIS IS THE FIFTH AND FINAL USE OF THE WORD ESCAPE. TEV SAYS “HURRY! RUN!” OTHERS SAY “FLEE THERE QUICKLY.” FOR I CAN DO NOTHING UNTIL YOU ARRIVE THERE: THE ANGEL URGES LOT TO HURRY, BECAUSE THE DESTRUCTION CANNOT BEGIN UNTIL LOT REACHES SAFETY IN ZOAR. I CAN DO NOTHING MAY NEED TO BE RENDERED MORE CONCRETELY “I CAN’T DESTROY THE OTHER CITIES UNTIL.…” THEREFORE, THE NAME OF THE CITY WAS CALLED ZOAR: THIS STATEMENT EXPLAINS THE ORIGIN OF THE NAME OF THE TOWN OF ZOAR. HOWEVER, VERSES 21 AND 22A SEPARATE THE NAME ZOAR IN THIS VERSE FROM THE WORDPLAY IN VERSE 20. THEREFORE, TEV HAS REINTRODUCED THE WORD “SMALL” BY SAYING “BECAUSE LOT CALLED IT SMALL.…” TRANSLATORS ARE ADVISED TO DO SOMETHING SIMILAR. SOME TRANSLATIONS PLACE VERSE 22B IN PARENTHESES TO SHOW IT IS NOT PART OF THE STORY LINE.**

**GOD DESTROYS SODOM AND GOMORRAH (19:23–29)**

**VERSES 23–29 DEPICT THE DESTRUCTION OF SODOM AND GOMORRAH AND EXPLAIN HOW LOT’S DELIVERANCE IS DUE TO GOD’S GOODNESS TO ABRAHAM. THE DESTRUCTION OF THE TWO CITIES IS INTRODUCED WITH LOT ARRIVING SAFELY IN ZOAR (VERSE 23). IN VERSES 24–25 GOD RAINS DOWN FIRE UPON THE CITIES SO THAT ALL THE PEOPLE AND PLANTS ARE DESTROYED. IN VERSE 26 LOT’S WIFE DISOBEYS BY LOOKING BACK AND IS TURNED INTO A COLUMN OF SALT. IN VERSES 27–29 ABRAHAM VIEWS THE SMOKE RISING FROM THE DESTRUCTION. BECAUSE GOD HAD NOT FORGOTTEN ABRAHAM, LOT HAD ESCAPED TO SAFETY.**

**SUBDIVISION HEADING**

**THE HANDBOOK HEADING MAY ALSO BE WORDED, FOR EXAMPLE, “THE DESTRUCTION OF SODOM AND GOMORRAH,” “HOW THE TWO CITIES WERE DESTROYED,” “LOT ESCAPES WHEN GOD DESTROYS THE CITIES,” OR “THE END OF SODOM AND GOMORRAH.” TRANSLATORS MAY WISH TO USE THE HANDBOOK HEADING OR ADAPT IT BY SAYING, FOR EXAMPLE, “THIS IS HOW SODOM AND GOMORRAH WERE DESTROYED,” “THE END OF SODOM AND GOMORRAH,” “LOT AND HIS DAUGHTERS ARE SAVED.”**

**GENESIS 19:23: RSV, NEB, AND OTHERS ASSOCIATE VERSE 23 WITH WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE. TEV AND OTHERS PLACE IT WITH THE FOLLOWING PARAGRAPH. THE LATTER HAS THE ADVANTAGE OF CONNECTING SUN AND EARTH MORE CLOSELY WITH THE VOCABULARY IN VERSE 24. THE SUN HAD RISEN ON THE EARTH: IN SOME LANGUAGES IT WILL BE MORE NATURAL TO BEGIN WITH THE TIME CLAUSE WHEN LOT CAME.… IN THIS CONTEXT THE HEBREW VERB TRANSLATED HAD RISEN MAY MEAN “WAS RISING” OR “HAD JUST RISEN.” SOME TRANSLATIONS THAT TAKE THE MEANING “HAD RISEN” EXPRESS THIS AS “THE SUN WAS CLIMBING UP.” ON THE EARTH IS NOT REQUIRED IN ENGLISH, SINCE IT IS INCLUDED IN THE SENSE OF RISEN. THEREFORE, TEV HAS “THE SUN WAS RISING WHEN LOT.…” CAME TO ZOAR MEANS “REACHED ZOAR,” “ARRIVED IN ZOAR.” THE FOCUS IN THE HEBREW REMAINS ON LOT, AND SO THE SINGULAR IS USED. SINCE THE PREVIOUS VERSES ONLY SPEAK OF THE ANGELS GIVING LOT PERMISSION TO GO TO ZOAR, AND THIS VERSE STARTS WITH HIS ARRIVAL, THE STORY IS INCOMPLETE IN THAT IT DOES NOT ACTUALLY SAY THAT HE AND HIS FAMILY MADE THE JOURNEY. IN SOME LANGUAGES IT IS NECESSARY TO INCLUDE THIS INFORMATION; AND THIS CAN EASILY BE DONE IN A TRANSITION STATEMENT. ONE TRANSLATION, FOR EXAMPLE, SAYS “LOT AND HIS FAMILY TRAVELED IN THE EARLY MORNING, AND WHEN THE SUN ROSE THEY CAME TO THAT LITTLE TOWN.”**

**GENESIS 19:24: THE DESTRUCTION OF SODOM AND GOMORRAH IS TOLD IN TWO VERSES. IF VERSE 23 OPENS THIS BRIEF ACCOUNT, WE MAY MAKE VERSE 23 THE INTRODUCTORY TIME CLAUSE FOR VERSE 24; FOR EXAMPLE, “WHEN THE SUN WAS RISING AND LOT HAD REACHED ZOAR, THE LORD.…” IF THIS STRUCTURE IS NOT SATISFACTORY, VERSE 23 CAN BE KEPT AS A SEPARATE SENTENCE. THE LORD RAINED MEANS THE LORD CAUSED IT TO RAIN OR “MADE BRIMSTONE FALL ON.…” BRIMSTONE IS TRANSLATED BY TEV AS “BURNING SULFUR.” SULFUR IS A YELLOW SUBSTANCE THAT BURNS WITH A HIGH HEAT AND PRODUCES A SUFFOCATING ODOR. FIRE AND BURNING SULFUR ARE USED TO DESCRIBE THE DESTRUCTION SENT DOWN FROM HEAVEN BY GOD IN EZEK 38:22. BRIMSTONE IS ALSO MENTIONED IN REV 14:10; 19:20; 20:10; 21:8. “FIRE AND BRIMSTONE” IS THE TRADITIONAL RENDERING SUGGESTING TWO SEPARATE ELEMENTS, BUT IN THE CONTEXT THEY ARE TO BE UNDERSTOOD AS ONE AND THE SAME. BRIMSTONE AND FIRE MAY BE RENDERED, FOR EXAMPLE, “HEAT AND FIRE THAT SUFFOCATE PEOPLE” OR “HOT BURNING COALS.” FROM THE LORD OUT OF HEAVEN: THIS EMPHASIZES THAT THE SOURCE OF THE DESTRUCTION IS FROM THE LORD ABOVE. NEB, REB SAY “FROM THE SKIES.” IN TRANSLATION THE PICTURE OF THE DESTRUCTION FALLING LIKE RAIN CAN OFTEN BE USED. TWO TRANSLATIONS THAT KEEP THIS FIGURE OF SPEECH ARE “THE LORD SENT RAIN LIKE SULFUR WITH FIRE FROM THE SKY” AND “THE LORD SENT BURNING SULFUR, WHICH FELL LIKE RAIN ON THOSE TWO TOWNS.” EXAMPLES OF TRANSLATIONS THAT DO NOT USE THE PICTURE OF RAIN ARE “STRAIGHT AWAY THE LORD SENT HOT STONES WITH FIRE FALLING ON TOP OF SODOM AND GOMORRAH” AND “STRAIGHT AWAY THE LORD SPILLED OUT FROM THE SKY VERY HOT STONES WITH FIRE ON TOP OF THE TWO TOWNS.”**

**GENESIS 19:25: AND HE OVERTHREW THOSE CITIES: THOSE CITIES REFERS TO SODOM AND GOMORRAH. OVERTHREW, THE SAME TERM AS IN VERSE 21, MEANS “HE DESTROYED.” IN THE LIGHT OF THE PREVIOUS VERSE, SOME TRANSLATIONS PREFER TO SAY “HE BURNED UP.…” AND ALL THE VALLEY: THAT IS, THE VALLEY OR LOW-LYING LAND WHERE THE CITIES ARE LOCATED. THE SAME WORD IS USED IN VERSE 17. AND ALL THE INHABITANTS OF THE CITIES: TRANSLATORS MAY FIND IT IS CLEARER TO LINK THIS STATEMENT TO THE DESTRUCTION OF THE CITIES, AND THE FINAL CLAUSE OF THE VERSE WITH ALL THE VALLEY. WE MAY THEN TRANSLATE “HE DESTROYED THOSE CITIES AND THEIR PEOPLE [ALL THE PEOPLE WHO LIVED IN THEM] AND DESTROYED EVERYTHING THAT GREW IN THE ENTIRE VALLEY.” THE LINES OF THIS VERSE FOLLOW THE PATTERN A-B-A-B, IN WHICH A REFERS TO THE CITIES AND B TO THE VALLEY AND LAND.**

**GENESIS 19:26: BUT LOT’S WIFE BEHIND HIM LOOKED BACK: THE ACCOUNT OF THE DESTRUCTION OF LOT’S WIFE FOLLOWS THAT OF THE DESTRUCTION OF THE CITIES AND VALLEY. IN VERSE 17 THE ANGEL HAD WARNED LOT AND HIS FAMILY NOT TO LOOK BACK AS THEY FLED. BUT, USED IN MANY ENGLISH VERSIONS, SHOWS IN THIS CONTEXT THE CONTRAST BETWEEN THE EXPECTED DESTRUCTION OF THE CITIES AND THE UNEXPECTED DESTRUCTION OF LOT’S WIFE. TRANSLATORS SHOULD MAKE SURE OF THE CONNECTING WORD, IF ANY, THAT IS USED IN THIS SITUATION. THE HEBREW TEXT HAS “HIS WIFE BEHIND HIM LOOKED.” THE VERB MEANING “LOOKED” DOES NOT INDICATE DIRECTION. HOWEVER, THE INSTRUCTIONS IN VERSE 17 AND THE CONTEXT OF VERSE 26 MAKE THE SENSE OF “LOOKED BACK” OR “LOOKED BEHIND HER” MOST PROBABLE. AND SHE BECAME A PILLAR OF SALT: SHE BECAME MEANS “SHE TURNED INTO STONE.” IN LANGUAGES IN WHICH AN AGENT OF THE ACTION MUST BE NAMED, IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “THE LORD TURNED HER INTO …” OR “THE LORD MADE HER BECOME A.…” PILLAR TRANSLATES A WORD RELATED TO THE VERB TO STAND; THAT IS, SOMETHING THAT STANDS UPRIGHT, A COLUMN. THE IDEA IN THIS CONTEXT IS AN UPRIGHT ROCK FORMATION IN THE SHAPE OF A HUMAN FIGURE. READERS MAY HAVE DIFFICULTY IMAGINING A COLUMN OF TABLE SALT. THE PICTURE IS THAT OF A FORMATION OF CRYSTALLIZED ROCK SALT. MANY TRANSLATIONS USE THE EXPRESSION “SALT STATUE,” OR “A STONE OF SALT.” OTHER WAYS OF EXPRESSING WHAT HAPPENED ARE “SHE TURNED INTO SALT AND STOOD LIKE A POST,” “SALT COVERED HER AND HER BODY BECAME HARD LIKE STONE,” “[GOD] MADE HER DIE AND TURNED HER BODY INTO SALT.” IN SOME LANGUAGES A SIMILE MAY HAVE TO BE USED: “SHE BECAME LIKE A STATUE MADE OF ROCK SALT.”**

**GENESIS 19:27: THIS VERSE SHOULD BEGIN A NEW PARAGRAPH. AND ABRAHAM WENT EARLY IN THE MORNING: IT IS POSSIBLE TO VIEW THE TIMING OF THE EVENTS IN VERSES 15–28 IN TWO WAYS.**

**(1) ABRAHAM SAW THE SMOKE RISING FROM THE DESTRUCTION OF THE CITIES AT THE VERY MOMENT THEY WERE DESTROYED. IN THIS CASE LOT LEFT SODOM, REACHED ZOAR, AND THE ANGELS DESTROYED THE CITIES ON THE MORNING OF THE DAY AFTER THE LORD HAD SPOKEN WITH ABRAHAM. AND IT WAS ON THAT SAME MORNING THAT ABRAHAM WENT EARLY TO HIS LOOKOUT AND SAW WHAT HAPPENED.**

**(2) LOT DID NOT REACH ZOAR (VERSE 23) UNTIL SOME TIME LATER IN THAT DAY. SINCE THE ANGELS WOULD NOT DESTROY THE CITIES UNTIL AFTER LOT’S ARRIVAL IN ZOAR, THE DESTRUCTION WAS LATE THAT DAY, AND IT WAS ON THE NEXT MORNING THAT ABRAHAM WENT UP AND SAW THE SMOKE.**

**EITHER VIEW IS POSSIBLE. RSV, WHICH SAYS “ABRAHAM WENT EARLY IN THE MORNING” CAN BE UNDERSTOOD AS REFERRING TO THE SAME MORNING AS THE DESTRUCTION, OR LATER. TEV, WHICH HAS “EARLY THE NEXT MORNING,” PREFERS THE SECOND VIEW. MOST COMMENTATORS DO NOT DEAL WITH THIS QUESTION. ONE WHO DOES MAKE A COMMENT, HOWEVER, IS SPEISER, WHO SAYS “AS ABRAHAM PEERED ANXIOUSLY AT THE SCENE OF THE DISASTER, FROM THE DISTANT HEIGHTS OF HEBRON, HE HAD HIS ANSWER TO THE QUESTION HE HAD POSED THE NIGHT BEFORE.” THIS APPEARS TO SUPPORT THE FIRST VIEW ABOVE; BUT IN HIS OWN TRANSLATION SPEISER HAS “NEXT MORNING …,” SO IT IS NOT REALLY CLEAR WHICH VIEW HE SUPPORTS! THE SEQUENCE OF THE NARRATIVE AS WE HAVE IT FAVORS VIEW (2). THIS IS BECAUSE, IN THE ABSENCE OF ANY MARKER OR OTHER CLUE IN THE TEXT, READERS NATURALLY ASSUME THAT THE EVENTS HAPPENED IN THE SAME ORDER AS THE STORY REPORTS THEM. FOR VIEW (1), HOWEVER, ABRAHAM WOULD HAVE HAD TO SET OUT FOR HIS LOOKOUT PLACE BEFORE THE EVENTS OF VERSES 15–26 OR WHILE THEY WERE HAPPENING. THIS MEANS THAT VIEW (1) WOULD INVOLVE A “FLASHBACK” AT VERSE 27, WHICH MOST LANGUAGES WOULD HAVE TO MARK IN SOME WAY SO THAT READERS WOULD FOLLOW THE CHANGE IN TIME SEQUENCE. (IN ENGLISH WE WOULD HAVE TO SAY SOMETHING LIKE “MEANWHILE ABRAHAM GOT UP EARLY …” OR “ON THAT SAME DAY ABRAHAM HAD GOTTEN UP EARLY AND HAD GONE.…”) THE HANDBOOK RECOMMENDS THAT TRANSLATORS FOLLOW VIEW (2) AND FOLLOW TEV AND OTHER TRANSLATIONS THAT MAKE THIS VIEW CLEAR, BY SAYING, FOR EXAMPLE, “ON THE MORNING OF THE NEXT DAY …” OR “EARLY THE NEXT MORNING.…” THE PLACE WHERE HE HAD STOOD BEFORE THE LORD: THE PLACE IS THE SAME ONE AS IN 18:16. WE GET THE IMPRESSION FROM 18:16 AND 18:33 THAT THIS HIGH POINT MAY HAVE BEEN SOME DISTANCE FROM ABRAHAM’S CAMP. FOR STOOD BEFORE THE LORD SEE 18:22.**

**GENESIS 19:28: ABRAHAM LOOKED DOWN INTO THE VALLEY AT WHAT HAD BEEN, UNTIL A SHORT TIME BEFORE, SODOM AND GOMORRAH. TOWARD ALL THE LAND OF THE VALLEY: THE VALLEY IS THE JORDAN VALLEY, THE SAME AS IN VERSES 17 AND 25. AND BEHELD AND LO IS AN ARCHAIC EXPRESSION MEANING “HE LOOKED AND SAW.” IN MANY LANGUAGES DIFFERENT WORDS OR EXPRESSIONS FOR LOOKING OR SEEING WILL NATURALLY BE USED FOR THE VERBS IN THIS VERSE. AT THE BEGINNING OF THE VERSE ABRAHAM DIRECTED HIS LOOKING TOWARD THE TWO CITIES: HE “LOOKED TOWARD,” OR AS SOME TRANSLATIONS HAVE IT, “LOOKED FOR” SODOM AND GOMORRAH. THEN HERE AS HE LOOKED, HIS EYES TOLD HIM THE TERRIBLE TRUTH: HE “SAW [AND UNDERSTOOD]” WHAT HAD HAPPENED. THE SMOKE OF THE LAND WENT UP: SMOKE IN BOTH OCCURRENCES TRANSLATES A HEBREW WORD HAVING THE SAME ROOT AS ONE MEANING “INCENSE.” HOWEVER, TRANSLATORS ARE NOT ADVISED TO SUBSTITUTE “INCENSE” FOR SMOKE. THE SMOKE RISING FROM THE LAND IS COMPARED WITH THE SMOKE OF A FURNACE, IN WHICH FURNACE TRANSLATES A WORD USED IN EXO 9:8, 10 AND RENDERED “KILN” BY RSV. A “KILN” (SEE ALSO NEB, REB) IS A LARGE OVEN OR FURNACE MADE OF BRICK OR STONE AND WHICH IS HEATED TO HIGH TEMPERATURES FOR HARDENING, BURNING, OR DRYING. IF A KILN IS UNKNOWN, AN OVEN OR CHIMNEY MAY BE USED. SINCE ATTENTION IS DRAWN TO THE SMOKE AND NOT TO THE SOURCE OF THE SMOKE, IT IS ALSO POSSIBLE TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “LIKE THE SMOKE FROM A LARGE FIRE.” IN ONE TRANSLATION THIS IS “A BIG SMOKE WENT UP JUST LIKE [SMOKE FROM] A BUSHFIRE.”**

**GENESIS 19:29: VERSE 29 IS THE CONCLUSION OF THE EPISODE THAT DESCRIBES THE DESTRUCTION OF THE CITIES. SO, IT WAS INTRODUCES THE CONCLUSION. WE MAY ALSO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “AND SO IT HAPPENED,” “THAT IS WHAT HAPPENED WHEN.…” GOD DESTROYED THE CITIES OF THE VALLEY: GOD IS ’ELOHIM IN BOTH OCCURRENCES IN VERSE 29. THE SIGNIFICANT POINT MADE IN THIS VERSE IS GOD REMEMBERED ABRAHAM; THIS IS THE SAME EXPRESSION USED OF NOAH IN 8:1. SEE THERE FOR DISCUSSION AND TRANSLATION. IT WAS BECAUSE OF ABRAHAM’S RELATION TO GOD THAT LOT, ABRAHAM’S NEPHEW (A SON OF ONE’S BROTHER, SISTER, BROTHER-IN-LAW, OR SISTER-IN-LAW), ESCAPED DESTRUCTION. SENT LOT OUT OF THE MIDST OF THE OVERTHROW: THIS MEANS THAT HE LET LOT ESCAPE FROM THE DESTRUCTION. TRANSLATIONS EXPRESS THIS IN VARIOUS WAYS; FOR EXAMPLE, “HE LET LOT RUN AWAY TO A SAFE PLACE,” “HE SENT LOT AWAY SO THAT HE WOULDN’T PERISH,” OR “HE DID NOT FINISH OFF LOT ALONG WITH ALL THOSE OTHER PEOPLE.” WHEN HE OVERTHREW THE CITIES …: THIS REPEATS WHAT IS STATED AT THE BEGINNING OF THE VERSE. MANY TRANSLATORS WILL WANT TO FOLLOW TEV IN EXPRESSING THIS ONLY ONCE: “WHEN GOD DESTROYED THE CITIES OF THE VALLEY WHERE LOT WAS LIVING.” TRANSLATORS MAY ALSO FIND THAT SOME REORDERING OF CLAUSES IS NECESSARY IN THIS VERSE TO GIVE A CLEAR PICTURE. FOR EXAMPLE, WE MAY FOLLOW TEV WITH “THEREFORE WHEN GOD DESTROYED THE CITIES OF THE JORDAN VALLEY WHERE LOT WAS LIVING, HE HAD NOT FORGOTTEN ABRAHAM, AND SO LET LOT ESCAPE THE DESTRUCTION” OR “IT WAS IN THIS WAY THAT GOD DESTROYED THE CITIES OF THE VALLEY WHERE LOT WAS LIVING; BUT GOD KEPT ABRAHAM IN MIND [KEPT ABRAHAM IN HIS HEART] AND RESCUED LOT FROM THE DESTRUCTION.”**

**HOW LOT BECAME THE ANCESTOR OF THE MOABITE AND THE AMMONITE PEOPLE (19:30–38)**

**THE SECOND PART OF CHAPTER 19 TELLS ABOUT THE ORIGIN OF THE MOABITES AND THE AMMONITES, WHO ARE DESCRIBED AS BEING THE INCESTUOUS OFFSPRING OF LOT AND HIS DAUGHTERS. THE STORY IS TOLD AS AN EVENT FOLLOWING THE ESCAPE OF LOT AND HIS DAUGHTERS FROM THE DESTRUCTION OF SODOM.**

**THE ACCOUNT IS PRESENTED IN THREE STEPS: (1) VERSE 30 EXPLAINS THAT LOT WAS AFRAID TO REMAIN IN ZOAR, AND SO HE MOVED TO A CAVE IN THE HILLS. (2) IN VERSES 31–36 EACH OF THE UNNAMED DAUGHTERS SLEEPS WITH HER DRUNKEN FATHER AND BECOMES PREGNANT. (3) IN VERSES 37–38 THE OLDER DAUGHTER GIVES BIRTH TO MOAB AND THE YOUNGER ONE TO BEN-AMMI.**

**SUBDIVISION HEADING**

**THE HANDBOOK HEADING MAY BE ADJUSTED TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “THIS IS THE STORY ABOUT THE ORIGIN OF THE MOABITES AND THE AMMONITES” OR “HOW LOT’S DESCENDANTS WERE THE MOABITES AND THE AMMONITES.” GECL HAS “WHAT IS TOLD ABOUT THE ORIGIN OF THE MOABITES AND AMMONITES,” FRCL “LOT AND HIS DAUGHTERS,” NAB “MOABITES AND AMMONITES.”**

**GENESIS 19:30: NOW LOT WENT UP OUT OF ZOAR: NOW IS USED BY RSV AS A TRANSITION TO A NEW DEVELOPMENT AND IS NOT A TIME WORD. WE CAN ALSO SHOW THIS AS A TRANSITION FROM THE EARLIER STORY; FOR EXAMPLE, “AFTER THESE THINGS HAPPENED” OR “LATER.” WENT UP IS DIRECTIONAL AND PICTURES LOT MOVING FROM THE LOW-LYING ZOAR TO THE HIGHER ELEVATION IN THE HILL COUNTRY. DWELT IN THE HILLS WITH HIS TWO DAUGHTERS: DWELT TRANSLATES A VERB THAT MEANS TO “STAY” OR “LIVE” FOR A PERIOD OF TIME. THERE IS NO INDICATION THAT LOT IS A HERDSMAN ON THE MOVE. IN VERSE 18 IT WAS TO THESE HILLS THAT LOT SAID HE COULD NOT GO. IN LATER TIMES THESE HILLS EAST OF THE JORDAN WERE OCCUPIED BY THE MOABITES AND AMMONITES, A FACT THAT THROWS LIGHT ON THIS STORY. TRANSLATORS MAY FIND IT CLEARER TO BEGIN THIS VERSE WITH THE REASON CLAUSE FOR HE WAS AFRAID TO DWELL IN ZOAR. IN THAT CASE WE MAY BEGIN VERSE 30 AS TEV DOES: “BECAUSE LOT WAS AFRAID TO STAY IN ZOAR, …” IN SOME LANGUAGES AN ADJUSTMENT MAY ALSO BE NEEDED TO MAKE IT CLEAR THAT IT WAS NOT ONLY LOT WHO TRAVELED FROM ZOAR TO THE HILL COUNTRY, AS THE SINGULAR SUBJECT AND VERB IN HEBREW MAY SUGGEST; TEV SAYS “HE AND HIS TWO DAUGHTERS MOVED,” AND SOME OTHER TRANSLATIONS HAVE “… SO HE TOOK HIS TWO DAUGHTERS, AND THEY WENT AND STAYED.…” SO, HE DWELT IN A CAVE WITH HIS TWO DAUGHTERS: DWELT IS THE SAME VERB AS USED IN THE PREVIOUS SENTENCE. THE VOWEL POINTS IN HEBREW MAKE THE CAVE A DEFINITE ONE, WHICH MAY MEAN THAT THIS CAVE WAS A WELL-KNOWN PLACE WHEN THE TEXT WAS FINALLY WRITTEN. HOWEVER, IN THE CONTEXT AS WE HAVE IT, IT IS NECESSARY TO REFER TO AN INDEFINITE “CAVE” IN LANGUAGES THAT MAKE THIS KIND OF DISTINCTION.**

**GENESIS 19:31: AND THE FIRST-BORN SAID TO THE YOUNGER: SOME LANGUAGES REQUIRE A TIME TRANSITION BETWEEN VERSES 30 AND 31 TO SEPARATE THE SETTING OF VERSE 30 FROM THE OPENING EVENT IN VERSE 31. FOR EXAMPLE, WE MAY SAY “SOME TIME LATER THE OLDER DAUGHTER SAID …” OR “ONE DAY THE OLDER DAUGHTER SAID …” (SPCL, FRCL). OUR FATHER IS OLD: THE OLDER DAUGHTER TAKES THE INITIATIVE TO DO SOMETHING, DRASTIC THOUGH IT MAY BE, TO PROVIDE FOR THE SURVIVAL OF HER FATHER’S FAMILY LINE. WHEN TRANSLATING OLD, CARE MUST BE TAKEN NOT TO GIVE THE IMPRESSION OF A MAN WHO IS SO AGED AS TO BE UNABLE TO PRODUCE OFFSPRING. NOTE TEV “OUR FATHER IS GETTING OLD.” THERE IS NOT A MAN ON EARTH TO COME IN TO US: LOT AND HIS DAUGHTERS MAY BELIEVE THEY ARE THE ONLY SURVIVORS IN THE WORLD AFTER THE DESTRUCTION THAT HAS TAKEN PLACE AROUND THEM. IN THAT CASE THE OBSERVATION OF THE OLDER DAUGHTER SHOULD BE TAKEN LITERALLY. ON THE OTHER HAND, MAN ON EARTH MAY BE UNDERSTOOD AS NO MAN LEFT IN THAT LAND, THAT IS, THE LAND OR REGION THAT HAS BEEN DESTROYED. SEE TEV FOOTNOTE. SPCL, FRCL TRANSLATE “THERE IS NO MAN IN ALL THE REGION.” THE SENSE MAY ALSO BE THAT, AS SURVIVORS FROM SODOM, LOT’S DAUGHTERS WERE CONSIDERED TABOO BY THE PEOPLE OF ZOAR. THE EXPRESSION TO COME IN TO WAS FIRST USED IN 6:4. SEE THERE FOR DISCUSSION. THE MEANING OF THIS EXPRESSION IS TO HAVE SEXUAL RELATIONS, AND IT IS OFTEN BEST TRANSLATED BY AN EQUALLY INDIRECT EXPRESSION. MANY TRANSLATIONS SAY SIMPLY “THERE ARE NO MEN … TO MARRY US.” AFTER THE MANNER OF ALL THE EARTH: THAT IS, “AS IS THE CUSTOM” OR “AS PEOPLE EVERYWHERE DO.”**

**GENESIS 19:32: COME, LET US MAKE OUR FATHER …: COME IS HERE USED AS A COMMAND TO SET A THOUGHT INTO ACTION, AND IT APPEALS FOR THE YOUNGER SISTER’S PARTICIPATION. NJB, TEV SAY “COME ON,” NEB, REB “COME NOW.” IN SOME LANGUAGES THIS MAY BE EXPRESSED “HELP ME NOW,” “LET’S GO TOGETHER.” FOR A SIMILAR USAGE SEE 11:4. MAKE … DRINK WINE TRANSLATES A CAUSATIVE FORM OF THE HEBREW VERB TO DRINK; BUT THE PURPOSE IS NOT MERELY TO GET LOT TO DRINK, BUT TO GET HIM TO DRINK SO MUCH THAT HE WILL BECOME DRUNK AND UNAWARE OF WHAT HE IS DOING. THEREFORE, IN TRANSLATION IT IS OFTEN NECESSARY TO MAKE THIS POINT CLEAR BY SAYING SOMETHING LIKE TEV “LET’S GET OUR FATHER DRUNK,” OR “LET’S MAKE OUR FATHER DRINK WINE UNTIL HE GETS DRUNK.” IF THE TRANSLATION OF WINE IS A PROBLEM, THE TEV MODEL MAY BE BETTER TO FOLLOW. AND WE WILL LIE WITH HIM: THAT IS, “WE WILL SLEEP WITH HIM” OR “WE WILL HAVE SEX WITH HIM.” THIS EXPRESSION IS USED FIVE TIMES IN VERSES 32–35 AND SHOULD MOST OFTEN BE RENDERED BY AN EQUIVALENT FIGURATIVE OR INDIRECT PHRASE THAT WILL BE ACCEPTABLE FOR PUBLIC READING. THAT WE MAY PRESERVE OFFSPRING THROUGH OUR FATHER: THIS CLAUSE STATES THE PURPOSE OF THE OLDER DAUGHTER’S PROPOSAL. HER DESIRE IS TO PRESERVE THEIR FATHER’S LINE, AND THE PLAN WAS TO BE CARRIED OUT WITHOUT THE FATHER’S AWARENESS. PRESERVE OFFSPRING IS LITERALLY “KEEP SEED ALIVE.” WE MAY RENDER THIS CLAUSE “SO WE CAN GIVE BIRTH TO HIS CHILDREN,” “SO THAT WE CAN GIVE HIM DESCENDANTS,” OR “SO THAT WE WILL HAVE CHILDREN BY MEANS OF OUR FATHER.” A TYPICAL TRANSLATION OF THE LAST PART OF THIS VERSE IS “IN THIS WAY WE-TWO CAN GIVE BIRTH TO CHILDREN TO CONTINUE HIS NAME.”**

**GENESIS 19:33: SO, THEY MADE THEIR FATHER DRINK WINE THAT NIGHT: SO, INTRODUCES THE ACTION THAT FOLLOWS FROM THE PROPOSAL MADE IN VERSE 32. MADE … DRINK WINE IS THE SAME AS IN VERSE 32. HERE AGAIN IT WILL BE NECESSARY IN SOME LANGUAGES TO SAY CLEARLY THAT THE WINE MADE LOT DRUNK; FOR EXAMPLE, ONE TRANSLATION SAYS “THEY GAVE HIM WINE, AND THAT WINE MADE HIM VERY DRUNK.” THAT NIGHT REFERS TO THE NIGHT OF THE PROPOSAL; THUS, THE DAUGHTERS IMMEDIATELY PUT THE PLAN INTO ACTION. WENT IN AND LAY MAY BE CONSIDERED A SINGLE EVENT, THAT IS “SPENT THE NIGHT,” “SLEPT WITH,” “HAD SEX WITH.” HE DID NOT KNOW WHEN SHE LAY DOWN OR WHEN SHE AROSE: LOT NOT BEING PARTY TO THE SCHEME, AND BEING HEAVILY DRUNK, IS DESCRIBED AS BEING UNAWARE OF WHAT HAS HAPPENED. IF THE RSV WORDING IS UNCLEAR, WE MAY ALSO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “BEING DRUNK HE DID NOT KNOW WHEN HIS DAUGHTER LAID DOWN WITH HIM OR WHEN SHE LEFT HIM.” IN SOME LANGUAGES THE DETAIL OF THIS STATEMENT SEEMS LIKE UNNECESSARY REPETITION OF THE PREVIOUS CLAUSE, AND TRANSLATORS JUST SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “HE DIDN’T KNOW WHAT SHE [HIS DAUGHTER] DID BECAUSE HE WAS VERY DRUNK.” THE NARRATOR’S DESCRIPTION OF THE OLDER DAUGHTER’S NIGHT WITH HER FATHER IS REPEATED ALMOST EXACTLY FOR THE SECOND DAUGHTER IN VERSE 35.**

**GENESIS 19:34: AND ON THE NEXT DAY, THE FIRST-BORN SAID TO THE YOUNGER: THE OLDER DAUGHTER REPORTS TO HER YOUNGER SISTER. BEHOLD, I LAY LAST NIGHT WITH MY FATHER; LET US … TONIGHT ALSO: SHE GOES ON TO PROPOSE THAT THE SAME BE DONE AGAIN AS IN VERSE 32. THE URGENCY OF THEIR PLIGHT IS BROUGHT OUT IN THE SWIFT SUCCESSION OF EVENTS: TONIGHT ALSO. IN MANY LANGUAGES THE REPETITION OF PROPOSAL AND ACTION IS MARKED BY THE FREQUENT USE OF WORDS LIKE ALSO, “A SECOND TIME” OR “AGAIN”: “LET’S GET HIM DRUNK AGAIN TONIGHT …” (TEV). THE YOUNGER SISTER IS INSTRUCTED BY THE OLDER ONE, THEN YOU GO IN AND LIE WITH HIM. MANY TRANSLATIONS EXPRESS THIS AS “THEN YOU GO AND SLEEP WITH HIM TOO” OR “YOU CAN SLEEP WITH HIM AS I DID.” THE PURPOSE IS REPEATED FROM VERSE 32: THAT WE MAY PRESERVE OFFSPRING THROUGH OUR FATHER.**

**GENESIS 19:35: THAT NIGHT ALSO: VERSE 35A REPEATS VERSE 33A. THIS TIME THE YOUNGER AROSE AND LAY WITH HIM, WHERE AROSE AND LAY MAY BE CONSIDERED A SINGLE EVENT, THAT IS, “HAD INTERCOURSE WITH HIM” (TEV). AGAIN, AROSE HERE INDICATES NOT GETTING UP FROM A SITTING OR LYING DOWN POSITION, BUT THAT SHE SET OUT TO DO THE ACTION OF THE NEXT VERB, LAY. AND HE DID NOT KNOW WHEN … AROSE REPEATS FROM VERSE 33. IN MANY LANGUAGES IT WILL BE NECESSARY OR DESIRABLE TO INCLUDE A WORD SUCH AS “AGAIN” (TEV, NIV) IN THE CONTEXT OF THIS REPETITION ALSO.**

**GENESIS 19:36: THUS, BOTH THE DAUGHTERS OF LOT WERE WITH CHILD BY THEIR FATHER: THUS, INTRODUCES A CONSEQUENCE. WE MAY ALSO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “AS A RESULT,” “IN THIS WAY,” “NOW THEN.” IN SOME LANGUAGES IT IS DIFFICULT TO EXPRESS MEANS WITH THIS KIND OF CONSTRUCTION. THEREFORE, IT IS SOMETIMES NECESSARY TO SAY “IN THIS WAY LOT MADE BOTH HIS DAUGHTERS PREGNANT” OR “AND SO BOTH LOT’S DAUGHTERS WERE GOING TO HAVE BABIES BECAUSE THEIR FATHER HAD MADE THEM PREGNANT.” IN SOME LANGUAGES THAT EXPRESS BEING PREGNANT AS “GOING TO HAVE A BABY,” THIS VERSE MAY BE LINKED TO VERSES 37 AND 38 AS A GENERAL STATEMENT THAT IS FOLLOWED BY A STATEMENT ABOUT EACH DAUGHTER IN TURN; FOR EXAMPLE, “IN THIS WAY THEY-TWO HAD BABIES FROM THEIR OWN FATHER. THE FIRSTBORN HAD A BOY AND.…”**

**GENESIS 19:37: THE FIRST-BORN BORE A SON: THE TEXT DOES NOT INDICATE ANY TIME TRANSITION BETWEEN VERSE 36 AND 37. SOME LANGUAGES, HOWEVER, FIND IT MORE NATURAL TO BEGIN VERSE 37 WITH A TRANSITION SUCH AS “AFTER MONTHS HAD PASSED,” “WHEN THE BIRTH TIME CAME,” OR SIMPLY “LATER.” BORE A SON MEANS “GAVE BIRTH TO A MALE CHILD,” “HAD A SON.” MOAB: NOTE THAT THE TEV FOOTNOTE SAYS “MOAB: THIS NAME SOUNDS LIKE THE HEBREW FOR ‘FROM MY FATHER.’” ALTHOUGH MOAB IS NOT FORMALLY MARKED WITH THE HEBREW POSSESSIVE SUFFIX MEANING “MY,” THE STYLE SUGGESTS IT AND THE NAME OF THE SECOND DAUGHTER’S SON EXPRESSES IT FORMALLY. FATHER OF THE MOABITES MUST OFTEN BE EXPRESSED AS “ANCESTOR OF THE MOABITE PEOPLE” OR “ANCESTOR OF THE PEOPLE CALLED MOABITE.” IN SOME LANGUAGES THIS IS “THE MOABITE PEOPLE COME FROM HIM.” IN THIS TEXT THE HEBREW EXPRESSES THE NAME OF THE CHILD AND THE NAME OF THE TRIBE BY THE SAME TERM. THERE ARE OTHER LANGUAGES IN WHICH THE ETHNIC NAME AND THE PERSONAL NAME WILL ALSO BE THE SAME. HOWEVER, IN MANY LANGUAGES A COMMON ETHNIC PLURALIZER IS ADDED TO THE PERSONAL NAME. WE MAY ALSO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “HE IS THE ANCESTOR OF THE MOABITE PEOPLE WHO DESCENDED FROM HIM.” TO THIS DAY REFERS TO THE TIME MUCH LATER, WHEN THIS ACCOUNT WAS WRITTEN, AND WHEN THE MOABITE PEOPLE WERE LIVING NEAR ISRAEL. TEV SAYS “THE PRESENT-DAY MOABITES,” SPEISER “THE MOABITES OF TODAY.” IN SOME LANGUAGES THIS MAY BE EXPRESSED “THE PEOPLE CALLED MOABITES TODAY,” “THE PEOPLE WHO ARE KNOWN TODAY AS MOABITES.”**

**GENESIS 19:38: BENAMMI: THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS NAME IS ALSO FOUND IN THE TEV FOOTNOTE, WHICH SAYS “BENAMMI: THIS NAME IN HEBREW MEANS ‘SON OF MY RELATIVE’ AND SOUNDS LIKE THE HEBREW FOR ‘AMMONITE.’” TRANSLATORS MAY WISH TO USE BOTH THESE FOOTNOTE MODELS. IN THIS WAY THE MOABITES AND THE AMMONITES ARE GIVEN NAMES THAT ACCOUNT FOR THEIR ORIGIN IN AN INCESTUOUS WAY. TO THIS DAY HAS THE SAME FUNCTION AS IN VERSE 37.**

**ABRAHAM DECEIVES ABIMELECH (20:1–18)**

**CHAPTER 20 TURNS OUR ATTENTION AGAIN TO ABRAHAM AND SARAH. IN THIS CHAPTER WE RECOGNIZE IMMEDIATELY A CLOSE SIMILARITY BETWEEN THIS STORY AND THE EVENTS RELATED IN 12:10–20. THERE ABRAHAM IS FORCED BY FAMINE TO GO TO EGYPT. HERE HE TAKES HIS CAMP AND ANIMALS TO GERAR, AS HE MIGRATES SOUTH.**

**THIS SUBDIVISION MAY BE VIEWED AS HAVING FOUR PARTS: (1) THE FIRST PART IS A BRIEF INTRODUCTION THAT PLACES ABRAHAM IN GERAR, WHERE HE TELLS A HALF TRUTH TO KING ABIMELECH—THAT SARAH IS HIS SISTER (VERSES 1–2).**

**(2) IN THE SECOND PART GOD WARNS ABIMELECH IN A DREAM THAT SARAH, WHOM HE HAS TAKEN INTO HIS HAREM, IS ABRAHAM’S WIFE. ABIMELECH DEFENDS HIS ACTIONS AS HAVING BEEN DONE WITH A CLEAR CONSCIENCE. GOD THEN WARNS ABIMELECH TO RETURN SARAH TO HER HUSBAND OR FACE DEATH (VERSES 3**

**(3) THE THIRD SECTION IS A DIALOGUE BETWEEN ABIMELECH AND ABRAHAM, IN WHICH ABIMELECH ACCUSES ABRAHAM OF WRONGING HIM THROUGH DECEPTION. ABRAHAM DEFENDS HIS MISCONDUCT AS MOTIVATED BY FEAR FOR HIS LIFE, AND EXCUSES HIS ACTION BY SAYING THAT SARAH IS HIS HALF-SISTER AS WELL AS HIS WIFE (VERSES 20:9–13).**

**(4) THE FINAL SECTION BRINGS THE STORY TO A CLOSE, IN WHICH ABIMELECH MAKES A GIFT TO ABRAHAM AND RETURNS SARAH. ABRAHAM THEN PRAYS FOR ABIMELECH, AND SO GOD ENABLES THE KING AND HIS WOMEN TO HAVE CHILDREN AGAIN (VERSES 14–18).**

**SUBDIVISION HEADING**

**THE HANDBOOK HEADING MAY BE ADJUSTED TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “ABIMELECH TAKES SARAH FOR A WIFE” OR “ABRAHAM AND SARAH IN GERAR.” TEV AND MANY OTHERS HAVE “ABRAHAM AND ABIMELECH,” NJB, NAB “ABRAHAM AT GERAR.”**

**GENESIS 20:1: FROM THERE ABRAHAM JOURNEYED: FROM THERE IS THE LITERAL HEBREW WORDING, BUT IT FAILS TO SAY WHERE THERE IS. WE COULD TAKE IT TO MEAN “FROM LOT’S CAVE” AT THE END OF CHAPTER 19; HOWEVER, THERE IS NO EVIDENCE IN THE TEXT THAT ABRAHAM WAS AT THAT CAVE. SOME INTERPRETERS ASSUME THAT THERE REFERS TO HEBRON (13:18), OR MORE LIKELY TO MAMRE (18:1), WHICH IS THE LAST PLACE WHERE ABRAHAM IS LOCATED BEFORE THIS EPISODE; AND SO TEV HAS “ABRAHAM MOVED FROM MAMRE.…” FRCL AVOIDS THERE AND SAYS “ABRAHAM DEPARTED FOR THE NEGEB.” IN TRANSLATION IT IS OFTEN NECESSARY FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF THE ORGANIZATION OF THE DISCOURSE TO MAKE THE TIME IN RELATION TO WHAT WENT BEFORE CLEAR AT THE OUTSET OF THE STORY. THEREFORE, IT IS OFTEN NECESSARY TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “AFTER SOME TIME,” “LATER,” “AGAIN, IT HAPPENED LIKE THIS.” JOURNEYED TRANSLATES THE VERB RENDERED “MIGRATED” IN 11:2 (SEE 11:2; 12:9, FOR DISCUSSION) AND REFERS TO THE MOVING OF ABRAHAM’S CAMP AND ANIMALS AS HIS HERDSMEN SEARCH FOR PASTURES AND WATER. TOWARD … NEGEB: THE HEBREW PERMITS THE RSV RENDERING TOWARD BUT DOES NOT ACTUALLY STATE THAT ABRAHAM WENT INTO THE NEGEB DESERT. FOR ADDITIONAL COMMENTS SEE 12:9. HEBREW NEGEB CAN MEAN “SOUTH” AS WELL AS REFERRING TO THE REGION OF THAT NAME IN THE SOUTH OF CANAAN. TEV TRANSLATES “THE SOUTHERN PART OF CANAAN,” WHICH GIVES AS ACCURATE A DESCRIPTION IN THIS CONTEXT AS DOES TERRITORY OF THE NEGEB. DWELT BETWEEN KADESH AND SHUR: DWELT REFERS TO PITCHING CAMP, SETTING UP CAMP FOR A SHORT OR LONG STAY. KADESH IS MENTIONED IN 14:7, WHERE IT IDENTIFIES THE LOCATION OF “ENMISHPAT.” KADESH IS LOCATED ABOUT 80 KILOMETERS (50 MILES) SOUTH OF BEERSHEBA IN THE AREA OF THE NEGEB DESERT. SHUR IS MENTIONED IN 16:7 AS THE PLACE WHERE THE ANGEL OF THE LORD MET HAGAR, AND REFERS TO A DESERT REGION IN THE SINAI PENINSULA EAST OF THE PRESENT SUEZ CANAL. THE AREA BETWEEN KADESH AND SHUR IS IN THE DIRECTION OF THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA AND WEST OF THE NEGEB DESERT. SEE A BIBLICAL ATLAS. FOR A STORY OPENING, TRANSLATORS MAY FIND THE FOLLOWING A HELPFUL MODEL: “AFTER SOME TIME HAD PASSED, ABRAHAM TOOK HIS PEOPLE AND ANIMALS AND MOVED SOUTHWARD, WHERE THEY PITCHED CAMP BETWEEN THE PLACE CALLED KADESH AND THE DESERT CALLED SHUR.” AND HE SOJOURNED IN GERAR: SOJOURNED TRANSLATES A VERB MEANING TO LIVE AS A FOREIGNER OR ALIEN AMONG PEOPLE ONE IS NOT RELATED TO. FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION AND REFERENCES SEE 12:10. THE EXACT LOCATION OF THE TOWN OF GERAR IS UNCERTAIN, AND THERE ARE SOME PROBLEMS IN TRYING TO RELATE IT TO KADESH AND SHUR. ACCORDING TO VON RAD, “GERAR LAY NEAR GAZA,” WHICH PLACES IT SOME DISTANCE TO THE NORTH OF KADESH AND SHUR. SCHOLARS HAVE QUESTIONED THE DIVISION BETWEEN VERSES 1 AND 2, WHICH APPEARS RATHER ABRUPT AS IT STANDS. SPEISER CONCLUDES THAT AND HE SOJOURNED IN GERAR SHOULD BE UNDERSTOOD AS A TIME CLAUSE RELATED TO VERSE 2 AS THE MAIN CLAUSE, AND SO TRANSLATES “WHILE HE WAS SOJOURNING IN GERAR, ABRAHAM SAID OF SARAH HIS WIFE.…” MANY TRANSLATIONS FOLLOW THIS WAY OF UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT; FOR EXAMPLE, “FOR A WHILE HE STAYED IN GERAR, AND THERE …” (NIV). TEV PROVIDES A TRANSITION AS INTRODUCTION: “LATER, WHILE HE WAS LIVING IN GERAR.…” SOMETHING OF THIS KIND IS RECOMMENDED TO TRANSLATORS, AS IT ENABLES THE THREAD OF DISCOURSE TO MOVE MORE NATURALLY FROM THE OPENING DESCRIPTION OF THE MIGRATION TO THE INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT BY ABRAHAM (“SHE IS MY SISTER”), UPON WHICH ALL THE EVENTS IN THE STORY TURN.**

**GENESIS 20:2: AND ABRAHAM SAID OF SARAH HIS WIFE: WHO ABRAHAM SAID THIS TO IS NOT STATED IN THE TEXT. IN 12:13 ABRAHAM INSTRUCTS SARAH TO SAY THAT SHE IS HIS SISTER. IN LANGUAGES IN WHICH IT MUST BE MADE CLEAR WHO ABRAHAM TELLS THAT SARAH IS HIS SISTER, IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “ABRAHAM TOLD THE PEOPLE THAT HIS WIFE SARAH WAS HIS SISTER.” IT IS PROBABLY NOT NECESSARY TO BE MORE EXACT THAN THIS. SHE IS MY SISTER: THE TEXT DOES NOT USE QUOTE MARKS, BUT THE CONSTRUCTION SHOWS THIS TO BE A DIRECT QUOTATION. IF AN INDIRECT QUOTATION IS REQUIRED, WE MAY SAY “ABRAHAM SAID THAT HIS WIFE SARAH WAS HIS SISTER.” ABRAHAM’S INTENTION IS CLEARLY TO PROTECT HIS LIFE, AS SEEN IN VERSE 11. ACCORDINGLY, HE WISHES TO GIVE THE IMPRESSION THAT SHE IS NOT HIS WIFE, AND OF COURSE THIS WILL MEAN THAT SHE IS AVAILABLE FOR MARRIAGE. MANY LANGUAGES MUST DISTINGUISH BETWEEN OLDER AND YOUNGER SISTER, AND YOUNGER SISTER WILL PROBABLY BE MORE APPROPRIATE. IN SOME LANGUAGES IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO SAY “WE ARE BROTHER AND SISTER.” FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION SEE 12:13. AND ABIMELECH KING OF GERAR SENT AND TOOK SARAH: BY COMPARING THE ACCOUNT IN 12:10–20 WITH THE PRESENT ONE, TRANSLATORS WILL NOTICE HOW OUR PRESENT STORY IS SHORTER IN SOME DETAILS. THERE THE EGYPTIANS SAW SARAH, THE PRINCES OF PHARAOH (THE KING) SAW HER, AND THEY PRAISED HER BEAUTY TO THE KING. BY CONTRAST, IN THIS CHAPTER THERE IS NO REPORT OF PEOPLE SEEING SARAH’S BEAUTY, AND WITHOUT ANYONE REPORTING TO ABIMELECH, HE TAKES HER. RSV RENDERS THE HEBREW CONNECTIVE AS AND, BUT THE CONTEXT CALLS FOR A CONNECTOR THAT SHOWS CONSEQUENCE OR RESULT; FOR EXAMPLE, “SO,” “AS A RESULT,” “THEREFORE,” “BECAUSE ABRAHAM SAID THIS.” THE NAME ABIMELECH MEANS “MELECH IS [MY] FATHER” OR “THE KING IS MY FATHER.” DRIVER SAYS THAT PHOENICIAN PROPER NOUNS SHOW THAT THERE WAS AN OLD CANAANITE GOD CALLED MILK, MEANING “KING,” AND THIS NAME IS THE EQUIVALENT OF HEBREW MELECH OR MOLECH. FOR THE TREATMENT OF NAMES IN GENESIS, SEE “TRANSLATING GENESIS.” SENT AND TOOK SARAH: SENT AND TOOK MAY BE VIEWED AS A SINGLE EVENT. “HE SENT FOR HER” OR “HE TOOK HER.” IT MAY ALSO BE REGARDED AS TWO EVENTS: “HE SENT PEOPLE TO BRING HER TO HIM,” WHICH IS A FULLER FORM OF TEV’S PASSIVE RENDERING, “HE HAD SARAH BROUGHT TO HIM.” WE MAY ALSO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “SO ABIMELECH KING OF GERAR SENT FOR SARAH.” TOOK SARAH MEANS THAT HE TOOK HER AS ONE OF HIS WIVES OR TOOK HER INTO HIS HAREM.**

**GENESIS 20:3: BUT GOD CAME TO ABIMELECH IN A DREAM BY NIGHT AND SAID TO HIM: RSV BUT SUGGESTS A CONTRAST BETWEEN WHAT ABIMELECH HAS DONE AND WHAT GOD ACCEPTS, AND MANY OTHER VERSIONS ALSO USE IT. CAME TO ABIMELECH MEANS HE “APPEARED,” OR “SHOWED HIMSELF.” TRANSLATORS MAY FIND IT MORE NATURAL TO PLACE THE TIME OF THE DREAM AT THE OPENING OF THIS VERSE; FOR EXAMPLE, “BUT ONE NIGHT GOD APPEARED TO ABIMELECH.…” BEHOLD, YOU ARE A DEAD MAN: BEHOLD INTRODUCES WHAT CERTAINLY MUST HAVE BEEN A SHOCKING STATEMENT TO ABIMELECH. IN THIS CONTEXT IT IS BEST UNDERSTOOD AS A MARKER OF IMPACT OR EMPHASIS THAT SHOULD BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT IN THE WAY THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT IS EXPRESSED. DEAD MAN TRANSLATES A HEBREW ACTIVE PARTICIPLE AND SUGGESTS A DYING MAN, OR ONE WHO WILL SOON BE DEAD, AND SO TEV SAYS “YOU ARE GOING TO DIE.…” IN SOME LANGUAGES THIS DREAM MESSAGE WILL HAVE MORE FORCE IN A FAMILIAR FIGURATIVE FORM; FOR EXAMPLE, “YOUR GRAVE IS BEING DUG,” “YOU HAVE EATEN YOUR FINAL MEAL.” BECAUSE OF THE WOMAN WHOM YOU HAVE TAKEN; FOR SHE IS A MAN’S WIFE: THE FIRST CLAUSE GIVES THE REASON FOR THE DEATH SENTENCE ON ABIMELECH, AND THE SECOND ELABORATES IT. IN SOME LANGUAGES TRANSLATORS MAY FIND IT MORE NATURAL TO REDUCE THESE TWO CLAUSES TO ONE; FOR EXAMPLE, “BECAUSE YOU HAVE TAKEN A MARRIED WOMAN.” IF IT IS CLEARER TO RETAIN THE NAMES, WE MAY SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “BECAUSE YOU HAVE TAKEN SARAH, WHO IS ABRAHAM’S WIFE.”**

**GENESIS 20:4: IN VERSES 4–6 ABIMELECH IS PRESENTED AS ACTING INNOCENTLY AND NOT IN THE EVIL MANNER OFTEN REGARDED AS TYPICAL OF CANAANITE RULERS. NOW ABIMELECH HAD NOT APPROACHED HER: RSV NOW, WHICH TRANSLATES THE HEBREW CONNECTIVE, MARKS A TRANSITION TO AN EXPLANATION OF ABIMELECH’S RELATION TO SARAH, WHICH IN TURN FORMS THE BASIS FOR ABIMELECH’S DEFENSE IN HIS REPLY TO GOD. WE MAY ALSO TRANSLATE WITH A CONTRAST SUCH AS “BUT,” “NEVERTHELESS,” “HOWEVER.” HAD NOT APPROACHED HER IS A FIGURATIVE WAY OF SAYING HE HAD NOT HAD SEXUAL RELATIONS WITH SARAH. MOST LANGUAGES HAVE NO DIFFICULTY EXPRESSING THIS IDEA IN A FIGURATIVE OR INDIRECT MANNER; TYPICAL EXPRESSIONS ARE “HAD NOT GONE NEAR HER” AND “HAD NOT TOUCHED HER” (SEE VERSE 6). IN SOME LANGUAGES IT WILL BE MORE NATURAL TO BEGIN THE QUOTE IN WHAT IS THE NARRATOR’S STATEMENT; FOR EXAMPLE, “SO ABIMELECH SAID TO THE LORD, ‘I HAVE NOT COME NEAR HER; WILL YOU KILL …?’” LORD, WILT THOU SLAY AN INNOCENT PEOPLE? ABIMELECH ADDRESSES GOD AS ’ADONAI. FOR COMMENTS SEE 15:2. ABIMELECH’S QUESTION IS SIMILAR TO ABRAHAM’S PLEA FOR THE DELIVERANCE OF SODOM IN 2–3: “ARE YOU REALLY GOING TO DESTROY THE INNOCENT WITH THE GUILTY?” INNOCENT TRANSLATES THE HEBREW ADJECTIVE MOST OFTEN RENDERED “RIGHTEOUS.” THE PARTICULAR SENSE IN THIS CONTEXT IS RIGHT, GUILTLESS, INNOCENT; IT REFERS TO THE FACT THAT ABIMELECH HAS NOT HAD RELATIONS WITH SARAH AND SO IS INNOCENT OF WRONGDOING IN THAT REGARD. SCHOLARS DIFFER IN THEIR INTERPRETATION OF THE HEBREW TERM GOY, TRANSLATED PEOPLE. SPEISER HOLDS THAT THE WORD HAS RESULTED FROM A COPYIST’S ERROR, AND THAT THE KING IS SPEAKING ONLY OF HIMSELF. VON RAD, ON THE OTHER HAND, SAYS “AND NOT ONLY HIM, FOR ALL HIS SUBJECTS COLLECTIVELY ARE CAUGHT WITH HIM IN VERY GREAT DANGER, LIABLE TO BE DRAWN WITH HIM INTO A CATASTROPHE.” BOTH MEANINGS ARE FOUND IN MODERN VERSIONS; FOR EXAMPLE, “LORD, WILL YOU DESTROY PEOPLE WHO ARE INNOCENT?” (REB) AND “LORD, MY PEOPLE AND I ARE INNOCENT. ARE YOU GOING TO DESTROY US ANYWAY?” (FRCL). THESE MAY BE COMPARED WITH NJB “LORD, WOULD YOU KILL SOMEONE EVEN IF HE IS UPRIGHT?” AND NAB “O LORD, WOULD YOU SLAY A MAN EVEN THOUGH HE IS INNOCENT?” TRANSLATORS ARE FREE TO FOLLOW THE SINGULAR OR THE PLURAL, AND THE DIFFERENCE IN MEANING IS PROBABLY NOT SUFFICIENT TO WARRANT ADDING A FOOTNOTE.**

**GENESIS 20:5: ABIMELECH NOW BEGINS TO SHIFT THE BLAME TO ABRAHAM. IN SOME LANGUAGES IT MAY BE UNACCEPTABLE FOR ABIMELECH TO PRESENT HIS DEFENSE IN THIS VERSE WITHOUT REPEATING A SUITABLE FORM OF ADDRESS TO GOD: FOR EXAMPLE, BY REPEATING “LORD,” OR “HEAR MY WORDS, LORD,” OR “WITH YOUR PERMISSION, LORD.” DID HE NOT HIMSELF SAY TO ME, ‘SHE IS MY SISTER’? ABIMELECH CONTINUES HIS DEFENSE BY ASKING A RHETORICAL QUESTION, WHICH IS THE EQUIVALENT OF SAYING “HE [ABRAHAM] HIMSELF SAID TO ME, ‘SHE IS MY SISTER.’” TO STRENGTHEN HIS ARGUMENT, HE BLAMES SARAH AS WELL: AND SHE HERSELF SAID, “HE IS MY BROTHER.” IF SISTER HAS BEEN RENDERED BY A WORD MEANING “YOUNGER SISTER,” THEN THE TRANSLATION OF BROTHER WILL PROBABLY NEED TO BE “OLDER BROTHER.” NOTE THAT TEV HAS AVOIDED DIRECT QUOTATION: “ABRAHAM HIMSELF SAID THAT SHE WAS.…” AND INSTEAD OF GIVING SARAH’S ACTUAL WORDS, TEV TRANSLATES “SHE SAID THE SAME THING.” IN THE CONTEXT OF A PLEA OF SELF-DEFENSE BEFORE GOD, THE JUDGE OF THIS AFFAIR, TRANSLATORS SHOULD MAKE CERTAIN THAT THE PLEA IS NOT WEAKENED WHEN MAKING AN ADAPTATION SUCH AS IN TEV. IN SOME LANGUAGES, IF THE RHETORICAL QUESTION FORM IS USED IN RELATION TO ABRAHAM’S STATEMENT, IT MAY BE ADVISABLE TO EXPRESS THE PART ABOUT SARAH AS A RHETORICAL QUESTION ALSO. A FURTHER POINT TO CONSIDER IS THE FEELING ABOUT USING RHETORICAL QUESTIONS WHEN SPEAKING TO GOD. IF EITHER THE QUESTION FORM OR THE DIRECT STATEMENT FORM WILL BE INAPPROPRIATE IN THIS CONTEXT, THEN AN ADJUSTMENT MUST BE MADE. THERE IS A FURTHER POINT TO KEEP IN MIND, HOWEVER: THE RHETORICAL QUESTION IN THIS CONTEXT SERVES TO SHIFT THE BLAME TO ABRAHAM AND SARAH, BUT IT DOES SO INDIRECTLY. THE QUESTION FORM INVITES GOD TO DECIDE FOR HIMSELF THE TRUTH OF THE MATTER. EVEN IF TRANSLATORS ARE UNABLE TO USE THE RHETORICAL QUESTION FORM, THEY MAY BE ABLE TO CONVEY WHAT THAT FORM SUGGESTS BY SAYING, FOR EXAMPLE, “YOU MUST KNOW THAT ABRAHAM HIMSELF SAID TO ME … AND THAT SARAH TOO SAID.…” IN THE INTEGRITY OF MY HEART: THE FULL EXPRESSION INTEGRITY OF … HEART AND INNOCENCE OF HANDS FORMS A POETIC PARALLELISM THAT SOUNDS LIKE 4: “HE WHO HAS CLEAN HANDS AND A PURE HEART.” WESTERMANN SAYS “IT PRESUPPOSES THE LANGUAGE OF A LATER ERA.” FOR INTEGRITY OF HEART SEE ALSO 1 KGS 9:4; PSA 101:2. INTEGRITY TRANSLATES A WORD MEANING “COMPLETENESS,” AND IN RELATION TO THE HEART AS THE SEAT OF REASONING OR THOUGHT, IT MEANS THAT THE HEART OR MIND IS RIGHTLY GUIDED, NOT DIVIDED BY GOOD AND BAD MOTIVES. SOME MODERN VERSIONS TRANSLATE THIS EXPRESSION AS “GOOD [CLEAR] CONSCIENCE” (TEV, NJB, NIV, FRCL) OR “GOOD FAITH” (SPCL, NEB, REB). TO ACT WITH A GOOD CONSCIENCE IS SOMETIMES RENDERED BY SUCH FIGURATIVE EXPRESSIONS AS “THE VOICE INSIDE ME SPEAKS TRUE WORDS,” “MY HEART’S VOICE SPEAKS STRAIGHT,” “MY LIVER KNOWS I TELL THE TRUTH.” THE INNOCENCE OF MY HANDS: THE WORD TRANSLATED INNOCENCE HAS THE SENSE OF CLEANNESS, AND IN RELATION TO THE HANDS, WHICH SYMBOLIZE BEHAVIOR OR CONDUCT, IT MEANS THAT CONDUCT IS FREE OF WRONGDOING, AND THEREFORE INNOCENT OR GUILTLESS. WE MAY TRANSLATE THE PARALLELISM, FOR EXAMPLE, “THE VOICE INSIDE ME SPEAKS THE TRUTH, AND WHAT I DID IS NOT WRONG.” TRANSLATORS MAY FIND IT MORE NATURAL TO RELATE THE TWO STATEMENTS AS SUMMARY AND REASON; FOR EXAMPLE, “MY CONSCIENCE IS CLEAR BECAUSE I AM INNOCENT OF HAVING DONE WRONG.”**

**GENESIS 20:6: THEN GOD SAID TO HIM IN THE DREAM SERVES TO SWITCH SPEAKERS IN THE DIALOGUE. IN THE DREAM MUST OFTEN BE RENDERED “IN HIS DREAM” OR “WHILE ABIMELECH WAS DREAMING.” YES, I KNOW THAT YOU HAVE DONE THIS IN THE INTEGRITY OF YOUR HEART: IN SPITE OF GOD’S JUDGMENT OF ABIMELECH IN VERSE 3, GOD NOW ACCEPTS ABIMELECH’S ARGUMENT. YOU HAVE DONE THIS MAY REQUIRE FILLING OUT TO SAY “YOU TOOK SARAH TO BE YOUR WIFE.” THEN THE TRANSLATION MAY NEED TO CONTINUE “AND I KNOW YOU DID THIS WITH A GOOD CONSCIENCE.” AND IT WAS I: THE CONSTRUCTION PLACES THE EMPHASIS UPON GOD AS THE ONE WHO ACTED TO PREVENT ABIMELECH FROM SINNING. IN TRANSLATION SUCH EMPHASIS IS SOMETIMES EXPRESSED “NOT SOMEONE ELSE, ONLY I,” “I AND NOT ANYONE ELSE,” “I AM THE ONE.…” WHO KEPT YOU FROM SINNING AGAINST ME: SINNING AGAINST ME MAY REQUIRE ADJUSTMENTS IN TRANSLATION TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “… KEPT YOU FROM DOING WHAT I SAID WAS EVIL,” “… KEPT YOU FROM DOING EVIL IN MY EYES,” OR “… FROM SINNING AND BREAKING MY LAWS.” THEREFORE, I DID NOT LET YOU TOUCH HER: IN SOME LANGUAGES IT MAY BE MORE NATURAL TO PLACE THIS CLAUSE BEFORE THE PREVIOUS ONE, SO THAT “KEPT YOU FROM SINNING” WILL BE THE RESULT OF I DID NOT LET YOU.… FOR EXAMPLE, “I DID NOT LET YOU TOUCH SARAH, AND SO I KEPT YOU FROM DOING WHAT IS EVIL.”**

**GENESIS 20:7: NOW THEN RESTORE THE MAN’S WIFE: NOW THEN MARKS A TRANSITION TO A NEW COURSE OF ACTION TO FOLLOW. ALTHOUGH GOD ACCEPTS ABIMELECH’S INNOCENCE REGARDING HIS VIOLATION OF THE MARRIAGE BOND, ABIMELECH MUST STILL RETURN SARAH TO HER HUSBAND. RESTORE MEANS TO “RETURN HER,” “GIVE HER BACK,” “SEND HER BACK.” THE MAN’S WIFE IN SOME LANGUAGES CAN REFER TO SOMEONE OTHER THAN ABRAHAM, AND IN SUCH CASES, IT WILL BE NECESSARY TO SAY “GIVE THIS MAN’S WIFE BACK,” “GIVE SARAH BACK TO ABRAHAM,” “RETURN ABRAHAM’S WIFE TO HIM.” FOR HE IS A PROPHET: INTERPRETERS DIFFER IN THEIR UNDERSTANDING OF PROPHET (HEBREW NABÌ) IN THIS CONTEXT. SOME HOLD THAT ABRAHAM IS CALLED A PROPHET HERE BECAUSE HE WILL SPEAK TO GOD ON ABIMELECH’S BEHALF; AND HE IS NOT TO BE UNDERSTOOD AS A PROPHET IN THE SAME SENSE AS SAMUEL, ELIJAH, ISAIAH, OR JEREMIAH. HOWEVER, THE EXPRESSION USED IN 15:1, “… THE WORD OF THE LORD CAME TO ABRAM,” IS TYPICALLY THAT USED OF GOD SPEAKING TO A PROPHET. OTHERS HOLD THAT THE WORDS FOR HE IS A PROPHET, AND HE WILL PRAY FOR YOU HAVE BEEN INSERTED INTO THE TEXT LONG AFTER THE PATRIARCHAL PERIOD, AT A TIME WHEN ABRAHAM HAD BECOME FAMOUS AS A GODLY MAN OF THE ANCIENT PERIOD. NOTE THE REFERENCE TO ABRAHAM AND THE PATRIARCHS AS “PROPHETS” IN PSA 105:15. IN GENERAL OLD TESTAMENT USAGE, A PROPHET IS A PERSON WHO SPEAKS TO THE PEOPLE ON BEHALF OF GOD, BUT HE MAY ALSO BE A SPOKESMAN FOR ANOTHER PERSON. FOR EXAMPLE, IN EXO 7:1 AARON IS SAID TO BE MOSES’ PROPHET, AND IT MAY BE THAT PROPHET IS BEING USED IN THIS SENSE IN OUR VERSE. THE USUAL TERM FOR PROPHET USED THROUGHOUT THE OLD TESTAMENT MAY NOT BE SUITABLE IN THIS CONTEXT, AS ABRAHAM IS NOT TELLING THE PEOPLE GOD’S MESSAGE BUT IS INTERCEDING BEFORE GOD ON BEHALF OF ABIMELECH. HIS FUNCTION IN THIS CASE IS MORE SIMILAR TO THAT OF A PRIEST IN LATER TIMES. IF THE USE OF THE TERM PROPHET CAN RESULT IN CONFUSION FOR THE READER, IT MAY BE BETTER TO USE A MORE GENERAL EXPRESSION SUCH AS “MAN OF GOD,” “HOLY MAN,” “GOD’S PRAYER MAN.” HOWEVER, TRANSLATORS IN AREAS WHERE THERE IS MUSLIM INFLUENCE SHOULD REMEMBER THAT IN THE KORAN ABRAHAM (IBRAHIM) IS KNOWN AS ONE OF THE SIX GREAT PROPHETS TO WHOM GOD DELIVERED SPECIAL LAWS. THE EXPLANATION THAT ABRAHAM IS A PROPHET IS NOT TO BE TAKEN AS THE REASON ABIMELECH SHOULD RETURN SARAH BUT RATHER SHOULD BE UNDERSTOOD AS THE QUALIFICATION ABRAHAM HAS FOR APPROACHING GOD ON ABIMELECH’S BEHALF. ACCORDINGLY, WE MAY SAY “ABRAHAM IS A PROPHET AND SO WILL PRAY FOR YOU.” AND HE WILL PRAY FOR YOU: PRAY TRANSLATES A VERB THAT IS USED HERE AND GENERALLY THROUGHOUT THE OLD TESTAMENT WITH THE SENSE OF “INTERVENE,” “MEDIATE,” “INTERCEDE.” IT IS USED, FOR EXAMPLE, IN NUM 11:2, IN WHICH “THE PEOPLE CRIED TO MOSES; AND MOSES PRAYED TO THE LORD, AND THE FIRE ABATED” (RSV). NEB, REB, FRCL TRANSLATE “AND HE INTERCEDED WITH THE LORD.…” TO INTERCEDE IN THIS CONTEXT IS TO SPEAK TO GOD FOR ABIMELECH, OR MORE CONCRETELY, “TO ASK GOD TO BE MERCIFUL TO ABIMELECH.” AND YOU SHALL LIVE EXPRESSES THE OUTCOME OF ABRAHAM’S PRAYING TO GOD FOR THE KING. THIS STATEMENT REVERSES THE CONDEMNATION OF ABIMELECH BY GOD IN VERSE “YOU ARE GOING TO DIE.” IN TRANSLATION IT MAY BE STYLISTICALLY DESIRABLE TO RETAIN THE IDEA OF DEATH BY SAYING, FOR EXAMPLE, “YOU SHALL NOT DIE” OR “I WILL NOT KILL YOU.” IF THE STATEMENT IS TRANSLATED AS IN RSV, YOU SHALL LIVE MAY REQUIRE ADJUSTMENT, SINCE ABIMELECH IS OBVIOUSLY ALREADY ALIVE. WE MAY NEED TO TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “YOUR LIFE WILL BE SPARED,” “YOU WILL GO ON LIVING.” BUT IF YOU DO NOT RESTORE HER: BUT INTRODUCES A DIFFERENT CONSEQUENCE THAT CONTRASTS WITH HAVING HIS LIFE SPARED. RESTORE HER TRANSLATES THE SAME VERB FORM AS IN THE FIRST PART OF THE VERSE AND MEANS “GIVE HER BACK TO ABRAHAM,” “SEND SARAH BACK.” KNOW THAT YOU SHALL SURELY DIE: KNOW, THE LITERAL RENDERING, MUST BE MODIFIED IN MANY LANGUAGES, SINCE A PERSON CANNOT BE TOLD TO “KNOW” SOMETHING. THE SENSE OF KNOW AS A COMMAND SERVES TO STRENGTHEN THE CERTAINTY OF THE THREAT OR WARNING. TEV SAYS “I WARN YOU THAT …,” NEB, REB “I TELL YOU THAT.…” WE MAY ALSO TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “YOU CAN BE SURE THAT,” “THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT,” OR “I WANT YOU TO KNOW THAT.” YOU, AND ALL THAT ARE YOURS: THIS ADDITIONAL PHRASE EMPHASIZES THE INCLUSION OF ABIMELECH’S HOUSEHOLD IN THE THREAT OF DEATH. ALL THAT ARE YOURS REFLECTS THE WAY IN WHICH THE FAMILY OR HOUSEHOLD OF A GUILTY PERSON SHARED IN HIS GUILT AND CONSEQUENT PUNISHMENT. FOR EXAMPLES SEE THE CASE OF KORAH IN NUM 16:32–35; OF ACHAN IN JOSH 7:24–26. IN TRANSLATION ALL THAT ARE YOURS MAY NEED TO BE RENDERED “ALL THE PEOPLE WHO LIVE WITH YOU,” “EVERYONE IN YOUR FAMILY.” FOLLOWING THE DIALOGUE BETWEEN GOD AND ABIMELECH, ABIMELECH PREPARES TO CONFRONT ABRAHAM, WHO HE NOW SEES AS THE SOURCE OF HIS SUFFERING, THE EXACT NATURE OF WHICH IS ONLY DISCLOSED AT THE END OF THE CHAPTER.**

**GENESIS 20:8: SO, ABIMELECH ROSE EARLY IN THE MORNING: RSV TRANSLATES THE HEBREW CONNECTIVE AS SO, MARKING WHAT FOLLOWS AS A CONSEQUENCE OF HIS DREAM. TEV “EARLY THE NEXT MORNING ABIMELECH …” SHIFTS THE ACTION IMMEDIATELY TO A NEW SCENE. BOTH ARE POSSIBLE. CALLED ALL HIS SERVANTS: CALLED MEANS “SENT FOR HIS SERVANTS,” “HAD HIS SERVANTS BROUGHT TO HIM.” THESE SERVANTS ARE PROBABLY TO BE UNDERSTOOD AS HIS REPRESENTATIVES OR OFFICIALS, THE OFFICERS OF HIS COURT. TEV CALLS THEM “OFFICIALS,” NJB “HIS FULL COURT,” REB “COURT OFFICIALS.” TOLD THEM ALL THESE THINGS IS LITERALLY “SPOKE ALL THESE WORDS IN THEIR EARS.” “THESE WORDS” REFERS TO THE CONVERSATION HE HAD HAD WITH GOD IN HIS DREAM. IN TRANSLATION ALL THESE THINGS, OR TEV “WHAT HAD HAPPENED,” MAY BE TOO GENERAL. IN THAT CASE WE MAY SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “WHAT GOD HAD SAID TO HIM,” “THE WORDS GOD SPOKE TO HIM,” OR “ALL THAT WAS SAID IN HIS DREAM.” AND THE MEN WERE VERY MUCH AFRAID: MEN REFERS TO THE OFFICIALS WHO WERE LISTENING TO ABIMELECH, AND MAY OFTEN BE RENDERED AS “THEY,” AS IN TEV. THE REACTION OF THESE OFFICIALS REVEALS THE PRESENCE IN ABIMELECH AND HIS COURT OF “WHAT ABRAHAM HAD NOT THOUGHT HE COULD COUNT ON, NAMELY, THE FEAR OF GOD” (VON RAD).**

**GENESIS 20:9: VERSES 20:9–10 INTRODUCE A NEW DIALOGUE, IN WHICH ABIMELECH ACCUSES ABRAHAM OF WRONGDOING THAT HAS BROUGHT GRIEF UPON HIM AND HIS PEOPLE. IN VERSES 11–13 ABRAHAM DEFENDS HIMSELF WITH WHAT APPEAR TO BE EXCUSES FOR HIS MISCONDUCT. THEN ABIMELECH CALLED ABRAHAM: CALLED, AS IN VERSE 8, MEANS “SENT FOR ABRAHAM” OR “HAD ABRAHAM BROUGHT TO HIM.” AND SAID TO HIM: IN SOME LANGUAGES IT IS NECESSARY TO INDICATE THAT ABRAHAM CAME TO THE KING BEFORE ABIMELECH SPOKE TO HIM; FOR EXAMPLE, “WHEN ABRAHAM CAME, ABIMELECH SAID” OR “AFTER ABRAHAM ARRIVED, ABIMELECH SAID.…” WHAT HAVE YOU DONE TO US: THIS QUESTION IS RHETORICAL AND DOES NOT SEEK TO FIND OUT WHAT ABRAHAM HAS DONE SO MUCH AS TO ASK WHY HE DID IT OR TO SCOLD HIM: “LOOK WHAT YOU HAVE DONE TO US!” “HOW WRONGLY YOU HAVE DEALT WITH US!” ABIMELECH’S SPEECH PROBABLY REVEALS THAT THE COURT OFFICIALS ARE STILL PRESENT. US REFERS TO ABIMELECH AND OTHERS, EXCLUDING ABRAHAM. AND HOW HAVE I SINNED AGAINST YOU: ABIMELECH CONTINUES WITH A SECOND RHETORICAL QUESTION. IF KEEPING THE FORM OF A RHETORICAL QUESTION IS INAPPROPRIATE IN THE TRANSLATOR’S LANGUAGE, IT CAN BE SHIFTED, FOR EXAMPLE, TO A NEGATIVE STATEMENT: “I HAVE DONE NOTHING WRONG TO YOU,” “I HAVE NOT OFFENDED YOU,” “I AM NOT GUILTY OF HARMING YOU.” THAT YOU HAVE BROUGHT ON ME AND MY KINGDOM A GREAT SIN? BROUGHT ON ME … MEANS “YOU [ABRAHAM] HAVE CAUSED ME AND MY PEOPLE TO DO A BAD THING.” IT IS ALSO POSSIBLE THAT ABIMELECH IS PLACING THE GUILT ON ABRAHAM BY ASKING, AS IN SPCL, “HOW HAVE I OFFENDED YOU SO THAT YOU HAVE BROUGHT SUCH A GREAT SIN ON ME AND ON MY PEOPLE?” ALTHOUGH THIS CLAUSE IS CONTAINED WITHIN THE QUESTION PUNCTUATION IN RSV AND OTHER ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS, IT REALLY STATES THE CONSEQUENCE OF THE ASSUMED WRONG IN THE FIRST PART. THIS KIND OF QUESTION MAY REQUIRE SOME ADJUSTMENTS IN TRANSLATION. NOTE TEV “… TO MAKE YOU BRING THIS DISASTER.…” IN SOME LANGUAGES IT MAY BE MORE NATURAL TO BEGIN A NEW SENTENCE AND SWITCH THE ORDER OF THE QUESTION AND THE CONSEQUENCE TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “YOU HAVE BROUGHT ON ME AND MY KINGDOM A GREAT SIN. BUT HOW HAVE I SINNED AGAINST YOU?” IF THE QUESTION IS EXPRESSED AS A NEGATIVE STATEMENT, WE MAY TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “I HAVE NOT OFFENDED YOU, BUT YOU HAVE BROUGHT ON ME AND MY PEOPLE.…” WE MAY ALSO MAKE THE SECOND PART BECOME THE QUESTION: “I HAVE NOT WRONGED YOU; WHY THEN HAVE YOU BROUGHT ON ME AND MY PEOPLE …?” KINGDOM REFERS NOT TO THE POLITICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL AREA WHERE THE KING RULES BUT MORE EXACTLY TO THE PEOPLE HE RULES. EVEN IF THE INFERTILITY MENTIONED IN VERSES 17–18 AFFECTS ONLY THE KING’S HAREM, IT INDIRECTLY AFFECTS ALL HIS PEOPLE. THEREFORE SPCL, GECL AND OTHERS TRANSLATE “ME AND MY PEOPLE.” YOU HAVE DONE TO ME THINGS THAT OUGHT NOT TO BE DONE: IN HEBREW THE ORDER IS REVERSED, “THINGS THAT OUGHT NOT TO BE DONE YOU HAVE DONE TO ME.” HERE ABIMELECH APPEALS TO A COMMON SET OF VALUES THAT PEOPLE GENERALLY SHOULD BE ABLE TO RELY ON. HE THUS APPEARS TO BE ON A HIGHER MORAL GROUND THAN ABRAHAM. WE MAY ALSO TRANSLATE “YOU HAVE DONE SOMETHING TO ME THAT NOBODY SHOULD DO TO ANOTHER PERSON” OR “YOU HAVE WRONGED ME. SUCH WRONGS SHOULD NOT BE DONE TO ANYBODY.”**

**GENESIS 20:10: AND ABIMELECH SAID TO ABRAHAM: TEV DROPS THIS AS UNNECESSARY IN THE DIALOGUE. ABIMELECH CONTINUES TO ACCUSE ABRAHAM BY PURSUING HIS QUESTIONS. WHAT WERE YOU THINKING OF, THAT YOU DID THIS THING? THINKING OF IS LITERALLY “WHAT DID YOU SEE,” WHERE “SEE” HAS THE SENSE OF “FORESEE,” “EXPECT,” “HOPE TO GAIN.” WE MAY TRANSLATE “WHAT DID YOU HOPE TO ACCOMPLISH?” “WHAT WERE YOU AFTER?” “WHAT DID YOU EXPECT TO GET FROM IT?” TEV “WHY DID YOU DO IT?” SEEMS TO OMIT THE ELEMENT OF PERSONAL GAIN ASSUMED IN ABIMELECH’S QUESTION. THE LAST PART OF THE VERSE MAY BE RENDERED, FOR EXAMPLE, “WHAT DID YOU EXPECT TO GET BY DOING THIS THING?” SINCE “THIS THING” REFERS TO SAYING THAT SARAH WAS HIS SISTER, IT MAY BE CLEARER TO TRANSLATE “WHAT DID YOU EXPECT TO GET BY SAYING THAT SARAH WAS YOUR SISTER?” OR “… BY HIDING THE FACT THAT SHE WAS YOUR WIFE?”**

**GENESIS 20:11: I DID IT BECAUSE I THOUGHT, THERE IS NO FEAR OF GOD AT ALL IN THIS PLACE: FEAR OF GOD IS HERE TO BE UNDERSTOOD AS AN ATTITUDE OF REVERENCE OR RESPECT FOR GOD, WHO REQUIRES RESPECT FOR HUMAN LIFE. ABRAHAM HAD ASSUMED THE PAGAN PEOPLE OF GERAR WOULD HAVE NO MORE RESPECT FOR HIM THAN THOSE IN SODOM HAD FOR LOT. TEV TRANSLATES “REVERENCE FOR GOD,” SPCL, FRCL HAVE “RESPECT FOR GOD.” A LITERAL TRANSLATION OF FEAR OF GOD IS PROBABLY APPROPRIATE IN THIS CONTEXT. WE MAY ALSO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “NOBODY HERE IS AFRAID OF WHAT GOD MIGHT DO.” GECL ATTEMPTS TO ASSOCIATE FEAR OF GOD WITH DISOBEDIENCE TO GOD’S LAW: “THE PEOPLE DO NOT CARE ABOUT GOD’S LAW.” WE MAY ALSO SAY “THE PEOPLE HERE PAY NO ATTENTION TO WHAT GOD COMMANDS THEM TO DO.” AND THEY WILL KILL ME BECAUSE OF MY WIFE: THIS IS THE CONSEQUENCE OF THE PEOPLE’S LACK OF RESPECT FOR GOD’S DEMANDS FOR THE SANCTITY OF HUMAN LIFE. BECAUSE OF MY WIFE MUST OFTEN BE ADJUSTED TO STATE THE PURPOSE OR REASON MORE EXACTLY; FOR EXAMPLE, “THEY WILL KILL ME IN ORDER TO TAKE MY WIFE,” OR “THEY WILL WANT MY WIFE AND SO WILL KILL ME.”**

**GENESIS 20:12: ABRAHAM’S DEFENSE GROWS WEAKER AS HE FINDS MORE EXCUSES FOR HIS DECEIT. BESIDES SHE IS INDEED MY SISTER: BESIDES IS A TERM THAT MEANS “ALSO,” “IN ADDITION,” “AS WELL.” HERE IT MARKS THE INTRODUCTION OF A SECOND EXCUSE. IN THE LAW (SEE LEV 18:9, 11; 20:17; DEUT 27:22) MARRIAGE BETWEEN SUCH BROTHERS AND SISTERS WAS PROHIBITED AT LATER PERIODS IN ISRAEL, ALTHOUGH IT WAS PRACTICED AMONG THE CANAANITES (AS DRIVER STATES) AND MAY HAVE BEEN PERMITTED AT THE TIME OF KING DAVID (2 SAM 13:13). INDEED, TRANSLATES A HEBREW FORM THAT EMPHASIZES THE WORD OR STATEMENT THAT FOLLOWS: “HERE INDEED,” “IN FACT,” “IN TRUTH.” THIS EMPHASIS IS ACCOMPLISHED IN TEV BY “REALLY.” REB HAS “SHE IS IN FACT.…” THIS CLAIM WILL BE MODIFIED IN THE FOLLOWING CLAUSE. FOR SISTER SEE COMMENTS ON VERSE 2. THE DAUGHTER OF MY FATHER BUT NOT THE DAUGHTER OF MY MOTHER: THESE TWO PHRASES EXPLAIN THE CLAUSE BEFORE THEM, AND IN RSV THEY ARE SEPARATED FROM IT BY A COMMA. IN OTHER LANGUAGES IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO BEGIN A NEW SENTENCE: “SHE IS THE DAUGHTER OF.…” IF THE HEBREW MANNER OF EXPRESSING THE RELATIONSHIP IS NOT SATISFACTORY, WE MAY ALSO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “MY FATHER WAS HER FATHER BUT MY MOTHER WAS NOT HER MOTHER” OR “SHE AND I HAD THE SAME FATHER BUT NOT THE SAME MOTHER.” AND SHE BECAME MY WIFE: IN SOME LANGUAGES THIS STATEMENT MAY REQUIRE A TRANSITION; FOR EXAMPLE, “WHEN WE GREW UP, SHE [SARAH] BECAME MY WIFE” OR “LATER, I MARRIED HER.”**

**GENESIS 20:13: AND WHEN GOD CAUSED ME TO WANDER FROM MY FATHER’S HOUSE: TEV MARKS THIS VERSE AS BEGINNING WITH “SO.” OTHERS PREFER A TIME CLAUSE, “WHEN GOD,” “LATER WHEN.” GOD IS HERE ’ELOHIM FOLLOWED BY A PLURAL FORM OF THE VERB. ALTHOUGH SCHOLARS INTERPRET THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PLURAL FORM IN VARIOUS WAYS, THIS USAGE WITH ’ELOHIM IS FOUND ALSO IN 35:7; EXO 22:9; 2 SAM 7:23, AND ELSEWHERE. DRIVER SUGGESTS THAT ABRAHAM IS ADAPTING HIS SPEECH TO A PAGAN WHO BELIEVES IN MANY GODS, SAYING IN EFFECT “WHEN THE GODS CAUSED ME TO.…” SPEISER BELIEVES THE PLURAL USAGE HERE SUGGESTS A BROADER CONCEPT OF GOD, WHICH HE TRANSLATES AS “HEAVEN.” HOWEVER, IT IS PROBABLY BEST TO TAKE THE PLURAL USAGE IN A SINGULAR SENSE, SINCE THIS USAGE OCCURS ELSEWHERE. CAUSED ME TO WANDER RECALLS THE COMMAND GIVEN TO ABRAHAM IN 12:1. THE TERM WANDER MEANS TO GO ABOUT WITHOUT A FIXED COURSE, AIM, OR OBJECTIVE. IN 12:1 ABRAHAM IS TOLD TO GO TO A LAND THAT GOD WILL SHOW HIM. HIS MOVEMENTS UP TO THIS POINT HAVE BEEN TWICE TO THE SOUTH AND ONCE TO THE NORTH. IN THIS CONTEXT THE TRANSLATION OF WANDER SHOULD NOT GIVE THE IMPRESSION THAT ABRAHAM DOES NOT KNOW WHERE HE IS. FROM MY FATHER’S HOUSEDOES NOT MEAN “FROM THE BUILDING WHERE MY FATHER LIVES” BUT RATHER “FROM MY FATHER’S FAMILY” OR “FROM MY FATHER’S HOUSEHOLD” (NIV). SEE 12:1. TEV COMPLETES THE THOUGHT OF LEAVING HIS FATHER’S HOUSEAND ADDS “INTO FOREIGN LANDS.” TRANSLATORS MAY FIND SOME SUCH ADDITION NECESSARY TO COMPLETE THE THOUGHT HERE. THIS IS THE KINDNESS YOU MUST DO ME: THIS POINTS AHEAD TO WHAT ABRAHAM WILL TELL SARAH TO DO. KINDNESS TRANSLATES HEBREW CHESED, MEANING “GOODNESS,” “MERCY,” “LOYALTY.” TEV TRANSLATES “YOU CAN SHOW HOW LOYAL YOU ARE TO ME.” NEB, REB HAVE “THERE IS A DUTY TOWARDS ME WHICH YOU MUST LOYALLY FULFILL.” NJB SAYS “THERE IS AN ACT OF LOVE YOU CAN DO ME.” ALL OF THESE ARE SATISFACTORY MODELS. HOWEVER, IN MANY LANGUAGES AN IDIOMATIC EXPRESSION WILL BE MORE NATURAL; FOR EXAMPLE, “SHOW ME YOUR GOOD HEART BY SAYING …” OR “LET YOUR INSIDES BE LOYAL TO ME BY SAYING.…” AT EVERY PLACE TO WHICH WE COME IS THE LITERAL HEBREW AND CAN OFTEN BE TRANSLATED AS “EVERYWHERE”; TEV SAYS “TELL EVERYONE,” NIV AND NJB “EVERYWHERE WE GO.” THE FOCUS IS ON PLACES BECAUSE THE THEME IS ABOUT WANDERING, MIGRATING FROM PLACE TO PLACE. HE IS MY BROTHER MAY HAVE TO BE ADJUSTED TO “TELL THEM I AM YOUR BROTHER” OR “… THAT WE ARE BROTHER AND SISTER.”**

**GENESIS 20:14: WITH VERSE 13 ABRAHAM HAS COMPLETED HIS DEFENSE. ABIMELECH APPEARS TO BE ANXIOUS TO CLOSE THE AFFAIR AND TO RECEIVE THE BENEFITS OF ABRAHAM’S PRAYERS FOR HIM AS PROMISED BY GOD IN VERSE 7. THEN ABIMELECH TOOK SHEEP AND OXEN, AND MALE AND FEMALE SLAVES, AND GAVE THEM TO ABRAHAM: THEN MAY NOT BE AN ADEQUATE TRANSITION IN THE DISCOURSE STRUCTURE FOR SOME LANGUAGES. IN SOME CASES, IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “AFTER ABRAHAM HAD FINISHED SPEAKING,” “AFTER ABRAHAM HAD TOLD ABIMELECH ALL THESE THINGS,” OR “WHEN ABIMELECH HAD HEARD ALL THAT ABRAHAM TOLD HIM.” SHEEP INCLUDES BOTH SHEEP AND GOATS. OXEN TRANSLATES A WORD REFERRING TO CATTLE GENERALLY AND NOT JUST TO WORK ANIMALS. MALE AND FEMALE SLAVES TRANSLATES THE SAME WORDS RENDERED “MENSERVANTS AND MAIDSERVANTS” IN 12:16. FOR A DISCUSSION OF SLAVES SEE THE COMMENTS ON 9:25–27. AND RESTORED SARAH HIS WIFE TO HIM: RESTORED IS AS IN VERSE 7. WE MAY TRANSLATE “HE ALSO GAVE ABRAHAM BACK HIS WIFE” OR “HE ALSO RETURNED SARAH TO ABRAHAM.” NOTE THAT TEV HAS PLACED THE RETURN OF SARAH BEFORE THE GIFT OF ANIMALS AND SLAVES. THIS PROVIDES FOR BETTER CONTINUITY BETWEEN VERSES 13 AND 14.**

**GENESIS 20:15: BEHOLD, MY LAND IS BEFORE YOU: BEHOLD MARKS THE CALLING OF ABRAHAM’S ATTENTION TO THE LAND, A LAND THAT ABRAHAM IS INVITED TO SHARE. TEV RENDERS THIS “HERE IS MY WHOLE LAND.” SPCL SAYS “LOOK, THERE IS MY COUNTRY.” DWELL WHERE IT PLEASES YOU IS LITERALLY “WHERE IT IS GOOD IN YOUR EYES, LIVE.” NOTE BY WAY OF CONTRAST THAT IN 12:19, WHEN SARAH IS RETURNED BY THE KING OF EGYPT, HE SAYS “HERE IS YOUR WIFE, TAKE HER AND BE GONE.” THE KING OF GERAR ACTS VERY DIFFERENTLY. WE MAY TRANSLATE “LIVE WHEREVER YOU LIKE” OR “TAKE WHATEVER LAND YOU LIKE AND LIVE THERE.”**

**GENESIS 20:16: ABIMELECH NOW ADDRESSES SARAH. BEHOLD, I HAVE GIVEN …: BEHOLD IS PROBABLY NOT TO CALL SARAH’S ATTENTION TO THE SILVER ITSELF BUT TO THE FACT THAT SHE IS CONSIDERED WORTHY OF VINDICATION, OR BEING PUT IN THE RIGHT IN THE EYES OF EVERYONE. IN THIS SENSE BEHOLD MAY SERVE AS AN ADDRESS TO SARAH PERSONALLY, WHICH WE MAY TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “WELL, SARAH,” “NOW ABOUT YOU, SARAH,” OR “AS FOR YOU, SARAH.” ABIMELECH REFERS TO ABRAHAM AS SARAH’S BROTHER. AS VON RAD SAYS, “IN THIS WAY HE AVOIDS COMPROMISING ABRAHAM. ABIMELECH DOES EVERYTHING TO DEMONSTRATE ABRAHAM’S AND SARAH’S HONORABLENESS.…” IN SOME LANGUAGES BROTHER WILL BE “OLDER BROTHER.” A THOUSAND PIECES OF SILVER IS LITERALLY “A THOUSAND IN SILVER.” THE TEXT DOES NOT SAY IN WHAT FORM THE SILVER IS GIVEN. RSV, TEV SUPPLY PIECES. ALTHOUGH SOME TRANSLATIONS SUPPLY “SHEKELS” OR CONVERT TO MODERN UNITS, IT IS BETTER TO LEAVE THE AMOUNT GENERAL. IT IS YOUR VINDICATION IN THE EYES OF ALL WHO ARE WITH YOU IS LITERALLY “IT IS FOR YOU A COVERING FOR THE EYES TO ALL WHO ARE WITH YOU.” ALTHOUGH THE EXACT MEANING OF THIS IDIOM IS NOT CLEAR, IT APPEARS TO BE USED TO SAY THAT THIS GIFT WILL SERVE TO COVER THE CRITICAL EYES OF SARAH’S PEOPLE, SO THAT THEY WILL NOT SEE ANY WRONG IN HER. INSTEAD OF DEMANDING COMPENSATION FOR WRONGDOING, THE KING IS REWARDING HER FOR HER GOODNESS. THE GIFT, EVEN THOUGH GIVEN THROUGH ABRAHAM, IS TO REMOVE ANY SUGGESTION OF DISHONOR DONE TO SARAH. NJB SAYS “THIS WILL ALLAY SUSPICIONS ABOUT YOU.” WE MAY TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “THIS GIFT IS TO SHOW ALL WHO ARE WITH YOU THAT YOU ARE INNOCENT,” “THIS GIFT IS TO SHOW … THAT YOU ARE NOT GUILTY OF ANY WRONG.” AND BEFORE EVERY ONE YOU ARE RIGHTED: THIS CLAUSE, AS IT STANDS IN THE TEXT, SEEMS TO REPEAT WHAT HAS JUST BEEN SAID REGARDING SARAH’S INNOCENCE. IF THE PURPOSE IS TO SAY THAT SARAH WILL BE LOOKED UPON AS INNOCENT BY EVERYONE (NOT JUST AMONG HER OWN PEOPLE), THEN THE SENSE CAN BE TAKEN AS A PUBLIC VINDICATION, AND SO SPEISER TRANSLATES “YOU HAVE BEEN PUBLICLY VINDICATED.” SEE TEV “EVERYONE WILL KNOW THAT YOU HAVE DONE NO WRONG.” THE VERB RENDERED YOU ARE RIGHTED IS A LEGAL TERM WITH THE GENERAL SENSE OF “JUDGE,” “DECIDE,” “PROVE.” THE SAME FORM OF THE VERB IS USED IN JOB 23:7 AND ISA 1:18 WITH THE SENSE OF TO REASON OR TO ARGUE (NEB AND REB HAVE “VINDICATE” IN JOB 23:7). IT IS THE RESULT OF LEGAL REASONING OR ARGUING THAT GIVES THE BASIS FOR RENDERING THE TERM HERE AS “TO PUT RIGHT” OR “TO VINDICATE.” TEV STATES THE SAME NEGATIVELY, “YOU HAVE DONE NO WRONG,” WHICH PROVIDES A GOOD TRANSLATION MODEL.**

**GENESIS 20:17–18: VERSES 17–18 CONCLUDE THIS STORY. IN VERSE 17 ABRAHAM PRAYS FOR THE HEALING OF ABIMELECH AND HIS FEMALES, AND VERSE 18 EXPLAINS THE REASON ABIMELECH’S WOMEN ARE UNABLE TO HAVE CHILDREN. NOTE THAT TEV AND OTHERS COMBINE VERSE NUMBERS 17 AND 18 AND PLACE THE CONTENT OF VERSE 18 BEFORE VERSE 17 SO THAT THE REASON FOR ABRAHAM’S PRAYER IS GIVEN FIRST. THEN ABRAHAM PRAYED TO GOD: IF VERSES 17 AND 18 ARE SWITCHED, VERSE 17 WILL PROBABLY SHOW THAT IT IS A CONSEQUENCE OF VERSE 18. SEE TEV. PRAYED IS THE SAME AS IN VERSE 7. SEE COMMENTS THERE. GOD HEALED ABIMELECH: HEALED IS A TRANSLATION PROBLEM IN SOME LANGUAGES, SINCE IT OFTEN MEANS TAKING CARE OF SOMEONE, PERFORMING RITUALS, OR GIVING MEDICINES. FURTHERMORE, NOTHING HAS BEEN SAID IN THE STORY ABOUT ABIMELECH BEING ILL. HOWEVER, THE LATER PART OF THIS VERSE MAY INDICATE THAT ABIMELECH HAD BEEN UNABLE TO GIVE HIS WOMEN CHILDREN. ACCORDINGLY, IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO SPEAK OF ABIMELECH’S HEALING IN CONCRETE TERMS AND SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “GOD GAVE ABIMELECH BACK HIS VIGOR,” “GOD MADE ABIMELECH STRONG AGAIN,” “GOD HEALED ABIMELECH SO HE COULD MAKE HIS WOMEN PREGNANT.” ALSO HEALED HIS WIFE AND FEMALE SLAVES: IF HEALED MUST BE REPEATED, THE EXPRESSION USED IN REGARD TO ABIMELECH MAY NOT BE SUITABLE IN SOME LANGUAGES, AND SO A TERM MUST BE USED THAT CAN APPLY TO THE INFERTILE WOMEN. FEMALE SLAVES TRANSLATES A DIFFERENT TERM THAN THAT USED IN VERSE 14, BUT THE SENSE IS THE SAME. THESE ARE THE WOMEN OF THE KING’S HAREM. IN 21:10, 12, 13 HAGAR IS REFERRED TO BY THE SAME TERM AS HERE. SO THAT THEY BORE CHILDREN: THAT IS, “SO THAT THEY COULD HAVE CHILDREN” OR “SO THAT THEY COULD BECOME PREGNANT.” VERSE 18 CONTAINS TWO REASON CLAUSES, AND IT IS NORMALLY BEST TO PLACE THE PRIMARY REASON FIRST, AS DO TEV AND OTHERS: “BECAUSE OF SARAH.…” THIS MAY BE CONSIDERED TOO VAGUE, AND TRANSLATORS MAY NEED TO GIVE MORE DETAIL: “BECAUSE SARAH, ABRAHAM’S WIFE, HAD BEEN TAKEN BY ABIMELECH.…” LORD: THIS IS THE ONLY PLACE IN CHAPTER 20 WHERE STEPHEN YAHWEH IS USED. THE SEPTUAGINT AND SAMARITAN PENTATEUCH BOTH HAVE “GOD.” SPEISER BELIEVES STEPHEN YAHWEH IS A COPYIST’S ERROR DUE TO THE PRESENCE OF STEPHEN YAHWEH IN THE FIRST LINE OF CHAPTER 21. HOWEVER, THIS MAY BE, IT IS BEST TO RETAIN THE TEXT AS IS AND TRANSLATE LORD, UNLESS, OF COURSE, THE TRANSLATOR RENDERS BOTH GOD AND LORD BY THE SAME TERM. SEE “THE NAMES OF GOD” IN “TRANSLATING GENESIS,” PAGE 13. CLOSED ALL THE WOMBS IS A COMMON HEBREW EXPRESSION MEANING “KEPT THE WOMEN FROM HAVING CHILDREN.” HOUSEOF ABIMELECH: SEE VERSE 13 AND 12:1.**

**THE BIRTH OF ISAAC (21:1–8)**

**THE STORY OF THE BIRTH OF ISAAC IS INTRODUCED BY THE STATEMENT THAT THE LORD “VISITED SARAH,” AN EVENT THAT WAS ANNOUNCED EARLIER IN 18:10–14. NEXT COMES THE REPORT OF THE NAMING AND CIRCUMCISION OF ISAAC, FOLLOWED BY THE REPORT OF ABRAHAM’S AGE AT THE TIME OF ISAAC’S BIRTH (VERSES 1–5). THIS IS FOLLOWED BY SARAH’S SPEECH (VERSES 21:6–7). THE EPISODE CLOSES WITH A REFERENCE TO THE WEANING OF ISAAC (VERSE 8).**

**SUBDIVISION HEADING**

**THE HANDBOOK HEADING FOR THE SUBDIVISION MAY BE MODIFIED TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “SARAH GIVES BIRTH TO ISAAC,” “ABRAHAM HAS A SON,” “A SON FOR ABRAHAM AND SARAH.” TOB HAS “ISAAC AND ISHMAEL” (VERSES 1–21), GECL “SARAH GETS A SON.”**

**GENESIS 21:1: THE LORD … AS HE HAD SAID: LORD TRANSLATES GREEK/HEBREW STEPHEN YAHWEH, WHICH IS USED ONLY IN VERSES 1 AND 33 IN THIS CHAPTER. AS HE HAD SAID REFERS TO WHAT THE LORD, AS ONE OF THE THREE VISITORS, HAD SAID TO ABRAHAM IN 18:10, 14. IT MAY BE CLEARER TO SAY “AS HE HAD PROMISED” (TEV) OR “JUST AS HE SAID HE WOULD DO.” IN SOME LANGUAGES THIS IS NATURALLY EXPRESSED AS “… KEPT HIS WORD THAT HE HAD SAID ABOUT SARAH HAVING A BABY.” VISITED TRANSLATES A HEBREW TERM THAT USUALLY HAS THE SENSE OF COMING AND ACTING, EITHER IN BLESSING OR IN JUDGMENT, WHEN IT IS USED WITH THE LORD AS SUBJECT. IT IS USED HERE IN A POSITIVE AND BENEFICIAL SENSE. FOR A SIMILAR CONTEXT REGARDING THE BIRTH OF SAMUEL, SEE 1 SAM 2:21. SEE ALSO EXO 4:31; RUTH 1:6; LUKE 1:68. IT IS ALSO USED IN GEN 50:24, IN WHICH JOSEPH PROMISES THAT GOD WILL VISIT HIS BROTHERS TO RESCUE THEM. FOR THE TRANSLATION OF THIS TERM, TEV SAYS “THE LORD BLESSED SARAH,” NEB/REB “THE LORD SHOWED FAVOUR.…” GECL HAS “THE LORD DID NOT FORGET SARAH.” IN SOME LANGUAGES THIS THOUGHT IS EXPRESSED FIGURATIVELY; FOR EXAMPLE, “THE LORD SHOWED SARAH HIS GOOD HEART,” “THE LORD’S LIVER WAS GOOD TO SARAH.” THE LORD DID TO SARAH AS HE HAD PROMISED: THIS CLAUSE FORMS A PARALLEL WITH THE FIRST PART OF THE VERSE. NOTE THAT TEV “… BLESSED SARAH, AS HE HAD PROMISED” PURPOSELY REDUCES THE PARALLELISM TO A SINGLE STATEMENT. OTHERS PREFER TO RETAIN THE DOUBLE STATEMENT; FOR EXAMPLE, NEB/REB HAVE “… SHOWED FAVOUR TO SARAH AS HE HAD PROMISED, AND MADE GOOD WHAT HE HAD SAID ABOUT HER.” WHAT THE LORD HAD SAID ABOUT SARAH WAS “SARAH … SHALL HAVE A SON” (18:10). ACCORDINGLY, WE MAY ALSO TRANSLATE VERSE 1 “THE LORD BLESSED SARAH. HE HAD SAID SHE WOULD HAVE A SON,” OR “… HE HAD PROMISED ABRAHAM THAT SHE WOULD HAVE A SON.” IN SOME LANGUAGES IT MAY BE MORE NATURAL TO REVERSE THE ORDER OF THE TWO CLAUSES IN THIS VERSE, SO THAT THE PROMISE IS MENTIONED BEFORE ITS FULFILLMENT. WE MAY SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “[EARLIER] THE LORD HAD SAID THAT SARAH WOULD HAVE A SON. HE KEPT HIS WORD AND BLESSED HER, AND.…”**

**GENESIS 21:2: AND SARAH CONCEIVED: IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO USE A CONNECTING EXPRESSION THAT SHOWS THE LINK BETWEEN VERSES 1 AND 2; FOR EXAMPLE, “AND SO,” “THEREFORE.” CONCEIVED MEANS SHE BECAME PREGNANT. BORE ABRAHAM A SON: THAT IS, “GAVE ABRAHAM A SON,” “HAD A SON WITH ABRAHAM.” IN HIS OLD AGE: THAT IS, “WHEN HE WAS OLD.” AT THE TIME OF WHICH GOD HAD SPOKEN TO HIM: THIS REFERS BACK TO GOD’S PROMISE OF A SON TO THE AGED ABRAHAM IN CHAPTER 18. THE TIME REFERS TO THE TIME MENTIONED IN 18:10, 14. NOTE HOW TEV HAS REPHRASED THE SECOND CLAUSE AS AN INDEPENDENT SENTENCE: “THE BOY WAS BORN AT THE TIME GOD HAD SAID HE WOULD BE BORN.” OTHER TRANSLATIONS THAT FOLLOW THIS APPROACH SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “SARAH GAVE BIRTH AT THE [EXACT] TIME GOD HAD INDICATED EARLIER.”**

**GENESIS 21:3: CALLED THE NAME OF HIS SON MAY ALSO BE EXPRESSED “NAMED HIS SON,” “CALLED HIS SON,” “GAVE HIS SON THE NAME.” IT WAS THE CUSTOM FOR THE FATHER TO GIVE THE NAME TO A CHILD, BUT THERE WERE EXCEPTIONS TO THIS (SEE 19:37, 38). ABRAHAM HAD NAMED HAGAR’S SON IN 16:15. WHO WAS BORN TO HIM IS REPEATED IN THE WORDS WHOM SARAH BORE HIM. MOST TRANSLATIONS REDUCE THIS REPETITIVE STATEMENT IN ONE WAY OR ANOTHER. NEB/REB SAY “THE SON WHOM SARAH BORE TO HIM.” BECAUSE IT IS STATED IN VERSE 2 THAT SARAH BORE ABRAHAM A SON, TEV DOES NOT REPEAT THIS INFORMATION HERE. ISAAC: SEE DISCUSSION AT 17:19. IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT ISAAC’S NAME IN CHAPTERS 17 AND 18 IS ASSOCIATED WITH THE LAUGHTER OF DISBELIEF. IN VERSE 6 OF THIS CHAPTER THE LAUGHTER IS RELATED TO JOY OVER THE BIRTH OF A CHILD IN THE OLD COUPLE’S DECLINING YEARS. THE WHOLE VERSE MAY BE RENDERED, FOR EXAMPLE, “ABRAHAM NAMED THE SON SARAH GAVE HIM ISAAC” OR “ISAAC IS THE NAME ABRAHAM CALLED HIS SON.” IN A NUMBER OF LANGUAGES THIS VERSE IS MADE A CONTINUATION OF VERSE 2 AND MAY BE SHORTENED BY SIMPLY SAYING “… AND ABRAHAM CALLED THE BABY’S NAME ISAAC.”**

**GENESIS 21:4: ABRAHAM CIRCUMCISED HIS SON ISAAC WHEN HE WAS EIGHT DAYS OLD: ABRAHAM FOLLOWS THE INSTRUCTIONS GIVEN TO HIM BY GOD IN 17:11–14. FOR DISCUSSION OF CIRCUMCISED SEE 17:10. FOR EIGHT DAYS OLD SEE 17:12. AS GOD HAD COMMANDED HIM: FOR A SIMILAR EXPRESSION SEE 17:23. LOOKING BACK TO CHAPTER 17 WE SEE THAT SOME TRANSLATIONS EXPRESS THIS AS “ABRAHAM KEPT THE PROMISE [COVENANT] HE HAD MADE WITH GOD, AND CIRCUMCISED ISAAC.”**

**GENESIS 21:5: ABRAHAM WAS A HUNDRED YEARS OLD: THE STANDARD BIRTH REPORT IN GENESIS STATES THE AGE OF THE FATHER AT THE TIME OF THE BIRTH OF THE SON. SEE THE INTRODUCTION TO CHAPTER 5. IN SOME TRANSLATIONS THIS INFORMATION ABOUT ABRAHAM’S AGE IS PLACED AT THE BEGINNING OF VERSE “WHEN ABRAHAM WAS A HUNDRED YEARS OLD, HIS WIFE SARAH BECAME PREGNANT AND BORE HIM A SON.” ALTERNATIVELY VERSE 5 MAY BE PLACED BEFORE VERSE 2 AND NOT REPEATED. WHEN HIS SON ISAAC WAS BORN TO HIM: THAT IS, “WHEN ISAAC WAS BORN” OR “WHEN ABRAHAM’S SON ISAAC WAS BORN.” SOME LANGUAGES PLACE THE TIME CLAUSE FIRST.**

**GENESIS 21:6: VERSES 21:6–7 GIVE THE COMMENTS MADE BY SARAH CONCERNING THE BIRTH OF ISAAC. THESE VERSES FIT MORE NATURALLY FOLLOWING VERSE 3. HOWEVER, THE SENSE IS NOT SERIOUSLY DISTURBED IN THE TEXT AS WE HAVE IT, AND TRANSLATIONS IN ENGLISH DO NOT SHIFT THESE VERSES TO FOLLOW VERSE 3. GOD HAS MADE LAUGHTER FOR ME: IN THE DISCUSSION OF 17:19, IT WAS POINTED OUT THAT ISAAC’S NAME MEANS “HE LAUGHS,” AND THIS WAS ASSOCIATED WITH VERSE 17, IN WHICH ABRAHAM LAUGHED IN DISBELIEF AT THE THOUGHT OF HAVING A CHILD AT HIS ADVANCED AGE. THE SAME ASSOCIATION IS MADE WITH SARAH IN 18:12. IN 17:17 ATTENTION WAS LIKEWISE CALLED TO THE FACT THAT DIFFERENT LANGUAGES USE DIFFERENT TERMS TO EXPRESS THE VARIOUS KINDS OF LAUGHTER THAT EXPRESS DIFFERENT EMOTIONS. IT WAS SUGGESTED THAT A FOOTNOTE MAY BE NECESSARY TO EXPLAIN THAT ISAAC’S NAME REFERS TO A LAUGHTER OF EMBARRASSED DISBELIEF; THAT IS, THE NAME IS “HE LAUGHS,” BECAUSE THE BIRTH OF A SON SEEMS RIDICULOUS AT ABRAHAM’S AGE. WHEN WE COME TO THIS PASSAGE, HOWEVER, THE SAME HEBREW WORD AS WAS USED IN 17:17, 19; 18:12 HAS THE SENSE OF LAUGHTER FROM SURPRISED ENJOYMENT. IN SOME LANGUAGES THIS WILL REQUIRE EITHER A DIFFERENT VERB OR SOME ADDITIONAL EXPRESSION, AND PERHAPS A FOOTNOTE REFERRING THE READER BACK TO THE NOTE AT 17:19. TEV HAS TRANSLATED LAUGHTER IN THIS VERSE AS “JOY AND LAUGHTER” TO SHOW THAT LAUGHTER HERE HAS A WIDER RANGE OF MEANING THAN IN 17:17, 19. FRCL SAYS “GOD HAS MADE ME LAUGH WITH JOY.” IN ONE LANGUAGE THIS IS EXPRESSED AS “GOD HAS MADE ME LAUGH WITH GOOD FEELING VERY MUCH.” EVERYONE WHO HEARS WILL LAUGH OVER ME: HEARS MEANS “HEARS ABOUT SARAH GIVING BIRTH WHEN SHE IS OLD,” AND IN SOME LANGUAGES SOMETHING SIMILAR WILL BE REQUIRED TO GIVE ADEQUATE SENSE; FOR EXAMPLE, “EVERYONE WHO HEARS I HAVE GIVEN BIRTH WILL.…” LAUGH OVER ME IS AWKWARD ENGLISH. NOTE TEV AND NEB/REB “LAUGH WITH ME,” THAT IS, “SHARE MY LAUGHTER,” “REJOICE WITH ME,” “BE HAPPY BECAUSE I AM HAPPY.” SOME LANGUAGES SAY “COME AND HELP ME LAUGH.”**

**GENESIS 21:7: WHO WOULD HAVE SAID TO ABRAHAM: THIS OPENS WHAT MAY BE A RHETORICAL QUESTION OR AN EXCLAMATION. IT CARRIES THE SENSE THAT WHAT HAS HAPPENED IS VERY SURPRISING, AND EXPRESSES IN THIS CONTEXT AN EMOTION OF JOY. IT MAY BE RENDERED IN VARIOUS WAYS, INCLUDING, FOR EXAMPLE, A NEGATIVE STATEMENT, “NOBODY WOULD HAVE SAID TO ABRAHAM …,” OR A RHETORICAL QUESTION WITH A REPLY, “WOULD ANYONE HAVE SAID TO ABRAHAM …? OF COURSE NOT.” THAT SARAH WOULD SUCKLE CHILDREN: THIS IS PART OF THE RHETORICAL QUESTION OR EXCLAMATION. IN SOME LANGUAGES THIS FORM MUST BE SHIFTED FROM THE THIRD PERSON TO THE FIRST PERSON: “THAT I WOULD SUCKLE.…” SUCKLE MEANS TO GIVE THE BREAST TO, TO NURSE OR BREAST-FEED. CHILDREN TRANSLATES A HEBREW PLURAL, BUT IN SOME LANGUAGES, THIS WILL BE TRANSLATED MORE NATURALLY AS A SINGULAR. IN SOME LANGUAGES IT IS NECESSARY TO INCLUDE WHAT IS ASSUMED IN THE ORIGINAL TEXT, THAT SARAH WOULD FIRST GIVE BIRTH TO A CHILD AND THEN BREAST-FEED IT; FOR EXAMPLE, “… THAT YOUR WIFE SARAH WILL BEAR A CHILD AND GIVE IT HER MILK.” AND SINCE SUCKLE CHILDREN IS REALLY AN INDIRECT WAY OF SAYING THAT SARAH WILL HAVE A BABY, SOME TRANSLATIONS EXPRESS THIS DIRECTLY; FOR EXAMPLE, “EVERYONE RECKONED THAT I COULD NEVER HAVE A BABY FOR ABRAHAM.” YET I HAVE BORN HIM A SON IN HIS OLD AGE: YET TRANSLATES THE HEBREW KI, WHICH HERE SIGNALS SOMETHING THAT IS UNEXPECTED, SURPRISING, IN VIEW OF WHAT HAS JUST BEEN SAID. FOR THE WORDING OF THIS SENTENCE, REFER TO VERSE 2. THE ELEMENT OF SURPRISE MAY BE BROUGHT OUT IN A NUMBER OF WAYS; EXAMPLES FROM TWO TRANSLATIONS ARE “BEFORE, NOBODY COULD TELL ABRAHAM THAT.… BUT LOOK! HE IS VERY OLD AND I HAVE …,” AND “… WELL IT DOESN’T MATTER THAT HE IS VERY OLD; I HAVE STILL HAD HIS SON.”**

**GENESIS 21:8: VERSE 8 MAY BE VIEWED AS CONCLUDING THE STORY OF THE BIRTH OF ISAAC AND ALSO AS A TRANSITION TO THE SENDING AWAY OF HAGAR AND HER SON. VERSE 9 CARRIES THE TRANSITION ANOTHER STEP FORWARD. TRANSLATIONS DIFFER IN THE WAY THEY RELATE VERSE 8 TO ITS CONTEXT. TEV PLACES IT IN A SEPARATE PARAGRAPH AND HAS A HEADING BEFORE VERSE 9. RSV BEGINS A NEW PARAGRAPH WITH VERSE 8 AND CONTINUES THAT PARAGRAPH TO VERSE 15. SOME TRANSLATIONS LIKE NEB MAKE NO PARAGRAPH BREAK AT VERSE 8 OR 9. (NOTE, HOWEVER, THAT REB OPENS VERSE 9 WITH A NEW PARAGRAPH.) WE MAY CONSIDER VERSE 8 AS CLOSING THE STORY OF ISAAC’S BIRTH (VERSES 1–7). IN THIS CASE TEV MAY BE FOLLOWED. IT IS ALSO POSSIBLE TO TAKE VERSE 8 AS OPENING THE EPISODE OF HAGAR AND ISHMAEL (VERSES 21:9–21). IN THIS CASE IT WILL BE BEST TO PLACE THE HEADING BEFORE VERSE 8. THIS IS DONE IN FRCL, SPCL, AND GECL. THE HANDBOOK FOLLOWS THE MODEL OF TEV. AND THE CHILD GREW AND WAS WEANED: CHILD TRANSLATES A HEBREW NOUN THAT GENERALLY REFERS TO A SMALL CHILD OR INFANT. THE SAME TERM WILL BE USED IN REFERENCE TO ISHMAEL IN VERSES 14–16. WEANED REFERS TO THE PROCESS OF ACCUSTOMING A CHILD TO EAT AND DRINK WITHOUT SUCKING FROM THE MOTHER’S BREAST. ACCORDING TO THE STORY IN 2 MACCABEES 7:27, THIS WAS AT THE AGE OF THREE. MOST LANGUAGES HAVE TERMS MEANING TO WEAN, BUT IF A DESCRIPTIVE PHRASE IS NECESSARY, IT MAY BE POSSIBLE TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “AND CEASED DRINKING HIS MOTHER’S MILK,” “WAS TAKEN OFF THE MOTHER’S BREAST,” “STOPPED SUCKING THE BREAST.” ABRAHAM MADE A GREAT FEAST: FEAST TRANSLATES A TERM RELATED TO THE WORD MEANING “TO DRINK,” REFLECTING THE FACT THAT FEASTS WERE OCCASIONS FOR DRINKING WINE. HOWEVER, IN MANY CULTURES THE ESSENCE OF FEASTING IS THAT A QUANTITY AND RANGE OF FOOD IS AVAILABLE, FAR BEYOND WHAT IS NORMALLY EATEN. IN SUCH CASES GREAT FEAST MAY BE EXPRESSED AS “A BIG PARTY FOR MANY PEOPLE WITH ALL KINDS OF FOOD.” THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE FEAST IN THIS STORY IS AS A CELEBRATION OF ISAAC REACHING HIS FIRST STAGE IN BECOMING A YOUNG MAN. TRANSLATORS SHOULD MAKE IT POSSIBLE FOR THEIR READERS TO RECOGNIZE THIS, WHETHER OR NOT THE TIME OF WEANING IS AN OCCASION THAT IS CELEBRATED IN THEIR OWN CULTURE; FOR EXAMPLE, “ON THE DAY WHEN ISAAC LEFT THE BREAST, ABRAHAM MADE A BIG FEAST TO MARK [CELEBRATE] THE OCCASION.” ON THE DAY THAT ISAAC WAS WEANED MAY SOMETIMES BE RENDERED “WHEN ISAAC WAS OLD ENOUGH TO GET ALONG WITHOUT HIS MOTHER’S BREAST,” “WHEN ISAAC NO LONGER DRANK FROM HIS MOTHER’S BREAST,” OR “WHEN THEY CUT HIM OFF FROM HIS MOTHER’S MILK.” IN MANY LANGUAGES THERE IS A REGULAR EXPRESSION FOR THE TIME OF WEANING, SUCH AS “LET GO THE BREAST” OR “LEAVE THE BREAST.”**

**ABRAHAM SENDS HAGAR AND ISHMAEL AWAY (21:9–21)**

**IN THIS SECTION SARAH BECOMES JEALOUS OF HER SON’S RIGHTS AND SO INSTRUCTS ABRAHAM TO SEND HAGAR AND ISHMAEL AWAY TO PREVENT ISHMAEL FROM SHARING ISAAC’S INHERITANCE (VERSES 21:9–10). ABRAHAM IS TOLD BY GOD TO CARRY OUT SARAH’S INSTRUCTIONS, AND SO HAGAR AND HER SON ARE SENT WAY INTO THE DESERT OF BEERSHEBA (VERSES 11–14). WHILE WANDERING IN THE DESERT WITHOUT WATER, HAGAR EXPECTS HER SON TO DIE OF THIRST, BUT GOD HEARS THE CRYING CHILD AND DIRECTS HIS MOTHER TO A WELL (VERSES 15–19). THIS EPISODE CONCLUDES WITH ISHMAEL GROWING UP IN THE DESERT AND MARRYING AN EGYPTIAN WOMAN (VERSES 20–21).**

**SUBDIVISION HEADING**

**THE HANDBOOK HEADING MAY BE REWORDED TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “SARAH MAKES ABRAHAM GET RID OF HAGAR AND ISHMAEL,” “HAGAR AND ISHMAEL ARE SENT AWAY.” NJB HAS “THE DISMISSAL OF HAGAR AND ISHMAEL,” GECL “ABRAHAM HAS TO SEPARATE FROM ISHMAEL,” SPCL “HAGAR AND ISHMAEL ARE THROWN OUT OF ABRAHAM’S HOUSE.”**

**GENESIS 21:9: BUT SARAH SAW THE SON OF HAGAR THE EGYPTIAN: BUT IS NOT AN ADEQUATE DISCOURSE OPENER FOR ENGLISH AND MANY OTHER LANGUAGES. ACCORDINGLY, IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO BEGIN THIS EPISODE WITH SOMETHING LIKE “ONE DAY WHEN,” “IT HAPPENED LATER THAT,” “AFTER THE FEAST WAS OVER.” IF VERSE 8 IS TAKEN AS OPENING THIS EPISODE, THE BEST TRANSITION HERE MAY BE “DURING THE COURSE OF THE FEAST”; OR IT MAY BE QUITE SATISFACTORY TO FOLLOW RSV AS IT STANDS. SAW IS USED HERE IN THE SENSE OF “NOTICE,” “OBSERVE.” THE NARRATOR AVOIDS ISHMAEL’S NAME AND FOCUSES ON ISHMAEL’S MOTHER AND HER ORIGIN. TEV, HOWEVER, NAMES THE SON. PLAYING WITH HER SON ISAAC: A NOTE IN RSV SAYS THAT “WITH HER SON ISAAC” IS LACKING IN THE HEBREW TEXT BUT IS FOUND IN THE GREEK SEPTUAGINT AND THE VULGATE TRANSLATIONS. THE VERB TRANSLATED PLAYING WAS RENDERED BY THE SEPTUAGINT TRANSLATORS BY A VERB MEANING “MOCKING,” AND THIS HAS BEEN FOLLOWED BY SOME RECENT VERSIONS. HOWEVER, THE HEBREW WORD IS NOT FOLLOWED BY A PREPOSITION, AS IT IS IN OTHER CASES WHERE THE SENSE IS CLEARLY “MOCKING,” AND SO THE MEANING IS BETTER TAKEN AS “PLAYING,” WHICH IS SUPPORTED BY HOTTP. THE HEBREW VERB EXPRESSES THE INTENSIVE FORM OF THE ROOT FROM WHICH ISAAC’S NAME IS DERIVED. THIS IS ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF A PLAY ON THE NAME ISAAC. IT IS HIGHLY UNLIKELY THAT THIS PLAY ON WORDS CAN BE REPRODUCED IN TRANSLATION. IT IS THE SIGHT OF YOUNG ISHMAEL PLAYING AS AN EQUAL WITH ISAAC THAT CAUSES SARAH TO BECOME JEALOUS AND ANGRY. IN SOME LANGUAGES TRANSLATIONS OF THIS VERSE SIMPLY SAY “SARAH SAW THAT OTHER SON OF ABRAHAM, THE SON OF HAGAR THE EGYPTIAN WOMAN, PLAYING.” BUT IN OTHER LANGUAGES PLAYING IS AN ACTIVITY THAT TWO OR MORE CHILDREN DO TOGETHER; A COMMON RENDERING IS “SARAH SAW THAT OTHER SON OF ABRAHAM … PLAYING WITH HER SON ISAAC.” ONE TRANSLATION EXPRESSES THIS AS “ONE DAY SARAH SAW HER SON ISAAC AND ISHMAEL THE SON OF … HAGAR PLAYING TOGETHER.” TRANSLATORS MAY FIND THAT THE WHOLE OF VERSE 9 MAY BE TRANSLATED AS A TIME CLAUSE AND VERSE 10 AS THE MAIN CLAUSE. FOR EXAMPLE, SPEISER TRANSLATES “WHEN SARAH NOTICED THAT THE SON WHOM HAGAR THE EGYPTIAN, … SHE TURNED ON ABRAHAM, ‘CAST OUT.…’”**

**GENESIS 21:10: SO, SHE SAID TO ABRAHAM: SHE REFERS TO SARAH. SO INTRODUCES THE CONSEQUENCE OF VERSE 9 IN RSV; BUT IT ALSO SUGGESTS TO THE READER SOMETHING OF THE EMOTION THAT LED SARAH TO MAKE THIS DEMAND OF ABRAHAM. IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO SHOW THE EMOTION IN SARAH’S WORDS BY SAYING SOMETHING LIKE “… SARAH WAS JEALOUS, AND SHE SAID.…” CAST OUT TRANSLATES A VERB MEANING “DRIVE OUT,” “EXPEL,” “GET RID OF,” “SEND AWAY.” SLAVE WOMAN IS THE SAME WORD AS USED IN THE PLURAL IN 20:17. SEE THERE FOR COMMENTS. SARAH’S DEMAND IS THAT ABRAHAM SEND AWAY OR EXPEL HAGAR, WHOM SHE CALLS THIS SLAVE WOMAN, ALONG WITH HER SON. FOR THE SON OF THIS SLAVE WOMAN SHALL NOT BE HEIR WITH MY SON ISAAC: BY AVOIDING THE NAMES OF HAGAR AND ISHMAEL—A RHETORICAL DEVICE OF THE NARRATOR TO SHOW DISDAIN—SARAH EXPRESSES THE REASON FOR HER DEMAND. BE HEIR, THE SAME WORD AS USED IN 15:3–4, TRANSLATES THE VERB “TO INHERIT.” FOR DISCUSSION OF HEIR AND “INHERIT” SEE 15:2. THIS CLAUSE IS TRANSLATED BY TEV AS A NEGATIVE “MUST” CLAUSE: “THE SON OF THIS WOMAN MUST NOT GET ANY PART.…” THE SENSE IS “THE SON OF THIS SLAVE WOMAN MUST NOT INHERIT YOUR WEALTH [WHEN YOU DIE]. ONLY MY SON ISAAC MUST INHERIT IT.” OTHER EXPRESSIONS OF THIS SENSE ARE “IT IS NOT RIGHT AT ALL FOR THE SON OF … TO TAKE PART OF WHAT BELONGS TO YOU; EVERYTHING BELONGS TO MY SON” AND “HER SON CAN’T TAKE OVER ANYTHING OF YOURS [WHEN YOU DIE]; ISAAC MY SON HAS GOT TO TAKE OVER EVERYTHING.” TRANSLATORS MAY WISH TO NOTE THE NEW TESTAMENT REFERENCE TO THIS PASSAGE IN GAL 4:29–30.**

**GENESIS 21:11: AND THE THING WAS VERY DISPLEASING TO ABRAHAM: THE THING, MEANING MATTER OR AFFAIR, REFERS TO SARAH’S PLEA FOR ABRAHAM TO SEND HAGAR AND ISHMAEL AWAY. IT MUST OFTEN BE TRANSLATED WITH MORE CONTENT; FOR EXAMPLE, “THE THOUGHT OF SENDING THEM AWAY PAINED ABRAHAM,” “WHAT SARAH SAID HURT ABRAHAM VERY MUCH.” WAS VERY DISPLEASING TO ABRAHAM IS LITERALLY “DISPLEASING IN ABRAHAM’S EYES.” THE VERB MEANS TO CAUSE EMOTIONAL PAIN OR HURT; AS SOME TRANSLATIONS SAY, “MADE ABRAHAM FEEL VERY BAD [SAD].” ON ACCOUNT OF HIS SON MEANS “BECAUSE OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ABRAHAM AND HIS SON” OR “BECAUSE ABRAHAM CARED VERY MUCH FOR HIS SON.” TEV SAYS “BECAUSE ISHMAEL WAS ALSO HIS SON.”**

**GENESIS 21:12: BUT GOD SAID TO ABRAHAM: BUT INTRODUCES THE CONTRAST BETWEEN WHAT ABRAHAM FEELS AND GOD’S INSTRUCTIONS CONCERNING ISHMAEL. BE NOT DISPLEASED BECAUSE OF THE LAD: THAT IS, “DON’T BE UPSET ABOUT THE BOY [ISHMAEL].” DISPLEASED TRANSLATES THE SAME VERB AND IDIOM AS USED IN VERSE 11. LAD TRANSLATES A HEBREW WORD THAT MAY REFER TO A BOY OF ANY AGE RIGHT UP TO THE TIME OF MARRIAGE AND BEYOND. IN GENESIS 22:5 IT IS ALSO USED OF ISAAC, WHO CARRIES THE WOOD FOR THE SACRIFICE; OF JOSEPH (AGED 17) IN 37:2; OF BENJAMIN IN 43:8; 44:22–23. IN GEN 14:24 ABRAHAM USES THE TERM TO REFER TO THE TRAINED MEN WHO FOUGHT WITH HIM TO RECAPTURE LOT AND HIS PEOPLE. ALTHOUGH THE WORD IS USED TO REFER TO THE BABY MOSES IN EXO 2:6, IT IS ALSO APPLIED BY DAVID TO THE MATURE ABSALOM IN 2 SAM 14:21. IT IS APPARENT THAT THE WORD IS APPLIED TO MALES OF A WIDE RANGE OF AGES, AND THE MEANING OF EACH OCCURRENCE MUST BE DETERMINED BY ITS CONTEXT. IN SOME LANGUAGES TRANSLATORS MAY BE FORCED TO CHOOSE A TERM HERE THAT REFERS EITHER TO A YOUNG CHILD OR TO A TEENAGE YOUTH; AND THE CHOICE WILL HAVE TO BE MADE IN THE LIGHT OF HOW OLD ISHMAEL IS JUDGED TO BE AT THE TIME OF THIS STORY. SEE COMMENTS ON THE TRANSLATION OF THE TERM “CHILD” IN VERSE 14. AND BECAUSE OF YOUR SLAVE WOMAN: THE TWO EXPRESSIONS STARTING BECAUSE OF … MAY OFTEN BE COMBINED TO SAY “DON’T BE UPSET ABOUT THE BOY AND YOUR SLAVE WOMAN.” SEE TEV “DON’T BE WORRIED ABOUT THE BOY AND YOUR SLAVE HAGAR.” WHATEVER SARAH SAYS TO YOU, DO AS SHE TELLS YOU IS LITERALLY “ALL THAT SARAH SAYS TO YOU, LISTEN TO HER VOICE.” WE MAY ALSO TRANSLATE “DO WHATEVER SARAH TELLS YOU” (TEV). FOR THROUGH ISAAC SHALL YOUR DESCENDANTS BE NAMED IS LITERALLY “BECAUSE THROUGH ISAAC SHALL SEED BE CALLED TO YOU.” THE SENSE OF THIS STATEMENT IS THAT ABRAHAM’S DESCENDANTS WILL BE IDENTIFIED THROUGH ISAAC’S LINE OR, AS NEB SAYS, “BECAUSE YOU SHALL HAVE DESCENDANTS THROUGH ISAAC.” COMPARE WITH ROM 9:7; HEB 11:18. ONE TRANSLATION THAT MAKES THIS COMPLETELY CLEAR SAYS “BECAUSE MY PROMISE TO YOU, THAT YOU WILL HAVE MANY DESCENDANTS, THAT WILL COME TRUE THROUGH ISAAC.”**

**GENESIS 21:13: AND I WILL MAKE A NATION OF THE SON OF THE SLAVE WOMAN ALSO: TO MAKE A NATION REQUIRES A PROCESS IN TIME, AND IN MANY LANGUAGES SOME ADJUSTMENTS ARE NECESSARY TO TRANSLATE THIS THOUGHT CLEARLY. FOR EXAMPLE, “I WILL MAKE THE DESCENDANTS OF THE SLAVE WOMAN’S SON TO BECOME A NATION.” FOR A SIMILAR KIND OF TRANSLATION ADJUSTMENT, SEE THE DISCUSSION OF 12:2. IN 17:20 AND 18:18 THE HEBREW TEXT SAYS “A GREAT NATION,” AND MANY TRANSLATIONS FOLLOW THE ANCIENT VERSIONS AND SUPPLY THE WORD “GREAT” HERE. HOWEVER, THAT WORD IS LACKING IN THE HEBREW TEXT OF THIS VERSE AND NEED NOT BE SUPPLIED (SO HOTTP). BECAUSE HE IS YOUR OFFSPRING IS LITERALLY “BECAUSE HE IS YOUR SEED.” THIS CLAUSE GIVES THE REASON FOR MAKING ISHMAEL’S DESCENDANTS A NATION; THAT IS, “BECAUSE HE [ISHMAEL] IS YOUR SON.”**

**GENESIS 21:14: SO, ABRAHAM ROSE EARLY IN THE MORNING: EARLY IN THE MORNING SUGGESTS THAT THIS ACTION TAKES PLACE THE MORNING FOLLOWING THE EVENTS AND SPEECHES IN VERSES 9–13, WHICH TEV AND MANY OTHER VERSIONS MAKE CLEAR WITH “NEXT MORNING.” SO, ABRAHAM OBEYS GOD’S INSTRUCTIONS QUICKLY. ROSE MAY BE TAKEN TO MEAN “HE GOT UP FROM SLEEPING” OR THAT HE INITIATED THE ACTION THAT IS NAMED, “GAVE HAGAR SOME FOOD.” BREAD IS UNDERSTOOD BY TEV, NEB, REB, NIV, MFT TO REFER TO FOOD GENERALLY, AS IN 3:19. SKIN OF WATER REFERS TO A DRIED ANIMAL HIDE THAT HAS BEEN PREPARED TO HOLD WATER. THIS MAY SOMETIMES BE REFERRED TO AS “A HIDE FOR HOLDING WATER,” “A SKIN TO CARRY WATER IN,” “A LEATHER WATER BAG.” AND GAVE IT TO HAGAR: THE FIRST CLAUSE (LITERALLY “AND GAVE TO HAGAR”) REFERS TO THE FOOD AND THE WATER SKIN. PUTTING IT ON HER SHOULDER, ALONG WITH THE CHILD: THIS IS NOT ENTIRELY CLEAR. THE TEXT SAYS LITERALLY “HE PUTTING ON HER SHOULDER AND THE CHILD.” DID ABRAHAM PUT THE FOOD AND WATER SKIN ON HER SHOULDER (THE WORD MAY ALSO REFER TO THE BACK) AND ALSO THE CHILD? CHILD TRANSLATES THE SAME WORD AS IN VERSE 8, WHERE IT REFERRED TO LITTLE ISAAC WHO IS PROBABLY ABOUT THREE YEARS OLD. THE USE OF THE SAME WORD IN VERSES 14–16 REFERRING TO ISHMAEL SEEMS TO IDENTIFY ISHMAEL ALSO AS A SMALL CHILD WHO COULD BE CARRIED ON THE BACK OF HIS MOTHER. THE SEPTUAGINT AND SYRIAC TRANSLATED “AND HE PLACED THE CHILD ON HER SHOULDER.” IN THESE ANCIENT VERSIONS THE SENSE IS CLEAR. HOWEVER, IN THE LIGHT OF CHAPTER 17, WE MUST ASK HOW OLD ISHMAEL WAS WHEN HE AND HAGAR WERE SENT AWAY. IN 17:25 ISHMAEL WAS THIRTEEN WHEN HE WAS CIRCUMCISED. IF THE WEANING OF ISAAC TOOK PLACE WHEN HE WAS APPROXIMATELY THREE, ISHMAEL WAS THEN BETWEEN SIXTEEN AND SEVENTEEN YEARS OLD AND FAR TOO BIG TO RIDE ON HIS MOTHER’S BACK. TWO APPROACHES ARE TAKEN BY TRANSLATORS: THE FIRST IS TO ASSUME THAT THIS STORY HAS NO TIME RELATIONSHIP TO CHAPTER 17, AND THAT THE HEBREW TEXT HERE PICTURES ISHMAEL AS A SMALL CHILD. IN SOME CASES, THIS IS DONE BY FOLLOWING THE SEPTUAGINT. FOR EXAMPLE, TEV SAYS “HE PUT THE CHILD ON HER BACK AND SENT HER AWAY,” AND NEB/REB “HE SET THE CHILD ON HER SHOULDER.” THIS IS EQUIVALENT TO THE RECOMMENDATION OF HOTTP, WHICH SAYS “… IT IS NOT IMPOSSIBLE THAT THE M[ASORETIC] T[EXT] CONSTITUTES AN EMENDED TEXT-FORM. THEREFORE, TRANSLATORS MAY CHOOSE THE SIMPLIFIED FORM ‘(… AND HE GAVE IT [THE FOOD AND WATER] TO HAGAR,) AND PUT THE CHILD ON HER SHOULDER.’” THE SECOND CHOICE IS TO INTERPRET THE HEBREW TO MEAN THAT ONLY THE FOOD AND WATER WERE PLACED ON HAGAR’S [SHOULDER] BACK. ACCORDINGLY, SPEISER TRANSLATES “HE PLACED THEM ON HER BACK AND SENT HER AWAY WITH THE CHILD.” SPEISER NOTES THAT THE HEBREW TEXT IS OBSCURE, BUT HE PREFERS TO GIVE IT THIS QUESTIONABLE SENSE RATHER THAN TO RESORT TO CHANGING THE TEXT. AS HE SAYS, “THE VARIOUS EMENDATIONS THAT HAVE BEEN PROPOSED MERELY SUBSTITUTE ONE SET OF PROBLEMS FOR ANOTHER. AN ACCEPTABLE SOLUTION HAS YET TO BE DISCOVERED.” ANOTHER TRANSLATION THAT FOLLOWS THE SECOND ALTERNATIVE IS NIV, WHICH TRANSLATES “ABRAHAM TOOK SOME FOOD AND A SKIN OF WATER AND GAVE THEM TO HAGAR. HE SET THEM ON HER SHOULDERS AND THEN SENT HER OFF WITH THE BOY.” IN THE LIGHT OF THE PROBLEMS RELATED TO THIS OBSCURE TEXT, IT DOES NOT SEEM ADVISABLE TO FAVOR ONE SOLUTION ABOVE THE OTHER. HOWEVER, IF THE TRANSLATOR SELECTS THE FIRST OPTION, IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO EXPLAIN HOW ISHMAEL, WHO WAS THIRTEEN YEARS OLD IN 17:25, IS NOW BEING CARRIED BY HIS MOTHER. IT IS FAR MORE NATURAL IN TERMS OF THE STORY DEVELOPMENT TO FOLLOW THE SECOND CHOICE, AND MANY TRANSLATORS WILL WISH TO DO THIS. AND SHE DEPARTED: THAT IS, “LEFT ABRAHAM’S CAMP.” WANDERED IN THE WILDERNESS OF BEERSHEBA: WANDERED MEANS SHE DRIFTED ABOUT WITHOUT A FIXED DESTINATION. SEE DISCUSSION OF 20:13. FOR WILDERNESS SEE 14:6. BEERSHEBA IS THE NAME OF A TOWN SOUTHEAST OF GAZA IN THE NEGEV DESERT. THE PLAIN AROUND BEERSHEBA WAS SUITABLE FOR WINTER PASTURAGE AND WAS WHERE SOME OF THE PATRIARCHS MADE THEIR CAMPS.**

**GENESIS 21:15: THERE IS NO INDICATION OF HOW LONG HAGAR AND HER SON WANDERED ABOUT IN THE DESERT. IT MAY BE IMPORTANT FOR DISCOURSE CONSIDERATIONS TO MAKE CLEAR THAT THEY HAD BEEN THERE LONG ENOUGH TO USE UP THEIR WATER; FOR EXAMPLE, “AFTER SOME TIME,” “SOME TIME LATER.” SOME TRANSLATIONS REPEAT THE VERB OF THE PREVIOUS VERSE: “THEY WANDERED AROUND UNTIL.…” WATER IN THE SKIN WAS GONE MAY NEED TO BE EXPRESSED AS “WHEN THEY HAD DRUNK ALL THE WATER IN THE SKIN,” “WHEN THERE WAS NO MORE WATER LEFT IN THE SKIN,” “WHEN THE WATER SKIN HAD BECOME EMPTY,” OR AS SOME TRANSLATIONS SAY, “WHEN THEIR WATER WAS FINISHED.” SHE CAST THE CHILD UNDER ONE OF THE BUSHES: CAST TRANSLATES A FORM OF THE VERB MEANING “TO THROW,” BUT WITH A HUMAN OBJECT THE SENSE IS “ABANDON,” “LEAVE,” “PUT.” CHILD TRANSLATES THE SAME WORD USED IN VERSE 8. ACCORDING TO DRIVER THE VERB TRANSLATED CAST “CLEARLY INDICATES THAT ISHMAEL WAS BEING CARRIED BY HIS MOTHER.” SPEISER, HOWEVER, COMMENTS THAT THE MEANING OF THE VERB IS “NOT NECESSARILY ‘CAST AWAY’ ” AND TRANSLATES “LEFT THE CHILD.” BUSHES TRANSLATES A WORD ALSO USED IN JOB 30:4. ALTHOUGH SOME INTERPRETERS ATTEMPT TO MAKE PRECISE WHAT THE BUSH OR SHRUB MAY HAVE BEEN, IT IS PROBABLY BEST NOT TO TRY TO NAME IT. IT IS IMPORTANT THAT THE BUSH OR SMALL TREE BE LARGE ENOUGH TO PROVIDE SHADE FOR THE CHILD. IT MAY BE BETTER IN MANY CASES TO TRANSLATE “UNDER A SMALL TREE” OR “IN THE SHADE OF A BUSH.”**

**GENESIS 21:16: THEN SHE WENT, AND SAT DOWN OVER AGAINST HIM A GOOD WAY OFF: ACCORDING TO THE END OF THE VERSE, HAGAR WANTED TO BE FAR ENOUGH AWAY FROM HER CHILD NOT TO WATCH HIM DIE. THE NARRATOR HAS THEREFORE EMPHASIZED THE DISTANCE WITH WENT … OVER AGAINST [OPPOSITE] … A GOOD WAY OFF. ALL OF THIS MAY BE MORE CLEARLY TRANSLATED AS “WENT SOME DISTANCE AWAY AND SAT DOWN.” ABOUT THE DISTANCE OF A BOWSHOT: THIS EXPRESSION WILL BE QUITE GRAPHIC TO PEOPLE WHO ARE ACCUSTOMED TO USING THE BOW AND ARROW, BUT WILL HAVE LITTLE OR NO MEANING FOR OTHERS. SOME SCHOLARS INTERPRET THE WORD FOR BOWSHOT AS BEING A DUAL FORM, AND SO NEB HAS “ABOUT TWO BOWSHOTS AWAY.” NOTE, HOWEVER, THAT REB HAS “ABOUT A BOWSHOT DISTANT.” TRANSLATORS APPEAR TO HAVE AT LEAST THREE CHOICES IN TRANSLATING THIS EXPRESSION: TO KEEP THE HEBREW EXPRESSION, TO SUBSTITUTE A KNOWN EXPRESSION INVOLVING SOME OTHER WEAPON, OR TO USE A STANDARD MEASUREMENT OF DISTANCE. TEV DOES THE LAST: “ABOUT A HUNDRED YARDS [METERS] AWAY.” FOR SHE SAID: AS HAGAR IS NOT SPEAKING TO SOMEONE, SHE IS, AS IT WERE, THINKING ALOUD, OR AS TEV AND OTHERS TRANSLATE, “SHE SAID TO HERSELF.” WE MAY ALSO RENDER THIS “SHE THOUGHT TO HERSELF.” LET ME NOT LOOK UPON THE DEATH OF THE CHILD: LET ME NOT LOOK IS THE COMMAND FORM OF THE VERB “TO SEE.” WE MAY ALSO EXPRESS THIS IN ENGLISH AS “DON’T LET ME SEE” OR “I DON’T WANT TO SEE.” NEB/REB TRANSLATE AS A RHETORICAL QUESTION: “HOW CAN I WATCH THE CHILD DIE?” THIS MAY ALSO BE RENDERED, FOR EXAMPLE, “I CAN’T BEAR TO WATCH THE CHILD DIE.” AND AS SHE SAT OVER AGAINST HIM: THIS IS SIMILAR TO THE EXPRESSION EARLIER IN THE VERSE AND MEANS “WHILE SHE WAS SITTING THERE.” THE CHILD LIFTED UP HIS VOICE AND WEPT: NOTE THAT IN RSV IT IS THE CHILD WHO CRIES, BUT IN TEV “SHE BEGAN TO CRY.” THE RSV FOOTNOTE SHOWS THAT IT FOLLOWS THE SEPTUAGINT; TEV FOLLOWS THE HEBREW TEXT. WHY, WE MAY ASK, WOULD SEPTUAGINT SAY “THE CHILD,” WHEN THE HEBREW TEXT CLEARLY SAYS “SHE”? (IN HEBREW THE WORDS “RAISED,” “VOICE,” AND “WEPT” ALL HAVE FEMININE SINGULAR AFFIXES.) THE ANSWER PROBABLY IS THAT THE SEPTUAGINT TRANSLATORS, NOTICING THAT GOD HEARS THE VOICE OF THE CHILD TWICE IN VERSE 17, MODIFIED VERSE 16 TO AGREE WITH VERSE 17. THIS IS NOT NECESSARY; AS HOTTP REMARKS, “VERSE 16 DESCRIBES HAGAR’S DESPAIR; VERSE 17 INTRODUCES THE INITIATIVE OF GOD.” ACCORDINGLY, THE HANDBOOK RECOMMENDS TRANSLATING THE HEBREW TEXT, AS IN TEV. ANOTHER WAY OF TRANSLATING THE LAST PART OF THE VERSE IS TO LINK HAGAR’S CRYING WITH WHAT SHE WAS THINKING ABOUT THE CHILD; FOR EXAMPLE, IN ONE TRANSLATION “… SHE BEGAN TO CRY, BECAUSE SHE DIDN’T WANT TO SEE THE CHILD DIE.”**

**GENESIS 21:17: SOME CONFUSION MAY ARISE IN THE TRANSITION FROM VERSE 16 TO VERSE 17 UNLESS AN ADJUSTMENT IS MADE. AT THE END OF VERSE 16 IT IS HAGAR WHO IS CRYING, WHEREAS IN VERSE 17 GOD HEARS NOT HAGAR BUT ISHMAEL. THEREFORE, TO MAKE THIS TRANSITION CLEAR IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO SAY AT THE BEGINNING OF VERSE 17 “LATER,” “SOON,” “AFTER A WHILE.” MANY MODERN TRANSLATIONS ATTEMPT TO MAKE A TRANSITION BY STARTING A NEW PARAGRAPH AT VERSE 17. THIS MAY NOT BE SUFFICIENT IN SOME LANGUAGES. AND GOD HEARD THE VOICE OF THE LAD: HEARD IS USED TWICE IN THIS VERSE AND IS PROBABLY A PLAY ON ISHMAEL’S NAME. SEE ALSO 16:11; 17:20. GOD HEARD MEANS NOT ONLY THAT HE WAS AWARE THAT THE CHILD WAS CRYING, BUT ALSO THAT HE WOULD PROVIDE A SOLUTION TO HIS PROBLEM. IN SOME LANGUAGES THIS OTHER ELEMENT MAY NEED TO BE ADDED TO THE NORMAL TERM FOR “HEAR,” TO AVOID THE SENSE OF A PASSIVE KIND OF HEARING. FOR LAD SEE VERSE 12. SEE ALSO COMMENTS ON “CHILD” IN VERSE 14. AND THE ANGEL OF GOD CALLED TO HAGAR FROM HEAVEN: ANGEL OF GOD IS USUALLY EXPRESSED ELSEWHERE AS “ANGEL OF THE LORD.” FOR DISCUSSION SEE 16:7, 9, 10, 11. IN THIS CASE THE VOICE OF THE ANGEL SPEAKS FROM HEAVEN. THIS CONTRASTS WITH THE PREVIOUS CASES OF ANGELS WHO APPEAR ON EARTH. SAID TO HER IS FOLLOWED BY A QUESTION AND MUST OFTEN BE RENDERED “ASKED HER.” WHAT TROUBLES YOU IS LITERALLY “WHAT TO YOU?” THE SENSE IS WELL CONVEYED IN ENGLISH BY NEB/REB: “WHAT IS THE MATTER?” THE QUESTION DOES NOT RECEIVE A REPLY, AND THIS SHOULD BE NOTED IN SELECTING A SUITABLE WAY TO TRANSLATE THE QUESTION. IN A NUMBER OF LANGUAGES, IT WILL BE POSSIBLE TO USE AN APPROPRIATE COLLOQUIAL EXPRESSION SUCH AS “WHAT’S WRONG, HAGAR?” OR “WHAT’S UP, HAGAR?” FEAR NOT: THAT IS, “DON’T BE AFRAID.” THE REASON HAGAR SHOULD NOT BE AFRAID IS THAT GOD HAS HEARD THE VOICE OF THE LAD. IN VERSE 17 GOD’S HEARING IS A SYMPATHETIC HEARING THAT BRINGS ABOUT A SOLUTION OR ASSURANCE OF BEING RESCUED. WHERE HE IS: SCHOLARS DIFFER IN THEIR INTERPRETATION OF THIS PHRASE; LITERALLY “IN [OR, CONCERNING] WHICH HE IS THERE.” SOME, LIKE NEB/REB, HOLD THAT IT MEANS “UNDER THE BUSH WHERE HAGAR PUT HIM.” OTHERS HOLD THAT IT REFERS TO ISHMAEL’S PHYSICAL CONDITION; NJB “IN HIS PLIGHT” REPRESENTS THIS INTERPRETATION. TRANSLATIONS SUCH AS TEV “GOD HAS HEARD THE BOY CRYING” ALSO FOLLOW THE SECOND INTERPRETATION. TRANSLATORS MAY USE EITHER INTERPRETATION.**

**GENESIS 21:18: ARISE, LIFT UP THE LAD: ARISE MAY BE TAKEN LITERALLY AS “STAND UP.” HAGAR HAS BEEN SITTING SINCE VERSE 16. THIS TERM IS ALSO USED IN A MORE GENERAL SENSE AS “GET READY,” “GO AHEAD,” “PREPARE YOURSELF.” REB SAYS “GO.” LIFT UP TRANSLATES A VERB THAT IS USED WITH THE SENSE OF LIFTING UP IN ORDER TO MOVE, CARRY AWAY. TEV AND OTHERS SAY “PICK … UP.” IF THE TRANSLATION PICTURES ISHMAEL AS A SMALL CHILD, “PICK UP” WILL BE APPROPRIATE. IF, ON THE OTHER HAND, THE TRANSLATION PICTURES ISHMAEL AS A GROWN YOUTH, SOMETHING EQUIVALENT TO “HELP HIM UP” WILL BE BETTER. HOLD HIM FAST WITH YOUR HAND IS LITERALLY “MAKE YOUR HAND FIRM ON HIM.” THIS IS AN IDIOM MEANING “STRENGTHEN,” “ENCOURAGE,” “COMFORT.” IT IS USED IN EZEK 16:49, WHERE RSV TRANSLATES “AID.” NEB/REB ATTEMPT TO GIVE THE SENSE OF COMFORTING WHILE USING AN EXPRESSION CLOSE TO THE HEBREW IDIOM: “HOLD HIM IN YOUR ARMS.” FOR I WILL MAKE HIM A GREAT NATION: FOR INTRODUCES A STRONG ASSERTION HERE. FOR THE TRANSLATION OF MAKE HIM … NATION, SEE THE DISCUSSION IN VERSE 13.**

**GENESIS 21:19: THEN GOD OPENED HER EYES: THIS EXPRESSION MAY BE TAKEN LITERALLY. HOWEVER, IF IT ONLY MEANS HE FORCED HER EYELIDS TO OPEN, SOME ADJUSTMENTS WILL BE REQUIRED. THE SENSE IS “GOD CAUSED HAGAR TO SEE.” SHE WAS NOT BLIND BEFORE, BUT SHE HAD FAILED TO SEE THE WELL THAT WAS NEARBY. IN SOME LANGUAGES THIS MAY BE TRANSLATED “GOD CAUSED HER TO SEE [OR, NOTICE] A WELL OF WATER.” WELL OF WATER: IN 16:14 THE SPRING REFERRED TO EARLIER IN 16:7 IS CALLED A “WELL.” WELL OF WATER REFERS TO A DEEP HOLE DUG IN THE GROUND DOWN TO WHERE THE UNDERGROUND WATER IS AND FROM WHICH THE WATER IS DRAWN OUT WITH A ROPE AND CONTAINER. IN AREAS WHERE WELLS ARE UNKNOWN, IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO REFER TO A WATER HOLE OR SPRING. AND SHE WENT, AND FILLED THE SKIN WITH WATER: HAGAR WENT TO THE WELL. THE NARRATOR DOES NOT SAY HOW SHE FILLED THE EMPTY SKIN, AND THIS IS PROBABLY NOT NECESSARY. GAVE THE LAD A DRINK: GAVE … DRINK TRANSLATES THE CAUSATIVE FORM OF THE VERB TO DRINK. LAD IS THE SAME NOUN AS USED IN VERSES 12, 17 AND 18.**

**GENESIS 21:20: AND GOD WAS WITH THE LAD: THE SENSE IS THAT GOD PROTECTED, GUARDED, BLESSED ISHMAEL. AND HE GREW UP: THAT IS, “GOD PROTECTED THE YOUNG BOY AS HE WAS GROWING UP,” “… AS HE MATURED,” “… AS HE BECAME OLDER.” HE LIVED IN THE WILDERNESS: FOR WILDERNESS SEE VERSE 14. BECAME AN EXPERT WITH THE BOW: THE HEBREW HAS A DOUBLE EXPRESSION THAT HOTTP TAKES TO MEAN “A SHOOTER, AN ARCHER” AND BELIEVES THE HEBREW INTENDS TO SAY “A SHOOTER OF THE BOW.” THERE IS LITTLE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THIS AND RSV’S RENDERING. NOTE, HOWEVER, THAT TEV TRANSLATES “SKILLFUL HUNTER.” THIS RENDERING IS BASED ON SPEISER’S SUGGESTION THAT THE FIRST OF THE TWO HEBREW WORDS IS TO BE ASSOCIATED WITH “GREAT.” HOWEVER, EVEN THIS UNDERSTANDING MAKES LITTLE DIFFERENCE IN THESE TRANSLATIONS, AND THERE IS NO CLEAR REASON TO PREFER ONE OVER THE OTHER. ACCORDINGLY, WE MAY TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, AS RSV, TEV. FRCL SAYS “A SKILLFUL SHOOTER OF THE BOW,” AND SPCL “A GOOD SHOOTER OF THE BOW.” NOTE ALSO NEB/REB “BECAME AN ARCHER.” IF THE BOW IS NOT KNOWN, TRANSLATORS MAY USE THE MORE GENERAL EXPRESSION SUCH AS “BECAME A HUNTER” OR “BECAME A SKILLED HUNTER.” IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT TEV, LIKE SOME OTHER MODERN TRANSLATIONS, RESTRUCTURES VERSES 20 AND 21, SO THAT ISHMAEL BECOMING A SKILLFUL HUNTER IS STATED AFTER HIS LIVING IN THE WILDERNESS OF PARAN. THIS MAKES IT POSSIBLE TO AVOID THE REPETITION OF HE LIVED IN THE WILDERNESS IN VERSE 20 AND HE LIVED … PARAN IN VERSE 21. TRANSLATORS SHOULD CONSIDER DOING SOMETHING SIMILAR.**

**GENESIS 21:21: HE LIVED IN THE WILDERNESS OF PARAN: SEE 14:6 FOR DISCUSSION OF WILDERNESS. HIS MOTHER TOOK A WIFE FOR HIM MEANS “HAGAR ARRANGED A MARRIAGE FOR HIM,” “CHOSE A WIFE FOR HIM,” OR “ARRANGED FOR HIM TO MARRY.…” THIS WAS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE FATHER, BUT IN ISHMAEL’S CASE THAT WAS NOT POSSIBLE. A WIFE: THAT IS A BRIDE, A WOMAN. LAND OF EGYPT: IN 10:6, 13 EGYPT IS A PERSON, BUT IN 12:10 IT IS A COUNTRY. HERE ALSO EGYPT REFERS TO THE NATION OR COUNTRY, WHICH IS OFTEN TRANSLATED “THE COUNTRY CALLED EGYPT.” EGYPT WAS OF COURSE THE COUNTRY THAT HAGAR HAD COME FROM; AND IN SOME CULTURES WHERE MARRIAGE WITHIN A PERSON’S OWN TRIBE IS IMPORTANT, THIS MAY BE BROUGHT OUT: “HAGAR GOT A WIFE FOR HIM FROM HER OWN COUNTRY EGYPT.”**

**ABRAHAM AND ABIMELECH MAKE AN AGREEMENT (21:22–34)**

**THE THIRD SECTION OF CHAPTER 21 TELLS THE STORY OF A COVENANT OR AGREEMENT BETWEEN ABRAHAM AND ABIMELECH ESTABLISHING ABRAHAM’S OWNERSHIP OF A WELL HE HAD DUG AT BEERSHEBA. IN THE INTRODUCTION TO THIS EPISODE, ABIMELECH REQUIRES ABRAHAM TO SWEAR LOYALTY TO ABIMELECH AND HIS DESCENDANTS (VERSES 22–24). ABIMELECH’S SERVANTS HAD SEIZED ABRAHAM’S WELL. TO ESTABLISH OWNERSHIP OVER HIS WELL, ABRAHAM GIVES ABIMELECH SEVEN LAMBS IN A COVENANT RITUAL. THIS EVENT IS SAID TO EXPLAIN THE ORIGIN OF THE NAME BEERSHEBA (VERSES 25–32). THE EPISODE CLOSES WITH ABIMELECH RETURNING HOME AND ABRAHAM PLANTING A TREE AND WORSHIPING GOD (VERSES 33–34).**

**SUBDIVISION HEADING**

**MOST MODERN TRANSLATIONS USE HEADINGS THAT ARE SIMILAR TO THE ONE SUGGESTED IN THIS HANDBOOK. WE MAY REWORD THIS MODEL HEADING TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “ABRAHAM AND ABIMELECH PROMISE TO BE LOYAL TO EACH OTHER,” “ABIMELECH MAKES ABRAHAM TAKE A VOW,” OR “ABRAHAM GIVES ABIMELECH SEVEN SHEEP.”**

**GENESIS 21:22: AT THAT TIME PROBABLY HAS NO RELATION TO THE EVENTS IN VERSES 9–21 BUT RATHER REFERS BACK TO THE EVENTS RELATED IN THE STORY ABOUT ABRAHAM AND ABIMELECH IN CHAPTER 20. IN TRANSLATION IT WILL PROBABLY BE BEST TO AVOID MAKING A CONNECTION WITH THE END OF CHAPTER 20 AND TO USE A GENERAL TRANSITION BEFORE VERSE 22; FOR EXAMPLE, “LATER,” “ONE DAY,” “IT HAPPENED ONE DAY LIKE THIS.” SPCL SAYS “MORE OR LESS ABOUT THAT TIME,” AND FRCL “AT ABOUT THAT PERIOD.” PHICOL THE COMMANDER OF HIS ARMY: PHICOL APPEARS HERE PROBABLY IN THE ROLE OF PERSONAL BODYGUARD OR AS AN OFFICIAL WITNESS. HE FIGURES AGAIN IN THE SAME CAPACITY IN CHAPTER 26, WHEN A SIMILAR OATH IS MADE WITH ISAAC. COMMANDER IS AN ADEQUATE TERM IN ENGLISH FOR THE HEAD OF AN ARMY. IN LANGUAGES IN WHICH THERE IS NO ARMY, A MORE GENERAL TERM SUCH AS “LEADER” OR “OFFICER” MAY BE REQUIRED. WHERE AN ORGANIZED BODY OF SOLDIERS DOES NOT EXIST, ARMY IS SOMETIMES RENDERED AS “SOLDIERS,” “FIGHTERS,” “ONES WHO CARRY WEAPONS.” SAID TO ABRAHAM: THE HEBREW CONSTRUCTION CAN BE READ AS IN RSV, WITH BOTH MEN SPEAKING TO ABRAHAM. HOWEVER, IN VERSE 23 ABIMELECH ALONE IS THE SPEAKER, AND SO IT IS BEST TO MAKE ABIMELECH THE SPEAKER IN THIS PHRASE: SEE TEV. THE TEXT DOES NOT ACTUALLY SAY THAT ABIMELECH AND PHICOL CAME TO WHERE ABRAHAM WAS, BUT IT WILL BE NECESSARY TO INCLUDE THIS INFORMATION IN SOME LANGUAGES. NOTE TEV “ABIMELECH WENT”; OTHER TRANSLATIONS SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “KING ABIMELECH WITH PHICOL … THEY-TWO CAME TO SEE ABRAHAM, AND THE KING SAID TO HIM.…” GOD IS WITH YOU IN ALL THAT YOU DO: ABIMELECH RECOGNIZES THAT ABRAHAM HAS SPECIAL POWER AND FORTUNE ATTRIBUTED TO GOD, AND CONSEQUENTLY FEARS ABRAHAM. THEREFORE, HE WISHES TO ASSURE HIMSELF OF ABRAHAM’S LOYALTY. WITH YOU MEANS “HELPS YOU,” PROTECTS YOU,” “BLESSES YOU.” IN SOME LANGUAGES IT IS NATURAL TO INTRODUCE THIS STATEMENT WITH “I HAVE NOTICED …” OR “I HAVE SEEN THAT.…”**

**GENESIS 21:23: NOW THEREFORE SWEAR TO ME HERE BY GOD: NOW THEREFORE TRANSLATES A WORD MARKING A CONSEQUENCE; THAT IS, “BECAUSE GOD IS WITH YOU” OR “BECAUSE GOD PROTECTS YOU IN EVERYTHING, THEREFORE.…” AS A CONSEQUENCE OF KNOWING THAT GOD HELPS ABRAHAM, ABIMELECH WANTS ABRAHAM TO BE LOYAL TO HIM. ALTHOUGH THE HEBREW TEXT HAS THE FORM OF AN IMPERATIVE HERE, THE SENSE IS MORE OF A REQUEST THAN A COMMAND. THEREFORE, IN TRANSLATION IT WILL OFTEN BE MORE APPROPRIATE TO USE A FORM OF POLITE REQUEST HERE; FOR EXAMPLE, “I WANT YOU TO PROMISE.…” SWEAR TO ME: IN 14:22 “I HAVE SWORN” TRANSLATED AN EXPRESSION THAT LITERALLY MEANT “I HAVE RAISED MY HAND.” SEE THERE FOR DISCUSSION. THE VERB MEANING “SWEAR AN OATH” IN THIS VERSE (HEBREW SHABÀ) SOUNDS LIKE THE WORD “SEVEN” (SHEBÀ) AND MAY HAVE THE SENSE OF GIVING OR NAMING SEVEN THINGS AS A WAY OF MAKING A SOLEMN OATH. (THE BDB HEBREW LEXICON GIVES THE BASIC MEANING OF SHABÀ AS “BIND ONESELF BY SEVEN THINGS.”) ABIMELECH IS ASKING ABRAHAM TO TAKE AN OATH, TO PROMISE. SWEAR … BY GOD (’ELOHIM) MEANS TO DO SO WHILE CALLING ON GOD TO PUNISH HIM IF HE BREAKS THE OATH OR FAILS TO DO WHAT HE PROMISES TO DO. THE FULL EXPRESSION MAY SOMETIMES BE RENDERED, FOR EXAMPLE, “PROMISE ME BEFORE GOD THAT YOU WILL …” OR “TAKE AN OATH AND MAY GOD PUNISH YOU IF YOU FAIL TO KEEP YOUR WORD.” HERE MAY REFER TO THE LOCATION OF BEERSHEBA. HOWEVER, MANY TRANSLATIONS DO NOT ATTEMPT TO NAME THE PLACE. TEV TAKES HERE TO BE EQUIVALENT WITH GOD’S PRESENCE IN WHICH THE OATH IS TAKEN. WE MAY ALSO SAY “HERE BEFORE GOD,” “HERE WHERE GOD IS,” OR EVEN “NOW IN GOD’S PRESENCE.” THAT YOU WILL NOT DEAL FALSELY WITH ME: DEAL FALSELY TRANSLATES A VERB MEANING TO “DECEIVE,” “BETRAY,” “LIE.” ABIMELECH DEMANDS THAT ABRAHAM NOT BEHAVE IN THIS WAY WITH HIM. HE ALSO ASKS THAT ABRAHAM NOT DECEIVE OR BETRAY MY OFFSPRING … MY POSTERITY. IN HEBREW THESE TWO WORDS HAVE SIMILAR SOUNDS, AND SO SPEISER ATTEMPTS TO MATCH THEM WITH ENGLISH “KITH AND KIN.” TEV AND REB EXPRESS THE THOUGHT CLEARLY WITH “CHILDREN … DESCENDANTS.” IN TRANSLATION MOST LANGUAGES HAVE TERMS THAT MEAN “BEHAVE DECEITFULLY” AND WHICH WILL BE SUITABLE IN THIS CONTEXT. BUT AS I HAVE DEALT LOYALLY WITH YOU: LOYALLY TRANSLATES HEBREW CHESED, MEANING “KINDNESS,” “FAITHFULNESS,” “LOYALTY.” LITERALLY THIS IS “AS THE LOYALTY THAT I HAVE MADE WITH YOU.…” WE MAY TRANSLATE “AS I HAVE BEEN LOYAL IN DEALING WITH YOU, NOW YOU DO THE SAME WITH ME” OR “I HAVE BEEN LOYAL TO YOU AND SO YOU MUST BE LOYAL TO ME.” IN SOME LANGUAGES THE SENSE OF BEING LOYAL OR FAITHFUL CAN ONLY BE EXPRESSED IN GENERAL TERMS WITH SOMETHING LIKE “BEHAVED WELL TOWARD” OR “DONE ONLY GOOD TO”; OR IT MAY BE EXPRESSED NEGATIVELY, “NOT BEHAVED DECEITFULLY.” THE CONSTRUCTION AS I HAVE … WITH YOU, YOU WILL … WITH ME IS EXPRESSED IN SOME TRANSLATIONS AS “GIVE BACK TO ME THE LOVE [LOYALTY] I HAVE SHOWN TO YOU.” AND WITH THE LAND WHERE YOU HAVE SOJOURNED: THE LAND REFERS TO THE COUNTRY OR KINGDOM RULED BY ABIMELECH. IN GETTING ABRAHAM’S PROMISE OF LOYALTY TO THE LAND, THE KING OBTAINS LOYALTY TO HIMSELF AS ITS RULER. IN MANY LANGUAGES A PERSON CAN BE LOYAL TO ANOTHER PERSON OR TO PEOPLE, BUT NOT TO AN INANIMATE OBJECT SUCH AS LAND. IT MAY THEREFORE BE NECESSARY TO SAY SOMETHING LIKE “AND BE LOYAL TO THE PEOPLE OF THIS COUNTRY.” AND SINCE ABIMELECH IS THE RULER OF THE COUNTRY, IN SOME TRANSLATIONS THIS BECOMES “MY PEOPLE.” ONE RESTRUCTURING OF THE LAST PART OF THE VERSE IS “I HAVE BEEN KIND TO YOU WHILE YOU HAVE BEEN A STRANGER IN MY COUNTRY. WELL, NOW, YOU HAVE TO TREAT ME AND MY PEOPLE IN A KIND WAY TOO.” FOR DISCUSSION OF SOJOURN SEE 12:10.**

**GENESIS 21:24: AND ABRAHAM SAID, “I WILL SWEAR”: THIS IS NOT TO BE TAKEN AS A SWEARING THAT ABRAHAM WILL PERFORM IN THE FUTURE, BUT RATHER AS SOMETHING HE DOES IMMEDIATELY. NJB AND REB HAVE “I SWEAR IT,” TEV SIMPLY “I PROMISE” (FOLLOWING THE TERM AS TRANSLATED IN THE PREVIOUS VERSE). WE MAY ALSO SAY “I GIVE MY OATH,” “I PROMISE TO BE LOYAL TO YOU.” IN SOME LANGUAGES IT IS NORMAL TO USE SOME TERM OF ASSENT OR AGREEMENT BEFORE THESE WORDS; FOR EXAMPLE, “ALL RIGHT. I PROMISE …” OR “VERY WELL. BEFORE GOD I PROMISE THAT I WILL NOT DECEIVE YOU.”**

**GENESIS 21:25: VERSE 25 MAY BE VIEWED IN TWO WAYS: AS INTRODUCING A FURTHER TOPIC IN THE TREATY NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN ABIMELECH AND ABRAHAM (VERSES 22–24), OR AS A NEW AND SUBSEQUENT DISCUSSION. TEV TENDS TO FAVOR THE SECOND OF THESE. RSV MAY BE INTERPRETED IN EITHER WAY. NIV, “THEN ABRAHAM COMPLAINED …,” AND NJB FAVOR THE FIRST VIEW. IF WE ASSUME THAT THE WELL HAD BEEN SEIZED BEFORE THE DISCUSSIONS IN VERSES 22–24, AS THE HANDBOOK DOES, THEN VERSE 25 IS TO BE TAKEN AS PART OF THE TREATY DISCUSSION. IN THIS CASE IT WILL BE NATURAL IN MANY LANGUAGES TO BEGIN VERSE 25 WITH A TRANSITION SUCH AS “THEN ABRAHAM WENT ON TO COMPLAIN …” OR “AFTER ABRAHAM HAD SWORN, HE THEN COMPLAINED.…” GECL MAKES IT CLEAR THAT VERSE 25 IS PART OF THE TREATY TALKS, BY BEGINNING A NEW PARAGRAPH AT VERSE 24, WHICH CONTAINS VERSES 25 AND 26 ALSO. TRANSLATORS MAY FOLLOW THESE MODELS. ABRAHAM COMPLAINED TO ABIMELECH: THE WORD TRANSLATED COMPLAINED MAY ALSO BE RENDERED “PROTESTED,” “OBJECTED,” “CALLED ABIMELECH’S ATTENTION TO.” OTHER EXPRESSIONS FOUND IN SOME LANGUAGES ARE “ABRAHAM HAD AN ARGUMENT WITH …,” “ABRAHAM HAD SOMETHING TO TALK TO ABIMELECH ABOUT [MEANING A COMPLAINT].” FOR WELL OF WATER SEE VERSE 19. ABIMELECH’S SERVANTS HAD SEIZED: HAD SEIZED MEANS AT SOME TIME IN THE PAST THEY HAD TAKEN IT OVER, POSSESSED IT, AND PROBABLY WOULD NOT ALLOW OTHERS TO USE IT. WE MAY ASSUME THAT THESE SERVANTS OR HERDSMEN OF ABIMELECH HAD TAKEN THE WELL FROM ABRAHAM, SINCE HE NOW CLAIMS OWNERSHIP OF IT. IN MANY LANGUAGES IT IS NECESSARY TO SAY WHOM THEY HAD TAKEN THE WELL FROM. SOME TRANSLATIONS EXPRESS THE TAKING OF THE WELL AS “… HAD MADE THEMSELVES THE BOSSES [OWNERS] OF.…” IN SOME LANGUAGES IT IS MORE NATURAL TO EXPRESS COMPLAINING ABOUT SOMETHING IN A DIRECT QUOTATION. A TRANSLATION THAT DOES THIS HERE SAYS “KING, I HAVE SEEN THAT YOUR PEOPLE HAVE DONE SOMETHING THAT ISN’T RIGHT: THEY HAVE TAKEN A WELL THAT BELONGS TO ME, AND BLOCKED MY PEOPLE FROM GETTING WATER FROM IT.”**

**GENESIS 21:26: ABIMELECH EXPRESSES HIS IGNORANCE OF WHAT ABRAHAM IS COMPLAINING ABOUT: I DO NOT KNOW WHO HAS DONE THIS THING. THIS THING REFERS TO THE SEIZING OF THE WELL, AND SO WE MAY SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “I DO NOT KNOW WHO TOOK THIS WELL.” IN SOME TRANSLATIONS THIS IS EXPRESSED IDIOMATICALLY; FOR INSTANCE, “I DON’T KNOW ABOUT THIS. WHO MIGHT HAVE DONE IT?” ABIMELECH THEN PLACES SOME OF THE BLAME ON ABRAHAM FOR NOT REPORTING IT TO HIM: YOU DID NOT TELL ME. THIS MAY HAVE TO BE COMPLETED IN TRANSLATION TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “YOU DID NOT TELL ME ABOUT THIS” OR “YOU DID NOT TELL ME THAT MY SERVANTS HAD TAKEN THIS WELL.” FURTHERMORE, ABIMELECH SAYS HE COULD NOT HAVE DONE ANYTHING, BECAUSE I HAVE NOT HEARD OF IT UNTIL TODAY; THAT IS, “I HAVE ONLY HEARD OF IT TODAY FOR THE FIRST TIME” OR “ONLY RIGHT HERE AND NOW HAVE I HEARD ABOUT IT.”**

**GENESIS 21:27: VERSE 27 MOVES FROM THE WORDS OF ABIMELECH TO AN UNEXPECTED ACTION BY ABRAHAM. THE USUAL MARKER OF CONSEQUENCE, SO, MAY NOT BE SUITABLE IN THIS KIND OF CONTEXT. SOME LANGUAGES PREFER A TRANSITION SUCH AS “WELL THEN,” “AFTER HEARING THAT,” “SO THEN.” SHEEP AND OXEN: THE WORD TRANSLATED SHEEP REFERS TO BOTH SHEEP AND GOATS. OXEN REFERS TO “CATTLE.” FOR DISCUSSION OF THESE TERMS SEE 4:2 AND 12:16. THE TWO MEN MADE A COVENANT IS LITERALLY “… CUT A COVENANT.” FOR DISCUSSION OF THIS EXPRESSION SEE 15:18. FOR DISCUSSION OF COVENANT SEE 6:18; 9:9.**

**GENESIS 21:28: ABRAHAM SET SEVEN EWE LAMBS OF THE FLOCK APART: AS A SUBSEQUENT ACTION IT MAY BE CLEARER TO SAY “THEN ABRAHAM.…” SET APART MEANS “SET APART FROM THE HERD,” “TOOK OUT OF THE HERD,” “PUT IN A PLACE BY THEMSELVES.” EWE LAMBS ARE FEMALE LAMBS, THAT IS, YOUNG FEMALE SHEEP.**

**GENESIS 21:29: ABIMELECH SAID MAY NEED TO BE TRANSLATED “ABIMELECH ASKED.…” WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THESE SEVEN EWE LAMBS WHICH YOU HAVE SET APART? IS LITERALLY “WHAT ARE THESE SEVEN EWE LAMBS YOU HAVE PUT BY THEMSELVES?” TEV HAS TRANSLATED THIS QUESTION AS “WHY DID YOU DO THAT?” WE MAY ALSO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “WHY DID YOU PUT THESE SEVEN EWE LAMBS ASIDE?” “WHY DID YOU TAKE THESE SEVEN EWE LAMBS OUT OF THE FLOCK?” OR “THOSE SEVEN EWE LAMBS, WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO WITH THEM?”**

**GENESIS 21:30: THESE SEVEN EWE LAMBS YOU WILL TAKE FROM MY HAND: NOTE THAT THE NARRATIVE HAS THUS FAR USED THE WORD SEVEN IN VERSES 28, 29, 30, ALL LEADING UP TO VERSE 31, WHERE SEVEN IS TO FIGURE AS ONE OF THE MEANINGS OF THE NAME BEERSHEBA. WHAT ABRAHAM SAYS IS REALLY A REQUEST OR A COMMAND TO ABIMELECH TO RECEIVE THE LAMBS. THIS MAY BE EXPRESSED AS “YOU MUST TAKE THESE LAMBS” OR “I WANT YOU TO TAKE THEM AS YOURS.” FROM MY HAND MEANS “FROM ME” IN AN EMPHATIC SENSE, “FROM ME PERSONALLY.” THAT YOU MAY BE A WITNESS FOR ME THAT I DUG THIS WELL IS ABRAHAM’S REPLY TO ABIMELECH’S QUESTION IN VERSE 29. WE MAY REWORD THIS REPLY TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “TAKE THESE SEVEN EWE LAMBS IN ORDER TO REMEMBER THAT I AM THE ONE WHO DUG THIS WELL,” “… WHEN YOU TAKE THEM, THAT IS PROOF FOR EVERYONE THAT I DUG THE WELL,” “BY DOING THIS YOU WILL DECLARE OPENLY THAT I MADE THIS WELL,” OR “YOU RECEIVE THEM AS YOURS, AS A SIGN THAT THIS WELL IS MINE.”**

**GENESIS 21:31: THEREFORE, THAT PLACE WAS CALLED BEERSHEBA: RSV TRANSLATES THE HEBREW ACTIVE “HE CALLED” AS A PASSIVE WAS CALLED. IT WAS NOTED IN VERSE 23 THAT THE WORD TRANSLATED “TO SWEAR AN OATH” SOUNDS LIKE THE WORD TRANSLATED “SEVEN,” AND SO BEERSHEBA CAN MEAN EITHER “WELL OF THE OATH” OR “WELL OF SEVEN.” SEE RSV AND TEV FOOTNOTES. BECAUSE THERE BOTH OF THEM SWORE AN OATH: IT IS UNLIKELY IN TRANSLATION THAT THIS PLAY ON THE WORD “SEVEN” AND “SWEAR AN OATH” CAN BE MATCHED IN MANY LANGUAGES. THEREFORE, IT WILL BE SUFFICIENT TO SUPPLY A FOOTNOTE, AS IN TEV.**

**GENESIS 21:32: SO, THEY MADE A COVENANT AT BEERSHEBA: SO, TRANSLATES THE REGULAR HEBREW CONNECTIVE, BUT HERE IT SERVES AS A MARKER FOR THE CONCLUSION OR SUMMING UP OF THE EPISODE. SOME LANGUAGES HAVE A REGULAR FORMULA FOR INTRODUCING SUCH A SUMMING UP; FOR EXAMPLE, “THAT IS HOW ABRAHAM AND ABIMELECH.…” MADE A COVENANT REPEATS THE EXPRESSION “CUT A COVENANT” FROM VERSE 27. A NUMBER OF TRANSLATIONS HAVE MADE THIS FIRST SENTENCE INTO A DEPENDENT TIME CLAUSE, WITH THE VERBS ROSE UP AND RETURNED AS THE VERBS OF THE MAIN CLAUSE. FOR EXAMPLE, NRSV HAS “WHEN THEY HAD MADE A COVENANT …,” AND TEV “AFTER THEY HAD MADE THIS AGREEMENT.…” OTHER TRANSLATIONS SAY “THEY-TWO HAVING MADE THE AGREEMENT, ABIMELECH AND PHICOL … WENT” AND “WHEN ALL THE TALK ABOUT THE COVENANT WAS MADE STRAIGHT, KING ABIMELECH AND PHICOL LEFT TO GO BACK.…” THEN ABIMELECH … ARMY: SEE VERSE 22. ROSE UP AND RETURNED SHOULD BE TAKEN AS A SINGLE EVENT; THAT IS, “ABIMELECH AND PHICOL … RETURNED TO” OR “… WENT BACK TO.…” LAND OF THE PHILISTINES: IN 26:1 THERE IS THE STATEMENT THAT “ISAAC WENT TO GERAR, TO ABIMELECH KING OF THE PHILISTINES.” HOWEVER, UP TO THIS POINT OF THE NARRATIVE, ABIMELECH HAS NOT BEEN ASSOCIATED WITH THE PHILISTINES. THE PHILISTINES WERE FIRST MENTIONED IN 10:14. SEE THERE FOR DEFINITION. INTERPRETERS THINK THAT THIS STATEMENT DOES NOT FIT THE TIME OF ABRAHAM, AS THE PHILISTINES ARRIVED MUCH LATER. HOWEVER, THE STATEMENT IS PART OF THE TEXT AND MUST BE TRANSLATED. LAND OF THE PHILISTINES IS OFTEN RENDERED, FOR EXAMPLE, “COUNTRY OF …,” “REGION OF …,” OR “AREA OF THE PEOPLE CALLED PHILISTINES.”**

**GENESIS 21:33: ABRAHAM PLANTED A TAMARISK TREE IN BEERSHEBA: TAMARISK TREE IS DESCRIBED AS A TREE OR SHRUB THAT GROWS IN DESERTS, DUNES, AND SALT MARSHES. IT PRODUCES NEEDLELIKE LEAVES, IS EVERGREEN, AND PROVIDES YEAR-ROUND FOOD FOR GOATS. BECAUSE THE TWO CLAUSES IN THIS SHORT VERSE ARE PLACED TOGETHER, IT IS VERY LIKELY THAT READERS ARE EXPECTED TO SEE A CONNECTION BETWEEN THEM; THAT IS, THE TREE WAS A SACRED TREE, OR A TREE TO MARK THE PLACE OF WORSHIP. SPEISER COMMENTS THAT THIS VERSE “TIES THE WORSHIP OF STEPHEN YAHWEH TO THE SYMBOLISM OF A SACRED TREE.” TRANSLATORS SHOULD TRY TO MAINTAIN THIS CONNECTION BY KEEPING THE CLAUSES TOGETHER, AND BY TRANSLATING TAMARISK TREE IN A WAY THAT WILL MAKE CLEAR ITS FUNCTION IN MARKING THE PLACE AS A PLACE OF WORSHIP. CALLED THERE ON THE NAME OF THE LORD [STEPHEN YAHWEH], THE EVERLASTING GOD: THIS STATEMENT SHOULD NOT BE CONFUSED WITH THAT IN 4:26, IN WHICH PEOPLE BEGAN TO PRAY TO GOD BY CALLING HIM “LORD.” HERE THE MEANING IS THAT ABRAHAM WORSHIPED, PRAYED TO THE LORD WHO IS THE EVERLASTING GOD. EVERLASTING GOD TRANSLATES A HEBREW EXPRESSION THAT MEANS THE ETERNAL GOD, THE GOD WHO LIVES FOREVER.**

**GENESIS 21:34: AND ABRAHAM SOJOURNED MANY DAYS …: SOJOURNED MEANS “LIVED,” “REMAINED,” “STAYED AS A FOREIGNER.” MANY DAYS DOES NOT REFER TO A LIMITED TIME BUT RATHER TO A LONG TIME, A GREAT AMOUNT OF TIME, PROBABLY A NUMBER OF YEARS, OR AS REB SAYS, “FOR MANY YEARS.” LAND OF THE PHILISTINES: SEE VERSE 32.**

**GOD TESTS ABRAHAM (22:1–19)**

**CHAPTER 22 TELLS THE STORY OF GOD’S COMMAND TO ABRAHAM TO SACRIFICE ISAAC (VERSES 1–19) AND CONCLUDES WITH A SHORT GENEALOGY OF THE DESCENDANTS OF ABRAHAM’S BROTHER NAHOR (VERSES 20–24). THE STORY OF THE SACRIFICE OF ISAAC IS PRESENTED AS A TEST OF ABRAHAM’S TRUST IN GOD. THE STORY OPENS BY STATING THAT GOD TESTED ABRAHAM (VERSE 1). GOD TELLS ABRAHAM WHAT HE MUST DO AND WHERE HE MUST DO IT (VERSES 2–3). ABRAHAM OBEYS BY MAKING PREPARATIONS FOR THE SACRIFICE AND TRAVELING TO THE AREA WHERE GOD HAS TOLD HIM TO GO (VERSE 4). ABRAHAM INSTRUCTS HIS HELPERS, AND THEY GO PART OF THE WAY WITH ABRAHAM AND ISAAC TO CARRY OUT THE SACRIFICE (VERSES 22:5–6). IN REPLY TO ISAAC’S QUESTION ABOUT THE ANIMAL TO BE SACRIFICED, ABRAHAM ASSURES HIS SON THAT GOD WILL PROVIDE IT (VERSES 22:7-8). AT THE APPOINTED PLACE ABRAHAM PREPARES TO SACRIFICE HIS SON BUT IS HALTED BY THE ANGEL OF THE LORD, WHO SEES THAT ABRAHAM HAS OBEYED GOD. IN PLACE OF HIS SON A RAM IS PROVIDED FOR ABRAHAM, WHO THEN SACRIFICES IT AND GIVES THE PLACE A SPECIAL NAME (VERSES 22:9–14). AS A RESULT OF ABRAHAM’S OBEDIENCE, THE LORD RENEWS HIS PROMISE OF BLESSING TO ABRAHAM AND HIS DESCENDANTS AND TO ALL PEOPLE. THE STORY CLOSES WITH ABRAHAM AND HIS MEN RETURNING TO BEERSHEBA (VERSES 15–19).**

**SUBDIVISION HEADING**

**THE HANDBOOK HEADING MAY HAVE TO BE REWORDED TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “GOD EXAMINES ABRAHAM’S FAITH,” “GOD TRIES ABRAHAM TO SEE IF HE TRUSTS GOD.” SOME OTHER HEADINGS ARE “GOD COMMANDS ABRAHAM TO OFFER ISAAC” (TEV), “GOD TESTS THE FAITH OF ABRAHAM” (SPCL), “ABRAHAM IS READY TO SACRIFICE ISAAC” (FRCL), “GOD PUTS ABRAHAM TO THE TEST” (GECL), “THE TESTING OF ABRAHAM” (NAB), “ABRAHAM’S SACRIFICE” (JB/NJB).**

**GENESIS 22:1: AFTER THESE THINGS: FOR DISCUSSION OF THIS EXPRESSION SEE 15:1. TRANSLATORS MAY NEED TO USE A STORY OPENER HERE THAT WILL RELATE NATURALLY TO THE EVENTS THAT CLOSED THE PREVIOUS SUBDIVISION. WE MAY SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “AFTER ABRAHAM HAD BEEN LIVING SOME YEARS IN THAT LAND,” “A WHILE AFTER THESE THINGS HAPPENED,” “TIME PASSED, THEN GOD …,” “IT WAS MUCH LATER WHEN GOD.…” GOD TESTED ABRAHAM: TESTED HERE MEANS TOOK ACTION TO LEARN WHETHER OR NOT ABRAHAM’S FAITH, TRUST IN GOD, WAS GENUINE. BY SUBMITTING ABRAHAM TO A DIFFICULT EXPERIENCE, GOD WOULD TEST, TRY, EXAMINE ABRAHAM’S FAITHFULNESS TO HIM. THE WORD FOR TESTED IS USED IN THE SAME WAY IN EXO 16:4 (“PROVE”); DEUT 8:2; JUDGES 2:22. IN SOME LANGUAGES IT IS MORE NATURAL TO TALK ABOUT TESTING SOMEONE’S FAITH THAN ABOUT TESTING THE PERSON; FOR INSTANCE, “GOD TRIED OUT ABRAHAM’S WAY OF BELIEVING.” IN LANGUAGES IN WHICH A WORD FOR “TEST” OR “TRY” CARRIES THE MEANING THAT THE ONE TESTED IS EXPECTED TO FAIL, OR IS EQUIVALENT TO “TEMPT” OR “ENTICE,” IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO ADJUST THE EXPRESSION BY SAYING, FOR EXAMPLE, “GOD WANTED TO SEE IF ABRAHAM TRUSTED HIM,” “GOD WANTED TO EXAMINE ABRAHAM TO SEE IF HE WOULD OBEY HIM.” AND SAID TO HIM, “ABRAHAM!”: IN SOME LANGUAGES THIS EXPRESSION MAY NEED TO BE INTRODUCED AS A CONSEQUENCE OF THE DESIRE TO TEST ABRAHAM. FOR EXAMPLE, “AND SO HE SAID …,” “THEREFORE HE SAID.…” SAID MAY NOT BE NATURAL IN THIS CONTEXT. NOTE THAT TEV USES “CALLED.” ABRAHAM! IS HERE A FORM OF ADDRESS THAT OFTEN REQUIRES ADJUSTMENTS SUCH AS “YOU, ABRAHAM.” MANY LANGUAGES IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA CAN USE A FORM THAT CALLS A PERSON FROM SOME DISTANCE AWAY AND SAY “ABRAHAM-O.” THE SEPTUAGINT AND VULGATE, AS WELL AS SOME MODERN TRANSLATIONS, SAY “ABRAHAM, ABRAHAM!” THE HEBREW TEXT HAS THE SINGLE “ABRAHAM,” WHICH HOTTP RATES AS {A} AND WHICH IS RECOMMENDED TO TRANSLATORS. NEVERTHELESS, IF A LANGUAGE REQUIRES THE REPEATING OF THE NAME IN CALLING OUT TO A PERSON, THAT NATURAL FORM SHOULD BE USED. IF IT IS OPTIONAL, THE SINGLE USE OF THE NAME SHOULD BE USED. AND HE SAID: HE NOW REFERS TO ABRAHAM, WHICH MUST BE INDICATED IN MANY LANGUAGES. ABRAHAM’S RESPONSE SHOULD BE APPROPRIATE TO THE VERB USED OF GOD’S CALLING, SPEAKING, SAYING.**

**HERE AM I: IT IS IMPORTANT THAT THE TRANSLATION OF THIS RESPONSE REFLECT, IF POSSIBLE, THAT ABRAHAM EXPECTS TO HEAR A FURTHER COMMUNICATION. THIS MAY BE SOMETHING EQUIVALENT TO “YES, I AM WAITING,” “AT YOUR SERVICE,” “I AM READY,” “YES, WHAT IS IT?” FRCL SAYS “YES, I HEAR YOU.”**

**GENESIS 22:2: HE SAID: HE NOW REFERS TO GOD AND MAY NEED TO BE TRANSLATED AS “GOD.” TAKE YOUR SON: TAKE IS USED HERE IN THE SENSE OF “TAKE YOUR SON WITH YOU,” “HAVE YOUR SON ACCOMPANY YOU,” “GO WITH YOUR SON.” YOUR ONLY SON ISAAC, WHOM YOU LOVE EMPHASIZES THE SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ABRAHAM AND ISAAC AND UNDERLINES THE HARSHNESS OF THE DEMAND TO SACRIFICE ISAAC. THE EXPRESSION YOUR ONLY SON IS EMPHATIC AND MEANS THE ONLY SON YOU HAVE, WHICH REB TRANSLATES “YOUR ONE AND ONLY SON.” ISHMAEL, OF COURSE, IS ALSO ABRAHAM’S SON, BUT ISAAC IS THE HEIR TO THE PROMISE MADE TO ABRAHAM. NOW THAT ISHMAEL HAS BEEN SENT AWAY, ISAAC IS THE ONLY SON. WHOM YOU LOVE IS A SECOND EXPRESSION ADDED TO SON. THIS IS THE FIRST OCCURRENCE OF THE WORD LOVE IN GENESIS. THE TERM OR EXPRESSION USED TO TRANSLATE LOVE IN THIS CONTEXT MUST BE APPROPRIATE FOR LOVE OF CHILDREN. IN SOME LANGUAGES THE WORD FOR LOVE TOWARD A PERSON’S RELATIVES OR CHILDREN IS DIFFERENT THAN LOVE IN A GENERAL SENSE OR LOVE FOR OBJECTS. IT MAY BE THAT A FIGURATIVE EXPRESSION IS MOST APPROPRIATE; FOR EXAMPLE, “YOUR ONLY SON FOR WHOM YOUR HEART IS WARM,” OR “YOUR SON WHO MAKES YOUR INNERMOST TO BE AT EASE.” IN SOME LANGUAGES THE WHOLE EXPRESSION YOUR SON, YOUR ONLY SON ISAAC, WHOM YOU LOVE, IN WHICH FOUR DIFFERENT ITEMS OF INFORMATION ARE LINKED WITH THE SIMPLE TERM SON, IS ALTOGETHER TOO HEAVY TO BE INCLUDED IN A LONGER SENTENCE. IT MAY THEREFORE NEED TO BE MADE A SEPARATE SENTENCE LEADING UP TO THE MAIN COMMAND; FOR EXAMPLE, “YOU HAVE ONLY ONE SON, ISAAC, AND YOU LOVE HIM VERY MUCH. TAKE THIS BOY.…” GO TO THE LAND OF MORIAH: THE LOCATION OF THIS PLACE IS UNKNOWN. THE SEPTUAGINT GIVES IT THE MEANING OF “LOFTY,” THE SAME AS FOR “MOREH” IN 12:6. INSTEAD OF “MORIAH” SYRIAC HAS “OF THE AMORITES.” THE ONLY OTHER REFERENCE TO MORIAH IS IN 2 CHR 3:1, WHERE IT REFERS TO THE TEMPLE HILL IN JERUSALEM. TRANSLATORS NORMALLY TRANSLITERATE THE WORD. OFFER HIM THERE AS A BURNT OFFERING: FOR OFFER AND OFFERING SEE DISCUSSION OF 8:20. IT MAY BE HELPFUL TO REMIND OURSELVES THAT, WHERE THE PRACTICE OF BURNED SACRIFICES IS UNKNOWN, IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO INDICATE THAT ISAAC, LIKE A SACRIFICIAL ANIMAL, IS TO BE KILLED BEFORE BEING BURNED. THEREFORE, OFFER HIM … AS A BURNT OFFERING MAY NEED TO BE EXPRESSED AS “KILL HIM AND BURN HIS BODY AS A GIFT TO ME” OR “KILL HIM AND BURN HIS BODY TO HONOR ME.” IN LANGUAGES IN WHICH SUCH SACRIFICES ARE KNOWN, IT IS POSSIBLE TO USE SOMETHING MORE LIKE TEV. UPON ONE OF THE MOUNTAINS OF WHICH I SHALL TELL YOU: TELL HERE MAY BE EXPRESSED BETTER IN TRANSLATION AS “SHOW” (TEV). SOME TRANSLATORS WILL FIND IT STYLISTICALLY MORE NATURAL TO MAKE THIS CLAUSE A SEPARATE SENTENCE. FOR EXAMPLE, SPCL SAYS “WHEN YOU GET THERE OFFER HIM AS A SACRIFICE ON THE MOUNTAIN, I WILL SHOW YOU.” SEE ALSO TEV. IN SOME LANGUAGES IT WILL ALSO BE MORE NATURAL TO MOVE THIS CLAUSE TO BEFORE THE COMMAND TO OFFER … A BURNT OFFERING, SO THAT THE STORY FOLLOWS THE SEQUENCE OF EVENTS; FOR EXAMPLE, “… GO TO THE REGION OF MORIAH AND I WILL SHOW YOU A HILL THERE. ON THAT HILL YOU MUST OFFER ISAAC.…”**

**GENESIS 22:3: THE ORDER OF EVENTS IN VERSE 3 ARE NOT ENTIRELY AS THEY WOULD HAPPEN. ACCORDINGLY, FOLLOWING THE COMMENTS ON THE VOCABULARY, IT WILL BE NECESSARY TO LOOK AT THE SEQUENCE OF EVENTS. SO, ABRAHAM ROSE EARLY IN THE MORNING: SO, SERVES AS A MARKER OF CONSEQUENCE FOLLOWING VERSE 2. ROSE … MORNING MEANS THE MORNING FOLLOWING THE INSTRUCTIONS IN VERSE 2, AND SO WE MAY TRANSLATE “EARLY THE NEXT MORNING ABRAHAM GOT UP.…” SADDLED HIS ASS: SADDLED SHOULD NOT GIVE THE PICTURE OF PUTTING A LEATHER SADDLE WITH STIRRUPS ON THE ANIMAL. IN THIS CONTEXT THE VERB REFERS TO TYING OR HITCHING A LOAD ON TO THE ANIMAL’S BACK. THE LOAD WAS THE FIREWOOD AND SUPPLIES TAKEN FOR THE JOURNEY. TEV “LOADED HIS DONKEY” EXPRESSES THIS BETTER IN ENGLISH. IN SOME TRANSLATIONS THIS ACTION IS LINKED WITH CUTTING THE FIREWOOD: “HE CUT SOME FIREWOOD … AND PUT IT ON THE BACK OF HIS DONKEY” (SEE THE SUGGESTION FOR REORDERING BELOW). IN SOME LANGUAGES THE VERB IS TRANSLATED MORE GENERALLY AS “GOT HIS DONKEY READY.” ASS OR “DONKEY” (SEE FAUNA AND FLORA OF THE BIBLE, PAGES 5–7) IS A SMALL HORSE-LIKE ANIMAL WIDELY USED SINCE EARLY TIMES IN THE MIDDLE EAST FOR RIDING AS WELL AS FOR CARRYING LOADS. IN AREAS WHERE THIS ANIMAL IS UNKNOWN, TRANSLATORS MAY OFTEN USE A LOAN WORD OR A DESCRIPTIVE EXPRESSION SUCH AS “AN ANIMAL FOR CARRYING LOADS”; HOWEVER, TRANSLATORS SHOULD NOTE THAT SOMETIMES THE CONTEXT MAY MAKE THE BURDEN-CARRYING ELEMENT REDUNDANT, AS IT DOES IN THESE VERSES. TWO OF HIS YOUNG MEN: THIS REFERS TO SERVANTS FROM ABRAHAM’S CAMP, YOUNG MEN WHO BELONG TO ABRAHAM AS SLAVES. THE TERM “SLAVE” IS NOT USED IN THE TEXT. A NUMBER OF TRANSLATIONS REFER TO THEM AS “SERVANTS” OR “WORKING MEN.” AND HIS SON ISAAC: ISAAC IS MENTIONED AFTER THE TWO YOUNG MEN. TEV FINDS IT MORE APPROPRIATE TO PLACE ISAAC BEFORE THE TWO YOUNG MEN, AND TRANSLATORS MAY FIND IT MORE ACCEPTABLE TO DO THE SAME. HE CUT WOOD FOR THE BURNT OFFERING: CUT REFERS TO SPLITTING THE WOOD SO THAT IT WOULD BURN WELL. IN SOME LANGUAGES THERE IS A SPECIAL WORD FOR FIREWOOD THAT IS DIFFERENT FROM THE GENERAL TERM FOR WOOD, AND THE SPECIAL TERM IS REQUIRED HERE: “FIREWOOD TO BURN THE SACRIFICE.” AND AROSE AND WENT TO THE PLACE OF WHICH GOD HAD TOLD HIM: AROSE AND WENT REPRESENT NOT TWO SEPARATE EVENTS, BUT RATHER THE FIRST VERB INDICATES THE BEGINNING OF THE ACTION OF THE SECOND VERB; THAT IS “BEGAN TO GO,” OR MORE NATURALLY IN ENGLISH, “STARTED OUT” (TEV). IN SOME LANGUAGES, HOWEVER, THIS ACTION DOES REQUIRE TWO VERBS, TO INDICATE FIRST THE DEPARTURE AND THEN THE TRAVELING: “THEY LEFT THERE AND WALKED TOWARD THE PLACE THAT GOD.…” THE REORDERING OF SOME EVENTS IN VERSE 3 SHOULD GIVE A MORE NATURAL FLOW OF THOUGHT. FOR EXAMPLE, WE MAY SUGGEST THE FOLLOWING:**

**• THE FOLLOWING MORNING ABRAHAM GOT UP EARLY AND SPLIT SOME WOOD TO BE USED FOR THE SACRIFICE. HE LOADED THIS ON HIS DONKEY. THEN HE TOOK HIS SON ISAAC AND TWO YOUNG SERVANTS. TOGETHER THEY STARTED OUT FOR THE PLACE WHERE GOD HAD TOLD HIM TO GO.**

**GENESIS 22:4: ON THE THIRD DAY SHIFTS THE SCENE TO NEAR THE END OF THE JOURNEY. IN SOME LANGUAGES THIS CHANGE OF SCENE REQUIRES SOME KIND OF TRANSITION. FOR EXAMPLE, “AFTER THEY HAD BEEN TRAVELING FOR NEARLY THREE DAYS,” “THEY HAD TRAVELED NEARLY THREE DAYS WHEN.…” LIFTED HIS EYES AND SAW: THIS IDIOM MAY BE TRANSLATED, FOR EXAMPLE, “LOOKED UP AND SAW.” THE PLACE AFAR OFF: THAT IS “FAR AWAY,” “A LONG WAY OFF,” “IN THE DISTANCE.” IN SOME LANGUAGES A PLACE MAY BE TOO DIFFICULT TO SEE FROM A DISTANCE, IN WHICH CASE TRANSLATORS MAY REFER TO THIS AS “THE MOUNTAIN.”**

**GENESIS 22:5: THEN ABRAHAM SAID TO HIS YOUNG MEN: THESE WORDS ARE SPOKEN BEFORE ABRAHAM AND ISAAC SEPARATE FROM THE TWO YOUNG MEN TO WALK TO THE PLACE WHERE THE SACRIFICE IS TO BE MADE. STAY HERE WITH THE ASS: THESE WORDS ADDRESSED TO THE TWO YOUNG MEN MAY FIT BETTER FOLLOWING THE NEXT SENTENCE. I AND THE LAD WILL GO YONDER AND WORSHIP: THE RSV ORDER I AND THE LAD FOLLOWS THE HEBREW. NOTICE THAT TEV AND NRSV SAY “THE BOY AND I.” IN ENGLISH THIS IS A MORE ACCEPTABLE STYLE THAT MAY ALSO BE RENDERED “MY SON AND I” OR “ISAAC AND I.” IN LANGUAGES THAT HAVE SPECIAL PRONOUNS FOR TWO PEOPLE, THIS IS OFTEN EXPRESSED AS “WE-TWO, THE BOY AND I.” WHERE THERE IS A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN INCLUSIVE AND EXCLUSIVE PRONOUNS, THIS IS THE EXCLUSIVE FIRST PERSON FORM. GO YONDER: YONDER TRANSLATES WHAT IS LITERALLY “AS FAR AS HERE,” WHICH SUGGESTS THAT ABRAHAM IS POINTING TO A SPOT HE CAN SEE IN THE DISTANCE. WE MAY ALSO SAY “OVER THERE,” “TO THAT PLACE YOU SEE.” AND WORSHIP: THE HEBREW WORD MEANS TO “BOW DOWN.” THE VERB IS SOMETIMES USED IN THE LITERAL SENSE OF BOWING DOWN BEFORE A SUPERIOR; FOR EXAMPLE, SEE GEN 43:28. HOWEVER, WHEN GOD IS THE OBJECT (WHETHER THIS IS STATED OR NOT) THE SENSE IS TO “PRAISE,” “PRAY TO,” “WORSHIP.” IN THIS CONTEXT IT IS TO MAKE A SACRIFICE, AND WE MAY TRANSLATE “AND OFFER A SACRIFICE TO GOD.” AND COME AGAIN TO YOU: THAT IS, “WE WILL THEN COME BACK,” “WE WILL RETURN HERE,” OR “WE-TWO WILL COME BACK TO YOU-TWO AGAIN.”**

**A SUGGESTED TRANSLATION MODEL FOR VERSE 5 IS: • THEN ABRAHAM SAID TO HIS YOUNG MEN, “MY BOY AND I WILL GO OVER THERE AND OFFER A SACRIFICE TO GOD, AND THEN WE WILL COME BACK TO YOU. SO, STAY HERE WITH THE DONKEY UNTIL WE RETURN.”**

**GENESIS 22:6: WOOD OF THE BURNT OFFERING: THAT IS, “THE WOOD TO BE USED FOR THE FIRE OF THE BURNED OFFERING” OR “THE WOOD TO BURN THE SACRIFICE.” LAID IT ON ISAAC: THE HEBREW VERB DOES NOT INDICATE THE PLACE NOR THE MANNER IN WHICH THE WOOD IS PLACED ON ISAAC. HOWEVER, MANY LANGUAGES HAVE SPECIAL VERBS FOR CARRYING OR LOADING WATER, WOOD, AND OTHER BURDENS. IN SOME LANGUAGES IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO INDICATE THAT THE WOOD WAS LAID ON ISAAC’S HEAD, SHOULDER, OR BACK. A NUMBER OF TRANSLATIONS PREFER TO EXPRESS LAID IT ON AS “GAVE IT TO ISAAC TO CARRY” OR “MADE HIS SON CARRY IT.” TOOK IN HIS HAND THE FIRE: THE TRANSLATION SHOULD NOT GIVE A PICTURE OF ABRAHAM CARRYING A BLAZING FIRE IN HIS BARE HAND. THE PICTURE IS PROBABLY THAT OF CARRYING A CONTAINER OF COALS OR EMBERS FROM THE LAST CAMP FIRE, OR OF CARRYING A FIRE STONE AND FLINT WITH WHICH TO MAKE A FIRE. NOTE TEV “LIVE COALS FOR STARTING A FIRE,” AND FRCL “COALS FOR THE FIRE.” OTHER TRANSLATIONS HAVE “GLOWING CHARCOAL TO MAKE FIRE” AND “A BUCKET OF LIVE CHARCOAL.” KNIFE: SPEISER TRANSLATES IT “CLEAVER,” SAYING THAT THE WORD IS USED FOR “BUTCHER KNIFE.” SEE JUDGES 19:29. MOST TRANSLATIONS DO NOT SPECIFY WHAT KIND OF KNIFE IT IS. HOWEVER, THE KNIFE SHOULD BE LARGE ENOUGH TO BUTCHER AN ANIMAL, THAT IS, TO CUT IT INTO PIECES. IN SOME CULTURES, A SPECIAL TERM IS USED FOR THE KNIFE THAT IS USED TO KILL ANIMALS FOR SACRIFICE. SO, THEY WENT BOTH OF THEM TOGETHER: THE NARRATOR PICTURES THE TWO WALKING OFF TO OFFER THE SACRIFICE TOGETHER. TEV HAS RESTRUCTURED THIS SENTENCE SO THAT IT FUNCTIONS AS A TIME CLAUSE WITH VERSE “AS THEY WALKED ALONG TOGETHER, ISAAC SPOKE UP.…”**

**GENESIS 22:7: AND ISAAC SAID … MY FATHER! THIS ADDRESS FORM SHOULD BE TRANSLATED IN THE NATURAL WAY A SON MAY ADDRESS HIS FATHER TO GET HIS ATTENTION BEFORE ASKING A PERPLEXING QUESTION. IN THE CONTEXT OF THE TWO WALKING ALONG TOGETHER, SPEISER TRANSLATES “ISAAC BROKE THE SILENCE AND SAID TO HIS FATHER.…” HERE AM I, MY SON: ABRAHAM’S RESPONSE TO HIS SON IS THE SAME AS ABRAHAM MADE TO GOD’S CALL TO HIM IN VERSE 1. HOWEVER, THE CONTEXT OF FATHER AND SON MAY REQUIRE A DIFFERENT FORM HERE IN SOME LANGUAGES. A MORE NATURAL RESPONSE IN ENGLISH IS NJB AND NIV “YES, MY SON.” EXAMPLES OF TRANSLATIONS IN OTHER LANGUAGES ARE “SON, WHAT?” AND “YES, WHAT IS IT?” BEHOLD, THE FIRE AND THE WOOD: BEHOLD HERE CALLS ATTENTION TO ISAAC’S AWARENESS OF THE FIRE AND WOOD, WHILE THE ANIMAL IS LACKING. IN TRANSLATION WE MAY SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “I SEE THAT WE HAVE FIRE AND WOOD,” “WE HAVE FIRE AND WOOD WITH US,” “I KNOW THAT WE HAVE FIRE AND WOOD.” BUT WHERE IS THE LAMB? THE QUESTION FORM WHERE IS …? DRAWS ATTENTION TO THE CONTRAST BETWEEN WHAT THEY HAVE FOR THE SACRIFICE AND WHAT IS MISSING. THIS MAY BE EXPRESSED MORE DIRECTLY AS, FOR EXAMPLE, “LOOK! WE HAVE GOT FIRE AND FIREWOOD, BUT WE HAVEN’T GOT A SMALL SHEEP TO MAKE A SACRIFICE WITH. WHAT WILL WE DO FOR THAT?” LAMB TRANSLATES A HEBREW WORD MEANING THE YOUNG OF A SHEEP OR GOAT AND SO CAN REFER TO A LAMB (YOUNG SHEEP) OR A KID (YOUNG GOAT). BOTH ARE USED FOR SACRIFICE. FOR A BURNT OFFERING: THAT IS, “A LAMB TO BE KILLED AND SACRIFICED” OR “A KID TO BE KILLED AND BURNED AS A GIFT TO GOD.”**

**GENESIS 22:8: ABRAHAM SAID MAY REQUIRE SHIFTING TO “ABRAHAM ANSWERED,” SINCE HE IS REPLYING TO ISAAC’S QUESTION. GOD WILL PROVIDE HIMSELF THE LAMB FOR A BURNT OFFERING, MY SON: WILL PROVIDE HIMSELF TRANSLATES A HEBREW IDIOM THAT IS LITERALLY “WILL SEE FOR HIMSELF.” THE SENSE IS “GOD WILL LOOK AFTER THE NEED FOR A LAMB.” HIMSELF EMPHASIZES THAT GOD ALONE, GOD WITH NO ONE HELPING HIM, WILL FURNISH THE ANIMAL. IN TRANSLATION IT MAY BE MORE NATURAL TO PLACE THE ADDRESS FIRST: “MY SON, GOD HIMSELF WILL MAKE READY A LAMB.” PROVIDE THE LAMB IS EXPRESSED IN SOME TRANSLATIONS AS “GOD WILL GIVE YOU AND ME SOMETHING FOR THE SACRIFICE” AND “GOD HIMSELF WILL FIND A LAMB.” FOR A BURNT OFFERING HAS BEEN REPEATED IN VERSES 2, 3, 6–8, AND TEV DOES NOT REPEAT IT HERE. SO, THEY WENT BOTH OF THEM TOGETHER: THIS STATEMENT IS REPEATED FROM VERSE 6 AND FUNCTIONS TO GIVE THE STORY AN AIR OF SILENCE AS THEY MOVE CLOSER AND CLOSER TO AN UNKNOWN CLIMAX.**

**GENESIS 22:9: WHEN THEY CAME TO THE PLACE OF WHICH GOD HAD TOLD HIM: THE PLACE IS THE ONE MENTIONED BY GOD TO ABRAHAM IN VERSE 2. FOR DISCUSSION OF ALTAR SEE 8:20. LAID THE WOOD IN ORDER: THAT IS, ARRANGED OR STACKED THE WOOD SO THAT IT WOULD BURN WELL. IN SOME CASES, IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO SAY “ABRAHAM TOOK THE WOOD ISAAC HAD CARRIED AND STACKED IT FOR BURNING ON THE TOP OF THE ALTAR.” AND BOUND ISAAC HIS SON: THIS SENTENCE MAY REQUIRE A TRANSITION SUCH AS “THEN,” “AFTER THAT.” BOUND TRANSLATES A VERB FOUND ONLY HERE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT. IN LATER TIMES IT WAS USED “ESPECIALLY, TO BIND THE BENT FORE- AND HIND-LEGS OF AN ANIMAL FOR SACRIFICE” (DRIVER). IN TRANSLATION IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO RENDER BOUND ISAAC AS “TIED ISAAC’S ARMS AND LEGS.” LAID HIM ON THE ALTAR, UPON THE WOOD: THE PICTURE GIVEN IS OF ISAAC LAID OUT ON THE WOOD THAT IS ON THE TOP OF THE ALTAR. IN TRANSLATION IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “THEN ABRAHAM LAID ISAAC ON TOP OF THE WOOD THAT WAS ON THE ALTAR.” READERS SHOULD NOT BE GIVEN THE IMPRESSION THAT THE WOOD IS ALREADY BURNING WHEN ISAAC IS PLACED ON IT.**

**GENESIS 22:10: THEN ABRAHAM PUT FORTH HIS HAND AND TOOK THE KNIFE IS A WAY OF SAYING “THEN ABRAHAM REACHED OUT AND TOOK THE KNIFE” OR “… PICKED UP THE KNIFE.” THE FACT THAT ABRAHAM IS ON THE POINT OF ACTING IS BROUGHT OUT BY SOME TRANSLATIONS THAT SAY “ABRAHAM TOOK HOLD OF THE KNIFE” OR “ABRAHAM HELD UP THE KNIFE.” THE VERB THAT IS USED MAY SOMETIMES HAVE TO BE RELATED TO THE WAY A KNIFE IS NORMALLY CARRIED; IN ONE LANGUAGE THIS IS “ABRAHAM PULLED OUT HIS KNIFE.” TO SLAY HIS SON: THE WORD TRANSLATED SLAY IS THE TERM USED FOR KILLING IN A GENERAL SENSE. WHEN USED IN THE CONTEXT OF SACRIFICE, THE WORD USED IN TRANSLATION SHOULD BE APPROPRIATE FOR KILLING AN ANIMAL TO SACRIFICE IT. IN SOME LANGUAGES THIS WILL BE RENDERED BY AN EXPRESSION MEANING “TO CUT THE THROAT.” THE FACT THAT ABRAHAM IS ON THE POINT OF ACTING IS ALSO BROUGHT OUT IN SOME LANGUAGES BY THE WAY THIS VERB IS TRANSLATED; FOR EXAMPLE, “ABRAHAM TOOK THE KNIFE AND WAS ABOUT TO KILL HIS SON.” SOME TRANSLATIONS MAKE VERSE 10 THE DEPENDENT CLAUSE AND VERSE 11 THE MAIN CLAUSE. FOR EXAMPLE, SPCL SAYS “BUT IN THE MOMENT HE TOOK THE KNIFE … THE ANGEL OF THE LORD CALLED OUT.…”**

**GENESIS 22:11: BUT THE ANGEL OF THE LORD: BUT IN ENGLISH SERVES TO CONTRAST ABRAHAM’S ACTION WITH GOD’S DESIRE TO SPARE ISAAC. IN OTHER LANGUAGES IT MAY BE MORE APPROPRIATE TO INTRODUCE VERSE 11 BY SOMETHING THAT MARKS GOD’S INTERVENTION, SUCH AS “SUDDENLY,” “BEFORE ABRAHAM COULD MOVE.” SPEISER COMMENTS “THE BLADE IS IN MIDAIR WHEN HIS HAND IS STAYED BY A VOICE FROM HEAVEN.” ONE EXAMPLE OF HOW THIS SPLIT-SECOND INTERVENTION MAY BE EXPRESSED IS “WHEN HE [ABRAHAM] DID THAT, STRAIGHT AWAY THE ANGEL.…” FOR ANGEL OF THE LORD SEE DISCUSSION OF 16:7. CALLED … FROM HEAVEN: CALLED CAN OFTEN BE TRANSLATED “SPOKE IN A LOUD VOICE.” HEAVEN IS UNDERSTOOD HERE TO REFER TO THE PLACE OR ABODE OF GOD. SINCE CALLING FROM HEAVEN MAY BE DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND, SOME TRANSLATIONS SAY “THE ANGEL OF THE LORD WHO WAS IN HEAVEN CALLED OUT.” THE PURPOSE OF THE ANGEL IN CALLING TO ABRAHAM WAS TO PREVENT HIM FROM CARRYING OUT THE KILLING. THIS IS INCLUDED IN THE TEXT IN SOME TRANSLATIONS; ONE EXAMPLE IS “BUT THE ANGEL OF THE LORD STOPPED HIM. HE WAS IN HEAVEN AND HE CALLED OUT TO HIM.” ABRAHAM, ABRAHAM: THE HEBREW TEXT HAS THE REPEATED NAME. IN SOME LANGUAGES THE REPEATING OF THE NAME HAS SPECIAL SIGNIFICANCE THAT SHOULD BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT IN TRANSLATION, AND THE NAME SHOULD BE USED ONLY ONCE, IF USING IT TWICE WILL GIVE A WRONG MEANING TO THE NARRATIVE. AND IF IT IS STYLISTICALLY MORE NATURAL, THE SINGLE NAME SHOULD BE USED. HERE AM I: SEE VERSE 1.**

**GENESIS 22:12: DO NOT LAY YOUR HAND ON THE LAD OR DO ANYTHING TO HIM FORMS A DOUBLET OR REPETITION OF THE SAME THOUGHT. THE FIRST COMMAND IS LITERALLY “DO NOT PUT OUT YOUR HAND UPON THE BOY.” IT MEANS “DON’T HURT HIM,” “DON’T CAUSE HIM PAIN.” THE SECOND PART GOES FURTHER BY SAYING “DON’T DO ANYTHING [HARMFUL] TO HIM,” “DON’T HARM HIM IN ANY WAY.” IN MANY LANGUAGES THE URGENCY OF THE SITUATION IS SHOWN BY EXPRESSING THIS SENTENCE AS TWO SEPARATE SHORT COMMANDS; FOR EXAMPLE, “DON’T HURT THE BOY! DON’T DO ANYTHING TO HIM!” FOR NOW, I KNOW: ABRAHAM HAS SHOWN THAT HE IS WILLING TO SACRIFICE ISAAC, AND SO THE TEST OF OBEDIENCE MENTIONED IN VERSE 1 IS COMPLETED SUCCESSFULLY. FOR NOW, SIGNALS THAT THE ANGEL OF THE LORD HAS HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO WITNESS ABRAHAM’S OBEDIENCE. THIS COULD ONLY BE SAID AFTER THE TEST WAS COMPLETED. WE MAY ALSO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “NOW THAT I KNOW,” “SINCE I NOW KNOW,” “BECAUSE NOW I HAVE FOUND OUT.” YOU FEAR GOD: AS IN 20:11 FEAR GOD DOES NOT MEAN TO BE FRIGHTENED BY GOD OR FEARFUL OF GOD, BUT RATHER TO HAVE AWE, RESPECT, OR REVERENCE FOR GOD. IN THIS CONTEXT WE MAY SAY “I KNOW YOU HAVE RESPECT FOR GOD,” “I KNOW THAT YOU HONOR GOD,” “I KNOW THAT YOU OBEY GOD’S COMMANDS,” “I KNOW THAT YOU DO WHAT GOD TELLS YOU TO DO.” SEEING YOU HAVE NOT WITHHELD YOUR SON, YOUR ONLY SON FROM ME: SEEING IS RSV’S RENDERING OF THE USUAL HEBREW CONNECTIVE “AND.” NOT WITHHELD MEANS “YOU HAVE NOT SPARED,” “NOT HELD BACK,” “NOT KEPT FOR YOURSELF.” IN SOME LANGUAGES IT MAY BE MORE NATURAL TO EXPRESS THIS THOUGHT POSITIVELY; FOR EXAMPLE, “YOU HAVE SHOWN THAT YOU ARE WILLING TO SACRIFICE YOUR ONLY SON TO ME.” FOR YOUR SON, YOUR ONLY SON, SEE VERSE 2. ONE EXAMPLE OF THE WAY THE LAST PART OF THE VERSE MAY BE TRANSLATED IS “NOW I KNOW YOU TRULY HONOR GOD, BECAUSE THIS SON IS THE ONLY ONE YOU HAVE, YET YOU DIDN’T HANG ON TO HIM, YOU WERE READY TO LET HIM DIE.” SOME TRANSLATIONS CHANGE THE ORDER OF THE CLAUSES; FOR EXAMPLE, “YOU HAVE ONLY THIS ONE SON, BUT YOU DIDN’T HOLD HIM BACK. YOU WERE READY TO GIVE HIM TO GOD. SO, NOW I KNOW THAT YOU ARE A MAN WHO ALWAYS SUBMITS TO GOD.” TRANSLATORS MAY FIND IT STRANGE THAT THE ANGEL OF THE LORD SPEAKS OF GOD IN THE THIRD PERSON IN THIS SENTENCE AND SWITCHES TO FIRST PERSON IN THE NEXT SENTENCE. IF IT IS NECESSARY TO RETAIN THE FIRST PERSON IN BOTH PLACES, FRCL MAY SUGGEST A SUITABLE MODEL. IT SWITCHES HERE TO FIRST PERSON, “I KNOW NOW THAT YOU RESPECT MY AUTHORITY,” AND RETAINS FIRST PERSON IN FROM ME IN THE FOLLOWING SENTENCE.**

**GENESIS 22:13: AND ABRAHAM LIFTED UP HIS EYES AND LOOKED: SEE VERSE 4 FOR THE SAME IDIOM. IN THIS CONTEXT BOTH “LOOKED UP” (NRSV, NIV) AND “LOOKED AROUND” (TEV, REB) ARE APPROPRIATE TRANSLATIONS. BEHOLD MARKS A SUDDEN AND UNEXPECTED APPEARANCE THAT PRODUCES SURPRISE. IN ENGLISH WE MAY ATTEMPT TO REPRESENT THIS WITH “ABRAHAM WAS SURPRISED BY THE SUDDEN APPEARANCE …,” “SURPRISED, ABRAHAM CAUGHT SIGHT OF …,” “ABRAHAM WAS SURPRISED TO SEE.…” BEHIND HIM WAS A RAM: THE HEBREW TEXT HAS A WORD MEANING BEHIND, WHICH MAKES LITTLE SENSE AS “A RAM BEHIND.” RSV TRANSLATES IT SO THAT IT IS BEHIND HIM (ABRAHAM). HOTTP BELIEVES THAT THE FINAL “R” IN THE HEBREW WORD MEANING BEHIND RESULTED FROM COPYISTS CHANGING A FINAL “D” TO “R,” WHICH IS VERY SIMILAR IN SHAPE. THE WORD WITH THE FINAL “D” MEANS “A” OR “ONE.” ACCORDINGLY, HOTTP SUGGESTS TRANSLATING “A SOLITARY RAM,” THAT IS, “A RAM.” THEREFORE, THE RECOMMENDATION TO TRANSLATORS IS “ABRAHAM … SAW A RAM.” RAM REFERS TO A MATURE MALE SHEEP. CAUGHT IN A THICKET BY HIS HORNS: THE HORNS OF THE ANIMAL ARE ENTANGLED AND HELD FAST BY THE BUSHES SO THAT IT CANNOT GET FREE. THICKET REFERS TO A PATCH OF UNDERBRUSH OR SHRUBBERY, DENSE AND GROWN TOGETHER, WITH THE BRANCHES TWISTED TOGETHER. IF “A BUSH” IS USED TO TRANSLATE THICKET, THE BUSH MUST BE LARGE ENOUGH AND WITH ENOUGH BRANCHES FOR A RAM TO ENTANGLE ITS HORNS IN THEM. TWO WAYS OF EXPRESSING THIS ARE “… WITH ITS HORNS CAUGHT IN THE BRANCHES OF A SMALL TREE” AND “… STUCK WITH ITS HORNS CAUGHT IN SOME BUSHES.” ABRAHAM WENT AND TOOK THE RAM: ABRAHAM UNDERSTANDS CLEARLY THAT THE RAM HAS BEEN PROVIDED FOR THE SACRIFICE, EVEN THOUGH NO WORDS ARE SPOKEN. WENT AND TOOK MEANS “WENT FROM WHERE HE WAS BESIDE THE ALTAR AND TOOK HOLD OF THE RAM.” OFFERED IT UP AS A BURNT OFFERING INSTEAD OF HIS SON: WE MAY ALSO RENDER THIS SENTENCE “HE KILLED IT AND GAVE IT TO GOD AS A GIFT. HE DID THIS TO THE RAM IN PLACE OF HIS SON.” ANOTHER WAY OF RENDERING INSTEAD OF IS TO SAY “ABRAHAM WENT AND GOT THE RAM, AND HE LET ISAAC GO. THEN HE PUT THE RAM THERE ON TOP OF THE ALTAR, AND HE KILLED AND BURNED IT.…”**

**GENESIS 22:14: CALLED THE NAME OF THAT PLACE: OR WE MAY SAY “ABRAHAM GAVE THAT PLACE THE NAME” OR “… NAMED THAT PLACE.” THE LORD WILL PROVIDE: FOR PROVIDE THE HEBREW SAYS “SEE,” AS USED IN VERSE 8, IN WHICH ABRAHAM SAID “GOD WILL PROVIDE [LITERALLY ‘SEE’] HIMSELF THE LAMB.” THE NAME USED IN THIS VERSE SHOULD CORRESPOND TO THE VERB USED IN VERSE 8. EVEN SO A NOTE MAY BE NECESSARY TO HELP THE READER SEE THE CONNECTION BETWEEN WHAT ABRAHAM SAID IN VERSE 8 AND THE NAME IN VERSE 14. ALTERNATIVELY, IT IS POSSIBLE TO TRANSLITERATE THE HEBREW (SEE SPEISER “STEPHEN YAHWEH-YIREH”). BUT THIS SOLUTION IS NOT VERY HELPFUL, BECAUSE AN EXPLANATION OF THE HEBREW MEANING WILL STILL BE NEEDED IN A FOOTNOTE. AS IT IS SAID TO THIS DAY: THIS EXPRESSION REFERS TO THE TIME (MUCH LATER THAN THE ORAL ACCOUNT) WHEN THESE WORDS OR THE BOOK OF GENESIS WAS WRITTEN. NOTE TEV “EVEN TODAY PEOPLE SAY.” WE MAY ALSO SAY “THAT IS WHY PEOPLE STILL SAY TODAY …”; OR, IF THE USE OF TO THIS DAY OR “TODAY” IS CONFUSING, IT MAY BE BETTER TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “FROM THAT TIME ON” OR “FROM THEN ON.” ON THE MOUNT OF THE LORD IT SHALL BE PROVIDED: MOUNT OF THE LORD IS TAKEN BY SOME TO REFER TO THE TEMPLE HILL OR MOUNT ZION IN JERUSALEM (ISA 2:3; 30:29; PSA 24:3, “HILL OF THE LORD”). NOTE THAT THE RSV FOOTNOTE HAS “HE WILL BE SEEN” AS AN ALTERNATIVE TRANSLATION FOR THE WORD TRANSLATED PROVIDED. IN THE HEBREW TEXT AS WE HAVE IT, THE SENSE IS “THE LORD IS SEEN.” THE CONSONANTS ARE THE SAME AS IN THE WORD MEANING “PROVIDED” IN THE FIRST PART OF THE VERSE. HOWEVER, THE VOWELS HAVE BEEN CHANGED TO GIVE “WILL BE SEEN.” HOTTP, WHICH GIVES THE HEBREW TEXT HERE A {B} RATING, SUGGESTS THAT “IT SHALL BE PROVIDED” BE USED IN THE TEXT, AND THAT “HE WILL APPEAR” OR “HE WILL BE SEEN,” WHICH ARE LESS PROBABLE, BE PLACED IN THE FOOTNOTE. IN A NUMBER OF LANGUAGES, IT WILL BE NECESSARY TO SAY WHAT IT IS THAT THE LORD PROVIDES OR GIVES. IN THE CONTEXT OF VERSE 8, THIS WAS CLEARLY THE ANIMAL FOR THE SACRIFICE; BUT HERE THE SENSE IS MUCH MORE GENERAL. SUGGESTIONS FROM TWO TRANSLATIONS FOR THE FIRST PART OF THE VERSE ARE “THE LORD GIVES US WHAT WE NEED” AND “THE LORD [ALWAYS] GIVES EVERYTHING.” IN THE SECOND PART WE MAY SAY “ON THE LORD’S HILL HE GIVES US WHAT WE NEED” OR “AT THE LORD’S TEMPLE HE BLESSES US.” IN SOME LANGUAGES IT WILL NOT BE POSSIBLE TO USE THE PASSIVE IN THE FOOTNOTE.**

**GENESIS 22:15: AND THE ANGEL OF THE LORD CALLED … FROM HEAVEN: SEE THE WORDING OF VERSE 11. GENESIS 22:16: BY MYSELF I HAVE SWORN: THE LORD HAS CALLED UPON HIS OWN NAME IN AN OATH. FOR SWORN SEE DISCUSSION OF 21:23. IF IT IS UNNATURAL IN THE LANGUAGE OF TRANSLATION FOR GOD TO SWEAR ON HIMSELF, TRANSLATORS MAY USE A MORE GENERAL EXPRESSION SUCH AS “I HAVE PROMISED,” “I HAVE DECLARED,” “I HAVE SOLEMNLY SAID.” SAYS THE LORD IS A SOLEMN AFFIRMATION THAT WHAT IS BEING SAID COMES DIRECTLY FROM GOD. IT IS USED FREQUENTLY IN THE PROPHETS BUT OCCURS FAR LESS FREQUENTLY ELSEWHERE. TEV “—THE LORD IS SPEAKING—” INSERTS THIS EXPRESSION AS AN INTERRUPTION IN THE ANGEL’S MESSAGE. REB BEGINS THE ANGEL’S QUOTE WITH “THIS IS THE WORD OF THE LORD: …” FRCL HAS “THIS IS WHAT THE LORD DECLARES: …” WE MAY ALSO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “THESE ARE THE LORD’S OWN WORDS: ‘I HAVE SWORN …’” OR “HEAR WHAT THE LORD SAYS TO YOU: ‘I HAVE MADE A PROMISE.…’” BECAUSE YOU HAVE DONE THIS: THIS REFERS TO OBEYING GOD AND PREPARING TO SACRIFICE ISAAC. AND HAVE NOT WITHHELD YOUR SON, YOUR ONLY SON: FOR WORDING SEE VERSE 12. IF THE ENGLISH CONSTRUCTION IS NOT SUITABLE FOR TRANSLATION, THE REASON CLAUSE BECAUSE YOU … MAY BE EXPRESSED AS A STATEMENT, AND THEN VERSE 17 TREATED AS A CONSEQUENCE OF THIS: “YOU OBEYED ME AND HAVE NOT HELD BACK YOUR SON …; THEREFORE.…” ANOTHER WAY OF RESTRUCTURING THIS PASSAGE IS “THIS SON IS THE ONLY ONE YOU HAVE, AND YOU HAVE NOT HELD ON TO HIM. BECAUSE YOU HAVE DONE THIS, I PROMISE YOU THAT.…”**

**GENESIS 22:17: I WILL INDEED BLESS YOU: INDEED, BLESS REPRESENTS TWO FORMS OF THE HEBREW VERB “BLESS” THAT OCCUR HERE, “BLESSING I WILL BLESS YOU”—WHICH EMPHASIZES THE ACTION OF BLESSING. THE SENSE IS “I WILL CERTAINLY BLESS YOU” OR “I WILL GIVE YOU GREAT BLESSINGS.” FOR DISCUSSION OF BLESS SEE 1:22 AND 12:2–3. TEV HAS MOVED THIS FIRST CLAUSE OF VERSE 17 TO THE INTRODUCTION TO WHAT THE LORD PROMISES IN VERSE “… THAT I WILL RICHLY BLESS YOU.” THIS MAY BE ATTRACTIVE TO TRANSLATORS IN OTHER LANGUAGES ALSO; AND IN THIS CASE IT MAY BE ADVISABLE TO NUMBER THE TWO VERSES TOGETHER (WHICH TEV HAS NOT DONE IN THIS CASE). I WILL MULTIPLY YOUR DESCENDANTS: GOD’S BLESSING IS HERE STATED IN TERMS OF FERTILITY, AND WE MAY TRANSLATE “I WILL GIVE YOU MANY DESCENDANTS.” NUMEROUS DESCENDANTS ARE COMPARED TO STARS AND SAND. THE FIRST COMPARISON AS THE STARS OF HEAVEN IS TO THE STARS, WHICH WERE VAST IN NUMBER IN THE DESERT NIGHT SKY OF ABRAHAM’S WORLD. THE SECOND COMPARISON IS AS THE SAND WHICH IS ON THE SEASHORE. IN TRANSLATION IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO MAKE CLEAR THAT THESE COMPARISONS ARE USED FOR THE VAST NUMBERS THEY REPRESENT. ACCORDINGLY, IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO TRANSLATE SOMETHING LIKE “I WILL CAUSE YOU TO HAVE SO MANY DESCENDANTS THEY WILL BE AS NUMEROUS AS THE STARS OF HEAVEN AND THE GRAINS OF SAND BY THE SEASHORE.” ONE TRANSLATION THAT EMPHASIZES THIS BY REPETITION SAYS “YOUR DESCENDANTS WILL BE VERY MANY. THEY WILL BE AS MANY AS THE STARS IN THE SKY. THEY WILL BE AS MANY AS THE SAND ALONG THE SEASHORE.” PART OF THIS FIGURE OF SPEECH WILL OCCUR AGAIN IN 26:4 AND 32:12. SIMILAR BLESSINGS WERE PROMISED EARLIER, REFERRING TO THE DUST OF THE EARTH (13:16) AND THE STARS (15:5). AND YOUR DESCENDANTS SHALL POSSESS THE GATE OF THEIR ENEMIES: THE IMAGE CHANGES FROM VASTNESS IN NUMBER TO POWER AND MIGHT IN CONFLICT. POSSESS THE GATE IS A FIGURATIVE EXPRESSION THAT REFERS TO CONQUERING, DEFEATING, AND TAKING POSSESSION OF THE ENEMY’S CITY. THIS EXPRESSION MUST OFTEN BE AVOIDED IN FAVOR OF A MORE GENERAL TERM; FOR EXAMPLE, “WILL DEFEAT AND CONQUER THEIR ENEMIES.”**

**GENESIS 22:18: AND BY YOUR DESCENDANTS SHALL ALL THE NATIONS OF THE EARTH BLESS THEMSELVES: THE WORDING HERE IS SOMEWHAT SIMILAR TO 12:2–3. THE SENSE EXPRESSED HERE IS THAT WHEN THE NATIONS OR PEOPLE OF THE EARTH ASK GOD’S BLESSINGS UPON THEMSELVES, THEY WILL CITE THE DESCENDANTS OF ABRAHAM AS THEIR EXAMPLE; WE MAY SAY “THE NATIONS WILL ASK GOD TO BLESS THEM AS HE BLESSED THE DESCENDANTS OF ABRAHAM.” BECAUSE YOU HAVE OBEYED MY VOICE: THE REASON WHY THE PEOPLE OF THE EARTH WILL BE BLESSED IS THAT ABRAHAM “HEARD MY VOICE.” THIS MAY ALSO BE RENDERED “OBEYED ME,” “DID WHAT I COMMANDED YOU TO DO,” “THIS WILL HAPPEN BECAUSE YOU OBEYED ME.” WE MAY RENDER THIS VERSE, FOR EXAMPLE, “BECAUSE YOU HAVE OBEYED ME, YOUR DESCENDANTS WILL BE A BLESSING TO ALL THE PEOPLE OF THE WORLD.”**

**GENESIS 22:19: SO, ABRAHAM RETURNED TO HIS YOUNG MEN: ABRAHAM DOES NOT REPLY TO THE ANGEL OF THE LORD. THE STORY CONCLUDES WITH ABRAHAM (AND ISAAC) RETURNING TO THE WAITING SERVANTS. ONLY ABRAHAM IS MENTIONED AS RETURNING BECAUSE HE IS THE PRINCIPAL FIGURE. TO OMIT ISAAC MAY CAUSE CONFUSION, AND SO WE MAY SAY “ABRAHAM AND ISAAC” OR “ABRAHAM AND HIS SON.” THEY AROSE AND WENT TOGETHER: THEY REFERS TO ABRAHAM, ISAAC, AND THE TWO YOUNG SERVANTS, “ALL OF THEM.” AROSE AND WENT SHOULD BE HANDLED AS A SINGLE EVENT: “THEY WENT, “THEY DEPARTED,” “THEY LEFT.” FOR BEERSHEBA SEE 21:14. AND ABRAHAM DWELT AT BEERSHEBA: AGAIN, ABRAHAM ALONE IS CITED AS THE PRINCIPAL FIGURE. IF THIS IS TOO EXCLUSIVE TO BE NATURAL IN THE STORY CLOSING, WE MAY SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “ABRAHAM AND ALL HIS PEOPLE.” DWELT TRANSLATES THE COMMON WORD MEANING “TO LIVE,” AND IN ABRAHAM’S NOMADIC LIFE SUGGESTS A PROLONGED STAY. TEV HAS “SETTLED,” NEB/REB “REMAINED.” A TYPICAL TRANSLATION OF THE LAST PART OF THE VERSE IS “THEY ALL WENT BACK TO THEIR CAMPING PLACE AT BEERSHEBA; AND ABRAHAM KEPT ON STAYING THERE.”**

**THE DESCENDANTS OF NAHOR (22:20–24)**

**THIS BRIEF SUBDIVISION LISTS THE DESCENDANTS OF ABRAHAM’S BROTHER NAHOR. THE PURPOSE OF THIS GENEALOGY IS TO PREPARE THE GROUND FOR THE STORY ABOUT GETTING A WIFE FOR ISAAC FROM NAHOR’S KINSMEN IN CHAPTER 24. IMPORTANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR THIS SECTION IS THAT NAHOR AND HIS FAMILY GROUP WERE LIVING BACK IN HARAN, IN MESOPOTAMIA. MESOPOTAMIA WAS THE COUNTRY WHERE ABRAHAM WAS BORN, BUT IT WAS FAR AWAY FROM WHERE HE WAS NOW LIVING IN CANAAN. THIS INFORMATION CAN BE FOUND IN THE TEXT OF 11:27–32, BUT WE MAY NOT BE ABLE TO RELY ON READERS HAVING IT IN MIND WHEN THEY COME TO THIS CHAPTER. HAVING LEFT HIS PEOPLE TO MIGRATE SO FAR FROM HIS FAMILY GROUP, IT SHOULD NOT BE SURPRISING THAT ABRAHAM WOULD NOT BE INFORMED ABOUT THE CHILDREN BORN TO HIS BROTHER, UNTIL FAMILY NEWS REACHED HIM AS STATED HERE.**

**SUBDIVISION HEADING**

**THE HANDBOOK SHOWS THESE FOUR VERSES TO BE A SEPARATE SUBDIVISION IN THE ABRAHAM STORY. MANY TRANSLATIONS DO NOT INSERT A TITLE AT THIS POINT. MOST OF THOSE THAT DO ARE SIMILAR TO THE HANDBOOK HEADING. NIV SAYS “NAHOR’S SONS.”**

**GENESIS 22:20: NOW AFTER THESE THINGS IS SIMILAR TO THE OPENING OF CHAPTER 22, WHICH TEV RENDERS “SOME TIME LATER” IN BOTH PLACES. SEE COMMENTS ON VERSE 1. IT WAS TOLD ABRAHAM: THE PASSIVE VOICE IS USED IN THE HEBREW, BUT THIS MUST OFTEN BE MADE ACTIVE IN TRANSLATION. TEV AND OTHERS SAY “ABRAHAM LEARNED THAT …”; SPEISER HAS “WORD REACHED ABRAHAM, AS FOLLOWS …” WE MAY ALSO SAY “ABRAHAM RECEIVED WORD” OR “ABRAHAM FOUND OUT.” ANOTHER WAY OF TRANSLATING THIS VERSE IS TO SAY “SOME TIME AFTER THIS ABRAHAM RECEIVED NEWS OF HIS BROTHER NAHOR, THAT HIS WIFE.…” BEHOLD: TEV AND OTHERS DO NOT ATTEMPT TO REPRESENT THIS ELEMENT. IT PROBABLY HAS THE FUNCTION OF CALLING FOR ATTENTION BEFORE AN IMPORTANT STATEMENT. IT IS POSSIBLE TO EXPRESS THIS IN THE WAY ABRAHAM IS ADDRESSED, IF A DIRECT QUOTATION IS USED; FOR EXAMPLE, “LISTEN TO THIS, ABRAHAM,” “HERE IS SOME NEWS, ABRAHAM.” WHAT ABRAHAM LEARNED IS PLACED IN QUOTES BY RSV, FROM BEHOLD IN THIS VERSE TO AFTER BETHUEL AT THE END OF VERSE 22. TEV AND OTHERS DO NOT USE QUOTE MARKS. THIS LIST NAMES EIGHT SONS FROM MILCAH AND FOUR FROM NAHOR’S CONCUBINE, THUS MAKING A TOTAL OF TWELVE. THIS IS THE SAME NUMBER BORN TO ISHMAEL (25:12–16) AND TO JACOB (35:22B–26). MILCAH: ACCORDING TO 11:29 MILCAH IS NAHOR’S WIFE AND NIECE (A DAUGHTER OF ONE’S BROTHER, SISTER, BROTHER-IN-LAW, OR SISTER-IN-LAW). IN SOME TRANSLATIONS THAT REFER TO REUMAH IN VERSE 24 AS A “SECOND WIFE,” MILCAH IS CALLED NAHOR’S “FIRST WIFE” HERE. ALSO HAS BORNE CHILDREN: ALSO, MAY COMPARE MILCAH TO SARAH IN 21:1–7, WHO BORE ABRAHAM A CHILD. CHILDREN IN THE HEBREW AND IN THIS CONTEXT REFERS TO “SONS.” YOUR BROTHER REFERS TO ABRAHAM’S BROTHER. TEV AND OTHERS AVOID A DIRECT QUOTATION AND SAY “HIS BROTHER.” THE EIGHT NAMES IN VERSES 21 AND 22 MAY BE INTRODUCED AS IN TEV, “MILCAH HAD BORNE EIGHT CHILDREN.…” THIS MEANS INTRODUCING INFORMATION FROM VERSE 23 IN VERSE 20, AND THEN REPEATING IT IN ITS ORIGINAL LOCATION IN VERSE 23, IF ONE FOLLOWS THE PATTERN OF TEV. IN SOME LANGUAGES IT IS MORE NATURAL WITH NEWS OF THIS NATURE FOR THE HUSBAND AND WIFE TO BE NAMED TOGETHER, GIVING THE TRANSLATION “ABRAHAM HEARD NEWS THAT HIS BROTHER NAHOR AND HIS [BROTHER’S] WIFE MILCAH THEY-TWO HAD HAD EIGHT SONS.”**

**GENESIS 22:21: UZ THE FIRST-BORN: UZ IN 10:23 IS DESCRIBED AS A “SON” OF ARAM. THE FIRST-BORN MEANS THE FIRST SON BORN TO NAHOR. BUZ IS MENTIONED IN JER 25:23. ELIHU, JOB’S FOURTH FRIEND, WAS CALLED A “BUZITE.” KEMUEL: THIS NAME IS UNKNOWN ELSEWHERE. ARAM: IN 10:22 A PERSON OF THIS NAME IS A SON OF SHEM.**

**GENESIS 22:22: ACCORDING TO WESTERMANN THESE FIVE ARE ALL PERSONAL NAMES. AT LEASST IT CANNOT BE PROVED THAT THEY ARE PLACE NAMES. CHESED (KESED IN HEBREW) IS THOUGHT TO BE THE NAME FROM WHICH THE CHALDEANS (HEBREW KASDIM) GOT THEIR NAME. HAZO IS A NAME THAT WAS FOUND ON AN INSCRIPTION. PILDASH AND JIDLAPH ARE UNKNOWN. BETHUEL: SEE NEXT VERSE.**

**GENESIS 22:23: ETHUEL IS NAMED AGAIN IN 24:15, 24, 47 AS REBEKAH’S FATHER. IN SOME LANGUAGES THERE IS A PROBLEM IN SAYING THAT A WOMAN GAVE BIRTH TO A CHILD WHO WAS “THE FATHER OF.…” IN SUCH LANGUAGES THE INTERMEDIATE STEPS, THAT IS, GROWING FROM BABY TO FATHER, MUST NOT BE OMITTED. IF THIS IS THE CASE IN YOUR LANGUAGE, IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO SAY THAT THE PERSON “GREW UP AND GOT MARRIED, AND THEN BECAME THE FATHER OF.…” ONE TRANSLATION, FOR EXAMPLE, LISTS THE NAMES OF THE EIGHT SONS IN VERSES 21–22 AND THEN CONTINUES IN A NEW SENTENCE, “KEMUEL LATER GOT MARRIED AND HAD A SON NAMED ARAM; AND BETHUEL GOT MARRIED TOO AND HAD A DAUGHTER NAMED REBEKAH.” THESE EIGHT …: SEE SUGGESTION ABOVE FOR INTRODUCING THE EIGHT IN VERSE 20.**

**GENESIS 22:24: MOREOVER, MAY BE TRANSLATED BY SUCH EXPRESSIONS AS “IN ADDITION,” “ALSO.” CONCUBINE REFERS TO A WIFE WHOSE STATUS IN THE FAMILY IS SECONDARY. SHE MAY HAVE BEEN TAKEN AS A CAPTIVE IN WAR OR PURCHASED. WIVES TAKEN AS BOOTY IN WAR WERE GIVEN CERTAIN PROTECTION FROM EXPLOITATION (SEE DEUT 21:10–17). HAGAR SERVED AS ABRAHAM’S CONCUBINE BUT WAS NOT REFERRED TO BY THAT TERM. IN TRANSLATION THE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF THIS TERM ARE A WIFE WHOSE STATUS IS SECONDARY TO THE “LEGAL” WIFE OR WIVES. MANY LANGUAGES HAVE ADEQUATE TERMS FOR A SECONDARY WIFE. IN SOME LANGUAGES SHE IS CALLED “THE WIFE BEHIND,” A “MINOR WIFE,” OR “THE LITTLE WIFE.” IN OTHERS THE EXPRESSION “SECOND WIFE” IS QUITE ADEQUATE, SINCE IT IS ASSUMED THAT THE WOMAN WHO IS TAKEN SECOND HAS A LOWER STATUS THAN THE FIRST WIFE. IF A DESCRIPTIVE EXPRESSION IS NECESSARY, WE MAY SUGGEST, FOR EXAMPLE, “THE SECOND-CLASS WIFE,” “THE WIFE WITH LESS RIGHTS.” IF A FOREIGN WORD IS USED, IT SHOULD BE QUALIFIED BY “WIFE” OR “WOMAN.” SINCE THE MAIN INTEREST IN THIS PASSAGE IS IN THE NAMES OF THE TWELVE SONS OF NAHOR AND IN THE NAME OF ISAAC’S FUTURE WIFE REBEKAH, IT IS NOT OF GREAT IMPORTANCE THAT THE WOMAN REFERRED TO HERE IS A CONCUBINE. SO, TRANSLATORS ARE NOT CALLED UPON TO GO TO ANY GREAT LENGTHS IN EXPLAINING HER STATUS, IF A PRECISE TERM IS NOT AVAILABLE. SOME TRANSLATIONS HAVE, FOR EXAMPLE, “NAHOR HAD ANOTHER WIFE WHOSE NAME WAS REUMAH, AND SHE HAD FOUR SONS.…” THE NAMES OF NAHOR’S CONCUBINE AND HER FOUR SONS ARE NOT KNOWN OTHERWISE, WITH THE POSSIBLE EXCEPTION OF MAACAH, WHICH, ACCORDING TO SPEISER, IS KNOWN AS THE AREA SOUTH OF MOUNT HERMON. SEE DEUT 3:14; JOSH 13:11, 13.**

**ABRAHAM BUYS A BURIAL GROUND FOR SARAH (23:1–20)**

**CHAPTER 23 REPORTS THE DEATH OF SARAH AND THE NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN ABRAHAM AND THE HITTITES OF HEBRON FOR THE PURCHASE OF A CAVE IN WHICH TO BURY HER. THE REPORT OF SARAH’S DEATH STATES THE LENGTH OF HER LIFE, THE PLACE OF HER DEATH, AND THE FACT THAT ABRAHAM MOURNED FOR HER (VERSES 1–2). AFTER MOURNING FOR HIS DEAD WIFE, ABRAHAM BEGAN NEGOTIATING WITH A GROUP OF HITTITES TO OBTAIN FROM THEM A BURIAL PLACE FOR SARAH (VERSES 3–4). THE HITTITES RESPOND TO ABRAHAM’S PROPOSAL IN COURTEOUS OVERSTATEMENT, IN WHICH THEY ACKNOWLEDGE ABRAHAM’S HIGH RANK AND SAY THEY WILL OFFER HIM THEIR BEST BURIAL PLACES WITHOUT CONDITIONS (VERSES 23:5–6). ABRAHAM BOWS TO EXPRESS HIS GRATEFULNESS, BUT MOVES THE NEGOTIATIONS FORWARD AND ASKS FOR A PARTICULAR CAVE OWNED BY EPHRON (VERSES 23:7-9). IN THE WITNESSING PRESENCE OF THE HITTITES, EPHRON OFFERS TO LET ABRAHAM HAVE NOT ONLY THE CAVE BUT ALSO THE ADJOINING FIELD (VERSES 10–11). POLITELY ACKNOWLEDGING EPHRON’S GENEROSITY, ABRAHAM OFFERS TO PURCHASE THE FIELD (12–13). EPHRON REPLIES RHETORICALLY THAT THE PRICE HE NAMES IS NOTHING FOR MEN OF HIS AND ABRAHAM’S STANDING (14–16). AS A RESULT OF THE PURCHASE WITNESSED BY THOSE PRESENT, THE FIELD AND THE CAVE AND RIGHTS OF OWNERSHIP PASS OVER TO ABRAHAM (17–18).**

**THE CHAPTER CLOSES BY SAYING THAT ABRAHAM BURIED SARAH IN THE CAVE AND THUS REPEATS THE INFORMATION THAT THE FIELD AND CAVE BECAME ABRAHAM’S POSSESSION (19–20).**

**SUBDIVISION HEADING**

**TRANSLATORS MAY WISH TO INCLUDE BOTH THE DEATH AND THE PURCHASE OF THE CAVE IN THE HEADING. IN THAT CASE WE MAY SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “SARAH DIES AND ABRAHAM BUYS A BURIAL PLACE FOR HER.” SOME OTHER HEADINGS ARE “ABRAHAM BUYS A TOMB FOR SARAH” (FRCL), “DEATH AND BURIAL OF SARAH” (SPCL), “THE TOMB OF THE PATRIARCHS” (JB/NJB), “THE DEATH OF SARAH” (NIV).**

**GENESIS 23:1: SARAH LIVED A HUNDRED AND TWENTY-SEVEN YEARS: OR “SARAH LIVED TO BE A HUNDRED, AND TWENTY-SEVEN YEARS OLD” (TEV, REB, NIV). THE HEADING AND BLANK SPACE WILL BE SUFFICIENT IN MANY TRANSLATIONS TO SHOW THAT A NEW STORY BEGINS HERE. HOWEVER, IN SOME LANGUAGES IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO LINK CHAPTER 23 WITH WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE, AND ALSO TO STATE AT THE OUTSET THAT SARAH DIED. THIS MAY BE DONE BY SAYING, FOR EXAMPLE, “SOME TIME LATER” OR “AFTER MANY YEARS”; THEN THE INFORMATION IN VERSE 2 MAY NEED TO BE SHIFTED TO THE OPENING. ANOTHER POSSIBILITY IS TO KEEP THE ORDER AS IN THE HEBREW TEXT (SEEN IN RSV) BUT TO MAKE VERSE 1 A TIME CLAUSE AND VERSE 2 THE MAIN CLAUSE. FOR EXAMPLE, “YEARS LATER WHEN SARAH WAS … SHE DIED AT.…” ANOTHER MODEL AGAIN IS GIVEN IN THE TRANSLATION “SARAH LIVED ON UNTIL SHE BECAME OLD AND SHE DIED. AT THAT TIME SHE WAS 127 YEARS OLD.” THESE WERE THE YEARS OF THE LIFE OF SARAH: ON THE BASIS OF 25:7; 47:28, WE NORMALLY EXPECT THE YEARS OF THE LIFE OF SARAH TO OCCUR BEFORE SARAH LIVED … YEARS. FURTHERMORE, THIS PHRASE IS LACKING IN BOTH THE SEPTUAGINT AND VULGATE. HOTTP EXPLAINS THAT THIS PHRASE HAS BEEN ADDED BY LATER COPYISTS AND RECOMMENDS THAT IT BE OMITTED OR, IF FOOTNOTES ARE USED, THAT IT BE PLACED IN A FOOTNOTE. HOWEVER, IT GIVES NO SIGNIFICANT INFORMATION, AND PLACING IT IN A FOOTNOTE WILL BE OF LITTLE VALUE. MOST MODERN TRANSLATION OMIT IT FROM THE TEXT AND DO NOT INCLUDE IT IN A FOOTNOTE.**

**GENESIS 23:2: AND SARAH DIED AT KIRIATH-ARBA (THAT IS HEBRON) IN THE LAND OF CANAAN: KIRIATH-ARBA MEANS “CITY OF FOUR” AND IS FOUND ELSEWHERE IN 35:27; NEH 11:25. IT IS REGULARLY USED FOR HEBRON IN JOSH 15:13, 54; 20:7; 21:11, AND IS SAID IN JOSH 14:15 AND JUDGES 1:10 TO HAVE BEEN THE OLDER NAME FOR HEBRON. TEV AND OTHERS TRANSLATE IT “HEBRON.” SPEISER SAYS “KIRIATH-ARBA—NOW HEBRON.” NEB/REB HAVE “KIRIATH-ARBA, WHICH IS HEBRON.” UNLESS THERE IS A REASON TO RETAIN THE ANCIENT NAME, TRANSLATORS ARE ADVISED TO USE “HEBRON.” LAND OF CANAAN IS OFTEN CALLED “THE AREA [REGION, COUNTRY] CALLED CANAAN.” WENT IN TO MOURN FOR SARAH: WENT IN IN THIS CONTEXT MAY REFER TO GOING INSIDE THE TENT WHERE HER BODY WAS KEPT. MFT SAYS “AFTER GOING INDOORS.” WENT IN, HOWEVER, MAY SIGNAL THAT ABRAHAM PERFORMED OR CARRIED OUT THE RITES OF MOURNING, OR, AS FRCL SAYS, “ABRAHAM CELEBRATED THE MOURNING.…” NOTE TEV “ABRAHAM MOURNED HER DEATH.” MOURN AND WEEP ARE UNDERSTOOD AS TWO VERBS IN WHICH THE SECOND DESCRIBES THE ACTION OF THE FIRST; THAT IS, “HE WEPT IN MOURNING,” OR MORE GENERALLY “HE MOURNED.” MOURNING RITES INVOLVED WAILING OR WEEPING, AS SEEN IN 2 SAM 1:12; 3:31–32; 1 KGS 13:30; ZECH 12:10–12. A COMMON WAY OF EXPRESSING ABRAHAM’S MOURNING IS “ABRAHAM CRIED VERY MUCH FOR SOME TIME WHEN SARAH DIED.” IN TRANSLATION IT IS IMPORTANT THAT THE DESCRIPTION OF MOURNING REPRESENT BIBLICAL PRACTICE. IT MAY BE APPROPRIATE TO SAY IN A FOOTNOTE, FOR EXAMPLE, “THIS IS EQUIVALENT TO THE CUSTOM CALLED …,” IN WHICH A LOCAL MOURNING CUSTOM IS REFERRED TO.**

**GENESIS 23:3: ROSE UP FROM BEFORE HIS DEAD: THE POSITION OF THE MOURNER IS DESCRIBED AS SITTING ON THE GROUND IN JOB 2:13. ROSE UP PROBABLY REFERS TO GETTING UP FROM THE GROUND AND ENDING THE PERIOD OF MOURNING. HOWEVER, IN THE CONTEXT OF WHAT FOLLOWS, IT MAY SIMPLY BE SAYING THAT ABRAHAM LEFT ONE PLACE TO GO TO ANOTHER; TEV HAS “HE LEFT THE PLACE WHERE.…” HIS DEAD REFERS TO THE CORPSE OF SARAH, BUT TRANSLATORS SHOULD USE THE NORMAL WAY OF REFERRING TO THE BODY OF A DEAD PERSON IN THEIR OWN CULTURE; NOTE TEV “HIS WIFE’S BODY.” THE RSV TEXT GIVES THE IMPRESSION THAT ABRAHAM FINISHED MOURNING FOR SARAH AND THEN IMMEDIATELY BEGAN SPEAKING TO THE HITTITES, AS IF THEY WERE IN THE PLACE WHERE HE WAS MOURNING. IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO SEPARATE THE TWO EVENTS IN TIME AND SPACE. ACCORDINGLY, WE MAY TRANSLATE THE FIRST PART OF THIS VERSE “WHEN ABRAHAM HAD FINISHED THE TIME OF MOURNING FOR HIS DEAD WIFE, HE WENT TO SPEAK TO THE PEOPLE CALLED HITTITES.” OTHER WAYS OF EXPRESSING THE CHANGE OF SCENE THAT IS INVOLVED HERE ARE “… HE LEFT THAT PLACE WHERE THE BODY WAS, AND WENT TO SEE THE HEADMEN OF THE TOWN” AND “… HE GOT UP FROM HIS DEAD WIFE, AND WENT TO THE MEETING PLACE AT THE TOWN GATE WHERE ALL THE IMPORTANT PEOPLE WERE.” THE CONVERSATIONS, ACCORDING TO VERSE 10, TAKE PLACE AT THE GATE OF THE CITY. HITTITES TRANSLATES THE HEBREW “SONS OF HETH.” FOR DISCUSSION OF HITTITES SEE 10:15. THE HITTITES OR “SONS OF HETH” ARE ONE OF SEVERAL ETHNIC GROUPS WHO OCCUPIED ANCIENT CANAAN BEFORE THE ARRIVAL OF THE ISRAELITES. SEE 15:19–21; NUM 13:29; DEUT 7:1. TO AVOID IDENTIFYING THESE PEOPLE NEAR HEBRON WITH THE HISTORICAL HITTITES WHO LIVED NORTH OF PHOENICIA, SOME TRANSLATORS RETAIN THE LITERAL EXPRESSION. FRCL SAYS “THE DESCENDANTS OF HETH,” SPEISER “THE CHILDREN OF HETH,” TOB “THE SONS OF HETH.” TRANSLATORS MAY SAY HITTITES OR FOLLOW ONE OF THE MODELS CITED.**

**GENESIS 23:4: AT THIS POINT OF THE NARRATIVE THE NEGOTIATION BEGINS BETWEEN ABRAHAM AND THE HITTITES FOR HIS PURCHASE OF A PIECE OF LAND. IT IS IMPORTANT FOR TRANSLATORS TO UNDERSTAND THAT WHAT THE PARTIES ACTUALLY SAY IS NOT TO BE TAKEN AT FACE VALUE BUT HAS ITS MEANING IN THE CONTEXT OF THE NEGOTIATION, WHICH BOTH PARTIES KNOW WILL LEAD TO A SALE. NOTE PARTICULARLY THE COMMENTS BELOW ON THE HEBREW WORD “GIVE,” WHICH CAN ALSO MEAN “SELL” IN A CONTEXT LIKE THIS. IN A TEXT LIKE THIS IT IS IMPORTANT THAT READERS CLEARLY UNDERSTAND THE REAL INTENTIONS OF THE SPEAKERS, EVEN IF THEIR APPARENTLY POLITE AND GENEROUS WORDS ARE REPRODUCED IN TRANSLATION. I AM A STRANGER AND SOJOURNER AMONG YOU: STRANGER TRANSLATES A WORD REFERRING TO ONE WHO IS NOT A NATIVE OF THE COUNTRY AND SO A “FOREIGNER,” “ALIEN,” “OUTSIDER.” SOJOURNER TRANSLATES A WORD MEANING “SETTLER,” ONE WHO OCCUPIES LAND BUT DOES NOT OWN IT. THE COMPLETE IDEA OF BOTH EXPRESSIONS MAY BE STATED AS “SETTLED FOREIGNER,” “LAND-USING FOREIGNER.” TEV HAS “FOREIGNER LIVING HERE AMONG YOU,” AND FRCL “I LIVE AS A FOREIGNER AMONG YOU.” ANOTHER POSSIBLE MODEL IS “I LIVE HERE IN YOUR PLACE, BUT I AM A STRANGER.” AS A FOREIGNER ABRAHAM DOES NOT OWN PROPERTY, AND THEREFORE THE BURIAL PLACE FOR SARAH WOULD HAVE TO BE ON ANOTHER PERSON’S PROPERTY, UNLESS ABRAHAM CAN ACQUIRE OWNERSHIP OF SOME LAND. GIVE ME IS ADDRESSED TO THE HITTITES IN THE PLURAL. THE UNMARKED MEANING OF THE HEBREW WORD IS TRANSLATED GIVE, BUT IN THE CONTEXT OF A BUSINESS NEGOTIATION, IT IS FAR MORE LIKELY TO CARRY THE SENSE OF “GIVE FOR A PRICE” OR “SELL.” SPEISER AND TEV HAVE “SELL.” REB HAS “MAKE OVER TO ME SOME GROUND,” THAT IS, “TRANSFER OWNERSHIP TO ME.” NJB SAYS “LET ME HAVE,” WHICH INDICATES A REQUEST TO PURCHASE. PROPERTY AMONG YOU FOR A BURIAL PLACE TRANSLATES HEBREW “A BURIAL PLACE AMONG YOU.” TEV TRANSLATES THIS AS “SOME LAND,” AND THE CONTEXT MAKES CLEAR THAT THIS IS FOR A BURIAL PLACE. THAT I MAY BURY MY DEAD: IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT THIS EXPRESSION OR SIMILAR ONES OCCUR ALMOST LIKE A REFRAIN IN THIS CHAPTER. THE EXPRESSION IN ONE FORM OR ANOTHER IS REPEATED IN VERSES 6 (TWO TIMES), 8, 11, 13, 15, AND IN THE SUMMARY VERSE 19, IN WHICH SARAH’S NAME IS USED. ABRAHAM ASKS THAT THE LOCAL HITTITE LAND OWNERS SELL HIM A BURIAL GROUND SO HE CAN BURY SARAH, HIS DEAD WIFE. WE MAY TRANSLATE “SELL ME A PIECE OF LAND WHERE I CAN BURY MY DEAD WIFE,” “SELL ME A BURYING GROUND SO I CAN PLACE MY DEAD WIFE THERE.” IN SOME LANGUAGES IT IS NECESSARY IN THIS SPEECH FOR ABRAHAM TO SPEAK OF HIS SITUATION FIRST BEFORE PRESENTING HIS REQUEST FOR LAND; FOR EXAMPLE, “MY WIFE HAS DIED, AND SO NOW I WANT TO BUY.…” THIS WHOLE VERSE MAY ALSO BE EXPRESSED IN INDIRECT SPEECH, AS IN “… HE ASKED THEM ABOUT BUYING A SMALL PIECE OF LAND TO BURY THE BODY. HE HAD TO BUY LAND FROM THEM BECAUSE HE WAS A STRANGER IN THEIR COUNTRY.” OUT OF MY SIGHT: ONE THOUGHT REGARDING THIS PHRASE IS THAT A DEAD BODY WAS CONSIDERED TABOO OR UNCLEAN AND NEEDED TO BE PLACED OUT OF CONTACT WITH THE LIVING. THE DEAD BODY MUST BE DISPOSED OF BY BURIAL. SOME ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS USE THE EXPRESSION “REMOVE MY DEAD FOR BURIAL,” WHICH HAS THE SENSE OF DISPOSING OF OR PUTTING AWAY THE DEAD BODY. HOWEVER, THE EXPRESSION “SO THAT I MAY BURY” INCLUDES DISPOSING OF THE BODY AND THEREFORE PUTTING IT OUT OF … SIGHT.**

**GENESIS 23:5–6: THE HITTITES ANSWERED ABRAHAM: ABRAHAM HAS MADE A REQUEST IN VERSE 4. CONSEQUENTLY, THE TRANSLATION OF ANSWERED SHOULD BE APPROPRIATE FOR REPLYING TO A REQUEST. THE HEBREW OF VERSE 5 IS LITERALLY “ANSWERED ABRAHAM SAYING TO HIM.” HOWEVER, “TO HIM” IN THIS POSITION IS CONSIDERED UNIDIOMATIC HEBREW, AND HOTTP AND OTHERS CONSIDER IT TO BE A MISUNDERSTANDING OF A CLOSELY SIMILAR PARTICLE MEANING “WOULD THAT” AS A PLEA OR REQUEST AND POSITION IT AS THE OPENING WORD OF THE SPEECH IN VERSE 6. THE LATTER FORM OCCURS IN VERSES 11, 13, 14–15. THE RECOMMENDATION IS THAT VERSE 5 BE TRANSLATED AS IN RSV, AND THAT VERSE 6 BEGIN WITH SOMETHING EQUIVALENT TO “PRAY” OR “PLEASE LISTEN TO US.” NOTE THAT TEV DOES THIS BY TRANSLATING VERSE 5 “THEY ANSWERED” AND BEGINNING VERSE 6 WITH “LISTEN TO US, SIR.” FRCL HAS MANAGED A MORE COURTEOUS STYLE BY TRANSLATING (5) “THE DESCENDANTS OF HETH REPLIED: (6) DO US THE HONOR OF LISTENING TO US!” HEAR US: IT SHOULD BE NOTICED HOW THE EXPRESSION “HEAR ME” OR “HEAR US” IS USED AS A DISCOURSE MARKER. IN THE NEGOTIATION BETWEEN ABRAHAM AND THE HITTITES, THIS EXPRESSION DOES NOT SERVE MERELY AS AN ATTENTION-GETTER OR A REQUEST TO LISTEN TO THE SPEAKER BUT SIGNALS THAT A PROPOSAL OR COUNTERPROPOSAL IS TO BE PUT FORWARD. EACH TIME THE EXPRESSION IS USED, THE NEGOTIATION MOVES TO A NEW LEVEL. THIS IS IMPORTANT BECAUSE IN MANY LANGUAGES “LISTEN TO ME” OR “PLEASE HEAR ME” WILL BE UNDERSTOOD AS A REBUKE TO THE LISTENER FOR NOT PAYING ATTENTION. THEREFORE, TRANSLATORS SHOULD PAY PARTICULAR ATTENTION TO THE STYLE AND PROCEDURE OF THE INTERCHANGE BETWEEN ABRAHAM AND THE HITTITES. THE TRANSLATION OF “HEAR ME” OR “HEAR US” SHOULD SIGNAL TO THE READER THAT A PROPOSAL OR OFFER IS ABOUT TO BE PUT FORWARD. LORD: FOR DISCUSSION SEE 18:3. HERE THE REFERENCE IS TO A PERSON OF RANK, COMMONLY EQUATED WITH “SIR” AS AN ADDRESS FORM IN ENGLISH. THIS TITLE DOES NOT SUGGEST THAT ABRAHAM IS THE MASTER OR SOMEONE IN AUTHORITY OVER THE HITTITES, BUT THAT HE IS RECOGNIZED AS A WEALTHY AND POWERFUL PERSON WHO MERITS THEIR RESPECT. THE TERM CHOSEN IN TRANSLATION SHOULD REFLECT THESE FACTORS. RSV REFLECTS THE HEBREW MY LORD. THIS MAY SEEM STRANGE BECAUSE THE HITTITES IS THE SUBJECT OF ANSWERED. THEREFORE, WE EXPECT “OUR LORD.” TRANSLATORS MAY FIND IT NECESSARY TO ADJUST MY LORD TO “OUR LORD,” OR TO SAY SOMETHING LIKE TEV, “LISTEN TO US, SIR.” MIGHTY PRINCE TRANSLATES “PRINCE OF GOD [’ELOHIM].” AS VON RAD POINTS OUT, THIS EXPRESSION IN THE MINDS OF THE HITTITES MEANT LITTLE MORE THAN A POLITE TITLE. TO LATER ISRAELITE READERS IT WAS “A LOFTY TITLE OF HONOR WITH WHICH FAITH REVERED ABRAHAM.” THIS TITLE CONTRASTS WITH THE LOWLY DESCRIPTION OF “STRANGER AND SOJOURNER,” WHICH ABRAHAM GIVES HIMSELF IN VERSE 4. FOR FURTHER EXPLANATION OF THE USE OF “GOD” AS A DESCRIPTIVE TERM, SEE 1:2. AMONG US DOES NOT MEAN THAT THE HITTITES CONSIDER ABRAHAM TO BE ONE OF THEM BUT THAT THEY RECOGNIZE HIS PRESENCE AS PART OF THE LIFE OF HEBRON. WE MAY TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “HERE YOU ARE A MIGHTY MAN” OR “WE ACKNOWLEDGE YOU IN HEBRON AS A POWERFUL MAN.” BURY YOUR DEAD IN THE CHOICEST OF OUR SEPULCHRES: THIS REPLY IS NOT THE CONCRETE RESPONSE ABRAHAM IS SEEKING. IT REMAINS STILL AT THE LEVEL OF COURTEOUS OVERSTATEMENT; AND IF IT WERE TAKEN LITERALLY, IT WOULD NOT GIVE ABRAHAM ANY LEGAL TITLE TO THE BURIAL PLACE. YOUR DEAD REFERS TO SARAH, WHICH IS OFTEN RENDERED “YOUR DEAD WIFE.” CHOICEST REFERS TO THE BEST, OR MOST ATTRACTIVE GRAVE, OR WHICHEVER GRAVE ABRAHAM WOULD LIKE TO CHOOSE. SEPULCHRES TRANSLATES THE NOUN FORM OF THE VERB “TO BURY” AND REFERS GENERALLY TO THE BURIAL PLACE OR GRAVE. IN ENGLISH “SEPULCHRE” REFERS TO A TOMB OR BURIAL VAULT; BUT THIS RESTRICTED SENSE IS NOT REQUIRED HERE, AND TRANSLATORS SHOULD USE WHATEVER TERMS ARE APPROPRIATE FOR BURIAL IN THEIR OWN SITUATION, PROVIDED THAT THEY REFER TO BURIAL ON LAND AND NOT TO SOME OTHER MEANS OF DISPOSING OF A DEAD BODY SUCH AS CREMATION. NONE OF US WILL WITHHOLD FROM YOU HIS SEPULCHRE: THE SENSE OF THIS IS “NOT ONE OF US WOULD REFUSE YOU HIS BURIAL GROUND.” TEV EXPRESSES THIS SENTENCE POSITIVELY AS “ANY OF US WOULD BE GLAD TO GIVE YOU A GRAVE.” OR HINDER YOU FROM BURYING YOUR DEAD: RSV’S WORDING WITHHOLD AND HINDER CREATES A PARALLELISM THAT DOES NOT FULLY APPEAR IN THE HEBREW TEXT. WE MAY STAY CLOSER TO THE TEXT BY SAYING, FOR EXAMPLE, “NO ONE WOULD WITHHOLD HIS BURIAL PLACE FROM YOU TO PREVENT YOU FROM BURYING YOUR DEAD.” WE MAY ALSO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “NONE OF US WOULD REFUSE YOU A PLACE TO BURY YOUR DEAD.” THE LAST PART OF THIS VERSE MAY BE RESTRUCTURED IN A NUMBER OF WAYS TO ALLOW IT TO SOUND NATURAL IN TRANSLATION; TWO EXAMPLES ARE “YOU CAN BURY THAT BODY IN ANY GOOD BURYING PLACE OF OURS; WE WON’T REFUSE YOU” AND “YOU CAN BURY YOUR WIFE IN ANY OF OUR BURYING PLACES; JUST PICK OUT THE PLACE YOU WANT, AND THE OWNER WILL GIVE IT TO YOU.…”**

**GENESIS 23:7: AS IN RUTH 4 THESE NEGOTIATIONS ARE PROBABLY CONDUCTED WHILE PEOPLE ARE SEATED ON THE GROUND. THIS VERSE MOVES THE NEGOTIATION TO THE NEXT STAGE, WHICH MUST MAKE CONCRETE ABRAHAM’S REQUEST. ROSE AND BOWED TO THE HITTITES: THIS GESTURE OF COURTESY IS TO THANK THE HITTITES FOR THEIR AS YET VAGUE RESPONSE AND TO SHOW RESPECT FOR THEIR CONSIDERATION OF ABRAHAM AS A GREAT MAN. BOWED MEANS TO BEND THE BODY FORWARD FROM THE HIPS, NOT A MERE BOWING OF THE HEAD. PEOPLE OF THE LAND: THE HITTITES WERE THE PEOPLE WHO LIVED IN THE AREA OF HEBRON. THEY ARE THE NATIVE POPULATION AND THE LANDOWNERS. TEV DOES NOT REFER TO THEM BY THIS EXPRESSION. WE MAY SAY “WHO LIVED IN THE AREA,” “WHO WERE THE NATIVE CITIZENS,” “WHO WERE THE LOCAL PEOPLE.”**

**GENESIS 23:8: IN VERSE 8 ABRAHAM MOVES THE NEGOTIATION FORWARD. IF YOU ARE WILLING … HEAR ME: UP TO THIS POINT THE HITTITES HAVE BEEN QUITE WILLING TO ALLOW ABRAHAM TO BURY SARAH, BUT THEY HAVE NOT REPLIED TO HIS REQUEST TO “SELL” PROPERTY FOR THIS PURPOSE. THEIR COUNTERPROPOSAL WAS A COURTEOUS OFFER TO ALLOW HIM TO USE THEIR OWN BURIAL GROUNDS. THE HITTITES ARE REALLY INVITING ABRAHAM TO MAKE A FURTHER PROPOSAL, WHICH HE DOES NOW. HEAR ME MARKS THE INTRODUCTION OF THIS NEW PROPOSAL. AS POINTED OUT ABOVE, A LITERAL TRANSLATION OF HEAR ME MAY FAIL TO REVEAL ABRAHAM’S INTENTION. IN SOME LANGUAGES SOMETHING WILL BE REQUIRED EQUIVALENT TO “PLEASE CONSIDER,” “THINK ABOUT THIS,” “PLEASE LET ME ASK YOU,” OR “THIS IS MY REQUEST.” IN SOME LANGUAGES THIS IS SAID MORE FIGURATIVELY AS “I NOW HAVE TWO WORDS FOR YOUR EARS” OR “LET YOUR EARS HEAR A NEW WORD FROM ME.” OUT OF MY SIGHT IS REPEATED FROM VERSE 4. SEE DISCUSSION THERE. AND ENTREAT FOR ME EPHRON THE SON OF ZOHAR: ENTREAT TRANSLATES A VERB MEANING “REQUEST,” “PLEAD,” “PREVAIL ON.” THE HITTITES ARE ASKED TO DO THIS ON BEHALF OF ABRAHAM. HE IS ASKING THE HITTITES TO PERSUADE THEIR OWN COUNTRYMAN AND PROBABLY KINSMAN TO SELL THE CAVE. ABRAHAM HAS INFORMED HIMSELF NOT ONLY ABOUT THE PARTICULAR CAVE HE WANTS BUT ALSO WHO THE OWNER IS AND WHOSE SON HE IS. SOME TRANSLATIONS EXPRESS ENTREAT … EPHRON AS “PLEASE TALK TO EPHRON … AND ASK HIM IF HE IS WILLING TO SELL.”**

**GENESIS 23:9: THAT HE MAY GIVE ME THE CAVE OF MACHPELAH: GIVE IS “SELL” AS IN VERSE 4. MACHPELAH IS THE NAME OF THE AREA OR DISTRICT IN WHICH THE CAVE IS LOCATED. IN VERSES 17 AND 19 MACHPELAH IS DEFINED AS THE AREA TO THE EAST OF MAMRE, OR HEBRON. THE WAY CAVE OF MACHPELAH IS TRANSLATED WILL DEPEND UPON THE WAY A SMALL PLACE WITHIN A LARGER AREA IS REFERRED TO; THAT IS, “THE CAVE LOCATED IN THE AREA CALLED MACHPELAH.” IN THIS STAGE OF THE NEGOTIATIONS, ABRAHAM ASKS TO BUY THE CAVE ONLY. WHICH HE OWNS: THAT IS, THE CAVE THAT EPHRON OWNS, OR “THE CAVE ON EPHRON’S LAND.” IT MAY BE MORE NATURAL TO INDICATE OWNERSHIP HERE AS “HIS CAVE IN MACHPELAH THAT IS AT THE END OF HIS FIELD” OR “… AT THE EDGE OF HIS LAND.” FOR THE FULL PRICE REFERS TO THE CURRENT VALUE. ABRAHAM IS NOT NEGOTIATING FOR THE PRICE BUT FOR THE CAVE, AND WILL PAY THE PRICE IT IS WORTH AS LAND VALUES WERE KNOWN TO THESE MEN. WE MAY TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “LET HIM SELL IT TO ME FOR ITS TRUE PRICE,” “… FOR WHATEVER IT IS WORTH.” A TRANSLATION THAT SEPARATES THIS EXPRESSION TO THE END OF THE VERSE AS A SEPARATE SENTENCE SAYS “TELL HIM I WILL GIVE HIM THE RIGHT PRICE FOR THAT LAND.” IN YOUR PRESENCE MEANS THAT THE HITTITES WILL BE WITNESSES TO THE SALE, AND THEREFORE IT WILL BE LEGAL. THIS MAY BE TRANSLATED “HERE IN FRONT OF YOU [PLURAL],” “HERE WHERE YOU [PLURAL] ARE WITNESSES,” “WITH YOU [PLURAL] AS WITNESS TO THE SALE.” AS A POSSESSION FOR A BURYING PLACE: THIS MAY NEED TO BE RESTRUCTURED TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “SO THAT IT WILL BE MY BURIAL PLACE,” “AND I WILL OWN IT AS A GRAVE,” “AND THAT GRAVE WILL BECOME MY PROPERTY,” OR “SO THAT I CAN HAVE MY OWN GRAVEYARD.”**

**GENESIS 23:10: SOME ADJUSTMENTS MAY BE REQUIRED IN THE CLAUSE ORDER OF THIS VERSE SO THAT THE INFORMATION AT THE END OF THE VERSE DOES NOT OVERLOAD THE VERSE IN AN AWKWARD MANNER. NOTICE HOW TEV HAS MOVED FORWARD “ALL WHO WENT IN AT THE GATE OF THE CITY” TO RELATE TO THE HITTITES. NOW EPHRON WAS SITTING AMONG THE HITTITES: NOW TRANSLATES THE HEBREW CONNECTIVE WAW AS A TRANSITIONAL WORD. WE MAY ALSO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “WHILE ABRAHAM WAS SPEAKING, EPHRON WAS SITTING.…” A TRANSLATION THAT FOLLOWS THE TEV MODEL AND RESTRUCTURES SITTING AMONG … IS “THEY WERE ALL SITTING AT THE GATE OF THE TOWN … TO TALK ABOUT THIS BUSINESS, AND EPHRON TOO WAS THERE WITH THEM.” IN ANOTHER TRANSLATION THIS IS SHORTENED TO “EPHRON WAS THERE AT THAT MEETING.” AND EPHRON THE HITTITE ANSWERED ABRAHAM: THIS CLAUSE MAY BE MORE LOGICALLY UNDERSTOOD AS A CONSEQUENCE OF EPHRON’S PRESENCE, SINCE HE HAS HEARD THE DISCUSSIONS. ACCORDINGLY, WE MAY TRANSLATE “SO EPHRON SPOKE UP,” “THEREFORE EPHRON REPLIED TO ABRAHAM.” IN MANY LANGUAGES IT WILL NOT BE NECESSARY TO REPEAT THE NAME OF EPHRON, BUT SIMPLY TO SAY “… SO HE REPLIED TO ABRAHAM.” IN THE HEARING OF THE HITTITES IS LITERALLY “IN THE EARS OF THE HITTITES.” WE MAY ALSO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “WITH THE OTHER HITTITES LISTENING,” “WHERE THE OTHER HITTITES WERE,” OR “IN THE PRESENCE OF THE REST OF THE HITTITES.” OF ALL WHO WENT IN AT THE GATE OF HIS CITY: THE POSSESSIVE PRONOUN HIS USED WITH CITY IN THIS CONTEXT SEEMS TO EMPHASIZE THAT EPHRON BELONGED TO THAT PLACE AND WAS RESPONSIBLE TO THE PEOPLE THERE. FOR DISCUSSION OF GATE OF THE CITY, SEE 19:1. TRANSLATORS MAY FIND IT CLEARER TO SHIFT THIS INFORMATION FORWARD, AS IN TEV, AND TO PLACE IN THE HEARING OF THE HITTITES AT THE END OF THE SENTENCE. THEREFORE, WE MAY TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “ALL THIS TIME EPHRON WAS SITTING WITH THE OTHER HITTITES. SO, HE SPOKE UP BEFORE ALL THOSE WHO MET AT THE CITY GATE. WHILE THEY LISTENED, HE REPLIED TO ABRAHAM.”**

**GENESIS 23:11: NO, MY LORD: THERE ARE TWO WAYS TO INTERPRET NO. HOTTP CONSIDERS NO TO MEAN “PRAY,” “PLEASE,” A PLEA BASED ON THE EXPLANATION GIVEN IN VERSE 6. OTHERS INTERPRET NO TO BE TAKEN LITERALLY AS A VOICED OBJECTION TO ABRAHAM’S PROPOSAL. TRANSLATORS ARE DIVIDED IN THEIR INTERPRETATION. SOME PREFERRING TO RETAIN NO ARE SPCL, NEB, REB, NRSV, MFT, TOB, NIV, NJB, NJV. SOME THAT TRANSLATE WITH SOME FORM OF “PLEASE” ARE TEV (WHICH LEAVES IT TO BE UNDERSTOOD FROM THE STYLE OF ADDRESS), FRCL, NAB, GECL. IF TRANSLATORS CHOSE TO FOLLOW THE RECOMMENDATION OF HOTTP IN VERSE 6, WHERE A SIMILAR FORM IS CONSIDERED A POLITE PLEA OR REQUEST, THEY SHOULD CONTINUE TO DO SO HERE IN VERSE 11. MY LORD IS AS IN VERSE 6. IF TRANSLATORS CHOOSE TO RETAIN THE WORD NO, IT IS STILL IMPORTANT TO BE CLEAR ABOUT HOW EPHRON’S COUNTERPROPOSAL REJECTS ABRAHAM’S OFFER TO BUY THE CAVE. ON THE SURFACE IT APPEARS THAT HE REJECTS THE OFFER TO BUY IT AND INSTEAD OFFERS TO GIVE IT TO ABRAHAM FOR NOTHING. BUT IN REALITY, THE COUNTERPROPOSAL IS THAT ABRAHAM MUST BUY BOTH THE CAVE AND THE PIECE OF GROUND. HEAR ME SUGGESTS THAT EPHRON WILL NOW MAKE A COUNTERPROPOSAL. SEE THE COMMENTS ON VERSE 5. I GIVE YOU THE FIELD: EPHRON’S USE OF GIVE APPEARS TO MEAN “GIVE AS A GIFT,” “GIVE WITHOUT ANYTHING IN RETURN.” HOWEVER, IN THE CONTEXT OF THIS NEGOTIATION, THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT EPHRON DOES NOT MEAN THIS, AND THAT ABRAHAM IS NOW REQUIRED TO TURN DOWN HIS OFFER AND TO MAKE A FURTHER PROPOSAL, WHICH HE WILL DO IN VERSE 13. VON RAD COMMENTS: “EVEN TODAY THE SELLER AVOIDS THE COARSE WORD ‘SELL,’ WHICH ONE FEELS TO BE AN INSULT FOR THE HONORED BUYER. ONE WANTS TO ‘GIVE IT,’ ‘BESTOW IT,’ AND THUS OBLIGATES THE BUYER EVEN MORE WITH SUCH GENEROSITY. ABRAHAM ALREADY KNOWS FROM THIS NOBLE GESTURE THAT HE WILL HAVE TO PAY A GREAT DEAL.” AND I GIVE YOU THE CAVE THAT IS IN IT: BY MAKING THIS OFFER IN WHICH HE MENTIONS THE FIELD BEFORE THE CAVE EPHRON RAISES THE NEGOTIATION TO A NEW LEVEL. WE MAY TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “I GIVE YOU BOTH THE FIELD AND THE CAVE” OR “I MAKE A GIFT TO YOU OF BOTH THE FIELD AND THE CAVE.” A TRANSLATION THAT PUTS THE EMPHASIS EVEN MORE STRONGLY ON THE FIELD SAYS “I AM HAPPY TO GIVE YOU THE WHOLE PIECE OF LAND IN THAT PLACE, WITH THE CAVE THAT IS ON IT.” IN THE PRESENCE IS LITERALLY “BEFORE THE EYES.” THIS PHRASE MEANS THAT THOSE PRESENT ARE WITNESSES TO THE VERBAL TRANSACTION. SONS OF MY PEOPLE MEANS “MY FELLOW COUNTRYMEN,” “MY FELLOW HITTITES,” “THE PEOPLE I BELONG TO,” “THOSE AMONG WHOM I WAS BORN AND RAISED.” VERSE 11 MAY BE RENDERED “O, SIR, I COULD NOT ACCEPT THAT. BUT LOOK HERE PLEASE. I WILL MAKE YOU A GIFT OF BOTH THE FIELD AND THE CAVE. I MAKE THEM A GIFT TO YOU WITH MY COUNTRYMEN AS MY WITNESSES. SO NOW PLEASE BURY YOUR DEAD WIFE.”**

**GENESIS 23:12: THEN ABRAHAM BOWED DOWN: WE MAY ASSUME THAT ABRAHAM HAS REMAINED STANDING BEFORE THE HITTITES SINCE HE STOOD UP AND BOWED IN VERSE 7. AS IN VERSE 7, HIS BOW IS AGAIN A GESTURE EXPRESSING APPRECIATION FOR EPHRON’S OFFER. SUCH AN OFFER WOULD NOT LIKELY BE MADE TO SOMEONE WHO COULD NOT PAY THE PRICE OF THE FIELD. TEV “BUT” SUGGESTS THAT VERSE 12 IS IN CONTRAST TO SOMETHING IN VERSE 11. HOWEVER, ABRAHAM BOWS AGAIN, AND THE TRANSLATION SHOULD SIGNAL A REPEATED ACT; FOR EXAMPLE, “THEN ABRAHAM BOWED AGAIN.” SEE VERSE 7 FOR PEOPLE OF THE LAND.**

**GENESIS 23:13: HE SAID: ABRAHAM IS ADDRESSING EPHRON DIRECTLY. IN THE HEARING [EARS] OF THE PEOPLE OF THE LAND: THAT IS, “SO THAT ALL THE HITTITES COULD HEAR.” BUT IF YOU WILL, HEAR ME: HEAR ME SIGNALS TO EPHRON AND THE OTHERS THAT ABRAHAM IS ABOUT TO TAKE THE NEGOTIATION A FURTHER STEP, AS EPHRON NO DOUBT EXPECTED HIM TO. BUT ABRAHAM IS NOT MAKING ANY NEW PROPOSAL; HE IS SIMPLY AGREEING, AS HE KNOWS HE MUST, TO THE PURCHASE OF BOTH THE CAVE AND THE PIECE OF LAND. WE MAY TRANSLATE THIS, FOR EXAMPLE, “LISTEN PLEASE. [I AGREE TO WHAT YOU PROPOSE.]” I WILL GIVE YOU THE PRICE OF THE FIELD: IN VERSE 9 ABRAHAM WAS SEEKING TO PURCHASE THE CAVE ONLY. HOWEVER, EPHRON’S RESPONSE IN VERSE 11 INTRODUCED THE FIELD AS PART OF THE DEAL. SO NOW ABRAHAM IS AGREEING TO BUY THE FIELD THAT INCLUDED THE CAVE. WE MAY TRANSLATE “I WILL PAY YOU FOR THE WHOLE FIELD,” “I WILL BUY THE ENTIRE PIECE OF GROUND,” “I WILL BUY THE FIELD WITH THE CAVE IN IT.” ACCEPT IT FROM ME, THAT I MAY BURY MY DEAD THERE: THAT IS, “TAKE THE MONEY SO THAT I CAN BURY MY DEAD WIFE.”**

**GENESIS 23:14: EPHRON ANSWERED: ANSWERED MAY HAVE TO BE ADJUSTED TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “EPHRON THEN SAID” OR “THIS TIME EPHRON CAME BACK WITH.…”**

**GENESIS 23:15: MY LORD, LISTEN TO ME SHIFTS THE NEGOTIATION TO THE FINAL STAGE IN WHICH THE PRICE IS NOW TO BE NAMED. HERE LISTEN TO ME SHOULD BE EXPRESSED BY A SIMILAR WORDING TO THAT USED IN VERSES 6, 11, 13. IN ENGLISH WE MAY SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “LOOK AT IT THIS WAY,” “THINK ABOUT IT LIKE THIS.” A PIECE OF LAND WORTH FOUR HUNDRED SHEKELS OF SILVER: IN THIS MANNER EPHRON STATES HIS PRICE FOR THE LAND, BUT WITH THE RHETORICAL QUESTION THAT FOLLOWS, HE MAKES THE PRICE APPEAR AS INSIGNIFICANT. TEV EXPRESSES THE PRICE WITH “ONLY,” WHICH FITS THE CONTEXT WELL, “LAND WORTH ONLY.…” IN SOME LANGUAGES THE STRUCTURE OF THE HEBREW SENTENCE, WHICH RSV AND TEV RETAIN AS A SINGLE SENTENCE, IS TOO COMPLICATED; SO THIS COMMENT ABOUT THE VALUE OF THE LAND IS MADE INTO A SEPARATE SENTENCE: “THE PRICE OF THE LAND IS FOUR HUNDRED SILVER PIECES” OR “THAT LAND IS WORTH FOUR HUNDRED BITS OF MONEY.” IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO SAY FOR SURE WHETHER FOUR HUNDRED SHEKELS OF SILVER WAS A HIGH OR LOW PRICE, BECAUSE WE DO NOT KNOW THE VALUE OF LAND AT THAT TIME AND PLACE, NOR DO WE KNOW THE SIZE OF THE FIELD. THERE IS THEREFORE LITTLE POINT IN COMPARING THIS PRICE WITH THE PRICE PAID FOR FIELDS IN LATER BIBLICAL TIMES. HOWEVER, GIVEN ABRAHAM’S POSITION AS A FOREIGNER, AND HIS URGENT NEED FOR A BURIAL PLACE FOR HIS DEAD WIFE, WE ARE PROBABLY JUSTIFIED IN THINKING THAT THE PRICE ASKED FOR THE LAND WAS LIKELY TO HAVE BEEN VERY HIGH, IF NOT “AN EXORBITANT PRICE” (SPEISER). IN TRANSLATION LITTLE IS GAINED IN ATTEMPTING TO EQUATE THE VALUE OF A SILVER SHEKEL IN ABRAHAM’S TIME WITH MODERN CURRENCY. IN ORDER TO AVOID CONFUSION RESULTING FROM THE EVER-CHANGING VALUE OF A UNIT OF CURRENCY, IT IS BEST TO TRANSLATE “FOUR HUNDRED SILVER COINS,” OR BETTER, “… PIECES OF SILVER.” WHAT IS THAT BETWEEN YOU AND ME? THAT REFERS TO THE AMOUNT OF MONEY JUST NAMED BY EPHRON. THE POINT OF THE QUESTION IS TO MINIMIZE THE AMOUNT OF MONEY. BY ASKING THIS QUESTION EPHRON COMPARES THE WORTH AND IMPORTANCE OF MEN LIKE ABRAHAM AND HIMSELF TO THE MERE FOUR HUNDRED SILVER SHEKELS. LOOKED AT IN THIS WAY THE PRICE IS OF LITTLE IMPORTANCE; FOR ABRAHAM TO HAGGLE OVER THE PRICE WOULD BE TO ADMIT THAT HE WAS OF LESS WORTH THAN EPHRON SUGGESTED. ACCORDINGLY, ABRAHAM IS PREPARED TO PAY THE FULL PRICE WITHOUT FURTHER DISCUSSION. IN TRANSLATION IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO RESTRUCTURE EPHRON’S RESPONSE SO THAT THE POINT OF COMPARISON IS EASILY GRASPED. FOR EXAMPLE, “TO MEN OF OUR STANDING, IS A FIELD PRICED AT A MERE FOUR HUNDRED ANY GREAT THING? OF COURSE, NOT”; “TO MEN LIKE US, WHAT IS A PIECE OF LAND VALUED AT FOUR HUNDRED PIECES OF SILVER? WHY IT IS NOTHING AT ALL!” “THE LAND IS ONLY WORTH FOUR HUNDRED SILVER PIECES. AFTER ALL, WHAT IS THAT TO MEN OF OUR WORTH?” “THE PRICE OF THE LAND IS FOUR HUNDRED …, BUT TO YOU AND ME THAT’S NOTHING!” EPHRON CLOSES HIS OFFER BY REPEATING THE REFRAIN BURY YOUR DEAD.**

**GENESIS 23:16: ABRAHAM AGREED WITH EPHRON: THIS IS LITERALLY “HEARD EPHRON” AND SHOWS THAT THE FINAL STAGE HAS BEEN REACHED, WHICH IS THE HANDING OVER OF THE CASH PAYMENT. REB SAYS “ABRAHAM CLOSED THE BARGAIN WITH HIM.” TRANSLATORS SHOULD USE THE EXPRESSION THAT IS THE MOST NATURAL FOR CLOSING A DEAL WHEN MAKING A PURCHASE; FOR EXAMPLE, “ABRAHAM AGREED TO PAY THE PRICE THAT EPHRON HAD NAMED.” ABRAHAM WEIGHED OUT FOR EPHRON THE SILVER: WEIGHED TRANSLATES THE HEBREW VERB SHAKAL RELATED TO THE NOUN SHEKEL. DRIVER SAYS THERE WAS NO COINED MONEY, AND THAT “PRECIOUS METALS CIRCULATED IN THE FORM OF INGOTS OF KNOWN WEIGHT, WHICH UPON OCCASION OF ANY COMMERCIAL TRANSACTION WERE REGULARLY ‘WEIGHED’ AS A SECURITY AGAINST FRAUD.” IN LANGUAGE AREAS WHERE THE WEIGHING OF PRECIOUS METALS IS UNKNOWN, THE LOCAL EQUIVALENT SHOULD BE USED. IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO SAY “ABRAHAM COUNTED THE SILVER PIECES.” THE SILVER WHICH HE HAD NAMED: THAT IS, “THE AMOUNT OF SILVER HE HAD SAID” OR “THE FOUR HUNDRED PIECES OF SILVER HE HAD MENTIONED.” MOST TRANSLATIONS AVOID REPEATING THE TERM “SILVER” BY USING A TERM LIKE “AMOUNT” (TEV) OR “PRICE”; FOR EXAMPLE, “ABRAHAM COUNTED OUT THE RIGHT MONEY … HE GAVE THAT MAN FOUR HUNDRED SILVER PIECES.” IN THE HEARING OF THE HITTITES: SEE VERSES 10, 13. ACCORDING TO THE WEIGHTS CURRENT AMONG THE MERCHANTS: THE EXPRESSION IS LITERALLY “… PASSING OVER TO THE MERCHANT.” ACCORDING TO SPEISER “THIS MEANS THAT THE GOODS THAT WERE OFFERED IN PAYMENT WERE COMPUTED IN TERMS OF SILVER AT THE FIXED RATE THAT WAS CURRENT AT THE TIME.” TEV TRANSLATES “FOUR HUNDRED PIECES OF SILVER, ACCORDING TO THE STANDARD WEIGHTS USED BY THE MERCHANTS.”**

**WE MAY ALSO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE: • ABRAHAM CLOSED THE SALE WITH EPHRON. HE WEIGHED OUT [COUNTED] THE AMOUNT OF SILVER THAT EPHRON HAD ASKED FOR, WITH HIS COUNTRYMEN AS WITNESSES. THAT WAS FOUR HUNDRED SILVER PIECES USING THE MERCHANTS’ FIXED RATE [OR, … FIGURING THE WAY THE MERCHANTS DO].**

**GENESIS 23:17–18: THESE TWO VERSES ARE A SUMMARY OF THE PURCHASE EPISODE AND CONTAIN THE DETAILS OF THE VERBAL CONTRACT. THEY FIRST DESCRIBE THE PROPERTY PURCHASED, AND THEN STATE THE TRANSFER AND THE LEGAL WITNESS TO THE TRANSACTION. FOR CLARITY VERSES 17–18 MUST OFTEN BE MADE INTO SHORTER SENTENCES. SO, THE FIELD: SO, MARKS THESE VERSES AS A CONCLUSION OR SUMMARY. NOTE TEV “THAT IS HOW THE PROPERTY.…” IN SOME LANGUAGES THE CONCLUSION MAY BE STATED, FOR EXAMPLE, “WELL, THIS IS THE WAY ABRAHAM BOUGHT.…” WAS MADE OVER: THIS TRANSLATES THE OPENING WORD IN THE HEBREW TEXT, WHICH IN THE CONTEXT OF A PURCHASE HAS THE SENSE OF ESTABLISHING OR CONFIRMING THE LEGAL TRANSFER OF THE PROPERTY; “SO IT STOOD, WAS ESTABLISHED, WAS FIRM, THAT.…” SO, NEB/REB HAS “BECAME THE LEGAL POSSESSION OF,” AND NIV THE RATHER TECHNICAL “WAS DEEDED TO.” IN TEV THIS LEGAL SENSE IS EXPRESSED BY “IT WAS RECOGNIZED AS THE PROPERTY OF.” EXAMPLES OF HOW THIS IS HANDLED IN OTHER TRANSLATIONS ARE “THAT IS HOW THEY LEGALLY PASSED OVER …,” “THEY DID THIS IN THE PROPER WAY, AND THE HITTITES WHO CAME LATER KNEW THAT …,” AND “SO THE HITTITES WHO WERE THERE AT THAT MEETING TOOK THAT [PAYMENT] AS PROOF THAT EPHRON HAD HANDED OVER THAT LAND.…”**

**BECAUSE THE VOCABULARY IN VERSES 17–18 HAS ALL BEEN DISCUSSED IN THE OTHER VERSES, WE PRESENT HERE ONLY A MODEL TRANSLATION FOR THESE TWO VERSES: • 17 SO THIS IS WHAT ABRAHAM BOUGHT FROM EPHRON: HE BOUGHT THE FIELD IN THE DISTRICT OF MACHPELAH EAST OF MAMRE. THE FIELD INCLUDED THE CAVE ON THE LAND AND ALL OF THE TREES ON THE PROPERTY. 18 THIS PROPERTY WAS LEGALLY MADE OVER TO ABRAHAM IN THE PRESENCE OF ALL THE MEN MEETING IN THE CITY SQUARE WHERE THE HITTITES WERE WITNESSES.**

**GENESIS 23:19: AFTER THIS: THIS REFERS TO THE PURCHASE OF THE BURIAL PLACE, AND WE MAY NEED TO MAKE THIS CLEAR WITH SOMETHING LIKE “AFTER ABRAHAM HAD BOUGHT THE LAND,” “AS SOON AS THE BURIAL PLACE HAD BEEN BOUGHT.” BURIED SARAH HIS WIFE CLIMAXES THE ENTIRE EPISODE OF CHAPTER 23. THE REST OF THIS VERSE IS REPETITION. NOTE THAT TEV SAYS “IN THAT CAVE IN THE LAND OF CANAAN” AND THUS AVOIDS THE REPETITION OF THE HEBREW TEXT. HOWEVER, MOST MODERN TRANSLATIONS KEEP FIELD OF MACHPELAH EAST OF MAMRE (THAT IS, HEBRON). NOT ALL TRANSLATIONS INCLUDE (THAT IS, HEBRON), WHICH HOTTP CALLS A GLOSS, SOMETHING ADDED TO THE TEXT BY COPYISTS. NEVERTHELESS (THAT IS, HEBRON) IS FOUND IN ALL ANCIENT TEXT WITNESSES, AND SO HOTTP RECOMMENDS KEEPING IT. TRANSLATIONS THAT DO NOT USE PARENTHESES OFTEN SAY “THAT IS ALSO CALLED HEBRON.”**

**GENESIS 23:20: VERSE 20 REPEATS THE SUBSTANCE OF VERSES 17 AND 18 AND ADDS NOTHING NEW. MADE OVER TO ABRAHAM TRANSLATES THE SAME VERB AS USED IN VERSE 17, WHICH REB RENDERS “BECAME THE LEGAL POSSESSION OF ABRAHAM.” THE SENSE IS “WAS SOLD TO,” “WAS TRANSFERRED TO.” AS A POSSESSION FOR A BURYING PLACE: SEE VERSE 9. IN SOME TRANSLATIONS BURYING PLACE IS EXPRESSED MORE FULLY AS “A PLACE FOR BURYING [DEAD] MEMBERS OF HIS FAMILY.”**

**ABRAHAM SENDS HIS SERVANT TO GET A WIFE FOR ISAAC (24:1–67)**

**CHAPTER 24 IS A SINGLE STORY IN WHICH THE AGING ABRAHAM INSTRUCTS HIS HEAD SERVANT TO GO BACK TO HIS HOME COUNTRY IN MESOPOTAMIA TO GET A WIFE FOR ISAAC FROM ABRAHAM’S KINSMEN. THE EVENTS OF THE STORY CENTER ON THE UNNAMED SERVANT; BUT THE STORY REVEALS HOW IT IS THE LORD WHO SELECTS REBEKAH TO BE ISAAC’S WIFE. THIS CHAPTER, THE LONGEST IN THE BOOK OF GENESIS, TAKES UP ONE OF ABRAHAM’S LAST ACTS. THE STORY IS LAID OUT IN FIVE EPISODES, AND EACH EPISODE EXCEPT THE LAST CONTAINS A DEVELOPMENT OF TENSION OR A COMPLICATION THAT IS THEN RESOLVED WITHIN THAT SAME EPISODE. THE FIVE EPISODES BEGIN AT VERSES 1, 10, 28, 54, AND 62; AND IN THIS DISCUSSION EACH EPISODE WILL BE INTRODUCED AT THE POINT IN THE TEXT WHERE IT BEGINS.**

**EPISODE 1 (VERSES 1–9) THE FIRST EPISODE INTRODUCES THE STORY (VERSES 1–9). ABRAHAM INSTRUCTS HIS SERVANT TO SWEAR THAT HE WILL NOT ARRANGE FOR ISAAC TO MARRY A CANAANITE WOMAN BUT WILL GO TO HIS KINSMEN IN THE LAND OF HIS BIRTH TO OBTAIN A WIFE FOR ISAAC (VERSES 2–4).**

**THE FIRST SIGN OF COMPLICATION ARISES WHEN THE SERVANT OBJECTS THAT THE WOMAN MIGHT NOT AGREE, AND SO ASKS IF HE SHOULD TAKE ISAAC BACK TO MESOPOTAMIA (VERSE 5). ABRAHAM, WHO REFUSES TO ALLOW HIS SON TO GO BACK THERE, ASSURES THE SERVANT THAT THE LORD HAS PROMISED TO GIVE CANAAN TO HIS DESCENDANTS AND WILL SEND HIS ANGEL TO GUIDE THE SERVANT (VERSES 6-8). THE RESOLUTION OF THE TENSION COMES WHEN ABRAHAM ASSURES THE SERVANT THAT IF THE WOMAN REFUSES TO ACCOMPANY HIM BACK TO CANAAN, HE WILL BE FREE FROM THE OATH HE IS TO SWEAR (VERSE 8). THE SERVANT THEN SWEARS THE OATH (VERSE 9).**

**SUBDIVISION HEADING**

**TRANSLATORS WILL NEED TO CONSIDER WHETHER TO INCLUDE A HEADING AT THE POINT WHERE EACH OF THE EPISODES OF THIS STORY BEGINS, OR WHETHER TO HAVE ONLY A SINGLE HEADING HERE AT THE BEGINNING OF THE CHAPTER. MOST ENGLISH VERSIONS HAVE ONLY ONE HEADING; BUT SUGGESTIONS ARE GIVEN IN THE HANDBOOK FOR HEADINGS FOR EACH OF THE EPISODES.**

**THE HANDBOOK HEADING AT THIS POINT MAY REQUIRE IN SOME LANGUAGES THAT THE PLACE THE SERVANT IS SENT SHOULD BE NAMED; FOR EXAMPLE, “SENDS TO MESOPOTAMIA,” “SENDS HIS SERVANT TO ABRAHAM’S KINSMEN.” SOME OTHER HEADINGS ARE: “A WIFE FOR ISAAC” (TEV), “THE MARRIAGE OF ISAAC AND REBEKAH” (FRCL), “ABRAHAM SEEKS A WIFE FOR ISAAC” (SPCL), “THE MARRIAGE OF ISAAC” (NJB), “ABRAHAM’S SERVANT SEEKS A WIFE FOR ISAAC” (GECL).**

**GENESIS 24:1: NOW ABRAHAM WAS OLD: NOW TRANSLATES THE HEBREW WAW CONNECTIVE AND IS USED HERE AS AN OPENER OR TRANSITIONAL. HOWEVER, NOW IS UNDERSTOOD BY TEV AND OTHERS AS REFERRING TO THE TIME IN ABRAHAM’S LIFE WHEN THE EVENTS IN CHAPTER 24 TAKE PLACE. THIS STORY DOES NOT BUILD ON OR CONTINUE ONE THAT GOES BEFORE, BUT OPENS BY DRAWING ATTENTION TO ABRAHAM’S ADVANCED AGE AND GOD’S BLESSINGS. IT IS BECAUSE ABRAHAM IS VERY OLD THAT ARRANGEMENTS MUST BE MADE FOR HIS HEIR. VERSE 1 SERVES AS AN INTRODUCTION TO THE STORY WHOSE STORY LINE BEGINS WITH VERSE 2. IN SOME LANGUAGES THIS OPENING MAY BE EXPRESSED “WELL, ABRAHAM HAD BECOME A VERY OLD MAN,” “SOME YEARS HAD PASSED AND ABRAHAM HAD GROWN VERY OLD.” IT IS ALSO POSSIBLE TO SHIFT BLESSED ABRAHAM TO THE BEGINNING AND SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “THE LORD HAD BLESSED ABRAHAM IN EVERYTHING AND HE HAD BECOME A VERY OLD MAN” OR “… AND SO HAD LIVED TO BE VERY OLD.” IN LANGUAGES IN WHICH WORDS FOR OLD AS A DESIGNATION OF A PERSON’S AGE OFFER SEVERAL MEANINGS? IT WILL BE BEST TO SELECT A TERM THAT REFERS TO THE MOST ADVANCED AGE. WELL ADVANCED IN YEARS IS LITERALLY “GONE IN DAYS.” THIS EXPRESSION SERVES TO EMPHASIZE ABRAHAM’S AGE, WHICH MAY BE TRANSLATED “VERY OLD,” “REALLY OLD.” THIS EXPRESSION MAY BE TRANSLATED FIGURATIVELY IN SOME LANGUAGES; FOR EXAMPLE, “HE WAS OLD, WITH ONLY ONE HAIR LEFT.” IN MANY OTHER LANGUAGES ITS SENSE IS INCLUDED IN THE TERMS THAT ARE USED FOR “VERY OLD.” THE LORD HAD BLESSED ABRAHAM: FOR BLESSED SEE DISCUSSIONS AT 1:22; 2:3; 5:2; 9:1; AND PARTICULARLY 14:19. IN ALL THINGS: THAT IS, “IN ALL SITUATIONS,” “IN EVERYTHING HE DID.”**

**GENESIS 24:2: AND ABRAHAM SAID: AND IS NOT A SATISFACTORY TRANSITION FOR ENGLISH IN THIS CONTEXT. THIS SENTENCE BEGINS THE STORY LINE AND REQUIRES A TRANSITION THAT SEPARATES IT FROM THE INTRODUCTION IN VERSE 1. GECL, FRCL, SPCL SAY “ONE DAY ABRAHAM SAID.…” IN SOME LANGUAGES THIS USE OF SAID TO INDICATES TO READERS THAT THE SERVANT WAS ALREADY THERE WITH ABRAHAM. IN THESE LANGUAGES IT IS NECESSARY TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “ABRAHAM CALLED IN THE SERVANT … AND HE SAID TO HIM.…” SERVANT TRANSLATES A HEBREW WORD USED IN 14:15; 18:7; 20:8; 21:25. IN THESE PASSAGES THE MEANING RANGES FROM “SLAVE” TO “OFFICIAL.” ABRAHAM’S SERVANT IN THIS STORY IS A HIGHLY PLACED PERSON WHO IS TRUSTED WITH ABRAHAM’S WEALTH AS WELL AS WITH FAMILY AFFAIRS AS DELICATE AS OBTAINING A WIFE FOR ABRAHAM’S ONLY SON. ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS USE SERVANT TO MEAN SOMEONE WHO SERVES AND BELONGS TO A MASTER. OTHER LANGUAGES REFER TO THIS KIND OF INDIVIDUAL IN OTHER WAYS. IT WOULD BE INAPPROPRIATE TO USE A TERM MEANING A DOMESTIC SERVANT, HOUSEWORKER, OR TABLE WAITER. HOWEVER, SUCH TERMS AS “HELPER,” “ADMINISTRATOR,” “OVERSEER” ARE SOMETIMES USED. IN SOME LANGUAGES SUCH A PERSON MAY BE REFERRED TO AS “ONE WHO KEEPS HIS EYE OPEN,” “THE ONE WHO WALKS CLOSE TO THE BOSS,” “THE ONE ON THE CHIEF’S RIGHT HAND.” NOTE THAT THE SERVANT’S NAME IS NEVER GIVEN. HE IS “ABRAHAM’S SERVANT,” AND THUS THE FOCUS OF THE STORY IS NEVER ENTIRELY WITHDRAWN FROM ABRAHAM UNTIL THE CONCLUSION. (SOME THINK THE SERVANT IS ELIEZER, WHO IS REFERRED TO ONLY IN 15:2. HOWEVER, HE HAS NOT APPEARED IN ANY EARLIER ACCOUNT AND DOES NOT APPEAR AGAIN.) THE OLDEST OF HIS HOUSE: OLDEST TRANSLATES THE SAME HEBREW WORD APPLIED TO ABRAHAM IN VERSE 1. HE IS CALLED THE OLDEST BUT IS OBVIOUSLY NOT SO OLD AS TO BE UNABLE TO MAKE A CARAVAN TRIP TO MESOPOTAMIA AND BACK. HE IS “THE SENIOR SERVANT” (NJB), “THE CHIEF SERVANT” (NIV). WHO HAD CHARGE OF ALL THAT HE HAD: HAD CHARGE TRANSLATES A VERB MEANING TO RULE OR CONTROL AND, IN CONNECTION WITH POSSESSIONS, HAS THE SENSE OF “ADMINISTER,” “OVERSEE,” “LOOK AFTER” ALL THAT HE HAD MEANS ALL OF HIS PROPERTY, GOODS, POSSESSIONS FOR A PARALLEL EXPRESSION SEE 39:4, IN WHICH JOSEPH CARRIES OUT THE SAME DUTIES. PUT YOUR HAND UNDER MY THIGH: THE HEBREW CONTAINS A PARTICLE OF ENTREATY WITH THE WORD FOR PUT THAT GIVES THE COMMAND A POLITE TONE, SOMETHING LIKE “PLEASE PUT,” “I PRAY YOU TO PLACE,” “KINDLY LAY.” ABRAHAM IS CHARGING HIS SERVANT TO SWEAR AN OATH ACCOMPANIED BY A SYMBOLIC GESTURE THAT IS SAID TO BE A VERY ANCIENT CUSTOM. BY THIS SAME GESTURE JACOB LATER REQUIRED JOSEPH TO SWEAR TO HIM THAT JACOB’S BODY WOULD NOT BE BURIED IN EGYPT (47:29–31). THIGH IS NO DOUBT USED HERE AS AN INDIRECT OR FIGURATIVE WAY OF REFERRING TO THE GENITALS. IN 46:26 AND EXO 1:5 IN THE HEBREW TEXT, SONS ARE SAID TO COME FROM THEIR FATHER’S THIGH. HOWEVER, THE FULL MEANING OF THE GESTURE IS NOT CLEAR. SOME INTERPRET IT TO MEAN THAT THE PERSON ORDERING THE OATH (ABRAHAM) IS CALLING ON HIS DESCENDANTS TO MAKE THE OATH-TAKER (THE SERVANT) KEEP THE OATH, AND CALLING FOR HIS POSTERITY TO AVENGE HIM IF THE OATH-TAKER FAILS TO PERFORM HIS DUTY. ANOTHER INTERPRETATION IS THAT THE SYMBOLISM MEANS THAT THE OATH-TAKER WILL BE MADE INCAPABLE OF HAVING CHILDREN IF HE DOES NOT KEEP HIS WORD. IN THE CASES OF ABRAHAM AND JACOB, BOTH WERE NEAR DEATH AND WERE MAKING PROVISION FOR THE FUTURE. TEV’S RENDERING “BETWEEN MY THIGHS” CAUSES PEOPLE TO THINK OF THE GENITALS. HOWEVER, TRANSLATORS SHOULD AVOID ANY EXPRESSION THAT IS UNSUITABLE FOR PUBLIC READING. IN MANY LANGUAGES THERE ARE EUPHEMISMS, OR ROUNDABOUT WAYS, FOR REFERRING TO THE GENITALS THAT PEOPLE UNDERSTAND WITHOUT BEING OFFENDED. A TRANSLATION IN ONE LANGUAGE, FOR INSTANCE, IS “YOU HAVE TO MAKE ME A PROMISE. YOU CAN’T EVER BREAK THIS PROMISE. AND AS PROOF OF THIS PROMISE YOU HAVE TO TOUCH MY BODY.” IT IS NOT ESSENTIAL, HOWEVER, TO RETAIN THE ANCIENT GESTURE; FOR EXAMPLE, REB HAS DEPARTED FROM NEB’S EARLIER TRANSLATION AND SAYS “GIVE ME YOUR SOLEMN OATH.” TRANSLATORS MAY FIND THIS A SATISFACTORY MODEL. ON THE OTHER HAND, IF THE SYMBOLIC ACT IS RETAINED, ITS MEANING SHOULD BE GIVEN, AS IN TEV.**

**GENESIS 24:3: AND I WILL MAKE YOU SWEAR BY THE LORD: MAKE YOU SWEAR IS THE LITERAL HEBREW FORM. MORE NATURAL IN ENGLISH IS “AND SWEAR” OR “AND MAKE A VOW.” FOR DISCUSSION OF SWEAR SEE 14:22; 21:23. THE GOD OF HEAVEN AND OF THE EARTH: THIS EXPRESSION STANDS IN APPOSITION TO THE LORD; THAT IS, IT ADDS A TITLE OR DESCRIPTION TO THE NAME: “THE LORD WHO IS THE GOD OF HEAVEN AND THE EARTH.” GOD OF HEAVEN AND … MAY BE RENDERED AS “GOD WHO CREATED HEAVEN AND …,” “GOD WHO RULES HEAVEN AND …,” “GOD WHO IS OVER HEAVEN AND.…” STATED SIMPLY, WHAT ABRAHAM IS ASKING HIS SERVANT TO SWEAR OR PROMISE TO DO IN VERSES 3B–4 HAS TWO ELEMENTS: (1) A POSITIVE CONDITION REQUIRING THE SERVANT TO CHOOSE A WOMAN FROM AMONG ABRAHAM’S RELATIVES IN MESOPOTAMIA, AND (2) A NEGATIVE CONDITION WARNING HIM NOT TO CHOOSE A CANAANITE WOMAN. IN THE HEBREW TEXT AND MOST ENGLISH VERSIONS, THE ORDER OF THESE ELEMENTS IS 2, 1; THAT IS, THE NEGATIVE CONDITION IS STATED FIRST AND THE POSITIVE COMMAND LAST. HOWEVER, IN MANY LANGUAGES THIS IS NOT A NATURAL ORDER FOR GIVING INSTRUCTIONS, AND THE TEXT WILL NEED TO BE RESTRUCTURED TO THE ORDER 1, 2, OR AT LEAST TO GIVE THE ESSENTIAL PART OF THE COMMAND FIRST (“GET A WIFE FOR MY SON ISAAC”). SEE THE END OF VERSE 4 FOR ONE MODEL OF SUCH RESTRUCTURING. THAT YOU WILL NOT TAKE A WIFE FOR MY SON: TAKE A WIFE MEANS MORE THAN TO PICK OUT OR CHOOSE A WOMAN. IT REFERS TO MAKING THE MARRIAGE ARRANGEMENTS. THE EXPRESSION USED SHOULD REFLECT THE EXPRESSION USED FOR ARRANGING FOR OR CONTRACTING FOR A WIFE BETWEEN FAMILIES. THIS IS OFTEN SOMETHING LIKE “CAUSE MY SON TO MARRY” OR “MARRY MY SON TO.…” SPCL SAYS “THAT YOU WILL NOT ALLOW MY SON ISAAC TO MARRY.…” IN SOME LANGUAGES THE TERM FOR WIFE IS “WOMAN,” WHILE IN OTHERS IT IS NECESSARY IN THIS CONTEXT TO SPEAK OF “BRIDE” OR “FUTURE WIFE.” FROM THE DAUGHTERS OF THE CANAANITES: THE REFERENCE IS TO THE CANAANITE FEMALES, THAT IS, “FROM THE CANAANITE WOMEN.” TEV GENERALIZES BY SAYING “FROM THE PEOPLE HERE IN CANAAN.” AMONG WHOM I DWELL: THIS IS ADEQUATELY EXPRESSED BY TEV “HERE.” IN REFERENCE TO INTERMARRIAGE WITH CANAANITE WOMEN, SEE JOSH 23:12.**

**GENESIS 24:4: BUT WILL GO TO MY COUNTRY: EVEN IF THE TEXT IS NOT RESTRUCTURED AS SUGGESTED ABOVE, TRANSLATORS MAY FIND IT BEST TO BEGIN A NEW SENTENCE WITH VERSE 4. “I WANT YOU TO GO BACK TO MY COUNTRY.” MY COUNTRY MEANS “MY COUNTRY OF ORIGIN,” “THE COUNTRY IN WHICH I WAS RAISED.” TO MY KINDRED: THAT IS, “TO MY RELATIVES.” SOME TRANSLATIONS FILL THIS OUT TO “MY RELATIVES WHO ARE STILL LIVING THERE.” IN 12:1 THE LORD TOLD ABRAHAM “GO FROM YOUR COUNTRY AND YOUR KINDRED.…” IN 12:4 ABRAHAM DEPARTED FROM HARAN. SO, THE INSTRUCTION TO THE SERVANT IS TO RETURN TO THE AREA OF HARAN IN NORTHERN MESOPOTAMIA. AND TAKE A WIFE FOR MY SON ISAAC EXPRESSES POSITIVELY WHAT WAS SAID NEGATIVELY IN THE PREVIOUS VERSE. A NUMBER OF ACTIONS ARE INCLUDED IN TAKE A WIFE FOR, AND IN SOME LANGUAGES, THESE MUST BE MENTIONED SEPARATELY; FOR EXAMPLE, “FIND A WOMAN … AND BRING HER BACK SO THAT SHE CAN BE MARRIED TO MY SON.” IN SOME TRANSLATIONS CHOOSING THE WIFE IS LINKED MORE CLOSELY WITH GOING BACK TO ABRAHAM’S RELATIVES, BY SAYING “CHOOSE THE DAUGHTER OF ONE OF THEM FOR MY SON TO MARRY.”**

**A MODEL OF THE WAY VERSES 3B–4 MAY NEED TO BE REARRANGED IN TRANSLATION IS AS FOLLOWS: • HERE IS THE PROMISE I WANT YOU TO MAKE. YOU MUST FIND A WIFE FOR MY SON ISAAC. BUT YOU MUST NOT FIND HIS WIFE IN THIS COUNTRY OF CANAAN. NO! YOU HAVE TO GO BACK TO MY OWN COUNTRY, AND FROM MY OWN COUNTRYMEN YOU MUST GET A WIFE FOR MY SON.**

**GENESIS 24:5: THE SERVANT SAID: THE SERVANT NOW RAISES THE POSSIBILITY OF BEING UTEV AND OTHERS ARE CORRECT TO BEGIN VERSE 5 WITH “BUT.” PERHAPS THE WOMAN …: ANOTHER WAY OF INTRODUCING THIS DIFFICULTY IS SUGGESTED BY REB “WHAT IF THE WOMAN IS UNWILLING …?” IN A NUMBER OF TRANSLATIONS THIS IS EXPRESSED AS A QUESTION ABOUT THE SERVANT’S NEXT ACTION; FOR EXAMPLE, “IF THAT GIRL WON’T …, WELL WHAT WILL I DO?” IN SOME LANGUAGES IT IS ALSO NECESSARY TO MAKE CLEAR THAT THE WOMAN IS THE ONE WHO HAS BEEN CHOSEN; IN ONE TRANSLATION, FOR EXAMPLE, THE SERVANT SAYS “IF I CHOOSE A GIRL LIKE THAT, AND SHE DOESN’T WANT TO LEAVE … WHAT THEN?” UNWILLING TO FOLLOW ME TO THIS LAND: UNWILLING TO MAY ALSO BE TRANSLATED AS “REFUSES TO” (SPEISER) OR “DOES NOT WANT TO” (NJB). SOME TRANSLATIONS PUT IN WHAT THE TEXT DOES NOT ACTUALLY SAY ABOUT THE GIRL’S UNWILLINGNESS: “DOESN’T WANT TO LEAVE HER PLACE TO COME WITH ME.” FOLLOW ME HAS THE SENSE OF “COME BACK WITH ME,” “ACCOMPANY ME,” “RETURN WITH ME.” THIS LAND REFERS TO CANAAN, THE LAND WHERE ABRAHAM AND ISAAC ARE LIVING. MUST I THEN TAKE YOUR SON IS LITERALLY “… CAUSE YOUR SON TO RETURN.” TEV HAS “SHALL I SEND YOUR SON BACK?” TAKE MEANS THAT THE SON ACCOMPANIES THE SERVANT AT THE SERVANT’S INITIATIVE. “SEND” MEANS ONLY THAT THE SERVANT TAKES THE INITIATIVE TO RETURN THE SON. EITHER TRANSLATION IS POSSIBLE. THE LAND FROM WHICH YOU CAME: THAT IS, “YOUR NATIVE LAND.” THE EXPRESSION USED HERE MAY BE ADAPTED FROM “MY COUNTRY” IN VERSE 4.**

**GENESIS 24:6: THE REASON FOR ABRAHAM’S REPLY HERE IS GIVEN IN VERSE 7. THE REPLY IS ACTUALLY A STRONG NEGATIVE, WHICH WILL NATURALLY BEGIN WITH “NO!” IN MANY LANGUAGES; SPCL, FOR INSTANCE, HAS “NO, DO NOT.…” SEE TO IT TRANSLATES A COMMAND MEANING “TO BE ON GUARD,” “TO WATCH OUT,” OR “TO TAKE CARE.” TEV SAYS “MAKE SURE THAT YOU DON’T …,” AND NEB, REB “ON NO ACCOUNT ARE YOU TO.…” TAKE MY SON BACK THERE: TAKE MAY BE TRANSLATED BY THE SAME TERM USED BY THE SERVANT IN HIS QUESTION IN VERSE 5. THERE REFERS TO ABRAHAM’S NATIVE COUNTRY.**

**GENESIS 24:7: THIS VERSE SERVES AS THE REASON FOR ABRAHAM’S COMMAND TO HIS SERVANT IN VERSE 6 NOT TO TAKE ISAAC BACK TO MESOPOTAMIA. HOWEVER, IT CONTAINS TWO “WHO” CLAUSES, A QUOTATION, AND A CONSEQUENCE. ACCORDINGLY, IT WILL OFTEN BE NECESSARY TO MAKE SEVERAL ADJUSTMENTS. IF THE LOGICAL RELATION OF VERSE 7 TO VERSE 6 IS NOT CLEAR, IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO BEGIN VERSE 7 WITH SOMETHING EQUIVALENT TO “THE REASON I SAY THIS IS BECAUSE …” OR “THE REASON FOR THIS IS.…” IT MAY ALSO BE NECESSARY TO BREAK UP THIS LONG SENTENCE INTO SEVERAL SHORTER ONES. NOTE THAT TEV SHIFTS TO INDIRECT SPEECH FOR REASONS OF ENGLISH STYLE. THE LORD, THE GOD OF HEAVEN: THE GOD OF HEAVEN IS USED AS A TITLE IN APPOSITION WITH THE LORD. SOME TRANSLATORS FOLLOW THE SEPTUAGINT AND ADD, AS IN VERSE 3, “AND THE GOD OF THE EARTH.” HOWEVER, HOTTP GIVES THE HEBREW TEXT AN {A} RATING AND RECOMMENDS FOLLOWING RSV, OR WITH THE PLURAL “OF HEAVENS.” WHO TOOK ME FROM MY FATHER’S HOUSE: FATHER’S HOUSE IS DISCUSSED IN 12:1. LAND OF MY BIRTH MEANS THE LAND WHERE I WAS BORN? WHO SPOKE TO ME AND SWORE TO ME: THIS REFERS TO GOD SPEAKING TO ABRAHAM IN 12:1–3, 7; 13:14–17; 15:18–21. TO YOUR DESCENDANTS I WILL GIVE THIS LAND IS QUOTED FROM 12:7. YOUR DESCENDANTS REFERS TO ABRAHAM’S DESCENDANTS. VERSE 7 MAY NEED TO BE REWORDED IN INDIRECT STYLE; FOR EXAMPLE, “THE LORD GOD OF HEAVEN WHO TOOK ME … AND WHO SPOKE TO ME AND SWORE THAT HE WOULD GIVE THIS LAND TO MY DESCENDANTS, HE WILL SEND HIS ANGEL BEFORE YOU.…” HE WILL SEND HIS ANGEL BEFORE YOU: HE IS GOD. FOR ANGEL SEE 16:7. YOU REFERS TO THE SERVANT. THE PHRASE BEFORE YOU IS USED OF ANGELS GUARDING OVER, PREPARING THE WAY, GIVING A SUCCESSFUL OUTCOME IN EXO 23:20; 32:34; NUM 20:16. WE MAY TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “HE WILL SEND HIS ANGEL TO PREPARE THE WAY FOR YOU,” “HE WILL … TO GUARD YOU,” “HE WILL … TO LEAD YOU.” AND YOU SHALL TAKE A WIFE FOR MY SON FROM THERE: AND SUGGESTS A CONSEQUENCE THAT TEV BRINGS OUT: “SO THAT YOU CAN.…” THE SENSE OF THIS IS THAT THE SERVANT WILL BE SUCCESSFUL IN HIS MISSION, WHICH IS BROUGHT OUT MORE DIRECTLY BY TRANSLATIONS THAT SAY “AND HE [THE ANGEL] WILL HELP YOU TO.…” TAKE A WIFE IS AS IN VERSE 3.**

**HERE IS A MODEL FOR THE VERSE THAT TRANSLATORS MAY WISH TO FOLLOW: • THAT IS BECAUSE THE LORD, WHO IS THE GOD OVER ALL OF HEAVEN, TOOK ME FROM MY FATHER’S CAMP WHERE I WAS BORN. THIS IS WHAT HE PROMISED, “I WILL GIVE THIS LAND TO YOUR DESCENDANTS.” HE WILL SEND HIS ANGEL TO GUIDE YOU SO THAT YOU CAN BRING BACK A WIFE FOR MY SON.**

**GENESIS 24:8: IN THIS VERSE ABRAHAM RESPONDS TO THE SERVANT’S HESITATION TO ACCEPT THE ASSIGNMENT (VERSE), BY ASSURING HIM THAT HE WILL NOT BE PUNISHED IF THE WOMAN REFUSES. RSV BUT (RETAINED ALSO IN NRSV) CONTRASTS THE CONDITION THAT WOULD RESULT FOR THE SERVANT IN VERSE 5 WITH HIS BEING FREE FROM HIS OATH IN THIS VERSE. FOR FOLLOW YOU SEE VERSE 5. FREE FROM THIS OATH OF MINE: FREE TRANSLATES A WORD MEANING “CLEAN,” “PURGED,” THAT IS, “PURGED FROM GUILT” AND SO “FREE FROM GUILT,” AND SO THE SERVANT WILL BE FREE FROM THE PUNISHMENT THAT FAILING TO KEEP THE OATH WOULD BRING UPON HIM. WE MAY ALSO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “THIS OATH YOU TAKE WILL NOT CAUSE YOU TO BE PUNISHED.” IN THE CONTEXT OF OATHS, THE HEBREW TERM MEANS IN PRACTICE BEING FREE OR EXEMPT FROM OBLIGATIONS; SO, ANOTHER WAY OF RENDERING FREE FROM THAT IS FOLLOWED BY A NUMBER OF TRANSLATIONS IS “THIS PROMISE WILL NOT BIND YOU ANY LONGER.” OATH OF MINE: THAT IS, “THE OATH YOU SWEAR TO ME,” “THE OATH I MAKE YOU TAKE,” “THE VOW [PROMISE] YOU MAKE TO ME.” ONLY INTRODUCES A RESTRICTION HERE, SOMETHING THAT MUST NOT BE DONE. THE HEBREW TERM SOMETIMES ADDS EMPHASIS OR STRENGTH TO THE STATEMENT THAT FOLLOWS; SO TEV HAS “NOT UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES.” ANOTHER WAY OF EXPRESSING THIS IS “NO MATTER WHAT YOU DO, DON’T TAKE.…” YOU MUST NOT TAKE MY SON BACK THERE, REPEATS ABRAHAM’S DEMAND AGAINST ISAAC RETURNING TO MESOPOTAMIA. SEE THE WORDING IN VERSE 6.**

**GENESIS 24:9: SO, THE SERVANT PUT HIS HAND UNDER THE THIGH: SO, INTRODUCES A CONSEQUENCE. THE SERVANT’S FEARS ARE SET ASIDE, AND THEREFORE HE AGREES TO TAKE THE OATH. PUT HIS HAND … THIGH SHOULD BE RENDERED HERE AS IT WAS IN VERSE 2. ABRAHAM HIS MASTER: MASTER SHOULD BE RENDERED BY A TERM THAT A SERVANT WOULD USE TO REFER TO HIS MASTER, OWNER, OR CHIEF. IN LANGUAGES IN WHICH THE SERVANT-MASTER RELATIONSHIP DOES NOT EXIST, WE MAY NEED TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “ABRAHAM, WHO WAS THE ONE HE WORKED FOR.” IN SOME LANGUAGES THIS IS “ABRAHAM, HIS BIG BOSS.” SWORE TO HIM CONCERNING THIS MATTER: FOR SWORE SEE VERSE 3. CONCERNING THIS MATTER IS THE NARRATOR’S WAY OF REFERRING TO THE DETAILS OF VERSES 3–8. SOME TRANSLATIONS SAY SIMPLY “TO DO AS HE SAID.” HOWEVER, IN SOME LANGUAGES IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO SAY “SWORE TO HIM TO DO WHAT ABRAHAM HAD DEMANDED,” OR AS FRCL SAYS, “SWORE TO CARRY OUT HIS ORDERS.”**

**EPISODE 2 (VERSES 10–27) THE SECOND EPISODE DESCRIBES HOW THE SERVANT CARRIES OUT THE COMMISSION GIVEN HIM BY ABRAHAM (VERSES 10–14) THE LONG TRIP IS MADE FROM CANAAN TO THE CITY OF NAHOR IN MESOPOTAMIA. AT THEIR DESTINATION THE THIRSTY CAMELS ARE MADE TO KNEEL NEAR A WELL.**

**THE COMPLICATION FACING THE SERVANT NOW IS HOW TO DISCOVER THE BRIDE GOD HAS CHOSEN FOR ISAAC. TO BEGIN RESOLVING THIS PROBLEM THE SERVANT PRAYS THAT THE WOMAN WHO OFFERS HIM A DRINK AND OFFERS TO WATER HIS CAMELS SHOULD BE THE ONE GOD HAS CHOSEN (VERSES 12–14). THE FIRST TO DRAW WATER IS REBEKAH, WHO RESPONDS TO THE SERVANT’S REQUESTS JUST AS HE HAD ASKED GOD IN HIS PRAYER (VERSES 15–20). THE SERVANT STUDIES REBEKAH WHILE WAITING TO SEE IF SHE IS THE RIGHT ONE (VERSE 21). BY THE TIME THE CAMELS HAVE FINISHED DRINKING, THE SERVANT IS CONVINCED THAT REBEKAH IS GOD’S CHOICE FOR ISAAC, AND SO HE GIVES HER VALUABLE ORNAMENTS AND ASKS HER TO IDENTIFY HERSELF. WHEN HE LEARNS WHO SHE IS, HE THANKS GOD FOR GIVING HIM A SUCCESSFUL JOURNEY (VERSES 22–27). TRANSLATORS WISHING TO PROVIDE READERS WITH A HEADING FOR THIS EPISODE MAY SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “THE SERVANT IS LED TO REBEKAH,” “GOD LEADS THE SERVANT TO REBEKAH,” “THE SERVANT FINDS REBEKAH.”**

**GENESIS 24:10: TEN OF HIS MASTER’S CAMELS IS LITERALLY “TEN CAMELS OF HIS MASTER’S CAMELS,” WHICH NEB/REB TRANSLATE “TEN CAMELS OF HIS MASTER’S HERDS.” FOR DISCUSSION OF “CAMEL” SEE 12:16. THE WORD TRANSLATED DEPARTED IN RSV OCCURS IN THE HEBREW BUT DOES NOT FIT IN THE SENTENCE, BECAUSE THE SAME VERB OCCURS LATER IN THE SAME SENTENCE. HOTTP RECOMMENDS IT BE OMITTED; HOWEVER, THIS WILL DEPEND ON THE STRUCTURE OF THE TRANSLATOR’S LANGUAGE. TAKING ALL SORTS OF CHOICE GIFTS FROM HIS MASTER: TAKING IS SUPPLIED BY RSV. THE HEBREW TEXT HAS “AND ALL GOOD THINGS OF HIS MASTER WERE IN HIS HAND.” HOTTP RATES THE HEBREW AS {A} AND SAYS THE SENSE OF “AND ALL GOOD THINGS” IS THAT THE SERVANT TOOK TEN CAMELS “AND ALL THE BEST THINGS OF THE MASTER.” “BEST THINGS” REFERS TO GIFTS FROM ABRAHAM TO HIS RELATIVES IN MESOPOTAMIA. TEV INTERPRETS THIS CLAUSE TO REFER TO THE SERVANT “WHO WAS IN CHARGE OF ABRAHAM’S PROPERTY.” MOST MODERN TRANSLATIONS FOLLOW THE INTERPRETATION OF RSV, AND THIS IS THE ONE RECOMMENDED BY THE HANDBOOK. SOME TRANSLATIONS INCLUDE IN THE RENDERING OF ALL SORTS OF CHOICE GIFTS “… TO GIVE TO THEM THERE.” AND HE AROSE, AND WENT TO MESOPOTAMIA: SEE DISCUSSION OF AROSE FOLLOWED BY ANOTHER VERB OF ACTION IN 13:17. IN ENGLISH THIS EXPRESSION IS MOST NATURALLY TRANSLATED “HE WENT,” “HE SET OUT FOR.” MESOPOTAMIA TRANSLATES HEBREW ’ARAM-NAHARAIM (AS ALSO IN DEUT 23:4; JUDGES 3:8). ’ARAM REFERS TO THE COUNTRY OF THE ARAMEANS, WHICH AT THAT TIME EXTENDED FROM MESOPOTAMIA TO NORTHERN SYRIA. NAHARAIM MEANS “TWO RIVERS” AND REFERS TO THE TIGRIS AND EUPHRATES RIVERS IN MODERN IRAQ. THE WHOLE EXPRESSION APPEARS TO MEAN “THAT PART OF ARAM THAT IS BETWEEN THE TWO RIVERS,” WHICH SPEISER CALLS “CENTRAL MESOPOTAMIA.” IN SOME TRANSLATIONS THE INFORMATION “A LONG WAY TO THE NORTH” IS GIVEN WITH TO MESOPOTAMIA, TO HELP READERS WHO ARE NOT FAMILIAR WITH THE GEOGRAPHY OF THAT PART OF THE WORLD. TO THE CITY OF NAHOR: THIS MAY REFER TO THE CITY IN WHICH ABRAHAM’S BROTHER HAD LIVED, OR TO THE PLACE BY THAT NAME IN THE DISTRICT OF HARAN. TEV UNDERSTANDS IT TO BE “THE CITY WHERE NAHOR HAD LIVED IN NORTHERN MESOPOTAMIA.” FRCL SAYS “THE CITY OF NAHOR IN UPPER MESOPOTAMIA.” EITHER INTERPRETATION IS ACCEPTABLE. IN TRANSLITERATION NONE OF THESE PLACE NAMES WILL BE RECOGNIZABLE BY MANY READERS. HOWEVER, WE MAY HELP THE READER BY SAYING “TO THE CITY CALLED NAHOR IN THE REGION CALLED MESOPOTAMIA” OR “TO THE TOWN WHERE ABRAHAM’S BROTHER NAHOR LIVED IN THE AREA OF MESOPOTAMIA.” THE MAP OF THE ANCIENT WORLD, PAGE 18, SHOWS MESOPOTAMIA AND HARAN IN RELATION TO THE TIGRIS AND EUPHRATES RIVERS. IF FOOTNOTES ARE USED, WE MAY SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “NAHOR IS IN THE AREA OF HARAN IN WHAT IS NOW KNOWN AS NORTHERN IRAQ.”**

**GENESIS 24:11: BETWEEN VERSES 10 AND 11 THE SERVANT’S CARAVAN OF CAMELS HAS TRAVELED A DISTANCE OF APPROXIMATELY 800 KILOMETERS (500 MILES). VERSE 11 BEGINS AT THE END OF THE JOURNEY AND WITH NO TRANSITION. THEREFORE, IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO START VERSE 11 WITH SOMETHING LIKE “AFTER THE LONG TRIP HE REACHED THE CITY OF NAHOR,” “AFTER HIS LONG TRIP THE SERVANT ARRIVED OUTSIDE THE CITY,” “THEY TRAVELED A LONG TIME, AND WHEN THEY REACHED THE CITY.…” NOTE TEV “WHEN HE ARRIVED.” MADE THE CAMELS KNEEL DOWN: THE CAMEL KNEELS BY BENDING ITS FRONT LEGS AND LOWERING ITS BODY FIRST ON THE FRONT LEGS THEN ON THE BACK LEGS. IT IS THEN LYING WITH ITS LEGS DOUBLED BENEATH ITS BODY. IT IS NECESSARY FOR THE CAMEL TO LOWER ITS BODY BEFORE ITS RIDER CAN GET DOWN. IN SOME LANGUAGES IT IS NECESSARY TO SAY “HE MADE THE CAMELS LIE DOWN.” IF THIS STATEMENT SEEMS TO HAVE NO PURPOSE OR GIVES A WRONG IDEA, IT MAY BE HELPFUL TO SAY “TO GET OFF HE MADE THE CAMELS LIE DOWN” OR “HE MADE THE CAMELS KNEEL DOWN SO HE COULD GET TO THE GROUND.” OUTSIDE THE CITY BY THE WELL OF WATER: HERE THERE ARE TWO POSITIONS. IN SOME LANGUAGES THE MORE LOCALIZED ONE IS REFERRED TO FIRST: “BY THE WELL OUTSIDE THE CITY.” WELL OF WATER REFERS TO A DUG WELL. SEE 21:19. SINCE THIS SAME WELL IS REFERRED TO LATER IN THE STORY AS “A SPRING OF WATER,” SOME TRANSLATIONS SAY HERE “A WELL THAT HAD A SPRING IN IT” AND THEN USE JUST THE TERM “WELL” THROUGHOUT THE REST OF THE NARRATIVE. IN SOME LANGUAGES THERE MAY SEEM TO BE A CONFLICT BETWEEN “TO THE CITY” IN VERSE 10 AND OUTSIDE THE CITY HERE. A TRANSLATION THAT DEALS WITH THIS PROBLEM SAYS “HE ORDERED THE CAMELS NOT TO GO INTO THE CITY BUT TO KNEEL DOWN CLOSE TO THE WELL.…” AT THE TIME OF: THIS MAY NEED TO BEGIN A NEW SENTENCE, AS IN TEV “IT WAS.…” AT THE TIME OF EVENING REFERS TO THE LATE AFTERNOON, WHEN THE SUN IS DOWN FAR ENOUGH TO ALLOW SOME COOLING OF THE AIR. THE WATER IS DRAWN FOR THE EVENING MEAL AND TO GIVE WATER TO THE ANIMALS TO DRINK. WOMEN GO OUT TO DRAW WATER: DRAWING WATER FROM A WELL WAS MAINLY A WOMAN’S TASK (EXO 2:16; 1 SAM 9:11; JOHN 4:7). IN AREAS WHERE WELLS AND DRAWING WATER ARE UNKNOWN, A GENERAL TERM WILL USUALLY BE USED; FOR EXAMPLE, “WHEN WOMEN GO TO THE WATER PLACE TO GET WATER,” “… TO FILL THEIR GOURDS.” NOTE THAT TEV SPEAKS FROM THE VIEWPOINT OF THE WELL: “WOMEN CAME OUT TO GET WATER.”**

**GENESIS 24:12: HE SAID: HIS WORDS ARE ADDRESSED TO THE LORD, AND SO “HE PRAYED” OR “THIS IS WHAT HE PRAYED.” GOD OF MY MASTER ABRAHAM: THAT IS, “GOD WHOM MY MASTER ABRAHAM SERVES,” “… WORSHIPS.” GRANT ME SUCCESS TODAY: THE HEBREW SAYS LITERALLY “MAKE IT MEET [HAPPEN WELL] BEFORE ME.” JACOB IN THE GUISE OF ESAU USES THE SAME EXPRESSION IN 27:20. THE SERVANT IS ASKING FOR A FAVORABLE RESULT IN HIS UNDERTAKING. NEB/REB SAY “GIVE ME GOOD FORTUNE,” FRCL “GRANT ME TO MAKE A HAPPY ENCOUNTER,” GECL “GIVE ME GOOD FORTUNE IN MY PURPOSE.” SINCE READERS OF THE STORY ALREADY KNOW WHAT THE SERVANT HAD BEEN COMMANDED TO DO, SOME TRANSLATIONS MAKE THIS PRAYER MORE DIRECT; FOR EXAMPLE, “HELP ME FIND THAT GIRL TODAY.” I PRAY THEE REPRESENTS A PARTICLE WITH THE PREVIOUS VERB THAT IS EQUIVALENT TO “PLEASE.” SHOW STEADFAST LOVE TO MY MASTER ABRAHAM: STEADFAST LOVE TRANSLATES THE HEBREW CHESED, WHICH HAS THE SENSE OF “LOYALTY,” “KINDNESS,” “LOVE.” TEV TRANSLATES THE THOUGHT OF LOYALTY BY SAYING “KEEP YOUR PROMISE TO MY MASTER.” THIS IS A GOOD MODEL.**

**GENESIS 24:13: BEHOLD IS RENDERED “HERE” IN TEV AND OTHERS. THE SERVANT IS CALLING THE LORD’S ATTENTION TO THE SITUATION AND TO THE FACT THAT HE IS ABOUT TO MEET THE WOMEN WHO ARE COMING TOWARD THE WELL. HE IS STILL SPEAKING TO THE LORD. SPRING OF WATER: THE NARRATOR SPOKE OF THE “WELL OF WATER” IN VERSE 11. IN CHAPTER 16 “SPRING” AND “WELL” ARE USED TO REFER TO THE SAME SOURCE OF WATER. THERE DOES NOT APPEAR TO BE ANY REASON FOR SHIFTING FROM “WELL” TO SPRING HERE AND THEN IN VERSE 20 BACK TO “WELL.” IT IS PROBABLY BEST, THEREFORE, TO TRANSLATE EACH VERSE BY USING THE SAME TERM. DAUGHTERS OF THE MEN OF THE CITY IS A BIBLICAL WAY OF SAYING “THE YOUNG WOMEN OF THE CITY,” OR MORE GENERALLY “THE WOMEN OF THE TOWN,” “THE DAUGHTERS OF THE TOWN’S PEOPLE.” TO DRAW WATER: AS IN VERSE 11.**

**GENESIS 24:14: MAIDEN REFERS TO A YOUNG WOMAN OF MARRIAGEABLE AGE. IN VERSE 16 THE WORD IS REPEATED AND THE YOUNG WOMAN IS FURTHER DESCRIBED AS A “VIRGIN,” WITH AN ADDITIONAL REMARK ABOUT HER LACK OF SEXUAL EXPERIENCE. PRAY LET DOWN YOUR JAR REFERS TO LOWERING THE WATER JAR FROM THE WOMAN’S SHOULDER. IN THE RSV RENDERING OF THIS VERSE, THE REQUEST LET THE MAIDEN … LET HER BE THE ONE … IS REPEATED AS A FRAME AROUND THE IMAGINED CONVERSATION. THE HEBREW TEXT DOES NOT ACTUALLY USE A REQUEST FORM; IT IS LITERALLY “AND IT WILL BE [THAT] THE GIRL, THE ONE WHO I SAY TO HER … AND SHE SAYS …, YOU HAVE CHOSEN HER.…”**

**HERE IS ONE WAY THAT MAY SERVE AS A MODEL: • “… I WILL SAY TO ONE OF THE YOUNG WOMEN, ‘PLEASE LET ME HAVE A DRINK.’ IF SHE IS THE ONE YOU HAVE CHOSEN FOR YOUR SERVANT ISAAC, SHE WILL THEN SAY TO ME ‘YES, SIR, HAVE A DRINK.’ THEN SHE WILL ADD, ‘I WILL ALSO GET WATER FOR YOUR CAMELS TO DRINK.’ IN THIS WAY I WILL KNOW YOU HAVE DONE A GREAT KINDNESS TO MY MASTER.”**

**ANOTHER WAY OF ADJUSTING THE STRUCTURE OF THIS DIFFICULT SENTENCE IS FOR THE SERVANT TO GIVE THE WHOLE OF THE IMAGINED CONVERSATION BEFORE COMING TO THE “IF” ELEMENT; IN ONE TRANSLATION THIS IS DEVELOPED AS FOLLOWS: • “… I WILL SAY TO ONE GIRL, ‘GIVE ME SOME WATER.’ AND SHE WILL SAY, ‘ALL RIGHT OLD MAN. I WILL GIVE YOU SOME WATER. AND I WILL GET WATER FOR ALL YOUR CAMELS TOO.’ WHEN THAT GIRL TALKS LIKE THAT, WELL I WILL KNOW THAT SHE IS THE RIGHT GIRL, THE ONE YOU HAVE CHOSEN FOR YOUR SERVANT ISAAC.”**

**GENESIS 24:15: DONE SPEAKING: THAT IS, FINISHED SAYING THE WORDS IN VERSE 14, WHICH ARE ADDRESSED TO THE LORD AS A PRAYER. BEHOLD SIGNALS THAT THE FOLLOWING EVENT HAPPENS QUICKLY, EVEN SURPRISINGLY. WE MAY TRANSLATE “BEFORE HE FINISHED PRAYING, HE SUDDENLY SAW REBEKAH.” TRANSLATORS WILL NOTE THAT RSV AND SOME OTHER VERSIONS RETAIN APPROXIMATELY THE HEBREW SPELLING OF REBEKAH’S NAME. OTHER MODERN ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS USE THE ENGLISH SPELLING “REBECCA.” THE HANDBOOK WILL FOLLOW THE RSV SPELLING IN THE COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDED TRANSLATIONS, EXCEPT WHEN QUOTING ENGLISH LANGUAGE PRINTED EDITIONS THAT USE THE OTHER FORM. WHO WAS BORN TO BETHUEL THE SON OF MILCAH, THE WIFE OF NAHOR, ABRAHAM’S BROTHER: THE IDENTIFICATION OF REBEKAH INTERRUPTS HER SUDDEN APPEARANCE AND SHOULD MOST OFTEN BE PLACED AT THE END OF THE VERSE, AS IN TEV, SINCE REBEKAH HAS BEEN INTRODUCED BY NAME IN VERSE 15, SOME TRANSLATIONS PREFER TO USE HER NAME IN PLACE OF “SHE” IN THE VERSES THAT FOLLOW. IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO MAKE THE RELATIONSHIPS CLEARER BY FOLLOWING TEV. CAME OUT: THAT IS, CAME OUT OF THE CITY, NOT OUT OF THE WELL AREA. TEV AND OTHERS SAY “ARRIVED.” WE MAY ALSO SAY “HE SUDDENLY SAW REBEKAH COMING [APPROACHING].” WATER JAR UPON HER SHOULDER: WATER JAR REFERS TO A CLAY POT OR JAR. IN SOME CASES, IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO TRANSLATE MORE GENERALLY BY SAYING, FOR EXAMPLE, “WATER CONTAINER,” “THING FOR CARRYING WATER IN.” ALTHOUGH IN MANY AREAS A WATER JAR IS CARRIED ON THE HEAD OR BACK, IT IS PROBABLY BEST TO KEEP THE PICTURE AS STATED. READERS GENERALLY REALIZE THAT THE CUSTOMS OF OTHER PEOPLE DIFFER FROM THEIR OWN.**

**GENESIS 24:16: THE MAIDEN WAS VERY FAIR TO LOOK UPON: MAIDEN TRANSLATES THE FEMININE FORM OF THE WORD USED FOR ABRAHAM’S YOUNG MEN IN 14:24; THE SAME HEBREW WORD APPEARS IN VERSE 14. SHE HAS REACHED MARRIAGEABLE AGE. VERY FAIR TO LOOK UPON IS LITERALLY “VERY FAIR OF FACE,” WHICH MAY BE RENDERED, FOR EXAMPLE, “SHE WAS A VERY PRETTY GIRL,” “… A LOVELY YOUNG WOMAN,” “… HAD AN ATTRACTIVE APPEARANCE.” A VIRGIN REFERS, AS THE CONTEXT MAKES CLEAR, TO A YOUNG WOMAN WHO HAS NOT HAD SEXUAL INTERCOURSE. WHOM NO MAN HAD KNOWN: KNOWN AS AN EXPRESSION FOR SEXUAL RELATIONS WAS USED IN 4:1. SEE THERE FOR COMMENTS. IN THIS CONTEXT TEV SAYS “AND STILL A VIRGIN,” WHICH CLEARLY MEANS THAT SHE HAD NOT YET HAD SEXUAL RELATIONS. SHE WENT DOWN TO THE SPRING: SPRING AGAIN REPLACES “WELL.” SEE RECOMMENDATION IN VERSE 13. THE SPRING OR WELL IS LOCATED IN AN AREA LOWER THAN THE PLACE WHERE THE SERVANT IS. FILLED HER JAR: IT IS NOT STATED WHETHER THIS IS DONE BY LOWERING THE JAR INTO THE WELL OR DIPPING FROM IT. AND CAME UP: THAT IS, CAME BACK UP TO THE PLACE SHE HAD GONE DOWN FROM.**

**GENESIS 24:17: THE SERVANT RAN TO MEET HER: RAN TRANSLATES THE SAME VERB USED TO DESCRIBE ABRAHAM’S ACTION IN 18:7 WHEN HE PREPARED A MEAL FOR THE THREE GUESTS. THE IDEA IS ALSO CONVEYED BY NEB/REB “HURRIED.” AND SAID MAY NEED TO BE TRANSLATED HERE “AND ASKED HER,” THAT IS, “REQUESTED.” PRAY GIVE ME A LITTLE WATER TO DRINK: THE WORD USED HERE FOR DRINK IS NOT THE SAME AS IN VERSE 14. IN VERSE 17 THE IDEA EXPRESSED IS “GIVE ME A FEW SIPS.” THE EXPRESSION TENDS TOWARD UNDERSTATEMENT IN ORDER TO EXPRESS POLITENESS AND SOCIAL DISTANCE BETWEEN THE SERVANT AND THE GIRL. AN EQUIVALENT EXPRESSION SHOULD REFLECT THE SAME DEGREE OF COURTESY AND SOCIAL DISTANCE IN THE TRANSLATION. FROM YOUR JAR: IN THIS REQUEST WE DO NOT KNOW HOW THE SERVANT WILL DRINK. IF IT IS NECESSARY TO STATE THIS, SEE THE COMMENTS ON THE NEXT VERSE.**

**GENESIS 24:18: SHE SAID MAY NEED TO BE RENDERED “SHE ANSWERED.” THE VERB REBEKAH USES IS AGAIN DRINK AS IN VERSE 14. HER RESPONSE OFFERS MORE THAN THE SERVANT’S POLITE REQUEST. MY LORD EXPRESSES IN THIS CONTEXT AN ADDRESS FORM OF A YOUNG GIRL TO AN OLDER MAN, IN WHICH RESPECT IS SHOWN. SEE ALSO 18:3; 19:2; 23:6, 11, 15. IN SOME LANGUAGES HONORIFIC ADDRESS FORMS ARE ACCOMPANIED BY HONORIFIC PARTICLES AND VERB FORMS. AND SHE QUICKLY LET DOWN HER JAR UPON HER HAND: THAT IS, SHE LOWERED THE WATER JAR FROM HER SHOULDER AND HELD IT SO THAT THE SERVANT COULD DRINK FROM IT. SEE TEV. THE MANNER IN WHICH THE SERVANT DRINKS SHOULD BE ACCEPTABLE IN THE LOCAL LANGUAGE AND CULTURE. FOR EXAMPLE, IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO SAY “AND POURED SOME WATER INTO HIS CUPPED HANDS.”**

**GENESIS 24:19: WHEN SHE HAD FINISHED GIVING HIM A DRINK: THE NARRATOR DESCRIBES THE ACTIONS OF THE GIRL AS CORRESPONDING TO THE SERVANT’S PRAYER, AND SO IT IS BEST TO RETAIN THIS POINT OF VIEW. NOTE ON THE OTHER HAND TEV, “WHEN HE [THE SERVANT] HAD FINISHED.…” SHE SAID MAY NEED TO BE EXPRESSED AS “SAID TO THE SERVANT” OR “SAID TO HIM.” I WILL DRAW FOR YOUR CAMELS ALSO: THAT IS, “I WILL ALSO DRAW WATER FOR YOUR CAMELS.” HAVING IN MIND THE MOVEMENTS THAT ARE INVOLVED IN THIS ACTION, ONE TRANSLATION SAYS “WAIT HERE. I WILL GO AND BRING WATER FOR YOUR CAMELS TO DRINK.…” UNTIL THEY HAVE DONE DRINKING: THIS MEANS “UNTIL THEY HAVE HAD ENOUGH,” “UNTIL THEY ARE FILLED.” IN SOME LANGUAGES THE WORD FOR DRINK IN REFERENCE TO HUMAN BEINGS OR ANIMALS IS DIFFERENT.**

**GENESIS 24:20: SO, SHE QUICKLY EMPTIED HER JAR: SO, SIGNALS A CONSEQUENCE. THIS MAY OR MAY NOT BE REQUIRED IN THE DISCOURSE. INTO THE TROUGH: NOTHING HAS BEEN SAID ABOUT AN ANIMAL WATERING TROUGH BECAUSE THE ANCIENT READER EXPECTED IT TO BE THERE. IN SOME LANGUAGES, HOWEVER, IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO MAKE SOME ADJUSTMENT TO INTRODUCE THE TROUGH; FOR EXAMPLE, “THERE WAS A TROUGH WHERE ANIMALS DRINK, AND SHE QUICKLY EMPTIED HER JAR INTO IT.” IN AREAS WHERE DRINKING TROUGHS FOR ANIMALS ARE UNKNOWN, IT IS OFTEN NECESSARY TO USE A DESCRIPTIVE PHRASE SUCH AS “A STONE BOX WHERE ANIMALS DRINK” OR “A PLACE FOR POURING OUT WATER FOR ANIMALS TO DRINK.”**

**RAN AGAIN TO THE WELL: WELL IS AGAIN THE SAME WORD USED IN VERSE 11. IT WAS RECOMMENDED IN VERSE 13 TO RETAIN ONE WORD IN REFERENCE TO THE WELL THROUGHOUT THE CHAPTER.**

**GENESIS 24:21: THE MAN GAZED AT HER IN SILENCE: IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO PROVIDE A TRANSITION TO THIS STATEMENT; FOR EXAMPLE, “WHILE SHE WORKED,” OR “WHILE SHE CARRIED THE WATER.” THE MAN MAY NEED TO BE TRANSLATED “THE SERVANT,” TO AVOID GIVING THE IMPRESSION THAT THE PERSON WATCHING HER IS NOT THE SERVANT BUT SOMEONE ELSE. CARE SHOULD BE TAKEN IN THE TRANSLATION OF GAZED AT HER, AS IT SHOULD NOT SUGGEST THAT HE IS MERELY LOOKING AT HER BEAUTY. HE IS SEEKING TO KNOW IF GOD IS REVEALING THE RIGHT GIRL TO HIM. WORDS LIKE “STUDIED” AND “OBSERVED” MAY BE SUITABLE. IN SILENCE MEANS WITHOUT SAYING ANYTHING, WITHOUT SPEAKING. ONE WAY OF EXPRESSING THIS FIRST PART OF THE VERSE IS “THE SERVANT DID NOT SPEAK. HE JUST KEPT ON LOOKING.” TO LEARN WHETHER THE LORD HAD PROSPERED HIS JOURNEY OR NOT: PROSPERED TRANSLATES A FORM OF A VERB THAT MEANS “BRING TO A SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION,” “CAUSE TO TURN OUT WELL.” WE MAY TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “TO SEE IF THE LORD HAD MADE HIM SUCCEED,” “TO FIND OUT IF THE LORD HAD MADE HIS TRIP A SUCCESS,” “… HAD GIVEN HIM A SUCCESSFUL MISSION.” AS IN VERSE 12, SOME TRANSLATIONS EXPRESS THE SUCCESS OF THE MISSION IN TERMS OF ITS PURPOSE, THAT IS, FINDING A WIFE; FOR EXAMPLE, “HE WAS THINKING, ‘MAYBE THE LORD HAS BROUGHT THIS GIRL TO THE SPRING TO SHOW ME THAT SHE IS THE ONE TO BE THE WIFE.…’ ”**

**GENESIS 24:22: WHEN THE CAMELS HAD DONE DRINKING SERVES AS A TRANSITION TO THE SERVANT’S GIVING GOLD ORNAMENTS TO REBEKAH. THE MAN: SEE COMMENTS ON VERSE 21. TOOK A GOLD RING: IN SOME LANGUAGES IT IS NECESSARY TO SAY WHERE HE TOOK THE RING FROM; IN ONE TRANSLATION, FOR EXAMPLE, “HE PULLED OUT A GOLD RING FROM THE PACK SADDLE.” THIS AND THE FOLLOWING VERSES DO NOT SAY WHEN THE SERVANT GAVE REBEKAH THESE GIFTS. HOWEVER, SEE THE SERVANT’S REPORT IN VERSE 47. TEV AND OTHERS FOLLOW THE SAMARITAN PENTATEUCH, WHICH ADDS HERE “WHICH HE PUT ON HER NOSE.” HOTTP, WHICH RATES THE HEBREW TEXT AS {A}, UNDERSTANDS “WHICH HE PUT ON HER NOSE” TO BE A TRANSLATIONAL ADJUSTMENT TO THE TEXT OR TAKEN OVER FROM VERSE 47, AND RECOMMENDS FOLLOWING THE HEBREW. NEVERTHELESS, READERS MAY BE CONFUSED UNLESS SOME TRANSLATIONAL ADJUSTMENT IS MADE. THIS MAY BE DONE BY FOLLOWING TEV. ANOTHER WAY IS SUGGESTED BY FRCL, WHICH SAYS “WHEN THE CAMELS HAD FINISHED DRINKING, THE MAN GAVE THE YOUNG WOMAN A RING.…” GOLD RING REFERS TO A RING THAT IS NOT CLOSED, SO THAT IT CAN BE WORN IN THE NOSTRIL. THAT THE RING WAS PLACED IN THE GIRL’S NOSTRIL IS SHOWN IN VERSE 47. WEIGHING A HALF SHEKEL: THIS WEIGHT MAY BE SAID TO BE APPROXIMATELY SIX GRAMS (A QUARTER OUNCE) OF GOLD. ALTHOUGH THE MEASUREMENT GIVEN IN HEBREW IS A WEIGHT, IT WAS ALSO A MONETARY VALUE, AND THE IMPORTANT FACT FOR THE STORY IS CLEARLY THAT THE RING AND BRACELETS WERE GIFTS OF CONSIDERABLE VALUE. IN TRANSLATION A UNIT OF WEIGHT, WHETHER IT IS THE SHEKEL AS IN NJB AND NEB/REB (“HALF A SHEKEL”) OR SOME MODERN EQUIVALENT AS IN MFT (“A QUARTER OF AN OUNCE”) AND FRCL (“ABOUT SIX GRAMS”), MAY NOT CARRY THE SENSE OF GREAT VALUE FOR READERS. HOWEVER, THERE IS LITTLE POINT IN ATTEMPTING TO GIVE THE VALUE IN TODAY’S CURRENCY, BECAUSE WE DO NOT KNOW HOW MUCH A QUARTER OUNCE OF GOLD WAS WORTH IN THOSE DAYS, AND MODERN VALUES ARE CONSTANTLY CHANGING. TEV AND GECL SAY “AN EXPENSIVE GOLD RING,” WHICH IS PROBABLY THE BEST SOLUTION. TWO BRACELETS FOR HER ARMS WEIGHING TEN GOLD SHEKELS: IF THE TRANSLATOR WISHES TO EXPRESS THE GOLD IN WEIGHT, THE BRACELETS WEIGHED MORE THAN A HUNDRED GRAMS OR AROUND FIVE OUNCES; BUT AS IN THE CASE OF THE NOSE RING, IT IS THE SIZE OR VALUE THAT IS IMPORTANT IN THIS TEXT RATHER THAN THE WEIGHT. IN SPITE OF THIS A NUMBER OF MODERN VERSIONS FOCUS ON THE WEIGHT: EXPRESSING IT IN SHEKELS (NEB/REB, NJB), IN OUNCES (MFT), OR IN GRAMS (FRCL, SPCL). A BETTER APPROACH IS TAKEN BY TEV “LARGE” AND GECL “HEAVY,” WHICH FOCUS ON THE SIZE OF THE GOLD BRACELETS. WHICHEVER USAGE IS EMPLOYED, IT SHOULD APPLY TO BOTH RING AND BRACELETS. IN SOME TRANSLATIONS THE STATEMENTS ABOUT THE WEIGHT OR VALUE OF THE GIFTS ARE COMBINED AND PLACED AFTER THE REFERENCE TO BOTH ITEMS; FOR EXAMPLE, “… THE SERVANT TOOK A GOLD RING FOR DECORATING THE NOSE AND TWO GOLD CLASPS FOR REBEKAH’S ARMS. THE WEIGHT OF THE RING WAS ABOUT 5 GRAMS, AND THE WEIGHT OF EACH CLASP WAS ABOUT 100 GRAMS.” FROM VERSE 47 IT APPEARS THAT THE SERVANT PUT THESE ORNAMENTS ON REBEKAH AFTER SHE REPLIED IN VERSE 24 THAT SHE WAS THE DESCENDANT OF NAHOR. WE MAY THEREFORE COMPLETE VERSE 22 BY SAYING AT THE END OF VERSE 24 OR 25 “THEN THE SERVANT PUT THE RING IN HER NOSE AND THE BRACELETS ON HER ARMS.”**

**GENESIS 24:23: TELL ME WHOSE DAUGHTER YOU ARE: SINCE THE FOLLOW-UP QUESTION CONCERNS HER FATHER, TEV EXPRESSES THE FIRST AS “PLEASE TELL ME WHO YOUR FATHER IS.” FOR LANGUAGES THAT PREFER DIRECT SPEECH, THIS MAY BE EXPRESSED AS “PLEASE TELL ME. WHO IS YOUR FATHER?” THE NEXT QUESTION IS ASKED BEFORE REBEKAH CAN ANSWER THE FIRST. IS THERE ROOM IN YOUR FATHER’S HOUSEFOR US TO LODGE IN? US REFERS TO THE SERVANT AND OTHERS WHO HAVE ACCOMPANIED HIM ON THE JOURNEY, AND SO TEV SAYS “MY MEN AND ME.” LODGE TRANSLATES A FORM OF A VERB MEANING TO SPEND THE NIGHT. THE SERVANT IS SPEAKING OF A ONE-NIGHT’S STAY, EXPECTING TO BE ABLE TO DEPART THE FOLLOWING DAY. IN SOME LANGUAGES THIS QUESTION IS TOO ABRUPT AND REQUIRES SOME STATEMENT TO INTRODUCE THE REQUEST FOR LODGING; IN ONE LANGUAGE, FOR EXAMPLE, THE SERVANT SAYS “I AND MY MEN ARE LOOKING FOR A PLACE TO SLEEP. DO YOU THINK WE COULD COME AND STAY AT HIS HOUSE?”**

**GENESIS 24:24: SHE SAID TO HIM: THAT IS, “SHE ANSWERED HIM.” I AM THE DAUGHTER OF BETHUEL: REBEKAH IDENTIFIES HERSELF THROUGH HER MALE LINE, FATHER AND GRANDFATHER. THE TRANSLATION OF THIS SHORT LINEAGE SHOULD BE HANDLED IN THE MANNER MOST COMMONLY USED IN THE TRANSLATOR’S LANGUAGE. TEV GIVES ONE MODEL. FRCL SAYS “I AM THE DAUGHTER OF BETHUEL AND THE GRANDDAUGHTER OF MILCAH AND NAHOR,” GECL “MY FATHER’S NAME IS BETHUEL … HIS PARENTS ARE MILCAH AND NAHOR.”**

**GENESIS 24:25: SHE ADDED TRANSLATES “SHE SAID TO HIM.” RSV USES ADDED TO AVOID REPEATING “SAID.” TEV HAS PLACED “SHE ANSWERED” AT THE END OF VERSE 24 SO THAT IT NEED NOT BE REPEATED AT THE BEGINNING OF THIS VERSE. STRAW AND PROVENDER: STRAW REFERS TO THE STALKS OR STEMS OF GRAIN THAT REMAIN AFTER THRESHING. IN MESOPOTAMIA STRAW WAS MAINLY FROM WHEAT, OATS, OR BARLEY. PROVENDER (TEV “FODDER”) REFERS TO DRY FEED FOR DOMESTIC ANIMALS. IN THIS CASE IT WAS PROBABLY HAY OR OATS. THE USE OF THE STRAW WAS TO PUT DOWN IN THE PLACE WHERE THE ANIMALS WOULD SLEEP; SO, STRAW AND PROVENDER IS SOMETIMES TRANSLATED “FOOD FOR THE CAMELS AND A PLACE FOR THEM TO SLEEP.” ROOM TO LODGE IN IS AN OFFER OF SPACE, A PLACE. FOR LODGE SEE VERSE 23.**

**GENESIS 24:26: THE MAN BOWED HIS HEAD AND WORSHIPED THE LORD: THE MAN IS THE SERVANT, AS IN VERSES 21, 22. RSV TRANSLATES THE HEBREW VERB BOWED AS A BOWING OF THE HEAD. THE WORD FOR BOW USED HERE IS ALWAYS FOLLOWED BY THE VERB TRANSLATED WORSHIPED. HOWEVER, WORSHIPED ALSO TRANSLATES A WORD MEANING TO BOW DOWN TO THE GROUND, TO PROSTRATE ONESELF, BUT WHEN THE LORD IS MENTIONED THE WORD HAS THE SENSE OF WORSHIP. IN THIS CONTEXT THE SERVANT IS GIVING THANKS TO THE LORD, AND WE MAY TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “BOWED DOWN AND THANKED THE LORD,” OR AS FRCL SAYS, “THE MAN THANKED THE LORD BY BOWING DOWN ON THE GROUND.”**

**GENESIS 24:27: BLESSED BE THE LORD: BLESSED IS USED HERE IN THE SENSE OF PRAISING OR THANKING. FOR THE TRANSLATION OF, BLESSED BE THE LORD, SEE THE DISCUSSION AT 9:26; AND SEE THE SIMILAR EXPRESSION IN 14:20. FOR GOD OF MY MASTER ABRAHAM, SEE VERSE 12. IN MANY LANGUAGES WHAT THE SERVANT SAID IS ADDRESSED TO THE LORD IN THE SECOND PERSON AS A PRAYER: “LORD, GOD OF MY MASTER ABRAHAM, I PRAISE YOUR NAME. YOU HAVE.…” HAS NOT FORSAKEN HIS STEADFAST LOVE AND HIS FAITHFULNESS: THERE ARE TWO PROBLEMS IN THIS EXPRESSION. THE FIRST IS THE NEGATIVE STATEMENT, WHICH MUST OFTEN BE EXPRESSED AS A POSITIVE. ALTHOUGH SOME TRANSLATIONS RETAIN THE NEGATIVE STATEMENT (NIV “WHO HAS NOT ABANDONED,” NEB “WHO HAS NOT FAILED TO KEEP”), MORE OFTEN MODERN TRANSLATIONS EMPLOY A POSITIVE EXPRESSION LIKE TEV “WHO HAS FAITHFULLY KEPT.” THE SECOND PROBLEM IS THE DOUBLE EXPRESSION STEADFAST LOVE AND FAITHFULNESS. FOR STEADFAST LOVE (HEBREW CHESED) SEE DISCUSSION OF VERSE 12. FAITHFULNESS TRANSLATES A NOUN MEANING “TRUTH,” “PERMANENCE,” “FIRMNESS.” THE COMBINED PHRASE IS AN IDIOMATIC CONSTRUCTION IN HEBREW CALLED HENDIADYS (“ONE BY MEANS OF TWO”), IN WHICH LOYALTY OR KINDNESS IS CHARACTERIZED BY TRUTH OR PERMANENCE. THE EXPRESSION DOES NOT YIELD “STEADFAST GRACE AND TRUTH” (KJV) BUT RATHER “STEADFAST LOYALTY,” “TRUE KINDNESS.” TEV REARRANGES THIS AS A CLAUSE, “WHO HAS FAITHFULLY KEPT HIS PROMISE TO MY MASTER.” THIS IS A GOOD TRANSLATION MODEL. AS FOR ME, THE LORD HAS LED ME IN THE WAY IS A VERY LITERAL RENDERING OF THE HEBREW. THE SENSE IS “THE LORD HAS LED ME STRAIGHT TO.…” NEB HAS “I HAVE BEEN GUIDED BY THE LORD TO.…” HOUSEOF MY MASTER’S KINSMEN: RSV FOLLOWS THE HEBREW TEXT, WHICH HAS KINSMEN (PLURAL). SEE TEV “RELATIVES.” THE PLURAL FORM IS SUPPORTED BY HOTTP, ALTHOUGH WITH A {B} RATING. NOTE, HOWEVER, IN VERSE 48 THE WORD IS “KINSMAN” (SINGULAR). MOST OF THE ANCIENT VERSIONS HAVE THE SINGULAR FORM HERE AS DO MANY MODERN TRANSLATIONS. TRANSLATORS ARE FREE TO MAKE THEIR OWN CHOICE.**

**EPISODE 3 (VERSES 28–54A) IN THE THIRD EPISODE REBEKAH REPORTS HER ENCOUNTER AT THE WELL (VERSE 28), AND THE ATTENTION THEN SHIFTS TO HER BROTHER LABAN. LABAN INVITES THE SERVANT AND HIS MEN TO HIS HOUSEAND OFFERS THEM HOSPITALITY (VERSES 29–33A). BEFORE THEY BEGIN TO EAT THE SERVANT IS WORRIED THAT REBEKAH’S FAMILY MAY NOT AGREE TO THE MARRIAGE.**

**TO HELP RESOLVE THIS PROBLEM THE SERVANT RETELLS ALL THE EVENTS SURROUNDING THE TAKING OF THE OATH, ABRAHAM’S ASSURANCE, HIS OWN FEARS, HIS PRAYER AT THE WELL, AND HIS ENCOUNTER WITH REBEKAH (VERSES 33B–48). THE SERVANT CONCLUDES BY ASKING REBEKAH’S BROTHER AND FATHER IF THEY INTEND TO DO WHAT ABRAHAM IS REQUESTING (VERSE 49). THEY REPLY THAT THE LORD HAS DECIDED THE MATTER, AND SO THEY AGREE TO LET REBEKAH BECOME ISAAC’S WIFE (VERSES 24:50–51). THIS REPLY RELIEVES THE TENSION IN THE THIRD STAGE. THE SERVANT THEN THANKS THE LORD AGAIN AND GIVES GIFTS TO REBEKAH AND HER FAMILY. THE SERVANT AND HIS MEN ARE THEN ABLE TO ENJOY THEIR MEAL (VERSES 52–54A). TRANSLATORS MAY WISH TO GIVE THE READER HELP AT THIS POINT BY SUPPLYING A HEADING. WE MAY SUGGEST, FOR EXAMPLE, “THE SERVANT IN THE HOME OF REBEKAH’S FAMILY,” “THE SERVANT ARRANGES THE MARRIAGE WITH LABAN AND BETHUEL,” “THE SERVANT PAYS THE BRIDE PRICE TO REBEKAH’S FAMILY,” “THE SERVANT AND REBEKAH’S FAMILY AGREE ON THE MARRIAGE ARRANGEMENTS.”**

**GENESIS 24:28: THEN THE MAIDEN RAN: IT IS IMPORTANT FOR DISCOURSE CONSIDERATIONS TO OPEN THIS STAGE WITH AN INTRODUCTORY TRANSITION TO THE NEW DEVELOPMENTS. IN SOME LANGUAGES THIS MAY BE EXPRESSED, FOR EXAMPLE, AS “WHILE THE SERVANT WAS PRAYING …” OR “AFTER THEY HAD FINISHED SPEAKING.” TOLD HER MOTHER’S HOUSEHOLD: TOLD MAY BE RENDERED BY A WORD THAT MEANS TO REPORT OR EXPLAIN A SERIES OF HAPPENINGS RECENTLY WITNESSED BY THE SPEAKER. MOTHER’S HOUSEHOLD IS “HER MOTHER’S HOUSE.” THIS IS THE PLACE SHE RAN TO AND PROBABLY REFERS TO THE WOMEN’S AREA, OR HER MOTHER’S ROOM IN BETHUEL’S COMPOUND. THERE MAY BE OTHER WIVES, BUT IF SO, THEY ARE NOT MENTIONED. HER TELLING WAS PROBABLY TO EVERYONE PRESENT IN THE MOTHER’S QUARTERS. IN SOME TRANSLATIONS THIS IS EXPRESSED AS “SHE RAN BACK TO HER MOTHER AND TOLD EVERYONE IN THAT CAMP” AND “SHE RAN TO THE HOUSEAND TOLD EVERYTHING TO HER MOTHER AND ALL THE OTHER WOMEN.” ABOUT THESE THINGS REFERS TO ALL THAT HAPPENED AT THE WELL. FRCL SAYS “THE YOUNG WOMAN RAN TO ANNOUNCE THIS NEWS IN HER MOTHER’S HOUSE.” TEV SAYS “TOLD THE WHOLE STORY.” WE MAY ALSO SAY “RAN TO HER MOTHER’S PLACE AND REPORTED EVERYTHING THAT HAD HAPPENED.”**

**GENESIS 24:29–30: THERE IS A PROBLEM IN THE ORDER OF THE EVENTS IN THESE TWO VERSES. ACCORDINGLY, THE HANDBOOK SUGGESTS COMBINING THEM. THE DETAILS WILL BE PRESENTED BELOW. REBEKAH HAD A BROTHER WHOSE NAME WAS LABAN: THIS SENTENCE INTERRUPTS THE ACTION TO INTRODUCE AN IMPORTANT CHARACTER IN THE STORY. SOME LANGUAGES REQUIRE A MARKER TO SIGNAL THIS PAUSE TO FILL IN BACKGROUND INFORMATION. NOTE THAT TEV AND OTHERS SAY “NOW REBEKAH HAD A BROTHER.” IN LANGUAGES THAT DISTINGUISH BETWEEN YOUNGER AND OLDER BROTHER, LABAN SHOULD BE REFERRED TO AS “OLDER BROTHER.” IN GOING OUT TO OFFER HOSPITALITY, AS WELL AS IN TAKING THE LEAD IN THE MARRIAGE NEGOTIATIONS THAT FOLLOW, LABAN IS ACTING AS THE HEAD OF THE HOUSEHOLD. REBEKAH’S FATHER BETHUEL IS MENTIONED ONLY IN VERSE 50 (WHERE HE IS NAMED AFTER LABAN), AND HE IS NOT NAMED AS RECEIVING ANY OF THE PRESENTS THAT THE SERVANT GIVES. SO PERHAPS IT MAY BE ASSUMED THAT HE IS VERY OLD, TOO OLD TO DO ANY MORE THAN BE ROUSED TO GIVE HIS CONSENT TO THE PROPOSED MARRIAGE. AND LABAN RAN OUT TO THE MAN, TO THE SPRING: IN VERSE 29 LABAN IS SAID TO RUN OUT TO MEET THE SERVANT. THEN IN VERSE 30 THE ACCOUNT BACKS UP TO TELL WHY HE RAN OUT (INCLUDING A QUOTATION FROM REBEKAH). THEN AGAIN LABAN GOES TO THE WELL (SPRING) TO MEET THE SERVANT. IN ORDER TO AVOID AN AWKWARD SERIES OF MOVEMENTS, SOME ADJUSTMENTS ARE REQUIRED. TEV DOES NOT CHANGE THE ORDER OF EVENTS BUT MODIFIES THE VERB TENSE IN VERSE 30A FROM A TIME CLAUSE, “WHEN HE SAW THE RING,” TO A FLASHBACK, “LABAN HAD SEEN THE NOSE RING.” THIS MAY BE SATISFACTORY IN SOME LANGUAGES. ANOTHER POSSIBILITY IS TO COMBINE VERSES 29–30 AND TO SHIFT LABAN RAN OUT TO THE MAN, TO THE SPRING TO JUST BEFORE THE FINAL CLAUSE OF VERSE 30.**

**NEB/REB HAVE TAKEN THIS OPTION, WHICH MAY SERVE AS A TRANSLATION MODEL FOR SOME LANGUAGES: • REBEKAH HAD A BROTHER NAMED LABAN, AND, WHEN HE SAW THE NOSE-RING, AND ALSO THE BRACELETS ON HIS SISTER’S WRISTS, AND HEARD HIS SISTER REBECCA’S ACCOUNT OF WHAT THE MAN HAD SAID TO HER, HE HURRIED OUT TO THE SPRING. WHEN HE GOT THERE, HE FOUND THE MAN STILL STANDING BY THE CAMELS.**

**IN LANGUAGES THAT REQUIRE THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN OLDER AND YOUNGER, REBEKAH WILL BE CALLED “YOUNGER SISTER.” ARMS: HEBREW DOES NOT DISTINGUISH BETWEEN “ARMS,” “HANDS,” AND “WRISTS.” THE BRACELETS WOULD BE WORN ON THE WRISTS, OR ARMS, OR BOTH. NOTE THAT WHAT RSV PLACES IN QUOTES, “THUS THE MAN SPOKE TO ME,” IS TREATED BY MOST MODERN TRANSLATIONS AS INDIRECT SPEECH (TEV “HAD HEARD HER SAY WHAT THE MAN HAD TOLD HER”). IN THESE TWO VERSES SPRING REPLACES “WELL.” TRANSLATORS ARE ADVISED TO USE ONE TERM THROUGHOUT.**

**GENESIS 24:31: HE SAID: HE REFERS TO LABAN. COME IN SOUNDS LIKE AN INVITATION TO ENTER THE HOUSE. HOWEVER, IN VERSE 30 LABAN AND THE SERVANT ARE OUTSIDE THE CITY AT THE WELL. IN VERSE 32 THE SERVANT ENTERS THE HOUSE. THERE ARE TWO WAYS TO VIEW THE SPACE PROBLEM HERE. THE FIRST IS TO ASSUME THAT THE NARRATOR DOES NOT BOTHER TO GIVE US THE INFORMATION THAT HIS CHARACTERS HAVE MOVED FROM THE WELL TO THE HOUSE, AND THAT COME IN IS SPOKEN NEAR THE HOUSE. THE OTHER VIEW IS THAT LABAN’S SPEECH IN VERSES 31 AND 32A IS SPOKEN OUTSIDE THE CITY BY THE WELL WHERE REBEKAH LEFT THE SERVANT. THIS IS THE ASSUMPTION OF TEV, WHICH SAYS “COME HOME WITH ME.” OTHERS SAY “COME, LET US GO TO THE HOUSE” OR “COME WITH ME; COME BACK TO MY CAMP.” LABAN ADDRESSES THE SERVANT AS O BLESSED OF THE LORD. THIS IS USED AS A TITLE OF DISTINCTION. IT IS ALSO USED BY ABIMELECH ADDRESSING ISAAC IN 26:29. WE MAY ALSO SAY “YOU WHOM THE LORD HAS BLESSED” OR “YOU TO WHOM THE LORD HAS GIVEN GOOD GIFTS.” WHY DO YOU STAND OUTSIDE? OUTSIDE MAY REFER TO OUTSIDE THE TOWN OR OUTSIDE LABAN’S HOUSE. TEV ASSUMES AGAIN THAT THE PLACE IS OUTSIDE THE CITY; “WHY ARE YOU STANDING OUT HERE?” RSV AND OTHERS ASSUME LABAN’S INVITATION AND QUESTION ARE SPOKEN NEAR THE HOUSE. TRANSLATORS SHOULD MAINTAIN A VIEWPOINT THROUGHOUT THAT WILL NOT CONFUSE THE READER. AND IF THE VIEW IS TAKEN THAT LABAN SPOKE OUTSIDE THE HOUSE, THEN SOMETHING LIKE “LABAN BROUGHT THE MAN BACK TO HIS HOUSE[CAMP] AND SAID …” MAY BE NECESSARY TO MAKE THIS CLEAR. PREPARED THE HOUSE: PREPARED TRANSLATES A VERB FORM MEANING TO CLEAR OUT OBSTACLES, SET IN ORDER, ARRANGE. WE MAY TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “I HAVE GOT A PLACE READY FOR YOU” OR “I HAVE FIXED UP A PLACE FOR YOU.” A PLACE FOR THE CAMELS MAY ALSO BE INSIDE THE SAME HOUSE, AS THIS HAS LONG BEEN THE PRACTICE IN THE AREA. THIS MAY BE THE SENSE CONVEYED BY NEB “I HAVE PREPARED THE HOUSEAND THERE IS ROOM FOR THE CAMELS.”**

**GENESIS 24:32: SO, THE MAN CAME INTO THE HOUSE: CAME PLACES THE POINT OF VIEW INSIDE THE HOUSE. TEV AND OTHERS SAY “WENT INTO THE HOUSE.” UNGIRDED THE CAMELS: TO UNGIRD MEANS TO “UNLOAD,” “REMOVE THE LOADS,” “TAKE THE PACKS OFF.” THE HEBREW DOES NOT MAKE CLEAR WHETHER IT WAS THE SERVANT OR LABAN WHO UNLOADED THE CAMELS. SOME TRANSLATIONS PREFER TO USE A PASSIVE OR IMPERSONAL SUBJECT. TEV AND RSV MAKE LABAN THE AGENT. ANOTHER POSSIBILITY IS THAT “LABAN TOLD HIS SERVANTS TO TAKE OFF THE PACKS FROM THE CAMELS.” AND GAVE HIM: HEBREW DOES NOT HAVE HIM, WHICH OBSCURES THE SENTENCE IN RSV. STRAW AND PROVENDER ARE AS IN VERSE 25. HERE IT IS STATED THAT THEY ARE FOR THE CAMELS; THE WHOLE ACTION MAY BE EXPRESSED AS IN ONE TRANSLATION, “HE GAVE FOOD TO THE CAMELS AND PUT THEM IN THE PLACE WHERE THEY WERE TO SLEEP.” AND WATER TO WASH HIS FEET AND THE FEET OF THE MEN WHO WERE WITH HIM: FOR THIS ACT OF HOSPITALITY SEE 18:4 AND COMMENTS. THIS SENTENCE CAN OFTEN BE SHORTENED TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “HE BROUGHT WATER FOR THE SERVANT AND HIS MEN TO WASH THEIR FEET.”**

**GENESIS 24:33: THEN FOOD WAS SET BEFORE HIM TO EAT: THE HEBREW HAS A PASSIVE CONSTRUCTION THAT MUST OFTEN BE EXPRESSED AS ACTIVE; FOR EXAMPLE, “HE BROUGHT …” OR “LABAN BROUGHT.…” RSV REFLECTS THE HEBREW BEFORE HIM, THAT IS, THE SERVANT WHO IS THE ONE THE NARRATOR IS PAYING ATTENTION TO. SINCE THE SERVANT’S HELPERS HAVE JUST BEEN MENTIONED, IT MAY BE CLEARER TO SAY “HE BROUGHT THEM FOOD” OR “LABAN SET FOOD BEFORE THEM.” IT IS ALSO POSSIBLE TO EXPRESS THIS AS A TIME CLAUSE; FOR EXAMPLE, “WHEN FOOD WAS BROUGHT, THE SERVANT SAID …” OR “WHEN LABAN BROUGHT THEM FOOD, THE SERVANT SPOKE UP.” SEE TEV. BUT HE SAID: WHAT THE SERVANT SAID WOULD CAUSE SURPRISE IN THE LIGHT OF LABAN’S HOSPITALITY. ACCORDINGLY, REB SAYS “HE PROTESTED,” AND FRCL “HE DECLARED.” THE SERVANT’S PROTEST IS I WILL NOT EAT UNTIL I HAVE TOLD MY ERRAND; THAT IS, “I WILL NOT EAT UNTIL I EXPLAIN TO YOU WHY I HAVE COME HERE,” “… WHAT I AM HERE FOR,” “… TELL YOU WHAT MY MISSION IS,” “… TELL YOU MY STORY.” SOME WAYS IN WHICH TRANSLATIONS RENDER THIS SENTENCE ARE “I HAVE TO TALK FIRST BEFORE I EAT SUPPER,” “WE CAN’T EAT FOOD YET; THERE IS BUSINESS TO TALK ABOUT WHICH I MUST TELL YOU FIRST,” “I CAN’T EAT STRAIGHT AWAY; I MUST TELL YOU MY BUSINESS FIRST.” LABAN RESPONDS WITH SPEAK ON, THAT IS, “GO AHEAD AND TELL US,” “YES, PLEASE TELL US,” “SAY WHAT YOU WISH,” “LET US HEAR IT” (REB), “WELL GO ON. TALK!”**

**GENESIS 24:34: VERSES 34–48 TAKE UP THE SERVANT’S STORY, HIS FIRST-PERSON ACCOUNT OF THE IMPORTANT EVENTS THAT BROUGHT HIM TO LABAN AND BETHUEL. IN THE COMMENTARY THAT FOLLOWS, ONLY TERMS AND EXPRESSIONS NOT USED IN VERSES 1–33 WILL BE DISCUSSED. SO, HE SAID: AS THIS IS THE OPENING OF A RATHER LONG DISCOURSE OF PAST EVENTS, SOME REMOTE AND SOME VERY RECENT, SAID MAY NEED TO BE ADJUSTED. TEV HAS “HE BEGAN.” OTHER EXPRESSIONS USED IN THIS CONTEXT ARE “WELL, THIS IS HOW THINGS HAPPENED,” “I WILL NOW TELL YOU MY STORY.” IN SOME LANGUAGES THE LENGTH OF THIS STORY IS GREATER THAN WOULD BE NORMAL FOR A PASSAGE OF DIRECT SPEECH, AND IT IS ALSO QUITE COMPLICATED BECAUSE IT HAS A NUMBER OF REPORTED SPEECHES WITHIN IT. IT MAY THEREFORE BE DESIRABLE TO GIVE ADDITIONAL INDICATIONS FOR THE READERS AT POINTS WITHIN THE STORY THAT THE SERVANT IS STILL THE SPEAKER. SEE COMMENTS AT VERSES 42 AND 49.**

**GENESIS 24:35: THE LORD HAS GREATLY BLESSED MY MASTER: SEE VERSE 1. HE HAS BECOME GREAT: GREAT IS DEFINED IN THE WORDS THAT FOLLOW AS “HAVING MANY POSSESSIONS.” THEREFORE, THE SENSE IS “RICH,” “PROSPEROUS,” “WEALTHY,” OR “THE LORD HAS CAUSED HIM TO PROSPER.” FLOCKS (SEE 4:4) REFERS TO BOTH SHEEP AND GOATS. HERDS MEANS CATTLE. MENSERVANTS AND MAIDSERVANTS REFERS TO MALE AND FEMALE SLAVES. FOR DISCUSSION OF ASSES OR DONKEYS, SEE 22:3.**

**GENESIS 24:36: VERSE 36 INTRODUCES ISAAC AS ABRAHAM’S HEIR, THE ONE WHO WILL POSSESS ABRAHAM’S WEALTH WHEN HE DIES. SARAH … BORE A SON: THAT IS, “GAVE BIRTH TO A SON” OR “GAVE HIM [ABRAHAM] A SON.” SARAH HAS DIED BEFORE THE EVENTS OF THIS CHAPTER TAKE PLACE, AND IN SOME LANGUAGES, TRANSLATORS WILL HAVE TO TAKE THIS INTO ACCOUNT IN REFERRING TO HER; FOR EXAMPLE, “SARAH, THAT DEAD WIFE OF MY MASTER, LEFT BEHIND A SON. SHE HAD THAT SON WHEN SHE WAS AN OLD WOMAN.” WHEN SHE WAS OLD: IN 21:2 A SIMILAR STATEMENT IS MADE, IN WHICH SARAH GIVES BIRTH “IN HIS [ABRAHAM’S] OLD AGE.” HERE IN VERSE 36 THE SEPTUAGINT HAS “IN HIS OLD AGE.” HOWEVER, HOTTP RATES THE HEBREW TEXT AS {A}, “IN HER OLD AGE,” AND RECOMMENDS THE WORDING OF RSV AND TEV. AND TO HIM HE HAS GIVEN ALL THAT HE HAS: THE MASCULINE SINGULAR PRONOUNS MAY NEED TO BE CLARIFIED BY SAYING, FOR EXAMPLE, “AND ABRAHAM [MY MASTER] HAS GIVEN HIS SON ALL THAT MY MASTER HAS.” THE UNDERLYING MESSAGE IS THAT LABAN AND BETHUEL WOULD BE WISE TO FORM AN ALLIANCE THROUGH MARRIAGE WITH THE HEIR OF ABRAHAM’S GREAT WEALTH.**

**GENESIS 24:37–39: SEE THE WORDING OF VERSES 3–5. 3 AND I WILL MAKE THEE SWEAR BY THE LORD, THE GOD OF HEAVEN, AND THE GOD OF THE EARTH, THAT THOU SHALT NOT TAKE A WIFE UNTO MY SON OF THE DAUGHTERS OF THE CANAANITES, AMONG WHOM I DWELL: 4 BUT THOU SHALT GO UNTO MY COUNTRY, AND TO MY KINDRED, AND TAKE A WIFE UNTO MY SON ISAAC. 5 AND THE SERVANT SAID UNTO HIM, PERADVENTURE THE WOMAN WILL NOT BE WILLING TO FOLLOW ME UNTO THIS LAND: MUST I NEEDS BRING THY SON AGAIN UNTO THE LAND FROM WHENCE THOU CAMEST?**

**GENESIS 24:40: THE LORD BEFORE WHOM I WALK: IN 17:1 THE LORD APPEARED TO ABRAHAM AND INSTRUCTED HIM TO “WALK BEFORE ME AND BE BLAMELESS.” “WALK BEFORE ME” MEANS “LIVE IN CONFORMITY TO MY WILL,” “DO AS I ASK YOU,” “OBEY ME.” IN THIS CONTEXT WE MAY TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “IN WHOSE PRESENCE I HAVE LIVED” (NEB/REB), “WHOM I HAVE ALWAYS OBEYED” (TEV), OR “WHOM I HAVE ALWAYS FOLLOWED.” WILL SEND HIS ANGEL WITH YOU: SEE VERSE 8. PROSPER YOUR WAY: SEE “PROSPERED HIS JOURNEY” IN VERSE 21. AND YOU SHALL TAKE A WIFE FOR MY SON FROM MY KINDRED AND FROM MY FATHER’S HOUSE: SEE VERSES 4, 7. THIS IS A FULLER STATEMENT THAN IN VERSE 7, AND IT IS CLOSELY LINKED TO PROSPER YOUR WAY. THIS SUGGESTS TO SOME TRANSLATORS THE RENDERING “THEY ARE MY CLAN AND MY RELATIVES. IT WILL NOT BE DIFFICULT FOR YOU TO GET ONE OF THEIR GIRLS FOR MY SON TO MARRY.”**

**GENESIS 24:41L YOU WILL BE FREE FROM MY OATH IS USED BOTH AT THE BEGINNING AND AT THE END OF THIS VERSE. AS STATED IN VERSE 8 THE SERVANT IS TO BE FREE FROM THE PUNISHMENT OF THE OATH ONLY IF THE WOMAN IS UNWILLING TO RETURN FROM HARAN WITH HIM. RSV THEN MAKES IT APPEAR THAT YOU WILL BE FREE IS A CONSEQUENCE OF VERSE 40B. HOWEVER, THAT IS NOT THE CONDITION FOR BECOMING FREE FROM THE OATH: IT IS ONLY IF THEY WILL NOT GIVE HER TO YOU. THEREFORE, WE MAY TRANSLATE AS IN TEV, “THERE IS ONLY ONE WAY FOR YOU TO BE FREE.…” WE MAY ALSO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “IF YOU GO TO MY RELATIVES AND THEY WILL NOT GIVE HER [REBEKAH] TO YOU, YOU WILL BE FREE FROM THE OATH YOU SWORE TO ME. THAT IS THE ONLY WAY YOU WILL BE FREE FROM IT.” MY OATH IS AS IN VERSE 8, “THE OATH I AM MAKING YOU SWEAR TO ME.”**

**GENESIS 24:42: THIS IS A MAJOR TRANSITION POINT IN THE SERVANT’S STORY, AS HE REACHES THE POINT OF TELLING WHAT HAPPENED WHEN HE ARRIVED AT HIS DESTINATION. IT IS AN APPROPRIATE PLACE TO ADD SOMETHING LIKE “AND THE SERVANT CONTINUED” OR “THE MAN KEPT ON TALKING, AND HE SAID, …” SEE THE RECOMMENDATION CONCERNING SPRING IN VERSE 13. FOR LORD, THE GOD OF MY MASTER ABRAHAM, SEE VERSE 12.**

**GENESIS 24:43: SEE VERSES 13, 14. THE SERVANT USES THE REGULAR WORD FOR DRINK, NOT THE MODEST REQUEST FOR A FEW SIPS HE USED IN VERSE 17.**

**GENESIS 24:44: SEE VERSE 14. 14 AND LET IT COME TO PASS, THAT THE DAMSEL TO WHOM I SHALL SAY, LET DOWN THY PITCHER, I PRAY THEE, THAT I MAY DRINK; AND SHE SHALL SAY, DRINK, AND I WILL GIVE THY CAMELS DRINK ALSO: LET THE SAME BE SHE THAT THOU HAST APPOINTED FOR THY SERVANT ISAAC; AND THEREBY SHALL I KNOW THAT THOU HAST SHEWED KINDNESS UNTO MY MASTER.**

**GENESIS 24:45: SPEAKING IN MY HEART: THE SERVANT’S PRAYER WAS MADE SILENTLY, THAT IS, “BEFORE I HAD FINISHED PRAYING,” “BEFORE I HAD FINISHED MY SILENT PRAYER,” “… SPEAKING TO THE LORD IN MY HEART.” BEHOLD, REBEKAH: SEE VERSE 15. NOTE THAT THE KINSHIP IDENTIFICATIONS, WHICH THE SERVANT DID NOT LEARN UNTIL LATER, ARE NOW OMITTED, AS ARE THE NARRATOR’S DESCRIPTION OF REBEKAH’S APPEARANCE. PRAY LET ME DRINK: DRINK IS AS IN VERSE 43.**

**GENESIS 24:46: SEE VERSE 18. THE SERVANT DOES NOT REPORT REBEKAH’S ADDRESSING HIM AS “MY LORD,” BECAUSE IT WOULD BE UNSUITABLE FOR HIM TO SPEAK ABOUT HIMSELF IN THIS WAY WHILE RELATING THESE EVENTS TO HIS MASTER’S RELATIVES.**

**GENESIS 24:47: SEE VERSE 23. THE SERVANT IS ALSO CAREFUL NOT TO REPEAT HIS INQUIRING ABOUT HOSPITALITY FROM REBEKAH’S FAMILY. SEE THE TRANSLATION OF HER REPLY CONCERNING HER FAMILY LINE IN VERSE 24. ONLY HERE IN THIS VERSE DO WE READ THAT THE SERVANT PLACED THE RING AND BRACELETS ON REBEKAH. SEE SUGGESTIONS MADE IN VERSE 22.**

**GENESIS 24:48: SEE VERSES 4, 26, 27B. 4 BUT THOU SHALT GO UNTO MY COUNTRY, AND TO MY KINDRED, AND TAKE A WIFE UNTO MY SON ISAAC. 26 AND THE MAN BOWED DOWN HIS HEAD, AND WORSHIPPED THE LORD. 27 AND HE SAID, BLESSED BE THE LORD GOD OF MY MASTER ABRAHAM, WHO HATH NOT LEFT DESTITUTE MY MASTER OF HIS MERCY AND HIS TRUTH: I BEING IN THE WAY, THE LORD LED ME TO THE HOUSE OF MY MASTER'S BRETHREN.**

**GENESIS 24:49: HAVING NOW COMPLETED HIS FULL REPORT, THE SERVANT COMES TO THE POINT OF IT ALL. NOW THEN SERVES AS A TRANSITION FROM THE REPORT TO THE REQUEST. IN SOME LANGUAGES THIS SORT OF TRANSITION MAY REQUIRE CONCLUDING THE STORY AT THE END OF 48 OR AT THE OPENING OF 49, BEFORE THE REQUEST IS MADE. FOR EXAMPLE, “THAT IS WHAT HAPPENED,” “THIS IS THE END OF MY STORY,” “YOUR EARS HAVE NOW HEARD MY WORDS.” IN SOME LANGUAGES IT WILL ALSO BE NATURAL TO INSERT “THEN HE SAID TO THEM …,” OR IF THE WORDS THAT FOLLOW ARE IN THE FORM OF A QUESTION, “THEN HE ASKED THEM.…” IF YOU WILL … TELL ME; AND IF NOT, TELL ME: BY MEANS OF THIS DOUBLE “IF” CONSTRUCTION, THE SERVANT IS ASKING FOR A RESPONSE OR DECISION FROM THE HEAD MEN, LABAN AND BETHUEL. BY ITSELF THIS TYPE OF CONSTRUCTION WILL NOT BE THE MOST NATURAL WAY OF PUTTING THE REQUEST IN MANY LANGUAGES. IN SOME LANGUAGES A DIRECT QUESTION SHOULD COME FIRST, SUCH AS “NOW WHAT ABOUT IT?” OR “WELL, WHAT DO YOU SAY?” IN OTHER CASES, THE SPEECH WOULD BE OPENED WITH THE WORDS “NOW I WANT YOU TO TELL ME.…” DEAL LOYALLY AND TRULY: THIS EXPRESSION IS THE SAME AS THAT TRANSLATED “STEADFAST LOVE AND FAITHFULNESS” IN VERSE 27. THERE IT WAS POINTED OUT THAT THE TWO NOUNS FORM AN IDIOMATIC CONSTRUCTION IN WHICH THE FIRST “LOYALTY” OR “KINDNESS” IS CHARACTERIZED BY THE SECOND, AND SO “TRUE LOYALTY,” “FAITHFUL KINDNESS.” ACCORDINGLY, SPEISER TRANSLATES “TREAT MY MASTER WITH TRUE LOYALTY.” HOWEVER, IN THE PRESENT CONTEXT IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO EXPRESS THIS AS TWO CLAUSES AND SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “IF YOU ARE GOING TO DEAL LOYALLY AND TREAT HIM JUSTLY.” TEV RENDERS THE THOUGHT OF DEAL LOYALLY AS “FULFILL YOUR RESPONSIBILITY,” AND TRULY AS “TREAT HIM FAIRLY.” SUCH TREATMENT IS EXPECTED WITHIN THE KIN GROUP. THAT I MAY TURN TO THE RIGHT HAND OR TO THE LEFT TRANSLATES THE HEBREW LITERALLY. THE THOUGHT EXPRESSED MAY BE THAT THE SERVANT WOULD HAVE TO GO ELSEWHERE TO FIND A WIFE FOR ISAAC. IN THAT CASE WE MAY TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “SO THAT I MAY LOOK SOMEWHERE ELSE” OR “AND I WILL MAKE OTHER PLANS.” HOWEVER, THESE WORDS MAY HAVE AS THEIR INTENTION THE SERVANT’S WITHDRAWAL TO DECIDE HIS NEXT MOVE, SINCE A NEGATIVE RESPONSE FROM LABAN AND BETHUEL WOULD MEAN THAT THE SERVANT IS FREE FROM FURTHER OBLIGATION TO HIS MASTER. IN THIS CASE A MORE INDEFINITE REPLY MAY BE AS IN NEB/REB “AND I SHALL TURN ELSEWHERE,” OR TEV “AND I WILL DECIDE WHAT TO DO.”**

**GENESIS 24:50: LABAN AND BETHUEL REPLY “THE THING COMES FROM THE LORD.” THING (HEBREW DAVAR) IN THIS CONTEXT MEANS “THIS MATTER,” “THESE EVENTS,” OR AS REB SAYS, “SINCE THIS IS FROM THE LORD.…” WE MAY ALSO TRANSLATE THE THING AS “ALL THAT YOU HAVE TOLD US.…” COMES FROM THE LORD MAY NEED TO BE EXPRESSED DIFFERENTLY TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “THE LORD HAS DIRECTED ALL THESE EVENTS” OR “THE LORD HAS MADE ALL THIS HAPPEN.” WE CANNOT SPEAK TO YOU BAD OR GOOD: THIS EXPRESSION MAY BE REWORDED TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “WE CAN SAY NOTHING AT ALL” OR “THERE IS NOTHING WE CAN SAY.” HERE SPEAK OR “SAY” HAS THE SENSE OF “ARGUE,” “DISCUSS,” “COMMENT ON.” IT IS BEST TO CONNECT THE PREVIOUS CLAUSE AS THE REASON FOR THEIR STATEMENT; FOR EXAMPLE, “SINCE WHAT YOU HAVE TOLD US HAS COME FROM THE LORD, THERE IS NOTHING WE CAN ADD.” NJB TRANSLATES “THIS IS FROM STEPHEN YAHWEH; IT IS NOT FOR US TO SAY YES OR NO TO YOU.” FOR THE SAME EXPRESSION SEE 31:24, 29; 2 SAM 13:22.**

**GENESIS 24:51: THE SENSE OF THE WORDS IN VERSES 50 AND 51 IS THAT LABAN AND BETHUEL AGREE TO THE PROPOSAL THAT REBEKAH SHOULD GO BACK WITH THE SERVANT TO BE MARRIED TO ISAAC. IN SOME LANGUAGES IT WILL BE NECESSARY TO INCLUDE AT THIS POINT WORDS SUCH AS “ALL RIGHT,” “IT IS GOOD,” OR “WE-TWO AGREE.” BEHOLD, REBEKAH IS BEFORE YOU: BEHOLD SERVES TO POINT OUT THE PRESENCE OF REBEKAH. TEV TRANSLATES “HERE IS REBEKAH.” TAKE HER AND GO: MORE DETAIL MAY NEED TO BE GIVEN TO THIS; FOR EXAMPLE, “TAKE HER WITH YOU AND GO BACK TO CANAAN.” IN SOME LANGUAGES THIS IS EXPRESSED AS “YOU LEAD HER AND YOU-TWO GO BACK TO YOUR PLACE.” LET HER BE THE WIFE: EXAMPLES OF HOW THIS MAY BE EXPRESSED IN TRANSLATION ARE “SHE CAN MARRY YOUR MASTER’S SON” AND “IT IS GOOD THAT SHE WILL BE MARRIED TO.…” AS THE LORD HAS SPOKEN: SPOKEN HERE MEANS “DECIDED,” “DETERMINED,” “ARRANGED.” NEB/REB AND NJB TRANSLATE “AS THE LORD HAS DECREED, “NIV “AS THE LORD HAS DIRECTED,” GECL “AS THE LORD HAS DECIDED.” IT IS POSSIBLE FOR THE LAST PART OF THE VERSE TO BE RESTRUCTURED; FOR EXAMPLE, “YOU TAKE HER BACK, BECAUSE THE LORD HAS SHOWN YOU THAT SHE IS THE ONE WHO WILL BE THE WIFE OF YOUR MASTER’S SON.”**

**GENESIS 24:52: HEARD THEIR WORDS: THAT IS “HEARD THEIR REPLY,” “HEARD WHAT THEY SAID.” TEV SAYS “HEARD THIS.” BOWED HIMSELF TO THE EARTH BEFORE THE LORD: SEE 18:2. THE SERVANT’S ACT OF WORSHIP IS TO GIVE THANKS TO THE LORD, AS IN VERSE 26.**

**GENESIS 24:53: AND THE SERVANT BROUGHT FORTH JEWELRY OF SILVER AND GOLD: AND IS USED TO REPRESENT THE HEBREW WAW, WHICH HERE SIGNALS THE NEXT IN A SERIES OF EVENTS. IN ENGLISH “THEN” IS APPROPRIATE. BROUGHT FORTH TRANSLATES THE CAUSATIVE FORM OF A VERB MEANING TO GO OR COME, AND IN THIS CONTEXT, IT MEANS “TO BRING OUT.” THE SERVANT BROUGHT THESE GIFTS OUT OF THE PACKS AND LOADS CARRIED BY THE CAMELS. THE THINGS GIVEN TO REBEKAH WERE GIFTS, AND THOSE GIVEN TO THE FAMILY MEMBERS WERE PART OF THE BRIDE PRICE OR DOWRY. JEWELRY TRANSLATES A WORD REFERRING TO ARTICLES OR OBJECTS THAT ARE CRAFTED FROM VALUABLE MATERIALS. FOR SILVER AND GOLD SEE 13:2. RAIMENT REFERS TO ARTICLES OF CLOTHING. HE ALSO GAVE: HE REFERS TO THE SERVANT. HER BROTHER IS LABAN. REBEKAH’S MOTHER’S NAME IS NOT GIVEN, NOR IS BETHUEL MENTIONED AGAIN IN THE STORY. COSTLY ORNAMENTS: UNLIKE VERSE 22, WHICH DESCRIBES THE VALUE OF THE GOLD RING AND BRACELETS IN TERMS OF THEIR WEIGHTS, THE GIFTS TO LABAN AND REBEKAH’S MOTHER ARE MENTIONED ONLY AS BEING COSTLY, THAT IS, EXPENSIVE. IN LANGUAGES IN WHICH IT IS DIFFICULT TO DESCRIBE OBJECTS IN TERMS OF COST, IT MAY BE POSSIBLE TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “GIFTS A PERSON SPENDS MUCH MONEY TO BUY,” “GIFTS OF GREAT VALUE.”**

**GENESIS 24:54A: IN VERSE 54 THE SERVANT AND HIS MEN RETURN TO THEIR MEAL THAT WAS INTERRUPTED IN VERSE 33. IT MAY BE IMPORTANT TO MARK THE OPENING OF VERSE 54 AS A NEW PARAGRAPH AND WITH A TRANSITION; FOR EXAMPLE, “AFTER ALL THAT,” “WHEN THE GIVING OF GIFTS WAS COMPLETED,” “WHEN ALL THE TALK WAS FINISHED.” ATE AND DRANK DESCRIBES THE EATING OF THE EVENING MEAL BY THESE SPECIAL VISITORS. IF THE EXPRESSION ATE AND DRANK IS UNNATURAL, IT MAY BE POSSIBLE TO SAY “HAD THEIR MEAL” OR “ATE THEIR SUPPER.” SPENT THE NIGHT IS AS IN 19:2**

**EPISODE 4 (VERSES 54B–61) THE FOURTH EPISODE OPENS WITH THE SERVANT ASKING PERMISSION TO RETURN TO HIS MASTER (VERSE 54BB). IMMEDIATELY A NEW COMPLICATION ARISES WHEN REBEKAH’S FAMILY OBJECTS TO HER LEAVING SO SOON (VERSE).**

**HOWEVER, THE FAMILY IS WILLING TO ASK REBEKAH HER WISHES IN THE MATTER. THE TENSION IS RELIEVED WHEN SHE SAYS SHE IS WILLING TO DEPART (VERSES 57-58). WHEN THE LAST OBSTACLE IS CLEARED, THE FAMILY SINGS A POETIC FERTILITY AND VICTORY BLESSING FOR THEIR DAUGHTER, AND THE CARAVAN DEPARTS FOR CANAAN (VERSES 24:59–61). A HEADING MAY BE DESIRED AT THIS POINT. SOME SUGGESTIONS ARE “DEPARTURE FOR CANAAN,” “REBEKAH SAYS GOOD-BYE TO HER FAMILY,” “REBEKAH’S FAMILY BLESSES HER AS SHE LEAVES.”**

**GENESIS 24:54B: THEY AROSE REFERS TO THE SERVANT AND HIS MEN. SEND ME BACK TO MY MASTER: THE SERVANT HAS COMPLETED HIS MISSION AND NOW ASKS FOR PERMISSION TO LEAVE FOR CANAAN. THIS REQUEST SHOULD BE FORMULATED IN A MANNER THAT IS APPROPRIATE FOR A SERVANT TO SPEAK TO ABRAHAM’S RELATIVES. NOTE TEV’S RENDERING, OR SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “PLEASE ALLOW US TO GO BACK NOW TO MY MASTER.” THE SERVANT IS INDICATING THAT HE WANTS TO DEPART IMMEDIATELY. HOWEVER, THE CUSTOMARY THING WAS TO REMAIN FOR A TIME.**

**GENESIS 24:55: HER REFERS TO REBEKAH, AND SO TEV SAYS “REBECCA’S BROTHER.…” LET THE MAIDEN REMAIN: MAIDEN IS THE SAME TERM USED IN VERSES 14, 16, 28. A WHILE, AT LEAST TEN DAYS IS LITERALLY “DAYS OR TEN.” THIS IS AN IDIOMATIC EXPRESSION, WITH “TEN” TO MEAN “MORE OR LESS TEN DAYS.” TEV HAS “A WEEK OR TEN DAYS,” NEB/REB “FOR A FEW DAYS, SAY TEN DAYS.” IN MANY LANGUAGES IT WILL BE NATURAL TO SAY “A LITTLE WHILE LONGER …” OR “A LITTLE WHILE MORE.…”**

**GENESIS 24:56: THE REASON THE SERVANT DOES NOT WANT TO BE DELAYED IS SINCE THE LORD HAS PROSPERED MY WAY. THIS IS THE SAME EXPRESSION USED IN VERSES 21, 40, 42. LET ME GO IS AGAIN “SEND ME BACK” AS IN VERSE 54. “LET ME GO BACK TO MY MASTER” (TEV) IS A GOOD MODEL.**

**GENESIS 24:57: THEY REFERS TO LABAN AND TO REBEKAH’S MOTHER. CALL THE MAIDEN, AND ASK HER: ASK HER IS LITERALLY “INQUIRE AT HER MOUTH,” WITH EMPHASIS ON ASKING THE PERSON DIRECTLY, NOT INDIRECTLY THROUGH SOMEONE ELSE. THIS EXPRESSION IS USED ALSO IN JOSH 9:14; ISA 30:2. THE SENSE IS “WE WILL CALL REBEKAH AND ASK HER WHAT SHE THINKS,” “WE WILL CALL HER AND FIND OUT HER OPINION,” OR “… WHAT SHE WANTS TO DO.”**

**GENESIS 24:58: THEY AGAIN REFERS TO LABAN AND TO THE MOTHER OF REBEKAH. SAID TO HER MUST OFTEN BE TRANSLATED “ASKED HER.” GO WITH THIS MAN: GO IS USED IN THE SENSE OF “ACCOMPANY.” THE REAL MEANING OF THE QUESTION IS NOT WHETHER REBEKAH IS WILLING TO GO BACK TO CANAAN, BUT WHETHER SHE IS WILLING TO GO IMMEDIATELY. THIS WILL NEED TO BE MADE CLEAR IN MOST LANGUAGES; IN ONE TRANSLATION, FOR INSTANCE, THEY SAY TO REBEKAH “THIS MAN WANTS TO GO BACK TODAY. ARE YOU HAPPY TO GO WITH HIM NOW?” SHE SAID MUST OFTEN BE TRANSLATED AS “SHE REPLIED” OR “SHE ANSWERED.” I WILL GO MAY NEED TO BE FILLED OUT TO “YES, I WILL GO WITH HIM NOW.” A MORE IDIOMATIC WAY OF AGREEING MAY BE MORE NATURAL HERE, SUCH AS “YES, ALL RIGHT” OR “YES, IT’S GOOD.”**

**GENESIS 24:59: THEIR SISTER: REBEKAH IS THE SISTER OF ONLY LABAN, BUT SHE IS PROBABLY CALLED SISTER BY THE LARGER FAMILY UNIT IN THIS VERSE. MANY LANGUAGES HAVE A SISTER-TERM THAT REFERS TO A NEAR FEMALE RELATIVE; OR WE MAY SAY “LABAN’S SISTER.” BUT SEE ALSO COMMENTS ON “OUR SISTER” IN THE NEXT VERSE. NURSE TRANSLATES A NOUN FORM OF THE HEBREW VERB MEANING “TO SUCK.” THE REFERENCE IS TO A WOMAN WHO SUCKLES AND CARES FOR A BABY. ACCORDING TO 35:8 REBEKAH’S NURSE WAS CALLED DEBORAH. SHE WOULD SERVE REBEKAH AS A PERSONAL SERVANT. TWO EXAMPLES OF HOW NURSE IS TRANSLATED ARE “THE WOMAN SERVANT WHO HAD BROUGHT HER UP” AND “THE WOMAN SERVANT WHO HAD LOOKED AFTER HER WHEN SHE WAS SMALL.”**

**GENESIS 24:60: THE PART OF THIS VERSE WITHIN QUOTATION MARKS SHOULD BE INDENTED TO DRAW ATTENTION TO ITS SPECIAL NATURE AS A SUNG OR SPOKEN BLESSING. THEY BLESSED REBEKAH: BLESSED IS USED HERE AS IN 14:19, AND TRANSLATORS SHOULD REVIEW THE COMMENTS MADE THERE. THE BLESSING GIVEN TO REBEKAH HAS TWO PARTS: THE FIRST IS FOR FERTILITY, AND THE SECOND FOR VICTORY IN BATTLE. THE BLESSING IS A PLEA TO GOD TO GRANT THE FAVORS THAT THEY ARE ASKING FOR REBEKAH. THEREFORE, IT IS OFTEN NECESSARY TO EXPRESS THE PLEA DIFFERENTLY. IN ENGLISH, FOR INSTANCE, IT IS COMMON TO SAY “MAY YOU BECOME.…” WE MAY ALSO MAKE IT CLEAR THAT THE PLEA IS DIRECTED TO GOD; FOR EXAMPLE, “MAY GOD MAKE YOU.…” OUR SISTER IS SPOKEN BY REBEKAH’S FAMILY AND NO DOUBT ALL THOSE GATHERED TO SAY GOOD-BYE TO HER. THIS TERM MAY BE USED IN A GENERAL SENSE AND NOT AS A PRECISE KINSHIP TERM. LANGUAGES OFTEN USE TERMS OF ENDEARMENT TO ADDRESS A WOMAN WHO IS CONSIDERED LIKE A SISTER. ON THE OTHER HAND, SOME LANGUAGES MAY PREFER TO USE THE TERM THAT DESIGNATES “YOUNGER SISTER” OR “LITTLE SISTER.” BE THE MOTHER OF: IS LITERALLY “MAY YOU BECOME THOUSANDS OF TEN-THOUSANDS,” IN WHICH MOTHER IS INFERRED FROM DESCENDANTS IN THE NEXT LINE. IF MOTHER IS NOT USED, WE MAY SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “MAY YOUR DESCENDANTS NUMBER.…” THIS EXPRESSION MUST OFTEN BE EXPRESSED AS “MAY YOU BECOME THE MOTHER,” “MAY YOU BE …,” “GOD GRANT THAT YOU BECOME.…” TRANSLATORS SHOULD REFER TO THE SIMILAR WORDING IN 17:16. THOUSANDS OF TEN-THOUSANDS IS THE HEBREW WAY OF SAYING A VERY GREAT NUMBER, RENDERED AS “MILLIONS” IN SOME TRANSLATIONS. NEB, WHICH HAD “MOTHER OF MYRIADS,” HAS BEEN REVISED BY REB TO “MOTHER OF MANY CHILDREN.” IN LANGUAGES THAT DO NOT EXPRESS HUGE NUMBERS OR DO SO ONLY AWKWARDLY, REB MAY BE A GOOD MODEL. MAY YOUR DESCENDANTS: THE SECOND PLEA OR BLESSING MAY BE WORDED IN A PARALLEL MANNER; IT BLESSES REBEKAH’S DESCENDANTS WITH POWER AND VICTORY OVER THEIR ENEMIES. DESCENDANTS IS LITERALLY “SEED,” AS IN 3:15. POSSESS THE GATE IS AS IN 22:17 AND MEANS “CONQUER THE CITIES” OR “DEFEAT THE ENEMIES.” THOSE WHO HATE THEM IS A LITERAL RENDERING. HATE WHEN APPLIED TO A CONFLICT BETWEEN GROUPS OR NATIONS HAS THE MEANING OF “ENEMY” AND SHOULD BE TRANSLATED THUS. HERE IS A MODEL TRANSLATION SOME TRANSLATORS MAY WISH TO FOLLOW: “LITTLE SISTER, MAY YOUR OFFSPRING BECOME TOO MANY TO COUNT, AND MAY THEY CONQUER THEIR ENEMIES.”**

**GENESIS 24:61: REBEKAH AND HER MAIDS: THE NARRATOR MENTIONED A NURSE FOR REBEKAH IN VERSE 59. NOW, HOWEVER, THERE ARE MAIDS. THE LITERARY PURPOSE IS TO GIVE A PICTURE OF REBEKAH AS A WOMAN OF STATUS SURROUNDED BY PERSONAL SERVANTS. IN SOME LANGUAGES IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO INTRODUCE THESE ADDITIONAL MAIDS BY SAYING, FOR EXAMPLE, “THEN REBEKAH AND MANY SERVANT GIRLS WHO ALSO WENT WITH HER.…” AROSE, AND RODE: AROSE DOES NOT SUGGEST THAT THEY WERE LYING DOWN BUT RATHER THAT THEY GOT READY, PREPARED THEMSELVES. IN SOME LANGUAGES IT WILL BE CLEARER TO SAY “THEN REBEKAH AND HER SERVANT GIRLS GOT ON THE CAMELS.” FOLLOWED THE MAN: THAT IS, WENT WITH OR ACCOMPANIED ABRAHAM’S SERVANT, WHO LED THE WAY. THUS, THE SERVANT TOOK REBEKAH AND WENT HIS WAY: THE FINAL STATEMENT OF THE DEPARTURE IS FROM THE SERVANT’S POINT OF VIEW. IN SOME LANGUAGES IT MAY BE MORE NATURAL TO RETAIN THE SAME POINT OF VIEW AS IN THE OPENING OF VERSE 61. IN THAT CASE REBEKAH AND HER YOUNG SERVANTS GET READY, GET ON THE CAMELS, AND, AS TEV SAYS, “THEY ALL STARTED OUT.”**

**EPISODE 5 (VERSES 62–67) IN THE FIFTH AND FINAL EPISODE, IN WHICH THERE ARE NO FURTHER COMPLICATIONS, THE STORY REACHES ITS CONCLUSION. ISAAC APPROACHES THE ARRIVING CARAVAN; REBEKAH COVERS HER FACE WITH HER VEIL. THE SERVANT REPORTS TO ISAAC, AND ISAAC AND REBEKAH ARE UNITED.**

**TRANSLATORS MAY WISH TO PLACE A HEADING TO INDICATE THAT THE CONCLUSION OF THE STORY BEGINS HERE. WE MAY SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “ISAAC RECEIVES HIS WIFE,” “ISAAC MEETS REBEKAH,” “ISAAC IS COMFORTED BY REBEKAH,” “REBEKAH BECOMES ISAAC’S WIFE.”**

**GENESIS 24:62: THIS VERSE OPENS THE FINAL STAGE OF THE STORY. THE SCENE IS AGAIN IN CANAAN. THE ACTION CENTERS ON ISAAC. ABRAHAM IS NOT MENTIONED. THE CAMEL CARAVAN BRINGING REBEKAH HAS ALMOST ARRIVED. ACCORDINGLY, IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO START A NEW PARAGRAPH AT THIS POINT AND TO SIGNAL THE TRANSITION TO THE NEW SCENE. IN SOME LANGUAGES THIS MAY REQUIRE SAYING, FOR EXAMPLE, “WHILE THEY WERE TRAVELING …,” “DURING THEIR TRIP TO CANAAN.…” NEB/REB HAVE “ISAAC MEANWHILE HAD MOVED.…” NOW ISAAC HAD COME FROM BEERLAHAIROI: RSV REPRESENTS THE HEBREW WAW HERE AS NOW, THAT IS, AS A GENERAL TRANSITION TO THE NEW SCENE. AS NOTED IN THE RSV FOOTNOTE, THE HEBREW TEXT HAS “FROM COMING TO,” WHICH DOES NOT MAKE GOOD SENSE. RSV THEREFORE FOLLOWS SYRIAC AND TARGUM HAD COME FROM. TEV “HAD COME INTO THE WILDERNESS OF” FOLLOWS ANOTHER VARIANT FOUND IN THE SAMARITAN PENTATEUCH AND THE SEPTUAGINT. HOTTP, WHICH RATES THE HEBREW TEXT AS A {B}, RECOMMENDS “HE CAME FROM THE WELL OF LAHAI ROI.” THIS IS AN ATTEMPT TO RETAIN THE HEBREW WHILE TRYING TO MAKE IT CLEAR. THE HANDBOOK RECOMMENDS FOLLOWING HOTTP’S SUGGESTION. TRANSLATORS SHOULD REFER TO THEIR OWN RENDERING OF BEERLAHAIROI IN 16:14. AND WAS DWELLING IN THE NEGEB: DWELLING REFERS TO PITCHING CAMP, SETTING UP A TEMPORARY LIVING PLACE, SETTLING. SEE 20:1. FOR NEGEB SEE 12:9. NOTE TEV “SOUTHERN PART OF CANAAN.” WE MAY TRANSLATE THE WHOLE VERSE AS FOLLOWS: “IN THE MEANWHILE ISAAC, WHO HAD SETTLED IN THE SOUTHERN PART OF CANAAN, CAME FROM BEERLAHAIROI” OR “WHILE THEY WERE ON THEIR WAY TO CANAAN, ISAAC, WHO HAD SETTLED IN THE NEGEB, CAME FROM BEERLAHAIROI.” FOR ANOTHER TRANSLATION MODEL SEE TEV.**

**GENESIS 24:63: MEDITATE IN THE FIELD: MEDITATE TRANSLATES A HEBREW VERB OF UNCERTAIN MEANING. THE WORD IS FOUND ELSEWHERE ONLY IN POETIC PASSAGES SUCH AS PSA 119:15, 23, 27. HOWEVER, IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THE HEBREW ROOT SUCH “MEDITATE” WAS MISTAKEN FOR SHUT “WALK ABOUT.” THE ANCIENT VERSIONS, ACCORDING TO SPEISER, HAVE “TO CHAT, PRAY, MEDITATE, TAKE A WALK.” MOST MODERN VERSIONS EXAMINED TRANSLATE AS DOES TEV. HOWEVER, GECL AVOIDS SAYING WHY ISAAC WENT OUT IN THE FIELD, WHILE NEB/REB HAS “HOPING TO MEET THEM [THE SERVANT AND THOSE WITH HIM].” TOB’S FOOTNOTE EXPLAINS THAT THE WORD CAN MEAN MEDITATE OR COMPLAIN, AND “ACCORDING TO VERSE 67 ISAAC APPEARS AFFLICTED BY THE DEATH OF HIS MOTHER.” NRSV HAS DEPARTED FROM RSV BY TRANSLATING “TO WALK” BUT ADDS A NOTE, “MEANING OF THE HEBREW WORD UNCERTAIN.” MFT UNDERSTANDS ISAAC TO BE IN MOURNING. DUE TO THE UNCERTAINTY OF THE MEANING OF THE WORD TRANSLATED MEDITATE BY RSV, THE HANDBOOK SUGGESTS TWO POSSIBLE WAYS TO HANDLE THIS PROBLEM. THE FIRST IS TO FOLLOW TEV AND OTHERS WITH “TAKE A WALK.” THE SECOND IS TO LEAVE UNSTATED THE REASON ISAAC WENT OUT INTO THE FIELD; IN THIS CASE WE MAY SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “ONE EVENING ISAAC WENT OUT INTO THE FIELD.” THIS APPROACH, HOWEVER, INVITES READERS TO FILL IN THE REASON FOR ISAAC GOING OUT INTO THE FIELD FROM THEIR OWN IMAGINATION; AND TRANSLATORS SHOULD CONSIDER CAREFULLY WHETHER A WRONG MEANING IS LIKELY TO BE TAKEN. FIELD IN THIS CONTEXT SUGGESTS AN AREA WHERE ANIMALS WERE GRAZING, THAT IS, PASTURELAND. ABRAHAM AND ISAAC ARE STOCKMEN, NOT FARMERS RAISING CROPS IN AGRICULTURAL FIELDS. HOWEVER, THE HEBREW TERM ALSO COMMONLY REFERS TO LAND OR COUNTRYSIDE AWAY FROM A SETTLEMENT, WITHOUT REFERENCE TO THE USE THAT IS MADE OF THE LAND; SO ANOTHER POSSIBLE WAY OF TRANSLATING IN THIS CONTEXT IS “GO FOR A WALK IN THE COUNTRYSIDE” (TEV AUSTRALIAN EDITION) OR “HE HAD GONE OUT INTO THE OPEN COUNTRY” (NEB/REB). HE LIFTED UP HIS EYES AND LOOKED: THIS IDIOM IS ALSO USED IN 13:10, 14; 18:2; 22:4. IT MAY BE TRANSLATED IN ENGLISH AS “HE LOOKED UP,” “HE LOOKED,” “HE SAW.” AND BEHOLD: IN A NARRATIVE CONTEXT BEHOLD MAY SERVE AS A MARKER OF SOMETHING VIVID OR EASILY VISIBLE. WE MAY TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “NOT FAR AWAY HE SAW CAMELS APPROACHING.”**

**GENESIS 24:64: REBEKAH LIFTED UP HER EYES REPEATS FOR REBEKAH WHAT WAS SAID OF ISAAC. TEV COMBINES THIS AND THE FOLLOWING CLAUSE AS A SINGLE TIME CLAUSE: “WHEN REBECCA SAW ISAAC.…” SHE ALIGHTED FROM THE CAMEL: ALIGHTED MEANS TO “GET DOWN,” “DISMOUNT,” “GET OFF.” IN SOME LANGUAGES THE VERB TO GET DOWN FROM A CAMEL IS DIFFERENT FROM THAT USED FOR GETTING DOWN FROM A HORSE OR DONKEY. THE REASON FOR HER GETTING DOWN IS TO BE PREPARED TO SHOW PROPER RESPECT FOR HER FUTURE HUSBAND. NOTE THE SIMILAR COURTESY SHOWN BY A WOMAN IN JOSH 15:18.**

**GENESIS 24:65: SAID TO THE SERVANT MUST OFTEN BE RENDERED “ASKED THE SERVANT” OR “INQUIRED OF ABRAHAM’S SERVANT.” WHO IS THE MAN YONDER? RSV YONDER HAS BEEN CHANGED TO “OVER THERE” IN NRSV, AND SO REBEKAH ASKS “WHO IS THE MAN OVER THERE WALKING IN THE FIELD TO MEET US?” OR “… COMING ACROSS THE FIELD TO MEET US?” IT IS MY MASTER IS THE SERVANT’S REPLY. UNTIL NOW ONLY ABRAHAM HAS BEEN REFERRED TO AS MY MASTER, SO THE READER IS LIKELY TO BE CONFUSED BY THIS CHANGE. TO KEEP THE REFERENCE THE SAME, SOME TRANSLATORS WANT TO SAY “THE SON OF MY MASTER”; BUT THIS IS NOT WHAT THE NARRATIVE ACTUALLY SAYS. A BETTER APPROACH THAT IS FOLLOWED BY SOME TRANSLATIONS IS TO SAY “MY MASTER ISAAC.” WHEN REBEKAH LEARNED THAT IT WAS ISAAC, SHE TOOK HER VEIL AND COVERED HERSELF. SHE COVERED HER FACE TO SHOW RESPECT AND MODESTY IN THE PRESENCE OF HER FUTURE HUSBAND. A VEIL IS A CLOTH THAT CAN BE PLACED OVER A WOMAN’S HEAD AND FACE TO CONCEAL HER FACE FROM VIEW. THAT JACOB DID NOT REALIZE THAT LEAH HAD BEEN SUBSTITUTED FOR RACHEL WAS PROBABLY DUE TO THE VEIL SHE WORE (GEN 29:21–26). TAMAR WORE A VEIL TO DECEIVE JUDAH SO HE WOULD HAVE INTERCOURSE WITH HER (GEN 38:14).**

**GENESIS 24:66: THE FUNCTION OF THIS VERSE IS TO PROVIDE THE BASIS FOR THE JOINING OF ISAAC AND REBEKAH IN VERSE 67. ALL THE THINGS HE HAD DONE: THE SERVANT PROBABLY REPORTED TO ISAAC IN EVEN GREATER DETAIL THAN HE HAD REPORTED TO LABAN AND BETHUEL.**

**GENESIS 24:67: THEN ISAAC BROUGHT HER INTO THE TENT: TO THIS STATEMENT IN THE HEBREW TEXT ARE ADDED THE WORDS “SARAH HIS MOTHER.” SEE RSV FOOTNOTE. RSV AND OTHERS ASSUME “SARAH HIS MOTHER” IS MISPLACED AND MAY HAVE ORIGINALLY BELONGED AT THE END OF THE VERSE. TEV AND OTHERS RETAIN “SARAH HIS MOTHER” AND RELATE THESE WORDS TO TENT AS “THE TENT THAT HIS MOTHER SARAH HAD LIVED IN.” HOTTP TAKES THE SAME POSITION AS TEV AND GIVES THE HEBREW TEXT AN {A} RATING. THAT SARAH WOULD HAVE HAD A SPECIAL TENT OF HER OWN IS SUGGESTED BY THE CASE OF LEAH AND RACHEL IN 31:33. IN SOME CULTURES, THERE IS A STRONG TABOO AGAINST LIVING IN A DWELLING IN WHICH A PERSON HAS RECENTLY DIED, PARTICULARLY IF THAT PERSON WAS A CLOSE RELATIVE. THAT MAY BE A SERIOUS PROBLEM FOR TRANSLATION OF THIS PASSAGE; HOWEVER, SINCE THERE IS SOME DOUBT ABOUT THE TEXT HERE, IT MAY BE BEST FOR TRANSLATORS WHO FACE THE PROBLEM TO FOLLOW RSV AND SOME OTHER VERSIONS, AND SAY JUST “THE TENT” OR “HIS TENT.” ONE TRANSLATION, FOR EXAMPLE, SAYS SIMPLY “AFTER THAT ISAAC BROUGHT REBEKAH TO HIS TENT, AND THEY-TWO WERE MARRIED.…” AND TOOK REBEKAH, AND SHE BECAME HIS WIFE: TOOK REBEKAH MEANS HE MARRIED HER. THE FORM OF THE HEBREW STATEMENT IS A REPETITION OF THE SAME INFORMATION BUT USING DIFFERENT WORDS, AND IN MANY LANGUAGES, IT IS SUFFICIENT TO SAY “ISAAC MARRIED REBEKAH” OR “ISAAC MADE REBEKAH HIS WIFE.” AND HE LOVED HER MAY BE INTERPRETED AS A SEPARATE STATEMENT, BUT MORE LIKELY IT FUNCTIONS AS THE REASON FOR HIS BEING COMFORTED AFTER HIS MOTHER’S DEATH. WE MAY TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “ISAAC LOVED REBEKAH, AND SO HE WAS COMFORTED AFTER HIS MOTHER’S DEATH” OR “BECAUSE ISAAC LOVED REBEKAH HE WAS CONSOLED FOR THE DEATH OF HIS MOTHER.” IN LANGUAGES IN WHICH THE PASSIVE CANNOT BE USED, WE MAY SAY “ISAAC LOVED … AND SO THE DEATH OF HIS MOTHER PAINED HIM LESS.” COMFORTED AFTER HIS MOTHER’S DEATH MAY BE DIFFICULT TO TRANSLATE LITERALLY, BECAUSE IT DESCRIBES A CHANGE IN FEELINGS FROM BEING SAD TO BEING HAPPY AGAIN. AN EXAMPLE OF A TRANSLATION THAT EXPRESSES ALL THE ELEMENTS MORE FULLY IS “BEFORE, WHEN HIS MOTHER DIED, ISAAC FELT SAD ALL THE TIME. BUT NOW HE HAD A GOOD FEELING AGAIN.”**

**THE DESCENDANTS OF ABRAHAM AND KETURAH (25:1–6)**

**CHAPTER 25 CONCLUDES THE ABRAHAM STORY AND BEGINS THE STORY OF ABRAHAM’S DESCENDANTS, NAMELY ISAAC, JACOB, AND ESAU.**

**THIS CHAPTER CONTAINS FIVE PARTS: 1. A LIST OF SIX SONS BORN TO ABRAHAM AND KETURAH, AND SOME OF THEIR GRANDSONS (THE SON OF ONE’S SON OR ONE’S DAUGHTER) AND GREAT-GRANDSON (THE SON’S SON OF ONE’S SON OR ONE’S DAUGHTER) (VERSES 1-6). 2. THE REPORT OF THE DEATH AND BURIAL OF ABRAHAM (VERSES 25:7–11). 3. A LIST OF THE SONS BORN TO ISHMAEL (VERSES 12–18). 4. THE BIRTH OF ISAAC’S SONS ESAU AND JACOB (VERSES 19–26). 5. THE RIVALRY BETWEEN ESAU AND JACOB THAT LEADS ESAU TO SELL HIS BIRTHRIGHT TO JACOB (VERSES 27–34)**

**BEFORE BEGINNING THE DISCUSSION OF THE VERSES OF THIS CHAPTER, IT IS NECESSARY TO EXAMINE THE WAY IN WHICH CHAPTER 25 RELATES TO THE CHAPTER BEFORE IT. CHAPTER 25 BRINGS TOGETHER GENEALOGIES, BIRTHS, AND DEATHS. THE CHAPTER SERVES AS A TRANSITION BETWEEN THE END OF THE ABRAHAM STORY AND THE BEGINNING OF THE JACOB STORY. FURTHERMORE, IT SERVES TO BRING THE ISHMAEL STORY TO A CLOSE. OUR ATTENTION FROM THIS CHAPTER FORWARD WILL BE PLACED PRIMARILY UPON THE DESCENDANTS OF ISAAC, NAMELY JACOB AND JOSEPH. ACCORDINGLY, THE PURPOSE OF CHAPTER 25 IS NOT TO PICK UP THE ABRAHAM STORY FROM THE CLOSE OF CHAPTER 24 BUT RATHER TO CONCLUDE THE ABRAHAM AND ISHMAEL STORIES AND TO OPEN THE JACOB STORY. HOWEVER, HAVING SAID THIS, WE SEE THAT THE TEXT AS WE HAVE IT OPENS IN SUCH A WAY AS TO PRESERVE THE STORY LINE THAT REMINDED US AT THE END OF CHAPTER 24 THAT SARAH HAD DIED. IT IS IMPORTANT TO KEEP IN MIND BOTH OF THESE FACTORS AS WE EXAMINE THE OPENING VERSE OF THIS CHAPTER. THIS LISTING GIVES THE NAMES OF SIX SONS BORN TO ABRAHAM AND KETURAH AND INCLUDES THE NAMES OF SEVEN OF THEIR, GRANDSONS (THE SON OF ONE’S SON OR ONE’S DAUGHTER) AND THREE OF THEIR GREAT-GRANDSON (THE SON’S SON OF ONE’S SON OR ONE’S DAUGHTER) . VERSE 5 STATES THAT ISAAC IS ABRAHAM’S HEIR, AND THAT THE OTHER SONS OF ABRAHAM ARE PROVIDED FOR AND SENT AWAY FROM ISAAC.**

**SUBDIVISION HEADING**

**THE HANDBOOK HEADING MAY NEED TO BE MODIFIED TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “ABRAHAM MARRIES KETURAH AND HAS MORE SONS.” NJB HAS “THE DESCENDANTS OF KETURAH.” FRCL HAS “THE DEATH OF ABRAHAM. HIS OTHER DESCENDANTS,” GECL “ABRAHAM’S OTHER DESCENDANTS AND HIS DEATH” (VERSES 1–11), NIV “THE DEATH OF ABRAHAM” (VERSES 1–11). TRANSLATORS WHO PROVIDE THEIR READERS WITH CROSS REFERENCES WILL WANT TO REFER VERSES 1–4 TO 1 CHR 1:32–33. SEE TEV.**

**GENESIS 25:1: ABRAHAM TOOK ANOTHER WIFE: TOOK ANOTHER TRANSLATES THE HEBREW “ADDED AND TOOK.…” IN TERMS OF TIME THERE ARE TWO WAYS TO UNDERSTAND THIS STATEMENT. THE FIRST IS TO ASSUME THAT THE NARRATOR IS SAYING THAT ABRAHAM MARRIED KETURAH SOME TIME AFTER THE DEATH OF SARAH. THIS WOULD MEAN THAT HE MARRIED HER WHEN HE WAS MORE THAN, ONE HUNDRED, AND THIRTY-SEVEN YEARS OLD. (SARAH DIED AT AGE ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-SEVEN, AND ABRAHAM WAS TEN YEARS OLDER THAN SARAH.) THE SIX SONS WOULD HAVE BEEN BORN WHEN ABRAHAM WAS BETWEEN THE AGES OF ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-SEVEN AND ONE HUNDRED AND SEVENTY-FIVE. WHILE THIS MAY NOT SEEM LIKELY, THE TEXT DOES NOT RULE OUT THIS POSSIBILITY. THE OTHER VIEW IS THAT ABRAHAM MARRIED KETURAH, OR TOOK KETURAH AS A CONCUBINE, AND HAD THESE SONS AT SOME EARLIER TIME. VERSE 6 MAKES CLEAR THAT THESE SONS WERE OLD ENOUGH TO LEAVE HOME AND FIND THEIR OWN MEANS OF SUPPORT WHILE ABRAHAM WAS STILL LIVING. REGARDLESS OF THE TIME WHEN ABRAHAM MARRIED KETURAH AND HAD SONS WITH HER, MANY TRANSLATORS ARE FACED WITH THE NECESSITY OF THE DEMANDS OF THE DISCOURSE STRUCTURE IN THEIR LANGUAGES AND HOW TO OPEN THIS NEW ACCOUNT. A TIME EXPRESSION SUCH AS “THEN,” “AFTER THAT,” “LATER” MAY BE USED. IN SUCH CASES THE UNDERSTANDING WILL THEN BE THAT ABRAHAM MARRIED KETURAH AND HAD SIX SONS FOLLOWING THE EVENTS AT THE END OF CHAPTER 24. EVEN WITHOUT PROVIDING A TIME TRANSITION TO THE OPENING OF CHAPTER 25, VERSE 1 IN RSV AND TEV IS MOST LIKELY TO BE UNDERSTOOD BY READERS AS HAPPENING AFTER THE DEATH OF SARAH. IF WE SUGGEST THAT A SUITABLE OPENER MAY BE “AFTER SARAH HAD DIED,” WE MUST ALSO SUGGEST AS ANOTHER POSSIBILITY “BEFORE SARAH HAD DIED.” SINCE WE CANNOT DECIDE THIS MATTER ON THE BASIS OF THE TEXT, IT IS BEST TO MAKE THE OPENING GENERAL, AS SUGGESTED ABOVE. ANOTHER WIFE MAY MEAN IN ADDITION TO SARAH OR IN ADDITION TO OTHER WIVES ABRAHAM MAY HAVE HAD. HOWEVER, ONLY SARAH, HAGAR, AND KETURAH ARE MENTIONED AS BEARING CHILDREN FOR ABRAHAM. KETURAH IS REFERRED TO HERE AS WIFE IN CONTRAST TO “CONCUBINE,” WHICH IS USED IN THE PARALLEL PASSAGE IN 1 CHR 1:32. NOTE, HOWEVER, THAT VERSE 6 REFERS TO THE “SONS OF HIS CONCUBINES,” WHICH INCLUDES THE SONS OF KETURAH. FOR A DISCUSSION OF “CONCUBINE” SEE 22:24. WHOSE NAME WAS KETURAH: KETURAH’S NAME OCCURS ONLY HERE AND IN VERSE 4, AND IN 1 CHR 1:32–33. HER NAME MAY BE A VARIANT OF A WORD REFERRING TO THE SMOKE FROM A SACRIFICE OR FROM INCENSE. IN SOME LANGUAGES IT IS MORE NATURAL TO CALL HER “SWEET SMELLING SMOKE” OR “INCENSE.” IN OTHERS IT WILL BE MORE NATURAL TO TRANSLITERATE HER NAME. SEE THE SECTION “NAMES IN GENESIS” IN “TRANSLATING GENESIS,” PAGE 8.**

**GENESIS 25:2: THE NAMES OF KETURAH’S SONS APPEAR TO BE PERSONAL NAMES. SHE BORE HIM MAY ALSO BE RENDERED, FOR EXAMPLE, “HER SONS’ NAMES WERE,” “THE NAMES OF THE SONS SHE HAD WITH ABRAHAM WERE,” “SHE GAVE BIRTH TO SIX OF ABRAHAM’S SONS, WHOSE NAMES WERE.” THE NAMES OF KETURAH’S SONS ARE: ZIMRAN, JOKSHAN, MEDAN, MIDIAN, ISHBAK, AND SHUAH. EACH OF THESE SIX NAMES OCCURS ONLY HERE AND IS UNKNOWN, WITH THE POSSIBLE EXCEPTIONS OF MIDIAN AND SHUAH. MIDIAN IS THE NAME OF THE PLACE WHERE THE “MIDIANITES” LIVED. SEE EXO 2:15; NUM 25:15. THESE PEOPLE LIVED IN THE DESERT EAST OF THE GULF OF AQABA. SHUAH, FOUND ALSO IN JOB 2:11, APPEARS TO BE THE HOME OF BILDAD THE SHUHITE. IN LANGUAGES THAT DISTINGUISH THE FORM OF PLACE NAMES FROM THE FORM OF PERSONAL NAMES, THESE SHOULD BE HANDLED AS PERSONAL NAMES, AND THEY WILL NEED TO BE TRANSLITERATED IN A FORM THAT IS EASY TO READ AND PRONOUNCE. SEE “NAMES IN GENESIS” IN “TRANSLATING GENESIS,” PAGE 8.**

**GENESIS 25:3: JOKSHAN WAS THE FATHER OF SHEBA AND DEDAN: WAS THE FATHER OF IS EXPRESSED HERE IN THE HEBREW AS A VERB WITH THE SENSE IN ENGLISH OF “FATHERED.” THE NAME SHEBA OCCURS IN 10:26 AS A SON OF JOKTAN (WHICH MAY BE EQUATED WITH JOKSHAN). IN 10:7 SHEBA AND DEDAN ARE SAID TO BE THE SONS OF RAAMAH. SEE DISCUSSION OF THESE TWO NAMES IN 10:7. IN SOME LANGUAGES IT IS DIFFICULT TO SAY JOKSHAN WAS THE FATHER OF … IMMEDIATELY AFTER SAYING THAT HE WAS BORN (VERSE 2). IF THIS IS THE CASE IT IS NECESSARY TO SAY SOMETHING LIKE “JOKSHAN GREW UP AND GOT MARRIED, AND HIS WIFE HAD TWO SONS.…” THREE NAMES ARE LISTED AS THE SONS OF DEDAN: ASHURIM, LITUSHIM AND LEUMMIM. THESE PERSON NAMES ARE IN THE PLURAL FORM AND SHOULD BE TRANSLITERATED AS PLURALS. SEE TEV. THE THREE NAMES ARE MISSING IN 1 CHR 1:32–33 AND ARE THOUGHT TO BE LATER ADDITIONS TO THE TEXT. THEY OCCUR NOWHERE ELSE AND NOTHING IS KNOWN ABOUT THEM.**

**GENESIS 25:4: VERSE 4 LIST FIVE SONS OF MIDIAN. MORE IS KNOWN OF THESE THAN OF ANY OF THE OTHER NAMES. EPHAH IS ASSOCIATED WITH MIDIAN IN ISA 60:6. NOTHING IS KNOWN OF EPHER. HANOCH IS THE SAME AS THE NAME OF THE PATRIARCH ENOCH. SEE 4:17; 5:18–24. THE NAMES OF ABIDA AND ELDAAH ARE FOUND IN ANCIENT STONE INSCRIPTIONS AND AS THE NAMES OF KINGS.**

**ALL THESE WERE THE CHILDREN: THIS IS THE SAME WORDING AS USED OF THE SONS OF JOKTAN IN 10:29. HERE CHILDREN REFERS TO OFFSPRING OF AT LEAST THREE GENERATIONS, AND SO “DESCENDANTS” IS MORE APPROPRIATE IN ENGLISH. WE MAY ALSO TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “ALL THESE PEOPLE WERE DESCENDANTS OF KETURAH.” VERSE 4 COMPLETES THE GENEALOGY OF DESCENDANTS BORN TO ABRAHAM AND KETURAH.**

**GENESIS 25:5–6: VERSE 6 SHOWS THAT ABRAHAM’S LINE CONTINUES ONLY THROUGH ISAAC, AND THEREFORE ISAAC IS ABRAHAM’S ONLY HEIR. VERSE 6 CONTRASTS WHAT ABRAHAM DID FOR ISAAC WITH WHAT HE DID FOR HIS OTHER SONS. ABRAHAM GAVE ALL HE HAD TO ISAAC: THE WORDING OF THIS VERSE EXPRESSES THE SAME THOUGHT THE SERVANT CONVEYED IN 24:36. GAVE IS USED HERE IN THE SPECIAL SENSE OF A PERSON PASSING ON HIS PROPERTY AT DEATH TO AN HEIR. IN ENGLISH THIS THOUGHT IS EXPRESSED BY SUCH VERBS AS “BEQUEATH,” “WILL,” “GIVE AS INHERITANCE,” “LEAVE.” TEV SAYS “LEFT EVERYTHING HE OWNED.” IN OTHER LANGUAGES IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO FOLLOW THE CUSTOMS THAT APPLY FOR INHERITANCE; IN ONE SITUATION, FOR EXAMPLE, THE TRANSLATION SAYS “THEN ABRAHAM CALLED ALL HIS PEOPLE TOGETHER AND TOLD THEM THAT WHEN HE DIED EVERYTHING OF HIS WOULD BELONG TO HIS SON ISAAC.” FOR A DISCUSSION OF “HEIR” SEE 15:2. IN LANGUAGES IN WHICH IT IS MORE NATURAL TO SPEAK OF INHERITING, SPCL PROVIDES A MODEL: “ISAAC INHERITED EVERYTHING THAT ABRAHAM HAD.” IT IS REASONABLE TO ASSUME THAT ABRAHAM IS STILL ALIVE IN VERSE 5 WHEN HE ARRANGED FOR ISAAC TO INHERIT HIS PROPERTY. TO ASSUME HE IS DEAD IN VERSE 5 MAY CONFLICT WITH THE STATEMENT THAT HE GAVE GIFTS TO HIS SONS WHILE HE WAS STILL LIVING IN VERSE 6. HOWEVER, WE MAY ALSO TRANSLATE THESE TWO CLOSELY RELATED VERSES SO THAT THEIR TIME IN RELATION TO ABRAHAM’S DEATH IS MADE CLEAR; FOR EXAMPLE, “WHEN ABRAHAM DIED, HE LEFT ALL HIS PROPERTY TO ISAAC. HOWEVER, WHILE HE WAS STILL ALIVE, HE GAVE GIFTS TO … AND SENT THEM AWAY.…” ANOTHER POSSIBLE ADJUSTMENT IS TO CHANGE THE ORDER OF VERSES 5 AND 6. IN THIS CASE WE MAY TRANSLATE “WHILE ABRAHAM WAS STILL LIVING, HE GAVE GIFTS TO … AND SENT THEM AWAY.… LATER, WHEN ABRAHAM DIED, HE LEFT ALL HIS PROPERTY TO ISAAC.” BUT TO THE SONS OF HIS CONCUBINES: CONCUBINES (SEE DISCUSSION OF THIS TERM IN 22:24) APPEARS STRANGE IF THE REFERENCE IS TO KETURAH, WHO IS NOT REFERRED TO AS CONCUBINE IN VERSE 1. THE PLURAL FORM OF THIS WORD MAY REFER TO KETURAH AND HAGAR, OR TO THESE TWO AND STILL OTHERS NOT MENTIONED ELSEWHERE. IN LANGUAGES THAT DISTINGUISH BETWEEN THE MAIN WIFE AND SECONDARY WIVES, IT IS ADVISABLE TO USE SOMETHING EQUIVALENT TO SECONDARY WIVES HERE. ABRAHAM GAVE GIFTS: GIFTS TRANSLATES A GENERAL WORD FOR PRESENTS. THESE MAY HAVE BEEN IN THE FORM OF JEWELS, PRECIOUS METALS, ANIMALS, SLAVES, OR COMBINATIONS OF THESE. IN ANY EVENT THEY WOULD BE MOVABLE GIFTS THAT COULD BE TAKEN TO ANOTHER AREA. THE GIFTS ARE PROBABLY GIVEN AS A LEGAL SETTLEMENT THAT WILL ENABLE THESE SONS TO BEGIN LIFE ON THEIR OWN. IT IS UNLIKELY THAT MONEY AS IT IS USED IN THE MODERN WORLD WOULD HAVE BEEN A PART OF THESE GIFTS, BUT QUANTITIES OF PRECIOUS METALS SERVED THE SAME PURPOSE; THEREFORE, IT IS LEGITIMATE TO INCLUDE MONEY ALONG WITH OTHER ITEMS IN TRANSLATION, IF A DESCRIPTIVE EXPRESSION IS REQUIRED. HE SENT THEM AWAY FROM HIS SON ISAAC: THE PURPOSE OF SENDING THESE SONS AWAY IS TO REMOVE THEM FROM ISAAC SO THAT THEY WILL NOT BE A THREAT TO ISAAC’S WEALTH AND SECURITY. IN TRANSLATION IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO MAKE CLEAR THAT ABRAHAM IS SEPARATING THESE OTHER SONS FROM ISAAC. WE MAY TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “HE SENT THEM FAR AWAY TO KEEP THEM SEPARATED FROM ISAAC.” ANOTHER EXAMPLE FROM SOME TRANSLATIONS IS “HE SENT THEM AWAY TO COUNTRIES IN THE EAST, BECAUSE HE DIDN’T WANT THEM TO STAY THERE WITH HIS SON ISAAC.” EASTWARD TO THE EAST COUNTRY: SOME TAKE THIS REPEATED USE OF EAST TO REFER TO A LAND IN THE EAST CALLED “EAST.” A SIMILAR EXPRESSION IS FOUND IN 29:1. MFT TRANSLATES “EASTWARD TO THE LAND OF KEDEM.” (THE HEBREW WORD FOR “EAST” IS QEDEM.) ACCORDING TO DRIVER THE EXPRESSION IS A GENERAL DESIGNATION OF THE LAND THAT LAY TO THE EAST, NORTHEAST, OR SOUTHEAST OF CANAAN. FOR SOME LANGUAGES TEV WILL BE A SUITABLE MODEL, BUT FOR OTHERS IT WILL BE NECESSARY TO USE LOCAL CONDITIONS TO DESIGNATE EAST; FOR EXAMPLE, “TO A LAND WHERE THE SUN RISES,” “TO A LAND BEYOND THE BIG MOUNTAINS.” VERSE 6 COMPLETES THE GENEALOGY AND THE SEPARATION OF ISAAC’S FUTURE LINE FROM THAT OF HIS HALF-BROTHERS. THE NEXT SUBDIVISION WILL END WITH GOD BLESSING ISAAC AFTER ABRAHAM’S DEATH AND BURIAL.**

**THE DEATH AND BURIAL OF ABRAHAM (25:7–11)**

**THIS BRIEF REPORT IS THE FORM USED TO RECORD THE END OF THE LIFE OF A PATRIARCH. COMPARE THAT OF NOAH IN 9:28 AND ISAAC IN 35:29. ABRAHAM IS BURIED IN THE CAVE THAT HE PURCHASED FROM THE HITTITES. GOD BLESSES ISAAC, WHO CAMPS AT BEERLAHAIROI.**

**SUBDIVISION HEADING**

**TRANSLATORS MAY WISH TO MODIFY THE HANDBOOK HEADING TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “ABRAHAM DIES AND IS BURIED,” “THE DEATH OF ABRAHAM.”**

**GENESIS 25:7–8: NOTE THAT TEV COMBINES VERSES 7 AND 8 INTO ONE BRIEF STATEMENT. TRANSLATORS MAY WISH TO FOLLOW THIS MODEL. THESE ARE THE DAYS OF THE YEARS OF ABRAHAM’S LIFE: THESE POINTS FORWARD TO THE NUMBER OF YEARS ABRAHAM LIVED BEFORE HE DIED. AS WITH “DAYS” IN 5:5, THE SENSE OF THE IDIOM DAYS OF THE YEARS IS “ABRAHAM LIVED TO BE,” “ABRAHAM REACHED THE AGE OF,” “THIS IS HOW LONG ABRAHAM LIVED.” ABRAHAM WAS SEVENTY-FIVE YEARS OLD WHEN HE ENTERED CANAAN (12:4), AND HE SPENT ONE HUNDRED YEARS THERE BEFORE HE DIED. ABRAHAM BREATHED HIS LAST AND DIED: BREATHED HIS LAST TRANSLATES A VERB USED HERE AND IN VERSE 17 MEANING TO “EXPIRE,” “DIE.” THE USE OF THE TWO VERBS “EXPIRE” AND “DIE” TOGETHER IS FOUND IN POETIC CONTEXTS. TEV SAYS ONLY “DIED.” HOWEVER, NEB/REB MAKE BREATHED HIS LAST PART OF VERSE “ABRAHAM HAD LIVED … YEARS WHEN HE BREATHED HIS LAST.” IF IT IS NATURAL IN THE LANGUAGE OF THE TRANSLATION, WE MAY SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “ABRAHAM TOOK HIS LAST BREATH AND DIED.” IN A GOOD OLD AGE MEANS “WHEN HE WAS VERY OLD,” “AT A GREAT AGE,” OR “AFTER HAVING LIVED A LONG LIFE.” AN OLD MAN AND FULL OF YEARS IS A DOUBLE REPETITION OF THE PREVIOUS THOUGHT. AND WAS GATHERED TO HIS PEOPLE: IN 15:15 THE EXPRESSION IS “GO TO YOUR FATHERS.” IT IS GENERALLY ACCEPTED THAT THE TWO EXPRESSIONS ARE EQUIVALENT. HOWEVER, THERE ARE DIFFERENT INTERPRETATIONS OF THE MEANING. NOTE THAT TEV TAKES THIS EXPRESSION TO MEAN THE SAME AS “DIED,” AND CONSIDERS GATHERED TO HIS PEOPLE AS A REPETITION OF BREATHED HIS LAST AND DIED. ANOTHER VIEW IS THAT GATHERED … PEOPLE REFERS TO BEING PLACED IN THE BURIAL PLACE WITH THOSE WHO HAVE DIED BEFORE. OTHERS TAKE IT TO REFER TO BEING IN SHEOL, THE PLACE OF THE DEAD IN THE DEEP PARTS OF THE EARTH. STILL OTHERS UNDERSTAND IT TO REFER TO BEING REMEMBERED BY THE LIVING AS ONE OF THE HONORED ANCESTORS. WITH THE POSSIBLE EXCEPTION OF TEV, ALL THE MAJOR MODERN TRANSLATIONS IN ENGLISH RETAIN SOME FORM OF THIS EXPRESSION. BECAUSE IT IS EXPRESSED AS A PASSIVE CONSTRUCTION, IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO SHIFT TO THE ACTIVE AND SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “HE DIED AND UNITED HIMSELF WITH HIS KINSMEN,” OR “HE DIED AND JOINED HIS DEAD KINSMEN.” IN SOME LANGUAGES IT IS IMPORTANT TO MAKE CLEAR THAT THE KINSMEN OR RELATIVES ARE DEAD ONES: “HE DIED AND JOINED HIS RELATIVES WHO HAD DIED BEFORE HIM.”**

**GENESIS 25:9: ISAAC AND ISHMAEL HIS SONS BURIED HIM: THIS BRIEF STATEMENT SAYS NOTHING ABOUT THE RITUAL OF HANDLING THE CORPSE NOR OF THE BURIAL RITES. THE FOCUS IS ON PLACING THE BODY IN THE CAVE THAT ABRAHAM HAD PURCHASED FROM THE HITTITES (23:17–20). THE BURIAL WAS PROBABLY DONE BY WRAPPING THE BODY IN CLOTH, AND LAYING IT ON THE FLOOR OF THE CAVE, AND CLOSING THE ENTRANCE OF THE CAVE. IN LANGUAGES THAT HAVE TERMS FOR BURYING THAT REFER TO PLACING THE CORPSE IN A TREE OR ON A RAISED PLATFORM, TRANSLATORS MAY NEED TO USE A MORE GENERAL EXPRESSION SUCH AS “LAID HIS CORPSE IN THE CAVE.…” FOR THE EXPRESSIONS CAVE OF MACHPELAH, FIELD OF EPHRON, HITTITES, EAST OF MAMRE, TRANSLATORS SHOULD REFER TO THE WORDING USED IN 23:8–9, 17–20. NOTE THAT TEV AND OTHERS HAVE SHIFTED EAST OF MAMRE TO FOLLOW “IN THE FIELD” FOR A MORE NATURAL STYLE IN ENGLISH. THE FIELD OF EPHRON, IF IT IS TRANSLATED LITERALLY AS IN RSV, MAY GIVE READERS THE IMPRESSION THAT EPHRON WAS STILL THE OWNER OF THE FIELD. TEV CORRECTS THIS IN ENGLISH WITH THE VERB TENSE “WHICH HAD BELONGED TO EPHRON.” IN OTHER LANGUAGES SOME REFERENCE TO PAST AND PRESENT TIME MAY BE REQUIRED; FOR EXAMPLE, “THE PIECE OF GROUND THAT BELONGED AT FIRST TO EPHRON …, (10) BUT WHICH LATER ABRAHAM BOUGHT.…”**

**GENESIS 25:10: THE FIELD WHICH … THE HITTITES: SEE 23:16. THERE ABRAHAM WAS BURIED, WITH SARAH HIS WIFE: THERE REFERS TO THE CAVE OF MACHPELAH. WE MAY SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “IN THAT CAVE,” “THAT IS THE CAVE WHERE.” THE PASSIVE MAY HAVE TO BE EXPRESSED AS ACTIVE; FOR EXAMPLE, “ABRAHAM’S SONS BURIED HIM.” WITH SARAH HIS WIFE MAY NEED TO BE EXPRESSED AS “WHERE SARAH HAD ALSO BEEN BURIED” OR “WHERE ABRAHAM HAD BURIED HIS WIFE SARAH.” ANOTHER WAY OF EXPRESSING THIS WHOLE SENTENCE IS “THE BODY OF ABRAHAM AND THE BODY OF SARAH WERE BOTH THERE IN THAT CAVE.” SINCE THERE IS A GOOD DEAL OF REPETITION OF INFORMATION IN VERSES 9 AND 10, SOME TRANSLATORS FIND IT EASIER TO COMBINE THE TWO VERSES.**

**ONE EXAMPLE OF THE WAY VERSES 25:9–10 MAY BE TRANSLATED IS: • SAAC AND ISHMAEL, THE TWO SONS OF THAT OLD MAN, PUT HIS BODY IN THE CAVE THAT HE HAD BOUGHT A LONG TIME BEFORE NEAR MAMRE. IN THAT CAVE THAT OLD MAN HAD BURIED HIS WIFE SARAH BEFORE. THEY CALLED THAT CAVE MACHPELAH CAVE …, AND THAT WAS WHERE THE TWO SONS BURIED THAT OLD MAN’S BODY.**

**GENESIS 25:11: VERSE 11 CLOSES THE BURIAL REPORT BY TURNING OUR ATTENTION AGAIN TO ISAAC, THE SON GOD HAD PROMISED TO ABRAHAM. IT MAY BE BEST TO MAKE THIS VERSE A SEPARATE PARAGRAPH. AFTER THE DEATH OF ABRAHAM: OR “AFTER ABRAHAM DIED.” FOR BLESSED SEE DISCUSSION OF 14:19. ISAAC DWELT AT BEERLAHAIROI: IN 24:62 ISAAC HAD COME FROM BEERLAHAIROI WHEN HE FIRST MET REBEKAH. DWELT MEANS HE SETTLED OR ESTABLISHED HIS CAMP AT THAT PLACE. FOR BEERLAHAIROI SEE 16:14.**

**THE DESCENDANTS OF ISHMAEL (25:12–18)**

**VERSES 12–18 LIST THE DESCENDANTS OF ISHMAEL AND WHERE THEY LIVED. 12 NOW THESE ARE THE GENERATIONS OF ISHMAEL, ABRAHAM'S SON, WHOM HAGAR THE EGYPTIAN, SARAH'S HANDMAID, BARE UNTO ABRAHAM: 13 AND THESE ARE THE NAMES OF THE SONS OF ISHMAEL, BY THEIR NAMES, ACCORDING TO THEIR GENERATIONS: THE FIRSTBORN OF ISHMAEL, NEBAJOTH; AND KEDAR, AND ADBEEL, AND MIBSAM, 14 AND MISHMA, AND DUMAH, AND MASSA, 15 HADAR, AND TEMA, JETUR, NAPHISH, AND KEDEMAH: 16 THESE ARE THE SONS OF ISHMAEL, AND THESE ARE THEIR NAMES, BY THEIR TOWNS, AND BY THEIR CASTLES; TWELVE PRINCES ACCORDING TO THEIR NATIONS. 17 AND THESE ARE THE YEARS OF THE LIFE OF ISHMAEL, A HUNDRED AND THIRTY AND SEVEN YEARS: AND HE GAVE UP THE GHOST AND DIED; AND WAS GATHERED UNTO HIS PEOPLE. 18 AND THEY DWELT FROM HAVILAH UNTO SHUR, THAT IS BEFORE EGYPT, AS THOU GOEST TOWARD ASSYRIA: AND HE DIED IN THE PRESENCE OF ALL HIS BRETHREN.**

**SUBDIVISION HEADING**

**ALTHOUGH THE ABRAHAM STORY HAS CONCLUDED WITH HIS DEATH, THE LIST OF DESCENDANTS OF ISHMAEL AND THE REPORT OF HIS DEATH ARE INCLUDED IN THE OUTLINE OF THE ABRAHAM STORY. A NEW DIVISION WILL BEGIN WITH THE DESCENDANTS OF ISAAC AT VERSE 19. THE HANDBOOK HEADING MAY BE REWORDED TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “THESE ARE ISHMAEL’S OFFSPRING,” “ISHMAEL’S MALE DESCENDANTS,” OR “THE DEATH OF ISHMAEL.”**

**GENESIS 25:12: THESE ARE THE DESCENDANTS OF ISHMAEL TRANSLATES “THESE ARE THE TOLEDOTH OF ISHMAEL.” THE HEBREW WORD TOLEDOTH WAS FIRST USED IN 2:4. SEE THERE FOR DISCUSSION. HERE THE WORD MEANS “GENEALOGY” OR “LIST OF DESCENDANTS.” SEE ALSO “TRANSLATING GENESIS.” ABRAHAM’S SON … BORE TO ABRAHAM: THE NARRATOR MAKES A SPECIAL POINT TO IDENTIFY ISHMAEL AS ABRAHAM’S SON BORN TO SARAH’S MAID HAGAR, WHO IS AN EGYPTIAN. RSV PRESERVES THE HEBREW ORDER OF THESE PHRASES, WHICH ARE CLEAR ENOUGH IN ENGLISH BUT LACKING IN DESCRIPTIVE STYLE. NOTE HOW TEV HAS MARKED THEM AS A PARENTHETICAL CLAUSE. IN SOME LANGUAGES IT WILL BE CLEARER TO RESTRUCTURE THESE INTO TWO SHORT SENTENCES. FOR EXAMPLE, WE MAY SAY “ISHMAEL WAS ABRAHAM’S SON. HIS MOTHER WAS SARAH’S EGYPTIAN MAID.” SINCE THE EXPRESSION THESE ARE THE DESCENDANTS OF ISHMAEL IS REPEATED IN VERSES 13 AND 16, IT MAY NOT BE NECESSARY OR ADVISABLE TO INCLUDE THIS INFORMATION IN VERSE 12.**

**GENESIS 25:13–15: THESE ARE THE NAMES OF THE SONS … ORDER OF BIRTH: IF THE TRANSLATOR HAS FOLLOWED THE MODEL SUGGESTED FOR VERSE 12, VERSE 13 MAY BEGIN “THE NAMES OF ISHMAEL’S SONS ARE LISTED HERE IN THE ORDER IN WHICH THEY WERE BORN.” NEBAIOTH: IN 28:9 AND 36:3, ESAU MARRIED MAHALATH AND BASEMATH, WHO ARE SAID TO BE THE SISTERS OF NEBAIOTH. THE NAME OCCURS IN ISA 60:7, BUT NOTHING MORE IS KNOWN ABOUT IT. THE FIRST-BORN OF ISHMAEL: THIS INFORMATION HAS ALREADY BEEN GIVEN IN NAMED IN THE ORDER OF THEIR BIRTH. HOWEVER, THE REPETITION OF IT CALLS SPECIAL ATTENTION TO THE FIRSTBORN. TRANSLATIONS LIKE TEV DO NOT REPEAT IT. KEDAR IS ALSO MENTIONED IN ISA 60:7 AS AN ETHNIC GROUP. IT IS ALSO NAMED IN PSA 120:5; ISA 21:16–17; 42:11; JER 2:10; 49:28. THE NAME IS MENTIONED IN CUNEIFORM TEXTS AS THE NAME OF AN ARABIAN TRIBE. ADBEEL OCCURS ONLY HERE AND IN 1 CHR 1:29. MIBSAM AND MISHMA ARE MENTIONED IN 1 CHR 4:25 AS THE NAMES OF SONS OF SIMEON. DUMAH OCCURS IN ISA 21:11. THIS IS SAID BY SPEISER TO BE CONNECTED WITH AN OASIS IN THE SYRIAN DESERT. MASSA IS A NAME MENTIONED IN PRO 31:1. HADAD OCCURS ONLY HERE AND IS UNKNOWN. TEMA IS IDENTIFIED BY SOME SCHOLARS WITH THE PLACE BY THAT NAME IN ARABIA. THE NAME OCCURS ALONG WITH DEDAN IN JER 25:23 AND WITH SHEBA IN JOB 6:19. THE NAME ALSO OCCURS IN ISA 21:14 ALONG WITH DUMAH, DEDAN, AND KEDAR. JETUR AND NAPHISH OCCUR IN 1 CHR 5:19 AS TRIBES LOCATED SOMEWHERE EAST OF THE JORDAN, AND WHO WERE ENGAGED IN BATTLES WITH SOME OF THE TRIBES OF ISRAEL. KEDEMAH OCCURS ONLY HERE AND IS UNKNOWN.**

**GENESIS 25:16: THESE ARE THE SONS OF ISHMAEL: THESE REPRESENTS THE SAME WORD USED IN VERSE 12, WHERE IT POINTED AHEAD TO THE NAMES. NOW IT POINTS BACK TO THE SAME NAMES. IF TRANSLATORS USE A POINTING TERM HERE, IT SHOULD BE ONE THAT INDICATES WHAT HAS ALREADY BEEN MENTIONED. TEV SAYS “THEY,” WHICH REFERS TO THE NAMES OF ISHMAEL’S SONS. THERE ARE TWELVE NAMES LISTED, AS IS STATED AT THE END OF THIS VERSE. ACCORDINGLY, SOME TRANSLATORS SHIFT THAT INFORMATION FORWARD TO SAY “THESE ARE THE NAMES OF THE TWELVE SONS OF ISHMAEL.” AND THESE ARE THEIR NAMES, BY THEIR VILLAGES AND BY THEIR ENCAMPMENTS: RSV RETAINS THE HEBREW WORD ORDER, WHICH OBSCURES THE SENSE. THE MEANING IS THAT THE NAMES OF ISHMAEL’S SONS BECAME THE NAMES OF VILLAGES, OR THE VILLAGES WERE NAMED AFTER ISHMAEL’S SONS. IN MANY LANGUAGES IT WILL BE NECESSARY OR DESIRABLE TO SAY THAT IT WAS “PEOPLE” OR “THEIR DESCENDANTS” WHO ACTUALLY NAMED THE SETTLEMENTS. IN ONE TRANSLATION, FOR EXAMPLE, THIS PART OF THE VERSE IS EXPRESSED AS FOLLOWS: “THE DESCENDANTS OF THESE TWELVE SONS OF ISHMAEL TOOK THE NAMES OF THEIR ANCESTORS, AND THEY GAVE THE NAMES OF THEIR ANCESTORS TO THEIR VILLAGES AND CAMPING PLACES.” VILLAGES TRANSLATES A NOUN THAT REFERS TO A SETTLEMENT, A CLUSTER OF DWELLINGS WITHOUT A PROTECTING WALL. IN TRANSLATION THE TERM SHOULD DENOTE A GROUP OF DWELLINGS OR STRUCTURES THAT ARE NOT INTENDED TO BE PERMANENT. ENCAMPMENTS REFERS TO AN ENCLOSURE, ESPECIALLY A CIRCULAR ARRANGEMENT OF NOMADIC SHELTERS, OFTEN IN THE FORM OF TENTS. AN ENCAMPMENT IS EVEN LESS PERMANENT THAN A VILLAGE OR SETTLEMENT, AS DESCRIBED ABOVE. TWELVE PRINCES ACCORDING TO THEIR TRIBES: IN 17:20 GOD PROMISED ABRAHAM THAT HE WOULD BLESS ISHMAEL AND MAKE HIM THE FATHER OF TWELVE PRINCES. FOR DISCUSSION OF PRINCE SEE 17:20. THE WORD USED TO TRANSLATE PRINCE IN 17:20 SHOULD ALSO BE USED HERE. ACCORDING TO THEIR TRIBES MEANS THAT EACH OF THE SONS WAS LEADER OF HIS OWN GROUP. TRIBES TRANSLATES A LITTLE-USED WORD HERE THAT REFERS TO A DIVISION OF THE ISHMAELITE PEOPLE, THE DESCENDANTS OF ISHMAEL. VARIOUS ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS USE “TRIBE,” “PEOPLE,” “GROUPS,” “CLAN.” VERSE 16 MAY BE TRANSLATED AS IN TEV; HOWEVER, TEV USED “PRINCE” IN 17:20 BUT DOES NOT DO SO HERE. A SIMILAR TRANSLATION THAT FOLLOWS THE ORDER OF RSV SAYS “THESE WERE THE NAMES OF THE SONS OF ISHMAEL; AND PEOPLE GAVE THOSE NAMES TO THE VILLAGES AND PLACES THEY LIVED IN. THOSE TWELVE WERE THE LEADERS OF TWELVE TRIBES.” ANOTHER SATISFACTORY MODEL IS FRCL: “SUCH WERE THE TWELVE SONS OF ISHMAEL. EACH ONE WAS THE CHIEF OF A CLAN; THEY GAVE THEIR NAMES TO THEIR VILLAGES AND TO THEIR ENCAMPMENTS.”**

**GENESIS 25:17: VERSE 17 REPORTS THE DEATH BUT NOT THE BURIAL OF ISHMAEL. THIS REPORT APPEARS TO INTERRUPT THE CONTINUITY BETWEEN VERSES 16 AND 18. THE FORM OF THE DEATH REPORT FOLLOWS THAT OF ABRAHAM IN VERSE 25:7–8. HOWEVER, IT IS TO BE NOTED THAT “AND DIED IN A GOOD OLD AGE” AND “AN OLD MAN AND FULL OF YEARS” IS LACKING.**

**GENESIS 25:18: THEY DWELT FROM HAVILAH TO SHUR: THE SEPTUAGINT AND VULGATE HAVE “HE” INSTEAD OF THEY, BUT RSV AND TEV FOLLOW THE HEBREW. THEY REFERS TO THE SONS OF ISHMAEL AND THEIR DESCENDANTS, AND IN RELATION TO ISHMAEL THEY ARE ALL “DESCENDANTS” (TEV). HAVILAH OCCURS IN 2:11 AND 10:29 BUT NOT AS A KNOWN PLACE. SEE ALSO 1 SAM 15:7. SOME SCHOLARS BELIEVE IT TO BE IN NORTHEAST ARABIA (DRIVER). WESTERMANN SUGGESTS IT MAY BE ON THE PERSIAN GULF. FOR COMMENTS ON SHUR SEE 16:7. WHICH IS OPPOSITE EGYPT: OPPOSITE TRANSLATES A PHRASE THAT MAY MEAN “BEFORE,” “IN FRONT OF,” OR MAY BE USED AS IN 1 KGS 11:7 WITH THE MEANING OF “TO THE EAST OF.” TEV AND OTHERS TRANSLATE IN THIS WAY. HOWEVER, SOME UNDERSTAND IT TO MEAN “CLOSE TO” OR “IN HOSTILITY TO.” ON THE WAY TO ASSYRIA IS LITERALLY “AS YOU GO TO ASSHUR.” TRANSLATIONS DIFFER AS TO THE MEANING OF “ASSHUR.” RSV AND TEV SAY ASSYRIA AND REFER TO THE COUNTRY BY THAT NAME. NEB AND OTHERS SAY “ASSHUR” AND REFER TO THE CAPITAL OF ASSYRIA. SEE DISCUSSION OF “ASSHUR” AT 2:14. THERE IS NO CLEAR REASON TO PREFER ONE ABOVE THE OTHER. HE SETTLED OVER AGAINST ALL HIS PEOPLE: THE MEANING OF THE HEBREW IS UNCERTAIN. RSV FOLLOWS THE HEBREW AND TRANSLATES THE SUBJECT AS HE, WHICH REFERS TO ISHMAEL. HOWEVER, TEV TAKES THE SINGULAR SUBJECT TO BE UNDERSTOOD IN A COLLECTIVE SENSE, AND SO REFERS TO THE DESCENDANTS OF ISHMAEL. AS THE RSV FOOTNOTE SHOWS, THE HEBREW HAS “FELL,” WHICH RSV TRANSLATES AS SETTLED. THE SAME HEBREW VERB IN JUDGES 7:12 IS TRANSLATED IN THIS WAY. HOWEVER, OTHERS UNDERSTAND “FELL” ACCOMPANIED BY OVER AGAINST TO MEAN “TO RAID,” OR “TO ATTACK,” OR AS SPEISER SAYS, “MADE FORAYS AGAINST.” HOTTP TAKES “FELL” TO MEAN “DIED” AND SUGGESTS “BECAUSE HE [ISHMAEL] DIED BEFORE HIS BROTHERS” OR “BECAUSE HE DIED DURING THE LIFE-TIME OF HIS BROTHERS.” HOWEVER, IT IS NOT CLEAR WHY ISHMAEL’S DYING BEFORE HIS BROTHERS WOULD CAUSE HIS DESCENDANTS TO BECOME SPREAD FROM HAVILAH TO SHUR. THE SAME HEBREW PHRASE IN THE FIRST PART OF VERSE 18 TRANSLATED “OPPOSITE” BY RSV AND “TO THE EAST” BY TEV IS RENDERED HERE AS OVER AGAINST BY RSV AND AS “APART FROM” BY TEV. HOWEVER, AS POINTED OUT ABOVE, IT MAY ALSO HAVE THE SENSE OF “IN HOSTILITY TO,” WHICH IS THE SENSE INTENDED BY RSV. DUE TO THE DIFFERENCES IN THE INTERPRETATION OF THIS CLAUSE, IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO POINT TO ANY ONE MODEL AS BEING THE PREFERRED ONE. HOWEVER, TEV IS A SUITABLE MODEL, AND NIV MAY ALSO BE FOLLOWED: “AND THEY LIVED IN HOSTILITY TOWARD ALL THEIR BROTHERS.” HIS PEOPLE IS LITERALLY “HIS BROTHERS.” THESE MAY BE THE “OTHER DESCENDANTS OF ABRAHAM” (TEV), SUCH AS ISAAC AND THE SONS OF KETURAH AND THEIR OFFSPRING MENTIONED IN VERSES 2–4. BUT THERE IS ANOTHER POSSIBLE INTERPRETATION GIVEN BY SPEISER, WHO TRANSLATES “EACH MADE FORAYS AGAINST HIS VARIOUS KINSMEN.” IN HIS NOTES HE COMMENTS ON THE SINGULAR VERB: “… EVIDENTLY DISTRIBUTIVE, HENCE THE RENDERING ‘EACH.’” ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF A RECENT TRANSLATION THAT FOLLOWS THIS INTERPRETATION IS “BUT THESE TRIBES WERE NOT ABLE TO LIVE PEACEABLY TOGETHER.” THIS CONCLUDES THE ABRAHAM STORY.**

**THE STORY OF ISAAC AND REBEKAH GEN 25:19–26:35**

**SECTION 2 OF THIS HANDBOOK, WHICH IS TITLED THE ANCESTORS OF THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL, BEGAN AT 11:27 AND CONTINUES TO THE END OF THE BOOK. SEE THE HEADING AND DISCUSSION AT 11:27. DIVISION 2A WITH ITS SUBDIVISIONS, BEGINNING WITH 2A-1 IN 11:27 AND CONTINUING TO 2A-27 IN 25:18, HAS COVERED THE ENTIRE ABRAHAM STORY. DIVISION 2B TAKES UP THE ISAAC STORY, WHICH IN FACT GIVES THE EARLY STAGES OF THE JACOB AND ESAU STORIES, EXCEPT FOR CHAPTER 26, WHICH IS ABOUT ISAAC ONLY. ALTHOUGH ISAAC’S DEATH IS NOT REPORTED UNTIL 35:29, JACOB BECOMES THE PRINCIPAL ACTOR IN 25:27. HOWEVER, BECAUSE JACOB IS NOT MENTIONED IN CHAPTER 26, THE HANDBOOK BEGINS DIVISION C, THE STORY OF JACOB, AT 27:1. IT WILL BE NOTED THAT THE MATERIAL IN THE ISAAC AND JACOB STORIES IS NOT NEATLY ARRANGED AROUND ONE PERSON’S LIFE. IN WHAT THE HANDBOOK CALLS THE ISAAC STORY, OUR ATTENTION IS DRAWN TO THE STRUGGLES BETWEEN ISAAC’S TWIN SONS, ESAU AND JACOB. IN 25:29–34 ISAAC IS NOT MENTIONED. 26:34–35 TELLS OF ESAU’S MARRIAGE TO FOREIGN WOMEN, WHICH SHOULD BE IN THE ESAU STORY. HOWEVER, ESAU, LIKE ISHMAEL, IS NOT THE LINE THAT THE OLD TESTAMENT STORY FOLLOWS. THEREFORE, ESAU’S STORY HAS TO BE INCLUDED IN THAT OF HIS FATHER AND BROTHER.**

**DIVISION HEADING**

**MOST TRANSLATIONS DO NOT CREATE A MAJOR HEADING CALLED “THE STORY OF ISAAC.” HOWEVER, NJB HAS “III: THE PATRIARCHS ISAAC AND JACOB,” AND NAB “III: THE STORY OF ISAAC AND JACOB.” OTHERS LIKE TEV HAVE HEADINGS ONLY FOR THE INDIVIDUAL STORIES. SPEISER AND FRCL BEGIN “THE STORY OF JACOB” AT THIS POINT. TRANSLATORS MAY FOLLOW THE MODEL OF THE HANDBOOK OR ONE OF THESE TRANSLATIONS.**

**THE BIRTH OF ESAU AND JACOB (25:19–26)**

**THE FIRST SUBDIVISION IN THE ISAAC STORY IS THE ACCOUNT OF THE BIRTH OF HIS SONS ESAU AND JACOB. THIS STORY REPEATS THE OUTLINE OF ISAAC’S MARRIAGE TO REBEKAH (VERSES 19–20). LIKE HIS MOTHER SARAH, ISAAC’S WIFE IS UNABLE TO BECOME PREGNANT BUT DOES SO AFTER ISAAC PRAYS FOR HER (VERSE 21). REBEKAH LEARNS OF THE STRUGGLE BETWEEN HER TWO SONS BEFORE THEY ARE BORN (VERSES 22–23). SHE GIVES BIRTH TO TWIN BOYS WHO ARE GIVEN SPECIAL NAMES TAKEN FROM THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THEIR BIRTHS (VERSES 24–26).**

**SUBDIVISION HEADING**

**THE HANDBOOK HEADING MAY BE ADJUSTED TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “ISAAC’S WIFE REBEKAH GIVES BIRTH TO TWO SONS,” “TWO SONS ARE BORN TO ISAAC.” NIV HAS “JACOB AND ESAU,” FRCL “ESAU AND JACOB,” GECL “REBEKAH HAS TWINS.”**

**GENESIS 25:19: THESE ARE THE DESCENDANTS OF ISAAC, ABRAHAM’S SON: THE WORDING IS IDENTICAL TO THAT OF VERSE 12 CONCERNING ISHMAEL. HOWEVER, THE HEBREW WORD TOLEDOTH IS NOT FOLLOWED BY A LIST OF DESCENDANTS BUT RATHER BY THE ACCOUNT OF ISAAC’S MARRIAGE TO REBEKAH AND HER PREGNANCY. THEREFORE, TOLEDOTH IS USED HERE AS IT WAS IN 2:4 WITH THE MEANING OF “STORY,” “ACCOUNT,” “HISTORY.” ACCORDINGLY, TEV TRANSLATES “THIS IS THE STORY OF.…” VERSE 19A FUNCTIONS AS A FORMAL TITLE TO THIS DIVISION, WHICH THE HANDBOOK CALLS “THE STORY OF ISAAC AND REBEKAH.” ISAAC IS IDENTIFIED TWICE WITH ABRAHAM, ONCE AS ABRAHAM’S SON AND AGAIN BY THE SENTENCE ABRAHAM WAS THE FATHER OF ISAAC. RSV AND OTHER FORMAL TRANSLATIONS RETAIN THE REPETITION; HOWEVER, MANY MODERN TRANSLATIONS CONSIDER ABRAHAM WAS … ISAAC TO BE REDUNDANT AND SO DO NOT REPEAT THIS INFORMATION. EVEN WITH A DIVISION AND SUBDIVISION HEADING, IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO OPEN THIS STORY WITH A SUITABLE STORY OPENER. OUR TEXT PROVIDES ONE THAT MAY HAVE TO BE ADAPTED TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, AS DOES GECL, “HERE BEGINS THE STORY OF ISAAC, ABRAHAM’S SON.” WE MAY ALSO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “THIS IS HOW THE STORY OF ISAAC BEGINS. HE WAS ABRAHAM’S SON.…”**

**GENESIS 25:20: AND ISAAC WAS FORTY YEARS OLD … REBEKAH: IN MANY LANGUAGES THIS INFORMATION PROVIDES THE TIME ELEMENT THAT NEEDS TO BE EXPRESSED AS “WHEN ISAAC WAS FORTY YEARS OLD …” OR “WHEN ISAAC REACHED THE AGE OF FORTY.…” WHEN HE TOOK HIS WIFE HAS BEEN REVISED IN NRSV TO SAY “WHEN HE MARRIED REBEKAH.” SEE TEV. THE REMAINDER OF VERSE 20 IDENTIFIES REBEKAH AS THE DAUGHTER OF BETHUEL AND THE SISTER OF LABAN. IT FURTHER IDENTIFIES THE TWO MEN AS BEING ARAMEAN AND BETHUEL AS BEING ASSOCIATED WITH PADDAN-ARAM. FOR ARAMEAN SEE THE DISCUSSION OF “ARAM” AT 10:22. PADDAN-ARAM OCCURS FOR THE FIRST TIME HERE BUT IS REPEATED A NUMBER OF TIMES LATER IN GENESIS. IN 24:10 IT IS CALLED IN HEBREW ARAM-NAHARAIM “ARAM OF THE TWO RIVERS.” SEE THERE FOR COMMENTS. IT IS ANOTHER NAME FOR MESOPOTAMIA, THE AREA BETWEEN THE TIGRIS AND EUPHRATES RIVERS IN MODERN IRAQ. TEV HAS PLACED “AN ARAMEAN FROM MESOPOTAMIA” BETWEEN PARENTHESES. HOWEVER, PARENTHESES OR OTHER PUNCTUATION MARKS MAY NOT BE USEFUL IN SOME LANGUAGES. IT IS SOMETIMES NECESSARY TO FORM TWO SENTENCES; FOR EXAMPLE, “REBEKAH WAS THE DAUGHTER OF BETHUEL AND THE SISTER OF LABAN. THEY WERE ARAMEANS FROM MESOPOTAMIA.” SISTER MAY NEED TO BE EXPRESSED BY A TERM MEANING “YOUNGER SISTER”; IN SOME LANGUAGES THIS RELATIONSHIP IS EXPRESSED BY A TERM THAT MEANS “SIBLING OF THE OPPOSITE SEX” (THAT IS, SISTER OF A MAN OR BROTHER OF A WOMAN). IT IS PROBABLY NOT NECESSARY TO SAY THAT LABAN WAS AN ARAMEAN, SINCE THAT INFORMATION CAN BE GATHERED FROM HIS FATHER BEING ARAMEAN. FRCL PLACES LABAN BEFORE BETHUEL: “REBEKAH, SISTER OF LABAN AND DAUGHTER OF BETHUEL, AN ARAMEAN FROM UPPER-MESOPOTAMIA.” TRANSLATORS MAY WISH TO FOLLOW THIS MODEL.**

**GENESIS 25:21: AND ISAAC PRAYED TO THE LORD FOR HIS WIFE: RSV FOLLOWS THE HEBREW CLAUSE ORDER, WHICH GIVES THE ACTION TAKEN BEFORE THE REASON. THIS WILL BE NATURAL IN SOME LANGUAGES, BUT OTHERS WILL PREFER TO PLACE THE REASON CLAUSE FIRST. PRAYED TRANSLATES A VERB THAT OCCURS ONLY THIS ONE TIME IN GENESIS. IT IS FOUND ALSO IN EXO 10:18 AND IS ALWAYS A REQUEST OR PLEA DIRECTED TO GOD. FOR DISCUSSION OF “PRAY” SEE 20:7. FOR LORD SEE 2:4 AND “THE NAMES OF GOD IN GENESIS,” IN “TRANSLATING GENESIS,” PAGE 13. FOR HIS WIFE MUST OFTEN BE EXPRESSED AS “PRAYED THAT THE LORD WOULD HEAL HIS WIFE.” BECAUSE SHE WAS BARREN GIVES THE REASON FOR ISAAC’S PRAYER. BARREN TRANSLATES THE SAME WORD USED OF SARAH’S CONDITION IN 11:30. IT NOW BECOMES APPARENT THAT ISAAC, LIKE HIS FATHER, MUST DEPEND UPON GOD TO INTERVENE TO KEEP THE PROMISE HE MADE TO ABRAHAM IN 12:2. A SUGGESTED RENDERING OF VERSE 21 IS, FOR EXAMPLE, “REBEKAH WAS UNABLE TO HAVE CHILDREN, AND SO ISAAC PRAYED TO THE LORD FOR HER” OR “BECAUSE REBEKAH COULD NOT BECOME PREGNANT, ISAAC ASKED THE LORD TO GIVE HER CHILDREN.” SEE ALSO TEV. AND THE LORD GRANTED HIS PRAYER: GRANTED HIS PRAYER TRANSLATES A PASSIVE FORM OF THE HEBREW VERB “PRAY” USED IN THE FIRST PART OF THIS VERSE AND WHICH HAS THE LITERAL SENSE “HE WAS PRAYED TO” AND MEANS “HE [THE LORD] ANSWERED THE PRAYER.” THAT IS, “THE LORD DID WHAT ISAAC ASKED HIM TO DO.” AND REBEKAH HIS WIFE CONCEIVED: THAT IS, SHE BECAME PREGNANT.**

**GENESIS 25:22: THE OPENING OF THIS VERSE SPEAKS OF THE CHILDREN … WITHIN HER BUT HAS NOT INFORMED THE READER THAT REBEKAH BECAME PREGNANT WITH TWINS. THEREFORE, TEV SUPPLIES THIS INFORMATION. SPCL SAYS “THE TWINS FOUGHT EACH OTHER.…” CHILDREN TRANSLATES THE WORD FOR “SONS.” THE WORD USED IN TRANSLATION SHOULD BE SUITABLE FOR SPEAKING OF OFFSPRING THAT ARE AS YET UNBORN. STRUGGLED TOGETHER TRANSLATES THE REFLEXIVE FORM OF A VERB MEANING TO CRUSH OR OPPRESS, BUT IN THIS CONTEXT, IT REFERS TO THE RIVALRY OR OPPOSITION BETWEEN THE TWO UNBORN INFANTS, A SUBJECT THAT WILL DEVELOP AS THEY GROW TO MATURITY. STRUGGLED TOGETHER MAY BE TRANSLATED AS “PUSHED AGAINST EACH OTHER” OR “STRUCK EACH OTHER.” REB SAYS “PRESSED ON EACH OTHER,” NIV “JOSTLED EACH OTHER,” TOB “BUMPED AGAINST EACH OTHER.” WITHIN HER IS LITERALLY “INSIDE HER WOMB.” REBEKAH’S REACTION IN RSV IS EXPRESSED AS A RHETORICAL QUESTION: IF IT IS THUS, WHY DO I LIVE? AS RSV’S FOOTNOTE SHOWS, THAT WORDING FOLLOWS THE SYRIAC TRANSLATION BECAUSE THE HEBREW IS SAID TO BE OBSCURE. THE HEBREW TEXT SAYS “WHY THIS [AM] I?” TO WHICH HOTTP GIVES AN {A} RATING AND TRANSLATES “WHY IS THIS HAPPENING TO ME?” THIS RENDERING IS NEARLY EQUIVALENT TO TEV AND IS RECOMMENDED TO TRANSLATORS. IN ORDER TO OBTAIN AN ANSWER TO HER QUESTION, SHE WENT TO INQUIRE OF THE LORD. THE HEBREW VERB TRANSLATED INQUIRE MEANS TO “CONSULT” OR “ASK.” THE EXPRESSION INQUIRE OF GOD ALSO OCCURS, FOR EXAMPLE, IN 1 SAM 9:9, IN WHICH THE PERSON INQUIRES OF THE LORD THROUGH A PROPHET OR WISE MAN (SEER). IN 1 KGS 22:5 THE EXPRESSION IS “INQUIRE FIRST FOR THE WORD OF THE LORD.” AT THIS LATER PERIOD IT WAS THE PROPHET OR SEER WHO HAD THE TASK OF MAKING GOD’S WISHES KNOWN TO THE PEOPLE; THE INQUIRING WAS DONE AT A SANCTUARY OR HOLY PLACE. IN MANY LANGUAGES IT WILL BE POSSIBLE TO TRANSLATE AS TEV, OR TO SAY SOMETHING LIKE “ASK THE LORD ABOUT WHAT WAS HAPPENING TO HER.” IN OTHER LANGUAGES, HOWEVER, IT WILL BE MORE NATURAL TO USE THE TERM “PRAY.” IN ONE TRANSLATION, FOR EXAMPLE, THIS WHOLE EXPRESSION IS RENDERED “SHE WANTED TO KNOW THE REASON FOR THIS, SO SHE WENT AND PRAYED TO THE LORD.”**

**GENESIS 25:23: THE ANSWER REBEKAH RECEIVES FROM THE LORD IS SPOKEN IN POETIC FORM, AND MANY TRANSLATIONS INDENT THE LINES TO SHOW THIS. THE HEBREW CONSISTS OF TWO LINES, IN WHICH THE FIRST LINE HAS THREE WORDS FOLLOWED BY FOUR, AND THE SECOND HAS THREE WORDS FOLLOWED BY ANOTHER GROUP OF THREE. TWO NATIONS ARE IN YOUR WOMB: NATIONS REFERS TO POLITICAL STATES OR COUNTRIES, AND THE USAGE IS FIGURATIVE. THE SENSE IS THAT THE TWO UNBORN INFANTS WILL BECOME THE ANCESTORS OF TWO NATIONS. IN MANY LANGUAGES IT WILL NOT BE POSSIBLE TO TRANSLATE THE TEXT LITERALLY. HOWEVER, WE MAY OFTEN SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “THE TWO BABIES IN YOUR WOMB WILL BECOME THE ANCESTORS OF THE PEOPLE OF TWO NATIONS” OR “THE TWINS YOU WILL HAVE WILL BECOME TWO NATIONS.” TWO PEOPLES IS IN PARALLEL WITH “TWO NATIONS,” AND BORN OF YOU (LITERALLY “FROM YOUR BODY”) IS PARALLEL WITH “IN YOUR WOMB.” SHALL BE DIVIDED: DIVIDED TRANSLATES THE PASSIVE FORM OF A VERB MEANING TO BE SEPARATED. THE VERB IS USED OF A RIVER DIVIDING INTO BRANCHES IN 2:10. IN OUR CONTEXT THE SEPARATION IS NOT JUST PHYSICAL BUT EMOTIONAL AND SOCIAL. NEB/REB EMPHASIZES THE ANTAGONISM AND ENMITY WITH “TWO PEOPLES, GOING THEIR OWN WAYS FROM BIRTH.” TEV EXPRESSES THE ELEMENT OF OPPOSITION WITH “YOU WILL GIVE BIRTH TO TWO RIVAL PEOPLES.” IN SOME LANGUAGES THE FIGURATIVE SENSE OF GIVING BIRTH TO “PEOPLES” MAY NOT BE ACCEPTABLE. IN THAT CASE WE MAY SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “YOU WILL GIVE BIRTH TO TWINS WHO WILL GROW UP TO BE RIVALS” OR “… WHO WILL BE ENEMIES WITH EACH OTHER.” SOME TRANSLATIONS EXPRESS THE ELEMENT OF OPPOSITION OR RIVALRY AS “… WILL COMPETE WITH EACH OTHER,” “… EACH WILL EACH TRY TO BE GREATER THAN THE OTHER,” “THOSE TWO TRIBES WON’T BE ABLE TO LIVE TOGETHER AS FRIENDS.” THE ONE SHALL BE STRONGER THAN THE OTHER: THIS LINE IS STATED IN A GENERAL WAY, AND ITS CONTENT ONLY BECOMES CLEAR IN THE NEXT LINE. STRONGER REFERS TO “POWER,” “FORCE,” “STRENGTH,” NOT OF ONE INFANT OVER THE OTHER SO MUCH AS WHAT THE TWO PEOPLES LATER WILL BECOME. IN SOME LANGUAGES THIS KIND OF COMPARISON IS EXPRESSED AS “THE ONE WILL BE STRONG. THE OTHER WILL SURPASS IN STRENGTH.” THE ELDER SHALL SERVE THE YOUNGER: THE ELDER AND THE YOUNGER REFER TO THE ORDER OF BIRTH OF THE TWINS THAT REBEKAH WILL HAVE. THE RIGHTS OF THE OLDEST SON WILL BE DISCUSSED IN VERSE 31. IN TRANSLATION IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO MAKE CLEAR THAT SHALL SERVE REFERS TO THE FUTURE. IF THIS IS NOT MADE CLEAR, READERS MAY THINK OF ONE INFANT SERVING THE OTHER INFANT. THE SENSE OF SERVE HERE IS NOT MERELY TO WORK FOR BUT TO BE THE SERVANT OR SLAVE OF.**

**MFT SAYS “REIGN” OVER. FOR LANGUAGES THAT REQUIRE CONSIDERABLE ADAPTING IN THE TRANSLATION OF VERSE 23, HERE IS A MODEL THAT MAY BE USEFUL: • THE LORD SAID TO REBEKAH: “THERE ARE TWO BABIES [TWINS] IN YOU, AND THEY WILL BECOME THE ANCESTORS OF THE PEOPLE OF TWO NATIONS. THE PEOPLE OF THESE NATIONS WILL BE RIVALS. ONE NATION WILL BE STRONGER THAN THE OTHER. THE TWIN THAT IS BORN FIRST WILL GROW UP TO BECOME THE SERVANT OF THE TWIN BORN LAST.”**

**GENESIS 25:24: WHEN HER DAYS … FULFILLED: HER REFERS TO REBEKAH. DAYS … FULFILLED REFERS TO THE NINE MONTHS OF HER PREGNANCY BEING COMPLETED. THIS CLAUSE MAY BE RENDERED, FOR EXAMPLE, “WHEN IT WAS TIME FOR HER TO GIVE BIRTH” OR “WHEN REBEKAH WAS READY TO GIVE BIRTH.” BEHOLD, THERE WERE TWINS IN HER WOMB: BEHOLD EXPRESSES AN ELEMENT OF CONFIRMATION OF WHAT HAD BEEN SAID IN VERSE 23. TEV AND SOME OTHER MODERN TRANSLATIONS DO NOT REPRESENT THIS ELEMENT. FRCL, HOWEVER, SAYS “WHEN THE MOMENT OF HER DELIVERY ARRIVED, THERE WAS NO LONGER ANY DOUBT.” NEB/REB HAS “THERE WERE INDEED TWINS IN.…” SOME OTHER TRANSLATIONS SAY “WHEN THE TIME CAME IT WAS TRUE THAT SHE GAVE BIRTH TO TWO BOYS.” TWINS IN HER WOMB: IT IS MORE NATURAL IN ENGLISH TO SAY “SHE GAVE BIRTH TO TWINS” OR, AS TEV SAYS, “TWIN SONS,” SINCE BOTH WERE MALE.**

**GENESIS 25:25: THE FIRST CAME FORTH RED: MANY LANGUAGES HAVE WORDS TO DESIGNATE THE FIRST AND SECOND OF A PAIR OF TWINS. CAME OUT REFERS TO THE BABY COMING OUT OF THE MOTHER’S BIRTH CANAL. SOME LANGUAGES USE THE EXPRESSION “THE FIRST TO SEE LIGHT,” “THE FIRST TO CRY OUT.” RED (HEBREW ’ADMONI) IS THE FIRST OF TWO CHARACTERISTICS OF THE FIRSTBORN TWIN. THE WORD DESCRIBES THE COLOR OF THE CHILD’S SKIN. IT IS A REDDISH COLOR, BUT NOT RED LIKE THE COLOR OF BLOOD. BECAUSE COLOR TERMS ARE DIFFICULT TO TRANSLATE, IT IS OFTEN USEFUL TO USE A COMPARISON “RED LIKE.…” THE COLOR TERM OR THE COMPARISON MUST BE ONE THAT CAN BE APPLIED TO A NEWBORN INFANT, EVEN THOUGH IN EXPERIENCE IT MAY BE RARE. THIS CHARACTERISTIC IS LINKED BY THE SOUND OF THE HEBREW WORDS TO THE NAME EDOM, WHICH IS THE TRIBAL NAME OF ESAU’S DESCENDANTS. SEE ALSO COMMENTS ON VERSE 30. ALL HIS BODY LIKE A HAIRY MANTLE: THE SECOND DESCRIPTION COMPARES THE CHILD’S SKIN TO A COAT OR ROBE THAT IS HAIRY (HEBREW SÈAR). IN OTHER WORDS, HE WAS COVERED WITH HAIR LIKE A COAT. SO, THEY CALLED HIS NAME ESAU: RSV AND TEV SO GIVES THE IMPRESSION THAT THE NAME ESAU RESULTS FROM THE CHILD’S HAIRY APPEARANCE. HOWEVER, ESAU (HEBREW ÈSAW) ONLY FAINTLY RESEMBLES SE’AR, THE HEBREW WORD FOR “HAIRY.” FOR A STATEMENT THAT EXPLAINS THE NAME ESAU AS A WORDPLAY, SEE TEV FOOTNOTE. THE HEBREW CONNECTIVE MAY ALSO BE RENDERED “AND,” WHICH RESULTS IN A SIMPLE STATEMENT ABOUT THE NAME, “AND THEY NAMED HIM ESAU” (REB). SOME TRANSLATORS MAY FIND THIS IS A SUITABLE MODEL TO FOLLOW.**

**GENESIS 25:26: AFTERWARD HIS BROTHER CAME FORTH: CAME FORTH TRANSLATES THE SAME VERB AS USED WITH ESAU IN VERSE 25. IN SOME LANGUAGES HIS BROTHER MUST BE RENDERED BY A KINSHIP TERM MEANING “YOUNGER BROTHER.” IN OTHER CASES, LANGUAGES HAVE SPECIAL TERMS FOR THE FIRST AND SECOND TWIN. SEE THE USAGE OF “ELDER” AND “YOUNGER” IN VERSE 23. HIS HAND HAD TAKEN HOLD OF ESAU’S HEEL: HIS HAND REFERS TO THE HAND OF THE SECOND TWIN. HAD TAKEN HOLD TRANSLATES THE ACTIVE PARTICIPLE OF A VERB MEANING TO GRASP, SEIZE, OR HOLD. TEV EXPRESSES THE THOUGHT WELL FOR ENGLISH: “WAS BORN HOLDING ON TIGHTLY TO THE HEEL OF ESAU.” SO, HIS NAME WAS CALLED JACOB: UNLIKE VERSE 25, WHICH HAS “THEY CALLED … ESAU,” HERE CALLED HAS A SINGULAR INDEFINITE SUBJECT TRANSLATED AS A PASSIVE BY RSV AND TEV. IN LANGUAGES THAT DO NOT USE THE PASSIVE, WE MAY EXPRESS THIS THE SAME AS IN VERSE “THEY NAMED HIM,” “THEY GAVE HIM THE NAME.” JACOB: THE HEBREW WORD FOR “HEEL” IS ̀AQEV AND SOUNDS SIMILAR TO THE HEBREW FOR “JACOB,” WHICH IS YÀAQOV. NOTE THAT THE RSV FOOTNOTE HAS “HE TAKES BY THE HEEL OR HE SUPPLANTS.” THIS EXPLANATION REFERS TO THE VERB FORM ̀AQAV. “SUPPLANT” REFERS TO JACOB’S REPLACING HIS OLDER BROTHER THROUGH DECEIT, AS BECOMES EVIDENT IN VERSES 27–34 AND 27:1–40. IN AREAS WHERE SOME FORM OF THE NAME JACOB IS WIDELY USED AS A PERSONAL NAME, THAT FORM OF THE NAME SHOULD BE USED HERE. WHERE THE NAME IS UNKNOWN IT MAY BE TRANSLITERATED FROM A MAJOR LANGUAGE IN THE AREA. IT MAY ALSO BE TRANSLITERATED FROM THE HEBREW FORM BUT SHOULD BE SPELLED IN A WAY THAT CAN BE EASILY PRONOUNCED.**

**SINCE JACOB IN HEBREW SOUNDS LIKE THE WORD FOR “HEEL” OF THE FOOT, IT MAY BE HELPFUL TO PROVIDE READERS WITH A NOTE HERE, AND THE ONE IN TEV MAY BE FOLLOWED. IN 27:36 THERE IS A SECOND PLAY ON JACOB’S NAME, AND THERE IT IS BASED ON THE SIMILARITY IN SOUND OF JACOB AND THE WORD FOR “CHEAT.” SEE 27:36 FOR A FOOTNOTE SUGGESTION AT THAT PLACE. THE BIRTH REPORT OF THE TWINS CONCLUDES WITH THE AGE OF THE FATHER. ISAAC WAS SIXTY YEARS OLD WHEN SHE BORE THEM: ACCORDING TO VERSE 20 ISAAC WAS FORTY YEARS OLD WHEN HE MARRIED REBEKAH. THUS, HE WAITED FOR TWENTY YEARS FOR GOD TO GIVE HIM AN HEIR. SHE REFERS, OF COURSE, TO REBEKAH. THIS CLAUSE MAY BE RENDERED, FOR EXAMPLE, “WHEN REBEKAH GAVE BIRTH TO HER TWINS” OR “WHEN REBEKAH GAVE BIRTH TO ESAU AND JACOB.”**

**ESAU TRADES HIS RIGHTS FOR A MYSTERIOUS POTTAGE TO EAT (25:27–34)**

**IN THIS STORY THE TWINS HAVE GROWN TO BE YOUNG MEN. VERSES 27–28 INTRODUCE THE STORY BY CONTRASTING ESAU AS A HUNTER WITH JACOB AS PERHAPS A QUIET SHEPHERD. IN VERSES 29–34 ESAU, WHO HAS RETURNED FROM THE HUNT AND IS OVERCOME BY HUNGER, SMELLS THE FOOD JACOB IS COOKING. THE CAREFREE ESAU IS LED BY JACOB TO GIVE UP HIS RIGHTS AS THE FIRSTBORN SON IN EXCHANGE FOR SOMETHING TO EAT.**

**SUBDIVISION HEADING**

**THE HANDBOOK HEADING MAY NEED TO BE MODIFIED TO MAKE CLEAR WHAT IS MEANT BY “RIGHTS”; FOR EXAMPLE, “ESAU GIVES JACOB HIS RIGHTS AS HEIR IN EXCHANGE FOR SOME FOOD” OR “JACOB TAKES AWAY ESAU’S RIGHT TO INHERIT ISAAC’S WEALTH.”**

**GENESIS 25:27: WHEN THE BOYS GREW UP: HERE THE HEBREW TEXT SUPPLIES A DISCOURSE OPENER AND TRANSITION FROM THE BIRTH REPORT. IN SOME LANGUAGES THIS MAY NEED TO BE WORDED TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “MANY YEARS PASSED AND THE TWO BOYS BECAME MEN” OR “MANY YEARS LATER THE TWINS GREW TO BE MEN.” ESAU WAS A SKILFUL HUNTER: SKILFUL HUNTER TRANSLATES THE HEBREW “KNOWING HUNTER.” THE SENSE IS THAT ESAU HAD LEARNED THE SKILL, TECHNIQUE, KNOWLEDGE NECESSARY TO BE A HUNTER. HUNTER REFERS HERE TO SOMEONE WHO STALKS AND KILLS WILD ANIMALS WITH THE BOW AND ARROW, AND SPEAR. A MAN OF THE FIELD IS A SECOND DESCRIPTION OF ESAU, WHICH COMPLEMENTS THE FIRST AND CONTRASTS ESAU SHARPLY WITH THE DESCRIPTION TO BE GIVEN OF JACOB. THE EXPRESSION MEANS “A MAN WHO SPENT HIS TIME OUTDOORS,” “A MAN WHO ROAMED THE OPEN COUNTRYSIDE.” REB CALLS HIM “AN OUTDOOR MAN,” MFT “A MAN WHO LIVED IN THE OPEN.” IN SOME LANGUAGES ESAU MAY BE CALLED “A MAN WHO WALKS THE BUSH.” IN SOME LANGUAGES THIS SECOND DESCRIPTION, WHICH IS MORE GENERAL, FITS BETTER THE STYLE OF THE LANGUAGE WHEN PLACED BEFORE “SKILFUL HUNTER.” WHILE JACOB WAS A QUIET MAN, DWELLING IN TENTS: WHILE TRANSLATES THE COMMON HEBREW CONNECTIVE THAT SERVES HERE TO CONTRAST JACOB’S STYLE OF LIFE, AND PERHAPS OCCUPATION, WITH THAT OF HIS BROTHER. THE CONTRAST MAY NEED TO BE MARKED IN OTHER WAYS BY SAYING, FOR EXAMPLE, “ON THE OTHER HAND” OR “BUT JACOB WAS DIFFERENT.” QUIET TRANSLATES THE HEBREW WORD FOR “PERFECT,” “BLAMELESS,” AS USED IN JOB 1:1; PSA 37:37. HOWEVER, IN THIS CONTEXT MOST INTERPRETERS PREFER “QUIET,” “TRANQUIL,” OR “MEDITATIVE.” SPEISER SAYS “A RETIRING MAN,” THAT IS, ONE WHO IS SHY. DWELLING IN TENTS CONTRASTS JACOB’S STAYING CLOSE TO THE CAMP WITH ESAU’S ROAMING THROUGH THE OPEN COUNTRYSIDE. DRIVER INTERPRETS THIS EXPRESSION TO MEAN THAT JACOB WAS A SHEPHERD. IN TRANSLATION WE MAY SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “JACOB WAS A QUIET MAN WHO STAYED CLOSE TO THE CAMP.”**

**GENESIS 25:28: THE CONTRAST AND CONFLICT BETWEEN THE TWO MEN IS NOW EXTENDED TO INCLUDE THE FEELINGS OF THEIR PARENTS. ISAAC LOVED ESAU, BECAUSE HE ATE OF HIS GAME: LOVED ESAU DOES NOT MEAN TO SAY THAT HE THEREFORE DID NOT LOVE JACOB. THE SENSE IS THAT, BECAUSE ISAAC LIKED TO EAT WILD MEAT, HE FAVORED ESAU. NJV, NEB/REB SAY “FAVORED,” MFT “FOND OF,” TEV, FRCL “PREFERRED.” BECAUSE HE ATE OF HIS GAME IS LITERALLY “BECAUSE OF THE GAME IN HIS MOUTH.” GAME TRANSLATES A NOUN RELATED TO THE VERB MEANING TO HUNT. IT REFERS HERE TO THE MEAT OBTAINED FROM KILLING WILD ANIMALS IN THE HUNT. THIS REASON CLAUSE SUGGESTS A FONDNESS FOR SUCH MEAT ON ISAAC’S PART. ACCORDINGLY, MANY TRANSLATIONS MAKE THIS ELEMENT CLEAR: TEV “ENJOYED EATING,” FRCL “APPRECIATED WILD GAME,” SPCL “LIKED TO EAT,” SPEISER “HAD A TASTE FOR GAME.” IN SOME LANGUAGES THE WORD FOR MEAT OR GAME DEPENDS UPON THE ANIMAL OR TYPE OF ANIMAL THAT PROVIDES THE MEAT. IN THIS STORY THE TRANSLATOR MAY ASSUME THAT THE ANIMALS HUNTED WERE SOME KIND OF DEER OR WILD GOAT. NEB (BUT NOT REB) HAS “VENISON,” WHICH IS DEER MEAT. BUT REBEKAH LOVED JACOB: BUT SIGNALS THE CONTRAST BETWEEN REBEKAH’S AND ISAAC’S AFFECTIONS. THE TRANSLATION OF LOVED HERE SHOULD BE PARALLEL TO THAT USED IN RESPECT OF ISAAC. THIS STATEMENT PREPARES THE READER FOR REBEKAH’S ROLE IN THE DECEPTION OF HER HUSBAND IN CHAPTER 27. VERSES 27–28 HAVE INTRODUCED THE BACKGROUND FOR THE EPISODE THAT BEGINS TO UNFOLD WITH VERSE 29.**

**GENESIS 25:29: ONCE WHEN JACOB WAS BOILING POTTAGE: ONCE TRANSLATES THE REGULAR HEBREW CONNECTIVE, WHICH SERVES HERE AS A TRANSITION MARKER OPENING THIS EPISODE. TEV “ONE DAY” PROVIDES A USEFUL MODEL FOR MANY LANGUAGES. BOILING TRANSLATES THE PRECISE MEANING OF THE HEBREW WORD, BUT “COOKING” REPRESENTS THE GENERAL ACT MORE SUITABLY IN ENGLISH. POTTAGE TRANSLATES A WORD REFERRING TO SOMETHING BOILED, NAMELY, A BROTH OR SOUP. IN VERSE 30 IT WILL BE CALLED “RED POTTAGE,” AND IN VERSE 34 “POTTAGE OF LENTILS.” IN THIS VERSE A TERM MAY BE USED THAT REFERS TO A SOUP, BROTH, OR STEW THAT CONTAINS VEGETABLES AND PERHAPS BITS OF MEAT. IF SUCH A SOUP OR STEW IS UNKNOWN IN THE LOCAL DIET, IT IS POSSIBLE TO USE A GENERAL EXPRESSION FOR COOKED FOOD. SPCL OFFERS ANOTHER POSSIBILITY. IT OMITS ANY REFERENCE TO THE KIND OF FOOD AND SAYS “ONE DAY JACOB WAS COOKING.…” ESAU CAME IN FROM THE FIELD: FIELD TRANSLATES THE SAME WORD AS IN VERSE 27. THE REFERENCE IS NOT TO A CULTIVATED FIELD WHERE CROPS ARE GROWN BUT TO THE OPEN COUNTRYSIDE WHERE PROBABLY ESAU HAS BEEN HUNTING. AND HE WAS FAMISHED: FAMISHED MEANS TO BE WEAK AND FAINT FROM HAVING GONE WITHOUT FOOD FOR A LONG WHILE. THIS IDEA IS SOMETIMES EXPRESSED IDIOMATICALLY; FOR EXAMPLE, “HUNGER HELD HIM BY THE THROAT” OR “HUNGER BURNED HIS STOMACH.”**

**GENESIS 25:30: LET ME EAT SOME OF THAT RED POTTAGE IS LITERALLY “LET ME SWALLOW.…” THE NARRATOR IS DEPICTING ESAU AS A GREEDY GLUTTON. NJV EXPRESSES THE THOUGHT WELL WITH “LET ME GULP DOWN.” IN SOME TRANSLATIONS THE FEELING IS EXPRESSED BY “GIVE ME THAT RED SOUP OF YOURS. HURRY!” RED POTTAGE IS LITERALLY “THIS RED, RED” (HEBREW ’EDOM, A WORD THAT SOUNDS LIKE “EDOM”). FOR I AM FAMISHED: ESAU REPEATS WHAT THE NARRATOR HAS SAID ABOUT HIM IN VERSE 29. IN SOME LANGUAGES IT IS MORE NATURAL TO MAKE THIS THE FIRST STATEMENT OF ESAU’S SPEECH: “I’M SO HUNGRY! GIVE ME SOME OF THAT RED SOUP.” (THEREFORE, HIS NAME WAS CALLED EDOM): RSV AND TEV ENCLOSE THIS INFORMATION BETWEEN PARENTHESES AND ADD A FOOTNOTE EXPLAINING THAT “EDOM,” THE COUNTRY OF THE EDOMITES, SOUNDS LIKE THE HEBREW WORD FOR “RED.”**

**GENESIS 25:31: FIRST SELL ME YOUR BIRTHRIGHT IS LITERALLY “SELL ME AS TODAY YOUR BIRTHRIGHT.” JACOB PRESSURES ESAU TO GIVE UP HIS BIRTHRIGHT IMMEDIATELY BEFORE HE WILL CONSENT TO GIVE HIM SOME OF THE FOOD HE HAS COOKED. THE WORD SELL MAY BE INAPPROPRIATE IN CASES WHERE IT MEANS ONLY THE EXCHANGE OF GOODS FOR MONEY. SOME LANGUAGES WILL PREFER A WORD MEANING “BARTER,” “TRADE,” OR “GIVE.” FRCL HAS A WORD MEANING “YIELD, GIVE UP, SURRENDER.” SPEISER SAYS “GIVE ME IN EXCHANGE.” BIRTHRIGHT REFERS TO THE RIGHT OF THE FIRSTBORN TO INHERIT FROM THE FATHER TWICE AS MUCH AS THE YOUNGER BROTHER OR BROTHERS WILL INHERIT. IN LANGUAGES IN WHICH THE IDEA OF BIRTHRIGHT (PRIMOGENITURE) IS UNKNOWN, IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO USE A DESCRIPTIVE PHRASE SUCH AS “THE RIGHT TO INHERIT MOST OF OUR FATHER’S WEALTH” OR “THE RIGHTS HELD BY THE OLDEST BROTHER.” TWO EXAMPLES FROM PACIFIC TRANSLATIONS ARE “IF YOU PROMISE ME THAT YOU WILL NO LONGER DO THE THINGS YOU HAVE A RIGHT TO DO BECAUSE YOU ARE THE FIRSTBORN, AND YOU AGREE THAT I WILL DO THOSE THINGS, THEN I WILL …” AND “FIRST YOU MUST GIVE ME THAT RANK OF YOURS AS THE OLDEST SON, AND AFTER THAT I WILL.…” IN ONE OTHER LANGUAGE THE BIRTHRIGHT IS EXPRESSED AS “YOUR PLACE AS SECOND TO OUR FATHER, BECAUSE YOU ARE THE FIRSTBORN SON.” IF A SHORT PHRASE LIKE “OLDEST BROTHER’S RIGHTS” IS USED, IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO EXPLAIN THAT PHRASE IN A FOOTNOTE. GECL PROVIDES A SUITABLE MODEL FOR SOME TRANSLATORS: “JACOB ANSWERED: ‘YOU WILL GET IT ONLY WHEN YOU SURRENDER YOUR BIRTHRIGHT TO ME ON THE SPOT [HERE AND NOW].’”**

**GENESIS 25:32: THE HEBREW TEXT BEGINS ESAU’S QUOTED STATEMENT WITH THE WORD MOST COMMONLY TRANSLATED BY RSV AS “BEHOLD.” TEV REPRESENTS IT AS “ALL RIGHT!” SPCL HAS “AS YOU CAN SEE.” BUT MANY TRANSLATIONS DO NOT REPRESENT IT. WHAT ESAU SAYS IN THIS VERSE INDICATES THAT HE IS AGREEING TO DO WHAT JACOB WANTS, EVEN THOUGH THIS IS NOT ACTUALLY STATED UNTIL THE END OF THE NEXT VERSE. SO, IN MANY LANGUAGES IT WILL BE NATURAL TO START THIS SPEECH AS TEV DOES, WITH WORDS THAT SIGNAL HIS AGREEMENT; FOR EXAMPLE, “YES, YOU CAN HAVE IT. JUST GIVE ME THAT FOOD!” I AM ABOUT TO DIE: ESAU CLAIMS HE IS GOING TO DIE (OF HUNGER). IN TRANSLATION IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO MAKE CLEAR THAT HUNGER IS KILLING HIM, SO AS NOT TO GIVE THE IMPRESSION THAT HE IS TO BE PUT TO DEATH BY SOMEONE. OF WHAT USE IS A BIRTHRIGHT TO ME? ESAU’S QUESTION IS RHETORICAL. HE IS NOT ASKING FOR JACOB TO EXPLAIN THE VALUE OF HIS BIRTHRIGHT. IN THE CONTEXT OF A HUNGRY MAN, THIS RHETORICAL QUESTION MAY BE EXPRESSED AS “CAN I MAKE A MEAL OF A BIRTHRIGHT?” IN SOME LANGUAGES SUCH A QUESTION MUST BE ANSWERED IN THE NEGATIVE. THE QUESTION MAY ALSO BE STATED NEGATIVELY; FOR EXAMPLE, “A BIRTHRIGHT IS OF NO USE TO ME.”**

**GENESIS 25:33: SWEAR TO ME FIRST: FOR DISCUSSION OF SWEAR SEE 21:23. FIRST TRANSLATES THE HEBREW WORD “TODAY” AS IN VERSE 31. BEFORE JACOB WILL GIVE ESAU THE FOOD, ESAU MUST FIRST TAKE A VOW, SWEAR TO TURN OVER HIS RIGHTS AS THE FIRSTBORN TO JACOB. SO, HE SWORE TO HIM AND SOLD HIS BIRTHRIGHT TO JACOB: THE NARRATOR AFFIRMS THAT THE TRANSACTION TOOK PLACE. SOLD SHOULD BE RENDERED AS IN VERSE 31.**

**GENESIS 25:34: JACOB KEEPS HIS WORD BY GIVING ESAU A MEAL WITH BREAD AND POTTAGE OF LENTILS; LENTILS ARE SMALL LENS-SHAPED PEAS THAT HAVE BEEN GROWN SINCE PREHISTORIC TIMES IN BIBLICAL LANDS. FOR A DESCRIPTION SEE FAUNA AND FLORA OF THE BIBLE, PAGE 134. LENTILS ARE REFERRED TO ELSEWHERE ONLY IN 2 SAM 17:28; 23:11; AND EZEK 4:9. IN THE TRANSLATION OF BREAD AND POTTAGE OF LENTILS WHERE NEITHER OF THESE FOODS IS KNOWN OR EATEN, THE TRANSLATOR MAY BORROW WORDS FROM A MAJOR LANGUAGE IN THE AREA OR, MORE SUITABLY, SUBSTITUTE LOCAL FOODS THAT ARE EATEN TOGETHER AT A MEAL. HE ATE AND DRANK MAY NEED TO BE EXPRESSED AS A SUBORDINATE CLAUSE; FOR EXAMPLE, “WHEN ESAU HAD FINISHED EATING AND DRINKING.…” ROSE AND WENT HIS WAY: THE NARRATOR PICTURES THE LIGHTHEARTED ESAU AS UNMINDFUL OF WHAT HE HAS DONE. WE MAY SAY IN ENGLISH “HE JUST GOT UP AND WALKED AWAY.” THE STORY CONCLUDES BY EXPRESSING A FEELING OF DISDAIN FOR ESAU: THUS, ESAU DESPISED HIS BIRTHRIGHT. DESPISED IS USED HERE IN THE SENSE OF CARELESS INDIFFERENCE OR DISREGARD. FOR ESAU THE BIRTHRIGHT IS A WORTHLESS OBJECT. REB TRANSLATES “ESAU SHOWED BY THIS HOW LITTLE HE VALUED HIS BIRTHRIGHT,” SPCL “ESAU … LEFT, WITHOUT ATTACHING ANY IMPORTANCE TO HIS RIGHTS AS OLDEST SON.” THESE AND TEV ARE SATISFACTORY TRANSLATION MODELS.**

**ISAAC AND REBEKAH IN GERAR (26:1–17)**

**THIS STORY PARALLELS CLOSELY THAT OF ABRAHAM IN 12:10–20 AND 20:1–18. TRANSLATORS SHOULD REVIEW THESE ABRAHAM STORIES TO NOTE THE SIMILARITIES AND CONTRASTS WITH THE PRESENT STORY ABOUT ISAAC. AS IN 12:10 THE REASON FOR ISAAC’S MOVE TO GERAR IS A FAMINE (VERSE 1). ISAAC IS WARNED BY THE LORD NOT TO GO TO EGYPT, AND THE PROMISES MADE TO ABRAHAM IN 12:2–3 AND 15:5 ARE RENEWED (VERSES 2–5). ISAAC TELLS THE MEN OF GERAR THAT REBEKAH IS HIS SISTER AS A MEANS OF PROTECTING HIS OWN LIFE (VERSES 26:6–7). ABIMELECH, HOWEVER, OBSERVES ISAAC EMBRACING REBEKAH. ABIMELECH QUESTIONS ISAAC AND WARNS THE PEOPLE NOT TO HARM ISAAC (VERSES 26:8–11). ISAAC BECOMES WEALTHY, WHICH RESULTS IN THE PEOPLE OF GERAR BECOMING ENVIOUS OF HIM. THEY FILLED IN THE WELLS DUG BY ABRAHAM (VERSES 12–15). ABIMELECH’S POWER IS THREATENED BY THE PRESENCE OF ISAAC, AND SO ABIMELECH SENDS ISAAC AWAY (VERSES 16–17).**

**SUBDIVISION HEADING**

**THE HANDBOOK HEADING MAY NEED TO BE WORDED IN A MORE CONCRETE MANNER; FOR EXAMPLE, “ISAAC MOVES HIS CAMP TO GERAR,” “ISAAC MOVES TO GERAR AND SAYS THAT REBEKAH IS HIS SISTER,” “ISAAC BECOMES WEALTHY IN GERAR.” TEV HAS “ISAAC LIVES AT GERAR” (1–25), FRCL “ISAAC AND ABIMELECH” (1–14A), NJB “ISAAC AT GERAR” (1–14), TOB CALLS 26:1–33 “EPISODES IN THE LIFE OF ISAAC” AND HAS “ISAAC AT ABIMELECH’S” (1–14A), GECL “ISAAC AND REBEKAH IN GERAR” (1–11).**

**GENESIS 26:1: AS WAS POINTED OUT AT THE BEGINNING OF CHAPTER 25, WE NEED TO ASK HOW CHAPTER 26 IS RELATED TO CHAPTER 25. TO BEGIN, THERE IS NO MENTION IN CHAPTER 26 OF ESAU AND JACOB, ASIDE FROM THE COMMENT AT THE END ON ESAU’S FOREIGN WIVES. THE RIVALRY BETWEEN ESAU AND JACOB BEGINS AGAIN IN CHAPTER 27. FURTHERMORE, CHAPTER 26 DOES NOT FORM A CONTINUITY WITH CHAPTER 25 (EXCEPT THAT ISAAC AND REBEKAH WERE LAST MENTIONED IN 25:28). THE THEMES OF CHAPTER 26, FAMINE, MOVING TO GERAR, PROMISE OF DESCENDANTS, LYING ABOUT REBEKAH, WERE LAST SEEN IN CONNECTION WITH ABRAHAM IN CHAPTERS 12, 20, AND 21. THEREFORE CHAPTER 26 HAS MORE CONTINUITY OF THEME WITH THESE EARLIER CHAPTERS THAN IT HAS WITH CHAPTER 25. IN TERMS OF TIME, CHAPTER 26 IS MORE CLOSELY RELATED TO CHAPTERS 24 AND 25 THAN TO THE EARLIER CHAPTERS. HOWEVER, CHAPTER 26 DOES NOT SEEM TO BEGIN WHERE CHAPTER 25 ENDED, AND IN TRANSLATION WE CANNOT OPEN CHAPTER 26 WITH A TIME EXPRESSION SUCH AS “AFTER THAT” OR “SOME TIME LATER.” RSV BEGINS CHAPTER 26 BY REPRESENTING THE COMMON HEBREW CONNECTIVE WITH THE TRANSITIONAL WORD NOW. OTHER LANGUAGES MAY ALSO USE AN EQUIVALENT TRANSITIONAL EXPRESSION. NOTE THAT TEV “THERE WAS” IS SOMETIMES USED IN ENGLISH TO INTRODUCE A GENERAL REFERENCE TO PAST TIME. ANOTHER POSSIBILITY THAT TRANSLATORS MAY WISH TO CONSIDER IS TO ASSUME THAT ISAAC, WHO WAS LAST MENTIONED AS LIVING AT BEERLAHAIROI IN 25:11, WAS STILL LOCATED THERE WHEN THE FAMINE IN VERSE 1 OCCURRED. IN THIS CASE WE MAY SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “WHILE ISAAC WAS CAMPED [WAS LIVING] AT BEERLAHAIROI, THERE WAS A FAMINE.” FAMINE IN THE LAND: FOR FAMINE SEE COMMENTS ON 12:10. LAND REFERS TO THE GENERAL AREA, OR AS SPCL SAYS, “IN ALL THAT REGION”; NJB HAS “IN THE COUNTRY.” TRANSLATORS SHOULD REFER TO THE EXPRESSION USED IN 12:10. BESIDES THE FORMER FAMINE THAT WAS IN THE DAYS OF ABRAHAM: THE TEXT MAKES CLEAR THAT THE FAMINE IN ISAAC’S STORY IS TO BE DISTINGUISHED FROM THE ONE IN HIS FATHER’S LIFE IN 12:10. NEB/REB SAY “—NOT THE EARLIER FAMINE IN ABRAHAM’S TIME—.” IN SOME LANGUAGES IT WILL BE NECESSARY TO MAKE THIS STATEMENT A SEPARATE SENTENCE; FOR EXAMPLE, “THIS FAMINE WAS NOT THE SAME ONE THAT HAPPENED IN ABRAHAM’S TIME” OR “THIS WAS A DIFFERENT FAMINE THAN THE ONE ABRAHAM KNEW.” SOME TRANSLATIONS MAKE THE POINT BY SAYING “THERE WAS ANOTHER FAMINE … JUST AS THERE HAD BEEN A FAMINE BEFORE IN THE TIME OF ABRAHAM.” AND ISAAC WENT TO GERAR AS A RESULT OF THE FAMINE. IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO MAKE THIS STATEMENT A CONSEQUENCE; FOR EXAMPLE, “THEREFORE [FOR THAT REASON, BECAUSE OF THAT] ISAAC MOVED TO GERAR.” ONLY ISAAC IS MENTIONED AS GOING TO GERAR BECAUSE THE STORY CENTERS ON HIS LIFE; HOWEVER, IT MEANS THAT HE WENT WITH ALL HIS PROPERTY AND THE PEOPLE WHO DEPENDED UPON HIM. WENT MAY NEED TO BE RENDERED BY A VERB THAT DESCRIBES THE MOVEMENT OF A NOMADIC HERDSMAN FROM ONE CAMPSITE TO ANOTHER. IN SOME LANGUAGES IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO EXPRESS WENT IN THIS CONTEXT AS “LEFT HIS CAMPSITE AND MIGRATED TO GERAR.” TO ABIMELECH KING OF THE PHILISTINES: ISAAC DOES NOT GO TO ABIMELECH IN THE SAME SENSE THAT HE GOES TO GERAR. GERAR IS THE PLACE, WHILE ABIMELECH IS THE RULER OF THE PEOPLE OF THAT PLACE AND THE SAME RULER ISAAC’S FATHER HAD ENCOUNTERED IN CHAPTER 20. ACCORDINGLY, WE MAY NEED TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “ISAAC WENT TO GERAR WHERE ABIMELECH WAS KING OF THE PHILISTINES” OR “ISAAC WENT WHERE ABIMELECH WAS KING OF THE PHILISTINES IN THE REGION CALLED GERAR.” HAVING IN MIND THE WAY A PERSON WOULD ACT IN GOING TO ANOTHER PERSON’S TERRITORY, ONE TRANSLATION SAYS “ISAAC WENT AND SPOKE TO ABIMELECH … AND THEN ISAAC STAYED THERE IN THAT PLACE GERAR.” FOR PHILISTINES SEE BOTH 10:14 AND 21:32. IN SOME LANGUAGES THERE IS A PROBLEM WITH THE ORDER OF VERSES 1–6, BECAUSE THE SPEECH OF THE LORD IN VERSES 2–5 ACTUALLY COMES BEFORE ISAAC MAKES THE JOURNEY TO GERAR. IN TEV AND SOME OTHER ENGLISH VERSIONS, THE TIME OF VERSES 2–5 IN RELATION TO VERSE 1 IS CORRECTLY STATED BY THE VERB TENSES “HAD APPEARED” AND “HAD SAID.” BUT IT MAY BE NECESSARY IN SOME OTHER LANGUAGES TO MOVE VERSE 1B SO THAT IT COMES AFTER VERSE 5. IT IS ALSO POSSIBLE IN THIS CASE TO COMBINE VERSE 1B WITH VERSE 6 AS THE CONCLUSION OF THE PARAGRAPH; BUT SEE THE COMMENTS ON VERSE 6 REGARDING THIS.**

**GENESIS 26:2: AND THE LORD APPEARED TO HIM AND SAID: THIS EXPRESSION AND A DISCUSSION OF ITS MEANING OCCURS IN 12:7. DO NOT GO DOWN TO EGYPT: ISAAC IS WARNED NOT TO DO AS HIS FATHER HAD DONE IN 12:10. THE WORDS OF THE LORD ARE A NEGATIVE COMMAND FOLLOWED BY A POSITIVE COMMAND. DWELL IN THE LAND OF WHICH I SHALL TELL YOU: DWELL IN THIS CONTEXT MEANS TO “CAMP,” “PITCH TENTS,” “SET UP CAMP.” THE LAND REFERS HERE TO A LAND, COUNTRY, THAT HAS NOT YET BEEN DISCLOSED TO ISAAC. TELL YOU MEANS THAT THE LORD WILL SHOW OR POINT TO THE LAND WHERE ISAAC IS TO SET UP HIS CAMP. IN THE MESSAGE TO ABRAHAM IN 12:1, THE VERB IS “SHOW.”**

**GENESIS 26:3: SOJOURN IN THIS LAND: FOR SOJOURN SEE THE RESTRICTED SENSE OF THIS WORD IN 12:10. THIS REFERS TO THE LAND, REGION, COUNTRY WHERE ISAAC WAS LIVING WHEN THE LORD WAS SPEAKING TO HIM. I WILL BE WITH YOU: THIS PROMISE REFERS TO GOD’S PRESENCE WITH ISAAC TO HELP HIM AND PROTECT HIM. IN SOME LANGUAGES IT IS NECESSARY TO MODIFY THIS EXPRESSION TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “I WILL GO WITH YOU,” “… HELP YOU,” “… TAKE CARE OF YOU.” FOR DISCUSSION OF BLESS YOU SEE 9:1; 12:2; 14:19. FOR TO YOU AND TO YOUR DESCENDANTS I WILL GIVE ALL THESE LANDS: THIS PROMISE CONFIRMS THE PROMISE OF THE LAND MADE UNDER OATH TO ABRAHAM IN 15:7–21. YOUR DESCENDANTS TRANSLATES THE HEBREW “YOUR SEED.” THE TEXT DOES NOT DEFINE THE LIMITS OF THE AREA DESCRIBED AS ALL THESE LANDS. LANDS IS SOMETIMES RENDERED “TERRITORIES,” “REGIONS,” “AREAS.” AND I WILL FULFILL THE OATH WHICH I SWORE TO ABRAHAM YOUR FATHER: THIS IS THE OATH, PROMISE, COVENANT THE LORD MADE TO ABRAHAM IN 12:7; 13:15. IN BOTH REFERENCES “LAND” IS SINGULAR. FOR OATH SEE “SWORN” IN 22:16. WE MAY TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “I WILL KEEP THE PROMISE I MADE TO YOUR FATHER ABRAHAM” OR “I WILL DO WHAT I SWORE TO YOUR FATHER ABRAHAM.”**

**GENESIS 26:4: I WILL MULTIPLY YOUR DESCENDANTS AS THE STARS OF HEAVEN IS THE SAME WORDING AS USED IN 22:17. AND WILL GIVE … LANDS IS A REPETITION OF VERSE 3B, WHICH MOST TRANSLATIONS RETAIN AS EMPHASIZING THE GIFT OF THE LAND. IF ITS REPETITION HAS A DIFFERENT MEANING, AN APPROPRIATE ADJUSTMENT SHOULD BE MADE. AND BY YOUR DESCENDANTS ALL THE NATIONS OF THE EARTH SHALL BLESS THEMSELVES: FOR THE PARALLEL EXPRESSION AND DISCUSSION SEE 22:18.**

**GENESIS 26:5: BECAUSE ABRAHAM OBEYED MY VOICE: SEE 22:18. THE WORDING IN THIS VERSE WITH CHARGE, COMMANDMENTS, STATUTES, AND LAWS OCCURS NOWHEREELSE IN THE STORIES OF THE PATRIARCHS. THIS VOCABULARY REFLECTS A USAGE FROM A MUCH LATER PERIOD, WHEN OBEDIENCE TO THE LAW WAS THE CENTER OF ISRAEL’S RELATIONSHIP TO GOD. ALL OF THESE NOUNS OVERLAP IN THEIR MEANINGS. MY CHARGE MEANS WHAT I CHARGED, ORDERED ABRAHAM TO DO. CHARGE TRANSLATES A NOUN WHOSE VERB FORM MEANS TO “GUARD,” “WATCH OVER.” ITS NOUN FORM IS USED, FOR EXAMPLE, IN DEUT 11:1; JOSH 22:3; 1 KGS 2:3, WITH THE SENSE OF “COMMAND,” “LAW,” “REGULATION.” SPEISER TRANSLATES “MANDATE,” FRCL, SPCL “ORDERS.” IN SOME LANGUAGES IT WILL BE MORE NATURAL TO EXPRESS THIS AS A CLAUSE; FOR EXAMPLE, “AND DID WHAT I TOLD HIM,” “DID WHAT I ORDERED HIM TO DO.” MY COMMANDMENTS IS ALSO USED IN LEV 26:14. IT TRANSLATES ONE OF THE COMMON WORDS IN THIS GROUP AND IS ALMOST ALWAYS USED IN THE PLURAL IN PSA 119. TRANSLATORS SHOULD REFER TO THE DISCUSSION IN THE INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 119 IN A HANDBOOK ON PSALMS, AND TO THE DISCUSSION OF PSA 1:2 AND 19:7 IN THE SAME VOLUME. IN CASES WHERE “MY LAWS” MAY BE MISUNDERSTOOD, IT WILL PROBABLY BE BETTER TO SAY “MY TEACHING” OR “MY INSTRUCTION.” OFTEN A CLAUSE IS PREFERRED; FOR EXAMPLE, “WHAT I TAUGHT,” “THE THINGS I INSTRUCTED ABRAHAM TO DO.” SEE ALSO MY LAWS BELOW. MY STATUTES: THE SAME HEBREW WORD IS TRANSLATED BY RSV AS “DECREE” IN PSA 2:7. STATUTE REFERS TO AN AUTHORITATIVE STATEMENT OF SOME KIND. AS A CLAUSE IT MAY BE RENDERED, FOR EXAMPLE, “THE WORDS I HAVE SPOKEN,” “WHAT I HAVE DECLARED.” MY LAWS TRANSLATES THE HEBREW WORD TORAH, WHICH REFERS TO THE FIRST FIVE BOOKS OF THE HEBREW BIBLE. THE WORD ITSELF MEANS “TEACHING,” “INSTRUCTION,” OR “GUIDANCE.” ACCORDING TO PSA 1:2 OBEYING THE TORAH OF THE LORD IS THE SOURCE OF JOY.**

**AS MANY LANGUAGES WILL FIND IT MORE NATURAL TO TRANSLATE SOME OF THESE NOUN-LIKE WORDS AS VERBS, HERE IS A SUGGESTED MODEL: • … BECAUSE ABRAHAM OBEYED ME. HE DID WHAT I TOLD HIM TO DO. HE FOLLOWED MY INSTRUCTIONS, THE WORDS I SPOKE, AND WHAT I TAUGHT HIM.**

**GENESIS 26:6: RSV AND TEV MAKE VERSE 6 THE OPENING OF A NEW PARAGRAPH. NEB, BUT NOT REB, MAKES VERSE 6 THE CONCLUSION OF THE PREVIOUS PARAGRAPH. SPEISER BEGINS A NEW PARAGRAPH WITH VERSE 6 AND MAKES IT A SUBORDINATE CLAUSE: “WHILE ISAAC STAYED THUS IN GERAR, THE MEN OF THE PLACE.…” TRANSLATORS ARE ADVISED TO FOLLOW RSV AND TEV. SO, ISAAC DWELT IN GERAR: SO, WHICH TRANSLATES THE COMMON HEBREW CONNECTIVE, SIGNALS A RESULT WHOSE BASIS IS FOUND IN VERSE 3. IF VERSE 6 IS TO BE TREATED AS A RESULT OF GOD’S COMMAND TO ISAAC, IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “ISAAC OBEYED THE LORD AND PITCHED HIS CAMP AT GERAR” OR “ISAAC DID AS THE LORD TOLD HIM AND CAMPED IN GERAR.” AND IF THIS INTERPRETATION IS FOLLOWED, IT MAY ALSO BE MORE APPROPRIATE FOR VERSE 6 TO BE REGARDED AS THE CONCLUSION OF THE PARAGRAPH THAT STARTS AT VERSE 1.**

**GENESIS 26:7: WHEN THE MEN OF THE PLACE … HIS WIFE: MEN OF THE PLACE REFERS TO THE MEN OF GERAR, THE NATIVE INHABITANTS. ASKED ABOUT HIS WIFE IS GENERAL, BUT ISAAC’S REPLY MAKES CLEAR THAT THEY INQUIRED ABOUT HIS RELATIONSHIP TO REBEKAH. WE MAY NEED IN SOME CASES TO MAKE THE QUESTION ACTUALLY SAY THIS; FOR EXAMPLE, “WHEN THE MEN OF GERAR ASKED WHO REBEKAH WAS” OR “WHEN … ASKED WHO THE WOMAN WITH HIM WAS.” IN SOME TRANSLATIONS THE INTENT OF THE QUESTION IS MADE EVEN CLEARER BY SAYING “WHEN THE MEN OF THE PLACE SAW REBEKAH, THEY ASKED ISAAC, ‘IS THIS WOMAN YOUR WIFE?’” AND THE ANSWER THAT ISAAC GIVES IS “NO, SHE IS MY SISTER.” SHE IS MY SISTER: FOR THE SAME WORDING IN ABRAHAM’S REPLY, SEE 20:2. FOR HE FEARED TO SAY “MY WIFE”: RSV TRANSLATES THE TEXT LITERALLY. THE SEPTUAGINT HAS “SHE IS MY WIFE,” BUT HOTTP DEFENDS THE HEBREW TEXT AS BEING AN {A} READING. THE TEXTUAL POINT IS INSIGNIFICANT, AND IN MANY TRANSLATIONS, IT IS NECESSARY TO SAY “SHE IS MY WIFE,” OR AS INDIRECT SPEECH, “HE WAS AFRAID TO ADMIT THAT REBEKAH WAS HIS WIFE.” SEE TEV. RSV CONTINUES TO TRANSLATE ISAAC’S THOUGHTS IN THE FIRST PERSON, THINKING “LEST THE MEN OF THE PLACE SHOULD KILL ME,” OR AS TEV SAYS, “BECAUSE HE WAS AFRAID THAT THE MEN THERE WOULD KILL HIM.” FOR THE SAKE OF REBEKAH: THAT IS, ON ACCOUNT OF REBEKAH, IN ORDER TO TAKE REBEKAH. BECAUSE SHE WAS FAIR TO LOOK UPON: A SIMILAR REMARK WAS MADE BY ABRAHAM REGARDING THE PHYSICAL BEAUTY OF SARAH IN 12:11. SEE ALSO 24:16.**

**WE MAY TRANSLATE THIS VERSE, FOR EXAMPLE: • REBEKAH WAS A BEAUTIFUL WOMAN. SO, WHEN THE MEN OF GERAR ASKED ISAAC WHO SHE WAS, HE REPLIED “SHE IS MY SISTER.” HE DID NOT SAY “SHE IS MY WIFE” BECAUSE HE WAS AFRAID, THEY WOULD KILL HIM AND TAKE HER.**

**GENESIS 26:8: WHEN HE HAD BEEN THERE A LONG TIME: HE REFERS TO ISAAC. THE OPENING OF THIS EPISODE MAY REQUIRE IN SOME LANGUAGES NOT ONLY A TRANSITION BUT ALSO AN EXPRESSION TO MARK THE BEGINNING OF THE NEW EPISODE; FOR EXAMPLE, “ISAAC HAD BEEN LIVING THERE FOR SOME TIME, THEN ONE DAY ABIMELECH LOOKED.…” FOR KING OF THE PHILISTINES SEE THE TRANSLATION OF VERSE 1. LOOKED OUT TRANSLATES A VERB USED ALSO IN 19:28, WHERE ABRAHAM LOOKED DOWN TOWARD SODOM. THE SENSE IS TO LOOK FROM A HIGH PLACE TOWARD SOMETHING THAT IS LOWER. ABIMELECH WAS PROBABLY AT THE WINDOW IN A TOWER OR UPPER PART OF HIS PALACE. SAW ISAAC FONDLING REBEKAH: THE HEBREW TEXT BEGINS WITH THE WORD HINNEH COMMONLY RENDERED “LO” OR “BEHOLD.” KJV HAS “AND SAW, AND BEHOLD, ISAAC.…” IT PROBABLY SUGGESTS THAT WHAT ABIMELECH SAW SURPRISED HIM. REB RETAINS SOMETHING OF THIS ELEMENT BY TRANSLATING “… LOOKED DOWN FROM HIS WINDOW AND THERE WAS ISAAC CARESSING HIS WIFE.” FONDLING TRANSLATES THE INTENSIVE PARTICIPLE OF A VERB MEANING TO LAUGH, PLAY (AS IN 21:9), AND IN THIS CONTEXT “TO HANDLE TENDERLY AND LOVINGLY.” THE HEBREW WORD MAKES A WORD-PLAY ON THE NAME “ISAAC.” TEV “MAKING LOVE” IS AN UNFORTUNATE TRANSLATION, SINCE IN MANY PARTS OF THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING WORLD IT WILL INEVITABLY BE UNDERSTOOD TO MEAN HAVING SEXUAL RELATIONS. THE SENSE OF THE HEBREW IS “CARESSING” OR “EMBRACING.” THIS IS A CONTEXT WHERE THE PRECISE MEANING OF THE HEBREW IS NOT AS IMPORTANT AS USING A TERM THAT REFERS TO A DISPLAY OF AFFECTION BETWEEN HUSBAND AND WIFE IN PUBLIC THAT IS CULTURALLY ACCEPTABLE.**

**GENESIS 26:9: CALLED ISAAC MEANS ABIMELECH SENT FOR ISAAC, HAD SOMEONE BRING ISAAC TO HIM. BEHOLD, SHE IS YOUR WIFE: HERE BEHOLD (HEBREW HINNEH) IS PRECEDED BY ANOTHER WORD OFTEN TRANSLATED “SURELY,” SO THAT IT INTRODUCES AN AFFIRMATION, A STATEMENT BASED ON EVIDENCE. TEV, REB TRANSLATE “SO SHE IS YOUR WIFE!” WE MAY ALSO SAY “SHE IS FOR CERTAIN YOUR WIFE,” “THERE IS NOW NO DOUBT; SHE IS YOUR WIFE!” IN SOME LANGUAGES A LITERAL RENDERING OF “LOOK!” CALLING ISAAC’S ATTENTION TO WHAT ABIMELECH HAS JUST FOUND OUT, WILL BE QUITE NATURAL AND APPROPRIATE. IN OTHERS IT IS VERY NATURAL TO SAY “NOW I KNOW.…” HOW THEN COULD YOU … MY SISTER? OR WE MAY SAY “WHY DID YOU SAY ‘SHE IS MY SISTER?’ ” OR AS INDIRECT SPEECH, “WHY DID YOU SAY SHE WAS YOUR SISTER?” (TEV). FOR A SIMILAR QUESTION PUT TO ABRAHAM, SEE 12:19. THE QUESTION IS NOT TAKEN BY ISAAC TO BE RHETORICAL, BECAUSE HE ATTEMPTS TO GIVE A REPLY. IN TRANSLATION SOME LANGUAGES WILL USE IN CONTEXTS LIKE THIS A FORM OF THE QUESTION WORD “WHY?” WHICH INDICATES ANGER DIRECTED AGAINST THE HEARER. IN SOME TRANSLATIONS THE MAIN PART OF THE QUESTION IS EXPRESSED AS A STATEMENT (ACCUSATION): “YOU LIED TO US WHEN YOU TOLD US SHE WAS YOUR SISTER. WHY DID YOU DO THAT?” ISAAC’S REPLY BECAUSE I THOUGHT … REFERS TO THE REASON HE GAVE IN VERSE 7. RSV FOLLOWS THE HEBREW FORM, WHICH MUST SOMETIMES BE EXPRESSED AS “BECAUSE I THOUGHT THEY WOULD KILL ME AND TAKE HER.”**

**GENESIS 26:10: WHAT IS THIS YOU HAVE DONE TO US? IS NOW A RHETORICAL QUESTION TO WHICH ISAAC DOES NOT RESPOND, ABIMELECH IS PROBABLY REFERRING TO A PUNISHMENT THE LOCAL GODS COULD INFLICT UPON THE PEOPLE OF GERAR? REB TRANSLATES “WHY HAVE YOU TREATED US LIKE THIS?” WE MAY ALSO TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “DON’T YOU REALIZE WHAT YOU HAVE DONE TO US?” IF THE QUESTION MUST BE EXPRESSED AS A NEGATIVE, WE MAY SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “YOU SHOULD NEVER HAVE DONE SUCH A THING TO US.” US REFERS TO ABIMELECH AND THE PEOPLE OF GERAR, WHICH REQUIRES IN SOME LANGUAGES AN EXCLUSIVE PRONOUN FORM. ONE OF THE PEOPLE MIGHT … WIFE: UNLIKE THE CASE OF ABRAHAM AND PHARAOH IN 12:15, OR ABIMELECH IN 20:2, HERE ABIMELECH HAS NOT TAKEN REBEKAH INTO HIS HAREM. ONE OF THE PEOPLE MEANS ONE OF THE MEN OF GERAR, SOMEBODY IN GERAR. LAIN TRANSLATES A VERB MEANING TO LIE DOWN. IT IS USED IN 19:33 AND 35, WHERE LOT’S DAUGHTERS SLEPT WITH THEIR FATHER TO BECOME PREGNANT. SEE DISCUSSION THERE. NEB SAYS “MIGHT HAVE GONE TO BED WITH.” TRANSLATORS SHOULD USE AN EXPRESSION THAT IS SUITABLE FOR PUBLIC READING, BUT WHICH AT THE SAME TIME WILL BE CLEARLY UNDERSTOOD TO REFER TO SEXUAL INTERCOURSE. YOU WOULD HAVE BROUGHT GUILT UPON US: ABIMELECH’S MORAL ATTITUDE IS SIMILAR TO THAT OF PHARAOH IN 12:10–20. THE THOUGHT IS THAT, IF SOMEBODY HAD SLEPT WITH REBEKAH, IT WOULD HAVE CAUSED THE PEOPLE OF GERAR TO BE GUILTY OF WRONGDOING. TO ABIMELECH THIS WOULD HAVE PROBABLY MEANT THAT THE LOCAL GODS WOULD HAVE PUNISHED ALL THE PEOPLE FOR THE GUILT OF THE OFFENDER. GUILT TRANSLATES A NOUN MEANING “OFFENSE,” “FAULT,” “SIN.” IF SUCH A THING HAD HAPPENED, ISAAC WOULD HAVE BEEN, AS TEV SAYS, “RESPONSIBLE FOR OUR GUILT.” WE MAY ALSO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “YOU WOULD HAVE CAUSED US TO BECOME GUILTY OF WRONG.” IN SOME LANGUAGES THIS IDEA IS EXPRESSED AS “IT WOULD BE YOUR FAULT THAT WE CARRY THE LOAD OF FILTHINESS ON OUR HEADS.” SEE COMMENT ON US AT THE BEGINNING OF THIS VERSE.**

**GENESIS 26:11: SO, ABIMELECH WARNED ALL THE PEOPLE: SO, SUGGESTS A CONCLUSION. WE MAY ALSO TRANSLATE THE HEBREW CONNECTIVE HERE AS “THEN” OR “AFTER THAT.” WARNED TRANSLATES A VERB MEANING TO “CHARGE,” “COMMAND,” OR “ORDER.” SPEISER SAYS “ABIMELECH ISSUED ORDERS TO.…” BECAUSE THE ORDER CARRIES WITH IT THE THREAT OF DEATH, WARNED IS SATISFACTORY IN ENGLISH. ALL THE PEOPLE MEANS ALL THE PEOPLE OF GERAR, OR ALL ABIMELECH’S PEOPLE. WHOEVER TOUCHES … DEATH: TOUCH IS USED HERE, NOT IN THE USUAL SENSE OF PLACING THE HAND IN CONTACT WITH SOMETHING, BUT RATHER TO HURT, HARM, OR ACT VIOLENTLY AGAINST. NJV, SPCL SAY “MOLESTS,” TEV “MISTREATS,” REB “HARMED.” BE PUT TO DEATH TRANSLATES A HEBREW CONSTRUCTION MADE UP OF TWO FORMS OF THE VERB “DIE” AND HAS THE LITERAL SENSE OF “DIE THE DEATH,” BUT THE SENSE IS AS IN RSV, OR WE MAY SAY “BE KILLED.” IN LANGUAGES THAT DO NOT USE THE PASSIVE, IT WILL BE NECESSARY TO SAY SOMETHING LIKE “WILL DIE,” “THEY WILL KILL THEM,” OR “I WILL ORDER MY MEN TO KILL HIM.”**

**GENESIS 26:12: IN VERSES 12–16 ISAAC BECOMES WEALTHY, AND THE LOCAL PEOPLE BECOME ENVIOUS. ABIMELECH THEN REMOVES ISAAC. AND ISAAC SOWED IN THAT LAND: AS THIS IS THE INTRODUCTION TO A SUBTHEME IN THE STORY, MANY LANGUAGES WILL REQUIRE SOME KIND OF TRANSITION SUCH AS “WHILE HE WAS LIVING IN GERAR,” “WHEN HE LIVED IN THAT COUNTRY,” “DURING HIS TIME THERE.…” SOWED REFERS TO PLANTING, AND HERE TO THE PLANTING OF GRAIN (PROBABLY WHEAT OR BARLEY), WHICH WAS BY BROADCASTING OR SCATTERING SEEDS OVER THE SURFACE OF THE FIELD. THE FIELD MAY BE PLOWED BEFORE OR AFTER THE SEED IS SOWN. SOME LANGUAGES HAVE SPECIAL TERMS TO DESIGNATE DIFFERENT KINDS OF PLANTING. IN LANGUAGES IN WHICH SCATTERING SEED IS UNKNOWN, A GENERAL TERM FOR PLANTING MAY BE USED. IN SOME LANGUAGES THE CLOSEST EQUIVALENT TO SOWED IN THAT LAND IS “ISAAC PLANTED A LARGE GARDEN IN THAT COUNTRY.” REAPED … A HUNDREDFOLD: REAPED TRANSLATES THE COMMON HEBREW VERB MEANING “FIND.” HOWEVER, IN CONNECTION WITH A CROP IT MEANS TO REAP OR HARVEST. IN SOME LANGUAGES THIS WILL BE TRANSLATED AS “COLLECTED, GATHERED, BROUGHT OUT OF HIS GARDEN.” IN OTHERS IT WILL BE MORE NATURAL TO TALK ABOUT THE PLANTS PRODUCING FOOD; FOR EXAMPLE, “THE SEEDS THAT HE PLANTED ALL PRODUCED FOOD; EACH SEED GAVE A HUNDRED.…” HUNDREDFOLD MEANS ONE HUNDRED TIMES MORE THAN HE PLANTED; THAT IS, THE WEIGHT OF THE CROP WAS A HUNDRED TIMES MORE THAN THE WEIGHT OF THE SOWN SEEDS. DRIVER SAYS THIS NEED NOT BE TAKEN LITERALLY BUT MAY ALSO BE A WAY OF SAYING THAT IT WAS AN EXCEPTIONALLY GOOD HARVEST, WHICH SPCL TRANSLATES “ISAAC HARVESTED A VERY GOOD CROP.” IN THE SAME YEAR: THE REFERENCE IS NOT TO A CALENDAR YEAR BUT TO AN AGRICULTURAL YEAR OR GROWING SEASON; THAT IS, FROM PLANTING TIME TO HARVEST TIME. GRAIN CROPS IN THIS AREA ARE SOWN IN ABOUT OCTOBER AND REMAIN IN THE EARTH TO RECEIVE THE WINTER RAINS, AND THEN ARE HARVESTED AT THE END OF THE RAINS IN APRIL OR MAY. SOME TRANSLATIONS, LIKE FRCL, SPCL, TAKE IN THE SAME YEAR TO REFER TO THE SAME YEAR AS THE WARNING GIVEN BY ABIMELECH IN VERSE 11, AND SO BEGIN VERSE 12 “THAT YEAR ISAAC SOWED.…” RSV AND TEV DO NOT ASSOCIATE IN THE SAME YEAR WITH THE PREVIOUS EVENTS BUT RATHER UNDERSTAND THAT ISAAC REAPED A GREAT HARVEST IN THE SAME YEAR THAT HE SOWED. THIS IS THE VIEW TAKEN BY MOST TRANSLATIONS. HOWEVER, BOTH UNDERSTANDINGS ARE POSSIBLE. THE LORD BLESSED HIM: FOR BLESSED SEE VERSE 3. NOTE THAT TEV AND OTHERS MAKE THIS STATEMENT THE CAUSE OF ISAAC’S SUCCESSFUL HARVEST. REB DOES THE SAME BY USING A VERB TENSE THAT REFERS BACK TO THE PREVIOUS STATEMENTS: “THE LORD HAD BLESSED HIM.” HIM IS ISAAC.**

**GENESIS 26:13: THE MAN BECAME RICH: THE MAN REFERS TO ISAAC. RICH IS LITERALLY “GREAT,” BUT THE FOCUS IS HERE ON HIS POSSESSIONS RATHER THAN HIS FAME, AND SO “RICH” IS APPROPRIATE IN ENGLISH. WE WOULD EXPECT ISAAC, WHO HAS INHERITED ABRAHAM’S WEALTH, TO HAVE BEEN RICH BEFORE GOING TO GERAR. HOWEVER, THE NARRATOR PRESENTS ISAAC AS GAINING HIS WEALTH AND POWER THROUGH GOD’S BLESSING HIM IN THE PRESENCE OF THE CANAANITES, WHOSE LAND HAS BEEN PROMISED TO HIM. A RICH MAN IS EXPRESSED IN SOME LANGUAGES AS “A BIG OWNER MAN,” “A MAN WITH MANY LOADS,” “A MAN WHO HAS MANY POSSESSIONS,” OR “A BIG METAL MAN”; THAT IS, A MAN WHO OWNS LOTS OF METAL OBJECTS. GAINED MORE … WEALTHY IS LITERALLY “HE WENT ON GOING GREAT UNTIL HE BECAME VERY GREAT.” FOR A CLEAR TRANSLATION SEE TEV. WE MAY ALSO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “ISAAC BECAME RICH AND OBTAINED MANY POSSESSIONS.” IT MAY BE MORE NATURAL IN SOME LANGUAGES TO REVERSE THIS AND SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “ISAAC OBTAINED MANY POSSESSIONS AND SO BECAME A VERY RICH MAN.”**

**GENESIS 26:14: VERSE 14 EXPLAINS IN DETAIL WHAT IT MEANS FOR ISAAC TO BE DESCRIBED AS A VERY RICH MAN. THE FIRST PART OF THE VERSE GIVES THE REASON WHY THE PHILISTINES ENVIED ISAAC. NOTE THAT TEV BEGINS WITH “BECAUSE.…” HE HAD … FLOCKS AND HERDS IS LITERALLY “HE CAME TO HAVE POSSESSIONS OF FLOCKS AND CATTLE.” SINCE THE HEBREW WORD TSON, RENDERED FLOCKS BY RSV, INCLUDES BOTH SHEEP AND GOATS, WE MAY SAY “HE HAD FLOCKS OF SHEEP AND GOATS AND HERDS OF CATTLE.” AND A GREAT HOUSEHOLD: HOUSEHOLD TRANSLATES A HEBREW TERM, USED HERE AND IN JOB 1:3, REFERRING TO ALL ISAAC’S SERVANTS, WHICH SPEISER CALLS “A LARGE RETINUE”; TEV HAS “MANY SERVANTS,” NEB/REB “MANY SLAVES.” FOR DISCUSSION OF “SLAVE” SEE 9:25. AS A GENERAL EXPRESSION WE MAY SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “AND ALL THE PEOPLE WHO SERVED IN ISAAC’S CAMP.” ONE TYPICAL TRANSLATION OF THE FIRST PART OF VERSE 14 IS “ISAAC BRED UP VERY MANY SHEEP AND GOATS AND CATTLE, AND HE HAD A GREAT MANY WORKERS.…” SO THAT THE PHILISTINES ENVIED HIM: SO THAT IS USED BY RSV TO MAKE THIS STATEMENT A CONSEQUENCE OF ISAAC’S WEALTH. NOTE THAT TEV MADE THE FIRST PART OF THE VERSE A REASON CLAUSE. WE MAY ALSO BEGIN THIS CLAUSE AS A CONSEQUENCE BY SAYING “AND FOR THAT REASON,” “BECAUSE OF THAT,” THEREFORE.” ENVIED MEANS THAT THE PEOPLE OF GERAR, HERE CALLED PHILISTINES, ARE UNHAPPY ABOUT THE SUCCESS AND WEALTH THAT ISAAC HAS ACQUIRED. THEY MAY ALSO BE CALLED “JEALOUS.” IN SOME LANGUAGES ENVIED IS EXPRESSED IDIOMATICALLY; FOR EXAMPLE, “THEIR HEARTS WERE HOT FOR THE THINGS THAT ISAAC POSSESSED.”**

**GENESIS 26:15: RSV TREATS VERSE 15 AS A COMMENT OR EXPLANATION IN ANTICIPATION OF THE INFORMATION THAT WILL COME IN VERSE 18. BECAUSE THIS COMMENT IS RELATIVE TO A VERSE THAT STILL LIES AHEAD, RSV PLACES IT BETWEEN PARENTHESES. HOWEVER, OTHER VERSIONS SUCH AS SPEISER, TEV, NIV, TAKE VERSE 15 AS PART OF THE PRESENT STORY LINE, AN ACTION OF THE PEOPLE OF GERAR RESULTING FROM THEIR JEALOUSY OF ISAAC’S PROSPERITY. THESE VERSIONS ALL BEGIN THE VERSE WITH “SO.…” SOME TRANSLATIONS IN OTHER LANGUAGES JOIN THE FIRST PART OF THIS VERSE TO THE LAST PART OF THE PREVIOUS VERSE IN THE SAME SENTENCE; FOR EXAMPLE, “THOSE PHILISTINE PEOPLE WERE JEALOUS OF HIM, AND THEY FILLED IN ALL THE WELLS.…” STOPPED AND FILLED WITH EARTH ALL THE WELLS: STOPPED RENDERS A VERB MEANING TO STOP UP OR CLOSE UP BY FILLING IN (WITH DIRT). THE VERB IS USED IN 2 KGS 3:19, 25 OF STOPPING UP SPRINGS OF WATER. AND FILLED WITH EARTH TELLS HOW THEY STOPPED UP THE WELLS. FOR AN ALTERNATE WAY OF EXPRESSING THIS, SEE TEV. FOR WELLS SEE DISCUSSION OF 21:19.**

**WHICH HIS FATHER … HIS FATHER: THIS MAY NEED TO BE EXPRESSED DIFFERENTLY TO AVOID SOME REPETITION; FOR EXAMPLE, “WHICH HIS FATHER’S SERVANTS HAD DUG WHEN ABRAHAM WAS STILL ALIVE.” IT MAY BE DESIRABLE TO REARRANGE VERSE 15 SO THAT THE EVENTS FOLLOW EACH OTHER IN THE ORDER THEY HAPPENED. FOR EXAMPLE, “WHEN HIS FATHER ABRAHAM WAS STILL ALIVE, ABRAHAM’S SERVANTS HAD DUG SOME WELLS, BUT LATER THE PHILISTINES HAD FILLED THEM IN” OR “BEFORE, IN THE TIME WHEN HIS FATHER ABRAHAM WAS LIVING, HIS FATHER’S WORKERS HAD DUG WELLS THERE, BUT NOW BECAUSE OF THEIR JEALOUSY THE PHILISTINES WENT AND FILLED THEM IN AGAIN.”**

**GENESIS 26:16: ISAAC’S POWER AND WEALTH HAD BECOME A THREAT TO THE SECURITY OF ABIMELECH. THIS VERSE MAY NEED TO BE INTRODUCED WITH A TERM EQUIVALENT TO “SO,” “THEREFORE.” GO AWAY FROM US: THAT IS, “LEAVE US,” “DEPART FROM HERE,” “GET OUT OF OUR COUNTRY.” FOR YOU ARE MUCH MIGHTIER THAN WE: THIS CLAUSE IS THE REASON WHY ISAAC SHOULD LEAVE GERAR, AND IN SOME LANGUAGES IT WILL NEED TO BE EXPRESSED AT THE BEGINNING OF THE SENTENCE; FOR EXAMPLE, “YOU HAVE BECOME MUCH STRONGER THAN WE ARE, SO NOW LEAVE OUR COUNTRY.”**

**GENESIS 26:17: VERSES 17–25 SHOW ISAAC MOVING FROM THE VALLEY OF GERAR TO BEERSHEBA. IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO SHOW WITH ANY CERTAINTY THE MIGRATION ROUTE ISAAC AND HIS PEOPLE FOLLOWED. THE CENTRAL POINT IN THESE VERSES, HOWEVER, IS THE ESTABLISHING OF A SERIES OF WELLS ALONG THE ROUTE, IN A SITUATION WHERE PASTURING NOMADS DEPENDED UPON THESE WELLS FOR THEIR WATER AND THEREFORE FOR THEIR SURVIVAL. IT WAS IMPORTANT FOR THESE WATERING PLACES TO HAVE NAMES THAT WOULD BECOME KNOWN TO THE NOMADIC HERDERS. SO, ISAAC DEPARTED FROM THERE: SO, MARKS THE RESULT OF VERSE 16. DEPARTED FROM THERE MEANS FROM GERAR, THE AREA WHERE ABIMELECH LIVED. ENCAMPED IN THE VALLEY OF GERAR: ENCAMPED TRANSLATES A VERB USED HERE AND IN 33:18 AND MEANS “PITCHED HIS TENTS,” “MADE HIS CAMP,” “SETTLED.” VALLEY TRANSLATES THE HEBREW NAHAL, WHICH REFERS TO A STREAM OR RIVER BED. USUALLY THESE STREAM BEDS ARE DRY EXCEPT AFTER A HEAVY RAIN. THE TERM MAY ALSO BE APPLIED TO THE VALLEY THROUGH WHICH THE STREAM FLOWED. IN THE LITERATURE IN ENGLISH THESE AREAS ARE USUALLY REFERRED TO BY THE ARABIC TERM WADI. IT IS NOT KNOWN HOW FAR THIS PLACE MAY HAVE BEEN FROM ABIMELECH’S GERAR. DWELT THERE MEANS HE SETTLED, STAYED, LIVED THERE FOR A TIME.**

**ISAAC DIGS NEW WELLS (26:18–33)**

**IN THIS SUBDIVISION ISAAC’S MEN REOPEN THE WELLS THAT THE MEN OF GERAR HAD FILLED IN (VERSE 18). THE MEN OF GERAR CLAIM WELLS DUG BY ISAAC’S MEN (VERSES 19–21). ISAAC MOVES ON AND DIGS A NEW WELL THAT IS NOT CONTESTED BY THE PEOPLE OF GERAR (VERSE 22). IN BEERSHEBA THE LORD RENEWS HIS PROMISE OF THE LAND AND DESCENDANTS TO ISAAC, WHO WORSHIPS THE LORD, AND HIS SERVANTS DIG STILL ANOTHER WELL (VERSES 23–25). ABIMELECH AND ISAAC MAKE A PEACE TREATY, AND AGAIN A NEW WELL IS REPORTED (VERSES 26–33).**

**SUBDIVISION HEADING**

**THE HANDBOOK HEADING DIFFERS FROM MOST TRANSLATIONS BY PLACING VERSES 18–33 UNDER A SINGLE HEADING. IN TEV, FRCL, GECL, THE TREATY BETWEEN ISAAC AND ABIMELECH BEGINS AT VERSE 26 AND CONTINUES THROUGH VERSE 33. SPCL HAS THE SAME HEADING AS TEV BUT INCLUDES VERSES 34–35. BECAUSE THE ESTABLISHING OF THE WELLS IS THE ONE THEME THAT UNITES VERSES 18–33, THE HANDBOOK HAS MADE IT THE HEADING FOR THIS SUBDIVISION. TRANSLATORS SHOULD CONSIDER DOING LIKEWISE. OTHER SUGGESTIONS FOR THIS HEADING ARE “ISAAC AND THE WATER WELLS,” “A WELL CALLED ‘FREEDOM,’ ” OR “ISAAC’S SERVANTS DIG MANY WELLS.”**

**GENESIS 26:18: THIS STORY FOCUSES UPON THESE EVENTS IN THE LIFE OF ISAAC AS A PATRIARCH AND SO LEGITIMIZES HIS DESCENDANTS’ CLAIM TO THESE WELLS. AND ISAAC DUG AGAIN THE WELLS OF WATER WHICH HAD BEEN DUG IN THE DAYS OF ABRAHAM HIS FATHER: ISAAC DUG MAY GIVE THE IMPRESSION IN SOME LANGUAGES THAT ISAAC ALONE DID THE DIGGING. IF THAT IS THE CASE, IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “ISAAC HAD HIS MEN DIG,” “ISAAC ORDERED HIS MEN TO DIG.” DUG AGAIN MEANS HE REOPENED OR RESTORED THE WELLS THAT HAD BEEN FILLED IN. WHICH HAD BEEN DUG … IS TRANSLATED BY RSV AS A PASSIVE. THE HEBREW HAS AN ACTIVE CONSTRUCTION WITH A PLURAL SUBJECT “THEY,” MEANING ABRAHAM AND HIS MEN. IN THE DAYS OF, WHICH IS THE HEBREW TEXT, IS “THE SERVANTS OF” IN SOME OF THE ANCIENT VERSIONS, AND SO BJ TRANSLATES “WHICH THE SERVANTS OF HIS FATHER ABRAHAM HAD DUG.” “THE SERVANTS OF” OCCURS IN THE HEBREW TEXT OF VERSE 15 BUT NOT HERE IN VERSE 18. HOTTP REGARDS THE HEBREW IN THE DAYS OF AS AN {A} READING, AND THEREFORE THIS SHOULD BE FOLLOWED BY TRANSLATORS. THIS EXPRESSION MEANS “WHEN ABRAHAM WAS ALIVE.” FOR THE PHILISTINES HAD STOPPED THEM AFTER THE DEATH OF ABRAHAM: THIS INFORMATION HIGHLIGHTS THE CONFLICT OVER WATER THAT BEGAN IN ABRAHAM’S TIME. BY CLOSING WELLS IT WAS POSSIBLE TO FORCE HERDERS TO LEAVE THE AREA. FOR THE WORDING OF THIS CLAUSE SEE VERSE 15. AND HE GAVE THEM THE NAMES WHICH HIS FATHER HAD GIVEN THEM: HE IS ISAAC. IT WAS COMMON PRACTICE TO GIVE NAMES TO WATER WELLS OR SPRINGS THAT RECALLED SOMETHING OF THEIR HISTORY OR THE PERSONAL EXPERIENCE OF THEIR FOUNDER. WE MAY TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “ISAAC GAVE THESE WELLS THE SAME NAMES HIS FATHER HAD GIVEN THEM” OR “ISAAC CALLED THEM BY THE SAME NAMES HIS FATHER ABRAHAM HAD CALLED THEM.”**

**GENESIS 26:19: TEV AND OTHERS BEGIN A NEW PARAGRAPH WITH VERSE 19. VERSE 19 IS THE FIRST OF TWO BRIEF EPISODES THAT LEAD TO QUARRELING BETWEEN THE PEOPLE OF GERAR AND ISAAC’S PEOPLE. IN SOME LANGUAGES IT WILL BE APPROPRIATE TO BEGIN THIS EPISODE WITH AN INTRODUCTORY TIME EXPRESSION, AS DO FRCL AND SPCL: “ONE DAY.” OTHER TRANSLATIONS ARE “ONE TIME” AND “LATER.” ONE TRANSLATION GROUPS THE EVENTS OF VERSES 19–22 TOGETHER BY BEGINNING “THEN ISAAC’S WORKERS DUG THREE NEW WELLS. THEY DUG THE FIRST ONE IN THE VALLEY AND FOUND WATER.…” DUG IN THE VALLEY CAN MEAN THEY DUG IN THE ACTUAL STREAM BED OR SOMEWHERE IN THE VALLEY WHERE THE STREAM BED LIES. FOUND MEANS THEY DISCOVERED, LOCATED WATER. WELL OF SPRINGING WATER IS LITERALLY “WELL OF LIVING WATER.” THIS EXPRESSION IS USED TO REFER TO A SPRING OF “RUNNING WATER” IN LEV 14:5, 6, 50, 51, 52; ZECH 14:8. IT IS WATER THAT FLOWS OUT CONTINUALLY FROM BENEATH THE SURFACE OF THE GROUND.**

**GENESIS 26:20: AS A RESULT OF THIS DISCOVERY THE HERDSMEN OF GERAR QUARRELED WITH ISAAC’S HERDSMEN. FOR TRANSLATION SUGGESTIONS REGARDING HERDSMEN SEE 13:7. SEE THE QUARRELS OVER PASTURE LANDS BETWEEN THE SERVANTS OF ABRAHAM AND LOT IN 13:6–11 AND BETWEEN ABIMELECH AND ABRAHAM OVER WATER WELLS IN 21:25. QUARRELED TRANSLATES A VERB MEANING TO “ARGUE” OR “DISPUTE.” IN EXO 21:18 QUARREL IS USED IN THE CONTEXT OF A PHYSICAL STRUGGLE. IN VERSES 20 AND 21 THE STRIFE APPEARS TO BE VERBAL. “THE WATER IS OURS” IS THE CLAIM MADE BY THE HERDSMEN OF GERAR. IN TRANSLATION IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO MAKE THEM CLAIM THE SOURCE OF THE WATER; FOR EXAMPLE, “THAT SPRING BELONGS TO US.” LANGUAGES THAT DISTINGUISH BETWEEN INCLUSIVE AND EXCLUSIVE PLURAL PRONOUNS WILL USE THE EXCLUSIVE FORM HERE. CALLED THE NAME OF THE WELL ESEK: THE HEBREW SAYS WELL, BUT TRANSLATORS SHOULD CALL THE SOURCE OF THE WATER BY THE TERM USED IN THE TRANSLATION OF VERSE 19. ESEK (SEE RSV FOOTNOTE) MAY BE TRANSLATED AS “QUARREL,” “STRIFE,” “DISPUTE,” “CONTENTION.” BECAUSE THEY CONTENDED WITH HIM: CONTEND MEANS TO BE IN RIVALRY OR IN OPPOSITION. BECAUSE THE REASON CLAUSE IS SUGGESTED IN THE WORD QUARREL, TEV DOES NOT REPEAT IT. HOWEVER, MOST MODERN TRANSLATIONS RETAIN THE FULL FORM. WE MAY ALSO TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “SO ISAAC NAMED THE WELL ‘QUARREL,’ BECAUSE THE MEN OF GERAR QUARRELED WITH ISAAC’S MEN.”**

**GENESIS 26:21: THEN THEY DUG ANOTHER WELL: THEN TRANSLATES THE HEBREW CONNECTIVE, WHICH SUGGESTS HERE A SUBSEQUENT ACTION AND MAY ALSO BE EXPRESSED IN ENGLISH AS “LATER,” “AFTER THAT,” “AT ANOTHER TIME.” THEY REFERS TO ISAAC’S SERVANTS. SEE TEV. IN SOME LANGUAGES IT MAY BE CLEARER TO REFER TO THIS WELL AS “A SECOND WELL” AND THE NEXT WELL DUG AS “A THIRD WELL,” RATHER THAN TO REPEAT THE TERM ANOTHER. THEY QUARRELED OVER THAT ALSO: THEY REFERS TO ISAAC’S SERVANTS AND THE MEN OF GERAR. TEV AND OTHERS USE AN IMPERSONAL FORM “THERE WAS A QUARREL.” WE MAY ALSO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “IT ALSO CAUSED A QUARREL.” IN SOME LANGUAGES IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO NAME THOSE WHO QUARRELED; FOR EXAMPLE, “AND THE SERVANTS OF ISAAC AND THE MEN OF GERAR QUARRELED OVER THAT WELL ALSO.” SO, HE CALLED ITS NAME SITNAH: HE REFERS TO ISAAC. FOR THE MEANING OF SITNAH SEE THE RSV FOOTNOTE. THIS HEBREW WORD MEANS ENMITY OR HOSTILITY. IF A NOUN-LIKE WORD IS UNSUITABLE, IN SOME LANGUAGES WE MAY SAY “WELL OF THOSE WHO HATE EACH OTHER” OR “WELL OF THOSE WHO OPPOSE EACH OTHER.”**

**GENESIS 26:22: AND HE MOVED FROM THERE: HE MOVED MEANS THAT ISAAC MIGRATED WITH HIS FAMILY, SERVANTS, BELONGINGS, AND ANIMALS IN SEARCH OF PASTURE FOR HIS FLOCKS AND HERDS. THERE HAS NO PARTICULAR GEOGRAPHICAL REFERENCE BUT MEANS THE PLACE IN WHICH HE HAD BEEN CAMPED IN VERSE 21. OVER THAT THEY DID NOT QUARREL: THEY REFERS TO THE SAME PEOPLE AS IN VERSE 21. CALLED ITS NAME REHOBOTH: ITS REFERS TO THAT WELL. SEE RSV FOOTNOTE FOR REHOBOTH. THIS NAME FIRST OCCURRED IN 10:11. THE WORD IS IN A PLURAL FORM. IT IS USED IN THE SINGULAR IN DAVID’S SONG IN 2 SAM 22:20, “A BROAD PLACE,” AS A FIGURE OF FREEDOM FROM DANGER OR DISTRESS, AND WITH THE SAME SENSE IN PSA 18:19. THE SENSE OF REHOBOTH IS GIVEN IN THE EXPLANATION HAS MADE ROOM FOR US, WHICH IS LITERALLY “HAS BROADENED FOR US.” IN OTHER WORDS, THE LORD HAS GIVEN US A PLACE WHERE WE CAN SPREAD OUT AND BE FREE FROM THE PRESSURE OF OTHERS. IN SOME LANGUAGES THERE IS A TERM FOR A PLACE OR SPACE THAT IS VACANT OR NOT BEING USED BY OTHER PEOPLE, “AN EMPTY PLACE.” TEV’S RENDERING IS ADEQUATE: “THE LORD HAS GIVEN US FREEDOM TO LIVE IN THE LAND.” INTERPRETERS IDENTIFY THIS WELL WITH ONE KNOWN LATER AS “WADI RUHEBE,” LOCATED SOME THIRTY KILOMETERS (TWENTY MILES) SOUTHWEST OF BEERSHEBA. AS A RESULT OF THE SPACE TO LIVE IN PEACE, THE QUOTATION GOES ON TO ADD AND WE SHALL BE FRUITFUL IN THE LAND. FRUITFUL IS THE SAME TERM AS IN 1:22, 28; 8:17, AND MEANS TO INCREASE IN NUMBERS THROUGH REPRODUCTION. SINCE THE REFERENCE IS, TO WE, SOME INTERPRETERS TAKE IT TO MEAN THE PEOPLE, ISAAC AND HIS DESCENDANTS. OTHERS UNDERSTAND IT MORE GENERALLY TO REFER TO AN INCREASE IN EVERYTHING, AND SO TEV HAS “WILL BE PROSPEROUS.” THE SENSE OF THIS IS EXPRESSED IN ONE TRANSLATION AS “AND OUR WORK CAN GO AHEAD WELL HERE.” EITHER VIEW IS POSSIBLE. THE PRONOUN WE IS INCLUSIVE IN THIS CONTEXT.**

**GENESIS 26:23: FROM THERE: THIS MAY BE UNDERSTOOD TO MEAN “FROM REHOBOTH.” HE WENT UP TO BEERSHEBA: HE IS ISAAC. WENT UP IS THE LITERAL HEBREW VERB OFTEN USED WHEN GOING FROM A LOWER TO A HIGHER ELEVATION. BUT IT IS ALSO USED IN MANY CONTEXTS WHERE ELEVATION IS NOT IN FOCUS; AND IN THESE CASES, IT HAS THE SAME SENSE AS THE VERB “TO GO.” FOR TRANSLATORS IT IS IMPORTANT TO USE THE NATURAL OR CONVENTIONAL WAY OF DESCRIBING A MOVE FROM ONE PLACE TO ANOTHERJ. IN SOME LANGUAGES, FOR INSTANCE, THE IMPORTANT FEATURE OF A JOURNEY IS NOT WHETHER IT IS “UP” OR “DOWN,” BUT WHETHER IT IS “TOWARD THE SEA” OR “AWAY FROM THE SEA.” IN THIS VERSE TEV “WENT TO” WILL BE A GOOD MODEL FOR MANY LANGUAGES.**

**GENESIS 26:24: SOME TRANSLATIONS SET OFF THE QUOTED WORDS AS A BLOCK IN VERSE 24. THE LORD APPEARED TO HIM THE SAME NIGHT: FOR APPEARED SEE VERSE 2. THE SAME NIGHT MEANS THE NIGHT ISAAC ARRIVED IN BEERSHEBA. I AM THE GOD OF ABRAHAM YOUR FATHER: SEE 15:7, IN WHICH GOD APPEARED TO ABRAHAM SAYING “I AM THE LORD WHO.…” FEAR NOT: THESE ARE THE SAME WORDS SPOKEN TO ABRAHAM IN 15:1. FOR THE WORDS OF THE PROMISE, SEE VERSES 3. MY SERVANT ABRAHAM’S SAKE: SEE THE PARALLEL EXPRESSION IN 12:16.**

**GENESIS 26:25: ALTAR: SEE DISCUSSION AT 8:20. CALLED UPON THE NAME OF THE LORD [STEPHEN YAHWEH]: SEE 4:26; 21:33. PITCHED HIS TENT IS THE USE OF A PART TO REPRESENT THE WHOLE. IT MEANS THAT ISAAC SET UP HIS CAMP THERE. SEE TEV. AND THERE ISAAC’S SERVANTS DUG A WELL: THERE REFERS TO THE AREA OF BEERSHEBA. THEREFORE, WE MAY SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “ISAAC’S SERVANTS DUG A WELL AT BEERSHEBA.”**

**GENESIS 26:26: VERSE 26 INTRODUCES AN EPISODE IN THIS STORY IN WHICH ABIMELECH AND ISAAC MAKE A PEACE TREATY. THE PURPOSE OF THIS TREATY IS TO PREVENT ISAAC, WHOM ABIMELECH RECOGNIZES AS BLESSED OF GOD, FROM ATTACKING ABIMELECH’S KINGDOM. NOTE THAT THE INITIATIVE COMES ENTIRELY FROM THE SIDE OF ABIMELECH. TEV AND SOME OTHERS PLACE A HEADING BEFORE VERSE 26. IN SOME LANGUAGES THIS EPISODE WILL NEED TO BE INTRODUCED SO THAT THE READER WILL RECOGNIZE THAT A SHIFT OF THEME HAS TAKEN PLACE. FOR EXAMPLE, WE MAY NEED TO SAY “WHILE ISAAC WAS CAMPED AT BEERSHEBA, ABIMELECH …,” “DURING ISAAC’S STAY IN BEERSHEBA.…” THEN ABIMELECH WENT TO HIM FROM GERAR: BECAUSE ABIMELECH HAS NOT BEEN MENTIONED SINCE VERSE 16, IT MAY BE HELPFUL TO BRING HIM BACK INTO THE STORY WITH HIS TITLE, THAT IS, “THEN KING ABIMELECH” OR “THEN ABIMELECH, KING OF GERAR.…” WENT IN ENGLISH SUGGESTS THAT THE VIEWPOINT IS FROM GERAR. WE MAY ALSO SAY “LEFT GERAR AND WENT.” IT MAY, HOWEVER, BE MORE NATURAL TO ASSUME THE VIEWPOINT AS BEING AT BEERSHEBA. IN THAT CASE “CAME FROM GERAR” IS PREFERRED IN ENGLISH. TO HIM MEANS “TO ISAAC,” ‘TO THE PLACE WHERE ISAAC WAS.” WITH AHUZZATH HIS ADVISER: WITH MEANS THAT ABIMELECH WAS ACCOMPANIED BY AHUZZATH. ADVISER TRANSLATES A NOUN MEANING “FRIEND,” “COMPANION.” IT IS USED IN 2 SAM 15:37; 1 KGS 4:5, AND THERE, AS HERE, IT REFERS TO A PERSON WHO COUNSELS, ADVISES, GIVES HIS EXPERT OPINION TO THE KING. IN SOME LANGUAGES AN ADVISER TO A LEADER IS CALLED “THE ONE WHO WHISPERS IN THE CHIEF’S EAR” OR “THE ONE WHO SPEAKS IN PRIVATE TO THE CHIEF.” FOR PHICOL THE COMMANDER OF HIS ARMY SEE 21:22.**

**GENESIS 26:27: ISAAC SAID: SAID IS FOLLOWED BY A QUESTION AND MUST OFTEN BE TRANSLATED AS “ISAAC ASKED THEM.” WHY HAVE YOU COME TO ME: ISAAC’S QUESTION IS ADDRESSED IN THE PLURAL TO ALL THREE. SEEING THAT … HATE ME: SEEING TRANSLATES THE HEBREW CONNECTIVE, WHICH WE MAY ALSO RENDER IN ENGLISH AS “SINCE” OR “BECAUSE.” HATE IS A LITERAL RENDERING OF THE HEBREW VERB. ISAAC IS NO DOUBT ACCUSING KING ABIMELECH OF HAVING TREATED HIM WITH GREAT DISLIKE, AND HE CONFRONTS THE KING WITH A DIFFICULT QUESTION TO ANSWER. THE CENTRAL ELEMENT IN HATE AS IT IS USED BY ISAAC IN HIS QUESTION IS HOSTILITY, OPPOSITION, ENMITY. TEV SAYS “SO UNFRIENDLY,” REB HAS REVISED NEB “HATE” TO “ILL-DISPOSED,” WHILE NIV SAYS “HOSTILE.” SENT ME AWAY FROM YOU: THAT IS, “MADE ME GET OUT OF YOUR COUNTRY.” IN SOME LANGUAGES IT WILL MORE NATURAL TO SHIFT THIS TO DIRECT SPEECH, “AND SAID TO ME ‘GET OUT OF MY COUNTRY.’” A TYPICAL TRANSLATION OF THE WHOLE OF ISAAC’S SPEECH IN THIS VERSE IS “WHY [FOR WHAT PURPOSE] HAVE YOU COME TO SEE ME? THE LAST TIME I SAW YOU, YOU WERE HOSTILE TO ME AND YOU DROVE ME OUT OF YOUR PLACE.” A TRANSLATION THAT PLACES THE QUESTION LAST AS A CLIMAX SAYS “YOU WERE BAD FRIENDS TO ME BEFORE, AND YOU CHASED ME AWAY FROM YOUR COUNTRY. WELL, WHY HAVE YOU COME TO SEE ME NOW?”**

**GENESIS 26:28: THEY SAID: IN SOME LANGUAGES THIS WILL SUGGEST THAT ALL THREE MEN SPOKE AT ONCE. IN SUCH CASES IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO SAY “KING ABIMELECH SAID.” WE SEE PLAINLY THAT THE LORD IS WITH YOU: WE OF COURSE REFERS TO THE THREE MEN, AND IN SOME LANGUAGES, THIS MUST BE RENDERED BY AN EXCLUSIVE PRONOUN. SEE PLAINLY TRANSLATES A HEBREW IDIOM “SEEING WE SEE.” THE SENSE IS AS IN RSV, OR WE MAY SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “IT IS CLEAR TO US,” “ANYBODY CAN SEE.” SEE TEV. FOR THE LORD IS WITH YOU, SEE VERSE 3.**

**SO, WE SAY REPRESENTS A CONCLUSION THE KING AND HIS MEN HAVE REACHED, WHICH MAY BE EXPRESSED AS “WE HAVE CONCLUDED,” “WE HAVE DECIDED,” “SO WE THOUGHT.” LET THERE BE AN OATH BETWEEN YOU AND US: LET THERE BE EXPRESSES A DESIRE, WHICH MAY HAVE TO BE EXPRESSED AS “THAT WE SHOULD SWEAR AN OATH WITH YOU,” “WE SHOULD MAKE AN AGREEMENT WITH YOU,” OR “WE WANT TO MAKE A TREATY WITH YOU.” OATH TRANSLATES THE SAME WORD USED IN 24:41. THE OATH IS THE GIVING OF A PLEDGE OR PROMISE TO ABIDE BY THE CONDITIONS OF THE TREATY. AND LET US MAKE A COVENANT WITH YOU IS LITERALLY “LET US CUT A COVENANT.” FOR DISCUSSION OF THIS EXPRESSION SEE 6:18; 15:18. THE INTENTION OF THE COVENANT IS TO ESTABLISH AND MAINTAIN PEACE BETWEEN ISAAC’S PEOPLE AND THOSE OF ABIMELECH. IN MODERN TERMS THIS CAN BE CALLED A NONAGGRESSION PACT; THAT IS, EACH SIDE AGREES NOT TO ATTACK THE OTHER.**

**GENESIS 26:29: THAT YOU WILL DO US NO HARM: HARM TRANSLATES A WORD THAT MEANS “EVIL” OR “BAD.” IT IS USED HERE AS BAD DEEDS OR ACTIONS. TEV SHIFTS TO A CLAUSE, “THAT YOU WILL NOT HARM US.” JUST AS WE HAVE NOT TOUCHED YOU: JUST AS EXPRESSES THE THOUGHT OF “IN THE SAME WAY THAT” OR “AS WE FOR OUR PART.” TOUCH IS USED HERE IN THE SAME SENSE AS IN VERSE 11, WITH THE SENSE OF “HARM,” “MOLEST.” AND HAVE DONE TO YOU NOTHING BUT GOOD IS LITERALLY “AND AS WE DID WITH YOU ONLY GOOD.” THIS MAY ALSO BE RENDERED “WE DID NOTHING BAD TO YOU” OR “WE DID ONLY GOOD THINGS TO YOU.” AND HAVE SENT YOU AWAY IN PEACE: SEE VERSE 16 FOR THE CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH ISAAC DEPARTED FROM GERAR. FOR PEACE SEE DISCUSSION OF 15:15. IN THIS CONTEXT SOME LANGUAGES MAY TRANSLATE THIS SENTENCE IDIOMATICALLY; FOR EXAMPLE, “WE SAID GOOD-BYE TO YOU WITH OUR HEARTS COOL,” “WHEN WE SENT YOU ON YOUR WAY, OUR HEARTS WERE AT EASE.” YOU ARE NOW THE BLESSED OF THE LORD: SEE DISCUSSION OF 24:31. IT WAS POLITICALLY PRUDENT OF ABIMELECH TO SEEK GOOD RELATIONS WITH SOMEONE HE RECOGNIZED AS HAVING GOD’S SPECIAL FAVOR.**

**GENESIS 26:30: SO, HE MADE THEM A FEAST: SO, TRANSLATES THE HEBREW CONNECTIVE, WHICH DOES NOT NECESSARILY CARRY THE SENSE OF A CONSEQUENCE HERE. A WORD LIKE “THEN” IS PROBABLY MORE APPROPRIATE FOR ENGLISH. HE REFERS TO ISAAC; AND SINCE THERE IS A CHANGE IN SUBJECT AT THIS POINT, THE NAME “ISAAC” WILL OFTEN BE REQUIRED IN TRANSLATION. FOR FEAST SEE 19:3. SHARING THE SAME FOOD WAS PART OF THE RITUAL OF SWEARING AN OATH.**

**GENESIS 26:31: AND [THEY] TOOK OATH WITH ONE ANOTHER IS LITERALLY “AND SWORE [EACH] MAN TO HIS BROTHER.” THE LANGUAGE USED SHOWS THAT ISAAC IS TREATED AS AN EQUAL WITH ABIMELECH. WE MAY TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “THEY SWORE AN OATH TO EACH OTHER,” “THEY SWORE TO EACH OTHER TO DO AS THEY HAD PROMISED,” “THEY GAVE THEIR WORD OF TRUST TO EACH OTHER.” IN SOME LANGUAGES IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO SAY WHAT IT WAS THAT THE PARTIES PROMISED TO DO. THIS MAY BE SUPPLIED FROM THE EARLIER DISCUSSION IN VERSES 28–29; FOR EXAMPLE, “THEY PROMISED THEY WOULD NOT FIGHT AGAINST EACH OTHER AND THAT THEY WOULD KEEP THEIR WORD.” ALTHOUGH THE HEBREW PLURAL IS AMBIGUOUS AS TO THE NUMBER OF PERSONS WHO SWORE TO EACH OTHER, IT IS MOST LIKELY THAT THE REFERENCE IS TO ABIMELECH AND ISAAC AS THE HEADS OF THEIR GROUPS OF PEOPLE. IN THIS CASE, LANGUAGES THAT HAVE DUAL PRONOUN FORMS WILL HAVE TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “THE NEXT DAY ISAAC AND THE KING THEY-TWO MADE A TREATY WITH EACH OTHER.” AND ISAAC SET THEM ON THEIR WAY MEANS, AS NEB TRANSLATES, “ISAAC BADE THEM FAREWELL” OR TEV “SAID GOOD-BYE TO THEM.” AT THIS POINT OF THE STORY, THEM REFERS TO THE THREE MEN, THAT IS, TO “ABIMELECH AND HIS FRIENDS.” THEY DEPARTED FROM HIM IN PEACE: THAT IS, “THEY LEFT ISAAC’S CAMP PEACEFULLY.” FOR IN PEACE SEE VERSE 29.**

**GENESIS 26:32: VERSES 32–33 CONCLUDE THE REPORTS ABOUT THE WELLS DUG BY ISAAC’S MEN. THAT SAME DAY REFERS TO THE DAY OF ABIMELECH’S DEPARTURE FROM ISAAC’S CAMP. CAME AND TOLD HIM: THAT IS, CAME AND TOLD ISAAC. IT MAY BE MORE NATURAL TO PUT “WE HAVE FOUND WATER” IN INDIRECT SPEECH, AND THEN THIS VERSE MAY BE TRANSLATED, FOR EXAMPLE, “THE SAME DAY ABIMELECH LEFT ISAAC’S CAMP, HIS SERVANTS CAME AND TOLD HIM THAT THEY HAD FOUND WATER IN A WELL THEY HAD BEEN DIGGING.” IF IT IS MORE NATURAL TO USE DIRECT SPEECH, RSV OR TEV MAY BE FOLLOWED. IN AREAS WHERE WELLS AND WELL DIGGING ARE UNKNOWN, THERE MAY BE NO CONNECTION IN THE READER’S MIND BETWEEN FINDING WATER AND DIGGING THE HOLE. IT MAY HELP IN SUCH CASES TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “… TOLD HIM, ‘WE HAVE REACHED WATER IN THE HOLE WE HAVE DUG.’ ”**

**GENESIS 26:33: HE CALLED IT SHIBAH: SPEISER POINTS OUT THAT THE CONSONANTAL TEXT OF THE HEBREW CAN BE INTERPRETED TO MEAN “PLENTY” AND IS UNDERSTOOD IN THIS WAY BY SYRIAC, VULGATE, AQUILA, AND SYMMACHUS. IT MAY ALSO BE UNDERSTOOD TO MEAN “SEVEN,” BUT UNLIKE THE CONTEXT IN 21:31, HERE THERE IS NO MENTION OF THE NUMBER SEVEN. THEREFORE, THE MOST RELEVANT SENSE IN THE CONTEXT IS “OATH,” ALSO FOLLOWED BY SEPTUAGINT. NOTE THAT IN 21:31 THE WORD “SEVEN” AND THE WORD “OATH” ARE BOTH GIVEN AS THE REASON FOR THE WELL’S NAME. TRANSLATIONS HANDLE THE EXPLANATION OF SHIBAH IN DIFFERENT WAYS. FOR EXAMPLE, RSV SAYS SHIBAH AND GIVES NO FOOTNOTE. TEV TRANSLATES SHIBAH AS “VOW” AND GIVES THE ALTERNATIVE MEANING “SEVEN” IN THE FOOTNOTE. THE SPCL FOOTNOTE SAYS “SHEBA AND THE WORDS WHICH MEAN ‘OATH’ AND ‘ABUNDANCE’ HAVE A SIMILAR SOUND.” TEV’S FOOTNOTE IS PREFERRED. THEREFORE, THE NAME OF THE CITY IS BEERSHEBA TO THIS DAY: THEREFORE, TRANSLATES AN EXPRESSION THAT MAY ALSO BE RENDERED “THIS IS WHY,” “THIS IS THE REASON.” SEE TEV. TO THIS DAY REFERS TO THE TIME, MUCH LATER, WHEN THE STORY WAS PUT IN WRITTEN FORM. WE MAY TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “THE NAME OF THE CITY HAS REMAINED BEERSHEBA EVER SINCE” OR “FROM THAT TIME UNTIL TODAY, THE CITY HAS BEEN CALLED BEERSHEBA.”**

**ESAU MARRIES FOREIGN WOMEN (26:34–35)**

**VERSES 34–35 HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH THE PREVIOUS STORY. THEY INTRODUCE A SUBJECT THAT CREATES TENSION WITHIN ISAAC’S FAMILY. THIS THEME DOES NOT APPEAR AGAIN UNTIL WE REACH 27:46. HOWEVER, BECAUSE THESE VERSES ARE PLACED HERE IN THE HEBREW TEXT, THEY ARE TO BE TRANSLATED HERE.**

**SUBDIVISION HEADING**

**THE HANDBOOK HEADING MAY NEED TO BE ADJUSTED TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “ESAU MARRIES WOMEN FROM CANAAN” OR “ESAU MARRIES TWO HITTITE WOMEN.” FRCL HAS “THE MARRIAGE OF ESAU,” GECL “ESAU’S WIVES,” NJB “THE HITTITE WIVES OF ESAU.”**

**GENESIS 26:34: WHEN ESAU WAS FORTY YEARS OLD: ESAU’S AGE IS SAID TO BE THE SAME AS ISAAC’S WAS WHEN HE MARRIED REBEKAH (25:20). TOOK TO WIFE IS THE SAME EXPRESSION USED IN 6:2. THE HEBREW FORM IS “TOOK WIFE” AND IS BEST RENDERED IN ENGLISH AS “HE MARRIED.” JUDITH THE DAUGHTER OF BEERI THE HITTITE: THE NAME JUDITH SHOULD NOT BE CONFUSED WITH THE DEUTEROCANONICAL BOOK OF THAT NAME, AND THE NAME IS NOT MENTIONED ELSEWHERE. BEERI DOES NOT OCCUR ELSEWHERE EXCEPT AS THE NAME OF THE FATHER OF THE PROPHET (HOSEA HOS 1:1). AND BASEMATH THE DAUGHTER OF ELON THE HITTITE: BASEMATH’S NAME IS REPEATED FIVE TIMES IN CHAPTER 36. ELON’S NAME OCCURS AGAIN IN 36:2. FOR SOME READERS THE TERM HITTITE WILL BE NOTHING MORE THAN A NAME, AND THE IMPORTANT FACT THAT THE WOMEN WERE OF A DIFFERENT TRIBE FROM ISAAC AND HIS FAMILY MAY NEED TO BE BROUGHT OUT. TEV GIVES THE INFORMATION IN ITS HEADING “ESAU’S FOREIGN WIVES”; SOME OTHER TRANSLATIONS SAY AT THE BEGINNING OF THIS VERSE “ESAU … MARRIED TWO GIRLS WHO WERE NOT OF HIS OWN TRIBE; HE TOOK JUDITH.…”**

**GENESIS 26:35: AND THEY MADE LIFE BITTER FOR ISAAC AND REBEKAH: THEY REFERS TO THE TWO HITTITE WOMEN, AND IN TRANSLATION IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO MAKE THIS CLEAR. FOR EXAMPLE, SPCL SAYS “THESE TWO WOMEN.…” MADE LIFE BITTER IS LITERALLY “THEY WERE BITTERNESS OF SPIRIT TO …,” WHERE “SPIRIT” REFERS TO THE STATE OF MIND, INNER SELF. IN SOME LANGUAGES THIS EXPRESSION IS BEST RENDERED BY A FIGURATIVE PHRASE; FOR EXAMPLE, “THEY MADE ISAAC’S AND REBEKAH’S HEART TO BOIL,” “… CAUSED ISAAC’S AND REBEKAH’S INNERMOST TO CHURN,” “… MADE THE LIVERS OF ISAAC AND REBEKAH HOT.”**

**THE STORY OF JACOB AND HIS FAMILY GEN 27:1–36:43**

**JACOB GETS ISAAC TO BLESS HIM (27:1–45)**

**SUBDIVISION HEADING**

**THE HANDBOOK HEADING SUGGESTS THAT JACOB MADE A SPECIAL EFFORT TO GET THE BLESSING FROM HIS FATHER. WHAT IT DOES NOT SAY, BUT WHAT WE KNOW FROM THE STORY, IS THAT JACOB DECEIVED ISAAC AND OBTAINED THE BLESSING THAT WAS TO BE FOR ESAU. ACCORDINGLY, TRANSLATORS MAY PREFER TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “JACOB DECEIVES ISAAC AND GETS HIS BLESSING.” “BLESSING” MAY NEED TO BE RENDERED MORE CONCRETELY; FOR EXAMPLE, “JACOB DECEIVES ISAAC AND RECEIVES THE INHERITANCE” OR “ISAAC GIVES HIS GIFTS TO JACOB INSTEAD OF TO ESAU.” FRCL SAYS “JACOB OBTAINS FOR HIMSELF THE BLESSING PROMISED TO ESAU,” SPCL “ISAAC BLESSES JACOB AND ESAU,” GECL (VERSES 1–17) “ISAAC WISHES TO BLESS HIS FIRSTBORN SON,” NIV “JACOB GETS ISAAC’S BLESSING,” NJB “JACOB OBTAINS ISAAC’S BLESSING BY FRAUD,” TOB “ESAU SUPPLANTED.” THE PURPOSE OF THIS SUBDIVISION IS TO RELATE THE EVENTS THAT TELL HOW ISAAC PASSED ON ALL THAT HE HAD GAINED IN HIS LIFE TO THE NEXT GENERATION. THIS INCLUDES NOT ONLY THE MATERIAL GOODS BUT WHAT IS EVEN MORE IMPORTANT, NAMELY, THE VITALITY OR STRENGTH AND AUTHORITY OF THE PATRIARCH. THE BLESSING PLACES JACOB IN THE DIRECT LINE TO RECEIVE THE PROMISE MADE TO ABRAHAM. THE NARRATOR IS CAREFUL NOT TO EXPRESS ANY VIEW CONCERNING THE RIGHTNESS OR WRONGNESS OF THE DECEIT DEVISED BY REBEKAH AND CARRIED OUT BY HER FAVORITE SON.**

**GENESIS 27:1: CHAPTER 27 OPENS AT SOME TIME IN ISAAC’S OLD AGE. IT IS IN NO WAY TIED TO THE TIME OF THE END OF CHAPTER 26. WHEN ISAAC WAS OLD IS FOR MANY LANGUAGES AN ACCEPTABLE DISCOURSE OPENER FOR THIS NEW STORY. SOME LANGUAGES PREFER TO BEGIN WITH SOMETHING LIKE “WELL, ISAAC HAD BECOME AN OLD MAN,” “MANY YEARS HAD PASSED AND ISAAC WAS GETTING VERY OLD,” “ONE DAY WHEN ISAAC WAS OLD AND BLIND HE CALLED ESAU,” “ISAAC LIVED ON UNTIL HE WAS VERY OLD AND HE BECAME BLIND. THEN ONE DAY.…” AND HIS EYES WERE DIM SO THAT HE COULD NOT SEE: THE LITERAL TRANSLATION OF THIS EXPRESSION IS “HIS EYES WERE TOO DIM TO SEE WITH,” WHICH MEANS HE WAS BLIND. SEE TEV. THAT ISAAC WAS BLIND AND NOT JUST SUFFERING FROM IMPAIRED VISION IS WITNESSED IN VERSES 18–24. HE CALLED ESAU HIS OLDER SON: CALLED, THAT IS, “SENT FOR,” “SENT SOMEONE TO BRING,” “CALLED ESAU TO COME TO HIM.” OLDER SON REFERS TO THE FIRSTBORN SON. FOR THE WAY OLDER SON HAS BEEN TRANSLATED, SEE 25:23. ISAAC ADDRESSES ESAU AS MY SON. IN LANGUAGES IN WHICH A SPECIAL ADDRESS FORM IS RESERVED FOR THE OLDEST SON, IT MAY BE BEST TO USE THAT FORM HERE. IN SOME LANGUAGES A VOCATIVE FORM, SHOWING DIRECT ADDRESS, WILL ALSO BE USED; FOR EXAMPLE, “O, SON,” OR “YOU SON.” IN OTHER CASES, IT MAY BE MORE NATURAL TO USE THE SON’S NAME: “ESAU!” HERE I AM IS THE SAME REPLY ABRAHAM MADE TO GOD IN 22:1. SEE THERE FOR TRANSLATION.**

**GENESIS 27:2: VERSE 2 IS THE GROUND OR BASIS FOR ISAAC’S REQUEST IN VERSES 3–4. BEHOLD I AM OLD: BEHOLD IS USED TO CALL ATTENTION TO AN ACTION IN WHICH THE LISTENER (ESAU) IS VITALLY INVOLVED. IN OTHER WORDS, “LISTEN CAREFULLY” BECAUSE WHAT I AM GOING TO SAY AFFECTS YOU. TEV HAS “YOU SEE.” OLD TRANSLATES THE VERB FORM OF THE ADJECTIVE USED IN VERSE 1. I DO NOT KNOW THE DAY OF MY DEATH TRANSLATES THE HEBREW LITERALLY. WHILE ISAAC SAYS THAT HE DOES NOT KNOW WHEN HE WILL DIE, HE MEANS THAT HE THINKS HE MAY DIE SOON. HE “FEELS HIMSELF NEAR DEATH” (VON RAD). WE MAY SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “I MAY DIE ANY DAY NOW,” “I DON’T KNOW HOW MUCH LONGER I WILL LIVE,” OR “I FEEL THAT IT WON’T BE LONG BEFORE I DIE.” SOME LANGUAGES EXPRESS THIS IDEA IDIOMATICALLY; FOR EXAMPLE, “I’M ALMOST FINISHED.” IT IS QUITE LIKELY THAT THE WORDS I AM OLD … HAD THE FORCE OF A FORMULA INTRODUCING A DECLARATION ABOUT INHERITANCE. SPEISER QUOTES A STATEMENT FROM DOCUMENTS FOUND AT NUZI AND COMING FROM THE PERIOD OF THE PATRIARCHS, IN WHICH THE FORMULA “I HAVE NOW GROWN OLD” LEADS TO AN ORAL ALLOCATION OF THE SPEAKER’S PROPERTY. IN SOME LANGUAGES IT MAY BE POSSIBLE TO USE A SIMILAR FORMULA IN THIS CONTEXT. APART FROM SUCH A FORMULA MANY LANGUAGES HAVE A SPECIAL TERM OR EXPRESSION FOR THE DECLARATION ABOUT INHERITANCE THAT AN OLD MAN MAKES IN THIS SITUATION; SEE COMMENTS ON “BLESS” AT VERSE 4.**

**GENESIS 27:3: NOW THEN MARKS THE TRANSITION FROM THE BACKGROUND EXPLANATION TO THE REQUEST HE WILL MAKE. ISAAC’S DESIRE IS TO GAIN STRENGTH AND ENJOY HIS FAVORITE FOOD IN PREPARATION FOR BLESSING ESAU. THIS TRANSITION MAY ALSO BE HANDLED AS A CONSEQUENCE OF VERSE 2; FOR EXAMPLE, “SO NOW.” TEV AND OTHERS LEAVE THE CONSEQUENCE TO BE UNDERSTOOD FROM THE SEQUENCE OF STATEMENTS. YOUR WEAPONS, YOUR QUIVER AND YOUR BOW: WEAPONS TRANSLATES A GENERAL WORD USED FOR UTENSILS AND IMPLEMENTS, WHICH IN THIS CONTEXT REFERS TO HUNTING EQUIPMENT. NOTE THAT TEV OMITS THE GENERAL TERM AND TRANSLATES ONLY THE TWO ITEMS THAT ARE NAMED. QUIVER REFERS TO THE CONTAINER OR HOLDER FOR THE ARROWS. IT IS HUNG BY A STRAP OVER THE SHOULDER OR ACROSS THE BACK. ALTHOUGH “ARROWS” ARE NOT MENTIONED, THEY ARE TO BE UNDERSTOOD FROM THE USE OF QUIVER. BOW, OF COURSE, REFERS TO THE INSTRUMENT USED FOR SHOOTING ARROWS. NEB/REB AND OTHERS RETAIN THE GENERAL WORD WEAPONS BY TRANSLATING IT AS “HUNTING GEAR,” THAT IS, EQUIPMENT USED IN HUNTING. WE MAY ALSO TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “TAKE YOUR HUNTING THINGS.” IF QUIVER WILL BE TAKEN TO MEAN “EMPTY QUIVER” IN THE TRANSLATOR’S LANGUAGE, IT WILL BE NECESSARY TO MAKE AN ADJUSTMENT; FOR EXAMPLE, “QUIVER OF ARROWS” OR “ARROWS.” IN ENGLISH THE NATURAL WORD ORDER IS “BOW AND ARROWS.” IF THE OBJECTS NAMED HERE ARE UNFAMILIAR IN THE LANGUAGE, IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO USE THE LOCAL EQUIVALENTS OR SHIFT TO A MORE GENERAL EXPRESSION; FOR EXAMPLE, “TAKE YOUR HUNTING THINGS” OR “TAKE THE THINGS YOU USE TO HUNT WITH.” GO OUT TO THE FIELD AND HUNT GAME FOR ME: FIELD REFERS TO THE COUNTRYSIDE, NOT TO A CULTIVATED FIELD. SEE COMMENTS ON 25:27. FOR GAME SEE 25:28.**

**GENESIS 27:4: PREPARE FOR ME SAVORY FOOD: ESAU IS TO KILL THE ANIMAL AND BUTCHER IT AND COOK THE MEAT TO SUIT HIS FATHER’S TASTE. PREPARE IS USED IN RELATION TO THE MEAL, AND SO “COOK” (TEV). SAVORY, WHICH IS USED SIX TIMES IN THIS CHAPTER, REFERS TO FOOD THAT IS ESPECIALLY TASTEFUL, APPETIZING, PLEASANT TO EAT. IN SOME LANGUAGES THE VERB MEANING “COOK” DIFFERS ACCORDING TO THE TYPE OF FOOD BEING COOKED. SUCH AS I LOVE: HEBREW DOES NOT DISTINGUISH BETWEEN ENGLISH “LIKE” AND “LOVE.” IN SOME LANGUAGES IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO SAY “WHICH I LOVE TO EAT.” IN OTHER LANGUAGES THIS THOUGHT IS COMMONLY EXPRESSED IDIOMATICALLY; FOR EXAMPLE, “FOOD THAT MAKES MY STOMACH JOYFUL,” “THE KIND THAT WARMS MY INNERMOST.” THAT I MAY EAT: THAT IS, “SO I CAN EAT IT.” THAT I MAY BLESS YOU BEFORE I DIE IS LITERALLY “THAT MY SOUL MAY BLESS YOU BEFORE.…” “MY SOUL” IS THE USE OF THE HEBREW NEFESH IN PLACE OF THE FIRST-PERSON SINGULAR PRONOUN. ISAAC DOES NOT MEAN THAT HIS SOUL WILL BLESS ESAU, BUT THAT HE HIMSELF WILL BLESS HIM. SEE TEV. SOME INTERPRETERS TAKE “SOUL” HERE TO BE MORE THAN A MERE SUBSTITUTE FOR “I,” TAKING IT AS EXPRESSING A PERSONAL ELEMENT IN RELATION TO THE BLESSING. SO SPEISER SAYS “THAT I MAY GIVE YOU MY VERY OWN BLESSING,” AND NJV “THAT I MAY GIVE YOU MY INNERMOST BLESSING.” BLESS TRANSLATES THE COMMON HEBREW WORD USED OF GOD BLESSING THE SEA CREATURES IN 1:22, OF GOD BLESSING ABRAHAM IN 12:2, AND OF MELCHIZEDEK BLESSING ABRAHAM IN 14:19. THE BLESSING GIVEN BY THE DYING FATHER IS A SOLEMN DECLARATION THAT TRANSFERS PROPERTY RIGHTS AND THE AUTHORITY OF THE FATHER TO THE ONE RECEIVING THE BLESSING. ISAAC’S FINAL BLESSING IS PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT IN THAT IT CONFERS UPON THE RECEIVER THE PROMISE MADE BY THE LORD TO GIVE THE LAND TO ABRAHAM AND HIS DESCENDANTS. THE TRANSFER OF THE BLESSING IS A FINAL AND UNCHANGEABLE ACT. IT CANNOT BE UNDONE EVEN BY ISAAC HIMSELF. IN OTHER CONTEXTS, THE HANDBOOK HAS SUGGESTED TRANSLATING BLESS BY MEANS OF SUCH EXPRESSIONS AS “GOD WAS GOOD TO,” “GOD LOOKED WITH FAVOR ON,” “GAVE GOOD GIFTS TO.” AS IN SUCH PASSAGES AS 1:22, 28; 2:3; 12:2, 3; 14:19, HERE ALSO GOD IS THE ONE WHO GRANTS THE BLESSING, AND THE ONE WHO RECEIVES IT IS BENEFITTED. HERE, HOWEVER, ISAAC IS THE AGENT, THE ONE WHO TRANSFERS TO HIS SON THE SPECIAL STATUS AND PROMISE OF THE LAND HE HAS RECEIVED FROM GOD THROUGH ABRAHAM. IN MANY LANGUAGES THERE ARE SPECIAL TERMS OR EXPRESSIONS FOR THE FORMAL DECLARATIONS OF OLD PEOPLE WHO KNOW THEY ARE NEAR THE END OF THEIR LIVES; AND THIS APPLIES IN PARTICULAR TO DECLARATIONS ABOUT INHERITANCE THAT ARE MADE IN THIS SITUATION. SOME EXAMPLES OF THE WAY BLESS YOU BEFORE I DIE HAS BEEN TRANSLATED ARE “I WILL BLESS YOU WITH MY LAST WORD,” “I WILL GIVE YOU MY LAST BLESSING AND THEN I CAN DIE,” AND MAKING THE ELEMENT OF INHERITANCE QUITE CLEAR, “I WILL GIVE YOU MY LAST WORD AND HAND OVER EVERYTHING I OWN TO YOU BEFORE I DIE.”**

**GENESIS 27:5: NOW REBEKAH WAS LISTENING WHEN ISAAC SPOKE TO HIS SON ESAU: RSV TRANSLATES THE COMMON HEBREW CONNECTIVE WITH THE TRANSITIONAL NOW. IT MAY BE MORE NATURAL TO MOVE THE TIME CLAUSE WHEN … TO THE BEGINNING OF THE SENTENCE; FOR EXAMPLE, “WHILE ISAAC WAS TALKING TO” (TEV). IT IS UNDERSTOOD FROM THE CONTEXT THAT REBEKAH WAS NOT PRESENT BUT WAS LISTENING SECRETLY. GECL SAYS “REBEKAH OVERHEARD THE CONVERSATION.” SO, WHEN ESAU WENT TO THE FIELD TO HUNT FOR GAME: SEE VERSE 3.**

**GENESIS 27:6: IN VERSE 6 REBEKAH REPORTS TO HER FAVORITE SON. SPEAK TO DOES NOT MERELY REFER TO A CONVERSATION IN GENERAL BUT INTRODUCES A QUOTATION; THUS TEV “HEARD YOUR FATHER SAY TO ESAU.…” YOUR BROTHER ESAU: BROTHER MAY NEED TO BE EXPRESSED MORE PRECISELY AS “OLDER TWIN BROTHER” OR “OLDER BROTHER” IN SOME LANGUAGES.**

**GENESIS 27:7: FOR THE TRANSLATION OF VERSE 19, SEE VERSES 3–4. BEFORE THE LORD MAY MEAN “IN THE LORD’S PRESENCE” (TEV). HOWEVER, IN THE CONTEXT OF ISAAC GRANTING HIS BLESSING TO HIS SON, IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THE SENSE IS “THAT I MAY GIVE YOU THE LORD’S BLESSING,” “THAT … GIVE YOU THE BLESSING THE LORD HAS FOR YOU,” OR “THAT I MAY GIVE YOU THE GIFT THE LORD HAS FOR YOU.” A TRANSLATION THAT GIVES A SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT BEING IN THE LORD’S PRESENCE MEANS IS “THE LORD WILL WITNESS THAT LAST WORD OF MINE.”**

**GENESIS 27:8: REBEKAH HAS DEVISED A PLAN TO CHEAT ESAU, AND SHE URGES JACOB TO ACT QUICKLY. NOW THEREFORE TRANSLATES THE SAME HEBREW EXPRESSION USED AT THE OPENING OF VERSE 3. IT MAY BE TRANSLATED BY A TRANSITION WORD OR BY AN EXPRESSION MARKING A CONSEQUENCE. OBEY MY WORD IS LITERALLY “HEAR MY VOICE.” THIS EXPRESSION SUGGESTS MORE THAN PASSIVE HEARING AND MAY BE RENDERED “DO” OR “OBEY.” THIS IS OFTEN RENDERED BY OTHER IDIOMS SUCH AS “ACT ON MY TWO WORDS” OR “DO AS MY MOUTH SAYS.” AS I COMMAND YOU: THIS EXPRESSION IS SOMETIMES COMBINED WITH OBEY MY WORD, SO THAT THE MEANING IS EQUIVALENT TO “LISTEN TO ME AND DO WHAT I TELL YOU.” SEE TEV.**

**GENESIS 27:9: GO TO THE FLOCK: FLOCK REFERS TO THE FLOCK, OR HERD, OF SHEEP AND GOATS. IN SOME LANGUAGES IT WILL BE MORE NATURAL TO USE AN EXPRESSION THAT REFERS TO THE PLACE WHERE THE ANIMALS ARE KEPT; FOR EXAMPLE, “THE PLACE WHERE OUR GOATS ARE” OR “THE GOAT YARD.” FETCH ME TWO GOOD KIDS: FETCH ME TRANSLATES A VERB MEANING “TAKE OR BRING TO ME.” TWO GOOD KIDS IS LITERALLY “TWO KIDS [OF] GOATS [WHICH ARE] GOOD.” KID REFERS TO A YOUNG GOAT. GOOD IN THIS CONTEXT REFERS TO THEIR BEING GOOD FOR FOOD AND THEREFORE TENDER OR FAT. SEE TEV. IT IS HIGHLY UNLIKELY THAT “LAMB” CAN BE USED IN PLACE OF KID, AS GOATS ARE MORE COMMON THROUGHOUT THE WORLD THAN ARE SHEEP. IF, HOWEVER, NEITHER IS KNOWN, WE MAY USE A GENERAL EXPRESSION AND SAY “TWO YOUNG ANIMALS.” PREPARE FROM THEM SAVORY FOOD FOR YOUR FATHER, SUCH AS HE LOVES: SEE VERSE 4.**

**GENESIS 27:10: BRING IT TO YOUR FATHER: BRING TRANSLATES THE CAUSATIVE FORM OF A HEBREW VERB MEANING BOTH TO COME AND TO GO. IN THIS CONTEXT IN WHICH ISAAC IS NOT AT THE PLACE WHERE REBEKAH IS SPEAKING, ENGLISH NORMALLY USES “TAKE.” IT REFERS TO THE FOOD THAT REBEKAH WILL COOK. SO THAT HE MAY BLESS YOU BEFORE HE DIES: FOR BLESS YOU SEE TRANSLATION SUGGESTIONS IN VERSE 4.**

**GENESIS 27:11: BUT JACOB SAID TO REBEKAH HIS MOTHER: BUT TRANSLATES THE HEBREW CONNECTIVE, WHICH SIGNALS HERE AN OBJECTION OR RAISES A QUESTION REGARDING REBEKAH’S PLAN. MANY TRANSLATIONS DO NOT REPEAT REBEKAH’S NAME, BECAUSE IT IS CLEAR WHO JACOB’S MOTHER IS. IN SOME LANGUAGES IT IS MORE NATURAL TO MAKE MOTHER THE BEGINNING OF JACOB’S SPEECH: “LOOK, MOTHER, …” BEHOLD, MY BROTHER ESAU IS A HAIRY MAN: BEHOLD SERVES TO CALL REBEKAH’S ATTENTION TO A FACT THAT BOTH KNOW AND MUST NOW RECOGNIZE. TEV TRANSLATES “YOU KNOW THAT.…” WE MAY ALSO TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “WE KNOW THAT …” OR “EVERYBODY KNOWS THAT.…” FOR MY BROTHER SEE COMMENTS ON VERSE 6. HAIRY MAN REFERS TO ESAU’S SKIN BEING COVERED WITH HAIR. SEE 25:25. SOME LANGUAGES DISTINGUISH BETWEEN HAIR THAT GROWS ON THE SKIN AND HAIR THAT GROWS ON THE HEAD. IN SOME CASES, WE MAY SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “ESAU’S SKIN IS COVERED WITH HAIR” OR “ESAU HAS HAIR ALL OVER HIS BODY.” SMOOTH MAN IS AMBIGUOUS IN ENGLISH. TEV AND OTHERS SAY “SMOOTH SKIN” OR “MY SKIN IS SMOOTH.” IF THERE IS NOT AN IDIOMATIC WAY OF DESCRIBING SKIN WITH LITTLE OR NO HAIR, A DESCRIPTIVE PHRASE MAY BE NEEDED; FOR EXAMPLE, “BUT I HAVE A CLEAN SKIN WITH NO HAIR” OR “BUT I DON’T HAVE HAIRY SKIN.” IN A GOOD MANY LANGUAGES, THE MOST NATURAL WAY OF EXPRESSING THIS WHOLE CONTRAST IS TO USE JUST A NEGATIVE IN THE SECOND PART: “ESAU HAS A LOT OF HAIR ON HIS SKIN BUT I DON’T.”**

**GENESIS 27:12: PERHAPS MY FATHER WILL FEEL ME: PERHAPS TRANSLATES AN ADVERB THAT MOST OFTEN EXPRESSES A HOPE (GEN 16:2 “IT MAY BE”; 1 SAM 6:5), BUT IN OUR CONTEXT IT EXPRESSES A FEAR OR DOUBT. SEE ALSO JOB 1:5. NEB/REB HAVE “SUPPOSE MY FATHER FEELS ME.” THIS CLAUSE MAY ALSO BE TRANSLATED AS AN “IF” CLAUSE, WHICH MAY EXPRESS THE DOUBT ELEMENT MORE ADEQUATELY IN SOME LANGUAGES. FOR EXAMPLE, FRCL SAYS “IF MY FATHER TOUCHES ME.…” FEEL REFERS HERE TO EXAMINING BY FEELING WITH THE HANDS. JACOB IS AFRAID THAT HIS FATHER WILL FEEL HIS HAIRLESS SKIN AND DISCOVER THAT HE IS NOT HAIRY LIKE HIS BROTHER. IN TRANSLATION IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “I AM AFRAID MY FATHER WILL FEEL ME WITH HIS HANDS” OR “… THAT MY FATHER WILL FEEL MY SKIN.” I SHALL SEEM TO BE MOCKING HIM IS LITERALLY “I SHALL BE IN HIS EYES LIKE A MOCKER.” MOCKING IS THE MEANING OF THE SAME RARE HEBREW WORD IN 2 CHR 36:16; IF THE MEANING IS THE SAME HERE, THE SENSE EXPRESSED IS THAT, IF DISCOVERED, JACOB WILL APPEAR TO BE RIDICULING OR MAKING FUN OF HIS FATHER, A SERIOUS MISCONDUCT HAVING THE CONSEQUENCE OF BEING CURSED. SPCL TRANSLATES “IF MY FATHER TOUCHES ME AND RECOGNIZES ME, HE WILL THINK THAT I AM RIDICULING HIM.” HOWEVER, IN THE CONTEXT OF THIS STORY, THE SENSE OF “DECEIVING” OR “TRICKING” IS MUCH MORE APPROPRIATE; AND SO MANY OF THE VERSIONS TAKE THE WORD IN THIS SENSE. KJV HAS “A DECEIVER,” TEV “DECEIVING HIM,” NJB “CHEATING HIM,” NIV AND NEB “TRICKING HIM,” REB “PLAYING A TRICK.” NOTE THE IDIOMATIC FORCE OF THE LITERAL HEBREW “IN HIS EYES” USED IN REFERENCE TO THE BLIND ISAAC AND TRANSLATED I SHALL SEEM. THE MEANING OF THE EXPRESSION HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH THE PHYSICAL EYES BUT RATHER WITH HIS UNDERSTANDING, THOUGHT, PERCEPTION. AND BRING A CURSE UPON MYSELF AND NOT A BLESSING: THE CONCLUSION OF JACOB’S WORRY IS THAT HE WILL CAUSE HIMSELF TO BE CURSED INSTEAD OF BLESSED. CURSE TRANSLATES THE SAME WORD HERE AS USED IN 8:21 AND 12:3. HOWEVER, FOR A DISCUSSION OF THE MEANING AND FUNCTION OF CURSE, SEE 3:14. IN TRANSLATION IT MAY BE MORE NATURAL TO SHIFT TO A PASSIVE CONSTRUCTION AND SAY “I WILL CAUSE MYSELF TO BE CURSED AND NOT BLESSED.” AS AN ACTIVE CONSTRUCTION WE MAY ALSO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “INSTEAD OF GIVING ME HIS BLESSING HE WILL CURSE ME” OR “HE WILL NOT BLESS ME BUT WILL CURSE ME.” TWO RECENT EXAMPLES OF HOW THIS HAS BEEN TRANSLATED ARE “HE [MY FATHER] WILL ASK GOD TO INJURE ME, AND I WON’T GET THE BLESSING” AND “HE WON’T GIVE ME THAT LAST WORD, AND I WILL MAKE TROUBLE FOR MYSELF.”**

**GENESIS 27:13: REBEKAH’S REPLY REVEALS THAT SHE IS DETERMINED TO PURSUE HER SCHEME REGARDLESS OF THE CONSEQUENCES. UPON ME BE YOUR CURSE: REBEKAH INVITES THE CURSE THAT ISAAC MAY CAST ON JACOB TO FALL ON HER. YOUR CURSE MEANS THE CURSE THAT ISAAC INVOKES ON YOU (JACOB). IN SOME LANGUAGES THIS SENTENCE MUST BE RESTRUCTURED TO MAKE CLEAR HOW REBEKAH INVITES THIS CURSE TO TRANSFER TO HER. NOTE THAT TEV SAYS “LET ANY CURSE AGAINST YOU FALL ON ME.” WE MAY ALSO TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “I WILL TAKE ON MYSELF THAT CURSE,” “I WILL ACCEPT THAT CURSE FOR MYSELF,” “LET ME BE CURSED AND NOT YOU,” OR “I WILL BE CURSED IN YOUR PLACE.” A TRANSLATION THAT GIVES A FULLER EXPRESSION TO CURSE SAYS “IF HE CALLS DOWN TROUBLE ON YOU, THAT TROUBLE CAN COME ON ME ALONE.” ONLY OBEY MY WORD: REBEKAH RETURNS IMMEDIATELY TO HER SCHEME AND URGES HER SON TO ACT. OBEY MY WORD IS LITERALLY “HEAR MY VOICE” (SEE VERSE 8). ONLY TRANSLATES A HEBREW ADVERB THAT INTRODUCES HERE A CONTRAST WITH WHAT HAS JUST BEEN SAID. NOTE TEV “JUST DO.…” IN SOME LANGUAGES THE CONTRAST MAY BE EXPRESSED MORE IDIOMATICALLY IN WORDS LIKE “DON’T YOU WORRY, MY SON.… JUST DO WHAT I TELL YOU.” GO FETCH THEM TO ME: FETCH MEANS “BRING.” THEM REFERS TO THE TWO KIDS (VERSE 9).**

**GENESIS 27:14: SO, HE WENT AND TOOK THEM AND BROUGHT THEM TO HIS MOTHER: SO, MARKS A RESULT. JACOB DOES AS HIS MOTHER HAS INSISTED. IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO SAY WHERE JACOB WENT; FOR EXAMPLE, “WELL THEN, JACOB WENT OUT TO THE HERD.…” BROUGHT THEM: THAT IS, “GOT THE TWO KIDS AND BROUGHT THEM TO HIS MOTHER.” HIS MOTHER PREPARED SAVORY FOOD … ISAAC LOVED: SEE VERSE 9.**

**GENESIS 27:15: THEN REBEKAH TOOK THE BEST GARMENTS OF ESAU HER OLDER SON: GARMENTS TRANSLATES A GENERAL WORD FOR CLOTHING AND PROBABLY INCLUDED ESAU’S ROBE AND SANDALS. IN HEBREW THE WORD RENDERED BEST REFERS TO THE SPECIAL CLOTHES THAT ESAU WOULD WEAR ON OCCASIONS WHEN PEOPLE WEAR THEIR BEST CLOTHING, “HIS BEST SUIT OF CLOTHES,” AS WE MAY SAY. WHICH WERE WITH HER IN THE HOUSE: THAT IS, “WHICH WERE KEPT IN HER HOUSE” OR “WHICH ESAU KEPT IN HIS MOTHER’S HOUSE.” IN SOME LANGUAGES THIS INFORMATION SHOULD BE GIVEN BEFORE THE FIRST CLAUSE, SINCE IT REFERS TO A SITUATION THAT BEGAN MUCH EARLIER: “ESAU’S GOOD CLOTHES WERE IN THE HOUSEWITH REBEKAH; SO, REBEKAH GOT THEM AND.…” AND PUT THEM ON JACOB HER YOUNGER SON: IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO BEGIN A NEW SENTENCE HERE; FOR EXAMPLE, “SHE PUT THEM ON HER YOUNGER SON JACOB.” THE MEANING IS NOT THAT SHE DRESSED JACOB AS IF HE WERE A SMALL CHILD. THE HEBREW VERB TRANSLATED “PUT … ON” IS IN THE CAUSATIVE FORM AND SO HAS THE SENSE “SHE HAD JACOB PUT THEM ON” OR “SHE MADE JACOB DRESS IN THEM.”**

**GENESIS 27:16: THE SKINS OF THE KIDS SHE PUT UPON HIS HANDS: SKINS IS THE SAME WORD AS USED IN 3:21, WHERE ANIMAL SKINS ARE USED TO MAKE CLOTHING. FOR KIDS SEE VERSE 9. PUT TRANSLATES THE CAUSATIVE FORM OF THE VERB TO DRESS, THE SAME AS IN VERSE 15. IT IS NOT SAID HOW REBEKAH PUT THESE SKINS ON JACOB’S HANDS. THE WORD RENDERED HANDS REFERS TO BOTH THE ARMS AND HANDS. IN TRANSLATION IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO BE MORE CONCRETE AND SAY SOMETHING LIKE “SHE TIED THE SKINS TO HIS HANDS” OR “SHE COVERED HIS ARMS WITH THESE SKINS.” THE NARRATOR GIVES THE IMPRESSION THAT THE KID SKINS HAD JUST BEEN TAKEN FROM THE ANIMALS AND SO WERE SOFT, AND STILL WET ON THE UNDER SIDE. SMOOTH PART OF HIS NECK: SMOOTH IS THE SAME WORD AS USED IN VERSE 11. THIS MAY REQUIRE ADJUSTING IN TRANSLATION TO SOMETHING LIKE SPCL: “ON THE PART OF HIS NECK THAT HAD NO HAIR.”**

**GENESIS 27:17: SHE GAVE THE SAVORY FOOD AND THE BREAD: FOR SAVORY FOOD SEE VERSE 4. NOTHING WAS SAID IN VERSE 4 ABOUT BREAD. HOWEVER, WE MAY ASSUME THAT ANY DISH ISAAC AND HIS PEOPLE WOULD EAT WOULD BE ACCOMPANIED BY BREAD, AS THE BROKEN PIECES OF BREAD WERE USED TO DIP UP THE FOOD AND WERE THUS SERVED IN PLACE OF EATING UTENSILS SUCH AS SPOON AND FORK. NOTE ALSO THAT “WINE” IS NOT MENTIONED HERE BUT OCCURS IN VERSE 25 AS PART OF THE MEAL. MOST REFERENCES IN GENESIS TO BREAD HAVE CARRIED THE SENSE OF FOOD GENERALLY. HERE, AS IN 25:34, BREAD REFERS TO THE BAKED PRODUCT OF AN OVEN. IN AREAS WHERE BREAD IS NOT EATEN BUT IS KNOWN, A BORROWED WORD IS OFTEN AVAILABLE. IF THIS IS NOT THE CASE, IT MAY BE POSSIBLE TO SUBSTITUTE A LOCAL ITEM OF FOOD THAT SERVES THE SAME PURPOSE. IF THERE IS NONE, WE MAY SIMPLY SAY “SHE HANDED HIM THE SPECIAL FOOD SHE HAD COOKED.” WHICH SHE HAD PREPARED: THIS CLAUSE MAY REFER TO THE SAVORY FOOD AND THE BREAD. HOWEVER, TEV AND SOME OTHERS RESTRICT IT TO THE BREAD, “ALONG WITH THE BREAD SHE HAD BAKED.” EITHER WAY IS POSSIBLE. INTO THE HAND OF HER SON JACOB: THAT IS, “SHE GAVE TO JACOB,” “PUT INTO HIS HANDS,” “HANDED TO HIM.”**

**GENESIS 27:18: SO, HE WENT IN TO HIS FATHER: SINCE THIS IS AN ACTION THAT FOLLOWS THE EVENT IN VERSE 17, SOMETHING EQUIVALENT TO “THEN” OR “AFTER THAT” MAY BE MORE SUITABLE. IN SOME LANGUAGES THE TRANSITION TO THE PLACE WHERE ISAAC IS MAY NEED TO BE EXPRESSED MORE FULLY; FOR EXAMPLE, “CARRYING THE FOOD IN HIS HANDS, JACOB WENT TO THE ROOM WHERE HIS FATHER WAS.” MY FATHER: THE FORM OF ADDRESS SHOULD BE APPROPRIATE FOR THIS SITUATION IN THE LANGUAGE AND CULTURE OF THE READERS. IT SHOULD BE RECALLED THAT JACOB DOES NOT WANT TO REVEAL WHO HE REALLY IS. AND HE SAID: HE IS ISAAC, AND THIS MAY NEED TO BE STATED AS “ISAAC SAID.” HERE I AM: ISAAC’S REPLY IS NEARLY THE SAME AS ABRAHAM GAVE TO GOD IN 22:1. ISAAC IS NOT TELLING HIS SON WHERE TO LOOK FOR HIM IN THE ROOM BUT IS RESPONDING TO JACOB’S WORDS. IN TRANSLATION ISAAC’S RESPONSE SHOULD MATCH THE SITUATION. IN SOME CASES, THIS MAY BE “I HEAR YOU,” “YOU’VE COME,” “YOU SAY SO.” NOTE TEV “YES.” ISAAC MUST BE CERTAIN THAT HE IS DEALING WITH HIS OLDER SON AND SO INQUIRES WHO ARE YOU, MY SON? ISAAC’S QUESTION DOES NOT MEAN THAT THE VOICE HE HAS HEARD IS FROM A TOTAL STRANGER. HE WISHES ONLY TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN ESAU AND JACOB; THAT IS, “WHICH OF MY SONS ARE YOU?” SEE TEV.**

**GENESIS 27:19: JACOB REPLIES BY LYING. I AM ESAU YOUR FIRST-BORN: FIRST-BORN REFERS TO THE OLDEST SON, THE ONE WHO WAS BORN BEFORE ANY OTHERS. SEE 10:15. I HAVE DONE AS YOU TOLD ME: THAT IS, “I HAVE DONE WHAT YOU TOLD ME TO DO” OR “I HAVE DONE AS YOU ORDERED ME.” NOW SIT UP AND EAT OF MY GAME IS LITERALLY “RISE PLEASE, SIT AND EAT.…” “RISE” DOES NOT NECESSARILY MEAN THAT ISAAC WAS LYING DOWN, ALTHOUGH THAT IS POSSIBLE, BUT IT MEANS THAT HE SHOULD DO WHAT THE FOLLOWING VERB OR VERBS COMMAND. THUS, THE WHOLE EXPRESSION WITH THREE VERBS IS USED TO INVITE ISAAC TO EAT. A MORE NATURAL WORDING IN SOME LANGUAGES MAY BE “PLEASE COME AND EAT YOUR FOOD.” IN SOME LANGUAGES IT IS UNACCEPTABLE FOR A SON TO ORDER HIS FATHER TO SIT UP AND EAT. IN THESE LANGUAGES IT IS BETTER TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “YOUR FOOD IS READY FOR YOU” OR “YOUR MEAL IS READY.” FOR GAME SEE VERSES 3 AND 7. THAT YOU MAY BLESS ME: JACOB IS ANXIOUS TO GET THE BLESSING BEFORE ESAU RETURNS FROM THE HUNT. FOR BLESS SEE VERSE 4.**

**GENESIS 27:20: ISAAC REVEALS SOME DOUBT: HOW IS IT THAT YOU HAVE FOUND IT SO QUICKLY? THIS QUESTION IS NOT RHETORICAL; HE IS SURPRISED AND WANTS TO KNOW THE ANSWER: “HOW DID YOU FIND GAME SO QUICKLY?” THE QUESTION INDICATES THAT ESAU NORMALLY TAKES MUCH LONGER TO HAVE A SUCCESSFUL HUNT.**

**JACOB’S REPLY APPEALS TO ISAAC’S RELIGIOUS LIFE.**

**BECAUSE THE LORD YOUR GOD GRANTED ME SUCCESS: LORD YOUR GOD IS “STEPHEN YAHWEH YOUR ELOHIM.” IN TRANSLATION IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “THE LORD WHO IS THE GOD YOU WORSHIP” OR “THE LORD, THE GOD YOU SERVE.” GRANTED ME SUCCESS IS LITERALLY “CAUSED IT TO HAPPEN BEFORE ME” AND IS WELL TRANSLATED BY TEV.**

**GENESIS 27:21: ISAAC HAS HEARD JACOB’S VOICE AND IS NOT SURE WHO HE IS; SO, HE DECIDES TO USE HIS SENSE OF TOUCH ON JACOB. COME NEAR, THAT I MAY FEEL YOU, MY SON: ISAAC DIRECTS JACOB TO APPROACH HIM OR COME CLOSE TO HIM. TEV “PLEASE” REPRESENTS THE HEBREW PARTICLE OF ENTREATY THAT ACCOMPANIES THE VERB. WE MAY ALSO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “PLEASE COME HERE” OR “PLEASE STEP NEAR ME.” FEEL TRANSLATES THE SAME VERB AS USED IN VERSE 12. TO KNOW WHETHER YOU ARE REALLY MY SON ESAU OR NOT: THIS MAY ALSO BE RENDERED, FOR EXAMPLE, “THEN I WILL KNOW FOR SURE THAT YOU ARE MY SON ESAU.” IN SOME LANGUAGES THIS IS BETTER EXPRESSED AS A SEPARATE SENTENCE: “I WANT TO MAKE SURE THAT YOU ARE MY SON ESAU.”**

**GENESIS 27:22: SO, JACOB WENT NEAR TO ISAAC HIS FATHER: SO, MARKS THE CONSEQUENCE OF ISAAC’S COMMAND. TEV ACCOMPLISHES THE SAME END WITHOUT A RESULT MARKER. WHO FELT HIM: THIS RELATIVE CLAUSE MAY NEED TO BE EXPRESSED AS A SEPARATE SENTENCE; FOR EXAMPLE, “ISAAC FELT HIM,” “ISAAC TOUCHED HIM WITH HIS HANDS” AS A RESULT, ISAAC EXPRESSES HIS CONFUSION THE VOICE IS JACOB’S VOICE: THE VOICE MAY HAVE TO BE EXPRESSED AS “YOUR VOICE SOUNDS LIKE JACOB’S VOICE,” “YOUR VOICE IS THAT OF JACOB,” “YOU SOUND LIKE JACOB,” “YOU SPEAK JUST LIKE JACOB.” BUT THE HANDS ARE THE HANDS OF ESAU: BUT SIGNALS THE CONTRAST BETWEEN THE ASSOCIATION OF THE VOICE AND THE HANDS. FOR HANDS SEE VERSE 16. HANDS IS BEST REPRESENTED “ARMS” IF THE TRANSLATOR’S LANGUAGE DISTINGUISHES BETWEEN “HANDS” AND “ARMS.” HERE AGAIN IT MAY BE PREFERABLE TO SPEAK OF “YOUR HANDS” IN PLACE OF THE IMPERSONAL THE HANDS. WE MAY ALSO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “BUT YOUR HANDS ARE JUST LIKE ESAU’S.” ANOTHER POSSIBILITY HERE MAY BE TO TRANSLATE (ISAAC) SAID AS “SAID TO HIMSELF” OR “THOUGHT.” IN THE CONTEXT OF TRYING TO WORK OUT WHETHER THE PERSON BEFORE HIM WAS GENUINE OR NOT, IT WOULD BE NATURAL ENOUGH FOR THE OLD MAN TO KEEP THIS LINE OF THOUGHT TO HIMSELF. IN THIS CASE THERE WOULD BE NO NEED TO CHANGE THE HANDS TO “YOUR HANDS.”**

**GENESIS 27:23: AND HE DID NOT RECOGNIZE HIM: HE IS ISAAC AND HIM IS JACOB, AND SO IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “ISAAC DID NOT RECOGNIZE THAT IT WAS REALLY JACOB.” BECAUSE HIS HANDS WERE HAIRY LIKE HIS BROTHER ESAU’S HANDS: IN SOME LANGUAGES IT IS MORE NATURAL FOR THE REASON CLAUSE TO BE PLACED AHEAD OF THE RESULT CLAUSE; FOR EXAMPLE, “BECAUSE HIS HANDS WERE HAIRY, ISAAC DID NOT RECOGNIZE THAT IT WAS REALLY JACOB.” FOR HANDS WERE HAIRY SEE SUGGESTIONS IN VERSE 11; HOWEVER, IN THIS CONTEXT IT MAY NOT BE POSSIBLE TO USE THE SAME EXPRESSIONS AS IN VERSE 11, BECAUSE JACOB’S HANDS WERE NOT NATURALLY HAIRY LIKE ESAU’S—THEY ONLY FELT HAIRY BECAUSE OF THE GOAT SKINS THAT COVERED THEM. IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO SAY SOMETHING LIKE “ISAAC DIDN’T RECOGNIZE JACOB, BECAUSE JACOB HAD GOAT SKINS COVERING HIS ARMS, MAKING THEM HAIRY LIKE THE ARMS OF ESAU” OR “… BECAUSE HE DIDN’T DISCOVER WHAT WAS MAKING THE ARMS SEEM HAIRY LIKE ESAU’S.” SO, HE BLESSED HIM: RSV TRANSLATES BLESSED AS A COMPLETED ACTION. THIS IS FOLLOWED BY MANY OTHER MODERN TRANSLATIONS. TEV, HOWEVER, UNDERSTANDS THE IMPERFECT FORM OF THE VERB BLESS TO MEAN “WAS ABOUT TO GIVE HIM HIS BLESSING,” WHICH MAY ALSO BE EXPRESSED, FOR EXAMPLE, “STARTED TO BLESS HIM.” THE ACTUAL BLESSING DOES NOT BEGIN UNTIL VERSE 27, AND SO BLESSED IN VERSE 23 IS NOT TO BE RENDERED AS IF THE RITUAL BLESSING IS ACCOMPLISHED IN VERSE 23. SPEISER, WHO TRANSLATES “STILL, AS HE WAS ABOUT TO BLESS HIM,” ARGUES THAT THIS ASPECT OF THE VERB IS ONE OF MANY SENSES OF THE HEBREW IMPERFECT. IN A SIMILAR MANNER SPCL SAYS “BUT WHEN HE WAS GOING TO GIVE HIM HIS BLESSING,” AND FRCL HAS “BUT BEFORE GIVING HIM HIS BLESSING.” TEV, SPCL, FRCL, AND SPEISER ARE SUITABLE TRANSLATION MODELS IN THIS CASE. IN SOME LANGUAGES IT IS MORE NATURAL TO EXPRESS THIS SENSE AS “SO HE GOT READY TO BLESS HIM.…”**

**GENESIS 27:24: HE SAID, “ARE YOU REALLY MY SON ESAU?”: IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO RENDER SAID WITH “ASKED,” “INQUIRED,” “QUESTIONED JACOB.” AND SINCE THIS IS NOT THE FIRST TIME ISAAC HAS ASKED THIS QUESTION, IT WILL BE MORE NATURAL IN MANY LANGUAGES TO SAY “HE ASKED HIM AGAIN.” THE WORDING FOLLOWS THAT EXPRESSED ALREADY BY ISAAC IN VERSE 21. HE ANSWERED: HE IS JACOB, WHICH MAY NEED TO BE EXPRESSED AS “JACOB ANSWERED HIM.” I AM IS LITERALLY “I.” IN SOME LANGUAGES THIS REPLY MAY BE “YES, SIR,” “I AM WHO YOU SAY,” “I AM ESAU.”**

**GENESIS 27:25: BRING IT TO ME, THAT I MAY EAT: IT IS SUPPLIED BY RSV. MY SON’S GAME: SOME TRANSLATIONS, LIKE NEB, FOLLOW THE SEPTUAGINT, WHICH SAYS “YOUR GAME.” RSV TRANSLATES THE HEBREW TEXT, WHICH HOTTP RATES HERE AS {A}. HOWEVER, IT MAY NOT BE NATURAL IN SOME LANGUAGES FOR ISAAC TO SPEAK IN THE THIRD PERSON MY SON’S GAME WHEN ADDRESSING HIS SON. WHERE THAT IS THE CASE WE MAY SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “BRING SOME OF YOUR GAME” OR “LET ME HAVE SOME OF YOUR MEAT.” TEV AVOIDS THE USE OF ANY PERSONAL PRONOUN, WITH “SOME OF THE MEAT. AFTER I EAT IT.…” AND BLESS YOU: THE BLESSING WILL FOLLOW THE MEAL, AND SO TEV HAS “AFTER I EAT IT, I WILL BLESS YOU.” SO, HE BROUGHT IT TO HIM, AND HE ATE: THAT IS, JACOB TOOK THE FOOD TO ISAAC AND ISAAC ATE IT. NOTE THE USE OF PRONOUNS IN THIS SENTENCE. HE [JACOB] BROUGHT HIM [ISAAC] WINE, AND HE [ISAAC] DRANK. FOR DISCUSSION OF WINE SEE 9:21.**

**GENESIS 27:26: ISAAC’S DOUBTS HAVE NOT BEEN LAID TO REST. HE HAS USED HIS SENSE OF HEARING AND TOUCH, AND NOW HE WILL USE HIS SENSE OF SMELL AS THE FINAL TEST IN VERSE 27. COME NEAR AND KISS ME, MY SON: COME NEAR IS THE SAME AS IN VERSE 21. KISS IS USED HERE FOR THE FIRST TIME IN GENESIS. IT WILL BE USED AGAIN IN CHAPTERS 29, 31, 33, 45, 48, AND 50. KISS IN THE BIBLICAL CONTEXT IS A GESTURE IN WHICH ONE PLACES THE LIPS AGAINST THE CHEEK OF THE ONE BEING KISSED. THE KISS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT GENERALLY TAKES PLACE BETWEEN CLOSE RELATIVES AND IS USED AS A GREETING OR WHEN SAYING FAREWELL. IN SOCIETIES IN WHICH THE KISS IS NOT PRACTICED, OR WHERE IT SUGGESTS ONLY EROTIC FEELINGS, IT WILL BE NECESSARY TO USE ANOTHER GESTURE THAT WILL BRING JACOB INTO CLOSE PHYSICAL CONTACT WITH ISAAC. WE MAY SUGGEST, FOR EXAMPLE, “EMBRACE ME,” “HUG ME,” “PUT YOUR ARMS AROUND ME.” IF NONE OF THESE IS SUITABLE, IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “PUT YOUR FACE CLOSE TO ME” OR “LET ME SMELL YOU.” WHERE FOOTNOTES ARE USED AND UNDERSTOOD, IT MAY BE HELPFUL TO INCLUDE A NOTE THAT SAYS, FOR EXAMPLE, “KISSING WAS A CUSTOM AMONG THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL, BY WHICH MEN OF THE SAME FAMILY SHOWED THEIR AFFECTION FOR EACH OTHER.”**

**GENESIS 27:27: SO, HE CAME NEAR AND KISSED HIM: SO, EXPRESSES THE RESULT OF ISAAC’S ORDER IN VERSE 26. HE CAME IS JACOB, AND HIM IS ISAAC. AND HE SMELLED THE SMELL OF HIS GARMENTS: HE SMELLED IS THE ACTION OF ISAAC. WHAT HE SMELLED WAS ESAU’S BODY SMELL ON ESAU’S CLOTHING. RSV FOLLOWS THE HEBREW FORM RATHER CLOSELY AND IS SOMEWHAT AWKWARD FOR ENGLISH. THE SMELL OF HIS GARMENTS DOES NOT SUGGEST AN UNPLEASANT ODOR, AS IS CLEAR FROM THE FIRST LINE OF THE BLESSING POEM. THE TEXT SUGGESTS THAT ISAAC RECOGNIZED BY THEIR SMELL THAT THE CLOTHES WERE ESAU’S. IF THIS CONNECTION IS NOT CLEAR, IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “ISAAC SMELLED THE GARMENTS AND KNEW THEY WERE ESAU’S.” SPEISER SAYS “ISAAC SNIFFED THE SMELL OF HIS CLOTHES.” AND BLESSED HIM: THIS INTRODUCES THE WORDS OF THE BLESSING THAT FOLLOW. NOTE TEV MAKES CLEAR THAT JACOB’S DECEIT HAS NOW PASSED THE FINAL TEST “—SO HE GAVE HIM HIS BLESSING.” SPEISER SAYS “THEN, AT LAST, HE BLESSED HIM.” IN ONE TRANSLATION THIS IS MADE EVEN CLEARER BY SAYING “SO ISAAC WAS SATISFIED AND HE GAVE.…” ISAAC’S BLESSING IS GIVEN IN POETIC FORM. FOR LANGUAGES THAT ARE ACCUSTOMED TO DO SO, VERSES 27B–29 SHOULD BE INDENTED TO MAKE MORE VISIBLE THE FORM OF THE BLESSING. A REPEATED METER RUNS THROUGH THIS SHORT POEM. EACH PAIR OF LINES HAS MATCHING ELEMENTS, AND THE POEM IS ARRANGED BY TOPICS IN FOUR PARTS: TRANSITION (27B), BLESSING OF FERTILITY (28), POWER OVER NATIONS AND KINSMEN (29A–B), AND RETRIBUTION (29C). SEE, THE SMELL OF MY SON: SEE IS NOT NECESSARILY A COMMAND TO LOOK OR SEE, BUT AN EXCLAMATION OR CONFIRMATION OF WHAT ISAAC HAS BEEN TRICKED INTO DISCOVERING. SPEISER TRANSLATES “AH, MY SON’S SMELL,” SPCL “YES, THIS IS THE SMELL OF MY SON,” FRCL “TRULY, THE SMELL OF MY SON.” THE PLEASANT SMELL OF ESAU’S CLOTHES IS NOW COMPARED WITH THE PLEASANT SMELL OF A FIELD WHICH THE LORD HAS BLESSED! FIELD HAS BEEN USED IN VERSES 3 AND 5 WITH THE MEANING OF THE OPEN COUNTRY WHERE ESAU HUNTS. NOW, HOWEVER, THE SENSE IS PROBABLY THAT OF A CULTIVATED OR AGRICULTURAL FIELD, SINCE VERSE 28 SHOWS IT TO BE WATERED AND PRODUCTIVE OF GRAIN AND WINE. SOME OF THE ANCIENT VERSIONS HAVE TRANSLATED FIELD AS “LUSH FIELD” HERE. BLESSED IS USED HERE AS THE BLESSING OF FERTILITY AND PRODUCTIVITY AND RECALLS THE EARLIER USES OF THE LORD’S BLESSING OF THE EARTH AND SEA IN 1:22, 28. SEE THERE FOR TRANSLATION SUGGESTIONS.**

**GENESIS 27:28: IN VERSE 28 ISAAC ASKS THAT GOD GIVE JACOB MOISTURE FOR THE LAND (CROPS), FERTILE LANDS, AND THE BLESSING OF GRAIN AND WINE. MAY GOD GIVE YOU THE DEW OF HEAVEN: MAY GOD GIVE IS A PETITION ADDRESSED TO GOD AND MUST OFTEN BE RESTRUCTURED IN TRANSLATION TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “I PRAY THAT GOD WILL GIVE YOU,” “I ASK GOD TO GRANT YOU.” DEW AS COMING FROM GOD, FROM ABOVE, OR FROM HEAVEN IS MENTIONED IN THE HEBREW TEXT OF DEUT 33:28; HOS 14:5; ZECH 8:12, AS A CONDITION OF FERTILITY. THE REFERENCE IS TO THE NIGHT DEW THAT FORMS ON THE GROUND DURING THE COOLING PERIOD ON HOT SUMMER NIGHTS. THE DEW SUPPLIES MOISTURE FOR THE PLANTS. IN TRANSLATION WE SHOULD ATTEMPT TO REPRESENT THE NARRATOR’S VIEW THAT THE DEW IS FROM HEAVEN OR SENT BY GOD: FOR EXAMPLE, “I ASK THAT GOD SEND YOU DEW FOR YOUR LANDS” OR “MAY GOD MAKE THE DEW COME DOWN ON YOUR CROPS.” AND OF THE FATNESS OF THE EARTH: THIS IS LIKEWISE AN OBJECT OF MAY GOD GIVE. FATNESS REFERS TO FAT OR RICH FOODS IN 49:20. IN RELATION TO LAND THE SENSE IS “FERTILE,” AS IN NUM 13:20 (“RICH”); NEH 9:25, 35 (“RICH LAND”). THEREFORE, THE PRAYER IS THAT GOD GIVE JACOB RICH, FERTILE, PRODUCTIVE LANDS. IN SOME LANGUAGES THIS MAY BE TRANSLATED “I ASK GOD TO GIVE YOU GARDENS THAT GROW ABUNDANT CROPS” OR “… ALL KINDS OF GOOD CROPS.” AND PLENTY OF GRAIN AND WINE: THIS LINE MAKES CONCRETE WHAT IT MEANS IN THE PREVIOUS ONE TO HAVE FERTILE, RICH LANDS. PLENTY DOES NOT MEAN JUST TO HAVE SUFFICIENT BUT RATHER TO HAVE A GREAT AMOUNT. GRAIN TRANSLATES THE WORD FOR WHEAT BUT IS ALSO USED GENERALLY FOR CEREALS OR GRASS SEEDS THAT ARE EATEN. IN NEB/REB IT IS TRANSLATED “CORN,” WHICH IN BRITISH USAGE REFERS TO DIFFERENT VARIETIES OF GRAIN. THE WORD IS USED ALONG WITH “WINE” TO INDICATE GOOD CROPS GENERALLY. IN AREAS WHERE NEITHER GRAINS OR WINE ARE KNOWN, IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO SHIFT TO MORE GENERAL EXPRESSIONS AND SAY “FOOD AND DRINK” OR “THINGS TO EAT AND DRINK.” IT MAY ALSO BE POSSIBLE TO SUBSTITUTE LOCAL COMMON CROPS AND LOCAL DRINKS.**

**GENESIS 27:29: IN THIS VERSE THE BLESSING IS TO GIVE JACOB DOMINANCE OVER OTHERS. LET PEOPLES SERVE YOU: AGAIN, ISAAC ASKS GOD TO CAUSE PEOPLES TO SERVE JACOB. THIS IS A “LET” COMMAND IN ENGLISH AND EXPRESSES A WISH OR DESIRE STATED IN TERMS OF THE FOLLOWING VERB, THAT IS, “I DESIRE THAT PEOPLE SERVE YOU,” OR “PEOPLE SHOULD SERVE YOU.” PEOPLES TRANSLATES A WORD THAT MAY REFER TO NATIONS, ETHNIC GROUPS, OR TRIBES, AND HAS ALMOST THE SAME MEANING AS THE WORD RENDERED NATIONS IN THE NEXT LINE. THE REFERENCE MAY BE TO THE CANAANITES AND OTHER TRIBES THAT LIVED AROUND ISRAEL IN LATER TIMES. YOU HAS HERE A DOUBLE SENSE, IN THAT IT APPLIES TO THE ONE RECEIVING THE BLESSING, BUT AT THE SAME TIME IT REFERS TO THE TIME WHEN ISRAEL IS ITSELF A NATION. IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO MAKE THIS TWOFOLD MEANING CLEAR BY SAYING, FOR EXAMPLE, “I ASK GOD TO MAKE OTHER NATIONS [TRIBES, PEOPLES] BE SERVANTS TO YOU AND YOUR DESCENDANTS.” AND NATIONS BOW DOWN TO YOU: NATIONS (SEE THE ABOVE PARAGRAPH) MAY BE TRANSLATED BY A DIFFERENT TERM FOR PEOPLES, TRIBES, ETHNIC GROUPS, IF ONE IS AVAILABLE. BOW DOWN TRANSLATES THE SAME VERB USED OF ABRAHAM BOWING BEFORE THE HITTITES IN CHAPTER 23. THE WORD IS ALSO USED, FOR EXAMPLE, IN EXO 11:8 AND 20:5. THE SENSE AS IT IS USED HERE IS TO BOW DOWN BEFORE SOMEONE IN SUBMISSION, TO GIVE OF YOURSELF TO OBEY AND SERVE. THE TWO LINES OF VERSE 29 ARE CLOSELY PARALLEL IN MEANING, AND THE SECOND LINE MAKES MORE VIVID WHAT IT MEANS IN THE FIRST LINE TO SERVE. IN THE SECOND PAIR OF PARALLEL LINES IN VERSE 29, THE THOUGHT MOVES FROM THE LARGE, GENERAL GROUP CALLED NATIONS AND PEOPLES TO THE MORE PERSONAL BROTHERS. BE LORD OVER YOUR BROTHERS: LORD TRANSLATES THE HEBREW GEBIR USED HERE FOR THE FIRST TIME IN GENESIS. THE WORD IS CLOSELY RELATED TO GIBBOR, THE WORD FOR “STRONG,” “MIGHTY,” “VALIANT,” “ONE WHO DOES ACTS OF BRAVERY.” TEV SHIFTS TO THE VERB “RULE.” WE MAY ALSO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “MAY YOU BE THE CHIEF OVER …,” “… MASTER OVER …,” “… THE LEADER OF.…” BROTHERS IS USED HERE MORE GENERALLY IN THE SENSE OF “RELATIVES” (TEV).**

**BECAUSE THE BLESSING REFERS NOT ONLY TO THE PRESENT BUT TO A FUTURE TIME WHEN JACOB AND ESAU HAVE DESCENDANTS, IT MAY BE CLEARER TO TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “MAY YOU AND YOUR DESCENDANTS BE RULERS OVER YOUR BROTHERS AND THEIR DESCENDANTS.” MAY YOUR MOTHER’S SONS BOW DOWN TO YOU: MOTHER’S SONS SHOULD PROBABLY BE UNDERSTOOD IN THE WIDER SENSE AS DESCENDANTS, AS THIS EXPRESSION MEANS THE SAME AS YOUR BROTHERS. BOW DOWN IS THE SAME AS IN THE FIRST PART OF THIS VERSE. THE POETIC EFFECT OF THE CLOSE REPETITION IS TO EMPHASIZE THE POWER AND DOMINION GIVEN TO THE PERSON WHO RECEIVES THE BLESSING. TRANSLATORS SHOULD DETERMINE WHAT THE EFFECT OF THE REPETITION IS, AND USE THE POETIC DEVICES IN THEIR OWN LANGUAGES THAT CREATE EMPHASIS. THE BLESSING COMES TO A CLOSE WITH A WARNING THAT ANYONE WHO CURSES JACOB (AND HIS DESCENDANTS) WILL RECEIVE A CURSE, AND ANYONE WHO BLESSES HIM (THEM) WILL BE BLESSED IN TURN. THIS RECALLS THE BLESSING ON ABRAHAM IN 12:3. CURSED BE EVERYONE WHO CURSES YOU: FOR A DISCUSSION OF CURSE SEE 3:14. HERE AGAIN ISAAC IS CALLING UPON GOD TO PUNISH BY MEANS OF A CURSE, AND WE MAY TRANSLATE “I ASK GOD TO CURSE EVERYONE WHO CURSES YOU.” IN SOME CASES. IT MAY BE MORE SUITABLE TO SAY “I ASK GOD TO PUNISH [WITH A CURSE] EVERYONE WHO PUTS A CURSE ON YOU.” IF A SPECIAL TERM FOR CURSE IS NOT AVAILABLE, WE MAY ALSO TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “I PRAY GOD TO CAUSE EVIL TO HAPPEN TO EVERYONE WHO WISHES YOU TO HAVE EVIL.” IN THE FINAL LINE, BLESSING IS TO BE REPAID BY BLESSING, THE OPPOSITE OF THE CURSE: AND BLESSED BE EVERYONE WHO BLESSES YOU. TO MARK THE CONTRAST BETWEEN BLESSING AND CURSE, IT MAY BE BEST TO BEGIN WITH A CONTRASTIVE CONNECTOR SUCH AS “BUT” OR “ON THE OTHER HAND.” IN LANGUAGES IN WHICH THE PASSIVE CANNOT BE USED, IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO SAY “I ASK GOD TO BLESS EVERYONE WHO BLESSES YOU,” “I PRAY GOD TO DO GOOD TO EVERYBODY WHO DOES GOOD TO YOU,” OR “I ASK GOD TO PROSPER ALL WHO SPEAK KIND WORDS OF YOU.”**

**GENESIS 27:30: THIS VERSE REPRESENTS A TRANSITION FROM THE SUCCESSFUL DECEPTION OF ISAAC TO THE RETURN OF THE CHEATED ESAU. TEV INSERTS A HEADING BEFORE VERSE 30, AND TRANSLATORS MAY WISH TO DO THE SAME. THE TEV HEADING MAY NEED TO BE MODIFIED TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “ESAU BEGS ISAAC TO BLESS HIM.” AS SOON AS ISAAC HAD FINISHED BLESSING JACOB: RSV FOLLOWS THE HEBREW STRUCTURE, WHICH MUST OFTEN BE REARRANGED TO GIVE A SMOOTH READING OF THIS VERSE. FOR EXAMPLE, IN ENGLISH IT IS MORE NATURAL TO SAY “ISAAC FINISHED GIVING HIS BLESSING, AND AS SOON AS JACOB LEFT …” (AS IN TEV), “WHEN ISAAC HAD FINISHED BLESSING JACOB AND JACOB HAD LEFT, ESAU CAME IN FROM THE HUNT,” OR “NO SOONER HAD JACOB RECEIVED THE BLESSING AND HAD LEFT HIS FATHER THAN HIS BROTHER ESAU RETURNED FROM HUNTING.” SINCE THE BLESSING IS A SPOKEN RITUAL, IT MAY BE MORE NATURAL TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “… HAD SAID THE LAST WORDS OF THE BLESSING” OR “… HAD FINISHED SPEAKING THE BLESSING.”**

**GENESIS 27:31: HE ALSO PREPARED SAVORY FOOD, AND BROUGHT IT TO HIS FATHER: HE IS ESAU. FOR SAVORY FOOD SEE VERSE 4. LET MY FATHER ARISE, AND EAT OF HIS SON’S GAME, THAT YOU MAY BLESS ME: FOR TRANSLATION OF THIS LINE SEE VERSE 19. HOWEVER, IN MANY LANGUAGES THE USE OF THE THIRD PERSON TERMS MY FATHER AND HIS SON WILL BE DIFFICULT OR IMPOSSIBLE, AND ESPECIALLY IN THE SAME UTTERANCE AS THAT YOU MAY BLESS ME. WHERE THIS IS THE CASE, TRANSLATORS MAY HAVE TO SAY SOMETHING LIKE “PLEASE GET UP, FATHER, AND EAT THE MEAT I HAVE PREPARED.…” SEE ALSO COMMENTS ON VERSE 25.**

**GENESIS 27:32: WHO ARE YOU? SEE VERSE 18. AND HE CAME UNTO HIS FATHER, AND SAID, MY FATHER: AND HE SAID, HERE AM I; WHO ART THOU, MY SON? I AM YOUR SON … ESAU: SEE VERSE 19. AND JACOB SAID UNTO HIS FATHER, I AM ESAU THY FIRSTBORN; I HAVE DONE ACCORDING AS THOU BADEST ME: ARISE, I PRAY THEE, SIT AND EAT OF MY VENISON, THAT THY SOUL MAY BLESS ME.**

**GENESIS 27:33: THEN ISAAC TREMBLED VIOLENTLY IS LITERALLY “AND ISAAC WAS TERRIFIED WITH A VERY GREAT TERROR.” ISAAC KNEW THE VOICE OF JACOB IN VERSE 22, AND NOW ESAU’S WORDS OF IDENTIFICATION CAUSED HIS FATHER TO REALIZE THAT HE HAD BEEN DECEIVED, AND THE SHOCK CAUSED HIM TO TREMBLE. THE WORD TRANSLATED TREMBLED IS USED OF THE QUAKING OR TREMBLING OF A MOUNTAIN IN EXO 19:18. IN 1 SAM 14:15 IT IS USED OF BOTH PEOPLE AND THE EARTH. IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO PROVIDE SOME KIND OF TRANSITION BETWEEN ESAU’S RESPONSE IN VERSE 32 AND ISAAC’S REACTION; FOR EXAMPLE, “WHEN ISAAC FOUND OUT THAT IT WAS ESAU, HE BEGAN TO SHAKE AND TREMBLE.” WHO WAS IT THEN WHO HUNTED GAME AND BROUGHT IT TO ME: THE HEBREW TEXT DOES NOT USE QUESTION MARKS, AND RSV HAS PLACED THE QUESTION MARK AT THE WRONG PLACE? TRANSLATORS SHOULD FOLLOW SOMETHING SIMILAR TO THE PUNCTUATION OF TEV. ANOTHER POSSIBILITY IS GIVEN IN THE TRANSLATION “WHO … BROUGHT ME THIS FOOD THAT I JUST FINISHED WHEN YOU WALKED IN? I GAVE HIM.…” I ATE IT ALL: THE RSV FOOTNOTE SHOWS THAT THE HEBREW HAS “OF ALL,” WHICH PROBABLY MEANS “I ATE SOME OF EVERYTHING.” —YES, AND HE SHALL BE BLESSED: ISAAC PULLS HIMSELF TOGETHER AND REMEMBERS THAT WHAT HE HAS DONE CANNOT BE UNDONE; THE BLESSING GIVEN TO JACOB CANNOT BE WITHDRAWN. WE MAY ALSO RENDER THIS STATEMENT, FOR EXAMPLE, “IT IS TRUE, I HAVE BLESSED HIM AND HE WILL REMAIN BLESSED,” “YES, IT IS FINISHED AND HE HAS THE FINAL BLESSING,” “HEAR ME, I HAVE BLESSED HIM AND I CAN NEVER TAKE IT AWAY FROM HIM,” “I BLESSED HIM WITH MY LAST TALK AND I CAN’T CHANGE IT; IT IS HIS FOR EVER.”**

**GENESIS 27:34: IT IS NOW ESAU’S TURN TO EXPRESS HIS ANGUISH: HE CRIED OUT WITH AN EXCEEDINGLY GREAT AND BITTER CRY. ESAU’S CRY IS ONE OF SHOCK AND PAIN. SPEISER TRANSLATES “ON HEARING HIS FATHER’S WORDS, ESAU BURST INTO SOBBING OF THE MOST VIOLENT AND BITTER KIND.” FRCL SAYS “WHEN … HIS HEART OVERFLOWED WITH BITTERNESS AND HE BEGAN TO CRY LOUDLY.” A BITTER CRY IS ONE THAT EXPRESSES DEEP SORROW AND ANGUISH. IN AN EFFORT TO SALVAGE SOMETHING FOR HIMSELF, ESAU BEGS HIS FATHER, BLESS ME, EVEN ME ALSO, O MY FATHER. THESE WORDS ARE UTTERED BY ESAU WHILE HE IS CRYING. GECL SAYS “‘FATHER,’ HE SHOUTED, ‘BLESS ME ALSO.’” THE REPETITION OF ME (LITERALLY “BLESS ME, ALSO ME”) EMPHASIZES ESAU’S NEED AND DESIRE FOR A BLESSING. WE MAY TRANSLATE AS DOES FRCL, “GIVE ME ALSO A BLESSING, FATHER!” IN SOME LANGUAGES IT MAY BE MORE NATURAL TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “O MY FATHER, SPEAK YOUR WORDS OF BLESSING OVER ME ALSO.”**

**GENESIS 27:35: BUT HE SAID: HE IS ISAAC, AND WHAT FOLLOWS IS A NEGATIVE RESPONSE TO ESAU’S PLEA. THE UNSPOKEN MEANING OF WHAT ISAAC GOES ON TO SAY IS “NO, I CAN’T” OR “NO, IT IS IMPOSSIBLE.” IN SOME LANGUAGES THE TRANSLATION WILL BE CLEARER IF SOME EXCLAMATION OR EXPRESSION IS USED TO CONVEY THIS. YOUR BROTHER CAME WITH GUILE: BROTHER REFERS TO JACOB, WHO IS THE YOUNGER TWIN BROTHER, AND SHOULD BE TRANSLATED BY THE APPROPRIATE BROTHER TERM. GUILE TRANSLATES THE NOUN FORM OF A VERB MEANING “DECEIVE” AND USED IN 29:25, “DECEIVED.” CAME WITH GUILE MAY BE RENDERED AS IN TEV, OR WE MAY SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “CAME HERE AND TRICKED ME.” IN SOME LANGUAGES TO DECEIVE IS TO “COVER THE EYES.” HAS TAKEN AWAY YOUR BLESSING: IN THIS CONTEXT, WHERE THE OBJECT OF THE VERB IS NOT ANYTHING MATERIAL, TAKEN AWAY HAS THE SENSE OF DEPRIVING THE PERSON OF SOMETHING. YOUR BLESSING MEANS “THE BLESSING THAT SHOULD HAVE BEEN FOR YOU.” WE MAY ALSO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “… GOT THE BLESSING THAT I WAS GOING TO GIVE TO YOU.”**

**GENESIS 27:36: ESAU’S REPLY IS RHETORICAL: IS HE NOT RIGHTLY NAMED JACOB? FOR JACOB’S NAME SEE 25:26. ESAU’S QUESTION MAY REQUIRE A REPLY SUCH AS “HE CERTAINLY IS.” THIS QUESTION MAY ALSO BE REPHRASED AS A STATEMENT; FOR EXAMPLE, “HE IS RIGHTLY CALLED JACOB,” “WITH GOOD REASON THEY NAMED HIM JACOB,” “HE IS NOT CALLED JACOB FOR NOTHING.” IN TRANSLATION IT MAY BE HELPFUL TO USE A CROSS REFERENCE TO 25:26. IF THE CROSS REFERENCE WILL NOT BE ADEQUATE TO MAKE ESAU’S STATEMENT CLEAR, IT MAY BE PREFERABLE TO TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “IS HE NOT CALLED JACOB BECAUSE HE DECEIVES PEOPLE?” AT 25:26 THE HANDBOOK RECOMMENDED A FOOTNOTE THAT EXPLAINED THE PLAY ON JACOB’S NAME. THERE HIS NAME WAS ASSOCIATED WITH THE WORD FOR “HEEL.” HERE THERE IS A SECOND ASSOCIATION, AND THIS TIME IT IS WITH THE WORD “CHEAT” OR “DECEIVE.” THE HANDBOOK RECOMMENDS A FOOTNOTE HERE THAT IS EQUIVALENT TO THAT FOUND IN TEV. ON THE OTHER HAND, TRANSLATORS MAY FEEL THAT THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT MADE BY ESAU IS SUFFICIENT TO MAKE CLEAR THE MEANING OF JACOB’S NAME. ANOTHER, MODEL TRANSLATORS MAY WISH TO CONSIDER IS FRCL: “HIS NAME JACOB, ‘HE WHO CHEATS,’ SUITS HIM WELL, BECAUSE HE HAS CHEATED ME TWICE.” FOR HE HAS SUPPLANTED ME THESE TWO TIMES: SUPPLANTED IN THIS CONTEXT MEANS TO TAKE THE PLACE OF SOMEONE ELSE THROUGH FRAUD AND DECEIT. THE HEBREW WORD USES THE SAME CONSONANTS AS THE NAME JACOB. IN SOME LANGUAGES IT WILL BE MORE NATURAL TO FOLLOW TEV, “THIS IS THE SECOND TIME THAT HE HAS …,” THAN TO TRANSLATE RSV LITERALLY. ESAU GOES ON TO STATE WHAT THE TWO OCCASIONS WERE. THE FIRST IS HE TOOK AWAY … BIRTH-RIGHT. FOR BIRTH-RIGHT SEE DISCUSSION AT 25:31. THE SECOND IS INTRODUCED BY AND BEHOLD, AN EXPRESSION THAT EMPHASIZES THE IMPORTANCE OF WHAT IS TO BE SAID. WE MAY TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “AND NOW LOOK,” “AND WHAT IS MORE,” “AND SEE HERE.” TAKEN AWAY MY BLESSING IS AS IN VERSE 35. HAVE YOU NOT RESERVED A BLESSING FOR ME? THAT IS, “… SAVED,” “… KEPT BACK,” “… LAID ASIDE.” ESAU ACCEPTS THAT HIS FATHER CANNOT GIVE THE SAME BLESSING TWICE, BUT HE IS HOPEFUL THAT SOMETHING MAY BE LEFT FOR HIM. THIS IS BROUGHT OUT MORE FULLY BY SOME TRANSLATIONS; FOR EXAMPLE, “ISN’T THERE ONE MORE BLESSING THAT YOU CAN GIVE TO ME?” AND “ARE THERE NO OTHER THINGS THAT YOU DIDN’T SAY BEFORE THAT YOU CAN ASK GOD TO GIVE ME?**

**GENESIS 27:37: BEHOLD, I HAVE MADE HIM YOUR LORD: THIS IS DOUBTLESS NEWS THAT ESAU IS UNPREPARED TO HEAR. BEHOLD SERVES HERE TO INTRODUCE THIS UNEXPECTED ANNOUNCEMENT. TRANSLATORS MAY HAVE AN EXPRESSION, WORD, PARTICLE, OR SYNTACTIC DEVICE THAT SERVES THIS FUNCTION. MANY MODERN TRANSLATIONS DO NOT HAVE A SUITABLE TERM OR EXPRESSION. FOR THE TRANSLATION OF LORD SEE VERSE 29. WE MAY ALSO TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “LISTEN CAREFULLY, I HAVE MADE HIM YOUR RULER,” “LOOK, I HAVE MADE HIM TO BE THE ONE WHO RULES OVER YOU,” OR “I HAVE MADE HIM THE BOSS OVER YOU.” ALL HIS BROTHERS I HAVE GIVEN TO HIM FOR SERVANTS: BROTHERS IS USED HERE AS IN VERSE 29. WE MAY ALSO TRANSLATE “I HAVE MADE ALL HIS RELATIVES TO BE HIS SERVANTS” OR “I HAVE ORDERED THAT ALL HIS RELATIVES SHOULD SERVE HIM.” SEE TEV. WITH GRAIN AND WINE, I HAVE SUSTAINED HIM: SEE VERSE 28. SUSTAINED TRANSLATES A VERB MEANING TO “SUPPORT,” “UPHOLD,” “MAINTAIN.” ISAAC HAS GRANTED HIM GRAIN AND WINE TO MAINTAIN HIS SUPERIORITY OVER HIS BROTHERS. GECL SAYS “I HAVE RICHLY SUPPLIED HIM WITH GRAIN AND WINE,” WHICH IS A GOOD TRANSLATION MODEL. WHAT THEN CAN I DO FOR YOU, MY SON? ISAAC’S QUESTION IS NOT TO ASK IF THERE IS SOMETHING HE CAN STILL DO FOR ESAU, BUT RATHER A RHETORICAL WAY OF SAYING THAT HE HAS GIVEN EVERYTHING TO JACOB AND NOTHING REMAINS; OR AS FRCL SAYS, “I CAN DO NOTHING FOR YOU, MY SON.” SEE TEV. IN SOME LANGUAGES THIS RHETORICAL QUESTION WILL REQUIRE A RESPONSE; FOR EXAMPLE, “WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU, MY SON? NOTHING AT ALL,” OR “HOW CAN I DO ANYTHING FOR YOU, MY SON? I CAN DO NOTHING.”**

**GENESIS 27:38: ESAU SAID TO HIS FATHER: NOTE THAT TEV TRANSLATES THIS IN A STYLE SUITABLE FOR THE CONTEXT: “ESAU CONTINUED TO PLEAD WITH HIS FATHER.” IF THE BLESSING GIVEN TO JACOB CANNOT BE WITHDRAWN, ESAU HOPES THERE MAY YET BE A BLESSING FOR HIM. HAVE YOU BUT ONE BLESSING? IS LITERALLY “IS ONE BLESSING [ONLY] TO YOU?” WE MAY ALSO RENDER THIS QUESTION, FOR EXAMPLE, “IS THAT THE ONLY BLESSING YOU HAVE?” “DON’T YOU HAVE A SECOND BLESSING FOR ME?” BLESS ME, EVEN ME ALSO, O MY FATHER: SEE VERSE 34. RSV AND TEV FOLLOW THE HEBREW TEXT HERE. BEFORE ESAU CRIES, THE SEPTUAGINT ADDS “BUT ISAAC REMAINED SILENT,” AND THIS IS FOLLOWED BY A FEW TRANSLATIONS. HOTTP RATES THE HEBREW AS {A}, AND TRANSLATORS SHOULD FOLLOW THE HEBREW TEXT AS IN RSV, TEV. EVEN ME ALSO EXPRESSES ESAU’S APPEAL TO HIS FATHER TO GIVE HIM A BLESSING. WE MAY SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “GIVE ME A BLESSING TOO,” “DON’T WITHHOLD YOUR BLESSING FROM ME,” “I BEG YOU, GIVE ME TOO YOUR BLESSING.” ESAU LIFTED UP HIS VOICE (AND WEPT) IS AN IDIOM. IT WAS USED OF ISHMAEL IN 21:16. THE MEANING OF THE FULL EXPRESSION IS “HE BEGAN TO CRY.” FRCL TRANSLATES WELL IN THIS CONTEXT: “HE COULD NOT HOLD BACK HIS TEARS.”**

**GENESIS 27:39: ISAAC PRONOUNCES SOMETHING RESEMBLING A BLESSING FOR ESAU THAT IS IN CLEAR CONTRAST WITH VERSES 28–29. IT HAS TWO PARTS. IN THE FIRST PART ESAU IS TO BE DENIED THE FERTILE LAND WITH ITS DEW OR RAIN, BUT HE IS TO HAVE A PLACE TO LIVE (VERSE 39). IN THE SECOND PART (VERSE 40) ESAU WILL LIVE IN CONFLICT WITH OTHERS AND WILL SERVE HIS BROTHER, BUT ONLY FOR A TIME, AND THEN HE WILL BE FREE FROM HIS BROTHER’S CONTROL. THEN ISAAC HIS FATHER ANSWERED HIM: ANSWERED MAY BE INAPPROPRIATE IN THIS CONTEXT. SOMETHING LIKE “SPOKE THESE WORDS” MAY BE MORE SUITABLE. BEHOLD, AWAY FROM THE FATNESS OF THE EARTH SHALL YOUR DWELLING BE: BEHOLD INTRODUCES HERE A STATEMENT THAT IS SOMETHING OF A SHOCK FOR ESAU. IN TRANSLATION IT MAY REQUIRE AN EXPRESSION THAT INVITES CLOSE ATTENTION; FOR EXAMPLE, “NOW LISTEN” OR “HEAR WHAT I SAY.” TRANSLATORS WILL NOTE THAT ACCORDING TO THE RSV FOOTNOTE AWAY FROM MAY ALSO BE INTERPRETED TO MEAN “OF” (SO ALSO KJV). INTERPRETED IN THIS WAY THE SENSE WOULD BE THAT ESAU TOO IS TO RECEIVE RICH, FERTILE FIELDS. HOWEVER, TO GIVE BOTH SONS THE SAME WEALTH WOULD CONFLICT WITH THE SENSE OF THE STORY, WHICH IS OF DEPRIVING ESAU OF HIS BIRTH-RIGHT. AND THE DIFFERENT LIFESTYLE FORETOLD IN THE NEXT VERSE IS REALLY BASED ON THE LACK OF RESOURCES FOR A SETTLED LIFE OF FARMING. ACCORDING TO SPEISER THE HEBREW STYLE REMAINS AWKWARD ASIDE FROM THIS PREPOSITION. ESAU, AND SO EDOM, IS TO BE DEPRIVED OF POSSESSIONS. THE PREFERRED UNDERSTANDING IS AS IN THE RSV TEXT AND IN TEV. FATNESS OF THE EARTH IS THE SAME AS IN THE BLESSING GIVEN TO JACOB IN VERSE 28 AND REFERS TO THE FERTILE, PRODUCTIVE LANDS OR FIELDS. THE PLACE WHERE ESAU WILL LIVE IS TO BE A LONG WAY FROM SUCH RICH LANDS. WE MAY TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “YOU SHALL LIVE FAR AWAY FROM FERTILE FIELDS” OR “YOUR HOME SHALL BE A LONG WAY FROM FIELDS THAT PRODUCE ABUNDANT CROPS.” HOWEVER, IN SOME AREAS THESE MODELS WILL MEAN LITTLE MORE THAN SAYING “YOUR HOUSEAND GARDENS WILL BE SEPARATED BY SOME DISTANCE,” WHICH IS PERFECTLY NORMAL. IF THIS IS THE CASE, IT WILL BE BETTER TO MAKE CLEAR THAT ESAU IS NOT TO BE GIVEN ANY FERTILE LAND. ACCORDINGLY, WE MAY SAY “YOU WILL HAVE TO LIVE AND WORK WHERE THE FIELDS PRODUCE NOTHING.” AWAY FROM THE DEW OF HEAVEN ON HIGH: SEE VERSE 28. THE DRYNESS OR LACK OF RAIN THAT PREVENTS CROPS FROM GROWING IS THE SECOND FEATURE OF ESAU’S “BLESSING.” HERE WE MAY SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “AND WHERE GOD SENDS NO DEW UPON THE GROUND” OR “WHERE NO RAIN FALLS FROM HEAVEN.”**

**GENESIS 27:40: BY YOUR SWORD YOU SHALL LIVE: THIS REFERENCE IS TO ESAU AND TO HIS DESCENDANTS, THE EDOMITES. TO LIVE BY YOUR SWORD MEANS TO LIVE BY WAR, PLUNDER, ROBBERY. IN MANY LANGUAGES THE SWORD IS UNKNOWN. EVEN WHERE WE MAY TRANSLATE “YOU WILL LIVE BY MEANS OF YOUR LONG KNIFE,” THE SENSE MAY BE FAR FROM CLEAR. THEREFORE, TO MAKE THIS FIGURATIVE EXPRESSION UNDERSTANDABLE, WE MAY NEED TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “YOU WILL EARN YOUR LIVING BY MAKING WAR,” “YOU WILL SPEND YOUR LIFE AS ONE WHO KILLS AND ROBS PEOPLE,” OR “YOU WILL LIVE BY TAKING PLUNDER.” AND YOU SHALL SERVE YOUR BROTHER: THE THOUGHT BEHIND THIS LINE IS THAT THE EDOMITES WERE TO BE SUBJECTED TO ISRAEL. HOWEVER, IT IS NECESSARY TO RETAIN HERE THE SUBJECTION OF ESAU TO HIS BROTHER JACOB. SERVE TRANSLATES THE SAME WORD USED IN VERSE 29. SEE THERE FOR SUGGESTIONS. YOUR BROTHER REFERS TO JACOB, WHO IS THE YOUNGER BROTHER, OR YOUNGER TWIN. BUT WHEN YOU BREAK LOOSE: THE VERB TRANSLATED BREAK LOOSE HAS NO ACCOMPANYING FOOTNOTE IN RSV. TEV, HOWEVER, HAS “REBEL; OR GROW RESTLESS.” THE SENSE OF THE HEBREW VERB IS UNCERTAIN. THE MEANING “RESTLESS” OR “UNSETTLED” COMES FROM A SIMILAR VERB IN ARABIC. DRIVER CALLS ATTENTION TO EDOM’S REVOLT FROM JUDAH IN 2 KGS 8:20–22. ISAAC IS SPEAKING OF ESAU’S DESCENDANTS. WE MAY TRANSLATE THE VERB BY SUCH EXPRESSIONS AS “REBEL,” “BREAK AWAY,” “REVOLT,” “SHOW SIGNS OF REVOLTING.” YOU SHALL BREAK HIS YOKE FROM YOUR NECK: A YOKE IS A WOODEN BAR OR FRAME PLACED ON THE NECKS OF WORK ANIMALS, EITHER ONE ANIMAL ALONE OR TWO JOINED TOGETHER; ROPES OR CHAINS WERE THEN CONNECTED FROM THE YOKE TO WHATEVER LOAD THE ANIMAL WAS TO PULL. FREQUENTLY A DOUBLE YOKE JOINED TWO ANIMALS TOGETHER IN ORDER TO PULL MORE EFFECTIVELY. THE YOKE IS A COMMON SYMBOL FOR BEING IN SUBJECTION OR UNDER SOMEONE’S CONTROL, AS IN LEV 26:13; NUM 19:2. TO BREAK HIS YOKE IS TO BE FREE FROM THE BROTHER’S POWER AND AUTHORITY. IN LANGUAGES IN WHICH THE YOKE IS UNKNOWN OR CANNOT BE USED IN THIS FIGURATIVE SENSE, IT IS BEST TO SWITCH TO A NONFIGURATIVE EXPRESSION; FOR EXAMPLE, “YOU SHALL BE FREE FROM HIM,” “YOU SHALL NOT LONGER BE UNDER HIS CONTROL,” OR “HE WILL NO LONGER BE THE BOSS OVER YOU.”**

**GENESIS 27:41: SOME TRANSLATIONS INSERT A NEW HEADING BEFORE VERSE 41. FOR EXAMPLE, SPCL HAS “JACOB FLEES FROM ESAU,” GECL “JACOB HAS TO FLEE,” AND FRCL “JACOB FLEES TO HIS UNCLE LABAN.” NOW ESAU HATED JACOB: NOW REPRESENTS A TRANSITION TO A FURTHER DEVELOPMENT IN THE STORY. HATED EXPRESSES THE “ENMITY,” “ILL FEELING,” “ANIMOSITY” THAT ESAU FEELS TOWARD HIS BROTHER. ESAU’S HATE FOR JACOB HAS NOW BECOME INTENSE AND LEADS HIM TO PLAN TO KILL JACOB. BECAUSE OF THE BLESSING … HIM: THAT IS, “BECAUSE HIS FATHER HAD GIVEN ESAU’S BLESSING TO JACOB.” THE DAYS OF MOURNING FOR MY FATHER ARE APPROACHING: BOTH RSV AND TEV PLACE ESAU’S WORDS IN QUOTES. THE HEBREW IS LITERALLY “ESAU SAID IN HIS HEART.…” THIS SUGGESTS THAT THESE WORDS WERE THE THOUGHTS OF ESAU, BUT IN VERSE 42 THEY ARE REPORTED TO REBEKAH. WE MAY TRANSLATE “ESAU THOUGHT TO HIMSELF” OR “ESAU SAID TO HIMSELF.” THE DAYS OF MOURNING REFERS TO THE MOURNING PERIOD THAT WILL FOLLOW ISAAC’S DEATH. IN GEN 50:10 THIS LASTED SEVEN DAYS. FOR MOURNING SEE 23:2. IN ORDER TO MAKE CLEAR THAT ESAU’S PLAN TO KILL HIS BROTHER WILL TAKE EFFECT AFTER THE DEATH AND MOURNING FOR ISAAC, WE MAY NEED TO TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “AFTER MY FATHER HAS DIED AND WE HAVE FINISHED MOURNING FOR HIM.…” A NUMBER OF TRANSLATIONS RETAIN THE THOUGHT THAT THE DAYS FOR MOURNING ISAAC’S DEATH ARE APPROACHING AND THEREFORE WILL SOON HAPPEN, AND THEY SAY SOMETHING LIKE “IN A SHORT TIME MY FATHER WILL DIE, AND WE WILL MOURN FOR HIM; WHEN THE TIME OF MOURNING IS PAST, I WILL KILL JACOB.”**

**GENESIS 27:42: BUT THE WORDS OF ESAU HER OLDER SON WERE TOLD TO REBEKAH: BUT CONTRASTS WHAT ESAU THOUGHT TO HIMSELF AND REBEKAH’S LEARNING OF IT. WE MAY ALSO SAY IN ENGLISH “WHEN,” OR “BUT WHEN.” IN LANGUAGES IN WHICH THE PASSIVE CANNOT BE USED, IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “SOMEONE TOLD REBEKAH WHAT ESAU HAD BEEN SAYING” OR “REBEKAH FOUND OUT WHAT ESAU WAS PLANNING TO DO.” SHE SENT AND CALLED JACOB: THAT IS “SHE SENT SOMEONE TO BRING JACOB.” BEHOLD, YOUR BROTHER ESAU COMFORTS HIMSELF BY PLANNING TO KILL YOU: BEHOLD SERVES THE SAME FUNCTION AS IN VERSE 39. SEE THERE FOR TRANSLATION SUGGESTIONS. COMFORTS TRANSLATES A VERB WHOSE BASIC MEANING IS AS IN RSV. IN THIS CONTEXT, HOWEVER, IT CARRIES THE SENSE OF TAKING REVENGE; THAT IS, ESAU PLANS TO RELIEVE HIS ANGER AND FRUSTRATION BY TAKING REVENGE ON JACOB. SO NJB TRANSLATES “MEANS TO TAKE REVENGE,” AND TEV “PLANNING TO GET EVEN WITH YOU.” WE MAY TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “ESAU IS MAKING HIMSELF FEEL BETTER BY PLANNING TO KILL YOU,” “ESAU HOPES TO SET THINGS RIGHT BY KILLING YOU,” OR “ESAU IS PLANNING TO PAY YOU BACK FOR WHAT YOU DID; HE WANTS TO KILL YOU.”**

**GENESIS 27:43: NOW THEREFORE, MY SON, OBEY MY VOICE: NOW THEREFORE REPRESENTS A TRANSITION AND A CONSEQUENCE OF ESAU’S PLAN TO KILL JACOB. OBEY MY VOICE IS LITERALLY “HEAR MY VOICE.” SEE VERSE 8. NOTE TEV “DO WHAT I SAY.” ARISE, FLEE TO LABAN MY BROTHER IN HARAN: ARISE DOES NOT SUGGEST THAT JACOB IS SITTING OR LYING WHEN HE IS ADDRESSED BY HIS MOTHER. ARISE HERE MEANS “GET READY,” “HURRY,” “GO AT ONCE.” FLEE MEANS TO “GO QUICKLY,” “ESCAPE.”**

**GENESIS 27:44: STAY WITH HIM A WHILE: A WHILE IS LITERALLY “SOME DAYS,” A MANNER OF SPEAKING OF AN INDEFINITE TIME. THE LENGTH OF TIME WILL BE UNTIL YOUR BROTHER’S FURY TURNS AWAY. IN SOME LANGUAGES THIS THOUGHT IS BEST EXPRESSED IN FIGURATIVE TERMS: FOR EXAMPLE, “UNTIL HIS HEART BECOMES COOL AGAIN,” “UNTIL HIS LIVER IS NO LONGER HOT,” “UNTIL HIS INNERMOST IS CALM AGAIN.” IN OTHER LANGUAGES PEOPLE NATURALLY SAY “UNTIL HE CALMS DOWN” OR “UNTIL HE SETTLES DOWN.”**

**GENESIS 27:45: UNTIL YOU BROTHER’S ANGER TURNS AWAY: THIS LINE ONLY SUBSTITUTES A DIFFERENT TERM WITH THE SAME MEANING FOR FURY IN THE PREVIOUS LINE. NOTE THAT TEV DOES NOT REPEAT THIS THOUGHT, AND MANY TRANSLATIONS WILL BE ABLE TO DO THE SAME. FORGETS WHAT YOU HAVE DONE TO HIM: THAT IS, “UNTIL HE FORGETS THAT YOU HAVE TAKEN THE BLESSING AWAY FROM HIM.” SEND, AND FETCH YOU FROM THERE: “I WILL SEND SOMEONE TO BRING YOU HOME AGAIN.” REBEKAH THEN ASKS A RHETORICAL QUESTION: WHY SHOULD I BE BEREFT OF YOU BOTH IN ONE DAY? THE ASSUMPTION IS THAT, IF JACOB DOES NOT LEAVE, ESAU WILL KILL HIM, AND THEN OTHERS WILL AVENGE JACOB’S DEATH BY KILLING ESAU; OR IN SOME PARTS OF THE WORLD, IT WOULD BE THAT THE TWO BROTHERS WOULD FIGHT AND KILL EACH OTHER. BEREFT (OR BEREAVED) MEANS TO LOSE A RELATIVE THROUGH DEATH. THIS QUESTION MAY NEED TO BE EXPRESSED AS A NEGATIVE WISH; FOR EXAMPLE, “I DON’T WANT TO LOSE YOU BOTH IN ONE DAY.” IF THE THOUGHT OF LOSING TWO SONS IS NOT CLEAR, IT MAY BE POSSIBLE TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “I DON’T WANT TO HAVE YOU KILLED AND THEN ESAU KILLED AS WELL. I WOULD LOSE YOU BOTH AT THE SAME TIME.”**

**JACOB IS SENT TO GET A WIFE FROM LABAN (27:46–28:5)**

**VERSE 45 CONCLUDES THE STORY OF JACOB GETTING THE BLESSING THAT WAS INTENDED FOR ESAU. GEN 27:46–28:5 TAKES UP THE STORY OF JACOB BEING SENT TO GET A WIFE FROM THE FAMILY OF HIS UNCLE LABAN IN HARAN. IN THIS SUBDIVISION REBEKAH EXPRESSES TO ISAAC THE GRIEF THE HITTITE WOMEN CAUSE HER, AND HER CONCERN THAT JACOB SHOULD NOT MARRY ONE OF THEM. (NOTE THAT 26:34–35 WAS THE LAST MENTION OF HITTITE WIVES IN RELATION TO ESAU.) ISAAC BLESSES JACOB AND ORDERS HIM TO GO TO MESOPOTAMIA TO GET A WIFE FROM REBEKAH’S FATHER (28:1–2). ISAAC THEN GRANTS JACOB A BLESSING TO POSSESS THE LAND PROMISED BY GOD TO ABRAHAM (VERSES 3–4). JACOB DEPARTS (VERSE).**

**SUBDIVISION HEADING**

**THE HANDBOOK HEADING MAY NEED TO BE REWORDED TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “JACOB FLEES TO HARAN” OR “JACOB GOES TO HIS UNCLE IN HARAN.” TEV HAS “ISAAC SENDS JACOB TO LABAN,” GECL “JACOB MUST MARRY A WOMAN FROM THE OLD HOMELAND,” NIV “JACOB FLEES TO LABAN.”**

**GENESIS 27:46: I AM WEARY OF MY LIFE: WEARY TRANSLATES A VERB MEANING “DISGUST,” “LOATH,” “ABHOR.” SPEISER TRANSLATES “I AM DISGUSTED WITH LIFE,” SPCL “I AM TIRED OF LIFE,” GECL “I AM SICK OF LIVING,” AND TEV “I AM SICK AND TIRED.” WE MAY ALSO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “I CAN’T STAND THESE … ANY LONGER.” BECAUSE OF THE HITTITE WOMEN: HITTITE WOMEN IS LITERALLY “DAUGHTERS OF HETH.” REBEKAH’S DISGUST, AS IS EVIDENT FROM 26:35, IS DUE NOT TO HITTITE WOMEN IN GENERAL BUT TO THE WIVES ESAU HAS MARRIED. ACCORDINGLY, TEV HAS TRANSLATED “ESAU’S FOREIGN WIVES,” FRCL “MY HITTITE DAUGHTERS-IN-LAW,” AND SPCL “THESE HITTITES ESAU HAS MARRIED.” IF JACOB MARRIES ONE OF … THESE: NOTE THAT TEV HAS SUPPLIED “ALSO” IN THE “IF” CLAUSE. SUCH AS THESE MEANS “LIKE THE WOMEN ESAU HAS MARRIED” OR “LIKE THE TWO WHO ARE HERE.” ONE OF THE WOMEN OF THE LAND IS LITERALLY “FROM THE DAUGHTERS OF THE LAND,” AN EXPRESSION THAT MEANS “A LOCAL GIRL” OR “A NATIVE WOMAN.” THE TERM FOR WOMEN SHOULD BE ONE THAT IS APPLICABLE TO YOUNG WOMEN OF MARRIAGEABLE AGE. SPCL SAYS “ONE OF THESE WHO LIVE HERE IN CANAAN.” THE RESULT CLAUSE IS FORMULATED AS A RHETORICAL QUESTION, WHAT GOOD WILL MY LIFE BE TO ME? WHICH IS LITERALLY “WHAT IS MY LIFE TO ME?” TRANSLATORS MAY FIND THIS QUESTION NEEDS TO BE ANSWERED, “NO GOOD AT ALL,” OR BE EXPRESSED AS A NEGATIVE STATEMENT; FOR EXAMPLE, “MY LIFE WON’T BE WORTH A THING,” “MY LIFE WILL BE WORTHLESS.” FRCL TRANSLATES “I WILL LOSE MY LAST REASON FOR LIVING.” NOTE ALSO TEV.**

**GENESIS 28:1: THEN ISAAC CALLED JACOB AND BLESSED HIM AND CHARGED HIM: FOR CALLED JACOB SEE SUGGESTIONS ON 27:1, 42. BLESSED HIM IS NOT USED HERE IN THE SENSE OF GIVING A FORMAL BLESSING AS WAS THE CASE IN 27:27–29. BLESSED IS MAINLY USED AS IN CHAPTER 27, BUT IT IS ALSO USED WHEN GREETING AND SAYING FAREWELL. SEE 26:31. NO DOUBT THE WORDS OF THE GREETING ARE IN THE FORM OF A SHORT PRAYER OR WISH FOR GOD’S PROTECTION AND FAVOR FOR THE ONE BEING GREETED. SOME LANGUAGES USE SUCH EXPRESSIONS FOR GREETINGS; FOR EXAMPLE, “GOD BE WITH YOU,” “GOD GIVE YOU THE DAY.” IF THE TRANSLATOR’S LANGUAGE USES SUCH EXPRESSIONS, THEY MAY BE USED INSTEAD OF THE WORD “GREET” (SEE TEV). IT IS ALSO POSSIBLE THAT ISAAC IS HERE SAYING FAREWELL TO JACOB. IN THAT CASE WE MAY SOMETIMES TRANSLATE “ISAAC CALLED JACOB AND GAVE HIM A FAREWELL BLESSING.” FRCL SAYS “AND GAVE HIM HIS GOOD-BYE.” IT IS CLEAR THAT THE NARRATOR HAS GIVEN ISAAC A FRIENDLY ATTITUDE TOWARD JACOB IN SPITE OF JACOB’S DECEPTION OF ISAAC IN CHAPTER 27. CHARGED TRANSLATES THE SAME VERB AS IN 18:19 AND HAS THE MEANING OF “ORDER,” “COMMAND,” “INSTRUCT.” WHAT ISAAC INSTRUCTED JACOB NOT TO DO IS CONTAINED IN THE WORDS OF THE REST OF THIS VERSE. NOTE THAT TEV TRANSLATES “TOLD HIM”; REB TRANSLATES “GAVE HIM THESE INSTRUCTIONS,” NJB “GAVE HIM THIS ORDER,” NIV “COMMANDED HIM.” YOU SHALL NOT MARRY ONE OF THE CANAANITE WOMEN IS LITERALLY “YOU ARE NOT TO TAKE A WIFE OF THE DAUGHTERS OF CANAAN.” “TAKE A WIFE” MEANS TO MARRY. CANAANITE WOMEN SHOULD BE EXPRESSED IN THE MOST NATURAL FORM IN THE TRANSLATOR’S LANGUAGE. TEV PREFERS “A CANAANITE.” WOMEN SHOULD BE RENDERED BY THE TERM THAT APPLIES TO YOUNG WOMEN OF MARRIAGEABLE AGE. CANAANITE REFERS TO THE PEOPLE IN THE LAND, COUNTRY, OR AREA WHERE ISAAC IS LIVING. WE MAY ALSO SAY “ONE OF THE NATIVE GIRLS” OR “ONE OF THE YOUNG WOMEN OF THIS COUNTRY.”**

**GENESIS 28:2: ARISE: SEE COMMENTS ON 27:43. NOTE THAT TEV CONTRASTS THE NEGATIVE AND POSITIVE COMMANDS BY SAYING “GO INSTEAD.…” ANOTHER WAY OF MAKING THIS CONTRAST IS TO SAY “IT IS BETTER THAT YOU GO.…” FOR PADDAN-ARAM SEE 25:20. HOUSE OF BETHUEL YOUR MOTHER’S FATHER: HOUSEREFERS TO THE HOME AND FAMILY OF BETHUEL. MOTHER’S FATHER KEEPS THE LITERAL HEBREW EXPRESSION. TEV AND OTHERS SAY “YOUR GRANDFATHER BETHUEL.” MANY LANGUAGES DISTINGUISH BETWEEN PATERNAL AND MATERNAL GRANDFATHER. THE LATTER IS TO BE USED HERE. AND TAKE AS WIFE FROM THERE IS THE SECOND PART OF THE INSTRUCTIONS GIVEN TO JACOB; THAT IS, “GET A WIFE FROM THERE,” “MARRY A GIRL FROM THERE.” IN SOME LANGUAGES OTHER VERBS ARE NORMALLY USED FOR THIS ACTIVITY; FOR EXAMPLE, “CHOOSE A YOUNG WOMAN FOR YOURSELF FROM.…” ONE OF THE DAUGHTERS OF LABAN YOUR MOTHER’S BROTHER: IN MANY LANGUAGES DIFFERENT TERMS ARE USED TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN MOTHER’S BROTHER AND FATHER’S BROTHER. IN ENGLISH WE MAY SAY “UNCLE” FOR BOTH. JACOB IS BEING INSTRUCTED TO MARRY ONE OF HIS COUSINS. IF A COUSIN TERM IS USED IN TRANSLATION HERE, IT SHOULD REFER TO “MOTHER’S BROTHER’S DAUGHTER.” IF REQUIRED, LABAN MAY NEED TO BE INDICATED AS “MOTHER’S OLDER BROTHER.” SINCE THE PRECISE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN JACOB AND LABAN IS GIVEN IN VERSE 5, SOME TRANSLATIONS PREFER TO USE A MORE GENERAL TERM HERE: “… MARRY A DAUGHTER OF YOUR RELATIVE LABAN.” IF COUSIN MARRIAGE OF THIS TYPE IS CONSIDERED TABOO IN THE CULTURE, IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO ADD AN EXPLANATORY NOTE AT THIS POINT. SUCH A NOTE MAY TELL READERS, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT MARRIAGE WITH A COUSIN WAS ACCEPTABLE AMONG THE ANCIENT HEBREWS AND CONTINUES TO BE COMMON AMONG PEOPLE IN THE MIDDLE EAST TODAY.**

**GENESIS 28:3: GOD ALMIGHTY TRANSLATES THE HEBREW ’EL SHADDAI. SEE “THE NAMES OF GOD IN GENESIS” IN “TRANSLATING GENESIS,” PAGE 13. BLESS YOU AND MAKE YOU FRUITFUL AND MULTIPLY YOU: BLESS IS USED AS IN THE EARLY CHAPTERS OF GENESIS, AND AS IN CHAPTER 27, IN WHICH ISAAC ASKS GOD TO “GRANT HIS FAVOR,” “LOOK WITH KINDNESS,” “BE GOOD TO” JACOB. THE CONTENT OF THE BLESSING IS THAT GOD SHOULD MAKE YOU FRUITFUL AND MULTIPLY YOU, WHICH IS A RITUAL WAY OF SAYING “HAVE MANY CHILDREN,” “BECOME THE FATHER OF MANY DESCENDANTS.” THIS BLESSING IS MADE MORE CONCRETE AND EXTENDED IN TIME IN THE WORDS THAT YOU MAY BECOME A COMPANY OF PEOPLES. YOU REFERS TO JACOB AND HAS THE SENSE OF “YOU AND YOUR DESCENDANTS.” TEV EXPRESSES THIS THOUGHT BY SAYING “SO THAT YOU WILL BECOME THE FATHER OF.…” WHILE ENGLISH DOES NOT DISTINGUISH BETWEEN SINGULAR AND PLURAL IN ITS USE OF “YOU,” IN MANY LANGUAGES A SWITCH FROM “YOU [SINGULAR]” IN THE FIRST PART OF THE VERSE TO “YOU [PLURAL]” HERE WILL NATURALLY GIVE THE SENSE: “SO THAT YOU [PLURAL] WILL BECOME A CROWD OF PEOPLE.” COMPANY RENDERS A WORD MEANING “ASSEMBLY,” “GATHERING,” “GROUPING.” THE REFERENCE IS TO A LARGE BODY OF PEOPLE. PEOPLES TRANSLATES THE SAME HEBREW TERM USED IN 11:6, WHERE IT REFERS TO A TRIBE OR ETHNIC GROUP. IT IS ALSO USED IN 23:7, WHERE THE HITTITES ARE REFERRED TO AS “THE PEOPLE OF THE LAND.” WE MAY ALSO TRANSLATE, AS DOES SPEISER, “AN ASSEMBLY OF TRIBES.” TEV PREFERS “MANY NATIONS,” NIV “COMMUNITY OF PEOPLES,” NEB “HOST OF NATIONS,” REB “COMMUNITY OF NATIONS.”**

**GENESIS 28:4: MAY HE GIVE THE BLESSING OF ABRAHAM TO YOU: HE REFERS TO GOD AS EXPRESSED IN VERSE 3. THE BLESSING OF ABRAHAM REFERS TO THE BLESSING ABRAHAM RECEIVED FROM GOD, AS SEEN, FOR EXAMPLE, IN 17:8, WHICH SPEAKS OF THE GRANTING OF THE LAND TO ABRAHAM. YOUR DESCENDANTS TRANSLATES “YOUR SEED.” ISAAC’S PRAYER IS THAT GOD “BLESS JACOB AND HIS DESCENDANTS THE SAME AS HE BLESSED ABRAHAM.” WE MAY ALSO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “I ASK GOD TO GIVE YOU AND YOUR DESCENDANTS WHAT HE PROMISED TO ABRAHAM.” THAT YOU MAY TAKE POSSESSION OF THE LAND OF YOUR SOJOURNINGS: IN THESE WORDS, THE BLESSING OF ABRAHAM IS MADE CONCRETE. TAKE POSSESSION TRANSLATES A VERB MEANING TO POSSESS THROUGH INHERITANCE, BUT IN THIS CONTEXT, IT MEANS TO TAKE BY FORCE, AND SO SPEISER SAYS “THAT YOU MAY TAKE OVER.” LAND OF YOUR SOJOURNINGS: SEE 12:10 AND 17:8 FOR DISCUSSION.**

**GENESIS 28:5: THUS, ISAAC SENT JACOB AWAY: THUS, TRANSLATES THE COMMON HEBREW CONNECTIVE, WHICH SERVES TO CONCLUDE THE INSTRUCTIONS AND BLESSING GIVEN TO JACOB. WE MAY TRANSLATE WITH A WORD MARKING A CONCLUSION OR A SUBSEQUENT ACTION SUCH AS “AFTER THAT,” “THEN.” SENT IS USED IN THE SENSE OF “DISMISS,” “MADE JACOB GO.” HOWEVER, ISAAC IS NOT DOING THIS IN ANGER, AND THE WORD FOR SENT SHOULD NOT REFLECT ANY NEGATIVE FEELINGS ON ISAAC’S PART. AND HE WENT: THE TRANSLATION WENT IN RSV AND OTHER VERSIONS APPARENTLY SUMMARIZES THE WHOLE OF JACOB’S JOURNEY. HOWEVER, THERE IS A FULLER DESCRIPTION OF HAPPENINGS ON THE JOURNEY IN 28:10–29:14, AND THE TRANSITION FROM THE END OF VERSE 5 TO VERSE 10 MAY RAISE PROBLEMS FOR SOME TRANSLATORS. SEE THE COMMENTS ON VERSE 10 FOR A FULLER DISCUSSION. A NUMBER OF TRANSLATIONS MODIFY THE FORM OF THE VERB WENT IN DEALING WITH THE TRANSITION TO THE RESUMPTION OF THE STORY LINE IN VERSE 10; ONE APPROACH, FOR EXAMPLE, IS TO SAY “ISAAC SENT JACOB OFF TO GO TO MESOPOTAMIA, TO LABAN.…” IN ONE OTHER TRANSLATION THE WORDS “AND HE [ISAAC] SENT HIM OFF” CONCLUDE THE PARAGRAPH THAT BEGAN AT VERSE 1, AND THEN THE REST OF VERSE 5 MAKES A SEPARATE PARAGRAPH BEGINNING “THEN JACOB LEFT IN ORDER TO GO TO THE COUNTRY OF MESOPOTAMIA, TO STAY WITH LABAN.” TO PADDAN-ARAM TO LABAN, THE SON OF BETHUEL THE ARAMEAN: JACOB’S DESTINATION IS UPPER MESOPOTAMIA (SEE 25:20) AND THE FAMILY OF LABAN. BECAUSE OF THE IDENTIFICATION OF REBEKAH’S BROTHER AND FATHER, IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO REARRANGE VERSE 5 TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “THEN ISAAC SENT JACOB OFF ON HIS TRIP. HE WENT TO LABAN IN MESOPOTAMIA. LABAN WAS THE SON OF BETHUEL THE ARAMEAN, AND THE BROTHER OF ESAU’S AND JACOB’S MOTHER.” FOR ARAMEAN SEE 10:22 AND 25:20. THE JOURNEY FROM SOUTHERN CANAAN TO HARAN IN UPPER MESOPOTAMIA IS A DISTANCE OF APPROXIMATELY 800 KILOMETERS (500 MILES). SEE 24:10–11.**

**ESAU MARRIES ANOTHER WOMAN (28:6–9)**

**THE STORY OF JACOB’S TRAVEL TO HARAN TO GET A WIFE IS INTERRUPTED BY VERSES 28:6–9. THE ATTENTION IS SHIFTED TO ESAU. IN THESE VERSES ESAU LEARNS THAT JACOB HAS GONE TO HARAN TO GET A WIFE BECAUSE THE CANAANITE WOMEN ARE DISPLEASING TO HIS PARENTS. IN VERSE 9, THEREFORE, ESAU GOES TO HIS UNCLE ISHMAEL AND MARRIES ONE OF ISHMAEL’S DAUGHTERS.**

**SUBDIVISION HEADING**

**THE HANDBOOK HEADING MAY BE REWORDED TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “ESAU MARRIES ISHMAEL’S DAUGHTER” OR “ESAU MARRIES ANOTHER WIFE.” TEV HAS “ESAU TAKES ANOTHER WIFE,” SPCL “ESAU GETS MARRIED,” NJV “ANOTHER MARRIAGE OF ESAU.”**

**GENESIS 28:6: NOW ESAU SAW …: NOW RENDERS THE COMMON HEBREW CONNECTIVE, WHICH IS UNDERSTOOD BY RSV TO BE A TRANSITION MARKER TO THIS BRIEF EPISODE. SOME MODERN TRANSLATIONS TREAT THE OPENING OF VERSE 6 AS A DEPENDENT TIME CLAUSE: “WHEN ESAU SAW THAT.…” HOWEVER, BEGINNING VERSE 6 WITH A DEPENDENT CLAUSE MAKES VERSE 7 A SECOND SIMILAR CLAUSE, AND THE RESULT IS A LONG AND FRONT-HEAVY SENTENCE IN ENGLISH. THE SAME IS TRUE OF THE STRUCTURE OF RSV. THEREFORE, IT IS OFTEN BETTER TO MAKE THE FIRST PART OF VERSE 6 A STATEMENT, AS IN TEV, AND TO BREAK VERSES 6 AND 7 INTO TWO SENTENCES. SAW THAT ISAAC HAD BLESSED JACOB: IT IS DIFFICULT TO TELL FROM THE TEXT WHETHER OR NOT ESAU WAS PRESENT WHEN ISAAC BLESSED JACOB. HOWEVER, THE TEXT USES SAW TO EXPRESS ESAU’S KNOWLEDGE OF THIS EVENT. IN MANY LANGUAGES A WORD LIKE “LEARNED,” “FOUND OUT,” “DISCOVERED” MAY BE MORE APPROPRIATE. A NUMBER OF TRANSLATIONS HAVE “ESAU HEARD” OR “ESAU HEARD NEWS THAT.…” THE ACT OF BLESSING JACOB REFERS TO VERSES 3 AND 4. SENT HIM AWAY TO PADDAN-ARAM TO TAKE A WIFE FROM THERE: PADDAN-ARAM IS AS IN VERSE 5. SEE VERSE 2 FOR WORDING SIMILAR TO THIS STATEMENT. AND THAT AS HE BLESSED HIM: RSV TREATS THIS AS THE INTRODUCTION TO THE QUOTED COMMAND. OTHERS LIKE TEV MAKE A NEW SENTENCE AND REPEAT THE VERB “LEARNED”: “HE ALSO LEARNED THAT WHEN ISAAC BLESSED HIM.…” CHARGED HIM MEANS ISAAC ORDERED, DIRECTED, OR TOLD JACOB. YOU SHALL NOT MARRY ONE OF THE CANAANITE WOMEN: RSV USES DIRECT SPEECH, WHICH REPEATS THE QUOTE GIVEN IN VERSE 1. NOTE THAT IN VERSE 6 TEV USES INDIRECT SPEECH. TRANSLATORS MUST DECIDE WHICH IS STYLISTICALLY BETTER IN THEIR LANGUAGES.**

**GENESIS 28:7: AND THAT JACOB HAD OBEYED HIS FATHER AND HIS MOTHER AND GONE TO PADDAN-ARAM: THAT IN RSV INTRODUCES THE THIRD CLAUSE CONTAINING THE INFORMATION THAT ESAU HAD LEARNED. TEV REPEATS “LEARNED” FOR THE THIRD TIME IN THE FORM OF “FOUND OUT.” WHAT HE FOUND OUT WAS THAT JACOB HAD OBEYED HIS PARENTS.**

**GENESIS 28:8: SO, WHEN ESAU SAW THAT THE CANAANITE WOMEN …: RSV USES A TIME CLAUSE. THE HEBREW FORM IS THE SAME AS IN THE OPENING OF VERSE 6. WE MAY TRANSLATE AS IN RSV OR SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “ESAU SAW THAT …,” OR AS IN TEV, “ESAU THEN UNDERSTOOD THAT.…” SOME TRANSLATIONS MAKE THE CONNECTION TO VERSES 6 AND 7 EVEN STRONGER BY SAYING “FROM THIS ESAU UNDERSTOOD.…” DID NOT PLEASE ISAAC HIS FATHER IS LITERALLY “WERE NOT PLEASING IN THE EYES OF ISAAC HIS FATHER.” THIS THOUGHT MAY BE EXPRESSED, FOR EXAMPLE, AS “WERE NOT PLEASING TO,” “WERE NOT ACCEPTABLE TO,” OR “WERE DISAGREEABLE TO.” SEE TEV “ISAAC DID NOT APPROVE OF.” REB HAS “HIS FATHER DISLIKED CANAANITE WOMEN,” AND NJB “HIS FATHER DISAPPROVED OF.…”**

**GENESIS 28:9: ESAU WENT TO ISHMAEL AND TOOK TO WIFE: AS A RESULT OF HIS PARENTS’ DISLIKE OF THE CANAANITE WOMEN, ESAU TRIES TO IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH THEM BY MARRYING ONE OF HIS COUSINS. TO BRING OUT THE LINK WITH THE PREVIOUS VERSE, SOME TRANSLATIONS BEGIN “SO HE WENT.…” WENT TO ISHMAEL MEANS “WENT WHERE ISHMAEL LIVED” OR “WENT WHERE ISHMAEL WAS.” SOME TRANSLATIONS SAY “WENT TO VISIT ISHMAEL.” IN THIS CONTEXT ISHMAEL MAY ALSO BE TAKEN TO MEAN “ISHMAEL AND HIS FAMILY” OR “THE CLAN OF ISHMAEL.” TOOK TO WIFE MEANS “MARRIED A WOMAN.” BESIDES THE WIVES HE HAD IS PLACED AT THE END OF THE HEBREW SENTENCE. TEV DOES NOT REPRESENT THIS PHRASE IN ITS TRANSLATION. AS IT HAS BEEN CLEARLY SAID THAT ESAU HAD OTHER WIVES (26:34), IT WILL PROBABLY BE SUFFICIENT TO SAY HERE “HE MARRIED ANOTHER WOMAN” OR “HE TOOK YET ANOTHER WIFE.” ONE TRANSLATION THAT FOLLOWS THE HEBREW ORDER CONCLUDES THE VERSE BY SAYING, AFTER THE NAME AND RELATIONSHIPS OF THE WOMAN, “AND SHE BECAME ESAU’S THIRD WIFE.” MAHALATH THE DAUGHTER OF ISHMAEL ABRAHAM’S SON, THE SISTER OF NEBAIOTH: MAHALATH IS IDENTIFIED AS THE DAUGHTER OF ISHMAEL AND THE SISTER OF NEBAIOTH. FURTHERMORE, ISHMAEL IS IDENTIFIED AS ABRAHAM’S SON. FOR A MODEL WORDING OF THESE RELATIONSHIPS, SEE TEV. SINCE NEBAIOTH IS NAMED IN 25:13 AS THE “FIRST-BORN OF ISHMAEL,” IT WILL BE NECESSARY IN SOME LANGUAGES TO SAY “YOUNGER SISTER OF NEBAIOTH.” IN SOME LANGUAGES THERE IS TOO MUCH INFORMATION IN VERSE 9 FOR A NATURAL SENTENCE. A MODEL TRANSLATION FROM ONE OF THESE LANGUAGES SAYS “SO HE WENT TO THE CLAN OF ISHMAEL, ABRAHAM’S SON, AND MARRIED ANOTHER WIFE, WHOSE NAME WAS MAHALATH. THIS WOMAN WAS THE DAUGHTER OF ISHMAEL AND THE SISTER OF NEBAIOTH.”**

**JACOB DREAMS AT BETHEL (28:10–22)**

**IN THIS SUBDIVISION, WHICH PICKS UP THE ACTION FROM THE SUMMARY STATEMENT OF VERSE 5, JACOB STARTS OUT ON HIS JOURNEY TO HARAN. IN VERSES 11–15 JACOB HAS A DREAM IN WHICH HE SEES A STAIRWAY THAT REACHES FROM EARTH TO HEAVEN, WITH ANGELS GOING UP AND DOWN ON IT. IN THIS DREAM THE LORD RENEWS THE PROMISE OF THE LAND AS GIVEN TO ABRAHAM IN 12:3, 7. IN VERSES 16–19 JACOB DEDICATES THE SITE AND NAMES IT BETHEL. IN VERSES 20–22 HE MAKES A VOW TO THE LORD.**

**SUBDIVISION HEADING**

**TRANSLATORS MAY WISH TO MODIFY THE HANDBOOK HEADING TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “JACOB’S DREAM,” “JACOB HAS A DREAM AT BETHEL,” OR “WHAT JACOB SAW WHEN HE DREAMED.” SPCL HAS “GOD APPEARS TO JACOB AT BETHEL,” AND GECL “JACOB SEES THE HEAVENS OPEN.”**

**GENESIS 28:10: THERE IS NOTHING IN THE HEBREW TEXT TO MARK A RESUMPTION OF THE STORY OF JACOB’S JOURNEY OR TO MAKE A TRANSITION FROM THE STATEMENT IN VERSE 5 THAT “HE [JACOB] WENT TO PADDAN-ARAM.” IN SOME LANGUAGES, HOWEVER, IT WILL BE NECESSARY TO INDICATE THE RELATIONSHIP OF VERSE 10 TO VERSE 5 AT THIS POINT. THE TRANSITION MAY BE INDICATED IN TWO WAYS FOR THE TEXT AS WE HAVE IT:**

**(1) WE MAY REGARD VERSE 5 AS THE BRIEF STATEMENT OF JACOB’S JOURNEY, AND THEN 28:10–29:14 AS TELLING IN MORE DETAIL WHAT HAPPENED ON THAT JOURNEY. IN THIS CASE WE MAY ADD AT THE BEGINNING OF VERSE 10 SOMETHING LIKE “NOW THIS IS THE STORY OF WHAT HAPPENED TO JACOB AS HE TRAVELED TO PADDAN-ARAM [MESOPOTAMIA].”**

**(2) WE MAY REGARD THE VERBS “SENT” AND “WENT” IN VERSE 5 AS REFERRING TO THE BEGINNING OF JACOB’S JOURNEY, AND VERSE 10 AS CONTINUING THE ACTION FROM VERSE 5. IN THIS CASE WE MAY TRANSLATE IN VERSE 5 “ISAAC SENT JACOB AWAY; AND HE SET OUT FOR PADDAN-ARAM …” OR “ISAAC SENT JACOB AWAY TO GO TO PADDAN-ARAM.…” THEN, IF NECESSARY, WE MAY BEGIN VERSE 10 BY SAYING “WHEN JACOB LEFT BEERSHEBA HE WENT.…” JACOB LEFT BEERSHEBA, AND WENT TOWARD HARAN: BEERSHEBA IS THE LAST-MENTIONED LOCATION OF ISAAC IN 26:23.**

**GENESIS 28:11: HE CAME TO A CERTAIN PLACE: AS THE HEBREW SENTENCE STATES LITERALLY, JACOB SPENDS THE NIGHT “IN THE PLACE” BECAUSE THE SUN HAD SET. NOTE THAT TEV SAYS IN ITS TEXT “A HOLY PLACE” AND IN ITS FOOTNOTE “A PLACE.” THE PRESENCE OF THE DEFINITE ARTICLE IN THE HEBREW MAY SUGGEST THAT THIS SPOT WAS ALREADY KNOWN TO BE SACRED, PERHAPS THE LOCATION OF A SHRINE. HOWEVER, IT IS UNLIKELY THAT THE NARRATOR HAS TWO MEANINGS IN MIND. JACOB SEEMS TO BE UNAWARE THAT THIS PLACE IS SACRED UNTIL AFTER HIS DREAM (VERSE 16). MOST MODERN TRANSLATIONS SAY “A PLACE” OR “A CERTAIN PLACE.” HOWEVER, REB HAS “A CERTAIN SHRINE.” IT MAY BE MORE SATISFACTORY HERE TO SAY “A SPECIAL PLACE.” STAYED THERE THAT NIGHT: THIS TRANSLATES A VERB MEANING TO “PASS THE NIGHT,” “STOP FOR THE NIGHT.” SINCE THE OVERNIGHTING IS OUTDOORS, SOME LANGUAGES HAVE SPECIAL TERMS TO EXPRESS THIS. BECAUSE THE SUN HAD SET: THIS SUGGESTS THAT JACOB HAD NOT CHOSEN THIS SPOT BUT WAS THERE WHEN IT GREW DARK, AND SO HAD TO SPEND THE NIGHT. ONE TRANSLATION THAT BRINGS THIS OUT WELL SAYS “ON HIS WAY HE CAME TO A PLACE JUST AS THE SUN WAS SETTING, AND HE CAMPED THERE FOR THE NIGHT.” TAKING ONE OF THE STONES OF THE PLACE, HE PUT IT UNDER HIS HEAD: THE STONE SERVED TO REST HIS HEAD ON, AND SOME TRANSLATIONS COMPARE IT TO A PILLOW; FOR EXAMPLE, SPCL “HE TOOK FOR A PILLOW ONE OF THE STONES IN THAT PLACE,” REB “… USING IT AS A PILLOW,” NJB “HE MADE IT HIS PILLOW.” SOME TRANSLATORS MAY FIND IT NECESSARY TO MODIFY THE ORDER SO THAT JACOB PLACES THE STONE UNDER HIS HEAD AFTER LYING DOWN; FOR EXAMPLE, “HE LAY DOWN AND PUT THE STONE UNDER HIS HEAD.” ONE CLEAR AND VERY BRIEF TRANSLATION OF THE LAST PART OF VERSE 11 IS “HE LAY DOWN, PILLOWED ON A STONE, AND SLEPT.”**

**GENESIS 28:12: AND HE DREAMED THAT THERE WAS A LADDER: THIS MAY NEED TO BE ADJUSTED TO SAY, AS IN TEV, “HE DREAMED THAT HE SAW.…” SOME TRANSLATIONS PREFER TO SAY “WHILE HE WAS ASLEEP, HE HAD A DREAM.…” LADDER IS AN INADEQUATE TRANSLATION OF THE HEBREW IN THE CONTEXT OF ANGELS GOING UP AND COMING DOWN. THE WORD INTENDS TO CONVEY THE IMAGE OF A STAIRWAY OR RAMP WITH WIDE STEPS. THE NRSV FOOTNOTE SAYS “OR STAIRWAY OR RAMP.” SUCH LONG STAIRWAYS WERE WELL KNOWN IN BABYLONIAN TEMPLE TOWERS EXCEPT, OF COURSE, THAT THEY DID NOT ACTUALLY REACH HEAVEN. SET UP ON THE EARTH: THAT IS, THE FOOT OF THE STAIRWAY RESTED ON THE GROUND. NOTE TEV’S RENDERING. WE MAY ALSO SAY “THAT WENT FROM THE GROUND TO THE SKY.” IN SOME LANGUAGES THE MOST NATURAL WAY TO SPEAK ABOUT THE STAIRWAY IS TO SAY “THE BOTTOM END WAS ON THE EARTH AND THE TOP END REACHED RIGHT UP TO HEAVEN.” AND THE TOP OF IT REACHED TO HEAVEN: IN MANY LANGUAGES THE TERM OR EXPRESSION CHOSEN TO TRANSLATE HEAVEN WILL MEAN BOTH “SKY” AND “PLACE WHERE GOD DWELLS.” BUT FOR LANGUAGES IN WHICH THERE ARE DIFFERENT TERMS, “SKY” IS PROBABLY MORE APPROPRIATE IN THIS CONTEXT. AT THIS POINT OF THE DESCRIPTION OF THE DREAM, WE HAVE A PICTURE OF HOW THE STAIRWAY IS LOCATED IN SPACE, IN WHICH “REACHING TO THE SKY” IS PAIRED WITH “STANDING ON THE GROUND.” THE FACT THAT THE PLACE IS HOLY AND A “GATEWAY TO HEAVEN” IS SOMETHING THAT JACOB DISCOVERS LATER, AS HE CONTEMPLATES HIS DREAM AFTER HE HAS WOKEN UP. AND BEHOLD, THE ANGELS OF GOD WERE ASCENDING AND DESCENDING ON IT: BEHOLD INDICATES MOST PROBABLY THAT WHAT IS ABOUT TO BE SAID IS BOTH VIVID AND UNUSUAL. SEE 22:11 FOR “ANGEL OF THE LORD.” HERE ANGELS IS PLURAL AND GOD TRANSLATES ’ELOHIM. THE WORDS USED TO TRANSLATE ASCENDING AND DESCENDING SHOULD BE APPROPRIATE FOR GOING UP AND DOWN ON A STAIRWAY OR ON A SERIES OF STEPS, AND THE VERB FORMS SHOULD DESCRIBE CONTINUOUS MOVEMENT.**

**GENESIS 28:13: BEHOLD SERVES THE SAME FUNCTION AS IN VERSE 12. IT IS REPEATED OFTEN IN DREAMS. THE LORD STOOD ABOVE IT: THE RSV FOOTNOTE GIVES THE ALTERNATIVE MEANING “BESIDE HIM.” SEE ALSO TEV FOOTNOTE. NRSV HAS REVERSED RSV AND PLACED “BESIDE HIM” IN ITS TEXT. THIS IS THE PREFERRED POSITION; THE PICTURE IS OF THE LORD STANDING BESIDE THE SLEEPING JACOB. SOME TRANSLATORS FEEL THAT IT IS NECESSARY TO EMPHASIZE FOR THEIR READERS THAT THIS APPEARANCE OF THE LORD IS STILL WITHIN JACOB’S DREAM: “THE LORD APPEARED IN THE DREAM AND STOOD CLOSE TO HIM” OR “IN THAT DREAM JACOB SAW THE LORD STANDING THERE.…” I AM THE LORD, THE GOD OF ABRAHAM YOUR FATHER: FOR THE WORDS I AM THE LORD, SEE 15:7. SINCE ABRAHAM IS NOT LITERALLY THE FATHER OF JACOB, SOME TRANSLATIONS PREFER TO SAY “YOUR GRANDFATHER ABRAHAM.” FOR THE SENSE OF THE GOD OF ABRAHAM, SEE 26:24. THE LAND ON WHICH YOU LIE: THE PROMISE OF THE LAND IS NOW GIVEN TO JACOB, AS IT HAD BEEN TO ABRAHAM EARLIER. IF TAKEN LITERALLY THIS EXPRESSION WOULD MEAN ONLY THE GROUND WHERE JACOB’S BODY IS RESTING, BUT THE SENSE IS NOT SO RESTRICTED. IT MAY BE NECESSARY IN SOME CASES TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “I WILL GIVE YOU AND YOUR DESCENDANTS ALL THIS LAND, EVEN WHERE YOU ARE LYING” OR “I WILL GIVE YOU AND YOUR DESCENDANTS THIS LAND OF CANAAN ON WHICH YOU ARE LYING.”**

**GENESIS 28:14: AND YOUR DESCENDANTS SHALL BE LIKE THE DUST OF THE EARTH: FOR THE COMPARISON OF NUMEROUS DESCENDANTS WITH DUST, SEE 13:16, WHERE GOD GAVE THIS SAME PROMISE TO ABRAHAM. SEE TEV “SPECKS OF DUST.” YOU SHALL SPREAD ABROAD: FOR A SIMILAR EXPRESSION REGARDING EXTENDING THE POPULATION, SEE ISA 54:3. THE SENSE OF THE VERB USED HERE IS “BREAK OUT,” BUT THE REFERENCE IS TO EXTENDING THE TERRITORY OR THE BORDERS OF THEIR COUNTRY. TO THE WEST … TO THE SOUTH: NOTE THAT TEV REDUCES THIS TO “IN ALL DIRECTIONS.” THE TEV MODEL MAY BE HELPFUL FOR LANGUAGES THAT USE LONG, DESCRIPTIVE EXPRESSIONS FOR NORTH, SOUTH, EAST, AND WEST. AND BY YOU AND YOUR DESCENDANTS SHALL ALL THE FAMILIES OF THE EARTH BLESS THEMSELVES: THE HEBREW WORDING IS THE SAME AS IN 12:3, WHERE RSV ALSO TRANSLATES “BLESS THEMSELVES.” SEE 12:3 FOR FULL DISCUSSION. SEE ALSO 18:18.**

**GENESIS 28:15: BEHOLD, I AM WITH YOU AND WILL KEEP YOU WHEREVER YOU GO: BEHOLD SERVES TO CALL JACOB’S ATTENTION TO WHAT THE LORD IS SAYING. TEV SAYS “REMEMBER.…” OTHER TRANSLATIONS SAY “LISTEN!” OR “DON’T YOU FORGET.…” I AM WITH YOU ASSURES JACOB THAT THE LORD ACCOMPANIES OR GOES WITH HIM TO GUIDE, DIRECT, AND PROTECT HIM. IN SOME LANGUAGES THIS MAY BE RENDERED AS A HABITUAL PRESENT OR FUTURE; THAT IS, “I AM ALWAYS WITH YOU” OR “I WILL ALWAYS BE WITH YOU.” KEEP YOU MEANS “GUARD,” “WATCH OVER,” “PROTECT” YOU. BRING YOU BACK TO THIS LAND: AS JACOB IS TRAVELING AWAY FROM CANAAN TO HARAN, THIS LAND AGAIN REFERS TO CANAAN, WHERE HE BEGAN HIS JOURNEY. FOR I WILL NOT LEAVE YOU UNTIL I HAVE DONE THAT OF WHICH I HAVE SPOKEN TO YOU: THE LORD’S PROMISE NOT TO LEAVE JACOB MEANS THAT HE WILL NOT ABANDON, FORSAKE, DEPART FROM JACOB. UNTIL I HAVE DONE … SHOULD NOT BE INTERPRETED TO MEAN THAT THE LORD WILL LEAVE JACOB AFTER HE HAS DONE WHAT HE HAD PROMISED. ACCORDINGLY, IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “I WILL NOT LEAVE YOU; I WILL DO EVERYTHING THAT I HAVE PROMISED TO DO.”**

**GENESIS 28:16: VERSE 15 COMPLETES THE LORD’S SPEECH TO JACOB. IN VERSES 16–17 JACOB REACTS TO HIS DREAM. THEN JACOB AWOKE FROM HIS SLEEP AND SAID: IN SOME LANGUAGES IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO INDICATE TO WHOM JACOB IS SPEAKING. AS HE IS ALONE, IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO SAY “JACOB AWOKE AND SAID TO HIMSELF.” ANOTHER MODEL TRANSLATION SAYS “WHEN JACOB WOKE UP, HE WAS THINKING ABOUT HIS DREAM AND SAID.…” SURELY THE LORD IS IN THIS PLACE: SURELY TRANSLATES A HEBREW ADVERB THAT SUGGESTS THAT SOMETHING UNEXPECTED HAS HAPPENED. AS DRIVER SAYS, “JACOB HAD BEEN ACCUSTOMED TO ASSOCIATE JEHOVAH’S PRESENCE WITH THE SACRED SPOTS AT WHICH HIS FATHER HAD DWELT AND WORSHIPED, AND IS SURPRISED TO FIND HIM HERE AS WELL.” TEV CAPTURES THE THOUGHT WELL WITH AN EXCLAMATION “THE LORD IS HERE!” MFT SAYS “THE ETERNAL MUST BE HERE!” IN THIS PLACE REFERS TO THE PLACE WHERE JACOB SPENT THE NIGHT. I DID NOT KNOW IT MAY NEED TO BE MODIFIED TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “AND I DID NOT KNOW HE WAS HERE.” IN SOME TRANSLATIONS THIS CLAUSE IS PLACED FIRST IN JACOB’S WORDS: “I DIDN’T KNOW THAT THE LORD WAS HERE, BUT TRULY HE IS!”**

**GENESIS 28:17: AND HE WAS AFRAID: THE FEAR THAT JACOB EXPERIENCES IS CAUSED BY UNKNOWINGLY BEING IN A SACRED SPOT AND BEING UNPREPARED FOR WHAT MIGHT HAPPEN TO HIM. THE LORD STANDING BESIDE HIM (VERSE 13) WOULD HAVE ADDED TO THE FEAR. AND SAID MAY NEED AGAIN TO BE EXPRESSED AS “AND SAID TO HIMSELF,” OR IDIOMATICALLY IN MANY CASES, “HE SAID IN HIS HEART.” HOW AWESOME IS THIS PLACE: AWESOME IS LITERALLY “TO BE FEARED?” JACOB EXPERIENCES THE DREAD, FEAR, AWESOMENESS OF BEING IN THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD. OTHER WORDS USED IN ENGLISH ARE “AWE-INSPIRING,” “FEARSOME,” “TERRIFYING.” IN SOME LANGUAGES IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO USE A FIGURATIVE EXPRESSION; FOR EXAMPLE, “HOW THIS PLACE MAKES MY HEART QUIVER,” “THIS PLACE MELTS MY LIVER.” IN OTHERS ALL OF THE SENSE OF AWE AND FEAR IS CONVEYED BY SAYING “THIS IS A SACRED [TABOO] PLACE.” THIS IS NONE OTHER EMPHASIZES THE CERTAINTY OF JACOB’S CONCLUSION REGARDING THE PLACE HE IS IN. THIS EXPRESSION MAY ALSO BE RENDERED, FOR EXAMPLE, “THIS IS CERTAINLY THE PLACE WHERE GOD LIVES.” HOUSEOF GOD REFERS TO THE HOUSE, PLACE, OR CITY WHERE GOD DWELLS AND NOT A HOUSETHAT GOD POSSESSES. AND THIS IS THE GATE OF HEAVEN: THIS REFERS TO THE SAME PLACE AS IN THE PREVIOUS SENTENCE. GATE OF HEAVEN EXPRESSES THE IDEA OF THE ENTRANCE TO HEAVEN. BECAUSE THIS WAS WHERE GOD HAD APPEARED TO JACOB, THE PLACE OF HIS DREAM WAS CONSIDERED THE GATE, DOORWAY, ENTRANCE TO HEAVEN. THE WHOLE EXPRESSION IS FIGURATIVE RATHER THAN LITERAL, AND SO IN SOME LANGUAGES IT IS NECESSARY TO SAY “IT IS JUST LIKE THE GATE OF HEAVEN.”**

**GENESIS 28:18: SO, JACOB ROSE EARLY IN THE MORNING: SO, RENDERS THE COMMON HEBREW CONNECTIVE, WHICH IS BETTER EXPRESSED HERE IN ENGLISH AS A TIME CLAUSE; FOR EXAMPLE, “WHEN JACOB GOT UP IN THE MORNING.” OR WITHOUT A TIME CLAUSE IT MAY BE EXPRESSED AS IN TEV. SET IT UP FOR A PILLAR: SET IT UP MEANS THAT JACOB STOOD IT ON END, SET IT UPRIGHT. PILLAR TRANSLATES A WORD THAT REFERS TO A STONE THAT IS STOOD UPRIGHT IN A PLACE TO MARK IT AS A SACRED SPOT. SUCH PILLARS ERECTED BY THE CANAANITES WERE LATER ORDERED TO BE DESTROYED IN EXO 23:24; 2 KGS 10:26–27. IN TRANSLATION IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “HE TOOK THE STONE HE HAD USED FOR A PILLOW AND STOOD IT ON END TO SHOW THIS PLACE WAS HOLY” OR “HE TOOK THE STONE HE HAD SLEPT ON AND STOOD IT ON END TO MARK THIS AS A PLACE WHERE GOD HAD APPEARED TO HIM.” IN SOME PARTS OF THE WORLD, STONE OR CONCRETE PILLARS ARE COMMONLY SET UP AS MEMORIALS TO PAST EVENTS OR TO PEOPLE, AND THE TERMS FOR “PILLAR” REFLECT THIS. TRANSLATIONS IN SUCH PLACES OFTEN SAY SOMETHING LIKE “HE STOOD IT UP AS A MEMORIAL OF WHAT HAD HAPPENED.” AND POURED OIL ON THE TOP OF IT: THE POURING OF OIL WAS TO RITUALLY CONSECRATE THE STONE AS SET APART FOR GOD FROM OTHER STONES. IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO STATE THAT THE OIL IS “OLIVE OIL.” ON TOP MEANS THAT JACOB POURED THE OIL ON THE UPPER END OF THE STONE. IN SOME CASES, IT WILL BE NECESSARY TO MAKE CLEAR THE PURPOSE OF JACOB’S SYMBOLIC ACT. NOTE THAT TEV DOES THIS WITH “DEDICATE IT TO GOD.”**

**GENESIS 28:19: HE CALLED THE NAME OF THAT PLACE BETHEL: AS BOTH RSV AND TEV FOOTNOTES SHOW, BETHEL MEANS “HOUSEOF GOD.” HOWEVER, TRANSLATORS MAY PREFER TO INCLUDE THIS MEANING IN THE TEXT AS DOES FRCL, WHICH SAYS “HE CALLED THIS PLACE BETHEL, WHICH MEANS HOUSEOF GOD.” FOR BETHEL SEE 12:8. BUT THE NAME OF THE CITY WAS LUZ AT THE FIRST: SEE JUDGES 1:23. WE MAY TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “THE TOWN THERE WAS EARLIER CALLED LUZ.” TEV PLACES THIS INFORMATION IN PARENTHESES. TRANSLATORS MAY DO LIKEWISE IF SUCH MARKS ARE KNOWN BY READERS.**

**GENESIS 28:20: JACOB MADE A VOW: VOW REFERS TO A SOLEMN PROMISE TO GIVE TO GOD SOME SERVICE IN EXCHANGE FOR CERTAIN PRAYERS OR WISHES BEING GRANTED. SEE NUM 21:2. IF GOD WILL BE WITH ME: THIS IS THE FIRST WISH. JACOB ADDRESSES GOD IN THE THIRD PERSON, BUT THIS MAY NEED TO BE EXPRESSED IN THE SECOND PERSON; FOR EXAMPLE, “GOD, IF YOU WILL BE WITH ME.…” KEEP ME IN THIS WAY THAT I GO IS JACOB’S SECOND WISH. RSV RENDERS THE HEBREW LITERALLY. WE MAY TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “IF YOU WILL PROTECT ME DURING MY JOURNEY [TO HARAN].” AS NOTED IN THE COMMENTS ON VERSE 5, JACOB’S JOURNEY COVERED A DISTANCE OF SOME 800 KILOMETERS (500 MILES), A VERY LONG WAY. SOME TRANSLATIONS BRING OUT THIS FACT HERE BY SAYING “CARE FOR ME ON THIS LONG JOURNEY I AM MAKING.” THE THIRD REQUEST IS GIVE ME BREAD TO EAT AND CLOTHING TO WEAR. BREAD IS USED HERE FOR FOOD GENERALLY: “IF YOU WILL GIVE ME FOOD AND CLOTHING.”**

**GENESIS 28:21: THE LAST WISH IS SO THAT I COME AGAIN TO MY FATHER’S HOUSEIN PEACE. JACOB ASKS THAT HE BE ABLE TO RETURN HOME SAFELY. IT SHOULD BE NOTICED THAT, ASIDE FROM ASKING FOR FOOD AND CLOTHING, EACH OF THESE REQUESTS IS SET FORTH IN THE PROMISES MADE TO JACOB BY THE LORD IN VERSE 15. HAVING STATED HIS WISHES OR REQUESTS TO THE LORD, JACOB PROMISES TO DO THREE THINGS IN RETURN. THE FIRST IS THE LORD SHALL BE MY GOD. HERE AGAIN JACOB ADDRESSES THE LORD IN THE THIRD PERSON, WHICH MUST OFTEN BE SHIFTED TO SECOND PERSON BY SAYING, FOR EXAMPLE, “YOU WILL BE MY GOD,” OR IN MANY CASES “YOU WILL BE THE GOD I WILL SERVE [WORSHIP].”**

**GENESIS 28:22: THE SECOND PART OF JACOB’S VOW OR PROMISE IS THIS STONE, WHICH I HAVE SET UP FOR A PILLAR, SHALL BE GOD’S HOUSE. THE TEXT MAKES CLEAR THAT THE STONE AND NOT THE PLACE GENERALLY IS TO BE GOD’S HOUSE. THE SENSE OF GOD’S HOUSE IS “A PLACE FOR WORSHIPING GOD,” “A PLACE TO PRAY TO GOD.” ACCORDINGLY, WE MAY TRANSLATE THIS SENTENCE, FOR EXAMPLE, “THIS STONE I HAVE SET UP AS A MARKER WILL BE THE PLACE WHERE PEOPLE COME TO WORSHIP YOU.” AND OF ALL THAT THOU GIVEST ME I WILL GIVE THE TENTH TO THEE COMPLETES THE THREE PROMISES OR VOWS MADE BY JACOB TO GOD. THE REGULAR PRACTICE OF THE TITHE, WHICH CAME MUCH LATER, IS DISCUSSED IN DEUT 14:22–29; 26:12–15. IN SOME LANGUAGES TO GIVE A TENTH REQUIRES SAYING SOMETHING LIKE “OUT OF EVERY TEN THINGS YOU GIVE ME I WILL GIVE BACK ONE TO YOU.” IN OTHER LANGUAGES THIS IS BEST EXPRESSED BY USING THE IDEA OF DIVIDING EVERYTHING INTO TEN PARTS; FOR EXAMPLE, “I WILL DIVIDE EVERYTHING THAT YOU GIVE ME INTO TEN HEAPS, AND GIVE ONE HEAP BACK TO YOU.”**

**JACOB ARRIVES AT LABAN’S HOUSE (29:1–14)**

**VERSES 1–14 TELL THE STORY OF JACOB’S ARRIVAL IN HARAN, HIS ARRIVAL AT THE WELL (2–3), HIS CONVERSATION WITH THE SHEEP HERDERS (4–8), HIS MEETING WITH RACHEL (29:9–12), AND HIS ENCOUNTER WITH LABAN (13–14). THE ARRIVAL OF JACOB IN HARAN SERVES TO SET THE SCENE FOR THE LARGER SECTION OF NARRATIVE IN CHAPTERS 29–31, WHICH IS THE EXTENDED STORY OF THE DEALINGS BETWEEN JACOB AND LABAN. AS KIDNER SAYS, THE INCIDENT AT THE WELL HAS THE EFFECT OF INTRODUCING JACOB TO LABAN “AS A BENEFACTOR INSTEAD OF A SUPPLIANT.” IT PORTRAYS JACOB AS FULL OF THRUST AND ENTERPRISE IN CONTRAST TO THE SHEPHERDS, “WHO ARE REALLY TOO LAZY TO SPEAK” (VON RAD). WHEN RACHEL COMES ON THE SCENE, JACOB KNOWS HOW TO ACT TO HIS OWN ADVANTAGE, “CAPPING THE FEAT OF STRENGTH WITH ONE OF SERVICE, AND THIS IN TURN WITH THE DRAMATIC ANNOUNCEMENT. IT IS A SUPERB ENTRY” (KIDNER).**

**SUBDIVISION HEADING**

**THE HANDBOOK HEADING MAY NEED TO BE REWORDED TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “JACOB MEETS RACHEL AND LABAN,” “JACOB MEETS RACHEL IN HARAN,” OR “JACOB ARRIVES IN HARAN.” FRCL HAS “JACOB MEETS RACHEL,” SPCL “JACOB IN HARAN,” GECL “JACOB COMES TO LABAN,” NIV “JACOB ARRIVES IN PADDAN-ARAM.”**

**GENESIS 29:1: THE WHOLE STORY OF JACOB’S JOURNEY, WHICH EXTENDS FROM 28:10 TO 29:14, ONLY MAKES TWO REFERENCES TO JACOB TRAVELING: IN 28:10 AND HERE. SO THIS VERSE PICKS UP THE ACTION FROM 28:10, CONTINUING JACOB’S JOURNEY FROM BETHEL AFTER THE DREAM HE HAD THERE. THIS VERSE IN FACT COVERS THE REST OF JACOB’S TRAVELING FROM BETHEL TO HARAN. THEN JACOB WENT ON HIS JOURNEY IS LITERALLY “JACOB LIFTED UP HIS FEET AND WENT.” IF THIS IS AN IDIOM, IT IS FOUND ONLY HERE. THE SENSE IS AS GIVEN IN BOTH RSV AND TEV. WENT ON MEANS HE LEFT BETHEL AND CONTINUED HIS JOURNEY TOWARD HARAN HIS DESTINATION. WE MAY TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “AFTER THAT JACOB WENT ON TOWARD HARAN” OR “THEN JACOB CONTINUED ON HIS JOURNEY” (NIV). ANOTHER MODEL IS “JACOB SET OUT AGAIN.…” CAME TO THE LAND OF THE PEOPLE OF THE EAST IS LITERALLY “TO THE LAND OF THE SONS OF THE EAST.” THE REFERENCE IS TO THE LAND THAT LAY TO THE EAST (IN THIS CASE NORTHEAST) OF CANAAN, THAT IS, MESOPOTAMIA. THE EXPRESSION IS ALSO USED BROADLY OF THE PEOPLE LIVING EAST AND NORTHEAST OF CANAAN, SUCH AS MOAB, AMMON, AND GILEAD, AS SEEN IN JUDGES 6:3, 33; ISA 11:14; JER 49:28. IN SOME LANGUAGES THIS EXPRESSION IS RENDERED BY DESCRIPTIVE TERMS; FOR EXAMPLE, “PEOPLE WHO LIVE WHERE THE SUN RISES,” “PEOPLE WHERE THE BIG RIVER FLOWS.” NEB/REB SAY “LAND OF THE EASTERN TRIBES.” IN THE CONTEXT OF THE STORY THAT FOLLOWS, THE GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION EAST IS NOT AS SIGNIFICANT AS THE FACT THAT JACOB CAME TO ANOTHER COUNTRY, WHERE THE PEOPLE HAD DIFFERENT CUSTOMS FROM THOSE OF CANAAN.**

**GENESIS 29:2: THE TEXT CONTAINS NO TRANSITION MARKER OTHER THAN THE COMMON CONNECTIVE BETWEEN THE GENERAL STATEMENT IN VERSE 1 AND THE STATEMENT ABOUT JACOB SEEING THE WELL IN VERSE 2. IN MANY LANGUAGES THIS IS TOO ABRUPT AND NEEDS TO BE ADJUSTED TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “WHEN HE REACHED THAT PLACE” OR “WHEN HE GOT THERE.…” FRCL SAYS “ONE DAY HE SAW.…” AS HE LOOKED, HE SAW A WELL IN THE FIELD: THE HEBREW SENTENCE USES HINNEH, COMMONLY RENDERED “BEHOLD” ELSEWHERE BY RSV. THIS PARTICLE IS PROBABLY USED TO EMPHASIZE THE VIVID IMAGE OF THE WELL AND TO GIVE AN ELEMENT OF SURPRISE. WELLS WERE AN UNCOMMON AND HIGHLY WELCOMED SIGHT TO TRAVELERS. TEV EXPRESSES THE ELEMENT OF SURPRISE WITH “SUDDENLY.” WELL REFERS HERE NOT TO A SPRING OR CISTERN BUT TO A DUG WELL. FIELD IS THE SAME TERM AS USED IN 25:27, 29, WHICH REFERRED TO THE PLACE WHERE ESAU HUNTED GAME. THIS IS NOT A CULTIVATED FIELD BUT RATHER OPEN GRAZING COUNTRY. MFT SAYS “IN THE OPEN COUNTRY,” TEV (AUSTRALIAN EDITION) “OUT IN THE COUNTRY,” NJV “OUT IN THE OPEN.” IT IS CALLED “OPEN” IN ENGLISH BECAUSE SUCH AREAS ARE NOT SURROUNDED BY ANY KIND OF ENCLOSURE SUCH AS A HEDGE OR FENCE AND ARE OUTSIDE OF THE TOWN AREA. AND LO, THREE FLOCKS OF SHEEP LYING BESIDE IT: LO IS THE TRANSLATION OF HINNEH, AND THAT TERM IS REPEATED HERE TO EMPHASIZE JACOB’S SURPRISE AT WHAT HE SAW (SHEEP GATHERED AROUND A WELL IN THE MIDDLE OF THE DAY). THE WORD TRANSLATED SHEEP REFERS TO SHEEP AND GOATS. THREE FLOCKS DEPICTS THESE ANIMALS AS GATHERED INTO THREE GROUPS. SINCE THE WELL WAS IN THE OPEN COUNTRY, IT IS VERY LIKELY THAT JACOB SAW THE SHEEP BEFORE HE ACTUALLY SAW THE WELL. A TRANSLATION THAT TAKES ACCOUNT OF THIS ORDER SAYS “HE WAS LOOKING AROUND AND HE SAW THREE FLOCKS OF SHEEP LYING NEAR A WELL.” LYING PICTURES THESE ANIMALS AS RESTING ON THE GROUND. IN THE REMAINDER OF VERSE 2 AND ALL OF VERSE 3, THE VERBS IN HEBREW DESCRIBE A CUSTOMARY PRACTICE, ACTIONS THAT WERE TAKEN DAILY TO WATER THE SHEEP. THE FLOCKS WERE WATERED MEANS THAT THE SHEEP HERDERS GAVE THEIR FLOCKS WATER FROM THIS WELL DAILY. THE STONE ON THE WELL’S MOUTH WAS LARGE: THE STONE COVERED THE OPENING OF THE WELL, AND WATER COULD NOT BE DRAWN UNTIL THE STONE HAD BEEN REMOVED. THE STONE IS NOT A LARGE ROCK OR BOLDER BUT A THICK FLAT STONE THAT LAY OVER THE OPENING OF THE WELL TO KEEP OBJECTS FROM FALLING IN AND TO CONTROL THE USE OF THE WATER. HEBREW, LIKE MANY OTHER LANGUAGES, USES MOUTH TO REFER TO THE OPENING OF THE WELL. OTHER EXPRESSIONS THAT ARE OFTEN USED ARE “THE EYE OF THE WELL” OR “OVER THE TOP OF THE WELL.”**

**WE MAY RESTRUCTURE VERSE 2 TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE: • ONE DAY JACOB CAME TO A WELL OUT IN THE OPEN COUNTRY, WHERE THE SHEEP HERDERS WATERED THEIR ANIMALS. THREE FLOCKS OF SHEEP AND GOATS WERE LYING NEAR THE WELL, AND A LARGE STONE WAS STILL COVERING THE OPENING.**

**GENESIS 29:3: WHEN ALL THE FLOCKS WERE GATHERED THERE: THE THOUGHT EXPRESSED HERE IS “WHENEVER ALL … THERE.” THAT IS, THE STONE WOULD BE REMOVED ONLY WHEN ALL THE FLOCKS WERE PRESENT TO BE WATERED. VON RAD SUGGESTS THAT ALL THE SHEPHERDS HAD EQUAL RIGHTS TO THE WELL, AND THAT THE WELL WAS ONLY OPENED WHEN THEY WERE ALL PRESENT, IN ORDER TO AVOID “ANY MISCHIEF OF INDIVIDUAL PARTNERS.” THE SHEPHERDS WOULD ROLL THE STONE FROM THE MOUTH OF THE WELL: ROLL MEANS TO MOVE BY TURNING OVER AND OVER LIKE A WHEEL. DRIVER, CITING THOMPSON, SAYS “CISTERNS—AND SOMETIMES ALSO ‘WELLS’—ARE IN THE EAST STILL GENERALLY COVERED IN BY A BROAD AND THICK FLAT STONE, WITH A ROUND HOLE IN THE MIDDLE, WHICH IN ITS TURN IS OFTEN COVERED WITH A HEAVY STONE, WHICH IT REQUIRES TWO OR THREE MEN TO ROLL AWAY.…” ANOTHER VIEW IS THAT THE WELL MOUTH WAS COVERED BY A VERY LARGE ROCK THAT COULD BE ROLLED BACK FAR ENOUGH TO ALLOW WATER TO BE DRAWN. IT IS ALSO POSSIBLE THAT THE FLAT STONE COVERING THE MOUTH WAS TURNED ON ITS EDGE AND ROLLED BACK. AND WATER THE SHEEP: THE PROCESS IS NOT DESCRIBED, BUT SOME TRANSLATORS MAY NEED MORE INFORMATION THAN IS GIVEN HERE. WATERING THE ANIMALS REQUIRED DRAWING WATER FROM THE WELL WITH A ROPE AND SKIN BUCKET, AND EMPTYING THE WATER INTO A DRINKING TROUGH WHERE THE ANIMALS DRANK. SEE 24:20. AND PUT THE STONE BACK IN ITS PLACE UPON THE MOUTH OF THE WELL: THE FINAL ACT EACH TIME THE SHEEP WERE WATERED WAS TO REPLACE THE STONE.**

**WE MAY TRANSLATE VERSE 3, FOR EXAMPLE: • WHENEVER ALL THE FLOCKS WERE THERE, THE HERDERS WOULD REMOVE THE STONE FROM THE OPENING OF THE WELL. THEY WOULD THEN DRAW WATER FOR THEIR ANIMALS, AND WHEN THEY WERE FINISHED, THEY WOULD REPLACE THE STONE OVER THE WELL.**

**IN SOME LANGUAGES IT IS MORE NATURAL TO GIVE THE DESCRIPTION OF WHAT HAPPENED EACH DAY AT THE WELL FIRST, SO THAT IT DOES NOT INTERRUPT THE STORY LINE. ONE TRANSLATION THAT FOLLOWS THIS RESTRUCTURING OF VERSES 2–3 SAYS:**

**• 2–3 AT LAST HE CAME TO A WELL WHERE THE SHEPHERDS USED TO WATER THEIR SHEEP. THEY HAD A BIG STONE THERE TO SHUT THE WELL. EVERY DAY, WHEN THE SHEPHERDS BROUGHT THEIR SHEEP, THEY USED TO.…**

**WHEN JACOB CAME TO THAT WELL, THREE FLOCKS OF SHEEP WERE LYING THERE WAITING FOR WATER, 4 AND JACOB SPOKE TO THE SHEPHERDS WHO WERE SITTING THERE.**

**GENESIS 29:4: VERSES 4–8 DESCRIBE JACOB’S CONVERSATION WITH THE SHEEP HERDERS AT THE WELL. THE NARRATOR GIVES A PICTURE CONTRASTING, ON THE ONE HAND, JACOB WHO IS EXCITED AND TALKATIVE, AND ON THE OTHER HAND, THE HERDSMEN WHO HAVE LITTLE INTEREST IN THIS STRANGER; AS SPEISER SAYS, “THEY ACT AS IF EACH WORD WERE JUST TOO MUCH TROUBLE.” JACOB SAID TO THEM: SAID MUST OFTEN BE RENDERED AS “ASKED” IN THE CONTEXT OF VERSES 4. MY BROTHERS IS A GENERAL ADDRESS FORM USED BETWEEN MEN AND DOES NOT IMPLY IN THIS CONTEXT ANY KINSHIP WITH JACOB. FOR A SIMILAR USAGE SEE 19:7. IN ENGLISH IT MAY BE RENDERED AS “MY FRIENDS” (SPEISER, TEV). IN THIS CONTEXT IT IS PERHAPS JUST AS IMPORTANT FOR JACOB TO ADDRESS THE SHEPHERDS WITH AN APPROPRIATE GREETING WORD AS TO TRY TO FIND A CLOSE EQUIVALENT FOR BROTHERS. A TRANSLATION IN AN AUSTRALIAN LANGUAGE HAS JACOB SAY “GOOD DAY. WHERE ARE YOU FROM?” WHERE DO YOU COME FROM? JACOB ASKS ABOUT THEIR ORIGIN, PROBABLY BECAUSE HE WISHES TO KNOW WHERE HE IS. THEIR SHORT REPLY WE ARE FROM HARAN MEANS THEY ARE FROM THE TOWN CALLED HARAN. IN SOME LANGUAGES THIS IS EXPRESSED AS “WE ARE HARAN’S PEOPLE,” “OUR VILLAGE IS HARAN,” “HARAN IS WHERE WE LIVE.” TRANSLATORS SHOULD TRY TO EXPRESS THIS ANSWER IN AS FEW WORDS AS POSSIBLE.**

**GENESIS 29:5: DO YOU KNOW LABAN THE SON OF NAHOR? SON OF NAHOR IS USED TO REFER TO LABAN AS A DESCENDANT OF NAHOR. LABAN IS THE SON OF BETHUEL AND GRANDSON OF NAHOR. IN SOME LANGUAGES IT WILL BE NECESSARY TO SAY “GRANDSON OF NAHOR.” THE REPLY OF THE HERDERS TAKES THE TYPICAL HEBREW FORM FOR EXPRESSING “YES,” WHICH IS TO REPEAT THE QUESTIONER’S VERB IN A POSITIVE WAY, “WE KNOW HIM.” IN SOME LANGUAGES THIS REPLY WILL BE A WORD EQUIVALENT TO “YES” OR “YES, WHAT YOU SAY IS SO.”**

**GENESIS 29:6: IN VERSE 6 JACOB ASKS A THIRD QUESTION: IS IT WELL WITH HIM? THIS QUESTION IS LITERALLY “[IS] SHALOM TO HIM?” SHALOM HERE HAS THE SENSE OF WELL-BEING OR GOOD HEALTH. LANGUAGES DIFFER GREATLY IN THE WAY THEY EXPRESS INQUIRIES CONCERNING A THIRD PERSON’S WELL-BEING; FOR EXAMPLE, “DOES HIS HEART REST?” “DOES HIS LIVER SIT QUIETLY?” “IS COOLNESS WITH HIS INNERMOST?” THE LOCAL MEN GIVE A ONE-WORD REPLY, “SHALOM,” MEANING THAT HE IS WELL. DURING THIS CONVERSATION THE APPROACH OF RACHEL, LABAN’S DAUGHTER, CAUSES THE MEN TO CALL JACOB’S ATTENTION TO HER: AND SEE, RACHEL HIS DAUGHTER IS COMING. SEE TRANSLATES THE HEBREW HINNEH, WHICH CALLS JACOB’S ATTENTION TO THIS EVENT. TEV AND OTHERS SAY “LOOK.” WE MAY ALSO SAY IN ENGLISH, FOR EXAMPLE, “THERE IS RACHEL.” VON RAD AND OTHERS SUGGEST THAT THE MEN POINT OUT RACHEL TO JACOB SO THAT HE WILL DIRECT HIS QUESTIONS TO HER AND NOT BOTHER THEM ANY FURTHER. COMING WITH THE SHEEP MUST OFTEN BE EXPRESSED AS “BRINGING THE SHEEP.” IN SHEEP-RAISING CULTURES THE APPROPRIATE TERM SHOULD BE USED, SUCH AS LEADING OR DRIVING THE SHEEP. THE WORD FOR SHEEP IS THE SAME AS IN VERSE 2.**

**GENESIS 29:7: JACOB, WHO IS UNFAMILIAR WITH THE LOCAL CUSTOM, URGES THE HERDERS TO GO AHEAD AND WATER THE SHEEP SO THAT THEY CAN RETURN TO THE PASTURES FOR THE REST OF THE DAY. BEHOLD IS USED HERE TO INTRODUCE ADVICE JACOB WANTS TO GIVE THE LOCAL MEN. HE BEGINS BY POINTING OUT TO THEM THAT IT IS STILL HIGH DAY. HIGH DAY IS NOT IDIOMATIC ENGLISH. THE HEBREW EXPRESSION IS LITERALLY “BIG DAY,” WHICH MEANS THAT THE SUN IS STILL HIGH IN THE SKY, A LONG WHILE BEFORE SUNSET, OR THAT A GREAT PART OF THE DAY IS STILL BEFORE THEM. TEV AND OTHERS SAY “BROAD DAYLIGHT,” WHICH REFERS TO ANY TIME IN WHICH THE SUN IS STILL SHINING BRIGHTLY. IN TRANSLATION ANY LOCAL TERM THAT REFERS TO THE MIDDLE OF THE DAY WILL BE SUITABLE HERE; WHERE A MEAL IS NORMALLY EATEN AT MIDDAY, FOR EXAMPLE, WE MAY SAY, “IT IS ONLY DINNER-TIME.” IT IS NOT TIME FOR THE ANIMALS TO BE GATHERED TOGETHER: ANIMALS TRANSLATES A GENERAL WORD FOR DOMESTIC ANIMALS THAT MAY INCLUDE CATTLE, HORSES, CAMELS, AND DONKEYS, AS WELL AS SHEEP AND GOATS. IN REFERENCE TO DOMESTIC ANIMALS BE GATHERED TOGETHER MEANS TO BE ROUNDED UP FOR THE NIGHT AND PERHAPS BROUGHT INTO FOLDS. SOME TRANSLATIONS SAY “IT IS NOT TIME TO PUT THE SHEEP INSIDE THEIR FENCE” OR “… TO TAKE THEM BACK TO THE YARD.” IN THE HEBREW JACOB EXPRESSES TWO IMPERATIVES, WHICH SPEISER SAYS SHOULD NOT BE TAKEN AS COMMANDS. HE, LIKE TEV, TRANSLATES THEM AS QUESTIONS: “WHY DON’T YOU WATER THEM AND GO ON GRAZING?” WATER THE SHEEP MAY NEED TO BE REWORDED TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “GIVE THE SHEEP WATER TO DRINK.” GO, PASTURE THEM MAY BE EXPRESSED AS “TAKE THE SHEEP OUT AND LET THEM GRAZE, EAT.”**

**GENESIS 29:8: THE HERDERS REPLY WE CANNOT [WATER THE ANIMALS] UNTIL ALL THE FLOCKS ARE GATHERED TOGETHER. THIS PART OF THE VERSE REPEATS THE CUSTOMARY EVENTS OF GATHERING THE SHEEP AND REMOVING THE STONE, AS GIVEN IN VERSE 3. IN LANGUAGES THAT DO NOT USE THE CONSTRUCTION CANNOT … UNTIL, IT IS POSSIBLE TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “WE HAVE TO WAIT HERE FOR THE OTHER SHEPHERDS [OR, FLOCKS]. WHEN THEY COME, WE CAN ROLL THE STONE AWAY FROM THE WELL. WE HAVE TO WATER ALL THE SHEEP TOGETHER.” IN SOME LANGUAGES THE REPLY OF THE HERDERS WILL NATURALLY BEGIN WITH A NEGATIVE WORD OR EXPRESSION. EXAMPLES FROM SOME TRANSLATIONS ARE “NO. WE CAN’T DO THAT”; “NO. WE DON’T DO IT LIKE THAT.” FOR STONE IS ROLLED SEE THE COMMENTS IN VERSE 3. THEN WE WATER THE SHEEP: THAT IS, “AFTER REMOVING THE STONE FROM THE WELL, WE WATER THE SHEEP.”**

**GENESIS 29:9: WHILE THE CONVERSATION IN VERSES 4–8 HAS BEEN GOING ON, RACHEL HAS BEEN APPROACHING THE WELL WITH HER FATHER’S FLOCK. WHILE HE WAS STILL SPEAKING WITH THEM: HE REFERS TO JACOB, AND THEM REFERS TO THE LOCAL HERDERS. RACHEL CAME WITH HER FATHER’S SHEEP: THE POINT OF VIEW IS FROM THE WELL, WHERE RACHEL HAS NOW ARRIVED. THIS SENTENCE MAY NEED TO BE RESTRUCTURED TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “RACHEL ARRIVED AT THE WELL WITH HER FATHER’S SHEEP.” TRANSLATORS MAY NOTICE THAT TEV DOES NOT REPEAT IN VERSE 9 THAT THE SHEEP BELONG TO LABAN, BECAUSE THAT FACT HAS BEEN STATED IN VERSE 6 AS “HIS FLOCK,” AND IT WILL OCCUR AGAIN IN VERSE 10. FOR SHE KEPT THEM IS LITERALLY “BECAUSE SHE WAS A SHEPHERDESS,” THAT IS, A GIRL WHO TAKES CARE OF THE FAMILY SHEEP. IN SOME LANGUAGES THIS EXPRESSION MAY NEED TO BE STATED, FOR EXAMPLE, AS “RACHEL, WHO CARED FOR HER FATHER’S SHEEP, CAME TO THE WELL.”**

**GENESIS 29:10: NOW WHEN JACOB SAW RACHEL: NOW WHEN TRANSLATES THE HEBREW VERB “TO HAPPEN” FOLLOWED BY A RELATIVE CLAUSE MARKER. IN KJV THIS IS REGULARLY TRANSLATED “AND IT CAME TO PASS.” THIS MAY BEST BE RENDERED IN ENGLISH AS A TIME EXPRESSION, “WHEN” OR “AS SOON AS.” SAW RACHEL: JACOB’S ATTENTION WAS CALLED TO RACHEL IN VERSE 6 WHILE SHE WAS STILL SOME DISTANCE AWAY. NOW, HOWEVER, SHE IS NEAR THE WELL, AND JACOB CAN SEE HER DISTINCTLY. SHE IS DESCRIBED IN VERSE 17 AS BEING “BEAUTIFUL AND LOVELY.” RACHEL THE DAUGHTER OF LABAN: THE RELATION OF RACHEL TO LABAN WAS FIRST GIVEN IN VERSE 6, AND TEV DOES NOT REPEAT IT HERE. LABAN HIS MOTHER’S BROTHER: THIS INFORMATION WAS GIVEN IN 28:2, 5. IN THIS VERSE MOTHER’S BROTHER OCCURS THREE TIMES, AND TRANSLATORS MAY NEED TO FIND WAYS TO AVOID UNNECESSARY REPETITIONS OF THIS PHRASE. FOR EXAMPLE, ON THE FIRST OCCURRENCE WE MAY SAY “HIS UNCLE LABAN” AND OMIT THE SECOND AND THIRD REPETITIONS, AS IN TEV. WE MAY TRANSLATE VERSE 10, FOR EXAMPLE, “WHEN JACOB SAW HIS COUSIN RACHEL, THE DAUGHTER OF HIS UNCLE LABAN, …” JACOB WENT UP AND ROLLED THE STONE FROM THE WELL’S MOUTH: THE NARRATOR GIVES THE IMPRESSION THAT IT IS THE SIGHT OF THE LOVELY RACHEL THAT GIVES JACOB THE STRENGTH TO REMOVE THE STONE BY HIMSELF. BUT IT WILL TAKE HIM FOURTEEN YEARS OF LABOR TO OBTAIN HER FOR HIS WIFE. AND WATERED THE FLOCK OF LABAN: THAT IS, “AND GAVE WATER TO LABAN’S FLOCK” OR “GAVE A DRINK TO LABAN’S ANIMALS.”**

**GENESIS 29:11: THEN JACOB KISSED RACHEL: FOR DISCUSSION OF KISSED SEE 27:26, 27. WEPT ALOUD IS LITERALLY “LIFTED UP HIS VOICE AND WEPT.” THE SCENE IS HIGHLY EMOTIONAL, AND JACOB MAKES NO EFFORT TO HIDE HIS TEARS OF JOY. IN TRANSLATION IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO MAKE CLEAR THAT JACOB CRIES BECAUSE OF THE JOYFUL RELIEF HE EXPERIENCES WHEN AT LAST HE HAS REACHED HARAN AND FOUND THE BEAUTIFUL RACHEL. IN ENGLISH WE MAY SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “HE BURST INTO TEARS OF JOY.” GECL SAYS “HE WAS SO MOVED HE BURST INTO TEARS,” FRCL “UNABLE TO HOLD BACK HIS TEARS.” EXAMPLES FROM SOME OTHER TRANSLATIONS ARE “AND HE WEPT LOUDLY, BECAUSE HE WAS REALLY HAPPY” AND “HE WAS FEELING SO HAPPY THAT THE TEARS CAME FROM HIS EYES.”**

**GENESIS 29:12: AND JACOB TOLD RACHEL: WHAT JACOB TOLD RACHEL MAY NEED TO BE SHIFTED TO DIRECT SPEECH, “I AM …,” AS IN TEV. JACOB’S ANNOUNCEMENT IS THE NARRATIVE CLIMAX OF THIS WHOLE EPISODE; AND EVEN IN LANGUAGES THAT NATURALLY USE INDIRECT SPEECH, DIRECT SPEECH MAY BE MORE NATURAL OR APPROPRIATE IN THIS CONTEXT. KINSMAN TRANSLATES THE HEBREW “BROTHER,” BUT A GENERAL TERM SUCH AS “RELATIVE” OR “KINSMAN” IS PREFERRED IN ENGLISH. WE MAY ALSO GIVE THE ACTUAL RELATIONSHIP AND SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “COUSIN” OR “YOUR FATHER’S SISTER’S SON.” REBEKAH’S SON: SINCE REBEKAH IS RACHEL’S AUNT (FATHER’S SISTER), WE MAY TRANSLATE THIS PART OF VERSE 12, FOR EXAMPLE, “JACOB TOLD RACHEL ‘I AM YOUR FATHER’S NEPHEW (A SON OF ONE’S BROTHER, SISTER, BROTHER-IN-LAW, OR SISTER-IN-LAW) AND THE SON OF YOUR AUNT REBEKAH.’” IN SOME CULTURES, IT IS REQUIRED THAT, IN AN INTRODUCTION LIKE THIS, THE SPEAKER RELATES HIMSELF OR HERSELF DIRECTLY TO THE HEARER; SO, THE TRANSLATION MAY HAVE JACOB SAY “I AM REBEKAH’S SON. YOUR FATHER IS MY UNCLE.” RAN AND TOLD HER FATHER MAY NEED TO BE MODIFIED TO SAY “SHE RAN AND TOLD HER FATHER WHAT JACOB HAD SAID.”**

**GENESIS 29:13: WHEN LABAN HEARD THE TIDINGS OF JACOB HIS SISTER’S SON: TIDINGS TRANSLATES A WORD MEANING “HEARING,” “REPORT,” “NEWS.” TIDINGS OF JACOB MEANS THE NEWS ABOUT JACOB. IN SOME LANGUAGES A GENERAL NOUN MEANING “THE TALK” OR “THE WORD” IS USED IN A WIDE RANGE OF CONTEXTS AND IS NATURALLY USED HERE: “WHEN LABAN HEARD THE TALK THAT HIS SISTER’S SON HAD COME.…” EMBRACED HIM AND KISSED HIM: EMBRACED MEANS TO “HUG,” “CLASP WITH THE ARMS,” “PUT THE ARMS AROUND AS A GESTURE OF WELCOME.” FOR KISS SEE COMMENTS ON 27:26. BROUGHT HIM TO HIS HOUSE: LABAN TOOK AND WELCOMED JACOB INTO HIS HOUSE. JACOB TOLD LABAN ALL THESE THINGS: THESE THINGS MAY REFER TO THE CONFLICT BETWEEN JACOB AND ESAU, BUT IT IS MORE LIKELY TO BE THE NEWS OF HIS FAMILY AS WELL AS THE EVENTS ON HIS LONG JOURNEY TO HARAN. AND NO DOUBT HE SPOKE OF HIS REASON FOR COMING TO HARAN, JUST AS THE SERVANT HAD DONE FOR ISAAC, HIS FATHER, AT AN EARLIER TIME. WE MAY TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “JACOB TOLD LABAN ALL HIS NEWS” OR “… ALL THAT HAD HAPPENED TO HIM.”**

**GENESIS 29:14: LABAN’S RESPONSE ON HEARING JACOB’S ACCOUNT IS SURELY YOU ARE MY BONE AND MY FLESH! SURELY TRANSLATES AN EMPHATIC PARTICLE THAT CAN ALSO BE RENDERED “CERTAINLY,” “THERE IS NO QUESTION,” “WITHOUT DOUBT.” MY BONE AND MY FLESH HAS THE SAME SENSE AS THE EXPRESSION USED BY ADAM IN 2:23. BY USING THIS IDIOM LABAN RECOGNIZES JACOB AS HIS RELATIVE OR CLOSE KINSMAN. TEV AND OTHERS EMPLOY AN ENGLISH EQUIVALENT, “MY OWN FLESH AND BLOOD.” FRCL SAYS “YOU CERTAINLY ARE OF MY FAMILY, THE SAME BLOOD AS I,” AND SPCL “TRULY YOU ARE A PERSON OF MY OWN BLOOD.” WE MAY ALSO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “YOU ARE REALLY PART OF MY FAMILY” OR “WE-TWO ARE FROM THE SAME ANCESTOR.” THIS PART OF THE NARRATIVE CLOSES WITH AND HE STAYED WITH HIM A MONTH; THAT IS, “JACOB REMAINED IN LABAN’S HOUSEFOR A MONTH.”**

**JACOB WORKS FOR LABAN AND GETS LEAH AND RACHEL (29:15–30)**

**IN VERSES 15–20 JACOB WORKS FOR LABAN TO GET RACHEL AS HIS WIFE. UNLIKE THE ARRANGEMENTS AND ELABORATE GIFTS GIVEN IN ISAAC’S MARRIAGE TO REBEKAH, JACOB COMES TO LABAN WITH ONLY HIS CAPACITY FOR WORK TO EXCHANGE FOR RACHEL. IN VERSE 18 HE OFFERS TO WORK FOR SEVEN YEARS. IN VERSES 21–30 LABAN DECEIVES JACOB AND GIVES HIM LEAH, THE OLDER SISTER. LABAN REQUIRES JACOB TO WORK FOR HIM SEVEN MORE YEARS IN ORDER TO GET RACHEL.**

**SUBDIVISION HEADING**

**TRANSLATORS MAY USE THE HANDBOOK HEADING OR REWORD IT; FOR EXAMPLE, “JACOB WORKS FOR LABAN TO GET HIS WIVES” OR “THE STORY OF HOW JACOB GOT HIS WIVES.” TEV HAS “JACOB SERVES LABAN FOR RACHEL AND LEAH,” FRCL “JACOB’S DOUBLE MARRIAGE,” GECL “JACOB SERVES [LABAN] TWICE FOR RACHEL,” NJV “JACOB’S TWO MARRIAGES.”**

**GENESIS 29:15: THE TEXT FROM THIS VERSE TO VERSE 19 IS ANOTHER INSTANCE OF A NEGOTIATION BETWEEN TWO PARTIES, IN THIS CASE JACOB AND LABAN. FOR A PREVIOUS INSTANCE SEE 23:3–18. IN HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH LABAN, JACOB WAS NEITHER A SLAVE NOR A HIRED WORKER; SO, SOME AGREEMENT OR CONTRACT WAS NECESSARY IF JACOB WAS TO STAY AND WORK WITH LABAN. THIS EPISODE OPENS WITH LABAN ASKING JACOB A RHETORICAL QUESTION: BECAUSE YOU ARE MY KINSMAN, SHOULD YOU THEREFORE SERVE ME FOR NOTHING? THIS QUESTION EXPECTS A NEGATIVE REPLY. “SHOULD YOU WORK FOR ME FOR NOTHING? NO!” IN MANY LANGUAGES IT WILL BE MORE NATURAL TO USE A NEGATIVE STATEMENT, “YOU SHOULD NOT WORK FOR ME FOR NOTHING,” OR A POSITIVE STATEMENT, “YOU SHOULD BE PAID FOR WORKING FOR ME.” LABAN’S QUESTION ASSUMES JACOB WILL WORK OR HAS ACCEPTED THAT HE WILL WORK FOR HIS UNCLE. HOWEVER, THIS FACT IS NOT STATED UNTIL VERSE 18. IT MAY BE NECESSARY, THEREFORE, TO MAKE THIS CLEAR AT THE BEGINNING OF VERSE 15 BY SAYING, FOR EXAMPLE, “THEN LABAN SPOKE WITH JACOB ABOUT HIS WORK.…” IT IS NOT STATED, BUT WE MAY QUITE NATURALLY ASSUME FROM THE TEXT THAT JACOB HAD ALREADY BEGUN TO WORK FOR LABAN DURING THE MONTH THAT IS REFERRED TO IN VERSE 14. IF THIS IS THE CASE, THEN THE NEGOTIATION THAT IS REPORTED HERE TAKES PLACE TO SORT OUT A PROBLEM THAT HAS ALREADY ARISEN. ONE TRANSLATION THAT REFLECTS THIS UNDERSTANDING OF THE SITUATION MOVES THE TIME EXPRESSION “FOR ONE MONTH” FROM THE END OF VERSE 14 TO THE BEGINNING OF THIS EPISODE AS PART OF A TIME TRANSITION: “AFTER JACOB HAD BEEN WORKING FOR HIS UNCLE LABAN FOR ONE MONTH, LABAN SAID TO HIM, “YOU CAN’T WORK FOR ME WITHOUT PAY.” KINSMAN TRANSLATES THE HEBREW FOR “BROTHER.” SEE COMMENTS ON VERSE 12. HERE THE TRANSLATION MAY FOLLOW TEV “MY RELATIVE,” OR ELSE GIVE THE ACTUAL RELATIONSHIP, “MY NEPHEW (A SON OF ONE’S BROTHER, SISTER, BROTHER-IN-LAW, OR SISTER-IN-LAW).” NOTE THAT TEV HAS SWITCHED THE TWO CLAUSES SO THAT THE CAUSE CLAUSE FOLLOWS THE RESULT CLAUSE. THIS MAY SERVE AS A MODEL FOR SOME LANGUAGES. TELL ME, WHAT SHALL YOUR WAGES BE? THE REPLY TO THIS QUESTION COMES IN VERSE 18. WAGES REFERS TO PAYMENT OR REWARD GIVEN IN EXCHANGE FOR SERVICES. WE MAY TRANSLATE “TELL ME HOW MUCH I SHOULD PAY YOU,” “WHAT WAGES DO YOU ASK?” OR “HOW MUCH MONEY WILL YOU WANT?”**

**GENESIS 29:16: IN VERSES 16 AND 17 THE NARRATOR INTERRUPTS JACOB’S ANSWER TO GIVE AN INSIGHT INTO JACOB’S MOTIVATION FOR WORKING FOR HIS UNCLE. FOR SUGGESTIONS REGARDING ADJUSTMENTS OF THE INFORMATION IN VERSES 16–18, SEE THE COMMENTS AT THE END OF VERSE 17. NOW LABAN HAD TWO DAUGHTERS: NOW DOES NOT REFER TO TIME BUT RATHER IS A TRANSITION MARKER FOR THE BACKGROUND INFORMATION THAT IS BEING GIVEN. THE NAME OF THE OLDER WAS LEAH: THE OLDER MUST BE EXPRESSED IN SOME LANGUAGES BY A SPECIAL TERM FOR “OLDER SISTER” OR “FIRSTBORN DAUGHTER.” THE NAME OF THE YOUNGER IS LIKEWISE SOMETIMES CALLED BY A TERM DESIGNATING “YOUNGER SISTER.”**

**GENESIS 29:17: LEAH’S EYES WERE WEAK: WEAK TRANSLATES THE HEBREW FOR “TENDER,” “DELICATE,” “DAINTY.” ACCORDING TO SPEISER THE POPULAR EXPLANATION OF THE NAME LEAH AS MEANING “WEAK” HAS INFLUENCED THE TRANSLATION: “WHAT THE NARRATIVE APPEARS TO BE SAYING IS THAT LEAH HAD LOVELY EYES, BUT RACHEL WAS AN OUTSTANDING BEAUTY.” TEV TRANSLATES ACCORDING TO SPEISER’S LEAD BUT INCLUDES “WEAK” IN ITS FOOTNOTE. NIV, ON THE OTHER HAND, SAYS “WEAK” IN ITS TEXT AND “DELICATE” IN ITS FOOTNOTE. PROBABLY THE BEST SOLUTION FOR TRANSLATIONS THAT USE FOOTNOTES IS TO FOLLOW NRSV, WHICH HAS “LOVELY” IN ITS TEXT, AND IN ITS FOOTNOTE SAYS “MEANING OF HEBREW UNCERTAIN.” BUT RACHEL WAS BEAUTIFUL AND LOVELY: BUT CONTRASTS THE APPEARANCE OF THE TWO SISTERS. BEAUTIFUL IS LITERALLY “BEAUTIFUL IN FORM” AND MEANS SHE WAS SHAPED WELL, OR HAD AN ATTRACTIVE FIGURE. SEE TEV “SHAPELY.” LOVELY IS LITERALLY “BEAUTIFUL IN APPEARANCE.” TRANSLATORS SHOULD USE TERMS THAT DEFINE THESE PHYSICAL QUALITIES ON THE BASIS OF WHAT IS RECOGNIZED LOCALLY AS SHAPELY AND BEAUTIFUL. SINCE VERSES 16 AND 17 ARE AN EXPLANATION OF JACOB’S MOTIVATION IN WORKING FOR HIS UNCLE, IT MAY BE PREFERABLE IN SOME LANGUAGES TO EXPRESS THEM IN JACOB’S OWN WORDS OR THOUGHTS. ONE TRANSLATION THAT DOES THIS TRANSLATES VERSES 16–18 AS FOLLOWS: “WELL, JACOB THOUGHT ABOUT THIS. HE THOUGHT TO HIMSELF, ‘LABAN HAS TWO DAUGHTERS. THAT OLDER ONE LEAH IS PRETTY ALL RIGHT. BUT THE YOUNGER ONE RACHEL IS REALLY, REALLY PRETTY. SHE’S THE ONE I WANT.’ SO, HE SAID TO HIS UNCLE.…” ANOTHER KIND OF ADJUSTMENT IS TO PLACE THE INFORMATION IN VERSES 16, 17, AND 18A AT THE BEGINNING OF THIS SUBDIVISION, THAT IS, BEFORE VERSE 15. IN THIS CASE LABAN’S SPEECH IN VERSE 15 WILL FOLLOW “JACOB LOVED RACHEL.” FOR EXAMPLE, “[16] NOW LABAN HAD TWO DAUGHTERS … [17] … [18A] … JACOB LOVED RACHEL. [15] ONE DAY LABAN SAID TO JACOB, ‘… WHAT SHOULD YOUR WAGES BE?’ [18B] JACOB ANSWERED, ‘I WILL SERVE YOU SEVEN YEARS FOR RACHEL.’” IF THIS TYPE OF ADJUSTMENT IS FOLLOWED, THE VERSE NUMBERS “15–18” MAY BE PLACED BEFORE THIS MATERIAL.**

**GENESIS 29:18: JACOB LOVED RACHEL: THIS EXPLAINS WHY JACOB IS WILLING TO WORK SEVEN YEARS TO GET RACHEL FOR A WIFE. LOVED RACHEL MUST SOMETIMES BE EXPRESSED FIGURATIVELY; FOR EXAMPLE, “JACOB’S HEART WAS WARM FOR RACHEL,” “JACOB’S INNERMOST WAS FOLLOWING RACHEL,” OR “JACOB’S LIVER TURNED TOWARD RACHEL.” I WILL SERVE YOU SEVEN YEARS FOR YOUR YOUNGER DAUGHTER RACHEL: JACOB’S SERVICE OR WORK UNDER LABAN TAKES THE PLACE OF THE DOWRY OR GIFTS GIVEN TO THE BRIDE AND HER FAMILY. SEE 24:53. JACOB MAKES CLEAR THAT HE WILL WORK FOR THE YOUNGER DAUGHTER. TRANSLATORS MUST DECIDE IF THE REPETITION OF YOUNGER DAUGHTER HERE IS STYLISTICALLY NATURAL. IF IT IS NOT, IT CAN BE OMITTED.**

**GENESIS 29:19: LABAN DOES NOT OBJECT TO JACOB’S OFFER FOR RACHEL, BUT HIS REPLY IS NOT A DIRECT PROMISE TO GIVE JACOB WHAT HE IS ASKING FOR. IT LEAVES THE WAY OPEN FOR THE DECEPTION OF JACOB THAT IS DESCRIBED IN VERSES 23–25. IT IS BETTER THAT I GIVE HER TO YOU THAN THAT I SHOULD GIVE HER TO ANY OTHER MAN: LABAN’S REASONING IS BASED ON A PREFERENCE FOR MARRIAGE BETWEEN COUSINS. ANY OTHER MAN HAS A RESTRICTIVE SENSE IN THE HEBREW. IT REFERS TO SOMEONE WHO IS NOT OF THE FAMILY OR CLAN AND THEREFORE “AN OUTSIDER,” AS SPEISER TRANSLATES. IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “I WOULD RATHER GIVE RACHEL TO YOU AS A WIFE THAN HAVE SOMEONE ELSE MARRY HER.” ANOTHER TRANSLATION, WHICH FOLLOWS THE LOCAL WAY OF DISCUSSING MARRIAGE AND BETROTHAL, SAYS “THIS WOULD MAKE ME VERY HAPPY. YOU ARE THE RIGHT MAN FOR HER.” STAY WITH ME MAY NEED A TRANSITION SUCH AS “THEREFORE,” “SO,” “FOR THIS REASON.” BY SAYING THIS LABAN ACCEPTS JACOB’S OFFER. IN SOME LANGUAGES IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO SAY “I AGREE; SO STAY WITH ME AND WORK” OR “I ACCEPT; NOW STAY HERE AND WORK FOR ME.” IN SOME LANGUAGES WORDS SUCH AS “I AGREE” COME MORE NATURALLY AT THE BEGINNING OF LABAN’S SPEECH.**

**GENESIS 29:20: SO, JACOB SERVED SEVEN YEARS: IN THE HEBREW TEXT BOTH VERSE 20 AND VERSE 21 BEGIN WITH THE NORMAL CONNECTIVE, AND THERE IS NO INDICATION OF A PARAGRAPH BREAK. SOME TRANSLATIONS MAKE VERSE 20 THE CONCLUSION OF THE NEGOTIATION AND BEGIN A NEW PARAGRAPH AT VERSE 21 (RSV, TEV, NIV, SPEISER). MOST OF THESE TRANSLATIONS, INCLUDING RSV, BEGIN WITH SO; BUT TRANSLATORS MAY FIND THAT A CONCLUSION MARKER IS NOT REQUIRED HERE. OTHER TRANSLATIONS REGARD VERSE 20 AS BEGINNING THE NEXT EPISODE, WHICH CONTINUES TO VERSE 30, AND THEY MAKE VERSE 20 THE BEGINNING OF THE NEW PARAGRAPH. NJB STILL INDICATES THE LINK WITH VERSES 15–19 BY BEGINNING WITH “SO JACOB WORKED.…” REB, HOWEVER, JOINS VERSE 20 TO VERSE 21 AS A TIME CLAUSE: “WHEN JACOB HAD WORKED SEVEN YEARS FOR RACHEL, AND THEY SEEMED LIKE A FEW DAYS …, HE SAID TO LABAN, ‘I HAVE SERVED MY TIME. GIVE ME MY WIFE.…’” TRANSLATORS MAY FOLLOW EITHER OF THESE MODELS. FOR RACHEL MAY NEED TO BE EXPRESSED AS “IN ORDER TO MARRY RACHEL” OR “TO GET RACHEL AS HIS WIFE.” THEY SEEMED TO HIM BUT A FEW DAYS: THEY REFERS TO THE SEVEN YEARS OF WORK. THEY SEEMED … A FEW DAYS MAY NEED TO BE EXPRESSED, FOR EXAMPLE, AS “THE SEVEN YEARS PASSED AS QUICKLY AS A FEW DAYS.” BECAUSE OF THE LOVE HE HAD FOR HER: OR “BECAUSE HE LOVED RACHEL SO MUCH.”**

**GENESIS 29:21: FROM THIS POINT IN THE STORY, JACOB ENTERS INTO A NEW RELATIONSHIP WITH LABAN. WHILE LABAN REMAINS HIS UNCLE, HE IS NOW JACOB’S FATHER-IN-LAW; AND IN MANY CULTURES THIS NEW RELATIONSHIP OVERRIDES ALL OTHER RELATIONSHIPS. IN SOME LANGUAGES THERE IS A SPECIAL FORM OF ADDRESS THAT A MAN IS REQUIRED TO USE WHEN SPEAKING WITH HIS FATHER-IN-LAW, AND THAT MUST BE USED FROM THIS POINT ON. LIKEWISE, LABAN MUST USE THE APPROPRIATE FORM OF ADDRESS FOR A SON-IN-LAW WHEN ADDRESSING JACOB. IN SOME LANGUAGES THIS ALSO EXTENDS TO THE WAY A NARRATOR TELLS A STORY, SO THAT, FOR EXAMPLE, THE NARRATOR WILL NOT SAY “JACOB SAID TO LABAN” BUT “JACOB SAID TO HIS FATHER-IN-LAW.” GIVE ME MY WIFE THAT I MAY GO IN TO HER: JACOB REFERS TO RACHEL AS MY WIFE, ALTHOUGH THE MARRIAGE CELEBRATION HAS NOT YET TAKEN PLACE. IN SOME LANGUAGES THE SAME TERM IS USED FOR A WOMAN WHO IS FORMALLY ENGAGED OR BETROTHED TO A MAN, AS FOR A WOMAN WHO IS ACTUALLY MARRIED. HOWEVER, IN OTHER LANGUAGES IT WILL BE MORE ACCEPTABLE TO SAY “GIVE ME YOUR DAUGHTER.” GO IN TO HER REFERS TO HAVING SEX; HOWEVER, IN THIS CONTEXT IT IS BETTER EXPRESSED AS “MARRY HER.” WE MAY TRANSLATE “GIVE ME YOUR DAUGHTER TO BE MY WIFE,” “LET ME MARRY YOUR DAUGHTER.” FOR MY TIME IS COMPLETED: JACOB REFERS TO THE END OF THE SEVEN-YEAR WORK CONTRACT. TRANSLATORS MAY FIND IT BETTER TO PLACE THIS INFORMATION AT THE BEGINNING OF THE VERSE; FOR EXAMPLE, “MY SEVEN YEARS ARE FINISHED, SO LET ME MARRY YOUR DAUGHTER” OR “I HAVE WORKED FOR YOU FOR SEVEN YEARS. GIVE ME MY WOMAN SO I CAN MARRY HER.”**

**GENESIS 29:22: SO, LABAN GATHERED TOGETHER ALL THE MEN OF THE PLACE: SO, MARKS THE RESULT OF JACOB’S DEMAND IN VERSE 21. GATHERED TOGETHER IN THE CONTEXT OF GIVING A FEAST MEANS “INVITED,” “BROUGHT TOGETHER.” MEN REFERS HERE TO PEOPLE GENERALLY AND NOT JUST TO THE MALES. FEAST IS LITERALLY “DRINKING PARTY.” IT IS BASED ON THE VERB TO DRINK AND REFERS TO A CELEBRATION IN WHICH WINE IS DRUNK AS WELL AS FOOD BEING EATEN. FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION AND TRANSLATION SUGGESTIONS, SEE 21:8. IN SOME LANGUAGES THIS FEAST MAY BE DESCRIBED AS “A WEDDING FEAST,” “MARRIAGE PARTY,” OR “THE BIG EATING AND DRINKING TIME WHEN PEOPLE GET MARRIED.”**

**GENESIS 29:23: IN ORDER TO UNDERSTAND THE WAY IN WHICH LABAN DECEIVES JACOB, IT IS NECESSARY TO ASSUME, AS SUPPORTED BY 24:65, THAT THE BRIDE REMAINED VEILED THROUGHOUT THE WEDDING FEAST. BUT EVEN WITH THIS UNDERSTANDING, WE MAY AGREE WITH DRIVER WHEN HE SAYS “IT IS STILL DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND HOW THE DISGUISE COULD BE CARRIED SUCCESSFULLY THROUGH.” BUT IN THE EVENING, HE TOOK HIS DAUGHTER LEAH AND BROUGHT HER TO JACOB: EVENING PROBABLY REFERS IN THIS CASE TO SOME TIME AFTER DARK. SINCE JACOB IS EXPECTING TO BE UNITED WITH RACHEL, IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO SAY, AS DOES TEV, “INSTEAD OF RACHEL,” WHICH MAKES CLEAR THAT LABAN IS DECEIVING JACOB. IN SOME CASES, THIS MAY NEED TO BE MADE EVEN STRONGER; FOR EXAMPLE, “INSTEAD OF BRINGING RACHEL, HE WAITED UNTIL DARK AND THEN BROUGHT LEAH TO JACOB” OR “… BROUGHT LEAH TO JACOB’S ROOM.” ANOTHER WAY OF EXPRESSING THIS IS TO SAY “BUT THAT NIGHT HE DID NOT TAKE HIS SECOND DAUGHTER TO JACOB, HE TOOK HIS FIRST DAUGHTER TO HIM.” IN SOME TRANSLATIONS THE DECEPTION IS STATED DIRECTLY: “BUT WHEN THE SUN WENT DOWN AND IT WAS DARK, HE TRICKED JACOB AND BROUGHT … LEAH.” AND HE WENT IN TO HER MEANS THAT JACOB HAD SEX WITH LEAH. TRANSLATORS MUST BE CAREFUL TO EXPRESS THIS THOUGHT IN A MANNER THAT CAN BE READ IN PUBLIC. MANY LANGUAGES SAY “HE SLEPT WITH HER,” “HE LAY DOWN WITH HER,” OR “THEY SLEPT TOGETHER.”**

**GENESIS 29:24: VERSE 24 INTERRUPTS THE SEQUENCE OF EVENTS TO SAY THAT (LABAN GAVE HIS MAID ZILPAH TO HIS DAUGHTER LEAH TO BE HER MAID). THIS WAS PROBABLY DONE BEFORE THE WEDDING, AND IN ENGLISH WE MAY SAY “LABAN HAD GIVEN HIS MAID.…” THIS INFORMATION IS PLACED BETWEEN PARENTHESES IN BOTH RSV AND TEV TO SHOW THAT IT IS NOT PART OF THE STORY LINE. SEE ALSO VERSE 29. ZILPAH IS A SLAVE GIRL WHO IS GIVEN TO LEAH TO SERVE HER. FOR FURTHER INFORMATION SEE THE CASE OF HAGAR AND SARAH IN 16:1. IT MAY BE DESIRABLE IN SOME LANGUAGES TO MOVE THIS VERSE SO THAT IT DOES NOT INTERRUPT THE MAIN STORY LINE. ONE WAY OF DOING THIS IS TO MOVE VERSE 24 BACK TO THE MIDDLE OF VERSE 23 TO GIVE THE SAME SEQUENCE OF INFORMATION AS IN THE PARALLEL VERSES 28–30. ANOTHER WAY IS TO MOVE BOTH VERSES 24 AND 29 AND PLACE THEM TOGETHER AFTER VERSE 30.**

**GENESIS 29:25: AND IN THE MORNING, BEHOLD IT WAS LEAH: THE TEXT DOES NOT MAKE CLEAR THAT IT IS JACOB WHO DISCOVERS THAT HE HAS BEEN TRICKED, BUT THIS IS CERTAINLY THE INTENDED SENSE. IN THE MORNING REFERS TO “THE NEXT MORNING,” “WHEN DAYLIGHT CAME,” OR “WHEN IT WAS LIGHT.” BEHOLD EXPRESSES THE ELEMENT OF SHOCK OR SURPRISE IN JACOB’S DISCOVERY. WE MAY TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “THE NEXT MORNING HE SAW THAT IT WAS NOT RACHEL BUT LEAH!” “IN THE MORNING HE LOOKED AT HER AND EXCLAIMED, ‘LEAH!’” IN SOME LANGUAGES AN EXCLAMATION IS PROBABLY REQUIRED TO EXPRESS THE ELEMENT OF SHOCK AND SURPRISE: “IN THE MORNING … AND SAID, ‘HEY! THIS IS LEAH!” IN OTHER LANGUAGES A WORD OR EXPRESSION MAY BE USED TO DESCRIBE WHAT JACOB FELT: “IN THE MORNING JACOB WAS SHOCKED TO SEE THAT THE WOMAN SLEEPING WITH HIM WAS NOT RACHEL. IT WAS LEAH.” AND JACOB SAID TO LABAN: IN SOME LANGUAGES A WORD OR EXPRESSION STRONGER THAN JUST THE WORD SAID MAY BE REQUIRED HERE TO EXPRESS THE FORCE OF JACOB’S WORDS; FOR EXAMPLE, “… WENT AND ACCUSED LABAN” OR “… SPOKE ANGRILY TO LABAN.” WHAT IS THIS YOU HAVE DONE TO ME? JACOB’S QUESTION IS RHETORICAL. HE IS NOT ASKING WHAT HAPPENED BUT IS USING THIS FORM OF THE QUESTION TO EXPRESS HIS ANGER AND SURPRISE THAT LABAN COULD DO SUCH A THING. TEV SHIFTS TO “WHY DID YOU DO THIS TO ME?” IN LANGUAGES THAT HAVE DIFFERENT WORDS FOR “WHY?” THE USE OF THE WORD THAT EXPRESSES ANGER WILL BE MOST APPROPRIATE HERE. DID I NOT SERVE WITH YOU FOR RACHEL? IS ANOTHER RHETORICAL QUESTION THAT MAY ALSO BE TRANSLATED AS A STATEMENT: “I WORKED FOR YOU TO GET RACHEL,” “I SERVED YOU IN ORDER TO MARRY RACHEL.” WHY THEN HAVE YOU DECEIVED ME? THIS IS THE CLIMAX OF JACOB’S ANGRY SPEECH, “WHY [ANGRY] HAVE YOU TRICKED ME?” IT IS EXPRESSED IDIOMATICALLY IN SOME LANGUAGES AS “WHY DID YOU SPEAK TO ME WITH TWO TONGUES?” OR “WHY DID YOU DEAL WITH ME WITH TWO HEARTS?”**

**GENESIS 29:26: IT IS NOT SO DONE IN OUR COUNTRY, TO GIVE THE YOUNGER BEFORE THE FIRST-BORN: LABAN EXPLAINS WHAT HE MEANS IN THE NEXT CLAUSE. TEV “IT IS NOT THE CUSTOM HERE” EXPRESSES THIS THOUGHT WELL. WE MAY ALSO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “WE DO NOT GIVE THE YOUNGER DAUGHTER IN MARRIAGE BEFORE THE OLDER DAUGHTER”; OR THIS MAY BE STATED POSITIVELY: “IT IS OUR PRACTICE TO GIVE THE FIRSTBORN IN MARRIAGE BEFORE WE GIVE THE YOUNGER DAUGHTER.” IN SOME LANGUAGES IT MAY BE MORE NATURAL TO EXPRESS THIS VERSE AS A RHETORICAL QUESTION: “IS IT THE CUSTOM AMONG US TO GIVE THE YOUNGER DAUGHTER IN MARRIAGE BEFORE THE MARRIAGE OF THE FIRSTBORN?” AND IN SOME CASES, THIS QUESTION MUST BE ANSWERED WITH “NO” OR “IT IS NOT.” IT IS COMMON FOR WHAT IS DONE IN RELATION TO CUSTOM TO BE SPOKEN OF AS “RIGHT” OR “NOT RIGHT”; SO, ANOTHER WAY OF EXPRESSING LABAN’S EXPLANATION IS “NO, OUR CUSTOM HERE IS NOT LIKE THAT. WE DON’T LET OUR YOUNGER DAUGHTERS GET MARRIED FIRST AND OUR OLDER DAUGHTERS AFTERWARD. THAT ISN’T RIGHT.”**

**GENESIS 29:27: COMPLETE THE WEEK OF THIS ONE: THE WEEK REFERS TO THE WEEK OF THE MARRIAGE FEAST THAT IS UNDER WAY. LABAN IS ASKING JACOB TO GO THROUGH WITH THE SEVEN DAYS OF THE MARRIAGE CEREMONY WITH LEAH. SPEISER REFERS TO THIS AS “THE BRIDAL WEEK.” WE MAY TRANSLATE “GO AHEAD AND FINISH THE MARRIAGE FEAST WEEK WITH LEAH.” THIS MAY ALSO BE EXPRESSED AS A CONDITION: “IF YOU WILL FINISH THE WEEK OF CELEBRATION.…” SEE TEV FOR ANOTHER MODEL. WE WILL GIVE YOU THE OTHER ALSO: WE IS THE FORM PREFERRED BY HOTTP AND PROBABLY REFERS TO LABAN AND THE MEMBERS OF HIS FAMILY OR HOUSEHOLD. IN TRANSLATION, IF WE IS KEPT, IT SHOULD EXPRESS A FORM THAT EXCLUDES JACOB. NOTE THAT TEV SHIFTS TO “I.” THE OTHER MEANS THE OTHER DAUGHTER, NAMELY, RACHEL. IN RETURN FOR SERVING ME ANOTHER SEVEN YEARS: THIS MAY BE RENDERED “IF YOU WILL WORK FOR ME FOR SEVEN MORE YEARS.” A TRANSLATION OF THIS VERSE THAT EXPRESSES SOME OF ITS ELEMENTS IN A DIFFERENT WAY SAYS “NEXT WEEK THIS FEAST WILL BE OVER, AND AFTER THAT I WILL GIVE YOU RACHEL. BUT YOU WILL HAVE TO WORK FOR ME SEVEN MORE YEARS.”**

**GENESIS 29:28: JACOB DID SO: JACOB AGREES TO FINISH THE MARRIAGE FEAST WITH LEAH AND DOES AS HIS UNCLE REQUIRES. COMPLETED HER WEEK: JACOB REMAINED WITH LEAH FOR THE WEEK OF THE MARRIAGE FEAST AND ACCEPTED LEAH AS HIS WIFE. THEN LABAN GAVE HIM HIS DAUGHTER RACHEL TO WIFE: UNLIKE THE CASE OF THE FIRST WIFE, LABAN NOW GIVES RACHEL TO JACOB APPARENTLY IN ADVANCE OF HIS SEVEN YEARS SERVICE. THE NARRATOR SAYS NOTHING REGARDING A SECOND MARRIAGE FEAST. WE MAY ASSUME PERHAPS THAT THIS WAS REALLY A DOUBLE WEDDING. NOTE THAT LEV 18:18 FORBIDS A MAN TO MARRY SISTERS.**

**GENESIS 29:29: (LABAN GAVE HIS MAID BILHAH TO HIS DAUGHTER RACHEL TO BE HER MAID): SEE VERSE 24. 24 AND LABAN GAVE UNTO HIS DAUGHTER LEAH ZILPAH HIS MAID FOR A HANDMAID.**

**GENESIS 29:30: SO, JACOB WENT IN TO RACHEL ALSO: SEE VERSE 23. LOVED RACHEL MORE THAN LEAH: FOR LOVED SEE VERSE 18. DIFFERENT LANGUAGES HAVE DIFFERENT WAYS OF EXPRESSING THE IDEA OF MORE THAN; SOME EXAMPLES ARE “HE REALLY LOVED RACHEL, BUT HE DIDN’T LOVE LEAH VERY MUCH,” “OUT OF THE TWO, RACHEL AND LEAH, HE GREATLY LOVED RACHEL,” “HE LIKED RACHEL A LOT, BUT HE DIDN’T LIKE LEAH.” AND SERVED LABAN FOR ANOTHER SEVEN YEARS: IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO MAKE CLEAR IN TRANSLATION THAT JACOB WORKED FOR LABAN AFTER HE MARRIED RACHEL. IN THAT CASE WE MAY SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “AFTER JACOB MARRIED RACHEL, HE WORKED FOR LABAN ANOTHER SEVEN YEARS.” IN SOME TRANSLATIONS THE REASON FOR THIS PERIOD OF SERVICE IS REPEATED HERE: “HE WORKED SEVEN YEARS MORE FOR HIS FATHER-IN-LAW, IN ORDER TO REPAY HIS MARRIAGE OBLIGATIONS” OR “AS A PAYMENT FOR HIS DAUGHTER RACHEL.”**

**THE CHILDREN BORN TO JACOB AND HIS WIVES (29:31–30:24)**

**THIS SUBDIVISION TELLS OF THE ORIGIN OF ELEVEN OF JACOB’S TWELVE SONS AND ONE DAUGHTER. THE REPORT OF THE BIRTH OF THE TWELFTH SON, BENJAMIN, IS GIVEN IN 35:18. IN VERSES 31–35 LEAH GIVES BIRTH TO REUBEN, SIMEON, LEVI, AND JUDAH. IN 30:1–8 RACHEL, WHO IS BARREN, GIVES HER MAID TO JACOB AND SHE BEARS DAN AND NAPHTALI. IN 30:9–13 LEAH’S SERVANT GIVES BIRTH TO GAD AND ASHER. IN 30:14–21 LEAH AGAIN HAS CHILDREN, WHOSE NAMES ARE ISSACHAR, ZEBULUN, AND DINAH. FINALLY, RACHEL GIVES BIRTH TO JOSEPH IN 30:22–24. ONE OF THE PURPOSES OF THESE VERSES IS TO EXPLAIN THE NAMES OF JACOB’S SONS. THE EXPLANATIONS GIVEN IN THE TEXT OF GENESIS ARE NOT INTENDED TO BE ETYMOLOGIES OR HISTORIES OF THE NAMES. INSTEAD THE NAMES HAVE A SYMBOLIC SENSE. THE FACT THAT A GIVEN NAME SOUNDS SOMEWHAT LIKE A WORD OR PHRASE ASSOCIATED WITH THE BIRTH OF THAT PERSON MAKES A PLAY ON WORDS. FOR EXAMPLE, THE NAME REUBEN SOUNDS IN THE HEBREW SOMETHING LIKE “SEE, A SON,” BUT IT IS NOT EQUIVALENT TO NOR DERIVED FROM THAT EXPRESSION, NOR FROM “HAS SEEN MY AFFLICTION.” FOR A DISCUSSION OF THE TRANSLATION OF HEBREW NAMES, SEE “NAMES IN GENESIS” IN “TRANSLATING GENESIS.”**

**SUBDIVISION HEADING**

**TRANSLATORS MAY WISH TO REWORD THE HANDBOOK HEADING TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “JACOB’S CHILDREN,” “JACOB’S ELEVEN SONS AND ONE DAUGHTER,” “JACOB’S WIVES AND THEIR CHILDREN,” OR “THE BIRTH AND NAMING OF JACOB’S SONS.” GECL USES THREE HEADINGS: BEFORE VERSE 31, “LEAH GIVES JACOB SONS”; BEFORE 30:1, “THE SONS OF THE TWO MAIDS”; AND BEFORE 30:14, “EVEN MAGIC FAILS TO HELP RACHEL HAVE A SON.”**

**GENESIS 29:31: WHEN THE LORD SAW THAT LEAH WAS HATED: HATED MAY BE UNDERSTOOD IN A RELATIVE SENSE; FOR EXAMPLE, “LOVED LESS THAN RACHEL” (TEV). SO, WE MAY TRANSLATE “WHEN THE LORD SAW THAT JACOB LOVED LEAH LESS THAN HE LOVED RACHEL.” IN ITS NORMAL SENSE HATED MAY BE EXPRESSED BY SUCH TERMS AS “UNLOVED,” “DISLIKED,” “REJECTED.” A TRANSLATION THAT EXPRESSES THIS SENSE MAY SAY “WHEN THE LORD SAW THAT JACOB DID NOT LIKE LEAH [MUCH].” OPENED HER WOMB: IN 20:18 THE LORD CLOSED THE WOMBS OF ABIMELECH’S WOMEN. HERE WE MAY SAY “THE LORD ENABLED LEAH TO HAVE CHILDREN,” “THE LORD MADE HER FERTILE,” OR “… MADE HER ABLE TO BECOME PREGNANT.” BUT RACHEL WAS BARREN: FOR BARREN SEE 11:30; 25:21.**

**GENESIS 29:32: CONCEIVED AND BORE IS A SET EXPRESSION USED IN MANY OLD TESTAMENT PASSAGES, AND IS REPEATED FREQUENTLY IN THIS SUBDIVISION. FOR STYLISTIC REASON TRANSLATORS MAY NEED TO USE SEVERAL DIFFERENT EXPRESSIONS RATHER THAN REPEATING THE SAME EXPRESSION MANY TIMES. SOME TRANSLATIONS OMIT THE TERM CONCEIVED IN THIS VERSE, BECAUSE THEIR TRANSLATION OF “OPENED HER WOMB” IN THE PREVIOUS VERSE WILL BE TAKEN BY READERS TO MEAN THAT SHE BECAME PREGNANT. IN SOME LANGUAGES PEOPLE DO NOT SPEAK ABOUT CONCEIVING AS SUCH, ALTHOUGH THEY HAVE EXPRESSIONS TO DESCRIBE WOMEN WHO ARE PREGNANT. IN THIS CASE THE TRANSLATION OF CONCEIVED AND BORE MAY BE SOMETHING LIKE “WHEN SHE SLEPT WITH HER HUSBAND JACOB, LATER ON SHE HAD A BABY BOY FOR HIM.” SHE CALLED HIS NAME REUBEN: SEE RSV AND TEV FOOTNOTES. LOOKED UPON MY AFFLICTION OR “SEEN MY TROUBLE” MEANS THAT THE LORD HAS HELPED LEAH BECAUSE SHE HAS SUFFERED. LEAH CONCLUDES THAT SURELY NOW MY HUSBAND WILL LOVE ME. FOR LOVE SEE VERSE 20.**

**GENESIS 29:33: BECAUSE THE LORD HAS HEARD THAT I AM HATED: AGAIN, LEAH’S SON IS TO BE NAMED BECAUSE OF THE LORD’S ACTION, WHICH IS HEARD. SEE RSV AND TEV FOOTNOTES FOR THE ASSOCIATION OF THIS NAME WITH THE HEBREW VERB “TO HEAR.” AS IN VERSE 31, I AM HATED IS MORE SUITABLY EXPRESSED AS “… MY HUSBAND DOES NOT LOVE ME.”**

**GENESIS 29:34: NOW THIS TIME MY HUSBAND WILL BE JOINED TO ME: THE NAME LEVI IS HERE ASSOCIATED IN SOUND WITH THE HEBREW VERB MEANING TO “JOIN,” “ATTACH,” “BIND.” SEE RSV AND TEV FOOTNOTES. HIS NAME WAS CALLED LEVI: IN THE HEBREW TEXT WAS CALLED IS “HE CALLED,” WHICH HOTTP RATES AS {B} AND RECOMMENDS. THE SEPTUAGINT AND ANCIENT SYRIAC VERSIONS HAVE “SHE CALLED HIM.” RSV USES THE PASSIVE, BUT TEV FOLLOWS THE SEPTUAGINT WITHOUT A FOOTNOTE. A SIMILAR PLAY ON WORDS IS FOUND IN NUM 18:2, “THAT THEY MAY JOIN YOU.” TRANSLATORS MAY FOLLOW RSV, TEV, OR HOTTP. IN THE LATTER CASE IT MAY BE BEST TO SAY “JACOB CALLED HIS SON LEVI.”**

**GENESIS 29:35: THIS TIME I WILL PRAISE THE LORD: IN THE HEBREW THE NAME JUDAH SOUNDS LIKE THE VERB FOR “PRAISE.” SEE RSV AND TEV FOOTNOTES. THEN SHE CEASED BEARING: SHE REFERS TO LEAH. LEAH WILL AGAIN HAVE CHILDREN IN 30:17–21. ACCORDINGLY, REB TRANSLATES “THEN FOR A WHILE SHE BORE NO MORE CHILDREN.” THIS IS A SUITABLE MODEL FOR TRANSLATORS.**

**GENESIS 30:1: THE OPENING VERSE OF CHAPTER 30 SHIFTS OUR ATTENTION FROM LEAH AND THE BIRTH OF HER FIRST FOUR CHILDREN TO RACHEL; AND IT PICTURES RACHEL, WHO HAS HAD NO CHILDREN, AS BEING JEALOUS OF HER SISTER. IT IS MOST LIKELY THE CASE THAT RACHEL’S JEALOUSY BEGAN LONG BEFORE THE BIRTH OF LEAH’S FOURTH SON. IN ORDER TO AVOID GIVING THE IMPRESSION THAT RACHEL’S JEALOUSY BEGAN AT THAT TIME, IT MAY BE ADVISABLE TO LINK 30:1 MORE CLOSELY WITH 29:31–35 BY SAYING, FOR EXAMPLE, “WHILE LEAH WAS GIVING BIRTH TO HER SONS, RACHEL REALIZED THAT SHE WAS UNABLE TO HAVE CHILDREN, AND SO SHE BECAME JEALOUS OF HER SISTER.” WHEN RACHEL SAW THAT SHE BORE JACOB NO CHILDREN: SAW IS USED HERE IN THE SAME WAY AS IN 29:31 WITH THE SENSE OF “FOUND OUT,” “DISCOVERED,” “REALIZED.” 29:31 STATES THAT RACHEL WAS BARREN. FOR THE CASE OF HANNAH, WHO SUFFERED SIMILARLY, SEE 1 SAMUEL CHAPTER 1. WE MAY TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “WHEN RACHEL REALIZED SHE WAS UNABLE TO HAVE CHILDREN.…” SHE ENVIED HER SISTER: ENVIED TRANSLATES A VERB MEANING TO BE ENVIOUS OR JEALOUS. THE IDEA EXPRESSED IS THAT RACHEL FELT ILL WILL OR RESENTMENT AGAINST LEAH, BECAUSE LEAH ENJOYED THE PRIVILEGE OF HAVING SONS FOR JACOB. EXPRESSIONS FOR ENVY AND JEALOUSY ARE OFTEN FIGURATIVE; FOR EXAMPLE, “RACHEL’S LIVER TURNED BLACK AGAINST HER SISTER,” “RACHEL’S HEART BECAME HOT AGAINST LEAH.” IN SOME LANGUAGES IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO USE A SPECIAL TERM FOR LEAH, DENOTING “OLDER SISTER.” GIVE ME CHILDREN OR I SHALL DIE: RACHEL’S SUFFERING AND SHAME FROM BARRENNESS IS SO GREAT THAT SHE FEELS SHE WILL DIE IF SHE DOES NOT HAVE CHILDREN. HER DEMAND IS ADDRESSED TO JACOB AND IS THE EQUIVALENT OF SAYING “CAUSE ME TO BECOME PREGNANT,” “MAKE ME HAVE OFFSPRING.” CHILDREN TRANSLATES THE TERM FOR “SONS” BUT IN THIS CONTEXT INCLUDES BOTH SONS AND DAUGHTERS.**

**GENESIS 30:2: JACOB’S ANGER WAS KINDLED AGAINST RACHEL: JACOB BECOMES ANGRY BECAUSE RACHEL’S DEMAND ACCUSES JACOB OF WITHHOLDING CHILDREN FROM HER. THE HEBREW SAYS LITERALLY “JACOB’S ANGER BURNED AGAINST RACHEL.” IN SOME LANGUAGES THIS THOUGHT MUST BE EXPRESSED METAPHORICALLY; FOR EXAMPLE, “JACOB’S FACE GREW HOT” OR “JACOB’S EYES BECAME RED.” AM I IN THE PLACE OF GOD, WHO HAS WITHHELD FROM YOU THE FRUIT OF THE WOMB? JACOB’S RHETORICAL QUESTION IS A DENIAL THAT HE HAS THE MEANS OF FULFILLING HER DEMAND. IF THE RHETORICAL QUESTION IS NOT RETAINED, WE MAY TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “I AM NOT GOD. IT IS GOD WHO KEEPS YOU FROM HAVING CHILDREN.” SEE TEV. IT MAY ALSO BE POSSIBLE TO RESTRUCTURE THIS AS A STATEMENT FOLLOWED BY A RHETORICAL QUESTION, “GOD IS THE ONE WHO WON’T LET YOU HAVE CHILDREN. DO YOU THINK I AM GOD?”**

**GENESIS 30:3: HERE IS MY MAID BILHAH: RACHEL DOES NOT REPLY BUT OFFERS HER SLAVE GIRL TO JACOB. BY DOING THIS SHE FOLLOWS THE SAME SOLUTION THAT SARAH TOOK IN 16:2. GO IN TO HER MEANS HAVE SEX WITH HER. SEE TRANSLATION SUGGESTIONS ON 29:21, 23. THAT SHE MAY BEAR UPON MY KNEES IS THE LITERAL HEBREW FIGURATIVE EXPRESSION AND REFERS TO THE PRACTICE OF OBTAINING CHILDREN THROUGH THE SERVICE OF ANOTHER WOMAN, OR OF RECOGNIZING THE CHILD THAT IS BORN AS LEGALLY ONE’S OWN. IN 50:23 JOSEPH’S GRANDCHILDREN WERE “BORN UPON HIS KNEES,” A WAY OF SAYING THAT HE ACKNOWLEDGED THEM AS LEGITIMATE. IN THIS CASE RACHEL PROPOSES TO MAKE BILHAH’S OFFSPRING HER OWN, AND THUS SHE IS TO BECOME THE ADOPTIVE MOTHER. IN SOME LANGUAGES THIS IS EXPRESSED SIMPLY AS “SHE WILL HAVE CHILDREN FOR ME.” AND EVEN I MAY HAVE CHILDREN THROUGH HER: THE VERY AWKWARD ENGLISH OF RSV RENDERS THE HEBREW, WHICH IS LITERALLY “AND I WILL BE BUILT UP THROUGH HER.” THE THOUGHT EXPRESSED HERE IS “SO THAT I WILL BECOME A MOTHER WHEN SHE GIVES BIRTH.” UNLESS THE LANGUAGE OF TRANSLATION HAS AN EQUIVALENT FIGURATIVE EXPRESSION, IT IS BEST TO TRANSLATE THE IDEA. IN THIS CASE WE MAY FOLLOW TEV OR SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “TAKE MY SERVANT GIRL BILHAH AND SLEEP WITH HER. WHEN SHE GIVES BIRTH, I WILL ADOPT [ACCEPT AS MY OWN] HER CHILD. IN THIS WAY SHE WILL ENABLE ME TO HAVE CHILDREN.”**

**GENESIS 30:4: SO, SHE GAVE HIM HER MAID BILHAH AS A WIFE: SO, MARKS THE CONCLUSION OF RACHEL’S PROPOSAL, WHICH JACOB APPARENTLY ACCEPTS WITHOUT QUESTION. AS A WIFE MEANS TO DO AS A WIFE WOULD DO, AND PARTICULARLY TO SLEEP WITH JACOB. SINCE JACOB ALREADY HAS TWO WIVES, SOME TRANSLATIONS SAY “AS ANOTHER WIFE” IN THIS CONTEXT. JACOB WENT IN TO HER: SEE 29:21.**

**GENESIS 30:5: AND BILHAH CONCEIVED: FOR CONCEIVED SEE 4:17; 29:32. GENESIS 29:32: CONCEIVED AND BORE IS A SET EXPRESSION USED IN MANY OLD TESTAMENT PASSAGES, AND IS REPEATED FREQUENTLY IN THIS SUBDIVISION. FOR STYLISTIC REASON TRANSLATORS MAY NEED TO USE SEVERAL DIFFERENT EXPRESSIONS RATHER THAN REPEATING THE SAME EXPRESSION MANY TIMES. SOME TRANSLATIONS OMIT THE TERM CONCEIVED IN THIS VERSE, BECAUSE THEIR TRANSLATION OF “OPENED HER WOMB” IN THE PREVIOUS VERSE WILL BE TAKEN BY READERS TO MEAN THAT SHE BECAME PREGNANT. IN SOME LANGUAGES PEOPLE DO NOT SPEAK ABOUT CONCEIVING AS SUCH, ALTHOUGH THEY HAVE EXPRESSIONS TO DESCRIBE WOMEN WHO ARE PREGNANT. IN THIS CASE THE TRANSLATION OF CONCEIVED AND BORE MAY BE SOMETHING LIKE “WHEN SHE SLEPT WITH HER HUSBAND JACOB, LATER ON SHE HAD A BABY BOY FOR HIM.” SHE CALLED HIS NAME REUBEN: SEE RSV AND TEV FOOTNOTES. LOOKED UPON MY AFFLICTION OR “SEEN MY TROUBLE” MEANS THAT THE LORD HAS HELPED LEAH BECAUSE SHE HAS SUFFERED. LEAH CONCLUDES THAT SURELY NOW MY HUSBAND WILL LOVE ME. FOR LOVE SEE VERSE 20.**

**GENESIS 30:6: GOD HAS JUDGED ME: JUDGED DOES NOT MEAN JUDGED AND FOUND GUILTY BUT RATHER DECIDED IN HER FAVOR, OR AS TEV SAYS, “JUDGED IN MY FAVOR.” IN TRANSLATION WE MAY SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “GOD HAS DECIDED FOR ME,” “GOD HAS RULED AND FOUND ME RIGHT,” “GOD HAS LOOKED AT MY CASE AND SAYS THAT I AM IN THE RIGHT.” HAS ALSO HEARD MY VOICE: LEAH SAID THE SAME WHEN SIMEON WAS BORN IN 29:33. RACHEL REFERS TO THE VOICE OF HER SUFFERING, HER CRIES, AND HER PRAYERS. SEE TEV. NEB/REB TRANSLATE “HE HAS INDEED HEARD ME.” SHE CALLED HIS NAME DAN: RSV AND TEV FOOTNOTES SHOW THAT THE HEBREW NAME DAN SOUNDS LIKE THE VERB “HE JUDGED.”**

**GENESIS 30:7: RACHEL’S MAID BILHAH CONCEIVED AGAIN AND BORE JACOB A SECOND SON: FOR CONCEIVED SEE 4:17. 17 CAIN LAY WITH HIS WIFE, AND SHE BECAME PREGNANT AND GAVE BIRTH TO ENOCH. CAIN WAS THEN BUILDING A CITY, AND HE NAMED IT AFTER HIS SON ENOCH.**

**GENESIS 30:8: WITH MIGHTY WRESTLINGS I HAVE WRESTLED WITH MY SISTER: THE HEBREW SAYS “WITH WRESTLING OF ’ELOHIM,” WHICH CREATES A PROBLEM OF INTERPRETATION.**

**THERE ARE THREE VIEWS OF THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS EXPRESSION: (1) RSV, TEV TAKE ’ELOHIM, WHICH NORMALLY MEANS “GOD,” TO BE A DESCRIPTIVE TERM MEANING “GREAT” OR “MIGHTY.” IN 23:6 ABRAHAM IS DESCRIBED AS A PRINCE OR LEADER OF ’ELOHIM, AND RSV TRANSLATES “MIGHTY PRINCE,” AND TEV “MIGHTY LEADER.” (2) SOME UNDERSTAND THAT RACHEL’S WRESTLINGS OR STRUGGLES ARE “FOR ’ELOHIM,” THAT IS, TO WIN GOD’S FAVOR. (3) SPEISER UNDERSTANDS THAT THE EXPRESSION REFERS TO A MYSTERIOUS STRUGGLE AND TRANSLATES “A FATEFUL CONTEST.” NEB/REB TRANSLATE “I HAVE PLAYED A FINE TRICK ON MY SISTER.”**

**THE HANDBOOK RECOMMENDS THAT TRANSLATORS FOLLOW RSV AND TEV, WHICH ARE SUPPORTED BY FRCL, SPCL, GECL. I HAVE PREVAILED: PREVAILED MEANS “WON,” “SUCCEEDED,” OR “BECOME VICTORIOUS.”**

**GENESIS 30:9: WHEN LEAH SAW THAT SHE HAD CEASED BEARING CHILDREN: THE NARRATOR PICKS UP THE THOUGHT FROM 29:35. SHE TOOK HER MAID ZILPAH …: SEE VERSE 4.**

**GENESIS 30:10: THEN LEAH’S MAID ZILPAH BORE JACOB A SON: SEE VERSE 5. 5 AND BILHAH CONCEIVED, AND BARE JACOB A [GOOD] SON.**

**GENESIS 30:11: GOOD FORTUNE! FORTUNE REFERS TO SOME UNEXPECTED OR UNFORESEEN GOOD HAPPENING. IN ENGLISH THIS IS ALSO CALLED “LUCK” OR “CHANCE.” IN SOME LANGUAGES IT WILL BE NECESSARY TO FILL THIS EXPRESSION OUT AND SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “WHAT GOOD FORTUNE I HAVE HAD!” OR “HOW LUCKY I HAVE BEEN!” SO, SHE CALLED HIS NAME GAD: SEE RSV AND TEV FOOTNOTES.**

**GENESIS 30:12: LEAH’S MAID ZILPAH BORE JACOB A SECOND SON: SEE VERSE 7. 7 AND BILHAH RACHEL'S MAID CONCEIVED AGAIN, AND BARE JACOB A SECOND SON.**

**GENESIS 30:13: HAPPY AM I! SEE TEV. FOR THE WOMEN WILL CALL ME HAPPY: WOMEN IS LITERALLY “DAUGHTERS,” OR “GIRLS,” BUT THE REFERENCE IS TO WOMEN GENERALLY. WILL CALL ME HAPPY MUST OFTEN BE RESTRUCTURED TO SAY “WILL SAY THAT I AM HAPPY NOW,” “WILL SAY TO EACH OTHER ‘SHE IS HAPPY NOW.’” SO, SHE CALLED HIS NAME ASHER: SEE RSV AND TEV FOOTNOTES.**

**GENESIS 30:14: VERSE 14 BEGINS A BRIEF EPISODE (VERSES 14–16) ABOUT THE JEALOUSY AND BAD FEELING BETWEEN JACOB’S WIVES. IN THE DAYS OF THE WHEAT HARVEST REUBEN WENT AND FOUND MANDRAKES IN THE FIELD: WHEAT HARVEST REFERS TO THE TIME WHEN THE WHEAT IS CUT AND GATHERED. IF WHEAT IS UNKNOWN IN THE TRANSLATOR’S LANGUAGE, ANOTHER GRAIN SUCH AS RICE MAY BE SUBSTITUTED. IF THERE IS NO GRAIN HARVEST, IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “AT THE TIME OF GATHERING IN CROPS FROM THE GARDENS.…” MANDRAKES TRANSLATES A HEBREW WORD THAT REFERS TO A PLANT WITH LARGE LEAVES AND YELLOW OR PURPLE FLOWERS. FOR ILLUSTRATION AND DESCRIPTION SEE FAUNA AND FLORA OF THE BIBLE, PAGES 138–39. THE MANDRAKE, ALSO CALLED “LOVE APPLE,” WAS BELIEVED TO STIMULATE SEXUAL DESIRE WHEN EATEN AND TO HELP WOMEN TO BECOME PREGNANT. SEE TEV FOOTNOTE. THIS PLANT IS MENTIONED IN SONG 7:13. A FORM OF THE HEBREW WORD IS USED IN EZEK 16:8, “AN AGE FOR LOVE,” REFERRING TO SEXUAL LOVE. IN TRANSLATION OF THIS TERM IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO SUBSTITUTE A LOCAL PLANT THAT IS BELIEVED TO HAVE THE SAME POWERS AS THE MANDRAKE. IF NO SUCH PLANT IS KNOWN, IT MAY BE POSSIBLE TO USE A DESCRIPTIVE EXPRESSION SUCH AS “PLANT THAT WOMEN EAT TO HELP THEM BECOME PREGNANT” OR “PLANT THAT HELPS WOMEN TO HAVE CHILDREN.” TWO EXAMPLES FROM TRANSLATIONS IN THE PACIFIC AREA ARE “A FLOWERING PLANT THAT WOMEN EAT TO HELP THEM GET CHILDREN, AND WHICH IS USED AS A LOVE MAGIC” AND “SOME BUSH MEDICINE THAT WAS GROWING THERE, A GOOD MEDICINE TO HELP WOMEN TO HAVE BABIES.” THE FIELD IN WHICH THE BOY REUBEN FOUND THE MANDRAKES IS THE WHEAT FIELD, WHICH IS A CULTIVATED FIELD IN CONTRAST TO THE OPEN LANDS WHERE THE ANIMALS GRAZE. GIVE ME, I PRAY, SOME OF YOUR SON’S MANDRAKES: RACHEL HOPES THAT THESE PLANTS WILL HELP HER TO BECOME PREGNANT. IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO ADD “TO EAT.”**

**GENESIS 30:15: IS IT A SMALL MATTER THAT YOU HAVE TAKEN AWAY MY HUSBAND? LEAH’S QUESTION EXPECTS A NEGATIVE ANSWER, “NO, IT IS NOT A SMALL MATTER.” SOME TRANSLATORS WILL FIND IT MORE NATURAL TO TRANSLATE THE RHETORICAL QUESTION AS AN EMPHATIC STATEMENT: “YOU HAVE ALREADY TAKEN AWAY MY HUSBAND.” LEAH IS THE FIRST WIFE AND OLDER SISTER. SHE THEREFORE HAS THE AUTHORITY TO CLAIM CERTAIN RIGHTS. WOULD YOU TAKE AWAY MY SON’S MANDRAKES ALSO? LEAH’S SECOND QUESTION BUILDS ON THE FIRST. IN SOME LANGUAGES THE TWO RHETORICAL QUESTIONS WILL BE QUITE NATURAL. IN OTHERS THE SECOND QUESTION MAY NEED TO BE EXPRESSED AS A STATEMENT THAT PARALLELS THE FIRST STATEMENT: “AND NOW YOU WANT TO TAKE AWAY MY SON’S MANDRAKES.” RACHEL’S REPLY IS IN THE FORM OF A DEAL IN WHICH LEAH GETS TO SLEEP WITH JACOB IN EXCHANGE FOR SOME OF THE MANDRAKES. THIS THOUGHT IS NOT ENTIRELY CLEAR IN RSV THEN HE MAY LIE WITH YOU TONIGHT FOR YOUR SON’S MANDRAKES. IN TRANSLATION IT SHOULD BE MADE CLEAR THAT FOR YOUR SON’S MANDRAKES MEANS IN EXCHANGE FOR YOUR SON’S MANDRAKES. REB TRANSLATES “VERY WELL, IN EXCHANGE FOR YOUR SON’S MANDRAKES, LET JACOB SLEEP WITH YOU TONIGHT.” FOR A DIFFERENT MODEL SEE TEV.**

**GENESIS 30:16: WHEN JACOB CAME HOME FROM THE FIELD IN THE EVENING: FOR FIELD SEE VERSE 14. EVENING REFERS TO THE LATE AFTERNOON, SUNDOWN, THE TIME WHEN THE WORKERS RETURNED FROM THE FIELDS. YOU MUST COME IN TO ME: THIS REPEATS THE EXPRESSION FOR HAVING SEXUAL RELATIONS. SEE COMMENTS ON 29:21. REFLECTING THE LOCAL SITUATION WHERE A MAN HAS MORE THAN ONE WIFE, ONE TRANSLATION SAYS “YOU MUST COME AND STAY IN MY HOUSE. I HAVE PAID RACHEL FOR YOU TO SLEEP WITH ME.” FOR I HAVE HIRED YOU WITH MY SON’S MANDRAKES: HIRED TRANSLATES THE VERB SACHAR, WHICH IS RELATED IN SOUND TO THE NAME ISSACHAR. THIS IS THE FIRST TIME THE SOUND ASSOCIATION OF THE VERB AND THE NAME OCCURS BEFORE THE CHILD IS CONCEIVED OR BORN. IN TRANSLATION IT IS SUFFICIENT TO SAY “I HAVE HIRED YOU” OR “I HAVE PAID FOR YOU.” SO, HE LAY WITH HER: SEE 29:21.**

**GENESIS 30:17: AND GOD HEARKENED TO LEAH: NOTHING HAS BEEN SAID REGARDING LEAH PRAYING OR ASKING GOD FOR CHILDREN. HOWEVER, IN 29:31 IT IS THE LORD WHO MAKES IT POSSIBLE FOR LEAH TO GIVE BIRTH, AND THAT THOUGHT IS NOW REPEATED. FOR A TRANSLATION MODEL SEE TEV. IN SOME LANGUAGES IT IS MORE NATURAL TO REVERSE THE ORDER OF CLAUSES IN THIS VERSE: “AND LEAH BECAME PREGNANT AND BORE JACOB A FIFTH SON, BECAUSE GOD HEARD HER WHEN SHE PRAYED TO HIM.”**

**GENESIS 30:18: GOD HAS GIVEN ME MY HIRE: HIRE PICKS UP THE THOUGHT FROM VERSE 16. MY HIRE MUST OFTEN BE TRANSLATED “GOD HAS REWARDED ME” OR “GOD HAS PAID ME.” BECAUSE I GAVE MY MAID TO MY HUSBAND: SEE VERSE 9. SHE CALLED HIS NAME ISSACHAR: SEE RSV AND TEV FOOTNOTES.**

**GENESIS 30:19: LEAH CONCEIVED AGAIN … SIXTH SON: SEE VERSE 17. GENESIS 30:17: AND GOD HEARKENED TO LEAH: NOTHING HAS BEEN SAID REGARDING LEAH PRAYING OR ASKING GOD FOR CHILDREN. HOWEVER, IN 29:31 IT IS THE LORD WHO MAKES IT POSSIBLE FOR LEAH TO GIVE BIRTH, AND THAT THOUGHT IS NOW REPEATED. FOR A TRANSLATION MODEL SEE TEV. IN SOME LANGUAGES IT IS MORE NATURAL TO REVERSE THE ORDER OF CLAUSES IN THIS VERSE: “AND LEAH BECAME PREGNANT AND BORE JACOB A FIFTH SON, BECAUSE GOD HEARD HER WHEN SHE PRAYED TO HIM.”**

**GENESIS 30:20: GOD HAS ENDOWED ME WITH A GOOD DOWRY: IN OTHER WORD’S “GOD HAS GIVEN ME A FINE GIFT” (TEV). THE HEBREW VERB ZABAD RENDERED ENDOWED (GIVEN) AND THE RELATED NOUN DOWRY (GIFT) IS THE FIRST OF TWO EXPLANATIONS FOR THE NAME ZEBULUN. NOW MY HUSBAND WILL HONOR ME: HONOR (HEBREW ZABAL) IS THE SECOND EXPLANATION OF ZEBULUN’S NAME. IN THE RSV AND TEV FOOTNOTES “HONOR ME” AND “ACCEPT ME” EXPRESS THE SAME THOUGHT. SO, SHE CALLED HIM ZEBULUN: “SO SHE NAMED HIM ZEBULUN” (TEV).**

**GENESIS 30:21: AFTERWARDS SHE BORE A DAUGHTER, AND CALLED HER NAME DINAH: AFTERWARDS IS PROBABLY TO BE UNDERSTOOD AS “AFTER ZEBULUN” OR “AFTER SHE GAVE BIRTH TO ZEBULUN.” THERE IS NO INDICATION OF ANY TIME INTERVAL. SPEISER TRANSLATES “LASTLY.” TRANSLATORS WILL NOTE THAT NO EXPLANATION OF THE NAME DINAH IS GIVEN. THIS IS THE ONLY RECORDED DAUGHTER BORN TO JACOB.**

**GENESIS 30:22: THEN GOD REMEMBERED RACHEL: REMEMBERED DOES NOT MEAN THAT GOD HAD FORGOTTEN RACHEL UNTIL NOW; IT MEANS THAT GOD “CAME TO THE AID OF,” “HELPED,” “DID SOMETHING MERCIFUL FOR” HER. IN THIS CASE WE MAY TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “GOD THOUGHT OF RACHEL AND.…” IN SOME LANGUAGES IT WILL BE MORE NATURAL TO EXPRESS THIS IN FIGURATIVE TERMS; FOR EXAMPLE, “GOD’S HEART WAS WARM FOR RACHEL AND SO HE.…” HEARKENED TO HER: SEE VERSE 17. OPENED HER WOMB: SEE 29:31.**

**GENESIS 30:23: SHE CONCEIVED AND BORE A SON: BECAUSE OF THE LONG TIME RACHEL HAS WAITED, SOME LANGUAGES WILL SAY “SO AT LAST SHE BECAME PREGNANT AND HAD A SON.” GOD HAS TAKEN AWAY MY REPROACH: REPROACH, WHICH MEANS “DISGRACE” OR “SHAME,” REFERS TO RACHEL’S BEING BARREN. IN SOME LANGUAGES IT MAY BE MORE NATURAL TO PLACE THE REASON BEFORE THE RESULT: “‘GOD HAS TAKEN AWAY MY SHAME,’ RACHEL SAID; AND SHE GAVE BIRTH TO A SON.” IN MANY LANGUAGES SHAME IS EXPRESSED AS A FEELING: “GOD HAS PUT AN END TO MY BURDEN SO THAT I WON’T FEEL ASHAMED ANY LONGER.” NOTE THAT TEV JOINS RACHEL’S QUOTE IN THIS VERSE WITH THE ONE IN THE FOLLOWING VERSE.**

**GENESIS 30:24: AND SHE CALLED HIS NAME JOSEPH: SEE RSV AND TEV FOOTNOTES FOR THE DOUBLE EXPLANATION OF THE NAME JOSEPH. MAY THE LORD ADD TO ME ANOTHER SON: THE WORD ADD IS RELATED TO THE NAME JOSEPH IN HEBREW, BUT IN MOST LANGUAGES “GIVE ME ANOTHER” EXPRESSES THE MEANING ADEQUATELY.**

**JACOB MAKES A DEAL WITH LABAN (30:25–43)**

**JACOB ANNOUNCES TO LABAN THAT HE WISHES TO TAKE HIS WIVES AND CHILDREN AND RETURN TO CANAAN (VERSES 25–26). LABAN, HOWEVER, WISHES TO KEEP JACOB WITH HIM BECAUSE JACOB HAS MADE HIM PROSPER (VERSE 27). THIS SETS THE SCENE FOR ANOTHER EPISODE OF NEGOTIATION BETWEEN THE TWO MEN THAT IS REPORTED IN VERSES 28–34. JACOB AGREES TO STAY AND WORK IF LABAN WILL ALLOW JACOB TO TAKE ALL THE BLACK LAMBS AND THE SPOTTED AND SPECKLED SHEEP AND GOATS (VERSES 31–33). LABAN AGREES TO THIS; HOWEVER, HE AGAIN TRIES TO GET THE BETTER OF JACOB BY HAVING THESE PARTICULAR ANIMALS REMOVED FROM HIS FLOCKS (VERSES 35–36). JACOB THEN DEVISES A PLAN TO CAUSE THE ANIMALS TO GIVE BIRTH TO SPOTTED AND SPECKLED YOUNG. AS A RESULT, JACOB BECOMES A WEALTHY MAN (VERSES 37–43).**

**SUBDIVISION HEADING**

**TRANSLATORS MAY WISH TO USE THE HANDBOOK HEADING OR TO REWORD IT TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “HOW JACOB BECAME RICH,” “JACOB GETS HIS OWN HERDS,” OR “JACOB AND THE HERDS OF LABAN.” TEV HAS “JACOB’S BARGAIN WITH LABAN,” NIV “JACOB’S FLOCKS INCREASE,” SPCL “TRICKS BETWEEN JACOB AND LABAN.”**

**GENESIS 30:25: VERSE 25 SERVES AS A TRANSITION THAT LINKS 30:1–24 TO THE EPISODE THAT FOLLOWS. IN MANY LANGUAGES THIS TRANSITION WILL BE ADEQUATELY MARKED BY SUCH AN INTRODUCTORY SENTENCE AS “AFTER THE BIRTH OF JOSEPH …” OR “SOME TIME AFTER JOSEPH HAD BEEN BORN.…” WHEN RACHEL HAD BORNE JOSEPH: WHILE THIS TRANSITION GIVES AN INDICATION OF THE PASSING OF TIME FOLLOWING THE REPORT OF THE BIRTH OF JACOB’S CHILDREN, IT DOES NOT ACTUALLY STATE HOW MUCH TIME HAD PASSED SINCE JACOB BEGAN TO WORK FOR LABAN. AS WE DISCOVER LATER (SEE 31:41), THIS WAS NOW FOURTEEN YEARS; IN FACT, IT WAS WHEN JACOB HAD COMPLETED HIS SECOND PERIOD OF SEVEN YEARS SERVICE IN PAYMENT FOR HIS MARRIAGE TO RACHEL (SEE 29:30). IT WAS THE FACT THAT THE CONTRACT RELATING TO THE MARRIAGE HAD BEEN COMPLETED, RATHER THAN THE BIRTH OF JOSEPH, THAT MADE NEGOTIATING A NEW CONTRACT NECESSARY. IF NECESSARY, THIS MAY BE MADE CLEAR IN THE TRANSLATION OF VERSE 26. SEE, FOR EXAMPLE, THE MODEL TRANSLATION GIVEN FOR THE FIRST PART OF THAT VERSE. SEND ME AWAY, THAT I MAY GO …: SEND ME IS THE SAME REQUEST ABRAHAM’S SERVANT MADE TO LABAN AND BETHUEL IN 24:54, A REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO LEAVE. SEE THERE FOR COMMENTS. WE MAY TRANSLATE “LET ME GO,” “ALLOW ME TO RETURN.” AS VON RAD POINTS OUT, THE REQUEST OF JACOB IS ACTUALLY A REQUEST TO BE RELEASED FROM HIS STATUS AS A SERVANT WHO IS DEPENDENT ON LABAN. SO, IN SOME LANGUAGES AN EXPRESSION THAT MEANS TO RELEASE A PERSON FROM SERVICE OR OBLIGATION MAY BE USED APPROPRIATELY HERE; FOR EXAMPLE, “RELEASE ME [LITERALLY, UNTIE ME] SO THAT I MAY GO BACK.…”**

**TO MY OWN HOME AND COUNTRY: MY OWN HOME IS LITERALLY “MY OWN PLACE,” WHICH REFERS TO HIS FAMILY HOME THAT JACOB HAD LEFT MANY YEARS EARLIER. MY COUNTRY OR LAND REFERS TO BEERSHEBA, FROM WHICH JACOB HAD LEFT TO GO TO HARAN. IT IS THE LAND WHERE JACOB HAD BEEN BORN AND RAISED.**

**GENESIS 30:26**

**GIVE ME MY WIVES AND MY CHILDREN: IT MAY STRIKE TRANSLATORS AS STRANGE THAT JACOB SHOULD ASK LABAN FOR HIS OWN WIVES AND CHILDREN. THIS IS APPARENTLY NOT JUST POLITE LANGUAGE. ACCORDING TO VON RAD, JACOB, WHO IS A STRANGER AND WITHOUT PROPERTY, IS NOT A FREE MAN TO GO AS HE WISHES. ON THE CONTRARY HE IS DEPENDENT UPON LABAN. AS LABAN WILL SAY IN 31:43, “THE DAUGHTERS ARE MY DAUGHTERS, THE CHILDREN ARE MY CHILDREN.” FOR WHOM I HAVE SERVED YOU: TECHNICALLY JACOB WORKED FOR LABAN ONLY FOR THE WIVES. IT IS IN THIS SENSE THAT SPEISER TRANSLATES “GIVE ME MY WIVES, FOR WHOM I HAVE SERVED YOU, AND MY CHILDREN.…” THIS IS FOLLOWED BY SEVERAL OTHER TRANSLATIONS AND IS A MODEL THAT IS RECOMMENDED TO TRANSLATORS. AS NOTED AT THE BEGINNING OF VERSE 25, THE VERB I HAVE SERVED MUST BE UNDERSTOOD IN THIS CONTEXT AS MEANING “I HAVE [NOW] COMPLETED MY SERVICE.” A MODEL TRANSLATION THAT EXPRESSES THIS, AND WHICH ALSO CHANGES THE ORDER OF THE TWO CLAUSES, SAYS “I HAVE WORKED HARD TO FINISH PAYING FOR MY TWO WIVES. PLEASE GIVE THEM TO ME, WITH MY CHILDREN, AND WE WILL GO.” FOR YOU KNOW THE SERVICE WHICH I HAVE GIVEN YOU: THIS STATEMENT ALLUDES TO THE FACT THAT JACOB’S WORK HAS BEEN OUTSTANDING AND HAS INCREASED LABAN’S WEALTH, AS LABAN ADMITS IN VERSE 27. WE MAY TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “YOU KNOW HOW MUCH GOOD YOU HAVE GOT FROM MY WORK” OR “YOU KNOW HOW MUCH MY WORK HAS HELPED YOU.”**

**GENESIS 30:27: IF YOU WILL ALLOW ME TO SAY SO IS LITERALLY “IF I HAVE FOUND FAVOR IN YOUR EYES.” LABAN SPEAKS TO JACOB AS IF JACOB WERE HIS SUPERIOR. THIS POLITE FORM OF ADDRESS IS PART OF LABAN’S PLAN TO KEEP JACOB SO THAT LABAN’S ANIMALS WILL CONTINUE TO INCREASE AND MAKE HIM STILL RICHER. KJV ACTUALLY MAKES THE TEXT SAY THIS: “IF NOW I HAVE FOUND FAVOR IN THINE EYES, TARRY: FOR I HAVE DIVINED.…” I HAVE LEARNED BY DIVINATION: DIVINATION TRANSLATES A VERB MEANING TO SEE OMENS. DIVINATION OR SEEING OMENS IS A METHOD FOR DISCOVERING HIDDEN KNOWLEDGE. EZEK 21:21 MENTIONS THREE WAYS IN WHICH THE KING OF BABYLON DOES THIS: HE “SHAKES ARROWS,” “CONSULTS THE TERAFIM [FAMILY GODS],” AND “INSPECTS THE LIVER.” THE WORD TRANSLATED DIVINATION IS FOUND IN 44:5, 15 IN REFERENCE TO JACOB’S SILVER CUP IN EGYPT. DIVINATION WAS FORBIDDEN TO ISRAEL IN LEV 19:26 (“AUGURY”) AND DEUT 18:10, 14. IT IS POSSIBLE IN TRANSLATION TO USE A TERM THAT EXPRESSES THIS PROCESS, OR TO SAY MORE GENERALLY “I HAVE FOUND OUT BY USE OF MAGIC.” FRCL SAYS “MY GODS HAVE REVEALED TO ME”; GECL ASSOCIATES DIVINATION WITH ASTROLOGY WHEN IT TRANSLATES “AS LONG AS YOU WERE THERE, I STOOD UNDER A FAVORABLE STAR.” DRIVER UNDERSTANDS THE EXPRESSION TO BE USED IN THE METAPHORICAL SENSE OF “PERCEIVE BY CAREFUL OBSERVATION.” TRANSLATORS WHO DO NOT HAVE ADEQUATE TERMS FOR DIVINATION MAY WISH TO FOLLOW THAT MODEL; FOR EXAMPLE, “I HAVE DISCOVERED” OR “I HAVE FOUND OUT BY OBSERVING WHAT YOU DO.” NEB/REB TAKE THE HEBREW VERB IN THE SENSE OF HAVING GOOD FORTUNE, AND THEREFORE TRANSLATE “I HAVE BECOME PROSPEROUS”; NIV ALSO NOTES THIS POSSIBILITY IN A FOOTNOTE, “OR POSSIBLY ‘HAVE BECOME RICH AND.’” SOME EXAMPLES OF DIFFERENT TRANSLATIONS OF LEARNED BY DIVINATION ARE “I HAVE COME TO UNDERSTAND THAT …” (VERY GENERAL), “I HAVE BEEN DOING A RITUAL FOR FINDING OUT …,” “THE SIGNS I HAVE BEEN OBSERVING SHOW ME THAT.…” THE LORD HAS BLESSED ME BECAUSE OF YOU: LABAN SPEAKS IN TERMS OF STEPHEN YAHWEH HAVING BLESSED HIM. STEPHEN YAHWEH IS THE NAME OF JACOB’S GOD? WHICH JACOB HAS LEARNED FROM ABRAHAM AND ISAAC? HOWEVER, THE ANCIENT VERSIONS HAVE ’ELOHIM, THE GENERAL WORD FOR GOD, WHICH WE WOULD EXPECT FROM LABAN. TRANSLATORS SHOULD FOLLOW THE HEBREW TEXT, AS IN RSV AND TEV. BECAUSE OF YOU SHOWS THAT JACOB IS THE AGENT OF THE BLESSING GIVEN TO LABAN. THIS SENTENCE MAY NEED TO BE RESTRUCTURED TO SAY, FOR INSTANCE, “THE LORD HAS USED YOU TO BLESS ME.” AS A PASSIVE CONSTRUCTION WE MAY SAY “I HAVE BEEN BLESSED BY THE LORD THROUGH YOU” OR “I HAVE BEEN BLESSED BY THE LORD BECAUSE OF WHAT YOU HAVE DONE.”**

**GENESIS 30:28: NAME YOUR WAGES IS LITERALLY “SET YOUR WAGES ON ME.” WE MAY RENDER THIS “TELL ME HOW MUCH I SHOULD PAY YOU” OR “TELL ME HOW MUCH MONEY YOU WANT.” FOR WAGES SEE 29:15. AT THIS POINT SOME TRANSLATIONS ALSO PUT INTO WORDS LABAN’S DESIRE FOR JACOB TO STAY WITH HIM; FOR EXAMPLE, “YOU MUST STAY ON WITH ME. TELL ME YOUR PRICE, HOW MUCH MONEY YOU WANT.…”**

**GENESIS 30:29: JACOB’S REPLY BEGINS BY REPEATING THE THOUGHTS THAT HAVE BEEN EXPRESSED IN VERSES 26–28. YOU YOURSELF KNOW … YOU: SEE VERSE 26. HOW YOUR CATTLE HAVE FARED WITH ME: CATTLE REFERS TO ALL OF LABAN’S ANIMALS OR FLOCKS AND NOT JUST TO HIS COWS AND BULLS. THIS STATEMENT REFERS TO THE INCREASE IN LABAN’S ANIMALS AND MAY OFTEN BE TRANSLATED, FOR EXAMPLE, “HOW MUCH YOUR ANIMALS HAVE INCREASED.” SEE TEV. WITH ME MEANS IN THIS CONTEXT “SINCE I HAVE BEEN HERE,” “UNDER MY CARE,” OR “WITH ME TAKING CARE OF THEM.”**

**GENESIS 30:30: FOR YOU HAD LITTLE BEFORE I CAME IS LITERALLY “FOR A LITTLE WHICH WAS TO YOU BEFORE ME.” JACOB REMINDS LABAN THAT, COMPARED WITH THE PRESENT, LABAN HAD FEW ANIMALS WHEN JACOB ARRIVED IN HARAN: “BEFORE I CAME HERE YOU HAD FEW ANIMALS.” AND IT HAS INCREASED ABUNDANTLY: IT REFERS TO THE ANIMALS OR FLOCKS OF LABAN. WE MAY SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “AND YOUR FLOCKS [ANIMALS] HAVE BECOME NUMEROUS” OR “AND NOW SEE HOW MANY ANIMALS YOU HAVE.” AND THE LORD HAS BLESSED YOU WHEREVER I TURNED IS LITERALLY “THE LORD HAS BLESSED YOU ACCORDING TO MY FOOT.” THIS HEBREW IDIOM MAY HAVE THE MEANING OF “WHEREVER I WENT” OR “BECAUSE I AM HERE.” SEE TEV FOOTNOTE. IN TRANSLATION IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO MAKE THIS EXPRESSION MORE APPROPRIATE TO THE CONTEXT BY SAYING, FOR EXAMPLE, “THE LORD BLESSED YOU WHEREVER I TOOK YOUR FLOCKS” OR “THE LORD INCREASED YOUR FLOCKS WHEREVER I TOOK THEM TO GRAZE.” BUT NOW WHEN SHALL I PROVIDE FOR MY OWN HOUSEHOLD ALSO? JACOB’S QUESTION IS RHETORICAL AND MAY NEED TO BE RESHAPED AS A STATEMENT: “I NEED TO PROVIDE FOR MY OWN FAMILY NOW” OR “I HAVE TO START TAKING CARE OF MY OWN FAMILY.”**

**GENESIS 30:31: WHAT SHALL I GIVE YOU? LABAN’S QUESTION ASSUMES THAT JACOB IS WILLING TO STAY AND WORK, OR IT MAY BE UNDERSTOOD AS AN UNSPOKEN REFUSAL TO ALLOW JACOB TO LEAVE HARAN. IF THE TRANSLATOR ACCEPTS THE QUESTION AS ASSUMING JACOB WILL REMAIN, IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO MAKE THIS A CONDITION FOLLOWED BY A QUESTION: “IF YOU WILL STAY WITH ME, HOW MUCH SHALL I PAY YOU?” OR “IF YOU WILL CONTINUE WORKING FOR ME, TELL ME HOW MUCH MONEY YOU WILL WANT.” YOU SHALL NOT GIVE ME ANYTHING: JACOB’S ANSWER DOES NOT REALLY MEAN THAT HE DOES NOT WANT ANYTHING OR THAT HE IS WILLING TO WORK FOR NOTHING. JACOB’S REPLY MUST BE SEEN AS HIS OWN STRATEGY IN NEGOTIATING WITH THIS CLEVER AND OPPRESSIVE UNCLE. ANYTHING REFERS TO WAGES, PAYMENT, AND MAY HAVE TO BE RENDERED, FOR EXAMPLE, “I DO NOT WANT TO BE PAID WAGES” OR “I DO NOT WANT YOU TO PAY ME IN MONEY.” IF YOU WILL DO THIS FOR ME, I WILL AGAIN FEED YOUR FLOCK AND KEEP IT: JACOB’S CONDITION IF YOU WILL DO THIS MAY NEED TO BE PLACED AFTER FEED YOUR FLOCK AND KEEP IT, SO THAT THIS IS MORE CLEARLY JOINED TO “PASS THROUGH YOUR FLOCK” IN THE NEXT VERSE (SO TEV). ANOTHER ARRANGEMENT IS “I WILL AGAIN FEED YOUR FLOCK AND GUARD IT, IF YOU WILL LET ME GO THROUGH ALL YOUR FLOCK.…” FEED YOUR FLOCK IS EQUIVALENT TO “GRAZE YOUR ANIMALS,” “PASTURE YOUR ANIMALS.” KEEP IT MEANS “LOOK AFTER,” “TAKE CARE,” “WATCH OVER,” “PROTECT.”**

**GENESIS 30:32: VERSE 32 HAS SEVERAL PROBLEMS OF TEXT AND VOCABULARY. RSV FOLLOWS THE HEBREW TEXT WITH ITS EXTRA WORDING. SEE TEV FOOTNOTE. LET ME PASS REPRESENTS THE HEBREW TEXT. THE VULGATE HAS “[YOU] GO THROUGH.” MOST MODERN TRANSLATIONS FOLLOW RSV, TEV. REMOVING FROM IT: THIS JUST MEANS “TAKING OUT” OR “TAKING AWAY.” HOWEVER, PEOPLE WHO KEEP HERDS OF ANIMALS OFTEN HAVE SPECIAL WORDS OR EXPRESSIONS FOR THE WAY A FLOCK OR HERD IS DIVIDED; FOR EXAMPLE, ONE TRANSLATION SAYS “… IF YOU LET ME GO AND CUT OUT ALL THE.…” EVERY SPECKLED AND SPOTTED SHEEP AND EVERY BLACK LAMB: JACOB’S PLAN IS TO TAKE OUT OF LABAN’S FLOCKS ALL THE SHEEP AND GOATS THAT ARE OF MIXED COLORS. SHEEP WERE NORMALLY WHITE, AND GOATS WERE BROWN OR BLACK. JACOB WOULD SEPARATE OUT ALL THE ANIMALS THAT WERE SPECKLED AND SPOTTED (SHEEP THAT HAD DARK SPOTS ON THEIR WHITE WOOL, OR AMONG GOATS, THOSE THAT HAD WHITE OR OTHER LIGHT-COLORED SPOTS ON THEIR DARK HAIR). THE WORDS EVERY SPECKLED AND SPOTTED SHEEP ARE OMITTED BY THE SEPTUAGINT. KIDNER SAYS THAT THESE WORDS “SEEM TO HAVE CREPT INTO THE TEXT FROM THE SECOND HALF,” WHILE SPEISER COMMENTS, “AT THIS POINT, THE HEB. TEXT READS REDUNDANTLY ‘SPECKLED AND SPOTTED, AND EVERY SHEEP’ EVIDENTLY ADDED THROUGH CONFLATION WITH THE FOLLOWING VERSE.” HOTTP AGREES WITH RSV’S WORDING EXCEPT THAT IT TRANSLATES SPOTTED SHEEP AS “SPOTTED LAMB.” BESIDES TEV, SPEISER, NJB, AND NEB/REB ALSO OMIT THE ADDITIONAL WORDS. AND THE SPOTTED AND SPECKLED AMONG THE GOATS: IF THE ADDITION IN THE HEBREW IS REALLY PART OF THE TEXT, THEN IT SIMPLY REPEATS INFORMATION ALREADY GIVEN IN THE PREVIOUS SENTENCE, SINCE THE WORD TRANSLATED SHEEP REFERS TO ONE OF A FLOCK AND MAY MEAN BOTH SHEEP AND GOATS OR EITHER SHEEP OR GOATS. SUCH SHALL BE MY WAGES: SUCH REFERS TO THE COLORED ANIMALS: “THEY WILL BE MY WAGES” OR “YOU MUST GIVE ME THOSE ONES AS MY PAY FOR WORKING FOR YOU.” A SUGGESTED MODEL FOR TRANSLATING VERSE 32 IS “LET ME TAKE OUT OF YOUR HERD TODAY EVERY BLACK LAMB AND EVERY [SHEEP OR] GOAT THAT HAS MORE THAN ONE COLOR. THAT IS ALL THE PAYMENT I ASK.”**

**GENESIS 30:33: SO, MY HONESTY WILL ANSWER FOR ME LATER: ANSWER MEANS HERE TO WITNESS. THE THOUGHT EXPRESSED IS THAT IN THE FUTURE (WHEN LABAN CHECKS UP ON JACOB’S WAGES, WHICH IS IN JACOB’S FLOCK) THE COLORS OF JACOB’S ANIMALS WILL BE PROOF (A WITNESS) OF HIS HONESTY (OR DISHONESTY). SEE TEV FOR A CLEAR TRANSLATION MODEL. EVERY ONE THAT IS NOT SPECKLED AND SPOTTED AMONG THE GOATS AND BLACK AMONG THE LAMBS, IF FOUND WITH ME, SHALL BE COUNTED STOLEN: WE MAY RESTRUCTURE THIS SLIGHTLY TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “IF I HAVE A GOAT THAT IS NOT OF MORE THAN ONE COLOR OR A SHEEP THAT IS NOT BLACK, I HAVE STOLEN IT, AND YOU WILL KNOW IT.” FOR THE FINAL EXPRESSION COUNTED STOLEN, SOME LANGUAGES MAY PREFER TO EXPRESS THIS IN DIRECT SPEECH: “YOU WILL BE ABLE TO SAY, ‘THIS ONE IS STOLEN.’ ”**

**GENESIS 30:34: GOOD! LET IT BE AS YOU HAVE SAID: THESE WORDS CLEARLY INDICATE THAT LABAN AGREED TO JACOB’S PROPOSAL. THIS MAY BE BECAUSE HE BELIEVES IT WILL NOT COST HIM MANY ANIMALS. IN ANY CASE, MOST LANGUAGES SHOULD USE HERE A FORM OF WORDS THAT SAY UNAMBIGUOUSLY THAT “LABAN AGREED” (REB).**

**GENESIS 30:35: BUT THAT DAY LABAN REMOVED THE HE-GOATS THAT WERE STRIPED: IN VERSE 34 LABAN AGREED TO LET JACOB GO THROUGH HIS HERD AND REMOVE THE SPOTTED ANIMALS (VERSE 32). HOWEVER, IN VERSE 35 IT IS THE CAUTIOUS LABAN WHO REMOVES THE MULTICOLORED ANIMALS. EVEN IF HE IS REMOVING THEM FOR JACOB, THIS DOES NOT REPRESENT THE AGREEMENT. THEREFORE, RSV AND TEV BUT MARKS A CONTRAST BETWEEN WHAT LABAN AGREED WITH JACOB AND WHAT HE LATER DID WITH HIS FLOCKS. HE-GOATS ARE MALE GOATS. STRIPED MEANS HAVING STRIPES OF COLORS DIFFERENT FROM THE GENERAL BACKGROUND COLOR; THIS MAY ALSO BE SAID TO BE “STREAKED.” SHE-GOATS THAT WERE SPECKLED AND SPOTTED: AGAIN, THESE FEMALE GOATS ARE THE ONES THAT HAVE SPOTS OR SPECKS OF A DIFFERENT COLOR FROM THE BACKGROUND COLOR OF DARK BROWN OR BLACK. THEY INCLUDE GOATS THAT HAVE ANY WHITE ON THEM. IN HEBREW THE WORD FOR WHITE HERE IS LABAN, WHICH MAY BE A PLAY ON LABAN’S NAME. EVERY LAMB THAT WAS BLACK: THE WORD RENDERED LAMB BY RSV TRANSLATES THE HEBREW WORD THAT REFERS TO A SHEEP OR GOAT AS ONE OF A FLOCK. TEV AND OTHERS TRANSLATE “BLACK SHEEP.” WE MAY ALSO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “SHEEP WITH ANY BLACK ON THEM.” AND PUT THEM IN CHARGE OF HIS SONS: THIS IS THE FIRST MENTION OF LABAN’S SONS. WE MAY TRANSLATE THIS SENTENCE “HE TOLD HIS SONS TO TAKE CARE OF THEM” OR “HE ORDERED HIS SONS TO LOOK AFTER THEM.”**

**GENESIS 30:36: AND HE SET A DISTANCE OF THREE DAYS JOURNEY BETWEEN HIMSELF AND JACOB: VERSE 35 SAYS THAT LABAN PUT HIS SONS IN CHARGE OF THESE ANIMALS THAT JACOB WANTED. IN VERSE 36 THE TEXT DOES NOT SAY THAT LABAN ACCOMPANIED HIS SONS, BUT TO AVOID JACOB HE PROBABLY DID. SET A DISTANCE … MEANS THAT LABAN AND HIS SONS LED THIS FLOCK AWAY FOR THREE DAYS TO A DISTANT GRAZING GROUND. IN A NUMBER OF TRANSLATIONS LABAN’S INTENT IS BROUGHT OUT BY THE RENDERING “THEY WENT FOR THREE DAYS AND STAYED A LONG WAY AWAY FROM JACOB.” IN SOME LANGUAGES THERE ARE COLLOQUIAL WAYS OF SAYING THAT LABAN AND HIS SONS “DISAPPEARED” OR “MADE THEMSELVES SCARCE.” AND JACOB FED THE REST OF LABAN’S FLOCK: THIS ACTION TAKES PLACE WHILE LABAN AND HIS SONS ARE GOING AWAY WITH THE SPECKLED AND SPOTTED ANIMALS TO SEPARATE THESE ANIMALS FROM LABAN’S FLOCK. IN TRANSLATION IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO SHOW THE RELATION BETWEEN THESE TWO EVENTS. WE MAY SAY, AS DOES NEB/REB, “WHILE JACOB WAS TAKING CARE OF THE REST.…”**

**GENESIS 30:37: VERSES 37–43 DESCRIBE THE WAY IN WHICH JACOB OUTWITS HIS UNCLE AND INCREASES HIS WEALTH IN ANIMALS. IT IS THE CUNNING OF THE YOUNG NEPHEW (A SON OF ONE’S BROTHER, SISTER, BROTHER-IN-LAW, OR SISTER-IN-LAW) AGAINST THE OLDER UNCLE THAT ENABLES JACOB TO OVERCOME LABAN AND BECOME A RICH MAN. JACOB’S METHODS FOR PRODUCING SPOTTED ANIMALS REVEAL HIS CUNNING BEHAVIOR AND SHOULD BE UNDERSTOOD AS TRICKS AND NOT AS FACTS OF ANIMAL BREEDING. ACCORDING TO WHAT JACOB SAYS TO HIS WIVES IN 31:9–12, IT IS GOD WHO CAUSES THESE TRICKS TO SUCCEED. THERE ARE REALLY THREE DIFFERENT TRICKS THAT JACOB PLAYED WITH LABAN’S FLOCKS: TRICK 1 IS DESCRIBED IN VERSES 37–39. BY PEELING SOME OF THE BARK FROM THE BRANCHES OF CERTAIN TREES, JACOB CAUSES THEM TO HAVE A STRIPED APPEARANCE. HE THEN PLACES THESE WHERE THE FLOCKS SEE THEM AS THEY COME TO MATE, AND THIS CAUSES THE FEMALES TO GIVE BIRTH TO STRIPED AND SPOTTED OFFSPRING. TRICK 2 IS DESCRIBED IN VERSE 40 AND IS SIMILAR TO TRICK 1. IN THIS CASE JACOB SEPARATES OUT THE MATING FEMALES OF THE FLOCK AND CAUSES THEM TO BE LOOKING AT ONLY THE BLACK AND STRIPED ANIMALS; THIS ALSO HAS THE EFFECT OF CAUSING THEM TO GIVE BIRTH TO STRIPED AND SPOTTED KIDS, AND BLACK LAMBS. TRICK 3 IS DESCRIBED IN VERSES 41–42 AND MAY BE SEEN AS A REFINEMENT OF TRICK 1. IN THIS CASE JACOB USES TRICK 1 ONLY WHEN THE STRONGER ANIMALS IN THE FLOCK ARE MATING, AND NOT WHEN THE WEAKER ANIMALS ARE MATING. BY THIS SELECTIVE BREEDING JACOB BUILDS UP HIS FLOCK FROM THE STRONGEST OF LABAN’S STOCK. THEN JACOB TOOK FRESH RODS OF POPLAR AND ALMOND AND PLANE: RODS REFERS TO STICKS THAT HAVE BEEN CUT FROM BRANCHES OF A TREE. IN THIS CASE THE BRANCHES ARE GREEN, STILL GROWING, FRESH. TO MAKE CLEAR THAT THEY ARE GREEN BRANCHES, IT MAY BE CLEARER TO SAY “CUT GREEN BRANCHES FROM … TREES.” FOR POPLAR, ALMOND, AND PLANE SEE FAUNA AND FLORA OF THE BIBLE. THESE TREES MAY NOT BE KNOWN IN THE AREA OF THE TRANSLATION. OTHER NAMES OF TREES MAY NEED TO BE SUBSTITUTED. THE IMPORTANT POINT IS THAT, WHERE THESE BRANCHES HAVE THE BARK PEELED, THE EXPOSED AREA IS WHITE. IN SOME CASES, IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO USE BORROWED WORDS FOR THESE TREES. A GENERAL EXPRESSION MAY ALSO BE USED SUCH AS “NEW YOUNG BRANCHES OF TREES, THREE KINDS” OR “BRANCHES OF THREE KINDS OF TREES THAT HAD WHITE WOOD.” PEELED WHITE STREAKS IN THEM, EXPOSING THE WHITE OF THE RODS: PEELED MEANS REMOVED THE BARK OR CUT AWAY THE BARK. HOWEVER, HE DID NOT REMOVE ALL THE BARK BUT RATHER PEELED IT IN SECTIONS SO THAT THE BRANCH HAD STRIPS OF PEELED AREAS AND STRIPS OF BARK COVERED AREAS. THE AREAS WHERE THE BARK WAS REMOVED WERE WHITE. IN THIS WAY THE BRANCH HAD ALTERNATING STRIPS OF LIGHT AND DARK COLORS. TEV PROVIDES A SATISFACTORY MODEL FOR MANY LANGUAGES: “AND STRIPPED OFF SOME OF THE BARK SO THAT THE BRANCHES HAD WHITE STRIPES ON THEM.”**

**GENESIS 30:38: HE SET THE RODS WHICH HE HAD PEELED IN FRONT OF THE FLOCKS IN THE RUNNELS: THIS STATEMENT SHOULD BE UNDERSTOOD TO MEAN THAT THE ANIMALS COULD SEE THESE BRANCHES IN FRONT OF THEM WHEN THEY HAD THEIR HEADS LOWERED TO DRINK. RSV RUNNELS IS AN ARCHAIC WORD FOR A SMALL STREAM. NRSV SAYS “IN THE TROUGHS.” THE HEBREW USES A SPECIAL WORD FOR TROUGH AND ADDS A DESCRIPTIVE DEFINITION, THE WATERING TROUGHS, WHERE THE ANIMALS CAME TO DRINK. TRANSLATORS SHOULD REFER TO 24:20 FOR THE TRANSLATION OF TROUGHS. WE MAY SUGGEST TRANSLATING THIS PART OF VERSE 38 AS “JACOB PUT THE STRIPED BRANCHES INSIDE THE DRINKING TROUGHS, WHERE THE ANIMALS WOULD SEE THEM WHEN THEY CAME TO DRINK.” THE CONTEXT RATHER THAN THE PARTICULAR FORM OF THE VERB HERE INDICATES THAT JACOB DID WHAT IS DESCRIBED IN VERSES 37–42 NOT ONE TIME BUT MANY TIMES; IT WAS HIS REGULAR PRACTICE. HE BUILT UP HIS OWN FLOCK BY DOING THESE THINGS OVER A PERIOD OF YEARS. IF THERE IS ANY DANGER OF MISUNDERSTANDING FOR READERS, TRANSLATORS SHOULD USE AN EXPRESSION OR VERB FORMS THAT MAKE IT CLEAR THAT JACOB DID THESE ACTIONS HABITUALLY; FOR EXAMPLE, “ALL THE TIME JACOB USED TO CUT BRANCHES … AND HE WOULD PUT THE STICKS.…” THE FINAL SENTENCE OF VERSE 38 EXPLAINS THE CIRCUMSTANCES IN WHICH THE ANIMALS MATED. TEV EXPANDS THIS EXPLANATION BY SAYING “HE PUT THEM THERE BECAUSE THE ANIMALS MATED.…” TRANSLATORS MAY FIND THIS A HELPFUL MODEL. IT IS IMPORTANT IN TRANSLATION TO USE AN EXPRESSION FOR MATING OR BREEDING THAT CAN BE READ IN PUBLIC WITHOUT CAUSING AMUSEMENT OR EMBARRASSMENT.**

**GENESIS 30:39: THE FLOCKS BRED IN FRONT OF THE RODS AND SO THE FLOCKS BROUGHT FORTH STRIPED, SPECKLED, AND SPOTTED: NOTICE THAT TEV AND OTHERS MAKE THE WHOLE OF VERSE 39 A RESULT. FOR FLOCKS BRED SEE TEV VERSE 38, “THE ANIMALS MATED.” IN FRONT OF THE RODS MAY NEED TO BE EXPRESSED AS “WHERE THEY COULD SEE THE STRIPED BRANCHES.” BROUGHT FORTH MEANS GAVE BIRTH TO. THIS IS OFTEN A DIFFERENT EXPRESSION THAN THAT USED FOR HUMAN BEINGS. FOR STRIPED, SPECKLED, AND SPOTTED SEE THE TERMS USED IN VERSES 32 AND 35. A SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF TRANSLATIONS TAKE FLOCKS IN THIS VERSE TO REFER ONLY TO THE GOATS, IN CONTRAST TO THE REFERENCE TO THE SHEEP IN THE NEXT VERSE. SO NJB HAS “THE GOATS THUS MATED IN FRONT OF THE SHOOTS, AND THE GOATS PRODUCED.…” SPEISER IS VERY SIMILAR; AND TEV AND NEB/REB ALSO MAKE THIS VERSE REFER ONLY TO THE GOATS. WHILE THIS IS NOT ABSOLUTELY REQUIRED BY THE HEBREW, IT SUITS THE CONTEXT VERY WELL.**

**GENESIS 30:40: AND JACOB SEPARATED THE LAMBS: LAMBS TRANSLATES THE HEBREW TERMS USED IN VERSES 33 AND 35 AND RENDERED LAMB IN RSV AND “SHEEP” IN TEV. OTHERS TRANSLATE “EWE,” MEANING ADULT FEMALE SHEEP. IN SHEEP RAISING CULTURES IT WILL BE ADVISABLE TO USE THE TERM FOR “EWE.” WE MAY ALSO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “THE SHEEP THAT WERE IN HEAT” OR “THE FEMALE SHEEP THAT WERE READY TO BREED.” THESE FEMALE SHEEP ARE BEING BRED WHILE FACING THE COLORED ANIMALS IN ORDER THAT THEY WILL PRODUCE COLORED YOUNG FOR JACOB’S FLOCKS. ACCORDINGLY, IN TRANSLATION IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO MAKE CLEAR THE REASON JACOB SET THE FACES OF THE FLOCKS [THESE EWES] TOWARD THE STRIPED AND ALL BLACK IN THE FLOCK OF LABAN. SEE THE NOTE ON TRICK 2 IN VERSE 37. IT IS OBVIOUS THAT JACOB CANNOT MAKE HIS EWES FACE LABAN’S ANIMALS IF THESE ARE THREE DAYS JOURNEY AWAY (SEE 30:36). SINCE THE PROCESS DESCRIBED TAKES PLACE OVER A LONG PERIOD, WE MAY ASSUME THAT LABAN’S ANIMALS AND JACOB’S ANIMALS ARE AGAIN NEAR EACH OTHER, WITH LABAN’S ANIMALS NOW CARRYING THEIR OWNER’S MARKINGS. (ANOTHER POSSIBLE EXPLANATION IS THAT THE COLORED ANIMALS REFERRED TO IN THIS VERSE ARE THE YOUNG ONES BRED BY THE TRICK DESCRIBED IN VERSES 37–39, WHICH AT THIS TIME ARE STILL WITH LABAN’S FLOCK, EVEN THOUGH THEY BELONG TO JACOB.)**

**WE MAY TRANSLATE VERSE 40, FOR EXAMPLE: • JACOB REMOVED THE EWES FROM THE OTHER SHEEP AND GOATS IN LABAN’S FLOCK. WHEN THESE EWES WERE BRED, HE MADE THEM LOOK TOWARD THE STRIPED AND BLACK ANIMALS OF LABAN SO THEY WOULD GIVE BIRTH TO STRIPED AND SPOTTED YOUNG. BY DOING THIS HE INCREASED THE NUMBER OF HIS OWN ANIMALS AND KEPT THEM SEPARATE FROM LABAN’S HERDS.**

**A DIFFERENT POSSIBILITY FOR THIS VERSE IS GIVEN BY NEB/REB. IT IS THAT JACOB SEPARATED THE RAMS (MALE SHEEP) OF LABAN’S FLOCK AND LET ONLY THE COLORED RAMS BREED WITH THE EWES, THUS MAKING SURE THAT THE OFFSPRING WOULD BE BLACK. WHILE THIS IS THE WAY A MODERN SHEEP-BREEDER WOULD THINK, IT MUST BE REGARDED AS ONLY SPECULATION IN THIS TEXT AND CANNOT BE RECOMMENDED TO TRANSLATORS.**

**GENESIS 30:41: VERSES 41–42 EXPLAIN HOW JACOB MADE CERTAIN THAT HIS ANIMALS WERE STRONGER AND HEALTHIER THAN THOSE THAT BELONGED TO LABAN. SEE THE NOTE ON TRICK 3 IN VERSE 37. WHENEVER THE STRONGER OF THE FLOCK WERE BREEDING: STRONGER OF THE FLOCK REFERS TO THE ANIMALS THAT ARE ROBUST, STURDY, HEALTHY. IN SOME LANGUAGES THESE ARE CALLED “THE FAT ANIMALS.” LAID THE RODS IN THE RUNNELS: SEE VERSE 38. BEFORE THE EYES OF THE FLOCK: THAT IS, SO THEY COULD SEE THE STRIPED BRANCHES. THAT THEY MIGHT BREED AMONG THE RODS: SEE THE SIMILAR EXPRESSION IN VERSE 39.**

**GENESIS 30:42: BUT FOR THE FEEBLER OF THE FLOCK HE DID NOT LAY THEM THERE: FEEBLER OF THE FLOCK REFERS TO THE ANIMALS THAT ARE NOT ROBUST AND HEALTHY. THEY ARE SOMETIMES DESCRIBED IN ENGLISH AS WEAK, SCRAWNY, OR THIN. TRANSLATORS WILL WANT TO USE A TERM THAT CONTRASTS WITH THAT USED IN VERSE 41. DID NOT LAY THEM MEANS HE DID NOT LAY THE STRIPED BRANCHES IN THE DRINKING TROUGHS. SO, THE FEEBLER WERE LABAN’S: THE THIN, WEAK ANIMALS WOULD TEND TO PRODUCE OFFSPRING LIKE THEIR PARENTS AND BE UNAFFECTED BY THE STRIPED BRANCHES. THESE WOULD REMAIN IN LABAN’S FLOCKS. AND THE STRONGER JACOB’S: ON THE OTHER HAND, THE HEALTHIER ANIMALS WOULD PRODUCE OFFSPRING OF MIXED COLORS AND THESE BELONGED TO JACOB.**

**GENESIS 30:43: THUS, THE MAN GREW EXCEEDINGLY RICH: THUS, MARKS A CONCLUSION TO THIS STORY, WHICH HAS BEEN TOLD TO EXPLAIN THAT JACOB BECAME A RICH MAN BECAUSE HE WAS MORE-CLEVER THAN HIS UNCLE. WE MAY SAY IN ENGLISH, FOR EXAMPLE, “AND SO IT HAPPENED,” “IN THIS WAY,” “BY DOING THESE THINGS,” “AS A RESULT.” GREW … RICH TRANSLATES A HEBREW VERB THAT DESCRIBES SOMETHING BURSTING OR BREAKING FORTH, AND SO IN THIS CONTEXT DESCRIBES JACOB’S WEALTH AS DEVELOPING SUDDENLY AND GREATLY. HAD LARGE FLOCKS … ASSES: JACOB’S WEALTH IN FLOCKS REFERS TO SHEEP AND GOATS. FOR MAIDSERVANTS AND MENSERVANTS, CAMELS, AND ASSES, SEE 12:16 AND 24:35.**

**JACOB AND HIS FAMILY ESCAPE FROM LABAN (31:1–21)**

**SUBDIVISION HEADING**

**THE HANDBOOK HEADING SUGGESTS THAT JACOB LEFT LABAN SECRETLY. TRANSLATORS MAY WISH TO CONSIDER OTHER TITLES FOR THIS EPISODE; FOR EXAMPLE, “JACOB TAKES ALL THAT BELONGS TO HIM AND LEAVES LABAN” OR “GOD CALLS JACOB TO RETURN TO CANAAN.” SOME OTHER HEADINGS ARE “JACOB FLEES FROM LABAN” (TEV), “JACOB PLANS TO FLEE FROM LABAN” (SPCL, VERSES 1–16), “JACOB’S FLIGHT” (NJB), “JACOB’S SECRET DEPARTURE” (GECL).**

**GENESIS 31:1: VERSES 1–31. VERSES 1–2 FORM A TRANSITION BETWEEN THE CLOSE OF CHAPTER 30 AND THE INTRODUCTORY EPISODE IN CHAPTER 31. NOW JACOB HEARD THAT THE SONS OF LABAN WERE SAYING: NOW IS THE RSV RENDERING OF THE HEBREW CONNECTIVE AND SERVES TO MARK THE CHANGE TO THE NEW EVENTS THAT WILL NOW UNFOLD. JACOB HEARD PROBABLY MEANS HERE THAT HE HEARD THESE WORDS FROM OTHERS WHO REPORTED THEM TO HIM. THIS IS OFTEN EXPRESSED AS “JACOB RECEIVED WORD” OR “JACOB HEARD NEWS THAT.” IN SOME CASES, IT MAY BE BETTER TO SAY “LEARNED” OR “FOUND OUT.” IN SOCIETIES WHERE IT IS IMPORTANT TO EXPRESS RELATIONSHIPS WHEN SPEAKING OF PEOPLE, THE SONS OF LABAN MAY HAVE TO BE CALLED “HIS [JACOB’S] BROTHERS-IN-LAW.” AND THE SPEECH THAT FOLLOWS MAY BEGIN “OUR BROTHER-IN-LAW HAS TAKEN.…” LABAN’S SONS ARE QUOTED IN RSV AS SAYING JACOB HAS TAKEN ALL THAT WAS OUR FATHER’S. THE SENSE OF TAKEN IS “TAKEN FOR HIMSELF,” “TAKEN AWAY FROM LABAN.” ALL THAT WAS … MEANS “ALL THE ANIMALS THAT BELONGED TO OUR FATHER.” THIS MAY BE UNDERSTOOD AS EXAGGERATION. IT MAY BE CLEARER TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “ALL THE ANIMALS THAT JACOB HAS TAKEN BELONGED TO OUR FATHER.” AND FROM WHAT WAS OUR FATHER’S HE HAS GAINED: THAT IS, “FROM THE THINGS THAT BELONGED TO OUR FATHER” OR “FROM OUR FATHER’S WEALTH.” SEE TEV “FROM WHAT OUR FATHER OWNED.” GAINED ALL THIS WEALTH MAY BE RENDERED “HE HAS GOTTEN ALL HIS RICHES, ANIMALS, PROPERTY.” A NUMBER OF TRANSLATIONS EXPRESS THIS SIMPLY AS “HE HAS BECOME [VERY] RICH.” IN MANY LANGUAGES IT WILL BE MORE NATURAL TO CHANGE THE ORDER OF THE CLAUSES IN THE LAST PART OF THE SENTENCE AS TEV HAS DONE. ONE OTHER TRANSLATION THAT DOES THIS SAYS “HE IS A VERY RICH MAN, BUT EVERYTHING HE HAS BELONGED TO OUR FATHER BEFORE.”**

**GENESIS 31:2: AND JACOB SAW THAT LABAN DID NOT REGARD HIM WITH FAVOR AS BEFORE IS LITERALLY “AND JACOB SAW THE FACE OF LABAN AND BEHOLD IT WAS NOT TOWARD HIM AS BEFORE.” WHAT JACOB SAW WAS A CHANGE IN LABAN’S FACE, THAT HE WAS NO LONGER FRIENDLY TOWARD HIM. IN SOME LANGUAGES THIS STATEMENT IS EXPRESSED IN FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE; FOR EXAMPLE, “JACOB SAW THAT LABAN’S EYES HAD TURNED COLD” OR “… DID NOT SHOW HIM HIS GOOD FACE.” SPCL SAYS “LABAN NO LONGER LOOKED AT HIM WITH GOOD EYES, AS BEFORE.” MANY LANGUAGES SPEAK ABOUT PEOPLE BEING FRIENDLY OR UNFRIENDLY IN A CONTEXT LIKE THIS; TWO EXAMPLES OF TRANSLATIONS THAT USE SUCH EXPRESSIONS HERE ARE “JACOB SAW THAT HIS FATHER-IN-LAW WAS NOT GOOD FRIENDS WITH HIM LIKE HE WAS BEFORE” AND “JACOB SAW THAT LABAN WAS UNFRIENDLY TOWARD HIM NOW.” THE FACT THAT JACOB OBSERVED A CHANGE IN THE RELATIONSHIP IS BROUGHT OUT IN SOME TRANSLATIONS; FOR EXAMPLE, “JACOB SAW THAT LABAN’S BEHAVIOR TOWARD HIM HAD CHANGED, AND THAT HE DIDN’T LIKE HIM AS HE HAD BEFORE.”**

**GENESIS 31:3: IN THIS VERSE THE LORD TELLS JACOB TO RETURN TO CANAAN. THEN THE LORD: THEN TRANSLATES THE HEBREW CONNECTIVE AND REFERS TO A SUBSEQUENT EVENT. WE MAY ALSO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “AFTER THAT,” OR “LATER,” OR IT MAY NOT BE NECESSARY TO USE ANY TRANSITION EXPRESSION. RETURN TO THE LAND OF YOUR FATHERS AND TO YOUR KINDRED: FOR A SIMILAR EXPRESSION SEE 12:1; 24:4, 38. AND I WILL BE WITH YOU MAY NEED TO BE RENDERED “I WILL GO WITH YOU,” OR STATED MORE FULLY, “I WILL GO WITH YOU AND HELP YOU.”**

**GENESIS 31:4: IN VERSES 4–13 JACOB ARRANGES A PRIVATE CONVERSATON WITH HIS WIVES AND EXPLAINS HOW GOD ENABLED HIM TO OVERCOME THE HARDSHIPS LABAN HAD IMPOSED UPON HIM. SO, JACOB SENT AND CALLED RACHEL AND LEAH INTO THE FIELD: SO, MARKS A CONSEQUENCE OF THE EVENTS IN VERSE 3. SENT AND CALLED MEANS JACOB SENT SOMEONE TO TELL HIS WIVES TO COME TO HIM. FIELD REFERS TO THE PASTURE OR GRAZING AREA WHERE HIS FLOCKS WERE FEEDING. HE WAS THERE WITH HIS ANIMALS. NEB AND REB REFER TO THIS AS “IN THE COUNTRY,” WHILE SOME OTHER TRANSLATIONS SAY SIMPLY “THE PLACE WHERE HIS FLOCKS WERE” (TEV AUSTRALIAN EDITION AND OTHERS).**

**GENESIS 31:5: I SEE THAT YOUR FATHER DOES NOT REGARD ME WITH FAVOR AS HE DID BEFORE: SEE VERSE 2. FOR THE GOD OF MY FATHER SEE 26:24; 28:13. GOD IS ’ELOHIM. THIS EXPRESSION MAY NEED TO BE RENDERED, FOR EXAMPLE, “THE GOD WHOM MY FATHER WORSHIPS.”**

**GENESIS 31:6: YOU KNOW THAT I HAVE SERVED YOUR FATHER WITH ALL MY STRENGTH: YOU (PLURAL) IS EMPHATIC IN THE HEBREW CONSTRUCTION. SEE TEV “YOU BOTH KNOW.” IN LANGUAGES THAT HAVE DUAL PRONOUN FORMS, THIS WILL BE “YOU-TWO KNOW.” WITH … STRENGTH IS SOMETIMES RENDERED IDIOMATICALLY AS “I WORKED FOR YOUR FATHER WITH MY BODY AND MY HEART” OR “… WITH MY HANDS AND MY FEET.”**

**GENESIS 31:7: YET YOUR FATHER HAS CHEATED ME AND CHANGED MY WAGES TEN TIMES: YET, USED IN BOTH RSV AND TEV, EXPRESSES SOMETHING UNEXPECTED IN VIEW OF WHAT WAS JUST SAID. THREE HEBREW WORDS ARE TRANSLATED CHEAT BY RSV IN VERSES 7, 26, AND 27. HERE THE WORD REFERS TO BEING DECEITFUL BY GIVING JACOB LESS THAN HE WAS PROMISED. CHANGED … WAGES CAN MEAN TO CHANGE BY INCREASING OR BY DECREASING: IT IS THE LATTER THAT JACOB REFERS TO. WE MAY SAY “HE REDUCED MY WAGES.” IT IS ALSO POSSIBLE TO LINK THIS CLAUSE TO THE ONE BEFORE IT AS EXPRESSING THE MANNER IN WHICH LABAN CHEATED HIM: “YOUR FATHER HAS CHEATED ME BY CHANGING MY WAGES.” TEN TIMES DOES NOT INDICATE THE EXACT NUMBER OF TIMES BUT IS A GENERAL WAY OF SAYING “MANY TIMES,” “OVER AND OVER,” “AGAIN AND AGAIN.” IN MANY LANGUAGES THIS IS BEST EXPRESSED BY USING A FORM OF THE VERB THAT HAS THE SENSE OF CONTINUOUS ACTION; FOR EXAMPLE, “ALL THE TIME HE WAS DECEIVING ME AND CHANGING MY PAY” OR “HE DECEIVED ME AND HE WAS ALWAYS CHANGING MY WAGES.” BUT GOD DID NOT PERMIT HIM TO HARM ME: GOD IS ’ELOHIM. HARM IS PROBABLY TO BE TAKEN AS PHYSICAL HARM OR HURT. “GOD DID NOT LET HIM CAUSE ME ANY HARM.” THIS IS COMMONLY EXPRESSED AS “GOD DID NOT ALLOW HIM TO DO BAD TO ME.”**

**GENESIS 31:8: IF HE SAID: IF DOES NOT INDICATE IN THIS CONTEXT A SITUATION THAT MAY OR MAY NOT HAVE HAPPENED. IT PROBABLY REFERS TO LABAN’S HAVING SAID THE WORDS THAT FOLLOW ON CERTAIN OCCASIONS, AND ESPECIALLY SAYING THEM ON REPEATED OCCASIONS. IN THIS CASE WE MAY TRANSLATE “WHENEVER HE SAID,” “WHEN HE WOULD SAY,” OR “EVERY TIME HE WOULD SAY.” ANOTHER APPROACH TO THE “IF … THEN … IF … THEN” CONSTRUCTION IS REPRESENTED BY A TRANSLATION THAT SAYS “FIRST HE SAID I COULD HAVE THE ALL THE SPOTTED …; AND AT THAT TIME THE FLOCKS ALL BORE SPOTTED YOUNG. AFTER THAT HE SAID I COULD HAVE ALL THE STRIPED …; WELL, THEN THE FLOCKS BORE YOUNG THAT WERE STRIPED.” THE SPOTTED SHALL BE YOUR WAGES: THIS EXPRESSION MAY NEED TO BE FILLED OUT TO MAKE IT CLEAR; FOR EXAMPLE, “THE SPOTTED ANIMALS THAT ARE BORN WILL BE GIVEN TO YOU AS YOUR WAGES” OR “I WILL GIVE YOU THE SPOTTED YOUNG ANIMALS FOR YOUR PAY.” THEN ALL THE FLOCK BORE SPOTTED IS THE CONSEQUENCE OF THE “IF” CLAUSE AT THE OPENING OF THIS VERSE. BORE SPOTTED MAY NEED TO BE EXPANDED TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “BORE SPOTTED YOUNG” OR “GAVE BIRTH TO SPOTTED YOUNG ANIMALS.” FOR SPOTTED SEE 30:32. THE SECOND HALF OF VERSE 8 FOLLOWS THE SAME PATTERN AS THE FIRST HALF. FOR STRIPED SEE 30:35. FOR COMMENTS ON THE RENDERING “GOATS” IN TEV, SEE 30:39.**

**GENESIS 31:9: THUS, GOD HAS TAKEN AWAY …: THUS, WHICH TRANSLATES THE COMMON HEBREW CONNECTIVE, IS USED TO SHOW THIS STATEMENT TO BE A CONSEQUENCE OF THE EVENTS IN VERSE 8. OR IT MAY HAVE THE MEANING OF “IN THIS WAY.” NOTE THAT TEV DOES NOT USE A SPECIAL MARKER. TAKEN AWAY TRANSLATES A VERB FORM THAT HAS THE SENSE OF SNATCH AWAY, LIKE PREY TAKEN FROM THE MOUTH OF AN ANIMAL IN 1 SAM 17:35 (“DELIVERED”); AMOS 3:12 (“RESCUES”). IN REFERENCE TO PROPERTY AND WIVES, IT IS USED IN 1 SAM 30:18, 22 (“RECOVERED”). SPEISER GIVES IT THE SENSE OF “SALVAGED” AND TRANSLATES “RECLAIMED,” AS DOES ALSO NJB. MOST ENGLISH VERSIONS ARE SIMILAR TO RSV AND TEV. CATTLE TRANSLATES THE HEBREW TERM THAT REFERS TO ALL KINDS OF LIVESTOCK OR DOMESTIC ANIMALS, NOT ONLY COWS. SEE 4:20. CATTLE OF YOUR FATHER MEANS THE ANIMALS OR FLOCKS THAT BELONGED TO YOUR FATHER.**

**GENESIS 31:10: IN THE MATING SEASON OF THE FLOCK: THIS SERVES AS A TIME SETTING FOR THE DREAM THAT JACOB REVEALS TO HIS WIVES. IN SOME LANGUAGES IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO GIVE MORE DETAIL AND SAY, AS SPCL DOES, “ONE DAY WHEN THE ANIMALS WERE IN HEAT.…” MATING SEASON REFERS TO THE TIME WHEN THE ANIMALS BREED OR MATE. SINCE IN MANY PLACES THIS IS AT A FIXED TIME OF THE YEAR, SOME TRANSLATIONS SAY “IN THE MONTH WHEN.…” I LIFTED UP MY EYES IS AN IDIOM MEANING “I BEGAN TO LOOK.” WHAT JACOB SAW WAS THE ANIMALS MATING. IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO RESTRUCTURE THIS BY SAYING, FOR EXAMPLE, “I HAD A DREAM AND SAW.…” SEE TEV. THE WORD USUALLY TRANSLATED “BEHOLD” OCCURS IN THE HEBREW AND MARKS THIS AS A DREAM. HE-GOATS: THAT IS, MALE GOATS OR SHEEP. LEAPED UPON THE FLOCK IS USED HERE AS A WAY OF REFERRING TO THE MATING ACT, IN WHICH THE MALE MOUNTS ON THE BACK OF THE FEMALE. TEV SAYS “MALE GOATS THAT WERE MATING.” IN SOME LANGUAGES IT IS EXPRESSED AS “THE MALE GOATS THAT WERE COVERING THE FEMALES” OR “… CLIMBING ON THE FEMALES,” OR AS IN FRCL, “THE MALES THAT COUPLED WITH THE SHEEP OR THE GOATS.” TRANSLATORS SHOULD MAKE CERTAIN THAT THE EXPRESSION USED FOR MATING IS BOTH THE CORRECT EXPRESSION IN THEIR LANGUAGE AND ACCEPTABLE FOR PUBLIC READING. FOR STRIPED AND SPOTTED SEE 30:35. MOTTLED TRANSLATES A WORD THAT HAS THE SAME MEANING AS “SPOTTED.” IN ENGLISH THE TERMS “MOTTLED,” “DAPPLED,” OR “PIEBALD” ARE SOMETIMES USED. THESE TERMS REFER TO THE SKIN OR HIDE OF AN ANIMAL THAT HAS DIFFERENT COLORED SPOTS OR BLOTCHES.**

**GENESIS 31:11: THEN THE ANGEL OF GOD SAID TO ME IN THE DREAM: FOR ANGEL OF GOD SEE A SIMILAR EXPRESSION IN 16:7. SAID TO ME FOLLOWED BY CALLING JACOB’S NAME MAY NEED TO BE RENDERED “CALLED TO ME” OR “CALLED MY NAME.” AND I SAID IS FOLLOWED BY A RESPONSE AND SO MUST OFTEN BE TRANSLATED “I ANSWERED.” SEE TEV. FOR HERE I AM SEE ABRAHAM’S RESPONSE TO THE LORD IN 22:1.**

**GENESIS 31:12: LIFT UP YOUR EYES IS THE COMMAND FORM OF THE SAME EXPRESSION USED IN VERSE 10. SEE TEV. ALL THE GOATS THAT LEAP UPON THE FLOCK ARE STRIPED, SPOTTED, AND MOTTLED: SEE VERSE 10. FOR I HAVE SEEN ALL THAT LABAN IS DOING TO YOU: THIS STATEMENT SUGGESTS THAT GOD HAS ARRANGED FOR THE ANIMALS TO BREED IN THIS FASHION SO THAT JACOB WILL RECEIVE THE WAGES LABAN HAS WITHHELD FROM HIM. IN THIS WAY JACOB’S TRICK IN CHAPTER 30, IN WHICH THE STRIPED BRANCHES ARE PLACED BEFORE THE MATING ANIMALS, IS NOW EXPLAINED AS GOD’S INTERVENTION TO MAKE THE TRICK WORK FOR JACOB. IN SOME LANGUAGES IT WILL BE NECESSARY TO ADJUST THE FINAL SENTENCE OF VERSE 12 TO SHOW ITS RELATION TO THE REST OF THAT VERSE. FOR EXAMPLE, WE MAY NEED TO SAY “I HAVE CAUSED THEM TO MATE THAT WAY BECAUSE I HAVE SEEN HOW LABAN HAS CHEATED YOU.” NOTE TEV “I AM MAKING THIS HAPPEN BECAUSE.…”**

**GENESIS 31:13: INTERPRETERS RECOGNIZE THAT VERSE 13 DOES NOT FIT WELL IN ITS PRESENT POSITION IN THE HEBREW TEXT. HOWEVER, MOST TRANSLATIONS KEEP IT AT THIS POSITION. THE INFORMATION IN VERSE 13 REFERS BACK TO THE EVENTS RECORDED IN 28:18–22. I AM THE GOD OF BETHEL: GOD OF BETHEL MAY BE A TITLE; HOWEVER, THE SEPTUAGINT AND THE ANCIENT TARGUMS TRANSLATE “THE GOD WHO APPEARED TO YOU AT BETHEL.” SEE TEV. HOTTP, WHICH RATES THE HEBREW AS A {B}, RECOMMENDS TRANSLATING AS “THE GOD OF BETHEL.” MODERN VERSIONS ARE DIVIDED. FOR EXAMPLE, NEB FOLLOWS THE SEPTUAGINT, BUT REB FOLLOWS THE HEBREW TEXT. NRSV FOLLOWS RSV AND ADDS A NOTE, “HEBREW UNCERTAIN.” TO CLARIFY THE PHRASE OF BETHEL, THE HANDBOOK RECOMMENDS FOLLOWING TEV, AND FOR THOSE TRANSLATIONS THAT USE FOOTNOTES, TO ADD THE RSV FORM IN A NOTE. ANOINTED A PILLAR: SEE THE WORDING USED IN 28:18. FOR VOW SEE 28:20. THE REMAINDER OF VERSE 13 REPEATS THE COMMAND GIVEN TO JACOB IN VERSE 3. NOW ARISE, GO FORTH FROM THIS LAND: FOR COMMENTS ON ARISE IN THIS CONTEXT, SEE 13:17. GO FORTH MEANS TO “DEPART FROM,” “LEAVE,” “GO BACK.” LAND OF YOUR BIRTH IS LITERALLY “LAND OF YOUR KINDRED.” THE SAME HEBREW WORD IS RENDERED “KINDRED” IN VERSE 3 AND MAY BE TRANSLATED THE SAME WAY HERE AS IT WAS THERE. IN SOME LANGUAGES THERE IS A COMMON TERM OR EXPRESSION FOR THE PLACE WHERE A PERSON WAS BORN OR THE PLACE THAT IS REGARDED AS THE HOME OF A CLAN, AND THIS MAY BE APPROPRIATE IN THIS CONTEXT; FOR EXAMPLE, “GO BACK TO YOUR OWN COUNTRY” OR “… TO THE PLACE WHERE YOU BELONG.”**

**GENESIS 31:14: IN VERSES 14–16 JACOB’S WIVES RESPOND TO HIS SPEECH. THEN RACHEL AND LEAH ANSWERED HIM: THIS STATEMENT MAY GIVE THE IMPRESSION THAT BOTH WOMEN ARE SPEAKING IN UNISON, WITH ONE VOICE. IF THIS IS A PROBLEM FOR THE TRANSLATOR’S LANGUAGE, IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO ADJUST THIS INTRODUCTORY SENTENCE TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “RACHEL AND LEAH SPOKE TO JACOB AND ONE OF THEM ASKED [SAID].…” IS THERE ANY PORTION OR INHERITANCE …? THIS QUESTION IS RHETORICAL AND A WAY OF SAYING “THERE IS NOTHING WE CAN INHERIT.…” SEE TEV. PORTION OR INHERITANCE IS A CONSTRUCTION IN WHICH TWO NOUNS ARE JOINED BY A CONJUNCTION, BUT WHICH HAS A SINGLE MEANING, “INHERITANCE.” THE THOUGHT IS THAT AT THEIR MARRIAGE TO JACOB RACHEL AND LEAH RECEIVED ALL THE INHERITANCE THEY COULD EXPECT FROM THEIR FATHER. TWO EXAMPLES OF THE WAY THIS MAY BE EXPRESSED IN TRANSLATION ARE “THERE IS NOTHING MORE THAT WE-TWO CAN GET WHEN OUR FATHER DIES” AND “OUR FATHER DOESN’T WANT TO GIVE US ANYTHING WHEN HE DIES.”**

**GENESIS 31:15: ARE WE NOT REGARDED BY HIM AS FOREIGNERS: THIS QUESTION EXPECTS A POSITIVE ANSWER? NOTE THAT TEV RENDERS THE QUESTION AS A STATEMENT. FOREIGNERS HERE MEANS “FOREIGN WOMEN,” “OUTSIDERS,” “ALIENS.” THE REASON THEY MAY BE LOOKED UPON AS FOREIGNERS IS POSSIBLY THAT THEY HAVE MARRIED JACOB, WHO COMES FROM A FOREIGN LAND AND WORSHIPS A FOREIGN GOD, EVEN THOUGH HE IS LABAN’S NEPHEW (A SON OF ONE’S BROTHER, SISTER, BROTHER-IN-LAW, OR SISTER-IN-LAW). ANOTHER WAY OF UNDERSTANDING THE EXPRESSION REGARDED … AS FOREIGNERS IS “HE TREATS US AS IF WE WERE OUTSIDERS, NOT MEMBERS OF HIS FAMILY.” NJB AND SPEISER TRANSLATE THE KEY WORD AS “OUTSIDERS,” WHILE REB HAS “STRANGERS.” ONE TRANSLATION EXPRESSES THIS AS “WOMEN OF ANOTHER TRIBE”; ANOTHER SAYS “HE NOW TREATS US AS IF WE-TWO WERE NOT HIS CHILDREN, WE-TWO ARE JUST STRANGERS.” FOR HE HAS SOLD US: SPEISER SAYS THAT “SELL” USED IN REGARD TO MARRIAGE WAS THE TERM USED IN DOCUMENTS FROM THAT PERIOD AND AREA. PART OF THE BRIDE PRICE WAS KEPT FOR THE WOMAN AS HER DOWRY. HOWEVER, THE TEXT DOES NOT SAY THAT JACOB GAVE PROPERTY OR MONEY AS A BRIDE PAYMENT. HE GAVE FOURTEEN YEARS OF SERVICE IN EXCHANGE FOR HIS TWO WIVES. IT IS PROBABLY THE CASE THAT RACHEL AND LEAH CONSIDERED THE PROFIT LABAN MADE THROUGH JACOB’S SERVICE AS THEIR TRUE BRIDE PAYMENT. INSTEAD OF GIVING THEM SOME OF THE MONEY EARNED FROM JACOB’S LONG YEARS OF SERVICE, LABAN USED IT FOR HIMSELF. HE HAS BEEN USING UP THE MONEY GIVEN FOR US: USING UP IS LITERALLY “HE HAS EATEN UP OUR SILVER.” THIS MONEY WOULD REPRESENT THE INCOME PRODUCED BY JACOB’S ABILITY TO INCREASE THE FLOCKS. IN SOME LANGUAGES THIS THOUGHT IS EXPRESSED VERY MUCH AS IN THE LITERAL HEBREW; FOR EXAMPLE, “OUR FATHER HAS EATEN THE MONEY PAID FOR US” OR “OUR FATHER HAS EATEN THE WEALTH JACOB PAID HIM TO MARRY US.” IN OTHER CASES, EVERYDAY EXPRESSIONS ARE USED, SUCH AS “THE MONEY HE GOT AS A PRICE FOR US, HE HAS SPENT IT ALL.”**

**GENESIS 31:16: ALL THE PROPERTY WHICH GOD HAS TAKEN AWAY FROM OUR FATHER: PROPERTY TRANSLATES A TERM THAT MEANS RICHES OR WEALTH IN A GENERAL SENSE. LABAN’S WEALTH CONSISTED OF HIS ANIMALS. THIS STATEMENT REFLECTS THAT MADE BY JACOB IN VERSE 9. THE REFERENCE HERE IS TO THE FLOCKS THAT JACOB ACQUIRED ACCORDING TO 30:37–43. BELONGS TO US: THAT IS, TO RACHEL AND LEAH. WHATEVER GOD HAS SAID TO YOU, DO: THAT IS, “DO WHATEVER GOD TELLS YOU TO DO.” THUS, JACOB’S WIVES ARE IN FULL AGREEMENT TO LEAVE THE LAND OF THEIR BIRTH AND KINDRED AND TO GO WITH JACOB TO CANAAN.**

**GENESIS 31:17–18: VERSES 17–21 TELL ABOUT JACOB’S ESCAPE FROM LABAN. SO, JACOB AROSE: SO, WHICH IS USED BY BOTH RSV AND TEV, MARKS VERSE 17 AS A CONSEQUENCE OF THE DISCUSSIONS JACOB HELD WITH HIS WIVES IN THE PREVIOUS VERSES. AROSE IS A LITERAL RENDERING OF THE HEBREW, WHICH MEANS HERE TO GET READY OR PREPARE FOR DEPARTURE. SEE TEV. SET HIS SONS AND HIS WIVES ON CAMELS MEANS HE PUT THEM ON THE BACKS OF CAMELS TO RIDE. CAMELS KNEEL ON THE GROUND TO ENABLE THE RIDER TO MOUNT THEM. WE MAY TRANSLATE “AND PUT HIS WIVES AND CHILDREN ON THE CAMELS,” “HAD HIS WIVES AND CHILDREN MOUNT THE CAMELS,” OR “TOLD HIS WIVES AND CHILDREN TO GET ON THE CAMELS.” AND HE DROVE AWAY ALL HIS CATTLE: DROVE AWAY TRANSLATES A WORD MEANING TO DRIVE ANIMALS AS IN A HERD OR FLOCK. THE ANIMALS ARE DRIVEN OR HERDED FROM BEHIND. HOWEVER, DROVE AWAY, AS USED IN RSV, IS AMBIGUOUS, SINCE IT CAN ALSO MEAN “TO GET RID OF” AS IN “CHASE AWAY.” RSV INTENDS TO EXPRESS THE THOUGHT OF DRIVING THE ANIMALS SECRETLY SO THAT LABAN DOES NOT KNOW. FOR SIMILAR USAGE SEE 1 SAM 23:5. TEV IS BETTER WITH “DROVE … AHEAD OF HIM.” CATTLE IS AS IN VERSE 9. SEE THERE FOR COMMENTS. TEV TRANSLATES “FLOCKS” HERE, NIV AND NJB “LIVESTOCK.” THE SECOND CLAUSE, ALL HIS LIVESTOCK WHICH HE HAD GAINED, EXPANDS THE FIRST CLAUSE TO INCLUDE NOT ONLY ALL HIS ANIMALS BUT HIS OTHER CAMP BAGGAGE AS WELL, WHICH INCLUDED SUCH THINGS AS TENTS, CLOTHING, UTENSILS, INSTRUMENTS, AND TOOLS. THIS IS BETTER EXPRESSED BY A GENERAL TERM SUCH AS “POSSESSIONS” (SPEISER, NJB), OR “GOODS” (NIV). THE CATTLE IN HIS POSSESSION REPEATS ESSENTIALLY THE SAME INFORMATION GIVEN IN THE FIRST CLAUSE, ALL HIS CATTLE. NOTE THAT TEV AND OTHERS DO NOT REPEAT A TERM REFERRING TO THE ANIMALS BUT RATHER SUMMARIZE AS “EVERYTHING.” WHICH HE HAD ACQUIRED IN PADDAN-ARAM: FOR PADDAN-ARAM SEE 25:20. TO GO TO THE LAND OF CANAAN TO HIS FATHER ISAAC: GO TO MAY BE MORE NATURALLY RENDERED “GO BACK” (TEV) OR “RETURN” IN SOME LANGUAGES. IT MAY ALSO NOT BE CLEAR FROM THE VERB DROVE EARLIER IN THE VERSE THAT JACOB AND HIS FAMILY WERE ACTUALLY BEGINNING THEIR JOURNEY AWAY FROM HARAN. IF THIS IS THE CASE IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO MAKE THAT CLEAR AT THIS POINT BY SAYING, FOR EXAMPLE, “AND HE [OR THEY] SET OUT TO GO BACK.…” THIS LAST CLAUSE IS MORE NATURALLY LINKED TO THE EVENTS IN VERSE 17. NOTE THAT TEV HAS COMBINED VERSES 17 AND 18 IN ORDER TO SHIFT THIS CLAUSE TO VERSE 17. TRANSLATORS MAY FIND THIS MORE NATURAL IN THEIR LANGUAGES. HOWEVER, SEE ALSO THE COMMENTS ABOUT THE SEQUENCE OF EVENTS IN VERSES 17–21 UNDER VERSE 19 BELOW.**

**GENESIS 31:19: VERSES 19 AND 20 ARE A PARENTHESIS OR INTERRUPTION TO THE MAIN STORY LINE, WHICH CONTINUES IN VERSE 21. THE NARRATOR PROBABLY INSERTS THE INFORMATION THAT IS GIVEN IN THESE VERSES SO AS TO ANTICIPATE THE CONFLICT THAT ARISES LATER IN VERSES 30–35. FOR SOME TRANSLATORS, HOWEVER, PLACING THE INFORMATION AT THIS POINT OF THE NARRATIVE IS DIFFICULT, BECAUSE IT DESCRIBES ACTIONS THAT HAPPENED OR SHOULD HAVE HAPPENED BEFORE THE ACTIONS THAT ARE REFERRED TO IN VERSES 17 AND 18. THE SEQUENCE OF ACTIONS IS AS FOLLOWS: JACOB MADE PREPARATIONS TO LEAVE, HE COULD HAVE TOLD LABAN, BUT HE DIDN’T, LABAN WENT AWAY TO SHEAR HIS SHEEP, RACHEL STOLE LABAN’S HOUSEHOLD GODS, JACOB LOADED THE CAMELS AND PUT HIS WIVES AND CHILDREN ON THEM, HE SENT HIS ANIMALS ON AHEAD, HE LEFT HARAN WITH HIS FAMILY, THEY TRAVELED TO THE EUPHRATES AND CROSSED IT, THEY WENT ON IN THE DIRECTION OF GILEAD. IF NECESSARY, VERSES 17–21 SHOULD BE REORDERED TO MAKE THE STORY FOLLOW THE ACTUAL SEQUENCE OF EVENTS. LABAN HAD GONE TO SHEAR HIS SHEEP: SHEEP SHEARING REFERS TO CUTTING THE WOOL FROM THE SHEEP’S SKIN. ACCORDING TO 1 SAM 25:2, 8, 11; 2 SAM 13:23, THIS WAS AN OCCASION FOR CELEBRATING AND COULD LAST FOR SEVERAL DAYS IF THE FLOCKS WERE LARGE. THE SHEEP SHEARING TOOK PLACE WHERE THE FLOCKS WERE RESTING AT THE TIME. IN AREAS WHERE THIS PRACTICE IS UNKNOWN, IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “LABAN HAD GONE AWAY TO CUT THE WOOL [FUR, OR HAIR] FROM THE SHEEP.” RACHEL STOLE HER FATHER’S HOUSEHOLD GODS: LABAN’S ABSENCE FROM THE HOME GAVE RACHEL AN OPPORTUNITY TO STEAL THESE OBJECTS. STOLE TRANSLATES A HEBREW VERB WITH A WIDE RANGE OF MEANINGS. NO DOUBT RACHEL FELT JUSTIFIED IN TAKING THEM, IN THE LIGHT OF COMMENTS MADE IN VERSES 14–16. ACCORDINGLY, SPEISER, NJB, AND FRCL TRANSLATE “APPROPRIATED.” THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT SHE TOOK THEM WITHOUT LABAN’S KNOWLEDGE, AND IN MANY LANGUAGES A TERM EQUIVALENT TO STOLE WILL BE THE ONLY AVAILABLE WORD. HOUSEHOLD GODS TRANSLATES THE HEBREW TERAFIM. THE TERM IS FOUND IN 1 SAM 19:13, 16, WHERE IT IS TRANSLATED IN THE SINGULAR AS “IMAGE” BY RSV AND “HOUSEHOLD IDOL” BY TEV. IN THAT CONTEXT THE OBJECTS HAD AT LEAST A HEAD RESEMBLING A HUMAN BEING. ACCORDING TO EZEK 21:21 AND ZECH 10:2, THESE IMAGES WERE CONSULTED IN ORDER TO LEARN WHAT A PERSON SHOULD DO IN PARTICULAR SITUATIONS. ACCORDING TO JUDGES 17:5 AND 18:14–20, THEY WERE HELD IN HIGH REGARD BY THE PEOPLE. DRIVER, CITING EWALD, SAYS “RACHEL, BY TAKING HER FATHER’S TERAPHIM, HOPED, IT MAY BE SUPPOSED, TO CARRY WITH HER INTO CANAAN THE GOOD FORTUNE OF HER PATERNAL HOME.” OTHERS BELIEVE THAT THEY WERE RELATED TO INHERITANCE IN THE FAMILY; SPEISER COMMENTS, “ACCORDING TO THE NUZI DOCUMENTS, WHICH HAVE BEEN FOUND TO REFLECT TIME AND AGAIN THE SOCIAL CUSTOMS OF HARAN, … POSSESSION OF THE HOUSEGODS COULD SIGNIFY LEGAL TITLE TO A GIVEN ESTATE, PARTICULARLY IN CASES OUT OF THE ORDINARY, INVOLVING DAUGHTERS, SONS-IN-LAW, OR ADOPTED SONS.” LABAN’S ANGRY ACCUSATION OF JACOB (VERSE 30) SEEMS TO CONFIRM SOME SUCH IMPORTANCE AS THIS. THE TERAFIM WERE APPARENTLY NOT REPRESENTATIONS OF A SUPERNATURAL BEING. HOWEVER, THEY WERE BELIEVED TO POSSESS SOME LIMITED SUPERNATURAL POWER. IN SOME LANGUAGES THESE HOUSEHOLD GODS MAY BE REFERRED TO BY A LOCAL TERM FOR “IDOL.” IN LANGUAGES IN WHICH IDOLS ARE UNKNOWN, IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO USE SOME KIND OF DESCRIPTIVE EQUIVALENT; FOR EXAMPLE, “WOODEN LITTLE PEOPLE,” “IMAGES,” OR “CARVED OBJECTS.”**

**GENESIS 31:20: THE PARENTHETICAL STATEMENT CONTINUES IN THIS VERSE. JACOB OUTWITTED LABAN THE ARAMEAN: OUTWITTED TRANSLATES THE SAME HEBREW VERB RENDERED “STOLE” IN VERSE 19. HERE IT HAS THE SENSE OF “DUPE,” “TRICK,” “DECEIVE.” THE LITERAL EXPRESSION IS “JACOB STOLE THE HEART OF LABAN.” FOR ARAMEAN SEE 10:22. IN THAT HE DID NOT TELL HIM THAT HE INTENDED TO FLEE: THIS MAY BE TRANSLATED “BY LEAVING WITHOUT TELLING HIM” OR “BY LEAVING WITHOUT SAYING A WORD.” IN SOME LANGUAGES IT WILL BE MORE NATURAL TO DIVIDE THIS VERSE INTO TWO OR MORE SENTENCES: “JACOB DECEIVED LABAN. HE DID NOT TELL HIM THAT HE WANTED TO LEAVE. NO. HE DID IT SECRETLY AND.…”**

**GENESIS 31:21: HE FLED WITH …: FLED MEANS “HE ESCAPED,” OR “HE LEFT SECRETLY IN A HURRY.” ALL THAT HE HAD: THAT IS, “WITH EVERYTHING HE OWNED” OR “WITH ALL HIS PROPERTY.” AROSE AND CROSSED THE EUPHRATES: AROSE SERVES TO PUT THE FOCUS ON THE ACTION OF THE FOLLOWING VERB. IT MAY NOT NEED TO BE TRANSLATED. SEE TEV. FOR EUPHRATES SEE 2:14. THE HEBREW TEXT SAYS “THE RIVER.” IN 15:18 “THE GREAT RIVER” IS DEFINED AS “THE EUPHRATES.” TO THE HEBREWS “THE RIVER” MEANT THE EUPHRATES RIVER. FROM HARAN, LABAN’S HOME, TO THE EUPHRATES IS A DISTANCE OF ABOUT EIGHTY KILOMETERS (FIFTY MILES). SET HIS FACE IS AN IDIOM MEANING “HE HEADED TOWARD,” “STARTED TOWARD,” “WENT IN THE DIRECTION OF.” HILL COUNTRY OF GILEAD IS A HILLY TERRITORY EAST OF THE JORDAN RIVER IN THE NORTHERN PART OF MODERN JORDAN. IT IS BOUNDED ROUGHLY ON THE NORTH BY THE YARMUK RIVER AND ON THE SOUTH BY THE VALLEY OF HESHBON. SEE A BIBLICAL ATLAS. ACCORDING TO NUM 32:1; SONG 6:5, IT WAS A GOOD AREA FOR PASTURING SHEEP, AND SO IT WAS A LOGICAL DESTINATION FOR JACOB. IN TRANSLATION THE HILL COUNTRY OF GILEAD MAY BE CALLED, FOR EXAMPLE, “THE HILLS CALLED GILEAD,” “THE MOUNTAINS NAMED GILEAD.” IF NEITHER HILLS NOR MOUNTAINS ARE KNOWN, TRANSLATORS MAY SAY “THE REGION, AREA, LAND CALLED GILEAD.” FOR FURTHER COMMENTS SEE VERSE 23.**

**LABAN CATCHES UP WITH JACOB (31:22–42)**

**IN THIS SUBDIVISION LABAN COMPLICATES JACOB’S ESCAPE BY CHASING AND CATCHING UP WITH HIM. IN VERSES 22–23 LABAN LEARNS OF JACOB’S DEPARTURE AND GOES AFTER HIM. IN VERSE 24 GOD WARNS LABAN IN A DREAM NOT TO HARM JACOB. IN VERSES 25–29 LABAN CONFRONTS JACOB AND SCOLDS HIM SEVERELY FOR FLEEING. IN VERSE 30 LABAN ACCUSES JACOB OF STEALING HIS FAMILY GODS. IN VERSES 31–32 JACOB OFFERS TO LET LABAN SEARCH HIS CAMP AND VOWS TO KILL THE ONE WHO MAY HAVE STOLEN HIS GODS. IN VERSES 33–35 LABAN SEARCHES FOR HIS GODS, BUT IS UNABLE TO FIND THEM BECAUSE RACHEL SUCCESSFULLY DECEIVES HIM. AS A RESULT, JACOB SCOLDS LABAN, DEFENDS HIS INTEGRITY, AND ATTRIBUTES HIS GOOD FORTUNE TO GOD ALONE (VERSES 36–42).**

**SUBDIVISION HEADING**

**THE HANDBOOK HEADING MAY NEED TO BE REWORDED TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “LABAN MAKES MORE TROUBLE FOR JACOB,” “LABAN AND JACOB ACCUSE EACH OTHER.” TEV AND OTHERS HAVE “LABAN PURSUES JACOB,” GECL “GOD PROTECTS JACOB FROM LABAN.” OF THE VERSIONS THAT PLACE A HEADING AFTER VERSE 24, TOB HAS “AGREEMENT BETWEEN LABAN AND JACOB,” AND NAB HAS “LABAN AND JACOB IN GILEAD.”**

**GENESIS 31:22: IT WAS TOLD LABAN: THIS MAY BE EXPRESSED IN A NUMBER OF WAYS; FOR EXAMPLE, “LABAN WAS TOLD,” “PEOPLE TOLD LABAN,” “LABAN HEARD THE NEWS,” OR “LABAN FOUND OUT.” WHEN … ON THE THIRD DAY: IN TERMS OF THE STORY LINE, VERSE 22 IS A SHIFT IN TIME, PLACE, AND CHARACTER. RSV TRANSLATES CLOSE TO THE HEBREW FORM AND MAKES VERSE 22 A TIME CLAUSE WITH A PASSIVE VERB. SOME TRANSLATORS MAY KEEP THE TIME CLAUSE AS IN RSV; IN OTHER CASES, IT WILL BE MORE NATURAL TO MAKE VERSE 22 A COMPLETE SENTENCE EXPRESSING THE TIME ASPECT OF THE STORY. FOR EXAMPLE, WE MAY SAY “THREE DAYS AFTER JACOB HAD LEFT, LABAN FOUND OUT,” “JACOB HAD ONLY BEEN GONE THREE DAYS WHEN HIS UNCLE LEARNED ABOUT IT,” OR “AFTER JACOB HAD BEEN GONE FOR THREE DAYS, PEOPLE TOLD LABAN WHAT HAD HAPPENED.”**

**GENESIS 31:23: VERSE 23 TELLS WHAT LABAN DOES AS A RESULT OF LEARNING ABOUT JACOB’S ESCAPE. IN SOME CASES, IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO MARK THIS AS A CONSEQUENCE: “SO LABAN …,” “THEREFORE LABAN …,” “BECAUSE OF THAT, LABAN.…” HE TOOK HIS KINSMEN WITH HIM: HE REFERS TO LABAN. KINSMEN TRANSLATES THE HEBREW WORD FOR “BROTHERS” AS IN 29:12, 15. THESE ARE PROBABLY TRUSTED RELATIVES ON WHOM LABAN COULD DEPEND IN CASE OF CONFLICT WITH JACOB. PURSUED HIM … AND FOLLOWED CLOSE AFTER HIM: PURSUED HIM MEANS “WENT AFTER JACOB” WITH THE INTENTION OF CATCHING HIM. IN SOME LANGUAGES THIS ACTION IS EXPRESSED AS “FOLLOWED HIM.” IN OTHERS DESCRIPTIVE EXPRESSIONS ARE USED SUCH AS “FOLLOWED IN HIS FOOTSTEPS” OR “WALKED IN HIS TRACES.” FOLLOWED CLOSE AFTER TRANSLATES A FORM OF THE HEBREW VERB THAT MEANS “TO OVERTAKE” OR “TO CATCH UP WITH.” SEE TEV. THE SENSE IS NOT THAT LABAN CONTINUED TO FOLLOW JACOB INTO GILEAD, AS RSV SUGGESTS, BUT THAT HE CAUGHT UP WITH HIM THERE. SOME TRANSLATIONS SAY “… GOT CLOSE TO HIM IN THE HILL COUNTRY.” FOR SEVEN DAYS: THE TEXT APPEARS TO MEAN THAT, AFTER FOLLOWING JACOB FOR SEVEN DAYS, LABAN CAUGHT UP WITH HIM IN THE HILL COUNTRY OF GILEAD. AN EXAMPLE OF THE WAY THIS MAY BE EXPRESSED IS “THEY TRAVELED FOR A WEEK BEFORE THEY CAME UP TO JACOB IN THE HILL COUNTRY.…” ACCORDING TO DRIVER THE DISTANCE FROM HARAN TO GILEAD IS ABOUT 560 KILOMETERS (350 MILES). SUCH A DISTANCE WOULD REQUIRE LABAN’S PARTY TO TRAVEL 80 KILOMETERS (50 MILES) A DAY. IT WOULD BE EVEN MORE DIFFICULT FOR JACOB’S FLOCKS TO COVER THAT DISTANCE IN TEN DAYS.**

**THERE ARE THREE WAYS WE MAY VIEW THIS PROBLEM: 1) THE AREA CALLED GILEAD MAY HAVE EXTENDED FURTHER EAST IN THE TIMES OF OUR STORY, AND SO THE DISTANCE WOULD HAVE BEEN SHORTER. 2) SEVEN DAYS MAY REFER TO A GENERAL TIME TO GO A GREAT DISTANCE. ACCORDING TO SPEISER THE EXPRESSION IS USED THIS WAY IN 2 KGS 3:9. 3) THE NARRATOR MAY HAVE UNDERESTIMATED THE TIME SUCH A JOURNEY WOULD REQUIRE. IN ANY EVENT TRANSLATORS SHOULD KEEP SEVEN DAYS.**

**GENESIS 31:24: BUT GOD CAME TO LABAN THE ARAMEAN IN A DREAM BY NIGHT: BUT TRANSLATES THE COMMON CONNECTIVE. IT SERVES HERE TO INTRODUCE AN UNEXPECTED DEVELOPMENT. LANGUAGES HAVE MANY WAYS OF EXPRESSING THIS KIND OF CONTRAST. CAME TO LABAN MAY NEED TO BE RENDERED, FOR EXAMPLE, “GOD APPEARED” OR “GOD SPOKE TO LABAN.” FOR ARAMEAN SEE 25:20. IN VERSE 23 THE TEXT SAYS THAT LABAN CAUGHT UP WITH JACOB IN GILEAD. HOWEVER, THE WARNING DREAM MENTIONED IN THIS VERSE PROBABLY OCCURRED BEFORE LABAN ACTUALLY MET JACOB. THEREFORE, IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO MAKE THE TIME CONNECTION BETWEEN THESE TWO EVENTS CLEAR BY SAYING, FOR EXAMPLE, “BUT BEFORE LABAN SPOKE TO JACOB, GOD APPEARED TO HIM IN A DREAM.” TEV DOES SOMETHING SIMILAR BY SAYING IN VERSE 24 “IN A DREAM THAT NIGHT,” IN WHICH “THAT NIGHT” REFERS TO THE NIGHT LABAN CAUGHT UP WITH JACOB BUT HAD NOT YET SPOKEN TO HIM. IN SOME LANGUAGES A BETTER WAY OF MAKING THE TIME CONNECTION CLEAR IS TO REVERSE THE ORDER OF VERSES 24 AND 25 SO THAT THE EVENTS ARE DESCRIBED AS THEY HAPPENED. A TRANSLATION THAT FOLLOWS THIS APPROACH SAYS “JACOB HAD MADE HIS CAMP ON A HILL … AND LABAN CAME WITH HIS MEN AND THEY SET UP CAMP IN THAT HILLY PLACE TOO. THAT NIGHT GOD CAME TO LABAN IN A DREAM AND SAID.…” TAKE HEED THAT YOU SAY NOT A WORD TO JACOB: TAKE HEED TRANSLATES AN EXPRESSION MEANING “WATCH OUT,” “BE ON GUARD,” “BE CAREFUL.” IF TAKEN LITERALLY SAY NOT A WORD WOULD PREVENT LABAN FROM SPEAKING TO JACOB. HOWEVER, THIS CAUTION IS QUALIFIED BY EITHER GOOD OR BAD. THIS EXPRESSION IS IDIOMATIC. IT WAS USED BY LABAN AND HIS FATHER IN 24:50. THE STRICT SENSE IS “DON’T SAY ANYTHING AT ALL.” BUT WHAT IS TO BE UNDERSTOOD IS THAT LABAN SHOULD NOT SAY ANYTHING HARMFUL. SPCL TRANSLATES “DON’T SPEAK BRUSQUELY TO JACOB,” TEV AND GECL “BE CAREFUL NOT TO THREATEN JACOB.” MANY TRANSLATIONS USE EXPRESSIONS LIKE “STRONG TALK” OR “CROSS TALK” IN THIS CONTEXT.**

**GENESIS 31:25: AND LABAN OVERTOOK JACOB: THIS INFORMATION HAS BEEN GIVEN IN THE SUMMARY STATEMENT IN VERSE 23. TO TRANSLATE AS RSV DOES IS TO REPEAT WHAT WAS SAID THERE. IF THIS VERSE IS NOT PLACED BEFORE VERSE 24, IT IS BETTER TO TREAT THE HEBREW CONNECTIVE AS INTRODUCING A TIME CLAUSE, BY SAYING “WHEN LABAN OVERTOOK JACOB.…” THIS REQUIRES HANDLING THE NEXT CONNECTIVE AS INTRODUCING THE MAIN CLAUSE. IN THIS CASE WE MAY TRANSLATE “WHEN LABAN OVERTOOK JACOB, JACOB HAD PITCHED HIS TENTS IN.…” NOTE THAT TEV PREFERS TO OMIT LABAN OVERTOOK JACOB AS REDUNDANT, SINCE IT HAS ALREADY BEEN SAID IN VERSE 23. FOR PITCHED HIS TENT SEE 12:8. IN THE HEBREW TENT IS SINGULAR BUT THE SENSE IS COLLECTIVE; THE SENSE MAY BE BETTER EXPRESSED AS “SET UP HIS CAMP.” IN THE HILL COUNTRY IS LITERALLY “IN THE HILL [MOUNTAIN].” THE TEXT DOES NOT NAME THIS HILL OR HIGH GROUND. SOME INTERPRETERS ASSUME THAT THE NAME HAS BEEN DROPPED. SOME THINK IT IS MOUNT MIZPAH AND OTHERS THAT IT IS GILEAD. SPEISER, WHO TRANSLATES “THE HEIGHT,” SAYS “‘THE MOUNTAIN’ WAS USED AS A PLACE NAME OF ONE OF THE HIGH ELEVATIONS IN THE GILEAD RANGE.” IF THIS IS SO, “THE MOUNTAIN” PARALLELS THE USE OF “THE RIVER” MEANING THE EUPHRATES RIVER. SINCE THERE IS NO WAY OF KNOWING FOR CERTAIN THE NAME THAT WAS ASSOCIATED WITH THIS MOUNTAIN, IT IS BEST TO TRANSLATE “ON A MOUNTAIN [OR, HILL],” AS IN TEV. AND LABAN WITH HIS KINSMEN ENCAMPED IN THE HILL COUNTRY OF GILEAD: THE HEBREW SAYS LITERALLY “AND LABAN HAD PITCHED WITH HIS BROTHERS.…” A VARIANT FORM OF THE TEXT HAS “HIS TENT” IN PLACE OF “HIS BROTHERS.” HOWEVER, HOTTP REGARDS THE HEBREW AS AN {A} READING AND ASSUMES “HIS TENT” IS TO BE UNDERSTOOD. WE MAY, ACCORDINGLY, FOLLOW EITHER RSV OR TEV. A TRANSLATION THAT CAN BE RECOMMENDED FOR THE WHOLE VERSE IS SPCL, WHICH SAYS “LABAN OVERTOOK JACOB IN THE HILLS OF GILEAD, WHERE JACOB HAD CAMPED. LABAN ALSO CAMPED THERE WITH HIS KINSMEN.”**

**GENESIS 31:26: AND LABAN SAID TO JACOB: IN VERSE 25 WE WERE TOLD THAT THE TWO GROUPS CAMPED IN THE SAME MOUNTAINS; AND NOW IN VERSE 26 THEY SUDDENLY BEGIN SPEAKING TO EACH OTHER. IN SOME LANGUAGES A TRANSITION WILL BE REQUIRED TO BRING THESE TWO MEN TOGETHER. ACCORDINGLY, LABAN SAID TO JACOB MAY NEED TO BE ADJUSTED TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “WHEN THEY MET EACH OTHER LABAN ASKED JACOB,” OR “[THE NEXT DAY] LABAN WENT TO JACOB AND SAID.” WHAT HAVE YOU DONE, THAT YOU HAVE CHEATED ME? RSV FOLLOWS THE LITERAL FORM OF THE HEBREW QUESTION. IN MANY LANGUAGES THIS WILL NEED TO BE RESTRUCTURED TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “WHY HAVE YOU CHEATED ME?” THE TONE OF LABAN’S VOICE IS ANGRY AND ACCUSING, AND THE FORM OF THE QUESTION SHOULD REFLECT THAT. LABAN’S QUESTION REFERS TO JACOB’S DEPARTURE WITH HIS DAUGHTERS, AND SO THE FULL QUESTION IS “WHY HAVE YOU CHEATED ME AND TAKEN AWAY MY DAUGHTERS?” IN SOME LANGUAGES IT WILL BE MORE NATURAL TO EXPRESS THIS AS A RHETORICAL QUESTION; FOR EXAMPLE, “AM I SOMEONE TO DECEIVE SO YOU CAN STEAL MY DAUGHTERS?” CHEATED ME IS LITERALLY “STOLE MY HEART,” AS DISCUSSED IN VERSE 20. CARRIED AWAY TRANSLATES A FORM OF THE VERB MEANING TO “TAKE” OR “LEAD AWAY.” LIKE CAPTIVES OF THE SWORD: SWORD HERE REPRESENTS A BATTLE OR WAR. THE FULL EXPRESSION REFERS TO ENEMIES WHO ARE CAPTURED AND CARRIED OFF AS CAPTIVES BY THE VICTOR IN A BATTLE. LABAN CONDEMNS JACOB FOR SNEAKING AWAY SECRETLY FROM HARAN. IN NORMAL PRACTICE THE DEPARTURE OF LEAH AND RACHEL WOULD BE THE OCCASION FOR A FAREWELL FEAST WITH BLESSINGS IN SONGS AND POETRY. NOTE THE CASE OF ABRAHAM’S SERVANT DEPARTING WITH REBEKAH IN 24:54–61.**

**GENESIS 31:27: TO EMPHASIZE HIS POINT LABAN REPEATS HIS QUESTION IN SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT FORM. WHY DID YOU FLEE SECRETLY? FOR FLEE SEE VERSES 20, 21, AND 22. SECRETLY MEANS “WITHOUT TELLING ANYONE.” CHEAT ME TRANSLATES THE VERB “STOLE” AS IN VERSE 26, BUT IT IS NOT USED IN THE IDIOMATIC EXPRESSION AS THERE. THE SENSE IS, HOWEVER, TO “DECEIVE,” ‘DUPE,” OR “TRICK.” SO THAT I MIGHT HAVE SENT YOU AWAY WITH MIRTH AND SONGS: LABAN CLAIMS HE WOULD HAVE GIVEN A FAREWELL PARTY IF JACOB HAD NOT GONE OFF WITHOUT TELLING HIM. WE MAY RESTRUCTURE THIS STATEMENT TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “IF YOU HAD NOT GONE LIKE THAT, I WOULD HAVE SENT YOU OFF WITH …,” OR “IF YOU …, I WOULD HAVE GIVEN A FAREWELL FEAST WITH.…” TO AVOID THE CONTRARY-TO-FACT CONDITION, WE MAY SAY SOMETHING LIKE “I WANTED TO SEND YOU OFF WITH …, BUT I COULD NOT BECAUSE YOU.…” IN MANY LANGUAGES THE CELEBRATION FEAST GIVEN AT THE DEPARTURE OF THE BRIDE FOR HER HUSBAND’S VILLAGE HAS A SPECIAL NAME. IN SOCIETIES IN WHICH HUSBANDS MOVE TO THE BRIDE’S FAMILY, A SPECIAL NOTE MAY BE REQUIRED. IF THE NOTE IS GIVEN ONLY ONCE, IT MAY BE BETTER TO PLACE IT AT 24:58. IN SOME LANGUAGES THE CONSTRUCTION SENT YOU AWAY WITH … IS NOT NATURAL AND MUST BE REPLACED WITH SOMETHING LIKE “I WOULD HAVE CALLED IN THE PEOPLE WHO PLAY … AND MADE A FEAST TO SEND YOU OFF IN THE PROPER WAY.” WITH MIRTH AND SONGS: MIRTH TRANSLATES A WORD MEANING “GLADNESS,” “REJOICING,” “GAIETY.” THE WORD EXPRESSES THE SORT OF REJOICING EXPERIENCED AND EXPRESSED IN A HAPPY CELEBRATION. SONGS IN THIS CONTEXT REFERS TO SONGS OR SINGING ACCOMPANIED BY THE TAMBOURINE AND LYRE. TAMBOURINE TRANSLATES THE HEBREW WORD TOF, WHICH IS A TYPE OF SMALL HAND-HELD DRUM. SOUND IS PRODUCED BY HOLDING THE INSTRUMENT IN ONE HAND AND STRIKING THE SKIN HEAD WITH THE PALM OR FINGERS OF THE OITHER HAND. THE LYRE IS A STRINGED INSTRUMENT SIMILAR TO A HARP. FOR FURTHER INFORMATION AND ILLUSTRATIONS, SEE 4:21. IN TRANSLATION IT IS OFTEN POSSIBLE TO USE LOCAL EQUIVALENT INSTRUMENTS SUCH AS BELLS AND GUITAR. TRANSLATORS SHOULD NOTE THAT LABAN IS NOT CALLING ATTENTION TO THE NATURE OF THESE INSTRUMENTS. IF NO EQUIVALENT INSTRUMENTS ARE KNOWN, IT MAY BE BEST TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “I WOULD HAVE GIVEN A FAREWELL FEAST WITH LOTS OF FUN, AND SINGING WITH MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS.”**

**GENESIS 31:28: LABAN PURSUES HIS LINE OF QUESTIONS. AND WHY DID YOU NOT PERMIT ME TO KISS MY SONS AND MY DAUGHTERS FAREWELL? TRANSLATORS MAY FIND THAT IT IS MORE NATURAL TO SHIFT TO AN EMPHATIC STATEMENT FOR REASONS OF STYLE. SEE TEV. WE MAY ALSO TRANSLATE “I DID NOT EVEN HAVE A CHANCE TO KISS … GOOD-BYE.” FOR KISS SEE 27:26. TO KISS … FAREWELL MAY NEED TO BE RESTRUCTURED TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “TO KISS … AND SAY GOOD-BYE” OR “TO KISS … WHEN THEY LEFT.” MY SONS REPRESENTS THE HEBREW TEXT, BUT THAT WORD REFERS HERE TO LEAH AND RACHEL’S CHILDREN. A MORE SUITABLE TRANSLATION IS PERHAPS “GRANDCHILDREN.” NOW YOU HAVE DONE FOOLISHLY IS LITERALLY “NOW YOU HAVE BEEN FOOLISH TO DO [THIS].” THE THOUGHT EXPRESSED IS THAT JACOB ACTED FOOLISHLY BY FLEEING SECRETLY AND DEPRIVING LABAN OF HIS RIGHTS AS FATHER AND GRANDFATHER. TEV OFFERS A GOOD TRANSLATION MODEL.**

**GENESIS 31:29: IT IS IN MY POWER TO DO YOU HARM: NO DOUBT LABAN’S MEN WERE WELL ARMED AND OUTNUMBERED JACOB’S SERVANTS; SO, THEY COULD EASILY DEFEAT THEM IN A FIGHT. THE HEBREW CONSTRUCTION SAYS LITERALLY “IT IS ACCORDING TO THE POWER OF MY HAND.” SEE TEV. FRCL SAYS “I HAVE THE MEANS OF.…” WE MAY ALSO SAY “IF I WISH I CAN …” OR “I AM STRONG ENOUGH TO.…” YOU IN DO YOU HARM IS PLURAL AND REFERS TO JACOB AND ALL THOSE WITH HIM. LABAN USES HARM AS A GENERAL TERM WITHOUT SAYING WHAT KIND OF HARM HE MEANS. IF THE LANGUAGE OF TRANSLATION REQUIRES SOMETHING MORE CONCRETE, WE MAY SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “TO ATTACK YOU.” BUT THE GOD OF YOUR FATHER: THE CONNECTIVE TRANSLATED AS BUT BY RSV MARKS A STRONG CONTRAST BETWEEN LABAN’S THREAT AND GOD’S INTERVENTION. GOD IS ’ELOHIM AND YOUR IS AGAIN PLURAL IN THE HEBREW TEXT BUT SINGULAR IN THE SEPTUAGINT AND IN THE SAMARITAN PENTATEUCH. THE PLURAL FORM SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN REPEATED FROM THE PREVIOUS LINE (“DO YOU [PLURAL] HARM”) BUT YOUR SHOULD BE TRANSLATED HERE AS SINGULAR, SINCE LABAN IS REFERRING TO THE FATHER OF JACOB. SPOKE TO ME LAST NIGHT: IN VERSE 24 GOD SPOKE TO LABAN “IN A DREAM BY NIGHT.” IT MAY BE ADVISABLE TO REPEAT “IN A DREAM” HERE IN VERSE 29 TO AVOID GIVING THE IMPRESSION THAT LABAN REFERS TO A DIFFERENT EVENT. TAKE HEED … BAD: SEE VERSE 24.**

**GENESIS 31:30: AND NOW YOU HAVE GONE AWAY: LABAN HAS JUST CONFESSED THAT GOD HAS SPOKEN IN FAVOR OF JACOB. SO, LABAN’S ADMISSION OF HIS DREAM HAS THE EFFECT OF SOFTENING HIS VERBAL ATTACK ON JACOB. WE SEE, IN EFFECT, LABAN ALMOST EXCUSING JACOB FOR HAVING FLED FROM HARAN. IN SOME LANGUAGES IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO SHOW THIS CHANGE OF TONE IN THE TRANSLATION. FOR EXAMPLE, IT MAY BE POSSIBLE TO SAY “WHEN LABAN SPOKE AGAIN, HE SAID SOFTLY …” OR “LABAN THOUGHT TO HIMSELF; THEN HE SAID, ‘WELL, I UNDERSTAND HOW YOU WANTED TO LEAVE AND GET HOME TO YOUR FATHER’S PLACE.’” NOTE TEV. BUT WHY DID YOU STEAL MY GODS? IT SEEMS THAT AT THE THOUGHT OF THE HOUSEHOLD GODS LABAN ADOPTS HIS ANGRY ATTITUDE AGAIN. PERHAPS THE BEST APPROACH TO THE CONTRAST IN THIS VERSE IS TO SEE LABAN SPEAKING IN THE FIRST INSTANCE OF AN ACTION THAT HE REGARDS AS EXCUSABLE, AND IN THE SECOND CASE OF AN ACTION THAT IS NOT EXCUSABLE. THE NORMAL WORD FOR INTRODUCING A CONTRAST IS BUT IN ENGLISH AND ITS EQUIVALENTS IN OTHER LANGUAGES; HOWEVER, IT MAY NOT BE QUITE STRONG ENOUGH BY ITSELF TO EXPRESS THE CHANGE OF TONE AT THIS POINT. THEREFORE, IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO SAY SOMETHING LIKE “BUT THAT ISN’T ALL … WHY …?” OR “BUT I AM ANGRY WITH YOU FOR SOMETHING ELSE: WHY …?” GODS TRANSLATES THE HEBREW ’ELOHIM AND NOT TERAFIM, AS USED IN VERSE 19. TERAFIM IS USED BY THE NARRATOR, BUT HERE BOTH LABAN AND JACOB (VERSE 32) USE ’ELOHIM TO REFER TO THESE IMAGES. FOR TRANSLATION SEE VERSE 19.**

**GENESIS 31:31: IN VERSE 31 JACOB REPLIES TO THE QUESTION ASKED BY LABAN IN VERSE “WHY DID YOU CARRY OFF MY DAUGHTERS?” THE ANSWER TO THE QUESTION “WHY DID YOU STEAL MY GODS?” IS NOT GIVEN UNTIL VERSE 32. HOWEVER, JACOB’S REPLY BECAUSE I WAS AFRAID MAY APPEAR TO ANSWER WHY HE STOLE LABAN’S GODS, BECAUSE IT FOLLOWS STRAIGHT AFTER THAT QUESTION. IN ORDER TO AVOID THIS CONFUSION, IT MAY BE HELPFUL TO INTRODUCE JACOB’S REPLY BY SAYING “THEN JACOB TOLD LABAN WHY HE HAD FLED WITH HIS DAUGHTERS.” ANOTHER WAY THAT SOME TRANSLATIONS FOLLOW IS TO MAKE THE BEGINNING OF JACOB’S REPLY REFER CLEARLY TO HIS DEPARTURE: “WE WENT AWAY LIKE THAT BECAUSE I WAS AFRAID, AND I THOUGHT THAT YOU WOULD TAKE YOUR DAUGHTERS AWAY FROM ME.” I THOUGHT THAT YOU WOULD TAKE YOUR DAUGHTERS FROM ME BY FORCE: THIS IS THE SECOND PART OF JACOB’S ANSWER CONCERNING LEAH AND RACHEL, WHICH MAKES IT CLEAR WHAT JACOB IS REFERRING TO WHEN HE SAYS “I WAS AFRAID.” THE HEBREW TEXT SAYS “FOR I SAID …,” WHICH SOME UNDERSTAND AS INTRODUCING A DIRECT ADDRESS TO HIMSELF AND SO TRANSLATE “I WAS AFRAID AND I SAID TO MYSELF.…” HOWEVER, THIS MAY ALSO BE EXPRESSED AS IN RSV AND TEV. TAKE BY FORCE TRANSLATES A VERB MEANING TO “SEIZE,” “PLUNDER,” “ROB.” IN THIS CONTEXT IT MEANS TO FORCE JACOB TO GIVE THEM UP, TO TAKE THEM FORCEFULLY AWAY FROM JACOB. IN SOME LANGUAGES THIS IS EXPRESSED “I THOUGHT YOU WOULD TIE ME UP AND GRAB YOUR DAUGHTERS.” IN SOME LANGUAGES IT IS MORE NATURAL OR MORE APPROPRIATE FOR JACOB TO REFER TO YOUR DAUGHTERS AS “MY TWO WIVES.”**

**GENESIS 31:32: IN VERSE 19 THE READER WAS TOLD THAT RACHEL STOLE THE GODS. CONSEQUENTLY, JACOB IS INNOCENT, AND, FROM HIS ACTION NOW, IT IS CLEAR THAT HE KNOWS NOTHING OF RACHEL’S DECEIT. JACOB CHALLENGES LABAN AND GOES SO FAR AS TO SAY THAT HE IS READY TO PUT THE THIEF TO DEATH. SINCE THE CHANGE OF TOPIC AT THIS POINT MAY AGAIN BE CONFUSING FOR READERS, IT MAY BE NECESSARY IN SOME LANGUAGES TO INDICATE IT IN JACOB’S SPEECH BY SAYING “BUT ABOUT YOUR GODS, …” AT LEAST ONE TRANSLATION ALSO HAS JACOB EXPRESS HIS INNOCENCE IN THIS ANGRY RESPONSE: “WE DIDN’T TAKE YOUR GODS—IF YOU FIND.…” ANY ONE WITH WHOM YOU FIND YOUR GODS SHALL NOT LIVE: THIS MAY NEED TO BE RESTRUCTURED TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “IF YOU FIND YOUR GODS WITH ANYONE HERE, I WILL [OR YOU CAN, OR WE WILL HAVE TO] KILL THAT PERSON,” OR “… THAT PERSON WILL DIE.” IN THE PRESENCE OF OUR KINSMEN IS LITERALLY “BEFORE OUR BROTHERS.” SEE VERSE 25. THIS EXPRESSION IS SOMETIMES RENDERED “WITH OUR RELATIVES WATCHING WHAT YOU DO” OR “TAKE OUR KINSMEN AS WITNESSES.” IN THIS CONTEXT THE PRONOUN OUR MUST BE INCLUSIVE IN THOSE LANGUAGES THAT MAKE A DISTINCTION BETWEEN INCLUSIVE AND EXCLUSIVE FIRST PERSON, SINCE JACOB IS CLEARLY REFERRING TO PEOPLE WHO ARE RELATIVES OF THE TWO MEN. SEE ALSO THE COMMENTS ON VERSE 37. POINT OUT WHAT I HAVE THAT IS YOURS, AND TAKE IT: THE HEBREW OF THIS SENTENCE IS NOT CLEAR WITHOUT SOME ADDITIONAL ELEMENTS BEING SUPPLIED. HOTTP SUGGESTS TRANSLATING “(IF YOU SEE) ANYTHING [BELONGING] TO YOU WITH ME, [THEN] TAKE IT.” SEE TEV “LOOK FOR ANYTHING THAT BELONGS TO YOU AND TAKE.…” THE FINAL SENTENCE OF VERSE 32 IS PARENTHETICAL. IT IS TO REMIND THE READER WHAT WAS SAID IN VERSE 19. IT BUILDS TENSION IN THE STORY, BECAUSE JACOB MAY BE FACED WITH HAVING TO PUT TO DEATH HIS BELOVED WIFE RACHEL. NOW JACOB DID NOT KNOW THAT RACHEL HAD STOLEN THEM: NOW TRANSLATES THE COMMON HEBREW CONNECTIVE AND IS USED BY RSV AS A MEANS OF INTRODUCING THIS INSERTED REMINDER. THE THOUGHT EXPRESSED IS THAT JACOB DID NOT KNOW (AT THE TIME HE SWORE TO KILL THE THIEF) THAT RACHEL HAD STOLEN LABAN’S GODS WHEN THEY WERE STILL IN HARAN.**

**GENESIS 31:33: LABAN SAYS NOTHING IN REPLY TO JACOB, BUT GOES IMMEDIATELY FROM TENT TO TENT AND SEARCHES THROUGH THE CAMP BAGGAGE. SO, LABAN WENT INTO JACOB’S TENT: LABAN BEGINS THE SEARCH IN JACOB’S TENT, SINCE JACOB HIMSELF IS PROBABLY THE NUMBER ONE SUSPECT IN LABAN’S EYES. IN TRANSLATION IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO STATE THE PURPOSE FOR GOING INTO THE TENTS; FOR EXAMPLE, “SO LABAN BEGAN TO SEARCH IN JACOB’S TENT, THEN IN LEAH’S TENT, AND IN THE TENT OF THE TWO WOMEN SERVANTS, BUT HE DID NOT FIND HIS HOUSEHOLD GODS.” … AND INTO … AND INTO …: VERSE 33 SUMMARIZES THE SEARCH OF THREE TENTS. IF WE ASSUME THE NARRATOR GIVES THE TENTS IN ORDER OF THE SEARCH, THIS IS JACOB, LEAH, THE MAIDS. THE FINAL SENTENCE, HOWEVER, SAYS AND HE WENT OUT OF LEAH’S TENT, AND ENTERED RACHEL’S. IT IS PROBABLE THAT LEAH’S TENT IS MENTIONED HERE RATHER THAN THE MAIDS’, AS THE LATTER ARE ONLY SECONDARY CHARACTERS IN THE STORY. NEVERTHELESS, IF TRANSLATORS FIND THIS A PROBLEM, IT IS POSSIBLE TO MAKE AN ADJUSTMENT BY SAYING, FOR EXAMPLE, “WHEN HE HAD SEARCHED THOSE TENTS HE WENT INTO RACHEL’S” OR “HE WENT FROM THOSE TENTS AND INTO.…” FOR ANOTHER MODEL SEE TEV.**

**GENESIS 31:34: NOW RACHEL HAD TAKEN THE HOUSEHOLD GODS AND PUT THEM IN THE CAMEL’S SADDLE: NOW IS AGAIN RSV’S TREATMENT OF THE CONNECTIVE AS A TRANSITION TO A NEW DEVELOPMENT. NOTE TEV. TAKEN … AND PUT TRANSLATES THE HEBREW FORM, WHICH MAY OFTEN BE RENDERED BY A SINGLE VERB. CAMEL’S SADDLE REFERS TO WHAT BDB CALLS A “CAMEL-BASKET.” THIS IS NOT THE SADDLE ITSELF BUT RATHER A BASKET THAT IS ATTACHED TO THE SADDLE FOR CARRYING GOODS. TEV TRANSLATES “SADDLEBAG,” NEB/REB “CAMEL-BAG,” NJB “CAMEL CUSHION.” THE TERM USED IN TRANSLATION SHOULD REFER TO AN OBJECT THAT IS SMALL ENOUGH TO BE CONCEALED BY RACHEL’S SKIRTS WHILE SEATED. AND SAT UPON THEM SUGGESTS THAT HER CLOTHING, PARTICULARLY A LONG AND WIDE SKIRT, WOULD HIDE THE IMAGES THAT WERE INSIDE THE SADDLEBAG OR CUSHION SHE WAS SITTING ON. LABAN FELT ALL ABOUT THE TENT, BUT DID NOT FIND THEM: WHILE RACHEL IS SITTING ON THE IDOLS, LABAN IS POKING HIS HANDS INTO THE BAGGAGE IN THE TENT. FELT ALL ABOUT THE TENT MEANS HE SEARCHED THE WHOLE TENT, FEELING EVERYTHING WITH HIS HANDS.**

**GENESIS 31:35: RACHEL’S DECEPTION OF HER FATHER NOW GIVES THE NARRATOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO RIDICULE LABAN’S IDOLS. LET NOT MY LORD BE ANGRY THAT I CANNOT RISE BEFORE YOU: THE HEBREW EXPRESSION IS IDIOMATIC: “LET [IT] NOT BURN IN THE EYES OF MY LORD.” MY LORD IS ’ADONI, A FORM OF ADDRESS USED BY AN INFERIOR ADDRESSING A SUPERIOR. NOTE TEV “SIR.” IF AN EQUIVALENT FORM OF ADDRESS IS NOT AVAILABLE, WE MAY SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “MY FATHER.” CANNOT RISE: THAT IS, “BECAUSE I CANNOT STAND UP, SIR.” THE ASSUMPTION IS THAT RACHEL SHOULD NOT REMAIN SEATED IN THE PRESENCE OF HER FATHER, WHO IS STANDING AS HE SEARCHES THROUGH HER BELONGINGS. IF IN THE CULTURE OF THE TRANSLATION IT IS NOT UNDERSTOOD WHY SHE WOULD BE EXPECTED TO STAND UP, A NOTE MAY BE ADDED, OR WE MAY ADJUST THE TEXT TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “PLEASE DO NOT BE ANGRY, SIR, THAT I CANNOT STAND UP TO SHOW YOU RESPECT” OR “PLEASE … CANNOT STAND UP AS IS THE POLITE CUSTOM.” THE WAY OF WOMEN IS UPON ME TRANSLATES THE HEBREW LITERALLY. THE SITUATION IS A DAUGHTER SPEAKING TO HER FATHER, AND SO SHE AVOIDS A DIRECT REFERENCE TO HER MENSTRUAL CONDITION. IN A SIMILAR MANNER FRCL SAYS “I AM INDISPOSED,” NEB/REB HAVE “THE COMMON LOT OF WOMAN IS UPON ME.” MORE DIRECT IS SPCL “TODAY I HAVE MY MENSTRUAL PERIOD.” SEE ALSO TEV. TRANSLATORS SHOULD CONSIDER THE SOCIAL CONTEXT AND USE THE FORM THAT IS BOTH APPROPRIATE AND NATURAL; IN MANY LANGUAGES THIS IS SIMPLY “I AM SICK.” IT SHOULD NOT BE FORGOTTEN THAT THIS SCENE HAS A STRONG COMIC ELEMENT IN WHICH SOMETHING (THE IDOLS) SO HIGHLY REGARDED BY LABAN IS HERE BEING SAT UPON BY A WOMAN WHO, IN THE LEVITICAL VIEW, IS TABOO AND UNCLEAN (LEV 15:19–20). FOR SIMILAR RIDICULE OF IDOLS SEE JUDGES 17 AND ISA 44:9–20. IT SHOULD ALSO BE NOTED HOW THE NARRATOR HAS USED RACHEL’S OWN HUMOR AND DECEIT TO RELIEVE THE TENSION THAT WAS CREATED CONCERNING HER IN VERSE 32. SO, HE SEARCHED, BUT DID NOT FIND THE HOUSEHOLD GODS: THIS IS BEST TAKEN AS A CONCLUSION TO THE BAGGAGE INSPECTION EPISODE. IT IS WELL HANDLED BY NEB/REB “SO FOR ALL HIS SEARCHING, LABAN DID NOT FIND THE HOUSEHOLD GODS.” WE MAY ALSO TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “WELL, HE SEARCHED EVERYWHERE, AND IN THE END, HE NEVER FOUND HIS HOUSEHOLD GODS.”**

**GENESIS 31:36: AT THIS POINT OF THE STORY, JACOB, WHO KNEW HE WAS INNOCENT AND THAT GOD WAS ON HIS SIDE, CAN REMAIN CALM NO LONGER. THEN JACOB BECAME ANGRY: THEN REPRESENTS A TRANSITION FROM THE ACTIONS OF LABAN TO THE SPEECH OF HIS INDIGNANT SON-IN-LAW. BECAME ANGRY TRANSLATES THE SAME VERB AS USED OF LABAN IN VERSE 35, BUT HERE IT IS “[IT] BURNED FOR JACOB.” HOWEVER, MANY LANGUAGES USE FIGURATIVE EXPRESSIONS TO SAY THIS, SUCH AS “JACOB GOT REALLY WILD” OR “JACOB’S INSIDES WERE HOT.” UPBRAIDED LABAN: UPBRAIDED TRANSLATES A HEBREW VERB THAT HAS THE SENSE OF MAKING A COUNTERCHARGE, AS IF IN A COURT OF LAW. THIS MAY BE EXPRESSED AS “ACCUSED LABAN” OR “SPOKE STRONGLY.” WHAT IS MY OFFENSE? OFFENSE RENDERS A NOUN RELATED TO THE VERB MEANING TO “REBEL,” “REVOLT,” OR “TRANSGRESS.” THE CONTEXT REQUIRES A SENSE OF AN OFFENSE AGAINST ANOTHER PERSON, IN THIS CASE LABAN. FURTHERMORE, JACOB’S INNOCENCE OF THEFT HAS NOW BEEN CLEARLY ESTABLISHED, AND SO HE IS ASKING LABAN TO NAME THE CHARGE THAT HE IS ACCUSED OF. TEV SAYS “WHAT CRIME HAVE I COMMITTED?” WHAT IS MY SIN? SIN TRANSLATES THE USUAL HEBREW WORD FOR SIN, BUT AS THE NEXT CLAUSE SHOWS, THIS REFERS HERE TO A SIN AGAINST LABAN. SPEISER TRANSLATES THIS AS “GUILT.” IT IS CLEAR THAT THE TERMS OFFENSE AND SIN ARE WORDS WITH VERY SIMILAR MEANING, AND THE REPETITION OF THE QUESTION WHAT IS MY …? IS USED RHETORICALLY TO EMPHASIZE JACOB’S HEATED EMOTIONS. WE MAY TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “HOW HAVE I OFFENDED YOU? HOW HAVE I WRONGED YOU?” OR “WHAT CRIME HAVE I COMMITTED? WHAT LAW DID I BREAK?” SEE TEV. THAT YOU HAVE HOTLY PURSUED ME: HOTLY PURSUED TRANSLATES THE IDIOMATIC USE OF ANOTHER WORD FOR “BURN” THAT MEANS CHASED WITH THE INTENTION OF CAPTURING. NOTE TEV “HUNT ME DOWN.” SOME OTHER ENGLISH VERSIONS SAY “HOUNDED ME.”**

**GENESIS 31:37: ALTHOUGH YOU HAVE FELT THROUGH ALL MY GOODS: RSV TRANSLATES THE HEBREW KI CLAUSE AS A CONCESSIVE CLAUSE MEANING SOMETHING LIKE “IN SPITE OF HAVING SEARCHED,” OR “EVEN THOUGH YOU HAVE SEARCHED.” IT IS ALSO POSSIBLE TO TRANSLATE AS A STATEMENT; FOR EXAMPLE, “YOU HAVE JUST SEARCHED THROUGH ALL MY GOODS.…” WHAT HAVE YOU FOUND OF ALL YOUR HOUSEHOLD GOODS? THIS MAY BE HANDLED AS AN ORDINARY QUESTION, OR BE EXPRESSED AS A RHETORICAL QUESTION, OR AS A NEGATIVE STATEMENT. FOR EXAMPLE, “WELL, HAVE YOU FOUND ANY OF YOUR HOUSEHOLD GOODS?” “SO, YOU HAVE FOUND NONE OF YOUR HOUSEHOLD GOODS.” THE FORM THIS QUESTION WILL TAKE IN TRANSLATION DEPENDS IN PART UPON HOW THE FOLLOWING SENTENCE IS RENDERED. SINCE JACOB KNOWS THAT NOTHING BELONGING TO LABAN HAS BEEN FOUND IN HIS CAMP BAGGAGE, HIS NEXT REMARK SHOULD BE UNDERSTOOD AS RIDICULING LABAN. SET IT HERE: THAT IS, “PUT IT HERE IN FRONT OF EVERYONE.” SOME TRANSLATIONS SAY “BRING IT OUTSIDE INTO THE OPEN” OR “COME ON! BRING IT OUT HERE WHERE … CAN SEE THEM.” MY KINSMEN AND YOUR KINSMEN: RSV AND TEV TAKE THE VIEW THAT THESE ARE TWO DISTINCT GROUPS OF PEOPLE. IT IS JUST AS LIKELY, HOWEVER, THAT THESE ARE ONE AND THE SAME PEOPLE, SINCE RELATIVES OF LABAN, AT LEAST ON HIS FATHER’S SIDE, WOULD ALSO BE ACKNOWLEDGED AS RELATIVES OF JACOB. IT THEN HAS THE MEANING “THESE PEOPLE, WHO ARE BOTH MY KINSMEN AND YOURS.” EARLIER IN THIS SAME SPEECH, IN VERSE 32, JACOB REFERS TO THE PEOPLE WHO WILL BE WITNESS TO THE PUNISHMENT OF WHOEVER MAY HAVE STOLEN LABAN’S GODS; THERE HE CALLS THEM “OUR KINSMEN,” AND THEY SEEM TO BE THE SAME PEOPLE THAT HE NOW CALLS MY KINSMEN AND YOUR KINSMEN. PERHAPS THE EXPLANATION FOR JACOB’S CHANGED WAY OF REFERRING TO THESE PEOPLE IS THAT, EVEN THOUGH THEY MAY ALL HAVE BEEN RELATED TO THE TWO MEN, NEVERTHELESS SOME WERE WITH LABAN AND SUPPORTED HIM, WHILE OTHERS WERE WITH JACOB AND SUPPORTED HIM. IT IS UNLIKELY THAT TWO GROUPS OF OPPOSED KINSMEN COULD DECIDE WHO WAS AT FAULT IN A MATTER SUCH AS THIS. BUT IT WOULD HAVE BEEN VERY IMPORTANT THAT THOSE WHO WITNESSED WHAT HAPPENED BETWEEN THE TWO MEN SHOULD HAVE COME FROM THE TWO CAMPS. WE MAY TAKE IT, THEN, THAT JACOB IS MAKING A POINT ABOUT THE RELATIVES WHO WERE PRESENT, EVEN THOUGH IN ANOTHER SENSE THEY WERE ALL RELATIVES OF BOTH MEN. IN TRANSLATION EACH TRANSLATOR SHOULD WEIGH UP WHAT THE TWO DIFFERENT EXPRESSIONS “OUR RELATIVES” AND “MY RELATIVES AND YOUR RELATIVES” WILL MEAN FOR READERS IN THIS CONTEXT. IN SOME LANGUAGES THE EXPRESSION “OUR RELATIVES” WILL CERTAINLY BE UNDERSTOOD AS “MY RELATIVES AND YOUR RELATIVES”; IN THIS CASE “IN FRONT OF OUR RELATIVES” IS A SATISFACTORY RENDERING. HOWEVER, IN OTHER LANGUAGES “OUR RELATIVES” MAY NOT GIVE ANY SENSE OF THEIR BEING ATTACHED TO ONE OR OTHER OF THE TWO MEN; IF THIS IS THE CASE, IT MAY BE BEST TO TRANSLATE MORE LITERALLY, “MY RELATIVES AND YOUR RELATIVES,” OR TO SAY SOMETHING LIKE “OUR RELATIVES, THOSE WHO ARE WITH ME AND THOSE WHO ARE WITH YOU.” THAT THEY MAY DECIDE BETWEEN US TWO: THE RELATIVES OF THE TWO MEN WOULD DECIDE WHICH OF THE TWO MEN, LABAN OR JACOB, WAS IN THE RIGHT. IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO ADJUST DECIDE BETWEEN US BY SAYING, FOR EXAMPLE, “DECIDE WHO IS IN THE RIGHT, YOU OR ME.” IN SOME LANGUAGES IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO EXPRESS MORE FULLY THE THOUGHTS OR ACTIONS THAT ARE INVOLVED IN DECIDE BETWEEN US; FOR EXAMPLE, “THEY CAN TEST OUR WORDS, AND WE CAN KNOW …” OR “THEY CAN LOOK AT THE ACCUSATIONS BETWEEN US AND RECOGNIZE.…”**

**GENESIS 31:38: IN VERSES 38–40 JACOB DEFENDS THE SACRIFICIAL WAY IN WHICH HE HAS CARED FOR LABAN’S FLOCKS. ACCORDING TO EXO 22:9–14, A SHEPHERD HAD CERTAIN LEGAL PROTECTION IN REGARD TO THE FLOCKS UNDER HIS CARE. FOR EXAMPLE, UNDER CERTAIN CONDITIONS HE WAS NOT REQUIRED TO REPLACE AN ANIMAL KILLED BY WILD BEASTS. THESE TWENTY YEARS I HAVE BEEN WITH YOU: THE TWENTY YEARS MENTIONED BY JACOB HAVE ALREADY PASSED AT THE TIME OF THIS CONVERSATION WITH LABAN, AND SO IT MAY BE CLEARER TO SAY “I WORKED FOR YOU FOR TWENTY YEARS” OR “DURING THE TWENTY YEARS I WORKED FOR YOU.…” YOUR EWES AND YOUR SHE-GOATS HAVE NOT MISCARRIED: FOR EWES SEE 21:28. MISCARRIED TRANSLATES A VERB USED IN THE HEBREW FOR BOTH HUMANS AND ANIMALS. IT MEANS TO ABORT OR FAIL TO CARRY THE YOUNG UNTIL THEY ARE READY TO BE BORN. SEE TEV. IN 30:27 LABAN ADMITS THAT JACOB’S PRESENCE HAS INCREASED HIS FLOCKS. AND I HAVE NOT EATEN THE RAMS OF YOUR FLOCKS: ACCORDING TO VON RAD A SHEPHERD HAD THE RIGHT TO EAT RAMS OF THE FLOCK UNDER HIS CARE. THE RAMS WERE MALE ANIMALS NOT NEEDED FOR FUTURE BREEDING REQUIREMENTS, AND WHICH THE OWNER WOULD NORMALLY REMOVE FROM THE FLOCK.**

**GENESIS 31:39: THAT WHICH WAS TORN BY WILD BEASTS: SPEISER CITES A PARAGRAPH FROM THE CODE OF HAMMURABI (ABOUT 2000 B.C.): “IF THERE OCCURS IN THE FOLD AN ACT OF GOD, OR A LION TAKES A LIFE, THE SHEPHERD SHALL CLEAR HIMSELF BEFORE THE DEITY. THE OWNER OF THE FOLD MUST THEN ACCEPT THE LOSS INCURRED.” EXO 22:13 SAYS “IF IT [AN ANIMAL] IS TORN BY BEASTS, LET HIM [THE SHEPHERD] BRING IT AS EVIDENCE; HE SHALL NOT MAKE RESTITUTION FOR WHAT HAS BEEN TORN.” JACOB CLAIMS THAT IN SUCH CASES HE DID NOT BRING THE REMAINS OF THE ANIMAL TO LABAN BUT RATHER REPLACED THE KILLED ANIMAL FROM ONE OF HIS OWN. TORN BY WILD BEASTS MAY BE RENDERED, FOR EXAMPLE, “KILLED BY A WILD ANIMAL.” I DID NOT BRING IT TO YOU MAY NEED TO BE FILLED OUT TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “I DID NOT BRING THE BODY OF THE DEAD ANIMAL FOR YOU TO SEE,” “I DID NOT TELL YOU AND PUT THE BLAME ON THAT WILD ANIMAL,” “I DID NOT BRING THE REMAINS SO YOU COULD SEE HOW IT WAS KILLED,” OR “… THAT A WILD ANIMAL HAD KILLED IT.”**

**I BORE THE LOSS MEANS “I REPLACED THE DEAD ANIMAL WITH A LIVE ONE OF MY OWN.” OF MY HAND YOU REQUIRED IT: LABAN DID NOT LIVE UP TO THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE LAW (THE CURRENT CODE OF HAMMURABI OR THE LATER MOSAIC LAW). INSTEAD HE IMPOSED HIS OWN RULES UPON HIS SON-IN-LAW. FOR TRANSLATION SEE TEV. OR IT CAN BE “YOU MADE ME REPLACE IT” OR “… PAY FOR IT.” WHETHER STOLEN BY DAY OR STOLEN BY NIGHT: ACCORDING TO EXO 22:10 IF THE ANIMAL DISAPPEARED AND THERE IS NO WITNESS, AS WOULD LIKELY BE THE CASE OF AN ANIMAL STOLEN AT NIGHT, THE SHEPHERD COULD TAKE AN OATH THAT HE HAD NOT STOLEN THE ANIMAL. IN THAT CASE THE OWNER HAD TO ACCEPT THE LOSS. WE MAY TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “WHENEVER AN ANIMAL WAS STOLEN IN BROAD DAYLIGHT OR EVEN AT NIGHT, YOU MADE ME REPLACE IT” OR “… MADE ME PAY FOR IT.”**

**GENESIS 31:40: THUS, I WAS; BY DAY THE HEAT CONSUMED ME: RSV’S SENTENCE STRUCTURE IS AWKWARD. SEE TEV. CONSUMED TRANSLATES THE HEBREW, WHICH MEANS “ATE” OR “DEVOURED.” JACOB MEANS THAT HE SUFFERED FROM THE DAYTIME HEAT. SPCL ALSO USES A FIGURATIVE EXPRESSION: “BY DAY I WAS DYING FROM THE HEAT AND BY NIGHT I WAS DYING FROM THE COLD.” AND THE COLD BY NIGHT: THIS PHRASE IS ELLIPTIC; THAT IS, THE VERB CONSUMED SERVES FOR BOTH DAY AND NIGHT. COLD IS LITERALLY “FROST” AND REFERS TO THE FORMATION OF DEW, WHICH FREEZES AT 0 DEGREES CELSIUS, 32 DEGREES FAHRENHEIT. IT IS USUALLY NOT ADVISABLE TO USE A LONG DESCRIPTIVE PHRASE TO SPEAK OF THE COLD. SINCE HEAT AND COLD ARE RELATIVE TERMS, A PAIR OF OPPOSITES IS NORMALLY ADEQUATE. AND MY SLEEP FLED FROM MY EYES: THIS EXPRESSION IS FIGURATIVE. NOTE HOW TEV TRANSLATES IT NONFIGURATIVELY.**

**GENESIS 31:41: THESE TWENTY YEARS I HAVE BEEN IN YOUR HOUSE: JACOB REMINDS LABAN AGAIN OF THE MANY YEARS OF SERVICE HE GAVE HIM. SEE VERSE 38. THE REPETITION IS RHETORICAL AND IT EMPHASIZES JACOB’S ANGER. WE MAY TRANSLATE “FOR TWENTY LONG YEARS I WAS PART OF YOUR FAMILY” OR “FOR TWENTY YEARS I WAS MEMBER OF YOUR FAMILY.” TEV AND NJB RELATE THIS STATEMENT CLOSELY TO WHAT JACOB HAS JUST BEEN SAYING: “IT WAS LIKE THAT FOR THE WHOLE TWENTY YEARS I WAS WITH YOU.” WE MAY ALSO SAY “FOR TWENTY LONG YEARS IN YOUR FAMILY YOU HAVE TREATED ME LIKE THAT.” THIS IS FURTHER EMPHASIZED IN SOME TRANSLATIONS BY ADDING “IT WAS ALWAYS THE SAME; IT NEVER CHANGED.” I SERVED YOU FOURTEEN YEARS FOR YOUR TWO DAUGHTERS: FOR SERVED SEE 29:18, 30. FOR YOUR DAUGHTERS MUST OFTEN BE EXPRESSED AS “TO BE ALLOWED TO MARRY YOUR TWO DAUGHTERS” OR “SO I COULD MARRY … DAUGHTERS.” AND SIX YEARS FOR YOUR FLOCKS: THE EXPRESSION FOR YOUR … MAKES THIS CLAUSE PARALLEL TO THE PREVIOUS CLAUSE. THE VERB SERVED IS THE VERB FOR BOTH CLAUSES. FOR YOUR FLOCKS MEANS “I WORKED SIX YEARS FOR THESE ANIMALS, WHICH YOU GAVE ME AS MY PAY” OR “IN ORDER TO GET ANIMALS FOR MYSELF FROM YOUR FLOCKS.” SEE THE AGREEMENT REACHED WITH LABAN IN 30:31 AND 32. CHANGED MY WAGES TEN TIMES: SEE VERSE 7. THE MEANING MAY BE EXPRESSED AS “ALL THE TIME YOU KEPT CHANGING MY PAY.” THIS STATEMENT AND THE FOLLOWING VERSE ARE OF SPECIAL SIGNIFICANCE. AS WESTERMANN SAYS, “IN THE EARS OF THE LISTENERS THIS WAS A VERY SERIOUS ACCUSATION. FROM THE BOOK OF THE COVENANT, THROUGH THE DEUTERONOMIC LAW TO THE PROPHETS AND INTO THE NEW TESTAMENT, IT WAS A PARTICULARLY SERIOUS CRIME FOR THE EMPLOYER NOT TO ALLOW THE EMPLOYEE TO RECEIVE THE WAGES DUE HIM (IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE WORK). IT IS HERE THAT LABAN’S REAL CULPABILITY LIES.” IN THE HEBREW THIS STATEMENT IS INTRODUCED BY THE COMMON HEBREW CONNECTIVE, BUT ITS FORCE IN THIS CONTEXT IS MORE THAN A MERE COORDINATION OR ADDITION. A MORE ADEQUATE RENDERING THAN RSV IS SOMETHING LIKE “WHAT IS MORE” OR “TO MAKE MATTERS WORSE.” SEE ALSO TEV.**

**GENESIS 31:42: IN VERSE 42 JACOB BRINGS THE ACCUSATIONS AGAINST HIS UNCLE TO A CLOSE BY TELLING HOW GOD HAS SAVED HIM FROM LABAN’S MISTREATMENT. VERSE 42 BEGINS WITH A CONDITIONAL SENTENCE THAT HAS SEVERAL SUBJECTS IN THE “IF” CLAUSE. IF THE GOD OF MY FATHER, THE GOD OF ABRAHAM AND THE FEAR OF ISAAC: IT IS IMPORTANT THAT READERS UNDERSTAND THAT JACOB IS REFERRING HERE TO ONE AND THE SAME GOD, NOT THREE DIFFERENT ONES. IT WILL OFTEN BE POSSIBLE TO REDUCE THE NUMBER OF THESE EXPRESSIONS. FATHER IN GOD OF MY FATHER REFERS TO ISAAC, JACOB’S FATHER. ISAAC IS MENTIONED AGAIN BY NAME IN FEAR OF ISAAC. GOD OF MY FATHER REFERS TO THE SAME PERSON AS GOD OF ABRAHAM. WE MAY SUGGEST REDUCING THE FIRST TWO EXPRESSIONS TO “THE GOD OF MY FATHER AND GRANDFATHER,” “THE GOD OF ISAAC AND ABRAHAM,” OR “THE GOD MY FATHER AND GRANDFATHER WORSHIPED.” WE ARE STILL LEFT WITH THE EXPRESSION FEAR OF ISAAC. FEAR TRANSLATES A HEBREW WORD THAT SEEMS STRANGE WHEN USED IN THIS MANNER IN A TITLE. MANY MODERN VERSIONS TRANSLATE FEAR AS A TITLE, AS DOES RSV. SOME TRANSLATE IT AS A CLAUSE: “THE GOD WHO MADE MY FATHER ISAAC TREMBLE” (FRCL, GECL), “THE GOD MY FATHER ISAAC WORSHIPED” (SPCL); TEV SIMPLY COMBINES IT WITH THE PREVIOUS NOUN CLAUSE, SINCE IT REFERS TO “GOD” IN ANY CASE: “GOD OF ABRAHAM AND ISAAC.” NOTE THAT TEV ALSO RENDERS FATHER IN GOD OF MY FATHER AS “FATHERS,” REFERRING TO ABRAHAM AND ISAAC. TO SUM UP, THERE ARE MANY POSSIBILITIES FOR HANDLING THE THREE SUBJECTS IN THE “IF” CLAUSE. HOWEVER, IT IS POSSIBLE TO SIMPLIFY THESE SUBJECTS. THE CHOICE DEPENDS UPON MATTERS OF STYLE AND CLARITY. “IF THE GOD OF MY GRANDFATHER ABRAHAM AND MY FATHER ISAAC …,” “IF THE GOD ABRAHAM AND ISAAC WORSHIPED …,” “IF THE GOD OF MY FATHERS ABRAHAM AND ISAAC.…” FOR THOSE WHO PREFER TO KEEP FEAR AS A TITLE, THESE MODELS OCCUR: MFT “AWE,” TOB “TERROR”; NRSV HAS “FEAR” WITH A NOTE “MEANING OF THE HEBREW UNCERTAIN.” ONE OF THE INTERPRETATIONS OF THE HEBREW WORD COMES FROM A SIMILAR ARABIC WORD AND IS “KINSMAN,” AND THIS IS USED BY NJB. HAD NOT BEEN ON MY SIDE: THAT IS, “HAD NOT TAKEN CARE OF ME” OR “HAD NOT PROTECTED ME.” THIS CONDITION IS A CONTRARY-TO-FACT CONDITION; THAT IS, THINGS CERTAINLY DID NOT HAPPEN THIS WAY—IN FACT “GOD SURELY WAS ON MY SIDE.” SURELY NOW YOU WOULD HAVE SENT ME AWAY EMPTY-HANDED EXPRESSES THE IMAGINARY CONSEQUENCE OF THE CONTRARY-TO-FACT CONDITION. NOW DOES NOT EXPRESS A TRANSITION BUT REFERS HERE TO THE PRESENT TIME; THAT IS, “BY NOW,” “BY THIS TIME.” NEB/REB HAVE “YOU WOULD NOW HAVE SENT ME AWAY.…” EMPTY-HANDED TRANSLATES THE WORD FOR EMPTY IDIOMATICALLY. SOME OTHER FIGURATIVE EXPRESSIONS ARE “WITHOUT ONE BEAN,” “WITH NOTHING BUT MY SWEAT.” IN SOME LANGUAGES THERE ARE MARKERS THAT INDICATE THAT A CONDITION IS CONTRARY-TO-FACT. IN OTHERS TRANSLATORS MAY FIND THAT A LITERAL TRANSLATION OF THE FIRST PART OF THE VERSE GIVES ENTIRELY THE WRONG MEANING. IF THIS IS THE CASE, THE ACTUAL MEANING OF THE CONTRARY-TO-FACT CONDITIONAL STRUCTURE MAY HAVE TO BE EXPRESSED IN A DIRECT AND POSITIVE WAY: “GOD TOOK CARE OF ME, AND SO YOU WERE NOT ABLE TO SEND ME AWAY WITH NOTHING.” ANOTHER WAY OF BRINGING OUT THE MEANING DIRECTLY IS “YOU WANTED TO SEND ME AWAY WITHOUT ANYTHING, BUT GOD … WAS WITH ME AND YOU COULDN’T DO IT.” GOD SAW MY AFFLICTION: THAT IS, “GOD SAW HOW MUCH I HAD SUFFERED.” SEE TEV. AND THE LABOR OF MY HANDS: OR “HOW HARD I HAD WORKED.” AND REBUKED YOU LAST NIGHT: AND MAY HERE SIGNAL AN ADDITIONAL THOUGHT, BUT IT MAY BE MORE SUITABLE TO MARK THIS AS A CONSEQUENCE; FOR EXAMPLE, “THEREFORE,” “BECAUSE OF THAT,” “THAT IS WHY.” REBUKE TRANSLATES A VERB MEANING TO JUDGE OR DECIDE A CASE. HERE THE JUDGMENT IS AGAINST LABAN AND IN FAVOR OF JACOB. NEB SAYS “LAST NIGHT HE DELIVERED HIS VERDICT.” WE MAY ALSO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “HE SHOWED YOU TO BE GUILTY,” “HE SAID YOU WERE IN THE WRONG,” OR “HE JUDGED YOUR CASE AND FOUND YOU GUILTY.”**

**JACOB AND LABAN MAKE A TREATY (31:43–55)**

**IN THE FINAL PART OF CHAPTER 31, LABAN REALIZES THAT HE HAS LOST HIS CONTEST WITH JACOB (VERSE 43). AND SO HE SEEKS TO END THEIR CONFLICT BY MAKING A TREATY (VERSE 44). THEY PILE UP STONES AS A MEMORIAL AND EAT TOGETHER; THEN THEY RECITE A WARNING THAT IS INTENDED TO PREVENT EACH FROM AVENGING HIMSELF ON THE OTHER (VERSES 45–53). FINALLY JACOB MAKES A SACRIFICE, AND THEY EAT AND SPEND THE NIGHT ON THE MOUNTAIN (VERSE 54). THE FOLLOWING MORNING LABAN LEAVES FOR HOME (VERSE).**

**SUBDIVISION HEADING**

**THE HANDBOOK HEADING MAY NEED TO BE REWORDED TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “JACOB AND LABAN SETTLE THEIR DIFFERENCES,” “JACOB AND LABAN AGREE TO KEEP SEPARATE,” OR “JACOB AND LABAN AGREE NOT TO ATTACK EACH OTHER.” TEV HAS “THE AGREEMENT BETWEEN JACOB AND LABAN,” GECL “A BORDER TREATY BETWEEN JACOB AND LABAN.”**

**GENESIS 31:43THEN LABAN ANSWERED AND SAID TO JACOB: THIS TYPICAL HEBREW INTRODUCTION FOR A CHANGE OF SPEAKERS HAS TWO VERBS THAT MUST MOST OFTEN BE REDUCED TO A SINGLE VERB. THE VERB THAT IS USED IN TRANSLATION DEPENDS IN PART ON THE KIND OF STATEMENT OR QUESTION THAT FOLLOWS. IN THIS VERSE LABAN WILL REPEAT HIS CLAIM, NOT TO A FEW THINGS HE THINKS JACOB HAS STOLEN, BUT TO EVERYTHING JACOB HAS. HIS CLAIM IS, OF COURSE, A GROSS EXAGGERATION. NO DOUBT LABAN HAS ALREADY DECIDED THAT HE MUST MAKE HIS PEACE WITH JACOB. AND HIS CLAIM MAY BE HIS WAY OF LETTING GO THAT WHICH HE KNOWS HE CAN NO LONGER KEEP. THE DAUGHTERS ARE MY DAUGHTERS: IN MANY LANGUAGES IT WILL BE MORE NATURAL TO SAY “THESE WOMEN ARE MY DAUGHTERS.” NOTE TEV. THE CHILDREN ARE MY CHILDREN: SINCE LABAN IS REFERRING TO HIS GRANDCHILDREN, IT WILL OFTEN BE BEST TO SAY “AND THOSE CHILDREN ARE MY GRANDCHILDREN.” IN MANY LANGUAGES THE CHILDREN WILL BE REFERRED TO AS “THEIR CHILDREN,” THAT IS, THE CHILDREN OF THE TWO WOMEN. THE FLOCKS ARE MY FLOCKS: THE ONLY FLOCKS VISIBLE TO LABAN ARE THOSE BELONGING TO JACOB. THE FORM OF LABAN’S CLAIM IS THE SAME IN RESPECT TO HIS DAUGHTERS, HIS GRANDCHILDREN, AND THE FLOCKS. IT MAY BE MORE NATURAL, AS LABAN GAZES OUT OVER JACOB’S ANIMALS, TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “EVEN ALL THOSE ANIMALS OUT THERE BELONG TO ME.” AND ALL THAT YOU SEE IS MINE IS NO DOUBT SAID WITH A WIDE SWEEP OF HIS HAND TO INCLUDE ANYTHING HE MAY HAVE OVERLOOKED. TEV GIVES A GOOD MODEL FOR THE TRANSLATION. BUT WHAT CAN I DO THIS DAY TO THESE MY DAUGHTERS …? BUT WHAT CAN I DO …? SIGNALS THE RESIGNATION OF LABAN TO THE REALITY HE NOW FACES. IT HAS BECOME OBVIOUS TO LABAN THAT HIS DAUGHTERS AND THEIR CHILDREN ARE MORE SATISFIED WITH JACOB THAN THEY WERE WITH HIM. (SEE VERSES 14–16.) THE QUESTION AS TRANSLATED BY RSV IS AMBIGUOUS. LABAN’S QUESTION IS PROBABLY ADDRESSED TO HIMSELF, NOT TO JACOB. HE KNOWS HE CANNOT TAKE HIS DAUGHTERS BACK TO HARAN, AND SO HE WONDERS ALOUD WHAT HE CAN DO “FOR THEM,” “ON THEIR BEHALF.” THE PREPOSITION MAY LIKEWISE MEAN “TO THEM” (RSV), THAT IS, TAKE SOME PUNISHING ACTION AGAINST THEM, OR “ABOUT THEM” IN THE SENSE THAT LABAN CANNOT TAKE THEM BACK WITH HIM. LABAN’S CONCERN MAY OR MAY NOT BE GENUINE. SEE THE NEXT VERSE. NOTE TEV’S TRANSLATION “BUT SINCE I CAN DO NOTHING TO KEEP MY DAUGHTERS AND THEIR CHILDREN.…” IN OTHER LANGUAGES THIS MEANING IS EXPRESSED AS “I CANNOT HOLD ON TO MY DAUGHTERS …” OR “I CAN’T TAKE … AWAY FROM YOU.” FRCL TRANSLATES MORE CLOSELY TO THE TEXT: “BUT FROM TODAY I WON’T BE ABLE TO DO ANYTHING MORE FOR MY DAUGHTERS OR THE CHILDREN THEY HAVE GIVEN BIRTH TO.”**

**GENESIS 31:44: TRANSLATORS MAY NOTICE SOME CONFUSIONS IN VERSES 44–54. FOR EXAMPLE, THERE APPEAR TO BE TWO DISTINCT AGREEMENTS OR TREATIES. THE DETAILS OF MAKING THE FIRST ONE ARE GIVEN IN VERSES 44–50, WITH THE ACTUAL WORDS IN VERSES 49–50, WHERE LABAN WARNS JACOB AGAINST MISTREATING HIS DAUGHTERS AND AGAINST MARRYING OTHER WOMEN. HE CALLS ON GOD AS A WITNESS. THE SECOND TREATY IS DESCRIBED IN VERSES 51–54, WITH THE WORDS BEING GIVEN IN VERSES 51–53; THIS IS A NONAGGRESSION PACT OR AGREEMENT NOT TO VIOLATE EACH OTHERS’ TERRITORY. 31:48 IN THIS TREATY THE HEAP OF STONES AND THE PILLAR ARE WITNESSES. A PILLAR AND A HEAP OF STONES ARE ALSO SET UP IN VERSES 45 AND 46; HOWEVER, VERSE 44 SPEAKS OF ONLY ONE COVENANT. AND THERE ARE REPETITIONS AND CONFLICTING STATEMENTS IN THE DETAILS OF THE TREATIES AS WELL. MANY INTERPRET THESE PROBLEMS AS THE RESULT OF THESE VERSES HAVING BEEN PUT TOGETHER FROM DIFFERENT ORIGINAL SOURCES. IT IS ALSO POSSIBLE THAT LATER COPYISTS ADDED WORDS. HOWEVER, THIS MAY BE, TRANSLATORS ARE OBLIGED TO TRANSLATE THE TEXT AS IT STANDS. NEVERTHELESS, MANY MODERN VERSIONS HAVE MADE ADJUSTMENTS WITHIN THE TEXT TO HELP MINIMIZE THE CONFUSIONS. SOME OF THESE WILL BE POINTED OUT SO THAT TRANSLATORS MAY SEE WHAT KINDS OF ADJUSTMENTS CAN BE MADE. VERSE 44 IS ADDRESSED DIRECTLY TO JACOB, AND IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO MAKE THIS CLEAR IN TRANSLATION. LABAN’S REAL CONCERN NOW SEEMS TO BE FOR HIS OWN PROTECTION MORE THAN FOR THE WELFARE OF HIS DAUGHTERS AND GRANDCHILDREN. COME NOW, LET US MAKE A COVENANT, YOU AND I: FOR COME NOW SEE 11:3. THE HEBREW VERB IN VERSE 44 IS DIFFERENT THAN THAT USED IN 11:3, BUT THE IDEA IS THE SAME. ANOTHER WAY OF EXPRESSING THE FACT THAT LABAN IS NOW PROPOSING A RESOLUTION TO THE DISPUTE IS TO SAY “[SINCE I CAN DO NOTHING …,] I AM READY TO MAKE AN AGREEMENT WITH YOU.” FOR MAKE A COVENANT SEE 15:18; 26:28. LET IT BE A WITNESS BETWEEN YOU AND ME: ALTHOUGH NOT INDICATED IN RSV OR TEV, MANY INTERPRETERS HOLD THAT THE HEBREW TEXT AS WE HAVE IT IN THIS PASSAGE HAS UNDERGONE MODIFICATION. AS THE TEXT STANDS THE AGREEMENT OR TREATY IS TO SERVE AS THE WITNESS, AND RSV EXPRESSES IT THAT WAY. TEV, ON THE OTHER HAND, UNDERSTANDS THE “PILE OF STONES” AS THE WITNESS, “TO REMIND US OF OUR AGREEMENT.” TEV INTERPRETS VERSE 44 IN THE LIGHT OF VERSES 48 AND 52. OTHERS BELIEVE THAT THE WITNESS IS THE LORD, BUT THAT THE DIVINE NAME WAS DROPPED FROM THE TEXT. THE SEPTUAGINT ADDS JUST BEFORE OUR CLAUSE THE WORDS “THOUGH NO MAN BE WITH US, KNOW THAT GOD [WILL BE A WITNESS BETWEEN YOU AND ME.]” TRANSLATORS WILL FIND VERSIONS THAT FOLLOW EACH OF THE POSSIBILITIES ABOVE. THE HANDBOOK AUTHORS TAKE THE POSITION THAT THE HEBREW TEXT AS WE HAVE IT IS PREFERRED IN THIS CASE. THIS MEANS THAT THE COVENANT OR TREATY IS THE REMINDER OF WHAT THEY WILL AGREE TO. HOWEVER, ANOTHER POSSIBILITY IS THAT OF TEV, WHICH HAS THE ADVANTAGE OF RELATING VERSE 44 TO VERSES 48 AND 52. ANOTHER TRANSLATION THAT MAY BE CONSIDERED IS THAT OF REB. THAT VERSION DEPARTS FROM NEB, “LET IT [THE AGREEMENT] STAND AS A WITNESS,” AND INSTEAD TRANSLATES “AND LET THERE BE A WITNESS BETWEEN US,” IN WHICH THE NATURE OF THE WITNESS IS NOT GIVEN, DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY. ANOTHER TRANSLATION THAT LEAVES OPEN THE NATURE OF THE WITNESS SAYS “AND LET US DO SOMETHING TO HELP US KEEP THINKING OF OUR AGREEMENT.”**

**GENESIS 31:45: SO, JACOB TOOK A STONE AND SET IT UP AS A PILLAR: STONE AND PILLAR TRANSLATE THE SAME HEBREW WORDS AS USED IN 28:18. SEE THERE FOR THE SETTING UP OF A STONE PILLAR AT BETHEL.**

**GENESIS 31:46: JACOB SAID TO HIS KINSMEN: FOR KINSMEN SEE VERSES 23 AND 37. HIS KINSMEN IS UNCLEAR BECAUSE KINSMEN OF JACOB ARE ALSO RELATIVES OF LABAN. WE MAY BE INCLINED TO THINK THAT KINSMEN HERE REFERS TO THOSE MEN WHO WERE ATTACHED TO JACOB’S CAMP, AS SUGGESTED IN VERSE 37. HOWEVER, THE FACT THAT THEY ATE A TREATY MEAL TOGETHER SUGGESTS THAT HIS KINSMEN REFERS TO BOTH LABAN’S MEN AND THOSE ACCOMPANYING JACOB. ON THE OTHER HAND, IT IS POSSIBLE THAT JACOB GAVE INSTRUCTIONS TO HIS OWN GROUP OF FOLLOWERS TO PILE UP THE STONES, AND AFTER THIS WAS DONE LABAN’S MEN JOINED THOSE OF JACOB TO EAT A COVENANT MEAL. MADE A HEAP: HEAP TRANSLATES THE HEBREW WORD GAL AND SERVES AS THE FIRST PART OF THE NAME GALEED IN VERSE 47. THE WORD MEANS A PILE OF STONES AND IS USED IN JOSH 7:26 AND 8:29 FOR A HEAP OF STONES PILED OVER A DEAD BODY. ACCORDING TO VERSE 45 A SINGLE STONE IS RAISED BY JACOB, AND IN VERSE 46 OTHER STONES ARE PILED UP BY THE MEN. (VERSE 51 SAYS THAT LABAN SET UP BOTH THE SINGLE STONE AND THE PILE.) THEY ATE THERE BY THE HEAP: THEY, ACCORDING TO THE DISCUSSION OF KINSMEN EARLIER IN THIS VERSE, REFERS TO THE RELATIVES OF BOTH JACOB AND LABAN; AND IT IS UNLIKELY THAT THE KINSMEN WOULD EAT WITHOUT JACOB AND LABAN. EATING IN THIS CONTEXT SUGGESTS SHARING FOOD AS PART OF THE TREATY; AND THIS NATURALLY INVOLVED THE KINSMEN IN EACH OF THE TWO GROUPS. ONE TRANSLATION THAT TRIES TO MAKE THIS POINT CLEAR SAYS “JACOB TOLD HIS MEN TO GET SOME STONES AND MAKE A HEAP. THEN THE MEN OF JACOB AND LABAN ATE FOOD NEAR THE HEAP OF STONES.”**

**GENESIS 31:47: LABAN CALLED IT JEGAR-SAHADUTHA: IT REFERS TO THE PILE OF STONES. FOR THE ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF THE NAMES, SEE THE FOOTNOTES IN RSV AND TEV. FOR THE TRANSLATION OF NAMES GENERALLY, SEE “NAMES IN GENESIS” IN “TRANSLATING GENESIS,” PAGE 8. SOME TRANSLATIONS BRING THE EXPLANATION OF THE TWO NAMES INTO THE TEXT BY SAYING “LABAN GAVE A NAME TO THE HEAP AS A REMINDER IN HIS LANGUAGE …, AND HIS SON-IN-LAW GAVE A NAME TO THE HEAP AS A REMINDER IN HIS LANGUAGE.…” BUT JACOB CALLED IT GALEED: SEE RSV AND TEV FOOTNOTES.**

**GENESIS 31:48: THIS HEAP IS A WITNESS BETWEEN YOU AND ME TODAY: IN MANY LANGUAGES A PILE OF STONES CANNOT BE SAID TO BE A WITNESS. ACCORDINGLY, IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO TRANSLATE AS IN TEV OR TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “THIS HEAP WILL MAKE US REMEMBER,” OR “… WILL KEEP US FROM FORGETTING,” OR “… WILL HELP US KEEP IN OUR HEARTS.” THEREFORE, HE NAMED IT GALEED: THIS STATEMENT CREATES CONFUSION BECAUSE VERSE 47 HAS JUST SAID THAT JACOB CALLED IT BY THE NAME GALEED. NOTE THAT TEV TRANSLATES “THAT IS WHY THAT PLACE WAS NAMED GALEED,” AND MOST MODERN TRANSLATIONS DO SOMETHING SIMILAR. BY SHIFTING TO THE PASSIVE THESE TRANSLATIONS AVOID SAYING THAT IT IS LABAN WHO CALLS IT GALEED. THIS IS A POSSIBLE UNDERSTANDING OF THE HEBREW, AND IT IS RECOMMENDED AS A POSSIBILITY TO TRANSLATORS WHOSE LANGUAGES CAN USE THE PASSIVE VOICE. IN SOME OTHER LANGUAGES AN IMPERSONAL PRONOUN “THEY CALLED IT” HAS THE SAME EFFECT AS THE PASSIVE. OTHERWISE IT WILL BE NECESSARY TO FOLLOW RSV.**

**GENESIS 31:49: AND THE PILLAR MIZPAH: THE RSV FOOTNOTE SHOWS THAT THE HEBREW TEXT LACKS THE PILLAR, WHICH IS TAKEN FROM THE SAMARITAN PENTATEUCH. RSV CAN ONLY MEAN THAT LABAN CALLED THE PILLAR BY THE NAME MIZPAH. IT IS NOT THE MEMORIAL STONE THAT IS GIVEN THE NAME MIZPAH BUT RATHER THE LOCALITY, OR PLACE. THEREFORE, IN TRANSLATION IT IS BEST TO FOLLOW TEV AND PLACE THIS INFORMATION AT THE END OF THE VERSE AS A CONCLUSION. AGAIN, TEV AND MOST OTHER MODERN VERSIONS EMPLOY THE PASSIVE: “SO THE PLACE WAS ALSO NAMED MIZPAH.” MIZPAH IS EXPLAINED IN THE TEV FOOTNOTE AS “PLACE FROM WHICH TO WATCH.” RSV HAS “WATCHPOST.” WE MAY ALSO CALL IT A “LOOK-OUT POINT” OR “OBSERVATION POINT.” IT REFERS TO A HIGH ELEVATION FROM WHICH IT IS POSSIBLE TO SEE A GREAT DISTANCE. SUCH ELEVATED PLACES WERE USED BY GUARDS, OR WATCHMEN, FOR OBSERVING IF AN ENEMY WAS APPROACHING TO ATTACK. FOR HE SAID: IN THE LIGHT OF VERSE 50, HE REFERS TO LABAN. THE LORD WATCH BETWEEN YOU AND ME: LABAN IS HERE CALLING ON THE LORD TO “KEEP WATCH,” “SPY ON,” “BE ON THE LOOK OUT.” THIS IS NOT A PRAYER FOR THE LORD TO TAKE CARE OF THESE TWO MEN WHILE THEY ARE APART, AS IS SOMETIMES PRAYED BY CHRISTIANS. RATHER IT IS A PLEA THAT THE LORD WILL BE VIGILANT TO CATCH THE ONE WHO IS PREPARING TO HARM THE OTHER. TEV “MAY THE LORD KEEP AN EYE ON US” EXPRESSES THE THOUGHT IDIOMATICALLY IN ENGLISH. SOME TRANSLATIONS IN OTHER LANGUAGES BRING THIS OUT CLEARLY BY SAYING “… WATCH OUR BEHAVIOR” OR “… SEE WHAT WE-TWO ARE DOING.” WHEN WE ARE ABSENT ONE FROM THE OTHER: ABSENT TRANSLATES A VERB MEANING TO HIDE OR CONCEAL, AND IN THIS CONTEXT, IT SUGGESTS BEING UNABLE TO SEE EACH OTHER. AS LONG AS THESE MEN ARE TOGETHER, THEY CAN LOOK OUT FOR THEMSELVES, BUT WHEN THEY ARE APART OR HIDDEN FROM EACH OTHER’S SIGHT, THEY REQUIRE THE ALL-SEEING EYE OF THE LORD. OTHER WAYS OF EXPRESSING THIS THOUGHT ARE “WHEN WE-TWO ARE NOT TOGETHER” AND “WHEN WE GO BACK TO OUR OWN PLACES.”**

**GENESIS 31:50: LABAN STILL SEEKS ONE MORE GUARANTEE FOR HIS DAUGHTERS. IF YOU ILL-TREAT MY DAUGHTERS: ILL-TREAT MEANS TO “CAUSE TO SUFFER,” “TREAT BADLY,” OR “DO HARM TO SOMEONE.” THE SECOND CONDITION THAT LABAN WARNS JACOB OF IS IF YOU TAKE WIVES BESIDES MY DAUGHTERS. THIS MEANS “IF YOU MARRY OTHER WOMEN.” ACCORDING TO SPEISER MANY ANCIENT BABYLONIAN MARRIAGE DOCUMENTS MADE IT A CONDITION THAT ADDITIONAL WOMEN WERE NOT TO BE TAKEN BY THE HUSBAND. THE REASON FOR THIS IS PROBABLY RELATED TO INHERITANCE RIGHTS OF THE OFFSPRING. ALTHOUGH NO MAN IS WITH US: THAT IS, “EVEN THOUGH THERE IS NO WITNESS TO REPORT TO ME.” SEE TEV “EVEN THOUGH I DON’T KNOW ABOUT IT.” ANOTHER WAY OF EXPRESSING THIS IS “PERHAPS I WON’T FIND OUT ABOUT IT, BUT YOU THINK.…” REMEMBER, GOD IS WITNESS BETWEEN YOU AND ME: THE THOUGHT EXPRESSED IS “EVEN IF NO ONE SEES WHAT YOU DO TO TELL ME ABOUT IT, GOD WILL SEE.” SEE VERSE 48, IN WHICH THE SAME THOUGHT IS EXPRESSED IN REGARD TO “THE HEAP” AS WITNESS. EXAMPLES OF THE WAY THIS IS RENDERED IN TRANSLATION ARE “YOU THINK ABOUT THIS: GOD IS WATCHING US” AND “THINK OF GOD WHO ALWAYS SEES US.”**

**GENESIS 31:51: THEN LABAN SAID TO JACOB: THIS STATEMENT MAY SEEM ODD IN THAT LABAN HAS BEEN THE SPEAKER SINCE VERSE 48. WE MAY TRANSLATE IT “LABAN ALSO SAID TO JACOB” OR “LABAN WENT ON TALKING TO JACOB.” NOTE THAT TEV TRANSLATES WITHOUT IDENTIFYING LABAN AS THE SPEAKER AGAIN HERE IN VERSE 51. SEE THIS HEAP AND THE PILLAR: SEE FUNCTIONS TO CALL JACOB’S ATTENTION TO THE PILE OF STONES AND THE PILLAR. WE MAY SAY “LOOK AT.…” SEE ALSO TEV “HERE ARE THE.…” WHICH … ME: IN RSV LABAN APPEARS TO BE THE ONE WHO SET UP THE PILLAR AND THE HEAP. TEV’S RENDERING MAKES LABAN RESPONSIBLE FOR THE HEAP AND LEAVES IT POSSIBLE THAT JACOB COULD HAVE SET UP THE MEMORIAL STONE, AS IS STATED IN VERSE 45: “HERE ARE THE ROCKS THAT I HAVE PILED UP BETWEEN US, AND HERE IS THE MEMORIAL STONE.” TEV THUS GIVES A GOOD MODEL TO FOLLOW.**

**GENESIS 31:52: THIS VERSE GIVES THE WORDS OF A TREATY BETWEEN THE TWO MEN: NEITHER SIDE WILL CROSS THE BOUNDARY TO DO THE OTHER HARM. THIS IS DIFFERENT THAN THE WORDS OF THE TREATY GIVEN IN VERSE 50. THIS HEAP IS A WITNESS AND THE PILLAR IS A WITNESS: SEE TEV, WHICH REDUCES THESE TWO CLAUSES TO ONE. THAT I WILL NOT PASS OVER THIS HEAP TO YOU: THIS STATEMENT IS COMPLETED IN RSV ONLY AT THE END OF THE VERSE, WHERE THE WORDS FOR HARM ARE FOUND. IT WILL OFTEN BE NECESSARY TO MOVE THE PURPOSE FORWARD BY SAYING, FOR EXAMPLE, “I WILL NEVER GO BEYOND THIS PILE TO INJURE YOU.” SEE TEV. NEB SAYS “… TO DO AN INJURY,” WHICH REB HAS REVISED TO “WITH EVIL INTENT.” IN MANY LANGUAGES THIS IS MOST SIMPLY EXPRESSED AS “TO CAUSE YOU HARM.” SOME LANGUAGES HAVE SPECIAL TERMS OR EXPRESSIONS FOR CROSSING OVER TRIBAL OR NATIONAL BORDERS, OR MARKERS FOR OWNERSHIP OF LAND; SUCH TERMS AND EXPRESSIONS WILL GENERALLY BE APPROPRIATE IN THIS CONTEXT. AND YOU [JACOB] WILL NOT PASS OVER …: HERE THE PILLAR IS ADDED. OTHERWISE THE ONLY CHANGE FROM THE STATEMENT BEFORE IS THE CHANGE OF THE PRONOUN, YOU (SINGULAR).**

**GENESIS 31:53: AS IN VERSE 42 THE DIVINE SUBJECT IS GIVEN AS THE GOD OF … THREE TIMES. NOTE, HOWEVER, THAT TEV DOES NOT HAVE THE THIRD ELEMENT THE GOD OF THEIR FATHER. THIS EXPRESSION IS LACKING IN SOME HEBREW MANUSCRIPTS AND IN THE SEPTUAGINT. HOTTP SUPPORTS TEV’S OMISSION. ABRAHAM IS THE GRANDFATHER OF JACOB AND NAHOR THE GRANDFATHER OF LABAN. CONSEQUENTLY, SPCL SAYS “MAY THE GOD OF YOUR [JACOB’S] GRANDFATHER ABRAHAM AND HE [THE GOD] OF MY GRANDFATHER NAHOR DECIDE BETWEEN US.” JUDGE BETWEEN US: FOR JUDGE SEE 16:5. IN THIS CONTEXT THE SENSE MAY BE “GIVE A DECISION IN THE CASE OF TROUBLE BETWEEN US” OR “MAKE SURE THAT WE-TWO KEEP THE AGREEMENT WE HAVE MADE.” THE VERB JUDGE IN THE HEBREW TEXT IS PLURAL. IT APPEARS THAT THE TEXT TREATS THE TWO GOD OF … AS DISTINCT. THIS IS SUPPORTED BY 2: “YOUR FATHERS LIVED OF OLD BEYOND THE EUPHRATES, TERAH, THE FATHER OF ABRAHAM AND NAHOR; AND THEY SERVED OTHER GODS.” SO, JACOB SWORE BY THE FEAR OF HIS FATHER ISAAC: SO, WHICH SIGNALS A CONSEQUENCE, MAY BE BETTER REPLACED BY A WORD LIKE “THEN,” POINTING TO A SUBSEQUENT ACTION TAKEN BY JACOB. FOR SWORE SEE 14:22; 21:23, 24. SEE TEV “SOLEMNLY VOWED.” FOR FEAR OF … ISAAC SEE VERSE 42.**

**GENESIS 31:54: JACOB OFFERED A SACRIFICE ON THE MOUNTAIN: THIS IS THE FIRST USE OF THE WORD FOR SACRIFICE IN GENESIS. IN 8:20; 22:2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 13, WE ENCOUNTERED THE EXPRESSION “BURNT OFFERING,” WHICH REFERRED TO ANIMALS THAT WERE KILLED AND BURNED UP COMPLETELY. IN THIS VERSE THE ANIMAL IS KILLED AND BURNED, BUT SOME OF THE MEAT IS KEPT FOR EATING. THE SACRIFICE AND THE EATING OF THE MEAT FROM THE SACRIFICIAL ANIMAL UNITES JACOB AND LABAN, AS WELL AS THEIR KINSMEN, WITH GOD IN A RITUAL ACT AND SO AFFIRMS AND SEALS THE AGREEMENT. IN LANGUAGES THAT DO NOT HAVE A SUITABLE EXPRESSION FOR THIS KIND OF SACRIFICE, IT IS MOST OFTEN NECESSARY TO USE A DESCRIPTIVE EXPRESSION SUCH AS “SLAUGHTER AN ANIMAL AND BURN PART OF IT AS A GIFT FOR GOD.” THIS LENGTHY EXPRESSION MAY BE PLACED IN A NOTE AND A SHORTER FORM USED IN THE TRANSLATION. CALLED HIS KINSMEN … AND THEY ATE: THE TEXT HIS KINSMEN MEANS THE RELATIVES OF JACOB, BUT IT DOES NOT MAKE CLEAR WHO IS REFERRED TO. BECAUSE OF THE CONTEXT OF MAKING A TREATY THAT APPLIES TO THE WHOLE PASSAGE, WE TAKE THE VIEW HERE THAT THEY REFERS TO JACOB, LABAN, AND ALL THEIR KINSMEN. A TRANSLATION THAT BRINGS THIS OUT CLEARLY SAYS “JACOB KILLED A SMALL GOAT AS AN OFFERING, AND HE CALLED ALL HIS RELATIONS TO COME AND EAT THAT MEAT. JACOB COOKED THE MEAT, THEN THEY ALL ATE THERE BESIDE THE STONES.” AND THEY ATE BREAD AND TARRIED ALL NIGHT: BREAD IS OFTEN USED IN HEBREW AS A PART FOR THE WHOLE, WITH THE MEANING OF “FOOD” OR “A MEAL.” THE MEAT FROM THE SACRIFICE WAS EATEN WITH BREAD. THE FULLER SENSE OF BREAD HERE IS “A MEAL.” SEE TEV. TARRIED TRANSLATES A VERB MEANING “TO PASS THE NIGHT”; THE SAME VERB WAS USED IN 19:2, WHERE LOT URGED THE TWO ANGELS “TO SPEND THE NIGHT” AT HIS HOUSE. SEE ALSO 28:11. EATING AND STAYING ALL NIGHT ARE NOT INTENDED TO BE TWO EXPRESSIONS FOR ONE EVENT BUT DESCRIBE TWO SEPARATE ACTIONS. ACCORDINGLY, TEV IS A GOOD MODEL: “AFTER THEY HAD EATEN.…”**

**GENESIS 31:55: IN THE HEBREW BIBLE VERSE 55 IS THE FIRST VERSE OF CHAPTER 32. THE HANDBOOK PLACES IT HERE TO KEEP IN LINE WITH THE VERSE NUMBERING OF RSV AND TEV. THE HEBREW CHAPTER AND VERSE NUMBERS WILL BE INCLUDED WITHIN SQUARE BRACKETS FOR THOSE TRANSLATORS WHO NEED TO FOLLOW THAT ALTERNATIVE SYSTEM. EARLY IN THE MORNING LABAN AROSE: AROSE PROBABLY MEANS HE GOT UP FROM SLEEPING. HOWEVER, IT MAY ALSO HAVE BEEN USED HERE TO MEAN THAT HE GOT READY TO LEAVE. KISSED HIS GRANDCHILDREN AND HIS DAUGHTERS: IN VERSE 28 LABAN COMPLAINED TO JACOB THAT HE HAD BEEN DENIED THIS PLEASURE WHEN JACOB FLED. IN SOME LANGUAGES IT IS NECESSARY TO EXPRESS A TRANSITION THAT MOVES LABAN FROM WHERE HE GOT UP TO THE PLACE WHERE HE KISSED THEM. FOR EXAMPLE, IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO SAY “EARLY THE NEXT MORNING LABAN GOT UP AND WENT TO HIS GRANDCHILDREN AND DAUGHTERS AND KISSED THEM GOOD-BYE.” BLESSED THEM: HERE THE VERB OCCURS AS PART OF THE FAREWELL CEREMONY. THIS WORD IS SOMETIMES USED WHEN PEOPLE MEET EACH OTHER AND WHEN THEY PART. FOR ITS USE AS A GREETING, SEE 1 SAM 13:10; 25:14. IN THE CONTEXT OF VERSE 55, BLESSED THEM IS A PARTING GESTURE THAT WE MAY TRANSLATE AS “SAID FAREWELL TO THEM” OR “TOLD THEM GOOD-BYE.” IN 32:29 WHEN JACOB’S OPPONENT TAKES LEAVE OF HIM BEFORE DAYLIGHT, IT WILL BE SAID “THERE HE BLESSED HIM.” THEN HE DEPARTED AND RETURNED HOME: THE TEXT MENTIONS ONLY LABAN AS THE PRINCIPAL CHARACTER, BUT THE SENSE IS “LABAN AND HIS MEN.”**

**JACOB PREPARES TO MEET ESAU (32:1–21) [32:2–22]**

**JACOB AND HIS PEOPLE LEAVE THE PLACE WHERE THEY WERE AT THE END OF CHAPTER 31, AND, AFTER MEETING SOME ANGELS, HE GIVES THAT PLACE A NEW NAME (VERSES 1–2). IN THE HOPE OF HAVING GOOD RELATIONS WITH HIS BROTHER ESAU, JACOB SENDS MESSENGERS TO INFORM HIM THAT HE IS APPROACHING EDOM (VERSES 3–5). JACOB THEN LEARNS THAT ESAU IS COMING TO MEET HIM. AFRAID OF WHAT MAY HAPPEN, JACOB DIVIDES HIS PEOPLE AND ANIMALS INTO TWO GROUPS (VERSES 32:6–8). HE ALSO PRAYS FOR DELIVERANCE FROM THE THREAT OF ESAU AND ASKS THAT GOD REMEMBER THE PROMISE MADE TO ABRAHAM AND ISAAC (VERSES 32:9–12). THEN HE SELECTS HUNDREDS OF ANIMALS TO BE SENT AHEAD AS GIFTS FOR ESAU, AND HOPES THROUGH THESE GIFTS TO MAKE PEACE WITH HIS BROTHER (VERSES 13–21).**

**SUBDIVISION HEADING**

**THE HANDBOOK HEADING MAY NEED TO BE REWORDED TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “JACOB SENDS GIFTS TO ESAU,” “JACOB IS AFRAID TO MEET ESAU,” OR “JACOB PLANS TO DEAL WITH HIS BROTHER.” OTHER HEADINGS ARE “JACOB AND ESAU MEET” (SPCL), “JACOB PREPARES FOR HIS MEETING WITH ESAU” (NJB), “JACOB AND ESAU: PRELIMINARIES TO THE ENCOUNTER” (TOB), “ENCOUNTER” (SPEISER).**

**GENESIS 32:1: TRANSLATIONS THAT FOLLOW THE VERSE NUMBERING OF THE HEBREW BIBLE PLACE 31:55 (NUMBERED AS VERSE 1) AS THE OPENING VERSE OF CHAPTER 32. SEE THE EXPLANATION AT 31:55. THIS VERSE IS THEN NUMBERED AS 32:2. IN SOME VERSIONS VERSE 31:55 (HEBREW 32:1) SERVES AS A CONCLUSION TO THE STORY OF JACOB AND LABAN. HOWEVER, 32:1 IN RSV AND TEV DOES NOT OPEN THE NEXT STORY, WHICH IS THE NEXT EPISODE IN THE STORY OF JACOB AND ESAU. RATHER VERSES 1–2 SERVE AS A TRANSITION BETWEEN THE END OF THE STORY OF JACOB AND LABAN AND THE BEGINNING OF THE NEW EPISODE OF JACOB AND ESAU. ONLY IN VERSE 3 DOES THE NEW STORY REALLY GET UNDER WAY. ACCORDINGLY, THE HANDBOOK CONSIDERS 31:1 AND 2 AS TRANSITIONAL. THE NATURE OF THE TRANSITION IS A MOVEMENT AWAY FROM THE THREAT OF LABAN, WHICH WAS LAID TO REST IN CHAPTER 31, TO THE NEW THREAT OF ESAU, WHICH WILL BE OVERCOME IN CHAPTER 33. IN SOME LANGUAGES IT WILL BE HELPFUL TO MARK THE OPENING OF CHAPTER 32 WITH SOMETHING LIKE “AFTER LABAN HAD GONE HOME, JACOB CONTINUED HIS JOURNEY.…” JACOB WENT ON HIS WAY: JACOB’S DEPARTURE FROM THE PLACE WHERE HE MADE THE TREATY WITH LABAN TAKES PLACE AFTER LABAN LEAVES FOR HOME. HIS DESTINATION HAS BEEN SET FOR HIM BY GOD IN A DREAM (31:13). THEREFORE, IT IS IMPORTANT THAT THE EXPRESSION WENT ON HIS WAY HAS THE SENSE OF GOING FORWARD WITH A DESTINATION IN MIND, NOT JUST WALKING AIMLESSLY ABOUT. IN SOME LANGUAGES IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “JACOB WENT ON TOWARD HIS OWN COUNTRY” OR “… TOWARD CANAAN.” IF THIS CAN MEAN THAT JACOB TRAVELED ALONE, IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO SAY “JACOB AND THOSE WITH HIM” OR “JACOB TOOK HIS PEOPLE AND ANIMALS AND WENT.…” AND THE ANGELS OF GOD MET HIM: FOR ANGELS SEE 16:7; 31:11. THIS IS THE FIRST OCCURRENCE OF THE PLURAL OF “ANGEL.” THERE IS NO WAY OF KNOWING HOW MANY ANGELS THERE MAY HAVE BEEN; BUT FROM JACOB’S REMARK THERE MUST HAVE BEEN MANY. TEV SAYS “SOME.” NEB/REB USE THE INDEFINITE “ANGELS OF GOD.” MET IN THIS CONTEXT MEANS “TO ENCOUNTER,” “TO MEET UP WITH UNEXPECTEDLY.” THERE IS NOTHING HOSTILE ABOUT THIS ENCOUNTER.**

**GENESIS 32:2: WHEN JACOB SAW THEM: THEM REFERS TO THE ANGELS THAT HAD APPEARED WHERE HE WAS. HE SAID: WHAT JACOB SAYS IS PROBABLY IN THE FORM OF AN EXCLAMATION, AS THEIR APPEARANCE WOULD BE A SURPRISE. IT MAY BE BETTER IN THAT CASE TO SAY SOMETHING EQUIVALENT TO “HE EXCLAIMED,” OR “HE SHOUTED.” IN SOME LANGUAGES IT MAY BE NATURAL TO MAKE THE EXPRESSION OF HE SAID INCLUDE HOW JACOB WAS FEELING; FOR EXAMPLE, “HE HAD A GOOD FEELING [LITERALLY ‘GOOD INSIDES’] AND SAID.” THIS IS GOD’S ARMY: ARMY TRANSLATES THE HEBREW MAHANEH, WHICH REFERS TO A (MILITARY) CAMP. IT IS USED, FOR EXAMPLE, IN EXO 16:13 AND 19:16 OF THE CAMP OF THE ISRAELITES IN THE WILDERNESS. SEE ALSO JUDGES 7:1, 8, 9. ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS USE SUCH TERMS AS “CAMP,” “ARMY,” “COMPANY.” NO DOUBT JACOB UNDERSTOOD THE APPEARANCE OF THESE ANGELS AS THE PROTECTING PRESENCE OF GOD ON HIS HOMEWARD JOURNEY. SO, HE CALLED THE NAME OF THAT PLACE MAHANAIM: THE STRICT SENSE OF THIS NAME IS “TWO CAMPS” OR “TWIN CAMPS.” SEE TEV FOOTNOTE. IF TRANSLATIONS USE FOOTNOTES THEY MAY FOLLOW TEV. OTHERWISE IT MAY BE BEST TO KEEP THE PROPER NOUN IN THE TEXT AND TO ADD “WHICH MEANS ‘TWO CAMPS.’” IT IS NOT IMMEDIATELY EVIDENT WHY JACOB GAVE THE PLACE THIS NAME. HOWEVER, IN VERSE 7 WE WILL SEE JACOB DIVIDE HIS PEOPLE AND ANIMALS INTO TWO CAMPS OR COMPANIES AS HE PLANS HIS ESCAPE FROM ESAU. IN LATER HISTORY A TOWN BY THIS NAME WAS A PLACE OF REFUGE. FOR EXAMPLE, DAVID FLED THERE DURING ABSALOM’S REVOLT (2 SAM 17:24, 27). IT IS ALSO REFERRED TO AS A CITY IN GILEAD IN THE TERRITORY OF GAD, NEAR ITS BORDER WITH MANASSEH (JOSH 13:26). ACCORDING TO HARPER’S BIBLE DICTIONARY IT WAS “STRATEGICALLY SITUATED NEAR THE CONFLUENCE OF THE [RIVERS] JORDAN AND … JABBOK.” SEE A BIBLE ATLAS.**

**GENESIS 32:3: AS THE STORY PROPER BEGINS, JACOB HAS TRAVELED IN A SOUTH OR SOUTH–WEST DIRECTION, EITHER ALONG THE JORDAN VALLEY OR TOWARD IT THROUGH WHAT IS THE COUNTRY OF JORDAN TODAY. HE IS “ON THE POINT OF RE-ENTERING CANAAN” (DRIVER) AND STILL A CONSIDERABLE DISTANCE (SOME 130 KILOMETERS, OR 80 MILES) AWAY FROM THE REGION OF EDOM, SOUTHEAST OF THE DEAD SEA AND EAST OF BEERSHEBA. EDOM IS THE AREA OCCUPIED BY ESAU. (WE ARE NOT TOLD, HOWEVER, THAT ESAU MOVED TO EDOM UNTIL 36:6–8. FOR THE ASSOCIATION OF ESAU WITH EDOM, SEE 25:30.) THE LAST MENTION OF ESAU IN RELATION TO JACOB WAS IN 27:41, WHERE ESAU HAD DECIDED TO KILL JACOB. IT WAS BECAUSE OF THIS THAT JACOB HAD GONE TO HIS UNCLE LABAN IN HARAN (27:43–44). AND JACOB SENT MESSENGERS BEFORE HIM TO ESAU HIS BROTHER: THE HEBREW WORD FOR MESSENGER IS THE SAME AS THAT FOR “ANGEL.” IN VERSE 2 THE “ANGELS” ARE GOD’S MESSENGERS. HERE THE TERM REFERS TO MEN SENT BY JACOB TO CONTACT ESAU; SO, SOME TRANSLATIONS SAY SIMPLY “SENT SOME MEN.” BEFORE HIM MEANS AHEAD OF HIM, IN ADVANCE. TO ESAU MAY REQUIRE FILLING OUT TO GIVE THE PURPOSE; FOR EXAMPLE, “TO SPEAK WITH ESAU,” “TO EXPLAIN THINGS TO ESAU,” “TO NEGOTIATE WITH ESAU.” ANOTHER WAY OF EXPRESSING THE WHOLE SENTENCE IS “JACOB SENT SOME MEN … TO TAKE A MESSAGE TO HIS BROTHER ESAU.” JACOB DID NOT ACTUALLY SEND OFF THE MESSENGERS UNTIL AFTER HE HAD GIVEN THEM THEIR INSTRUCTIONS; AND THOSE INSTRUCTIONS COME IN VERSES 4 AND 5.**

**IN SOME LANGUAGES IT WILL BE MORE NATURAL TO REARRANGE VERSES 3–5 SO THAT THE ORDER OF EVENTS IS AS FOLLOWS: 1. JACOB CALLED OR CHOSE SOME MEN; 2. HE TOLD THEM WHAT TO SAY TO ESAU; 3. HE SENT THEM OFF.**

**IN THE LAND OF SEIR, THE COUNTRY OF EDOM: SEIR IS A MOUNTAINOUS REGION SOUTHEAST OF CANAAN. EDOM IS A TERRITORY TRADITIONALLY INHABITED BY THE EDOMITES OR DESCENDANTS OF ESAU. SEE A BIBLE DICTIONARY. IN TRANSLATION WE MAY SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “IN THE MOUNTAINS CALLED SEIR, WHERE THE REGION OF EDOM IS.”**

**GENESIS 32:4: INSTRUCTING THEM: RSV RUNS VERSES 3 AND 4 TOGETHER, BUT TRANSLATORS MAY FIND THAT A NEW SENTENCE IS REQUIRED WITH VERSE 4. INSTRUCTING HERE MEANS “DIRECTING,” “ORDERING,” “TELLING.” WE MAY ALSO TRANSLATE THE BEGINNING OF VERSE 4 AS IN SPCL, “HE GAVE THEM THIS MESSAGE: …” OR “HE TOLD THEM TO SAY TO ESAU.…” THUS, YOU SHALL SAY TO MY LORD ESAU: SINCE A WRITTEN MESSAGE IS NOT EMPLOYED, THE MESSENGER IS TO REPEAT EXACTLY THE WORDS SPOKEN BY THE SENDER OF THE MESSAGE. NOTE THE FORM THE MESSAGE HAS IN TEV. WE MAY TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “THESE ARE THE WORDS YOU WILL SAY TO …” OR “HERE IS WHAT YOU ARE TO SAY TO.…” MY LORD TRANSLATES ’ADONI, AS IN RACHEL’S ADDRESS TO HER FATHER IN 31:35. JACOB USES MY LORD AS AN ADDRESS FORM TO HIS BROTHER IN VERSE 5. SINCE THIS QUOTE IS USED AS INTRODUCTORY TO THE MESSENGERS AND NOT TO ESAU, IT MAY BE NECESSARY IN TRANSLATION TO MAKE THIS CLEAR. FOR EXAMPLE, “I WANT YOU TO GIVE MY LORD ESAU THIS MESSAGE” OR “I AM GOING TO TELL YOU NOW WHAT I WANT YOU TO SAY TO MY LORD ESAU.” THUS, SAYS YOUR SERVANT JACOB: THESE ARE THE WORDS THE MESSENGERS ARE TO SPEAK TO ESAU. IN SOME LANGUAGES IT MAY BE CONFUSING FOR JACOB TO SPEAK OF HIMSELF IN THE THIRD PERSON. IN THAT CASE WE MAY SOMETIMES SAY “I AM YOUR SERVANT, JACOB” OR “I AM JACOB AND I AM YOUR SLAVE.” WE MAY PUT TOGETHER JACOB’S INSTRUCTIONS TO HIS MESSENGERS AND THE OPENING STATEMENT AS FOLLOWS: “SAY THESE WORDS TO MY LORD ESAU: ‘I AM JACOB WHO SERVES YOU’ ” OR “… ‘I AM JACOB, YOUR SLAVE.’ ” A TRANSLATION THAT USES INDIRECT SPEECH IN THIS CONTEXT SAYS “TELL THIS WORD TO ESAU. TELL HIM THAT I, JACOB, AM HIS SERVANT. I CALL HIM BOSS.” I HAVE SOJOURNED WITH LABAN: FOR SOJOURNED SEE 12:10. FOR STAYED UNTIL NOW SEE TEV. WE MAY ALSO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “I AM ONLY NOW RETURNING HOME” OR “AFTER ALL THIS TIME I AM NOW COMING HOME.” IN SOME TRANSLATIONS SOJOURNED … AND STAYED UNTIL NOW IS EXPRESSED AS “I HAVE STAYED A LONG TIME WITH LABAN AND NOW I AM COMING BACK.”**

**GENESIS 32:5: IN THIS VERSE JACOB LISTS HIS WEALTH, PERHAPS TO INTRODUCE HIMSELF AS A POWERFUL STOCK OWNER, AND PERHAPS TO ASSURE ESAU THAT HE IS CAPABLE OF BUYING A HIGH-PRICED PEACE WITH HIS BROTHER. FOR THE LIST OF ANIMALS AND SERVANTS, SEE THE SIMILAR LIST IN 12:16. AND I HAVE SENT TO TELL MY LORD: THE TENSE IS EXPRESSED AS PAST BECAUSE IT REPRESENTS WHAT THE MESSENGERS WILL SAY WHEN THEY MEET ESAU. IN SOME LANGUAGES THIS MAY BE MORE CLEARLY EXPRESSED AS PRESENT: “I AM SENDING THESE MESSENGERS TO SAY THIS.…” MY LORD IS NOW TO BE USED WHEN THE SERVANTS SPEAK TO ESAU ON JACOB’S BEHALF. IN ORDER THAT I MAY FIND FAVOR IN YOUR SIGHT: FOR THE TRANSLATION OF THIS EXPRESSION, SEE 6:8. JACOB “CLEARLY FEELS THAT MATTERS HAVE NOT IMPROVED AT ALL DURING HIS TWENTY-YEAR ABSENCE” (VON RAD). HE HAS SETTLED ACCOUNTS WITH LABAN AND IS NOW ANXIOUS TO DO THE SAME WITH HIS BROTHER. FIND FAVOR IN YOUR SIGHT IS SOMETIMES EXPRESSED AS “YOU WILL HAVE A GOOD HEART TOWARD ME” OR “YOU WILL BE GLAD TO SEE ME.”**

**GENESIS 32:6: AND THE MESSENGERS RETURNED TO JACOB: THE TEXT GIVES NO DETAILS OF THE MESSENGERS’ MISSION TO ESAU. HOWEVER, IN TRANSLATION IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO INDICATE SOME KIND OF TRANSITION TO VERSE 6. FOR EXAMPLE, WE MAY SAY, AS DOES TEV, “WHEN THE MESSENGERS CAME BACK,” OR “THE MESSENGERS WENT TO ESAU, AND WHEN THEY RETURNED TO JACOB,” OR “THE MESSENGERS DID WHAT JACOB HAD TOLD THEM. THEN THEY RETURNED TO HIM AND SAID.…” THE DISTANCE FROM MAHANAIM TO THE REGION OF EDOM MEANS THAT THE MESSENGERS MUST HAVE BEEN AWAY FOR SEVERAL DAYS BEFORE THEY RETURNED. WE CAME TO YOUR BROTHER ESAU: CAME, WHICH RENDERS THE HEBREW VERB, MUST OFTEN BE EXPRESSED FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF THE PLACE WHERE JACOB IS. IN ENGLISH THIS IS “WE WENT TO.…” WE MAY ALSO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “WE WENT TO SEE …,” “WE HAVE RETURNED FROM YOUR BROTHER ESAU.” IN THE LIGHT OF THE NEXT SENTENCE, WE MAY TRANSLATE AS DOES REB, “WE WENT TO YOUR BROTHER ESAU AND HE IS ALREADY.…” HE IS COMING TO MEET YOU: THE HEBREW TEXT MAY ALSO BE UNDERSTOOD AS “HE IS ALSO COMING,” “HE IS ALREADY COMING,” OR “HE IS ALREADY ON HIS WAY.” MEET TRANSLATES A VERB MEANING TO APPROACH OR COME NEAR. IN ENGLISH WE MAY TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “HE IS ALREADY ON HIS WAY HERE” OR “HE IS COMING AND WILL SOON BE HERE.” THE MOST NATURAL WAY TO UNDERSTAND THE SEQUENCE OF EVENTS IN THIS VERSE IS THAT, WHEN THE MESSENGERS FROM JACOB ARRIVED WITH THEIR MESSAGE, ESAU IMMEDIATELY SET OUT TO MEET JACOB. THIS IS WHAT THE MESSENGERS NOW REPORTED TO JACOB. NOTE NIV “WE WENT TO YOUR BROTHER ESAU, AND NOW HE IS COMING TO MEET YOU.” ANOTHER TRANSLATION EXPRESSES THIS AS “WE WENT AND SAW YOUR BROTHER. NOW HE HAS LEFT HIS OWN PLACE AND IS COMING TO MEET YOU.” FOUR HUNDRED MEN WITH HIM: IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO MAKE A NEW SENTENCE, AS IN TEV.**

**GENESIS 32:7: JACOB’S MESSENGERS BRING NO REPLY FROM ESAU. THE NEWS THAT ESAU AND SO MANY MEN ARE COMING TOWARD JACOB’S CAMP CAN ONLY BE BAD NEWS FOR JACOB. SEE 27:40. THEN JACOB WAS GREATLY AFRAID AND DISTRESSED: DISTRESSED TRANSLATES A WORD DERIVED FROM A VERB MEANING TO “TIE UP,” “BIND,” “RESTRICT.” IT PICTURES JACOB AS IMMOBILIZED BY FEAR. THIS IS SOMETIMES EXPRESSED IN ENGLISH AS BEING “SCARED STIFF.” AND HE DIVIDED THE PEOPLE THAT WERE WITH HIM: IN SPITE OF HIS FEAR, JACOB IS STILL RESOURCEFUL ENOUGH TO DEVISE A PLAN AIMED AT A PARTIAL ESCAPE. (HOWEVER, NOTHING FURTHER WILL BE SAID ABOUT THIS DIVISION.) THIS CLAUSE BEGINS WITH THE REGULAR HEBREW CONNECTIVE, WHICH IN THIS CASE INDICATES CONSEQUENCE: JACOB ACTS AS A CONSEQUENCE OF HIS FEAR. THIS CONNECTION IS OFTEN SHOWN BY MAKING THE FIRST CLAUSE A DEPENDENT CLAUSE OR PHRASE: “IN GREAT FEAR AND DISTRESS JACOB DIVIDED” (NIV), “JACOB, MUCH AFRAID AND DISTRESSED, DIVIDED” (REB). AND THE FLOCKS AND HERDS AND CAMELS: THE ANIMALS LISTED HERE ARE NOT EXACTLY THOSE GIVEN IN VERSE 5. IN EACH HERD OF ANIMALS THERE WERE FLOCKS (SHEEP AND GOATS), HERDS OF CATTLE, AND CAMELS. CAMELS IS LACKING IN THE SEPTUAGINT; FURTHERMORE, THE GRAMMATICAL CONSTRUCTION IS ODD, IN THAT THE HEBREW OBJECT MARKER IS MISSING. IN ADDITION, CAMELS ARE NOT MENTIONED IN VERSE 5. THEY ARE, HOWEVER, MENTIONED IN 31:17, WHERE JACOB’S WIVES AND CHILDREN MOUNT THEM. HOTTP ADMITS THAT THERE IS SOME DOUBT ABOUT CAMELS IN THIS VERSE, AND RATES IT WITH A {B}. NEVERTHELESS, THERE IS NOT SUFFICIENT REASON TO OMIT THE WORD IN TRANSLATION. INTO TWO COMPANIES: COMPANIES TRANSLATES THE WORD FOR “CAMP” USED IN VERSE 2. THE NARRATOR IS MAKING A RHETORICAL CONNECTION BETWEEN THE APPEARANCE OF THE ANGELS (A SIGN OF PROTECTION) AND THE PRESENT CRISIS.**

**GENESIS 32:8: THINKING TRANSLATES “AND HE SAID,” IN WHICH JACOB IS THINKING ALOUD OR TALKING TO HIMSELF. IF ESAU COMES TO THE ONE COMPANY AND DESTROYS IT: JACOB MAY NOT BE CERTAIN THAT ESAU IS APPROACHING. HOWEVER, HIS EMOTIONS HAVE REACTED AS IF THAT IS CERTAIN. HE DOES NOT KNOW FOR CERTAIN THAT ESAU WILL ATTACK, BUT NEITHER CAN HE ASSUME THAT HE WON’T ATTACK. THE ONLY COURSE OPEN FOR JACOB IS TO PREPARE FOR THE WORST. DESTROYS TRANSLATES A WORD MEANING TO STRIKE, BUT IN THE CONTEXT, IT REFERS TO A MILITARY TYPE OF ATTACK. SEE TEV. THEN THE COMPANY WHICH IS LEFT WILL ESCAPE: JACOB’S REASONING DOES NOT TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION THAT ESAU ALSO COULD DIVIDE HIS MEN INTO TWO COMPANIES AND ATTACK BOTH OF JACOB’S CAMPS.**

**GENESIS 32:9: JACOB REALIZES THAT HIS PLAN OF ESCAPE IS PROBABLY NOT ENOUGH. THEREFORE, HE TURNS TO GOD IN PRAYER. VERSES 32:9–12 ARE JACOB’S PRAYER FOR DELIVERANCE FROM ESAU. JACOB BEGINS BY ADDRESSING GOD IN HIS CHARACTERISTIC WAY, “GOD OF MY FATHER.” HE THEN GOES ON TO REMIND THE LORD THAT HE IS THE ONE WHO TOLD JACOB TO RETURN TO CANAAN. JACOB THEN RECALLS HOW HE HAS GROWN IN WEALTH FROM NOTHING TO TWO CAMPS—A REMINDER THAT GOD HAS OBVIOUSLY CHOSEN TO BLESS AND PROTECT HIM IN MESOPOTAMIA. HE ASKS GOD TO SAVE HIM AND HIS PEOPLE FROM ESAU, AND FINALLY HE REMINDS GOD ONCE MORE OF THE PROMISE MADE TO ABRAHAM AND HIS DESCENDANTS. AND JACOB SAID: SAID MAY BE BETTER RENDERED AS “PRAYED,” SINCE WHAT FOLLOWS IS A PRAYER. O GOD OF MY FATHER ABRAHAM AND … ISAAC: THAT IS, “GOD WHOM MY FATHER AND GRANDFATHER WORSHIPED.” O LORD WHO DIDST SAY TO ME: THIS MUST OFTEN BE HANDLED AS “YOU TOLD ME, LORD.…” SEE TEV. RETURN TO YOUR COUNTRY … KINDRED: SEE 12:1. I WILL DO YOU GOOD: THAT IS, “I WILL DEAL WELL WITH YOU,” “I WILL CAUSE EVERYTHING TO GO WELL.” SEE THE SAME EXPRESSION IN NUM 10:29, 32. THE WORDS USED BY THE LORD IN THE DREAM IN 31:3 WERE “I WILL BE WITH YOU.”**

**GENESIS 32:10: I AM NOT WORTHY OF THE LEAST OF ALL THE STEADFAST LOVE AND ALL THE FAITHFULNESS … THY SERVANT: I AM NOT WORTHY OF ALL TRANSLATES A HEBREW IDIOM MEANING “I AM TOO SMALL FROM ALL …” AND HAS THE SENSE OF BEING OF LITTLE IMPORTANCE, INSIGNIFICANT, AND SO NOT WORTHY. FOR STEADFAST LOVE SEE 24:12. FOR FAITHFULNESS SEE 24:27. THY SERVANT REFERS TO JACOB AND MUST OFTEN BE TRANSLATED AS IN TEV, OR “TO ME; I AM THE ONE WHO SERVES YOU.” FOR WITH ONLY MY STAFF I CROSSED THIS JORDAN: JACOB REFERS TO THE TIME TWENTY YEARS EARLIER WHEN HE CROSSED THE JORDAN RIVER GOING TO HARAN. WE MAY TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “WHEN I CROSSED THE JORDAN RIVER LAST TIME, I HAD ONLY MY STAFF.” STAFF HERE REFERS TO A STICK CARRIED BY TRAVELERS. IT WAS USED TO LEAN ON WHEN TIRED AND AS AN AID IN WALKING. THE SAME HEBREW WORD IS USED IN 30:37–39, INDICATING THE BRANCHES, OR “RODS,” THAT JACOB PEELED AND PLACED IN FRONT OF THE MATING ANIMALS. AND NOW I HAVE BECOME TWO COMPANIES: JACOB COMPARES HIS EARLIER CONDITION WITH HIS PRESENT FAMILY AND ALL HIS WEALTH NOW DIVIDED INTO TWO CAMPS OR COMPANIES. IT IS NOT THAT JACOB HAS LITERALLY BECOME THESE BUT THAT HIS HOUSEHOLD IS LARGE ENOUGH AND HIS WEALTH IS GREAT ENOUGH FOR THEM TO BE DIVIDED INTO TWO LARGE CAMPS. WE MAY TRANSLATE, FOR INSTANCE, “WHEN I CROSSED THE JORDAN [GOING TO MESOPOTAMIA] I HAD NOTHING MORE THAN MY STAFF. NOW I HAVE SO MUCH WEALTH AND SUCH A LARGE HOUSEHOLD THAT THEY ARE DIVIDED INTO TWO CAMPS.”**

**GENESIS 32:11: DELIVER ME, I PRAY THEE: THAT IS, “SAVE,” “RESCUE ME.” I PRAY TRANSLATES THE HEBREW PARTICLE OF ENTREATY, WHICH HAS THE SENSE OF “PLEASE,” “I BEG YOU,” “I ASK YOU.” FROM THE HAND OF MY BROTHER, FROM THE HAND OF ESAU: TO BE DELIVERED FROM SOMEONE’S HAND IS TO BE RESCUED FROM THAT PERSON’S POWER OR CONTROL. THE REPETITION OF THIS EXPRESSION IS TO GIVE RHETORICAL EMPHASIS TO IT. IT IS MOST OFTEN SUFFICIENT TO SAY IT ONCE OR TO REPRESENT THE EMPHASIS THROUGH A DIFFERENT STYLISTIC DEVICE. IN SOME LANGUAGES THIS MAY BE DONE BY SAYING “FROM THE HANDS OF MY BROTHER ESAU.” ANOTHER WAY OF RENDERING THE FIRST PART OF THE VERSE IS “PLEASE BLOCK [STOP] MY BROTHER ESAU, AND SAVE ME.” FOR I FEAR HIM GIVES THE GENERAL REASON WHY JACOB ASKS TO BE SAVED. LEST HE COME AND SLAY US ALL, THE MOTHERS WITH THE CHILDREN IS LITERALLY “LEST HE COME SMITE ME, MOTHER TO CHILDREN.” JACOB IS THE PRINCIPAL TARGET OF ESAU, BUT THE PROVERBIAL EXPRESSION (ALSO USED IN HOS 10:14) IS ADDED TO REFER TO WHAT DRIVER CALLS “A MERCILESS AND CRUEL SLAUGHTER.” SEE TEV. SPCL HAS “I AM AFRAID HE WILL COME TO ATTACK ME AND WILL KILL THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN.” THIS IS A GOOD MODEL FOR TRANSLATION.**

**GENESIS 32:12: BUT THOU DIDST SAY, ‘I WILL DO YOU GOOD’: FOR THE QUOTE SEE VERSE 9. THE HEBREW TRANSLATED BUT THOU IS EMPHATIC AND CARRIES THE PLEA THAT GOD WILL NOT FORGET THE PROMISE HE MADE, BUT ACT ON IT. NOTE TEV “REMEMBER THAT …”; SOME OTHER TRANSLATIONS SAY AT THE BEGINNING OR THE END OF THE VERSE “PLEASE DON’T FORGET YOUR PROMISE.” YOUR DESCENDANTS AS SAND OF THE SEA WHICH CANNOT BE NUMBERED FOR MULTITUDE: FOR THE COMPARISON OF NUMEROUS DESCENDANTS WITH SAND SEE 22:17. FOR WHICH … MULTITUDE SEE 16:10.**

**GENESIS 32:13: NOTE THAT TEV PLACES VERSE NUMBERS 13–15 AT THIS POINT IN ORDER TO AVOID ANY CONFUSION FROM INSERTING NUMBERS 14 AND 15 INTO THE LIST OF NUMBERED ANIMALS. SO, HE LODGED THERE THAT NIGHT: FOR LODGED SEE 24:23. THE LAST PLACE MENTIONED BY NAME WAS THE PLACE OF THE ENCOUNTER WITH THE ANGELS, MAHANAIM IN VERSE 2. THE TEXT DOES NOT SAY THAT JACOB HAS MOVED FROM THERE. IF IT IS ESSENTIAL FOR THE COHERENCE OF THE STORY, TRANSLATORS MAY SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “JACOB SPENT THE NIGHT IN THE PLACE WHERE HE HAD PRAYED” OR “… SPENT THE NIGHT IN ONE OF THE TWO CAMPS.” TOOK FROM WHAT HE HAD WITH HIM REFERS TO SELECTING ANIMALS FROM THE CAMP WHERE HE WAS LOCATED. IN SOME LANGUAGES IT WILL BE NECESSARY TO SAY “THE NEXT DAY HE TOOK.…” NOTE TEV AND REB “AFTER SPENDING THE NIGHT THERE, JACOB CHOSE.…” A PRESENT FOR HIS BROTHER ESAU: PRESENT TRANSLATES A WORD USED IN 4:3 AND TRANSLATED “OFFERING” BY RSV AND TEV. SEE THERE FOR COMMENTS. AS A GIFT TO A SUPERIOR THE WORD CLEARLY SUGGESTS THE IDEA OF TRIBUTE, THAT IS, A PAYMENT MADE BY AN INFERIOR TO A SUPERIOR TO OBTAIN PROTECTION. SEE 2 KGS 8:9. VERSE 20 STATES THAT THE GIFT IS TO APPEASE ESAU. MANY LANGUAGES HAVE SPECIAL NAMES FOR SUCH “GIFTS.”**

**GENESIS 32:14: VERSES 14 AND 15 LIST THE VARIOUS ANIMALS AND THE NUMBERS OF EACH KIND THAT JACOB IS TO PRESENT TO ESAU. THE FEMALE ANIMALS ARE MORE NUMEROUS AND MORE VALUABLE THAN THE MALES AS THEY WILL PRODUCE YOUNG ONES. FEWER MALES ARE REQUIRED FOR REPRODUCTION. FOR THE ANIMALS LISTED SEE 12:16; 30:35; 31:38. IN SOME LANGUAGES THE STRUCTURE OF THE TEXT IN HEBREW FROM VERSE 14 TO VERSE 20 IS VERY DIFFICULT IN THE WAY IT GIVES A LIST OF ALL THE ANIMALS FIRST AND THEN GIVES THE INSTRUCTIONS THAT JACOB GAVE TO EACH OF THE HERDSMEN. A SUGGESTION FOR RESTRUCTURING THESE VERSES WILL BE GIVEN AT THE END OF VERSE 20.**

**GENESIS 32:15: MILCH CAMELS REFERS TO CAMELS THAT ARE GIVING MILK FOR THEIR YOUNG. SEE TEV “MILK CAMELS.” THESE ARE CAMELS THAT HAVE GIVEN BIRTH AND ARE STILL SUCKLING THEIR YOUNG. IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO SHOW THEIR CONDITION IN THE TRANSLATION. FOR EXAMPLE, FRCL SAYS “30 CAMELS THAT SUCKLE THEIR YOUNG,” SPCL “30 CAMELS HAVING RECENTLY GIVEN BIRTH.” COLTS IS THE PROPER ENGLISH TERM FOR YOUNG CAMELS. HOWEVER, THIS WORD IS MORE FAMILIARLY USED TO DESIGNATE YOUNG HORSES. HENCE MOST MODERN ENGLISH VERSIONS SAY “THEIR YOUNG.” IT WILL BE NOTED THAT NO MALE CAMELS ARE INCLUDED. COWS AND BULLS: THIS IS THE FIRST USE OF THESE TERMS IN GENESIS. “CATTLE” HAS BEEN USED AS A GENERAL TERM FOR THESE AND INCLUDES OTHER DOMESTIC ANIMALS. THE BULLS IN OUR VERSE ARE NOT CASTRATED AND SO ARE NOT WHAT ARE REFERRED TO AS “OXEN,” “BULLOCKS,” OR “STEERS.” THEY ARE THEREFORE ABLE TO MATE WITH THE COWS. IN AREAS WHERE COWS AND BULLS ARE NOT RAISED, THEY ARE OFTEN KNOWN. HOWEVER, WHERE THEY ARE UNKNOWN, IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO BORROW A WORD FROM A LARGER LANGUAGE. FOR SHE-ASSES AND HE-ASSES SEE 12:16.**

**GENESIS 32:16: THESE HE DELIVERED INTO THE HANDS OF HIS SERVANTS, EVERY DROVE BY ITSELF: AFTER SELECTING THE ANIMALS, JACOB PUT HIS SERVANTS IN CHARGE OF THEM. THE TEXT EXPRESSES THIS AS “HE GAVE EVERY HERD BY ITSELF INTO THE HANDS OF HIS SERVANTS.” WHAT JACOB DOES IS TO FORM SEVERAL SMALL DROVES OR HERDS (THERE WERE FIVE HUNDRED AND FIFTY ANIMALS ALTOGETHER PLUS THE YOUNG CAMELS). HE PUTS SERVANTS IN CHARGE OF THEM TO GUIDE OR HERD THEM AS THEY GO OUT TO MEET ESAU. THE WORDING OF TEV IS A GOOD MODEL TO FOLLOW. JACOB THEN INSTRUCTS HIS HERDSMEN PASS ON BEFORE ME; THAT IS, “GO AHEAD OF ME,” “GO IN FRONT OF ME.” THE HEBREW TRANSLATED PASS ON CAN ALSO MEAN “CROSS OVER”; IT IS THEREFORE POSSIBLE IN THIS CONTEXT THAT JACOB IS SAYING “CROSS THE RIVER AHEAD OF ME.” IF THE SENSE IS “CROSS THE RIVER,” THE RIVER REFERS TO THE JABBOK. FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION OF THE ROUTE THEY TRAVELED, SEE THE COMMENTS INTRODUCING THE TEXT OF 32:22–32. KJV HAS “PASS OVER BEFORE ME”; AND SOME OTHER TRANSLATIONS HAVE SIMILAR RENDERINGS. PUT A SPACE BETWEEN DROVE AND DROVE: THAT IS TO SAY, “LEAVE A SPACE BETWEEN EACH OF THE HERDS.” THE IDEA IS THAT THE GIFT HERDS ARE TO REACH ESAU IN INTERVALS, PART OF JACOB’S PLAN TO IMPRESS ON ESAU THE EXTENT OF HIS TRIBUTE. THE IDEA OF A SPACE BETWEEN CANNOT BE RENDERED LITERALLY IN SOME LANGUAGES. TWO DIFFERENT WAYS THIS MAY BE HANDLED ARE “DON’T LET ANY GROUP OF ANIMALS TRAVEL CLOSE TO ANOTHER GROUP” AND “GO AHEAD OF ME, BUT NOT ALL TOGETHER; THE GOATS ARE TO GO FIRST, THEN THE SHEEP WILL WAIT FOR A WHILE AND THEN FOLLOW, AND THE THREE OTHER GROUPS ARE TO DO THE SAME.”**

**GENESIS 32:17: HE INSTRUCTED THE FOREMOST: FOREMOST REFERS TO THE SERVANT OR SERVANTS WHO ACCOMPANY THE FIRST HERD THAT WILL REACH ESAU. WE MAY TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “THEN JACOB SAID TO THE SERVANTS OF THE FIRST HERD” OR “… THE SERVANTS OF THE HERD THAT WENT FIRST.” WHEN ESAU, MY BROTHER: MY BROTHER MAY HAVE TO BE EXPRESSED BY THE TERM FOR “OLDER BROTHER” OR “OLDER TWIN.” MEETS YOU AND ASKS: IN SOME PARTS OF THE WORLD THE QUESTIONS ARE THOSE THAT ARE OBVIOUS, THE QUESTIONS THAT ARE ALWAYS ASKED. BUT IN OTHER PARTS THIS MAY NOT BE THE CASE; AND SO, SOME TRANSLATIONS FIND IT NECESSARY TO SAY “PERHAPS WHEN MY BROTHER MEETS YOU, HE WILL ASK.…” IN SOME PARTS OF THE WORLD ALSO, THE THREE QUESTIONS ARE NOT IN THE ORDER THAT PEOPLE REGULARLY FOLLOW; FOR INSTANCE, IT IS VERY COMMON FOR THE FIRST QUESTION THAT PEOPLE ASK WHEN THEY MEET EACH OTHER ON THE ROAD TO BE “WHERE ARE YOU GOING?” TRANSLATORS SHOULD BE READY TO CHANGE THE ORDER OF THE QUESTIONS HERE IN LINE WITH LOCAL CUSTOM. TO WHOM DO YOU BELONG? JACOB KNOWS THAT ESAU WILL RECOGNIZE THESE HERDSMEN BY THEIR APPEARANCE AND BY THEIR CONDUCT AS THE SLAVES OR SERVANTS OF SOME WEALTHY HERD OWNER. ACCORDINGLY, TEV GIVES A GOOD MODEL. WHERE ARE YOU GOING? THIS QUESTION WILL BE ANSWERED WHEN ESAU LEARNS THAT THE ANIMALS ARE A GIFT FOR HIM. WHOSE ARE THESE BEFORE YOU? THESE REFERS TO THE ANIMALS IN THE HERDS. BEFORE YOU PROBABLY REFERS TO THE HERDS BEING DRIVEN, AS IN VERSE 19. THIS QUESTION WILL GIVE THE SERVANTS AN OPPORTUNITY TO SAY THEY ARE A GIFT FOR ESAU FROM JACOB.**

**GENESIS 32:18: THIS PROVIDES THE SERVANTS WITH THE REPLIES THEY ARE TO GIVE ESAU. THEY BELONG TO YOUR SERVANT JACOB: YOUR SERVANT JACOB IS THE SAME AS USED IN THE FIRST MESSAGE TAKEN TO ESAU IN VERSE 4. THEY ARE A PRESENT SENT TO MY LORD ESAU: FOR PRESENT SEE THE TERM USED IN VERSE 13. MY LORD REPEATS WHAT WAS USED IN VERSE 5, AND CONTRASTS JACOB AS SERVANT WITH ESAU AS LORD. AND MOREOVER, HE IS BEHIND US: MOREOVER, TRANSLATES THE HEBREW HINNEH, USUALLY TRANSLATED “BEHOLD,” WHICH HERE INTRODUCES AN UNEXPECTED BIT OF NEWS FOR ESAU. IS BEHIND MUST OFTEN BE RENDERED “IS COMING BEHIND US” OR “IS ON HIS WAY HERE.”**

**GENESIS 32:19: HE LIKEWISE INSTRUCTED THE SECOND AND THIRD: JACOB GAVE THE SAME INSTRUCTIONS TO THE HERDSMEN LEADING THE SECOND AND THE THIRD HERDS. AND ALL WHO FOLLOWED THE DROVES: DOUBTLESS THIS CLAUSE REFERS TO HERDSMEN, AS THEY ARE INCLUDED WITH THOSE WHO RECEIVED THE INSTRUCTION CONCERNING WHAT IS TO BE SAID TO ESAU. VERSE 19 MAY THEN BE TRANSLATED, FOR EXAMPLE, “HE ALSO TOLD THE LEADERS OF THE SECOND AND THIRD HERDS AND ALL THE OTHER HERDSMEN.” YOU SHALL SAY THE SAME THING TO ESAU … HIM: SAME THING MEANS GIVE THE SAME REPLIES AS TOLD TO THE HERDSMEN OF THE FIRST HERD.**

**GENESIS 32:20: MOREOVER … BEHIND US: THIS REPEATS THE WORDS FROM VERSE 18, WITH YOUR SERVANT JACOB REPLACING “HE.” THE REPETITION IS A VERY IMPORTANT ELEMENT OF JACOB’S MESSAGE, AS INDICATED BY A HEBREW EXPRESSION THAT LITERALLY SAYS “ALSO BEHOLD,” WHICH RSV RENDERS AS MOREOVER. THE EMPHASIS IS BROUGHT OUT, FOR INSTANCE, IN SPEISER’S TRANSLATION, “AND BE SURE TO ADD, ‘YOUR SERVANT JACOB.…’” OTHER TRANSLATIONS SAY “DON’T FORGET TO TELL HIM, …” FOR HE THOUGHT: LITERALLY “FOR HE SAID.” SEE VERSE 8. I MAY APPEASE HIM WITH THE PRESENT THAT GOES BEFORE ME: APPEASE HIM TRANSLATES THE EXPRESSION MEANING TO “COVER HIS FACE” AND IS USED FIGURATIVELY TO MEAN “PACIFY,” “CALM,” “SOOTH ANGRY FEELINGS.” THE GIFTS ARE TO COVER ESAU’S FACE (PACIFY HIM) SO HE CANNOT SEE THE GUILT IN JACOB, THE WRONG THAT JACOB HAD DONE TO HIM IN STEALING HIS BLESSING. SPCL SAYS “I WILL CALM HIS ANGER,” TOB “I WILL SOFTEN HIS ANGER,” GECL “… PUT HIM IN A FAVORABLE MOOD.” SEE ALSO TEV “I WILL WIN HIM OVER.” MANY LANGUAGES HAVE IDIOMATIC WAYS OF REFERRING TO THE GIVING OF PRESENTS AND OTHER ACTIONS THAT ARE INTENDED TO INFLUENCE ANOTHER PERSON’S FEELINGS AND ATTITUDE; FOR EXAMPLE, “GREASE HIM UP,” “MAKE HIS THINKING SWEET,” “MAKE HIS INSIDES GOOD TOWARD ME.” I SHALL SEE HIS FACE MEANS “WHEN I SEE HIM” OR “WHEN WE MEET.” PERHAPS HE WILL ACCEPT ME: FOR THE FOURTH TIME IN THIS VERSE, THE HEBREW WORD FOR “FACE” IS USED. HERE AGAIN WE ARE DEALING WITH A FIGURATIVE EXPRESSION, WHICH IS LITERALLY “LIFT UP MY FACE.” IN 19:21 THIS IDIOM IS USED WITH THE MEANING “I WILL GRANT YOUR REQUEST,” OR “I WILL DO WHAT YOU ASK ME.” HOWEVER, IN THE PRESENT CONTEXT IT IS TO BE UNDERSTOOD AS “RECEIVE ME FAVORABLY,” “ACCEPT ME KINDLY,” “BE GOOD TO ME.” NOTE TEV “FORGIVE ME.” FRCL HAS “HE WILL GIVE ME A GOOD WELCOME,” AND OTHERS “HE MIGHT BE GLAD TO SEE ME.”**

**A RESTRUCTURING THAT GIVES A MORE NATURAL DISCOURSE SEQUENCE IN VERSES 14–20 IS AS FOLLOWS: 1. JACOB SEPARATED SOME ANIMALS TO GIVE AS A PRESENT … 2. HE SEPARATED TWO HUNDRED FEMALE GOATS AND TWENTY MALE GOATS INTO ONE FLOCK; 3. HE TOLD A WORKER TO TAKE THEM AHEAD TO ESAU; 4. HE INSTRUCTED THAT WORKER: “WHEN MY BROTHER ASKS YOU … YOU MUST SAY THAT THESE ANIMALS ARE A PRESENT.…” 5. AFTER THAT HE SEPARATED TWO HUNDRED FEMALE SHEEP AND TWENTY MALE SHEEP INTO ANOTHER FLOCK; 6. HE TOLD ANOTHER WORKER TO TAKE THEM SOME DISTANCE BEHIND THE FIRST FLOCK; 7. HE INSTRUCTED THAT WORKER TO SAY THE SAME AS HE HAD TOLD THE FIRST ONE; 8. HE SAID, “MAKE SURE THAT YOU TELL HIM THAT I, JACOB, AM COMING BEHIND.” 9. JACOB DID THE SAME WITH ALL THE OTHER ANIMALS: HE SEPARATED THIRTY FEMALE CAMELS WITH THEIR BABIES, FORTY COWS AND TEN BULLS, TWENTY FEMALE DONKEYS AND TEN MALE DONKEYS; AND HE SENT THEM AS A PRESENT.…**

**GENESIS 32:21: SO, THE PRESENT PASSED ON BEFORE HIM: THE PRESENT REFERS TO THE HERDS OF ANIMALS MOVING OUT IN ESAU’S DIRECTION. PASSED … HIM IS LITERALLY “PASSED OVER BEFORE HIS FACE.” THE HEBREW VERB IS THE SAME AS IN VERSE 16 AND MAY REFER TO CROSSING THE RIVER. NO DOUBT JACOB WATCHED AS THE HERDS MOVED OUT OF THE CAMP. WE MAY TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “FINALLY, THE HERDS LEFT THE CAMP.” HE HIMSELF LODGED THAT NIGHT IN THE CAMP: TO GIVE THE SLOW-MOVING HERDS A CHANCE TO GET WELL AHEAD, JACOB SPENDS THE NIGHT IN HIS CAMP.**

**JACOB WRESTLES WITH SOMEONE AT PENIEL (32:22–32) [32:23–33]**

**IN THE SECOND PART OF CHAPTER 32 JACOB SPENDS THE NIGHT IN A STRUGGLE WITH SOMEONE. AS A RESULT, JACOB IS GIVEN A NEW NAME. AFTER THE DEPARTURE OF THE HERDS, WHICH ARE A GIFT FOR ESAU, JACOB MOVES HIS FAMILY ACROSS THE JABBOK RIVER (VERSES 22–23). THEN JACOB AND A MAN WRESTLE WITH EACH OTHER THROUGHOUT THE NIGHT. IN THE STRUGGLE JACOB’S HIP IS PUT OUT OF JOINT. THE PERSON WISHES TO LEAVE BEFORE DAYLIGHT, BUT JACOB DEMANDS THAT HE BLESS HIM (VERSES 24–26). THE STRANGER ASKS JACOB HIS NAME AND TELLS HIM THAT HIS NAME WILL NOW BE “ISRAEL” (VERSES 27–28). JACOB CALLS THE NAME OF THE PLACE PENIEL (VERSES 29–30). IN THE MORNING JACOB GOES OFF LIMPING, AND THIS EPISODE CLOSES WITH AN EXPLANATION OF WHY THE ISRAELITES DO NOT EAT THE MUSCLE ON THE HIP JOINT (VERSES 31–32). FOR AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE DIRECTION OF JACOB’S MOVEMENTS UP TO THIS POINT OF THE STORY, TRANSLATORS SHOULD CONSULT A GOOD BIBLE ATLAS. WHILE THERE IS SOME UNCERTAINTY AND ARGUMENT ABOUT THIS, THE MOST DIRECT AND MOST PROBABLE ROUTE SHOWS JACOB TRAVELING FROM THE NORTH–EAST AND REACHING THE JABBOK ONLY AT THE PLACE WHERE THE EVENTS OF THIS CHAPTER HAPPEN. WITHOUT ANY CLEAR EVIDENCE TO THE CONTRARY, IT IS MOST LIKELY THAT JACOB AND HIS COMPANY APPROACHED THE JABBOK FROM THE NORTH AND WERE ON THE NORTH SIDE OF THE RIVER DURING THE EVENTS OF VERSES 3–21.**

**SUBDIVISION HEADING**

**THE HANDBOOK HEADING MAY BE CHANGED TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “JACOB IS NOW CALLED ISRAEL,” OR “JACOB AND A MAN STRUGGLE TOGETHER.” SPCL HAS “JACOB WRESTLES WITH AN ANGEL,” FRCL “JACOB STRUGGLES WITH GOD,” TOB “THE PASSAGE AT THE JABBOK,” AND TEV “JACOB WRESTLES AT PENIEL.”**

**GENESIS 32:22: THE SAME NIGHT REFERS TO THE NIGHT MENTIONED IN VERSE 21. IT IS THE NIGHT BEFORE JACOB’S MEETING WITH ESAU. SOME TRANSLATIONS SAY “IN THE COURSE OF THAT NIGHT.…” THE TIME IS ADEQUATELY EXPRESSED IN BOTH VERSES 21 AND 22 TO PROVIDE THE CONTINUATION OF THE STORY WITHOUT A BREAK. AROSE AND TOOK HIS TWO WIVES MAY MEAN THAT JACOB GOT UP (FROM SLEEPING) AND TOOK THEM. HOWEVER, THE CONSTRUCTION IS COMMONLY USED AS INITIATING AN ACTION: “JACOB TOOK HIS TWO WIVES AND.…” HIS TWO MAIDS: FOR MAIDS SEE 16:1. STRICTLY SPEAKING THESE WOMEN BELONG TO HIS WIVES. HOWEVER, HE HAS SOME CLAIM ON THEM AS THEY HAVE GIVEN BIRTH TO HIS CHILDREN. SOME TRANSLATIONS SAY “… TOOK HIS FOUR WIVES.” TEV HAS “HIS TWO CONCUBINES.” HIS ELEVEN CHILDREN: JACOB HAS ONLY ELEVEN SONS BECAUSE BENJAMIN HAS NOT YET BEEN BORN. HERE “SONS” IS MORE SUITABLE THAN CHILDREN. AND CROSSED: THIS SEEMS TO INDICATE THAT JACOB WENT ACROSS THE RIVER; BUT SEE COMMENTS ON VERSE 23. FORD OF THE JABBOK: A FORD IS A SHALLOW PLACE IN A RIVER OR STREAM WHERE PEOPLE AND ANIMALS CAN CROSS TO THE OTHER SIDE. THE JABBOK IS TODAY KNOWN IN ARABIC AS THE “WADI ZERGA.” IT FLOWS WESTWARD INTO THE JORDAN RIVER ABOUT FORTY KILOMETERS (TWENTY-FIVE MILES) NORTH OF THE DEAD SEA.**

**GENESIS 32:23: HE TOOK THEM AND SENT THEM ACROSS THE STREAM: THIS REPEATS WHAT WAS SAID IN VERSE 22, EXCEPT THAT THE VERB SENT HAS THE MEANING IN ENGLISH THAT JACOB HIMSELF DID NOT GO ACROSS. THE HEBREW VERB TRANSLATED SENT IS A CAUSATIVE FORM, “HE CAUSED THEM TO CROSS,” WHICH DOES NOT INDICATE WHETHER JACOB HIMSELF CROSSED OR NOT. THE MAJORITY OF TRANSLATIONS AGREE WITH RSV AND TEV, AND THIS INTERPRETATION IS RECOMMENDED TO TRANSLATORS. HOWEVER, SOME TRANSLATIONS HAVE “AFTER HE HAD TAKEN THEM ACROSS,” WHICH WOULD MEAN THAT JACOB DID GO ACROSS THE RIVER; AND THIS COULD ALSO BE UNDERSTOOD TO MEAN THAT HE RETURNED TO THE OTHER SIDE BEFORE HE SENT ACROSS EVERYTHING THAT HE HAD. ONE TRANSLATION, FOR EXAMPLE, TRANSLATES VERSE 23 AS “HE TOOK THEM TO THE OTHER SIDE OF THE RIVER, THEN HE WENT BACK AND TOLD HIS WORKERS TO TAKE ALL HIS POSSESSIONS ACROSS.” TEV RETAINS THE REPETITION OF THE VERB FROM VERSE 22 WITH “AFTER HE HAD SENT THEM ACROSS.…” FRCL GIVES ANOTHER MODEL. IT NUMBERS THIS VERSE TOGETHER WITH THE PREVIOUS VERSE AND DOES NOT REPEAT THE VERBS “TOOK” AND “CROSSED.” THUS AFTER “HIS ELEVEN CHILDREN” WE READ “HE MADE THEM CROSS THE FORD OF THE JABBOK WITH EVERYTHING HE POSSESSED.” AND LIKEWISE, EVERYTHING THAT HE HAD: THE HEBREW TEXT SAYS “WHAT BELONGED TO HIM,” WHICH HOTTP RATES AS {B}. “ALL THAT BELONGED TO HIM” IS FOUND IN ONE HEBREW MANUSCRIPT AND IN THE ANCIENT VERSIONS. HOTTP RECOMMENDS THE HEBREW TEXT, BUT MOST MODERN VERSIONS PREFER “ALL.…” THE DIFFERENCE IN MEANING IS NOT SIGNIFICANT, AND TRANSLATORS MAY FOLLOW EITHER FORM.**

**GENESIS 32:24: AND JACOB WAS LEFT ALONE: THE TEXT DOES NOT SAY WHICH SIDE OF THE JABBOK JACOB IS NOW ON. THIS WILL DEPEND ON THE UNDERSTANDING OF VERSES 22–23; THE INTERPRETATION RECOMMENDED HERE IS THAT JACOB DID NOT CROSS OVER THE JABBOK WITH HIS FAMILY AND POSSESSIONS, AND THAT HE WAS STILL ON THE NORTH SIDE OF THE RIVER. THE ALTERNATIVE INTERPRETATION THAT JACOB TOOK HIS FAMILY ACROSS AND THEN RETURNED TO SEND HIS POSSESSIONS ACROSS WOULD HAVE THE SAME RESULT. THE WORDS LEFT ALONE SEEM TO BE MORE APPROPRIATE TO A SITUATION WHERE JACOB WAS SEPARATED FROM HIS FAMILY BY THE RIVER. AND A MAN WRESTLED WITH HIM UNTIL THE BREAKING OF THE DAY: THIS SENTENCE IS ABRUPT. THERE IS NO TRANSITION TO BRING JACOB INTO CONTACT WITH THE STRANGER, WHOSE SUDDEN APPEARANCE MAY EXPLAIN WHY JACOB DID NOT CROSS THE RIVER AFTER THE REST OF HIS PARTY HAD GONE ACROSS. TEV AVOIDS THIS ABRUPTNESS BY PLACING THE FIRST SENTENCE OF THIS VERSE AS THE FINAL SENTENCE OF VERSE 23. IN A NEW PARAGRAPH TEV SAYS “THEN A MAN CAME AND.…” TRANSLATORS MAY FIND THAT THE ENCOUNTER BETWEEN JACOB AND THE STRANGER MUST BE PRESENTED IN SOME SUCH MANNER. IN SOME LANGUAGES A TRANSITIONAL EXPRESSION SUCH AS “DURING THE NIGHT …” MAY BE REQUIRED. THE SUDDEN APPEARANCE OF THE STRANGER IS BROUGHT OUT IN A NUMBER OF TRANSLATIONS THAT SAY “THEN A MAN APPEARED AND.…” A MAN TRANSLATES THE ORDINARY HEBREW WORD FOR A MAN IN CONTRAST WITH A WOMAN. ALTHOUGH JACOB CLEARLY UNDERSTANDS IN VERSE 30 THAT THIS PERSON IS SUPERNATURAL, THE TEXT AT THIS POINT CALLS HIM A MAN, NOT AN ANGEL OR GOD. WRESTLED: THE PARTICULAR HEBREW WORD IS USED ONLY HERE AND IN THE NEXT VERSE. IT IS RELATED TO A WORD FOR “DUST,” “GET DUSTY,” AS TWO PEOPLE DO WHEN WRESTLING ON THE GROUND. THERE IS A PLAY ON WORDS BETWEEN HE WRESTLED (YE’ABEQ), JABBOK (YABBOQ) AND JACOB (YÀAQOB). TWO MEN ENGAGED IN WRESTLING TRY TO THROW EACH OTHER TO THE GROUND. IN SOCIETIES WHERE SUCH CONTESTS ARE UNKNOWN, A DESCRIPTIVE PHRASE MUST BE USED; FOR EXAMPLE, “HE CAME AND STRUGGLED WITH JACOB” OR “HE AND JACOB TRIED TO PUSH EACH OTHER OVER.” IN SOME LANGUAGES CAME AND WRESTLED MAY NEED TO BE FILLED OUT; FOR EXAMPLE, “THEN A MAN CAME AND TOOK HOLD OF HIM, AND THEY-TWO WERE WRESTLING UNTIL NEARLY DAYBREAK.” UNTIL THE BREAKING OF THE DAY IS LITERALLY “UNTIL THE RISING OF THE DAWN.” THE EXPRESSION REFERS TO THE EARLY PERIOD OF DAWN, WHEN THE EASTERN SKY BEGINS TO BECOME LIGHT. THIS IS SOME TIME BEFORE THE SUN ACTUALLY RISES.**

**GENESIS 32:25: WHEN THE MAN SAW THAT HE DID NOT PREVAIL AGAINST JACOB: DID NOT PREVAIL MEANS THAT HE COULD NOT BEAT JACOB, COULD NOT THROW HIM DOWN. SEE TEV “HE WAS NOT WINNING.” JACOB’S OPPONENT WAS UNABLE TO DEFEAT HIM BY USING ORDINARY WRESTLING METHODS, AND, IN ORDER TO ESCAPE BEFORE DAWN, HE THREW JACOB’S HIP OUT OF JOINT. HE TOUCHED THE HOLLOW OF HIS THIGH: THE VERB RENDERED TOUCHED MAY ALSO MEAN TO STRIKE OR HIT. HOLLOW REFERS TO THE HIP SOCKET. THE BALL OF THE THIGH BONE FITS INTO THE HIP SOCKET. IT IS CLEARER TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “HE HIT HIM ON THE HIP.” SEE TEV. PUT OUT OF JOINT MEANS THE THIGH BONE WAS PULLED LOOSE FROM THE HIP SOCKET.**

**GENESIS 32:26: LET ME GO, FOR THE DAY IS BREAKING: THESE ARE THE WORDS OF JACOB’S OPPONENT. PRACTICALLY ALL TRANSLATIONS IN ENGLISH HAVE LET ME GO, BUT THIS CAN HAVE TWO POSSIBLE MEANINGS: (1) “ALLOW ME TO LEAVE,” AND (2) “RELEASE ME FROM YOUR GRIP.” BOTH THE FORM OF THE HEBREW VERB AND THE CONTEXT OF WRESTLING FAVOR THE SECOND AS THE INTENDED MEANING. DAY IS BREAKING IS BASED ON THE SAME EXPRESSION AS IN VERSE 24. THE EXPRESSION USED IN TRANSLATION SHOULD SHOW THAT DAYLIGHT OR DAWN IS OCCURRING. JACOB’S OPPONENT DOES NOT WANT TO BE SEEN. THIS REQUEST IS ENOUGH TO LET JACOB KNOW THAT HIS OPPONENT IS NO ORDINARY MAN. REALIZING HE IS WRESTLING WITH A GOD-LIKE PERSON, JACOB TIGHTENS HIS GRIP ON HIS OPPONENT. BUT JACOB SAID: THE HEBREW TEXT HAS “HE SAID,” BUT THE CONTEXT MAKES CLEAR THAT “HE” REFERS HERE TO JACOB. IN MANY LANGUAGES “REPLIED” MAY BE MORE APPROPRIATE THAN “SAID” IN THIS CONTEXT. I WILL NOT LET YOU GO, UNLESS …: SINCE THIS IS A STRONG NEGATIVE RESPONSE, IT IS APPROPRIATE IN SOME LANGUAGES TO BEGIN WITH “NO!” THE TRANSLATION OF UNLESS WILL ALSO REQUIRE A RESTRUCTURING OF THE SENTENCE IN SOME LANGUAGES; TWO EXAMPLES OF POSSIBLE TRANSLATIONS ARE “NO WAY! FIRST YOU GIVE ME A BLESSING, AND THEN I WILL LET YOU GO” AND “NO! YOU ARE A POWERFUL ONE! YOU MUST BLESS ME FIRST.” UNLESS YOU BLESS ME: BLESS IS THE SAME TERM USED IN 1:22; 2:3; 5:2, AND IN NUMEROUS OTHER PASSAGES IN GENESIS. SEE THE DISCUSSION OF BLESS IN 12:2. JACOB, WHO IS ALREADY A WEALTHY MAN (AND SO ALREADY GREATLY BLESSED), IS THREATENED BY ESAU. IT IS LIKELY THAT WHAT JACOB REQUESTS FOR A BLESSING AT THIS POINT IS TO HAVE GOOD FORTUNE IN HIS ENCOUNTER WITH HIS ANGRY BROTHER. ACCORDINGLY, IF A FULLER EXPRESSION IS REQUIRED, BLESS IN THIS CONTEXT MAY BE EXPRESSED AS “GIVE ME GOOD FORTUNE IN WHAT I MUST DO.” IN A MORE GENERAL SENSE WE MAY SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “SPEAK WORDS OF HELP FOR ME.” THIS MAY BE EXPRESSED IDIOMATICALLY IN SOME LANGUAGES; FOR EXAMPLE, “PLACE NOTHING BUT GOODNESS UPON MY HEAD.”**

**GENESIS 32:27: SAID TO HIM MUST OFTEN BE EXPRESSED AS “ASKED JACOB.” WHAT IS YOUR NAME? THE CONTRAST BETWEEN THIS STRAIGHTFORWARD QUESTION AND THAT USED BY JACOB IN VERSE 29 SHOWS THAT JACOB’S STATUS IS INFERIOR TO THAT OF HIS OPPONENT. “JACOB”: IT SHOULD BE REMEMBERED THAT THE NAME JACOB SOUNDS LIKE THE HEBREW WORD FOR “CHEAT.” SEE 27:36. JACOB’S REPLY TO THE QUESTION MAY NEED TO BE ANSWERED IN A STYLE THAT IS BOTH NATURAL IN THE LANGUAGE AND SUITABLE FOR THE SITUATION. THAT SITUATION IS THAT JACOB HAS REALIZED THAT HE IS DEALING WITH A SUPERIOR BEING; BUT AT THE SAME TIME, HE IS STILL HOLDING THAT PERSON IN HIS GRIP. IN SOME LANGUAGES THE BARE NAME JACOB MAY BE UNNATURAL OR IMPOLITE, SO THE STYLE OF JACOB’S REPLY MAY BE “THEY CALL ME JACOB,” “I AM JACOB, SIR [GREAT ONE],” OR “I AM YOUR SERVANT JACOB.”**

**GENESIS 32:28: THE BLESSING JACOB RECEIVES IS IN HAVING HIS NAME CHANGED. THEN HE SAID: HE REFERS TO JACOB’S OPPONENT AND MAY NEED TO BE TRANSLATED AS A NOUN TO AVOID CONFUSION. SEE TEV. YOUR NAME SHALL NO MORE BE CALLED JACOB, BUT ISRAEL: THIS MAY NEED TO BE RENDERED, FOR EXAMPLE, “THEY WILL NO LONGER CALL YOU JACOB; THEY WILL NOW CALL YOU ISRAEL.” THE REASON FOR GIVING JACOB A NEW NAME FOLLOWS. NOTE, HOWEVER, THAT TEV HAS PLACED THE EXPLANATION BEFORE THE NAME ISRAEL. SOME TRANSLATORS MAY FIND THIS ARRANGEMENT HELPFUL AND MORE NATURAL. AND SOME MAY ALSO FIND IT APPROPRIATE TO CONTRAST THE TWO NAMES BY SAYING, FOR EXAMPLE, “YOUR NEW NAME WILL BE ISRAEL,” OR “BECAUSE OF THAT, GOD IS GIVING YOU A DIFFERENT NAME. PEOPLE WILL CALL YOUR NAME ISRAEL.” NOTE THAT BOTH RSV AND TEV HAVE FOOTNOTES TO EXPLAIN THE MEANING OF THE NAME ISRAEL. FOR YOU HAVE STRIVEN WITH GOD: THIS SENTENCE EXPLAINS WHY JACOB’S NAME IS TO BE CHANGED TO ISRAEL. IN THE HEBREW YOU HAVE STRIVEN (STRUGGLED) IS SARITA, AND THE FIRST PART OF THIS HEBREW VERB IS LINKED IN SOUND TO ISRA IN “ISRA-EL.” GOD IS ’ELOHIM AND THE ’EL FORMS THE SECOND PART OF “ISRA-EL.” STRIVEN (STRUGGLED) DOES NOT TRANSLATE THE WORD FOR “WRESTLED” USED IN VERSE 24. HERE THE WORD IS MORE GENERAL AND MEANS TO “CONTEND,” “STRUGGLE,” “CONTEST WITH.” AND WITH MEN: MEN DOES NOT MEAN MALE HUMAN BEINGS BUT RATHER “PEOPLE,” “HUMAN BEINGS.” SPEISER TRANSLATES “YOU HAVE STRIVEN WITH BEINGS, DIVINE AND HUMAN.” REB HAS REVISED NEB’S “MEN” TO “MORTALS”; AND NRSV HAS CHANGED RSV “MEN” TO “HUMANS” AND GIVES A FOOTNOTE THAT IS EQUIVALENT TO SPEISER’S TEXT. AND HAVE PREVAILED: PREVAILED TRANSLATES THE SAME VERB USED BY RACHEL WHEN SHE GAVE BIRTH TO HER CHILD NAPHTALI. SEE 30:8. IT MEANS TO BE THE VICTOR OR WINNER IN A CONTEST. JACOB HAS STRUGGLED WITH ESAU AND WITH LABAN, AND HAS JUST WRESTLED SUCCESSFULLY WITH A DIVINE BEING. IN SOME LANGUAGES TO WIN A PHYSICAL CONTEST IS EXPRESSED AS “YOU WERE THE STRONGER” OR “YOUR STRENGTH SURPASSED MY STRENGTH.”**

**GENESIS 32:29: THEN JACOB ASKED HIM: ASKED MAY NOT BE SUITABLE IN SOME LANGUAGES HERE BECAUSE WHAT FOLLOWS IS NOT A QUESTION. TELL ME, I PRAY, YOUR NAME: TO POSSESS THE NAME OF SOMEONE IS TO HAVE SOME DEGREE OF CONTROL OVER THAT PERSON. THE FORM OF JACOB’S QUESTION IS QUITE DIFFERENT FROM THE SAME QUESTION ASKED BY HIS OPPONENT IN VERSE 27. HERE THE VERB SUGGESTS TELLING IN THE SENSE OF REVEALING, OR MAKING SOMETHING KNOWN. THE REQUEST IS ADDRESSED TO A SUPERIOR AND SO HAS THE PARTICLE OF ENTREATY EQUIVALENT TO “PLEASE,” “I BEG YOU.” SOME TRANSLATIONS EXPRESS JACOB’S REQUEST IN INDIRECT SPEECH: “THEN HE ASKED THAT MAN TO DECLARE HIS NAME.” BUT HE SAID: BOTH RSV AND TEV TRANSLATE THE COMMON HEBREW CONNECTIVE AS BUT, TO CONTRAST THE MAN’S REPLY WITH JACOB’S REQUEST. “ANSWERED” OR “REPLIED” MAY BE MORE APPROPRIATE IN SOME LANGUAGES THAN “SAID.” WHY IS IT THAT YOU ASK MY NAME? HE DOES NOT GIVE HIS NAME BUT RATHER ANSWERS WITH HIS OWN QUESTION. SEE TEV. THERE ARE TWO WAYS TO UNDERSTAND THIS QUESTION: AS A TRUE QUESTION OR AS A RHETORICAL QUESTION. IF JACOB TOOK IT FOR A QUESTION TO BE ANSWERED, HE DID NOT GIVE A REPLY. THEREFORE, THERE IS REASON TO BELIEVE THAT THE QUESTION IS A WAY OF SAYING “YOU SHOULD NOT ASK MY NAME.” FOR A SIMILAR ASKING FOR THE NAME OF AN ANGEL, SEE JUDGES 13:17–18. MOST MODERN TRANSLATIONS ACCEPT THE QUESTION AS A REQUEST FOR INFORMATION. HOWEVER, NJV AND SPEISER TAKE THE QUESTION AS RHETORICAL AND TRANSLATE “YOU MUST NOT ASK MY NAME.” MFT, ON THE OTHER HAND, KEEPS THE QUESTION BUT GIVES IT A RHETORICAL SENSE, “WHY ASK MY NAME?” WHICH MAY BE TAKEN TO MEAN “IT WILL DO YOU NO GOOD TO ASK MY NAME?” THE RHETORICAL QUESTION SEEMS TO FIT THE CONTEXT BETTER AND IS RECOMMENDED TO TRANSLATORS. WHETHER A QUESTION OR A STATEMENT IS USED TO RENDER IT WILL DEPEND ON WHICH IS MORE NATURAL IN THE TRANSLATOR’S OWN LANGUAGE. AND THERE HE [THE STRANGER] BLESSED HIM [JACOB]: BLESSED IN THE SENSE OF GIVING A BLESSING IS THE INTERPRETATION FOLLOWED BY MANY MODERN TRANSLATIONS. HOWEVER, THE BLESSING THAT JACOB DEMANDED IN VERSE 27 WAS GRANTED WHEN HIS NAME WAS CHANGED TO ISRAEL. THEREFORE, BLESSED HIM IN THIS VERSE VERY LIKELY IS USED AS IT WAS IN 31:55, WHEN LABAN BLESSED HIS DAUGHTERS AND GRANDCHILDREN; NAMELY, HE TOLD THEM GOOD-BYE. THIS IS THE WAY NAB, NJV, AND SPEISER UNDERSTAND BLESSED HIM IN THIS CONTEXT. IF THE TRANSLATOR ACCEPTS THIS MEANING, WE MAY TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “THEN AND THERE HE SAID GOOD-BYE TO JACOB” OR “RIGHT THERE HE TOOK LEAVE OF JACOB.”**

**GENESIS 32:30: SO, JACOB CALLED THE NAME OF THE PLACE PENIEL: NOTE HERE AGAIN THAT TEV, AS IN VERSE 28, GIVES THE REASON FOR THE NAME BEFORE THE NAME ITSELF. TRANSLATORS MAY FIND TEV A GOOD MODEL. THE EXPLANATION FOR THE NAME PENIEL IS FOR I HAVE SEEN GOD FACE TO FACE. FACE TRANSLATES THE HEBREW WORD PENI, WHICH IS FOLLOWED BY ONE OF THE GENERAL WORDS FOR GOD, ’EL, AND THE RESULT IS PENIEL. FACE TO FACE TRANSLATES THE HEBREW “FACES TO FACES,” MEANING TWO PEOPLE LOOKING DIRECTLY AT EACH OTHER WHILE UP CLOSE. SOME LANGUAGES USE OTHER EXPRESSIONS FOR THIS; FOR EXAMPLE, “EYE TO EYE,” “NOSE TO NOSE,” AND “BREATHING ON EACH OTHER.” WE MAY ALSO SAY, AS DOES GECL, “I HAVE SEEN GOD.” YET MY LIFE IS PRESERVED: IN SPITE OF MOSES’ DESIRE TO SEE GOD’S GLORY, HE WAS TOLD BY GOD “YOU CANNOT SEE MY FACE; FOR MAN SHALL NOT SEE ME AND LIVE” (EXO 33:20. SEE ALSO JUDGES 13:22). IF A VERB LIKE “SPARED” IS USED, IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO SHIFT TO THE ACTIVE AND SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “HE HAS SPARED MY LIFE” OR “HE HAS NOT LET ME DIE.” MANY TRANSLATIONS, HOWEVER, SAY SIMPLY “I HAVE SEEN GOD … AND I’M STILL ALIVE” OR “I HAVE SEEN THE FACE OF GOD, AND I DIDN’T DIE.”**

**GENESIS 32:31: THE SUN ROSE UPON HIM: THAT IS, “THE SUN WAS RISING” OR “THE SUN WAS COMING UP.” FOR REASONS OF STYLE THIS CLAUSE MAY BE BETTER PLACED AFTER THE CLAUSE CONTAINING THE VERB PASSED. AS HE PASSED PENUEL: PASSED MAY MEAN “PASSED THROUGH,” “PASSED BY,” OR “CROSSED OVER.” THE HEBREW VERB IS THE SAME AS WAS USED FOR CROSSING THE FORD OF THE JABBOK STREAM IN VERSE 22. IT MAY MEAN THAT JACOB NOW CROSSED THE FORD TO JOIN HIS FAMILY AND GO IN THE DIRECTION FROM WHICH HE EXPECTED ESAU; SEE COMMENTS ON VERSES 22 AND 23. HOWEVER, NO MAJOR ENGLISH TRANSLATION TRANSLATES THE VERB AS “CROSSED OVER.” IN OTHER LANGUAGES MANY TRANSLATIONS DO THE SAME AS TEV: “THE SUN ROSE AS JACOB WAS LEAVING PENIEL.” IN THE HEBREW PENUEL IS SPELLED DIFFERENTLY THAN IN VERSE 30. THIS IS THE SPELLING FOUND IN SUCH PASSAGES AS JUDGES 8:8 AND 9; 1 KGS 12:25. SOME TRANSLATIONS KEEP THE TWO SPELLINGS IN VERSES 30 AND 31, AND SOME USE ONLY ONE SPELLING IN BOTH PLACES. BECAUSE BOTH REFER TO THE SAME PLACE AND OCCUR CLOSE TOGETHER IN THE TEXT, THE HANDBOOK RECOMMENDS USING ONE SPELLING. THE QUESTION THEN IS, WHICH SPELLING? THE SPELLING USED IN VERSE 31 OCCURS EIGHT TIMES IN THE OLD TESTAMENT, WHEREAS THAT IN VERSE 30 IS USED ONLY ONCE. IT IS RECOMMENDED, THEREFORE, THAT PENUEL BE THE FORM USED IN BOTH VERSES 30 AND 31. LIMPING BECAUSE OF HIS THIGH: BECAUSE OF MAY NEED TO BE RENDERED SO THAT THE REASON IS MORE CONCRETE. FOR EXAMPLE, “JACOB WAS LIMPING BECAUSE HIS HIP WAS INJURED” OR “THE OPPONENT HAD INJURED JACOB’S HIP, AND HE WAS LIMPING AS HE WALKED.”**

**GENESIS 32:32: VERSE 32 IS GIVEN TO EXPLAIN THE ORIGIN OF A DIETARY TABOO. NOTHING IS SAID IN ANY OTHER PART OF THE OLD TESTAMENT ABOUT ABSTAINING FROM EATING THIS PART OF AN ANIMAL. IT IS, HOWEVER, PROHIBITED IN THE MISHNA, WHICH IS A COLLECTION OF JEWISH LAWS WRITTEN IN THE EARLY CHRISTIAN ERA; AND THIS MAY REFLECT A MUCH MORE ANCIENT TRADITION. THEREFORE, TO THIS DAY MAKES IT CLEAR THAT THIS COMMENT COMES FROM A MUCH LATER PERIOD THAN THAT OF THE PATRIARCHS. THIS INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT MAY ALSO BE RENDERED, FOR EXAMPLE, “STILL TODAY,” “EVEN TODAY,” OR “RIGHT UP TO THIS DAY.” THE ISRAELITES DO NOT EAT THE SINEW OF THE HIP WHICH IS UPON THE HOLLOW OF THE THIGH: SINEW OF THE HIP TRANSLATES A HEBREW EXPRESSION THAT IS USED ONLY HERE. PART OF THE EXPRESSION REFERS TO THE SINEW (OR TENDON). THESE ARE TOUGH WHITE BANDS OF CONNECTIVE TISSUE THAT ATTACH THE MUSCLE, IN THIS INSTANCE, TO THE HIP JOINT. TRANSLATIONS VARY CONSIDERABLY IN THE WAY THEY EXPRESS THIS. NEB HAS “SINEW OF THE NERVE THAT RUNS IN THE HOLLOW OF THE THIGH,” REB “SINEW THAT IS ON THE HOLLOW OF THE THIGH,” SPCL “THE TENDON THAT IS IN THE HIP JOINT,” FRCL “THE THIGH MUSCLE THAT IS IN THE HIP JOINT.” NOTE ALSO TEV. BECAUSE HE TOUCHED THE HOLLOW OF JACOB’S THIGH ON THE SINEW OF THE HIP: TOUCHED IS AS IN VERSE 25. SEE THERE FOR TRANSLATION. MOST TRANSLATIONS DO NOT NEED TO REPEAT THE DETAILED STATEMENT OF WHAT WAS STRUCK. NOTE TEV “ON THIS MUSCLE,” AND REB “ON THAT SINEW.”**

**JACOB AND HIS FAMILY MEET ESAU AND GO TO SHECHEM (33:1–20)**

**CHAPTER 33 CONTINUES THE EVENTS OF CHAPTER 32 WITHOUT INTERRUPTION. WHEN JACOB SEES ESAU COMING, HE ARRANGES HIS FAMILY SO THAT THE SERVANT WIVES AND THEIR CHILDREN ARE IN THE FRONT, FOLLOWED BY LEAH AND HER CHILDREN AND FINALLY JOSEPH AND HIS MOTHER RACHEL. JACOB THEN BOWS SEVEN TIMES AS HE GOES OUT TO MEET ESAU (VERSES 1–3). INSTEAD OF ATTACKING, ESAU EMOTIONALLY EMBRACES JACOB. JACOB’S FAMILY COMES FORWARD IN THE ORDER JACOB HAD ARRANGED THEM, AND THEY BOW DOWN TO ESAU (VERSES 4–7). ESAU INQUIRES ABOUT THE HERDS SENT TO HIM BY JACOB, WHO EXPLAINS THEY WERE SENT TO WIN ESAU’S FRIENDSHIP. WHEN ESAU REFUSES TO ACCEPT JACOB’S GIFT, JACOB URGES HIM UNTIL ESAU TAKES THEM (VERSES 33:8–11). AS THEY PREPARE TO MOVE ON, JACOB EXPLAINS WHY HE MUST MOVE SLOWLY WITH HIS HERDS AND FAMILY, AND ENCOURAGES ESAU NOT TO WAIT FOR THEM (VERSES 12–14). ESAU OFFERS TO LEAVE SOME OF HIS MEN WITH JACOB, BUT JACOB REFUSES; AND SO, ESAU RETURNS TO SEIR, BUT JACOB GOES TO SUCCOTH (VERSE 15–17). FINALLY, JACOB ARRIVES SAFELY IN SHECHEM, WHERE HE BUYS LAND FOR HIS CAMP AND BUILDS AN ALTAR (VERSES 18–20).**

**SUBDIVISION HEADING**

**THE HANDBOOK PLACES ONLY ONE HEADING IN CHAPTER 33. HOWEVER, SOME TRANSLATORS MAY WISH TO USE TWO. FOR EXAMPLE, VERSES 12–20 MAY BE PLACED UNDER A SEPARATE HEADING SUCH AS “JACOB GOES TO SHECHEM” OR “JACOB AND ESAU GO THEIR SEPARATE WAYS.” NJB HAS “JACOB PARTS COMPANY WITH ESAU.” MOST MODERN TRANSLATIONS USE ONLY ONE HEADING. SPCL HAS “JACOB AND ESAU ARE RECONCILED.” MOST ARE SIMILAR TO TEV.**

**GENESIS 33:1: CHAPTER 32 ENDED WITH AN EXPLANATION OF A DIETARY TABOO. IN 32:31 JACOB WAS LIMPING AWAY FROM THE FORD AT THE JABBOK RIVER. AT THE BEGINNING OF CHAPTER 33 OUR ATTENTION IS STILL ON JACOB, WHO NOW SEES ESAU APPROACHING. IN ORDER TO PICK UP THE THREAD OF THE STORY FROM 32:31, IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO OPEN CHAPTER 33 BY SAYING, FOR EXAMPLE, “AS JACOB WAS GOING OUT …” OR “WHEN JACOB WAS LEAVING THAT PLACE.…” AND JACOB LIFTED UP HIS EYES AND LOOKED: FOR LIFTED UP HIS EYES SEE 18:2. AND BEHOLD ESAU WAS COMING: BEHOLD SIGNALS HERE SOMETHING OF SURPRISE, OR THAT SOMETHING WAS NOTICED. NO DOUBT JACOB EXPECTED TO MEET ESAU IN THE OPEN COUNTRY AND NOT SO CLOSE TO HIS CAMP. THE ELEMENT OF SURPRISE IS WELL BROUGHT OUT IN NIV “JACOB LOOKED UP AND THERE WAS ESAU, COMING WITH.…” IT IS POSSIBLE TO TREAT THE FIRST PART OF THIS VERSE AS A TIME CLAUSE; FOR EXAMPLE, “WHEN JACOB SAW ESAU COMING … HE DIVIDED.…” SO HE DIVIDED THE CHILDREN AMONG LEAH AND RACHEL AND THE TWO MAIDS: WORDS FOR DIVIDE IN SOME LANGUAGES MAY MEAN THAT JACOB DIVIDED THE CHILDREN SO THAT EACH MOTHER WOULD HAVE AN EQUAL NUMBER; BUT THIS IS NOT THE SENSE HERE. WHAT JACOB DID WAS TO ASSIGN EACH CHILD TO ACCOMPANY ITS OWN MOTHER, AS THE NEXT VERSE MAKES CLEAR. WE MAY TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “HE PLACED THE CHILDREN WITH THEIR MOTHERS, WHO WERE LEAH, RACHEL, AND THE TWO SERVANT MOTHERS” OR “HE DIVIDED THE CHILDREN INTO THREE GROUPS WITH THEIR OWN MOTHERS.” TAKING THIS CLAUSE WITH THE NEXT VERSE, SOME TRANSLATIONS SAY “HE TOLD THE CHILDREN TO STAND WITH THEIR MOTHERS; THEN HE TOLD THE TWO SERVANT WOMEN TO GO FIRST WITH THEIR CHILDREN.…” TEV CALLS THE TWO MAIDS “CONCUBINES.” FOR A DISCUSSION OF THIS TERM, SEE 22:24.**

**GENESIS 33:2: THERE ARE TWO VIEWS REGARDING JACOB’S REASON FOR ARRANGING HIS FAMILY AS DESCRIBED. VON RAD THINKS THAT JACOB MAY BE PREPARING FOR AN ATTACK AND SO EXPOSES THE MAIDS AND THEIR CHILDREN FIRST, AND RACHEL AND JOSEPH LAST. IT IS DIFFICULT TO ACCEPT THIS VIEW, SIMPLY BECAUSE FOUR WOMEN AND ELEVEN CHILDREN IN ANY ARRANGEMENT WOULD BE TOTALLY DEFENSELESS AGAINST FOUR HUNDRED MEN. THEREFORE, THE MORE REASONABLE UNDERSTANDING IS THAT OF WESTERMANN, NAMELY, THAT THIS FAMILY ARRANGEMENT “HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH PROTECTIVE MEASURES.… THE DIVISION INTO THREE GROUPS (VV. 1B–2) CORRESPONDS TO THE ORDER OF RANK, AS IN THE COURT CEREMONIAL.…” THE FIRST TO PLACE THEMSELVES IN SUBMISSION TO ESAU WILL BE THE SERVANTS, AND THE LAST TO DO SO WILL BE JACOB’S FAVORITE WIFE, RACHEL. AND HE PUT THE MAIDS WITH THEIR CHILDREN IN FRONT: EACH OF THESE WOMEN HAD TWO CHILDREN (SEE CHAPTERS 29–30). THEN LEAH WITH HER CHILDREN: BEHIND THE MAIDS COMES LEAH, WHO HAS SIX SONS AND ONE DAUGHTER. AND RACHEL AND JOSEPH LAST OF ALL: RACHEL HAS ONLY ONE SON. THERE IS NOTHING TO SUGGEST THAT THESE THREE GROUPS WERE SPACED OUT AS WERE THE GIFT HERDS IN 32:16. ACCORDINGLY WE MAY PICTURE THEM AS FOUR WOMEN AND THEIR CHILDREN ARRANGED IN THE ORDER DESCRIBED AND WALKING CLOSELY TOGETHER. ONE TRANSLATION THAT GIVES THIS KIND OF PICTURE SAYS “HE MADE THEM ALL LINE UP, WITH THE TWO SERVANT WOMEN AND THEIR CHILDREN FIRST, THEN LEAH WITH HER CHILDREN NEXT.…”**

**GENESIS 33:3: HE HIMSELF WENT ON BEFORE THEM: HE MAY NEED TO BE TRANSLATED AS “JACOB.” HE WENT “AHEAD OF THEM,” OR “IN FRONT OF THEM.” SOME TRANSLATIONS INCLUDE A REFERENCE TO THE DIRECTION OF MOVEMENT HERE: “HE WENT AHEAD OF THEM TOWARD HIS BROTHER” OR “… TO MEET HIS BROTHER.” IN SOME LANGUAGES IT IS MORE NATURAL TO MENTION JACOB HIMSELF BEFORE THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN, SEEING THAT HE WAS WALKING IN FRONT. A TRANSLATION THAT FOLLOWS THIS ORDER (AND TAKES VERSES 2–3 TOGETHER) SAYS “JACOB WENT AHEAD OF THEM, AND THOSE TWO OTHER WIVES CAME BEHIND WITH THEIR CHILDREN. JACOB’S WIFE LEAH CAME BEHIND THEM WITH HER CHILDREN, AND JACOB’S OTHER WIFE RACHEL CAME LAST WITH HER SON JOSEPH.” BOWING HIMSELF TO THE GROUND SEVEN TIMES: ACCORDING TO THE TELL EL-AMARNA TABLETS (GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS SENT FROM SYRIA AND PALESTINE TO EGYPT SOME THIRTEEN CENTURIES BEFORE CHRIST), LOCAL CHIEFS WERE REQUIRED TO BOW SEVEN TIMES BEFORE THE KINGS OF EGYPT. FOR BOWING SEE 23:12. IN MANY LANGUAGES BOWING MUST BE DESCRIBED AS TWO ACTIONS: KNEELING AND PUTTING THE FACE OR FOREHEAD ON THE GROUND. THIS CAN MAKE THE VERSE A VERY HEAVY AND LONG SENTENCE, AND IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO DIVIDE IT INTO TWO OR MORE SENTENCES: “JACOB HIMSELF WENT AHEAD OF HIS FAMILY. HE KNELT AND PUT HIS FACE DOWN ON THE GROUND. HE DID THIS SEVEN TIMES UNTIL.…” UNTIL HE CAME NEAR TO HIS BROTHER: JACOB IS PICTURED AS STOPPING TO BOW BY KNEELING AND PLACING HIS FOREHEAD ON THE GROUND THEN GETTING TO HIS FEET AND GOING ON BEFORE STOPPING TO BOW AGAIN. BY THE TIME HE HAS REPEATED THIS GESTURE OF SUBMISSION SEVEN TIMES, THE TWO MEN ARE NOT FAR APART. SOME VERSIONS TRANSLATE CAME NEAR AS MEANING THAT JACOB CAME RIGHT UP TO ESAU; FOR EXAMPLE, “UNTIL HE REACHED HIS BROTHER” (NJB). BUT THIS RENDERING MAY CAUSE A PROBLEM IN THE TRANSLATION OF THE NEXT VERSE, WHICH PICTURES ESAU RUNNING TOWARD JACOB. A TRANSLATION LIKE THAT OF TEV AND NIV, “AS HE APPROACHED HIS BROTHER,” AVOIDS THE PROBLEM.**

**GENESIS 33:4: BUT ESAU RAN TO MEET HIM: RSV AND TEV RENDER THE COMMON HEBREW CONNECTIVE AS BUT, WHICH IS TO MARK IN ENGLISH THE CONTRAST BETWEEN JACOB’S CEREMONIAL SUBMISSION AND ESAU’S FRIENDLY AND INFORMAL RESPONSE. TRANSLATORS SHOULD TRY TO HAVE IN MIND THE FULL PICTURE OF THE MOVEMENTS AND ACTIONS OF THE TWO BROTHERS IN VERSES 3–4, WHETHER THEY NEED TO PUT MORE DETAIL INTO THEIR TRANSLATION OR NOT. FOR INSTANCE, WE MAY SUPPOSE THAT JACOB DID NOT BEGIN BOWING UNTIL HE WAS REASONABLY CLOSE TO ESAU; AND WE MAY SUPPOSE THAT ESAU WAS WALKING AHEAD OF HIS MEN, AND BEGAN RUNNING TOWARD JACOB BEFORE JACOB HAD FINISHED MAKING HIS SEVEN BOWS. IT ALSO SEEMS FROM THIS VERSE THAT IT WAS ESAU WHO CAME UP TO JACOB, RATHER THAN THE OTHER WAY-ROUND TO FINALLY BRING THE TWO TOGETHER. EMBRACED HIM, AND FELL ON HIS NECK AND KISSED HIM: INSTEAD OF ATTACKING HIM, ESAU SURPRISES JACOB BY HIS SHOW OF AFFECTION. FOR EMBRACED AND KISSED SEE THE CASE OF LABAN GREETING JACOB IN 29:13. FELL ON HIS NECK DESCRIBES WHAT ESAU DID AFTER EMBRACING JACOB: HE THREW HIS ARMS AROUND JACOB’S NECK AND KISSED HIM. IN SOME CULTURES, THIS GREETING SCENE BETWEEN TWO MEN MAY SEEM STRANGE AND REPULSIVE. SEE THE COMMENT ON 27:26. IN SOME LANGUAGES IT WILL BE ADEQUATE TO SAY “HE HUGGED HIM AND KISSED HIM” OR “HE PUT HIS ARMS AROUND JACOB TO SHOW HE ACCEPTED HIM, AND THEN KISSED HIS CHEEKS.” FOR KISSED SEE 27:26. AND THEY WEPT: SOME TRANSLATIONS CHANGE THE TEXT TO “HE WEPT.” HOWEVER, THE HEBREW TEXT HAS THE PLURAL AND IS RECOMMENDED TO TRANSLATORS. SOME TRANSLATIONS SAY “THEY-TWO CRIED TOGETHER.” IT MAY STRIKE READERS IN SOME LANGUAGES AS STRANGE THAT THESE DESERT-HARDENED MEN SHOULD CRY INSTEAD OF DANCING OR SHAKING THEIR SPEARS. IN SUCH CASES IT MAY BE HELPFUL TO GIVE THE PURPOSE OF THEIR WEEPING, AS GECL DOES, “BOTH CRIED FOR JOY.” ALTHOUGH NOTHING IS SAID ABOUT JACOB’S DECEPTION OF MANY YEARS BEFORE, THAT HAS BEEN SILENTLY SETTLED IN THE WORDLESS RECONCILIATION THROUGH THE HUGS AND TEARS.**

**GENESIS 33:5: AND WHEN ESAU RAISED HIS EYES: THAT IS, “WHEN ESAU LOOKED AROUND” OR “WHEN ESAU LOOKED UP.” WHO ARE THESE WITH YOU? ESAU’S QUESTION INQUIRES ABOUT THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN TO JACOB, NOT ABOUT THEIR INDIVIDUAL NAMES AND IDENTITIES. IN SOME LANGUAGES THIS FORM OF THE QUESTION MAY ONLY MEAN “WHAT ARE THEIR NAMES?” OR “WHERE ARE THEY FROM?” IF THIS IS THE CASE, IT WILL BE BETTER TO TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “ARE THESE WOMEN AND CHILDREN YOURS?” OR “DO THESE WOMEN AND CHILDREN BELONG TO YOU?” THE CHILDREN WHOM GOD HAS GRACIOUSLY GIVEN YOUR SERVANT: JACOB ACKNOWLEDGES THE CHILDREN AS BEING GIVEN TO HIM BY GOD. GRACIOUSLY GIVEN TRANSLATES A VERB MEANING TO “BE GRACIOUS,” “SHOW FAVOR,” “BE KIND TO,” AND IN THIS CONTEXT THE IDEA OF GIVEN IS IMPLIED IN THE HEBREW. SEE TEV. FOR YOUR SERVANT SEE COMMENTS ON 32:4. JACOB’S RESPONSE IS BOTH A REPLY TO ESAU’S QUESTION AND AN INTRODUCTION, A CLUE TO THE SERVANT WIVES TO COME FORWARD WITH THEIR CHILDREN AND BOW DOWN TO ESAU. ESAU WILL NOW SEE WHICH CHILDREN BELONG TO EACH MOTHER AS THEY COME FORWARD TO PAY HIM THEIR RESPECT.**

**GENESIS 33:6: THEN THE MAIDS DREW NEAR, THEY AND THEIR CHILDREN: RSV FOLLOWS THE HEBREW WORD ORDER. SEE TEV FOR A MORE NATURAL STATEMENT IN ENGLISH. FOR “CONCUBINES” SEE VERSE 1. BOWED DOWN TRANSLATES THE SAME VERB AS USED FOR JACOB’S SEVEN BOWS AND MEANS THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN KNELT AND PLACED THEIR FOREHEADS TO THE GROUND.**

**GENESIS 33:7: LEAH LIKEWISE AND HER CHILDREN DREW NEAR AND BOWED DOWN: LEAH AND HER CHILDREN ARE THE NEXT GROUP TO COME FORWARD AND BOW. AND LAST JOSEPH AND RACHEL … BOWED DOWN: JOSEPH IS THE ONLY CHILD NAMED IN THE THREE GROUPS AND IS MENTIONED HERE BEFORE HIS MOTHER, NO DOUBT BECAUSE OF THE PROMINENT ROLE OF JOSEPH IN THE BOOK OF GENESIS. IN SOME LANGUAGES IT IS NOT NATURAL TO NAME A YOUNG CHILD BEFORE THE CHILD’S MOTHER, SO THE ORDER MAY NEED TO BE REVERSED: “… AND BEHIND, RACHEL AND JOSEPH.”**

**GENESIS 33:8: ESAU SAID: WITHOUT COMMENTING ON JACOB’S FAMILY, ESAU INQUIRES ABOUT THE HERDS SENT TO HIM AS GIFTS. THE HEBREW TEXT HAS “HE SAID” WHERE “HE” CAN ONLY MEAN ESAU. SAID MUST OFTEN BE RENDERED AS “ASKED,” SINCE WHAT FOLLOWS IS A QUESTION. WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY ALL THIS COMPANY WHICH I MET: ESAU’S QUESTION IS LITERALLY “WHO [OR, WHAT] TO YOU ALL THAT CAMP [OR, COMPANY] I MET?” (THE WORD FOR “CAMP” OR “COMPANY” IS THE SAME AS THAT USED IN 32:10 AND IN FORMING THE WORD “MAHANAIM” IN 32:2.) ALTHOUGH SOMEWHAT DIFFICULT TO INTERPRET, THE SENSE SEEMS TO BE “WHAT DID YOU HAVE IN MIND WHEN YOU SENT ALL THOSE HERDS TO ME?” ESAU SEEMS TO BE ASKING WHY JACOB WANTED TO GIVE THEM TO HIM. JACOB’S ANSWER CONFIRMS THAT INTERPRETATION OF ESAU’S QUESTION. WE MAY TRANSLATE THE QUESTION, FOR EXAMPLE, “WHAT DID YOU HOPE TO DO WITH THOSE HERDS I MET?” “WHAT WAS YOUR PURPOSE IN SENDING THOSE ANIMALS TO ME?” OR “WHY DID YOU SEND ALL THOSE ANIMALS TO ME?” IN SOME LANGUAGES IT MAY BE EASIER TO TRANSLATE SOME OR ALL OF ESAU’S WORDS AS A STATEMENT RATHER THAN A QUESTION. TWO EXAMPLES ARE “I MET THESE PEOPLE COMING WITH ANIMALS. WHY DID YOU SEND THEM TO ME?” AND “THOSE WORKERS WITH THE ANIMALS WHICH I MET BEFORE I DON’T KNOW WHY YOU SENT THEM.” TO FIND FAVOR IN THE SIGHT OF MY LORD: FOR THE MEANING OF THIS EXPRESSION, SEE 6:8 AND 32:5. JACOB’S ANSWER REFERS TO WHAT ESAU HAS ASKED ABOUT, NAMELY, THE GIFT OF ANIMALS, BUT DOES NOT ACTUALLY SAY THAT. IN TRANSLATION THIS WILL OFTEN HAVE TO BE FILLED IN: “I SENT THEM IN ORDER TO …” OR “THEY ARE FOR YOU, TO MAKE YOU FEEL GOOD TOWARD ME.”**

**GENESIS 33:9: IN THE CONVERSATION OF VERSES 33:9–10 THE MEANING IS NOT ALWAYS WHAT IS LITERALLY STATED. THE OFFERING AND EVENTUAL ACCEPTANCE OF A GIFT IS A SITUATION IN WHICH PEOPLE SAY WHAT POLITENESS AND CONVENTION REQUIRES RATHER THAN WHAT THEY REALLY FEEL. IN A CONTEXT LIKE THIS IT IS ALWAYS IMPORTANT TO MAKE THE FORM OF WORDS FIT WHAT IS REQUIRED IN THE TRANSLATOR’S OWN CULTURE. BUT ESAU SAID: BUT SERVES IN ENGLISH TO INDICATE THAT ESAU’S RESPONSE IS NOT AN ACCEPTANCE OF WHAT JACOB HAS OFFERED. IT ALSO CONTRASTS JACOB’S GIFTS WITH ESAU’S SUFFICIENCY. I HAVE ENOUGH, MY BROTHER: ENOUGH MEANS “ENOUGH ANIMALS, HERDS.” NOTICE HOW ESAU ADDRESSES JACOB AS MY BROTHER, WHILE JACOB CONTINUES TO GROVEL AND CALL ESAU “MY LORD.” KEEP WHAT YOU HAVE FOR YOURSELF: JACOB KNOWS THAT ESAU’S REFUSAL IS MIDDLE EASTERN POLITENESS AND THAT HE WILL HAVE TO URGE ESAU TO ACCEPT. IN MANY CULTURES TO ACCEPT A GIFT TOO QUICKLY IS TO ADMIT POVERTY OR GREED. SEE THE NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN ABRAHAM & THE HITTITES IN CHAPTER 23.**

**GENESIS 33:10: NO, I PRAY YOU: NO IS IN REPLY TO ESAU’S SAYING “KEEP WHAT YOU HAVE.…” THE NEGATIVE NO MAY NEED TO BE ADJUSTED IN SOME LANGUAGES TO SAY “I WILL NOT KEEP THEM” OR “YES [WHAT YOU SAY IS GOOD]. BUT I CANNOT KEEP THEM FOR MYSELF.” FOR I PRAY YOU SEE 19:2. IF I HAVE FOUND … SIGHT: SEE VERSE 8. ACCEPT MY PRESENT FROM MY HAND: THAT IS, “ACCEPT THIS PRESENT FROM ME.” JACOB NEEDS THE ASSURANCE THAT ESAU REALLY ACCEPTS HIM. BY ACCEPTING HIS GIFT, ESAU WILL BE ACCEPTING JACOB. FOR TRULY TRANSLATES A HEBREW IDIOMATIC FORM THAT IS SOMETIMES USED IN RESPONSE TO AN OBJECTION OR REFUSAL, AS ESAU HAS REFUSED JACOB’S GIFT. IT EMPHASIZES THE REASON THAT FOLLOWS, “SEEING YOUR FACE.…” IN TRANSLATION WE MAY SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “IT REALLY IS SO THAT” OR “IT CERTAINLY IS THE CASE THAT.” IN JACOB’S NEXT REMARK, WHICH IS TO URGE ESAU TO TAKE THE GIFTS, WE SEE JACOB THE DIPLOMAT RISE TO NEW RHETORICAL HEIGHTS. TO SEE YOUR FACE IS LIKE SEEING THE FACE OF GOD: THIS SIMILE IS NO DOUBT AN ALLUSION TO PENIEL IN 32:30, WHERE JACOB SAID “I HAVE SEEN GOD FACE TO FACE AND YET MY LIFE IS PRESERVED.” IN THIS VERSE JACOB HAS SEEN ESAU FACE TO FACE AND NOW KNOWS THAT HE WILL NOT BE KILLED BY A VENGEFUL BROTHER. WITH SUCH FAVOR HAVE YOU RECEIVED ME: IN TRANSLATION IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO RESTRUCTURE THIS PART OF VERSE 10 BY SAYING, FOR EXAMPLE, “YOU HAVE ACCEPTED ME SO KINDLY THAT WHEN I LOOK AT YOUR FACE IT IS LIKE LOOKING AT GOD’S FACE.”**

**GENESIS 33:11: ACCEPT, I PRAY YOU, MY GIFT THAT IS BROUGHT TO YOU: JACOB CONTINUES TO URGE ESAU TO ACCEPT. THESE WORDS REPEAT THE THOUGHT AND MUCH OF THE WORDING FROM VERSE 10; BUT THE REPETITION IS A NECESSARY PART OF GETTING ESAU TO ACCEPT THE GIFT. HERE GIFT TRANSLATES THE HEBREW WORD FOR “BLESSING.” THE SAME WORD IS USED FOR “GIFT,” OR “PRESENT,” IN 1 SAM 25:27; 30:26. BY EXPRESSING IT THIS WAY, JACOB IS OFFERING TO SHARE THE BLESSING HE TOOK AWAY FROM ESAU MANY YEARS EARLIER. BECAUSE GOD HAS DEALT GRACIOUSLY WITH ME: SEE VERSE 5. AGAIN, JACOB IS GIVING REASONS WHY ESAU SHOULD ACCEPT HIS GIFTS. WE MAY TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “BECAUSE GOD HAS BEEN GOOD TO ME.” SEE TEV. AND BECAUSE I HAVE ENOUGH: JACOB GIVES THIS AS A FURTHER REASON. IN VERSE 9 ESAU SAID THE SAME THING, WHICH IN HEBREW IS “I HAVE MUCH.” JACOB’S LITERAL WORDS HERE ARE “I HAVE ALL,” MEANING THAT HE HAS A VERY GREAT AMOUNT. THUS, HE URGED HIM: THAT IS, “WITH THESE WORDS JACOB URGED ESAU TO ACCEPT THE GIFT.” DIFFERENT LANGUAGES HAVE DIFFERENT WAYS OF EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF URGED HIM; FOR EXAMPLE, “HE WAS STRONG THAT ESAU SHOULD RECEIVE THE PRESENT …” AND “JACOB KEPT ON TALKING LIKE THAT TO ESAU UNTIL HE ACCEPTED.” AND HE TOOK IT: HE IS ESAU AND IT IS THE GIFT. NOTE HOW SIMPLY THE ACCEPTANCE IS HANDLED BY THE NARRATOR AFTER THE NECESSARY FORMALITIES OF URGING AND REFUSING HAVE RUN THEIR COURSE. ESAU PROBABLY MADE NOTHING MORE THAN A NOD OF HIS HEAD OR A DISPLAY OF HIS OPEN HAND. HE DOES NOT EVEN SEEM TO RECALL THAT HE HAD LOST SOMETHING CALLED A “BLESSING.”**

**GENESIS 33:12: LET US JOURNEY ON OUR WAY: ESAU SEEMS TO ASSUME THAT THEY WILL TRAVEL TOGETHER. THE COMMON FORM OF THESE WORDS IN MANY LANGUAGES IS “LET US GO.” US IS THE INCLUSIVE FIRST-PERSON PRONOUN, PLURAL OR DUAL; “YOU AND ME.” ALTHOUGH NO DESTINATION IS NAMED, FROM VERSE 14 IT IS CLEAR THAT ESAU’S PLACE IN SEIR IS MEANT. I WILL GO BEFORE YOU: THIS EXPRESSION MAY MEAN “AHEAD OF” OR “ALONGSIDE OF.” IN EITHER CASE ESAU’S PROPOSAL IS TO ACCOMPANY JACOB, NOT TO GO A LONG DISTANCE IN ADVANCE OF HIM. ESAU TOO NOW HAS A HERD OF AT LEAST FIVE HUNDRED ANIMALS TO DRIVE. SEE 32:13–15.**

**GENESIS 33:13: BUT JACOB SAID TO HIM: IN THIS CONTEXT SAID INTRODUCES AN EXCUSE, REASON, OR OBJECTION. JACOB DOES NOT ACCEPT ESAU’S PROPOSAL, BUT HE IS NOT SO CONFIDENT IN HIS NEW RELATIONSHIP WITH HIS BROTHER THAT HE CAN EXPRESS OPEN DISAGREEMENT. MY LORD KNOWS THAT THE CHILDREN ARE FRAIL: JACOB CONTINUES TO ADDRESS HIS BROTHER AS HIS SUPERIOR, A FACT THAT TELLS ESAU NOT TO TAKE JACOB’S REMARKS AT THEIR FACE VALUE. FRAIL TRANSLATES A WORD MEANING “INEXPERIENCED” OR “TENDER,” AS IN 1 CHR 22:5; PRO 4:3. THE IDEA IS PROBABLY THAT THE CHILDREN ARE YOUNG AND INEXPERIENCED IN THE HARDSHIPS OF DESERT TRAVEL. IN MANY LANGUAGES THIS IS EXPRESSED SIMPLY AS “THE CHILDREN ARE NOT [VERY] STRONG.” THE VERB KNOWS IS USED AS A REMINDER TO ESAU. IN SOME LANGUAGES IT MAY NECESSARY TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “DON’T FORGET, MY LORD, THAT MY CHILDREN ARE YOUNG” OR “REMEMBER, SIR, THAT.…” FLOCKS AND HERDS REFERS TO ALL OF JACOB’S LIVESTOCK, HIS ANIMALS. GIVING SUCK IS LITERALLY “GIVING SUCK [SUCKLING, FEEDING WITH MILK] WITH ME.” THESE ARE THE ADULT FEMALE ANIMALS IN JACOB’S HERDS (“WITH ME”) THAT ARE SUCKLING THEIR YOUNG. THESE ANIMALS MUST MOVE SLOWLY, AS THEY HAVE TO ALLOW THEIR YOUNG TO DRINK AS THEY GO. IN MANY LANGUAGES SOMETHING LIKE TEV “[THE LIVESTOCK] WITH THEIR YOUNG” WILL BE SUFFICIENT TO INDICATE WHAT THIS TEXT MEANS. ARE A CARE TO ME AND TEV “I MUST THINK OF” ARE NOT STATED IN THE HEBREW BUT CLEARLY EXPRESS WHAT IT MEANS. OVERDRIVEN FOR ONE DAY: OVERDRIVEN MEANS “FORCED TO GO TOO FAST” OR “PUSHED TOO HARD.” THE RESULT OF DRIVING THE ANIMALS TOO HARD FOR EVEN ONE DAY WILL BE TO CAUSE THEM TO DIE. SOME EXAMPLES OF HOW THIS IS TRANSLATED ARE “IF WE MAKE THEM RUN HARD FOR ONE DAY THEY WILL DIE,” “IF WE MAKE THEM TRAVEL FAST, IN JUST ONE DAY THEY WILL ALL BE DEAD.”**

**GENESIS 33:14: LET MY LORD PASS ON BEFORE HIS SERVANT: JACOB MAKES HIS OWN PROPOSAL—HE URGES ESAU NOT TO ACCOMPANY HIM BUT TO GO AHEAD AND NOT WAIT. DOUBTLESS ESAU UNDERSTANDS THAT JACOB IS DETERMINED TO GO AT HIS OWN PACE AND TO HIS OWN DESTINATION. HIS SERVANT MUST OFTEN BE EXPRESSED AS “YOUR SERVANT” OR “BEFORE ME WHO SERVES YOU.” LEAD ON SLOWLY: LEAD ON TRANSLATES A VERB THAT MEANS TO GO BY STAGES, TO MOVE FROM ONE PLACE TO THE NEXT ON A JOURNEY. THE THOUGHT IS THAT JACOB AND ALL HIS PEOPLE AND ANIMALS WILL MOVE BIT BY BIT (TO WHERE THERE IS PASTURE AND WATER FOR THE ANIMALS): “WE WILL COME BEHIND SLOWLY” OR “… NOT TRAVELING TOO FAST.” ACCORDING TO THE PACE OF THE … CHILDREN: THAT IS, “AS FAST AS THE LIVESTOCK AND THE CHILDREN ARE ABLE TO WALK.” SEE TEV. UNTIL I COME TO MY LORD IN SEIR: COME TO HERE MEANS “CATCH UP WITH,” “MEET,” “REACH.” WE MAY ALSO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “UNTIL WE MEET UP WITH YOU AGAIN …,” “WE WILL CATCH UP WITH YOU …,” OR “UNTIL WE MEET AGAIN IN SEIR, MY LORD.” TEV HAS “IN EDOM.” SEE 32:3 FOR THE RELATION OF SEIR TO EDOM.**

**GENESIS 33:15: LET ME LEAVE … SOME OF THE MEN: ESAU MAKES ANOTHER PROPOSAL. THIS TIME HE OFFERS TO LEAVE SOME OF HIS FOUR HUNDRED MEN TO PROTECT JACOB ON THE WAY. THERE IS NO REASON TO THINK ESAU WANTS TO LEAVE THESE MEN TO SPY ON JACOB. HIS ATTITUDE AND CHARACTER HAVE GIVEN NO INDICATION OF SUSPICION OR REVENGE. IT MAY BE DESIRABLE TO EXPRESS ESAU’S MOTIVE IN TRANSLATION, IF READERS ARE LIKELY TO MISUNDERSTAND; FOR EXAMPLE, “SOME OF MY WORKERS TO STAY WITH YOU AND ESCORT YOU” OR “I’LL LEAVE SOME OF MY WORKERS WITH YOU TO HELP YOU.” WHAT NEED IS THERE? JACOB’S REPLY IN HEBREW IS “WHY THAT?” IT IS A REJECTION THAT WE MAY RENDER IN ENGLISH AS “WHAT FOR?” IT IS EXPRESSED IN SOME TRANSLATIONS AS “NO. DON’T BOTHER.” LET ME FIND FAVOR IN THE SIGHT OF MY LORD: JACOB NOW APPEALS TO ESAU BY USING THE SAME EXPRESSION AS IN VERSE 8. THERE HE SAID HE WANTED TO GAIN ESAU’S FAVOR SO THAT ESAU WOULD ACCEPT HIM. BUT HERE THAT SENSE DOES NOT FIT THE CONTEXT. SPEISER TRANSLATES “PLEASE INDULGE [ALLOW] ME, MY LORD.” SPCL SAYS “OH PLEASE DON’T! WHY SHOULD YOU BOTHER?” AND REB “THERE IS NO REASON WHY MY LORD SHOULD BE SO KIND.” WE MAY ALSO TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “THANK YOU, SIR, BUT THAT IS NOT NECESSARY” OR “BIG MAN, YOU ARE VERY GOOD TO ME; BUT DON’T!”**

**GENESIS 33:16: SO, ESAU RETURNED THAT DAY ON HIS WAY TO SEIR: AS IN VERSE 11, ESAU SILENTLY GIVES WAY TO HIS BROTHER’S OBJECTIONS. RSV IS AGAIN VERY LITERAL HERE. THE MEANING IS “THAT SAME DAY ESAU RETURNED TO SEIR” OR “THAT VERY DAY ESAU STARTED BACK TO SEIR.” NOTE TEV “EDOM,” AS IN VERSE 14. JACOB AND ESAU NOW GO THEIR SEPARATE WAYS, BUT THEY WILL COME TOGETHER AGAIN TO BURY THEIR FATHER IN CHAPTER 35.**

**GENESIS 33:17: BUT JACOB JOURNEYED TO SUCCOTH: BOTH RSV AND TEV TRANSLATE THE COMMON HEBREW CONNECTIVE AS BUT TO CONTRAST JACOB’S DESTINATION WITH THAT OF HIS BROTHER. IT MAY ALSO CONTRAST WHAT JACOB ACTUALLY DID WITH WHAT HE TOLD ESAU HE WOULD DO; THIS MAY BE BROUGHT OUT BY SAYING “BUT JACOB DID NOT GO TO SEIR; HE WENT INSTEAD TO ANOTHER PLACE, SUCCOTH.” IN FACT, SUCCOTH IS PROBABLY TO THE NORTH OF WHERE THE TWO BROTHERS MET, ON THE NORTH SIDE OF THE JABBOK RIVER; AND THIS MEANS THAT JACOB ACTUALLY TURNED AND WENT IN THE OPPOSITE DIRECTION FROM ESAU. SEE A BIBLE ATLAS. MANY MODERN TRANSLATIONS DO NOT MARK A SHARP CONTRAST BETWEEN JACOB’S AND ESAU’S DESTINATIONS. FOR EXAMPLE, SPEISER SAYS “AND JACOB JOURNEYED TO.…” REB HAS CHANGED NEB “BUT JACOB …” TO “WHILE JACOB.…” TRANSLATORS SHOULD DECIDE WHETHER A CONTRAST WORD OR EXPRESSION IS REQUIRED HERE ON THE BASIS OF WHAT IS NATURAL IN THEIR OWN LANGUAGES. SUCCOTH MEANS “HUTS.” SEE RSV AND TEV FOOTNOTES. ITS EXACT LOCATION IS UNCERTAIN. ACCORDING TO JOSH 13:27 IT WAS IN THE TERRITORY OF GAD ON THE EAST SIDE OF THE JORDAN. IN MOST ATLASES IT IS SHOWN JUST TO THE NORTH OF THE JABBOK RIVER AND TO THE NORTH AND WEST OF PENIEL. THE TEXT SPEAKS OF JACOB GOING TO SUCCOTH, BUT “JACOB” REPRESENTS HIMSELF AND ALL THOSE WITH HIM. IF IN TRANSLATION “JACOB” MEANS THAT JACOB WENT ALONE, IT WILL BE BETTER TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “JACOB AND THOSE WITH HIM.” THE SAME IS TRUE OF ESAU IN VERSE 16. BUILT HIMSELF A HOUSE, AND MADE BOOTHS FOR HIS CATTLE: IN ALL OF JACOB’S TRAVELS HE HAS PITCHED HIS TENT AND CAMPED. THEREFORE BUILT … A HOUSEDOES NOT SEEM TO FIT THE CONTEXT OF HIS STYLE OF LIVING. WE NOTE ALSO THAT IN VERSES 18 AND 19 HE CAMPS AND PITCHES HIS TENT IN SHECHEM. IT MAY BE THAT A CONTRAST IS INTENDED: A HOUSEFOR HIMSELF AND HIS FAMILY IN CONTRAST TO BOOTHS FOR HIS CATTLE. HOWEVER, BUILT HIMSELF A HOUSEMAY INDICATE JACOB’S INTENTION TO STOP TRAVELING FROM PLACE TO PLACE AND TO SETTLE IN THIS PLACE FOR A PERIOD OF YEARS. AND BUILDING SHELTERS FOR THE LIVESTOCK WOULD MAKE MUCH BETTER SENSE IF JACOB WAS SETTLING THAN IF HE WAS PLANNING TO MOVE ON IN A SHORT TIME. JACOB AND HIS FAMILY HAD SPENT SOME YEARS IN CANAAN BY THE TIME THE EVENTS REPORTED IN CHAPTER 34 TOOK PLACE. THIS TIME WAS DIVIDED BETWEEN SUCCOTH AND SHECHEM, AND MORE TIME COULD HAVE BEEN SPENT AT EITHER PLACE; BUT EVERYTHING IN THE STORY WOULD FIT WELL IF MOST OF THE TIME WAS SPENT AT SUCCOTH, AND BUILT … A HOUSEMAY BE A POINTER TO THAT. TRANSLATORS SHOULD USE WORDS OR EXPRESSIONS FOR BUILT … A HOUSETHAT INDICATE A PERMANENT STRUCTURE FOR LIVING IN OVER AN EXTENDED PERIOD.**

**THERE ARE SEVERAL TRANSLATION PROBLEMS IN THE FIRST PART OF THIS VERSE: (1) IN SOME LANGUAGES THE USE OF A REFLEXIVE ELEMENT SUCH AS (FOR) HIMSELF MEANS HE BUILT IT FOR HIS OWN USE, EXCLUDING THAT OF HIS WIVES AND CHILDREN. THIS IS HARDLY THE INTENTION OF THE NARRATOR. IN MANY LANGUAGES THIS PROBLEM CAN BE AVOIDED BY NOT SAYING “[FOR] HIMSELF” IN THE TRANSLATION; PEOPLE WILL NATURALLY THINK THAT THE HOUSEIS FOR JACOB AND HIS FAMILY. (2) SIMILARLY, IN SOME LANGUAGES “HE BUILT” OR “JACOB BUILT” WILL BE TAKEN TO MEAN THAT JACOB DID ALL THE WORK WHILE HIS SERVANTS DID NOTHING. ACCORDINGLY, IT MAY BE MORE SUITABLE TO SAY SOMETHING LIKE “JACOB HAD HIS MEN BUILD” OR “JACOB ORDERED HIS MEN TO BUILD.” (3) A FURTHER PROBLEM MAY BE THAT IN MANY LANGUAGES THERE IS ONLY ONE VERB TO EXPRESS THE TWO VERBS BUILD AND MAKE. IF A CONTRAST IS INTENDED HERE, IT MAY BE POSSIBLE TO EXPRESS THIS IN ANOTHER WAY; FOR EXAMPLE, “FOR HIS PEOPLE HE PUT UP LIVING PLACES, AND FOR HIS ANIMALS HE PUT UP SHELTERS.”**

**THE BOOTHS, WHICH WERE “HUTS” OR “SHELTERS” FOR THE ANIMALS, WERE PROBABLY SHADE COVERINGS CONSTRUCTED FROM UPRIGHT POLES AND LAID OVER WITH BRANCHES TO PROVIDE SHADE FOR THE YOUNG ANIMALS. IN THIS CONTEXT CATTLE DOES NOT REFER TO COWS AND BULLS ONLY BUT TO ALL KINDS OF LIVESTOCK. SEE 13:2. THEREFORE, THE NAME OF THE PLACE IS CALLED SUCCOTH: “THAT IS THE REASON PEOPLE CALL THE PLACE SUCCOTH.” THE HEBREW KEEPS THE FOCUS ON JACOB AS THE PRINCIPAL ACTOR AND SO HAS “HE CALLED.” MOST ENGLISH VERSIONS TRANSLATE AS A PASSIVE. WE MAY EXPRESS THE THOUGHT AS AN ACTIVE CONSTRUCTION; FOR EXAMPLE, “THAT IS WHY JACOB NAMED THE PLACE SUCCOTH.” TRANSLATORS WHO WISH TO EXPLAIN THE NAME OF SUCCOTH IN THE TEXT RATHER THAN IN A FOOTNOTE MAY USE FRCL AS A MODEL. THAT TRANSLATION SAYS “THAT IS THE REASON ONE CALLS [OR, THEY CALL] THIS PLACE SUCCOTH, WHICH MEANS ‘THE HUTS.’”**

**GENESIS 33:18: THERE ARE TWO PROBLEMS IN REGARD TO VERSE 18. THE FIRST IS JACOB’S ARRIVAL IN SHECHEM WITH APPARENTLY NO CLEAR LINKAGE WITH VERSE 17. THE SECOND IS THE ORDER OF HIS MOVEMENTS IN VERSES 17–20. INTERPRETERS POINT OUT THAT VERSES 18–20 HAVE BEEN ADDED TO THE STORY THAT CONCLUDED WITH VERSE 17. BE THAT AS IT MAY, TRANSLATORS ARE FACED WITH THE TASK OF KEEPING THE TEXT TOGETHER. TRANSLATORS USE VARIOUS MEANS TO COPE WITH THESE PROBLEMS. FOR EXAMPLE, FRCL, NJB, TOB INSERT A HEADING BEFORE VERSE 18 SO THAT 18–20 ARE HANDLED AS A SEPARATE UNIT. NJV ON THE OTHER HAND LEAVES EXTRA BLANK SPACE BETWEEN VERSES 17 AND 18 TO INDICATE A BREAK IN THE NARRATIVE. THE BEGINNING OF VERSE 18 SEEMS TO HAVE THE FUNCTION OF DRAWING THE WHOLE NARRATIVE OF JACOB’S JOURNEY FROM MESOPOTAMIA (CHAPTERS 31–33) TO A CLOSE. THUS, IT DOES HAVE A LINK WITH THE PREVIOUS VERSES; AND TRANSLATORS ARE ADVISED TO MAINTAIN THIS. GECL LINKS VERSE 18 TO VERSE 17 BY SAYING “FINALLY, JACOB ARRIVED SAFELY IN SHECHEM.…” THE HANDBOOK RECOMMENDS THIS AS A SUITABLE MODEL. AND JACOB CAME SAFELY: SAFELY TRANSLATES THE HEBREW “IN PEACE.” FOR A SIMILAR EXPRESSION SEE 28:21, IN WHICH JACOB MADE A VOW, “IF … I COME TO MY FATHER’S HOUSEIN PEACE.…” IN ENGLISH WE MAY SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “SAFE AND SOUND,” AND IN SOME OTHER LANGUAGES “WHOLE AND AT PEACE” OR “STRONG AND OF GOOD HEART.” CITY OF SHECHEM WHICH IS IN THE LAND OF CANAAN: THE FIRST REFERENCE TO SHECHEM IS IN 12:6. SHECHEM LIES 64 KILOMETERS (40 MILES) NORTH OF JERUSALEM. ON HIS WAY FROM PADDAN-ARAM: IT WILL OFTEN BE NECESSARY TO RESTRUCTURE PARTS OF THE VERSE TO FIT IN THIS CLAUSE. FOR EXAMPLE, SOME TRANSLATORS PLACE THIS INFORMATION AT THE OPENING OF THE VERSE. SEE TEV. HOWEVER, IF A LINKAGE IS REQUIRED AT THE OPENING OF VERSE 18, IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “LATER JACOB ARRIVED SAFELY IN THE CITY IN CANAAN CALLED SHECHEM. THIS WAS WHEN HE WAS RETURNING FROM MESOPOTAMIA.” ON HIS WAY FROM IS LITERALLY “IN HIS COMING FROM,” WHICH IS BEST EXPRESSED AS “ON HIS RETURN FROM” OR “WHEN [OR, AFTER] HE CAME BACK FROM.” WE MAY EVEN SAY “THE END OF JACOB’S JOURNEY FROM MESOPOTAMIA WAS WHEN HE ARRIVED SAFELY AT SHECHEM …” OR “THE STORY OF JACOB’S JOURNEY FROM MESOPOTAMIA ENDS WITH HIM ARRIVING SAFELY AT SHECHEM.…” RSV ON HIS WAY GIVES THE IMPRESSION THAT SHECHEM WAS JUST A STOPPING POINT ON A JOURNEY THAT WOULD SOON BE CONTINUED; BUT THIS IS NOT THE SENSE OF THE TEXT. CAMPED BEFORE THE CITY: CAMPED MEANS “PITCHED HIS TENTS.” BEFORE MAY MEAN IN THIS SITUATION “TO THE EAST,” AS HE IS APPROACHING SHECHEM FROM THAT DIRECTION. THIS IS FOLLOWED BY REB/NEB, MFT. OTHER TRANSLATIONS ARE MORE GENERAL WITH “FACING,” “NEAR,” “OPPOSITE,” “IN SIGHT OF.”**

**GENESIS 33:19: AND FROM THE SONS OF HAMOR, SHECHEM’S FATHER: SONS REFERS TO THE DESCENDANTS OF HAMOR, A NAME MEANING “DONKEY.” SHECHEM’S FATHER IS UNDERSTOOD IN TWO WAYS BY INTERPRETERS: (1) AS THE FATHER OF THE SON NAMED SHECHEM, WHO RAPES JACOB’S DAUGHTER DINAH IN CHAPTER 34; AND (2) AS REFERRING TO HAMOR AS THE ANCIENT FOUNDER OF THE TOWN CALLED SHECHEM. THE LATTER IDIOM IS PARALLELED IN 1 CHR 2:50–51, WHERE WE READ, FOR EXAMPLE, “SHOBAL THE FATHER OF KIRIATH-JEARIM” AND “SALMA THE FATHER OF BETHLEHEM.” RSV AND TEV UNDERSTAND SHECHEM’S FATHER IN THE FIRST SENSE, WHILE GECL, FRCL, NAB, MFT TAKE THE EXPRESSION TO HAVE THE SECOND MEANING. ALTHOUGH BOTH INTERPRETATIONS ARE ACCEPTABLE, THERE IS AN ADVANTAGE FOR THE READER TO THINK OF THE HAMOR IN THE STORY AS THE FATHER OF THE YOUNG MAN CALLED SHECHEM, AS IN RSV AND TEV. HE BOUGHT FOR A HUNDRED PIECES OF MONEY: HE REFERS TO JACOB. PIECES OF MONEY TRANSLATES A HEBREW WORD THAT OCCURS ELSEWHERE ONLY IN JOSH 24:32 AND JOB 42:11. ITS EQUIVALENT VALUE IN MODERN TERMS IN UNKNOWN. SOME OF THE ANCIENT VERSIONS, HOWEVER, TRANSLATE IT “LAMBS,” AND NEB/REB TRANSLATE “A HUNDRED SHEEP.” IN TRANSLATION IT IS BEST TO USE A GENERAL EXPRESSION, AS IN BOTH RSV AND TEV. THE PIECE OF LAND ON WHICH HE HAD PITCHED HIS TENT: PIECE OF LAND IS LITERALLY “THAT PART OF THE FIELD.” WE SHOULD NOT THINK OF THIS AS THE SMALL SPACE REQUIRED TO PUT A TENT ON. WE KNOW FROM 25:27, 29; 27:3 THAT “FIELD” IS SOMETIMES USED FOR THE UNCULTIVATED OPEN COUNTRYSIDE IN CONTRAST TO FIELDS FOR CULTIVATING CROPS. IT IS THE FORMER SENSE THAT SHOULD BE TRANSLATED HERE. NOTE THAT TEV ARRANGES THE WORDING OF VERSE 18 SO THAT PITCHED HIS TENT IS NOT REQUIRED A SECOND TIME HERE. TRANSLATORS MAY FIND IT NECESSARY TO RESTRUCTURE SOME OF THE ELEMENTS OF VERSE 19. FOR EXAMPLE, “JACOB BOUGHT THE LAND WHERE HE HAD CAMPED FOR A HUNDRED PIECES OF SILVER. HE BOUGHT IT FROM THE FAMILY OF HAMOR, SHECHEM’S FATHER.”**

**GENESIS 33:20: THERE HE ERECTED AN ALTAR: THERE REFERS TO THE LAND HE HAD BOUGHT FROM THE CLAN OF HAMOR. HE REFERS TO JACOB. ERECTED TRANSLATES A VERB MEANING TO SET UP OR STAND UP AND IS USED IN 35:14 AND 20 TO REFER TO THE SETTING UP OF A PILLAR. THE HEBREW WORD IS DIFFERENT FROM THAT USED OF THE SAME ACTION IN 28:18; 31:45. FOR ALTAR SEE 8:20. CALLED IT EL-ELOHE-ISRAEL: THE NAME JACOB GAVE TO THE ALTAR MEANS “GOD [IS] THE GOD OF ISRAEL.” SOME TRANSLATORS KEEP THE HEBREW FORM IN THE TEXT AND PLACE THE MEANING IN A FOOTNOTE (RSV, NEB/REB). SOME RETAIN EL AND TRANSLATE ELOHE-ISRAEL: “EL, GOD OF ISRAEL” (NJB), “NAMED IT … EL, THE GOD OF ISRAEL” (TEV, FRCL). SOME TRANSLATE THE ENTIRE EXPRESSION “GOD IS THE GOD OF ISRAEL” (GECL). IT IS ALSO POSSIBLE TO KEEP THE HEBREW FORM AND GIVE THE MEANING WITH IT IN THE TEXT. TRANSLATORS SHOULD FOLLOW THE MODEL THAT IS THE MOST MEANINGFUL FOR THEIR READERS.**

**SHECHEM RAPES THE DAUGHTER OF JACOB AND LEAH (34:1–12)**

**CHAPTER 34 TELLS THE STORY OF THE RAPE OF DINAH, THE ONLY DAUGHTER OF JACOB AND LEAH, BY THE SON OF HAMOR IN THE CITY OF SHECHEM. THE SON, WHOSE NAME IS ALSO SHECHEM, WISHES TO MARRY DINAH.**

**IN THIS SUBDIVISION SHECHEM TAKES DINAH BY FORCE AND MAKES HER SUBMIT TO HIM SEXUALLY (VERSES 1–2). SHECHEM IS IN LOVE WITH DINAH AND ASKS HIS FATHER TO GET HER FOR HIS WIFE (VERSES 3–4). JACOB LEARNS OF THE RAPE BUT CAN SAY NOTHING TO HIS SONS WHO ARE AWAY CARING FOR THE LIVESTOCK (VERSE). HAMOR, SHECHEM’S FATHER, GOES TO JACOB TO DISCUSS MARRIAGE. JACOB’S SONS LEARN OF THE VIOLATION OF DINAH AND BECOME ANGRY (VERSES 3-7) HAMOR APPEALS TO THEM TO GIVE DINAH TO HIS SON, AND FOR THEIR FAMILY TO INTERMARRY WITH HIS PEOPLE AND TO SETTLE THERE AND ACQUIRE PROPERTY. SHECHEM OFFERS TO PAY WHATEVER BRIDE PRICE THEY ASK IF THEY WILL LET HIM MARRY DINAH (VERSES 34:8–12).**

**SUBDIVISION HEADING**

**THE HANDBOOK HEADING MAY NEED TO BE MODIFIED TO EXPRESS THE IDEA OF RAPE IN A WAY THAT MAY BE READ IN PUBLIC. FOR EXAMPLE, “SHECHEM MAKES JACOB’S DAUGHTER LIE DOWN WITH HIM,” “… FORCES DINAH TO GO TO BED WITH HIM,” “… TAKES JACOB’S DAUGHTER AND SLEEPS WITH HER.” MOST MODERN VERSIONS HAVE ONLY A SINGLE HEADING FOR CHAPTER 34. SPCL HAS “THE DISHONOR OF DINAH AVENGED,” FRCL “SIMEON AND LEVI AVENGE THEIR DISHONORED SISTER,” GECL “A CONFLICT WITH THE NATIVE PEOPLE,” TOB “VIOLENCE AT SHECHEM.” NJB HAS THREE HEADINGS: VERSES 1–5 “THE RAPE OF DINAH,” VERSES 34:6–24 “A MATRIMONIAL ALLIANCE WITH THE SHECHEMITES,” VERSES 25–31 “THE TREACHEROUS REVENGE OF SIMEON AND LEVI.”**

**GENESIS 34:1: THE EVENTS DESCRIBED IN THIS CHAPTER SHOW THAT SOME YEARS HAVE PASSED SINCE THE MOTHERS AND THEIR CHILDREN BOWED BEFORE ESAU IN 33:6–7. IN SOME LANGUAGES IT WILL BE NECESSARY TO MOVE THE TIME ASPECT OF THE STORY FORWARD. DINAH, WHO APPEARED FOR THE FIRST TIME IN 30:21, HAS NOT BEEN MENTIONED SINCE SHE WAS BORN TO LEAH. IN CHAPTER 34 SHE IS THE BACKGROUND FIGURE OF THE CONFLICT BETWEEN JACOB’S SONS AND THE PEOPLE OF SHECHEM. SHE DOES NOT APPEAR AS AN ACTIVE CHARACTER IN THE RAPE SCENE, NOR IS SHE EVER MENTIONED AGAIN IN THE OLD TESTAMENT, ASIDE FROM 46:15, WHICH GIVES A LIST OF JACOB’S DESCENDANTS WHO WENT TO EGYPT. NOW DINAH: NOW IS THE RENDERING OF THE HEBREW CONNECTIVE USED BY VARIOUS ENGLISH VERSIONS TO EXPRESS A TRANSITION TO A NEW EPISODE. IT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH PRESENT TIME. TEV “ONE DAY” IS ADEQUATE TO SHIFT TO A NEW EPISODE; IT MAY NOT BE ADEQUATE, HOWEVER, FOR LANGUAGES THAT REQUIRE A MAJOR STEP FORWARD IN TIME. TRANSLATORS WHO FIND IT NECESSARY TO GIVE THE STORY A TIME SETTING MAY SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “WHEN DINAH HAD GROWN UP,” “YEARS LATER,” “AFTER SOME YEARS HAD PASSED.” THE DAUGHTER OF LEAH, WHOM SHE HAD BORN TO JACOB: THE IDENTIFICATION OF DINAH IN RELATION TO HER PARENTS IS SUITABLY EXPRESSED BY TEV AS “DAUGHTER OF JACOB AND LEAH,” WHICH IS ALSO FOLLOWED BY OTHER ENGLISH VERSIONS. WENT OUT TO VISIT THE WOMEN OF THE LAND: WENT OUT MEANS SHE WENT FROM JACOB’S CAMP TO VISIT. THE TEXT DOES NOT SAY THAT SHE WAS ACCOMPANIED BY OTHERS, BUT IT IS UNLIKELY THAT SHE WOULD GO ALONE. LIKEWISE. THE TEXT DOES NOT SAY THAT SHE WENT TO THE CITY OF SHECHEM, BUT WE MAY ASSUME THAT SHE DID FROM 33:18. VISIT TRANSLATES THE COMMON HEBREW VERB “TO SEE”; AND “SEE THE WOMEN OF THE TOWN” WILL BE THE MOST NATURAL WAY TO TRANSLATE IN MANY LANGUAGES. WOMEN IS LITERALLY “DAUGHTERS,” WHICH IS PREFIXED BY THE PREPOSITION MEANING “IN,” AND THIS CONSTRUCTION IS COMMONLY INTERPRETED TO MEAN “SOME OF THE WOMEN.” THESE WOMEN ARE DESCRIBED AS OF THE LAND, AN EXPRESSION MEANING NATIVE OR LOCAL PEOPLE IN 23:7, 12; 27:46. SEE TEV, WHICH IS A GOOD MODEL.**

**GENESIS 34:2: AND WHEN SHECHEM THE SON OF HAMOR, THE HIVITE, THE PRINCE OF THE LAND: RSV AND TEV RENDER THIS AS A “WHEN” CLAUSE. IN SOME LANGUAGES IT WILL BE MORE NATURAL TO MAKE A COMPLETE SENTENCE; FOR EXAMPLE, “SHECHEM WAS THE SON OF HAMOR WHO WAS A HIVITE AND RULER OF THAT AREA.” IN SOME LANGUAGES IT WILL BE MORE NATURAL TO MAKE HAMOR THE SUBJECT OF THE SENTENCE, SEEING THAT HE IS THE MORE IMPORTANT PERSON, AND THE INFORMATION GIVEN IS MAINLY ABOUT HIM: “NOW HAMOR, WHO WAS OF THE HIVI TRIBE, AND WHO WAS THE CHIEF OF THAT PLACE, HAD A SON WHOSE NAME WAS SHECHEM.” FOR HIVITE SEE 10:17. PRINCE DOES NOT REFER TO THE SON OF A KING BUT TO A LOCAL LEADER OR CHIEF. IN THIS CONTEXT IT REFERS TO HAMOR, NOT TO HIS SON; SEE TEV “CHIEF OF THAT REGION.” SAW HER: IN THIS CONTEXT THERE IS MORE IN THE WORD SAW THAN JUST SEEING WITH THE EYES; AS SOME TRANSLATIONS SAY, THIS MAY BE EXPRESSED AS “SAW THAT SHE WAS BEAUTIFUL” OR “SAW AND DESIRED HER.” SEIZED HER AND LAY WITH HER AND HUMBLED HER: AFTER SEEING DINAH, SHECHEM IS REPORTED TO HAVE COMMITTED ACTS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST HER. FOR LAY WITH HER SEE THE TRANSLATION SUGGESTIONS UNDER THE SUBDIVISION HEADING. HUMBLED HER TRANSLATES A VERB FORM MEANING TO “CAUSE TO SUBMIT.” WHEN USED OF A MAN IN RELATION TO A WOMEN, IT REFERS TO FORCED SEXUAL RELATIONS OR RAPE. SEE DEUT 21:14; 22:24, 29 (“VIOLATED”). LAY WITH HER AND HUMBLED HER IS A COMMON HEBREW CONSTRUCTION IN WHICH TWO VERB CLAUSES ARE JOINED TO EXPRESS A SINGLE IDEA. NOTE THAT TEV AND OTHERS USE ONLY ONE EXPRESSION. SOME EXAMPLES OF THE WAY THIS WHOLE EXPRESSION IS RENDERED IN DIFFERENT LANGUAGES ARE “TOOK HOLD OF HER AND FORCED HER TO SLEEP WITH HIM,” “FORCED HER TO HIMSELF, SLEPT WITH HER, AND SPOILED HER,” “FORCEFULLY PULLED HER AND DID WHAT WAS NOT GOOD TO HER.”**

**GENESIS 34:3: AND HIS SOUL WAS DRAWN TO DINAH THE DAUGHTER OF JACOB: SOUL (NEFESH) IS USED HERE AS THE CENTER OF THE EMOTIONS AND AFFECTIONS. THE LITERAL EXPRESSION IS A HEBREW IDIOM: “HIS SOUL FASTENED ON DINAH.” THE VERB IS USED IN 2:24 OF A MAN UNITING WITH HIS WIFE, IN RUTH 1:14 OF RUTH HOLDING ON TO NAOMI, AND IN JOB 19:20 OF THE SKIN CLINGING TO THE BONES. IN ENGLISH WE MAY SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “HE WAS GREATLY ATTRACTED TO HER” OR “HE FELL DEEPLY IN LOVE WITH HER.” NEB “HE REMAINED TRUE TO” HAS BEEN REVISED BY REB TO SAY MORE FITTINGLY “SHECHEM WAS DEEPLY ATTACHED TO.…” HE LOVED THE MAIDEN: THE LOVE OF A MAN FOR A WOMAN IS EXPRESSED IN SOME LANGUAGES BY FIGURATIVE EXPRESSIONS; FOR EXAMPLE, “HIS HEART FOLLOWED HER,” “HIS LIVER WENT OUT TO HER.” MAIDEN HAS BEEN REVISED TO “GIRL” IN NRSV. THE TERM USED IN TRANSLATION SHOULD REFER TO A YOUNG WOMAN OF MARRIAGEABLE AGE. AND SPOKE TENDERLY TO HER IS LITERALLY “HE SPOKE UPON HER HEART,” AN IDIOM THAT IS USED IN JUDGES 19:3 OF THE LEVITE WHO TRIED TO GET BACK THE CONCUBINE WHO HAD RUN AWAY FROM HIM. SHECHEM TRIES TO CONVINCE DINAH OF HIS LOVE FOR HER. NOTE TEV “TRIED TO WIN HER AFFECTION,” AND FRCL “HE TRIED TO WIN HER HEART.” AGAIN, REB HAS REJECTED NEB “COMFORTED HER” AND TRANSLATED “SOUGHT TO WIN HER AFFECTION.” WE MAY ALSO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “HE TRIED TO GET HER TO LOVE HIM TOO.” SOME LANGUAGES HAVE IDIOMS FOR THE KIND OF TALK THAT TRIES TO WIN OVER SOMEONE; IN THIS CONTEXT, FOR EXAMPLE, ONE TRANSLATION IS “HE MADE SWEET TALK SO THAT DINAH WOULD LOVE HIM.”**

**GENESIS 34:4: SINCE DINAH DOES NOT PLAY AN ACTIVE ROLE IN THE STORY, WE CANNOT TELL IF DINAH LOVES SHECHEM OR NOT. THE MATTER THAT REQUIRES NEGOTIATION, HOWEVER, IS THE AGREEMENT OF DINAH’S FAMILY TO A MARRIAGE. THE MARRIAGE ARRANGEMENT MUST BE MADE BETWEEN THE FATHERS (SOMETIMES A MOTHER, AS IN THE CASE OF HAGAR AND ISHMAEL) OF THE YOUNG COUPLE. SEE THE CASE OF ABRAHAM AND ISAAC IN CHAPTER 24, AND THAT OF SAMSON IN JUDGES 14:2. SO SHECHEM SPOKE TO HIS FATHER HAMOR: RSV TREATS THE HEBREW CONNECTIVE AS A CONSEQUENCE. OTHER TRANSLATIONS HAVE NO LOGICAL LINK AT THE BEGINNING OF THIS VERSE. SOME PREFER A WORD LIKE “THEN.” GET ME THIS MAIDEN FOR MY WIFE: THE LANGUAGE IS SURPRISINGLY DIRECT AND MAY REFLECT THE NARRATOR’S FEELING AGAINST CANAANITES. NOTE THAT TEV HAS MADE SHECHEM’S DEMAND MORE POLITE THAN THE ORIGINAL. IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO FILL OUT SHECHEM’S WORDS TO MAKE HIS THOUGHT CLEAR; FOR EXAMPLE, “ASK HER FATHER TO LET ME MARRY THIS GIRL” OR “BUY [PAY THE BRIDE PRICE FOR] THAT WOMAN SO THAT WE-TWO CAN MARRY.”**

**GENESIS 34:5: NOW JACOB HEARD THAT HE HAD DEFILED HIS DAUGHTER DINAH: NOW IS USED BY RSV TO SHIFT THE SCENE TO JACOB. SOME SAY “WHEN JACOB LEARNED.…” TEV BEGINS A NEW PARAGRAPH. HEARD MAY NEED TO BE RENDERED AS “LEARNED” OR “FOUND OUT.” HE REFERS TO SHECHEM. DEFILED NORMALLY MEANS TO BECOME OR TO MAKE RITUALLY UNCLEAN. DEFILEMENT COULD BE CAUSED BY DOING MANY FORBIDDEN ACTS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT. IN THE SEXUAL REALM A MAN COULD BECOME DEFILED BY HAVING SEX WITH A MENSTRUATING WOMAN, WITH HIS NEIGHBOR’S WIFE, WITH ANOTHER MAN, OR WITH AN ANIMAL (LEV 18:19–23). IN VERSES 5, 13, AND 27 THE TERM DEFILED IS PROBABLY USED ON TWO LEVELS OF MEANING. THE MORE OBVIOUS IS “DISHONORED,” “VIOLATED,” “DISGRACED.” AT A DEEPER LEVEL THE TERM IS NO DOUBT USED BECAUSE DINAH WAS FORCED TO HAVE SEX WITH AN UNCIRCUMCISED CANAANITE. IN TRANSLATION IT IS SUFFICIENT TO EXPRESS THE DISHONOR OR DISGRACE COMMITTED AGAINST HER. A COMMON TRANSLATION THAT USES A EUPHEMISM (AN EXPRESSION THAT AVOIDS THE DIRECT WORDS) FOR SEXUAL MISCONDUCT IS “JACOB GOT THE NEWS THAT SHECHEM HAD MADE TROUBLE FOR [OR, WITH] HIS DAUGHTER.” BUT HIS SONS WERE WITH HIS CATTLE IN THE FIELD IS THE REASON JACOB SAYS NOTHING ABOUT THIS MATTER. IN SOME LANGUAGES IT WILL BE MORE NATURAL TO EXPRESS THE REASON FIRST; FOR EXAMPLE, “JACOB’S SONS WERE IN THE FIELD CARING FOR THE LIVESTOCK, AND SO HE HELD HIS PEACE UNTIL THEY CAME HOME.” CATTLE REFERS TO LIVESTOCK GENERALLY. FIELD REFERS TO THE OPEN COUNTRY WHERE THE ANIMALS WERE TAKEN TO GRAZE. HELD HIS PEACE TRANSLATES THE HEBREW “KEPT SILENT.” WE MAY ALSO TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “SO JACOB SAID NOTHING ABOUT IT.” A NUMBER OF TRANSLATIONS MAKE THIS REFER TO ACTION IN GENERAL RATHER THAN JUST SPEAKING; FOR EXAMPLE, “HE DIDN’T DO ANYTHING STRAIGHT AWAY, BECAUSE.… HE JUST WAITED FOR THEM TO COME HOME.”**

**GENESIS 34:6: HAMOR THE FATHER OF SHECHEM WENT OUT TO JACOB …: VERSE 6 INTERRUPTS THE ACTION BETWEEN THE END OF VERSE 5 AND THE BEGINNING OF VERSE 7. SOME ENGLISH VERSIONS THEREFORE BEGIN VERSE 6 WITH A TRANSITION WORD LIKE “MEANWHILE.” VERSE 6 REALLY FOLLOWS THE THOUGHT OF VERSE 4; AND IN SOME LANGUAGES THE SEQUENCE OF EVENTS MAY REQUIRE THAT IT IS PLACED IMMEDIATELY AFTER VERSE 4. SEE ALSO THE COMMENTS AT VERSE 7. VERSE 6 DOES NOT SAY THAT HAMOR’S SON SHECHEM ACCOMPANIED HIS FATHER, BUT WE LEARN IN VERSE 11 THAT SHECHEM IS ALSO PRESENT IN THESE NEGOTIATIONS. IF THE DISCOURSE STRUCTURE OF THE LANGUAGE REQUIRES THE INTRODUCTION OF EACH SPEAKER, IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO SAY IN THIS VERSE THAT SHECHEM ACCOMPANIED HIS FATHER. FOR EXAMPLE, WE MAY NEED TO SAY “HAMOR, THE FATHER OF SHECHEM, TOOK HIS SON AND WENT TO SPEAK WITH JACOB.” SEE THE COMMENT ON SHECHEM IN VERSE 11. WENT OUT RENDERS THE SAME VERB AS IN VERSE 1, WHERE DINAH WENT IN THE OTHER DIRECTION TO VISIT THE LOCAL WOMEN.**

**GENESIS 34:7: THE SONS OF JACOB CAME IN FROM THE FIELD: VERSE 7 CONTINUES DIRECTLY FROM VERSE 5. IT IS NOT CLEAR FROM THE TEXT AS WE HAVE IT PRECISELY WHEN HAMOR CAME TO SEE JACOB (VERSE 6), BEFORE, OR AFTER, OR AT THE SAME TIME AS JACOB’S SONS RETURNED. HOWEVER, IN MANY LANGUAGES TRANSLATORS WILL NEED TO MAKE A DECISION ABOUT THIS. ONE POSSIBLE WAY OF UNDERSTANDING THE SEQUENCE OF THINGS IS REPRESENTED BY THE TRANSLATION “THEY-TWO WERE STILL TALKING WHEN THE SONS OF JACOB RETURNED.” IN SOME LANGUAGES IT IS NECESSARY TO REARRANGE THE TEXT TO SORT THIS OUT; FOR EXAMPLE, “(6–7) AT THE SAME TIME AS THEY CAME HOME, THE FATHER OF THE YOUNG MAN CAME TO DISCUSS MARRIAGE.…” WHEN THEY HEARD OF IT: IN THE HEBREW THE OBJECT OF THE VERB HEARD IS PLURAL, “HEARD OF THEM,” WHICH PROBABLY REFERS TO THE NEWS, REPORTS, OR RUMORS OF THE RAPE. IN RSV THIS CLAUSE IS LINKED TO THE PREVIOUS CLAUSE; IT SAYS THAT JACOB’S SONS HEARD THE NEWS FIRST, AND THEN THEY RETURNED. THIS IS ALSO THE UNDERSTANDING OF SOME OTHER TRANSLATIONS, INCLUDING NIV AND REB (BUT NOT NEB). HOWEVER, NRSV, AS WELL AS TEV AND OTHERS LIKE SPEISER AND NJB, TAKE THIS CLAUSE WITH WHAT FOLLOWS: “WHEN THEY HEARD ABOUT IT THEY WERE SHOCKED AND FURIOUS.” IN THIS CASE THE SONS RETURNED FIRST AND THEN HEARD THE NEWS. BOTH OF THESE UNDERSTANDINGS ARE POSSIBLE FROM THE HEBREW. THE MEN WERE INDIGNANT AND VERY ANGRY: THE MEN REFERS TO DINAH’S BROTHERS AND HALF-BROTHERS WHO WERE RETURNING TO JACOB’S CAMP. IT THEREFORE MEANS EXACTLY THE SAME PEOPLE AS THE SONS OF JACOB; IN MANY LANGUAGES THIS IS EXPRESSED SIMPLY BY THE PRONOUN “THEY” (SO REB AND TEV). INDIGNANT TRANSLATES A WORD MEANING TO FEEL GRIEF IN A PAINFUL WAY. THE IDEA IS THAT THEY WERE DEEPLY SADDENED OR EVEN SHOCKED THAT THIS HAD HAPPENED TO THEIR SISTER AND THAT THEIR HONOR HAD BEEN VIOLATED. HOWEVER, THERE IS MORE THAN GRIEF INVOLVED, AS THEY ARE ALSO DEEPLY ANGERED, AS VERY ANGRY INDICATES. BECAUSE HE HAD WROUGHT FOLLY IN ISRAEL: HE IS SHECHEM. WROUGHT FOLLY IS A SET EXPRESSION USED IN THE OLD TESTAMENT TO EXPRESS SERIOUS ACTS OF MORAL MISCONDUCT. IT EXPRESSES THE IDEA THAT SINFUL ACTS ARE THE OPPOSITE OF WISDOM; THEY ARE “FOOLISHNESS” IN ITS WORST FORM. SOME EXAMPLES ARE SEEN IN DEUT 22:21; JUDGES 19:23–24 (“VILE THING”); 2 SAM 13:12 (“WANTON FOLLY”); JER 29:23. BY ADDING THE WORDS IN ISRAEL, THE NARRATOR OF A MUCH LATER TIME USES THE EXPRESSIONS OF HIS DAY TO DESCRIBE EVENTS IN THE PATRIARCHAL AGE. NEB TRANSLATES THIS EXPRESSION “AN OUTRAGE, AN INTOLERABLE THING,” WHICH REB REVISES TO “AN INTOLERABLE OUTRAGE.” FRCL SAYS “SOMETHING THAT IS INADMISSIBLE,” SPCL “A VERY GREAT OFFENSE,” MFT “AN IMMORAL SCANDAL,” AND NJB “A THING TOTALLY UNACCEPTABLE.” TRANSLATIONS IN SOME PACIFIC LANGUAGES ARE “THE YOUNG MAN HAD MADE BIG SHAME FOR THEIR FAMILY,” “BECAUSE HE HAD DONE THAT NO-GOOD THING, AND MADE A BAD NAME FOR THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL,” AND “WHAT SHECHEM HAD DONE WAS A REALLY BAD THING—IN THE THINKING OF THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL THIS WAS ABSOLUTELY FORBIDDEN.” BY LYING WITH JACOB’S DAUGHTER: IT MAY BE MORE NATURAL TO BEGIN THE REASON CLAUSE WITH THESE WORDS, FOR EXAMPLE: “BY LYING WITH JACOB’S DAUGHTER, SHECHEM HAD DONE SOMETHING THAT WAS A VERY GREAT OFFENSE IN ISRAEL.” FOR SUCH A THING OUGHT NOT TO BE DONE: THAT IS, “NO ONE SHOULD DO SUCH A THING” OR “SUCH THINGS SHOULD NEVER BE DONE.” IN SOME LANGUAGES THIS IS EXPRESSED BY SAYING “SUCH A THING IS TABOO [OR, FORBIDDEN].”**

**AS A TRANSLATION MODEL FOR VERSE 7, WE MAY SUGGEST, FOR EXAMPLE: • WHEN JACOB’S SONS LEARNED THAT DINAH HAD BEEN RAPED [THAT SHECHEM HAD RAPED THEIR SISTER], THEIR HEARTS WERE SADDENED FOR HER AND THEY BECAME VERY ANGRY. BY DOING THIS TO DINAH SHECHEM HAD COMMITTED A GREAT OFFENSE IN ISRAEL; SUCH BAD THINGS MUST NEVER BE DONE.**

**GENESIS 34:8: VERSE 8 FOLLOWS THE CONTENT OF VERSE 6. IN VERSE 8 HAMOR SEEKS TO OBTAIN JACOB’S PERMISSION FOR SHECHEM TO MARRY DINAH, AND IN VERSES 34:9–10 HAMOR EXPANDS HIS REQUEST BY PROPOSING A TREATY WITH JACOB THAT WILL BRING THEIR TWO GROUPS INTO CLOSER RELATIONS. HAMOR SPOKE WITH THEM: SOME TRANSLATIONS ASSUME THAT HAMOR IS SPEAKING ONLY TO JACOB’S SONS. HOWEVER, IT IS MORE LIKELY THAT HE IS ADDRESSING JACOB AND THE SONS, AS IS CLEAR WHEN SHECHEM SPEAKS IN VERSE 11. THE SOUL OF MY SON SHECHEM LONGS FOR YOUR DAUGHTER: THIS EXPRESSION IS SIMILAR IN FORM AND MEANING TO THE IDIOM USED IN VERSE 3, MEANING “MY SON IS IN LOVE WITH YOUR DAUGHTER.” ALTHOUGH YOUR IS PLURAL, IN SOME CASES IT WILL NOT BE NATURAL WHEN ADDRESSING JACOB AND THE SONS TO SAY YOUR [PLURAL] DAUGHTER. IN SUCH SITUATIONS IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO SAY BOTH “[SPEAKING TO JACOB] YOUR [SINGULAR] DAUGHTER” AND “[SPEAKING TO THE BROTHERS] YOUR [PLURAL] SISTER,” SO THAT IT IS CLEAR IS HE ADDRESSING BOTH THE FATHER AND THE BROTHERS. SOME TRANSLATIONS AVOID THIS PROBLEM BY SAYING “THIS YOUNG WOMAN” OR “THIS GIRL.” WE MAY ALSO SIMPLY SAY “DINAH.” I PRAY YOU GIVE … MARRIAGE: THIS IS LITERALLY “PLEASE GIVE [YOU PLURAL] HER TO HIM [SHECHEM] FOR A WIFE.” HERE AGAIN NOTE THAT THE CANAANITE SPEAKS POLITELY BUT DIRECTLY. THERE ARE NO FORMALITIES OR CONVERSATIONAL EXCHANGES LEADING UP TO THE MATTER. IN TRANSLATION, HOWEVER, IT WILL BE NECESSARY TO FOLLOW THE USUAL WAY OF INTRODUCING A DISCUSSION ABOUT ARRANGING A MARRIAGE. IN SOME LANGUAGES, FOR INSTANCE, HAMOR’S REQUEST WILL MORE NATURALLY BE FRAMED AS A QUESTION: “SO I ASK YOU, ‘COULD THEY-TWO BE MARRIED?’” OR “WELL, WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT LETTING THEM GET MARRIED?”**

**GENESIS 34:9: HAMOR NOW EXTENDS HIS REQUEST FOR DINAH TO A MORE GENERAL PROPOSAL FOR AN AGREEMENT OR TREATY THAT WOULD ENHANCE HIS STANDING IN CANAAN. MAKE MARRIAGES WITH US TRANSLATES A VERB WHOSE FORM HERE MEANS “MAKE YOURSELF A SON-IN-LAW [DAUGHTER’S HUSBAND].” THE THOUGHT IS EXPRESSED IN SPCL AS “MAKE YOURSELVES OUR RELATIVES.” GECL ASKS “WHY SHOULDN’T WE RELATE OURSELVES TO EACH OTHER?” WE MAY ALSO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “LET OUR SONS AND DAUGHTERS MARRY EACH OTHER.” THE SENSE OF MAKING AN AGREEMENT ABOUT INTERMARRYING IS GIVEN BY NEB/REB “LET US ALLY OURSELVES IN MARRIAGE”; THIS MAY ALSO BE EXPRESSED AS “AND WE SHOULD MAKE A PROMISE [AGREEMENT] ABOUT OUR PEOPLE MARRYING EACH OTHER.” GIVE YOUR DAUGHTERS TO US: THIS PROPOSAL EXPANDS ON THE PREVIOUS ONE. WE MAY ALSO EXPRESS IT, FOR EXAMPLE, “LET MY PEOPLE MARRY YOUR [PLURAL] GIRLS.” TAKE OUR DAUGHTERS FOR YOURSELVES: THAT IS, “LET YOUR PEOPLE MARRY OUR GIRLS.” NOTE THAT TEV CONSIDERS BOTH OF THESE “LET” COMMANDS TO BE INCLUDED IN “LET US MAKE … INTERMARRIAGES BETWEEN OUR PEOPLE AND YOURS.” DEUT 7:3 FORBIDS FOR ISRAELITES OF A LATER PERIOD WHAT HAMOR IS PROPOSING TO JACOB.**

**GENESIS 34:10: YOU SHALL DWELL WITH US: DWELL HAS THE SENSE HERE OF “SETTLE,” “LIVE,” “REMAIN.” SOME INTERPRET HAMOR’S PROPOSAL AS A CONDITIONAL STATEMENT: “IF YOU WILL LIVE WITH US.…” OTHERS TRANSLATE IT AS A DEMAND OR REQUEST FOR FUTURE ACTION: “YOU [PLURAL] WILL LIVE HERE WITH US.…” THESE ARE BOTH POSSIBLE MODELS FOR TRANSLATION. THE LAND SHALL BE OPEN TO YOU [PLURAL]: THIS IS LITERALLY “THE LAND IS BEFORE YOUR [PLURAL] FACE.” THIS IS AN IDIOM AND IS SIMILAR TO ENGLISH “MAKE YOURSELVES AT HOME.” SEE TEV “LIVE ANYWHERE YOU WISH.” SPCL SAYS “THE COUNTRY IS AT YOUR DISPOSAL.” DWELL AND TRADE IN IT: THE WORD RENDERED TRADE BY RSV AND TEV, ACCORDING TO SPEISER AND WESTERMANN, CANNOT MEAN TO BUY AND SELL, AS TRADE SUGGESTS. THAT MEANING IS SAID TO BE A LATER DEVELOPMENT IN HEBREW AND JEWISH ARAMAIC, BASED ON A SIMILAR-SOUNDING NOUN MEANING “MERCHANT,” AS USED IN 23:16. THE VERB RENDERED TRADE MEANT TO CIRCLE OR GO IN AN IRREGULAR COURSE. THIS SENSE IS SUPPORTED BY THE KOEHLER-BAUMGARTNER LEXICON AS “MOVE FREELY THROUGHOUT THE LAND.” NEB/REB TRANSLATE “MOVE ABOUT FREELY,” AND THIS IS RECOMMENDED TO TRANSLATORS. FOR THIS CLAUSE AND THE PREVIOUS ONE, SOME TRANSLATIONS HAVE “YOU CAN TRAVEL AND STAY ANYWHERE YOU LIKE IN THIS COUNTRY.” GET PROPERTY IN IT TRANSLATES A VERB WHOSE BASIC MEANING IS TO “GRASP,” “TAKE POSSESSION.” IN THIS CONTEXT IT REFERS TO ACQUIRING OR OWNING LAND OR PROPERTY. SEE NEB/REB “ACQUIRE LAND OF YOUR OWN.” WE MAY ALSO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “BECOME LAND OWNERS” OR “OWN YOUR OWN LAND.”**

**GENESIS 34:11: SHECHEM ALSO SAID: SHECHEM WAS NOT MENTIONED AS ACCOMPANYING HIS FATHER TO THESE NEGOTIATIONS IN VERSE 6. HOWEVER, IT IS CLEAR IN VERSE 11 THAT HE IS A PARTICIPANT, AND IN SOME LANGUAGES, IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO INTRODUCE HIM AS A PARTICIPANT IN VERSE 6. IT IS ALSO POSSIBLE TO MAKE THE SITUATION CLEAR AT THIS POINT BY SAYING, FOR EXAMPLE, “SHECHEM HAD COME WITH HIS FATHER, AND HE NOW SAID.…” SHECHEM’S SPEECH MAKES A BREAK WITH WHAT HAMOR HAS BEEN PROPOSING. WHAT THE SON SAYS GOES BACK TO VERSE 8 AND PICKS UP THE REQUEST TO MARRY DINAH. HE SHOWS NO INTEREST IN HIS FATHER’S PLANS FOR INTERTRIBAL MARRIAGES. HE IS CONCERNED ONLY FOR HIMSELF. TO HER FATHER: THAT IS, “TO DINAH’S FATHER, JACOB.” LET ME FIND FAVOR IN YOUR [PLURAL] EYES: SEE 33:10, 15. SINCE THIS IS A PLEA FOR JACOB AND HIS SONS TO AGREE TO THE MARRIAGE PROPOSAL, SOME TRANSLATIONS MAKE SHECHEM SAY SOMETHING LIKE “IF YOU AGREE TO MY REQUEST” OR “IF YOU ARE HAPPY TO HELP ME IN THIS MATTER.” WHATEVER YOU SAY TO ME I WILL GIVE: BECAUSE OF THE DISCONTINUITY BETWEEN VERSE 11 AND VERSES 9–10, IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO MAKE SHECHEM’S STATEMENT REFER MORE CLEARLY TO THE MARRIAGE PROPOSAL. IF THIS IS NOT DONE IN THE PREVIOUS CLAUSE, WE MAY SAY HERE, FOR EXAMPLE, “WHATEVER YOU ASK FOR DINAH I WILL GIVE IT TO YOU” OR “ASK ANYTHING YOU [PLURAL] WANT FOR YOUR [SINGULAR] DAUGHTER AND YOUR [PLURAL] SISTER AND I WILL GIVE IT TO YOU [PLURAL].”**

**GENESIS 34:12: ASK OF ME EVER SO MUCH AS MARRIAGE PRESENT: ASK OF ME IS LITERALLY “PILE ON ME.” SHECHEM FEELS CONFIDENT THAT HE (SUPPORTED BY HIS FATHER) CAN BEAR THE WEIGHT OF THE DEMANDS THAT WILL BE PUT ON HIM BY DINAH’S FAMILY. IN THE MARRIAGE NEGOTIATION THERE ARE TWO PAYMENTS OR EXCHANGES TO BE MADE BY THE GROOM. MARRIAGE PRESENT (TEV “PAYMENT FOR THE BRIDE”) TRANSLATES THE HEBREW TERM THAT REFERS TO THE BRIDE PRICE THAT WILL BE PAID BY THE GROOM TO THE BRIDE’S FAMILY. THE BRIDE PRICE ENABLES THE TRANSFER OF THE BRIDE FROM HER FATHER’S HOUSEHOLD TO THAT OF THE GROOM. ACCORDING TO EXO 22:16 IF A MAN SEDUCED A GIRL, HE HAD TO PAY THE BRIDE PRICE AS A PENALTY AND MAKE HER HIS LEGAL WIFE. THE MARRIAGE PRESENT IS NOT MONEY OR PROPERTY GIVEN TO THE BRIDE BY HER HUSBAND OR THE HUSBAND’S FAMILY; IT REFERS TO MONEY OR PROPERTY (GOODS, ANIMALS, LAND) THAT IS PASSED FROM THE GROOM (HUSBAND) TO THE FATHER OR FAMILY OF THE BRIDE. GIFT REFERS TO THE PRESENTS THAT WILL BE PRESENTED TO DINAH’S FAMILY. IN 24:53 THE SAME TERM REFERS TO THE GIFTS GIVEN BY ABRAHAM’S SERVANT TO REBEKAH AND TO HER MOTHER AND BROTHER. I WILL GIVE ACCORDING AS YOU SAY TO ME: THIS REPEATS FOR EMPHASIS WHAT SHECHEM HAS ALREADY SAID IN VERSE 11.**

**SOME EXAMPLES OF THE WAY THIS PART OF THE VERSE MAY BE TRANSLATED ARE: (1) “YOU CAN SET THE BRIDE PRICE AND TELL ME WHAT I HAVE TO GIVE YOU. IT DOESN’T MATTER HOW MUCH YOU ASK I WILL GIVE IT TO YOU.” (2) “NAME A BIG BUYING AMOUNT [BRIDE PRICE] AND A BIG PRESENT; I WILL GIVE IT TO YOU, JUST AS YOU SAY.” (3) “YOU TELL ME WHAT PRESENTS YOU WANT ME TO GIVE YOU. AND YOU CAN RAISE THE BRIDE PRICE AS HIGH AS YOU LIKE. IF YOU ARE HAPPY FOR HER TO MARRY ME, I WILL PAY WHATEVER PRICE YOU SET.”**

**ONLY GIVE ME THE MAIDEN TO BE MY WIFE: ONLY, WHICH TRANSLATES THE HEBREW CONNECTIVE, IS USED IN SOME ENGLISH VERSIONS TO EXPRESS SOMETHING EQUIVALENT TO A CONDITION: “I WILL GIVE YOU AS MUCH AS YOU ASK FOR IF YOU WILL GIVE ME THE GIRL TO BE MY WIFE.” IN RSV AND A NUMBER OF OTHER VERSIONS, ONLY SERVES TO EMPHASIZE SHECHEM’S REQUEST AT THE END OF HIS SPEECH, WITH THE SENSE OF “THIS IS THE [ONLY] THING I WANT.” FOR MAIDEN SEE VERSE 3.**

**JACOB’S SONS TAKE REVENGE (34:13–31)**

**IN THE SECOND HALF OF THIS CHAPTER, JACOB’S SONS AVENGE THE WRONG DONE TO THEIR SISTER. THE CONTENT OF THIS PART IS FRAMED BY TWO REFERENCES TO THE RAPE OF DINAH, THE FIRST IN VERSE 13 AND THE LAST IN THE CLOSING RHETORICAL QUESTION IN VERSE 31. THIS PART OF THE STORY IS PRESENTED IN FOUR PARTS: IN VERSES 13–17 JACOB’S SONS TAKE OVER THE NEGOTIATION WITH HAMOR AND SHECHEM AND ACCEPT THEIR PROPOSALS FOR INTERMARRIAGE ON CONDITION THAT ALL THE MALES OF SHECHEM BECOME CIRCUMCISED. IN VERSES 18–24 HAMOR AND SHECHEM CONVINCE THE MEN OF THE CITY TO ACCEPT THE CONDITION LAID DOWN BY JACOB’S SONS. IN VERSES 25–29 SIMEON AND LEVI ATTACK AND KILL ALL THE MALES, RESCUE THEIR SISTER, AND LEAVE. THE OTHER BROTHERS LOOT THE CITY AND CAPTURE THE WIVES AND CHILDREN. IN VERSES 30–31 JACOB, WHO HAS HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH THE REVENGE OF DINAH, FEARS THAT HE AND ALL HIS PEOPLE WILL BE DESTROYED; BUT HIS SONS ARE ONLY CONCERNED THAT THEY HAVE AVENGED THE DISGRACE OF THEIR SISTER.**

**SUBDIVISION HEADING**

**TRANSLATORS WHO WISH TO FOLLOW THE HANDBOOK BY PLACING A HEADING BEFORE VERSE 13 MAY NEED TO MODIFY IT TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “JACOB’S SONS DECEIVE SHECHEM,” “HOW JACOB’S SONS GOT REVENGE FOR DINAH,” OR “JACOB’S SONS DESTROY A TOWN TO AVENGE THEIR SISTER.” BEFORE VERSE 25 NJB HAS “THE TREACHEROUS REVENGE OF SIMEON AND LEVI.”**

**GENESIS 34:13: FROM VERSE 13 THE INITIATIVE IN THE NEGOTIATIONS PASSES TO JACOB’S SONS. THE SONS OF JACOB ANSWERED … DECEITFULLY: ANSWERED IS USED HERE IN THE SENSE OF “REPLY” OR “RESPOND TO” SHECHEM’S GENEROUS OFFER IN VERSE 12. DECEITFULLY IS OFTEN EXPRESSED IN FIGURATIVE TERMS; FOR EXAMPLE, “TO SPEAK WITH TWO TONGUES,” “TO COVER THE EYES WITH LIES,” “TO CAUSE SOMEONE TO TAKE THE WRONG PATH.” WE MAY TRANSLATE WITH SUCH A FIGURE; FOR EXAMPLE, “THE SONS OF JACOB SPOKE WITH TWO TONGUES WHEN THEY REPLIED TO SHECHEM.” BECAUSE HE HAD DEFILED THEIR SISTER DINAH: FOR DEFILED SEE VERSE 5. IN SOME LANGUAGES THE REASON CLAUSE MUST COME BEFORE THE RESULT CLAUSE. IN THESE CASES, WE MAY TRANSLATE VERSE 13, FOR EXAMPLE, “SHECHEM HAD CAUSED DINAH TO SUFFER SHAME, AND SO JACOB’S SONS SPOKE WITH TWO TONGUES WHEN THEY REPLIED TO SHECHEM AND HIS FATHER HAMOR.” SINCE THE SPEECH OF THE BROTHERS DOES NOT BEGIN UNTIL THE NEXT VERSE, SOME TRANSLATIONS FOCUS THE CONTENT OF THIS VERSE ON THEIR THINKING; FOR EXAMPLE, “THE SONS OF JACOB WERE THINKING ABOUT THE BAD THING THAT SHECHEM HAD DONE TO THEIR SISTER DINAH. SO, THEY MADE UP THEIR MINDS TO DECEIVE SHECHEM AND HIS FATHER HAMOR, (14) AND THEY SAID, …”**

**GENESIS 34:14: WE CANNOT DO THIS THING IS A GENERAL STATEMENT WHOSE CONTENT COMES IN THE FOLLOWING CLAUSE. THIS THING REFERS TO GIVING DINAH TO SHECHEM IN MARRIAGE. TRANSLATORS MAY FIND THAT THIS STATEMENT AND THE FOLLOWING MUST BE MADE INTO ONE FOR THE SAKE OF CLARITY; FOR EXAMPLE, “WE CANNOT GIVE OUR SISTER TO ONE WHO IS UNCIRCUMCISED.” SEE TEV. SOME TRANSLATIONS SAY “IT IS HARD [IMPOSSIBLE] FOR US TO DO THIS.” GIVE OUR SISTER MAY NEED TO FILLED OUT TO SAY “LET OUR SISTER MARRY” OR “GIVE OUR SISTER IN MARRIAGE.” UNCIRCUMCISED: SEE 17:10 FOR A DETAILED DISCUSSION OF THIS TERM AND ITS TRANSLATION. SEE ALSO 17:14. FOR THAT WOULD BE A DISGRACE TO US: DISGRACE REFERS TO “SHAME,” “DISHONOR,” “HUMILIATION.” THE WORD IS USED IN THIS SENSE IN SUCH PASSAGES AS 1 SAM 11:2 AND JOB 10:15. IN SOME LANGUAGES DISGRACE IS EXPRESSED IN FIGURATIVE TERMS; FOR EXAMPLE, “THAT WOULD MAKE OUR FACES BURN” OR “THAT WOULD MAKE US LOWER OUR HEADS.” IN SOME LANGUAGES FOR THAT WOULD BE … IS MORE NATURALLY EXPRESSED AS “IF WE DID THAT, WE WOULD HAVE VERY BIG SHAME.”**

**GENESIS 34:15: ONLY ON THIS CONDITION WILL WE CONSENT TO YOU: ONLY IS USED RESTRICTIVELY TO MEAN THAT THE AGREEMENT TO GIVE DINAH TO SHECHEM IS POSSIBLE, PROVIDED THE MALES ACCEPT CIRCUMCISION. ON THIS CONDITION IS LITERALLY “ON THIS.” IT POINTS FORWARD TO THE NEXT PART OF THE VERSE, NAMELY, THAT THE MALES OF SHECHEM AGREE TO BECOME CIRCUMCISED. CONSENT TO YOU MEANS “AGREE TO GIVE YOU OUR SISTER.” THE TRANSLATION OF ONLY ON THIS CONDITION WILL WE … MAY REQUIRE RESTRUCTURING IN SOME LANGUAGES. TWO DIFFERENT EXAMPLES OF SUCH RESTRUCTURING ARE: (1) “YOU MUST DO ONE THING FIRST. YOU MUST CUT.… AFTER THAT WE CAN AGREE TO YOUR REQUEST.” (2) “THERE IS ONLY ONE WAY. IF YOU BECOME LIKE US …, THAT IS WHEN WE WILL AGREE TO.…” THAT YOU [PLURAL] WILL BECOME AS WE ARE: THE MEANING OF AS WE ARE MAY NEED TO BE MADE CLEAR BY SAYING, FOR EXAMPLE, “BECOME CIRCUMCISED LIKE US.” THAT … EVERY MALE OF YOU BE CIRCUMCISED: EVERY MALE INCLUDED ALL MALES FROM INFANTS TO OLD MEN. BE CIRCUMCISED TRANSLATES THE HEBREW PASSIVE. LANGUAGES THAT CANNOT USE A PASSIVE HERE MAY BE ABLE TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “AND SOMEONE WILL CIRCUMCISE EVERY ONE OF YOUR MALES,” OR “THEY WILL CIRCUMCISE EVERY MALE,” OR “YOU [PLURAL] MUST CIRCUMCISE.…”**

**GENESIS 34:16: THEN WE WILL GIVE OUR DAUGHTERS TO YOU: THEN SUGGESTS THAT THESE EVENTS WILL FOLLOW EVENTUALLY AFTER THE CIRCUMCISION OF THE MALES OF SHECHEM. IN SOME LANGUAGES THIS MAY BE EXPRESSED AS “AFTER THAT.…” THE BROTHERS ARE RESPONDING TO THE PROPOSALS MADE BY HAMOR IN VERSE 9. THIS MAY HAVE TO BE STATED AS “AFTER THAT OUR DAUGHTERS WILL BE ALLOWED TO MARRY YOUR PEOPLE [OR, YOUR MEN].” AND WE WILL TAKE YOUR DAUGHTERS TO OURSELVES: THAT IS, “AND WE WILL MARRY YOUR GIRLS” OR “AND OUR PEOPLE WILL MARRY YOUR DAUGHTERS.” WE WILL DWELL … YOU [PLURAL]: SEE HAMOR’S WORDS IN VERSE 10. BECOME ONE PEOPLE IS PROBABLY TO BE TAKEN AS MEANING “FORMING A SINGLE TRIBE.” SO EXTENSIVE WOULD THE INTERMARRIAGES BECOME THAT JACOB’S PEOPLE AND HAMOR’S WOULD DISSOLVE THEIR CULTURAL, POLITICAL, AND RELIGIOUS DIFFERENCES. NOTE THAT HAMOR NEVER MADE SUCH A RADICAL SUGGESTION IN VERSES 8–10. DINAH’S BROTHERS CAN AFFORD TO MAKE SUCH A PROPOSAL, BECAUSE THEY ARE ABOUT TO KILL ALL THE MALES IN SHECHEM AND FORCEFULLY INCORPORATE ALL THE FEMALES INTO THEIR OWN CLAN.**

**GENESIS 34:17: BUT IF YOU WILL NOT LISTEN TO US AND BE CIRCUMCISED: LISTEN TO US REFERS TO THE CONDITION LAID DOWN IN 15 AND MEANS TO AGREE TO OR ACCEPT BEING CIRCUMCISED. IF THE PASSIVE CONSTRUCTION BE CIRCUMCISED CANNOT BE USED IN THE TRANSLATION, IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “IF YOU WILL NOT AGREE TO HAVE THEM [IMPERSONAL AGENT] CIRCUMCISE YOU” OR “IF YOU REFUSE TO UNDERGO CIRCUMCISION.…” IN SOME LANGUAGES THE REPETITION OF AND BE CIRCUMCISED IS BETTER OMITTED IN THIS VERSE: “BUT IF YOU DON’T FOLLOW [OR, OBEY] OUR TALK, THEN WE WILL.…” THEN WE WILL TAKE OUR DAUGHTER EXPRESSES THE CONSEQUENCE OF THE “IF” CLAUSE. SINCE THIS IS THE SPEECH OF JACOB’S SONS, WE EXPECT THEM TO SAY “OUR SISTER,” AS IN VERSE 14. MANY MODERN VERSIONS SAY “OUR SISTER,” “THE GIRL,” OR “HER” (TEV) WITHOUT CONSIDERING THIS A TEXTUAL PROBLEM. IN SOME TRANSLATIONS TAKE OUR DAUGHTER IS EXPRESSED AS A SEQUENCE OF TWO ACTIONS: “WE WILL GET THAT YOUNG WOMAN AND TAKE HER AWAY.…” WE WILL BE GONE: THAT IS, “WE WILL LEAVE, GO AWAY.”**

**GENESIS 34:18: VERSES 18–24 SHIFT THE SCENE BACK TO THE TOWN WHERE HAMOR AND HIS SON PRESENT THE PROPOSAL OF CIRCUMCISION TO THE MEN OF THE TOWN. LIKE GOOD POLITICIANS, HAMOR AND SHECHEM ARE NOT SLOW TO POINT OUT THE MATERIAL ADVANTAGES THE PEOPLE WILL THEN ENJOY. THEIR WORDS PLEASED HAMOR AND … SHECHEM IS LITERALLY “THEIR WORDS WERE GOOD IN THE EYES OF.…” THEIR REFERS TO JACOB’S SONS. WE MAY RENDER THIS STATEMENT, FOR EXAMPLE, “HAMOR AND HIS SON SHECHEM AGREED TO WHAT THEY TOLD THEM TO DO” OR “HAMOR … ACCEPTED THE CONDITION DEMANDED BY JACOB’S SONS.” THIS MAY ALSO BE EXPRESSED IN DIRECT SPEECH: “HAMOR AND … SHECHEM SAID, ‘ALL RIGHT.’”**

**GENESIS 34:19: AND THE YOUNG MAN DID NOT DELAY TO DO THE THING: THE YOUNG MAN REFERS TO SHECHEM. DID NOT DELAY MAY NEED TO BE RESTATED IN A POSITIVE WAY; FOR EXAMPLE, “HURRIED,” “WENT QUICKLY,” “… STRAIGHT AWAY.” THE THING TRANSLATES THE SAME HEBREW ROOT USED FOR “WORDS” IN VERSE 18 AND REFERS BACK TO VERSE 14, WHERE SHECHEM WAS TOLD HE MUST BECOME CIRCUMCISED TO MARRY DINAH. TO DO THE THING IS AN INDIRECT WAY OF SAYING “TO BECOME CIRCUMCISED.” BECAUSE HE HAD DELIGHT IN JACOB’S DAUGHTER: HAD DELIGHT RENDERS A VERB MEANING TO “TAKE PLEASURE IN,” TO “WANT” OR “DESIRE.” SEE TEV. NOW HE WAS THE MOST HONORED OF ALL HIS FAMILY: NOW TRANSLATES THE COMMON HEBREW CONNECTIVE, BUT A TRANSITIONAL SUCH AS “NOW” IS NOT NECESSARILY REQUIRED IN ENGLISH HERE. SEE TEV. THIS SENTENCE MAY BE UNDERSTOOD AS A PARENTHETICAL STATEMENT: IT PROVIDES ADDITIONAL INFORMATION OR COMMENT ABOUT SHECHEM THAT HAS LITTLE TO DO WITH THE STORY LINE. HONORED MEANS HE WAS THE MOST RESPECTED OR THE MOST INFLUENTIAL. OF ALL HIS FAMILY IS LITERALLY “OF HIS FATHER’S HOUSE” AND REFERS TO HIS CLAN OR TO THE EXTENDED FAMILY RELATED TO HAMOR. IN ONE TRANSLATION THIS IS EXPRESSED AS “HE WAS THE SECOND BOSS AFTER HIS FATHER.” SOME TRANSLATIONS RESTRUCTURE VERSE 19. FOR EXAMPLE, REB SAYS “AND THE YOUNG MAN, WHO WAS HELD IN RESPECT ABOVE ANYONE IN HIS FATHER’S HOUSE, DID NOT HESITATE TO DO WHAT THEY [JACOB’S SONS] HAD SAID, BECAUSE HIS HEART HAD BEEN CAPTURED BY JACOB’S DAUGHTER.” ANOTHER MODEL IS SPCL “WITHOUT LOSING ANY TIME, THE YOUNG MAN WAS CIRCUMCISED, BECAUSE THE DAUGHTER OF JACOB HAD PLEASED HIM SO. SINCE SHECHEM WAS THE MOST RESPECTED IN HIS FATHER’S FAMILY, THEY WENT.…” NOTE THAT IN THIS MODEL “HE WAS RESPECTED … FAMILY” BECOMES THE REASON CLAUSE FOR VERSE 20. VERSE 20 MAY THEN BEGIN “HE AND HIS FATHER WENT TO THE ENTRANCE OF THE CITY.…”**

**GENESIS 34:20: THE GATE OF THEIR CITY REFERS TO THE PLACE WHERE PEOPLE GATHERED TO DISCUSS EVENTS AND TO HOLD COURT. SEE 19:1. MANY TRANSLATIONS SAY IN THIS CONTEXT “WENT TO THE MEETING PLACE AT [NEAR] THE GATE.” IF A TERM FOR CITY IS USED IN TRANSLATION, IT SHOULD NOT MAKE READERS THINK OF A HUGE PLACE LIKE CITIES IN THE MODERN WORLD. THE WORD “TOWN” (SPEISER, NJB, REB) IS MUCH MORE APPROPRIATE IN ENGLISH. THE MEN OF THEIR CITY: THE NARRATOR PROBABLY MEANS THAT CERTAIN KEY MEN OF THE CITY WOULD BE INVOLVED. SPEISER CALLS THEM “THEIR TOWN COUNCIL.” HOWEVER, THE HEBREW TEXT DOES NOT REQUIRE THIS SENSE, AND TRANSLATORS MAY TAKE ACCOUNT OF CUSTOM IN THEIR OWN SITUATION; SOME SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “SPOKE TO ALL THEIR COUNTRYMEN” OR “… TO THE OTHER MEN OF THE TOWN.”**

**GENESIS 34:21: THESE MEN ARE FRIENDLY WITH US: THESE MEN REFERS TO JACOB AND HIS SONS. FRIENDLY TRANSLATES AN ADJECTIVAL FORM OF THE HEBREW SHALOM AND EXPRESSES THEIR PEACEFUL AND FRIENDLY INTENTIONS, AS MISUNDERSTOOD BY HAMOR AND HIS SON. IN SOME LANGUAGES A PEACEFUL AND FRIENDLY ATTITUDE IS EXPRESSED SIMPLY AS “ARE GOOD PEOPLE” OR “ARE A GOOD GROUP.” LET THEM DWELL IN THE LAND: TRANSLATORS WILL NOTICE THAT WITH US IS LINKED IN RSV TO FRIENDLY. HOWEVER, IN TEV WITH US IS CONNECTED TO LIVE IN THE LAND. THE REASON FOR THE DIFFERENCE IS THAT TEV FOLLOWS THE SEPTUAGINT AND THE SAMARITAN PENTATEUCH. HOTTP, WHICH ACKNOWLEDGES SOME DEGREE OF DOUBT IN THE HEBREW TEXT, RECOMMENDS THE TRANSLATION OF RSV. AND TRADE IN IT: FOR TRADE SEE THE RECOMMENDATION IN VERSE 10. THE LAND IS LARGE ENOUGH FOR THEM IS LITERALLY “THE LAND IS WIDE ON BOTH HANDS.” WESTERMANN SAYS CONCERNING THIS EXPRESSION THAT IT “IMAGINES THAT THE ARMS ARE STRETCHED OUT ON BOTH SIDES TO INDICATE THE EXTENT OF THE LAND.” LET US TAKE … GIVE OUR DAUGHTERS: SEE VERSE 9.**

**GENESIS 34:22: ONLY ON THIS CONDITION … US: SEE VERSE 15. TEV AND MANY OTHER TRANSLATIONS INTRODUCE THIS CONDITION WITH “BUT” TO SIGNAL SOMETHING THAT MAY BE NEGATIVE IN THE MINDS OF THE HEARERS. SUCH A MARKER MAY BE REQUIRED IN OTHER LANGUAGES ALSO; SOME TRANSLATIONS SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “BUT THERE IS ONE THING THEY.…” TO BECOME ONE PEOPLE: SEE VERSE 16. THAT EVERY MALE AMONG US BE CIRCUMCISED: NOTE THAT TEV TRANSLATES AS AN ACTIVE CONSTRUCTION, WHICH WILL BE A HELPFUL MODEL IN MANY LANGUAGES. EVERY MALE IS AS IN VERSE 15. AS THEY ARE CIRCUMCISED MAY NEED TO BE EXPRESSED, FOR EXAMPLE, “AS THEY ALSO ARE” OR “LIKE THEM.” SPCL SAYS “AS THEY ARE ACCUSTOMED TO DO.”**

**GENESIS 34:23: AT THIS POINT HAMOR ASKS A RHETORICAL QUESTION THAT ASSUMES A POSITIVE RESPONSE. IN HIS CONVERSATION WITH JACOB AND HIS SONS, NOTHING WAS SAID ABOUT THE CANAANITES ACQUIRING ALL OF JACOB’S LIVESTOCK, BUT HAMOR KNOWS THAT THE PAIN OF CIRCUMCISION MUST BE OFFSET BY SOME LARGE GAIN. WILL NOT THEIR CATTLE, THEIR PROPERTY AND ALL THEIR BEASTS BE OURS? PROPERTY TRANSLATES A WORD USED HERE FOR THE FIRST TIME IN GENESIS. IT REFERS TO ALL THE THINGS NOT INCLUDED IN CATTLE AND BEASTS. CATTLE REFERS HERE TO LIVESTOCK GENERALLY. BEASTS DOES NOT ADD A SEPARATE CLASS OF ANIMALS BUT IS A WAY OF EXPRESSING THE TOTALITY OF THESE ANIMALS. SPEISER TRANSLATES “… THEIR LIVESTOCK …—ALL THEIR ANIMALS—.…” TEV INCLUDES EVERYTHING IN “ALL THEIR LIVESTOCK AND EVERYTHING ELSE THEY OWN.…” IN SOME LANGUAGES A REPLY TO THE RHETORICAL QUESTION IS REQUIRED: “YES, THEY WILL ALL BE OURS.” IN OTHERS THE QUESTION IS BEST EXPRESSED AS A STATEMENT: “[AND IF WE AGREE …] ALL THEIR ANIMALS AND EVERYTHING ELSE THEY HAVE WILL BE OURS.” ONLY LET US AGREE WITH THEM: ONLY, AS IN VERSE 15, ELIMINATES ALL OTHER REQUIREMENTS. WE MAY SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “ALL WE HAVE TO DO IS TO AGREE TO BE CIRCUMCISED.” AND THEY WILL DWELL WITH US: AS IN VERSE 10.**

**GENESIS 34:24: ALL WHO WENT OUT OF THE GATE OF HIS CITY: SEE ALSO 23:10. THERE ARE TWO INTERPRETATIONS OF THIS EXPRESSION: (1) THAT IT REFERS TO THE MEN CAPABLE OF DEFENDING THE TOWN. (2) THAT IT REFERS TO ALL THE MEN (TEV “CITIZENS”) OF THE TOWN.**

**SPEISER ARGUES FOR THE FORMER MEANING, SAYING THAT THE VERB TRANSLATED WENT OUT IS MILITARY USAGE. ACCORDINGLY, HE AND OTHERS TRANSLATE “ALL THE ABLE-BODIED MEN.” THERE IS LITTLE IF ANY DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THESE TWO UNDERSTANDINGS. HEARKENED TO HAMOR: IN THE HEBREW THIS CLAUSE COMES BEFORE “ALL WHO WENT OUT.…” HEARKENED MEANS “LISTENED TO” AND IN THIS CONTEXT HAS THE SENSE OF “AGREED WITH” OR “ACCEPTED WHAT HAMOR WANTED THEM TO DO.” IN SOME LANGUAGES THIS MAY BE MORE NATURALLY EXPRESSED IN DIRECT SPEECH: “… SAID, ‘YES. WE AGREE WITH YOUR WORDS.’” AND EVERY MALE WAS CIRCUMCISED: ALL WHO WENT OUT OF THE GATE OF HIS CITY IS PARALLEL TO EVERY MALE AND MEANS “ALL THE MALES IN THE CITY.” IN VERSE 25 ALL THE MALES REGARDLESS OF AGE ARE KILLED, AS RSV SAYS. ALL WHO WENT OUT OF THE GATE OF THE CITY (AS REPEATED AT THE END OF VERSE 24) IS NOT REPEATED IN SOME MODERN TRANSLATIONS. SEE TEV. WESTERMANN CONSIDERS IT A SCRIBAL ERROR.**

**GENESIS 34:25: ON THE THIRD DAY, WHEN THEY WERE SORE: THIS ASSUMES THAT ALL THE MALES WERE CIRCUMCISED ON THE SAME DAY. NOTE TEV “THREE DAYS LATER.” WE MAY ALSO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “THREE DAYS AFTER THEY HAD BEEN CIRCUMCISED.” FOR DISCUSSION OF THEY SEE VERSE 24. THE PAIN OR SORENESS IS DUE TO SWELLING WHERE THE FORESKIN OF THE PENIS HAS BEEN REMOVED. AS KIDNER COMMENTS, “CRUDELY PERFORMED, CIRCUMCISION COULD BE QUITE INCAPACITATING, PARTICULARLY AFTER TWO OR THREE DAYS.” TWO OF THE SONS OF JACOB, SIMEON AND LEVI: THESE ARE THE SECOND AND THIRD SONS RESPECTIVELY OF LEAH AND FULL BROTHERS OF DINAH. NOTHING IS SAID REGARDING REUBEN, THE OLDEST BROTHER. TOOK THEIR SWORDS: SWORDS IS USED IN 3:24 AND 27:40. IN CONTRAST WITH THOSE VERSES, HERE THE FOCUS IS ON THE SWORD AS A WEAPON FOR KILLING PEOPLE. IN LANGUAGES IN WHICH THIS INSTRUMENT IS UNKNOWN, IT MAY BE POSSIBLE TO USE A BORROWED TERM, AN EQUIVALENT LOCAL TERM, OR TO SHIFT TO A MORE GENERAL LEVEL AND SAY “TOOK THEIR WEAPONS.” CAME UPON THE CITY UNAWARES: UNAWARES, WHICH MEANS “WITHOUT BEING NOTICED,” “WITHOUT THE PEOPLE BEING AWARE THAT THEY WERE THERE,” IS LITERALLY “IN SECURITY.” SOME UNDERSTAND THAT IT IS THE CITY THAT IS DWELLING SECURELY (BDB). HOWEVER, IF THE CITY WERE SECURE, THE ATTACKERS WOULD NOT HAVE SUCCEEDED. MOST MODERN VERSIONS INTERPRET “IN SECURITY” TO REFER TO THE MANNER IN WHICH THE BROTHERS INVADED THE CITY, NAMELY, “UNOPPOSED,” “WITHOUT ANY RESISTANCE.” SEE TEV “WITHOUT AROUSING SUSPICION.” EXAMPLES OF OTHER TRANSLATIONS ARE “WENT INTO THE TOWN IN A QUIET WAY” AND “WALKED RIGHT INSIDE THE TOWN AND NOBODY PREVENTED THEM.” KILLED ALL THE MALES: SEE THE DISCUSSION CONCERNING WHO IS CIRCUMCISED AND WHO IS KILLED IN VERSE 24. ASIDE FROM THE SORENESS OF THE RECENTLY CIRCUMCISED MEN, THE NARRATOR IS NOT CONCERNED TO EXPLAIN HOW TWO MEN COULD CARRY OUT SUCH A MASSACRE.**

**GENESIS 34:26: THEY SLEW HAMOR … WITH THE SWORD IS LITERALLY “… WITH THE MOUTH OF THE SWORD,” AN EXPRESSION IN WHICH A PART OF AN OBJECT IS USED TO REPRESENT THE WHOLE OBJECT. “MOUTH” REFERS TO THE BLADE OR EDGE OF THE SWORD. THIS EXPRESSION IS USED, FOR EXAMPLE, IN JOB 1:15. IT MAY BE PREFERABLE IN SOME CASES TO AVOID SPEAKING OF THE SWORD AND TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “THEY ALSO KILLED HAMOR AND HIS SON SHECHEM.” TOOK DINAH OUT OF SHECHEM’S HOUSE: DINAH, WHOSE ROLE IS ENTIRELY PASSIVE IN THIS STORY, APPEARS NOW TO HAVE BEEN HELD SINCE THE RAPE IN SHECHEM’S HOUSE. THIS MAY APPEAR STRANGE SINCE NOTHING WAS SAID ABOUT RETURNING HER IN THE MARRIAGE NEGOTIATIONS IN VERSES 14–17. AND WENT AWAY: THIS MEANS “THEY LEFT THE TOWN,” AND AS SOME TRANSLATIONS SAY, “WENT BACK TO THEIR OWN CAMP.”**

**GENESIS 34:27: THE ACTIONS DESCRIBED IN THIS VERSE TOOK PLACE AFTER THE KILLING IN VERSE 26 WAS OVER. A TRANSITION MAY BE REQUIRED IN SOME LANGUAGES TO INDICATE THIS; FOR EXAMPLE, “AFTER SIMEON AND LEVI HAD KILLED ALL THE MEN OF THE TOWN, …” OR “WHEN ALL THOSE MEN WERE DEAD.…” TEV HAS “AFTER THE SLAUGHTER …,” WHICH MAKES A GOOD TRANSITION; BUT THIS EXPRESSION APPEARS TO BE ITS TRANSLATION OF UPON THE SLAIN, SINCE IT MAKES NO FURTHER REFERENCE TO THE DEAD BODIES. THE SONS OF JACOB CAME UPON THE SLAIN: THE ONLY SONS OF JACOB THAT ENTERED THE CITY TO KILL THE MEN WERE SIMEON AND LEVI. IT IS THEREFORE HARDLY NORMAL TO SAY THAT THE SAME TWO SONS WHO KILLED ALL OF THESE MEN OF SHECHEM NOW CAME UPON THE SLAIN, AND SO THIS IS TAKEN TO REFER TO THE “OTHER SONS.” MANY TRANSLATIONS, INCLUDING NRSV, SAY “JACOB’S OTHER SONS.” “OTHER SONS” IS FOUND IN SOME OF THE ANCIENT VERSIONS. IF NO OTHER TRANSITION IS USED, THIS CLAUSE MAY NEED TO BE RESTRUCTURED AS A “WHEN” CLAUSE; FOR EXAMPLE, “WHEN THE OTHER SONS OF JACOB CAME TO THE DEAD BODIES.…” THE SLAIN REFERS TO THE DEAD MEN, THE ONES KILLED BY SIMEON AND LEVI. THE HEBREW WORD IS RELATED TO A VERB MEANING TO PIERCE OR PUNCTURE. THESE BODIES HAD BEEN PIERCED, RUN THROUGH BY SWORDS. CAME UPON MAY SUGGEST IN ENGLISH THAT THEY FOUND THE DEAD BODIES UNEXPECTEDLY. HOWEVER, THE HEBREW MEANS ONLY THAT THEY CAME TO THE BODIES, WITHOUT INDICATING WHETHER THEY KNEW THE BODIES WERE THERE OR NOT. COME UPON IS SOMETIMES USED IN THE SENSE OF HOSTILITY AGAINST SOMEONE, AND THIS SENSE IS POSSIBLE HERE. THERE IS ALSO ANOTHER SIMILAR IDIOM, “FLY UPON” (1 SAM 14:32), WHICH HAS THE SENSE OF LOOTING, AND THAT CAN WELL BE THE MEANING IN THIS CONTEXT. PLUNDERED MEANS TO CARRY AWAY THEIR POSSESSIONS BY FORCE. OTHER ENGLISH WORDS WITH A SIMILAR SENSE ARE “SACK,” “LOOT,” AND “PILLAGE.” BECAUSE THEIR SISTER HAD BEEN DEFILED: THE NARRATOR INSERTS THE REASON FOR THEIR VIOLENT BEHAVIOR. TEV AND OTHER VERSIONS EXPRESS THIS AS AN ACT OF “REPRISAL” OR “REVENGE”; AND THIS WILL BE UNDERSTOOD AS A NATURAL MOTIVE IN MANY PLACES. TWO TYPICAL TRANSLATIONS ARE “TO PAY BACK THEIR BAD BEHAVIOR TO DINAH” AND “… THEY PUNISHED THEM FOR THE BIG SHAME.…” FOR DEFILED SEE VERSE 5.**

**GENESIS 34:28: THEY TOOK, WHICH COMES AT THE END OF THE VERSE IN THE HEBREW, MAY REQUIRE A WORD THAT APPLIES PARTICULARLY TO THIS TYPE OF CONTEXT SUCH AS “LOOT” OR “PLUNDER.” FLOCKS REFERS TO THEIR SHEEP AND GOATS. HERDS REFERS TO THEIR CATTLE. FOR ASSES SEE 22:3. AND WHATEVER WAS IN THE CITY AND IN THE FIELD IS A SUMMARY STATEMENT THAT SAYS “THEY CARRIED AWAY EVERYTHING THEY COULD FIND INSIDE THE TOWN AND OUT IN THE COUNTRY.”**

**GENESIS 34:29: ALL THEIR WEALTH: IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO EMPLOY A VERB AND MAKE WEALTH ITS OBJECT; FOR EXAMPLE, “THEY CARRIED OFF ALL THEIR WEALTH.” WEALTH TRANSLATES A DIFFERENT NOUN HERE THAN THAT USED IN 31:1, BUT THE SENSE IS THE SAME AS THERE. LITTLE ONES REFERS TO SMALL CHILDREN GENERALLY AND INCLUDES BOTH MALES AND FEMALES, IN SPITE OF THE STATEMENT THAT ALL THE MALES WERE KILLED. NOTE IN TEV THAT ENGLISH STYLE PREFERS TO PLACE WOMEN BEFORE CHILDREN. ALL THAT WAS IN THE HOUSES: THAT IS, “THEY LOOTED EVERYTHING THAT WAS IN THEIR HOUSES.” THIS STATEMENT REPEATS IN OTHER WORDS THE MEANING OF “PLUNDERED THE CITY” IN VERSE 27 AND EMPHASIZES THE EXTENT OF THE LOOTING. THEY CAPTURED AND MADE THEIR PREY: CAPTURED RENDERS THE VERB FORM OF THE NOUN “CAPTIVES” USED IN 31:26, WHERE LABAN ACCUSED JACOB OF “CARRYING AWAY HIS DAUGHTERS LIKE CAPTIVES.” HERE JACOB’S SONS CARRY OFF THE WIVES AND CHILDREN AS PRISONERS CAPTURED IN WAR. MADE THEIR PREY TRANSLATES A VERB MEANING TO PLUNDER, WHICH IS TO TAKE BY FORCE. IN TRANSLATION IT MAY BE POSSIBLE TO USE A VERB FOR “CAPTURE” IN RELATION TO THE WIVES AND CHILDREN, AND AN EQUIVALENT FOR “LOOT” FOR THE PLUNDER OF THE WEALTH AND THINGS TAKEN FROM THE HOUSES. FOR EXAMPLE, “JACOB’S SONS LOOTED ALL THEIR WEALTH AND EVERYTHING THAT WAS IN THEIR HOUSES. THEY CARRIED AWAY AS PRISONERS THEIR WIVES AND SMALL CHILDREN.”**

**GENESIS 34:30: IN THIS VERSE JACOB, WHO APPEARS TO HAVE HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH THE MASSACRE AND PILLAGE OF SHECHEM, EXPRESSES HIS FEAR THAT THE LOCAL TRIBES WILL SEEK REVENGE FOR HIS SONS’ MURDEROUS SEXUAL MISCONDUCT. YOU [PLURAL OR DUAL] HAVE BROUGHT TROUBLE ON ME BY MAKING ME ODIOUS: BROUGHT TROUBLE TRANSLATES A VERB MEANING “MADE ME TURBID,” THAT IS, “STIRRED UP” (AS WATER MADE MUDDY). SEE JOSH 6:18; 7:25. THE HEBREW EXPRESSION IS FIGURATIVE FOR CAUSING PAIN, UNHAPPINESS, TROUBLE. MAKE ODIOUS TRANSLATES A VERB FORM MEANING TO CAUSE SOMETHING TO STINK; SEE EXO 5:21 (“OFFENSIVE”); PRO 13:5 (“ACT SHAMEFULLY”). ENGLISH ODIOUS MEANS HATEFUL, THAT IS, “HATED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE COUNTRY.” SEE TEV. VARIOUS ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS SAY “YOU HAVE BROUGHT MY NAME INTO BAD ODOR.” NEB HAS “YOU HAVE MADE MY NAME STINK.” PERIZZITES: SEE 13:7. MY NUMBERS ARE FEW MAY BE RENDERED, FOR EXAMPLE, “I DON’T HAVE MANY MEN” OR “I CAN’T COUNT ON MANY MEN TO FIGHT FOR ME.” IF THEY GATHER … ATTACK ME: THEY REFERS TO THE PEOPLE OF THE LAND, NAMELY, OTHER TRIBES AND CLANS OF CANAANITES AND PERIZZITES. GATHER AGAINST HAS THE SENSE OF UNITING OR JOINING TOGETHER TO FIGHT AGAINST. I SHALL BE DESTROYED: DESTROYED RENDERS A VERB MEANING TO “BE ANNIHILATED,” “EXTERMINATED,” “DONE AWAY WITH.” SPEISER SAYS “WIPED OUT.” BOTH I AND MY HOUSEHOLD: JACOB CONCLUDES BY SAYING WHAT HE MEANS BY “I” IN THE PREVIOUS SENTENCE. THE HEBREW ’ANI UBETHI EXPRESSES THE FINALITY OF IT ALL IN RHYMING FORM. A COMMON TRANSLATION OF THE LAST PART OF THIS VERSE IS “IF THESE TRIBES JOIN TOGETHER AND FIGHT AGAINST US, THEY WILL FINISH US ALL OFF, ME AND ALL MY FAMILY.”**

**GENESIS 34:31: JACOB’S SONS DO NOT RESPOND TO HIS DOOMSDAY FORECAST. THEIR MINDS HAVE NEVER LEFT THE THOUGHT OF THEIR SISTER’S DISGRACE. THEY NOW EXPRESS THEIR FEELINGS IN A RHETORICAL QUESTION. SHOULD HE [SHECHEM] TREAT OUR SISTER AS A HARLOT? TREAT, WHICH RENDERS THE COMMON VERB “TO DO” OR “TO MAKE,” MEANS TO “DEAL WITH,” “HANDLE,” OR “ACT TOWARD HER” AS IF SHE WERE A HARLOT. IN THE HEBREW A SINGLE VERB MEANS “TO BE A HARLOT” AND “TO COMMIT FORNICATION [HAVE ILLICIT SEX].” IN A CONTEXT SUCH AS THIS, A WORD THAT EXPRESSES BAD FEELINGS, LIKE THE ENGLISH WORD “WHORE,” IS MORE SUITABLE THAN HARLOT. ALTHOUGH PROSTITUTION MAY NOT BE PRACTICED LOCALLY, IT IS NEARLY EVERYWHERE WELL KNOWN. THE CHOICE OF A WORD TO TRANSLATE HARLOT MUST BE CAREFULLY WEIGHED SO THAT THE READING OF IT IN PUBLIC DOES NOT CAUSE EMBARRASSMENT. IN SOME LANGUAGES WORDS FOR HARLOT ARE FIGURATIVE EXPRESSIONS; FOR EXAMPLE, “ONE WHO PLAYS THE BITCH [SHE-DOG],” “WOMAN WHO TAKES MEN IN,” “GIRL EVERYBODY SLEEPS WITH,” “WOMAN WHO SELLS HERSELF,” “WOMAN OF THE ROAD.” SEE ALSO COMMENTS ON 38:15. IN TRANSLATION THE RHETORICAL QUESTION MAY HAVE TO TAKE A DIFFERENT FORM; IN SOME LANGUAGES, FOR EXAMPLE, JACOB’S SONS SAY “WHAT? SHOULD WE HAVE LET THEM TREAT OUR SISTER LIKE A PROSTITUTE?” IN SOME LANGUAGES THE RHETORICAL QUESTION MUST BE ANSWERED. IF THE QUESTION FORM IS UNSATISFACTORY, IT MAY BE EXPRESSED AS A NEGATIVE STATEMENT: “HE [SHECHEM] CAN’T TREAT OUR SISTER LIKE A WHORE” OR “WE CAN’T LET THEM DO THAT TO OUR SISTER. SHE ISN’T THE KIND OF GIRL THAT EVERYBODY CAN SLEEP WITH.”**

**GOD SENDS JACOB AND HIS FAMILY TO BETHEL (35:1–15)**

**IN THIS SUBDIVISION GOD ORDERS JACOB AND HIS FAMILY TO GO TO BETHEL. SO, JACOB PURIFIES HIS PEOPLE BY REMOVING THEIR FOREIGN GODS, ALONG WITH OTHER OBJECTS, WHICH HE BURIES NEAR SHECHEM (VERSES 1–4). AS JACOB’S PEOPLE TRAVEL TO BETHEL, GOD CAUSES THE LOCAL PEOPLE TO FEAR THEM, AND SO THEY PASS THROUGH SAFELY. HOWEVER, REBEKAH’S OLD NURSE DIES (VERSES 35:5–8). GOD BLESSES JACOB AND CHANGES HIS NAME TO ISRAEL (VERSES 35:9–10). GOD RENEWS THE PROMISE MADE TO ABRAHAM AND ISAAC (VERSES 11–13). JACOB CONSECRATES THE PLACE WHERE GOD SPOKE TO HIM BY SETTING UP A PILLAR AND NAMING THE PLACE BETHEL (VERSES 14–15).**

**SUBDIVISION HEADING**

**THE HANDBOOK HEADING MAY NEED TO BE REWORDED TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “JACOB AND HIS FAMILY GO TO BETHEL,” “JACOB BUILDS AN ALTAR AT BETHEL,” OR “JACOB HONORS GOD AT BETHEL.” SPCL HAS “GOD BLESSES JACOB AT BETHEL,” FRCL “JACOB LEAVES SHECHEM FOR BETHEL,” AND GECL “JACOB COMES TO BETHEL.”**

**GENESIS 35:1: CHAPTER 35 OPENS WITH JACOB AND HIS PEOPLE LEAVING THE AREA OF SHECHEM. IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO SAY HOW SOON THEY DEPART FOLLOWING THE MASSACRE AND PLUNDER OF SHECHEM. HOWEVER, IT IS GOD WHO TELLS JACOB TO GO. MANY TRANSLATORS WILL WANT TO LINK CHAPTER 35 TO 34 BY SHOWING THAT THE EVENTS IN CHAPTER 35 FOLLOW THOSE IN THE PREVIOUS CHAPTER. NIV SAYS “THEN GOD SAID.…” WE MAY ALSO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “LATER,” “AFTER SOME TIME HAD PASSED,” OR “SOON AFTER THAT.” GOD SAID TO JACOB: THE WORDS THAT FOLLOW ARE IN THE FORM OF A COMMAND, AND THIS WILL INFLUENCE THE WAY SAID IS RENDERED IN SOME LANGUAGES. ARISE, GO UP TO BETHEL: FOR ARISE SEE 13:17. THE VERB GO UP IS THE SAME VERB AS WAS USED IN 13:1, WHERE ABRAHAM CAME EASTWARD FROM EGYPT TO THE NEGEB. IN THIS CASE THE DIRECTION FROM SHECHEM TO BETHEL IS SOUTH AND THE DISTANCE IS ABOUT 30 KILOMETERS (20 MILES; NOTE THEIR LOCATIONS ON THE MAP, PAGE 19); HOWEVER, BETHEL LIES ABOUT 300 METERS (1000 FEET) HIGHER THAN SHECHEM. MORE SIGNIFICANT, HOWEVER, THAN A COMMAND TO GO TO A HIGHER PLACE IS THE FACT THAT THE HEBREW WORD TRANSLATED GO UP IS FREQUENTLY USED IN THE CONTEXT OF A CALL TO UNDERTAKE A PILGRIMAGE OR JOURNEY TO A SACRED PLACE TO CELEBRATE A SPECIAL OCCASION (HERE THE KEEPING OF JACOB’S VOW MADE IN 28:20–22). THIS VERB OCCURS, FOR EXAMPLE, IN PSA 122:1, IN WHICH THE PSALMIST SAYS “LET US GO TO THE HOUSEOF THE LORD!” JACOB WILL REPEAT THE CALL TO MAKE THE PILGRIMAGE IN VERSE 3. DWELL MEANS TO SETTLE, REMAIN, LIVE. FOR ALTAR SEE 8:20. JACOB IS INSTRUCTED BY GOD TO MAKE … AN ALTAR TO THE GOD WHO APPEARED TO YOU.… IN SOME LANGUAGES THIS COMMAND WILL REQUIRE RESTRUCTURING TO MAKE CLEAR THAT GOD IS SPEAKING OF HIMSELF AND NOT OF A DIFFERENT GOD. NOTE THAT TEV SAYS “TO ME, THE GOD WHO APPEARED.…” FRCL MAKES THE REFERENCE TO GOD WHO IS SPEAKING STILL CLEARER BY TRANSLATING “… WHERE YOU WILL BUILD ME AN ALTAR. IT WAS THERE THAT I SHOWED MYSELF TO YOU WHEN YOU.…” MAKE … AN ALTAR TO MAY REQUIRE INDICATING THE PURPOSE OF THE ALTAR; FOR EXAMPLE, “BUILD AN ALTAR TO WORSHIP THE GOD WHO.…” GOD WHO APPEARED … FLED … ESAU: THE REFERENCE IS TO 28:11–17. NOTE THE TRANSLATION OF FRCL ABOVE. IN SOME LANGUAGES THE VERSE IS MADE CLEARER BY MOVING THE LAST CLAUSE TO THE BEGINNING: “I AM GOD WHO APPEARED TO YOU AT BETHEL.… NOW YOU MUST GO BACK THERE AND LIVE THERE. AND YOU MUST MAKE AN ALTAR THERE.…”**

**GENESIS 35:2: IN PREPARATION FOR THE PILGRIMAGE TO BETHEL, JACOB’S CAMP MUST BE PURIFIED. HE NOW ACTS TO MAKE CERTAIN THAT HIS FAMILY AND OTHER PEOPLE ARE PURIFIED AND HAVE NO OTHER GODS WITH THEM. HOUSEHOLD IS LITERALLY “HIS HOUSE” AND REFERS TO HIS FAMILY. ALL WHO WERE WITH HIM REFERS TO HIS SERVANTS AND SLAVES. SINCE THE MASSACRE OF THE MEN IN SHECHEM, THESE WERE NUMEROUS. IN TRANSLATION IT MAY BE DESIRABLE TO SAY SOMETHING LIKE “ALL THE OTHERS WHO WERE WITH HIM” (SPEISER), SINCE THESE PEOPLE WERE IN ADDITION TO THE MEMBERS OF JACOB’S FAMILY. PUT AWAY THE FOREIGN GODS THAT ARE AMONG YOU: PUT AWAY TRANSLATES A VERB FORM MEANING TO “REMOVE,” “DISPOSE OF,” “GET RID OF,” “DO AWAY WITH.” THE PEOPLE DO THIS IN VERSE 4 BY HANDING THESE OBJECTS OVER TO JACOB. FOREIGN GODS PROBABLY REFERS TO THE IMAGES OR IDOLS BROUGHT WITH THE PEOPLE FROM MESOPOTAMIA, OR BROUGHT INTO JACOB’S CAMP AFTER THE LOOTING OF SHECHEM. IN ORDER TO EXPRESS THIS THOUGHT, IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “GODS THAT DO NOT BELONG HERE.” FOR A DISCUSSION OF GODS SEE 31:19. PURIFY YOURSELVES IS A COMMAND THAT THE PEOPLE WASH OR BATHE THEMSELVES TO REMOVE ANY RITUAL IMPURITY THAT WOULD PREVENT THEM FROM ENTERING THE SACRED PRESENCE AT THE SHRINE. SEE EXO 19:10, 14, WHERE IT EVEN INCLUDED WASHING THEIR CLOTHING. IN TRANSLATION WE MAY SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “WASH AND MAKE YOURSELVES CLEAN.” CHANGE YOUR GARMENTS: SEE TEV. THE COMMAND TO CHANGE SHOULD CARRY THE MEANING THAT THE CLOTHES TO BE PUT ON ARE CLEANER THAN THE ONES THE PEOPLE WILL REMOVE. THE COMMAND IS TO PUT ON CLEAN CLOTHES. THE COMMANDS IN THIS VERSE ARE GIVEN BEFORE LEAVING THE CAMP AT SHECHEM. AFTER A THREE-DAY JOURNEY WITH THE ANIMALS, THE CLOTHES OBVIOUSLY WILL NO LONGER BE CLEAN—BUT THEY MUST BE CLEAN TO JOIN IN AT THE START OF THE PILGRIMAGE. FOR PEOPLE IN SOME CULTURES THE COMMAND TO PUT ON CLEAN CLOTHES BEFORE A JOURNEY WILL SEEM SO STRANGE THAT THE SYMBOLIC PURPOSE OF THIS ACTION MUST BE EXPRESSED IN WORDS: “… CLEAN CLOTHES, AS A SIGN THAT YOU HAVE MADE YOURSELVES CLEAN IN THE SIGHT OF GOD.”**

**GENESIS 35:3: THEN LET US ARISE AND GO UP TO BETHEL: ARISE IS THE SAME AS IN VERSE 1. HERE THE SENSE IS “GET READY, PREPARE.” GO UP IS THE SAME AS IN VERSE 1. FOR AN ALTAR TO THE GOD, SEE VERSE 1. ANSWERED ME IN THE DAY OF MY DISTRESS: ANSWERED IN THIS CONTEXT MEANS “HELPED,” OR “HEARD.” IN THE DAY MAY REFER TO THE DAY WHEN JACOB WAS FLEEING FROM ESAU, OR IT MAY BE TAKEN GENERALLY AS “WHEN I WAS IN TROUBLE.” DISTRESS TRANSLATES A NOUN MEANING “SUFFERING,” “PAIN,” “DIFFICULTIES.” THIS MAY REFER TO THE DIFFICULTIES JACOB WAS HAVING WITH ESAU, OR TO THOSE HE HAD LATER WITH LABAN. HAS BEEN WITH ME WHEREVER I HAVE GONE AFFIRMS THAT GOD HAS DONE FOR JACOB WHAT HE ASKED IN 28:20.**

**GENESIS 35:4: SO, THEY GAVE TO JACOB ALL THE FOREIGN GODS THAT THEY HAD: RSV AND TEV TRANSLATE THE HEBREW CONNECTIVE AS SO TO EXPRESS THE RESULT OF JACOB’S DEMAND IN VERSE 3. OTHER ENGLISH VERSIONS BEGIN VERSE 4 WITH “THEN” OR MAKE NO LOGICAL CONNECTION WITH VERSE 3. THEY GAVE IS IN RESPONSE TO JACOB’S ORDERS; AND IN SOME LANGUAGES GAVE MAY NEED TO BE EXPRESSED BY A VERB MEANING “HANDED OVER,” “GAVE UP,” “SURRENDERED.” FOR FOREIGN GODS SEE VERSE 2. THE RINGS THAT WERE IN THEIR EARS: NOTHING WAS SAID IN VERSE 2 ABOUT GETTING RID OF EARRINGS OR OTHER ORNAMENTS WORN BY THE WOMEN. INTERPRETERS UNDERSTAND THESE EARRINGS TO BE RELIGIOUS OBJECTS, PERHAPS AMULETS OR MAGICAL CHARMS. JACOB HID THEM UNDER THE OAK WHICH WAS NEAR SHECHEM: UNDER IS TO BE UNDERSTOOD AS UNDER THE BRANCHES AND NOT BENEATH THE TRUNK OF THE TREE. HID IN THIS CONTEXT MEANS HE BURIED THEM. THE REFERENCE APPEARS TO BE TO THE OAK OR TEREBINTH OF MOREH ASSOCIATED WITH ABRAHAM IN 12:6.**

**GENESIS 35:5: FOLLOWING THE MASSACRE AT SHECHEM IN CHAPTER 34, IT IS NATURAL THAT JACOB AND HIS SONS WOULD EXPECT RETALIATION FROM THE CANAANITES. SEE 34:30. SOME INTERPRETERS HOLD THAT VERSE 5 IS THE CONCLUSION OF CHAPTER 34, AND MFT PLACES IT AFTER 34:29. TRANSLATORS ARE ADVISED TO FOLLOW THE ORDER OF RSV AND TEV. AS THEY JOURNEYED: THE HEBREW VERB HERE REFERS TO PULLING UP TENT PEGS, A FIGURATIVE WAY OF REFERRING TO BREAKING CAMP, OR GETTING READY TO MOVE. WE MAY TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “AS THEY WERE PREPARING TO LEAVE,” “… WERE BREAKING UP CAMP,” “… BEGINNING THE JOURNEY TO BETHEL.” A TERROR FROM GOD: THIS EXPRESSION REFERS TO THE PANIC OR PARALYZING FEAR THAT ARISES IN THE HEARTS OF PEOPLE WHEN THEY LEARN THAT THEIR ENEMIES HAVE HAD A GREAT SUCCESS IN BATTLE. THE EXPRESSION COMES FROM THE CARRYING OUT OF HOLY WARS AS SEEN IN EXO 23:27 AND JOSH 10:10 (“PANIC”). SEE ALSO 1 SAM 14:15; 2 CHR 14:14. GOD IS ’ELOHIM AND IS USED HERE IN A DESCRIPTIVE SENSE, MEANING “EXCEEDINGLY GREAT,” AS WAS POINTED OUT IN 30:8. ACCORDINGLY TEV SAYS “GREAT FEAR,” AND THIS IS THE USAGE RECOMMENDED BY THE HANDBOOK. HOWEVER, MANY MODERN TRANSLATIONS PREFER TO RETAIN GOD AS THE SOURCE OF THE TERROR. SO THAT THEY DID NOT PURSUE THE SONS OF JACOB: PURSUE IN THIS CONTEXT MEANS TO “ATTACK,” “GO AFTER,” “GET REVENGE.” THE SONS OF JACOB ARE MENTIONED HERE AS THE ONES WHO KILLED AND LOOTED IN SHECHEM. NOTE HOW TEV SHIFTS JACOB’S SONS TO THE BEGINNING OF THE VERSE AND SAYS HERE “DID NOT PURSUE THEM.” TRANSLATORS MAY FIND THIS A SUITABLE MODEL.**

**GENESIS 35:6: AND JACOB CAME TO LUZ (THAT IS, BETHEL): THE OPENING OF VERSE 6 MAY REQUIRE A TRANSITION SUCH AS “LATER” OR “IN A FEW DAYS.” FOR LUZ AND ITS RELATION TO BETHEL, SEE COMMENTS ON 28:19. IN THAT VERSE IT WAS EXPLAINED THAT THE OLDER NAME OF THE PLACE WAS LUZ OR, AS TEV SAYS, “LUZ, WHICH IS NOW KNOWN AS BETHEL.” THIS IS A GOOD TRANSLATION MODEL. WHICH IS IN THE LAND OF CANAAN: LAND MAY BE TRANSLATED “COUNTRY” OR “REGION.” THERE MAY BE A PROBLEM HERE IN SOME LANGUAGES, BECAUSE THIS CLAUSE IS TAKEN TO MEAN THAT THE DESTINATION BETHEL IS IN A DIFFERENT COUNTRY OR REGION FROM SHECHEM, WHERE THE JOURNEY STARTS. IF THIS IS THE CASE TRANSLATORS MAY HAVE TO SAY SOMETHING LIKE “… ALSO IN THE REGION OF CANAAN” OR “… STILL WITHIN THE COUNTRY OF CANAAN.” SINCE THERE ARE THREE PLACE NAMES TOGETHER HERE, SOME ADJUSTMENTS MAY BE REQUIRED TO LINK THEM IN A MEANINGFUL WAY. WE MAY SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “HE ARRIVED IN THE PLACE CALLED LUZ, ALSO CALLED BETHEL, IN THE REGION OF CANAAN” OR “… TO THE PLACE CALLED LUZ IN THE COUNTRY OF CANAAN. THAT PLACE HAS ANOTHER NAME NOW, BETHEL.” HE AND ALL THE PEOPLE WHO WERE WITH HIM: THIS CLAUSE MAY NEED TO BE SHIFTED FORWARD TO THE BEGINNING OF THE VERSE. FOR EXAMPLE, “JACOB AND HIS PEOPLE CAME.…”**

**GENESIS 35:7: AND THERE HE BUILT AN ALTAR: THERE MEANS AT BETHEL. FOR EL-BETHEL SEE 31:13. MOST MODERN VERSIONS HANDLE THIS NAME IN ONE OF TWO WAYS. SOME, LIKE RSV, SAY EL-BETHEL AND MAY GIVE A NOTE SAYING “GOD OF BETHEL.” OTHERS USE “GOD OF BETHEL” IN THE TEXT AND MAY ADD A FOOTNOTE GIVING THE HEBREW FORM, AS IN THE TEXT OF RSV. GECL KEEPS BOTH FORMS IN ITS TEXT BY SAYING “EL-BETH-EL [GOD OF BETH-EL].” TRANSLATORS MAY FOLLOW ANY OF THESE MODELS. HOWEVER, TEV HAS THE ADVANTAGE OF AVOIDING AT LEAST PART OF THE HEBREW FORM. BECAUSE THERE, GOD HAD REVEALED HIMSELF … HIS BROTHER: THERE REFERS TO BETHEL. REVEALED TRANSLATES A VERB WHOSE BASIC MEANING IS TO “UNCOVER” OR “REMOVE.” IN THE REFLEXIVE FORM, AS IT IS HERE, IT MEANS TO UNCOVER YOURSELF AND SO TO EXPOSE YOUR NAKEDNESS. HOWEVER, IN REGARD TO GOD IT MEANS TO “SHOW,” “DISCLOSE,” “MAKE HIMSELF SEEN.” WE MAY ALSO TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “BECAUSE GOD HAD APPEARED TO JACOB.” IN SOME LANGUAGES IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO RESTRUCTURE THE CLAUSE ORDER OF THIS VERSE SO THAT THE REASON IS PLACED BEFORE THE RESULT. FOR EXAMPLE, “WHEN HE WAS RUNNING AWAY FROM HIS BROTHER, GOD APPEARED TO HIM AT THIS PLACE. THAT IS WHY HE NAMED IT BETHEL. HE ALSO BUILT AN ALTAR THERE.”**

**GENESIS 35:8: IN 24:59 REBEKAH, JACOB’S MOTHER, DEPARTED FROM MESOPOTAMIA WITH HER NURSE TO JOIN ISAAC IN CANAAN. BUT THE NAME OF HER NURSE WAS NOT GIVEN THERE. ACCORDING TO 25:20 ISAAC WAS FORTY YEARS OLD WHEN HE MARRIED REBEKAH, AND ACCORDING TO 35:28 ISAAC WAS ONE HUNDRED AND EIGHTY WHEN HE DIED. THEREFORE, NEARLY ONE HUNDRED AND FORTY YEARS HAVE PASSED SINCE REBEKAH’S NURSE WAS MENTIONED. ADMITTEDLY IT IS SURPRISING THAT WE SHOULD DISCOVER THAT REBEKAH’S OLD NURSE IS WANDERING ABOUT WITH JACOB’S CAMP AND NOT ATTACHED TO ISAAC’S FAMILY. THE PROBLEM HERE IS LINKED TO THE NAME DEBORAH. FOR ONE THING THE NAME OF THE PROPHETESS DEBORAH IS ASSOCIATED WITH BETHEL IN JUDGES 4:5. IT IS ALSO POSSIBLE, ACCORDING TO VON RAD, THAT THERE WAS A TRADITION REGARDING DEBORAH AS THE NAME OF REBEKAH’S NURSE. IN EITHER EVENT IT SEEMED NATURAL TO THE NARRATOR OR COMPILER TO MAKE A STATEMENT RELATING DEBORAH TO BETHEL. SOME INTERPRETERS BELIEVE THAT VERSE 8 ORIGINALLY BELONGED TO A DIFFERENT CONTEXT, AND THAT IN LATER TIMES IT WAS PLACED HERE. HOWEVER, THERE IS NO EVIDENCE FOR THIS SUGGESTION. REGARDLESS OF THE HISTORY OF OUR TEXT AT THIS POINT, TRANSLATORS MUST RENDER THE TEXT AS WE HAVE IT. SOME TRANSLATORS ATTEMPT TO SEPARATE VERSE 8 BY PLACING IT IN ITS OWN PARAGRAPH. OTHERS TRY TO GIVE A HINT THAT DEBORAH HAD MOVED FROM ISAAC’S CAMP TO JACOB’S AT SOME STAGE; FOR EXAMPLE, “DEBORAH, WHO HAD BEEN REBEKAH’S NURSE” (NJB). ANOTHER TRANSLATION THAT GIVES A LITTLE MORE INFORMATION SAYS “THE OLD WOMAN DEBORAH, WHO CARED FOR ISAAC’S WIFE REBEKAH WHEN REBEKAH WAS A CHILD.…” FOR NURSE SEE 24:59. UNDER AN OAK MEANS IN THE GROUND UNDER THE BRANCHES OF THE TREE, NOT UNDER THE TRUNK OF THE TREE. FOR OAK SEE 12:6. BELOW BETHEL MEANS NEARBY AT A LOWER ELEVATION THAN BETHEL, WHICH TEV TAKES TO BE “SOUTH OF BETHEL.” THE PRIMARY SENSE IS NEARNESS. THE NAME OF IT WAS CALLED ALLON-BACUTH: IT REFERS TO THE BURIAL PLACE BENEATH THE TREE. AS IN THE CASE OF BETHEL, TRANSLATIONS DIFFER. SOME RETAIN THE HEBREW FORM IN THE TEXT AND MAY GIVE A FOOTNOTE EXPLAINING THE HEBREW WORDS, AS IN RSV. PROBABLY LESS DIFFICULT FOR READERS IS TEV, WHICH TRANSLATES THE MEANING IN ITS TEXT.**

**GENESIS 35:9: VERSES 35:9–11 PRESENT A SECOND VERSION OF THE CHANGE OF JACOB’S NAME TO ISRAEL. FOR THE EARLIER ONE SEE 32:28. GOD APPEARED TO JACOB AGAIN, WHEN HE CAME FROM PADDAN-ARAM: AGAIN, MAY REFER TO THE EARLIER EXPERIENCES AT MAHANAIM IN 32:1–2 AND AT PENIEL IN 32:29–30. IN TRANSLATION IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO MAKE CLEAR WHERE JACOB HAS RETURNED TO; FOR EXAMPLE, “GOD APPEARED TO JACOB AGAIN, WHEN HE RETURNED TO BETHEL FROM MESOPOTAMIA.” IT MAY ALSO BE MORE NATURAL TO PLACE THE “WHEN” CLAUSE AT THE BEGINNING. BLESSED HIM: IN VERSES 10–12 THE CONTENT OF THE BLESSING IS IN THE CHANGE OF JACOB’S NAME AND IN THE RENEWAL OF THE PROMISE MADE TO HIS GRANDFATHER AND FATHER. THEREFORE, IN TRANSLATION IT IS BEST TO LINK THE BLESSING TO WHAT GOD SAYS TO JACOB. WE MAY DO THIS BY SAYING, FOR EXAMPLE, “GOD WAS GOOD TO JACOB, AND SO HE SAID TO HIM, …” IN SOME LANGUAGES BLESSED IN THIS CONTEXT MAY BE EXPRESSED IN FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE; FOR EXAMPLE, “GOD SHOWED HIS GOOD HEART TO JACOB” OR “GOD PLACED GOOD [THINGS] UPON JACOB WHEN HE SAID TO HIM.…”**

**GENESIS 35:10: IN CONTRAST TO RSV AND TEV, SOME VERSIONS PLACE GOD’S SPEECH IN POETICALLY INDENTED LINES TO REFLECT THE PARALLELISM. NOTE THAT GOD’S SPEECH TO ABRAHAM OPENED IN 17:1 AND CLOSED IN 17:22 IN NEARLY THE SAME MANNER AS HERE IN VERSES 11 AND 13. YOUR NAME IS JACOB … NO LONGER CALLED JACOB: COMPARE THIS WITH THE CHANGE OF ABRAM’S NAME TO ABRAHAM IN 17:5. NOTE THAT TEV CONSIDERS THE NEGATIVE NO LONGER … JACOB AS REDUNDANT, SINCE IT DOES NOT ATTEMPT TO RETAIN THE PARALLELISM.**

**TRANSLATORS WHO WISH TO USE A POETIC FORMAT MAY SAY SOMETHING LIKE THE FOLLOWING: • “THEY CALL YOU BY THE NAME JACOB, BUT THEY WILL CALL YOU JACOB NO MORE. NOW THEY WILL CALL YOU ISRAEL.”**

**SO. HIS NAME IS CALLED ISRAEL: RSV AND TEV RENDER THE HEBREW CONNECTIVE AS SO, SUGGESTING A CONSEQUENCE. NOTE THAT TEV TRANSLATES THE VERB AS AN ACTIVE CONSTRUCTION, WITH GOD AS THE SUBJECT. THIS LINE IS A CONCLUSION REFERRING BACK TO WHAT GOD HAS JUST SAID; IT IS NOT INCLUDED IN GOD’S SPEECH BUT IS A COMMENT OF THE NARRATOR. IN MANY LANGUAGES THIS KIND OF CONCLUSION BEGINS “IN THAT WAY GOD …” OR “THAT IS HOW GOD.…” TRANSLATORS SHOULD NOTE THAT, APART FROM A FEW SPECIAL CASES, TEV DOES NOT USE “ISRAEL” WHEN JACOB IS REFERRED TO BY THIS NAME IN HEBREW. SWITCHING BACK AND FORTH BETWEEN “ISRAEL” AND “JACOB” AS THE HEBREW TEXT DOES MAY CREATE CONFUSION FOR THE READERS. SEE COMMENTS ON VERSE 21.**

**GENESIS 35:11: IN VERSES 11 AND 12 GOD’S SPEECH CONTINUES WITH THE PROMISE OF DESCENDANTS AND THE LAND. GOD SAID TO HIM INTRODUCES THE SECOND PART OF THE SPEECH. GOD ALMIGHTY TRANSLATES ’EL SHADDAI, WHICH WAS USED IN 17:1 AND IN 28:3 IN A CONTEXT SIMILAR TO THE PRESENT ONE. SEE 17:1 FOR THE MEANING OF THIS EXPRESSION AND ITS TRANSLATION. BE FRUITFUL AND MULTIPLY: SEE 1:22, 28. THE SAME WORDS WERE SPOKEN TO NOAH IN 8:17; 9:1, 7. SEE ALSO 28:3. JACOB HAS BEEN VERY FRUITFUL; HE IS NOW EXPECTING BENJAMIN, HIS TWELFTH SON. A NATION AND A COMPANY OF NATIONS: FOR THE SENSE OF NATION SEE 12:2. COMPANY OF NATIONS MEANS AN ASSEMBLY OR GATHERING OF NATIONS, WHICH IS COMMONLY EXPRESSED AS “MANY NATIONS.” SHALL COME FORTH FROM YOU MEANS THAT THE DESCENDANTS OF JACOB WILL BECOME MANY NATIONS. SEE 18:18. AND KINGS SHALL SPRING FROM YOU IS LITERALLY “KINGS FROM YOUR LOINS SHALL GO FORTH.” SEE TEV FOR AN ADEQUATE TRANSLATION MODEL. WE MAY ALSO SAY “KINGS WILL BE AMONG YOUR DESCENDANTS” OR “SOME OF YOUR DESCENDANTS WILL BE KINGS.”**

**GENESIS 35:12: THE LAND WHICH I GAVE TO ABRAHAM AND ISAAC I WILL GIVE TO YOU: THIS REFERS TO THE PROMISE MADE TO ABRAHAM IN 17:8 AND TO ISAAC IN 26:3. A LITERAL RENDERING OF GAVE MAY BE A PROBLEM IN SOME LANGUAGES, SINCE IT MAY HAVE THE SENSE THAT ABRAHAM AND ISAAC ACTUALLY BECAME THE OWNERS OF THE LAND. IF THIS IS THE CASE, A TRANSLATION SUCH AS “I WILL GIVE YOU THE LAND THAT I PROMISED ABRAHAM AND ISAAC” MAY BE REQUIRED. FOR THOSE WHO ARE ABLE TO CAPTURE SOME OF THE POETIC PARALLELISM IN VERSES 11–12, WE MAY SUGGEST A SAMPLE IN ENGLISH: “I AM GOD ALMIGHTY. HAVE MANY CHILDREN; YOUR CHILDREN WILL BECOME MANY NATIONS; AND SOME OF YOUR CHILDREN WILL BE THEIR KINGS. THE LAND I GAVE TO ABRAHAM AND TO ISAAC THAT LAND I GIVE NOW TO YOU, AND TO YOUR CHILDREN AFTER YOU I GIVE THIS LAND.”**

**GENESIS 35:13: THEN GOD WENT UP FROM HIM: SEE 17:22 FOR THE SAME EXPRESSION AFTER GOD’S SPEECH TO ABRAHAM. IN THE PLACE WHERE HE HAD SPOKEN WITH HIM: THESE SAME WORDS ALSO OCCUR IN VERSE 14. NOTE THAT TEV DOES NOT TRANSLATE THEM IN VERSE 13. SOME INTERPRETERS ARGUE THAT THESE WORDS WERE COPIED FROM VERSE 14 AND DO NOT BELONG HERE. THEY ARE LACKING IN THE VULGATE. NEB/REB ALSO OMIT THEM. HOWEVER, HOTTP RATES THEM AS {A} AND RECOMMENDS THAT THEY NOT BE OMITTED FROM VERSE 13. WESTERMANN ARGUES THAT THE COMPILER USES THESE WORDS TO EMPHASIZE “THAT THE REVELATION AT BETHEL TOOK PLACE AT HIS [JACOB’S] RETURN FROM PADDAN-ARAM.” IF THE REPETITION OF THIS PHRASE IS A PROBLEM, TRANSLATORS MAY FOLLOW TEV.**

**GENESIS 35:14: AND JACOB SET UP A PILLAR IN THE PLACE WHERE … HIM: FOR SET UP A PILLAR SEE 28:18; 31:45. A PILLAR OF STONE IS A FURTHER MODIFICATION OF THE PILLAR AND MAY BE HANDLED BEST IN TRANSLATION BY SAYING “SET UP A STONE PILLAR.” SEE TEV. HE POURED OUT A DRINK OFFERING: DRINK OFFERING RENDERS A NOUN RELATED TO THE VERB MEANING TO “POUR”; LITERALLY “HE POURED A POURING.” A DRINK OFFERING IS A LIBATION OR OFFERING OF A LIQUID THAT IS USED AS A DRINK. WE MAY ASSUME THAT IT IS WINE, AND THAT THE OIL IS OLIVE OIL. DRINK OFFERING IS USED, FOR EXAMPLE, IN RELATION TO PAGAN RITES IN ISA 57:6 AND JER 7:18. SEE ALSO 2 KGS 16:13. POURED OIL ON IT: POURED IS THE SAME VERB AS USED IN 28:18, WHERE JACOB POURED OIL THE FIRST TIME, HE SET UP A PILLAR AT BETHEL. POURING THE DRINK OFFERING AND THE OIL ON THE STONE IS A RITUAL WHOSE PURPOSE IS, AS TEV INDICATES, “TO CONSECRATE IT.” TO CONSECRATE MEANS TO DEDICATE, OR SET ASIDE SOMETHING FOR THE WORSHIP OF GOD. FRCL TRANSLATES “JACOB SET UP THERE A STONE AND POURED OIL AND AN OFFERING OF WINE ON IT TO MAKE IT A SACRED STONE.” WE MAY ALSO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “JACOB SET UP A STONE AND POURED WINE AND OIL ON IT TO SET THAT PLACE ASIDE [OR, MAKE IT TABOO] FOR WORSHIPING GOD.”**

**GENESIS 35:15: SO, JACOB CALLED THE NAME OF THE PLACE … BETHEL: SO, WHICH INTRODUCES A LOGICAL CONSEQUENCE, DOES NOT FOLLOW FROM VERSE 14. THE HEBREW IS THE USUAL CONNECTIVE, SERVING AS A MARKER OF SEQUENCE. MOST ENGLISH VERSIONS HAVE NO CONNECTOR AT ALL. HOWEVER, IT IS POSSIBLE TO RESTRUCTURE VERSE 15 AND FORMULATE A CONSEQUENCE; FOR EXAMPLE, “GOD HAD SPOKEN TO JACOB AT THIS PLACE; SO, HE NAMED IT BETHEL.” IN MANY LANGUAGES IT WILL BE BETTER NOT TO LINK VERSE 15 DIRECTLY TO VERSE 14 BUT TO MAKE VERSE 15 THE CONCLUSION OF THE FIRST SEGMENT OF CHAPTER 35.**

**RACHEL DIES IN CHILDBIRTH (35:16–21)**

**THIS SUBDIVISION PRESENTS THE BIRTH OF BENJAMIN AND THE DEATH OF HIS MOTHER, RACHEL. JACOB AND HIS PEOPLE LEAVE BETHEL AND TRAVEL SOUTH TOWARD BETHLEHEM. ON THE WAY RACHEL GIVES BIRTH TO BENJAMIN, BUT THE BIRTHING IS DIFFICULT, AND RACHEL DIES (VERSES 16–18). RACHEL IS BURIED BY THE ROADSIDE, AND JACOB SETS UP A STONE TO MARK HER GRAVE (VERSES 19–20). THEN JACOB MOVES HIS CAMP BEYOND THE TOWER OF EDER (VERSE 21).**

**SUBDIVISION HEADING**

**THE HANDBOOK HEADING MAY NEED TO BE REWORDED TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “THE DEATH OF RACHEL AND THE BIRTH OF BENJAMIN” OR “RACHEL DIES AND BENJAMIN IS BORN.” FRCL HAS “THE BIRTH OF BENJAMIN AND THE DEATH OF RACHEL,” SPCL “THE DEATH OF RACHEL,” GECL “RACHEL DIES AT BENJAMIN’S BIRTH,” NIV (VERSES 16–29) “THE DEATH OF RACHEL AND ISAAC.”**

**GENESIS 35:16: THEN THEY JOURNEYED FROM BETHEL: THEN TRANSLATES THE HEBREW CONNECTIVE, WHICH MAY ALSO BE EXPRESSED AS “AFTER THAT,” OR “LATER.” THEY REFERS TO JACOB AND HIS PEOPLE AND MAY NEED TO BE EXPRESSED IN THIS WAY. JOURNEYED MEANS THEY LEFT BETHEL AND WERE GOING TO A NEW DESTINATION. WHEN THEY WERE STILL SOME DISTANCE FROM EPHRATH IS LITERALLY “THERE WAS STILL A STRETCH OF LAND TO GO TO EPHRATH.” THE DISTANCE FROM BETHEL SOUTH TO EPHRATH (BETHLEHEM, ACCORDING TO VERSE 19) IS ABOUT 28 KILOMETERS (18 MILES). WE MAY TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “WHILE THEY WERE STILL A SHORT DISTANCE FROM EPHRATH.” EPHRATH IS IDENTIFIED WITH BETHLEHEM IN VERSE 19 AND IN 48:7. SEE ALSO RUTH 4:11; MICAH 5:2. HOWEVER, IN 1 SAM 10:2 THE TOMB IS IN THE TERRITORY OF BENJAMIN AT ZELZAH. RACHEL TRAVAILED: TRAVAILED TRANSLATES THE FORM OF THE VERB “TO GIVE BIRTH” THAT MEANS “SHE WAS BEGINNING TO GIVE BIRTH.” REB SAYS “RACHEL WAS IN LABOUR,” NEB “RACHEL WENT INTO LABOUR.” IN SOME LANGUAGES THIS EVENT IS EXPRESSED AS “BEGAN TO HAVE THE PAINS OF BIRTH.” AND SHE HAD HARD LABOR IS IN THE HEBREW “AND SHE HAD HARD LABOR IN HER BEARING [OF THE CHILD].” SEE TEV. WE MAY ALSO TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “AND HER LABOR [BIRTH PAINS] WAS DIFFICULT” OR “SHE HAD A DIFFICULT BIRTH.”**

**GENESIS 35:17: AND WHEN SHE WAS IN HER HARD LABOR: HARD LABOR IS REPEATED FROM THE PREVIOUS VERSE. FOR STYLISTIC REASONS MANY TRANSLATORS USE A DIFFERENT EXPRESSION HERE. WE MAY SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “WHEN SHE WAS IN THE GREATEST PAIN” OR “WHEN SHE WAS HURTING THE MOST.” THE TEXT DOES NOT ACTUALLY SAY THAT THE BABY WAS BORN AT THIS TIME, BUT THE WORDS OF THE MIDWIFE SHOW THAT IT WAS. IN SOME LANGUAGES THIS IS A NECESSARY PIECE OF INFORMATION; SO, THE TRANSLATION MUST SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “WHEN SHE WAS IN GREAT PAIN HER CHILD WAS BORN; AND THE WOMAN WHO.…” THE MIDWIFE SAID TO HER: MIDWIFE REFERS TO THE WOMAN WHO DELIVERS THE BABY AND CARES FOR THE MOTHER. IN TRANSLATION, IF THERE IS NO SPECIAL TERM FOR THIS PERSON, IT IS POSSIBLE TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “THE WOMAN WHO HELPED HER GIVE BIRTH” OR “THE WOMAN WHO LIFTED THE BABY OUT.” FEAR NOT; FOR NOW, YOU WILL HAVE ANOTHER SON: IN OTHER CONTEXTS, THIS IS USUALLY SPOKEN BY GOD OR AN ANGEL TO A PERSON IN TROUBLE. THE ADMONITION OF THE MIDWIFE IS TO ENCOURAGE RACHEL AND GIVE HER STRENGTH BY TELLING HER THAT SHE HAS A SON. FOR THE USE OF THIS EXPRESSION IN THE SAME KIND OF CIRCUMSTANCES, SEE THE CASE OF THE WIFE OF PHINEHAS IN 1 SAM 4:20. THE MIDWIFE’S WORDS DO NOT REFER TO FUTURE TIME, AS RSV MAY SUGGEST. SHE IS SPEAKING OF THE PRESENT BIRTH: “NOW YOU HAVE ANOTHER SON,” “YOU HAVE GIVEN BIRTH TO ANOTHER BOY,” OR “IT’S ANOTHER BOY!”**

**GENESIS 35:18: AND AS HER SOUL WAS DEPARTING (FOR SHE DIED): NOTE THAT TEV AND OTHERS RENDER THE HEBREW CONNECTIVE AS “BUT,” TO CONTRAST WHAT THE MIDWIFE WAS SAYING WITH WHAT WAS HAPPENING TO RACHEL. HER SOUL WAS DEPARTING IS AN IDIOMATIC WAY OF SAYING THAT SHE WAS DYING. THE LITERAL RENDERING IS “HER BREATH GOING FORTH,” WHICH IS RENDERED BY NEB/REB “WITH HER LAST BREATH.” FOR SHE DIED IS PLACED BETWEEN PARENTHESES IN RSV. NOTE THAT TEV PLACES THIS STATEMENT, WITHOUT PARENTHESES, AT THE OPENING OF VERSE 18. SHE CALLED HIS NAME BENONI: THAT IS, “SHE NAMED HIM BENONI.” NOTE THAT RSV AND TEV GIVE THE RECOGNIZED MEANING OF THIS NAME IN THEIR FOOTNOTES. SPEISER SAYS “THE ELEMENT ’ONI MAY SIGNIFY ‘MY VIGOR’ (SEE 49:3), AND THIS SENSE IS SUPPORTED BY THE ORTHOGRAPHY; THE CONTEXT, HOWEVER, FAVORS (AT LEAST SYMBOLICALLY) ‘MISFORTUNE, SUFFERING’ (FROM A DIFFERENT ROOT), AND THIS INTERPRETATION IS PREFERRED BY TRADITION (SEE ALSO HOS 9:4 [“MOURNERS”]).” BUT HIS FATHER CALLED HIS NAME BENJAMIN: HIS FATHER IS JACOB. ACCORDING TO RSV’S FOOTNOTE BENJAMIN MAY MEAN “SON OF THE RIGHT HAND” OR “SON OF THE SOUTH.” WHEN SOMEONE FACES EAST, THE RIGHT HAND IS TOWARD THE SOUTH. NOTE, HOWEVER, THAT TEV SAYS “SON WHO WILL BE FORTUNATE.” THE SENSE OF “FORTUNATE,” “GOOD LUCK” COMES FROM THE BELIEF THAT THE RIGHT HAND IS MORE FAVORABLE THAN THE LEFT HAND. IN TRANSLATION IT IS IMPORTANT TO DRAW ATTENTION TO THE CONTRAST BETWEEN THE TWO NAMES. SOME TRANSLATIONS DO THIS BY SAYING “BUT HIS FATHER GAVE HIM A DIFFERENT NAME …” OR “… JACOB CHANGED THE NAME OF THAT CHILD. HE CALLED HIM BENJAMIN.” THE DIFFERENCE OF MEANING IS MOST OFTEN GIVEN IN FOOTNOTES AS IN RSV AND TEV. HOWEVER, IT IS POSSIBLE TO GIVE THE BASIC DIFFERENCE IN THE TEXT. FOR EXAMPLE, IN ITS TEXT FRCL SAYS AFTER BENONI “WHICH MEANS SON OF SORROW,” AND AFTER BENJAMIN SAYS “SON OF THE RIGHT HAND.” IN ITS FOOTNOTE FRCL HAS “JACOB CHANGES AN UNFAVORABLE NAME (BENONI) TO A FAVORABLE NAME (BENJAMIN), THE RIGHT HAND OFTEN BEING CONSIDERED THE BETTER ONE (SEE PSA 137:5), THE SAME AS WITH THE RIGHT SIDE (PSA 110:5).”**

**GENESIS 35:19: SO, RACHEL DIED: SO, IN RSV EXPRESSES A CONCLUSION. IN SOME TRANSLATIONS THIS IS EXPRESSED IN THE USUAL WAY FOR CONCLUDING A STORY OR EPISODE; FOR EXAMPLE, “THAT WAS HOW RACHEL DIED.…” NOTE THAT TEV PREFERS “WHEN RACHEL DIED.…” AND SHE WAS BURIED ON THE WAY TO EPHRATH: WAS BURIED MUST OFTEN BE EXPRESSED AS AN ACTIVE CONSTRUCTION: “THEY BURIED HER.…” ON THE WAY OR “ON THE ROAD” MAY GIVE THE IMPRESSION THAT THEY BURIED RACHEL IN THE ROAD. NOTE TEV “BESIDE THE ROAD.” NEB/REB HAVE “BY THE SIDE OF THE ROAD.” IN THIS VERSE EPHRATH IS CLEARLY IDENTIFIED AS BETHLEHEM. SEE ALSO 48:7. BETHLEHEM IS NO DOUBT A LATER GLOSS OR EXPLANATION FOR READERS TO BE ABLE TO IDENTIFY EPHRATH. THIS EXPLANATION WOULD HAVE BEEN MORE APPROPRIATE IN VERSE 16, AND SOME TRANSLATORS MAY PREFER TO INSERT IT THERE. IN TRANSLATION WE MAY FOLLOW TEV OR SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “NOW CALLED BETHLEHEM” OR “WHICH IS THE SAME AS BETHLEHEM.”**

**GENESIS 35:20: JACOB SET UP A PILLAR UPON HER GRAVE: FOR SET UP A PILLAR SEE 28:18. THIS MAY BE TRANSLATED “JACOB SET UP A MEMORIAL STONE AT THE PLACE WHERE THEY BURIED HER.” IN LANGUAGE AREAS WHERE GRAVESTONES ARE NOT USED, IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO PROVIDE MORE INFORMATION; FOR EXAMPLE, “JACOB PUT A STONE ON TOP OF HER GRAVE SO THAT PEOPLE WOULD REMEMBER WHERE IT WAS.” IT IS THE PILLAR OF RACHEL’S TOMB MEANS “THIS PILLAR MARKS RACHEL’S TOMB” OR “… SHOWS WHERE RACHEL IS BURIED.” WHICH IS THERE TO THIS DAY: SEE TEV.**

**GENESIS 35:21: ISRAEL JOURNEYED ON: THIS IS THE FIRST USE OF ISRAEL FOR JACOB’S NAME. FOR THE NAME CHANGE FROM JACOB TO ISRAEL, SEE 32:28 AND 35:10. IN SOME LANGUAGES A NAME CHANGE LIKE THIS IN THE COURSE OF NARRATIVE IS QUITE DIFFICULT WITHOUT SOME EXPLANATION. FOR THIS REASON, SOME TRANSLATORS RETAIN THE NAME JACOB THROUGHOUT THE REST OF GENESIS AND INDICATE THE VARIATION IN THE HEBREW TEXT BY MEANS OF A FOOTNOTE. SEE THE COMMENT IN VERSE 10. JOURNEYED TRANSLATES THE SAME VERB AS IN VERSE 16. HERE JACOB AND HIS PEOPLE “CONTINUED ON THEIR WAY, MOVED ON, WENT FURTHER TO THE SOUTH.” PITCHED HIS TENT: SEE 12:8. BEYOND MEANS “ON THE OTHER SIDE.” TOWER OF EDER: TOWER REFERS TO A WATCH-TOWER BUILT SO THAT THE KEEPER OF THE ANIMALS CAN CLIMB UP AND WATCH FOR THIEVES AND WILD ANIMALS. SEE 2 KGS 17:9; 18:8; 2 CHR 26:10. EDER MEANS “FLOCK” OF SHEEP AND GOATS. TRANSLATORS MAY REFER TO THIS PLACE BY ITS HEBREW NAME, THAT IS, “MIGDAL-EDER,” OR AS “THE WATCH TOWER AT EDER,” OR BY TRANSLATING THE FULL EXPRESSION AS “THE WATCH TOWER OF THE FLOCK.” IF THE PLACE IS CALLED “MIGDAL-EDER,” IT MAY BE DESIRABLE TO ADD A NOTE TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “MIGDAL-EDER MEANS ‘WATCH TOWER OF THE FLOCK.’” IN LANGUAGE AREAS WHERE THE GUARDING OF FLOCKS IS UNKNOWN, IT MAY BE POSSIBLE TO USE A DESCRIPTIVE PHRASE; FOR EXAMPLE, “PITCHED HIS TENT AT THE PLACE WHERE PEOPLE LOOK AFTER THE FLOCKS OF ANIMALS,” OR USE THE HEBREW NAME WITH OR WITHOUT EXPLANATION. THE LOCATION OF THIS PLACE IS UNKNOWN.**

**THE TWELVE SONS OF JACOB AND HIS WIVES (35:22–26)**

**THIS SUBDIVISION, WHICH IS A SUMMARY OF THE NAMES OF JACOB’S SONS, SAYS THAT REUBEN HAD SEXUAL RELATIONS WITH ONE OF JACOB’S CONCUBINES (VERSE 22A). THE LIST OF JACOB’S SONS IS ARRANGED ACCORDING TO THE NAMES OF THEIR MOTHERS IN THE ORDER OF LEAH, RACHEL, BILHAH, ZILPAH (VERSES 22B–26).**

**SUBDIVISION HEADING**

**THE HANDBOOK HEADING FOLLOWS TEV. MANY MODERN VERSIONS DO NOT HAVE A HEADING BEFORE VERSE 22. ON THE OTHER HAND, NJB SEPARATES 22A FROM THE LIST OF SONS AND SAYS “REUBEN’S INCEST.” GECL, SPCL DIVIDE VERSE 22 SO THAT VERSE 22A BELONGS WITH 2C-18 AND VERSE 22B WITH 2C-19.**

**GENESIS 35:22: WHILE ISRAEL DWELT IN THAT LAND: ISRAEL IS AGAIN USED FOR JACOB. FROM CHAPTER 37 ONWARD JACOB WILL ALWAYS BE CALLED ISRAEL. SINCE MIGDAL-EDER IS NOT KNOWN, IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO SAY WHAT THAT LAND MEANS. WE MUST BE SATISFIED TO SPEAK GENERALLY OF “THAT REGION, AREA, PLACE.” REUBEN WENT AND LAY WITH BILHAH HIS FATHER’S CONCUBINE: REUBEN IS JACOB’S FIRSTBORN SON. LAY WITH MEANS HE HAD SEXUAL RELATIONS WITH HER. THE VERB IS THE SAME AS THAT USED IN 19:33. SEE ALSO 34:2 FOR SHECHEM’S LYING WITH DINAH. THERE IS NO SUGGESTION, HOWEVER, THAT REUBEN FORCED BILHAH. FOR CONCUBINE SEE 22:24. AND ISRAEL HEARD OF IT: HEARD OF IT MEANS HE FOUND OUT ABOUT IT. NOTE THAT RSV AND TEV DIFFER HERE. TEV’S FOOTNOTE EXPLAINS THAT “ONE ANCIENT TRANSLATION HAS ‘AND WAS FURIOUS.’” THE REFERENCE HERE IS TO THE SEPTUAGINT. SOME MODERN VERSIONS PREFER THE ADDITION OF THE SEPTUAGINT, AND OTHERS KEEP THE HEBREW TEXT, AS IN RSV. THIS IS, HOWEVER, ONE OF THE FEW PLACES IN GENESIS THAT HOTTP DEPARTS FROM THE HEBREW TEXT AND SUGGESTS AS A TRANSLATION “AND ISRAEL HEARD OF IT, AND IT WAS OFFENSIVE TO HIM.” ALTHOUGH NOTHING MORE IS SAID HERE ABOUT REUBEN’S SEXUAL MISCONDUCT, WE WILL DISCOVER IN 49:3–4 THAT REUBEN LOSES HIS RIGHTS AS THE FIRSTBORN SON BECAUSE OF IT. VERSE 22B INTRODUCES JACOB’S TWELVE SONS. ALL EXCEPT BENJAMIN WERE LISTED IN THEIR ORDER OF BIRTH IN CHAPTERS 29 AND 30. NOW THE SONS OF JACOB WERE TWELVE: THIS INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT MAY BE PLACED IN A NEW PARAGRAPH, AS IN BOTH RSV AND TEV. THIS IS THE FIRST TIME IN GENESIS THAT JACOB’S SONS ARE SAID TO BE TWELVE. THE LIST IS PROBABLY GIVEN AT THIS POINT IN THE TEXT BECAUSE THE BIRTH OF THE TWELFTH SON, BENJAMIN, HAS BEEN RECORDED IN VERSE 18. DINAH IS NOT INCLUDED IN THE LIST.**

**GENESIS 35:23–26: THE SONS OF: IN EACH CASE THE WORD SONS IS PLURAL IN HEBREW; HOWEVER, IN SOME LANGUAGES THE PLURAL IS NOT USED FOR SMALL NUMBERS LIKE TWO, AND IT IS NECESSARY TO SAY “TWO SONS” FOR ALL THE MOTHERS EXCEPT LEAH. IN TRANSLATION THE ARRANGEMENT OF THE MOTHERS AND SONS SHOULD BE IN THE MOST NATURAL STYLE FOR THIS KIND OF TEXT.**

**IN SOME LANGUAGES THIS MEANS SAYING, FOR EXAMPLE: • LEAH HAD SIX SONS. THEIR NAMES WERE REUBEN, WHO WAS THE FIRST OF JACOB’S SONS, THEN SIMEON, LEVI, JUDAH, ISSACHAR, AND THE YOUNGEST ZEBULUN. RACHEL HAD TWO SONS. THEIR NAMES WERE JOSEPH AND BENJAMIN. BILHAH, WHO WAS RACHEL’S SERVANT, HAD TWO SONS. THEIR NAMES WERE DAN AND NAPHTALI. LEAH’S SERVANT ZILPAH ALSO HAD TWO SONS. THEIR NAMES WERE GAD AND ASHER. ALL OF THESE WERE JACOB’S SONS, AND THEY WERE BORN IN MESOPOTAMIA.**

**THE LAST STATEMENT INCLUDES BENJAMIN AMONG THE SONS BORN IN MESOPOTAMIA. HOWEVER, THIS CHAPTER MAKES CLEAR THAT HE WAS BORN IN CANAAN. INTERPRETERS USUALLY ACCEPT THAT THE BIRTH ACCOUNT OF BENJAMIN IN VERSES 16–21 IS FROM A DIFFERENT TRADITION THAN THE LIST OF SONS IN VERSES 22–26.**

**THE DEATH AND BURIAL OF ISAAC (35:27–29)**

**THE STORY OF JACOB’S RETURN TO HIS FATHER’S HOME PICKS UP AGAIN IN VERSE 27. IN VERSES 28–29 ISAAC DIES AND HIS SONS BURY HIM.**

**SUBDIVISION HEADING**

**TRANSLATORS MAY RETAIN THE HANDBOOK HEADING OR SHORTEN IT TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “THE DEATH OF ISAAC,” AS IN TEV, NJB, SPCL. MANY MODERN TRANSLATIONS DO NOT PLACE A HEADING BEFORE THESE VERSES.**

**GENESIS 35:27: AND JACOB CAME TO HIS FATHER ISAAC AT MAMRE, OR KIRIATH-ARBA (THAT IS, HEBRON): CAME IN THIS CONTEXT SUGGESTS THAT HE RETURNED WITH THE INTENTION OF REMAINING. WE MAY SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “CAME HOME,” OR “CAME BACK HOME.” IN 13:18 MAMRE IS AT HEBRON, AND IN 23:2 KIRIATH-ARBA IS ALSO HEBRON. IN THIS VERSE THE COMPILER IS CONCERNED TO IDENTIFY BOTH MAMRE AND KIRIATH-ARBA WITH HEBRON, WHICH WAS KNOWN TO HIS READERS IN HIS DAY. NOTE THAT TEV SAYS “AT MAMRE, NEAR HEBRON.” FRCL OFFERS ANOTHER MODEL, “AT MAMRE, NEAR KIRIATH-ARBA, WHICH IS NOW CALLED HEBRON.” HEBRON IS ABOUT 24 KILOMETERS (15 MILES) SOUTH OF BETHLEHEM AND THE SAME DISTANCE WEST OF THE DEAD SEA. SEE THE MAP, PAGE 18. FROM SHECHEM TO HEBRON JACOB AND HIS PEOPLE HAVE BEEN TRAVELING SOUTH. WHERE ABRAHAM AND ISAAC HAD SOJOURNED: THIS MAY NEED TO BE RESTRUCTURED AS A SENTENCE: “THIS IS WHERE ABRAHAM AND ISAAC HAD LIVED.” IN SOME LANGUAGES THIS WILL HAVE TO BE SOMETHING LIKE “WHERE ABRAHAM STAYED FIRST, AND WHERE ISAAC LATER STAYED.”**

**GENESIS 35:28: NOW THE DAYS OF ISAAC WERE A HUNDRED AND EIGHTY YEARS: IN CHAPTER 27 ISAAC WAS PICTURED AS AN OLD MAN EVEN BEFORE JACOB LEFT FOR HARAN. ACCORDING TO 25:26 ISAAC WAS SIXTY YEARS OLD WHEN JACOB AND ESAU WERE BORN, AND IN 26:34 HE WOULD HAVE BEEN ONE HUNDRED WHEN ESAU MARRIED AT AGE FORTY. IN TEV AND SOME OTHER VERSIONS, THIS SENTENCE IS JOINED TO THE NEXT VERSE; FOR EXAMPLE, “ISAAC WAS ONE HUNDRED AND EIGHTY YEARS OLD WHEN HE BREATHED HIS LAST” (NJB), “ISAAC WAS A VERY OLD MAN, AND WHEN HE REACHED A HUNDRED AND EIGHTY YEARS HE DIED.”**

**GENESIS 35:29: AND ISAAC BREATHED HIS LAST; HE DIED … FULL OF DAYS: FOR THE WORDING OF ISAAC’S DEATH AND BURIAL, SEE THAT OF ABRAHAM IN 25:8. AND HIS SONS ESAU AND JACOB BURIED HIM: THEY COULD DO THIS PEACEFULLY HAVING BECOME RECONCILED IN CHAPTER 33. ACCORDING TO 49:31 ISAAC AND REBEKAH WERE BURIED IN THE CAVE OF MACHPELAH.**

**THE DESCENDANTS OF ESAU (36:1–43)**

**CHAPTER 36 PRESENTS A RECORD OF THE DESCENDANTS OF ESAU. IT IS APPROPRIATE THAT THIS RECORD, DIFFICULT AND CONFUSING AS IT IS IN MANY RESPECTS, SHOULD BE PLACED IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE DEATH AND BURIAL OF ISAAC. IN A SIMILAR WAY WE ENCOUNTERED THE LIST OF ISHMAEL’S DESCENDANTS AFTER THE DEATH AND BURIAL OF ABRAHAM IN CHAPTER 25. THE DETAILS ABOUT ESAU’S DESCENDANTS ARE MORE NUMEROUS THAN THOSE OF ISHMAEL’S, POSSIBLY BECAUSE THE TRIBES OR CLANS THAT DESCENDED FROM ESAU WERE MORE CLOSELY RELATED TO ISRAEL THAN WERE THOSE OF ISHMAEL. THE LISTS IN THIS CHAPTER ARE PARALLELED IN 1 CHR 1:34–54. A QUICK READING OF THIS CHAPTER MAY GIVE THE IMPRESSION OF FREQUENT REPETITIONS, INCONSISTENCIES, AND ABSENCE OF STRUCTURE. HOWEVER, A CLOSER EXAMINATION OF THE MATERIAL SHOWS THAT THERE ARE SIX LISTS OF NAMES, AND VARIOUS STRUCTURES ARE REPEATED IN THOSE LISTS. NEVERTHELESS, WITHIN THESE LISTS THERE ARE MANY NAMES THAT ARE UNKNOWN, AND NAMES FROM ONE LIST SOMETIMES APPEAR IN OTHER LISTS. WHERE IT IS POSSIBLE TO DO SO, ATTENTION WILL BE CALLED TO RELATIONS BETWEEN THE LISTS. FOR MANY OF THE NAMES IN THESE LISTS THAT ARE OTHERWISE UNKNOWN, THERE IS NO USEFUL COMMENT THAT CAN BE MADE; AND THE HANDBOOK WILL PASS OVER THEM WITHOUT COMMENT. SEE ALSO THE SECTION “NAMES IN GENESIS” IN “TRANSLATING GENESIS,” PAGE.**

**THE CHAPTER IS DIVIDED INTO SIX LISTS: (1) VERSES 1–5 CONTAIN THE NAMES OF ESAU’S WIVES AND CHILDREN IN CANAAN. THIS LIST IS FOLLOWED IN VERSES 36:6–8 BY THE REPORT OF ESAU’S MIGRATION TO EDOM. (2) VERSES 36:9–14 GIVE THE NAMES OF ESAU’S DESCENDANTS IN SEIR. (3) VERSES 15–19 LIST THE ANCESTORS OF THE CLANS OR TRIBES OF EDOM. (4) VERSES 20–30 LIST THE DESCENDANTS OF SEIR. (5) VERSES 31–39 GIVE THE NAMES OF THE KINGS OF EDOM. (6) VERSES 40–43 HAS AN ADDITIONAL LIST OF ANCESTORS OF EDOMITE CLANS OR TRIBES.**

**BECAUSE ALL OF CHAPTER 36 IS TAKEN UP WITH THE DESCENDANTS OF ESAU, THE HANDBOOK USES ONLY ONE SUBDIVISION HEADING. A SEPARATE HEADING, WHICH IS NUMBERED 1 THROUGH 6 AND PLACED IN THE CENTER OF THE PAGE, IS GIVEN FOR EACH OF THE SIX LISTS. IN THIS WAY TRANSLATORS CAN SEE WHERE EACH LIST BEGINS AND ENDS. THIS ARRANGEMENT ALSO MAKES IT POSSIBLE TO REFER TO EACH LIST BY ITS NUMBER.**

**SUBDIVISION HEADING**

**TRANSLATIONS DIFFER GREATLY IN THE NUMBER OF HEADINGS USED IN THIS CHAPTER. FRCL HAS TWO, TEV THREE, GECL FOUR, AND NJV SEVEN. THE HANDBOOK USES ONLY ONE SUBDIVISION HEADING, BUT IDENTIFIES EACH OF THE SIX LISTS WITH A TITLE. TRANSLATORS MAY WISH TO FOLLOW THE HANDBOOK OR THE MODEL OF ANOTHER TRANSLATION. THE IMPORTANT POINT IS TO HELP THE READER SEE THAT THE CHAPTER IS MADE OF SIX LISTS OF NAMES.**

**ESAU’S WIVES AND CHILDREN IN CANAAN (VERSES 1) (1 CHR 1:34–35)**

**GENESIS 36:1: THESE ARE THE DESCENDANTS: THESE POINTS FORWARD TO THE NAMES THAT ARE LISTED HERE: “THE FOLLOWING ARE.…” AS USED IN THIS CHAPTER, RSV THESE SOMETIMES POINTS FORWARD TO THE NAMES THAT FOLLOW, AND SOMETIMES POINTS BACKWARD TO NAMES THAT HAVE ALREADY BEEN GIVEN; TRANSLATORS SHOULD BE CAREFUL TO IDENTIFY WHICH SENSE IS INTENDED IN EACH CASE AND USE THE APPROPRIATE POINTING WORDS OR EXPRESSIONS IN THEIR OWN LANGUAGES. THE DESCENDANTS OF ESAU: DESCENDANTS TRANSLATES THE HEBREW TOLEDOTH, WHICH WAS FIRST USED IN 2:4. THERE IT REFERRED TO A “STORY,” “ACCOUNT,” “EXPLANATION.” HERE, HOWEVER, IT REFERS TO THE LIST OF DESCENDANTS OR GENEALOGY OF ESAU. SEE 5:1 FOR THE FIRST USE OF THIS TERM MEANING “DESCENDANTS.” (THAT IS, EDOM): IN 25:30 ESAU’S NAME IS CALLED EDOM, WHERE THAT NAME IS ASSOCIATED WITH THE REDDISH SOUP HE OBTAINED FROM JACOB. THIS MAY ALSO BE RENDERED, FOR EXAMPLE, “WHO IS ALSO CALLED EDOM” OR “WHOM THEY ALSO CALL EDOM.”**

**GENESIS 36:2: ESAU TOOK HIS WIVES FROM THE CANAANITES: TOOK … FROM MEANS THAT HE “MARRIED.…” FROM THE CANAANITES IS LITERALLY “FROM THE DAUGHTERS OF THE CANAANITES.” THE SENSE OF THE WHOLE CLAUSE IS AS IN TEV: “ESAU MARRIED CANAANITE WOMEN.” THE NAMES OF ESAU’S THREE WIVES FOLLOW THIS FIRST BRIEF STATEMENT. IN SOME LANGUAGES IT IS NECESSARY TO REPEAT “HE MARRIED …” FOR EACH OF THE WIVES: “HE MARRIED ADAH.… AND HE MARRIED OHOLIBAMAH.… AND HE MARRIED BASEMATH.…” ADAH THE DAUGHTER OF ELON THE HITTITE: ADAH IS NOT INCLUDED AMONG THE HITTITE WOMEN MARRIED BY ESAU IN 26:34. THERE THE DAUGHTER OF ELON THE HITTITE IS BASEMATH. ACCORDING TO 28:9 ESAU MARRIED ISHMAEL’S DAUGHTER, MAHALATH. FOR HITTITE SEE 15:20. OHOLIBAMAH THE DAUGHTER OF ANAH: SHE IS MENTIONED ONLY IN THIS CHAPTER AND IN THE PARALLEL REFERENCE IN 1 CHR 1:52. THE SON OF ZIBEON: NOTE THAT THE RSV FOOTNOTE SHOWS THAT THE HEBREW TEXT SAYS “DAUGHTER” (ALSO IN VERSE 14), BUT RSV HAS FOLLOWED THE ANCIENT VERSIONS THAT HAVE SON. HOTTP, WHICH RATES THE HEBREW AS {A}, RECOMMENDS THAT THE HEBREW “DAUGHTER” BE TRANSLATED AS “GRANDDAUGHTER” (AS IN NIV), AND THIS IS RECOMMENDED TO TRANSLATORS. HIVITE: IN VERSE 20 ZIBEON IS REFERRED TO AS ONE OF THE “SONS OF SEIR THE HORITE.” SOME INTERPRETERS THINK THAT HIVITE IN THIS VERSE IS AN ERROR FOR “HORITE.” NEB/REB TRANSLATE “HORITE.” SPEISER ARGUES THAT HIVITE WAS A TERM MEANING THE SAME AS “HORITE” AND THAT THE LATER TERM WAS USED IN THE HEBREW TEXT TO REFER TO THE HURRIANS. HOWEVER, THERE IS NO ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE OR ANCIENT INSCRIPTIONS TO EQUATE THE HORITES OF SEIR WITH THE HURRIANS.**

**GENESIS 36:3: BASEMATH, ISHMAEL’S DAUGHTER: IN 26:34 BASEMATH IS SAID TO BE “THE DAUGHTER OF ELON THE HITTITE.” THE SISTER OF NEBAIOTH: IN 25:13 NEBAIOTH IS RECORDED AS THE FIRSTBORN SON OF ISHMAEL.**

**GENESIS 36:4: VERSES 4–5A LIST THE NAMES OF THE SONS BORN TO ESAU’S THREE WIVES. IN SOME TRANSLATIONS VERSES 2–5A ARE RESTRUCTURED TO PLACE THE NAMES OF THE SONS WITH THE NAME OF THEIR MOTHERS; THIS RESULTS IN THREE PARAGRAPHS, EACH OF WHICH HAS THE FORM, FOR EXAMPLE, “HE MARRIED ADAH WHO WAS.… ADAH HAD A SON WHOSE NAME WAS ELIPHAZ.…”**

**GENESIS 36:5: OHOLIBAMAH BORE JEUSH, JALAM, AND KORAH: JEUSH AND JALAM ARE MENTIONED ONLY IN CHAPTER 36 AND IN THE PARALLEL PASSAGES IN 1 CHRONICLES. THESE ARE THE SONS OF ESAU … CANAAN: THESE POINTS BACK TO THE FIVE SONS MENTIONED IN VERSES 4–5. FOR A TRANSLATION MODEL SEE TEV.**

**GENESIS 36:6: VERSES 36:6–8 DO NOT CONTAIN A LIST OF DESCENDANTS AND THEREFORE ARE NOT GIVEN A SEPARATE HEADING IN THIS HANDBOOK. VERSE 6 EXPLAINS THAT ESAU MOVED ALL OF HIS PEOPLE AND PROPERTY TO SEPARATE HIMSELF FROM JACOB. VERSE 7 EXPLAINS THE REASON FOR THE MIGRATION, AND VERSE 8 CONCLUDES THE MIGRATION ACCOUNT. TRANSLATORS WHO WISH TO PLACE VERSES 36:6–8 UNDER A SPECIAL HEADING MAY SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “ESAU MIGRATES TO SEIR,” “ESAU MOVES HIS PEOPLE AND ANIMALS TO EDOM.” THEN ESAU TOOK HIS WIVES … CANAAN: FOR A SIMILAR ACCOUNT OF ABRAHAM TAKING HIS POSSESSIONS AND MIGRATING, SEE 12:5. ALL THE MEMBERS OF HIS HOUSEHOLD IS LITERALLY “ALL THE SOULS OF HIS HOUSE.” SOME UNDERSTAND THESE TO BE ESAU’S SERVANTS, AND OTHERS TAKE IT TO REFER TO THOSE RELATED TO HIM. IT PROBABLY REFERS TO EVERYONE WHO WAS IN SOME WAY ATTACHED TO HIS CAMP: SLAVES, SERVANTS, AND RELATIVES. THEREFORE, IT IS BEST TO TRANSLATE “AND ALL THE PEOPLE OF HIS CAMP” OR “AND ALL THE REST WHO BELONGED TO HIS CAMP.” CATTLE AND BEASTS MEANS “HIS LIVESTOCK” OR “HIS ANIMALS.” PROPERTY IS THE SAME WORD AS USED IN 34:23 AND REFERS TO MOVEABLE POSSESSIONS. ACQUIRED IN THE LAND OF CANAAN: THAT IS, “THAT HE HAD GOTTEN WHILE HE LIVED IN THE COUNTRY OF CANAAN” OR “HE HAD BECOME THE OWNER OF ALL THESE WHILE HE WAS STILL LIVING IN CANAAN.” WENT INTO A LAND AWAY FROM HIS BROTHER JACOB: SOME VERSIONS FOLLOW THE ANCIENT SYRIAC VERSION, WHICH HAS “HE WENT TO THE LAND OF SEIR.” SEE VERSE 8. THE ANCIENT TARGUMS HAVE “ANOTHER [LAND],” WHICH APPEARS TO BE THE BASIS FOR THE TEV RENDERING, OR THE WAY IN WHICH TEV INTERPRETS THE HEBREW. HOTTP RATES THE WORDING AS A {B} AND RECOMMENDS TRANSLATING “INTO A LAND [WHICH WAS] DISTANT [LITERALLY AWAY] FROM JACOB.” SEE 25:6 FOR A SIMILAR SITUATION, IN WHICH THE OTHER SONS OF ABRAHAM MOVED AWAY FROM ISAAC. IN SOME LANGUAGES IT IS MORE NATURAL TO PLACE THIS LAST CLAUSE FIRST: “ESAU LEFT HIS BROTHER JACOB AND WENT TO LIVE IN ANOTHER PLACE. HE TOOK HIS WIVES … AND WENT.”**

**GENESIS 36:7: IN THIS VERSE THE REASON FOR THE MIGRATION OF ESAU TO EDOM IS SAID TO BE BECAUSE THE ANIMALS OF ESAU AND JACOB HAD BECOME TOO NUMEROUS. FOR THE SEPARATION OF ABRAHAM AND LOT ON THE SAME BASIS, SEE 13:5–13. THEIR POSSESSIONS … TOGETHER: FOR POSSESSIONS SEE 12:5. LAND OF THEIR SOJOURNINGS: THAT IS, “THE LAND WHERE THEY WERE LIVING.” COULD NOT SUPPORT THEM: THAT IS, “WAS NOT ENOUGH,” “WAS TOO SMALL.” CATTLE REFERS TO LIVESTOCK IN GENERAL.**

**GENESIS 36:8: SO, ESAU DWELT IN THE HILL COUNTRY OF SEIR: SO IN RSV AND TEV INTRODUCES A FURTHER CONSEQUENCE. DWELT IN THIS CONTEXT SUGGESTS THAT ESAU “WENT TO LIVE” OR “MADE HIS HOME.” HILL COUNTRY TRANSLATES “ON THE MOUNTAIN” AND REFERS TO THE MOUNTAINOUS COUNTRY OF SEIR. ESAU IS EDOM: SEE VERSE 1. RATHER THAN ADDING THIS IDENTIFICATION AT THE END OF THE VERSE, MANY TRANSLATIONS FIT IT IN TO THE SENTENCE. FOR EXAMPLE, FRCL SAYS “IT IS THUS THAT ESAU, ALSO CALLED EDOM, LIVED IN THE MOUNTAIN OF SEIR.” SPCL HAS “FOR THIS REASON ESAU, THAT IS EDOM, WENT TO LIVE IN THE MOUNTAINOUS REGION OF SEIR.”**

**ESAU’S DESCENDANTS IN SEIR (VERSES 36:9–14) (1 CHR 1:35–37)**

**THIS LIST COMBINES ALL THE SPECIAL NAMES FROM LIST 1 (VERSES 1–5) WITH SOME OF THE SPECIAL NAMES FROM LIST 3 (VERSES 15–19).**

**GENESIS 36:9: THESE ARE THE DESCENDANTS: AS IN VERSE 1 THESE POINTS FORWARD TO THE NAMES THAT FOLLOW. FATHER OF THE EDOMITES IS AN EXPRESSION THAT IS NOT USED IN VERSES 1–5. FATHER HAS THE MEANING HERE OF “ANCESTOR” OR “ORIGINATOR.” FATHER IS USED HERE AS IN 19:37. IN THE HILL COUNTRY OF SEIR: SEE VERSE 8. NOTE THAT TEV DOES NOT REPEAT THIS INFORMATION; HOWEVER, MOST TRANSLATIONS KEEP IT.**

**GENESIS 36:10–13: NOTE THAT TEV HAS COMBINED VERSES 10–13 AND REDUCED THE REPETITIONS. TRANSLATORS SHOULD CONSIDER DOING THE SAME. THESE ARE THE NAMES OF ESAU’S SONS: AGAIN, THESE POINTS TO NAMES THAT FOLLOW. NOTE THAT HERE IN VERSE 10 THE SONS ARE NAMED BEFORE THEIR MOTHERS, WHICH IS THE REVERSE OF THE ORDER USED IN VERSES 1. ELIPHAZ THE SON OF ADAH: SEE VERSE 4. REUEL THE SON OF BASEMATH: SEE VERSE 4. VERSE 11 LISTS THE NAMES OF THE SONS OF ELIPHAZ. THEY ARE ESAU’S GRANDSONS (THE SON OF ONE’S SON OR ONE’S DAUGHTER). IN VERSES 15–19 THESE GRANDSONS (THE SON OF ONE’S SON OR ONE’S DAUGHTER) ARE LISTED AS “CHIEFS.” TIMNA WAS A CONCUBINE OF ELIPHAZ: RSV PLACES THIS INFORMATION, INCLUDING THE NAME OF THE SON AMALEK, IN PARENTHESES. THIS IS NOT NECESSARY, AND TEV INCORPORATES THIS INFORMATION AS PART OF 10–13. FOR CONCUBINE SEE 22:24. AMALEK IS ALSO A GRANDSON OF ESAU AND IS COUNTED AS A CHIEF IN VERSE 16. THESE ARE THE SONS OF ADAH, ESAU’S WIFE: IF THESE SONS INCLUDE THE GRANDSONS (THE SON OF ONE’S SON OR ONE’S DAUGHTER), THIS STATEMENT IS A SUMMARY AND REPEATS WHAT HAS BEEN GIVEN ALREADY IN VERSES 10–12. IF IT IS NECESSARY TO RETAIN IT, THESE NOW POINTS BACK TO THE NAMES IN VERSES 10–12. SONS OF ADAH REFERS TO HER GRANDSONS (THE SON OF ONE’S SON OR ONE’S DAUGHTER), SONS OF ELIPHAZ. VERSE 13 LISTS THE NAMES OF THE FOUR SONS OF REUEL. THEY TOO ARE ESAU’S GRANDSONS (THE SON OF ONE’S SON OR ONE’S DAUGHTER) AND ARE LISTED AS “CHIEFS” IN VERSE 17. THESE ARE THE SONS OF BASEMATH: THESE POINTS BACK TO THE NAMES OF THE FOUR SONS OF REUEL WHO ARE BASEMATH’S GRANDSONS (THE SON OF ONE’S SON OR ONE’S DAUGHTER).**

**GENESIS 36:14: THESE ARE THE SONS OF OHOLIBAMAH THE DAUGHTER OF ANAH THE SON OF ZIBEON: THESE POINTS FORWARD TO THE NAMES OF OHOLIBAMAH’S THREE SONS WHO ARE LISTED IN VERSE 5 AND AGAIN IN VERSE 18 AS CHIEFS. NO GRANDSONS (THE SON OF ONE’S SON OR ONE’S DAUGHTER) OF OHOLIBAMAH ARE MENTIONED. NOTE THAT THE EXPRESSION OHOLIBAMAH THE DAUGHTER OF ANAH THE SON OF ZIBEON IS THE SAME AS IN VERSE 2. TRANSLATORS SHOULD TREAT THE EXPRESSION THE SAME WAY IN BOTH VERSES.**

**THE ANCESTORS OF THE TRIBES OF EDOM (VERSES 15–19) (1 CHR 1:36–37)**

**VERSES 15–19 LIST THE NAMES OF THE ANCESTORS OF THE CLANS OR TRIBES OF EDOM. LIST NUMBER 3 HAS THE SAME NAMES AS IN NUMBER 2 (VERSES 36:9–14), BUT HERE THE NAMES REPRESENT THE HEADS OF CLANS. IN THIS WAY LIST 3 SHOWS A DEVELOPMENT FROM THE FAMILIES IN 9–14 TO LARGER POLITICAL UNITS IN VERSES 15–19.**

**GENESIS 36:15–16: THESE ARE THE CHIEFS OF THE SONS OF ESAU: CHIEFS TRANSLATES A HEBREW TERM RELATED TO THE WORD MEANING “THOUSAND.” THE REFERENCE IS TO A POLITICAL UNIT AND NOT TO AN INDIVIDUAL, AS CHIEF SUGGESTS IN RSV. THE TERM IS USED IN REFERENCE TO A POLITICAL GROUP IN JUDGES 6:15 (“CLAN”); 1 SAM 10:19 (“THOUSANDS”). HOWEVER, THE EXPRESSION “CLANS OF THE SONS OF ESAU” IS UNCLEAR WITHOUT DEFINING THE RELATION BETWEEN THE SONS AND THE PARTICULAR CLAN NAME. THE CRUCIAL POINT IS THAT THE SONS OF ESAU WERE THE ORIGINATORS OR ANCESTORS OF THE CLANS OR TRIBES THAT BORE THEIR NAMES. ACCORDINGLY, TEV IS QUITE RIGHT WHEN IT TRANSLATES “THESE ARE THE TRIBES [CLANS] DESCENDED FROM ESAU.” BECAUSE THESE MEN ARE DESCRIBED AS DESCENDANTS OF ELIPHAZ IN VERSE 15 AND ARE LISTED AGAIN AS CLAN HEADS IN VERSE 16, IT MAY BE BEST TO COMBINE THE TWO VERSES. IN THIS WAY WE MAY RESTRUCTURE THESE TWO VERSES; FOR EXAMPLE, “HERE ARE THE NAMES OF THE CLANS THAT DESCENDED FROM ESAU: THE CLANS OF TEMAN, OMAR … AMALEK. ELIPHAZ, THE FIRST SON OF ESAU AND ADAH, WAS THEIR ANCESTOR.” AT THE BEGINNING OF VERSE 16 KORAH IS INCLUDED. MANY VERSIONS OMIT KORAH AT THIS POINT BECAUSE THIS NAME APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN INTRODUCED BY ERROR FROM VERSE 18. THE OMISSION OF KORAH IN VERSE 16 IS SUPPORTED BY HOTTP.**

**GENESIS 36:17: VERSE 17 LISTS THE SONS OF REUEL AS HIS CLAN DESCENDANTS. WE MAY RESTRUCTURE THIS ALSO TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “THE ANCESTOR OF THE CLANS CALLED NAHATH, ZERA, SHAMMAH, AND MIZZAH WAS REUEL. REUEL’S FATHER WAS ESAU, AND HIS MOTHER WAS BASEMATH.”**

**GENESIS 36:18: WE MAY RENDER VERSE 18, FOR EXAMPLE, “OHOLIBAMAH WAS THE ANCESTRESS OF THE CLANS CALLED JEUSH, JALAM, AND KORAH. SHE WAS ESAU’S WIFE AND THE DAUGHTER OF ANAH.”**

**GENESIS 36:19: IF THE TRANSLATOR IS FOLLOWING CLOSELY THE FORM OF THE HEBREW AS REFLECTED IN RSV, THESE POINTS BACK TO THE NAMES IN 15–18. OTHERWISE WE MAY TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “THAT IS THE LIST OF THE CLANS OF THE EDOMITES” OR “THAT IS THE LIST OF THE CLANS THAT DESCENDED FROM ESAU.”**

**THE DESCENDANTS OF SEIR THE HORITE (VERSES 20–30) (1 CHR 1:38–42)**

**IN VERSES 20–30 THERE ARE NAMES THAT CANNOT BE FOUND IN ANY OF THE OTHER LISTS. THIS SECTION APPEARS TO BE ANOTHER TRADITION THAT HAS BEEN INCLUDED.**

**GENESIS 36:20–21: THESE ARE THE SONS OF SEIR THE HORITE: THESE POINTS AHEAD. SEIR, WHICH HAS UNTIL NOW BEEN THE NAME OF THE MOUNTAINOUS REGION IN EDOM, IS HERE PERSONALIZED. HORITE APPEARS TO REFER TO HURRIANS WHO MIGRATED FROM MESOPOTAMIA INTO SYRIA AND CANAAN. IN THE SECOND MILLENNIUM THE EGYPTIANS USED THE TERM HORITE TO REFER TO THE POPULATIONS OF THAT REGION. IT IS NOT KNOWN WHY THE ISRAELITES USED HORITE FOR THE PEOPLE OF THE ANCIENT AREA OF EDOM. INHABITANTS OF THE LAND MEANS THEY WERE ALREADY IN THE REGION OF EDOM WHEN ESAU’S SONS SETTLED THERE. NOTE TEV “ORIGINAL INHABITANTS,” WHICH MAY NEED TO BE RENDERED, FOR EXAMPLE, “THE FIRST PEOPLE TO LIVE IN THE REGION OF EDOM.…” A FULLER RENDERING OF THIS WHOLE STATEMENT IS “BEFORE ESAU WENT TO THAT COUNTRY OF EDOM, THE HORITE PEOPLE WERE THERE, AND THAT WAS THEIR COUNTRY. ALL THE HORITE TRIBES WERE DESCENDED FROM ONE OLD MAN WHOSE NAME WAS SEIR.” IN TRANSLATION WE MAY COMBINE VERSES 20–21 FOR THE SAME REASON AS IN VERSES 15–16. WE MAY RESTRUCTURE VERSES 20–21 TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “THE FIRST PEOPLE WHO LIVED IN EDOM WERE THE DESCENDANTS OF SEIR, WHO WAS OF THE TRIBE CALLED HORITE. THE ANCESTORS OF THE CLANS OF THE HORITE TRIBE WERE LOTAN, SOBAL, ZIBEON, ANAH, DISHON, EZER, AND DISHAN. ALL OF THESE WERE THE DESCENDANTS OF SEIR.” FOR ANOTHER MODEL SEE TEV.**

**GENESIS 36:22: VERSES 22–28 LIST THE DESCENDANTS OF EACH OF THE CLAN FOUNDERS (CLAN ANCESTORS) NAMED IN VERSES 20–21 IN THE SAME ORDER GIVEN THERE. THE SONS OF LOTAN WERE HORI AND HEMAN: SONS IS NOT TO BE TAKEN AS LITERAL “SONS” BUT AS ETHNIC AND POLITICAL GROUPS THAT WE HAVE CALLED “CLANS.” HORI AND HEMAN ARE THEREFORE THE NAMES OF THE CLANS THAT DESCENDED FROM THE CLAN FOUNDER, WHO WAS LOTAN. SEE TEV FOR TRANSLATION. LOTAN’S SISTER WAS TIMNA: THIS IS TREATED AS PARENTHETICAL BY TEV. TIMNA IS USED AS A PERSONAL NAME AND NOT THAT OF A GROUP. TIMNA IS THE NAME OF THE CONCUBINE OF ELIPHAZ IN VERSE 12.**

**GENESIS 36:23: VERSES 23–29 ALL HAVE THE SAME STRUCTURE, WITH THESE ARE FOLLOWED BY THE NAMES. IN EACH CASE THESE POINTS FORWARD TO THE LIST OF NAMES.**

**GENESIS 36:24: SONS OF ZIBEON: ANAH IS FIRST MENTIONED IN VERSE 2 AS THE SON OF ZIBEON AND FATHER OF OHOLIBAMAH. HE IS THE ANAH: THAT IS, “ANAH IS THE NAME OF THE MAN WHO.…” HOT SPRINGS: THE MEANING OF THE HEBREW WORD IS UNCERTAIN, AS IT OCCURS ONLY HERE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT. TRANSLATIONS VERY GREATLY IN THE WAY THEY RENDER THIS WORD. MOST, HOWEVER, REFER TO “WATER,” “SPRING,” OR “HOT SPRINGS.” NEB, WHICH HAS “MULES,” HAS BEEN REVISED BY REB TO “HOT SPRINGS,” AND BOTH OF THESE VERSIONS ADMIT IN THEIR FOOTNOTES THAT THE HEBREW IS UNCERTAIN. IF HOT SPRINGS ARE UNKNOWN, TRANSLATORS MAY FOLLOW THE ANCIENT SYRIAC, AS DO FRCL, SPEISER, TOB, AND NAB, TO SAY “WATER.” FOR WILDERNESS SEE 14:6. THE DISCOVERY OF WATER IN THE DESERT CAN EASILY BECOME A LEGEND. FOR PASTURED SEE 29:7; FOR ASSES SEE 22:3.**

**GENESIS 36:25–26: CHILDREN OF ANAH: CHILDREN TRANSLATES THE SAME HEBREW TERM RENDERED “SONS” IN THE PREVIOUS VERSES. HERE IT IS TRANSLATED CHILDREN BECAUSE OHOLIBAMAH IS A DAUGHTER. THE ANAH OF THIS VERSE IS THE SAME ONE AS IN VERSES 2 AND 24. SONS OF DISHON: THE HEBREW HAS “DISHAN”; HOWEVER, THIS SPELLING WITH THE LETTER “A” OCCURS IN VERSE 28, WHERE IT REFERS TO A DIFFERENT PERSON. THE FORM DISHON IS FOUND IN SOME OF THE ANCIENT VERSIONS AS WELL AS IN THE PARALLEL PASSAGE IN 1 CHR 1:41. HOTTP REGARDS “DISHAN” AS A SCRIBAL ERROR.**

**GENESIS 36:27–28: THE SONS OF DISHAN: THE FIRST NAME UZ, ALTHOUGH SPELLED THE SAME IN ENGLISH AS THE COUNTRY WHERE JOB LIVED, IS A DIFFERENT WORD IN THE HEBREW.**

**GENESIS 36:29–30: VERSES 29–30 SUMMARIZE AND REPEAT THE NAMES OF THE SEVEN ANCESTORS OF THE HORITE CLANS. THESE ARE THE CHIEFS OF THE HORITES: THESE POINTS FORWARD. CHIEFS, AS THROUGHOUT VERSES 20–30, REFERS TO THE NAMES OF THE ANCESTORS OR FOUNDERS OF THE HORITE CLANS. BECAUSE OF THE REPETITION IT IS ADVISABLE TO JOIN THESE TWO VERSES, AS IN TEV. SEE TEV FOR TRANSLATION MODEL.**

**THE KINGS WHO RULED EDOM (VERSES 31–39) (1 CHR 1:43–50)**

**VERSES 31–39 GIVE THE NAMES OF EIGHT EDOMITE KINGS WHO, ACCORDING TO VERSE 31B, RULED IN EDOM BEFORE ISRAEL HAD KINGS. IT FOLLOWS LOGICALLY THAT THE PERSON WHO WROTE THIS RECORD DID SO AFTER ISRAEL BECAME A MONARCHY. THERE IS NO INDICATION IN THIS LIST OF KINGS THAT IT WAS THE CUSTOM FOR A SON TO REPLACE HIS FATHER AS KING. THE BASIS FOR THE CHOICE OF A KING IS NOT EXPLAINED. THE GENERAL PATTERN FOLLOWED IN VERSE 32–39 IS: X RULED, (THE NAME OF HIS CITY WAS Y), X DIED AND WAS SUCCEEDED BY Z.**

**GENESIS 36:31: NOTE THAT TEV HAS COMBINED VERSES 31–39 AND HAS ARRANGED THE LINES SO THAT THE NAMES OF THE EIGHT KINGS ARE AT THE LEFT, WITH THE INFORMATION ABOUT THEM INDENTED TO THE RIGHT. TRANSLATORS MAY WISH TO FOLLOW SOME SUCH MODEL. THESE ARE THE KINGS WHO REIGNED IN THE LAND OF EDOM: THESE POINTS FORWARD TO THE NAMES BEGINNING IN VERSE 32. FOR KING SEE DISCUSSION OF 14:1. BEFORE ANY KING REIGNED OVER THE ISRAELITES: THE HEBREW OF OVER THE ISRAELITES IS LITERALLY “OVER THE SONS OF ISRAEL.” ISRAELITES MUST OFTEN BE RENDERED IN THIS CONTEXT AS “THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL” OR “THE PEOPLE OF THE COUNTRY CALLED ISRAEL.”**

**GENESIS 36:32: BELA THE SON OF BEOR IS SIMILAR TO “BALAAM SON OF BEOR” IN NUM 22:5, BUT NO ESTABLISHED CONNECTION EXISTS. REIGNED IN EDOM: REIGNED RENDERS THE HEBREW VERB FORM RELATED TO THE NOUN MEANING “KING” AND REFERS TO THE RULE OF A KING. IT IS ASSUMED THE KING REIGNED UNTIL HE DIED. THE NAME OF HIS CITY: THIS PROBABLY REFERS TO HIS HOMETOWN, THE CITY HE LIVED IN. THE KING WOULD HAVE THE POLITICAL SUPPORT OF THE PEOPLE OF HIS HOMETOWN, THE CITY HE GREW UP IN.**

**GENESIS 36:33: BELA DIED, AND JOBAB … REIGNED: SOME TRANSLATIONS SAY “WHEN BELA DIED, … JOBAB BECAME KING.” SON OF ZERA OF BOZRAH: JOBAB IS IDENTIFIED AS SON OF ZERAH. BOZRAH WAS AN IMPORTANT TOWN IN EDOM AND IS MENTIONED IN ISA 63:1 AND AMOS 1:12. IN TRANSLATION IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “ZERAH … FROM THE TOWN OF BOZRAH” OR “ZERAH WHO LIVED IN THE TOWN CALLED BOZRAH. REIGNED IN HIS STEAD MEANS REIGNED OR RULED “IN HIS PLACE” OR “AFTER HIM,” AFTER HE HAD DIED. IN SOME LANGUAGES THERE ARE EXPRESSIONS THAT WILL BE APPROPRIATE IN THIS CONTEXT, FOR TAKING OVER A POSITION OF LEADERSHIP OR OWNERSHIP WHEN AN IMPORTANT PERSON DIES; IN ONE LANGUAGE, FOR EXAMPLE, “BELA DIED AND JOBAB … TOOK OVER FROM HIM” (LITERALLY “EXCHANGED HIM”). NOTE THAT TEV DOES NOT REPEAT REIGNED IN HIS STEAD IN THESE VERSES BUT SAYS ONCE IN VERSE 31 “RULED THE LAND OF EDOM IN SUCCESSION,” THAT IS, EACH KING RULED AFTER THE OTHER.**

**GENESIS 36:34: OF THE LAND OF TEMANITES MEANS “WHO LIVED IN THE REGION CALLED TEMAN” OR “WHO WAS FROM THE AREA OF TEMAN.” TEMAN IS THE NAME OF ONE OF THE SONS OF ELIPHAZ IN VERSE 11.**

**GENESIS 36:35: WHO DEFEATED MIDIAN IN THE COUNTRY OF MOAB: THAT IS, “WHO DEFEATED THE PEOPLE OF MIDIAN IN A BATTLE IN THE COUNTRY OF MOAB.” IN SOME LANGUAGES IT IS NECESSARY TO SAY “HADAD WENT TO THE COUNTRY OF MOAB AND FOUGHT WITH THE MIDIANITES THERE AND DEFEATED THEM.” THIS MAY BE A SEPARATE SENTENCE AT THE END OF THE VERSE.**

**GENESIS 36:36: NOTHING IS HARDLY KNOWN OF THIS SAMLAH NOR OF HIS PLACE MASREKAH. SAMLAH: SAM'-LA (SAMLAH; SALAMA): ONE OF THE KINGS OF EDOM, OF THE CITY OF MASREKAH. HE REIGNED BEFORE THE ISRAELITES HAD KINGS (GENESIS 36:36,37; 1 CHRONICLES 1:47,48). THE FACT THAT THE CITY IS MENTIONED IN CONNECTION WITH THE NAME OF THE KING SUGGESTS THAT EDOM WAS A CONFEDERACY AT THIS TIME AND THE CHIEF CITY WAS THE METROPOLIS OF THE WHOLE COUNTRY.**

**GENESIS 36:37–38: SHAUL OF REHOBOTH ON THE EUPHRATES: SHAUL IN THE HEBREW IS THE SAME AS “SAUL.” THE HEBREW SAYS “FROM REHOBOTH THE RIVER.” WE SAW IN 31:21 THAT “THE RIVER” WAS UNDERSTOOD TO REFER TO THE EUPHRATES. HOWEVER, AS SPEISER COMMENTS, “AN EDOMITE KING OF MESOPOTAMIAN ORIGIN CANNOT BE POSITED WITHOUT OTHER EVIDENCE.” WE MAY ASSUME “THE RIVER” HERE REFERS TO A LOCAL RIVER. KJV TRANSLATES “REHOBOTH BY THE RIVER.” SPCL SAYS “REHOBOTH, THE TOWN THAT IS BY THE RIVER.” SEE TEV.**

**GENESIS 36:39: HADAR REIGNED: THE HEBREW TEXT HAS HADAR; NOTE, HOWEVER, THAT TEV HAS “HADAD.” TRANSLATIONS VARY GREATLY IN THEIR PREFERENCE. SOME HEBREW MANUSCRIPTS HAVE “HADAD.” IN THE HEBREW THE LETTERS (“R”) AND (“D”) ARE VERY SIMILAR, AND COPYISTS SOMETIMES CONFUSE THEM. IN 1 CHR 1:50 THE HEBREW HAS “HADAD.” HOTTP RATES THE “HADAD” FORM AS A {C} HERE BUT NEVERTHELESS RECOMMENDS HADAR, AS IN RSV. DAUGHTER OF MATRED, DAUGHTER OF MEZAHAB: THIS IS THE ONLY KING IN THE LIST WHOSE WIFE IS MENTIONED. THE USE OF DAUGHTER TWICE IN RSV CAUSES CONFUSION. ACCORDING TO HOTTP DAUGHTER OF MEZAHAB SHOULD BE UNDERSTOOD AS “MEZAHAB’S GRANDDAUGHTER.” SEE VERSE 2.**

**ANOTHER LIST OF EDOMITE CLAN’S (VERSES 40–43) (1 CHR 1:51–54)**

**VERSES 40–43 PROVIDE A SECOND LIST OF ANCESTORS OF EDOMITE CLANS. ALTHOUGH SOME NAMES FROM PREVIOUS LISTS APPEAR HERE, THERE IS NO CLEAR CONNECTION BETWEEN THOSE LISTS AND THIS FINAL ONE.**

**GENESIS 36:40–43: BY FOLLOWING CLOSELY, THE HEBREW WORDING, RSV OBSCURES THE PICTURE OF THIS LIST. IN ORDER TO AVOID UNNECESSARY REPETITIONS, THE HANDBOOK RECOMMENDS THAT TRANSLATORS RESTRUCTURE VERSES 40–43 ALONG THE LINES FOLLOWED BY TEV. TEV BEGINS BY SHIFTING ESAU, THE FATHER OF EDOM FROM VERSE 42 TO THE OPENING OF THE COMBINED VERSES. BECAUSE THE LIST SPEAKS OF ESAU AS THE FATHER, MEANING “FOUNDER” OR “ANCESTOR,” TEV SAYS “ESAU WAS THE ANCESTOR OF.…” BECAUSE THE NAMES OF THE CLANS OR TRIBES OCCUR IN THREE VERSES, TEV SPEAKS OF “THE FOLLOWING TRIBES,” BEGINNING WITH TIMNA AND ENDING WITH IRAM. BECAUSE DWELLING PLACES OCCURS IN BOTH VERSES 40 AND 43, THESE TWO OCCURRENCES ARE REDUCED TO ONE BY PLACING THIS INFORMATION IN THE FINAL SENTENCE.**

**WE MAY ALSO SUGGEST ANOTHER MODEL FOR TRANSLATING VERSES 40–43: • HERE ARE THE NAMES OF THE CLANS OF EDOM: TIMNA … IRAM. THOSE ARE THE ANCESTORS OF THE EDOMITE CLANS. EACH ONE SETTLED IN A DIFFERENT REGION OF THEIR COUNTRY. ESAU WAS THE ANCESTOR OF ALL THE EDOMITES.**

**THE FATHER STEPHEN’S 4TH SUPREME DEFENSE (JOSEPH) IN THE ULTIMATE BEGINNING IS 48 LEGIONS OF ANGELS [288,000 TIMES 185,000 TIMES 100,000 IN RELENTING] BY GOING ONE MILE GO TWAIN [3], WHICH CAN SAVE OR DESTROY 15,984,000,000,000,000 QUADRILLION IN RELENTING OF 100,000 IN JUDE 14-15**

**IN ACTS 7:10-16 DECLARES “AND THE PATRIARCHS, BECOMING ENVIOUS, SOLD JOSEPH INTO EGYPT. BUT GOD WAS WITH HIM AND DELIVERED HIM OUT OF ALL HIS TROUBLES, AND GAVE HIM FAVOR AND WISDOM IN THE PRESENCE OF PHARAOH, KING OF EGYPT, AND MADE HIM GOVERNOR OVER EGYPT AND ALL HIS HOUSE. NOW A FAMINE AND GREAT TROUBLE [AFFLICTION] CAME OVER ALL THE LAND OF EGYPT AND CANAAN, AND OUR FATHER FOUND NO SUSTENANCE [GRAIN]. BUT WHEN JACOB HEARD THAT THERE WAS GRAIN IN EGYPT, HE SENT OUT OUR FATHERS FIRST. AND THE SECOND TIME JOSEPH WAS MADE KNOWN TO HIS BROTHERS, AND JOSEPH’S FAMILY BECAME KNOW TO THE PHARAOH. THEN JOSEPH SENT AND CALLED HIS FATHER JACOB AND ALL HIS RELATIVES TO HIM, SEVENTY-FIVE [70] PEOPLE. SO, JACOB WHEN DOWN TO EGYPT, AND HE DIED, HE AND OUR FATHERS. AND THEY WERE CARRIED BACK TO SHECHEM AND LAID IN THE TOMB THAT ABRAHAM BOUGHT FOR A SUM OF MONEY FROM THE SONS OF HAMOR, THE FATHER OF SHECHEM.”**

**STEPHEN YAHWEH’S TOP HOUSE**

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**THE BOOK OF JOSEPH**

**THE LORD JOSEPH’S NAME MEAN “MAY GOD ADD.” THE SCRIPTURE REVERENCES IS IN GENESIS CHAPTERS 37-50; HEBREWS 11:22 & ACTS 7:9-18. THE LORD JOSEPH’S ROLE IN SCRIPTURE: THE LORD JOSEPH PLAYED A VITAL ROLE IN THE PRESERVATION OF THE HEBREW PEOPLE. IF THEY HAD STAYED IN CANAAN, WHICH WAS A CONSTANT BATTLEGROUND, THEY WOULD NOT HAVE PROSPERED AND THUS NOT FULFILLING GENESIS 12:2. BUT THEY RELOCATED IN EGYPT’S RICHEST AGRICULTURAL AREAS, THUS FULFILLING THE FATHER STEPHEN’S COVENANT PROMISES. THE LORD JOSEPH’S FAITH IN THE FATHER STEPHEN IS IN HEBREWS 11:22. IT DECLARES “BY FAITH JOSEPH, WHEN HE WAS DYING, MADE MENTION OF THE DEPARTURE OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL, AND GAVE INSTRUCTIONS CONCERNING HIS BONES.” THE LORD JOSEPH’S LIFE AND TIMES: THE LORD JOSEPH’S EARLY YEARS IS IN GENESIS CHAPTER 37. THE LORD JOSEPH WAS THE SON OF THE LORD JACOB AND LADY RACHEL. UNFORTUNATELY, HIS FATHER SHOWED OBVIOUS FAVORITISM THAT THE LORD JOSEPH’S BROTHERS RESENTED HIM. THEN HIS BROTHERS SOLD HIM TO MERCHANTS GOING TO EGYPT. THE LORD JOSEPH’S SUFFERING IN EGYPT IS IN GENESIS CHAPTERS 39-40. IN EGYPT, THE LORD JOSEPH WAS SOLD TO A HIGH OFFICIAL NAMED POTIPHAR. TIME WENT ON, AND THE LORD JOSEPH BECAME HIS MOST TRUSTED AGENT AND PUT IN CHARGE OF HIS ESTATE. WHEN POTIPHAR’S WIFE FALSELY CHARGED HIM IN RAPING HER, POTIPHAR IMPRISONED THE LORD JOSEPH. THE LORD JOSEPH’S ORGANIZATIONAL GIFTS AND TRUSTWORTHINESS LED HIM TO ADVANCEMENT AND HE BECAME THE WARDEN’S AGENT, AND RAN THE PRISON. WHEN THE TWO HIGH OFFICIALS WERE IMPRISONED, THE LORD JOSEPH INTERPRETED THEIR DREAMS RIGHTFULLY. HE HAS PREDICTED ONE WAS TO BE HANGED AND THE OTHER RESTORED TO HIS OFFICE. THIS HAPPED AS THE LORD JOSEPH PREDICTED. LATER, THE PHARAOH WAS TOLD ABOUT THE LORD JOSEPH INTERPRETING THE DREAMS CORRECTLY. THE LORD JOSEPH MADE THE MOST OF HIS OPPORTUNITIES BY GOING TO WORK AND NOT BEING DESPONDENT. ALSO, HE REMAINED COMMITTED TO THE FATHER STEPHEN AND GODLINESS IS IN GENESIS 39:9. THE LORD JOSEPH’S EXALTATION AS 2ND RULER OF EGYPT IS IN GENESIS CHAPTER 41. THE SYMBOLS OF THE LORD JOSEPH’S OFFICE THAT ARE DESCRIBED IN GENESIS 41:21 CAN BE SEEN IN WALL PAINTINGS FROM THE ERA. THEY SUGGEST THAT THE LORD JOSEPH WAS MADE VIZIER OF EGYPT, AS THE HIGHEST ADMINISTRATIVE POSITION IN THE KINGDOM. THE LORD JOSEPH’S REUNION WITH HIS FAMILY IS IN GENESIS CHAPTERS 42-46. WHEN FAMINE STRUCK THE ENTIRE MIDDLE EAST, THE LORD JACOB SENT HIS SON TO PURCHASE GRAIN SO THE FAMILY COULD SURVIVE. ON THE FIRST TWO TRIPS TO EGYPT, HIS BROTHERS DID NOT RECOGNIZE HIM, BUT HE WAS REVEALED TO THEM AFTERWARDS. IN ACTS 7 OF THE LORD JOSEPH’S LIFE, REMINDS US THAT HE PLAYED AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN THE FATHER STEPHEN’S PLAN IS IN GENESIS 50:20. THE EXPLORING OF THE LORD JOSEPH’S RELATIONSHIPS: THE LORD JOSEPH’S RELATIONSHIP WITH HIS BROTHERS IS IN GENESIS CHAPTER 37. THE LORD JOSEPH AS A YOUNG TEEN DID NOT UNDERSTAND TO IMPACT ON HIS BROTHERS ABOUT HIS DREAMS OF BECOMING HEAD OVER ALL HIS FAMILY. THEY BECAME HOSTILE. ONE DAY, THEY DECIDED TO KILL THEIR BROTHER JOSEPH, BUT INSTEAD SOLD HIM ON A CARAVAN TO EGYPT. LATER, THEY CONVINCED THEIR FATHER JACOB THAT WILD ANIMALS HAD KILLED HIS SON JOSEPH. THE LORD JOSEPH’S LATER RELATIONSHIP WITH HIS BROTHERS IS IN GENESIS CHAPTERS 42-50. THE LORD JOSEPH IMMEDIATELY RECOGNIZED HIS BROTHERS WHEN THEY CAME TO BUY GRAIN IN EGYPT. THE 1ST TRIP TO EGYPT IS IN GENESIS CHAPTER 42. THE 2ND TRIP TO EGYPT IS IN GENESIS CHAPTER 43. THE LORD JOSEPH THREATENS TO KEEP BENJAMIN AS A SLAVE IS IN GENESIS 44:20, 31. THE LORD JOSEPH AS AN EXAMPLE FOR TODAY: THE LORD JOSEPH IS THE ONLY ONE THAT SEEMS TO HAVE HAD NO FLAW. HE IS CONSIDERED AS THE MOST CHRIST-LIKE PROTOTYPE TO THE CHRIST IN BIBLICAL OT HISTORY. THE LORD JOSEPH TEACHES US TO SEEK EXCELLENCE IN WHATEVER SITUATION WE MAY FIND OURSELVES. THE LORD JOSEPH TEACHES US TO LIVE MORALLY & SPIRITUALLY PURE IN A WORLD OF SEXUALITY. THE LORD JOSEPH TEACHES US TO MAINTAIN A POSITIVE ATTITUDE WHEN TREATED UNFAIRLY. THE LORD JOSEPH REMINDS US THAT WHILE IT IS DIVINE TO FORGIVE, WE MUST ALSO BE WISE IN OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THOSE WHO HAVE HARMED US. THE LORD JOSEPH REMINDS US THAT FULFILLING THE FATHER STEPHEN’S PURPOSE IS MORE SIGNIFICANT THAT OUR OWN AGENDAS. THE LORD JOSEPH REMINDS US OF THE WONDER OF FORGIVENESS AND ITS HEALING AUTHORITY.**

**THE STORY OF JOSEPH GEN 37:1–50:26**

**CHAPTER 37 OPENS THE FOURTH AND FINAL DIVISION OF THE PATRIARCHAL STORY THAT BEGAN WITH ABRAHAM IN 11:27. IN THIS DIVISION OUR ATTENTION IS ON JOSEPH FROM HIS YOUTH UNTIL HIS DEATH. THE STORY OF JOSEPH IS TOLD AS A TALE THAT DEVELOPS A PLOT WITH CONFLICTS AND RESOLUTIONS AND THAT MOVES ON TO A DEFINITE END. THE STORY IS TOLD THROUGH THE CREATION OF A NUMBER OF SCENES OR EPISODES THAT CARRY THE STORY FROM BEGINNING TO END. WITHIN THE STORY DREAMS AND THE INTERPRETATION OF DREAMS ARE AN IMPORTANT THEME; IN CHAPTERS 40 AND 41, FOR INSTANCE, JOSEPH INTERPRETS TWO PAIRS OF DREAMS. AND IT IS HIS SKILL IN THE INTERPRETATION OF DREAMS THAT FINALLY CARRIES JOSEPH TO THE GOVERNORSHIP OF EGYPT AND THE SAVING OF HIS STARVING FAMILY. WHILE THIS DIVISION IS CLEARLY BASED ON THE PERSON JOSEPH, THERE ARE INTERRUPTIONS THAT SHIFT OUR ATTENTION MOMENTARILY AWAY FROM JOSEPH, BUT THEN THE STORY LINE PICKS UP AGAIN. THESE INTERRUPTIONS ARE CHAPTER 38, THE JUDAH AND TAMAR TALE, AND 47:27–49:33, WHICH TELLS ABOUT THE CLOSE OF JACOB’S LIFE, HIS DEATH AND PREPARATIONS FOR BURIAL.**

**DIVISION HEADING**

**MANY VERSIONS HAVE NO HEADING TO INTRODUCE THE STORY OF JOSEPH. OTHERS LIKE NJB CONSIDER CHAPTERS 37–50 AS THE FOURTH DIVISION OF THE PATRIARCHAL STORY AND SAY “IV: THE STORY OF JOSEPH.” REB AND FRCL HAVE SIMPLY “JOSEPH.” TRANSLATORS WHO WISH TO PLACE A DIVISION HEADING AT THIS POINT MAY FOLLOW THE HANDBOOK MODEL OR SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “THIS IS THE STORY ABOUT JOSEPH,” “THIS PART TELLS ABOUT THE LIFE OF JOSEPH,” “HERE IS THE STORY OF JACOB’S SON JOSEPH.”**

**JOSEPH AND HIS BROTHERS (37:1–11)**

**IN THIS SUBDIVISION VERSE 1 INTRODUCES THE STORY OF JACOB’S FAMILY, A STORY THAT PLACES JOSEPH AT THE CENTER. JOSEPH REPORTS TO HIS FATHER THAT HIS HALF-BROTHERS ARE NOT DOING THEIR WORK AS THEY SHOULD (VERSE 2). JACOB, WHO LOVES JOSEPH MORE THAN HIS BROTHERS, HAS A SPECIAL ROBE OR COAT MADE FOR JOSEPH, AND HIS BROTHERS HATE HIM (VERSES 3–4). JOSEPH TELLS HIS BROTHERS OF A DREAM IN WHICH THEY ARE SYMBOLICALLY BOWING DOWN TO HIM, AND THEIR HATE FOR JOSEPH GROWS (VERSES 37:5–8). IN A SECOND DREAM NOT ONLY HIS BROTHERS BUT ALSO HIS PARENTS BOW TO HIM (VERSE). AS A RESULT OF HIS TELLING ABOUT HIS DREAMS, HIS BROTHERS ARE ANGRY WITH HIM; HIS FATHER ALSO SCOLDS HIM, BUT THINKS ABOUT WHAT JOSEPH HAS DREAMED (VERSES 10–11).**

**SUBDIVISION HEADING**

**TRANSLATORS MAY FIND THE HANDBOOK HEADING TOO GENERAL. IN THAT CASE WE MAY SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “JOSEPH’S BROTHERS BECOME ANGRY WITH HIM,” “JOSEPH ANGERS HIS BROTHERS BY TELLING THEM HIS DREAMS,” “JOSEPH DREAMS AND HIS BROTHERS BECOME ANGRY WITH HIM.” FRCL HAS “JOSEPH’S DREAMS,” WHILE GECL SAYS “JOSEPH HAS PROPHETIC DREAMS.”**

**GENESIS 37:1: TRANSLATORS WILL NOTICE THAT SOME VERSIONS LINK 37:1–36. VERSE 2A SAYS “THESE ARE THE TOLEDOTH OF JACOB.” IF TOLEDOTH IS TAKEN TO MEAN A GENEALOGY OR LIST OF DESCENDANTS, IT CANNOT REFER TO THE MATERIAL THAT FOLLOWS, SINCE THERE IS NO GENEALOGY IN CHAPTER 37. HOWEVER, IT CAN REFER BACK TO THE LIST OF DESCENDANTS OF ESAU IN CHAPTER 36. THEREFORE, THOSE VERSIONS THAT UNDERSTAND IT TO REFER BACK TO CHAPTER 36 PLACE 37:1–2A WITH THE END OF CHAPTER 36, AND BEGIN THE NEW DIVISION AT 37:2B (SPEISER, FOR EXAMPLE). THE HANDBOOK CONSIDERS 37:1–2A TO REFER NOT TO A GENEALOGY BUT TO A “STORY,” “ACCOUNT,” OR “HISTORY,” TAKING THE WORD TOLEDOTH IN THE SAME SENSE AS IN 2:4A. SEE THERE FOR COMMENTS. ACCORDINGLY, 37:1–2A IS PLACED AT THE BEGINNING OF THE NEW DIVISION, AS REFERRING TO THE STORY OF JOSEPH AND HIS BROTHERS FOUND IN CHAPTERS 37–50. NEVERTHELESS, THERE REMAINS A PROBLEM IN THE OPENING OF CHAPTER 37. THE SETTING OF CHAPTER 36 IS SEIR AND EDOM. VERSE 1 OF CHAPTER 37, ON THE OTHER HAND, SPEAKS OF JACOB AND CANAAN, AND THEN VERSE 2B TURNS TO JOSEPH. THIS MAY CREATE CONFUSION FOR READERS, SINCE CHAPTER 37 DOES NOT CONTINUE THE STORY LINE FROM CHAPTER 36. IN 35:29 WE READ THAT ISAAC HAD DIED AND BEEN BURIED (IN CANAAN) BY JACOB AND ESAU. BECAUSE CHAPTER 36 INTERRUPTS THE STORY OF JACOB, IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO RE-ESTABLISH THE STORY LINE IN 37:1 BY SAYING, FOR EXAMPLE, “AFTER ISAAC HAD DIED, JACOB SETTLED IN CANAAN, … HERE BEGINS THE STORY ABOUT JACOB’S FAMILY.” JACOB DWELT IN THE LAND OF HIS FATHER’S SOJOURNINGS: IN CONTRAST TO ESAU, WHO HAD MIGRATED TO SEIR, JACOB SETTLED DOWN AND LIVED IN CANAAN. OF HIS FATHER’S SOJOURNINGS MEANS “WHERE HIS FATHER LIVED AS A FOREIGNER.” FOR “SOJOURN” SEE COMMENTS ON 12:10. IN TRANSLATION WE MAY BE ABLE TO SAY “IN THE LAND OF CANAAN, WHERE HIS FATHER [ISAAC] LIVED AS A FOREIGNER.” IF IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO EXPRESS THE IDEA OF LIVING AS A FOREIGNER, IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO SAY SIMPLY “… WHERE HIS FATHER HAD LIVED.”**

**GENESIS 37:2: THIS IS THE HISTORY OF THE FAMILY OF JACOB: FOR HISTORY SEE THE COMMENTS ON TOLEDOTH UNDER VERSE 1. THE HANDBOOK TAKES THIS TO POINT FORWARD TO THE JOSEPH STORY BEGINNING HERE. THE STATEMENT MAY ALSO BE EXPRESSED, FOR EXAMPLE, AS “THIS IS THE STORY OF JACOB’S FAMILY” OR “THESE ARE THE THINGS THAT HAPPENED IN JACOB’S FAMILY.” IN MANY LANGUAGES THIS IS THE CUSTOMARY AND NATURAL OPENING OF A STORY; AND SOME TRANSLATORS MAY WISH TO PLACE IT BEFORE THE STATEMENT OF VERSE “THIS IS THE STORY OF … JACOB WAS STILL LIVING IN CANAAN, THE LAND WHERE.…” IF THE TRANSLATOR PREFERS TO INTERPRET VERSE 2A AS POINTING BACK TO CHAPTER 36, THEN IT IS BEST TO MAKE THE WORDS OF 37:1–36. IN THAT CASE HISTORY MUST BE TRANSLATED BY A WORD OR EXPRESSION EQUIVALENT TO “GENEALOGY” OR “LIST OF DESCENDANTS” (SPEISER, “SUCH, THEN, IS THE LINE OF JACOB”). IF THE DIVISION AND SUBDIVISION HEADINGS ARE NOT SUFFICIENT AS INTRODUCTION TO THIS PART, IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO OPEN THE STORY OF JOSEPH BY MAKING VERSE 2B A TIME CLAUSE; FOR EXAMPLE, “WHEN JOSEPH WAS SEVENTEEN YEARS OLD, HE AND HIS BROTHERS TENDED THE FLOCKS.…” JOSEPH, BEING SEVENTEEN YEARS OLD IS LITERALLY “JOSEPH A SON OF SEVENTEEN YEARS.” FOR A SIMILAR USE OF THIS HEBREW IDIOM, SEE 17:1. WE MAY RESTRUCTURE THIS TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “WHEN JOSEPH WAS SEVENTEEN YEARS OLD.…” WAS SHEPHERDING THE FLOCK: THAT IS, HE WAS CARING FOR OR LOOKING AFTER THE FLOCK. FLOCK REFERS TO SHEEP AND GOATS. SEE TEV. HIS BROTHERS; HE WAS A LAD WITH THE SONS OF BILHAH AND ZILPAH: IN MANY VERSIONS HIS BROTHERS IS TAKEN TO MEAN THE SAME AS THE SONS OF JACOB’S CONCUBINES (SEE 22:24) BILHAH AND ZILPAH. THESE BROTHERS WERE DAN, NAPHTALI, GAD, AND ASHER; AND BECAUSE THEY WERE NOT ALL THE BROTHERS JOSEPH HAD, SOME TRANSLATIONS SAY “SOME OF HIS BROTHERS.…” BUT THIS INTERPRETATION ASSUMES THAT THE WORDS HE WAS A LAD WITH ONLY SERVE TO LINK THE TWO EXPRESSIONS. THE HEBREW, WHICH IS RENDERED LITERALLY IN RSV, MAY ALSO HAVE A DIFFERENT SENSE, NAMELY THAT OUT OF ALL HIS BROTHERS HE WAS USUALLY IN THE COMPANY OF THE SONS OF BILHAH AND ZILPAH. NRSV AND SPEISER ALSO TAKE THIS TO BE THE SENSE; BUT THEY TAKE THE HEBREW WORD FOR LAD IN THE SENSE OF “SERVANT” OR “ASSISTANT” RATHER THAN AS “A YOUTH,” GIVING A TRANSLATION LIKE “HE WAS A HELPER TO …” OR “HE WAS ASSISTING.…” TRANSLATORS MAY FOLLOW EITHER INTERPRETATION. NOTE ALSO THAT IN SOME LANGUAGES BROTHERS WHO HAVE THE SAME FATHER BUT DIFFERENT MOTHERS ARE CALLED BY A SPECIAL TERM. BROUGHT AN ILL REPORT OF THEM MEANS JOSEPH TOLD HIS FATHER THAT HIS BROTHERS WERE DOING SOMETHING BAD. THERE IS NO WAY OF KNOWING WHAT THIS MAY HAVE BEEN. THE SAME EXPRESSION IS USED IN NUM 14:37, IN WHICH THE SCOUTS BROUGHT BACK TO MOSES “AN EVIL REPORT” ABOUT THE LAND. WE MAY TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “JOSEPH TOLD HIS FATHER ABOUT THE BAD CONDUCT OF HIS BROTHERS” OR “JOSEPH TOLD HIS FATHER THAT HIS BROTHERS DID THINGS THEY SHOULD NOT DO.” IN SOME LANGUAGES THERE ARE SPECIAL TERMS FOR TELLING ABOUT THE BAD DEEDS OF OTHERS; IN ENGLISH, FOR EXAMPLE, “JOSEPH REPORTED THEM TO HIS FATHER.”**

**GENESIS 37:3: NOW ISRAEL LOVED JOSEPH …: RSV TRANSLATES THE COMMON HEBREW CONNECTIVE AS A TRANSITIONAL NOW. VERSES 3 AND 4 ARE ACTUALLY AN INTERRUPTION OR DIVERSION FROM THE MAIN STORY LINE; SO NOW INTRODUCES A PARENTHETICAL NOTE, TO GIVE ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE FAMILY WHICH IS IMPORTANT FOR THE STORY THAT FOLLOWS FROM VERSE 5 ON. NOTE THAT TEV BEGINS A NEW PARAGRAPH HERE. ALTHOUGH THE HEBREW HAS ISRAEL, WHICH REFERS TO JACOB, IT MY BE CLEARER FOR THE READER TO USE “JACOB,” AS ISRAEL IS MAINLY USED TO REFER TO THE NATION DESCENDED FROM JACOB. SEE 35:10, 21 FOR COMMENTS ON TRANSLATING JACOB AS ISRAEL. MORE THAN ANY OTHER OF HIS CHILDREN: IN SOME LANGUAGES THE COMPARATIVE DEGREE LOVED … MORE THAN IS EXPRESSED “ISRAEL LOVED HIS CHILDREN; HE SURPASSED IN HIS LOVE FOR JOSEPH.” IN OTHERS A KIND OF POSITIVE-NEGATIVE EXPRESSION IS USED; FOR EXAMPLE, “JACOB LOVED JOSEPH; HE DIDN’T LOVE HIS OTHER CHILDREN MUCH.” IN OTHERS AGAIN THE NORMAL EXPRESSION IS “JACOB LOVED JOSEPH A LOT, AND LOVED HIS OTHER CHILDREN ONLY A LITTLE.” SON OF HIS OLD AGE GIVES THE REASON WHY JACOB LOVED JOSEPH MORE. THIS EXPRESSION MAY NEED TO BE EXPRESSED AS “BECAUSE HE HAD BEEN BORN WHEN JACOB WAS ALREADY OLD.” SEE TEV. JOSEPH’S SPECIAL POSITION IN HIS FATHER’S AFFECTIONS WAS OBVIOUS TO HIS BROTHERS AND A REASON FOR THEIR HATING HIM. ANOTHER REASON FOR HATING JOSEPH WAS THAT HE [JACOB] MADE HIM A LONG ROBE WITH SLEEVES. THE TRADITIONAL RENDERING IS “COAT OF MANY COLORS,” WHICH FOLLOWS THE SEPTUAGINT AND THE VULGATE. ALTHOUGH THE DETAILS ARE NOT CERTAIN, SOME UNDERSTAND IT TO HAVE BEEN A GARMENT WORN NEXT TO THE SKIN, AND THAT COVERED THE ARMS TO THE WRISTS AND THE LEGS TO THE ANKLES (KOEHLER-BAUMGARTNER). IN 2 SAM 13:18 IT IS THE GARMENT WORN BY A PRINCESS. BY CONTRAST THE ORDINARY GARMENT FOR MALES REACHED ONLY TO THE KNEES AND DID NOT COVER THE ARMS. SPEISER FINDS SUPPORT IN CUNEIFORM INVENTORIES THAT SUGGEST IT WAS “AN ORNAMENTED TUNIC,” THAT IS, A TUNIC OR ROBE THAT WAS DECORATED BY SEWING ORNAMENTS TO THE CLOTH. VON RAD DESCRIBES IT AS “A LUXURY WHICH ONLY THOSE WHO DID NOT HAVE TO WORK COULD THINK OF HAVING.” IN SUMMARY THE GARMENT MAY REFER TO A ROBE, COAT, OR LONG SHIRT-LIKE PIECE OF CLOTHING. IT WAS CLEARLY A VERY SPECIAL GARMENT THAT GAVE JOSEPH A STATUS NOT SHARED BY HIS BROTHERS. SOME TYPICAL TRANSLATIONS ARE “A VERY PRETTY COAT WITH LONG ARMS” AND “A SPECIAL LONG JACKET WITH FULL SLEEVES.”**

**GENESIS 37:4: FATHER LOVED HIM MORE THAN ALL HIS BROTHERS: IN THE HEBREW HIM IS MOVED FROM ITS USUAL POSITION TO GIVE IT SPECIAL EMPHASIS. WE MAY TRANSLATE “THEIR FATHER LOVED JOSEPH MORE THAN HE LOVED THE OTHER BROTHERS”; TEV HAS “MORE THAN HE LOVED THEM.” SEE VERSE 3 FOR COMMENTS ON LOVED … MORE THAN. THEY HATED HIM IS THE FIRST CONSEQUENCE OF JOSEPH’S BEING LOVED MORE. FOR THIS USE OF HATED SEE 26:27. IN SOME LANGUAGES IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO EXPRESS HATED HIM IDIOMATICALLY; FOR EXAMPLE, “THEIR HEARTS WERE HOT AGAINST HIM,” “THEIR LIVERS BOILED BECAUSE OF HIM,” OR “THEY WERE BAD FRIENDS WITH HIM.” COULD NOT SPEAK PEACEABLY TO HIM IS LITERALLY “COULD NOT SPEAK TO HIM FOR [IN] PEACE (SHALOM).” SINCE SHALOM WAS A REGULAR GREETING, THIS EXPRESSION SEEMS TO MEAN THAT THEY COULD NOT GREET HIM; AND WE MAY TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “THEY COULD NOT BRING THEMSELVES TO GREET HIM IN A FRIENDLY MANNER” OR “THEY COULD NOT GIVE HIM A FRIENDLY HELLO.” SOME TRANSLATIONS EXPRESS THIS IN A NEGATIVE WAY: “THEY ALWAYS SPOKE TO HIM CROSSLY.”**

**GENESIS 37:5: VERSES 3 AND 4 SHOW THAT THE CONFLICT BETWEEN JOSEPH AND HIS BROTHERS HAS RESULTED IN A SEVERE STRAIN IN FAMILY RELATIONS. IN VERSES 37:5–11 THE TENSION CONTINUES TO MOUNT TO A CRISIS, WHICH THE BROTHERS ATTEMPT TO RESOLVE BY GETTING RID OF JOSEPH. IN THESE VERSES JOSEPH HAS TWO DREAMS THAT HE RETELLS TO HIS BROTHERS. BOTH OF THESE DREAMS SUGGEST THE FUTURE GREATNESS OF JOSEPH, SOMETHING WHICH JOSEPH KNOWS NOTHING ABOUT AT THIS TIME. NOW JOSEPH HAD A DREAM: AS IN VERSE 3, RSV USES THE TRANSITIONAL NOW TO RENDER THE HEBREW CONNECTIVE. AT THIS POINT OF THE NARRATIVE, ITS FUNCTION IS TO INDICATE THE RESUMPTION OF THE STORY LINE FOLLOWING THE BACKGROUND INFORMATION GIVEN IN VERSES 3–4. NOTE THAT TEV AGAIN STARTS A NEW PARAGRAPH AND OPENS THIS PART OF THE STORY WITH “ONE TIME.…” SOME MAY FIND “ONE NIGHT” IS MORE SUITABLE FOR THE SETTING OF A DREAM. THEY ONLY HATED HIM THE MORE: THIS CLAUSE IS OMITTED IN SOME MODERN VERSIONS AND IN THE SEPTUAGINT. MANY INTERPRETERS BELIEVE THAT IT HAS BEEN COPIED FROM VERSE 8. HOTTP CLASSIFIES IT AS {B} AND KEEPS IT; AND THE HANDBOOK RECOMMENDS THE SAME TO TRANSLATORS. HOWEVER, IN MANY LANGUAGES THE CLAUSE MUST BE PLACED AFTER VERSE 7 IN ANY CASE, FOR DISCOURSE REASONS, SINCE IT REPORTS WHAT THE BROTHERS’ FEELINGS WERE AFTER JOSEPH TOLD THEM HIS DREAM. IF THAT IS DONE, THEN AND WHEN HE TOLD … SHOULD BE RENDERED “AND HE TOLD.…”**

**GENESIS 37:6: HEAR THIS DREAM WHICH I HAVE DREAMED: HEAR TRANSLATES A POLITE REQUEST ADDRESSED TO THE BROTHERS AND IS EQUIVALENT TO “PLEASE LISTEN TO THE DREAM I HAD.” IN SOME TRANSLATIONS THE REQUEST FOR THE BROTHERS TO LISTEN IS EXPRESSED AS A COLLOQUIAL CALL FOR ATTENTION, SUCH AS “HEY, YOU-ALL.…”**

**GENESIS 37:7: IN VERSE 7 JOSEPH TELLS HIS BROTHERS ABOUT HIS DREAM. BEHOLD, WE WERE BINDING SHEAVES IN THE FIELD: BEHOLD (HEBREW HINNEH) CALLS FOR THE ATTENTION OF THE BROTHERS AND INDICATES THAT WHAT JOSEPH IS ABOUT TO TELL MAY BE UNEXPECTED OR SURPRISING. WE REFERS TO JOSEPH AND HIS BROTHERS; THAT IS, IT IS THE INCLUSIVE FIRST-PERSON PRONOUN. BINDING SHEAVES REFERS TO CUTTING THE STALKS OF RIPE GRAIN AND THEN TYING THEM INTO BUNDLES WITH THE HEADS OF GRAIN AT ONE END. IN AREAS WHERE GRAIN HARVESTS ARE UNKNOWN, IT MAY BE POSSIBLE TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “WE WERE TYING THE PLANTS INTO BUNDLES.” IN RICE-GROWING CULTURES THE APPROPRIATE TERMS FOR TYING RICE BUNDLES SHOULD BE USED. THE PICTURE GIVEN HERE IS OF TIED BUNDLES OF GRAIN STALKS LYING IN THE HARVESTED FIELD. LO, MY SHEAF: LO ALSO TRANSLATES THE HEBREW HINNEH, WHICH IS OFTEN REPEATED IN THIS WAY IN DREAM REPORTS. SEE ALSO 41:2–3; JUDGES 7:13. MY SHEAF MEANS THE SHEAF JOSEPH HAD CUT AND TIED INTO A BUNDLE. AROSE AND STOOD UPRIGHT: IN THE DREAM THE SHEAVES OF GRAIN ACT AS IF THEY WERE LIVING CREATURES: “THE BUNDLE I HAD CUT AND TIED GOT UP AND STOOD UPRIGHT.” IN SOME LANGUAGES IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “GOT ON ITS FEET AS A PERSON STANDS UP.” AND BEHOLD: BEHOLD (HINNEH) IS AGAIN REPEATED TO MAINTAIN THE EMPHASIS ON SURPRISING EVENTS. YOUR SHEAVES: THAT IS, THE BUNDLES YOU (PLURAL) HAD CUT AND TIED. GATHERED ROUND IT: THE SHEAVES OF THE BROTHERS MUST ALSO STAND, AS THEY WILL BOW DOWN. ACCORDINGLY, IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO SAY “YOUR SHEAVES GOT UP AND FORMED A RING AROUND MY SHEAF” OR “YOUR SHEAVES WALKED AROUND MY SHEAF.” BOWED DOWN TO MY SHEAF: FOR BOWED DOWN SEE 23:7. THE PICTURE IS OF THE STANDING BUNDLES BENDING FORWARD UNTIL THEIR HEADS OF GRAIN ARE TOUCHING THE GROUND. IF THE SYMBOLIC MEANING OF THE BOWING SHEAVES IS NOT CLEAR, IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “YOUR [PLURAL] SHEAVES STOOD AROUND MINE AND BOWED DOWN TO HONOR MINE.”**

**GENESIS 37:8: BROTHERS SAID: THE BROTHERS’ QUESTIONS ARE RHETORICAL AND SARCASTIC. IN SOME LANGUAGES SAID MAY NEED TO BE RENDERED “ASKED HIM,” IF A QUESTION FORM IS USED (SEE TEV). ARE YOU INDEED TO REIGN OVER US? THE HEBREW CONSTRUCTION SAYS “DO YOU BECOME KING AND RULE [SAME WORD AS KING] OVER US?” FOR A MODEL TRANSLATION SEE TEV. FROM HERE TO THE END OF VERSE 10, THE FIRST-PERSON PLURAL PRONOUNS ARE EXCLUSIVE. OR ARE YOU INDEED TO HAVE DOMINION OVER US? HAVE DOMINION TRANSLATES A GENERAL VERB MEANING TO GOVERN OR CONTROL. NJB TRANSLATES “‘SO YOU WANT TO BE KING OVER US,’ HIS BROTHERS RETORTED, ‘YOU WANT TO LORD IT OVER US?’” SPCL HAS “YOU MEAN THAT YOU ARE GOING TO BE OUR KING, AND THAT YOU ARE GOING TO DOMINATE US?” SO, THEY HATED HIM YET MORE: THIS EXPRESSION IS SIMILAR TO THAT IN VERSE 5. FOR HIS DREAMS AND FOR HIS WORDS: THAT IS, “BECAUSE OF HIS DREAMS AND FOR WHAT HE TOLD THEM ABOUT HIS DREAMS.”**

**GENESIS 37:9: DREAMED ANOTHER DREAM: THIS INTRODUCES JOSEPH’S SECOND DREAM. TOLD IT TO HIS BROTHERS: NEB/REB AND OTHERS HAVE “HIS FATHER AND HIS BROTHERS,” WHICH FOLLOWS THE SEPTUAGINT. HOTTP, WHICH CONSIDERS THE HEBREW TEXT AN {A} CLASSIFICATION, SUPPORTS RSV AND TEV. TRANSLATORS SHOULD FOLLOW THEM. BEHOLD … BEHOLD: SEE THE COMMENTS ON VERSE 7. THE SUN, THE MOON, AND ELEVEN STARS: IT IS CLEAR FROM JACOB’S RESPONSE IN VERSE 10 THAT HE AND THE BROTHERS UNDERSTAND THE STARS, SUN, AND MOON TO REFER TO JOSEPH’S ELEVEN BROTHERS AND HIS PARENTS.**

**GENESIS 37:10: TO HIS FATHER AND TO HIS BROTHERS: NOTE THAT TEV HAS “TO HIS FATHER” BUT OMITS TO HIS BROTHERS; TEV FOLLOWS THE SEPTUAGINT, WHICH OMITS TO HIS BROTHERS, INFORMATION ALREADY STATED IN VERSE 9. RSV FOLLOWS THE HEBREW TEXT. HOTTP HAS NO EVALUATION OF THIS PROBLEM. SPEISER IS OF THE OPINION THAT TO HIS BROTHERS HAS BEEN ADDED BY LATER COPYISTS. TRANSLATORS MAY FOLLOW EITHER RSV OR TEV BUT SHOULD BE GUIDED MAINLY BY WHAT IS MOST NATURAL IN THEIR OWN LANGUAGES. SOME TRANSLATIONS MAKE A LINK BETWEEN VERSES 9 AND 10 BY BEGINNING VERSE 10 “AFTER THAT HE TOLD HIS FATHER” OR “HE ALSO TOLD IT TO THEIR FATHER.” HIS FATHER REBUKED HIM: REBUKED MEANS “SCOLDED,” “CORRECTED,” “REPRIMANDED.” WHAT IS THIS DREAM THAT YOU HAVE DREAMED? RSV TRANSLATES THIS QUESTION LITERALLY; IN MOST LANGUAGES, HOWEVER, THE REPETITION DREAM THAT YOU HAVE DREAMED WILL BE REDUCED TO THE SIMPLE TERM “DREAM.” THE QUESTION IS CLEARLY RHETORICAL AND EXPRESSES JACOB’S ANGER; IN MANY LANGUAGES IT WOULD BE SOMETHING LIKE “WHAT KIND OF DREAM IS THAT?” THE QUESTION FORM MAY NEED TO BE CHANGED TO A NEGATIVE STATEMENT IN SOME LANGUAGES; FOR EXAMPLE, “YOU SHOULD NOT TELL DREAMS LIKE THAT” OR “THAT IS NOT THE KIND OF DREAM YOU SHOULD TELL PEOPLE.” SHALL I AND YOUR MOTHER AND YOUR BROTHERS … BEFORE YOU? JOSEPH’S SYMBOLISM OF SUN AND MOON IN VERSE 9 AS WELL AS JACOB’S RESPONSE IN VERSE 10 SEEMS TO SUGGEST THAT RACHEL, JOSEPH’S MOTHER, IS STILL ALIVE. HOWEVER, ACCORDING TO 35:19 RACHEL DIED AND WAS BURIED MUCH EARLIER, ON THE ROAD FROM BETHEL TO BETHLEHEM. THE REFERENCE MAY BE TO LEAH AS THE FEMALE HEAD OF THE FAMILY, OR TO BILHAH, RACHEL’S MAID, WHO MAY HAVE BECOME “MOTHER” TO JOSEPH AFTER RACHEL DIED; IN MANY LANGUAGES, HOWEVER, A PERSONAL NAME SHOULD NOT BE USED IN THIS CONTEXT. JACOB’S QUESTION IS AGAIN RHETORICAL. NOTE HOW IT HAS BEEN KEPT AS A RHETORICAL QUESTION IN TEV. THIS QUESTION EXPECTS A NEGATIVE ANSWER; FOR EXAMPLE, “DO YOU THINK YOUR MOTHER AND I … BOW DOWN BEFORE YOU? WE WILL NOT.”**

**GENESIS 37:11: BROTHERS WERE JEALOUS OF HIM: JEALOUS TRANSLATES A WORD THAT MEANS TO BECOME RED IN THE FACE FROM INTENSIVE EMOTIONS. IN THE CONTEXT OF VERSE 11, THE TERM EXPRESSES SOMETHING MORE AKIN TO ANGER THAN TO JEALOUSY. SPEISER SAYS “HIS BROTHERS WERE WROUGHT UP WITH HIM”; NJB HAS “HELD IT AGAINST HIM,” AND MFT “BORE HIM MALICE.” FATHER KEPT THE SAYING IN MIND IS LITERALLY “HIS FATHER GUARDED THE WORD [MATTER].” THE IDEA OF “GUARDED” IS THAT JACOB KEPT THINKING ABOUT IT. VON RAD SUGGESTS THAT IT MEANS THAT JACOB COULDN’T GET THE THING OUT OF HIS MIND. THE SAYING REFERS TO WHAT JOSEPH HAD TOLD ABOUT HIS DREAMS, OR ABOUT THE SECOND DREAM IN PARTICULAR. WE MAY TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “BUT JACOB KEPT THINKING ABOUT THESE DREAMS” OR “JACOB KEPT IN HIS HEART [DID NOT FORGET] THIS MATTER OF JOSEPH’S DREAMS.” TWO EXAMPLES FROM PACIFIC TRANSLATIONS ARE “ALL THE TIME HIS FATHER KEPT THINKING ABOUT IT ALL” AND “HIS FATHER WAS THINKING ABOUT THAT DREAM ALL THE TIME.”**

**JOSEPH IS SOLD AND TAKEN TO EGYPT (37:12–36)**

**IN THIS SUBDIVISION JOSEPH IS SENT BY JACOB TO REPORT ON THE SAFETY OF HIS BROTHERS AND THE FLOCKS THEY ARE TENDING IN SHECHEM (VERSES 12–14). JOSEPH MANAGES TO CATCH UP WITH HIS BROTHERS AT DOTHAN (VERSES 15–17). HIS BROTHERS PLOT TO KILL JOSEPH, BUT REUBEN, THE ELDEST BROTHER, INTERVENES. AS A RESULT, JOSEPH IS PUT INTO AN EMPTY PIT (VERSES 18–24). JOSEPH IS SOLD TO SOME MERCHANTS WHO TAKE HIM TO EGYPT (VERSES 25–28). THE BROTHERS THEN DIP JOSEPH’S COAT IN GOAT’S BLOOD AND TAKE IT TO JACOB. JACOB RECOGNIZES THE COAT AS BELONGING TO JOSEPH AND IS OVERCOME WITH GRIEF. IN THE MEANWHILE, JOSEPH IS IN EGYPT, WHERE HE IS AGAIN SOLD TO AN OFFICER OF THE KING OF EGYPT (VERSES 29–36).**

**SUBDIVISION HEADING**

**TRANSLATORS MAY FIND THE PASSIVE CONSTRUCTION OF THE HANDBOOK HEADING NEEDS TO BE MODIFIED. WE MAY ALSO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “JOSEPH’S BROTHERS SELL HIM, AND SOME TRADERS TAKE HIM TO EGYPT.” FRCL HAS “JOSEPH IS SOLD BY HIS BROTHERS,” GECL “THE BROTHERS SELL JOSEPH INTO EGYPT,” AND NJB “JOSEPH SOLD BY HIS BROTHERS.”**

**GENESIS 37:12: NOW HIS BROTHERS WENT TO PASTURE THEIR FATHER’S FLOCK NEAR SHECHEM: NOW IS TRANSITIONAL. HIS BROTHERS REFERS TO JOSEPH’S BROTHERS. PASTURE … FLOCKS MEANS TO GUARD, TEND, OR CARE FOR THE SHEEP AND GOATS WHILE THEY GRAZE. THE MURDEROUS EVENTS THAT TOOK PLACE IN SHECHEM (SEE CHAPTER 34) SEEM TO HAVE BEEN FORGOTTEN. NOTE HOW TEV OPENS THIS EPISODE WITH “ONE DAY WHEN …” AND MAKES VERSE 13 THE MAIN CLAUSE.**

**GENESIS 37:13: ISRAEL SAID TO JOSEPH: SEE THE TRANSLATION SUGGESTION REGARDING ISRAEL IN VERSE 3. FROM HEBRON, WHERE JACOB IS LOCATED (SEE 35:27), TO JERUSALEM IS ABOUT 32 KILOMETERS (20 MILES) AND SHECHEM IS ABOUT 64 KILOMETERS (40 MILES) NORTH OF JERUSALEM. THUS, JACOB’S SONS HAVE GONE NEARLY 96 KILOMETERS (60 MILES) NORTH OF HEBRON TO FIND PASTURE. ARE NOT YOUR BROTHERS PASTURING THE FLOCK AT SHECHEM? THE HEBREW USES A RHETORICAL QUESTION, WHICH IS EQUIVALENT TO A STATEMENT. MANY LANGUAGES WILL PREFER A STATEMENT IN THIS CONTEXT. SEE TEV. COME, I WILL SEND YOU TO THEM TRANSLATES THE HEBREW LITERALLY. SEE TEV. JOSEPH’S RESPONSE TO HIS FATHER IS HERE I AM OR LITERALLY “BEHOLD ME.” JOSEPH IS NOT TELLING HIS FATHER WHERE HE IS BUT IS USING THIS IDIOM TO TELL HIS FATHER THAT HE IS READY TO DO AS ASKED. IN SOME LANGUAGES THE EQUIVALENT RESPONSE IS “ALL RIGHT, SIR,” “I AM AT YOUR SERVICE, FATHER.” FRCL SAYS “YES, FATHER,” AND SPCL “I WILL GO WITH GREAT PLEASURE”; GECL IS LIKE TEV: “I AM READY.”**

**GENESIS 37:14: GO NOW, SEE IF IT IS WELL WITH YOUR BROTHERS AND WITH THE FLOCK: JOSEPH IS TOLD TO GO AND SEE THE SHALOM OF HIS BROTHERS AND THE SHALOM OF THE ANIMALS. SHALOM IS USED IN VERSE 4, WHERE IT IS TRANSLATED “PEACE.” IN THE CONTEXT OF VERSE 14, IT REFERS TO THE SAFETY, SECURITY, AND WELFARE OF THE BROTHERS AND THE FLOCK. WE MY TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “GO THERE AND SEE IF EVERYTHING IS ALL RIGHT,” “GO FIND OUT IF THERE IS ANY TROUBLE.” BRING ME WORD AGAIN: THAT IS, “THEN COME BACK AND TELL ME,” “BRING ME NEWS,” “COME AND LET ME KNOW.” SO, HE SENT HIM FROM THE VALLEY OF HEBRON: THE VALLEY OF HEBRON RUNS NORTH–WEST TO SOUTH–EAST, AND THE TOWN OF HEBRON IS LOCATED IN THE VALLEY. HE SENT HIM FROM … MAY HAVE TO BE RESTRUCTURED IN SOME LANGUAGES TO SEPARATE THE DIFFERENT ACTIONS OR MOVEMENTS; FOR EXAMPLE, “… AND HE SENT HIM OFF. JOSEPH SET OUT FROM … HEBRON AND TRAVELED TOWARD SHECHEM.” SOME TRANSLATIONS SAY “AT THIS TIME JACOB AND HIS CLAN WERE IN THE VALLEY OF HEBRON, AND JOSEPH SET OUT FROM THERE AND BEGAN WALKING.” VALLEY REFERS TO A BROAD LOW-LYING PLAIN BETWEEN TWO MOUNTAIN RANGES. IN SOME LANGUAGES A VALLEY IS CALLED “THE LOW LAND BETWEEN THE HILLS.” AND HE CAME TO SHECHEM: NOTE THAT TEV BEGINS A NEW PARAGRAPH HERE. RSV, WHICH TRANSLATES THE HEBREW CONNECTIVE AS AND, FORMS THREE SHORT SENTENCES: “AND HE CAME … AND A MAN FOUND … AND THE MAN ASKED.” IT WILL OFTEN BE MORE NATURAL TO RESTRUCTURE THESE ALONG THE LINES OF TEV, OR SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “WHEN HE REACHED SHECHEM, A MAN FOUND HIM … AND ASKED HIM.”**

**GENESIS 37:15: WANDERING IN THE FIELDS: ALTHOUGH NOT TRANSLATED BY RSV, THE HEBREW TEXT SAYS “A MAN FOUND HIM AND BEHOLD HE WAS WANDERING.…” THE USE OF HINNEH “BEHOLD” HERE PROBABLY SUGGESTS THE MAN’S SURPRISE AT JOSEPH’S APPARENT STRAYING ABOUT THROUGH THE COUNTRYSIDE. FIELDS REFERS TO THE OPEN COUNTRYSIDE WHERE ANIMALS GRAZE. WANDERING TRANSLATES THE SAME VERB USED OF HAGAR WANDERING ABOUT IN THE WILDERNESS IN 21:14. SEE THERE FOR COMMENTS. JOSEPH, SEARCHING FOR HIS BROTHERS, APPEARS TO BE DRIFTING ABOUT, NOT KNOWING WHERE HE IS GOING. IN SOME LANGUAGES IT WILL BE MORE NATURAL TO CHANGE THE ORDER OF THE TWO CLAUSES, A MAN FOUND HIM AND WANDERING IN THE FIELDS. TWO EXAMPLES ARE “JOSEPH ARRIVED IN SHECHEM AND WAS WANDERING AROUND THERE. THEN A MAN SAW HIM AND ASKED …” AND “WHEN HE ARRIVED AT SHECHEM HE WAS WALKING ABOUT IN THE COUNTRYSIDE ROUND THE TOWN, AND A MAN FOUND HIM AND ASKED HIM, ‘WHOM ARE YOU LOOKING FOR?’”**

**GENESIS 37:16: TELL ME I PRAY YOU IS LITERALLY “PLEASE TELL ME.” THIS REQUEST SHOULD BE TRANSLATED IN A POLITE FORM SUITABLE FOR A YOUNG MAN ADDRESSING AN OLDER MAN WHO IS A STRANGER. WHERE THEY ARE PASTURING THE FLOCK: NOTE THAT TEV RESTRUCTURES THE VERSE TO MAKE JOSEPH GIVE THIS INFORMATION ABOUT HIS BROTHERS IN HIS ANSWER TO THE MAN, RATHER THAN IN HIS REQUEST FOR INFORMATION ABOUT THEIR WHEREABOUTS. THIS MAY BE MORE NATURAL FOR TRANSLATORS IN SOME OTHER LANGUAGES; AN EXAMPLE OF WHAT SOME HAVE DONE IS “I AM LOOKING FOR MY BROTHERS. THEY ARE MINDING MY FATHER’S SHEEP AND GOATS SOMEWHERE HERE. DO YOU KNOW WHERE THEY ARE?”**

**GENESIS 37:17: AND THE MAN SAID: IN MANY LANGUAGES AN ANSWER TO JOSEPH’S QUESTION OR REQUEST WILL BE EXPECTED AT THE BEGINNING OF THIS SPEECH. EXAMPLES ARE “YES. I KNOW. THEY AREN’T HERE” AND “YES, I SAW THEM, BUT THEY.…” THEY HAVE GONE AWAY: GONE AWAY SHOULD BE EXPRESSED IN A FORM SUITABLE FOR THE MOVEMENT OF NOMADIC SHEPHERDS WITH THEIR FLOCKS, IF THE LANGUAGE PERMITS THIS; FOR EXAMPLE, “THEY HAVE MOVED ON … (NJB).” LET US GO TO DOTHAN: DOTHAN IS ABOUT ONE DAY’S TRAVEL (WITH ANIMALS) NORTH OF SHECHEM. SOME TRANSLATORS MAY FIND IT BEST TO SHIFT THE QUOTE TO INDIRECT SPEECH. SEE TEV. JOSEPH WENT AFTER HIS BROTHERS: THAT IS, “JOSEPH WENT IN THE SAME DIRECTION IN SEARCH OF HIS BROTHERS” OR “JOSEPH WENT THERE TO FIND HIS BROTHERS.”**

**GENESIS 37:18: THEY SAW HIM AFAR OFF: THEY REFERS TO JOSEPH’S BROTHERS. THE BROTHERS RECOGNIZE JOSEPH BECAUSE OF HIS DISTINGUISHED ROBE. WE MAY SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “THEY SAW JOSEPH COMING IN THE DISTANCE” OR “THEY RECOGNIZED JOSEPH WHILE HE WAS STILL FAR OFF.” THEY CONSPIRED AGAINST HIM TO KILL HIM: CONSPIRED MEANS “PLOTTED” OR “MADE PLANS.” THE PLAN THEY MADE WAS TO KILL HIM (JOSEPH).**

**GENESIS 37:19: SAID TO ONE ANOTHER IS LITERALLY “SAID MAN TO HIS BROTHER,” WHICH IS AN IDIOMATIC WAY OF DESCRIBING A GROUP OF PEOPLE SAYING THE SAME THING TOGETHER. HERE COMES THIS DREAMER IS LITERALLY “BEHOLD, MASTER OF DREAMS.” THIS IS AN IDIOMATIC EXPRESSION THAT IS PARALLELED IN 49:23, WHERE “MASTER OF ARROWS” ARE ARCHERS; IN 2 KGS 1:8, WHERE “MASTER OF HAIR” IS A HAIRY MAN; AND IN PRO 29:22, WHERE “MASTER OF ANGER” IS AN ANGRY KIND OF MAN. HERE JOSEPH IS A DREAMER. A NUMBER OF LANGUAGES HAVE THE SAME OR A SIMILAR IDIOM; SEVERAL TRANSLATIONS HAVE “MAN OF DREAMS” HERE. IN THIS CONTEXT THE EXPRESSION IS CLEARLY INTENDED AS MOCKERY OR RIDICULE. THIS IN THIS DREAMER ESTABLISHES JOSEPH AS THE PERSON WHO HAS BEEN TALKED ABOUT AND RIDICULED IN HIS ABSENCE.**

**GENESIS 37:20: COME NOW IS A CALL TO ACTION SUCH AS “LET’S GO,” “COME ON, EVERYBODY.” ONE OF THE PITS: PITS RENDERS A WORD MEANING A HOLE OR CISTERN THAT HAS BEEN DUG FOR CATCHING AND HOLDING RAIN WATER. THE CISTERN WAS APPARENTLY DRY OR NEARLY SO. THE FACT THE BROTHERS HAD TO GO SO FAR TO FIND PASTURE SUGGESTS THAT THIS SCENE TAKES PLACE IN THE DRY SEASON OF THE YEAR. SUCH STORAGE CISTERNS ARE SAID TO HAVE BEEN ABUNDANT IN THE DOTHAN AREA. IN LANGUAGE AREAS WHERE CISTERNS ARE UNKNOWN, IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO USE A DESCRIPTIVE EXPRESSION SUCH AS “ONE OF THESE HOLES IN THE GROUND FOR CATCHING RAIN WATER.” THEN WE SHALL SAY: IN SOME LANGUAGES IT WILL BE NECESSARY TO INDICATE THE PERSON WHO IS TOLD. IN THIS CASE “WE SHALL TELL OUR FATHER.…” A WILD BEAST … HIM: THAT IS, “A WILD ANIMAL HAS EATEN HIM.” WE SHALL SEE WHAT WILL BECOME OF HIS DREAMS: THIS STATEMENT REFERS TO THE DREAMS BECOMING A REALITY. BY KILLING JOSEPH NONE OF THE BROTHERS OR HIS PARENTS WILL EVER HAVE TO BOW DOWN TO HIM, THEY THINK. BOTH RSV AND TEV TRANSLATE THE TEXT CLOSELY, BUT IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO SHOW MORE CLEARLY WHAT THE BROTHERS MEAN BY WHAT WILL BECOME OF HIS DREAMS. FOR EXAMPLE, WE MAY DO THIS BY SAYING “THEN WE WILL SEE IF THESE DREAMS COME TRUE” OR “… IF THERE IS ANY TRUTH IN HIS DREAMS.” SOME TRANSLATIONS ARE EVEN MORE DIRECT THAN THIS: “THAT WILL PUT AN END TO HIS DREAMS!” OR “WE’LL DO THAT BECAUSE WE DON’T WANT HIM TO BE OUR BOSS!”**

**GENESIS 37:21: BUT WHEN REUBEN … OUT OF THEIR HANDS: RSV INTRODUCES REUBEN’S INTERVENTION WITH BUT. TEV USES ONLY A NEW PARAGRAPH. SOME VERSIONS SAY “WHEN REUBEN HEARD THIS.…” ALL THESE ARE POSSIBLE TRANSLATIONS. REUBEN AS THE ELDEST SON IS RESPONSIBLE TO REPRESENT HIS FATHER IN THE LATTER’S ABSENCE. DELIVERED HIM OUT OF THEIR HANDS IS AN IDIOM IN WHICH HANDS REPRESENTS POWER, CONTROL. THE FORM OF THE VERB RENDERED DELIVERED PROBABLY HAS THE SENSE OF ATTEMPTING TO DELIVER. SEE TEV “TRIED TO SAVE JOSEPH.” LET US NOT TAKE HIS LIFE IS LITERALLY “LET US NOT STRIKE HIS LIFE [SOUL].” THE SENSE IS CORRECTLY RENDERED BY RSV.**

**GENESIS 37:22: AND REUBEN SAID TO THEM: SINCE THE PREVIOUS VERSE ENDS WITH REUBEN SPEAKING, SOME ADJUSTMENT MAY BE NEEDED HERE. SOME TRANSLATIONS SAY “AND THEN HE SAID” OR “HE WENT ON TO SAY.” OTHERS JOIN THE SPEECHES OF REUBEN IN VERSES 21 AND 22 INTO A SINGLE SPEECH AND DO NOT REPEAT “HE SAID” HERE. SHED NO BLOOD REPEATS IN DIFFERENT WORDS WHAT REUBEN HAS JUST SAID IN VERSE 21. NOTE THAT TEV DOES NOT REPEAT IT. CAST HIM INTO THIS PIT HERE IN THE WILDERNESS: REUBEN IS AGAINST KILLING JOSEPH BUT IS IN AGREEMENT TO THROW HIM INTO ONE OF THE EMPTY CISTERNS. THE HEBREW WORD RENDERED PIT BY RSV AND “WELL” BY TEV MAY ALSO REFER TO A CISTERN FOR CATCHING RUNOFF WATER. ACCORDING TO VERSE 24 THIS HOLE IN THE GROUND WAS DRY AT THE TIME. “WELL” SHOULD NOT BE USED IF THE LOCAL WORD REFERS ONLY TO A HOLE CONTAINING WATER. BUT LAY NO HAND UPON HIM: THIS EXPRESSION IS ANOTHER WAY OF SAYING “BUT DO NOT INJURE HIM” OR “LEAVE HIM UNHURT.” THAT HE MIGHT RESCUE HIM OUT OF THEIR HAND: HE IS REUBEN AND HIM IS JOSEPH. THEIR HAND REFERS TO THE BROTHERS WHO WANT TO KILL JOSEPH. TRANSLATORS MAY NEED TO MAKE CLEAR HOW THAT HE MIGHT … FATHER IS RELATED TO REUBEN’S INSTRUCTIONS TO HIS BROTHERS. NOTE TEV: “HE SAID THIS, PLANNING TO SAVE HIM.…” WE MAY ALSO TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “REUBEN SAID THIS BECAUSE HE WANTED TO RESCUE JOSEPH AND RETURN HIM TO HIS FATHER” OR “HE WAS THINKING OF GETTING JOSEPH OUT AND TAKING HIM BACK TO HIS FATHER; THAT’S WHY HE SAID THAT.”**

**GENESIS 37:23: ALL THE CONVERSATION AND SCHEMING FROM VERSE 18 TO 22 TAKES PLACE AFTER THE BROTHERS RECOGNIZE JOSEPH IN THE DISTANCE AND BEFORE HE ARRIVES WHERE THEY ARE. RSV TRANSLATES THE HEBREW CONNECTIVE AS SO, TO INTRODUCE A CONSEQUENCE. WE MAY ALSO TRANSLATE THE OPENING OF VERSE 23 AS A CONTRAST WITH REUBEN’S PURPOSES IN VERSE 22; FOR EXAMPLE, “BUT WHEN JOSEPH CAME TO WHERE HIS BROTHERS WERE, THEY STRIPPED HIM.…” STRIPPED HIM OF HIS ROBE: STRIPPED IN THIS CONTEXT MEANS THEY “TORE OFF,” “PULLED OFF,” “RIPPED OFF” HIS ROBE. THE LONG ROBE WITH SLEEVES SHOULD BE TRANSLATED AS IN VERSE 3.**

**GENESIS 37:24: FOR CAST HIM INTO A PIT SEE VERSES 20, 22. PIT WAS EMPTY, THERE WAS NO WATER IN IT: RSV RETAINS THE REPETITIONS OF THE HEBREW. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THE NARRATOR WANTED TO STRESS THAT NOTHING ELSE HAD BEEN THROWN INTO THE PIT AND THAT IT WAS DRY. MOST MODERN TRANSLATIONS KEEP THE DOUBLE DESCRIPTION. TEV USES ONLY “WHICH WAS DRY.” WE MAY ALSO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “A DRY AND EMPTY PIT.”**

**GENESIS 37:25: THEN THEY SAT DOWN TO EAT: TRANSLATORS MAY FIND THIS SENTENCE FITS BEST AS CONCLUDING THE EPISODE OF THROWING OF JOSEPH INTO THE CISTERN. IN THAT CASE IT WILL BE LINKED WITH VERSE 24, AND A NEW PARAGRAPH WILL BEGIN AT VERSE 25B. TEV BEGINS A NEW PARAGRAPH WITH “WHILE THEY WERE EATING.…” IN SOME LANGUAGES A TRANSITION IS REQUIRED BETWEEN PUTTING JOSEPH IN THE CISTERN AND THE BROTHERS SITTING DOWN TO EAT. WE MAY SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, AT THE BEGINNING OF VERSE 25, “AFTER THE BROTHERS HAD PUT HIM INTO THE CISTERN, THEY SAT DOWN TO EAT” OR “AFTER THAT WAS DONE, THEY SAT DOWN AND BEGAN TO EAT.” LOOKING UP THEY SAW IS LITERALLY “THEY LIFTED THEIR EYES AND LOOKED AND BEHOLD,” WHERE “BEHOLD” DRAWS THE ATTENTION OF READERS TO WHAT THEY SAW. TEV SAYS “THEY SUDDENLY SAW.” A CARAVAN OF ISHMAELITES … GILEAD: CARAVAN IN THIS CONTEXT MEANS A GROUP OR COMPANY OF MERCHANT TRADERS TRAVELING WITH CAMELS ACROSS THE COUNTRY. THE HEBREW IS LITERALLY AS IN RSV, WHICH KJV RENDERS “A TRAVELING COMPANY OF ISHMAELITES.” IN ITS LITERAL SENSE ISHMAELITES REFERS TO DESCENDANTS OF ISHMAEL, BUT IT IS THEIR OCCUPATION AS TRADERS OR MERCHANTS THAT IS IMPORTANT HERE. TRADERS ARE PEOPLE WHO TRANSPORT MERCHANDISE TO OTHER AREAS TO SELL. IF THE TERM ISHMAELITE IS RETAINED IN TRANSLATION, IT IS HELPFUL TO CALL THESE PEOPLE “ISHMAELITE TRADERS”; BUT SEE COMMENTS BELOW AT VERSE 28. GILEAD IS THE MOUNTAINOUS REGION EAST OF THE JORDAN RIVER IN WHAT IS NOW MODERN JORDAN. IT LAY ON THE MAIN TRADE ROUTE FROM THE GULF OF AQABA TO DAMASCUS, AND ITS INHABITANTS CONTROLLED ACCESS TO THAT AREA. BEARING GUM, BALM, AND MYRRH: GUM AND BALM ARE TWO KINDS OF RESIN OR SAP TAKEN FROM CERTAIN TREES. MYRRH IS ALSO AN AROMATIC OR SCENTED GUM. IT WAS USED IN INCENSE (EXO 30:23) AND AS A PERFUME FOR CLOTHING (PSA 45:8). SEE ALSO PRO 7:17. IT WAS PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT IN EGYPT, WHERE IT WAS USED IN THE EMBALMING OR PRESERVING OF DEAD HUMAN BODIES. ALL THREE OF THESE ARTICLES SEEM TO HAVE BEEN IN DEMAND FOR SWEET SMELLING INCENSE AND PERFUME. TEV RENDERS THE WHOLE EXPRESSION “LOADED WITH SPICES AND RESINS.” IF TEV WILL NOT SERVE AS A TRANSLATION MODEL, IT IS POSSIBLE TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “LOADED WITH THINGS THAT GIVE FOOD SPECIAL FLAVORS AND THAT GIVE OFF PLEASANT SMELLS.” TO CARRY IT DOWN TO EGYPT: THIS INFORMATION MAY FIT BETTER IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE PLACE OF ORIGIN OF THE TRADERS, GILEAD. IN THAT CASE WE MAY SAY “COMING FROM GILEAD AND GOING TO EGYPT.”**

**GENESIS 37:26: IN THIS VERSE JUDAH, THE SECOND SON, TAKES THE INITIATIVE. WHAT PROFIT IS IT … BLOOD? SEE TEV; OR “WHAT ADVANTAGE WILL THERE BE FOR US?” THIS QUESTION EXPECTS A NEGATIVE ANSWER: “NO ADVANTAGE AT ALL,” “WE WILL GAIN NOTHING.” CONCEAL HIS BLOOD IS LITERALLY “COVER HIS BLOOD.” THE THOUGHT BEHIND THIS EXPRESSION IS THAT COVERING THE BLOOD (THAT WAS HIS LIFE) IS TO PREVENT HIS BLOOD (LIFE) FROM CRYING OUT FOR VENGEANCE. IN 4:10 THE VOICE OF ABEL’S BLOOD CRIED OUT TO GOD FROM THE GROUND. SEE ALSO JOB 16:18; EZEK 24:7. IN TRANSLATION WE NEED TO SPEAK OF HIDING THE MURDER OF JOSEPH, NOT LETTING ANYONE KNOW THAT THEY HAVE KILLED JOSEPH. WE MAY TRANSLATE VERSE 26, FOR EXAMPLE, “THEN JUDAH SAID TO HIS BROTHERS, ‘WHAT GOOD WOULD IT DO TO MURDER OUR BROTHER AND THEN TRY TO COVER UP HIS DEATH?’”**

**GENESIS 37:27: COME, LET US SELL HIM TO THE ISHMAELITES: COME MAY BE RENDERED AS IN VERSE 20. IN SOME LANGUAGES IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO EXPRESS THE IDEA OF SELLING JOSEPH AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO KILLING HIM; FOR EXAMPLE, “INSTEAD OF KILLING HIM, LET’S SELL HIM TO THOSE ISHMAELITE TRADERS.” LET NOT OUR HAND BE UPON HIM: A SIMILAR IDIOM WAS USED IN VERSE 21, WHERE IT MEANT TO RESCUE OR SAVE JOSEPH. HERE THE SENSE IS “LET US NOT HARM [INJURE OR KILL] HIM.” FOR HE IS OUR BROTHER, OUR OWN FLESH: THESE STATEMENTS AFFIRM THAT JOSEPH IS RELATED TO THEM AS A CLOSE KINSMAN. FOR A SIMILAR EXPRESSION SEE 29:14. IN SOME LANGUAGES IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO STATE THE REASON BEFORE THE CONSEQUENCE; FOR EXAMPLE, “HE IS OUR BROTHER, OUR CLOSE KIN; SO, LET’S NOT KILL HIM. INSTEAD LET’S SELL HIM TO THOSE ISHMAELITE TRADERS.” HIS BROTHERS HEEDED HIM: HIM REFERS TO JUDAH, AND IT MAY BE BETTER TO SAY “JUDAH’S BROTHERS AGREED TO DO WHAT HE SAID.” IN SOME LANGUAGES THIS IS MORE NATURAL IN DIRECT SPEECH: “ALL HIS BROTHERS SAID, ‘ALL RIGHT, WE WILL DO WHAT YOU SAY.’”**

**GENESIS 37:28: AT THIS POINT THE STORY BECOMES CONFUSING FOR THE FOLLOWING REASONS: (1) VERSES 25–27 HAVE REFERRED ONLY TO ISHMAELITES; BUT HERE IN VERSE 28 THE MIDIANITES APPEAR TO BE THE ONES WHO PULL JOSEPH OUT OF THE CISTERN AND SELL HIM TO THE ISHMAELITES. (2) HERE IN VERSE 28 THE ISHMAELITES TAKE JOSEPH TO EGYPT; HOWEVER, IN VERSE 36 IT IS THE MIDIANITES WHO SELL JOSEPH TO THE EGYPTIAN, POTIPHAR.**

**SOME INTERPRETERS UNDERSTAND THAT VERSES 18–30 CONSIST OF TEXT THAT HAS BEEN TAKEN FROM TWO SOURCES WHICH WERE ORIGINALLY SEPARATE, AND WHICH HAVE BEEN COMBINED INTO THE STORY AS WE HAVE IT IN GENESIS. THIS COMBINING OF TWO PARALLEL VERSIONS OF HOW JOSEPH WAS TAKEN TO EGYPT HAS GIVEN RISE TO THE CONFUSION BETWEEN THE TWO GROUPS, WHO WERE CALLED ISHMAELITES IN ONE SOURCE AND MIDIANITES IN THE OTHER. BIBLE DICTIONARIES SUGGEST THAT BOTH NAMES WERE PROBABLY USED IN A GENERAL SENSE FOR A GROUP OF RELATED TRIBES, AND SO THEY MAY HAVE HAD PRACTICALLY THE SAME MEANING FOR THOSE WHO FIRST HEARD AND USED GENESIS. (THUS, FOR INSTANCE, THE ENTRY MIDIANITES IN HARPER’S BIBLE DICTIONARY, PAGE 634.) THIS IS SUPPORTED BY THE WAY THE TWO NAMES ARE USED TO REFER TO THE ONE GROUP OF PEOPLE IN JUDGES 8:22–24. IF WE ACCEPT THIS VIEW, THERE WAS ONLY ONE GROUP OF TRADERS INVOLVED, NOT TWO; AND TRANSLATORS ARE ADVISED TO MAKE SURE THAT THEIR READERS UNDERSTAND THIS. ONE WAY OF DOING THIS IS TO USE A GENERAL DESCRIPTIVE TERM SUCH AS “TRADERS” IN PLACE OF BOTH NAMES, “ISHMAELITES” AND “MIDIANITES.” (AND A FOOTNOTE MAY EXPLAIN THIS TRANSLATION, IF APPROPRIATE.) ANOTHER WAY IS TO USE JUST ONE OF THE NAMES THROUGHOUT THE STORY, EITHER “MIDIANITES” OR “ISHMAELITES” (AGAIN WITH A FOOTNOTE, IF APPROPRIATE). IT IS ALSO POSSIBLE, BUT LESS SATISFACTORY, TO KEEP BOTH NAMES IN THE TEXT BUT RELY ON A FOOTNOTE TO EXPLAIN THAT THE TWO DIFFERENT NAMES REALLY REFER TO THE SAME GROUP OF PEOPLE. SOME TRANSLATIONS SAY “ISHMAELITES WHO WERE MIDIANITES.” THEN MIDIANITE TRADERS PASSED BY: THEN REPRESENTS THE USUAL HEBREW CONNECTIVE, WHICH HERE SERVES TO SHIFT THE FOCUS OF THE STORY FROM THE BROTHERS TO ANOTHER GROUP WHO CAME ON THE SCENE AT THAT TIME. SPEISER AND NEB/REB RENDER IT AS “MEANWHILE …,” AND NJB “NOW SOME MIDIANITE MERCHANTS WERE PASSING.” A FULLER LINK IS MADE IN THE TRANSLATION THAT SAYS “WHILE THE BROTHERS WERE TALKING, SOME MIDIANITE BUSINESSMEN CAME AND SAW JOSEPH IN THE HOLE.” MIDIANITES LITERALLY MEANS PEOPLE FROM THE AREA CALLED MIDIAN, WHICH IS EAST OF THE GULF OF AQABA IN ARABIA; BUT SEE COMMENTS ABOVE ABOUT A MORE GENERAL SENSE. AND THEY DREW JOSEPH UP … OUT OF THE PIT: THEY REPRESENTS THE HEBREW TEXT. NOTE, HOWEVER, THAT TEV AND SOME OTHER VERSIONS SAY “THE BROTHERS PULLED JOSEPH OUT.” IF WE ACCEPT THAT THERE WAS ONLY ONE GROUP OF TRADERS, THEY MUST REFER TO THE BROTHERS OF JOSEPH, SINCE TO MAKE IT REFER TO THE TRADERS WOULD RESULT IN THE NONSENSE THAT THEY SOLD JOSEPH TO THEMSELVES, UNLESS OTHER CHANGES ARE MADE IN THE TEXT. ACCORDINGLY, TRANSLATORS ARE ADVISED TO TRANSLATE SO THAT THEY REFERS TO JOSEPH’S BROTHERS. SOLD HIM TO THE ISHMAELITES FOR TWENTY SHEKELS OF SILVER: FOR A DISCUSSION OF THE TRANSLATION OF SHEKEL, SEE 23:15. ACCORDING TO LEV 27:5 TWENTY SHEKELS IS THE STANDARD VALUE FOR SETTING FREE FROM A VOW A YOUNG MALE OF JOSEPH’S AGE. IT IS ALSO POSSIBLE TO SAY IN A FOOTNOTE “THIS IS THE AMOUNT OF MONEY USED TO PAY FOR A YOUNG MALE SLAVE.” THEY [THE ISHMAELITES] TOOK JOSEPH TO EGYPT: IN VERSE 36 THE GROUP THAT TOOK JOSEPH TO EGYPT ARE CALLED MIDIANITES; HOWEVER, SEE COMMENTS ABOVE ABOUT THE TWO NAMES.**

**GENESIS 37:29: WHEN REUBEN RETURNED … PIT: THIS VERSE MAKES CLEAR THAT REUBEN WAS NOT WITH HIS BROTHERS WHEN THEY TOOK JOSEPH OUT OF THE PIT AND DID NOT KNOW WHAT THEY HAD DONE. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT REUBEN HAD GONE TO THE CISTERN TO RESCUE JOSEPH. WE KNOW FROM VERSE 22 THAT HE WANTED TO DO SO AND SEND JOSEPH HOME. HE RENT HIS CLOTHING: TEARING OF THE CLOTHING WAS THE SYMBOL THAT A PERSON WAS OVERCOME BY SUDDEN GRIEF, SORROW, OR ANGER. SEE JOSH 7:6; 2 SAM 1:11; 3:31. IF THIS GESTURE IS KEPT IN TRANSLATION, IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO ADD AN EXPLANATION OF THE PURPOSE; FOR EXAMPLE, “HE TORE HIS CLOTHES BECAUSE HE WAS GRIEVED.” IN SOME LANGUAGES IT WILL BE MORE APPROPRIATE TO OMIT THE GESTURE AND SAY SOMETHING EQUIVALENT TO “HE WAS OVERCOME BY SORROW.” IN SOME LANGUAGES FIGURATIVE EXPRESSIONS ARE USED; FOR EXAMPLE, “HIS LIVER TURNED COLD” OR “HIS INNERMOST BECAME HEAVY.” IN SOME CASES, A LOCAL GESTURE THAT DISPLAYS THESE EMOTIONS MAY BE USED.**

**GENESIS 37:30: AND RETURNED TO HIS BROTHERS: IT IS CLEAR FROM THIS VERSE AND THE PREVIOUS VERSE THAT THE BROTHERS HAD MOVED ON BEFORE REUBEN ARRIVED AT THE PIT. NOW RETURNED DESCRIBES REUBEN’S CHANGE OF LOCATION FROM THE EMPTY PIT TO WHERE HIS BROTHERS WERE. THE LAD IS GONE: ACCORDING TO VERSE 2 JOSEPH WAS SEVENTEEN YEARS OLD. THEREFORE, THE TERM USED FOR LAD SHOULD BE APPROPRIATE FOR A YOUTH OF THAT AGE. AND I, WHERE SHALL I GO? REUBEN IS THINKING OF HIMSELF IN HIS ROLE AS ELDEST BROTHER AND RESPONSIBLE FOR JOSEPH IN HIS FATHER’S ABSENCE. AS LONG AS JOSEPH WAS HELD IN THE CISTERN, REUBEN HAD SOME DEGREE OF CONTROL OVER HIS DESTINY, BUT WITH HIS DISAPPEARANCE REUBEN FEELS HELPLESS. RSV’S RENDERING IS LITERAL AND DOES NOT MEAN THAT REUBEN IS ASKING WHERE HE CAN GO; RATHER HE IS SAYING “WHAT CAN I DO?” “WHO CAN HELP ME?” “I DON’T KNOW WHAT TO DO.”**

**GENESIS 37:31: THE BROTHERS DO NOT CONSULT WITH REUBEN OR DISCUSS THE MATTER. THEY ACT IMMEDIATELY TO TAKE CARE OF THEIR PROBLEM, WHICH IS: WHAT HAPPENED TO OUR BROTHER? AND HOW DO WE EXPLAIN IT TO OUR FATHER? THEN THEY TOOK JOSEPH’S ROBE: THIS CLAUSE INTRODUCES THE ROBE AS THE FOCAL POINT OF VERSES 31–33. NOTE THAT TEV DOES NOT BEGIN VERSE 31 IN THIS WAY, AS THEY TOOK JOSEPH’S ROBE IS UNDERSTOOD BY THE ACT OF DIPPING IT IN THE BLOOD. KILLED A GOAT: KILLED WHEN APPLIED TO A DOMESTIC ANIMAL IS OFTEN EXPRESSED BY A SPECIAL TERM SUCH AS “SLAUGHTERED” IN ENGLISH. GOAT REFERS HERE TO A RAM OR MALE GOAT. DIPPED THE ROBE: IT IS NOT STATED WHETHER THE BLOOD WAS POURED INTO A CONTAINER BEFORE DIPPING THE GARMENT, OR IF THE GARMENT WAS DIPPED INTO THE BLOOD IN THE CARCASS OF THE GOAT. DIPPED MEANS THAT PARTS OF THE GARMENT WERE PUT INTO THE BLOOD. JACOB WAS EXPECTED TO DRAW THE CONCLUSION THAT THE BLOOD WAS HIS SON’S.**

**GENESIS 37:32: SENT THE LONG ROBE WITH SLEEVES: IT IS NOT CLEAR WHETHER THE BROTHERS SENT THE BLOODIED ROBE WITH A MESSENGER OR IF THEY ALL TOOK IT TO JACOB. IT IS BEST IN MANY LANGUAGES TO CONTINUE THE DIRECT STYLE OF NARRATIVE AND FOLLOW THE MODEL OF TEV: “THEY TOOK THE ROBE TO THEIR FATHER.” IN THIS VERSE THE ROBE IS GIVEN ITS FULL EXPRESSION AS IN VERSE 3. THIS IS DOUBTLESSLY USED BY THE NARRATOR TO CALL ATTENTION TO THE PARTICULAR ROBE THAT HAD BEGUN AS A GIFT, CREATED JEALOUSY, AND ENDED IN REVENGE. THIS WE HAVE FOUND: THAT IS, “WE HAVE FOUND THIS ROBE.” SEE NOW … OR NOT: THE QUESTION IS ASKED POLITELY IN ADDRESSING THEIR FATHER: “PLEASE SEE IF THIS IS YOUR SON’S ROBE OR NOT.”**

**GENESIS 37:33: HE RECOGNIZED IT: JACOB SAW THAT IT WAS JOSEPH’S ROBE. IN SOME LANGUAGES IT MAY BE MORE NATURAL TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “HE LOOKED AT IT AND SAID ‘YES, IT IS MY SON’S ROBE.…’” A WILD BEAST HAS DEVOURED HIM: WILD BEAST RENDERS A TERM USED FOR WILD ANIMALS IN CONTRAST TO DOMESTIC ONES. IN TRANSLATION THIS MAY BE REPRESENTED AS IN TEV OR BY THE NAME OF AN ANIMAL OF PREY THAT ATTACKS AND KILLS DOMESTIC ANIMALS. DEVOURED IN ENGLISH EXPRESSES THE GREEDY EATING OF A HUNGRY ANIMAL. IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO SAY “HAS KILLED AND EATEN HIM.” JOSEPH IS WITHOUT DOUBT TORN TO PIECES: THE HEBREW EXPRESSION IS A LAMENT IN WHICH THE WORDS HAVE REPEATING SOUNDS OR ALLITERATION: TAROF TORAF YOSEF. A FEW TRANSLATIONS HAVE TRIED TO BRING OUT THE ELEMENT OF MOURNING BY USING TRADITIONAL LAMENT FORMS IN THIS SENTENCE; FOR EXAMPLE, “OH MY SON JOSEPH! SOMETHING HAS DESTROYED HIM!”**

**GENESIS 37:34: THEN JACOB RENT HIS GARMENTS: SEE VERSE 29. PUT SACKCLOTH UPON HIS LOINS: SACKCLOTH IS A DARK-COLORED COARSE CLOTH MADE OF GOAT OR CAMEL HAIR. IT IS WORN NEXT TO THE SKIN AS A SIGN OF MOURNING OR DISTRESS. WE MAY NEED TO TRANSLATE SACKCLOTH IN MORE GENERAL TERMS; FOR EXAMPLE, “HE PUT ON THE CLOTHES THAT PEOPLE WEAR WHEN THEY MOURN FOR THE DEAD.” IF A FOOTNOTE IS REQUIRED, WE MAY SAY “AT THAT TIME [OR, IN THAT PART OF THE WORLD] MOURNING CLOTHES WERE PIECES OF COARSE CLOTH MADE FROM GOATS’ HAIR AND WORN BY PEOPLE WHEN THEY MOURNED FOR THE DEAD.” MOURNED … MANY DAYS: THAT IS, “FOR A LONG TIME.” FOR COMMENTS ON MOURNING SEE 23:2.**

**GENESIS 37:35: SONS AND DAUGHTERS: ALTHOUGH WE KNOW ONLY THE NAME OF ONE DAUGHTER, DINAH, JACOB MAY HAVE HAD OTHER DAUGHTERS. ROSE UP TO COMFORT HIM: IN 21:32 ROSE UP INDICATES THE IMMEDIATE ACTION OF THE FOLLOWING VERB “RETURNED.” COMFORT EXPRESSES THE EFFORT OF CONSOLING JACOB. WE MAY TRANSLATE “TRIED TO COMFORT.” SEE TEV. COMFORT MEANS TO DO AND SAY THINGS THAT WOULD HELP RELIEVE HIM OF HIS SORROW, MAKE HIM FEEL BETTER, FORGET HIS GRIEF. HE REFUSED TO BE COMFORTED: THAT IS, “HE COULD NOT FORGET HIS SORROW,” “HE COULD NOT BE MADE TO FEEL BETTER,” OR “HE WOULD NOT LET THEM COMFORT HIM.” IN SOME LANGUAGES WHERE “COMFORT” REFERS TO WHAT PEOPLE SAY, THIS IS EXPRESSED AS “HE WOULD NOT LISTEN TO THEM.” GO DOWN TO SHEOL: THIS IS THE FIRST OCCURRENCE OF SHEOL IN GENESIS. SHEOL WAS REGARDED AS A DARK AND GLOOMY PLACE WHERE ALL THE DEAD WERE IN A SHADOWY AND SLOWLY DISAPPEARING EXISTENCE. IT WAS BELIEVED TO BE BENEATH THE EARTH; THEREFORE, THE EXPRESSION IS “GO DOWN TO SHEOL.” SEE THE ILLUSTRATION OF THE ANCIENT VIEW OF THE WORLD. THE WORD OCCURS FREQUENTLY IN SUCH BOOKS AS JOB, PSALMS, AND PROVERBS. A COMMON TRANSLATION OF SHEOL IS “WORLD OF THE DEAD.” SEE TEV. SHEOL SHOULD NOT BE TRANSLATED BY A WORD FOR “HELL,” A PLACE OF PUNISHMENT. IN THE CONTEXT OF VERSE 35 WE MAY TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “I WILL GO TO MY GRAVE,” “I WILL DIE AND BE BURIED.” IF IT IS DESIRED, A FOOTNOTE OR WORD LIST MAY INCLUDE SHEOL AND MAY BE DESCRIBED AS ABOVE. TO MY SON, MOURNING: JACOB, CONVINCED THAT JOSEPH HAS BEEN KILLED, SAYS THAT HE WILL GO TO SHEOL IN MOURNING. MODERN VERSIONS DIFFER SOMEWHAT IN THE WAY THEY UNDERSTAND THIS VERSE. SOME TAKE IT THAT HE WILL STILL BE MOURNING FOR HIS SON WHEN HE GOES DOWN TO SHEOL, AND OTHERS THAT HE WILL STILL BE MOURNING WHEN HE JOINS HIS SON IN SHEOL. TEV REPRESENTS THE FORMER AND RSV THE LATTER. FRCL IS MORE IN AGREEMENT WITH RSV WHEN IT TRANSLATES “I WILL STILL BE IN MOURNING WHEN I JOIN MY SON IN THE WORLD OF THE DEAD,” AND SPCL “I WILL REMAIN IN MOURNING FOR MY SON UNTIL I JOIN HIM AMONG THE DEAD.” REB PREFERS THE SENSE OF TEV, “I SHALL GO TO SHEOL MOURNING FOR MY SON.” BOTH OF THESE INTERPRETATIONS ARE ACCEPTABLE. THUS, HIS FATHER WEPT FOR HIM: THUS, AS A MARKER OF CONCLUSION, IS THE RSV RENDERING OF THE HEBREW CONNECTIVE. WEEPING IS PART OF THE MOURNING RITUAL. THE THOUGHT EXPRESSED IS THAT JACOB CONTINUED MOURNING (INCLUDING WEEPING) IN SPITE OF HIS CHILDREN’S EFFORTS TO COMFORT OR CONSOLE HIM. SEE TEV.**

**GENESIS 37:36: VERSE 35 BRINGS THIS PART OF THE NARRATIVE TO A CONCLUSION. VERSE 36 IS UNRELATED TO WHAT FOLLOWS IN CHAPTER 38, BUT IS A TRANSITION TO THE CONTINUATION OF THE STORY OF JOSEPH IN CHAPTER 39. SEE 39:1. MEANWHILE THE MIDIANITES HAD SOLD HIM IN EGYPT: MEANWHILE, USED BY BOTH RSV AND TEV, SERVES IN ENGLISH AS A GOOD INTRODUCTION TO THIS TRANSITION TO THE EPISODE THAT FOLLOWS IN CHAPTER 39. ALTHOUGH IN VERSE 28 AND ALSO IN 39:1 IT IS THE ISHMAELITES WHO TOOK JOSEPH TO EGYPT, HERE IN VERSE 36 THE ONES WHO SOLD JOSEPH IN EGYPT ARE REFERRED TO AS THE MIDIANITES. THERE IS NO QUESTION THAT THE DIFFERENT NAMES USED IN VERSES 28 AND 36 ARE CONFUSING. HOWEVER, THOSE WHO EDITED THE HEBREW TEXT IN ANCIENT TIMES HELD THEIR SOURCES IN HIGH ESTEEM, AND IN THIS CASE, THEY SAW NO NEED TO COVER OVER OR REMOVE THE DISCREPANCY. TRANSLATORS ARE ADVISED TO DEAL WITH THE NAME IN THIS VERSE IN A WAY THAT IS CONSISTENT WITH THEIR TREATMENT OF VERSES 25–28. SEE COMMENTS AND ADVICE ABOVE, PARTICULARLY AT VERSE 28. POTIPHAR, AN OFFICER OF PHARAOH: POTIPHAR, ACCORDING TO DRIVER, IS AN EGYPTIAN NAME AND MEANS “HE WHOM THE RA [OR, THE SUN GOD] GAVE.” OFFICER IS LITERALLY “EUNUCH,” A CASTRATED MAN. HOWEVER, THE TERM “EUNUCH” IS COMMONLY USED TO DESIGNATE A COURT OFFICIAL OR OFFICER, AND ACCORDING TO VON RAD IS NOT TO BE TAKEN LITERALLY. SEE 1 KGS 22:9; 2 KGS 8:6; 24:12; EST 1:10, RSV RENDERS THE TERM “OFFICER,” “OFFICIAL,” OR “EUNUCH.” PHARAOH IS NOT A NAME BUT A TITLE THAT MEANS “KING.” IN LANGUAGES IN WHICH THIS TITLE IS UNKNOWN, IT IS BEST TO USE A KNOWN TITLE OF THE HIGHEST RULER. IT MAY BE ADVISABLE TO QUALIFY THE TITLE; FOR EXAMPLE, “THE KING OF EGYPT” OR “THE GREAT CHIEF OF THE EGYPTIANS.” CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD IS LITERALLY “CHIEF OF THE SLAUGHTERERS.” THE REFERENCE IS TO THE SLAUGHTERING OF ANIMALS. IT IS SOMETIMES MISTAKENLY RENDERED “CHIEF OF THE EXECUTIONERS.” DRIVER COMMENTS “THE ROYAL BUTCHERS MUST, IT SEEMS, HAVE COME IN SOME WAY TO FORM THE ROYAL BODYGUARD.” SPEISER CONSIDERS POTIPHAR’S POSITION TO BE “CHIEF STEWARD,” THAT IS, THE ONE IN CHARGE OF THE MANAGEMENT OR ADMINISTRATION OF THE KING’S PALACE. SINCE THE EXACT FUNCTION OF A PERSON WITH THIS TITLE IS NOT KNOWN, IT IS BEST TO USE A GENERAL DESCRIPTION SUCH AS TEV “OFFICER OF THE KING’S GUARDS,” OR IN SOME LANGUAGES “BOSS MAN OF THE SOLDIERS WHO PROTECTED THE KING.”**

**THE STORY OF JUDAH AND TAMAR (38:1–30)**

**BIBLICAL SCHOLARS GENERALLY AGREE THAT CHAPTER 38 INTERRUPTS THE STORY OF JOSEPH AND, AS SPEISER SAYS, “THE NARRATIVE IS A COMPLETELY INDEPENDENT UNIT. IT HAS NO CONNECTION WITH THE DRAMA OF JOSEPH.…” WESTERMANN CALLS IT “A SELF-CONTAINED INDIVIDUAL NARRATIVE.” HOWEVER, A CAREFUL READING OF THE JUDAH AND TAMAR STORY SHOWS, AS ALTER SUGGESTS, THAT “POINTED CONNECTIONS ARE MADE WITH THE MAIN NARRATIVE THROUGH A WHOLE SERIES OF EXPLICIT PARALLELS AND CONTRASTS.” ONE OF THESE CONNECTIONS IS THE RECURRENCE OF THE VERB HAKER, “TO RECOGNIZE.” THIS WORD IS USED IN 37:32 BY JACOB’S SONS WHEN THEY TELL THEIR FATHER “SEE NOW [HAKER] WHETHER IT IS YOUR SON’S ROBE,” AND BY THE NARRATOR, WHO SAYS THAT JACOB “RECOGNIZED [HAKER] IT (VERSE 33).” IN ANOTHER REVEALING SCENE AT THE CLIMAX OF THE JUDAH AND TAMAR STORY (VERSE 25), TAMAR, WHO IS BEING TAKEN OUT TO BE KILLED FOR HER SIN, SAYS “MARK [HAKER], I PRAY YOU, WHOSE THESE ARE.…” AND IN VERSE 26 JUDAH “ACKNOWLEDGED [HAKER] IT.” IN CHAPTER 42 JOSEPH RECOGNIZED [HAKER] HIS BROTHERS, BUT THEY DID NOT KNOW HIM. THE THEME OF DECEPTION THAT RECURS MANY TIMES IN GENESIS IS CENTRAL TO THE JUDAH AND TAMAR STORY. IRONICALLY JUDAH, WHO WITH HIS BROTHERS DECEIVES JACOB CONCERNING JOSEPH’S DEATH, IS NOW DECEIVED BY TAMAR, WHO HAS UNJUSTLY BEEN DENIED THE RIGHT TO GIVE LIFE TO JUDAH’S LINE. THE BIRTH OF STRUGGLING TWINS IN REBEKAH’S CASE IS NOW REPEATED AT THE BIRTH OF TAMAR’S TWIN SONS. AND THE LAW OF PRIMOGENITURE, OR RIGHT OF THE FIRSTBORN, BEING OVERRULED BY GOD, AS IN THE CASE OF JACOB AND ESAU, IS REPEATED IN THE BIRTH OF TAMAR’S SON PEREZ, WHO BECOMES THE ANCESTOR OF DAVID. WE ALSO CANNOT OVERLOOK THE CONTRAST BETWEEN JUDAH, WHO SEEKS OUT SEXUAL OPPORTUNITY THAT ENDS IN HIS EXPOSURE AND DEFEAT BY TAMAR, AND, ON THE OTHER HAND, JOSEPH, WHO AVOIDS THE SEXUAL OPPORTUNITY GIVEN TO HIM BY POTIPHAR’S WIFE—AN ACT THAT LEADS HIM TO PRISON AND TO ULTIMATE TRIUMPH. THESE AND OTHER PARALLELS AND CONTRASTS CLEARLY RELATE THIS CHAPTER TO OTHER THEMES OF THE LARGER NARRATIVES IN GENESIS. THE HEROINE OF THIS STORY IS A CANAANITE WOMAN WHO BRAVELY TRIUMPHS IN UPHOLDING THE OBLIGATION OF A DEAD HUSBAND’S BROTHERS TO PROVIDE DESCENDANTS FOR THEIR BROTHER AND TO ASSURE THE DEAD BROTHER’S SHARE IN THE FAMILY INHERITANCE (SEE VERSE). THE STORY UNFOLDS IN THREE STEPS. IN VERSES 1–11 WE MEET THE CHARACTERS IN THE STORY AND ARE INTRODUCED TO THE CONFLICT THAT MUST BE RESOLVED. IN VERSES 12–23 WE SEE TAMAR, THE HEROINE, ENGAGED IN RESOLVING THE CONFLICT IN HER LIFE. FINALLY, IN VERSES 24–30 THE CONFLICT IS RESOLVED AND TAMAR HAS TRIUMPHED.**

**SUBDIVISION HEADING**

**THE HANDBOOK HEADING, AS IN TEV, GIVES NO HINT OF THE CONTENT OF THE STORY. OTHER SUGGESTIONS ARE, FOR EXAMPLE, “TAMAR OBTAINS HER RIGHTS,” “THE WIDOW TAMAR AND HER TROUBLES,” “A DAUGHTER-IN-LAW DECEIVES HER FATHER-IN-LAW.” GECL HAS “A COURAGEOUS WOMAN OBTAINS HER RIGHTS.”**

**GENESIS 38:1: IT HAPPENED AT THAT TIME IS LITERALLY “IT WAS AT THAT TIME.” IF WE TAKE THIS EXPRESSION TO REFER TO A PARTICULAR TIME, IT MEANS “AT THE TIME JOSEPH WAS BEING SOLD TO POTIPHAR” (37:36). HOWEVER, THE EXPRESSION IS MORE COMMONLY UNDERSTOOD AS A STYLIZED OPENING TO A STORY INCIDENT (FAMILIAR TO READERS OF THE KJV AS “AND IT CAME TO PASS AT THAT TIME”). IN TRANSLATION IT IS BEST TO MAKE THAT TIME AS GENERAL AS POSSIBLE; FOR EXAMPLE, “IT WAS ABOUT THEN,” “THAT IS ABOUT WHEN,” “DURING THESE TIMES,” “SOME TIME LATER.” HOWEVER, SOME TRANSLATORS MAY FIND THAT A GENERAL REFERENCE TO TIME IS NOT SUFFICIENTLY CLEAR TO SERVE AS A STORY OPENER. IN LIGHT OF THE SUGGESTED RELATION OF CHAPTER 38 TO THE REST OF THE JOSEPH STORY, WE MAY SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “WHILE JACOB WAS STILL IN MOURNING.…” JUDAH WENT DOWN FROM HIS BROTHERS: WENT DOWN MAY DESCRIBE THE MOVEMENT FROM THE HILL COUNTRY OF JUDAH AT HEBRON TO ADULLAM AT A LOWER ELEVATION. THE DIRECTION FROM HEBRON IS NORTHWEST, AND THE DISTANCE IS ABOUT 19 KILOMETERS (12 MILES; NOTE THE LOCATIONS ON THE MAP, PAGE 19). HOWEVER, THERE IS ANOTHER POSSIBLE INTERPRETATION FOR WENT DOWN: ACCORDING TO SOME, THE HEBREW WORD MAY ALSO MEAN “WENT SOUTH” IN CERTAIN CONTEXTS. THIS INTERPRETATION IS FOLLOWED BY NEB/REB: “JUDAH PARTED FROM HIS BROTHERS, AND HEADING SOUTH HE …” (REB). HOWEVER, THIS INTERPRETATION IS DEBATABLE. TURNED INTO IS LITERALLY “TURNED ASIDE NEXT TO,” WHICH IN THIS CONTEXT MEANS HE “SETTLED” OR “LIVED” WITH OR NEAR, OR AS NEB/REB SAY, “PITCHED HIS TENT IN COMPANY WITH.” A CERTAIN ADULLAMITE, WHOSE NAME WAS HIRAH: THAT IS, “A MAN FROM THE VILLAGE OF ADULLAM,” “A NATIVE OF ADULLAM.” WE MAY TRANSLATE VERSE 1, FOR EXAMPLE, “DURING THESE TIMES JUDAH LEFT HIS BROTHERS AND WENT TO A PLACE CALLED ADULLAM, WHERE HE SETTLED NEAR A MAN NAMED HIRAH WHO WAS A NATIVE OF THAT PLACE.”**

**GENESIS 38:2: THERE JUDAH SAW THE DAUGHTER OF A CERTAIN CANAANITE: THERE MEANS IN ADULLAM, IN THE PLACE HE WAS LIVING. SAW SUGGESTS THAT HE CAME TO KNOW THE WOMAN, EVEN IF HE ONLY BEGAN BY SEEING HER. IN MANY LANGUAGES IT WILL BE MORE NATURAL TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “HE BECAME ACQUAINTED WITH.” NOTE TEV “MET.” WHOSE NAME WAS SHUA: THE NAME OF JUDAH’S WIFE IS GIVEN IN 1 CHR 2:3 AS “BATHSHUA,” WHICH MEANS “DAUGHTER OF SHUA.” WE MAY TRANSLATE AS IN RSV OR TEV, OR SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “MET A CANAANITE WOMAN NAMED BATHSHUA.” IT IS IMPORTANT TO RECOGNIZE THAT IN THE CASE OF JUDAH, IN CONTRAST WITH ABRAHAM GETTING A WIFE FOR ISAAC IN 24:3, THERE IS NO OBJECTION TO THE FATHER OF THE TRIBE OF JUDAH MARRYING A CANAANITE WOMAN. HE MARRIED HER AND WENT IN TO HER: FOR WENT IN TO SEE 29:23. NOTE THAT TEV OMITS THIS, SINCE “SHE BORE HIM A SON” IN VERSE 3 CLEARLY MEANS THAT HE HAD SEXUAL RELATIONS WITH HER.**

**GENESIS 38:3: VERSES 3–5 GIVE A STANDARD GENEALOGICAL PHRASING REPEATED FOR THE BIRTH OF EACH SON: “SHE CONCEIVED … SHE BORE … CALLED HIS NAME.…” TRANSLATORS SHOULD REFER TO PREVIOUS GENEALOGIES SUCH AS LEAH’S BIRTHS IN 29:32–35. SHE CONCEIVED AND BORE A SON: THAT IS, “SHE BECAME PREGNANT AND GAVE BIRTH TO A SON [BOY].” HE CALLED HIS NAME ER: THE HEBREW HAS THE MASCULINE SINGULAR PRONOUN, WHICH IS OFTEN USED IMPERSONALLY. HOWEVER, SOME HEBREW MANUSCRIPTS AS WELL AS THE SAMARITAN PENTATEUCH AND ONE OF THE ANCIENT TARGUMS HAS “SHE,” WHICH OCCURS IN THE HEBREW IN VERSES 4 AND 5. WE ENCOUNTERED A PARALLEL CASE IN 29:34. HERE, AS WELL AS IN 29:34, HOTTP RECOMMENDS “HE CALLED,” AS IN RSV. SOME MAY FIND IT CLEARER TO SAY “JUDAH NAMED HIM ER.”**

**GENESIS 38:4: VERSE 4 FOLLOWS THE SAME PATTERN AS VERSE 3, EXCEPT THAT HERE THE PRONOUN IS “SHE”; THAT IS, “HIS MOTHER NAMED HIM ONAN.” THE NAMES OF JUDAH’S THREE SONS ARE FOUND ALSO IN 46:12; NUM 26:19–20; AND 1 CHR 2:3.**

**GENESIS 38:5: SHE WAS IN CHEZIB WHEN SHE BORE HIM: SHE, ACCORDING TO THE RSV FOOTNOTE, IS THE FORM FOUND IN THE SEPTUAGINT. THE HEBREW HAS “HE,” THAT IS, JUDAH. HOTTP RECOMMENDS THE HEBREW TEXT WITH “HE” AND SUGGESTS TRANSLATING “WHILE HE [JUDAH] WAS IN CHEZIB.” CHEZIB IS THOUGHT TO BE THE ACHZIB OF JOSH 15:44. THIS IS A PLACE 5 KILOMETERS (3 MILES) SOUTH OF ADULLAM. IT IS NOT CERTAIN WHY THIS DETAIL ABOUT SHELAH’S BIRTH IS MENTIONED.**

**GENESIS 38:6: VERSES 38:6–11 INTRODUCE THE MAIN FEMALE CHARACTER OF THE STORY, TAMAR. BECAUSE OF THE SWIFT MOVEMENT OF THE NARRATIVE, WHICH JUMPS FROM BIRTH TO MARRIAGE, IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO INTRODUCE VERSE 6 BY SAYING, FOR EXAMPLE, “WHEN HIS SONS WERE GROWN,” “MUCH LATER,” OR “AFTER SOME YEARS HAD PASSED.” JUDAH TOOK A WIFE FOR ER HIS FIRST-BORN: TOOK A WIFE MEANS “ARRANGED A MARRIAGE” OR “CHOSE A WOMAN FOR ER HIS OLDEST SON TO MARRY.” SEE THE CASE OF SHECHEM AND HIS FATHER IN 34:4. TAMAR, WHICH MEANS “DATE PALM,” IS ALSO THE NAME OF DAVID’S DAUGHTER (2 SAM 13:1) AND A DAUGHTER OF ABSALOM (2 SAM 14:27).**

**GENESIS 38:7: BUT ER, JUDAH’S FIRST-BORN, WAS WICKED IN THE SIGHT OF THE LORD: RSV GIVES A LITERAL RENDERING OF THE HEBREW, WHICH MANY VERSIONS UNDERSTAND TO MEAN THAT ER DISPLEASED OR OFFENDED THE LORD. SEE TEV. THERE IS NO WAY OF KNOWING WHAT ER DID THAT WAS BAD OR DISPLEASING TO THE LORD. WE MAY TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “ER … BEHAVED BADLY SO THAT THE LORD CAUSED HIM TO DIE” OR “ER … DISPLEASED THE LORD SO MUCH THAT THE LORD TOOK HIS LIFE.”**

**GENESIS 38:8: IN ORDER TO FOLLOW THE RAPID SUCCESSION OF EVENTS, IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO BEGIN VERSE 8 BY SAYING, FOR EXAMPLE, “AFTER ER HAD DIED, JUDAH SAID TO ONAN.…” GO IN TO YOUR BROTHER’S WIFE: GO IN TO MEANS HAVE SEXUAL RELATIONS WITH, WHICH MUST BE EXPRESSED IN A WAY THAT IS ACCEPTABLE FOR PUBLIC READING. SEE THE CASE OF ABRAHAM AND HAGAR IN 16:4, AND OF JACOB AND HIS WIVES IN 29:23, 30. IN SOME LANGUAGES YOUR BROTHER MUST BE EXPRESSED AS “YOUR OLDER BROTHER.” PERFORM THE DUTY OF A BROTHER-IN-LAW TO HER: RSV’S TRANSLATION IS A REASONABLE RENDERING OF THE HEBREW VERB BASED ON A WORD MEANING BROTHER OF A WIDOW’S DEAD HUSBAND. THE VERB FORM MEANS TO CONSUMMATE THE MARRIAGE (HAVE SEXUAL RELATIONS) WITH THE DEAD BROTHER’S WIDOW. THE PURPOSE IS TO GIVE ER’S WIDOW CHILDREN WHO WILL BE ACKNOWLEDGED AS THE CHILDREN OF ER. THESE CHILDREN WILL THEN HAVE THE INHERITANCE RIGHTS OF ER. THIS CUSTOM, CALLED LEVIRATE MARRIAGE IN ENGLISH, WAS LATER INCORPORATED INTO HEBREW LAW. SEE DEUT 25:5–10; DEUT 25:9–10 SHOWS THAT IT WAS A DISGRACE FOR A DEAD MAN’S LIVING BROTHERS TO FAIL TO HAVE CHILDREN WITH THE WIDOW OF THE DECEASED. RAISE UP OFFSPRING FOR YOUR BROTHER STATES THE PURPOSE OF JUDAH’S COMMAND TO ONAN. WE MAY RENDER THIS PURPOSE “SO THAT YOUR BROTHER MAY HAVE DESCENDANTS BY MEANS OF YOU” OR “IN THIS WAY YOU WILL MAKE IT POSSIBLE FOR YOUR OLDER BROTHER TO HAVE DESCENDANTS.” IN SITUATIONS WHERE PEOPLE DO NOT KNOW ABOUT THIS CUSTOM, IT MAY BE DESIRABLE TO MAKE A DIRECT REFERENCE TO IT IN TRANSLATION. IN ONE CASE, FOR EXAMPLE, THIS IS EXPRESSED AS FOLLOWS: “YOUR BROTHER HAS DIED AND HAD NO CHILDREN. OUR CUSTOM IS THAT YOU MUST TAKE YOUR BROTHER’S WIFE AND RAISE CHILDREN FOR HIS NAME.” ANOTHER TRANSLATION HAS “YOU SHOULD GO AND SLEEP WITH THE WIFE OF YOUR DEAD BROTHER, BECAUSE THAT IS WHAT OUR LAW SAYS. YOU MUST SLEEP WITH HER TO GIVE HER A BABY FOR.…” FRCL GIVES A TRANSLATION MODEL THAT SOME MAY FIND PARTICULARLY HELPFUL “THEN JUDAH SAID TO ONAN: ‘YOU KNOW YOUR OBLIGATION AS THE NEXT OF KIN TO A DECEASED [BROTHER]. YOU MUST GIVE YOUR BROTHER DESCENDANTS. THEREFORE, MARRY HIS WIDOW.’”**

**GENESIS 38:9: BUT ONAN KNEW THE OFFSPRING WOULD NOT BE HIS: BUT IS USED BY RSV TO CONTRAST WHAT ONAN IS WILLING TO DO WITH WHAT JUDAH ORDERS HIM TO DO. ONAN COULD NOT CLAIM AS HIS THE CHILDREN THAT WOULD BE BORN TO HIM AND TAMAR. THESE CHILDREN WOULD HAVE INHERITANCE RIGHTS AS THE OFFSPRING OF ER. IN SOME LANGUAGES THIS IS EXPRESSED SIMPLY AS “ONAN KNEW THAT THE BABY WOULD NOT BE HIS OWN CHILD.” SO, WHEN HE WENT IN TO HIS BROTHER’S WIFE …: WHEN IN THIS CONTEXT MEANS “WHENEVER,” “EACH TIME.” IN SOME LANGUAGES IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO SAY WHAT THE HEBREW PASSES OVER: “HE TOOK [MARRIED] THE WOMAN, BUT WHEN.…” BROTHER’S WIFE MAY NEED TO BE EXPRESSED AS “DEAD OLDER BROTHER’S WIFE.” HE SPILLED THE SEMEN ON THE GROUND: SPILLED TRANSLATES A VERB FORM MEANING TO LET SOMETHING GO TO WASTE. THE ACTION DESCRIBED IS OF ONAN WITHDRAWING HIS PENIS BEFORE EJACULATING HIS SEMEN, IN ORDER TO PREVENT TAMAR FROM BECOMING PREGNANT. TRANSLATORS MUST BE PARTICULARLY CAREFUL IN EXPRESSING THIS ACT SO THAT IT WILL NOT CAUSE EMBARRASSMENT IN PUBLIC READING. IF THE PICTURE IS TOO GRAPHIC, IT MAY BE POSSIBLE TO EXPRESS IT MORE INDIRECTLY AS IN SPCL: “THEREFORE, EACH TIME HE UNITED [SEXUALLY] WITH HIS BROTHER’S WIDOW, HE TRIED TO PREVENT HER FROM BECOMING PREGNANT.…” IN SOME LANGUAGES THERE ARE INDIRECT WAYS OF SPEAKING OF SEMEN; FOR EXAMPLE, “HE LET HIS STRENGTH RUN OUT ON THE GROUND.” IN MANY LANGUAGES THE TERM FOR SEMEN IS JUST OMITTED IN THIS CONTEXT, OR IS INDICATED BY SOME INDEFINITE WORD; FOR EXAMPLE, “HE LET IT FALL TO THE GROUND.” ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF A TRANSLATION THAT DOES THIS ALSO MAKES CLEAR THE ACTION OF WITHDRAWAL: “HE DID NOT SPILL ANYTHING INSIDE THAT WOMAN … HE SPILLED ON THE GROUND.” LEST HE SHOULD GIVE OFFSPRING TO HIS BROTHER: THAT IS, “IN ORDER NOT TO GIVE CHILDREN TO HIS BROTHER,” “SO THAT HIS BROTHER WOULD NOT HAVE CHILDREN,” OR “BECAUSE HE DIDN’T WANT THE WOMAN TO HAVE A BABY THAT WOULD BELONG TO HIS BROTHER.”**

**GENESIS 38:10: WHAT HE DID WAS DISPLEASING IN THE SIGHT OF THE LORD AND HE SLEW HIM ALSO: FOR TRANSLATION SEE VERSE 7. THE HEBREW FOR DISPLEASING HERE AND “WICKED” IN VERSE 7 IS THE SAME WORD, SIMPLY “EVIL.”**

**GENESIS 38:11: FOR DAUGHTER-IN-LAW SEE 11:31. REMAIN A WIDOW IN YOUR FATHER’S HOUSE: TEV “RETURN TO YOUR FATHER’S HOUSE” MAY RESULT FROM MODIFYING THE VOWELS OF THE HEBREW WORD FOR REMAIN; OR MORE LIKELY IT IS TRANSLATIONAL, SINCE TAMAR MUST GO BACK TO HER FATHER’S HOUSETO REMAIN A WIDOW. ANOTHER WAY OF EXPRESSING REMAIN A WIDOW IS TO SAY “GO BACK TO YOUR FATHER’S HOUSE… BUT DON’T GET MARRIED AGAIN UNTIL.…” TILL SHELAH MY SON GROWS UP: ACCORDING TO VERSE 5, SHELAH IS JUDAH’S YOUNGEST SON. THERE IS NO WAY OF KNOWING HOW OLD HE IS AT THIS TIME. FOR HE FEARED HE WOULD DIE: THAT IS, JUDAH WAS AFRAID THAT SHELAH WOULD ALSO DIE.**

**GENESIS 38:12: TAMAR HAS RETURNED TO LIVE IN HER FATHER’S HOUSEAND REMAINS A CHILDLESS WIDOW, A STATUS OF PITY AND MISERY FOR HER. VERSE 12 BEGINS A NEW DEVELOPMENT IN THE STORY, IN WHICH TAMAR TAKES THE INITIATIVE TO SOLVE THE CONFLICT CREATED BY FAILURE TO HAVE CHILDREN FOR HER DEAD HUSBAND. IN COURSE OF TIME IS LITERALLY “AND THE DAYS WERE MANY,” WHICH WE MAY RENDER “SOME TIME HAD PASSED,” “AFTER SOME TIME,” OR “SOME TIME LATER.” SINCE WE KNOW FROM VERSE 14 THAT SHELAH IS NOW OLD ENOUGH TO MARRY TAMAR, WE MAY ALSO TRANSLATE “SOME YEARS LATER” OR “AFTER SOME YEARS HAD PASSED.” THE WIFE OF JUDAH, SHUA’S DAUGHTER DIED: THIS WOMAN IS IDENTIFIED AS JUDAH’S WIFE AND THE DAUGHTER OF SHUA. SINCE SHE WAS IDENTIFIED AS THE DAUGHTER OF SHUA IN VERSE 2, TEV DOES NOT REPEAT THIS. MOST MODERN VERSIONS KEEP IT. WHEN JUDAH WAS COMFORTED: FOR COMFORTED FOLLOWING A DEATH SEE 37:35. WE MAY TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “WHEN HIS TIME OF MOURNING HAD FINISHED.” WENT UP TO TIMNAH TO HIS SHEEPSHEARERS: TIMNAH IS ABOUT 7 KILOMETERS (4 MILES) NORTHEAST OF ADULLAM (SEE THE MAP, PAGE 19). JUDAH WENT TO TIMNAH FOR THE SHEARING OF HIS SHEEP, THAT IS, THE CUTTING OF THE WOOL FROM THE SHEEP. FOR A SIMILAR REFERENCE REGARDING LABAN, SEE 31:19. FOR HIRAH THE ADULLAMITE SEE VERSE 1.**

**GENESIS 38:13: WHEN TAMAR WAS TOLD MAY HAVE TO BE EXPRESSED IN AN ACTIVE FORM; FOR EXAMPLE, “WHEN THEY TOLD TAMAR” OR “WHEN TAMAR FOUND OUT.” YOUR FATHER-IN-LAW: THAT IS, “THE FATHER OF YOUR HUSBAND,” OR “JUDAH.”**

**GENESIS 38:14: PUT OFF HER WIDOW’S GARMENTS: THE EXACT KIND OF CLOTHING A WIDOW WORE IS NOT KNOWN. PUT ON A VEIL: VEIL IS A CLOTH THAT COVERS THE FACE AND MAY COVER THE HEAD AS WELL. THERE ARE TWO PURPOSES FOR TAMAR’S COVERING HER FACE. THE FIRST AND MORE OBVIOUS IS TO HIDE HER IDENTITY FROM JUDAH. AS TO THE SECOND, WE MUST REMEMBER THAT TAMAR, WHO IS A CANAANITE WOMAN AND LIVES IN A CANAANITE CULTURE, COULD BE PLAYING THE PART OF A RELIGIOUS PROSTITUTE WHO WOULD WEAR A VEIL. JUDAH COULD EASILY CONSIDER HER A TEMPLE PROSTITUTE RATHER THAN AN ORDINARY PROSTITUTE OR HARLOT. NOTICE THAT IN VERSES 21 AND 22 TAMAR WILL BE REFERRED TO BY JUDAH’S CANAANITE FRIEND HIRAH BY A TERM MEANING “CULT PROSTITUTE.” WHETHER TAMAR IS ACTING AS A COMMON PROSTITUTE OR AS A TEMPLE PROSTITUTE, SHE WOULD PUT ON A VEIL TO KEEP HER IDENTITY SECRET. WRAPPING HERSELF UP MAY APPLY TO COVERING HERSELF WITH A VEIL, OR TO ADDITIONAL CLOTHING SHE PUT ON TO HELP DISGUISE HERSELF. WHETHER WE TAKE “DISGUISE HERSELF” TO BE THE DIRECT MEANING OF THE HEBREW HERE OR NOT, IN SOME LANGUAGES IT WILL BE HELPFUL TO INCLUDE THESE WORDS AS GIVING THE MEANING OF PUTTING ON A VEIL IN THIS CONTEXT. SAT AT THE ENTRANCE TO ENAIM: THIS MAY REFER TO THE ENTRANCE TO THE VILLAGE OF ENAIM NEAR TIMNAH, OR TO A ROAD JUNCTION LEADING TO WHERE JUDAH HAD TO PASS ON HIS WAY TO TIMNAH. ACCORDING TO VERSE 16 SHE IS SITTING BY THE ROADSIDE. SHE HAS MANAGED TO GET THERE AHEAD OF JUDAH. FOR SHE SAW THAT SHELAH WAS GROWN UP, AND SHE HAD NOT BEEN GIVEN TO HIM IN MARRIAGE: FROM THE AMOUNT OF TIME THAT HAS PASSED SINCE JUDAH TOLD HER TO WAIT FOR SHELAH IN VERSE 11, TAMAR COULD REASONABLY ASSUME HE HAD MATURED FOR MARRIAGE. SHE HAD NOT BEEN GIVEN TO HIM IN MARRIAGE: IN LANGUAGES IN WHICH THIS SENTENCE MUST BE EXPRESSED AS ACTIVE, WE MAY SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “JUDAH HAD NOT GIVEN HER TO SHELAH AS HIS WIFE” OR “JUDAH HAD NOT MARRIED HER TO SHELAH.” IN SOME LANGUAGES IT WILL BE NECESSARY TO PLACE THESE LAST TWO CLAUSES AT THE BEGINNING OF VERSE 14.**

**GENESIS 38:15: HE THOUGHT HER TO BE A HARLOT: THE WORD HARLOT IS FIRST USED IN CHAPTER 34, WHEN DINAH’S BROTHERS HAD TAKEN THEIR REVENGE ON SHECHEM. SEE 34:31 FOR SOME COMMENTS ABOUT TRANSLATION OF THE TERM. THERE IS THE SITUATION IN SOME CULTURES, HOWEVER, WHERE PROSTITUTION AS A CUSTOM IS NOT RECOGNIZED AND WHERE THERE ARE NO REGULAR TERMS FOR “PROSTITUTE.” THIS DOES NOT MEAN THAT WOMEN AND MEN DON’T ENGAGE IN IRREGULAR SEXUAL ACTIVITY, OR THAT MONEY DOESN’T CHANGE HANDS IN THE PROCESS; BUT IT DOES MEAN THAT THERE ARE NOT THE TECHNICAL TERMS TO RENDER THE HEBREW TEXT AT ALL LITERALLY. THE FOLLOWING RESTRUCTURINGS FROM ONE TRANSLATION IN WHICH THERE IS NO TERM FOR “PROSTITUTE” MAY BE HELPFUL TO OTHER TRANSLATORS IN SIMILAR SITUATIONS: IN VERSE 14 TAMAR TAKES OFF HER WIDOW’S GARB AND PUTS ON OTHER CLOTHES “TO ATTRACT MEN.” JUDAH COMES ALONG IN VERSE 15, SEES THE WOMAN WEARING THOSE CLOTHES, AND IS “INTERESTED.” HE SAYS TO HIMSELF, “HELLO! THIS WOMAN LOOKS AS THOUGH SHE WANTS A MAN!” IN VERSE 20 JUDAH SENDS HIS FRIEND TO FIND “THAT WOMAN.” IN VERSE 21 HIRAH ASKS THE MEN, “WHERE IS THAT WOMAN WHO ALWAYS SITS BESIDE THE ROAD AND WAITS FOR MEN?” THE MEN REPLY, “WE DON’T HAVE THAT KIND OF WOMAN HERE WHO IS ALWAYS WAITING FOR MEN!” IN VERSE 22 HIRAH REPORTS BACK TO JUDAH: “THEY TOLD ME THAT THEY DON’T HAVE THAT KIND OF WOMAN THERE.” IN VERSE 24 THE REPORT ABOUT TAMAR IS THAT “YOUR DAUGHTER-IN-LAW HAS BEEN LOOKING FOR MEN AND IS IN THE FAMILY WAY.”**

**FOR SHE HAD COVERED HER FACE: SEE DISCUSSION IN VERSE 14. THERE ARE TWO POSSIBILITIES FOR HOW THIS CLAUSE IS RELATED TO THOUGHT HER TO BE A HARLOT:**

**(1) JUDAH TOOK HER TO BE A PROSTITUTE BECAUSE PROSTITUTES COMMONLY WORE VEILS. THIS IS THE WAY ORDINARY READERS OF MOST ENGLISH VERSIONS UNDERSTAND THE TEXT. HOWEVER, COMMENTATORS DO NOT AGREE ABOUT WHETHER IT WOULD HAVE BEEN TRUE IN THIS CONTEXT THAT A VEILED WOMAN WOULD MOST LIKELY BE A PROSTITUTE.**

**(2) JUDAH COULD NOT SEE WHO THE WOMAN WAS BECAUSE OF HER VEIL, AND SO HE ASSUMED THAT SHE WAS A PROSTITUTE. IN THIS CASE HE WOULD HAVE TO THINK SHE WAS A PROSTITUTE FOR A DIFFERENT REASON: PERHAPS BECAUSE SHE WAS SITTING IN THAT PLACE, OR PERHAPS BECAUSE OF SOMETHING ELSE ABOUT HER CLOTHING. ONE TRANSLATION THAT FOLLOWS THIS INTERPRETATION RENDERS “WRAPPED HERSELF UP” IN VERSE 14 AS “SHE PUT ON CLOTHES TO ATTRACT MEN,” AND SAYS HERE “JUDAH SAW THOSE CLOTHES AND THOUGHT.…” ANOTHER POSSIBILITY IS “JUDAH SAW HER SITTING THERE BESIDE THE ROAD, AND SO HE THOUGHT SHE WAS A PROSTITUTE. HE DIDN’T RECOGNIZE HER BECAUSE SHE WAS WEARING A VEIL.”**

**GENESIS 38:16: COME, LET ME COME IN TO YOU: COME IN THIS CONTEXT SEEMS TO SERVE ONLY TO GET TAMAR’S ATTENTION. COME IN TO YOU MEANS “HAVE SEX WITH YOU.” FOR HE DID NOT KNOW … HIS DAUGHTER-IN-LAW: THIS REASON CLAUSE MUST OFTEN BE MOVED FORWARD IN TRANSLATION. WE MAY TRANSLATE VERSE 16, FOR EXAMPLE, “JUDAH DID NOT KNOW SHE WAS HIS DAUGHTER-IN-LAW, SO HE WENT TO THE SIDE OF THE ROAD WHERE SHE WAS SITTING AND SAID, ‘LET ME SLEEP WITH YOU.’” TEV’S RENDERING “ALL RIGHT, HOW MUCH DO YOU CHARGE?” IS INTENDED TO ANTICIPATE TAMAR’S QUESTION; BUT THIS IS NOT NECESSARY, AND TEV IS NOT A GOOD MODEL HERE. WHAT WILL YOU GIVE ME? HER QUESTION IS GENERAL ENOUGH TO MEAN “HOW MUCH [MONEY]?” OR “WHAT KIND OF GOODS?”**

**GENESIS 38:17: I WILL SEND YOU A KID FROM THE FLOCK: KID REFERS TO A YOUNG GOAT. FOR THE TERM USED FOR KID, SEE 27:9. GIVE ME A PLEDGE: A PLEDGE IS AN OBJECT OF PERSONAL PROPERTY GIVEN UNTIL A DEBT IS PAID. IN THIS CASE TAMAR ASKS FOR SOMETHING BELONGING TO JUDAH THAT SHE CAN KEEP UNTIL HE SENDS HER THE KID. WHEN SHE RECEIVES THE KID, IT IS ASSUMED THAT SHE WILL RETURN THE OBJECTS GIVEN AS PLEDGE, OR AS A PROMISE TO PAY. IF A DESCRIPTIVE EXPRESSION MUST BE USED TO TRANSLATE PLEDGE, WE MAY SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “WHAT WILL YOU GIVE ME TO KEEP UNTIL YOU SEND ME THE KID?” SOME TRANSLATIONS SAY “… GIVE ME SOMETHING AS A MARK OF YOUR PROMISE.” IN SOME LANGUAGES THIS REQUEST IS BETTER EXPRESSED AS A STRONG STATEMENT: “ALL RIGHT. BUT YOU MUST GIVE ME SOMETHING.…”**

**GENESIS 38:18: WHAT PLEDGE SHALL I GIVE: THAT IS, “WHAT SHALL I GIVE YOU AS A PLEDGE?” OR “WHAT SHALL I GIVE YOU TO KEEP UNTIL I SEND THE KID?” TAMAR WISELY REQUIRES THINGS THAT WILL CLEARLY IDENTIFY THEIR OWNER. YOUR SIGNET AND YOUR CORD: SIGNET REFERS TO A CYLINDER SEAL THAT HUNG ON A CORD AROUND THE OWNER’S NECK, OR TO A SEAL ON A RING. THE SEAL COULD BE PRESSED INTO SOFT CLAY TO SHOW THE OWNER’S MARK. IT WAS THE EQUIVALENT OF PLACING THE OWNER’S SIGNATURE ON A DOCUMENT. IN LANGUAGES WHERE THE USE OF SEALS IS UNKNOWN, IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “YOUR RING WITH YOUR NAME THAT HANGS ON A CORD” OR “YOUR NAME MARKER THAT HANGS AROUND YOUR NECK.” IN ONE TRANSLATION THIS IS “THAT NECKLACE WITH YOUR NAME ON IT.” YOUR STAFF: THIS REFERS TO JUDAH’S WALKING STICK. ACCORDING TO ANCIENT HISTORIANS A MAN’S WALKING STICK CARRIED HIS PERSONAL CARVINGS AND WOULD, LIKE HIS SEAL, BE EASILY IDENTIFIED AS JUDAH’S PROPERTY. THE REMAINDER OF VERSE 18 STATES IN SUMMARY FASHION THAT THEY AGREED ON THE FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENT, HAD INTERCOURSE, AND THAT TAMAR BECAME PREGNANT, WHICH WAS HER SOLE PURPOSE. THIS LAST STATEMENT, THAT SHE CONCEIVED BY HIM, IS A PROBLEM IN SOME LANGUAGES, SINCE TAMAR WOULD NOT KNOW THIS UNTIL SOME TIME AFTER SHE HAD RETURNED HOME. SO, IN SOME TRANSLATIONS VERSES 18 AND 19 ARE COMBINED, AND THE FINAL STATEMENT IS “THEN AFTER A WHILE SHE DISCOVERED THAT SHE WAS PREGNANT.” IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT AT NO POINT IN THIS STORY IS TAMAR CRITICIZED FOR PLAYING THE PART OF A PROSTITUTE; NOR IS JUDAH JUDGED FOR HAVING SEX WITH A HARLOT. THE NARRATOR’S POINT IS THAT TAMAR IS SEEKING JUSTICE, EVEN IF WE CONSIDER HER METHODS AS LESS THAN ADMIRABLE.**

**GENESIS 38:19: THEN SHE AROSE AND WENT AWAY: AROSE IS AS IN 31:21. WENT AWAY IS TRANSLATED BY TEV AS “WENT HOME” AND IS A GOOD MODEL. THE REMAINDER OF VERSE 19 IS THE REVERSE OF VERSE 14A.**

**GENESIS 38:20: WHEN JUDAH SENT THE KID BY HIS FRIEND THE ADULLAMITE: RSV RENDERS THE HEBREW CONNECTIVE AS WHEN AND BEGINS THIS VERSE WITH A TIME CLAUSE. COMPARE TEV. THE HEBREW IS LITERALLY “AND JUDAH SENT THE GOAT KID BY THE HAND OF HIS FRIEND THE ADULLAMITE.” IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO BEGIN THIS VERSE WITH A TRANSITIONAL EXPRESSION; FOR EXAMPLE, “LATER” OR “SOON AFTERWARD.” THE REST OF THE VERSE MAY BE RENDERED “JUDAH SENT THE KID WITH HIS FRIEND THE ADULLAMITE. THE ADULLAMITE [HIRAH] WAS TO GET BACK THE PLEDGE FROM TAMAR, BUT COULD NOT FIND HER.”**

**GENESIS 38:21: MEN OF THE PLACE: THE HEBREW SAYS “MEN OF HER PLACE.” THE ANCIENT VERSIONS HAVE “MEN OF THE PLACE.” HOTTP RATES THE HEBREW TEXT AS {B} AND RECOMMENDS “MEN OF HER [DWELLING] PLACE.” TEV TAKES HER DWELLING PLACE TO BE ENAIM IN VERSE 14 AND TRANSLATES “SOME MEN OF ENAIM.” THIS IS A SATISFACTORY MODEL. HARLOT: THE RSV FOOTNOTE SUGGESTS THAT THIS IS A DIFFERENT WORD THAN THAT USED IN VERSE 15. THE HEBREW WORD IS QEDESHA, WHICH IS DERIVED FROM THE WORD FOR “HOLY” OR “CONSECRATED” AND REFERS TO A TEMPLE OR CULT PROSTITUTE, A WOMAN WHO SELLS HER SEX AS A RELIGIOUS DUTY, USUALLY CONNECTED WITH FERTILITY RITES IN CANAANITE RELIGIONS. SEE THE DISCUSSION IN VERSE 14. ACCORDING TO WESTERMANN, USE OF THIS TERM WOULD BE A MORE POLITE WAY OF REFERRING TO A HARLOT, AS CULTIC PROSTITUTION WAS AN ACCEPTED INSTITUTION IN CANAANITE CULTURE, BUT HARDLY SO AMONG THE ISRAELITES. TRANSLATORS MAY FIND THAT NOTHING IS GAINED IN USING A DIFFERENT WORD FOR HARLOT IN VERSE 21. THE IDEA OF CULT PROSTITUTION WILL BE STRANGE TO SPEAKERS OF MOST LANGUAGES. TRANSLATORS SHOULD DECIDE IF A FOOTNOTE IS REQUIRED. IF SO, A FOOTNOTE MAY SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “THIS REFERS TO WOMEN WHO TOOK PART IN CANAANITE FERTILITY RITES AND WHO HAD SEX WITH MANY MEN.”**

**GENESIS 38:22: SO, HE RETURNED TO JUDAH: HE REFERS TO HIRAH THE ADULLAMITE. INSTEAD OF THE DIRECT SPEECH IN THIS VERSE, SOME TRANSLATORS MAY FIND IT MORE NATURAL IN STYLE TO SHIFT TO INDIRECT SPEECH. IN THAT WE CASE WE MAY SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “SO HIRAH WENT BACK TO JUDAH AND TOLD HIM HE COULD NOT FIND HER; ALSO, THE MEN OF ENAIM SAID THAT NO HARLOT HAD BEEN THERE.”**

**GENESIS 38:23: LET HER KEEP … OWN: THE THINGS REFERS TO THE SIGNET ON ITS CORD AND THE WALKING STICK. IN SOME LANGUAGES THIS SPEECH OF JUDAH BEGINS NATURALLY WITH A COLLOQUIAL EXCLAMATION SUCH AS “LEAVE IT!” OR “FORGET IT NOW!” WE BE LAUGHED AT IS LITERALLY “LEST WE BE FOR CONTEMPT.” THE SENSE IS “LEST WE BE THE OBJECT OF CONTEMPT.” WE MAY ALSO TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “SO WE ARE NOT LAUGHED AT” OR “SO PEOPLE DON’T MAKE FUN OF US.” SEE TEV. WE IS INCLUSIVE, AND IT IS ALSO A DUAL PRONOUN (“WE-TWO”), AS IT REFERS TO JUDAH AND HIRAH ONLY. YOU SEE, I SENT THE KID: YOU SEE TRANSLATES THE HEBREW HINNEH, WHICH WE MAY RENDER IN ENGLISH AS “ANYWAY” OR “WELL, AT LEAST.” AN EXAMPLE FROM ANOTHER LANGUAGE IS “I DID MY BEST TO PAY HER, BUT.…”**

**GENESIS 38:24: JUDAH WAS TOLD: SEE SUGGESTIONS FOR SHIFTING TO ACTIVE SENTENCES IN VERSES 13 AND 14. TAMAR … HAS PLAYED THE HARLOT: FOR DAUGHTER-IN-LAW SEE VERSE 11. PLAYED THE HARLOT TRANSLATES A VERB MEANING TO COMMIT FORNICATION OR TO ACT AS A HARLOT. WE MAY TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “TAMAR HAS ACTED LIKE A HARLOT,” “TAMAR HAS SOLD HER SEX LIKE A HARLOT,” OR “TAMAR HAS DONE WHAT HARLOTS DO.” NOTE THAT TEV USES “WHORE” IN THIS EXPRESSION TO SHOW THE DISAPPROVAL OF THE PEOPLE WHO TOLD JUDAH. AND MOREOVER: THIS PART OF THE VERSE IS INTRODUCED BY HINNEH, WHICH CALLS ATTENTION TO THE UNEXPECTED NEWS THAT TAMAR IS PREGNANT. WITH CHILD BY HARLOTRY: IT HAS ALREADY BEEN SAID THAT SHE ACTED AS A HARLOT, AND SO SOME VERSIONS DO NOT REPEAT THIS. SEE TEV. AND JUDAH SAID: JUDAH NOW TAKES ON THE ROLE OF HEAD OF THE FAMILY. HIS RESPONSE IS THAT OF AN ISRAELITE. IN SOME LANGUAGES SPECIAL WORDS SHOULD BE USED FOR THIS KIND OF SPEECH, WHICH CONDEMNS SOMEONE TO PUNISHMENT; FOR EXAMPLE, “THEN JUDAH GAVE A STRONG COMMAND LIKE THIS.…” BRING HER OUT: BRING IS A COMMAND IN THE PLURAL. TAMAR IS TREATED AS IF SHE HAS BEEN PROMISED IN MARRIAGE TO SHELAH. HOWEVER, SEE VERSE 11. ACCORDING TO DEUT 22:23–24 A BETROTHED VIRGIN AND THE MAN WHO HAS HAD SEX WITH HER ARE TO BE TAKEN TO THE GATE OF THE CITY AND STONED TO DEATH. ALTHOUGH TAMAR IS NOT A VIRGIN, JUDAH MAY CONSIDER HER PROMISED TO HIS SON. LET HER BE BURNED: HERE AGAIN, IF THE PASSIVE CANNOT BE USED, IT MAY BE POSSIBLE TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “AND BURN HER ALIVE.” BURN HERE MEANS SET HER ON FIRE UNTIL SHE DIES. IN LATER JEWISH LAW THE ONLY CASE REQUIRING DEATH THROUGH BURNING IS IF THE DAUGHTER OF A PRIEST PROSTITUTES HERSELF (LEV 21:9).**

**GENESIS 38:25: IN VERSE 25 TAMAR MAKES HER FINAL EFFORT TO RESOLVE THE CONFLICT THAT RAGES ABOUT HER. IN SOME LANGUAGES IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO PROVIDE A TRANSITION TO VERSE 25; FOR EXAMPLE, “THEY WENT TO GET HER, AND AS THEY WERE BRINGING HER.…” SHE SENT WORD … FATHER-IN-LAW IS LITERALLY “SHE SENT TO HER FATHER-IN-LAW SAYING.” IT IS EVIDENT FROM VERSE 26 THAT TAMAR SENT THE PLEDGES WITH SOMEONE TO CONFRONT JUDAH. ACCORDINGLY, IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO TRANSLATE THIS VERSE: “WHILE THEY WERE BRINGING HER TO THE ENTRANCE OF THE TOWN, SHE SENT SOMEONE TO HER FATHER-IN-LAW WITH THE THINGS HE HAD GIVEN HER AS A PLEDGE.” AND SHE SAID: HER MESSAGE ACCOMPANYING THE PLEDGES WAS “THE MAN WHO OWNS THESE THINGS HAS MADE ME PREGNANT. LOOK AND SEE WHOSE SEAL ON THE CORD AND WHOSE WALKING STICK THESE ARE.” EXAMPLES OF DIFFERENT WAYS THIS IS RENDERED ARE “DO YOU SEE THESE THINGS …? I AM PREGNANT, BUT THE MAN WHO MADE ME PREGNANT, THESE TWO THINGS BELONG TO HIM. LOOK AT THEM! WHO DO THEY BELONG TO?” AND “I AM PREGNANT BY THE MAN WHO IS THE OWNER OF THESE THINGS. LOOK CAREFULLY AT THESE THINGS, … WHO DO YOU THINK THEY BELONG TO?”**

**GENESIS 38:26: VERSE 26 INTRODUCES THE SOLUTION TO THE CONFLICT AND IS THE CLIMAX OF THE STORY. THEN JUDAH ACKNOWLEDGED THEM: THAT IS, “JUDAH LOOKED AT THEM AND RECOGNIZED THAT THEY WERE HIS.” SEE TEV. SHE IS MORE RIGHTEOUS THAN I: RIGHTEOUS HERE REFERS TO BEING RIGHT IN RESPECT TO KEEPING THE LAW OF THE LEVIRATE MARRIAGE. THIS IS CLEARLY SHOWN IN THE NEXT SENTENCE. TAMAR HAD MADE A HEROIC EFFORT TO SATISFY THE OBLIGATION OF BEARING CHILDREN FOR HER DEAD HUSBAND. JUDAH, ON THE OTHER HAND, HAD WITHHELD HIS LAST SON FROM HER, AND SO WAS IN THE WRONG. IN OTHER WORDS, TAMAR HAD RESPECTED OR HONORED THE LAW OF THE LEVIRATE, WHEREAS JUDAH HAD NOT. FRCL GIVES A GOOD RENDERING THAT MAKES CLEAR JUDAH’S MEANING: “SHE HAS RESPECTED THE LAW BETTER THAT I HAVE.” WE MAY ALSO TRANSLATE “SHE HAS DONE THE RIGHT THING AND I HAVE DONE WRONG.” INASMUCH AS I DID NOT GIVE HER TO MY SON SHELAH: IN THIS WAY JUDAH STATES WHAT IT WAS THAT HE DID WRONG. WE MAY TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “BECAUSE I DID NOT GIVE HER TO MY SON SHELAH IN MARRIAGE” OR “BECAUSE I FAILED TO HAVE MY SON SHELAH MARRY HER.” AND HE DID NOT LIE WITH HER AGAIN: HE IS JUDAH AND HER IS TAMAR. LIE WITH HER IS LITERALLY “KNOW HER,” AS IN 4:1. IT IS NOT ACTUALLY STATED IN THE TEXT, BUT IN SOME LANGUAGES, IT IS EXPECTED THAT THE STORY WILL SAY AT THIS POINT THAT JUDAH DID NOT PROCEED WITH THE PUNISHMENT. ONE TRANSLATION, FOR EXAMPLE, FINISHES THIS EPISODE BY SAYING “JUDAH LET HER GO FREE. THEY DIDN’T KILL HER; AND JUDAH DID NOT SLEEP WITH HER AGAIN.”**

**GENESIS 38:27: WHEN THE TIME OF HER DELIVERY [HAVING THE CHILD] CAME: FOR A PARALLEL EXPRESSION USED OF REBEKAH, SEE 25:24.**

**GENESIS 38:28: FOR WAS IN LABOR SEE 35:16, 17. ONE PUT OUT A HAND: THAT IS, ONE OF THE TWINS. LIKE MANY OTHER LANGUAGES, THE HEBREW DOES NOT DISTINGUISH BETWEEN “HAND” AND “ARM.” SOME ENGLISH VERSIONS PREFER “ARM” HERE. FOR MIDWIFE SEE 35:17. BOUND ON HIS HAND A SCARLET THREAD IS LITERALLY “TIED ON HIS HAND [WRIST] CRIMSON.” THE REFERENCE IS TO A DARK RED THREAD. IT IS IMPORTANT, AS WE SAW IN THE BIRTH OF ESAU AND JACOB, TO ESTABLISH WHICH OF THE TWINS IS BORN FIRST AND THEREFORE HAS THE PRIVILEGES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF OLDEST BROTHER. THIS CAME OUT FIRST: THAT IS, “THIS IS THE CHILD [THE ONE WITH THE RED THREAD] THAT WAS BORN FIRST.”**

**GENESIS 38:29: AS HE DREW BACK HIS HAND: THAT IS, “AS HE PULLED HIS HAND BACK INSIDE THE BIRTH CANAL.” BEHOLD INTRODUCES A SURPRISE EVENT, WHICH IS: HIS BROTHER CAME OUT. SEE TEV. WHAT A BREACH YOU HAVE MADE FOR YOURSELF IS LITERALLY “HOW YOU HAVE TORN A BREAK [A PLACE BROKEN OPEN] FOR YOURSELF.” BREACH IN HEBREW IS PARETS, SPELLED PEREZ IN ENGLISH. SEE RSV AND TEV FOOTNOTES. THEREFORE, HIS NAME WAS CALLED PEREZ: OR “THEREFORE THEY CALLED HIM PEREZ.”**

**GENESIS 38:30: AFTERWARD HIS BROTHER CAME OUT WITH THE SCARLET THREAD UPON HIS HAND: ZERAH IS THE SECOND TO BE BORN. NO EXPLANATION SUCH AS THE ONE FOR PEREZ IS GIVEN FOR THE NAME ZERAH, BUT SEE THE TEV FOOTNOTE. IN 1 CHR 2:6 THE DESCENDANTS OF ZERAH ARE MORE NUMEROUS THAN THOSE OF PEREZ. IN RUTH 4:18–22 PEREZ IS THE ANCESTOR OF KING DAVID. SEE ALSO MATT 1:3**

**JOSEPH WORKS FOR POTIPHAR (39:1–6A)**

**CHAPTER 39 PICKS UP THE STORY OF JOSEPH WHERE IT LEFT OFF IN CHAPTER 37. IN THIS SUBDIVISION JOSEPH IS SOLD BY ISHMAELITE TRADERS TO POTIPHAR AND BECOMES A SUCCESSFUL AND TRUSTED EMPLOYEE BECAUSE THE LORD IS WITH HIM (VERSES 1–4). THE LORD BLESSES THE EGYPTIAN’S HOUSEAND FARM BECAUSE OF JOSEPH, AND JOSEPH IS GIVEN FULL RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE OVERSIGHT OF HIS MASTER’S PROPERTY (VERSES 5–6A).**

**SUBDIVISION HEADING**

**THE HANDBOOK HEADING MAY NEED TO BE MODIFIED TO INDICATE THAT POTIPHAR IS AN OFFICER OF THE KING OF EGYPT. SEE COMMENTS ON 37:36. MOST MODERN VERSIONS HAVE ONLY ONE HEADING FOR CHAPTER 39. HOWEVER, FRCL HAS THREE AND BEFORE VERSES 1–6A SAYS “JOSEPH IN THE HOUSEOF POTIPHAR THE EGYPTIAN.” FOR THE SAME VERSES NJB SAYS “JOSEPH’S EARLY DAYS IN EGYPT.”**

**GENESIS 39:1: NOW JOSEPH WAS TAKEN DOWN TO EGYPT: NOW (ALSO TEV) IS USED TO TRANSLATE THE HEBREW CONNECTIVE. IT SERVES IN ENGLISH AS A TRANSITION TO A NEW EPISODE. HOWEVER, OUR TEXT IS AGAIN OPENING AN EPISODE ABOUT JOSEPH AFTER HAVING LEFT HIS STORY AT THE END OF CHAPTER 37. ACCORDINGLY, IN MANY LANGUAGES IT WILL BE NECESSARY TO MAKE CLEAR THAT WE ARE AGAIN PICKING UP THE THREAD OF THE JOSEPH STORY AND NOT CONTINUING THE JUDAH AND TAMAR STORY. IN FACT, VERSE 1 PICKS UP FROM 37:28, WHERE JOSEPH WAS SOLD TO THE ISHMAELITES. FOR COMMENTS AND ADVICE ABOUT TRANSLATING ISHMAELITES, SEE THE DISCUSSION AT 37:28. WE MAY BEGIN CHAPTER 39 BY SAYING “AFTER THE TRADERS HAD BOUGHT JOSEPH AND BROUGHT HIM TO EGYPT, POTIPHAR … BOUGHT HIM” OR “WELL JOSEPH WAS NOW IN EGYPT, BECAUSE THE TRADERS WHO BOUGHT HIM … TOOK HIM THERE; AND THEY SOLD HIM TO POTIPHAR.…” IF THE TRANSLATION USES CROSS REFERENCES, VERSE 1 MAY BE REFERENCED TO 37:28. POTIPHAR, AN OFFICER OF PHARAOH, THE CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD: FOR THE TRANSLATION SEE 37:36. IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT POTIPHAR’S NAME IS NOT USED AGAIN. FROM THIS POINT ON HE IS REFERRED TO AS “JOSEPH’S MASTER” OR AS “THE EGYPTIAN.” BOUGHT HIM: THIS MAY NEED TO BE EXPRESSED AS “BOUGHT HIM AS A SLAVE,” IF THE IDEA OF SLAVERY IS NOT CLEAR TO READERS FROM THE CONTEXT. WHO HAD BROUGHT HIM DOWN THERE: FOR TAKEN DOWN AND BROUGHT HIM DOWN, SEE 12:10. THIS CLAUSE IS REPETITIVE, PARTICULARLY IF THE TRANSLATOR FOLLOWS THE MODEL FOR THE OPENING SENTENCE, SEE TEV? TRANSLATORS WILL NOTICE THAT IN VERSES 2 AND 3 RSV JOINS CLAUSES FIVE TIMES WITH “AND.” SOME OF THESE CAUSE RELATIONS BETWEEN THE CLAUSES TO BECOME UNCLEAR.**

**GENESIS 39:2: THE LORD WAS WITH JOSEPH: AS IN 26:3 THE SENSE HERE IS “HELPED,” “GUIDED,” “PROTECTED,” AND MUST OFTEN BE TRANSLATED BY SOME SUCH EXPRESSION. SOME TRANSLATIONS SAY “… HELPED HIM IN EVERYTHING.” HE BECAME A SUCCESSFUL MAN: THE HEBREW VERB HAS A CAUSATIVE FORCE, THAT IS, “THE LORD CAUSED JOSEPH TO SUCCEED,” “… TO DO WELL.” ALTHOUGH THE WORD RENDERED SUCCESSFUL CAN ALSO MEAN “PROSPEROUS,” THAT IS NOT THE PREFERRED MEANING IN THIS CONTEXT. THE FIRST PART OF THIS VERSE CAN BE TRANSLATED AS A COMBINATION OF REASON AND RESULT CLAUSES; FOR EXAMPLE, “BECAUSE THE LORD HELPED JOSEPH, HE WAS ABLE TO DO WELL” OR “THE REASON JOSEPH DID WELL WAS BECAUSE THE LORD HELPED HIM.” AND HE WAS IN THE HOUSEOF HIS MASTER THE EGYPTIAN: THIS STATEMENT IS OFTEN HANDLED BEST AS A SEPARATE SENTENCE, AS IN TEV, OR IT MAY BE LINKED TO THE PREVIOUS CLAUSE; FOR EXAMPLE, “THE LORD … MADE HIM SUCCESSFUL WHILE HE WAS WORKING IN THE HOUSEOF.…”**

**GENESIS 39:3: AND HIS MASTER SAW THAT THE LORD WAS WITH HIM: AND IS THE USUAL HEBREW CONNECTIVE, BUT HERE IT MAY BE TAKEN TO MEAN “THEN” OR “AFTER A TIME.” HIS MASTER MEANS JOSEPH’S MASTER. FOR MASTER SEE 24:9. SAW MAY NEED TO BE RENDERED BY A WORD EQUIVALENT TO “REALIZED,” “RECOGNIZED,” “WAS AWARE OF,” “KNEW.” FOR WAS WITH HIM SEE VERSE 1.**

**AND THAT THE LORD CAUSED ALL THAT HE DID TO PROSPER IN HIS HANDS: JOSEPH’S MASTER RECOGNIZED THAT THE LORD HELPED JOSEPH AND THEREFORE EVERYTHING HE UNDERTOOK TURNED OUT WELL. IN HIS HANDS IS A HEBREW IDIOM THAT MEANS “WHATEVER HE DID,” “EVERYTHING HE UNDERTOOK.” WE MAY TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “THE LORD MADE EVERYTHING HE DID TO TURN OUT WELL.”**

**GENESIS 39:4: SO, JOSEPH FOUND FAVOR IN HIS SIGHT: FOR THE TRANSLATION OF THIS EXPRESSION, SEE 6:8. IN THE CONTEXT OF SOMEONE DOING GOOD WORK FOR A MASTER, THIS IS OFTEN EXPRESSED AS “HE WAS VERY HAPPY WITH JOSEPH.” ATTENDED HIM: JOSEPH’S MASTER LIKED AND TRUSTED HIM, AND SO HE GAVE JOSEPH THE POSITION OF ATTENDANT OR PERSONAL SERVANT. WE MAY TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “HIS MASTER LIKED JOSEPH AND THEREFORE MADE HIM HIS SERVANT.” AND HE MADE HIM OVERSEER OF HIS HOUSE: JOSEPH WAS MADE “ADMINISTRATOR,” “CHIEF,” “HEAD” OF THE OTHER SERVANTS IN POTIPHAR’S HOUSE. PUT HIM IN CHARGE OF ALL THAT HE HAD IS LITERALLY “AND ALL THAT HE HAD HE GAVE INTO HIS HAND.” WE MAY RENDER THIS “HE ENTRUSTED TO JOSEPH ALL HIS POSSESSIONS [THINGS HE OWNED].” IN SOME LANGUAGES THIS THOUGHT MAY BE EXPRESSED “HE TOLD JOSEPH ‘YOU ARE TO TAKE CARE OF ALL THESE THINGS OF MINE.’” IN ONE TRANSLATION THE LAST TWO CLAUSES ARE COMBINED: “HE MADE JOSEPH THE BOSS OF ALL THE PEOPLE IN HIS HOUSEHOLD AND OF EVERYTHING HE OWNED.”**

**GENESIS 39:5: FROM THE TIME HE MADE HIM OVERSEER … BLESSED THE EGYPTIAN’S HOUSEFOR JOSEPH’S SAKE: SOME TRANSLATIONS REPEAT THE WORDS THAT WERE EXPRESSED IN VERSE 4. HOWEVER, SEE TEV. BLESSED IN THIS CONTEXT HAS THE SENSE OF DOING GOOD TO SOMEONE, AND IN PARTICULAR TO MAKE THEM PROSPER. IF THE MORE GENERAL TERM FOR BLESSED IS NOT SUITABLE HERE, WE MAY SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “THE LORD MADE EVERYTHING IN POTIPHAR’S HOUSETURN OUT WELL.” FRCL HAS A RENDERING THAT MAY SERVE AS A MODEL: “FROM THAT TIME, BECAUSE OF JOSEPH, THE LORD MADE THE AFFAIRS OF THE EGYPTIAN PROSPER. THAT PROSPERITY EXTENDED TO ALL HIS GOODS, BOTH IN HIS HOUSEAND IN HIS FIELDS.”**

**GENESIS 39:6A: SO, HE LEFT ALL THAT HE HAD IN JOSEPH’S CHARGE IS LITERALLY “HE LEFT EVERYTHING HE HAD IN JOSEPH’S HAND.” THIS MAY OFTEN BE RENDERED “HE TRUSTED JOSEPH TO LOOK AFTER [TAKE CARE OF] EVERYTHING HE OWNED.” AND HAVING HIM HE HAD NO CONCERN FOR ANYTHING BUT THE FOOD WHICH HE ATE: THIS MAY BE RENDERED, FOR EXAMPLE, “POTIPHAR DID NOT HAVE TO TROUBLE HIMSELF WITH ANYTHING EXCEPT THE FOOD HE ATE.”**

**INTERPRETERS UNDERSTAND BUT THE FOOD WHICH HE ATE IN THREE WAYS: (1) AS REFERRING TO HIS PRIVATE SEXLESS LIFE, (2) AS REFERRING TO HIS PRIVATE AFFAIRS GENERALLY, (3) AS REFERRING TO RELIGIOUS REGULATIONS CONCERNING THE PREPARATION OF FOOD, WHICH HE COULD NOT ENTRUST TO A FOREIGNER.**

**SEE 43:32. IT IS IN THIS LAST SENSE THAT WE ARE PROBABLY TO UNDERSTAND THIS EXPRESSION. IT IS POSSIBLE TO RESTRUCTURE THIS VERSE BY CHANGING THE ORDER OF THE CLAUSES; ONE EXAMPLE OF THIS RESTRUCTURING IS “POTIPHAR NOW HAD AN EASY JOB. HE DIDN’T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT ANYTHING IN HIS HOUSEHOLD, BECAUSE HE PUT JOSEPH IN CHARGE; THE ONLY THING HE HAD TO THINK ABOUT WAS HIS FOOD.”**

**JOSEPH AND POTIPHAR’S WIFE (39:6B–20)**

**IN THIS EPISODE POTIPHAR’S WIFE, WHO IS NEVER NAMED, ATTEMPTS TO SEDUCE JOSEPH; BUT JOSEPH RESISTS AND DEFENDS HIMSELF BY REMINDING HER THAT HE HAS GAINED THE TRUST OF HIS MASTER. ALSO, HE RECOGNIZES THAT TO GIVE IN TO THE WOMAN WOULD BE TO SIN AGAINST GOD (VERSES B–9). AFTER REPEATED ATTEMPTS TO SEDUCE HIM HAVE FAILED, THE WOMAN GRABS HIS SKIRT BUT JOSEPH FREES HIMSELF AND RUNS OUT OF THE HOUSE. SHE THEN FALSELY ACCUSES JOSEPH TO THE OTHER SERVANTS OF ATTEMPTING TO RAPE HER. WHEN HER HUSBAND COMES HOME, SHE REPORTS THE SAME TO HIM, AND THE MASTER HAS JOSEPH PUT IN PRISON (VERSES 10–20).**

**SUBDIVISION HEADING**

**THE HANDBOOK HEADING DOES NOT INDICATE THE NATURE OF THE CONFLICT BETWEEN JOSEPH AND POTIPHAR’S WIFE. IT MAY, HOWEVER, BE DESIRABLE TO MAKE THIS CLEAR IN THE HEADING. IN THAT CASE WE MAY SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “POTIPHAR’S WIFE TRIES TO SEDUCE JOSEPH,” “JOSEPH REFUSES TO GO TO BED WITH HIS MASTER’S WIFE,” “JOSEPH RESISTS THE TEMPTATION OF POTIPHAR’S WIFE,” “BECAUSE OF POTIPHAR’S WIFE JOSEPH GOES TO PRISON.” FRCL HAS “JOSEPH AND HIS MASTER’S WIFE.” NJB SAYS “THE ATTEMPT TO SEDUCE JOSEPH.” A HEADING THAT MAKES USE OF A COMMON EUPHEMISM SAYS “POTIPHAR’S WIFE MAKES TROUBLE FOR JOSEPH.”**

**GENESIS 39:6B: NOW JOSEPH WAS HANDSOME AND GOOD-LOOKING: NOW IS AGAIN USED BY RSV TO INTRODUCE A NEW EPISODE. NOTE TEV. FOR HANDSOME AND GOOD-LOOKING THE HEBREW SAYS LITERALLY “FAIR OF FORM AND FAIR OF FACE.” THE SAME EXPRESSION IS USED IN 29:17, WHERE RACHEL’S BEAUTY IS DESCRIBED. HERE THE WORDING SHOULD BE SUITABLE FOR DESCRIBING A MAN. NOTE TEV “WELL-BUILT AND GOOD LOOKING.”**

**GENESIS 39:7: CAST HER EYES UPON JOSEPH IS LITERALLY “LIFTED UP HER EYES AT JOSEPH.” POTIPHAR’S WIFE IS NOT PICTURED IN THIS STORY AS BEING IN A HAREM, AND NO OTHER WIFE IS MENTIONED. SHE APPEARS TO BE FREE TO DO AS SHE PLEASES. THE SERVANTS OF THE HOUSEHOLD WOULD BE EXPECTED TO AVOID EYE CONTACT WITH THEIR MASTER’S WIFE. SHE, HOWEVER, DOES NOT APPEAR TO BE UNDER ANY SIMILAR RESTRICTION. SHE HAS HAD TIME TO OBSERVE JOSEPH AND, AS TEV SAYS, SHE “BEGAN TO DESIRE JOSEPH.” REB SAYS SHE “BECAME INFATUATED,” NAB “BEGAN TO LOOK FONDLY AT.” ALL OF THESE ARE ADEQUATE MODELS. IN SOME LANGUAGES THERE ARE IDIOMATIC WAYS OF TALKING ABOUT HOW MEN AND WOMEN LOOK AT EACH OTHER; ONE EXAMPLE IN THIS CONTEXT IS “SHE HAD DESIROUS EYES FOR JOSEPH.” LIE WITH ME: WE MUST REMEMBER THAT THE WOMAN IS SPEAKING TO A FOREIGN SLAVE WHOM HER HUSBAND HAS PURCHASED. SHE IS IN A POSITION TO ORDER HIM TO DO ANYTHING SHE WANTS. IN TRANSLATION THE EXPRESSION SHOULD BE A COMMAND TO HAVE SEXUAL RELATIONS, BUT MAY NEED TO BE EXPRESSED IN AN INDIRECT WAY, AS IT IS IN THE HEBREW AND RSV. REB SAYS IT WELL IN ENGLISH: “COME, MAKE LOVE TO ME.”**

**GENESIS 39:8: BUT HE REFUSED: IN THIS CONTEXT IT MAY BE MORE NATURAL TO USE DIRECT SPEECH; FOR EXAMPLE, “‘NO!’ SAID JOSEPH. ‘I CAN’T DO THAT!’” FRCL SAYS “‘NEVER,’ REPLIED JOSEPH.” JOSEPH’S DEFENSE FOR REFUSING POTIPHAR’S WIFE IS BASED ON THE TRUST HIS MASTER HAS PLACED IN HIM, AND THAT TO DO WHAT SHE COMMANDS WOULD BE A SIN AGAINST GOD. LO, HAVING ME … IN THE HOUSE: LO TRANSLATES THE HEBREW HEN, WHICH EMPHASIZES THE REASON TO FOLLOW. TEV TRANSLATES IT “LOOK, …” WE MAY ALSO SOMETIMES SAY “LISTEN,” OR “WAIT.” HAVING ME … MAY APPEAR THAT JOSEPH’S SPEECH IS NOT RELATED TO THE WIFE’S SEDUCTION UNLESS SOMETHING IS SAID TO MAKE THIS CLEAR. THIS MAY BE DONE BY REVERSING THE TWO CLAUSES OF THE VERSE SO THAT THE QUESTION OF TRUST IS STATED FIRST; FOR EXAMPLE, “LISTEN, DON’T YOU KNOW MY MASTER HAS TRUSTED ME WITH EVERYTHING HE HAS? HE DOESN’T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT ANYTHING IN THIS HOUSEBECAUSE I AM HERE.”**

**GENESIS 39:9: HE IS NOT GREATER IN THIS HOUSETHAN I AM: THE SENSE OF GREATER IS TO BE TAKEN IN TERMS OF RIGHT, POWER, OR AUTHORITY. SEE TEV. IN SOME LANGUAGES THIS STATEMENT MAY BE RENDERED “IN THIS HOUSEI AM AS MUCH A RULER AS HE IS,” “IN THIS HOUSEI RULE PEOPLE THE SAME AS HE DOES,” OR “NEITHER OF US-TWO IS HIGHER IN THIS HOUSEHOLD.” NOR HAS HE KEPT BACK ANYTHING FROM ME EXCEPT YOURSELF: KEPT BACK MEANS “FORBIDDEN,” “WITHHELD,” OR “DENIED.” WE MAY ALSO TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “HE HAS GIVEN ME THE RIGHT TO EVERYTHING EXCEPT YOU.” TWO OTHER WAYS OF EXPRESSING THIS ARE “HE DID NOT FORBID ME TO TOUCH ANYTHING. NO. BUT HE DID NOT TELL ME TO SLEEP WITH YOU …,” AND “I CAN DO ANYTHING I WANT TO IN THIS HOUSEHOLD. ONLY YOU I CAN’T TOUCH.” BECAUSE YOU ARE HIS WIFE: JOSEPH’S REASON MAKES CLEAR THE SERIOUSNESS WITH WHICH HE VIEWS ADULTERY, AND THAT MARRIAGE IS UNDER DIVINE PROTECTION. HOW THEN CAN I DO THIS GREAT WICKEDNESS? OR “HOW CAN I DO SUCH AN EVIL THING?” TEV “IMMORAL THING” MAY BE TOO ABSTRACT FOR A MODEL TRANSLATION IN SOME LANGUAGES. IF THE QUESTION FORM IS NOT SUITABLE, IT MAY ALSO BE EXPRESSED AS A NEGATIVE STATEMENT; FOR EXAMPLE, “I COULD NOT DO SUCH A BAD THING.” SIN AGAINST GOD: SEE 13:13 FOR DISCUSSION OF THIS EXPRESSION. IN CONTRAST WITH THE NARRATOR’S USE OF STEPHEN YAHWEH IN VERSES 2–5, JOSEPH IN CONVERSATION WITH THE EGYPTIAN WOMAN USES ’ELOHIM.**

**GENESIS 39:10: ALTHOUGH SHE SPOKE TO JOSEPH DAY AFTER DAY: SPOKE DOES NOT CONVEY ADEQUATELY WHAT SHE WAS DOING. THEREFORE, IT WILL OFTEN BE NECESSARY TO MAKE HER ACTIONS CLEAR BY SAYING, FOR EXAMPLE, “ALTHOUGH SHE KEPT ON ASKING,” “… CONTINUED TO TEMPT,” “… INSISTED.” HE WOULD NOT LISTEN TO HER, TO LIE WITH HER: THIS DOUBLE STATEMENT MAY BE RENDERED MORE DIRECTLY BY SAYING “HE REFUSED TO GO TO BED WITH HER” OR “HE WOULD NOT HAVE SEX WITH HER.” OR TO BE WITH HER IS OMITTED IN SOME ANCIENT VERSIONS. NOTE TEV. MOST MODERN VERSIONS KEEP THIS PHRASE. NEB/REB HAVE “OR BE IN HER COMPANY.” A SUGGESTED MODEL TRANSLATION FOR VERSE 10 IS “ALTHOUGH SHE INSISTED DAY AFTER DAY THAT JOSEPH SLEEP WITH HER OR KEEP HER COMPANY, HE REFUSED TO PAY ANY ATTENTION TO HER.”**

**GENESIS 39:11: VERSES 11–19 REPORT THE INCIDENT THAT LED TO JOSEPH BEING PUT IN PRISON. BUT ONE DAY IS LITERALLY “ON A DAY LIKE THIS,” WHICH MEANS “AS USUAL.” THE REFERENCE IS TO ONE OF THOSE DAYS IN WHICH POTIPHAR’S WIFE WAS TRYING TO SEDUCE JOSEPH. SPEISER TRANSLATES “ONE SUCH DAY.” WENT INTO THE HOUSE: THAT IS, “HIS MASTER’S HOUSE.” AND NONE OF THE MEN OF THE HOUSEREFERS TO THE OTHER SERVANTS WHO WORKED IN POTIPHAR’S HOUSE. SEE TEV. IN SOME LANGUAGES THIS INFORMATION WILL NEED TO BE EXPRESSED AS AN INDEPENDENT SENTENCE.**

**GENESIS 39:12: SHE CAUGHT HIM BY HIS GARMENT: SHE REFERS TO POTIPHAR’S WIFE AND HIM TO JOSEPH. TRANSLATORS DIFFER GREATLY AS TO THE KIND OF CLOTHING JOSEPH WAS WEARING. SUCH TERMS AS “TUNIC,” “ROBE,” “CLOAK,” “COAT,” AND “LOINCLOTH” ARE USED. ANCIENT EGYPTIAN ART SHOWS THE DRESS OF A WORKER AS BEING BARE ABOVE THE WAIST AND WITH THE LOWER BODY COVERED BY A CLOTH THAT TIED AT THE WAIST AND HUNG OVER THE HIPS IN THE FORM OF A SHORT SKIRT. IF JOSEPH WAS WEARING SUCH A SKIRT, IT COULD EASILY COME LOOSE WHEN HE PULLED AWAY FROM THE WOMAN’S GRASP. AS A RESULT, JOSEPH WOULD BE LEFT NAKED. IF A SATISFACTORY TERM FOR SUCH A SHORT SKIRT OR LOINCLOTH IS NOT AVAILABLE, IT IS PROBABLY BEST TO USE A GENERAL WORD FOR CLOTHING. TERMS LIKE “TROUSERS” OR “SHIRT” WOULD CONVEY THE WRONG PICTURE. BUT HE LEFT HIS GARMENT IN HER HAND: JOSEPH REACTS BY RUNNING OUT OF THE HOUSE, AND AS A RESULT THE SKIRT IS IN HER HAND — “HE RAN OUT OF THE HOUSELEAVING HIS SKIRT IN HER HAND.” THE NAKED JOSEPH DOES NOT RUN INTO THE STREET, AS THE HOUSEWOULD HAVE BEEN SURROUNDED BY A COURTYARD.**

**GENESIS 39:13: VERSES 13–18 REPORT THE WIFE’S FALSE VERSION OF THIS INCIDENT. VERSE 13 FOLLOWS THE SAME SEQUENCE OF EVENTS AS IN VERSE 12. IN SOME LANGUAGES IT MAY BE DESIRABLE TO BEGIN A NEW PARAGRAPH AT THIS POINT (AS IN NIV, CEV).**

**GENESIS 39:14: SHE CALLED TO THE MEN OF HER HOUSEHOLD: THAT IS, “SHE CALLED TO THE OTHER SERVANTS [MASCULINE].” THESE MEN WERE PROBABLY IN THEIR QUARTERS IN THE REAR OF THE COURTYARD. SEE, HE HAS BROUGHT AMONG US A HEBREW TO INSULT US: IN THE PREVIOUS SENTENCE SHE CALLED TO THE MEN, AND IT IS ASSUMED THAT THEY CAME TO HER BEFORE SHE BEGAN SPEAKING. HOWEVER, IN SOME LANGUAGES THIS TRANSITION MUST BE STATED; FOR EXAMPLE, “AND WHEN THE SERVANTS CAME TO HER, SHE SAID, ‘LOOK HERE.…’” APPARENTLY THE WOMAN IS HOLDING UP JOSEPH’S SKIRT FOR THEM TO SEE. SEE TEV. WE MAY ALSO TRANSLATE “SEE WHAT THIS IS,” “COME AND LOOK AT THIS,” OR “SEE WHAT I HAVE HERE.” THE PERSON REFERRED TO IN HE HAS BROUGHT MAY NEED TO BE GIVEN: “MY HUSBAND HAS BROUGHT.…” THE TERM HEBREW IS NORMALLY USED BY ISRAELITES WHEN SPEAKING OF THEMSELVES TO FOREIGNERS, OR IS USED BY FOREIGNERS WHEN SPEAKING ABOUT ISRAELITES. ACCORDING TO 43:32 EGYPTIANS WERE FORBIDDEN TO EAT WITH HEBREWS. THE WOMAN THEREFORE USES THIS TERM TO REFER TO JOSEPH AS A DESPISED FOREIGNER. TO MAKE THIS CLEAR IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “MY HUSBAND HAS IMPORTED THIS HEBREW” OR “… THIS HEBREW FOREIGNER.” INSULT US IS LITERALLY “TO LAUGH AT US.” IN THIS CONTEXT THE WIFE PRETENDS TO HAVE BEEN OFFENDED, AND THEREFORE TERMS LIKE INSULT, “BRING SHAME,” “OFFEND” ARE APPROPRIATE. SOME TRANSLATIONS SAY “MAKE FOOLS OF US.” SOME COMMENTATORS THINK THAT US MAY SUGGEST THAT THERE ARE OTHER WOMEN IN THE HOUSEWHO HAD ALSO BEEN OFFENDED BY JOSEPH. HOWEVER, SHE MAY BE SEEKING SOLIDARITY WITH THE SERVANTS BY INCLUDING THEM. IN THAT CASE SOME LANGUAGES REQUIRE IN THIS CONTEXT AN INCLUSIVE FORM OF US. IF SHE IS SPEAKING TO THE MALE SERVANTS BUT REFERRING TO OTHER WOMEN, THE FORM OF US WOULD BE EXCLUSIVE. ANOTHER POSSIBILITY IS THAT THE WIFE REALLY MEANS TO REFER ONLY TO HERSELF WHEN SHE SAYS US; SEE NJB “TO MAKE A FOOL OF ME.” HE CAME IN TO ME MEANS HE CAME IN WHERE I WAS. TEV SAYS “MY ROOM.” OTHER TRANSLATIONS ARE MORE GENERAL: “CAME HERE.” NJB UNDERSTANDS CAME AS A VIOLENT ENTRANCE AND SAYS “BURST IN ON ME.” TO LIE WITH ME: THE WOMAN FALSELY DESCRIBES JOSEPH’S INTENTION AS BEING AGAINST HER WILL, AND THEREFORE TEV “TRIED TO RAPE” IS APPROPRIATE. IN SOME LANGUAGES RAPE IS EXPRESSED AS “TRIED TO FORCE ME,” “TRIED TO PUT ME UNDER HIM,” OR “TRIED TO HAVE SEX WITH ME.” I CRIED OUT WITH A LOUD VOICE: THE WOMAN CLAIMS SHE PROTESTED BY SHOUTING OUT AN ALARM. WE MAY TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “I SCREAMED FOR HELP” OF “I YELLED FOR SOMEONE TO COME.”**

**GENESIS 39:15: WHEN HE HEARD THAT I LIFTED UP MY VOICE: LIFTED UP MY VOICE IS A HEBREW IDIOM FOR “I CALLED OUT LOUDLY,” OR “I SCREAMED” (TEV). IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT THE WIFE HAS NO WITNESSES, THE SERVANTS ARE ENTIRELY PASSIVE, AND JOSEPH’S SIDE OF THE STORY IS NEVER BROUGHT TO LIGHT. HOWEVER, AS AN AFRICAN PROVERB SAYS, “A WORM IN A COURT OF BIRDS NEVER GETS A HEARING.” LEFT HIS GARMENT WITH ME: WITH ME IS LITERALLY “BESIDE ME” AND HAS THE SENSE OF “ON THE BED BESIDE ME.” FLED AND GOT OUT OF THE HOUSE: SEE VERSE 13.**

**GENESIS 39:16: THE UNTRUE REPORT TO THE SERVANTS IS FINISHED AND THE NEXT ACTION IS INTRODUCED IN RSV BY THEN. IN SOME LANGUAGES IT WILL BE MORE NATURAL TO SAY “WHEN SHE HAD FINISHED TELLING THIS TO THE OTHER SERVANTS.…” LAID UP HIS GARMENT BY HER MEANS SHE KEPT HIS GARMENT WITH HER.**

**GENESIS 39:17: TOLD HIM THE SAME STORY REFERS TO THE VERSION SHE HAD TOLD TO THE SERVANTS. INSTEAD OF REPEATING THE FULL ACCOUNT, SHE GIVES A SHORTER VERSION TO HER HUSBAND. THE HEBREW SERVANT … TO INSULT ME: IN HER REPORT TO HER HUSBAND SHE USES INSULT (THE SAME HEBREW WORD AS USED IN VERSE 14) TO REFER TO THE ATTEMPTED RAPE. SPCL AND FRCL SAY “AND TRIED TO DISHONOR ME.”**

**GENESIS 39:18: FOR THE WORDING OF THIS VERSE, SEE VERSES 14 AND 15. GENESIS 39:14: SHE CALLED TO THE MEN OF HER HOUSEHOLD: THAT IS, “SHE CALLED TO THE OTHER SERVANTS [MASCULINE].” THESE MEN WERE PROBABLY IN THEIR QUARTERS IN THE REAR OF THE COURTYARD. SEE, HE HAS BROUGHT AMONG US A HEBREW TO INSULT US: IN THE PREVIOUS SENTENCE SHE CALLED TO THE MEN, AND IT IS ASSUMED THAT THEY CAME TO HER BEFORE SHE BEGAN SPEAKING. HOWEVER, IN SOME LANGUAGES THIS TRANSITION MUST BE STATED; FOR EXAMPLE, “AND WHEN THE SERVANTS CAME TO HER, SHE SAID, ‘LOOK HERE.…’” APPARENTLY THE WOMAN IS HOLDING UP JOSEPH’S SKIRT FOR THEM TO SEE. SEE TEV. WE MAY ALSO TRANSLATE “SEE WHAT THIS IS,” “COME AND LOOK AT THIS,” OR “SEE WHAT I HAVE HERE.” THE PERSON REFERRED TO IN HE HAS BROUGHT MAY NEED TO BE GIVEN: “MY HUSBAND HAS BROUGHT.…” THE TERM HEBREW IS NORMALLY USED BY ISRAELITES WHEN SPEAKING OF THEMSELVES TO FOREIGNERS, OR IS USED BY FOREIGNERS WHEN SPEAKING ABOUT ISRAELITES. ACCORDING TO 43:32 EGYPTIANS WERE FORBIDDEN TO EAT WITH HEBREWS. THE WOMAN THEREFORE USES THIS TERM TO REFER TO JOSEPH AS A DESPISED FOREIGNER. TO MAKE THIS CLEAR IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “MY HUSBAND HAS IMPORTED THIS HEBREW” OR “… THIS HEBREW FOREIGNER.” INSULT US IS LITERALLY “TO LAUGH AT US.” IN THIS CONTEXT THE WIFE PRETENDS TO HAVE BEEN OFFENDED, AND THEREFORE TERMS LIKE INSULT, “BRING SHAME,” “OFFEND” ARE APPROPRIATE. SOME TRANSLATIONS SAY “MAKE FOOLS OF US.” SOME COMMENTATORS THINK THAT US MAY SUGGEST THAT THERE ARE OTHER WOMEN IN THE HOUSEWHO HAD ALSO BEEN OFFENDED BY JOSEPH. HOWEVER, SHE MAY BE SEEKING SOLIDARITY WITH THE SERVANTS BY INCLUDING THEM. IN THAT CASE SOME LANGUAGES REQUIRE IN THIS CONTEXT AN INCLUSIVE FORM OF US. IF SHE IS SPEAKING TO THE MALE SERVANTS BUT REFERRING TO OTHER WOMEN, THE FORM OF US WOULD BE EXCLUSIVE. ANOTHER POSSIBILITY IS THAT THE WIFE REALLY MEANS TO REFER ONLY TO HERSELF WHEN SHE SAYS US; SEE NJB “TO MAKE A FOOL OF ME.” HE CAME IN TO ME MEANS HE CAME IN WHERE I WAS. TEV SAYS “MY ROOM.” OTHER TRANSLATIONS ARE MORE GENERAL: “CAME HERE.” NJB UNDERSTANDS CAME AS A VIOLENT ENTRANCE AND SAYS “BURST IN ON ME.” TO LIE WITH ME: THE WOMAN FALSELY DESCRIBES JOSEPH’S INTENTION AS BEING AGAINST HER WILL, AND THEREFORE TEV “TRIED TO RAPE” IS APPROPRIATE. IN SOME LANGUAGES RAPE IS EXPRESSED AS “TRIED TO FORCE ME,” “TRIED TO PUT ME UNDER HIM,” OR “TRIED TO HAVE SEX WITH ME.” I CRIED OUT WITH A LOUD VOICE: THE WOMAN CLAIMS SHE PROTESTED BY SHOUTING OUT AN ALARM. WE MAY TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “I SCREAMED FOR HELP” OF “I YELLED FOR SOMEONE TO COME.” GENESIS 39:15: WHEN HE HEARD THAT I LIFTED UP MY VOICE: LIFTED UP MY VOICE IS A HEBREW IDIOM FOR “I CALLED OUT LOUDLY,” OR “I SCREAMED” (TEV). IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT THE WIFE HAS NO WITNESSES, THE SERVANTS ARE ENTIRELY PASSIVE, AND JOSEPH’S SIDE OF THE STORY IS NEVER BROUGHT TO LIGHT. HOWEVER, AS AN AFRICAN PROVERB SAYS, “A WORM IN A COURT OF BIRDS NEVER GETS A HEARING.” LEFT HIS GARMENT WITH ME: WITH ME IS LITERALLY “BESIDE ME” AND HAS THE SENSE OF “ON THE BED BESIDE ME.” FLED AND GOT OUT OF THE HOUSE: SEE VERSE 13.**

**GENESIS 39:19: WHEN HIS MASTER HEARD THE WORDS … WIFE SPOKE TO HIM: THE NARRATOR KEEPS OUR ATTENTION ON JOSEPH BY SPEAKING OF HIS MASTER. IT MAY BE CLEARER TO SAY “WHEN JOSEPH’S MASTER HEARD.…” THIS IS THE WAY YOUR SERVANT TREATED ME IS PLACED BETWEEN QUOTES IN RSV. THE QUOTED MATERIAL HAS NOT APPEARED IN THE RETELLING OF THE INCIDENT TO THE HUSBAND. IT IS BETTER, THEREFORE, TO AVOID THE USE OF QUOTES AND TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “WHEN JOSEPH’S MASTER HEARD HIS WIFE TELL HOW JOSEPH HAD TREATED HER, HE BECAME ANGRY.” NOTE THAT TEV HAS SEVERELY SHORTENED VERSE 19.**

**GENESIS 39:20: JOSEPH’S MASTER TOOK HIM AND PUT HIM INTO THE PRISON: TOOK HIM PROBABLY DOES NOT MEAN THAT POTIPHAR GRABBED JOSEPH HIMSELF. IN SOME LANGUAGES IT WILL BE NECESSARY TO MAKE THIS CLEAR BY SAYING “GAVE ORDERS THAT SOLDIERS GRAB JOSEPH AND PUT HIM IN PRISON” OR “SENT HIS MEN TO TAKE HOLD OF JOSEPH AND THROW HIM INTO JAIL.” PRISON TRANSLATES AN EXPRESSION MEANING “HOUSEOF ROUNDNESS” OR “ROUND HOUSE” AND OCCURS ONLY HERE AND IN VERSES 21–23; 40:3, 5. IT IS FURTHER DEFINED AS THE PLACE WHERE THE KING’S PRISONERS WERE CONFINED. WE MAY TRANSLATE THE LAST CLAUSE, FOR EXAMPLE, AS “WELL, JOSEPH WAS THERE IN PRISON” OR “BECAUSE OF WHAT HAPPENED IN POTIPHAR’S HOUSE, JOSEPH BECAME A PRISONER.”**

**JOSEPH IN PRISON (39:21–40:4)**

**JOSEPH IN PRISON STILL HAS THE BLESSING OF GOD, AND CONSEQUENTLY HE IS FAVORED OVER OTHER PRISONERS MUCH AS HE WAS IN HIS MASTER’S HOUSE (VERSE 21). JOSEPH IS GIVEN RESPONSIBILITY AND MADE THE LEADER IN THE PRISON (VERSES 22–23). DURING HIS TIME IN PRISON THE KING’S BUTLER AND BAKER ARE IMPRISONED WITH JOSEPH, AND JOSEPH IS APPOINTED TO ATTEND TO THEIR NEEDS (40:1–4).**

**SUBDIVISION HEADING**

**TRANSLATORS MAY WISH TO MODIFY THE HANDBOOK HEADING TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “JOSEPH IS PUT IN PRISON,” “JOSEPH GOES TO PRISON,” OR “GOD HELPS JOSEPH IN PRISON.”**

**GENESIS 39:21: BUT THE LORD WAS WITH JOSEPH: FOR THIS EXPRESSION SEE VERSE 3. SHOWED HIM STEADFAST LOVE: SEE 24:12 FOR THE USE OF THE HEBREW CHESED IN THIS EXPRESSION. IN SOME LANGUAGES THIS IS EXPRESSED FIGURATIVELY; FOR EXAMPLE, “THE LORD’S HEART WAS WARM TOWARD JOSEPH” OR “THE LORD HAD GOODNESS IN HIS INNERMOST FOR JOSEPH.” GAVE HIM FAVOR IN THE SIGHT OF: THE PARALLEL EXPRESSION OCCURS IN 6:8; 18:3; 19:19; 32:5; 33:8, IN WHICH THE INDIVIDUAL FINDS FAVOR IN THE EYES OF SOMEONE. IN OUR VERSE THE LORD MAKES THE JAILER PLEASED OR SATISFIED WITH JOSEPH: “THE LORD MADE JOSEPH WIN THE FAVOR OF THE JAILER.” KEEPER OF THE PRISON REFERS TO THE MAN IN CHARGE OF THE PRISONERS, CALLED “CHIEF JAILER” OR “HEAD JAILER” IN ENGLISH. IN MANY LANGUAGES HE IS CALLED “THE MAN IN CHARGE OF THE JAIL” OR “THAT JAIL BOSS.”**

**GENESIS 39:22: COMMITTED TO JOSEPH’S CARE ALL THE PRISONERS IS LITERALLY “AND THE JAILER GAVE INTO JOSEPH’S HANDS ALL THE PRISONERS.” WE MAY ALSO TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “THE JAILER ENTRUSTED ALL THE OTHER PRISONERS TO JOSEPH” OR “… PUT JOSEPH IN CHARGE OF.…” SOME TRANSLATIONS SAY “… APPOINTED JOSEPH TO TAKE CARE OF.…” WHO WERE IN PRISON IS UNDERSTOOD AND NEED NOT BE TRANSLATED IF A TERM FOR PRISONERS IS USED? WHATEVER WAS DONE THERE, HE WAS THE DOER OF IT: THIS MAY ALSO BE TRANSLATED, FOR EXAMPLE, “WHATEVER HAD TO BE DONE IN THE PRISON, JOSEPH WAS IN CHARGE OF IT” OR “WHENEVER ANYTHING HAD TO BE DONE, IT WAS DONE UNDER JOSEPH’S DIRECTION.”**

**GENESIS 39:23: VERSE 23 IS SIMILAR TO VERSE 6, WHERE POTIPHAR HAD NO WORRIES ABOUT THE RUNNING OF HIS HOUSEHOLD BECAUSE HE FULLY TRUSTED JOSEPH. THE REASON THE JAILER NEED NOT CONCERN HIMSELF IS BECAUSE THE LORD WAS WITH JOSEPH. WE MAY BEGIN VERSE 23 WITH THE REASON CLAUSE: “SINCE THE LORD WAS HELPING JOSEPH, THE JAILER DID NOT WORRY ABOUT ANYTHING THAT JOSEPH WAS IN CHARGE OF” OR “WHATEVER JOSEPH UNDERTOOK THE LORD MADE IT WORK OUT WELL.”**

**GENESIS 40:1: SOME TIME AFTER THIS MARKS A TRANSITION TO THE INTRODUCTION OF THE KING’S CHIEF BUTLER AND BAKER, WHO ARE ALSO ARRESTED AND PUT IN PRISON. THIS EVENT BRINGS JOSEPH INTO CONTACT WITH TWO OF THE KING’S OFFICIALS AND LAYS THE GROUND FOR THE DREAM INTERPRETATIONS THAT EVENTUALLY BRING JOSEPH TO LEADERSHIP IN EGYPT. THE TRANSITION EXPRESSION DOES NOT REFER TO A PARTICULAR EVENT IN VERSES 20–23 BUT TO THAT REPORT IN GENERAL. SINCE VERSES 1–4 CONTINUE THE STORY OF JOSEPH IN PRISON, WE MAY TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “AFTER SOME TIME,” “A WHILE LATER,” “TIME WENT ON AND THEN ONE DAY,” OR “ONE DAY.” BUTLER TRANSLATES A WORD WHOSE LITERAL SENSE IS “DRINK-GIVER.” THE TERM IS THE TITLE OF AN OFFICIAL WHOSE JOB IT WAS TO PREPARE AND GIVE DRINKS TO THE KING. SEE VERSE 11. THIS PERSON WAS IN A POSITION TO INFLUENCE THE KING’S DECISIONS, AS SEEN IN NEH 1:11; 2:1–9. FOR TRANSLATION SUGGESTIONS SEE VERSE 2. FOR BAKER SEE VERSE 2. OFFENDED THEIR LORD THE KING OF EGYPT: OFFENDED TRANSLATES THE VERB “TO SIN,” BUT THAT MEANING IS NOT SUITABLE IN THIS CONTEXT. MOST MODERN VERSIONS, LIKE TEV, SAY “OFFENDED”; THAT IS, THE TWO MEN DID SOMETHING THAT DISPLEASED OR ANGERED THE KING. IN 41:9 THE BUTLER REFERS TO A SIMILAR OFFENSE, NAMELY HIS FORGETFULNESS, AS “MY FAULTS.” IF A GENERAL VERB MEANING “OFFEND” IS NOT AVAILABLE, IT MAY BE POSSIBLE TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “DID SOMETHING THAT WAS NOT RIGHT,” “MADE A BAD MISTAKE,” OR “DID SOMETHING THE KING DIDN’T LIKE.” THEIR LORD THE KING IS SOMETIMES EXPRESSED “THEIR CHIEF WHO WAS THE KING OF EGYPT.”**

**GENESIS 40:2: AND PHARAOH WAS ANGRY WITH HIS TWO OFFICERS: THE TITLE PHARAOH WAS FIRST USED IN 12:15; HE WAS CALLED “KING OF EGYPT” IN VERSE 1 AND WILL BE CALLED BY THIS EXPRESSION AGAIN IN 41:46. TO AVOID CONFUSION TRANSLATORS SHOULD USE ONE TITLE, AS TEV DOES WITH “KING OF EGYPT” AND “THE KING.” THE TWO MEN NAMED IN VERSE 1 ARE NOW CALLED OFFICERS, TEV “OFFICIALS,” WHICH SHOWS THAT THEY BELONG TO THE OFFICIALS OF THE KING’S COURT. THE LITERAL TERM IS “EUNUCH,” WHICH IS DISCUSSED IN 37:36. THE CHIEF BUTLER: IN VERSE 1 THIS OFFICIAL WAS CALLED BY HIS TITLE THE BUTLER, WHICH REFERS TO A PERSON WHOSE JOB IT WAS TO PREPARE DRINKS AND SERVE THEM TO THE KING. IF TRANSLATORS FOLLOW RSV, THEN THE TERM IS USED TWICE IN VERSES 1 AND 2.**

**THERE ARE TWO OTHER POSSIBILITIES: (1) FOLLOW TEV AND USE SOMETHING LIKE “WINE SERVANT” IN VERSE 1 AND “THESE TWO OFFICIALS” IN VERSE 2, OR (2) SAY “TWO OF THE KING’S OFFICIALS” IN VERSE 1 AND USE THE ACTUAL TITLES IN VERSE 2.**

**ALL THREE POSSIBILITIES ARE ACCEPTABLE MODELS. CHIEF BUTLER AND CHIEF BAKER ARE LITERALLY “CHIEF OF THE BUTLERS” AND “CHIEF OF THE BAKERS,” WHICH INDICATES THAT THERE WERE OTHERS DOING THE SAME WORK WHO WERE NOT OF THEIR RANK. IN TRANSLATION WE MAY NEED TO SAY FOR CHIEF BUTLER, FOR EXAMPLE, “THE HEAD [OR CHIEF, OR LEADER MAN] OF THE DRINK OR WINE SERVANTS” OR “THE HEAD MAN AMONG THOSE WHO SERVED THE KING HIS DRINKS.” THE SAME MAY BE USED FOR THE CHIEF BAKER: “THE CHIEF [LEADER] OF THOSE WHO BAKED THE KING’S BREAD.” LOCAL TERMS FOR PEOPLE WHO DO THESE JOBS MAY ALSO BE APPROPRIATE; TWO EXAMPLES ARE “THE MAN WHO LOOKED AFTER THE KING’S WINE AND THE BOSS OF HIS BAKEHOUSE” AND “THE KING’S HEAD BARMAN AND HIS HEAD BAKER.”**

**GENESIS 40:3: PUT THEM IN CUSTODY: THE WORD TRANSLATED IN CUSTODY MAY MEAN “JAIL” OR “PRISON” (TEV): BUT IT HAS ALSO A MORE RESTRICTED SENSE OF BEING PUT UNDER GUARD, OR BEING DETAINED FOR INVESTIGATION. IN THE HOUSE OF THE CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD: THIS APPEARS TO BE THE ACTUAL PLACE WHERE THEY WERE HELD. IT MAY REFER TO THE HOUSEOF THIS OFFICER OR MORE PROBABLY TO A SECTION OF THE PRISON WHERE HE HAD HIS HEADQUARTERS AND WHERE TRUSTED PRISONERS LIKE JOSEPH WERE ALLOWED TO STAY. CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD TRANSLATES THE SAME EXPRESSION USED OF POTIPHAR IN 37:36. IN THE PRISON REFERS TO THE LARGER CONFINEMENT AREA OR BUILDING THAT INCLUDED THE GUARD HOUSE. WE MAY TRANSLATE VERSE 3, FOR EXAMPLE, “HE [THE KING] PUT THEM IN PRISON IN THE HOUSEOF THE OFFICER OF THE GUARD, WHERE JOSEPH WAS ALSO KEPT” OR “THE KING PUT THEM INTO THE HEAD JAILER’S HOUSE, WHICH WAS IN THE PRISON WHERE JOSEPH WAS A PRISONER.”**

**GENESIS 40:4: CHARGED JOSEPH WITH THEM: THE CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE TWO DETAINED OFFICIALS, BUT HE “APPOINTED [GAVE THE JOB TO] JOSEPH” TO BE WITH THEM AND TO SERVE THEM. SOME COMMENTATORS MAKE THE POINT THAT THIS BROUGHT JOSEPH DOWN FROM BEING A SUPERVISOR OF ALL THE PRISONERS TO BEING A SLAVE OF THESE TWO OFFICIALS OF THE KING. ONE TRANSLATION THAT MAKES THIS CLEAR SAYS “HE MADE JOSEPH THE SLAVE OF THOSE TWO, TO CARE FOR THEM.” THIS EPISODE REVEALS THE CONTINUING CONFLICT IN YOUNG JOSEPH’S LIFE, AND HOW GOD IS PREPARING THE WAY TO A GREATER RESOLUTION OF HIS SITUATION THROUGH THESE ADVERSE CIRCUMSTANCES. THEY CONTINUED FOR SOME TIME IN CUSTODY IS LITERALLY “THEY WERE MANY DAYS IN CUSTODY.” WE MAY TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “THEY HAD TO STAY THERE FOR SOME TIME” OR “THE KING MADE THEM STAY IN THE JAILER’S HOUSEFOR A LONG TIME.”**

**JOSEPH INTERPRETS THE PRISONERS’ DREAMS (40:5–23)**

**FROM THIS POINT IN THE STORY, JOSEPH’S ABILITY TO INTERPRET DREAMS BECOMES THE CENTRAL THEME. IN THIS PART THE TWO DETAINED OFFICIALS HAVE DREAMS THAT TROUBLE THEM, AND THEY HAVE NO ONE TO EXPLAIN TO THEM THEIR MEANING. JOSEPH INVITES THEM TO REVEAL THEIR DREAMS TO HIM (VERSES 40:5–8). THE WINE SERVANT TELLS JOSEPH HIS DREAM ABOUT THE GRAPES AND THE KING’S CUP. JOSEPH EXPLAINS THAT THE DREAM MEANS THE OFFICIAL WILL BE RELEASED FROM PRISON AND RESTORED TO HIS FORMER POSITION. HE THEN ASKS THE MAN TO SPEAK TO THE KING ON HIS BEHALF WHEN HE IS AGAIN WITH THE KING (VERSES 40:9–15). THE BAKER THEN REVEALS HIS DREAM TO JOSEPH, WHO INTERPRETS IT TO MEAN THAT THE BAKER WILL BE TAKEN OUT OF PRISON AND THEN EXECUTED (VERSES 16–19). THREE DAYS LATER, AS FORETOLD BY JOSEPH, THE TWO MEN ARE BROUGHT OUT OF DETENTION. THE WINE SERVANT IS RESTORED TO HIS JOB AND THE BAKER IS EXECUTED. THE WINE SERVANT THEN FORGETS ALL ABOUT JOSEPH (VERSES 20–23).**

**SUBDIVISION HEADING**

**THE HANDBOOK HEADING MAY BE MODIFIED TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “JOSEPH EXPLAINS THEIR DREAMS TO THE TWO OFFICIALS,” “JOSEPH TELLS THE TWO PRISONERS WHAT THEIR DREAMS MEAN,” OR “JOSEPH INTERPRETS THE DREAMS OF THE KINGS OFFICIALS.”**

**GENESIS 40:5: THIS EPISODE BEGINS BY CALLING ATTENTION TO THE OPENING OF A SPECIAL EVENT THAT WILL EVENTUALLY LEAD TO JOSEPH’S FREEDOM AND RISE TO POWER IN EGYPT. RSV HAS REORDERED THE ELEMENTS OF THIS VERSE TO MAKE IT CLEARER. IT HAS, HOWEVER, RETAINED THE REPETITION THAT TEV HAS REMOVED. TRANSLATORS MAY FIND IT CLEARER TO FOLLOW TEV AS A MODEL. WE MAY ALSO SUGGEST, FOR EXAMPLE, “ONE NIGHT WHILE THEY WERE IN PRISON, THE KING’S WINE SERVANT AND BAKER HAD DREAMS. EACH DREAM HAD A DIFFERENT MEANING.” IN SOME LANGUAGES IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “THE MEANING OF THE WINE SERVANT’S DREAM WAS DIFFERENT FROM THAT OF THE BAKER.”**

**GENESIS 40:6: WHEN JOSEPH CAME … SAW THEM: JOSEPH CAME TO THE TWO OFFICIALS TO SERVE THEM AND TO WAIT ON THEM, AS HE WAS ORDERED TO DO BY THE CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD IN VERSE 4. IN TRANSLATION IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO MAKE CLEAR THE PURPOSE OF JOSEPH’S COMING TO THE OFFICIALS; FOR EXAMPLE, “THE NEXT MORNING WHEN JOSEPH CAME IN TO WAIT ON THEM.” THEY WERE TROUBLED IS LITERALLY “BEHOLD THEY WERE TROUBLED,” IN WHICH HINNEH “BEHOLD” EXPRESSES SURPRISE ON THE PART OF JOSEPH. IT SUGGESTS THAT JOSEPH HAD NEVER SEEN THEM THIS WAY BEFORE. TROUBLED TRANSLATES A WORD MEANING “DEJECTED,” “SAD,” “WORRIED,” OR AS REB SAYS, “DISPIRITED.” TWO TRANSLATION EXAMPLES ARE “THEIR FACES WERE VERY SAD” AND “THEY-TWO HAD A BIG WORRY.” IN SOME LANGUAGES THIS STATE OF MIND IS BEST EXPRESSED FIGURATIVELY; FOR EXAMPLE, “HAVING A WEAK HEART,” “HAVING THEIR STRENGTH MELTED AWAY,” “KEEPING THEIR EYES ON THE GROUND,” “THEIR INSIDES WERE HEAVY.”**

**GENESIS 40:7: PHARAOH’S OFFICERS IS LITERALLY “PHARAOH’S EUNUCHS.” SEE THE COMMENTS ON VERSE 2 AND 37:36. FOR CUSTODY SEE VERSE 3. MASTER’S HOUSEREFERS TO THE HOUSEOF THE CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD IN VERSE 3, WHERE ALL THREE WERE KEPT. NOTE THAT TEV AND SOME OTHERS DO NOT REPEAT WHO WERE WITH HIM IN CUSTODY IN HIS MASTER’S HOUSE, AS THIS INFORMATION HAS ALREADY BEEN GIVEN IN VERSE 3. WHY ARE YOUR FACES DOWNCAST TODAY? DOWNCAST TRANSLATES AN ADJECTIVE MEANING “BAD” OR “EVIL,” BUT IN THE CONTEXT OF FACES IT HAS THE SENSE OF BEING “PAINED,” “MISERABLE,” OR “UNHAPPY.”**

**GENESIS 40:8: FROM THE TWO MEN’S REPLIES IT IS EVIDENT THAT THEY HAVE ALREADY DISCUSSED THEIR DREAMS WITH EACH OTHER. WE HAVE HAD DREAMS IS LITERALLY “A DREAM WE DREAMED.” THE CONTEXT SHOWS THAT EACH MAN HAS HAD ONE DREAM. ACCORDINGLY, TEV “EACH OF US HAD A DREAM” IS A BETTER MODEL THAN RSV. NO ONE TO INTERPRET THEM: ACCORDING TO VON RAD THERE WERE PEOPLE IN EGYPT WHO WERE SKILLED IN INTERPRETING THE MEANING OF DREAMS; BUT THE TWO MEN WERE UNABLE TO GO TO THEM BECAUSE THEY WERE LOCKED UP IN PRISON. SO, THE MEANING OF NO ONE IS “NO ONE HERE IN THIS PLACE”; AND IN SOME LANGUAGES THIS IS EXPRESSED IN THE TRANSLATION. INTERPRET RENDERS A HEBREW WORD USED ONLY IN CHAPTERS 40 AND 41 TO MEAN TO INTERPRET OR EXPLAIN A DREAM. SOME OTHER LANGUAGES ALSO HAVE A TERM WITH THIS SPECIAL MEANING. WHERE THERE IS NO SPECIAL TERM, THIS MAY BE RENDERED “THERE IS NO ONE TO TELL US WHAT OUR DREAMS MEAN” OR “… TO EXPLAIN OUR DREAMS TO US.” DO NOT INTERPRETATIONS BELONG TO GOD IS LITERALLY “DO NOT TO GOD INTERPRETATIONS?” THIS REPLY BY JOSEPH IS A RHETORICAL QUESTION THAT MAY NEED TO BE RESTRUCTURED IN SOME LANGUAGES AS AN EMPHATIC STATEMENT. THE SENSE OF JOSEPH’S QUESTION IS TO AFFIRM THAT THE INTERPRETATION OF DREAMS, OR THE ABILITY TO INTERPRET DREAMS, IS GIVEN BY GOD. ACCORDINGLY, IF WE TRANSLATE AS A STATEMENT, WE MAY SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “ONLY GOD CAN ENABLE A PERSON TO INTERPRET DREAMS” OR “… TO EXPLAIN WHAT A DREAM MEANS.” IN SOME LANGUAGES IT IS MORE NATURAL TO REVERSE THE ORDER OF THE LAST TWO CLAUSES; FOR EXAMPLE, “YOU TWO TELL ME YOUR DREAMS. GOD KNOWS THIS KIND OF THING, AND HE WILL SHOW ME WHAT YOUR DREAMS ARE SAYING.…”**

**GENESIS 40:9: THE OPENING OF THIS VERSE SERVES AS AN INTRODUCTION TO THE WINE SERVANT’S DREAM. SOME MAY FIND IT APPROPRIATE TO SHORTEN THIS INTRODUCTION AS IN THE CASE OF TEV. IN MY DREAM THERE WAS A VINE BEFORE ME: THE HEBREW HINNEH IS COMMONLY USED WHEN REPORTING THE CONTENT OF A DREAM. IT IS EXPRESSED IN RSV AS THERE WAS. THE VINE REFERS TO A GRAPEVINE. BEFORE ME MEANS “IN FRONT OF ME” OR “FACING ME.” THE TRANSLATION OF VINE IS OFTEN A PROBLEM. IN MANY AREAS OF THE WORLD, GRAPEVINES AND GRAPES ARE UNKNOWN. VINES MAY BE COMMON, BUT THE LOCAL VINES MAY PRODUCE NO FRUIT THAT IS EATEN. IF THIS IS THE CASE, IT IS OFTEN POSSIBLE TO SHIFT FROM VINE TO “BUSH” AND FROM GRAPE TO “FRUIT.” IF A LOCAL VINE PRODUCES FRUIT THAT IS EATEN BY PEOPLE, THEN THE NAME OF SUCH A VINE AND ITS FRUIT MAY BE USED. HOWEVER, FOR A MORE DETAILED TREATMENT OF VINE, SEE THE COMMENTS ON 9:20–21.**

**GENESIS 40:10: ON THE VINE THERE WERE THREE BRANCHES: THESE BRANCHES GROW OUT OF THE MAIN STEM, WHICH IS THE VINE. AS SOON AS IT BUDDED MEANS AS SOON AS BUDS APPEARED ON THE BRANCHES. THE BUDS PRODUCE THE LEAVES ON THE VINE, WHICH NOURISH THE VINE AND ENABLE THE FRUIT TO GROW. ITS BLOSSOMS SHOT FORTH: THAT IS, THE FLOWERS [FLORENCE], WHICH MUST APPEAR BEFORE THE FRUIT CAN GROW, CAME OUT SUDDENLY, AND THE TINY GRAPE CLUSTERS THAT FOLLOW THE BLOSSOMS QUICKLY BECAME RIPE GRAPES. AN EXAMPLE OF THE WAY THIS PART OF THE VERSE MAY BE TRANSLATED IS “THIS VINE HAD THREE ARMS, AND WHEN THE ARMS GOT LEAVES, IMMEDIATELY THE VINE FLOWERED AND BORE FRUIT THAT WERE RIPE.”**

**GENESIS 40:11: PHARAOH’S CUP MAY NEED TO BE RENDERED “THE KING’S CUP.” SEE VERSE 2. I TOOK THE GRAPES MAY, ACCORDING TO THE DECISION MADE IN VERSES 9 AND 10, BE EXPRESSED AS “I TOOK THE FRUIT.” PRESSED THEM: THE MANNER OF PRESSING, SQUEEZING, OR MASHING THE FRUIT IS NOT INDICATED. IF THE LANGUAGE REQUIRES IT, WE MAY SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “I SQUEEZED THE GRAPES WITH MY FINGERS” OR “I SQUEEZED THE JUICE INTO THE KING’S CUP.” PLACED THE CUP IN PHARAOH’S HAND: THAT IS, “AND GAVE IT TO THE KING” OR “HANDED IT TO THE KING.”**

**GENESIS 40:12: THIS IS THE INTERPRETATION: THIS POINTS FORWARD TO WHAT JOSEPH IS ABOUT TO SAY. THE THREE BRANCHES ARE THREE DAYS IS LITERALLY “THE THREE BRANCHES THREE DAYS.” THE SENSE OF THIS EXPRESSION IS THAT THE THREE BRANCHES STAND FOR OR SYMBOLIZE THREE DAYS.**

**GENESIS 40:13: WITHIN THREE DAYS PHARAOH WILL LIFT UP YOUR HEAD: LIFT UP YOUR HEAD IS AN IDIOM, AND THE SAME WORDS ARE USED IN VERSES 19 AND 20. THE USUAL MEANING OF THIS IDIOM IS TO COMFORT OR ENCOURAGE SOMEONE WHO IS DEPRESSED OR DISCOURAGED. HOWEVER, IN THE CONTEXT OF SPEAKING TO A PRISONER, THE EXPRESSION MEANS TO PARDON OR RELEASE FROM JAIL. SEE, FOR EXAMPLE, 2 KGS 25:27, WHERE RSV TRANSLATES “KING OF BABYLON … FREED JEHOIACHIN KING OF JUDAH FROM PRISON.” MANY TRANSLATIONS RENDER THE EXPRESSION “TAKE YOU OUT OF THE PRISON.” RESTORE YOU TO YOUR OFFICE: THIS MEANS “PUT YOU BACK IN THE JOB YOU WERE FORMERLY DOING” OR “RETURN YOU TO YOUR FORMER POSITION.” YOU SHALL PLACE PHARAOH’S CUP IN HIS HAND: THE WINE SERVANT WILL ONCE AGAIN HAND THE KING’S DRINKS TO HIM AS HE USED TO DO.**

**GENESIS 40:14: JOSEPH CONCLUDES HIS EXPLANATION OF THE WINE SERVANT’S DREAM BY APPEALING TO HIM TO SPEAK TO THE KING ON HIS BEHALF. BUT REMEMBER ME, WHEN IT IS WELL WITH YOU: THIS MAY ALSO BE RENDERED, FOR EXAMPLE, “PLEASE DO NOT FORGET ME WHEN ALL IS GOING WELL FOR YOU.” DO ME THE KINDNESS, I PRAY YOU: THAT IS, “PLEASE BE KIND [HEBREW CHESED].” TO MAKE MENTION OF ME TO PHARAOH: THAT IS, “SPEAK TO THE KING ABOUT MY CASE.” GET ME OUT OF THIS HOUSE: HOUSE IS THE LITERAL HEBREW, USED IN THE GENERAL SENSE OF ANY KIND OF BUILDING. THERE ARE OTHER LANGUAGES THAT ALSO USE “HOUSE” IN THIS SAME GENERAL SENSE. HOWEVER, THE REFERENCE IS TO THE PRISON, AND THE TERM SHOULD BE TRANSLATED BY THE TERM FOR JAIL OR PRISON.**

**GENESIS 40:15: JOSEPH’S SLAVE STATUS IN EGYPT IS DUE TO HIS HAVING BEEN TAKEN BY FORCE (SEE 37:28). FOR I WAS INDEED STOLEN: SOME LANGUAGES REQUIRE THAT THIS BE RESTRUCTURED AS AN ACTIVE EXPRESSION; FOR EXAMPLE, “THEY KIDNAPPED ME” OR “PEOPLE TOOK ME BY FORCE.” LAND OF THE HEBREWS MAY NOT HAVE BEEN AN EXPRESSION THAT COULD BE USED IN JOSEPH’S TIME. WHERE HE LIVED WAS CALLED “THE LAND OF CANAAN.” TRANSLATORS SHOULD TRANSLATE LAND OF THE HEBREWS EVEN THOUGH IT PROBABLY REFLECTS THE USAGE OF A LATER AGE; OR IF IT IS MORE-CLEARER, WE MAY SAY “FROM MY OWN COUNTRY.” AND HERE ALSO I HAVE DONE NOTHING … DUNGEON: HERE ALSO REFERS TO “HERE IN EGYPT.” SEE TEV. WE MAY TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “I DO NOT DESERVE BEING PUT IN PRISON BECAUSE I HAVE DONE NOTHING WRONG” OR “THEY SHOULD NOT HAVE PUT ME IN PRISON, BECAUSE I HAVE DONE NOTHING BAD.” DUNGEON TRANSLATES THE HEBREW WORD FOR “PIT,” “CISTERN,” OR “WELL.” IT IS PERHAPS USED BY JOSEPH HERE AS A REMINDER OF THE PIT OR CISTERN HE WAS TAKEN FROM AND SOLD INTO EGYPT; BUT IT REFERS TO THE PRISON AND SHOULD BE TRANSLATED AS SUCH.**

**GENESIS 40:16: WHEN THE CHIEF BAKER SAW THAT THE INTERPRETATION WAS FAVORABLE: THAT IS, THE INTERPRETATION OF THE WINE SERVANT’S DREAM. IN MANY LANGUAGES SAW MUST BE RENDERED AS “HEARD”; FOR EXAMPLE, “WHEN THE HEAD OF THE BAKERS HEARD THE GOOD INTERPRETATION.…” THERE WERE TRANSLATES THE HEBREW HINNEH AS IN VERSE 9. CAKE IN THE EXPRESSION CAKE BASKETS TRANSLATES A HEBREW WORD THAT MAY REFER TO A SPECIAL KIND OF WHITE BREAD. BASKETS MAY MEAN “WICKER BASKETS,” REFERRING TO A KIND OF BASKET WOVEN FROM PLIABLE TWIGS. THE BASKETS WERE OPEN ON TOP, BUT ONLY THE UPPERMOST BASKET WAS OPEN FOR BIRDS TO EAT FROM, AS DESCRIBED IN THE NEXT VERSE. TEV HAS “BREAD BASKET.” THE BASKETS ARE ON THE BAKER’S HEAD, AS THAT IS THE PLACE AN EGYPTIAN WOULD CARRY THEM. NOTE TEV, “I WAS CARRYING THEM.” WE ARE TO UNDERSTAND THAT THE THREE BASKETS ARE STACKED ONE ABOVE THE OTHER.**

**GENESIS 40:17: AND IN THE UPPERMOST BASKET: THAT IS “IN THE TOP BASKET.” THE CONTENTS OF THIS BASKET WAS EXPOSED TO THE BIRDS. ALL SORTS OF BAKED FOOD FOR PHARAOH IS LITERALLY “SOME FROM ALL THE FOOD OF PHARAOH THE WORK OF A BAKER.” WE MAY TRANSLATE “IN THE TOP BASKET WERE ALL KINDS OF BREAD AND PASTRIES FOR THE KING” OR “… ALL KINDS OF THINGS FROM THE BAKERY THAT THE KING LIKED.” THE RANGE OF FOODS REFERRED TO IS WIDER THAN THOSE THAT MAY BE CALLED “BREAD” IN ENGLISH; HOWEVER, THE TERM FOR “BREAD” IN SOME OTHER LANGUAGES IS MORE GENERAL THAN IN ENGLISH, AND SO IT MAY BE SUITABLE IN THIS CONTEXT. IF THE LANGUAGE HAS NO SUITABLE EQUIVALENT WORD, WE MAY SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “ALL KINDS OF BAKED GOODS.” BUT THE BIRDS WERE EATING IT OUT OF THE BASKET ON MY HEAD: SOMETHING BEING TAKEN AWAY FROM THE BAKER’S HEAD IS A BAD OMEN IN HIS DREAM.**

**GENESIS 40:18: JOSEPH’S INTERPRETATION OF THE BAKER’S DREAM IS INTRODUCED IN THE SAME MANNER AS WAS THAT OF THE WINE SERVANT’S DREAM IN VERSE 12. SEE COMMENTS ON VERSE 12.**

**GENESIS 40:19: PHARAOH WILL LIFT UP YOUR HEAD: IN THIS SECOND USE OF THE EXPRESSION LIFT UP YOUR HEAD, THE NARRATOR MAKES A PLAY ON WORDS. HE USES THE SAME WORDS AS IN VERSE 13 AND THEN ADDS FROM YOU, WHICH GIVES THE EXPRESSION NOT AN IDIOMATIC BUT A LITERAL MEANING. THIS LITERAL MEANING IS EITHER “REMOVE YOUR HEAD [BEHEAD YOU]” OR “HANG YOU [BY YOUR HEAD].” TRANSLATORS SHOULD ATTEMPT TO KEEP THE WORDING OF THE EXPRESSIONS IN VERSES 13 AND 19 AS SIMILAR AS POSSIBLE. IF THE TRANSLATION HAS SAID IN VERSE 13 “THE KING WILL RELEASE YOU,” THEN IN VERSE 19 IT MAY SAY “THE KING WILL BRING YOU OUT AND THEN CUT OFF YOUR HEAD.” SINCE THE KING WILL NOT ACTUALLY EXECUTE THE MAN HIMSELF, SOME TRANSLATIONS SAY “THE KING WILL BRING YOU OUT, AND THE POLICE WILL CUT OFF YOUR HEAD” OR “… AND TELL THE SOLDIERS TO CUT YOUR NECK.” AND HANG YOU ON A TREE: ACCORDING TO SPEISER HANG SHOULD BE RENDERED “IMPALE” HERE AND IN VERSE 22. IMPALE MEANS TO RUN A SHARP STAKE THROUGH THE BODY, OR TO FIX THE BODY ON A SHARP STAKE. THIS IS FOLLOWED BY NAB AND NJV. MOST MODERN VERSIONS PREFER “HANGED”; BUT IN THIS CASE YOU MAY NEED TO BE RENDERED AS “YOUR BODY,” IF HANGING FOLLOWS BEHEADING, AS IN TEV. SOME TRANSLATIONS SAY “AND THEY WILL HANG YOUR BODY ON A POST.” ACCORDING TO DEUT 21:23, FOR AN ISRAELITE TO BE EXECUTED BY HANGING WAS TO BE ACCURSED BY GOD. IN THE EGYPTIAN VIEW A BODY EATEN BY BIRDS COULD NOT BE PRESERVED AS A MUMMY AND THEREFORE WAS PREVENTED FROM OBTAINING IMMORTALITY. BIRDS WILL EAT THE FLESH FROM YOU: BIRDS HERE REFERS TO BIRDS OF PREY, AS NOT ALL BIRDS EAT FLESH. THE NAME OF A PARTICULAR BIRD SUCH AS “VULTURES” MAY BE USED IF THERE IS NO GENERAL TERM FOR BIRDS OF PREY.**

**GENESIS 40:20: ON THE THIRD DAY, WHICH WAS THE PHARAOH’S BIRTHDAY: THIRD DAY REFERS TO THE THIRD DAY AFTER THE INTERPRETATION OF THE DREAMS. WE MAY SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “THREE DAYS LATER” OR “AFTER THREE DAYS.” BIRTHDAY REFERS TO THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE DAY ON WHICH THE KING WAS BORN. THIS MAY, HOWEVER, BE A DAY ON WHICH THE KING HAS CHOSEN TO CELEBRATE HIS BIRTHDAY. IN SOME LANGUAGE AREAS PEOPLE DO NOT KNOW THE DATE OF THEIR BIRTHS AND DO NOT CELEBRATE BIRTHDAYS. TRANSLATORS NEED TO BE CAREFUL IN TRANSLATING BIRTHDAY, BECAUSE A LITERAL RENDERING MAY MEAN THAT THE KING WAS GIVING THIS FEAST ON THE VERY DAY HE WAS BORN. IN SOME LANGUAGES BIRTHDAY IS EXPRESSED AS “THE DAY WHEN HIS BIRTH CAME AROUND AGAIN,” “THE DAY HE WAS REMEMBERING ABOUT HIS BIRTH,” OR “THE DAY WHEN THE KING BECAME ONE YEAR OLDER.” MADE A FEAST FOR ALL HIS SERVANTS: FOR MADE A FEAST SEE DISCUSSION OF 21:8. SERVANTS REFERS TO OFFICIALS, OFFICERS, LEADERS, AND PEOPLE OF HIGH RANK IN THE KING’S COURT. LIFTED UP THE HEAD: THIS IS THE THIRD TIME THIS EXPRESSION IS USED. SEE VERSES 13 AND 19. THE SENSE IS USUALLY UNDERSTOOD AS IN VERSE 13 WITH THE MEANING OF “RELEASE FROM PRISON” OR “PARDON.” HOWEVER, IN THE CASE OF THE BAKER HE WAS NEITHER RELEASED NOR PARDONED, AND SO THESE TERMS ARE NOT APPROPRIATE IN THIS CONTEXT. A MORE GENERAL EXPRESSION SUCH AS “BROUGHT OUT OF PRISON” MAY BE USED; AND THIS WILL ALSO BE APPROPRIATE IN VERSE 13. SPEISER AND NJV SAY “SINGLED OUT” HERE, WHICH MEANS TO GIVE SPECIAL RECOGNITION TO SOMEONE IN A GROUP. THE EXPRESSION MAY WELL MEAN TO GIVE THE TWO OFFICIALS A PROMINENT POSITION AT THE FEAST BEFORE THE KING REVEALED THEIR FATE. REB “HE HAD … BROUGHT UP WHERE THEY WERE ALL ASSEMBLED” IS A GOOD MODEL. ANOTHER MODEL IS “HE BROUGHT OUT … AND STOOD THEM UP IN FRONT OF ALL HIS OFFICIALS.”**

**GENESIS 40:21: HE RESTORED THE CHIEF BUTLER TO HIS BUTLERSHIP: FOR RESTORED SEE VERSE 13. BUTLERSHIP REPRESENTS RSV’S ATTEMPT TO RETAIN THE HEBREW NOUN FORM REFERRING TO THE WINE SERVANT’S POSITION. WE MAY SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “THE KING GAVE THE WINE SERVANT HIS FORMER JOB” OR “THE KING RETURNED TO THE WINE SERVANT THE POSITION HE HAD HELD BEFORE HE WAS ARRESTED.” AND HE PLACED THE CUP IN PHARAOH’S HAND: TEV CONSIDERS THIS TO BE INCLUDED IN “RESTORED … TO HIS FORMER POSITION” AND DOES NOT TRANSLATE IT. HOWEVER, THIS STATEMENT SERVES TO AFFIRM WHAT JOSEPH HAD PREDICTED IN VERSE 13. FURTHERMORE, IT CONTRASTS THE CONTINUING FUNCTION OF THE WINE SERVANT WITH THE DEATH OF THE BAKER. THE STATEMENT HAS A RHETORICAL FUNCTION AND SHOULD NOT BE OMITTED.**

**GENESIS 40:22: BUT HE HANGED THE CHIEF BAKER: BUT TRANSLATES THE HEBREW CONNECTIVE, WHICH HERE CONTRASTS THE RESTORING OF THE WINE SERVANT WITH THE DEATH OF THE BAKER. FOR HANGED SEE COMMENTS ON VERSE 19. IN THIS VERSE THERE IS NO MENTION OF A SEPARATE EXECUTION BEFORE THE MAN’S BODY WAS HUNG UP; THIS IS AN EXECUTION BY HANGING. TEV USES THE MORE GENERAL TERM “EXECUTED”; SOME OTHER TRANSLATIONS SAY “SENT HIS MEN TO KILL.…” AS JOSEPH HAD INTERPRETED TO THEM: THAT IS, “IT HAPPENED JUST AS JOSEPH HAD EXPLAINED TO THEM ABOUT THEIR DREAMS.”**

**GENESIS 40:23: YET THE CHIEF BUTLER DID NOT REMEMBER JOSEPH, BUT FORGOT HIM: DID NOT REMEMBER JOSEPH IS THE NARRATOR’S WAY OF SAYING HE DID NOT SPEAK TO THE KING ABOUT JOSEPH. IT IS POSSIBLE TO TRANSLATE THIS VERSE IN TERMS OF NOT SPEAKING TO THE KING ABOUT JOSEPH OR NOT REMEMBERING HIM. FOR EXAMPLE, WE MAY SAY “IN SPITE OF BEING RESTORED, THE WINE SERVANT DID NOT SPEAK TO THE KING ABOUT JOSEPH” OR “AFTER HE HAD HIS FORMER JOB AGAIN, THE WINE SERVANT DID NOT GIVE JOSEPH A THOUGHT. HE FORGOT HIM.” WE MUST REMEMBER THAT THE SILENCE OF THE WINE SERVANT IS A DEVICE OF THE NARRATOR FOR BUILDING SUSPENSE IN THE STORY. ALSO, IT IS IMPORTANT THAT THE TWO OFFICIALS NEVER REPLIED TO ANYTHING JOSEPH SAID WHEN HE INTERPRETED THEIR DREAMS. THE NARRATOR HAS CAREFULLY DEVELOPED THE COMPLICATIONS IN THE STORY. SINCE COMING TO EGYPT JOSEPH’S INITIAL RISE TO INFLUENCE IN POTIPHAR’S HOUSEENDED IN HIS IMPRISONMENT. WHILE IN PRISON HE AGAIN ROSE TO A POSITION OF TRUST ONLY TO BE ABANDONED, AT LEAST FOR THE NEXT TWO YEARS, BY THE ONE MAN WHO COULD SPEAK TO THE KING FOR HIM.**

**THE KING’S DREAMS (41:1–13)**

**THIS SUBDIVISION REPORTS THE STRANGE DREAMS OF THE KING OF EGYPT AND THE INABILITY OF HIS MAGICIANS AND WISE MEN TO INTERPRET THEM.**

**THE KING DREAMS FIRST THAT SEVEN FAT COWS GRAZING BY THE NILE ARE EATEN BY SEVEN THIN COWS (VERSES 1–4). IN HIS SECOND DREAM HE SEES SEVEN FULL HEADS OF GRAIN GROWING ON A STALK AND SEVEN THIN HEADS OF GRAIN SWALLOW THE FULL ONES (VERSES 41:5–7). THE KING CALLS HIS MAGICIANS AND WISE MEN TO EXPLAIN THE MEANING OF THE DREAMS, BUT THEY ARE UNABLE TO DO SO (VERSE). THE WINE SERVANT RECALLS THAT JOSEPH HAD ACCURATELY INTERPRETED DREAMS FOR HIM AND THE BAKER WHILE THEY WERE IN PRISON (VERSE 41:9–13).**

**SUBDIVISION HEADING**

**THE HANDBOOK HEADING MAY NEED TO BE MODIFIED TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “THESE ARE THE KING’S DREAMS,” “THIS IS WHAT THE KING DREAMED,” OR “THE KING HAS TWO DREAMS.” MANY MODERN VERSIONS HAVE ONLY TWO HEADINGS IN THIS CHAPTER; SEE TEV FOR EXAMPLE.**

**GENESIS 41:1: AFTER TWO WHOLE YEARS: CHAPTER 41 CONTINUES DIRECTLY FROM THE ACTION IN CHAPTER 40. MANY TRANSLATIONS WILL BE ABLE TO USE THE TIME EXPRESSION AS IN RSV. OTHERS MAY FIND THAT THE LINK WITH CHAPTER 40 NEEDS TO BE EXPRESSED MORE FULLY. IN THAT CASE WE MAY SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “TWO YEARS AFTER THE BAKER WAS HANGED” OR “… AFTER THE BUTLER WAS RESTORED BY THE KING.” PHARAOH: SEE COMMENTS ON 12:15. DREAMED THAT HE WAS …: AS STATED IN 40:9 HEBREW HINNEH “BEHOLD” INTRODUCES THE CONTENT OF A DREAM AND OFTEN OCCURS AS AN INTRODUCTION TO INDIVIDUAL ELEMENTS IN THE DREAM. NOTE KJV “AND, BEHOLD, HE STOOD BY THE RIVER.” IN SOME LANGUAGES THIS IS EXPRESSED AS “THE KING HAD A DREAM AND HERE IS WHAT HE SAW: …” OR “… IT WAS LIKE THIS.…” STANDING BY THE NILE: THIS EXPRESSION HAS THE SENSE OF “STANDING BESIDE” OR “STANDING ON THE BANK.” THE KING IS FACING THE RIVER AND IS ABLE TO SEE WHAT TAKES PLACE THERE. THIS IS THE FIRST OCCURRENCE IN GENESIS OF THE NAME OF THE GREAT RIVER OF EGYPT, THE NILE. IN THE OLD TESTAMENT THERE ARE THREE WORDS USED FOR THE NILE. HOWEVER, IN GENESIS AND IN MOST OF THE OTHER BOOKS, IT IS ALWAYS CALLED IN HEBREW YE’OR, A WORD OF EGYPTIAN ORIGIN. IN AREAS WHERE THE NILE IS UNKNOWN, TRANSLATORS SHOULD SAY SOMETHING LIKE “THE RIVER CALLED NILE.”**

**GENESIS 41:2: AND BEHOLD, THERE CAME UP: NOTE THAT TEV AND OTHERS INTRODUCE THE DREAM CONTENT WITH “… WHEN SEVEN COWS.…” FOR BEHOLD SEE VERSE 1. THE HEBREW VERB CAME UP EXPRESSES MOVEMENT FROM A LOW PLACE TO A HIGHER PLACE. IT WAS USED IN 19:30 OF LOT GOING FROM ZOAR IN THE VALLEY TO LIVE IN THE HILLS. ALTHOUGH IN A DREAM THESE COWS COULD COME UP OUT OF THE WATER, THE SENSE IS PROBABLY THAT THEY CAME FROM THE WATER’S EDGE OR FROM WADING IN THE WATER AND WENT TOWARD THE PLACE WHERE THE KING WAS STANDING AND LOOKING DOWN ON THE SCENE. COW WAS FIRST USED IN 32:15. SEE THERE FOR COMMENTS.**

**REED GRASS**

**SLEEK AND FAT: SLEEK IS LITERALLY “LOVELY IN FORM,” MEANING WELL SHAPED, AND IS THE SAME EXPRESSION USED TO DESCRIBE THE BEAUTY OF RACHEL IN 29:17. HOWEVER, THE TRANSLATED DESCRIPTION MUST BE ONE THAT APPLIES TO STURDY, ROBUST ANIMALS. FAT IS LITERALLY “FAT OF FLESH” AND MAY OFTEN BE RENDERED “WELL FED ASS” OR “HAVING HAD LOTS TO EAT.”**

**THEY FED IN THE REED GRASS: NOTE TEV “BEGAN TO FEED,” EXPRESSING THE ACTION OF FEEDING AFTER COMING UP FROM THE RIVER. FED TRANSLATES A VERB MEANING “TO GRAZE” OR “TO PASTURE.” REED GRASS REFERS TO ONE OF A VARIETY OF PLANTS OR GRASSES THAT GROW ALONG THE NILE. IN TRANSLATION A GENERAL TERM FOR GRASS THAT COWS EAT IS ADEQUATE.**

**GENESIS 41:3: BEHOLD, SEVEN OTHER COWS: BEHOLD INTRODUCES THE NEXT SCENE IN THE DREAM. TEV EXPRESSES THIS WITH “THEN,” REB HAS “PRESENTLY,” AND NIV “AFTER THEM.” SEVEN OTHER COWS MEANS “SEVEN MORE COWS” OR “ANOTHER GROUP OF SEVEN COWS.” GAUNT IS LITERALLY “BAD OF FORM” AND DESCRIBES THE APPEARANCE OF THESE ANIMALS AS THE OPPOSITE OF STURDY AND ROBUST. NJB CALLS THEM “WRETCHED,” NJV “UGLY.” THIN IS LITERALLY “LEAN OF FLESH,” WHICH TEV CALLS “BONY.” IN CATTLE-RAISING SOCIETIES THERE ARE OFTEN NUMEROUS TERMS FOR DEGREES OF GOOD AND BAD TO CHOOSE FROM. AND STOOD BY THE OTHER COWS … NILE: THE THIN COWS COME UP FROM THE WATER OR FROM THE WATER’S EDGE. INSTEAD OF GRAZING ON THE GRASS, THEY SIMPLY STAND NEAR THE FIRST GROUP.**

**GENESIS 41:4: THIS VERSE STRENGTHENS THE BIZARRE PICTURE IN THE DREAM: GRASS-EATING COWS SUDDENLY BECOME MEAT-EATERS. AND THE GAUNT AND THIN COWS ATE UP THE … COWS: IN SOME LANGUAGES IT IS NECESSARY TO PROVIDE A TRANSITION BETWEEN THE ACTION OF THE THIN COWS IN VERSE 3 AND WHAT THEY DO IN THIS VERSE. FOR EXAMPLE, WE MAY SAY “THEN SUDDENLY THE THIN AND UGLY COWS BEGAN EATING THE STRONG AND WELL-FED COWS AND ATE THEM UP COMPLETELY.” THE DREAM IS SO STARTLING THAT THE KING WAKES UP.**

**GENESIS 41:5: IN THE SECOND DREAM SEVEN SICKLY OBJECTS AGAIN EAT SEVEN HEALTHY OBJECTS. AND: AS THIS IS A SEQUENCE OF EVENTS, IT MAY BE BEST TO SAY SOMETHING EQUIVALENT TO “THEN,” “AFTER THAT,” OR “LATER.” DREAMED A SECOND DREAM: THAT IS, “HAD A SECOND DREAM,” “HAD ANOTHER DREAM,” “DREAMED AGAIN,” OR “DREAMED A SECOND TIME.” FOLLOWING THE SAME PATTERN AS IN VERSE 1, SOME TRANSLATIONS SAY “… DREAMED AGAIN, AND HIS SECOND DREAM WAS LIKE THIS.…” BEHOLD SEVEN EARS OF GRAIN … STALK: UNLIKE THE FIRST DREAM, IN WHICH THERE IS A SETTING (THE KING IS LOOKING DOWN ON THE RIVER FROM THE BANK), THE SECOND DREAM HAS NO SETTING. TRANSLATORS MAY FIND IT IS NECESSARY TO PROVIDE A SETTING BY SAYING, FOR EXAMPLE, “THIS TIME HE DREAMED HE WAS LOOKING AT A STALK OF GRAIN.” SEVEN EARS OF GRAIN: KJV AND BRITISH EDITION TEV “EARS OF CORN” MAY GIVE THE IMPRESSION TO SOME THAT THE REFERENCE IS TO MAIZE. HOWEVER, WHAT THE KING SEES IN HIS DREAM IS A STALK OF GRAIN, PERHAPS WHEAT, WITH HEADS FULL OF GRAINS GROWING OUT OF THE STALK. EARS OR “HEADS OF GRAIN” REFERS TO THE CLUSTERS OF RIPE GRAIN AT THE HEAD OF THE STALK. IN SOME LANGUAGES THE TENDER CLUSTERS OF GRAINS ARE CALLED “EYES OF GRAIN,” AND WHEN THEY ARE RIPE ARE CALLED “HEADS OF GRAIN.” IN RICE-GROWING AREAS THE HEADS OF GRAIN MAY BE APPLIED TO THE STALK OF RICE. PLUMP AND GOOD: PLUMP, WHICH MEANS “WELL ROUNDED” OR “FILLED OUT,” TRANSLATES THE HEBREW WORD FOR “FAT” USED IN VERSE 2. TEV SAYS “FULL AND RIPE.” TRANSLATORS SHOULD USE EXPRESSIONS THAT ARE USED TO DESCRIBE WELL-DEVELOPED AND RIPE GRAINS (OR EARS) GROWING ON A STALK OF GRAIN, OR RICE.**

**GENESIS 41:6: AND BEHOLD, AFTER THEM SPROUTED SEVEN EARS: AFTER THEM MEANS “AFTER THE KING SAW THE SEVEN GOOD HEADS.” WE MUST ASSUME THAT THE THIN HEADS OF GRAIN WERE GROWING ON ONE STALK, JUST AS THE HEALTHY ONES WERE; THIS MAY HAVE BEEN THE SAME STALK OR IT MAY HAVE BEEN A DIFFERENT STALK. SOME TRANSLATIONS SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “THEN HE SAW ANOTHER STALK OF WHEAT, ON WHICH WERE SEVEN.…” SPROUTED REFERS HERE TO GROWING FROM NOTHING TO FULL SIZE. IT MEANS TO PUSH OUT OR GROW OUT FROM THE MAIN STEM OF THE STALK. THIN AND BLIGHTED: THIN TRANSLATES THE SAME HEBREW WORD AS USED OF THE COWS IN VERSE 3. HOWEVER, IN TRANSLATION THE TERM MUST BE ONE THAT DESCRIBES A WEAK, STUNTED, UNDERDEVELOPED HEAD OF GRAIN. BLIGHTED MEANS “WITHERED,” “SCORCHED,” OR “DRIED UP.” INSTEAD OF RECEIVING RAIN TO MAKE THEM GROW, THESE HEADS ARE SAID TO HAVE BEEN BLIGHTED BY THE EAST WIND. EAST WIND TRANSLATES “EASTERN” AND AS IN JOB 27:21 REFERS TO THE HOT WIND THAT BLOWS FROM THE DESERT. IN AREAS WHERE “EAST” DOES NOT MAKE PEOPLE THINK OF THE DESERT, TRANSLATORS ARE ADVISED TO FOLLOW TEV “DESERT WIND” OR SOME SUCH EQUIVALENT IN THEIR OWN LANGUAGES. WE MAY RENDER VERSE 6, FOR EXAMPLE, “AFTER THE GOOD HEADS HAD FORMED, SEVEN THIN HEADS SPROUTED THAT LOOKED AS THOUGH THEY HAD BEEN SCORCHED BY THE DESERT WIND” OR “… SCORCHED BY A HOT WIND.”**

**GENESIS 41:7: THE THIN EARS SWALLOWED UP THE SEVEN PLUMP AND FULL EARS: THE IMAGE OF GRAIN EATING GRAIN IS AGAIN FROM THE STRANGE AND UNREAL WORLD OF DREAMS. IF IN TRANSLATION IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO SPEAK OF GRAIN SWALLOWING OR EATING GRAIN, IT MAY BE POSSIBLE TO SHIFT TO A SIMILE AND SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “THEN THE THIN HEADS OF GRAIN MADE THE SEVEN HEALTHY HEADS DISAPPEAR, LIKE A PERSON EATING FOOD.” AND PHARAOH AWOKE, AND BEHOLD, IT WAS A DREAM: THAT IS, “WHEN THE KING WOKE UP, HE REALIZED HE HAD BEEN DREAMING.”**

**GENESIS 41:8: SO, IN THE MORNING HIS SPIRIT WAS TROUBLED: THIS IS A LITERAL RENDERING OF THE HEBREW, WHICH MAY ALSO BE EXPRESSED AS “HE WAS UPSET,” “… DISTURBED,” OR “… WORRIED.” A SIMILAR THOUGHT IS EXPRESSED WHEN THE KING’S OFFICIALS AWOKE FROM THEIR DREAMS IN 40:6. SENT AND CALLED: THAT IS, “SENT SOMEONE TO BRING,” OR “SENT WORD FOR THEM TO COME.” MAGICIANS … WISE MEN: MAGICIANS REFERS TO A CLASS OF EGYPTIAN PRIESTS WHO HAD SPECIAL POWERS AND KNOWLEDGE. THE HEBREW TERM IS FOUND ONLY IN PASSAGES RELATED TO EGYPT; FOR EXAMPLE, EXO 7:11, 22; 8:18–19; 9:11. MOST ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS CALL THEM “MAGICIANS,” BUT REB PREFERS “DREAM-INTERPRETERS.” INTERPRETING DREAMS, HOWEVER, WAS PROBABLY ONLY ONE OF THEIR FUNCTIONS. A MAGICIAN IS A PERSON SKILLED IN MAGIC OR THE CONTROL OF SECRET FORCES IN NATURE. IF THE TRANSLATOR FINDS THAT IT IS NOT SUITABLE TO USE THE LOCAL TERM FOR SORCERER OR SHAMAN, IT MAY BE BEST TO FOLLOW REB, OR TO SAY “PRIEST,” AS IN SOME TRANSLATIONS. WISE MEN REFERS TO ANOTHER CLASS OF EGYPTIAN PRIESTS OR PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL KNOWLEDGE OR WISDOM. TOB EXPLAINS THE RELATION OF THESE TWO GROUPS IN ITS FOOTNOTE: “THESE ‘PRIESTS’ (MAGICIANS) WERE THE HEAD ‘READER PRIESTS’ ACCORDING TO EGYPTIAN TERMINOLOGY. THEY ARE HERE THE HIGHEST IN THE HIERARCHY. THE ‘WISE MEN’ ARE THE TOP LEVEL CIVIL SERVANTS EDUCATED IN THE SCRIBAL SCHOOLS. THESE TWO GROUPS WERE THE SCHOLARS OF THEIR DAY AND WERE RESPONSIBLE TO ANSWER THE PHARAOH’S QUESTIONS.” IN SOME LANGUAGES WISE MEN IS EXPRESSED AS “MEN WHO KNOW THINGS” OR “THE KNOWING ONES.” SOME INTERPRETERS UNDERSTAND ALL BEFORE MAGICIANS AND BEFORE WISE MEN TO MEAN “ALL KINDS OF.…” IT MAY ALSO REFER TO THE MAIN ONES OR THOSE WHO WERE HIGHEST IN THE HIERARCHY. HOWEVER, MOST TRANSLATIONS TAKE ALL TO REFER TO THE ENTIRE GROUP OF SUCH PERSONS. PHARAOH TOLD THEM HIS DREAM: THAT IS, HE DESCRIBED IT, HE TOLD THEM WHAT HE SAW. DREAM IS SINGULAR IN THE HEBREW, AS SHOWN BY RSV, BUT TRANSLATORS MAY NEED TO MAKE IT PLURAL AS IN TEV. WHO COULD INTERPRET IT TO PHARAOH: RSV FOOTNOTE SHOWS THAT THE HEBREW HAS “THEM” IN PLACE OF IT. THE TERM DREAM, WHICH THE PRONOUN REFERS BACK TO, IS SINGULAR IN THE HEBREW BUT IS UNDERSTOOD IN A COLLECTIVE SENSE, AS HOTTP SAYS: “ALL THE THINGS HE HAD DREAMT?” WE MAY TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “BUT NO ONE COULD EXPLAIN THE MEANING OF THE THINGS THE KING [PHARAOH] HAD DREAMED.”**

**GENESIS 41:9: THEN THE CHIEF BUTLER SAID TO PHARAOH: THEN TRANSLATES THE HEBREW CONNECTIVE. THE CHIEF BUTLER TAKES THE INITIATIVE NOW BECAUSE HE WAS PROBABLY PRESENT WHEN THE KING DESCRIBED HIS DREAMS TO HIS MAGICIANS AND WISE MEN, AND BECAUSE HE NOW REMEMBERS THAT JOSEPH HAD CORRECTLY INTERPRETED HIS DREAM. I REMEMBER MY FAULTS TODAY: THE BUTLER ADDRESSES THE KING DIRECTLY WITHOUT AN ADDRESS FORM. IN SOME LANGUAGES THIS CONTEXT WILL REQUIRE SOMETHING LIKE “SIR,” “YOUR MAJESTY,” “MY CHIEF.” REMEMBER IN THIS CONTEXT IS MORE THAN RECALLING SOMETHING THAT HAS BEEN FORGOTTEN: THE BUTLER WISHES TO TELL THE KING SOMETHING HE SHOULD HAVE TOLD HIM MUCH EARLIER. ACCORDINGLY, THE TRANSLATION SHOULD REFLECT THIS OMISSION OR CARELESSNESS COMMITTED BY THE BUTLER. NOTE TEV “I MUST CONFESS TODAY … WRONG.” NIV SAYS “TODAY I AM REMINDED OF MY SHORTCOMINGS,” REB “NOW I MUST MENTION MY OFFENSES.”**

**GENESIS 41:10: WHEN PHARAOH WAS ANGRY WITH HIS SERVANTS: RSV BEGINS THIS VERSE WITH A “WHEN” CLAUSE. HOWEVER, TRANSLATORS MAY FIND IT MORE NATURAL TO MAKE TWO SENTENCES IN VERSES 10 AND 11. WE MAY OPEN VERSE 10, FOR EXAMPLE, “ONE DAY …” OR “IT HAPPENED THAT THE KING WAS ANGRY.…” IN SOME LANGUAGES IT WILL BE NECESSARY TO ADDRESS THE KING IN THE SECOND PERSON; FOR EXAMPLE, “ONE TIME WHEN YOU WERE ANGRY …” OR “ONCE WHEN YOU, SIR, WERE ANGRY WITH US SERVANTS AND YOU PUT THE HEAD BAKER AND ME IN THE GUARD HOUSE.” SEE THE WORDING IN 40:3 FOR THE KIND OF ARREST AND THE DESCRIPTION OF THE PART OF THE JAIL WHERE THEY WERE KEPT.**

**GENESIS 41:11: WE DREAMED: IN SOME LANGUAGES THE FORM OF WE MUST EXCLUDE THE KING, THE ONE ADDRESSED; AND IT MAY ALSO HAVE TO BE THE SPECIAL PRONOUN THAT REFERS TO JUST TWO PERSONS, “WE-TWO [EXCLUSIVE].” THE WORDING IS SIMILAR TO THAT USED IN 40:5.**

**GENESIS 41:12: A YOUNG HEBREW … US: IN SOME LANGUAGES A MAN IS REFERRED TO AS “A CHILD” OR “A YOUTH” UNTIL HE IS MARRIED. JOSEPH IS NOT YET MARRIED, ALTHOUGH HE IS THIRTY YEARS OLD ACCORDING TO VERSE 46. FOR CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD SEE 40:3–4. EACH MAN: THE WINE STEWARD REFERS IN THE THIRD PERSON TO HIMSELF AND THE BAKER. IN MOST LANGUAGES IT IS BETTER TO RETAIN THE FIRST-PERSON PLURAL, AS IN TEV.**

**GENESIS 41:13: AND AS HE INTERPRETED TO US, SO IT CAME TO PASS: THAT IS, “EVERYTHING HAPPENED JUST AS HE SAID IT WOULD” OR “EVERYTHING HAPPENED ACCORDING TO THE WAY HE INTERPRETED OUR DREAMS.” FOR RESTORED TO MY OFFICE SEE 40:13. FOR BAKER WAS HANGED SEE 40:22.**

**JOSEPH INTERPRETS THE KING’S DREAMS (41:14–36)**

**IN THIS PART OF THE STORY, JOSEPH IS BROUGHT BEFORE THE KING AND INTERPRETS HIS DREAMS. HE THEN GOES ON TO EXPLAIN TO THE KING A PLAN TO PREVENT EGYPT FROM SUFFERING DURING THE COMING FAMINE. JOSEPH IS MADE PRESENTABLE TO THE KING, AND THE KING TELLS JOSEPH HIS FIRST DREAM (VERSES 14–21). THE KING GOES ON TO RELATE TO JOSEPH HIS SECOND DREAM (VERSES 22–24). JOSEPH INTERPRETS THE MEANING OF THE DREAMS AS BEING ONE THEME. THE SEVEN GOOD COWS AND SEVEN GOOD EARS REPRESENT SEVEN YEARS OF ABUNDANT CROPS. THE SEVEN THIN COWS AND THE SEVEN DRIED-UP EARS REPRESENT SEVEN YEARS OF FAMINE. THE REPETITION OF THE THEME IN THE DREAMS MEANS THAT GOD WILL CAUSE IT TO HAPPEN (VERSE 25–32). JOSEPH THEN LAYS OUT A PLAN TO PREPARE FOR THE YEARS OF FAMINE (VERSES 33–36).**

**SUBDIVISION HEADING**

**THE HANDBOOK HEADING MAY NEED TO BE MODIFIED TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “JOSEPH TELLS THE KING WHAT HIS DREAMS MEAN,” “JOSEPH EXPLAINS THE MEANING OF THE DREAMS,” OR “JOSEPH INTERPRETS THE KING’S DREAMS AND SHOWS HIM HOW TO PREPARE FOR THE FUTURE FAMINE.” TOB HAS “JOSEPH BEFORE PHARAOH,” GECL “JOSEPH EXPLAINS THE PHARAOH’S DREAMS.”**

**GENESIS 41:14: THE KING DOES NOT REPLY TO THE WINE SERVANT’S SPEECH BUT IMMEDIATELY ARRANGES TO HAVE JOSEPH BROUGHT TO HIM. FOR SENT AND CALLED SEE VERSE 8. THEY BROUGHT HIM HASTILY OUT OF THE DUNGEON: RSV FOLLOWS THE HEBREW ACTIVE CONSTRUCTION. THEY DOES NOT REFER BACK TO ANY NOUN, HOWEVER; AND LANGUAGES THAT CANNOT FOLLOW THIS MODEL MAY NEED TO REPLACE THEY WITH A NOUN PHRASE SUCH AS “THE KING’S MEN,” “THE KING’S MESSENGERS,” OR “THE KING’S SOLDIERS.” FOR DUNGEON SEE 40:15. WHEN HE HAD SHAVED HIMSELF AND CHANGED HIS CLOTHES: HE REFERS TO JOSEPH, WHO MUST PREPARE HIMSELF TO APPEAR BEFORE THE KING. SEE THE SIMILAR CASE OF JEHOIACHIN IN 2 KGS 25:29. THE HEBREW VERB SHAVED MEANS BOTH TO SHAVE (THE FACE) AND TO CUT THE HAIR (OF THE HEAD). SOME INTERPRET THE FORM OF THE VERB TO MEAN HERE “CUT HIS HAIR.” SEE SPEISER, NJV, SPCL, AND GECL. HOWEVER, MOST ENGLISH VERSIONS TRANSLATE AS DO RSV AND TEV. DRIVER COMMENTS: “THE EGYPTIANS SHAVED BOTH THEIR HEADS AND THEIR FACES (THOUGH THEY WORE ON IMPORTANT OCCASIONS ARTIFICIAL HAIR AND BEARDS): ON THE MONUMENTS, ONLY FOREIGNERS, AND NATIVES OF INFERIOR RANK, ARE REPRESENTED AS GROWING BEARDS.” IF THE TRANSLATOR CHOOSES “CUT THE HAIR,” IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO SAY “THEY CUT HIS HAIR.” A LITERAL TRANSLATION OF CHANGED HIS CLOTHES MAY NOT CARRY THE RIGHT SENSE. HE HAD TO REMOVE HIS PRISON CLOTHING AND PUT ON CLOTHING THAT WAS ACCEPTABLE FOR STANDING BEFORE THE KING.**

**GENESIS 41:15: THERE IS NO ONE WHO CAN INTERPRET IT: THIS IS THE SAME THOUGHT AS EXPRESSED BY THE BUTLER AND THE BAKER IN 40:8. I HAVE HEARD IT SAID OF YOU … IT: THAT IS, “I HAVE HEARD THAT YOU CAN INTERPRET [EXPLAIN THE MEANING OF] A DREAM.” THIS IS ALSO EXPRESSED IN SOME TRANSLATIONS AS “THEY [INDEFINITE] SAY THAT YOU …” OR “SOME PEOPLE HAVE TOLD ME THAT YOU.…” WHEN YOU HEAR A DREAM: THAT IS, “WHEN SOMEONE DESCRIBES A DREAM TO YOU” OR “WHEN YOU HEAR SOMEONE TELL YOU WHAT THEY HAVE DREAMED.”**

**GENESIS 41:16: AS IN 40:8 JOSEPH DOES NOT CLAIM FOR HIMSELF ANY SPECIAL POWER OR SECRET KNOWLEDGE, AS THE KING’S MAGICIANS MIGHT. IT IS NOT IN ME IS LITERALLY “NOT I.” SEE TEV. WE MAY EXPRESS THIS THOUGHT AS “I AM NOT THE ONE” OR “IT IS NOT ME WHO DOES IT.” ONE TRANSLATION EXPRESSES IT LIKE THIS: “NO, KING. I CAN’T DO THIS. BUT GOD.…” NOTE THAT TEV SOFTENS JOSEPH’S REPLY BY THE ADDRESS “YOUR MAJESTY.” GOD WILL GIVE PHARAOH A FAVORABLE ANSWER: THIS IS LITERALLY “GOD WILL ANSWER THE PEACE OF PHARAOH.” THE WORD FOR “PEACE” INCLUDES SUCH MEANINGS AS WELL-BEING, PROSPERITY, AND SUCCESS. JOSEPH MAKES CLEAR IN VERSE 28 THAT GOD IS THE ORIGIN OF THE DREAM, AND IN VERSE 32 THAT GOD IS SPEAKING TO THE KING TO PREPARE HIM FOR WHAT IS ABOUT TO HAPPEN. ACCORDINGLY, FAVORABLE MEANS THAT THE INTERPRETATION OF THE DREAM WILL BE FOR THE GOOD OF THE KING, AND WE MAY TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “GOD WILL GIVE THE KING A GOOD ANSWER” OR “GOD WILL GIVE YOUR MAJESTY AN EXPLANATION THAT WILL BE FOR YOUR GOOD.”**

**GENESIS 41:17–18: VERSES 17–24 REPEAT THE DETAILS OF THE DREAMS AS TOLD BY THE NARRATOR IN VERSES 1. GENESIS 41:1: AFTER TWO WHOLE YEARS: CHAPTER 41 CONTINUES DIRECTLY FROM THE ACTION IN CHAPTER 40. MANY TRANSLATIONS WILL BE ABLE TO USE THE TIME EXPRESSION AS IN RSV. OTHERS MAY FIND THAT THE LINK WITH CHAPTER 40 NEEDS TO BE EXPRESSED MORE FULLY. IN THAT CASE WE MAY SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “TWO YEARS AFTER THE BAKER WAS HANGED” OR “… AFTER THE BUTLER WAS RESTORED BY THE KING.” PHARAOH: SEE COMMENTS ON 12:15. DREAMED THAT HE WAS …: AS STATED IN 40:9 HEBREW HINNEH “BEHOLD” INTRODUCES THE CONTENT OF A DREAM AND OFTEN OCCURS AS AN INTRODUCTION TO INDIVIDUAL ELEMENTS IN THE DREAM. NOTE KJV “AND, BEHOLD, HE STOOD BY THE RIVER.” IN SOME LANGUAGES THIS IS EXPRESSED AS “THE KING HAD A DREAM AND HERE IS WHAT HE SAW: …” OR “… IT WAS LIKE THIS.…” STANDING BY THE NILE: THIS EXPRESSION HAS THE SENSE OF “STANDING BESIDE” OR “STANDING ON THE BANK.” THE KING IS FACING THE RIVER AND IS ABLE TO SEE WHAT TAKES PLACE THERE. THIS IS THE FIRST OCCURRENCE IN GENESIS OF THE NAME OF THE GREAT RIVER OF EGYPT, THE NILE. IN THE OLD TESTAMENT THERE ARE THREE WORDS USED FOR THE NILE. HOWEVER, IN GENESIS AND IN MOST OF THE OTHER BOOKS, IT IS ALWAYS CALLED IN HEBREW YE’OR, A WORD OF EGYPTIAN ORIGIN. IN AREAS WHERE THE NILE IS UNKNOWN, TRANSLATORS SHOULD SAY SOMETHING LIKE “THE RIVER CALLED NILE.”**

**GENESIS 41:19–20: VERSE 19 ADDS SUCH AS I HAD NEVER SEEN IN ALL THE LAND OF EGYPT, MEANING “WORSE THAN ANY COWS I HAD EVER SEEN IN EGYPT.”**

**GENESIS 41:21: THE PICTURE OF THE THIN COWS GIVEN HERE IS NOT IN THE FIRST TELLING IN VERSE 4. THAT THEY HAD EATEN THEM: THAT IS, “THAT THE THIN COWS HAD EATEN THE FAT ONES.” NO ONE WOULD HAVE KNOW THAT …: THAT IS, “YOU COULD SEE NO DIFFERENCE” OR “BY LOOKING YOU COULD NOT TELL THAT.…”**

**GENESIS 41:22: THE SEPTUAGINT TRANSLATORS SUPPLIED A TRANSITION BETWEEN I AWOKE AT THE END OF VERSE 21 AND I SAW AT THE OPENING OF VERSE 22 SO THAT VERSE 22 SAYS “AND I FELL ASLEEP AGAIN AND I SAW.” RSV FOLLOWS THE HEBREW TEXT, WHICH HOTTP RANKS AS A {B}. HOTTP RECOMMENDS TRANSLATING THE HEBREW TEXT IN VERSE 22 AS “THEN I FELL AGAIN TO DREAMING” OR “THEN I SAW AGAIN IN MY DREAM.…” IN SOME LANGUAGES IT MAY BE NECESSARY FOR THE TRANSLATOR TO MAKE CLEAR THAT, AFTER THE KING AWOKE AT THE END OF VERSE 21, HE HAD TO GO TO SLEEP A SECOND TIME BEFORE HE COULD DREAM AGAIN. IN SUCH CASES THE LANGUAGE MAY REQUIRE THE SAME KIND OF TRANSITION AS THAT SUPPLIED BY THE SEPTUAGINT TRANSLATORS.**

**GENESIS 41:23–24: AND I TOLD IT TO THE MAGICIANS … EXPLAIN IT TO ME: SEE VERSE 8. GENESIS 41:8: SO, IN THE MORNING HIS SPIRIT WAS TROUBLED: THIS IS A LITERAL RENDERING OF THE HEBREW, WHICH MAY ALSO BE EXPRESSED AS “HE WAS UPSET,” “… DISTURBED,” OR “… WORRIED.” A SIMILAR THOUGHT IS EXPRESSED WHEN THE KING’S OFFICIALS AWOKE FROM THEIR DREAMS IN 40:6. SENT AND CALLED: THAT IS, “SENT SOMEONE TO BRING,” OR “SENT WORD FOR THEM TO COME.” MAGICIANS … WISE MEN: MAGICIANS REFERS TO A CLASS OF EGYPTIAN PRIESTS WHO HAD SPECIAL POWERS AND KNOWLEDGE. THE HEBREW TERM IS FOUND ONLY IN PASSAGES RELATED TO EGYPT; FOR EXAMPLE, EXO 7:11, 22; 8:18–19; 9:11. MOST ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS CALL THEM “MAGICIANS,” BUT REB PREFERS “DREAM-INTERPRETERS.” INTERPRETING DREAMS, HOWEVER, WAS PROBABLY ONLY ONE OF THEIR FUNCTIONS. A MAGICIAN IS A PERSON SKILLED IN MAGIC OR THE CONTROL OF SECRET FORCES IN NATURE. IF THE TRANSLATOR FINDS THAT IT IS NOT SUITABLE TO USE THE LOCAL TERM FOR SORCERER OR SHAMAN, IT MAY BE BEST TO FOLLOW REB, OR TO SAY “PRIEST,” AS IN SOME TRANSLATIONS. WISE MEN REFERS TO ANOTHER CLASS OF EGYPTIAN PRIESTS OR PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL KNOWLEDGE OR WISDOM. TOB EXPLAINS THE RELATION OF THESE TWO GROUPS IN ITS FOOTNOTE: “THESE ‘PRIESTS’ (MAGICIANS) WERE THE HEAD ‘READER PRIESTS’ ACCORDING TO EGYPTIAN TERMINOLOGY. THEY ARE HERE THE HIGHEST IN THE HIERARCHY. THE ‘WISE MEN’ ARE THE TOP LEVEL CIVIL SERVANTS EDUCATED IN THE SCRIBAL SCHOOLS. THESE TWO GROUPS WERE THE SCHOLARS OF THEIR DAY AND WERE RESPONSIBLE TO ANSWER THE PHARAOH’S QUESTIONS.” IN SOME LANGUAGES WISE MEN IS EXPRESSED AS “MEN WHO KNOW THINGS” OR “THE KNOWING ONES.” SOME INTERPRETERS UNDERSTAND ALL BEFORE MAGICIANS AND BEFORE WISE MEN TO MEAN “ALL KINDS OF.…” IT MAY ALSO REFER TO THE MAIN ONES OR THOSE WHO WERE HIGHEST IN THE HIERARCHY. HOWEVER, MOST TRANSLATIONS TAKE ALL TO REFER TO THE ENTIRE GROUP OF SUCH PERSONS. PHARAOH TOLD THEM HIS DREAM: THAT IS, HE DESCRIBED IT, HE TOLD THEM WHAT HE SAW. DREAM IS SINGULAR IN THE HEBREW, AS SHOWN BY RSV, BUT TRANSLATORS MAY NEED TO MAKE IT PLURAL AS IN TEV. WHO COULD INTERPRET IT TO PHARAOH: RSV FOOTNOTE SHOWS THAT THE HEBREW HAS “THEM” IN PLACE OF IT. THE TERM DREAM, WHICH THE PRONOUN REFERS BACK TO, IS SINGULAR IN THE HEBREW BUT IS UNDERSTOOD IN A COLLECTIVE SENSE, AS HOTTP SAYS: “ALL THE THINGS HE HAD DREAMT?” WE MAY TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “BUT NO ONE COULD EXPLAIN THE MEANING OF THE THINGS THE KING [PHARAOH] HAD DREAMED.”**

**GENESIS 41:25: THE DREAM OF PHARAOH IS ONE: THAT IS, “THE TWO DREAMS HAVE THE SAME MEANING.” DREAM IS SINGULAR IN THE HEBREW, BUT THE SENSE IS COLLECTIVE. GOD HAS REVEALED TO PHARAOH WHAT HE IS ABOUT TO DO: THAT IS, “… SHOWED PHARAOH.” FOR ADDRESS FORMS SEE VERSE 9.**

**GENESIS 41:26: IN JOSEPH’S INTERPRETATION OF THE DREAMS OF THE BUTLER AND THE BAKER IN 40:12, THREE OBJECTS REPRESENTED THREE DAYS. HERE IN THE KING’S DREAMS SEVEN OBJECTS REPRESENT SEVEN YEARS. JOSEPH EXPLAINS IN VERSE 29 WHAT WILL HAPPEN DURING THESE SEVEN YEARS. SEVEN YEARS MAY NEED TO BE EXPRESSED AS “SEVEN YEARS WITH PLENTY OF FOOD,” TO CONTRAST WITH THE “SEVEN YEARS OF FAMINE.” FOR THE TRANSLATION OF THIS VERSE, SEE 40:12, 18. THE DREAM IS ONE: THAT IS, “YOUR DREAMS BOTH HAVE THE SAME MEANING,” OR “THEY BOTH [THE SEVEN COWS AND THE SEVEN EARS] STAND FOR THE SAME THING.”**

**GENESIS 41:27: TRANSLATORS WILL NOTE THAT RSV HAS EMPTY [EARS] AND TEV HAS “THIN [HEADS OF GRAIN].” THE REASON FOR THE DIFFERENCE IS THAT THE HEBREW WORD FOR “THIN” HAS THE LETTER, “D,” WHICH HAS BEEN MISCOPIED AS, “R” (THE TWO LETTERS ARE VERY SIMILAR IN SHAPE IN THE HEBREW). SEE 14:14. HOTTP RECOMMENDS “THIN” AS IN TEV. HOWEVER, THE MEANINGS IN THIS CONTEXT ARE ALMOST THE SAME. BECAUSE SEVEN COWS AND SEVEN … EARS TOGETHER REPRESENT SEVEN YEARS OF FAMINE, TEV AVOIDS THE REPETITION OF ARE [ALSO] SEVEN YEARS. FOR BLIGHTED BY THE EAST WIND, SEE VERSE 6. FOR FAMINE SEE 12:10.**

**GENESIS 41:28: AS I TOLD PHARAOH: THAT IS, “AS I TOLD YOU, SIR,” OR “AS I TOLD YOUR MAJESTY.” WHO IS THE DAMN IDIOT TO CALL PHARAOH, MAJESTY & NOT THE TOP ENGLISH LORD, MAJESTY?**

**GENESIS 41:29: SEVEN YEARS OF GREAT PLENTY: PLENTY TRANSLATES A WORD SUGGESTING PLENTY OF FOOD, OR MORE THAN ENOUGH FOOD. IN TRANSLATION GREAT PLENTY MAY NEED TO BE FILLED OUT TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “THERE WILL BE SEVEN YEARS OF GOOD CROPS” OR “… WITH PLENTY TO EAT.” MANY LANGUAGES HAVE SPECIAL TERMS OR IDIOMS THAT REFER TO “TIMES OF PLENTY,” OR “GOOD TIMES.”**

**GENESIS 41:30: BUT AFTER THEM: THAT IS, “THEN,” “AFTER THAT,” OR “FOLLOWING THOSE YEARS OF PLENTY.” ALL THE PLENTY WILL BE FORGOTTEN: ALL THE PLENTY MAY BE EXPRESSED AS “THE YEARS OF GOOD CROPS” OR “THE YEARS WITH PLENTY TO EAT.” BE FORGOTTEN MAY NEED TO BE EXPRESSED ACTIVELY AS “THE PEOPLE WILL FORGET.…” FAMINE WILL CONSUME THE LAND: THIS CLAUSE IS THE REASON FOR FORGETTING THE ABUNDANT YEARS. THE HUNGER AND FAMINE WILL BE SO GREAT THAT PEOPLE WILL NOT REMEMBER THE TIME WHEN THEY HAD PLENTY TO EAT. IN MANY LANGUAGES FAMINE IS CALLED A “HUNGRY TIME.” CONSUME, WHICH IS LITERALLY “EAT,” MEANS TO DESTROY OR RUIN, OR TO AFFLICT PEOPLE. THE LAND IS NOT JUST THE GROUND, SOIL, OR EARTH, BUT REFERS MORE GENERALLY TO THE PEOPLE AND THEIR COUNTRY, WHICH SUGGESTS BOTH THE POLITICAL REALM AND ITS PEOPLE. CONSUME THE LAND IS AN EXPRESSION THAT RETAINS THE IMAGES OF THE TWO DREAMS THAT THE KING HAD. IF IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO KEEP THE FIGURE, THEN AN EXPRESSION SUCH AS TEV’S “WILL RUIN THE COUNTRY” WILL BE USEFUL.**

**GENESIS 41:31: VERSE 31 PARALLELS VERSE 30 BY ANNOUNCING AGAIN THAT THE FAMINE WILL BE SO SEVERE THAT THE YEARS OF PLENTY WILL BE FORGOTTEN. THE PLENTY WILL BE UNKNOWN: UNKNOWN IN THIS CONTEXT HAS THE SENSE THAT THE FAMINE WILL CAUSE THE EVIDENCE OF THE PLENTIFUL YEARS TO DISAPPEAR. THIS IS EXPRESSED BY SPEISER AS “NO TRACE WILL BE LEFT IN IT OF THE ABUNDANCE.” SPCL SAYS “THERE WILL BE LEFT NO SIGNS OF THE ABUNDANCE,” REB “THE GOOD YEARS WILL LEAVE NO TRACE IN THE LAND.…” BY REASON OF THAT FAMINE WHICH WILL FOLLOW IS LITERALLY “IN THE FACE OF THE FAMINE THAT FOLLOWS.” FOR IT WILL BE VERY GRIEVOUS: IT REFERS TO THE FAMINE. GRIEVOUS TRANSLATES THE HEBREW FOR “HEAVY,” WHICH HERE HAS THE SENSE OF “SEVERE,” “TERRIBLE,” “PAINFUL.” IN SOME LANGUAGES IT WILL BE MORE NATURAL TO REVERSE THE ORDER OF CLAUSES AND SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “THE FAMINE WILL BE SO SEVERE THAT NOTHING WILL BE SEEN OF THE YEARS WHEN THE CROPS WERE GOOD” OR “THE FAMINE … SO BAD THAT NO SIGN OF THE YEARS OF GOOD CROPS WILL BE SEEN.”**

**GENESIS 41:32: THE DOUBLING OF PHARAOH’S DREAM: THIS MAY NEED TO BE RESTRUCTURED TO SAY “YOUR MAJESTY HAD THE SAME DREAM TWICE.” MEANS THAT THE THING IS FIXED BY GOD: THIS EXPRESSION HAS THE SENSE “GOD HAS DECIDED WHAT WILL HAPPEN,” “THE DECISION OF GOD HAS BEEN TAKEN,” OR “GOD HAS ESTABLISHED WHAT IS GOING TO HAPPEN.” IN SOME LANGUAGES IT IS MORE NATURAL TO REVERSE THE ORDER OF THE CLAUSES IN THE FIRST PART OF THIS VERSE; FOR EXAMPLE, “THIS THING IS SURE TO HAPPEN BECAUSE GOD HAS GIVEN YOU THE MESSAGE IN TWO DREAMS.” AND GOD WILL SHORTLY BRING IT TO PASS: THAT IS, “AND HE WILL MAKE IT HAPPEN SOON.”**

**GENESIS 41:33: JOSEPH CONCLUDES HIS EXPLANATION OF THE KING’S DREAM BY PROPOSING A PRACTICAL WAY FOR PROVIDING FOR THE YEARS OF FAMINE. HE WOULD STORE UP GRAIN DURING THE SEVEN YEARS OF PLENTY. THE FIRST STEP TO BE TAKEN TO CARRY OUT THIS PLAN IS TO CHOOSE SOMEONE CAPABLE OF ORGANIZING AND ADMINISTERING THE PROJECT. NOW THEREFORE LET PHARAOH SELECT A MAN DISCREET AND WISE: NOW THEREFORE SHIFTS JOSEPH’S SPEECH FROM THE INTERPRETATION TO A CONCRETE PROPOSAL; THIS INTRODUCTION OF A PROPOSAL MAY BE EXPRESSED AS “WITH THIS IN MIND YOU SHOULD …” OR “SO I ADVISE YOU.…” IN ONE SITUATION WHERE IT IS ACCEPTABLE FOR PEOPLE TO SPEAK THEIR MINDS TO THEIR LEADERS, THE TRANSLATION SAYS “WELL, YOU LISTEN TO ME NOW, KING…” SELECT IS LITERALLY “LOOK FOR.” DISCREET TRANSLATES A WORD MEANING INTELLIGENT, HAVING UNDERSTANDING OR INSIGHT. THIS PERSON SHOULD ALSO BE WISE, THAT IS, HAVE KNOWLEDGE AND SOUND JUDGMENT. LET PHARAOH …: JOSEPH’S ADVICE TO THE KING IS GIVEN AS A SERIES OF THIRD PERSON IMPERATIVES. IN MANY LANGUAGES THIS WILL BE MUCH MORE NATURAL IF EXPRESSED IN THE SECOND PERSON, AS IN TEV “YOU SHOULD CHOOSE.…” SET HIM OVER THE LAND OF EGYPT: THAT IS, “PLACE HIM IN CHARGE OF THE COUNTRY,” OR “GIVE HIM THE POWER TO RULE.…” WE MAY TRANSLATE VERSE 33, FOR EXAMPLE, “SO, YOUR MAJESTY, YOU SHOULD CHOOSE AN INTELLIGENT AND WISE MAN AND PUT HIM IN CHARGE OF THE WHOLE COUNTRY.**

**GENESIS 41:34: VERSES 34 AND 35 ALSO BEGIN WITH THIRD PERSON COMMANDS IN THE HEBREW, RENDERED BY RSV AS “LET” COMMANDS ADDRESSED TO THE KING. SEE COMMENTS ON VERSE 33 ABOVE. LET … APPOINT OVERSEERS OVER THE LAND: OVERSEERS REFERS TO OTHER OFFICIALS, PROBABLY ON A REGIONAL AND LOCAL BASIS. SOME TRANSLATIONS CALL THESE OVERSEERS “GOVERNORS,” “COMMISSIONERS,” OR “SUPERVISORS.” IN SOME LANGUAGES THESE PERSONS ARE CALLED “SMALLER BOSSES.” TAKE THE FIFTH PART OF THE PRODUCE … DURING THE SEVEN PLENTEOUS YEARS: IT APPEARS THAT THE TASK OF THESE OVERSEERS IS TO COLLECT FROM THE FARMERS A FIFTH OF THEIR CROPS DURING THE YEARS OF ABUNDANT CROPS. IT IS ASSUMED THAT THEY WILL DO THIS EACH GROWING SEASON. THERE IS NO INDICATION, HOWEVER, WHETHER THIS FIFTH IS TAKEN AS A TAX OR IS PURCHASED. BUT THE HEBREW IS ALSO OPEN TO OTHER INTERPRETATIONS. FOR EXAMPLE, SOME SCHOLARS UNDERSTAND IT TO MEAN “TO DIVIDE THE LAND INTO FIVE PARTS.” SPEISER UNDERSTANDS IT TO MEAN “TO ORGANIZE OR TO REGIMENT THE LAND,” AND THIS IS FOLLOWED BY NJV AND NAB. MOST MODERN TRANSLATIONS FOLLOW RSV AND TEV, WHICH IS RECOMMENDED. IN THIS CASE WE MAY TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “AND LET THESE OFFICIALS COLLECT A FIFTH OF ALL THE CROPS GROWN IN EGYPT DURING THE SEVEN YEARS OF GOOD CROPS” OR “ORDER THESE OVERSEERS TO COLLECT A FIFTH OF EVERY FARMER’S CROPS EVERY SEASON DURING THE GOOD YEARS.” WHERE THE CONCEPT OF A FIFTH PART IS DIFFICULT TO EXPRESS, SOME TRANSLATORS SAY “DIVIDE ALL THE FOOD THEY PRODUCE INTO FIVE HEAPS [PARTS]: FOUR OF THESE ARE FOR FOOD AND ONE IS TO BE HELD IN STORAGE.”**

**GENESIS 41:35: AND LET THEM GATHER: THE OVERSEERS ARE TO COLLECT THE FOOD. FOOD IN THIS STORY DOES NOT REFER TO PERISHABLE FOOD BUT RATHER TO PRODUCE FROM THE FIELDS, PRINCIPALLY GRAIN OR WHEAT, WHICH CAN BE STORED FOR LONG PERIODS OF TIME. LAY UP GRAIN UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF THE PHARAOH FOR FOOD IN THE CITIES: THAT IS, “GIVE THEM AUTHORITY TO GATHER GRAIN AND STORE IT IN THE CITIES.” AND LET THEM KEEP IT: KEEP HERE MEANS TO “WATCH,” “PRESERVE,” OR “PROTECT.” SEE TEV “AND GUARD IT.” ONE TRANSLATION THAT STATES THIS CLEARLY SAYS “AND THERE MUST BE SOLDIERS TO GUARD IT.”**

**GENESIS 41:36: THAT FOOD SHALL BE A RESERVE: THAT FOOD REFERS TO THE GRAIN THAT HAS BEEN STORED AND SAVED UP TO BE EATEN DURING THE YEARS OF FAMINE. FOR THE LAND MEANS FOR THE COUNTRY AS A WHOLE OR FOR THE PEOPLE OF EGYPT. AGAINST THE SEVEN YEARS OF FAMINE: THAT IS, “FOR WHEN THE SEVEN YEARS OF FAMINE COME.” SO THAT THE LAND MAY NOT PERISH THROUGH THE FAMINE: THAT IS, “SO THE PEOPLE WILL NOT DIE FROM STARVATION” OR “SO THAT THE PEOPLE WILL NOT STARVE TO DEATH.” WE MAY RENDER VERSE 36, FOR EXAMPLE, “ALL OF THAT PRODUCE WILL BE SAVED UP FOR THE PEOPLE OF THIS COUNTRY SO THEY WILL HAVE IT WHEN THE SEVEN YEARS OF FAMINE COME, AND IN THIS WAY THE PEOPLE WILL NOT STARVE.”**

**JOSEPH BECOMES GOVERNOR [PRESIDENT] OF EGYPT (41:37–57)**

**IN THIS SUBDIVISION JOSEPH IS INSTALLED AS SECOND IN COMMAND TO THE KING OF EGYPT AND APPOINTED TO CARRY OUT THE PLAN THAT HE HAS OUTLINED. THE KING APPOINTS JOSEPH TO BE OVER ALL OF EGYPT AND SECOND ONLY IN POWER AND AUTHORITY TO HIMSELF (VERSES 37–41). HE GIVES JOSEPH HIS SIGNET RING, DRESSES HIM TO SUIT HIS NEW OFFICE, AND HAS JOSEPH RIDE BEHIND HIM IN THE OFFICIAL CHARIOT. WHEREVER JOSEPH GOES PEOPLE MUST BOW BEFORE HIM. NO ONE IS TO UNDERTAKE ANYTHING WITHOUT JOSEPH’S PERMISSION (VERSES 42–44). THE KING GIVES JOSEPH AN EGYPTIAN NAME AND AN EGYPTIAN WIFE (VERSE 45). JOSEPH CARRIES OUT HIS PLAN TO SAVE EGYPT FROM STARVATION BY OBTAINING AND STORING GRAIN DURING THE YEARS OF PLENTY (VERSES 46–49). HE BECOMES THE FATHER OF TWO SONS (VERSES 41:50–52). AS A RESULT OF JOSEPH’S INSIGHTS, EGYPT HAS GRAIN WHILE OTHER COUNTRIES ARE HAVING FAMINE, AND SO PEOPLE FROM OUTSIDE EGYPT MUST COME TO JOSEPH TO BUY GRAIN (VERSES 53**

**SUBDIVISION HEADING**

**THE HANDBOOK HEADING PLACES THE EMPHASIS UPON JOSEPH’S APPOINTMENT AS GOVERNOR. TRANSLATORS MAY WISH TO INDICATE MORE THAN THAT BY SAYING, FOR EXAMPLE, “JOSEPH BECOMES GOVERNOR AND SAVES EGYPT FROM FAMINE,” “JOSEPH BECOMES THE CHIEF OF THE EGYPTIANS AND STORES UP THE GRAIN,” “JOSEPH SAVES EGYPT FROM STARVATION.” FRCL HAS “JOSEPH BECOMES THE PHARAOH’S MINISTER,” SPCL “JOSEPH GOVERNOR OF EGYPT,” NJB “JOSEPH’S PROMOTION.”**

**GENESIS 41:37: THIS PROPOSAL SEEMED GOOD TO PHARAOH AND TO ALL HIS SERVANTS: PROPOSAL TRANSLATES A HEBREW TERM FOR “WORD” OR “MATTER,” AND IN THIS CONTEXT IT REFERS TO THE PLAN JOSEPH HAD SET OUT TO SAVE EGYPT DURING THE COMING FAMINE. SEEMED GOOD TO IS LITERALLY “WAS GOOD IN THE EYES OF.” SERVANTS REFERS TO THE KING’S OFFICIALS, HIGHLY PLACED CIVIL SERVANTS, AND COURT OFFICIALS. IN TRANSLATION THIS PROPOSAL SEEMED GOOD TO … MAY BE RENDERED IN A NUMBER OF WAYS; SOME EXAMPLES FROM THE PACIFIC AREA ARE “THE KING AND ALL HIS SERVANTS ADMIRED THIS IDEA”; “THE KING AND ALL HIS OFFICERS HEARD THIS TALK OF JOSEPH’S AND THEY AGREED TO IT”; “THE KING AND HIS SENIOR OFFICIALS SAID TO EACH OTHER, ‘THAT IS A GOOD IDEA OF JOSEPH’S.’ ”**

**GENESIS 41:38: HERE THE KING ADDRESSES HIS QUESTION TO HIS OFFICIALS. THE QUESTION IS PROBABLY TO BE TAKEN AS RHETORICAL, SO TEV RENDERS IT AS AN EMPHATIC STATEMENT. NOTE THAT THE KING DOES NOT RECEIVE AN ANSWER BUT CONTINUES IN VERSES 39–40 TO APPOINT JOSEPH TO THE NEW POSITION. CAN WE FIND SUCH A MAN AS THIS …? WE REFERS TO THE KING AND HIS OFFICIALS AND EXCLUDES JOSEPH. IN SOME LANGUAGES THIS REQUIRES AN INCLUSIVE FORM OF THAT PRONOUN. THIS MAY POINT BACK TO THE QUALIFICATIONS GIVEN BY JOSEPH IN VERSE 33; BUT IT IS MORE LIKELY THAT THIS POINTS TO JOSEPH, WHO IS STANDING AT THE SIDE LISTENING TO THE KING. IN WHOM IS THE SPIRIT OF GOD: IN VERSE 25 JOSEPH MADE IT CLEAR THAT GOD HAS REVEALED TO THE KING WHAT IS ABOUT TO TAKE PLACE. IT IS ALSO CLEAR IN VERSE 16 THAT GOD WILL REVEAL THROUGH JOSEPH THE MEANING OF THE KING’S DREAMS. IT IS THEREFORE EVIDENT TO THE KING THAT JOSEPH HAS GOD’S SPIRIT IN HIM. SPIRIT OF GOD HAS BEEN REVISED TO “SPIRIT OF GOD” IN NRSV. AS IN THE CASE OF BEZALEL IN EXO 31:1–5, THE KING RECOGNIZES THAT GOD HAS GIVEN HIS SPIRIT TO JOSEPH TO BE ABLE TO UNDERSTAND WHAT GOD IS DOING. THEREFORE JOSEPH, REGARDLESS OF WHAT HE HAS SAID IN VERSE 16, IS SEEN BY THE KING AS POSSESSING EXTRAORDINARY POWERS OR GIFTS. WE MAY TRANSLATE AS IN TEV. ANOTHER MODEL IS GECL, WHICH SAYS “GOD HAS GIVEN HIS SPIRIT TO THIS MAN.” IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO ANSWER THE RHETORICAL QUESTION; FOR EXAMPLE, “CAN WE FIND SUCH A MAN AS HE [JOSEPH] IS, AND WHO HAS THE POWER OF GOD IN HIM? OF COURSE NOT.” IT IS ALSO POSSIBLE TO TRANSLATE AS A NEGATIVE EMPHATIC STATEMENT; FOR EXAMPLE, “WE CANNOT FIND A MAN LIKE HIM WHO HAS THIS GIFT FROM GOD.” SOME TRANSLATIONS CHANGE THE ORDER OF CLAUSES TO PUT THE LAST CLAUSE FIRST; FOR EXAMPLE, “THE SPIRIT OF GOD IS IN THIS MAN [JOSEPH]. WE WILL NOT BE ABLE TO FIND ANY OTHER MAN AS GOOD …”; “THE SPIRIT OF GOD IS IN THIS MAN. THERE IS NO ONE ELSE WE CAN APPOINT TO THIS WORK.”**

**GENESIS 41:39: SINCE GOD HAS SHOWN YOU ALL THIS: HAS SHOWN IS LITERALLY “HAS MADE KNOWN.” ALL THIS REFERS TO THE CONTENT OF THE KING’S DREAMS. WE MAY SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “SINCE GOD HAS SHOWN YOU THE MEANING OF MY DREAMS.” THERE IS NONE SO DISCREET AND WISE AS YOU ARE: THAT IS, “NO ONE IS AS INTELLIGENT AND WISE AS YOU.” SEE VERSE 33.**

**GENESIS 41:40: VERSES 40–45 DESCRIBE THE INSTALLATION OR INVESTITURE OF JOSEPH TO THE HIGHEST POSITION IN THE KING’S GOVERNMENT. OVER MY HOUSE: MY HOUSEREFERS HERE TO THE KING’S PALACE, COURT, OR GOVERNMENT. IN LATER TIMES IN JUDAH AND ISRAEL, THE CHIEF OFFICER WAS SAID TO BE IN CHARGE OF THE PALACE, AS IN 1 KGS 4:6; 16:9. FRCL TRANSLATES “ADMINISTRATOR OF MY KINGDOM,” NJB “MY CHANCELLOR,” NJV “IN CHARGE OF MY COURT.” WE MAY ALSO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “IN CHARGE OF MY GOVERNMENT” OR “THE CHIEF OFFICER IN MY PALACE.” MY PEOPLE SHALL ORDER THEMSELVES AS YOU COMMAND: THIS APPEARS TO SAY LITERALLY “AT YOUR MOUTH ALL MY PEOPLE SHALL BE ORDERED.” THE WORD TRANSLATED “ORDERED” IS OF UNCERTAIN MEANING.**

**HOTTP SUGGESTS THREE POSSIBILITIES: (1) “AND TO YOUR WORD (COMMAND), ALL MY PEOPLE SHALL PAY HOMAGE,” (2) “AND … (COMMAND), ALL MY PEOPLE SHALL BE NOURISHED,” (3) “AND … (COMMAND), ALL MY PEOPLE SHALL BE EQUIPPED (OR: ARMED).” HOTTP ADDS “IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO DECIDE WHICH OF THESE INTERPRETATIONS IS THE BEST ONE.”**

**ALTHOUGH THEY DO NOT CONFORM ENTIRELY TO THE FIRST RECOMMENDATION OF HOTTP, REB “ALL MY PEOPLE WILL RESPECT YOUR EVERY WORD” AND TEV “ALL MY PEOPLE WILL OBEY YOUR ORDERS” GIVE US TWO MODEL TRANSLATIONS TO FOLLOW. ONLY AS REGARDS THE THRONE WILL I BE GREATER THAN YOU: THRONE IS USED HERE AS A SYMBOL OF AUTHORITY OR POWER. THIS MAY BE TRANSLATED, FOR EXAMPLE, “ONLY BECAUSE I AM THE KING WILL I BE GREATER THAN YOU.” WE MAY ALSO STATE THIS NEGATIVELY: “YOU WILL BE LESS THAN ME ONLY BECAUSE I AM THE KING.”**

**GENESIS 41:41: BEHOLD, I HAVE SET YOU OVER ALL THE LAND OF EGYPT: BEHOLD TRANSLATES THE HEBREW “SEE” (NOT HINNEH). THIS INTRODUCTORY TERM SOLEMNIZES THE ACT OF INSTALLATION OF JOSEPH IN HIGH OFFICE. SEE TEV “I NOW APPOINT YOU”; NEB/REB “I HEREBY MAKE YOU.…” SET YOU OVER MEANS “I PUT YOU IN CHARGE” OR “I GIVE YOU AUTHORITY OVER.…” TEV SUPPLIES “GOVERNOR.” THE HEBREW TEXT DOES NOT ATTACH A NAME TO JOSEPH’S POSITION.**

**GENESIS 41:42: TOOK HIS SIGNET RING FROM HIS HAND: THAT IS, “TOOK OFF HIS SIGNET RING AND PUT IT ON JOSEPH’S FINGER.” THE RING THAT THE KING GIVES TO JOSEPH IS, AS TEV SAYS, “ENGRAVED WITH THE ROYAL SEAL.” THE USE OF A SIGNET RING WAS DESCRIBED IN CONNECTION WITH JUDAH IN 38:18. IN JUDAH’S CASE THE SIGNET WAS HUNG BY A CORD AROUND HIS NECK. HERE THE SIGNET IS A RING WORN ON THE FINGER. IT WAS TRADITIONAL IN EGYPT FOR THE KING’S SECOND IN COMMAND TO BE “THE KEEPER OF THE SEAL.” LINEN REFERS TO A SUPERIOR QUALITY CLOTH WOVEN FROM THE FIBERS OF THE FLAX PLANT. LINEN IS COOL AND HAS A SURFACE LUSTER. FOR DETAILS REGARDING FLAX SEE FAUNA AND FLORA, FLAX.… IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO TRANSLATE “AND THE KING PLACED ROBES OF FINE LINEN ON HIM.” IN AREAS WHERE LINEN IS UNKNOWN, TRANSLATORS SHOULD USE A TERM FOR THE BEST QUALITY CLOTH THAT IS KNOWN. PUT A GOLD CHAIN ABOUT HIS NECK: IN ANCIENT EGYPT SUCH CHAINS WERE GIVEN FOR OUTSTANDING SERVICE TO THE KING. THE CHAIN HANGS LOOSELY ABOUT THE NECK AND CHEST.**

**GENESIS 41:43: MADE HIM TO RIDE IN HIS SECOND CHARIOT: ACCORDING TO WESTERMANN MOUNTING THE ROYAL CHARIOT WAS PART OF THE INSTALLATION RITUAL. A CHARIOT IS A VEHICLE WITH TWO WHEELS DRAWN BY ONE OR TWO HORSES. CHARIOTS IN ANCIENT EGYPT ARE DEPICTED IN PAINTINGS AS MANNED BY A DRIVER AND AN ARCHER. THE FIRST CHARIOT WOULD BE THE ONE THE KING RODE IN. A COMMON TRANSLATION OF CHARIOT IS “BATTLE CART” OR “WAR BUGGY.” THEY CRIED BEFORE HIM “BOW THE KNEE!”: THEY REFERS TO THE SOLDIERS OR GUARD OF HONOR WHO ACCOMPANIED HIS CHARIOT. BOW THE KNEE REPRESENTS THE EXPRESSION ABREK. FOR THE MEANING SEE THE RSV FOOTNOTE. IT IS NOT CERTAIN HOW THIS WORD SHOULD BE TRANSLATED. SPEISER SAYS “ATTENTION!” TEV, NEB/REB SAY “MAKE WAY!” IN SOME AREAS ASSISTANTS TO LOCAL CHIEFS OR OTHER DIGNITARIES GO AHEAD OF THEM AND CALL OUT TO THE PEOPLE “CHIEF IS COMING,” “EYES AND EARS, CHIEF IS NEAR,” OR “CLEAR THE ROAD!” THUS, HE SET HIM OVER ALL THE LAND OF EGYPT: THIS IS ESSENTIALLY THE SAME AS IN VERSE 41.**

**GENESIS 41:44: I AM PHARAOH: THIS STATEMENT APPEARS TO EMPHASIZE THE AUTHORITY GIVEN TO JOSEPH IN THE NEXT CLAUSE. THEREFORE, THE SENSE IS “ALTHOUGH I AM THE KING, NO ONE SHALL DO ANYTHING WITHOUT YOUR PERMISSION.” NO MAN SHALL LIFT UP HAND OR FOOT: THIS FIGURATIVE EXPRESSION IS USED TO EMPHASIZE AND MAKE VIVID THAT NO ONE CAN UNDERTAKE ANYTHING WITHOUT JOSEPH’S PERMISSION. SPCL SAYS “NO ONE IN ALL EGYPT SHALL MOVE A FINGER WITHOUT YOUR PERMISSION,” FRCL “… MOVE THE LITTLE FINGER.” TRANSLATORS SHOULD USE WHATEVER EXPRESSION MEANS TO DO THE LEAST ACTIVITY POSSIBLE. ANOTHER WAY OF EXPRESSING THE IDEA IS TO SAY “BEFORE THEY DO ANYTHING, THEY MUST GET YOUR PERMISSION.”**

**GENESIS 41:45: ZAPHENATH-PANEAH: THIS NAME, ACCORDING TO MANY SCHOLARS, MEANS “THE GOD SPOKE AND HE [THE ONE WHO BEARS THIS NAME] LIVES.” MOST TRANSLATORS WILL PREFER TO TRANSLITERATE THIS NAME. IT DOES NOT OCCUR ELSEWHERE IN THE BIBLE. ASENATH MEANS “THE ONE BELONGING TO [THE GODDESS] NEITH.” POTIPHERA PRIEST OF ON: POTIPHERA IS A FORM OF THE SAME NAME AS JOSEPH’S OWNER IN CHAPTER 39. SEE THERE FOR THE MEANING. ON REFERS TO THE TEMPLE AT HELIOPOLIS (TODAY A RESIDENTIAL AREA OF NORTHERN CAIRO), WHICH WAS A CENTER FOR SUN WORSHIP. BY RECEIVING ASENATH AS A WIFE, JOSEPH BECOMES A MEMBER OF THE EGYPTIAN NOBILITY. NOTE THAT THE NARRATOR SHOWS NO DISAPPROVAL OF JOSEPH’S INVOLVEMENT IN A FOREIGN RELIGION. SO, JOSEPH WENT OUT OVER THE LAND: THIS SENTENCE IS OMITTED IN THE SEPTUAGINT AND THE SAMARITAN PENTATEUCH. WESTERMANN DISMISSES IT AS A SCRIBAL ERROR. RSV APPEARS TO RENDER IT AS IT IS GIVEN IN THE HEBREW, BUT INTERPRETERS DO NOT AGREE ON THE MEANING OF THE VERB WENT OUT.**

**THERE ARE THREE POSSIBILITIES THAT ALL FIT QUITE WELL IN THE CONTEXT: (1) TEV CONSIDERS THIS EXPRESSION AND THE SIMILAR ONE IN VERSE 46 TO MEAN THE SAME THING, TO “TRAVEL THROUGH THE LAND.” THEREFORE, TEV COMBINES VERSES 45 AND 46 AND TRANSLATES THE EXPRESSION ONLY ONCE. NJB “JOURNEY ALL OVER” AND NIV “WENT THROUGHOUT” FOLLOW THIS SAME INTERPRETATION.**

**(2) SPEISER ARGUES THAT THE LITERAL MEANING OF THE VERB IS “ROSE OVER” AND MEANS THAT JOSEPH’S NAME BECAME KNOWN, THAT KNOWLEDGE OF HIM SPREAD ABOUT THE COUNTRY. HE TRANSLATES IT “JOSEPH BECAME KNOWN THROUGHOUT THE LAND OF EGYPT.” THE VERB IS USED IN THIS SENSE IN EST 1:17, WHERE RSV TRANSLATES “THIS DEED OF THE QUEEN WILL BE MADE KNOWN TO ALL.…”**

**(3) THE EXPRESSION OVER THE LAND, WHICH FOLLOWS THE VERB, IS USED THREE OTHER TIMES IN THIS PART OF THE STORY, IN VERSES 33, 41, AND 43; AND EACH TIME IT REFERS TO JOSEPH BEING IN AUTHORITY OVER THE WHOLE COUNTRY OF EGYPT. SO, THE MOST LIKELY INTERPRETATION HERE IN THIS CONCLUDING VERSE IS THAT THE VERB MEANS JOSEPH “ROSE TO” OR “CAME TO” POWER OR AUTHORITY OVER THE LAND. THIS INTERPRETATION IS FOLLOWED BY NEB/REB “JOSEPH’S AUTHORITY EXTENDED OVER …,” AND NJV “THUS JOSEPH EMERGED IN CHARGE OF.…” SIGNIFICANTLY NRSV REVISES RSV AT THIS POINT AND SAYS “THUS JOSEPH GAINED AUTHORITY OVER THE LAND.” THE HANDBOOK RECOMMENDS THIS INTERPRETATION TO TRANSLATORS.**

**GENESIS 41:46: JOSEPH WAS THIRTY YEARS OLD … EGYPT: ACCORDING TO 37:2 JOSEPH WAS SEVENTEEN YEARS OLD WHEN HE CAME INTO CONFLICT WITH HIS BROTHERS. IF HE WAS SOLD INTO EGYPT AT THAT AGE, HE HAD BY THIS TIME BEEN IN EGYPT APPROXIMATELY THIRTEEN YEARS. ENTERED THE SERVICE OF PHARAOH IS LITERALLY “STOOD BEFORE PHARAOH.” MOST TRANSLATORS UNDERSTAND THIS EXPRESSION AS IN RSV AND TEV. WE MAY ALSO TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “WHEN THE KING MADE HIM THE RULER.” WENT OUT FROM THE PRESENCE OF PHARAOH: THAT IS, “LEFT THE KING’S PALACE” OR “LEFT THE KING AND WENT.…” WENT THROUGH ALL THE LAND OF EGYPT: THE SENSE HERE IS THAT JOSEPH MADE A ROYAL TOUR TO INSPECT THE COUNTRY. IT IS A SYMBOLIC TRIP IN WHICH THE YOUNG RULER “TAKES POSSESSION” OF HIS TERRITORY. IN A SOMEWHAT SIMILAR MANNER ABRAHAM WAS INSTRUCTED BY THE LORD IN 13:17 TO WALK THROUGH THE LENGTH AND BREADTH OF THE LAND THAT WAS PROMISED TO HIM.**

**GENESIS 41:47: DURING THE SEVEN … ABUNDANTLY: THAT IS, “DURING THE SEVEN YEARS OF GOOD CROPS, THE LAND PRODUCED LOTS OF GRAIN.”**

**GENESIS 41:48: HE GATHERED UP: HE REFERS TO JOSEPH; HOWEVER, THE WORK OF GATHERING IS ACTUALLY DONE UNDER JOSEPH’S SUPERVISION. IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “JOSEPH MADE WORKERS GATHER.…” THE FOOD OF THE SEVEN YEARS WHEN THERE WAS PLENTY IN THE LAND: AS IN VERSE 35, FOOD REFERS TO CROPS OR GRAIN. OF THE SEVEN YEARS REPRESENTS THE HEBREW TEXT, TO WHICH THE SEPTUAGINT ADDS “OF PLENTY,” WHICH IS THEN FOLLOWED BY RSV. HOWEVER, THIS IS MORE A TRANSLATION ADJUSTMENT THAN A TEXTUAL PROBLEM. STORED UP THE FOOD IN THE CITIES: THAT IS, “HE ORDERED THE PEOPLE TO STORE THE CROPS IN THE TOWNS,” WHICH IN HEBREW REFERS TO “WALLED CITIES.” HE STORED UP … FROM THE FIELDS AROUND IT: IN EVERY TOWN HE ARRANGED FOR THE CROPS GROWN NEAR BY TO BE STORED IN THE LOCAL TOWNS. THE POINT HERE IS THAT THE GRAIN WOULD NOT HAVE TO BE TRANSPORTED TO A CENTRAL STORAGE PLACE, AND WHEN THE TIME OF NEED CAME, THE GRAIN WOULD BE LOCALLY AVAILABLE.**

**GENESIS 41:49: STORED UP GRAIN IN GREAT ABUNDANCE: HERE AGAIN IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “JOSEPH COMMANDED PEOPLE AND THEY STORED UP LOTS OF GRAIN.” LIKE THE SAND OF THE SEA: THIS SIMILE WAS USED IN PROMISES OF NUMEROUS DESCENDANTS IN 22:17 AND 32:12. UNTIL HE CEASED TO MEASURE IT … MEASURED: IT IS NOT KNOWN HOW THE GRAIN WAS COUNTED OR MEASURED; BUT THIS IS NOT REALLY IMPORTANT FOR THE STORY, AND TRANSLATORS MAY USE A VERY GENERAL EXPRESSION OR AN EXPRESSION FOR MEASURING GRAIN THAT IS KNOWN TO THEIR READERS. ANOTHER WAY OF EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THIS CLAUSE IS TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “THE GRAIN THAT WAS STORED INCREASED SO MUCH THAT THE PEOPLE NO LONGER WROTE DOWN HOW MUCH IT WAS.” WE MAY TRANSLATE VERSE 49, FOR EXAMPLE, “THE GRAIN THAT JOSEPH ORDERED THE PEOPLE TO STORE WAS SO GREAT IN AMOUNT THAT THEY STOPPED TRYING TO MEASURE HOW MUCH THERE WAS. COUNTING IT WAS LIKE COUNTING GRAINS OF SAND ON THE SEASHORE.”**

**GENESIS 41:50: IN VERSES 41:50–52 THE NARRATOR SHIFTS OUR ATTENTION TO JOSEPH’S PERSONAL LIFE AND THE BIRTH OF HIS TWO SONS. BEFORE THE YEAR OF FAMINE CAME: THAT IS, “BEFORE THE FAMINE BEGAN.” THE DAUGHTER OF …: TEV AND SOME OTHER MODERN TRANSLATIONS DO NOT REPEAT THE IDENTIFICATION OF ASENATH AS THE DAUGHTER OF THE PRIEST OF ON, BECAUSE THIS INFORMATION HAS JUST BEEN GIVEN IN VERSE 45.**

**GENESIS 41:51: JOSEPH CALLED THE NAME OF THE FIRST-BORN MANASSEH: AS THE SOUND OF WORDS IS SIGNIFICANT IN MANY EARLIER EXPLANATIONS OF NAMES, THE HEBREW FOR “CAUSE TO FORGET” SOUNDS SOMEWHAT LIKE MANASSEH. SEE THE RSV AND TEV FOOTNOTES. ALL MY HARDSHIP: HARDSHIP TRANSLATES A WORD MEANING “TROUBLE,” “SORROW,” OR “SUFFERING.” ALL MY FATHER’S HOUSE: THIS REFERS TO JOSEPH’S RELATIVES. FOR A PARALLEL USAGE OF THIS EXPRESSION, SEE PSA 45:10.**

**GENESIS 41:52: EPHRAIM: SEE THE RSV AND TEV FOOTNOTES. MADE ME FRUITFUL: THAT IS, “MADE ME BECOME A FATHER” OR “MADE ME HAVE CHILDREN.” IN THE LAND OF MY AFFLICTION: THAT IS, “HERE IN THIS LAND WHERE I HAVE SUFFERED.”**

**GENESIS 41:53–54: THAT PREVAILED … CAME TO AN END: THAT IS, “THE SEVEN YEARS OF GOOD CROPS CAME TO AN END.” WE MAY ALSO TRANSLATE VERSE 53 AS A “WHEN” CLAUSE; FOR EXAMPLE, “WHEN THE SEVEN YEARS OF GOOD CROPS HAD COME TO AN END, THEN THE SEVEN YEARS OF FAMINE BEGAN, AS JOSEPH HAD SAID THEY WOULD.” THERE WAS FAMINE IN ALL LANDS; BUT IN … THERE WAS BREAD: THAT IS, “THERE WAS FAMINE IN EVERY COUNTRY EXCEPT IN EGYPT, WHERE THERE WAS FOOD.”**

**GENESIS 41:55: WHEN ALL THE LAND OF EGYPT WAS FAMISHED: THAT IS, “WHEN THE PEOPLE OF EGYPT BECAME HUNGRY.” SOME TRANSLATIONS SAY “… RAN OUT OF FOOD” OR “… BEGAN TO BE SHORT OF FOOD.” CRIED TO PHARAOH FOR BREAD: THAT IS, “BEGGED THE KING FOR FOOD.” GO TO JOSEPH: THAT IS, “GO AND ASK JOSEPH [FOR FOOD].” WHAT HE SAYS TO YOU, DO: THAT IS, “AND DO WHATEVER HE TELLS YOU TO DO.”**

**GENESIS 41:56: SO, WHEN THE FAMINE HAD SPREAD OVER THE LAND IS LITERALLY “AND THE FAMINE WAS ON ALL THE FACE OF THE LAND.” SEE TEV.**

**AN EGYPTIAN STOREHOUSE**

**OPENED THE STOREHOUSES: THE HEBREW TEXT SAYS “OPENED ALL THAT WAS IN THEM.” SEE RSV FOOTNOTE. HOTTP SUPPORTS RSV AND TEV STOREHOUSES. STOREHOUSES, AS USED HERE, REFERS TO LARGE BUILDINGS WITH WALLS AND ROOF, WHERE GRAIN WAS KEPT UNTIL NEEDED. IN SOME AREAS THESE MAY BE THE EQUIVALENT OF “BARNS” OR “STORAGE SHEDS.” TRANSLATORS MAY BE HELPED BY REFERRING TO 6:21. AND SOLD TO THE EGYPTIANS: THAT IS, “SOLD THE GRAIN TO THE PEOPLE OF EGYPT.” FOR THE FAMINE WAS SEVERE: NOTE THAT THIS CLAUSE IS EXPRESSED AT THE BEGINNING OF VERSE 56 IN TEV, “THE FAMINE GREW WORSE AND SPREAD.…”**

**GENESIS 41:57: ALL THE EARTH: THAT IS, “PEOPLE CAME FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD.” THIS EXPRESSION REFERS TO THE PEOPLE OF THE COUNTRIES SURROUNDING EGYPT. THEY HAD TO DEAL WITH JOSEPH TO PURCHASE GRAIN. THIS FINAL VERSE LINKS CHAPTER 41 TO CHAPTER 42 AS THE STORY SHIFTS TO CANAAN AND JACOB’S FAMILY, WHO ARE ALSO SUFFERING FROM THE WIDESPREAD FAMINE.**

**JACOB SENDS HIS SONS TO EGYPT (42:1–24)**

**JACOB SENDS ALL HIS SONS EXCEPT BENJAMIN TO BUY GRAIN IN EGYPT, BECAUSE THERE IS ALSO A FAMINE IN CANAAN (VERSES 1–5). ONCE THERE THE BROTHERS ARE CONFRONTED BY JOSEPH, WHO RECOGNIZES THEM AND ACCUSES THEM OF BEING SPIES (VERSES 42:6–9). THEY PROTEST THEIR INNOCENCE AND TELL JOSEPH THAT THEY ARE ALL THE SONS OF ONE MAN, AND THAT THE YOUNGEST BROTHER, BENJAMIN, IS AT HOME WITH THEIR FATHER, AND THAT ONE BROTHER IS DEAD. JOSEPH WARNS THEM THAT THEY CANNOT LEAVE UNLESS THEIR YOUNGEST BROTHER IS BROUGHT TO HIM. ONE OF THEM IS TO GO BACK TO CANAAN AND BRING BENJAMIN, WHILE THE OTHERS REMAIN IN PRISON UNTIL HE COMES (VERSES 10–17). HOWEVER, THREE DAYS LATER JOSEPH ORDERS THAT ONE BROTHER SHOULD BE DETAINED WHILE THE OTHERS TAKE GRAIN BACK TO CANAAN AND BRING BENJAMIN TO EGYPT (VERSES 18–20). THE BROTHERS CONCLUDE THAT THEY ARE BEING PUNISHED FOR THE EVIL THEY HAD DONE TO JOSEPH (VERSES 21–22). JOSEPH OVERHEARS THEIR TALK OF BEING PUNISHED FOR THEIR WRONGS. HE ORDERS SIMEON TO BE KEPT IN PRISON (VERSES 23–24). HE THEN ORDERS THE BROTHERS’ BAGS TO BE FILLED WITH GRAIN AND THEIR MONEY REPLACED IN THEIR SACKS. HE THEN GIVES THEM PROVISIONS FOR THEIR RETURN JOURNEY TO CANAAN (VERSES 24–25).**

**SUBDIVISION HEADING**

**THE HANDBOOK HEADING MAY NEED TO BE MODIFIED TO GIVE MORE DETAILED INFORMATION. FOR EXAMPLE, “JACOB SENDS HIS SONS TO EGYPT TO BUY GRAIN,” “JOSEPH’S BROTHERS COME TO BUY GRAIN FROM HIM,” “JOSEPH’S BROTHERS COME TO EGYPT FOR FOOD BUT DO NOT RECOGNIZE JOSEPH.” NJB HAS “THE FIRST MEETING BETWEEN JOSEPH AND HIS BROTHERS,” AND NIV “JOSEPH’S BROTHERS GO TO EGYPT.”**

**GENESIS 42:1: THE EPISODE IN THIS CHAPTER IS A CONTINUATION OF THE STORY IN CHAPTER 41. THE SETTING SWITCHES FROM EGYPT TO CANAAN IN THE INTRODUCTION IN VERSES 1–5. MOST TRANSLATORS WILL HAVE NO PROBLEM OPENING THIS CHAPTER THE SAME AS IN RSV AND TEV. AN EXAMPLE OF A TRANSITION THAT MAY BE USED IF NECESSARY, IS “AT THIS TIME JACOB AND HIS FAMILY WERE FAR AWAY IN CANAAN, AND WHEN HE HEARD THE NEWS.…” WHEN JACOB LEARNED THAT THERE WAS GRAIN IN EGYPT: LEARNED IS LITERALLY “SAW” AND HAS THE SENSE OF “FOUND OUT” OR “HEARD.” SOME LANGUAGES PREFER A PASSIVE CONSTRUCTION; FOR EXAMPLE, “WHEN JACOB WAS TOLD THAT.…” THE WORD FOR GRAIN REFERS TO GRAIN THAT HAS BEEN THRESHED AND IS A MARKET PRODUCE. IN EGYPT THIS MOST LIKELY REFERS TO WHEAT. SAID TO HIS SONS MAY NEED TO BE RENDERED AS “ASKED HIS SONS,” IF THE WORDS THAT FOLLOW ARE TRANSLATED AS A QUESTION THAT ASKS FOR INFORMATION. WHY DO YOU LOOK AT ONE ANOTHER? RSV TRANSLATES THIS QUESTION LITERALLY. THE QUESTION IS REGARDING THE SONS’ HELPLESSNESS TO DO ANYTHING TO GET FOOD. JACOB IS CHIDING THEM FOR THEIR FAILURE TO TAKE INITIATIVE. SEE TEV. IN ENGLISH WE MAY SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “WHY DO YOU STAND AROUND DOING NOTHING?” OR “WHY DO YOU STAND AROUND LOOKING HELPLESSLY AT EACH OTHER?” BUT THE QUESTION MAY ALSO BE TAKEN AS A RHETORICAL QUESTION AND RENDERED AS A NEGATIVE COMMAND: “DON’T JUST STAND AROUND DOING NOTHING!” “DON’T JUST LOOK AT EACH OTHER!”**

**GENESIS 42:2: BEHOLD, I HAVE HEARD THAT THERE IS GRAIN IN EGYPT: BEHOLD, HINNEH, IS OFTEN USED TO CALL SOMEONE’S ATTENTION BEFORE GIVING AN EXHORTATION OR COMMAND. IT MAY BE THAT JACOB KNOWS SOMETHING HIS SONS HAVE NOT YET HEARD. HEARD EXPRESSES THE HEBREW VERB “TO HEAR,” AND THE SENSE IS THE SAME AS THE HEBREW “SAW” IN VERSE 1. IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “PEOPLE HAVE TOLD ME THAT THERE IS.…” GO DOWN AND BUY GRAIN FOR US THERE: FOR COMMENT ON GO DOWN (TO EGYPT) SEE 12:10. FOR US REFERS TO ALL OF JACOB’S FAMILY. THAT WE MAY LIVE, AND NOT DIE IS THE REASON FOR SENDING HIS SONS TO EGYPT TO BUY GRAIN. THIS EXPRESSION IS USED BY THE NARRATOR AS A RHETORICAL DEVICE TO EMPHASIZE THE IMPORTANCE OF OBTAINING FOOD FOR SURVIVAL. WE MAY TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “SO WE CAN GO ON LIVING” OR “SO THAT WE CAN SURVIVE.” SEE TEV.**

**GENESIS 42:3: SO, TEN OF JOSEPH’S BROTHERS WENT DOWN TO BUY GRAIN IN EGYPT: BOTH RSV AND TEV TRANSLATE THE HEBREW CONNECTIVE AS SO TO INDICATE THE CONSEQUENCE OF JACOB’S COMMAND. THE NUMBER TEN EXCLUDES JOSEPH AND BENJAMIN (SEE VERSE 4). IN SOME LANGUAGES JOSEPH’S BROTHERS MUST BE RENDERED BY A TERM MEANING “OLDER BROTHERS.” TEV SAYS “JOSEPH’S TEN HALF BROTHERS.” JOSEPH AND BENJAMIN ARE THE ELEVENTH AND TWELFTH SONS OF JACOB. IN ENGLISH “HALF BROTHER” REFERS TO SONS WHO SHARE ONE PARENT. “FULL BROTHERS” (JOSEPH AND BENJAMIN) SHARE BOTH PARENTS, RACHEL AND JACOB. IT IS THIS FULL-BROTHER RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN JOSEPH AND BENJAMIN THAT IS THE KEY TO JOSEPH’S INSISTENCE THAT BENJAMIN BE BROUGHT TO EGYPT. FOR THE BIRTH OF JACOB’S SONS, REFER TO CHAPTERS 29–30. WENT DOWN: IN SOME LANGUAGES IT IS NECESSARY TO SAY “LEFT CANAAN AND WENT TO EGYPT” OR “LEFT THEIR PLACE AND.…”**

**GENESIS 42:4: BUT JACOB DID NOT SEND BENJAMIN: BUT INTRODUCES THE FACT THAT JACOB SENT ALL BUT ONE OF HIS SONS. DID NOT SEND BENJAMIN MAY ALSO BE TRANSLATED “DID NOT ALLOW BENJAMIN … TO GO.” JOSEPH’S BROTHER: THE TERM IN SOME LANGUAGES MUST INDICATE “YOUNGER BROTHER.” WITH HIS BROTHERS: THAT IS, “WITH THE OTHER TEN.” SEE COMMENTS ON VERSE 3. HE FEARED THAT HARM MIGHT BEFALL HIM: BY THIS COMMENT THE NARRATOR FORGES A LINK WITH THE EVENTS BEGINNING IN 37:12, IN WHICH JACOB SENT JOSEPH TO INQUIRE ABOUT HIS BROTHERS’ WELFARE, AND AS A RESULT HE LOST HIS BELOVED SON. HE IS DETERMINED NOT TO REPEAT THIS TRAGEDY WITH BENJAMIN, WHO HAS NOW TAKEN JOSEPH’S PLACE IN HIS OLD FATHER’S HEART. SEE VERSE 38. HARM RENDERS A WORD THAT SUGGESTS A FATAL ACCIDENT, OR AS SPEISER TRANSLATES, “A DISASTER.”**

**GENESIS 42:5: THUS, THE SONS OF ISRAEL: THUS, MARKS ANOTHER CONSEQUENCE, THAT IS, THE BROTHERS HAD DONE AS ORDERED BY THEIR FATHER. FOR ISRAEL SEE COMMENTS ON 35:21, WHICH RECOMMEND KEEPING “JACOB” IN THESE KINDS OF CONTEXTS. CAME TO BUY AMONG OTHERS: THE NARRATIVE PASSES OVER THE EVENTS OF LEAVING CANAAN AND MAKING THE JOURNEY, AND CAME INDICATES THAT THE BROTHERS HAVE ARRIVED IN EGYPT. IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO USE “WENT,” AS DOES REB, “THUS THE SONS OF ISRAEL [JACOB] WENT WITH EVERYONE ELSE.…” FOR THE FAMINE … CANAAN: THIS STATEMENT REINFORCES WHAT WAS SAID IN 41:57, “THE FAMINE WAS SEVERE OVER ALL THE EARTH.” IT SERVES AS THE PRINCIPAL REASON FOR GETTING JOSEPH’S BROTHERS TO HIM IN EGYPT, AND EVENTUALLY ALL OF JACOB’S FAMILY. VERSE 5 COMPLETES THE INTRODUCTION TO THE FIRST EPISODE IN THIS CHAPTER.**

**GENESIS 42:6: SOME TRANSLATORS PREFER TO PLACE A HEADING BEFORE VERSE 6; FOR EXAMPLE, FRCL HAS “JOSEPH TREATS HIS BROTHERS BRUSQUELY,” GECL “THE BROTHERS DO NOT RECOGNIZE JOSEPH,” AND TOB “FIRST ENCOUNTER BETWEEN JOSEPH AND HIS BROTHERS.” NOW JOSEPH WAS GOVERNOR: NOW, WHICH REPRESENTS THE HEBREW CONNECTIVE, MARKS A TRANSITION OF SETTING AND ALSO THE INTRODUCTION OF THE MAIN PARTICIPANT IN THIS EPISODE. THE HEBREW WORD RENDERED GOVERNOR IS RELATED TO A VERB MEANING TO DOMINEER OR BE MASTER OVER. AS USED HERE IT MEANS ONE WHO HAS MASTERY AND IS THEREFORE A RULER. THE ENGLISH WORD GOVERNOR (RSV AND TEV) CARRIES THE SENSE THAT THIS PERSON ADMINISTERS UNDER A HIGHER AUTHORITY, THE KING (PHARAOH). IN SOME LANGUAGES JOSEPH IS REFERRED TO AS “THE SECOND BOSS.” OVER THE LAND: THAT IS, “OVER EGYPT.” HE IT WAS … LAND: THAT IS, “HE WAS THE ONE WHO SOLD [WAS SELLING] GRAIN TO THE PEOPLE.” SINCE GRAIN WAS STORED ALL OVER EGYPT (SEE 41:48), JOSEPH OBVIOUSLY COULD NOT BE SELLING GRAIN PERSONALLY TO ALL THE PEOPLE. IF WE TAKE LAND TO MEAN THE COUNTRY OF EGYPT HERE (AND THIS IS THE VIEW OF PRACTICALLY ALL TRANSLATIONS), THEN WE MAY HAVE TO SAY SOMETHING LIKE “WHO WAS IN CHARGE OF SELLING GRAIN TO ALL THE PEOPLE [OF EGYPT].” NJB USES THE TERM “ALLOCATED,” AND THIS IS ANOTHER POSSIBILITY. BUT TEV TAKES THE HEBREW WORD ÈRETS TO REFER TO “THE WORLD” IN THIS CONTEXT, SINCE 41:57 AND 42:5 SPEAK OF PEOPLE COMING FROM OTHER COUNTRIES TO BUY GRAIN IN EGYPT. IF WE FOLLOW TEV THE SENSE MUST BE THAT “JOSEPH WAS THE ONE [RESPONSIBLE FOR] SELLING GRAIN TO PEOPLE FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD [OTHER COUNTRIES].” THE NARRATIVE MAKES SENSE EITHER WAY, SINCE EVEN IF THE LOCAL PEOPLE COULD BUY GRAIN IN THEIR OWN TOWNS, FOREIGNERS MIGHT BE EXPECTED TO HAVE TO DEAL WITH THE PERSON IN CHARGE OF THE WHOLE OPERATION. THE FIRST PART OF THIS VERSE IS RESTRUCTURED IN SOME TRANSLATIONS; FOR EXAMPLE, “THEY CAME TO THE SECOND RULER OF THAT COUNTRY, BECAUSE HE WAS SELLING FOOD TO THE PEOPLE OF OTHER COUNTRIES. THAT SECOND RULER WAS JOSEPH, …” JOSEPH’S BROTHERS CAME, AND BOWED THEMSELVES … TO THE GROUND: SEE VERSE 3 FOR THE RENDERING OF BROTHERS. FOR BOWED … GROUND SEE 18:2. WITH THIS SCENE JOSEPH’S DREAMS IN 37:5–11 HAVE NOW BECOME A REALITY.**

**GENESIS 42:7: JOSEPH SAW HIS BROTHERS AND KNEW THEM: THAT IS, “WHEN JOSEPH SAW HIS BROTHERS, HE KNEW WHO THEY WERE [RECOGNIZED THEM AS BEING HIS BROTHERS].” TREATED THEM LIKE STRANGERS IS LITERALLY “MADE HIMSELF A STRANGER TO THEM.” WE MAY ALSO TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “BUT HE DID NOT MAKE HIMSELF KNOWN TO THEM” OR “DID NOT LET THEM KNOW WHO HE WAS.” SEE TEV. WE MUST REMEMBER THAT JOSEPH IS NOW AN EGYPTIAN IN DRESS, CUSTOMS, AND LANGUAGE. ACCORDING TO VERSE 23 HE SPEAKS TO HIS BROTHERS THROUGH AN INTERPRETER. SPOKE ROUGHLY TO THEM: THIS IS LITERALLY “SPOKE HARSH THINGS TO THEM.” IN SOME LANGUAGES THIS IS RENDERED “HE SPOKE TO THEM WITH HARD WORDS” OR “HE LAID HIS TONGUE HEAVILY ON THEM.” IN THE ENCOUNTER BETWEEN JOSEPH THE RULER AND HIS HERDSMEN BROTHERS, IT WILL BE NECESSARY TO ADJUST THE FORM OF ADDRESS IN MANY LANGUAGES THAT USE HONORIFIC TERMS WHEN SPEAKING TO A HIGH OFFICIAL.**

**GENESIS 42:8: IN VERSE 7 NOTHING IS SAID ABOUT THE BROTHERS RECOGNIZING JOSEPH. HOWEVER, IT IS MADE CLEAR IN THIS VERSE THAT THEY DO NOT KNOW HIM. NOTE THAT TEV BEGINS VERSE 8 WITH A CONCESSION: “ALTHOUGH JOSEPH RECOGNIZED …, THEY DID NOT RECOGNIZE HIM.” THIS MAY SERVE TRANSLATORS AS A GOOD MODEL.**

**GENESIS 42:9: HEARING HIS BROTHERS’ REPLIES AND SEEING THEM BOWED TO THE GROUND BEFORE HIM MAY HAVE BROUGHT BACK TO JOSEPH THE MEMORY OF HIS DREAMS AS TOLD IN CHAPTER 37. JOSEPH NOW HAS TO DECIDE WHETHER TO REVEAL HIMSELF OR TO PLAY OUT HIS POWER ROLE, WHICH WILL MAINTAIN THE SOCIAL DISTANCE BETWEEN HIMSELF AND THEM. HE DECIDES TO BE THE STERN RULER. YOU [PLURAL] ARE SPIES: IF THE LANGUAGE OF TRANSLATION DOES NOT HAVE A TERM FOR SPIES, IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO USE A PHRASE; FOR EXAMPLE, “YOU [PLURAL] ARE PEOPLE WHO HAVE COME TO WATCH US SECRETLY” OR “YOU [PLURAL] ARE LOOKING FOR A WAY TO HARM OUR COUNTRY.” A FULLER EXPRESSION USED IN ONE TRANSLATION SAYS “YOU ARE CUNNING PEOPLE WHO HAVE COME TO FIND A WAY TO TAKE OVER OUR COUNTRY.” THE WEAKNESS OF THE LAND IS LITERALLY “THE NAKEDNESS OF THE LAND.” AS SPEISER SAYS, “‘NAKEDNESS’ IS NOT ‘NUDITY’ BUT RATHER REFERS TO THINGS THAT ARE MEANT TO BE HIDDEN FROM POTENTIAL ENEMIES.” DRIVER TAKES IT TO MEAN “ITS EXPOSED AND DEFENSELESS PARTS.” IT IS IN THIS SENSE THAT TEV TRANSLATES “FIND OUT WHERE OUR COUNTRY IS WEAK.” ANOTHER TRANSLATION MODEL IS “SEE IF WE ARE WEAK, SO THAT YOU CAN FIGHT AGAINST US.”**

**GENESIS 42:10: NO, MY LORD, BUT TO BUY FOOD HAVE YOUR SERVANTS COME: THE BROTHERS DENY BEING SPIES. SOME LANGUAGES WILL NEED TO STATE THE NEGATIVE ANSWER MORE FULLY AS, FOR EXAMPLE, “SIR, WE ARE NOT SPIES.” THEY REFER TO THEMSELVES AS YOUR SERVANTS OR “YOUR SLAVES” IN CONVERSATION WITH THIS POWERFUL EGYPTIAN RULER BEFORE THEM. BUT TO BUY: THAT IS, “SIR, WE HAVE NOT COME TO SPY ON YOUR COUNTRY BUT TO BUY FOOD.”**

**GENESIS 42:11: WE ARE ALL SONS OF ONE MAN: THE BROTHERS APPEAL TO JOSEPH’S SENSE OF FAMILY MORALITY TO TRY AND PERSUADE HIM OF THEIR TRUE MISSION TO EGYPT. WE MAY RENDER THIS SENTENCE, FOR EXAMPLE, “WE ARE ALL SONS OF THE SAME FATHER.” WE ARE HONEST MEN: THE SENSE OF HONEST MEANING “UPRIGHT,” “DECENT,” “HONORABLE” IS INTENDED TO CONTRAST WITH SPIES WHO ARE DECEPTIVE AND DISHONORABLE. IN SOME LANGUAGES HONEST MEN ARE SAID TO BE “MEN WITH STRAIGHT TALK,” “PERSONS WITH CLEAN HEARTS,” OR “PEOPLE WHO TALK WITH ONE TONGUE.”**

**GENESIS 42:12: IN VERSE 12 JOSEPH CONTRADICTS THE BROTHERS AND REPEATS THE CHARGE MADE IN VERSE 9. GENESIS 42:9: HEARING HIS BROTHERS’ REPLIES AND SEEING THEM BOWED TO THE GROUND BEFORE HIM MAY HAVE BROUGHT BACK TO JOSEPH THE MEMORY OF HIS DREAMS AS TOLD IN CHAPTER 37. JOSEPH NOW HAS TO DECIDE WHETHER TO REVEAL HIMSELF OR TO PLAY OUT HIS POWER ROLE, WHICH WILL MAINTAIN THE SOCIAL DISTANCE BETWEEN HIMSELF AND THEM. HE DECIDES TO BE THE STERN RULER. YOU [PLURAL] ARE SPIES: IF THE LANGUAGE OF TRANSLATION DOES NOT HAVE A TERM FOR SPIES, IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO USE A PHRASE; FOR EXAMPLE, “YOU [PLURAL] ARE PEOPLE WHO HAVE COME TO WATCH US SECRETLY” OR “YOU [PLURAL] ARE LOOKING FOR A WAY TO HARM OUR COUNTRY.” A FULLER EXPRESSION USED IN ONE TRANSLATION SAYS “YOU ARE CUNNING PEOPLE WHO HAVE COME TO FIND A WAY TO TAKE OVER OUR COUNTRY.” THE WEAKNESS OF THE LAND IS LITERALLY “THE NAKEDNESS OF THE LAND.” AS SPEISER SAYS, “‘NAKEDNESS’ IS NOT ‘NUDITY’ BUT RATHER REFERS TO THINGS THAT ARE MEANT TO BE HIDDEN FROM POTENTIAL ENEMIES.” DRIVER TAKES IT TO MEAN “ITS EXPOSED AND DEFENSELESS PARTS.” IT IS IN THIS SENSE THAT TEV TRANSLATES “FIND OUT WHERE OUR COUNTRY IS WEAK.” ANOTHER TRANSLATION MODEL IS “SEE IF WE ARE WEAK, SO THAT YOU CAN FIGHT AGAINST US.”**

**GENESIS 42:13: THE BROTHERS BEGIN THEIR REPLY BY REPEATING THAT THEY ARE BROTHERS. THEY NOW VOLUNTEER MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THEIR FAMILY. WE … ARE TWELVE BROTHERS: THE HEBREW DOES NOT HAVE AN EQUIVALENT TO ENGLISH “ARE” OR “WERE” IN THIS SENTENCE. IT SAYS “YOUR SERVANTS TWELVE BROTHERS.” NOTE RSV HAS ARE, AND TEV “WERE.” NEB, WHICH HAS “ARE,” HAS BEEN REVISED BY REB TO “WERE.” THE CONTEXT FAVORS THE USE OF THE PAST TENSE HERE, AND THIS IS FOLLOWED BY MOST MODERN TRANSLATIONS. THE BROTHERS MUST GIVE AN ACCOUNT FOR THE TWO WHO ARE NOT PRESENT. THEY EXPLAIN BENJAMIN’S ABSENCE FIRST. AND BEHOLD, THE YOUNGEST IS … WITH OUR FATHER: THE PARTICLE BEHOLD (HEBREW HINNEH) FUNCTIONS IN THIS CONTEXT TO FOCUS ATTENTION ON A MOST CRITICAL PIECE OF INFORMATION; HOWEVER, MOST TRANSLATORS DO NOT ATTEMPT TO REPRESENT IT. AND ONE IS NO MORE: THE SENSE OF THIS IS THAT ONE BROTHER IS DEAD, AS STATED IN TEV AND GECL, ALTHOUGH MOST TRANSLATIONS DO NOT SAY SO DIRECTLY. FOR EXAMPLE, FRCL AND NEB SAY “HAS DISAPPEARED,” REB “IS LOST,” SPCL “IS NO LONGER WITH US.”**

**GENESIS 42:14: IT IS AS I SAID TO YOU: JOSEPH’S ACCUSATION IS INTRODUCED BY AN AFFIRMATION OF FINALITY; THAT IS, THEY ARE TO MAKE NO MORE REPLIES. THE FINAL WORD OF THE RULER HAS BEEN SPOKEN. IN SOME LANGUAGES THIS KIND OF STATEMENT IS EXPRESSED AS “I HAVE TOLD YOU!” “MY MOUTH HAS SPOKEN,” OR “THIS IS MY WORD FOR YOUR EARS.”**

**GENESIS 42:15: BY THIS YOU SHALL BE TESTED: THIS POINTS TO THE TEST THE BROTHERS WILL BE PUT THROUGH. JOSEPH MAY SUSPECT THAT THE BROTHERS HAVE DONE AWAY WITH BENJAMIN THE SAME AS THEY DID WITH HIM. WE MAY TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “YOU WILL NOW BE GIVEN A CHANCE TO PROVE THAT WHAT YOU SAY IS TRUE,” “I AM GOING TO PUT YOU TO THE TEST ON THIS,” OR “… TO SEE IF WHAT YOU SAY ABOUT YOUR YOUNGER BROTHER IS TRUE.” BY THE LIFE OF PHARAOH: JOSEPH IS USING THIS EXPRESSION AS AN OATH. ACCORDING TO DRIVER THIS KIND OF OATH IS FOUND ON EGYPTIAN MONUMENTS. IT IS EQUIVALENT TO THE HEBREW OATH “AS THE LORD LIVES” AND “AS YOUR SOUL LIVES” IN 1 SAM 14:39 AND 17:55. TRANSLATORS SHOULD REFER TO SIMILAR CASES OF SWEARING AN OATH IN 14:22 AND 21:23–24. TO SWEAR BY THE LIFE OF THE KING WAS TO AFFIRM BY THE HIGHEST AUTHORITY UNDER GOD THAT WHAT JOSEPH SAID WOULD REALLY HAPPEN. THE LITERAL EXPRESSION OF THE OATH MAY NEED TO BE ADJUSTED IN TRANSLATION TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “BY THE POWER OF PHARAOH” OR “AS SURE AS THE KING IS ALIVE AND WELL.” SEE TEV. WE MAY TRANSLATE VERSE 15, FOR EXAMPLE, “I SWEAR BY THE POWER OF THE KING OF EGYPT THAT YOU [PLURAL] WILL NEVER LEAVE UNTIL YOUR YOUNGER BROTHER IS BROUGHT HERE.”**

**GENESIS 42:16: SEND ONE OF YOU: THIS COMMAND IS MADE TO THE TEN BROTHERS, WHO MUST DECIDE WHICH ONE THEY WILL SEND BACK TO BRING BENJAMIN. IT MAY BE NECESSARY IN TRANSLATION TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “CHOOSE ONE OF YOU TO GO …,” “LET ONE OF YOU GO AND BRING YOUR YOUNGER BROTHER HERE,” OR “ONE OF YOU MUST GO BACK AND.…” WHILE YOU [PLURAL] … IN PRISON: THAT IS, “WHILE THE REST OF YOU STAY HERE IN PRISON” OR “WHILE THE REST OF YOU ARE KEPT HERE.” THAT YOUR WORDS MAY BE TESTED … TRUTH IN YOU: THAT IS, “SO THAT WHAT YOU SAY CAN BE TESTED” OR “SO THAT I WILL KNOW IF YOU [PLURAL] ARE TELLING THE TRUTH.” OR ELSE: THAT IS, “IF YOU ARE NOT BEING TRUTHFUL” OR “IF YOU ARE LYING.” BY THE LIFE OF PHARAOH: THIS EXPRESSION OPENED THE THREAT AND NOW CLOSES IT AS AN APPEAL TO THE HIGHEST AUTHORITY AS WITNESS TO THE BROTHERS BEING SPIES IF THEY DO NOT PASS THE TEST. HERE IT IS USED NOT SO MUCH AS AN OATH AS A POWERFUL AFFIRMATION EQUIVALENT TO ENGLISH “SO HELP ME GOD!” WE MAY TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “AS SURE AS THE KING IS ALIVE, YOU [PLURAL] ARE SPIES.”**

**GENESIS 42:17: IT IS PROBABLY THE CASE THAT JOSEPH IS NOT YET READY TO ALLOW ONLY ONE OF THE BROTHERS TO LEAVE, BECAUSE HE KNOWS THEIR FAMILIES ARE SUFFERING FROM THE FAMINE, AND ONE MAN CANNOT TAKE ENOUGH FOOD TO SAVE THEM. AS VERSES 18–20 SHOW, HE THEREFORE MODIFIES HIS PLAN TO TEST THEM. HOWEVER, IN THE MEANWHILE HE PUTS THEM ALL IN PRISON.**

**GENESIS 42:18: VERSES 18–25 DESCRIBE THE SECOND INTERVIEW BETWEEN JOSEPH AND HIS BROTHERS. DO THIS AND YOU WILL LIVE: THIS LOOKS AHEAD TO THE NEW INSTRUCTIONS JOSEPH IS ABOUT TO GIVE THEM. YOU WILL LIVE IS A POSITIVE WAY OF SAYING “YOU WON’T BE EXECUTED [FOR BEING SPIES].” FOR I FEAR GOD: THIS IS SAID AS THE REASON FOR GIVING THE BROTHERS THE OPPORTUNITY TO PROVE THEIR HONESTY. THIS EXPRESSION MAY BE TRANSLATED “I AM A PERSON WHO HONORS [RESPECTS] GOD.” FRCL SAYS “I RECOGNIZE THE AUTHORITY OF GOD.” IN SOME LANGUAGES IT WILL BE MORE NATURAL TO PLACE THE REASON BEFORE THE COMMAND. WE MAY TRANSLATE VERSE 18, FOR EXAMPLE, “THREE DAYS LATER JOSEPH ORDERED HIS BROTHERS TO BE BROUGHT BEFORE HIM, AND HE SAID TO THEM, ‘I AM A MAN WHO HONORS GOD, SO DO AS I WILL TELL YOU AND YOUR LIVES WILL BE SPARED.’”**

**GENESIS 42:19: IF YOU ARE HONEST MEN: HONEST IS THE SAME AS IN VERSE 11. LET ONE OF YOUR BROTHERS … PRISON: THAT IS, “LET ONE OF YOU STAY IN PRISON” OR “ONLY ONE OF YOU NEEDS TO STAY IN PRISON.” OTHER WAYS OF EXPRESSING THIS ARE “ONE OF YOU MUST STAY HERE IN PRISON” AND “I WILL KEEP ONE HERE IN THE JAIL.” LET THE REST GO AND CARRY GRAIN … HOUSEHOLDS: THAT IS, “AND THE REST OF YOU MAY TAKE GRAIN TO YOUR HUNGRY FAMILIES.” TAKING ACCOUNT OF THE FACT THAT ALL THE BROTHERS HAVE BEEN IN PRISON, SOME TRANSLATIONS SAY “I WILL RELEASE THE REST OF YOU TO GO.…”**

**GENESIS 42:20: AND BRING YOUR YOUNGEST BROTHER TO ME: THAT IS, “THEN BRING … TO ME.” SO, YOUR WORDS WILL BE VERIFIED: THAT IS, “SO THAT I WILL KNOW THAT YOU [PLURAL] ARE TELLING THE TRUTH” OR “THAT WAY I WILL KNOW … TRUTH.” AND YOU SHALL NOT DIE: THEIR DEATHS WILL HAPPEN IF JOSEPH WILL DECIDE THEY ARE SPIES AND HAVE THEM EXECUTED. IF THEY WILL PROVE THEY ARE HONEST MEN, THEY WILL NOT BE EXECUTED. AND THEY DID SO: THIS APPEARS TO MEAN “THEY DID LIKE SO,” OR AS SPEISER SAYS, “THEY MADE (THE) YES (SIGN),” WHICH HE AND OTHERS TAKE TO MEAN “THEY AGREED” OR “THEY ACCEPTED.” JACOB USED THE SAME EXPRESSION IN 29:28, WHEN HE AGREED WITH LABAN TO COMPLETE THE WEEK OF THE MARRIAGE CELEBRATIONS WITH LEAH. FRCL TRANSLATES MORE FULLY “THE BROTHERS ACCEPTED THIS PROPOSAL.”**

**GENESIS 42:21: WHILE THE CONVERSATION BETWEEN THE BROTHERS CONTINUES IN VERSES 21–22, JOSEPH OVERHEARS WHAT THEY ARE SAYING TO EACH OTHER, BUT DOES NOT LET THEM KNOW THAT HE UNDERSTANDS THEM. THEN THEY SAID TO ONE ANOTHER IS LITERALLY “AND THEY SAID EACH TO HIS BROTHER.” IT IS MADE CLEAR IN THE COMMENT OF VERSE 23 THAT JOSEPH SPOKE TO HIS BROTHERS THROUGH AN INTERPRETER, WHICH WAS THE REASON WHY THEY DID NOT REALIZE THAT HE COULD UNDERSTAND THEM. SOME TRANSLATIONS EXPRESS HERE WHAT THAT COMMENT ASSUMES BUT DOES NOT SAY DIRECTLY: “THEY SAID TO EACH OTHER IN THEIR OWN LANGUAGE.…” IN TRUTH WE ARE GUILTY … BROTHER: THE BROTHERS NOW FEEL THAT THE WRONG THEY DID TO JOSEPH HAS CAUGHT UP WITH THEM, AND THAT THEY ARE SUFFERING FOR THE EVIL THEY DID TO HIM YEARS EARLIER. THEY HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO FREE THEMSELVES OF THE GUILT BROUGHT ON THEM BY ABANDONING JOSEPH AND LYING TO THEIR FATHER. SEE TEV. WE MAY ALSO TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “IT IS TRUE THAT WHAT WE DID TO OUR BROTHER WAS WRONG.” FRCL SAYS “OH! WE ARE CERTAINLY BEING PUNISHED BECAUSE OF OUR BROTHER.” IN THAT WE SAW THE DISTRESS OF HIS SOUL: THIS REFERS TO WHEN THEY THREW JOSEPH INTO A PIT IN 37:23–24. DISTRESS OF HIS SOUL MAY BE RENDERED, FOR EXAMPLE, “HOW DISTRESSED HE WAS,” “HIS ANGUISHED LOOK,” OR “HIS PLEADING EYES.” WHEN HE BESOUGHT US AND WE WOULD NOT LISTEN: THAT IS, “WHEN HE BEGGED US FOR MERCY AND WE PAID NO ATTENTION TO HIM.” THEREFORE, IS THIS DISTRESS COME UPON US: THAT IS, “THAT IS THE REASON WHY WE ARE SUFFERING NOW.”**

**WE MAY TRANSLATE VERSE 21, FOR EXAMPLE: • THEY ALL BEGAN TALKING TO EACH OTHER AND SAYING, “WE ARE BEING PUNISHED NOW FOR WHAT WE DID TO OUR BROTHER WHEN WE SAW HOW TROUBLED HE WAS AND HOW HE BEGGED US FOR MERCY. BUT WE PAID NO ATTENTION TO HIM. THAT IS WHY WE ARE IN THIS TROUBLE NOW.”**

**GENESIS 42:22: REUBEN, THE OLDEST BROTHER, REFERS TO WHAT HE HAD SAID WHEN HE WARNED HIS BROTHERS IN 37:21–22. SIN AGAINST THE LAD: REUBEN HAD WARNED THEM NOT TO KILL JOSEPH, BECAUSE HE PLANNED TO RETURN HIM SECRETLY TO HIS FATHER. SIN IN THIS CONTEXT MEANS “HARM,” “HURT,” “WRONGDOING.” BUT YOU WOULD NOT LISTEN: THAT IS, “BUT YOU [PLURAL] REFUSED TO DO AS I SAID.” SO NOW THERE COMES A RECKONING FOR HIS BLOOD IS LITERALLY “AND NOW HIS BLOOD IS REQUIRED.” THIS REFERS TO THE BELIEF THAT THE BLOOD SHED IN A MURDER REQUIRES RETRIBUTION OR REVENGE—IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO MURDER WITHOUT BEING CALLED TO ACCOUNT. FOR THE INTRODUCTION OF THIS CONCEPT, SEE 9:6. REUBEN, WHO HAD WARNED THE BROTHERS NOT TO HARM JOSEPH, IS NOW SAYING THE EQUIVALENT OF “NOW WE HAVE TO PAY THE PRICE OF HIS DEATH,” “NOW WE HAVE TO PAY FOR HAVING KILLED HIM,” OR “WE WILL SUFFER NOW FOR WHAT WE DID TO HIM.” SEE TEV.**

**GENESIS 42:23: THEY DID NOT KNOW THAT JOSEPH UNDERSTOOD THEM: THAT IS, “THE BROTHERS DID NOT KNOW THAT JOSEPH UNDERSTOOD WHAT THEY WERE SAYING AMONG THEMSELVES.” SOME TRANSLATIONS SAY “THEY DID NOT KNOW THAT JOSEPH UNDERSTOOD THEIR LANGUAGE” OR “THE BROTHERS SPOKE IN HEBREW AND DIDN’T KNOW THAT JOSEPH UNDERSTOOD, BECAUSE HE SPOKE EGYPTIAN AND AN INTERPRETER.…” FOR THERE WAS AN INTERPRETER BETWEEN THEM: THIS CLAUSE GIVES THE REASON WHY THE BROTHERS ASSUMED THAT JOSEPH DID NOT UNDERSTAND THEIR LANGUAGE. INTERPRETER, WHICH IS USED ONLY HERE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT, IS BASED ON A VERB MEANING “TO BE A SPOKESMAN.” BETWEEN THEM MEANS THAT THEY WERE SPEAKING TO JOSEPH “THROUGH” OR “BY MEANS OF” AN INTERPRETER. IN SOME LANGUAGES INTERPRETER IS EXPRESSED AS “WORD MAN,” “MAN OF TONGUES,” OR “HE WHO TURNS THEIR TALK OVER.” IN TRANSLATION IT MAY BE MORE NATURAL TO BEGIN WITH THE CAUSE AND SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “JOSEPH WAS SPEAKING TO THEM THROUGH AN INTERPRETER, AND SO THEY DID NOT THINK HE UNDERSTOOD WHAT THEY HAD BEEN SAYING.”**

**GENESIS 42:24: THEN HE TURNED AWAY FROM THEM AND WEPT: TURNED AWAY PROBABLY MEANS THAT HE REMOVED HIMSELF FAR ENOUGH SO THEY COULD NOT SEE HIM CRY. WE MAY TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “HE LEFT THEM” OR “HE WENT AWAY FROM THEM.” SOME TRANSLATIONS SAY “HE WENT OUTSIDE AND CRIED.” IT IS APPARENT THAT THE CONVERSATION GOING ON AMONG THE BROTHERS COMES TO JOSEPH AS A CONFESSION OF THE EVIL THEY HAD DONE TO HIM, EVEN THOUGH HE HAD NOT ASKED FOR THIS CONFESSION. HE IS MOVED TO TEARS TO HEAR IT, BUT HE IS NOT READY TO TELL THEM WHO HE REALLY IS UNTIL HE SEES HIS YOUNGER BROTHER. RETURNED TO THEM AND SPOKE TO THEM: SPEISER SAYS THAT THE HEBREW VERB FOR RETURNED IS USED ADVERBIALLY HERE, SO THAT THE EXPRESSION AS A WHOLE HAS THE SENSE OF “WHEN HE WAS ABLE TO FACE THEM AGAIN.” ACCORDINGLY, SPEISER, NJB, GECL, NAB, SPCL ALL TRANSLATE IN WORDS EQUIVALENT TO “WHEN HE WAS ABLE TO SPEAK AGAIN.…” THIS IS RECOMMENDED TO TRANSLATORS. A COMMON TRANSLATION IS “WHEN HE FELT BETTER, HE CAME INSIDE AND.…” HE TOOK SIMEON FROM THEM AND BOUND HIM BEFORE THEIR EYES: WHEN JOSEPH SPOKE AGAIN TO THEM, HE ORDERED SIMEON, REUBEN’S YOUNGER BROTHER, TO BE TIED UP WHILE THE REST LOOKED ON. THIS IS RENDERED, FOR EXAMPLE, AS “HE CHOSE SIMEON TO STAY, AND HIS MEN TIED HIM UP” OR “HE TOLD HIS SERVANTS TO TAKE SIMEON AND TIE HIM UP.”**

**JOSEPH’S BROTHERS RETURN TO CANAAN (42:25–38)**

**IN THIS FINAL PART OF CHAPTER 42, THE BROTHERS RETURN TO THEIR FATHER WITHOUT SIMEON AND TRY TO CONVINCE HIM THAT HE SHOULD ALLOW BENJAMIN TO RETURN WITH THEM TO EGYPT. JOSEPH ORDERS THE GRAIN SACKS OF THE NINE BROTHERS TO BE FILLED AND THEIR MONEY TO BE REPLACED IN THEIR SACKS (VERSE 25). ON THEIR WAY TO CANAAN ONE OF THEM DISCOVERS HIS MONEY IN HIS SACK. THIS CAUSES GREAT FEAR AMONG THE BROTHERS (VERSES 26–28). WHEN THEY REACH HOME, THEY TELL HOW SIMEON IS BEING HELD HOSTAGE BY THE EGYPTIAN RULER, WHO IS ALSO DEMANDING THAT BENJAMIN BE BROUGHT TO HIM (29–34). THEY ARE AGAIN FILLED WITH FEAR WHEN THEY FIND THAT ALL THEIR MONEY HAS BEEN PLACED IN THEIR SACKS. JACOB ACCUSES HIS SONS OF CAUSING THE LOSS OF JOSEPH AND SIMEON, AND SAYS THAT NOW THEY WANT TO TAKE BENJAMIN AWAY (VERSES 35–36). REUBEN IS UNABLE TO PERSUADE HIS FATHER TO ALLOW BENJAMIN TO LEAVE. THE LOSS OF BENJAMIN WOULD MEAN THE DEATH OF THE OLD MAN (37–38).**

**SUBDIVISION HEADING**

**THE HANDBOOK HEADING MAY NEED TO BE MADE MORE CONCRETE BY SAYING, FOR EXAMPLE, “THE BROTHERS LEAVE SIMEON AND RETURN TO THEIR FATHER” OR “JOSEPH’S BROTHERS TAKE THEIR GRAIN AND GO HOME TO CANAAN.”**

**GENESIS 42:25: AND JOSEPH GAVE ORDERS TO FILL THEIR BAGS WITH GRAIN: THIS MUST OFTEN BE RENDERED, FOR EXAMPLE, “JOSEPH ORDERED HIS WORKERS TO FILL THE BROTHERS’ BAGS WITH GRAIN.” REPLACE EVERY MAN’S MONEY IN HIS SACK: THAT IS, “PUT THE MONEY THAT WAS TO PAY FOR THE GRAIN BACK IN THE SACK.…” THE REASON RSV USES BAG IN THE FIRST SENTENCE AND SACK IN THE SECOND IS BECAUSE THE HEBREW USES TWO WORDS. HOWEVER, THERE IS NO SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE IN MEANING. MONEY TRANSLATES THE HEBREW “SILVER.” THE REFERENCE IS TO A SMALL PACKET OR BAG OF SILVER THAT IS WEIGHED AND EXCHANGED FOR THE GRAIN. SEE THE CASE OF ABRAHAM PURCHASING THE CAVE OF MACHPELAH IN CHAPTER 23. PROVISIONS REFERS TO FOOD CARRIED ON A JOURNEY. MANY LANGUAGES HAVE SPECIAL WORDS THAT DESIGNATE JUST THIS KIND OF FOOD. IF NO SPECIAL WORD IS AVAILABLE, WE MAY SAY “FOOD” OR “THINGS TO EAT ON THE JOURNEY.” THIS WAS DONE: THAT IS, “JOSEPH’S ORDERS WERE CARRIED OUT” OR “THEY [THE WORKERS] DID SO.”**

**GENESIS 42:26: LOADED THEIR ASSES: FOR DISCUSSION OF ASS SEE 22:3. NOTHING HAS BEEN SAID IN THE STORY ABOUT THE BROTHERS HAVING ANIMALS TO CARRY THEIR GRAIN. IN SOME LANGUAGES IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO ADD “THEY LOADED THE ASSES [DONKEYS] THEY HAD COME WITH TO EGYPT.” IT MAY BE BETTER IN SOME LANGUAGES TO ADD THIS INFORMATION IN VERSE 5 AT THE BEGINNING OF THE EPISODE. IN MANY LANGUAGES LOADED MUST BE RENDERED AS “PUT THEIR GRAIN ON THE BACKS OF.…”**

**GENESIS 42:27: THE ACTION IN VERSE 27 MAY REQUIRE A TRANSITION. IN THAT CASE WE MAY SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “WHEN THEY ARRIVED THAT NIGHT AT A LODGING PLACE.…” SEE TEV. SOME TRANSLATIONS SAY “WHEN THEY STOPPED FOR THE NIGHT” OR “… MADE CAMP FOR THE NIGHT.” PROVENDER REFERS TO FEED FOR ANIMALS AND WAS FIRST USED IN 24:25. SEE THERE. THE PROVENDER IN THIS CASE IS SOME OF THE GRAIN OBTAINED IN EGYPT. NOTE TEV “TO FEED HIS DONKEY.” LODGING PLACE: THIS TRANSLATES A NOUN RELATED TO THE VERB MEANING “TO PASS THE NIGHT.” IT MAY REFER TO MAKING CAMP FOR THE NIGHT OR TO AN INN BESIDE THE ROAD WHERE TRAVELERS SPENT THE NIGHT. IT IS APPARENT FROM THIS VERSE THAT THE TRAVELER HAD TO PROVIDE HIS OWN FEED FOR HIS ANIMALS. TEV “AT THE PLACE WHERE THEY SPENT THE NIGHT” MAY MEAN EITHER THEIR CAMP SITE OR AN INN AND IS A GOOD MODEL. HE SAW HIS MONEY IN THE MOUTH OF HIS SACK: THAT IS, “HE FOUND [DISCOVERED] HIS MONEY [BAG OF SILVER] AT THE TOP OF HIS GRAIN SACK” OR “… ON TOP OF THE GRAIN.” IN THIS FINAL CLAUSE THE HEBREW USES HINNEH TO INTRODUCE THE SURPRISE OF ONE OF THEM FINDING THE MONEY. ACCORDING TO WHAT THEY TELL JOSEPH’S STEWARD IN 43:21, EACH MAN FOUND HIS MONEY ON THIS OCCASION. HOWEVER, IN 42:35 THE REST OF THE BROTHERS FIND THEIR MONEY WHEN THEY ARE AT HOME WITH THEIR FATHER. REGARDLESS OF THE ASSUMPTIONS MADE ABOUT THE HISTORY OF THE TEXT TO ACCOUNT FOR THESE DIFFERENCES, THE TRANSLATOR MUST TRANSLATE THE HEBREW TEXT AS WE HAVE IT.**

**GENESIS 42:28: THE SURPRISE AT FINDING HIS MONEY MAY REQUIRE A VERB EXPRESSING MORE FEELING THAN HE SAID TO HIS BROTHERS. FOR EXAMPLE, IT MAY BE MORE APPROPRIATE FOR THIS CONTEXT TO SAY “HE SHOUTED” OR “HE EXCLAIMED.” IN SOME TRANSLATIONS THIS IS EXPRESSED AS AN EXCLAMATION AT THE BEGINNING OF THE SPEECH; FOR EXAMPLE, “LOOK HERE!” MY MONEY HAS BEEN PUT BACK: THIS PASSIVE CONSTRUCTION MAY NEED TO BE RESTRUCTURED TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “SOMEONE HAS PUT MY MONEY BACK IN MY SACK!” HERE IT IS IN THE MOUTH OF MY SACK! THAT IS, “… AT THE TOP OF MY SACK.” AT THIS IS SUPPLIED BY RSV. WE MAY NEED TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “WHEN THEY SAW IT” OR “WHEN THEY SAW THE MONEY.” THEIR HEARTS FAILED THEM IS LITERALLY “THEIR HEARTS SANK.” IN SOME LANGUAGES OTHER FIGURATIVE EXPRESSIONS ARE “THEIR LIVERS TURNED COLD,” “THEIR STOMACHS DROPPED,” OR “THEIR INSIDES DRIED UP.” THEY TURNED TREMBLING TO ONE ANOTHER: THAT IS, “THEY WERE FRIGHTENED AND ASKED ONE ANOTHER.” WHAT IS THIS THAT GOD HAS DONE TO US? THIS QUESTION RECALLS VERSE 21, IN WHICH THE BROTHERS TELL EACH OTHER THAT THEY ARE BEING PAID BACK FOR THE EVIL THEY HAD DONE TO JOSEPH. THEY ASSUME THAT GOD HAS DONE THIS TO THEM, AND THAT IT IS RELATED TO THE PUNISHMENT THEY DESERVE. US IS THE INCLUSIVE PRONOUN IN THIS CONTEXT.**

**GENESIS 42:29: WHEN THEY CAME TO JACOB THEIR FATHER IN THE LAND OF CANAAN: THIS TIME CLAUSE SERVES AS A TRANSITION TO THE CONVERSATION WITH JACOB IN CANAAN. IN SOME LANGUAGES IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO EXPRESS THE MOVEMENT IN THE DIRECTION OF CANAAN BEFORE BEING ABLE TO SPEAK OF ARRIVING THERE; FOR EXAMPLE, “THEY TRAVELED ON TOWARD CANAAN UNTIL THEY CAME TO THEIR FATHER JACOB” OR “… AND WHEN THEY CAME TO THEIR FATHER, THEY TOLD HIM.…” THEY TOLD HIM ALL THAT HAD BEFALLEN THEM: THAT IS, “THEY TOLD HIM EVERYTHING THAT HAD HAPPENED TO THEM IN EGYPT.”**

**GENESIS 42:30: THE MAN, THE LORD OF THE LAND TRANSLATES THE HEBREW LITERALLY. IT IS THE BROTHERS’ WAY OF SPEAKING OF JOSEPH AS THE RULER OF THE COUNTRY. TEV SAYS “THE GOVERNOR OF EGYPT,” FRCL “THE MAN WHO IS THE GOVERNOR OF THE COUNTRY,” SPCL “THE MAN WHO GOVERNS IN THAT COUNTRY.” ALL OF THESE ARE GOOD MODELS. SOME TRANSLATORS MAY WISH TO TAKE ACCOUNT OF THEIR OWN POLITICAL STRUCTURE; FOR EXAMPLE, “THE HEAD MAN OF THAT COUNTRY,” “THE PRIME MINISTER,” OR “THE SECOND-IN-COMMAND THERE.” SPOKE ROUGHLY TO US: SEE VERSE 7. US IN THIS VERSE AND THE OTHER FIRST-PERSON PLURAL PRONOUNS DOWN TO THE END OF VERSE 32 ARE ALL EXCLUSIVE, WHETHER THE BROTHERS ARE SPEAKING TO THEIR FATHER OR REPORTING WHAT THEY SAID TO JOSEPH. TOOK US TO BE SPIES OF THE LAND: THAT IS, “SAID THAT WE WERE SPYING AGAINST HIS COUNTRY” OR “TREATED US LIKE SPIES.” SEE ALSO TEV “ACCUSED US OF SPYING.” SEE VERSE 9 FOR SUGGESTIONS FOR TRANSLATING SPIES.**

**GENESIS 42:31: WE ARE HONEST MEN WE ARE NOT SPIES: SEE VERSE 11. GENESIS 42:11: WE ARE ALL SONS OF ONE MAN: THE BROTHERS APPEAL TO JOSEPH’S SENSE OF FAMILY MORALITY TO TRY AND PERSUADE HIM OF THEIR TRUE MISSION TO EGYPT. WE MAY RENDER THIS SENTENCE, FOR EXAMPLE, “WE ARE ALL SONS OF THE SAME FATHER.” WE ARE HONEST MEN: THE SENSE OF HONEST MEANING “UPRIGHT,” “DECENT,” “HONORABLE” IS INTENDED TO CONTRAST WITH SPIES WHO ARE DECEPTIVE AND DISHONORABLE. IN SOME LANGUAGES HONEST MEN ARE SAID TO BE “MEN WITH STRAIGHT TALK,” “PERSONS WITH CLEAN HEARTS,” OR “PEOPLE WHO TALK WITH ONE TONGUE.”**

**GENESIS 42:32: WE ARE TWELVE BROTHERS … CANAAN: SEE VERSE 13. NOTE THAT THE BROTHERS DO NOT TELL THEIR FATHER THAT THEY WERE PUT IN PRISON FOR THREE DAYS.**

**GENESIS 42:33: THE MAN, THE LORD OF THE LAND: THIS IS THE SAME EXPRESSION AS IN VERSE 30. BY THIS I SHALL KNOW …: SEE VERSE 15. FOR MANY LANGUAGES IT IS NOT NATURAL TO USE A QUOTE WITHIN A QUOTE. FOR EXAMPLE, IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO SHIFT TO THIRD PERSON: “HE SAID HE WOULD FIND OUT IF WE WERE BEING HONEST.…” TAKE GRAIN FOR THE FAMINE OF YOUR HOUSEHOLDS: THE WORD GRAIN DOES NOT OCCUR IN THE HEBREW TEXT BUT IS IN MOST OF THE ANCIENT VERSIONS. HOTTP SAYS THE HEBREW CAN BE UNDERSTOOD AS “TAKE [WHAT IS NEEDED FOR] THE HUNGER OF YOUR FAMILIES,” THAT IS, “TAKE WHAT YOUR FAMILIES ARE HUNGRY FOR.”**

**GENESIS 42:34: BRING YOUR YOUNGEST BROTHER TO ME: SEE VERSE 20. I WILL DELIVER TO YOU YOUR BROTHER: THAT IS, “I WILL LET YOU HAVE YOUR BROTHER BACK.” JOSEPH MEANT THIS, BUT ACCORDING TO VERSE 20 HE DID NOT SAY IT. AND YOU SHALL TRADE IN THE LAND: FOR TRADE SEE 34:10. THIS REMARK WAS NEVER MADE BY JOSEPH TO THE BROTHERS IN THE NARRATIVE WE HAVE IN VERSES 6–25. TRADE IN THE LAND IS EXPRESSED IN A NUMBER OF DIFFERENT WAYS BY TRANSLATORS; FOR EXAMPLE, “YOU WILL BE FREE TO TRAVEL AROUND IN THIS COUNTRY” AND “YOU CAN STAY IN THE COUNTRY AND ENGAGE IN BUSINESS.”**

**GENESIS 42:35: THE OTHER BROTHERS NOW ALSO DISCOVER THAT THEIR MONEY HAS BEEN RETURNED TO THEM. AS THEY EMPTIED THEIR SACKS: THAT IS, “WHEN THEY BEGAN TO EMPTY THEIR SACKS.” BEHOLD, EVERY MAN’S BUNDLE OF MONEY WAS IN HIS SACK: BEHOLD AGAIN SIGNALS THE SURPRISE EXPERIENCED BY THE BROTHERS, AS IT DID IN VERSE 27. BUNDLE IN THE EXPRESSION BUNDLE OF MONEY TRANSLATES A NOUN RELATED TO THE VERB TO “BIND” OR “TIE UP.” HERE IT GIVES THE PICTURE OF THE SILVER AS WRAPPED AND TIED. THEY WERE DISMAYED: THAT IS, “THEY WERE AFRAID” OR “… FILLED WITH FEAR.”**

**GENESIS 42:36: YOU HAVE BEREAVED ME OF MY CHILDREN: FOR BEREAVED SEE THE CASE OF REBEKAH IN 27:45. IN THIS CONTEXT THE SENSE OF BEREAVED IS “TAKEN AWAY FROM ME” OR “MADE ME LOSE.” JACOB REFERS TO TWO OF HIS CHILDREN BY NAME, SO IN SOME LANGUAGES WHERE SMALL NUMBERS MUST BE EXPRESSED RATHER THAN A GENERAL PLURAL, THE TRANSLATION IS “MADE ME LOSE TWO OF MY CHILDREN.” TEV, HOWEVER, TAKES THE VERB AS HAVING A PRESENT SENSE AND MAKES JACOB SAY “… YOU WANT TO MAKE ME LOSE ALL MY CHILDREN”; SIMILARLY, NJB SAYS “YOU ARE ROBBING ME OF MY CHILDREN.” ALTHOUGH IN HEBREW JACOB DOES NOT EXPRESS HIMSELF BY USING A QUESTION FORM, TEV APPARENTLY FEELS THAT A RHETORICAL QUESTION BETTER BRINGS OUT THE EMOTION THAT THE OLD MAN FEELS AS HE SPEAKS. TRANSLATORS IN OTHER LANGUAGES MAY WISH TO CONSIDER THIS APPROACH AND TO USE IDIOMATIC WAYS OF SPEAKING THAT ARE APPROPRIATE TO THIS SITUATION. ONE EXAMPLE OF A TRANSLATION OF THIS PART OF THE VERSE IS “WHAT [ANGRY]? DO YOU WANT ME TO LOSE ALL MY CHILDREN? JOSEPH IS GONE! SIMEON IS GONE! AND NOW, DO YOU WANT TO TAKE AWAY BENJAMIN TOO?” JOSEPH IS NO MORE: SEE VERSE 13. ALL THIS HAS COME UPON ME IS LITERALLY “ALL THESE THINGS ARE AGAINST ME.” THE HEBREW CONSTRUCTION PLACES THE EMPHASIS UPON ME IN CONTRAST TO “YOU [PLURAL].” AS DRIVER SAYS, “IT IS I, THE FATHER, WHO SUFFERS, NOT YOU.” SEE TEV.**

**GENESIS 42:37: THEN REUBEN SAID, …: REUBEN AS THE OLDEST SON ATTEMPTS TO ASSURE HIS FATHER THAT HE WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR GETTING BENJAMIN SAFELY BACK TO HIM. THIS VERSE CONSISTS OF TWO PARTS. THE FIRST PART IS AN “IF” CLAUSE AND A CONSEQUENCE: “IF I DO NOT BRING … YOU MAY KILL MY TWO SONS.” THE SECOND PART IS A REQUEST AND A PROMISE: “PUT HIM [BENJAMIN] IN MY HANDS … I WILL BRING HIM BACK TO YOU.” IN SOME LANGUAGES THIS VERSE WILL REQUIRE CONSIDERABLE ADJUSTING IN TRANSLATION. FOR EXAMPLE, WE MAY NEED TO SAY “PUT BENJAMIN IN MY HANDS AND I PROMISE TO RETURN HIM TO YOU. IF I DO NOT BRING HIM BACK, YOU MAY KILL MY TWO SONS.” SOME TRANSLATIONS PUT INTO WORDS AT THE BEGINNING OF THE VERSE THE MEANING THAT REUBEN DOES NOT STATE DIRECTLY: “I WILL TAKE CARE OF BENJAMIN.”**

**GENESIS 42:38: IN SPITE OF REUBEN’S PROMISE AND HIS WILLINGNESS TO GAMBLE THE LIVES OF HIS OWN CHILDREN, JACOB IS NOT WILLING TO AGREE TO BENJAMIN GOING AWAY FROM HIM. MY SON SHALL NOT GO DOWN WITH YOU [PLURAL]: IN SOME LANGUAGES A STRONG NEGATIVE IS REQUIRED AT THE BEGINNING OF THIS SPEECH: “NO! MY SON CAN’T GO WITH YOU” OR “NO! I WON’T LET HIM GO WITH YOU.” FOR GO DOWN SEE VERSE 2. THE PLURAL PRONOUN YOU SHOWS THAT JACOB IS ADDRESSING NOT JUST REUBEN BUT ALL THE BROTHERS WHO RETURNED FROM EGYPT. HIS BROTHER IS DEAD: THAT IS, “BENJAMIN’S OLDER BROTHER JOSEPH IS DEAD.” AND HE ONLY: THAT IS, “ONLY BENJAMIN IS LEFT.” BENJAMIN IS NOT THE ONLY SON LEFT TO JACOB; HE IS THE ONLY SON LEFT TO THE UNION OF JACOB AND RACHEL. A TRANSLATION THAT BRINGS THIS OUT SAYS “HE IS THE LAST BOY OF HIS MOTHER.” IF HARM SHOULD BEFALL HIM ON THE JOURNEY … MAKE: THAT IS, “IF SOMETHING WERE TO HAPPEN TO HIM.…” ANOTHER WAY OF EXPRESSING THIS IS “SOMETHING MIGHT HAPPEN TO HIM ON THE ROAD, AND THEN I WOULD.…” YOU [PLURAL] WOULD BRING DOWN MY GRAY HAIRS WITH SORROW TO SHEOL: GRAY HAIRS TRANSLATES THE HEBREW NOUN MEANING “A HEAD THAT IS OLD AND GRAY.” IN THIS WAY JACOB REFERS TO HIMSELF AS AN OLD MAN. BRING DOWN … TO SHEOL MEANS “CAUSE ME TO DIE [AND GO TO MY GRAVE].” ONE TRANSLATION OF THIS IS SIMPLY “I WOULD DIE FROM IT!” WE MAY TRANSLATE THIS EXPRESSION, FOR EXAMPLE, “IF SOMETHING SHOULD HAPPEN, … YOU [PLURAL] WOULD CAUSE ME TO DIE AN OLD MAN FULL OF SORROW,” “I AM AN OLD GRAY HEAD; IF …, YOU [PLURAL] WOULD MAKE ME DIE OF SORROW,” OR “HE MIGHT HAVE AN ACCIDENT ON THE ROAD. I AM AN OLD MAN, AND IF … YOU [PLURAL] WOULD GIVE ME GREAT GRIEF AND I WOULD GO TO.…” SEE ALSO TEV.**

**BENJAMIN GOES TO EGYPT (43:1–14)**

**AT THE OPENING OF CHAPTER 43, THE FAMINE HAS CONTINUED IN CANAAN, AND CONSEQUENTLY JACOB ASKS HIS SONS TO RETURN TO EGYPT TO BUY FOOD. HOWEVER, JUDAH ARGUES THAT UNLESS BENJAMIN ACCOMPANIES THE BROTHERS, THE RULER OF EGYPT WILL NOT RECEIVE THEM (VERSES 1–5). JACOB BLAMES THE BROTHERS FOR GIVING THE RULER INFORMATION ABOUT THEIR YOUNGEST BROTHER. HOWEVER, THEY REPLY THAT THE RULER INQUIRED ABOUT THEIR FATHER AND ANOTHER BROTHER (VERSES 43:6–7). JUDAH ASKS JACOB TO ALLOW BENJAMIN TO GO WITH THE BROTHERS IN ORDER TO SAVE THEIR STARVING FAMILIES. JUDAH OFFERS TO GIVE HIS LIFE AS A PLEDGE TO BRING BENJAMIN BACK (VERSES 43:8–10). FINALLY, JACOB RESIGNS HIMSELF TO LETTING BENJAMIN GO WITH THEM. THEREUPON THEY LOAD THEIR ANIMALS WITH GIFTS FOR THE RULER AND SET OUT FOR EGYPT (VERSES 11–14).**

**SUBDIVISION HEADING**

**THE HANDBOOK HEADING MAY NEED TO BE MODIFIED TO GIVE MORE BACKGROUND INFORMATION. FOR EXAMPLE, “JUDAH CONVINCES JACOB TO ALLOW BENJAMIN TO GO TO EGYPT,” “JACOB FINALLY AGREES TO ALLOW BENJAMIN TO GO WITH THE BROTHERS,” “JACOB ALLOWS BENJAMIN TO GO TO EGYPT.” TEV HAS “JOSEPH’S BROTHERS RETURN TO EGYPT WITH BENJAMIN,” NIV “THE SECOND JOURNEY TO EGYPT,” NJB “JACOB’S SONS LEAVE AGAIN WITH BENJAMIN,” TOB “JACOB ACCEPTS THE DEPARTURE OF BENJAMIN,” SPCL “BENJAMIN IS TAKEN TO EGYPT.”**

**GENESIS 43:1: CHAPTER 43 OPENS WHERE CHAPTER 42 LEFT OFF, AT JACOB’S CAMP IN CANAAN. THE FAMINE, WHICH DROVE THE BROTHERS TO EGYPT, IS CONTINUING AND BECOMING MORE SEVERE. ACCORDINGLY, CHAPTER 43 CONTINUES THE STORY LINE FROM THE PREVIOUS CHAPTER. NOW THE FAMINE WAS SEVERE IN THE LAND: NOW, WHICH TRANSLATES THE HEBREW CONNECTIVE, IS THE RSV WAY OF MARKING A TRANSITION TO A NEW DEVELOPMENT IN THE STORY LINE. THE EVENTS TOLD HAPPEN SOME TIME AFTER THOSE IN CHAPTER 42. THE WORDING ABOUT THE FAMINE IN VERSE 1 IS SIMILAR TO THAT IN 41:57. HERE THE LAND REFERS TO CANAAN. WE MAY SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “THE FAMINE IN CANAAN GREW WORSE” OR “HUNGER KEPT ON GETTING WORSE IN CANAAN.”**

**GENESIS 43:2: WHEN THEY HAD EATEN THE GRAIN WHICH THEY HAD BROUGHT FROM EGYPT: THE FIRST THEY REFERS TO ALL JACOB’S FAMILY; THE SECOND THEY REFERS TO THE BROTHERS. GO AGAIN, BUY US A LITTLE FOOD: GO AGAIN MEANS “GO BACK TO EGYPT.” US IS INCLUSIVE, REFERRING TO JACOB AND THOSE HE IS ADDRESSING. LITTLE MAY REFER TO A SMALL AMOUNT OR FEW IN NUMBER, BUT IN A LITTLE FOOD JACOB IS USING THIS LIMITING EXPRESSION AS A CONTRAST WITH “A GREAT AMOUNT.” HE DOES NOT MEAN THAT THEY SHOULD BUY AN INSUFFICIENT AMOUNT BUT RATHER “BUY SOME FOOD.” REB SAYS “BUY SOME MORE GRAIN,” WHICH NEB HAS REVISED AS “BUY A LITTLE MORE CORN.” THIS USE OF “LITTLE” IN THE SENSE OF “ENOUGH” IS TYPICAL COLLOQUIAL SPEECH IN MANY LANGUAGES IN RELATION TO FOOD.**

**GENESIS 43:3–5: IN THE PREVIOUS CHAPTER REUBEN PLEADED UNSUCCESSFULLY WITH JACOB TO ALLOW BENJAMIN TO RETURN WITH THE BROTHERS TO EGYPT. NOW, HOWEVER, WE HEAR JUDAH, THE FOURTH SON OF LEAH (29:35), ACTING AS SPOKESMAN FOR THE BROTHERS. SINCE THIS IS THE SECOND DISCUSSION ABOUT THE SAME MATTER, SOME TRANSLATIONS BEGIN BY SAYING “FATHER, WE TOLD YOU BEFORE, THAT HEADMAN.…” THE MAN SOLEMNLY WARNED US: THE MAN, WHICH REFERS TO JOSEPH AS THE RULER OF EGYPT, IS THE SAME EXPRESSION AS IN 42:30. THERE THE MAN IS IDENTIFIED AS “LORD OF THE LAND.” IT MAY BE NECESSARY IN THE PRESENT CONTEXT TO SAY “THE MAN WHO RULES EGYPT” OR “THE RULER.” SOLEMNLY WARNED TRANSLATES A SPECIAL INTENSIVE CONSTRUCTION OF THE HEBREW VERB “TO WARN,” IN WHICH THE SENSE IS “STERNLY [SEVERELY] WARNED US.” IN SOME LANGUAGES THIS IS TRANSLATED “HE CLEARLY THREATENED US” OR “HE TOLD US FOR CERTAIN.” YOU SHALL NOT SEE MY FACE: THIS IS AN IDIOM MEANING “YOU [PLURAL] WILL NOT BE GIVEN AN AUDIENCE WITH ME,” “I WILL NOT RECEIVE YOU,” “I WILL REFUSE TO SPEAK WITH YOU,” OR “YOU CANNOT APPROACH ME.” IN SOME TRANSLATIONS THE REFERENCE TO WHAT JOSEPH HAD SAID IS GIVEN IN INDIRECT SPEECH; FOR EXAMPLE, “HE SAID THAT HE WILL NOT AGREE TO SEE US AGAIN, IF OUR BROTHER.…” UNLESS YOUR BROTHER IS WITH YOU: HERE BROTHER MUST OFTEN BE RENDERED BY A TERM FOR YOUNGER BROTHER. A TERM FOR HALF-BROTHER WILL BE INAPPROPRIATE, AS JOSEPH HAS ONLY BEEN TOLD THAT BENJAMIN IS THEIR YOUNGEST BROTHER. IN SOME LANGUAGES IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO STATE THE CONDITION BEFORE THE CONSEQUENCE; FOR EXAMPLE, “UNLESS YOUR BROTHER IS WITH YOU, I WILL NOT ALLOW YOU TO SPEAK WITH ME” OR “IF YOUR BROTHER DOES NOT COME WITH YOU, …” ANOTHER WAY OF EXPRESSING THIS CONDITION IS “WARNED US THAT WE COULD NOT GO BACK THERE TO HIM. BUT IF WE HAVE OUR [YOUNGEST] BROTHER WITH US, IT WILL BE ALL RIGHT, WE CAN GO BACK.” IF YOU WILL SEND OUR BROTHER WITH US: IN MANY LANGUAGES THIS IS MORE NATURALLY “IF YOU LET OUR BROTHER GO WITH US” OR “IF YOU AGREE THAT OUR BROTHER CAN COME WITH US.”**

**GENESIS 43:6: ISRAEL SAID: SEE 35:21. JACOB’S QUESTION IS “WHY DID YOU [PLURAL] DO EVIL TO ME BY TELLING THE MAN YOU HAD ANOTHER BROTHER?” BY THIS QUESTION JACOB IS THINKING OF THE GRIEF THE BROTHERS HAVE CAUSED HIM BY MENTIONING BENJAMIN TO THE RULER. THE QUESTION IS NOT RHETORICAL BUT REAL, AND THE BROTHERS GIVE THEIR REPLY IN VERSE 7. FOR THE MAN SEE VERSE 3.**

**GENESIS 43:7: THE MAN QUESTIONED US CAREFULLY ABOUT …: QUESTIONED US CAREFULLY IS ANOTHER USE OF THE INTENSIVE VERB CONSTRUCTION USED IN VERSE 3. EXAMPLES OF THE WAY IT IS RENDERED IN DIFFERENT TRANSLATIONS ARE “THAT MAN ASKED US MANY QUESTIONS” AND “HE KEPT ON ASKING US QUESTIONS ABOUT.…” THE STATEMENT THAT THE MAN QUESTIONED US DOES NOT AGREE WITH WHAT HAPPENED IN THE INTERVIEW WITH JOSEPH IN CHAPTER 42. THERE THE BROTHERS GAVE THIS INFORMATION TO JOSEPH IN ORDER TO CONVINCE HIM THAT THEY WERE NOT SPIES BUT RATHER A FAMILY UNIT. THE DISCREPANCY IS CONSIDERED BY SOME INTERPRETERS TO BE DUE TO DIFFERENT TEXT SOURCES; HOWEVER, IN MANY PARTS OF THE WORLD, READERS WILL NATURALLY UNDERSTAND IT AS THE BROTHERS CHANGING THEIR STORY TO SHOW THEMSELVES IN THE BEST LIGHT. KINDRED REFERS TO RELATIVES IN GENERAL, AS IN 31:3 AND 32:9, BUT IN THIS CONTEXT THE REFERENCE IS TO THEIR CLOSE FAMILY, IN PARTICULAR THEIR FATHER AND ANOTHER BROTHER. SAYING, WHICH HERE SERVES AS AN INTRODUCTION TO THE QUESTION, MUST OFTEN BE ADJUSTED TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “HE ASKED US …,” “WHAT HE ASKED US WAS ‘IS YOUR FATHER …?’” IF IT IS NOT NATURAL TO USE DIRECT SPEECH HERE, WE MAY SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “HE ASKED US IF OUR FATHER WAS STILL ALIVE AND IF WE HAD ANOTHER BROTHER.” WHAT WE TOLD HIM WAS IN ANSWER TO THESE QUESTIONS: THIS IS LITERALLY “WE SAID TO HIM UPON THE MOUTH OF THESE WORDS.” WE MAY TRANSLATE THIS, FOR EXAMPLE, “WE HAD TO ANSWER THE QUESTIONS HE ASKED US.” SEE TEV. SOME TRANSLATIONS SAY “WE ONLY ANSWERED HIS QUESTIONS.” COULD WE IN ANY WAY KNOW THAT HE WOULD SAY …? IN ANY WAY KNOW IS A FURTHER USE OF THE INTENSIVE VERB CONSTRUCTION NOTED ABOVE. THIS QUESTION ASSUMES A NEGATIVE REPLY AND MAY BE REPHRASED; FOR EXAMPLE, “WE COULD NOT KNOW THAT HE WOULD SAY …” OR “WE DIDN’T KNOW THAT HE WAS GOING TO TELL US TO.…” AS A “HOW” QUESTION WE MAY TRANSLATE “HOW COULD WE [BE EXPECTED TO] KNOW THAT HE WOULD SAY …?” BRING YOUR BROTHER DOWN: RSV MAKES THIS DIRECT SPEECH. NOTE THAT TEV USES INDIRECT SPEECH. BOTH ARE POSSIBLE. BRING DOWN IS SPOKEN FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF EGYPT. IT MAY BE MORE NATURAL TO SAY “BRING YOUR BROTHER HERE,” OR “BRING YOUR BROTHER TO ME.”**

**GENESIS 43:8: JUDAH SAID TO ISRAEL HIS FATHER: FOR ISRAEL SEE 35:21. NOTE THAT TEV AND OTHERS DO NOT GIVE ANY NAME HERE, AS JACOB HAS BEEN IDENTIFIED IN VERSE 6. SEND THE LAD: BENJAMIN IS REFERRED TO HERE AS LAD (HEBREW NÀAR), WHICH OFTEN DESIGNATES A YOUNG BOY BUT JUST AS FREQUENTLY REFERS TO A YOUNG MAN NOT YET MARRIED. FOR USE OF THE TERM IN THE CASE OF ISHMAEL, SEE 21:12. IN THE TEXT THE IMPRESSION IS GIVEN THAT BENJAMIN, WHO WAS BORN SOME TIME AFTER JOSEPH, IS A BOY COMPARED WITH JOSEPH, WHO IS A MATURE MAN. ACCORDING TO 41:46 JOSEPH WAS THIRTY YEARS OLD WHEN HE BECAME RULER OF EGYPT. HE IS SEVERAL YEARS OLDER WHEN BENJAMIN GOES TO EGYPT. IT MAY BE THAT WE CANNOT DEPEND ON THE REFERENCES TO AGE IN THE STORY, OR THAT NÀAR EMPHASIZES THE ENDEARING QUALITY OF A MAN MORE THAN HIS ACTUAL AGE. TRANSLATORS ALL SEEM TO AGREE THAT BENJAMIN IS A BOY OR YOUTH IN THIS STORY. WITH ME: JUDAH’S REQUEST IS THAT JACOB ALLOW BENJAMIN TO GO TO EGYPT WITH JUDAH; THAT IS, “IN MY CARE,” OR AS NJV, SPCL, AND GECL SAY, “TRUST THE BOY TO ME.” WE WILL ARISE AND GO: WE REFERS NOT JUST TO JUDAH AND BENJAMIN, BUT TO ALL THE BROTHERS ALONG WITH BENJAMIN. IN SOME LANGUAGES WE REQUIRES A PRONOUN FORM THAT EXCLUDES THE ONE ADDRESSED, NAMELY JACOB. ARISE AND GO MEANS “GET READY TO LEAVE,” OR SIMPLY “GO.” SEE TEV. THAT WE MAY LIVE AND NOT DIE: THIS EXPRESSION WAS FIRST USED IN 42:2. SEE THERE FOR TRANSLATION. BOTH WE AND YOU AND ALSO OUR LITTLE ONES: LITTLE ONES REFERS TO SMALL CHILDREN, AS THEY ARE THE ONES WHO ARE MOST LIKELY TO DIE IN A FAMINE. HOWEVER, NEB AND NJB TRANSLATE MORE GENERALLY AS “OUR DEPENDENTS.” FRCL HAS “OUR FAMILIES.”**

**GENESIS 43:9: I WILL BE SURETY FOR HIM: TO BE SURETY FOR SOMEONE MEANS IN A LEGAL SENSE TO BE RESPONSIBLE FOR ANOTHER’S DEBTS, TO SERVE AS GUARANTOR. HOWEVER, THE TERM IS USED HERE, AS IN PSA 119:122, WITH THE GENERAL MEANING OF PROMISING TO HELP AND PROTECT. A COMMON RENDERING IS “I PROMISE TO TAKE CARE OF HIM.” OF MY HAND YOU SHALL REQUIRE HIM: THIS EXPRESSION WAS FIRST USED IN 31:39 IN A CONVERSATION BETWEEN JACOB AND LABAN. SEE THERE FOR TRANSLATION. IF I DO NOT BRING HIM BACK TO YOU AND SET HIM BEFORE YOU: SET HIM BEFORE YOU IS LITERALLY “SET HIM BEFORE YOUR FACE,” AN EXPRESSION THAT MEANS “RETURN HIM SAFELY TO YOU.” SEE TEV. THEN LET ME BEAR THE BLAME FOR EVER IS THE CONSEQUENCE OF THE “IF” CLAUSE. THE LITERAL EXPRESSION IS “I SHALL BE A SINNER AGAINST YOU ALL THE DAYS.” THE VERB RENDERED BEAR THE BLAME MEANS TO “BE GUILTY,” “BE AT FAULT.” WE MAY TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “I SHALL BE FOREVER GUILTY” OR “YOU CAN BLAME ME ALL THE REST OF MY LIFE.”**

**GENESIS 43:10: JUDAH URGES HIS FATHER TO ACCEPT HIS PROPOSAL, BECAUSE THEY ARE WASTING TIME COMING TO A DECISION WHEN THEY SHOULD BE GETTING FOOD FOR THEIR STARVING FAMILIES. IF WE HAD NOT DELAYED: THAT IS, “IF WE HAD NOT WASTED SO MUCH TIME, WE COULD HAVE GONE TWICE TO EGYPT AND HOME AGAIN” OR “IF WE HAD NOT TAKEN SO LONG TO MAKE UP OUR MINDS, …” SOME TRANSLATIONS REFER BACK TO AN EARLIER DISCUSSION AND SAY “IF YOU HAD NOT PREVENTED US FROM GOING BEFORE, …” OR “IF WE HAD NOT WASTED SO MUCH TIME SINCE WE ASKED YOU EARLIER, WE WOULD HAVE MADE TWO TRIPS FOR FOOD BY NOW.”**

**GENESIS 43:11: JACOB FINALLY RELENTS AND ALLOWS BENJAMIN TO GO WITH HIS BROTHERS. FATHER ISRAEL: SEE VERSE 8. IF IT MUST BE SO, THEN DO THIS IS LITERALLY “IF SO, THEN DO THIS.” THE SENSE IS “IF IT HAS TO BE” OR “IF THERE IS NO OTHER WAY.” IT MAY NOT BE NECESSARY TO TRANSLATE DO THIS. FOR EXAMPLE, WE MAY SAY “IF THAT IS THE WAY IT HAS TO BE, THEN TAKE SOME.…” SEE TEV. CHOICE FRUITS OF THE LAND: THE MEANING OF THE WORD TRANSLATED CHOICE FRUITS IS UNCERTAIN, BECAUSE IT OCCURS ONLY HERE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT. HOWEVER, SOME EXPRESSION LIKE “BEST PRODUCE” SEEMS TO FIT THE CONTEXT WELL AND IS REQUIRED TO GIVE A SENSE OF HIGH VALUE TO THE PRESENT; SOME TRANSLATIONS SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “THE MOST VALUABLE THINGS WE HAVE PRODUCED.” THE NARRATOR DOES NOT SEEM CONCERNED TO EXPLAIN THE EXISTENCE OF THIS PRODUCE DURING THE SEVERE FAMINE. CARRY DOWN TO THE MAN A PRESENT: THAT IS, “TAKE A GIFT TO THE RULER OF EGYPT.” THE CHOICE FRUITS ARE NAMED AS BALM, HONEY, GUM, MYRRH, PISTACHIO NUTS AND ALMONDS. FOR BALM, GUM, AND MYRRH SEE 37:25. BALM, MYRRH (LADANUM), PISTACHIO NUTS, AND ALMONDS ARE DESCRIBED IN FAUNA AND FLORA OF THE BIBLE, PAGES 89–90, 93–94, 147–149, AND 164–165. HONEY, BOTH CULTIVATED AND WILD, IS KNOWN THROUGHOUT MOST OF THE WORLD; BUT THE OTHER ITEMS IN THE LIST MAY NOT BE SO WELL KNOWN. MANY TRANSLATIONS USE GENERAL TERMS SUCH AS “OINTMENT,” “PERFUME,” AND “NUTS,” EITHER ALONG WITH THE ACTUAL NAMES OF THE ITEMS OR WITHOUT THE NAMES.**

**GENESIS 43:12: TAKE DOUBLE THE MONEY WITH YOU: JACOB’S INSTRUCTIONS ARE THAT THEY SHOULD TAKE TWICE AS MUCH MONEY AS THEY DID ON THE FIRST TRIP. WITH YOU IS LITERALLY “IN YOUR HAND.” THEY ARE TO RETURN THE MONEY THEY FOUND IN THE TOP OF THEIR GRAIN SACKS, AND TAKE ADDITIONAL MONEY TO BUY MORE GRAIN. PERHAPS IT WAS AN OVERSIGHT: THIS REFERS TO THE PLACING OF THE MONEY IN THE GRAIN SACKS. OVERSIGHT MEANS AN UNINTENTIONAL ERROR OR MISTAKE.**

**GENESIS 43:13: TAKE ALSO YOUR BROTHER, AND ARISE, GO AGAIN TO THE MAN: THAT IS, “TAKE YOUR YOUNGEST BROTHER AND GO NOW TO THE MAN WHO RULES THERE.”**

**GENESIS 43:14: JACOB COMPLETES HIS INSTRUCTIONS TO HIS SONS BY ASKING GOD’S MERCY FOR THEM AS THEY DEPART. MAY GOD ALMIGHTY GRANT YOU MERCY BEFORE THE MAN: GOD ALMIGHTY TRANSLATES ’EL SHADDAI. THIS TERM FOR GOD WAS FIRST USED IN 17:1 AND AS A BLESSING IN 28:3. MERCY HERE MEANS “KINDNESS,” “COMPASSION,” “PITY.” SEE TEV. WE MAY TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “MAY GOD CAUSE THE MAN TO BE KIND TO YOU,” “I ASK GOD WHO IS ALL POWERFUL TO MAKE THE RULER SHOW PITY ON YOU,” OR “MY PRAYER IS THAT GOD WILL HELP THIS MAN’S THINKING SO THAT HE WILL HAVE PITY ON YOU.” IN SOME LANGUAGES THIS EXPRESSION IS STATED IN FIGURATIVE TERMS; FOR EXAMPLE, “MAY GOD CAUSE THE RULER’S HEART TO BE WARM TOWARD YOU.” THAT HE MAY SEND BACK YOUR OTHER BROTHER AND BENJAMIN: THE HEBREW OF THIS CLAUSE SAYS “THAT HE MAY SEND [RELEASE] YOUR OTHER BROTHER [MEANING SIMEON] TO YOU [PLURAL] AND BENJAMIN [WHO HAS NOT YET GONE].” TEV, WHICH PLACES BENJAMIN BEFORE THE OTHER BROTHER (SIMEON), TRANSLATES “GIVE BENJAMIN AND YOUR OTHER BROTHER BACK TO YOU”; FRCL ALSO FOLLOWS THAT ORDER BUT NAMES THE OTHER BROTHER AS SIMEON: “BY LETTING BENJAMIN AND SIMEON RETURN WITH YOU [PLURAL].” BOTH OF THESE ARE GOOD MODELS. IF I AM BEREAVED …, I AM BEREAVED: THIS BRIEF EXCLAMATION CONSISTS OF THREE WORDS IN THE HEBREW “IF [I AM] BEREAVED, [I AM] BEREAVED.” OF MY CHILDREN IS NOT EXPRESSED IN THE HEBREW BUT IS UNDERSTOOD. BEREAVED MEANS TO SUFFER THE LOSS OF ONE OR MORE LOVED ONES BECAUSE OF DEATH. THIS EXPRESSES JACOB’S DEEP SENSE OF LOSS AS HE GIVES HIS SONS HIS FAREWELL BLESSING. THE UNDERLYING SENSE OF THIS KIND OF EXPRESSION IS “I MUST GO THROUGH WITH THIS, EVEN THOUGH I HAVE NO CONTROL OR KNOWLEDGE OF THE OUTCOME.” FOR A SIMILAR CONSTRUCTION AND SENSE, SEE EST 4:16. WE MAY SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “IF I MUST LOSE MY CHILDREN, THEN LET IT BE SO,” “IF IT HAPPENS THAT I LOSE MY CHILDREN, THEN I MUST LOSE THEM,” OR “IF I AM TO END UP WITHOUT ANY SONS, THEN I WILL BE WITHOUT ANY SONS.” SEE TEV.**

**THE BROTHERS MEET JOSEPH AGAIN (43:15–34)**

**IN THIS EPISODE THE BROTHERS TAKE BENJAMIN AND RETURN TO EGYPT. WHEN JOSEPH SEES THAT BENJAMIN IS WITH THEM, HE ORDERS HIS HOUSESERVANT TO TAKE THEM TO HIS HOUSEAND PREPARE A NOON MEAL (VERSES 15–17). THE BROTHERS, THINKING THEY ARE ABOUT TO BE PUNISHED FOR THE MONEY FOUND IN THEIR SACKS, EXPLAIN TO JOSEPH’S SERVANT ABOUT THE MONEY AND HOW THEY HAVE BROUGHT IT BACK WITH THEM. THE SERVANT QUIETS THEIR FEARS BY TELLING THEM THAT THEIR GOD MUST HAVE PUT THE MONEY IN THEIR SACKS. HE THEN DELIVERS SIMEON TO THEM (VERSES 18–23). THE SERVANT PROVIDES WATER FOR THE BROTHERS TO WASH THEIR FEET AND GIVES FEED TO THEIR ANIMALS. THE BROTHERS THEN PREPARE THEIR GIFTS FOR JOSEPH, WHO RETURNS TO HIS HOUSEAT NOON. JOSEPH INQUIRES ABOUT THEIR FATHER AND ASKS IF THE YOUNG MAN WITH THEM IS BENJAMIN. AGAIN, JOSEPH IS OVERCOME BY EMOTION AND HAS TO GO INTO ANOTHER ROOM TO CRY (VERSES 24–30). JOSEPH RETURNS TO THE BROTHERS AND ORDERS HIS SERVANTS TO SERVE THE MEAL. THE BROTHERS, WHO EAT SEPARATELY FROM JOSEPH, ARE SEATED ACCORDING TO THEIR AGE, A FACT THAT CAUSES THEM GREAT SURPRISE. THE FOOD THAT IS SERVED TO THE BROTHERS IS TAKEN FROM JOSEPH’S TABLE, AND THE PORTIONS GIVEN TO BENJAMIN ARE MUCH LARGER THAN THOSE SERVED TO THE OTHERS. THE FEASTING AND DRINKING CONTINUE UNTIL ALL ARE IN A VERY MERRY MOOD (VERSES 31–34).**

**GENESIS 43:15: SO, THE MEN TOOK THE PRESENT: SO, IN BOTH RSV AND TEV RENDERS THE HEBREW CONNECTIVE, WHICH MARKS A CONSEQUENCE OF JACOB’S AGREEING TO LET BENJAMIN GO TO EGYPT. MEN REFERS TO THE BROTHERS OR SONS OF JACOB. SEE TEV. PRESENT IS AS IN VERSE 11. FOR DOUBLE THE MONEY SEE VERSE 12. AROSE AND WENT DOWN TO EGYPT: SEE VERSE 13. STOOD BEFORE JOSEPH IS LITERALLY “STOOD BEFORE THE FACE OF JOSEPH” AND MEANS “WENT TO WHERE JOSEPH WAS,” “PRESENTED THEMSELVES TO JOSEPH,” OR “WENT TO JOSEPH’S OFFICE.” IN SOME LANGUAGES THE SHORT SEQUENCE OF ACTIONS AROSE … WENT … STOOD IS TOO ABRUPT, AND THE TEXT MUST BE RESTRUCTURED; ONE EXAMPLE OF A TRANSLATION IS “SO THE SONS OF JACOB WENT TO EGYPT WITH BENJAMIN.… WHEN THEY CAME TO THAT COUNTRY, THEY WENT TO JOSEPH’S PLACE.”**

**GENESIS 43:16: WHEN JOSEPH SAW BENJAMIN WITH THEM: JOSEPH RECOGNIZED BENJAMIN AND IS ASSURED THEREBY THAT HIS BROTHER IS ALIVE. THEREFORE, HE MAKES PREPARATIONS TO RECEIVE THEM AT HIS OWN HOUSE. STEWARD OF HIS HOUSE: STEWARD IN RELATION TO A HOUSEAND FAMILY REFERS TO A PERSON WHO IS IN CHARGE OF THE SERVANTS AND HAS THE OVERSIGHT OR ADMINISTRATION OF THE MASTER’S HOUSE. ACCORDING TO 39:4 JOSEPH HELD THIS POSITION IN POTIPHAR’S HOUSE. THE HEBREW EXPRESSION IS “THE ONE OVER HIS HOUSE.” BRING THE MEN INTO THE HOUSE: THAT IS, “TAKE THESE MEN TO MY HOUSE.” SLAUGHTER AN ANIMAL AND MAKE READY: SLAUGHTER NORMALLY MEANS TO KILL AN ANIMAL AND PREPARE THE MEAT FOR FOOD. THE CONTEXT MAKES CLEAR WHAT THE MEAT IS TO BE USED FOR. ACCORDINGLY, MANY TRANSLATIONS SAY “KILL,” WHICH IS USED IN TEV, NEB/REB. THE HEBREW EXPRESSION IS LITERALLY “SLAUGHTER A SLAUGHTERING” AND DOES NOT INDICATE WHAT ANIMAL IS TO BE KILLED. IN SOME LANGUAGES THERE IS NO GENERAL WORD FOR ANIMAL, AND SO A PARTICULAR ANIMAL SUCH AS “GOAT” IS NAMED. MAKE READY REFERS TO PREPARING THE MEAT FOR THE MEAL. FOR THE MEN ARE TO DINE WITH ME AT NOON: THIS CLAUSE GIVES THE REASON FOR JOSEPH’S ORDERS THAT THE STEWARD KILL THE ANIMAL. DINE WITH ME MEANS “EAT A MEAL WITH ME.” IN MANY SOCIETIES THERE IS NO MEAL TAKEN AT NOON, AND SINCE THE TIME OF THE MEAL IS NOT AN ESSENTIAL PART OF THE STORY, IT MAY BE NECESSARY SOMETIMES TO SAY “THESE MEN ARE TO HAVE A MEAL WITH ME WHEN I COME HOME.”**

**GENESIS 43:17: THE MAN DID AS JOSEPH BADE HIM: MAN REFERS HERE TO THE STEWARD AND SHOULD PROBABLY BE RENDERED BY THE TERM USED TO SPEAK OF HIM IN VERSE 16. BROUGHT THE MEN: THAT IS, “TOOK THE BROTHERS.…”**

**GENESIS 43:18: IN VERSES 18–23 THE BROTHERS ARE ALARMED AT BEING TAKEN TO JOSEPH’S HOUSE, AS THEY DO NOT EXPECT TO BE HONORED BY THIS HIGH OFFICIAL. BEFORE ENTERING THE HOUSETHEY ATTEMPT TO CLEAR UP THE MATTER OF THE MONEY FOUND IN THEIR GRAIN SACKS. THE REASSURANCE THEY RECEIVE FROM THE STEWARD IS A TURNING POINT IN THE STORY. HERE FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE BEING ACCUSED OF SPYING (SEE 42:9), THEY ARE ASSURED THAT THEY ARE FREE OF ANY CRIMINAL ACT. AND THE MEN WERE AFRAID: THAT IS, “THE BROTHERS WERE AFRAID.” IT IS BECAUSE OF THE MONEY: THE BROTHERS ARE AGAIN SPEAKING AMONG THEMSELVES AND SEEKING A REASON FOR THEIR BEING TAKEN TO JOSEPH’S HOUSE. WHICH WAS REPLACED IN OUR SACKS THE FIRST TIME: WAS REPLACED TRANSLATES A FORM OF THE VERB “CAME BACK,” MEANING THAT SOMEONE RETURNED THE MONEY TO THEIR SACKS. THE FIRST TIME REFERS TO THE FIRST VISIT TO EGYPT, THAT IS, “ON OUR FIRST TRIP HERE.” THAT WE ARE BROUGHT IN: THAT IS, “THAT IS WHY WE ARE BEING TAKEN THERE” OR “THAT IS WHY HE IS TAKING US THERE.” SO THAT HE MAY SEEK OCCASION AGAINST US IS LITERALLY “TO THROW HIMSELF UPON US.” THIS EXPRESSION AND THE FOLLOWING ONE AND FALL UPON US SERVE AS A DOUBLE EXPRESSION MEANING “SO THAT HE CAN ACCUSE US AND ATTACK US.” THE PURPOSE OF ATTACKING THE BROTHERS IS TO MAKE SLAVES OF US; THAT IS, “TO MAKE US HIS SLAVES” OR “TO FORCE US TO SERVE HIM.” SEIZE OUR ASSES: SEIZE IS SUPPLIED BY RSV. THE HEBREW HAS NO VERB ASSOCIATED WITH ASSES. WE MAY ALSO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “MAKE US HIS SLAVES, ALONG WITH OUR DONKEYS” OR “MAKE US HIS SLAVES AND TAKE AWAY OUR ANIMALS.” FOR DISCUSSION OF ASSES SEE 22:3.**

**VERSE 18 MAY BE TRANSLATED, FOR EXAMPLE: • AS THE BROTHERS WERE GOING TO JOSEPH’S HOUSE, THEY BECAME AFRAID AND BEGAN TO THINK “HE HAS BROUGHT US HERE BECAUSE OF THE MONEY THAT SOMEONE PUT BACK IN OUR GRAIN SACKS ON OUR FIRST TRIP HERE. THEY ARE GOING TO ACCUSE AND ATTACK US, MAKE US HIS SLAVES, AND TAKE AWAY OUR DONKEYS.”**

**GENESIS 43:19: ACCORDING TO ANCIENT RECORDS AN EGYPTIAN OFFICIAL’S HOUSE WAS VERY LARGE, THE DINING HALL BEING THE PRINCIPAL ROOM. THERE WERE MANY OTHER ROOMS INCLUDING SEPARATE QUARTERS FOR THE WOMEN. THIS MAY BE THE REASON WE HEAR NOTHING OF JOSEPH’S FAMILY IN THIS SCENE. AT THIS POINT IN THE STORY, THE BROTHERS ARE STILL ON THE OUTSIDE OF THE HOUSEFOLLOWING THE STEWARD. THEY APPARENTLY DO NOT WANT TO GO INSIDE UNTIL THEY HAVE CLEARED UP THE MATTER OF THE MONEY. THEY WENT UP TO THE STEWARD … SPOKE TO HIM AT THE DOOR: THAT IS, “THE BROTHERS STOPPED AT THE DOOR AND SPOKE TO JOSEPH’S HEAD SERVANT.”**

**GENESIS 43:20: OH, MY LORD, WE CAME DOWN THE FIRST TIME TO BUY FOOD: OH, TRANSLATES THE HEBREW PARTICLE OF ENTREATY, WHICH IS OFTEN USED WHEN AN INFERIOR SPEAKS TO A PERSON OF SUPERIOR RANK. IN ENGLISH, FOR EXAMPLE, THE EQUIVALENT MAY BE “I BEG YOU TO EXCUSE ME, SIR,” OR “PLEASE EXCUSE ME, SIR.” OTHER LANGUAGES HAVE PARTICULAR EXPRESSIONS IN THIS KIND OF SOCIAL CONTEXT; FOR EXAMPLE, “I SPEAK WITH MY MOUTH COVERED, MY CHIEF,” OR “I HIDE MY FACE TO SAY TO YOU, SIR.” WE CAME DOWN MAY BE RENDERED “WE CAME TO EGYPT” OR “WE CAME TO THIS COUNTRY.” IN A NUMBER OF TRANSLATIONS, THE FIRST TIME IS RENDERED AS “ONCE BEFORE.”**

**GENESIS 43:21: WHEN WE CAME TO THE LODGING PLACE: THAT IS, “WHEN WE LEFT HERE AND CAMPED FOR THE NIGHT” OR “… SPENT THE NIGHT ON THE WAY HOME.” FOR LODGING PLACE SEE 42:27. OUR MONEY IN FULL WEIGHT IS LITERALLY “OUR SILVER IN ITS WEIGHT.” THE HEBREW WORD FOR WEIGHT IS SHEQAL, WHICH IS THE BASIS FOR THE COIN KNOWN AS “SHEKEL.” BEFORE THE USE OF MINTED COINS, METAL WAS WEIGHED TO DETERMINE VALUE. THEY ARE SAYING THAT THE SILVER THAT HAD BEEN WEIGHED OUT TO PAY FOR THE GRAIN WAS ALL THERE IN THE SACK, EVERY BIT OF IT, INSTEAD OF WITH THE PERSON TO WHOM IT WAS SUPPOSED TO BE GIVEN. SO, WE HAVE BROUGHT IT AGAIN WITH US IS LITERALLY “WE BRING IT IN OUR HAND.” THE SENSE IS “WE ARE RETURNING THE MONEY.”**

**GENESIS 43:22: WE DO NOT KNOW WHO PUT OUR MONEY IN OUR SACKS: OUR MONEY REFERS TO THE MONEY USED AS PAYMENT ON THE FIRST TRIP. ACCORDINGLY, IT MAY BE CLEARER TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “WE DON’T KNOW WHO PUT THE MONEY WE PAID FOR THE GRAIN BACK IN OUR SACKS.” THIS LAST SENTENCE OF VERSE 22 IS CLOSELY LINKED IN THOUGHT TO “WE OPENED OUR SACKS, AND THERE WAS EVERY MAN’S MONEY IN THE MOUTH OF HIS SACK” OF VERSE 21. TRANSLATORS MAY FIND THAT IT IS BEST TO LINK THESE SENTENCES, WHICH ARE IN TWO SEPARATE VERSES.**

**GECL DOES THIS BY COMBINING VERSES 21–22 AND TRANSLATING: • AS WE WERE OPENING OUR SACKS AT THE INN ON OUR WAY HOME, WE FOUND ALL THE MONEY THAT WE HAD PAID. WE DID NOT KNOW HOW IT CAME TO BE THERE. HOWEVER, WE HAVE BROUGHT IT ALL BACK AND ALSO ADDITIONAL MONEY FOR THE GRAIN THAT WE WILL BUY. TRANSLATORS MAY FIND THIS A SUITABLE MODEL TO FOLLOW.**

**GENESIS 43:23: THE BROTHERS DO NOT YET UNDERSTAND THAT THEY ARE DEALING WITH JOSEPH, BUT THE STEWARD ASSURES THEM THAT THEY ARE NO LONGER UNDER SUSPICION, AND SO THEY ARE ABLE TO RELAX AND ENJOY THE FEAST THAT LIES AHEAD. HOWEVER, THE NARRATOR IS NOT READY TO LIFT THEIR BURDEN COMPLETELY, AS THE EVENTS OF CHAPTER 44 WILL REVEAL. REST ASSURED IS LITERALLY “PEACE TO YOU [PLURAL].” THE PURPOSE OF THE STEWARD’S REMARK IS TO REASSURE THE BROTHERS THAT THERE IS NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT. WE MAY SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “BE AT EASE,” “CALM YOURSELVES,” OR “DON’T BE UPSET.” IN SOME LANGUAGES A FIGURATIVE EXPRESSION IS USED; FOR EXAMPLE, “QUIETEN YOUR LIVERS,” OR “LET COOLNESS REST ON YOU.” DO NOT BE AFRAID: SEE THE ADMONITION GIVEN TO ABRAHAM BY THE LORD IN 15:1. YOUR GOD AND THE GOD OF YOUR FATHER: IN TRANSLATION IT IS NECESSARY TO MAKE CERTAIN THAT THIS EXPRESSION DOES NOT SUGGEST THAT THESE ARE TWO DIFFERENT GODS. IN MANY LANGUAGES GOD CANNOT BE POSSESSED. CONSEQUENTLY, IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “THE GOD YOU [PLURAL] WORSHIP WHO IS THE GOD YOUR FATHER WORSHIPS” OR “THE GOD YOU [PLURAL] AND YOUR FATHER WORSHIP.” MUST HAVE PUT TREASURE IN YOUR SACKS FOR YOU: IN RSV AND TEV THE STEWARD’S STATEMENT IS A CONJECTURE OR GUESS. NIV AND OTHERS MAKE IT A STATEMENT OF FACT: “HAS GIVEN YOU TREASURE IN.…” TREASURE TRANSLATES A WORD THAT IS RELATED TO THE VERB TO “HIDE” OR “BURY.” THUS, THE TREASURE IS THE VALUABLE THING HIDDEN IN THE GRAIN SACKS. THE ACTUAL REFERENCE IS TO THE MONEY. SEE TEV. I RECEIVED YOUR MONEY: THE STEWARD SAYS THAT THE MONEY THEY PAID “CAME TO ME.” IN 42:25 JOSEPH GAVE ORDERS FOR THE BROTHERS’ MONEY TO BE REPLACED IN THEIR SACKS. THE STEWARD ALLOWS THE BROTHERS TO THINK THAT THE MONEY THEY FOUND CAME ABOUT AS AN ACT OF THEIR FAMILY GOD. WE MAY TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “I RECEIVED THE MONEY YOU PAID FOR YOUR GRAIN.” THEN HE BROUGHT SIMEON OUT TO THEM: SINCE THE CONVERSATION IN VERSES 19–23 APPEARS TO TAKE PLACE AT THE DOOR OF JOSEPH’S HOUSE, IT IS POSSIBLE THAT SIMEON HAD ALREADY BEEN BROUGHT THERE AND WAS INSIDE WAITING. BUT THIS IS NOT THE ONLY WAY OF TAKING THE TEXT. THE REFERENCES TO THE PRISON IN 42:15–24 DO NOT ACTUALLY SAY THAT IT WAS CLOSE TO JOSEPH’S HOUSE, BUT THE STORY PROCEEDS AS IF IT WAS QUITE CLOSE; IT IS THEREFORE ALSO QUITE POSSIBLE THAT IN THIS VERSE SIMEON IS BROUGHT FROM THE PRISON TO JOIN HIS BROTHERS AS THEY GO INTO JOSEPH’S HOUSE. IN MANY LANGUAGES THIS SENTENCE CAN BE TRANSLATED IN THE SAME WAY AS IN ENGLISH, WITHOUT INDICATING WHERE SIMEON WAS BROUGHT FROM.**

**GENESIS 43:24–25: FOR WASHED THEIR FEET SEE COMMENTS ON 18:4. FOR PROVENDER SEE 24:25. EAT BREAD MEANS TO HAVE A MEAL. TRANSLATORS MAY FIND THAT SOME ADJUSTMENTS ARE REQUIRED TO TRANSLATE THE ORDER OF EVENTS IN VERSES 24–25. IT IS MOST LIKELY THAT THE BROTHERS LEARNED EARLY ON THAT THEY WERE TO EAT AT JOSEPH’S HOUSE. THEREFORE, WE MAY COMBINE VERSES 24–25 AND SHIFT VERSE 25B TO THE OPENING OF THE COMBINED TEXT.**

**WE MAY SAY, FOR EXAMPLE: • 24–25 THE BROTHERS LEARNED THAT THEY WERE TO EAT THE NOON MEAL IN JOSEPH’S HOUSE. AFTER THEY HAD ENTERED THE HOUSE, THE STEWARD GAVE THEM WATER TO WASH THEIR FEET. HE ALSO FED THEIR DONKEYS. WHILE THEY WAITED FOR JOSEPH TO COME HOME, THEY LAID OUT THE GIFTS THEY HAD BROUGHT FOR HIM.**

**GENESIS 43:26: VERSES 26–30 DESCRIBE THE MEETING BETWEEN JOSEPH AND HIS BROTHERS AND THE EMOTION OF JOSEPH UPON SEEING BENJAMIN. WHEN JOSEPH CAME HOME, THEY BROUGHT INTO THE HOUSETO HIM THE PRESENT … THEM: THEY, OF COURSE, REFERS TO THE BROTHERS. APPARENTLY, THE GIFTS HAD BEEN PLACED OUTSIDE, WHERE JOSEPH WOULD SEE THEM WHEN HE CAME HOME AT NOON. IT MAY ALSO BE THAT THE GIFTS HAVE BEEN PLACED IN THE ENTRY ROOM AND ARE LATER BROUGHT INTO ANOTHER LARGER INSIDE ROOM. THE BROTHERS BRING THE GIFTS TO HIM. BOWED DOWN TO HIM TO THE GROUND: THIS ACTION APPEARS TO FOLLOW THE PRESENTATION OF THE GIFTS. THIS IS THE SECOND TIME THE BROTHERS HAVE BOWED DOWN TO JOSEPH. THE FIRST OCCASION WAS IN 42:6. BOTH OF THESE ENCOUNTERS RECALL JOSEPH’S DREAMS IN 37:7–9.**

**GENESIS 43:27: JOSEPH SAYS NOTHING ABOUT THE GIFTS BUT RATHER INQUIRES ABOUT THEIR OWN AND THEIR FATHER’S HEALTH. INQUIRED ABOUT THEIR WELFARE: THAT IS, “ASKED IF THEY WERE WELL [IN GOOD HEALTH—SHALOM].” FOR FURTHER COMMENTS ON SHALOM SEE 15:15. IN SOME TRANSLATIONS THIS INQUIRY IS EXPRESSED IN DIRECT SPEECH: “ASKED THEM, ‘ARE YOU WELL?’” THIS LEADS ON TO THE OTHER QUESTIONS THAT ARE ALREADY IN DIRECT SPEECH IN THE HEBREW. ANOTHER APPROACH TO THIS CLAUSE IS TO TAKE IT AS A GREETING, AS NJB DOES; FOR EXAMPLE, “SAID GOOD DAY TO THEM.” IS YOUR FATHER WELL? LITERALLY “IS THERE SHALOM TO YOUR FATHER?” TEV HAS RESTRUCTURED THE DIRECT SPEECH PARTS OF VERSE 27 SO THAT THE TWO QUESTIONS ARE KEPT TOGETHER. TRANSLATORS MAY FIND TEV A GOOD MODEL HERE.**

**GENESIS 43:28: YOUR SERVANT OUR FATHER IS … ALIVE: THE BROTHERS REFER TO JACOB AS YOUR SERVANT AND OUR FATHER. IN SOME LANGUAGES THIS DUAL IDENTIFICATION OF ONE PERSON MAY BE CONFUSING. IN THAT CASE WE MAY HAVE TO SAY “OUR FATHER WHO SERVES YOU” OR “OUR FATHER WHO HONORS YOU.” IN SOME LANGUAGES IS WELL … IS STILL ALIVE IS VERY REPETITIVE, AND SO IT IS RESTRUCTURED TO SAY “IS WELL; HE HAS NOT DIED [YET].” AND THEY BOWED THEIR HEADS AND MADE OBEISANCE: THE HEBREW EXPRESSION IS USED FOR BOTH BOWING IN WORSHIP AND FOR BOWING TO PAY RESPECT TO A PERSON OF SUPERIOR RANK. SEE TEV.**

**GENESIS 43:29: HE LIFTED UP HIS EYES IS AN IDIOM THAT MEANS “HE LOOKED UP,” “HE LOOKED AROUND,” OR “HE LOOKED.” HIS BROTHER BENJAMIN MAY NEED TO BE EXPRESSED AS “HIS YOUNGER BROTHER BENJAMIN.” HIS MOTHER’S SON IS THE NARRATOR’S WAY OF CALLING ATTENTION TO THE SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP JOSEPH HAS WITH BENJAMIN THROUGH THE SAME MOTHER, RACHEL. IS THIS YOUR YOUNGEST BROTHER, OF WHOM YOU SPOKE TO ME? TRANSLATORS DIFFER IN THE WAY THEY HANDLE THIS. RSV AND OTHERS MAKE IT A QUESTION, BUT TEV AND OTHERS PREFER A STATEMENT. BOTH INTERPRETATIONS ARE POSSIBLE. GOD BE GRACIOUS TO YOU, MY SON: THIS IS A BLESSING OR WISH FOR GOD TO SHOW FAVOR OR KINDNESS TO BENJAMIN. MY SON STRENGTHENS THE IMPRESSION THAT BENJAMIN IS A YOUNG LAD. REGARDLESS OF THE FACT THAT NOT MANY YEARS COULD SEPARATE JOSEPH AND BENJAMIN, IT IS THE DESIGN OF THE STORY TO PRESENT BENJAMIN AS A YOUTH. IN SOME LANGUAGES MY SON CAN ONLY MEAN THAT JOSEPH IS BENJAMIN’S FATHER. IN SUCH CASES IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO SAY SOMETHING EQUIVALENT TO “YOUNG MAN” OR “BOY.”**

**GENESIS 43:30: THEN JOSEPH MADE HASTE: JOSEPH’S HASTE IS TO GET AWAY FROM THE BROTHERS SO THAT HE COULD RELEASE HIS PENT-UP EMOTIONS. HIS HEART YEARNED FOR HIS BROTHER IS LITERALLY “HIS COMPASSION GREW HOT FOR HIS BROTHER.” NRSV HAS REVISED RSV TO SAY “HE WAS OVERCOME WITH AFFECTION.” REB HAS “JOSEPH, SUDDENLY OVERCOME BY HIS FEELING FOR HIS BROTHER, …” SEE TEV. IN SOME LANGUAGES OTHER FIGURATIVE EXPRESSIONS ARE USED; FOR EXAMPLE, “JOSEPH’S INNERMOST BECAME VERY HEAVY” OR “JOSEPH’S LIVER BEGAN TO SHAKE.” HE SOUGHT A PLACE TO WEEP: THE WORD PLACE DOES NOT OCCUR IN THE HEBREW, AND A BETTER TRANSLATION IS AS IN NRSV, “HE WAS ABOUT TO WEEP.” HE ENTERED HIS CHAMBER AND WEPT THERE: CHAMBER REFERS TO AN INNER ROOM, OF WHICH THERE WERE MANY IN HOUSES LIKE JOSEPH’S. NRSV CALLS IT “A PRIVATE ROOM.”**

**A MODEL TRANSLATION OF VERSE 30 IS: • WHEN JOSEPH HAD SAID THAT, HE WAS SO OVERCOME BY FEELINGS FOR HIS YOUNGER BROTHER THAT HE WAS ABOUT TO CRY. SO, HE QUICKLY LEFT AND WENT INTO ANOTHER ROOM TO CRY.**

**GENESIS 43:31: THEN HE WASHED HIS FACE AND CAME OUT: IN SOME LANGUAGES THE TRANSITION FROM CRYING TO RETURNING TO THE ROOM MAY NEED TO BE MORE DETAILED THAN IN RSV; FOR EXAMPLE, “AFTER HE HAD FINISHED CRYING …” OR “WHEN HE HAD CRIED FOR A WHILE.…” THE PURPOSE OF WASHING HIS FACE WAS TO WASH AWAY THE TEARS FROM HIS EYES AND FACE. CONTROLLING HIMSELF: CONTROLLING TRANSLATES A VERB MEANING TO BE STRONG. TO BE STRONG TOWARD YOURSELF IS TO RESTRAIN YOURSELF. IN SOME LANGUAGES THIS IS EXPRESSED AS “HE WOULD NOT LET THEM SEE HOW HE FELT” OR “HE HID HIS TRUE FEELINGS FROM THEM.” LET FOOD BE SERVED: THESE WORDS ARE DIRECTED TO THE STEWARD. WE MAY ALSO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “YOU MAY BRING IN THE FOOD NOW” OR “SERVE THE MEAL.” IF INDIRECT SPEECH IS MORE NATURAL, WE MAY SAY “AND HE ORDERED THE SERVANTS TO BRING THE FOOD.”**

**GENESIS 43:32: VERSES 32–34 DESCRIBE THE MEAL EATEN AT JOSEPH’S HOUSE. VERSE 32 SAYS THAT THE MEAL IS SERVED IN THREE PLACES: JOSEPH, WHO IS OF HIGH RANK, EATS BY HIMSELF; THE BROTHERS BEING HEBREWS EAT BY THEMSELVES; AND SOME EGYPTIANS EAT BY THEMSELVES. THIS WAY OF SERVING MAY BE EXPRESSED, FOR EXAMPLE, AS “THEY PUT OUT SEPARATELY HIS [JOSEPH’S] FOOD, AND THEIRS, AND THE FOOD OF THE EGYPTIANS.” TEV HAS THE MEAL SERVED ON SEPARATE TABLES: “JOSEPH WAS SERVED AT ONE TABLE, AND HIS BROTHERS AT ANOTHER”; THIS IS A USEFUL MODEL FOR PEOPLE WHO ARE ACCUSTOMED TO EAT AT A TABLE. AND THE EGYPTIANS WHO ATE WITH HIM: THE TEXT DOES NOT INDICATE WHO THESE PERSONS ARE. HOWEVER, WE MAY ASSUME THEY ARE GUESTS, PROBABLY LESSER OFFICIALS DOING BUSINESS WITH JOSEPH, OR PERHAPS MALE MEMBERS OF JOSEPH’S WIFE’S FAMILY. BECAUSE THE EGYPTIANS MIGHT NOT EAT BREAD WITH THE HEBREWS, FOR THAT IS AN ABOMINATION …: THE EGYPTIANS COULD NOT EAT AT THE SAME TABLE WITH FOREIGNERS. DOING SO WAS CONSIDERED AN ABOMINATION, WHICH MEANS SOMETHING DISGUSTING, LOATHSOME, OR DETESTABLE. ACCORDING TO THE ANCIENT GREEK HISTORIAN HERODOTUS, THE EGYPTIANS “WOULD NOT USE THE KNIFE OR COOKING UTENSIL OF A GREEK, BECAUSE IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN EMPLOYED IN PREPARING FOOD FROM THE FLESH OF A COW, WHICH WAS SACRED TO ISIS [AN ANCIENT EGYPTIAN GOD].” ACCORDINGLY, THE REASON FOR NOT EATING WITH FOREIGNERS WAS A RELIGIOUS TABOO. WE MAY TRANSLATE, THEREFORE, “IT WAS TABOO FOR EGYPTIANS TO EAT WITH HEBREWS” OR “THE RELIGION OF THE EGYPTIANS PROHIBITED THEM FROM EATING WITH HEBREWS.” TRANSLATORS MAY FIND THAT A FOOTNOTE IS NEEDED TO EXPLAIN THIS TABOO. IN THAT CASE WE MAY SUGGEST, FOR EXAMPLE, “AT THAT TIME THE HEBREWS AND OTHER FOREIGNERS WERE LOOKED UPON BY THE EGYPTIANS AS UNCLEAN, BECAUSE THEY ATE FOOD THAT THE EGYPTIANS DID NOT EAT.”**

**GENESIS 43:33: AND THEY SAT BEFORE HIM: THERE IS NO CLEAR CONNECTION IN THE RSV RENDERING BETWEEN THEY SAT BEFORE HIM AND THE AMAZEMENT THAT THE BROTHERS EXPRESSED AT THE SEATING ARRANGEMENT. BEFORE HIM MAY BE UNDERSTOOD TO MEAN EITHER “OPPOSITE JOSEPH” OR “FACING JOSEPH” (TEV). HOWEVER, SPEISER UNDERSTANDS BEFORE HIM TO MEAN “AT JOSEPH’S DIRECTIONS.” IN THIS SENSE IT IS JOSEPH WHO DETERMINES WHERE EACH MAN WILL SIT, EITHER BY TELLING THEM DIRECTLY OR BY INSTRUCTING THE STEWARD WHERE TO PLACE THEM. REB, WHICH FOLLOWS SPEISER’S LEAD, TRANSLATES “WHEN AT HIS [JOSEPH’S] DIRECTION THE BROTHERS WERE SEATED … THEY LOOKED AT EACH OTHER IN AMAZEMENT.” FOR ANOTHER VERSION THAT LINKS THE SEATING ARRANGEMENT TO THE BROTHERS’ SURPRISE, SEE TEV. ONE EXAMPLE OF A TRANSLATION OF THIS CLAUSE IS “JOSEPH HAD TOLD THE SERVANT TO MARK THE CHAIRS WHERE ALL THE BROTHERS MUST SIT WHEN THEY ATE.” THE FIRST-BORN ACCORDING TO HIS BIRTHRIGHT AND THE YOUNGEST ACCORDING TO HIS YOUTH: RSV, WHICH TRANSLATES THE HEBREW LITERALLY, MAY NEED TO BE RESTRUCTURED TO SHOW THAT THE SEATING ARRANGEMENT IS BY ORDER OF AGE, FROM THE OLDEST DOWN TO THE YOUNGEST. SEE TEV. WE MAY ALSO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “JOSEPH SHOWED EACH OF THE BROTHERS WHERE TO SIT. HE SEATED THEM EACH ACCORDING TO HIS AGE, FROM THE OLDEST TO THE YOUNGEST.” OTHER POSSIBILITIES ARE “HE [JOSEPH] WANTED THEM ALL TO SIT FOLLOWING THEIR NUMBER OF YEARS, STARTING FROM THE FIRST AND GOING TO THE YOUNGEST”; AND “… WITH THE FIRSTBORN AT ONE END OF THE TABLE, AND IN A LINE AS THEY WERE BORN, TO THE LAST-BORN AT THE OTHER END.” AND THE MEN LOOKED AT ONE ANOTHER IN AMAZEMENT: THEIR SURPRISE COMES FROM FINDING THAT THEY ARE SEATED IN THE ORDER THEY WERE BORN. IN TRANSLATION IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO MAKE CLEAR THE REASON FOR THEIR SURPRISE. FOR A MODEL SEE TEV.**

**GENESIS 43:34: PORTIONS WERE TAKEN TO THEM FROM JOSEPH’S TABLE: PORTIONS REFERS TO SERVINGS OF FOOD OR FOOD THAT IS PUT ON A PLATE FROM A LARGER CONTAINER. FROM JOSEPH’S TABLE IS LITERALLY “FROM BEFORE HIM.” WE MAY NEED TO TRANSLATE IN THE ACTIVE VOICE; FOR EXAMPLE, “JOSEPH SENT THEM EACH A PORTION OF THE FOOD THE SERVANTS HAD PLACED BEFORE HIM,” OR “JOSEPH ORDERED HIS SERVANTS TO TAKE EACH A PLATE OF FOOD FROM THE FOOD THAT THEY HAD SERVED HIM.” FIVE TIMES AS MUCH: ALTHOUGH MOST MODERN TRANSLATIONS PREFER FIVE TIMES, SPEISER THINKS FIVE IS USED HERE AS A ROUND NUMBER, JUST AS TEN WAS USED IN 24:10. CONSEQUENTLY SPEISER TRANSLATES “SEVERAL TIMES AS LARGE,” AND THIS IS FOLLOWED BY SPCL AND NJV. HOWEVER, IT IS APPARENT THAT THE NARRATOR IS BUILDING UP JOSEPH’S ATTENTION TO BENJAMIN, AND FIVE TIMES IS MORE DEFINITE THAN “SEVERAL TIMES.” SOME TRANSLATIONS SAY “BUT THE FOOD THEY GAVE TO THE YOUNGEST WAS ENOUGH FOR FIVE MEN.” SO, THEY DRANK AND WERE MERRY WITH HIM: THIS IS LITERALLY “AND THEY DRANK AND BECAME DRUNK WITH HIM.” AT A MEAL OR FEAST OF THIS KIND, WINE WOULD BE DRUNK. WERE MERRY TRANSLATES THE SAME VERB AND FORM AS IN 9:21, IN WHICH NOAH DRANK WINE AND “BECAME DRUNK.” ALL OF THIS SEEMS TO SAY CLEARLY THAT THE BROTHERS GOT INTOXICATED. HOWEVER, IN TERMS OF THE STORY LINE THE NARRATOR IS PREPARING TO CONTRAST THIS JOYFUL OCCASION WITH THE SHOCK OF BENJAMIN BEING ACCUSED OF STEALING FROM JOSEPH’S HOUSE, A HORRIBLE BREACH OF HOSPITALITY. THEREFORE, IT IS MORE FITTING FOR CHAPTER 43 TO END WITH THE BROTHERS CELEBRATING AND MAKING MERRY THAN ON THEM BECOMING DULL WITH DRUNKENNESS. IN THIS REGARD TEV IS ALONE AMONG MODERN VERSIONS TO SAY “UNTIL THEY WERE DRUNK.” THE HANDBOOK RECOMMENDS, THEREFORE, SOMETHING EQUIVALENT TO RSV. WE MAY SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “THEY ATE AND DRANK WINE WITH JOSEPH UNTIL THEY BECAME VERY CHEERFUL” OR “THEY … UNTIL THEY WERE ALL VERY LIGHT-HEARTED.”**

**JOSEPH TESTS HIS BROTHERS (44:1–17)**

**FOLLOWING THE FEAST AT JOSEPH’S HOUSE, JOSEPH ORDERS HIS STEWARD TO FILL THE BROTHERS’ SACKS WITH GRAIN AND TO PUT THEIR MONEY IN THEIR SACKS AS HE HAD DONE ON THEIR FIRST RETURN TO CANAAN. IN ADDITION, HE ARRANGES TO HAVE HIS SILVER CUP PLACED IN BENJAMIN’S SACK; AND THE BROTHERS LEAVE FOR HOME (VERSES 1–3). AFTER THEY HAVE LEFT THE CITY, JOSEPH SENDS HIS STEWARD WITH INSTRUCTIONS TO ASK WHY THEY HAVE STOLEN THE RULER’S SILVER CUP. THE BROTHERS DENY HAVING DONE SUCH A THING. MOREOVER, THEY ARE WILLING THAT IF ONE OF THEM IS GUILTY HE SHOULD BE PUT TO DEATH AND THE REST MADE SLAVES OF THE RULER. THE STEWARD SAYS THAT ONLY THE ONE WITH THE CUP WILL BECOME A SLAVE; THE REST WILL BE FREE TO GO (VERSES 4–10). THE STEWARD EXAMINES EACH MAN’S SACK AND FINDS THE CUP IN BENJAMIN’S SACK. STRICKEN WITH GRIEF AND DISMAY THE BROTHERS RETURN TO THE CITY TO FACE THEIR JUDGE (VERSES 11–13). AT JOSEPH’S HOUSETHE BROTHERS FALL TO THE GROUND IN FRONT OF HIM. JOSEPH ASKS THEM HOW THEY COULD DARE DO SUCH A THING AGAINST A MAN WHO HAS THE POWER OF DIVINATION (VERSES 14–15). JUDAH SPEAKS FOR THE BROTHERS AND ACCEPTS THAT THEY ARE ALL JOSEPH’S SLAVES. JOSEPH, HOWEVER, REPEATS THE WORDS SPOKEN BY THE STEWARD, THAT ONLY BENJAMIN WILL BECOME HIS SLAVE (VERSES 16–17).**

**SUBDIVISION HEADING**

**THE HANDBOOK HEADING MAY NEED TO BE MODIFIED TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “THE SILVER CUP IN BENJAMIN’S SACK,” “THE BROTHERS ARE ACCUSED OF STEALING JOSEPH’S SILVER CUP,” OR “WHY HAVE YOU STOLEN MY SILVER CUP?” TEV HAS “THE MISSING CUP,” FRCL “JOSEPH PUTS HIS BROTHERS TO THE TEST,” NIV “A SILVER CUP IN A SACK,” NJB “JOSEPH’S CUP IN BENJAMIN’S SACK,” SPCL “JOSEPH’S CUP.”**

**GENESIS 44:1: THE ACTION IN THIS CHAPTER FLOWS DIRECTLY FROM THE CLOSE OF CHAPTER 43. VERSE 3 MAKES CLEAR THAT THE BROTHERS LEFT FOR CANAAN IN THE EARLY MORNING, WHICH WE MAY ASSUME IS THE MORNING FOLLOWING THE FEASTING AND DRINKING AT JOSEPH’S HOUSE. WE MAY ALSO OPEN THIS CHAPTER BY SAYING, FOR EXAMPLE, “AFTER THE FEASTING WAS OVER,” “BEFORE DAWN THE NEXT DAY,” “WHEN THE EATING AND DRINKING WERE FINISHED.” THEN HE COMMANDED THE STEWARD OF HIS HOUSE: TRANSLATORS MAY PREFER TO SAY “THEN JOSEPH COMMANDED.…” STEWARD IS LITERALLY “THE ONE OVER HIS HOUSE,” AS IN 43:16. SEE THERE FOR COMMENTS. FILL THE MEN’S SACKS WITH FOOD: FOOD HERE REFERS TO GRAIN. AS MUCH AS THEY CAN CARRY: JOSEPH IS AS CONCERNED FOR JACOB’S HUNGRY FAMILY AS HE WAS IN 42:19. THE LOADED SACKS WILL BE CARRIED BY DONKEYS. JOSEPH SAYS THIS NOT TO LIMIT THE AMOUNT TO WHAT A MAN CAN CARRY BUT RATHER TO EXPRESS THE MAXIMUM AMOUNT THAT CAN BE PUT INTO A SACK. ACCORDINGLY, MFT TRANSLATES “WITH AS MUCH GRAIN AS THEY CAN HOLD,” WHICH IS A GOOD MODEL. AND PUT EACH MAN’S MONEY IN THE MOUTH OF HIS SACK: SEE 42:25. IT IS SIGNIFICANT THAT, WHEN THE SACKS ARE INSPECTED BY THE STEWARD IN VERSES 11–12, NOTHING IS SAID ABOUT THE SILVER IN THE SACKS. THIS LEADS SOME INTERPRETERS TO THINK THAT THIS INFORMATION HAS BEEN INSERTED LATER FROM 42:25.**

**GENESIS 44:2: MY CUP, MY SILVER CUP: CUP TRANSLATES A TERM THAT REFERS TO A CUP OR BOWL WHICH IS A DRINKING CUP, PROBABLY WITHOUT A HANDLE. SILVER MAKES THE CUP ESPECIALLY VALUABLE. WE MAY TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “MY SILVER CUP” OR “MY DRINKING BOWL, THE ONE MADE OF SILVER.” GECL SAYS “MY CUP, YOU KNOW, THE SILVER ONE.” IN MANY AREAS PEOPLE DRINK FROM GOURDS, WOODEN BOWLS, OR CLAY BOWLS AND NOT CUPS. HOWEVER, SILVER IS NEARLY UNIVERSALLY KNOWN, AND THE IDEA OF A DRINKING CUP OR BOWL MADE OF SILVER IS NOT DIFFICULT TO IMAGINE. IN THE MOUTH OF THE SACK OF THE YOUNGEST: THAT IS, “IN THE TOP OF THE GRAIN SACK OF THE YOUNGEST BROTHER.” WITH HIS MONEY FOR THE GRAIN: THAT IS, “ALONG WITH THE MONEY HE PAID FOR THE GRAIN.” SEE TEV.**

**GENESIS 44:3: AS SOON AS THE MORNING WAS LIGHT: THAT IS, “AT THE FIRST LIGHT OF MORNING” OR “IN THE EARLY DAWN.” WERE SENT AWAY WITH THEIR ASSES: IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO SHIFT FROM THE PASSIVE TO AN ACTIVE CONSTRUCTION; FOR EXAMPLE, “WITH THE FIRST LIGHT OF MORNING, THEY SENT THE BROTHERS ON THEIR WAY WITH THEIR DONKEYS” OR “WHEN IT WAS EARLY MORNING JOSEPH’S SERVANTS SENT THEM OFF WITH THEIR DONKEYS, AND THEY LEFT.”**

**GENESIS 44:4: UP, FOLLOW AFTER THE MEN: JOSEPH’S INSTRUCTIONS TO THE STEWARD MAY BE EXPRESSED AS “GO, FOLLOW THEM” OR “GO AFTER THOSE MEN.” WHEN YOU OVERTAKE THEM: THAT IS, “WHEN YOU CATCH THEM,” OR WE MAY COMBINE THIS WITH THE FIRST COMMAND; FOR EXAMPLE, “GO AFTER THOSE MEN AND CATCH THEM.” WHY HAVE YOU RETURNED EVIL FOR GOOD? IN RSV VERSE 4 HAS TWO “WHY” QUESTIONS. THE FIRST IS ABSTRACT AND THE SECOND CONCRETE. HOWEVER, AS THE RSV AND TEV (VERSE 5) FOOTNOTES SHOW, THE SECOND QUESTION WHY HAVE YOU STOLEN MY SILVER CUP? IS NOT IN THE HEBREW TEXT BUT IS TAKEN FROM THE SEPTUAGINT.**

**MODERN TRANSLATIONS HANDLE THIS QUESTION IN THREE WAYS: (1) AS IN RSV, IN WHICH BOTH QUESTIONS ARE PLACED IN VERSE 4, (2) AS IN TEV, IN WHICH THE SECOND QUESTION IS PLACED IN VERSE 5, AND (3) AS IN TOB, NJV, NJB, WHICH OMIT THE SECOND QUESTION.**

**HOTTP FAVORS KEEPING THE QUESTION WHY HAVE YOU STOLEN MY SILVER CUP? AND PLACING IT IN VERSE 5, AS IN TEV. APPARENTLY, THE SEPTUAGINT TRANSLATORS FELT THIS ADDITION WAS NECESSARY FOR CORRECT UNDERSTANDING, AND IT IS RECOMMENDED TO MODERN TRANSLATORS ALSO. THIS QUESTION MUST BE EXPRESSED IN SOME LANGUAGES AS, FOR EXAMPLE, “WHY HAVE YOU STOLEN MY MASTER’S SILVER CUP?” THE EXPRESSION RETURNED EVIL FOR GOOD IS DIFFICULT AND MAY HAVE TO BE RESTRUCTURED IN SOME LANGUAGES TO INDICATE THE PEOPLE WHO DID THE GOOD AND THE EVIL ACTIONS. TWO EXAMPLES OF SUCH RESTRUCTURING ARE “WE [EXCLUSIVE] DID GOOD TO YOU. WHY HAVE YOU DONE BAD TO US?” AND “MY MASTER WAS VERY GOOD TO YOU. WHY HAVE YOU BEHAVED BADLY TO HIM IN RETURN?”**

**GENESIS 44:5: IS IT NOT FROM THIS THAT MY LORD DRINKS AND BY THIS THAT HE DIVINES? THE STEWARD’S QUESTION IS RHETORICAL AND MAY NEED TO BE REFORMULATED IN SOME LANGUAGES TO SAY “IT IS THE CUP HE DRINKS FROM AND USES FOR DIVINING.” FROM THIS: THIS REFERS TO THE SILVER CUP. IF THE SECOND QUESTION IS NOT INCLUDED IN VERSE 4 (SEE DISCUSSION ABOVE), THERE IS ANOTHER POSSIBILITY FOR SUPPLYING THE INFORMATION THAT IS UNDERSTOOD AND NEEDED TO MAKE THE TEXT CLEAR AT THIS POINT. AS EXPRESSED IN ONE TRANSLATION, WE MAY SAY “THE CUP YOU HAVE TAKEN IS THE CUP MY MASTER DRINKS FROM.” DIVINES REFERS TO THE PRACTICE OF FORESEEING OR FORETELLING FUTURE EVENTS, OR DISCOVERING HIDDEN KNOWLEDGE. ACCORDING TO DRIVER, WATER WAS POURED INTO A VESSEL, AND THEN PIECES OF GOLD, SILVER, OR PRECIOUS STONES WERE ADDED, AND THE DIVINER OBSERVED THE DESIGNS THAT APPEARED ON THE SURFACE OF THE WATER. FROM THESE SHAPES THE DIVINER COULD INTERPRET EVENTS. SO ALSO, SPEISER. FOR FURTHER COMMENTS ON DIVINATION SEE 30:27. YOU HAVE DONE WRONG IN SO DOING IS LITERALLY “YOU [PLURAL] HAVE DONE EVIL WHAT YOU [PLURAL] HAVE DONE.” SEE TEV. WE MAY TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “BY STEALING YOU HAVE DONE A BAD THING” OR “YOU HAVE STOLEN SOMETHING AND THAT IS BAD.”**

**GENESIS 44:6: SPOKE TO THEM THESE WORDS: THESE WORDS ARE THE ONES JOSEPH TOLD THE STEWARD. WE MAY TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “HE SAID TO THEM WHAT JOSEPH HAD TOLD HIM TO SAY.” THE BROTHERS, WHO LEFT THE CITY FEELING SECURE, ARE ABRUPTLY PLUNGED INTO DESPAIR, HEARING THAT THEY ARE ACCUSED OF THEFT.**

**GENESIS 44:7: WHY DOES MY LORD SPEAK SUCH WORDS AS THESE? THIS QUESTION IS NOT ASKING FOR AN EXPLANATION BUT RATHER EXPRESSES THE BROTHERS’ DISBELIEF IN WHAT THEY ARE HEARING: “SIR, HOW CAN YOU SAY SUCH A THING?” OR “HOW CAN YOU ACCUSE US IN THIS WAY, SIR?” A TRANSLATION THAT EXPRESSES THE SENSE BUT DOES NOT USE A QUESTION FORM SAYS “WE DON’T KNOW WHAT YOU ARE TALKING ABOUT.” FAR BE IT FROM YOUR SERVANTS THAT THEY SHOULD DO SUCH A THING! FOR THE TRANSLATION OF THIS EXPRESSION, SEE 18:25. YOUR SERVANTS REFERS TO THE BROTHERS WHO ARE SPEAKING TO THEIR SUPERIOR. IN MANY LANGUAGES IT WILL BE TRANSLATED AS THE FIRST-PERSON PLURAL (EXCLUSIVE) PRONOUN; FOR EXAMPLE, “FAR BE IT FROM US TO DO …” OR “WE COULD NEVER DO.…” IN SOME LANGUAGES THE SENTENCE WITH YOUR SERVANTS MAY BE EXPRESSED AS, FOR EXAMPLE, “SUCH SMALL PEOPLE AS WE ARE COULD NOT DO SUCH A THING.”**

**GENESIS 44:8: BEHOLD, THE MONEY WHICH WE FOUND IN THE MOUTH OF OUR SACKS: BEHOLD CALLS ATTENTION TO THE REASON WHY THE BROTHERS COULD NOT BE GUILTY AS CHARGED, NAMELY, THAT THEY RETURNED THE SILVER THAT HAD BEEN PUT INTO THEIR SACKS. TEV EXPRESSES BEHOLD HERE WITH “YOU KNOW THAT …,” WHICH IS A GOOD MODEL. HOW THEN SHOULD WE STEAL SILVER OR GOLD? A MORE NATURAL QUESTION IN MANY LANGUAGES IS “WHY SHOULD WE STEAL …?” “WHY DO YOU THINK WE WOULD …?” OR “WE COULD NOT STEAL.…” SEE ALSO TEV.**

**GENESIS 44:9: SO CERTAIN ARE THE BROTHERS OF THEIR INNOCENCE THAT THEY ARE WILLING TO HAVE THE CULPRIT KILLED AND THE REST MADE SLAVES. WITH WHOMEVER OF YOUR SERVANTS IT BE FOUND, LET HIM DIE: THAT IS, “IF YOU FIND THE CUP WITH ANY ONE OF US, THAT PERSON SHOULD DIE [BE KILLED]” OR “LET THEM KILL THE ONE OF US WHO HAS THAT CUP.” AND WE ALSO WILL BE MY LORD’S SLAVES: THAT IS, “AND THE REST OF US WILL BE YOUR SLAVES, SIR.” MANY LANGUAGES REQUIRE CHANGING MY LORD’S TO “YOUR.”**

**GENESIS 44:10: THE STEWARD APPEARS TO BE WILLING TO SETTLE FOR LESS THAN THE BROTHERS OFFER. HE MOST PROBABLY ASSUMES THAT JOSEPH IS ONLY INTERESTED IN KEEPING BENJAMIN, AND THAT IT WAS FOR THAT REASON THAT HE HAD THE CUP PUT IN BENJAMIN’S SACK. LET IT BE AS YOU SAY: THIS APPEARS TO MEAN THAT THE CONDITIONS OFFERED BY THE BROTHERS, NAMELY, THAT ALL BUT THE CULPRIT WILL BECOME SLAVES, ARE ACCEPTABLE TO THE STEWARD. HOWEVER, WHAT THE STEWARD ACCEPTS IS THAT THE GUILTY ONE BE MADE A SLAVE, NOT PUT TO DEATH. ACCORDINGLY, WE MAY TRANSLATE “ALL RIGHT, I ACCEPT.” HE WITH WHOM IT IS FOUND SHALL BE MY SLAVE: SINCE THIS STATEMENT CONTRASTS WITH THE PROPOSAL MADE BY THE BROTHERS, IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO INTRODUCE IT WITH A WORD OR EXPRESSION THAT MARKS A CONTRAST; FOR EXAMPLE, “HOWEVER,” “BUT,” OR “EXCEPT.” THE REST OF YOU SHALL BE BLAMELESS: THAT IS, “THE REST OF YOU WILL NOT BE GUILTY,” “… WILL BE JUDGED AS INNOCENT.”**

**GENESIS 44:11: STILL ASSUMING THE STEWARD IS MISTAKEN IN HIS CHARGES, THE BROTHERS HURRY TO UNLOAD THEIR SACKS OF GRAIN FROM THEIR DONKEYS [ASSES], PLACE THEM ON THE GROUND, AND OPEN THEM.**

**GENESIS 44:12: AND HE SEARCHED, BEGINNING WITH THE ELDEST AND ENDING WITH THE YOUNGEST: BY NOW THE STEWARD KNOWS THE ORDER IN WHICH THE BROTHERS WERE BORN. THE WHOLE CLAUSE MAY BE EXPRESSED AS “THE STEWARD BEGAN SEARCHING IN THE SACK OF THE OLDEST BROTHER AND CONTINUED UNTIL HE FINALLY CAME TO THE YOUNGEST ONE.” THIS PROCEDURE ALLOWS THE TENSION TO MOUNT AMONG THE BROTHERS AS THEY WAIT TO BE CLEARED OF CHARGES. AND THE CUP WAS FOUND IN BENJAMIN’S SACK: THAT IS, “AND THERE IN BENJAMIN’S SACK HE FOUND THE CUP.”**

**GENESIS 44:13: THE SHOCK OF THE DISCOVERY CANNOT BE EXPRESSED IN WORDS BUT ONLY IN A DESPERATE GESTURE OF GRIEF. RENT THEIR CLOTHES: SEE 37:29. IN THIS CONTEXT THE ACTION EXPRESSES THE EMOTION OF GRIEF OR HORROR: “… BECAUSE THEY WERE VERY UPSET.” THE TEXT DOES NOT SAY IF THE STEWARD TOOK THE CUP. FURTHERMORE, NOTHING IS SAID ABOUT THE MONEY IN THE SACKS. WITH DISMAY AND DISBELIEF, THE BROTHERS LOAD THEIR ANIMALS AND RETURN, PROBABLY UNDER THE THREATENING SCRUTINY OF THE STEWARD, TO THE CITY AND TO JOSEPH’S HOUSE.**

**GENESIS 44:14: WHEN JUDAH AND HIS BROTHERS CAME TO JOSEPH’S HOUSE, HE WAS STILL THERE: AT THIS POINT JUDAH IS MENTIONED AS THE ONE WHO TAKES THE INITIATIVE ON BENJAMIN’S BEHALF. ACCORDING TO VERSE 3 THE BROTHERS DEPARTED “AS SOON AS THE MORNING WAS LIGHT.” IT IS STILL MORNING AND JOSEPH HAS NOT YET LEFT HIS HOUSETO GO TO HIS PLACE OF WORK, PRESUMABLY AT THE KING’S PALACE. SINCE JOSEPH IS THE CENTRAL CHARACTER THROUGHOUT, IT MAY BE BEST TO BEGIN THIS VERSE BY MENTIONING JOSEPH FIRST; FOR EXAMPLE, NEB/REB SAY “JOSEPH WAS STILL IN THE HOUSEWHEN JUDAH AND THE BROTHERS ARRIVED.” ALTHOUGH THE TEXT DOES NOT ACTUALLY GIVE THE REASON WHY JOSEPH HAD REMAINED AT HIS HOUSE, IT IS ALSO QUITE IN KEEPING WITH THE STORY LINE TO ASSUME THAT HE WAS THERE DELIBERATELY; AS ONE TRANSLATION SAYS, “HE WAS THERE WAITING FOR THEM.” THEY FELL BEFORE HIM TO THE GROUND: THIS ACT IS MORE THAN A GREETING TO THE RULER AS WAS GIVEN IN 43:26. HERE THEY THROW THEMSELVES ON THE GROUND, SEEKING MERCY.**

**GENESIS 44:15: SAID TO THEM MUST OFTEN BE EXPRESSED AS “ASKED THEM.” WHAT DEED IS THIS THAT YOU HAVE DONE? RSV RENDERS THE HEBREW AS A “WHAT” QUESTION. IT MAY BE MORE NATURAL TO SAY “WHY HAVE YOU DONE THIS THING?” OR “WHY HAVE YOU ACTED THIS WAY?” IT IS ALSO POSSIBLE TO BE QUITE DIRECT: “WHY DID YOU STEAL MY CUP?” DO YOU NOT KNOW THAT SUCH A MAN AS I CAN INDEED DIVINE? JOSEPH’S QUESTION EXPRESSES THE FUTILITY OF TRYING TO DECEIVE HIM, BECAUSE HE, AS A RULER OF EGYPT, HAS SECRET KNOWLEDGE, OR, JUST AS HE INTERPRETS DREAMS, HE ALSO KNOWS HOW TO REVEAL PEOPLE’S SECRETS—IN THIS CASE SOMETHING SECRETLY STOLEN. SUCH A MAN AS I MEANS “A MAN OF MY KNOWLEDGE” OR “A MAN WHO RULES AS I DO.” IT MAY ALSO BE EXPRESSED AS “WE RULERS CAN.…” CAN INDEED DIVINE IS EXPRESSED IN NRSV AS “CAN PRACTICE DIVINATION.” NEB/REB SAY “USES DIVINATION.” WE MAY TRANSLATE THE IDEA OF DIVINE BY SAYING, FOR EXAMPLE, “CAN LEARN THROUGH MAGIC THE SECRET THINGS PEOPLE DO” OR “CAN FIND OUT SECRETLY THE THINGS PEOPLE TRY TO KEEP HIDDEN.”**

**GENESIS 44:16: JUDAH IS THE SPOKESMAN FOR THE BROTHERS BECAUSE HE IS THE ONE WHO MUST ACCOUNT FOR BENJAMIN’S ABSENCE IF THEY RETURN TO JACOB WITHOUT HIM. SEE 43:9. WHAT SHALL WE SAY TO MY LORD? JUDAH REALIZES THERE IS NOTHING THAT CAN BE SAID TO THE RULER THAT WOULD PROVE THE INNOCENCE OF THE BROTHERS. THEREFORE, THE QUESTION IS RHETORICAL AND MAY ALSO BE EXPRESSED AS A NEGATIVE STATEMENT; FOR EXAMPLE, “THERE IS NOTHING WE CAN SAY, MY LORD, NOTHING WE CAN SPEAK TO YOU.” MOST MODERN VERSIONS RETAIN THE QUESTION FORM, BUT IF THE FUTILITY OF ANSWERING OR ARGUING CAN BE BETTER EXPRESSED WITH A NEGATIVE STATEMENT, THAT FORM SHOULD BE USED. NOTE TEV’S ADJUSTMENT OF MY LORD TO “TO YOU, SIR?” HOW CAN WE CLEAR OURSELVES? AGAIN, THE QUESTION IS RHETORICAL. CLEAR TRANSLATES THE HEBREW TSADEQ, WHICH MEANS TO “JUSTIFY” OR “PUT OURSELVES IN THE RIGHT.” HERE THE SENSE IS TO JUSTIFY THE WRONG THAT HAS BEEN DONE, OR BETTER, TO CLEAR OF SUSPICION OF WRONGDOING. WE MAY TRANSLATE BY USING THE QUESTION FORM OR BY SAYING, FOR EXAMPLE, “WE CAN DO NOTHING TO PROVE THAT WE ARE INNOCENT” OR “… THAT WE ARE NOT GUILTY.” GOD HAS FOUND OUT THE GUILT OF YOUR SERVANTS: ARE WE TO UNDERSTAND BY JUDAH’S CONFESSION THAT HE REFERS ONLY TO THE STOLEN CUP? PROBABLY NOT. JUDAH’S WORDS REVEAL THAT THE BROTHERS’ CRIME OF LONG AGO AGAINST JOSEPH HAS FINALLY BEEN UNCOVERED BY GOD. THE DAY OF RECKONING HAS FINALLY COME, AND IRONICALLY, IT IS THROUGH THE USE OF JOSEPH’S BELOVED AND INNOCENT BROTHER THAT THE CONFESSION OF GUILT HAS FINALLY EMERGED. IN SOME TRANSLATIONS THIS CLAUSE IS LINKED TO THE EARLIER PART OF THE VERSE AS THE REASON WHY THE BROTHERS COULD NOT SAY OR DO ANYTHING: “WE CAN’T DO ANYTHING BECAUSE GOD HAS FOUND OUT OUR WRONG” OR “… BECAUSE GOD HAS PAID US BACK FOR WHAT WE DID.” THE TEST JOSEPH HAS PUT HIS BROTHERS THROUGH IS TO SEE IF THEY WILL LET BENJAMIN BE SACRIFICED IN ORDER TO SAVE THEIR OWN SKINS. IF THEY DO THAT, THEY HAVE NOT CHANGED AT ALL—THEY ARE STILL THE CRUEL CROWD THAT LET JOSEPH BE SOLD INTO SLAVERY AND SUFFER FOR YEARS IN AN EGYPTIAN PRISON. BEHOLD, WE ARE MY LORD’S SLAVES: JUDAH’S SURRENDER OF THE BROTHERS TO SHARE THE ENSLAVEMENT WITH BENJAMIN TELLS JOSEPH THE ANSWER HE HAS BEEN SEEKING. BOTH WE AND HE ALSO IN WHOSE HAND THE CUP HAS BEEN FOUND: IN SOME LANGUAGES WE REQUIRES AN EXCLUSIVE PRONOUN FORM THAT REFERS TO THE SPEAKER AND OTHERS, BUT EXCLUDES THE LISTENER, JOSEPH. IN WHOSE HAND MEANS “THE ONE WHO HAD THE CUP.” IN TRANSLATION WE MAY SAY “IN WHOSE SACK THE CUP WAS FOUND.” IN CONTRAST TO THE STEWARD’S STATEMENT IN VERSE 10, THAT ONLY THE ONE IN WHOSE SACK THE CUP IS FOUND WILL BECOME A SLAVE, JUDAH SURRENDERS ALL THE BROTHERS ALONG WITH BENJAMIN. SOME TRANSLATIONS EMPHASIZE THIS BY SAYING “IT IS NOT ONLY THE ONE WHO HAS YOUR CUP WHO WILL BE YOUR SLAVE. NO. ALL OF US TOGETHER.”**

**GENESIS 44:17: BUT HE SAID: THE SPEAKER IN VERSE 17 IS JOSEPH. FAR BE IT FROM ME THAT I SHOULD DO SO: SEE VERSE 7 FOR THIS KIND OF EXPRESSION. JOSEPH REFUSES JUDAH’S OFFER AND INSISTS THAT HE WILL MAKE ONLY BENJAMIN HIS SLAVE. IN THIS WAY HE FORCES THE BROTHERS TO THINK AGAIN ABOUT HOW THE FAMILY IS SHATTERED BY THE LOSS OF ONLY ONE BROTHER—IN THE PAST HIMSELF, AND NOW AGAIN HIMSELF IN THE PERSON OF BENJAMIN. IN MANY LANGUAGES IT IS NATURAL TO BEGIN THIS SPEECH WITH “NO! I CAN’T DO THAT.” ONLY THE MAN IN WHOSE HAND THE CUP WAS FOUND SHALL BE MY SLAVE: SEE VERSE 20. BUT AS FOR YOU, GO UP IN PEACE TO YOUR FATHER: JOSEPH’S RELEASE OF THE BROTHERS AS STATED HERE IS WITH IRONY. HE KNOWS THAT FOR THEM TO RETURN WITHOUT BENJAMIN WILL BE THE OPPOSITE OF PEACE. JOSEPH IS ADDRESSING ALL THE BROTHERS, NOT JUST JUDAH. THIS MUST BE EXPRESSED AS “THE REST OF YOU,” SINCE ONE BROTHER, BENJAMIN, IS TO STAY AS A SLAVE. GO UP IS USED IN THE HEBREW TO INDICATE GOING FROM EGYPT TO CANAAN; TRANSLATIONS MAY REFLECT SIMPLE TRAVEL WITHOUT MENTIONING DIRECTION, AS IN TEV, OR MENTION MOVEMENT TOWARD THE HIGHER, HILLY COUNTRY OF CANAAN, OR ELSE MENTION THE DIRECTION AS “NORTHEASTWARD” TOWARD HEBRON. IN PEACE MEANS TO GO SAFELY OR, AS SPCL SAYS, “NO ONE WILL BOTHER YOU.” SEE TEV.**

**JUDAH PLEADS FOR BENJAMIN (44:18–34)**

**JUDAH BEGINS A LONG SPEECH IN WHICH HE RECALLS HOW THE BROTHERS ANSWERED JOSEPH’S QUESTIONS AND TOLD HIM THAT THEIR FATHER WAS OLD AND THAT THEY HAD A YOUNG BROTHER AND A DEAD BROTHER, THAT BENJAMIN IS THE ONLY LIVING CHILD OF HIS MOTHER, AND THAT HIS FATHER LOVES HIM. JUDAH RECALLS HOW THEY TRIED TO OBEY JOSEPH’S ORDERS TO BRING BENJAMIN TO EGYPT, BUT HIS FATHER WOULD NOT ALLOW HIM TO GO (VERSES 18–23). HE ALSO REPORTS TO JOSEPH THE CONVERSATION HELD WITH JACOB, IN WHICH THE BROTHERS TRIED TO PERSUADE JACOB TO ALLOW BENJAMIN TO GO WITH THEM AS JOSEPH HAD ORDERED (VERSES 24–26). JUDAH TELLS JOSEPH THAT IF ANYTHING HAPPENED TO BENJAMIN, IT WOULD CAUSE THE DEATH OF HIS FATHER (VERSES 27–29). FINALLY, HE EXPLAINS HOW HE BECAME SURETY FOR BENJAMIN AND THEREFORE PLEADS WITH JOSEPH TO ALLOW HIM TO TAKE BENJAMIN’S PLACE AS A SLAVE AND TO ALLOW BENJAMIN TO RETURN HOME AND THUS PREVENT HIS OLD FATHER FROM DYING OF GRIEF (VERSES 30–34).**

**SUBDIVISION HEADING**

**THE HANDBOOK HEADING MAY NEED TO HAVE MORE DETAIL; FOR EXAMPLE, “JUDAH BEGS JOSEPH TO LET BENJAMIN RETURN HOME” OR “JUDAH SAYS HE WILL BECOME JOSEPH’S SLAVE IN PLACE OF BENJAMIN.” FRCL HAS “JUDAH INTERVENES ON BEHALF OF BENJAMIN.”**

**GENESIS 44:18: VERSE 18 SERVES AS AN INTRODUCTION TO JUDAH’S LONG SPEECH TO JOSEPH. THEN JUDAH WENT UP TO HIM AND SAID: WENT UP TRANSLATES A VERB MEANING TO “COME CLOSE,” “APPROACH,” “DRAW NEAR TO.” JUDAH STEPS UP CLOSE TO THE RULER TO BEGIN HIS FRANK AND PERSONAL APPEAL ON BENJAMIN’S BEHALF. DRIVER CALLS JUDAH’S SPEECH IN VERSES 18–34, IS OFTEN DIFFERENT IN WORDING. O MY LORD, LET YOUR SERVANT, I PRAY YOU, SPEAK A WORD IN MY LORD’S EARS: JUDAH’S USE OF MY LORD … YOUR SERVANT … PRAY YOU SHOW AN INFERIOR SEEKING A HEARING WITH HIS SUPERIOR. THIS MUST BE REFLECTED CAREFULLY IN LANGUAGES THAT USE HONORIFIC TERMS OF ADDRESS. AS IN MANY PREVIOUS EXAMPLES, IF MY LORD OR YOUR SERVANT WILL BE UNDERSTOOD AS A THIRD PARTY, IT MUST BE ADJUSTED. IN SOME LANGUAGES THIS MAY BE EXPRESSED AS “SIR, I AM ONLY A SMALL PERSON IN YOUR PRESENCE” OR “SIR, I AM LIKE NOTHING IN YOUR EYES.” SPEAK A WORD IN … EARS IS A VERY NATURAL EXPRESSION IN SOME LANGUAGES. IN OTHERS IT IS MORE FITTING TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “I BEG YOU TO LET ME SPEAK WITH YOU” OR “STRAIGHT TO YOUR FACE.” ANOTHER VIEW OF THIS EXPRESSION, ACCORDING TO SPEISER, IS THAT TO SPEAK … IN … EARS MEANS TO “SPEAK EARNESTLY.” TEV HAS “FREELY,” NJB “HAVE A WORD PRIVATELY,” AND SPCL “SECRETLY.” BOTH THE MORE LITERAL AND THE ADVERBIAL USE ARE ACCEPTABLE. LET NOT YOUR ANGER BURN AGAINST YOUR SERVANT: THAT IS, “AND PLEASE DON’T BE ANGRY WITH ME, SIR.” THE HEBREW IS LITERALLY “DON’T LET YOUR NOSTRIL [NOSE, FACE] BURN [HEAT] [ON] YOUR SERVANT.” FOR A SIMILAR EXPRESSION SEE 30:2 AND 39:19. AS A NONFIGURATIVE EXPRESSION WE MAY SAY “PLEASE BE PATIENT WITH ME, SIR.” IN SOME LANGUAGES ANOTHER FIGURATIVE EXPRESSION WILL BE APPROPRIATE; FOR EXAMPLE, “DON’T LET YOUR HEART GROW HOT” OR “DON’T LET YOUR LIVER BOIL BECAUSE OF ME.” FOR YOU ARE LIKE PHARAOH HIMSELF: THIS MAY BE UNDERSTOOD AS THE REASON WHY JUDAH PLEADS THAT JOSEPH SHOULD NOT GET ANGRY WITH JUDAH. SINCE HE IS EQUAL TO THE KING, HE HAS THE POWER TO DO AS HE WISHES WITH JUDAH, AND SO JUDAH HOPES THAT HE WILL NOT GET ANGRY AND USE HIS POWER. IT IS ALSO POSSIBLE TO UNDERSTAND THAT JUDAH USES THIS EXPRESSION TO ADMIT THE VAST SUPERIORITY OF JOSEPH, AND SO PLACE HIMSELF IN A POSITION OF TOTAL WEAKNESS AND IN NEED OF MERCY. FRCL OPENS VERSE 18 WITH THIS ADMISSION: “SIR, YOU WHO ARE THE ADMINISTRATOR, YOU ARE THE EQUAL OF THE PHARAOH. PLEASE ALLOW ME TO ADD SOME WORDS WITHOUT CAUSING YOU TO BE ANGRY.”**

**GENESIS 44:19: MY LORD ASKED HIS SERVANTS: MY LORD IS, OF COURSE, JOSEPH, AND HIS SERVANTS ARE THE BROTHERS. SO, THE CLAUSE MEANS “YOU ASKED US.…” IN THE FIRST ENCOUNTER IN CHAPTER 42, JOSEPH DID NOT ASK ABOUT THEIR FATHER; BUT IN 43:7 JUDAH REPORTED TO JACOB THAT THE RULER HAD ASKED, “IS YOUR FATHER STILL ALIVE? HAVE YOU ANOTHER BROTHER?” IN SOME TRANSLATIONS THIS STATEMENT IS REFERRED BACK IN TIME TO THE PREVIOUS VISIT: “AT AN EARLIER TIME YOU ASKED …” OR “ON OUR FIRST TRIP HERE YOU ASKED.…”**

**GENESIS 44:20: WE SAID TO MY LORD: THIS MUST OFTEN BE REPHRASED TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “WE ANSWERED YOU WHO ARE OUR LORD” OR “WE REPLIED TO YOU, SIR.” WE HAVE A FATHER, AN OLD MAN: IN 42:13 THE BROTHERS IDENTIFIED THEMSELVES AS “THE SONS OF ONE MAN IN THE LAND OF CANAAN.” IN MANY LANGUAGES IT IS NATURAL TO BEGIN THIS ANSWER WITH “YES, WE HAVE A FATHER.…” A YOUNG BROTHER, THE CHILD OF HIS OLD AGE: IN 42:13 THE BROTHERS’ REPLY IS “THE YOUNGEST IS THIS DAY WITH OUR FATHER AND ONE IS NO MORE.” CHILD OF HIS OLD AGE MAY BE RENDERED, FOR EXAMPLE, “A CHILD BORN WHEN HE WAS OLD” OR “HE BECAME THE FATHER TO THIS CHILD WHEN HE WAS AN OLD MAN.”**

**GENESIS 44:21: BRING HIM DOWN TO ME, THAT I MAY SET MY EYES UPON HIM: THE COMMAND THAT BENJAMIN BE BROUGHT TO HIM IS BASED ON JOSEPH’S STATEMENT IN 42:20 AND 42:34.**

**GENESIS 44:22: THE LAD CANNOT LEAVE HIS FATHER: THESE WORDS ARE NOT RECORDED AS HAVING BEEN SAID TO JOSEPH. HOWEVER, THEY REPRESENT WHAT JACOB SAID IN 42:38, WHEN HE REFUSED REUBEN’S PLEA TO LET BENJAMIN GO WITH THE BROTHERS TO EGYPT.**

**GENESIS 44:23: UNLESS YOUR YOUNGEST BROTHER COMES DOWN WITH YOU, YOU SHALL SEE MY FACE NO MORE: IN 42:15 JOSEPH HAD WARNED THE BROTHERS “YOU SHALL NOT GO FROM THIS PLACE UNLESS YOUR YOUNGEST BROTHER COMES HERE.” YOU SHALL SEE MY FACE NO MORE IS SPOKEN BY JUDAH TO JACOB IN 43:3.**

**GENESIS 44:24: WHEN WE WENT BACK TO YOUR SERVANT MY FATHER … MY LORD: SEE 42:29 AND FOLLOWING. GENESIS 42:29: WHEN THEY CAME TO JACOB THEIR FATHER IN THE LAND OF CANAAN: THIS TIME CLAUSE SERVES AS A TRANSITION TO THE CONVERSATION WITH JACOB IN CANAAN. IN SOME LANGUAGES IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO EXPRESS THE MOVEMENT IN THE DIRECTION OF CANAAN BEFORE BEING ABLE TO SPEAK OF ARRIVING THERE; FOR EXAMPLE, “THEY TRAVELED ON TOWARD CANAAN UNTIL THEY CAME TO THEIR FATHER JACOB” OR “… AND WHEN THEY CAME TO THEIR FATHER, THEY TOLD HIM.…” THEY TOLD HIM ALL THAT HAD BEFALLEN THEM: THAT IS, “THEY TOLD HIM EVERYTHING THAT HAD HAPPENED TO THEM IN EGYPT.”**

**GENESIS 44:25: GO AGAIN, BUY US A LITTLE FOOD: THIS IS QUOTED FROM JACOB’S WORDS IN 43:2. GENESIS 43:2: WHEN THEY HAD EATEN THE GRAIN WHICH THEY HAD BROUGHT FROM EGYPT: THE FIRST THEY REFERS TO ALL JACOB’S FAMILY; THE SECOND THEY REFERS TO THE BROTHERS. GO AGAIN, BUY US A LITTLE FOOD: GO AGAIN MEANS “GO BACK TO EGYPT.” US IS INCLUSIVE, REFERRING TO JACOB AND THOSE HE IS ADDRESSING. LITTLE MAY REFER TO A SMALL AMOUNT OR FEW IN NUMBER, BUT IN A LITTLE FOOD JACOB IS USING THIS LIMITING EXPRESSION AS A CONTRAST WITH “A GREAT AMOUNT.” HE DOES NOT MEAN THAT THEY SHOULD BUY AN INSUFFICIENT AMOUNT BUT RATHER “BUY SOME FOOD.” REB SAYS “BUY SOME MORE GRAIN,” WHICH NEB HAS REVISED AS “BUY A LITTLE MORE CORN.” THIS USE OF “LITTLE” IN THE SENSE OF “ENOUGH” IS TYPICAL COLLOQUIAL SPEECH IN MANY LANGUAGES IN RELATION TO FOOD.**

**GENESIS 44:26: VERSE 26 REPRESENTS WHAT JUDAH REPLIED TO JACOB IN 43:3–5. GENESIS 43:3–5: IN THE PREVIOUS CHAPTER REUBEN PLEADED UNSUCCESSFULLY WITH JACOB TO ALLOW BENJAMIN TO RETURN WITH THE BROTHERS TO EGYPT. NOW, HOWEVER, WE HEAR JUDAH, THE FOURTH SON OF LEAH (29:35), ACTING AS SPOKESMAN FOR THE BROTHERS. SINCE THIS IS THE SECOND DISCUSSION ABOUT THE SAME MATTER, SOME TRANSLATIONS BEGIN BY SAYING “FATHER, WE TOLD YOU BEFORE, THAT HEADMAN.…” THE MAN SOLEMNLY WARNED US: THE MAN, WHICH REFERS TO JOSEPH AS THE RULER OF EGYPT, IS THE SAME EXPRESSION AS IN 42:30. THERE THE MAN IS IDENTIFIED AS “LORD OF THE LAND.” IT MAY BE NECESSARY IN THE PRESENT CONTEXT TO SAY “THE MAN WHO RULES EGYPT” OR “THE RULER.” SOLEMNLY WARNED TRANSLATES A SPECIAL INTENSIVE CONSTRUCTION OF THE HEBREW VERB “TO WARN,” IN WHICH THE SENSE IS “STERNLY [SEVERELY] WARNED US.” IN SOME LANGUAGES THIS IS TRANSLATED “HE CLEARLY THREATENED US” OR “HE TOLD US FOR CERTAIN.” YOU SHALL NOT SEE MY FACE: THIS IS AN IDIOM MEANING “YOU [PLURAL] WILL NOT BE GIVEN AN AUDIENCE WITH ME,” “I WILL NOT RECEIVE YOU,” “I WILL REFUSE TO SPEAK WITH YOU,” OR “YOU CANNOT APPROACH ME.” IN SOME TRANSLATIONS THE REFERENCE TO WHAT JOSEPH HAD SAID IS GIVEN IN INDIRECT SPEECH; FOR EXAMPLE, “HE SAID THAT HE WILL NOT AGREE TO SEE US AGAIN, IF OUR BROTHER.…” UNLESS YOUR BROTHER IS WITH YOU: HERE BROTHER MUST OFTEN BE RENDERED BY A TERM FOR YOUNGER BROTHER. A TERM FOR HALF-BROTHER WILL BE INAPPROPRIATE, AS JOSEPH HAS ONLY BEEN TOLD THAT BENJAMIN IS THEIR YOUNGEST BROTHER. IN SOME LANGUAGES IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO STATE THE CONDITION BEFORE THE CONSEQUENCE; FOR EXAMPLE, “UNLESS YOUR BROTHER IS WITH YOU, I WILL NOT ALLOW YOU TO SPEAK WITH ME” OR “IF YOUR BROTHER DOES NOT COME WITH YOU, …” ANOTHER WAY OF EXPRESSING THIS CONDITION IS “WARNED US THAT WE COULD NOT GO BACK THERE TO HIM. BUT IF WE HAVE OUR [YOUNGEST] BROTHER WITH US, IT WILL BE ALL RIGHT, WE CAN GO BACK.” IF YOU WILL SEND OUR BROTHER WITH US: IN MANY LANGUAGES THIS IS MORE NATURALLY “IF YOU LET OUR BROTHER GO WITH US” OR “IF YOU AGREE THAT OUR BROTHER CAN COME WITH US.”**

**GENESIS 44:27: YOU KNOW THAT MY WIFE BORE ME TWO SONS: THESE WORDS ARE NOT RECORDED IN JACOB’S SPEECH TO HIS SONS IN CHAPTERS 42 AND 43.**

**GENESIS 44:28: ONE LEFT ME IS ANOTHER WAY OF REPORTING THE WORDS “JOSEPH IS NO MORE” IN 42:36. SURELY, HE HAS BEEN TORN TO PIECES: IN 37:33, WHEN JACOB SAW THE BLOODIED ROBE, HE SAID “JOSEPH IS WITHOUT DOUBT TORN TO PIECES.” AND I HAVE NEVER SEEN HIM SINCE: THESE WORDS ARE NOT RECORDED ELSEWHERE.**

**GENESIS 44:29: VERSE 29 REPRESENTS JACOB’S WORDS IN 42:38. GENESIS 42:38: IN SPITE OF REUBEN’S PROMISE AND HIS WILLINGNESS TO GAMBLE THE LIVES OF HIS OWN CHILDREN, JACOB IS NOT WILLING TO AGREE TO BENJAMIN GOING AWAY FROM HIM. MY SON SHALL NOT GO DOWN WITH YOU [PLURAL]: IN SOME LANGUAGES A STRONG NEGATIVE IS REQUIRED AT THE BEGINNING OF THIS SPEECH: “NO! MY SON CAN’T GO WITH YOU” OR “NO! I WON’T LET HIM GO WITH YOU.” FOR GO DOWN SEE VERSE 2. THE PLURAL PRONOUN YOU SHOWS THAT JACOB IS ADDRESSING NOT JUST REUBEN BUT ALL THE BROTHERS WHO RETURNED FROM EGYPT. HIS BROTHER IS DEAD: THAT IS, “BENJAMIN’S OLDER BROTHER JOSEPH IS DEAD.” AND HE ONLY: THAT IS, “ONLY BENJAMIN IS LEFT.” BENJAMIN IS NOT THE ONLY SON LEFT TO JACOB; HE IS THE ONLY SON LEFT TO THE UNION OF JACOB AND RACHEL. A TRANSLATION THAT BRINGS THIS OUT SAYS “HE IS THE LAST BOY OF HIS MOTHER.” IF HARM SHOULD BEFALL HIM ON THE JOURNEY … MAKE: THAT IS, “IF SOMETHING WERE TO HAPPEN TO HIM.…” ANOTHER WAY OF EXPRESSING THIS IS “SOMETHING MIGHT HAPPEN TO HIM ON THE ROAD, AND THEN I WOULD.…” YOU [PLURAL] WOULD BRING DOWN MY GRAY HAIRS WITH SORROW TO SHEOL: GRAY HAIRS TRANSLATES THE HEBREW NOUN MEANING “A HEAD THAT IS OLD AND GRAY.” IN THIS WAY JACOB REFERS TO HIMSELF AS AN OLD MAN. BRING DOWN … TO SHEOL MEANS “CAUSE ME TO DIE [AND GO TO MY GRAVE].” ONE TRANSLATION OF THIS IS SIMPLY “I WOULD DIE FROM IT!” WE MAY TRANSLATE THIS EXPRESSION, FOR EXAMPLE, “IF SOMETHING SHOULD HAPPEN, … YOU [PLURAL] WOULD CAUSE ME TO DIE AN OLD MAN FULL OF SORROW,” “I AM AN OLD GRAY HEAD; IF …, YOU [PLURAL] WOULD MAKE ME DIE OF SORROW,” OR “HE MIGHT HAVE AN ACCIDENT ON THE ROAD. I AM AN OLD MAN, AND IF … YOU [PLURAL] WOULD GIVE ME GREAT GRIEF AND I WOULD GO TO.…” SEE ALSO TEV.**

**GENESIS 44:30–31: TRANSLATORS MAY FIND IT HELPFUL TO REARRANGE THE ORDER OF PARTS IN VERSES 30 AND 31 AND COMBINE THEM, AS IN TEV. NOW THEREFORE, WHEN I COME TO YOUR SERVANT MY FATHER: NOW THEREFORE DRAWS A CONCLUSION BASED ON WHAT HAS BEEN STATED AND WILL BE REPEATED IN VERSE 33. WHEN I COME MAY BE BETTER TRANSLATED AS A CONDITIONAL: “IF I RETURN TO MY FATHER.” FOR YOUR SERVANT MY FATHER SEE SUGGESTIONS ON 43:28. AND THE LAD IS NOT WITH US: THAT IS, “WITHOUT THE BOY” OR “WITHOUT THE BOY WITH US.” AS HIS LIFE IS BOUND UP IN THE LAD’S LIFE IS LITERALLY “AND HIS [BENJAMIN’S] SOUL BOUND TO HIS [JACOB’S] SOUL.” THE BASIC MEANING OF THE IDIOM IS THAT THERE IS A SPECIAL “BOND OF LOVE” BETWEEN THE TWO PEOPLE; FOR ANOTHER USE OF THE SAME IDIOM, SEE 1 SAM 18:1, WHERE THE TWO PEOPLE ARE DAVID AND JONATHAN. THE THOUGHT EXPRESSED IN THIS CONTEXT IS THAT JACOB’S LIFE OR DESIRE TO GO ON LIVING DEPENDS ON BENJAMIN’S LIFE, AND THEREFORE ON HIS SAFETY AND SAFE RETURN HOME. WE MAY TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “OUR FATHER’S LIFE DEPENDS ON THE SAFE RETURN OF THE BOY.” WHEN HE SEES THAT THE LAD IS NOT WITH US: HE REFERS TO JACOB. THE CONSEQUENCE IS HE [JACOB] WILL DIE. AND YOUR SERVANTS: THAT IS, “WE” OR “WE WHO HONOR YOU.” BRING DOWN THE GRAY HAIRS … SHEOL: SEE 42:38. TEV OFFERS A GOOD MODEL FOR TRANSLATING VERSES 30–31. ANOTHER MODEL THAT DOES NOT COMBINE THESE TWO VERSES IS SPCL, WHICH SHIFTS THE DEPENDENCE OF JACOB’S LIFE ON THAT OF BENJAMIN TO THE FRONT AS THE GROUND FOR WHAT FOLLOWS: “BECAUSE THE LIFE OF MY FATHER IS SO TIED UP WITH THE LIFE OF THE BOY THAT, IF THE BOY DOES NOT GO WITH US WHEN I GO BACK, OUR FATHER WILL DIE WHEN HE DOES NOT SEE HIM. IN THIS WAY WE WILL BE GUILTY OF CAUSING OUR OLD FATHER TO DIE OF SORROW.”**

**GENESIS 44:32: FOR YOUR SERVANT BECAME SURETY FOR THE LAD TO MY FATHER: FOR, WHICH TRANSLATES THE HEBREW KI, SERVES HERE TO INTRODUCE STILL ANOTHER FEATURE OF JUDAH’S ARGUMENT. WE MAY SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “IN ADDITION,” “THAT IS NOT ALL,” OR “WHAT IS MORE” (TEV). FOR BECAME SURETY SEE THE REST OF VERSE 32 AND COMMENTS ON 43:9.**

**GENESIS 44:33: JUDAH MAKES HIS FINAL APPEAL THAT HE BE ALLOWED TO TAKE BENJAMIN’S PLACE AND REMAIN AS A SLAVE. JUDAH’S WILLINGNESS TO TAKE THE PLACE OF BENJAMIN IN ORDER TO SPARE JACOB’S LIFE IS CLEAR EVIDENCE THAT A GENUINE CHANGE OF HEART HAS TAKEN PLACE. JOSEPH IS ABOUT TO BE OVERCOME AGAIN BY EMOTION. NOW THEREFORE, LET YOUR SERVANT, I PRAY YOU … LORD: FOR NOW, THEREFORE SEE VERSE 30. JUDAH’S APPEAL EXPRESSES A CONSEQUENCE OF ALL THAT HE HAS SAID. “THEREFORE …,” “FOR THESE REASONS …,” “BECAUSE OF ALL I HAVE SAID, I BEG YOU, SIR, TO ALLOW ME TO TAKE THE BOY’S PLACE AND BECOME YOUR SLAVE.” LET THE LAD GO BACK WITH HIS BROTHERS: THAT IS, “LET THE BOY GO HOME WITH HIS BROTHERS.” ANOTHER WAY OF TRANSLATING JUDAH’S REQUEST IS “SIR, I AM PREPARED TO STAY HERE. I AM PREPARED TO TAKE HIS PLACE AND BE YOUR SLAVE. PLEASE LET HIM GO BACK WITH MY BROTHERS.” IN SOME LANGUAGES IT IS MORE NATURAL TO MAKE THE REQUEST ABOUT BENJAMIN FIRST: “PLEASE LET THIS BOY GO BACK WITH HIS BROTHERS. I WILL TAKE HIS PLACE. I WILL BE A PRISONER AND DO ALL YOUR HARD WORK.”**

**GENESIS 44:34: HOW CAN I GO BACK TO MY FATHER IF THE LAD IS NOT WITH ME? JUDAH’S QUESTION IS A RHETORICAL WAY OF SAYING EMPHATICALLY “I CANNOT GO HOME TO MY FATHER IF THE BOY IS NOT WITH ME.” I FEAR TO SEE THE EVIL THAT WOULD COME UPON MY FATHER IS LITERALLY “LEST I LOOK ON THE EVIL THAT WILL FIND MY FATHER.” SEVERAL GOOD MODELS FOR JUDAH’S FINAL THOUGHT ARE “I COULD NOT BEAR TO SEE THE MISERY WHICH MY FATHER WOULD SUFFER” (NEB/REB), “I WOULD BE UNABLE TO BEAR SEEING THE MISFORTUNE THAT WOULD HAPPEN TO MY FATHER” (FRCL), AND “I DON’T WANT TO SEE THE INJURY THAT MY FATHER WOULD SUFFER” (SPCL).**

**JOSEPH TELLS HIS BROTHERS WHO HE IS & BLOWS HIS TOP-SECRET CLEARANCE (45:1–15)**

**JOSEPH, WHO HAS LISTENED TO JUDAH’S PLEAS, IS OVERCOME BY EMOTION. ALONE WITH HIS BROTHERS, HE TELLS THEM WHO HE IS. THE BROTHERS ARE STUNNED AND SILENT (VERSES 1–3). JOSEPH GATHERS HIS BROTHERS AROUND HIM AND TELLS THEM NOT TO BE UPSET BECAUSE THEY HAD SOLD HIM INTO EGYPT. GOD, HE SAYS, SENT HIM THERE TO SAVE PEOPLE’S LIVES, TO RESCUE HIS FAMILY FROM STARVATION, AND TO MAKE HIM THE MOST-HIGHEST OFFICIAL IN EGYPT (VERSES 4-8). HE THEN ORDERS HIS BROTHERS TO RETURN TO THEIR FATHER AND BRING HIM AND ALL THAT HE HAS TO EGYPT, WHERE THEY WILL ALL LIVE IN THE REGION OF GOSHEN. AS THERE ARE FIVE MORE YEARS OF FAMINE TO COME, IT IS URGENT THAT JACOB AND HIS PEOPLE COME QUICKLY TO AVOID LOSING ALL THEY HAVE (VERSES 45:9–13). JOSEPH THEN KISSES BENJAMIN AND HIS OTHER BROTHERS, AND THEY CRY TOGETHER (VERSES 14–15).**

**SUBDIVISION HEADING**

**THE HANDBOOK HEADING, WHICH IS THE SAME AS IN TEV, MAY BE MODIFIED TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “JOSEPH REVEALS HIMSELF TO HIS BROTHERS,” “THE RULER EXPLAINS THAT HE IS JOSEPH, THEIR BROTHER,” OR “THE BROTHERS LEARN THAT THE RULER IS REALLY THEIR BROTHER JOSEPH.” NIV HAS “JOSEPH MAKES HIMSELF KNOWN,” NAB “THE TRUTH REVEALED,” AND SPEISER “THE DISCLOSURE.” TOB PLACES ITS HEADING BEFORE VERSE “RECOGNIZED BY HIS BROTHERS, JOSEPH HAS HIS FATHER COME TO EGYPT.”**

**GENESIS 45:1: JOSEPH, WHO HAS LISTENED IN SILENCE TO JUDAH’S PLEA, SEES THAT THE BROTHERS HAVE PASSED THE TEST HE PUT THEM THROUGH—WHETHER OR NOT THEY WOULD ABANDON BENJAMIN AS THEY HAD DONE WITH HIM. DURING ALL OF THIS TIME JOSEPH’S EMOTIONS HAVE BEEN WELLING UP WITHIN HIM AS HE STRUGGLES INWARDLY WITH THE DESIRE TO BE RECONCILED WITH THEM. THEN JOSEPH COULD NOT CONTROL HIMSELF: THEN, WHICH TRANSLATES THE HEBREW CONNECTIVE, SIGNALS THAT THE ACTION IN THIS VERSE FOLLOWS DIRECTLY FROM THE END OF CHAPTER 44. IT MAY BE NECESSARY, HOWEVER, TO SHOW THE CLOSE LINK IN TIME WITH THE END OF CHAPTER 44 BY OPENING CHAPTER 45 WITH “WHEN JUDAH HAD FINISHED SPEAKING,” “AT THE END OF JUDAH’S SPEECH,” OR “WHEN JOSEPH HEARD THIS, HE.…” FOR CONTROL HIMSELF SEE 43:31. IN THIS CONTEXT COULD NOT CONTROL HIMSELF IS EXPRESSED IN SOME TRANSLATIONS AS “FELT HE WAS GOING TO CRY” OR “WAS BEGINNING TO CRY.” ALL THOSE WHO STOOD BY HIM REFERS NOT TO THE BROTHERS BUT RATHER TO HIS SERVANTS, OFFICIALS, OR PEOPLE OF HIS RETINUE. THESE ARE PEOPLE WHO WOULD NOT UNDERSTAND THE EMOTIONAL OVERTONES OF THE CONFLICT IN JOSEPH’S FAMILY. MAKE EVERYONE GO OUT FROM ME: WE MAY ASSUME THESE WORDS WERE ADDRESSED TO THOSE WHO WORKED FOR JOSEPH AND SO WERE SPOKEN IN EGYPTIAN, WHICH HIS BROTHERS PROBABLY DID NOT UNDERSTAND. SINCE EVERYONE DOES NOT INCLUDE THE BROTHERS, WE MAY NEED TO MAKE THIS CLEAR BY SAYING, FOR EXAMPLE, “JOSEPH WAS UNABLE TO HIDE HIS FEELINGS IN THE PRESENCE OF HIS SERVANTS AND SO HE ORDERED THEM TO LEAVE THE ROOM.” RSV TRANSLATES THIS ORDER AS DIRECT SPEECH WHICH MAY BE PREFERRED IN SOME LANGUAGES. IN THAT CASE IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO ADAPT WHAT GECL SAYS: “LET ALL THE EGYPTIANS LEAVE THE ROOM.” IF JOSEPH’S ORDER FOR EVERYONE TO LEAVE WAS SAID IN THE EGYPTIAN LANGUAGE, THEN THE SERVANTS WOULD UNDERSTAND IT AS ADDRESSED EXCLUSIVELY TO THEM. IN THAT CASE WE MAY TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “JOSEPH SAID IN THE EGYPTIAN LANGUAGE, ‘EVERYONE LEAVE THE ROOM.’” IN SOME LANGUAGES IT IS MORE NATURAL FOR JOSEPH TO SPEAK DIRECTLY TO THE EGYPTIANS; FOR EXAMPLE, “SO HE SAID TO HIS SERVANTS, ‘YOU ALL GO OUTSIDE.’” SO, NO ONE STAYED WITH HIM WHEN JOSEPH MADE HIMSELF KNOWN TO HIS BROTHERS: NO ONE MEANS “NO ONE ELSE” OR “NO ONE BUT HIS BROTHERS.” ANOTHER WAY THIS MAY BE EXPRESSED IS “SO JOSEPH WAS ALONE WITH HIS BROTHERS.…” FOR MADE HIMSELF KNOWN SEE TEV. THIS STATEMENT IS BEST TAKEN AS A REFERENCE TO WHAT JOSEPH TOLD HIS BROTHERS IN VERSE 3. IT SIMPLY SUMMARIZES IN ADVANCE THE SITUATION DESCRIBED IN VERSE 3.**

**GENESIS 45:2: AND HE WEPT ALOUD IS LITERALLY “HE GAVE HIS VOICE IN WEEPING.” NOW THAT JOSEPH IS ALONE WITH HIS BROTHERS, HIS EMOTIONS BURST OUT IN SOBS. WE MAY TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “HE CRIED SO LOUDLY THE EGYPTIANS HEARD IT.” THE EXPRESSION SO THAT THE EGYPTIANS HEARD IT IS LITERALLY “AND EGYPT HEARD.” IF “EGYPT” REFERS TO THE EGYPTIANS JOSEPH HAS JUST SENT OUT OF THE ROOM, THEN WE MAY TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “HE CRIED SO LOUDLY THAT THE EGYPTIANS OUTSIDE THE ROOM HEARD HIM.” SEE TEV.**

**HOWEVER, MODERN VERSIONS UNDERSTAND THIS SENTENCE IN THREE WAYS: (1) THAT THE EGYPTIANS (NOT IDENTIFIED, BUT PRESUMABLY THOSE OUTSIDE THE ROOM) HEARD HIS SOBS; (2) THAT THE EGYPTIANS (NOT IDENTIFIED, BUT PROBABLY EGYPTIANS IN GENERAL) FOUND OUT ABOUT IT; AND (3) THAT ALL EGYPTIANS HEARD ABOUT IT (THE SEPTUAGINT ACTUALLY INCLUDES THE WORD “ALL”).**

**BEFORE MAKING A RECOMMENDATION ABOUT THIS, WE MUST LOOK AT THE NEXT EXPRESSION, IN WHICH THE SAME HEBREW VERB IS USED. AND THE HOUSEHOLD OF PHARAOH HEARD IT: RSV AND NRSV GIVE THE IMPRESSION THAT THE NOISE OF JOSEPH’S WEEPING WAS SO LOUD THAT PEOPLE IN THE KING’S PALACE HEARD THE SOUNDS. HOWEVER, IT IS HIGHLY UNLIKELY THAT THIS IS WHAT THE NARRATOR MEANS. MANY MODERN VERSIONS EXPRESS THE IDEA THAT THE NEWS OF JOSEPH’S CRYING REACHED THE PALACE. FOR EXAMPLE, REB SAYS “AND NEWS OF IT GOT TO PHARAOH’S HOUSEHOLD.” SEE TEV. NIV MAKES CLEAR THAT THE PHARAOH’S HEARING IS INDIRECT: “AND PHARAOH’S HOUSEHOLD HEARD ABOUT IT”; GECL HAS “AND SOON THE WHOLE OF PHARAOH’S COURT KNEW ABOUT IT.” A NUMBER OF TRANSLATIONS THAT FOLLOW INTERPRETATION (1) FOR THE PREVIOUS CLAUSE MAKE A DIRECT LINK BETWEEN THE TWO CLAUSES: “THE EGYPTIANS OUTSIDE HEARD, AND THEY WENT AND TOLD THE NEWS TO THE PEOPLE OF THE KING’S HOUSEHOLD.” REFERRING BACK TO THE CLAUSE THE EGYPTIANS HEARD IT, HOTTP RECOMMENDS TRANSLATING “AND EGYPT HEARD” RATHER THAN “AND [THE] EGYPTIANS HEARD,” WHICH INDICATES A PREFERENCE FOR INTERPRETATION (3), OR POSSIBLY INTERPRETATION (2) ABOVE. ALSO, IN FAVOR OF THIS APPROACH IS THE FACT THAT THE VERB IS GIVEN THE SAME SENSE (“HEARD THE NEWS OF”) IN THE TWO CLAUSES; A POSSIBLE TRANSLATION IS “… SO THAT ALL EGYPT HEARD ABOUT IT, AND THE NEWS REACHED THE HOUSEHOLD OF THE KING.” HOWEVER, MOST MODERN VERSIONS THAT ARE NOT AMBIGUOUS FOLLOW INTERPRETATION (1). THIS SEEMS TO BE THE MOST NATURAL AND LIKELY MEANING IN THE CONTEXT OF THE OVERALL STORY LINE, AND IS THE INTERPRETATION THAT THE HANDBOOK RECOMMENDS TO TRANSLATORS.**

**GENESIS 45:3: IN THIS VERSE JOSEPH, NOW ALONE WITH HIS BROTHERS, BEGINS FOR THE FIRST TIME TO SPEAK TO THEM IN THEIR OWN LANGUAGE. I AM JOSEPH: IT IS APPROPRIATE IN MANY LANGUAGES TO SHOW THIS AS AN EXCLAMATION. JOSEPH IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWS THIS STUNNING DISCLOSURE WITH A QUESTION ABOUT HIS FATHER: IS MY FATHER STILL ALIVE? THE URGENCY OF KNOWING THE TRUTH IS QUITE DIFFERENT FROM JOSEPH’S INQUIRY IN 43:27. THERE JOSEPH MAINTAINED A SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DISTANCE: “IS YOUR FATHER WELL, THE OLD MAN OF WHOM YOU SPOKE?” HERE THE HEBREW HAS “MY FATHER,” AS IN RSV. IN THIS CONTEXT LANGUAGES WILL DIFFER IN THE WAY MY FATHER IS TRANSLATED. FOR EXAMPLE, SPEISER TRANSLATES “IS FATHER STILL ALIVE?”—FOR ENGLISH THE ABSENCE OF THE PRONOUN MAKES FATHER THE FATHER OF THE BROTHERS AND OF JOSEPH AND SO BUILDS ON JOSEPH’S DISCLOSURE THAT THEY ARE ALL BROTHERS. THIS SENSE IS EXPRESSED IN MANY OTHER LANGUAGES BY MAKING THE QUESTION “IS OUR [INCLUSIVE] FATHER STILL LIVING?” SOME TRANSLATIONS ALSO EXPRESS THE FEELING OF URGENCY BY SAYING “IS IT TRUE THAT …?” THE BROTHERS ARE UNABLE TO SAY “YES” OR “NO” BECAUSE THEY HAVE JUST LEARNED THAT THIS POWERFUL RULER IS THE VERY BOY, THEY ABANDONED YEARS BEFORE IN A RAIN PIT. THEY ARE NOW DUMBFOUNDED AND FRIGHTENED. THEY WERE DISMAYED AT HIS PRESENCE: DISMAYED TRANSLATES A FORM OF A VERB MEANING TO BE “FRIGHTENED,” “TERRIFIED,” “STUNNED.” WE MAY TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “THEY WERE SO FRIGHTENED TO FIND THEMSELVES FACE TO FACE WITH JOSEPH THAT THEY COULD NOT ANSWER HIS QUESTION.”**

**GENESIS 45:4: SO, JOSEPH SAID: RSV SO RENDERS THE USUAL HEBREW CONNECTIVE BUT MAKES THIS MORE FRIENDLY APPROACH BY JOSEPH LINK TO THE PREVIOUS VERSE AS HIS RESPONSE TO THE FEAR HIS BROTHERS DISPLAYED. SOME TRANSLATIONS SAY “WELL, JOSEPH SPOKE TO THEM AGAIN …” COME NEAR TO ME, I PRAY YOU: JOSEPH, WHO HAS THE AUTHORITY TO HAVE THEM PUT IN PRISON OR EXECUTED, ADDRESSES THEM IN A PARTICULARLY POLITE MANNER. THIS WOULD HAVE A CALMING EFFECT ON THEIR EMOTIONS. THEY RESPOND BY MOVING CLOSER TO HIM. IT IS CLEAR TO JOSEPH THAT HIS BROTHERS HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO GRASP WHAT HE HAS REVEALED TO THEM. I AM YOUR BROTHER JOSEPH: THIS TIME HE NOT ONLY SAYS HE IS JOSEPH BUT ADDS YOUR BROTHER. IT WOULD NOT BE DIFFICULT FOR SOMEONE ELSE TO SAY THAT HE WAS JOSEPH OR EVEN “YOUR BROTHER JOSEPH”; BUT JOSEPH NOW SPEAKS OF THE EVENT THAT TORE HIM FROM HIS FAMILY AND FATHER: WHOM YOU SOLD INTO EGYPT. THIS IS THE THOUGHT THAT THE BROTHERS LEAST WANTED TO HEAR, AND NO DOUBT A SHOCKING REVELATION ABOUT HIS BROTHERS TO YOUNG BENJAMIN. SEE THE NEXT VERSE FOR DISCUSSION OF YOU SOLD.**

**GENESIS 45:5: IN VERSES 45:5–8 JOSEPH REASSURES HIS BROTHERS BY GIVING HIS TRAGEDY A RELIGIOUS MEANING THAT THEY CAN NOW APPRECIATE. AND NOW DO NOT BE DISTRESSED, OR ANGRY WITH YOURSELVES: DISTRESSED TRANSLATES A VERB MEANING TO BE PAINED OR GRIEVED. JOSEPH DOES NOT WANT HIS BROTHERS TO BE GRIEVED OR UPSET, OR TO SUFFER FOR WHAT THEY HAD DONE TO HIM. ANGRY WITH YOURSELVES IS LITERALLY “BLAZE UP IN YOUR EYES.” ALTHOUGH THE SENSE OF THIS EXPRESSION IS AS IN RSV, THE IDEA IS THAT THEY SHOULD NOT REPROACH OR BLAME THEMSELVES. SEE TEV. IN SOME LANGUAGES “BLAME YOURSELVES” IS EXPRESSED AS “DON’T PUNISH YOUR OWN HEARTS” OR “DON’T MAKE YOUR OWN THOUGHTS SUFFER.” BECAUSE YOU SOLD ME HERE: JOSEPH DOES NOT HIDE OR AVOID THE BROTHERS’ GUILT. ACCORDING TO 37:28 IT WAS A GROUP OF TRAVELING TRADERS WHO BOUGHT JOSEPH AND TOOK HIM TO EGYPT; AND ACCORDING TO 37:36 THEY SOLD JOSEPH TO POTIPHAR. SEE DISCUSSION THERE. IN OUR PRESENT VERSE THE WORDS YOU SOLD REMIND THE BROTHERS OF WHAT THEY HAD DONE MANY YEARS BEFORE. THIS WOULD HAVE BROUGHT HOME TO THEM THEIR RESPONSIBILITY AND GUILT FOR THEIR ACTIONS; HOWEVER, IN SOME LANGUAGES IT IS NECESSARY TO EXPRESS WHAT THEY HAD DONE AS CAUSING OR ALLOWING JOSEPH TO BE SOLD AS A SLAVE IN EGYPT. EXAMPLES OF RENDERINGS THAT DO THIS ARE “YOU SOLD ME, SO THAT I BECAME A SLAVE OF THE PEOPLE HERE,” “YOU LET THOSE TRADERS BUY ME AS A SLAVE, AND THEY BROUGHT ME TO EGYPT,” AND “YOU SOLD ME TO THOSE OTHER PEOPLE WHO BROUGHT ME HERE TO THIS COUNTRY.” FOR GOD SENT ME BEFORE YOU TO PRESERVE LIFE: THIS STATEMENT, WHICH ACKNOWLEDGES THAT GOD HAD A SAVING PURPOSE IN THE CRUEL EVENTS IN JOSEPH’S LIFE, IS PART OF THE SAVING THEME THAT RUNS THROUGHOUT THE BOOK OF GENESIS. SOME TRANSLATIONS EXPRESS THE ELEMENT OF PURPOSE BY SAYING “IT HAPPENED LIKE THAT BECAUSE GOD.…” SENT ME BEFORE YOU: THAT IS, “SENT ME AHEAD OF YOU [PLURAL]” OR “SENT ME TO EGYPT AHEAD OF YOU.” GOD IS NAMED HERE AS THE ONE RESPONSIBLE FOR JOSEPH’S BEING IN EGYPT. IN THIS SENSE GOD IS IN CONTRAST WITH THE BROTHERS; ACCORDINGLY, TEV AND OTHERS SAY “IT WAS REALLY GOD [NOT YOU ALL].…” SOME TRANSLATIONS BRING THIS OUT MORE DIRECTLY BY SAYING “THIS WAS NOT YOUR DOING IT WAS GOD’S DOING; HE SENT ME.…” TO PRESERVE LIFE: THIS TRANSLATES A HEBREW NOUN THAT HAS THE MEANING OF THE PRESERVATION OR SAVING OF LIFE, BUT WHICH CAN MOST OFTEN BE EXPRESSED AS AN ACTION, AS IN TEV “TO SAVE PEOPLE’S LIVES.”**

**GENESIS 45:6: FOR THE FAMINE HAS BEEN IN THE LAND THESE TWO YEARS: THE FUNCTION OF THIS STATEMENT IS TO COMPARE THE AMOUNT OF TIME SINCE THE FAMINE BEGAN WITH THE LONGER PERIOD OF TIME BEFORE IT WILL END. WE MAY TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “WE HAVE HAD ONLY TWO YEARS OF FAMINE IN THIS COUNTRY,” “PEOPLE HAVE BEEN HUNGRY HERE FOR ONLY TWO YEARS,” OR “THIS IS ONLY THE SECOND DRY YEAR.” AND THERE ARE YET FIVE YEARS: A CONTRASTIVE LINK SUCH AS “BUT” OR “HOWEVER” MAY BETTER CONNECT THESE TWO CLAUSES: “BUT FOR FIVE MORE YEARS THERE WILL BE …” OR “BUT THERE ARE FIVE MORE YEARS OF IT STILL TO COME, WHEN.…” NEITHER PLOWING NOR HARVEST: PLOWING TRANSLATES A NOUN THAT REFERS BOTH TO THE ACT OF PLOWING AND TO THE TIME OF PLOWING: “THE PLOWING SEASON.” HARVEST MAY MEAN “THE HARVEST” (THE CROP THAT IS HARVESTED), “THE PROCESS OF HARVESTING,” OR “THE HARVESTING SEASON.” THIS EXPRESSION IS USED WITH THE PREPOSITION “IN” IN EXO 34:21, WHERE IT REFERS TO THE SEASONS, AS TEV SAYS, “DURING PLOWING TIME OR HARVEST [TIME].” WHATEVER IS THE PRECISE SENSE, JOSEPH IS SAYING THAT FOR THE NEXT FIVE YEARS THERE WILL BE NO CROPS PRODUCED. IN LANGUAGE AREAS WHERE PLOWING WITH A WORK ANIMAL IS UNKNOWN, AND THE GROUND IS NOT TURNED OVER IN PREPARATION FOR PLANTING, TRANSLATORS MAY USE AN EXPRESSION EQUIVALENT TO PLANTING AND HARVESTING (COLLECTING). IN AREAS WHERE HOE CULTIVATION IS PRACTICED, IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO SAY “FIVE MORE YEARS WHEN NOBODY WILL HOE THE GROUND OR HARVEST CROPS.” IF NO SUITABLE EXPRESSION IS AVAILABLE IN REGARD TO WORKING THE EARTH AND HARVESTING, WE MAY HAVE TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “FOR THE NEXT FIVE YEARS THERE WILL BE NO CROPS GROWN,” OR ACTIVELY “… PEOPLE WILL NOT BE ABLE TO RAISE A CROP.” SOME EXAMPLES OF RECENT TRANSLATIONS ARE “FIVE YEARS YET WHEN PEOPLE CAN’T GET FOOD FROM THEIR GARDENS,” “… WHEN NO ONE CAN WORK THE GROUND OR GROW FOOD,” AND “FIVE YEARS … IN WHICH PEOPLE CAN’T MAKE GARDENS OR HARVEST FOOD.”**

**GENESIS 45:7: AFTER THE OPENING CLAUSE, WHICH REPEATS THE THOUGHT OF VERSE 5, THIS VERSE HAS TWO PARTS THAT ARE PARALLEL IN MEANING. TO PRESERVE FOR YOU A REMNANT ON EARTH IS LITERALLY “TO ESTABLISH FOR YOU A REMAINDER ON EARTH.” REMNANT TRANSLATES A NOUN RELATED TO A VERB MEANING TO BE LEFT OVER OR TO REMAIN AFTER SOMETHING HAS DESTROYED THE REST. THE ONES LEFT OVER (FROM THE DESTRUCTIVE FAMINE) IN THIS CASE ARE PEOPLE OF THE FUTURE WHO WILL BE BORN TO INDIVIDUALS LIKE THE BROTHERS; THEREFORE, THE SENSE IS “DESCENDANTS.” ACCORDINGLY, WE MAY RENDER THE FIRST HALF OF THIS VERSE AS “GOD SENT ME AHEAD OF YOU [PLURAL] TO MAKE SURE YOU [PLURAL] WILL HAVE DESCENDANTS.” IT IS UNDERSTOOD THAT THESE DESCENDANTS WILL BE ON EARTH, AND SO THE WORDS ON EARTH MAY NOT BE NEEDED. AND TO KEEP ALIVE FOR YOU MANY SURVIVORS: KEEP ALIVE TRANSLATES A FORM OF A VERB MEANING TO CAUSE TO LIVE, OR TO PRESERVE ALIVE. SURVIVORS TRANSLATES A NOUN THAT REFERS TO PEOPLE WHO HAVE ESCAPED SOME DEADLY TRAGEDY. HOWEVER, THERE IS ANOTHER VIEW OF THE WORDS RENDERED MANY SURVIVORS. THE WORD TRANSLATED MANY BY RSV MAY ALSO MEAN “GREAT,” “EXTRAORDINARY,” “POWERFUL”; AND THE WORD TRANSLATED SURVIVORS MAY BE UNDERSTOOD AS “ESCAPING OR CAUSING TO ESCAPE,” WHICH IS “DELIVERANCE.” THIS IS THE VIEW OF DRIVER AND SPEISER AND IS FOLLOWED BY SUCH VERSIONS AS NJB, NJV, NIV, NAB, GECL, FRCL, AND SPCL. IN THIS CASE WE MAY TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “THEREFORE GOD SENT ME AHEAD OF YOU [PLURAL] TO THIS COUNTRY SO THAT YOU MIGHT HAVE DESCENDANTS, AND TO SAVE YOUR LIVES IN THIS MARVELOUS WAY.” ALTHOUGH THIS IS THE INTERPRETATION RECOMMENDED BY THE HANDBOOK, THE RENDERING OF RSV, WHICH IS ALSO FOLLOWED BY NEB/REB AND TEV, IS ALSO POSSIBLE.**

**GENESIS 45:8: SO, IT WAS NOT YOU WHO SENT ME HERE: JOSEPH IS ADDRESSING ALL THE BROTHERS. SO, MARKS A CONSEQUENCE OF WHAT HAS BEEN SAID IN VERSE 7. SEE TEV. REB SAYS “IT IS CLEAR THAT.…” IN SOME LANGUAGES THIS CONSTRUCTION IS EXPRESSED, FOR EXAMPLE, AS “YOU [PLURAL] DID NOT SEND ME HERE; GOD SENT ME HERE” OR “GOD SENT ME HERE; YOU [PLURAL] DID NOT DO IT.” JOSEPH NOW LISTS THREE THINGS GOD HAS DONE WITH HIM IN EGYPT. HE HAS MADE ME A FATHER TO PHARAOH: FATHER IN THIS EXPRESSION REFERS TO THE ROLE OF COUNSELOR OR ADVISOR; AS REB SAYS, “HE HAS MADE ME PHARAOH’S CHIEF COUNSELOR.” IN SOME LANGUAGES THIS MAY BE EXPRESSED AS “KING’S ADVISOR” OR “THE MAN WHO ADVISES THE KING.” IN SOME LANGUAGES THIS IS “THE MAN WHO WHISPERS IN THE CHIEF’S EAR.” LORD OF ALL HIS HOUSE: SEE 41:40. RULER OVER ALL THE LAND OF EGYPT: THAT IS, “RULER OF THE WHOLE COUNTRY OF EGYPT.” SEE TEV AND COMMENTS ON 41:41 AND 41:43. WE MAY ALSO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “CHIEF OVER ALL THE PEOPLE OF EGYPT.”**

**GENESIS 45:9: IN VERSES 45:9–13 JOSEPH URGES HIS BROTHERS TO BRING JACOB, THE PEOPLE OF HIS HOUSEHOLD, AND HIS HERDS TO EGYPT, WHERE THEY WILL BE CARED FOR DURING THE REMAINING YEARS OF THE FAMINE. AGAIN, JOSEPH ADDRESSES ALL THE BROTHERS. MAKE HASTE AND GO UP TO MY FATHER: THAT IS, “HURRY AND GO BACK TO [OUR] FATHER.” FOR GO UP SEE 13:1. THUS, SAYS YOUR SON JOSEPH: THAT IS, “TELL HIM THAT THIS IS WHAT HIS SON JOSEPH SAYS,” “TELL HIM THAT THESE ARE THE WORDS SPOKEN BY HIS SON JOSEPH,” OR “TELL HIM I AM HIS SON JOSEPH AND I SAY THESE WORDS TO HIM.” LORD OF ALL EGYPT: THAT IS, “RULER OF ALL THE PEOPLE OF EGYPT” OR “RULER OF THE WHOLE COUNTRY OF EGYPT.” COME DOWN TO ME: SEE 43:20. DO NOT TARRY: THAT IS, “WITHOUT DELAY,” “IMMEDIATELY.”**

**GENESIS 45:10: YOU SHALL DWELL IN THE LAND OF GOSHEN: YOU IS SINGULAR AND ADDRESSED TO JACOB. ACCORDING TO SCHOLARS THE LAND OF GOSHEN IS CALLED BY THAT NAME ONLY IN THE BIBLE. THE MOST PROBABLE LOCATION IS A FERTILE AREA IN THE EASTERN PART OF THE NILE DELTA THAT TODAY IS CALLED WADI TUMILAT. SEE THE MAP ON PAGE 18. THE AREA WAS PARTICULARLY WELL SUITED FOR GRAZING OR PASTURING ANIMALS, A WAY OF LIFE THAT EGYPTIANS DID NOT FOLLOW. IN TRANSLATION LAND OF … DOES NOT INDICATE A SEPARATE COUNTRY; IT REFERS HERE TO A REGION OR DISTRICT WITHIN EGYPT. YOU SHALL BE NEAR ME: THAT IS, NEAR COMPARED WITH FAR-AWAY CANAAN. YOU AND YOUR CHILDREN AND YOUR CHILDREN’S CHILDREN …: HERE JOSEPH EXPANDS WHAT HE MEANS BY YOU (SINGULAR). TRANSLATORS MAY FIND IT BEST TO START A NEW SENTENCE WITH THIS EXPANSION; FOR EXAMPLE, “THIS INCLUDES YOU [JACOB], YOUR CHILDREN, AND YOUR GRANDCHILDREN [THE CHILDREN OF JACOB’S MARRIED SONS], AND YOUR FLOCKS [WHICH INCLUDES SHEEP AND GOATS], YOUR CATTLE, AND ALL YOUR BELONGINGS [THESE ARE MOVEABLE POSSESSIONS].”**

**GENESIS 45:11: THERE I WILL PROVIDE FOR YOU: PROVIDE TRANSLATES A VERB MEANING TO “NOURISH,” “SUSTAIN,” OR “SUPPORT.” JOSEPH ASSURES HIS FATHER THAT HE PERSONALLY WILL TAKE CARE OF THEIR NEEDS OR, AS FRCL SAYS MORE CONCRETELY, “I WILL SUPPLY YOU WITH FOOD HERE.” A NUMBER OF TRANSLATIONS SAY SIMPLY “I WILL LOOK AFTER YOU.” JOSEPH ADDRESSES JACOB, BUT INCLUDED ARE ALL OF HIS DEPENDENTS TOO, AS THE FINAL CLAUSE IN THIS VERSE SHOWS. FOR THERE ARE YET FIVE YEARS OF FAMINE TO COME: SEE VERSE 6. LEST YOU AND YOUR HOUSEHOLD … COME TO POVERTY: YOUR HOUSEHOLD REFERS TO JACOB’S FAMILY OR EXTENDED FAMILY. ALL THAT YOU HAVE REFERS TO JACOB’S HERDS. COME TO POVERTY RENDERS A VERB THAT NORMALLY MEANS TO INHERIT OR TAKE POSSESSION OF SOMETHING. HOWEVER, THE FORM USED HERE MEANS TO “BE IMPOVERISHED” OR TO “BE LACKING.” VERSE 11 MAY REQUIRE SOME ADJUSTING TO MAKE IT CLEAR. WE MAY TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “I CAN SUPPLY YOU WITH FOOD HERE IN GOSHEN—FOOD FOR YOU, YOUR FAMILY, AND YOUR ANIMALS, SO THAT YOU WILL LACK NOTHING. THIS FAMINE IS GOING TO LAST FIVE MORE YEARS.” ANOTHER MODEL IS “THIS FAMINE IS GOING TO LAST FIVE MORE YEARS, BUT HERE IN GOSHEN I CAN GIVE YOU ENOUGH FOOD FOR YOU, YOUR FAMILY, AND YOUR ANIMALS. HERE YOU WILL NOT STARVE.”**

**GENESIS 45:12: JOSEPH HAS FINISHED THE SPEECH THAT IS TO BE DELIVERED TO HIS FATHER, AND NOW HE ADDRESSES HIS BROTHERS AGAIN. IN LANGUAGES LIKE ENGLISH, WHICH DO NOT MARK THE SECOND PERSON PLURAL FORMS, THE READER MAY THINK THAT JOSEPH IS STILL ADDRESSING JACOB. TEV SHOWS QUITE CLEARLY THAT JOSEPH IS NOW SPEAKING DIRECTLY TO THE BROTHERS BY BEGINNING A NEW PARAGRAPH, AND BY SAYING “ALL OF YOU, AND YOU TOO, BENJAMIN.” IN SOME LANGUAGES IT MAY BE HELPFUL TO BEGIN VERSE 12 BY SAYING “THEN JOSEPH SPOKE AGAIN TO HIS BROTHERS.” AND NOW YOUR EYES SEE, AND THE EYES … BENJAMIN SEE: THE HEBREW HAS “BEHOLD YOUR EYES SEE.” HERE “BEHOLD” FOCUSES THEIR ATTENTION ON WHO HE IS AND THUS ANTICIPATES THE COMMAND THAT COMES IN VERSE 13. BOTH RSV AND TEV SAY NOW. IT IS ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT THAT BENJAMIN, WHOSE VOICE WILL HAVE GREAT INFLUENCE ON HIS FATHER’S DECISION TO COME TO EGYPT, IS A WITNESS TO WHAT JOSEPH HAS SAID TO HIS BROTHERS. THAT IT IS MY MOUTH THAT SPEAKS TO YOU: MY MOUTH IS USED TO REPRESENT JOSEPH OR WHAT JOSEPH SAYS. WE MAY TRANSLATE VERSE 12, FOR EXAMPLE, “NOW, YOUNGER BROTHER BENJAMIN, YOU AND ALL THE REST ARE WITNESSES TO ALL THAT I HAVE SAID” OR “NOW, ALL OF YOU AND ESPECIALLY MY FULL BROTHER BENJAMIN HAVE SEEN ME AND KNOW THAT IT IS I, JOSEPH, WHO HAVE SPOKEN TO YOU [PLURAL].” ANOTHER POSSIBLE INTERPRETATION IS THAT MY MOUTH REFERS TO THE SPEECH OF JOSEPH THAT IS NOW IN THE BROTHERS’ OWN LANGUAGE: “YOU KNOW I AM JOSEPH BECAUSE I AM SPEAKING TO YOU IN OUR [INCLUSIVE] OWN LANGUAGE.”**

**GENESIS 45:13: YOU MUST TELL MY FATHER OF ALL MY SPLENDOR IN EGYPT: JOSEPH IS ADDRESSING ALL THE BROTHERS. SPLENDOR TRANSLATES A HEBREW WORD THAT WAS USED FOR “WEALTH” IN 31:1. IN 34:19 THE SAME WORD WAS USED FOR THE “HONOR” OF SHECHEM AND HERE ALSO HAS THE SENSE OF GLORY, HONOR, OR FAME. NRSV HAS REVISED RSV TO SAY “HOW GREATLY I AM HONORED.” IN SOME LANGUAGES THIS IDEA IS BEST EXPRESSED AS “TELL MY FATHER HOW THE PEOPLE OF EGYPT PRAISE ME” OR “… HONOR ME.” SOME MODERN TRANSLATIONS INTERPRET THE WORD IN THIS CONTEXT TO MEAN “AUTHORITY”: “ABOUT MY AUTHORITY IN THIS COUNTRY.” TEV HAS “HOW POWERFUL I AM”; OTHER TRANSLATIONS SAY “THAT I HAVE A HIGH RANK” OR “THAT I AM VERY IMPORTANT.” ALL THAT YOU HAVE SEEN, IN THE CONTEXT OF JOSEPH’S POWER AND SPLENDOR, MOST LIKELY REFERS TO JOSEPH’S STYLE OF LIFE AND HIS COMMANDING PRESENCE. WE MAY TRANSLATE THIS EXPRESSION, FOR EXAMPLE, “AND THE THINGS YOU HAVE SEEN ME DO” OR “THE WAY OF MY LIFE YOU HAVE SEEN.” MAKE HASTE REPEATS PART OF THE OPENING OF VERSE 9 AND SO ENCLOSES VERSES 9–13 WITH THE SAME COMMAND.**

**GENESIS 45:14: VERSE 13 ENDS WITH JOSEPH SPEAKING AND VERSE 14 BEGINS WITH JOSEPH WELCOMING HIS BROTHERS WITH HUGS, KISSES, AND TEARS OF JOY AND RECONCILIATION. THEREFORE, IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO PROVIDE A TRANSITION AT THE BEGINNING OF VERSE 14; WE MAY SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “THEN JOSEPH WENT OVER TO BENJAMIN AND PUT HIS ARMS AROUND HIM.…” THEN HE FELL UPON HIS BROTHER BENJAMIN’S NECK AND WEPT: FOR THE IDIOM FELL UPON HIS … NECK, SEE 33:4. AND BENJAMIN WEPT: IN SOME LANGUAGES THIS IS BEST COMBINED WITH THE PREVIOUS CLAUSE AND EXPRESSED AS SOMETHING THE TWO BROTHERS DID TOGETHER: “THEN JOSEPH PUT HIS ARMS ROUND BENJAMIN, AND THEY CRIED TOGETHER.”**

**GENESIS 45:15: AND HE KISSED ALL HIS BROTHERS AND WEPT UPON THEM: FOR DISCUSSION OF KISS SEE 27:26 AND 29:11. WEPT UPON THEM MEANS THAT JOSEPH WAS CRYING WHEN HE KISSED HIS BROTHERS. AND AFTER THAT HIS BROTHERS TALKED WITH HIM: IN VERSE 3 THE BROTHERS WERE DUMBFOUNDED BY JOSEPH’S TELLING THEM WHO HE REALLY WAS. SINCE THAT TIME, THEY HAVE LISTENED IN A STATE OF SHOCK, BUT JOSEPH HAS SHOWN HOW HEALING HAS TAKEN PLACE IN THEIR RELATIONS, AND NOW THEY ARE SUFFICIENTLY ASSURED AND RENEWED TO BE ABLE TO TALK WITH HIM. THIS IS WELL BROUGHT OUT BY A TRANSLATION THAT SAYS “ONLY NOW DID THE BROTHERS FEEL THAT THEY COULD TALK WITH HIM.” WE CAN WELL IMAGINE THAT THEIR TALK WAS ABOUT NEWS OF BIRTHS AND DEATHS AND OTHER FAMILY EVENTS THAT HAD HAPPENED SINCE JOSEPH DISAPPEARED.**

**THE KING INVITES JACOB TO COME TO EGYPT (45:16–28)**

**IN THIS PART THE KING IS HAPPY TO LEARN THAT JOSEPH’S BROTHERS HAVE COME TO EGYPT, AND THEREFORE HE URGES JOSEPH TO INSTRUCT JACOB TO BRING HIS FAMILY AND COME TO EGYPT. MOREOVER, HE PROVIDES THE BROTHERS WITH WAGONS TO TRANSPORT JACOB’S FAMILY AND PROMISES TO GIVE THEM GOOD LAND AND FOOD (VERSES 16–20). THE BROTHERS RETURN TO CANAAN LOADED WITH GIFTS FOR JACOB. THEY REPORT TO JACOB THAT JOSEPH IS ALIVE AND IS RULER OF EGYPT. AT FIRST JACOB IS UNABLE TO BELIEVE THEM, BUT WHEN HE SEES THE GIFTS AND WAGONS, HE IS CONVINCED AND READY TO GO TO EGYPT TO SEE HIS SON (VERSES 21–28).**

**SUBDIVISION HEADING**

**THERE ARE MANY WAYS TO TITLE THIS SUBDIVISION. WE MAY SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “THE KING SENDS GIFTS TO JACOB AND INVITES HIM TO EGYPT,” “THE BROTHERS RETURN HOME WITH GIFTS FOR JACOB, WHO AGREES TO GO TO EGYPT,” “JACOB WILL NOW GO AND SEE JOSEPH IN EGYPT.” SOME OTHER HEADINGS ARE: NJB (VERSES 16–20) “PHARAOH’S INVITATION,” GECL “THE PHARAOH HAS JOSEPH BROUGHT TO EGYPT.”**

**GENESIS 45:16: VERSES 16–20 RELATE THE INSTRUCTIONS GIVEN BY THE KING TO HAVE JACOB BROUGHT TO EGYPT AND THE PROMISES MADE TO TAKE CARE OF HIM AND HIS PEOPLE. WHEN THE REPORT WAS HEARD IN PHARAOH’S HOUSE: REPORT REFERS TO THE NEWS OF THE PRESENCE OF JOSEPH’S BROTHERS. PHARAOH’S HOUSEIS “PHARAOH’S PALACE” OR “THE KING’S PALACE.” THE NEWS OF JOSEPH’S BROTHERS PROBABLY PASSED FROM JOSEPH’S OFFICERS TO THOSE IN THE KING’S COURT, WHO RELAYED IT TO THE KING. WE MAY TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “WHEN THE NEWS REACHED THE KING’S PALACE …” OR “AT THE KING’S PALACE IT WAS LEARNED THAT.…” JOSEPH’S BROTHERS HAVE COME: RSV TREATS THIS AS QUOTED SPEECH. HOWEVER, MOST TRANSLATIONS HANDLE THIS INFORMATION AS AN INDIRECT REPORT: “THAT JOSEPH’S BROTHERS HAD COME TO EGYPT.” IT PLEASED PHARAOH AND HIS SERVANTS WELL IS LITERALLY “AND IT WAS GOOD IN THE EYES OF PHARAOH AND IN THE EYES OF HIS SERVANTS.” THIS IS THE CONSEQUENCE OF HAVING LEARNED THAT JOSEPH’S BROTHERS HAD COME TO EGYPT. SERVANTS ARE NOT DOMESTIC WORKERS IN THE PALACE BUT OFFICERS OF THE KING’S COURT, OR MORE GENERALLY “OFFICIALS.” SOME LANGUAGES PREFER TO FOLLOW THE ORDER OF THE REASON FOLLOWED BY THE CONSEQUENCE, AS IN TEV. OTHERS, HOWEVER, FIND IT MORE NATURAL TO REVERSE THAT ORDER; FOR EXAMPLE, “THE KING AND HIS OFFICERS WERE VERY HAPPY WHEN THE NEWS REACHED THE PALACE THAT JOSEPH’S BROTHERS HAD COME TO EGYPT.”**

**GENESIS 45:17: DO THIS: THE KING EXPECTS JOSEPH TO CARRY OUT HIS ORDERS TO THE LETTER AND TO SAY TO THE BROTHERS EXACTLY WHAT THE KING SAYS TO JOSEPH. TEV AND OTHERS PREFER TO MAKE THESE INSTRUCTIONS TO THE BROTHERS INDIRECT SPEECH: “TELL YOUR BROTHERS TO.…” TRANSLATORS SHOULD USE THE FORM THAT IS MOST NATURAL IN THEIR OWN LANGUAGE. WE MAY TRANSLATE DO THIS AS “HERE IS WHAT I WANT YOU [PLURAL] TO DO,” “YOU [PLURAL] MUST DO LIKE THIS,” OR “THIS IS WHAT YOU [PLURAL] MUST DO.” LOAD YOUR BEASTS AND GO BACK TO THE LAND OF CANAAN: BEASTS GENERALLY REFERS TO ANY ANIMAL OF BURDEN SUCH AS A CAMEL, OX, OR DONKEY. IN THIS CONTEXT IT PROBABLY REFERS TO DONKEYS. SEE 42:26; 43:18; 44:3. IN SOME LANGUAGES IT WILL BE NECESSARY TO INDICATE WHAT IS TO BE LOADED ON THE DONKEYS; FOR EXAMPLE, “LOAD YOUR DONKEYS WITH GRAIN.”**

**GENESIS 45:18: TAKE YOUR FATHER AND YOUR HOUSEHOLDS, AND COME TO ME: FOR TAKE YOUR FATHER NEB/REB SAY “FETCH YOUR FATHER …,” WHICH MEANS “GO AND GET.” WE MAY ALSO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “BRING YOUR FATHER.…” HOUSEHOLDS MEANS “FAMILIES” OR “RELATIVES.” WHEN HE SAYS COME TO ME, THE KING SPEAKS OF EGYPT AS BEING HIMSELF. IT MAY BE MORE NATURAL TO SAY “COME BACK TO EGYPT” OR “COME BACK HERE.” I WILL GIVE YOU THE BEST OF THE LAND OF EGYPT: BEST MEANS “THE BEST AREA,” “THE BEST REGION.” WHEN SPOKEN TO HERDSMEN (AS JACOB’S FAMILY ARE), BEST HAS A QUITE DIFFERENT MEANING THAN IT WOULD HAVE WHEN SPOKEN TO FARMERS. THE KING HAS IN MIND AREAS WHERE ANIMALS WILL FIND THE BEST PASTURES. WE MAY TRANSLATE AS THE “BEST REGION [OR TERRITORY, OR AREA] OF EGYPT” OR “THE BEST PASTURE LANDS IN EGYPT.” YOU SHALL EAT THE FAT OF THE LAND: IN 27:28 ISAAC BLESSES JACOB WITH “THE FATNESS OF THE EARTH,” WHICH REFERS TO THE LAND’S RICH FERTILITY AND GROWTH. IN EZEK 34:14 A “GOOD PASTURE” IS CALLED IN HEBREW “A FAT PASTURE.” IN THIS VERSE FAT OF THE LAND REFERS TO GOOD PRODUCE, AS FRCL TRANSLATES: “YOU WILL HAVE AVAILABLE THE BEST PRODUCE OF THE COUNTRY.” WE MAY ALSO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “YOU [PLURAL] WILL HAVE THE BEST FOOD THERE IS TO EAT IN THIS COUNTRY.”**

**GENESIS 45:19: COMMAND THEM ALSO: THE KING SAYS THIS TO JOSEPH. AS THE RSV FOOTNOTE SHOWS, THE HEBREW TEXT HAS “YOU ARE COMMANDED”; RSV FOLLOWS THE SEPTUAGINT AND THE VULGATE. HOTTP, WHICH RATES THE HEBREW AS A {B}, SAYS THE VERB TO COMMAND HAS A CAUSATIVE MEANING, “TO CHARGE SOMEONE TO GIVE ORDERS,” AND IS HERE USED IN A PASSIVE FORM THAT MAY BE RENDERED “YOU HAVE BEEN CHARGED TO GIVE ORDERS,” THAT IS, “DO LIKE THIS.” WHETHER THE TRANSLATOR FOLLOWS RSV OR THE HEBREW TEXT, THE SENSE IS ESSENTIALLY THE SAME. NOTE TEV “TELL THEM …,” WHICH IS A GOOD MODEL. DO THIS: SEE VERSE 17. TAKE WAGONS FROM THE LAND OF EGYPT FOR YOUR LITTLE ONES AND FOR YOUR WIVES: THE HEBREW WORD TRANSLATED WAGONS REFERS TO TWO- OR FOUR-WHEELED CARTS PULLED BY WORK ANIMALS, USUALLY OXEN OR DONKEYS. THE “CHARIOT” DESCRIBED IN 41:43 IS DIFFERENT, IN THAT IT WAS USED IN BATTLE, HAD ONLY TWO WHEELS, AND WAS PULLED BY FAST-MOVING HORSES. IN AREAS WHERE CHARIOTS AND WAGONS ARE UNKNOWN, IT MAY BE DIFFICULT WITHOUT ILLUSTRATIONS FOR READERS TO UNDERSTAND THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THESE TWO VEHICLES. IN SOME LANGUAGES IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO USE THE SAME WORD AS WAS USED TO TRANSLATE “CHARIOT” IN 41:43, AND RENDER “WAGON” AS “BIG CHARIOT,” OR “BIG CART.” ONE LANGUAGE THAT USES THE SAME WORD FOR BOTH IS FRENCH; TOB, HOWEVER, GIVES AN EXPLANATION OF THE DIFFERENCE IN ITS FOOTNOTE. IT MAY NOT BE CLEAR WHY THESE WAGONS ARE SAID TO BE FOR YOUR LITTLE ONES AND FOR YOUR WIVES. THIS MAY BE THE CASE PARTICULARLY IN AREAS WHERE A WOMAN IS EXPECTED TO WALK AND CARRY HER SMALL CHILD. IN SUCH CASES WE MAY NEED TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “… FOR YOUR WIVES AND SMALL CHILDREN TO RIDE IN.” FOR LITTLE ONES SEE 43:8.**

**GENESIS 45:20: GIVE NO THOUGHT TO YOUR GOODS IS LITERALLY “LET NOT YOUR EYE LOOK WITH REGRET ON YOUR POSSESSIONS.” THE KING UNDERSTANDS THAT JACOB AND THE BROTHERS PROBABLY CANNOT BRING ALL THEIR CAMP BAGGAGE ALL THE WAY TO EGYPT, AND SO HE ADVISES THEM, THROUGH JOSEPH, NOT TO WORRY ABOUT LEAVING SOME OF THEIR POSSESSIONS BEHIND IN CANAAN. THE PLURAL VERB AND PRONOUN FORMS IN THE HEBREW SHOW THAT THE KING IS SPEAKING TO THE BROTHERS. WE MAY TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “DON’T YOU [PLURAL] BE CONCERNED ABOUT HAVING TO LEAVE SOME OF YOUR POSSESSIONS BEHIND.” SEE TEV. FOR THE BEST OF ALL THE LAND OF EGYPT IS YOURS: THIS STATEMENT GIVES THE REASON WHY THEY SHOULD NOT WORRY IN THE PREVIOUS SENTENCE. FOR ITS TRANSLATION SEE VERSE 18.**

**GENESIS 45:21: THE INSTRUCTIONS TO THE BROTHERS SPOKEN TO JOSEPH BY THE KING ARE FINISHED. THE SONS OF ISRAEL DID SO: THAT IS, “JACOB’S SONS DID AS THE KING ORDERED THEM.” JOSEPH GAVE THEM WAGONS, ACCORDING TO THE COMMAND OF PHARAOH, AND GAVE THEM PROVISIONS FOR THE JOURNEY: IN SOME LANGUAGES THE PHRASE ACCORDING TO … PHARAOH MAY NEED TO BE RENDERED AS A CONCLUDING SENTENCE; FOR EXAMPLE, “JOSEPH GAVE THEM WAGONS AND FOOD FOR THEIR TRIP HOME. HE DID JUST AS THE KING HAD TOLD HIM TO DO.” WE MAY LIKEWISE SAY “JOSEPH DID AS THE KING HAD TOLD HIM; HE GAVE HIS BROTHERS WAGONS AND FOOD FOR THEIR TRIP.”**

**GENESIS 45:22: FESTAL GARMENTS: THE HEBREW APPEARS TO SAY “CHANGE OF CLOTHING.” HOWEVER, INTERPRETERS AND TRANSLATORS DIFFER AS TO WHAT THIS MEANS. RSV TAKES IT TO REFER TO SPECIAL OR FESTAL CLOTHING; THAT IS, ROBES THAT WERE WORN ONLY ON SPECIAL OCCASIONS. SOME TAKE IT TO MEAN A “CHANGE OF CLOTHING” OR “FRESH CLOTHING” WITHOUT SUGGESTING WHETHER THE CLOTHING IS NEW OR USED. REB HAS REVISED NEB “CHANGE OF CLOTHING” TO “NEW CLOTHES.” NRSV HAS REVISED RSV TO “A SET OF GARMENTS.” WESTERMANN TAKES IT TO MEAN “CHANGES OF CLOTHING FOR SPECIAL OCCASIONS.” SINCE IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO SAY PRECISELY WHAT IS MEANT, WE MAY TRANSLATE AS IN RSV, TEV, OR SAY “NEW” OR “FRESH CLOTHING.” BUT TO BENJAMIN HE GAVE THREE HUNDRED SHEKELS OF SILVER: FOR SHEKEL AS THE WEIGHT OF SILVER, SEE 43:21. THE WORD SHEKEL IS NOT USED IN THE HEBREW OF THIS VERSE, WHICH IS LITERALLY “THREE HUNDRED [OF] SILVER.” FOR TRANSLATION SEE TEV. FIVE FESTAL GARMENTS: THIS IS A PARALLEL TO BENJAMIN BEING GIVEN FIVE TIMES THE AMOUNT OF FOOD THAT WAS GIVEN TO HIS BROTHERS IN 43:34. IN SOME LANGUAGES TRANSLATORS CHANGE THE ORDER OF THE GIFTS TO BENJAMIN SO THAT THE GIFT OF CLOTHES TO HIM FOLLOWS IMMEDIATELY ON THE GIFT OF CLOTHES TO THE OTHER BROTHERS; FOR EXAMPLE, “HE GAVE NEW CLOTHES TO EACH BROTHER; BUT TO BENJAMIN HE GAVE FIVE NEW CLOTHES AND THREE HUNDRED PIECES OF SILVER MONEY.”**

**GENESIS 45:23: TO HIS FATHER HE SENT AS FOLLOWS: THAT IS, “THESE ARE THE THINGS JOSEPH SENT TO HIS FATHER” OR “THIS IS WHAT HE SENT TO HIS FATHER.” SEE TEV. TEN ASSES LOADED WITH THE GOOD THINGS OF EGYPT: ASSES IS THE GENERAL WORD FOR “DONKEY” HERE, ALTHOUGH SHE-ASSES IN THE NEXT CLAUSE REFERS TO FEMALES. IN LANGUAGES THAT MUST DISTINGUISH BETWEEN THE GENDERS OF ANIMALS, OR WHICH FIND IT BEST TO DO SO IN THIS CONTEXT, WHERE ONE GROUP IS DESIGNATED AS FEMALE, WE MAY SAY “TEN MALE DONKEYS.” GOOD THINGS OF EGYPT: THESE ARE GIFTS, BUT THERE IS NO WAY TO KNOW WHAT THEY ARE, AND SO IT MAY BE BEST TO REFER TO THEM AS “SOME OF THE BEST GIFTS FROM EGYPT” OR “SOME OF THE BEST GOODS MADE IN EGYPT.” FOR SHE-ASSES SEE 12:16. NOTE THAT TEV DOES NOT DISTINGUISH THE FEMALE DONKEYS FROM THE MALE DONKEYS. HOWEVER, THE FEMALE DONKEY IS OF GREATER VALUE THAN THE MALE DONKEY, BECAUSE IT REPRODUCES YOUNG ONES BY MATING EITHER WITH A MALE DONKEY OR WITH A MALE HORSE. THE FEMALE DONKEYS ARE SENT AS A SPECIAL GIFT TO JACOB, CARRYING THE FOOD HE WILL NEED ON HIS JOURNEY TO EGYPT. IF THE LANGUAGE OF TRANSLATION DISTINGUISHES THE MALE FROM THE FEMALE, IT MAY BE ADVISABLE IN THIS CONTEXT TO DO SO. GRAIN, BREAD, AND PROVISION: SEE 42:25. FOR HIS FATHER ON THE JOURNEY: JOURNEY REFERS TO THE TRIP FROM CANAAN TO EGYPT. WE MAY TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “FOR HIS FATHER WHEN HE WILL [OR, WOULD] TRAVEL TO EGYPT.”**

**GENESIS 45:24: THEN HE SENT HIS BROTHERS AWAY: THAT IS, “HE SENT HIS BROTHERS ON THEIR WAY,” OR “SENT HIS BROTHERS OFF TO CANAAN.” SEE 44:3. DO NOT QUARREL ON THE WAY: QUARREL TRANSLATES A VERB MEANING TO BE “DISTURBED,” “UPSET,” “WORRIED.” IT HAS MAINLY TO DO WITH EMOTIONAL STATES, NOT WITH QUARRELS AND ARGUMENTS. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT JOSEPH IS HERE WARNING THE BROTHERS NOT TO BE BOTHERED BY THE FACT THAT HE GAVE BENJAMIN MUCH MORE THAN HE GAVE THE OTHERS. HOWEVER, IT IS MORE LIKELY THAT HE IS REPEATING WHAT HE SAID TO THEM IN VERSE 5, NAMELY, THAT THEY SHOULD NOT BE UPSET OVER THEIR TREATMENT OF HIM—WHICH, AS HE HAS EXPLAINED TO THEM, GOD HAS TURNED INTO GOOD FOR THEM. NJB TRANSLATES “LET THERE BE NO UPSETS ON THE WAY,” WHERE “UPSETS” IS DEFINED IN A FOOTNOTE AS “ANXIETY” OR “RECRIMINATIONS.” WE MAY ALSO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “KEEP YOUR HEARTS COOL.”**

**GENESIS 45:25: IN VERSES 25–28 THE BROTHERS RETURN TO JACOB AND ANNOUNCE THAT JOSEPH IS ALIVE. AS IN THE PREVIOUS RETURN TO CANAAN, THERE ARE NO DETAILS OF THE LONG TRIP.**

**GENESIS 45:26: AND THEY TOLD HIM: TOLD MAY NOT BE SUITABLE IN THIS CONTEXT IN SOME LANGUAGES, WHICH MAY REQUIRE SOMETHING EQUIVALENT TO “THEY ANNOUNCED,” “… REPORTED,” “… BROKE THE NEWS.” IT IS ALSO POSSIBLE TO RESTRUCTURE THIS VERSE TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “WHEN THEY TOLD HIM ‘JOSEPH IS STILL ALIVE; HE IS THE RULER OF ALL OF EGYPT,’ JACOB WAS.…” JOSEPH IS STILL ALIVE: THIS NEWS IS THE CLIMAX OF THE WHOLE STORY AS FAR AS JACOB IS CONCERNED; AND IT MAY NEED TO BE DELIVERED WITH SUITABLE EXCITEMENT OR EMPHASIS. ONE EXAMPLE OF HOW THIS MAY BE DONE IS “JOSEPH IS NOT DEAD! NO. HE IS STILL ALIVE; AND NOW HE IS.…” HIS HEART FAINTED IS LITERALLY “HIS HEART FROZE [TURNED COLD].” THE SENSE OF THE METAPHOR IS “TO BECOME NUMBED.” IN ENGLISH WE MAY SAY “IT TOOK HIS BREATH AWAY” OR “HE WAS STUNNED.” EXAMPLES FROM TRANSLATIONS IN OTHER LANGUAGES ARE “HIS THINKING BECAME WEAK,” “HIS HEAD WAS CONFUSED,” AND “HIS THINKING BECAME HARD.” FOR HE DID NOT BELIEVE THEM: THAT IS, HE COULD NOT BELIEVE WHAT HE WAS HEARING. NO DOUBT HE HAD FOR YEARS LOOKED FOR THE DAY WHEN HE WOULD HEAR THIS NEWS; THEN WHEN IT CAME, HE COULD NOT BELIEVE IT. ANOTHER WAY OF EXPRESSING HE DID NOT BELIEVE THEM IS “HE THOUGHT THEY WERE DECEIVING HIM.”**

**GENESIS 45:27: THIS VERSE CONTAINS TWO REASONS FOLLOWED BY A CONSEQUENCE. THE FIRST REASON IS “THEY TOLD HIM EVERYTHING THAT JOSEPH HAD SAID TO THEM,” AND THE SECOND IS “HE SAW THE WAGONS JOSEPH HAD SENT TO BRING HIM TO EGYPT.” AS A RESULT, THE SPIRIT OF THEIR FATHER … REVIVED; THAT IS, “THEIR FATHER PULLED HIMSELF TOGETHER” OR “… GOT OVER HIS SHOCK.” SOME TRANSLATIONS SAY “HIS THINKING RECOVERED” OR “… WAS ALL RIGHT AGAIN.”**

**GENESIS 45:28: AND ISRAEL SAID: THAT IS, “JACOB SAID.” IT IS ENOUGH: THIS EXPRESSION REFERS TO THE REPORT THAT JOSEPH IS ALIVE. HERE ARE SOME OF THE WAYS VARIOUS TRANSLATIONS EXPRESS IT IS ENOUGH: “IT IS ENOUGH TO KNOW THAT …” (SPCL), “I COULD ASK FOR NOTHING MORE” (FRCL), “NOT ANOTHER WORD” (GECL), “ENOUGH!” (NRSV), “THIS IS ALL I COULD ASK FOR!” (TEV). SOME PACIFIC TRANSLATIONS HAVE “IT’S REALLY TRUE, NOW I KNOW, …” I WILL GO AND SEE HIM BEFORE I DIE: JACOB DOES NOT MEAN THAT HE WILL GO AT SOME DISTANT TIME. IN 42:38 HE HAS ALREADY SPOKEN OF HIMSELF AS BEING OLD AND OF HIS DEATH. JACOB’S GOING TO EGYPT IS URGENT. TEV, NJB, NAB, GECL ALL EXPRESS IT WELL: “I MUST GO AND SEE HIM BEFORE I DIE” OR “I MUST GO AND SEE HIM NOW BEFORE I DIE.” SOME TRANSLATIONS EXPRESS THIS MORE FULLY OR MORE IDIOMATICALLY; FOR EXAMPLE: (1) “IT WILL NOT BE LONG BEFORE I DIE. I MUST GO AND SEE HIM FIRST!” (2) “I MUST GO QUICKLY TO EGYPT, IN CASE I DIE BEFORE I SEE HIM.” (3) “I’LL HAVE TO GO AND SEE HIM WHILE MY EYES HAVE NOT CLOSED YET.”**

**JACOB AND HIS FAMILY GO TO EGYPT (46:1–7)**

**JACOB TAKES ALL THAT HE HAS AND STARTS OUT FOR EGYPT. IN BEERSHEBA HE OFFERS SACRIFICES TO GOD, WHO TELLS HIM NOT TO BE AFRAID TO GO TO EGYPT. GOD RENEWS THE PROMISE THAT JACOB’S DESCENDANTS WILL BE A GREAT NATION. GOD ALSO PROMISES TO BRING JACOB’S DESCENDANTS BACK TO CANAAN, AND THAT JOSEPH WILL BE WITH HIM WHEN HE DIES (VERSES 1–4). JACOB AND HIS PEOPLE SET OUT FROM BEERSHEBA, WITH JACOB AND THE MOTHERS WITH SMALL CHILDREN RIDING IN THE WAGONS PROVIDED BY THE KING OF EGYPT. THEY ARRIVE IN EGYPT WITH THEIR POSSESSIONS AND THEIR HERDS (VERSES**

**SUBDIVISION HEADING**

**THE HANDBOOK HEADING MAY BE MODIFIED OR REPLACED TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “GOD SPEAKS TO JACOB BEFORE HE GOES TO EGYPT,” “JACOB GOES TO EGYPT,” “THE JOURNEY TO EGYPT,” “GOD MAKES A PROMISE TO JACOB.” GECL HAS “GOD GIVES JACOB COURAGE FOR THE JOURNEY,” SPEISER “JACOB’S MIGRATION TO EGYPT,” NJB “JACOB LEAVES FOR EGYPT,” AND SPCL (46:1–47:12) “JACOB IN EGYPT.”**

**GENESIS 46:1: THE ACTION IN THIS VERSE FOLLOWS DIRECTLY ON JACOB’S DECISION TO GO TO EGYPT, REPORTED IN 45:28. SO, ISRAEL TOOK HIS JOURNEY: SO TRANSLATES THE HEBREW CONNECTIVE AS A MARKER OF THE CONSEQUENCE OF JACOB’S DECISION IN 45:28. TOOK HIS JOURNEY MAY BE RENDERED, FOR EXAMPLE, “STARTED OUT,” “SET OFF ON HIS TRIP,” “BEGAN TO TRAVEL.” ALL THAT HE HAD REFERS TO HIS POSSESSIONS, GOODS, AND CAMP BAGGAGE: “ALL THAT HE OWNED.” WE MAY TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “JACOB SET OUT FOR EGYPT WITH ALL HIS POSSESSIONS” OR “JACOB TOOK ALL HE OWNED AND STARTED ON HIS JOURNEY TO EGYPT.” CAME TO BEERSHEBA: ACCORDING TO 37:14 JACOB WAS LIVING IN THE VALLEY OF HEBRON WHEN HE SENT JOSEPH TO INQUIRE ABOUT HIS BROTHERS AT DOTHAN. SEE ALSO 22:19. IF JACOB DEPARTED FROM HEBRON, THE TRIP TO BEERSHEBA WOULD BE ABOUT 40 KILOMETERS (25 MILES) TO THE SOUTH. WITH LARGE HERDS THIS WOULD BE A TWO-DAY JOURNEY. IN A NUMBER OF TRANSLATIONS THIS CLAUSE IS MADE THE BEGINNING OF A NEW SENTENCE: “WHEN HE CAME TO BEERSHEBA, HE MADE A SACRIFICE.…” OFFERED SACRIFICES TO THE GOD OF HIS FATHER ISAAC: IN 26:25 ISAAC BUILT AN ALTAR AT BEERSHEBA. FOR SACRIFICES SEE 31:54. GOD OF … ISAAC MUST OFTEN BE RENDERED “THE GOD HIS FATHER ISAAC WORSHIPED.” SEE 28:13.**

**GENESIS 46:2: THIS IS THE LAST TIME THAT GOD IS SAID TO SPEAK DIRECTLY TO ONE OF THE PATRIARCHS. AND GOD SPOKE TO ISRAEL IN VISIONS OF THE NIGHT: ISRAEL MAY BE REPLACED BY “HIM,” SINCE THERE IS NO OTHER PERSON REFERRED TO. A VISION (SEE 15:1) IS NORMALLY A DREAM-LIKE EXPERIENCE IN WHICH SOMETHING IS SEEN. HOWEVER, HERE THERE IS NO APPEARANCE TO JACOB, ONLY A SPOKEN MESSAGE. VISIONS IS PLURAL IN THE HEBREW TEXT. HOWEVER, THE USE OF THE PLURAL HERE DOES NOT NECESSARILY MEAN THAT JACOB HAD MORE THAN ONE VISION, AND MOST MODERN VERSIONS USE THE SINGULAR, ALTHOUGH HOTTP FAVORS THE PLURAL. IT IS POSSIBLE TO AVOID SUCH WORDS AS VISIONS, OR “DREAM,” OR “DREAM-LIKE APPEARANCE” AND SAY, AS DOES GECL, “IN THE NIGHT HE HEARD THE VOICE OF GOD.…” JACOB, JACOB … HERE AM I: SEE 22:11.**

**GENESIS 46:3: I AM GOD, THE GOD … FATHER: FOR SIMILAR EXPRESSIONS SEE 26:24; 28:13; 43:23. DO NOT BE AFRAID IS OFTEN SPOKEN BY GOD TO ASSURE THE ONE WHO HEARS THE VOICE OF GOD. HERE, HOWEVER, THE ASSURANCE IS IN REGARD TO JACOB’S MIGRATION TO CANAAN. BY GOING TO EGYPT JACOB IS LEAVING THE LAND THAT HAS BEEN PROMISED TO ABRAHAM, TO ISAAC, AND TO HIMSELF. JACOB’S GOING AWAY MUST BE DIRECTED BY GOD AND NOT SIMPLY A CHOICE MADE BY JACOB HIMSELF. I WILL THERE MAKE OF YOU A GREAT NATION: THIS IS THE REASON WHY JACOB SHOULD NOT BE AFRAID TO LEAVE THE LAND THAT HAS BEEN PROMISED TO HIM. IN FACT, GOD IS NOW TELLING JACOB THAT THE FULFILLMENT OF THE PROMISE ABOUT BECOMING A GREAT NATION WILL TAKE PLACE THERE, THAT IS, IN EGYPT. SOME TRANSLATIONS RENDER THERE AS “IN THAT COUNTRY.” AS IN 12:2; 17:6, 20; 18:18, ADJUSTMENTS MUST BE MADE TO SAY THAT IT IS JACOB’S DESCENDANTS (NOT JACOB HIMSELF) THAT WILL BECOME A GREAT NATION. SEE TEV. ONE RENDERING OF THIS WHOLE CLAUSE IS “I WILL MAKE YOUR DESCENDANTS BECOME A BIG TRIBE THERE.”**

**GENESIS 46:4: I WILL GO DOWN WITH YOU TO EGYPT: FOR GO DOWN SEE 12:10 AND 26:2. GO … WITH MEANS MORE THAN TO ACCOMPANY; IT HAS THE SENSE OF “GUIDE AND PROTECT.” YOU IS SINGULAR, AS GOD IS ADDRESSING JACOB. YOU IS ALSO SINGULAR IN THE NEXT CLAUSE, AND I WILL ALSO BRING YOU UP AGAIN. NOTE, HOWEVER, THAT TEV SAYS “BRING YOUR DESCENDANTS BACK.” TEV INTERPRETS GOD’S PROMISE AS REFERRING, NOT TO JACOB PERSONALLY AND INDIVIDUALLY, BUT TO HIS OFFSPRING THROUGH HIM. THIS IS SUPPORTED BY DRIVER, VON RAD, AND WESTERMANN, AND IS RECOMMENDED TO TRANSLATORS. THE POINT IS BEING MADE THAT THE STORY OF THE PATRIARCHS IS AT AN END WITH JACOB IN EGYPT, AND THE STORY OF THE EXODUS SHIFTS TO THE DESCENDANTS OF JACOB, THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL. JOSEPH’S HAND SHALL CLOSE YOUR EYES IS LITERALLY “JOSEPH WILL PUT HIS HAND UPON YOUR EYES.” THE CUSTOM OF PULLING DOWN THE UPPER EYELIDS OF A DEAD PERSON IS NOT KNOWN IN SOME AREAS. FOR EXAMPLE, SOME PEOPLE COVER THE DEAD PERSON’S FACE, OTHERS PLACE COINS OVER THE EYES, WHILE OTHERS PAINT THE FACE. TRANSLATORS MUST DECIDE IF THE LOCAL CUSTOM IS SUITABLE TO BE USED IN THIS CONTEXT. IF NOT, A MORE GENERAL EXPRESSION, SUCH AS “BE WITH YOU WHEN YOU DIE” (TEV), MAY BE PREFERRED. ANOTHER POSSIBILITY IS “WHEN YOU DIE, JOSEPH WILL BURY YOU.”**

**GENESIS 46:5: THEN JACOB SET OUT FROM BEERSHEBA: THEN, WHICH TRANSLATES THE HEBREW CONNECTIVE, IS A TRANSITION FROM THE ENCOUNTER WITH GOD AT BEERSHEBA TO THE TRIP TO EGYPT. IF A TERM LIKE THEN SHOWING SUBSEQUENT ACTION IS INSUFFICIENT, WE MAY SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “AFTER GOD HAD SPOKEN TO HIM, JACOB LEFT BEERSHEBA AND TRAVELED [WEST] TO EGYPT.” A NUMBER OF TRANSLATIONS, HOWEVER, TAKE THE CONNECTIVE TO INDICATE A CONSEQUENCE: JACOB SET OUT BECAUSE GOD HAD REASSURED HIM. SPEISER, NJB, AND NEB/REB ALL SAY “SO JACOB SET OUT.” THE SONS OF ISRAEL CARRIED JACOB … WAGONS: CARRIED TRANSLATES A VERB MEANING TO “LIFT” OR “CARRY.” HOWEVER, IT IS THE WAGONS AND NOT JACOB’S SONS THAT CARRY (TRANSPORT) THESE PEOPLE. WE MAY SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “JACOB’S SONS LOADED JACOB, THEIR WIVES, AND SMALL CHILDREN” OR “JACOB’S SONS MADE … RIDE IN THE WAGONS.” SOME TRANSLATIONS SAY SIMPLY “TOOK THEIR FATHER …” (NIV). WHICH PHARAOH HAD SENT TO CARRY HIM: THAT IS, “WHICH THE KING OF EGYPT HAD SENT FOR THEM TO RIDE IN?”**

**GENESIS 46:6: THEY ALSO TOOK THEIR CATTLE AND THEIR GOODS … CANAAN: THEY REFERS TO THE SONS OF JACOB. CATTLE REFERS TO ALL KINDS OF LIVESTOCK AND MAY BE RENDERED AS “LIVESTOCK” OR “FLOCKS AND HERDS.” GOODS TRANSLATES THE SAME WORD AS USED IN 14:11 AND REFERS TO MOVEABLE POSSESSIONS. GAINED IN THE LAND OF CANAAN: THAT IS, “THAT THEY HAD GOT [OR ACQUIRED, OR OBTAINED] WHILE LIVING IN CANAAN.” JACOB AND ALL HIS OFFSPRING WITH HIM: OFFSPRING TRANSLATES THE HEBREW WORD FOR “SEED” AND REFERS COLLECTIVELY TO THE LIVING DESCENDANTS OF JACOB. TRANSLATORS MAY FIND IT BEST TO PLACE THIS CLAUSE AT THE BEGINNING OF THIS VERSE; FOR EXAMPLE, “JACOB AND ALL HIS DESCENDANTS WENT TO EGYPT. THEY DROVE THEIR HERDS AND TOOK WITH THEM ALL THE POSSESSIONS THEY HAD ACQUIRED IN CANAAN.”**

**GENESIS 46:7: VERSE 7 IS A SUMMARY STATEMENT OF THOSE WHO WENT WITH JACOB TO EGYPT. WE MAY TRANSLATE IT, FOR EXAMPLE, “SO JACOB TOOK WITH HIM TO EGYPT ALL HIS FAMILY. THESE INCLUDED HIS SONS AND GRANDSONS (THE SON OF ONE’S SON OR ONE’S DAUGHTER), HIS DAUGHTERS AND GRANDDAUGHTERS.” FOR DAUGHTERS SEE THE COMMENT ON 37:35.**

**THE FAMILY OF JACOB (46:8–27)**

**AT THIS POINT A LIST OF THE NAMES OF THE PEOPLE WHO WENT WITH JACOB TO EGYPT IS INSERTED. THE STORY LINE IS INTERRUPTED AND WILL PICK UP AGAIN IN VERSE 28.**

**THE LIST OF NAMES GIVEN IN VERSES 46:8–27 ALSO APPEARS IN WHOLE OR IN PART IN EXO 1:1–5; 6:14–16; NUM 26:5–51; AND 1 CHRONICLES 2–8. THE NAMES IN THE VARIOUS LISTS DO NOT ALWAYS AGREE. THE PRESENT LIST GIVES THIRTY-THREE DESCENDANTS THROUGH LEAH (VERSE 15), SIXTEEN THROUGH HER MAID ZILPAH (VERSE 18), FOURTEEN DESCENDANTS THROUGH RACHEL (VERSE 22), AND SEVEN THROUGH RACHEL’S MAID BILHAH (VERSE 25). THIS MAKES A TOTAL OF SEVENTY PERSONS (VERSE 27). HOWEVER, VERSE 26 SAYS THERE WERE SIXTY-SIX, AND ACTS 7:14 GIVES THE NUMBER AS SEVENTY-FIVE. ALTHOUGH IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO BE CERTAIN WHY THE NUMBERS DIFFER, IT MAY BE THAT SEVENTY INCLUDES ER AND ONAN, THE SONS OF JUDAH WHO DIED IN CANAAN (VERSE 12), AND THE TWO SONS OF JOSEPH (VERSES 20, 27) WHO WERE BORN IN EGYPT. IT IS ALSO POSSIBLE THAT THE NUMBER SEVENTY IS ARRIVED AT BY EXCLUDING ER AND ONAN, BUT INCLUDING JOSEPH’S TWO SONS, JACOB HIMSELF (VERSE), AND DINAH (VERSE 15). ACTS 7:14 FOLLOWS THE SEPTUAGINT, WHICH LISTS THREE GRANDSONS (THE SON OF ONE’S SON OR ONE’S DAUGHTER) AND TWO GREAT GRANDSONS (THE SON OF ONE’S SON OR ONE’S DAUGHTER) OF JOSEPH IN VERSE 20, WHO DO NOT APPEAR IN THE HEBREW TEXT.**

**SUBDIVISION HEADING**

**THE HANDBOOK HEADING MAY NEED TO BE ADJUSTED TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “HERE ARE THE NAMES OF JACOB’S DESCENDANTS WHO WENT TO EGYPT” OR “THESE ARE THE NAMES OF JACOB’S RELATIVES WHO WENT TO EGYPT.” GECL HAS “A LIST OF JACOB’S FAMILY,” AND FRCL “JACOB’S FAMILY.” MANY MODERN VERSIONS, LIKE TEV, DO NOT HAVE A HEADING HERE.**

**GENESIS 46:8: VERSE 8 SERVES AS A HEADING FOR THE LIST OF NAMES AND IS SIMILAR TO THAT USED IN EXO 1:1. THE NAMES IN VERSES 46:8–15 ARE THE SONS AND GRANDSONS (THE SON OF ONE’S SON OR ONE’S DAUGHTER) BORN TO LEAH AND JACOB. VERSE 12 NAMES TWO OF THEIR GREAT-GRANDSON (THE SON’S SON OF ONE’S SON OR ONE’S DAUGHTER). THESE ARE THE NAMES OF THE DESCENDANTS OF ISRAEL, WHO CAME INTO EGYPT: THESE POINTS AHEAD TO THE LIST; IT MEANS “THE FOLLOWING.…” DESCENDANTS OF ISRAEL IS LITERALLY “SONS OF ISRAEL,” THE COMMON EXPRESSION USED IN THE OLD TESTAMENT FOR “ISRAELITES.” ALTHOUGH MANY MODERN VERSIONS SAY “ISRAELITES,” TEV “MEMBERS OF JACOB’S FAMILY” IS MORE IN KEEPING WITH THE PURPOSE OF THE LIST, WHICH IS TO NAME THE INDIVIDUALS WHO WENT WITH JACOB TO EGYPT. JACOB AND HIS SONS IS IN APPOSITION WITH DESCENDANTS OF ISRAEL AND MEANS THE SAME. REUBEN, JACOB’S FIRST-BORN: THAT IS, “REUBEN, WHO WAS JACOB’S FIRSTBORN SON” OR “… OLDEST SON.” IN SOME LANGUAGES, FITTING THE LIST OF JACOB’S FAMILY MEMBERS INTO THE STORY IS MADE EASIER BY REPEATING THE VERB FROM THE OPENING SENTENCE OF THIS VERSE WITH THE NAME OF EACH OF THE SONS OF JACOB. FOR EXAMPLE, “THESE ARE THE NAMES OF … WHO WENT TO EGYPT WITH HIM: JACOB’S SON REUBEN WENT WITH HIM, AND REUBEN’S SONS.… JACOB’S SON SIMEON WENT WITH HIM, AND SIMEON’S SONS.…”**

**GENESIS 46:9: BEGINNING WITH VERSE 9 THERE ARE MANY NAMES NOT SEEN BEFORE IN GENESIS. TRANSLATORS ARE ADVISED TO READ “NAMES IN GENESIS” IN “TRANSLATING GENESIS.” IN LANGUAGES THAT ONLY USE A PLURAL FOR NUMBERS GREATER THAN THREE, CARE IS REQUIRED IN COUNTING THE NUMBER OF NAMES IN EACH PART OF THE LIST, SO THAT EXPRESSIONS LIKE “THE ONE SON OF DAN” AND “LEVI’S THREE SONS” ARE USED WHERE NECESSARY.**

**GENESIS 46:10–11: THE SON OF A CANAANITISH WOMAN: THAT IS, “SHAUL [SAUL], WHOSE MOTHER WAS FROM CANAAN” OR “SHAUL, THE SON OF A WOMAN FROM CANAAN.”**

**GENESIS 46:12: (BUT ER AND ONAN DIED IN THE LAND OF CANAAN): SEE 38:7 AND 10. HEZRON AND HAMUL ARE THE GRANDSONS (THE SON OF ONE’S SON OR ONE’S DAUGHTER) OF JUDAH AND THE ONLY GREAT-GRANDSON (THE SON’S SON OF ONE’S SON OR ONE’S DAUGHTER) OF LEAH AND JACOB MENTIONED IN THIS LIST.**

**GENESIS 46:13–14: IOB: NOTE THAT TEV HAS “JASHUB.” THE SAMARITAN PENTATEUCH AND THE SEPTUAGINT AS WELL AS THE HEBREW TEXT OF NUM 26:24 HAVE “JASHUB.” HOTTP CONSIDERS IOB (HEBREW CONSONANTS YWB) TO BE A SCRIBAL ERROR IN WHICH ONE LETTER HAS DROPPED OUT, AND WHICH SHOULD BE YSHWB, “JASHUB.”**

**GENESIS 46:15: THESE ARE THE SONS OF LEAH: THESE POINTS BACK TO THE NAMES IN VERSES 8–14. FOR PADDAN-ARAM SEE 25:20. TOGETHER WITH … DINAH: THAT IS, “IN ADDITION TO JACOB’S DAUGHTER DINAH,” “TO THESE MUST BE ADDED THEIR DAUGHTER DINAH,” “AND THERE WAS ALSO HIS DAUGHTER DINAH,” OR “LEAH ALSO HAD ONE DAUGHTER NAMED DINAH.” ALTOGETHER … THIRTY-THREE: THAT IS, “JACOB’S SONS AND DAUGHTER WERE THIRTY-THREE” OR “ALTOGETHER JACOB AND LEAH HAD THIRTY-THREE SONS AND DAUGHTERS.” APART FROM THE NEED TO INCLUDE “DAUGHTER” IN THIS CASE, IT IS ALSO NECESSARY IN SOME LANGUAGES TO SAY “SONS AND GRANDSONS (THE SON OF ONE’S SON OR ONE’S DAUGHTER)” RATHER THAN JUST “SONS” HERE AND IN THE OTHER PLACES WHERE A TOTAL NUMBER OF FAMILY MEMBERS IS GIVEN. ALTHOUGH VERSE 15 SAYS HIS SONS AND HIS DAUGHTERS NUMBERED THIRTY-THREE, DINAH IS THE ONLY FEMALE IN THE LIST, AND SHE IS APPARENTLY NOT COUNTED AS ONE OF THE THIRTY-THREE. NOTE THE WORDING OF TEV.**

**GENESIS 46:16: VERSES 16–18 LIST THE DESCENDANTS OF ZILPAH, LEAH’S MAID. ZIPHION IS SPELLED “ZEPHON” IN TEV, WHICH IS THE SPELLING IN THE SAMARITAN PENTATEUCH, THE SEPTUAGINT, AND THE HEBREW OF NUM 26:15. “ZEPHON” IS ALSO RECOMMENDED BY HOTTP.**

**GENESIS 46:17: SERAH IS A FEMALE AND IS COUNTED AS ONE OF THE SIXTEEN DESCENDANTS OF ZILPAH. HEBER AND MALCHIEL ARE ZILPAH’S GRANDSONS (THE SON OF ONE’S SON OR ONE’S DAUGHTER).**

**GENESIS 46:18: THESE ARE THE SONS OF ZILPAH: THESE POINTS BACK TO THE NAMES IN VERSES 16–18. SINCE SERAH IS A FEMALE, IT IS BEST TO USE A WORD LIKE “DESCENDANTS” OR “OFFSPRING” THAT INCLUDES BOTH SEXES. SEE TEV.**

**GENESIS 46:19: VERSES 19–22 LIST THE DESCENDANTS OF RACHEL. IN THESE VERSES THERE ARE SOME ADDITIONS AND VARIATIONS TO THE HEBREW TEXT THAT ARE FOUND IN THE SEPTUAGINT. HOTTP TAKES THE VIEW THAT THESE ARE A PART OF THE EARLY TEXT BUT WERE OMITTED AT SOME STAGE FOR THEOLOGICAL REASONS.**

**THE VARIATIONS ARE AS FOLLOWS: (1) IN VERSE 20 THERE IS AN ADDITION AT THE END OF THE VERSE THAT IS PARTLY PARALLEL WITH NUM 26:28–37. IT ADDS FOUR MORE NAMES TO THE LIST.**

**(2) IN VERSE 21 THE HEBREW TEXT GIVES TEN SONS OF BENJAMIN, WHEREAS THE SEPTUAGINT GIVES THREE SONS AND EIGHT GRANDSONS (THE SON OF ONE’S SON OR ONE’S DAUGHTER).**

**(3) IN VERSE 22 THE TOTAL GIVEN IS FOURTEEN PERSONS IN THE HEBREW TEXT, BUT NINETEEN IN THE SEPTUAGINT. THIS IS A CONSEQUENCE OF THE VARIATIONS IN VERSES 21 AND 22.**

**(4) THERE IS A FURTHER CONSEQUENTIAL VARIATION IN VERSE 27, WHERE THE HEBREW TEXT HAS A GRAND TOTAL OF SEVENTY AND THE SEPTUAGINT SEVENTY-FIVE.**

**WHILE MANY COMMENTATORS POINT OUT THAT THE HEBREW TEXT IS DIFFICULT OR CORRUPTED, ALL MODERN VERSIONS FOLLOW IT, AND TRANSLATORS ARE ADVISED TO DO THE SAME. FOR THE TRANSLATION OF VERSE 19, SEE TEV.**

**GENESIS 46:20: WE MAY NOT EXPECT TO FIND IN A LIST OF PERSONS “WHO CAME INTO EGYPT” JOSEPH AND HIS TWO SONS, AS HIS SONS WERE BORN THERE AND JOSEPH DID NOT GO THERE WITH JACOB. BUT THIS STATEMENT MAY ALSO BE SEEN AS A PARENTHESIS OR ASIDE, WHICH IS NOT ACTUALLY PART OF THE LIST.**

**GENESIS 46:21: ACCORDING TO THE HEBREW TEXT BENJAMIN HAS TEN SONS. IT IS, OF COURSE, IMPOSSIBLE THAT HE BECAME THE FATHER OF TEN SONS BETWEEN HIS RETURN TO CANAAN IN CHAPTER 45 AND THE DEPARTURE OF JACOB FOR EGYPT IN CHAPTER 46. THE SEPTUAGINT VARIATION IS EVEN MORE IMPOSSIBLE TO FIT INTO THE TIME FRAME OF THE JOSEPH STORY. HOWEVER, WE MUST TRANSLATE VERSE 21 AS THE TEXT STANDS.**

**GENESIS 46:22: FOURTEEN PERSONS IN ALL: AS NOTED ABOVE, THE SEPTUAGINT HAS “NINETEEN.” HOWEVER, ALL MODERN VERSIONS FOLLOW THE HEBREW TEXT, AS IN RSV AND TEV.**

**GENESIS 46:23–25: THESE VERSES LIST ALL THE NAMES OF THE SEVEN KNOWN DESCENDANTS BORN TO THE CONCUBINE BILHAH, RACHEL’S MAID.**

**GENESIS 46:26: ALL THE PERSONS BELONGING TO JACOB … WHO WERE HIS OWN OFFSPRING: THAT IS, “THE MEMBERS OF JACOB’S FAMILY WHO WERE HIS DIRECT DESCENDANTS AND WHO CAME WITH HIM TO EGYPT.” “DIRECT DESCENDANTS” MAY ALSO BE EXPRESSED AS “HIS SONS AND THOSE BORN TO HIS SONS AND TO HIS GRANDSONS (THE SON OF ONE’S SON OR ONE’S DAUGHTER)” OR “ALL THOSE WHO WERE OF HIS OWN BLOOD.” NOT INCLUDING JACOB’S SONS’ WIVES: THESE WOMEN WOULD BE EXCLUDED BY THE PREVIOUS STATEMENT, AS THEY WERE NOT “HIS OWN OFFSPRING.” RATHER THAN OMIT THIS STATEMENT, SOME MAY FIND IT CLEARER TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “IN ADDITION TO THESE THERE WERE ALSO HIS SONS’ WIVES,” OR “THIS DOES NOT INCLUDE THE WIVES OF JACOB’S SONS,” OR “THE WIVES OF JACOB’S SONS ARE NOT COUNTED.…” WERE SIXTY-SIX PERSONS IN ALL: FOR POSSIBLE EXPLANATIONS OF THIS NUMBER, SEE THE INTRODUCTION TO THIS SUBDIVISION.**

**GENESIS 46:27: AND THE SONS OF JOSEPH, WHO WERE BORN TO HIM IN EGYPT, WERE TWO; ALL THE PERSONS … WERE SEVENTY: IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO ARRIVE AT THE NUMBER SEVENTY BY ADDING JOSEPH’S TWO SONS TO THE SIXTY-SIX IN VERSE 26. IT APPEARS THAT TWO MORE WOULD ALSO HAVE TO BE ADDED (PERHAPS JACOB AND JOSEPH OR JACOB AND DINAH). SINCE WE CANNOT SAY WITH ANY CERTAINTY HOW THE NUMBERS IN VERSES 26 AND 27 HAVE BEEN ARRIVED AT, WE CAN ONLY TRANSLATE THEM AS THEY ARE, AND TEV IS AS GOOD A MODEL AS ANY. HOWEVER, SOME TRANSLATIONS GIVE A POSSIBLE EXPLANATION IN A FOOTNOTE TO SATISFY THE CURIOSITY OF READERS; FOR EXAMPLE, “[46:27] THIS NUMBER 70 … ALSO COUNTS JACOB AND JOSEPH AND THE TWO SONS OF JOSEPH.”**

**JACOB AND HIS FAMILY IN EGYPT (46:28–47:12)**

**IN THE THIRD PART OF THIS CHAPTER, AND CONTINUING INTO THE NEXT CHAPTER, JACOB SENDS JUDAH AHEAD TO TELL JOSEPH TO MEET HIM IN GOSHEN. JOSEPH GOES TO GOSHEN, AND AFTER MANY YEARS OF SEPARATION, FATHER AND SON ARE REUNITED (VERSES 28–30). JOSEPH INSTRUCTS HIS BROTHERS TO TELL THE KING THAT THEY ARE SHEPHERDS, AN ACTIVITY THAT IS DESPISED BY THE EGYPTIANS. IN THIS WAY THE KING WILL LET THEM SETTLE IN GOSHEN (VERSES 31–34). JOSEPH TAKES FIVE OF HIS BROTHERS AND PRESENTS THEM TO THE KING, WHO ASKS THEM THEIR OCCUPATION. THEY REPLY THAT THEY ARE SHEPHERDS, BUT DUE TO THE DROUGHT THERE ARE NO PASTURES FOR THEIR ANIMALS IN CANAAN. THEY REQUEST PERMISSION TO SETTLE IN GOSHEN. THE KING GRANTS THEIR REQUEST (47:1-6). THEN JOSEPH PRESENTS HIS FATHER TO THE KING, WHO ASKS JACOB HIS AGE. JACOB REPLIES THAT HE IS 130 YEARS OLD; HE BLESSES THE KING AND LEAVES (47:7–10). JOSEPH SETTLES JACOB’S PEOPLE IN THE DISTRICT OF RAMESES, AS THE KING HAD ORDERED, AND JOSEPH SUPPORTS JACOB’S FAMILY WITH FOOD, AS HE HAD PROMISED TO DO (47:11–12).**

**SUBDIVISION HEADING**

**THE HANDBOOK HEADING, WHICH IS THE SAME AS IN TEV, MAY BE ADJUSTED TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “JOSEPH’S BROTHERS AND FATHER MEET THE KING OF EGYPT,” “JACOB BLESSES THE KING,” “THE KING OF EGYPT GIVES JACOB LAND TO SETTLE ON.” FRCL HAS “JACOB IN EGYPT,” GECL “JACOB’S FAMILY COMES TO EGYPT,” NJB (VERSES 28–34) “JOSEPH WELCOMES THEM.”**

**GENESIS 46:28: VERSE 28 PICKS UP THE STORY LINE THAT WAS INTERRUPTED BY THE INSERTION OF VERSES 46:8–27. HE SENT JUDAH BEFORE HIM TO JOSEPH: HE IS JACOB. BEFORE HIM MEANS THAT JACOB SENT JUDAH AHEAD TO WHERE JOSEPH WAS. TO APPEAR BEFORE HIM IN GOSHEN: RSV’S FOOTNOTE SHOWS THAT IT FOLLOWS THE SAMARITAN PENTATEUCH AND THE SYRIAC VERSION. THE SEPTUAGINT HAS “MEET ME,” WHICH IS FOLLOWED BY TEV AND OTHERS. THE HEBREW TEXT HAS “TO SHOW THE WAY BEFORE HIM.”**

**TRANSLATORS VARY GREATLY IN THE WAY THEY TRANSLATE THIS VERSE. THERE ARE THREE QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER: (1) DID JACOB SEND JUDAH BEFORE HE (JACOB) REACHED GOSHEN, TO FIND OUT FROM JOSEPH HOW TO GET THERE? OR DID JACOB SEND JUDAH TO JOSEPH TO SHOW JOSEPH HOW TO FIND JACOB, WHO IS WAITING FOR HIM THERE? (2) WHAT IS THE MEANING AND FUNCTION OF THE LAST CLAUSE, AND THEY CAME INTO THE LAND OF GOSHEN? (3) DOES-THEY REFER TO JACOB AND HIS PEOPLE, OR TO JUDAH AND JOSEPH COMING FROM THE EGYPTIAN CAPITAL?**

**RSV APPEARS TO SAY THAT BEFORE JACOB REACHED GOSHEN, HE SENT JUDAH AHEAD TO TELL JOSEPH TO COME TO GOSHEN, AND (BEFORE OR AFTER JOSEPH ARRIVED) JACOB AND HIS PEOPLE REACHED GOSHEN. HOWEVER, NRSV HAS REVISED THIS TO SAY “ISRAEL SENT JUDAH TO JOSEPH TO LEAD THE WAY BEFORE HIM INTO GOSHEN,” WHICH CAN MEAN EITHER “TO SHOW JOSEPH THE WAY TO HIS FAMILY IN GOSHEN” OR “SO THAT JOSEPH COULD SHOW JACOB THE WAY TO GOSHEN.” ALSO, IN NRSV AND THEY CAME … GOSHEN IS LINKED WITH VERSE 29 AS A TIME CLAUSE: “WHEN THEY [JACOB AND HIS FAMILY] CAME TO THE LAND OF GOSHEN, 29 JOSEPH MADE READY HIS CHARIOT AND WENT.…” THUS, IN NRSV IT APPEARS THAT JOSEPH WAITED IN THE CAPITAL CITY UNTIL HE GOT WORD, PRESUMABLY FROM JUDAH, THAT JACOB WAS IN GOSHEN. HOTTP, WHICH KEEPS THE HEBREW TEXT AND GIVES IT AN {A} RATING, SAYS THE WHOLE VERSE SHOULD BE UNDERSTOOD THIS WAY: “AND JACOB SENT JUDAH BEFORE HIM TO JOSEPH IN ORDER THAT JUDAH MIGHT SHOW JOSEPH THE WAY TO JACOB IN GOSHEN; AND THEY ARRIVED IN THE LAND OF GOSHEN.” EXCEPT FOR THE LAST SENTENCE, HOTTP’S RENDERING IS ESSENTIALLY THE SAME AS TEV, WHICH FOLLOWS THE SEPTUAGINT. HOWEVER, TEV AND MOST MODERN VERSIONS LINK AND THEY CAME INTO THE LAND OF GOSHEN WITH VERSE “WHEN THEY [JACOB AND HIS PEOPLE] ARRIVED, 29 JOSEPH GOT IN HIS CHARIOT AND WENT TO GOSHEN.…” THE HANDBOOK RECOMMENDS THAT TRANSLATORS FOLLOW EITHER THE MODEL OF TEV OR THAT OF HOTTP, BUT LINK THEY CAME … GOSHEN WITH VERSE 29.**

**GENESIS 46:29: JOSEPH MADE READY HIS CHARIOT: MADE READY TRANSLATES THE VERB TO “TIE” OR “BIND,” AND IN THIS CONTEXT IT REFERS TO HARNESSING OR HITCHING HORSES TO THE CHARIOT. IT IS ACTUALLY JOSEPH’S SERVANTS WHO WOULD HARNESS THE HORSE OR HORSES TO THE CHARIOT. CONSEQUENTLY, IT MAY BE BETTER TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “JOSEPH ORDERED HIS CHARIOT,” “JOSEPH HAD HIS CHARIOT BROUGHT TO HIM,” OR “JOSEPH TOLD HIS SERVANTS TO GET HIS CHARIOT READY.” FOR CHARIOT SEE 41:43. TO MEET ISRAEL: THAT IS, “JACOB.” HE PRESENTED HIMSELF TO HIM: THIS EXPRESSION IS OFTEN USED IN THE OLD TESTAMENT REFERRING TO GOD APPEARING TO SOMEONE. IN THIS CONTEXT IT IS NOT TO BE THOUGHT OF AS JOSEPH INTRODUCING HIMSELF TO JACOB AS A STRANGER MIGHT DO. JOSEPH DOES NOT COME TO HIS FATHER AS THE RULER OF EGYPT BUT AS HIS LONG-LOST SON. FRCL GIVES A GOOD MODEL: “AS SOON AS HE WAS IN HIS FATHER’S PRESENCE, HE.…” ALSO GOOD ARE TEV, NEB/REB: “WHEN THEY MET.…” AND FELL ON HIS NECK, AND WEPT ON HIS NECK: SEE 45:14.**

**GENESIS 46:30: NOW LET ME DIE: JACOB IS NOT ASKING SOMEONE PRESENT TO ALLOW HIM TO DIE. THE FATHER WHO IS LIVING ONLY TO SEE HIS LOST SON ONCE MORE (SEE 45:28) CAN NOW SAY “I AM READY TO DIE” OR “I CAN DIE NOW.” OTHER EXAMPLES OF THE WAY THIS CAN BE EXPRESSED IN TRANSLATION ARE “IT IS ALL RIGHT FOR ME TO DIE NOW” AND “I CAN DIE HAPPY NOW.” SINCE I HAVE SEEN YOUR FACE AND KNOW THAT YOU ARE STILL ALIVE: SEEN YOUR FACE MAY NEED TO BE RENDERED “SEEN YOUR FACE AGAIN” OR “SEEN YOU AGAIN.” IN SOME LANGUAGES IT IS MORE NATURAL TO PLACE THE REASON BEFORE THE REQUEST; FOR EXAMPLE, “NOW LET ME DIE. I HAVE SEEN YOU AND KNOW THAT YOU ARE STILL ALIVE.”**

**GENESIS 46:31: RSV USES BOTH DOUBLE QUOTE MARKS AND SINGLE QUOTE MARKS IN VERSES 31–34, BECAUSE IT RENDERS THE TEXT AS QUOTED SPEECH WITHIN SPEECH. NOTE THAT TEV SIMPLIFIES THIS BY USING INDIRECT SPEECH AND AVOIDING THE SINGLE QUOTES. I WILL GO UP AND TELL PHARAOH: THE SENSE OF THIS IS THAT JOSEPH WAS OBLIGED TO REPORT BACK TO THE KING, OR THAT THIS WAS NECESSARY TO GET PERMISSION FOR JACOB AND HIS FAMILY TO SETTLE IN GOSHEN. THEREFORE, SOME TRANSLATIONS SAY “NOW I HAVE TO TELL THE KING” OR “I MUST REPORT TO THE KING ABOUT YOU.” FATHER’S HOUSEHOLD: THAT IS, “THE OTHERS OF MY FATHER’S FAMILY.” SEE TEV. HAVE COME TO ME: THAT IS, “HAVE COME TO BE NEAR ME,” OR “HAVE COME TO JOIN ME.”**

**GENESIS 46:32: SHEPHERDS … KEEPERS OF CATTLE: SHEPHERDS REFERS TO PEOPLE WHO TEND OR CARE FOR SHEEP AND GOATS. CATTLE REFERS TO ALL KINDS OF LIVESTOCK. FLOCKS ARE GREAT NUMBERS OF SHEEP AND GOATS. HERDS IS USED TO REFER HERE TO LARGE NUMBERS OF COWS OR TO LIVESTOCK GENERALLY. ALL THAT THEY HAVE: THAT IS, “ALL THEIR POSSESSIONS” OR “ALL THAT THEY OWN.”**

**GENESIS 46:33: CALLS HERE HAS THE SENSE OF “SUMMONS,” “ORDERS YOU TO APPEAR,” OR “CALLS YOU IN.” OCCUPATION: THAT IS, “YOUR WORK” OR “THE KIND OF WORK YOU DO.”**

**GENESIS 46:34: YOU SHALL SAY: THIS HAS THE FORCE OF A COMMAND. IT IS RENDERED IN SOME TRANSLATIONS AS “THIS IS WHAT YOU MUST SAY” OR “MAKE SURE YOU TELL HIM.” YOUR SERVANTS … OUR YOUTH EVEN UNTIL NOW: YOUR SERVANTS MAY NEED TO BE MODIFIED, AS IN SOME LANGUAGES THIS EXPRESSION MAY MEAN THE PEOPLE WHO ARE EMPLOYED BY THE KING. WE MAY SOMETIMES ADJUST THIS TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “WE WHO HONOR YOU, SIR, HAVE BEEN …,” OR IF USING AN INDIRECT QUOTE, “… THAT YOU [PLURAL] HAVE TAKEN CARE OF.…” SEE TEV. FROM OUR YOUTH EVEN UNTIL NOW MAY ALSO BE EXPRESSED AS “THROUGH ALL OUR LIVES.” BOTH WE AND OUR FATHERS: OUR FATHERS OR “OUR ANCESTORS” DOES NOT FIT WITH UNTIL NOW, AS THESE ANCESTORS ARE NO LONGER LIVING. THEREFORE, IT IS NECESSARY TO ADJUST THIS CLAUSE BY SAYING, FOR EXAMPLE, “THAT YOU [PLURAL] HAVE TAKEN CARE OF LIVESTOCK [BEEN HERDERS OR HERDSMEN] ALL YOUR LIVES, THE SAME AS YOUR ANCESTORS DID.” SPOKEN IN THE “WE” FORM (DIRECT SPEECH) THIS MAY BE “WE HAVE BEEN HERDSMEN ALL OUR LIVES, JUST LIKE OUR ANCESTORS WERE.” IN ORDER THAT YOU MAY DWELL IN THE LAND OF GOSHEN: SEE TEV “IN THIS WAY HE WILL LET YOU LIVE.…” IT IS EXPRESSED MORE FULLY IN SOME TRANSLATIONS AS “WHEN YOU SAY THAT, THE KING WILL LET YOU LIVE.…” FOR EVERY SHEPHERD IS AN ABOMINATION TO THE EGYPTIANS: FOR ABOMINATION SEE 43:32. ALTHOUGH RSV AND TEV CORRECTLY TRANSLATE THE HEBREW TEXT, EVEN THE KING OF EGYPT HAD A HERD OF LIVESTOCK (SEE 47:6). DRIVER COMMENTS THAT, ACCORDING TO THE ANCIENT GREEK HISTORIAN HERODOTUS, SWINEHERDS AND COWHERDS WERE LOOKED DOWN UPON BY THE EGYPTIANS, BUT THAT SHEPHERDS WERE NOT. SPEISER THINKS THAT THE TERM SHEPHERD IS HERE A PLAY ON THE POPULAR INTERPRETATION OF THE HYKSOS DYNASTY AS “SHEPHERD KINGS.” THE HYKSOS WERE ASIANS WHO RULED EGYPT FROM ABOUT 1660 B.C. FOR A HUNDRED YEARS; AND THE DESCENDANTS OF JACOB WERE IN EGYPT BEFORE, DURING, AND AFTER THE HYKSOS PERIOD.**

**GENESIS 47:1–2: VERSES 1–31. HOWEVER, THE OPENING OF THIS CHAPTER HAS A CHANGE OF SETTING THAT INVOLVES THE MOVEMENT OF JOSEPH, HIS FATHER, AND AT LEAST SOME OF HIS BROTHERS FROM GOSHEN TO THE CAPITAL, WHERE THE KING OF EGYPT (PHARAOH) LIVED. IN LANGUAGES WHOSE NARRATIVE STRUCTURE REQUIRES MAKING MOVEMENTS AND SCENE CHANGES UNAMBIGUOUSLY CLEAR, SOME ADJUSTMENTS MUST BE MADE IN VERSES 1 AND 2.**

**THERE ARE TWO WAYS TO VIEW THE MOVEMENT FROM GOSHEN TO THE KING’S PALACE IN THE CAPITAL CITY: (1) THAT JOSEPH TAKES HIS FATHER AND BROTHERS WITH HIM WHEN HE GOES TO HIS AUDIENCE OR MEETING WITH THE KING; OR (2) THAT JOSEPH RETURNS, LEAVING HIS FATHER AND BROTHERS IN GOSHEN.**

**IF WE ASSUME THE FIRST OF THESE POSSIBILITIES, AS TEV AND A NUMBER OF OTHER ENGLISH VERSIONS DO, WE ARE FACED WITH THE PROBLEM OF THE BROTHERS AND JACOB BEING AT THE SAME TIME IN GOSHEN AND IN THE PALACE. TEV BEGINS WITH “JOSEPH TOOK FIVE OF HIS BROTHERS AND WENT TO THE KING,” BUT THEN SAYS ABOUT THE BROTHERS AND JACOB, “THEY ARE NOW IN THE REGION OF GOSHEN.” IF THIS IS A REAL PROBLEM, IT MAY BE SOLVED BY USING A DIFFERENT EXPRESSION TO INDICATE THE PRESENCE OF JACOB’S PEOPLE AT GOSHEN. SEE FURTHER COMMENTS BELOW. IF, ON THE OTHER HAND, WE MAKE THE SECOND ASSUMPTION, WE MUST ALSO ASSUME THAT THERE ARE TWO DIFFERENT OCCASIONS WHEN JOSEPH MEETS WITH THE KING. IN THIS CASE THE LANGUAGE OF TRANSLATION MAY STILL REQUIRE MAKING THE MOVEMENTS CLEAR; WE MAY SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “AFTER INSTRUCTING HIS BROTHERS, JOSEPH RETURNED TO THE KING’S PALACE AND WENT IN TO SPEAK WITH HIM: ‘MY FATHER AND BROTHERS HAVE ARRIVED FROM CANAAN WITH.… THEY ARE NOW IN THE REGION OF GOSHEN.’” THIS VIEW ASSUMES THEY ARE PHYSICALLY IN GOSHEN. THEREFORE, WE HAVE TO ASSUME THAT JOSEPH ARRANGES A SECOND MEETING, IN WHICH THE KING WILL SPEAK WITH THE BROTHERS. IF THIS IS SO, BEFORE JOSEPH CAN PRESENT THE BROTHERS TO THE KING, HE MUST SEND FOR THEM TO COME; AND TO SHOW THE MOVEMENT OF THE BROTHERS FROM GOSHEN, WE MUST SAY SOMETHING LIKE “JOSEPH SENT FOR HIS FATHER AND HIS BROTHERS. HE THEN CHOSE FIVE OF HIS BROTHERS TO PRESENT THEM TO THE KING.” SO, JOSEPH WENT IN AND TOLD PHARAOH: THE HEBREW SAYS “JOSEPH CAME AND TOLD PHARAOH.” “CAME” IN ENGLISH IS SPEAKING FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF THE PLACE WHERE THE KING IS. RSV WENT SPEAKS FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF WHERE JOSEPH WAS AT THE TIME, NAMELY, IN GOSHEN. WE MAY KEEP THE POINT OF VIEW OF GOSHEN AND SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “THEN JOSEPH LEFT GOSHEN AND WENT TO SPEAK WITH THE KING.” THEY ARE NOW IN …: IN HEBREW THIS IS LITERALLY “AND BEHOLD THEM IN …”; THERE IS NO VERB. THE WORD HINNEH AGAIN HAS THE FUNCTION OF DRAWING ATTENTION TO A SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENT IN THE STORY. IF JACOB AND THE (FIVE) BROTHERS ARE IN FACT WAITING AT THE PALACE AT THIS TIME, THEN A VERB OTHER THAN ONE THAT MEANS “THEY ARE STAYING” SHOULD BE SUPPLIED; FOR EXAMPLE, “THEY HAVE MADE THEIR CAMP IN.…” FROM AMONG HIS BROTHERS HE TOOK FIVE MEN: FIVE MEN MAY BE EXPRESSED AS “FIVE OF THEM.” SPEISER BELIEVES THE NUMBER FIVE MEANS “SEVERAL” HERE AS WELL AS IN 43:34. HOWEVER, MOST MODERN TRANSLATIONS RETAIN THE NUMBER FIVE BOTH HERE AND IN 43:34. AS SUGGESTED ABOVE, MOST TRANSLATIONS THAT FOLLOW POSSIBILITY (2) RENDER TOOK AS “SENT FOR” OR “CALLED FOR.” PRESENTED THEM TO PHARAOH: PRESENTED TRANSLATES A VERB MEANING “TO PUT,” “TO SET,” OR “TO PLACE.” THE SAME VERB IS USED OF JACOB PUTTING THE PEELED BRANCHES IN FRONT OF THE ANIMALS IN 30:38. IN THIS CONTEXT IT HAS THE SENSE OF “INTRODUCED,” “SHOWED,” OR “TOOK THEM TO THE KING SO HE COULD SEE THEM.” SOME TRANSLATIONS THAT FOLLOW POSSIBILITY (1) ABOVE ALSO ASSUME THAT JOSEPH TOOK HIS BROTHERS WITH HIM WHEN HE FIRST WENT IN TO SPEAK WITH THE KING, RATHER THAN HAVING THEM WAIT OUTSIDE. IN THIS CASE JOSEPH CONCLUDES HIS SPEECH BY INTRODUCING THE BROTHERS: “HE TOLD THE NAMES OF HIS BROTHERS TO THE KING.”**

**GENESIS 47:3: PHARAOH SAID TO HIS BROTHERS: HIS REFERS TO JOSEPH AND WILL OFTEN BE CLEARER IF TRANSLATED AS “THE KING ASKED JOSEPH’S BROTHERS.” OCCUPATION: SEE 46:33. YOUR SERVANTS: SEE COMMENT ON 18:3. THE BROTHERS’ REPLY TO THE KING IS BASED ON THE INSTRUCTIONS THEY RECEIVED FROM JOSEPH IN 46:34. IN THIS REPLY THE FIRST-PERSON PRONOUNS USED BY THE BROTHERS ARE EXCLUSIVE IN THOSE LANGUAGES THAT MAKE A DISTINCTION BETWEEN INCLUSIVE AND EXCLUSIVE FORMS. AS OUR FATHERS WERE: FATHERS REFERS TO ANCESTORS.**

**GENESIS 47:4: THE STRUCTURE OF THIS VERSE IS MADE UP OF A RESULT CLAUSE FOLLOWED BY A CAUSE AND A REQUEST. IN SOME LANGUAGES THE MOST NATURAL ORDER TO EXPRESS THESE IS CAUSE, RESULT, AND REQUEST. WE HAVE COME TO SOJOURN IN THE LAND EXPRESSES THE RESULT. FOR SOJOURN SEE 12:10. IN THIS CONTEXT SOME TRANSLATIONS EXPRESS IT AS “STAY FOR A SHORT TIME” OR “STAY AS FOREIGNERS.” IN THE LAND MEANS “IN THIS COUNTRY” OR “IN YOUR COUNTRY.” THERE IS NO PASTURE FOR YOUR SERVANTS’ FLOCKS, FOR THE FAMINE IS SEVERE IN THE LAND OF CANAAN: THIS CLAUSE EXPRESSES THE REASON OR CAUSE OF THE COMING TO EGYPT. PASTURE REFERS TO GRASSLANDS OR FIELDS WHERE ANIMALS GRAZE. FOR THE FAMINE IS SEVERE IN … CANAAN, SEE 12:10 AND 41:56. WE PRAY YOU, LET YOUR SERVANTS DWELL IN THE LAND OF GOSHEN IS THE REQUEST. WE MAY TRANSLATE THIS, FOR EXAMPLE, “PLEASE, SIR, ALLOW US TO STAY IN THE AREA OF GOSHEN.” IN SOME LANGUAGES THIS IS EXPRESSED AS A FORMAL REQUEST: “WE REQUEST YOU” OR “WE WOULD LIKE YOU TO AGREE.…” THE BROTHERS MAKE IT CLEAR THAT THEY HAVE COME AS IMMIGRANTS OR FOREIGNERS, AND THAT THEY ONLY REQUEST TO DWELL, THAT IS, “STAY,” “RESIDE,” OR “SETTLE” IN GOSHEN. THIS REQUEST WAS NOT INCLUDED IN JOSEPH’S INSTRUCTIONS TO THE BROTHERS IN 46:34 BUT RATHER WAS WHAT HE EXPECTED THE KING WOULD SAY.**

**GENESIS 47:5–6: VERSES 47:5–6 ARE TRANSLATED QUITE DIFFERENTLY BY VARIOUS VERSIONS. THIS IS BECAUSE VERSE 5 IN THE HEBREW TEXT, IN WHICH THE KING SPEAKS TO JOSEPH, DOES NOT SEEM TO BE AN APPROPRIATE RESPONSE TO THE SPEECH OF JACOB’S SONS IN VERSE 4. IN THE SEPTUAGINT THE ORDER OF THE CLAUSES IS DIFFERENT IN THESE VERSES, AND THERE IS ONE ADDITIONAL CLAUSE; AND HOTTP FAVORS THE SEPTUAGINT TEXT WITH A RATING OF {B}. RSV, TEV, NEB/REB AND A NUMBER OF OTHER ENGLISH VERSIONS FOLLOW THE HEBREW TEXT. THEY DEAL WITH THE DIFFICULTY BY TRYING TO TRANSLATE VERSE 5 IN SUCH A WAY THAT IT DOES FOLLOW ON REASONABLY WELL FROM THE END OF VERSE 4, EVEN THOUGH IT IS NOT AN IMMEDIATE OR DIRECT RESPONSE TO THE REQUEST MADE BY JOSEPH’S BROTHERS. HOWEVER, OTHERS SUCH AS NAB AND GECL TRANSLATE THESE VERSES FROM THE SEPTUAGINT. MOREOVER, BJ AND NJB (AND SPEISER IN HIS NOTES) TREAT VERSES 1–11 AS TWO PARALLEL VERSIONS OF THE SAME EVENT AND CONVERSATION. NJB MAKES THIS VERY OBVIOUS BY PLACING A HEADING IN THE MIDDLE OF VERSES 47:5–6 AS THEY ARE IN THE SEPTUAGINT; THE HEADING LABELS WHAT FOLLOWS AS “ANOTHER VERSION.” THE HANDBOOK RECOMMENDS THAT TRANSLATORS FOLLOW THE HEBREW TEXT AS SEEN IN RSV, TEV, AND OTHER MAJOR ENGLISH VERSIONS. YOUR FATHER AND YOUR BROTHERS HAVE COME TO YOU: THE KING, WHO IS NOW SPEAKING TO JOSEPH, IS NOT TELLING JOSEPH SOMETHING HE DOES NOT KNOW. THE FUNCTION OF THIS STATEMENT SEEMS RATHER TO BE AN INTRODUCTION TO VERSE 6 IN THE FORM OF A REASON OR CONCESSION. WE MAY STATE IT IN SUCH WORDS AS “WELL, NOW THAT YOUR … HAVE COME TO YOU” OR “SINCE YOUR … HAVE COME TO YOU.” TEV AND NEB/REB ALSO PROVIDE GOOD MODELS FOR THIS CLAUSE. HAVE COME TO YOU MAY BE RENDERED, FOR EXAMPLE, “HAVE COME TO BE WITH YOU” OR, AS FRCL TRANSLATES, “HAVE COME TO JOIN YOU.” THE LAND OF EGYPT IS BEFORE YOU: THIS EXPRESSION HAS THE SENSE OF “THE COUNTRY OF EGYPT IS UNDER YOUR CONTROL” OR “… IS AVAILABLE TO YOU.” IN SOME TRANSLATIONS THIS IS RENDERED “… IS OPEN TO YOU” OR “… IS FREE FOR YOU.” SETTLE YOUR … IN THE BEST OF THE LAND: THAT IS, “PUT YOUR … ON THE BEST LAND IN THE COUNTRY.” FOR BEST OF THE LAND SEE 45:18. LET THEM DWELL IN THE LAND OF GOSHEN: THIS REPEATS IN A MORE CONCRETE FORM WHAT THE KING HAS JUST SAID. WE MAY RESTRUCTURE VERSES 5–6A TO SAY AS FOLLOWS: “THEN THE KING SAID TO JOSEPH, ‘THE LAND OF THIS COUNTRY IS YOURS. NOW THAT YOUR FATHER AND BROTHERS HAVE COME TO BE WITH YOU, SETTLE THEM IN GOSHEN, WHICH IS THE BEST OF OUR LANDS.’” IF YOU KNOW ANY ABLE MEN AMONG THEM: ABLE TRANSLATES A TERM MEANING “STRONG” AND “WORTHY.” TEV RENDERS IT “CAPABLE,” FRCL “COMPETENT, AND REB “WITH THE SKILL.” PUT THEM IN CHARGE OF MY CATTLE IS LITERALLY “PUT THEM AS PRINCES [RULERS] OVER LIVESTOCK THAT BELONGS TO ME.” THE SAME EXPRESSION IS USED IN EXO 18:21, WHERE MOSES INSTRUCTS THE PEOPLE TO CHOOSE CAPABLE MEN AS RULERS OVER SECTIONS OF THE PEOPLE. ACCORDING TO DRIVER, EGYPTIAN INSCRIPTIONS TELL OF THE PHARAOHS OWNING LARGE HERDS WATCHED OVER BY A SUPERINTENDENT OF THE ROYAL HERD.**

**GENESIS 47:7: THEN JOSEPH BROUGHT IN JACOB HIS FATHER, AND SET HIM BEFORE PHARAOH: THIS MAY BE DURING THE AUDIENCE WITH THE FIVE BROTHERS OR IT MAY BE AT ANOTHER AUDIENCE. THE VERB SET TRANSLATES A DIFFERENT VERB THAN THAT RENDERED “PRESENTED” IN VERSE 2, BUT THE SENSE IS THE SAME. JACOB BLESSED PHARAOH: THE WORD “BLESS” IS USED IN MANY DIFFERENT CONTEXTS IN GENESIS. JACOB DOES NOT BLESS THE KING IN THE SAME SENSE THAT ISAAC BLESSED JACOB IN 28:1. TRANSLATORS AND INTERPRETERS ARE DIVIDED ON THE MEANING OF BLESSED IN THIS VERSE. SOME, LIKE TEV, NEB/REB, NIV, TOB, RSV/NRSV, UNDERSTAND THAT IN SOME MANNER JACOB GAVE THE KING HIS BLESSING. THIS MAY MEAN THAT HE DID LITTLE MORE THAN ASK GOD TO GIVE THE KING STRENGTH AND A LONG AND FRUITFUL LIFE WITH MANY DESCENDANTS. OTHER VERSIONS, SUCH AS FRCL, SPCL, GECL, NJB, NJV, MFT, NAB, SPEISER, DRIVER, BELIEVE THAT BLESSED MEANS JACOB GAVE THE KING A RESPECTFUL SALUTATION OR GREETING. BLESSED IS ALSO USED IN THIS WAY IN 1 SAM 13:10, IN WHICH SAUL GOES OUT TO GREET SAMUEL; IN THAT PASSAGE RSV SAYS “SALUTE,” AND TEV “WELCOME.” IN THE PRESENT VERSE SPEISER SAYS “PAID HIS RESPECTS TO PHARAOH,” FRCL “GREETED PHARAOH RESPECTFULLY,” SPCL “GREETED PHARAOH WITH GREAT RESPECT,” AND GECL “GREETED THE SOVEREIGN WITH BEST WISHES.” MANY LANGUAGES HAVE SPECIAL EXPRESSIONS USED BY A PERSON GREETING A HIGH RULER IN FORMAL CONTEXTS SUCH AS THIS. ALTHOUGH IT IS NOT SAID THAT JACOB BOWED TO THE GROUND BEFORE THE KING, IN SOME LANGUAGES SUCH A GREETING MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY BOWING, CLAPPING THE HANDS, OR EVEN LYING FACE DOWN BEFORE THE RULER. ALTHOUGH WE MAY TRANSLATE WHAT JACOB DOES EITHER AS “GIVING THE KING A BLESSING” OR AS “GREETING HIM WITH GREAT RESPECT,” IN MANY LANGUAGES THE REGULAR FORMAL GREETING TAKES THE FORM OF A BLESSING UPON THE ONE GREETED.**

**GENESIS 47:8: AND PHARAOH SAID TO JACOB: AS IN VERSE 3, THE KING TAKES THE INITIATIVE TO OPEN THE CONVERSATION WITH A QUESTION. IN SOME LANGUAGES A TERM OF ADDRESS IS REQUIRED BEFORE THE ACTUAL QUESTION; FOR EXAMPLE, “OLD MAN [RESPECTFUL], HOW MANY.…” HOW MANY ARE THE DAYS OF THE YEARS OF YOUR LIFE? THE KING MAY BE STRUCK BY THE VITALITY OF JACOB OR IMPRESSED BY HIS WEATHER-BEATEN FEATURES AND ADVANCED AGE. JACOB’S LIFE AS A HERDSMAN IN THE OPEN COUNTRY WAS VERY DIFFERENT FROM THAT OF THE KING IN HIS PALACE. FOR THE WORDING IN THE KING’S QUESTION, SEE 25:7. RSV TRANSLATES THE HEBREW FORM LITERALLY; HOWEVER, THE QUESTION SHOULD BE ASKED IN A NATURAL MANNER, WHICH IN ENGLISH IS AS IN TEV. IN SOME LANGUAGES A DIRECT QUESTION ABOUT JACOB’S AGE WILL BE SEEN AS RUDE. IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO ADD, FOR EXAMPLE, “WHEN THE KING SAW HE WAS VERY OLD, HE INQUIRED OF JACOB.…”**

**GENESIS 47:9: JACOB DOES NOT ANSWER THE KING’S QUESTION DIRECTLY; RATHER HE CALLS ATTENTION TO THE NATURE OF HIS LIFE AS A NOMAD AND FOREIGNER. THE DAYS OF THE YEARS OF MY SOJOURNING: FOR THE USE OF THE VERB AND NOUN SOJOURNING, SEE 12:10 AND 17:8. TRANSLATORS MAY FIND IT BETTER TO EXPRESS SOJOURNING AS A CLAUSE, AS DOES FRCL: “FOR ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY YEARS I HAVE GONE AS A FOREIGNER FROM ONE COUNTRY TO ANOTHER.” EXAMPLES OF RENDERINGS FROM TWO OTHER TRANSLATIONS ARE “I HAVE BEEN WALKING AROUND THE LAND [EARTH] FOR MANY YEARS, A HUNDRED AND THIRTY” AND “I HAVE A HUNDRED AND THIRTY YEARS, IN WHICH I HAVE BEEN TRAVELING ALL THE TIME AND GOING AROUND TO MANY PLACES.” FEW AND EVIL … LIFE: FEW IS USED EITHER IN THE SENSE OF A PERSPECTIVE ON LIFE IN OLD AGE, OR MORE LIKELY IN COMPARISON WITH HIS FATHER ISAAC, WHO DIED AT AGE ONE HUNDRED AND EIGHTY (35:28–29), AND ABRAHAM, WHO DIED AT AGE ONE HUNDRED AND SEVENTY-FIVE (25:7–8). EVIL MEANS “HARD” OR “DIFFICULT.” THIS CLAUSE IS EXPRESSED AS, FOR EXAMPLE, “MY LIFE HAS BEEN SHORT, AND I HAVE ALWAYS HAD A HARD TIME” AND “I HAVEN’T STAYED VERY LONG, NOT LIKE MY GRANDFATHERS, AND I’VE HAD A ROUGH TIME, POOR ME.” AND THEY HAVE NOT ATTAINED … LIFE OF MY FATHERS: THAT IS, “MY LIFE HAS NOT BEEN AS LONG AS THAT OF MY FATHER AND MY GRANDFATHER.” IN THE DAYS OF THEIR SOJOURNINGS: THAT IS, “WHO ALSO WENT AS FOREIGNERS FROM PLACE TO PLACE.”**

**GENESIS 47:10: THE KING DOES NOT REPLY TO JACOB’S COMMENTS ON HIS LIFE NOR DOES HE ASK ANY FURTHER QUESTIONS. JACOB BLESSED PHARAOH AND WENT OUT … PHARAOH: THIS IS A DEPARTURE, AND IF A FAREWELL GREETING IS TO BE USED, IT SHOULD BE SUITABLE FOR SAYING GOOD-BYE TO THE KING. IF A BLESSING THAT IS DIFFERENT THAN A FAREWELL GREETING IS USED, IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “THEN JACOB GAVE THE KING ANOTHER BLESSING” OR “THEN JACOB BLESSED THE KING AGAIN.” SEE TEV “… FAREWELL BLESSING.” WENT OUT … PHARAOH: THAT IS, “LEFT THE KING” OR “LEFT THE KING’S PALACE.”**

**GENESIS 47:11: IN LANGUAGES WHOSE DISCOURSE REQUIRES CAREFUL MARKING OF MOVEMENTS AND NEW SETTINGS, OR EVEN SUMMARY STATEMENTS LIKE THIS, IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO MOVE THE END OF THIS VERSE TO THE BEGINNING BY SAYING, FOR EXAMPLE, “AFTER JOSEPH’S FATHER AND BROTHERS HAD SPOKEN WITH THE KING, JOSEPH DID WHAT THE KING HAD TOLD HIM TO DO; HE SETTLED THEM.…” SETTLED: SEE VERSE 6. GAVE THEM A POSSESSION IN THE LAND OF EGYPT … LAND: THAT IS, “HE GAVE THEM LAND [PROPERTY, FIELDS, PASTURES] IN THE BEST PART OF THE COUNTRY.” IN THE LAND OF RAMESES: INTERPRETERS UNDERSTAND THIS NAME TO REFER TO RAMESES II (THAT IS, THE SECOND KING OF EGYPT OF THAT NAME); HE WAS A PHARAOH WHO LIVED LONG AFTER JOSEPH’S TIME. LAND OF RAMESES IS FOUND IN THE SEPTUAGINT IN 46:28, WHERE THE HEBREW TEXT HAS “LAND OF GOSHEN.” ACCORDING TO EXO 1:11 RAMESES IS ONE OF TWO CITIES BUILT BY THE ISRAELITES LIVING IN EGYPT. MOST MODERN VERSIONS REFER TO THIS PLACE AS THE “REGION [DISTRICT, AREA] OF RAMESES.”**

**GENESIS 47:12: AND JOSEPH PROVIDED: THE VERB PROVIDED IS LITERALLY “SUSTAIN,” “SUPPORT,” OR “NOURISH” (KJV), AND THE SENSE SEEMS TO BE OF A CONTINUOUS ACTION. IN SOME ENGLISH VERSIONS THE PAST TENSE SUGGESTS SOMETHING THAT JOSEPH DID ONCE, WHEN HE FIRST SETTLED THE FAMILY IN GOSHEN; A TRANSLATION LIKE NEB/REB “SUPPORTED” EXPRESSES THE MEANING BETTER. IN SOME OTHER TRANSLATIONS A VERB FORM THAT INDICATES CONTINUOUS OR FREQUENT ACTION, OR A RENDERING LIKE “ALL THE TIME HE WAS GIVING FOOD,” GIVES THE REQUIRED SENSE. HIS FATHER, HIS BROTHERS, AND ALL HIS FATHER’S HOUSEHOLD: THIS MAY BE TRANSLATED LITERALLY, OR ADJUSTED TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “ALL HIS RELATIVES.” SEE TEV. ACCORDING TO THE NUMBER OF THEIR DEPENDENTS IS LITERALLY “ACCORDING TO THE LITTLE ONES.” ALTHOUGH TRANSLATORS VARY IN THEIR RENDERINGS OF THIS EXPRESSION, MOST AGREE THAT THE AMOUNT OF FOOD PROVIDED WAS DETERMINED BY THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE, AND THIS INCLUDED THE SMALLEST CHILDREN. BOTH RSV AND TEV ARE SATISFACTORY MODELS.**

**JOSEPH’S RULE DURING THE FAMINE (47:13–26)**

**VERSES 13–26 INTERRUPT THE EPISODE DEALING WITH THE SETTLING OF JACOB’S FAMILY IN GOSHEN. THAT STORY PICKS UP AGAIN IN VERSE 27 AND DEALS WITH PREPARATIONS FOR JACOB’S DEATH. THE PURPOSE OF VERSES 13–26 IS TO EXPLAIN HOW THE EGYPTIANS CAME TO PAY ONE-FIFTH OF THEIR CROPS IN TAXES. THIS INSERTION TELLS HOW THE FAMINE BECAME SO SEVERE THAT THE PEOPLE SPENT ALL THEIR MONEY TO BUY FOOD FROM JOSEPH (VERSES 13–15). UNABLE TO BUY MORE FOOD WITH MONEY, THE PEOPLE TRADED THEIR LIVESTOCK FOR FOOD (VERSES 16–17). THE FOLLOWING YEAR THE PEOPLE, WHO WERE NOW WITHOUT MONEY AND ANIMALS, OFFERED THEMSELVES AS SLAVES AND THEIR LAND IN EXCHANGE FOR SEED TO PLANT (VERSES 18–19). AS A RESULT OF JOSEPH’S POLICIES, THE KING OWNS THE PEOPLE’S FARMS, THEIR ANIMALS, AND THE PEOPLE THEMSELVES AS SLAVES. HOWEVER, THE PRIESTS, WHO ARE SUPPORTED BY THE KING, DO NOT HAVE TO SELL THEIR LANDS. CONSEQUENTLY, THEY ARE THE ONLY ONES IN THE COUNTRY WHO HAVE MONEY (VERSES 20–22). JOSEPH THEN GIVES THE PEOPLE SEED TO SOW, ON CONDITION THAT THEY PAY THE KING A FIFTH OF THEIR HARVEST. THE EGYPTIANS RECOGNIZE THEIR SLAVE STATUS BUT CONSIDER JOSEPH TO HAVE BEEN GOOD TO THEM. JOSEPH MAKES IT A LAW THAT A FIFTH OF EVERYONE’S HARVEST BELONGS TO THE KING. ONLY THE PRIESTS ARE EXEMPT (VERSES 23–26).**

**SUBDIVISION HEADING**

**THE HANDBOOK HEADING MAY NEED TO BE EXPRESSED AS “WHAT JOSEPH DID DURING THE FAMINE,” “HOW JOSEPH OBTAINED EVERYTHING IN THE COUNTRY FOR THE KING,” AND “THE KING BECOMES THE OWNER OF EVERYTHING.” FRCL HAS “JOSEPH’S POLICY DURING THE FAMINE,” SPCL “JOSEPH’S AGRARIAN POLICIES,” NIV “JOSEPH AND THE FAMINE,” GECL “THE EGYPTIANS SELL THEMSELVES TO PHARAOH,” AND SPEISER “JOSEPH’S LAND POLICY.”**

**GENESIS 47:13: VERSES 13–14 SERVE AS AN INTRODUCTION TO THIS SUBDIVISION. NOW THERE WAS NO FOOD IN ALL THE LAND: NOW, WHICH TRANSLATES THE COMMON HEBREW CONNECTIVE, SERVES AS A TRANSITION FROM THE STORY OF JOSEPH’S FAMILY TO THE SEVERITY OF THE FAMINE IN EGYPT AND CANAAN. THE OPENING SENTENCE IN RSV, AS IN THE HEBREW, STATES A CONSEQUENCE OF THE NEXT CLAUSE, WHICH IS FOLLOWED BY STILL ANOTHER CONSEQUENCE. IN MANY LANGUAGES IT IS MORE NATURAL TO BEGIN WITH THE CAUSE. SEE TEV. FOOD IS LITERALLY “BREAD,” THE NECESSARY FOOD IN A MIDDLE EASTERN MEAL. SOME TRANSLATE FOOD AS “GRAIN” OR “WHEAT.” WE MAY ALSO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “THERE WAS NOTHING TO EAT.” IN ALL THE LAND MEANS HERE “IN EGYPT AND CANAAN”; OR AS A GENERALIZATION IT CAN BE EXPRESSED AS “THERE WAS NO FOOD ANYWHERE.” LANGUISHED BY REASON OF THE FAMINE: LANGUISH MEANS “TO FAINT,” “TO BE WEAK,” OR TO BE “WITHOUT STRENGTH.” IT IS NOT THE LAND ITSELF THAT IS SO DESCRIBED BUT RATHER THE PEOPLE OF THE LAND. BY REASON OF THE FAMINE MAY BE EXPRESSED AS “FROM THE FAMINE,” “FROM HUNGER,” “FROM STARVATION,” OR “FROM HAVING NOTHING TO EAT.” TEV IS A GOOD MODEL TO TRANSLATE. WE MAY ALSO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “THE PEOPLE SUFFERED BADLY FROM HUNGER BECAUSE THERE WAS NOTHING TO EAT. AS A RESULT, THE PEOPLE OF EGYPT AND CANAAN BECAME WEAK.”**

**GENESIS 47:14: JOSEPH GATHERED UP ALL THE MONEY THAT WAS FOUND IN … CANAAN: IN 41:55–56 THE FAMINE APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN LIMITED TO EGYPT, BUT IN 41:57 IT IS “OVER ALL THE EARTH,” OR “EVERYWHERE.” HERE IN VERSES 13–14 IT IS IN EGYPT AND CANAAN. ACCORDING TO 41:56 JOSEPH SOLD GRAIN FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE FAMINE. BY NOW THE PEOPLE’S MONEY IS COMING TO AN END. GATHERED UP ALL THE MONEY MEANS THAT BY SELLING GRAIN JOSEPH GOT ALL THE MONEY. IN TRANSLATION IT WILL BE CLEARER TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “THE PEOPLE OF EGYPT AND CANAAN SPENT ALL THEIR MONEY TO BUY GRAIN,” “ALL THE MONEY OF THE PEOPLE IN EGYPT AND CANAAN WAS USED UP BUYING GRAIN,” OR “THOSE PEOPLE SPENT ALL THEIR MONEY BUYING GRAIN.” SEE TEV. JOSEPH BROUGHT THE MONEY INTO PHARAOH’S HOUSE: THE IDEA IS THAT HE DEPOSITED THE MONEY WITH THE KING’S TREASURY, WHICH WAS AN IMPORTANT PART OF THE ADMINISTRATION AND REFERRED TO IN ANCIENT TIMES IN EGYPTIAN INSCRIPTIONS AS “THE HOUSEOF SILVER.” NEB/REB SAY “AND PUT IT IN PHARAOH’S TREASURY.” MOST OTHERS SAY “… IN PHARAOH’S PALACE.” BOTH ARE SUITABLE RENDERINGS.**

**GENESIS 47:15: WHEN THE MONEY WAS ALL SPENT IN … CANAAN: WAS ALL SPENT MAY NEED TO BE EXPRESSED AS AN ACTIVE CONSTRUCTION; FOR EXAMPLE, “WHEN THE PEOPLE OF THESE COUNTRIES HAD SPENT ALL THEIR MONEY BUYING GRAIN.…” IN A NUMBER OF LANGUAGES, THE USUAL WAY OF SAYING THIS IS “THE PEOPLE OF … FINISHED THEIR MONEY.” THIS CLAUSE IS THE THIRD TIME IN THREE VERSES THAT EGYPT AND CANAAN ARE MENTIONED. HOWEVER, FROM THIS POINT ON ONLY EGYPT IS MENTIONED. FOOD IS LITERALLY “BREAD” AS IN VERSE 12 AND IN 41:55. WHY SHOULD WE DIE BEFORE YOUR EYES? THIS IS A RHETORICAL QUESTION—THE PEOPLE ARE COMPLAINING THAT THEIR HUNGER IS KILLING THEM AND THAT JOSEPH IS DOING NOTHING TO SAVE THEM. THIS ELEMENT OF COMPLAINT IS BROUGHT OUT IN TEV BY THE SHORT SENTENCE “DO SOMETHING!” SOME OTHER TRANSLATIONS SAY IN A SIMILAR WAY “YOU MUST FIND THE WAY FOR US [TO STAY ALIVE]” OR “YOU MUST HELP US!” RSV HAS AVOIDED A LITERAL RENDERING OF THE HEBREW “IN FRONT OF YOU” BY SAYING BEFORE YOUR EYES; THE SENSE OF BEFORE YOUR EYES OR “IN FRONT OF YOU” IS “WHILE YOU JUST LOOK AT US WITHOUT DOING ANYTHING.” REB SAYS “‘GIVE US FOOD,’ THEY SAID, ‘OR WE SHALL PERISH BEFORE YOUR VERY EYES.’” AS A COMPLAINT SPCL SAYS “GIVE US SOMETHING TO EAT! IT IS NOT RIGHT FOR YOU TO LET US DIE OF HUNGER JUST BECAUSE WE NO LONGER HAVE ANY MONEY.” SOME OTHERS SAY “YOU MUST GIVE.… IF YOU DON’T, HUNGER WILL DESTROY US AND WE WILL FALL DOWN AND DIE IN YOUR PRESENCE.” WE MAY ALSO TRANSLATE THE LAST PART OF THE VERSE, FOR EXAMPLE, “WE HAVE SPENT ALL OUR MONEY. DO YOU WANT US TO DIE WHILE YOU STAND THERE LOOKING AT US? GIVE US SOMETHING TO EAT!”**

**GENESIS 47:16: GIVE YOUR CATTLE: THAT IS, “BRING ME YOUR LIVESTOCK [ANIMALS].” AND I WILL GIVE YOU FOOD IN EXCHANGE FOR YOUR CATTLE: FOOD IS NOT MENTIONED HERE IN THE HEBREW TEXT, BUT IT IS CLEARLY SUGGESTED FROM VERSE 15 AND IS NEEDED TO MAKE THE MEANING CLEAR. NO RATE OF EXCHANGE IS MENTIONED, BUT ACCORDING TO VERSE 18 THE PEOPLE EXCHANGED ALL THEIR LIVESTOCK FOR GRAIN. IN TRANSLATION FOOD IN EXCHANGE FOR YOUR CATTLE IS SOMETIMES RENDERED “BRING YOUR ANIMALS AS PAYMENT FOR FOOD” OR “USE YOUR ANIMALS TO PAY FOR FOOD.” IF YOUR MONEY IS GONE: IN SOME LANGUAGES THE “IF” CLAUSE MUST BE STATED BEFORE THE CONSEQUENCE. IN THAT CASE WE MAY TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “IF YOU [PLURAL] DON’T HAVE ANY MORE MONEY, BRING ME YOUR ANIMALS AND I WILL EXCHANGE THEM FOR GRAIN.”**

**GENESIS 47:17: HORSES, THE FLOCKS, THE HERDS, AND THE ASSES: THAT IS, “HORSES, SHEEP AND GOATS, CATTLE, AND DONKEYS.” AND HE SUPPLIED THEM WITH FOOD IN EXCHANGE FOR ALL THEIR CATTLE THAT YEAR: THIS IS A SUMMARY OF WHAT WAS DONE. SUPPLIED TRANSLATES A VERB THAT MEANS “TO GUIDE” OR “LEAD TO A WATERING PLACE,” AND BY EXTENSION “TO REFRESH” OR “SUPPORT” (DRIVER). “PROVIDED” OR “SUPPLIED” ARE SUITABLE TRANSLATIONS IN ENGLISH. THAT YEAR: THIS TIME EXPRESSION MAY NEED TO BE PLACED EITHER AT THE BEGINNING OF VERSE 17 OR LINKED TO THE SENTENCE “HE SUPPLIED THEM WITH FOOD.” IN SOME TRANSLATIONS IT IS MADE A SEPARATE SENTENCE: “THEY DID THAT UNTIL THE END OF THAT YEAR,” AND THE NEXT VERSE BEGINS “THE NEXT YEAR …” (SEE TEV). IN MANY MEAT-EATING CULTURES IT WILL APPEAR AMAZING THAT PEOPLE WOULD NOT EAT THEIR ANIMALS, NO MATTER HOW SCRAWNY THEY MIGHT BE, BUT WOULD TRADE THEM FOR GRAIN. SPEISER THINKS THE REASON IS TO BE FOUND IN TABOOS ON EATING ANIMALS, OR SIMPLY THAT THE STORY REQUIRES THIS DEVELOPMENT TO ACCOMPLISH ITS PURPOSE OF EXPLAINING THE ORIGIN OF THE TAX ON HARVESTS.**

**GENESIS 47:18: WHEN THAT YEAR WAS ENDED … FOLLOWING YEAR: THIS MAY BE RENDERED, FOR EXAMPLE, “AT THE END OF A YEAR,” “THE NEXT YEAR,” OR “A YEAR LATER.” WE WILL NOT HIDE FROM MY LORD … ALL SPENT: ALTHOUGH THE SPEAKERS ARE PLURAL, THEY ADDRESS JOSEPH AS MY LORD, NOT “OUR LORD,” AS WE MIGHT EXPECT. NOTE THAT TEV SHIFTS TO “YOU, SIR.” MONEY IS LITERALLY “SILVER.” AND THE HERDS OF CATTLE ARE MY LORD’S: THIS MAY BE RENDERED “OUR HERDS [CATTLE] ALL BELONG TO YOU, SIR” OR “ALL OUR ANIMALS ARE IN YOUR HANDS.” THERE IS NOTHING LEFT IN THE SIGHT OF MY LORD: THAT IS, “THERE IS NOTHING LEFT THAT WE CAN EXCHANGE WITH YOU FOR FOOD.” THIS IS SOMETIMES EXPRESSED AS A RHETORICAL QUESTION: “WHAT CAN WE GIVE YOU NOW FOR OUR FOOD?” BUT OUR BODIES AND OUR LANDS: BODIES MAY NEED TO BE EXPRESSED AS “OURSELVES” AND LANDS AS “OUR FIELDS,” “OUR FARMS,” OR “OUR GARDENS.” IN SOME LANGUAGES THIS MAY BE EXPRESSED AS “NOTHING BUT OUR BACKS AND OUR SOIL” OR “WE HAVE ONLY OURSELVES AND OUR LAND LEFT.”**

**GENESIS 47:19: WHY SHOULD WE DIE … EYES: SEE VERSE 15. RESTRUCTURING THE RHETORICAL QUESTION, WE MAY BEGIN THE VERSE “PLEASE DON’T LET US PERISH!” OR “YOU CAN’T LET US DIE! HELP US!” BOTH WE AND OUR LAND: THE IDEA OF THE PEOPLE DYING OF STARVATION IS CLEAR, BUT IN WHAT SENSE IS THE LAND SAID TO DIE? THE THOUGHT EXPRESSED HERE IS THAT, IF FARMERS DO NOT HAVE SEED TO SOW, THEIR LANDS ARE USELESS AND BECOME ABANDONED. ACCORDINGLY, THE PEOPLE’S QUESTION MUST BE WORDED IN SOME LANGUAGES, FOR EXAMPLE, “DO WE HAVE TO DIE BEFORE YOUR VERY EYES AND ABANDON OUR FIELDS [FARMS, GARDENS]?” SEE TEV. BUY US AND OUR LAND FOR FOOD: THAT IS, “TAKE US AND OUR FIELDS IN EXCHANGE FOR SOMETHING TO EAT” OR “GIVE US FOOD TO EAT AND YOU CAN HAVE US AND OUR GARDENS.” AND WE WITH OUR LAND WILL BE SLAVES TO PHARAOH: AGAIN, IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO MAKE ADJUSTMENTS IN TRANSLATION, AS PEOPLE AND NOT LAND MAY BE CALLED SLAVES. IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO EXPRESS THE SLAVERY OF THE PEOPLE AND THE “SLAVERY OF THE LAND” IN SEPARATE CLAUSES WITH DIFFERENT SENSES; FOR EXAMPLE, “WE WILL BECOME THE KING’S SLAVES, AND HE WILL BECOME THE OWNER OF OUR LANDS” OR “WE WILL BE SLAVES TO THE KING, AND OUR FARMS WILL ALL BELONG TO HIM.” SEE TEV. GIVE US SEED THAT WE MAY LIVE AND NOT DIE: SEED IS A GENERAL TERM, BUT IF THE LANGUAGE OF TRANSLATION HAS ONLY NAMES FOR PARTICULAR SEEDS, THE KIND THAT PROVIDES A MAJOR CROP IN THE AREA SHOULD BE USED. FOR LIVE AND NOT DIE SEE 42:2. LAND MAY NOT BE DESOLATE: DESOLATE LAND IS FARM LAND THAT HAS GONE TO WASTE FROM NEGLECT, THAT IS, FROM NOT BEING CULTIVATED AND PLANTED. NEB/REB AND OTHERS SAY “OUR LAND WILL BECOME A DESERT.” SEE TEV.**

**WE MAY TRANSLATE VERSE 19, FOR EXAMPLE: • DO WE HAVE TO DIE UNDER YOUR VERY EYES AND ABANDON OUR FARMS? TAKE US AND OUR LANDS IN EXCHANGE FOR SOMETHING TO EAT. THEN WE WILL BE THE KING’S SLAVES AND OUR FARMS WILL BELONG TO HIM. GIVE US SEED SO WE CAN SURVIVE, AND SO OUR FARMS WILL NOT BECOME LIKE DESERTS.”**

**GENESIS 47:20: IN VERSES 20–22 ALL THE FARMS AND PEOPLE IN EGYPT, EXCEPT THE PRIESTS AND THEIR FARMS, BECOME THE PROPERTY OF THE KING. VERSE 20 MAY BE SEEN AS TWO CONSEQUENCES FOLLOWED BY A CAUSE AND ANOTHER CONSEQUENCE. SO, JOSEPH BOUGHT … FOR PHARAOH AND THE EGYPTIANS SOLD THEIR FIELDS FORM THE TWO CONSEQUENCES. BECAUSE THE FAMINE WAS SO SEVERE UPON THEM IS THE REASON OR CAUSE FOR THE EGYPTIANS SELLING AND JOSEPH BUYING. THE LAND BECAME PHARAOH’S IS THE FINAL CONSEQUENCE. IN THIS CASE TRANSLATORS MAY FIND IT MORE NATURAL TO RESTRUCTURE THIS VERSE TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “THE FAMINE WAS SO BAD IN EGYPT THAT THE EGYPTIANS SOLD THEIR FIELDS TO JOSEPH, WHO BOUGHT THEM FOR THE KING. AS A RESULT, THE KING OWNED ALL THE LAND IN EGYPT.” ANOTHER VIEW OF VERSE 20 IS THAT THE FIRST CLAUSE IS A SUMMARY OR CONSEQUENCE OF VERSES 18 AND “THUS PHARAOH ACQUIRED ALL THE LAND” (NJB). A TRANSLATION OF THE VERSE THAT FOLLOWS THIS VIEW IS: “IN THIS WAY JOSEPH BOUGHT ALL THEIR LAND FOR THE KING. THE FAMINE WAS SEVERE FOR THEM, AND IT FORCED EVERYBODY TO SELL THEIR LAND TO GET FOOD, AND ALL THE LAND IN THE COUNTRY BECAME THE KING’S.”**

**GENESIS 47:21: HE MADE SLAVES OF THEM: RSV’S FOOTNOTE SHOWS THIS WORDING IS TAKEN FROM THE SAMARITAN PENTATEUCH AND THE SEPTUAGINT. THE HEBREW TEXT HAS “HE REMOVED THEM TO THE CITIES.” KJV FOLLOWS THE HEBREW TEXT, BUT NEARLY ALL MODERN VERSIONS ARE LIKE RSV, WHICH IS SUPPORTED BY HOTTP. IT IS HIGHLY UNLIKELY THAT JOSEPH COULD OR WOULD MOVE THE ENTIRE POPULATION, LESS THE PRIESTS, INTO THE CITIES AND THEN GIVE THE PEOPLE SEED TO PLANT THEIR FIELDS. SEE VERSE 23. HE IS AMBIGUOUS IN RSV, BUT IN THIS CONTEXT, IT IS MOST LIKELY TO REFER TO JOSEPH RATHER THAN TO THE KING. THIS IS MADE CLEAR IN NIV, REB, TEV, AND TRANSLATORS SHOULD ALSO MAKE SURE THE REFERENCE IS TO JOSEPH. IN TRANSLATION IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO RESTRUCTURE HE MADE SLAVES OF THEM, EITHER BECAUSE OF THE DIFFICULTY IN FINDING TERMS FOR “SLAVE” AND “SLAVERY” OR BECAUSE THE CAUSATIVE FORM “MADE SLAVES” IS UNNATURAL. ONE EXAMPLE OF RESTRUCTURING IS “… AND NOBODY WAS FREE IN ALL THAT COUNTRY. THEY WERE LIKE PRISONERS ALL THE TIME BEING FORCED TO WORK FOR THAT KING.…” FROM ONE END … OTHER IS LITERALLY “FROM THE END OF THE BORDER OF EGYPT TO ITS END.”**

**GENESIS 47:22: ONLY THE LAND OF THE PRIESTS HE DID NOT BUY: THAT IS, “JOSEPH BOUGHT EVERYONE’S FARM EXCEPT THE ONES THAT BELONGED TO THE PRIESTS.” THIS KIND OF SENTENCE IS OFTEN EXPRESSED AS “JOSEPH BOUGHT EVERYONE’S FARM; HE DID NOT BUY THE PRIESTS’ FARMS.” FOR THE PRIESTS HAD A FIXED ALLOWANCE FROM PHARAOH: ALLOWANCE REFERS TO A SET AMOUNT OF MONEY, OR PERHAPS FOOD AND GRAIN, GIVEN AT REGULAR INTERVALS. WE MAY TRANSLATE THIS, FOR EXAMPLE, “BECAUSE THE KING REGULARLY GAVE THE PRIESTS THEIR PROVISIONS” OR “… GAVE THE PRIESTS A FIXED AMOUNT OF MONEY.” LIVED ON THE ALLOWANCE WHICH PHARAOH GAVE THEM: WE MAY SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “THEY LIVED ON THE GRAIN [MONEY] THAT THE KING GAVE THEM.” THEREFORE, THEY DID NOT SELL THEIR LAND: THIS CONSEQUENCE IS ESSENTIALLY THE SAME IN MEANING AS THE OPENING STATEMENT IN THIS VERSE.**

**IN A FULLER FORM WE MAY TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE: • THE ONLY FARMS THAT JOSEPH DID NOT BUY WERE THOSE THE PRIESTS OWNED. THIS IS BECAUSE THE KING REGULARLY GAVE THEM PROVISIONS OF GRAIN THAT THEY ATE, AND SO THEY DID NOT HAVE TO SELL THEIR FARMS TO GET GRAIN FROM JOSEPH.**

**GENESIS 47:23: BEHOLD, I HAVE THIS DAY …: BEHOLD EXPRESSES A CALL FOR ATTENTION BEFORE THE COMMAND THAT THE PEOPLE PLANT THEIR FARMS: “LISTEN!” (REB). TEV SAYS “YOU SEE.…” IT MAY ALSO BE CONSIDERED AS THE INTRODUCTION TO A PROCLAMATION OR FORMAL DECLARATION: “THESE ARE MY ORDERS.…” NJB SAYS “THIS IS HOW WE STAND.…” BOUGHT YOU … FOR PHARAOH MAY NEED TO BE EXPRESSED AS “I HAVE BOUGHT YOU [PLURAL] AND YOUR FARMS, AND NOW THE KING IS YOUR OWNER.” AND YOU SHALL SOW THE LAND: THAT IS, “YOU [PLURAL] GO NOW AND PLANT YOUR FIELDS” OR “… PLANT YOUR GARDENS.”**

**GENESIS 47:24: AT THE HARVESTS YOU SHALL GIVE A FIFTH TO PHARAOH: THAT IS, “WHEN YOU [PLURAL] HARVEST YOUR CROPS, YOU MUST GIVE ONE-FIFTH OF YOUR CROPS TO THE KING.” AT THE HARVESTS IS ALSO EXPRESSED AS “WHEN THE FOOD IN YOUR GARDEN IS RIPE” OR “WHEN YOU GROW ANY KIND OF FOOD.” IN SOME LANGUAGES A FIFTH IS EXPRESSED AS TAKING ONE PART FROM FIVE PARTS; FOR EXAMPLE, “YOU MUST MAKE FIVE PILES WITH YOUR GRAIN AND TAKE ONE PILE AND GIVE IT TO THE KING.” AND FOUR-FIFTHS SHALL BE YOUR OWN: FOLLOWING THE MODEL OF DIVIDED PILES: “AND FOUR PILES WILL BE FOR YOU,” OR IN SUCH LANGUAGES WE MAY ALSO SAY “AND THE REST IS FOR YOU.” AS SEED FOR THE FIELD: THAT IS, “YOU MUST USE SOME FOR PLANTING YOUR FIELDS.” AND AS FOOD FOR YOURSELVES AND YOUR HOUSEHOLDS AND … LITTLE ONES: THAT IS, “AND THE REST YOU AND YOUR FAMILIES CAN EAT,” OR MORE FULLY “THE REST IS FOR YOU [PLURAL] TO EAT. IT IS FOR YOU AND ALL THOSE WHO LIVE WITH YOU, INCLUDING YOUR SMALL CHILDREN.” FOR ANOTHER MODEL OF THE SHORTER VERSION, SEE TEV. FOR YOUR LITTLE ONES IS SIMILAR TO VERSE 12.**

**GENESIS 47:25: AND THEY SAID: THE PEOPLE ARE SAYING THAT THEY AGREE TO OR ACCEPT JOSEPH’S TERMS. IN SOME LANGUAGES THIS MUST BE MADE CLEAR AT THE OUTSET; FOR EXAMPLE, “YES, ALL RIGHT …” OR “WE ACCEPT.…” YOU HAVE SAVED OUR LIVES: SEE 19:19. MAY IT PLEASE MY LORD IS LITERALLY “LET US FIND FAVOR IN THE EYES OF MY LORD.” SEE TEV. NOTE THAT AGAIN MY LORD IS USED WITH A GROUP SPEAKING TO JOSEPH. SEE TEV “YOU …, SIR.”**

**WE MAY RENDER VERSE 25 AS: • AND THE PEOPLE SAID TO JOSEPH, “SIR, WE AGREE TO BE SLAVES OF THE KING, BECAUSE YOU HAVE BEEN GOOD TO US AND YOU HAVE SAVED OUR LIVES.”**

**GENESIS 47:26: SO, JOSEPH MADE IT A STATUTE: STATUTE TRANSLATES THE NOUN FORM OF A VERB MEANING TO “ENGRAVE” OR “INSCRIBE.” IN THIS CONTEXT IT REFERS TO A DECREE OR LAW. WE MAY TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “JOSEPH MADE IT A LAW FOR THE COUNTRY OF EGYPT” OR “… MADE IT A LAW THAT ALL EGYPTIANS HAD TO OBEY.” CONCERNING THE LAND OF EGYPT: IN SOME LANGUAGES THE CONTENT OF THE LAW IS EXPRESSED AS A SEPARATE STATEMENT. ONE EXAMPLE OF RESTRUCTURING TO DO THIS IS “SO JOSEPH MADE THAT NEW LAW FOR EVERYBODY IN THE COUNTRY. THAT LAW SAYS: ‘WHEN ANYBODY MAKES FOOD GROW.…’” AND IT STANDS TO THIS DAY: THIS EXPRESSION THIS DAY REFERS TO THE TIME OF THE WRITER OF OUR STORY, OR THE TIME OF A LATER EDITOR OR COPYIST, WHICH IS LATER THAN THE EVENTS DESCRIBED. SCHOLARS CANNOT SAY WITH ACCURACY HOW LONG THIS MAY HAVE BEEN. IN MANY LANGUAGES THIS CLAUSE COMES MORE NATURALLY AFTER THE CONTENT OF THE LAW. SEE TEV FOR THE TRANSLATION. THE LAND OF THE PRIESTS … PHARAOH’S: THIS REPEATS THE STATEMENT IN VERSE 22, THAT THE LAND OF THE PRIESTS AND TEMPLE PROPERTY REMAINED INDEPENDENT. SEE THERE FOR THE TRANSLATION.**

**JACOB’S LAST REQUEST (47:27–31)**

**THE FINAL PART OF THIS CHAPTER PICKS UP FROM VERSE 12 AND TELL HOW JACOB REQUESTS JOSEPH TO RETURN HIS BODY TO CANAAN TO BE BURIED WHEN HE DIES. IN GOSHEN JACOB’S FAMILY PROSPERS AND HAS MANY CHILDREN (VERSE 27). JACOB LIVES IN GOSHEN FOR SEVENTEEN YEARS UNTIL HE REACHES THE AGE OF ONE HUNDRED AND FORTY-SEVEN YEARS (VERSE 28). JACOB CALLS JOSEPH AND MAKES HIM SWEAR AN OATH THAT HE WILL RETURN HIS BODY TO THE PLACE WHERE ABRAHAM AND ISAAC ARE BURIED IN CANAAN. JOSEPH SWEARS HE WILL DO SO (VERSES 29–31).**

**SUBDIVISION HEADING**

**THE HANDBOOK HEADING, WHICH IS THE SAME AS IN TEV, MAY NEED TO BE MORE CONCRETE; FOR EXAMPLE, “JACOB ASKS JOSEPH NOT TO BURY HIM IN EGYPT,” “JACOB MUST BE BURIED WITH HIS FATHER AND GRANDFATHER.” FRCL AND OTHERS HAVE “JACOB’S LAST WISHES.”**

**GENESIS 47:27: THUS ISRAEL … GOSHEN: THUS, WHICH IN RSV SIGNALS A RESULT, TRANSLATES THE COMMON HEBREW CONNECTIVE. HOWEVER, THIS CONCLUSION FOLLOWS THE EXPLANATION OF THE ORIGIN OF THE ONE-FIFTH TAX ON EGYPTIAN CROPS, AND VERSE 27 HAS NO CONNECTION WITH THAT. FOR SOME TRANSLATORS THE NEW SUBDIVISION HEADING HELPS SEPARATE THE CONTENT OF VERSES 27–31 FROM WHAT WENT BEFORE. HOWEVER, IN SOME LANGUAGES THERE NEEDS TO BE A LINK BACK TO THE CONTENT OF VERSES 11–12. IN SUCH CASES WE MAY ESTABLISH THIS CONNECTION BY SAYING, FOR EXAMPLE, “AFTER JOSEPH HAD SETTLED HIS FATHER AND BROTHERS IN THE LAND OF GOSHEN.…” THE HEBREW TEXT SAYS ISRAEL DWELT … THEY GAINED POSSESSIONS. DWELT IS SINGULAR, TO AGREE WITH ISRAEL (JACOB), BUT GAINED IS PLURAL. SCHOLARS EXPLAIN THE CHANGE TO THE PLURAL AS REPRESENTING A DIFFERENT SOURCE TEXT. MODERN VERSIONS TAKE TWO APPROACHES TO THIS PROBLEM. SOME SAY “ISRAEL … THEY” EVEN THOUGH THIS VIOLATES THE AGREEMENT BETWEEN SINGULAR SUBJECT AND PLURAL PRONOUN. OTHERS MAKE ISRAEL PLURAL TO AGREE WITH THEY; FOR EXAMPLE, TEV “ISRAELITES … THEY.” TRANSLATORS SHOULD NOT BE SO FAITHFUL TO THE HEBREW WORDS THAT THEY CREATE GRAMMATICAL MISTAKES. THEREFORE, IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT TRANSLATORS FOLLOW TEV. ISRAELITES IS SOMETIMES EXPRESSED AS “THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL” OR “JACOB’S PEOPLE” THEY GAINED POSSESSIONS IN IT: GAINED POSSESSIONS TRANSLATES A VERB THAT MEANS TO “GRASP” OR “TAKE HOLD” OF SOMETHING. IN OUR CONTEXT IT REFERS TO ACQUIRING PROPERTY OR LAND. TEV SAYS MORE GENERALLY “BECAME RICH,” BUT THIS MAY NOT BE APPROPRIATE IF IT SUGGESTS THAT JACOB AND HIS FAMILY WERE NOT RICH WHEN THEY CAME TO EGYPT. WERE FRUITFUL AND MULTIPLIED EXCEEDINGLY: SEE 1:22 AND 17:20.**

**GENESIS 47:28: AND JACOB LIVED IN THE LAND OF EGYPT SEVENTEEN YEARS: IN VERSE 9 JACOB TOLD THE KING THAT HE WAS, ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-YEARS OLD. AFTER THAT HE LIVED ANOTHER SEVENTEEN YEARS IN EGYPT, WHICH MADE HIM ONE HUNDRED AND FORTY-SEVEN WHEN HE DIED. HOWEVER, THE DEATH OF JACOB IS NOT REPORTED YET. INSTEAD JACOB GOES ON IN CHAPTERS 48 AND 49 TO PERFORM VARIOUS ACTS THAT MUST BE DONE BEFORE HIS DEATH, WHICH IS RECORDED IN 49:33.**

**GENESIS 47:29: AND WHEN THE TIME DREW NEAR THAT ISRAEL MUST DIE: THAT IS, “WHEN JACOB FELT THAT THE TIME FOR HIM TO DIE WAS APPROACHING” OR “WHEN THE TIME FOR JACOB TO DIE WAS GETTING NEAR.” HE CALLED HIS SON JOSEPH: CALLED MAY NEED TO BE EXPRESSED AS “SENT FOR … JOSEPH” OR “SENT SOMEONE TO BRING HIS SON JOSEPH.” IF NOW I HAVE FOUND FAVOR IN YOUR SIGHT: THIS EXPRESSION IS NORMALLY USED WHEN A PERSON IS SPEAKING TO HIS SUPERIOR. FOR EXAMPLE, LOT SPEAKING TO THE TWO ANGELS IN 19:19, AND A FEARFUL JACOB ADDRESSING ESAU IN 32:5; 33:8, 10, 15. IT ALSO SHOWS NOAH’S RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD IN 6:8. NOTE THAT TEV FAILS TO TRANSLATE THIS EXPRESSION. HERE JACOB INQUIRES ABOUT JOSEPH’S FEELING TOWARD HIM BEFORE ASKING HIM A GREAT FAVOR. JACOB IS SAYING “IF YOU THINK WELL OF ME.…” FRCL SAYS “IF YOU HAVE AFFECTION FOR ME,” NJB “IF YOU REALLY LOVE ME.” REB IS LESS EMOTIVE WITH “I HAVE A FAVOR TO ASK.” ALL OF THESE ARE SUITABLE MODELS. PUT YOUR HAND UNDER MY THIGH: FOR COMMENTS ON THIS GESTURE USED IN SWEARING AN OATH, SEE 24:2. PROMISE TO DEAL LOYALLY AND TRULY WITH ME IS LITERALLY “AND DO MERCY AND TRUTH WITH ME,” WHICH MAY BE RENDERED “THAT YOU WILL BE LOYAL AND FAITHFUL TO ME.” DO NOT BURY ME IN EGYPT: THIS IS THE REQUEST TO WHICH JOSEPH COMMITS HIMSELF WITH A PROMISE AND AN OATH. A MODEL THAT SOME TRANSLATORS MAY FIND USEFUL IS ONE THAT REARRANGES VERSE 29 BY SAYING, FOR EXAMPLE, “IF YOU LOVE ME, SHOW ME THAT YOU ARE LOYAL AND FAITHFUL TO ME. WHEN I DIE DO NOT BURY ME HERE IN EGYPT. PROMISE ME THIS BY SWEARING THAT YOU WILL DO AS I ASK.”**

**GENESIS 47:30: BUT LET ME LIE WITH MY FATHERS: BUT IS USED BY RSV TO CONTRAST BEING BURIED IN EGYPT WITH BEING BURIED IN CANAAN BESIDE HIS FATHER AND GRANDFATHER. IF THIS IS THE MEANING OF THE CLAUSE, WE MAY TRANSLATE “BURY ME WHERE MY ANCESTORS ARE.” HOWEVER, NRSV HAS A DIFFERENT RENDERING, WHICH IS ALSO FOLLOWED BY SOME OTHER VERSIONS, “WHEN I LIE DOWN WITH MY ANCESTORS.” THIS TAKES THE CLAUSE TO BE THE COMMONLY OCCURRING IDIOM (OR EUPHEMISM) FOR DEATH; AND IN THIS SENSE WE MAY TRANSLATE “WHEN I DIE, [I WANT YOU TO] CARRY MY BODY AWAY.…” CARRY ME OUT OF EGYPT AND BURY ME IN THEIR BURYING PLACE: THIS REFERS TO THE CAVE OF MACHPELAH PURCHASED BY ABRAHAM FROM THE HITTITES IN CHAPTER 23. IF RSV IS FOLLOWED, IT MAY BE HELPFUL TO REARRANGE VERSE 30 SO THAT THE FIRST CLAUSE BECOMES THE CONSEQUENCE OF THE COMMAND TO JOSEPH; FOR EXAMPLE, “TAKE ME OUT OF EGYPT AND BURY ME IN THE GRAVE OF MY FATHERS [OF MY FATHER AND MY GRANDFATHER]. THERE I WILL LIE BESIDE THEM.” SOME TRANSLATIONS EXPRESS THE CONTRAST IN THE VERSE BY SAYING “WHEN I DIE, DON’T BURY ME HERE IN THIS COUNTRY. CARRY MY BODY BACK … AND PUT ME THERE IN THAT GRAVEYARD WHERE MY ANCESTORS ARE LYING.” HE ANSWERED: THAT IS, “JOSEPH ANSWERED.” I WILL DO AS YOU HAVE SAID IS LITERALLY “I WILL DO ACCORDING TO YOUR WORDS.” SEE TEV.**

**GENESIS 47:31: IN VERSE 29 JACOB INSTRUCTED JOSEPH HOW TO TAKE THE OATH. IN VERSE 30 JOSEPH PROMISES TO DO AS JACOB HAS SAID, BUT IN THIS VERSE, JACOB INSISTS THAT JOSEPH AFFIRM HIS PROMISE BY TAKING THE OATH AS GIVEN IN VERSE 29. HE SAID: THAT IS, “JACOB SAID.” SWEAR TO ME: THAT IS, “SWEAR AN OATH TO ME,” “TAKE THE VOW,” OR “PROMISE [IN GOD’S NAME] THAT YOU WILL DO IT.” AND HE [JOSEPH] SWORE TO HIM [JACOB]: WE MAY TRANSLATE THIS, FOR EXAMPLE, “THEN JOSEPH SWORE AN OATH [TOOK THE VOW, MADE THE SOLEMN PROMISE]” OR “THEN JOSEPH DID AS HIS FATHER COMMANDED HIM TO DO.” THEN ISRAEL BOWED HIMSELF UPON THE HEAD OF HIS BED: DRIVER SAYS JACOB “APPARENTLY TURNED HIMSELF OVER ON HIS BED, AND BENT HIS HEAD DOWN TOWARDS ITS HEAD—IN IMITATION, AS FAR AS POSSIBLE, OF ACTUAL PROSTRATION.” FOR THE ACCOUNT OF DAVID DOING SOMETHING SIMILAR IN HIS OLD AGE, SEE 1 KGS 1:47. THE PURPOSE OF BOWING IN HIS BED IS TO GIVE THANKS, ALTHOUGH TRANSLATIONS DO NOT AGREE ON THE ONE BEING THANKED. THEREFORE, SOME TRANSLATORS DO NOT EXPRESS THE GESTURE BUT ONLY ITS PURPOSE. SEE TEV. OTHERS RETAIN BOTH THE GESTURE AND ITS FUNCTION. FOR EXAMPLE, FRCL SAYS “THEN JACOB THANKED HIM BY INCLINING DEEPLY AT THE HEAD OF HIS BED,” AND REB SAYS “AND ISRAEL BOWED IN WORSHIP BY THE HEAD OF HIS BED.” HEB 11:21 RECORDS THIS EVENT AS “HE LEANED ON THE TOP OF HIS WALKING STICK AND WORSHIPED GOD” (TEV). THE REASON FOR SAYING “WALKING STICK” IS THAT THE HEBREW WORDS FOR “BED” AND “WALKING STICK” ARE VERY SIMILAR, AND THE SEPTUAGINT, WHICH SAYS “WALKING STICK,” IS THE BASIS FOR THE TRANSLATION IN HEB 11:21. HOWEVER, THE SEPTUAGINT IS NOT TO BE TRANSLATED IN THIS VERSE.**

**JACOB BLESSES JOSEPH’S SONS (48:1–22)**

**THIS ENTIRE CHAPTER IS TAKEN UP WITH JACOB’S BLESSING OF EPHRAIM AND MANASSEH, THE SONS OF JOSEPH. THE MATERIAL IN THIS CHAPTER IS USUALLY RECOGNIZED AS BEING BASED ON SEVERAL TRADITIONS, AND ITS PURPOSE IS TO EXPLAIN HOW IT CAME ABOUT THAT EPHRAIM AND MANASSEH BECAME THE ANCESTORS OF TRIBES, THE SAME AS JACOB’S OWN SONS. THESE SOURCES ALSO REFLECT THE FACT THAT LATER IN HISTORY THESE TWO TRIBES PROSPERED, AND THAT EPHRAIM’S TRIBE WAS MORE SUCCESSFUL THAN THAT OF MANASSEH. JOSEPH LEARNS THAT JACOB IS ILL, SO HE TAKES HIS TWO SONS AND RETURNS TO GOSHEN TO VISIT HIM. JACOB SITS UP IN BED TO RECEIVE THEM (VERSES 1–2). HE TELLS JOSEPH HOW GOD APPEARED TO HIM AT LUZ AND PROMISED HIM MANY DESCENDANTS, WHO WOULD BE GIVEN THE LAND OF CANAAN (VERSES 3–4). JACOB EXPLAINS THAT BECAUSE OF RACHEL’S DEATH JOSEPH’S TWO SONS ARE TO BE HIS HEIRS ALONG WITH JACOB’S OWN SONS, BUT THAT OTHER SONS BORN TO JOSEPH IN THE FUTURE WILL INHERIT THROUGH MANASSEH AND EPHRAIM (VERSES 5-12). JACOB, WHO IS NEARLY BLIND, DOES NOT RECOGNIZE HIS GRANDSONS (THE SON OF ONE’S SON OR ONE’S DAUGHTER) BUT ASKS JOSEPH TO BRING THEM CLOSE TO HIM SO HE CAN BLESS THEM (VERSES 48:8–12). SO, JOSEPH PLACES EPHRAIM AT JACOB’S LEFT AND MANASSEH AT HIS RIGHT FOR JACOB TO PUT HIS HANDS ON THEM IN BLESSING. HOWEVER, THE GRANDFATHER CROSSES HIS HANDS, THEREBY PLACING HIS RIGHT HAND ON THE YOUNGER SON EPHRAIM AND HIS LEFT HAND ON MANASSEH THE FIRSTBORN. HE THEN PRONOUNCES HIS BLESSING ON THEM (VERSES 13–16). DISTURBED THAT HIS FATHER HAD PLACED HIS RIGHT HAND ON THE YOUNGER SON, JOSEPH TRIES TO CHANGE JACOB’S HANDS (VERSES 17–18). NEVERTHELESS, JACOB REFUSES TO CHANGE HIS HANDS, AS HE KNOWS THAT EPHRAIM’S DESCENDANTS WILL BE GREATER THAN THOSE OF MANASSEH (VERSE 19). JACOB THEN SAYS THAT FUTURE GENERATIONS OF ISRAELITES WILL USE THE NAMES OF EPHRAIM AND MANASSEH WHEN THEY PRONOUNCE A BLESSING ON ANYONE. JACOB FINISHES BY SAYING THAT JOSEPH’S DESCENDANTS WILL RETURN TO CANAAN AND INHERIT THE AREA OF SHECHEM, WHICH JACOB TOOK IN BATTLE FROM THE AMORITES (VERSES 20–22).**

**SUBDIVISION HEADING**

**NEARLY ALL TRANSLATIONS THAT USE HEADINGS HAVE ONLY ONE HEADING FOR THIS CHAPTER, AND ALL ARE SIMILAR TO THE ONE USED BY TEV AND THE HANDBOOK. NJB HAS “JACOB ADOPTS JOSEPH’S TWO SONS AND BLESSES THEM.”**

**GENESIS 48:1: AFTER THIS: THE HEBREW SAYS “AND IT HAPPENED AFTER THESE THINGS,” AS IN 15:1; 22:1; AND 40:1. THIS EXPRESSION SERVES AS A TRANSITION TO A NEW EPISODE OR SERIES OF EVENTS. HOWEVER, WE MUST BE AWARE THAT JOSEPH IS IN THE CAPITAL CITY AND JACOB IS IN GOSHEN. THEREFORE, IN LANGUAGES THAT MUST ACCOUNT FOR MOVEMENTS, IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO HAVE IN THIS OPENING EXPRESSION MORE THAN A TIME TRANSITION. FOR EXAMPLE, “SOME TIME LATER, WHEN JOSEPH WAS IN THE CITY, HE WAS TOLD THAT HIS FATHER IN GOSHEN WAS ILL. SO HE TOOK HIS TWO SONS MANASSEH AND EPHRAIM AND WENT TO GOSHEN.”**

**JOSEPH WAS TOLD MAY NEED TO BE EXPRESSED ACTIVELY AS IN THE HEBREW: “SOMEONE TOLD JOSEPH,” “THEY TOLD JOSEPH,” “JOSEPH FOUND OUT,” “JOSEPH RECEIVED NEWS,” OR “JOSEPH GOT WORD THAT.…” BEHOLD, YOUR FATHER IS ILL: BEHOLD, WHICH IS NOT REPRESENTED BY TEV, MAY SUGGEST THAT THE NEWS IS A SURPRISE TO JOSEPH; OR IT MAY SIGNAL A SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENT IN THE NARRATIVE. NOTE THAT RSV TRANSLATES THIS AS DIRECT SPEECH, WHILE TEV USES INDIRECT. SO, HE TOOK WITH HIM: SEE THE SUGGESTED MODEL ABOVE. NOTE THAT TEV RECOGNIZES THAT JOSEPH HAS TO GET TO WHERE JACOB IS. IN SOME LANGUAGES THIS IS EXPRESSED AS “HE TOOK HIS TWO SONS … AND THE THREE OF THEM WENT TO SEE HIM.”**

**GENESIS 48:2: YOUR SON JOSEPH HAS COME TO YOU: THE HEBREW AGAIN HAS HINNEH “BEHOLD,” WHICH RSV DOES NOT TRANSLATE. THIS WORD MAKES IT APPEAR THAT POSSIBLY JOSEPH WENT IMMEDIATELY TO GOSHEN AND DID NOT HAVE TIME TO SEND WORD THAT HE WAS COMING. TRANSLATORS MAY FIND IT BETTER TO AVOID THE TWO SENTENCES OF RSV AND TO FOLLOW THE MODEL OF TEV, WITH “WHEN JACOB WAS TOLD, …,” “WHEN JACOB FOUND OUT, …,” OR “WHEN THEY TOLD JACOB, …” SOME TRANSLATIONS MAKE A LINK WITH VERSE 1 BY SAYING “WHEN THEY ARRIVED SOMEONE TOLD THE OLD MAN.…” ISRAEL SUMMONED HIS STRENGTH: ISRAEL IS JACOB AND CAN BE RENDERED BY THE PRONOUN HE IN MOST LANGUAGES. SUMMONED HIS STRENGTH TRANSLATES A FORM OF THE VERB “TO STRENGTHEN” OR “TO GROW STRONG.” IN THIS CONTEXT WE MAY SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “MADE THE EFFORT TO” OR “TOOK HOLD OF HIMSELF.” SEE TEV. IN SOME LANGUAGES THE FACT THAT JACOB WAS LYING DOWN AT FIRST IS BROUGHT OUT: “WHEN JACOB HEARD … HE WAS LYING DOWN, BUT HE EXERTED HIMSELF TO GET UP AND HE SAT ON THE BED.”**

**GENESIS 48:3–4: JACOB SAID TO JOSEPH: THE LACK OF A GREETING AT THE BEGINNING OF JACOB’S SPEECH WILL MAKE THIS SITUATION APPEAR UNREAL IN MANY LANGUAGES. ACCORDINGLY, IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “JACOB GREETED JOSEPH AND SAID TO HIM.…” GOD ALMIGHTY … LUZ: THIS AND VERSE 4 REFER TO THE EVENT IN 35:11–13. FOR GOD ALMIGHTY SEE 35:11. I WILL MAKE YOU FRUITFUL … COMPANY OF PEOPLES: FOR THE TRANSLATION OF THIS EXPRESSION, SEE 28:3, WHERE ISAAC SENT JACOB TO MESOPOTAMIA TO GET A WIFE. FOR EVERLASTING POSSESSION SEE 17:8.**

**GENESIS 48:5: JACOB CITES HIS EXPERIENCE WITH GOD (’EL SHADDAI) IN 35:11–13 AS THE BASIS FOR ADOPTING JOSEPH’S SONS AND RAISING THEM TO THE SAME LEVEL OF INHERITANCE AS HIS OWN SONS. AND NOW YOUR TWO SONS … ARE MINE: AND NOW IS PROBABLY TO BE UNDERSTOOD AS A CONSEQUENCE, BUT ONE OF BROADER SIGNIFICANCE THAN MAY BE DRAWN FROM THE PREVIOUS VERSE. JACOB IS HERE DECLARING THAT JOSEPH’S SONS BORN IN EGYPT TO AN EGYPTIAN MOTHER ARE THE LEGITIMATE HEIRS OF THE PROMISE FIRST RECEIVED BY ABRAHAM AND PASSED TO HIM. ARE MINE MEANS “BELONG TO ME” OR “ARE MY SONS.” EPHRAIM AND MANASSEH … MINE … AS REUBEN AND SIMEON: JACOB REPEATS HIMSELF HERE FOR EMPHASIS. HE ALSO MENTIONS THE NAME OF THE YOUNGER BROTHER FIRST AS IF HE WERE THE FIRSTBORN.**

**GENESIS 48:6: AND THE OFFSPRING BORN TO YOU … YOURS: ONLY EPHRAIM AND MANASSEH ARE TO BE THE LEGITIMATE SONS OF JACOB. NO OTHER SONS BORN TO JOSEPH ARE MENTIONED IN THE OLD TESTAMENT. THEY SHALL BE CALLED BY THE NAME OF THEIR BROTHERS IN THEIR INHERITANCE: RSV TRANSLATES THE HEBREW LITERALLY. THE SENSE OF THIS STATEMENT IS THAT ANY OF THEIR BROTHERS (OTHER SONS JOSEPH MAY HAVE LATER) WILL INHERIT FROM EPHRAIM AND MANASSEH, AS IF THESE TWO WERE THEIR FATHERS. SEE TEV. HOWEVER, SINCE THE INHERITANCE REFERS TO THE LAND, IT MAY BE CLEARER TO SAY, AS DOES FRCL, “THEY WILL RECEIVE THEIR PART OF THE INHERITANCE IN THE TERRITORY OF THEIR BROTHERS.”**

**GENESIS 48:7: VERSE 7 GIVES AN EXPLANATION FOR THE STATEMENTS IN VERSES 48:5–6. JOSEPH’S MOTHER RACHEL DIED AND WAS THUS PREVENTED FROM HAVING MORE CHILDREN. CONSEQUENTLY, JACOB IS ADDING JOSEPH’S SONS TO THE SONS OF RACHEL. VERSE 7 IS AN ADAPTATION OF 35:16 AND 19. IN A NUMBER OF TRANSLATIONS THE ELEMENT OF EXPLANATION IS BROUGHT OUT; FOR EXAMPLE, “I HAVE TO DO THIS BECAUSE I AM THINKING OF WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR MOTHER” AND “I WAS SAD BECAUSE RACHEL HAD DIED ON THE WAY … AND THAT IS WHY I AM SAYING THIS.” PADDAN IS A SHORT FORM OF PADDAN-ARAM, OR MESOPOTAMIA. RACHEL TO MY SORROW … ON THE WAY: RSV FOLLOWS THE HEBREW TEXT WITH RACHEL. NOTE THAT TEV SAYS “YOUR MOTHER RACHEL,” WHICH IS THE FORM USED BY THE SEPTUAGINT. HOWEVER, THIS DOES NOT SEEM TO BE A TEXTUAL DIFFERENCE BUT A TRANSLATIONAL ADJUSTMENT REQUIRED BY THE CONTEXT, IN WHICH A FATHER IS SPEAKING TO HIS SON. TO MY SORROW MAY BE TRANSLATED IN SOME LANGUAGES AS A SEPARATE STATEMENT; FOR EXAMPLE, “THIS MADE ME VERY SORROWFUL” OR “I WAS GREATLY GRIEVED BECAUSE OF THIS.” FOR DIED IN … BETHLEHEM SEE 35:19.**

**GENESIS 48:8: VERSES 48:8–12 PICK UP THE STORY LINE FROM VERSES 1–2. TOGETHER WITH VERSES 1–2 THESE VERSES FORM A COMPLETE EPISODE, WHICH TELLS OF THE VISIT OF JOSEPH AND HIS SONS TO THE DYING JACOB. WHO ARE THESE? JACOB’S QUESTION MAY SUGGEST THAT JACOB HAD NOT SEEN JOSEPH’S SONS BEFORE. HOWEVER, VERSE 10 MAKES CLEAR THAT JACOB IS NEARLY BLIND. SEE THE RENDERING OF TEV. TRANSLATORS MAY FIND IT NECESSARY TO COMBINE VERSES 8–10, PUTTING JACOB’S BLINDNESS FIRST, TO EXPLAIN WHY HE HAD TO ASK WHO JOSEPH’S CHILDREN WERE.**

**GENESIS 48:9: THEY ARE MY SONS WHOM GOD HAS GIVEN ME HERE: IN 41:50–52 JOSEPH EXPLAINS THE NAMES OF HIS SONS BASED ON GOD’S ACTS IN HIS LIFE. FOR A SIMILAR RESPONSE SPOKEN BY JACOB TO ESAU, SEE 33:5. AND HE SAID: THAT IS, “JACOB SAID.” BRING THEM … BLESS THEM: BLESS REFERS TO THE BLESSING RITUAL THAT IS BEST DISPLAYED IN CHAPTER 27. SEE THERE FOR TRANSLATION OF THE TERM BLESS.**

**THERE ARE FIVE PARTS TO THE RITUAL OF BLESSING HERE: (1) JACOB’S DEMAND (VERSE B), (2) THE IDENTIFICATION OF THE ONES TO BE BLESSED (VERSES 8–9A), (3) THE TOUCH OR KISS (VERSE 10B), (4) THE LAYING ON OF HANDS (VERSE 14), AND (5) THE WORDS OF BLESSING (VERSES 15–16).**

**GENESIS 48:10: THE EYES OF ISRAEL WERE DIM WITH AGE … COULD NOT SEE: SEE 27:1, IN WHICH THESE WORDS WERE ALSO SAID IN THE CONTEXT OF A BLESSING. BROUGHT THEM: THAT IS, “BROUGHT HIS SONS” OR “TOOK THE BOYS.” FOR KISS SEE 27:26.**

**GENESIS 48:11: I HAD NOT THOUGHT TO SEE YOUR FACE: FOR TRANSLATION SEE TEV. AND LO, GOD … ALSO: LO EXPRESSES THE UNEXPECTED EVENT OF JACOB SEEING NOT ONLY JOSEPH BUT EVEN HIS GRANDCHILDREN. SEE TEV “HAS EVEN LET.…” YOUR CHILDREN IS LITERALLY “YOUR SEED.”**

**GENESIS 48:12: IN THIS VERSE JOSEPH REMOVES THE TWO BOYS FROM JACOB AND BOWS TO THE GROUND. FROM THIS IT WOULD APPEAR THAT THE BLESSING HAS BEEN COMPLETED AND JOSEPH BOWS TO GIVE THANKS TO HIS FATHER AND TO GOD. HOWEVER, ACCORDING TO THE TEXT AS WE HAVE IT, THE BLESSING (VERSES 15–16) HAS NOT YET BEEN PRONOUNCED. THEN JOSEPH REMOVED THEM FROM HIS KNEES: IN THE HEBREW TEXT JOSEPH DOES NOT PLACE HIS SONS ON JACOB’S KNEES IN VERSE 10. WHATEV ON “HIS LAP”). THE IMPORTANT POINT IS THAT, BY TAKING THEM ON HIS KNEES, JACOB IS RECOGNIZING JOSEPH’S SONS AS HIS OWN BY ADOPTION. SEE 30:3. WESTERMANN SAYS THE HEBREW EXPRESSION NEED NOT MEAN THAT THE BOYS WERE LITERALLY SITTING ON JACOB’S KNEES. DRIVER TRANSLATES THE EXPRESSION “FROM BETWEEN HIS KNEES.” SOME INTERPRETERS UNDERSTAND THIS EXPRESSION TO BE AN IDIOM MEANING “FROM HIS LAP.” SEE TEV AND OTHERS. SEE ALSO THE COMMENTS IN THIS HANDBOOK AT 30:3. HE BOWED HIMSELF WITH HIS FACE TO THE EARTH: SEE 18:2 AND 19:1.**

**GENESIS 48:13: VERSES 13–20 DESCRIBE A NEW SCENE THAT HAS NO INTRODUCTION. IN IT WE SEE HOW EPHRAIM IS GIVEN THE PRIMARY BLESSING. VERSE 13 FOLLOWS DIRECTLY ON VERSE 10A. THE PURPOSE OF VERSES 13–20 IS EXPRESSED AT THE CONCLUSION OF THIS SCENE IN VERSE “THUS HE PUT EPHRAIM BEFORE MANASSEH.” EPHRAIM IN HIS RIGHT HAND … ISRAEL’S LEFT: WHILE JACOB SITS ON THE SIDE OF HIS BED, JOSEPH PLACES EPHRAIM ON HIS OWN RIGHT SIDE AND MANASSEH ON HIS OWN LEFT—SO THAT AS THEY APPROACH JACOB, EPHRAIM WILL BE ON JACOB’S LEFT AND MANASSEH ON JACOB’S RIGHT. JOSEPH ARRANGES THE BOYS IN THIS WAY SO THAT THE NEARLY BLIND GRANDFATHER WILL NOT BE CONFUSED. BROUGHT THEM NEAR HIM: THAT IS, JOSEPH BROUGHT THEM CLOSE TO JACOB SO THAT HE COULD EASILY TOUCH THEM.**

**GENESIS 48:14: IN SPITE OF JOSEPH’S CAREFUL ARRANGEMENT OF THE BOYS, JACOB HAS CLEARLY DECIDED THAT EPHRAIM IS TO BE GIVEN PREFERENCE OVER HIS OLDER BROTHER. CROSSING HIS HANDS: RSV FOLLOWS THE HEBREW CLAUSE ORDER, WHICH MAKES THIS STATEMENT A SUMMARY OF WHAT JACOB DOES. NOTE THAT TEV AND OTHERS GIVE THIS INFORMATION AS THE PRINCIPAL ACTION FOLLOWING A CONTRASTING CONNECTOR: “BUT JACOB CROSSED HIS HANDS AND.…” WHAT JACOB DOES IS CONTRARY TO JOSEPH’S EXPECTATIONS. FOR MANASSEH WAS THE FIRST-BORN: THAT IS, “ALTHOUGH [OR, IN SPITE OF THE FACT THAT] MANASSEH WAS THE OLDER BROTHER.”**

**GENESIS 48:15: AND HE BLESSED JOSEPH: SOME UNDERSTAND THAT JOSEPH IS THE ONE WHO RECEIVES THE BLESSING. THE TEV FOOTNOTE SAYS “IN BLESSING EPHRAIM AND MANASSEH, JACOB WAS IN FACT BLESSING JOSEPH.” HOWEVER, THE SEPTUAGINT HAS “THEM,” WHICH MAY REFER TO THE TWO BOYS, OR TO JOSEPH AND HIS SONS. IN THE FOLLOWING LINES OF THE SPOKEN BLESSING, GOD IS GIVEN THREE TITLES WHICH TAKEN TOGETHER FORM THE SUBJECT OF THE VERB BLESS IN THE EXPRESSION BLESS THE LADS. GOD BEFORE WHOM … WALKED: IN 17:1 ABRAHAM WAS INSTRUCTED BY GOD TO “WALK BEFORE ME AND BE BLAMELESS.” SEE ALSO 24:40. WALK MEANS TO LIVE AS GOD REQUIRES, TO CONFORM ABRAHAM’S LIFE TO GOD’S WILL OR TO SERVE HIM. THE GOD WHO HAS LED ME … DAY: LED TRANSLATES A VERB THAT MEANS TO TEND AS A SHEPHERD TENDS HIS SHEEP. THE GENERAL SENSE IS TO “CARE FOR,” “LOOK AFTER.” IN PASTORAL TERMS IT SAYS “THE GOD WHO HAS SHEPHERDED ME TO THIS VERY DAY.”**

**GENESIS 48:16: THE ANGEL WHO HAS REDEEMED ME … EVIL: ANGEL IS USED OF GOD SEVERAL TIMES IN THE PATRIARCHAL STORIES AS THE ONE WHO RESCUES SOMEONE FROM TROUBLE. SEE 21:17; 22:11. REDEEMED MEANS “RESCUED,” “SAVED,” “DELIVERED.” BLESS THE LADS: SEE CHAPTER 27 FOR DISCUSSION OF TRANSLATING BLESS. THE LADS MUST OFTEN BE RENDERED “THESE BOYS” (TEV) OR “THESE TWO [BOYS].” IN THESE TWO VERSES IT MAY BE CONFUSING TO SPEAK OF THE GOD, THE GOD WHO, AND THE ANGEL WHO, SINCE THESE MAY BE UNDERSTOOD AS THREE SEPARATE GODS. IT MAY BE POSSIBLE TO OVERCOME THIS PROBLEM BY ADDRESSING GOD DIRECTLY WITH “YOU”; FOR EXAMPLE, “O GOD, YOU ARE THE ONE MY GRANDFATHER ABRAHAM AND MY FATHER ISAAC WORSHIPED. YOU ARE THE GOD WHO HAS TAKEN CARE OF ME ALL THE DAYS OF MY LIFE. YOU ARE ALSO THE ANGEL WHO HAS RESCUED ME FROM ALL KINDS OF EVIL. I ASK YOU, GOD, TO BLESS THESE BOYS.” SEE TEV FOR ANOTHER MODEL. AND IN THEM LET MY NAME BE PERPETUATED IS LITERALLY “AND MAY MY NAME BE NAMED ON THEM,” THAT IS, “BY MEANS OF THEM MAY MY NAME BE REMEMBERED” OR “MAY PEOPLE REMEMBER MY NAME BECAUSE OF THEM.” SEE TEV. IN SOME LANGUAGES THE DUAL PRONOUN “THEM-TWO” MUST BE USED RATHER THAN THE PLURAL THEM TO REFER TO THE BOYS THROUGHOUT THIS BLESSING. AND THE NAME OF MY FATHERS ABRAHAM AND ISAAC: IT IS NOT ONLY JACOB’S NAME THAT IS TO BE CARRIED ON THROUGH JOSEPH’S SONS BUT ALSO THE NAME OF ABRAHAM AND THAT OF ISAAC. ACCORDINGLY, IT IS BEST TO JOIN THIS CLAUSE WITH THE PREVIOUS ONE; FOR EXAMPLE, “MAY PEOPLE REMEMBER MY NAME AND THE NAMES OF MY FATHER ISAAC AND MY GRANDFATHER ABRAHAM BECAUSE OF THESE BOYS.” SEE ALSO TEV. THE FINAL THOUGHT IN THE BLESSING REGARDS THEIR FERTILITY, AS IN 1:22. AND LET THEM GROW INTO A MULTITUDE IN THE MIDST OF THE EARTH REFERS TO HAVING NUMEROUS DESCENDANTS. WE MAY TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “MAY THEY [THESE BOYS] HAVE MANY DESCENDANTS.” IN THE MIDST OF THE EARTH DOES NOT REFER TO A PARTICULAR PART OF THE EARTH, BUT “ON THE EARTH” GENERALLY (NRSV). TEV DOES NOT TRANSLATE THIS EXPRESSION.**

**GENESIS 48:17: VERSES 17–20 APPEAR TO BE A CONTINUATION OF VERSES 13–14. IF THIS IS SO, IT MAKES VERSES 15–16 APPEAR TO BE A LATER INSERTION. ALTHOUGH THE BLESSING HAS BEEN SPOKEN, THE TEXT AS WE NOW HAVE IT SHOWS JOSEPH ATTEMPTING TO CORRECT THE BLESSING BY PUTTING JACOB’S RIGHT HAND ON MANASSEH, THE FIRSTBORN SON. TRANSLATORS MAY FIND IT NECESSARY TO MAKE AN ADJUSTMENT IN THE FIRST CLAUSE OF VERSE 17 BY SAYING, FOR EXAMPLE, “BEFORE JACOB BEGAN THE BLESSING, JOSEPH HAD NOTICED THAT HIS FATHER HAD LAID HIS RIGHT HAND ON THE HEAD OF EPHRAIM.” WHEN JOSEPH SAW … IT DISPLEASED HIM: THE FIRST PART OF THIS VERSE IS MADE UP OF A REASON FOLLOWED BY A RESULT. THE RIGHT-HAND SIDE IS THE POSITION OF IMPORTANCE AND IS ASSOCIATED HERE WITH THE GREATER BLESSING. IT DISPLEASED HIM IS LITERALLY “IT WAS EVIL IN HIS EYES.” THIS IDIOMATIC EXPRESSION WAS FIRST USED IN 21:11, WHERE ABRAHAM REACTED WITH DISPLEASURE AT SARAH’S DEMAND THAT ABRAHAM GET RID OF HAGAR AND ISHMAEL. TRANSLATORS MAY FIND IT BEST TO SWITCH THE ORDER OF REASON FOLLOWED BY RESULT IN THE FIRST PART OF THIS VERSE, SO THAT JOSEPH’S ACTION WHICH FOLLOWS LINKS UP DIRECTLY WITH THE REASON CLAUSE. SEE TEV FOR A MODEL. HE TOOK HIS FATHER’S HAND TO REMOVE IT: THE PICTURE HERE IS OF JOSEPH TAKING HOLD OF JACOB’S HAND, OR AS SPEISER SAYS, “GRASPED HIS FATHER’S HAND.” JOSEPH ATTEMPTS TO REMOVE JACOB’S RIGHT HAND, WHICH IS RESTING ON THE HEAD OF EPHRAIM, AND PLACE IT UPON THE HEAD OF MANASSEH. HOWEVER, HE DOES NOT REMOVE JACOB’S HAND BECAUSE JACOB RESISTS. TRANSLATIONS EXPRESS THIS SITUATION IN A NUMBER OF WAYS; FOR EXAMPLE, “HE GRABBED HIS FATHER’S HAND TO PUT HIS RIGHT HAND ON MANASSEH’S HEAD,” “HE LIFTED HIS FATHER’S HAND TO MOVE IT ACROSS FROM … TO …,” “… SO HE TOOK HOLD OF HIS FATHER’S RIGHT HAND, AND HE WANTED TO PUT IT ON.…”**

**GENESIS 48:18: JOSEPH’S OBJECTION SHOWS THAT HE ASSUMES HIS NEARLY BLIND FATHER HAS MADE A MISTAKE. NOT SO, MY FATHER: THAT IS, “DON’T DO IT LIKE THAT, FATHER” OR “NO, FATHER, NOT THAT WAY.” ALTHOUGH THE HEBREW TEXT HAS “MY FATHER,” IN ENGLISH THE POSSESSIVE PRONOUN IS LESS SUITABLE WHEN JOSEPH IS ADDRESSING JACOB. IN SOME LANGUAGES A SPECIAL ADDRESS FORM WILL BE APPROPRIATE HERE. FOR THIS ONE IS THE FIRST-BORN: IT IS NECESSARY TO VISUALIZE THE ARRANGEMENT OF THE TWO BOYS AS GIVEN IN VERSE 13, WITH EPHRAIM ON JACOB’S LEFT AND MANASSEH ON HIS RIGHT. THIS ONE REFERS TO MANASSEH, AND IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO MAKE THIS CLEAR BY SAYING “THE ONE ON YOUR RIGHT IS THE FIRSTBORN,” “THE BOY TO YOUR RIGHT …,” OR “THE ONE ON THIS SIDE IS THE ELDEST.” ANOTHER WAY OF MAKING THE REFERENCE CLEAR IS TO SAY “THE OTHER ONE IS THE FIRSTBORN.”**

**GENESIS 48:19: BUT HIS FATHER REFUSED: THAT IS, “REFUSED TO MOVE HIS HAND.” I KNOW … I KNOW: THE REPETITION OF I KNOW EMPHASIZES JACOB’S CERTAINTY IN WHAT HE HAS DONE. IN SOME LANGUAGES REPETITION OF THIS KIND WILL HAVE THE EFFECT OF CASTING DOUBT ON WHAT HE HAS DONE; IN THIS CASE SOME OTHER APPROPRIATE EXPRESSION OF EMPHASIS SHOULD BE USED. ONE TRANSLATION HAS JACOB SAY “I KNOW WHAT I’M DOING.” HE ALSO SHALL BECOME A PEOPLE: HE REFERS TO MANASSEH AND MAY NEED TO BE EXPRESSED IN THAT WAY. BECOME A PEOPLE MEANS HIS DESCENDANTS WILL BECOME A TRIBE OR NATION, WHICH IS FURTHER QUALIFIED AS GREAT OR “IMPORTANT.” NEVERTHELESS, HIS YOUNGER BROTHER SHALL BE GREATER THAN HE: THIS STATEMENT IS INTRODUCED BY A CONTRAST. HIS YOUNGER BROTHER REFERS TO EPHRAIM, AND IT MAY BE CLEARER TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “BUT EPHRAIM WILL BE GREATER THAN MANASSEH.” HIS DESCENDANTS … NATIONS: DESCENDANTS IS LITERALLY “SEED,” AND MULTITUDE TRANSLATES A WORD MEANING “FULLNESS,” OR THAT WHICH FILLS UP A SPACE, AND THEREFORE “A GREAT NUMBER” OR “MANY.” THE TERM TRANSLATED NATIONS IS THE SAME AS IN 17:4–5.**

**GENESIS 48:20: SO, HE BLESSED THEM THAT DAY SAYING: BOTH RSV AND TEV MARK THE FIRST CLAUSE AS A CONSEQUENCE OR A SUMMARY. BY YOU ISRAEL WILL PRONOUNCE BLESSINGS: YOU IS SINGULAR IN THE HEBREW TEXT, AS IS POINTED OUT IN THE FOOTNOTE OF NRSV. THE SEPTUAGINT, HOWEVER, HAS “YOU [PLURAL].” HOTTP RATES THE HEBREW TEXT AS AN {A} AND RECOMMENDS TRANSLATING “YOU [SINGULAR]” ON THE ASSUMPTION THAT JACOB IS SPEAKING TO JOSEPH AND NOT TO HIS SONS. IN THE CONTEXT IT IS DIFFICULT TO SEE THAT THIS IS SO. TRANSLATIONS SUCH AS FRCL, SPCL, BJ, AND POCL, WHOSE LANGUAGES DISTINGUISH SINGULAR AND PLURAL SECOND PERSON PRONOUNS, ALL USE THE PLURAL FORM. TOB USES THE SINGULAR WITHOUT A NOTE, AND GECL COMPROMISES BY SAYING “YOU [JOSEPH] AND YOUR CHILDREN.” ACCORDING TO SPEISER THE HEBREW SINGULAR FORM CAN BE UNDERSTOOD IN THE SENSE OF “EACH OF YOU.” THE HANDBOOK RECOMMENDS USING THE PLURAL FORM IN THOSE LANGUAGES THAT MAKE THE DISTINCTION. SOME TRANSLATIONS AGAIN USE THE DUAL PRONOUNS HERE: “HE BLESSED THEM-TWO … ‘THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL WILL USE THE NAME OF YOU-TWO WHEN.…’” ISRAEL IS NOT USED HERE TO REFER TO JACOB BUT RATHER TO THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL. PRONOUNCE BLESSINGS MEANS “TO BLESS SOMEONE,” “TO SPEAK THE WORDS OF A BLESSING BEING GIVEN TO SOMEONE.” WE MAY TRANSLATE THIS CLAUSE, FOR EXAMPLE, “THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL WILL USE YOUR [PLURAL OR DUAL] NAMES WHEN THEY SPEAK THE WORDS OF A BLESSING FOR SOMEONE.” GOD MAKE YOU AS EPHRAIM AND MANASSEH: THIS SAYING MAY NEED TO BE FILLED OUT AS IN TEV: “THEY WILL SAY.” YOU IN MAKE YOU IS SINGULAR AND REFERS TO THE PERSON BEING BLESSED. THE EXPRESSION ASSUMES THAT THE PERSON THESE WORDS ARE SPOKEN TO RECEIVES WISHES FOR GOODNESS AND HAPPINESS. IT MAY BE NECESSARY IN TRANSLATION TO MAKE THIS ASSUMPTION CLEAR BY SAYING, FOR EXAMPLE, “THEY WILL SAY ‘MAY GOD MAKE YOU FORTUNATE LIKE EPHRAIM AND MANASSEH,’” OR “… ‘I PRAY THAT GOD WILL BE GOOD TO YOU AS HE WAS TO EPHRAIM AND MANASSEH.’” AND THUS, HE PUT EPHRAIM BEFORE MANASSEH: HERE JACOB PUTS EPHRAIM’S NAME AHEAD OF THAT OF MANASSEH; THAT IS, HE GIVES EPHRAIM THE MORE IMPORTANT PLACE OR THE SENIORITY OVER MANASSEH. IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “IN THIS SAYING JACOB PUT EPHRAIM’S NAME AHEAD OF MANASSEH’S NAME” OR “IN THIS WAY HE MADE EPHRAIM COME FIRST AND MANASSEH AFTER HIM.”**

**GENESIS 48:21: BEHOLD, I AM ABOUT TO DIE: BEHOLD HERE EMPHASIZES THE NEARNESS OF JACOB’S DEATH; AND IT IS FOLLOWED BY AN EXHORTATION OF ASSURANCE TO JOSEPH. TEV EXPRESSES IT “AS YOU SEE.” WITH YOU: YOU IS PLURAL, AS JACOB MAY BE SPEAKING TO JOSEPH AND HIS SONS. HOWEVER, IN LIGHT OF THE NEXT CLAUSE, IT MAY REFER TO JOSEPH AND HIS BROTHERS. THE EXPRESSION MEANS THAT GOD WILL “HELP YOU,” “PROTECT YOU,” “GUIDE YOU.” AND WILL BRING YOU AGAIN TO THE LAND OF YOUR FATHERS: THAT IS, “GOD WILL TAKE YOU [PLURAL] BACK” OR “GOD WILL RETURN YOU [PLURAL] TO.…” YOUR [PLURAL] FATHERS MEANS “YOUR ANCESTORS.”**

**GENESIS 48:22: TRANSLATORS WHO COMPARE VARIOUS VERSIONS WILL NOTE THAT THIS VERSE IS RENDERED DIFFERENTLY BY MANY TRANSLATIONS AND IS UNDERSTOOD IN VARIOUS WAYS BY INTERPRETERS. THE CORE PROBLEM IS IN THE MEANING OR MEANINGS OF SHECHEM. IN THE CONTEXT OF THIS VERSE, IT MAY REFER TO THE DISTRICT OR THE TOWN OF SHECHEM LOCATED ON THE SLOPE OF MOUNT GERIZIM IN CANAAN. HOWEVER, THE WORD ALSO MEANS “SHOULDER” OR “BACK.” IN THIS SENSE IT MAY REFER TO THE SLOPE OR SIDE OF THE MOUNTAIN WHERE SHECHEM IS LOCATED. IT MAY ALSO REFER TO THE “SHOULDER” OF A SACRIFICIAL ANIMAL, WHICH WAS THE CHOICE PART OF THE MEAT. SEE 1 SAM 9:23–24. RSV TAKES SHECHEM TO REFER TO A MOUNTAIN SLOPE; NEB/REB “ONE RIDGE OF LAND.” TEV UNDERSTANDS SHECHEM TO REFER TO “THE AREA OF SHECHEM” AND TAKES THE SECONDARY SENSE AS AN ALLUSION TO THE CHOICE PART OF MEAT, AS EXPLAINED ABOVE, WHICH IT TRANSLATES AS “THAT FERTILE REGION.” NRSV HAS REVISED RSV MOUNTAIN SLOPE TO SAY “ONE PORTION MORE THAN TO YOUR BROTHERS.” THE NRSV FOOTNOTE SAYS “OR MOUNTAIN SLOPE (HEB SHEKEM, A PLAY ON THE NAME OF THE TOWN AND DISTRICT OF SHECHEM).” SPEISER CALLS THE DOUBLE MEANING OF SHECHEM/SHOULDER AN “OBSCURE ALLUSION.” IN VIEW OF THE PROBLEM OF ARRIVING AT A SURE TRANSLATION HERE, THE HANDBOOK RECOMMENDS TRANSLATING, FOR EXAMPLE, “I NOW GIVE YOU [SINGULAR] MORE THAN I GIVE TO YOUR BROTHERS. I GIVE YOU THE MOUNTAINSIDE OF SHECHEM.…” EXAMPLES OF OTHER TRANSLATIONS ARE “THE LAND IN THE REGION OF SHECHEM IS VERY GOOD LAND … I AM GIVING THIS PIECE OF LAND TO YOU AND NOT TO YOUR BROTHERS” AND “JOSEPH, THE LAND AT SHECHEM IS RICH … AND I WON’T GIVE IT TO YOUR BROTHERS. I WANT TO GIVE IT ONLY TO YOU.” WHICH I TOOK FROM THE … BOW: THAT IS, “WHICH I CAPTURED FROM THE AMORITES.” WITH MY SWORD … BOW MEANS “FIGHTING AGAINST THEM WITH MY SWORD AND BOW.” IF THE READER IS LIKELY TO UNDERSTAND THAT JACOB FOUGHT USING A BOW WITHOUT ARROWS, IT WILL BE NECESSARY TO ADD, FOR EXAMPLE, “MY BOW AND ARROWS.” IF THESE WEAPONS ARE NOT FAMILIAR, WE MAY USE A MORE GENERAL TERM AND SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “I FOUGHT THEM AND DEFEATED THEM WITH MY WEAPONS.” IT IS UNLIKELY THAT THIS STATEMENT REFERS TO THE SLAUGHTER OF SHECHEM IN CHAPTER 34, WHERE JACOB SAID THAT SIMEON AND LEVI HAD GOT HIM INTO TROUBLE. THERE IS NO REFERENCE IN GENESIS TO THE CONQUEST OF SHECHEM, AND THERE IS ALSO NO REASON TO BELIEVE THAT SIMEON AND LEVI KEPT THE TOWN IN THEIR POSSESSION AFTER THEIR RAID.**

**JACOB BLESSES HIS TWELVE SONS (49:1–28)**

**CHAPTER 49 IS CONSIDERED BY MANY AS ONE OF THE MOST DIFFICULT IN THE ENTIRE OLD TESTAMENT. MANY LINES IN VERSES 2–27 ARE BURDENED WITH TEXTUAL UNCERTAINTIES. THERE ARE MANY PLACES WHERE THE MEANING OF THE HEBREW IS OBSCURE, AND THE ANCIENT VERSIONS DO NOT AGREE AMONG THEMSELVES. TRANSLATORS NEED ONLY TO COMPARE A FEW MODERN VERSIONS TO WITNESS THE DIFFERENCES AMONG THEM. THE HANDBOOK CALLS ATTENTION TO THE MAJOR TEXTUAL DIFFICULTIES BUT DOES NOT DISCUSS THEM IN SUCH DETAIL AS WOULD MAKE THE COMMENTARY OF LIMITED USE FOR MANY TRANSLATORS. THOSE WHO HAVE ACCESS TO THE TOOLS REQUIRED FOR EXAMINING THESE PROBLEMS ARE ENCOURAGED TO DO SO. THIS SUBDIVISION IS MADE UP OF A COLLECTION OF TRADITIONAL POETIC SAYINGS ABOUT EACH OF THE TRIBES OF ISRAEL. IN SOME CASES, THE CHARACTER OF THE FOUNDER OF THE TRIBE, THE PARTICULAR SON OF JACOB, IS ALSO IN SOME WAY THE CHARACTER OF THE TRIBE. AS DRIVER SAYS, “THE POET PASSES THE TRIBES IN REVIEW; AND SINGLES OUT IN EACH SOME STRIKING FEATURE OF MORAL CHARACTER, POLITICAL STATE, OR GEOGRAPHICAL POSITION, FOR POETICAL AMPLIFICATION. THE MORAL INSTABILITY OF REUBEN, THE DISORGANIZED SOCIAL CONDITION OF SIMEON AND LEVI.…” THE “BLESSING” GIVEN HERE BY JACOB SHOULD BE COMPARED WITH THE “BLESSING” OF MOSES IN DEUTERONOMY 33 AND WITH THE SONG OF DEBORAH IN JUDGES 5. WITHIN THE BOOK OF GENESIS THIS IS THE “LAST OF THE GREAT SAYINGS OF DESTINY … WHICH PUNCTUATE THE BOOK” (KIDNER). THE SONS OF JACOB PASS BEFORE US BEGINNING WITH REUBEN AND ENDING WITH BENJAMIN. HOWEVER, THE ORDER IS NOT ENTIRELY ACCORDING TO THEIR ORDER OF BIRTH AS GIVEN IN CHAPTERS 29 AND 30. REUBEN RECEIVES THE HONOR GIVEN TO A FIRST SON, BUT THEN LOSES HIS POSITION AS FIRSTBORN BECAUSE OF HIS MORAL FAILURE (VERSES 2–4). SIMEON AND LEVI ARE BLAMED FOR THEIR VIOLENCE, AND THEIR ANGRY BEHAVIOR IS CURSED (VERSES 5-7). JUDAH IS THE FIRST OF JACOB’S SONS TO RECEIVE A BLESSING. HE IS PROMISED POWER AND GREAT WEALTH (VERSES 49:8–12). ZEBULUN IS PROMISED A PLACE BY THE SEA (VERSE 13). ISSACHAR IS CRITICIZED FOR PREFERRING EASE RATHER THAN FREEDOM (VERSES 14–15). DAN IS PRAISED FOR BEING A RULER AND FOR HIS STEALTH AS A WARRIOR (VERSES 16–17). GAD IS PRAISED FOR PURSUING HIS ENEMIES (VERSE 19). ASHER IS PRAISED FOR HIS AGRICULTURAL PRODUCE (VERSE 20). NAPHTALI IS PRAISED FOR HIS BEAUTY AS COMPARED WITH A DEER OR WITH A SPREADING TREE (VERSE 21). THE LONGEST PRAISE OR BLESSING IS DEVOTED TO JOSEPH, ALL OF WHICH IS TEXTUALLY UNCERTAIN. SEE THE COMMENTS (VERSES 22–26). THE FINAL WORD IS FOR BENJAMIN, WHO IS PRAISED FOR HIS EXPLOITS AS A WARRIOR (VERSES 27). BEFORE BEGINNING THE COMMENTS, A SUGGESTION IS IN ORDER CONCERNING THE USE OF PRONOUNS THROUGHOUT THIS SUBDIVISION. TRANSLATORS SHOULD NOTE THAT IN THE TEXT OF RSV AND TEV, SOME VERSES HAVE “YOU” AND “YOUR” WHILE OTHERS HAVE “HE,” “HIS,” “HIM, “THEY,” “THEIR” AND “THEM.” SOME VERSES BEGIN WITH “YOU” OR “YOUR” AND THEN SHIFT TO “HE” OR “HIS.” IN THIS MATTER RSV AND TEV FOLLOW THE HEBREW TEXT QUITE LITERALLY. IN SOME LANGUAGES THIS SWITCHING OF PRONOUNS MAY CREATE SERIOUS CONFUSION. IN FACT IN SOME LANGUAGES IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO USE THIRD PERSON WHEN ADDRESSING SOMEONE, AS JACOB IS SAID IN VERSES 1 AND 28 TO BE DOING HERE. THEREFORE IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO RESTRUCTURE THESE VERSES THROUGHOUT SO THAT JACOB IS SPEAKING DIRECTLY TO THE PERSON NAMED, THAT IS, SPEAKING IN THE SECOND PERSON. ONE TRANSLATION THAT DOES THIS IS GECL. THE HANDBOOK DOES NOT REPEAT THIS ADVICE FOR EVERY VERSE BUT DOES REMIND TRANSLATORS FROM TIME TO TIME THAT THIS KIND OF RESTRUCTURING MAY BE REQUIRED.**

**SUBDIVISION HEADING**

**HEADINGS SUCH AS “JACOB BLESSES HIS SONS” (NIV) FOCUS ON THE TRADITIONAL THEME OF “BLESSING” AND PICK UP THE WORDS USED BY MANY VERSIONS IN TRANSLATING VERSE 28. HOWEVER, THERE IS MUCH MORE THAN BLESSING HERE. WHILE “JACOB BLESSES” MAY BE SAID TO REPRESENT THE CONTENT OF 49:1–28, THE WORD “BLESSES” IS NOT ENTIRELY APPROPRIATE, IN THAT SOME OF THE TRIBES ARE CRITICIZED FOR THEIR ANCESTOR’S BAD CONDUCT, AND TWO ARE EVEN CURSED RATHER THAN BLESSED. OTHER HEADINGS SIMILAR TO TEV ARE “JACOB’S LAST WORDS TO HIS SONS” (NRSV), “JACOB’S LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT,” AND “JACOB’S LAST INSTRUCTIONS TO HIS SONS.” NJB AND NAB HAVE “JACOB’S TESTAMENT.”**

**GENESIS 49:1: THEN JACOB CALLED HIS SONS: THEN, WHICH TRANSLATES THE COMMON HEBREW CONNECTIVE, ALLOWS US TO CONCLUDE THAT THIS POETIC DISCOURSE FOLLOWS DIRECTLY FROM THE PREVIOUS CHAPTER. REGARDLESS OF THE ORIGIN AND TIME OF WRITING OF CHAPTER 49, THE MATERIAL HAS BEEN PLACED IN THE SETTING OF JACOB’S FINAL WORDS FROM HIS DEATH BED AND SO IS SUITABLY SAID TO FOLLOW THE BLESSING OF EPHRAIM AND MANASSEH IN CHAPTER 48. THEREFORE, WE MAY OPEN THIS CHAPTER AS IN RSV. SOME TRANSLATORS MAY FIND IT CLEARER TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “AFTER JACOB HAD BLESSED EPHRAIM AND MANASSEH, HE CALLED ALL HIS SONS TO HIM AND SAID.…” SINCE THE NEW CHAPTER BEGINS AFTER A NEW HEADING, IT MAY NOT BE NECESSARY TO OPEN WITH A TIME EXPRESSION. SEE TEV. CALLED HIS SONS MAY NEED TO BE RENDERED AS “SENT SOMEONE TO BRING HIS SONS” OR “CALLED HIS SONS TO COME TO HIM.” GATHER YOURSELVES TOGETHER: THAT IS, “COME NEAR ME” OR “GATHER AROUND ME.” THAT I MAY TELL YOU: SINCE THE WORDS THAT FOLLOW ARE THE LAST WORDS OF JACOB, SOME TRANSLATIONS SAY “I WANT TO TELL YOU BEFORE I DIE.…” BEFALL YOU IN DAYS TO COME: BEFALL MEANS “HAPPEN” OR “TAKE PLACE.” DAYS TO COME IS AN EXPRESSION THAT IS USED IN PROPHETIC LITERATURE TO MEAN THE LAST DAYS OR THE END OF TIME (SEE ISA 2:2 AND EZEK 38:16, FOR EXAMPLE). IN THIS CONTEXT DRIVER UNDERSTANDS IT TO MEAN “THE PERIOD OF ISRAEL’S OCCUPATION OF CANAAN—IN PARTICULAR OF THE PERIOD OF THE JUDGES AND EARLY YEARS OF THE MONARCHY.” IN TRANSLATION IT IS SUFFICIENT TO RENDER THIS AS “IN THE FUTURE,” “A TIME IN THE FUTURE,” OR “A TIME STILL TO COME.”**

**GENESIS 49:2: ASSEMBLE AND HEAR, O SONS OF JACOB: ASSEMBLE TRANSLATES A DIFFERENT VERB THAN “GATHER” IN VERSE 1, BUT THE SENSE IS THE SAME. IN THE POETIC PARALLELISM OF THIS VERSE, HEAR IS REPEATED IN THE SECOND LINE, WHERE RSV TRANSLATES IT AS HEARKEN. SEE TEV, WHICH HAS “LISTEN … LISTEN.” IN THE EXPRESSION O SONS OF JACOB, O IS USED BY RSV TO EXPRESS POETICALLY THAT HE IS ADDRESSING THEM FORMALLY. NOTE THAT TEV DOES NOT USE THIS FORM. IN SOME LANGUAGES IT WILL BE NECESSARY TO MAKE CLEAR THAT JACOB IS SPEAKING TO HIS OWN SONS; FOR EXAMPLE, “YOU [PLURAL] MY SONS” OR “YOU [PLURAL] WHO ARE MY SONS.” THE SECOND LINE REPEATS NOT ONLY HEAR (HEARKEN) BUT ALSO JACOB (ISRAEL). IF JACOB IS REPLACED BY “MY” IN THE FIRST LINE, IT MAY BE BEST TO OMIT ISRAEL IN THE SECOND LINE OR SAY “LISTEN TO YOUR FATHER.”**

**GENESIS 49:3: IN VERSES 3–7 JACOB’S WORDS ARE ADDRESSED DIRECTLY TO REUBEN, SIMEON, AND LEVI AS INDIVIDUALS. JACOB PRONOUNCES PUNISHMENT FOR CRIMES THAT HAVE BEEN RECORDED IN THE STORY OF HIS LIFE. IN THIS RESPECT THESE VERSES DIFFER FROM ALL THOSE THAT FOLLOW. REUBEN, YOU ARE MY FIRST-BORN: FOR FIRST-BORN SEE 10:15. MY MIGHT: REUBEN REPRESENTS JACOB’S SEXUAL VIGOR. NOTE HOW IN 4:12 THE LORD SPEAKING TO CAIN SAID THAT THE GROUND WOULD NO LONGER GIVE HIM CROPS, WHICH IS EXPRESSED AS “STRENGTH.” IN THAT CULTURE EXPRESSIONS RELATING TO FERTILITY WERE APPLIED TO CROPS, LAND, ANIMALS, AND PEOPLE AS WELL. THE FIRST FRUITS OF MY STRENGTH: SEE DEUT 21:17. THIS EXPRESSION, WHICH MATCHES MY MIGHT IN THE FIRST LINE, EXPRESSES THE THOUGHT FIGURATIVELY AND MAKES THE IMAGE MORE STRIKING. IN TRANSLATION IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO MAKE THESE IMAGES CLEARER BY SAYING, FOR EXAMPLE, “YOU ARE THE PRODUCT OF MY STRENGTH, THE FIRST CHILD OF MY MATURITY” OR “… MY FIRST CHILD AFTER I BECAME A GROWN MAN.” IF THE LANGUAGE OF TRANSLATION HAS A SATISFACTORY FIGURATIVE EXPRESSION, IT SHOULD BE USED. PRE-EMINENT IN PRIDE … POWER: PRE-EMINENT TRANSLATES A WORD MEANING “SURPASSING” OR “EXCELLING.” THE WORD RENDERED PRIDE MAY MEAN “GRANDEUR,” “EXCELLENCE,” OR “DIGNITY.” WE MAY TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “YOU SURPASS EVERYONE IN PRIDE AND POWER” OR “YOUR EXCELLENCE AND STRENGTH IS GREATER THAN THAT OF ALL OTHERS.” SEE TEV.**

**GENESIS 49:4: VERSE 4 REVERSES THE DIRECTION OF PRAISE FOR REUBEN AND PUNISHES HIM FOR HIS SEXUAL MISCONDUCT. THE FIRST PART OF THE VERSE GIVES A NEGATIVE CHARACTERIZATION AND PUNISHMENT. THE REST GIVES THE REASONS FOR THE PUNISHMENT. UNSTABLE AS WATER: UNSTABLE TRANSLATES A WORD WHOSE MEANING IS UNCERTAIN. DRIVER THINKS THE BASIC IDEA IS PROBABLY “TO BE UNCONTAINED,” THAT IS, NOT HELD IN CHECK. THE ROOT OF THE HEBREW WORD IS USED IN JUDGES 9:4 AND JER 23:32 WITH THE SENSE OF “RECKLESS.” THE THOUGHT IS PERHAPS THAT WATER WHICH IS NOT HELD BACK BY A DAM RECKLESSLY DASHES AWAY; AND THIS SEEMS TO BE APPLIED HERE TO THE MENTION OF REUBEN’S SEXUAL AFFAIR WITH BILHAH IN 35:22. NOTE THAT TEV KEEPS THE IMAGE OF UNCONTROLLED WATER THROUGH THE USE OF ANOTHER FIGURE. IN TRANSLATION IT WILL OFTEN BE NECESSARY TO COMPLETE THE THOUGHT BY SAYING, FOR EXAMPLE, “YOU ARE …,” OR “YOU ARE LIKE.…” YOU SHALL NOT HAVE PRE-EMINENCE: THAT IS, “YOU WILL NOT EXCEL” OR “YOU WILL NOT SURPASS OTHERS.” TEV SAYS “… THE MOST IMPORTANT” AND NJB “FOREMOST.” SINCE THE CONTEXT IS OF A DYING FATHER SPEAKING HIS LAST WORDS TO HIS SONS, PEOPLE IN MANY CULTURES WILL NATURALLY TAKE THIS AS A REFERENCE TO INHERITANCE AND THE PLACE OF LEADERSHIP IN THE CLAN OR EXTENDED FAMILY. VERSES 3–4 WILL BE UNDERSTOOD TO SAY “EVEN THOUGH YOU ARE THE FIRSTBORN, YOU WILL NOT BE THE HEAD OF THE CLAN AFTER ME [OR RECEIVE THE FIRST INHERITANCE], BECAUSE YOU.…” IN TRANSLATION, HOWEVER, THE WORDS USED HERE SHOULD BE ABLE TO BE UNDERSTOOD AS REFERRING TO THE LATER FORTUNES OF THE TRIBE OF REUBEN AS WELL AS TO THE INDIVIDUAL. EXAMPLES OF RENDERINGS FROM TWO TRANSLATIONS ARE “BUT YOU WILL NOT BE NUMBER ONE ANY MORE, BECAUSE …” AND “BUT YOU WILL NOT BE MORE IMPORTANT THAN YOUR BROTHERS.…” BECAUSE YOU WENT UP TO YOUR FATHER’S BED: THIS IS A METAPHOR THAT MEANS REUBEN SLEPT WITH JACOB’S CONCUBINE, OR SECONDARY WIFE. THE LITERAL FORM MAY GIVE THE READER THE WRONG MEANING OR SIMPLY BE UNCLEAR. THEREFORE, IT IS BETTER TO TRANSLATE AS IN TEV OR TO USE A NOTE TO EXPLAIN THE MEANING. THEN YOU DEFILED IT—YOU WENT UP TO MY COUCH: FOR DEFILED SEE 34:5 AND TEV. THERE THE WORD DESCRIBES THE DISHONOR DONE TO DINAH. HERE, HOWEVER, THE OBJECT IS JACOB’S BED. IN THIS CASE, IF BED IS KEPT IN THE EXPRESSION, IT MAY BE POSSIBLE TO SAY “YOU CAUSED MY BED TO BECOME DIRTY,” “YOU MADE MY BED A BAD PLACE,” OR “YOU DID A WRONG THING IN MY BED.” TRANSLATIONS THAT FIND SPEAKING ABOUT JACOB’S BED TOO DIFFICULT OR TOO SENSITIVE OFTEN SAY SOMETHING LIKE “YOU BROUGHT BIG SHAME TO MY CAMP WHEN YOU SLEPT WITH MY CONCUBINE.” YOU WENT … COUCH: THIS STATEMENT IS PARALLEL WITH THE PREVIOUS LINE, IN WHICH BED IS MATCHED BY COUCH. COUCH REFERS TO CUSHIONS PLACED ON THE FLOOR FOR SLEEPING OR RESTING. THE RSV FOOTNOTE SHOWS THAT THE HEBREW TEXT HAS “HE” INSTEAD OF YOU, WHICH IS THE FORM USED IN SOME OF THE ANCIENT VERSIONS. HOWEVER, HOTTP RATES THE HEBREW TEXT AS {A} AND RECOMMENDS IT BE TRANSLATED AS “THEN YOU DEFILED THE MAN WHO WENT UPON MY BED.” WE MAY ADJUST THIS TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “SO YOU DEFILED YOURSELF WHEN YOU USED MY BED” OR “SO YOU DEFILED YOURSELF IN MY BED.” NOTE THAT TEV UNDERSTANDS THAT REUBEN DISHONORED HIS FATHER’S BED RATHER THAN HIMSELF. TRANSLATORS WHO FIND THE THOUGHT SEQUENCE DIFFICULT MAY FOLLOW TEV OR SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “YOU ARE LIKE WATER BREAKING THROUGH A DAM, AND SO YOU SLEPT WITH MY CONCUBINE. WHEN YOU DID THAT YOU MADE MY BED AN UNCLEAN PLACE. SO, NOW YOU WILL NO LONGER BE THE GREATEST OF MY SONS.”**

**GENESIS 49:5: SIMEON AND LEVI ARE THE SECOND AND THIRD SONS OF LEAH. BECAUSE THEY ARE ADDRESSED TOGETHER IN VERSES 49:5–7, ALL THE PRONOUNS REFERRING TO THEM IN THESE VERSES WILL BE DUAL PRONOUNS (“YOU-TWO” OR “THEY-TWO”) IN LANGUAGES THAT HAVE THIS FEATURE. SIMEON AND LEVI ARE BROTHERS: THESE TWO ARE ASSOCIATED HERE, NOT BECAUSE THEY ARE BLOOD BROTHERS, BUT BECAUSE OF THE CRIME THEY COMMITTED TOGETHER IN THE SLAUGHTER OF SHECHEM (34:25–30). IF THIS IS CORRECT, THE WORD BROTHERS SHOULD BE EXPRESSED BY A TERM THAT ASSOCIATES THEM AS TWO PEOPLE WHO DO THE SAME KIND OF THING RATHER THAN BY THE LITERAL WORD FOR BROTHERS. SPEISER TRANSLATES “SIMEON AND LEVI ARE A PAIR.” IN ENGLISH THE THOUGHT IS PERHAPS BETTER EXPRESSED AS “TWO OF A KIND.” IN SOME LANGUAGES AN EXPRESSION LIKE “BROTHERS IN CRIME” IS USED AND WILL BE APPROPRIATE IN THIS CONTEXT. WEAPONS OF VIOLENCE ARE THEIR SWORDS: HOTTP RECOGNIZES TWO TEXTUAL PROBLEMS HERE. FIRST, IT USES OTHER VOWELS WITH THE HEBREW CONSONANTS TO REVISE WEAPONS TO A TERM USED WITH AGREEING TO A COVENANT, “DECIDED” OR “AGREED” (RATED WITH SOME UNCERTAINTY AS A {B} DECISION). SIMILARLY, THEIR SWORDS ARE GIVEN DIFFERENT VOWELS, YIELDING “THEIR DESTRUCTIONS” (RATED WITH EVEN LESS CERTAINTY AS A {C} DECISION). HOTTP’S COMBINED RECOMMENDATION FOR THE TWO PROBLEMS IS “THEY DECIDED UPON VIOLENT DESTRUCTIONS,” OR “THEY DETERMINED TO DESTROY VIOLENTLY.” SOME MODERN VERSIONS FOLLOW HOTTP, SOME FOLLOW RSV, WHILE OTHERS FOLLOW A MIXTURE OF THE TWO. FRCL SAYS “THEY AGREE TO ACT WITH VIOLENCE,” SPCL “THEIR ARMS ARE INSTRUMENTS OF VIOLENCE,” NEB “THEIR SPADES BECOME WEAPONS OF VIOLENCE” (WITH A NOTE THAT THE HEBREW IS UNCERTAIN), REB “WEAPONS OF VIOLENCE ARE THEIR COUNSELS,” NJB “IN CARRYING OUT THEIR MALICIOUS PLANS” (SOME EDITIONS OF NJB, WHICH FOLLOWS THE LATIN AND SEPTUAGINT, HAVE A NOTE THAT SAYS THE HEBREW IS “CORRUPT”). SPEISER CALLS THE PROBLEM REGARDING WEAPONS HERE “AN OLD AND STUBBORN PUZZLE.” HE DERIVES HIS UNDERSTANDING FROM A VERB MEANING “TO SELL” OR “TO TRADE” AND TRANSLATES “THEIR WARES ARE THE TOOLS OF LAWLESSNESS.” IN LIGHT OF THE UNCERTAINTY THE HANDBOOK RECOMMENDS FOLLOWING HOTTP OR ADAPTING RSV OR TEV. FOR EXAMPLE, WE MAY ADJUST TEV’S RENDERING TO SAY “YOU [PLURAL OR DUAL] USE YOUR WEAPONS TO DESTROY THINGS.”**

**GENESIS 49:6: IT IS UNCLEAR WHAT THE FUNCTION OF THE FIRST PART OF THE VERSE IS AND HOW IT MAY RELATE TO THE REST OF THE STATEMENTS ABOUT SIMEON AND LEVI. THE FORM OF THE LINE IS IN THE POETIC STYLE OF PSA 42:5; 57:8; 103:1. O MY SOUL: IF THESE ARE THE WORDS OF JACOB, WE MUST ASSUME HE IS ADDRESSING HIMSELF, AND THIS WILL MOST OFTEN BE EXPRESSED AS “I.” THE HEBREW EXPRESSION GIVES EMPHASIS TO WHAT FOLLOWS BY RELATING THESE STATEMENTS TO HIS INNERMOST THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS. COME NOT INTO THEIR COUNCIL: COUNCIL REFERS HERE TO A CIRCLE OR GROUP OF INTIMATE FRIENDS WHO DEVISE EVIL PLANS AND SCHEMES. IT IS AS IN PSA 1:1. TEV TRANSLATES THE THOUGHT WELL. WE MAY ALSO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “I WILL NOT JOIN IN YOUR SECRET PLANS.” O MY SPIRIT: SPIRIT TRANSLATES A HEBREW WORD THAT CAN MEAN “GLORY” (SEE RSV FOOTNOTE) AND WHICH IS USED AS A POETIC EXPRESSION FOR THE MOST NOBLE FEATURE OF A PERSON. TEV TRANSLATES BOTH MY SOUL AND MY SPIRIT BY “I,” AS DO MANY MODERN TRANSLATIONS. HOWEVER, NEB/REB ATTEMPT TO RETAIN THE POETIC LANGUAGE WITH “MY SOUL … MY HEART.” NRSV HAS REVISED RSV TO AGREE WITH TEV, WHICH MANY TRANSLATORS WILL ALSO WANT TO FOLLOW. BE NOT JOINED TO THEIR COMPANY: THIS THOUGHT IS PARALLEL IN MEANING TO THAT IN THE PREVIOUS LINE. COMPANY TRANSLATES A NOUN MEANING “ASSEMBLY” OR “MEETING.” JOIN THEIR COMPANY MEANS TO PARTICIPATE OR TAKE PART IN THEIR MEETINGS. SEE TEV. THE SECOND HALF OF VERSE 6 GIVES THE REASON FOR THE STATEMENTS MADE IN THE FIRST HALF. FOR IN THEIR ANGER THEY SLAY MEN: THEIR REFERS TO SIMEON AND LEVI. THE POET ALLUDES TO 34:26, WHERE SIMEON AND LEVI KILLED HAMOR AND HIS SON SHECHEM. IF THE TRANSLATOR HAS USED “YOUR [PLURAL OR DUAL]” IN VERSE 5, IT WILL BE NECESSARY TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “IN YOUR ANGER YOU SLAY.…” MEN IS SINGULAR IN THE HEBREW, BUT MOST UNDERSTAND THIS TO BE COLLECTIVE. THIS STATEMENT MAY OFTEN BE EXPRESSED AS “THEY KILLED PEOPLE BECAUSE THEY WERE ANGRY” OR “THEY BECAME ANGRY AND KILLED PEOPLE.” IN THEIR WANTONNESS THEY HAMSTRING OXEN: THERE IS NO REFERENCE IN THE STORY OF CHAPTER 34 TO SIMEON AND LEVI DOING THIS. HOWEVER, DRIVER SAYS IT IS “APPARENTLY A FIGURATIVE DESCRIPTION OF THE SAME ACT” (THAT IS, THE MASSACRE OF THE PEOPLE OF SHECHEM). IT FOLLOWS THE TENDENCY OF HEBREW POETRY, IN WHICH THE METAPHOR FOLLOWS THE LITERAL EXPRESSION. WANTONNESS TRANSLATES A WORD MEANING “WILL,” “DESIRE,” “PLEASURE.” THE THOUGHT EXPRESSED IS THAT OF DOING SOMETHING WILLFULLY, FOR SELF-GRATIFICATION, OR TO GET PLEASURE FROM IT. ALTHOUGH NOT COMMONLY USED IN ENGLISH, WANTONNESS EXPRESSES THE IDEA OF DOING SOMETHING MALICIOUS OR CRUEL WITHOUT PROVOCATION, OFTEN WITHOUT REGARD FOR WHAT IS RIGHT OR LAWFUL. SPCL SAYS “FOR PURE WHIM.” ONE OTHER TRANSLATION SAYS “THEY CRIPPLE BULLOCKS FOR FUN.” HAMSTRING AN ANIMAL MEANS TO CUT THE SINEWS IN THE HIND LEG AND THUS TO MAKE THE ANIMAL LAME. SEE JOSH 11:6 AND 2 SAM 8:4. TRANSLATORS MAY FIND A MORE GENERAL EXPRESSION IS SUITABLE. FRCL SAYS “DISABLED SOME BULLS,” SPCL “BROKE THE HOOVES OF OXEN,” AND NJV “… MAIMED OXEN.” IF THE LANGUAGE REQUIRES STATING THE REASON BEFORE THE CONCLUSION, THEN THE TRANSLATOR MAY NEED TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, THEY [YOU—PLURAL OR DUAL] ANGRILY KILLED PEOPLE AND THEY [YOU] WILLFULLY HAMSTRUNG OXEN. THEREFORE, I WILL NOT MEET WITH THEM [YOU] AND I WILL NOT ATTEND THEIR [YOUR] MEETINGS.**

**GENESIS 49:7: IN THIS VERSE JACOB CURSES THE ANGER OF SIMEON AND LEVI. CURSED BE THEIR ANGER, FOR IT IS FIERCE: FOR CURSED SEE 3:14. ANGER RENDERS THE SAME HEBREW WORD AS IN VERSE 6. FIERCE WHEN DESCRIBING ANGER SUGGESTS ANGER THAT LEADS TO VIOLENT, EXTREME, OR CRUEL ACTIONS, AS WAS THE CASE OF THE SLAUGHTER OF SHECHEM. AND THEIR WRATH, FOR IT IS CRUEL: THIS LINE EXPRESSES THE SAME THOUGHT AS THE ONE BEFORE IT. IF TRANSLATORS FIND THAT THE REPETITION DOES NOT EMPHASIZE THE FIRST IDEA BUT DISTRACTS FROM IT, IT WILL BE BETTER TO USE ONLY ONE LINE. THE THOUGHT OF THE SECOND HALF OF THE VERSE IS THAT THE DESCENDANTS OF SIMEON AND LEVI ARE TO BE SCATTERED AMONG THE OTHER TRIBES IN THE LAND OF ISRAEL AND WILL NOT POSSESS THEIR OWN TERRITORIES. IN THE CONTEXT OF THE DYING FATHER’S LAST WORDS, THIS WILL SAY TO READERS IN SOME CULTURES THAT SIMEON AND LEVI, THE NEXT TWO SONS IN ORDER OF BIRTH AFTER REUBEN, ARE ALSO DISQUALIFIED FROM THE MOST IMPORTANT INHERITANCE: “I DO NOT PASS ON TO YOU-TWO ANY OF THE FAMILY LAND.” SEE COMMENTS ON VERSE 4. I WILL DIVIDE THEM IN JACOB: FOR THE TRANSLATION SEE TEV. THE VERBS TRANSLATED DIVIDE AND SCATTER ARE CLOSELY SIMILAR IN MEANING. SINCE THE REFERENCE IS NOT JUST TO SIMEON AND LEVI AS INDIVIDUALS BUT MORE PARTICULARLY TO THEIR DESCENDANTS, IT MAY BE CLEARER TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “I WILL SCATTER YOUR DESCENDANTS THROUGHOUT THE LAND OF ISRAEL AND MAKE THEM LIVE WHERE THE OTHER TRIBES OF ISRAEL LIVE” OR “YOUR DESCENDANTS WILL NOT BE ABLE TO STAY TOGETHER IN ONE PLACE—THEY WILL BE SCATTERED EVERYWHERE AND MIXED UP WITH ALL THE OTHER CLANS.”**

**GENESIS 49:8: JUDAH, WHO IS THE FOURTH SON OF LEAH, IS THE FIRST TO RECEIVE NOTHING BUT PRAISE FROM JACOB. NOTE THAT THE HEBREW TEXT SWITCHES BACK TO “YOU.” JUDAH, YOUR BROTHERS SHALL PRAISE YOU: FOR THE PLAY ON JUDAH’S NAME, SEE 29:35. YOUR HAND SHALL BE ON THE NECK OF YOUR ENEMIES: THIS LINE GIVES THE REASON WHY JUDAH’S BROTHERS (THE OTHER TRIBES OF ISRAEL) WILL PRAISE HIM. THIS EXPRESSION IS A POETIC WAY OF SAYING “YOU DEFEAT YOUR ENEMIES” OR “YOU CONQUER YOUR ENEMIES IN BATTLE.” YOUR FATHER’S SONS SHALL BOW DOWN BEFORE YOU: BOW DOWN EXPRESSES MORE THAN JUST A PHYSICAL ACTION. IT IS AN ACTION THAT DISPLAYS SUBMISSION OR HOMAGE TO A RULER OR SUPERIOR. IN SOME TRANSLATIONS THIS IS EXPRESSED AS “YOU WILL BE THE BOSS OF ALL YOUR BROTHERS.” THE MOST IMPORTANT INHERITANCE AND PLACE IN THE FAMILY OF JACOB/ISRAEL, WHICH THE THREE OLDEST BROTHERS HAVE FORFEITED, IS NOW GIVEN TO JUDAH AND HIS DESCENDANTS. IN THIS LINE FATHER’S SONS MATCHES BROTHERS IN THE FIRST LINE, AND BOW DOWN MATCHES PRAISE. TRANSLATORS MAY FIND IT MORE SUITABLE TO KEEP THE FIRST AND THIRD LINES TOGETHER. IN THIS WAY WE MAY SAY: YOUR BROTHERS WILL BOW DOWN TO YOU, AND THEY WILL PRAISE YOU BECAUSE YOU DEFEAT YOUR ENEMIES. IN SOME LANGUAGES IT MAY BE PREFERABLE TO PLACE THE REASON AT THE BEGINNING OF THE VERSE: YOU CONQUER [ALL] YOUR ENEMIES, AND SO, YOUR BROTHERS WILL PRAISE YOU. THEY WILL BOW DOWN BEFORE YOU.**

**GENESIS 49:9: VERSE 9 IS THE FIRST IN A SERIES OF VERSES THAT MAKE USE OF ANIMAL METAPHORS. ALL OF THE ANIMAL FIGURES IN THIS VERSE ARE WAR IMAGES. JUDAH IS A LION’S WHELP: LION’S WHELP IS USED TO SUGGEST YOUTHFUL STRENGTH AND AGILITY. IT DOES NOT INTEND TO GIVE THE IMPRESSION OF A LION CUB THAT STILL DEPENDS UPON ITS MOTHER. TEV AVOIDS THE IMAGE OF AN IMMATURE LION BY USING A SIMILE AND SAYING “JUDAH IS LIKE A LION.” IF THE SECOND PERSON IS USED, WE MAY SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “JUDAH, YOU ARE LIKE A YOUNG LION.” IN SOME LANGUAGES IT IS AN INSULT TO SAY THAT SOMEONE IS “LIKE A LION.” IN SUCH CASES IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO SAY “POWERFUL LIKE A LION.” FROM THE PREY, MY SON, YOU HAVE GONE UP: THE PICTURE IS THAT OF THE LION THAT HAS KILLED ITS VICTIM, EATEN IT, AND GONE AWAY. GONE UP TRANSLATES A HEBREW VERB THAT MAY MEAN TO RETURN TO A PLACE WHERE THE LION WAS BEFORE (NIV HAS “RETURN FROM THE PREY” AND NEB/REB “RETURNED FROM THE KILL”), OR IT MAY MEAN TO STAND UP AFTER CROUCHING TO EAT (NJB “STAND OVER YOUR PREY”). TEV HAS INTRODUCED THE IDEA OF RETURNING TO A “DEN.” THIS LINE MAY REQUIRE SOME RESTRUCTURING TO MAKE IT CLEAR. MY SON IS ADDRESSED TO JUDAH AND THEREFORE MAY FIT BEST IN THE FIRST LINE, IF IT IS INCLUDED. SPCL, FRCL, AND GECL MAKE THIS ADJUSTMENT BY SAYING IN THE FIRST LINE “JUDAH, MY SON, YOU ARE LIKE A YOUNG LION.” THE SECOND LINE MAY THEN FOLLOW WITH “WHO HAS DEVOURED ITS VICTIM AND GONE AWAY” OR “WHO HAS KILLED AND RETURNED FROM EATING ITS PREY.” HE STOOPED DOWN: THE POET HAS NOW SWITCHED TO THIRD PERSON. TEV AVOIDS THE CHANGE OF PERSON BY USING VERBAL FORMS “KILLING,” “RETURNING,” “STRETCHING,” AND “LYING.” REB HAS “YOU CROUCH AND STRETCH LIKE A LION.” AS A LIONESS: THE PICTURE OF THE LION CONTINUES. SPEISER SAYS THE VARIOUS BIBLICAL WORDS FOR LION REFER TO “VARIOUS BREEDS … OR STAGES OF GROWTH”; MANY VERSIONS DO NOT RENDER THE HEBREW WORD USED HERE AS “A FEMALE LION.” IT IS NOT ALWAYS NECESSARY TO FIND AN EQUIVALENT TERM FOR “LION” IN THESE VERSES. IT MAY BE POSSIBLE TO REPLACE THE NOUN WITH A PRONOUN IN SOME PLACES. WHO DARES ROUSE HIM UP? THE POET HAS DROPPED THE THOUGHT OF A FEMALE LION AND SPEAKS OF HIM. IF IT IS MORE CONVENIENT TO AVOID HIM IN THIS CONTEXT, WE MAY SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “WHO DARES ROUSE A LION UP?” THE QUESTION IS RHETORICAL AND MAY BE EXPRESSED AS “NO ONE DARES TO STIR UP A LION.” SEE TEV.**

**GENESIS 49:10: VERSES 10–12 ARE IN THE FORM OF A PROMISE MADE TO JUDAH. VERSE 10, PARTICULARLY THE SECOND HALF, IS ONE OF THE MOST DIFFICULT AND DISPUTED VERSES IN THE OLD TESTAMENT. THE SCEPTER SHALL NOT DEPART FROM JUDAH: THE FIRST TWO LINES ARE PARALLEL IN MEANING. SCEPTER TRANSLATES A WORD MEANING “ROD” OR “STAFF.” IN THE PRESENT CONTEXT THIS OBJECT SEEMS TO BE A SYMBOL OF AUTHORITY. THE QUESTION IS, WHOSE AUTHORITY? SOME UNDERSTAND IT TO REFER TO A KING’S AUTHORITY, AS IN PSA 45:6. HOWEVER, THE MATCHING WORD IN THE FOLLOWING LINE RENDERED STAFF BY RSV IS NOT FOUND ELSEWHERE IN CONNECTION WITH THE OFFICE OF A KING. IN JUDGES 5:14 THESE TWO WORDS ARE IN PARALLEL, MEANING MILITARY LEADERS, OR, AS TEV SAYS, “COMMANDERS” AND “OFFICERS.” JUDAH IS PROBABLY PICTURED EITHER AS A KING OR AS A MILITARY COMMANDER HOLDING HIS STANDARD, THAT IS, HIS FLAG OR BANNER. REPLACING THE IMAGES OF SCEPTER AND STAFF WITH OTHER IMAGES THAT FUNCTION IN THE SAME WAY, WE MAY SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “NO ONE WILL TAKE AWAY THE COMMANDER’S FLAG FROM JUDAH,” OR “THE COMMANDER’S FLAG WILL REMAIN IN JUDAH’S HANDS.” IF IT IS NECESSARY TO DROP THE SYMBOL OF THE SCEPTER, WE MAY REPRESENT IT BY SOME SUCH TERM AS “POWER” OR “AUTHORITY” AND SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “NO ONE WILL TAKE AWAY JUDAH’S POWER.” NOR THE RULER’S STAFF FROM BETWEEN HIS FEET: THIS LINE MEANS THE SAME AS THE FIRST. WHEN THE KING OR COMMANDER STANDS OR SITS IN WAR COUNCIL, THE BASE OF HIS STAFF RESTS ON THE GROUND, THAT IS, BETWEEN HIS (YOUR) FEET. HOWEVER, SOME UNDERSTAND FEET AS A METAPHOR FOR THE SEX ORGAN, AND THEREFORE TEV HAS “HIS DESCENDANTS.” FRCL TRANSLATES “THE RULER’S STAFF WILL REMAIN IN THE HANDS OF HIS OFFSPRING.” UNTIL HE COMES TO WHOM IT BELONGS: NOTE THAT RSV DEPARTS FROM THE HEBREW TEXT AND FOLLOWS SOME OF THE ANCIENT VERSIONS. THE HEBREW CAN BE UNDERSTOOD AS “UNTIL SHILOH COMES” OR AS “UNTIL HE COMES TO SHILOH.” SPEISER OBJECTS TO THE FIRST SENSE, IN THAT SHILOH WAS A SHRINE LOCATED IN THE TERRITORY OF EPHRAIM AND NOT OF JUDAH. HE ALSO REJECTS THE SECOND UNDERSTANDING ON THE BASIS OF THE GRAMMAR AND ITS MEANINGLESSNESS. HE FINDS THE SEPTUAGINT, ONE OF THE ANCIENT TARGUMS (ONKELOS), AND SOME MANUSCRIPTS OF THE SAMARITAN TEXT TO HAVE UNDERSTOOD SHILOH AS SHELLO, WHICH MEANS “WHAT IS HIS” OR “WHAT IS DUE HIM,” GIVING IT THE GENERAL SENSE OF “UNTIL HE COMES INTO HIS OWN.” MORE TO THE POINT, HE FINDS SHILOH UNDERSTOOD AS SHAYLO “TRIBUTE TO HIM” BY MEDIEVAL JEWISH INTERPRETERS FOLLOWING AN OLD MIDRASHIC (RABBINIC) INTERPRETATION. IF THIS IS ACCEPTED, IT ALLOWS THE PARALLELISM TO BE COMPLETE WITH “TRIBUTE IS BROUGHT TO HIM … HOMAGE IS HIS.” THE TEV RENDERING FILLS OUT THIS INTERPRETATION WITH “NATIONS WILL BRING HIM TRIBUTE AND BOW IN OBEDIENCE BEFORE HIM.” “TRIBUTE” REFERS TO A PAYMENT, TAX, OR GIFTS THAT A SUBJECT PEOPLE ARE REQUIRED TO PAY TO THEIR CONQUERORS OR OVERLORDS. HOTTP, WHICH RATES THE HEBREW AS {A}, PREFERS “SHILOH COMES” AND COMMENTS THAT “SHILOH IS THE NAME OF A SON OF JUDAH.” HOWEVER, AS IT GOES ON TO ADMIT, THE NAME OF JUDAH’S SON IS EVERYWHERE SPELLED “SHELAH” AND NOT “SHILOH.” INTERPRETERS AND TRANSLATORS ARE AGREED THAT NO FINAL SOLUTION TO THIS PROBLEM HAS EMERGED. IN LIGHT OF THE DIFFICULTIES THERE IS CONSIDERABLE ROOM FOR VARIATION. THE HANDBOOK RECOMMENDS TEV AS A POSSIBLE MODEL. TRANSLATORS WHO ARE USING “YOU” INSTEAD OF “HE” WILL NEED TO MAKE ADJUSTMENTS. AND TO HIM SHALL BE THE OBEDIENCE OF THE PEOPLES: HIM REFERS TO JUDAH, AND OBEDIENCE OF THE PEOPLES MEANS THE PEOPLES AS “NATIONS” (TEV) WILL OBEY HIM.**

**GENESIS 49:11: THE TRIBE OF JUDAH OCCUPIED AN AREA OF RICH VINEYARDS, AND THE IMAGES IN VERSES 11–12 SUGGEST A PICTURE OF LIMITLESS MATERIAL ABUNDANCE. BECAUSE OF THE GREAT LIKELIHOOD THAT READERS WILL FAIL TO UNDERSTAND THE IMAGERY OF THESE TWO VERSES, IT IS NECESSARY EITHER TO MAKE ADJUSTMENTS IN THE TEXT OR TO PROVIDE A FOOTNOTE TO EXPLAIN THEIR MEANINGS. IN THE COMMENTS ON VERSES 11–12, SUGGESTIONS ARE MADE FOR ADJUSTING THE TRANSLATIONS. IF TRANSLATORS WISH INSTEAD TO EXPLAIN THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THESE VERSES IN A FOOTNOTE, WE MAY SUGGEST, FOR EXAMPLE, “VERSES 11–12 GIVE A PICTURE OF THE GREAT EXTENT OF THE FERTILITY OF THE AREA OF THE TRIBE OF JUDAH. IN VERSE 11 THE GRAPE VINES ARE SO PLENTIFUL THAT JUDAH WILL LOSE NOTHING BY LETTING HIS HUNGRY DONKEY BE TIED TO THEM. THE WINE IS SO ABUNDANT HE CAN USE IT LIKE WATER FOR WASHING CLOTHES. IN VERSE 12 THE ABUNDANCE OF WINE AND MILK ARE SEEN IN HIS EYES AND TEETH.” ONE AFRICAN TRANSLATION GIVES AN ALTERNATIVE IMAGE IN A FOOTNOTE: “IT IS THE SAME AS SETTING A PAN OF RICE BESIDE A CHICKEN.” BINDING HIS FOAL TO THE VINE: FOAL REFERS HERE TO A YOUNG DONKEY. VINE IS A GRAPE VINE. TO UNDERSTAND THIS LINE, WE MUST ASSUME THAT THE GRAPE VINE IS IN FULL LEAF AND SO WOULD BE EATEN BY THE DONKEY. FURTHERMORE, ONLY A PERSON WHO HAS LIMITLESS GRAPE VINES COULD AFFORD TO TIE HIS DONKEY WHERE IT COULD FEAST ON THE VINES. IN ORDER TO MAKE PROPER SENSE OF THIS LINE, IT IS NECESSARY TO INCREASE SOME OF THE BACKGROUND INFORMATION. FRCL ATTEMPTS TO DO THIS WITH ITS RENDERING “THE GRAPE VINES WILL BE SO WIDESPREAD THAT TYING HIS DONKEY TO IT WILL BE ALLOWED.” PERHAPS MORE TO THE POINT WE MAY SUGGEST, FOR EXAMPLE, “THE GRAPE VINES WILL GROW SO ABUNDANTLY THAT TYING YOUR HUNGRY DONKEY NEAR THEM WILL CAUSE YOU NO LOSS.” IN THE SECOND LINE ASS’S COLT MATCHES FOAL OR “YOUNG DONKEY” FROM THE FIRST LINE. CHOICE VINE MATCHES VINE AND ADDS ANOTHER ELEMENT TO IT. IN LANGUAGES WHERE NEITHER THE DONKEY NOR THE GRAPE VINE ARE KNOWN, SOME ADJUSTMENTS WILL BE REQUIRED. FOR SUGGESTIONS REGARDING “VINEYARD” SEE 9:20, AND FOR “VINE” SEE 40:9–10. FOR SUGGESTIONS CONCERNING ASS OR DONKEY, SEE 22:3. IN SOME LANGUAGES IT MAY BE POSSIBLE TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “SO RICHLY ABUNDANT WILL BE THE FRUIT THAT YOU CAN TIE YOUR HUNGRY ANIMALS TO THE BRANCHES, AND EVEN TO THE VERY BEST FRUIT TREES.” HE WASHES HIS GARMENTS IN WINE: THE IMAGE OF ABUNDANCE CONTINUES IN THE SECOND PAIR OF LINES. HERE WINE IS AS PLENTIFUL AS WATER, AND SO HE CAN AFFORD TO WASH HIS CLOTHING IN IT. AGAIN NO ONE WOULD BE SO FOOLISH AS TO WASH CLOTHES IN WINE; BUT THE SAYING IS NOT ABOUT WASHING CLOTHES BUT RATHER ABOUT FERTILITY AND ABUNDANCE. AND HIS VESTURE IN THE BLOOD OF GRAPES: THE VERB WASH IN THE FIRST LINE SERVES ALSO AS THE VERB FOR THE SECOND LINE. VESTURE TRANSLATES A LESS COMMON WORD FOR CLOTHING. BLOOD OF GRAPES IS A POETIC IMAGE FOR WINE USED IN SUCH PASSAGES AS DEUT 32:14 AND ISA 63:2–3. EVEN IN AREAS WHERE WINE AND GRAPES ARE KNOWN, THESE TWO LINES MAY REQUIRE CONSIDERABLE ADJUSTMENT IF THE READER IS TO UNDERSTAND THEIR MEANING. THIS MAY BE DONE IN THE TEXT OR IN A FOOTNOTE. IF THE ADJUSTMENT IS MADE IN THE TEXT, THERE ARE TWO WAYS THAT MAY BE FOLLOWED. SINCE BOTH LINES SAY THE SAME THING IN DIFFERENT WORDS, TRANSLATORS MAY WISH TO REDUCE THE TWO LINES TO ONE. FOR EXAMPLE, “WINE WILL BE SO PLENTIFUL HE [YOU] CAN WASH HIS [YOUR] CLOTHES IN IT,” “YOU WILL BE ABLE TO WASH YOUR CLOTHES IN WINE, BECAUSE YOU HAVE SO MUCH AND IT IS GOING TO WASTE,” OR “HE WILL MAKE MORE WINE FROM HIS GRAPEVINES THAN PEOPLE CAN DRINK, SO HE WILL TAKE SOME AND WASH HIS CLOTHES IN IT.” IF THE TWO LINES ARE KEPT, WE MAY SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “SINCE WINE WILL FLOW LIKE WATER, HE [YOU] CAN WASH HIS [YOUR] CLOTHES IN IT, WASH HIS [YOUR] FINEST CLOTHING IN THE RED JUICE OF THE GRAPES.” IN AREAS WHERE GRAPES AND WINE PRODUCTION ARE UNKNOWN, IT MAY BE POSSIBLE TO SUBSTITUTE A LOCAL FERMENTED DRINK. FOR EXAMPLE, IF THE TWO LINES ARE REDUCED TO ONE, WE MAY USE THE EXAMPLE ABOVE AND SUBSTITUTE PALM WINE OR A DRINK MADE FROM OTHER SOURCES.**

**GENESIS 49:12: HIS EYES SHALL BE RED WITH WINE: RED TRANSLATES A TERM USED ALSO IN PRO 23:29, WHERE EXCESSIVE DRINKING IS DESCRIBED. IN THIS VERSE RED REFERS TO EYES THAT ARE REDDENED FROM DRINKING TOO MUCH WINE. TEV SAYS “BLOODSHOT.” HERE AGAIN THE PICTURE IS THE DRINKER WITH RED EYES, BUT THE SIGNIFICANCE OF HIS RED EYES IS THE LIMITLESS AMOUNT OF WINE, WHICH IN TURN COMES FROM THE FERTILE CONDITIONS OF THE LAND. AND HIS TEETH WHITE WITH MILK: IN THIS LINE MILK, WHICH SUGGESTS COWS FEEDING ON RICH PASTURES, WILL BE SO PLENTIFUL THAT HIS TEETH WILL BE OF THE WHITENESS OF MILK. A SPECIAL NOTE MAY BE REQUIRED IN SOME AREAS WHERE MILK IS NEVER DRUNK EXCEPT FOR BABIES DRINKING MOTHER’S MILK.**

**GENESIS 49:13: ZEBULUN IS LEAH’S SIXTH SON (30:20). ZEBULUN SHALL DWELL AT THE SHORE OF THE SEA: VERSE 13 DOES LITTLE MORE THAN LOCATE ZEBULUN ALONG THE SEA COAST. IT IS NOT CERTAIN IF THIS IS PRAISE OR BLAME. IN LANGUAGES UNACQUAINTED WITH THE SEA, IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “YOU, ZEBULUN, WILL LIVE BESIDE THE GREAT WATER” OR “… BESIDE THE LARGE LAKE.” BECOME A HAVEN FOR SHIPS: BECOME IS SUPPLIED BY RSV. THE WORD TRANSLATED SHORE IN THE FIRST LINE IS REPEATED IN THIS LINE AND RENDERED HAVEN. THIS APPARENTLY MEANS A SHORE TO WHICH SHIPS COME. ACCORDING TO JOSH 19:10–16, THE TERRITORY OF ZEBULUN WAS ENTIRELY INLAND. SOME INTERPRETERS SUGGEST THAT, WHEN THE PRESENT SAYING WAS WRITTEN, ZEBULUN HAD PROBABLY OBTAINED AN OUTLET TO THE SEA AND PERHAPS A STRETCH OF TERRITORY TO THE NORTH TOWARD PHOENICIA, WHICH IS REPRESENTED AS SIDON IN THE NEXT LINE. IF TRANSLATORS FOLLOW RSV OR TEV, HAVEN MAY NEED TO BE RENDERED “A SAFE HARBOR” OR “A SAFE LANDING.” A COMMON TRANSLATION OF SHIPS IN AREAS WHERE ONLY SMALL BOATS OR DUGOUTS ARE KNOWN IS “BIG BOATS.” AND HIS BORDER SHALL BE AT SIDON: THIS APPEARS TO MEAN THAT THE NORTHERN BORDER OF ZEBULUN WILL BE AT THE TOWN OF SIDON, WHICH WAS IN SOUTHERN PHOENICIA. IT IS TODAY IN SOUTHERN LEBANON.**

**GENESIS 49:14: ISSACHAR IS LEAH’S FIFTH SON (30:17–18). IN THIS VERSE THE TRIBE OF ISSACHAR, WHO FOUGHT UNDER DEBORAH (JUDGES 5:15), IS BLAMED FOR PREFERRING EASE TO THE STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM FROM THE CANAANITES. ISSACHAR IS PICTURED AS A LOADED DONKEY THAT LIES DOWN AND IS UNABLE TO GET UP. ISSACHAR IS A STRONG ASS: THE WORD RENDERED STRONG IS LITERALLY “BONY.” MOST AGREE THAT THE SENSE IS NOT A SCRAWNY ANIMAL BUT ONE WITH LARGE BONES AND THEREFORE STRONG OR WELL-BUILT. IN SOME LANGUAGES THIS KIND OF COMPARISON TO AN ANIMAL MUST BE SHIFTED TO A SIMILE, “ISSACHAR IS LIKE A STRONG DONKEY” OR “ISSACHAR, YOU ARE LIKE A STRONG DONKEY.” TEV MAKES THE COMPARISON IN A NEGATIVE SENSE, WHICH IS IN KEEPING WITH THE CRITICISM OF ISSACHAR IN THIS VERSE AND THE NEXT. CROUCHING BETWEEN THE SHEEPFOLDS: SHEEPFOLDS TRANSLATES A DUAL NOUN THAT IS UNDERSTOOD ALSO AS MEANING “SADDLEBAGS” (TEV, NIV). THE TERM IS USED IN THIS CONTEXT ELSEWHERE ONLY IN JUDGES 5:16, WHERE RSV HAS “SHEEPFOLDS” AND TEV “SHEEP.” WESTERMANN SAYS THE VERB FORM FAVORS “SHEEPFOLDS.” SHEEPFOLDS REFERS TO GROUPS OR FLOCKS OF SHEEP. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE PICTURE OF THE KNEELING DONKEY LOADED WITH A PAIR OF SADDLE BASKETS AND UNABLE TO GET BACK TO ITS FEET IS, AS VON RAD SAYS, A SADLY COMICAL IMAGE; AS ONE TRANSLATION HAS IT, “A TIRED DONKEY LYING DOWN WITH ITS PACK BAGS.” THE HANDBOOK RECOMMENDS SOMETHING EQUIVALENT TO “SADDLEBAGS.” THESE ARE SOMETIMES CALLED “LOAD BASKETS.” IF A MORE GENERAL TERM MUST BE USED, ONE MAY SAY “LOAD.”**

**GENESIS 49:15: HE SAW THAT A RESTING PLACE WAS GOOD: RESTING PLACE REFERS TO THE CANAANITE AREA INTO WHICH ISSACHAR HAD MIGRATED. SOME TRANSLATE IT “COUNTRY.” SEE REB “SETTLED HOME.” SPEISER RESTRUCTURES TO SAY “WHEN HE SAW THAT …” AND MAKES THE FINAL TWO LINES A CONSEQUENCE. SO, HE BOWED HIS SHOULDER TO BEAR: SHOULDER MAY NEED TO BE EXPRESSED AS “NECK” OR “BACK” IN THIS EXPRESSION. THE FIGURE IS THAT OF THE WILLING DONKEY LOWERING ITS BACK TO BE LOADED WITH A HEAVY BURDEN (BY THE CANAANITES). SEE TEV. AND BECAME A SLAVE AT FORCED LABOR: THIS SAME EXPRESSION IS USED IN JOSH 16:10. SEE ALSO JOSH 17:13, WHERE IT APPLIES TO THE CANAANITES WHO ARE FORCED TO WORK FOR THE ISRAELITES. THE LINE IS WELL EXPRESSED BY TEV. TRANSLATORS WHO ARE USING “YOU” MUST MAKE THE APPROPRIATE ADJUSTMENTS.**

**GENESIS 49:16: DAN IS THE FIRST SON OF RACHEL’S SERVANT BILHAH (30:6). DAN SHALL JUDGE HIS PEOPLE: ACCORDING TO 30:6 DAN’S NAME IS A PLAY ON THE HEBREW WORD MEANING TO JUDGE. THERE RACHEL SAID “GOD HAS JUDGED ME,” IN WHICH SHE MEANT THAT GOD HAD RULED IN HER FAVOR AND GIVEN HER JUSTICE. IN THIS VERSE DAN GOVERNS OR RULES HIS OWN PEOPLE. AS ONE OF THE TRIBES OF ISRAEL: EVEN THOUGH THE TRIBE OF DAN IS SMALL, IT RULES ITS PEOPLE THE SAME AS THE OTHER TRIBES. SEE TEV.**

**GENESIS 49:17: DAN SHALL BE A SERPENT IN THE WAY: DAN IS PRAISED, AND THIS MAY BE UNDERSTOOD AS A PRAYER, “MAY DAN BE A SNAKE ON THE ROAD.” THE SERPENT/VIPER IMAGE IS NOT USED TO CRITICIZE DAN BUT TO PICTURE THIS TRIBE AS SMALL BUT DANGEROUS TO ITS ENEMIES. IN SOME LANGUAGES IT IS OFFENSIVE TO BE CALLED A SNAKE. IT MAY HELP IN SUCH CASES TO SAY “DAN WILL BE DANGEROUS AS A SNAKE ON THE ROAD.” A VIPER BY THE PATH: VIPER TRANSLATES A HEBREW WORD FOUND ONLY HERE. SOME TRANSLATE IT AS “HORNED VIPER” OR “HORNED SNAKE.” IF THE HORNED VIPER IS UNKNOWN, THE MODEL OF TEV “SNAKE … POISONOUS SNAKE” MAY BE SATISFACTORY. SPCL GIVES ANOTHER MODEL, “DAN WILL BE LIKE A VIPER BESIDE THE ROAD,” AND DOES NOT HAVE A SECOND LINE. THAT BITES THE HORSE’S HEELS: THE SNAKE/VIPER THAT LIES CONCEALED BESIDE THE ROAD STRIKES AT THE HEELS OF THE PASSING ENEMY’S HORSE. SO THAT HIS RIDER FALLS BACKWARD: AS THE SNAKE STRIKES, THE HORSE REARS, CAUSING THE RIDER TO FALL TO THE GROUND. IN THE WORDS OF ONE TRANSLATION, “HE BITES THE HORSE, MAKING IT BUCK AND THROW THE RIDER OFF.”**

**GENESIS 49:18: I WAIT FOR THY SALVATION, O LORD: THESE WORDS, FROM PSA 119:166, DO NOT SEEM TO CONNECT WITH WHAT HAS JUST BEEN SAID OR WITH WHAT FOLLOWS. WESTERMANN BELIEVES VERSE 18 IS A MARGINAL NOTE ADDED TO THE ENTIRE COLLECTION OF TRIBAL SAYINGS, AND HE POINTS OUT THAT IT IS PLACED AT THE HEART OF THE CHAPTER. IT IS NOT LIKELY THAT THESE WORDS ARE THE UTTERANCE OF A CANAANITE WARRIOR THROWN FROM HIS HORSE IN VERSE 17, AS HAS SOMETIMES BEEN SUGGESTED. IN SOME LANGUAGES SPECIAL INFORMATION IS REQUIRED TO SHOW THAT JACOB HAS STOPPED ADDRESSING HIS SONS HERE AND IS SPEAKING TO THE LORD. THEN IN VERSE 19 IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO SHOW THAT THE SONS ARE AGAIN BEING ADDRESSED. SALVATION IN THIS CONTEXT REFERS TO DELIVERANCE OR RESCUE FROM ENEMIES. WE MAY TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “I BEG YOU TO RESCUE ME, LORD” OR “I WAIT FOR YOU TO DELIVER ME, LORD.”**

**GENESIS 49:19: GAD IS THE FIRST SON OF LEAH’S SERVANT ZILPAH. THE HOME OF THE TRIBE WAS EAST OF THE JORDAN, WHERE IT WAS SUBJECT TO RAIDS FROM DESERT-DWELLING AMMONITES (JUDGES 11). THE NAME GAD SOUNDS LIKE THE WORD FOR “FORTUNE.” SEE 30:11. RAIDERS SHALL RAID GAD: VERSE 19 IS A SINGLE SENTENCE IN TWO PARTS. FOUR OF THE SIX HEBREW WORDS CONTAIN THE SEQUENCE G-D, AND RSV AND SOME OTHER TRANSLATIONS TRY TO GIVE A SIMILAR SOUND EFFECT IN ENGLISH BY REPEATING THE WORD “RAID.” RAIDERS REFERS TO ROVING BANDS OF ROBBERS. RAID MEANS TO CARRY OUT A SUDDEN ARMED ATTACK. SEE TEV. BUT HE SHALL RAID AT THEIR HEELS: GAD IS PRAISED BECAUSE OF HIS ABILITY TO REPEL THE RAIDERS, DRIVE THEM OFF, AND PURSUE THEM CLOSELY.**

**GENESIS 49:20: ASHER IS ZILPAH’S SECOND SON. THE TRIBE OF ASHER LIVED IN A PARTICULARLY FERTILE AREA ALONG THE SEA (JUDGES 5:17). ASHER’S NAME IS ASSOCIATED WITH HAPPINESS IN 30:12–13. ASHER’S FOOD SHALL BE RICH: ASHER’S FOOD REFERS TO THE FOOD FROM THE GOOD CROPS GROWN IN ASHER’S LAND. THE FERTILITY OF THIS AREA IS IMPLIED IN DEUT 33:24 BY THE REFERENCE TO “OIL.” RICH IS EXPRESSED IN THE HEBREW AS “FAT.” THE IDEA OF RICH FOOD IS “SAVORY,” “TASTY,” OR “DELICIOUS” FOOD. THIS MAY ALSO REFER TO THE QUALITY OF THE CROPS. SEE TEV. HE SHALL YIELD ROYAL DAINTIES: DAINTIES ARE LUXURY ITEMS---THINGS PEOPLE CAN AFFORD ONLY IF THEY ARE RICH ENOUGH. THE SENSE OF THIS LINE IS THAT THE FOOD RAISED IN ASHER’S TERRITORY WILL FIND ITS WAY TO THE TABLES OF KINGS BECAUSE OF ITS FINE QUALITY. THIS IS CLEARLY PRAISE FOR ASHER, AND ALL MODERN TRANSLATIONS UNDERSTAND IT IN THIS WAY. SEE TEV FOR A MODEL TRANSLATION.**

**GENESIS 49:21: NAPHTALI IS BILHAH’S SECOND SON. IN JUDGES 5:18 THE MEN OF NAPHTALI ARE PRAISED FOR RISKING THEIR LIVES IN BATTLE. NAPHTALI IS A HIND LET LOOSE: HIND REFERS TO AN ADULT FEMALE RED DEER. IN PSA 18:33 THE HIND IS PRAISED FOR ITS SPEED AND SUREFOOTEDNESS. LET LOOSE IS WELL EXPRESSED BY TEV’S “RUNS FREE.” ANOTHER UNDERSTANDING OF THE HEBREW WORD FOR HIND IS “TEREBINTH,” A LARGE OAK-LIKE TREE. SEE FAUNA AND FLORA OF THE BIBLE, PAGES 182–183. THE SEPTUAGINT AND THE TARGUM ONKELOS TRANSLATE IN THIS WAY, AND THIS IS ALSO PREFERRED BY NEB/REB. NOTE THAT TEV GIVES THIS MEANING IN ITS FOOTNOTE. THAT BEARS COMELY FAWNS: THE RSV FOOTNOTE SHOWS THAT THIS LINE CAN ALSO BE UNDERSTOOD AS “WHO GIVES BEAUTIFUL WORDS.” THE CHANGE FROM HINDS TO “TEREBINTH” AND FAWNS TO “WORDS” INVOLVES A CHANGE IN THE HEBREW VOWEL POINTS. HOTTP GIVES TWO RECOMMENDATIONS. ONE IS TO TRANSLATE AS IN RSV, AND THE OTHER IS TO SAY “NAPHTALI IS A HIND THAT … SPEAKS BEAUTIFUL WORDS.” HEBREW POETRY, WHOSE COMMON CHARACTERISTIC IS TO CONCRETELY EXPAND THE FIRST LINE IN THE SECOND LINE, MAKES US PREFER THE RSV TRANSLATION. TRANSLATORS MAY FIND IT MORE NATURAL TO SHIFT TO A SIMILE. IN LANGUAGES IN WHICH DEER ARE UNKNOWN, IT MAY BE POSSIBLE TO SUBSTITUTE ANOTHER WILD ANIMAL KNOWN FOR ITS SWIFTNESS AND GRACE: “LIKE A WILD GOAT THAT IS FREE TO RUN WHEREVER IT WISHES.” IF THAT IS NOT POSSIBLE, WE MAY BE ABLE TO SAY “NAPHTALI IS LIKE A WILD ANIMAL THAT RUNS FREE.”**

**GENESIS 49:22: JOSEPH IS RACHEL’S FIRST SON. VERSES 22–26 ARE FILLED WITH PRAISE FOR JOSEPH AND ARE AS WARM IN BLESSINGS AS THOSE FOR JUDAH IN VERSES 49:8–12. EACH OF THESE VERSES CONTAINS SERIOUS TEXTUAL PROBLEMS. JOSEPH IS A FRUITFUL BOUGH: IN THIS VERSE JOSEPH IS PRAISED FOR HIS NUMEROUS DESCENDANTS AND IS COMPARED TO A FRUITFUL SPREADING VINE THAT SENDS OUT BRANCHES (SEE DEUT 33:17, WHICH SPEAKS OF THE GREAT NUMBERS OF OFFSPRING FROM EPHRAIM AND MANASSEH). NRSV, UNLIKE RSV, HAS A FOOTNOTE, “HEBREW UNCERTAIN.” NOTE THAT TEV’S RENDERING IS ENTIRELY DIFFERENT, AS IT CONTINUES WITH ANIMAL METAPHORS SIMILAR TO THAT IN THE PREVIOUS VERSE. THE HEBREW TEXT APPEARS TO SAY LITERALLY “SON OF A FRUITFUL [VINE] JOSEPH” AND THEN A SECOND TIME “SON OF A FRUITFUL [VINE].” SPEISER REGARDS THE USE OF FRUITFUL BOUGH (OR VINE) INACCURATE. HE OBJECTS TO BREAKING WITH THE ANIMAL METAPHORS IN 9, 14, 17, 21, AND 27. HE OBSERVES THAT THE FIRST LINE IN VERSE 22 IS CLOSELY PARALLELED IN DEUT 33:17, WHERE THE OX AND WILD OX ARE USED, AND THEN PROPOSES THAT THE HEBREW EXPRESSION RENDERED FRUITFUL, WHICH IS LITERALLY “SON OF FRUITFUL,” SHOULD BE UNDERSTOOD AS “WILD ASS.” THIS IS FOLLOWED BY TEV AND NAB AND IS GIVEN AS AN ALTERNATIVE TRANSLATION BY NIV (FOOTNOTE). TEV GIVES THE ALTERNATIVE TRANSLATION (AS IN RSV) IN ITS FOOTNOTE. (HOTTP, WHICH DOES NOT CONSIDER THE SPEISER ARGUMENT, RECOMMENDS A TRANSLATION THAT IS EQUIVALENT TO THAT IN RSV.) THE HANDBOOK RECOMMENDS EITHER THE RSV OR THE TEV MODEL. HOWEVER, IF THE TEV IS FOLLOWED, THE ALTERNATIVE TRANSLATION SHOULD BE GIVEN IN A FOOTNOTE. HIS BRANCHES RUN OVER THE WALL: BRANCHES IS LITERALLY “DAUGHTERS.” SPEISER FINDS THE HEBREW OF “DAUGHTERS RUN” TO BE THE SAME AS THE ARABIC FOR “WILD ASSES.” OVER THE WALL HE UNDERSTANDS TO REFER TO AN ELEVATED PLACE, WHICH TEV RENDERS AS “HILLSIDE.” THE RECOMMENDATION OF THE HANDBOOK IS THE SAME HERE AS FOR THE FIRST LINE.**

**GENESIS 49:23: THE ARCHERS FIERCELY ATTACKED HIM: VERSE 23 CONSISTS OF A SERIES OF THREE VERB PHRASES, EACH BEGUN BY THE COMMON HEBREW CONNECTIVE, AND THE SERIES IS FOLLOWED BY THE ONE WHO DOES THESE ACTIONS; THE ACTIONS ARE: (1) “SHOWED HIM BITTERNESS [HOSTILITY],” (2) “SHOT AT HIM,” (3) “ATTACKED” OR “PERSECUTED HIM.” ARCHERS IS LITERALLY “MEN OF ARROWS.” IT MAY NEED TO BE RENDERED MORE GENERALLY AS “WARRIORS” OR “MEN WITH WEAPONS,” OR SIMPLY AS “HIS ENEMIES.” HIM REFERS TO JOSEPH. IF THE TRANSLATOR IS USING THE SECOND PERSON, HIM WILL BE RENDERED “YOU.” RSV IS A SATISFACTORY MODEL FOR TRANSLATION.**

**GENESIS 49:24: IN THIS VERSE GOD ENABLES JOSEPH TO REPEL AND OVERCOME HIS ENEMIES. YET HIS BOW REMAINED UNMOVED: UNMOVED DOES NOT MEAN THAT HE DOES NOTHING WITH HIS BOW, WHICH IS HIS DEFENSE. THE IDEA IS RATHER THAT “HE HOLDS HIS BOW STEADILY AS HE AIMS,” THAT IS, WITHOUT MOVING OR TREMBLING. SEE TEV. TWO WAYS OF EXPRESSING THIS ARE “YOUR HAND THAT HOLDS THE BOW DOES NOT SHAKE” AND “[YOU WILL BEAT THEM BECAUSE] YOU WILL HAVE A STEADY ARM FOR YOUR BOW.” HIS ARMS WERE MADE AGILE: THE HEBREW SAYS “THE ARMS OF HIS HANDS.” NOTE THAT TEV’S FOOTNOTE GIVES AN ALTERNATIVE RENDERING BASED ON THE SEPTUAGINT. HOTTP, HOWEVER, RECOMMENDS “AND HIS ARMS AND HANDS WERE AGILE.” BY THE HANDS OF THE MIGHTY ONE OF JACOB: HANDS IS USED HERE IN THE SENSE OF “POWER.” MIGHTY ONE OF JACOB REFERS TO THE GOD WHOM JACOB WORSHIPS. IT IS A TITLE USED ALSO IN PSA 132:2, 5; AND ISA 49:26. NOTE THE TEV RENDERING OF THIS TITLE AS “THE MIGHTY GOD OF JACOB.” IN THIS EXPRESSION THE RELATION OF JACOB TO GOD IS THAT OF WORSHIPER OR FOLLOWER AND NOT POSSESSOR. (BY THE NAME OF THE SHEPHERD, THE ROCK OF ISRAEL): NOTE THAT RSV HANDLES THESE ADDITIONAL NAMES AS PARENTHETICAL, BUT NRSV HAS REMOVED THE PARENTHESES. BOTH RSV AND TEV MAY BE UNDERSTOOD BY SOME READERS AS REPRESENTING THREE DIFFERENT GODS. IN SUCH CASES SOME ADJUSTMENTS WILL BE REQUIRED; FOR EXAMPLE, “BY THE MIGHTY GOD WHOM JACOB WORSHIPS, WHO IS ALSO CALLED THE SHEPHERD AND THE ROCK OF ISRAEL.” ALTHOUGH RSV AND TEV DO NOT CALL ATTENTION TO THE HEBREW TEXT, THE EXPRESSION BY THE NAME IS FROM THE SEPTUAGINT. THE HEBREW TEXT HAS “FROM THERE,” WHICH HOTTP TRANSLATES AS “FROM THERE,” “THENCE,” OR “FROM THEN.” HOWEVER, IF WE ARE TO UNDERSTAND THAT THE GOD CALLED BY THESE VARIOUS NAMES MADE JOSEPH’S ARMS STEADY SO THAT HIS BOW DID NOT TREMBLE, THEN BY, AS USED IN RSV AND TEV, IS MORE SUITABLE. SHEPHERD IS USED IN REFERENCE TO GOD IN PSA 80:1, WHERE IT IS EXPRESSED AS “SHEPHERD OF ISRAEL.” ROCK OF ISRAEL OCCURS IN ISA 30:29, BUT THERE THE HEBREW WORD MEANS A ROCK, WHEREAS IN OUR VERSE IT TRANSLATES THE WORD FOR “STONE,” AN EXPRESSION NOT USED ELSEWHERE FOR GOD, BUT WHICH CARRIES THE SENSE OF A GREAT STONE SUCH AS A MONUMENT. NOTE TEV “PROTECTOR.” TRANSLATORS MAY RENDER ROCK OF ISRAEL AS “THE GREAT STONE OF ISRAEL” OR, FOR EXAMPLE, “THE STONE THAT PROTECTS ISRAEL,” OR AS IN TEV.**

**GENESIS 49:25: BY THE GOD OF YOUR FATHER WHO WILL HELP YOU: BY, WHICH OPENS THE FIRST TWO LINES OF VERSE 25, APPEARS TO CONTINUE THE ADDITION OF NAMES OF THE GOD WHO ENABLES JOSEPH IN VERSE 24. HOWEVER, IT IS BETTER NOT TO LINK VERSE 25 TO VERSE 24 BUT TO BEGIN A NEW SENTENCE AS IN TEV; FOR EXAMPLE, “THE GOD YOUR FATHER WORSHIPS WILL HELP YOU,” OR AS A PRAYER, “MAY THE GOD … HELP YOU.” IT MAY BE CLEARER HERE TO SWITCH TO “MY GOD.…” GOD ALMIGHTY WHO WILL BLESS YOU: GOD ALMIGHTY TRANSLATES ’EL SHADDAI. SEE 17:1. THIS MAY ALSO BE EXPRESSED AS A PRAYER, “MAY THE ALMIGHTY GOD BLESS YOU WITH.…” WITH BLESSINGS OF HEAVEN ABOVE: THESE ARE THE TYPICAL BLESSINGS OF FERTILITY, ASKING FOR ABUNDANT CROPS THAT COME ABOUT FROM DEW, RAIN, AND SUNSHINE, AS IN 27:39. SEE TEV. BLESSINGS OF THE DEEP THAT COUCHES BENEATH: THIS IS EXPRESSED AS IN DEUT 33:13. THE REFERENCE IS TO THE WATER BENEATH THE EARTH, WHICH SUPPLIES SPRINGS AND RIVERS. SEE THE DISCUSSION AND TRANSLATION OF DEEP IN 1:2. THE VERB FOR COUCHES REFERS TO THE STATE OF LYING DOWN AT REST, BEING STRETCHED OUT IN A RELAXED WAY, AND IS SOMETIMES USED OF WILD ANIMALS AT REST BUT READY TO ACT; IT WAS USED TO DESCRIBE THE NEARNESS AND DANGER OF SIN IN 4:7. HERE IT IS A POETIC WAY OF PICTURING THE WATERS THAT ARE STRETCHED OUT UNDER THE EARTH, READY TO BE APPLIED FOR THE GOOD OF PEOPLE ACCORDING TO GOD’S BLESSINGS. SEE TEV FOR A SIMPLE WAY OF STATING THE BLESSING IN TRANSLATION. BLESSINGS OF THE BREAST AND OF THE WOMB: INTERPRETERS TAKE THIS TO REFER TO THE REPRODUCTION OF ANIMALS AND HUMANS. TEV SAYS “CATTLE AND CHILDREN.” FRCL ASKS FOR “BLESSINGS OF FERTILITY FOR WOMEN AND FOR ANIMALS.” IF THE MORE LITERAL TRANSLATIONS ARE NOT CLEAR, WE MAY ALSO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “MAY YOU HAVE MANY OFFSPRING, AND MAY YOUR ANIMALS GIVE BIRTH TO MANY YOUNG ONES.”**

**GENESIS 49:26: THE BLESSINGS OF YOUR FATHER ARE MIGHTY BEYOND THE BLESSINGS OF THE ETERNAL MOUNTAINS: SKINNER CALLS THE EXPRESSION THE BLESSINGS OF YOUR FATHER ARE MIGHTY BEYOND “ABSOLUTELY UNINTELLIGIBLE.” SPEISER SAYS THE ENTIRE SENTENCE IS “HOPELESS ON MORE THAN ONE COUNT” AND GIVES A NUMBER OF REASONS WHY HE BELIEVES THIS TO BE THE CASE. TEV “BLESSINGS OF GRAIN AND FLOWERS,” AS ITS FOOTNOTE SHOWS, FOLLOWS A CHANGE OF THE HEBREW TEXT. HOTTP REJECTS THIS CHANGE, SAYING IT “MIGHT REPRESENT THE ORIGINAL TEXT, BUT IT IS NOT ATTESTED BY ANY OLD TEXT WITNESS. THEREFORE, IT IS ONLY A CONJECTURE [A GUESS] RESTING ON NO TEXTUAL BASIS.” ACCORDINGLY, HOTTP KEEPS THE HEBREW TEXT AND SUPPORTS THE RENDERING OF RSV. THE TRANSLATION SUGGESTED BY HOTTP AND FOLLOWED BY RSV IS A RENDERING THAT FOLLOWS THE HEBREW TEXT WITHOUT RESORTING TO THE ANCIENT VERSIONS OR TO CONJECTURES. THE SENSE THUS FAR, ACCORDING TO DRIVER, IS THAT THE BLESSINGS JACOB RECEIVED FROM HIS ANCESTORS ARE GREATER THAN THE BLESSINGS THAT COME FROM THE ETERNAL MOUNTAINS. WE MAY TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “THE BLESSINGS THAT YOUR FATHER RECEIVED FROM HIS ANCESTORS ARE GREATER THAN THE BLESSINGS THAT COME FROM THE EVERLASTING MOUNTAINS.” WE MAY CHANGE THE PRONOUNS TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “THE BLESSINGS THAT MY FATHERS GAVE ME ARE GREATER THAN THE GOOD THINGS WE RECEIVE FROM THE ETERNAL HILLS.” WE CANNOT DISMISS THE POSSIBILITY, HOWEVER, THAT BLESSINGS OF YOUR FATHER MAY ALSO BE UNDERSTOOD AS THE BLESSINGS OR BENEDICTIONS GIVEN BY JACOB TO HIS OFFSPRING. SOME TRANSLATIONS EXPRESS MIGHTY BEYOND THE BLESSINGS OF THE ETERNAL MOUNTAINS AS “THE GOOD THINGS YOU RECEIVE WILL BE SO MANY THAT THEY COVER OVER THE BIG MOUNTAINS.” THE BOUNTIES OF THE EVERLASTING HILLS: THIS LINE REPEATS CLOSELY WHAT WAS SAID IN THE PREVIOUS LINE. BOUNTIES TRANSLATES A WORD MEANING “GOOD THINGS,” THINGS THAT ARE DESIRABLE IN THE GOOD SENSE. SEE TEV “DELIGHTFUL THINGS.” MAY THEY BE ON THE HEAD OF JOSEPH: JACOB ASKS THAT THESE BLESSINGS BE GIVEN TO JOSEPH. THE EXPRESSION IS, HOWEVER, POETIC AND COMES FROM THE CUSTOM OF PLACING ONE’S HANDS ON THE HEAD OF THE PERSON BEING BLESSED; THESE BLESSINGS ARE THUS EXPRESSED AS RESTING ON HIS HEAD. IF THE FIGURE OF BLESSINGS RESTING ON THE HEAD IS UNNATURAL, IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “MAY THESE BLESSINGS COME TO JOSEPH,” OR “MAY JOSEPH RECEIVE THESE BLESSINGS [GOOD THINGS],” OR “MAY GOD GIVE JOSEPH THESE BLESSINGS.” AND ON THE BROW OF HIM WHO WAS SEPARATE FROM HIS BROTHERS: BROW IS USED IN THE SECOND LINE AS A PARTICULAR PART OF THE HEAD, IN KEEPING WITH POETIC PARALLELISM. BROW REFERS TO THE FOREHEAD. SEPARATE TRANSLATES THE HEBREW TERM THAT IS ALSO USED TO DESIGNATE A “NAZIRITE.” THIS DOES NOT EMPHASIZE PHYSICAL SEPARATION BUT RATHER SEPARATION FOR A SPECIAL PURPOSE: “DEDICATED FROM AMONG HIS BROTHERS” (NJB). LAWS DESCRIBING HOW A NAZIRITE WAS TO MARK HIS SEPARATION AND DEDICATION ARE SET FORTH IN NUM 6:1–21. THE WORD ALSO MEANS “PRINCE” AND IS USED IN THAT SENSE IN LAM 4:7. IF TEV “SET APART FROM HIS BROTHERS” IS NOT SUITABLE, IT MAY BE POSSIBLE TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “WHO WAS MADE THE LEADER OF HIS BROTHERS.” NIV AND NEB/REB HAVE “THE PRINCE AMONG HIS BROTHERS.”**

**GENESIS 49:27: THE FINAL WORD IS GIVEN TO RACHEL’S YOUNGER SON. ACCORDING TO 1 CHR 8:40; 12:2, THE TRIBE OF BENJAMIN WAS SMALL IN NUMBERS BUT MIGHTY IN BATTLE. BENJAMIN IS A RAVENOUS WOLF: BENJAMIN IS PRAISED FOR HIS SKILL AND STEALTH AND IS COMPARED TO THE WOLF AS A VICIOUS HUNTER. RAVENOUS TRANSLATES A VERB MEANING TO TEAR THE FLESH. THE SENSE IS “FIERCE,” “FEROCIOUS,” OR “VICIOUS.” THE WOLF IS A DOG-LIKE ANIMAL OF PREY. IF THE WOLF IS UNKNOWN, SOMETHING LIKE “WILD DOG” MAY BE SUITABLE. IN THE MORNING DEVOURING THE PREY: HERE BENJAMIN IS PICTURED AS ENGAGED IN KILLING HIS ENEMIES. HE IS ALWAYS BUSY WITH WAR AND TAKING PLUNDER OR BOOTY FROM HIS ENEMIES. AND AT EVEN DIVIDING THE SPOIL: VICTORIOUS IN BATTLE HE KILLS ENEMIES AND DIVIDES THE BOOTY OR THE ENEMY’S PROPERTY AMONG HIS WARRIORS. SOME TRANSLATIONS ATTEMPT TO KEEP THE IMAGE OF THE FIERCE WOLF. HERE IS THE WAY SPCL TRANSLATES: BENJAMIN IS A FIERCE WOLF WHO EATS ITS VICTIMS IN THE, MORNING AND IN THE EVENING DIVIDES WHAT REMAINS.**

**GENESIS 49:28: VON RAD AND OTHERS CONSIDER THE BLESSINGS IN 49:1B–27 TO BE AN INSERTION IN WHAT IS A NARRATIVE TEXT THAT BEGINS WITH 49:1A AND CONTINUES AFTER THE INSERTED MATERIAL WITH 28B. HOWEVER, TRANSLATORS WILL HAVE TO TRANSLATE THE FULL TEXT AS IT EXISTS IN THE HEBREW AND AS REPRESENTED IN RSV. ALL THESE ARE THE TWELVE TRIBES OF ISRAEL: THESE POINTS BACK TO THE TWELVE SONS OF JACOB IN VERSES 3–27. THIS IS WHAT THEIR FATHER SAID: THIS REFERS TO THE CONTENT OF VERSES 3–27. BLESSING EACH WITH THE BLESSING SUITABLE TO HIM: THE WORDING IS REPETITIVE AND IS LITERALLY “AND HE BLESSED THEM EACH ONE WHOM AFTER HIS BLESSING HE BLESSED THEM.” AS NOTED AT THE BEGINNING OF THE CHAPTER, THE TERM “BLESSING” IS REALLY INAPPROPRIATE IN ENGLISH AND MANY OTHER LANGUAGES FOR THE CONTENT OF MUCH OF WHAT JACOB SAYS TO THE SONS. HERE IN VERSE 28 IS THE ONLY OCCURRENCE OF WORDS FOR “BLESSING” IN THE HEBREW TEXT OF THIS SUBDIVISION. TEV, SPEISER, AND NJB (IN PART) SHOW US ONE POSSIBLE WAY TO DEAL WITH THE PROBLEM: TO RENDER THE HEBREW TERMS AS “GIVE A PARTING MESSAGE” OR “SAY FAREWELL,” AS IN 47:10, WHERE THE SAME VERB IS USED. THIS IS A PARTICULARLY GOOD RECOMMENDATION FOR THOSE LANGUAGES IN WHICH “PARTING WORDS” OR “LAST WORDS” IN A DEATHBED CONTEXT GIVE THE SENSE OF SPEAKING ABOUT THE INHERITANCE AND THE LEADERSHIP OF THE CLAN. SPEISER “AS HE BADE THEM FAREWELL, ADDRESSING TO EACH AN APPROPRIATE PARTING MESSAGE” AND TEV ARE GOOD MODELS. EXAMPLES OF RENDERINGS FROM TWO OTHER TRANSLATIONS ARE “THESE ARE THE WORDS THE OLD MAN GAVE TO THEM WHEN HE SPOKE HIS LAST WORDS, AND HE GAVE WORDS APPROPRIATE TO EACH ONE OF THEM,” AND “LIKE THIS THE OLD MAN JACOB SPOKE TO HIS TWELVE SONS AND SAID GOOD-BYE TO THEM. HE GAVE THE RIGHT WORD TO EACH OF HIS SONS.” IN SOME LANGUAGES THE FIRST LINE OF THE VERSE COMES MORE APPROPRIATELY AT THE END; FOR EXAMPLE, “JACOB SPOKE LIKE THAT AND.… HE GAVE THE RIGHT WORD TO EACH OF HIS SONS. FROM THOSE TWELVE SONS THE TWELVE TRIBES OF ISRAEL WERE DESCENDED.”**

**THE DEATH AND BURIAL OF JACOB (49:29–50:14)**

**IN THIS SUBDIVISION JACOB REQUESTS HIS SONS TO BURY HIM AT MACHPELAH, WHERE HIS PARENTS AND HIS GRANDPARENTS ARE BURIED. AFTER INSTRUCTING HIS SONS WHERE TO BURY HIM, HE DIES (49:29–33). JOSEPH GIVES ORDERS FOR HIS FATHER TO BE EMBALMED, AND THEN SEVENTY DAYS OF MOURNING ARE OBSERVED (50:1–3). JOSEPH ASKS THE KING FOR PERMISSION TO TAKE JACOB’S BODY TO CANAAN FOR BURIAL (50:4–6). ACCOMPANIED BY MANY PEOPLE JOSEPH GOES NORTH UNTIL REACHING A PLACE EAST OF THE JORDAN, WHERE HE CONDUCTS MOURNING RITES FOR SEVEN DAYS (50:7–11). AFTER THE BURIAL JOSEPH AND ALL WHO WENT WITH HIM RETURN AGAIN TO EGYPT (50:12–14).**

**SUBDIVISION HEADING**

**TRANSLATORS MAY WISH TO REPLACE THE NOUNS “DEATH” AND “BURIAL” IN THE HANDBOOK HEADING WITH VERBS; FOR EXAMPLE, “JACOB DIES AND THEY BURY HIS BODY AT MACHPELAH.” BEFORE VERSE 29 FRCL HAS “THE DEATH OF JACOB” AND BEFORE 50:1 “JACOB’S FUNERAL.” NJB HAS “JACOB’S LAST MOMENTS” BEFORE VERSE 29 AND “JACOB’S FUNERAL” BEFORE 50:1. SPCL HAS ONE HEADING AS IN THE HANDBOOK: “DEATH OF JACOB.”**

**GENESIS 49:29: THEN HE CHARGED THEM: SEE 18:19. GATHERED TO MY PEOPLE: SEE 25:8 AND 17. IN SOME TRANSLATIONS THIS EXPRESSES JACOB’S FEELING THAT HE IS ABOUT TO DIE: “I FEEL THAT I’M CLOSE TO DEATH.” BURY ME WITH MY FATHERS: SEE JACOB’S EARLIER INSTRUCTIONS TO JOSEPH IN 47:30. IN SOME LANGUAGES THIS MUST BE “TAKE MY BODY TO CANAAN AND BURY ME.…” CAVE THAT IS IN THE FIELD … HITTITE: FOR THE WORDING SEE 25:9.**

**GENESIS 49:30: THE [MYSTERIOUS] CAVE THAT IS IN THE FIELD AT MACHPELAH … WHICH ABRAHAM BOUGHT … BURYING PLACE: SEE 25:9–10.**

**GENESIS 49:31: SEE TEV. AND TEV ARE GOOD MODELS. EXAMPLES OF RENDERINGS FROM TWO OTHER TRANSLATIONS ARE “THESE ARE THE WORDS THE OLD MAN GAVE TO THEM WHEN HE SPOKE HIS LAST WORDS, AND HE GAVE WORDS APPROPRIATE TO EACH ONE OF THEM,” AND “LIKE THIS THE OLD MAN JACOB SPOKE TO HIS TWELVE SONS AND SAID GOOD-BYE TO THEM. HE GAVE THE RIGHT WORD TO EACH OF HIS SONS.” IN SOME LANGUAGES THE FIRST LINE OF THE VERSE COMES MORE APPROPRIATELY AT THE END; FOR EXAMPLE, “JACOB SPOKE LIKE THAT AND.… HE GAVE THE RIGHT WORD TO EACH OF HIS SONS. FROM THOSE TWELVE SONS THE TWELVE TRIBES OF ISRAEL WERE DESCENDED.”**

**GENESIS 49:32: SEE VERSE 30. GENESIS 49:30: THE [MYSTERIOUS] CAVE THAT IS IN THE FIELD AT MACHPELAH … WHICH ABRAHAM BOUGHT … BURYING PLACE: SEE 25:9–10.**

**GENESIS 49:33: DREW UP HIS FEET INTO THE BED: SEE TEV. GATHERED TO HIS PEOPLE: SEE VERSE 29. GENESIS 49:29: THEN HE CHARGED THEM: SEE 18:19. GATHERED TO MY PEOPLE: SEE 25:8 AND 17. IN SOME TRANSLATIONS THIS EXPRESSES JACOB’S FEELING THAT HE IS ABOUT TO DIE: “I FEEL THAT I’M CLOSE TO DEATH.” BURY ME WITH MY FATHERS: SEE JACOB’S EARLIER INSTRUCTIONS TO JOSEPH IN 47:30. IN SOME LANGUAGES THIS MUST BE “TAKE MY BODY TO CANAAN AND BURY ME.…” CAVE THAT IS IN THE FIELD … HITTITE: FOR THE WORDING SEE 25:9.**

**GENESIS 50:1: FELL ON HIS FATHER’S FACE: IN 17:3 WE HAD THE EXPRESSION “ABRAHAM FELL ON HIS FACE,” AN IDIOM MEANING “TO BOW DOWN BEFORE.” IN 33:4 ESAU “FELL ON HIS [JACOB’S] NECK,” THAT IS, HE EMBRACED HIM. HERE ANOTHER FORM OF THIS IDIOM IS USED IN THE SENSE OF A GRIEVING EMBRACE. JOSEPH’S ACTION IS THAT OF BENDING DOWN AND EMBRACING HIS FATHER IN GREAT SORROW. TEV AND SOME OTHER VERSIONS “THREW HIMSELF ON HIS FATHER” GIVES A DIFFERENT PICTURE—OF AN ACTION THAT MAY BE REGARDED AS UNNATURAL OR VERY INAPPROPRIATE IN SOME CULTURES. THIS IS NOT RECOMMENDED AS A MODEL UNLESS IT ACCORDS WITH CUSTOM IN THE TRANSLATOR’S CULTURE. WEPT OVER HIM AND KISSED HIM: THAT IS, JOSEPH CRIED AND KISSED HIS FATHER’S FACE AS AN EXPRESSION OF HIS SORROW AND LOVE. FOR KISS SEE 27:26. IN CULTURES IN WHICH JOSEPH’S RESPONSE TO HIS FATHER’S DEATH MAY APPEAR STRANGE OR EVEN COMICAL, TRANSLATORS HAVE TWO OPTIONS. EITHER THEY MAY SUBSTITUTE THE KIND OF GRIEF RESPONSE PRACTICED LOCALLY, OR TRANSLATE WHAT JOSEPH DID AND ADD A FOOTNOTE SAYING, FOR EXAMPLE, “THIS IS THE WAY THE ANCIENT HEBREWS DID, WHICH IS EQUIVALENT TO THE CUSTOM OF …” (AND STATE THE LOCAL CUSTOM).**

**GENESIS 50:2: JOSEPH COMMANDED HIS SERVANTS THE PHYSICIANS TO EMBALM HIS FATHER: PHYSICIANS TRANSLATES A NOUN RELATED TO THE VERB MEANING “TO HEAL.” THE VERB FORM IS USED, FOR EXAMPLE, IN 20:17, WHERE ABRAHAM PRAYED FOR ABIMELECH AND GOD “HEALED” HIM AND HIS FAMILY. PHYSICIANS OR “HEALERS” IS USED HERE IN A GENERAL WAY TO INCLUDE “MORTICIANS,” WHOSE JOB IT WAS TO PREPARE BODIES FOR BURIAL. THESE PEOPLE WERE IN JOSEPH’S SERVICE, AS ALL OTHERS UNDER THE KING OF EGYPT WERE. NOTE THAT TEV DOES NOT USE A TERM FOR PHYSICIANS IN VERSE 2. TO EMBALM REFERS TO THE PROCESS USED BY THE EGYPTIANS TO PRESERVE THE BODIES OF HUMANS AND SOME ANIMALS. THE INTERNAL ORGANS WERE REMOVED AND THE BODY WAS DRIED OUT. SPICES AND OILS WERE APPLIED, AND THEN THE BODY WAS TIGHTLY WRAPPED WITH LINEN STRIPS. FINALLY, THE BODY WAS PLACED IN A DECORATED MUMMY CASE. SOME OF THESE PROCEDURES MAY BE SEEN IN PAINTINGS ON THE WALLS OF EGYPTIAN TOMBS. THE REASON FOR PRESERVING JACOB’S BODY IS THAT, BEING JOSEPH’S FATHER, HE IS TREATED AS A PERSON OF HIGH RANK. MOREOVER, THE LONG TRIP BACK TO CANAAN WITH THE BODY MADE IT ESSENTIAL.**

**SO, THE PHYSICIANS EMBALMED ISRAEL: IT IS NOT ALWAYS NECESSARY TO REPEAT THE WORD EMBALM. FOR EXAMPLE, WE MAY SAY “SO THEY DID AS JOSEPH HAD ORDERED THEM” OR “SO THEY DID WHAT JOSEPH TOLD THEM.” IF TRANSLATORS HAVE SUBSTITUTED “JACOB” FOR ISRAEL THUS FAR, THEY SHOULD CONTINUE TO DO SO HERE, IF THE NAME IS EXPRESSED IN THIS SENTENCE. BECAUSE EMBALMING IS UNKNOWN IN MANY LANGUAGE AREAS, A MORE GENERAL EXPRESSION WILL OFTEN BE NECESSARY; FOR EXAMPLE, “JOSEPH ORDERED THE HEALERS [DOCTORS, MORTICIANS, THOSE WHO TAKE CARE OF DEAD BODIES] TO PREPARE HIS FATHER’S BODY FOR BURIAL” OR “JOSEPH ORDERED THE MEN IN HIS SERVICE WHOSE JOB IT WAS TO HANDLE DEAD BODIES TO PREPARE HIS FATHER FOR BURIAL.” A NUMBER OF TRANSLATIONS RENDER EMBALM AS “PUT OINTMENTS ON HIS BODY SO THAT IT WOULD NOT DECAY [GO ROTTEN].” TRANSLATORS MAY FIND IT NECESSARY TO PROVIDE READERS WITH A FOOTNOTE OR GLOSSARY NOTE IN ORDER TO EXPLAIN HOW JACOB’S BODY COULD BE PRESERVED WELL ENOUGH TO CARRY IT ALL THE WAY BACK TO HIS BURIAL PLACE AT MACHPELAH. IN THAT CASE AN EXPLANATORY NOTE BASED ON THE INFORMATION GIVEN HERE MAY BE ADEQUATE. ANOTHER POTENTIAL PROBLEM IN THIS VERSE FOR READERS IN CERTAIN CULTURES IS THAT IN THESE CULTURES THE TASK OF PREPARING A BODY FOR BURIAL IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF A PERSON IN A PARTICULAR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE DEAD PERSON, A SON OR DAUGHTER OR SOME OTHER RELATIVE; AND THIS RESPONSIBILITY CANNOT BE PASSED OVER TO OTHERS. IN THIS CASE AGAIN A FOOTNOTE MAY BE REQUIRED TO EXPLAIN THAT JACOB’S BODY WAS EMBALMED FOLLOWING THE CUSTOMS THAT APPLIED IN EGYPT.**

**GENESIS 50:3: FORTY DAYS WERE REQUIRED FOR IT: THAT IS, “THE WORK OF PRESERVING THE BODY TOOK FORTY DAYS.” THIS SENTENCE GIVES AN EXPLANATION OF THE TIME INVOLVED, PARTICULARLY FOR THE HEBREWS, WHO DID NOT PRACTICE THIS CUSTOM. FOR SO MANY ARE REQUIRED FOR EMBALMING: THE EXPLANATION IS REPEATED, PERHAPS FOR EMPHASIS. SEE THE WAY TEV HANDLES THIS REPETITION. THE EGYPTIANS WEPT FOR HIM SEVENTY DAYS: ACCORDING TO ONE ANCIENT GREEK HISTORIAN, THE EGYPTIANS MOURNED FOR A KING FOR SEVENTY-TWO DAYS. JACOB IS BEING GIVEN HONORS NEARLY EQUAL TO THAT GIVEN A KING. THE LITERAL EXPRESSION IS WEPT, OR “CRIED,” AND THIS IS ALSO THE EXPRESSION USED IN A NUMBER OF OTHER LANGUAGES. IF THIS IS NOT THE CASE, THE THOUGHT MAY BE BETTER EXPRESSED AS “MOURNED.”**

**GENESIS 50:4: WHEN THE DAYS OF WEEPING FOR HIM WERE PAST: THAT IS, “WHEN THE TIME OF MOURNING WAS OVER.” SOME LANGUAGES HAVE SET EXPRESSIONS FOR THE PERIOD OF MOURNING AFTER A PERSON’S DEATH, AND SUCH EXPRESSIONS WILL USUALLY BE APPROPRIATE IN THIS CONTEXT; FOR EXAMPLE, “THE CONTINUALLY WAILING TIME” OR “TIME OF SADNESS AND CRYING.” HOUSEHOLD OF PHARAOH: JOSEPH MAKES HIS REQUEST THROUGH WHAT IS LITERALLY “THE HOUSEOF PHARAOH,” WHICH MEANS HERE THE OFFICERS OF THE KING’S COURT. THE REASON FOR NOT GOING DIRECTLY TO THE KING IS PROBABLY THAT JOSEPH WAS STILL IN MOURNING, OR THAT HIS HEAD AND BEARD WERE STILL SHAVED. IT WOULD NOT BE ACCEPTABLE FOR JOSEPH, WHO HAD BEEN INVOLVED WITH A CORPSE, TO HAVE CONTACT WITH THIS GOD-KING. IF NOW I HAVE FOUND FAVOR IN YOUR EYES: FOR THIS MUCH-REPEATED EXPRESSION SEE 6:8; 18:3; 33:10; AND ESPECIALLY 47:29. SPEAK … IN THE EARS OF PHARAOH: NOTE HOW TEV HAS EXPRESSED THIS: “PLEASE TAKE THIS MESSAGE TO THE KING.” WE MAY ALSO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “JOSEPH SAID TO THE KING’S OFFICIALS, ‘PLEASE GO TO THE KING AND TELL HIM THIS: …,’” OR “‘… AND MAKE THIS REQUEST ON MY BEHALF: …’”**

**GENESIS 50:5: MY FATHER MADE ME SWEAR: SEE 47:29–31 FOR THIS EVENT. IN LANGUAGES WHERE THE NAME OR RELATIONSHIP OF A DEAD PERSON ARE NOT MENTIONED FOR A TIME AFTER DEATH, TRANSLATORS USUALLY SAY SOMETHING LIKE “THAT DEAD ONE MADE ME PROMISE BEFORE.…” SAYING ‘I AM ABOUT TO DIE’: JOSEPH TELLS THE COURT OFFICIALS THE STORY OF JACOB’S LAST REQUEST IN THE FIRST PERSON (AS TOLD BY JACOB TO JOSEPH). THIS MAY NEED TO BE TRANSLATED, FOR EXAMPLE, “WHEN HE SAID THESE WORDS TO ME, ‘I AM ABOUT TO DIE.…’” IN SOME LANGUAGES IT WILL BE MORE NATURAL TO RETELL JACOB’S REQUEST IN THE THIRD PERSON; FOR EXAMPLE, “TELL HIM THAT MY FATHER MADE ME SWEAR WHEN HE WAS DYING THAT I WOULD BURY HIM IN THE GRAVE HE HAD DUG FOR HIMSELF IN CANAAN.” THE WORDING IN THIS VERSE IS QUITE DIFFERENT THAN THAT SPOKEN BY JACOB IN 47:29–31. NOTE THAT JOSEPH CAREFULLY AVOIDS SAYING THAT HIS FATHER DID NOT WANT TO BE BURIED IN EGYPT. THEREFORE, HE EXPRESSES JACOB’S WISH AS IN MY TOMB WHICH I HEWED OUT FOR MYSELF IN THE LAND OF CANAAN, THAT IS, “IN THE GRAVE I DUG FOR MYSELF IN CANAAN.” THE WORD RENDERED HEWED OUT MAY BE UNDERSTOOD AS RELATED TO EITHER ONE OF TWO SIMILAR HEBREW VERBS MEANING “TO DIG” AND “TO BUY.” THIS EXPLAINS TRANSLATIONS LIKE REB, “THAT HE HAD BOUGHT FOR HIMSELF.” MANY TRANSLATIONS USE A WORD MEANING “TO PREPARE.” SOME HAVE A MORE GENERAL EXPRESSION LIKE “… RIGHT BACK TO HIS OWN GRAVEYARD IN CANAAN.” THERE SHALL YOU BURY ME: THE RSV CLAUSE ORDER IN THIS VERSE FOLLOWS THE HEBREW CLOSELY, BUT IT MUST BE REORDERED IN MANY LANGUAGES. FOR A MODEL SEE TEV. NOW THEREFORE LET ME GO UP: JOSEPH HAS COMPLETED THE TELLING OF JACOB’S REQUEST AND NOW ADDRESSES THE KING (INDIRECTLY) WITH HIS OWN REQUEST. GO UP MEANS “GO TO CANAAN,” “GO BURY HIM,” OR “GO TO CANAAN AND BURY MY FATHER.”**

**GENESIS 50:6: AND PHARAOH ANSWERED: THE KING’S REPLY IS IN THE SECOND PERSON, AS THOUGH IT WERE SPOKEN DIRECTLY TO JOSEPH. REB MAKES THE ANSWER LESS DIRECT BY SAYING “PHARAOH’S REPLY WAS.…” SOME OTHER TRANSLATIONS SAY “THE KING SENT WORD BACK, LIKE THIS.…” GO UP … AS HE MADE YOU SWEAR: MANY TRANSLATIONS KEEP THE SECOND PERSON AS IN RSV AND TEV. IT MAY, HOWEVER, BE DESIRABLE TO ADJUST THE WORDING TO AGREE WITH THE INDIRECTNESS IN WHICH JOSEPH’S REQUEST WAS MADE. THIS IS DONE, FOR EXAMPLE, BY FRCL, WHICH SAYS “PHARAOH ALLOWED JOSEPH TO GO AND BURY HIS FATHER AND THUS TO KEEP HIS PROMISE.” TRANSLATORS MAY FIND THIS A HELPFUL MODEL.**

**GENESIS 50:7: VERSES 50:7–9 LIST THOSE GROUPS THAT TOOK PART IN THE FUNERAL PROCESSION TO CANAAN. ALL THE SERVANTS OF PHARAOH: WESTERMANN SAYS THAT THE USE OF ALL IS DELIBERATE EXAGGERATION. HOWEVER, ALL TRANSLATORS KEEP IT IN ENGLISH, AND IT IS A LITERARY DEVICE THAT WILL BE ACCEPTABLE IN MANY OTHER LANGUAGES ALSO. THIS GROUP PROBABLY REFERS TO ADMINISTRATORS IN THE GOVERNMENT WHO HAD CLOSE DEALINGS WITH JOSEPH. ELDERS OF HIS HOUSEHOLD: THESE ARE THE HIGHEST-RANKING COURT OFFICIALS, ADVISORS TO THE KING. THEY MAY BE A DIFFERENT GROUP THAN THE PREVIOUS ONE, BUT SPEISER DEFINES THE FIRST GROUP AS BEING THESE SAME MEN BY TRANSLATING “ALL OF PHARAOH’S OFFICIALS WHO WERE SENIOR MEMBERS OF HIS COURT.” ALL THE ELDERS OF THE LAND OF EGYPT: THE WORD ELDERS OR “OLD MEN,” USED IN BOTH EXPRESSIONS, REFERS TO HIGHLY PLACED DIGNITARIES, IMPORTANT OFFICIALS WHOSE EXACT OFFICE OR FUNCTION IS NOT STATED. IN SOME LANGUAGES THE ELDERS OF THE TRIBE ARE REFERRED TO AS “THE BIG MEN,” “THE OLD MEN,” OR “THOSE WHO SIT NEAR THE CHIEF.”**

**GENESIS 50:8: ALL THE HOUSEHOLD OF JOSEPH REFERS TO JOSEPH’S OWN FAMILY. HIS BROTHERS ARE THE SONS OF JACOB. HIS FATHER’S HOUSEHOLD REFERS TO THE MEMBERS OF JACOB’S FAMILY. BECAUSE HIS BROTHERS ARE PART OF THIS GROUP, TEV SAYS “AND THE REST OF HIS FATHER’S FAMILY.” IT IS LIKELY THAT ALL IS A LITERARY EXAGGERATION IN THIS VERSE ALSO, AND THAT THERE WERE PROBABLY SOME OF THE WOMEN AND SOME OF THE SERVANTS WHO DID NOT MAKE THE JOURNEY, BESIDES THE CHILDREN MENTIONED IN THE NEXT SENTENCE. ONLY THEIR CHILDREN: THE WORD RENDERED CHILDREN IS A COLLECTIVE NOUN THAT GENERALLY REFERS TO SMALL CHILDREN; IT IS RELATED IN HEBREW TO A VERB THAT MEANS TO TAKE LITTLE STEPS. THESE SMALL CHILDREN AND THE ANIMALS WERE LEFT BEHIND IN GOSHEN. WE MUST ASSUME THAT THERE WERE SERVANTS AND OTHERS TO TAKE CARE OF THEM; SOME TRANSLATIONS MAKE THIS CLEAR BY SAYING “ONLY THE SMALL CHILDREN AND SOME SERVANTS, WITH THE ANIMALS.…” A DIFFERENT UNDERSTANDING OF THE HEBREW WORD IS FOLLOWED BY NJB, WHICH TAKES IT TO MEAN IN THIS CONTEXT PEOPLE WHO WERE NOT FIT TO MAKE THE LONG JOURNEY: “THE ONLY PEOPLE THEY LEFT BEHIND … WERE THOSE UNFIT TO TRAVEL.” FLOCKS MEANS SHEEP AND GOATS, AND HERDS REFERS TO CATTLE.**

**GENESIS 50:9: IN ADDITION TO ALL THE ABOVE THERE WAS A MILITARY PRESENCE. FOR CHARIOTS SEE 41:43. HORSEMEN REFERS TO MEN WHO RODE HORSES. WE MAY TRANSLATE AS IN TEV OR SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “SOLDIERS RIDING IN CHARIOTS AND ON HORSES.” A VERY GREAT COMPANY: GREAT MAY EXPRESS THE SIZE OF THE PROCESSION, ITS APPEARANCE, THE RANK OF THE PEOPLE, OR ALL OF THESE. MOST TRANSLATIONS SAY SOMETHING LIKE “A BIG CROWD OF PEOPLE WENT TO THAT FUNERAL.”**

**GENESIS 50:10: A THRESHING FLOOR IS A FLAT OPEN AREA ON THE GROUND WHERE GRAIN WAS PLACED TO DRY AFTER HARVESTING IT, AND WHERE IT WAS LATER BEATEN OR CRUSHED TO SEPARATE THE GRAIN FROM THE HUSKS. THE LOCATION OF ATAD, WHICH MEANS “BRAMBLES,” IS NOT KNOWN. SOME TRANSLATORS DO NOT TRANSLATE AS THRESHING FLOOR OF ATAD BUT KEEP THE HEBREW FORM IN FULL AS THE NAME OF THE PLACE: “GOREN-HA-ATAD.” AS THIS IS NOT A KNOWN PLACE, THERE IS NO ADVANTAGE IN TRANSLITERATING IT. SOME TRANSLATIONS RESTRUCTURE THE FIRST PART OF THE VERSE TO SEPARATE THE NAME OF THE PLACE FROM THE ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT IT: “THEY CAME TO THE PLACE ATAD ON THE EAST SIDE OF THE JORDAN RIVER.… THIS WAS A PLACE WHERE THEY USED TO SEPARATE THE WHEAT SEEDS FROM THE CHAFF AND RUBBISH.” BEYOND THE JORDAN: THIS MAY MEAN EAST OF THE JORDAN RIVER, BUT SINCE THE PLACE IS NOT KNOWN, WE CANNOT KNOW HOW FAR EAST. IF THE DESTINATION OF THE FUNERAL PROCESSION WAS THE CAVE OF MACHPELAH NEAR HEBRON (23:19), WE MUST ASSUME THEY DID NOT FOLLOW THE CARAVAN ROUTE ALONG THE SEA COAST TO BEERSHEBA BUT RATHER TRAVELED ACROSS SINAI TO THE AREA EAST OF THE JORDAN (VON RAD). THEY LAMENTED THERE WITH A VERY GREAT … LAMENTATION: THIS IS LITERALLY “THEY MOURNED THERE A VERY GREAT AND HEAVY MOURNING,” WHICH EMPHASIZES THE EXTENT OF THE MOURNING RITUALS. NOTE TEV “LOUDLY FOR A LONG TIME.” FRCL SAYS “THERE THEY CELEBRATED A SOLEMN FUNERAL CEREMONY THAT WAS VERY IMPRESSIVE.” THE DETAILS OF SUCH MOURNING RITUALS ARE NOT WELL KNOWN, BUT THEY PROBABLY INCLUDED LOUD WAILING, CHANTING DIRGES, AND PEOPLE BEATING THEIR BODIES. TRANSLATORS MAY BE ABLE TO USE THE TERMS THAT EXPRESS MOURNING IN THEIR OWN CULTURES. THE CEREMONY THAT JOSEPH ORGANIZED LASTED FOR SEVEN DAYS, WHICH IS THE PERIOD OF MOURNING IN ISRAEL (1 SAM 31:13). IN THE WORDS OF ONE TRANSLATION, “THERE JOSEPH HAD THAT CEREMONY OF MOURNING THE DEAD ONE, FOR ONE WEEK.”**

**GENESIS 50:11: INHABITANTS OF THE LAND: THESE ARE IDENTIFIED IN THIS VERSE AS THE CANAANITES. WE MAY THEREFORE TRANSLATE “WHEN THE PEOPLE OF CANAAN SAW.…” SAW THE MOURNING ON …: THAT IS, “SAW HOW THE PEOPLE WERE MOURNING AT THE THRESHING FLOOR OF ATAD.…” THEY SAID MAY NEED TO BE EXPRESSED AS “SAID TO EACH OTHER” OR “SAID TO THEMSELVES.” THIS IS A GRIEVOUS MOURNING TO THE EGYPTIANS: THIS COMMENT MADE BY THE CANAANITES IS SAID TO PROVIDE AN EXPLANATION FOR THE NAME OF THE PLACE IN THE NEXT SENTENCE. THE WORD RENDERED MOURNING BY RSV IS ’EBEL. THE EXPRESSION IS LITERALLY “A HEAVY MOURNING,” WHICH MEANS “A VERY SAD MOURNING.” NOTE HOW TEV EXPRESSES THE EMPHATIC CHARACTER OF THIS REMARK. THEREFORE, THE PLACE WAS NAMED ABEL-MIZRAIM: SEE FOOTNOTES OF RSV AND TEV. AS IN MOST OF THE EXPLANATIONS OF THE ORIGINS OF NAMES IN GENESIS, IT IS THE SIMILARITY OF SOUND BETWEEN TWO WORDS THAT IS SAID TO BE THE EXPLANATION OF THE NAME. TRANSLATORS MAY FOLLOW THE MODELS OF RSV AND TEV. IT IS BEYOND THE JORDAN: TEV DOES NOT REPEAT THIS STATEMENT, WHICH WAS MADE IN VERSE 10.**

**GENESIS 50:12: VERSES 12–13 GIVE A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THE BURIAL OF JACOB. SOME INTERPRETERS UNDERSTAND THESE VERSES TO FOLLOW DIRECTLY FROM 49:33. NOTE THAT NO MENTION IS MADE OF THE EGYPTIANS. VERSE 12 SUMMARIZES THE BURIAL, AND VERSE 13 GIVES SOME DETAILS. THUS, HIS SONS DID FOR HIM AS HE HAD COMMANDED THEM: BOTH RSV AND TEV TRANSLATE THE HEBREW CONNECTIVE AS A MARKER OF A CONCLUSION. IN SOME LANGUAGES A FULLER EXPRESSION MAY BE USED, LIKE “IN THIS WAY THE SONS OF JACOB DID.…”**

**GENESIS 50:13: HIS SONS CARRIED HIM TO THE LAND OF CANAAN: CARRIED TRANSLATES A VERB MEANING “TO LIFT,” “TO CARRY,” OR “TO TAKE.” IN THIS CONTEXT IT MAY BE BETTER TO USE A MORE GENERAL TERM SUCH AS “TAKE” OR “TRANSPORT.” SEE NEB/REB. THE REMAINDER OF THIS VERSE IS TAKEN ENTIRELY FROM 49:30.**

**GENESIS 50:14: IN VERSE 14 JOSEPH APPEARS AGAIN AS THE LEADING FIGURE. AFTER HE HAD BURIED HIS FATHER: THE HEBREW TEXT SAYS “JOSEPH RETURNED AND HIS BROTHERS AND ALL THOSE WHO WENT WITH HIM TO BURY HIS FATHER AFTER HE BURIED HIS FATHER.” HOTTP RATES “TO BURY HIS FATHER … BURIED HIS FATHER” AS AN {A} AND SUPPORTS RSV’S RENDERING, WHICH IMPROVES ON THE HOTTP MODEL. HOWEVER, TEV, WHICH REPLACES THE FINAL “TO BURY HIS FATHER” WITH “FOR THE FUNERAL,” IS A BETTER ENGLISH LANGUAGE MODEL.**

**JOSEPH COMFORTS HIS BROTHERS (50:15–21)**

**IN THIS SUBDIVISION JOSEPH CALMS HIS BROTHERS’ FEAR THAT HE WILL TAKE REVENGE ON THEM FOR THE WRONG THEY DID TO HIM. NOW THAT THEIR FATHER IS NO LONGER WITH THEM, THE BROTHERS ARE AFRAID THAT JOSEPH MAY SEEK REVENGE FOR THE WAY THEY MISTREATED HIM. THEREFORE, THEY SEND A MESSAGE TO JOSEPH, ASKING HIM TO FORGIVE THEM. THE BROTHERS COME TO JOSEPH AND BOW DOWN BEFORE HIM AND DECLARE THEMSELVES TO BE HIS SERVANTS (VERSES 15–18). HOWEVER, JOSEPH REPEATS WHAT HE HAD SAID IN 45:5–8, THAT GOD MEANT THEIR EVIL TO BE USED FOR GOOD AND TO SAVE MANY LIVES. IN THIS WAY HE COMFORTS THEM (VERSES 19–21).**

**SUBDIVISION HEADING**

**THE HANDBOOK HEADING MAY NEED TO BE REWORDED TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “JOSEPH CALMS THE FEARS OF HIS BROTHER” OR “JOSEPH ASSURES HIS BROTHERS.” FRCL HAS “AFTER THE DEATH OF JACOB,” SPCL “FINAL DAYS OF JOSEPH,” NJB “FROM THE DEATH OF JACOB TO THE DEATH OF JOSEPH.” HOWEVER, THESE LAST HEADINGS COVER THE REST OF THIS CHAPTER AS A SINGLE UNIT.**

**GENESIS 50:15: AS THIS IS A NEW TOPIC THAT TAKES PLACE AFTER THE PREVIOUS EVENTS, IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO INDICATE THE TRANSITION. WE MAY SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “AFTER JACOB HAD BEEN BURIED,” “WHEN THE FUNERAL WAS OVER,” OR “SOME TIME AFTER THE FUNERAL.” WHEN JOSEPH’S BROTHERS SAW THAT THEIR FATHER WAS DEAD: SAW THAT … MAY NEED TO BE EXPRESSED HERE AS A TIME EXPRESSION AS IN TEV. IF A TRANSITIONAL PHRASE IS USED, WE MAY SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “WHEN THE FUNERAL WAS OVER AND THE BROTHERS NO LONGER HAD THEIR FATHER WITH THEM, THEY SAID.…” SAW THAT … DEAD TRANSLATES THE HEBREW LITERALLY AND MEANS “REALIZED THEY WERE NOW WITHOUT THEIR FATHER.” IT MAY BE THAT JOSEPH WILL HATE US: THE BROTHERS HAVE A LINGERING FEAR THAT THE POWERFUL JOSEPH, NO LONGER INFLUENCED BY HIS FATHER, MAY TAKE REVENGE ON THEM. TEV AND OTHERS USE A QUESTION FORM: “WHAT IF …?” FRCL RESTRUCTURES TO SAY “JOSEPH’S BROTHERS SAID TO THEMSELVES, ‘NOW THAT OUR FATHER IS DEAD, JOSEPH COULD WELL TURN AGAINST US.…’” ANOTHER MODEL IS SPCL: “SINCE JACOB HAD DIED, JOSEPH’S BROTHERS THOUGHT ‘PERHAPS JOSEPH HATES US AND IS GOING TO AVENGE HIMSELF.…’” EXAMPLES FROM TRANSLATIONS IN OTHER LANGUAGES ARE “WHAT NOW? IT WILL BE NO GOOD IF JOSEPH IS STILL CROSS WITH US …,” “IF JOSEPH STILL FEELS BAD AND WANTS TO PAY US BACK, WHAT WILL HAPPEN?” AND “PERHAPS JOSEPH STILL KEEPS US IN HIS INSIDES FOR THAT BAD THING WE DID.… HE MIGHT PAY US BACK BECAUSE OUR FATHER IS DEAD NOW.” AS IN 27:41 HATE MEANS TO BEAR A GRUDGE OR HOLD BAD FEELINGS AGAINST SOMEONE, TO RESENT SOMEONE. PAY US BACK IN THIS CONTEXT MEANS “TO GET EVEN,” “TO TAKE REVENGE.” WE MAY TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO US IF JOSEPH DECIDES TO …?” ALL THE EVIL: THAT IS, “ALL THE BAD THINGS,” OR “ALL THE WRONG.”**

**GENESIS 50:16: THE BROTHERS SAY THAT JACOB TOLD THEM TO SAY THIS TO JOSEPH SO THAT HE WILL LISTEN TO THEM AND FORGIVE THEM FOR HIS FATHER’S SAKE. WE HAVE NO WAY OF KNOWING WHETHER WHAT THE BROTHERS SAID IS TRUE, AND THIS IS A PROBLEM FOR LANGUAGES THAT MUST USE MARKERS OR VERB FORMS TO INDICATE THE TRUTH OR OTHERWISE OF WHAT PEOPLE SAY. TRANSLATORS WHO FACE THIS DIFFICULTY ARE ADVISED TO GIVE THE BROTHERS THE BENEFIT OF THE DOUBT. NOTE VON RAD’S COMMENT: “THAT THE APPEAL TO AN ORDER OF JACOB RELATING TO THIS SHOULD BE CONSIDERED A LIE ON THE PART OF THE BROTHERS … IS AN ANCIENT BUT CERTAINLY QUITE FALSE ASSUMPTION.” SO, THEY SENT A MESSAGE TO JOSEPH: THE HEBREW IS LITERALLY “AND THEY COMMANDED TO JOSEPH.” HOTTP SAYS THE VERB “COMMANDED” HAS THE SENSE OF “THEY MADE KNOWN TO HIM THE ORDER,” WHICH CAN BE EXPRESSED IN ENGLISH AS IN RSV AND TEV. YOUR FATHER: THIS FOLLOWS THE HEBREW AND IS NO DOUBT SAID IN THIS WAY TO GIVE THE COMMAND A PERSONAL CONNECTION WITH JOSEPH. NOTE THAT TEV SAYS “OUR FATHER,” AND THIS CHANGE WILL BE NECESSARY IN SOME OTHER LANGUAGES ALSO.**

**GENESIS 50:17: SAY TO JOSEPH: RSV INCLUDES THESE WORDS IN THE MESSAGE GIVEN BY JACOB. NOTE THAT TEV SAYS “HE TOLD US TO ASK YOU, ‘PLEASE.…’” TRANSLATORS MUST DECIDE WHAT FORM IS MOST NATURAL FOR THE LANGUAGE OF TRANSLATION. FORGIVE … THE TRANSGRESSION … AND THEIR SIN: FORGIVE, WHICH IS USED HERE FOR THE FIRST TIME IN GENESIS, TRANSLATES A VERB MEANING “TO LIFT UP.” THE IDEA IS THAT JOSEPH IS ASKED TO “LIFT,” “REMOVE,” “TAKE AWAY” THE WRONG THAT HIS BROTHERS DID TO HIM. FORGIVE IS SOMETIMES EXPRESSED AS “WIPE AWAY THE EVIL,” “THROW THE SIN FROM US,” OR “TAKE THE BURDEN [GUILT] FROM US.” IN A NUMBER OF LANGUAGES, THE IDEA OF LETTING GO OR RELEASING IS USED: “PLEASE LET GO THAT BIG WRONG AND THE SIN YOUR BROTHERS …,” OR “LET YOUR BROTHERS GO FREE FROM THAT BAD THING THEY DID.” TRANSGRESSION, WHICH RENDERS A WORD MEANING REBELLION OR DISOBEDIENCE, IS OFTEN EXPRESSED AS “CRIME,” “WRONG,” OR “EVIL.” SIN IS HERE MORE GENERAL. NOTE TEV “CRIME … WHEN THEY WRONGED YOU.” BECAUSE THEY DID EVIL TO YOU: RSV BECAUSE RENDERS A HEBREW PARTICLE THAT MEANS “SURELY” AND MAKES THE STATEMENT EMPHATIC, “FOR THEY CERTAINLY WRONGED YOU.” THIS IS THE END OF THE COMMAND THAT JACOB LEFT. WE PRAY YOU, FORGIVE … FATHER: IN THIS SENTENCE THE BROTHERS APPEAL TO JOSEPH ON THEIR COMMON RELIGIOUS GROUNDS. SERVANTS … FATHER MAY REQUIRE SOME RESTRUCTURING, SINCE THE BROTHERS ARE REFERRING TO THEMSELVES. FOR EXAMPLE, IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO SAY “FORGIVE US THE WRONG WE DID, WE WHO ARE THE SERVANTS OF THE GOD YOUR FATHER WORSHIPED” OR “FORGIVE US.… WE SERVE THE SAME GOD YOUR FATHER SERVED.” JOSEPH WEPT WHEN THEY SPOKE TO HIM: THAT IS, “JOSEPH CRIED WHEN HE HEARD THEIR MESSAGE” OR “JOSEPH CRIED WHEN HE HEARD WHAT THEY HAD SAID.” SEE TEV. THE HEBREW VERB FOR “SPOKE” DOES NOT REQUIRE THAT THE BROTHERS DELIVERED THEIR WORDS IN PERSON BUT THAT THE WORDS IN SOME WAY WERE ADDRESSED TO JOSEPH.**

**GENESIS 50:18: IN VERSE 18 THE BROTHERS SPEAK FACE TO FACE WITH JOSEPH. FELL DOWN BEFORE HIM: SEE 44:14. SAID, ‘BEHOLD, WE ARE YOUR SERVANTS’: SEE 44:16. SOME TRANSLATIONS USE AN EXPRESSION FOR SAID THAT ALSO EXPRESSES HUMILITY; FOR EXAMPLE, “THEY SPOKE IN A CRAWLING [HUMBLE] WAY AND SAID.…”**

**GENESIS 50:19: FEAR NOT: SEE 15:1, WHERE THE LORD SPEAKS THE SAME WORDS TO ABRAHAM. AM I IN THE PLACE OF GOD? IN 30:2 THIS SAME EXPRESSION IS USED BY JACOB IN REPLY TO RACHEL’S COMPLAINT OF HER LACK OF CHILDREN. HOWEVER, IN THE PRESENT CONTEXT THE SENSE IS “I AM NOT GOD WHO FORGIVES PEOPLE’S SINS” OR “… WHO JUDGES PEOPLE.” IN TRANSLATION, IF THE RHETORICAL QUESTION IS KEPT, IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO COMPLETE IT WITH A NEGATIVE REPLY; FOR EXAMPLE, “AM I IN GOD’S PLACE? CERTAINLY NOT!” SPEISER TRANSLATES “HOW COULD I ACT FOR GOD?” WE MAY ALSO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “I AM NOT IN GOD’S PLACE,” “IT IS NOT FOR ME TO PLAY GOD,” OR “I’M NOT GOD; I CAN’T PUNISH YOU.”**

**GENESIS 50:20: THE CONTENT OF VERSE 20 IS EXPRESSED IN EXPANDED FORM IN 45:5, 7, AND 8. AS FOR YOU, YOU MEANT EVIL AGAINST ME: HERE YOU (PLURAL) IS MADE EMPHATIC AND IS PLACED IN CONTRAST WITH WHAT GOD INTENDED TO DO. WE MAY TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “YOU [PLURAL] WANTED TO DO EVIL TO ME” OR “YOU [PLURAL] WANTED TO CARRY OUT EVIL PLANS AGAINST ME.” BUT GOD MEANT IT FOR GOOD: THAT IS, “GOD TOOK WHAT YOU DID WRONG AND MADE THE END OF IT GOOD.” SOME OTHER RENDERINGS OF THE FIRST PART OF THE VERSE ARE “YOU MADE A PLAN TO HARM ME, BUT GOD OVERTURNED YOUR PLAN AND MADE THE FRUIT OF IT GOOD” AND “YOU WANTED TO HURT ME, BUT GOD TURNED YOUR PLAN ROUND AND USED IT IN A GOOD WAY.” TO BRING IT ABOUT … ALIVE: SEE 45:5, 7.**

**GENESIS 50:21: SO, DO NOT FEAR: SEE VERSE 19. JOSEPH HAS EXPLAINED THAT GOD HAS OVERRULED THEIR MISCONDUCT. RSV MARKS THIS AS A CONSEQUENCE. I WILL PROVIDE FOR YOU AND YOUR LITTLE ONES: SEE 45:11. REASSURED TRANSLATES A VERB USED IN 37:35, WHERE JACOB’S SONS ATTEMPTED TO CONSOLE HIM WHEN HE GRIEVED FOR JOSEPH. IT IS USED IN THE SENSE OF GIVING ASSURANCE OR ENCOURAGEMENT TO A PERSON WHO IS HARD PRESSED OR UNCERTAIN. THIS IS SOMETIMES EXPRESSED FIGURATIVELY; FOR EXAMPLE, “HE WARMED THEIR STOMACHS” OR “HE GAVE THEM BACK THEIR HEARTS.” IN MORE LITERAL RENDERINGS MANY TRANSLATIONS SAY “HE SPOKE KINDLY TO THEM” OR “HE SPOKE GOOD WORDS TO THEM.” COMFORTED THEM IS LITERALLY “HE SPOKE TO THEIR HEARTS.” THIS IDIOM WAS USED IN 34:3, WHERE IT IS SAID THAT SHECHEM LOVED DINAH “AND SPOKE TENDERLY TO HER.” SEE THERE FOR TRANSLATION. COMMON EXPRESSIONS OF COMFORTED THEM ARE “MADE THEM FEEL GOOD AGAIN” AND “MADE THEIR INSIDES QUIET [OR PEACEFUL].”**

**THE DEATH OF JOSEPH (50:22–26)**

**THE CLOSING EPISODE OF THE BOOK OF GENESIS TELLS BRIEFLY OF JOSEPH’S OLD AGE AND DEATH. JOSEPH REMAINED IN EGYPT AND DIED WHEN HE WAS ONE HUNDRED AND TEN-YEARS OLD. HE LIVED TO SEE HIS GRANDCHILDREN AND HIS GREAT-GRANDCHILDREN (VERSES 22–23). BEFORE HE DIED, HE ASSURED HIS BROTHERS THAT GOD WOULD TAKE THEM BACK TO THE LAND PROMISED TO HIS ANCESTORS (VERSE 24). HE MADE HIS PEOPLE PROMISE TO TAKE HIS BODY OUT OF EGYPT WHEN THEY RETURNED TO CANAAN. AFTER HE DIED HIS BODY WAS EMBALMED AND PLACED IN A COFFIN (VERSES 25–26).**

**SUBDIVISION HEADING**

**THE HANDBOOK HEADING MAY NEED TO BE ADJUSTED TO SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “JOSEPH DIES IN EGYPT,” “THE END OF JOSEPH’S LIFE,” OR “JOSEPH BECOMES AN OLD MAN AND DIES.”**

**GENESIS 50:22: SO, JOSEPH DWELT IN EGYPT, HE AND HIS FATHER’S HOUSE: THERE IS NO SPECIAL REASON TO TRANSLATE THE HEBREW CONNECTIVE AS A MARKER OF CONSEQUENCE HERE. THERE IS NO LONGER ANY REFERENCE TO JOSEPH AS A RULER OF EGYPT. IT IS NOT CLEAR FROM THE TEXT WHETHER JOSEPH LIVED (PHYSICALLY) WITH JACOB’S OTHER OFFSPRING OR WHETHER HE REMAINED IN THE CAPITAL CITY. TEV “WITH HIS FATHER’S FAMILY” SUGGESTS HE MOVED TO GOSHEN. THAT THEY ALL REMAINED IN EGYPT IS CLEAR FROM THE BOOK OF EXODUS. WE MAY TRANSLATE, FOR EXAMPLE, “JOSEPH AND HIS FATHER’S FAMILY WENT ON LIVING IN EGYPT.” A HUNDRED AND TEN YEARS: SCHOLARS POINT OUT THAT IN ANCIENT EGYPTIAN WRITINGS THIS WAS CONSIDERED THE IDEAL AGE FOR A MAN TO LIVE.**

**GENESIS 50:23: AND JOSEPH SAW EPHRAIM’S CHILDREN OF THE THIRD GENERATION: THIS EXPRESSION HAS BEEN INTERPRETED TO MEAN EITHER GRANDCHILDREN OR GREAT-GRANDCHILDREN. SPEISER AVOIDS BOTH TERMS AND SAYS “HE LIVED TO SEE THE THIRD GENERATION OF EPHRAIM’S LINE.” WHAT IS CERTAIN IS THAT JOSEPH WAS BLESSED WITH LONG LIFE. PRO 17:6 SAYS “GRANDCHILDREN ARE THE CROWN OF THE AGED …” (RSV). THE CHILDREN OF MACHIR THE SON OF MANASSEH WERE BORN UPON JOSEPH’S KNEES: NOTHING HAS BEEN SAID EARLIER ABOUT MACHIR. HOWEVER, IN JUDGES 5:14 HE IS COUNTED AMONG THE TRIBES OF ISRAEL. SINCE MACHIR IS JOSEPH’S GRANDSONS (THE SON OF ONE’S SON OR ONE’S DAUGHTER), THE CHILDREN OF MACHIR WOULD BE JOSEPH’S GREAT-GRANDCHILDREN. BORN UPON JOSEPH’S KNEES: THIS EXPRESSION WAS USED FOR THE FIRST TIME IN 30:3 IN RELATION TO RACHEL BECOMING A MOTHER THROUGH HER MAID. IN 48:12 JACOB RECOGNIZED JOSEPH’S SONS AS HIS OWN BY TAKING THEM UPON HIS KNEES. DRIVER AND OTHERS UNDERSTAND THIS EXPRESSION TO BE A SYMBOLIC ACT IN WHICH JOSEPH OFFICIALLY RECOGNIZES THESE CHILDREN AS HIS OWN DESCENDANTS. TEV EXPRESSES THE THOUGHT WELL WITHOUT THE IMAGE AND IS A GOOD TRANSLATION MODEL. IF THE LANGUAGE OF TRANSLATION HAS A SIMILAR METAPHOR, IT MAY BE USED.**

**GENESIS 50:24: I AM ABOUT TO DIE: SEE THE SAME WORDS SPOKEN BY JACOB IN 48:21. BUT GOD WILL VISIT YOU: SEE EXO 13:19. VISIT WITH GOD AS SUBJECT, USED IN THIS WAY FOR THE FIRST TIME IN GENESIS, MEANS TO INTERVENE IN THE AFFAIRS OF PEOPLE OR TO COME TO DO SOMETHING POWERFUL OR SIGNIFICANT FOR THEM. THE CONTEXT DETERMINES WHETHER THIS IS FOR GOOD OR BAD. HERE JOSEPH’S MEANING IS THAT GOD WILL COME TO JACOB’S FAMILY, TO PROTECT, TO HELP, TO CARE FOR THEM. THE FORM OF THE EXPRESSION BOTH HERE AND IN VERSE 25 IS EMPHATIC, WITH THE SENSE OF “HE WILL CERTAINLY VISIT YOU.” IT OCCURS ALSO IN EXO 3:16 (WHERE IT IS USED IN AN EMPHATIC EXPRESSION, TRANSLATED “I HAVE OBSERVED YOU”) AND 4:31, AND SERVES HERE AS A LINK TO THE EXODUS STORY. IN MANY LANGUAGES THIS CLAUSE IS TRANSLATED “BUT GOD WILL COME TO HELP YOU” OR “I AM SURE THAT GOD WILL APPEAR TO YOU.” THE REMAINDER OF THIS VERSE IS ESSENTIALLY THE SAME AS THE WORDS SPOKEN BY JACOB TO JOSEPH IN 48:21.**

**GENESIS 50:25: JOSEPH TOOK AN OATH OF THE SONS OF ISRAEL: TOOK AN OATH OF TRANSLATES THE CAUSATIVE FORM OF THE VERB “TO SWEAR AN OATH” AND SO HAS THE SENSE OF “MADE THEM TAKE AN OATH,” “MADE THEM SWEAR TO HIM,” OR “MADE THEM PROMISE HIM.” SEE 47:31. JACOB HAD MADE JOSEPH SWEAR TO HIM THAT HE WOULD NOT BURY JACOB IN EGYPT; AND LIKEWISE, JOSEPH MAKES THE FAMILY OF JACOB SWEAR THE SAME THING ABOUT HIS BODY. SONS OF ISRAEL: IF THE TRANSLATOR HAS BEEN TRANSLATING ISRAEL AS “JACOB,” THAT SHOULD BE CONTINUED HERE. HERE THE SENSE IS PROBABLY MORE GENERAL, AND WE MAY SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “JACOB’S DESCENDANTS” OR “THE MEMBERS OF JACOB’S FAMILY.” GOD WILL VISIT YOU IS REPEATED FOR EMPHASIS. IT IS THE GROUNDS FOR THE EXODUS FROM EGYPT. THE PURPOSE OF GOD’S VISIT WAS STATED IN VERSE 24, “TO BRING YOU OUT OF THIS LAND.” NOTE THAT TEV DOES NOT REPEAT VISIT IN THIS VERSE BUT REPEATS THE PURPOSE OF THE VISIT: “WHEN GOD LEADS YOU TO THAT LAND.” SOME SAY “WHEN GOD INTERVENES.” NRSV HAS CHANGED RSV TO SAY “WHEN HE COMES FOR YOU,” AND NEB SAYS “WHEN GOD COMES TO YOUR AID.” CARRY UP MY BONES FROM HERE: IN VERSE 26 JOSEPH’S BODY IS EMBALMED. THEREFORE, TEV SAYS “TAKE MY BODY WITH YOU.” TRANSLATORS MAY WISH TO DO LIKEWISE.**

**GENESIS 50:26: THIS FINAL VERSE IS THE NARRATIVE CLOSURE OF THE WHOLE SECTION FROM CHAPTER 37 TO CHAPTER 50. SO, JOSEPH DIED: SO, OR A WORD THAT MARKS A CONCLUSION IS APPROPRIATE HERE. NOTE THAT TEV HAS MOVED IN EGYPT, WHICH COMES AT THE END OF THE VERSE IN HEBREW AND RSV, TO THE OPENING SENTENCE. THIS IS BECAUSE IN EGYPT SHOULD BE TAKEN WITH THE WHOLE VERSE AND NOT JUST WITH PUT IN A COFFIN. A HUNDRED AND TEN YEARS: JOSEPH’S AGE IS APPARENTLY IMPORTANT IN THE EGYPTIAN SETTING (SEE VERSE 22) AND SERVES AS A FRAME FOR THIS UNIT. THEY EMBALMED HIM: THEY REFERS TO THE EGYPTIAN MORTICIANS. FOR EMBALMED SEE DISCUSSION OF VERSE 2. WAS PUT IN A COFFIN: THE VERB IS IMPERSONAL. A COFFIN IS A BOX USED FOR BURIAL. FOR ILLUSTRATIONS OF EGYPTIAN COFFINS USED FOR MUMMIES OR BODIES THAT WERE PRESERVED, SEE A BIBLE DICTIONARY. THESE COFFINS WERE OFTEN MADE OUT OF STONE. ACCORDING TO EXO 13:19 MOSES TOOK THE BONES OF JOSEPH WITH HIM WHEN THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL LEFT EGYPT. IF WAS PUT IN A COFFIN SUGGESTS TO THE READER THAT JOSEPH’S BODY WAS LEFT WITHOUT BURIAL, IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO COMPLETE THE ACTION. WE MAY SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, “THEY PUT HIS BODY IN A COFFIN FOR BURIAL” OR “HE WAS PUT IN A COFFIN SO HE COULD BE BURIED.” SOME VERSIONS ATTEMPT A TRANSLATION OF COFFIN THAT GIVES A MORE PERMANENT STATUS OF THE CORPSE. FOR EXAMPLE, MFT HAS “EMBALMED AND PUT IN A MUMMY CASE,” AND FRCL SAYS “LAID IN A COFFIN OF STONE.”**

**THE LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH’S HOUSE OF THE LORD NET WORTH 200 BILLION DOLLARS, BUT IN FAITHFULNESS TO THE LORD IS WORTH 200 QUINTILLION DOLLARS**

**THE FATHER STEPHEN’S 5TH -7TH SUPREME DEFENSE (MOSES, REMPHAN & AARON) IN THE ULTIMATE BEGINNING IS 60, 72, 84 LEGIONS OF ANGELS [360,000, 432,000, 504,000 TIMES 185,000 TIMES 100,000 IN RELENTING] BY GOING ONE MILE GO TWAIN [3], WHICH CAN SAVE OR DESTROY 19,980,000,000,000,000 QUADRILLION TO 23,976,000,000,000,000 QUADRILLION TO 27,972,000,000,000,000 QUADRILLION IN RELENTING OF 100,000 IN JUDE 14-15**

**THE FATHER STEPHEN’S SPEECH IN ACTS 7:17-45 DECLARES “BUT WHEN THE TIME OF THE PROMISE DREW NEAR WHICH GOD HAD SWORN TO ABRAHAM, THE PEOPLE GREW AND MULTIPLIED IN EGYPT, TILL ANOTHER KING AROSE WHO DID NOT KNOW JOSEPH. THIS MAN DEALT TREACHEROUSLY WITH OUR PEOPLE, AND OPPRESSED OUR FOREFATHERS, MAKING THEM EXPOSE THEIR BABIES, SO THAT THEY MIGHT NOT LIVE. AT THIS TIME MOSES WAS BORN, AND WAS WELL PLEASING TO GOD, AND HE WAS BROUGHT UP IN HIS FATHER’S HOUSE FOR THREE MONTHS. BUT WHEN HE WAS SET OUT, PHARAOH’S DAUGHTER TOOK HIM AWAY AND BROUGHT HIM UP AS HER OWN SON. AND MOSES WAS LEARNED IN ALL THE WISDOM OF THE EGYPTIANS, AND WAS MIGHTY IN WORDS AND DEEDS. NOW WHEN HE WAS FORTY YEARS [40] OLD, IT CAME INTO HIS HEART TO VISIT HIS BRETHREN, THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL. AND SEEING ONE OF THEM SUFFER WRONG, HE DEFENDED AND AVENGED HIM WHO WAS OPPRESSED, AND STRUCK DOWN THE EGYPTIAN. FOR HE SUPPOSED THAT HIS BRETHREN WOULD HAVE UNDERSTOOD THAT GOD WOULD DELIVER THEM BY HIS HAND, BUT THEY DID NOT UNDERSTAND. AND THE NEXT DAY HE APPEARED TO TWO OF THEM AS THEY WERE FIGHTING, AND TRIED TO RECONCILE THEM, SAYING, ‘MEN, YOU, ARE BRETHREN, WHY DO YOU WRONG ONE ANOTHER?’ BUT HE WHO DID HIS NEIGHBOR WRONG PUSHED HIM AWAY, SAYING, ‘WHO MADE YOU A RULER AND A JUDGE OVER US? DO YOU WANT TO KILL ME AS YOU DID THE EGYPTIAN YESTERDAY?’ THEN AT THIS SAYING, MOSES FLED AND BECAME A DWELLER IN THE LAND OF MIDIAN, WHERE HE HAD TWO SONS. AND WHEN FORTY YEARS [80] HAD PASSED. THE ANGEL OF THE LORD APPEARED TO HIM IN A FLAME OF FIRE IN A BUSH, IN THE WILDERNESS OF MOUNT SINAI. WHEN MOSES SAW IT, HE MARVELED AT THE SIGHT, AND AS HE DREW NEAR TO OBSERVE, THE VOICE OF THE LORD CAME TO HIM, SAYING, ‘I AM THE GOD OF YOUR FATHERS---THE GOD OF ABRAHAM, THE GOD OF ISAAC, AND THE GOD OF JACOB.’ AND MOSES TREMBLED AND DARED NOT LOOK. THEN THE LORD SAID TO HIM, ‘TAKE YOUR SANDALS OFF YOU FEET, FOR THAT PLACE WHERE YOU STAND IS HOLY GROUND. I HAVE SURELY SEEN THE OPPRESSION OF MY PEOPLE WHO ARE IN EGYPT, I HAVE HEARD THEIR GROANING AND HAVE COME DOWN TO DELIVER THEM. AND NOW COME, I WILL SEND YOU TO EGYPT.’ THIS MOSES WHOM THEY REJECTED, SAYING, ‘WHO MADE YOU A RULER AND A JUDGE?’ IS THE ONE GOD SENT TO BE A RULER AND A DELIVERER BY THE HAND OF THE ANGEL WHO APPEARED TO HIM IN THE BUSH. HE BROUGHT THEM OUT, AFTER HE HAD SHOWN WONDERS AND SIGNS IN THE LAND OF EGYPT, AND IN THE RED SEA, AND IN THE WILDERNESS FORTY YEARS [120]. THIS IS THAT MOSES WHO SAID TO THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL, ‘THE LORD YOUR GOD WILL RAISE UP FOR YOU A PROPHET LIKE ME FROM YOUR BRETHREN, HIM YOU SHALL HEAR.’ THIS IS HE WHO WAS IN THE CONGREGATION [EKKLESIA, ASSEMBLY OR CHURCH] IN THE WILDERNESS WITH THE ANGEL WHO SPOKE TO HIM ON MOUNT SINAI, AND WITH OUR FATHERS, THE ONE WHO RECEIVED THE LIVING ORACLES TO GIVE TO US, WHOM OUR FATHERS WOULD NOT OBEY, BUT REJECTED. AND IN THEIR HEARTS, THEY TURNED BACK TO EGYPT, SAYING TO AARON, ‘MAKE US GODS TO GO BEFORE US, AS FOR THIS MOSES WHO BROUGHT US OUT OF THE LAND OF EGYPT, WE, DO NOT KNOW WHAT HAS BECOME OF HIM.’ AND THEY MADE A CALF IN THOSE DAYS, OFFERED SACRIFICES TO THE IDOL, AND REJOICED IN THE WORKS OF THEIR OWN HANDS. THEN GOD TURNED AND GAVE THEM UP TO WORSHIP THE HOST OF HEAVEN, AS IT IS WRITTEN IN THE BOOK OF THE PROPHETS: ‘DID YOU OFFER ME SLAUGHTERED ANIMALS AND SACRIFICES DURING FORTY YEARS [80-120] IN THE WILDERNESS, O HOUSE OF ISRAEL? YOU ALSO TOOK UP THE TABERNACLE OF MOLOCH, AND THE STAR OF YOUR GOD REMPHAN, IMAGES WHICH YOU MADE TO WORSHIP, AND I WILL CARRY YOU AWAY BEYOND BABYLON [LADY VICTORIA].’ OUR FATHERS HAD THE TABERNACLE OF WITNESS IN THE WILDERNESS, AS HE APPOINTED, INSTRUCTING MOSES TO MAKE IT ACCORDING TO THE PATTERN THAT HE HAD SEEN, WHICH OUR FATHERS HAVING RECEIVED IT IN TURN…”**

**STEPHEN YAHWEH’S TOP TABERNACLE**

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**THE BOOK OF MOSES**

**THE WHITE SKIN COLOR LORD MOSES’ NAME MEANS “DRAWN OUT OF THE WATER IN LORDSHIP.” THE LORD MOSES’ NAME MEANS “DRAWN OUT OF THE WATER.” THE SCRIPTURE REFERENCES OF THE LORD MOSES IS MAINLY IN THE FIRST 5 BOOKS OF THE HOLY HOLY BIBLE: GENESIS, EXODUS, LEVITICUS, NUMBERS AND DEUTERONOMY WITH THE 4 GOSPELS & HEBREWS CHAPTER 2 & 11. THE WRITING IS WRITTEN IN ABOUT 1520BC-1400BC. THE LORD MOSES’ KINGDOM LASTS FOR A “BILLION YEAR REIGN” WITH THE LORD STEPHEN. THE LORD JESUS CHRIST (ANOINTED SAVIOR IN LORDSHIP) OF THE GOSPEL WILL COME BACK IN THE SPIRIT & POWER OF THE LORD MOSES FOR MANKIND AND IS ONE OF THE WITNESSES THAT WILL DIE IN THE GREAT TRIBULATION BY BEING KILLED BY THE DRAGON IN REVELATION 11:1-14; 15:3; MATTHEW 17:1-13; MATTHEW 9:1-13; LUKE 24:44 & ZECHARIAH 4:1-14. THE LORD MOSES’ GREAT ACCOMPLISHMENT WAS THE FATHER STEPHEN AGENT IN DELIVERING THE ISRAELITES FROM SLAVERY IN EGYPT AND IN GIVING THEM THE FATHER STEPHEN’S LAW.**

**THE LORD MOSES’ IDENTITY IS CALLED A LORD TO PHARAOH BECAUSE HE WAS A LAWGIVER IN JOHN 10:34-36. IT DECLARES “IS IT NOT WRITTEN IN YOUR LAW, I SAID, ‘YOU ARE GODS?’ IF HE CALLED THEM GODS, TO WHOM THE WORD OF GOD CAME (AND THE SCRIPTURE CANNOT BE BROKEN), DO YOU SAY OF HIM WHO THE FATHER (STEPHEN) SANCTIFIED AND SENT INTO THE WORLD, ‘YOU ARE BLASPHEMING,’ BECAUSE I SAID, ‘I AM THE SON OF GOD?’” ALSO, THE LORD MOSES WAS MADE GOD TO PHARAOH AND THE REBELLIOUS & STIFF-NECKED PEOPLE OF THE FATHER STEPHEN IN EXODUS 7:1-2.**

**THE LORD MOSES’ LIFE AND TIMES: IN EXODUS 2:1-10 DECLARES THE BIRTH OF MOSES: “AND A MAN OF THE HOUSE OF LEVI WENT AND TOOK AS WIFE A DAUGHTER OF LEVI. SO, THE WOMAN CONCEIVED AND BORE A SON. AND WHEN SHE SAW THAT HE WAS A BEAUTIFUL CHILD, SHE HID HIM THREE MONTHS. BUT WHEN SHE COULD NO LONGER HIDE HIM, SHE TOOK AN ARK OF BULRUSHES FROM HIM, DAUBED IT WITH ASPHALT AND PITCH, PUT THE CHILD IN IT, AND LAID IT IN THE REEDS BY THE RIVER’S BANK. AND HIS SISTER STOOD AFAR OFF, TO KNOW WHAT WOULD BE DONE TO HIM. THEN THE DAUGHTER OF PHARAOH CAME DOWN TO BATHE AT THE RIVER. AND HER MAIDENS WALKED ALONG THE RIVERSIDE, AND WHEN SHE SAW THE ARK AMONG THE REEDS, SHE SENT HER MAID TO GET IT. AND WHEN SHE OPENED IT, SHE SAW THE CHILD, AND BEHOLD, THE BABY WEPT. SO, SHE HAD COMPASSION ON HIM, AND SAID, ‘THIS IS ONE OF THE HEBREW’S CHILDREN.’ THEN HIS SISTER SAID TO PHARAOH’S DAUGHTER, ‘SHALL I GO AND CALL A NURSE FOR YOU FROM THE HEBREW WOMEN, THAT SHE MAY NURSE THE CHILD FOR YOU?’ AND PHARAOH’S DAUGHTER SAID TO HER, ‘GO.’ SO, THE MAIDEN WENT AND CALLED THE CHILD’S MOTHER. THEN PHARAOH’S DAUGHTER SAID TO HER, ‘TAKE THIS CHILD AND NURSE HIM FOR ME, AND I WILL GIVE YOU YOUR WAGES.’ SO, THE WOMAN TOOK THE CHILD AND NURSED HIM. AND THE CHILD GREW, AND SHE BROUGHT HIM TO PHARAOH’S DAUGHTER, AND HE BECAME HER SON. SO, SHE CALLED HIS NAME MOSES, SAYING, ‘BECAUSE I DREW HIM OUT OF THE WATER.’” THE LORD MOSES WAS BORN INTO A HEBREW FAMILY AS SLAVES IN EGYPT. THE LORD MOSES’ LIFE AND TIMES IS AROUND 1540BC BY THE WEST SEMITIC PEOPLES KNOWN AS THE HYKSOS WERE DRIVEN OUT OF EGYPT BY AHMOSE I. BEFORE THIS HAPPENED, THE HYKSOS WERE THE DOMINATING FACTOR THAT SUPPLANTED THE EGYPTIAN RULERS AND GOVERNED THE PHARAOH’S FOR 100 YEARS. THE HEBREW’S WERE SOMEWHAT SEMITIC IN NATURE AND THE PHARAOH INTENDED TO NOT TRUST ANYONE THAT THE ISRAELITES WOULD SUPPORT THE PHARAOH’S ENEMIES IN EXODUS 1:10. ALSO PHARAOH THEN BROUGHT SLAVERY TO THE ISRAELITES (JEWISH PEOPLE) AND SET THEM TO FORCED LABOR TO DOMINATE AND RULE THEM. HE ALSO LIMITED THE PRODUCTION OF THE HEBREWS AND ORDERED THE MIDWIVES OF EGYPT TO KILL ANY MALE CHILDREN BORN TO THE ISRAELITES. THIS ATTEMPT FAILED FOR PHARAOH TO CONTROL THE POPULATION AND COMMANDED ALL HIS PEOPLE TO SEE THAT EVERY HEBREW MALE BE THROWN IN THE RIVER NILE.**

**THE LORD MOSES’ CHILDHOOD. IN EXODUS 2:1-10 SHOWS THAT WHEN THE LORD MOSES WAS BORN ABOUT 1520BC HIS PARENTS TOTALLY DISOBEYED PHARAOH’S COMMAND. THEY FIRST PLACED THE BOY CHILD MOSES IN A BASKET BOAT MADE OF PAPYRUS REEDS. MOSES WAS FOUND FLOATING IN THE PAPYRUS BASKET BY THE PHARAOH’S DAUGHTER. SHE FELL IN AGAPE LOVE WITH HIM AT FIRST SIGHT. THE LORD MOSES WAS ADOPTED BY THE EGYPTIAN PRINCESS WHO HIRED IN ACTUALITY HIS OWN HEBREW MOTHER AS HIS WET NURSE. THE LORD MOSES WAS PROBABLY WEANED AT AGE FOUR BY MOST BIBLICAL TIMES IN SCRIPTURE.**

**THE LORD MOSES’ EDUCATION. WHEN THE LORD MOSES WAS AN ADULT, HE IDENTIFIED WITH THE ISRAELITES RATHER THAN HIS EGYPTIAN HERITAGE AND DREAMED OF FREEING HIS OWN PEOPLE FROM SLAVERY. AS THE SPORTIVE CHILD OF THE EGYPTIAN PRINCESS, THE LORD MOSES HAD THE BEST EDUCATION THAT EGYPT COULD OFFER AT THAT TIME. IN EGYPTIAN DOCUMENTS IT SHOWS THAT THE ROYAL SCHOOLS TAUGHT SEMITIC BOYS BEING TRAINED IN EGYPT’S BUREAUCRACY AND THE LORD MOSES GREW MIGHTILY IN WISDOM AND DEEDS. THE LORD MOSES’ EDUCATION SHOULD HAVE LASTED OR 12 YEARS TILL MANHOOD. AFTERWARD, HE WAS TRAINED MORE IN DIPLOMACY AND MILITARY WARFARE. THE LORD MOSES WAS MOST LIKELY FLUENT IN MORE THAN ONE LANGUAGE, ESPECIALLY IN HEBREW AND EGYPTIAN. IN HEBREWS 11:24 SAYS THAT THE LORD MOSES WAS CALLED AS “THE SON OF PHARAOH’S DAUGHTER.” THIS MEANS THAT THE TITLE MAY REFLECT THAT IN EGYPT THE ROYAL LINE WAS PASSED TO THE DAUGHTER RATHER THAN THE SON. THIS MAY MEAN THAT THE LORD MOSES WAS IN THE ROYAL LINE TO TAKE THE THRONE AND THAT IS WHY HE HAD THE BEST EDUCATION THAT EGYPT COULD OFFER.**

**THE LORD MOSES AT MOUNT SINAI. IN EXODUS 2:15-25 SAYS HOW THE PENINSULA WAS MOSTLY INHABITED ALTHOUGH THE EGYPTIANS HAD MINED IT FOR MANY YEARS TO GET PRECIOUS STONES. IN THE WILDERNESS, THE LORD MOSES FOUND A SMALL FAMILY OF MIDIANITE SHEPHERDS WHOM HE SPENT TIME WITH. IN PROCESS OF TIME, THE LORD MOSES MARRIED THE DAUGHTER OF JETHRO, IN THE MIDIANITE CLAN AND JETHRO (FRIEND OF GOD) BEING A RELIGIOUS LEADER. THE LORD MOSES THEN BECAME A SHEPHERD AND FOR THE NEXT 40 YEARS & HE WAS “CONTENT TO LIVE” THERE IN EXODUS 2:21.**

**THE LORD MOSES’ CALLING BY THE FATHER STEPHEN. THIS CALL HAPPENED IN EXODUS CHAPTERS 3-4. THE LORD MOSES WAS 80 YEARS OLD AND THE FATHER STEPHEN APPEARED TO HIM IN A BURNING BUSH AND COMMISSIONED THE LORD MOSES TO DELIVER THE FATHER STEPHEN’S PEOPLE. THE LORD MOSES DID NOT WANT TO DO THIS BECAUSE OF UNBELIEF. IN EXODUS 3:11 SAYS TO THE FATHER STEPHEN “WHO AM I THAT I SHOULD GO TO PHARAOH, AND THAT I SHOULD BRING THE CHILDREN OUT OF EGYPT?” IN EXODUS 3:13 MENTIONS THAT HE DID NOT KNOW WHAT TO SAY AND DID NOT KNOW ENOUGH ABOUT HIS FATHER STEPHEN TO HAVE FAITH IN REPRESENTING HIM. IN EXODUS 4:1 SAYS THAT THE LORD MOSES KNEW THAT THE ISRAELITES WOULD NOT BELIEVE HIM. IN EXODUS 4:10 TELLS US THAT THE LORD MOSES WAS SLOW OF SPEECH AND SLOW OF TONGUE. IN EXODUS 4:13 THE LORD MOSES BEGGED THE FATHER STEPHEN TO SEND SOMEONE ELSE EVEN THOUGH THE FATHER STEPHEN HAS ANSWERED HIS QUESTIONS.**

**THE LORD MOSES’ CONFRONTATION WITH THE PHARAOH RAMSEES. THE CONFRONTATION IS PROVEN IN EXODUS CHAPTERS 5-15. THE LORD MOSES FINALLY RESPONDED TO THE FATHER STEPHEN’S CALL & COMMISSION IN WHICH HE DID CONFRONT PHARAOH. THOSE WHO SOUGHT THE LORD MOSES’ LIFE WERE ALREADY DEAD AT THIS TIME IN EXODUS 4:19. THE FATHER STEPHEN GAVE THE LORD MOSES THE ROD OF THE LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH THAT HAD PLAGUED THE EGYPTIANS WITH 10 PLAGUES AGAINST THE PHARAOH TO FINALLY LET THE FATHER STEPHEN’S PEOPLE GO. THE FINAL BLOW TO PHARAOH WAS THE RED SEA CROSSING THAT DROWNED PHARAOH’S ARMY.**

**THE LORD MOSES AS A LAWGIVER. THIS IS PROVEN FROM EXODUS 18:1-DEUTERONOMY 34:12. IN THE LORD MOSES’ ACCOMPLISHMENTS HE BROUGHT ABOUT 2 MILLION ISRAELITES OUT OF EGYPT IN NUMBERS 1:46. THE FATHER STEPHEN PROVIDED A CLOUDY-FIERY PILLAR TO LEAD HIS PEOPLE INTO THE SINAI PENINSULA TO MOUNT SINAI. THE LORD MOSES THERE WAS GIVEN THE TEN COMMANDMENTS AND OTHER LAWS SUCH AS CRIMINAL LAWS, CIVIL LAWS, ANIMAL CONTROL LAWS, WORSHIP REGULATIONS, DIETARY LAWS AND ACCEPTABLE INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS IN A DIVINE UNION AND MUCH MORE. THESE WERE TRADITIONALLY CALLED FROM THE SINAI REVELATION THE “LAW OF THE LORD MOSES.” THE LORD MOSES WAS A MODEL PROPHET THAT SERVED AS THE FATHER STEPHEN’S SPOKESMAN. IN DEUTERONOMY CHAPTER 18 WAS FORBIDDEN TO DO & ISRAEL WAS COMMANDED NOT TO CONSULT WITH ANY OCCULT SOURCES.**

**THE LORD MOSES AS A LEADER. THIS IS PROVEN IN EXODUS 16:1-DEUTERONOMY 34:12. THE LORD MOSES AS A LEADER WAS A LAWGIVER, MIRACLE WORKER AND AN EXCEPTIONAL PROPHET. THESE THINGS PROVE THAT THE LORD MOSES WAS HUMAN AND HE HAS TO LEAD A DISOBEDIENT & REBELLIOUS PEOPLE. THE LORD MOSES FELT ANGER, PAIN AND FRUSTRATION THAT RESULTED IN THE UNRESPONSIVE AND IGNORANT PEOPLE OF THE FATHER STEPHEN. THE LORD MOSES PRAYED FOR MANY THINGS WHILE HE LED THIS PEOPLE AND REMAINED FAITHFUL TO THE TASK AT HAND. IN THE 40 YEARS THAT HE LED, HE DEALT WITH TWO KINDS OF ISRAELITES. FIRST, ARE THOSE WHO DID NOT RESPOND TO THE FATHER STEPHEN BUT QUESTIONED EVERYTHING THAT THE LORD MOSES COMMANDED. SECOND, IS THE REBELLION AGAINST THE LORD MOSES’ LEADERSHIP THAT RESULTED IN DEATH IN THE WILDERNESS OUTSIDE THE PROMISED LAND. FOR 40 YEARS HE WAS THE FATHER STEPHEN’S AGENT ON EARTH, AND ACCOMPLISHING EXTRAORDINARY THINGS. THE LORD MOSES WAS CONSIDERED AS ONE OF THE GREATEST MEN OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.**

**THE LORD MOSES’ RELATIONSHIPS: THE HOLY BIBLE DESCRIBES THE LORD MOSES’ MOTHER WITH THE JOB TO MOLD AND SHAPE THE LORD MOSES INTO THE MAN & PERSONAL IDENTITY HE WAS SUPPOSED TO BE AS A HEBREW PERSON. THE LORD MOSES THOUGHT OF HIMSELF AS A HEBREW AND NOT EGYPTIAN ROYALTY. THERE IS NOT MUCH MORE ON HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH HIS MOTHER. ALSO, THE LADY MIRIAM (LOVED BY STEPHEN YAHWEH) HIS SISTER AND THE LORD AARON (HIGHEST LIGHT) HIS BROTHER BOTH PLAYED A SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN THE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE LORD MOSES.**

**THE LORD MOSES ONLY HAD ONE WIFE IN SCRIPTURE NAMED ZIPPORAH (BIRD), WHICH WAS A MIDIANITE AND BORE MOSES HIS TWO SONS, WHICH ARE GERSHOM (STRANGER, SOJOURNER THERE, EXPELLED ONE OR PROTECTED OF THE GOD SHOM) AND ELEAZER (FATHER AGAINST ALL) IN EXODUS 2:21-22 & 18:1-6.**

**THE LORD MOSES’ RELATIONSHIP WITH THE FATHER STEPHEN. THIS RELATIONSHIP BEGINS WITH THE LORD MOSES AND THE BURNING BUSH IN EXODUS 3:1-4:17. THE LORD MOSES WAS 80 YEARS OLD WHEN THE FATHER STEPHEN SHOWED UP IN THE BURNING BUSH AND THE BUSH WAS NOT CONSUMED. THERE ARE THREE THINGS THAT OCCURRED IN THE LORD MOSES’ COMMISSION. FIRST, THE FATHER STEPHEN COMMISSIONED THE LORD MOSES TO DO HIS MISSION ON EARTH IN EXODUS 3:6-10. THE FATHER STEPHEN IDENTIFIED HIMSELF AS THE FATHER STEPHEN OF ABRAHAM, ISAAC AND JACOB & TOLD MOSES THAT HE HAS HEARD THEIR CRIES AND HAS SEEN THE OPPRESSION OF HIS PEOPLE ISRAEL. THE FATHER STEPHEN REVEALED HIMSELF TO THE LORD MOSES BECAUSE IT WAS TIME TO DELIVER HIS PEOPLE OUT OF BONDAGE TO BRING THEM INTO THE PROMISED LAND. SECOND, THE FATHER STEPHEN REVEALED HIS PERSONAL NAME TO THE LORD MOSES IN EXODUS 3:11-22. THE LORD MOSES RESISTED THE FATHER STEPHEN EVEN THOUGH FOR 40 YEARS HE WAS A HUMBLE SHEPHERD. THE INITIAL RESPONSE TO THE HESITANT LORD MOSES WAS TO PROMISE TO BE WITH HIM AND THE FATHER STEPHEN REVEALED HIS NAME IN EXODUS 3:15 AS “STEPHEN YAHWEH” AS THE GOD OF MY FATHER’S WITH THE LORD STEPHEN IN ACTS 7:30-32 & JOHN 8:58 AND “I AM” AS THE GOD OF ABRAHAM WITH THE LORD JESUS IN LUKE 1:33 & JOHN 8:58 OR IN BIBLICAL TEXTS AS THE “JEHOVAH OR VICTOR” AS THE GOD OF JACOB WITH THE LORD JAMES IN GENESIS 32:22-32 & JAMES 2:8-13 OR “THE ONE WHO IS ALWAYS PRESENT” AS THE GOD OF ISAAC WITH THE LORD JOHN IN LUKE 1:68 & THE “BURNING BUSH” AS THE GOD OF ISRAEL WITH THE LORD PETER IN ACTS 7:30-32. THIRD, THE FATHER STEPHEN EQUIPPED THE LORD MOSES IN EXODUS 4:1-17. THE ESSENTIAL EQUIPMENT FOR A SUCCESSFUL MINISTRY IS TOTAL DEPENDENCE TO THE FATHER STEPHEN CONCERNING HIS COMMANDS, HIS AGAPE LOVE, HIS TRUTH AND HIS LEADING. THE LORD MOSES WAS GIVEN TWO SPECIAL SIGNS: FIRST, WAS THE ABILITY TO TURN HIS STAFF (ROD) INTO A SERPENT (ANGEL LORD) AND BACK TO A STAFF (ROD). SECOND, WAS THE ABILITY TO TURN HIS ARM INTO LEPROSY AND RESTORE HIS ARM TO PERFECT HEALTH BY THE FATHER STEPHEN. THIS WAS DONE TO CONVINCE THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL THAT THE FATHER STEPHEN WAS PRESENT.**

**THE LORD MOSES’ RELATIONSHIP WITH THE FATHER STEPHEN IS TRIED & TESTED. THIS IS PROVEN IN EXODUS 5:1-7:7. THE LORD MOSES’ FIRST APPROACH TO PHARAOH ON BEHALF ON ISRAEL WAS A DISASTER. PHARAOH IN UTTER CONTEMPT, INCREASED MORE AND MORE BONDAGE ON THE HEBREWS, CAUSING THE ACCUSATIONS AGAINST THE LORD MOSES OF PUTTING “A SWORD” IN PHARAOH’S HAND TO KILL THEM IN EXODUS 5:21. IN RESPONSE TO THIS CURRENT OF EVENTS, THE LORD MOSES ASKED THE FATHER STEPHEN WHY HAVE YOU BROUGHT TROUBLE ON THIS PEOPLE? WHY DID YOU SEND ME? I CAME TO PHARAOH TO SPEAK IN YOUR NAME, AND HE HAS DONE EVIL TO YOUR PEOPLE, AND NEITHER HAVE YOU DELIVERED YOUR PEOPLE AT ALL IN EXODUS 5:22-23. THIS PATTERN HAPPENED THROUGHOUT THE LORD MOSES’ LAST 40 YEARS WHEN THING SEEMED TO GO WRONG, THE ISRAELITES COMPLAINED AND MURMURED TO THE LORD MOSES. THE LORD MOSES THEN TOOK THOSE UNCERTAINTIES & LEGITIMATE GRIPES TO THE FATHER STEPHEN IN EXODUS 17:1. IN THIS THE PEOPLE SINNED AND THE LORD MOSES SHOWED RESPECT & PATIENCE TO THE FATHER STEPHEN. THE FAILURE OF THE ISRAELITES IS THAT THEY DID NOT LOOK BEYOND THE CIRCUMSTANCES AND TO KNOW THAT THE SOVEREIGN FATHER STEPHEN HAD HIS HAND ON EVERY EVENT THAT TOOK PLACE. THIS MEANS THERE WAS A LOT OF IGNORANCE THAT WOULD BE DAMNED IF THEY DID NOT TRUST ON THE FATHER STEPHEN. THEY DID NOT LOOK TO THE FATHER STEPHEN IN THEIR SPIRITUAL NONSENSE, WHERE THE LORD MOSES DID TRUST ON THE FATHER STEPHEN AND WAS SENSITIVE TO HIS WISHES. THE LORD MOSES KNEW HE DID NOT KNOW AND WAS IN THE DARK WHAT TO DO IN EVERY SITUATION, BUT RELIED ON THE FATHER STEPHEN TO ANSWER HIS PROBLEMS WITH HIS PEOPLE. THE LORD MOSES KNEW THE RESPONSIBILITY WAS THE FATHER STEPHEN’S AND THIS SHOWED THE KIND OF FAITH THE LORD MOSES HAD ENDEAVORED WITH HIS FATHER STEPHEN. THE FATHER STEPHEN RESPONDED TO THE LORD MOSES’ COMPLAINTS EVERY TIME BY GIVING HIM WHAT HE NEEDED IN EVERY SITUATION. PHARAOH WOULD RESIST, BUT THE FATHER STEPHEN WOULD “MULTIPLY HIS SIGNS AND WONDERS IN THE LAND OF EGYPT” TO PROVE THAT THE LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH IS GOD IN EXODUS 7:3.**

**THE LORD MOSES’ RELATIONSHIP WITH THE FATHER STEPHEN IS REVEALED. THIS IS PROVEN IN EXODUS 7:8-15. THE LORD MOSES WAS CALLED BY THE FATHER STEPHEN AND GIVEN A SURE MISSION TO WIN THE RELEASE OF THE ISRAELITE BONDAGE. THE FATHER STEPHEN TOLD MOSES, “SEE, I HAVE MADE YOU AS GOD TO PHARAOH, AND AARON YOUR BROTHER SHALL BE YOUR PROPHET. YOU SHALL SPEAK ALL THAT I COMMAND YOU” IN EXODUS 7:1-2. THIS STATEMENT WAS MADE TO THE LORD MOSES’ EXPRESSIONS OF INADEQUACY: “BEHOLD I AM OF UNCIRCUMCISED LIPS, AND HOW SHALL PHARAOH HEED ME” IN EXODUS 6:30. THE FATHER STEPHEN ANSWERED THE LORD MOSES AND TOLD HIM HE WAS HIS REPRESENTATIVE OF HIMSELF TO PHARAOH. THE FATHER STEPHEN WOULD BE REVEALED IN THE LORD MOSES TO AN UNBELIEVING EGYPTIAN RACE. WHEN PHARAOH RIDICULED THE LORD MOSES’ FATHER STEPHEN, HE STRUCK THE EGYPTIANS AT THE LORD MOSES’ WORD. THE LORD MOSES HAD TO HAVE A SECURE RELATIONSHIP WITH HIS FATHER STEPHEN TO WIELD SUCH EXTRAORDINARY AUTHORITY BY THE ROD OF THE LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH.**

**THE LORD MOSES’ RELATIONSHIP WITH THE FATHER STEPHEN HAS TRANSFORMATION ABILITIES. THIS IS PROVEN IN EXODUS 32:1-14. ONCE THE LORD MOSES LED HIS PEOPLE OUT OF THE LAND OF EGYPT AND THE LAW WAS GIVEN TO THE LORD MOSES ON MOUNT SINAI, THE ISRAELITES CAMPED ON THE PLAIN BELOW AND FASHIONED A GOLDEN CALF. THIS IS BECAUSE THEY DID NOT KNOW WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO THE LORD MOSES SINCE HE WAS GONE FOR ABOUT 40 DAYS IN EXODUS 32:1. THE FATHER STEPHEN INFORMED THE LORD MOSES WHAT THEY HAD DONE WHILE HE WAS GONE, AND SAID, “I HAVE SEEN THIS PEOPLE, AND INDEED IT IS A STIFF-NECKED PEOPLE! NOW THEREFORE, LET ME ALONE THAT MY WRATH MAY BURN HOT AGAINST THEM AND I MAY CONSUME THEM. AND I WILL MAKE OF YOU A GREAT NATION (LAW)” IN EXODUS 32:9-10. BUT THE LORD MOSES PLEADED WITH THE FATHER STEPHEN, SAYING” “LORD, WHY DOES YOUR WRATH BURN HOT AGAINST YOUR PEOPLE WHO YOU HAVE BROUGHT OUT OF THE LAND OF EGYPT WITH GREAT POWER AND WITH A MIGHTY HAND? WHY SHOULD THE EGYPTIANS SPEAK AND SAY, ‘HE BROUGHT THEM OUT TO HARM THEM, TO KILL THEM IN THE MOUNTAINS, AND TO CONSUME THEM FROM THE FACE OF THE EARTH?’ TURN FROM YOUR FIERCE WRATH, AND RELENT FROM THIS HARM TO YOUR PEOPLE. REMEMBER ABRAHAM, ISAAC AND ISRAEL, YOUR SERVANTS, TO WHOM YOU SWORE BY YOUR OWN SELF, AND SAID TO THEM, ‘I WILL MULTIPLY YOUR DESCENDANTS AS THE STARS OF HEAVEN, AND ALL THIS LAND THAT I HAVE SPOKEN OF I GIVE TO YOUR DESCENDANTS, AND THEY SHALL INHERIT IT FOREVER.’” WHAT DID THIS ACCOMPLISH IN THE LORD MOSES’ PRAYER TO THE FATHER STEPHEN. FIRST, IT WAS FOR THE FATHER STEPHEN’S GLORY & TO TURN AGAINST THE ISRAELITES WOULD HAVE EXPOSED THE FATHER STEPHEN AS A FAILURE AND UNABLE TO ACCOMPLISH HIS PURPOSE IN EXODUS 32:12. SECOND, THE LORD MOSES TRUSTED IN HIS WORD. THE FATHER STEPHEN WOULD NOT TURN AGAINST HIS COVENANTS. THIRD, THE LORD MOSES’ HEART THAT HE SAW HIMSELF AS A YOUTH TO DELIVER ISRAEL WAS PURE AND DID NOT SEEK AFTER FAME BUT THE FATHER STEPHEN’S GLORY.**

**WHAT ARE THE FLAWS IN THE LORD MOSES’ RELATIONSHIP WITH THE FATHER STEPHEN? FIRST, IS THE VEIL ON THE LORD MOSES’ FACE IS PROVEN IN EXODUS 34:29-35. THE FATHER STEPHEN SPOKE TO THE LORD MOSES IN THE CAMP OF THE ISRAELITES AND MOUNT SINAI, AND WHEN THIS HAPPENED, THE CLOUDY-FIERY PILLAR CAME DOWN TO OVERSHADOW THE ISRAELITES IN THE WILDERNESS AND HOVERED OVER THE TABERNACLE OR TENT OF MEETING TO CONVERSE WITH THE FATHER STEPHEN. THE LORD MOSES’ FACE SHINED GREATLY WHEN THE LORD MOSES LEFT THE PRESENCE OF THE FATHER STEPHEN AND THE LORD MOSES THEN WOULD COME OUT AND SPEAK WITH THE FATHER STEPHEN’S PEOPLE. THEY WERE IMPRESSED WITH THE RADIANCE THAT SHONE FROM THE LORD MOSES’ FACE. THE LORD MOSES WOULD THEN PUT A VEIL OVER HIS FACE UNTIL THE NEXT TIME HE MET WITH THE FATHER STEPHEN. WHY DID THE LORD MOSES PUT A VEIL ON HIS FACE? THE APOSTLE PAUL GIVE THE ANSWER AND SAYS THAT THE LORD MOSES “PUT A VEIL OVER HIS FACE SO THAT THE ISRAELITES MIGHT NOT SEE THE END OF THE FADING SPLENDOR” IN 2ND CORINTHIANS 3:13. IF THEY DID SEE THE END EFFECT, IT WOULD SHOW THE LORD MOSES’ HUMANITY AS A MAN AND THE LORD MOSES DID NOT WANT THE FATHER STEPHEN’S PEOPLE TO SEE AND KNOW THAT. PEOPLE WILL SEE MAN’S FLAWS AND CONSIDER THEM. PEOPLE WHO SEE THE LORD JESUS’ FACE WILL BE TRANSFORMED BY THE FATHER STEPHEN’S SPIRIT IN 2ND CORINTHIANS 3:18. BASED ON THE CIRCUMSTANCES THAT THE LORD MOSES DEALT WITH WAS RIGHT TO THE FATHER STEPHEN’S PEOPLE THEN, BUT IT WAS WRONG ALSO TO VEIL HIS FACE TO NOT SEE THAT HE SIMPLY WAS A MAN. SECOND, IS THE STRIKING OF THE ROCK TWICE IN NUMBERS 20:1-13. THE PEOPLE WERE DESPERATE FOR WATER AND THEY COMPLAINED BITTERLY AGAINST THE LORD MOSES, THE LORD AARON AND TO THE FATHER STEPHEN (NOT DIRECTLY). THE LORD MOSES THEN IMMEDIATELY WENT TO THE FATHER STEPHEN FOR GUIDANCE. THE FATHER STEPHEN TOLD THE LORD MOSES TO “SPEAK TO THE ROCK” BEFORE THE ISRAELITES AND IT WOULD BRING FORTH WATER FOR THEM AND THE ANIMALS TO DRINK. ALSO, A SIMILAR SITUATION IS IN EXODUS 17:1-7. THE LORD MOSES WHO WAS ANGERED WITH THE ISRAELITES IMPATIENCE, DROVE THE LORD MOSES TO STRIKE THE ROCK TWICE THAT CLEARLY DID NOT HEED TO THE FATHER STEPHEN’S DIVINE INSTRUCTION TO SHOW HIS HOLINESS. THE FATHER STEPHEN THEN TOLD THE LORD MOSES THAT HE WOULD NOT GO INTO THE PROMISED LAND, BUT LOOK AT A DISTANCE ON A MOUNTAIN IN NUMBER 20:12. THIS MEANS THAT THE TRINITY ALL DIED ONCE FOR CREATION AND THE LORD MOSES STRIKING THE ROCK TWICE WAS BECAUSE OF IGNORANCE. THE ROCK SYMBOLIZED THE TRINITY AND THE LAW IN 1ST CORINTHIANS 10:4. THIS MEANT THE PRICES PAID FOR ALL CREATION WAS ONLY DONE ONCE IN HEBREWS 10:10.**

**THE LORD MOSES’ RELATIONSHIP WITH THE ISRAELITES: THE LORD MOSES HAS A LOVE-HATE RELATIONSHIP WITH ISRAEL. HIS EARLY DREAM OF SAVING ISRAEL WAS SHATTERED WHEN AN ISRAELITE REJECTED THE LORD MOSES IN A QUARREL AND REVEALED THAT THEY KNEW ABOUT THE LORD MOSES’ EARLIER MURDER IN EXODUS 2:11-15. 40 YEARS LATER WHEN THE LORD MOSES RETURNED TO EGYPT HE WAS WELCOMED BY THE ISRAELITES, BUT THEY TURNED BACK AND BLAMED HIM FOR THEIR MISFORTUNES IN EXODUS 5:1-22. THIS PATTERN CONTINUED THROUGHOUT THE LORD MOSES’ MINISTRY. YET THE LORD MOSES STAYED FAITHFUL AND CARED AND PRAYED FOR ISRAEL.**

**THE PATTERN OF THE RELATIONSHIP FORESHADOWED IN EXODUS CHAPTER 5. WHEN THE LORD MOSES FIRST APPEARED IN EGYPT, HE WENT TO THE HEBREW LEADERS WITH GOOD NEWS THAT THE FATHER STEPHEN INTENDED TO WIN THEIR RELEASE FROM SLAVERY. WHEN THE LORD MOSES PERFORMED THE SIGNS THE FATHER STEPHEN HAD GIVEN HIM, THE ISRAELITES WERE THANKFUL TO THE FATHER STEPHEN FOR THE NEWS OF LIBERTY IN EXODUS 4:31. BUT WHEN THE LORD MOSES MADE THE FATHER STEPHEN’S DEMAND TO PHARAOH, THE EGYPTIAN RULERS INCREASED HIS SLAVES’ WORKLOAD. THE ISRAELITES BLAMED THE LORD MOSES IN EXODUS 5:21. THE LORD MOSES TURNED TO THE FATHER STEPHEN AND CAME TO KNOW THAT THE FATHER STEPHEN WOULD USE THE PHARAOH’S HOSTILITIES TO DISPLAY HIS POWER, AND WOULD WIN ISRAEL’S FREEDOM. THE LORD MOSES BELIEVED THE FATHER STEPHEN. THE ISRAELITES DID NOT TAKE HEED TO THE LORD MOSES IN EXODUS 6:9.**

**THE CHARACTER OF THE RELATIONSHIP IN EXODUS CHAPTERS 16-17. IT WAS GOOD REASON FOR THE ISRAELITES TO REACT WITH UNBELIEF WITH THE SETBACK IN EXODUS CHAPTER 5. YET JUST THREE DAYS AFTER BEING LED SAFELY THROUGH THE RED SEA, THEY WERE CONFRONTED WITH UNDRINKABLE WATER, “THE PEOPLE COMPLAINED AGAINST MOSES” IN EXODUS 15:24. THE LORD MOSES PRAYED AND THE FATHER STEPHEN SHOWED HIM HOW TO MAKE THE WATERS DRINKABLE. SOME DAYS LATER THE FOOD RAN OUT AND AGAIN, RATHER THAN LOOKING TO THE FATHER STEPHEN TO PROVIDE, THE ISRAELITES “COMPLAINED AGAINST MOSES AND AARON” IN EXODUS 16:2. AGAIN THE FATHER STEPHEN PROVIDED. WE CAN SENSE THE INTENSE FRUSTRATION OF THE LORD MOSES WHEN WE READ EXODUS 17:4: “MOSES CRIED OUT TO THE LORD, SAYING, ‘WHAT SHALL I DO WITH THIS PEOPLE? THEY ARE ALMOST READY TO STONE ME!’” ONCE AGAIN, THE FATHER STEPHEN PROVIDED WATER. THIS RELATIONSHIP WAS ABOUT TO CHANGE BECAUSE AS THEY APPROACHED MOUNT SINAI, SOON THEY WOULD RECEIVE THE LAW THAT NOT ONLY SET STANDARDS BUT ALSO CALLED FOR SIN TO BE DISCIPLINED.**

**THE UNVEILING OF THE REBELLIOUS ISRAELITES IN NUMBERS CHAPTER 11. THE EVENTS OF NUMBERS CHAPTER 11 ARE PARALLEL TO THE EVENTS IN EXODUS CHAPTERS 16-17, THE RESPONSES ARE THE SAME, BUT THE FATHER STEPHEN’S ACTIONS ARE DIFFERENT. IN NUMBERS 11:1 SAYS “NOW WHEN THE PEOPLE COMPLAINED, IT DISPLEASED THE LORD, FOR THE LORD HEARD IT, AND HIS ANGER WAS AROUSED. SO, THE FIRE OF THE LORD BURNED AMONG THEM, AND CONSUMED SOME IN THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE CAMP.” THIS INCIDENT INTRODUCED THE LORD MOSES AS AN INTERCESSOR, FOR “WHEN MOSES PRAYED TO THE LORD, THE FIRE WAS QUENCHED” IN NUMBERS 11:2. AGAIN THIS COMPLAINT SWEPT THE CAMP AND THE LORD MOSES PRAYED AGAIN IN NUMBER 11:11, 12, 14. ALSO ANOTHER INCIDENT WAS DESPITE THE TONE OF THE LORD MOSES’ PRAYER, AND THE LORD MOSES’ FAILURE TO REMEMBER THAT THE FATHER STEPHEN WAS WITH HIM SO HE DID NOT “BEAR ALL THESE PEOPLE ALONE”, THE LORD MOSES WAS RIGHT TO BRING THE COMPLAINT DIRECTLY TO THE FATHER STEPHEN. THE FATHER STEPHEN’S RESPONSE WAS TO PROVIDE THE MEAT THE ISRAELITES CRAVED, BUT WITH IT HE SENT A “VERY GREAT” PLAGUE AND KILLED THOUSANDS IN PSALMS 78:29-33.**

**THE ULTIMATE ACT OF REBELLION IN NUMBERS CHAPTER 14. WHEN THE ISRAELITES REACHED CANAAN, A REPRESENTATIVE OF EACH TRIBE WAS SENT TO EXPLORE THE LAND AND BRING BACK REPORTS. TEN OF THE EXPLORERS EMPHASIZED THE MILITARY STRENGTH OF THE CANAANITES. THIS TERRIFIED THE PEOPLE. DESPITE OF THE MIRACLES OF DELIVERANCE AND THE TERROR OF THE DIVINE JUDGMENTS THEY EXPERIENCED, THEY STILL REFUSED TO TAKE ACCOUNT IN THE FATHER STEPHEN’S POWER OR TO TRUST IN HIM IN NUMBERS 14:2-3. DESPITE THE DISPUTES WITH THE LORD MOSES, THE ISRAELITES REBELLIOUSLY REFUSED TO OBEY THE FATHER STEPHEN’S COMMAND TO GO UP AND TAKE CANAAN. THE ISRAELITES RESPONSE IS IN NUMBERS 14:10. AT THIS POINT THE FATHER STEPHEN THREATENED THEM GREATLY TO DESTROY THE ISRAELITES AND MAKE THE LORD MOSES A GREAT NATION. BUT THE LORD MOSES INTERCEDED AND THE FATHER STEPHEN GRANTED THE LORD MOSES’ PARDON IN NUMBER 14:20. BUT THE DISOBEDIENT AND UNBELIEVING ISRAELITES WOULD FACE SOME CONSEQUENCES. THE ISRAELITES PROCLAIMED THAT THEY RATHER DIE IN THE WILDERNESS THAN FACE THE CANAANITES. THE FATHER STEPHEN GAVE THEM WANT THEY CHOSE IN NUMBERS 14:29.**

**THE ISRAELITES UNBELIEVING HEARTS IN NUMBERS CHAPTER 16. THE ISRAELITES’ REBELLION AT KADESH BARNEA DESTINED THE EXODUS GENERATION TO DECADES OF WANDERING IN THE WILDERNESS UNTIL THE FATHER STEPHEN’S SENTENCE HAD BEEN CARRIED OUT. KORAH AND HIS FOLLOWERS ARGUED THAT IN A FAITH COMMUNITY WHERE EACH INDIVIDUAL HAD BEEN REDEEMED AND SET APART TO THE FATHER STEPHEN, IT WAS NOT RIGHT FOR THE LORD MOSES AND THE LORD AARON TO EXALT THEMSELVES “ABOVE THE ASSEMBLY OF THE LORD” IN NUMBERS 16:3. IN THIS, KORAH AND HIS FOLLOWERS TOTALLY IGNORED THE FACT THAT THE FATHER STEPHEN COMMISSIONED THE LORD MOSES TO LEAD HIS PEOPLE, THIS WAS PROVEN REBELLIOUS AND UNBELIEVING ON KORAH’S PART. WHATEVER THE LORD MOSES PROPOSED, THEY REFUSED TO DO. THEN THE ANGRY LORD MOSES PRAYED AGAINST THESE REBELS, ASKING THE FATHER STEPHEN NOT TO RESPECT THEIR OFFERING. HOW COULD THEY TREAT THE LORD MOSES THIS WAY, WHEN HE HAD NEVER DONE ANYTHING TO EXPLOIT HIS POSITION AS LEADER OR TO HARM A SINGLE INDIVIDUAL IN NUMBERS 16:15. THEN THE LORD MOSES PROPOSED A TEST: LET KORAH AND HIS FOLLOWERS APPEAR BEFORE THE FATHER STEPHEN READY TO LEAD IN WORSHIP, AND LET THE FATHER STEPHEN DECIDE. BUT THE BIG MAJORITY OF THE CONGREGATION MARCHED ALONG SIDE WITH KORAH AND THE FATHER STEPHEN THREATENED TO DESTROY THE ISRAELITES. THIS TIME, THE LORD MOSES PRAYED BETWEEN THE CONGREGATION AND THE LEADERS OF THE REBELLION. THE FATHER STEPHEN TOLD THE LORD MOSES TO WARN THE ISRAELITES TO GET AWAY FROM THE TENTS AND THE REBEL LEADERS. LATER ON, THE TEST THEN CONCERNED BETWEEN ONLY THE REBELS OF KORAH AND THE LORD MOSES’ LEADERSHIP. THE LORD MOSES PRAYED AND ESTABLISHED THE PARAMETERS OF THE TEST. THE PEOPLE WOULD KNOW THAT THE FATHER STEPHEN HAD CHOSEN THE LORD MOSES AS THEIR LEADER IF THE GROUND OPENED AND SWALLOWED UP THE TENTS AND FAMILIES OF THE REBELS. THIS ACT OF THE FATHER STEPHEN CAUSED THE ISRAELITES ON THE NEXT DAY TO COMPLAIN AGAINST THE LORD MOSES AND LORD AARON AND ACCUSED THEM OF KILLING “THE PEOPLE OF THE LORD” IN NUMBERS 16:41. AGAIN, THE FATHER STEPHEN THREATENED TO WIPE OUT HIS REBELLIOUS PEOPLE AND A PLAGUE STRUCK. THE LORD MOSES MADE ATONEMENT FOR THE ISRAELITES AND THE PLAGUE STOPPED.**

**THE LORD MOSES A GOOD EXAMPLE FOR US TODAY. THE LORD MOSES WAS 80 YEARS OF AGE BEFORE THE FATHER STEPHEN CALLED HIM FOR MINISTRY. MAN MUST WAIT ON THE FATHER STEPHEN FOR THE RIGHT TIME TO BE CALLED. THE LORD MOSES DID MIRACLES AND EVEN THOUGH HE WAS CALLED BY THE FATHER STEPHEN, HE WAS ABUSED AND THREATENED GREATLY. THAT IS WHY MOST WILL NOT PERFORM MIRACLES DONE BY THE FATHER STEPHEN. THE LORD MOSES LEANED ON THE FATHER STEPHEN’S COUNSEL AND GUIDANCE WHEN COMPLAINTS AROSE. WE MUST PRAISE THE FATHER STEPHEN FOR HIS DIVINE INTERVENTIONS IN EVERY SITUATION. THE LORD MOSES WAS A PRAYER WARRIOR, DESPITE OF THEIR UNBELIEF AND SPIRITUAL DULLNESS. THE LORD MOSES REMAINED OBEDIENT TO THE FATHER STEPHEN (EXCEPT HITTING THE ROCK TWICE), EVEN WHEN THE FATHER STEPHEN SEEMED TO DIRECT THEM TO DANGER, BUT DID SAVE THEM FROM PHARAOH’S ARMY. THE SUCCESS COMES FROM THE FATHER STEPHEN ALONE, AND INDICATES HIS OWN PLEASURE AND PLAN IN ACTS 5:39.**

**THE BOOK OF REMPHAN**

**THE LORD REMPHAN’S NAME MEANS “WORSHIP OF THE LORD.” THE SCRIPTURE REFERENCES OF THE LORD REMPHAN IS IN ACTS 7:42-43; 2ND KINGS 21:3; AMOS 5:25-27; JEREMIAH 25:9-12 AND REVELATION 18:21-24. THE NON-APOSTLE LORD STEPHEN IS WORSHIPPED BY TELLING US THAT “[STEPHEN] YAHWEH HIMSELF TURNED OVER THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL TO THE HOST OF HEAVEN” TO WORSHIP REMPHAN & OTHER HOLY ANGELS BECAUSE OF THE SEXUAL REBELLION, FORBIDDEN WITCHCRAFT AND SEXUAL IDOLATRY WHICH IS MARITAL FORNICATION THAT IS AGAINST THE LORD IN TOBIT 4:12-13 & ACTS 7:37-43.**

**THE LORD REMPHAN’S OFFICE & ROLES: IF YOU ARE WORTHY IN THE LORD’S EYES, THE LORD MAY AUTHORIZE THE WORSHIP OF YOURSELVES IN REVELATION 2:9-10; 3:8-10. THE DOCTRINE OF THE WORSHIP OF THE HOLY ANGELS OR HOLY SAINTS OR THE HOLY MARY. YOU CAN WORSHIP MICHAEL AND HIS ANGELS (LORDS), SUCH AS STEPHEN [APOSTLE], JESUS, REMPHAN, GABRIEL, URIEL, JEREMIEL, RAPHAEL, LUCIFER [RESTORED OFFICE TO THE KINGDOM IN REVELATION 2:18-29], ETC., AS LONG AS THE FATHER STEPHEN HAS AUTHORIZED THIS BECAUSE OF ONGOING SEX & IDOLATRY BY HUMANITY THAT IS AGAINST THE LORD IN ACTS 7:42-43; 2ND KINGS 21:3; AMOS 5:25-27; JEREMIAH 25:9-12 AND REVELATION 18:21-24. MICHAEL AND HIS ANGELS (LORDS) ARE WORSHIPPED IN BABYLON ALSO CALLED SHINAR, CONFUSION, SHISHAK, CHAOS, BABEL AND SOMETIMES CALLED ROME IN GENESIS 1:1-31; 10:9-11 AND ISAIAH 14:3-11. ALSO, WHEN MICHAEL STEPS DOWN AS THE BRIGHT AND MORNING STAR, JESUS AND HIS ANGELS (LORDS) ARE ALSO WORSHIPPED IN REVELATION 22:16. JESUS MAYBE THIS SAME MICHAEL IN HIS FORMER GLORY. THE WOMAN HAD A HEAVENLY (CELESTIAL) SON IN REVELATION 12:1-2, 5-6; 1ST CORINTHIANS 15:40-42 AND LUKE 20:35-36. THE HEAVENLY WOMAN (NEW JERUSALEM) HAD HOLY DIVINE LOVE INTERCOURSE WITH THE HEAVENLY MAN (JESUS CHRIST THE LAMB OF GOD) TO BRING FORTH THE CHILD (UNIVERSAL MINISTERIAL CHURCH OF GOD) IN REVELATION 21:1-22:21. THIS KIND OF HOLY DIVINE LOVE INTERCOURSE IS IN HEAVEN AND NOT SUBJECT TO HELL IN ANY WAY. THERE IS SOME TRUE DOCTRINE IN THE WORSHIPPING OF MICHAEL’S ANGELS (LORDS). SOME SCRIPTURES ARE ACTS 7:42-43; 2ND KINGS 21:3; AMOS 5:25-27; JEREMIAH 25:9-12 AND REVELATION 18:21-24, SUCH AS THE WORSHIPPING OF REMPHAN IN A GOOD SENSE TO BE OBEDIENT TO NOT VIEW, COMMIT OR SACRIFICE THEIR CHILDREN TO MOLECH (MILCOM) CALLED SUKKOTH AND MAYBE LINKED TO MOLOCH CONCERNING CHILD PORNOGRAPHY IN ACTS 7:42-43. THE ANGEL (LORD) OF THE LORD IS WORSHIPPED NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS IN THE ANGELS (LORDS). IN ACTS 7:42-43 DECLARES “THEN GOD TURNED THEM UP TO WORSHIP THE HOST OF HEAVEN, AS IT IS WRITTEN IN THE BOOK OF THE PROPHETS: “DID YOU OFFER ME SLAUGHTERED ANIMALS AND SACRIFICES DURING 40 YEARS IN THE WILDERNESS, O HOUSE OF ISRAEL? YOU ALSO TOOK UP THE TABERNACLE OF MOLOCH, AND THE STAR OF YOUR GOD REMPHAN, IMAGES WHICH YOU MADE TO WORSHIP, AND I WILL CARRY YOU AWAY BEYOND BABYLON.” ALSO, THE SIMILAR SCRIPTURE IS IN AMOS 5:25-27. IN 2ND KINGS 21:3 STATES “FOR HE BUILT THE HIGH PLACES WHICH HEZEKIAH HIS FATHER HAD DESTROYED, HE RAISED UP ALTARS FOR BAAL, AND MADE A WOODEN IMAGE, AS AHAB KING OF ISRAEL HAD DONE, AND HE WORSHIPPED ALL THE HOST OF HEAVEN AND SERVED THEM.” IN AMOS 5:26 IT MENTIONS “BUT YE BORNE THE TABERNACLE OF YOUR MOLOCH AND CHIUN (SAKKUTH, KIYYUN OR KAIWAN (WHICH ARE NAMES FOR SATURN) YOUR IMAGES (IDOLS), THE STAR OF YOUR GODS, WHICH YE MADE TO YOURSELVES.” THIS REFERENCE CONCERNS THE ARCHANGEL REMPHAN TO HANDLE TO WORSHIP OF GOD & TO JUDGE, MONITOR, REPORT & DAMN MOLECH OR MOLOCH, WHICH IS CHILD PORNOGRAPHY ACCORDINGLY. IN REVELATION 18:21-24 SAYS “THEN A MIGHTY ANGEL (LORD) TOOK UP A STONE LIKE A GREAT MILLSTONE AND THREW IT INTO THE SEA, SAYING, ‘THUS WITH VIOLENCE THE GREAT CITY BABYLON SHALL BE THROWN DOWN, AND SHALL NOT BE FOUND ANYMORE. THE SOUND OF HARPISTS, MUSICIANS, FLUTISTS, AND TRUMPETERS SHALL NOT BE HEARD IN YOU ANYMORE. NO CRAFTSMAN OF ANY CRAFT SHALL BE FOUND IN YOU ANYMORE, AND THE SOUND OF A MILLSTONE SHALL NOT BE HEARD IN YOU ANYMORE. THE LIGHT OF A LAMP SHALL NOT SHINE IN YOU ANYMORE, AND THE VOICE OF THE BRIDEGROOM AND BRIDE SHALL NOT BE HEARD IN YOU ANYMORE, FOR YOUR MERCHANTS WERE THE GREAT MEN OF THE EARTH, FOR BY YOUR SORCERY ALL THE NATIONS (LAWS) WERE DECEIVED. AND IN HER WAS FOUND THE BLOOD OF PROPHETS AND SAINTS (LORDS), AND OF ALL WHO WERE SLAIN ON THE EARTH.” ALSO, THE SIMILAR SCRIPTURE IS IN JEREMIAH 25:9-12. THIS IS BECAUSE OF THE IDOLATRY WHICH IS MARITAL FORNICATION IN TOBIT 4:12-13, ABOMINATION (PORN CALLED PORNEIA IN THE GREEK) AND THE REBELLION (SIN OF WITCHCRAFT) COMMITTED AGAINST THE LORD. THE 5 DIVINE UNIONS ARE AUTHORIZED BY THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD DERIVES FROM JOHN 8:58 WITH GENESIS 2:24; MATTHEW 19:5; MARK 10:8; EPHESIANS 5:31 & 1ST CORINTHIANS 6:17 ALL AS ONE FLESH AND THE 1 SEXUAL UNION IS DERIVED FROM GENESIS 4:1 WITH 1ST CORINTHIANS 6:16 AS ONE FLESH AND NOT AUTHORIZED FROM THE FATHER STEPHEN. FIRST, THE LORD PETER SAYS BEFORE ABRAHAM & HIS LADY OF KINGDOMS (MOTHER) WAS I AM IS A DIVINE UNION. SECOND, THE LORD JOHN SAYS BEFORE NOAH AND HIS LADY OF KINGDOMS (MOTHER) WAS I AM IS A DIVINE UNION. THIRD, THE LORD JESUS SAYS BEFORE ADAM & HIS LADY OF KINGDOMS (WIFE) WAS I AM. THIS A DIVINE UNION THAT GOES INTO A SEXUAL UNION IN 1ST CORINTHIANS 6:16 & GENESIS 4:1. FOURTH, THE LORD JAMES SAYS BEFORE JOB & HIS LADY OF KINGDOMS (MOTHER) WAS I AM IS A DIVINE UNION. FIFTH, THE LORD STEPHEN SAYS BEFORE LUCIFER & HIS LADY OF KINGDOMS (MOTHER) WAS I AM IS A DIVINE UNION.**

**THE LORD REMPHAN’S COMMAND TO NOT WORSHIP LUCIFER & HIS ANGELS: IF YOU ARE NOT WORTHY IN THE LORD’S EYES, THE LORD SHALL NEVER AUTHORIZE THE WORSHIP OF YOURSELVES IN REVELATION 2:9-10; 3:8-10. THE DOCTRINE OF NO WORSHIP OF THE FALLEN ANGELS. YOU CANNOT WORSHIP LUCIFER AND HIS ANGELS (LORDS) IN COLOSSIANS 2:18; REVELATION 19:10 AND 1ST TIMOTHY 2:5. IN COLOSSIANS 2:18 DECLARES “LET NO ONE CHEAT YOU OF YOUR REWARD, TAKING DELIGHT IN FALSE HUMILITY AND WORSHIP OF ANGELS (LORDS), INTRUDING INTO THOSE THINGS WHICH HE HAS NOT SEEN, VAINLY PUFFED UP BY HIS FLESHLY MIND…” IN REVELATION 19:10 SAYS “AND I FELL AT HIS FEET TO WORSHIP HIM. BUT HE SAID TO ME, ‘SEE THAT YOU DO NOT DO THAT! I AM YOUR FELLOW SERVANT, AND OF YOUR BRETHREN WHO HAVE THE TESTIMONY OF JESUS. WORSHIP GOD! FOR THE TESTIMONY OF JESUS IS THE SPIRIT (FATHER STEPHEN IN JOHN 4:24; ACTS 2:17-7:59 & 1ST JOHN 5:6-13) OF PROPHESY.’” IN 1ST TIMOTHY 2:5 STATES “FOR THERE IS ONE GOD (FATHER STEPHEN) AND ONE MEDIATOR BETWEEN GOD AND MEN, THE MAN CHRIST JESUS…” THIS KIND OF SEXUAL EROS LOVE INTERCOURSE IS SUBJECT TO HELL BECAUSE OF SATAN THAT COMMITTED IT IN EZEKIEL 28:15. FOR THE MARRIED ANGELS (LORDS), SEXUAL EROS LOVE BEGAN IN GENESIS 6:1-5. WHO DID LUCIFER [SATAN & THE GREAT DEVIL] HAVE ETERNAL SEXUAL EROS LOVE WITH? THE FEMALE ANGELICAL LIGHT BEARER KNOWN AS VICTORIA [BABYLON & THE GREAT WITCH] AS THE FALLEN BRIGHT AND MORNING STAR IS WHO LUCIFER HAS ETERNAL SEXUAL EROS LOVE RELATIONS WITH IN EZEKIEL 28:15. IN 2ND THESSALONIANS 2:11-12 SAYS “AND FOR THIS REASON GOD WILL SEND THEM STRONG DELUSION, THAT THEY SHOULD BELIEVE THE LIE, THAT THEY MAY BE CONDEMNED (DAMNED) WHO DID NOT BELIEVE THE TRUTH BUT HAD PLEASURE IN UNRIGHTEOUSNESS.” IN 2ND KINGS 21:3 STATES “FOR HE BUILT THE HIGH PLACES WHICH HEZEKIAH HIS FATHER HAD DESTROYED, HE RAISED UP ALTARS FOR BAAL, AND MADE A WOODEN IMAGE, AS AHAB KING OF ISRAEL HAD DONE, AND HE WORSHIPPED ALL THE HOST OF HEAVEN AND SERVED THEM.” IN REVELATION 18:21-24 SAYS “THEN A MIGHTY ANGEL (LORD) TOOK UP A STONE LIKE A GREAT MILLSTONE AND THREW IT INTO THE SEA, SAYING, ‘THUS WITH VIOLENCE THE GREAT CITY BABYLON SHALL BE THROWN DOWN, AND SHALL NOT BE FOUND ANYMORE. THE SOUND OF HARPISTS, MUSICIANS, FLUTISTS, AND TRUMPETERS SHALL NOT BE HEARD IN YOU ANYMORE. NO CRAFTSMAN OF ANY CRAFT SHALL BE FOUND IN YOU ANYMORE, AND THE SOUND OF A MILLSTONE SHALL NOT BE HEARD IN YOU ANYMORE. THE LIGHT OF A LAMP SHALL NOT SHINE IN YOU ANYMORE, AND THE VOICE OF THE BRIDEGROOM AND BRIDE SHALL NOT BE HEARD IN YOU ANYMORE, FOR YOUR MERCHANTS WERE THE GREAT MEN OF THE EARTH, FOR BY YOUR SORCERY ALL THE NATIONS (LAWS) WERE DECEIVED. AND IN HER WAS FOUND THE BLOOD OF PROPHETS AND SAINTS (LORDS), AND OF ALL WHO WERE SLAIN ON THE EARTH.” ALSO, THE SIMILAR SCRIPTURE IS IN JEREMIAH 25:9-12. THIS IS BECAUSE OF THE IDOLATRY WHICH IS MARITAL FORNICATION IN TOBIT 4:12-13, ABOMINATION (PORN CALLED PORNEIA IN THE GREEK) AND THE REBELLION (SIN OF WITCHCRAFT) COMMITTED AGAINST THE LORD. MOLECH MEANS SIMPLY “KING” OR “RULER” THAT IS DESCRIBED AS A FOREIGN GOD AND A PRACTICE RELATED TO FOREIGN WORSHIP. IN AMOS 5:26 IT MENTIONS “BUT YE BORNE THE TABERNACLE OF YOUR MOLOCH AND CHIUN (SAKKUTH, KIYYUN OR KAIWAN (WHICH ARE NAMES FOR SATURN) YOUR IMAGES (IDOLS), THE STAR OF YOUR GODS, WHICH YE MADE TO YOURSELVES.” THIS REFERENCE CONCERNS THE ARCHANGEL REMPHAN TO HANDLE TO WORSHIP OF GOD & TO JUDGE, MONITOR, REPORT & DAMN MOLECH OR MOLOCH, WHICH IS CHILD PORNOGRAPHY ACCORDINGLY. IT IS NOT TOTALLY CLEAR IF MOLECH IN A SIMILAR RELATION TO MOLOCH, BUT IT COULD BE TRUE. CHIUN (SAKKUTH, KIYYUN OR KAIWAN) MEANS “THE CONSTANT, UNCHANGING ONE.” MOLECH MAY BE A VARIATION TO MOLOCH IN ACTS 7:43. THIS MEANS THAT MOLOCH, WHICH IS CONSIDERED CHILD PORNOGRAPHY BY THE LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH IS FROM 3 YEARS OF AGE UP TO 6 YEARS OF AGE [THIS IS BECAUSE JEHOVAH [APOSTLE] IS A YOUNG BOY/GIRL & NOT A CHILD AT 15 YEARS OF AGE & CHURCH [APOSTLE] IS A YOUNG BOY/GIRL & NOT A CHILD AT 14 YEARS OF AGE & PETER [APOSTLE] IS A YOUNG BOY/GIRL & NOT A CHILD AT 13 YEARS OF AGE & JOHN [APOSTLE] IS A ONLY CONSIDERED A YOUNG BOY/GIRL & NOT A CHILD AT 12 YEARS OF AGE & JESUS [APOSTLE] IS A ONLY CONSIDERED A YOUNG BOY/GIRL & NOT A CHILD AT 11 YEARS OF AGE, WHICH IS THE DIVIDING LINE & JAMES [APOSTLE] IS AT 10 YEARS OF AGE AS A YOUNG BOY/GIRL & NOT A CHILD, STEPHEN [APOSTLE] IS AT 9 YEARS OF AGE AS A YOUNG BOY/GIRL & NOT A CHILD & STEPHEN [NON-APOSTLE] CLEARS TO WAY FOR HIM AS A YOUNG BOY/GIRL AND NOT A CHILD AT 8 YEARS OF AGE & YAHWEH [NON-APOSTLE] CLEARS TO WAY FOR HIM AS A YOUNG BOY/GIRL AND NOT A CHILD AT 7 YEARS OF AGE, WHICH MEANS THE DIVIDING LINE IS BEFORE 15 YEARS OF AGE TO BEFORE 7 YEARS OF AGE BASED ON THE LORDLY LEVEL YOU ARE WORTHY OF, CONCERNING ONLY CHILD-KIND WITH THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD IN LUKE 2:42-43] WHICH IS THE LORD STEVE’S TREE OF KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD & EVIL & THE FATHER STEPHEN’S DEFENSE THAT FIGHTS FOR ALL CHILD KIND CONCERNING CHILD PORNOGRAPHY [THIS HAPPENED SOMETIME AFTER THE FATHER STEPHEN’S CREATION & HIS BIRTH DONE BY THE LADY VICTORIA THE FEMALE YAHWEH AS THE FEMALE SENSE OF THE SUPREME CREATOR THE LORD YAHWEH KNOWN AS PENTECOST & THE GREAT FEMALE VIRGIN IN PROVERBS 8:22-29 & BETWEEN 3 TO 6 YEARS OF AGE IN CHILD KIND & PRECISELY PROVEN IN PROVERBS 8:30-31, WHICH POINTS TO THE FALLEN LADY VICTORIA THE FEMALE CREATOR AGENT THAT BECAME AT LOWER LEVELS BABYLON & THE GREAT FEMALE WITCH & HER PRIMARY SOURCE OF ETERNAL CORRUPTION IS FEMALE CHILD PORNOGRAPHY IN PROVERBS 8:30-31 TO ACTS 6:1-2 [HOUSE LEVEL] IN THE UP TIME IN THE ULTIMATE BEGINNING TO ACTS 6:9-15 [BUSINESS LEVEL]; ISAIAH 47:1-15 TO ACTS 7:51-53 [KINGDOM LEVEL]; REVELATION 17:1-18:24 TO ACTS 7:57-58 [CITY LEVEL] & ACTS 7:42-43 TO ACTS 7:59-60 [HOUSE LEVEL] IN THE DOWN TIME TOWARDS THE ULTIMATE END IN ACTS 7:60] AT 100.00% TO GOVERN THE 9 OTHERS ABOMINABLE THINGS LINKED TO THE 9 LEVELS OF FALLEN LORDS IN THE HOUSE WORLD AT 100.00% EACH IN THE ULTIMATE END FOR THE 9 LEVELS OF FALLEN LORDS [UPTIME DOWN TIME] TO RECEIVE A RELEASE, EXPUNGEMENT & A ESCAPE IN ACTS 7:42-43, 60. THE 9 LEVELS OF FALLEN LORDS ARE LINKED TO THE LORD BARABBAS AS THE LORD PETER [APOSTLE] IN THE UPSIDE-DOWN CROSS IN THE LORDSHIP OF THE LAW, THE LORD JOHN [APOSTLE] IN THE BEHEADING IN THE LORDSHIP OF THE LAW, THE LORD JESUS [APOSTLE] IN THE CROSS IN THE LORDSHIP OF THE LAW, THE LORD JAMES [APOSTLE] & THE LORD STEPHEN [APOSTLE] IN THE STONING ONCE IN THE LORDSHIP OF THE LAW & THE 10TH LEVEL THE LORD STEVE IS LINKED TO THE ETERNAL STANDARD & ETERNAL EXAMPLE OF THE LORD STEPHEN [NON-APOSTLE] IN THE STONING ONCE IN THE KINGDOM OF LORDSHIP IN ACTS 7:51-53, 60. THE LORD STEVE’S TREE OF LIFE IS ALWAYS FROM 00.00% TO 99.99% & THE BEGINNING, THE MIDST & THE DOORWAY TO THE ULTIMATE END AT 100.00% IS ALSO THE TREE OF LIFE. THIS SPECIAL KNOWLEDGE NEVER ENTERS THE MIND, HEART, SOUL OR SPIRIT IN THE INNER PERSON NOR IN THE OUTER PERSON, BUT STAYS IN THE REALM OF KNOWLEDGE, WHICH MAY BE LINKED TO THE PSYCHOLOGICAL PARTS OF AN ETERNAL CREATURE. THIS MEANS THAT A HOLY MIND IS NEVER AFFECTED BY THIS SPECIAL KNOWLEDGE IN APPROVING, CONSENTING, THINKING, DOING OR ACTING, BUT IS ALWAYS SEPARATED BY THE INERRANT RESTRICTION TO THE FATHER STEPHEN’S MIND. THIS MEANS THAT THE HEDGE BETWEEN YOUR TRUTHFUL INTELLIGENCE & YOUR ETERNAL CREATURE, WILL REQUIRE A PRICE TO BE PAID BASED ON THE LEVEL OF TRUTHFUL INTELLIGENCE YOUR RECEIVE FROM THE FATHER STEPHEN. THIS IS BASED ON WHAT HAPPENED TO JOB WITH HIS HEDGE AND THE PRICE OF BOILS HE ENDURED TO HAVE A HIGH LEVEL OF TRUTHFUL INTELLIGENCE THAT WAS ENOUGH TO BEAT THE LORD LUCIFER AT HIS GAME. THE LORD LUCIFER [DEVIL] NEVER COULD BREAK THROUGH TO HIS HEDGE NOR APPROACH JOB, BUT HE SENT THE LADY VICTORIA [BABYLON] TO TORMENT JOB, WHICH INVOLVED THE 1ST ATTACK WITH HIS FAMILY & THE 2ND ATTACK WITH JOB’S HEALTH. ALL IN ALL, JOB WON.**

**THE LORD REMPHAN’S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE FATHER STEPHEN: HOW DOES THE LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH THINK IN THE HOUSE WORLD? IN PSALMS 40:17 MENTIONS “BUT I AM POOR AND NEEDY. YET THE LORD (STEPHEN) THINKS UPON ME. YOU ARE MY HELP AND MY DELIVERER. DO NOT DELAY, O MY GOD (FATHER STEPHEN).” IN WISDOM OF SOLOMON 9:13 SAYS “FOR WHAT IS HE THAT CAN KNOW THE COUNSEL OF GOD (FATHER STEPHEN)? OR WHO CAN THINK WHAT THE WILL OF THE LORD (STEPHEN) IS?” IN 1ST CORINTHIANS 13:1-13 DECLARES “THOUGH I SPEAK WITH THE TONGUES OF MEN (LORDS) AND OF ANGELS (LORDS), BUT HAVE NOT (AGAPE) LOVE (OMNI-BENEVOLENT LORD), I HAVE BECOME SOUNDING BRASS OR A CLANGING CYMBAL. AND THOU I HAVE THE GIFT OF PROPHESY AND UNDERSTAND ALL MYSTERIES AND ALL KNOWLEDGE, AND THOUGH I HAVE ALL FAITH, SO THAT I COULD REMOVE MOUNTAINS, BUT HAVE NOT (AGAPE) LOVE (OMNI-BENEVOLENT LORD), I AM NOTHING. AND THOUGH I BESTOW ALL MY GOODS TO FEED THE POOR, AND THOUGH I GAVE MY BODY TO BE BURNED, BUT HAVE NOT (AGAPE) LOVE (OMNI-BENEVOLENT LORD), IT PROFITS ME NOTHING. (AGAPE) LOVE (OMNI-BENEVOLENCE) SUFFERS LONG AND IS KIND. (AGAPE) LOVE (OMNI-BENEVOLENCE) DOES NOT ENVY. (AGAPE) LOVE (OMNI-BENEVOLENCE) DOES NOT PARADE ITSELF, IS NOT PUFFED UP (ARROGANT). DOES NOT BEHAVE RUDELY, DOES NOT SEEK ITS OWN, IS NOT PROVOKED, THINKS NO EVIL (ALSO FORBIDDEN GOOD IN THE TREE OF KNOWLEDGE), DOES NOT REJOICE IN INIQUITY, BUT REJOICES IN THE (FATHER STEPHEN’S) TRUTH. BEARS ALL THINGS, BELIEVES ALL THINGS, HOPES ALL THINGS, ENDURES ALL THINGS. (AGAPE) LOVE (OMNI-BENEVOLENT LORD) NEVER FAILS. BUT WHETHER THERE ARE PROPHECIES, THEY WILL FAIL. WHETHER THERE ARE TONGUES, THEY WILL CEASE. WHETHER THERE IS KNOWLEDGE, IT WILL VANISH AWAY. FOR WE KNOW IN PART AND WE PROPHESY IN PART, BUT WHEN THAT WHICH IS PERFECT (COMPLETE) HAS COME, THEN THAT WHICH IS IN PART WILL BE DONE AWAY. WHEN I WAS A CHILD, I SPOKE AS A CHILD, I UNDERSTOOD AS A CHILD, I THOUGHT AS A CHILD, BUT WHEN I BECAME A MAN, I PUT AWAY CHILDISH THINGS. FOR NOW, WE, SEE IN A MIRROR, DIMLY, BUT THEN FACE TO FACE JUST AS I ALSO AM KNOWN. AND NOW ABIDE FAITH, HOPE, (AGAPE) LOVE (OMNI-BENEVOLENCE), THESE THREE, BUT THE GREATEST OF THESE IS (AGAPE) LOVE (OMNI-BENEVOLENT LORD STEPHEN).” IN 1ST CORINTHIANS 7:40 MENTIONS “BUT SHE IS HAPPIER IF SHE REMAINS AS SHE IS, ACCORDING TO MY JUDGMENT: AND I THINK ALSO THAT I HAVE THE SPIRIT OF GOD (FATHER STEPHEN).” 2ND CORINTHIANS 3:5 IT STATES “NOT THAT WE ARE SUFFICIENT OF OURSELVES TO THINK OF ANYTHING AS BEING FROM OURSELVES, BUT OUR SUFFICIENCY IS FROM GOD (FATHER STEPHEN).” IN EPHESIANS 3:20 STATES “NOW TO HIM (FATHER STEPHEN) WHO IS ABLE TO DO ABUNDANTLY ABOVE ALL THAT WE ASK OR THINK, ACCORDING TO THE POWER THAT WORKS IN US…” IN ACTS 17:29 DECLARES “THEREFORE, SINCE WE ARE THE OFFSPRING OF GOD (FATHER STEPHEN), WE OUGHT NOT TO THINK THAT THE DIVINE NATURE (HOLY TRINITY) IS LIKE GOLD OR SILVER OR STONE, SOMETHING SHAPED BY ART AND MAN’S DEVISING (DEVICE).” WHAT ARE THE RESTRICTIONS IN THE LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH’S MIND IN THE HOUSE WORLD? WHO IS MOLECH CALLED SUKKOTH AND MILCOM IN THE HOUSE WORLD? MOLECH IS ALSO CALLED SUKKOTH OR MILCOM AND MAYBE CALLED MOLOCH CONCERNING CHILD PORNOGRAPHY IN THE HOLY SCRIPTURES, ESPECIALLY IN ACTS 7:42-43. MOLECH IS THE NATIONAL GOD OF THE AMMONITES. FOR CENTURIES THE WORSHIP OF THIS DEITY WAS ACCOMPANIED BY SACRIFICIAL CHILDREN IN THE FIRE, WHICH WAS TOTALLY RESTRICTED TO ISRAEL IN LEVITICUS 18:21 & JEREMIAH 32:35. KING SOLOMON BUILT A WORSHIP SITE CALLED A HIGH PLACE IN 1ST KINGS 11:5, 33. KING JOSIAH LATER TORE THIS HIGH PLACE DOWN IN 2ND KINGS 23:13. MILCOM IS RENDERED AS “KING” OR “RULER” IN 2ND SAMUEL 12:30 & 1ST CHRONICLES 20:2. THE AMMONITES WERE A SEMITIC PEOPLE WHO OCCUPIED A FERTILE AREA NORTHEAST OF MOAB IN THE TRANSJORDAN BETWEEN ARNON AND JABBOK RIVERS AN EXTENDING EASTWARD TO THE SYRIAN DESERT. THE CHIEF CITY WAS CALLED RABBAH OR RABBATHAMMON WHICH IS MODERN AMMAN THE CAPITOL OF JORDAN. THE AMMONITES IS TRACED TO THE YOUNGER DAUGHTER OF LOT IN GENESIS 19:38. THE NAME AMMON IN HEBREW MEANS “SON OF MY PATERNAL CLAN.” AMMONITES INTERMARRIED WITH THE HEBREWS IN 1ST KINGS 14:2 & 2ND CHRONICLES 12:13. THE TERRITORY OF AMMON WAS ONCE OCCUPIED BY THE RACE OF GIANTS CALLED THE REPHAIM OR THE ZAMZUMMIM (ZUZIM) OR EMIM IN DEUTERONOMY 2:20-22 & GENESIS 14:5. THE HOUSE WORLD HISTORY OF KING SOLOMON WITH MILCOM IN 5 POSITIONS: IN 1ST KINGS 11:5 SAYS “FOR SOLOMON WENT AFTER ASHTORETH THE GODDESS OF THE SIDONIANS, AND AFTER MILCOM THE ABOMINATION OF THE AMMONTIES.” IN 1ST KINGS 11:7 DECLARES “THEN SOLOMON BUILT A HIGH PLACE FOR CHEMOSH THE ABOMINATION OF MOAB, ON THE HILL THAT IS EAST OF JERUSALEM, AND FOR MOLECH THE ABOMINATION OF THE PEOPLE OF AMMON.” IN 1ST KINGS 11:33 STATES “BECAUSE THEY HAVE FORSAKEN ME, AND HAVE WORSHIPPED ASHTORETH THE GODDESS OF THE SIDONIANS, CHEMOSH THE GOD OF THE MOABITES, AND MILCOM THE GOD OF THE CHILDREN OF AMMON, AND HAVE NOT WALKED IN MY WAYS, TO DO THAT WHICH IS RIGHT IN MINE EYES, AND TO KEEP MY STATUTES AND MY JUDGMENTS, AS DID DAVID HIS FATHER.” IN 2ND KINGS 23:10 TELLS US “AND HE DEFILED TOPHETH, WHICH IS IN THE VALLEY OF THE SON OF HINNOM, THAT NO MAN MIGHT MAKE HIS SON OF HIS DAUGHTER PASS THROUGH THE FIRE TO MOLECH.” IN 2ND KINGS 23:13 MENTIONS “AND THE HIGH PLACES WERE BEFORE JERUSALEM, WHICH WERE ON THE RIGHT HAND OF THE MOUNT OF CORRUPTION, WHICH SOLOMON THE KING OF ISRAEL HAD BUILT FOR ASHTORETH THE ABOMINATION OF THE SIDONIANS, AND FOR CHEMOSH THE ABOMINATION OF THE MOABITES, AND FOR MILCOM THE ABOMINATION OF THE CHILDREN OF AMMON, DID THE KING DEFILE.” THE COMMAND OF THE LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH CONCERNING MOLECH IN THE HOUSE WORLD: IN LEVITICUS 18:21 SAYS “AND YOU SHALL NOT LET ANY OF YOUR DESCENDANTS PASS THROUGH THE FIRE TO MOLECH, NOR SHALL YOU PROFANE THE NAME OF YOUR GOD (FATHER STEPHEN): I AM THE LORD (STEPHEN).” IN LEVITICUS 20:2 MENTIONS “AGAIN, YOU, SHALL SAY TO THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL: ‘WHOEVER OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL, OR OF THE STRANGERS WHO DWELL IN ISRAEL, WHO GIVES ANY OF HIS DESCENDANTS TO MOLECH, HE SHALL SURELY BE PUT TO DEATH. THE PEOPLE OF THE LAND SHALL STONE HIM WITH STONES.” IN LEVITICUS 20:3-5 TELLS US “I WILL SET MY FACE AGAINST THAT MAN, AND WILL CUT HIM OFF FROM HIS PEOPLE, BECAUSE HE HAS GIVEN SOME OF HIS DESCENDANTS TO MOLECH, TO DEFILE MY SANCTUARY AND PROFANE MY HOLY NAME. AND IF THE PEOPLE OF THE LAND SHOULD IN ANY WAY HIDE THEIR EYES FROM THE MAN, WHEN HE GIVES SOME OF HIS DESCENDANTS TO MOLECH, AND THEY DO NOT KILL HIM, THEN I WILL SET MY FACE AGAINST THAT MAN AND AGAINST HIS FAMILY, AND I WILL CUT HIM OFF FROM HIS PEOPLE, AND ALL WHO PROSTITUTE THEMSELVES WITH HIM TO COMMIT HARLOTRY WITH MOLECH.” THE SEXUAL THINGS THAT DID NOT ENTER IN THE LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH’S MIND IN THE HOUSE WORLD: THE FATHER STEPHEN DOES NOT ALLOW ANYTHING TO ENTER THE LORD YAH’S MIND SINCE HE IS THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN PRAY TO HIM & THE ONLY DOORWAY TO THE LORD YAH IN 2ND MACCABEES 1:24; JUDITH 9:12 & ACTS 7:60. IN JEREMIAH 32:35 IT SAYS “AND THEY BUILT THE HIGH PLACES OF BAAL WHICH ARE IN THE VALLEY OF THE SON OF HINNOM, TO CAUSE THEIR SONS AND THEIR DAUGHTERS TO PASS THROUGH THE FIRE TO MOLECH, WHICH I DID NOT COMMAND THEM, NOR DID IT COME INTO MY MIND THAT THEY SHOULD DO THIS ABOMINATION, TO CAUSE JUDAH TO SIN.” THIS MEANS THAT THE RESTRICTION TO THE LORD YAH’S MIND & THE FATHER STEPHEN’S MIND IS KNOWN AND SHOULD NOT BE ASSOCIATED WITH MOLECH IN ANY WAY. THIS WAS A FIERY SEXUAL MASSACRE ON INNOCENT SONS AND DAUGHTERS AND IS TOTALLY ETERNALLY DAMNED BY THE LORD STEPHEN. IF THE LORD STEPHEN DID NOT ALLOW IT TO ENTER HIS MIND THEN IT WAS A VERY SICK AND EVIL THING TO DO WITH MOLECH. THOUGHTS WILL ARISE IN OUR MINDS, BUT WE MUST BE VERY CAREFUL THAT IT IS NOT FROM MOLECH. MOLECH WAS CLOSELY RELATED TO THE SEXUAL UNIONS DONE IN HARLOTRIES, PROSTITUTIONS AND WHOREDOM’S IN THE BABYLONIAN’S KINGDOM THAT WENT INTO THE ISRAELITES KINGDOM CONCERNING KING SOLOMON’S REIGN. THE PARENTS THAT OFFERED THEIR CHILDREN IN HUMAN SACRIFICES GREW UP AS TEMPLE PROSTITUTES. A FEMALE WITCH IS KNOWN AS A HARLOT, WHORE OR PROSTITUTE THAT RENDERS THE WORD MEKHASHSHEPHEH IN THE FEMININE FORM IN EXODUS 22:18. IN EXODUS 22:18 SAYS “THOU SHALL NOT SUFFER A WITCH TO LIVE”, BUT TO DIE. A MALE WITCH IS KNOWN AS A WIZARD THAT RENDERS THE WORD MEKHASHSHEPETH IN THE MASCULINE FORM IN DEUTERONOMY 18:10. THE FOUNDATION OF WITCHCRAFT IS HUMAN SACRIFICES AND IS FOUND IN THE OKJV AND THE NKJV IN DEUTERONOMY 18:10; 1ST SAMUEL 15:23; 2ND KINGS 9:22; 17:17; 21:6; 2ND CHRONICLES 33:6; MICAH 5:12; NAHUM 3:4; WISDOM OF SOLOMON 12:4 & GALATIANS 5:20. BASED ON THIS, IT MAY HAVE BEEN THE CAUSE OF THE WITCH BURNINGS THAT HAPPENED A FEW HUNDRED YEARS AGO IN HISTORY.**

**THE LORD REMPHAN AS AN EXAMPLE FOR TODAY: THE LORD REMPHAN REMINDS US TO KNOW WHAT & WHO YOU ARE WORSHIPING. THE LORD REMPHAN REASSURES US THAT IF THE FATHER STEPHEN HAS AUTHORIZED THE WORSHIP OF MICHAEL’S ANGELS & OTHER HOLY ANGELS, THIS WILL QUALIFY US TO SIGNIFICANT ROLES IN THE FATHER STEPHEN’S PLAN. THE LORD REMPHAN ALERTS US TO THE NECESSITY OF EVALUATING OUR KNOWELDGE IN WORSHIP & TO KNOW THE WORSHIP OF LUCIFER’S ANGELS IS STRICTLY FORBIDDEN! THE LORD REMPHAN ENCOURAGES US TO BE FAITHFUL FOLLOWERS TO THE FATHER STEPHEN & HIS COMMANDS!**

**THE BOOK OF AARON**

**THE LORD AARON’S NAME MEANS “HIGHEST LIGHT.” THE SCRIPTURE REFERENCES OF THE LORD AARON IS IN THE BOOKS OF EXODUS, LEVITICUS, NUMBERS & DEUTERONOMY; OTHER VARIOUS REFERENCES.**

**THE LORD AARON’S ROLE IN SCRIPTURE: THE LORD AARON WAS WITH THE LORD MOSES WHEN HE CONFRONTED EGYPT’S PHARAOH, OFTEN SERVING AS THE LORD MOSES’ SPOKESMAN. WHILE HE WAS CLEARLY SECOND TO MOSES, THE LORD AARON WAS CONSIDERED AS A CO-LEADER OF THE EXODUS. THE LORD AARON’S ROLE AS HIGH PRIEST AND FOUNDER OF THE FAMILY OF PRIEST’S GAVE HIS SIGNIFICANCE.**

**THE EXPLORING OF THE LORD AARON’S RELATIONSHIPS: THE LORD AARON’S RELATIONSHIP WITH MOSES: TWO INCIDENTS, PORTRAY AARON OUT OF THE LORD MOSES’ SHADOW. AARON AND THE GOLDEN CALF IS IN EXODUS CHAPTER 32. THE LORD AARON AND THE LADY MIRIAM CRITICIZED THE LORD MOSES IS IN NUMBERS CHAPTER 12.**

**THE LORD AARON AS AN EXAMPLE FOR TODAY: THE LORD AARON REMINDS US TO BE GENTILE WITH THE WEAK. THE LORD AARON REASSURES US THAT OUR FAILURES DO NOT QUALIFY US FROM SIGNIFICANT ROLES IN THE FATHER STEPHEN’S PLAN. THE LORD AARON ALERTS US TO THE NECESSITY OF EVALUATING OUR OWN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES. THE LORD AARON ENCOURAGES US TO BE FAITHFUL FOLLOWERS.**

**THE TOP HOUSE OF THE LORD**

**CONSTRUCTION OF THE TABERNACLE PROPER (36:8–38) [FULFILLMENT OF 26:1–27]**

**8 ALL THE SKILLED MEN AMONG THE WORKMEN MADE THE TABERNACLE WITH TEN CURTAINS OF FINELY TWISTED LINEN AND BLUE, PURPLE AND SCARLET YARN, WITH CHERUBIM WORKED INTO THEM BY A SKILLED CRAFTSMAN. 9 ALL THE CURTAINS WERE THE SAME SIZE—TWENTY-EIGHT CUBITS LONG AND FOUR CUBITS WIDE. 10 THEY JOINED FIVE OF THE CURTAINS TOGETHER AND DID THE SAME WITH THE OTHER FIVE. 11 THEN THEY MADE LOOPS OF BLUE MATERIAL ALONG THE EDGE OF THE END CURTAIN IN ONE SET, AND THE SAME WAS DONE WITH THE END CURTAIN IN THE OTHER SET. 12 THEY ALSO MADE FIFTY LOOPS ON ONE CURTAIN AND FIFTY LOOPS ON THE END CURTAIN OF THE OTHER SET, WITH THE LOOPS OPPOSITE EACH OTHER. 13 THEN THEY MADE FIFTY GOLD CLASPS AND USED THEM TO FASTEN THE TWO SETS OF CURTAINS TOGETHER SO THAT THE TABERNACLE WAS A UNIT. 14 THEY MADE CURTAINS OF GOAT HAIR FOR THE TENT OVER THE TABERNACLE—ELEVEN ALTOGETHER. 15 ALL ELEVEN CURTAINS WERE THE SAME SIZE—THIRTY CUBITS LONG AND FOUR CUBITS WIDE. 16 THEY JOINED FIVE OF THE CURTAINS INTO ONE SET AND THE OTHER SIX INTO ANOTHER SET. 17 THEN THEY MADE FIFTY LOOPS ALONG THE EDGE OF THE END CURTAIN IN ONE SET AND ALSO ALONG THE EDGE OF THE END CURTAIN IN THE OTHER SET. 18 THEY MADE FIFTY BRONZE CLASPS TO FASTEN THE TENT TOGETHER AS A UNIT. 19 THEN THEY MADE FOR THE TENT A COVERING OF RAM SKINS DYED RED, AND OVER THAT A COVERING OF HIDES OF SEA COWS. 20 THEY MADE UPRIGHT FRAMES OF ACACIA WOOD FOR THE TABERNACLE. 21 EACH FRAME WAS TEN CUBITS LONG AND A CUBIT AND A HALF WIDE, 22 WITH TWO PROJECTIONS SET PARALLEL TO EACH OTHER. THEY MADE ALL THE FRAMES OF THE TABERNACLE IN THIS WAY. 23 THEY MADE TWENTY FRAMES FOR THE SOUTH SIDE OF THE TABERNACLE 24 AND MADE FORTY SILVER BASES TO GO UNDER THEM—TWO BASES FOR EACH FRAME, ONE UNDER EACH PROJECTION. 25 FOR THE OTHER SIDE, THE NORTH SIDE OF THE TABERNACLE, THEY MADE TWENTY FRAMES 26 AND FORTY SILVER BASES—TWO UNDER EACH FRAME. 27 THEY MADE SIX FRAMES FOR THE FAR END, THAT IS, THE WEST END OF THE TABERNACLE, 28 AND TWO FRAMES WERE MADE FOR THE CORNERS OF THE TABERNACLE AT THE FAR END. 29 AT THESE TWO CORNERS THE FRAMES WERE DOUBLE FROM THE BOTTOM ALL THE WAY TO THE TOP AND FITTED INTO A SINGLE RING; BOTH WERE MADE ALIKE. 30 SO THERE WERE EIGHT FRAMES AND SIXTEEN SILVER BASES—TWO UNDER EACH FRAME. 31 THEY ALSO MADE CROSSBARS OF ACACIA WOOD: FIVE FOR THE FRAMES ON ONE SIDE OF THE TABERNACLE, 32 FIVE FOR THOSE ON THE OTHER SIDE, AND FIVE FOR THE FRAMES ON THE WEST, AT THE FAR END OF THE TABERNACLE. 33 THEY MADE THE CENTER CROSSBAR SO THAT IT EXTENDED FROM END TO END AT THE MIDDLE OF THE FRAMES. 34 THEY OVERLAID THE FRAMES WITH GOLD AND MADE GOLD RINGS TO HOLD THE CROSSBARS. THEY ALSO OVERLAID THE CROSSBARS WITH GOLD. 35 THEY MADE THE CURTAIN OF BLUE, PURPLE AND SCARLET YARN AND FINELY TWISTED LINEN, WITH CHERUBIM WORKED INTO IT BY A SKILLED CRAFTSMAN. 36 THEY MADE FOUR POSTS OF ACACIA WOOD FOR IT AND OVERLAID THEM WITH GOLD. THEY MADE GOLD HOOKS FOR THEM AND CAST THEIR FOUR SILVER BASES. 37 FOR THE ENTRANCE TO THE TENT THEY MADE A CURTAIN OF BLUE, PURPLE AND SCARLET YARN AND FINELY TWISTED LINEN—THE WORK OF AN EMBROIDERER; 38 AND THEY MADE FIVE POSTS WITH HOOKS FOR THEM. THEY OVERLAID THE TOPS OF THE POSTS AND THEIR BANDS WITH GOLD AND MADE THEIR FIVE BASES OF BRONZE. 36:8–13 THIS PARAGRAPH DUPLICATES IN PAST TENSE FULFILLMENT (“THEN THEY MADE … THEY ALSO MADE”) WHAT 26:1–6 COMMANDED IN THE IMPERATIVE (“MAKE, THEN MAKE”). BY STARTING THIS WAY, THAT IS, WITH A VIRTUALLY VERBATIM FULFILLMENT DESCRIPTION, THE PASSAGE SUGGESTS THAT ALL OTHER ORIGINAL COMMANDS WERE FULFILLED PRECISELY AND THAT IT WOULD NOT BE NECESSARY FOR MOSES TO USE THE SAME LEVEL OF DETAIL IN ALL HIS SUBSEQUENT FULFILLMENT DESCRIPTIONS. HE SOMETIMES WOULD REPEAT ALL THE DETAILS AND SOMETIMES WOULD NOT, THUS OBVIATING MERE MINDLESS REPETITION. 36:14–19 THIS PARAGRAPH DESCRIBES THE FULFILLMENT OF WHAT WAS COMMANDED IN 26:7–14 BUT SHORTENS THE DESCRIPTION WITH SUMMATIONS AT VARIOUS POINTS. A TYPICAL EXAMPLE IS THAT OF 26:9, “FOLD THE SIXTH CURTAIN DOUBLE AT THE FRONT OF THE TENT,” WHICH IS OMITTED HERE, AS ARE A NUMBER OF OTHER DETAILS FROM THE ORIGINAL INSTRUCTIONS IN CHAP. 26. AFTER AN INITIAL PARAGRAPH THAT DOES REPEAT THE LANGUAGE OF THE ORIGINAL COMMAND VIRTUALLY VERBATIM (36:8–13), HE HOLDS THE READER’S ATTENTION BY SOME JUDICIOUS CONDENSATION. THE CONDENSATIONS OCCUR IN V. 9 AND AFTER V. 12 (SO THAT 26:12–13 IS ESSENTIALLY SKIPPED—A SIMPLE BUT EFFECTIVE WAY TO SHORTEN THE PASSAGE). 36:20–30 NOTE THAT IN THIS DESCRIPTION OF THE FULFILLMENT OF THE COMMANDS OF 26:15–25, MOSES REVERTED TO VIRTUAL VERBATIM CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN WHAT WAS DONE AS COMPARED TO WHAT HAD ORIGINALLY BEEN ORDERED, AS HE DID IN THE CASE IN 36:8–13. THUS, WE OBSERVE HIM ALTERNATING BETWEEN FULL DUPLICATION OF THE ORIGINAL COMMAND WORDING AND THE SORT OF PRÉCIS HE EMPLOYED IN 36:14–19. 36:31–34 THIS SHORT PARAGRAPH ALSO LEAVES OUT NOTHING OF THE DETAIL OF THE ORIGINAL COMMAND IN 26:26–29—ALL IS DESCRIBED AS FULFILLED, WITHOUT CONDENSING ANY WORDING. 36:35–38 THESE VERSES SHORTEN IN A RATHER OBVIOUS WAY CERTAIN DETAILS OF THE ORIGINAL COMMANDS IN 26:31–37, OF WHICH THEY DESCRIBE THE FULFILLMENT. THUS, AS IN THE CASE OF 36:14–19, MOSES AGAIN VARIED THE STYLE IN A MODEST WAY TO BREAK UP MONOTONY, BUT HE LEFT NO DOUBT IN THE READER’S MIND THAT EVERYTHING COMMANDED IN CHAP. 26 WAS IN FACT ACCOMPLISHED AS REQUIRED. VERSES 33–35 OF CHAP. 26 ARE SIMPLY SKIPPED IN THIS SUMMARY, AND 26:37 IS SLIGHTLY REWORDED IN 36:38.**

**CONSTRUCTION OF THE INVINCIBLE ARK (37:1–9) [FULFILLMENT OF 25:10–20]**

**1 BEZALEL MADE THE ARK OF ACACIA WOOD—TWO AND A HALF CUBITS LONG, A CUBIT AND A HALF WIDE, AND A CUBIT AND A HALF HIGH. 2 HE OVERLAID IT WITH PURE GOLD, BOTH INSIDE AND OUT, AND MADE A GOLD MOLDING AROUND IT. 3 HE CAST FOUR GOLD RINGS FOR IT AND FASTENED THEM TO ITS FOUR FEET, WITH TWO RINGS ON ONE SIDE AND TWO RINGS ON THE OTHER. 4 THEN HE MADE POLES OF ACACIA WOOD AND OVERLAID THEM WITH GOLD. 5 AND HE INSERTED THE POLES INTO THE RINGS ON THE SIDES OF THE ARK TO CARRY IT. 6 HE MADE THE ATONEMENT COVER OF PURE GOLD—TWO AND A HALF CUBITS LONG AND A CUBIT AND A HALF WIDE. 7 THEN HE MADE TWO CHERUBIM OUT OF HAMMERED GOLD AT THE ENDS OF THE COVER. 8 HE MADE ONE CHERUB ON ONE END AND THE SECOND CHERUB ON THE OTHER; AT THE TWO ENDS HE MADE THEM OF ONE PIECE WITH THE COVER. 9 THE CHERUBIM HAD THEIR WINGS SPREAD UPWARD, OVERSHADOWING THE COVER WITH THEM. THE CHERUBIM FACED EACH OTHER, LOOKING TOWARD THE COVER.**

**37:1–5 THESE VERSES DESCRIBE THE FULFILLMENT OF 25:10–15 VIRTUALLY VERBATIM—DIFFERING MAINLY IN ADDING THE IMPORTANT DETAIL IN 37:1 THAT “BEZALEL MADE THE ARK.” THE CHIEF OF ALL THE BUILDERS, SPECIALLY FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT OF GOD FOR THESE TASKS (31:2–3), WAS ENTRUSTED WITH THIS MOST PRECIOUS OBJECT OF ALL, AS WAS FITTING. IN CHAPS. 25–26 THE COMMAND TO BUILD THE ARK PRECEDES THE COMMAND TO BUILD THE TABERNACLE PROPER. HERE THE FULFILLMENT OF THE COMMAND TO BUILD THE ARK FOLLOWS THAT OF THE FULFILLMENT DESCRIPTION RELATED TO THE TABERNACLE PROPER. WHY THE DIFFERENT ORDER? THE ANSWER PROBABLY IS QUITE SIMPLE: THE ARK IS PROTECTED BY THE CURTAINS OF THE TABERNACLE; IT WAS WRAPPED FOR TRAVEL IN THE CURTAIN THAT DIVIDED THE HOLY PLACE FROM THE HOLY OF HOLIES, AND IT IS ALSO PROTECTED WHEN THE TABERNACLE IS SET UP IN PLACE BY THE VARIOUS LAYERS OF EXTERNAL TABERNACLE SURFACING. THEREFORE, BEZALEL CHOSE (PERHAPS AT MOSES’ SUGGESTION OR EVEN INSTRUCTION) TO READY THE PROTECTIVE MATERIAL FIRST SO THAT THE ARK WOULD NOT SIT OUT EXPOSED TO THE ELEMENTS FOR ALL TO SEE—EITHER TYPE OF EXPOSURE POTENTIALLY CONSTITUTING PROFANATION. 37:6–9 THESE VERSES DESCRIBE THE FULFILLMENT OF 25:17–20 ALSO VIRTUALLY VERBATIM, WITH CHANGES LIMITED ALMOST ENTIRELY TO VERB TENSES (EVEN THE DIFFERENCE IN THE HB. BETWEEN 25:19 AND 37:8 IS MORE MINUTE THAN THE NIV’S ADJUSTED WORD ORDER WOULD SUGGEST, BEING LIMITED TO A CHANGE IN THE VERB TENSE AND A PREPOSITION). NOTE THAT BEZALEL MAY HAVE BEEN THE SOLE WORKER ON THE ARK; NOTHING IN THE LANGUAGE OF THIS PASSAGE CAN BE INTERPRETED TO MEAN THAT ANY OTHER PERSONS WERE INVOLVED, IN CONTRAST TO THE MORE GENERAL “THEY” REFERENCES TO UNNAMED WORKERS ON OTHER PARTS OF THE TABERNACLE FURNISHINGS. THE PARAMOUNT SYMBOL OF THE INVISIBLE GOD WAS MADE BY THE ONE HE CHOSE AND SPECIALLY GUIDED TO MAKE IT.**

**CONSTRUCTION OF THE TABERNACLE TABLE (37:10–16) [FULFILLMENT OF 25:23–29]**

**10 THEY MADE THE TABLE OF ACACIA WOOD—TWO CUBITS LONG, A CUBIT WIDE, AND A CUBIT AND A HALF HIGH. 11 THEN THEY OVERLAID IT WITH PURE GOLD AND MADE A GOLD MOLDING AROUND IT. 12 THEY ALSO MADE AROUND IT A RIM A HANDBREADTH WIDE AND PUT A GOLD MOLDING ON THE RIM. 13 THEY CAST FOUR GOLD RINGS FOR THE TABLE AND FASTENED THEM TO THE FOUR CORNERS, WHERE THE FOUR LEGS WERE. 14 THE RINGS WERE PUT CLOSE TO THE RIM TO HOLD THE POLES USED IN CARRYING THE TABLE. 15 THE POLES FOR CARRYING THE TABLE WERE MADE OF ACACIA WOOD AND WERE OVERLAID WITH GOLD. 16 AND THEY MADE FROM PURE GOLD THE ARTICLES FOR THE TABLE—ITS PLATES AND DISHES AND BOWLS AND ITS PITCHERS FOR THE POURING OUT OF DRINK OFFERINGS. 37:10–16 ASIDE FROM SOME NECESSARY CHANGES IN VERB TENSE AND SOME VERY SLIGHT ADJUSTMENTS IN WORD ORDER TO PREVENT REPETITION MONOTONY, THIS PARAGRAPH DUPLICATES WHAT HAS BEEN SEEN ALREADY IN 25:23–29, SO THE CONSTRUCTION ORDER OF ARK-TABLE-LAMPSTAND CONTINUES IN THE FULFILLMENT PHASE OF THE TABERNACLE ACCOUNT JUST AS IT DID IN THE COMMAND PHASE. NOTE THAT HERE THE INDEFINITE “THEY” DESCRIBES THE WORKERS. WHOEVER THEY WERE AND HOW MANY THEY WERE IS NEVER IDENTIFIED.**

**CONSTRUCTION OF THE IMMORTAL LAMPSTAND (37:17–24) [FULFILLMENT OF 25:31–39]**

**17 THEY MADE THE LAMPSTAND OF PURE GOLD AND HAMMERED IT OUT, BASE AND SHAFT; ITS FLOWERLIKE CUPS, BUDS AND BLOSSOMS WERE OF ONE PIECE WITH IT. 18 SIX BRANCHES EXTENDED FROM THE SIDES OF THE LAMPSTAND—THREE ON ONE SIDE AND THREE ON THE OTHER. 19 THREE CUPS SHAPED LIKE ALMOND FLOWERS WITH BUDS AND BLOSSOMS WERE ON ONE BRANCH, THREE ON THE NEXT BRANCH AND THE SAME FOR ALL SIX BRANCHES EXTENDING FROM THE LAMPSTAND. 20 AND ON THE LAMPSTAND WERE FOUR CUPS SHAPED LIKE ALMOND FLOWERS WITH BUDS AND BLOSSOMS. 21 ONE BUD WAS UNDER THE FIRST PAIR OF BRANCHES EXTENDING FROM THE LAMPSTAND, A SECOND BUD UNDER THE SECOND PAIR, AND A THIRD BUD UNDER THE THIRD PAIR—SIX BRANCHES IN ALL. 22 THE BUDS AND THE BRANCHES WERE ALL OF ONE PIECE WITH THE LAMPSTAND, HAMMERED OUT OF PURE GOLD. 23 THEY MADE ITS SEVEN LAMPS, AS WELL AS ITS WICK TRIMMERS AND TRAYS, OF PURE GOLD. 24 THEY MADE THE LAMPSTAND AND ALL ITS ACCESSORIES FROM ONE TALENT OF PURE GOLD. 37:17–24 IN THESE VERSES THAT WHICH WAS COMMANDED IN 25:31–39 IS REITERATED, WITH THE EXPECTED CHANGES IN VERB TENSE AND TWO MODEST EXCEPTIONS: 25:37–38 IS CONDENSED INTO 37:23, AND THE WORD ORDER OF 25:39 IS ADJUSTED IN 37:24. AGAIN THE NAMES AND NUMBERS OF WORKERS ARE NOT MENTIONED HERE, SO WE DO NOT KNOW WHO AND HOW MANY WERE THE “THEY” THAT MADE THE LAMPSTAND. WITH THIS LAMPSTAND DESCRIPTION, THE ARK-TABLE-LAMPSTAND ORDER OF THE COMMAND PHASE (CHAP. 25) IS AGAIN DUPLICATED, BUT THAT PATTERN ENDS HERE SINCE THE INCENSE ALTAR WAS NOT COMMANDED UNTIL CHAP. 30, EVEN THOUGH ITS CONSTRUCTION DESCRIPTION FOLLOWS IMMEDIATELY HERE. THIS WOULD APPEAR TO BE YET ONE MORE WAY MOSES HEADED OFF MONOTONY IN THE FULFILLMENT SECTION, BUT IT MAY ALSO RELATE TO THE ACTUAL CONSTRUCTION DECISION-MAKING PROCESS, NO REASON TO DELAY GETTING AT THE BUILDING OF THE INCENSE ALTAR ALONG WITH THE ARK, TABLE, AND LAMPSTAND.**

**CONSTRUCTION OF THE INCENSE ALTAR (37:25–28) [FULFILLMENT OF 30:1–5]**

**25 THEY MADE THE ALTAR OF INCENSE OUT OF ACACIA WOOD. IT WAS SQUARE, A CUBIT LONG AND A CUBIT WIDE, AND TWO CUBITS HIGH—ITS HORNS OF ONE PIECE WITH IT. 26 THEY OVERLAID THE TOP AND ALL THE SIDES AND THE HORNS WITH PURE GOLD, AND MADE A GOLD MOLDING AROUND IT. 27 THEY MADE TWO GOLD RINGS BELOW THE MOLDING—TWO ON OPPOSITE SIDES—TO HOLD THE POLES USED TO CARRY IT. 28 THEY MADE THE POLES OF ACACIA WOOD AND OVERLAID THEM WITH GOLD.**

**37:25–28 THIS PARAGRAPH FOLLOWS 30:1–5 CLOSELY—ESSENTIALLY VERBATIM—WITH A SLIGHT WORDING ORDER CHANGE IN 37:25 AS OPPOSED TO THE WORDING ORDER OF 30:1 IN THE INTERESTS OF STYLISTIC VARIATION AND THE EXPECTED VERB TENSE CHANGES. THE ORIGINAL INCENSE ALTAR COMMAND WAS LINKED IN CHAP. 30 WITH INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE USE OF INCENSE AND THE ATONEMENT PROCESS FOR THE INCENSE ALTAR. THOSE INSTRUCTIONS (30:7–10) ARE NOT CONSTRUCTION COMMANDS PER SE, AND THEREFORE WE WOULD NOT EXPECT TO FIND, AND DO NOT FIND, THEM REPEATED HERE IN THE FULFILLMENT PHASE WHERE CONSTRUCTION DESCRIPTIONS ARE THE FOCUS.**

**COMPOSITION OF THE HOLY ANOINTING OIL AND THE HOLY INCENSE (37:29) [FULFILLMENT OF 30:22–25, 34–36]**

**29 THEY ALSO MADE THE SACRED ANOINTING OIL AND THE PURE, FRAGRANT INCENSE—THE WORK OF A PERFUMER. 37:29 HERE THE FORMULA FOR THE SPECIAL ANOINTING OIL (30:22–25) USED FOR PRIESTS [SERGEANTS] AND TABERNACLE OBJECTS (28:41; 29:7, 21, 29, 36; 30:30–33; 31:11) IS NOT REPEATED OR DESCRIBED IN ANY PARTICULARS, BUT MOSES MERELY NOTED THAT “THEY” OBEYED THE COMMAND TO MAKE IT. LIKEWISE, THE ORIGINAL, DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE FRAGRANT INCENSE (30:34–36) AND HOW AND WHEN IT WAS TO BE USED (30:7–9, 37–38) ARE NOT REPEATED HERE. THIS VERSE THUS CONDENSES IN THE FULFILLMENT SECTION A CONSIDERABLE AMOUNT OF LANGUAGE FROM THE COMMAND SECTION. THE MOST LIKELY REASON FOR THIS HIGH DEGREE OF ABBREVIATION IS THAT THE MATERIALS IN QUESTION WERE NOT PERMANENT PIECES OF FURNITURE BUT SUBSTANCES INTENDED TO BE USED UP OVER TIME, REQUIRING REFORMULATION PERIODICALLY. THE FORMULATION DESCRIPTIONS THUS FUNCTIONED REGULARLY AS GUIDELINES IN A WAY THAT THE FULFILLMENT DESCRIPTIONS NEEDED NOT.**

**CONSTRUCTION OF THE MAIN BURNING ALTAR (38:1–7) [FULFILLMENT OF 27:1–8A]**

**1 THEY BUILT THE ALTAR OF BURNT OFFERING OF ACACIA WOOD, THREE CUBITS HIGH; IT WAS SQUARE, FIVE CUBITS LONG AND FIVE CUBITS WIDE. 2 THEY MADE A HORN AT EACH OF THE FOUR CORNERS, SO THAT THE HORNS AND THE ALTAR WERE OF ONE PIECE, AND THEY OVERLAID THE ALTAR WITH BRONZE. 3 THEY MADE ALL ITS UTENSILS OF BRONZE—ITS POTS, SHOVELS, SPRINKLING BOWLS, MEAT FORKS AND FIREPANS. 4 THEY MADE A GRATING FOR THE ALTAR, A BRONZE NETWORK, TO BE UNDER ITS LEDGE, HALFWAY UP THE ALTAR. 5 THEY CAST BRONZE RINGS TO HOLD THE POLES FOR THE FOUR CORNERS OF THE BRONZE GRATING. 6 THEY MADE THE POLES OF ACACIA WOOD AND OVERLAID THEM WITH BRONZE. 7 THEY INSERTED THE POLES INTO THE RINGS SO THEY WOULD BE ON THE SIDES OF THE ALTAR FOR CARRYING IT. THEY MADE IT HOLLOW, OUT OF BOARDS.**

**38:1–7 ASIDE FROM THE EXPECTED CHANGES IN VERB TENSE AND A MODEST STYLE ADJUSTMENT THROUGH WORD REORDERING (E.G., 38:4–5 REORDERS 27:4–5) FOR THE SAKE OF VARIETY, THIS PASSAGE REPRISES 27:1–8A. THE BUILDERS WERE NOW MOVING OUT FROM THE TABERNACLE PROPER TO THE COURTYARD IN THEIR BUILDING PLAN. THE MAIN ALTAR (ALTAR OF BURNT OFFERING) WAS ONE OF THE TWO COURTYARD OBJECTS, THE OTHER BEING THE WASHING BASIN THAT WILL BE REFERRED TO IN THE NEXT VERSE. MOSES REPORTED THAT IN EVERY DETAIL THE SACRIFICE ALTAR (MAIN ALTAR, ALTAR OF BURNT OFFERING) WAS BUILT JUST AS ORDERED.**

**(11) CONSTRUCTION OF THE HOLY BRONZE WASH BASIN AND HOLY BRONZE STAND (38:8) [FULFILLMENT OF 30:17–21]**

**8 THEY MADE THE BRONZE BASIN AND ITS BRONZE STAND FROM THE MIRRORS OF THE WOMEN WHO SERVED AT THE ENTRANCE TO THE TENT OF MEETING. 38:8 MOSES HERE CONCENTRATED MAINLY ON THE FULFILLMENT OF 30:17–18, WHERE THE BASIN’S PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS ARE DESCRIBED, AND NOT ON 30:19–21, WHERE THE PROPER USE OF THE BASIN IS DESCRIBED. THIS IS TO BE EXPECTED SINCE WE ARE IN A SECTION DEALING WITH CONSTRUCTION OF WHAT HAD BEEN ORDERED BUILT, NOT USAGE—USAGE INSTRUCTIONS NEEDING NO REPETITION HERE. MOSES HAD DONE SO WITH A SIMPLE SUMMATION, ESPECIALLY SINCE THE ORIGINAL COMMAND ITSELF WAS NOT VERY DETAILED, DESCRIBING SIMPLY “A BRONZE BASIN, WITH ITS BRONZE STAND” (30:18), ESSENTIALLY THE LANGUAGE REPEATED HERE. IN THE ORIGINAL COMMAND THERE WAS NO ANTICIPATION OF WHERE THE BRONZE FOR THIS BASIN WOULD COME FROM, BUT SINCE THE BASIN WAS OBVIOUSLY A MORE PROMINENT OBJECT THAN THE OTHER BRASS OBJECTS (MAINLY TENT POLES) IN THE COURTYARD, ONE COULD HAVE ANTICIPATED THAT ITS BRONZE (AN ALLOY OF TIN AND COPPER) MIGHT HAVE BEEN OF SPECIAL ORIGIN IF POSSIBLE. HERE WE LEARN INDEED THAT IT WAS NOT JUST ANY BRONZE BROUGHT BY DONORS FROM ANY SOURCE, WHICH MIGHT HAVE INVOLVED THE POSSIBILITY OF SLIGHTLY UNEVEN QUALITY. INSTEAD, IT APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN A VERY HIGH-QUALITY BRONZE—POLISHED BRONZE FROM MIRRORS DONATED BY WOMEN RESPONDING TO THE EARLIER DONATION CALL (37:4). SUCH BRONZE PROBABLY WAS AS FLAW-FREE AS ANY THAT COULD BE FOUND SINCE IT WOULD HAVE BEEN REJECTED FOR MIRROR USE IF IT WERE NOT A SUCCESSFUL, VISIBLY CONSISTENT ALLOY OF PURE TIN, BRASS AND COPPER. BUT ANOTHER, QUITE FASCINATING DETAIL IS ALSO INCLUDED HERE: ONE THAT PRESUMES SOME COMMON KNOWLEDGE THAT MOSES AND HIS AUDIENCE SHARED, BUT THAT WE DO NOT. AT SOME POINT AFTER THE TABERNACLE WAS BUILT, CERTAIN WOMEN WERE EMPLOYED TO SERVE AT ITS ENTRANCE—A PRACTICE THAT PROBABLY CONTINUED AS LONG AS THE TABERNACLE WAS IN USE, JUDGING FROM THE MENTION OF IT IN 1 SAM 2:22, HUNDREDS OF YEARS AFTER THE TIME OF THE PRESENT DESCRIPTION. HOW WERE THESE WOMEN CHOSEN, AND WHAT EXACTLY DID THEY DO? WE HAVE NO FIRM INFORMATION. THEY QUITE POSSIBLY VOLUNTEERED—OR WERE PAID WITH A PORTION OF THE SACRIFICES—TO HELP WITH UTENSIL CLEANUP, GENERAL COURTYARD CLEANUP, WATER RESUPPLY, ANCILLARY FOOD PREPARATION, GUIDING AND ASSISTING OTHER WOMEN WORSHIPERS, WASHING PRIESTS’ CLOTHES, AND THE LIKE. THE FIRST SUCH GROUP OF WOMEN MAY HAVE BEEN CHOSEN FROM AMONG THOSE WHO DONATED THEIR MIRRORS, PRECISELY BECAUSE SUCH A GIFT OF SOMETHING NORMALLY VALUED BY A WOMAN WOULD TEND TO DEMONSTRATE HER DEVOTION TO GOD.**

**CONSTRUCTION OF THE HOLY COURTYARD (38:9–20) [FULFILLMENT OF 27:9–19]**

**9 NEXT THEY MADE THE COURTYARD. THE SOUTH SIDE WAS A HUNDRED CUBITS LONG AND HAD CURTAINS OF FINELY TWISTED LINEN, 10 WITH TWENTY POSTS AND TWENTY BRONZE BASES, AND WITH SILVER HOOKS AND BANDS ON THE POSTS. 11 THE NORTH SIDE WAS ALSO A HUNDRED CUBITS LONG AND HAD TWENTY POSTS AND TWENTY BRONZE BASES, WITH SILVER HOOKS AND BANDS ON THE POSTS. 12 THE WEST END WAS FIFTY CUBITS WIDE AND HAD CURTAINS, WITH TEN POSTS AND TEN BASES, WITH SILVER HOOKS AND BANDS ON THE POSTS. 13 THE EAST END, TOWARD THE SUNRISE, WAS ALSO FIFTY CUBITS WIDE. 14 CURTAINS FIFTEEN CUBITS LONG WERE ON ONE SIDE OF THE ENTRANCE, WITH THREE POSTS AND THREE BASES, 15 AND CURTAINS FIFTEEN CUBITS LONG WERE ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE ENTRANCE TO THE COURTYARD, WITH THREE POSTS AND THREE BASES. 16 ALL THE CURTAINS AROUND THE COURTYARD WERE OF FINELY TWISTED LINEN. 17 THE BASES FOR THE POSTS WERE BRONZE. THE HOOKS AND BANDS ON THE POSTS WERE SILVER, AND THEIR TOPS WERE OVERLAID WITH SILVER; SO, ALL THE POSTS OF THE COURTYARD HAD SILVER BANDS. 18 THE CURTAIN FOR THE ENTRANCE TO THE COURTYARD WAS OF BLUE, PURPLE AND SCARLET YARN AND FINELY TWISTED LINEN—THE WORK OF AN EMBROIDERER. IT WAS TWENTY CUBITS LONG AND, LIKE THE CURTAINS OF THE COURTYARD, FIVE CUBITS HIGH, 19 WITH FOUR POSTS AND FOUR BRONZE BASES. THEIR HOOKS AND BANDS WERE SILVER, AND THEIR TOPS WERE OVERLAID WITH SILVER. 20 ALL THE TENT PEGS OF THE TABERNACLE AND OF THE SURROUNDING COURTYARD WERE BRONZE.**

**NOTHING ASSERTED IN 27:9–19 IS LEFT OUT HERE, ALTHOUGH ENOUGH VARIETY OF ORDER AND SLIGHT ADDITIONS OR SUBTRACTIONS KEEP THE PRESENT FULFILLMENT PASSAGE FROM BEING A MERE REPETITION OF THE COMMAND ON WHICH IT IS BASED. 38:9–11 THIS PART OF THE PASSAGE IS VIRTUALLY A VERBATIM REPRISE OF 27:9–11 WITH THE NECESSARY VERB TENSE CHANGES BEING MADE AND THE PHRASE “FOR THE TABERNACLE” OF 27:9 BEING OMITTED. LIKEWISE, SOME SPACE IS SAVED IN 38:11 WITH THE OMISSION OF THE CLAUSE “IS TO HAVE CURTAINS” FROM 27:11. 38:12–17 MOST OF THESE VERSES REPEAT 27:12FF., WITH THE USUAL AND EXPECTED CHANGES IN ORDER TO BRING THE DESCRIPTION TO THE PRESENT CONTEXT, BUT THE CONTENT OF 27:16 IS DELAYED UNTIL 38:18, WITH SOME REORDERING OF THE WORDING. ADDITIONALLY, 27:17 IS ACTUALLY EXPANDED SLIGHTLY IN EXPLICIT DETAIL IN 38:17 IN REGARD TO THE “TOPS” OF THE POSTS BEING “OVERLAID WITH SILVER,” SOMETHING IMPLICIT BUT NOT STATED IN 27:17. 38:18–20 THE REMAINDER OF WHAT HAS NOT YET BEEN COVERED FROM CHAP. 27 IS HERE ADDRESSED AS COMPLETED, WITH THE CONTENT OF 27:19 SOMEWHAT REARRANGED AND DISTRIBUTED THROUGHOUT VV. 19–20.**

**ISRAEL’S EGYPTIAN OPPRESSION AND GOD’S CHOICE OF A DELIVERER (1:1–2:25)**

**FROM ALL APPEARANCES, MOSES INTENDED THIS BLOCK OF NARRATIVE TO FUNCTION AS A TRANSITIONAL INTRODUCTION TO THE ENTIRE BOOK OF EXODUS. IT PROVIDES A SENSE OF CONTINUITY TO SOME OF THE MAIN THEMES OF HIS FIRST BOOK, WITH THE RESULT THAT THE READER OF EXODUS SENSES A NATURAL FIT WITH THE ONGOING STORY OF GOD’S PLAN OF REDEMPTION, THAT IS, THAT STORY WHICH BEGINS TO DEVELOP SO ELOQUENTLY IN GENESIS. MANY IN THE ORIGINAL AUDIENCE WOULD NOT HAVE KNOWN MOST OF THE DETAILS FOUND IN THESE FIRST TWO CHAPTERS OF EXODUS ANY MORE THAN THEY WOULD HAVE KNOWN MANY OF THE DETAILS OF THEIR SPIRITUAL AND/OR ETHNIC BACKGROUNDS AS NARRATED IN GENESIS. THESE WERE, AFTER ALL, PEOPLE WHO HAD SPENT HUNDREDS OF YEARS IN PAGAN SURROUNDINGS, MOST OF WHOM PROBABLY NEEDED REINTRODUCTION EVEN TO THE VERY IDENTITY OF STEPHEN YAHWEH (THE TOP ENGLISH LORD) HIMSELF. GARRETT HAS CAREFULLY ARGUED THE POSITION THAT MOSES MOST LIKELY COMPOSED THESE MATERIALS DURING THE YEARS OF THE WILDERNESS WANDERINGS FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE SECOND-GENERATION ISRAELITES WHO WERE GROWING UP DURING THAT THIRTY-NINE-YEAR PERIOD, AS WELL AS FOR THE BENEFIT OF THOSE WHO CAME TO JOIN WITH ISRAEL EITHER SPIRITUALLY OR ETHNICALLY. WE SHOULD REMEMBER THAT A CONSIDERABLE PROPORTION OF THE PEOPLE WHO ACTUALLY ARRIVED AT MOUNT SINAI, AFTER FLEEING EGYPT TO MEET WITH THE ONLY TRUE AND LIVING GOD, WERE NOT ORIGINALLY ISRAELITES AT ALL. THEY HAD SEEN THE PLAGUES, HAD COME TO BELIEVE THAT THE ISRAELITES WERE INDEED A PEOPLE TO JOIN WITH, AND HAD TAKEN ADVANTAGE OF THE DISCOMFITURE OF THE EGYPTIANS ON THE NIGHT OF THE PASSOVER TO JOIN THE ISRAELITE RANKS AND SEEK FREEDOM. OF COURSE, AS THEY TRAVELED WITH THE ISRAELITES, THEY WOULD BEGIN TO PICK UP BITS AND PIECES OF THE HISTORY THEY WERE OFFICIALLY TO ADOPT AS THEIR OWN AT SINAI, BUT MOSES’ AUTHORITATIVE AND SYSTEMATIC VERSION WAS WHAT THEY ESPECIALLY REQUIRED IF THEY WERE TO BE SPIRITUALLY AT ONE WITH THE NEW PEOPLE GOD WAS CREATING FOR HIMSELF IN THE PROCESS OF THE EXODUS. THIS TRANSITIONAL-INTRODUCTORY MATERIAL IN CHAPS. 1–2 IS COMPOSED OF SIX COMPONENT PARTS: (1) FIRST COMES AN OPENING GENEALOGY (1:1–6) OF THE TWELVE TRIBES OF ISRAEL, FEATURING THE TWELVE SONS OF JACOB AND THUS CONNECTING THE STORY OF THE EXODUS WITH THE PATRIARCHAL NARRATIVES THAT COMPRISE THE BULK (CHAPS. 12–50) OF GENESIS. THE FACT THAT THIS OPENING GENEALOGY MENTIONS THE DESCENT OF JACOB’S FAMILY INTO EGYPT IS PART OF ITS TRANSITIONAL CHARACTER. (2) NEXT COMES A BRIEF SECTION DESCRIBING HOW THE DESCENDANTS OF JACOB GREW INTO A LARGE NATION AND EVENTUALLY CAME UNDER EGYPTIAN BONDAGE (1:7–14). THIS INFORMATION INFORMS THE ALERT READER THAT THE PROMISES OF GREAT GROWTH TO ABRAHAM’S DESCENDANTS—RESTATED, AS CAREFULLY NOTED IN GENESIS (E.G., 26:3–4; 46:3) TO BOTH ABRAHAM’S SON AND GRANDSONS (THE SON OF ONE’S SON OR ONE’S DAUGHTER)—ARE IN ACTIVE PROCESS OF FULFILLMENT. IT ALSO ORIENTS THE READER TO HOW IT COULD COME ABOUT THAT THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL SHOULD BE SUBJECT TO SUCH EXTREME LOATHING THAT (3) THEY WOULD BECOME, AS DESCRIBED IN THE FOLLOWING SECTION (1:15–22), THE TARGETS OF A VICIOUS GENOCIDAL CAMPAIGN BY THE NEW PHARAOH, WITH THE GOAL OF CONTROLLING THE POPULATION OF THE ISRAELITES THROUGH MALE INFANTICIDE. (4) AT THE BEGINNING OF CHAP. 2 (2:1–10) MOSES DESCRIBED HIS BIRTH AND, MORE IMPORTANTLY FOR THE SALVATION THEME THAT DOMINATES THE ENTIRE FIRST HALF OF THE BOOK, THE UNUSUAL CIRCUMSTANCES THAT LED TO HIS BEING FOUND BY ONE OF THE EGYPTIAN PRINCESSES AND RAISED AS AN EGYPTIAN YET NURSED BY HIS OWN MOTHER AND WELL AWARE OF THE PLIGHT OF HIS OWN ETHNIC PEOPLE. (5) THE FIFTH ELEMENT (2:11–22) IS THE STORY OF MOSES’ OWN EXODUS/EXILE FROM EGYPT, IN WHICH HE WAS FORCED TO FLEE FOR HIS LIFE AS A CRIMINAL SOUGHT FOR MURDER BECAUSE HE SIDED WITH HIS PEOPLE OVER AGAINST HIS OFFICE AS AN EGYPTIAN PRINCELING. THIS COVERS A FORTY-YEAR PERIOD, DURING WHICH MOSES GOT MARRIED, SETTLED IN MIDIANITE TERRITORY IN THE SINAI WILDERNESS, AND ASSUMED THE LIFE OF A SHEPHERD WITHIN THE OVERALL ESTATE OF HIS FATHER-IN-LAW. BY THIS TURN OF EVENTS, MOSES WAS ALLOWED TO UNDERSTAND BOTH THE EXPERIENCE OF FLEEING EGYPT AND A GREAT DEAL ABOUT SURVIVAL IN THE SINAI WILDERNESS, KNOWLEDGE THAT CONSTITUTED PART OF GOD’S PREPARATION OF HIM TO ASSUME THE POSITION OF LEADER OF GOD’S DELIVERANCE. (6) A BRIEF SUMMATIVE REMINDER (2:23–25) THEN DRAWS THE FIRST TWO CHAPTERS TO A CLOSE. THESE CONCLUDING THREE VERSES REMIND THE READER OF TWO THINGS ESPECIALLY: THE SEVERITY OF THE OPPRESSION THE ISRAELITES ENDURED FOR MANY DECADES AND THE FACT THAT IN SPITE OF THEIR LONG SOJOURN IN FOREIGN TERRITORY AND THEIR LONG PERIOD OF SUFFERING, GOD HAD NOT FORGOTTEN THEM BUT WAS INDEED DEEPLY CONCERNED FOR THE PLIGHT OF HIS PEOPLE. IN ALL OF THIS PORTION OF THE BOOK (1:1–2:25), MOSES CAREFULLY AVOIDED MENTION OF THE DIVINE NAME STEPHEN YAHWEH (THE TOP ENGLISH LORD) WHICH HE DOES NOT REINTRODUCE UNTIL 3:2, EVEN THOUGH HE USED IT TIMES THROUGHOUT GENESIS. HIS PURPOSE FOR THIS IS ALMOST CERTAINLY A DESIRE TO HEIGHTEN FOR THE READER THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE REREVELATION OF THE DIVINE NAME TO THE PEOPLE OF GOD, THE CENTERPIECE OF CHAP. 3) AND THE FOCUS OF THE COVENANTAL THEOLOGY THAT DOMINATES THE REST OF THE PENTATEUCH.**

**OPENING GENEALOGY: CONNECTING THE STORY WITH GENESIS (1:1–6)**

**1 THESE ARE THE NAMES OF THE SONS OF ISRAEL WHO WENT TO EGYPT WITH JACOB, EACH WITH HIS FAMILY: 2 REUBEN, SIMEON, LEVI AND JUDAH; 3 ISSACHAR, ZEBULUN AND BENJAMIN; 4 DAN AND NAPHTALI; GAD AND ASHER. 5 THE DESCENDANTS OF JACOB NUMBERED SEVENTY IN ALL; JOSEPH WAS ALREADY IN EGYPT. 6 NOW JOSEPH AND ALL HIS BROTHERS AND ALL THAT GENERATION DIED,**

**THESE OPENING VERSES PROVIDE AN OBVIOUS CONNECTION TO WHAT MOSES SAID IN THE LATTER CHAPTERS OF GENESIS, IN THAT THEY CONTAIN A BRIEF RECAPITULATION OF THE STORY OF HOW JACOB AND HIS SONS ENTERED EGYPT AND WERE REUNITED WITH JOSEPH (ESP. GEN 46) AS WELL AS THE DEATH OF JOSEPH IN THE CONTEXT OF HIS ASSOCIATION WITH HIS BROTHERS (GEN 50:22–26; NOTE HOW VV. 25–26 IMPLICITLY REFLECT THE CONCEPT OF “ALL THAT GENERATION” IN EXOD 1:6). THUS, THERE IS A CONSCIOUS CONCERN HERE TO BE SURE THE READER UNDERSTANDS THAT EXODUS IS NOT STRICTLY A SELF-CONTAINED NARRATIVE BUT A SEGMENT OF A NARRATIVE ON A GRANDER SCALE, THAT IS, THE FULL PENTATEUCH. IN OTHER WORDS, THE STORY CONTINUES SMOOTHLY FROM GENESIS INTO EXODUS. 1:1 THE BOOK BEGINS BY INTRODUCING TO THE READER A LIST OF NAMES. ACCORDINGLY, FOLLOWING THE COMMON INCIPIT NAMING SYSTEM OF ANCIENT TIMES, THE NAME OF THE BOOK OF EXODUS IN HEBREW IS “THESE ARE THE NAMES” (ʾĒLLEH ŠĔMÔT). TO A MODERN READER SUCH AN OPENING MIGHT NOT SEEM CONSISTENT WITH HIGH LITERARY STYLE. IT WAS, HOWEVER, NOT ONLY GOOD STYLE BUT ENTIRELY WELCOME IN THE ANCIENT SETTING, WHERE A GROUP OF REFUGEES OF MIXED ETHNIC ORIGIN, MANY OF WHOM WERE YOUNG ENOUGH TO BE LEARNING THEIR NATIONAL TRADITIONS FOR THE FIRST TIME, WERE BEING REMINDED OF GOD’S PLAN THROUGH A PEOPLE DESCENDED FROM ABRAHAM AND HEIRS TO THE PROMISES FIRST MADE TO HIM. THESE PROMISES HAD FOUR MAIN COMPONENTS: (1) VAST POPULATION INCREASE FOR HIS DESCENDANTS (GEN 12:2); (2) A LONG AND IMPORTANT FAMILY LINEAGE (THE MEANING OF “MAKE YOUR NAME GREAT” IN GEN 12:2); (3) A WORLDWIDE BLESSING THROUGH HIS OFFSPRING (GEN 12:2–3), AND (4) THE EVENTUAL GRANTING OF UNEARNED CITIZENSHIP IN A SPECIAL LAND OF GOD’S CHOOSING (IMPLIED IN GEN 12:1; EXPLICIT IN GEN 15:18–21). THE FACT THAT SEVERAL BIBLICAL BOOKS BEGIN WITH A GENEALOGY (E.G., 1 CHR 1–9) OR END WITH ONE (E.G., RUTH) IS A REFLECTION OF THE IMPORTANCE ANCIENT ISRAELITES PLACED ON BEING ABLE TO TRACE THEIR LINEAGE, AS PART OF UNDERSTANDING WHO THEY WERE AND WHAT THEIR PURPOSE WAS ON EARTH. AN EVEN MORE BASIC REASON FOR BEGINNING THE BOOK WITH A LIST OF NAMES, HOWEVER, WAS THE DESIRE TO ENSURE THAT THE READER UNDERSTOOD EXODUS AS A DIRECT CONTINUATION OF GENESIS, ACCOMPLISHED FROM THE OUTSET BY MAKING THE FIRST SIX WORDS IN THE HEBREW OF EXODUS (“THESE ARE THE NAMES OF THE SONS OF ISRAEL WHO WENT …”) IDENTICAL TO THE FIRST SIX WORDS OF GEN 46:8. THE LATTER CONTEXT CONTAINED A PROMISE TO JACOB ABOUT HIS SONS AND THEIR PLACE IN GOD’S PLAN. THE BOOK OF EXODUS OPENS WITH A DESCRIPTION OF JACOB’S GROWN FAMILY IN EGYPT (1:1, “WHO WENT [CAME] TO EGYPT WITH JACOB, EACH WITH HIS FAMILY”) THAT SHOWS CLEARLY HOW GOD WAS BEGINNING TO MOVE THAT PLAN ONTO ITS NEXT STAGE. GENESIS HAD ALREADY INTRODUCED THE THEME OF THE FERTILITY OF ABRAHAM’S DESCENDANTS IN THE PATRIARCHAL PROMISES, AS NOTED ABOVE, AND HAD DEVELOPED THOSE PROMISES IN SUCH PASSAGES AS GEN 47:6–12, 27; 48:3–7. THE NEXT STAGE ALSO IS ANTICIPATED IN THE USE OF YIŚRĀʾĒL HERE AS “SONS OF [THE MAN] ISRAEL” IN CONTRAST TO ITS NEXT USAGE IN 1:7, WHERE THE SAME PHRASE, BĔNÊ YIŚRĀʾĒL, WILL HAVE ITS USUAL POST-GENESIS MEANING, “ISRAELITES,” THAT IS, THE NATION, NOT MERELY AN EXTENDED FAMILY. 1:2–4 IT IS POSSIBLE TO MAKE EITHER TOO MUCH OR TOO LITTLE OF THIS LIST OF ELEVEN NAMES. IT WOULD BE A MISTAKE TO MAKE TOO MUCH OF THEIR ORDER. THERE APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN NO ESTABLISHED ORDER FOR THE NAMES IN ISRAELITE TRADITION, AS SHOWN BY THE WAY THE ORDER VARIES AMONG GEN 46:8–27; 49:3–27; DEUT 33:2–29; AND THE PRESENT PASSAGE. LIKEWISE, THE WAY THEY ARE GROUPED IS OF NO SPECIAL IMPORTANCE. THE VERSE DIVISIONS ARE MEDIEVAL SO IRRELEVANT TO MOSES’ ORIGINAL PURPOSE. THE PLACEMENT OF THE CONJUNCTION “AND” SEEMS TO BE AS FOLLOWS: N, N, N AND N … N, N AND N … N, AND N … N AND N. IN OTHER WORDS, THE PATTERN REFLECTS A SIMPLE DESCENDING ORDER OF NUMBER OF NAMES GROUPED BEFORE A COPULA IS INSERTED (FOUR NAMES, THREE NAMES, TWO NAMES, TWO NAMES): A PATTERN FOR CONVENIENCE, BUT NOT OTHERWISE MEANINGFUL. BUT WHAT ABOUT THE MEANING OF THE INDIVIDUAL NAMES? HEBREW NAMES WERE KNOWN TO BE GIVEN TO CHILDREN ACCORDING TO EVENTS OR CONCEPTS PRESENT AT THE TIME OF THEIR BIRTH. SHOULD THE READER THEREFORE HEAR IN THE RECITATION OF THESE NAMES SOME SORT OF ECHO OF THEIR ORIGINAL SIGNIFICANCE? WE THINK NOT. BY THIS POINT IN THE NARRATIVE THAT BEGAN WITH GENESIS, THERE IS NO HINT THAT THE NAMES CARRY ANY SYMBOLIC MEANING. THEY ARE SIMPLY NAMES FOR IDENTIFICATION AS ALL NAMES ARE, SIMPLY FUNCTIONING TO REMIND US THAT THE TRIBES OF ISRAEL WERE NAMED AFTER THE SONS OF JACOB, THAT IS, THAT THE ORGANIZATION OF THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL COULD BE TRACED BACK TO THE ORIGINAL FAMILY OF THE PATRIARCH ISRAEL. 1:5 HERE THE HEBREW LITERALLY SAYS, “THUS THE FULL OFFSPRING OF THE LOINS OF JACOB WAS SEVENTY SOULS IN ALL,” BUT THE NIV TRANSLATION RENDERS THE HEBREW WELL INTO IDIOMATIC ENGLISH—THE MAIN POINT OF THE FIRST PART OF THE VERSE BEING SIMPLY TO INFORM THE READER THAT THE GREAT NATION OF ISRAEL THAT CAME OUT OF EGYPT NUMBERING MANY TENS OF THOUSANDS HAD GONE INTO EGYPT NUMBERING ONLY SEVENTY. THE FIRST READERS OF THE BOOK WERE PEOPLE WHO BELONGED TO THE HUGE EXODUS NATION, FOR WHOM MOSES COMPOSED THE NARRATIVE. THIS LITTLE DETAIL WAS A REMINDER OF THE FAITHFULNESS OF GOD TO HIS PROMISES. THE BACKGROUND OF THIS GREAT HOST WAS TRACEABLE TO A SINGLE MAN’S FAMILY. THE MENTION THAT “JOSEPH WAS ALREADY IN EGYPT” IS A REQUIRED DETAIL SINCE OTHERWISE MOSES’ NARRATIVE MIGHT SEEM TO IMPLY EITHER THAT JOSEPH WAS NOT COUNTED IN THE SEVENTY OR THAT HE WAS AMONG THOSE WHO WENT TO EGYPT WITH JACOB. HOWEVER, IT ALSO LEADS NICELY TO THE NEXT POINT, MADE BY THE NEXT VERSE, THAT IS, THAT THE SPECIAL INFLUENCE OF JOSEPH THAT HAD MADE JACOB’S FAMILY PRIVILEGED GUESTS IN EGYPT WAS LINKED TO JOSEPH’S PERSON AND POSITION AND WOULD NOT CONTINUE AFTER HIS DEATH (A POINT MADE CLEAR IN V. 8). 1:6 THE BOOK OF GENESIS ENDS (50:26) WITH THE DEATH OF JOSEPH. THE SUMMARY IN THIS VERSE OF HOW THE ISRAELITES SETTLED IN EGYPT ENDS LIKEWISE. GENESIS 50:26 ALSO NOTES THAT JOSEPH DIED AT AGE 110, SUGGESTING THAT HE MIGHT HAVE BEEN THE LAST OF ALL THE BROTHERS TO DIE. HE WAS THE NEXT TO YOUNGEST SON, AND 110 YEARS IS A VERY LONG LIFE, PRESENTING THE LIKELIHOOD THAT HE OUTLIVED HIS BROTHERS. ACCORDINGLY, IT APPEARS THAT AT THE VERY END OF THIS VERSE MOSES BEGINS TO TAKE THE READER BEYOND THE GENESIS STORY BY NOTING THE END OF THE ENTIRE ORIGINAL PATRIARCHAL GENERATION, THUS PAVING THE WAY FOR THE NEXT PART OF THE NARRATIVE, WHICH WILL DISCUSS WHAT HAPPENED ONCE POSTPATRIARCHAL ISRAEL WAS PERMANENTLY ENSCONCED IN EGYPT. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THIS VERSE IS COMPOSED IN WHAT MAY HAVE BEEN A SOMEWHAT STANDARDIZED OR FORMULAIC PATTERN FOR THE PASSING OF A GREAT LEADER AND HIS CONTEMPORARIES OR THAT THE VERSE SET THE PATTERN FOR THE FORMULA THAT LATER WAS REPEATED.**

**HOW ISRAEL CAME UNDER EGYPTIAN BONDAGE (1:7–14)**

**7 BUT THE ISRAELITES WERE FRUITFUL AND MULTIPLIED GREATLY AND BECAME EXCEEDINGLY NUMEROUS, SO THAT THE LAND WAS FILLED WITH THEM. 8 THEN A NEW KING, WHO DID NOT KNOW ABOUT JOSEPH, CAME TO POWER IN EGYPT. 9 “LOOK,” HE SAID TO HIS PEOPLE, “THE ISRAELITES HAVE BECOME MUCH TOO NUMEROUS FOR US. 10 COME, WE MUST DEAL SHREWDLY WITH THEM OR THEY WILL BECOME EVEN MORE NUMEROUS AND, IF WAR BREAKS OUT, WILL JOIN OUR ENEMIES, FIGHT AGAINST US AND LEAVE THE COUNTRY.” 11 SO THEY PUT SLAVE MASTERS OVER THEM TO OPPRESS THEM WITH FORCED LABOR, AND THEY BUILT PITHOM AND RAMESES AS STORE CITIES FOR PHARAOH. 12 BUT THE MORE THEY WERE OPPRESSED, THE MORE THEY MULTIPLIED AND SPREAD; SO, THE EGYPTIANS CAME TO DREAD THE ISRAELITES 13 AND WORKED THEM RUTHLESSLY. 14 THEY MADE THEIR LIVES BITTER WITH HARD LABOR IN BRICK AND MORTAR AND WITH ALL KINDS OF WORK IN THE FIELDS; IN ALL THEIR HARD LABOR THE EGYPTIANS USED THEM RUTHLESSLY.**

**THESE EIGHT VERSES FUNCTION AS A UNIT IN THE NARRATIVE BY REASON OF THEIR COMMON TOPIC: A SUMMARY OF HOW THE ISRAELITES WENT FROM FAVOR TO DISGRACE, FROM A PROTECTED PEOPLE WITH GOVERNMENT CONNECTIONS AT THE HIGHEST LEVEL TO A GANG OF SLAVES LABORING UNDER SEVERE OPPRESSION. THE COMMON REASON THROUGHOUT THIS EXPLANATORY SECTION IS THEIR NUMERICAL GROWTH. OF COURSE, THIS REPRESENTS AN IRONY. THEIR RAPID GROWTH WAS A GLORIOUS BLESSING OF GOD, IN FAITHFUL FULFILLMENT OF HIS CREATION DECREES (SEE BELOW) AND PATRIARCHAL PROMISES (SEE VV. 1–7). HOW THEN COULD IT GET THEM IN SO MUCH TROUBLE? THE SHORT ANSWER IS THAT IN A FALLEN WORLD, THE BLESSINGS OF GOD ARE OFTEN SO IN CONFLICT WITH THE PREVAILING CORRUPT VALUES OF THIS WORLD’S CULTURE THAT THEY FUNCTION AS A THREAT TO THOSE WHO ARE NOT ALIGNED WITH GOD’S WILL. THE PARADE EXAMPLE OF THIS PHENOMENON IS THE REJECTION OF JESUS. HE WAS THE PUREST EXAMPLE OF GOOD THAT THE WORLD HAS SEEN, AND YET GOD COULD SEND HIM TO EARTH WITH THE CERTAIN KNOWLEDGE THAT HE WOULD BE PUT TO DEATH BY PEOPLE WHO THOUGHT THEY WERE DOING THE WORLD A FAVOR. SO MOSES HOLDS THE POPULATION FACTOR CLEARLY BEFORE THE READER, AS BOTH A GOOD THING FROM A RIGHTEOUS PERSON’S POINT OF VIEW AND ALSO AS THE CAUSE OF MUCH EVIL BECAUSE OF THE REACTION OF EVIL PEOPLE TO IT. IN ADDITION, HE POINTS OUT A FURTHER IRONY: THE FACT THAT THE OPPRESSION OF THE PEOPLE AND THEIR POPULATION GROWTH INCREASED TOGETHER (V. 12). AND HE DOES NOT WORD IT AS MIGHT BE EXPECTED, THAT IS, THAT AS THEIR GROWTH INCREASED, THEY NATURALLY EXPERIENCED MORE OPPRESSION; RATHER, IT WAS AS THEY EXPERIENCED MORE OPPRESSION THAT THEIR GROWTH INCREASED. THIS HAS THE EFFECT OF “DRAMATIZING THE NEED OF ISRAEL, AND THUS INCREASING THE READER’S CONCERN THAT SOMETHING MUST BE DONE.” IF GOD CAUSED THEIR ORIGINAL GROWTH AND THEN ACCELERATED IT IN CORRESPONDENCE WITH THEIR SUFFERING, SURELY IN HIS PLAN THERE MUST BE A MEANS OF RESOLUTION—SOME WAY TO BRING GOOD OUT OF THE CURRENT UNFAIRNESS. THIS UNIT OF THE NARRATIVE THUS ALERTS US TO EXPECT DIVINE INTERVENTION. THAT DIVINE INTERVENTION WOULD BE THE RESULT IS ALSO HEIGHTENED BY THE CAREFUL AVOIDANCE OF ANY MENTION OF GOD IN THESE VERSES AND, INDEED, IN THE NARRATIVE SO FAR. THIS HELPS CONVEY THE SENSE THAT PRESUMABLY PREVAILED AMONG THE ISRAELITES IN THOSE DAYS: IT SEEMED AS THOUGH GOD WASN’T AROUND AND THAT UNLESS HE SHOWED UP, THINGS WERE NOT GOING TO GET BETTER. 1:7 MOST OF THE VOCABULARY OF THIS VERSE HEARKENS TO THE GENESIS CREATION STORY, SHOWING THAT ISRAEL WAS IN ITSELF A FULFILLMENT OF THE CREATION COMMANDS (“BE FRUITFUL … INCREASE [MULTIPLY] … FILL,” GEN 1:22, 28). THIS LANGUAGE CONTINUES AT MANY POINTS IN GENESIS (E.G., 8:17; 9:1, 7; 17:20; 28:3; 35:11; 47:27; 48:4) AS THE CREATION THEME UNFOLDS IN THE NARRATIVE. THE COMMON BUT INCORRECT NOTION THAT THE CREATION STORY IS TO BE FOUND ONLY IN THE FIRST CHAPTERS OF GENESIS MISSES THE FACT THAT THE BIBLICAL PICTURE OF CREATION IS ONE OF ONGOING CREATION, STARTING WITH ADAM AND EVE, CONTINUING WITH HUMAN SOCIETY IN GENERAL, CONTINUING FURTHER WITH NOAH AND THE PATRIARCHS, THEN WITH THE NATION ISRAEL AND MANY OF ITS INSTITUTIONS (EVEN JERUSALEM; CF. EXOD 15:17; ISA 65:18), AND CULMINATING IN THE NEW CREATION (ISA 65:17) IN WHICH ALL WHO TRULY PLACE FAITH IN CHRIST ARE RECREATED (2 COR 5:17; EPH 2:10). IN SUPPORT OF THIS THEME OF ONGOING CREATION RELATIVE TO ISRAEL IN EGYPT, MOSES PACKED INTO THE VERSE ABOUT EVERY POSSIBLE WAY OF SAYING THAT THE ISRAELITES RAPIDLY INCREASED IN NUMBER. THE HEBREW LITERALLY READS, “AS FOR THE ISRAELITES, THEY GREW, THEY WERE FRUITFUL, THEY SWARMED, THEY INCREASED, THEY GOT POWERFUL MORE AND MORE, AND THE LAND WAS FILLED WITH THEM.” THE POINT MADE BY SUCH LANGUAGE IS TWOFOLD: (1) THAT ISRAEL’S AMAZING POPULATION GROWTH WAS THE RESULT OF GOD’S ORIGINAL DESIGN AND ONGOING CARE AND (2) THAT ISRAELITES WERE LIVING, AT LEAST IN SMALL COLONIES OR SCATTERED FAMILIES, IN SUFFICIENT NUMBERS AS TO DOMINATE THE POPULATION OF ONE PART OF EGYPT AT THE TIME OF THE PERSECUTION, THAT IS, JUST IN THE EASTERN NILE DELTA AREA OF GOSHEN, EVEN IF THEY WERE NOT THE SOLE INHABITANTS OF THAT GENERAL AREA. THEIR POPULATION GROWTH WAS TAKING PLACE IN A LAND WHERE THE ISRAELITES WERE RESIDENT ALIENS, AND THEREFORE WHAT FOLLOWS—THE HOSTILITY OF THE EGYPTIANS—IS HARDLY A TOTAL SURPRISE. “LAND” HERE REFERS ALMOST CERTAINLY NOT TO THE ENTIRETY OF EGYPT, NOR TO THE EARTH IN GENERAL, BUT TO THE LAND OF GOSHEN. FOR ANY LAND OR MAJOR PORTION THEREOF TO BE FILLED WITH PEOPLE OF EXTERNAL ORIGIN AND ALLEGIANCE IS BOUND TO THREATEN THOSE WHO REGARD THEMSELVES AS ITS RIGHTFUL CITIZENS. IN A FALLEN WORLD, HOSTILITY TO FOREIGNERS IS UNFORTUNATELY A COMMON HUMAN SIN. 1:8 IN THIS BRIEF SENTENCE IS CONTAINED REFERENCE TO A VAST POLITICAL AND IDEOLOGICAL SHIFT IN EGYPT. JOSEPH ALMOST CERTAINLY ROSE TO POWER (GEN 41–42) DURING THE TIME OF THE HYKSOS PHARAOHS, OUTSIDERS WHO HAD INVADED AND CONQUERED EGYPT. AFTER THE EXPULSION OF THE HYKSOS, AN ACCOMPLISHMENT MUCH CELEBRATED IN EGYPTIAN HISTORY, IT IS QUITE UNDERSTANDABLE THAT FEELING AGAINST FOREIGNERS WOULD RUN HIGH. IT IS ALSO UNDERSTANDABLE THAT A PHARAOH WHO HAD EXPELLED—OR WHOSE ANCESTORS HAD EXPELLED—HATED FOREIGN OPPRESSORS WOULD HAVE HAD NO SYMPATHY FOR OR EVEN INTEREST IN HONORING THE MEMORY OF A FOREIGNER WHO HAD SERVED AS EGYPT’S PRIME MINISTER DURING THE REIGN OF ONE OF THOSE HYKSOS PHARAOHS. IN OTHER WORDS, THE ISRAELITES WERE NOW FOREIGNERS IN A COUNTRY WHOSE GOVERNMENT HATED FOREIGNERS, UNDER A PHARAOH WHO WAS SURELY DETERMINED TO PREVENT WHAT HE SAW AS THE MISERIES OF THE PAST FROM RETURNING, AND WHO WOULD HAVE HAD NOT THE SLIGHTEST SENSE OF LOYALTY TO ANY AGREEMENTS HIS HYKSOS PREDECESSORS WORKED OUT WITH JOSEPH. THE FUNCTIONAL IMPLICATION OF “DID NOT KNOW ABOUT JOSEPH” IS THEREFORE “REFUSED TO HONOR ANY PRIOR ARRANGEMENTS PROTECTING THE STATUS OF THE ISRAELITES.” BY IMPLICATION, THE ISRAELITES ARE GOING TO BE IN TROUBLE, THEIR FORMER ASSURANCES OF ACCEPTANCE AS FOREIGNERS IN EGYPT NOW BEING USELESS. 1:9 IT IS POSSIBLE THAT MOSES HEARD THESE WORDS WHEN THEY WERE FIRST SPOKEN, SINCE AS AN EGYPTIAN PRINCELING DURING HIS FIRST FORTY YEARS OF LIFE HE PRESUMABLY ATTENDED AT LEAST SOME OF THE ROYAL COURT SESSIONS. THIS SOUNDS LIKE A SUMMARY OF A MAJOR POLICY INITIATIVE SPEECH GIVEN BY THE PHARAOH TO THE SORT OF LARGE ASSEMBLY THAT WOULD HAVE INCLUDED THE LESSER MEMBERS OF THE ROYAL FAMILY. MUCH DEPENDS, HOWEVER, ON WHETHER OR NOT THE PHARAOH OF THE OPPRESSION IS THIS SAME PHARAOH WHO INITIATED THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST ISRAEL, THAT IS, HOW MANY YEARS WENT BY BETWEEN VV. 9 AND 12. NEVERTHELESS, EVEN IF MOSES SERVED UNDER A LATER PHARAOH THAN THE ONE WHO INITIATED THIS POLICY, IT IS LIKELY THAT MOSES HEARD THESE WORDS OFTEN REFERRED TO, SINCE IT APPEARS THAT THE POLICY WAS ENDORSED AND ADOPTED AS A NATIONAL GOAL FOR THE LONG TERM RATHER THAN FOR THE DURATION OF A SINGLE ADMINISTRATION. IT BECAME, IN OTHER WORDS, THE POLICY OF A DYNASTY RATHER THAN OF A SINGLE PHARAOH. A SUBTLETY IN THE PHARAOH’S LANGUAGE IS NOT REFLECTED IN THE NIV TRANSLATION: WHAT HE LITERALLY SAID WAS THAT “THE NATION OF THE ISRAELITES HAS BECOME SO NUMEROUS AS TO BE STRONGER THAN WE ARE.” WITH REGARD TO THE FIRST PART OF THIS STATEMENT, THE NORMAL WAY OF REFERRING TO THE ISRAELITES WAS SIMPLY AS “THE ISRAELITES” (BĔNÊ YIŚRĀʾĒL). TO REFER TO “THE NATION OF THE ISRAELITES” (ʿAM BĔNÊ YIŚRĀʾĒL) IS MORE PEJORATIVE. FIRST, IT DEHUMANIZES THE ISRAELITES SOMEWHAT BY FOCUSING ON THEIR CATEGORY RATHER THAN THEIR HUMANITY (SLIGHTLY AKIN TO SPEAKING OF “THE MONGOL HORDES” RATHER THAN SIMPLY “THE MONGOLS”); SECOND, IT IDENTIFIES THEM AS A SEPARATE NATION/PEOPLE (ʿAM TENDS TO REFER TO ENTIRE, MAJOR, ETHNIC-POLITICAL GROUPS). THUS, THE PHARAOH WAS UNDOUBTEDLY USING LANGUAGE, A BIT OF WHICH IS PRESERVED HERE TO GIVE ITS FLAVOR, THAT IDENTIFIED ISRAEL AS A NATION WITHIN A NATION, SOMETHING NOT INNOCUOUS. THIS LANGUAGE DREW ATTENTION TO THE FACT THAT THE EGYPTIANS NOW HAD TO CONTEND NOT MERELY WITH A MINOR GROUP OF PEOPLE LIVING IN A REGION OF A GREAT COUNTRY BUT A FULL FOREIGN NATION WITHIN THEIR MIDST. THE SECOND PART OF THE STATEMENT, WHILE SURELY AN EXAGGERATION INTENDED TO FRIGHTEN RATHER THAN TO PRESENT THE FACTS ACCURATELY, PLAYS ON THE UNIVERSAL XENOPHOBIC TENDENCY OF PEOPLES TO FEAR LOSING THEIR JOBS, THEIR WEALTH, THEIR LAND, AND THEIR POLITICAL CONTROL TO FOREIGNERS IN THEIR MIDST. IT IS NO ACCIDENT THAT ALL MAJOR COUNTRIES OF THE MODERN WORLD HAVE IMMIGRATION LAWS INCLUDING NUMERICAL RESTRICTIONS ON THE INFLUX OF FOREIGNERS AND THAT MANY HAVE RESTRICTIONS ON FOREIGN INVESTMENT WITHIN THEIR BORDERS AS WELL. IT IS LIKEWISE NO ACCIDENT THAT THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES, FOR EXAMPLE, REQUIRES THE PRESIDENT TO BE BORN IN AMERICA. NATIONS THROUGHOUT HISTORY HAVE TENDED TO BE AFRAID OF LOSING THEIR POWER TO “OUTSIDERS,” SO THE EGYPTIAN MENTALITY AT THIS POINT CAN EASILY BE UNDERSTOOD. WHAT THE PHARAOH DID WAS TO SOUND THE ALARMIST NOTE, CALCULATED TO GET APPROVAL FROM THE MASSES FOR HIS PLANNED CAMPAIGN OF OPPRESSION, THAT THE EGYPTIANS HAD FALLEN BEHIND THE FOREIGNERS IN THEIR MIDST, AND WOULD NEED TO ACT QUICKLY TO REGAIN CONTROL. TO PORTRAY HIS OWN PEOPLE AS SOMEHOW A MINORITY, POTENTIALLY DOMINATED BY THE OUTSIDER MAJORITY, WAS A CLEVER WAY TO ENGENDER POPULAR SUPPORT FOR HIS PLAN. ALL OPPRESSIVE REGIMES USE THE THREAT OF SOME GREAT DANGER, REAL OR IMAGINED, TO JUSTIFY VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS. THE PHARAOH WAS SIMPLY FOLLOWING THIS WELL-ATTESTED COURSE OF ACTION. 1:10 HERE THE PHARAOH’S PROPOSAL FOR ACTION IS SUMMARIZED. HE CALLED FOR POPULATION CONTROL OF THE ISRAELITES. THE SHREWD DEALING, HE SUGGESTED IS INTENDED TO PREVENT THEIR BECOMING “MORE NUMEROUS.” THAT BECAME THE CENTERPIECE OF ALL FURTHER EGYPTIAN STRATEGY WITH REGARD TO THE ISRAELITES. IT WAS THEIR FURTHER GROWTH THAT WAS PORTRAYED AS THE THREAT, ONE THAT COULD NOT BE TOLERATED. AS WELL, THE EXCUSING THREAT THAT WILL JUSTIFY VIOLATING THE ISRAELITES’ RIGHTS IS NOW MORE PRECISELY DEFINED: IN THE EVENT OF WAR, THE ISRAELITES WOULD SIDE WITH THE ENEMY AND NOT WITH EGYPT, THUS PRODUCING AN INTOLERABLE DEFENSIVE SITUATION: THE ENEMY BOTH WITHIN AND WITHOUT IN FORCE. THIS SORT OF PROPAGANDA HAS WORKED COUNTLESS TIMES IN HISTORY. IF A REGIME WISHES TO BE GIVEN FREEDOM TO OPPRESS A GIVEN GROUP WITHIN A NATION, IT DEFINES THAT GROUP AS AN UNDERMINING FORCE, A REAL DANGER, AND POTENTIALLY THE AGENT OF OVERTHROW OF THE ESTABLISHED ORDER. THE PHARAOH WAS SPOUTING ETHNIC HATE PROPAGANDA OF THE SORT STILL WIDELY EMPLOYED IN THE MODERN WORLD TO JUSTIFY ETHNIC PERSECUTION AND EVENTUALLY GENOCIDE. LIKE MOST PROPAGANDA, IT WAS A DISTORTION OF THE TRUTH RATHER THAN ENTIRELY FALSE. THE ISRAELITES WERE FOREIGNERS, AS THE HATED HYKSOS HAD BEEN, AND THEY WERE, LIKE THE HYKSOS, “MOUNTAIN PEOPLE” (THE LITERAL MEANING OF THE EGYPTIAN FROM WHICH THE GREEK HYKSOS IS CORRUPTED), THAT IS, FROM MOUNTAINOUS CANAAN. MOREOVER, IN THE ANCIENT WORLD ETHNIC LOYALTIES WERE USUALLY STRONGER THAN POLITICAL ONES, AND THE PHARAOH’S REASONING HAD A GENERAL RING OF TRUTH. HISTORY WAS ALSO, IN A SENSE, ON HIS SIDE. FOREIGNERS HAD RECENTLY RULED EGYPT AS A RESULT OF WAR. WAS THIS NOT WHAT HISTORY TAUGHT—THAT YOU HAD TO BE SUSPICIOUS OF THE MOTIVES OF FOREIGNERS TOWARD EGYPT AND ITS DESIRABLE, FAMINE-PROOF LAND? THE FINAL WORDS IN THE PHARAOH’S SPEECH APPEAR TO COMPRISE A RELATIVELY RARE HEBREW IDIOM THAT MAY NOT MEAN WHAT IT HAS SEEMED TO MEAN TO MOST TRANSLATORS. THE NIV TRANSLATION “AND LEAVE THE COUNTRY” RENDERS CONTEXTUALLY WHAT THE MORE TRADITIONAL ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS HAVE RENDERED AS “AND GO UP FROM THE LAND” OR “AND ESCAPE FROM THE LAND,” OR THE LIKE. BUT THIS SPECIFIC COMBINATION OF HEBREW WORDS HAS A SEMANTIC VALUE DIFFERENT FROM WHAT EITHER A LITERAL OR TYPICAL DYNAMIC EQUIVALENCE READING MIGHT SEEM TO SUGGEST (I.E., SIMPLY “GO UP FROM THE LAND” OR SOME SIMILAR WORDING OF THE SAME CONCEPT OF “LEAVING”). THE IDIOM TO WHICH WE REFER APPEARS ONLY IN THE FOLLOWING THREE TEXTS, EACH OF WHICH HAS TO DO EITHER WITH WATER RISING OR PEOPLE RISING UP OVER LAND, THAT IS, OVERCOMING, OVERWHELMING, OR DOMINATING IT: GEN 2:6: BUT A FLOW OF WATER WOULD COME OVER THE EARTH, AND WATER THE WHOLE SURFACE OF THE EARTH. EXOD 1:10: COME, LET US DEAL SHREWDLY WITH THEM, OR THEY WILL INCREASE AND, IN THE EVENT OF WAR, JOIN OUR ENEMIES AND FIGHT AGAINST US AND TAKE POSSESSION OF THE LAND. [AUTHOR TRANSLATION] HOS 1:11: THE PEOPLE OF JUDAH AND THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL SHALL BE GATHERED TOGETHER, AND THEY SHALL APPOINT FOR THEMSELVES ONE HEAD; AND THEY SHALL TAKE POSSESSION OF THE LAND, FOR GREAT SHALL BE THE DAY OF JEZREEL. [NRSV, ITALICS MINE] THE NRSV CORRECTLY RECOGNIZES THE IDIOM’S MEANING IN HOS 1:11 (“TAKE POSSESSION OF THE LAND”), BUT NONE OF THE BEST-KNOWN TRANSLATIONS RECOGNIZE THE IDIOM HERE IN EXOD 1:10, WHERE WE BELIEVE IT SHOULD ALSO BE TRANSLATED “TAKE POSSESSION OF THE LAND.” THE IDIOM IS IMPLICITLY DISCERNIBLE IN GEN 2:6 EVEN IN THE UNSATISFACTORY TRADITIONAL TRANSLATIONS BECAUSE WHAT IS DEPICTED IN THAT VERSE IS A FLOW OF WATER THAT COVERS THE LAND AND THUS WATERS IT—IT “RISES OVER” OR “COMES OVER” OR “OVERWHELMS” OR “OVERFLOWS” OR “TAKES POSSESSION OF” THE LAND—THE SORT OF THING THE PHARAOH WAS SUGGESTING IN EXOD 1:10 THAT THE ISRAELITES MIGHT DO IN EGYPT. WITH THE PROPER TRANSLATION OF EXOD 1:10, THE PHARAOH’S SPEECH MAKES SENSE; WITHOUT IT, IT DOES NOT. WHAT SORT OF THREAT WOULD IT BE TO THE EGYPTIANS IF THE ISRAELITES WERE TO “LEAVE THE COUNTRY” DURING A WAR WAGED BY FOREIGNERS AGAINST EGYPT? INDEED, AN ISRAELITE DEPARTURE DURING WAR MIGHT WELL BE THE BEST POSSIBLE DEVELOPMENT FROM AN EGYPTIAN POINT OF VIEW SINCE IT WOULD ELIMINATE THE ENEMY THREAT IN THEIR MIDST. BUT IF THE PHARAOH IS WARNING ABOUT ACTUALLY BEING OVERTAKEN/OVERWHELMED/DISPOSSESSED FROM WITHIN BY THE FOREIGN ELEMENT ALREADY RESIDENT IN EGYPT, HIS SPEECH WOULD HAVE THE SORT OF IMPACT ON THE COLLECTIVE CONSCIOUSNESS THAT WOULD HELP JUSTIFY A FULL-SCALE CAMPAIGN OF OPPRESSION AGAINST A PEOPLE PREVIOUSLY ACCEPTED AND TREATED DECENTLY. 1:11 MOSES’ WORDING OF THIS VERSE IMPLIES THAT THE PHARAOH’S PROPOSAL WAS ACCEPTED AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION BEGUN FAIRLY RAPIDLY—AT LEAST RAPIDLY ENOUGH THAT MOSES FELT NO NEED TO DESCRIBE ANY INTERVENING DEVELOPMENTS BETWEEN THE PROPOSAL AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION. IT OBVIOUSLY WAS AN INCREMENTAL POLICY OF POPULATION CONTROL DESIGNED TO SUPPRESS GRADUALLY THE ISRAELITES’ WILL AND ABILITY TO RESIST. THE FIRST STEP WAS TO REORDER THE ISRAELITES’ POSITION IN EGYPTIAN SOCIETY. NO LONGER WOULD THEY BE AN INDEPENDENT PEOPLE BUT WOULD INSTEAD BE A SLAVE CASTE UNDER THE CONTROL OF SLAVE MASTERS, AND THEIR MAIN PURPOSE IN LIFE WOULD BE TO PERFORM FORCED LABOR ASSIGNED TO THEM BY THE EGYPTIANS. THEIR ORIGINAL IDENTITY HAD BEEN AS SHEPHERDS AND CONTRACT HERDERS IN THE GRAZING LANDS OF NORTHEAST EGYPT (GEN 46:34; 47:4–6, 27) WITH OFFICIAL RECOGNITION BY THE GOVERNMENT IN THIS ROLE (GEN 47:6). NOW THE GOVERNMENT REDEFINED THEM AS CONSCRIPT CONSTRUCTION LABORERS AND, AS THE READER SOON LEARNS, FORCED THEM TO DO GENERAL LABOR AND ESPECIALLY, TO MAKE BRICKS (EXOD 1:14; 5:7–19). THE LOWER A GROUP IS ON THE SOCIAL-ECONOMIC SCALE, THE LESS LIKELY IT IS TO BE ABLE TO ORGANIZE ITSELF IN OPPOSITION TO THOSE IN AUTHORITY. THUS, THE EGYPTIAN PROGRAM HAD ITS FIRST ACHIEVEMENT: THE ISRAELITE POPULATION WAS REDUCED IN INFLUENCE, LESS LIKELY TO BE A THREAT TO NATIVE EGYPTIAN SOVEREIGNTY. NEXT WOULD COME, GRADUALLY, A REDUCTION ALSO IN NUMBERS. THIS WOULD BE THE EXPECTED NATURAL RESULT OF THE COMBINATION OF POVERTY AND EXTREMELY HARD WORK THE ISRAELITES WERE FORCED TO ENDURE. THE TEXT DOES NOT OVERTLY REPORT THAT THE PHARAOH SAID, “LET’S KILL OFF SOME OF THE ISRAELITES WITH HARD LABOR” BECAUSE HE PROBABLY NEVER ANNOUNCED PUBLICLY ANY SUCH WORDING, BUT THAT IS SURELY THE IMPLICATION OF HIS PLAN. MOSES MENTIONED THE FACT THAT DURING THIS TIME THE ISRAELITES WERE THE GROUP USED TO BUILD TWO ENTIRE CITIES, PITHOM AND RAMESES, WHICH HE DESCRIBED AS “STORE CITIES.” PITHOM HAS BEEN COMMONLY IDENTIFIED WITH EGYPTIAN PRTM, THAT IS, “HOUSE OF ʿTUM” [= HOUSE OF THE GOD ATUM], A CITY KNOWN TO HAVE BEEN LOCATED SOMEWHERE TO THE EAST OF WADI TUMILAT AND THUS LIKELY WHERE EITHER TEL EL-MASKUTAH OR TEL ER-RATABAH ARE KNOWN TODAY, AND POSSIBLY AT OR NEAR HELIOPOLIS. THE CITY OF RAMESES, ON THE OTHER HAND, IS COMMONLY THOUGHT TO BEAR IN ITS NAME THE HEBREW REFLEX OF EGYPTIAN “HOUSE OF RAMSES,” BUT IT MAY IN FACT HAVE DERIVED ORIGINALLY FROM RIʿAMSĒS, MEANING “RE CREATED IT/HIM.” IT WAS A ROYAL CITY THE PHARAOHS OF THE NINETEENTH AND TWENTIETH DYNASTIES OCCUPIED, THAT IS, THE ROYAL RESIDENCE OF THE RAMESSIDES IN THE DELTA REGION FROM ABOUT 1300 TO ABOUT 1100 BC. IN GEN 47:11 “RAMESES” SEEMS TO FUNCTION AS A METONYMY FOR THE ENTIRE LAND OF GOSHEN. MANY SCHOLARS HAVE THUS ASSUMED THAT THE REGION IS GIVEN THAT NAME SOMEWHAT ANACHRONISTICALLY, BASED ON THE LATER ISRAELITE KNOWLEDGE OF THE CHIEF CITY OF THE REGION, THE PLACE MENTIONED IN EXOD 12:37 AND NUM 33:3–5 AS THE DEPARTURE POINT FOR THE EXODUS. BY THIS UNDERSTANDING, IT WOULD EVENTUALLY HAVE REPLACED “AVARIS” IN THE BIBLICAL TEXT FOR THE CONVENIENCE OF LATER READERS, MUCH AS “NEW YORK” EVENTUALLY REPLACED THE ORIGINAL “NEW AMSTERDAM” IN THE EVOLVING NOMENCLATURE OF COLONIAL AMERICA. HOWEVER, THERE IS NO REASON TO RULE OUT THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE CITY THAT RAMSES LATER “CONSTRUCTED” AND PERHAPS CALLED “HOUSE OF RAMSES,” WAS IN FACT A REBUILDING AND EXPANSION OF THE EARLIER RIʿAMSĒS. THIS WOULD BE CONSISTENT WITH RAMSES’ EXTENSIVE BUILDING AND REBUILDING EFFORTS IN MANY PARTS OF EGYPT, AND THE WAY THAT NEW DYNASTIES OFTEN REBUILT CITIES TO THEIR LIKING AND/OR TO NEW STRATEGIC USES, SO THAT MANY CITIES SHOW EVIDENCE OF SEVERAL MAJOR AND MANY MINOR RECONSTRUCTIONS OVER THEIR HISTORY. THIS DESCRIPTION RAISES TWO QUESTIONS, THE ANSWERS TO WHICH REMAIN SOMEWHAT SPECULATIVE. FIRST, WHERE WERE THE TWO CITIES LOCATED? IT IS REASONABLE TO SPECULATE THAT THEY WERE BUILT NEAR THE LAND OF GOSHEN, THAT IS, IN THE EASTERN DELTA, CLOSE TO THE SINAI PENINSULA, SINCE THIS WAS THE HEART OF THE ISRAELITE TERRITORY AND THE PLACE WHERE THE LARGEST CONCENTRATION OF ISRAELITE SLAVE WORKERS COULD BE FOUND. THE ANSWER TO THE SECOND QUESTION IS THAT WHILE THEY CERTAINLY WERE “STORE” OR EVEN “TREASURE” CITIES IN THE SENSE OF BEING PLACES WHERE VALUABLE ASSETS OF VARIOUS SORTS FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF THE KINGDOM WERE KEPT, THEY WERE ALSO DE FACTO PROBABLY MILITARY STORE CITIES BY REASON OF BEING BUILT IN THE NORTHEAST CORNER OF THE COUNTRY AT THE AREA WHERE INVASION WOULD FIRST COME FROM ASIA, THAT IS, THE DIRECTION OF THE EARLIER INVASION THAT HAD TAKEN PLACE UNDER THE ASIATIC HYKSOS—THE DIRECTION OF EGYPT’S MOST FEARED POTENTIAL ENEMIES. TODAY WE WOULD CALL THESE “ROYAL GARRISON CITIES” OR “FORTIFIED BORDER SETTLEMENTS.” THEY PRESUMABLY CONTAINED NOT ONLY QUARTERS, PROVISIONS, AND WEAPONRY FOR THE LIMITED NUMBER OF TROOPS AND THEIR DEPENDENTS AND CIVILIAN SUPPORT POPULATION THAT OCCUPIED THEM DURING PEACETIME BUT ALSO ADDITIONAL FACILITIES TO ACCOMMODATE AND EQUIP TROOPS THAT COULD BE RUSHED TO THEM IN WAR OR THE THREAT THEREOF. THE ISRAELITES WERE THEREFORE ASSIGNED THE MONUMENTAL TASK OF BUILDING ENTIRE SPECIAL AREAS OF CITIES FROM THE GROUND UP, SUPPLYING NOT ONLY THE LABOR BUT ALSO THE MATERIALS. THIS TOOK INDIVIDUAL HEBREWS AWAY FROM THEIR FAMILIES FOR LONG PERIODS OF TIME—MEN FROM WIVES AND CHILDREN, MOTHERS FROM CHILDREN. SUCH SEPARATIONS OBVIOUSLY CUT DOWN ON THE TIME BOTH TO CONCEIVE CHILDREN AND ALSO TO NURTURE THEM. THE EGYPTIAN PLAN WOULD HAVE ASSUMED THAT IN BOTH WAYS THE ISRAELITE POPULATION WOULD BEGIN TO DECREASE. ADDITIONALLY, AGRICULTURE WOULD HAVE SUFFERED GREATLY SINCE ONE CAN’T EASILY BE A PRODUCTIVE FARMER AND A SLAVE LABORER AT THE SAME TIME. AGAIN, THE PRESUMPTION OF THE EGYPTIAN STRATEGY WAS THAT MANY ISRAELITES WOULD NOW STARVE FOR LACK OF ADEQUATE ATTENTION TO THEIR HERDS, FLOCKS, AND PLOTS. FINALLY, ANY SLAVE LABOR SYSTEM WORTHY OF THE NAME DOES NOT TOLERATE ILL HEALTH. PEOPLE ARE WORKED DAILY, ENDLESSLY, REGARDLESS OF THEIR PHYSICAL CONDITION, UNTIL MANY OF THEM SIMPLY DIE OF ONE OF THE MANY COMPLICATIONS OF MALNOURISHMENT AND MALTREATMENT AND OVERWORK. THIS AGAIN WOULD BE A THIRD MEANS OF REDUCING THE ISRAELITE POPULATION. OF STATISTICAL INTEREST, BUT OF NO SEMANTIC IMPORTANCE AND LIKEWISE OF NO SOURCE-CRITICAL VALUE, IS THAT THIS VERSE IS THE FIRST POINT IN EXODUS AT WHICH MOSES CALLED THE KING OF EGYPT “PHARAOH.” HE USED THE TERM REGULARLY IN GENESIS, INCLUDING THE IMMEDIATELY PRIOR CHAPTER, GEN 50, AND INTERCHANGED THESE TERMS SOMEWHAT RANDOMLY HEREAFTER EXCEPT IN THE PLAGUES STORIES, WHERE HE USED PHARAOH ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY FOR REASONS DISCUSSED IN THE COMMENTARY AT THAT POINT. SOMETIMES HE EVEN COMBINED THE TWO TERMS (E.G., 14:8, “PHARAOH KING OF EGYPT”). “PHARAOH” DERIVES FROM AN EGYPTIAN CIRCUMLOCUTION, LIT., “BIG HOUSE,” WHICH INCREASINGLY OVER TIME WAS USED TO REFER TO THE KING, BECOMING EVENTUALLY A TITLE. SIMPLE STYLISTIC VARIATION IN VOCABULARY IS THE PURPOSE HERE AND ELSEWHERE IN THE NARRATIVE. 1:12–13 THE OPPRESSION POLICY BACKFIRED. INSTEAD OF A REDUCED ISRAELITE POPULATION, THE EGYPTIANS SAW AN ISRAELITE POPULATION GROWTH PARALLEL TO THE INTENSITY OF THE PERSECUTION. THIS IMPLIES THAT AS THE EARLY YEARS OF THE ATTRITION PROGRAM WENT BY AND THE POPULATION OF THE ISRAELITES DID NOT DECLINE, THE EGYPTIANS STEPPED UP THE OPPRESSION, ASSUMING THAT IT NEEDED TO BE MORE SEVERE IN ORDER TO WORK EFFECTIVELY. BUT THE RESULTS WERE THE OPPOSITE OF WHAT COMMON SENSE EXPECTED. OVER THE GENERATIONS THE GREATER THE OPPRESSION, THE GREATER THE GROWTH. IF ONE ANALYZES THIS RESULT AS THE EGYPTIANS DID, APART FROM THE EYES OF FAITH, ONE HAS NO REAL EXPLANATION FOR HOW IT COULD HAPPEN. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE READER WHO KNOWS THE GOD OF ISRAEL AS SAVIOR IS NOT MYSTIFIED FOR A MOMENT BUT CHEERED AND REINFORCED IN HIS OR HER FAITH: OBVIOUSLY, GOD WAS TURNING THE EGYPTIANS’ OPPRESSION POLICY AGAINST THEM. HOWEVER, THE ISRAELITES WERE CERTAINLY NOT ENJOYING IT. CRUEL OPPRESSION IS IPSO FACTO HORRIBLE TO ENDURE, AND ONE CAN HARDLY IMAGINE ANY OF THEM SAYING, IN EFFECT, “WE DON’T MIND THIS EXTREME SUFFERING BECAUSE, AFTER ALL, WE’RE GROWING NUMERICALLY.” POPULATION GROWTH VIRTUALLY ALWAYS RESULTS IN SPATIAL SPREAD, AND THE NOTE THAT “THEY MULTIPLIED AND SPREAD” (V. 12) CONFIRMS THIS. IT SHOULD BE REMEMBERED THAT THE XENOPHOBIC EGYPTIANS WERE NATURALLY SUSPICIOUS OF THE ISRAELITES AS OUTSIDER PRACTITIONERS OF THE MOUNTAIN FARMING SKILLS AND REPRESENTATIVES OF FOREIGN, ASIATIC CULTURE (GEN 46:34; CF. GEN 43:32). ISRAELITE DRESS AND MANNERS WERE DIFFERENT FROM THOSE OF THE EGYPTIANS, AND THEREFORE AS THE ISRAELITES KEPT SPREADING OUT INTO AREAS WHERE THEY HAD NOT PREVIOUSLY LIVED, EGYPTIAN RESENTMENT WOULD HAVE INCREASED ACCORDINGLY. HAVING BOUGHT INTO THE NATIONAL POLICY FIRST ENUNCIATED BY THE “NEW KING” IN VV. 9–10 AND CONTINUED SINCE,56 EGYPTIANS IN GENERAL COULD AND WOULD COME “TO DREAD THE ISRAELITES.” WHAT REMEDY DID THEY HAVE? TO WORK THE ISRAELITES EVEN HARDER (V. 13). IF HARD WORK HAD FAILED TO CURTAIL THE ISRAELITE GROWTH SO FAR, HARDER WORK SHOULD BE USED TO TRY TO STEM THE TIDE. “WORKED THEM RUTHLESSLY” IS THE FIRST OF FIVE DIFFERENT EXPRESSIONS IN VV. 13–14 TO DESCRIBE HOW EXTREME THE ISRAELITE WORKLOAD BECAME. 1:14 MOSES MADE SURE THE READER CANNOT MISS ISRAEL’S DESPERATE NEED FOR DELIVERANCE. “LIVES BITTER,” “HARD LABOR,” “ALL KINDS OF WORK,” “HARD LABOR,” AND “USED THEM RUTHLESSLY” FOLLOW AFTER “WORKED THEM RUTHLESSLY” AT THE END OF V. 13 TO HAMMER HOME THE POINT THAT THE SITUATION WAS INTOLERABLE. THE READER IS EXPECTED TO IDENTIFY WITH THE UNFAIRNESS OF THIS. FOR MOSES THIS WAS NOT MERELY HISTORICAL REPORTING. HE HAD WITNESSED IT ALL FIRSTHAND, AND ITS SEVERITY HAD EVENTUALLY BECOME TOO MUCH EVEN FOR HIM, RAISED AN EGYPTIAN, TO WITNESS (2:11–12). THE SEVERITY OF THE WORKLOAD WAS, OF COURSE, INTEGRAL TO THE POPULATION CONTROL PLAN. IF PEOPLE ARE GOING TO DIE UNDER A WORKLOAD, IT HAS TO BE HARD ENOUGH TO KILL PEOPLE, MAKING WEAK AND SICK THOSE WHO WERE PREVIOUSLY STRONG AND TERMINATING THE LIVES OF THOSE WHO WERE ALREADY WEAK AND/OR SICK. SOMEONE IN THE EGYPTIAN LEADERSHIP POSSIBLY ALSO ASSUMED THAT THIS SORT OF OPPRESSIVE LABOR MIGHT KEEP HUSBANDS AND WIVES AWAY FROM EACH OTHER FOR LONG PERIODS OF TIME OR RENDER THEM TOO TIRED TO PROCREATE, BUT NOTHING IN THE TEXT PER SE SUGGESTS THAT THIS REASONING WAS PART OF THE STRATEGY. THE WORKLOAD ITSELF WAS SUPPOSED TO BE SUFFICIENTLY HARD AS TO BE FATAL TO ENOUGH PEOPLE TO BRING THE POPULATION UNDER CONTROL. THIS VERSE CONTAINS AN IMPORTANT REPETITION OF THE HEBREW VERBAL ROOT ʿĀBAD, THE SIGNIFICANCE OF WHICH THE ENGLISH READER WILL SIMPLY MISS UNLESS IT IS POINTED. THIS WORD HAS A RANGE OF MEANING IN HEBREW MUCH BROADER THAN THE RANGE OF MEANING OF ANY WORD IN ENGLISH AVAILABLE TO TRANSLATE IT. IN ITS VERB USAGES IT CAN MEAN, DEPENDING ON THE CONTEXT, “WORK, SERVE, LABOR” AND ALSO “PERFORM, DO, MAKE” AND ALSO “WORSHIP, LIVE FOR, BE UNDER THE CONTROL OF.” IN ITS NOUN USAGES IT CAN MEAN, DEPENDING ON THE CONTEXT, “WORK, SERVICE, LABOR,” “PERFORMANCE, EFFORT, ACCOMPLISHMENT, TASK” AND “WORSHIP, OBLIGATION, MINISTRY.” LATER IN EXODUS, MOSES WILL USE THE WORD FREQUENTLY TO REFER TO ISRAEL’S DESIRE TO “WORSHIP/LIVE FOR/BE UNDER THE CONTROL OF” STEPHEN YAHWEH. AT THIS POINT IN THE NARRATIVE, ISRAEL WAS INVOLUNTARILY HAVING TO “SERVE/WORK FOR/LIVE FOR/BE UNDER THE CONTROL OF” PHARAOH. WHAT ISRAEL NEEDED WAS NOT INDEPENDENCE FROM PHARAOH AND EGYPT PER SE BUT A SHIFT OF DEPENDENCY, A SWITCHING OF MASTERS FROM PHARAOH AND THE EGYPTIANS TO THE TRUE AND LIVING GOD. THEY NEEDED TO GET OUT FROM UNDER AN OPPRESSIVE LEADER SO AS TO BE UNDER A BENEFICENT ONE, NO LONGER “SERVING” [ʿĀBAD] PHARAOH BUT “SERVING” [ʿĀBAD] GOD. THE RICHNESS OF THIS VOCABULARY AMBIGUITY AND THE OVERTONES IT CREATES ARE A PART OF THE BOOK’S STYLISTIC IMPACT ON THE READER AND YET CONSTITUTE A FREQUENT PROBLEM FOR THE TRANSLATOR. NEVERTHELESS, WE WILL DO OUR BEST TO POINT OUT THE CONTEXTUAL NUANCES OF THIS CENTRAL VOCABULARY TERM WHEN THEY OCCUR IN WAYS THE READER MIGHT NOT RECOGNIZE. BRICKWORK APPARENTLY WAS THE MAIN ASSIGNMENT OF MOST ISRAELITES, IN LIGHT OF ITS PROMINENCE HERE AND IN 5:7–19. NEVERTHELESS, WHEREVER ISRAELITES WORKED, THEY WERE TREATED CRUELLY BY NATIONAL DESIGN62 SO THAT THOSE ENGAGED IN “ALL KINDS OF WORK IN THE FIELDS” WERE NO LESS MISERABLE THAN THOSE DIRECTLY INVOLVED IN BUILDING PITHOM AND RAMESES.**

**A NEW PHARAOH’S INITIATIVE: GENOCIDE AS POPULATION CONTROL (1:15–22)**

**15 THE KING OF EGYPT SAID TO THE HEBREW MIDWIVES, WHOSE NAMES WERE SHIPHRAH AND PUAH, 16 “WHEN YOU HELP THE HEBREW WOMEN IN CHILDBIRTH AND OBSERVE THEM ON THE DELIVERY STOOL, IF IT IS A BOY, KILL HIM; BUT IF IT IS A GIRL, LET HER LIVE.” 17 THE MIDWIVES, HOWEVER, FEARED GOD AND DID NOT DO WHAT THE KING OF EGYPT HAD TOLD THEM TO DO; THEY LET THE BOYS LIVE. 18 THEN THE KING OF EGYPT SUMMONED THE MIDWIVES AND ASKED THEM, “WHY HAVE YOU DONE THIS? WHY HAVE YOU LET THE BOYS LIVE?” 19 THE MIDWIVES ANSWERED PHARAOH, “HEBREW WOMEN ARE NOT LIKE EGYPTIAN WOMEN; THEY ARE VIGOROUS AND GIVE BIRTH BEFORE THE MIDWIVES ARRIVE.” 20 SO GOD WAS KIND TO THE MIDWIVES AND THE PEOPLE INCREASED AND BECAME EVEN MORE NUMEROUS. 21 AND BECAUSE THE MIDWIVES FEARED GOD, HE GAVE THEM FAMILIES OF THEIR OWN. 22 THEN PHARAOH GAVE THIS ORDER TO ALL HIS PEOPLE: “EVERY BOY THAT IS BORN YOU MUST THROW INTO THE NILE, BUT LET EVERY GIRL LIVE.”**

**NOW BEGINS THE PENULTIMATE STAGE OF THE FORCED POPULATION CONTROL PROGRAM—DIRECTLY KILLING ISRAELITES. IT IS NOT QUITE THE ULTIMATE STAGE BECAUSE THE PHARAOH WAS AT THIS POINT TRYING TO GET ISRAELITES THEMSELVES (I.E., MIDWIVES) TO KILL ISRAELITES (I.E., MALE NEWBORNS) SUBTLY, WHEREAS THE ULTIMATE STATE COMES WITH V. 22, WHERE CHILDREN ARE KILLED OPENLY BY EGYPTIANS THEMSELVES. HOWEVER, MUCH TIME HAS ELAPSED, IT IS OBVIOUS THE EGYPTIANS CONCLUDED THAT MERE OPPRESSIVE LABOR WOULD NOT REDUCE THE ISRAELITES’ NUMBERS. THE PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN AGAINST ISRAEL HAD LONG SINCE BEEN ACCEPTED INTO THE GENERAL CONSCIOUSNESS, AND THE GOVERNMENT HAD REASON TO THINK THAT THE CITIZENRY WOULD TOLERATE THIS ESCALATION. THE STORY OF THE MIDWIVES IS A STORY OF HEROIC RESISTANCE. SO NOTEWORTHY WAS THEIR COURAGE THAT THEIR PERSONAL NAMES ARE RECORDED, IN CONTRAST TO ANY OF THE ELDERS OF ISRAEL (3:16, 18; 4:29) AND EVEN THE PHARAOH. THUS, THESE TWO MIDWIVES’ NAMES, ALONG WITH THE NAMES OF JACOB’S CHILDREN AND MOSES’ FAMILY, ARE THE ONLY NAMES ACTUALLY MENTIONED IN THE EARLY CHAPTERS OF THE BOOK. BUT AGAIN, THE EGYPTIAN PLAN BACKFIRES. THIS STRATEGY ALSO YIELDED NOTHING BUT MORE ISRAELITE POPULATION GROWTH—EVEN WITHIN THE FAMILIES OF THE MIDWIVES, WHERE IT WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN EXPECTED. IN PART THIS SECTION OF THE BOOK IS ALSO IMPLICITLY ABOUT MOSES. LIKE ANY MALE HEBREW CHILD, HE WAS ENDANGERED BY THE ESCALATION OF POPULATION CONTROL TO ACTUAL GENOCIDE OF MALE CHILDREN. HIS PRESERVATION WAS ALSO A DEFIANCE OF THE PHARAOH’S ORDERS. BUT IT WOULD BE A MISTAKE TO TAKE THIS SECTION AS MAINLY RELATED TO MOSES’ BIRTH BECAUSE THIS WAS STILL THE STAGE AT WHICH ISRAELITES WERE NOT DYING. THIS STAGE WAS STILL FOCUSING ON ISRAEL AS A PEOPLE, NOT MOSES, AND THE ONLY HEROES IN SIGHT WERE THE MIDWIVES, FROM THE HUMAN POINT OF VIEW, AND GOD, WHO KEPT GROWING HIS PEOPLE IN SPITE OF THE BEST EGYPTIAN ATTEMPTS TO RETARD THEIR GROWTH. SOME RECENT SCHOLARSHIP HAS FOCUSED ESPECIALLY ON THE GENDER ISSUES RAISED BY THE FACT THAT THE PHARAOH’S INSTRUCTIONS BOTH TO THE HEBREW MIDWIVES (V. 16) AND LATER TO THE EGYPTIANS IN GENERAL (V. 22) ALLOWED FEMALES TO LIVE BUT REQUIRED MALES TO BE PUT TO DEATH. THIS WAS, HOWEVER, SIMPLY A COMMONSENSE APPROACH IN THE ANCIENT SITUATION AND NOT DRIVEN BY GENDER-FOCUSED BIASES, SO THE READER SHOULD BE CAREFUL NOT TO REINTERPRET THE STORY THROUGH THE EYES OF SOCIOPOLITICAL INTERESTS THAT WERE NOT ISSUES IN THE ORIGINAL CONTEXT. 1:15 THIS VERSE IS PARTLY INTRODUCTORY, LEADING TO THE HORRIFIC GENOCIDAL COMMAND OF V. 16, AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE CAN THUS BE EASILY MISSED. ITS SPECIAL CONTRIBUTION TO THIS SECTION OF THE BOOK IS ITS CAREFUL NAMING OF THE TWO HEBREW MIDWIVES AND THE IMPLICATIONS THEREOF. FOUR QUESTIONS ARE RAISED BY THE VERSE: WHY NAME THE MIDWIVES? ARE THEIR NAMES SYMBOLIC? WERE THERE ONLY TWO? WOULD THE PHARAOH ACTUALLY DEAL PERSONALLY WITH TWO WOMEN OF SUCH RELATIVELY LOW POLITICAL STATUS? THE NIV TREATS THIS VERSE AS A SENTENCE FRAGMENT, BUT IN THE OVERALL GRAMMATICAL STRUCTURE OF THE PASSAGE IN HEBREW IT IS JUST AS LIKELY AN INDEPENDENT STATEMENT THAN AN INTRODUCTORY CLAUSE CONTAINING A PARENTHESIS. IN OTHER WORDS, THE HEBREW CONSTRUCTION IS NOT JUST MENTIONING THE WOMEN’S NAMES IN PASSING BUT ACTUALLY FOCUSING ON THEM. IT COULD EVEN BE SAID THAT MOSES VIRTUALLY STRETCHED OUT THE WORDING EMPLOYED IN IDENTIFICATION OF THEIR NAMES FOR EMPHASIS. THE HEBREW LITERALLY SAYS, “THE KING OF EGYPT SAID/SPOKE/GAVE INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE HEBREW MIDWIVES, ONE WHO WAS NAMED SHIPHRAH, AND THE OTHER WHO WAS NAMED PUAH.” THERE ARE MORE COMPACT WAYS IN HEBREW TO GIVE NAMES. THIS WAY, HOWEVER, IS TYPICAL OF HOW A NARRATOR MIGHT CHOOSE CAREFULLY TO IDENTIFY PROMINENT CHARACTERS AT THE BEGINNING OF AN ACCOUNT. MOSES CHOSE TO BE SURE THE READER HAS A GOOD CHANCE TO REMEMBER BOTH NAMES. WHY NAME THEM SO OVERTLY? THE ANSWER WOULD APPEAR TO BE THAT THEY WERE TO BE REGARDED AS HEROES IN ISRAEL’S EARLY HISTORY—SO NOTEWORTHY FOR THEIR BRAVERY IN CHOOSING TO OBEY GOD RATHER THAN PHARAOH THAT THEY DESERVED TO BE REMEMBERED SO THAT OTHERS MIGHT FOLLOW THEIR EXAMPLE. THE HONOR THUS GIVEN IS ALL THE MORE EVIDENT WHEN ONE REALIZES THAT NEITHER PHARAOH NOR HIS MAGICIANS NOR THE ELDERS OF ISRAEL NOR ANY OTHER CHARACTERS SAVE THOSE IN JACOB’S AND MOSES’ FAMILIES ARE NAMED IN THE FIRST FIVE CHAPTERS OF EXODUS. AN INSTRUCTIVE PARALLEL IS THAT OF JESUS’ WORDS IN MATT 26:13 AND PARALLELS ABOUT THE MARY WHO ANOINTED HIM: “I TELL YOU THE TRUTH, WHEREVER THIS GOSPEL IS PREACHED THROUGHOUT THE WORLD, WHAT SHE HAS DONE WILL ALSO BE TOLD, IN MEMORY OF HER.” MARY’S FAITH IN UNDERSTANDING THE NEED FOR JESUS TO DIE EARNED HER A SPECIAL PLACE IN THE GOSPEL STORY; THE MIDWIVES’ FAITH IN PROTECTING THE ISRAELITES EARNED THEM A SPECIAL PLACE IN THE EXODUS STORY. ARE THEIR NAMES SYMBOLIC? THE ANSWER IS ALMOST SURELY NO. THEY ARE TYPICAL FEMININE PERSONAL NAMES FROM THE SECOND HALF OF THE SECOND MILLENNIUM BC WITH NO INDICATION OF SYMBOLIC VALUE IN THE STORY. “SHIPHRAH” MEANS SOMETHING LIKE “DAWN” OR “FAIR” AND APPEARS ON A LIST OF SEMITIC SLAVES IN EGYPTIAN POSSESSION AS SP-RA. “PUAH” MEANS SOMETHING LIKE “FRAGRANT” OR, PERHAPS, “SPLENDID.” BOTH MEANINGS CONNECT IN NO WAY WITH THE EVENTS DESCRIBED IN THE CONTEXT. THE WOMEN WERE NAMED BECAUSE OF THE POWER OF THEIR EXAMPLE IN WHAT THEY DID FOR ISRAEL IN FAITHFULNESS TO GOD, NOT WHAT THEIR NAMES SYMBOLIZE. WERE THERE ONLY TWO HEBREW MIDWIVES? THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS QUESTION RELATES TO ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR THE SIZE OF THE ISRAELITE NATION. IF ONE IMAGINES THAT A BUSY MIDWIFE COULD ATTEND PERHAPS AS MANY AS (BUT NOT LIKELY MORE THAN) TEN BIRTHS A WEEK, THAT IS, ABOUT FIVE HUNDRED PER YEAR, THIS WOULD MEAN THAT TWO MIDWIVES MIGHT ATTEND ONE THOUSAND BIRTHS PER YEAR (WITHOUT EVEN CONSIDERING THE PROBLEM OF PHYSICALLY GETTING TO ALL THE HOMES; THE ISRAELITES HAD “SPREAD,” VV. 7, 12). IN THAT ERA IF ONE-THIRD OF THE CHILDREN BORN ACTUALLY SURVIVED TO ADULTHOOD, ONE COULD IMAGINE AN AVERAGE ANNUALLY SURVIVING POPULATION OF ABOUT THREE HUNDRED THIRTY-FOUR, WHICH, MULTIPLIED BY SEVENTY-FIVE YEARS YIELDS ABOUT TWENTY-FIVE THOUSAND ISRAELITES. ANY APPARENT RESULT OF ISRAELITE POPULATION CALCULATION IN THIS MANNER IS OBVIATED, HOWEVER, BY THE WAY THESE TWO MIDWIVES SPOKE OF OTHER, UNNAMED MIDWIVES IN V. 19. SHIPHRAH AND PUAH WERE ALMOST SURELY THE SENIOR MIDWIVES, FUNCTIONING AS THE LEADERS, OR ADMINISTRATORS, OVER AN INDEFINITE NUMBER OF OTHERS. THERE ARE TWO REASONS FOR CONCLUDING THIS: FIRST, IN A CULTURE THAT HONORED AGE, OLDER WOMEN WOULD NATURALLY BE VIEWED AS APPROPRIATE LEADERS WITHIN THEIR GROUP. SECOND, V. 21 (Q.V.) IS WORDED IN SUCH A WAY AS TO INDICATE THAT IT WAS A SPECIAL ACT OF GOD FOR THE TWO MIDWIVES IN QUESTION TO HAVE CHILDREN. ACCORDINGLY, WE PRESUME THEY HAD BEEN CHILDLESS INTO OLD AGE, AND WITHOUT TYPICAL FAMILY RESPONSIBILITY THEY WERE SUITABLE CANDIDATES FOR LONG-TERM, DEDICATED, FULL-TIME MIDWIFERY AMONG THE ISRAELITES. IT WAS TO THESE TWO SENIOR MIDWIVES THAT PHARAOH GAVE INSTRUCTIONS. BUT DID HE SPEAK TO THEM DIRECTLY? HERE THE TEXT IS SOMEWHAT AMBIGUOUS BUT MAY BE READ NATURALLY TO INDICATE THAT HE PROBABLY DID NOT AT FIRST. THE VERB ʾĀMAR USED TO DESCRIBE THE KING’S COMMUNICATION TO THE TWO MIDWIVES CAN MEAN “SPEAK TO” BUT ALSO CAN SIMPLY MEAN “COMMUNICATE TO” OR “GIVE INSTRUCTIONS FOR.” IT CAN REASONABLY BE ASSUMED THAT AT FIRST THE KING PASSED ON THE DEADLY INSTRUCTIONS OF V. 16 TO THE MIDWIVES VIA HIS OFFICIALS, AND ONLY LATER ACTUALLY SUMMONED THEM AND SPOKE DIRECTLY TO THEM (V. 18) AFTER MUCH TIME HAD GONE BY AND THERE WERE NO APPARENT RESULTS FROM HIS LATEST ESCALATION OF THE POPULATION-CONTROL PLAN. IT CANNOT BE RULED OUT, HOWEVER, THAT HE SPOKE TO THEM PERSONALLY FROM THE START IN ORDER TO IMPRESS UPON THEM THE URGENCY OF THEIR ASSIGNMENT OR TO MAKE THEM REALIZE THAT THE CONSEQUENCES WOULD BE GRAVE IF THEY FAILED TO OBEY. PERHAPS IT WAS A STRATEGY TO DIVERT THE MIDWIVES’ LOYALTY FROM THE WOMEN THEY SERVED TO THE GOVERNMENT AND THUS TO HELP DIMINISH THEIR EFFECTIVENESS AND KEEP THE POPULATION CONTROLLED. 1:16 HERE WE FIND THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE PENULTIMATE STAGE IN THE MURDEROUS POPULATION CONTROL PLAN. MALE ISRAELITE CHILDREN ARE TO BE KILLED AT BIRTH AND, INDEED, BY THEIR OWN MIDWIVES. DID THE PHARAOH THINK THIS WOULD BE AGREED TO? APPARENTLY, HE DID, BEING USED TO OBEDIENCE WITHOUT QUESTION AND PRESUMABLY BEING EXPERIENCED ENOUGH TO KNOW THAT IN MOST CIRCLES THERE IS NO SORT OF EVIL THAT PEOPLE WILL NOT DO IF THERE IS ADEQUATE PERSONAL GAIN FOR DOING IT (CF. 1 TIM 6:10). MOSES’ NARRATION DECLINES TO DELINEATE ALL THE TERMS OF THE PHARAOH’S PROPOSED DEAL WITH THE MIDWIVES, BUT UNLESS HE WERE A TRULY INCOMPETENT ADMINISTRATOR, THE KING SURELY PROPOSED BOTH A CARROT AND STICK. THE CARROT WOULD BE THE PROMISE OF FINANCIAL REWARD, AND THE STICK WOULD BE THE THREAT OF DEATH OR THE LIKE FOR NONCOMPLIANCE. NO MENTION IS MADE OF WHO CAME UP WITH THE IDEA OF USING MIDWIVES TO ACCOMPLISH THE INFANTICIDE. PERHAPS IT WAS THE IDEA OF A MALE OFFICIAL UNABLE TO APPRECIATE THE SORT OF DEDICATION TO THE PRESERVATION OF INFANT LIFE USUALLY FOUND AMONG MIDWIVES, AT LEAST IN ANCIENT TIMES; PERHAPS IT WAS SUGGESTED BY EGYPTIAN MIDWIVES ALREADY FEELING THE DISCOMFORT OF BEING JUDGED LESS PRODUCTIVE THAN THEIR ISRAELITE COUNTERPARTS. AT ANY RATE, IT WAS CERTAINLY TRUE THAT ISRAELITE MIDWIVES WERE IN AN IDEAL POSITION TO KILL BABIES. THEY ATTENDED THE BIRTH AND HAD TIME AT ANY OF VARIOUS POINTS OF LOOKING AFTER AN EMERGING OR JUST-DELIVERED CHILD TO SUFFOCATE OR STRANGLE HIM. PERHAPS THE PHARAOH BELIEVED THIS COULD BE DONE WITHOUT MOST MOTHERS EVEN REALIZING IT, ASSUMING AS HE MIGHT ARROGANTLY HAVE DONE THAT WOMEN IN THE THROES OF CHILDBIRTH WOULD NOT BE SUFFICIENTLY ALERT TO SPOT SUCH A FELONY IF IT WERE SUBTLY PRACTICED. THERE IS NOTHING ABOUT DELIVERY STOOLS (OR BIRTH STONES OR BIRTH STOOLS OR THE LIKE) IN THIS VERSE. WHAT THE HEBREW SAYS IS PROBABLY QUITE SIMPLE: “WHEN YOU HELP THE HEBREW WOMEN TO GIVE BIRTH, LOOK AT THE GENITALS.” “IF IT IS A BOY, PUT HIM TO DEATH. IF A GIRL, LET HER LIVE.” THERE IS NO EVIDENCE THAT ANCIENT ISRAELITES OR EGYPTIANS USED ANY SORT OF STONES FOR SUPPORTING A MOTHER DURING CHILDBIRTH. IT IS HARD TO IMAGINE THAT KNEELING ON STONES TO GIVE BIRTH, THE USUAL EXPLANATION OF THIS MISUNDERSTOOD LANGUAGE, WOULD REALLY HAVE BEEN PRACTICED. HERE AND IN V. 15 MOSES USED THE TERM “HEBREW” INSTEAD OF “ISRAELITE” TO REFER TO THE MIDWIVES. THIS IS CONSISTENT WITH THE GENERAL PATTERN IN THE OLD TESTAMENT WHEN ISRAELITES ARE DEALING WITH NON-ISRAELITES: PEOPLE OF OTHER CULTURES TENDED TO LUMP THE ISRAELITES TOGETHER WITH OTHER, RELATED ETHNIC GROUPS AND REFER TO THEM VIA THE MORE BROADLY GENERIC TERM “HEBREW.” ON OCCASION THE ISRAELITES CALLED THEMSELVES “HEBREWS” WHEN DEALING WITH NON-HEBREW PEOPLES. JUST AS SOMEONE FROM NEBRASKA PROBABLY WOULD NOT SAY WHEN INTRODUCING HIMSELF IN UGANDA, “I’M A NEBRASKAN” BUT RATHER, “I’M AN AMERICAN,” SO ANCIENT ISRAELITES OFTEN POLITELY REFERRED TO THEMSELVES AS “HEBREWS,” IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE TERMINOLOGY OTHERS WERE BEST ACQUAINTED WITH. MOSES REFLECTED THE FLAVOR OF THIS TERMINOLOGICAL PRACTICE HERE AND, AS APPROPRIATE, ELSEWHERE IN THE PENTATEUCH IN THE CONTEXT OF ISRAELITE—NON-ISRAELITE INTERACTION. BUT WHY KILL ONLY THE BOYS? WOULD THAT NOT DEPRIVE THE PHARAOH OF A WORKFORCE? NOT IF THE PHARAOH’S PLAN HAD ANY LEVEL OF SOPHISTICATION TO IT—AND UNDOUBTEDLY IT DID IN LIGHT OF ALL THE YEARS HE HAD TO THINK IT THROUGH. HE WOULD SURELY HAVE REASONED THAT (1) THERE HAD TO BE A SIMPLE CRITERION FOR KILLING CHILDREN, AND THE OBVIOUS CHOICE WAS BETWEEN MALES AND FEMALES. (2) MALES ARE THOSE WHO FIGHT IN WARS, AND THE FEAR OF LOSING IN A WAR WAS THE OFFICIAL PUBLIC REASON FOR THE POPULATION CONTROL POLICY, SO IT COULD HARDLY BE GIRLS WHO WERE KILLED. (3) IF ENOUGH BOYS WERE KILLED, WOMEN, WHO WERE DEPENDENT ON MEN IN BIBLE TIMES FOR SURVIVAL, WOULD EVENTUALLY DECLINE IN NUMBERS. (4) IN AGRARIAN SOCIETIES PEOPLE ARE USED TO THE IDEA OF KILLING THE MALE ANIMALS AND KEEPING ALIVE THE FEMALES, WHEREAS KILLING FEMALES IS SIMPLY NOT A NORMAL PRACTICE. (5) IF THE POLICY WERE SUCCESSFUL AND THE ISRAELITE NUMBERS WERE REDUCED SUFFICIENTLY, IT COULD SIMPLY BE SUSPENDED AT ANY TIME. MALES WOULD NOT DIE OFF SUDDENLY. SINCE ALL MALES ALREADY ABOVE INFANCY AGE WERE TO BE ALLOWED TO LIVE AND GROW UP TO ADULT SLAVERY, THIS WAS OBVIOUSLY A LONG-TERM POLICY OF POPULATION CONTROL. ITS IMPACT WOULD BE PRIMARILY PSYCHOLOGICAL AT FIRST, AND ONLY AS YEARS WENT BY AND BOYS WHO WOULD HAVE LIVED DID NOT REACH FIGHTING AGE WOULD IT BEGIN TO HAVE REAL EFFECT ON THE INTERNAL SECURITY SITUATION—THAT IS, ABOUT TWENTY YEARS LATER. IT COULD, OF COURSE, BE MODIFIED TO ANY EXTENT AND AT ANY POINT AS ITS OUTCOMES BECAME MEASURABLE AND WERE JUDGED TO HAVE SUCCEEDED OR NOT. 1:17 HERE THE GREAT HEROISM OF THE MIDWIVES IS LAUDED. THEY SIDED WITH GOD OVER AGAINST THE PHARAOH AND FLATLY REFUSED TO CARRY OUT THEIR FOUL ASSIGNMENT. THEY DID NOT KILL ANY BOYS. “FEARED GOD” DOES NOT IMPLY “BELIEVED IN THE TRUE GOD, THE GOD OF ISRAEL.” IT ALSO DOES NOT CARRY THE CONNOTATION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT LANGUAGE IN WHICH “FEARED GOD” HAD COME TO MEAN “WAS A GENTILE CONVERT TO JUDAISM.” IN THE PENTATEUCH “FEAR GOD” TENDS TO MEAN “TO BE HONEST, FAITHFUL, TRUSTWORTHY, UPRIGHT, AND, ABOVE ALL, RELIGIOUS.” THE MIDWIVES MAY NOT HAVE HAD GREAT KNOWLEDGE OF THE TRADITIONS OF THE PATRIARCHS (LIMITED IN THEIR ETHICAL CONTENT AS THOSE TRADITIONS NECESSARILY WERE AT ANY RATE) AND LIKE ALL THEIR CONTEMPORARY ISRAELITES CERTAINLY DID NOT YET HAVE WHAT WE WOULD CALL “SCRIPTURAL” KNOWLEDGE, BUT THEY DID UNDERSTAND THAT RIGHT AND WRONG ARE NOT HUMAN INVENTIONS BUT PART OF A DIVINELY CREATED ORDER. THIS IS THE PERSPECTIVE OF MANY PROVERBS FROM ALL OVER THE ANCIENT WORLD, NOT MERELY THOSE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT, WHICH REFLECT THE IDEA THAT THE FEAR OF GOD IS THE MOST IMPORTANT ORIENTING TRUTH AVAILABLE IN THE WORLD. TO FEAR GOD DOES NOT MEAN BEING AFRAID OF HIM IN GENERAL BUT BEING AFRAID OF THE CONSEQUENCES OF DISOBEYING HIM. SINCE DEATH WAS THE PRESUMED CONSEQUENCE OF DISOBEYING THE PHARAOH, THIS VERSE IS ONE OF MANY IN THE BIBLE THAT IMPLICITLY WITNESSES TO A BELIEF IN LIFE AFTER DEATH AND A FINAL JUDGMENT. THESE WOMEN CLEARLY FEARED WHAT GOD COULD DO TO THEM AFTER DEATH MORE THAN THE DEATH THE PHARAOH COULD PUT THEM TO. AT THIS POINT THE READER KNOWS THAT THE MIDWIVES ARE IN TROUBLE. THEY MUST ANSWER TO THE KING OF EGYPT. CAN THERE BE ANY HOPE FOR THEM—THAT IS, APART FROM GOD’S PROTECTION? 1:18 SEVERAL, PERHAPS MANY, YEARS MAY HAVE ELAPSED BETWEEN THE KING’S DECREE TO THE MIDWIVES (V. 16) AND HIS ANGRY SUMMONING OF THE DISOBEDIENT MIDWIVES AS DESCRIBED HERE. HOW COULD SUCH A LONG TIME ELAPSE? WHY WOULDN’T IT HAVE TAKEN JUST A FEW MONTHS FOR NEWS TO REACH THE KING THAT NEWBORN BABY BOYS WERE APPEARING AS FREQUENTLY AS EVER AMONG THE ISRAELITE FAMILIES? THE ANSWER IS THAT IN ANCIENT ISRAELITE SOCIETY, AS IN MOST SOCIETIES PRIOR TO MODERN TIMES AND MACHINE-MADE CLOTHING, LITTLE BOYS AND GIRLS WERE OFTEN DRESSED ALIKE AND HAD SIMILAR HAIR LENGTHS, SO THEY COULD EASILY BE CONFUSED. THE PHARAOH’S COMMAND ENVISIONED A SECRETIVE KILLING OF INFANTS DONE BY MIDWIVES AT BIRTH, AND THEREFORE HE COULD HARDLY ORDER EGYPTIAN SOLDIERS OPENLY TO GO INTO ISRAELITE TENTS AND HOUSES TO FORCIBLY EXAMINE THE GENDER OF YOUNG CHILDREN IN ORDER TO SEE IF THE PROGRAM WERE WORKING. THAT WOULD MAKE PUBLIC WHAT HE HAD SOUGHT TO KEEP PRIVATE. THUS, IT MUST BE ASSUMED THAT ONLY YEARS LATER, AS OLDER CHILDREN’S GROUPS SEEMED OBVIOUSLY TO HAVE AS MANY BOYS AS GIRLS AMONG THEM, THE MIDWIVES WERE SUMMONED TO APPEAR BEFORE THE PHARAOH TO GIVE ACCOUNT OF WHY THEY HAD NOT CARRIED OUT HIS LOATHSOME MANDATE. THE KING’S QUESTION WAS SURELY NOT DISPASSIONATE. HIS CLEARLY STATED WILL HAD BEEN DEFIED, AND HE WANTED AN ANSWER AS TO WHY HE HAD NOT BEEN OBEYED, PRESUMABLY AS A PRELUDE TO EXECUTING THE MIDWIVES. THE TWO QUESTIONS PRESUMABLY ARE REPRESENTATIVE EXCERPTS OF THE KING’S WORDS TO THE MIDWIVES, EFFECTIVELY PROVIDING A SUMMARY OF WHAT THE KING MORE FULLY SAID. 1:19 THE MIDWIVES HAD YEARS TO PREPARE THEIR ANSWER, SINCE THEY CERTAINLY KNEW FROM THE START OF THEIR DEFIANCE OF THE PHARAOH’S COMMAND THAT HE MIGHT EVENTUALLY DEMAND AN EXPLANATION (THE OTHER OPTION BEING THAT HE WOULD SIMPLY KILL THEM WITHOUT EVEN GIVING THEM A CHANCE TO EXPLAIN). A THEOLOGICAL ISSUE IS RAISED BY THE MIDWIVES’ ANSWER: WAS IT A LIE THAT GOD THEN REWARDED (V. 20)? IN OTHER WORDS, WERE THEY TELLING THE TRUTH TO CLAIM THAT THE EGYPTIAN WOMEN WERE SLOW TO DELIVER CHILDREN AND THE ISRAELITE WOMEN FAST, TO THE EXTENT THAT ONE GROUP ACTUALLY BORE BABIES BEFORE THE MIDWIVES COULD GET TO THEM WHILE THE OTHER GROUP, LIKE ALL OTHER KNOWN GROUPS, EXPERIENCED A NORMALLY LONG LABOR FOR MANY HOURS BEFORE DELIVERY? OR IS THERE SOME OTHER MEANING TO THE MIDWIVES’ REPLY? TO SOME EXTENT THE ANSWER HINGES ON THE MEANING OF THE HAPAX LEGOMENON ḤAYÔT, TRANSLATED IN THE NIV AS “VIGOROUS” AND BY OTHERS AS “ROBUST” (I.E., BOTH ESSENTIALLY TRANSLATIONS THAT SUGGEST THE DIFFERENCE WAS PHYSIOLOGICAL) BUT PERHAPS BEST TRANSLATED AS “MORE ACTIVE” OR “MORE INVOLVED” (I.E., SUGGESTING THAT THE DIFFERENCE WAS SOCIOLOGICAL). THE MOST PROBABLE CONCEPT BEHIND THE MEANING OF ḤAYÔT, DERIVED AS IT IS FROM THE VERBAL ROOT ḤYH (“TO LIVE”) WOULD BE THAT OF A GREATER LEVEL OF ACTIVITY IN CONNECTION WITH CHILDBIRTH. IN OTHER WORDS, THE MIDWIVES’ REPLY MAY WELL TESTIFY NOT TO ANY GENETIC DIFFERENCE BETWEEN EGYPTIANS AND ISRAELITES THAT SHORTENED THE DELIVERY TIME FOR ISRAELITE BABIES BUT TO A CULTURAL DIFFERENCE IN THE WAY ISRAELITE WOMEN CHOSE TO HAVE THEIR BABIES AS OPPOSED TO HOW EGYPTIAN WOMEN DID. THE FIRST PART OF THEIR ANSWER, “HEBREW WOMEN ARE NOT LIKE EGYPTIAN WOMEN,” COULD BE TRUE IN SEVERAL WAYS THAT ARE NOT NECESSARILY SPECIFIED. IT IS A CONJECTURE, TO BE SURE, BUT A REASONABLE ONE THAT THE ACTUAL DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE TWO GROUPS WAS A MATTER OF FAMILY STYLE RATHER THAN OF PHYSIOLOGY. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT AT THE TIME OF THE EXODUS, EGYPTIAN WOMEN—AT LEAST OF THE CLASSES THAT PHARAOH WOULD BE FAMILIAR WITH AND THAT THE MIDWIVES WERE REFERRING TO IN 1:19—TOOK A MINIMAL ROLE IN DELIVERING THEIR OWN CHILDREN. THEY MAY WELL HAVE MAINLY LAIN BACK WITH THEIR EYES CLOSED DURING AND PERHAPS IMMEDIATELY AFTER CHILDBIRTH AND LET MIDWIVES DO ALL THE REST. IF THIS WERE SO, IT WOULD CERTAINLY FIT WITH THE PHARAOH’S ORIGINAL EXPECTATION THAT A MIDWIFE COULD EASILY KILL A BABY AT THE POINT OF EMERGENCE FROM THE WOMB WITHOUT A MOTHER’S REALIZING IT SINCE THE MOTHER’S ROLE WAS USUALLY SO PASSIVE. BY CONTRAST, IT MAY WELL HAVE BEEN THE PRACTICE IN ISRAEL FOR WOMEN TO PLAY AN ACTIVE ROLE IN THE DELIVERY OF THEIR OWN CHILDREN. THE ROLE ASSIGNED TO MIDWIVES MAY HAVE BEEN MINIMAL AT ANY EVENT, AND IF THERE WERE ANY SORT OF NATIONWIDE COLLUSION DESIGNED TO LIMIT THAT ROLE FURTHER, IT WOULD ALL THE MORE HEIGHTEN THE CONTRAST BETWEEN THE “MORE ACTIVE/INVOLVED” ISRAELITE WOMEN AND THE PRESUMABLY MUCH LESS ACTIVE EGYPTIAN WOMEN RELATIVE TO SELF-INVOLVEMENT IN CHILDBIRTH. THE FINAL PART OF THE VERSE, “THEY … GIVE BIRTH BEFORE THE MIDWIVES ARRIVE,” COULD THUS BE PERFECTLY TRUE, PERHAPS IN PART BECAUSE OF A PURPOSELY SLOW ARRIVAL OF THE MIDWIVES AS PART OF A QUIET, WIDESPREAD PLOT AMONG ISRAELITES TO FOOL THE EGYPTIANS. INDEED, ONE CAN IMAGINE THE MIDWIVES, AS PART OF THIS STRATEGY, REGULARLY INFORMING ISRAELITE WOMEN TO DO “EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO GIVE BIRTH BEFORE WE ARE SUMMONED TO YOUR HOME. WE’LL TAKE IT FROM THERE. BUT WHATEVER YOU DO, DON’T CALL FOR US BEFORE THE BABY ACTUALLY COMES.” 1:20–21 THESE VERSES COMPLETE THE STORY OF THE MIDWIVES; AND, MORE IMPORTANTLY FOR THE OVERALL STORY, THEY CONTAIN ONCE AGAIN THE REPORT THAT NOTHING COULD STOP THE DIVINELY ORDAINED GROWTH OF THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL. IN THE PARTICULAR WAY IT TRANSLATES V. 20, THE NIV GIVES THE IMPRESSION OF A CAUSAL CONNECTION BETWEEN GOD’S KINDNESS TO THE MIDWIVES AND THE PEOPLE’S GROWTH, BUT THIS IS UNINTENDED. IT MIGHT BETTER BE RENDERED: “SO GOD WAS KIND TO THE MIDWIVES; MOREOVER, THE PEOPLE INCREASED.” VERSE 21 ACTUALLY SPECIFIES HOW GOD WAS KIND TO, THAT IS, REWARDED, THE MIDWIVES: IMPLICITLY HE PROTECTED THEM FROM THE PHARAOH’S POTENTIAL WRATH BY ALLOWING THEIR EXPLANATION ABOUT NOT KILLING THE HEBREW BOYS TO PREVAIL; EXPLICITLY, HE ALLOWED THEM TO CONCEIVE AND BEAR CHILDREN (“GAVE THEM FAMILIES OF THEIR OWN”). DID ISRAELITE MIDWIVES NORMALLY NOT HAVE CHILDREN? APPARENTLY, THEY DID NOT. THE EVIDENCE FROM THE ANCIENT WORLD IS SKETCHY, BUT THESE VERSES ARE WORDED IN SUCH A WAY AS TO SUGGEST STRONGLY THAT MOST MIDWIVES WERE WOMEN WHO HAD NOT BEEN BLESSED WITH CHILDREN OF THEIR OWN, THUS ENABLING THEM TO SPEND THE REQUIRED LONG HOURS OUT OF THE HOUSE BOTH DAY AND NIGHT THAT WOULD OTHERWISE HAVE BEEN DIFFICULT FOR WOMEN WITH CHILDREN. AN IMPLICIT MORAL IMPERATIVE TO “FEAR GOD” IS IN THESE VERSES, ESPECIALLY IN LIGHT OF THE RESUMPTION OF THE HEBREW EXPRESSION YĀRĒʾ ʾĔLŌHÎM (“FEAR GOD”) FROM V. 17. BUT WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO FEAR GOD? WE HAVE ALREADY SUGGESTED THAT FEARING GOD IS “TO BE HONEST, FAITHFUL, TRUSTWORTHY, UPRIGHT, AND, ABOVE ALL, RELIGIOUS.” IN SHORT, “FEARING GOD” IS COMMONLY IN SCRIPTURE A VIRTUAL ABBREVIATION FOR “BELIEVING IN GOD, AND THEREFORE FEARING THE CONSEQUENCE OF NOT PLEASING HIM, THUS BEING A PERSON OF MORAL CONVICTION AND RIGHTEOUS ACTIONS”—ALTHOUGH IN HEBREW IT IS SURELY NOT PER SE AN ABBREVIATION BUT AN IDIOM. A VARIETY OF HEBREW VOCABULARY WORDS ARE TRANSLATED BY ENGLISH “FEAR,” BUT THE EXPRESSION YĀRĒʾ ʾĔLŌHÎM (“FEAR GOD”) AS USED HERE IS THE MOST COMMON. MOSES EMPLOYED IT SIX TIMES IN THE PENTATEUCH, IN EACH INSTANCE WITH THE MEANING INDICATED ABOVE. INASMUCH AS THE “FEAR OF THE LORD IS THE BEGINNING OF WISDOM,” THE MIDWIVES’ FEAR OF GOD WAS WHAT HELPED THEM AVOID ACTING OUT OF SELF-INTEREST; INSTEAD, THEY BRAVELY IN DEFIED THE UNQUESTIONED LEADER OF THE GREATEST NATION OF THEIR DAY, RISKING EVERYTHING TO DO WHAT WAS RIGHT INSTEAD OF WHAT WAS EASY. 1:22 AT THIS POINT THE PROGROM PLAN REACHED ITS FINAL STAGE. THERE WAS NO MORE SUBTERFUGE, NO LIMITATION ON INVOLVEMENT: ALL EGYPTIANS WERE EXPECTED TO JOIN IN KILLING ALL ISRAELITE NEWBORN BOYS. THE PROCESS OF PERSECUTION THAT HAD BEGUN MODESTLY AND HAD ESCALATED IN STEPS HAD REACHED ITS ZENITH, A FULL-BLOWN, OPEN, NATIONAL POLICY OF LARGE-SCALE GENOCIDE AGAINST A PARTICULAR ETHNIC GROUP. WHY THROW THE BOYS INTO THE NILE? WHY NOT JUST KILL THEM WITH KNIVES OR ROCKS OR BY DASHING THEM ON THE GROUND OR THE LIKE? THERE ARE TWO GOOD REASONS WHY AN EGYPTIAN PHARAOH WOULD HAVE SUGGESTED THIS APPROACH. FIRST, IT WAS A CONVENIENT AND “CLEAN” SORT OF WAY TO KILL INFANTS. IT WAS CONVENIENT IN THAT VIRTUALLY THE ENTIRE POPULATION OF EGYPT LIVED ESSENTIALLY ON THE BANKS OF THE NILE, THE ARABLE LAND IN ANCIENT EGYPT BEING LIMITED MAINLY TO THAT AREA THAT WAS SERVED BY THE NILE DIRECTLY OR VIA IRRIGATION CANALS DRAWING FROM IT. ACCORDINGLY, THE NILE SERVED NOT ONLY AS THE NATION’S SOURCE OF WATER AND THEREFORE WEALTH BUT LIKE MANY GREAT RIVERS, AS ITS NATION’S SEWER, ITS RELENTLESS CURRENT TAKING AWAY ANYTHING THAT WAS NOT WANTED. THROWING A BABY INTO THE NILE WAS A LOT EASIER AND QUICKER, INVOLVING NO CLEANUP AND LEAVING NO EVIDENCE, THAN ALMOST ANY OTHER MEANS OF KILLING. THE CHILD WOULD SIMPLY FALL INTO THE WATER AND DISAPPEAR—OUT OF SIGHT AND HOPEFULLY, FROM THE EGYPTIAN POINT OF VIEW, OUT OF MIND. SECOND, IT SHIFTED SOME OF THE BLAME BECAUSE OF THE WAY THE PANTHEISTIC EGYPTIANS VIEWED THE NILE AS A GOD. IF THE NILE WERE TO “RECEIVE” THE INFANT, IT WOULD AT LEAST TO SOME DEGREE REPRESENT THE GOD NILE’S JUDGMENT RATHER THAN THAT OF THE INDIVIDUAL WHO CARRIED OUT THE PHARAOH’S ORDER. THE NILE WAS VIEWED BOTH AS A GIVER AND TAKER OF LIFE. IF THE NILE WERE TO TAKE A BABY’S LIFE, THAT WAS THE NILE’S DECISION, WAS IT NOT? WHILE THE NARRATIVE IS APPROPRIATELY TERSE AT THIS POINT, IT IS EASY TO IMAGINE THAT THE PHARAOH’S MESSENGERS, IN BRINGING HIS COMMAND TO THE PEOPLE, WERE INSTRUCTED TO INFORM THEM THAT BY THROWING BABIES INTO THE NILE THEY WERE DOING THE WILL OF THE GODS AND GIVING THE NILE ITS PROPER DUE AMONG THE GODS. A PROLEPTIC IRONY FOLLOWS FROM THIS APPROACH TO KILLING THE ISRAELITE BABY BOYS. LATER GOD WOULD KILL LARGE NUMBERS OF GROWN-UP BOYS, THAT IS, EGYPTIAN SOLDIERS, BY DROWNING THEM IN THE RED SEA (E.G., EXOD 15:4: “PHARAOH’S CHARIOTS AND HIS ARMY HE HAS HURLED INTO THE SEA./THE BEST OF PHARAOH’S OFFICERS ARE DROWNED IN THE RED SEA”; HEB 11:29: “BY FAITH THE PEOPLE PASSED THROUGH THE RED SEA AS ON DRY LAND; BUT WHEN THE EGYPTIANS TRIED TO DO SO, THEY WERE DROWNED”).**

**MOSES’ BIRTH AND GOD’S PROVISION (2:1–10)**

**1 NOW A MAN OF THE HOUSE OF LEVI MARRIED A LEVITE WOMAN, 2 AND SHE BECAME PREGNANT AND GAVE BIRTH TO A SON. WHEN SHE SAW THAT HE WAS A FINE CHILD, SHE HID HIM FOR THREE MONTHS. 3 BUT WHEN SHE COULD HIDE HIM NO LONGER, SHE GOT A PAPYRUS BASKET FOR HIM AND COATED IT WITH TAR AND PITCH. THEN SHE PLACED THE CHILD IN IT AND PUT IT AMONG THE REEDS ALONG THE BANK OF THE NILE. 4 HIS SISTER STOOD AT A DISTANCE TO SEE WHAT WOULD HAPPEN TO HIM. 5 THEN PHARAOH’S DAUGHTER WENT DOWN TO THE NILE TO BATHE, AND HER ATTENDANTS WERE WALKING ALONG THE RIVER BANK. SHE SAW THE BASKET AMONG THE REEDS AND SENT HER SLAVE GIRL TO GET IT. 6 SHE OPENED IT AND SAW THE BABY. HE WAS CRYING, AND SHE FELT SORRY FOR HIM. “THIS IS ONE OF THE HEBREW BABIES,” SHE SAID. 7 THEN HIS SISTER ASKED PHARAOH’S DAUGHTER, “SHALL I GO AND GET ONE OF THE HEBREW WOMEN TO NURSE THE BABY FOR YOU?” 8 “YES, GO,” SHE ANSWERED. AND THE GIRL WENT AND GOT THE BABY’S MOTHER. 9 PHARAOH’S DAUGHTER SAID TO HER, “TAKE THIS BABY AND NURSE HIM FOR ME, AND I WILL PAY YOU.” SO, THE WOMAN TOOK THE BABY AND NURSED HIM. 10 WHEN THE CHILD GREW OLDER, SHE TOOK HIM TO PHARAOH’S DAUGHTER AND HE BECAME HER SON. SHE NAMED HIM MOSES, SAYING, “I DREW HIM OUT OF THE WATER.”**

**NAMES PROVIDE THE INCLUSIO THAT SETS THIS SECTION OFF AS A UNIT. VERSE 1 NAMES THE HOUSE (TRIBE) OF LEVI AS THE GENEALOGICAL LOCUS FOR THE STORY, AND V. 10 ENDS WITH THE NAMING OF MOSES AND AN EXPLANATION OF HIS NAME’S MEANING. ON ONE HAND, THE STORY CONCERNS A BABY BORN A HUMBLE ISRAELITE BUT, SURPRISINGLY, ADOPTED AS A ROYAL EGYPTIAN. ON THE OTHER HAND, IT FORMS PART OF A CHEERING STORY OF GOD’S CAREFUL PROVISION OF A DELIVERER FOR HIS PEOPLE. OF COURSE, AT THIS PRELIMINARY POINT IN THE BOOK THE READER HAS NOT YET LEARNED FORMALLY THAT MOSES WILL FUNCTION IN THE ROLE OF DELIVERER OF GOD’S PEOPLE. BUT THAT IS OF LITTLE CONSEQUENCE SINCE THE EARLIEST READERS WERE ALREADY FAMILIAR WITH MOSES, WHO WROTE THIS STORY ONLY AFTER HE HAD BECOME ISRAEL’S DIVINELY-DESIGNATED LEADER. THE STORY OF HIS BIRTH IS THUS BOTH A PRELUDE TO HIS CALL AND, IN PART, AN INDICATION OF HIS CALL. ALTHOUGH THIS PORTION OF THE OVERALL NARRATIVE FEATURES MOSES, IT IS ALSO THE STORY OF HOW GOD USED THREE WOMEN TO SAVE A BABY FROM DEATH. IT FEATURES TWO MOTHERS AND TWO DAUGHTERS, WITH THE DAUGHTER OF PHARAOH IN TWO ROLES, INITIALLY THAT OF DAUGHTER AND EVENTUALLY ALSO OF ADOPTIVE MOTHER. MOSES’ BIOLOGICAL MOTHER ALSO FIGURES PROMINENTLY IN THESE EVENTS AS THE ONE WHO NOT ONLY DID EVERYTHING, SHE COULD TO PRESERVE THE LIFE OF HER CHILD, BUT ALSO AS THE WOMAN WHO ENDED UP BEING ABLE TO NURSE AND THUS SUBSTANTIALLY REAR (SEE VV. 7–10) HER OWN LITTLE BOY. THE FINAL MAJOR FIGURE IS THIS WOMAN’S DAUGHTER, THAT IS, MOSES’ SISTER, WHO WILL BE IDENTIFIED LATER AS MIRIAM, ONE OF THE LEADERS OF THE EXODUS. MIRIAM’S OVERSIGHT OF MOSES AS HE FLOATED AMONG THE RUSHES OF THE NILE AND HER QUICK THINKING IN PROPOSING AN ISRAELITE NURSE FOR THE BABY (KNOWING FULL WELL SHE WOULD “RECRUIT” HIS OWN MOTHER) HELPED PRESERVE MOSES FOR HER FAMILY AND FOR ISRAEL’S SALVATION. THE MOTIVES OF ALL THESE WOMEN APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN PURE AND APPROPRIATE. GOD USED THEM TO DO WHAT THEY WERE GOOD AT AND WHAT THEIR CULTURE ESPECIALLY HONORED IN WOMEN: PRESERVING AND RAISING A CHILD. THEIR FAITHFULNESS TO THAT NOBLE ROLE PARALLELS IN NO SMALL DEGREE THE FAITHFULNESS OF THE ISRAELITE MIDWIVES TO THEIRS AS DESCRIBED IN THE PRIOR CHAPTER. IN EACH INSTANCE CHILDREN WERE PRESERVED FROM THE DEATH THE PHARAOH HAD DECREED BY WOMEN WHO DEFIED HIS REPUGNANT COMMAND. PHARAOH’S DAUGHTER COULD DO SO BY REASON OF HER PRIVILEGED STATUS; MOSES’ MOTHER AND SISTER, BY REASON OF THEIR WIT AND FORTITUDE AND—THOUGH IT IS ONLY IMPLICIT AT THIS POINT IN THE NARRATIVE—THEIR FAITH. 2:1 THIS VERSE MIGHT SEEM AT FIRST GLANCE TO PROVIDE ONLY INCIDENTAL AND MINOR INFORMATION TO THE READER, BUT IT DOES MORE. IT DEMONSTRATES THAT MOSES WAS A CHOSEN CHILD FROM THE ONLY PROPER TRIBE FOR HIS FUTURE CALLING, FULLY IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE LAW THAT GOD HAD NOT YET REVEALED TO ISRAEL BUT WOULD REVEAL WITHIN MOSES’ LIFETIME. IN OTHER WORDS, THE VERSE ASSURES THE READER THAT MOSES WAS PREQUALIFIED FOR THE SERVICE GOD LATER GAVE HIM, EVEN IN ADVANCE OF THE REVELATION THAT WOULD MAKE THAT QUALIFICATION NECESSARY. THE VERSE POINTEDLY TELLS THE READER THAT MOSES WAS FULLY A LEVITE, THAT IS, FROM LEVITE STOCK ON BOTH HIS FATHER’S AND HIS MOTHER’S SIDE. THIS MEANS THAT HE WAS UNQUESTIONABLY OF THE TRIBE THAT WOULD SOON BE SPECIALLY DESIGNATED BY GOD TO PROVIDE THE RELIGIOUS AND SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP FOR THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL (EXOD 32:26–29; NUM 3:12; 8:6–26; DEUT 10:8–9)—THE TRIBE THAT SHOWED ITSELF READILY LOYAL TO STEPHEN YAHWEH (E.G., EXOD 32:26), THE TRIBE THAT WOULD SUPPLY THE PRIESTS TO BRIDGE THE HOLINESS GAP BETWEEN GOD AND ISRAEL (EXOD 28–30) AND THE TRIBE SELECTED TO PROVIDE MOST OF ISRAEL’S REGULAR COURT JUDGES (DEUT 21:5). THAT THE LEVITES WERE DESTINED DURING MOSES’ LIFETIME TO BECOME THE “CLERGY” TRIBE FOR ALL ISRAEL WAS WELL KNOWN EVEN TO THE FIRST READERS OF THE BOOK OF EXODUS, SINCE THE WRITING OF THE BOOK POSTDATED THE APPOINTMENT OF THE LEVITES TO THEIR SACRED TASKS. THE SCRIPTURES DESCRIBE OTHER PREQUALIFICATIONS OF PERSONS CALLED TO PLAY A ROLE IN THE DIVINE PLAN OF REDEMPTION. ABRAHAM’S PREQUALIFICATION INVOLVED HIS FAMILY’S WILLINGNESS TO SETTLE IN CANAAN, WHICH THEN LED TO THE REVELATION OF HIS POSITION AS THE FATHER OF MANY NATIONS (GEN 11:31; 12:1). AARON, MOSES’ BROTHER, HAD TO BE A LEVITE AND WITNESS OF GOD’S THEOPHANY IF HE WERE TO BE A PRIEST AND THE LEADER AND PROGENITOR OF ALL SUBSEQUENT PRIESTS (EXOD 4:14; 19:24; 28:1). SAMSON WAS SET ASIDE FROM BIRTH AS A NAZIRITE TO BECOME A DELIVERER OF HIS PEOPLE FROM THE PHILISTINES (JUDG 13:2–25). SAMUEL’S PREQUALIFICATION CAME IN THE FORM OF A DIVINE CALL OF ENDEARMENT EARLY IN LIFE (1 SAM 3:2–21). DAVID’S EARLY ANOINTING (1 SAM 16:13) AND PRECOCIOUS MILITARY SKILLS (1 SAM 17) ESTABLISHED HIS PREQUALIFICATION. PAUL’S DESCENDANCY FROM JEWS ON BOTH SIDES OF HIS FAMILY GAVE HIS MISSION TO THE GENTILES THE CREDIBILITY OF HIS IMPECCABLE HEBREW LINEAGE. AND, OF COURSE, JESUS WAS PREQUALIFIED IN EVERY CONCEIVABLE WAY, FROM HIS ETERNALITY (JOHN 1:1) TO HIS DESCENDANCY FROM DAVID (MATT 1; LUKE 3:23–38) TO HIS NAZARENE CITIZENSHIP (MATT 2:23). 2:2 NO SPECIAL SIGNIFICANCE ATTACHES TO THE EXPRESSION “SHE BECAME PREGNANT AND GAVE BIRTH TO.” IT IS STANDARD HENDIADYS IN HEBREW NARRATIVE FOR DESCRIBING A BABY COMING INTO A FAMILY. SPECIAL SIGNIFICANCE SHOULD, HOWEVER, BE NOTED IN THE PATTERN OF ITS USAGE: THIS IS THE SIXTEENTH AND FINAL TIME THAT MOSES USED THE EXPRESSION IN THE PENTATEUCH. HE HAD USED IT FIFTEEN TIMES THROUGHOUT GENESIS TO DESCRIBE IMPORTANT BIRTHS. THE SIXTEENTH USAGE DESCRIBES HIS OWN. THEREAFTER THE EXPRESSION CEASES IN HIS WRITINGS, SUGGESTING THAT HE UNDERSTOOD HIMSELF TO BE THE FINAL FIGURE IN A LONG LINE OF PERSONS THROUGH WHOM GOD HAD BEEN PRESERVING AND PREPARING THE FORMATION OF THE NATION—NOT MERELY THE FAMILY—OF ISRAEL. IN OTHER WORDS, ONCE THE READER REACHES THE STORY OF THE BIRTH OF MOSES HERE, HE OR SHE HAS COME TO THE LAST REQUIRED SPECIAL MENTION OF A BIRTH STORY IN THE PENTATEUCH. THE WOMEN’S ROLE IN RESCUING MOSES CONTINUES WITH THE ACTIONS OF HIS MOTHER, LATER IDENTIFIED AS JOCHEBED. THIS SHOULD NOT BE UNDERSTOOD TO MEAN THAT MOSES’ FATHER, AMRAM, WAS NOT IN AGREEMENT OR WAS DECEIVED. AS HEB 11:23 MAKES CLEAR, “BY FAITH MOSES’ PARENTS HID HIM FOR THREE MONTHS AFTER HE WAS BORN, BECAUSE THEY SAW HE WAS NO ORDINARY CHILD, AND THEY WERE NOT AFRAID OF THE KING’S EDICT.” IT IS SIMPLY THE CASE IN THE EXODUS DESCRIPTION THAT THE MOTHER’S PRIMARY ROLE IS EMPHASIZED. AMRAM WOULD HAVE BEEN EXPECTED TO WORK AS A SLAVE, AWAY FROM HOME THOSE DAILY LONG HOURS; JOCHEBED WAS THE ONE WHO HAD TO CARRY OUT THE RISKY AND INNOVATIVE PRESERVATION PLAN. THE NIV TRANSLATION “SHE SAW THAT HE WAS A FINE CHILD” CAN BE IMPROVED UPON. THE HEBREW IDIOM USED HERE, RĀʾĀH + [NOUN OR PRONOUN] + KÎ ṬÔB, ACTUALLY MEANS “TO CARE ABOUT,” “TO BE FOND OF,” OR “TO WANT [TO HAVE OR TO KEEP].” THE VERSE IS BETTER TRANSLATED: “SHE BECAME PREGNANT AND GAVE BIRTH TO A SON. LONGING TO HAVE/KEEP HIM, SHE HID HIM—FOR THREE MONTHS.” THIS IS NOT TO SUGGEST THAT JOCHEBED CARED ABOUT HER SON MORE THAN OTHER ISRAELITE WOMEN DID FOR THEIRS, OR THAT MANY OTHER WOMEN WERE NOT DOING THE SAME THING—HIDING THEIR NEWBORNS AS LONG AS POSSIBLE—BUT ONLY THAT MOSES HERE CREDITS HIS MOTHER WITH DOING WHAT ANY RESPONSIBLE, CARING MOTHER WOULD HAVE DONE, LOVING HER BABY AND TRYING TO KEEP IT ALIVE. “FOR THREE MONTHS” MAY BE A SOMEWHAT ROUNDED OR APPROXIMATE FIGURE, INDICATING THE PERIOD OF TIME WHEN A NEWBORN COULD BE EXPECTED TO SLEEP EXTENSIVELY. HE WOULD BE SMALL ENOUGH TO BE HIDDEN EASILY IN THE HOME, WOULD NOT MOVE AROUND MUCH, AND USUALLY COULD BE KEPT FROM CRYING BY NURSING OR ROCKING. THEREAFTER, IT WOULD BECOME HARDER TO HIDE A BABY FROM PRYING EYES AND EARS, SO THE ACTIONS OF V. 3 REPRESENT THE LOGICAL NEXT STEP TAKEN BY JOCHEBED. 2:3 THE TERM USED HERE FOR WHAT MOSES’ MOTHER PUT HIM IN IS TĒBĀH, FOUND ELSEWHERE IN THE BIBLE ONLY IN THE FLOOD STORY IN GENESIS 6–8, WHERE IT IS TRANSLATED “ARK.” MOSES APPARENTLY WAS CONSCIOUSLY DRAWING THE READER’S ATTENTION TO THE FACT THAT GOD, THROUGH MOSES’ MOTHER’S ACTIONS, WAS GRACIOUSLY PROTECTING HIM FROM DEATH BY A SMALL ARK, JUST AS GOD HAD PROTECTED NOAH AND THE ANIMALS BY A GREAT ARK IN THE DAYS OF THE GREAT FLOOD. INDEED, IT IS HARD TO IMAGINE THAT MOSES WAS NOT KEENLY AWARE OF THE OBVIOUS COMPARISON BETWEEN HIMSELF AND NOAH. THEY BOTH WERE DELIVERERS/RESCUERS WHO WERE CALLED BY GOD TO LEAD PEOPLE AND ANIMALS THROUGH AND OUT OF DANGER INTO A NEW LOCATION WHERE THOSE PEOPLE AND ANIMALS WOULD BECOME DOMINANT IN ESTABLISHING A NEW STAGE OF GOD’S UNFOLDING PLAN OF REDEMPTION OF THE WORLD. THIS ARK WAS MADE OF PAPYRUS (AS PERHAPS WERE MANY ITEMS OF FURNITURE IN EGYPT SINCE VIRTUALLY ALL OF THE POPULATION LIVED CLOSE TO THE NILE, WHERE PAPYRUS GREW ABUNDANTLY; WOOD WAS VERY COSTLY, AVAILABLE MAINLY BY IMPORTATION BY SEA). IT MAY HAVE BEEN A PIECE OF STORAGE FURNITURE THAT MOSES’ PARENTS ALREADY OWNED OR THAT THEY BOUGHT FOR THIS NEW, SPECIAL PURPOSE. JOCHEBED’S SPECIAL CONTRIBUTION WAS SEALING IT WITH TAR (BITUMEN/ASPHALT, ABUNDANT IN MANY PLACES IN EGYPT) AND PITCH (A TERM USED FOR VARIOUS SORTS OF TAR MIXTURES AND TARRY SUBSTANCES, POSSIBLY PLANT SAP, THOUGH LESS LIKELY ACTUAL TREE SAP IN LIGHT OF THE PAUCITY OF LARGER TREES IN EGYPT). NOTHING IN THE TEXT SUGGESTS THAT THIS WAS AN ESPECIALLY BRILLIANT OR ESPECIALLY DESPERATE METHOD OF ATTEMPTING TO HIDE A BABY—ONLY THAT MOSES’ MOTHER WAS DOING HER BEST TO PROTECT HIM. THIS INVOLVED CONCEALMENT IN PERHAPS THE BEST PLACE TO HIDE SOMETHING OUTDOORS IN EGYPT AND NOT ACTUALLY BURY IT, BUT STILL BE ABLE TO WATCH IT AND CARE FOR IT—THE REEDS ALONG THE NILE. HERE JOCHEBED WOULD BE ABLE TO RETRIEVE HER BABY TO NURSE HIM AND GIVE HIM LOVE WHEN NO EGYPTIAN POLICE/SOLDIERS WERE AROUND. BUT HERE SHE ALSO COULD QUICKLY PLACE HIM WHERE, SHOULD HE CRY, HIS CRIES WOULD BE MUFFLED BY THE ENCLOSURE OF THE ARK, THE THICKNESS OF THE REEDS, THE GENERAL OUTDOOR NOISES, THE NEARBY SOUND OF THE NILE WATERS [HE WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN OUT IN THE CURRENT ITSELF, OF COURSE], AND AT SUCH A DISTANCE FROM WHERE POLICE/SOLDIERS WOULD NORMALLY BE LIKELY TO WALK THAT THEY LIKELY COULD NOT HEAR HIM. THE GENERAL PARALLEL BETWEEN MOSES’ “EXPOSURE” IN HIS ARK AND THAT OF SARGON IN THE LEGEND OF SARGON OF AKKAD—IN WHICH SARGON IS PUT INTO A RIVER IN A CONTAINER MADE OF REEDS SEALED WITH PITCH, RESCUED BY A WATER-DRAWER, CARED FOR AND RAISED, AND EVENTUALLY BECOMES A LEGENDARY HERO AND THEN KING—MAY OR MAY NOT HAVE ANY RELATION TO THESE EVENTS. IF JOCHEBED KNEW THAT LEGEND, IT MIGHT HAVE ENCOURAGED HER TO TRY THE TECHNIQUE ONCE AGAIN. ON THE OTHER HAND, SHE IS MUCH MORE LIKELY TO HAVE KNOWN THE GENESIS FLOOD STORY IN SOME FORM WITH ITS OWN PARALLELS OF RESCUE ON WATER IN A PITCH-SEALED CONTAINER. IT NEED NOT BE ASSUMED THAT THE BABY MOSES WOULD HAVE BEEN IN HIS ARK VIRTUALLY AROUND THE CLOCK. EGYPTIAN SWEEPS FOR BABIES IN ISRAELITE SETTLEMENTS WERE PRESUMABLY OCCASIONAL RATHER THAN CONSTANT, LEST THE WHOLE EGYPTIAN LOCAL FORCE BE OCCUPIED WITH LITTLE ELSE. SUCH SWEEPS WERE ALMOST SURELY CONDUCTED BY DAY, SINCE AT NIGHT IN ANCIENT TIMES TORCHES AND LARGER (SEARCH) LAMPS WERE NOT EASILY BROUGHT INTO HOUSES (PHARAOH HAD NOT, AFTER ALL, ORDERED ISRAELITE HOUSES BURNED DOWN, EITHER PURPOSELY OR ACCIDENTALLY). THE ISRAELITES ALSO MAY HAVE DEVELOPED WARNING SYSTEMS THAT GAVE AT LEAST A FEW MINUTES’ NOTICE TO MOTHERS. THE ARK HAD ALWAYS TO BE READY, SO ESPECIALLY DURING PERIODS OF THE DAY WHEN EGYPTIANS WERE AROUND, MOSES WOULD BE SECRETED THERE. 2:4 THIS SHORT VERSE PROVIDES SEVERAL USEFUL BITS OF INFORMATION. FIRST, UNLESS THIS SISTER IS ONE WHO IS OTHERWISE UNKNOWN AND UNMENTIONED IN THE NARRATIVE, IT INTRODUCES MIRIAM (WHOSE NAME WILL BE PROVIDED FIRST AT 15:20) AS AN IMPORTANT PERSON IN MOSES’ LIFE. SECOND, IT SHOWS THAT THE FAMILY WAS TOGETHER INVOLVED IN PROTECTING MOSES, AS WOULD BE EXPECTED. THIRD, IT SUGGESTS THAT MIRIAM WAS OLDER EVEN THAN AARON (WHO WAS ALREADY THREE YEARS OLD AT THIS TIME; CF. EXOD 7:7), BUT NOT SO OLD THAT SHE WOULD BE EXPECTED TO BE WORKING AS THE YOUNG WOMEN DID AT HOME AND FIELD TASKS. IN OTHER WORDS, SHE WAS OLD ENOUGH FOR THE RESPONSIBILITY OF WATCHING HER LITTLE BROTHER IN HIS ARK AND TO HAVE THE ABILITY TO DO SO WITHOUT DRAWING ATTENTION TO HIS PRESENCE, BUT NOT OLD ENOUGH THAT HER LINGERING FOR LONG PERIODS OF TIME ALONG THE NILE WOULD RAISE QUESTIONS ABOUT AN OLDER GIRL DOING NO WORK. THUS, SHE WAS PERHAPS BETWEEN SIX, AND TWELVE YEARS OLD. HER PRESENCE OF MIND AND CAPABLE CONVERSATION WITH THE DAUGHTER OF PHARAOH IN VV. 7–8 SUGGEST SHE MAY HAVE BEEN CLOSER TO THE UPPER LIMIT OF THIS AGE RANGE. SHE WAS NOT MERELY WATCHING TO SEE WHAT HAPPENED BUT WAS ON GUARD SO AS TO KNOW ANYTHING THAT WOULD HAPPEN AND BE ABLE TO ACT ACCORDINGLY. 2:5–6 THERE WAS SURELY NO ATTEMPT TO PLACE MOSES IN HIS LITTLE ARK AT A LOCATION WHERE HE WAS LIKELY TO BE DISCOVERED. THE WHOLE INTENT WAS JUST THE OPPOSITE. YET HE WAS DISCOVERED—AND BY AN EGYPTIAN! IN THE STORY’S SURPRISING TWIST, HOWEVER, THE DISCOVERY BY AN EGYPTIAN, UNDER OTHER CONDITIONS LIKELY TO LEAD TO THE BOY’S DEATH, LEADS INSTEAD TO A PERFECT PROTECTION OF HIS LIFE. THIS IS GOD AT WORK, PROVIDING DELIVERANCE IN AN UNANTICIPATED YET WONDERFUL WAY. PHARAOH’S DAUGHTER IS DESCRIBED AS GOING “DOWN” TO THE NILE SIMPLY BECAUSE THAT WAS ALWAYS NECESSARY, ALL HOUSING BEING BUILT ON HIGHER GROUND AS PROTECTION AGAINST THE NILE’S OVERFLOWING ITS BANKS ANNUALLY. WE HAVE NO WAY OF KNOWING HOW MANY DAUGHTERS THIS PHARAOH HAD, BUT THERE MAY HAVE BEEN DOZENS, AND THE POPULAR IDEA THAT MOSES WAS ONE OF JUST A FEW FAVORED GRANDCHILDREN OF THE PHARAOH LACKS THE MERIT OF REALISM. NEVERTHELESS, TO BE FOUND AND THEN CARED FOR BY ONE SO HIGHLY PLACED COULD RESULT AT LEAST IN PROTECTION FROM THE PROGROM AGAINST THE HEBREWS AND GUARANTEE AT LEAST A FINE OPPORTUNITY FOR SURVIVAL. THAT THE PRINCESS WOULD CHOOSE TO BATHE IN THE NILE AS OPPOSED TO A BATHTUB REFLECTS THE ESTEEM OF THE PANTHEISTIC EGYPTIANS FOR THE SACREDNESS OF THAT RIVER, AN ISSUE ONLY HINTED AT HERE BUT OF GREAT IMPORTANCE TO THE LATER ASPECTS OF THE STORY (CHAPS. 4; 7). THE ATTENDANTS WERE ON GUARD, THUS NOT BATHING; THE PRINCESS ALONE WAS IN THE WATER AND ABLE TO SPOT THE LITTLE ARK FROM HER ANGLE. AGAIN, THE BETTER TRANSLATION IS “ARK” RATHER THAN “BASKET”; ALMOST ANY ANCIENT ISRAELITE WOULD CATCH THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE USE OF TĒBĀH HERE, REGARDLESS OF WHETHER THE STORY WAS READ OR HEARD. SENDING A SERVANT GIRL TO RETRIEVE IT MERELY REFLECTS THE FACT THAT THE ARK WOULD HAVE BEEN PLACED WHERE IT COULD BE REACHED FROM THE SHORE, AND THE PRINCESS DID NOT CHOOSE TO WADE THROUGH SEVERAL FEET OF REED TO GET IT HERSELF WHEN IT COULD BE EASILY PULLED FROM THE WATER BY ONE OF THOSE ALREADY ON SHORE. THE FACT THAT THE BOY WAS CRYING WHEN THE PRINCESS OPENED THE LID MAY BE A CLUE TO HOW SHE NOTICED THE ARK IN THE FIRST PLACE; SHE MAY HAVE HEARD THE CRYING AND THEN LOOKED FOR ITS SOURCE. AT ANY RATE, HERE WAS NOT A WOMAN INCLINED TOWARD HER FATHER’S COLD-BLOODED POPULATION CONTROL PROGRAM. SHE SIMPLY FELT CONCERN FOR A LITTLE BOY WHO WAS CRYING. ONE IMAGINES, IN FACT, MOSES’ ADOPTIVE MOTHER TELLING HIM THE STORY OF HIS RESCUE MANY TIMES—AND HOW PRECIOUS HE SEEMED TO HER THE FIRST MOMENT SHE SET EYES ON HIM. HER RECOGNITION THAT MOSES WAS A HEBREW BOY (YELED, WHICH THE NIV UNFORTUNATELY NEUTERS BOTH TIMES IN THIS VERSE TO “BABY”) PROBABLY WAS PREDICATED ON FOUR THINGS AT LEAST: THE GENERAL PHYSICAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN HEBREWS AND EGYPTIANS, THE TYPE OF BABY CLOTHES USED, THE FACT THAT HER DISCOVERY OCCURRED IN AN ISRAELITE SETTLEMENT AREA, AND THE GENERAL SITUATION (THE NEED TO HIDE ISRAELITE BABY BOYS BUT NOT EGYPTIAN BABY BOYS). 2:7–8 MOSES MUST HAVE HEARD THIS PART OF THE STORY MANY TIMES, AND NOT MERELY FROM HIS ADOPTIVE MOTHER BUT FROM JOCHEBED AND, INDEED, FROM MIRIAM HERSELF. MIRIAM CONTROLLED THE ACTION: SHE APPARENTLY DIDN’T RUN WHEN THE EGYPTIAN WOMEN ARRIVED BUT REMAINED AT HER POST AND AFFECTED CURIOSITY WHEN THE BABY WAS FOUND. SHE MUST HAVE GOTTEN CLOSE ENOUGH TO THE ACTION TO OVERHEAR THE PRINCESS’S VARIOUS EXPRESSIONS OF CONCERN FOR THE BOY (E.G., “HE’S CRYING!” “HE MUST BE HUNGRY!” “I CAN’T LEAVE HIM LIKE THIS!”), AND MIRIAM WISELY VOLUNTEERED A WET NURSE SHE KNEW WELL (HER OWN MOTHER). THE TURNING POINT OF THE STORY IS CONTAINED IN A ONE-WORD COMMAND, THAT OF THE PRINCESS: “GO”! WITH THAT DECISION OF THE KING’S DAUGHTER, MOSES’ PROTECTION WAS ASSURED. IT GOES WITHOUT SAYING THAT MIRIAM KNEW EGYPTIAN WELL ENOUGH TO CONVERSE WITH THE PRINCESS; MOST HEBREWS PROBABLY KNEW EGYPTIAN RELATIVELY WELL, IN LIGHT OF THEIR LONG HISTORY IN THE COUNTRY, NOTWITHSTANDING THEIR PARTIAL GEOGRAPHICAL CONFINEMENT. IT MAY HAVE BEEN DIFFICULT FOR JOCHEBED TO PROCESS WHAT SHE FIRST HEARD FROM MIRIAM, BREATHLESSLY ARRIVING AT THE HOME TO SUMMON HER. EGYPTIANS—THE ENEMY—HAD FOUND THE BABY SHE HAD SO CAREFULLY HIDDEN! BUT MIRIAM WAS OBVIOUSLY ABLE TO CONVINCE HER MOTHER THAT THERE WAS NO HARM—AT LEAST NOT YET—IN FOLLOWING THROUGH WITH THE OFFER TO BECOME HER BABY’S NURSE. AFTER ALL, THAT IMMEDIATELY LEGITIMIZED HER CARING OPENLY FOR HER OWN CHILD AND ELIMINATED THE NEED TO HIDE HIM ANY LONGER. SO, THE DETERMINED MOTHER MET THE DAUGHTER OF THE SOURCE OF HER WORST FEARS, GOD HAVING TURNED THE CIRCUMSTANCES TOWARD HOPE AND SALVATION. 2:9–10 IN THIS CONCLUDING PORTION OF THE PASSAGE, GOD’S SPECIAL PROVISION FOR MOSES CANNOT BE MISSED. THE BABY BOY ONCE IN GRAVE PERIL RECEIVED ROYAL PROTECTION, HIS OWN MOTHER RAISED HIM IN HIS EARLY YEARS, SHE WAS ACTUALLY PAID TO CARE FOR HIM, AND THE PRINCESS FORMALLY ADOPTED HIM AS EVIDENCED BY HER GIVING HIM AN EGYPTIAN NAME. THE REJOICING IN AMRAM AND JOCHEBED’S HOME WOULD BE TEMPERED ONLY BY THE REALIZATION THAT EVENTUALLY THEIR SON WOULD BE TRANSFERRED TO ANOTHER HOME; BUT HE WAS ALIVE, AND NOW HE HAD EVERY CHANCE TO SURVIVE INTO ADULTHOOD. ON THE OTHER HAND, WE CAN ONLY SPECULATE ON THE LEVEL OF RISK INVOLVED FOR PHARAOH’S DAUGHTER, BUT THERE MUST HAVE BEEN SO LITTLE THAT IT DID NOT OCCUR TO HER TO WORRY ABOUT THE FACT THAT SHE WAS TECHNICALLY VIOLATING HER FATHER’S ORDER RELATIVE TO HEBREW BOYS. WITHOUT CONSULTING ANYONE ELSE, SHE MADE THE DECISION TO KEEP THE BABY SHE FOUND AND CONCLUDED THE NEGOTIATION FOR A WET NURSE BEFORE LEAVING THE NILE TO RETURN TO HER HOME. THE NURSING CONTRACT DESCRIBED IN V. 9 PRESUMABLY TOOK A STANDARD FORM IN WHICH THE WET NURSE WAS COMPENSATED FOR CARING FOR A CHILD BUT THE LEGAL POSSESSION REMAINED WITH THE ONE MAKING THE PAYMENT. BECAUSE IN ANCIENT TIMES CHILDREN WERE NURSED FOR THREE OR FOUR YEARS BEFORE BEING WEANED, THE PRINCESS REALIZED THAT SHE WOULD HAVE ACTUAL PHYSICAL CUSTODY OF THE BOY ONLY LATER. IT PRESUMABLY WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN THINKABLE THAT A HEBREW WET NURSE WOULD RESIDE IN THE ROYAL HOUSING AS A FULL-TIME CAREGIVER; AND MOST WET NURSES WOULD HAVE FAMILIES TO CARE FOR AT ANY RATE. SO, THE PRINCESS DOES NOT SAY “COME WITH ME” BUT “TAKE THIS BOY AWAY” (THE LITERAL MEANING OF THE HB. HIPHIL OF HĀLAK). THOUGH GIVING UP HER LITTLE BOY WHEN THE TIME CAME TO TURN HIM OVER TO THE PRINCESS MUST HAVE BEEN HEARTWRENCHING FOR JOCHEBED, WE SHOULD NOT ASSUME THAT MOSES NEVER HAD CONTACT THEREAFTER WITH HIS FAMILY. THE DESCRIPTIONS OF HIS LATER REUNITING WITH HIS BROTHER AARON AS DESCRIBED IN CHAP. 4 ASSUME THAT THEY KNEW EACH OTHER ALL ALONG, AND THE IMPORTANCE OF MIRIAM’S ROLE IN THE EXODUS LEADERSHIP SUGGESTS THAT SHE AND MOSES WERE HARDLY STRANGERS. THE EMPHASIS OF V. 10 RESTS ON THE ADOPTION, WITH REQUISITE EGYPTIAN NAME. “MOSES” FOLLOWS THE TYPICAL PATTERN OF ANCIENT NAMING IN WHICH A NAME (USUALLY AN EXISTING, KNOWN NAME) WAS NOT SELECTED PRIOR TO BIRTH, AS IN MODERN WESTERN PRACTICE, BUT ONLY AFTER BIRTH AND SUGGESTED BY SOME SORT OF CIRCUMSTANCE OR SPEECH EXPERIENCED OR HEARD AT THE TIME OF BIRTH—IN THIS CASE AT THE TIME OF THE CHILD’S DISCOVERY. SO, A RELATIVELY COMMON EGYPTIAN NAME, MEANING “SON” OR “TO BEGET A SON,” IS CHOSEN AS APPROPRIATE BECAUSE IT SOUNDS SOMETHING LIKE MŌŠĒH, THE ACTIVE PARTICIPLE OF THE VERB MĀŠĀH, “DRAW OUT,” WHICH CONNECTS TO THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF MOSES’ DISCOVERY AND BEING “DRAWN OUT” OF THE WATER. THROUGH THIS NAME, THE PRINCESS BOTH CONSCIOUSLY HONORS THE HEBREW ORIGINS OF HER SON AND ALSO MAKES HIM LEGITIMATELY EGYPTIAN WITH A NAME IN HER OWN LANGUAGE THAT EMPHASIZES THAT SHE IS ADOPTING A SON.**

**MOSES’ OWN EXILE/EXODUS: MIDIAN AND MARRIAGE (2:11–22)**

**11 ONE DAY, AFTER MOSES HAD GROWN UP, HE WENT OUT TO WHERE HIS OWN PEOPLE WERE AND WATCHED THEM AT THEIR HARD LABOR. HE SAW AN EGYPTIAN BEATING A HEBREW, ONE OF HIS OWN PEOPLE. 12 GLANCING THIS WAY AND THAT AND SEEING NO ONE, HE KILLED THE EGYPTIAN AND HID HIM IN THE SAND. 13 THE NEXT DAY HE WENT OUT AND SAW TWO HEBREWS FIGHTING. HE ASKED THE ONE IN THE WRONG, “WHY ARE YOU HITTING YOUR FELLOW HEBREW?” 14 THE MAN SAID, “WHO MADE YOU RULER AND JUDGE OVER US? ARE YOU THINKING OF KILLING ME AS YOU KILLED THE EGYPTIAN?” THEN MOSES WAS AFRAID AND THOUGHT, “WHAT I DID MUST HAVE BECOME KNOWN.” 15 WHEN PHARAOH HEARD OF THIS, HE TRIED TO KILL MOSES, BUT MOSES FLED FROM PHARAOH AND WENT TO LIVE IN MIDIAN, WHERE HE SAT DOWN BY A WELL. 16 NOW A PRIEST OF MIDIAN HAD SEVEN DAUGHTERS, AND THEY CAME TO DRAW WATER AND FILL THE TROUGHS TO WATER THEIR FATHER’S FLOCK. 17 SOME SHEPHERDS CAME ALONG AND DROVE THEM AWAY, BUT MOSES GOT UP AND CAME TO THEIR RESCUE AND WATERED THEIR FLOCK. 18 WHEN THE GIRLS RETURNED TO REUEL THEIR FATHER, HE ASKED THEM, “WHY HAVE YOU RETURNED SO EARLY TODAY?” 19 THEY ANSWERED, “AN EGYPTIAN RESCUED US FROM THE SHEPHERDS. HE EVEN DREW WATER FOR US AND WATERED THE FLOCK.” 20 “AND WHERE IS HE?” HE ASKED HIS DAUGHTERS. “WHY DID YOU LEAVE HIM? INVITE HIM TO HAVE SOMETHING TO EAT.” 21 MOSES AGREED TO STAY WITH THE MAN, WHO GAVE HIS DAUGHTER ZIPPORAH TO MOSES IN MARRIAGE. 22 ZIPPORAH GAVE BIRTH TO A SON, AND MOSES NAMED HIM GERSHOM, SAYING, “I HAVE BECOME AN ALIEN IN A FOREIGN LAND.”**

**THIS PORTION OF THE NARRATIVE TAKES THE STORY OF MOSES FROM HIS OWN CHILDHOOD TO THAT OF HIS (FIRST) CHILD, FROM LIVING AS A FOREIGNER IN AN URBAN EGYPTIAN ROYAL HOUSEHOLD TO LIVING AS A FOREIGNER IN A RURAL MIDIANITE PRIESTLY HOUSEHOLD, AND FROM THE PRIVILEGE OF A PRINCELING OF THE GREATEST NATION OF HIS WORLD TO THE OBSCURITY OF CRIMINAL EXILE IN THE SINAI WILDERNESS. IT ALSO BRINGS THE READER TO THE POINT OF PREPARATION FOR THE EXODUS, WITH ITS CONCLUDING DECLARATION BY MOSES OF BEING “AN ALIEN IN A FOREIGN LAND” (V. 22). 2:11–12 THE NARRATIVE NOW JUMPS AHEAD APPROXIMATELY THIRTY-SIX YEARS, SKIPPING COMPLETELY OVER MOSES’ LATER CHILDHOOD, ADOLESCENCE, AND EARLY ADULTHOOD. THIS SORT OF LEAP FROM INFANCY/CHILDHOOD TO LATER ADULTHOOD IS NOT ONLY EFFICIENT FOR PURPOSES OF GETTING TO THE HEART OF THE STORY BUT APPARENTLY WAS PREFERRED OFTEN IN ANCIENT TIMES, WHEN THE STORY OF AN IMPORTANT PERSON’S BIRTH MIGHT BE RECOUNTED IF IT HAD SPECIAL SIGNIFICANCE BUT HIS “BIOGRAPHY” IN EFFECT BEGAN WITH THE FIRST TRULY PROMINENT ACTIONS HE UNDERTOOK. THE NEW TESTAMENT GOSPELS ILLUSTRATE BOTH OPTIONS: MARK AND JOHN DESCRIBE JESUS FIRST AT AGE THIRTY; MATTHEW AND LUKE TELL ABOUT HIS BIRTH AND THEN JUMP TO HIS LIFE AT AGE THIRTY—THOUGH LUKE ADDS AS WELL A BRIEF STORY ABOUT HIM AT AGE TWELVE, AN EXCEPTION TO THE USUAL APPROACH. THESE TWO VERSES EXPLAIN HOW MOSES HAD BY THIS TIME IDENTIFIED WITH THE ISRAELITES OVER AGAINST THE EGYPTIANS AND HOW HIS ZEAL AGAINST THE OPPRESSION OF HIS PEOPLE GOT HIM INTO TROUBLE. THIS WAS HIS FIRST ATTEMPT AT DELIVERING HIS PEOPLE—ACTING ALONE AND IN SECRET AND RELYING ON HIS OWN STRENGTH AND WISDOM—AND THOUGH IT FAILED MISERABLY, IT CERTAINLY SHOWS THE STRENGTH OF MOSES’ SENTIMENTS ON BEHALF OF HIS PEOPLE. TWICE IN V. 11 THE PHRASE ʾEḤĀYW, “HIS OWN PEOPLE” (LIT., “HIS BROTHERS”), SERVES TO ORIENT THE READER TO THE FACT THAT MOSES SAW HIMSELF BY THIS POINT AS AN ISRAELITE, NOT AN EGYPTIAN. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THE WORDING OF V. 11 INTENDS US TO UNDERSTAND THAT MOSES HAD HEARD INCREASINGLY OF THE SEVERITY OF ISRAELITE SERVITUDE AND FINALLY DECIDED TO MONITOR IT FOR HIMSELF, THUS FOR THE FIRST TIME BEING IN A POSITION TO BECOME FULLY ENRAGED AT HOW HIS “BROTHERS” WERE BEING TREATED. IT IS EQUALLY POSSIBLE THAT HE HAD OFTEN WITNESSED HIS OWN PEOPLE AT THEIR SLAVE LABOR BUT THAT THIS TIME THE EXTENT OF THE CRUELTY WAS GREATER, AND A LONG-SMOLDERING FIRE OF RESENTMENT WAS KINDLED INTO A WHITE-HOT RAGE THAT LED HIM TO MURDER. VERSE 12 DOES NOT NECESSARILY SUGGEST THAT THE BEATING MOSES OBSERVED WAS DONE IN AN ISOLATED LOCATION. THESE STATEMENTS ARE BRIEF SUMMARIES, AND ALTHOUGH THE BEATING WAS WIDELY WITNESSED, PERHAPS MOSES WAITED UNTIL THE EGYPTIAN WHO HAD GIVEN THE BEATING WAS ALONE (I.E., PERHAPS HE FOLLOWED HIM) AND KILLED HIM THEN. THERE APPEARS TO BE THUS SOME DEGREE OF PREMEDITATION IN MOSES’ ACT, AS INDICATED IN THE STATEMENT THAT “HE LOOKED THIS WAY AND THAT” (NIV “GLANCING” GIVES THE INCORRECT IMPRESSION THAT MOSES DID THE WHOLE THING ON THE SPUR OF THE MOMENT). HIDING THE MAN IN THE SAND WOULD BE A RATHER NATURAL THING TO DO SINCE BURYING A BODY IS THE FASTEST, BEST WAY TO CONCEAL IT IN A PART OF THE WORLD CHARACTERIZED BY LITTLE FOLIAGE, A LARGELY FLAT TERRAIN, AND PLENTY OF SAND. OF ALL THE POSSIBLE EVENTS IN MOSES’ LIFE THAT STEPHEN MIGHT HAVE CHOSEN TO INCLUDE IN HIS APOLOGETIC SPEECH FOR CHRIST, HE INCLUDED IN CONSIDERABLE DETAIL THE STORY OF MOSES’ SLAYING THE EGYPTIAN (ACTS 7:23–29). THE SPECIAL THEME OF STEPHEN’S SPEECH FUNCTIONS AS AN INDICTMENT OF THE JEWS TO WHOM HE WAS SPEAKING FOR THINKING THEY WERE FOLLOWING MOSES WHEN IN FACT THEY WERE MISSING THE IMPLICATIONS OF HIS TEACHING—INDEED, STUBBORNLY SO. IN OTHER WORDS, STEPHEN APPARENTLY RECOUNTED THESE EVENTS FROM MOSES’ PRE-MIDIANITE DAYS NOT BECAUSE THEY ARE MORE IMPORTANT THAN OTHERS BUT BECAUSE THEY ARE THE BEGINNING OF THE STORY OF THE ADULT MOSES. IN EFFECT, STEPHEN IS SAYING: “DO YOU REALLY UNDERSTAND WHO MOSES WAS AND WHAT HE WAS TEACHING? LET ME REMIND YOU OF SOME PARTS OF THE STORY IN DETAIL AS A WAY OF REMINDING YOU THAT THE WHOLE OF WHAT MOSES DID AND TAUGHT POINTS IN ONE WAY OR ANOTHER TO THE IMPORTANCE OF JESUS CHRIST, WHICH YOU ARE MISSING.” HEBREWS 11:24 PROVIDES ANOTHER PERSPECTIVE ON THESE VERSES THAT MIGHT EASILY BE MISSED IN A RAPID READ THROUGH OF THE OLD TESTAMENT STORY: BY FAITH MOSES, WHEN HE HAD GROWN UP, REFUSED TO BE KNOWN AS THE SON OF PHARAOH’S DAUGHTER. HE CHOSE TO BE MISTREATED ALONG WITH THE PEOPLE OF GOD RATHER THAN TO ENJOY THE PLEASURES OF SIN FOR A SHORT TIME. MOSES MIGHT EASILY HAVE SO ENJOYED THE PERQUISITES OF POWER AND WEALTH THAT WERE HIS AS AN EGYPTIAN PRINCELING THAT HE WOULD HAVE PROUDLY IDENTIFIED HIMSELF THROUGHOUT HIS LIFE AS AN EGYPTIAN. INSTEAD, IN SPITE OF HIS OUTWARD APPEARANCE AS ESTABLISHED BY HIS DRESS AND HAIRSTYLE (WHICH WAS CLEARLY EGYPTIAN; CF. 2:19), HE ESCHEWED ALL THE PRIVILEGES OF EGYPTIAN RANK AND SIDED WITH AN OPPRESSED PEOPLE. HE THUS GUARANTEED HIMSELF MISTREATMENT ALONG WITH THEM. NEVERTHELESS, HE RECOGNIZED THAT THE EGYPTIAN STANCE WAS SINFUL AND THAT THE RIGHT LIFE WAS TO BE FOUND WITH THE LOWLY HEBREWS, WHO IN SPITE OF THEIR POVERTY AND AFFLICTION WERE GOD’S PEOPLE AND CHOSEN FOR GREAT PURPOSES. 2:13–14 THESE TWO VERSES PROVIDE THE REASON WHY MOSES HAD TO FLEE EGYPT, AND IN THE PROCESS, GIVE FURTHER EMPHASIS TO THE FACT THAT HE HAD IDENTIFIED WITH THE HARDSHIP OF THE HEBREWS AS OVER AGAINST THE SUPERIOR STATUS OF THE EGYPTIANS, EVEN THOUGH IT COST HIM DEARLY (CF. HEB 11:24–26). HERE IS GOD AT WORK IN A WAY THAT MOSES SURELY DID NOT RECOGNIZE AT THE TIME, JUST AS WE CAN VIRTUALLY NEVER UNDERSTAND HOW OUR OWN MISERIES AND EMERGENCIES, AT THE TIME WE ARE EXPERIENCING THEM, MIGHT END UP LEADING TO BLESSING. MOSES HAD GOTTEN HIMSELF IN TERRIBLE TROUBLE AND WAS AFRAID, AND AT LEAST ONE OF HIS FELLOW HEBREWS WAS VOICING WHAT MANY OTHERS FELT: IN SPITE OF THEIR OWN PLIGHT, THEY DID NOT WELCOME MOSES’ NEWFOUND CONVERSION FROM EGYPTIAN TO HEBREW IDENTITY. IN HINDSIGHT MOSES COULD ADMIT TO WEAKNESS: NOT ONLY THE WEAKNESS OF BEING AFRAID, BUT ALSO THE WEAKNESS OF BEING REJECTED BY THE MAN WHO SAID, “WHO MADE YOU RULER AND JUDGE OVER US?”—CLEARLY AN EXPRESSION OF RESENTMENT AGAINST THIS JOHNNY-COME-LATELY STYLING HIMSELF AS A DEFENDER OF THE HEBREWS. IT IS NOT DIFFICULT TO IMAGINE WHY MOSES WAS DISLIKED OR WHY THE NEWS ABOUT HIS MURDEROUS ACT HAD SPREAD SO FAR SO FAST: AN EGYPTIAN OVERSEER WAS MISSING, AN INVESTIGATION PROBABLY WAS UNDERWAY OR SOON WOULD BE, AND THERE WAS EVERY LIKELIHOOD THAT THE HEBREWS WOULD BE BLAMED AND SEVERELY PUNISHED FOR THE OVERSEER’S MURDER. SUCH A SITUATION WOULD BECOME THE TALK OF THE COMMUNITY AND WOULD EASILY SURFACE SOMEONE’S ADMISSION, “I SAW WHO DID IT!” WHAT MOSES HAD TRIED TO DO HAD, FROM HIS PEOPLE’S POINT OF VIEW, BACKFIRED. HE HAD TAKEN MATTERS INTO HIS OWN HANDS, AND HIS ARROGANCE IN DOING SO PROBABLY WAS GOING TO GET A LOT OF PEOPLE IN TROUBLE. ROM MOSES’ POINT OF VIEW, HE HAD TRIED TO ACT IN SECRET TO HELP ONE OF HIS PEOPLE, AND HE THOUGHT HE HAD SUCCEEDED. NOW THAT IN THE PROCESS OF HIS FURTHER INTERVENTION TO TRY TO HELP ANOTHER OF HIS PEOPLE HE HAD LEARNED THAT HIS DEED OF THE DAY BEFORE WAS KNOWN, THE WHOLE COURSE HE HAD SET HIMSELF ON WAS SUDDENLY LEADING IN THE WRONG DIRECTION. IN BOTH CASES MOSES HAD ACTED OUT OF ALTRUISM. THE HEBREW WHO IN THIS INSTANCE SPOKE BACK TO HIM, HOWEVER, IN EFFECT ANTICIPATED THE LATER ATTITUDE OF THE LEADERS OF THE HEBREWS, WHO WOULD REPEATEDLY LOOK AT WHAT MOSES WAS TRYING TO DO AS DAMAGING TO THEIR INTERESTS, IN SPITE OF THE FACT THAT MOSES WOULD INTEND IT AS DELIVERANCE (5:19–21; EXOD 17:3; NUM 14:2; DEUT 1:27). THIS IS IN THE NATURE OF LEADERSHIP: THE BEST ATTEMPTS TO HELP ARE SOMETIMES FAULTY IN THEMSELVES, YET EVEN WHEN PROPER AND MAGNANIMOUS, THEY CAN PROVOKE THE RESENTMENT OF THOSE WHO FAIL TO APPRECIATE HOW THEY ARE BEING LED. AS WOULD OFTEN BE THE CASE WITH JESUS, MOSES WAS HERE NOT RECOGNIZED/ACCEPTED READILY BY HIS OWN PEOPLE. HE EAGERLY WANTED TO HELP THEM; THEY WERE SUSPICIOUS THAT HE REPRESENTED TROUBLE. 2:15 MOSES WAS IN DANGER OF DEATH AT VARIOUS TIMES BY VARIOUS PERSONS. THE EARLIER STORY OF HIS RESCUE AS A BABY REFLECTS A GENERAL ATTEMPT TO KILL ISRAELITE MALE CHILDREN, MOSES INCLUDED. NOW HE IS SOUGHT FOR MURDER BY A PRESUMABLY ENRAGED PHARAOH, SINCE TESTIMONY DURING THE INVESTIGATION OF THE CRIME MUST HAVE POINTED DIRECTLY TO MOSES, AND THE KING COULD HARDLY HAVE BEEN UNMOVED BY THE IMPLICATIONS OF A TURNCOAT HEBREW-RAISED-AS-AN-EGYPTIAN NOW KILLING EGYPTIAN WORK SUPERVISORS! LATER, MOSES WOULD BE THREATENED WITH DEATH FROM HIS OWN PEOPLE (E.G., EXOD 17:4), AND HIS FIRSTBORN SON, THREATENED BY GOD HIMSELF (SEE COMMENTS ON 4:24–26). BUT IT IS ALL PART OF A GREAT PLAN. MOSES WAS NOW CLEARLY SEPARATED FROM HIS EGYPTIAN TIES AND COULD NOT EVEN REMAIN IN THE COUNTRY. WHERE, THEN, COULD HE GO THAT WOULD BE RELATIVELY SAFE FROM EGYPTIAN INFLUENCE, RELATIVELY HOSPITABLE TO AN ISRAELITE (SPEAKING A RELATED LANGUAGE AND SHARING SOME CUSTOMS), AND RELATIVELY EASY TO GET TO FROM NORTHEAST EGYPT, WHERE HIS FLIGHT ORIGINATED? EVEN IN THE SHORT TIME MOSES PROBABLY HAD TO GATHER HIS THINGS AND FLEE, THE ANSWER MUST HAVE SEEMED OBVIOUS TO HIM: MIDIAN. THE MIDIANITES WERE DESCENDED FROM ABRAHAM THROUGH HIS WIFE KETURAH (GEN 25:2) AND OCCUPIED SPARSELY (I.E., TO THE EXTENT THAT SUCH REGIONS CAN SUPPORT POPULATION) PORTIONS OF THE CENTRAL AND NORTHERN SINAI PENINSULA IN ADDITION TO THEIR MAIN LOCATION, NORTHWESTERN ARABIA, SO THAT MIDIANITES COULD BE ENCOUNTERED IN THAT DAY FROM THE ARABIAN GULF IN THE SOUTH TO THE PLAINS OF MOAB IN THE NORTH.2 THOUGH THE MIDIANITES IN MOST OF THEIR HISTORY WERE ENEMIES OF THE ISRAELITES (AS WERE MOST OTHER SEMITIC GROUPS AS WELL), A SINGLE ISRAELITE ON THE RUN FROM EGYPT, A COUNTRY THAT HAD OFTEN TRIED TO DOMINATE THE MIDIANITES, WOULD NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT A THREAT BUT PERHAPS EVEN SOMETHING OF A KINDRED SPIRIT. MOREOVER, THE RELATIVELY INDEPENDENT AND ISOLATED MIDIANITES WERE JUST THE SORT OF PEOPLE TO SEEK REFUGE AMONG FOR A FUGITIVE LIKE MOSES.THE FINAL CLAUSE, “WHERE HE SAT DOWN BY A WELL,” BRINGS THE STORY TO A SPECIFIC LOCATION, WHERE THE FUGITIVE, LOOKING FOR SOME PLACE TO SETTLE, WILL HAVE YET ANOTHER OPPORTUNITY TO INTERVENE IN A DISPUTE ON BEHALF OF THE OPPRESSED AND IN SO DOING WILL ALSO BEGIN TO MEET THOSE WITH WHOM HE WILL LIVE AND WORK FOR THE NEXT FORTY YEARS. IN THE LARGELY BARREN SINAI WILDERNESS, A WELL WAS A NECESSITY FOR HUMAN AND DOMESTICATED ANIMAL LIFE, A MEETING PLACE, A COMMUNITY CENTER; ROADS LED TO IT, AND TRAVELERS SOUGHT IT OUT. FOR MOSES, “A CERTAIN WELL” WOULD BE THE BEGINNING POINT OF A NEW LIFE. 2:16–19 THE ACCOUNT OF THE ENCOUNTER AT THE WELL IN MIDIAN IN VV. 16–19 TELLS SEVERAL THINGS ABOUT MOSES’ CHARACTER: HIS FLIGHT FROM EGYPT HAD NOT BLUNTED HIS INSTINCT FOR INTERVENING AGAINST INJUSTICE AND RIGHTING WRONGS; HE WAS QUICK TO ACT AGAINST OPPRESSION, EVEN ALONE, ISOLATED, AND WITH THE ODDS AGAINST HIM; HE WAS SUFFICIENTLY IMPOSING AND/OR ASSERTIVE TO INTIMIDATE SEVERAL SHEPHERDS; HE WAS PHYSICALLY VIGOROUS ENOUGH TO CHASE OFF A GROUP OF SHEPHERDS AND THEN DO WORK THAT SEVEN GIRLS WERE PLANNING TO DO; HE WAS NOT EASILY COWED HIMSELF; HE WAS GENEROUS AND HELPFUL TO PEOPLE HE HARDLY KNEW, ACTING FROM PRINCIPLE RATHER THAN MERELY FROM PERSONAL LOYALTY; AND HE DID NOT ASK FOR A PERSONAL REWARD FOR WHAT HE HAD DONE. ALL OF THESE CHARACTERISTICS ARE SEEN AGAIN IN VARIOUS WAYS AS MOSES RESPONDED TO GOD’S CALL TO DELIVER THE ISRAELITES FROM EGYPT. IN OTHER WORDS, THE MOSES WE SEE HERE IS BASICALLY THE SAME MOSES WE HAVE ALREADY SEEN AS AN ADULT IN EGYPT AND WHOM WE WILL SEE AGAIN THROUGHOUT THE PENTATEUCH—A FIGURE WHOM GOD CONTINUED TO PREPARE FOR A GREAT AND DAUNTING TASK YET FOR WHOM SUCH A TASK, HOWEVER POTENTIALLY DISPIRITING, WOULD NOT BE SOMETHING INIMICAL TO HIS BASIC NATURE. THESE VERSES TELL US A BIT MORE ABOUT MOSES AS WELL. HE WAS, THOUGH SURELY NOT YET ROMANTICALLY, ATTRACTED TO THE DAUGHTERS OF REUEL, THE PRIEST OF MIDIAN. SOMETHING ABOUT THEIR LOOKS AND/OR DEMEANOR AWAKENED HIS INTEREST AND CONCERN. PERHAPS, IN LIGHT OF HIS EXTENSIVE EDUCATION ALREADY IN EGYPT, HE WAS WELL AWARE OF THE FAMILY CONNECTION BETWEEN MIDIAN AND ISRAEL AND THUS WAS WARMLY PREDISPOSED TOWARD A GROUP OF MIDIANITE WOMEN. HE OBVIOUSLY KNEW THAT HE WAS IN MIDIANITE TERRITORY AND MIGHT ALREADY HAVE BEEN LOOKING FOR A PLACE TO SETTLE DOWN. ADDITIONALLY, IT SHOULD NOT BE SURPRISING IN LIGHT OF HIS EVENTUAL BETROTHAL AND MARRIAGE TO ONE OF JETHRO’S DAUGHTERS THAT HE SHOULD BE INSPIRED TO INCLUDE IN THE NARRATIVE THE DETAILS OF HOW HE MET HIS WIFE. HE WAS ALSO RECOGNIZABLY DRESSED AND PRESUMABLY TONSURED LIKE AN EGYPTIAN; OTHERWISE THE GIRLS WOULD NOT HAVE DESCRIBED HIM SO READILY AS “AN EGYPTIAN.” ALTHOUGH THESE MIDIANITE WOMEN MAY NOT HAVE SPOKEN ANY EGYPTIAN IT WOULD NOT HAVE SURPRISED THEM THAT AN EGYPTIAN MIGHT SPEAK A RECOGNIZABLE FORM OF SEMITIC. THE EGYPTIANS, WHOSE HAMITIC TONGUE WAS NOT COGNATE TO HEBREW OR MIDIANITE, HAD OVER THE CENTURIES SENT ARMIES, OCCUPATION FORCES, DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATIVES, AND TRADERS INTO MIDIANITE REGIONS, AND THUS THE WOMEN WOULD KNOW WHAT AN EGYPTIAN LOOKED LIKE AND WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN SURPRISED THAT ONE WOULD KNOW THEIR LANGUAGE. IN ADDITION TO THIS, THE OPPORTUNITY WAS ONCE AGAIN PRESENTING ITSELF FOR MOSES TO BENEFIT FROM THE INTERVENTION OF WOMEN ON HIS BEHALF, AS THE FOLLOWING VERSES INDICATE. HE HAD RESCUED THEM; THEY IN TURN PROVIDED HOSPITALITY FOR HIM, EVENTUALLY A LIVING ARRANGEMENT AND MARRIAGE, AND LATER ONE OF THEM WOULD SAVE HIS SON’S LIFE PUT IN DANGER BY HIS OWN NEGLECT (4:24–26). 2:20–22 THESE THREE VERSES PROVIDE A FAST SUMMARY THAT TAKES THE READER THROUGH JETHRO’S INVITATION TO DINNER, MOSES’ SETTLING DOWN AS PART OF JETHRO’S HOUSEHOLD, MOSES’ MARRIAGE TO ZIPPORAH, AND THE BIRTH AND NAMING OF THEIR FIRST CHILD. THUS, MOSES HAD BECOME A PERMANENT RESIDENT (EMPHASIZED BY THE LAST STATEMENT IN V. 22) AMONG THE MIDIANITES AND AN EXILE BOTH FROM THE LAND, EGYPT, AND THE PEOPLE OF HIS BIRTH, ISRAEL. JETHRO’S THREE QUESTIONS REPRESENT A SUFFICIENTLY EXTENSIVE EMPHASIS IN THIS OTHERWISE SHORT ACCOUNT THAT HE MUST HAVE FELT THAT HIS DAUGHTERS HAD FORGOTTEN THEIR MANNERS IN THEIR EXCITEMENT AT HAVING BEEN PAID SUCH FAVORABLE ATTENTION BY A PROMINENT STRANGER. JETHRO IS SHOWN HERE IN A TYPICALLY FAVORABLE LIGHT, AS A GRACIOUS AND DIPLOMATIC INDIVIDUAL WHO FOUND IN MOSES SOMEONE HE COULD APPRECIATE. WHEN IN CHAP. 18 JETHRO’S CONVERSION IS DESCRIBED (NO SMALL MATTER IN LIGHT OF HIS BEING A PRIEST OF ANOTHER RELIGION), HIS DELIGHT AT MOSES’ ROLE IN HIS LIFE IS ALSO OBVIOUS. THE FACT THAT ZIPPORAH’S NAME OCCURS TWICE IS ALSO NO ACCIDENT, INASMUCH AS THE READER IS NOW INTRODUCED TO THE WOMAN WHO WILL HAVE A PROMINENT ROLE IN GOD’S PLANS FOR MOSES. IT IS NOT ENTIRELY INCIDENTAL THAT THIS PROMINENT ATTENTION IS PAID TO MOSES’ MARRYING A NON-ISRAELITE; CONTRARY TO POPULAR IMPRESSION, THE COMPOSITION OF THE ISRAELITES WAS SIMPLY NOT GENETICALLY/ETHNICALLY MONOLITHIC BUT RATHER A MATTER OF FAITH AS OPPOSED TO FLESH. THE NAMING OF GERSHOM IN V. 22 REPRESENTS ANOTHER INSTANCE OF HOMOPHONOUS NAMING OF A CHILD (CF. 2:10), THE NAME IN THIS CASE SUGGESTED BY ITS BEING SIMILAR IN SOUND TO THE EXPLANATION MOSES PROVIDED: GĒR (“ALIEN”) AND ŠŌM (CLOSE IN SOUND TO ŠĀM, “THERE”) COMBINING TO SUGGEST THE APPROXIMATE MEANING “AN ALIEN THERE.” THE NAME ITSELF PROBABLY WAS PREEXISTING AND THUS NOT A NEW NAME BUT ONE CAREFULLY CHOSEN IN LIGHT OF MOSES’ CIRCUMSTANCES. THESE CIRCUMSTANCES ARE NOT ENTIRELY POSITIVE. FROM MOSES’ POINT OF VIEW, HE WAS NOW PERMANENTLY SEPARATED BOTH FROM WHAT HE REGARDED AS HIS HOMELAND, EGYPT, AND ALSO FROM THE PEOPLE HE NOW IDENTIFIED WITH AS HIS OWN, ISRAEL. CONSIDER, THEN, THE SPIRITUAL CHALLENGE THAT WAS HIS. HE WAS A FAILURE AS A DELIVERER OF HIS PEOPLE, A FAILURE AS A CITIZEN OF EGYPT, UNWELCOME AMONG EITHER OF THE NATIONS HE MIGHT HAVE CALLED HIS OWN, A WANTED MAN, A NOW-PERMANENT RESIDENT OF AN OBSCURE PLACE, ALONE AND FAR FROM HIS ORIGINS, AND AMONG PEOPLE OF A DIFFERENT RELIGION (HOWEVER MUCH OR LITTLE MIDIANITE RELIGION MAY HAVE SHARED SOME FEATURES WITH WHATEVER UNWRITTEN ISRAELITE RELIGION EXISTED AT THIS TIME). HIS CHARACTER, AS WE HAVE SEEN, WAS CLEARLY THAT OF A DELIVERER. HIS CIRCUMSTANCES, HOWEVER, OFFERED NO SUPPORT FOR ANY CALLING APPROPRIATE TO THAT CHARACTER. IT WOULD SURELY REQUIRE AN AMAZING SUPERNATURAL ACTION OF A SOVEREIGN GOD FOR THIS WASHED-UP EXILE TO PLAY ANY ROLE IN ISRAEL’S FUTURE. MOSES KNEW THIS, AND HIS STATEMENT, “I HAVE BECOME AN ALIEN IN A FOREIGN LAND,” RESIGNEDLY CONFIRMS IT.**

**SUMMATIVE REMINDER: SEVERITY OF THE OPPRESSION AND GOD’S CONCERN (2:23–25)**

**23 DURING THAT LONG PERIOD, THE KING OF EGYPT DIED. THE ISRAELITES GROANED IN THEIR SLAVERY AND CRIED OUT, AND THEIR CRY FOR HELP BECAUSE OF THEIR SLAVERY WENT UP TO GOD. 24 GOD HEARD THEIR GROANING AND HE REMEMBERED HIS COVENANT WITH ABRAHAM, WITH ISAAC AND WITH JACOB. 25 SO GOD LOOKED ON THE ISRAELITES AND WAS CONCERNED ABOUT THEM.**

**2:23–25 NOW THAT MOSES’ SITUATION HAS BEEN SUMMARIZED, THESE VERSES CONCLUDE THE ENTIRE LARGE SECTION OF INTRODUCTION TO THE EXODUS STORY (1:1–2:25) BY RETURNING THE READER’S ATTENTION TO EGYPT, WHERE GOD’S PEOPLE ARE TRAPPED IN CRUSHING SLAVERY AND WHERE HE WILL ON THEIR BEHALF UNLEASH HIS MIGHTY DELIVERANCE. THIS LITTLE “POSTSCRIPT” PREPARES US TO EXPECT THAT GOD WILL NOW TAKE ACTION. FIVE IMPORTANT ASSERTIONS ARE MADE, EACH BEARING IMPLICATIONS FOR THE EVENTS THAT FOLLOW. FIRST, THE PHARAOH WHO SOUGHT MOSES’ LIFE HAD DIED. THIS WOULD MAKE POSSIBLE MOSES’ RETURN TO DEAL WITH THE EGYPTIAN LEADERSHIP NO LONGER AS A CRIMINAL FUGITIVE (CF. THIS ASSURANCE IN 4:19) BUT AS A PROPHET OF THE TRUE GOD. SECOND, THE CHANGE IN GOVERNMENT PRODUCED NO RELIEF FOR THE ISRAELITES, WHOSE PAINFUL SLAVERY CONTINUED UNABATED. THEIR MISERY IS EMPHASIZED NOTICEABLY BY FOUR TERMS, TWO OF THEM VERBS (“GROANED,” “CRIED OUT”) AND TWO NOUNS (“CRY,” “GROANING”), CONSTITUTING FOUR DIFFERENT VOCABULARY WORDS IN THE HEBREW, EVEN THOUGH REPRESENTED IN THE NIV BY WHAT WOULD SEEM TO BE ONLY TWO TERMS (“GROAN,” “CRY”). THE DOUBLE USE OF THE EXPRESSION “BECAUSE OF THEIR SLAVERY” REINFORCES THIS, WITH THE INTENTION THAT THE READER MUST NOT MISS THE SEVERITY OF ISRAEL’S MISERABLE SITUATION. THIRD, THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL BEGAN TO PRAY. THAT IS THE POINT MADE BY THE LANGUAGE IN V. 23 (“CRIED OUT … THEIR CRY … WENT UP TO GOD”) AND V. 24 (“GOD HEARD THEIR GROANING”). THIS DESCRIPTION OF THEIR PRAYER IS CENTRAL. HOWEVER, LITTLE THEY MAY HAVE KNOWN ABOUT THE TRUE GOD AT THIS STAGE IN THEIR EMERGING CORPORATE THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION, THEY WERE DURING THIS TIME EARNESTLY PRAYING TO HIM FOR HELP; AND GOD, FAITHFUL BOTH TO HIS NATURE AND TO HIS PAST PROMISES, HEARD THEM. LATER, IN DEUT 26:7, MOSES SUMMARIZED: “THEN WE CRIED OUT TO THE LORD, THE GOD OF OUR FATHERS, AND THE LORD HEARD OUR VOICE AND SAW OUR MISERY, TOIL AND OPPRESSION.” THE EXODUS DID NOT COME ABOUT SIMPLY BECAUSE PEOPLE WERE IN TROUBLE; IT WAS THE RESULT OF A PRAYER OF LAMENT FOR RESCUE TO THE ONLY ONE WHO COULD ACTUALLY DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT. AS JESUS TAUGHT, THE ONE WHO KNOWS ALL NEEDS BEFORE THEY ARE PRAYED FOR NEVERTHELESS EXPECTS THEM TO BE PRAYED FOR (MATT 6:5–8, 32). FOURTH, GOD “REMEMBERED HIS COVENANT.” THE WORD BĔRÎṬ (“COVENANT”) OCCURS TWENTY-FIVE TIMES IN GENESIS; THIS IS ITS FIRST OCCURRENCE IN EXODUS. THE COVENANT IN QUESTION IS USUALLY REFERRED TO AS THE “ABRAHAMIC COVENANT” BECAUSE IT WAS MADE INITIALLY TO ABRAHAM AND THEN SIMPLY RENEWED, WITHOUT CHANGE IN ESSENTIALS, TO BOTH ISAAC AND JACOB. HERE THE STATEMENT “REMEMBERED HIS COVENANT WITH ABRAHAM, WITH ISAAC AND WITH JACOB” IS WORDED IN SUCH A WAY AS TO EMPHASIZE THAT RENEWAL TO EACH SUBSEQUENT GENERATION (LIKEWISE THE WORDINGS, THOUGH SLIGHTLY VARIED, IN LEV 26:42 AND 2 KGS 13:23). IN FACT, AFTER GENESIS THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT IS NEVER AGAIN REFERRED TO BY SIMPLY INCLUDING THE NAME OF ABRAHAM BUT ALWAYS IN SOME MANNER THAT BRINGS IN AS WELL THE OTHER PATRIARCHS (1 CHR 16:16; PS 105:9; ACTS 3:25; 7:8) SO AS TO REMIND THE READER THAT IT IS AN ONGOING COVENANT FULLY APPLICABLE TO THE GENERATIONS THAT FOLLOWED ABRAHAM. IN COVENANTAL LANGUAGE THE TERM, “REMEMBER” (ZĀKAR) SHOULD NOT BE MISUNDERSTOOD TO SUGGEST THAT GOD WAS SOMEHOW UNAWARE OR UNCONCERNED PREVIOUSLY. THE BIBLE CONSISTENTLY PORTRAYS HIM AS INTERVENING AT VARIOUS TIMES FOR VARIOUS PURPOSES, THOUGH RARELY AS SOON AS HUMANS, SELF-CENTEREDLY, WOULD LIKE. INDEED, THIS PARTICULAR REMEMBERING COMES AT THE END OF NO LESS THAN 430 YEARS OF CAPTIVITY (12:40)! THUS, THE EMPHASIS IS ON ONGOING COVENANT: GOD’S PROMISES NEVER STOPPED BEING VALID, HOWEVER SELDOM MOST ISRAELITES MAY HAVE CALLED UPON HIM TO HONOR HIS PROMISES IN THE PAST. THE AVERAGE ISRAELITE LIKELY KNEW AT LEAST SOMETHING ABOUT THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT, AND IT MAY BE USEFUL FOR THE MODERN READER TO REALIZE THAT THE TERM ZĀKAR, “REMEMBER,” IS IDIOMATIC FOR COVENANT APPLICATION RATHER THAN RECOLLECTION (CF. GEN 9:15; EXOD 6:5; LEV 26:42, 45; 1 CHR 16:15; PSS 105:8; 106:45; 111:5; JER 14:21; EZEK 16:60; LUKE 1:72). IN OTHER WORDS, TO SAY “GOD REMEMBERED HIS COVENANT” IS TO SAY “GOD DECIDED TO HONOR THE TERMS OF HIS COVENANT AT THIS TIME.” WHAT WERE THOSE TERMS? THEY WERE, FROM GEN 12:2–3, THE GENERAL PROMISES OF GREATNESS (ALREADY LARGELY ACHIEVED) AND BLESSING—INCLUDING PROTECTION (NOW NEEDING TO BE ADDRESSED); AND FROM GEN 15:13–16, THE SPECIFIC PROMISES OF PUNISHMENT OF THE NATION THAT OPPRESSED ISRAEL IN SLAVERY AND DELIVERANCE WITH GREAT POSSESSIONS (ESP. GEN 15:14). FIFTH, GOD WAS CLOSELY INTERESTED IN HIS PEOPLE AND IN THE PROCESS OF MAKING HIMSELF KNOWN TO THEM. MOSES NOW MENTIONED GOD AGAIN FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE THE ACCOUNT OF THE MIDWIVES IN 1:17–20—NOT BECAUSE GOD HAD BEEN DISINTERESTED OR IRRELEVANT BUT AS A WAY OF HEIGHTENING THE FACT THAT GOD ALONE WAS THE ISRAELITE’S HOPE IN THIS SITUATION. THE BEST READING OF THE ORIGINAL, “GOD LOOKED ON THEM AND MADE HIMSELF KNOWN TO THEM,”159 SETS THE SCENE FOR WHAT FOLLOWS. GOD WAS INITIATING THE PROCESS OF DELIVERANCE, AND THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF BOTH MOSES AND ISRAEL WERE ABOUT TO CHANGE. IMPLICITLY, THE THEOLOGICAL ISSUE HERE IS NOT WHETHER OR HOW PEOPLE SUFFER; THE ISSUE IS: DOES SUFFERING GO UNNOTICED? IF IT DOES NOT—AND INDEED THE ONE DOING THE NOTICING IS THE TRUE, OMNIPOTENT, AND LOVING COVENANT GOD—HIS PEOPLE CAN PROPERLY SURMISE THAT THEIR SUFFERING MAY WELL BE PART OF A PLAN, THAT IT IS A SUFFERING WITH A DISTINCT BEGINNING AND END, A HARDSHIP UNDERSTOOD BY AND WATCHED OVER BY A SOVEREIGN WHO WILL NOT LET IT CONTINUE WITHOUT GOOD PURPOSE AND RESULT.**

**MOSES’ CALL, COMMISSION, CHALLENGE (3:1–7:7)**

**THIS BLOCK OF NARRATIVE MOVES THE EXODUS STORY FROM THE OBSCURITY OF ONE MAN’S QUIET, ISOLATED LIFE IN MIDIAN TO THE DECISIVE CHALLENGES OF A NATION DEMANDING ITS FREEDOM—IN THE NAME OF STEPHEN YAHWEH—FROM THE VASTLY SUPERIOR EGYPTIANS. THE (RE-)REVELATION OF THE NAME STEPHEN YAHWEH (3:1–15) IS CENTRAL TO THE DIRECTION OF MOSES’ CALL, DESCRIBED IN 3:1–12 AND REINFORCED IN 4:10–18: IF HE IS TO BE ACCEPTED BY THE ISRAELITES (ANTICIPATED IN 3:16–22), IT IS BECAUSE HE COMES IN THE NAME OF THEIR TRUE, HISTORIC, ONLY GOD. ARMED WITH INITIAL MIRACULOUS SIGNS TO UNDERSCORE HIS CREDIBILITY (4:1–9), HE GAINS A HEARING FROM THE ISRAELITE LEADERSHIP IN SPITE OF HIS OWN PERSONAL FAILURES (4:19–31). THE NEED FOR PERSEVERANCE AND REASSURANCE (5:22–6:12) BECOMES OBVIOUS AS BOTH THE PHARAOH (5:1–14) AND THE ISRAELITE WORK SUPERVISORS (5:15–20) REACT NEGATIVELY TO MOSES’ MESSAGE. CLEARLY, MOSES IS GOD’S CHOSEN REPRESENTATIVE, WITH AARON AS HIS PARTNER. NOT ONLY IS THEIR ROLE HIGHLIGHTED BY THE INCLUSION OF THEIR GENEALOGY (6:13–27), BUT MOSES’ CALL AND THE SIGNIFICANCE OF HIS ASSIGNMENT ONCE AGAIN RECEIVE SPECIAL DIVINE APPROBATION (6:28–7:7) ON THE VERGE OF THE CAMPAIGN OF PLAGUES THAT WILL DEMONSTRATE GOD’S TOTAL SUPERIORITY TO THE “GODS” OF EGYPT (CF. 12:12).**

**MOSES’ CALL: THE BURNING BUSH THEOPHANY (3:1–12)**

**1 NOW MOSES WAS TENDING THE FLOCK OF JETHRO HIS FATHER-IN-LAW, THE PRIEST OF MIDIAN, AND HE LED THE FLOCK TO THE FAR SIDE OF THE DESERT AND CAME TO HOREB, THE MOUNTAIN OF GOD. 2 THERE THE ANGEL OF THE LORD APPEARED TO HIM IN FLAMES OF FIRE FROM WITHIN A BUSH. MOSES SAW THAT THOUGH THE BUSH WAS ON FIRE IT DID NOT BURN UP. 3 SO MOSES THOUGHT, “I WILL GO OVER AND SEE THIS STRANGE SIGHT—WHY THE BUSH DOES NOT BURN UP.” 4 WHEN THE LORD SAW THAT HE HAD GONE OVER TO LOOK, GOD CALLED TO HIM FROM WITHIN THE BUSH, “MOSES! MOSES!” AND MOSES SAID, “HERE I AM.” 5 “DO NOT COME ANY CLOSER,” GOD SAID. “TAKE OFF YOUR SANDALS, FOR THE PLACE WHERE YOU ARE STANDING IS HOLY GROUND.” 6 THEN HE SAID, “I AM THE GOD OF YOUR FATHER, THE GOD OF ABRAHAM, THE GOD OF ISAAC AND THE GOD OF JACOB.” AT THIS, MOSES HID HIS FACE, BECAUSE HE WAS AFRAID TO LOOK AT GOD. 7 THE LORD SAID, “I HAVE INDEED SEEN THE MISERY OF MY PEOPLE IN EGYPT. I HAVE HEARD THEM CRYING OUT BECAUSE OF THEIR SLAVE DRIVERS, AND I AM CONCERNED ABOUT THEIR SUFFERING. 8 SO I HAVE COME DOWN TO RESCUE THEM FROM THE HAND OF THE EGYPTIANS AND TO BRING THEM UP OUT OF THAT LAND INTO A GOOD AND SPACIOUS LAND, A LAND FLOWING WITH MILK AND HONEY—THE HOME OF THE CANAANITES, HITTITES, AMORITES, PERIZZITES, HIVITES AND JEBUSITES. 9 AND NOW THE CRY OF THE ISRAELITES HAS REACHED ME, AND I HAVE SEEN THE WAY THE EGYPTIANS ARE OPPRESSING THEM. 10 SO NOW, GO. I AM SENDING YOU TO PHARAOH TO BRING MY PEOPLE THE ISRAELITES OUT OF EGYPT.” 11 BUT MOSES SAID TO GOD, “WHO AM I, THAT I SHOULD GO TO PHARAOH AND BRING THE ISRAELITES OUT OF EGYPT?” 12 AND GOD SAID, “I WILL BE WITH YOU. AND THIS WILL BE THE SIGN TO YOU THAT IT IS I WHO HAVE SENT YOU: WHEN YOU HAVE BROUGHT THE PEOPLE OUT OF EGYPT, YOU WILL WORSHIP GOD ON THIS MOUNTAIN.”**

**EXCURSUS: THE THEOPHANY STRUCTURE OF EXODUS 3–4**

**CHAPTERS 3 AND 4 OF EXODUS FOLLOW A LITERARY PATTERN WELL ATTESTED BOTH IN THE BIBLE AND IN OTHER LITERATURE OF THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST: THE THEOPHANY FORM. THIS FORM WAS APPARENTLY LONG ESTABLISHED IN THE CULTURE OF MOSES AND THE ISRAELITES FOR WHOM HE WROTE THE PENTATEUCH, AND IT IS NOT SURPRISING THEREFORE THAT HE WOULD EMPLOY IT REPEATEDLY AS HE WROTE. BEGINNING WITH THE WORK OF H. GUNKEL, WHO IDENTIFIED THIS FORM IN GENERAL TERMS IN THE STORIES OF THE PATRIARCHS IN GENESIS (I.E., MOSES HAD ALREADY EMPLOYED THIS FORM SEVERAL TIMES BEFORE HIS USE OF IT TO DESCRIBE HIS OWN INITIAL THEOPHANY STORY HERE), A NUMBER OF SCHOLARS HAVE ADVANCED THE STUDY OF THE FORM AND ITS COMPONENT PARTS. KUNTZ HAS DESCRIBED THE THEOPHANY FORM AS HAVING, IN ITS FULL REPRESENTATION, TEN COMPONENT PARTS. THIS APPROACH IS REFINED AND EXHAUSTIVELY DOCUMENTED BY NIEHAUS, WHO DEMONSTRATES PARTICULARLY WELL THE USEFULNESS OF THE FORM FOR UNDERSTANDING THE MANY OLD TESTAMENT THEOPHANY ACCOUNTS. 3:1 THE MAIN PURPOSE OF THIS FIRST VERSE IN THE THIRD-PERSON DESCRIPTION (THEOPHANY FORM ELEMENT 1) OF MOSES’ LIFE-CHANGING ENCOUNTER WITH GOD IS TO PROVIDE A BRIEF EXPLANATION FOR HOW MOSES CAME TO BE LOCATED FAR FROM NORMAL MIDIANITE HAUNTS, AT SINAI, WHERE GOD WOULD REVEAL HIMSELF TO HIM. IMPORTANT SUBSIDIARY INFORMATION, HOWEVER, IS REVEALED IN THE PROCESS. WE LEARN, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT MOSES’ IDENTIFICATION WITH HIS OWN ETHNIC PEOPLE WAS NOW SO STRONG THAT HE WAS WILLING TO SERVE IN THE OCCUPATION OF SHEPHERD, AN ASSIGNMENT THAT NO ONE WHO STILL THOUGHT OF HIMSELF AS AN EGYPTIAN WOULD EVER HAVE TAKEN ON, SO LOATHSOME WAS SHEPHERDING TO EGYPTIANS. IN OTHER WORDS, IT IS APPARENT THAT SHOULD HE EVER RETURN TO EGYPT, HE WOULD GO AS AN ISRAELITE, NOT AS AN EGYPTIAN. ADDITIONALLY, WE LEARN THAT HE DID NOT HAVE HIS OWN FLOCK BUT TENDED THAT OF HIS FATHER-IN-LAW, SUGGESTING THAT HE HAD NOT COME INTO SUBSTANTIAL MEANS OF HIS OWN. IN CONTRAST TO HIS DAYS AS AN EGYPTIAN PRINCELING, HE WAS NOW, EVEN IF IN A FAVORED WAY, AT LEAST IN SOME SENSE A HOUSEHOLD WORKER. WE ALSO LEARN THAT JETHRO CONTINUED TO BE A MIDIANITE PRIEST, PERHAPS EVEN CHIEF PRIEST OF THAT PEOPLE. OF SIGNIFICANCE FOR THE STORY OF THE EXODUS IS THE PLACING OF HOREB (MOUNT SINAI) WEST OF/TO THE FAR SIDE OF THE DESERT FROM MIDIAN. VARIOUS THEORIES HAVE BEEN ADVANCED IN FAVOR OF LOCATING MOUNT SINAI SOMEWHERE IN MIDIAN, BUT THIS VERSE IS PART OF THE CONTRARY EVIDENCE. MOSES APPARENTLY HAD GONE WITH THE FLOCK FROM MIDIANITE TERRITORY (LOCATED MAINLY EAST OF THE EAST FORK OF THE RED SEA) WESTWARD PAST ELAT/EZION-GEBER AND THEN SOUTHWEST INTO THE SINAI WILDERNESS—WEEKS AWAY FROM HOME, TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THE AVAILABLE HIGH GRASSY SLOPES WHOSE VALUE TO FEEDING THE SHEEP WAS WORTH THE GREAT DISTANCE REQUIRED FOR HIM TO TRAVERSE. THE SPECIAL DISTANCE MAY EVEN HAVE BEEN OCCASIONED BY POOR GRASS CONDITIONS IN MIDIAN ITSELF THAT YEAR. AT ANY RATE, MOSES HAD GONE NO SMALL DISTANCE TOWARD EGYPT IN HIS CATTLE DRIVE. 3:2–3 SUDDENLY A SUPERNATURAL ENCOUNTER OF GREAT CONSEQUENCE TOOK PLACE, CONTINUING THE THIRD-PERSON DESCRIPTION (I.E., STILL THEOPHANY FORM ELEMENT 1). NOTHING PRIOR TO THIS IN THE BOOK IS DEMONSTRABLY SUPERNATURAL, IN THE SENSE OF THE MIRACULOUS SUSPENSION OF THE USUAL LAWS OF NATURE. NOW, HOWEVER, GOD, IN THE FORM OF THE “ANGEL OF THE LORD” (SEE EXCURSUS BELOW, “THE ANGEL OF THE LORD”) APPEARED IN A FIRE THEOPHANY (SEE EXCURSUS BELOW, “FIRE THEOPHANY”) TO MOSES, A SPECIAL PERSONAL APPEARANCE OF GOD TO AN AGING EXILE WORKING AS A SHEPHERD, TO INITIATE THE DIVINE CALL FOR THIS UNLIKELY CANDIDATE TO BE HIS PROPHET FOR THE PURPOSE OF DELIVERING THE ISRAELITES FROM EGYPT. MOSES’ UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT WAS HAPPENING TO HIM UNFOLDS IN STAGES DESCRIBED IN THE REMAINDER OF CHAPS. 4 AND 5. THESE TWO VERSES DESCRIBE THE ENCOUNTER BOTH IN SUMMARY FORM FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF THE READER, WHO IS TOLD IMMEDIATELY THAT WHAT MOSES BEGAN TO SEE WAS IN FACT AN APPEARANCE OF THE ANGEL OF THE LORD, AND ALSO FROM MOSES’ POINT OF VIEW, RECOUNTED IN VV. 2A–3, WHICH MAKES CLEAR THAT AT FIRST HE HAD NO IDEA WHAT HE WAS SEEING BEYOND THE FACT THAT IT WAS A BUSH ON FIRE THAT KEPT BURNING STEADILY. THE TERM USED FOR THIS BUSH, SĔNEH, DENOTES A RELATIVELY SMALL (AT MOST A FEW FEET IN DIAMETER) THORNY BUSH/SHRUB. MOSES, KNOWING HOW TO KEEP WARM ON COLD NIGHTS IN THE WILDERNESS, WOULD HAVE BEEN WELL AWARE OF HOW QUICKLY BUSHES BURN AND WOULD THUS HAVE BEEN STRUCK BY TWO FACTORS: FIRST, A SINGLE BUSH ON A HILLSIDE WITHOUT ANYONE ELSE AROUND IT WAS ON FIRE; AND SECOND, INSTEAD OF BURNING UP IT BURNED ON AND ON. MOSES WAS NATURALLY ATTRACTED TO THIS UNUSUAL PHENOMENON AND CHOSE TO TRY TO UNDERSTAND IT BY GETTING CLOSER. GOD THUS USED THIS BURNING BUSH, AS HE SO OFTEN USES VARIOUS SORTS OF CIRCUMSTANCES, TO BEGIN TO BRING SOMEONE CLOSER TO HIMSELF. BUT WHY A BUSH? IT MAY ONLY BE BECAUSE GOD’S LIKELY CHOICE WAS BETWEEN ROCKS AND BUSHES—THE TWO SORTS OF OBJECTS THAT CAN TYPICALLY BE FOUND STICKING OUT OF THE GROUND IN THAT TERRAIN—AND HE SIMPLY CHOSE A BUSH. BUT IT MAY ALSO BE THAT THE SIMILARITY BETWEEN THE SOUNDS OF SĔNEH, “BUSH,” AND SÎNĀY, “SINAI,” FIT HIS PURPOSES. INDEED, SO CLOSE ARE THE TWO WORDS THAT IN DEUT 33:16 THE EXPRESSION ŠŌKĔNÎ SĔNEH, “THE ONE WHO RESIDED IN THE BUSH,” SOMETIMES HAS BEEN EMENDED TO ŠŌKĒN SÎNĀY, “THE ONE WHO DWELLS ON SINAI” (E.G., NRSV). AT ANY RATE, IT IS CERTAINLY CONCEIVABLE THAT THE MENTION OF THE BUSH, SĔNEH, WAS DESIGNED ALSO TO BECOME A REMINDER OF ITS LOCATION, SÎNĀY. BECAUSE IN BIBLICAL CULTURE BUSHES OR TREES CAN SYMBOLIZE PEOPLE OR GROUPS, THE USE OF A BUSH ON FIRE TO GAIN MOSES’ ATTENTION WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN OUTSIDE OF HIS COGNITION: HE COULD HAVE ADAPTED QUICKLY, AS HE DID TO THE IDEA THAT AN ANGEL/THE ANGEL OF THE LORD/THE LORD HIMSELF HAD MANIFESTED HIMSELF (TO GET MOSES’ ATTENTION) WITHIN THAT BUSH. NOT ONLY SO, BUT LATER, AS HE TOLD AND RETOLD THE STORY OF HIS CALL, OTHERS WOULD ALSO BE ABLE TO RELATE TO THE IDEA THAT A BURNING BUSH COULD IN FACT REPRESENT ISRAEL’S GOD.**

**EXCURSUS: THE ANGEL OF THE LORD**

**THE TERM MALʾĀK STEPHEN YAHWEH, USUALLY TRANSLATED “THE ANGEL OF THE LORD,” APPEARS SIXTY-SEVEN TIMES IN THE OLD TESTAMENT. EXODUS 3:2 IS ITS ONLY OCCURRENCE IN EXODUS, THOUGH IT WAS ALREADY PROMINENT IN BOTH GEN , THE STORY OF HAGAR, AND GEN 22, THE STORY OF ABRAHAM’S NEAR SACRIFICE OF ISAAC.16 GRAMMATICALLY, MALʾĀK STEPHEN YAHWEH IS A CONSTRUCT (ALSO CALLED BOUND FORM, GENITIVE CONSTRUCTION) AND ACCORDING TO THE RULE OF CONSTRUCTS, BOTH ELEMENTS MUST BE EITHER DEFINITE OR INDEFINITE. SINCE THE PROPER NOUN “STEPHEN YAHWEH” IS INTRINSICALLY DEFINITE, THE NOUN THAT PRECEDES IT MUSTS ALSO BE DEFINITE; SO, THE PHRASE CANNOT THEREFORE MEAN “AN ANGEL OF THE LORD” BUT MUST CONNOTE GREATER DEFINITENESS, IN OTHER WORDS, “THE ANGEL OF THE LORD.” BUT CAN IT MEAN SOMETHING MORE PRECISE EVEN THAN THIS? THIS QUESTION MAY BE ANSWERED IN PART BY ASKING WHAT SORT OF CONSTRUCT THE PHRASE IS MOST LIKELY TO REPRESENT. OF THE DOZEN OR SO TYPES OF CONSTRUCTS TYPICALLY RECOGNIZED BY HEBREW GRAMMARIANS, THE MOST LIKELY TYPE INVOLVED HERE IS THE APPOSITIONAL CONSTRUCT (ALSO CALLED DEFINITIONAL CONSTRUCT, GENITIVE OF APPOSITION, GENITIVE OF DEFINITION, GENITIVE OF ASSOCIATION), THAT IS, THE FORM OF THE CONSTRUCT THAT USES THE SECOND WORD TO IDENTIFY THE FIRST. A USEFUL ANALOGY IS FOUND IN THE WELL-KNOWN EXPRESSION NĔHAR PĔRĀT, [THE] RIVER EUPHRATES, ALSO AN APPOSITIONAL CONSTRUCT IN WHICH THE SECOND NOUN IS INTRINSICALLY DEFINITE BY REASON OF BEING A PROPER NOUN. CONSIDER THE NATURE OF THE RIVER EUPHRATES: IT WAS NOT A RIVER IN OR OF EUPHRATES; RATHER, ALL OF [THE] EUPHRATES WAS THE RIVER, THAT IS, THE RIVER EUPHRATES OR [THE] EUPHRATES RIVER. LIKEWISE, MALʾĀK STEPHEN YAHWEH IS GRAMMATICALLY APPOSITIONAL AND BEST TRANSLATED AS “THE ANGEL THAT IS STEPHEN YAHWEH” OR “THE ANGEL STEPHEN YAHWEH” OR “ANGEL STEPHEN YAHWEH.” BUT WHAT DOES THIS IMPLY ONTOLOGICALLY? ARE WE TO CONCLUDE THAT STEPHEN YAHWEH IS MERELY AN ANGEL OR, PERHAPS, SOMETIMES MERELY AN ANGEL? OR IS THERE A CERTAIN ANGEL WHO ON OCCASION TAKES THE IDENTITY OF STEPHEN YAHWEH FOR CERTAIN PURPOSES, SUCH AS SPECIAL REVELATORY ENCOUNTERS WITH HUMANS IN OLD TESTAMENT TIMES? IN A NUMBER OF OLD TESTAMENT PASSAGES AN INDIVIDUAL DESCRIBED AS AN ANGEL (MALʾĀK; NOT ALWAYS SPECIFICALLY MALʾĀK STEPHEN YAHWEH, “ANGEL OF THE LORD”) IS EITHER CALLED “THE LORD” (E.G., GEN 12:7; 17:1; 18:1) OR BECOMES RECOGNIZED AS THE LORD (E.G., GEN 16:13: “SHE GAVE THIS NAME TO THE LORD WHO SPOKE TO HER: ‘YOU ARE THE GOD WHO SEES ME,’ FOR SHE SAID, ‘I HAVE NOW SEEN THE ONE WHO SEES ME’ ”; GEN 48:15–16: “MAY THE GOD BEFORE WHOM MY FATHERS ABRAHAM AND ISAAC WALKED, / THE GOD WHO HAS BEEN MY SHEPHERD ALL MY LIFE TO THIS DAY, / THE ANGEL WHO HAS DELIVERED ME FROM ALL HARM”) OR ACTUALLY CALLS HIMSELF THE LORD OR GOD (E.G., GEN 31:11–13: “THE ANGEL OF GOD SAID TO ME … I AM THE GOD OF BETHEL”). SOMETIMES AN ANGEL IS DESCRIBED IN TERMS THAT CAN REFER ONLY TO GOD, AS IN THE CASE OF EXOD 23:20–23: SEE, I AM SENDING AN ANGEL AHEAD OF YOU TO GUARD YOU ALONG THE WAY AND TO BRING YOU TO THE PLACE I HAVE PREPARED. PAY ATTENTION TO HIM AND LISTEN TO WHAT HE SAYS. DO NOT REBEL AGAINST HIM; HE WILL NOT FORGIVE YOUR REBELLION, SINCE MY NAME IS IN HIM. IF YOU LISTEN CAREFULLY TO WHAT HE SAYS AND DO ALL THAT I SAY, I WILL BE AN ENEMY TO YOUR ENEMIES AND WILL OPPOSE THOSE WHO OPPOSE YOU. MY ANGEL WILL GO AHEAD OF YOU AND BRING YOU INTO THE LAND OF THE AMORITES, HITTITES, PERIZZITES, CANAANITES, HIVITES AND JEBUSITES, AND I WILL WIPE THEM OUT. THIS PASSAGE PRESUMES THAT THE ANGEL WOULD BRING ISRAEL INTO THE PROMISED LAND, HAD THE POWER TO FORGIVE OR NOT FORGIVE SINS, SPOKE TEACHINGS AND COMMANDS THAT MUST BE OBEYED, HAD WITHIN HIM GOD’S NAME, AND WAS THE JUDGE AND DESTROYER OF ISRAEL’S ENEMIES—ALL ATTRIBUTES CLEARLY ASSOCIATED WITH GOD ALONE MANY TIMES ELSEWHERE. STRIKINGLY, IN EXOD 3 THE “ANGEL OF THE LORD” SAID TO BE “IN FLAMES OF FIRE FROM WITHIN A BUSH” (V. 2) IS IN V. 4 CALLED BOTH STEPHEN YAHWEH [LORD] AND GOD: “WHEN THE LORD SAW THAT HE HAD GONE OVER TO LOOK, GOD CALLED TO HIM FROM WITHIN THE BUSH.” INDEED, EXOD 3 IS PERHAPS THE STRONGEST OF ALL PASSAGES FOR IDENTIFYING THE “ANGEL OF THE LORD” AS THE LORD HIMSELF, FOR IT CONTINUALLY REFERS TO THE INDIVIDUAL FIRST IDENTIFIED AS THE “ANGEL OF THE LORD” AS BOTH LORD [STEPHEN YAHWEH] (VV. 2, 4, 7, 5, 16, 18) AND GOD (VV. 4–6, 11–16, 18). THESE AND OTHER PASSAGES INDICATE THAT THE ANGEL OF THE LORD IS THE LORD GOD HIMSELF AND NOT MERELY ONE OF HEAVEN’S ANGELS STANDING IN FOR GOD OR SPEAKING WITH HIS AUTHORITY. WHAT REASON, THEREFORE, WOULD THERE BE FOR GOD TO TAKE THE FORM OF AN ANGEL IN SO MANY INSTANCES? WHY NOT JUST SHOW UP IN PERSON, AS IT WERE? THE ANSWER, WE SUGGEST, IS MOST PROBABLY TO BE FOUND PARTICULARLY IN TWO ATTRIBUTES OF GOD: HIS OMNIPRESENCE AND HIS HOLINESS. THESE TWO GREAT DOCTRINES WOULD REQUIRE ENORMOUS SPACE FOR ANYTHING APPROACHING AN ADEQUATELY FULL STATEMENT OF THEIR REFLECTION IN SCRIPTURE, BUT WE CAN AT LEAST SUMMARIZE HOW THEY RELATE TO THE APPROPRIATENESS OF GOD’S MANIFESTING HIMSELF IN ANGELIC FORM. BECAUSE OF HIS OMNIPRESENCE, GOD IS NOT LIMITED TO ANY SPACE. THEREFORE, WHEN HE OCCUPIES A SMALL SPACE FOR PURPOSES OF REVELATION, HE TYPICALLY DOES SO BY REPRESENTATION. HE HAS MADE HUMANS HIS REPRESENTATIVES TO DO HIS WILL (GEN 1:26; MATT 6:10) ON THE LITTLE SPACE IN THE UNIVERSE THAT WE CALL THE EARTH, AND HE HAS CHOSEN ANGELS AS HIS REPRESENTATIVES FROM HEAVEN TO EARTH (HEB 1:14). BUT HE SOMETIMES HAS SPECIALLY REPRESENTED HIMSELF IN HUMAN FORM, SUCH AS THROUGH THE ANGEL WHO COULD BE CALLED ANGEL STEPHEN YAHWEH AND MOST BRILLIANTLY AND IMPORTANTLY OF ALL THROUGH HIS OWN SON IN HUMAN LIKENESS. SUCH APPEARANCES HAVE THE ADVANTAGE OF GIVING PEOPLE SOMETHING TO LOOK AT AND LISTEN TO, SINCE LOOKING AND LISTENING ARE SO BASIC TO RELATING. SINCE PENTECOST, BOTH THE SON AND THE FATHER ARE REPRESENTED BY THE SPIRIT WITHIN BELIEVERS—AN EXTREMELY PERSONAL AND SIGNIFICANT REPRESENTATION THAT GOES BEYOND EVEN THE BENEFITS OF VISIBILITY AND VOICE PROVIDED BY AN ANGEL. GOD’S HOLINESS DOES NOT TOLERATE EVIL. THROUGHOUT THE BIBLE WE TRACE THE PATTERN OF GOD’S BENEFICENT DISTANCE FROM SINFUL HUMANS; WERE HE TO PLACE HIMSELF FULLY AND PRECISELY IN OUR PRESENCE PRIOR TO THE ELIMINATION OF ALL EVIL THROUGH THE FINAL JUDGMENT, WE WOULD HAVE TO DIE BECAUSE HIS HOLINESS WOULD NOT ABIDE OUR PRESENT SIN (SEE 33:20). THIS WAS A REASON FOR THE EXPULSION OF THE FIRST HUMANS FROM THE GARDEN AFTER THEY SINNED, A REASON FOR GOD’S DWELLING AMONG HIS PEOPLE BY INDIRECT REPRESENTATION IN THE TABERNACLE/TEMPLE AND IN ZION/JERUSALEM, AND THROUGH HIS OCCASIONAL APPEARANCE IN VISIBLE AND AUDIBLE FORM AS THE ANGEL STEPHEN YAHWEH. THE ANGEL STEPHEN YAHWEH WAS NOT ALL THERE WAS TO GOD BUT WAS A TRUE AND REAL REPRESENTATION OF HIM, MUCH AS A VIDEOCONFERENCING CALL BRINGS A VALUABLE SENSE OF THE PRESENCE OF AN INDIVIDUAL INTO A ROOM THROUGH A VIDEO SCREEN AND SPEAKER—VISIBILITY AND VOICE—EVEN THOUGH THE INDIVIDUAL IS NOT ACTUALLY FULLY PRESENT THEREBY.**

**EXCURSUS: FIRE THEOPHANY**

**THE TERM “THEOPHANY” (“APPEARANCE OF GOD”) IS NORMALLY USED TO REFER TO INSTANCES RECORDED IN SCRIPTURE WHERE GOD APPEARS IN SOME WAY TO HUMANS. AS DESCRIBED IN PRIOR EXCURSUS, GOD’S APPEARANCES DO NOT REPRESENT HIS TOTALITY OR THE FULLNESS OF HIS ESSENCE. THEY INSTEAD ARE OCCASIONS IN WHICH HE IS VISIBLE IN SOME FASHION—NORMALLY, THROUGH A SHAPE THAT IS NOT EXACTLY NATURAL (I.E., HE DOES NOT LOOK LIKE A HUMAN); BUT HE CAN NEVERTHELESS BE LOOKED AT AND FOCUSED ON BY A HUMAN, AN APPEARANCE OFTEN ACCOMPANIED BY FIRE. A POT OF FIRE IS THUS HOW GOD REPRESENTED HIMSELF IN HIS COVENANT WITH ABRAHAM IN GEN 15:17. TO LEAD THE ISRAELITES THROUGH THE WILDERNESS, HE SHOWED HIMSELF AS A PILLAR OF FIRE (EXOD 13:21 AND THEREAFTER). AT SINAI HE “DESCENDED IN FIRE” (EXOD 19:18 AND THEREAFTER) TO MEET WITH ISRAEL AND REVEAL HIS LAW. LATER, AGAIN AT SINAI, HE ACCOMPANIED HIS VISIT TO ELIJAH WITH FIRE (1 KGS 19:6). HE OFTEN IS ACTUALLY IDENTIFIED AS FIRE (E.G., DEUT 4:24) AND HIS COMING AS ACCOMPANIED BY FIRE (E.G., PS 50:3). EZEKIEL SAW HIM AS A FIERY SHAPE (EZEK 1; 8); DANIEL, AS ONE SITTING ON A THRONE OF FIRE (DAN 7:9); JOHN, AS ONE WITH EYES OF FIRE (REV 1:14; 2:18; 19:12). OFTEN HIS JUDGMENT IS DESCRIBED AS COMING IN THE FORM OF DESTRUCTIVE FIRE (E.G., NUM 11:1–3; 16:35; 2 KGS 1:12–14; JOB 1:16; AMOS 1:4–2:5), AS WAS THE BAPTISM OF CHRIST, WHICH RESULTED IN JUDGMENT AGAINST SIN (MATT 3:11), AND THE SECOND DEATH, IN THE FIRE THAT CONSUMES FULLY AND CANNOT BE QUENCHED IN ANY WAY (E.G., MATT 18:8–9; 2 PET 3:7; JUDE 7; REV 20:14). THE PRESENT PASSAGE, EXOD 3, THUS PROVIDES ONE OF THE MANY INSTANCES IN THE BIBLE OF GOD’S REPRESENTATION OF HIMSELF IN A FIRE THEOPHANY. OF COURSE, NOT ALL FIRES INDICATED GOD’S PRESENCE (INDEED EXOD 3:3 INDICATES THAT INITIALLY MOSES MADE NO SUCH ASSUMPTION ABOUT THE ORIGIN OF THE FIRE THAT KEPT THE BUSH BURNING), AND A NUMBER OF OTHER PHENOMENA ALSO ARE USED TO INDICATE HIS THEOPHANIC PRESENCE (STORMS, WIND, CLOUDS, SMOKE, BLAZING LIGHT)—WITH OR WITHOUT ANY ACCOMPANYING FIRE. 3:4–5 AFTER GOD’S METHOD OF ATTRACTING MOSES CLOSER TO THE BUSH WORKED, AS OF COURSE HE KNEW IT WOULD, GOD THEN BEGAN TO REVEAL HIMSELF (V. 4) FROM WITHIN THE THEOPHANIC FIRE BY ADDRESSING MOSES THROUGH A SPEECH PATTERN (“MOSES! MOSES!”) THAT MAY BE CALLED “REPETITION OF ENDEARMENT.” IN ANCIENT SEMITIC CULTURE, ADDRESSING SOMEONE BY SAYING HIS OR HER NAME TWICE WAS A WAY OF EXPRESSING ENDEARMENT, THAT IS, AFFECTION AND FRIENDSHIP. THUS, MOSES WOULD HAVE UNDERSTOOD IMMEDIATELY THAT HE WAS BEING ADDRESSED BY SOMEONE WHO LOVED HIM AND WAS CONCERNED ABOUT HIM. MOSES’ REPLY, HINNĒNÎ (“HERE I AM”), HAS NO SPECIAL MEANING BEYOND BEING THE STANDARD WAY IN HEBREW OF REPLYING “YES?” WHEN ONE IS CALLED. WITHOUT YET IDENTIFYING HIMSELF, GOD BEGAN TO TEACH MOSES ABOUT THE HOLY NATURE OF HIS PRESENCE (V. 5). THE THEME OF THE DIVINE PRESENCE IS A MAJOR TOPIC OF EXODUS. IT OFTEN IS EMPHASIZED BY COMMANDS REQUIRING DISTANCE FROM GOD SO AS NOT TO INTRUDE TOO FAR ON HIS HOLINESS, PROXIMITY TO WHICH CARRIES WITH IT DANGER TO THE PERSON NOT PROPERLY PREPARED (SANCTIFIED). THIS PASSAGE, WITH ITS COME-NO-FURTHER COMMAND, IS REMARKABLY PARALLEL TO THAT OF EXOD 19:9–25, WHERE A SERIES OF CONDITIONS OF SANCTIFICATION (PROCEDURES THAT CONFER HOLINESS) AND DISTANCE (E.G., 19:23, “PUT LIMITS AROUND THE MOUNTAIN AND SET IT APART AS HOLY”) ARE IMPOSED UPON THE ISRAELITES. THUS, WHAT GOD’S PEOPLE WOULD EVENTUALLY HAVE TO LEARN FROM GOD THROUGH HIM, MOSES NOW BEGAN TO LEARN FROM GOD. MOSES MUST DO TWO THINGS: KEEP A PROPER DISTANCE AWAY FROM THE BUSH (I.E., FROM GOD MANIFEST IN THE FIRE) AND TAKE OFF HIS SANDALS. THERE ARE MANY REFERENCES IN THE BIBLE TO TAKING OFF OR PUTTING ON SANDALS, BUT NONE HAS ANY CONNECTION WITH HOLINESS EXCEPT THIS ONE. PRESUMABLY, TAKING OFF SHOES WAS DONE WHEN ENTERING THE PRESENCE OF A SUPERIOR PERSON, WHICH USUALLY WOULD OCCUR FORMALLY WHEN ONE WAS AT THE SUPERIOR PERSON’S HOUSE, PALACE, OR TENT. THUS SINAI/HOREB IS HERE IMPLICITLY IDENTIFIED AS “STEPHEN YAHWEH’S PLACE.” THUS, THE VERY GROUND IS HOLY—SOMETHING SAID OF NO OTHER LOCATION IN THE BIBLE. 3:6 THIS VERSE IS NOTEWORTHY FOR THE PRECISE DESIGNATION OF WHOM MOSES IS TALKING TO, THAT IS, WHO THE TRUE GOD IS, AS WELL AS OF THE HISTORY OF DIVINE RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE DESCENDANTS OF ABRAHAM THAT MOSES NOW JOINS. NO SPECIAL SIGNIFICANCE SHOULD BE READ INTO THE FACT THAT “THE GOD OF” IS REPEATED. GREEK CAN AVOID THE REPETITION BY STRINGING OUT GENITIVES (THUS, “THE GOD OF ABRAHAM, ISAAC AND JACOB”), BUT STRINGS OF GENITIVES (I.E., THE GOVERNING WORDS IN CONSTRUCT PHRASES) ARE MUCH LESS COMMON IN HEBREW. THE NORMAL WAY TO INDICATE WHAT IN ENGLISH WOULD BE “THE W OF X, Y, AND Z” IS TO SAY “THE W OF X, THE W OF Y, AND THE W OF Z,” AS IN THIS VERSE. MOSES WAS BEING TOLD STRAIGHTFORWARDLY THAT HE WAS SPEAKING WITH THE GOD OF HIS FATHER AND OF THE GREAT PATRIARCHS. THIS NEED NOT IMPLY, HOWEVER, THAT AMRAM, MOSES’ BIOLOGICAL FATHER, WAS SOMEHOW OF EQUAL IMPORTANCE TO THE PATRIARCHS OR THAT AMRAM KNEW THE TRUE GOD AS CLOSELY AS THEY. GOD’S MENTION OF AMRAM WAS MORE LIKELY A MEANS OF ASSURING MOSES (1) THAT HE WAS NOW IN THE ISRAELITE TRADITION OF FAITH AND HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO KNOW THE TRUE GOD JUST AS HIS FATHER AND ALL WHO PRECEDED HIM SINCE ABRAHAM HAD; (2) GOD’S FAITHFUL PROVISION OVER ALL THE MANY GENERATIONS SINCE ABRAHAM, ACCORDING TO THE PROMISES MADE HIM IN GEN 12; 15, WAS BEGINNING TO COME TO FRUITION (CF. 1:7). IT HAD NEVER BEEN SUSPENDED AND WAS AT WORK EVEN IN GOD’S PROVISION FOR MOSES’ IMMEDIATE FAMILY, THE FAMILY OF AMRAM. ACCORDINGLY, THIS VERSE CONSTITUTES ONE OF THE STRONGEST, MOST OVERT LINK TO THE THEMES OF THE BOOK OF GENESIS SO FAR ENCOUNTERED IN EXODUS. MOSES’ FEAR OF SEEING GOD HAS VARIOUS PARALLELS AND REPRESENTS A GENERAL ASSUMPTION IN ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN CULTURE THAT IF ONE WERE ACTUALLY TO LOOK AT A GOD (EXCEPT IN THE FORM OF AN IDOL, ACCORDING TO PAGAN NOTIONS OF THE CONCEPT), HE OR SHE MIGHT BE IN GREAT DANGER BECAUSE GODS—AND CERTAINLY THE ONE TRUE GOD—GUARDED THEIR FULL PRESENCE FROM HUMANS (CF. JOHN 1:18; 6:46; 1 JOHN 4:12). ESPECIALLY RELEVANT PARALLELS ARE GEN 32:30, “SO JACOB CALLED THE PLACE PENIEL, SAYING, “IT IS BECAUSE I SAW GOD FACE TO FACE, AND YET MY LIFE WAS SPARED”; AND JUDG 13:22, “WE ARE DOOMED TO DIE!” HE SAID TO HIS WIFE. “WE HAVE SEEN GOD!” ACCORDINGLY, BEING ABLE TO SEE GOD IS ALWAYS WONDROUS (EVEN FIGURATIVELY; CF. 3 JOHN 11) AND IN ITS FULLNESS IS RESERVED FOR A FUTURE STATE (E.G., MATT 5:8, “BLESSED ARE THE PURE IN HEART, FOR THEY WILL SEE GOD”; CF. HEB 12:14). THOUGH MOSES’ THEOLOGY WAS HARDLY FULLY FORMED AT THIS POINT, HE NEVERTHELESS WELL UNDERSTOOD SOMETHING OF THE POTENTIAL POWER OF GOD’S HOLINESS. LATER, HIS BEING ALLOWED TO SEE GOD IN PART (EXOD 24:1–2; 33:21–23) WOULD CONSTITUTE AN EXTREMELY UNUSUAL PRIVILEGE AND CREDENTIAL. THE FACT THAT GOD EVENTUALLY MADE HIMSELF VISIBLE IN HUMAN FORM REPRESENTS THE HIGHEST EARTHLY EXPERIENCE OF SEEING GOD (JOHN 14:9), FAR SURPASSING EVEN MOSES’ UNUSUAL OPPORTUNITY. 3:7–10 WHAT THE READER HAS ALREADY LEARNED FROM MENTION OF THE PATRIARCHAL COVENANT IN 2:23–25 (AND WHICH WAS IMPLICIT IN THE REFERENCE TO ABRAHAM, ISAAC, AND JACOB IN 3:6) MOSES NOW HEARD SPELLED OUT EXPLICITLY: STEPHEN YAHWEH CARED ABOUT HIS PEOPLE AND PLANNED TO DELIVER THEM FROM EGYPT TO CANAAN. IN 2:23–25 THE EXODUS WAS ALREADY ADUMBRATED BY THE REFERENCE TO REMEMBERING THE COVENANT WITH ABRAHAM AND HIS DESCENDANTS, THE TERMS OF WHICH INCLUDED BOTH THEIR SLAVERY AND THEIR DELIVERANCE TO CANAAN (GEN 15:13–16). TWO GREAT CHALLENGES TO MOSES’ FAITH APPEAR HERE IMPLICITLY, AT EITHER END OF THESE VERSES. THE FIRST (V. 7) IS A CHALLENGE SHARED BY ALL BELIEVERS: TO TRUST THAT GOD HAS ALWAYS AND CONTINUES TO BE CONCERNED ABOUT THEIR SUFFERING SINCE IN THE PRESENT FALLEN WORLD, GOD ALLOWS SUFFERING. THAT THE ISRAELITES HAD BEEN SUFFERING OPPRESSION SUCH A LONG TIME WITHOUT RESCUE BEGS THE QUESTION OF GOD, “IF YOU ARE WILLING TO HELP NOW, WHY DIDN’T YOU HELP EARLIER?” THE BIBLE PROVIDES CLEAR ANSWERS IN PRINCIPLE TO SUCH A QUESTION, BUT INDIVIDUALS OR GROUPS CANNOT NORMALLY KNOW WHY THEIR PARTICULAR SUFFERING IS SO SEVERE OR HAS GONE ON AS LONG AS IT HAS. THE SECOND CHALLENGE (V. 10) INVOLVES MOSES’ PAST: HOW COULD ONE WHO TRIED AND FAILED TO HELP HIS FELLOW ISRAELITES ON AN INDIVIDUAL SCALE FORTY YEARS BEFORE (2:11–14) NOW, IN HIS LATE YEARS, BE GOD’S CHOICE AS DELIVERER OF THE WHOLE NATION? VERSE 7 SUMMARIZES THE PLIGHT OF THE ISRAELITES IN THEIR FORCED LABOR WITH FOUR TERMS: “MISERY … CRYING OUT … SLAVE DRIVERS … SUFFERING.” WITH THREE VERBS GOD ANNOUNCED HIS COMPASSION: “I HAVE INDEED SEEN … I HAVE HEARD THEM … I AM CONCERNED.” THE FIRST OF THESE, “I HAVE INDEED SEEN” (RĀʾŌH RĀʾÎTÎ) INVOLVES THE HEBREW INFINITIVE ABSOLUTE CONSTRUCTION, WHICH CONNOTES THE SENSE “I HAVE CAREFULLY WATCHED” OR “I HAVE PAID VERY CLOSE ATTENTION TO,” THUS BY ITSELF INDICATING THE INTENSITY OF GOD’S INTEREST IN THE MISERY OF HIS PEOPLE. NOTE ALSO THAT GOD CALLED ISRAEL “MY PEOPLE,” ECHOING BUT ALSO MORE GRANDLY SUPERSEDING MOSES’ REFERENCE TO “HIS OWN PEOPLE” IN 2:11. VERSE 8 DECLARES GOD’S RESCUE PLAN. THE WORDING “I HAVE COME DOWN [DESCENDED]” IS CHARACTERISTIC OF MANY BIBLICAL PASSAGES RELATED TO THEOPHANY AND DIVINE RESCUE OF HUMANS AND SHOULD NOT BE UNDERSTOOD AS SUGGESTING A PRIMITIVE VIEW OF GOD WITHIN A THREE-TIERED UNIVERSE. HE PROMISED TO BRING THEM TO A PLACE AMPLE IN BOTH SIZE AND NOURISHMENT FOR THEM. BY MENTIONING THE SIX (OR SEVEN) CANAANITE-AMORITE GROUPS, GOD BOTH CLARIFIED FOR MOSES EXACTLY WHICH TERRITORIES HE PLANNED TO GIVE HIS PEOPLE AND PROLEPTICALLY IDENTIFIED THE FUTURE ENEMIES IN THE WAR OF CONQUEST FOUGHT BY JOSHUA. VERSE 9 REITERATES BOTH 3:7 AND 2:23–25, PROVIDING YET ANOTHER OCCASION TO REMIND THE READER, AND IN THIS CASE MOSES IN THE SITUATION OF HIS CALL, THAT GOD HAD NOT FORGOTTEN HIS PEOPLE, WAS DEEPLY CONCERNED FOR THEM, AND WOULD ACT ON THEIR BEHALF. NEVERTHELESS, AS THE ENSUING PORTIONS OF THE NARRATIVE MAKE CLEAR, IT WAS NOT EASY FOR MOSES TO HEAR THE COMMAND OF V. 10, WITH ITS DEMAND THAT HE GO AS GOD’S PROPHET (“I AM SENDING YOU”) TO PHARAOH TO BRING ISRAEL OUT OF EGYPT. NOT ONLY WAS MOSES TO BE INVOLVED IN THE EXODUS BUT HE WAS TO LEAD IT, IN DEFIANCE OF THE GREATEST POTENTATE ON EARTH, THE EGYPTIAN PHARAOH. 3:11–12 IN THESE VERSES APPEAR, RESPECTIVELY, ELEMENT 8 OF THE THEOPHANY FORM (INQUIRY OR PROTEST BY THE ADDRESSEE, V. 11) AND PART OF ELEMENT 9 (CONTINUATION OF THE HIEROS LOGOS WITH PERHAPS SOME REPETITION OF PREVIOUS ELEMENTS [V. 12 IS ONE OF THE HIEROS LOGOS STATEMENTS]). THE TWO VERSES TOGETHER CONSTITUTE THE FIRST OF SEVERAL PATTERNS OF HIEROS LOGOS FOLLOWED BY MOSES’ PROTEST—PAIRS OF ELEMENTS THAT TAKE THE NARRATIVE ALL THE WAY TO 4:17. MOSES’ PROTEST IN V. 11 CONFORMS TO THE USUAL PATTERN IN SUCH CASES: BEING CALLED TO A TASK BY GOD, HE PROPERLY AND RESPECTFULLY EXPRESSED HIS HUMILITY AT BEING GIVEN SUCH AN IMPORTANT ASSIGNMENT. IN OTHER WORDS, MOSES’ QUESTION, “WHO AM I?” IS A PRO FORMA QUESTION, NOT AN EXPRESSION OF ACTUAL LACK OF SELF-CONFIDENCE AT THIS POINT, AT LEAST, HE WAS NOT TRYING TO GET OUT OF THE JOB STEPHEN YAHWEH WAS CALLING HIM TO PERFORM BUT WAS BEING MANNERLY ACCORDING TO THE DICTATES OF HIS CULTURE. THE EXACT EXPRESSION, “WHO AM I” (MÎʾĀNŌḲÎ) OCCURS TWO OTHER TIMES IN THE OLD TESTAMENT, IN EACH INSTANCE AS PART OF EXPRESSING POLITE ACCEPTANCE OF AN HONOR RATHER THAN AS AN ATTEMPT TO DECLINE IT. FROM THE WORDING OF HIS RESPONSE, IT IS CLEAR THAT MOSES UNDERSTOOD THE NATURE OF HIS ASSIGNMENT. GOD’S REPLY (V. 12) CONTAINS TWO KEY ELEMENTS: A PROMISE OF HELP AND GUIDANCE (“I WILL BE WITH YOU”) AND A FULFILLMENT SIGN. FOR GOD TO “BE WITH” SOMEONE MEANS THAT HE PROVIDES THAT PERSON DIRECT, SPECIAL HELP AND GUIDANCE THAT, IN TURN, CAN CAUSE PEOPLE TO RECOGNIZE THAT PERSON’S WORTH AND/OR AUTHORITY IN GIVEN SITUATIONS. A FULFILLMENT SIGN IS A CONFIRMATION THAT A PROPHET OR LEADER HAS COMPLETED A KEY PART OF A TASK ASSIGNED HIM BY GOD. THE FULFILLMENT SIGN FOR MOSES’ CALL WAS A SUCCESSFUL EXODUS FOLLOWED BY ARRIVAL AT MOUNT SINAI AND WORSHIP THERE BY ALL THE PEOPLE (“YOU WILL WORSHIP” IS PLURAL). THIS IS SIGNIFICANT BECAUSE IT IS NOT MERELY MEASURABLE BY THE MOVEMENT OF THE PEOPLE FROM ONE PLACE TO ANOTHER BUT ALSO BY THEIR MOVEMENT FROM ONE FAITH TO ANOTHER. THEY WOULD GET TO SINAI, BUT MORE IMPORTANTLY THEY WOULD GET TO SAVING BELIEF IN THE ONLY TRUE AND LIVING GOD. FULFILLMENT SIGNS REQUIRE FAITH SINCE THEY PROMISE PROOF TO FOLLOW AFTER AN INTERVAL OF TIME RATHER THAN IMMEDIATELY; IN DOING SO THEY ENCOURAGE FAITH. THIS ONE IS NO EXCEPTION. IT WOULD BE FULFILLED THREE MONTHS AFTER THE START OF THE EXODUS (EXOD 19:1) BUT WOULD CONTINUE TO PROVIDE ITS RETROSPECTIVE REASSURANCE FOR FORTY MORE YEARS.**

**REVELATION OF THE NAME STEPHEN YAHWEH (3:13–15)**

**13 MOSES SAID TO GOD, “SUPPOSE I GO TO THE ISRAELITES AND SAY TO THEM, ‘THE GOD OF YOUR FATHERS HAS SENT ME TO YOU,’ AND THEY ASK ME, ‘WHAT IS HIS NAME?’ THEN WHAT SHALL I TELL THEM?” 14 GOD SAID TO MOSES, “I AM WHO I AM. THIS IS WHAT YOU ARE TO SAY TO THE ISRAELITES: ‘I AM HAS SENT ME TO YOU.’” 15 GOD ALSO SAID TO MOSES, “SAY TO THE ISRAELITES, ‘THE LORD, THE GOD OF YOUR FATHERS—THE GOD OF ABRAHAM, THE GOD OF ISAAC AND THE GOD OF JACOB—HAS SENT ME TO YOU.’ THIS IS MY NAME FOREVER, THE NAME BY WHICH I AM TO BE REMEMBERED FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION.**

**THESE VERSES INCLUDE MOSES’ FIRST PROTEST (V. 13) AND THE BEGINNING OF GOD’S FIRST GROUP OF HIEROI LOGOI RESPONSES; THAT IS, THEY REPRESENT PART OF THE CONTINUATION OF ELEMENT 9 IN THE THEOPHANY STRUCTURE OF EXOD 3–4. KNOWING THE NAME OF GOD WOULD BE FOR MOSES BOTH A COMFORT AND A CREDENTIAL IN HIS DEALING WITH THE ISRAELITES, AND FOR THE ISRAELITES IN TURN IT WOULD BECOME A FIRST MEANS OF DESIGNATING TRUE FAITH AND WORSHIP. 3:13 MOSES’ PROTEST AT THIS POINT IS APPROPRIATE FOR SOMEONE WILLING TO RESPOND FAVORABLY TO A CALL OF GOD, PARTICULARLY IN LIGHT OF THE CULTURE HE AND HIS FELLOW ISRAELITES LIVED IN. THEIRS WAS A POLYTHEISTIC, PANTHEISTIC, AND SYNCRETISTIC WORLD IN WHICH ALL PEOPLE GROUPS AND NATIONS—THERE ARE NO KNOWN EXCEPTIONS—BELIEVED THAT THERE WERE MANY GODS, THAT ALL NATURE PARTOOK TO SOME DEGREE OF DIVINITY, AND THAT ALL RELIGIONS HAD AT LEAST SOME VALIDITY NO MATTER HOW MANY OR WHAT SORT OF GODS OR GODDESSES THOSE RELIGIONS WORSHIPED AND REGARDLESS OF THE CONTRADICTIONS A MODERN PERSON CAN IMMEDIATELY SEE BETWEEN ANY TWO SUCH RELIGIONS. MOSES THEREFORE WONDERED WHICH GOD AM I SPEAKING TO? SINCE “THE GOD OF YOUR FATHERS” (A SUMMATION OF V. 6) MIGHT HAVE DIFFERENT MEANINGS TO DIFFERENT ISRAELITES. HAVING LIVED IN THE MIDST OF PAGAN CULTURES ALL THEIR LIVES, ALL ISRAELITES WERE AT RISK FOR HETERODOX BELIEFS AND/OR THE DISTORTION OF WHATEVER CORRECT BELIEFS THEY MAY THEORETICALLY HAVE INHERITED. MOREOVER, SINCE THE TRUE GOD WAS KNOWN BY VARIOUS NAMES AND TITLES IN THE PATRIARCHAL ERA (E.G., EL ELYON, “GOD MOST HIGH” IN GEN 14:18–22; PAHAD YITṢḤAQ, “FEAR OF ISAAC” IN GEN 31:42, 53; EL SHADDAI, “GOD ALMIGHTY” IN GEN 17:1; 28:3; 35:11; 43:14; 48:3; EL ROʾI, “THE GOD WHO SEES ME” IN GEN 16:13; EL BETHEL, “GOD OF BETHEL” IN GEN 31:13) SPECIFICITY WAS DESIRABLE. PERHAPS MOST IMPORTANTLY, HOWEVER, WAS THE ASSUMPTION IN THAT CULTURE THAT TO CALL ON A GOD—THAT IS, TO PRAY TO AND WORSHIP HIM—INVOLVED CALLING ON HIS NAME, SPECIFICALLY NAMING HIM IN PRAYER AND WORSHIP (CF. 1 KGS 18:24–26). 3:14 HERE APPEARS GOD’S REREVELATION OF HIS ACTUAL PROPER NAME. STEPHEN YAHWEH WAS ALREADY KNOWN BY EARLY GENERATIONS (GEN 4:26) AND USED THEREAFTER BY THE PATRIARCHS (NOAH, GEN 9:26; ABRAHAM, GEN 12:8; ISAAC, GEN 26:25; JACOB, GEN 28:16; LABAN, GEN 30:27)—BUT IT WAS NOT USED, OR NOT PROMINENTLY USED, BY ANY OF THE CHILDREN OF JACOB, AT LEAST IN TERMS OF WHAT IS IN THE BIBLICAL RECORD. THUS IT APPEARS THAT MOSES, AS HE HAD CONSTRUCTED THE NARRATIVE WE NOW CALL THE BOOK OF GENESIS, INTENDED THAT WE REALIZE THAT THE GENERATION AFTER JACOB AND ALL SUBSEQUENT GENERATIONS UP TO HIS OWN HAD LOST AT LEAST A MEASURE—AND PROBABLY, OVER TIME, A GREATER AND GREATER MEASURE—OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE TRUE GOD AND THEREFORE, PRESUMABLY, OF THE PRACTICE OF PRAYING TO HIM AND WORSHIPING HIM REGULARLY AND PROPERLY, BY HIS NAME. AN ANALOGY IS FOUND IN THE WAY THE BOOK OF ESTHER IS WRITTEN: GOD IS NOT MENTIONED IN ANY MANNER IN THAT BOOK, NOT BECAUSE HE WAS NOT INVOLVED IN THE EVENTS OF THE STORY BUT AS A STYLISTIC DEVICE TO PROVIDE FOR THE READER THE CONSTANT, ONGOING, DIDACTIC IMPRESSION THAT THE JEWS OF ESTHER’S DAY HAD BECOME LARGELY PAGANIZED. MOSES CAREFULLY AVOIDED ANY MENTION OF THE NAME STEPHEN YAHWEH UNTIL NOW FOR A PRESUMABLY SIMILAR REASON IN THIS NARRATIVE. HERE THE REREVELATION OF THE NAME STEPHEN YAHWEH IS FIRST GIVEN IN ITS FIRST-PERSON FORM, ʾAHYEH, LATER VOCALIZED BY THE MEDIEVAL MASORETES AND ALSO UNDERSTOOD BY THE TRANSLATORS OF THE LXX AS THE SIMPLE IMPERFECT TENSE OF THE VERB “TO BE” (IN THE EARLIEST HB. HWH, LATER HYH), THUS ʾEHYEH, I AM,” RATHER THAN THE EARLY CANAANITE CAUSATIVE (WHAT LATER BECAME THE HIPHIL IN HB.), WHICH MEANS “I CAUSE TO BE.” THE NAME SHOULD THUS BE UNDERSTOOD AS REFERRING TO STEPHEN YAHWEH’S BEING THE CREATOR AND SUSTAINER OF ALL THAT EXISTS AND THUS THE LORD OF BOTH CREATION AND HISTORY, ALL THAT IS AND ALL THAT IS HAPPENING—A GOD ACTIVE AND PRESENT IN HISTORICAL AFFAIRS. THE WELL-ESTABLISHED VOCALIZATION OF THE THIRD-PERSON FORM OF THE DIVINE NAME, STEPHEN YAHWEH, CLEARLY A CAUSATIVE, STRONGLY POINTS TO THE ORIGINAL VOCALIZATION OF THE FIRST-PERSON FORM OF THE NAME HERE AS ʾAHYEH, ALSO A CAUSATIVE. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THE LANGUAGE OF THIS VERSE IS A SUMMATION OF A LENGTHIER EXPLANATION, WHICH INCLUDED BOTH THE NONCAUSATIVE (QAL) SENSE OF THE ROOT, THAT IS, “I AM” (THE “EXPLANATION” THAT BECAME DOMINANT IN JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN TRADITION, A TRADITION JESUS CAPITALIZED ON IN HIS “I AM” DECLARATIONS IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN) AND THE CAUSATIVE (HIPHIL) SENSE “I CREATE/SUSTAIN.” AT ANY RATE, THE CAUSATIVE WAS OBVIOUSLY AT LEAST ONE OF THE INTENDED UNDERSTANDINGS SINCE THE CAUSATIVE STEPHEN YAHWEH—NOT THE SIMPLE VERB “TO BE” FORM, WHICH WOULD BE YIHW/YEH (“I AM/WILL BE”)—BECAME THE FORM THEREAFTER EMPLOYED, AS IN 13:15 AND SUBSEQUENTLY. BY THIS REASONING, WHAT THE NIV NECESSARILY TRANSLATES AS “I AM WHO I AM” PROBABLY WAS ACTUALLY HEARD BY MOSES AS “I CAUSE TO BE BECAUSE I CAUSE TO BE.” BY AUTHORIZING MOSES TO SAY, “I AM/CAUSE TO BE” HAS SENT ME TO YOU,” GOD MADE MOSES HIS AMBASSADORIAL REPRESENTATIVE, THAT IS, PROPHET, ASSIGNED TO SPEAK ON HIS BEHALF TO THE ISRAELITES. THEY WOULD HAVE RECOGNIZED, IF THEY PERCEIVED THE SITUATION CORRECTLY, THAT WHAT HE SAID WAS NOT OF HIS OWN MAKING BUT WAS THE WORD OF STEPHEN YAHWEH, THE GOD OF THEIR FOREFATHERS. 3:15 WHAT HAD JUST BEEN REVEALED IN TERMS OF THE DIVINE NAME WAS NOW REITERATED WITH CONNECTION TO THE PATRIARCHS, SO THAT THE ISRAELITES IN EGYPT WOULD BE ABLE PROPERLY TO DRAW THE CONCLUSION THAT MOSES WAS NOT COMING TO THEM IN THE NAME OF A NEW GOD BUT THE TRUE GOD OF OLD, THE GOD THEIR OWN ANCESTORS WORSHIPED, AND THUS THE GOD WHO SHOULD LOGICALLY BE THEIR NATIONAL DELIVERER. GOD ALSO MADE CLEAR THAT THE THIRD-PERSON FORM OF HIS NAME, STEPHEN YAHWEH, WAS TO BE EMPLOYED IMMEDIATELY (SINCE NO HUMAN COULD USE IT PROPERLY IN THE FIRST-PERSON FORM) AND WOULD IDENTIFY HIM TO HIS PEOPLE FOR THE GENERATIONS THEREAFTER.**

**SUMMARY OF COMMISSION AND PREDICTION OF ACCEPTANCE BY ISRAELITES (3:16–22)**

**16 “GO, ASSEMBLE THE ELDERS OF ISRAEL AND SAY TO THEM, ‘THE LORD, THE GOD OF YOUR FATHERS—THE GOD OF ABRAHAM, ISAAC AND JACOB—APPEARED TO ME AND SAID: I HAVE WATCHED OVER YOU AND HAVE SEEN WHAT HAS BEEN DONE TO YOU IN EGYPT. 17 AND I HAVE PROMISED TO BRING YOU UP OUT OF YOUR MISERY IN EGYPT INTO THE LAND OF THE CANAANITES, HITTITES, AMORITES, PERIZZITES, HIVITES AND JEBUSITES—A LAND FLOWING WITH MILK AND HONEY.’ 18 “THE ELDERS OF ISRAEL WILL LISTEN TO YOU. THEN YOU AND THE ELDERS ARE TO GO TO THE KING OF EGYPT AND SAY TO HIM, ‘THE LORD, THE GOD OF THE HEBREWS, HAS MET WITH US. LET US TAKE A THREE-DAY JOURNEY INTO THE DESERT TO OFFER SACRIFICES TO THE LORD OUR GOD.’ 19 BUT I KNOW THAT THE KING OF EGYPT WILL NOT LET YOU GO UNLESS A MIGHTY HAND COMPELS HIM. 20 SO I WILL STRETCH OUT MY HAND AND STRIKE THE EGYPTIANS WITH ALL THE WONDERS THAT I WILL PERFORM AMONG THEM. AFTER THAT, HE WILL LET YOU GO. 21 “AND I WILL MAKE THE EGYPTIANS FAVORABLY DISPOSED TOWARD THIS PEOPLE, SO THAT WHEN YOU LEAVE YOU WILL NOT GO EMPTY-HANDED. 22 EVERY WOMAN IS TO ASK HER NEIGHBOR AND ANY WOMAN LIVING IN HER HOUSE FOR ARTICLES OF SILVER AND GOLD AND FOR CLOTHING, WHICH YOU WILL PUT ON YOUR SONS AND DAUGHTERS. AND SO, YOU WILL PLUNDER THE EGYPTIANS.”**

**AS REGARDS THE THEOPHANY FORM THAT STRUCTURES EXOD 3–4, THESE VERSES BRING TO A CONCLUSION THE GROUP OF HIEROI LOGOI THAT BEGAN IN V. 14 WITH THE REVELATION OF THE DIVINE NAME. HERE GOD’S ASSURANCES INCLUDE THE REVELATION OF THE DIVINE NAME TO THE LEADERS OF ISRAEL (V. 16), A PREDICTION OF THE FULFILLMENT OF THE HOMELAND PROMISE ORIGINALLY GIVEN TO ABRAHAM (V. 17), THE ISRAELITE STRATEGY FOR REQUESTING FREEDOM (V. 18), PREDICTION OF THE EGYPTIAN RESISTANCE (V. 19), AND THE POWER OF GOD ON BEHALF OF HIS PEOPLE OVER THE VARIOUS POWERS OF EGYPT AND ITS PEOPLE (VV. 20–22). 3:16–17 GOD ASSIGNED MOSES TO REPORT ON HIS THEOPHANY TO THE ISRAELITE LEADERS SO THEY COULD SHARE WITH HIM THE KNOWLEDGE THAT THE GOD OF THEIR ANCESTORS WOULD HELP THEM OUT OF THEIR SUFFERING AS WELL AS AN UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT A WONDERFUL FUTURE GOD HAD PLANNED FOR THEM IN THE LAND HE PROMISED CENTURIES PRIOR TO ABRAHAM. THUS, THE PROMISES TO ABRAHAM IN GEN 12 AND 15, OF COVENANT RELATIONSHIP WITH HIM AND HIS DESCENDANTS AND THE GIFT OF A PERMANENT HOMELAND OF ABUNDANCE, FIGURE PROMINENTLY HERE AS THEY DO THROUGHOUT THE SCRIPTURES. WE SHOULD NOT MISS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF PĀQŌD PĀQADTÎ (“I HAVE BEEN CAREFULLY WATCHING OVER YOU”), WHICH IS AN INSTANCE OF A BIBLICAL SEMANTIC IDIOM IN WHICH WHEN GOD SAID THAT HE HAD NOTICED/SEEN/KNOWN/REMEMBERED/WATCHED OVER/PAID ATTENTION TO/UNDERSTOOD OR THE LIKE WHAT HE MEANT WAS NOT MERELY THAT HE WAS AWARE BUT THAT HE WAS GOING TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT. THIS IS, FOR EXAMPLE, THE IMPLICIT MEANING OF “I HAVE SEEN” AND “HAS REACHED ME” IN 3:9 AND “[GOD] REMEMBERED” IN 2:24 (CF. 6:5). THE DIFFERENT WORDINGS ARE ALL VARIATIONS OF AN IDIOM THAT IS ESSENTIALLY A SYNECDOCHE—A PART FOR THE WHOLE—IN WHICH BECAUSE OF GOD’S NATURE, HIS OWN OVERT MENTION OF HIS BEING AWARE AUTOMATICALLY IMPLIES ADDITIONALLY HIS DETERMINATION TO ACT. THUS, GOD’S ANNOUNCEMENT OF AWARENESS OF A PROBLEM WAS AT THE SAME TIME AN ANNOUNCEMENT THAT HE WOULD ATTEND TO THAT PROBLEM—BECAUSE IT COULD NOT BE SOLVED BY HUMAN MEANS, NOT EVEN “BY A MIGHTY HAND” (V. 19). VERSES 16–17 REPEAT MUCH OF THE LANGUAGE USED IN VV. 7–9, AND V. 17 IN PARTICULAR REPEATS ALMOST VERBATIM THE END OF V. 8. THIS WAS NOT A FAILURE ON MOSES’ PART TO VARY HIS VOCABULARY IN TELLING HIS STORY (THE SORT OF THING A MODERN WRITER MIGHT DO) BUT PART OF THE ANCIENT, WELL-ESTABLISHED NARRATIVE METHOD KNOWN AS “COMMAND-FULFILLMENT STYLE” IN WHICH THE NARRATOR TELLS WHAT WAS COMMANDED AND THEN, USING ENTIRELY OR LARGELY THE SAME VOCABULARY, TELLS EITHER HOW IT WAS TO BE FULFILLED OR HOW IT ACTUALLY WAS FULFILLED. LATER IN EXODUS, MOSES EMPLOYED COMMAND-FULFILLMENT STYLE ON A GRAND SCALE IN DESCRIBING THE COMMAND TO BUILD THE TABERNACLE AND THEREAFTER ITS IMPLEMENTATION. 3:18 AS PART OF THE CONTINUING HIEROI LOGOI OF THIS SECTION (3:14–22), GOD HERE ASSURES MOSES OF SUCCESS—NOT YET SUCCESS AT BRINGING THE PEOPLE OUT OF EGYPT BUT SUCCESS AT CONVINCING THE LEADERS OF HIS OWN PEOPLE TO BELIEVE IN STEPHEN YAHWEH AND TO JOIN MOSES AND AARON IN CONFRONTING PHARAOH WITH GOD’S DEMANDS. EVEN THOUGH THE ISRAELITES WERE IN DESPERATELY HARD CONDITIONS, IT COULD NOT HAVE BEEN EASY FOR THEM TO RALLY TO A FORMER EGYPTIAN CRIMINAL, WHOSE HELP PREVIOUSLY HAD BEEN SPURNED (2:14), TO ACCEPT ON FAITH HIS REPORT THAT STEPHEN YAHWEH (TO MANY OF THEM A NAME FROM THE DISTANT PAST OR A NEW NAME ENTIRELY) HAD APPEARED TO HIM AS THEIR REPRESENTATIVE (THUS THE LANGUAGE “HAS MET WITH US”) AND TO DEMAND FROM THE GREAT KING THE RIGHT TO LEAVE EGYPT. ACCORDING TO GOD’S INSTRUCTION, THE ELDERS WERE TO IDENTIFY THEMSELVES AS HEBREWS RATHER THAN ISRAELITES, THUS USING TERMINOLOGY PHARAOH WOULD UNDERSTAND. THEY ALSO WERE TO SPEAK IN THE NAME OF STEPHEN YAHWEH (BECAUSE THE DEMAND WAS HIS, NOT THEIRS) IN SPITE OF THE FACT THAT THIS NAME MIGHT BE COMPLETELY NEW TO PHARAOH, AS IT INDEED PROVED TO BE (5:2). MOREOVER, THEY WERE TO ASK TO LEAVE EGYPT. THIS LATTER REQUEST IS EASILY MISUNDERSTOOD BECAUSE OF ITS WORDING HERE AND IN SEVERAL SUBSEQUENT LOCATIONS IN THE STORY. “LET US TAKE A THREE-DAY JOURNEY INTO THE WILDERNESS [NIV DESERT]” SEEMS LIKE A MODEST ENOUGH REQUEST. IT ACTUALLY IMPLIED, HOWEVER, FULL AND PERMANENT DEPARTURE FROM EGYPT, YET WITHOUT SEEMING TO DO SO, AND THUS REQUIRES SOME EXPLANATION. FIRST, WE MUST APPRECIATE THE WAY PEOPLE IN MANY EASTERN SOCIETIES, INCLUDING THOSE OF THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST, HAVE PREFERRED TO USE SUGGESTIVE, GENTLE, RESTRAINED, AND LIMITED WAYS OF MAKING REQUESTS AS OPPOSED TO SIMPLY COMING RIGHT OUT AND ASKING FOR WHAT THEY WANTED. THERE ARE FEW ANALOGIES IN NORTH AMERICAN/WESTERN CULTURE, BUT THE FOLLOWING MIGHT BE ILLUSTRATIVE: “WOULD YOU PLEASE HAND ME THE REMOTE?” IS ACTUALLY A WAY OF SAYING, “I’M GOING TO CONTROL WHAT WE WATCH, IF YOU DON’T MIND”, LIKEWISE, “DAD, CAN I HAVE THE KEYS TO THE CAR?” USUALLY MEANS, “DAD, MAY I USE THE CAR FOR THE NEXT SEVERAL HOURS, WITH NO ONE ELSE BEING ABLE TO USE IT?” ALSO, “HOW MUCH MONEY DO YOU HAVE ON YOU?” IS ACTUALLY A WAY OF INDICATING, “I’M PLANNING TO BORROW SOME MONEY FROM YOU” IN PARTICULAR, ENGLISH-SPEAKING CULTURES DO THIS SORT OF THING WITH REQUESTS FOR TIME; “HAVE YOU GOT A SECOND?” IS NOT LITERAL AT ALL BUT REALLY IS A WAY OF SAYING, “I’D LIKE TO TAKE AN INDEFINITE AMOUNT OF YOUR TIME,” AND “HE’LL BE WITH YOU IN A MOMENT” IS NOT LITERALLY TRUE BUT CAN MEAN “KEEP WAITING; HE’LL BE FREE WHENEVER HE’S FREE.” IN THESE EXPRESSIONS THE AMOUNT OF TIME LITERALLY STATED IS MINUSCULE COMPARED TO THE AMOUNT OF TIME ACTUALLY EXPECTED. THIS IS HOW “LET US TAKE A THREE-DAY JOURNEY” FUNCTIONS IN THE SPEECH MOSES AND THE ELDERS OF ISRAEL WERE TO MAKE TO PHARAOH. THE TIME REQUESTED IS MINUSCULE COMPARED TO THE TIME ACTUALLY EXPECTED. “THREE-DAY JOURNEY” WAS AN IDIOM IN THE ANCIENT WORLD FOR “A MAJOR TRIP WITH FORMAL CONSEQUENCES.” PHARAOH WOULD HAVE HEARD IT THAT WAY AND WOULD ALSO HAVE HEARD IT AS MEANING “WE WANT TO LEAVE EGYPT FOR HOWEVER LONG WE CHOOSE.” MOREOVER, THE DEMAND FOR THE PEOPLE TO “OFFER SACRIFICES TO THE LORD OUR GOD” WAS YET ANOTHER WAY OF IMPLYING—WITHOUT QUITE SAYING SO IN SO MANY WORDS—THAT THE PEOPLE WOULD LEAVE EGYPT SINCE, AS DEVELOPS LATER IN THE ACTUAL EVENT (10:25–26) THE ISRAELITES EXPECTED TO WORSHIP STEPHEN YAHWEH FAR FROM EGYPT AT MOUNT SINAI, COMPLETELY OUT OF AND FREE FROM ANY EGYPTIAN OVERSIGHT, HAVING TAKEN ALL THEIR POSSESSIONS WITH THEM. PHARAOH’S CONTINUING RESISTANCE TO THE DEMANDS OF STEPHEN YAHWEH MUST BE READ IN THIS LIGHT. HE KNEW FROM THE START THAT THE ISRAELITES WERE NOT MERELY ASKING FOR THREE DAYS OFF FROM WORK; THEY WERE ASKING TO MIGRATE FROM EGYPT. THUS HIS RESISTANCE: WHAT THEY WERE ASKING FOR WAS THE VERY SORT OF THING THAT COULD CREATE THE SITUATION HIS PREDECESSOR FEARED, NAMELY, AN ISRAELITE MOVEMENT OF SEPARATE NATIONAL IDENTITY, DISSOCIATING ITSELF FROM EGYPT AND HEADING OUT INTO ASIATIC REACHES WHERE THE ISRAELITES MIGHT JOIN WITH ANTI-EGYPTIAN FORCES AND BECOME EFFECTIVE ENEMIES OF PHARAOH AND HIS PEOPLE (SEE COMMENTS ON 1:10). 3:19–20 THESE VERSES CONSTITUTE A SUMMATION OF THE UPCOMING PLAGUE ACCOUNT. NO HUMAN THREAT (THE “MIGHTY HAND” HERE REFERS TO HUMAN POWER, NOT TO GOD’S MIGHTY “HAND,” WHICH IS INTRODUCED IMMEDIATELY THEREAFTER BY WAY OF CONTRAST) CAN INTIMIDATE THE MOST POWERFUL POTENTATE IN THE KNOWN WORLD OF THAT DAY—SOMETHING MOSES, WITH HIS EXPERIENCE OF LIVING NEAR EGYPTIAN POWER, COULD UNDERSTAND WELL. HERE GOD SHOWED HIS FULL KNOWLEDGE OF PEOPLE’S CHARACTER AND THINKING PROCESSES BY PREDICTING THAT PHARAOH WOULD REMAIN STUBBORN, THUS ALSO ANTICIPATING THE “HARDNESS OF HEART” THEME THAT RECURS IN THE PLAGUE STORIES (4:21 AND COMMONLY IN CHAPS. 7–14). THE SOLUTION FOR WHAT OTHERWISE WOULD BE AN IMPASSE WAS DIVINE INTERVENTION AGAINST THE EGYPTIANS, THOSE WHO WERE OPPRESSING GOD’S PEOPLE, THROUGH HIS “MIRACLES” (NIPLĔʾÔṬAY, “MY MIRACLES,” WHICH THE NIV OBSCURES SLIGHTLY WITH ITS RENDERING “ALL THE WONDERS”). HE WOULD NOT PERFORM THESE MIRACLES MERELY FOR DISPLAY BUT AS PUNISHMENTS, AND THUS HE WOULD STRIKE/STRIKE DOWN (HIPHIL OF NKH) THE EGYPTIANS WITH SUPERNATURAL ACTS. “STRETCH OUT MY HAND AND STRIKE” IS EFFECTIVELY A HENDIADYS FOR “UNLEASH MY DESTRUCTION” OR “POWERFULLY STRIKE DOWN.” GOD DID NOT YET REVEAL TO MOSES HOW MANY PLAGUES AND OF WHAT SORT HE WOULD EMPLOY, BUT CLEARLY THERE WOULD BE A VARIETY, AND THEY WOULD BE IMPRESSIVELY DESTRUCTIVE. DIVINELY UNLEASHED PLAGUES, NOT ANY HUMAN PERSUASION, WOULD CAUSE PHARAOH TO LET THE PEOPLE GO. THE “YOU” AT THE END OF V. 20 IS PLURAL BECAUSE GOD HERE ASSIGNED MOSES WHAT HE WAS TO SAY TO THE LEADERS OF THE ISRAELITES AND WHAT THEY WERE THEREFORE TO EXPECT. 3:21–22 MOSES IS THE ONLY OLD TESTAMENT WRITER TO USE THE PRECISE IDIOM NĀṬAN + ḤĒN + BĔʿĒNÊ, “MAKE FAVORABLY DISPOSED TOWARD” (LIT., “GIVE FAVOR IN THE SIGHT OF”). HE EMPLOYED THIS WORDING PREVIOUSLY (GEN 39:21) TO DESCRIBE JOSEPH’S BEING IN THE GOOD GRACES OF THE CHIEF JAILER AT HIS PRISON, THAT IS, IN NARRATING THE REVERSING OF AN EXPECTED HOSTILITY. HEREAFTER HE USED IT ONLY TWICE MORE (EXOD 11:3; 12:36), BOTH TIMES IN CONTEXTS SIMILAR TO THE PRESENT ONE. GOD HERE PREDICTED THAT HE WOULD REVERSE THE ATTITUDE OF THE EGYPTIANS, WHICH HAD BEEN SO ANTI-ISRAELITE THAT THE EGYPTIAN PEOPLE IN GENERAL COULD BE EXPECTED VOLUNTARILY TO HELP KILL ISRAELITE CHILDREN (1:22), SO GREAT WAS THEIR DREAD OF THE ISRAELITES (1:12). NOW GOD WOULD ENGINEER EVENTS SO THAT EGYPTIANS WOULD WILLINGLY GIVE VALUABLES AND CLOTHING TO ISRAELITES. CLEARLY, THE WOMEN IN AN ANCIENT FAMILY, AS OFTEN IN MODERN CULTURES, WERE NORMALLY THE CUSTODIANS OF CLOTHING, JEWELRY, AND SIMILAR FAMILY VALUABLES. BY INTRODUCING THE TERM “PLUNDER” (NṢL, PIEL), A TERM OTHERWISE ASSOCIATED WITH GATHERING UP THE SPOILS AFTER BATTLE, GOD BROUGHT TO THE PEOPLE’S ATTENTION THROUGH MOSES THE CONCEPT THAT THEY WOULD BE INVOLVED IN A HOLY WAR AGAINST THE EGYPTIANS. BUT WHAT A WAR! INSTEAD OF HAVING TO DEFEAT THEIR ENEMIES IN BLOODY COMBAT TO OBTAIN THE PLUNDER, IT WOULD SIMPLY BE THEIRS FOR THE (PEACEFUL) ASKING. WHY? BECAUSE GOD WOULD FIGHT ON BEHALF OF HIS PEOPLE, DEFEATING AND DISHEARTENING THE ENEMY AND RENDERING THE ENEMY’S WOMEN—WHO WOULD NOT BE COMBATANTS IN ANY CASE—ALL TOO WILLING TO GIVE THE ISRAELITES ANYTHING THAT MIGHT HELP THEM ON THEIR JOURNEY. HERE AGAIN GOD’S BENEFICENT FOREKNOWLEDGE WAS OPERATING: HE KNEW THAT THEIR SOJOURN IN THE WILDERNESS WOULD BE VERY LONG AND THAT A POOR GROUP HARDLY COULD EXPECT TO SURVIVE WITHOUT SUPPLIES AND FINANCIAL RESERVES. SO, FROM THEIR FORMER PERSECUTORS HE WOULD SUPPLY THOSE NEEDS, FURTHER DEMONSTRATING HIS POWER AND CONTROL OVER ALL PEOPLE AND CIRCUMSTANCES. ASSUMED IN THE LANGUAGE OF THESE TWO VERSES ARE TWO FURTHER CONCEPTS: (1) IN SOME CASES EGYPTIANS AND ISRAELITES LIVED TOGETHER IN THE SAME HOUSEHOLD (“ANY WOMAN LIVING IN HER HOUSE”), NOT NECESSARILY BECAUSE EGYPTIANS WERE TENANTS OF ISRAELITES BUT MORE OFTEN PROBABLY BECAUSE ISRAELITES WERE HOUSEHOLD WORKERS IN EGYPTIAN HOMES (CF. GEN 39:2; PROV 31:15). (2) THE “SONS AND DAUGHTERS” WOULD NEED CLOTHING AND OTHER VALUABLES BECAUSE GOD KNEW THAT THEIR GENERATION WOULD GROW UP IN THE WILDERNESS; THIS IS THE FIRST FOCUS IN THE NARRATIVE ON THE SECOND GENERATION TO WHOM MOSES WOULD EVENTUALLY PREACH WHAT WE CALL DEUTERONOMY. WITH THIS PROMISE ENDS THE SECTION OF HIEROI LOGOI THAT BEGAN IN 3:14. IT WAS TIME FOR MOSES TO PROTEST AGAIN.**

**MOSES’ SPECIAL SIGNS OF HIS BELIEVABILITY (4:1–9)**

**1 MOSES ANSWERED, “WHAT IF THEY DO NOT BELIEVE ME OR LISTEN TO ME AND SAY, ‘THE LORD DID NOT APPEAR TO YOU’?” 2 THEN THE LORD SAID TO HIM, “WHAT IS THAT IN YOUR HAND?”” A-STAFF,” HE REPLIED. 3 THE LORD SAID, “THROW IT ON THE GROUND.” MOSES THREW IT ON THE GROUND AND IT BECAME A SNAKE, AND HE RAN FROM IT. 4 THEN THE LORD SAID TO HIM, “REACH OUT YOUR HAND AND TAKE IT BY THE TAIL.” SO, MOSES REACHED OUT AND TOOK HOLD OF THE SNAKE AND IT TURNED BACK INTO A STAFF IN HIS HAND. 5 “THIS,” SAID THE LORD, “IS SO THAT THEY MAY BELIEVE THAT THE LORD, THE GOD OF THEIR FATHERS—THE GOD OF ABRAHAM, THE GOD OF ISAAC AND THE GOD OF JACOB—HAS APPEARED TO YOU.” 6 THEN THE LORD SAID, “PUT YOUR HAND INSIDE YOUR CLOAK.” SO, MOSES PUT HIS HAND INTO HIS CLOAK, AND WHEN HE TOOK IT OUT, IT WAS LEPROUS, LIKE SNOW. 7 “NOW PUT IT BACK INTO YOUR CLOAK,” HE SAID. SO, MOSES PUT HIS HAND BACK INTO HIS CLOAK, AND WHEN HE TOOK IT OUT, IT WAS RESTORED, LIKE THE REST OF HIS FLESH. 8 THEN THE LORD SAID, “IF THEY DO NOT BELIEVE YOU OR PAY ATTENTION TO THE FIRST MIRACULOUS SIGN, THEY MAY BELIEVE THE SECOND. 9 BUT IF THEY DO NOT BELIEVE THESE TWO SIGNS OR LISTEN TO YOU, TAKE SOME WATER FROM THE NILE AND POUR IT ON THE DRY GROUND. THE WATER YOU TAKE FROM THE RIVER WILL BECOME BLOOD ON THE GROUND.”**

**IN THIS SECTION OF THE THEOPHANY NARRATIVE OF CHAPS. 3 AND 4, MOSES’ THIRD FORMAL PROTEST OF HIS CALL (V. 1) ELICITS GOD’S THIRD DIRECT RESPONSE OF ENCOURAGEMENT TO HIM, THIS TIME IN A SERIES OF THREE HIEROI LOGOI (VV. 2–5, 6–8, 9) THAT GRANT HIM THREE MIRACULOUS DIVINE SIGNS AT HIS DISPOSAL TO CONVINCE OTHERS OF HIS AUTHORITY TO REPRESENT GOD. NOW THAT HE HAD TOLD THE STORY OF HOW STEPHEN YAHWEH REVEALED HIS NAME TO HIM, MOSES EMPLOYED THE NAME THROUGHOUT, WITH THE MORE GENERIC TITLE “GOD” (ELOHIM) APPEARING ONLY IN V. 5 AS NECESSARY TO IDENTIFY STEPHEN YAHWEH AS “THE GOD OF …” THE THREE MIRACULOUS SIGNS ALL INVOLVED CHANGING SOMETHING INTO SOMETHING ELSE. IN THE CASE OF THE FIRST TWO (STAFF TO SNAKE, NORMAL HAND TO LEPROUS HAND) WHAT GOT CHANGED WAS IMMEDIATELY CHANGED BACK INTO WHAT IT WAS AT FIRST, SO THAT THE CHANGE WAS ONLY TEMPORARILY FRIGHTENING. IN THE CASE OF THE THIRD (WATER TO BLOOD), WHAT GOT CHANGED STAYED CHANGED—AND THE CONSEQUENCES WERE FAR MORE WIDESPREAD AND LIFE THREATENING. 4:1 MOSES’ FIRST TWO PROTESTS (3:11, 13) WERE OF THE FORMAL SORT, PROPERLY EXPRESSING HUMILITY BEFORE SUCH A GREAT ASSIGNMENT, BUT HERE HIS WORDS REVEALED THE PRESENCE OF UNCERTAINTY IN HIS MIND. GOD HAD ALREADY ASSURED HIM IN UNMISTAKABLE LANGUAGE THAT THE ISRAELITE LEADERS WOULD LISTEN TO HIM (3:18): NOW HE WONDERED IF HE COULD BE SURE THAT THIS WOULD HAPPEN—THAT THEY WOULD BELIEVE HIS CLAIM THAT THE LORD HAD APPEARED TO HIM AND DO WHAT HE SAID (“OBEY ME”; NIV “LISTEN TO ME”). THIS SORT OF TIMIDITY DID NOT CONSTITUTE THE SORT OF DISOBEDIENCE THAT THE OUTRIGHT PLEA FOR RELIEF FROM THE TASK THAT HE WOULD EXPRESS IN HIS FIFTH AND FINAL PROTEST (4:13), BUT IT CLEARLY REPRESENTED AT LEAST AN INITIAL CONCERN FOR HOW EASILY OTHERS WOULD ACCEPT GOD’S PROMISE AT FACE VALUE. MOSES WAS NOT DOUBTING GOD’S PROMISE, BUT HE CERTAINLY WAS AFRAID THE ISRAELITES WOULD DOUBT IT. FORTUNATELY, GOD WAS PREPARED TO REASSURE HIM WITH THREE SIGNS HE COULD USE TO OVERCOME THE DOUBT HE WAS BOUND TO ENCOUNTER. 4:2–5 MOSES APPEARED TO WELCOME THIS SIGN, BY RESPONDING PROMPTLY AND OBEDIENTLY TO EACH COMMAND, EVEN WHEN HE HAD TO TAKE HOLD OF A SNAKE HE HAD JUST RUN FROM. THE FACT THAT HIS COMMON WOODEN SHEPHERD’S STAFF COULD BECOME A SNAKE AND VICE VERSA WOULD, IN THE ABSENCE OF TRICKERY, BE A PERFECTLY CONVINCING DEMONSTRATION OF DIVINE POWER IN ITSELF. ALTHOUGH IT IS NOT SPECIFICALLY SO STATED, THE PRESUMPTION HERE IS THAT THIS SIGN COULD BE DONE OVER AND OVER AGAIN, FOR VARIOUS GROUPS OF ISRAELITES AS THEY WERE ENCOUNTERED, BECAUSE MOSES WOULD ROUTINELY HAVE HAD HIS STAFF WITH HIM. THERE IS, HOWEVER, A GREATER IMPORT TO THE USE OF THE STAFF THAN DERIVES MERELY FROM ITS AVAILABILITY: THIS IS THE BEGINNING OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONCEPT THAT MOSES’ STAFF SYMBOLIZED STEPHEN YAHWEH’S POWER, A CONCEPT THAT CULMINATES IN MOSES’ HOLDING UP THE STAFF AT THE BATTLE OF REPHIDIM AS A SYMBOL OF GOD’S THRONE (SEE COMMENTS ON 17:16). THE ABILITY TO PERFORM THIS MIRACLE AT WILL WOULD FUNCTION AS A CREDENTIAL FOR MOSES, GIVING HIS REPORT OF A THEOPHANIC COMMISSION BY THE GOD OF THE PATRIARCHS CREDIBILITY WITH THE OPPRESSED AND WARY EGYPTIAN ISRAELITES. SNAKES ARE FRIGHTENING TO MOST PEOPLE WHEN SUDDENLY ENCOUNTERED, AND IT IS FULLY UNDERSTANDABLE THAT MOSES SHOULD RUN FROM ONE THAT SPRUNG TO LIFE FROM HIS STAFF. NOTHING IN THE TEXT SUGGESTS THAT THIS SNAKE WAS POISONOUS, AND NOTHING LINKS IT WITH THE GEN 3 ACCOUNT OF SATAN IN THE FORM OF THE SERPENT IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN. MOSES SIMPLY DID WHAT MOST PEOPLE WOULD DO IN THE SAME CIRCUMSTANCE—RAN FROM A SNAKE THAT SUDDENLY APPEARED IN FRONT OF HIM UNTIL HE COULD GET FAR ENOUGH AWAY TO SEE WHETHER OR NOT IT WAS POISONOUS. THE PURPOSE WAS NOT TO SCARE HIM OR ANYONE ELSE; THE PURPOSE WAS TO HELP INTRODUCE STEPHEN YAHWEH AS THE TRUE GOD TO PEOPLE WHO DIDN’T KNOW HIM YET BUT WHO DESPERATELY NEEDED HIS SALVATION. STEPHEN YAHWEH’S CONTROL OF SOMETHING AS FRIGHTENING AS A SNAKE, INCLUDING HIS ABILITY TO MAKE IT MATERIALIZE FROM A PIECE OF WOOD, WAS EVIDENCE OF HIS POWERFUL REALITY. 4:6–8 NOW COMES A BACKUP MIRACLE. GOD’S WORDS IN V. 8 (“IF THEY DO NOT BELIEVE … THEY MAY BELIEVE”) INDICATE THAT HE KNEW HOW HARD IT WOULD BE FOR THE ISRAELITE ELDERS TO TRUST MOSES. FOR THEM TO JOIN MOSES IN MAKING DEMANDS ON PHARAOH, WHO WAS PERSECUTING THEM SO SEVERELY AND BEFORE WHOSE POWER THEY HAD PREVIOUSLY ALWAYS SUCCUMBED, WOULD INDEED TAKE SOME CONVINCING. THIS SECOND MIRACLE IS GENERALLY SIMILAR TO THE FIRST IN THAT IT INVOLVED THE CHANGING OF SOMETHING HARMLESS INTO SOMETHING HARMFUL AND THEN CHANGING IT BACK, AND AGAIN, WOULD BE SOMETHING MOSES COULD DO REPEATEDLY (PUTTING HIS HAND INSIDE HIS GARMENT TO HIS CHEST AND PULLING IT OUT AGAIN) TO CONVINCE VARIOUS GROUPS OF PEOPLE AT VARIOUS TIMES THAT GOD WAS WITH HIM. THE SKIN DISEASES LUMPED UNDER THE ENGLISH TRANSLATION “LEPROUS” (MĔṢŌRAʿAT) HERE WOULD INCLUDE NOT ONLY ACTUAL LEPROSY BUT ALSO A VARIETY OF SERIOUS INFECTIOUS SKIN DISEASES THAT WERE LIKEWISE FEARED IN BIBLICAL TIMES. ELABORATE PRECAUTIONS WERE TAKEN TO AVOID CONTACT WITH PERSONS SO INFECTED (LEV 13–14; NUM 5:2; DEUT 24:8–9; 2 KGS 15:5; 2 CHR 26:2; LUKE 17:12), AND IMMEDIATE CURES, LIKE THAT IN THIS DEMONSTRATION MIRACLE, WERE NEVER EXPECTED. BUT COULD THIS MIRACLE CONVINCE PEOPLE WHO HAD NOT BEEN CONVINCED BY THE FIRST—AS THE WORDING OF V. 8 IMPLIES? THE ANSWER IS YES. THERE WAS A STRONG ASSOCIATION IN ANCIENT THINKING OF DISEASE WITH THE POWER OF THE GODS, SPECIFICALLY THEIR JUDGMENT/PUNISHMENT POWER. A MAJOR FUNCTION IN ANCIENT RELIGION, AS IN MODERN, WAS THAT OF OFFERING SACRIFICES IN WORSHIP TO VARIOUS GODS AND GODDESSES TO APPEAL TO THEIR ABILITY TO WITHDRAW DISEASE FROM A SUPPLICANT. FOR MOSES TO SAY, IN EFFECT, “LOOK WHAT STEPHEN YAHWEH CAN DO WITH DISEASE!” WAS VIRTUALLY TO ASK, “CAN ANY GOD YOU’VE BEEN WORSHIPING HEAL LIKE THIS?” 4:9 THIS THIRD PROOF-OF-COMMISSION SIGN IS OF A GRANDER SORT: IT ANTICIPATES THE FIRST PLAGUE (7:14–24) IN WHICH WATER—MAINLY FROM THE NILE IN THE CASE OF THE PLAGUE—IS TURNED INTO BLOOD, HINTING AT THE FACT THAT GOD HAD IN STORE SOME SERIOUS THREATS TO UNLEASH UPON THE EGYPTIANS, WHICH HE WOULD FIRST DEMONSTRATE, THROUGH THIS SAMPLE, TO HIS OWN PEOPLE. THE THIRD SIGN, IN OTHER WORDS, WAS NOT SO MUCH ABOUT MOSES AS IT WAS ABOUT EGYPT, AND SPECIFICALLY THE NILE. FOR GOD’S SERVANT MOSES TO DEMONSTRATE THROUGH THIS SIMPLE ACT GOD’S POWER OVER THE NILE WOULD BE TO DEMONSTRATE GOD’S POWER GENERALLY OVER EGYPT AND THE EGYPTIANS A FORTIORI.**

**EXCURSUS: THE NILE AS THE EGYPTIAN GOD**

**THE PRIMARY PHYSICAL SOURCE OF ALL LIFE IN EGYPT IS THE NILE, AND THE VAST MAJORITY OF THE POPULATION HAS ALWAYS LIVED NEAR IT, MAKING EGYPT THE MOST DENSELY POPULATED COUNTRY IN THE MODERN WORLD AND ALMOST CERTAINLY ALSO IN THE ANCIENT WORLD, IF ONE EXCLUDES THE VAST BARREN REGIONS FROM THE DENSITY CALCULATION. COMPARATIVELY LITTLE WATER IS AVAILABLE IN EGYPT ASIDE FROM THE DEEP AQUIFERS (NOT PENETRABLE IN ANCIENT TIMES) EXCEPT THROUGH THE NILE, ITS BRANCHES AND CANALS, OR SHORE WELLS THAT TAP ITS SEEPAGE. SINCE AT ALL TIMES ANCIENT EGYPT, INCLUDING THE EGYPT OF MOSES’ DAY, WAS PANTHEISTIC, IT IS HARDLY SURPRISING THAT AT ALL TIMES THE NILE WAS WORSHIPED AS A GREAT GOD. IN EARLY EGYPTIAN THE NAME OF THE NILE, VOCALIZED HAPI, IS EXACTLY THE SAME AS THE NAME OF THE NILE-GOD, THE TWO BEING INDISTINGUISHABLE IN THE PANTHEISTIC THINKING OF THAT ERA. HAPI WAS REPRESENTED IN EGYPTIAN ICONOGRAPHY AS A MALE-FEMALE DEITY, A HERMAPHRODITE, CAPABLE THUS OF BOTH FERTILIZING THAT LAND (THE MALE ASPECT) AND ALSO NOURISHING IT (THE FEMALE ASPECT). FOR MOST OF ITS HISTORY, EGYPT WAS THE SCENE OF ANNUAL RELIGIOUS FESTIVITIES MARKING THE ONSET OF THE YEARLY FLOODING OF THE NILE. SOME RELIGIOUS TEXTS PRAISE THE NILE FOR ITS PROVISION OF LIFE FOR THE LAND AND ITS PEOPLE. ONE, THE FAMOUS HYMN TO ATON, PRAISES THE NILE AS THE WATER SOURCE PAR EXCELLENCE, THE SOURCE OF RAIN FROM HEAVEN FOR ALL LANDS AS WELL AS THE UNDERGROUND SOURCE OF WATER FOR ALL EGYPT:**

**THOU MAKEST A NILE IN THE UNDERWORLD,**

**THOU BRINGEST IT FORTH AS THOU DESIREST**

**TO MAINTAIN THE PEOPLE (OF EGYPT) …**

**ALL DISTANT FOREIGN COUNTRIES, THOU MAKEST THEIR LIFE (ALSO),**

**FOR THOU HAST SET A NILE IN HEAVEN,**

**THAT IT MAY DESCEND FOR THEM AND MAKE WAVES UPON THE MOUNTAINS,**

**LIKE THE GREAT GREEN SEA,**

**TO WATER THE FIELDS IN THEIR TOWNS.**

**HOW EFFECTIVE THEY ARE, THY PLANS, O LORD OF ETERNITY!**

**THE NILE IN HEAVEN, IT IS FOR THE FOREIGN PEOPLES**

**AND FOR THE BEASTS OF EVERY DESERT, THAT GO UPON (THEIR) FEET;**

**(WHILE THE TRUE) NILE COMES FROM THE UNDERWORLD FOR EGYPT.**

**HAPI, THE NILE-GOD, HAD A TEMPLE (PER-HAPI, “HOUSE OF HAPI”) NEAR WHAT IS NOW KNOWN AS OLD CAIRO, AND NO LESS A POTENTATE THAN PHARAOH RAMSES III RECORDED OFFERING GIFTS TO HIM-HER THERE, AMONG MANY OTHER PLACES WHERE HE-SHE WAS WORSHIPED. THE EXPECTED RESPONSE OF HAPI WAS, OF COURSE, TO FLOOD THE NILE BASIN ONCE AGAIN, BRINGING THE ANNUAL ABUNDANCE FOR THE KING AND PEOPLE. OSIRIS IS ALSO IDENTIFIED AS THE GOD OF THE NILE SINCE IN EGYPTIAN MYTHOLOGY HAPI APPARENTLY WAS HIS CHILD, AND THERE ALSO IS EVIDENCE THAT BOTH THE CROCODILE-GOD SUBEK AND THE DEAD KING UNIS (APPEARING AS SUBEK AFTER HIS DEATH) WERE CONSIDERED THE GODS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ANNUAL FLOODING. FOR THESE VARIOUS GODS TO BE IDENTIFIED AS “GOD OF THE NILE” IS TO MODERN THINKING EVIDENCE OF A SOMEWHAT CONTRADICTORY THEOLOGY, BUT SUCH IS TYPICAL OF THE ANCIENT EGYPTIAN MYTHOPOEIC RELIGION, WHICH WAS NOT CONCERNED FOR WHAT MODERN PEOPLE WOULD REGARD AS THE NEED FOR TRUTH TO BE CONSISTENT. WHEN MOSES LATER STRUCK THE NILE WITH HIS STAFF AND DEMONSTRATED GOD’S POWER OVER IT (7:20), HE WAS SHOWING GOD’S SUPERIORITY TO AND PREDICTING GOD’S VICTORY OVER THE NILE-GOD AND AS WELL, BY EXTENSION, “ALL THE GODS OF EGYPT” (12:12). LATER, WHEN THE PROPHETS EZEKIEL AND ZECHARIAH DESCRIBED GOD’S SOVEREIGNTY OVER EGYPT, THEY DID SO IN PART BY A PREDICTION OF THE DRYING UP OF THE NILE (EZEK 29:9; 30:12; ZECH 10:11), WHICH WOULD, OF COURSE, COMPLETELY DESOLATE EGYPT.**

**MOSES’ RITUAL AND ACTUAL PROTESTS AND DIVINE REASSURANCE (4:10–18)**

**10 MOSES SAID TO THE LORD, “O LORD, I HAVE NEVER BEEN ELOQUENT, NEITHER IN THE PAST NOR SINCE YOU HAVE SPOKEN TO YOUR SERVANT. I AM SLOW OF SPEECH AND TONGUE.” 11 THE LORD SAID TO HIM, “WHO GAVE MAN HIS MOUTH? WHO MAKES HIM DEAF OR MUTE? WHO GIVES HIM SIGHT OR MAKES HIM BLIND? IS IT NOT I, THE LORD? 12 NOW GO; I WILL HELP YOU SPEAK AND WILL TEACH YOU WHAT TO SAY.” 13 BUT MOSES SAID, “O LORD, PLEASE SEND SOMEONE ELSE TO DO IT.” 14 THEN THE LORD’S ANGER BURNED AGAINST MOSES AND HE SAID, “WHAT ABOUT YOUR BROTHER, AARON THE LEVITE? I KNOW HE CAN SPEAK WELL. HE IS ALREADY ON HIS WAY TO MEET YOU, AND HIS HEART WILL BE GLAD WHEN HE SEES YOU. 15 YOU SHALL SPEAK TO HIM AND PUT WORDS IN HIS MOUTH; I WILL HELP BOTH OF YOU SPEAK AND WILL TEACH YOU WHAT TO DO. 16 HE WILL SPEAK TO THE PEOPLE FOR YOU, AND IT WILL BE AS IF HE WERE YOUR MOUTH AND AS IF YOU WERE GOD TO HIM. 17 BUT TAKE THIS STAFF IN YOUR HAND SO YOU CAN PERFORM MIRACULOUS SIGNS WITH IT.” 18 THEN MOSES WENT BACK TO JETHRO HIS FATHER-IN-LAW AND SAID TO HIM, “LET ME GO BACK TO MY OWN PEOPLE IN EGYPT TO SEE IF ANY OF THEM ARE STILL ALIVE.” JETHRO SAID, “GO, AND I WISH YOU WELL.”**

**THIS SECTION OF THE OVERALL THEOPHANY PATTERN OF CHAPS. 3 AND 4 CONTAINS TWO OF MOSES’ PROTESTS (VV. 10 AND 13 RESPECTIVELY) AS WELL AS, IN RESPONSE TO EACH, A BRIEF HIEROS LOGOS IN VV. 11–12 AND A SOMEWHAT LONGER GROUP OF HIEROI LOGOI IN 4:4–17. HIS FIRST PROTEST (4:10) IS STILL OF THE “RITUAL” SORT, MANNERLY AND EMPHASIZING HIS NEED FOR DIVINE HELP. THE SECOND (4:13), HOWEVER, REPRESENTS A BLATANT ATTEMPT TO BE EXCUSED FROM THE ASSIGNMENT ITSELF AND DRAWS GOD’S IMMEDIATE ANGER (4:14–17, AND LATER IS PROBABLY PART OF THE BACKGROUND FOR GOD’S CONTINUING ANGER RELATIVE TO ANOTHER INSTANCE OF MOSES’ RESISTANCE TO CARRYING OUT GOD’S INSTRUCTIONS [4:24–26]). THE CONCLUDING DESCRIPTION IN THE THIRD PERSON (4:18) WILL MARK THE END OF THE CURRENT TWO-CHAPTER LITERARY FORM. 4:10 MOSES’ STATEMENT IN THIS VERSE HAS GENERATED MUCH MISUNDERSTANDING ON THE PART OF THOSE WHO HAVE NOT RECOGNIZED IT AS A RITUAL PROTEST, AND IT HAS THUS OFTEN BEEN TAKEN LITERALLY, AS IF MOSES ACTUALLY EITHER HAD A SPEECH DEFECT OR WAS INCOMPETENT AS A PUBLIC SPEAKER OR HAD FORGOTTEN HIS EGYPTIAN. IN FACT, MOSES DID A HUGE AMOUNT OF SPEAKING IN THE REMAINDER OF THE PENTATEUCHAL NARRATIVE AND LAW, YET NOWHERE DID HE REVEAL THE SLIGHTEST SPEECH HESITANCY OR INABILITY TO MAKE HIMSELF UNDERSTOOD. WHY, THEN, DID HE MAKE THE CLAIM TO BE “SLOW OF SPEECH AND TONGUE”? THE ANSWER LIES NOT IN PHYSIOLOGY BUT IN CULTURE—IN THE STYLE OF ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN “EXAGGERATED HUMILITY,” OFTEN EMPLOYED IN SITUATIONS WHERE ONE IS APPEALING FOR HELP OR MERCY FROM SOMEONE ELSE OR SHOWING ONE’S MANNERLY SELF-DEPRECATION AT BEING GIVEN A GREAT ASSIGNMENT. THE FOLLOWING ARE AMONG THE PARADE EXAMPLES OF THIS STYLE IN THE BIBLE: GEN 18:27: I HAVE BEEN SO BOLD AS TO SPEAK TO THE LORD, THOUGH I AM NOTHING BUT DUST AND ASHES. (ABRAHAM) EXOD 4:10: I HAVE NEVER BEEN ELOQUENT … I AM SLOW OF SPEECH AND TONGUE. (MOSES) 1 SAM 9:21: SAUL ANSWERED, “BUT AM I NOT A BENJAMITE, FROM THE SMALLEST TRIBE OF ISRAEL, AND IS NOT MY CLAN THE LEAST OF ALL THE CLANS OF THE TRIBE OF BENJAMIN? WHY DO YOU SAY SUCH A THING TO ME?” 1 SAM 18:23: DAVID SAID, “DO YOU THINK IT IS A SMALL MATTER TO BECOME THE KING’S SON-IN-LAW? I’M ONLY A POOR MAN AND LITTLE KNOWN.” 1 SAM 24:14: “AGAINST WHOM HAS THE KING OF ISRAEL COME OUT? WHOM ARE YOU PURSUING? A DEAD DOG? A FLEA? 1 SAM 26:20: NOW DO NOT LET MY BLOOD FALL TO THE GROUND FAR FROM THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD. THE KING OF ISRAEL HAS COME OUT TO LOOK FOR A FLEA—AS ONE HUNTS A PARTRIDGE IN THE MOUNTAINS.” 2 SAM 9:8: MEPHIBOSHETH BOWED DOWN AND SAID, “WHAT IS YOUR SERVANT, THAT YOU SHOULD NOTICE A DEAD DOG LIKE ME?” 2 KGS 8:13: HAZAEL SAID, “HOW COULD YOUR SERVANT, A MERE DOG, ACCOMPLISH SUCH A FEAT?” 1 KGS 3:7: YOU HAVE MADE YOUR SERVANT KING … I AM ONLY A LITTLE CHILD AND DO NOT KNOW HOW TO CARRY OUT MY DUTIES. (SOLOMON) ISA 6:5: WOE IS ME! FOR I AM A MAN OF UNCLEAN LIPS. (ISAIAH) ISA 56:3: AND LET NOT ANY [OFFICIAL] COMPLAIN, “I AM ONLY A DRY TREE.” JER 1:6: AH, SOVEREIGN LORD, … I DO NOT KNOW HOW TO SPEAK; I AM ONLY A CHILD. (JEREMIAH) 1 COR 2:3: I CAME TO YOU IN WEAKNESS AND FEAR, AND WITH MUCH TREMBLING. (PAUL) EPH 3:8: ALTHOUGH I AM LESS THAN THE LEAST OF ALL GOD’S PEOPLE, THIS GRACE WAS GIVEN ME. (PAUL) 1 TIM 1:15: CHRIST JESUS CAME INTO THE WORLD TO SAVE SINNERS—OF WHOM I AM THE WORST. (PAUL) HEB 13:22: BROTHERS, I URGE YOU TO BEAR WITH MY WORD OF EXHORTATION, FOR I HAVE WRITTEN YOU ONLY A SHORT LETTER.**

**OF PARTICULAR INTEREST FOR THEIR CLOSE PARALLELS WITH EXOD 4:10 ARE SAUL’S CLAIM TO BE OBSCURE IN ORIGIN WHEN HE WAS IN FACT FROM A PROMINENT FAMILY (1 SAM 9:21); DAVID’S CLAIM TO BE A NOBODY WHEN IN FACT HE WAS ALREADY A POPULAR WAR HERO (1 SAM 18:23); HAZAEL’S CLAIM TO BE NO BETTER THAN A DOG WHEN HE WAS IN FACT ALREADY A MAJOR LEADER IN SYRIA (2 KGS 8:13); SOLOMON’S ASSERTION THAT HE WAS ONLY A CHILD WHEN IN FACT HE PROBABLY WAS AT LEAST THIRTY YEARS OLD AT THE TIME HE BECAME KING (1 KGS 3:7); AND PAUL’S CLAIM TO BE THE LOWEST OF THE LOW AMONG GOD’S PEOPLE (EPH 3:8; 1 TIM 1:15) WHEN IN FACT HE WAS AN INFLUENTIAL APOSTLE. THE CLOSEST PARALLEL OF ALL IS THAT OF JEREMIAH’S PROTEST (JER 1:6), IN WHICH HE CLAIMED TO BE UNABLE TO TALK, SOMETHING HE THEN DID QUITE ELOQUENTLY FOR THE NEXT FORTY-ONE YEARS. ALL OF THESE PARALLELS POINT TO THE SIMPLE FACT THAT MOSES WAS NOT SPEAKING LITERALLY HERE BUT FIGURATIVELY, RESPONDING TO A GREAT ASSIGNMENT WITH THE PROPER SORT OF EXAGGERATED HUMILITY AND SELF-EFFACEMENT EXPECTED AND VALUED IN HIS CULTURE. THERE IS NO EVIDENCE ANYWHERE IN THE BIBLE THAT HE HAD ANY LACK OF SKILL IN SPEECH, PUBLIC OR PRIVATE—AND OVERWHELMING EVIDENCE TO THE CONTRARY. 4:11–12 THIS HIEROS LOGOS MIGHT SEEM TO BE TAILORED TO THE RITUAL PROTEST MOSES HAD JUST MADE, IN THAT GOD REFERRED TO HIS CONTROL OVER HUMAN ABILITY TO SPEAK. HOWEVER, THE FACT THAT GOD ALSO CITED HIS CONTROL OVER HUMAN ABILITY TO HEAR AND TO SEE (V. 11)—ISSUES NOT IN DISPUTE SINCE MOSES DID NOT CLAIM TO HAVE ANY HEARING OR VISION PROBLEM—SHOWS THAT IT IS MORE A GENERAL ENCOURAGEMENT FOR MOSES, HIS PROTEST HAVING BEEN FIGURATIVE RATHER THAN LITERAL. THE PROMISE OF HELP IN KNOWING WHAT TO SAY AND HOW TO SAY IT (V. 12) IS RELEVANT TO ANY PROPHETIC CALL SINCE WHAT PROPHETS DO ABOVE ALL THINGS IS SAY WHAT GOD TEACHES THEM TO SAY. THE NIV’S “I WILL HELP YOU SPEAK” (ʾĀNŌKÎ ʾEHYEH ʿIM PÎKĀ, V. 12) MEANS LITERALLY “I WILL BE WITH YOUR MOUTH” AND IS EXACTLY WHAT GOD PROMISED TO BOTH MOSES AND AARON IN V. 15. IN LIGHT OF THE ABSENCE OF ANY CONCERN ABOUT AARON’S ABILITY TO SPEAK PUBLICLY, THIS IS SIMPLY FURTHER EVIDENCE THAT MOSES LIKEWISE HAD NO SPEECH DEFECT. AS THE GIVER OF ALL GIFTS, GOD KNOWS PEOPLE’S GIFTS AND CALLS THEM TO HIS SERVICE—AND SUPPORTS THEM IN IT—ACCORDINGLY. 4:13 THE NIV IDIOMATICALLY RENDERS MOSES’ REQUEST HERE, WHICH IS LITERALLY, “[HE SAID] ‘PLEASE, MY LORD, SEND BY YOU WILL SEND,’ ” A SOMEWHAT ELLIPTICAL EXPRESSION UNATTESTED ELSEWHERE IN THE BIBLE AND ONE APPARENTLY DESIGNED TO MEAN, “I DON’T WANT TO DO IT” BUT WORDED AS NEUTRALLY AND NON-OFFENSIVELY AS POSSIBLE. THE SAME SORT OF SENSE MIGHT BE IMPLIED IN ENGLISH BY: “WITH ALL DUE RESPECT, SIR, YOU MUST KNOW SOMEONE WHO’S AVAILABLE TO SEND.” THIS FINAL PROTEST OF MOSES REPRESENTS A DRAMATIC DEPARTURE FROM ALL FOUR OF HIS PREVIOUS PROTESTS (3:11, 13; 4:1, 10), WHICH HAD THE STYLE OF RITUAL, NONLITERAL DEMURRERS. IF MOSES WERE TO CONTINUE THAT, PATTERN, HE WOULD HERE SAY SOMETHING ELSE ABOUT HIS UNWORTHINESS AND/OR THE MAGNITUDE OF THE CHALLENGE. HE DID NOT. INSTEAD, HE ACTUALLY ASKED THAT GOD SEND SOMEONE ELSE TO DO THE JOB—IN OTHER WORDS, HE TRIED TO REFUSE TO ACCEPT THE CALL. AMONG THE VARIOUS CALL NARRATIVES IN THE BIBLE THERE IS ONLY ONE OTHER IN WHICH A PROPHET ATTEMPTED TO REFUSE TO ACCEPT A CALL FROM GOD: THAT OF JONAH. IN JONAH’S CASE THE PATTERN IS SIMILAR TO THAT FOUND HERE IN EXOD 4:**

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| **GOD CALLS PROPHET TO PREACH IN A FOREIGN LAND** | **EXOD 3:4–10** | **JONAH 1:1–2** |
| **PROPHET TRIES TO REFUSE** | **EXOD 4:13** | **JONAH 1:3** |
| **DIVINE DEATH PENALTY NEARLY IMPOSED DURING TRAVELS** | **EXOD 4:24** | **JONAH 1:4–15** |
| **PROPHET LEARNS HIS LESSON** | **EXOD 4:25** | **JONAH 2:1–10 [ALSO 1:12]** |
| **GOD SPARES HIM** | **EXOD 4:26** | **JONAH 1:17** |
| **GOD RENEWS THE CALL** | **EXOD 4:27–28** | **JONAH 3:1** |
| **PROPHET FINALLY COOPERATES WITH CALLING** | **EXOD 4:29–30 ET PASSIM** | **JONAH 3:3–4** |
| **CALL COMES TO SUCCESSFUL FRUITION** | **EXOD 4:31 ET PASSIM** | **JONAH 3:5–10** |

**JONAH IS A MUCH SMALLER BOOK THAN EXODUS, AND IT IS THEREFORE UNDERSTANDABLE THAT THE PATTERN WOULD BE RATHER MORE COMPACTLY PRESENTED IN JONAH THAN IN EXODUS, WHERE VARIOUS MORE-GRAND ISSUES ARE ALSO IN PLAY. IT NEED NOT BE ASSUMED THAT THE STORY OF JONAH IS MODELED ON THAT OF MOSES; RATHER, EACH STORY PROCEEDS LOGICALLY FROM THE FACTS: IF GOD IS DETERMINED TO USE A PROPHET HE WILL INDEED DO SO, AND WOE TO THE PROPHET WHO TRIES TO AVOID HIS CALLING. 4:14–17 THE NIV HAS MADE TRANSLATION ASSUMPTIONS IN V. 14 THAT ARE ONLY ONE SET OF POSSIBILITIES FOR ACCURATELY REPRESENTING THE SENSE OF THE ORIGINAL. IN FACT, THE FIRST PART OF THE VERSE PROBABLY IS BETTER TRANSLATED: “EVEN THOUGH THE LORD WAS ANGRY WITH MOSES, HE SAID, ‘IS NOT AARON YOUR LEVITE BROTHER? I KNOW …’” IN OTHER WORDS, THE VERSE APPEARS TO ASSERT THAT MOSES’ PROTEST IN V. 13 WAS NOT ACCEPTABLE TO GOD BUT RATHER AROUSED HIS ANGER, AND YET THE VERSE DOES NOT NECESSARILY GO ON TO ASSERT THAT THE PROVISION OF AARON HIS “LEVITE BROTHER” WAS THE RESULT OF ANGER BUT RATHER THAT IT WAS THE RESULT OF GRACE. THIS IS, AGAIN, NOT UNLIKE THE SITUATION OF JONAH, WHOSE REFUSAL TO OBEY GOD’S COMMAND TO PREACH REPENTANCE TO NINEVEH AROUSED GOD’S ANGER BUT WHO NEVERTHELESS EXPERIENCED GOD’S GRACE IN THE FORM OF THE LARGE FISH THAT UNEXPECTEDLY APPEARED TO KEEP HIM FROM DROWNING. HERE MOSES’ BROTHER AARON IS PROVIDED UNEXPECTEDLY AS A HELPER TO MOSES (SO ZIPPORAH, AS WELL, IN ANOTHER SENSE HELPED MOSES CONTINUE HIS MINISTRY [4:24–26]). MOSES PRESUMABLY HAD NO WAY OF KNOWING BEFORE THIS THAT AARON HAD SET OUT TO FIND HIM, BUT THE IDEA THAT AARON WOULD DO AT LEAST SOME OF THE SPEAKING ONCE THEY WERE IN EGYPT, SO THAT THE HOSTILITY GENERATED BY THAT SPEAKING WOULD NOT FALL EXCLUSIVELY ON MOSES, MUST HAVE BEEN WELCOME ENCOURAGEMENT INDEED. IN OTHER WORDS, AARON WAS PROVIDED AS A CO-SPEAKER FOR MOSES, NOT BECAUSE MOSES COULD NOT SPEAK WELL BUT BECAUSE OF THE ENCOURAGEMENT AARON WOULD BRING TO MOSES IN THE DAUNTING TASK OF FACING THE HOSTILITY OF THE PHARAOH OF EGYPT. VERSE 15 MAKES CLEAR THAT BOTH MOSES AND AARON WOULD SPEAK FOR GOD, AND THIS WAS IN FACT THE CASE. MOSES EVENTUALLY DID THE VAST MAJORITY OF THE SPEAKING, WITH VIRTUALLY NO MENTION MADE OF AARON’S PUBLIC SPEAKING BEYOND THE EARLY CHAPTERS OF EXODUS—BUT AT FIRST AARON WAS EITHER SPEAKING FOR HIM OR WITH HIM (4:30; 5:1). PRESUMABLY, AS MOSES’ COURAGE AND FAITH INCREASED, THE NEED FOR AARON’S CLOSE COLLEGIAL SUPPORT AND/OR PUBLIC REPRESENTATION OF HIS BROTHER LESSENED. VERSES 15 AND 16 TOGETHER ALSO SUGGEST THAT, FROM THE FIRST, MOSES WAS THE TRUE PROPHET (THE ONE INTO WHOSE MIND GOD PLACED HIS WORDS WITH THE INTENT THAT THEY BE PASSED ON TO OTHERS) AND THAT AARON WAS MOSES’ SPOKESPERSON RATHER THAN A DIRECT RECIPIENT OF GOD’S REVELATION. THUS, GOD IS THE REVEALER; MOSES, THE PROPHET; AND AARON, THE PUBLIC REPEATER, AN ARRANGEMENT NOT UNLIKE THAT IN THE MODERN CHURCH INVOLVING GOD, THE SCRIPTURES AS THE LOCATION OF HIS WORD, AND THE PREACHER AS THE PUBLIC REPEATER. ALTHOUGH AT FIRST AARON PRIMARILY WOULD HAVE REPEATED VERBATIM WHAT GOD HAD SAID TO MOSES AND WOULD NOT HAVE EXPOSITED UPON IT AS DOES THE MODERN PREACHER, THE ROLE OF PRIEST CERTAINLY INVOLVED TEACHING IN THE SACRED ASSEMBLY, AS A NUMBER OF SUBSEQUENT TEXTS DEMONSTRATE. VERSE 17 HIGHLIGHTS THE IMPORTANCE OF MOSES’ STAFF [ROD OR WAND], AN OBJECT THAT PLAYS A SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN THE EXODUS STORY. THE STAFF IS THE ULTIMATE IMMEDIATE REASSURANCE, IN THIS FINAL SET OF HIEROI LOGOI, OF GOD’S PRESENCE WITH MOSES AS HE ENTERS UPON THE CHALLENGING TASK TO WHICH HE HAS BEEN CALLED.**

**EXCURSUS: MOSES’ STAFF [ROD OR WAND]**

**IN ANCIENT PALESTINIAN-ISRAELITE SOCIETY, ONE’S STAFF WAS AN ESSENTIAL PERSONAL POSSESSION, A MEANS OF PROTECTION AND IDENTIFICATION AND EVEN A SYMBOL OF ONE’S POWER.87 VARIOUS HEBREW TERMS ARE TRANSLATED “STAFF.” IT IS POSSIBLE TO USE THEM RATHER INTERCHANGEABLY HERE IN LIGHT OF THEIR SEMANTIC OVERLAP AND RENDER THEM ALL WITH THE ENGLISH WORD “STAFF” JUST AS “ROD,” “STAFF,” “BIG STICK,” AND “WALKING STICK” CAN ALL BE USED LARGELY INTERCHANGEABLY IN ENGLISH. FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF IDENTIFYING ONESELF, A STAFF WAS IN CERTAIN WAYS THE EQUIVALENT IN ANCIENT CULTURE OF WHAT A PASSPORT, WALLET, OR DRIVER’S LICENSE WOULD BE TODAY. FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF PROTECTION, IT WAS THE ANCIENT EQUIVALENT OF WHAT A SIDEARM WOULD BE TODAY. FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF ITS FUNCTION AS A SYMBOL OF ONE’S PERSONAL POWER, A MODERN ANALOGY MIGHT BE ONE’S PHOTO ID PASS OR EVEN, IN SOME SITUATIONS, ONE’S PARKING PASS. IT IS LIKELY THAT WOMEN OFTEN CARRIED STAFFS; HOWEVER, AS IT HAPPENS, THE ONLY REFERENCES TO STAFFS IN THE BIBLE INVOLVE MEN. A STAFF [ROD OR WAND] IS SO BASIC AND PRIZED A POSSESSION THAT IT MIGHT BE THE MENTIONED METAPHORICALLY AS THE ONLY THING A PERSON POSSESSED, OR THE FIRST THING IN A SHORT LIST OF VERY BASIC POSSESSIONS, AS REFLECTED IN GEN 32:10 (“I HAD ONLY MY STAFF [ROD OR WAND] WHEN I CROSSED THIS JORDAN, BUT NOW I HAVE BECOME TWO GROUPS”) OR LUKE 9:3 (“TAKE NOTHING FOR THE JOURNEY—NO STAFF [ROD OR WAND], NO BAG, NO BREAD, NO MONEY”). IN MANY CASES A PERSON’S STAFF [ROD OR WAND] APPARENTLY WAS CAREFULLY CARVED WITH VARIOUS MARKINGS AND/OR WORDS TO MAKE IT UNIQUELY IDENTIFIABLE BOTH BY THE OWNER AND BY OTHERS WHO MIGHT BE FAMILIAR WITH THE OWNER. AN EXAMPLE OF THIS PRACTICE IS REFLECTED IN GEN 38:18 (“HE SAID, ‘WHAT PLEDGE SHOULD I GIVE YOU?’ ‘YOUR SEAL AND ITS CORD, AND THE STAFF IN YOUR HAND,’ SHE ANSWERED”; CF. NUM 17:2, 9; 2 KGS 4:29). THE HABIT OF CARRYING A STAFF [ROD OR WAND] MAY HAVE ORIGINATED IN CONNECTION WITH ITS USEFULNESS AS BOTH A WEAPON AND A TOOL, THAT IS, AS A WEAPON AGAINST WILD ANIMALS AND HUMAN FOES AND AS A TOOL FOR KEEPING ANIMALS UNDER ONE’S CONTROL OR MANIPULATING OBJECTS: NUM 22:27: WHEN THE DONKEY [ASS] SAW THE ANGEL OF THE LORD, SHE LAY DOWN UNDER BALAAM, AND HE WAS ANGRY AND BEAT HER WITH HIS STAFF [ROD OR WAND]. 1 SAM 14:27: BUT JONATHAN … REACHED OUT THE END OF THE STAFF [ROD OR WAND] THAT WAS IN HIS HAND AND DIPPED IT INTO THE HONEYCOMB. HE RAISED HIS HAND TO HIS MOUTH. 1 SAM 17:40: THEN [DAVID] TOOK HIS STAFF [ROD OR WAND] IN HIS HAND … AND, WITH HIS SLING IN HIS HAND, APPROACHED THE PHILISTINE. MARK 15:19: AGAIN, AND AGAIN THEY STRUCK HIM ON THE HEAD WITH A STAFF [ROD OR WAND] AND SPIT ON HIM. PS 23:4: EVEN THOUGH I WALK THROUGH THE VALLEY OF THE SHADOW OF DEATH, / I WILL FEAR NO EVIL, FOR YOU ARE WITH ME; / YOUR ROD AND YOUR STAFF [WAND], THEY COMFORT ME. STAFFS [RODS OR WANDS] ALSO COULD BE USED AS CRUTCHES. ALTHOUGH THE MODERN STYLE OF CRUTCH, WITH A PADDED SUPPORT UNDER THE ARM AND A PLACE TO GRIP WITH THE HAND, WAS UNKNOWN IN HOLY BIBLE TIMES, ONE’S STAFF [ROD OR WAND] PROVIDED A WORKABLE SUBSTITUTE, AS SEEN IN GEN 47:31 (“ISRAEL WORSHIPED AS HE LEANED ON THE TOP OF HIS STAFF [ROD OR WAND]”) AND EXOD. 21:19 (“THE ONE WHO STRUCK THE BLOW WILL NOT BE HELD RESPONSIBLE IF THE OTHER GETS UP AND WALKS AROUND OUTSIDE WITH HIS STAFF [ROD OR WAND]”; CF. ISA 36:6; EZEK. 29:6). FOR THOSE WITH A DEGREE OF SOCIETAL POWER, A STAFF [ROD OR WAND] IS AN ACCOUTREMENT THAT SHARED BY ASSOCIATION, AND THUS REPRESENTED, THEIR AUTHORITY: GEN 49:10: THE SCEPTER WILL NOT DEPART FROM JUDAH, NOR THE RULER’S STAFF [ROD OR WAND---DICK] FROM BETWEEN HIS FEET, UNTIL HE COMES TO WHOM IT BELONGS AND THE OBEDIENCE OF THE NATIONS IS HIS. NUM 17:2–3, 7, 10: SPEAK TO THE ISRAELITES AND GET TWELVE STAFFS [RODS OR WANDS] FROM THEM, ONE FROM THE LEADER OF EACH OF THEIR ANCESTRAL TRIBES. WRITE THE NAME OF EACH MAN ON HIS STAFF [ROD OR WAND]. ON THE STAFF [ROD OR WAND] OF LEVI WRITE AARON’S NAME, FOR THERE MUST BE ONE STAFF [ROD OR WAND] FOR THE HEAD OF EACH ANCESTRAL TRIBE … MOSES PLACED THE STAFFS [RODS OR WANDS] BEFORE THE LORD IN THE TENT OF THE TESTIMONY … THE LORD SAID TO MOSES, “PUT BACK AARON’S STAFF [ROD OR WAND] IN FRONT OF THE TESTIMONY, TO BE KEPT AS A SIGN TO THE [SEXUALLY] REBELLIOUS.” NUM 21:18: NOBLES WITH SCEPTERS AND STAFFS [RODS OR WANDS] … JUDG. 5:14: FROM MAKIR CAPTAINS CAME DOWN, FROM ZEBULUN THOSE WHO BEAR A COMMANDER’S STAFF [ROD OR WAND]. MATT 27:29: AND THEN TWISTED TOGETHER A CROWN OF THORNS AND SET IT ON HIS HEAD. THEY PUT A STAFF IN HIS RIGHT HAND AND KNELT IN FRONT OF HIM. JER. 48:17: HOW BROKEN IS THE MIGHTY SCEPTER, HOW BROKEN THE GLORIOUS STAFF [ROD OR WAND]! IN ZECH. 11 THE PROPHET EXPLOITS TWO COMMON USES OF THE STAFF [ROD OR WAND]—THE PRACTICE OF USING A STAFF [ROD OR WAND] TO CONTROL SHEEP AND THE FUNCTION OF A STAFF [ROD OR WAND] TO SIGNAL AUTHORITY—TO SYMBOLIZE GOD’S JUDGMENT FOR COVENANT-BREAKING (ZECH. 11:7–14: “THEN I TOOK TWO STAFFS [RODS OR WANDS] AND CALLED ONE FAVOR AND THE OTHER UNION, AND I PASTURED THE FLOCK.… I TOOK MY STAFF [ROD OR WAND] CALLED FAVOR AND BROKE IT, REVOKING THE COVENANT I HAD MADE WITH ALL THE NATIONS.… THEN I BROKE MY SECOND STAFF [ROD OR WAND] CALLED UNION, BREAKING THE BROTHERHOOD BETWEEN JUDAH AND ISRAEL”). ALTHOUGH MOSES’ STAFF HAD POTENTIALLY ALL THE USES CATEGORIZED ABOVE, IT HAD YET ANOTHER THAT ELEVATED ITS IMPORTANCE FAR BEYOND THAT OF ANY OTHER STAFF. BY DIVINE DESIGNATION IT BECAME NOT MERELY MOSES’ STAFF [ROD OR WAND] BUT GOD’S. IN EXOD. 4 THIS FACT BECOMES PROGRESSIVELY EVIDENT, BEGINNING WITH THE FIRST MENTION OF THE STAFF [ROD OR WAND] AS SOMETHING TO WHICH GOD CALLED SPECIAL ATTENTION (EXOD. 4:2, “THEN THE LORD SAID TO HIM, ‘WHAT IS THAT IN YOUR HAND?’”) AND CONTINUING THROUGH THE ACCOUNT OF HOW GOD INVESTED THE STAFF [ROD OR WAND] WITH SUPERNATURAL AUTHORITY (BEGINNING WITH 4:4; BUT ESP. 4:17, “BUT TAKE THIS STAFF [ROD OR WAND] IN YOUR HAND SO YOU CAN PERFORM MIRACULOUS SIGNS WITH IT”) TO THE CLIMACTIC DESCRIPTION OF THE STAFF [ROD OR WAND] AS “THE STAFF [ROD OR WAND] OF GOD” [WORDED MORE NATURALLY, “GOD’S STAFF (ROD OR WAND)”] IN 4:20. AT GOD’S COMMAND THE STAFF [ROD OR WAND] FUNCTIONED INTEGRALLY IN MOSES’ FIRST MIRACLE-MAKING ENCOUNTER WITH PHARAOH (7:9FF.; NOTE ESPECIALLY THE AMBIGUITY OF MOSES’ LANGUAGE WHEN HE SAID IN 7:17, “THIS IS WHAT THE LORD SAYS: BY THIS YOU WILL KNOW THAT I AM THE LORD: WITH THE STAFF [ROD OR WAND] THAT IS IN MY HAND I WILL STRIKE THE WATER OF THE NILE, AND IT WILL BE CHANGED INTO BLOOD”—ALMOST AS IF MOSES STOOD FOR GOD NOT MERELY IN SPEECH BUT ALSO IN BODY). THE STAFF [ROD OR WAND] FIGURES PROMINENTLY IN THE INITIATION OF VARIOUS PLAGUES (9:23; 10:13), THE MIRACLE AT THE RED SEA (14:16), AND THE MIRACULOUS PROVISION OF WATER IN THE WILDERNESS NEAR SINAI (17:5). MOSES ON ONE OTHER OCCASION CALLED HIS STAFF [ROD OR WAND] “GOD’S STAFF [ROD OR WAND]” [NIV “THE STAFF (ROD OR WAND) OF GOD”], THAT IS, IN 17:9 (“MOSES SAID TO JOSHUA, ‘CHOOSE SOME OF OUR MEN AND GO OUT TO FIGHT THE AMALEKITES. TOMORROW I WILL STAND ON TOP OF THE HILL WITH THE STAFF [ROD OR WAND] OF GOD IN MY HANDS’”). SINCE IN THE CONTEXT MOSES HIMSELF WAS SPEAKING TO JOSHUA OF THE STAFF [ROD OR WAMD] AS “GOD’S STAFF [ROD OR WAND]” RATHER THAN “MY STAFF [ROD OR WAND],” IT WOULD SEEM POSSIBLE THAT THIS TERM (MAṬṬĒH HĀʾĔLŌHÎM) MAY HAVE BECOME THE TERM THE LEADERS THEMSELVES USED TO REFER TO THE STAFF [ROD OR WAND]. MOSES WAS HARDLY THE ONLY ISRAELITE LEADER, HOWEVER, WHO CARRIED A STAFF [ROD OR WAND]. INDEED, WE MUST INQUIRE ABOUT THE SIGNIFICANCE OF “AARON’S STAFF [ROD OR WAND],” WHICH IS ALSO MENTIONED IN THE PENTATEUCHAL NARRATIVE ON A NUMBER OF OCCASIONS, PARTICULARLY EXOD. 7–8 AND NUM 20. A CAREFUL EXAMINATION OF ALL REFERENCES TO THIS STAFF [ROD OR WAND] INDICATES THAT IT TOO FUNCTIONED AS “GOD’S STAFF [ROD OR WAND],” THAT BOTH AARON AND MOSES USED IT AT VARIOUS TIMES, AND THAT WHEN MOSES USED IT THE STAFF [ROD OR WAND] COULD BE CALLED “HIS [MOSES’] STAFF [ROD OR WAND],” SUGGESTING THAT MOSES AND AARON FUNCTIONED SO CLOSELY AS A TEAM THAT THEIR ROLES VIS-À-VIS THE STAFF [ROD OR WAND] ARE NOT DISTINCT ENOUGH TO REQUIRE MUCH DIFFERENTIATION IN THE NARRATIVE. THUS AARON’S STAFF [ROD OR WAND] COULD BECOME A SNAKE IN THE SAME MANNER THAT MOSES’ STAFF [ROD OR WAND] COULD (EXOD. 7:8–13) AND WAS EMPLOYED IN THE INITIATION OF THE FIRST PLAGUE (7:14–24, MENTIONED FOUR TIMES; NOTE THAT “THE STAFF [ROD OR WAND] THAT WAS CHANGED INTO A SNAKE” IN V. 15 IS TECHNICALLY AMBIGUOUS AS TO OWNERSHIP; IT COULD REFER TO THE IMMEDIATELY PRECEDING STORY, INVOLVING AARON’S STAFF [ROD OR WAND], OR TO THE STORY OF CHAP. 4, INVOLVING MOSES’ STAFF [ROD OR WAND]). NOT ALL THE OTHER PLAGUE STORIES MENTION THE USE OF A STAFF [ROD OR WAND], BUT AMONG THOSE THAT DO, AARON’S STAFF [ROD OR WAND] IS USED TO INITIATE PLAGUES TWO (8:5) AND THREE (8:16–17), WHEREAS MOSES’ WAS USED IN PLAGUES SEVEN (9:23) AND EIGHT (10:13). THE ACCOUNT IN NUM 20:1–13 OF WATER FROM THE ROCK AT MERIBAH MENTIONS MOSES’ TAKING “THE STAFF [ROD OR WAND] FROM THE LORD’S PRESENCE” (V. 9), ALSO SIMPLY CALLED “HIS [MOSES’] STAFF [ROD OR WAND]” (20:11), AND USING IT IN THE MIRACULOUS PRODUCTION OF WATER. THIS STAFF [ROD OR WAND] IS SURELY THE SAME ONE THAT HAD BEEN PUT SPECIALLY IN THE LORD’S PRESENCE, THAT IS, AARON’S STAFF [ROD OR WAND] AS FEATURED IN THE STORY OF NUM 17. AARON’S STAFF [ROD OR WAND] IS USED TO DEMONSTRATE GOD’S FAVOR ON BOTH THE HOUSE OF LEVI AND AARON’S LEADERSHIP, AND IT WAS PUT “IN FRONT OF THE TESTIMONY TO BE KEPT AS A SIGN” (NUM 17:10). THE FACT THAT IT IS CALLED “HIS [MOSES’] STAFF [ROD OR WAND]” THREE CHAPTERS LATER (NUM 20:11) SEEMS TO SHOW THE LACK OF CONCERN TO DIFFERENTIATE THE STAFFS OF MOSES AND AARON, WHICH MAY WELL STEM FROM THE FACT THAT EITHER STAFF [ROD OR WAND] WAS ULTIMATELY GOD’S SO THAT THE HUMAN OWNER OR USER MATTERS LITTLE. BOTH ISAIAH AND MICAH REFER TO MOSES’ STAFF [ROD OR WAND], IN ITS ROLE AS GOD’S STAFF [ROD OR WAND], IN THEIR PROPHECIES (ISA 10:26: “THE LORD ALMIGHTY WILL LASH THEM WITH A WHIP, AS WHEN HE STRUCK DOWN MIDIAN AT THE ROCK OF OREB; AND HE WILL RAISE HIS STAFF [ROD OR WAND] OVER THE WATERS, AS HE DID IN EGYPT”; MIC 7:14: “SHEPHERD YOUR PEOPLE WITH YOUR STAFF [ROD OR WAND], THE FLOCK OF YOUR INHERITANCE, WHICH LIVES BY ITSELF IN A FOREST, IN FERTILE PASTURELANDS. LET THEM FEED IN BASHAN AND GILEAD AS IN DAYS LONG AGO”). A NOTEWORTHY PARALLEL TO THE MIRACLE-WORKING STAFF [ROD OR WAND] OF MOSES/AARON IS THAT OF THE ANGEL’S STAFF [ROD OR WAND] IN JUDG. 6:21 (“WITH THE TIP OF THE STAFF [ROD OR WAND] THAT WAS IN HIS HAND, THE ANGEL OF THE LORD TOUCHED THE MEAT AND THE UNLEAVENED BREAD. FIRE FLARED FROM THE ROCK, CONSUMING THE MEAT AND THE BREAD”). THUS, IS PORTRAYED FOR THE READER THE FACT THAT EVEN AN ANGEL, WHEN HE ASSUMED HUMAN FORM, CARRIED A STAFF [ROD OR WAND], AS VIRTUALLY ALL MALE HUMANS DID, AND COULD USE IT MUCH AS GOD’S PROPHETS DID. MUCH LATER, ELISHA EMPLOYED HIS STAFF [ROD OR WAND] IN A SIMILARLY MIRACULOUS WAY TO EFFECT A HEALING, EVEN AT A LONG DISTANCE (2 KGS 4:29, “ELISHA SAID TO GEHAZI, ‘TUCK YOUR CLOAK INTO YOUR BELT, TAKE MY STAFF [ROD OR WAND] IN YOUR HAND AND RUN.… LAY MY STAFF [ROD OR WAND ON THE BOY’S FACE’”). THIS USE OF A STAFF [ROD OR WAND] AS A HEALING TOKEN FINDS A PARALLEL IN SOME AKKADIAN INCANTATION TEXTS, WHERE THE “STAFF” (ROD OR WAND) IS SOMETIMES MENTIONED AS AN INSTRUMENT BY WHICH ARE EXORCISED ASAKKU DEMONS, WHO CAUSE FEVERS AND OTHER DISEASES. DID MOSES’ STAFF [ROD OR WAND] HAVE POWER IN ITSELF? NOT AT ALL. ITS POWER, AND EVERY ASPECT OF ITS EFFECTIVENESS, CAME FROM GOD’S USE OF THE STAFF [ROD OR WAND] IN MOSES’ (OR AARON’S) HAND AS A SYMBOL OF THE DIVINE AUTHORITY, SUPREMACY, AND PRESENCE. THE MIRACULOUS STAFF [ROD OR WAND] IS DESIGNATED TO CONVINCE MOSES AND AARON, THEN THE ISRAELITE LEADERSHIP, AND IN TURN PHARAOH, AND FINALLY THE NATION OF ISRAEL OF GOD’S SOVEREIGN CONTROL IN HIS PLAN TO LIBERATE HIS PEOPLE FROM THEIR SEXUAL BONDAGE. IT BECOMES PROGRESSIVELY CLEAR THAT THE STAFF [ROD OR WAND] IS NOT REALLY MOSES’ OR AARON’S (OR ANYONE ELSE’S) BUT GOD’S. 4:18 WITH THIS VERSE THE THEOPHANY STRUCTURE BECOMES COMPLETE VIA THE EXPECTED CONCLUDING THIRD-PERSON DESCRIPTION. HERE MOSES INDICATED HIS INITIAL ASSENT TO THE THEOPHANIC CALL OF GOD BY FORMALLY INDICATING TO JETHRO THAT HE WOULD BE LEAVING FOR EGYPT, AND HE RECEIVED HIS FIRST HUMAN APPROBATION IN THE FORM OF JETHRO’S WILLINGNESS TO SEE HIM DEPART. IT MAY SEEM FROM THE WORDING THAT MOSES, A GROWN MAN, REQUIRED PERMISSION FROM HIS FATHER-IN-LAW (A RELATIVE BY MARRIAGE AND ESPECIALLY THE FATHER OF A PERSON’S HUSBAND OR WIFE )FOR THE JOURNEY. THIS IS ONLY PARTIALLY TRUE. WHAT HE REALLY SOUGHT WAS BLESSING—A HAPPY DEPARTURE RATHER THAN A FORCED ONE. AS AN EMPLOYEE OF JETHRO (3:1) HE WOULD NEED RELEASE FROM HIS JOB, SOMETHING HE WOULD PREFER TO ACCOMPLISH AMICABLY. AS A SON-IN-LAW (THE HUSBAND OF ONE’S DAUGHTER OR SON) HE WOULD DESIRE THE BLESSING OF HIS WIFE’S FATHER, BOTH BECAUSE HE WAS TAKING ZIPPORAH WITH HIM (4:20) AND BECAUSE HE OWED DECADES OF HOSPITALITY TO THIS MIDIANITE PRIEST. OTHERWISE, MOSES’ LANGUAGE IS MORE A MATTER OF POLITELY INFORMING JETHRO OF HIS INTENTIONS (“LET ME GO BACK TO MY OWN PEOPLE IN EGYPT”) AND PROVIDING A SOCIALLY APPROPRIATE REASON (“TO SEE IF ANY OF THEM ARE STILL ALIVE”). IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT MOSES WOULD USE ESSENTIALLY THE SAME FORM IN SPEAKING TO PHARAOH, REQUESTING RELEASE FROM EGYPT FOR ISRAEL. BEFORE PHARAOH HE MADE HIS REQUEST POLITELY AND OFFERED AN ACCEPTABLE REASON FOR THE NEED TO LEAVE, BUT THIS DOES NOT MEAN THAT HE SAW HIMSELF AS ACTUALLY REQUIRING PERMISSION TO GO AS IF IT COULD RIGHTLY BE DENIED HIM (SEE COMMENTS ON 5:3). THIS IS THE LAST MENTION OF JETHRO UNTIL CHAP. 18, WHERE HE AND MOSES ARE REUNITED AND WHERE THE STORIES OF HIS CONVERSION AND HIS VALUABLE LEADERSHIP ADVICE TO MOSES DEMONSTRATE BOTH THE QUALITY OF HIS PIETY AND HIS WISDOM. THAT JETHRO WISHED MOSES WELL IS APPARENTLY A PRO FORMA SEND-OFF IN GOODWILL, AND IT DOES NOT IMPLY IN ITSELF ANYTHING SPECIFIC ABOUT JETHRO’S AGREEMENT WITH MOSES’ NEW THEOLOGY OR THE EXACT TERMS OF HIS CALLING.**

**A SHAKY START BUT INITIAL ACCEPTANCE: MOSES’ RETURN TO EGYPT (4:19–31)**

**19 NOW THE LORD HAD SAID TO MOSES IN MIDIAN, “GO BACK TO EGYPT, FOR ALL THE MEN WHO WANTED TO KILL YOU ARE DEAD.” 20 SO MOSES TOOK HIS WIFE AND SONS, PUT THEM ON A DONKEY [ASS] AND STARTED BACK TO EGYPT. AND HE TOOK THE STAFF [ROD OR WAND] OF GOD IN HIS HAND. 21 THE LORD SAID TO MOSES, “WHEN YOU RETURN TO EGYPT, SEE THAT YOU PERFORM BEFORE PHARAOH ALL THE WONDERS I HAVE GIVEN YOU THE POWER TO DO. BUT I WILL HARDEN HIS HEART SO THAT HE WILL NOT LET THE PEOPLE GO. 22 THEN SAY TO PHARAOH, ‘THIS IS WHAT THE LORD SAYS: ISRAEL IS MY FIRSTBORN SON, 23 AND I TOLD YOU, “LET MY SON GO, SO HE MAY WORSHIP ME.” BUT YOU REFUSED TO LET HIM GO; SO, I WILL KILL YOUR FIRSTBORN SON.’” 24 AT A LODGING PLACE ON THE WAY, THE LORD MET [MOSES] AND WAS ABOUT TO KILL HIM. 25 BUT ZIPPORAH TOOK A FLINT KNIFE, CUT OFF HER SON’S FORESKIN AND TOUCHED [MOSES’] FEET WITH IT. “SURELY YOU ARE A BRIDEGROOM OF BLOOD TO ME,” SHE SAID. 26 SO THE LORD LET HIM ALONE. (AT THAT TIME, SHE SAID “BRIDEGROOM OF BLOOD,” REFERRING TO CIRCUMCISION.) 27 THE LORD SAID TO AARON, “GO INTO THE DESERT TO MEET MOSES.” SO, HE MET MOSES AT THE MOUNTAIN OF GOD AND KISSED HIM. 28 THEN MOSES TOLD AARON EVERYTHING THE LORD HAD SENT HIM TO SAY, AND ALSO ABOUT ALL THE MIRACULOUS SIGNS HE HAD COMMANDED HIM TO PERFORM. 29 MOSES AND AARON BROUGHT TOGETHER ALL THE ELDERS OF THE ISRAELITES, 30 AND AARON TOLD THEM EVERYTHING THE LORD HAD SAID TO MOSES. HE ALSO PERFORMED THE SIGNS BEFORE THE PEOPLE, 31 AND THEY BELIEVED. AND WHEN THEY HEARD THAT THE LORD WAS CONCERNED ABOUT THEM AND HAD SEEN THEIR MISERY, THEY BOWED DOWN AND WORSHIPED. IN THIS PART OF THE NARRATIVE MOSES TAKES US FROM THE TIME OF HIS DEPARTURE FROM MIDIAN (V. 19) TO THE INITIAL MEETING WITH THE ISRAELITE ELDERS, WHO WERE CONVERTED TO THE TRUE GOD BASED ON MOSES’ TESTIMONY AND THE MIRACULOUS SIGNS HE PERFORMED (VV. 30–31). THIS ACCOUNT IS IN PART BOTH RESUMPTIVE (HARKENING BACK TO MOSES’ CALL IN MIDIAN, THUS THE NIV’S ENTIRELY PROPER TRANSLATION IN V. 22 WITH PLUPERFECT VERB, “THE LORD HAD SAID TO MOSES IN MIDIAN”) AND PROLEPTIC (THUS THE PREDICTION IN V. 23 OF HOW MOSES WOULD EVENTUALLY ANNOUNCE THE TENTH AND FINAL PLAGUE, THAT OF THE DEATH OF THE EGYPTIAN FIRSTBORN, THEREBY BROADLY ANTICIPATING EVENTS UP THROUGH CHAP. 11). HERE AGAIN THE STAFF [ROD OR WAND] OF GOD FIGURES PROMINENTLY (V. 20), AND HERE FOR THE FIRST TIME IN THE HOLY BIBLE, GOD’S PEOPLE ARE DESCRIBED COLLECTIVELY AS HIS “SON” (VV. 22–23). THE THREAT TO PHARAOH (V. 23) IS FOLLOWED BY A LACONIC STORY ABOUT MOSES’ SON GERSHOM NEARLY BEING PUT TO DEATH BY GOD FOR LONG-TERM DISOBEDIENCE (VV. 24–26, Q.V.) AND THEN BY FAR MORE CHEERFUL CIRCUMSTANCES: HIS REUNITING WITH AARON (VV. 27–28) AND THE MEETING WITH AND INITIAL SUCCESS IN CONVINCING THE ISRAELITE ELDERS, UNDERTAKEN BY MOSES AND AARON TOGETHER (VV. 29–31). 4:19–20 VERSE 19 BEGINS WITH ONE OF THE SEVERAL SIMPLE RESUMPTIONS FOUND IN EXODUS, PLACED TO HELP THE READER (MUCH MORE OFTEN IN THE ANCIENT WORLD, HOWEVER, THE LISTENER) KEEP THE OVERALL STORY IN MIND. THE LONG, COMPOUND-COMPLEX THEOPHANY CALL ACCOUNT THAT CONCLUDED IN 4:18 HAD EXCLUDED A CRUCIAL DETAIL OF DIVINE REASSURANCE, AND THAT DETAIL MOSES NOW PLACED BEFORE THE READER IN A WAY THAT NICELY TIES HIS DEPARTURE FOR EGYPT WITH THE DIVINE REASSURANCE ELEMENTS IN THE HIEROI LOGOI OF THE THEOPHANY: MOSES’ LIFE WOULD NOT BE IN DANGER UPON ARRIVAL IN EGYPT. HE WAS NO LONGER SOUGHT AS A FUGITIVE CRIMINAL. IT WAS COMMON PRACTICE IN THE ANCIENT WORLD, AS IT IS IN THE MODERN, FOR A NEW GOVERNMENT TO CANCEL CRIMINAL PENALTIES IMPOSED BY A PREVIOUS GOVERNMENT, THUS GRANTING GENERAL AMNESTY TO PRISONERS AND THOSE SOUGHT BY THE LAW. THUS FOR GOD TO SAY TO MOSES “ALL THE MEN WHO WANTED TO KILL YOU ARE DEAD” WOULD LIKELY REPRESENT NEWS THAT THE PHARAOH IN POWER WHEN MOSES KILLED AN EGYPTIAN (2:15) WAS NOW HIMSELF DEAD, ALONG WITH ANY OTHERS, SUCH AS IMMEDIATE SURVIVORS OF THE DECEASED WHO MIGHT HAVE HAD BOTH THE LEGAL STANDING AND THE DESIRE TO PRESS THE CASE. VERSE 20 CONTRIBUTES AN IMPORTANT EMPHASIS: MOSES WAS NOT MERELY RETURNING TO EGYPT PERSONALLY TO ACCOMPLISH A SHORT-TERM TASK; HE WAS RELOCATING TO EGYPT TO BECOME AN ISRAELITE AND THUS MOVED HIS FAMILY WITH HIM. HIS SONS ARE LATER IDENTIFIED IN 18:4 AND 1 CHR. 23:15, 17. ON THE IMPORTANCE OF THE NOTE THAT HE TOOK WITH HIM GOD’S STAFF [ROD OR WAND], SEE “EXCURSUS: MOSES’ STAFF” AFTER THE COMMENTS ON 4:14–17. 4:21–23 IN 3:10, AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE FORMAL STATEMENT OF HIS CALL TO DELIVER ISRAEL FROM EGYPT, THE LORD HAD TOLD MOSES: “SO NOW, GO. I AM SENDING YOU TO PHARAOH.” THE PRESENT VERSES ALLUDE TO AND EXPAND UPON THAT INSTRUCTION, WITH SPECIAL ADDED EMPHASIS THAT TAKES INTO PURVIEW THE PLAGUES, COMPREHENDING ALL OF THEM WITH MENTION OF THE FINAL AND MOST LETHAL, THE PLAGUE OF DEATH UPON THE EGYPTIAN FIRSTBORN—HERE PERSONALIZED TO INCLUDE PHARAOH’S OWN FIRSTBORN. NOTE, THEN, THAT MOSES DID NOT HAVE INSTRUCTIONS TO GO MERELY TO EGYPTIANS OR ISRAELITES BUT MUST APPEAR BEFORE AND ISSUE COMMANDS IN THE NAME OF THE LORD [STEPHEN YAHWEH] TO PHARAOH HIMSELF, LIKELY THE MOST ARDENT OPPONENT OF ANY EXODUS (SEE ON 1:10) AND THE ONE WITH THE MOST POWER AT HIS DISPOSAL TO PREVENT IT. MOSES’ INSTRUCTIONS REQUIRED THAT HE ACTUALLY CONFRONT PHARAOH IN PERSON; TO DO SO WAS THEREFORE NOT MERELY A STRATEGY HE HAPPENED TO CHOOSE. MOSES LEARNED HOW TO DO THREE MIRACLES (4:1–9) AS PREPARATION FOR BEING BELIEVED BY HIS OWN PEOPLE, THE ISRAELITES IN EGYPT (4:1, 8–9); INDEED, HE EVENTUALLY DID PERFORM THEM BEFORE THE ISRAELITES (4:30). BUT ARE THESE SAME THREE SIGNS THE ONES THAT ARE INDICATED BY THE WORDS “PERFORM BEFORE PHARAOH ALL THE WONDERS I HAVE GIVEN YOU THE POWER TO DO” IN V. 21? MOSES CERTAINLY DID PERFORM TWO OF THEM BEFORE PHARAOH, THAT IS, THE FIRST (CHANGING HIS STAFF [ROD OR WAND] INTO A SNAKE) AND THE THIRD (CHANGING WATER INTO BLOOD), ACCORDING TO 7:8–24. BUT HE DID NOT PERFORM THE SECOND MIRACLE AT ALL (CHANGING HIS HAND FROM HEALTHY TO LEPROUS) BEFORE PHARAOH. THIS SUGGESTS THAT THE THREE PROOF-OF-CALLING SIGNS ARE NOT COTERMINOUS WITH “ALL THE WONDERS” THAT, AS THE NARRATIVE UNFOLDS, TURN OUT TO BE THE TEN PLAGUES, THE EXODUS ITSELF, AND THE CROSSING OF THE RED SEA. THE THIRD OF THE PROOF SIGNS, IN OTHER WORDS, IS ONLY THE FIRST OF MANY GREAT SIGNS OF GOD’S POWER. VERSES 22–23 LINK THE CONCEPT OF STEPHEN YAHWEH’S “FIRSTBORN SON,” ISRAEL, WITH PHARAOH’S (AND BY IMPLICATION EVERY ISRAELITE’S) “FIRSTBORN SON” (SEE COMMENTS ON 11:1–10). THE FIRSTBORN SON IN THE ANCIENT WORLD IS THE ONE SPECIALLY FAVORED WITH INHERITANCE, THE ONE WHO WOULD REPRESENT THE FATHER IN MANY WAYS AS HE CAME INTO MATURITY AND THE FATHER GAVE HIM MORE AND MORE RESPONSIBILITY. MOREOVER, IN ANCIENT ISRAELITE SOCIETY THE FIRSTBORN SON, AS THE FIRST-FRUITS OF A MARRIAGE, IS DEVOTED TO GOD---HE BELONGED SPECIALLY TO GOD AND COULD NOT EVEN BE TAKEN AND RAISED BY HIS PARENTS WITHOUT THE PAYMENT OF A SPECIAL REDEMPTION OR “BUY BACK” FEE THAT SYMBOLIZED THE FAMILY’S RECOGNITION THAT THE SON IS BY RIGHTS, STEPHEN YAHWEH’S AND NOT THEIRS (SEE COMMENTS ON 13:2, 13). UNTIL ENTERING INTO HIS SPECIAL, DOUBLE INHERITANCE (DEUT. 21:17), THE FIRSTBORN SON “SERVED” HIS FATHER. THE VERB IN 4:23 OF THE NIV TRANSLATED AS “WORSHIP” (“LET MY SON GO THAT HE MAY WORSHIP ME”) IS ʿĀBAD, NORMALLY TRANSLATED AS “WORK, SERVE” ELSEWHERE. THE ISRAELITES HAD BEEN SERVING PHARAOH; NOW GOD TOLD PHARAOH THAT THE ISRAELITES WERE GOING TO SERVE HIM. THEIR LIBERATION CAME NOT IN BEING FREED FROM HAVING TO WORK BUT IN BEING FREED FROM WORKING FOR THE WRONG MASTER. WITH THE STATEMENT IN V. 21, “I WILL HARDEN HIS HEART SO THAT HE WILL NOT LET THE PEOPLE GO,” GOD INTRODUCED A NEW DETAIL INTO THE ASSIGNMENT, THAT OF HIS OWN DIVINE CAUSATION OF PHARAOH’S STUBBORNNESS, BUT NOT A NEW EXPECTATION. HE HAD ALREADY WARNED MOSES THAT PHARAOH WOULD BE HIGHLY RESISTANT (3:19–20). THE READER MIGHT AT FIRST BLUSH THINK THAT GOD IS HERE ANNOUNCING TO MOSES THAT HE WAS GOING TO FRUSTRATE MOSES’ EFFORTS. IN FACT, IT WAS JUST THE OPPOSITE. BY INDICATING THAT HE WOULD CONTROL PHARAOH’S RESISTANCE TO THE EXODUS, GOD ASSURED MOSES THAT HE WAS TOTALLY IN CONTROL OF PHARAOH IN EVERY WAY, ABLE TO MAKE HIM RESIST AS LONG AS NECESSARY EVEN DURING A BUILDUP OF INCREASINGLY PAINFUL PLAGUES AND THEN MAKE HIM GIVE UP AND LET THE ISRAELITES GO AT THE MOMENT OF GOD’S CHOOSING (WHICH WAS ALREADY THE ESSENTIAL MESSAGE OF 3:19–20).**

**EXCURSUS: THE HARDENING OF PHARAOH’S HEART**

**THREE DIFFERENT TERMS ARE EMPLOYED IN EXODUS TO DESCRIBE GOD’S MAKING PHARAOH (AND, AS IS SOMETIMES OVERTLY STATED, HIS OFFICIALS AND/OR THE EGYPTIANS IN GENERAL) STUBBORN SO THAT HE WOULD NOT ALLOW THE ISRAELITES TO LEAVE EGYPT. HIS PURPOSE IN PREVENTING PHARAOH FROM GIVING IN TOO EASILY AND TOO EARLY WAS, AS WILL BE SEEN IN SUBSEQUENT PARTS OF THE NARRATIVE, TO ALLOW HIMSELF FULLY TO DEMONSTRATE HIS SOVEREIGNTY OVER PHARAOH,101 THE EGYPTIANS, THE LAND OF EGYPT ITSELF, AND THE GODS IN WHICH PHARAOH AND THE EGYPTIANS TRUSTED. IT SHOULD NOT BE SURPRISING THAT PORTRAYING SUCH A SIGNIFICANT PURPOSE—ONE OF THE MAIN ISSUES OF THE ENTIRE EXODUS STORY—WOULD, IN THE COURSE OF THE NARRATIVE, EVENTUALLY INVOLVE ALL THE DIFFERENT WAYS OF DESCRIBING IN HEBREW THE ACT OF MAKING SOMEONE STUBBORN. ALL THREE TERMS ESSENTIALLY FUNCTION SYNONYMOUSLY IN EXODUS, AND ALTHOUGH ALL THREE ARE TYPICALLY RENDERED IN MOST ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS AS ONE VARIATION OR ANOTHER ON “HARDEN THE HEART,” THAT IS, FOLLOWING THE KJV LITERALISTIC WORDING, THEIR MEANING IN NORMAL MODERN ENGLISH IS SIMPLY “BE/MAKE STUBBORN.” THE MOST COMMON WAY OF THE THREE TO SPEAK OF “MAKING STUBBORN/BEING STUBBORN” IS THE COMBINATION ḤĀZAQ + LĒB, THE TERM USED IN THE PRESENT VERSE. IN THESE CASES, THE CAUSATIVE IS EXPRESSED THROUGH THE HEBREW PIEL (AS IN 4:21) AND THE SIMPLE DESCRIPTIVE THROUGH THE HEBREW QAL (AS IN 7:13): EXOD. 4:21: THE LORD SAID TO MOSES, “WHEN YOU RETURN TO EGYPT, SEE THAT YOU PERFORM BEFORE PHARAOH ALL THE WONDERS I HAVE GIVEN YOU THE POWER TO DO. BUT I WILL HARDEN HIS HEART SO THAT HE WILL NOT LET THE PEOPLE GO.” EXOD. 7:13: YET PHARAOH’S HEART BECAME HARD AND HE WOULD NOT LISTEN TO THEM, JUST AS THE LORD HAD SAID. EXOD. 7:22: BUT THE EGYPTIAN MAGICIANS DID THE SAME THINGS BY THEIR SECRET ARTS, AND PHARAOH’S HEART BECAME HARD; HE WOULD NOT LISTEN TO MOSES AND AARON, JUST AS THE LORD HAD SAID. EXOD. 8:19: THE MAGICIANS SAID TO PHARAOH, “THIS IS THE FINGER OF GOD.” BUT PHARAOH’S HEART WAS HARD AND HE WOULD NOT LISTEN, JUST AS THE LORD HAD SAID. EXOD. 9:12: BUT THE LORD HARDENED PHARAOH’S HEART AND HE WOULD NOT LISTEN TO MOSES AND AARON, JUST AS THE LORD HAD SAID TO MOSES. EXOD. 9:35: SO, PHARAOH’S HEART WAS HARD AND HE WOULD NOT LET THE ISRAELITES GO, JUST AS THE LORD HAD SAID THROUGH MOSES. EXOD. 10:20: BUT THE LORD HARDENED PHARAOH’S HEART, AND HE WOULD NOT LET THE ISRAELITES GO. EXOD. 10:27: BUT THE LORD HARDENED PHARAOH’S HEART, AND HE WAS NOT WILLING TO LET THEM GO. EXOD. 11:10: MOSES AND AARON PERFORMED ALL THESE WONDERS BEFORE PHARAOH, BUT THE LORD HARDENED PHARAOH’S HEART, AND HE WOULD NOT LET THE ISRAELITES GO OUT OF HIS COUNTRY. EXOD. 14:4: AND I WILL HARDEN PHARAOH’S HEART, AND HE WILL PURSUE THEM. BUT I WILL GAIN GLORY FOR MYSELF THROUGH PHARAOH AND ALL HIS ARMY, AND THE EGYPTIANS WILL KNOW THAT I AM THE LORD.” SO, THE ISRAELITES DID THIS. EXOD. 14:8: THE LORD HARDENED THE HEART OF PHARAOH KING OF EGYPT, SO THAT HE PURSUED THE ISRAELITES, WHO WERE MARCHING OUT BOLDLY. EXOD. 14:17: I WILL HARDEN THE HEARTS OF THE EGYPTIANS SO THAT THEY WILL GO IN AFTER THEM. AND I WILL GAIN GLORY THROUGH PHARAOH AND ALL HIS ARMY, THROUGH HIS CHARIOTS AND HIS HORSEMEN. THE NEXT TERM OF THE THREE TO APPEAR IN MOSES’ EXODUS NARRATIVE IS QĀŠĀH + LĒB, “HARDEN ONE’S HEART,” THAT IS, “BE DETERMINED / STUBBORN.” IN THE SINGLE INSTANCE EMPLOYED IN EXODUS, THE CAUSATIVE (HIPHIL) FORM OF THE VERB IS USED: EXOD. 7:3: BUT I WILL HARDEN PHARAOH’S HEART, AND THOUGH I MULTIPLY MY SIGNS AND WONDERS IN EGYPT, …THE THIRD OF THE THREE TERMS TO APPEAR IN MOSES’ VOCABULARY IN EXODUS IS KĀBĒD + LĒB, WHICH LIKEWISE MEANS “BE STUBBORN, BE UNBENDING.” WITH THIS TERM THE SIMPLE DESCRIPTIVE EMPLOYS THE HEBREW QAL STATIVE (E.G., 7:14), WHEREAS THE CAUSATIVE IS INDICATED BY THE HIPHIL (WHETHER REFERRING TO PHARAOH’S HARDENING HIS OWN HEART, AS IN 8:15 [HB. 8:11], OR GOD’S DOING SO, AS IN 10:1). EXOD. 7:14: THEN THE LORD SAID TO MOSES, “PHARAOH’S HEART IS UNYIELDING; HE REFUSES TO LET THE PEOPLE GO.” EXOD. 8:15: BUT WHEN PHARAOH SAW THAT THERE WAS RELIEF, HE HARDENED HIS HEART AND WOULD NOT LISTEN TO MOSES AND AARON, JUST AS THE LORD HAD SAID. EXOD. 8:32: BUT THIS TIME ALSO PHARAOH HARDENED HIS HEART AND WOULD NOT LET THE PEOPLE GO. EXOD. 9:7: PHARAOH SENT MEN TO INVESTIGATE AND FOUND THAT NOT EVEN ONE OF THE ANIMALS OF THE ISRAELITES HAD DIED. YET HIS HEART WAS UNYIELDING AND HE WOULD NOT LET THE PEOPLE GO. EXOD. 9:34: WHEN PHARAOH SAW THAT THE RAIN AND HAIL AND THUNDER HAD STOPPED, HE SINNED AGAIN: HE AND HIS OFFICIALS HARDENED THEIR HEARTS. EXOD. 10:1: THEN THE LORD SAID TO MOSES, “GO TO PHARAOH, FOR I HAVE HARDENED HIS HEART AND THE HEARTS OF HIS OFFICIALS SO THAT I MAY PERFORM THESE MIRACULOUS SIGNS OF MINE AMONG THEM.” EXOD. 14:4: “AND I WILL HARDEN PHARAOH’S HEART, AND HE WILL PURSUE THEM. BUT I WILL GAIN GLORY FOR MYSELF THROUGH PHARAOH AND ALL HIS ARMY, AND THE EGYPTIANS WILL KNOW THAT I AM THE LORD.” SO, THE ISRAELITES DID THIS. MOST OFTEN GOD HIMSELF MADE PHARAOH STUBBORN. IN SOME PLACES, HOWEVER, THE WORDING OF MOST TRANSLATIONS PROPERLY DESCRIBES PHARAOH’S MAKING HIMSELF STUBBORN (“HARDENING HIS OWN HEART”), AS IN 8:15, 32; 9:34. ADDITIONALLY, SOME WORDINGS SUGGEST A NEUTRAL SITUATION, THAT IS, THAT PHARAOH’S HEART SIMPLY “WAS/BECAME HARD” (7:13–14, 22; 8:19; 9:7, 35). BASED ON THE WAY THESE VARIOUS WORDINGS FOR “BE/MAKE STUBBORN” SEEM TO OCCUR IN NO PARTICULAR PATTERN, ARE ROUTINELY USED SYNONYMOUSLY, AND CLEARLY REFER TO THE SAME ESSENTIAL PHENOMENON (I.E., GOD’S KEEPING PHARAOH FROM LETTING THE ISRAELITES LEAVE EGYPT UNTIL A TIME OF GOD’S CHOOSING), IT IS NOT LIKELY THAT ANY REAL SEMANTIC DIFFERENCE IS INTENDED BY THE THREE WORDINGS. RATHER, THEY REPRESENT THE SORT OF VARIATION FOUND IN ALL GOOD WRITING, IN WHICH A CONCEPT REPEATEDLY MENTIONED IS REFERRED TO WITH VARIOUS WORDINGS RATHER THAN THE SAME WORDING EACH TIME. THIS WOULD SEEM TO BE THE OPERATING PRINCIPLE ALSO IN 9:34, WHICH EXPLICITLY STATES THAT PHARAOH “SINNED AGAIN: HE AND HIS OFFICIALS HARDENED THEIR HEARTS,” A WORDING THAT WOULD SEEM TO INDICATE THAT PHARAOH’S ACTION WAS TRULY VOLUNTARY SINCE IT IS NOT NORMAL FOR US TO THINK THAT GOD WOULD CAUSE ANYONE TO SIN. THIS, HOWEVER, IS MORE LIKELY THE RESULT EITHER OF THE GREATER RANGE OF MEANING OF THE HEBREW WORD FOR SIN (ḤṬʾ) OR ELSE OF THE WAY THE TWO CONCEPTS (SINNING AND BEING STUBBORN) ARE MENTIONED TOGETHER IN THE VERSE WITHOUT ANY INTENTION THAT THEY SHOULD BE UNDERSTOOD AS COTERMINOUS IN MEANING (SEE THE COMMENTARY ON 9:34). WAS PHARAOH A SINNER? MOST ASSUREDLY. INDEED, ONE OF THE REASONS FOR GOD’S CHOICE OF THE TERM “HARDEN THE HEART” IN THE REVELATION OF HIS PLAN TO MOSES IN 4:21 MAY HAVE BEEN THAT TO AN EGYPTIAN (AS MOSES HAD BEEN BY ADOPTION) OR TO THOSE WHO UNDERSTOOD THE BASICS OF EGYPTIAN CULTURE (AS MOST OF THE HEBREWS SURELY DID, EVEN IF IMPERFECTLY) THE CONCEPT OF HARDENING SOMEONE’S HEART WOULD CALL TO MIND THAT PERSON’S SINFULNESS. EGYPTIAN RELIGIOUS TEXTS SPEAK OFTEN OF THE ʾIB (EGYPTIAN FOR “HEART”) AS THE REPRESENTATION OF A PERSON’S BASIC ESSENCE, THE PLACE WHERE A PERSON’S GUILT AND INNOCENCE, MOTIVES AND GENERAL RIGHTEOUSNESS ARE TO BE FOUND. IN EGYPTIAN THINKING, THE WEIGHING/EVALUATING OF THE ʾIB BY THE GODS AT THE TIME OF A PERSON’S DEATH WAS A MEANS OF DETERMINING WHETHER OR NOT ONE IS A SINNER AND THEREFORE WHETHER OR NOT ONE CAN GO TO THE EGYPTIAN EQUIVALENT OF HEAVEN. THE EGYPTIAN PHARAOH WAS SUPPOSED TO BE A PURE PERSON, A DIVINE MANIFESTATION OF THE GODS, AND ONE WHOSE SOVEREIGNTY OVER THE PEOPLE WAS CREDENTIALIZED IN PART BY THE PURITY OF HIS ʾIB. THE IDEA THAT STEPHEN YAHWEH COULD DO WHATEVER HE WANTED WITH PHARAOH’S HEART, AND SPECIFICALLY COULD “HARDEN” IT, THEREFORE, WAS BOTH AN EVIDENCE OF STEPHEN YAHWEH’S CONTROL OF ALL THINGS INCLUDING THE MIGHTIEST MONARCH OF THE DAY AND ALSO EVIDENCE THAT STEPHEN YAHWEH HAD DONE WHAT THE EGYPTIANS THOUGHT THE “GODS” WOULD USUALLY DO—WEIGH THE HEART AND DECIDE WHETHER ITS OWNER WAS WORTHY OF ETERNAL LIFE OR NOT. IN EFFECT, THEN, EACH TIME STEPHEN YAHWEH IS DESCRIBED AS HARDENING PHARAOH’S HEART, THE ALERT READER IS REMINDED THAT STEPHEN YAHWEH HAD, AS IT WERE, WEIGHED PHARAOH AND FOUND HIM WANTING. THUS, GOD DISGRACED PHARAOH. IN TERMS OF THE COMPARISON BETWEEN WHAT THE EGYPTIANS WOULD HAVE EXPECTED TO HAPPEN TO PHARAOH’S HEART AFTER DEATH AND GOD’S HARDENING OF IT DURING PHARAOH’S LIFE IS NOT THAT PHARAOH WAS CONDEMNED TO BE DENIED ETERNAL LIFE (SOMETHING THE TEXT CANNOT BE READ TO MEAN) BUT THAT GOD HAD REDUCED THE SUPPOSEDLY DIVINE PHARAOH TO THE LEVEL OF A MERE MORTAL, EASILY MANIPULATED AND POSSESSING NO DIVINE “PURITY” AT ALL. IN TERMS OF THE CLASSICAL THEOLOGICAL-PHILOSOPHICAL ISSUE OF FREE WILL VERSUS DETERMINISM, NONE OF THE REFERENCES TO THE HARDENING OF PHARAOH’S HEART IS DECISIVE. THAT IS BECAUSE GOD’S CAUSING PHARAOH TO BE STUBBORN IS SIMPLY NOT PRESENTED IN THE NARRATIVE AS A GENERAL PERMANENT PHENOMENON (ETERNAL ELECTION OR REJECTION) BUT RATHER AS AN AD HOC ACTION OF GOD, TEMPORARY IN NATURE (I.E., PHARAOH’S MIND WAS NOT PERMANENTLY MADE STUBBORN SO THAT HE HAD NO ABILITY TO REPENT LATER IN LIFE) AND LIMITED TO THE SPECIAL PURPOSE OF HUMILIATING THE EGYPTIANS AND THEIR FALSE RELIGION. IN VV. 22–23 MOSES WAS INSTRUCTED TO BE PREPARED TO ANNOUNCE TO PHARAOH THE CLOSE AND TENDER PROTECTED RELATIONSHIP OF ISRAEL TO GOD, AS FIRSTBORN SON TO FATHER, AND TO CONTRAST IT TO THE DEADLY FATE THAT AWAITED THE FIRSTBORN OF EGYPT, INDIVIDUALIZED IN PHARAOH’S SON. GOD HAD CHOSEN ISRAEL FOR ELECTION TO A SPECIAL STATUS, THAT OF FIRSTBORN SON, WITH THE IMPLICATION OF INHERITANCE THAT WENT WITH IT. ISRAEL’S COMING INHERITANCE CERTAINLY INCLUDED THE PROMISED LAND OF CANAAN BUT INCLUDED ALSO THE SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP OF GOD’S PRESENCE. GOD IS NOT ONLY PROMISING TO PROTECT HIS SON OVER AGAINST PHARAOH’S SON AND TO USE HIS AWESOME POWER TO DO SO, BUT HE IS ANNOUNCING THAT THE ONE MUST DIE SO THAT THE OTHER MAY BE LIBERATED FROM SEXUAL BONDAGE. ALTHOUGH THIS IS CERTAINLY NOT EXPLICITLY A REFERENCE TO CHRIST’S SACRIFICE OF HIS LIFE ON THE CROSS, NOR CAN BE BUT FOR THE CHRIST OF THE STONING, IT IS AN EARLY BIBLICAL INSTANCE OF THE CONCEPT OF SUBSTITUTIONARY DEATH IN THE HUMAN SPHERE. ADDITIONALLY, IT ADUMBRATES THE CONCEPT OF THE MESSIAH’S EMBODIMENT OF ISRAEL, THE SAME CONNECTION MADE, FOR EXAMPLE, IN THE “SERVANT SONGS” IN ISAIAH (ESP. ISA 53) AND BY MATTHEW (2:15, IDENTIFYING THE FULFILLMENT OF HOS 11:1). NOTE AS WELL THAT GOD’S PURPOSE IN RESCUING HIS SON IS THAT HIS SON MIGHT WORSHIP HIM, A ROLE JESUS FULFILLED IN HIS OWN FAITHFUL WORSHIP OF THE FATHER STEPHEN AND A ROLE GOD’S PEOPLE ARE EXPECTED TO FULFILL AS THEIR MOST BASIC RESPONSE TO HIS DELIVERANCE OF THEIR LIVES IN JOHN 4:23-24. THE REQUEST TO LEAVE EGYPT TO “WORSHIP” THE TRUE GOD REPEATEDLY CHARACTERIZES MOSES’ EXODUS DEMANDS BEFORE PHARAOH IN THE ENSUING CHAPTERS. IMPLICIT IN GOD’S CLOSE IDENTIFICATION OF HIMSELF WITH HIS “SON” IS HIS CONCERN FOR THE SON’S SUFFERING. THIS SORT OF EMPATHETIC ATTENTION OF GOD TO ISRAEL ALSO APPEARS THREE TIMES IN JEREMIAH (JER. 3:19; 31:9 [“I AM ISRAEL’S FATHER, AND EPHRAIM [ISRAEL] IS MY FIRSTBORN SON”]; 31:20). THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE TENTH PLAGUE IN ADVANCE IS SOMETHING THE NIV TRANSLATION OF EXOD. 11:1 PROPERLY HIGHLIGHTS BY ITS TRANSLATION WITH THE ENGLISH PLUPERFECT (“THE LORD HAD SAID”). IN OTHER WORDS, MOSES ENTERED INTO THE PROCESS OF FULFILLING GOD’S COMMANDS WITH THE PRIOR UNDERSTANDING THAT THE MIGHTY ACTS OF GOD IN THE FORM OF THE PLAGUES WOULD BUILD IN INTENSITY UNTIL THEY CULMINATED IN THE DEATH OF THE EGYPTIAN FIRSTBORN—TOUCHING EVEN PHARAOH HIMSELF. 4:24–26 THIS UNUSUAL STORY HAS ENGENDERED MANY DIFFERENT INTERPRETATIONS AND ATTEMPTS AT EXPLANATION. THE FOLLOWING ASSERTIONS ARE IMPORTANT FOR UNDERSTANDING SUCH A SEEMINGLY ENIGMATIC STORY, WHICH CONTAINS MANY EVENTS AND ASSUMPTIONS THAT TEND TO BE FOREIGN TO MODERN WESTERN EARS: A. WHETHER ONE FOLLOWS THE MT HEBREW OF V. 24 (“STEPHEN YAHWEH MET UP WITH HIM AND SOUGHT TO KILL HIM”) OR THE LIKELY ORIGINAL LXX/TG. OF V. 24 (“THE ANGEL OF THE LORD MET UP WITH HIM AND SOUGHT TO KILL HIM”), THE SAME ESSENTIAL POINT IS MADE: GOD IS NOT GOING TO ALLOW SOMEONE (GERSHOM—NOT MOSES: THE TEXT OF 4:24–26 NEVER MENTIONS MOSES!) TO GET TO EGYPT ALIVE WITHOUT A DECISIVE CHANGE IN THEIR CIRCUMCISION STATUS. THE FACT THAT THIS STORY FOLLOWS IMMEDIATELY THE WARNING OF STEPHEN YAHWEH ABOUT THE POTENTIAL DEATH OF PHARAOH’S FIRSTBORN SON PROVIDES A SPATIAL SETTING IN THE TEXT: WE NOW READ A STORY ABOUT THE POTENTIAL DEATH OF MOSES’ FIRSTBORN SON, UPON WHOSE FATE THE FOCUS OF THE PERICOPE SHOULD NATURALLY FALL. THE NIV, IN INSERTING THE NAME MOSES AT TWO POINTS IN THE STORY VIA BRACKETS, MERELY MISLEADS THE READER INTO THINKING THAT MOSES, NOT GERSHOM, WAS THE SUBJECT OF WHAT ZIPPORAH SAID AND DID. B. ZIPPORAH, WHO HAD GROWN UP IN THE HOUSEHOLD OF A MIDIANITE (HIGH?) PRIEST, SURELY UNDERSTOOD HOW CIRCUMCISION WAS DONE AND WHAT ITS SIGNIFICANCE WAS—INCLUDING THE PROPER WORDS TO SAY IN CONNECTION WITH A CIRCUMCISION CEREMONY. MANY PEOPLE GROUPS IN THE ANCIENT WORLD PRACTICED CIRCUMCISION, INCLUDING THE MIDIANITES; IT WAS HARDLY UNKNOWN OUTSIDE OF ISRAELITE CIRCLES. C. THE EGYPTIANS PRACTICED A PARTIAL CIRCUMCISION, INVOLVING CUTTING ONLY A SMALL AMOUNT OF THE FORESKIN, A PRACTICE CONSIDERED SO ILLEGITIMATE BY THE ISRAELITES THAT IT COULD BE CALLED “THE REPROACH OF EGYPT” (JOSH 5:9).116 IF MOSES HAD FOLLOWED THIS SORT OF APPROACH IN CIRCUMCISING GERSHOM, THINKING THAT IT FULFILLED STEPHEN YAHWEH’S EXPECTATIONS, HE WOULD HAVE BEEN QUITE MISTAKEN AND STILL WOULD HAVE BEEN IN DEFIANCE OF STEPHEN YAHWEH’S WILL, EVEN IF HE HIMSELF HAD BEEN FULLY AND PROPERLY CIRCUMCISED PRIOR TO HIS MARRIAGE TO ZIPPORAH. D. MOSES PROBABLY HAD UNDERGONE THIS PARTIAL EGYPTIAN CIRCUMCISION EITHER UPON HIS ADOPTION BY PHARAOH’S DAUGHTER OR PERHAPS LATER IN LIFE. HIS BIOLOGICAL PARENTS MAY HAVE AVOIDED HAVING HIM CIRCUMCISED AT BIRTH FOR FEAR IT WOULD IDENTIFY HIM AS AN ISRAELITE AND/OR MAKE HIM CRY MORE AND THUS BE DETECTED BY EGYPTIANS SEEKING TO KILL THE INFANT BOYS AT THAT TIME (1:22–2:2), IF INDEED CIRCUMCISION WAS EVEN CONSISTENTLY PRACTICED AMONG THE ISRAELITES IN EGYPT IN THOSE DAYS. THIS MAY HAVE PREDISPOSED HIM NOT TO CIRCUMCISE GERSHOM, WHOM HE WAS BRINGING ALONG—UNCIRCUMCISED—ON THE TRIP. E. THE EXPRESSION “RELATIVE OF BLOOD,” OR MORE NATURALLY, “BLOOD RELATIVE” (ḤĂṬAN DĀMÎM) FOUND IN BOTH VV. 25 AND 26, IS KEY TO UNDERSTANDING WHAT ZIPPORAH WAS THINKING AND DOING: SHE WAS NOT NECESSARILY USING LANGUAGE ABOUT MOSES AS HER HUSBAND (WHICH WOULD BE EXPRESSED BY THE WORD ʾÎŠ) OR NECESSARILY LANGUAGE SHE OR SOMEONE ELSE MIGHT HAVE USED AT THE TIME OF THEIR MARRIAGE, LONG PRIOR TO THIS EVENT, WHEN HE WAS STILL (OR STILL ABOUT TO BECOME) HER BRIDEGROOM (WHICH CAN BE BUT IS NOT THE ONLY MEANING OF ḤĂṬAN). IT MAY WELL BE THAT THE LANGUAGE SHE USED HERE IS THE SORT THAT SHE WOULD NATURALLY HAVE USED ABOUT ANY MALE RELATIVE, SINCE ḤĂṬAN SIMPLY MEANS “RELATIVE.” AMONG THE MIDIANITES FULL CIRCUMCISION WAS PRESUMABLY PRACTICED EARLY IN A MALE CHILD’S LIFE, ALTHOUGH IT IS POSSIBLE THAT SOME MEN PROBABLY WERE CIRCUMCISED A FEW WEEKS PRIOR TO MARRIAGE RATHER THAN EARLIER IN LIFE. ZIPPORAH SAID WHAT SHE UNDERSTOOD TO BE THE PROPER LANGUAGE—WHICH WAS HER BEST ATTEMPT AND APPARENTLY WAS A SUFFICIENT ATTEMPT—TO SHOW THAT THE CIRCUMCISION SHE PERFORMED WAS OFFICIAL AND PIOUS. WHEN SHE SAID “YOU ARE A BLOOD RELATIVE TO ME” (OUR TRANSLATION), SHE PRESUMABLY WAS SPEAKING TO GERSHOM, NOT TO MOSES.**

**THE FLINT KNIFE PROBABLY WAS THE PROPER, TRADITIONAL INSTRUMENT FOR PERFORMING A CIRCUMCISION (CF. JOSH 5:2–9).**

**G. ZIPPORAH TOUCHED121 THE FORESKIN OF GERSHOM TO GERSHOM’S GENITALS FROM WHICH IT HAD JUST BEEN REMOVED. “FEET” (RĔGĀLÎM) IS ONE OF SEVERAL HEBREW EUPHEMISMS FOR “GENITALS” (CF. ISA 6:2; 7:20; EZEK 16:25; DEUT 28:57; OTHERS INCLUDE “HAND,” “KNEE,” “STONES” [SEE COMMENTS ON 1:16]). SHE THUS HAD PHYSICALLY CIRCUMCISED GERSHOM; THEN IMMEDIATELY SHE SYMBOLICALLY USED THE REMOVED FORESKIN TO TOUCH GERSHOM’S GENITALS AND SAID THE “RIGHT WORDS” (THE ONES SHE UNDERSTOOD TO BE GODLY AND PROPER AT A CIRCUMCISION) IN AN EFFORT PERHAPS TO LEGITIMIZE THE PREVIOUSLY NEGLECTED AND NOW EMERGENCY CIRCUMCISION. (AGAIN, IT WAS NOT MOSES, GOD SOUGHT TO KILL, NOR WAS MOSES LIKELY TO HAVE BEEN THE PERSON WHOSE GENITALS WERE TOUCHED BY THE FORESKIN. AN ACTUAL CIRCUMCISION OF MOSES WOULD HAVE PREVENTED HIS TRAVELING FOR A NUMBER OF DAYS. SINCE FROM THIS POINT ON IN THE NARRATIVE NEITHER ZIPPORAH NOR MOSES’ SONS ARE MENTIONED UNTIL THEIR REUNITING IN 18:2–6, IT IS LIKELY THAT THEY DID NOT TRAVEL FARTHER THAN THIS CAMPING PLACE (MĀLŌN, V. 24) AND, AFTER GERSHOM HAD HEALED, RETURNED TO MIDIAN. H. THE EXPRESSION “RELATIVE OF BLOOD” IS NOT NEGATIVE BUT POSITIVE, AN ENDEARING REFERENCE TO A HUSBAND’S AND WIFE’S JOINING TO BECOME ONE FLESH/BLOOD AND THUS PRODUCING OFFSPRING THAT ARE THEIR OWN FLESH AND BLOOD SO THAT GERSHOM WAS CLEARLY ZIPPORAH’S “BLOOD RELATIVE.” QUITE POSSIBLY ZIPPORAH, IN SAYING THIS, WAS NOT MERELY REPEATING WORDS MIDIANITES SAID AT CIRCUMCISIONS BUT WAS USING THESE WORDS TO LINK HERSELF CLOSELY TO GERSHOM; SO, HER ACT ON HIS BEHALF WOULD SUFFICE INSTEAD OF MOSES’ ACTUALLY DOING GERSHOM’S CIRCUMCISION. ACCORDINGLY, V. 26 IS PERHAPS BEST TRANSLATED, “THE LORD LET HIM [GERSHOM] ALONE SINCE SHE SAID ‘BLOOD RELATIVE’ IN CONNECTION WITH THE CIRCUMCISION.” I. MOSES MAY HAVE FAILED GOD IN TWO WAYS: HE HAD NOT HIMSELF BEEN FULLY CIRCUMCISED ACCORDING TO THE EXPECTATIONS IMPLICIT IN GEN 17:10–14 UNTIL SUCH TIME AS HIS MARRIAGE TO ZIPPORAH, BUT FAR MORE IMPORTANTLY, HE HAD NOT CIRCUMCISED OR AT LEAST NOT ADEQUATELY CIRCUMCISED ONE OF HIS SONS, LIKEWISE IN VIOLATION OF THOSE EXPECTATIONS—BOTH VERY SERIOUS SINS OF OMISSION, BUT MOSES ONLY SINNED ONCE BY HITTING THE ROCK TWICE. J. THE CONSEQUENCE OF FAILURE TO BE CIRCUMCISED IS “TO BE CUT OFF” FROM THE HOLY PEOPLE (GEN 17:14). THIS IS JUST WHAT GOD THREATENED TO MAKE HAPPEN IN GERSHOM’S CASE ACCORDING TO V. 24. FORTUNATELY, ZIPPORAH SAVED HER SON FROM SUCH A FATE BY SAYING AND DOING THE RIGHT THING, AS BEST SHE KNEW HOW. K. THE FACT THAT ZIPPORAH HAD TIME TO DO THE RIGHT THING AND REMOVE THE DANGER SHOWS THAT SOMEHOW, SHE WAS WARNED AND GIVEN TIME TO ACT. THE SPECIFICS OF THAT WARNING ARE NOT PROVIDED IN THE NARRATIVE, BUT THE GRACE OF GOD IS IMPLIED CLEARLY IN THE FACT THAT BY ACTING, ZIPPORAH PREVENTED A SERIOUS CONSEQUENCE. THEREBY, THE RESULT WAS THAT MOSES’ FAMILY WAS CONSISTENT WITH THE PRACTICES GOD REQUIRED OF HIS COVENANT PEOPLE, AND THUS THE STORY ENDS HAPPILY WITH THE WILL OF GOD ACCOMPLISHED, EVEN IF BY THREAT, AND THE BLESSING OF GOD RETAINED BY MOSES AND HIS FAMILY. L. FOR ALL ITS LACONIC STYLE AND SEEMINGLY DRAMATIC MOOD, THIS STORY IS ACTUALLY FULLY CONSISTENT WITH OTHER EVIDENCE FOR MOSES’ TENDENCY TO RESIST THE CALL OF GOD TO SUCH A DAUNTING ASSIGNMENT AS DELIVERING THE ISRAELITES FROM EGYPT AGAINST PHARAOH’S WISHES, A TENDENCY THAT BEGAN IN 4:13 WITH HIS ATTEMPT TO REFUSE THE CALL. EVEN AS HE HEADED TOWARD EGYPT, HE STILL DID NOT HAVE ALL ASPECTS OF HIS LIFE (IN THIS CASE HIS FAMILY LIFE) IN ORDER. THIS IS THEREFORE ONE OF SEVERAL STORIES MOSES TOLD ABOUT HIMSELF IN THE PENTATEUCH THAT DEMONSTRATE HIS LESS THAN PERFECT OBEDIENCE TO GOD’S COMMANDS AT VARIOUS TIMES (CF. ESP. DEUT. 32:51–52). BY WAY OF SUMMARIZING OUR VIEW OF THE PERICOPE: EXOD. 4:24–26 IS A STORY SHOWING HOW ZIPPORAH, BY PERFORMING AS OFFICIALLY AS SHE COULD A CIRCUMCISION ON HER SON—WHOM HIS FATHER HAD FAILED SO FAR TO CONFORM TO THE COVENANT REQUIREMENTS OF GEN 17:10–14—SAVED HIM FROM THE PUNISHMENT REQUIRED BY THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT OF CIRCUMCISION. NOTHING CAN THWART GOD’S PLAN OF REDEMPTION. SINCE MOSES HAD NOT YET DONE HIS PART IN REGARD TO GERSHOM’S CIRCUMCISION, GOD ACCEPTED ZIPPORAH’S DECISIVE AND PIOUS ACTIONS IN CIRCUMCISING HER SON AS AN APPROPRIATE SUBSTITUTE SO THAT GOD’S CHOSEN, YET RELUCTANT AND HEADSTRONG, PROPHET COULD CONTINUE HIS ASSIGNMENT TO LEAD THE ISRAELITES OUT OF BONDAGE. GOD OFTEN RELENTS IF PEOPLE REPENT, BUT NOT ALL THE TIME IN NUMBERS 23:19. RIGHT WORDS AND ACTIONS, IF THEY SHOW THE TRUE INTENT OF THE HEART, DEMONSTRATE RIGHT REPENTANCE. MOSES MIGHT HAVE LOST HIS OWN FIRSTBORN SON, JUST AS PHARAOH WOULD LATER LOSE HIS (PREDICTED IMMEDIATELY PRIOR TO THE PRESENT PASSAGE, IN 4:23). ZIPPORAH’S INTERVENTION PREVENTED THAT FROM HAPPENING. 4:27–28 THE THREE INDIVIDUAL NARRATIVES AT THE END OF CHAP. 4 ARE ALL BRIEF—THE PRIOR STORY OF GOD’S SEEKING TO KILL MOSES (VV. 24–26), THIS STORY OF MOSES’ REUNITING WITH AARON (VV. 27–28), AND THE CONCLUDING STORY OF MOSES’ AND AARON’S ARRIVAL AND ACCEPTANCE IN EGYPT (VV. 29–31). THE TERSE NARRATIVE STYLE SERVES MOSES’ PURPOSE AS NARRATOR: HE WANTED TO MOVE THE STORY FOCUS ON TO EGYPT, AND HE OBVIOUSLY THEREFORE HAD CHOSEN NOT TO BELABOR THE EVENTS THAT TOOK PLACE BETWEEN HIS CALL AT SINAI AND HIS ARRIVAL IN EGYPT. THE DETAILS OF SUCH EVENTS MIGHT FASCINATE US, BUT THEY WOULD CONTRIBUTE LITTLE TO THE PROGRESS OF THE PLAN OF REDEMPTION OF GOD’S PEOPLE, WHICH WAS MOSES’ CONCERN. VERSE 27 BEGINS RESUMPTIVELY, REFERRING BACK TO THE CALL OF AARON. THIS IS IMPORTANT IN HELPING THE READER UNDERSTAND THAT AARON WAS GENUINELY, FULLY COMMITTED TO THE EXODUS PLAN; WE NOW LEARN THAT HE HAD BEEN EXPLICITLY SENT BY GOD TO JOIN FORCES WITH MOSES—THAT IS, THAT THE EVENTS DESCRIBED IN 4:14 (“WHAT ABOUT YOUR BROTHER AARON? …HE IS ALREADY ON HIS WAY”) CAME ABOUT NOT MERELY BY REASON OF A DESIRE ON AARON’S PART TO HAVE A FAMILY VISIT WITH MOSES BUT BY A CALL OF GOD, PARALLEL TO BUT APPARENTLY NOT AS EXTENSIVE AS THAT OF MOSES’ OWN. AARON’S KEY ROLE AS MOSES’ SUPPORTER AND SPOKESMAN, WAS PREVIOUSLY ARRANGED IN 4:14–16. THE LOCATION OF THE “MOUNTAIN OF GOD” (SINAI) IS HERE IMPLIED NOT TO BE IN MIDIAN BUT SOMEWHERE BETWEEN MIDIAN AND EGYPT, IN LIGHT OF THE FACT THAT BOTH AARON GOING FROM EGYPT TOWARD MIDIAN, AND MOSES, GOING FROM MIDIAN TOWARD EGYPT, WERE WELL INTO THEIR JOURNEYS WHEN THEY MET. PERHAPS AARON ALREADY KNEW BY REPUTATION WHERE THE MOUNTAIN WAS; OR, JUST AS LIKELY, THEY WERE GUIDED TO THEIR MEETING BY GOD, WHO HAD DIRECTLY CALLED BOTH TO THE MEETING AND ARRANGED THE TIMING SO THAT THEY WOULD ENCOUNTER ONE ANOTHER. AT ANY RATE, THIS MEETING OF FAMILY LONG SEPARATED PARALLELS TO SOME DEGREE THE MEETING OF MOSES AND JETHRO AT THE SAME LOCATION IN CHAP. 18—DEMONSTRATING THE IMPORTANCE, AND PRESUMABLY THE FAME, OF MOUNT SINAI. THE MESSAGE OF V. 28 IS SIMPLE AND DIRECT: AARON KNEW EVERYTHING AND AGREED WITH EVERYTHING IN THE PLAN TO CONFRONT PHARAOH AND DEMAND THE RELEASE OF THE ISRAELITES. THE REPEATED OBJECT PRONOUN IN V. 28 (“HIM”) IS TECHNICALLY AMBIGUOUS BUT IS PLACED IN SYNTACTICAL CONTEXT IN A WAY THAT SUGGESTS THAT IT MUST REFER TO MOSES AND NOT TO AARON. IN OTHER WORDS, THE WORDING STILL MAKES MOSES THE PREEMINENT SPOKESMAN AND MIRACLE WORKER. HE WAS NOT SIMPLY HANDING OVER THOSE TASKS TO AARON. 4:29–31 THE TIME ELAPSED BETWEEN MOSES’ LEAVING JETHRO (V. 18) AND THE ISRAELITES’ WORSHIP OF STEPHEN YAHWEH (V. 31) MAY HAVE BEEN AS LITTLE AS A FEW WEEKS OR PERHAPS AS LONG AS MANY MONTHS. NONETHELESS, IT IS SUMMARIZED RAPIDLY. THESE VERSES DO NOT EVEN MENTION THE ARRIVAL OF MOSES AND AARON IN EGYPT BUT GET RIGHT TO THE POINT THAT THEY GATHERED THE ELDERS, PERFORMED THE SIGNS, AND SAW THE PEOPLE BELIEVE. THERE IS AN UNDERLYING ASSUMPTION IN THIS PART OF THE STORY OF A SPECIAL ASPECT OF AARON’S ROLE: HIS ABILITY TO PROVIDE IMMEDIATE CREDIBILITY WITH HIS FELLOW ISRAELITE ELDERS IN EGYPT. MOSES WAS AN OUTSIDER, SOMEONE MOST OF THEM PROBABLY HAD NEVER MET, EVEN IF THEY HAD HEARD OF HIM, AND SOMEONE THEY MAY EVEN HAVE BEEN AFRAID OF, BASED ON THE TENOR OF THE INCIDENT DESCRIBED IN 2:11–14. AARON, ON THE OTHER HAND, WAS ALMOST SURELY AN ISRAELITE ELDER HIMSELF (HOW ELSE WOULD HE HAVE HAD THE MEANS AND THE FREEDOM TO LEAVE EGYPT AND TAKE A TRIP TO MEET MOSES WHILE MOST OF THE PEOPLE WERE WORKING SEVEN DAYS A WEEK?), IN A POSITION TO INTRODUCE MOSES TO THE LEADERSHIP OF THE PEOPLE MUCH AS BARNABAS DID FOR SAUL (ACTS 9:26–28). THUS, AARON DID THE TALKING, TOLD THE WHOLE STORY OF MOSES’ CALL, AND PERFORMED AT LEAST TWO OF THE THREE SIGNS (4:1–9) BEFORE THE PEOPLE (V. 30). HE MAY HAVE NEEDED TO PERFORM ONLY TWO SIGNS, THE STAFF-TO-A SNAKE [ROD-TO-A SNAKE OR WAND-TO-A SNAKE] AND THE LEPROUS HAND, SINCE V. 31 SAYS THAT THE PEOPLE BELIEVED (THE HB. MAKING IT CLEAR THAT THE PEOPLE, NOT MERELY THE ELDERS, BELIEVED) WHEREAS 4:9 WOULD SEEM TO IMPLY THAT THE CHANGING OF WATER TO BLOOD WAS A BACKUP SIGN IN CASE OF REFUSAL TO BELIEVE. VERSE 31 DESCRIBES THE ISRAELITES’ CONVERSION TO FAITH IN STEPHEN YAHWEH, EVIDENCED BY THE POSTURE OF BOWING BEFORE GOD (NOT MOSES) AS THE PEOPLE’S SIGN THAT THEY BELIEVED IN AND ACCEPTED THE DEMANDS OF HIS WORDS AND PROMISES FOR THEM. THEY LIKELY HAD NO KNOWLEDGE OF HIS NAME PRIOR TO THIS (ANY MORE THAN MOSES HAD HAD BEFORE HIS ENCOUNTER AT SINAI) AND NO PREVIOUS IDEA THAT HE WAS THEIR NATIONAL GOD WHO HAD CHOSEN THEM AS HIS PEOPLE (WHICH IS WHAT “WAS CONCERNED ABOUT THEM AND HAD SEEN THEIR MISERY” IMPLIES). IN THE TERSE STYLE OF OLD TESTAMENT (AND USUALLY NT131) CONVERSION ACCOUNTS, MOSES TELLS THE READER IN V. 31 THAT THE ISRAELITES TRUSTED IN STEPHEN YAHWEH FOR THEIR SALVATION. THIS TRUST WAS SOON TO BE SORELY TESTED.**

**FIRST AUDIENCE WITH PHARAOH: HARSH RESULTS (5:1–14)**

**1 AFTERWARD MOSES AND AARON WENT TO PHARAOH AND SAID, “THIS IS WHAT THE LORD, THE GOD OF ISRAEL, SAYS: ‘LET MY PEOPLE GO, SO THAT THEY MAY HOLD A FESTIVAL TO ME IN THE DESERT.’” 2 PHARAOH SAID, “WHO IS THE LORD, THAT I SHOULD OBEY HIM AND LET ISRAEL GO? I DO NOT KNOW THE LORD AND I WILL NOT LET ISRAEL GO.” 3 THEN THEY SAID, “THE GOD OF THE HEBREWS HAS MET WITH US. NOW LET US TAKE A THREE-DAY JOURNEY INTO THE DESERT TO OFFER SACRIFICES TO THE LORD OUR GOD, OR HE MAY STRIKE US WITH PLAGUES OR WITH THE SWORD.” 4 BUT THE KING OF EGYPT SAID, “MOSES AND AARON, WHY ARE YOU TAKING THE PEOPLE AWAY FROM THEIR LABOR? GET BACK TO YOUR WORK!” 5 THEN PHARAOH SAID, “LOOK, THE PEOPLE OF THE LAND ARE NOW NUMEROUS, AND YOU ARE STOPPING THEM FROM WORKING.” 6 THAT SAME DAY PHARAOH GAVE THIS ORDER TO THE SLAVE DRIVERS AND FOREMEN IN CHARGE OF THE PEOPLE: 7 “YOU ARE NO LONGER TO SUPPLY THE PEOPLE WITH STRAW FOR MAKING BRICKS; LET THEM GO AND GATHER THEIR OWN STRAW. 8 BUT REQUIRE THEM TO MAKE THE SAME NUMBER OF BRICKS AS BEFORE; DON’T REDUCE THE QUOTA. THEY ARE LAZY; THAT IS WHY THEY ARE CRYING OUT, ‘LET US GO AND SACRIFICE TO OUR GOD.’ 9 MAKE THE WORK HARDER FOR THE MEN SO THAT THEY KEEP WORKING AND PAY NO ATTENTION TO LIES.” 10 THEN THE SLAVE DRIVERS AND THE FOREMEN WENT OUT AND SAID TO THE PEOPLE, “THIS IS WHAT PHARAOH SAYS: ‘I WILL NOT GIVE YOU ANY MORE STRAW. 11 GO AND GET YOUR OWN STRAW WHEREVER YOU CAN FIND IT, BUT YOUR WORK WILL NOT BE REDUCED AT ALL.’” 12 SO THE PEOPLE SCATTERED ALL OVER EGYPT TO GATHER STUBBLE TO USE FOR STRAW. 13 THE SLAVE DRIVERS KEPT PRESSING THEM, SAYING, “COMPLETE THE WORK REQUIRED OF YOU FOR EACH DAY, JUST AS WHEN YOU HAD STRAW.” 14 THE ISRAELITE FOREMEN APPOINTED BY PHARAOH’S SLAVE DRIVERS WERE BEATEN AND WERE ASKED, “WHY DIDN’T YOU MEET YOUR QUOTA OF BRICKS YESTERDAY OR TODAY, AS BEFORE?” WITH CHAPTER 5 THE ENCOUNTERS WITH PHARAOH BEGIN. THREE KEY THEMES OF THOSE ENCOUNTERS ARE INCLUDED ALREADY IN THESE VERSES (5:1–14): THE DEMAND MADE BY STEPHEN YAHWEH, AND QUOTED PROPHETICALLY BY MOSES AND AARON, THAT “MY PEOPLE” BE ALLOWED TO LEAVE EGYPT TO WORSHIP “ME” IN THE WILDERNESS (VV. 1, 3); PHARAOH’S RESISTANCE, SHOWING NO SUFFICIENT FEAR OF STEPHEN YAHWEH (VV. 2, 4); AND PHARAOH’S STUBBORNNESS, SHOWN IN EITHER DOING NOTHING OR DOING THE OPPOSITE OF WHAT STEPHEN YAHWEH DEMANDED (VV. 4–14, IN THIS CASE RESULTING IN EVEN HARSHER CONDITIONS FOR THE ISRAELITES). THESE THEMES, REPRESENTED IN VARIOUS EXPLICIT AND IMPLICIT WAYS, AND WITH VARYING DEGREES OF EMPHASIS, PERSIST THROUGH CHAP. 11. THUS, AT THIS POINT IN MOSES’ NARRATIVE, THE READER IS EXPOSED ONLY TO PHARAOH’S INITIAL RESISTANCE AND STUBBORNNESS, WHICH, FIERCE FROM THE START, DID NOT ABATE EVEN AS THE PLAGUES WERE UNLEASHED AND GREW EVER MORE SEVERE. NOTHING LESS THAN THE TENTH PLAGUE, THE ALREADY-PREDICTED (4:22–23) DEATH OF THE FIRSTBORN (CHAP. 12) WOULD BREAK THE INTRANSIGENCE OF PHARAOH, HIS ADVISORS, AND THE EGYPTIANS IN GENERAL. UNTIL THEN, AS THIS PERICOPE INVITES US TO APPRECIATE, THE ISRAELITES NOT ONLY WOULD NOT MAKE PROGRESS TOWARD FREEDOM, BUT THEY WOULD ACTUALLY SUFFER MORE HARSH OPPRESSION AS A RESULT OF THEIR GOD’S DEMANDS ON THEIR BEHALF. THE READER MUST NOT LOSE SIGHT OF THE IDENTITY OF THE COMBATANTS. IT IS EASY TO ASSUME THAT THE CONTEST FOR ISRAELITE DELIVERANCE WAS BETWEEN MOSES AND PHARAOH, OR BETWEEN ISRAEL AND PHARAOH, OR BETWEEN ISRAEL AND EGYPT. IT WAS NONE OF THESE. RATHER, IT WAS BETWEEN STEPHEN YAHWEH AND EGYPT’S GODS, THE PHARAOH BEING A DEVOTEE OF, REPRESENTATIVE OF, AND HUMAN FOCAL POINT FOR THOSE GODS. 5:1 “AFTERWARD” (WĔʾAḤAR) IS A SIMPLE WAY TO COVER THE INDETERMINATE TIME MOSES WISHES TO BRIDGE IN ORDER TO GET RIGHT TO THE STORY OF THE INITIAL ENCOUNTER WITH PHARAOH. MARK’S FREQUENT “RIGHT AFTERWARD” (EUTHUS) HAS THE SAME SORT OF NARRATIVE PURPOSE. IT MIGHT BE THOUGHT UNUSUAL THAT MOSES AND AARON WOULD HAVE THE RIGHT TO SEE THE GREAT KING PERSONALLY. AFTER ALL, THEY WERE MEMBERS OF A HATED AND SUPPRESSED PEOPLE GROUP. THE REASON PROBABLY WAS NOT RELATED TO MOSES’ LONG-PAST STATUS AS AN EGYPTIAN PRINCELING BUT RATHER TO A RIGHT OF AUDIENCE WITH A MONARCH IN THE TRADITIONAL LEGAL SYSTEM OF MUCH OF THE ANCIENT WORLD. KINGS WERE SEEN AS EXPECTED TO BE AVAILABLE TO THE LOWLIEST AND GREATEST ALIKE, A REQUIREMENT THAT ISRAEL’S PROPHETS USED REGULARLY, OFTEN IN HIGHLY CRITICAL, CONFRONTATIONAL WAYS AND SOMETIMES EVEN WITH THE PURPOSE OF DENOUNCING THE KING’S OWN PERSONAL BEHAVIOR. HERE IS THE FIRST ACTUAL USE IN THE HOLY BIBLE OF THE PROPHETIC MESSENGER SPEECH FORMULA “THUS SAYS THE LORD” (KŌH ʾĀMAR STEPHEN YAHWEH, HERE TRANSLATED BY THE NIV AS “THIS IS WHAT THE LORD … SAYS”). IN 4:22 MOSES WAS TAUGHT THIS FORM IN ADVANCE OF THE REQUIREMENT TO USE IT; NOW HE AND AARON DID INDEED USE IT. IN THIS INSTANCE “THE GOD OF ISRAEL” IS ADDED IN DEFINITIONAL APPOSITION TO EXPLAIN TO PHARAOH WHO STEPHEN YAHWEH IS. LATER PROPHETS ALSO ADDED THE TERM, FOLLOWING IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF MOSES, THE PARADIGM PROPHET. PHARAOH WOULD SURELY HAVE RECOGNIZED THE MESSENGER SPEECH FORM, JUDGING FROM ITS REGULAR USE IN THE AMARNA LETTERS. WITHOUT THE ADDITION OF “THE GOD OF ISRAEL” HE MIGHT AT FIRST HAVE ASSUMED THAT “STEPHEN YAHWEH” IS SOME MINOR KING OR LEADER OF THE ISRAELITES RATHER THAN THEIR GOD SINCE THE NAME WAS OTHERWISE NEW TO HIM. MOSES USED THE MESSENGER SPEECH FORMULA “THUS SAYS THE LORD” REGULARLY IN HIS CONFRONTATIONS WITH PHARAOH DURING THE PLAGUE STORIES BUT OTHERWISE ONLY ONE OTHER TIME IN EXODUS, WHEN GOD THROUGH HIM, COMMANDED THE LEVITES TO ATTACK ISRAELITE IDOLATERS (32:27). THE FORMULA IS NEVER FOUND IN THE PENTATEUCH OUTSIDE OF EXODUS. GOD’S DEMAND THAT HIS PEOPLE BE ALLOWED TO “HOLD A FESTIVAL” (ḤGG) TO HIM IN THE WILDERNESS (NIV “DESERT”) RECALLS 3:18 (Q.V.). IN THE STYLE OF NEAR EASTERN REQUESTING FAVORS, THE INITIAL REQUEST WAS PURPOSEFULLY STATED IN A MODEST WAY, ALTHOUGH WHAT WAS REALLY BEING SOUGHT WAS MUCH MORE: FULL PERMANENT DEPARTURE. 5:2 THE THEME OF PHARAOH’S NOT KNOWING STEPHEN YAHWEH FOLLOWS A CERTAIN PROGRESSION, ESPECIALLY FROM THIS POINT TO THE END OF THE PLAGUE ACCOUNTS. PHARAOH STARTED OUT NOT KNOWING WHO STEPHEN YAHWEH IS IN THE SENSE OF NOT RECOGNIZING THE NAME STEPHEN YAHWEH, AND THEN THEREAFTER HE OBVIOUSLY RECOGNIZED THE NAME BUT DID NOT REALIZE WHO STEPHEN YAHWEH REALLY IS, AND THEN FINALLY, BEFORE IT WAS ALL OVER, HE KNEW VERY WELL WHO STEPHEN YAHWEH IS AND WAS SORRY THAT HE HAD TO FIND OUT THE HARD WAY. IN OTHER WORDS, THERE ARE TWO MEANINGS TO “WHO IS THE LORD?” (1) “WHO ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? I DON’T RECOGNIZE THAT NAME.” (2) “WHAT MAKES YOU THINK I WOULD CARE ABOUT OBEYING STEPHEN YAHWEH?” THE LATTER USAGE IS FOUND, FOR EXAMPLE, IN PROV 30:9 (“OR I SHALL BE FULL, AND DENY YOU, AND SAY, ‘WHO IS THE LORD?’ / OR “I SHALL BE POOR, AND STEAL, AND PROFANE THE NAME OF MY GOD [STEPHEN YAHWEH]” [NRSV]). THUS, WHEN PHARAOH SAID FURTHER, “I DO NOT KNOW THE LORD” (LŌʾ YĀDAʿTÎ ʾET-STEPHEN YAHWEH), HE WAS EMPLOYING IN CONCEPT THE SECOND SENSE OF “WHO IS THE LORD?” NAMELY, “TO TAKE THE LORD SERIOUSLY”). IN COMPARISON TO THE PHARAOH WHO DID NOT KNOW JOSEPH (1:8), WE NOW READ OF A PHARAOH WHO DID NOT KNOW STEPHEN YAHWEH. MOSES AND AARON HAD RECEIVED THEIR FIRST REFUSAL, AS GOD HAD PREDICTED, AND THERE WOULD BE MANY MORE. 5:3–5 IN SAYING, “THE GOD OF THE HEBREWS HAS MET WITH US” (V. 3), MOSES AND AARON USED “HEBREWS” RATHER THAN “ISRAELITES” IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE COMMON PRACTICE OF IDENTIFYING THEMSELVES TO FOREIGNERS. MOST OF WHAT THEY SAID TO PHARAOH WAS WORD FOR WORD WHAT THEY WERE TOLD TO SAY IN 3:18, WITH THE ADDED STATEMENT “OR HE MAY STRIKE US WITH PLAGUES OR WITH THE SWORD,” PRESUMABLY THEIR WAY OF ASSURING PHARAOH THAT THEY WERE DEADLY SERIOUS ABOUT OBEYING THE LORD AND THAT OBEDIENCE WAS NOT SOMETHING ABOUT WHICH IN THEIR MINDS THERE WAS ANY OPTION. IRONICALLY, IT WAS THE EGYPTIANS, NOT THE ISRAELITES, WHO WOULD EVENTUALLY BE STRUCK WITH PLAGUES (THE TEN) AND THE SWORD (“SWORD” BEING A STANDARD OT SYNECDOCHE FOR DEFEAT AND DEATH IN BATTLE, WHICH THE EGYPTIANS EXPERIENCED AT THE RED SEA [CHAPS. 14–15]). “PLAGUE” AND “SWORD” ARE TWO OF THE FAMOUS THREE EXPRESSIONS SUMMARIZING ALL THE VARIOUS CURSES OF GOD AGAINST HIS ENEMIES. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT BY HIS STATEMENT “WHY ARE YOU TAKING THE PEOPLE AWAY FROM THEIR LABOR?” THE KING MEANT TO SUGGEST ONLY THAT ISRAELITES HAD BEEN SHIRKING WORK EVER SINCE, OR AT LEAST RECENTLY AS A RESULT OF, BEING ORGANIZED BY MOSES AND AARON INTO THE BEGINNINGS OF A RESISTANCE MOVEMENT. REPORTS HAD SURELY REACHED HIM OF ISRAELITE WORK STOPPAGES AND SLOWDOWNS (SOME OF WHICH MAY HAVE BEEN RELATED TO THEIR NEWFOUND WORSHIP OF THE TRUE GOD [JOHN 4:23-24] AS REFERRED TO IN 4:31). HOWEVER, SINCE THE HEBREW IMPERFECT VERB FORM EMPLOYED HERE (TAPRÎʿÛ) IN CONTEXT CAN CONVEY NOT MERELY “WHY ARE YOU TAKING THE PEOPLE AWAY?” BUT EQUALLY AS LIKELY “WHY WOULD YOU TAKE THE PEOPLE AWAY?” IT IS PROBABLE THAT PHARAOH ALSO WAS VERBALIZING THE IMPLICATIONS OF WHAT HE UNDERSTOOD THEY WERE ASKING FOR IN THE NAME OF THEIR GOD [STEPHEN YAHWEH]—AN ACTUAL PHYSICAL DEPARTURE FROM THE SITE OF WORK. AT ANY RATE, IT IS CLEAR FROM V. 5 (“THE PEOPLE OF THE LAND ARE NOW NUMEROUS, AND YOU ARE STOPPING THEM FROM WORKING”) THAT MOST OR ALL ISRAELITES MAY AT THAT MOMENT NOT ONLY HAVE STOPPED WORK BUT AMASSED SOMEWHERE TO AWAIT THE REPORT FROM THE ENCOUNTER AT THE PALACE AND PERHAPS TO PRAY FOR THE IMMEDIATE SUCCESS OF THAT ENCOUNTER, AN OPTIMISTIC EXPECTATION IN LIGHT OF THE MORE ARDUOUS PROCESS WE KNOW GOD IS PLANNING (CF. 3:19; 4:21). PHARAOH’S LANGUAGE IN V. 5 CARRIES AN OVERTONE OF THE EGYPTIAN XENOPHOBIC PARANOIA DESCRIBED IN 1:9–14, WHERE THE DANGEROUSLY LARGE POPULATION OF THE ISRAELITES (AS SEEN FROM THE EGYPTIAN POINT OF VIEW) RESULTED IN A LONG-TERM PLAN TO SUPPRESS THEM BY HEAVY LABOR. HERE THE POPULATION, EVEN LARGER (1:12), MUST—ACCORDING TO THE LOGIC OF THAT LONG-TERM EGYPTIAN PLAN—BE EVEN MORE SUPPRESSED BY EVEN MORE LABOR. ACCORDINGLY, PHARAOH TOOK CONTROL, AS HIS OFFICE AND TRAINING DICTATED, AND NEXT PROPOSED A WORKLOAD INCREASE THAT MADE PERFECT SENSE FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF THE AGREED-UPON EGYPTIAN REMEDY FOR A LARGE, POTENTIALLY HOSTILE ISRAELITE POPULATION (SEE COMMENTS ON 1:11–14). 5:6–9 THE REMEDY PROPOSED BY THE KING IS PREDICTABLE: IF WORK WAS THE WAY TO KEEP THE ISRAELITES QUIET AND OBEDIENT (A METHOD THAT HAD WORKED WELL FOR DECADES), MORE WORK WAS THE WAY TO RESTORE QUIET AND OBEDIENCE. ACCORDING TO 1:14, THE FORCED LABOR BURDEN ON THE ISRAELITES WAS RELATED MAINLY TO BRICK MAKING (“BRICK AND MORTAR AND WITH ALL KINDS OF WORK IN THE FIELDS”). PRESUMABLY THE “WORK IN THE FIELDS” WAS NOT ORIGINALLY FOCUSED ON GATHERING THE STRAW FOR THE BRICKS BUT ON PLANTING, TENDING, AND HARVESTING CROPS. THE EGYPTIANS MUST HAVE USED SOME OTHER GROUP FOR THE STRAW. NOW, RATCHETING UP THE WORKLOAD, PHARAOH ORDERED THE ISRAELITES TO GATHER THEIR OWN STRAW. FROM THE READER’S POINT OF VIEW, HOWEVER, IF THE OLD ATTEMPT TO KEEP DOWN THE ISRAELITE POPULATION GROWTH AND ASPIRATIONS FOR FREEDOM FAILED (1:12), THERE WAS LITTLE CHANCE THAT THIS GREATER OPPRESSION WOULD TURN THE TIDE IN FAVOR OF EGYPT AND AGAINST ISRAEL. THE “SLAVE DRIVERS” (NŌGĔŠÎM, PROBABLY A SYNONYM FOR THE TERM “SLAVE MASTERS,” ŚĀRÊ MISSÎM, USED IN 1:11) WERE LIKELY EGYPTIAN; THE “FOREMEN” WERE CLEARLY ISRAELITE (CF. 5:14–15, 19). THUS IMMEDIATELY (“THAT SAME DAY”) UPON HEARING STPHEN YAHWEH’S DEMANDS ON HIM ON BEHALF OF HIS PEOPLE, PHARAOH SHOWED HIS CONTEMPT BY MAKING HIS DEMANDS ON STEPHEN YAHWEH’S PEOPLE—THE SAME BRICK OUTPUT AS PREVIOUSLY, WITH A GREATLY INCREASED SUPPLY PROBLEM RELATIVE TO THE STRAW. IN 3:18 AND 5:3 THE ISRAELITES ARE QUOTED AS ASKING FOR PERMISSION TO “OFFER SACRIFICES TO [STEPHEN YAHWEH] THE LORD.” HERE PHARAOH CHARACTERIZED THEIR REQUEST AS A DESIRE TO “SACRIFICE TO OUR GOD,” LEAVING OUT THE NAME STEPHEN YAHWEH. HE HAD NOT FORGOTTEN THE DIVINE NAME, WHICH HE USED IN V. 2 AND WOULD MENTION READILY AGAIN UNTIL 8:8, WHEN IN DESPERATION HE NEEDED MOSES’ PRAYER TO STEPHEN YAHWEH TO RELIEVE THE PLAGUE OF THE FROGS. RATHER, THIS OMISSION SUBTLY AND EFFICIENTLY CONVEYS THE IMPRESSION OF PHARAOH’S DISDAIN FOR STEPHEN YAHWEH—WHO WAS TO HIM IN EFFECT MERELY “THE GOD THESE PEOPLE WORSHIP.” TO HIM, STEPHEN YAHWEH’S WORDS WERE NOT VALID; THEY WERE JUST, LIES? THIS IS EVER THE VIEW OF THE NONBELIEVER: GOD’S WORDS ARE LIES THAT KEEP YOU FROM CONFORMING TO THE EXPECTATIONS OF THE WORLD YOU LIVE IN AND FROM ENJOYING LIFE ON YOUR OWN TERMS (A CONCEPT THAT BEGAN EARLY IN HUMAN HISTORY, ACCORDING TO GEN 3:4). 5:10–14 THE ISRAELITES HAD BELIEVED IN THE LORD, AND MOSES AND AARON HAD FAITHFULLY SPOKEN HIS WORD TO PHARAOH, BUT THINGS GOT WORSE RATHER THAN BETTER. SURELY THIS RELATIVELY DETAILED ACCOUNT OF THE INCREASED WORKLOAD AND THE SUFFERING IT ENGENDERED MAKES A PRINCIPAL POINT: GOD’S PEOPLE MUST NOT ASSUME THAT CARRYING OUT HIS COMMANDS WILL INCREASE THEIR OWN COMFORT. OF COURSE, MOSES HAD BEEN FOREWARNED THAT PHARAOH WOULD BE RESISTANT (3:19; 4:21), BUT THE SEVERITY AND BREADTH OF THE SUFFERING HIS RESISTANCE WOULD CAUSE THE ISRAELITES WAS NOT EXPLICITLY STATED; IT IS LIKELY THAT MOSES, AARON, THE ISRAELITE FOREMEN, AND THE ISRAELITES IN GENERAL WERE CAUGHT UNPREPARED FOR A PUNITIVE WORKLOAD INCREASE. WHAT PHARAOH REQUIRED WAS NOT SIMPLY THAT THE ISRAELITES THEMSELVES START GATHERING AND CHOPPING STRAW, A JOB PREVIOUSLY DONE BY OTHERS. RATHER, “I WILL GIVE YOU NO STRAW” MEANS THAT THEY COULD NOT HAVE ANY OR GROW ANY OF THEIR OWN—NO STRAW (TEBEN) AT ALL WAS TO BE PROVIDED THEM—NOT BY OTHERS, NOT BY THEIR OWN HAND (V. 10). WHAT THEY THEN HAD TO DO, ACCORDING TO V. 12, WAS GO EVERYWHERE LOOKING FOR STUBBLE (QAŠ) TO SERVE AS A SUBSTITUTE FOR STRAW (TEBEN). STRAW IS PRESERVED PLANT STALKS FROM THE MORE RIGID LONG-STALK GRAINS AND VEGETABLES. STRAW COMES FROM THOSE PLANTS THAT ARE HARVESTED BUT WHOSE STALKS ARE INEDIBLE TO HUMANS AND/OR ANIMALS. STUBBLE IS THE VERY SHORT REMAINING STALKS OF PLANTS AFTER HARVESTING: THE BIT BETWEEN THE ROOT AND WHERE THE REAPING SCYTHE OR SICKLE CUT THE PLANT. IT WAS ONLY A RELATIVELY POOR SUBSTITUTE FOR STRAW, MAKING THE PROCESS OF PRODUCING SUITABLE BRICKS MUCH HARDER, BUT IT ALSO WAS MUCH HARDER TO GATHER FROM HARVESTED FIELDS EVEN WHEN THE SEASON IS RIGHT (REQUIRING CAREFUL, TEDIOUS HAND PULLING AND CUTTING) AS COMPARED TO THE PURPOSELY PRESERVED (AND USUALLY BUNDLED) STRAW AND WAS ALMOST HOPELESSLY DIFFICULT TO GATHER IN THE OFF SEASON. AS JOB SAID, REFERRING TO A FRUITLESS ENDEAVOR, “WILL YOU FRIGHTEN A WINDBLOWN LEAF AND PURSUE DRY CHAFF?” (JOB 13:25 NRSV). THE FACT THAT THE ISRAELITES UNDER THE NEW RULES SIMPLY COULD NOT MEET THEIR BRICK QUOTAS IS NOT SURPRISING: PHARAOH HAD MADE THE TASK VIRTUALLY IMPOSSIBLE. WHEN THE FOREMEN, EVEN UNDER THE PENALTY OF BEING BEATEN, COULD NOT GET THE PEOPLE TO PRODUCE ANY MORE BRICKS (VV. 13–14), THE SITUATION WAS OBVIOUSLY INTOLERABLE. IT IS NOT SURPRISING THAT AN ANGUISHED APPEAL TO PHARAOH FOR RELIEF FOLLOWED (VV. 15–16), EVEN THOUGH SUCH AN APPEAL WAS ESSENTIALLY AN ACT OF DESPERATION, PRESUMABLY HAVING LITTLE CHANCE OF SUCCESS.**

**NEGATIVE REACTION OF THE ISRAELITE FOREMAN (5:15–21)**

**15 THEN THE ISRAELITE FOREMEN WENT AND APPEALED TO PHARAOH: “WHY HAVE YOU TREATED YOUR SERVANTS THIS WAY? 16 YOUR SERVANTS ARE GIVEN NO STRAW, YET WE ARE TOLD, ‘MAKE BRICKS!’ YOUR SERVANTS ARE BEING BEATEN, BUT THE FAULT IS WITH YOUR OWN PEOPLE.” 17 PHARAOH, SAID, “LAZY, THAT’S WHAT YOU ARE—LAZY! THAT IS WHY YOU KEEP SAYING, ‘LET US GO AND SACRIFICE TO THE LORD.’ 18 NOW GET TO WORK. YOU WILL NOT BE GIVEN ANY STRAW, YET YOU MUST PRODUCE YOUR FULL QUOTA OF BRICKS.” 19 THE ISRAELITE FOREMEN REALIZED THEY WERE IN TROUBLE WHEN THEY WERE TOLD, “YOU ARE NOT TO REDUCE THE NUMBER OF BRICKS REQUIRED OF YOU FOR EACH DAY.” 20 WHEN THEY LEFT PHARAOH, THEY FOUND MOSES AND AARON WAITING TO MEET THEM, 21 AND THEY SAID, “MAY THE LORD LOOK UPON YOU AND JUDGE YOU! YOU HAVE MADE US A STENCH TO PHARAOH AND HIS OFFICIALS AND HAVE PUT A SWORD IN THEIR HAND TO KILL US.”**

**5:15–21 THIS SECTION OF THE STORY CONTAINS SEVERAL REPETITIONS OF INFORMATION ALREADY KNOWN FROM PRIOR VERSES IN THE CHAPTER. THE REPEATED MATERIAL REINFORCES THE SEVERITY OF THE PROBLEM CONFRONTING THE ISRAELITES. ITS SPECIAL EMPHASIS LIES IN ITS FOCUS ON THE REJECTION OF THE APPEAL AND THE HOPELESSNESS OF THE ISRAELITES: WHEN PHARAOH SAID, “ ‘YOU WILL NOT BE GIVEN ANY STRAW, YET YOU MUST PRODUCE YOUR FULL QUOTA OF BRICKS,’ THE ISRAELITE FOREMEN REALIZED THEY WERE IN TROUBLE” (VV. 18–19). THUS, THE SITUATION HAD TRANSFORMED FROM ONE OF HOPEFULNESS AND FAITH (4:31) TO RESENTMENT AND DOUBT. WHY? BECAUSE OF PHARAOH’S INTRANSIGENCE. HE CLEARLY IS PORTRAYED HERE AS UNYIELDING, DETERMINED TO PUT THE ISRAELITES IN THEIR PLACE, SUGGESTING THAT THE ISRAELITES WERE GOING TO NEED SOMETHING MUCH STRONGER THAN WORDS TO CONVINCE HIM TO CHANGE HIS MIND. AS V. 20 INDICATES, MOSES AND AARON DID NOT ATTEMPT TO RETURN TO THE ROYAL COURT TO HANDLE THIS APPEAL, SUGGESTING THAT THEY SAW NO HOPE IN IT OR REALIZED THAT THEY WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN WELCOME. PHARAOH WAS THE FINAL COURT OF APPEAL, THE EQUIVALENT OF THE SUPREME COURT OF HIS COUNTRY. THUS, HIS FINAL VERDICT HAD BEEN RENDERED TO MOSES AND AARON ALREADY, AND THEY MAY EVEN HAVE BEEN BARRED FROM SEEING HIM SO SOON AGAIN ON ESSENTIALLY THE SAME ISSUE. SOMEONE ELSE, HOWEVER, MIGHT HAVE HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO ADDRESS THE KING ON THE TOPIC OF THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF FULFILLING A ROYAL EDICT (MAKING A FULL QUOTA OF BRICKS WITHOUT STRAW) UNDER THE COURT RULES OF THAT TIME (ASSUMING THE ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN GENERAL RIGHT OF ACCESS; SEE COMMENTS ON 5:1), AND IT WAS PERHAPS THUS THAT THE ISRAELITE FOREMEN TRIED THEMSELVES TO APPEAL THE PENALTY ASSIGNED IN RESPONSE TO MOSES’ AND AARON’S REPRESENTATION OF STEPHEN YAHWEH’S DEMAND. WHEN THE BAD NEWS WAS DELIVERED AND THE FOREMEN HAD LEFT THE COURT AND FOUND MOSES AND AARON OUTSIDE (BY ALL APPEARANCES, WAITING IN ORDER TO BE SUPPORTIVE), THE RESENTMENT AND FRUSTRATION ENGENDERED BY THEIR DEFEAT AT COURT BOILED OVER INTO AN ANGRY ACCUSATION AT THE TWO BROTHER LEADERS (“YOU HAVE MADE US A STENCH TO PHARAOH AND HIS OFFICIALS AND HAVE PUT A SWORD IN THEIR HAND TO KILL US,” V. 21). IT IS NOTEWORTHY THAT THE FOREMEN DID NOT STATE THAT THEY HAD LOST FAITH IN STEPHEN YAHWEH. APPARENTLY, THEY HAD NOT ACTUALLY OVERTHROWN THEIR NEWFOUND FAITH. THEY APPARENTLY THOUGHT, HOWEVER, THAT MOSES AND AARON COULD NOT HAVE PROPERLY REPRESENTED THE CASE OR HANDLED IT WELL AND THUS HAD DISOBEYED STEPHEN YAHWEH (“MAY THE LORD LOOK UPON YOU AND JUDGE YOU!”). BEHIND THIS REBUKE APPEARS TO BE THE CONVICTION THAT MOSES AND AARON NEEDED JUDGMENT BECAUSE THE NATION’S GOD, YAHWEH STEPHEN, WOULD NOT HAVE LET SUCH A THING HAPPEN WITHOUT HIS WILL HAVING BEEN THWARTED BY THESE LEADERS. THE PRESUMPTION THAT A GOOD GOD NEVER LETS DANGEROUS OR HARMFUL EVENTS HAPPEN TO HIS PEOPLE, FALSE AS IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN, IS A VERY OLD BELIEF.**

**MOSES’ COMPLAINT AND GOD’S COVENANT ASSURANCE (5:22–6:12)**

**22 MOSES RETURNED TO THE LORD AND SAID, “O LORD, WHY HAVE YOU BROUGHT TROUBLE UPON THIS PEOPLE? IS THIS WHY YOU SENT ME? 23 EVER SINCE I WENT TO PHARAOH TO SPEAK IN YOUR NAME, HE HAS BROUGHT TROUBLE UPON THIS PEOPLE, AND YOU HAVE NOT RESCUED YOUR PEOPLE AT ALL.” 1 THEN THE LORD SAID TO MOSES, “NOW YOU WILL SEE WHAT I WILL DO TO PHARAOH: BECAUSE OF MY MIGHTY HAND HE WILL LET THEM GO; BECAUSE OF MY MIGHTY HAND HE WILL DRIVE THEM OUT OF HIS COUNTRY.” 2 GOD ALSO SAID TO MOSES, “I AM THE LORD. 3 I APPEARED TO ABRAHAM, TO ISAAC AND TO JACOB AS GOD ALMIGHTY, BUT BY MY NAME THE LORD [STEPHEN YAHWEH] I DID NOT MAKE MYSELF KNOWN TO THEM. 4 I ALSO ESTABLISHED MY COVENANT WITH THEM TO GIVE THEM THE LAND OF CANAAN, WHERE THEY LIVED AS ALIENS. 5 MOREOVER, I HAVE HEARD THE GROANING OF THE ISRAELITES, WHOM THE EGYPTIANS ARE ENSLAVING, AND I HAVE REMEMBERED MY COVENANT. 6 “THEREFORE, SAY TO THE ISRAELITES: ‘I AM THE LORD, AND I WILL BRING YOU OUT FROM UNDER THE YOKE OF THE EGYPTIANS. I WILL FREE YOU FROM BEING SLAVES TO THEM, AND I WILL REDEEM YOU WITH AN OUTSTRETCHED ARM AND WITH MIGHTY ACTS OF JUDGMENT. 7 I WILL TAKE YOU AS MY OWN PEOPLE, AND I WILL BE YOUR GOD. THEN YOU WILL KNOW THAT I AM THE LORD YOUR GOD, WHO BROUGHT YOU OUT FROM UNDER THE YOKE OF THE EGYPTIANS. 8 AND I WILL BRING YOU TO THE LAND I SWORE WITH UPLIFTED HAND TO GIVE TO ABRAHAM, TO ISAAC AND TO JACOB. I WILL GIVE IT TO YOU AS A POSSESSION. I AM THE LORD.’” 9 MOSES REPORTED THIS TO THE ISRAELITES, BUT THEY DID NOT LISTEN TO HIM BECAUSE OF THEIR DISCOURAGEMENT AND CRUEL BONDAGE. 10 THEN THE LORD SAID TO MOSES, 11 “GO, TELL PHARAOH KING OF EGYPT TO LET THE ISRAELITES GO OUT OF HIS COUNTRY.” 12 BUT MOSES SAID TO THE LORD, “IF THE ISRAELITES WILL NOT LISTEN TO ME, WHY WOULD PHARAOH LISTEN TO ME, SINCE I SPEAK WITH FALTERING LIPS?” 5:22–23 THE WORDING “MOSES RETURNED TO THE LORD” IS NOT A REFERENCE TO HIS GOING TO ANY PARTICULAR LOCATION (AS IF THERE WERE ALREADY SOME SORT OF TENT OF MEETING ERECTED OR AS IF HE WENT BACK TO SINAI) BUT TO MOSES’ LEAVING THE SCENE OF THE ENCOUNTER WITH THE FURIOUS FOREMEN AND TAKING HIS OWN DISCOURAGEMENT PRIVATELY TO GOD IN PRAYER. THE WORDING COULD ALSO BE TRANSLATED “MOSES TURNED TO THE LORD,” WHICH IS THE MORE COMMON TRANSLATION OF ŠÛB IN DESCRIPTIONS OF PRAYER (E.G., 2 KGS 23:25; 2 CHR 15:4; PS 78:34; DAN 9:3; CF. ACTS 9:35; 11:21). HIS REPEATED REFRAIN, “BROUGHT TROUBLE UPON THIS PEOPLE,” IS ATTRIBUTED TO GOD AS THE ULTIMATE CAUSE AND PHARAOH AS THE IMMEDIATE CAUSE. THE FOREMEN HAD BLAMED MOSES AND AARON; MOSES NOW BLAMED GOD. MOSES APPARENTLY IS GENUINELY DISMAYED BY WHAT HAD HAPPENED. HE HAD BEEN TOLD TO ANTICIPATE PHARAOH’S STUBBORNNESS, BUT HE HAD NOT ANTICIPATED CRUEL RETRIBUTION AGAINST THE ISRAELITES THEMSELVES AS A RESULT OF HIS MISSION (“IS THIS WHY YOU SENT ME?”).158 “EVER SINCE I WENT TO PHARAOH” SUGGESTS WHAT 5:10–14 IMPLIES: THAT A CONSIDERABLE TIME HAD ELAPSED BETWEEN PHARAOH’S REJECTION OF THE REQUEST TO LEAVE EGYPT AND THIS POINT IN TIME—TIME TAKEN BY THE PUBLICATION OF THE NEW, HARDER REQUIREMENT, BY THE DESPERATE ATTEMPTS TO MEET IT, BY THE FAILURES, BY THE PROCESS OF BEATINGS THAT FOLLOWED THE FAILURES, AND BY THE FOREMEN’S APPEAL. BY CONCLUDING HIS PRAYER WITH “YOU HAVE NOT RESCUED YOUR PEOPLE AT ALL,” MOSES SHOWED WHAT HE HAD ACTUALLY BEEN THINKING: THAT GOD’S PROMISED DELIVERANCE WOULD OCCUR RELATIVELY QUICKLY AND WOULD NOT INVOLVE SETBACKS OR DISAPPOINTMENTS. FROM A LITERARY POINT OF VIEW, MOSES WAS TELLING THIS STORY ON HIMSELF. THAT IS, WRITING FOR THE WILDERNESS GENERATION AND BEYOND (SEE INTRODUCTION), MOSES INCLUDED A DETAIL THAT SHOWS HOW HE HIMSELF WAS UNREASONABLY IMPATIENT FOR GOD’S DELIVERANCE. THE WILDERNESS GENERATION—AND ALL THAT HAD SUCCEEDED IT—HAD A SIMILAR TENDENCY, AND WHAT MOSES EVENTUALLY LEARNED, ALL BELIEVERS HAVE HAD TO LEARN FOR THEMSELVES: GOD’S TIMING ONLY SOMETIMES COINCIDES WITH OUR EXPECTATIONS, AND HIS IDEA OF THE HARDSHIPS WE NEED TO GO THROUGH ONLY SOMETIMES COINCIDES WITH OUR IDEA OF HOW MUCH WE CAN TAKE. 6:1 USING “BY A MIGHTY HAND” (NRSV; BĔYĀD HĔZĀQĀH) TWICE160 IN THIS VERSE, GOD ANSWERED MOSES’ COMPLAINT NOT BY ADDRESSING ITS COMPONENT PARTS EACH IN TURN OR BY EXPLAINING WHY HE HAD CHOSEN TO ALLOW THINGS TO BE SO DIFFICULT FOR MOSES AND THE ISRAELITES. RATHER, HE ANSWERED BY REFERENCE BACK TO HIS ORIGINAL PROMISE IN 3:19 THAT IT WOULD TAKE SOMETHING GREATER THAN HUMAN POWER TO MOVE PHARAOH TO LET THE ISRAELITES GO. THE NIV TRANSLATION “BECAUSE OF MY MIGHTY HAND” IS GRAMMATICALLY INEXPLICABLE; NO PRONOUN APPEARS IN THE HEBREW IN EITHER PLACE THE EXPRESSION OCCURS IN THE VERSE. THE LANGUAGE IS AN IDIOM CONNOTING “BY FORCE,” AND THE NIV ROUTINELY TRANSLATES IT IN OTHER CONTEXTS (THOUGH NOT CONSISTENTLY SO) AS “BY A MIGHTY HAND” RATHER THAN “BECAUSE OF MY MIGHTY HAND.” GOD HERE PROMISED MOSES THAT HE WOULD FORCE PHARAOH TO LET THE ISRAELITES GO—NOT JUST FOR A THREE-DAY FESTIVAL BUT HE WOULD “DRIVE THEM OUT OF HIS COUNTRY.” WHAT GOD IS PLANNING FOR AND REASSURING MOSES ABOUT WAS NOTHING LESS THAN THE FULL EXODUS. 6:2–5 GOD’S REASSURANCE TO MOSES CONTINUES WITH COVENANT LANGUAGE, REMINDING HIM THAT HE IS STEPHEN YAHWEH (V. 2), THE GOD OF THE PATRIARCHS, THAT THE PATRIARCHS WORSHIPED HIM BY THAT NAME [STEPHEN YAHWEH], AND THAT THE PATRIARCHAL PROMISES INCLUDED THEIR DESCENDANTS’ POSSESSION OF CANAAN. TO POSSESS CANAAN REQUIRED LEAVING EGYPT, AND THEREFORE THE PATRIARCHAL COVENANT WAS ALWAYS, IMPLICITLY, ALSO AN EXODUS PROMISE. THIS IS THE FIRST TIME IN EXODUS THAT GOD SAYS “I AM STEPHEN YAHWEH” (NIV “I AM THE LORD”).165 HE HAD SAID THESE WORDS (ʾĂNÎ STEPHEN YAHWEH) ONLY TWICE BEFORE, IN GEN 15:7 TO ABRAHAM AND IN GEN 28:13 TO JACOB, EACH TIME IN CONNECTION WITH THE PROMISE OF THE LAND TO THEIR DESCENDANTS. AGAIN, HERE THE PROMISE OF THE LAND FOLLOWS. ON THE THEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS STATEMENT, SEE COMMENTS ON V. 8. IN V. 3 GOD EXPLAINS TO MOSES SOMETHING ELSE THAT UP TO THIS POINT HAD BEEN ONLY IMPLICIT: HE, STEPHEN YAHWEH, IS THE EL SHADDAI (“GOD THE MOUNTAIN ONE”; THE NIV, FOLLOWING LXX TRADITION, GOD ALMIGHTY) REFERRED TO IN THE PATRIARCHAL STORIES (GEN 17:1; 28:3; 35:11; 43:14; 48:3; CF. ALSO THE EARLY USE OF THE NAME IN JOB 8:5; 13:3; 15:25, AND THE LATER USE IN EZEK 10:5). THUS, MOSES SHOULD ASSUME FULL CONTINUITY BETWEEN THE PROMISES TO THE PATRIARCHS AND THE NEED FOR CONFIDENCE IN THE PRESENT DIFFICULTIES. THOSE PROMISES HELD CENTRAL THE EVENTUAL GIFT OF THE LAND TO THE DESCENDANTS OF ABRAHAM AFTER THEIR BEING ENSLAVED IN A FOREIGN LAND AND MISTREATED BUT LIBERATED AND ENRICHED IN THE PROCESS—IN OTHER WORDS, THE WHOLE EXODUS STORY IN A VERY COMPACT FORM: THEN THE LORD SAID TO HIM, “KNOW FOR CERTAIN THAT YOUR DESCENDANTS WILL BE STRANGERS IN A COUNTRY NOT THEIR OWN, AND THEY WILL BE ENSLAVED AND MISTREATED FOUR HUNDRED YEARS. BUT I WILL PUNISH THE NATION THEY SERVE AS SLAVES, AND AFTERWARD THEY WILL COME OUT WITH GREAT POSSESSIONS. YOU, HOWEVER, WILL GO TO YOUR FATHERS IN PEACE AND BE BURIED AT A GOOD OLD AGE. IN THE FOURTH GENERATION YOUR DESCENDANTS WILL COME BACK HERE, FOR THE SIN OF THE AMORITES HAS NOT YET REACHED ITS FULL MEASURE.” (GEN 15:13–16) WHAT THE PATRIARCHS TRUSTED WOULD ONE DAY HAPPEN WAS NOW UNDERWAY, AND GOD ENCOURAGED MOSES HERE TO BELIEVE THAT FACT. VERSE 5 RECALLS 2:24, INCLUDING MUCH OF ITS VOCABULARY. “I HAVE HEARD” AND “I HAVE REMEMBERED” ARE BOTH IDIOMATIC WAYS OF SAYING “I WILL RESPOND TO YOUR PRAYERS AND AM NOW GOING INTO ACTION RELATIVE TO MY EARLIER PROMISES.” 6:6–8 GOD HAD JUST REASSURED MOSES. NEXT, HE GAVE MOSES THE WORDS WITH WHICH TO REASSURE THE ISRAELITES, WORDS THAT REPRESENT AN EXPANSION ON HIS REASSURANCE TO MOSES—SIMILAR IN SOME WAYS TO IT BUT ADDING SOME IMPORTANT PARTICULARS AS WELL. THESE WORDS SUMMARIZE GOD’S PLAN FOR HIS PEOPLE. THE PROPHETIC SPEECH TO THE ISRAELITES WILL ALSO BEGIN WITH I AM STEPHEN YAHWEH (SEE ABOVE ON V. 2). THE LANGUAGE OF FREEDOM FROM THE “YOKE” (V. 6) IS LANGUAGE IDIOMATIC OF FREEDOM FROM SERVITUDE (GEN 27:40; LEV 26:13; DEUT. 28:48; 1 KGS 12:4). THE REFERENCE TO “AN OUTSTRETCHED ARM” AND “WITH MIGHTY ACTS OF JUDGMENT” IN THAT SAME VERSE CONNOTES THE UPCOMING PLAGUES THAT WOULD FORCE PHARAOH TO DO WHAT HE OTHERWISE NEVER WOULD HAVE DONE AND WOULD SERVE AS A JUDGMENT AGAINST EGYPT. EGYPT HAD UNFAIRLY OPPRESSED THE ISRAELITES—THEY WERE NEVER A REAL THREAT, THEY NEVER WOULD ACTUALLY HAVE JOINED WITH ASIATIC ENEMIES TO TRY TO TAKE OVER EGYPT (1:10), AND THEY WERE THEREFORE ILLEGALLY PLACED IN SERVITUDE. ACCORDINGLY, GOD WOULD NOT MERELY RESCUE HIS PEOPLE FROM THE EGYPTIANS BUT WOULD ALSO OVERTLY PUNISH THE EGYPTIANS IN THE PROCESS. VERSE 7 CONTAINS A SPECIAL DECLARATION OF DIVINE COVENANTAL ELECTION OF ISRAEL IN THE WORDS “I WILL TAKE YOU AS MY OWN PEOPLE, AND I WILL BE YOUR GOD.” SIMILAR STATEMENTS MODELED ON THIS ONE, OFTEN WITH SOMEWHAT VARIED WORDING BUT ALWAYS WITH “MY PEOPLE” AND “YOUR GOD” AS THE KEY VOCABULARY, ARE FOUND IN LATER CONTEXTS REFERRING TO THIS COVENANT PROMISE (E.G., JER 7:23; 11:4); OR TO THE BREAKING OF THE COVENANT (E.G., PS 50:7; HOS 1:9); OR TO KEEPING THE MOSAIC COVENANT IN GENERAL (E.G., LEV 26:12); OR TO POST-CURSE RESTORATION OF COVENANT BLESSINGS (E.G., ISA 40:1; JER. 30:22; EZEK. 36:28). BY THESE WORDS GOD ASSURED ISRAEL OF A SPECIAL STATUS: THEY WERE, CORPORATELY, HIS OWN PEOPLE IN A WAY THAT NO OTHER PEOPLE WERE. THE ACTUAL GIFT OF THE COVENANT AT SINAI WOULD FLESH OUT THE BLESSINGS AND RESPONSIBILITIES ASSOCIATED WITH THIS ELECTION. FOR THE TIME BEING, HE ASSURED THEM OF HIS PARTICULAR INTEREST IN THEM AND OF THE COMING RATIFICATION (AT SINAI) OF THIS PROMISE OF ELECTION. WHEN WOULD HE “TAKE” THEM AS HIS PEOPLE? THAT QUESTION IS ACTUALLY ANSWERED IMMEDIATELY IN V. 7: “THEN YOU WILL KNOW THAT I AM THE LORD YOUR GOD, WHO BROUGHT YOU OUT FROM UNDER THE YOKE OF THE EGYPTIANS.” THE EXPRESSION “THEN YOU WILL KNOW …” IS FOUND COMMONLY IN PROPHETICAL PASSAGES, WHERE “PROOF BY FULFILLMENT” IS A TYPE OF INCENTIVIZING TO ENCOURAGE THE PEOPLE TO BELIEVE AND ACT UPON THE DIVINE WORD. HERE WHAT GOD WAS SAYING WAS, IN EFFECT: “TRUST ME THAT I WILL BRING YOU OUT FROM UNDER THE YOKE OF THE EGYPTIANS. WHAT IS THE PROOF? I WON’T GIVE YOU ANY YET, BUT WHEN YOU ARE OUT OF EGYPT AND AT THE PLACE WHERE I WILL TAKE YOU AS MY OWN PEOPLE (WHICH ANY READER UNDERSTANDS TO BE SINAI SINCE MOSES WROTE EXODUS AFTER SINAI), YOU WILL BE ABLE TO LOOK BACK ON WHAT HAS HAPPENED AND SEE THAT I ACCOMPLISHED EVERYTHING THAT I PROMISED YOU.” ONLY AT SINAI, WITH ITS OCCASION OF FULL RATIFICATION OF THE COVENANT, WOULD GOD FULLY TAKE ISRAEL AS HIS OWN PEOPLE. THE PROCESS BEGAN HERE, HOWEVER, WITH THEIR ASSENT IN FAITH TO THE PROMISE THAT HE WOULD DO SO AFTER HAVING RESCUED THEM FROM EGYPTIAN BONDAGE. VERSE 8 HEARKENS BACK TO THE REPEATED FORWARD-LOOKING FORMAL ASSURANCES GIVEN BY GOD TO THE PATRIARCHS THAT HE WOULD BRING THEIR DESCENDANTS BACK TO CANAAN (GEN 15:13–20; 24:7; 26:2–5; 28:15; 35:12; 48:4). THE SOLEMNITY OF THE PROMISES IS SIGNALED IN THE WORDING “I SWORE WITH UPLIFTED HAND,” AN IDIOM FOR “I FORMALLY PROMISED.” IN SAYING “I WILL GIVE IT TO YOU AS A POSSESSION,” GOD INDICATED THAT HE WOULD NOT MERELY LET THE ISRAELITES LIVE IN CANAAN BUT WOULD ACTUALLY LET THEM OWN CANAAN. THEY HAD NEVER OWNED LAND—THUS MAKING ABRAHAM’S PURCHASE OF LAND TO BURY SARAH AN EXCEPTIONAL EVENT WORTHY OF A SPECIAL STORY IN GENESIS (GEN 23:3–20). BUT NOW THEY WOULD HAVE THE LAND WHERE THE PATRIARCHS RESIDED AS RESIDENT ALIENS GIVEN TO THEM AS A GIFT FROM GOD. HERE WAS AN INCENTIVE TO FOLLOW STEPHEN YAHWEH INDEED! THE WORDS “I AM THE LORD” THAT APPEAR AT THE END OF V. 8 HAD ALSO OPENED THIS SECTION OF DIVINE RESPONSE TO MOSES’ COMPLAINT (VV. 2–8), FORMING AN INCLUSIO FOR THE ENTIRE DIVINE SPEECH. THESE TWO WORDS (IN HB. JUST ʾĂNÎ STEPHEN YAHWEH) HAVE PROFOUND SIGNIFICANCE THEOLOGICALLY IN TWO DIFFERENT WAYS. FIRST, THEY FUNCTION AS A SYNECDOCHE TO BRING TO MIND GOD’S IMPENDING COVENANT BECAUSE IDENTIFICATION OF THE GIVER OF A COVENANT IS PART OF THE PREAMBLE (IDENTIFICATION OF THE PARTIES TO THE COVENANT), THAT IS, THE INITIAL CONTENT OF A TYPICAL ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN COVENANT. THUS “I AM THE LORD” IS ALMOST TANTAMOUNT TO SAYING, “I AM STEPHEN YAHWEH, YOUR COVENANT GOD.” SECOND, “I AM THE LORD” IS A STATEMENT OF IDENTITY—NOT JUST THEORETICAL IDENTITY BUT RELATIONAL IDENTITY. IT INVITES THE HEARER TO SAY: “I HAVE A CONNECTION TO HIM. I KNOW HIM PERSONALLY. HE IS NOT JUST ANY GOD. HE IS MINE.” THIS DIRECT RELATIONSHIP, SO CRUCIAL TO OUR CHRISTIAN SENSE OF CONVERSION AND SALVATION FROM SIN, IS SIGNALED IN GOD’S IDENTIFYING HIMSELF PERSONALLY. 6:9–12 OPTIMISM IS OFTEN DASHED BY SUFFERING, ESPECIALLY ONGOING SUFFERING. FAITH IS OFTEN DIMINISHED BY HARDSHIP BECAUSE EMOTIONS PLAY A POWERFUL PART IN MOST HUMAN THINKING, AND THINKING CAN BECOME INCREASINGLY PESSIMISTIC WHEN ANY SORT OF PAIN CONTINUES UNABATED. ACCORDINGLY, IT IS UNDERSTANDABLE THAT THE ISRAELITES WOULD NOT LISTEN (V. 9) TO MOSES’ LATEST MESSAGE OF DIVINE REASSURANCE, EVEN THOUGH THEY HAD PREVIOUSLY WELCOMED STEPHEN YAHWEH’S WORDS (4:29–31). PHARAOH’S STRATEGY (5:7–9) HAD PROVED REMARKABLY SUCCESSFUL. THE PEOPLE WERE OVERCOME BY IMPATIENCE FOR RELIEF AND BY HARD SLAVERY (NIV “DISCOURAGEMENT AND CRUEL BONDAGE”). THIS PRESENTED AN OBVIOUS TACTICAL PROBLEM FOR MOSES, WHICH HE VOICED IN V. 12. IF THE ISRAELITES, WHO WOULD BE HIS NATURAL ALLIES AND WHO STOOD TO GAIN FROM THE MESSAGE HE WAS SPEAKING ON GOD’S BEHALF, WOULD NOT LISTEN, HOW COULD HE EVER EXPECT TO MEET SUCCESS BY CARRYING ON WITH THE TASK OF DEMANDING FREEDOM FROM PHARAOH, WHO WAS HIS NATURAL ENEMY IN THIS SITUATION AND WHO STOOD TO LOSE HUGELY FROM AN ISRAELITE EXODUS? NEVERTHELESS, GOD ASSIGNED HIM TO CONFRONT PHARAOH ONCE AGAIN AND DEMAND ISRAEL’S EXODUS (VV. 10–11). THE WORDING OF THE REQUEST REFLECTS LESS OF THE PREVIOUS “OPENING BARGAINING STYLE” NOW. IN 5:1 THE REQUEST WAS STATED AS “LET MY PEOPLE GO, SO THAT THEY MAY HOLD A FESTIVAL TO ME IN THE DESERT.” NOW IT IS LESS MODEST IN SCOPE: PHARAOH WAS TO “LET THE ISRAELITES GO OUT OF HIS COUNTRY”—USING THE MORE BLUNT, FULL-EXODUS LANGUAGE THAT GOD HAD FIRST USED WITH MOSES IN CONNECTION WITH THE EXODUS DEMAND HE WAS EVENTUALLY TO DELIVER (3:10). AT THE END OF V. 12 MOSES REVERTED TO HIS EARLIER PROTEST MODE (AS SEEN IN CHAPS. 3 AND 4, ESP. IN 4:10–13), STILL SEEKING RELEASE FROM THE DIFFICULT ASSIGNMENT. HE EMPLOYED HERE A VARIATION ON HIS EARLIER DESCRIPTION OF HIMSELF AS “NEVER … ELOQUENT … SLOW OF SPEECH AND TONGUE” (4:10). THE NIV “I SPEAK WITH FALTERING LIPS” MISSES THE CONNECTION WITH 4:24–26 THAT THE MORE LITERAL TRANSLATION “MY LIPS ARE UNCIRCUMCISED” (ĂNÎ ʿĂRAL ŚĔPĀTĀYIM) WOULD SUGGEST. MOSES WAS NOT SAYING THAT HE HAD A SPEECH IMPEDIMENT (“FALTERING LIPS”); HE WAS RATHER SAYING (DISINGENUOUSLY) THAT HE WAS “NOT READY FOR PUBLIC SPEAKING,” USING THE METAPHORICAL LANGUAGE OF CIRCUMCISION. DID MOSES THINK THAT SINCE GOD IS WILLING TO KILL HIM FOR FAILING TO CIRCUMCISE HIS CHILDREN AND PERHAPS HIMSELF (SEE COMMENTS ON 4:24–26) HE WOULD NOW BE WILLING TO DISMISS HIM AS A PROPHET FOR BEING UNWILLING TO SPEAK TO SPEAK TO PHARAOH AGAIN—CLAIMING LACK OF SKILL EVEN IF NOT LACK OF PHYSICAL ABILITY? THIS SEEMS INDEED LIKELY. IN OTHER WORDS, MOSES WAS STILL DESPERATE AND DESPERATELY DISCOURAGED AND PESSIMISTIC. HE WANTED OUT. GOD, HOWEVER, KNEW BETTER.**

**GENEALOGY OF MOSES AND AARON (6:13–27)**

**13 NOW THE LORD SPOKE TO MOSES AND AARON ABOUT THE ISRAELITES AND PHARAOH KING OF EGYPT, AND HE COMMANDED THEM TO BRING THE ISRAELITES OUT OF EGYPT. 14 THESE WERE THE HEADS OF THEIR FAMILIES: THE SONS OF REUBEN THE FIRSTBORN SON OF ISRAEL WERE HANOCH AND PALLU, HEZRON AND CARMI. THESE WERE THE CLANS OF REUBEN. 15 THE SONS OF SIMEON WERE JEMUEL, JAMIN, OHAD, JAKIN, ZOHAR AND SHAUL THE SON OF A CANAANITE WOMAN. THESE WERE THE CLANS OF SIMEON. 16 THESE WERE THE NAMES OF THE SONS OF LEVI ACCORDING TO THEIR RECORDS: GERSHON, KOHATH AND MERARI. LEVI LIVED 137 YEARS. 17 THE SONS OF GERSHON, BY CLANS, WERE LIBNI AND SHIMEI. 18 THE SONS OF KOHATH WERE AMRAM, IZHAR, HEBRON AND UZZIEL. KOHATH LIVED 133 YEARS. 19 THE SONS OF MERARI WERE MAHLI AND MUSHI. THESE WERE THE CLANS OF LEVI ACCORDING TO THEIR RECORDS. 20 AMRAM MARRIED HIS FATHER’S SISTER JOCHEBED, WHO BORE HIM AARON AND MOSES. AMRAM LIVED 137 YEARS. 21 THE SONS OF IZHAR WERE KORAH, NEPHEG AND ZICRI. 22 THE SONS OF UZZIEL WERE MISHAEL, ELZAPHAN AND SITHRI. 23 AARON MARRIED ELISHEBA, DAUGHTER OF AMMINADAB AND SISTER OF NAHSHON, AND SHE BORE HIM NADAB AND ABIHU, ELEAZAR AND ITHAMAR. 24 THE SONS OF KORAH WERE ASSIR, ELKANAH AND ABIASAPH. THESE WERE THE KORAHITE CLANS. 25 ELEAZAR SON OF AARON MARRIED ONE OF THE DAUGHTERS OF PUTIEL, AND SHE BORE HIM PHINEHAS. THESE WERE THE HEADS OF THE LEVITE FAMILIES, CLAN BY CLAN. 26 IT WAS THIS SAME AARON AND MOSES TO WHOM THE LORD SAID, “BRING THE ISRAELITES OUT OF EGYPT BY THEIR DIVISIONS.” 27 THEY WERE THE ONES WHO SPOKE TO PHARAOH KING OF EGYPT ABOUT BRINGING THE ISRAELITES OUT OF EGYPT. IT WAS THE SAME MOSES AND AARON.**

**IN THE STYLE OF ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN WRITING AND ACCORDING TO THE CONCERNS OF ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN CULTURE, A GENEALOGY HERE IS NEITHER OUT OF PLACE NOR STYLISTICALLY INTRUSIVE BUT WELCOME AND PERFECTLY PLACED. AT THE END OF 6:12, THE ONGOING NARRATIVE STOPS FOR A MOMENT: RIGHT AT THE POINT WHERE MOSES SAID, IN EFFECT, “I CAN’T DO IT.” THIS WOULD BE THE IDEAL POINT FOR A COMMERCIAL IN A MODERN TV DRAMATIC PRESENTATION, THE POINT JUST BEFORE THE RESOLUTION OF THE SUSPENSE, SINCE THE VIEWER’S INTEREST LEVEL IS HELD BY THE EMOTIONAL INTEREST IN STORY RESOLUTION. MOST ANCIENT NARRATIVES HAD NO CONCERN FOR PRESERVATION OF SUSPENSE PER SE. BUT NEITHER DID IT HURT TO PLACE A REVIEW AND RETROSPECTIVE, WHICH IS WHAT 6:13–27 FUNCTIONS AS IN EXODUS, AT A LOCATION JUST PRIOR TO A MAJOR STORY RESOLUTION, THE FINAL, GREAT DIVINE REASSURANCE OF MOSES’ CALL, COMMISSION, AND CHALLENGE (6:28–7:7) EQUIPPING HIM FOR THE LAUNCHING OF THE PLAGUES (7:8 AND FOLLOWING). THE READER HAS ALREADY BEEN LEARNING ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF MOSES AND AARON. THEY OBVIOUSLY WERE GOING TO BE FEATURED AS THE TWO KEY ISRAELITE FIGURES OF THE EXODUS STORY. NOW IS THE TIME THAT THE READER FINDS OUT WHAT HE HAS ALREADY BEEN WONDERING (IF HE IS AN ISRAELITE, ATTUNED TO HIS CULTURE’S HIGH INTEREST IN FAMILY CONNECTIONS, AS THE ORIGINAL READERS OF EXODUS WERE) JUST WHO MOSES AND AARON REALLY WERE IN TERMS OF THEIR FAMILIAL LINKS WITHIN THE SOCIOLOGICAL STRUCTURE OF THEIR PEOPLE. THIS PORTION OF THE BOOK IS COMPOSED OF A GENEALOGICAL LIST (VV. 14–25, THE FIRST AND LAST VERSES OF WHICH ARE LINKED IN AN INCLUSIO BY “THESE WERE THE HEADS OF … FAMILIES”) SURROUNDED BY A PROSE INTRODUCTION (V. 13) AND PROSE CONCLUSION (VV. 26–27) THAT LIKEWISE MAKE EXTENSIVE USE OF SHARED THEMES AND VOCABULARY, VV. 26–27 BEING ESSENTIALLY AN EXPANDED REWORDING OF V. 13. THE GENEALOGICAL LIST ITSELF HAS AT LEAST SEVEN PARTICULAR PURPOSES: (1) IT BEGINS WITH REUBEN, JACOB’S FIRSTBORN SON, AND THUS TRACES THE LINEAGE OF AARON AND MOSES BACK TO ISRAEL THE MAN, LINKING THEM WITH THE VERY BEGINNINGS OF THEIR PEOPLE, AS A PROPER ISRAELITE GENEALOGY WAS EXPECTED TO DO. (2) IT ENDS WITH AARON’S GRANDSONS (THE SON OF ONE’S SON OR ONE’S DAUGHTER) (PHINEHAS, V. 25) AND THUS BRINGS THE GENEALOGY INTO THE TIME OF THE BOOK OF JUDGES (JUDG. 20:28), PROVIDING A WAY FOR SUCCESSIVE GENERATIONS TO LINK THESE LEADERS WITH THEIR OWN PLACE IN TIME. (3) IT, HONORS AARON AND THE TRUE PRIESTHOOD, ONE OF MOSES’ SPECIAL CONCERNS IN EXODUS. (4) IT SHOWS THE READER WHERE KORAH, THE LEADER OF THE WILDERNESS REBELLION (NUM 16:1–49) FOUNDED HIS CLAIM TO CREDENTIALS OF LEADERSHIP. (5) IT REMINDS THE READER THAT MOSES WAS FROM A PRIESTLY FAMILY AND TRIBE, THUS QUALIFIED AND CALLED TO PERFORM PRIESTLY—NOT MERELY PROPHETIC—DUTIES FROM TIME TO TIME (INCLUDING HIS DIRECTING THE BUILDING OF THE TABERNACLE, HIS RIGHT TO ENTER IT, AND HIS OFFERING THE ORDINATION SACRIFICE IN LEV 8:28–29). (6) IT REMINDS THE READER THAT THE ISRAELITES WERE NOT ETHICALLY PURE, BY SPECIFICALLY MENTIONING THE CANAANITE WOMAN IN V. 15. (7) BY REASON OF CALLING SPECIAL ATTENTION TO SEVERAL WOMEN IN THE PRIESTLY FAMILY LINEAGE (VV. 20, 23, 25), IT REMINDS THE READER OF THE IMPORTANCE ATTACHED TO PROPER, GODLY MARRIAGE FOR PRIESTS, A THEME ALSO REFLECTED LATER, IN THE LAWS. VIRTUALLY ALL OLD TESTAMENT GENEALOGICAL LISTS ARE SELECTIVE. THAT IS, THEY NORMALLY NAME PROMINENT OR NECESSARY PERSONS IN A GENETIC LINE, BUT NOT BY ANY MEANS ALWAYS EVERY PERSON IN THAT LINE. THEY CAN SKIP SEVERAL GENERATIONS AT A TIME AND/OR CAN LEAVE OFF AT ANY POINT IN THE RUNDOWN OF A PARTICULAR LINE. THEY CAN INCLUDE SOME LINES FROM A GIVEN SET OF BROTHERS AND NOT OTHERS AND/OR CAN TAKE THE LINE OF ONE BROTHER ALL THE WAY TO A FINAL POINT, WHILE TAKING THE LINE OF ANOTHER BROTHER ONLY PART OF THE WAY AND THEN ABANDONING FURTHER LISTING. MOSES’ LISTING OF HIS AND AARON’S ANCESTRY HAS, TYPICALLY, GAPS. IT MENTIONS MOSES AND AARON IN THE FOURTH GENERATION AFTER JACOB, ALTHOUGH AARON’S WIFE ELISHEBA (V. 23) SEEMS TO FIT IN THE SIXTH GENERATION AFTER JACOB ACCORDING TO THE DATA IN THE LISTS IN 1 CHR 2:4–10 AND RUTH 4:18–20. BY MENTIONING ONLY, THE GENERATIONS OF LEVI, KOHATH, AMRAM, AND AARON/MOSES (VV. 16–20), IT COULD SEEM TO GIVE THE IMPRESSION THAT THERE WERE IN FACT ONLY FOUR GENERATIONS FROM THE ENTRANCE INTO EGYPT UNTIL THE EXODUS—A PERIOD OF 430 YEARS (CF. EXOD. 12:20). THIS IS THEORETICALLY POSSIBLE IN LIGHT OF THE LONG LIVES OF LEVI, KOHATH, AND AMRAM AND THE FACT THAT MOSES WAS EIGHTY WHEN THE EXODUS BEGAN, BUT IT WOULD REQUIRE THAT EACH FATHER IN THIS GROUP HAD THE SON NAMED IN THIS GROUP AT ABOUT AGE ONE HUNDRED. WHERE OTHER SELECTIVITY IS EVIDENT, WE POINT THIS OUT IN THE COMMENTS BELOW. 6:14 THE PHRASE “THE HEADS OF THEIR FAMILIES” IS STANDARD IN GENEALOGIES. REUBEN, JACOB’S FIRSTBORN SON, IS MENTIONED FIRST, IN THE MANNER OF NORMAL GENEALOGICAL PREFERENCE. HIS LISTING, HOWEVER, GOES ONLY TO HIS IMMEDIATE CHILDREN AND THEN STOPS BECAUSE MOSES AND AARON WERE NOT DESCENDED FROM HIM. 6:15 SIMEON, JACOB’S SECOND-BORN, IS LISTED NEXT, AS IS PROPER; BUT HIS LISTING LIKEWISE STOPS AT THE SECOND GENERATION BECAUSE AARON AND MOSES WERE NOT DESCENDED FROM HIM EITHER. THE MENTION OF “A CANAANITE WOMAN” AS THE FATHER OF SHAUL HAS TWO PURPOSES: IT CONTRASTS TO THE LINE OF LEVI, WHICH IS PURER ISRAELITE AS APPROPRIATE FOR THE TRIBE OF THE PRIESTS, AND IT REMINDS THE READER THAT SOME PROMINENT MATRIARCHS IN ISRAEL WERE NOT ISRAELITE BY BIRTH, A THEME CONSISTENT WITH 12:38. 6:16 HERE BEGINS THE LINEAGE THAT WILL BE TRACED DOWN TO AARON’S GRANDSONS (THE SON OF ONE’S SON OR ONE’S DAUGHTER) (V. 25) BECAUSE IT IS THE LINEAGE OF THE TRIBE OF LEVI, JACOB’S 3RD SON. HAD LEVI BEEN THE TWELFTH SON, THE VERSES PRIOR TO THIS ONE MIGHT HAVE BEEN MORE, TO ACCOMMODATE THE LISTING OF ALL BROTHERS PRIOR TO LEVI. CONVENIENTLY FOR THE READER, THIS WAS NOT NECESSARY. SO FAR, THE LIST CORRESPONDS TO THE ONE MOSES HAD ALREADY WRITTEN IN GEN 46:8–11. HEREAFTER, HOWEVER, IT DIVERGES BECAUSE THERE IS NO FURTHER INTEREST IN NAMING SONS OF JACOB AND THEIR OFFSPRING; ALL THE ATTENTION IS NOW ON LEVITES. LEVI’S LONG-LIFE SPAN (137 YEARS) IS TYPICAL OF THOSE OF THE PATRIARCHS—PART OF THE REASON ISRAEL COULD MULTIPLY SO RAPIDLY IN EGYPT. 6:17–19 LEVI’S SONS GERSHON, KOHATH, AND MERARI ARE ALL NAMED HERE WITH A SECOND GENERATION GIVEN FOR EACH, BUT ONLY KOHATH’S AGE IS GIVEN SINCE HE WAS THE ONE FROM WHOM AARON AND MOSES WERE DESCENDED. HEBRON IS NAMED AS A SON OF KOHATH IN V. 18, BUT HIS LINEAGE IS NOT BROUGHT FURTHER—NOT EVEN TO A SECOND GENERATION, AS IS THE CASE WITH THE OTHER SONS OF KOHATH. UNLESS HE DIED CHILDLESS BUT WAS NEVERTHELESS SO PROMINENT THAT LEAVING OUT HIS NAME WOULD SEEM IMPROPER, THIS IS SIMPLY ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF SELECTIVE GENEALOGIZING. 6:20 AMRAM, MOSES’ AND AARON’S FATHER, IS NOW MENTIONED FOR THE FIRST TIME BY NAME. MOSES MENTIONED HIM ONLY AS “A MAN OF THE HOUSE OF LEVI” IN 2:1, WHERE GIVING FURTHER DETAIL ABOUT HIM WAS NOT USEFUL IN THE NARRATIVE. OF SPECIAL NOTE IS THE REMARK MOSES ADDS AS THIS POINT: AMRAM MARRIED HIS AUNT [NIV “FATHER’S SISTER”] JOCHEBED. THIS APPARENTLY WAS SO BOTHERSOME TO THE LXX TRANSLATOR THAT HE RENDERED IT “MARRIED THE DAUGHTER OF HIS FATHER’S BROTHER,” A TRANSLATION FOR WHICH THERE IS NO JUSTIFICATION OTHERWISE. WHY THE CONCERN? LATER INCEST LAWS (E.G., LEV 18:12, “DO NOT HAVE SEXUAL RELATIONS WITH YOUR FATHER’S SISTER; SHE IS YOUR FATHER’S CLOSE RELATIVE”) PROHIBIT MARRIAGE TO ANY CLOSE RELATIVE (LEV 18:6). BUT A COUSIN IS TECHNICALLY NOT A CLOSE RELATIVE ACCORDING TO LEV 18, AND THE LXX TRANSLATOR OF THIS PASSAGE APPARENTLY FELT THAT SOMETHING THAT VIOLATED THE LATER LAW COULD NOT HAVE OCCURRED IN THE IMMEDIATE LINEAGE OF THE LAWGIVER MOSES AND THUS CAME UP WITH HIS TRANSLATION. THIS, HOWEVER, IS A TRUE GENEALOGY OF MOSES AND AARON, ANTEDATING THE SINAI LAW, SIMPLY STATING A FACT ABOUT WHO MOSES’ MOTHER REALLY WAS. AMRAM HAD VIOLATED NO LAW; THERE DID NOT YET EXIST ONE TO VIOLATE. FURTHER ON THE POSITIVE SIDE, JOCHEBED WAS THUS CLEARLY A LEVITE HERSELF, MAKING MOSES’ AND AARON’S PARENTAGE LEVITE ON BOTH SIDES. 6:21–22 THE SONS OF KOHATH UNIMPORTANT FOR THE LINEAGE OF MOSES AND AARON ARE MENTIONED, WITH THEIR CHILDREN, IN ALL BUT ONE CASE FOR A SINGLE FURTHER GENERATION. NOTE, HOWEVER, THE NAME “KORAH” IN V. 21, A COUSIN OF MOSES AND AARON. HIS IMPORTANCE WILL EMERGE IN THE REBELLION NARRATED IN NUM 16. FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF STRICT GENEALOGICAL PRESTIGE, HE WAS THE EQUAL OF MOSES AND AARON AND COULD LAY HIS CLAIM TO ISRAELITE LEADERSHIP ACCORDINGLY. THUS, HIS LINEAGE IS FURTHER DESCRIBED IN V. 24. 6:23 AARON MARRIED A JUDAHITE WOMAN, ELISHEBA, WHOSE FATHER AND BROTHER WERE ANCESTORS OF JESUS CHRIST, A SMALL BUT NOT INSIGNIFICANT CONNECTION OF TWO THREADS OF SALVATION HISTORY IN THE BIBLICAL TEXT. HIS FOUR SONS HAVE ROLES IN VARIOUS FUTURE NARRATIVES BECAUSE OF THEIR IMPORTANCE IN THE PRIESTLY LINEAGE. ONCE GOD ESTABLISHED THE PRIESTHOOD [NCO CORPS] AS AN INHERITED OFFICE, THE DESCENDANCY OF A PRIEST BECAME A NONNEGOTIABLE CREDENTIAL. 6:24 KORAH’S LINEAGE, ON THE OTHER HAND, MAY HAVE HAD AN OMINOUS OVERTONE FOR FUTURE READERS FOR WHOM THE STORY OF THE GREAT REBELLION IN THE WILDERNESS (NUM 16) LED BY KORAH WAS HISTORY. “THE KORAHITES,” IGNOBLE AS THEIR ANCESTOR’S ACTIONS WERE, NEVERTHELESS WERE A POWERFUL CLAN AMONG THE LEVITES AND FULLY WORTHY OF MENTION HERE EVEN IF ONLY FOR THAT REASON. 6:25 MOSES ENDED HIS AND AARON’S LEVITE GENEALOGY WITH PHINEHAS. BY THE TIME MOSES WROTE THIS GENEALOGY, AARON’S FIRST TWO SONS, NADAB AND ABIHU, WERE DEAD BY REASON OF ILLEGAL ACTIVITY (LEV 10:1–2). IN A LATER GENEALOGY, IN NUMBERS, MOSES EXPLAINED THAT AARON’S OTHER TWO SONS, ELEAZAR AND ITHAMAR, CONTINUED AS PRIESTS. WHY, THEN, MENTION ONLY ELEAZAR AND HIS SON PHINEHAS HERE? AFTER ALL, ITHAMAR HAD CHILDREN AND WAS THE ANCESTOR OF A HUGE DIVISION OF PRIESTS IN HIS OWN RIGHT. THE ANSWER IS SIMPLY THAT HERE AGAIN WE HAVE AN INTERRUPTED/SELECTIVE GENEALOGY IN WHICH MOSES HAD CHOSEN TO MENTION ONLY A SINGLE GRANDSON OF AARON: THE MOST FAMOUS ONE. PHINEHAS HAD SUCH A PROMINENT ROLE IN ENDING THE CULTIC PROSTITUTION SCANDAL AT BAAL-PEOR IN NUM 25 THAT IT IS UNDERSTANDABLE THAT HE SHOULD BE MENTIONED HERE AS OPPOSED TO HIS OWN RELATIVELY LESS-KNOWN BROTHERS AND THE RELATIVELY LESS-KNOWN CHILDREN OF ITHAMAR. THE STATEMENT “THESE WERE THE HEADS OF THE LEVITE FAMILIES, CLAN BY CLAN” BRINGS THE LEVITE GENEALOGY TO A FORMAL CONCLUSION THROUGH ITS SLIGHTLY EXPANDED RESUMPTION OF THE OPENING WORDS OF THE GENEALOGY (“THESE WERE THE HEADS OF THEIR FAMILIES”) IN V. 14. 6:26–27 THESE TWO VERSES ARE SLIGHTLY EXPANDED INCLUSIO RESUMPTIONS OF V. 13, PARALLEL TO THE WAY THE END OF V. 25 IS A SLIGHTLY EXPANDED RESUMPTION OF THE BEGINNING OF V. 14. THE NAMES ARE REPEATED FOR EMPHASIS SO THAT “IT WAS MOSES AND AARON” (NIV “IT WAS THIS SAME AARON AND MOSES”) UNMISTAKABLY LINKS THE TWO BROTHERS WITH BOTH THE GENEALOGY AND THE EXODUS. OTHERWISE THE ONLY REALLY NEW INFORMATION ADDED TO V. 13 IS THE EXPRESSION “BY ARMIES” (ʿAL-ṢĔBĀʾÔT; NIV “BY THEIR DIVISIONS”). IN ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS “DIVISIONS” CAN REFER TO VARIOUS SORTS OF DIVISIONS, INCLUDING CLAN DIVISIONS (E.G. GEN 36:30) AND PRIESTLY DIVISIONS (E.G., 1 CHR 28:13), BUT HERE THE WORDING OF THE HEBREW IS FOCUSED ON THE THEME OF ISRAEL’S ORGANIZATION AS AN ARMY OF GOD, THE MAIN REFERENT FOR THE LANGUAGE OF DIVISIONS IN THE PENTATEUCH. THIS VERSE THUS ADUMBRATES THE FIGHTING ROLE OF ISRAEL IN THE EXODUS AND CONQUEST, WHICH WILL FIRST BE TESTED IN 17:8–16 AT REPHIDIM, NEAR SINAI.**

**DIVINE REASSURANCE OF MOSES’ CALL, COMMISSION, CHALLENGE (6:28–7:7)**

**28 NOW WHEN THE LORD SPOKE TO MOSES IN EGYPT, 29 HE SAID TO HIM, “I AM THE LORD. TELL PHARAOH KING OF EGYPT EVERYTHING I TELL YOU.” 30 BUT MOSES SAID TO THE LORD, “SINCE I SPEAK WITH FALTERING LIPS, WHY WOULD PHARAOH LISTEN TO ME?” 1 THEN THE LORD SAID TO MOSES, “SEE, I HAVE MADE YOU LIKE GOD TO PHARAOH, AND YOUR BROTHER AARON WILL BE YOUR PROPHET. 2 YOU ARE TO SAY EVERYTHING I COMMAND YOU, AND YOUR BROTHER AARON IS TO TELL PHARAOH TO LET THE ISRAELITES GO OUT OF HIS COUNTRY. 3 BUT I WILL HARDEN PHARAOH’S HEART, AND THOUGH I MULTIPLY MY MIRACULOUS SIGNS AND WONDERS IN EGYPT, 4 HE WILL NOT LISTEN TO YOU. THEN I WILL LAY MY HAND ON EGYPT AND WITH MIGHTY ACTS OF JUDGMENT I WILL BRING OUT MY DIVISIONS, MY PEOPLE THE ISRAELITES. 5 AND THE EGYPTIANS WILL KNOW THAT I AM THE LORD WHEN I STRETCH OUT MY HAND AGAINST EGYPT AND BRING THE ISRAELITES OUT OF IT.” 6 MOSES AND AARON DID JUST AS THE LORD COMMANDED THEM. 7 MOSES WAS EIGHTY YEARS OLD AND AARON EIGHTY-THREE WHEN THEY SPOKE TO PHARAOH.**

**EXODUS 6:28–7:7 IS LARGELY SUMMATIONAL MATERIAL, REMINDING THE HEARER/READER OF KEY ISSUES IN THE STORY SO FAR, WITH A FOCUS ON THE CONFRONTATION WITH PHARAOH AND EGYPT. THE PLAGUES ARE ABOUT TO BEGIN, AND THIS IS AN APPROPRIATE PLACE IN THE NARRATIVE TO BE SURE THAT THE HEARER HAS THE KEY CHARACTERS AND THE ESSENTIAL THEMES IN MIND IN PREPARATION FOR THE GREAT CONFLICT STORY. SUCH A REMINDER HAS VALUE TO HEARERS, HOWEVER, WHO MUST KEEP EVERYTHING IN MIND BECAUSE THEY CANNOT GO BACK AND LOOK AT IT IN PRINT. ANCIENT READERS WERE FEW, FULL LITERACY WAS RELATIVELY RARE, AND EVEN PARTIAL LITERACY THE EXCEPTION, SO MANY READERS PROBABLY READ HALTINGLY AND BENEFITED FROM THE REORIENTATION A PASSAGE SUCH AS THE PRESENT ONE PROVIDED TO THEM. THE PASSAGE CONCENTRATES ESPECIALLY ON MOSES’ NEED FOR REASSURANCE. THE HERO OF THE STORY, IN OTHER WORDS, IS STEPHEN YAHWEH, NOT MOSES. MOSES OPENLY ADMITTED REPEATEDLY IN EXODUS THAT HE LACKED CONFIDENCE IN HIS ABILITY TO CARRY OUT GOD’S ORDERS AND REMINDED US IN EACH CASE THAT GOD SUSTAINED HIM THROUGH THE ENTIRE PROCESS. EVEN THE NOTE ABOUT HIS AND AARON’S AGE IN 7:7 IS INSTRUCTIVE: THE TWO OF THEM WERE CALLED UPON TO LEAD A GREAT MOVEMENT AT AN AGE WHEN MOST PEOPLE HAVE ALREADY DIED (PS 90:10). THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO THE EXODUS WAS NOT THEIR GENIUS OR THEIR EXPERIENCE (WHAT EXPERIENCE HAD THEY IN LEADING AN EXODUS?) OR THEIR CREDENTIALS (MOSES’ WERE ESSENTIALLY NEGATIVE AS FAR AS MOST ISRAELITES WERE CONCERNED) OR THEIR VITALITY, OR ANY SUCH THING. WHAT MADE THEM SUCCESSFUL LEADERS WAS THE FACT THAT THEY “DID JUST AS THE LORD COMMANDED THEM” (7:6) 6:28–30 ALL THAT WAS REQUIRED OF MOSES WAS THAT HE SHOULD FUNCTION AS GOD’S SPOKESMAN. HE WAS NOT REQUIRED TO BE INVENTIVE OR A CLEVER ORGANIZER OR A GIFTED PERSUADER. HE WAS SIMPLY REQUIRED TO PASS ON TO PHARAOH KING OF EGYPT WHAT GOD TOLD HIM TO SAY—TO FULFILL THE ROLE OF A PROPHET. HIS PROTEST, “WHY WOULD PHARAOH LISTEN TO ME, SINCE I SPEAK WITH FALTERING LIPS?” IS MENTIONED HERE BY WAY OF LINKAGE WITH 6:12, THE POINT AT WHICH THE NARRATIVE LEFT OFF AND THE INTERVENING GENEALOGY BEGAN. IT IS NOT, IN OTHER WORDS, A SECOND PROTEST USING THE SAME WORDS BUT SIMPLY A REMINDER TO THE READER OF WHAT MOSES HAD SAID PREVIOUSLY. 7:1–2 THIS IS ALSO SUMMATIVE MATERIAL, ESSENTIALLY REPEATING THE MAIN CONCEPTS, IN SOMEWHAT DIFFERENT WORDS, OF 4:14–16. THE LARGEST DIFFERENCE IS THAT IN CONTRAST TO 4:14–16 THE EMPHASIS HERE IS NOT ON AARON’S SPEAKING TO “THE PEOPLE” (4:16) BUT TO PHARAOH, AND THE GOAL IS NOT MERELY TO GET THE PEOPLE TO ACCEPT GOD’S PLAN BUT TO GET THE KING TO DO STEPHEN YAHWEH’S WILL. THE PURPOSE OF THESE WORDS WAS, ONCE AGAIN, TO REMOVE FROM MOSES ANY REASON FOR RESISTANCE. AS WE HAVE ALREADY NOTED, MOSES WOULD, IN THE EVENT, ACTUALLY DO MOST OF THE TALKING; BUT THE PROMISE THAT AARON COULD BE THE SPOKESPERSON WAS A REASSURANCE THAT TOOK AWAY THE GROUND OF MOSES’ PRO FORMA OBJECTION ABOUT HIS SPEAKING SKILL. THE REFERENCE TO EGYPT AS “HIS COUNTRY,” THAT IS, PHARAOH’S COUNTRY, IS NOT NEW: IT OCCURRED IN 6:1, 11 AND OCCURS AGAIN IN 11:10, ALWAYS IN THE EXACT WORDING “OUT OF HIS COUNTRY.” IT IS ONLY A DETAIL OF DICTION IN THE NARRATIVE, BUT IT UNDERSCORES THE FACT THAT MOSES AND THE ISRAELITES WERE TO THINK OF EGYPT AS SOMEONE ELSE’S COUNTRY, NOT THEIRS. “YOUR LAND” IS THE TERM GIVEN TO CANAAN, THE LAND OF ISRAEL’S PROMISE IN EXODUS (23:26, 33; 34:24) AND THEREAFTER REPEATEDLY IN THE PENTATEUCH. 7:3–6 THESE VERSES ALSO CONTAIN MUCH THAT IS SUMMATIVE. IN V. 3 THE PREDICTION OF THE HARDENING OF PHARAOH’S HEART RECALLS 4:21 (Q.V.), AND ALTHOUGH THE USE OF THE EXPRESSION “SIGNS AND WONDERS” IS NEW HERE TO EXODUS, THE EMPOWERMENT OF MOSES AND AARON WITH PROOF SIGNS HAD ALREADY APPEARED AS A SIGNIFICANT THEME (4:9, 17–18, 30), AND THE PROMISE OF WONDERS IN 3:20 AND 4:21 USES MUCH OF THE SAME LANGUAGE AS APPEARS HERE. WHAT IS SOMEWHAT NEW IN V. 3 IS THE INTENTION OF GOD TO MULTIPLY HIS SIGNS AND WONDERS—AN ADUMBRATION OF THE MULTIPLE PLAGUES THAT WILL SUCCESSIVELY HUMILIATE EGYPT AND HER GODS AND INCREASINGLY DEMONSTRATE THAT STEPHEN YAHWEH ALONE CONTROLS THE SUPERNATURAL WORLD. THE CONCEPT OF “MIGHTY ACTS OF JUDGMENT” IN V. 4 RECALLS 6:6, AND DEPARTURE BY ARMIES (NIV “DIVISIONS”) RECALLS 6:26. GOD’S DESIGNATION OF THE ISRAELITES AS “MY PEOPLE” HAS BEEN SEEN ALREADY IN 3:7, 10; 5:1; 6:7. VERSE 5 CONTAINS SOMETHING OF A TRANSFORMATION OF A PREVIOUSLY ENCOUNTERED THEME. IN 6:7 (“THEN YOU WILL KNOW THAT I AM THE LORD YOUR GOD, WHO BROUGHT YOU OUT FROM UNDER THE YOKE OF THE EGYPTIANS”) GOD PREDICTED A PROMISE FULFILLMENT IN THE SENSE OF THE ISRAELITES’ EVENTUALLY REALIZING WHO HE REALLY IS AND HOW GREAT WAS HIS POWER. NOW THAT LANGUAGE IS APPLIED TO THE EGYPTIANS. IT IS ONE THING WHEN A PEOPLE, ACKNOWLEDGES THE GREATNESS OF THEIR OWN GOD. IT IS YET ANOTHER WHEN GRUDGINGLY YET INESCAPABLY A PAGAN PEOPLE, ACKNOWLEDGES THE SUPREMACY OF A GOD THEY PREVIOUSLY HAD NEVER EVEN HEARD OF. THE REMAINDER OF V. 5 CLOSELY LINKS TO WHAT WAS ALREADY SAID IN 3:20. OUR REPEATEDLY CALLING ATTENTION TO WAYS IN WHICH THE LANGUAGE OF THE PRESENT PASSAGE RELATES TO WHAT HAS ALREADY BEEN INTRODUCED IN THE NARRATIVE SHOULD NOT BE MISUNDERSTOOD. THESE ARE ALL GREAT THEMES, AND THE FACT THAT THEY ARE REPEATED HERE DOES NOT DIMINISH THEIR SIGNIFICANCE BUT RATHER ENHANCES IT. THE CURRENT PASSAGE IS A POWERFUL REVIEW OF THE TRULY BIG ISSUES—THE VERY OPPOSITE OF A NEEDLESS TAUTOLOGY. 7:6–7 IT IS POSSIBLE THAT V. 6 IS REFERRING ONLY TO THE PAST, THAT IS, TO THE FACT THAT MOSES AND AARON HAD, IN THEIR ONE ENCOUNTER WITH PHARAOH SO FAR (5:1–5), BEEN FULLY FAITHFUL IN DELIVERING GOD’S MESSAGE TO PHARAOH. IT IS EVEN MORE LIKELY, HOWEVER, THAT BOTH VV. 6 AND 7 ARE INTENDED TO LEAD INTO THE ENTIRE SET OF STORIES THAT DESCRIBE ENCOUNTERS WITH PHARAOH, ESPECIALLY IN LIGHT OF THE IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING ACCOUNT (7:8–13) IN WHICH V. 10 ONCE AGAIN SAYS THAT MOSES AND AARON “DID JUST AS THE LORD COMMANDED”—REFERRING TO THEIR OVERALL FAITHFULNESS DURING THE REMAINDER OF THEIR SERVICE IN EGYPT. THAT IS, BECAUSE V. 7 DESCRIBES THEIR AGES “WHEN THEY SPOKE TO PHARAOH,” AND SINCE THEY SPOKE TO PHARAOH ON MANY SUBSEQUENT OCCASIONS, WE TAKE THESE VERSES AS PROGRAMMATIC FOR THE ENTIRE FOLLOWING SET OF ENCOUNTERS WITH PHARAOH, NAMELY CHAPS. 7–12. THE FIGURE GIVEN FOR MOSES’ AGE IS CONFIRMED BY DEUT. 34:7, MOSES’ DEATH COMING FORTY YEARS LATER THAN THE PRESENT EVENTS, AT AGE ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY. THAT AARON WAS THE OLDER BROTHER IS CONFIRMED IN PART BY THE (CULTURALLY PROPER) PRECEDENCE GIVEN TO AARON WITHIN THE GENEALOGY (6:20) AND AS WELL IN ITS WRAP-UP SENTENCE (6:26). AARON’S AGE AT DEATH IS GIVEN IN NUM 33:39 (“AARON WAS A HUNDRED AND TWENTY-THREE YEARS OLD WHEN HE DIED ON MOUNT HOR”), A FIGURE THAT IS, AGAIN, CONSISTENT WITH WHAT IS STATED HERE. THAT AARON’S DEATH (CF. ALSO NUM 10:28; DEUT. 10:6) AND MIRIAM’S DEATH (NUM 20:1) CAME SOMEWHAT BEFORE THAT OF MOSES IS ALSO CONSISTENT WITH THE EVIDENCE THAT THEY WERE THE OLDER SIBLINGS.**

**ELEVEN SIGNS OF STEPHEN YAHWEH’S SOVEREIGNTY: THE TEN PLAGUES: JUDGMENT ON THE GODS OF EGYPT (7:8–11:10)**

**THE TERM “THE TEN PLAGUES” IS A TRADITIONAL, BUT NOT STRICTLY BIBLICAL, EXPRESSION. IT DERIVES BOTH FROM THE TRANSLATION “PLAGUE” FOR A VARIETY OF HEBREW WORDS SUCH AS DEBER IN 5:3 AND NEGAʿ IN 11:1 AND FROM GOD’S REFERENCE IN 15:26 TO “THE DISEASES I BROUGHT ON THE EGYPTIANS.” EVEN THOUGH THE EXPRESSION “TEN PLAGUES” REFERS IN SUMMARY FASHION TO BOTH DISEASE PLAGUES AND NON-DISEASE SIGNS OF SOVEREIGNTY, AS DOES “DISEASES” IN 15:26, THE TERM “PLAGUE” IS NOT A MISLEADING TERM AS LONG AS IT IS UNDERSTOOD PROPERLY IN THE CONTEXT OF EXODUS. THE HEBREW TERM MOST OFTEN USED IN WHAT WE CALL THE PLAGUE ACCOUNTS, HOWEVER, IS ʾOT, A WORD USUALLY CONNOTING “MIRACULOUS SIGN.” WHAT MOSES RECORDED IN THE BOOK OF EXODUS IS ACTUALLY A SERIES OF ELEVEN MIRACULOUS SIGNS HAVING IN COMMON THEIR INDICATION OF GOD’S SOVEREIGNTY OVER EGYPT, THE EGYPTIANS, AND THEIR PHARAOH—THE FINAL ONE IN THE SERIES BEING AN ESPECIALLY GREAT SIGN BOTH OF HIS SOVEREIGNTY AND OF JUDGMENT: THE IMPOSITION OF DEATH UPON THE FIRSTBORN OF PEOPLE AND ANIMALS AMONG THE EGYPTIANS. OF THESE ELEVEN SIGNS OF SOVEREIGNTY, THE FIRST (7:8–13) IS A DEMONSTRATION RATHER THAN A PLAGUE SINCE THE ONLY HARM IT INVOLVED WAS THE LOSS OF A SMALL NUMBER OF THINGS, THAT IS, THE LOSS OF MAGICIANS’ STAFFS AND THE DEATH OF SOME SNAKES (7:12), NOT A GENERAL ANNOYANCE OR HARM TO THE HUMAN OR ANIMAL POPULATION AS A WHOLE. NEVERTHELESS, IT, LIKE THE OTHER TEN, WAS DESIGNED TO SHOW PHARAOH AND THE EGYPTIANS STEPHEN YAHWEH’S SUPERIORITY TO THEM AND THEIR GODS THROUGH THE MIRACULOUS TRANSFORMATION OF AN INANIMATE OBJECT (STAFF---ROD OR WAND) INTO A LIVING BEING (SNAKE---VIPER OR KING) AND THE SUPERIORITY OF THAT SNAKE TO ANY OTHERS. THE LAST TEN, ON THE OTHER HAND, WERE BOTH SIGNS OF SOVEREIGNTY AND, IN THE TERMINOLOGY COMMONLY BUT LOOSELY EMPLOYED FOR THEM, PLAGUES. THEY CAUSED DEATH (MAINLY OF ANIMALS UNTIL THE TENTH) OR MISERIES OF VARIOUS SORTS (ON BOTH PEOPLE AND ANIMALS IN MOST PLAGUES) EVEN IF SOME OF THEM HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH ILLNESS PER SE (NOTABLY NOS. SEVEN [HAIL], EIGHT [LOCUSTS], AND NINE [DARKNESS]). ALL ELEVEN SIGNS HUMILIATED THE EGYPTIANS AND PROVED STEPHEN YAHWEH’S POWER OVER THEM. ALL SHARED CERTAIN FORMAL FEATURES AND A BASICALLY SIMILAR OUTLINE, MOVING FROM A VERY SIMPLE FIRST SIGN ACCOUNT (7:8–13) THROUGH CLOSELY RELATED (SIMILAR TO ONE ANOTHER) SIGN ACCOUNTS (THE FIRST NINE PLAGUES), WHICH VARY IN LENGTH BUT BUILD IN INTENSITY OF MISERY CAUSED, TO CULMINATION IN A COMPOUND-COMPLEX ACCOUNT OF THE DEATH OF THE FIRSTBORN THAT IS MUCH LONGER AND MUCH MORE A MATTER OF FINAL JUDGMENT THAN ANY OF THE OTHERS (11:1–12:30). ALL ELEVEN SIGNS LED INEXORABLY TO THE GREAT MIGHTY ACT OF GOD AROUND WHICH THE BOOK OF EXODUS CENTERS, THE EXODUS FROM EGYPT, WHICH ALSO INVOLVED A GREAT SOVEREIGN ACT OF HUMILIATION OF THE EGYPTIANS, THE DESTRUCTION OF THE EGYPTIAN ARMY IN THE RED SEA. THUS THE SIGNS OF SOVEREIGNTY MUST NOT BE UNDERSTOOD AS ENDS IN THEMSELVES BUT AS LEAD-INS TO GOD’S GREAT DELIVERANCE OF HIS PEOPLE FROM BONDAGE TO THE GREATEST SUPERPOWER OF THEIR DAY, A DELIVERANCE THAT WAS COMPLETED ONLY WHEN THE EGYPTIAN ARMY WAS DESTROYED AND PHARAOH’S POWER BROKEN (14:21–31; 15:1–21). THE OVERALL 1:9:1 PATTERN OF THE ELEVEN SIGNS OF STEPHEN YAHWEH’S SOVEREIGNTY MAY BE SCHEMATIZED AS FOLLOWS. NOTE HOW THE FIRST SIGN ALREADY CONTAINS MOST OF THE TYPICAL ELEMENTS THAT WILL BE FOUND IN THE REMAINING SIGN STORIES.**

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| [**PRECISION**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Precision) **BECOME A LEGEND** | **[Press the Attack](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Press_the_Attack_(Rune))** [**PRESS THE ATTACK**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Press_the_Attack_(Rune))  **[Lethal Tempo](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Lethal_Tempo_(Rune))** [**LETHAL TEMPO**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Lethal_Tempo_(Rune))**[Fleet Footwork](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Fleet_Footwork_(Rune))** [**FLEET FOOTWORK**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Fleet_Footwork_(Rune))**[Conqueror](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Conqueror_(Rune))**[**CONQUEROR**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Conqueror_(Rune)) | **[Overheal](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Overheal_(Rune))** [**OVERHEAL**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Overheal_(Rune))  **[Triumph](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Triumph_(Rune))** [**TRIUMPH**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Triumph_(Rune))  **[Presence of Mind](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Presence_of_Mind_(Rune))** [**PRESENCE OF MIND**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Presence_of_Mind_(Rune)) | **[Legend: Alacrity](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Legend:_Alacrity_(Rune))** [**LEGEND: ALACRITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Legend:_Alacrity_(Rune))  **[Legend: Tenacity](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Legend:_Tenacity_(Rune))** [**LEGEND: TENACITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Legend:_Tenacity_(Rune))**[Legend: Bloodline](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Legend:_Bloodline_(Rune))** [**LEGEND: BLOODLINE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Legend:_Bloodline_(Rune)) | **[Coup de Grace](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Coup_de_Grace_(Rune))** [**COUP DE GRACE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Coup_de_Grace_(Rune))  **[Cut Down](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Cut_Down_(Rune))** [**CUT DOWN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Cut_Down_(Rune))  **[Last Stand](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Last_Stand_(Rune))** [**LAST STAND**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Last_Stand_(Rune)) |
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| [**DOMINATION**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Domination) **HUNT AND ELIMINATE PREY** | **[Electrocute](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Electrocute_(Rune))**[**ELECTROCUTE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Electrocute_(Rune))  **[Predator](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Predator_(Rune))** [**PREDATOR**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Predator_(Rune))  **[Dark Harvest](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Dark_Harvest_(Rune))** [**DARK HARVEST**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Dark_Harvest_(Rune))**[Hail of Blades](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Hail_of_Blades_(Rune))** [**HAIL OF BLADES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Hail_of_Blades_(Rune)) | **[Cheap Shot](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Cheap_Shot_(Rune))** [**CHEAP SHOT**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Cheap_Shot_(Rune))  **[Taste of Blood](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Taste_of_Blood_(Rune))** [**TASTE OF BLOOD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Taste_of_Blood_(Rune))**[Sudden Impact](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Sudden_Impact_(Rune))** [**SUDDEN IMPACT**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Sudden_Impact_(Rune)) | **[Zombie Ward](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Zombie_Ward_(Rune))** [**ZOMBIE WARD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Zombie_Ward_(Rune))  **[Ghost Poro](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ghost_Poro_(Rune))** [**GHOST PORO**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ghost_Poro_(Rune))**[Eyeball Collection](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Eyeball_Collection_(Rune))** [**EYEBALL COLLECTION**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Eyeball_Collection_(Rune)) | **[Ravenous Hunter](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ravenous_Hunter_(Rune))** [**RAVENOUS HUNTER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ravenous_Hunter_(Rune))  **[Ingenious Hunter](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ingenious_Hunter_(Rune))** [**INGENIOUS HUNTER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ingenious_Hunter_(Rune))**[Relentless Hunter](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Relentless_Hunter_(Rune))**[**RELENTLESS HUNTER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Relentless_Hunter_(Rune))**[Ultimate Hunter](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ultimate_Hunter_(Rune))** [**ULTIMATE HUNTER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ultimate_Hunter_(Rune)) |
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| [**SORCERY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Sorcery) **UNLEASH DESTRUCTION** | **[Summon Aery](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Summon_Aery_(Rune))** [**SUMMON AERY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Summon_Aery_(Rune))  **[Arcane Comet](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Arcane_Comet_(Rune))** [**ARCANE COMET**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Arcane_Comet_(Rune))**[Phase Rush](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Phase_Rush_(Rune))** [**PHASE RUSH**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Phase_Rush_(Rune)) | **[Nullifying Orb](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Nullifying_Orb_(Rune))** [**NULLIFYING ORB**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Nullifying_Orb_(Rune))  **[Manaflow Band](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Manaflow_Band_(Rune))** [**MANAFLOW BAND**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Manaflow_Band_(Rune))**[Nimbus Cloak](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Nimbus_Cloak_(Rune))** [**NIMBUS CLOAK**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Nimbus_Cloak_(Rune)) | **[Transcendence](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Transcendence_(Rune))**[**TRANSCENDENCE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Transcendence_(Rune))  **[Celerity](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Celerity_(Rune))** [**CELERITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Celerity_(Rune))  **[Absolute Focus](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Absolute_Focus_(Rune))** [**ABSOLUTE FOCUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Absolute_Focus_(Rune)) | **[Scorch](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Scorch_(Rune))** [**SCORCH**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Scorch_(Rune))  **[Waterwalking](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Waterwalking_(Rune))**[**WATERWALKING**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Waterwalking_(Rune))**[Gathering Storm](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Gathering_Storm_(Rune))** [**GATHERING STORM**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Gathering_Storm_(Rune)) |
|  | | | | |
| [**RESOLVE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Resolve) **LIVE FOREVER** | **[Grasp of the Undying](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Grasp_of_the_Undying_(Rune))** [**GRASP OF THE UNDYING**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Grasp_of_the_Undying_(Rune))  **[Aftershock](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Aftershock_(Rune))**[**AFTERSHOCK**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Aftershock_(Rune))**[Guardian](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Guardian_(Rune))** [**GUARDIAN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Guardian_(Rune)) | **[Demolish](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demolish_(Rune))** [**DEMOLISH**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demolish_(Rune))  **[Font of Life](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Font_of_Life_(Rune))** [**FONT OF LIFE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Font_of_Life_(Rune))**[Shield Bash](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shield_Bash_(Rune))** [**SHIELD BASH**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shield_Bash_(Rune)) | **[Conditioning](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Conditioning_(Rune))**[**CONDITIONING**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Conditioning_(Rune))  **[Second Wind](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Second_Wind_(Rune))** [**SECOND WIND**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Second_Wind_(Rune))**[Bone Plating](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bone_Plating_(Rune))** [**BONE PLATING**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bone_Plating_(Rune)) | **[Overgrowth](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Overgrowth_(Rune))**[**OVERGROWTH**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Overgrowth_(Rune))  **[Revitalize](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Revitalize_(Rune))**  **REVITALIZE**  **[Unflinching](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Unflinching_(Rune))**[**UNFLINCHING**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Unflinching_(Rune)) |
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| [**INSPIRATION**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Inspiration) **OUTWIT MERE MORTALS** | **[Glacial Augment](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Glacial_Augment_(Rune))** [**GLACIAL AUGMENT**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Glacial_Augment_(Rune))  **[Unsealed Spellbook](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Unsealed_Spellbook_(Rune))** [**UNSEALED SPELLBOOK**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Unsealed_Spellbook_(Rune))**[First Strike](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/First_Strike_(Rune))** [**FIRST STRIKE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/First_Strike_(Rune)) | **[Hextech Flashtraption](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Hextech_Flashtraption_(Rune))** [**HEXTECH FLASHTRAPTION**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Hextech_Flashtraption_(Rune))  **[Magical Footwear](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Magical_Footwear_(Rune))** [**MAGICAL FOOTWEAR**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Magical_Footwear_(Rune))**[Perfect Timing](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Perfect_Timing_(Rune))** [**PERFECT TIMING**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Perfect_Timing_(Rune)) | **[Future's Market](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Future%27s_Market_(Rune))** [**FUTURE'S MARKET**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Future%27s_Market_(Rune))  **[Minion Dematerializer](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Minion_Dematerializer_(Rune))** [**MINION DEMATERIALIZER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Minion_Dematerializer_(Rune))**[Biscuit Delivery](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Biscuit_Delivery_(Rune))** [**BISCUIT DELIVERY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Biscuit_Delivery_(Rune)) | **[Cosmic Insight](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Cosmic_Insight_(Rune))** [**COSMIC INSIGHT**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Cosmic_Insight_(Rune))  **[Approach Velocity](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Approach_Velocity_(Rune))** [**APPROACH VELOCITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Approach_Velocity_(Rune))**[Time Warp Tonic](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Time_Warp_Tonic_(Rune))** [**TIME WARP TONIC**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Time_Warp_Tonic_(Rune)) |

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|  | **NAME** | **TYPE** | **SUBTYPE** | **REGION(S)** |  |  |  | **RARITY** |
| **01DE001** | [**VANGUARD BANNERMAN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01DE001_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**ELITE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Elite_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **3** | **3** | **RARE** |
| **01DE002** | [**TIANNA CROWNGUARD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01DE002_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **8** | **8** | **8** | **EPIC** |
| **01DE003** | [**LAURENT BLADEKEEPER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01DE003_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **3** | **3** | **RARE** |
| **01DE004** | [**SILVERWING VANGUARD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01DE004_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**ELITE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Elite_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **2** | **1** | **COMMON** |
| **01DE006** | [**VANGUARD SERGEANT**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01DE006_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**ELITE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Elite_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **3** | **4** | **RARE** |
| **01DE007** | [**JUDGMENT**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01DE007_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **8** |  |  | **EPIC** |
| **01DE009** | [**BRIGHTSTEEL PROTECTOR**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01DE009_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **3** | **2** | **COMMON** |
| **01DE010** | [**SWIFTWING LANCER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01DE010_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** | **5** | **4** | **RARE** |
| **01DE011** | [**LAURENT PROTEGE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01DE011_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **2** | **4** | **COMMON** |
| **01DE012** | [**GAREN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01DE012_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**ELITE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Elite_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** | **5** | **5** | **CHAMPION** |
| **01DE012T1** | [**GAREN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01DE012T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**ELITE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Elite_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** | **6** | **6** |  |
| **01DE012T2** | [**GAREN'S JUDGMENT**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01DE012T2_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **8** |  |  |  |
| **01DE013** | [**CHAIN VEST**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01DE013_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **01DE014** | [**REINFORCEMENTS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01DE014_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **8** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **01DE015** | [**RADIANT GUARDIAN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01DE015_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** | **4** | **5** | **RARE** |
| **01DE016** | [**DAUNTLESS VANGUARD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01DE016_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**ELITE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Elite_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **3** | **3** |  |
| **01DE017** | [**STAND ALONE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01DE017_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **01DE018** | [**RADIANT STRIKE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01DE018_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **01DE019** | [**MOBILIZE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01DE019_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **01DE020** | [**VANGUARD DEFENDER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01DE020_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**ELITE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Elite_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **2** | **2** | **COMMON** |
| **01DE021** | [**RELENTLESS PURSUIT**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01DE021_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **01DE022** | [**LUCIAN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01DE022_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **3** | **2** | **CHAMPION** |
| **01DE022T1** | [**LUCIAN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01DE022T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **4** | **3** |  |
| **01DE022T2** | [**LUCIAN'S RELENTLESS PURSUIT**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01DE022T2_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** |  |  |  |
| **01DE023** | [**MAGESEEKER INVESTIGATOR**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01DE023_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **3** | **3** | **COMMON** |
| **01DE024** | [**MAGESEEKER CONSERVATOR**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01DE024_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** | **1** | **1** | **COMMON** |
| **01DE025** | [**DETAIN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01DE025_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **01DE026** | [**SINGLE COMBAT**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01DE026_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **01DE027** | [**EN GARDE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01DE027_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **01DE028** | [**VANGUARD CAVALRY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01DE028_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**ELITE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Elite_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** | **5** | **5** | **COMMON** |
| **01DE029** | [**FLEETFEATHER TRACKER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01DE029_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** | **2** | **1** | **COMMON** |
| **01DE030** | [**SILVERWING DIVER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01DE030_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **2** | **3** | **COMMON** |
| **01DE031** | [**DAWNSPEAKERS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01DE031_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **1** | **4** | **EPIC** |
| **01DE032** | [**PRISMATIC BARRIER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01DE032_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **01DE033** | [**REMEMBRANCE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01DE033_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **6** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **01DE034** | [**BATTLESMITH**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01DE034_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **2** | **2** | **RARE** |
| **01DE035** | [**FOR DEMACIA!**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01DE035_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **6** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **01DE036** | [**VANGUARD SQUIRE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01DE036_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**ELITE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Elite_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **3** | **3** | **COMMON** |
| **01DE037** | [**RIPOSTE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01DE037_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **01DE038** | [**SENNA, SENTINEL OF LIGHT**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01DE038_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **4** | **2** | **RARE** |
| **01DE039** | [**CITHRIA OF CLOUDFIELD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01DE039_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**ELITE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Elite_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** | **2** | **2** | **COMMON** |
| **01DE040** | [**MAGESEEKER PERSUADER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01DE040_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **3** | **2** | **RARE** |
| **01DE041** | [**BACK TO BACK**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01DE041_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **6** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **01DE042** | [**LUX**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01DE042_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** | **3** | **5** | **CHAMPION** |
| **01DE042T1** | [**LUX'S PRISMATIC BARRIER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01DE042T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  |  |
| **01DE042T2** | [**LUX**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01DE042T2_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** | **4** | **6** |  |
| **01DE042T3** | [**FINAL SPARK**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01DE042T3_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **0** |  |  |  |
| **01DE043** | [**WAR CHEFS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01DE043_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **1** | **3** | **COMMON** |
| **01DE044** | [**REDOUBLED VALOR**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01DE044_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **6** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **01DE045** | [**FIORA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01DE045_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **3** | **2** | **CHAMPION** |
| **01DE045T1** | [**FIORA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01DE045T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **4** | **3** |  |
| **01DE045T2** | [**FIORA'S RIPOSTE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01DE045T2_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** |  |  |  |
| **01DE046** | [**VANGUARD LOOKOUT**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01DE046_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**ELITE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Elite_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **1** | **4** | **COMMON** |
| **01DE047** | [**SUCCESSION**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01DE047_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **01DE048** | [**MAGESEEKER INCITER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01DE048_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **4** | **4** | **RARE** |
| **01DE049** | [**PLUCKY PORO**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01DE049_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**PORO**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Poro_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** | **1** | **1** | **COMMON** |
| **01DE050** | [**PURIFY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01DE050_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **01DE051** | [**CITHRIA THE BOLD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01DE051_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**ELITE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Elite_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **6** | **6** | **6** | **EPIC** |
| **01DE052** | [**BRIGHTSTEEL FORMATION**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01DE052_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **9** | **9** | **9** | **EPIC** |
| **01DE053** | [**LAURENT CHEVALIER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01DE053_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **3** | **2** | **EPIC** |
| **01DE054** | [**VANGUARD REDEEMER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01DE054_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**ELITE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Elite_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **3** | **3** | **COMMON** |
| **01DE055** | [**LAURENT DUELIST**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01DE055_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **4** | **2** | **COMMON** |
| **01DE056** | [**VANGUARD FIRSTBLADE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01DE056_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**ELITE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Elite_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **2** | **2** | **COMMON** |
| **01FR001** | [**FLASH FREEZE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01FR001_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **01FR003** | [**AVAROSAN SENTRY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01FR003_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **2** | **1** | **COMMON** |
| **01FR004** | [**ELIXIR OF IRON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01FR004_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **01FR005** | [**BATTLE FURY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01FR005_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **8** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **01FR006** | [**ICEBORN LEGACY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01FR006_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **6** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **01FR007** | [**BABBLING BJERG**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01FR007_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **3** | **3** | **COMMON** |
| **01FR008** | [**LONELY PORO**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01FR008_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**PORO**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Poro_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** | **1** | **1** | **COMMON** |
| **01FR008T1** | [**JUBILANT PORO**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01FR008T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**PORO**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Poro_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** | **1** | **1** |  |
| **01FR009** | [**BRAUM**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01FR009_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **0** | **6** | **CHAMPION** |
| **01FR009T1** | [**BRAUM**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01FR009T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **1** | **7** |  |
| **01FR009T2** | [**BRAUM'S TAKE HEART**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01FR009T2_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  |  |
| **01FR010** | [**BLOODSWORN PLEDGE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01FR010_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **01FR011** | [**ICEVALE ARCHER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01FR011_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **3** | **1** | **COMMON** |
| **01FR012** | [**CATALYST OF AEONS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01FR012_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **01FR013** | [**SCARMOTHER VRYNNA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01FR013_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **6** | **3** | **8** | **EPIC** |
| **01FR014** | [**YETI YEARLING**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01FR014_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**YETI**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Yeti_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** | **1** | **2** | **COMMON** |
| **01FR016** | [**PORO SNAX**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01FR016_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **01FR017** | [**TROOP OF ELNUKS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01FR017_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**ELNUK**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Elnuk_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** | **3** | **3** | **COMMON** |
| **01FR018** | [**RIMEFANG WOLF**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01FR018_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **3** | **2** | **RARE** |
| **01FR019** | [**WINTER'S BREATH**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01FR019_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **7** |  |  | **EPIC** |
| **01FR020** | [**AVALANCHE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01FR020_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **01FR021** | [**TARKAZ THE TRIBELESS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01FR021_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** | **5** | **8** | **EPIC** |
| **01FR021T1** | [**TARKAZ'S FURY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01FR021T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **ABILITY** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **0** |  |  |  |
| **01FR022** | [**OMEN HAWK**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01FR022_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** | **1** | **1** | **COMMON** |
| **01FR023** | [**WARMOTHER'S CALL**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01FR023_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **12** |  |  | **EPIC** |
| **01FR024** | [**ANIVIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01FR024_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **6** | **3** | **5** | **CHAMPION** |
| **01FR024T1** | [**ANIVIA'S HARSH WINDS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01FR024T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **6** |  |  |  |
| **01FR024T2** | [**GLACIAL STORM**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01FR024T2_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **ABILITY** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **0** |  |  |  |
| **01FR024T3** | [**ANIVIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01FR024T3_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **6** | **4** | **6** |  |
| **01FR024T4** | [**EGGNIVIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01FR024T4_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** | **0** | **1** |  |
| **01FR024T5** | [**GLACIAL STORM**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01FR024T5_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **ABILITY** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **0** |  |  |  |
| **01FR025** | [**PORO HERDER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01FR025_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **2** | **3** | **RARE** |
| **01FR026** | [**ALPHA WILDCLAW**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01FR026_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **6** | **7** | **6** | **COMMON** |
| **01FR027** | [**BULL ELNUK**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01FR027_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**ELNUK**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Elnuk_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **4** | **5** | **COMMON** |
| **01FR028** | [**ENRAGED YETI**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01FR028_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**YETI**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Yeti_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** | **5** | **5** |  |
| **01FR029** | [**ENTREAT**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01FR029_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **01FR030** | [**BRITTLE STEEL**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01FR030_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **01FR031** | [**ANCIENT YETI**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01FR031_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**YETI**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Yeti_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **7** | **5** | **5** | **RARE** |
| **01FR032** | [**STARLIT SEER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01FR032_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **2** | **3** | **RARE** |
| **01FR033** | [**WYRDING STONES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01FR033_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **0** | **3** | **COMMON** |
| **01FR034** | [**THEY WHO ENDURE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01FR034_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **7** | **1** | **1** | **RARE** |
| **01FR035** | [**UNSCARRED REAVER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01FR035_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** | **0** | **3** | **COMMON** |
| **01FR036** | [**AVAROSAN MARKSMAN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01FR036_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **3** | **1** | **COMMON** |
| **01FR036T1** | [**BULLSEYE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01FR036T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **ABILITY** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **0** |  |  |  |
| **01FR037** | [**AVAROSAN OUTRIDERS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01FR037_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **3** | **3** | **RARE** |
| **01FR038** | [**ASHE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01FR038_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **5** | **3** | **CHAMPION** |
| **01FR038T1** | [**ASHE'S FLASH FREEZE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01FR038T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  |  |
| **01FR038T2** | [**ASHE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01FR038T2_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **6** | **4** |  |
| **01FR038T3** | [**CRYSTAL ARROW**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01FR038T3_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  |  |
| **01FR039** | [**TRYNDAMERE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01FR039_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **8** | **8** | **4** | **CHAMPION** |
| **01FR039T1** | [**TRYNDAMERE'S BATTLE FURY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01FR039T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **8** |  |  |  |
| **01FR039T2** | [**TRYNDAMERE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01FR039T2_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **8** | **9** | **9** |  |
| **01FR040** | [**RIMETUSK SHAMAN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01FR040_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** | **3** | **4** | **RARE** |
| **01FR041** | [**AVAROSAN HEARTHGUARD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01FR041_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** | **5** | **5** | **EPIC** |
| **01FR042** | [**HARSH WINDS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01FR042_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **6** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **01FR043** | [**HEART OF THE FLUFT**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01FR043_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**PORO**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Poro_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **6** | **4** | **4** | **RARE** |
| **01FR043T1** | [**FLUFT OF POROS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01FR043T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**PORO**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Poro_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **6** | **4** | **4** |  |
| **01FR045** | [**SCARTHANE STEFFEN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01FR045_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **2** | **4** | **COMMON** |
| **01FR046** | [**TAKE HEART**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01FR046_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **01FR047** | [**FERAL MYSTIC**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01FR047_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **2** | **2** | **COMMON** |
| **01FR048** | [**AVAROSAN TRAPPER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01FR048_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **3** | **3** | **COMMON** |
| **01FR049** | [**STALKING WOLF**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01FR049_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **3** | **2** | **COMMON** |
| **01FR049T1** | [**SNOW HARE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01FR049T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** | **1** | **1** |  |
| **01FR050** | [**KINDLY TAVERNKEEPER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01FR050_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **3** | **3** | **COMMON** |
| **01FR051** | [**TALL TALES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01FR051_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **01FR052** | [**SHE WHO WANDERS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01FR052_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **10** | **10** | **10** | **EPIC** |
| **01FR052T1** | [**BALESIGHT**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01FR052T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **ABILITY** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **0** |  |  |  |
| **01FR053** | [**MIGHTY PORO**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01FR053_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**PORO**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Poro_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **3** | **3** | **COMMON** |
| **01FR054** | [**SCARMAIDEN REAVER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01FR054_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** | **4** | **5** | **RARE** |
| **01FR055** | [**SHATTER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01FR055_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **01FR056** | [**ICY YETI**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01FR056_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**YETI**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Yeti_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **7** | **5** | **5** | **RARE** |
| **01FR057** | [**PACK MENTALITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01FR057_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **7** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **01IO001** | [**RITUAL OF RENEWAL**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01IO001_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **7** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **01IO002** | [**WILL OF IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01IO002_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **01IO003** | [**DEATH MARK**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01IO003_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **01IO004** | [**HEALTH POTION**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01IO004_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **01IO005** | [**NIMBLE PORO**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01IO005_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**PORO**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Poro_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** | **1** | **1** | **COMMON** |
| **01IO006** | [**GREENGLADE DUO**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01IO006_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **2** | **1** | **RARE** |
| **01IO007** | [**REN SHADOWBLADE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01IO007_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **4** | **3** | **EPIC** |
| **01IO008** | [**FAE BLADETWIRLER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01IO008_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **1** | **3** | **RARE** |
| **01IO009** | [**ZED**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01IO009_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **3** | **2** | **CHAMPION** |
| **01IO009T1** | [**LIVING SHADOW**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01IO009T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **3** | **2** |  |
| **01IO009T2** | [**ZED**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01IO009T2_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **4** | **3** |  |
| **01IO009T3** | [**ZED'S SHADOWSHIFT**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01IO009T3_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  |  |
| **01IO010** | [**STAND UNITED**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01IO010_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **6** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **01IO011** | [**RECALL**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01IO011_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **01IO012** | [**TWIN DISCIPLINES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01IO012_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **01IO013** | [**SHADOW FIEND**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01IO013_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** | **4** | **3** | **COMMON** |
| **01IO014** | [**GREENGLADE ELDER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01IO014_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **3** | **1** | **COMMON** |
| **01IO015** | [**YASUO**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01IO015_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **4** | **4** | **CHAMPION** |
| **01IO015T1** | [**YASUO**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01IO015T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **5** | **5** |  |
| **01IO015T2** | [**YASUO'S STEEL TEMPEST**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01IO015T2_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  |  |
| **01IO016** | [**ZEPHYR SAGE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01IO016_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **6** | **4** | **4** | **RARE** |
| **01IO017** | [**NAVORI BLADESCOUT**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01IO017_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**YORDLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Yordle_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** | **2** | **1** | **COMMON** |
| **01IO018** | [**RUSH**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01IO018_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **01IO019** | [**GREENGLADE CARETAKER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01IO019_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** | **1** | **2** | **COMMON** |
| **01IO020** | [**KEEPER OF MASKS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01IO020_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **2** | **3** | **COMMON** |
| **01IO021** | [**WINDFARER HATCHLING**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01IO021_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **7** | **4** | **2** | **EPIC** |
| **01IO022** | [**GHOST**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01IO022_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **01IO023** | [**JEWELED PROTECTOR**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01IO023_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** | **4** | **4** | **RARE** |
| **01IO024** | [**DAWN AND DUSK**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01IO024_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **6** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **01IO026** | [**INSPIRING MENTOR**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01IO026_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** | **2** | **1** | **COMMON** |
| **01IO027** | [**SILENT SHADOWSEER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01IO027_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **3** | **1** | **EPIC** |
| **01IO028** | [**SCALED SNAPPER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01IO028_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **2** | **2** | **COMMON** |
| **01IO029** | [**SOWN SEEDS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01IO029_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **01IO030** | [**THE EMPYREAN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01IO030_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**DRAGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Dragon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **7** | **6** | **5** | **EPIC** |
| **01IO031** | [**CLOUD DRINKER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01IO031_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **6** | **3** | **5** | **RARE** |
| **01IO032** | [**SHEN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01IO032_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **3** | **5** | **CHAMPION** |
| **01IO032T1** | [**SHEN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01IO032T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **4** | **6** |  |
| **01IO032T2** | [**SHEN'S STAND UNITED**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01IO032T2_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **6** |  |  |  |
| **01IO033** | [**MINAH SWIFTFOOT**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01IO033_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **9** | **7** | **6** | **EPIC** |
| **01IO033T1** | [**SKYWARD STRIKES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01IO033T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **ABILITY** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **0** |  |  |  |
| **01IO036** | [**GREENGLADE LOOKOUT**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01IO036_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **2** | **2** | **COMMON** |
| **01IO037** | [**SPIRIT'S REFUGE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01IO037_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **01IO038** | [**SOLITARY MONK**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01IO038_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **3** | **3** | **RARE** |
| **01IO039** | [**SHADOWSHIFT**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01IO039_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **01IO040** | [**KINKOU LIFEBLADE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01IO040_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **2** | **2** | **COMMON** |
| **01IO041** | [**KARMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01IO041_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** | **4** | **3** | **CHAMPION** |
| **01IO041T1** | [**KARMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01IO041T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** | **5** | **4** |  |
| **01IO041T2** | [**KARMA'S INSIGHT OF AGES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01IO041T2_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  |  |
| **01IO042** | [**SPARRING STUDENT**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01IO042_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** | **1** | **1** | **COMMON** |
| **01IO043** | [**RIVERSHAPER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01IO043_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **2** | **2** | **RARE** |
| **01IO044** | [**NAVORI CONSPIRATOR**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01IO044_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **2** | **2** | **COMMON** |
| **01IO045** | [**HERALD OF SPRING**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01IO045_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **2** | **2** | **COMMON** |
| **01IO046** | [**STEEL TEMPEST**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01IO046_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **01IO047** | [**SHADOW FLARE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01IO047_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **6** |  |  | **EPIC** |
| **01IO048** | [**YUSARI**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01IO048_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** | **4** | **3** | **RARE** |
| **01IO049** | [**DENY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01IO049_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **01IO050** | [**KINKOU WAYFINDER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01IO050_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **3** | **3** | **RARE** |
| **01IO052** | [**NAVORI HIGHWAYMAN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01IO052_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **1** | **2** | **COMMON** |
| **01IO052T1** | [**NAVORI BRIGAND**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01IO052T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **1** | **2** |  |
| **01IO053** | [**EMERALD AWAKENER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01IO053_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **2** | **2** | **COMMON** |
| **01IO054** | [**INSIGHT OF AGES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01IO054_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **01IO055** | [**KI GUARDIAN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01IO055_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **01IO056** | [**YONE, WINDCHASER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01IO056_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **7** | **6** | **6** | **RARE** |
| **01IO056T1** | [**STAGGERING STRIKES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01IO056T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **ABILITY** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **0** |  |  |  |
| **01IO057** | [**SHADOW ASSASSIN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01IO057_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **2** | **1** | **COMMON** |
| **01NX002** | [**DECIMATE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01NX002_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **01NX003** | [**ARENA BOOKIE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01NX003_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**YORDLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Yordle_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **2** | **2** | **RARE** |
| **01NX004** | [**CULLING STRIKE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01NX004_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **01NX005** | [**CRIMSON ARISTOCRAT**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01NX005_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **2** | **2** | **COMMON** |
| **01NX006** | [**VLADIMIR**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01NX006_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** | **5** | **5** | **CHAMPION** |
| **01NX006T1** | [**VLADIMIR**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01NX006T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** | **6** | **6** |  |
| **01NX006T2** | [**CRIMSON PACT**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01NX006T2_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **ABILITY** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **0** |  |  |  |
| **01NX006T3** | [**VLADIMIR'S TRANSFUSION**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01NX006T3_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  |  |
| **01NX006T4** | [**CRIMSON PACT**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01NX006T4_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **ABILITY** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **0** |  |  |  |
| **01NX007** | [**ARENA BATTLECASTER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01NX007_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **2** | **2** | **RARE** |
| **01NX008** | [**BASILISK RIDER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01NX008_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **4** | **3** | **RARE** |
| **01NX009** | [**CROWD FAVORITE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01NX009_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **2** | **1** | **RARE** |
| **01NX010** | [**LEGION GENERAL**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01NX010_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** | **4** | **4** | **COMMON** |
| **01NX011** | [**WHIRLING DEATH**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01NX011_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **01NX012** | [**LEGION REARGUARD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01NX012_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** | **3** | **2** | **COMMON** |
| **01NX013** | [**DECISIVE MANEUVER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01NX013_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **01NX014** | [**SHIRAZA THE BLADE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01NX014_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **3** | **3** | **EPIC** |
| **01NX015** | [**PRECIOUS PET**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01NX015_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**SPIDER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Spider_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** | **2** | **1** | **COMMON** |
| **01NX016** | [**TRIFARIAN HOPEFUL**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01NX016_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **3** | **2** | **COMMON** |
| **01NX017** | [**LEGION DRUMMER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01NX017_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **3** | **2** | **COMMON** |
| **01NX019** | [**MIGHT**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01NX019_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **01NX020** | [**DRAVEN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01NX020_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **3** | **2** | **CHAMPION** |
| **01NX020T1** | [**SPINNING AXE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01NX020T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **0** |  |  |  |
| **01NX020T2** | [**DRAVEN'S WHIRLING DEATH**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01NX020T2_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  |  |
| **01NX020T3** | [**DRAVEN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01NX020T3_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **4** | **3** |  |
| **01NX021** | [**LEGION MARAUDER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01NX021_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **3** | **2** | **COMMON** |
| **01NX022** | [**NOXIAN GUILLOTINE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01NX022_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **01NX023** | [**ARACHNOID HOST**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01NX023_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**SPIDER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Spider_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** | **5** | **3** | **RARE** |
| **01NX024** | [**KATO THE ARM**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01NX024_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** | **5** | **4** | **EPIC** |
| **01NX025** | [**BROTHERS' BOND**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01NX025_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **01NX026** | [**RECKLESS TRIFARIAN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01NX026_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **5** | **4** | **COMMON** |
| **01NX027** | [**ELIXIR OF WRATH**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01NX027_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **01NX029** | [**LEGION VETERAN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01NX029_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **4** | **5** | **EPIC** |
| **01NX030** | [**CRIMSON DISCIPLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01NX030_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **2** | **3** | **RARE** |
| **01NX031** | [**TRIFARIAN GLORYSEEKER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01NX031_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **5** | **1** | **RARE** |
| **01NX032** | [**CRIMSON AWAKENER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01NX032_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **5** | **5** | **RARE** |
| **01NX033** | [**TRIFARIAN ASSESSOR**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01NX033_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** | **4** | **3** | **RARE** |
| **01NX034** | [**AFFECTIONATE PORO**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01NX034_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**PORO**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Poro_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** | **1** | **1** | **COMMON** |
| **01NX035** | [**DRAVEN'S BIGGEST FAN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01NX035_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** | **2** | **1** | **COMMON** |
| **01NX036** | [**MINOTAUR RECKONER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01NX036_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **6** | **6** | **6** | **RARE** |
| **01NX037** | [**LEGION GRENADIER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01NX037_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **3** | **2** | **COMMON** |
| **01NX038** | [**DARIUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01NX038_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **6** | **6** | **6** | **CHAMPION** |
| **01NX038T1** | [**DARIUS' DECIMATE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01NX038T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** |  |  |  |
| **01NX038T2** | [**DARIUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01NX038T2_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **6** | **10** | **7** |  |
| **01NX039** | [**VISION**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01NX039_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **01NX040** | [**LEGION SABOTEUR**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01NX040_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** | **2** | **1** | **COMMON** |
| **01NX040T1** | [**SABOTAGE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01NX040T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **ABILITY** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **0** |  |  |  |
| **01NX041** | [**TRIFARIAN SHIELDBREAKER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01NX041_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** | **6** | **5** | **COMMON** |
| **01NX042** | [**KATARINA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01NX042_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **3** | **2** | **CHAMPION** |
| **01NX042T1** | [**KATARINA'S DEATH LOTUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01NX042T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  |  |
| **01NX042T2** | [**KATARINA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01NX042T2_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **4** | **3** |  |
| **01NX043** | [**BLADE'S EDGE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01NX043_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **01NX044** | [**BATTERING RAM**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01NX044_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **6** | **0** | **12** | **EPIC** |
| **01NX045** | [**SAVAGE RECKONER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01NX045_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **7** | **7** | **4** | **RARE** |
| **01NX046** | [**ARACHNOID SENTRY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01NX046_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**SPIDER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Spider_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **3** | **2** | **COMMON** |
| **01NX046T1** | [**PARALYZING BITE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01NX046T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **ABILITY** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **0** |  |  |  |
| **01NX047** | [**TRANSFUSION**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01NX047_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **01NX048** | [**CRIMSON CURATOR**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01NX048_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **3** | **3** | **COMMON** |
| **01NX049** | [**GUILE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01NX049_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **01NX050** | [**DEATH LOTUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01NX050_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **01NX051** | [**CAPTAIN FARRON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01NX051_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **8** | **8** | **8** | **EPIC** |
| **01NX052** | [**BLOOD FOR BLOOD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01NX052_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **01NX053** | [**RECKONING**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01NX053_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **6** |  |  | **EPIC** |
| **01NX054** | [**INTIMIDATING ROAR**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01NX054_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **01NX055** | [**HOUSE SPIDER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01NX055_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**SPIDER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Spider_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **2** | **2** | **COMMON** |
| **01NX056** | [**SHUNPO**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01NX056_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **01PZ001** | [**RUMMAGE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01PZ001_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **01PZ002** | [**BACK ALLEY BARKEEP**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01PZ002_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **3** | **2** | **COMMON** |
| **01PZ003** | [**ASSEMBLY BOT**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01PZ003_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **1** | **1** | **RARE** |
| **01PZ004** | [**TRUESHOT BARRAGE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01PZ004_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **7** |  |  | **EPIC** |
| **01PZ005** | [**HEXTECH TRANSMOGULATOR**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01PZ005_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **6** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **01PZ006** | [**PLAZA GUARDIAN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01PZ006_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **10** | **6** | **6** | **RARE** |
| **01PZ007** | [**PARADE ELECTRORIG**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01PZ007_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **2** | **4** | **COMMON** |
| **01PZ008** | [**TEEMO**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01PZ008_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**YORDLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Yordle_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra))[**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** | **1** | **1** | **CHAMPION** |
| **01PZ008T1** | [**TEEMO'S MUSHROOM CLOUD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01PZ008T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** |  |  |  |
| **01PZ008T2** | [**TEEMO**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01PZ008T2_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**YORDLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Yordle_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra))[**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** | **2** | **2** |  |
| **01PZ009** | [**AMATEUR AERONAUT**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01PZ009_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **2** | **3** | **COMMON** |
| **01PZ010** | [**MUSHROOM CLOUD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01PZ010_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **01PZ012** | [**FLAME CHOMPERS!**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01PZ012_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **0** | **2** | **COMMON** |
| **01PZ013** | [**AUGMENTED EXPERIMENTER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01PZ013_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **6** | **3** | **3** | **EPIC** |
| **01PZ013T1** | [**RECKLESS RESEARCH**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01PZ013T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **ABILITY** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **0** |  |  |  |
| **01PZ014** | [**UNLICENSED INNOVATION**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01PZ014_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **6** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **01PZ014T1** | [**ILLEGAL CONTRAPTION**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01PZ014T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **6** | **5** | **5** |  |
| **01PZ015** | [**T-HEX**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01PZ015_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**TECH**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Tech_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **8** | **8** | **8** |  |
| **01PZ016** | [**FLASH OF BRILLIANCE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01PZ016_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **01PZ017** | [**USED CASK SALESMAN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01PZ017_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **3** | **2** | **COMMON** |
| **01PZ018** | [**ACADEMY PRODIGY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01PZ018_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **3** | **1** | **COMMON** |
| **01PZ019** | [**EAGER APPRENTICE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01PZ019_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **2** | **1** | **COMMON** |
| **01PZ020** | [**DARING PORO**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01PZ020_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**PORO**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Poro_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** | **1** | **1** | **COMMON** |
| **01PZ021** | [**MIDENSTOKKE HENCHMEN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01PZ021_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** | **5** | **4** | **RARE** |
| **01PZ022** | [**POISON PUFFCAP**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01PZ022_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **TRAP** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **0** |  |  |  |
| **01PZ023** | [**PROFESSOR VON YIPP**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01PZ023_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **2** | **3** | **RARE** |
| **01PZ024** | [**UNSTABLE VOLTICIAN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01PZ024_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** | **4** | **4** | **RARE** |
| **01PZ025** | [**PUFFCAP PEDDLER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01PZ025_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **3** | **3** | **COMMON** |
| **01PZ026** | [**SUMPWORKS MAP**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01PZ026_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **01PZ027** | [**THERMOGENIC BEAM**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01PZ027_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **0** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **01PZ028** | [**JURY-RIG**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01PZ028_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **01PZ029** | [**EMINENT BENEFACTOR**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01PZ029_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **3** | **3** | **RARE** |
| **01PZ030** | [**SHADY CHARACTER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01PZ030_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**YORDLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Yordle_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **1** | **3** | **RARE** |
| **01PZ030T1** | [**IMPERSONATE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01PZ030T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **ABILITY** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **0** |  |  |  |
| **01PZ031** | [**STATIKK SHOCK**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01PZ031_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **01PZ032** | [**SCRAP SCUTTLER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01PZ032_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** | **1** | **1** |  |
| **01PZ033** | [**PURRSUIT OF PERFECTION**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01PZ033_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** |  |  | **EPIC** |
| **01PZ033T1** | [**CATASTROPHE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01PZ033T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** | **30** | **30** |  |
| **01PZ034** | [**SUMPSNIPE SCAVENGER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01PZ034_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **4** | **3** | **RARE** |
| **01PZ035** | [**JAE MEDARDA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01PZ035_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **6** | **5** | **5** | **EPIC** |
| **01PZ036** | [**EZREAL**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01PZ036_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **1** | **3** | **CHAMPION** |
| **01PZ036T1** | [**EZREAL**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01PZ036T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **2** | **4** |  |
| **01PZ036T2** | [**EZREAL'S MYSTIC SHOT**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01PZ036T2_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  |  |
| **01PZ038** | [**SUMP DREDGER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01PZ038_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **4** | **3** | **COMMON** |
| **01PZ039** | [**GET EXCITED!**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01PZ039_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **01PZ040** | [**JINX**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01PZ040_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **4** | **3** | **CHAMPION** |
| **01PZ040T1** | [**JINX**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01PZ040T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **5** | **4** |  |
| **01PZ040T2** | [**SUPER MEGA DEATH ROCKET!**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01PZ040T2_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** |  |  |  |
| **01PZ040T3** | [**JINX'S GET EXCITED!**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01PZ040T3_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  |  |
| **01PZ042** | [**INTREPID MARINER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01PZ042_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **1** | **3** | **RARE** |
| **01PZ043** | [**CHEMPUNK PICKPOCKET**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01PZ043_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **3** | **2** | **RARE** |
| **01PZ044** | [**CHEMPUNK SHREDDER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01PZ044_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** | **5** | **2** | **RARE** |
| **01PZ044T2** | [**FACE-MELTER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01PZ044T2_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **ABILITY** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **0** |  |  |  |
| **01PZ045** | [**ZAUNITE URCHIN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01PZ045_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** | **2** | **1** | **COMMON** |
| **01PZ046** | [**COUNTERFEIT COPIES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01PZ046_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **01PZ047** | [**CAUSTIC CASK**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01PZ047_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **0** | **0** | **1** | **COMMON** |
| **01PZ048** | [**CORINA VERAZA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01PZ048_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **9** | **8** | **8** | **EPIC** |
| **01PZ048T1** | [**MAGNUM OPUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01PZ048T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **ABILITY** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **0** |  |  |  |
| **01PZ049** | [**PROGRESS DAY!**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01PZ049_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **8** |  |  | **EPIC** |
| **01PZ050** | [**RISING SPELL FORCE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01PZ050_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **01PZ051** | [**FUNSMITH**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01PZ051_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **1** | **3** | **RARE** |
| **01PZ052** | [**MYSTIC SHOT**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01PZ052_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **01PZ053** | [**CLUMP OF WHUMPS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01PZ053_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **2** | **2** | **COMMON** |
| **01PZ054** | [**BOOMCREW ROOKIE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01PZ054_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **1** | **3** | **COMMON** |
| **01PZ054T1** | [**UNDERMINE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01PZ054T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **ABILITY** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **0** |  |  |  |
| **01PZ055** | [**ASTUTE ACADEMIC**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01PZ055_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** | **1** | **2** | **COMMON** |
| **01PZ056** | [**HEIMERDINGER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01PZ056_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**YORDLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Yordle_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra))[**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** | **2** | **4** | **CHAMPION** |
| **01PZ056T1** | [**MK0: WINDUP SHREDDER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01PZ056T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**TECH**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Tech_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **0** | **0** | **1** |  |
| **01PZ056T2** | [**MK5: ROCKET BLASTER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01PZ056T2_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**TECH**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Tech_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** | **5** | **1** |  |
| **01PZ056T3** | [**HEIMERDINGER'S PROGRESS DAY!**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01PZ056T3_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **8** |  |  |  |
| **01PZ056T4** | [**MK1: WRENCHBOT**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01PZ056T4_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**TECH**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Tech_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** | **1** | **1** |  |
| **01PZ056T5** | [**MK7: ARMORED STOMPER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01PZ056T5_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**TECH**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Tech_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **7** | **7** | **1** |  |
| **01PZ056T6** | [**MK6: FLOOR-B-GONE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01PZ056T6_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**TECH**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Tech_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **6** | **6** | **1** |  |
| **01PZ056T7** | [**MK2: EVOLUTION TURRET**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01PZ056T7_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**TECH**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Tech_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **2** | **1** |  |
| **01PZ056T8** | [**MK3: APEX TURRET**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01PZ056T8_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**TECH**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Tech_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **3** | **1** |  |
| **01PZ056T9** | [**MK4: STORMLOBBER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01PZ056T9_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**TECH**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Tech_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **4** | **1** |  |
| **01PZ056T10** | [**HEIMERDINGER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01PZ056T10_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**YORDLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Yordle_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra))[**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** | **3** | **5** |  |
| **01PZ057** | [**SCRAPDASH ASSEMBLY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01PZ057_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **01PZ058** | [**CHUMP WHUMP**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01PZ058_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**YORDLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Yordle_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **4** | **4** | **RARE** |
| **01PZ059** | [**GOLDEN CRUSHBOT**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01PZ059_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**TECH**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Tech_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **2** | **5** | **COMMON** |
| **01SI001** | [**VENGEANCE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01SI001_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **6** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **01SI002** | [**SPIDERLING**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01SI002_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**SPIDER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Spider_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** | **1** | **1** |  |
| **01SI003** | [**THE HARROWING**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01SI003_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **9** |  |  | **EPIC** |
| **01SI004** | [**DARKWATER SCOURGE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01SI004_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **5** | **5** | **COMMON** |
| **01SI005** | [**SCUTTLEGEIST**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01SI005_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **10** | **5** | **5** | **RARE** |
| **01SI006** | [**POSSESSION**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01SI006_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **01SI007** | [**HAUNTED RELIC**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01SI007_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **01SI007T1** | [**UNLEASHED SPIRIT**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01SI007T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** | **1** | **1** |  |
| **01SI009** | [**STIRRED SPIRITS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01SI009_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **3** | **2** | **COMMON** |
| **01SI010** | [**ONSLAUGHT OF SHADOWS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01SI010_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **01SI011** | [**RAVENOUS BUTCHER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01SI011_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **0** | **3** | **2** | **COMMON** |
| **01SI012** | [**OBLIVIOUS ISLANDER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01SI012_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** | **2** | **1** | **COMMON** |
| **01SI014** | [**MISTWRAITH**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01SI014_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **2** | **2** | **COMMON** |
| **01SI015** | [**THE RUINATION**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01SI015_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **9** |  |  | **EPIC** |
| **01SI016** | [**WRAITHCALLER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01SI016_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **4** | **3** | **RARE** |
| **01SI018** | [**SCRIBE OF SORROWS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01SI018_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **2** | **3** | **COMMON** |
| **01SI019** | [**THE BOX**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01SI019_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **01SI020** | [**THE REKINDLER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01SI020_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **7** | **4** | **4** | **RARE** |
| **01SI021** | [**SHARK CHARIOT**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01SI021_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **3** | **1** | **RARE** |
| **01SI022** | [**MARK OF THE ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01SI022_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **01SI023** | [**SOUL SHEPHERD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01SI023_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **2** | **3** | **COMMON** |
| **01SI024** | [**SPECTRAL RIDER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01SI024_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **2** | **2** |  |
| **01SI025** | [**ATROCITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01SI025_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **7** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **01SI026** | [**WARDEN'S PREY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01SI026_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** | **1** | **1** | **COMMON** |
| **01SI027** | [**FRESH OFFERINGS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01SI027_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **01SI027T1** | [**VILEMAW**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01SI027T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**SPIDER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Spider_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **6** | **6** |  |
| **01SI028** | [**SPLINTER SOUL**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01SI028_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **01SI029** | [**WITHERING WAIL**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01SI029_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **01SI030** | [**KALISTA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01SI030_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **4** | **3** | **CHAMPION** |
| **01SI030T1** | [**KALISTA'S BLACK SPEAR**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01SI030T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  |  |
| **01SI030T2** | [**KALISTA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01SI030T2_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **5** | **4** |  |
| **01SI031** | [**IRON HARBINGER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01SI031_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **2** | **4** | **RARE** |
| **01SI032** | [**CHRONICLER OF RUIN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01SI032_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **3** | **3** | **COMMON** |
| **01SI033** | [**COMMANDER LEDROS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01SI033_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **9** | **9** | **6** | **EPIC** |
| **01SI033T1** | [**BLADE OF LEDROS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01SI033T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **ABILITY** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **0** |  |  |  |
| **01SI034** | [**BLACK SPEAR**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01SI034_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **01SI035** | [**RHASA THE SUNDERER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01SI035_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **8** | **8** | **6** | **EPIC** |
| **01SI035T1** | [**NIGHT HARVEST**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01SI035T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **ABILITY** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **0** |  |  |  |
| **01SI036** | [**CRAWLING SENSATION**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01SI036_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **01SI037** | [**SINISTER PORO**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01SI037_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**PORO**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Poro_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** | **1** | **1** | **COMMON** |
| **01SI038** | [**PHANTOM PRANKSTER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01SI038_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **0** | **3** | **RARE** |
| **01SI039** | [**ARACHNOID HORROR**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01SI039_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**SPIDER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Spider_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **3** | **2** | **COMMON** |
| **01SI040** | [**VILE FEAST**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01SI040_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **01SI041** | [**THE UNDYING**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01SI041_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **2** | **2** | **EPIC** |
| **01SI042** | [**HECARIM**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01SI042_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **6** | **5** | **6** | **CHAMPION** |
| **01SI042T1** | [**HECARIM**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01SI042T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **6** | **6** | **7** |  |
| **01SI042T2** | [**HECARIM'S ONSLAUGHT OF SHADOWS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01SI042T2_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  |  |
| **01SI043** | [**HAPLESS ARISTOCRAT**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01SI043_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** | **1** | **1** | **COMMON** |
| **01SI044** | [**SPECTRAL MATRON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01SI044_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **8** | **6** | **6** | **EPIC** |
| **01SI045** | [**ABSORB SOUL**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01SI045_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **01SI046** | [**MIST'S CALL**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01SI046_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **01SI047** | [**FADING MEMORIES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01SI047_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **0** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **01SI048** | [**CURSED KEEPER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01SI048_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **1** | **1** | **COMMON** |
| **01SI048T1** | [**ESCAPED ABOMINATION**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01SI048T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **4** | **2** |  |
| **01SI049** | [**GLIMPSE BEYOND**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01SI049_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **01SI050** | [**BROOD AWAKENING**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01SI050_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **6** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **01SI051** | [**TORTURED PRODIGY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01SI051_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** | **4** | **4** | **RARE** |
| **01SI052** | [**THRESH**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01SI052_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** | **3** | **6** | **CHAMPION** |
| **01SI052T1** | [**THRESH**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01SI052T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** | **4** | **7** |  |
| **01SI052T2** | [**THRESH'S THE BOX**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01SI052T2_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** |  |  |  |
| **01SI053** | [**ELISE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01SI053_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**SPIDER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Spider_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **2** | **3** | **CHAMPION** |
| **01SI053T1** | [**ELISE'S CRAWLING SENSATION**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01SI053T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** |  |  |  |
| **01SI053T2** | [**SPIDER QUEEN ELISE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01SI053T2_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**SPIDER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Spider_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **4** | **3** |  |
| **01SI054** | [**GRASP OF THE UNDYING**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01SI054_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **01SI055** | [**SOULGORGER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01SI055_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **6** | **3** | **7** | **RARE** |
| **01SI056** | [**FRENZIED SKITTERER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01SI056_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**SPIDER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Spider_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **3** | **2** | **RARE** |
| **01SI057** | [**ANCIENT CROCOLITH**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01SI057_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **7** | **7** | **RARE** |
| **01SI058** | [**ETHEREAL REMITTER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/01SI058_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** | **4** | **3** | **RARE** |
| **02BW001** | [**YE BEEN WARNED**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02BW001_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **02BW002** | [**THE DREADWAY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02BW002_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **8** | **4** | **6** | **EPIC** |
| **02BW003** | [**STRONG-ARM**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02BW003_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **6** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **02BW004** | [**DREADWAY DECKHAND**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02BW004_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **2** | **2** | **COMMON** |
| **02BW005** | [**HIRED GUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02BW005_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **2** | **3** | **COMMON** |
| **02BW006** | [**MYSTIFYING MAGICIAN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02BW006_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **2** | **2** | **RARE** |
| **02BW007** | [**BRASH GAMBLER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02BW007_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **4** | **5** | **RARE** |
| **02BW008** | [**PETTY OFFICER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02BW008_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**YORDLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Yordle_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **3** | **1** | **RARE** |
| **02BW009** | [**POOL SHARK**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02BW009_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** | **1** | **2** | **COMMON** |
| **02BW010** | [**PLUNDER PORO**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02BW010_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**PORO**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Poro_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** | **1** | **1** | **COMMON** |
| **02BW011** | [**YORDLE GRIFTER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02BW011_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**YORDLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Yordle_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **3** | **3** | **RARE** |
| **02BW012** | [**MORE POWDER!**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02BW012_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **02BW013** | [**PROWLING CUTTHROAT**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02BW013_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** | **1** | **1** | **COMMON** |
| **02BW014** | [**CORAL CREATURES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02BW014_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **1** | **3** | **RARE** |
| **02BW015** | [**THE SYREN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02BW015_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **7** | **3** | **7** | **EPIC** |
| **02BW016** | [**SLOTBOT**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02BW016_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **1** | **4** | **RARE** |
| **02BW017** | [**CITRUS COURIER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02BW017_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **6** | **4** | **5** | **RARE** |
| **02BW018** | [**PARRRLEY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02BW018_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **02BW019** | [**BUBBLE BEAR**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02BW019_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **0** | **6** | **COMMON** |
| **02BW020** | [**WARNING SHOT**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02BW020_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **0** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **02BW021** | [**RAZORSCALE HUNTER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02BW021_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** | **4** | **4** | **RARE** |
| **02BW022** | [**MISS FORTUNE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02BW022_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **3** | **3** | **CHAMPION** |
| **02BW022T1** | [**LOVE TAP**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02BW022T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **ABILITY** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **0** |  |  |  |
| **02BW022T2** | [**MISS FORTUNE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02BW022T2_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **4** | **4** |  |
| **02BW022T3** | [**MISS FORTUNE'S MAKE IT RAIN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02BW022T3_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  |  |
| **02BW022T4** | [**BULLET TIME**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02BW022T4_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **ABILITY** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **0** |  |  |  |
| **02BW023** | [**LURE OF THE DEPTHS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02BW023_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **02BW024** | [**DOUBLE TROUBLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02BW024_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **02BW025** | [**CHUM THE WATERS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02BW025_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **02BW026** | [**TWISTED FATE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02BW026_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **2** | **2** | **CHAMPION** |
| **02BW026T1** | [**TWISTED FATE'S PICK A CARD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02BW026T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  |  |
| **02BW026T2** | [**BLUE CARD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02BW026T2_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **ABILITY** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **0** |  |  |  |
| **02BW026T3** | [**TWISTED FATE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02BW026T3_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **3** | **3** |  |
| **02BW026T4** | [**RED CARD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02BW026T4_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **ABILITY** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **0** |  |  |  |
| **02BW026T5** | [**GOLD CARD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02BW026T5_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **ABILITY** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **0** |  |  |  |
| **02BW027** | [**HUNTING FLEET**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02BW027_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **6** | **6** | **COMMON** |
| **02BW028** | [**RIPTIDE REX**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02BW028_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **8** | **6** | **4** | **EPIC** |
| **02BW028T1** | [**CANNON BARRAGE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02BW028T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **ABILITY** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **0** |  |  |  |
| **02BW029** | [**SALVAGE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02BW029_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **02BW030** | [**SHIPWRECK HOARDER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02BW030_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**SEA MONSTER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Sea_Monster_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **7** | **7** | **5** | **EPIC** |
| **02BW030T1** | [**TREASURE TROVE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02BW030T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** | [**TREASURE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Treasure_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** |  |  |  |
| **02BW030T2** | [**KEELBREAKER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02BW030T2_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** | [**TREASURE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Treasure_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** |  |  |  |
| **02BW030T3** | [**PLATEWYRM EGG**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02BW030T3_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** | [**TREASURE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Treasure_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** |  |  |  |
| **02BW030T4** | [**VICIOUS PLATEWYRM**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02BW030T4_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**SEA MONSTER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Sea_Monster_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** | **5** | **5** |  |
| **02BW031** | [**DOUBLE UP**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02BW031_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **02BW032** | [**GANGPLANK**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02BW032_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** | **5** | **4** | **CHAMPION** |
| **02BW032T1** | [**POWDER KEG**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02BW032T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **0** | **0** | **1** |  |
| **02BW032T2** | [**GANGPLANK'S PARRRLEY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02BW032T2_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** |  |  |  |
| **02BW032T3** | [**GANGPLANK**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02BW032T3_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** | **6** | **5** |  |
| **02BW032T4** | [**POWDERFUL EXPLOSION**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02BW032T4_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **ABILITY** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **0** |  |  |  |
| **02BW033** | [**BLACK MARKET MERCHANT**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02BW033_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **2** | **2** | **RARE** |
| **02BW034** | [**MONKEY IDOL**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02BW034_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **0** | **5** | **RARE** |
| **02BW034T1** | [**POWDER MONKEY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02BW034T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** | **2** | **1** |  |
| **02BW035** | [**SHERIFF LARIETTE ROSE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02BW035_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **6** | **6** | **5** | **EPIC** |
| **02BW036** | [**GOLDEN NARWHAL**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02BW036_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **2** | **3** | **COMMON** |
| **02BW037** | [**ABYSSAL EYE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02BW037_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**SEA MONSTER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Sea_Monster_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** | **3** | **3** | **RARE** |
| **02BW038** | [**ZAP SPRAYFIN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02BW038_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **2** | **2** | **EPIC** |
| **02BW039** | [**JAULL HUNTERS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02BW039_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **4** | **1** | **RARE** |
| **02BW040** | [**SHELLSHOCKER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02BW040_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** | **2** | **1** | **COMMON** |
| **02BW041** | [**THE BEAST BELOW**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02BW041_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**SEA MONSTER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Sea_Monster_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **4** | **4** | **COMMON** |
| **02BW042** | [**MIND MELD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02BW042_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **7** |  |  | **EPIC** |
| **02BW043** | [**PICK A CARD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02BW043_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **02BW044** | [**JETTISON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02BW044_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **02BW045** | [**MAKE IT RAIN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02BW045_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **02BW046** | [**FIZZ**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02BW046_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**YORDLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Yordle_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra))[**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** | **2** | **1** | **CHAMPION** |
| **02BW046T1** | [**FIZZ'S PLAYFUL TRICKSTER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02BW046T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** |  |  |  |
| **02BW046T2** | [**LONGTOOTH**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02BW046T2_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **5** | **2** |  |
| **02BW046T3** | [**FIZZ**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02BW046T3_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**YORDLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Yordle_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra))[**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** | **3** | **2** |  |
| **02BW047** | [**DREG DREDGERS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02BW047_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** | **2** | **1** | **COMMON** |
| **02BW048** | [**JAILBREAK**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02BW048_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **02BW049** | [**PILFERED GOODS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02BW049_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **02BW050** | [**SMOOTH SOLOIST**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02BW050_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **7** | **3** | **4** | **RARE** |
| **02BW051** | [**PLAYFUL TRICKSTER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02BW051_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **02BW053** | [**NAUTILUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02BW053_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **7** | **0** | **12** | **CHAMPION** |
| **02BW053T1** | [**NAUTILUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02BW053T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **7** | **13** | **13** |  |
| **02BW053T2** | [**NAUTILUS' RIPTIDE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02BW053T2_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** |  |  |  |
| **02BW054** | [**RIPTIDE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02BW054_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **02BW055** | [**JAGGED TASKMASTER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02BW055_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **3** | **2** | **EPIC** |
| **02BW056** | [**DEVOURER OF THE DEPTHS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02BW056_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**SEA MONSTER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Sea_Monster_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **6** | **4** | **4** | **EPIC** |
| **02BW056T1** | [**DEVOUR**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02BW056T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **ABILITY** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **0** |  |  |  |
| **02BW057** | [**SLIPPERY WAVERIDER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02BW057_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** | **4** | **4** | **COMMON** |
| **02BW058** | [**JAGGED BUTCHER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02BW058_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** | **2** | **2** | **COMMON** |
| **02BW059** | [**SCRAPSHOT**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02BW059_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **7** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **02BW060** | [**CRACKSHOT CORSAIR**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02BW060_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**YORDLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Yordle_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** | **1** | **2** | **COMMON** |
| **02BW060T1** | [**CRACKSHOT**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02BW060T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **ABILITY** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **0** |  |  |  |
| **02BW061** | [**POCKET ACES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02BW061_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **02BW062** | [**ISLAND NAVIGATOR**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02BW062_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **2** | **4** | **RARE** |
| **02BW063** | [**SLEIGHT OF HAND**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02BW063_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **02DE001** | [**CONCERTED STRIKE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02DE001_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **02DE002** | [**BLINDING ASSAULT**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02DE002_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **02DE003** | [**LOYAL BADGERBEAR**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02DE003_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **3** | **4** | **COMMON** |
| **02DE004** | [**GREENFANG WARDEN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02DE004_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**ELITE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Elite_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **2** | **2** | **COMMON** |
| **02DE005** | [**UNYIELDING SPIRIT**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02DE005_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **8** |  |  | **EPIC** |
| **02DE006** | [**QUINN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02DE006_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** | **3** | **5** | **CHAMPION** |
| **02DE006T1** | [**QUINN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02DE006T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** | **4** | **6** |  |
| **02DE006T2** | [**VALOR**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02DE006T2_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **2** | **1** |  |
| **02DE006T3** | [**QUINN'S BLINDING ASSAULT**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02DE006T3_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  |  |
| **02DE007** | [**RANGER'S RESOLVE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02DE007_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **02DE008** | [**GREATHORN COMPANION**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02DE008_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** | **5** | **5** | **COMMON** |
| **02DE009** | [**GRIZZLED RANGER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02DE009_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**YORDLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Yordle_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **3** | **1** | **RARE** |
| **02DE010** | [**GENEVIEVE ELMHEART**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02DE010_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **6** | **5** | **4** | **EPIC** |
| **02FR001** | [**EMBER MAIDEN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02FR001_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **3** | **2** | **RARE** |
| **02FR002** | [**SEJUANI**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02FR002_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **6** | **5** | **6** | **CHAMPION** |
| **02FR002T1** | [**SEJUANI'S FURY OF THE NORTH**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02FR002T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** |  |  |  |
| **02FR002T3** | [**SEJUANI**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02FR002T3_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **6** | **6** | **7** |  |
| **02FR003** | [**AURORA POREALIS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02FR003_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **6** |  |  | **EPIC** |
| **02FR004** | [**CAUGHT IN THE COLD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02FR004_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **02FR005** | [**URSINE SPIRITWALKER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02FR005_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** | **4** | **6** | **COMMON** |
| **02FR005T1** | [**STORMCLAW URSINE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02FR005T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** | **6** | **6** |  |
| **02FR006** | [**RUTHLESS RAIDER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02FR006_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **3** | **1** | **COMMON** |
| **02FR007** | [**FURY OF THE NORTH**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02FR007_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **02FR008** | [**THE TUSKRAIDER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02FR008_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **8** | **7** | **7** | **EPIC** |
| **02FR009** | [**WOLFRIDER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02FR009_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **4** | **3** | **COMMON** |
| **02FR010** | [**SHARED SPOILS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02FR010_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **02IO001** | [**CLAWS OF THE DRAGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02IO001_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **3** | **2** | **COMMON** |
| **02IO002** | [**SCALES OF THE DRAGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02IO002_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **4** | **2** | **COMMON** |
| **02IO002T1** | [**DRAGON'S PROTECTION**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02IO002T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  |  |
| **02IO003** | [**EYE OF THE DRAGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02IO003_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **1** | **3** | **EPIC** |
| **02IO003T1** | [**DRAGONLING**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02IO003T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**DRAGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Dragon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **2** | **1** |  |
| **02IO004** | [**HORNS OF THE DRAGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02IO004_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **6** | **4** | **6** | **COMMON** |
| **02IO005** | [**CONCUSSIVE PALM**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02IO005_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **02IO005T1** | [**TAIL OF THE DRAGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02IO005T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **3** | **2** |  |
| **02IO006** | [**LEE SIN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02IO006_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** | **3** | **5** | **CHAMPION** |
| **02IO006T1** | [**LEE SIN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02IO006T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** | **4** | **6** |  |
| **02IO006T3** | [**DRAGON'S RAGE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02IO006T3_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **ABILITY** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **0** |  |  |  |
| **02IO007** | [**DRAGON'S RAGE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02IO007_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **7** |  |  | **EPIC** |
| **02IO008** | [**SONIC WAVE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02IO008_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **02IO008T1** | [**RESONATING STRIKE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02IO008T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** |  |  |  |
| **02IO009** | [**DEEP MEDITATION**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02IO009_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **02IO010** | [**RETREAT**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02IO010_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **02IO010T1** | [**RETURN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02IO010T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** |  |  |  |
| **02IO011** | [**LEE SIN'S SONIC WAVE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02IO011_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  |  |
| **02NX001** | [**THE LEVIATHAN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02NX001_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **8** | **5** | **8** | **EPIC** |
| **02NX002** | [**AUROK GLINTHORN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02NX002_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **6** | **6** | **6** | **EPIC** |
| **02NX003** | [**NOXIAN FERVOR**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02NX003_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **02NX004** | [**IMPERIAL DEMOLITIONIST**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02NX004_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **2** | **3** | **COMMON** |
| **02NX004T1** | [**BLACK POWDER GRENADE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02NX004T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **ABILITY** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **0** |  |  |  |
| **02NX005** | [**IRON BALLISTA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02NX005_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **4** | **3** | **COMMON** |
| **02NX006** | [**CITYBREAKER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02NX006_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **1** | **5** | **RARE** |
| **02NX007** | [**SWAIN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02NX007_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** | **3** | **6** | **CHAMPION** |
| **02NX007T1** | [**SWAIN'S RAVENOUS FLOCK**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02NX007T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** |  |  |  |
| **02NX007T2** | [**SWAIN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02NX007T2_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** | **4** | **7** |  |
| **02NX008** | [**DEATH'S HAND**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02NX008_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **02NX009** | [**RAVENOUS FLOCK**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02NX009_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **02NX010** | [**ARMORED TUSKRIDER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02NX010_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **6** | **6** | **5** | **RARE** |
| **02PZ001** | [**SUBPURRSIBLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02PZ001_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** | **1** | **5** | **EPIC** |
| **02PZ002** | [**CHIEF MECHANIST ZEVI**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02PZ002_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **6** | **5** | **6** | **EPIC** |
| **02PZ003** | [**SUIT UP!**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02PZ003_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **02PZ004** | [**VAULT BREAKER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02PZ004_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **02PZ005** | [**PATROL WARDENS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02PZ005_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **4** | **3** | **COMMON** |
| **02PZ006** | [**GOTCHA!**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02PZ006_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **02PZ007** | [**INSIGHTFUL INVESTIGATOR**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02PZ007_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **3** | **3** | **RARE** |
| **02PZ008** | [**VI**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02PZ008_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** | **2** | **4** | **CHAMPION** |
| **02PZ008T1** | [**VI'S VAULT BREAKER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02PZ008T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  |  |
| **02PZ008T2** | [**VI**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02PZ008T2_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** | **10** | **5** |  |
| **02PZ009** | [**TRAIL OF EVIDENCE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02PZ009_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **02PZ010** | [**VETERAN INVESTIGATOR**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02PZ010_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**YORDLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Yordle_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **3** | **2** | **COMMON** |
| **02SI001** | [**NEVERGLADE COLLECTOR**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02SI001_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** | **2** | **4** | **RARE** |
| **02SI002** | [**OVERGROWN SNAPVINE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02SI002_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **7** | **5** | **3** | **EPIC** |
| **02SI003** | [**TERROR OF THE TIDES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02SI003_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**SEA MONSTER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Sea_Monster_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **8** | **6** | **5** | **EPIC** |
| **02SI004** | [**BLIGHTED CARETAKER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02SI004_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **1** | **1** | **RARE** |
| **02SI005** | [**SAP MAGIC**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02SI005_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **02SI006** | [**BARKBEAST**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02SI006_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** | **1** | **1** | **COMMON** |
| **02SI007** | [**THORNY TOAD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02SI007_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **1** | **4** | **COMMON** |
| **02SI008** | [**MAOKAI**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02SI008_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **1** | **4** | **CHAMPION** |
| **02SI008T1** | [**MAOKAI'S SAP MAGIC**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02SI008T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  |  |
| **02SI008T2** | [**MAOKAI**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02SI008T2_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **2** | **5** |  |
| **02SI008T3** | [**SAPLING**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02SI008T3_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** | **2** | **1** |  |
| **02SI009** | [**SAPLING TOSS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02SI009_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **02SI010** | [**DEADBLOOM WANDERER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/02SI010_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **3** | **2** | **COMMON** |
| **03BW001** | [**THE SLAUGHTER DOCKS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03BW001_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **LANDMARK** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  | **EPIC** |
| **03BW002** | [**LOUNGING LIZARD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03BW002_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **3** | **5** | **COMMON** |
| **03BW003** | [**WISE FRY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03BW003_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **6** | **3** | **8** | **RARE** |
| **03BW004** | [**TAHM KENCH**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03BW004_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **2** | **6** | **CHAMPION** |
| **03BW004T2** | [**AN ACQUIRED TASTE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03BW004T2_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  |  |
| **03BW004T3** | [**TAHM KENCH**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03BW004T3_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **3** | **7** |  |
| **03BW004T4** | [**TAHM KENCH'S BAYOU BRUNCH**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03BW004T4_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  |  |
| **03BW005** | [**SUNK COST**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03BW005_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **8** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **03BW006** | [**JACK, THE WINNER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03BW006_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** | **5** | **5** | **EPIC** |
| **03BW006T1** | [**SLEEP WITH THE FISHES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03BW006T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **0** |  |  |  |
| **03BW007** | [**BOXTOPUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03BW007_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **3** | **4** | **COMMON** |
| **03BW008** | [**FORTUNE CROAKER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03BW008_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **2** | **3** | **COMMON** |
| **03BW009** | [**SHAKEDOWN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03BW009_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **03BW010** | [**BAYOU BRUNCH**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03BW010_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **03BW014** | [**MONKEY BUSINESS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03BW014_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **03BW015** | [**CRUSTY CODGER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03BW015_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** | **2** | **4** | **COMMON** |
| **03BW016** | [**BOOMSHIP**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03BW016_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **03BW017** | [**WIGGLY BURBLEFISH**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03BW017_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **6** | **2** | **1** | **EPIC** |
| **03BW020** | [**POWDER PANDEMONIUM**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03BW020_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** |  |  | **EPIC** |
| **03DE001** | [**CONFRONT**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03DE001_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **03DE002** | [**STRAFING STRIKE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03DE002_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **03DE003** | [**DRAGONGUARD LOOKOUT**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03DE003_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **6** | **3** | **5** | **RARE** |
| **03DE004** | [**CAPTAIN ARRIKA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03DE004_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**ELITE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Elite_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **8** | **6** | **6** | **RARE** |
| **03DE004T1** | [**CLAIM**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03DE004T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **ABILITY** |  | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **0** |  |  |  |
| **03DE005** | [**EGGHEAD RESEARCHER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03DE005_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **1** | **3** | **COMMON** |
| **03DE006** | [**SCREECHING DRAGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03DE006_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**DRAGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Dragon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** | **4** | **5** | **COMMON** |
| **03DE007** | [**KADREGRIN THE INFERNAL**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03DE007_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**DRAGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Dragon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **9** | **9** | **6** | **EPIC** |
| **03DE008** | [**DRAGONGUARD LIEUTENANT**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03DE008_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **3** | **2** | **COMMON** |
| **03DE010** | [**THE GRAND PLAZA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03DE010_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **LANDMARK** |  | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  | **EPIC** |
| **03DE011** | [**SHYVANA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03DE011_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**DRAGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Dragon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **3** | **4** | **CHAMPION** |
| **03DE011T1** | [**DRAGON SHYVANA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03DE011T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**DRAGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Dragon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **4** | **5** |  |
| **03DE011T2** | [**SHYVANA'S CONFRONT**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03DE011T2_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  |  |
| **03DE012** | [**FOR THE FALLEN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03DE012_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **8** |  |  | **EPIC** |
| **03DE013** | [**STALKING BROODMOTHER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03DE013_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**DRAGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Dragon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **7** | **6** | **6** | **COMMON** |
| **03DE014** | [**SHARPSIGHT**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03DE014_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **03DE015** | [**STONY SUPPRESSOR**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03DE015_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **1** | **3** | **RARE** |
| **03DE025** | [**MOLTEN BREATH**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03DE025_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **6** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **03FR002** | [**TROLL CHANT**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03FR002_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **03FR003** | [**IT THAT STARES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03FR003_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **8** | **8** | **8** | **RARE** |
| **03FR004** | [**REVITALIZING ROAR**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03FR004_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **7** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **03FR005** | [**TROLL RAVAGER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03FR005_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **3** | **5** | **COMMON** |
| **03FR006** | [**TRUNDLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03FR006_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** | **4** | **6** | **CHAMPION** |
| **03FR006T1** | [**ICE PILLAR**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03FR006T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **8** | **0** | **6** |  |
| **03FR006T2** | [**TRUNDLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03FR006T2_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** | **5** | **7** |  |
| **03FR006T3** | [**TRUNDLE'S ICEQUAKE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03FR006T3_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **8** |  |  |  |
| **03FR007** | [**TROLL SCAVENGER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03FR007_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **1** | **3** | **COMMON** |
| **03FR008** | [**ICEQUAKE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03FR008_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **8** |  |  | **EPIC** |
| **03FR009** | [**THE HOWLING ABYSS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03FR009_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **LANDMARK** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **6** |  |  | **EPIC** |
| **03FR010** | [**FACES OF THE OLD ONES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03FR010_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **0** | **3** | **COMMON** |
| **03FR011** | [**UZGAR THE ANCIENT**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03FR011_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **8** | **7** | **7** | **RARE** |
| **03FR017** | [**AUGUR OF THE OLD ONES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03FR017_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **6** | **5** | **5** | **RARE** |
| **03FR018** | [**CALL THE WILD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03FR018_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **03FR019** | [**VOICES OF THE OLD ONES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03FR019_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **8** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **03FR020** | [**THE SCARGROUNDS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03FR020_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **LANDMARK** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  | **EPIC** |
| **03FR022** | [**FEEL THE RUSH**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03FR022_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **12** |  |  | **EPIC** |
| **03FR025** | [**TROLL GIFTS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03FR025_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **03IO001** | [**FLOWER CHILD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03IO001_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**FAE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Fae_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** | **1** | **2** | **COMMON** |
| **03IO002** | [**LULU**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03IO002_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**YORDLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Yordle_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra))[**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **3** | **3** | **CHAMPION** |
| **03IO002T1** | [**LULU**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03IO002T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**YORDLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Yordle_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra))[**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **4** | **4** |  |
| **03IO002T4** | [**HELP, PIX!**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03IO002T4_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** |  |  |  |
| **03IO002T5** | [**LULU'S WHIMSY!**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03IO002T5_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** |  |  |  |
| **03IO003** | [**FAE GUIDE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03IO003_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**YORDLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Yordle_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **3** | **4** | **RARE** |
| **03IO005** | [**HOMECOMING**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03IO005_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **03IO006** | [**MONASTERY OF HIRANA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03IO006_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **LANDMARK** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  | **EPIC** |
| **03IO007** | [**TREVOR SNOOZEBOTTOM**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03IO007_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**YORDLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Yordle_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **0** | **3** | **EPIC** |
| **03IO007T1** | [**MUMBLESPRITE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03IO007T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**FAE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Fae_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **0** | **1** |  |
| **03IO008** | [**WHIMSY!**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03IO008_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **03IO008T1** | [**SQUIRREL**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03IO008T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**FAE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Fae_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** | **1** | **1** |  |
| **03IO009** | [**TASTY FAEFOLK**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03IO009_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**FAE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Fae_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **4** | **2** | **COMMON** |
| **03IO010** | [**YOUNG WITCH**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03IO010_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **1** | **1** | **COMMON** |
| **03IO011** | [**SWOLE SQUIRREL**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03IO011_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**FAE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Fae_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **3** | **4** | **RARE** |
| **03IO016** | [**SANCTUARY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03IO016_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** |  |  |  |
| **03IO017** | [**PIX!**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03IO017_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**FAE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Fae_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** | **0** | **2** | **COMMON** |
| **03IO018** | [**FUZZY CARETAKER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03IO018_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**YORDLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Yordle_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **3** | **2** | **RARE** |
| **03IO019** | [**SINGULAR WILL**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03IO019_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **10** |  |  | **EPIC** |
| **03IO020** | [**NOPEIFY!**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03IO020_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **03IO022** | [**GO GET IT**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03IO022_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** |  |  | **EPIC** |
| **03IO025** | [**FLURRY OF FISTS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03IO025_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **03MT001** | [**SNEAKY ZEEBLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT001_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** | **3** | **3** | **COMMON** |
| **03MT001T1** | [**MISCHIEF**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT001T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **ABILITY** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **0** |  |  |  |
| **03MT002** | [**THE SKIES DESCEND**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT002_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **15** |  |  | **EPIC** |
| **03MT003** | [**DRAGON'S CLUTCH**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT003_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **03MT004** | [**MOONSILVER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT004_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** | [**CELESTIAL**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Celestial_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **0** |  |  |  |
| **03MT005** | [**DIVERGENT PATHS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT005_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **03MT006** | [**INVIOLUS VOX**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT006_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**DRAGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Dragon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **6** | **5** | **6** | **EPIC** |
| **03MT007** | [**FLEDGLING STELLACORN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT007_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **1** | **2** | **COMMON** |
| **03MT008** | [**WISH**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT008_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **03MT009** | [**ZOE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT009_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** | **1** | **1** | **CHAMPION** |
| **03MT009T1** | [**ZOE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT009T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** | **2** | **2** |  |
| **03MT009T2** | [**ZOE'S SLEEPY TROUBLE BUBBLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT009T2_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  |  |
| **03MT010** | [**THE DESTROYER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT010_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**CELESTIAL**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Celestial_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **7** | **7** | **7** |  |
| **03MT011** | [**CRESCENT STRIKE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT011_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** | [**CELESTIAL**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Celestial_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  |  |
| **03MT012** | [**ARBITER OF THE PEAK**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT012_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **10** | **6** | **6** | **EPIC** |
| **03MT013** | [**MOONLIGHT AFFLICTION**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT013_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **03MT014** | [**HERALD OF DRAGONS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT014_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **1** | **2** | **RARE** |
| **03MT015** | [**BEHOLD THE INFINITE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT015_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **03MT016** | [**STARTLED STOMPER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT016_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **2** | **3** | **COMMON** |
| **03MT017** | [**MESSENGER'S SIGIL**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT017_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **03MT018** | [**THE MESSENGER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT018_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**CELESTIAL**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Celestial_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **2** | **2** |  |
| **03MT019** | [**BASTION**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT019_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **03MT020** | [**RESPLENDENT STELLACORN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT020_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** | **4** | **5** | **COMMON** |
| **03MT021** | [**THE INFINITE MINDSPLITTER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT021_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**DRAGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Dragon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **8** | **8** | **8** | **EPIC** |
| **03MT022** | [**THE GREAT BEYOND**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT022_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**CELESTIAL**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Celestial_(Legends_of_Runeterra))**,**[**DRAGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Dragon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **9** | **8** | **8** |  |
| **03MT023** | [**SUNBURST**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT023_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **6** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **03MT024** | [**SUPERNOVA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT024_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** | [**CELESTIAL**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Celestial_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **9** |  |  |  |
| **03MT025** | [**SHARDS OF THE MOUNTAIN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT025_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** |  |  | **EPIC** |
| **03MT026** | [**RAHVUN, DAYLIGHT'S SPEAR**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT026_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** | **5** | **6** | **RARE** |
| **03MT027** | [**ZENITH BLADE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT027_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **03MT028** | [**SOLARI SHIELDBEARER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT028_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **3** | **2** | **COMMON** |
| **03MT029** | [**STAR SHEPHERD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT029_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** | **0** | **3** | **RARE** |
| **03MT030** | [**STARGAZER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT030_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **3** | **4** | **RARE** |
| **03MT032** | [**WRITTEN IN STARS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT032_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** | [**CELESTIAL**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Celestial_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** |  |  |  |
| **03MT033** | [**GRANDFATHER RUMUL**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT033_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **8** | **8** | **4** | **RARE** |
| **03MT034** | [**THE SERPENT**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT034_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**CELESTIAL**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Celestial_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **0** | **1** | **1** |  |
| **03MT035** | [**PALE CASCADE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT035_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **03MT036** | [**BLESSING OF TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT036_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **03MT037** | [**THE SCOURGE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT037_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**CELESTIAL**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Celestial_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **10** | **10** | **10** |  |
| **03MT038** | [**WHITEFLAME PROTECTOR**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT038_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**DRAGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Dragon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **4** | **4** | **COMMON** |
| **03MT039** | [**POROFLY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT039_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**PORO**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Poro_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** | **1** | **1** | **COMMON** |
| **03MT040** | [**SPARKLEFLY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT040_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **1** | **2** | **COMMON** |
| **03MT041** | [**MENTOR OF THE STONES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT041_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**YORDLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Yordle_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **1** | **1** | **EPIC** |
| **03MT042** | [**SPELL THIEF**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT042_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **03MT043** | [**FALLING COMET**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT043_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** | [**CELESTIAL**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Celestial_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **6** |  |  |  |
| **03MT044** | [**SUN GUARDIAN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT044_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **6** | **4** | **4** | **EPIC** |
| **03MT045** | [**ASTRAL PROTECTION**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT045_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **03MT047** | [**CYGNUS THE MOONSTALKER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT047_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **6** | **5** | **3** | **EPIC** |
| **03MT048** | [**GIFT GIVER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT048_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** | **1** | **2** | **COMMON** |
| **03MT049** | [**METEOR SHOWER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT049_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** | [**CELESTIAL**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Celestial_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** |  |  |  |
| **03MT050** | [**THE WARRIOR**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT050_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**CELESTIAL**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Celestial_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** | **5** | **5** |  |
| **03MT051** | [**GUIDING TOUCH**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT051_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **03MT052** | [**STAR SPRING**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT052_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **LANDMARK** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  | **EPIC** |
| **03MT053** | [**MOONGLOW**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT053_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** | [**CELESTIAL**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Celestial_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  |  |
| **03MT054** | [**LEONA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT054_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **3** | **5** | **CHAMPION** |
| **03MT054T1** | [**LEONA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT054T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **4** | **6** |  |
| **03MT054T2** | [**LEONA'S MORNING LIGHT**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT054T2_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** |  |  |  |
| **03MT054T3** | [**SOLAR FLARE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT054T3_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **ABILITY** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **0** |  |  |  |
| **03MT055** | [**SORAKA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT055_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **1** | **6** | **CHAMPION** |
| **03MT055T1** | [**SORAKA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT055T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **2** | **7** |  |
| **03MT055T2** | [**SORAKA'S WISH**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT055T2_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  |  |
| **03MT056** | [**DIANA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT056_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **2** | **2** | **CHAMPION** |
| **03MT056T1** | [**DIANA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT056T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **3** | **3** |  |
| **03MT056T2** | [**DIANA'S PALE CASCADE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT056T2_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  |  |
| **03MT057** | [**SOLARI SUNFORGER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT057_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **5** | **4** | **COMMON** |
| **03MT058** | [**TARIC**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT058_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **3** | **5** | **CHAMPION** |
| **03MT058T1** | [**TARIC**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT058T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **4** | **6** |  |
| **03MT058T2** | [**TARIC'S BLESSING OF TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT058T2_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** |  |  |  |
| **03MT059** | [**THE GOLDEN SISTER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT059_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**CELESTIAL**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Celestial_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **6** | **4** | **3** |  |
| **03MT059T1** | [**THE SILVER SISTER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT059T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**CELESTIAL**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Celestial_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **6** | **4** | **3** |  |
| **03MT060** | [**BROADBACKED PROTECTOR**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT060_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **2** | **7** | **EPIC** |
| **03MT062** | [**GIDDY SPARKLEOLOGIST**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT062_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **2** | **2** | **RARE** |
| **03MT063** | [**MOONDREAMER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT063_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** | **3** | **6** | **COMMON** |
| **03MT064** | [**TARGON'S PEAK**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT064_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **LANDMARK** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** |  |  | **EPIC** |
| **03MT065** | [**EQUINOX**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT065_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** | [**CELESTIAL**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Celestial_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** |  |  |  |
| **03MT066** | [**COSMIC INSPIRATION**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT066_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** | [**CELESTIAL**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Celestial_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **7** |  |  |  |
| **03MT067** | [**CRYSTAL IBEX**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT067_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **4** | **4** | **COMMON** |
| **03MT070** | [**THE TRAVELER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT070_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**CELESTIAL**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Celestial_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **3** | **4** |  |
| **03MT071** | [**TYARI THE TRAVELER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT071_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **2** | **2** | **COMMON** |
| **03MT072** | [**FUSED FIREBRAND**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT072_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**DRAGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Dragon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** | **5** | **5** | **COMMON** |
| **03MT073** | [**LUNARI DUSKBRINGER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT073_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** | **2** | **1** | **COMMON** |
| **03MT073T1** | [**DUSKPETAL DUST**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT073T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** |  |  |  |
| **03MT074** | [**SLEEPY TROUBLE BUBBLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT074_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **03MT075** | [**LUNARI PRIESTESS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT075_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **2** | **2** | **RARE** |
| **03MT076** | [**MOUNTAIN SCRYER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT076_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **2** | **3** | **RARE** |
| **03MT077** | [**LIVING LEGENDS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT077_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** | [**CELESTIAL**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Celestial_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **10** |  |  |  |
| **03MT078** | [**COSMIC RAYS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT078_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** | [**CELESTIAL**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Celestial_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **8** |  |  |  |
| **03MT079** | [**STARRY SCAMP**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT079_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **2** | **2** | **COMMON** |
| **03MT080** | [**SPRING GUARDIAN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT080_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **3** | **3** | **COMMON** |
| **03MT080T1** | [**SPRING GIFTS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT080T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** |  |  |  |
| **03MT081** | [**MOUNTAIN SOJOURNERS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT081_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** | **4** | **5** | **EPIC** |
| **03MT082** | [**MORNING LIGHT**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT082_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **03MT083** | [**THE IMMORTAL FIRE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT083_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**CELESTIAL**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Celestial_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **8** | **6** | **5** |  |
| **03MT084** | [**STARSHAPING**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT084_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **03MT085** | [**HUSH**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT085_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **03MT086** | [**SPACEY SKETCHER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT086_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** | **1** | **1** | **RARE** |
| **03MT087** | [**AURELION SOL**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT087_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**DRAGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Dragon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **10** | **10** | **10** | **CHAMPION** |
| **03MT087T1** | [**AURELION SOL**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT087T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**DRAGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Dragon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **10** | **11** | **11** |  |
| **03MT087T2** | [**AURELION SOL'S THE SKIES DESCEND**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT087T2_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **15** |  |  |  |
| **03MT088** | [**SOLARI SOLDIER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT088_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** | **2** | **2** | **COMMON** |
| **03MT089** | [**CRESCENT GUARDIAN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT089_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **3** | **3** | **RARE** |
| **03MT090** | [**THE CHARGER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT090_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**CELESTIAL**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Celestial_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** | **4** | **1** |  |
| **03MT091** | [**SUPERCOOL STARCHART**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT091_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **03MT092** | [**MOUNTAIN GOAT**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT092_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **3** | **2** | **RARE** |
| **03MT092T1** | [**GEM**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT092T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** |  |  |  |
| **03MT093** | [**PADDLE STAR**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT093_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **03MT094** | [**LUNARI SHADESTALKER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT094_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **2** | **3** | **COMMON** |
| **03MT095** | [**THE TRICKSTER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT095_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**CELESTIAL**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Celestial_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **3** | **3** |  |
| **03MT096** | [**SOLARI PRIESTESS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT096_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **2** | **2** | **RARE** |
| **03MT098** | [**SUNBLESSED VIGOR**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT098_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **03MT100** | [**ECLIPSE DRAGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT100_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**DRAGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Dragon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **7** | **7** | **7** | **RARE** |
| **03MT110** | [**OUT OF THE WAY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT110_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** |  |  | **EPIC** |
| **03MT214** | [**THE FLIGHT**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT214_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** | **2** | **1** | **RARE** |
| **03MT215** | [**GIFTS FROM BEYOND**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT215_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **03MT216** | [**THE SKY SHADOWS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT216_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **3** | **1** | **COMMON** |
| **03MT217** | [**APHELIOS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT217_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **3** | **3** | **CHAMPION** |
| **03MT217T8** | [**CALIBRUM**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT217T8_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** | [**MOON WEAPON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Moon_Weapon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  |  |
| **03MT217T9** | [**SEVERUM**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT217T9_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** | [**MOON WEAPON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Moon_Weapon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  |  |
| **03MT217T10** | [**CRESCENDUM**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT217T10_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** | [**MOON WEAPON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Moon_Weapon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  |  |
| **03MT217T11** | [**APHELIOS' GIFTS FROM BEYOND**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT217T11_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** |  |  |  |
| **03MT217T12** | [**GRAVITUM**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT217T12_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** | [**MOON WEAPON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Moon_Weapon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  |  |
| **03MT217T13** | [**APHELIOS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT217T13_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **4** | **4** |  |
| **03MT217T14** | [**INFERNUM**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT217T14_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** | [**MOON WEAPON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Moon_Weapon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  |  |
| **03MT218** | [**STARBONE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT218_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  | **EPIC** |
| **03MT219** | [**THE VEILED TEMPLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT219_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **LANDMARK** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **03MT220** | [**THE CLOVEN WAY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT220_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** | **5** | **4** | **RARE** |
| **03MT220T1** | [**SKY CHARGE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT220T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **ABILITY** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **0** |  |  |  |
| **03MT221** | [**THE FANGS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03MT221_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **2** | **2** | **EPIC** |
| **03NX001** | [**RUNEWEAVER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03NX001_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **3** | **1** | **COMMON** |
| **03NX002** | [**ARREL THE TRACKER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03NX002_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **6** | **2** | **5** | **EPIC** |
| **03NX003** | [**BLADE SQUIRE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03NX003_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** | **2** | **1** | **COMMON** |
| **03NX004** | [**NOXKRAYA ARENA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03NX004_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **LANDMARK** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** |  |  | **EPIC** |
| **03NX005** | [**BRUTAL HUNTER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03NX005_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **3** | **3** | **RARE** |
| **03NX006** | [**WEAPON HILT**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03NX006_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **03NX007** | [**RIVEN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03NX007_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **3** | **4** | **CHAMPION** |
| **03NX007T1** | [**RIVEN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03NX007T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **4** | **5** |  |
| **03NX007T3** | [**RIVEN'S WEAPON HILT**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03NX007T3_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **03NX008** | [**HEAVY BLADE FRAGMENT**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03NX008_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** |  |  |  |
| **03NX009** | [**WRATHFUL RIDER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03NX009_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** | **7** | **3** | **COMMON** |
| **03NX010** | [**KEEN BLADE FRAGMENT**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03NX010_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** |  |  |  |
| **03NX011** | [**BLADE OF THE EXILE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03NX011_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** |  |  |  |
| **03NX012** | [**GLINTING BLADE FRAGMENT**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03NX012_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** |  |  |  |
| **03NX013** | [**SCORCHED EARTH**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03NX013_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **03NX014** | [**SHARPENED RESOLVE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03NX014_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **03NX015** | [**SURVIVAL SKILLS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03NX015_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **03NX016** | [**GOUGE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03NX016_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **ABILITY** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **0** |  |  |  |
| **03NX017** | [**BASILISK BLOODSEEKER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03NX017_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **7** | **7** | **4** | **EPIC** |
| **03NX018** | [**APPREHEND**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03NX018_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **03NX019** | [**HUNT THE WEAK**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03NX019_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **03NX022** | [**WILD CLAWS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03NX022_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** |  |  | **EPIC** |
| **03PZ001** | [**THE UNIVERSITY OF PILTOVER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03PZ001_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **LANDMARK** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** |  |  | **EPIC** |
| **03PZ002** | [**NYANDROID**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03PZ002_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **1** | **3** | **RARE** |
| **03PZ003** | [**VIKTOR**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03PZ003_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **2** | **4** | **CHAMPION** |
| **03PZ003T1** | [**VIKTOR**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03PZ003T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **3** | **5** |  |
| **03PZ003T11** | [**HEX CORE UPGRADE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03PZ003T11_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **03PZ003T15** | [**VIKTOR'S DEATH RAY - MK 1**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03PZ003T15_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **03PZ004** | [**DEATH RAY - MK 1**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03PZ004_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **03PZ004T1** | [**DEATH RAY - MK 2**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03PZ004T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **03PZ004T2** | [**DEATH RAY - MK 3**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03PZ004T2_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **03PZ005** | [**BALLISTIC BOT**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03PZ005_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **1** | **3** | **COMMON** |
| **03PZ010** | [**MECHANIZED MIMIC**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03PZ010_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** | **3** | **4** | **EPIC** |
| **03PZ011** | [**AFTERSHOCK**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03PZ011_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **03PZ012** | [**ARMED GEARHEAD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03PZ012_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** | **1** | **1** | **COMMON** |
| **03PZ013** | [**ITERATIVE IMPROVEMENT**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03PZ013_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **03PZ014** | [**CALCULATED CREATIONS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03PZ014_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **03PZ016** | [**IGNITION**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03PZ016_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **03PZ017** | [**TRI-BEAM IMPROBULATOR**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03PZ017_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** |  |  | **EPIC** |
| **03PZ018** | [**PORO CANNON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03PZ018_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **0** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **03PZ019** | [**PATCHED POROBOT**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03PZ019_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**PORO**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Poro_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **2** | **3** | **RARE** |
| **03PZ020** | [**HEXCORE FOUNDRY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03PZ020_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **LANDMARK** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **03PZ022** | [**GIVE IT ALL**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03PZ022_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **8** |  |  | **EPIC** |
| **03PZ025** | [**STRESS TESTING**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03PZ025_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **03SI001** | [**EVERSHADE STALKER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03SI001_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **2** | **2** | **EPIC** |
| **03SI002** | [**UNSPEAKABLE HORROR**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03SI002_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **03SI003** | [**STYGIAN ONLOOKER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03SI003_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** | **2** | **1** | **COMMON** |
| **03SI004** | [**STALKING SHADOWS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03SI004_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **03SI005** | [**NOCTURNE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03SI005_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **5** | **3** | **CHAMPION** |
| **03SI005T1** | [**NOCTURNE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03SI005T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **6** | **4** |  |
| **03SI005T3** | [**NOCTURNE'S UNSPEAKABLE HORROR**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03SI005T3_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  |  |
| **03SI006** | [**DOOMBEAST**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03SI006_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **3** | **2** | **COMMON** |
| **03SI006T1** | [**TORMENT**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03SI006T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **ABILITY** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **0** |  |  |  |
| **03SI007** | [**SHROUD OF DARKNESS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03SI007_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **03SI008** | [**CRUMBLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03SI008_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **03SI009** | [**VAULTS OF HELIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03SI009_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **LANDMARK** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** |  |  | **EPIC** |
| **03SI010** | [**DUSKRIDER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03SI010_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** | **3** | **5** | **RARE** |
| **03SI012** | [**PASSAGE UNEARNED**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03SI012_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **03SI013** | [**RISEN MISTS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03SI013_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **03SI014** | [**ENCROACHING SHADOWS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03SI014_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** |  |  | **EPIC** |
| **03SI015** | [**PESKY SPECTER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03SI015_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **0** | **1** | **1** | **COMMON** |
| **03SI016** | [**GO HARD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03SI016_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** |  |  | **EPIC** |
| **03SI016T1** | [**PACK YOUR BAGS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03SI016T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** |  |  |  |
| **03SI018** | [**GLUTTONY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/03SI018_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **04BW001** | [**REDFIN HAMMERSNOUT**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04BW001_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**LURKER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Lurker_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **1** | **2** | **COMMON** |
| **04BW002** | [**BONE SKEWER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04BW002_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  | **EPIC** |
| **04BW003** | [**SNAPJAW SWARM**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04BW003_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**LURKER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Lurker_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **0** | **2** | **COMMON** |
| **04BW004** | [**BLOODBAIT**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04BW004_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **04BW005** | [**PYKE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04BW005_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**LURKER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Lurker_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **2** | **3** | **CHAMPION** |
| **04BW005T1** | [**PYKE'S BONE SKEWER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04BW005T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  |  |
| **04BW005T2** | [**PYKE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04BW005T2_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**LURKER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Lurker_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **3** | **4** |  |
| **04BW005T3** | [**DEATH FROM BELOW**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04BW005T3_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** |  |  |  |
| **04BW006** | [**THE LIST**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04BW006_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **0** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **04BW007** | [**JAULL-FISH**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04BW007_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**LURKER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Lurker_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **8** | **2** | **7** | **EPIC** |
| **04BW007T1** | [**FRENZIED FEAST**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04BW007T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **ABILITY** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **0** |  |  |  |
| **04BW008** | [**LOST RICHES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04BW008_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **04BW009** | [**RIPPER'S BAY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04BW009_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **LANDMARK** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **04BW010** | [**MONSTER HARPOON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04BW010_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **6** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **04BW011** | [**LOADED DICE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04BW011_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** |  |  | **EPIC** |
| **04BW013** | [**REAVER'S ROW**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04BW013_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **LANDMARK** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **04BW014** | [**LINE 'EM UP**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04BW014_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **04BW014T1** | [**KNOCK 'EM DOWN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04BW014T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** |  |  |  |
| **04BW015** | [**SHARKLING**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04BW015_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**LURKER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Lurker_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** | **1** | **2** | **COMMON** |
| **04BW016** | [**RUINED REX**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04BW016_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** | **4** | **4** | **RARE** |
| **04DE001** | [**HONORED LORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04DE001_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**ELITE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Elite_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **3** | **2** | **COMMON** |
| **04DE002** | [**GOLDEN AEGIS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04DE002_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **04DE003** | [**CATACLYSM**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04DE003_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **04DE004** | [**ARDENT TRACKER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04DE004_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**ELITE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Elite_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **6** | **3** | **5** | **RARE** |
| **04DE005** | [**CITHRIA, LADY OF CLOUDS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04DE005_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **10** | **10** | **10** | **EPIC** |
| **04DE006** | [**BATTLEFIELD PROWESS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04DE006_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **04DE007** | [**PENITENT SQUIRE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04DE007_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** | **2** | **2** | **COMMON** |
| **04DE007T1** | [**TATTERED BANNER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04DE007T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** |  |  |  |
| **04DE008** | [**JARVAN IV**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04DE008_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**ELITE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Elite_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **6** | **6** | **4** | **CHAMPION** |
| **04DE008T1** | [**JARVAN IV**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04DE008T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**ELITE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Elite_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **6** | **7** | **5** |  |
| **04DE008T2** | [**JARVAN IV'S CATACLYSM**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04DE008T2_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  |  |
| **04DE009** | [**GALLANT RIDER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04DE009_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**ELITE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Elite_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **4** | **4** | **RARE** |
| **04DE010** | [**KING JARVAN III**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04DE010_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**ELITE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Elite_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **7** | **3** | **6** | **EPIC** |
| **04DE012** | [**FIELD PROMOTION**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04DE012_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **04DE013** | [**TOWERING STONEHORN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04DE013_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **6** | **7** | **7** | **COMMON** |
| **04DE014** | [**DRAGON CHOW**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04DE014_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** | **0** | **3** | **COMMON** |
| **04DE015** | [**SWIFTWING FLIGHT**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04DE015_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**ELITE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Elite_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **3** | **2** | **EPIC** |
| **04DE016** | [**KADREGRIN THE RUINED**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04DE016_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**DRAGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Dragon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **6** | **6** | **6** | **RARE** |
| **04DE020** | [**RUINED DRAGONGUARD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04DE020_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **3** | **4** | **COMMON** |
| **04FR001** | [**FROZEN THRALL**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04FR001_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **LANDMARK** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **04FR001T1** | [**FROSTGUARD THRALL**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04FR001T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **8** | **8** | **8** |  |
| **04FR005** | [**LISSANDRA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04FR005_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **2** | **3** | **CHAMPION** |
| **04FR005T1** | [**LISSANDRA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04FR005T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **3** | **4** |  |
| **04FR005T2** | [**LISSANDRA'S ENTOMB**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04FR005T2_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** |  |  |  |
| **04FR005T4** | [**WATCHER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04FR005T4_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **17** | **11** | **17** |  |
| **04FR006** | [**DRAKLORN INQUISITOR**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04FR006_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** | **4** | **5** | **EPIC** |
| **04FR007** | [**ENTOMB**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04FR007_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **04FR007T1** | [**FROZEN TOMB**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04FR007T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **LANDMARK** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **0** |  |  |  |
| **04FR009** | [**ICE SHARD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04FR009_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **04FR010** | [**THREE SISTERS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04FR010_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **04FR011** | [**SUCCUMB TO THE COLD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04FR011_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **04FR012** | [**BURIED IN ICE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04FR012_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **9** |  |  | **EPIC** |
| **04FR013** | [**COLD RESISTANCE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04FR013_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **04FR014** | [**BLIGHTED RAVINE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04FR014_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **LANDMARK** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **04FR015** | [**FABLED PORO**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04FR015_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**PORO**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Poro_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **2** | **5** | **RARE** |
| **04FR016** | [**SPOILS OF WAR**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04FR016_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **04FR017** | [**ANCESTRAL BOON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04FR017_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **04FR018** | [**ABOMINABLE GUARDIAN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04FR018_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**YETI**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Yeti_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **8** | **5** | **5** | **EPIC** |
| **04FR019** | [**RIMEFANG DENMOTHER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04FR019_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **6** | **5** | **5** | **RARE** |
| **04FR019T1** | [**RIMEFANG PACK**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04FR019T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** | **1** | **1** |  |
| **04IO001** | [**FIELD MUSICIANS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04IO001_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **1** | **4** | **EPIC** |
| **04IO002** | [**ZINNEIA, STEEL CRESCENDO**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04IO002_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **8** | **3** | **5** | **EPIC** |
| **04IO003** | [**VANGUARD'S EDGE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04IO003_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **7** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **04IO004** | [**BLOSSOMING BLADE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04IO004_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** | **4** | **3** | **COMMON** |
| **04IO005** | [**IRELIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04IO005_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **3** | **2** | **CHAMPION** |
| **04IO005T1** | [**IRELIA'S VANGUARD'S EDGE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04IO005T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **7** |  |  |  |
| **04IO005T2** | [**IRELIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04IO005T2_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **4** | **3** |  |
| **04IO005T4** | [**BLADESURGE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04IO005T4_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **0** |  |  |  |
| **04IO005T5** | [**FLAWLESS DUET**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04IO005T5_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  |  |
| **04IO006** | [**COASTAL DEFENDER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04IO006_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **2** | **6** | **COMMON** |
| **04IO007** | [**SYNCOPATION**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04IO007_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **04IO008** | [**DEFIANT DANCE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04IO008_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **04IO009** | [**RIBBON DANCER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04IO009_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **2** | **1** | **RARE** |
| **04IO010** | [**BLADE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04IO010_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** | **1** | **1** |  |
| **04IO011** | [**LEAD AND FOLLOW**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04IO011_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **04IO012** | [**SHADOWS OF THE PAST**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04IO012_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **04IO013** | [**SACRED PROTECTOR**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04IO013_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **7** | **8** | **6** | **EPIC** |
| **04IO014** | [**SHADOW APPRENTICE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04IO014_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** | **1** | **1** | **COMMON** |
| **04IO015** | [**DANCING DROPLET**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04IO015_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** | **1** | **1** | **COMMON** |
| **04MT001** | [**ROCKFALL PATH**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04MT001_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **LANDMARK** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **04MT002** | [**STONEBREAKER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04MT002_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **6** | **6** | **4** | **EPIC** |
| **04MT002T2** | [**SHAKEN GROUND**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04MT002T2_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **ABILITY** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **0** |  |  |  |
| **04MT003** | [**EARTH ELEMENTAL**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04MT003_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **3** | **5** | **COMMON** |
| **04MT004** | [**BLUE SENTINEL**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04MT004_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **2** | **3** | **COMMON** |
| **04MT004T1** | [**CREST OF INSIGHT**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04MT004T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **LANDMARK** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  |  |
| **04MT005** | [**CHIP**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04MT005_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** | **1** | **1** | **COMMON** |
| **04MT006** | [**STARLIT EPIPHANY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04MT006_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  | **EPIC** |
| **04MT007** | [**GROUND SLAM**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04MT007_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **04MT008** | [**MALPHITE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04MT008_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **7** | **6** | **10** | **CHAMPION** |
| **04MT008T1** | [**MALPHITE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04MT008T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **7** | **7** | **11** |  |
| **04MT008T4** | [**UNSTOPPABLE FORCE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04MT008T4_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  |  |
| **04MT008T5** | [**MALPHITE'S GROUND SLAM**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04MT008T5_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** |  |  |  |
| **04MT009** | [**SPIRAL STAIRS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04MT009_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **LANDMARK** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **04MT009T1** | [**SEED OF STRENGTH**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04MT009T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **0** |  |  |  |
| **04MT010** | [**STARTIPPED PEAK**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04MT010_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **LANDMARK** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **04MT012** | [**DESTINY'S CALL**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04MT012_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **8** |  |  | **EPIC** |
| **04MT013** | [**SOLARI SUNHAWK**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04MT013_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **2** | **3** | **COMMON** |
| **04MT013T1** | [**BLINDING CREST**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04MT013T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **ABILITY** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **0** |  |  |  |
| **04MT014** | [**EYE OF THE RA-HORAK**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04MT014_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **LANDMARK** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **04MT015** | [**HEAVENS ALIGNED**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04MT015_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **04MT018** | [**FRIGHTENED IBEX**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04MT018_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** | **1** | **2** | **COMMON** |
| **04NX001** | [**MIMIC**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04NX001_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **04NX002** | [**WHISPERED WORDS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04NX002_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **04NX003** | [**SIGIL OF MALICE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04NX003_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **04NX004** | [**LEBLANC**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04NX004_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **5** | **2** | **CHAMPION** |
| **04NX004T1** | [**LEBLANC'S SIGIL OF MALICE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04NX004T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** |  |  |  |
| **04NX004T2** | [**LEBLANC**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04NX004T2_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **6** | **3** |  |
| **04NX005** | [**MIRROR IMAGE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04NX005_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  |  |
| **04NX006** | [**BLACK ROSE SPY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04NX006_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **3** | **2** | **EPIC** |
| **04NX007** | [**ATAKHAN, BRINGER OF RUIN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04NX007_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **10** | **5** | **12** | **EPIC** |
| **04NX008** | [**INCISIVE TACTICIAN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04NX008_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **8** | **5** | **5** | **RARE** |
| **04NX009** | [**THORNED BLADE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04NX009_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **04NX010** | [**THORN OF THE ROSE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04NX010_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **5** | **1** | **COMMON** |
| **04NX015** | [**BLOODY BUSINESS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04NX015_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **04NX016** | [**SHRIEKING SPINNER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04NX016_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**SPIDER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Spider_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **2** | **5** | **RARE** |
| **04NX017** | [**STRENGTH IN NUMBERS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04NX017_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **8** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **04NX018** | [**CRIMSON BLOODLETTER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04NX018_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** | **1** | **2** | **COMMON** |
| **04NX019** | [**THRASHING SNAPPER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04NX019_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** | **2** | **1** | **EPIC** |
| **04NX021** | [**RETIRED RECKONER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04NX021_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** | **2** | **6** | **RARE** |
| **04NX022** | [**RUINED RECKONER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04NX022_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **4** | **3** | **RARE** |
| **04NX022T1** | [**MIDNIGHT RAID**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04NX022T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **0** |  |  |  |
| **04PZ001** | [**EKKO**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04PZ001_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **4** | **2** | **CHAMPION** |
| **04PZ001T2** | [**EKKO'S CALLED SHOT**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04PZ001T2_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  |  |
| **04PZ001T3** | [**EKKO**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04PZ001T3_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **5** | **3** |  |
| **04PZ001T4** | [**CHRONOBREAK**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04PZ001T4_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  |  |
| **04PZ002** | [**FALLEN FELINE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04PZ002_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** | **2** | **1** | **RARE** |
| **04PZ002T1** | [**HEXITE CRYSTAL**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04PZ002T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  |  |
| **04PZ003** | [**TIMEWINDER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04PZ003_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **04PZ004** | [**DROPBOARDER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04PZ004_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** | **1** | **3** | **COMMON** |
| **04PZ005** | [**CHIREAN SUMPWORKER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04PZ005_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **1** | **2** | **COMMON** |
| **04PZ005T1** | [**SUMPWORKS POSSE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04PZ005T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **4** | **2** |  |
| **04PZ005T2** | [**CIRCUIT BREAKER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04PZ005T2_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **ABILITY** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **0** |  |  |  |
| **04PZ007** | [**TIME TRICK**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04PZ007_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **04PZ010** | [**CONCURRENT TIMELINES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04PZ010_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** |  |  | **EPIC** |
| **04PZ011** | [**CALLED SHOT**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04PZ011_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  | **EPIC** |
| **04PZ011T1** | [**PARALLEL CONVERGENCE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04PZ011T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** |  |  |  |
| **04PZ012** | [**PRACTICAL PERFECTIONIST**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04PZ012_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **4** | **2** | **RARE** |
| **04PZ013** | [**VOLUNTEER ELNUK**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04PZ013_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**ELNUK**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Elnuk_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **3** | **4** | **RARE** |
| **04PZ014** | [**PRODUCTION SURGE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04PZ014_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **0** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **04PZ015** | [**ADAPTATRON 3000**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04PZ015_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**TECH**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Tech_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** | **1** | **3** | **EPIC** |
| **04PZ016** | [**BOOM BABOON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04PZ016_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **3** | **1** | **COMMON** |
| **04PZ017** | [**GLORIOUS EVOLUTION**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04PZ017_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **10** |  |  | **EPIC** |
| **04PZ020** | [**DEFECTIVE SWAPBOT**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04PZ020_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **4** | **3** | **RARE** |
| **04PZ020T1** | [**SWAPBOT'S SWAP**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04PZ020T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **ABILITY** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **0** |  |  |  |
| **04SH001** | [**ASPIRING CHRONOMANCER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH001_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **2** | **3** | **COMMON** |
| **04SH002** | [**BACCAI REAPER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH002_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** | **1** | **2** | **RARE** |
| **04SH003** | [**AZIR**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH003_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**ASCENDED**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ascended_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **1** | **5** | **CHAMPION** |
| **04SH003T1** | [**SAND SOLDIER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH003T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** | **1** | **1** |  |
| **04SH003T2** | [**AZIR**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH003T2_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**ASCENDED**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ascended_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **6** | **6** |  |
| **04SH003T3** | [**AZIR**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH003T3_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**ASCENDED**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ascended_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **2** | **6** |  |
| **04SH003T4** | [**AZIR'S ARISE!**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH003T4_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  |  |
| **04SH003T5** | [**GOLDEN HERALD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH003T5_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** | **6** | **6** |  |
| **04SH003T6** | [**CRUMBLING SANDS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH003T6_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** |  |  |  |
| **04SH003T7** | [**SHIMMERING MIRAGE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH003T7_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  |  |
| **04SH003T8** | [**ETERNAL GLADIATOR**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH003T8_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **7** | **10** | **7** |  |
| **04SH003T9** | [**EMPEROR'S PROSPERITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH003T9_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  |  |
| **04SH003T10** | [**GENERAL'S PALACE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH003T10_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **LANDMARK** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** |  |  |  |
| **04SH003T11** | [**EMPEROR'S GUARD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH003T11_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **5** | **4** |  |
| **04SH003T12** | [**SANDSTORM**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH003T12_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **9** |  |  |  |
| **04SH003T13** | [**ASCENDED'S CALL**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH003T13_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **10** |  |  |  |
| **04SH003T14** | [**SANDSTONE CHARGER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH003T14_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **5** | **2** |  |
| **04SH004** | [**WEIGHT OF JUDGMENT**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH004_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **04SH005** | [**BLOODTHIRSTY MARAUDER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH005_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** | **3** | **1** | **COMMON** |
| **04SH006** | [**ROILING SANDS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH006_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **LANDMARK** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  |  |
| **04SH009** | [**RAMPAGING BACCAI**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH009_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** | **4** | **6** | **RARE** |
| **04SH009T1** | [**BACCAI RAMPAGE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH009T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **ABILITY** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **0** |  |  |  |
| **04SH011** | [**XENOTYPE RESEARCHERS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH011_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **3** | **3** | **RARE** |
| **04SH012** | [**ESTEEMED HIEROPHANT**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH012_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **3** | **4** | **COMMON** |
| **04SH013** | [**PRESERVARIUM**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH013_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **LANDMARK** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **04SH014** | [**CLOCKLING**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH014_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** | **2** | **2** |  |
| **04SH015** | [**RAZ BLOODMANE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH015_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **7** | **7** | **7** | **EPIC** |
| **04SH016** | [**SIPHONING STRIKE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH016_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **04SH018** | [**RITE OF DOMINANCE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH018_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **04SH019** | [**REK'SAI**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH019_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**LURKER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Lurker_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **3** | **6** | **CHAMPION** |
| **04SH019T1** | [**REK'SAI**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH019T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**LURKER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Lurker_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **4** | **7** |  |
| **04SH019T2** | [**REK'SAI'S CALL THE PACK**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH019T2_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  |  |
| **04SH020** | [**SIVIR**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH020_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **5** | **3** | **CHAMPION** |
| **04SH020T1** | [**SIVIR**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH020T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **6** | **4** |  |
| **04SH020T2** | [**SIVIR'S RICOCHET**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH020T2_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **6** |  |  |  |
| **04SH021** | [**KHAHIRI THE RETURNED**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH021_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **6** | **4** | **4** | **RARE** |
| **04SH022** | [**XER'SAI DUNEBREAKER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH022_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**LURKER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Lurker_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **6** | **3** | **6** | **RARE** |
| **04SH024** | [**SALT SPIRE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH024_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **LANDMARK** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **04SH026** | [**DUNEKEEPER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH026_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** | **1** | **2** | **COMMON** |
| **04SH028** | [**ANCIENT PREPARATIONS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH028_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **LANDMARK** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **04SH030** | [**CHRONOSHIFT**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH030_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **7** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **04SH031** | [**PROMISING FUTURE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH031_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** |  |  | **EPIC** |
| **04SH032** | [**CALLOUS BONECRUSHER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH032_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **6** | **4** | **COMMON** |
| **04SH034** | [**THE CLOCK HAND**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH034_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **8** | **7** | **7** | **EPIC** |
| **04SH034T1** | [**INSTANT CENTURY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH034T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **0** |  |  |  |
| **04SH034T3** | [**INSTANT CENTURY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH034T3_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **0** |  |  |  |
| **04SH035** | [**PAYDAY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH035_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **04SH037** | [**UNRAVELED EARTH**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH037_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **04SH038** | [**ROCK HOPPER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH038_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **3** | **1** | **COMMON** |
| **04SH039** | [**ZILEAN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH039_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **1** | **4** | **CHAMPION** |
| **04SH039T1** | [**ZILEAN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH039T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **2** | **5** |  |
| **04SH039T2** | [**ZILEAN'S CHRONOSHIFT**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH039T2_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **7** |  |  |  |
| **04SH041** | [**SAI SCOUT**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH041_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **2** | **4** | **COMMON** |
| **04SH042** | [**HIBERNATING ROCKBEAR**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH042_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **LANDMARK** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **04SH043** | [**SHIFTING SANDS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH043_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **6** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **04SH044** | [**CLOCKWORK CURATOR**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH044_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **2** | **2** | **COMMON** |
| **04SH045** | [**EXHAUST**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH045_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **04SH046** | [**SANDSTONE CHIMERA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH046_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **12** | **6** | **6** | **RARE** |
| **04SH047** | [**NASUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH047_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**ASCENDED**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ascended_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **6** | **2** | **2** | **CHAMPION** |
| **04SH047T1** | [**NASUS' SIPHONING STRIKE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH047T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** |  |  |  |
| **04SH047T2** | [**NASUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH047T2_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**ASCENDED**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ascended_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **6** | **10** | **10** |  |
| **04SH047T3** | [**NASUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH047T3_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**ASCENDED**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ascended_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **6** | **3** | **3** |  |
| **04SH048** | [**INNER SANCTUM**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH048_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **LANDMARK** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **04SH049** | [**DESTINED PORO**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH049_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**PORO**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Poro_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** | **1** | **1** | **COMMON** |
| **04SH049T1** | [**EXALTED PORO**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH049T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**PORO**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Poro_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** | **2** | **2** |  |
| **04SH051** | [**EMPEROR'S DAIS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH051_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **LANDMARK** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **04SH054** | [**TREASURE SEEKER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH054_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** | **2** | **1** | **COMMON** |
| **04SH055** | [**RUIN RUNNER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH055_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** | **6** | **3** | **COMMON** |
| **04SH056** | [**PROFITEER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH056_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **5** | **3** | **COMMON** |
| **04SH057** | [**INSPIRING MARSHAL**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH057_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **6** | **4** | **5** | **RARE** |
| **04SH058** | [**SANDCRAFTER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH058_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **3** | **5** | **COMMON** |
| **04SH059** | [**RITE OF NEGATION**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH059_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** |  |  | **EPIC** |
| **04SH060T1** | [**TIME BOMB**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH060T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **LANDMARK** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  |  |
| **04SH062** | [**BURIED SUN DISC**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH062_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **LANDMARK** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** |  |  | **EPIC** |
| **04SH062T1** | [**RESTORED SUN DISC**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH062T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **LANDMARK** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **0** |  |  |  |
| **04SH065** | [**XERXA'RETH, THE UNDERTITAN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH065_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**LURKER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Lurker_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** | **2** | **6** | **EPIC** |
| **04SH066** | [**TIME IN A BOTTLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH066_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **04SH067** | [**RENEKTON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH067_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**ASCENDED**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ascended_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **4** | **4** | **CHAMPION** |
| **04SH067T1** | [**RENEKTON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH067T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**ASCENDED**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ascended_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **10** | **10** |  |
| **04SH067T2** | [**RENEKTON'S RUTHLESS PREDATOR**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH067T2_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  |  |
| **04SH067T4** | [**RENEKTON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH067T4_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**ASCENDED**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ascended_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **5** | **5** |  |
| **04SH067T5** | [**DOMINUS DESTRUCTION**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH067T5_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **ABILITY** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **0** |  |  |  |
| **04SH068** | [**XER'SAI CALLER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH068_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**LURKER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Lurker_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **2** | **3** | **COMMON** |
| **04SH069** | [**RUTHLESS PREDATOR**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH069_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **04SH070** | [**UNWORTHY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH070_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  | **EPIC** |
| **04SH072** | [**SOOTHSAYER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH072_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **1** | **4** | **COMMON** |
| **04SH073** | [**TALIYAH**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH073_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** | **3** | **5** | **CHAMPION** |
| **04SH073T1** | [**THREADED VOLLEY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH073T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **ABILITY** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **0** |  |  |  |
| **04SH073T2** | [**TALIYAH**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH073T2_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** | **4** | **6** |  |
| **04SH073T3** | [**TALIYAH'S STONEWEAVING**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH073T3_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** |  |  |  |
| **04SH074** | [**XER'SAI HATCHLING**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH074_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**LURKER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Lurker_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** | **1** | **1** | **COMMON** |
| **04SH075** | [**EMPEROR'S DIVIDE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH075_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **7** |  |  | **EPIC** |
| **04SH076** | [**ANCIENT HOURGLASS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH076_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **04SH076T1** | [**STASIS STATUE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH076T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **LANDMARK** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  |  |
| **04SH077** | [**VOICE OF THE RISEN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH077_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **3** | **4** | **EPIC** |
| **04SH079** | [**SCRYING SANDS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH079_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **04SH080** | [**CALL THE PACK**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH080_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **04SH081** | [**BACCAI SANDSPINNER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH081_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **5** | **3** | **RARE** |
| **04SH082** | [**RUINOUS PATH**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH082_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **04SH083** | [**FERAL PRESCIENCE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH083_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **0** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **04SH089** | [**DESERT NATURALIST**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH089_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **2** | **4** | **RARE** |
| **04SH089T1** | [**TEEN SPIRIT**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH089T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **ABILITY** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **0** |  |  |  |
| **04SH090** | [**GRUMPY ROCKBEAR**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH090_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** | **5** | **4** |  |
| **04SH091** | [**KHAHIRI THE STUDENT**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH091_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **3** | **3** | **COMMON** |
| **04SH092** | [**THE TIME HAS COME**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH092_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **04SH093** | [**SHAPED STONE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH093_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **04SH097** | [**SANCTUM CONSERVATOR**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH097_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **8** | **8** | **5** | **EPIC** |
| **04SH097T1** | [**CONSERVATOR'S JUDGMENT**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH097T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **ABILITY** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **0** |  |  |  |
| **04SH098** | [**LUCKY FIND**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH098_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **0** |  |  |  |
| **04SH098T1** | [**LUCKY FIND**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH098T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **0** |  |  |  |
| **04SH098T2** | [**LUCKY FIND**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH098T2_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **0** |  |  |  |
| **04SH098T3** | [**LUCKY FIND**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH098T3_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **0** |  |  |  |
| **04SH098T5** | [**LUCKY FIND**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH098T5_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **0** |  |  |  |
| **04SH098T6** | [**LUCKY FIND**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH098T6_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **0** |  |  |  |
| **04SH098T7** | [**LUCKY FIND**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH098T7_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **0** |  |  |  |
| **04SH098T8** | [**LUCKY FIND**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH098T8_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **0** |  |  |  |
| **04SH098T10** | [**LUCKY FIND**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH098T10_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **0** |  |  |  |
| **04SH098T12** | [**LUCKY FIND**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH098T12_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **0** |  |  |  |
| **04SH099** | [**ARISE!**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH099_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **04SH100** | [**CAREFUL PREPARATION**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH100_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **04SH101** | [**DEVOTED COUNCIL**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH101_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **1** | **6** | **RARE** |
| **04SH102** | [**GOLDEN AMBASSADOR**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH102_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **3** | **2** | **COMMON** |
| **04SH103** | [**MERCILESS HUNTER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH103_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **4** | **2** | **COMMON** |
| **04SH104** | [**PRESERVATIONIST**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH104_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** | **4** | **4** | **RARE** |
| **04SH105** | [**SANDSWEPT TOMB**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH105_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **LANDMARK** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **04SH106** | [**SPIRIT FIRE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH106_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **7** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **04SH107** | [**ASCENDED'S RISE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH107_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **6** |  |  | **EPIC** |
| **04SH108** | [**BOOMERANG BLADE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH108_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **7** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **04SH109** | [**QUICKSAND**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH109_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **04SH110** | [**STONEWEAVING**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH110_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** |  |  | **EPIC** |
| **04SH114** | [**DESERT'S WRATH**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH114_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **04SH118** | [**WAKING SANDS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH118_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **04SH119** | [**RICOCHET**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH119_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **6** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **04SH120** | [**IMAGINED POSSIBILITIES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH120_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **04SH121** | [**RITE OF CALLING**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH121_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **0** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **04SH125** | [**VEKAURAN SAFECRACKER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH125_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **4** | **4** | **RARE** |
| **04SH128** | [**VEKAURAN VAGABOND**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH128_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **3** | **3** | **COMMON** |
| **04SH129** | [**VEKAURAN BRUISER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH129_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** | **5** | **5** | **RARE** |
| **04SH130** | [**AKSHAN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH130_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **2** | **2** | **CHAMPION** |
| **04SH130T1** | [**WARLORD'S PALACE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH130T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **LANDMARK** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** |  |  |  |
| **04SH130T2** | [**AKSHAN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH130T2_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **3** | **3** |  |
| **04SH130T5** | [**AKSHAN'S GRAPPLING HOOK**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH130T5_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  |  |
| **04SH130T6** | [**WARLORD'S HOARD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH130T6_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **LANDMARK** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** |  |  |  |
| **04SH130T10** | [**RELIC OF POWER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH130T10_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **0** |  |  |  |
| **04SH130T13** | [**SENTINEL'S HOARD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH130T13_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **0** |  |  |  |
| **04SH131** | [**GRAPPLING HOOK**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH131_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **04SH137** | [**THRUMMING SWARM**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH137_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **7** | **8** | **4** | **EPIC** |
| **04SH138** | [**THE ABSOLVER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH138_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **04SH138T1** | [**THE ABSOLVER'S RETURN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SH138T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  |  |
| **04SI001** | [**LAMB'S RESPITE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SI001_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  | **EPIC** |
| **04SI002** | [**SPIRIT JOURNEY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SI002_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **04SI003** | [**FADING ICON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SI003_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **3** | **1** | **COMMON** |
| **04SI004** | [**THE WINGS AND THE WAVE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SI004_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** | **0** | **1** | **EPIC** |
| **04SI005** | [**KINDRED**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SI005_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **4** | **3** | **CHAMPION** |
| **04SI005T1** | [**KINDRED**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SI005T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** | **5** | **4** |  |
| **04SI005T4** | [**KINDRED'S SPIRIT JOURNEY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SI005T4_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** |  |  |  |
| **04SI007** | [**THE ETHERFIEND**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SI007_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **7** | **6** | **4** | **RARE** |
| **04SI007T3** | [**THE SECOND DEATH**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SI007T3_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **ABILITY** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **0** |  |  |  |
| **04SI009** | [**SOULSPINNER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SI009_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**SPIDER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Spider_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **3** | **2** | **COMMON** |
| **04SI011** | [**UNTO DUSK**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SI011_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **04SI012** | [**ASTRAL FOX**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SI012_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **3** | **3** | **COMMON** |
| **04SI012T1** | [**SYMMETRY IN STARS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SI012T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **ABILITY** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **0** |  |  |  |
| **04SI013** | [**MASK MOTHER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SI013_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **2** | **2** | **COMMON** |
| **04SI014** | [**PREY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SI014_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **0** | **0** | **1** |  |
| **04SI015** | [**SEA SCARAB**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SI015_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**SEA MONSTER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Sea_Monster_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **2** | **3** | **RARE** |
| **04SI016** | [**SPIRIT LEECH**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SI016_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **4** | **1** | **COMMON** |
| **04SI017** | [**SONG OF THE ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SI017_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **04SI018** | [**THE TWISTED TREELINE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SI018_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **LANDMARK** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  | **EPIC** |
| **04SI021** | [**CRAWLING VIPERWYRM**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SI021_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**DRAGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Dragon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **3** | **2** | **COMMON** |
| **04SI028** | [**CAMAVORAN DRAGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SI028_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**DRAGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Dragon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **4** | **3** | **RARE** |
| **04SI029** | [**DESPAIR**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SI029_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **04SI045** | [**ENCROACHING MIST**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SI045_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** | **1** | **1** |  |
| **04SI053** | [**INVASIVE HYDRAVINE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SI053_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **7** | **7** | **6** | **EPIC** |
| **04SI054** | [**CAMAVORAN SOLDIER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SI054_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **3** | **3** | **COMMON** |
| **04SI055** | [**VIEGO**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SI055_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** | **5** | **4** | **CHAMPION** |
| **04SI055T1** | [**VIEGO'S DESPAIR**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SI055T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** |  |  |  |
| **04SI055T2** | [**VIEGO**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SI055T2_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** | **6** | **5** |  |
| **04SI056** | [**WITHERING MIST**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/04SI056_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **05BC001** | [**MINIMORPH**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC001_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **6** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **05BC001T1** | [**MINI-MINITEE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC001T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **3** | **3** |  |
| **05BC004** | [**OTTERPUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC004_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** | **1** | **1** | **COMMON** |
| **05BC005** | [**KELP MAIDENS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC005_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **2** | **1** | **RARE** |
| **05BC006** | [**THE ARSENAL**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC006_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**YORDLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Yordle_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **8** | **8** | **6** | **EPIC** |
| **05BC007** | [**STONE STACKERS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC007_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**YORDLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Yordle_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **2** | **3** | **COMMON** |
| **05BC010** | [**SHARK TRAINER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC010_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**YORDLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Yordle_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra))[**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **7** | **6** | **6** | **RARE** |
| **05BC010T1** | [**SHORT TOOTH**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC010T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** | **4** | **2** |  |
| **05BC013** | [**TRICKSY TENTACLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC013_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **05BC014** | [**TEENYDACTYL**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC014_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **4** | **3** | **COMMON** |
| **05BC014T1** | [**TERRORDACTYL**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC014T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **6** | **5** |  |
| **05BC015** | [**BITSY LIZARD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC015_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **1** | **2** | **COMMON** |
| **05BC015T1** | [**LAVA LIZARD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC015T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **3** | **4** |  |
| **05BC018** | [**POMPOUS CAVALIER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC018_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**YORDLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Yordle_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra))[**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **1** | **1** | **RARE** |
| **05BC019** | [**RAINBOWFISH**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC019_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**FAE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Fae_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **2** | **1** | **COMMON** |
| **05BC020** | [**ASSISTANT LIBRARIAN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC020_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**FAE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Fae_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **2** | **2** | **COMMON** |
| **05BC021** | [**BOUNCING BOMB**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC021_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **05BC023** | [**MINITEE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC023_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **7** | **6** | **6** | **EPIC** |
| **05BC023T1** | [**MEGATEE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC023T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **7** | **8** | **8** |  |
| **05BC026** | [**HIDDEN PATHWAYS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC026_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **6** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **05BC027** | [**HEXPLOSIVE MINEFIELD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC027_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **LANDMARK** |  | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **05BC029** | [**YUUMI**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC029_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**FAE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Fae_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra))[**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **2** | **2** | **CHAMPION** |
| **05BC029T5** | [**YUUMI**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC029T5_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**FAE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Fae_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra))[**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **3** | **3** |  |
| **05BC029T6** | [**YUUMI'S PROWLING PROJECTILE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC029T6_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  |  |
| **05BC032** | [**GLEAMING LANTERN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC032_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**FAE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Fae_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **3** | **3** | **RARE** |
| **05BC039** | [**GRUFF GRENADIER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC039_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**YORDLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Yordle_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **4** | **3** | **RARE** |
| **05BC040** | [**TRINKET TRADE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC040_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **05BC041** | [**POPPY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC041_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**YORDLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Yordle_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra))[**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **2** | **3** | **CHAMPION** |
| **05BC041T1** | [**POPPY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC041T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**YORDLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Yordle_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra))[**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **3** | **4** |  |
| **05BC041T3** | [**POPPY'S KEEPER'S VERDICT**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC041T3_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **6** |  |  |  |
| **05BC042** | [**PURPLEBERRY SHAKE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC042_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **05BC046** | [**THUNDER FIST**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC046_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**YORDLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Yordle_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **2** | **3** | **COMMON** |
| **05BC046T2** | [**MASA, CRASHING THUNDER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC046T2_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**YORDLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Yordle_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **5** | **4** |  |
| **05BC049** | [**CONCHOLOGIST**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC049_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**YORDLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Yordle_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **2** | **2** | **RARE** |
| **05BC050** | [**BENEMONE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC050_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **4** | **3** | **COMMON** |
| **05BC052** | [**TREASURED TRASH**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC052_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **10** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **05BC056** | [**GUST MONK**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC056_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**YORDLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Yordle_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **2** | **2** | **RARE** |
| **05BC057** | [**STILTED ROBEMAKER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC057_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**YORDLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Yordle_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **3** | **4** | **RARE** |
| **05BC058** | [**KENNEN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC058_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**YORDLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Yordle_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra))[**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** | **2** | **1** | **CHAMPION** |
| **05BC058T2** | [**KENNEN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC058T2_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**YORDLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Yordle_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra))[**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** | **3** | **2** |  |
| **05BC058T3** | [**KENNEN'S LIGHTNING RUSH**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC058T3_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  |  |
| **05BC058T5** | [**MARK OF THE STORM**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC058T5_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **0** |  |  |  |
| **05BC063** | [**TORNADO WARRIOR**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC063_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**YORDLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Yordle_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **2** | **2** | **COMMON** |
| **05BC066** | [**QUICK QUILL**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC066_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**FAE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Fae_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **1** | **1** | **COMMON** |
| **05BC069** | [**LECTURING YORDLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC069_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**YORDLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Yordle_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **3** | **5** | **RARE** |
| **05BC070** | [**AVA ACHIEVER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC070_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**YORDLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Yordle_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **6** | **4** | **4** | **EPIC** |
| **05BC073** | [**INVENTIVE CHEMIST**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC073_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**YORDLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Yordle_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** | **2** | **1** | **COMMON** |
| **05BC073T1** | [**SCRAPPY BOMB**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC073T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **LANDMARK** |  | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** |  |  |  |
| **05BC078** | [**ELECTRO HARPOON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC078_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **05BC079** | [**LIL DIPPER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC079_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**MECHA-YORDLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Mecha-Yordle_(Legends_of_Runeterra))**,**[**YORDLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Yordle_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra))[**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **6** | **5** | **3** |  |
| **05BC080** | [**SMASH & DASH**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC080_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**MECHA-YORDLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Mecha-Yordle_(Legends_of_Runeterra))**,**[**YORDLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Yordle_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **4** | **4** |  |
| **05BC082** | [**BOUNCER & BOLT**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC082_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**MECHA-YORDLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Mecha-Yordle_(Legends_of_Runeterra))**,**[**YORDLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Yordle_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **3** | **2** |  |
| **05BC084** | [**SQUEAKER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC084_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **1** | **1** | **COMMON** |
| **05BC085** | [**BILGERAT RASCAL**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC085_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**YORDLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Yordle_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **3** | **2** | **RARE** |
| **05BC086** | [**EARTHSHAKER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC086_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**MECHA-YORDLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Mecha-Yordle_(Legends_of_Runeterra))**,**[**YORDLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Yordle_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra))[**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **6** | **3** | **8** |  |
| **05BC088** | [**RUMBLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC088_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**MECHA-YORDLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Mecha-Yordle_(Legends_of_Runeterra))**,**[**YORDLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Yordle_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra))[**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **5** | **4** | **CHAMPION** |
| **05BC088T1** | [**RUMBLE'S FLAMESPITTER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC088T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  |  |
| **05BC088T2** | [**RUMBLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC088T2_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**MECHA-YORDLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Mecha-Yordle_(Legends_of_Runeterra))**,**[**YORDLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Yordle_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra))[**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **6** | **5** |  |
| **05BC089** | [**TRUMPETECHER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC089_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**MECHA-YORDLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Mecha-Yordle_(Legends_of_Runeterra))**,**[**YORDLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Yordle_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra))[**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** | **4** | **5** |  |
| **05BC091** | [**ARENA PROMOTER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC091_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**YORDLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Yordle_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **4** | **3** | **COMMON** |
| **05BC093** | [**VEIGAR**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC093_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**YORDLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Yordle_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra))[**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **1** | **4** | **CHAMPION** |
| **05BC093T1** | [**VEIGAR'S EVENT HORIZON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC093T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** |  |  |  |
| **05BC093T2** | [**GRAND OVERSEER VEIGAR**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC093T2_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**MECHA-YORDLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Mecha-Yordle_(Legends_of_Runeterra))**,**[**YORDLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Yordle_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra))[**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **2** | **5** |  |
| **05BC094** | [**DARKBULB ACOLYTE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC094_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**YORDLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Yordle_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **2** | **2** | **COMMON** |
| **05BC096** | [**TENOR OF TERROR**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC096_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**YORDLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Yordle_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra))[**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **1** | **3** | **RARE** |
| **05BC096T1** | [**BASS OF BURDEN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC096T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**YORDLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Yordle_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra))[**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **3** | **1** |  |
| **05BC098** | [**TWISTED CATALYZER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC098_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**YORDLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Yordle_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **3** | **2** | **COMMON** |
| **05BC099** | [**SWOLE SCOUT**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC099_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**YORDLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Yordle_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **3** | **2** | **RARE** |
| **05BC100** | [**PUFFCAP PUP**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC100_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **2** | **2** | **COMMON** |
| **05BC102** | [**WIZENED WIZARD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC102_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**YORDLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Yordle_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **3** | **2** | **COMMON** |
| **05BC104** | [**PRIMAL STRENGTH**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC104_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **05BC105** | [**BANDLE GUNNERS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC105_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**YORDLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Yordle_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **8** | **7** | **7** | **RARE** |
| **05BC106** | [**GRUMBLESLUG**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC106_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra))[**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **2** | **3** | **COMMON** |
| **05BC108** | [**YORDLE EXPLORER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC108_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**YORDLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Yordle_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **2** | **2** | **COMMON** |
| **05BC110** | [**SCHOLARLY CLIMBER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC110_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**YORDLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Yordle_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra))[**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **5** | **4** | **COMMON** |
| **05BC111** | [**YORDLES IN ARMS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC111_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **05BC112** | [**BLASTCONE SEEDLING**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC112_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**FAE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Fae_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra))[**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **2** | **2** | **COMMON** |
| **05BC116** | [**BANDLE CITY MAYOR**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC116_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**YORDLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Yordle_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **2** | **2** | **EPIC** |
| **05BC119** | [**MINION**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC119_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra))[**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **2** | **1** | **COMMON** |
| **05BC120** | [**YORDLE CAPTAIN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC120_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**YORDLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Yordle_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **4** | **4** | **COMMON** |
| **05BC122** | [**YORDLE NEWBIE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC122_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**YORDLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Yordle_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **3** | **2** | **COMMON** |
| **05BC127** | [**RISSU, THE SILENT STORM**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC127_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**YORDLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Yordle_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** | **1** | **1** | **EPIC** |
| **05BC127T1** | [**STORMCLOUD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC127T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** | **7** | **3** |  |
| **05BC129** | [**ARENA KINGPIN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC129_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**YORDLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Yordle_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra))[**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **4** | **2** | **COMMON** |
| **05BC130** | [**HOTHEAD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC130_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**YORDLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Yordle_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra))[**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **4** | **2** | **COMMON** |
| **05BC132** | [**BUSTER SHOT**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC132_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **05BC133** | [**TRISTANA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC133_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**YORDLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Yordle_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **1** | **3** | **CHAMPION** |
| **05BC133T1** | [**TRISTANA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC133T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**YORDLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Yordle_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **2** | **4** |  |
| **05BC135** | [**DOUBLE TAP**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC135_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **6** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **05BC136** | [**SCRAPHEAP**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC136_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **05BC138** | [**FIX-EM-UPPERS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC138_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **1** | **2** | **COMMON** |
| **05BC140** | [**PORO SLED**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC140_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**PORO**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Poro_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra))[**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** | **5** | **5** | **EPIC** |
| **05BC141** | [**HEROIC REFRAIN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC141_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **05BC145** | [**YORDLE SQUIRE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC145_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**YORDLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Yordle_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** | **2** | **1** | **COMMON** |
| **05BC146** | [**BANDLE PAINTER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC146_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**YORDLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Yordle_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **2** | **3** | **COMMON** |
| **05BC148** | [**FURIOUS FAEFOLK**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC148_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**FAE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Fae_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra))[**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **7** | **5** | **4** | **COMMON** |
| **05BC151** | [**MIRROR MAGE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC151_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**YORDLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Yordle_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **8** | **4** | **7** | **EPIC** |
| **05BC152** | [**ALOOF TRAVELERS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC152_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**YORDLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Yordle_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra))[**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **2** | **3** | **COMMON** |
| **05BC155** | [**EMBER MONK**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC155_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**YORDLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Yordle_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **3** | **3** | **RARE** |
| **05BC160** | [**PROTO PORO**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC160_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**PORO**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Poro_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra))[**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** | **1** | **1** | **COMMON** |
| **05BC161** | [**GNAR**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC161_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**YORDLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Yordle_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra))[**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **4** | **3** | **CHAMPION** |
| **05BC161T1** | [**MEGA GNAR**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC161T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**YORDLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Yordle_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra))[**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **6** | **5** |  |
| **05BC161T2** | [**GNAR'S WALLOP**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC161T2_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  |  |
| **05BC162** | [**CHIEF NAKOTAK**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC162_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**YORDLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Yordle_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **3** | **3** | **RARE** |
| **05BC163** | [**ZIGGS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC163_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**YORDLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Yordle_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra))[**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **3** | **4** | **CHAMPION** |
| **05BC163T1** | [**ZIGGS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC163T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**YORDLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Yordle_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra))[**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **4** | **5** |  |
| **05BC163T3** | [**ZIGGS' BOUNCING BOMB**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC163T3_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  |  |
| **05BC163T4** | [**SHORT FUSE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC163T4_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **ABILITY** |  | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra))[**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **0** |  |  |  |
| **05BC163T5** | [**SHORT FUSE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC163T5_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **ABILITY** |  | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra))[**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **0** |  |  |  |
| **05BC164** | [**POISON DART**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC164_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **05BC166** | [**POKEY STICK**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC166_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **05BC167** | [**BANDLE COMMANDO**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC167_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**YORDLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Yordle_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **1** | **2** | **COMMON** |
| **05BC167T1** | [**HUNGRY OWLCAT**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC167T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**FAE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Fae_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra))[**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** | **2** | **1** |  |
| **05BC168** | [**SPOTTED TOAD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC168_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** | **4** | **5** | **RARE** |
| **05BC168T1** | [**GIGA GROMP**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC168T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** | **6** | **7** |  |
| **05BC169** | [**SHADOWTECH WALKER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC169_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**MECHA-YORDLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Mecha-Yordle_(Legends_of_Runeterra))**,**[**YORDLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Yordle_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra))[**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **2** | **5** |  |
| **05BC170** | [**FURYHORN CRASHER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC170_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**MECHA-YORDLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Mecha-Yordle_(Legends_of_Runeterra))**,**[**YORDLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Yordle_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra))[**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **3** | **2** |  |
| **05BC171** | [**GEODE MECHAFORCER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC171_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**MECHA-YORDLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Mecha-Yordle_(Legends_of_Runeterra))**,**[**YORDLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Yordle_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra))[**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **1** | **4** |  |
| **05BC172** | [**PROFESSOR VON MECH**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC172_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**MECHA-YORDLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Mecha-Yordle_(Legends_of_Runeterra))**,**[**YORDLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Yordle_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra))[**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **3** | **2** |  |
| **05BC173** | [**SALTY SPINNER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC173_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**MECHA-YORDLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Mecha-Yordle_(Legends_of_Runeterra))**,**[**YORDLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Yordle_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra))[**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **0** | **4** |  |
| **05BC174** | [**FRIENDSHIP!**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC174_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **05BC175** | [**LOPING TELESCOPE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC175_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**FAE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Fae_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra))[**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **2** | **1** | **RARE** |
| **05BC176** | [**PROWLING PROJECTILE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC176_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **05BC177** | [**PAPERCRAFT DRAGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC177_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**FAE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Fae_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** | **2** | **2** | **EPIC** |
| **05BC179** | [**YORDLE RANGER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC179_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**YORDLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Yordle_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra))[**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **6** | **5** | **5** | **EPIC** |
| **05BC180** | [**QUICKEN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC180_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **05BC181** | [**CLOUD STANCE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC181_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **05BC182** | [**LIGHTNING RUSH**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC182_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **05BC183** | [**GRANDFATHER FAE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC183_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**FAE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Fae_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra))[**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **1** | **2** | **RARE** |
| **05BC184** | [**BABBLING BALLADEERS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC184_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**YORDLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Yordle_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **2** | **4** | **COMMON** |
| **05BC185** | [**SHELL GAME**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC185_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **05BC188** | [**CURIOUS SHELLFOLK**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC188_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **6** | **4** | **6** | **EPIC** |
| **05BC190** | [**ARENA MECHACASTER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC190_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**YORDLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Yordle_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra))[**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **6** | **4** | **5** | **EPIC** |
| **05BC191** | [**KEEPER'S VERDICT**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC191_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **6** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **05BC192** | [**BOMBER TWINS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC192_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**YORDLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Yordle_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra))[**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **3** | **2** | **COMMON** |
| **05BC194** | [**THE BANDLE TREE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC194_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **LANDMARK** |  | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** |  |  | **EPIC** |
| **05BC195** | [**PRANK**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC195_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** |  |  |  |
| **05BC196** | [**DUNEHOPPER MECH**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC196_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**MECHA-YORDLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Mecha-Yordle_(Legends_of_Runeterra))**,**[**YORDLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Yordle_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra))[**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** | **5** | **6** |  |
| **05BC198** | [**GROUP SHOT**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC198_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **05BC200** | [**YORDLE PORTAL**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC200_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **05BC202** | [**TRISTANA'S BUSTER SHOT**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC202_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** |  |  |  |
| **05BC205** | [**EVENT HORIZON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC205_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **05BC208** | [**HEROIC CHARGE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC208_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **05BC209** | [**STRESS DEFENSE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC209_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **05BC210** | [**FLAMESPITTER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC210_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **05BC212** | [**SAFETY INSPECTOR**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC212_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**YORDLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Yordle_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **6** | **6** | **6** | **RARE** |
| **05BC212T1** | [**INSPECTION PASSED!**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC212T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **0** |  |  |  |
| **05BC213** | [**WALLOP**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC213_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **05BC214** | [**MEGA INFERNO BOMB**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC214_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **7** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **05BC216** | [**YORDLE CONTRAPTION**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC216_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **05BC217** | [**FAE SPROUT**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC217_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **05BC218** | [**FAE AID**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC218_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **05BC221** | [**MUSHROOM RING**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC221_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**FAE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Fae_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra))[**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **2** | **2** | **RARE** |
| **05BC223** | [**ENTRAPMENT**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC223_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **05BC224** | [**TRANSPOSITION**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC224_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **05BC230** | [**SPIRIT PORTAL**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC230_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **05BC235** | [**YORDLE SMITH**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BC235_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**YORDLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Yordle_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**BANDLE CITY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bandle_City_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **2** | **2** | **COMMON** |
| **05BW001** | [**MARAI WARDEN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BW001_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **2** | **1** | **RARE** |
| **05BW002** | [**JOURNEYING SANDHOPPER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BW002_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **4** | **3** | **COMMON** |
| **05BW003** | [**TIDAL WAVE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BW003_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **05BW003T1** | [**CRASHING WAVE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BW003T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  |  |
| **05BW003T2** | [**COLOSSAL WAVE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BW003T2_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  |  |
| **05BW004** | [**AVATAR OF THE TIDES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BW004_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **6** | **4** | **5** | **EPIC** |
| **05BW005** | [**NAMI**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BW005_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **2** | **3** | **CHAMPION** |
| **05BW005T1** | [**NAMI**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BW005T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **3** | **4** |  |
| **05BW005T2** | [**NAMI'S EBB**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BW005T2_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  |  |
| **05BW006** | [**EBB**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BW006_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **05BW006T1** | [**EBB AND FLOW**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BW006T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  |  |
| **05BW006T2** | [**FLOW**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BW006T2_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  |  |
| **05BW008** | [**ABYSSAL GUARD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BW008_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **2** | **3** | **COMMON** |
| **05BW010** | [**MARAI GREATMOTHER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BW010_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **3** | **3** | **COMMON** |
| **05BW011** | [**FLEET ADMIRAL SHELLY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BW011_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** | **3** | **3** | **EPIC** |
| **05BW013** | [**MARAI SONGSTRESS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05BW013_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**BILGEWATER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Bilgewater_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **3** | **2** | **RARE** |
| **05DE003** | [**GORLITH THE UNSCALABLE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05DE003_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **9** | **0** | **10** | **EPIC** |
| **05DE009** | [**GALIO**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05DE009_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **7** | **0** | **8** | **CHAMPION** |
| **05DE009T1** | [**GALIO**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05DE009T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **7** | **0** | **9** |  |
| **05DE009T3** | [**GALIO'S SHIELD OF DURAND**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05DE009T3_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  |  |
| **05DE010** | [**DURAND SCULPTOR**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05DE010_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **2** | **2** | **COMMON** |
| **05DE012** | [**PETRICITE BROADWING**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05DE012_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **0** | **3** | **RARE** |
| **05DE013** | [**PETRICITE STAG**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05DE013_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **3** | **5** | **EPIC** |
| **05DE014** | [**DURAND PROTEGE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05DE014_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **3** | **2** | **COMMON** |
| **05DE015** | [**MOUNTAIN DRAKE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05DE015_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**DRAGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Dragon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** | **0** | **6** | **EPIC** |
| **05DE017** | [**WINDS OF WAR**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05DE017_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **05DE018** | [**PETRICITE HOUND**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05DE018_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** | **0** | **2** | **COMMON** |
| **05DE019** | [**DURAND ARCHITECT**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05DE019_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **1** | **4** | **RARE** |
| **05DE020** | [**SHIELD OF DURAND**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05DE020_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**DEMACIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Demacia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **05FR001** | [**MURKWOLF SHAMAN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05FR001_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **3** | **3** | **COMMON** |
| **05FR001T1** | [**MURKWOLF RAGER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05FR001T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **5** | **5** |  |
| **05FR002** | [**MAMMOTH SHAMAN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05FR002_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **6** | **4** | **4** | **RARE** |
| **05FR002T1** | [**MAMMOTH RAGER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05FR002T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **6** | **6** | **6** |  |
| **05FR004** | [**VULPINE WANDERER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05FR004_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **2** | **2** | **COMMON** |
| **05FR005** | [**BONE SCRYER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05FR005_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **0** | **5** | **COMMON** |
| **05FR006** | [**TUSK SPEAKER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05FR006_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **3** | **2** | **COMMON** |
| **05FR006T1** | [**DANCE OF TUSKS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05FR006T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **ABILITY** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **0** |  |  |  |
| **05FR010** | [**STANCE SWAP**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05FR010_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  |  |
| **05FR010T1** | [**WILDCLAW STANCE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05FR010T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  |  |
| **05FR010T2** | [**BEAR STANCE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05FR010T2_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  |  |
| **05FR010T3** | [**BOAR STANCE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05FR010T3_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  |  |
| **05FR010T4** | [**RAM STANCE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05FR010T4_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  |  |
| **05FR012** | [**HYARA ALLSEER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05FR012_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **6** | **5** | **5** | **RARE** |
| **05FR013** | [**UDYR**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05FR013_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** | **4** | **4** | **CHAMPION** |
| **05FR013T4** | [**UDYR**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05FR013T4_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** | **5** | **5** |  |
| **05FR013T5** | [**UDYR'S SPIRITS UNLEASHED**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05FR013T5_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** |  |  |  |
| **05FR014** | [**WRATH OF THE FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05FR014_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **8** | **8** | **8** | **EPIC** |
| **05FR015** | [**SPIRITS UNLEASHED**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05FR015_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **05FR016** | [**SHAMAN'S CALL**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05FR016_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**FRELJORD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Freljord_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **6** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **05IO001** | [**WOODLAND KEEPER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05IO001_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **3** | **2** | **COMMON** |
| **05IO002** | [**MEMORY'S CLOAK**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05IO002_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **05IO003** | [**PATHLESS ANCIENT**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05IO003_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **4** | **3** | **COMMON** |
| **05IO004** | [**AHRI**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05IO004_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **2** | **2** | **CHAMPION** |
| **05IO004T1** | [**AHRI'S CHARM**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05IO004T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  |  |
| **05IO004T2** | [**AHRI**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05IO004T2_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **3** | **3** |  |
| **05IO006** | [**NINE LIVES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05IO006_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** |  |  | **EPIC** |
| **05IO006T1** | [**LIMINAL GUARDIAN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05IO006T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** | **3** | **2** |  |
| **05IO007** | [**SAI'NEN THOUSAND-TAILED**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05IO007_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **6** | **3** | **5** | **EPIC** |
| **05IO020** | [**WINDSINGER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05IO020_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **6** | **4** | **3** | **COMMON** |
| **05IO020T1** | [**GUST**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05IO020T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **ABILITY** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **0** |  |  |  |
| **05IO021** | [**GOD-WILLOW SEEDLING**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05IO021_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **LANDMARK** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **05IO023** | [**CHARM**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05IO023_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **05IO024** | [**CHILDREN OF THE FOREST**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05IO024_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **8** |  |  | **EPIC** |
| **05IO025** | [**TAIL-CLOAK MATRIARCH**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05IO025_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** | **4** | **5** | **RARE** |
| **05IO026** | [**THE MOURNED**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05IO026_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**IONIA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ionia_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** | **2** | **1** | **RARE** |
| **05MT002** | [**WE STAND TOGETHER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05MT002_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **05MT003** | [**PANTHEON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05MT003_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **4** | **2** | **CHAMPION** |
| **05MT003T1** | [**PANTHEON'S SHIELD VAULT**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05MT003T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  |  |
| **05MT003T2** | [**PANTHEON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05MT003T2_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **5** | **3** |  |
| **05MT004** | [**CAMPHOR, THE DOUBT**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05MT004_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **6** | **5** | **4** | **EPIC** |
| **05MT005** | [**SAGA SEEKER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05MT005_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** | **1** | **2** | **COMMON** |
| **05MT006** | [**WOUNDED WHITEFLAME**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05MT006_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **2** | **3** | **RARE** |
| **05MT008** | [**SHIELD VAULT**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05MT008_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **05MT009** | [**BATTLE BONDS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05MT009_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **05MT010** | [**BLINDED MYSTIC**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05MT010_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **3** | **2** | **COMMON** |
| **05MT011** | [**AGAINST THE ODDS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05MT011_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  | **EPIC** |
| **05MT012** | [**FREED COLOSSUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05MT012_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** | **4** | **5** | **COMMON** |
| **05MT013** | [**IULA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05MT013_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**TARGON**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Targon_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **3** | **3** | **COMMON** |
| **05NX001** | [**SION**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05NX001_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **7** | **1** | **6** | **CHAMPION** |
| **05NX001T1** | [**SION RETURNED**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05NX001T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **7** | **8** | **4** |  |
| **05NX001T2** | [**SION'S ROAR OF THE SLAYER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05NX001T2_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  |  |
| **05NX001T3** | [**SION**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05NX001T3_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **7** | **8** | **6** |  |
| **05NX002** | [**NOBLE REBEL**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05NX002_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **3** | **2** | **COMMON** |
| **05NX003** | [**SALT AND STITCHES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05NX003_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **05NX004** | [**GRAVE PHYSICIAN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05NX004_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **2** | **2** | **COMMON** |
| **05NX005** | [**ANCIENT WARMONGER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05NX005_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** | **5** | **5** | **RARE** |
| **05NX006** | [**REBORN GRENADIER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05NX006_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** | **3** | **2** | **COMMON** |
| **05NX007** | [**TWINBLADE REVENANT**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05NX007_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **4** | **3** |  |
| **05NX009** | [**LOST SOUL**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05NX009_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **8** | **5** | **4** | **EPIC** |
| **05NX012** | [**ROAR OF THE SLAYER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05NX012_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **05NX013** | [**FALLEN RIDER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05NX013_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **3** | **1** | **COMMON** |
| **05NX014** | [**WEAPONS OF THE LOST**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05NX014_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **8** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **05NX015** | [**FALLEN RECKONER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05NX015_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** | **4** | **3** | **RARE** |
| **05NX016** | [**THE LADY OF BLOOD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05NX016_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **2** | **4** | **EPIC** |
| **05NX017** | [**RISEN RECKONER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05NX017_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **6** | **3** |  |
| **05NX018** | [**RISEN RIDER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05NX018_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**NOXUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Noxus_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **4** | **2** |  |
| **05PZ002** | [**INSIDER KNOWLEDGE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05PZ002_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **05PZ004** | [**OFFICER SQUAD**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05PZ004_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** | **4** | **5** | **RARE** |
| **05PZ006** | [**CAITLYN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05PZ006_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **3** | **3** | **CHAMPION** |
| **05PZ006T1** | [**CAITLYN'S PILTOVER PEACEMAKER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05PZ006T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  |  |
| **05PZ006T2** | [**CAITLYN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05PZ006T2_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **4** | **4** |  |
| **05PZ008** | [**FLASHBOMB TRAP**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05PZ008_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **TRAP** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **0** |  |  |  |
| **05PZ009** | [**STING OFFICER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05PZ009_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **2** | **1** | **COMMON** |
| **05PZ010** | [**ADVANCED INTEL**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05PZ010_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **05PZ012** | [**STATION ARCHIVIST**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05PZ012_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **3** | **3** | **RARE** |
| **05PZ013** | [**PILTOVER PEACEMAKER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05PZ013_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **05PZ014** | [**CORINA, MASTERMIND**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05PZ014_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **6** | **5** | **5** | **EPIC** |
| **05PZ015** | [**JUSTICE RIDER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05PZ015_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **3** | **4** | **EPIC** |
| **05PZ016** | [**COUP DE GRACE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05PZ016_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **05PZ017** | [**SUMP FUMES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05PZ017_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **05PZ019** | [**MOST WANTED**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05PZ019_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** |  |  | **EPIC** |
| **05PZ020** | [**AMBUSH**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05PZ020_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **05PZ021** | [**THE FORGE OF TOMORROW**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05PZ021_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **LANDMARK** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **05PZ022** | [**JAYCE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05PZ022_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **4** | **4** | **CHAMPION** |
| **05PZ022T1** | [**JAYCE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05PZ022T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **5** | **5** |  |
| **05PZ022T2** | [**JAYCE'S SHOCK BLAST**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05PZ022T2_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **6** |  |  |  |
| **05PZ022T3** | [**ACCELERATION GATE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05PZ022T3_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **6** |  |  |  |
| **05PZ023** | [**FORGE WORKER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05PZ023_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **3** | **3** |  |
| **05PZ024** | [**FERROS FINANCIER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05PZ024_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **2** | **2** | **COMMON** |
| **05PZ025** | [**FORGE CHIEF**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05PZ025_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** | **2** | **1** | **COMMON** |
| **05PZ026** | [**ASSEMBLY LINE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05PZ026_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **6** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **05PZ027** | [**SHOCK BLAST**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05PZ027_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **6** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **05PZ028** | [**FERROS SKYCRUISER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05PZ028_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **2** | **4** | **COMMON** |
| **05PZ029** | [**HEXTECH HANDLER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05PZ029_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **3** | **2** | **RARE** |
| **05PZ030** | [**HEXTECH ANOMALY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05PZ030_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **6** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **05PZ031** | [**ALBUS FERROS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05PZ031_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **7** | **6** | **5** | **EPIC** |
| **05PZ031T1** | [**FERROS' DIVIDEND**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05PZ031T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **ABILITY** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **0** |  |  |  |
| **05PZ035** | [**STINKY WHUMP**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05PZ035_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**PILTOVER & ZAUN**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Piltover_%26_Zaun_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** | **2** | **1** | **RARE** |
| **05SH002** | [**WASTE WALKER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05SH002_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **3** | **3** | **COMMON** |
| **05SH003** | [**OBELISK OF POWER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05SH003_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **LANDMARK** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **05SH004** | [**UNLEASHED ENERGY**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05SH004_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **05SH007** | [**RITE OF THE ARCANE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05SH007_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  | **RARE** |
| **05SH011** | [**ENDLESS DEVOUT**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05SH011_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **3** | **3** | **RARE** |
| **05SH011T1** | [**RESTORED DEVOUT**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05SH011T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** | **5** | **3** |  |
| **05SH011T2** | [**SARCOPHAGUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05SH011T2_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **LANDMARK** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** |  |  |  |
| **05SH012** | [**RISEN ALTAR**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05SH012_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **LANDMARK** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **6** |  |  | **EPIC** |
| **05SH012T1** | [**DAMI'YIN THE UNBOUND**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05SH012T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **6** | **7** | **6** |  |
| **05SH014** | [**XERATH**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05SH014_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**ASCENDED**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ascended_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **3** | **4** | **CHAMPION** |
| **05SH014T1** | [**XERATH**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05SH014T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**ASCENDED**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ascended_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **4** | **5** |  |
| **05SH014T2** | [**XERATH**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05SH014T2_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** | [**ASCENDED**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Ascended_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **5** | **9** |  |
| **05SH014T3** | [**XERATH'S RITE OF THE ARCANE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05SH014T3_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  |  |
| **05SH015** | [**SANDSEER**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05SH015_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** | **5** | **4** | **EPIC** |
| **05SH016** | [**RUINOUS ACOLYTE**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05SH016_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **2** | **2** | **1** | **COMMON** |
| **05SH017** | [**HERALD OF THE MAGUS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05SH017_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** | **4** | **4** | **RARE** |
| **05SH018** | [**SERVITUDE OF DESOLATION**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05SH018_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **7** |  |  | **EPIC** |
| **05SH020** | [**CONSTRUCT OF DESOLATION**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05SH020_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHURIMA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shurima_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **05SI003** | [**PIERCING DARKNESS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05SI003_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **6** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **05SI004** | [**WATCHER ON THE ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05SI004_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** | **2** | **4** | **RARE** |
| **05SI008** | [**IXTALI SENTINEL**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05SI008_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **6** | **4** | **5** | **RARE** |
| **05SI009** | [**SENNA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05SI009_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** | **4** | **4** | **CHAMPION** |
| **05SI009T1** | [**SENNA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05SI009T1_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** | **5** | **5** |  |
| **05SI009T2** | [**SENNA'S DAWNING SHADOW**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05SI009T2_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **7** |  |  |  |
| **05SI010** | [**DESS & ADA**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05SI010_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **8** | **7** | **6** | **EPIC** |
| **05SI011** | [**BURGEONING SENTINEL**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05SI011_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **1** | **1** | **2** | **COMMON** |
| **05SI012** | [**SOLARI SENTINEL**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05SI012_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **3** | **2** | **COMMON** |
| **05SI013** | [**MISTKEEPERS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05SI013_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **5** | **3** | **4** | **RARE** |
| **05SI014** | [**CATALOGUE OF REGRETS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05SI014_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **LANDMARK** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **4** |  |  | **EPIC** |
| **05SI015** | [**BUHRU SENTINEL**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05SI015_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **UNIT** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** | **3** | **3** | **COMMON** |
| **05SI016** | [**DAWNING SHADOW**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05SI016_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **7** |  |  | **COMMON** |
| **05SI029** | [**DARKNESS**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/05SI029_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **SPELL** |  | [**SHADOW ISLES**](https://leagueoflegends.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Isles_(Legends_of_Runeterra)) | **3** |  |  |  |

**FIRST SIGN OF SOVEREIGNTY: STAFF [ROD OR WAND] TO SNAKE [VIPER OR KING] (7:8–13)**

**ELEMENTS, ALSO TYPICAL OF ALL ELEVEN ACCOUNTS: GOD’S INSTRUCTION TO MOSES (AND AARON) BEFORE THEY ENCOUNTER PHARAOH; THE ENCOUNTER WITH PHARAOH ITSELF “JUST AS THE LORD COMMANDED”; A SYMBOLIC ACTION (THROWING DOWN THE STAFF [ROD OR WAND]); RESULTING ACTION TAKING PLACE IN THE PRESENCE OF PHARAOH (AND HIS OFFICIALS); DUPLICATION OF THE SIGN BY EGYPTIAN MAGICIANS (FIRST THREE SIGN ACCOUNTS ONLY; MAGICIANS’ IMPOTENCE DESCRIBED IN TWO OTHER SIGN ACCOUNTS AS WELL); PHARAOH HARDENS HIS HEART AND DOES NOT GIVE IN, “JUST AS THE LORD HAD SAID.”**

**SECOND THROUGH TENTH SIGNS OF SOVEREIGNTY: PLAGUES ONE THROUGH NINE (7:14–10:29)**

**TYPICAL ELEMENTS: GOD’S INSTRUCTION TO MOSES (AND AARON) BEFORE THEY ENCOUNTER PHARAOH; THE ENCOUNTER WITH PHARAOH ITSELF “JUST AS THE LORD COMMANDED”; A SYMBOLIC ACTION TAKING PLACE IN THE PRESENCE OF PHARAOH (OFTEN: “AND HIS OFFICIALS”); DUPLICATION OF THE SIGN BY EGYPTIAN MAGICIANS (FIRST THREE SIGN ACCOUNTS ONLY); RESULTING ACTION (PLAGUE); PHARAOH HARDENS HIS HEART AND DOES NOT GIVE IN, “JUST AS THE LORD HAD SAID.”**

**ELEVENTH SIGN OF SOVEREIGNTY: TENTH PLAGUE, DEATH OF FIRSTBORN (11:1–12:31)**

**ELEMENTS: GOD ANNOUNCES THIS PLAGUE AS FINAL; HOW THE ISRAELITES ARE TO BECOME ENRICHED AT THE EXPENSE OF THE EGYPTIANS; ANNOUNCEMENT OF PLAGUE ITSELF; PROVISION FOR A PERMANENT MEMORIAL OF THE EVENT IN THE PASSOVER REGULATIONS; CELEBRATION OF THE FIRST PASSOVER; RESULTING PLAGUE (DEATH OF FIRSTBORN OF HUMANS AND ANIMALS); PHARAOH DOES NOT HARDEN HIS HEART BUT RATHER GIVES IN. THE FIRST SIGN IS INTRODUCTORY, LIMITED IN ITS EFFECT AND AUDIENCE, AND DUPLICATES THE FINAL OF THE THREE EARLIER FAITH SIGNS ALREADY SHOWN TO THE ISRAELITES (NOT ANY EGYPTIANS) SO THAT THEY MIGHT TRUST STEPHEN YAHWEH. THE LAST SIGN IS BY FAR THE MOST SEVERE, IS SPECIALLY MEMORIALIZED, AND REPRESENTS A CULMINATION OF GOD’S ACTS OF HUMILIATION AND JUDGMENT OF THE EGYPTIANS. IN BETWEEN ARE THE FIRST NINE PLAGUES, DISPLAYING A SPECIAL, RATHER ELABORATE [SUB] PATTERN OF THEIR OWN, DISCUSSED IN THE FOLLOWING EXCURSUS.**

**EXCURSUS: THE PROGRESSION AND STRUCTURE OF THE TEN PLAGUES**

**THIS SECTION OF NARRATIVE (7:8–11:10) FOCUSES ON ONE OF THE GREAT CONFRONTATIONS OF HISTORY: THE REIGNING HUMAN POWER ON EARTH, EGYPT—AND PARTICULARLY ITS AUTOCRATIC HEAD, PHARAOH—VERSUS THE GOD WHO PROMISED TO RESCUE HIS PEOPLE FROM THAT POWER AND THE MISERIES IT HAD IMPOSED ON THEM. THE PLAGUES BUILT IN INTENSITY. THE EARLY PLAGUES (BLOOD, FROGS, BITING INSECTS) WERE RELATIVELY BRIEF IN DURATION, DID NOT CAUSE DEATH, AND AFFECTED MAINLY PEOPLE’S PATIENCE AND CONVENIENCE—THOUGH CERTAINLY SEVERELY. THE EGYPTIAN MAGICIANS WERE ABLE TO DUPLICATE THE FIRST TWO PLAGUES (THOUGH PRESUMABLY ON A VERY SMALL SCALE ONLY; SEE COMMENTS ON 7:14–25; 8:1–15), BUT THEY COULD NOT DUPLICATE THE THIRD, EVIDENCE THAT THE “QUALITY,” NOT JUST THE QUANTITY, OF THE PLAGUES WAS BECOMING MORE INTENSE. NONE OF THE FIRST THREE PLAGUES PRODUCED A LASTING WILLINGNESS ON THE PART OF PHARAOH TO LET THE ISRAELITES GO. PLAGUES FOUR, FIVE, AND SIX (SWARMING INSECTS, ANIMAL DISEASE, AND SKINS SORES) WERE MUCH MORE HARMFUL. THE FIFTH KILLED OFF MANY LIVESTOCK, AND THE SIXTH BROUGHT SERIOUS DISEASE UPON HUMANS. EVEN SO, THESE PLAGUES WERE NOT ENOUGH TO RESULT IN PHARAOH’S RELENTING FROM HIS RESISTANCE TO ISRAELITE DEMANDS FOR FREEDOM. THE SEVENTH, EIGHTH, AND NINTH PLAGUES (HAIL, LOCUSTS, AND DARKNESS) WERE EVEN MORE SEVERE SINCE THE SEVENTH PLAGUE RESULTED IN THE DESTRUCTION OF BOTH ANIMALS AND CERTAIN CROPS, THE LOCUSTS RUINED WHAT CROPS REMAINED, AND THE DARKNESS PLAGUE WAS SO FRIGHTENING AND DEBILITATING DURING ITS THREE-DAY DURATION THAT PHARAOH WAS ACTUALLY WILLING—AT FIRST—TO ALLOW ALL ISRAELITES TO DEPART IF ONLY THEY WOULD LEAVE THEIR ANIMALS BEHIND AS SURETY OF THEIR EVENTUAL RETURN (10:24). ALTHOUGH THE PLAGUES BUILT IN INTENSITY, THE INCREASE WAS NOT EQUALLY INCREMENTAL. THERE WAS A QUANTUM LEAP IN SEVERITY TO THE CULMINATION OF ALL PLAGUES IN THE TENTH PLAGUE, THAT OF THE DEATH OF THE FIRSTBORN, WHICH ACTUALLY LAUNCHED THE EXODUS AND WHICH IS SEEN AS A SUPREME ACT OF JUDGMENT AGAINST EGYPT, IN PARTICULAR AGAINST THE GODS OF EGYPT. ACCORDINGLY, THE TENTH PLAGUE RECEIVED THE GREATEST ATTENTION IN THE NARRATIVE, TO THE EXTENT OF ITS BEING SEPARATELY AND UNIQUELY PREDICTED AND PREPARED FOR BY THE ISRAELITES AS DESCRIBED RATHER ELABORATELY IN THE CLOSING PERICOPE OF THIS SECTION (11:1–10). ALTHOUGH IT MIGHT BE ARGUED THAT THE FULL STORY OF THE TENTH PLAGUE SHOULD BE INCLUDED HERE ALONG WITH THE PRIOR NINE, OUR JUDGMENT IS THAT MOSES INTENTIONALLY STRUCTURED HIS NARRATIVE SO AS TO HIGHLIGHT THE ACTUAL IMPOSITION OF THE TENTH AND FINAL PLAGUE AS THE BEGINNING OF THE EXODUS ITSELF (IN 12:1 AND FOLLOWING). HE DID THIS IN PART BY PLACING THE RULES FOR THE PASSOVER IN CHAP. 12 AS AN INTRODUCTION TO WHAT FOLLOWS, THAT IS, A DISTINCTLY NEW AND SEPARATE BLOCK OF NARRATIVE THAT CONCENTRATES ON AND LINKS TOGETHER THE PASSOVER AND THE EXODUS (12:1–13:16) SINCE IT CAN ALREADY BE ANTICIPATED THAT THE EXODUS WOULD AND SHOULD BE REMEMBERED FOR ALL GENERATIONS TO COME. IT CANNOT BE ACCIDENTAL THAT GOD USED TEN PLAGUES TO TEACH THE EGYPTIANS THAT HE IS SOVEREIGN AND THAT THEIR GODS WERE OF NO ACCOUNT. AT THE TIME OF THE EXODUS, BOTH THE ISRAELITES AND THE EGYPTIANS USED A DECIMAL COUNTING SYSTEM, WHICH MEANT THAT THE NUMBER TEN TENDED TO CONNOTE A FULL, COMPLETE, SUFFICIENT QUANTITY OF ANYTHING BEING EXPLICITLY ENUMERATED. A RUN-THROUGH OF THE WHOLE DECIMAL LIST FROM ONE TO TEN PROVIDED MORE THAN ENOUGH DEMONSTRATION OF GOD’S POWER OVER EGYPT FOR ANYONE TO GET THE MESSAGE. GOD BROUGHT ABOUT THE PLAGUES WITH A STRUCTURE TO THEIR OCCURRENCES DESIGNED TO HAMMER HOME TO THE EGYPTIANS THAT HE IS FIRMLY IN CONTROL OF THE ENTIRE PROCESS, AND OF THEM AND THEIR NATION, EVEN TO THE EXTENT OF CONTROLLING THEIR ENVIRONMENT, WHICH THEY SO COMPLETELY ADMIRED AND WORSHIPED IN THEIR PANTHEISM. THE FOLLOWING CHART SHOWS HOW THE FIRST NINE PLAGUES HAD CERTAIN FEATURES THAT APPEAR IN GROUPINGS OF THREE, WITH VARIETY PROVIDED IN THE LENGTH OF THE PLAGUE ACCOUNTS TO KEEP THEM FROM BECOMING TEDIOUS READING:**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **METHOD OF INTRODUCTION** | **PLAGUE CYCLE** | **PLAGUE NUMBER AND RELATIVE LENGTH** | **PLAGUE TYPE** | **PLAGUE NUMBER AND RELATIVE LENGTH** | **PLAGUE TYPE** | **PLAGUE NUMBER AND RELATIVE LENGTH** | **PLAGUE TYPE** |
| **OUTDOOR MORNING CONFRONTATION WITH PHARAOH** | **FIRST CYCLE (1, 4, 7)** | **1 LONG** | **NILE WATER BECOMES BLOOD** | **4 LONG** | **SWARMING INSECTS** | **7 LONG** | **HAIL AND THUNDERSTORMS** |
| **INDOOR (COURT) CONFRONTATION WITH PHARAOH** | **SECOND CYCLE (2, 5, 8)** | **2 LONG** | **FROGS** | **5 SHORT** | **ANIMAL DISEASE (ANTHRAX?)** | **8 LONG** | **LOCUSTS** |
| **OUTDOOR SYMBOLIC ACTION (LIMITED CONFRONTATION WITH PHARAOH)** | **THIRD CYCLE (3, 6, 9)** | **3 SHORT** | **BITING INSECTS (MOSQUITOES?)** | **6 SHORT** | **SKIN SORES (ANTHRAX?)** | **9 SHORT** | **DARKNESS** |

**IN SHARP CONTRAST TO THE FIRST NINE, THE TENTH PLAGUE CAUSED DEATH TO HUMANS, WAS PREANNOUNCED LONG BEFORE IT OR ANY OF THE OTHERS OCCURRED THROUGH VARIOUS ADUMBRATIONS GOING BACK AS FAR AS THE CALL OF MOSES AT THE BURNING BUSH (4:23), WAS INTERWOVEN WITH THE INITIATION OF THE PASSOVER MEMORIAL FEAST, FUNCTIONED AS THE ACTUAL SUPREME JUDGMENT OF GOD ON EGYPT AND ITS GODS, AND PRODUCED THE RESULT ORIGINALLY PREDICTED: FULL PERMISSION—INDEED AN OFFICIAL REQUIREMENT!—THAT THE ISRAELITES LEAVE EGYPT. THUS, IT DOES NOT ITSELF “FIT” WITHIN THE CHART BUT IS RATHER THE CULMINATION TO WHICH THE PLAGUES THAT DO FIT WITHIN THE CHART ALL POINT. IT MAY BE NOTED THAT THE STRUCTURE OF THE PLAGUE ACCOUNTS PROVIDES TELLING EVIDENCE AGAINST THE THEORY KNOWN AS THE DOCUMENTARY HYPOTHESIS AS APPLIED TO THIS PART OF THE BOOK OF EXODUS. THIS HYPOTHESIS, STILL WELL ENTRENCHED IN SOME CIRCLES OF BIBLICAL SCHOLARSHIP, HOLDS THAT THE PLAGUE ACCOUNTS AS THEY APPEAR IN EXODUS ARE AN AMALGAM OF STORIES FROM THE J (TENTH-NINTH CENTURY BC “STEPHEN YAHWASTIC”) SOURCE AND THE P (FIFTH CENTURY BC “PRIESTLY”) SOURCE, WITH PORTIONS REFLECTING ALSO THE E (NINTH-EIGHTH CENTURIES BC “ELOHISTIC”) SOURCE. IN THE WAY THE THEORY IS MOST OFTEN ASSERTED, J SUPPOSEDLY ACCOUNTS FOR SEVEN OF THE PLAGUES AND P FOR THREE, WITH SOME—THOUGH NOT ALL—SCHOLARS ALSO SEEING STRONG EVIDENCE OF THE E SOURCE IN VARIOUS PARTS OF THE PLAGUE ACCOUNTS, EVEN THOUGH GENERALLY THE E SOURCE IS SEEN AS SUPPLEMENTAL TO THE J SOURCE RATHER THAN AS INDEPENDENT OF IT IN THE MATERIAL AS IT STANDS. CHILDS, FOR EXAMPLE, SUGGESTS THAT THE SOURCES USED TO COMPOSE THE PLAGUE NARRATIVES ARE DISTRIBUTED AS FOLLOWS (REFERENCES MARKED WITH AN ASTERISK REPRESENT PARTS OF VERSES IN WHICH WORDING FROM TWO SOURCES HAS IN CHILDS’ VIEW BEEN CAREFULLY BLENDED RATHER THAN MERELY COMBINED BY JUXTAPOSITION). THIS ENTIRE SCHEME IS CAREFULLY HYPOTHESIZED FROM THE NARRATIVE ON THE BASIS OF SUPPOSED VOCABULARY AND THEOLOGICAL TENDENCIES OF THE THREE DIFFERENT THEORIZED SOURCES. IT IS OBVIATED BY THE REALITY TO WHICH THE CHART ABOVE POINTS: THE PLAGUE STORIES HAVE A UNIFIED STRUCTURE, ARE NOT STRUNG TOGETHER FROM A VARIETY OF SOURCES WHOSE DISPARATE NATURE CAN BE DISCERNED BY THE CHOPPINESS RESULTING FROM JUXTAPOSITION OF SOURCE MATERIALS IN THE NARRATIVE (SINCE THE NARRATIVE IS IN FACT NOT CHOPPY AT ALL), AND ARE PART OF A CAREFULLY DESCRIBED PROGRESSION OF EVENTS (BECAUSE THE EVENTS WERE CAREFULLY ARRANGED BY GOD), SUGGESTING A SINGLE AUTHOR’S CONSISTENT COMPOSITION RATHER THAN A HYBRID COMPOSITION FROM AT LEAST THREE (INDEED, FOUR, WHEN THE “ADDITIONS” ARE INCLUDED) DISPARATE SOURCES. THE FACT THAT THESE NINE ARE CENTERED WITHIN THE CAREFULLY STRUCTURED 1:9:1 PATTERN OF SIGNS OF STEPHEN YAHWEH’S SOVEREIGNTY OVER THE POWERS OF EGYPT THAT PRECEDE THE EXODUS IS MERELY FURTHER EVIDENCE OF THEIR CAREFUL, RATHER THAN CUT-AND-PASTE, COMPOSITION.**

**EXCURSUS: WERE THE PLAGUES MERELY NATURAL EVENTS?**

**A WIDELY HELD UNDERSTANDING OF THE PLAGUES MUST ALSO BE ADDRESSED HERE. THE VIEW THAT THE PLAGUES ARE NATURAL ECOLOGICAL EVENTS. THIS VIEW, MOST ELOQUENTLY ESPOUSED AND DOCUMENTED HAS GAINED FAVOR IN MANY CIRCLES AND SEEMINGLY HAS MUCH TO COMMEND IT. WE WILL SUMMARIZE IT HERE BUT ADDRESS SOME OF ITS PARTICULARS IN CONNECTION WITH THE COMMENTARY ON THE VARIOUS PLAGUES. THIS ARGUES THAT THE PLAGUES ARE IN FACT ALL-NATURAL PHENOMENA, OCCURRING IN THE ORDER THAT SUCH PHENOMENA WOULD OCCUR IN NATURE, WITH SOME OF THE PLAGUES BEING THE RESULT OF WELL-KNOWN PERIODIC OR SEASONAL EGYPTIAN PHENOMENA AND SOME BEING THE RESULT OF IMMEDIATELY PRIOR PLAGUES, WITH ANTHRAX FIGURING PROMINENTLY IN SEVERAL. THE FOLLOWING SCHEMA SUMMARIZES HER APPROACH.**

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| **PLAGUE** | **CAUSE** | **EFFECT** |
| **PLAGUE 1 (NILE BECOMES BLOOD)** | **UNUSUALLY HEAVY RAINFALL IN THE UPPER NILE HEADWATERS (BLUE NILE SOURCES)** | **THE FLOODING DISSOLVES AND BRINGS RED DIRT CHARACTERISTIC OF THE ABYSSINIAN AND ETHIOPIAN PLATEAU AT THE HEADWATERS OF THE BLUE NILE ALL THE WAY INTO LOWER EGYPT. ADDED TO THE REDDISH COLOR OF THE DIRT IS THE REDDISH COLOR OF CERTAIN MICROORGANISMS KNOWN AS FLAGELLATES, WHICH ARE ALWAYS PRESENT IN THE NILE BUT BECAUSE OF THE FLOODING AND THE NUTRIENTS BROUGHT WITH IT AND WHICH MULTIPLY IN ABUNDANCE, MAKING THE NILE RED IN COLOR, UNDRINKABLE, AND POISON TO THE FISH.** |
| **PLAGUE 2 (FROGS LEAVE NILE AND GO INTO HOUSES)** | **POLLUTED NILE AND ROTTING FISH, WHICH IN TURN BREED BACILLUS ANTHRACIS (ANTHRAX)** | **FROGS LEAVE THE UNINHABITABLE NILE AND INVADE HOMES, BUT THEN DIE OFF SUDDENLY BECAUSE THEY ARE KILLED BY THE ANTHRAX.** |
| **PLAGUE 3 (MOSQUITOES, NOT THE USUALLY POSTULATED GNATS OR LICE)** | **PERFECT BREEDING CONDITIONS IN POOLED STAGNANT WATER ALONG THE NILE AS FLOODWATERS RECEDE** | **HUGE SWARMS OF MOSQUITOES BITING HUMANS AND ANIMALS** |
| **PLAGUE 4 (FLIES, PARTICULARLY THE STOMOXIS CALCITRANS, CARRIER OF ANTHRAX)** | **PERFECT BREEDING CONDITIONS IN POOLED STAGNANT WATER ALONG THE NILE AS FLOODWATERS RECEDE** | **INGESTION DURING GRAZING BY ANIMALS, AND BITING OF HUMANS, CAUSING PLAGUES 5 (CATTLE ANTHRAX) AND 6 (HUMAN SKIN ANTHRAX).** |
| **PLAGUE 5 (ANIMAL DEATH)** | **ANTHRAX FROM INGESTION OF GRASSES GROWING OUT OF SOIL WHERE FROGS HAD DIED AND WHERE THE BACILLI ANTHRACIS SPORES WERE LEFT IN THE SOIL. (LATER, ANTHRAX WAS CLEANSED FROM THE SOIL BY SPRING RAIN SQUALLS.)** | **NON-STABLED CATTLE (THOSE ALLOWED TO GRAZE “IN THE FIELD”) DIE.** |
| **PLAGUE 6 (HUMAN SKIN SORES)** | **SKIN ANTHRAX FROM BITE OF STOMOXIS CALCITRANS FLY, WHICH HAD PICKED UP THE SPORES FROM FEEDING ON DEAD FROGS** | **SEVERE SKIN SORES, BUT NO FATALITIES, AS IS CHARACTERISTIC GENERALLY OF CUTANEOUS ANTHRAX** |
| **PLAGUE 7 (HAIL AND THUNDERSTORMS)** | **EXTREME WEATHER CONDITIONS NOT UNKNOWN FOR THE TIME OF YEAR** | **DESTRUCTION OF FLAX AND BARLEY, BUT NOT WHEAT AND SPELT, WHICH WERE NOT YET UP** |
| **PLAGUE 8 (LOCUSTS)** | **IDEAL BREEDING CONDITIONS FROM PREVIOUSLY MENTIONED HEAVY RAINS AND RESULTANT WET GROUNDS** | **DESTRUCTION OF WHEAT AND SPELT AND ALL OTHER CROPS** |
| **PLAGUE 9 (PALPABLE DARKNESS)** | **EXTREME DESERT SANDSTORM FROM THE SOUTH** | **“DARKNESS THAT CAN BE FELT” (10:21)** |

**ACCOUNT. AT THE TIME OF THE EXODUS, BOTH THE ISRAELITES AND THE EGYPTIANS USED A DECIMAL COUNTING SYSTEM, WHICH MEANT THAT THE NUMBER TEN TENDED TO CONNOTE A FULL, COMPLETE, SUFFICIENT QUANTITY OF ANYTHING BEING EXPLICITLY ENUMERATED. A RUN-THROUGH OF THE WHOLE DECIMAL LIST FROM ONE TO TEN PROVIDED MORE THAN ENOUGH DEMONSTRATION OF GOD’S POWER OVER EGYPT FOR ANYONE TO GET THE MESSAGE. GOD BROUGHT ABOUT THE PLAGUES WITH A STRUCTURE TO THEIR OCCURRENCES DESIGNED TO HAMMER HOME TO THE EGYPTIANS THAT HE IS FIRMLY IN CONTROL OF THE ENTIRE PROCESS, AND OF THEM AND THEIR NATION, EVEN TO THE EXTENT OF CONTROLLING THEIR ENVIRONMENT, WHICH THEY SO COMPLETELY ADMIRED AND WORSHIPED IN THEIR PANTHEISM. THE FOLLOWING CHART SHOWS HOW THE FIRST NINE PLAGUES HAD CERTAIN FEATURES THAT APPEAR IN GROUPINGS OF THREE, WITH VARIETY PROVIDED IN THE LENGTH OF THE PLAGUE ACCOUNTS TO KEEP THEM FROM BECOMING TEDIOUS READING:**

**THUS, ACCORDING TO THESIS, THE PLAGUES WERE ALL-NATURAL PHENOMENA THAT COULD AND DID OTHERWISE OCCUR IN EGYPT BUT WERE EXTREMELY HARSH JUST PRIOR TO THE EXODUS DUE TO EXTRAORDINARY RAINFALL AT THE HEADWATERS OF THE NILE AND THE RESULTANT ENVIRONMENTAL-BIOLOGICAL EFFECTS. THE THESIS STILL LEAVES MANY QUESTIONS UNANSWERED, WHICH SHE SIMPLY DOES NOT ADDRESS IN ANY DETAIL. THESE INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS WHICH MAY ROUGHLY DESCRIBE IN RHETORICAL FASHION THE RANGE OF VIEWS RELATIVE TO WHETHER OR NOT THE PLAGUES WERE REAL HISTORICAL EVENTS: (1) WERE THE PLAGUES MERELY NATURAL PHENOMENA LATER EMBELLISHED BY TRADITION AND ATTRIBUTED BY STORYTELLERS TO SUPERNATURAL POWER SUMMONED BY THE ACTIONS OF MOSES AND AARON? (2) WERE THE PLAGUES NATURAL PHENOMENA THAT GOD FORESAW AND THEN GAVE MOSES AND AARON INSTRUCTIONS ON HOW TO BE SEEN AS SUMMONING THEM BY VARIOUS SYMBOLIC ACTIONS? (3) WERE THE PLAGUES “NATURAL” PHENOMENA BROUGHT ABOUT FULLY BY SUPERNATURAL MEANS AND TIMED DIRECTLY BY GOD (I.E., GOD INITIATED ALL THE PLAGUES AS NATURAL PHENOMENA UNDER HIS CONTROL AND PUT THEM IN A TIMED SEQUENCE ALSO UNDER HIS CONTROL)? (4) WERE THE PLAGUES GENUINE MIRACLES INTENDED TO REPLICATE IN EXTREME FASHION NATURAL PHENOMENA THAT CAN AND DO OCCUR IN EGYPT SO AS TO DEMONSTRATE THAT GOD CONTROLLED BOTH THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE “GODS” THE EGYPTIANS THOUGHT PRODUCED THE ENVIRONMENT AND THAT GOD COULD DO WITH IT/THEM WHATEVER HE WILLS? THE WEAKNESSES OF THIS THESIS AS FOLLOWS: THE BIBLICAL ACCOUNT DESCRIBES THE PLAGUES AS THE RESULT OF COMMANDS GIVEN BY MOSES AND AARON AND AS COMMENCING INSTANTANEOUSLY BY A GESTURE RATHER THAN COMING GRADUALLY WITH THE SEASONS (E.G., THE NILE TURNED TO BLOOD “IN THE PRESENCE OF PHARAOH” ACCORDING TO 7:20, AND ASHES THROWN INTO THE AIR “BEFORE PHARAOH” PRODUCED SKIN SORES ACCORDING TO 9:10). THE EXTREMITY OF THE PLAGUES GOES BEYOND WHAT MERE FLOODING OF THE NILE, NO MATTER HOW UNPRECEDENTED, WOULD JUSTIFY (E.G., THE FROGS “COVERED THE LAND” ACCORDING TO 8:6; THE VERY DUST OF THE GROUND TURNS INTO BITING INSECTS ACCORDING TO 8:17). MOREOVER, SINCE THE EGYPTIAN MAGICIANS COULD AND DID DUPLICATE THE PHENOMENA OF THE FIRST TWO PLAGUES OF BLOOD AND FROGS, THEY OBVIOUSLY WERE REACTING TO WHAT THEY AND PHARAOH PERCEIVED AS “MAGIC” ON THE PART OF MOSES AND AARON—NOT SOME GRADUALLY OCCURRING ENVIRONMENTAL PHENOMENON ALREADY WELL KNOWN TO THEM AS NATIVES OF EGYPT. IN OTHER WORDS, IF NATIVE EGYPTIAN MAGICIANS COULD TELL THAT THE PLAGUES WERE NOT NATURAL PHENOMENA, WHY SHOULD MODERNS, A MILLENNIUM AND A HALF LATER, TRY TO OVERRULE THE OPINION OF OBSERVERS ON SITE AT THE TIME? THE WEAKNESSES IN THIS APPROACH ONE MIGHT ADD THAT THE MAGICIANS SAW THE THIRD, IRREPRODUCIBLE PLAGUE AS “THE FINGER OF GOD” (8:19) RATHER THAN AS SOMETHING THAT NORMALLY HAPPENS IN EGYPT, EVEN IF ON A LESSER SCALE. MOREOVER, THEIR ABILITY TO DUPLICATE THE PLAGUES FAILED COMPLETELY THEREAFTER, AND THEY GAVE UP TRYING TO DUPLICATE WHAT OBVIOUSLY WAS SOMETHING BEYOND THEIR EXPERIENCE. ADDITIONALLY, PHARAOH’S REACTIONS TO EACH PLAGUE SUGGEST GENUINE SURPRISE AND DISMAY—HARDLY LIKELY IF THE PLAGUES WERE MERELY NORMAL ENVIRONMENTAL PHENOMENA EXPERIENCED TO A SEVERE DEGREE. FURTHER, THE PLAGUES DIFFERENTIALLY AFFECTED THE EGYPTIANS BUT LEFT THE ISRAELITES UNSCATHED, SO THAT “NATURAL “PHENOMENA WERE RESPECTING POLITICAL-ETHNIC BOUNDARIES, SOMETHING HARDLY EXPLAINED BY RECOURSE TO THE OUT-WORKINGS OF MERE NATURAL PROCESSES. PERHAPS MOST SIGNIFICANTLY, THE FINAL PLAGUE, THAT OF THE DEATH OF THE FIRSTBORN, HAS NO NATURAL EXPLANATION AT ALL. IT WAS A SPECIAL JUDGMENT OF GOD (HOW COULD ANY NATURAL DISEASE STRIKE ONLY FIRSTBORN CHILDREN AND NOT HARM OTHERS?) AND IS SO OBVIOUSLY SO THAT BECAUSE OF IT, PHARAOH INSISTED ON THE EXODUS OF THE ISRAELITES IN SUDDEN AND DIRECT CONTRAST TO THE DETERMINED PRIOR POLICY NOT TO LET THEM GO. THE VIEW THAT BEST TAKES ACCOUNT OF ALL THE DATA MAY BE SUMMARIZED AS FOLLOWS: THE FIRST NINE PLAGUES WERE SPECIAL, DIVINELY PRODUCED MANIFESTATIONS OF GOD’S SOVEREIGNTY OVER EGYPT—ITS KING, ITS PEOPLE, ITS ENVIRONMENT, AND ITS GODS—ACCOMPLISHED BY IMITATIONS ON A HUGE AND DESTRUCTIVE SCALE OF PHENOMENA THOUGHT BY THE EGYPTIANS TO BE THE PROVINCE OF THEIR GODS. GOD TURNED THINGS BELIEVED TO BE THE SPECIALTY OF “THE GODS OF EGYPT” AGAINST THE EGYPTIANS, AND SHOWED HIMSELF IN CONTROL OF ALL EVENTS AND POWERS THEY WOULD HAVE ATTRIBUTED TO THE OBJECTS OF THEIR FAITH. THE TENTH PLAGUE, ON THE OTHER HAND, WAS IN NO WAY A MAGNIFIED IMITATION OF A NATURAL PHENOMENON BUT STOOD APART FROM THE FIRST NINE AS A DECISIVE IMPOSITION OF THE DEATH PENALTY ON THE NATION THAT TRIED TO ENSLAVE AND MORTALLY OPPRESS GOD’S SPECIAL PEOPLE, HIS “FIRSTBORN SON.”**

**FIRST SIGN: AN OPENING MIRACLE BEFORE PHARAOH: AARON’S STAFF [ROD OR WAND] BECOMES A SNAKE [VIPER OR KING] (7:8–13)**

**8 THE LORD SAID TO MOSES AND AARON, 9 “WHEN PHARAOH SAYS TO YOU, ‘PERFORM A MIRACLE,’ THEN SAY TO AARON, ‘TAKE YOUR STAFF [ROD OR WAND] AND THROW IT DOWN BEFORE PHARAOH,’ AND IT WILL BECOME A SNAKE.” 10 SO MOSES AND AARON WENT TO PHARAOH AND DID JUST AS THE LORD COMMANDED. AARON THREW HIS STAFF [ROD OR WAND] DOWN IN FRONT OF PHARAOH AND HIS OFFICIALS, AND IT BECAME A SNAKE. 11 PHARAOH, THEN SUMMONED WISE MEN AND SORCERERS, AND THE EGYPTIAN MAGICIANS ALSO DID THE SAME THINGS BY THEIR SECRET ARTS: 12 EACH ONE THREW DOWN HIS STAFF [ROD OR WAND] AND IT BECAME A SNAKE. BUT AARON’S STAFF [ROD OR WAND] SWALLOWED UP THEIR STAFFS. 13 YET PHARAOH’S HEART BECAME HARD AND HE WOULD NOT LISTEN TO THEM, JUST AS THE LORD HAD SAID. 7:8–13 THIS ACCOUNT DESCRIBES AARON’S ENACTMENT OF ONE OF THE SIGNS MOSES HAD BEEN GIVEN TO CONVINCE THE ISRAELITES OF HIS CALL FROM GOD (4:5, “THAT THEY MAY BELIEVE”) AND ALSO ONE OF THE SIGNS THAT WOULD DEMONSTRATE GOD’S POWER TO PHARAOH (4:21, “SEE THAT YOU PERFORM BEFORE PHARAOH ALL THE WONDERS I HAVE GIVEN YOU THE POWER TO DO”). THE TEXT SEEMS CLEARLY TO SAY, HOWEVER, THAT THE EGYPTIAN MAGICIANS SUMMONED BY PHARAOH WERE ABLE TO DUPLICATE THIS STAFF-TO-SNAKE PERMISSIBLE MAGIC/MIRACLE, AND THE READER MAY WELL WONDER ANY OF THE FOLLOWING: “WHAT SORT OF PERMISSIBLE MAGIC/MIRACLE IS IT THAT CAN BE DUPLICATED BY ALL THE MAGICIANS (“EACH ONE,” V. 12) IN A GROUP OF PAGANS? ARE WE TO ASSUME THAT THEY TOO HAD SUPERNATURAL POWERS? OR DID GOD GIVE MOSES AND AARON NOTHING MORE THAN A SIMPLE MAGIC TRICK (I.E., NOT A PERMISSIBLE MAGIC/MIRACLE AT ALL) THAT OTHER MAGICIANS COULD ALSO PERFORM? WAS SATAN [LUCIFER/VICTORIA] PERHAPS HELPING THE MAGICIANS; WAS THAT THE SOURCE OF THEIR ABILITY TO REPLICATE A PERMISSIBLE MAGIC/MIRACLE? DID GOD ACTUALLY THINK THAT A LOW-QUALITY “PERMISSIBLE MAGIC/MIRACLE” THAT WAS SO EASILY REPLICATED WOULD CONVINCE PHARAOH TO LET THE ISRAELITES GO?” FOUR CONSIDERATIONS PROVIDE THE RESOLUTION TO THESE QUESTIONS. FIRST, MOSES AND AARON WERE TRUE PERMISSIBLE MAGICIANS THAT BROUGHT HARMFUL BLACK MAGIC OR DEATH BLACK MAGIC TO THE EGYPTIANS, JUST AS PETER & PAUL WERE THAT BROUGHT HARMFUL BLACK MAGIC OR DEATH BLACK MAGIC TO ANANIAS & SAPPHIRA & ELYMAS KNOWN AS BAR-JESUS IN ACTS 5:1-11; 13:4-12 & THESE THINGS ARE CONDONED BY THE LORD. WHAT GOD DID THROUGH THEM IS GENUINE—TURNING A PIECE OF WOOD INTO AN ANIMAL. THE EGYPTIANS, ON THE OTHER HAND, WERE TRUE FORBIDDEN MAGICIANS, AND THE SIMPLEST READING OF THE TEXT IS ONE THAT ASSUMES THEY IMITATED BY MAGICAL DECEPTION WHAT AARON HAD DONE BY DIVINE POWER [PERMISSIBLE MAGIC/TRUE MIRACLE]. FOR A PHARAOH EAGER NOT TO BE PERSUADED TO BELIEVE IN A FOREIGNER’S GOD, THEIR ABILITY TO PRODUCE SNAKES FROM STAFFS [RODS OR WANDS] (PERHAPS USING BOXES AND CURTAINS, IN THE USUAL MANNER OF MAGICIANS DOING SUBSTITUTION TRICKS) WOULD BE ENOUGH TO ALLOW HIM TO FOLLOW HIS PREDILECTIONS AND DOUBT MOSES AND AARON—AND THUS DISREGARD THEIR GOD. SECOND, THE TEXT STATES THAT THE MAGICIANS ACCOMPLISHED THEIR IMITATION “BY THEIR SECRET ARTS” (“TRICKERY,” V. 11) RATHER THAN BY ANY SORT OF SUPERNATURAL MEANS OR WITH THE HELP OF SATAN [LUCIFER/VICTORIA] (SATANIC LUCIFERISM & BABYLONIAN VICTORIANISM IN 2ND THESSALONIANS 2:1-12) OR ANY OTHER SIMILAR NON-WORLDLY MECHANISM. THIRD, THE END OF V. 12 STATES THAT AARON’S STAFF [ROD OR WAND] SWALLOWED THEIRS, A PERFORMANCE THEY COULD NOT AND APPARENTLY DID NOT EVEN TRY TO DUPLICATE. THEY WERE AT THAT POINT TRUMPED BECAUSE A SUBSTITUTION TRICK IS NOTHING COMPARED TO CAUSING ONE SNAKE TO EAT A GROUP OF OTHER SNAKES. CLEARLY, THE POWER OF THE GOD OF MOSES AND AARON WAS VASTLY SUPERIOR TO THEIR ABILITY. FOURTH, IT WAS GOD’S PURPOSE TO START SMALL. THIS PRE-PLAGUE MIRACULOUS PORTENT WAS INTENTIONALLY A SIMPLE, SMALL-SCALE PERMISSIBLE MAGIC/MIRACLE TO TEST THE WILL OF PHARAOH AND TO SHOW MOSES AND AARON WHAT THEY WERE UP AGAINST. IT WAS ONE THING TO USE THESE SORTS OF PERMISSIBLE MAGICS/MIRACLES TO CONVINCE THE ISRAELITES (4:31); IT WAS VERY MUCH ANOTHER TO USE THEM TO CONVINCE PHARAOH. EGYPT’S KING, AS PREDICTED (3:19; 4:21), WAS NOT GOING TO BE SO EASY TO IMPRESS, AND THAT FACT WAS CLEARLY PART OF THE DIVINE PLAN. IMPRESSED THOUGH THE EGYPTIAN MAGICIANS THEMSELVES MAY ACTUALLY HAVE BEEN ONCE AARON’S ROD [STAFF OR WAND] ATE THEIRS, PHARAOH, HIS MIND MADE STUBBORN BY GOD, NOW HAD AN EXCUSE FOR RESISTING, EVEN IF A LAME ONE; HE COULD FOR THE TIME BEING CONTENT HIMSELF WITH THE COMFORTING BELIEF THAT WHAT AARON HAD DONE WAS JUST A MAGIC TRICK.**

**SECOND SIGN: FIRST PLAGUE: WATER TO BLOOD (7:14–24)**

**14 THEN THE LORD SAID TO MOSES, “PHARAOH’S HEART IS UNYIELDING; HE REFUSES TO LET THE PEOPLE GO. 15 GO TO PHARAOH IN THE MORNING AS HE GOES OUT TO THE WATER. WAIT ON THE BANK OF THE NILE TO MEET HIM, AND TAKE IN YOUR HAND THE STAFF [ROD OR WAND] THAT WAS CHANGED INTO A SNAKE. 16 THEN SAY TO HIM, ‘THE LORD, THE GOD OF THE HEBREWS, HAS SENT ME TO SAY TO YOU: LET MY PEOPLE GO, SO THAT THEY MAY WORSHIP ME [JOHN 4:23-24] IN THE DESERT. BUT UNTIL NOW YOU HAVE NOT LISTENED. 17 THIS IS WHAT THE LORD SAYS: BY THIS YOU WILL KNOW THAT I AM THE LORD: WITH THE STAFF [ROD OR WAND] THAT IS IN MY HAND I WILL STRIKE THE WATER OF THE NILE, AND IT WILL BE CHANGED INTO BLOOD. 18 THE FISH IN THE NILE WILL DIE, AND THE RIVER WILL STINK; THE EGYPTIANS WILL NOT BE ABLE TO DRINK ITS WATER.’” 19 THE LORD SAID TO MOSES, “TELL AARON, ‘TAKE YOUR STAFF [ROD OR WAND] AND STRETCH OUT YOUR HAND OVER THE WATERS OF EGYPT—OVER THE STREAMS AND CANALS, OVER THE PONDS AND ALL THE RESERVOIRS’—AND THEY WILL TURN TO BLOOD. BLOOD WILL BE EVERYWHERE IN EGYPT, EVEN IN THE WOODEN BUCKETS AND STONE JARS.” 20 MOSES AND AARON DID JUST AS THE LORD HAD COMMANDED. HE RAISED HIS STAFF [ROD OR WAND] IN THE PRESENCE OF PHARAOH AND HIS OFFICIALS AND STRUCK THE WATER OF THE NILE, AND ALL THE WATER WAS CHANGED INTO BLOOD. 21 THE FISH IN THE NILE DIED, AND THE RIVER SMELLED SO BAD THAT THE EGYPTIANS COULD NOT DRINK ITS WATER. BLOOD WAS EVERYWHERE IN EGYPT. 22 BUT THE EGYPTIAN MAGICIANS DID THE SAME THINGS BY THEIR SECRET ARTS, AND PHARAOH’S HEART BECAME HARD; HE WOULD NOT LISTEN TO MOSES AND AARON, JUST AS THE LORD HAD SAID. 23 INSTEAD, HE TURNED AND WENT INTO HIS PALACE, AND DID NOT TAKE EVEN THIS TO HEART. 24 AND ALL THE EGYPTIANS DUG ALONG THE NILE TO GET DRINKING WATER, BECAUSE THEY COULD NOT DRINK THE WATER OF THE RIVER.**

**PROMINENT IN THE STRUCTURE OF THIS FIRST PLAGUE ACCOUNT IS THE EMPHASIS ON GOD’S INVOLVEMENT IN PHARAOH’S STUBBORNNESS. VERSES 14 AND 22–23 FUNCTION AS SOMETHING OF AN INCLUSIO FOR THE PASSAGE, REMINDING THE READER THAT MOSES KNEW DIRECTLY FROM GOD THAT PHARAOH WOULD BE RESISTANT (V. 14) AND THAT HE WOULD NOT BE MOVED EASILY, EVEN BY THINGS SUPERNATURAL (VV. 22–23). THE LAST VERSE OF THE PERICOPE (V. 24), SOMETHING OF A POSTSCRIPT, BRIEFLY ANSWERS THE READER’S LOGICAL QUESTION, “HOW THEN COULD THE EGYPTIANS SURVIVE SINCE THEIR DRINKING WATER CAME FROM THE NILE?” BY REASON OF THAT FINAL VERSE, THE FIRST PLAGUE IS SHOWN TO BE A SEVERE ANNOYANCE MORE THAN A LIFE-THREATENING DISASTER, REFLECTING THE SORT OF SEVERITY LEVEL ONE MIGHT EXPECT OF THE OPENING PLAGUE—A SHOT FIRED ACROSS EGYPT’S BOW, AS IT WERE. THE NILE IS MENTIONED SIX TIMES BY NAME HERE AND ALSO REFERRED TO BY TERMS LIKE “WATER” AND “RIVER,” IN ADDITION TO THE DESCRIPTION IN V. 19 OF “THE WATERS OF EGYPT,” THEN DELINEATED IN THAT VERSE TO BE SURE THAT THE READER REALIZES THAT EVERY SURFACE SOURCE OF WATER WAS AFFECTED BY THE PLAGUE IN THE SAME MANNER AS WAS THE NILE. THUS “BLOOD WAS EVERYWHERE IN EGYPT” (V. 21), AND NO EGYPTIAN COULD ESCAPE THE EFFECT OF THIS PLAGUE. NO LONGER WERE THE MIGHTY ACTS OF GOD CONFINED TO DEMONSTRATIONS FOR A PRIVATE AUDIENCE. NOW ALL THE CITIZENS OF THE NATION BEGAN TO FEEL THE EFFECT OF GOD’S WRATH, AND THE PRESSURE BEGAN TO RATCHET UP ON PHARAOH. IT WAS ONE THING FOR HIM TO IGNORE A DISPLAY INTENDED TO CONVINCE HIM OF GOD’S POWER BUT ANOTHER TO IGNORE THE CRIES OF HIS PEOPLE FOR ONE OF THEIR MOST BASIC NEEDS, WATER TO DRINK. IN CONSIDERING THE STORY OF THE FIRST PLAGUE, IT IS IMPORTANT TO BEAR IN MIND THAT THE EGYPTIANS UNDERSTOOD THE NILE TO BE A GOD. THEIR PANTHEISTIC VIEW OF THE UNIVERSE CONSIDERED ALL THINGS TO BE PARTAKERS OF THE DIVINE, AND THINGS THAT MOVED TO BE OBVIOUSLY DIVINE IN THEIR ESSENCE. THE ULTIMATE VICTORY OF THE ONLY TRUE GOD, STEPHEN YAHWEH, OVER THE MANY FALSE GODS OF THE EGYPTIANS (“JUDGMENT ON THE GODS OF EGYPT,” 12:12) BEGAN WITH THE HUMILIATION OF THE NILE. THE NATION’S GREAT WATERWAY AND SOURCE OF LIFE WAS TURNED ODIOUS AND MADE INTO A SOURCE OF DEATH (7:18), DEMONSTRATING THE SOVEREIGN POWER OF THE GOD OF ISRAEL AND THE SUBORDINATE IMPOTENCE OF THE NILE. 7:14 IN THE NIV TRANSLATION (“PHARAOH’S HEART IS UNYIELDING; HE REFUSES”) THIS VERSE MIGHT ALMOST SEEM TO BE SUGGESTING THAT STEPHEN YAHWEH IS “LEARNING” OR “FINDING OUT” HOW PHARAOH REACTED TO THE SIGN AARON HAD JUST PERFORMED (7:8–13). THE THRUST OF THE LORD’S STATEMENT IS, HOWEVER, THAT MOSES MUST NOT BE SURPRISED BY THE RESISTANCE JUST ENCOUNTERED OR BY THE FURTHER RESISTANCE THAT HE WAS ABOUT TO ENCOUNTER, WHICH THE LORD KNEW WELL IN ADVANCE. IN OTHER WORDS, THE LORD INFORMED MOSES HERE THAT NOTHING HAD CHANGED OR WOULD IN HIS CONTROL OF PHARAOH’S INCLINATIONS. THE VERSE COULD ALSO BE TRANSLATED: “PHARAOH [STILL] HAS A HARD HEART/IS STUBBORN, REFUSING TO LET THE PEOPLE GO.” 7:15 AS NOTED ABOVE, PLAGUES ONE, FOUR, AND SEVEN EACH BEGIN WITH AN OUTDOOR MORNING CONFRONTATION WITH PHARAOH, AS OPPOSED TO A COURT CONFRONTATION WITH HIM IN PLAGUES TWO, FIVE, AND EIGHT AND NO CONFRONTATION AT ALL IN PLAGUES THREE, SIX, AND NINE. THAT THIS FIRST “PLAGUE CONFRONTATION” SHOULD TAKE PLACE ALONG THE BANKS OF THE NILE IS HIGHLY APPROPRIATE IN LIGHT OF THIS PLAGUE’S NATURE: A DEMONSTRATION OF GOD’S SOVEREIGNTY OVER THE RIVER THAT WAS EGYPT’S GREATEST LANDMARK AND SPECIAL SOURCE OF LIFE. THERE IS NO EVIDENCE THAT PEOPLE BATHED IN RIVERS FREQUENTLY IN HOLY BIBLE TIMES; FEW ANCIENTS COULD SWIM AND WERE THEREFORE NOT AS AT HOME IN OR NEAR DEEP WATER AS MIGHT BE THE CASE IN MODERN TIMES, AND BATHING REGULARLY IS IN GENERAL A LUXURY OF MODERNITY. MOSES HAD ALREADY NOTED, HOWEVER, THAT PHARAOH’S DAUGHTER BATHED IN THE NILE (2:5FF.), AND MEMBERS OF THE ROYAL FAMILY MAY WELL HAVE BATHED FREQUENTLY OR EVEN DAILY, SOMETHING THEIR PRIVILEGED LIFESTYLE ALLOWED THEM TO DO. THOUGH WE CANNOT BE SURE OF IT, THE MOST LIKELY MEANING OF “AS HE GOES OUT TO THE WATER” IS “AS HE GOES TO TAKE A BATH IN THE WATER.” SINCE MOSES WOULD MAKE THE NILE IMMEDIATELY ODIOUS, THIS PLAGUE WOULD HAVE AN INSTANT EFFECT ON PHARAOH, PREVENTING HIM FROM DOING WHAT HE WAS DIRECTLY ON HIS WAY TO DO BEFORE MEETING UP WITH MOSES AND AARON. IN OTHER WORDS, PHARAOH COULD NOT IGNORE THIS PLAGUE, EVEN THOUGH HE MIGHT HAVE RESISTED ITS IMPLICATIONS. THE SPECIAL MENTION OF THE STAFF [ROD OR WAND] RELATES TO ITS SPECIAL NATURE, ALREADY SEEN IN THE BOOK AND OFTEN TO BE SEEN AGAIN. THIS IS THE STAFF [ROD OR WAND] THAT PARTLY REPRESENTS GOD AND HIS AUTHORITY; THAT IT SHOULD END UP IN THE ARK OF THE COVENANT IS TESTIMONY TO ITS GROWING SIGNIFICANCE IN THE STORY. 7:16–18 THE SPEECH GOD HERE GAVE MOSES TO SAY TO PHARAOH CLEARLY DESCRIBES WHO MOSES REPRESENTED (STEPHEN YAHWEH, “THE GOD OF THE HEBREWS,” V. 16), WHAT STEPHEN YAHWEH IS DEMANDING (“LET MY PEOPLE GO,” V. 16), THE REASON A PLAGUE-PUNISHMENT WAS WARRANTED (“UNTIL NOW YOU HAVE NOT LISTENED,” V. 16), THE FACT THAT STEPHEN YAHWEH IS DETERMINED TO TEACH PHARAOH WHO HE, STEPHEN YAHWEH, IS—MEANING HIS GREATNESS AND EXCLUSIVE POWER, NOT MERELY HIS NAME [STEPHEN YAHWEH] (“BY THIS YOU WILL KNOW THAT I AM THE LORD,” V. 17), THE MECHANISM FOR BRINGING ABOUT THE PUNISHMENT (“WITH THE STAFF [ROD OR WAND] THAT IS IN MY HAND I WILL STRIKE THE WATER OF THE NILE,” V. 17), AND WHAT THE PUNISHMENT WOULD BE (“IT WILL BE CHANGED INTO BLOOD. THE FISH … WILL DIE, AND THE RIVER WILL STINK; THE EGYPTIANS WILL NOT BE ABLE TO DRINK ITS WATER,” VV. 17–18). SUCH PRECISION MADE SURE THAT PHARAOH COULD NOT MISUNDERSTAND THE PURPOSE OF THE PLAGUE AND THE POWER OF THE GOD WHO CAUSED IT. PHARAOH NEEDED TO UNDERSTAND THAT MOSES WAS MERELY AN INSTRUMENT OF GOD; HIS ADVERSARY IS THE KING OF THE UNIVERSE, NOT A FORMER EGYPTIAN PRINCELING. HE MUST ALSO UNDERSTAND THAT HIS REFUSAL TO ALLOW THE ISRAELITES TO LEAVE EGYPT WOULD BE “RUBBED INTO HIS FACE” BY DIVINE DESIGN. AND, AS WELL, HE MUST UNDERSTAND THAT THE EGYPTIAN PEOPLE IN GENERAL WOULD SHARE IN THE MISERY THAT HIS CRUEL STUBBORNNESS, WITH THEIR COMPLICITY, WOULD BRING UPON THEM IN RETRIBUTION. “BY THIS YOU WILL KNOW THAT I AM THE LORD” (V. 17) IS VERY IMPORTANT TO THIS MESSAGE. PREVIOUSLY THE ANNOUNCEMENT “I AM THE LORD” HAD BEEN SPOKEN TO THE PATRIARCHS (GEN 15:7; 28:13), TO MOSES (6:2, 29), AND TO THE ISRAELITES (6:6–8); BUT THIS IS THE FIRST TIME IT IS TO BE SPOKEN TO A NON-ISRAELITE. IN EFFECT, IT WAS PART OF THE VERY EARLY ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE GOSPEL TO THE GENTILES SINCE, AS WE HAVE ALREADY NOTED, IT WAS NOT A MERE STATEMENT OF IDENTIFICATION BUT A DECLARATION OF THE APPLICATION OF SAVING POWER. HERE IT IS USED IN A MANNER CONSISTENT WITH ITS USAGE IN THE PREDICTION EARLIER IN 7:5 (“AND THE EGYPTIANS WILL KNOW THAT I AM THE LORD WHEN I STRETCH OUT MY HAND AGAINST EGYPT AND BRING THE ISRAELITES OUT OF IT”) AND, EVEN MORE IMPORTANTLY, WITH ITS USAGE IN THE CENTRAL LOCUS OF EXPLANATION FOR THE PLAGUES (“I WILL BRING JUDGMENT ON ALL THE GODS OF EGYPT. I AM THE LORD,” EXOD. 12:12). 7:19–21 IN THESE VERSES IS DESCRIBED THE ACTUAL FIRST PLAGUE, THE CHANGING OF ALL SURFACE WATER IN EGYPT (NEARLY ALL OF IT BEING IN OR FROM THE NILE) TO BLOOD. SIX CONSIDERATIONS SHOULD BE KEPT IN MIND IN THE ANALYSIS OF THIS PLAGUE: (1) “BLOOD” IS A COLOR IN HEBREW AS WELL AS A SUBSTANCE, JUST AS IN ENGLISH, AND NO FIRM DATA EXIST FOR THE INTERPRETER TO DIFFERENTIATE IN THIS STORY BETWEEN THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE NILE AND OTHER SURFACE WATER TURNED TO ACTUAL BLOOD FROM THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE WATERS TURNED—FOR WHATEVER REASON—“BLOOD” IN COLOR. (2) NO SPECIAL THEOLOGICAL OVERTONE IS PRESENT RELATIVE TO THE “BLOOD” HERE; IT IS NOT A FORESHADOWING OF “THE BLOOD OF CHRIST THAT FLOWS” OR ANY SUCH THING. (3) THE IMPORTANT PUNISHMENT ELEMENT IN THE PLAGUE IS NEITHER THE SUBSTANCE NOR THE COLOR BUT THE POLLUTION OF THE WATER, RENDERING IT NOT MERELY UNDRINKABLE FOR HUMANS BUT DEADLY TO FISH. (4) STEPHEN YAHWEH’S IMPLIED CONTROL OVER “NILE” (THE NILE RIVER GOD) COULD HARDLY HAVE BEEN MISSED BY ANY THOUGHTFUL EGYPTIAN CONSIDERING THE MEANING OF THIS PLAGUE. (5) AARON’S STAFF [ROD OR WAND] IS NOT MERELY A SIMPLE VISUAL DEVICE BUT A SYMBOLIC REMINDER THAT GOD, NOT AARON OR MOSES, WAS ACTUALLY PERFORMING THE PERMISSIBLE MAGIC/MIRACLE OF THE PLAGUE. (6) THE PLAGUE MAY WELL HAVE IMITATED A NATURAL PHENOMENON BY WHICH SOME PARTS OF THE NILE SOMETIMES TURNED REDDISH, BUT IT DOES NOT APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN MERELY A NATURAL PHENOMENON IN LIGHT OF THE IMMEDIACY OF THE RESULT AND ITS EXTENT. IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS PERMISSIBLE MAGIC/MIRACLE, MOSES BY HIS WORDS DIRECTED AARON, WHO DID THE ACTUAL MOTION WITH THE STAFF [ROD OR WAND] IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE GENERAL PATTERN OF RESPONSIBILITY PREDICTED IN 4:15–17, WHICH SPECIFICALLY INDICATED THAT MOSES WOULD TEACH AARON “WHAT TO DO” (4:16) AND THAT THE STAFF [ROD OR WAND] WOULD BE THE DEVICE FOR PERFORMING “MIRACULOUS SIGNS” (4:17). THUS, WE SEE HERE MOSES AND AARON WORKING TOGETHER IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REVEALED PATTERN, AS THE OPENING WORDS OF V. 20 ALSO IMPLY. THE MENTION OF “STREAMS … CANALS … PONDS … RESERVOIRS” (V. 19) DELINEATES ALL THE SORTS OF BODIES OF SURFACE WATER IN EGYPT AND THEREFORE FORMS AN EXPLICATIVE APPOSITION TO THE PHRASE “THE WATERS OF EGYPT.” THE EXTENSION OF THE PLAGUE EVEN TO “THE WOODEN BUCKETS AND STONE JARS” IS ESPECIALLY INFORMATIVE: IT TENDS TO CONFIRM THE COMPREHENSIVENESS OF THE PLAGUE AND ITS INSTANTANEOUS NATURE. AS THE FOLLOWING VERSE (7:25) INDICATES, THE PLAGUE OF BLOOD LASTED ONLY SEVEN DAYS. VIRTUALLY ALL COMMENTATORS HAVE OBSERVED THAT THE PLAGUES APPEAR TO HAVE INCREASED IN INTENSITY FROM FIRST TO LAST. HOW, THEN, COULD THIS PLAGUE BE REGARDED AS THE LEAST THREATENING OF THE TEN? THE ANSWER IS THAT THIS PLAGUE INVOLVED NOT THE CHANGING OF WATER INTO REAL BLOOD (WHICH WOULD BE SO HUGE AN ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTION OF EGYPT THAT ITS EFFECTS WOULD BE FAR MORE THREATENING TO LIFE THAN SOME OF THE LATER PLAGUES) BUT THE TEMPORARY REDDENING AND CONTAMINATION OF THE NILE AND OTHER SURFACE WATER IN A WAY THAT MADE THE NILE UNDRINKABLE AND KILLED ITS FISH. THIS PLAGUE FUNCTIONED MORE AS A SEVERE FRUSTRATION FOR EGYPTIANS THAN AS A THREAT TO LIFE. FISH DIED FROM THIS PLAGUE, BUT HUMANS AND OTHER ANIMALS DID NOT. WE HAVE ALREADY ARGUED THAT THIS DIVINE TAINTING OF EGYPT’S WATER WAS, HOWEVER, NOT MERELY AN ESPECIALLY STRONG VERSION OF THE SEASONAL REDDENING OF THE NILE. THAT IT MAY HAVE LOOKED LIKE AND PERHAPS, TO SKEPTICAL EGYPTIANS, SEEMED TO BE MERELY A VERY SEVERE MANIFESTATION OF A KNOWN NATURAL PHENOMENON WOULD BE CONSISTENT WITH THE WAY THAT COMFORTING SELF-DECEPTION WORKS IN GENERAL. IF ONE IS PREDISPOSED TO DOUBT GOD, ONE WILL ALWAYS BE ATTRACTED TO “NATURAL” EXPLANATIONS FOR ALL OF THE HOLY BIBLE’S SUPERNATURAL PHENOMENA, FROM CREATION TO THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS. 7:22–24 IT IS AGAIN LIKELY THAT WHAT WAS MEANT BY THE STATEMENT “THE EGYPTIAN MAGICIANS DID THE SAME THINGS BY THEIR SECRET ARTS” (V. 22) IS THAT THE MAGICIANS WERE ABLE TO DUPLICATE ON A HIGH SCALE, NOT BY MERE SIMPLE TRICKERY, BUT BY REAL POWER & HELP FROM SATANIC LUCIFERISM & BABYLONIAN VICTORIANISM IN REVELATION 13:11-18, WHICH THE TERM “FIRE AGAINST FIRE IS MEANT HERE, IN THE CHANGING OF WATER INTO REDDISH WATER, IS A CLEAR OPPOSITION TO THE LORD’S PERMISSIBLE MAGIC/TRUE MIRACLE. BUT TO THINK THIS WAS MERE TRICKS ON THE EGYPTIAN MAGICIANS PART, SUCH A DUPLICATION (OR, MORE TECHNICALLY, IMITATION) WOULD HAVE REQUIRED ONLY THE ABILITY TO ADD SOMETHING THAT WOULD DYE SOME WATER RED THROUGH SLIGHT OF HAND, IS TO MISS THE MARK OF WHAT ACTUALLY TRANSPIRED. IT IS NOTEWORTHY THAT THE MAGICIANS DID NOT ATTEMPT TO UNDO THE HAVOC WROUGHT UPON THE NILE OR OTHER LARGE BODIES OF WATER—FOR THE OBVIOUS REASON THAT THEY COULD NOT DO SO. BUT THE WORK OF THE MAGICIANS HAD ITS EFFECT ON PHARAOH. HE COULD COMFORT HIMSELF WITH THE THOUGHT THAT SOMEHOW THE TRICKERY OF MOSES AND AARON (OR THE POWER OF THEIR GOD, IF HE THOUGHT THAT IT WAS REAL DIVINE POWER BY WHICH HIS MAGICIANS WORKED) WAS SIMPLY THE SAME SORT OF THING HIS PEOPLE COULD DO, AND ON SHORT NOTICE AT THAT. THUS, AS WITH THE CHANGING OF AARON’S STAFF [ROD OR WAND] INTO A SNAKE, FORBIDDEN MAGIC UNDERMINED THE CREDIBILITY OF REALITY, AND PHARAOH HAD AN EXCUSE TO YIELD NOTHING TO THE ISRAELITES AND THE DEMANDS OF THEIR GOD. THE ONLY THING PHARAOH HAD LOST IN THIS ENCOUNTER WAS THE OPPORTUNITY TO HAVE HIS BATH (V. 23). THE EGYPTIAN PEOPLE, HOWEVER, HAD TO SCRAMBLE TO GET WATER, WHICH WAS AVAILABLE ONLY FROM NEW WELLS. SUBSURFACE WATER HAD NOT BEEN AFFECTED; THE MIRACLE OF THE FIRST PLAGUE WAS LIMITED IN ITS LETHALITY TO FISH—PEOPLE WERE MERELY GREATLY INCONVENIENCED. NEVERTHELESS, THE SUPERIORITY OF ISRAEL’S GOD TO THE GOD OF THE NILE WAS OBVIOUS. VERSE 24 PROVIDES A POSTSCRIPT SIMILAR TO THAT WHICH ACCOMPANIED THE ACCOUNT OF THE STAFF-TO-SNAKE PERMISSIBLE MAGIC/MIRACLE (CF. 7:12), THE PURPOSE OF WHICH WAS TO CLARIFY THAT WHAT THE MAGICIANS COULD DO WAS LIMITED. IN THE CASE OF THE STAFF-TO-SNAKE PERMISSIBLE MAGIC/MIRACLE, THEY COULD IMITATE ONE ASPECT OF THE MIRACLE, BUT THEY COULD NOT DUPLICATE THE ACTION OF THE SUPERIOR SNAKE. IN THE CASE OF THE WATER-TO-BLOOD PLAGUE, THEY COULD IMITATE THE CHANGING OF CLEAR WATER TO RED WATER, BUT THEY COULD NOT REVERSE THE CURSE, SO THE GENERAL POPULATION SUFFERED. WHAT MOSES AND AARON HAD DONE WAS NO TRICK; ANYONE DESPERATELY DIGGING A WELL TO GET PURE WATER KNEW THAT.**

**THIRD SIGN: SECOND PLAGUE: FROGS (7:25–8:15) [HB. 7:25–8:11]**

**25 SEVEN DAYS PASSED AFTER THE LORD STRUCK THE NILE. 1 THEN THE LORD SAID TO MOSES, “GO TO PHARAOH AND SAY TO HIM, ‘THIS IS WHAT THE LORD SAYS: LET MY PEOPLE GO, SO THAT THEY MAY WORSHIP ME. 2 IF YOU REFUSE TO LET THEM GO, I WILL PLAGUE YOUR WHOLE COUNTRY WITH FROGS. 3 THE NILE WILL TEEM WITH FROGS. THEY WILL COME UP INTO YOUR PALACE AND YOUR BEDROOM AND ONTO YOUR BED, INTO THE HOUSES OF YOUR OFFICIALS AND ON YOUR PEOPLE, AND INTO YOUR OVENS AND KNEADING TROUGHS. 4 THE FROGS WILL GO UP ON YOU AND YOUR PEOPLE AND ALL YOUR OFFICIALS.’” 5 THEN THE LORD SAID TO MOSES, “TELL AARON, ‘STRETCH OUT YOUR HAND WITH YOUR STAFF [ROD OR WAND] OVER THE STREAMS AND CANALS AND PONDS, AND MAKE FROGS COME UP ON THE LAND OF EGYPT.’” 6 SO AARON STRETCHED OUT HIS HAND OVER THE WATERS OF EGYPT, AND THE FROGS CAME UP AND COVERED THE LAND. 7 BUT THE MAGICIANS DID THE SAME THINGS BY THEIR SECRET ARTS; THEY ALSO MADE FROGS COME UP ON THE LAND OF EGYPT. 8 PHARAOH SUMMONED MOSES AND AARON AND SAID, “PRAY TO THE LORD TO TAKE THE FROGS AWAY FROM ME AND MY PEOPLE, AND I WILL LET YOUR PEOPLE GO TO OFFER SACRIFICES TO THE LORD.” 9 MOSES SAID TO PHARAOH, “I LEAVE TO YOU THE HONOR OF SETTING THE TIME FOR ME TO PRAY FOR YOU AND YOUR OFFICIALS AND YOUR PEOPLE THAT YOU AND YOUR HOUSES MAY BE RID OF THE FROGS, EXCEPT FOR THOSE THAT REMAIN IN THE NILE.” 10 “TOMORROW,” PHARAOH SAID. MOSES REPLIED, “IT WILL BE AS YOU SAY, SO THAT YOU MAY KNOW THERE IS NO ONE LIKE THE LORD OUR GOD. 11 THE FROGS WILL LEAVE YOU AND YOUR HOUSES, YOUR OFFICIALS AND YOUR PEOPLE; THEY WILL REMAIN ONLY IN THE NILE.” 12 AFTER MOSES AND AARON LEFT PHARAOH, MOSES CRIED OUT TO THE LORD ABOUT THE FROGS HE HAD BROUGHT ON PHARAOH. 13 AND THE LORD DID WHAT MOSES ASKED. THE FROGS DIED IN THE HOUSES, IN THE COURTYARDS AND IN THE FIELDS. 14 THEY WERE PILED INTO HEAPS, AND THE LAND REEKED OF THEM. 15 BUT WHEN PHARAOH SAW THAT THERE WAS RELIEF, HE HARDENED HIS HEART AND WOULD NOT LISTEN TO MOSES AND AARON, JUST AS THE LORD HAD SAID. 7:25–8:3 THE SECOND PLAGUE ENCOUNTER TOOK PLACE, AS ALSO DID THE FIFTH AND THE EIGHTH, AT PHARAOH’S COURT, AS MAY BE INFERRED FROM THE COMMAND, “GO [IN] TO PHARAOH AND SAY TO HIM …” (8:1). IT TOOK PLACE JUST A WEEK AFTER THE FIRST (7:25), BUT OTHERWISE ITS RELATIONSHIP TO THE FIRST PLAGUE, IF ANY, REMAINS UNSTATED. COULD THE FROG EPIDEMIC HAVE OCCURRED IN PART AS A PREDICTABLE RESULT OF THE POLLUTION OF THE NILE, SINCE WHATEVER KILLED THE FISH LIKELY WOULD HAVE DRIVEN THE FROGS AS WELL FROM THE RIVER, EVEN IF NOT ACCOUNTING FOR THEIR ENORMOUS MULTIPLICATION? WE ARE NOT TOLD. OR HAD THE POLLUTION BY THIS TIME (PERHAPS GRADUALLY) ABATED SO THAT THE EGYPTIANS COULD ONCE AGAIN MANAGE TO DRINK WATER FROM THE NILE? MOSES DID NOT SAY. ALTHOUGH ONE MIGHT ARGUE THEORETICALLY THAT HAVING THE ANSWERS TO THESE QUESTIONS WOULD HELP SUPPORT BIBLICAL HISTORY APOLOGETICALLY, NO SUCH CONCERN APPEARS TO HAVE OCCUPIED MOSES’ MIND. HE WAS WRITING, AFTER ALL, FOR AN AUDIENCE WHO HAD PERSONALLY LIVED THROUGH THE PLAGUES (OR WHOSE PARENTS HAD) AND AMONG WHOM THERE WAS AMPLE EXPERIENTIAL CERTAINTY THAT THE PLAGUES OCCURRED AND A STRONG MEMORY OF HOW AND WHEN. MOSES’ PURPOSE SEEMS RATHER TO CENTER ON PRODUCING A RELATIVELY SUCCINCT SUMMARY OF ALL THE PLAGUES TOGETHER AS A PERMANENT REMINDER FOR ALL GENERATIONS OF THEIR CUMULATIVE IMPACT AND, IN THE CASE OF THE FIRST NINE, AS A COMPOUND-COMPLEX LEAD-IN TO THE GREAT FINAL AND DECISIVE PLAGUE, THAT OF THE DEATH OF THE FIRSTBORN. TOO MUCH DETAIL ABOUT THE TIMING AND MECHANISM OF THE INDIVIDUAL PLAGUES WOULD ACTUALLY UNDERMINE THAT PURPOSE. THE FIRST PLAGUE PRODUCED GREAT INCONVENIENCE, REQUIRING THE DIGGING OF (SHALLOW) WELLS ALONG THE NILE AS OPPOSED TO THE EASY ACCESS TO DRINKING WATER THAT THE NILE USUALLY AFFORDED, AND IT ALSO PRODUCED THE DEATH OF LARGE QUANTITIES OF FISH. SPATIALLY, IT WAS LIMITED TO PLACES WHERE WATER WAS VISIBLE ON THE SURFACE OF THE GROUND. THIS SECOND PLAGUE ANNOUNCEMENT PRESAGED GREATER PROBLEMS, THOUGH STILL NONE WAS REMOTELY LIFE THREATENING. THE FROGS WOULD GO EVERYWHERE—WITHOUT VIRTUALLY ANY LIMITATION—INCLUDING THE INTERIOR OF THE PALACE (MENTIONED FIRST TO BE SURE PHARAOH KNEW HE WOULD NOT BE IMMUNE), BEDROOMS, BEDS, AND COOKING UTENSILS (MENTIONED AS WELL TO COMPLETE THE PICTURE OF A GROSS MANIFESTATION OF ALL PLACES WHERE HUMANS LIVED). IT IS ONE THING FOR SOMEONE TO BE REQUIRED WORK HARDER TO GET POTABLE WATER FOR HIS FAMILY OR NEIGHBORHOOD; IT IS QUITE ANOTHER TO HAVE UNDESIRABLE ANIMALS INFESTING ALL THE LOWER SURFACES OF ONE’S LIVING AREAS. THUS, THE PLAGUE OF FROGS HAS TRADITIONALLY, WITH GOOD REASON, BEEN JUDGED A MORE DISCOMFORTING PLAGUE THAN THE ONE THAT PRECEDED IT. PSALMS 78 AND 105 BOTH MENTION THE FROGS, AS EXPECTED IN THESE HISTORICAL PSALMS COVERING THE PLAGUES. PSALM 78:45 DESCRIBES THE “FROGS THAT DEVASTATED THEM,” AND PS 105:30 SUMMARIZES THE EXODUS ACCOUNT, “THEIR LAND TEEMED WITH FROGS, WHICH WENT UP INTO THE BEDROOMS OF THEIR RULERS.” BOTH OF THESE REPRESENT INDEPENDENT COMPOSITIONS REFLECTING THE CONSISTENCY OF THE PLAGUES, TRADITION IN LATER ISRAELITE TIMES. WITH REGARD TO THE THEMATIC PROGRESSION EVIDENT IN THE PLAGUE ACCOUNTS, IN 8:1 THE DEMAND OF STEPHEN YAHWEH IS TO “LET MY PEOPLE GO SO THAT THEY MAY WORSHIP ME.” THIS WORDING REFLECTS THE MORE COMPREHENSIVE, LESS RESTRICTED LANGUAGE ORIGINALLY REVEALED TO MOSES AT MOUNT SINAI IN 4:23 (“LET MY SON GO, SO HE MAY WORSHIP ME”) AND DOES NOT INCLUDE THE PHRASE “IN THE DESERT” THAT HAD BEEN INCLUDED IN 7:16. THIS MAY SEEM A MINOR POINT, BUT IT SERVES AS PART OF A PATTERN THAT PROGRESSES FROM A REQUEST INITIALLY EXPRESSED IN MODEST, LIMITED WORDING TO THE FULL REQUEST (THE POINT ALL ALONG IN ACTUAL FACT) FOR COMPLETE, PERMANENT FREEDOM FROM EGYPT. 7:25 THE BRIEF NOTE THAT A FULL WEEK HAD TRANSPIRED BETWEEN THE ONSET OF THE FIRST PLAGUE AND GOD’S ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE SECOND MIGHT SEEM TRIVIAL, OR EVEN AWKWARDLY PLACED. MOST PLAGUE ACCOUNTS DO NOT CONTAIN SIMILAR DESCRIPTIONS OF TIMING, AND THIS NOTE DOES NOT SEEM TO BEAR DIRECTLY ON THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PLAGUE OF FROGS PER SE (I.E., WHAT IS THERE ABOUT A FROG PLAGUE THAT MAKES SPECIFYING THE DAYS UNTIL IT HAPPENED ANY MORE MEANINGFUL TO THE READER THAN WOULD BE THE CASE WITH ANY OTHER PLAGUE?). RATHER THAN BEING INCIDENTAL, HOWEVER, THE INFORMATION IN V. 1 IS ALMOST SURELY PROGRAMMATIC: THE READER IS EXPECTED TO REASON THAT IF THERE WAS AT LEAST A WEEK BETWEEN THE FIRST AND SECOND PLAGUES (EIGHT DAYS, IN FACT, WHEN THE DELAY OF ONE DAY BETWEEN THE ANNOUNCEMENT AND THE INITIATION IS ADDED, ACCORDING TO 8:9) THERE PROBABLY WERE COMPARABLE SPACES OF TIME BETWEEN MOST OF THE OTHER PLAGUES. IN THE STYLE TYPICAL OF ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN NARRATIVE, STATING SOMETHING EARLY ON IN A COMPOUND STORY OR REPETITIVE SEQUENCE IS ONE WAY OF SAYING IMPLICITLY THAT IT KEPT HAPPENING LIKE THIS IN THE OTHER CASES TOO. BY THIS DEVICE, MOSES SIGNALED THE READER/LISTENER THAT THE DURATION OF THE ENTIRE PERIOD OF PLAGUES WAS AT LEAST A GOOD MANY WEEKS, THAT IS, SEVERAL MONTHS. THIS SHORT VERSE HAS A SECOND FUNCTION IN THE NARRATIVE. BY SPECIFYING THAT “THE LORD STRUCK THE NILE,” USING THE SAME VERB FOR “STRIKE” (NKH) THAT HAD BEEN EMPLOYED TWICE TO DESCRIBE WHAT MOSES AND AARON HAD DONE IN THE FIRST PLAGUE, STRIKING THE NILE (7:17, 20), THE VERSE REINFORCES IN THE READER’S MIND THAT THE ACTIONS OF MOSES AND AARON WERE SYMBOLIC; THE REAL MOVER OF THE PERMISSIBLE MAGICS/TRUE MIRACLES IS STEPHEN YAHWEH HIMSELF. THEY WENT THROUGH THE MOTIONS; HE MADE IT HAPPEN. 8:1–4 [HB. 7:26–29] THE DEMAND OF STEPHEN YAHWEH (“LET MY PEOPLE GO, SO THAT THEY MAY WORSHIP ME”) WILL BE REPEATED VERBATIM AGAIN IN 8:1, 20; 9:1, 13; 10:3. IT IS THE STANDARD EXPRESSION OF GOD’S DEMAND TO PHARAOH THROUGH MOSES, AND A SLIGHT BUT SIGNIFICANT VARIATION ON THE PREVIOUS WORDINGS (5:1, “LET MY PEOPLE GO, SO THAT THEY MAY HOLD A FESTIVAL TO ME IN THE DESERT,”) AND 7:16, “LET MY PEOPLE GO, SO THAT THEY MAY WORSHIP ME IN THE DESERT.” AT THIS POINT, THE BARGAINING-STYLE REFERENCE TO HOLDING A FESTIVAL/WORSHIP IN THE WILDERNESS CEASES, AND THE DEMAND IS THUS MORE NEARLY EXPLICITLY ONE OF FULL, PERMANENT RELEASE. THE HB. VERB TRANSLATED “WORSHIP” BY THE NIV (ʿBD) COULD AS EASILY BE TRANSLATED “SERVE,” REMINDING PHARAOH THAT THE GOD OF THE PEOPLE HE HAD FORCED TO SERVE HIM AS SLAVES WAS DEMANDING THEIR RELEASE TO SERVE FREELY AND PERMANENTLY A NEW MASTER, HIMSELF. IN THIS SECOND PLAGUE ACCOUNT IS SOUNDED THE FIRST ACTUAL NOTE OF WARNING (“IF YOU REFUSE TO LET THEM GO, …” VV. 2–4). WARNINGS WOULD ACCOMPANY MOST OF THE DEMANDS, HEREAFTER. THE WARNING ITSELF REFERS TO A CONSEQUENCE THAT WAS MAINLY OFFENSIVE RATHER THAN TRULY DANGEROUS. WHAT WAS ACTUALLY THREATENED WAS THE UGLINESS OF HAVING SLIMY, UNSANITARY, UNPLEASANT TO THE TOUCH AMPHIBIANS EVERYWHERE AND THE CONSTANT ANNOYANCE OF HAVING TO LISTEN TO THEM CROAK AND PEEP THROUGHOUT ALL PARTS OF PEOPLE’S HOUSES. IMPLIED IS THE DISGUST THAT WOULD OCCUR WHEN PEOPLE STEPPED ON THE FROGS (AS FAR AS WE KNOW, EGYPTIANS DID NOT WEAR SHOES INDOORS), WHEN THEY ROLLED OVER ON THEM IN BED (AGAIN, PEOPLE SLEPT ON MATS ON THE FLOOR, NOT IN ELEVATED BEDS AS WESTERNERS THINK OF “BEDS”), AND WHEN THEY WERE SURPRISED BY THEM IN VARIOUS PLACES THOUGHT OTHERWISE TO BE CLEAN (FEEDING TROUGHS, OVENS). OF PARTICULAR SIGNIFICANCE TO PHARAOH IS THE PROMISE THAT THIS PLAGUE WOULD AFFECT HIM TO THE SAME DEGREE THAT IT AFFECTED ALL OTHER EGYPTIANS. THE FIRST PLAGUE WAS PRESUMABLY OF LITTLE PERSONAL HARDSHIP FOR HIM; OTHERS BROUGHT HIM WATER FROM THE FRESHLY DUG WELLS, SO ALL HE MISSED WAS HIS USUAL BATH IN THE NILE. NOW, HOWEVER, HE WOULD QUITE POSSIBLY ENCOUNTER JUST AS MANY FROGS AND BE JUST AS REPULSED BY THEM AS ANYONE ELSE (EXCEPT THE ISRAELITES, WHO WERE ALWAYS IMPLICITLY AND SOMETIMES EXPLICITLY EXEMPTED FROM THE PLAGUES). THE PROGRESSION OF STATUS IMPLIED IN THE MENTION OF PHARAOH, THEN HIS OFFICIALS, THEN THE PEOPLE IN GENERAL IN V. 3 IS PARTLY REVERSED IN V. 4 (WHERE IT IS PHARAOH [“YOU”], THE PEOPLE, AND THE OFFICIALS, RESPECTIVELY). THIS DOUBLE LISTING WITH DIFFERENT ORDER OF ELEMENTS IS A WAY OF EMPHASIZING THAT NO ONE WOULD ESCAPE THE EFFECTS OF THIS PLAGUE; INDEED, THE POINT OF THE DESCRIPTIONS OF VV. 2–4 IS TO MAKE CLEAR THAT VIRTUALLY NO PERSON, PLACE, OR THING WOULD BE IMMUNE FROM THE FROG INFESTATION. IF KNEADING TROUGHS AND EVEN BAKE OVENS—PLACES WHERE FROGS WOULD NEVER NORMALLY BE FOUND—WERE TO BE INFESTED, SURELY LITTLE ELSE WOULD BE FREE FROM THE PLAGUE. ALTHOUGH WE MAY ASSUME THAT THIS SPEECH TO PHARAOH WAS DELIVERED BY MOSES AS INSTRUCTED, THE DELIVERY PER SE IS NOT MENTIONED. THIS IS PART OF THE VARIATION IN THE PLAGUE ACCOUNTS THAT KEEPS THEM FROM BEING OVERLY FORMULAIC. THE HEARER/READER SIMPLY ASSUMES THE REPETITION IN THE PRESENCE OF PHARAOH. AN ELEMENT IN THIS PORTION OF THE NARRATIVE THAT MAY ALSO HAVE OCCURRED TO THE ALERT HEARER/READER IS THE REPETITION OF THE TERM “TEEM” (ŠRṢ) IN V. 3, QUITE POSSIBLY INTENDED TO EVOKE COMPARISON WITH THE TEEMING OF ISRAELITES IN 1:7, THE ONLY OTHER TIME THE VERB OCCURS IN THE BOOK. 8:5–7 [HB. 8:1–3] THIS PORTION OF THE STORY DESCRIBES THE COMMAND-FULFILLMENT PATTERN OF THE FROG PLAGUE AS IT RELATES TO MOSES’ AND AARON’S ROLES AND THE FACT THAT THE EGYPTIAN MAGICIANS COULD IN SOME MANNER REPLICATE THIS FEAT AS WELL AS THE PRIOR TWO (STAFF TO SNAKE AND NILE WATER TURNED RED). HAD IT BEEN MOSES’ DESIRE IN THE OTHER PLAGUE ACCOUNTS TO PROVIDE THE SORT OF DETAIL HE GAVE HERE AS TO HIS AND AARON’S PRECISE ROLES, THE OTHER STORIES MIGHT ALSO HAVE DELINEATED HIS COMMAND TO AARON AND AARON’S FULFILLMENT THEREOF, AS WELL AS THE FACT THAT BOTH HAND AND STAFF WERE INVOLVED. LATER, THE APPARENT DIFFERENCE BETWEEN HAND AND STAFF IN SOME OF THE PLAGUE ACCOUNTS WILL BE OBVIATED BY RECOGNITION THAT THIS PLAGUE ACCOUNT SHOWS THE DISTINCTION TO BE LITERARY, THAT IS, STYLISTIC RATHER THAN MATERIALLY CONSEQUENTIAL. THUS, THERE IS NO SPECIAL DIFFERENTIATION INTENDED BY THE MENTION OF STAFF [ROD OR WAND] AS OPPOSED TO HAND OR VICE VERSA. SIMILARLY, NO CONTRADICTION EXISTS BETWEEN WHAT IS SAID IN V. 5 ABOUT THE SOURCE OF THE FROGS (“STREAMS AND CANALS AND PONDS”) AS OPPOSED TO V. 3 (“THE NILE WILL TEEM WITH FROGS”) SINCE THE NILE WAS THE ACTUAL SOURCE OF VIRTUALLY ALL SURFACE WATER IN EGYPT, CHANNELING THE WATER THAT FILLS THE STREAMS, CANALS, AND PONDS. TWO CHARACTERISTICS OF THIS PLAGUE MAKE IT MORE THAN A MERE NATURAL RESULT OF THE POLLUTION OF THE NILE AS DESCRIBED IN THE FIRST PLAGUE: THE NUMBER OF FROGS WAS ENORMOUS BEYOND ALL NATURAL EXPLANATION, AND THEY DID NOT MERELY LEAVE THE NILE AND ITS RELATED BODIES OF WATER AND THEN STAY NEARBY (AS MIGHT BE EXPECTED IF THEY WERE SIMPLY DRIVEN TEMPORARILY OUT OF POLLUTED WATER); THEY COVERED THE LAND. THE REACTION OF PHARAOH IN V. 8 IS LOGICAL IN LIGHT OF THIS: HE BEGGED FOR RELIEF. ADDITIONALLY, THE CLEANUP DESCRIBED IN VV. 13–14 MAKES SENSE ONLY IF THE FROG PLAGUE WAS SOMETHING FAR BEYOND JUST A DISPLACEMENT OF THE NUMBER OF FROGS USUALLY FOUND IN EGYPTIAN BODIES OF WATER. BUT HOW ARE WE TO UNDERSTAND THE ABILITY OF THE EGYPTIAN MAGICIANS TO REPLICATE WHAT GOD HAD DONE (V. 7)? THE ANSWER MUST BE ESSENTIALLY THE SAME AS IT WAS IN THE CASE OF THE PRIOR TWO PORTENTS: THE MAGICIANS DUPLICATED BY MAGIC, ON A HIGH SCALE AS “FIRE AGAINST FIRE”, WHAT GOD HAD DONE ON A NATIONWIDE SCALE. THEIR EFFORTS COULD PROVIDE SOME COMFORT FOR PERSONS WANTING TO DOUBT THE EXCLUSIVE POWER OF STEPHEN YAHWEH TO CONTROL EVENTS BUT COULD DO LITTLE MORE THAN REPRESENT A TOKEN IMITATION, BY DECEPTION, OF WHAT DIVINE POWER COULD DO. 8:8–11 [HB. 8:4–7] A SPECIAL FOCUS OF THIS PORTION OF THE FROG STORY IS PHARAOH’S OPPORTUNITY TO CHOOSE THE TIME OF THE FROGS’ REMOVAL. GIVING THE EGYPTIAN KING THIS POWER OF TIMING IS FROM A HUMAN POINT OF VIEW APOLOGETICALLY BRILLIANT ON GOD’S PART: IF THE KING COULD SAY WHEN THE FROGS WOULD GO AWAY, HE WOULD PERSONALLY KNOW THAT THE TIMING WAS NOT DUE TO THE SIMPLE CONSEQUENCES OF NATURAL PROCESSES OR A FIAT OF THE GODS OF THE EGYPTIANS BUT THE SOVEREIGNTY OF THE GOD OF ISRAEL. THEOLOGICALLY, THEREFORE, THIS PLAGUE WAS THE POINT BY WHICH PHARAOH SHOULD HAVE BEEN ABLE TO ADMIT THAT THERE IS A TRUE, POWERFUL GOD BEHIND THE DEMANDS VOICED BY MOSES. HIS REFUSAL TO BELIEVE EVEN THEN IS A PARADIGM FOR ALL PEOPLE WHO, THOUGH CONFRONTED WITH THE REASONABLENESS OF BIBLICAL TRUTH, NEVERTHELESS REFUSE TO BELIEVE BY REASON OF FACTORS OTHER THAN THE BELIEVABILITY OF THE EVIDENCE. IN V. 8 IT IS ALREADY EVIDENT THAT PHARAOH PLACED LITTLE STOCK IN THE APPARENT ABILITY OF THE MAGICIANS TO REPLICATE THE PRODUCTION OF FROGS ON A HIGH SCALE SINCE GETTING RID OF THEM, RATHER THAN PRODUCING MORE OF THEM, WAS WHAT PHARAOH WAS DRIVEN TO SEEK. HIS REQUEST TO MOSES TO “PRAY TO THE LORD TO TAKE THE FROGS AWAY FROM ME AND MY PEOPLE” IMPLIES AS WELL THAT HE BY NOW KNEW THAT STEPHEN YAHWEH EXISTED AND COULD CONTROL PARTS OF NATURE THE EGYPTIANS PREVIOUSLY THOUGHT WERE THE SOLE PROVINCE OF THEIR OWN GODS. WHAT PHARAOH WAS OFFERING IN RETURN WAS STILL, OF COURSE, MERELY THE CHANCE TO “OFFER SACRIFICES TO THE LORD,” A PRIVILEGE FAR SHORT OF WHAT HE BY NOW ALSO SURELY UNDERSTOOD WAS THE ISRAELITE DEMAND: FULL FREEDOM FROM EGYPT. THE LITERAL TRANSLATION OF THE IDIOMATIC HEBREW OF THE FIRST PART OF V. 9 IS, “HONOR YOURSELF OVER ME AS TO THE TIME FOR ME TO PRAY FOR YOU.” THE NIV RENDERING CAPTURES THE SENSE NICELY. NOTE HERE ALSO THE SIGNIFICANCE OF WHAT MOSES WAS OFFERING: THE WORDS “PRAY FOR YOU AND YOUR OFFICIALS AND YOUR PEOPLE” MAY BE SUMMARIZED BY JESUS’ WORDS IN MATT 5:44 (“PRAY FOR THOSE WHO PERSECUTE YOU”) AND LUKE 6:28 (“PRAY FOR THOSE WHO MISTREAT YOU”). PRAYER FOR ONE’S ENEMIES IS THUS NOT A CONCEPT INITIATED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT BUT IS IN FACT FIRST ENCOUNTERED IN THE OLD TESTAMENT. THE WORDING OF THE FINAL PART OF V. 9 (“EXCEPT FOR THOSE THAT REMAIN IN THE NILE”) IS AMBIGUOUS AS TO WHETHER THERE WERE FROGS IN THE NILE THAT NEVER CAME OUT ONTO THE LAND IN THE FIRST PLACE OR WHETHER SOME FROGS WOULD RETURN TO THE NILE AS THE REST DIED. HERE THE NIV TRANSLATION DIFFERS FROM THE NIV OF V. 11, EVEN THOUGH BOTH VERSES END IDENTICALLY IN THE HEBREW. A CLEARER TRANSLATION MIGHT END THE PRIOR SENTENCE WITH “YOUR OFFICIALS AND YOUR PEOPLE” AND THEN MAKE THE FINAL WORDS OF THE VERSE A NEW CLAUSE OR SENTENCE (E.G., “THEY WILL REMAIN ONLY IN THE NILE,” AS IN V. 11). ALTHOUGH IT IS AN UNLIKELY SCENARIO IN THE CONTEXT, ACCORDING TO THE GRAMMAR OF THE HEBREW ONE COULD REACH THE CONCLUSION THAT THERE HAD BEEN FROGS ALL ALONG UP TO THIS POINT IN THE NILE AND THUS INFER THAT THE REDDENING OF THE NILE THAT KILLED THE FISH DID NOT KILL THE FROGS AS WELL. FAR MORE LIKELY IS THE SCENARIO THAT SOME FROGS RETURNED TO THE NILE AFTER THE FROG PLAGUE ENDED. ONE MIGHT ASK WHY PHARAOH DID NOT SAY “TODAY!” INSTEAD OF “TOMORROW” IN V. 10. AFTER ALL, WHY NOT GET RID OF A NUISANCE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE? SINCE THE QUOTED PARTS OF THE CONVERSATION BETWEEN MOSES AND PHARAOH REPRESENT ONLY A SMALL PORTION OF THE TOTAL DIALOGUE THAT SURELY TOOK PLACE BETWEEN THEM, IT MAY BE ASSUMED THAT PHARAOH UNDERSTOOD THAT MOSES’ OFFER IN V. 9 OF “SETTING THE TIME” WAS UNDERSTOOD TO MEAN “SET THE DAY.” MOREOVER, V. 12 IMPLIES THAT MOSES PRAYED EARNESTLY FOR A PERIOD OF TIME IN INTERCESSION THE NEXT DAY; OUR MODERN STYLE OF QUICK PRAYERS TENDS TO BLIND US TO HOW NORMAL AND COMMON LENGTHY INTERCESSORY PRAYER WAS IN BIBLE TIMES, SO BOTH PHARAOH AND MOSES MAY WELL HAVE ASSUMED THAT AT LEAST A DAY WOULD BE NEEDED FOR INTERCESSION WITH GOD—AND THEREFORE PHARAOH HAD IN FACT REQUESTED THE EARLIEST POSSIBLE MOMENT FOR RELIEF FROM THE FROGS. MOSES PRACTICED HERE A FORM OF WHAT TODAY IS CALLED IN SOME QUARTERS, PRAYER EVANGELISM. IN SAYING THAT HE WOULD PRAY FOR A RESULT “SO THAT YOU MAY KNOW THERE IS NO ONE LIKE THE LORD OUR GOD,” HE WAS OFFERING PHARAOH, EVEN THOUGH IN THE CONTEXT OF AN ADVERSARIAL RELATIONSHIP, THE OPPORTUNITY TO UNDERSTAND THE UNIQUENESS OF THE TRUE GOD. KNOWING THIS GOD AS HE DID, HE COULD BE CONFIDENT OF HIS PREDICTION IN V. 11 THAT HIS PRAYERS WOULD INDEED BE ANSWERED. AFTER ALL, HE WAS ALREADY WELL AWARE THAT THE CONFRONTATION WITH PHARAOH WOULD END IN THE DEATH OF THE EGYPTIAN FIRSTBORN (CF. 4:23) AND NOT SIMPLY BY MEANS OF A RELATIVELY PRELIMINARY PLAGUE SUCH AS THAT OF THE TEEMING FROGS. 8:12–15 [HB. 8:8–11] THIS FINAL SECTION OF THE STORY OF THE SECOND PLAGUE DEMONSTRATES GOD’S GRACIOUS WILLINGNESS TO RESPOND TO MOSES’ INTERCESSORY PRAYER (VV. 12–13), REMINDS THE HEARER/READER OF THE ENORMITY OF THE PLAGUE (VV. 13–14), AND AFFIRMS THAT ALL HAPPENED CONSISTENT WITH GOD’S CONTROL OF PHARAOH’S ACTIONS, AS PREDICTED BY GOD IN THE FIRST PLACE (V. 15). THE NIV TRANSLATION OF V. 12 MIGHT SEEM TO SUGGEST THAT THE HB. IMPLIES THAT MOSES PRAYED “AS SOON AS” HE WAS AWAY FROM THE EGYPTIAN COURT. IN FACT, THE VERSE PROBABLY SHOULD BE TRANSLATED WITHOUT THE INTERPRETIVE TEMPORAL CLAUSE BUT WITH THE HB. IDIOM ŚĀM + LĔ RENDERED “AGREED,” THUS: “MOSES AND AARON WENT OUT FROM PHARAOH, AND MOSES CRIED OUT FOR HELP TO THE LORD CONCERNING THE FROGS, AS HE HAD AGREED WITH PHARAOH.” SIMILARLY, IN V. 15 THE NIV PROVIDES THE NAMES “MOSES AND AARON” AS IF THE USE OF THE PROPER NAMES CARRIED SPECIAL EMPHASIS, WHEREAS THE ORIGINAL SIMPLY HAS THE PRONOUN “THEM.” THESE VERSES DESCRIBE THE POWER OF PRAYER, WHEN A FAITHFUL SERVANT OF THE ONE TRUE GOD PRAYS IN ACCORDANCE WITH HIS MASTER’S WILL. MOSES MIGHT HAVE HAD GOOD REASON TO ASSUME THAT THE FROGS WOULD EVENTUALLY GO AWAY ON THEIR OWN, BUT HE HAD CERTAINLY NOT BEEN NOTIFIED BY GOD THAT THEY WOULD DIE OFF ON THE DAY PHARAOH SPECIFIED. ACCORDINGLY, HE PRAYED EARNESTLY FOR A RESULT THAT FROM HIS POINT OF VIEW, AT LEAST, WAS NOT GUARANTEED BUT IN FAITH THAT THE LORD WOULD DO WHAT HE ASKED IF HIS PRAYER WERE PROPER. IT WAS, AND THE FROGS DIED OFF SUDDENLY ENOUGH THAT THEY COULD BE GATHERED IN HEAPS TO DECOMPOSE AND SMELL, AS V. 14 INDICATES. ACCORDING TO GOD’S ALREADY ANNOUNCED PLAN, THIS PLAGUE WAS NOT WHAT WOULD CAUSE PHARAOH TO RELEASE THE ISRAELITES. IT WOULD IN FACT MEET WITH NO SUCCESS IN LIGHT OF GOD’S MAKING PHARAOH STUBBORN (7:3–5; 4:21–23), SO V. 15 REMINDS THE READER, IN EFFECT, THAT “THERE’S MUCH MORE TO COME BEFORE GOD IS FINISHED WITH EGYPT AND ITS KING.”**

**FOURTH SIGN: THIRD PLAGUE: MOSQUITOES OR GNATS (8:16–19) [HB. 8:12–15]**

**16 THEN THE LORD SAID TO MOSES, “TELL AARON, ‘STRETCH OUT YOUR STAFF [ROD OR WAND] AND STRIKE THE DUST OF THE GROUND,’ AND THROUGHOUT THE LAND OF EGYPT THE DUST WILL BECOME GNATS.” 17 THEY DID THIS, AND WHEN AARON STRETCHED OUT HIS HAND WITH THE STAFF [ROD OR WAND] AND STRUCK THE DUST OF THE GROUND, GNATS CAME UPON MEN AND ANIMALS. ALL THE DUST THROUGHOUT THE LAND OF EGYPT BECAME GNATS. 18 BUT WHEN THE MAGICIANS TRIED TO PRODUCE GNATS BY THEIR SECRET ARTS, THEY COULD NOT. AND THE GNATS WERE ON MEN AND ANIMALS. 19 THE MAGICIANS SAID TO PHARAOH, “THIS IS THE FINGER OF GOD.” BUT PHARAOH’S HEART WAS HARD AND HE WOULD NOT LISTEN, JUST AS THE LORD HAD SAID.**

**8:16–19 THE TERM “GNATS” IN ENGLISH IS PROPERLY USED TECHNICALLY TO DESCRIBE VIRTUALLY ANY TWO-WINGED BITING INSECTS, INCLUDING MOSQUITOES, AND THEREFORE SEVERAL OF THE ENGLISH VERSIONS, INCLUDING THE NIV, HAVE JUSTIFIABLY EMPLOYED THE BROADER TERM GNATS IN TRANSLATING THE HB. KINNÎM. POPULAR PARLANCE, HOWEVER, TENDS TO SPEAK OF “GNATS” AS MAINLY ANNOYING, TINY BITING INSECTS INCLUDING SOME TYPES OF FLIES AND “MOSQUITOES” AS THE FAR MORE COMMONLY ENCOUNTERED BLOOD-SUCKING, DISEASE-SPREADING INSECT ALMOST UNIVERSALLY DISTRIBUTED—AND LOATHED. THE BRIEF DESCRIPTION IN THIS ACCOUNT DOES NOT ALLOW US TO BE SURE WHICH TYPE OF “GNAT” ACTUALLY PLAGUED THE EGYPTIANS (AND IT IS NOT OUT OF THE QUESTION THAT MORE THAN ONE TYPE WAS INVOLVED). OUR DISCUSSION USES THE TERM “MOSQUITOES” FOR THE MOST PART, ON THE THEORY THAT THEY USUALLY ARE THE MOST HATED AND TROUBLESOME BRANCH OF THE GNAT FAMILY. IN SOME WAYS THIS PLAGUE IS LIKE THAT OF THE FROGS THAT PRECEDED IT: BOTH INVOLVE THE MIRACULOUS PRODUCTION OF A MASSIVE SUPERABUNDANCE OF AN ANIMAL, WITH THE EFFECT OF ANNOYING AND DISTURBING THE EGYPTIANS BUT WITHOUT SERIOUS DEVASTATION OTHERWISE. LIKEWISE, THIS PLAGUE WAS CAUSED BY STRIKING SOMETHING WITH THE STAFF OF GOD IN AARON’S HAND—PREVIOUSLY WATER, THIS TIME THE GROUND, SO THAT GOD’S SOVEREIGNTY OVER “LAND AND SEA” WAS CLEARLY EVIDENCED. AND, AGAIN, THE MAGICIANS SET OUT TO DUPLICATE THIS PLAGUE AS WELL. WHAT IS NOTABLY DIFFERENT ABOUT THE THIRD PLAGUE IS THE FAILURE OF THE MAGICIANS. THEY HAD BEEN ABLE TO MAKE THE WATER INTO BLOOD AND PRODUCE FROGS BY THEIR MAGICAL ARTS. BUT WHAT MAGICIAN HAS EVER DONE WITH TRAINED MOSQUITOES? THE MAGICIANS MAY HAVE TRIED LONG AND HARD TO DUPLICATE THE MIRACLE (V. 18), BUT CAPTURING ENOUGH MOSQUITOES TO MAKE AN IMPRESSIVE DISPLAY WHEN RELEASED, KEEPING THEM ALIVE AND CONFINED UNTIL THE RIGHT TIME, AND BEING ABLE TO RELEASE THEM IN SUCH A WAY THAT THEY WOULD PROMPTLY AND VISIBLY SWARM ON PEOPLE AND ANIMALS IN SIGNIFICANT NUMBERS WOULD SURELY HAVE PROVED TOO COMPLICATED. WHAT HAPPENED, THEN, WAS THAT THE MAGICIANS CONFESSED PUBLICLY THAT THIS PLAGUE (AND BY IMPLICATION THE OTHERS SO FAR) WAS NOT A TRICK BUT A PERMISSIBLE MAGIC/MIRACLE. THE EXPRESSION “THIS IS THE FINGER OF GOD,” IN LIGHT OF ITS USAGE IN EXOD. 31:18 AND DEUT. 9:10, WOULD SEEM TO MEAN SOMETHING LIKE “A SUPERNATURAL ACT OF GOD” RATHER THAN LITERALLY REFERRING TO GOD’S HAND OR FIGURATIVELY CONVEYING A SENSE SUCH AS “SOMETHING EASY ENOUGH FOR HIM TO DO WITH JUST A FINGER.” THE MAGICIANS WERE NOT CONFESSING TO THEIR OWN CONVERSION TO TRUE FAITH; THEY WERE SIMPLY SAYING THAT THE PLAGUE IS DIVINE IN ORIGIN, NOT HUMAN.**

**FIFTH SIGN: FOURTH PLAGUE: SWARMS OF FLIES (8:20–32) [HB. 8:16–28]**

**AS THE EARLIER CHART DISPLAYED, THE FOURTH PLAGUE REPLICATES SOME FEATURES OF THE FIRST, INCLUDING THE WAY IT BEGINS: WITH AN OUTDOOR MORNING CONFRONTATION WITH PHARAOH. MOSES HERE ALSO ISSUED A WARNING TO PHARAOH AS IN THE CASE OF THE SECOND PLAGUE. BUT A SPECIAL EMPHASIS IN THIS PLAGUE ACCOUNT IS NOT MENTIONED IN ANY OF THE EARLIER ONES: THE DIFFERENTIATION BETWEEN WHAT HAPPENED TO THE EGYPTIANS AND WHAT HAPPENED TO THE ISRAELITES. AS WE HAVE ALREADY ARGUED, THIS DIFFERENTIATION IS IMPLICIT IN THE EARLIER PLAGUES AS WELL, BUT AT THIS POINT MOSES CHOSE TO MAKE IT EXPLICIT. IT WILL APPEAR AS A FEATURE IN SOME OF THE SUBSEQUENT PLAGUE ACCOUNTS AS WELL (NOS. FIVE, SEVEN, NINE, TEN), BUT NOT IN ALL OF THEM—INDICATING THAT THE CASES WHERE THE DISTINCTION IS OVERTLY DESCRIBED ARE INTENDED TO SUGGEST TO THE READER THE GENERAL PATTERN THAT PREVAILED IN ALL TEN PLAGUES. ANOTHER IMPORTANT FEATURE OF THIS FOURTH PLAGUE ACCOUNT IS PHARAOH’S PARTIAL CAPITULATION TO MOSES’ DEMANDS: IN V. 25 PHARAOH EXPRESSED WILLINGNESS TO LET THE ISRAELITES HAVE A SPECIAL RELIGIOUS HOLIDAY AS LONG AS THEY HELD IT WITHIN THE LAND OF EGYPT; AND IN V. 28 HE WENT SO FAR AS TO AUTHORIZE A BRIEF DEPARTURE FROM THE LAND INTO THE WILDERNESS—ON WHICH HE SUBSEQUENTLY RENEGED (V. 32). THESE CONCESSIONS, HOWEVER BRIEF AND PARTIAL, REPRESENT THE FIRST CRACKS IN THE STONE OF THE OFFICIAL EGYPTIAN GOVERNMENT RESISTANCE, DEMONSTRATING THAT THE PLAGUES WERE BEGINNING TO AFFECT THE KING’S RESOLVE. MOSES’ ACCOUNT DOES NOT DIFFERENTIATE BETWEEN THE TWO MOST LIKELY CAUSES FOR PHARAOH’S WAVERING, THE GROWING INTENSITY OF THE PLAGUES AND THEIR OVERALL CUMULATIVE EFFECT. PRESUMABLY, BOTH CAUSES WORKED TO INFLUENCE PHARAOH’S DECISION TOWARD COMPROMISE. AS PLAGUES KEPT COMING, AS THEIR SEVERITY KEPT INCREASING, AND AS IT BECAME EVER MORE OBVIOUS THAT THEY WERE NOT MERE TRICKS BUT REAL, DIVINELY INSTIGATED ACTS OF JUDGMENT AGAINST EGYPT, THE KING BEGAN SEARCHING FOR WAYS TO END THEM WITHOUT ENDING EGYPTIAN DOMINATION OVER ISRAEL. THIS PLAGUE ACCOUNT THUS REPRESENTS A WAY STATION ON THE ROAD FROM IMPERIOUS DISDAIN FOR ANYTHING THE GOD OF ISRAEL WAS ASKING FOR TO THE EVENTUAL COMPLETE CAPITULATION THAT WILL FOLLOW THE TENTH AND FINAL PLAGUE, THE DEATH OF THE EGYPTIAN FIRSTBORN.**

**ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE PLAGUE (8:20–23) [HB. 8:16–19]**

**20 THEN THE LORD SAID TO MOSES, “GET UP EARLY IN THE MORNING AND CONFRONT PHARAOH AS HE GOES TO THE WATER AND SAY TO HIM, ‘THIS IS WHAT THE LORD SAYS: LET MY PEOPLE GO, SO THAT THEY MAY WORSHIP ME. 21 IF YOU DO NOT LET MY PEOPLE GO, I WILL SEND SWARMS OF FLIES ON YOU AND YOUR OFFICIALS, ON YOUR PEOPLE AND INTO YOUR HOUSES. THE HOUSES OF THE EGYPTIANS WILL BE FULL OF FLIES, AND EVEN THE GROUND WHERE THEY ARE. 22 “‘BUT ON THAT DAY I WILL DEAL DIFFERENTLY WITH THE LAND OF GOSHEN, WHERE MY PEOPLE LIVE; NO SWARMS OF FLIES WILL BE THERE, SO THAT YOU WILL KNOW THAT I, THE LORD, AM IN THIS LAND. 23 I WILL MAKE A DISTINCTION BETWEEN MY PEOPLE AND YOUR PEOPLE. THIS MIRACULOUS SIGN WILL OCCUR TOMORROW.’” 8:20 [HB. 8:16] THE WORDING OF THIS VERSE IS ESSENTIALLY A CONDENSATION OF THE WORDING OF THE OPENING VERSES OF THE FIRST PLAGUE ACCOUNT (WATER TO BLOOD, 7:14–16). THIS IS APPROPRIATE SINCE BY NOW MOSES WAS EXPERIENCED IN THE PROCESS OF CONFRONTING PHARAOH, AND THERE WOULD BE NO ADVANTAGE TO GOD’S REPEATING TO MOSES HIS INSTRUCTIONS IN THE SAME DEGREE OF DETAIL. THUS, THE INSTRUCTIONS WERE LIMITED TO THE TIME AND PLACE OF THE CONFRONTATION AND THE MORE-BROAD, LESS QUALIFIED DEMAND, “LET MY PEOPLE GO, SO THAT THEY MAY WORSHIP ME.” THE INITIAL FORMAL BARGAINING-STYLE QUALIFIER “IN THE DESERT” IS NO LONGER USED AS IT WAS IN 7:16, AND MOSES REFERRED TO GOD SIMPLY AS STEPHEN YAHWEH [NIV “THE LORD”] RATHER THAN “STEPHEN YAHWEH, THE GOD OF THE HEBREWS,” AS IN 7:16 SINCE PHARAOH TOO HAD BEEN LEARNING FROM THESE ENCOUNTERS AND WAS FAR MORE FULLY AWARE—TO HIS GREAT DISPLEASURE—OF WHO STEPHEN YAHWEH IS AND OF HIS AWESOME POWER. THE FIRST PLAGUE ENCOUNTER WITH PHARAOH WAS AT THE NILE, “AS HE GOES OUT TO THE WATER” (7:15), AND INVOLVED TURNING THE NILE’S WATER INTO BLOOD. IT CANNOT HAVE BEEN LOST ON PHARAOH, WHEN HE SAW MOSES WAITING FOR HIM ON THE BANK OF THE NILE IN FULFILLMENT OF THIS COMMAND FROM GOD, THAT HE WAS ONCE AGAIN IN THE PLACE AND SITUATION WHERE THE PLAGUES HAD STARTED. THE CYCLE OF ENCOUNTER LOCATIONS AND PATTERNS IS PRESUMABLY INTENDED TO HAVE THIS EFFECT ON PHARAOH: TO CAUSE HIM AS THE PATTERN BEGINS TO REPEAT ITSELF TO THINK, IN EFFECT, “OH, NO! NOT AGAIN!” 8:21 [HB. 8:17] THE RATHER BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THE THIRD PLAGUE (GNATS/MOSQUITOES) IN 8:16–19 OMITTED ANY REFERENCE TO A SPOKEN THREAT AS A WARNING OF WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF PHARAOH DID NOT COMPLY WITH GOD’S DEMAND. HERE, IN A LONGER PLAGUE ACCOUNT, THE THREAT COMPONENT IS AGAIN EXPLICITLY STATED (AS IN THE SECOND PLAGUE, 8:2–4). THE EGYPTIANS WERE THREATENED WITH A HUGE INFESTATION OF SWARMING INSECTS, SO ENORMOUS THAT THE INSECTS WOULD BE EVERYWHERE, INDOORS AND OUT, AND CONSTANTLY ON EVERYONE, INCLUDING PHARAOH AND HIS OFFICIALS. THE DESCRIPTION “AND EVEN THE GROUND WHERE THEY ARE” LITERALLY REFERS TO THE GROUND WHERE THE HOUSES WERE LOCATED, AS A WAY OF EMPHASIZING THAT THE SWARMS WOULD BE CONCENTRATED ON INHABITED AREAS AND IS COMPARABLE TO SAYING “TO THE EXTENT THAT YOU WON’T EVEN BE ABLE TO PUT A FOOT DOWN WITHOUT STEPPING ON LOTS OF THEM.” WHAT THE NIV TRANSLATES AS “SWARMS OF FLIES” IS ʿĀRŌB, A SINGLE WORD DESIGNATING INSECTS IN SWARMS. ALTHOUGH IT IS LIKELY THAT THE INSECTS IN SWARMS WERE IN THIS CASE, MOSTLY-VARIOUS SORTS OF FLIES, IT IS NOT CERTAIN THAT THEY WOULD HAVE BEEN LIMITED TO WHAT ENGLISH SPEAKERS NORMALLY THINK OF WHEN THEY HEAR THE WORD “FLIES.” A TRANSLATION SUCH AS “VARIOUS KINDS OF ANNOYING BITING AND NONBITING INSECTS IN HUGE SWARMS,” CUMBERSOME THOUGH IT WOULD BE, MIGHT ACTUALLY GIVE A SOMEWHAT CLEARER SENSE OF THE THREAT TO THE EGYPTIANS. 8:22–23 [HB. 8:18–19] ESPECIALLY SIGNIFICANT IN THIS FOURTH PLAGUE ACCOUNT, AND INDEED AN INHERENT PART OF THE THREAT, IS THE STRESS ON THE FACT THAT GOD WOULD NOT DO, TO HIS OWN PEOPLE WHAT HE WOULD DO TO THE EGYPTIANS, THEIR OPPRESSORS. TO ONE EXTENT OR ANOTHER, ALL THE PLAGUES ANTICIPATED AND PROGRESSIVELY LED UP TO THE FINAL, ULTIMATE JUDGMENT OF GOD IN THE FORM OF THE TENTH PLAGUE, THE DEATH OF THE FIRSTBORN. IN THAT CLIMACTIC EVENT, MUCH EMPHASIS IS PLACED ON THE DISTINCTION MADE BETWEEN THE EGYPTIANS AND THE ISRAELITES, A DISTINCTION THAT FOLLOWS FROM THE WILLINGNESS OF GOD’S PEOPLE TO ACT IN FAITH BY MARKING THEIR HOMES WITH THE SIGN OF THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB. HERE GOD’S DISTINCTION BETWEEN HIS OWN AND THOSE WHO DO NOT BELONG TO HIM IS SHOWN BY HIS CONTROL OF NATURE: ALTHOUGH FLIES AND OTHER SWARMING INSECTS CANNOT NATURALLY DISCRIMINATE BY NATIONALITY OR POLITICAL BOUNDARIES IN DECIDING ON WHOM THEY WILL LAND AND WHOSE SKIN THEY WILL BITE, NATIONALITY/POLITICAL BOUNDARY WAS EXACTLY THE BASIS FOR THE PLAGUING OR NON-PLAGUING BY THE SWARMING INSECTS. HERE, THEN, IS BROUGHT OVERTLY TO THE READER’S ATTENTION THE FACT THAT THE PLAGUES, FAR FROM BEING NATURAL PHENOMENA NATURALLY PRODUCED, WERE NATURE TURNED ON ITS HEAD: NATURE ORDERED BY ITS CREATOR TO ACT IN ABNORMAL WAYS THAT WERE OMINOUSLY FRIGHTENING FOR THE EGYPTIANS, WONDERFULLY REASSURING FOR THE ISRAELITES, AND CLEARLY EVIDENTIAL (IN THIS PLAGUE, EVEN TO PHARAOH) OF A DIVINE MIGHTY ACT IN SERVICE OF A DIVINE DEMAND.**

**THE PLAGUE AND ITS DEVASTATION (8:24) [HB. 8:20]**

**24 AND THE LORD DID THIS. DENSE SWARMS OF FLIES POURED INTO PHARAOH’S PALACE AND INTO THE HOUSES OF HIS OFFICIALS, AND THROUGHOUT EGYPT THE LAND WAS RUINED BY THE FLIES. 8:24 THE WINDOW SCREEN DID NOT EXIST IN ANCIENT TIMES; WINDOWS WERE SIMPLY OPENINGS IN WALLS (AND CEILINGS). IT WOULD HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE FOR SOME OF THE WEALTHIER EGYPTIANS TO FIX CLOTH AT DOORWAYS AND WINDOWS TO KEEP OUT THE INSECT SWARMS, BUT THIS WOULD HAVE PRODUCED AN ALMOST INTOLERABLE LACK OF AIRFLOW IN A PERENNIALLY HOT CLIMATE, MAKING LIFE INDOORS ESSENTIALLY UNBEARABLE, SO IT IS UNLIKELY THAT ANY EGYPTIANS EVEN CONSIDERED SUCH A MOVE. THUS THE SWARMS OF FLIES WERE ALLOWED ACCESS TO EVERYONE WHETHER INDOORS OR OUTDOORS, AND ONCE THE PLAGUE BEGAN, THE EGYPTIANS WERE LIVING (OR TRYING TO LIVE) COVERED WITH FLIES. FLIES OF VARIOUS SORTS WERE NOTHING NEW TO THE EGYPTIANS. THERE WERE PLENTY OF FLIES IN EGYPT IN HOLY BIBLE TIMES, JUST AS THERE ARE IN MODERN TIMES. THE DEVASTATION HERE DESCRIBED WAS NOT THE RESULT OF SOMETHING NEW BUT OF SOMETHING WELL KNOWN AND USUALLY TOLERABLE AS AN ANNOYANCE BECOMING MULTIPLIED THOUSANDS OF TIMES OVER BY GOD’S SPECIAL ACTION SO AS TO CONSTITUTE AN INTOLERABLE PESTILENCE, TO THE EXTENT THAT “THE LAND WAS RUINED BY THE FLIES.” THE RUIN HERE DESCRIBED WAS NOT TOPOLOGICAL BUT RATHER REFERRED TO THE QUALITY OF LIFE. PEOPLE COULDN’T EAT WITHOUT INGESTING FLIES; THEY COULDN’T SLEEP WITHOUT FLIES COVERING THEIR BODIES; THEY COULDN’T WORK FOR HAVING TO SWAT FLIES AND/OR BECAUSE THEY COULDN’T SEE WELL THROUGH THE SWARMS; THEIR SKIN WAS WELTED WITH FLY BITES.**

**PHARAOH’S FIRST CONCESSION: AN OFFER OF A RELIGIOUS HOLIDAY BUT ONLY INSIDE EGYPT (8:25) [HB. 8:21]**

**25 THEN PHARAOH SUMMONED MOSES AND AARON AND SAID, “GO, SACRIFICE TO YOUR GOD HERE IN THE LAND.” 8:25 THIS IS THE POINT AT WHICH PHARAOH BEGAN TO WEAKEN. WE ARE NOT TOLD HOW MANY DAYS HAD GONE BY, HOW MANY COMPLAINTS AND EXPRESSIONS OF PANIC HE HAD RECEIVED FROM HIS ADVISORS AND FROM THE EGYPTIAN PEOPLE IN GENERAL, AND HOW SEVERELY HE AND HIS OWN FAMILY HAD BEEN DRIVEN TO DISTRACTION BY THE INSECT SWARMS, BUT WE ARE TOLD THAT HE WAS NOW SO BOTHERED BY THE FLIES THAT HE CALLED MOSES AND AARON TO THE PALACE AND OFFERED THE ISRAELITES A PARTIAL ACCESSION TO THEIR GOD’S DEMANDS. IN ONE SENSE THIS CONCESSION GOES BEYOND THAT OF 8:8 BY REASON OF ITS SPECIFICITY: PHARAOH WAS OFFERING A REAL, CLEARLY DEFINED OPTION TO THE ISRAELITES IN EXCHANGE FOR RELIEF FROM THE FLIES. NEVERTHELESS, THE READER IS WELL ADVISED TO BEAR IN MIND THAT PHARAOH KNEW FROM THE BEGINNING THAT THE ISRAELITES WERE EXPECTING MUCH MORE THAN HE WAS NOW OFFERING. THEY WERE ASKING FOR NOTHING ELSE THAN TO LEAVE EGYPT PERMANENTLY, AND THE LANGUAGE USED THUS FAR BY MOSES AND AARON IN DEMANDING THE RIGHT TO LEAVE PERMANENTLY, MODIFIED BY SUCH PHRASES AS “INTO THE WILDERNESS” AND “TO OFFER SACRIFICES TO OUR GOD” AND “THREE DAYS,” SIMPLY REFLECTS ANCIENT/MODERN EASTERN BARGAINING STYLE; SO THE MODIFYING PHRASES WERE NEVER MEANT TO BE TAKEN LITERALLY AND NEVER WERE. NOW PHARAOH, FROM HIS PERSPECTIVE, WAS BARGAINING TOO AND OFFERING TERMS HE WANTED THE ISRAELITES TO SETTLE FOR: AN ISRAELITE NATIONAL HOLIDAY TO SACRIFICE TO STEPHEN YAHWEH WITHIN EGYPT. FROM PHARAOH’S POINT OF VIEW AS A BARGAINER, THIS MIGHT GAIN HIM THE END OF THE PLAGUES WHILE CEDING LITTLE TO ISRAEL: ONLY A SHORT TIME OFF FROM WORK. PHARAOH WOULD RETAIN ISRAEL UNDER EGYPTIAN DOMINATION AND CONTINUE TO PREVENT THEIR BEING ABLE TO ORGANIZE ALLIANCES WITH OTHER PEOPLES OR NATIONS IN ANY WAY THAT WOULD BE THREATENING TO EGYPT (CF. 1:10). PHARAOH MAY HAVE GENUINELY THOUGHT THIS CONCESSION WOULD WORK; IN A BARGAINING CULTURE, NEITHER SIDE CAN NECESSARILY BE SURE AT THE OUTSET WHAT THE MINIMUM OR MAXIMUM PRICE OF THE OTHER SIDE REALLY IS UNTIL THE BARGAINING PROCEEDS FURTHER OR IS COMPLETED.**

**MOSES’ REJECTION OF PHARAOH’S FIRST OFFER (8:26–27) [HB. 8:22–23]**

**26 BUT MOSES SAID, “THAT WOULD NOT BE RIGHT. THE SACRIFICES WE OFFER THE LORD OUR GOD WOULD BE DETESTABLE TO THE EGYPTIANS. AND IF WE OFFER SACRIFICES THAT ARE DETESTABLE IN THEIR EYES, WILL THEY NOT STONE US? 27 WE MUST TAKE A THREE-DAY JOURNEY INTO THE DESERT TO OFFER SACRIFICES TO THE LORD OUR GOD, AS HE COMMANDS US.”**

**8:26–27 MOSES, OF COURSE, WOULD NOT THINK OF SETTLING FOR A MERE IN-COUNTRY RELIGIOUS HOLIDAY. HE WELL KNEW THAT GOD’S PROMISE TO ISRAEL WAS “TO RESCUE THEM FROM THE HAND OF THE EGYPTIANS AND TO BRING THEM UP OUT OF THAT LAND INTO A GOOD AND SPACIOUS LAND, A LAND FLOWING WITH MILK AND HONEY—THE HOME OF THE CANAANITES, HITTITES, AMORITES, PERIZZITES, HIVITES AND JEBUSITES … TO BRING MY PEOPLE THE ISRAELITES OUT OF EGYPT” (3:8, 10). HE DID NOT, HOWEVER, REPLY TO PHARAOH AS A MODERN WESTERNER MIGHT: “NO, SORRY, WE WILL ACCEPT NOTHING LESS THAN PERMANENT EMIGRATION FROM EGYPT TO CANAAN, NEVER AGAIN TO BE UNDER YOUR DOMINATION.” HE CONTINUED IN BARGAINING-STYLE MODE, WITH AN APPROPRIATELY GENTLE RESPONSE ARGUMENT THAT MADE THREE REASONABLE ASSERTIONS, ALL OF WHICH WERE WAYS OF SAYING “THAT’S NOT WHAT WE WILL ACCEPT” YET IN A MANNER CALCULATED TO SOUND AS NONDEMANDING AND NONTHREATENING AS POSSIBLE. THESE ASSERTIONS ARE: (1) ISRAELITE ANIMAL SACRIFICES WERE ABOMINABLE TO EGYPTIANS. THIS WAS CERTAINLY TRUE. THE EGYPTIANS, AS TYPICAL PANTHEISTS, STILL MADE ANIMAL SACRIFICES EVEN THOUGH THEY IDENTIFIED MANY OF THEIR GODS WITH THEM. WHAT THEY DETESTED WAS ANYTHING RELATED TO MOUNTAIN-DWELLING PEOPLES’ HABITS AND PREFERENCES, INCLUDING THE RAISING OF SHEEP AND GOATS (GEN 46:34). (2) IN LIGHT OF EGYPTIAN ANIMOSITY TOWARD ISRAELITES, IT MADE LITTLE SENSE TO PERFORM OPENLY, AMONG EGYPTIANS, WHAT WAS SO REPUGNANT TO THEM AND MERELY INVITED ACTIVE RESENTMENT AND ATTACK. THIS LANGUAGE, TOO, WAS PART OF THE BARGAINING; WE HAVE NO KNOWLEDGE THAT WOULD LEAD US TO CONCLUDE THAT ALL EGYPTIANS THROUGHOUT THE LAND WOULD, IF THEY SAW AN ISRAELITE GOAT OR LAMB SACRIFICE, AUTOMATICALLY REACT BY STONING THOSE WHO MADE IT. (3) GOD HAD NOT CALLED FOR A MINOR SORT OF RELIGIOUS HOLIDAY BUT A FORMAL NATIONAL ACT OF WORSHIP IN A DIFFERENT LOCATION TO IDENTIFY THE ISRAELITES AS HIS PEOPLE. THE TERM “A THREE-DAY JOURNEY” IS NOT TO BE TAKEN LITERALLY; IT IS AN IDIOM FOR “AN OFFICIAL, FORMAL, FOREIGN VISIT.” MOSES AGAIN USED THIS PHRASE, JUST AS IT WAS DICTATED TO HIM IN 3:18 AND AS HE HAD EMPLOYED IT IN 5:3, TO REMIND PHARAOH THAT NO MERE SIMPLE, INFORMAL, BRIEF, OR LOCAL RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE COULD SUBSTITUTE FOR WHAT THE GOD OF ISRAEL WAS DEMANDING OF EGYPT’S KING. “THREE-DAY JOURNEY” CAN ALSO CARRY THE OVERTONE OF “FAR FROM HERE” OR “VERY FAR AWAY” AS IN GEN 30:36 (“THEN HE PUT A THREE-DAY JOURNEY BETWEEN HIMSELF AND JACOB”). PHARAOH OBVIOUSLY UNDERSTOOD IT THIS WAY SINCE HIS COUNTER-BARGAINING REPLY IN THE NEXT VERSE ASKED THAT THE ISRAELITES “NOT GO VERY FAR,” IN A VAIN ATTEMPT SOMEHOW TO SAVE FACE BY SUGGESTING THAT THEY WOULD ACTUALLY NOT MAKE A FULL, PERMANENT DEPARTURE FROM EGYPT.**

**PHARAOH’S SECOND CONCESSION: PERMISSION FOR A TEMPORARY TRIP INTO THE WILDERNESS (8:28–29) [HB. 8:24–25]**

**28 PHARAOH SAID, “I WILL LET YOU GO TO OFFER SACRIFICES TO THE LORD YOUR GOD IN THE DESERT, BUT YOU MUST NOT GO VERY FAR. NOW PRAY FOR ME.” 29 MOSES ANSWERED, “AS SOON AS I LEAVE YOU, I WILL PRAY TO THE LORD, AND TOMORROW THE FLIES WILL LEAVE PHARAOH AND HIS OFFICIALS AND HIS PEOPLE. ONLY BE SURE THAT PHARAOH DOES NOT ACT DECEITFULLY AGAIN BY NOT LETTING THE PEOPLE GO TO OFFER SACRIFICES TO THE LORD.”**

**8:28–29 PHARAOH NOW OFFERED TO LET THE ISRAELITES LEAVE EGYPT, AND MOSES APPARENTLY ACCEPTED HIS OFFER AS A GENUINE CAPITULATION TO STEPHEN YAHWEH’S DEMANDS. TRUE, PHARAOH PLACED RESTRICTIONS ON HIS OFFER (“I WILL LET YOU GO [ONLY] TO OFFER SACRIFICES … YOU MUST NOT GO VERY FAR”), AND MOSES REMAINED SUSPICIOUS AND WARY, AS INDICATED BY HIS WORDS IN REJOINDER (“ONLY BE SURE THAT PHARAOH DOES NOT ACT DECEITFULLY AGAIN BY NOT LETTING THE PEOPLE GO”). NEVERTHELESS, THIS INTERCHANGE RAISES A QUESTION: DID MOSES REALLY THINK HE HAD WON, AND IF SO, WASN’T HE MISTAKEN? THE MOST LIKELY ANSWER WOULD SEEM TO BE: HE DID NOT KNOW FOR SURE WHETHER OR NOT HE (OR MORE PRECISELY, STEPHEN YAHWEH) HAD WON, BUT HE REGARDED IT AS A REAL POSSIBILITY—THAT IS, THAT NOW THE EXODUS COULD GET UNDERWAY. THE MAIN REASON FOR THIS IS TO BE FOUND, ONCE AGAIN, IN THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE BARGAINING STYLE. THE STYLE ALLOWS MANY UNSPOKEN TRANSACTIONS TO BE SUBSUMED UNDER THAT WHICH IS ACTUALLY STATED. MOSES COULD WELL HAVE UNDERSTOOD PHARAOH’S SPOKEN RESTRICTIONS AS MERE FACE-SAVING DEVICES FOR ALLOWING THE EXODUS TO TAKE PLACE WITHOUT HAVING TO SAY, “OKAY, YOU WIN. I GIVE UP. YOU CAN HAVE YOUR EXODUS.” IT IS IMPORTANT TO BEAR IN MIND THAT MOSES HAD NEVER BEEN TOLD HOW MANY PLAGUES THERE WOULD BE AND COULD WELL HAVE WONDERED IF THIS FOURTH PLAGUE, HAVING SEVERAL SIMILARITIES TO THE FIRST, MIGHT INDICATE BY ITS SOMEWHAT RESUMPTIVE NATURE THAT THE PATTERN WAS STARTING AGAIN, SO THAT MEANS WE’VE COME FULL CIRCLE AND THIS PART OF THE SEQUENCE WAS COMING TO A CONCLUSION. HE ALSO DID NOT HAVE TO ASSUME THAT THE PREDICTED DEATH OF THE EGYPTIAN FIRSTBORN (4:23) WAS NO LONGER A VALID EXPECTATION. THAT EVENT COULD STILL HAPPEN, AFTER THE PLAGUE OF SWARMING INSECTS ABATED AND DURING OR AFTER THE TIME THE ISRAELITES LEFT EGYPT. IN OTHER WORDS, THERE WAS NOTHING IN WHAT MOSES HAD SO FAR BEEN LED TO EXPECT THAT WOULD AUTOMATICALLY CAUSE HIM TO THINK HE WAS AS YET FAR FROM THE TIME OF THE EXODUS AND THAT MANY MORE PLAGUES WOULD BE NEEDED BEFORE HE COULD BEGIN TO LEAD THE ISRAELITES INTO THE WILDERNESS. MOSES WAS OPERATING ON FAITH AS REGARDS GOD’S TIMING THROUGHOUT THE ENTIRE SEQUENCE OF THE PLAGUES. PHARAOH’S WORDS, “NOW PRAY FOR ME,” IN V. 28 SUGGEST THAT THIS PLAGUE HAD TOUCHED HIM PERSONALLY TO AN EXTENT THAT THE PRIOR THREE HAD NOT. MOSES’ PROMISE TO PRAY IMMEDIATELY AFTER DEPARTING THE PALACE (“AS SOON AS I LEAVE YOU,” V. 29) MAY BE ANOTHER INDICATION OF THE WAY PEOPLE WERE BEING “DRIVEN CRAZY” BY THE SWARMS OF FLIES: IT WAS THE SORT OF THING ONE MIGHT SAY IF DURING THE ENCOUNTER WITH PHARAOH THERE HAD BEEN MANY EXPRESSIONS OF DESIRE FOR RELIEF FROM WHAT HAD BECOME INTOLERABLE. MOSES’ PROMISE OF QUICK RATHER THAN GRADUAL RELIEF (“TOMORROW THE FLIES WILL LEAVE”) APPEARS AS WELL TO FIT WITH THIS SCENARIO.**

**REMOVAL OF THE PLAGUE, FOLLOWED BY PHARAOH’S RENEGING ON HIS PROMISE (8:30–32) [HB. 8:26–28]**

**30 THEN MOSES LEFT PHARAOH AND PRAYED TO THE LORD, 31 AND THE LORD DID WHAT MOSES ASKED: THE FLIES LEFT PHARAOH AND HIS OFFICIALS AND HIS PEOPLE; NOT A FLY REMAINED. 32 BUT THIS TIME ALSO PHARAOH HARDENED HIS HEART AND WOULD NOT LET THE PEOPLE GO.**

**8:30–32 THESE THREE VERSES CLOSELY PARALLEL 8:12–15, THE CONCLUDING STATEMENTS OF THE PLAGUE OF FROGS ACCOUNT, IMMEDIATELY PRECEDING. EACH OF THE TWO SUCCESSIVE PLAGUE ACCOUNTS (NOS. THREE AND FOUR) THUS ENDS WITH MENTION OF MOSES’ DEPARTURE FROM PHARAOH, HIS PRAYER, ASSURANCE OF STEPHEN YAHWEH’S FULL RESPONSE (WHAT MOSES ASKED), COMPLETE RELIEF FROM THE PLAGUE, AND PHARAOH’S STUBBORN REFUSAL TO HONOR HIS PROMISE. BY THIS TIME, IT SHOULD BE OBVIOUS TO THE READER THAT ONE OF THE THINGS THAT STEPHEN YAHWEH ACCOMPLISHED BY MAKING PHARAOH’S HEART HARD (I.E., MAKING HIM STUBBORN) WAS TO CAUSE PHARAOH TO BECOME SOMEONE WHOSE WORD SIMPLY COULD NOT BE TRUSTED. THIS IS ADUMBRATED BY MOSES’ VERBALIZED CONCERN THAT PHARAOH MUST NOT RENEGE ON HIS AGREEMENT TO LET THE ISRAELITES GO (8:29), WHICH SETS THE STAGE ALL THE MORE VISIBLY FOR THE READER TO NOTICE UNRELIABILITY IN PHARAOH. WITH REGARD TO THE BIGGER PICTURE OF PHARAOH’S OVERALL HUMILIATION IN THE PLAGUES-EXODUS-RED SEA NARRATIVE, THE READER IS ALREADY ABLE TO ASK THE QUESTION, “IF PHARAOH CANNOT KEEP HIS WORD WITH REGARD TO THINGS CLEARLY WITHIN HIS POWER TO ACCOMPLISH, CAN HE BE TRUSTED EVEN REMOTELY TO KEEP HIS WORD [OR BOAST] WITH REGARD TO THINGS ABOUT WHICH THERE MIGHT BE DOUBT AS TO HIS POWER—OR WILLINGNESS—TO PERFORM (E.G., HIS AFTERTHOUGHT ATTEMPT TO DESTROY ISRAEL AFTER THE EXODUS HAD TAKEN PLACE; 14:5–15:21)?**

**FIFTH PLAGUE: DEATH OF LIVESTOCK (9:1–7)**

**THIS PLAGUE ACCOUNT IS ONE OF THE SHORTER ONES, ONLY SLIGHTLY LONGER THAN PLAGUES TWO AND SIX BUT LONG ENOUGH TO PROVIDE THE BASIC ELEMENTS NECESSARY TO INFORM THE READER OF THE PARTICULARS: IT WOULD KILL LIVESTOCK, BUT ONLY EGYPTIAN ANIMALS; IT WAS A FURTHER HUMILIATION OF PHARAOH DIRECTLY TIED TO HIS CONTINUING REFUSAL TO RELEASE THE ISRAELITES; ITS DIFFERENTIATION BETWEEN THE EGYPTIANS AND THE ISRAELITES WAS VALIDATED BY FORMAL INVESTIGATION; AND WHEN IT WAS OVER, IT STILL DIDN’T MOVE PHARAOH TO ALLOW THE EXODUS.**

**ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE PLAGUE (9:1–4)**

**1 THEN THE LORD SAID TO MOSES, “GO TO PHARAOH AND SAY TO HIM, ‘THIS IS WHAT THE LORD, THE GOD OF THE HEBREWS, SAYS: “LET MY PEOPLE GO, SO THAT THEY MAY WORSHIP ME.” 2 IF YOU REFUSE TO LET THEM GO AND CONTINUE TO HOLD THEM BACK, 3 THE HAND OF THE LORD WILL BRING A TERRIBLE PLAGUE ON YOUR LIVESTOCK IN THE FIELD—ON YOUR HORSES AND DONKEYS [ASSES] AND CAMELS AND ON YOUR CATTLE AND SHEEP AND GOATS. 4 BUT THE LORD WILL MAKE A DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE LIVESTOCK OF ISRAEL AND THAT OF EGYPT, SO THAT NO ANIMAL BELONGING TO THE ISRAELITES WILL DIE.’” 9:1–2 THIS ACCOUNT BEGINS SIMILARLY TO PLAGUES TWO AND EIGHT, WITH MOSES BEING SENT TO PHARAOH INDOORS, PRESUMABLY AT HIS COURT, WITH BOTH A DEMAND AND A WARNING, “LET MY PEOPLE GO, SO THAT THEY MAY WORSHIP ME. IF YOU REFUSE TO LET THEM GO, …” IN THIS ACCOUNT V. 2 ADDS “AND CONTINUE TO HOLD THEM BACK,” A WORDING THAT IS NOT FOUND IN THE OTHER PLAGUE ACCOUNTS BUT MIGHT HAVE BEEN INCLUDED IN ALMOST ANY OF THEM; IT HAS THE EFFECT OF REMINDING PHARAOH—AND THE READER—THAT THERE WAS AN IMPETUS TO THE ISRAELITE CAUSE THAT PHARAOH WAS RESTRAINING. HE WAS HOLDING BACK PEOPLE WHO BELONGED SOMEWHERE ELSE. 9:3 PART OF THE EVIDENCE LEADING TO THE CONCLUSION THAT THE PLAGUES INCREASED IN SEVERITY AS THEY PROGRESSED IS FOUND IN THE WORDS OF V. 3, “THE HAND OF THE LORD WILL BRING A TERRIBLE PLAGUE.” NONE OF THE PRIOR PLAGUES WAS ANNOUNCED BY MOSES AS THE WORK OF “THE HAND OF THE LORD.” IT IS, OF COURSE, THE CASE THAT THE EGYPTIAN MAGICIANS USED A SIMILAR EXPRESSION IN THE THIRD PLAGUE ACCOUNT TO EXPLAIN TO PHARAOH THAT THE PLAGUE OF BITING INSECTS WAS SUPERNATURAL IN ORIGIN (“THIS IS THE FINGER OF GOD,” 8:19), BUT NOW GOD HIMSELF ANNOUNCED A PLAGUE AS COMING DIRECTLY FROM HIMSELF, IMPLICITLY REFERRING TO ITS SEVERITY. HE HAD, OF COURSE, CAUSED ALL THE OTHERS; BUT NOW HE WARNED PHARAOH THAT HE WOULD MAKE THIS ONE, HAPPEN IN EFFECT, IN A BIG WAY. THE NIV “WILL BRING A TERRIBLE PLAGUE” IS A FINESSED CONCEPTUAL RENDERING OF THE HEBREW, BUT IT CAPTURES SOME OF THE SENSE OF THE FINAL THREE WORDS IN THE ORIGINAL, WHICH MAY LITERALLY BE TRANSLATED “A VERY SEVERE PLAGUE.” 9:4 VERSE 4 NOT ONLY EMPHASIZES ONCE AGAIN THE DIFFERENTIATION BETWEEN THE EGYPTIANS AND THE ISRAELITES WITH REGARD TO THE DESTRUCTIVE EFFECTS OF THE PLAGUE BUT ANNOUNCES DEATH FOR THE FIRST TIME. IT WAS NOT YET THE DEATH OF PEOPLE, BUT IT WAS FAR GREATER THAN, SAY, THE DYING OFF OF THE FROGS MENTIONED IN THE SECOND PLAGUE STORY (8:13–14). DOMESTICATED ANIMALS WERE TREASURED AS ENORMOUSLY VALUABLE ASSETS IN HOLY BIBLE TIMES (AS IN ANY TIME PRIOR TO THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION, OR ANY PLACE EVEN TODAY WHERE FARMING PREDOMINATES). MOREOVER, THEY WERE SEEN AS CLOSELY INTERRELATED TO THE WELFARE OF HUMANS, A FACT REFLECTED EVEN IN THE HOLY BIBLE’S CREATION ACCOUNTS. THE PANTHEISTIC EGYPTIANS REVERED ALL ANIMALS BUT BIRDS AND LIVESTOCK MORE THAN FISH AND AMPHIBIANS. FOR THEM TO HAVE LOST LIVESTOCK WOULD CONSTITUTE A SERIOUS BLOW INDEED. FOR THEM TO HAVE LOST LIVESTOCK WHILE THE ISRAELITES RETAINED ALL THEIRS REPRESENTED A NATIONWIDE HUMILIATION.**

**THE PLAGUE AND ITS DEVASTATION (9:5–6)**

**5 THE LORD SET A TIME AND SAID, “TOMORROW THE LORD WILL DO THIS IN THE LAND.” 6 AND THE NEXT DAY THE LORD DID IT: ALL THE LIVESTOCK OF THE EGYPTIANS DIED, BUT NOT ONE ANIMAL BELONGING TO THE ISRAELITES DIED.**

**9:5 GOD’S VERBALLY SETTING A TIME FOR A LOCALIZED EVENT (NOT MERELY A PLAGUE) TO HAPPEN HAS NO PARALLEL ELSEWHERE IN SCRIPTURE, AND THE MENTION HERE OF THE EXPRESSION “THE LORD SET A TIME” PRESUMABLY IS INCLUDED AS A CONTRAST WITH THE WORDING IN THE SECOND PLAGUE ACCOUNT (7:25–8:15), WHERE MOSES SPECIFICALLY ALLOWED PHARAOH TO SET THE TIME (“I LEAVE TO YOU THE HONOR OF SETTING THE TIME,” 8:9). THIS IMPLICIT CONNECTION OF THE WORDING OF THE FIFTH PLAGUE TO THAT OF THE SECOND IS YET FURTHER EVIDENCE THAT THE PLAGUE STORIES ARE HIGHLY INTEGRATED, COMPOSED AS A UNIT, AND THEREFORE EXPECT THE READER TO BE THINKING OF THE ELEMENTS OF ALL OF THEM AS HE OR SHE READS ANY PARTICULAR ONE. SPECIFICALLY, THE CYCLIC NATURE OF THE COMPOSITION OF THE FIRST NINE PLAGUE ACCOUNTS MEANS THAT THE READER IS PRESUMED TO HAVE ESPECIALLY IN MIND WHAT HAPPENED IN THE SECOND PLAGUE, THE INITIAL PLAGUE OF THE “SECOND CYCLE” WHEN READING THE ACCOUNT OF THE FIFTH PLAGUE, THE NEXT ACCOUNT IN THAT CYCLE. THE FACT THAT PHARAOH WAS GIVEN A CHANCE TO SET THE TIME FOR RELIEF FROM THE SECOND PLAGUE, AND DID SO BUT WAS NOT ABLE TO LEARN FROM THE RESULT THAT HE SHOULD HAVE LET THE ISRAELITES GO, MEANS THAT NOW THERE WAS NO POINT IN GIVING HIM OTHER CHANCES. SO, GOD NAMED THE DATE. THE WAY GOD SPOKE OF HIMSELF IN THE THIRD PERSON IN V. 5 IS PARALLELED BY MANY OTHER INSTANCES IN SCRIPTURE, PARTICULARLY IN THE PROPHETICAL BOOKS. MOSES WAS THROUGHOUT EXODUS AND THE FOLLOWING PENTATEUCHAL BOOKS SPEAKING OF HIMSELF IN THE FIRST PERSON AS WELL. BOTH ARE EXAMPLES OF A PHENOMENON NORMAL TO HEBREW NARRATIVE STYLE. “THE LAND” REFERS TO EGYPT, AGAIN HIGHLIGHTING THE SUPERNATURAL NATURE OF THE PLAGUE, SINCE A NATURALLY OCCURRING PLAGUE WOULD NOT LIMIT ITSELF BY POLITICAL BOUNDARIES. 9:6 VERSE 6 DESCRIBES THE ACTUATION OF WHAT HAD BEEN WARNED AND PREDICTED PREVIOUSLY. GOD FULFILLED HIS WORD AND THE TIMING HE HAD ANNOUNCED, AND THE EGYPTIAN LIVESTOCK DIED, WITH ISRAELITE LIVESTOCK BEING UNTOUCHED. THE VERSE ALSO CONTAINS A TRANSLATION CHOICE IN THE NIV THAT CREATES A POSSIBLE MISIMPRESSION FOR THE READER. THE NIV TRANSLATION “ALL THE LIVESTOCK OF THE EGYPTIANS DIED” WOULD SEEM TO SUGGEST THAT NO EGYPTIAN LIVESTOCK SURVIVED THE PLAGUE, ESPECIALLY WHEN THIS STATEMENT IS FOLLOWED BY THE (CORRECTLY TRANSLATED) STATEMENT “BUT NOT ONE ANIMAL BELONGING TO THE ISRAELITES DIED.” YET WHEN ONE READS ON TO THE ACCOUNT OF THE SEVENTH PLAGUE, IT IS CLEAR THAT THERE WERE PLENTY OF EGYPTIAN LIVESTOCK STILL ALIVE, SINCE THEY ARE MENTIONED AS BEING IN DANGER OF BEING KILLED BY THE NEXT PLAGUE, THAT OF FEROCIOUS HAIL (9:19–21). MOREOVER, EGYPTIAN LIVESTOCK ARE DESCRIBED AS ALIVE AT THE ADVENT OF THE ACCOUNT OF THE FINAL PLAGUE, THAT OF THE DEATH OF THE FIRSTBORN (12:29). THIS APPARENT CONTRADICTION IS NOT DUE TO INCONSISTENCY AMONG THE PLAGUE ACCOUNTS, MULTIPLE CONTRADICTORY SOURCES FOR THEM, OR ANY SIMILAR CAUSE. IT IS DUE SIMPLY TO THE FACT THAT THE HEBREW WORD KOL, USUALLY TRANSLATED “ALL,” CAN MEAN “ALL SORTS OF” OR “FROM ALL OVER” OR “ALL OVER THE PLACE.” IN THIS VERSE THE BETTER TRANSLATION OF THE FULL EXPRESSION WOULD BE “ALL SORTS OF EGYPTIAN LIVESTOCK DIED” OR “EGYPTIAN LIVESTOCK DIED ALL OVER THE PLACE.”**

**PHARAOH’S INVESTIGATION OF ISRAELITE ANIMALS AND HIS CONTINUING REFUSAL (9:7)**

**7 PHARAOH SENT MEN TO INVESTIGATE AND FOUND THAT NOT EVEN ONE OF THE ANIMALS OF THE ISRAELITES HAD DIED. YET HIS HEART WAS UNYIELDING AND HE WOULD NOT LET THE PEOPLE GO. 9:7 NOW THAT SO MANY EGYPTIAN CATTLE HAD DIED, REPRESENTING AN ECONOMIC DISASTER FOR THE EGYPTIANS, PHARAOH DECIDED TO FIND OUT FOR HIMSELF WHETHER OR NOT THE SAME SORT OF THING HAD HAPPENED TO THE ISRAELITES. ALL OVER EGYPT THE BODIES OF COWS, HORSES, AND OTHER ANIMALS WERE ROTTING IN THE SUN. IF A SIMILAR SITUATION WERE FOUND IN GOSHEN, THE ISRAELITE ENCLAVE, IT WOULD PROVE THAT THE PLAGUE HAD BEEN NATURAL OR—PERHAPS BETTER YET—THAT STEPHEN YAHWEH HAD SOMEHOW TURNED AGAINST HIS OWN PEOPLE AS WELL. OF COURSE, THIS PLAGUE DOES NOT REPRESENT THE FIRST TIME THAT GOD HAD DIFFERENTIATED BETWEEN HIS PEOPLE ISRAEL AND THE EGYPTIANS. BUT IN THE CASE OF THE OTHER PLAGUES, THE RESULTS WOULD HAVE BEEN SOMEWHAT HARDER TO VERIFY OR THE DIFFERENCE EASIER TO HIDE ON THE PART OF THE ISRAELITES IF THEY WERE GIVEN TO DECEPTION, AS PHARAOH, IF PARANOID ENOUGH, MIGHT HAVE WISHFULLY THOUGHT. PRESUMABLY HE SENT ENOUGH INVESTIGATORS THAT THEY COULD COVER THE WHOLE LAND OF GOSHEN QUICKLY, BUT NO EVIDENCE OF ANY DEATH OF LIVESTOCK WAS FOUND THERE. EGYPTIAN TASKMASTERS AND MILITARY PERSONNEL STATIONED AT OR NEAR GOSHEN MAY ALSO HAVE CONFIRMED TO THE INVESTIGATORS WHAT THEY COULD DISCERN WITH THEIR OWN EYES: NOT A SINGLE ISRAELITE ANIMAL HAD DIED. GOD HAD SPARED ISRAEL AND DEVASTATED EGYPT. NEVERTHELESS, PHARAOH’S HEART WAS UNYIELDING, AND HE WOULD NOT GIVE THE ISRAELITES THEIR FREEDOM. GOD WAS CONTROLLING PHARAOH IN A MANNER LEADING PROGRESSIVELY TO PHARAOH’S AND EGYPT’S COMPLETE HUMILIATION AND TRAGIC DEFEAT. CONTINUING TO RESIST WAS THE MOST FOOLISH THING PHARAOH COULD DO, AND THAT WAS EXACTLY WHAT GOD WAS MAKING HIM DO.**

**SEVENTH SIGN: SIXTH PLAGUE: FESTERING BOILS (9:8–12)**

**ALTHOUGH THIS SIXTH PLAGUE ACCOUNT MENTIONS NO OVERT VERBAL CONFRONTATION WITH PHARAOH (NO CATCHING HIM AS HE HEADED SOMEWHERE OR SPOKEN WARNING DIRECTLY TO HIM, OR THE LIKE), BOTH HE AND HIS MAGICIANS WERE REQUIRED TO WITNESS THE SYMBOLIC ACTION THAT PRESUMABLY TOOK PLACE OUTDOORS. THIS IS, BY A SLIGHT MARGIN, THE SHORTEST OF THE PLAGUE ACCOUNTS, AND YET ITS SEVERITY IS CLEARLY INDICATED IN THE WORDS OF V. 11, “THE MAGICIANS COULD NOT STAND BEFORE MOSES BECAUSE OF THE BOILS THAT WERE ON THEM.” NOTHING THAT HAD YET HAPPENED TO THE EGYPTIANS HAD BEEN SO DEBILITATING THAT IT PREVENTED THEIR MOBILITY. HERE WAS A PLAGUE THAT NO ONE COULD IGNORE OR EASILY EXPLAIN AWAY AS TRIVIAL.**

**EXCURSUS: DID ANTHRAX CAUSE THE FIFTH AND SIXTH PLAGUES?**

**A NUMBER OF COMMENTATORS AND EVEN SOME MEDICAL SPECIALISTS HAVE RAISED THE POSSIBILITY THAT PLAGUES FIVE AND SIX BOTH REPRESENT THE EFFECTS OF ANTHRAX. THE ARGUMENTS IN FAVOR OF THIS THEORY MAY BE SUMMARIZED WITH THE FOLLOWING SCENARIO: PLAGUE ONE, THE TURNING OF WATER TO “BLOOD,” KILLED MANY OR MOST OF THE FISH IN THE NILE. SINCE ANTHRAX CAN AT LEAST THEORETICALLY BREED IN DEAD AND ROTTING FISH, THE HUGE QUANTITY OF ROTTING FISH IN AND ALONG THE BANKS OF THE RIVER COULD HAVE PROVIDED A FERTILE MEDIUM FOR THE MULTIPLICATION OF THE BACILLUS ANTHRACIS. THE FROGS THAT HAD BEEN IN THE NILE AND WERE NOW DRIVEN FROM IT BY ITS POLLUTION (PLAGUE TWO) CARRIED THE ANTHRAX INFECTION AS THEY SPREAD OUT OVER THE LAND ALONG THE NILE. SINCE VIRTUALLY ALL OF EGYPT’S POPULATION IN BOTH ANCIENT AND MODERN TIMES WAS/IS LOCATED VERY CLOSE TO THE NILE, THE FROGS WERE SPREADING THE ANTHRAX BACILLUS TO MUCH OF THE INHABITED AREA OF EGYPT, INCLUDING THE LOCATIONS WHERE THE EGYPTIAN CATTLE GRAZED. WHAT KILLED THE FROGS WHERE THEY WERE—ALL OVER EGYPT AND IN HUGE QUANTITIES—WAS ANTHRAX. AS THE DEAD FROG BODIES ROTTED IN THE SUN, ANTHRAX WAS RELEASED IN LARGE QUANTITIES INTO THE SOIL, WHERE IT COULD REMAIN DORMANT ALMOST INDEFINITELY. BUT A LONG DORMANCY WAS NOT REQUIRED IN THIS CASE. EVEN AFTER THE SMELL OF THE FROGS (CF. 8:14) WAS GONE BECAUSE THEIR BODIES WERE DESICCATED, THE ANTHRAX WAS ALIVE AND WELL IN THE SOIL AND WAS BEGINNING TO SPREAD TO THE GRASSES AS THEY GREW FROM THE SOIL WHERE THE FROGS HAD DIED. WHEN CATTLE GRAZED OVER THESE GRASSES, PLAGUE FIVE, THE DEATH OF THE CATTLE, WAS CAUSED BY ANTHRAX AS IT MULTIPLIED WITHOUT CHECK IN THE BODIES OF THE CATTLE. MEANWHILE, THE BREEDING CONDITIONS FOR VARIOUS SORTS OF FLIES (PLAGUE FOUR) (AND, INCIDENTALLY, MOSQUITOES, PLAGUE THREE) WERE IDEAL SINCE THE NILE AS WELL AS THE VARIOUS STAGNANT POOLS OF WATER ALONG THE NILE CONTAINED LARGE AMOUNTS OF ROTTING FISH THAT WERE ANTHRAX-INFECTED. THE ROTTING CARCASSES OF FROGS LIKEWISE CONTAINED ANTHRAX, AS WOULD THE ROTTING CARCASSES OF DEAD CATTLE. FROM ANY AND ALL OF THESE SOURCES, THE VARIOUS FLIES, BUT PARTICULARLY THE STOMOXIS CALCITRANS, FED AND MULTIPLIED, BECOMING CARRIERS OF ANTHRAX. ANTHRAX SPORES THAT ARE INHALED OR INGESTED BY HUMANS IN LARGE QUANTITIES CAN CAUSE DEATH AS ANTHRAX OVERWHELMS THE IMMUNE SYSTEM. CUTANEOUS ANTHRAX (SKIN ANTHRAX), HOWEVER, IS NOT USUALLY FATAL. IT CAUSES FESTERING SORES ON THE SKIN, WHICH ARE PAINFUL AND DEBILITATING, BUT MOST PEOPLE RECOVER FULLY FROM SKIN ANTHRAX EVENTUALLY. THE DESCRIPTION OF WHAT THE EGYPTIANS WERE SUFFERING IN PLAGUE SIX (9:9–10) WOULD SEEM TO COMPORT WITH AN EPIDEMIC INFESTATION OF ANTHRAX. THE PROBLEMS WITH THE THEORY THAT ANTHRAX CAUSED THE FIFTH AND SIXTH PLAGUES, HOWEVER, ARE SEVERAL. FIRST, THE THEORY REFLECTS A NORMAL HUMAN TENDENCY TO REDUCE THE SUPERNATURAL TO WHAT THE NATURAL CAN COMPREHEND. IN EFFECT, PEOPLE TEND TO READ THE BRIEF AND RATHER GENERAL DESCRIPTIONS OF THE EFFECTS OF THE PLAGUE(S) AND—SOMETIMES QUITE UNCONSCIOUSLY—ASK “WHAT NATURAL EVENT THAT I DO UNDERSTAND WOULD COME CLOSEST TO BEING AN EXPLANATION FOR THIS BIBLICAL EVENT, THE ORIGIN AND CHARACTERISTICS OF WHICH OTHERWISE I DO NOT UNDERSTAND? THE DESIRE TO UNDERSTAND AN EVENT TENDS TO MAKE A NATURALISTIC EXPLANATION ENTICINGLY ATTRACTIVE AND A SUPERNATURAL EXPLANATION OFF-PUTTING. IF THE HOLY BIBLE MENTIONS A DIVINELY CAUSED DISEASE, MANY PEOPLE IMMEDIATELY SEARCH FOR WHATEVER KNOWN DISEASE SEEMS TO COME CLOSEST TO WHAT THE HOLY BIBLE DESCRIBES AND ASSUME THAT TO BE WHAT THE DISEASE MUST ACTUALLY HAVE BEEN. LIKEWISE, WITH DISASTERS, FLOODS, THE GLORY/FIRE ATOP SINAI, THE EMPTY TOMB, AND SO ON. IT IS ALWAYS TEMPTING TO “DEMYTHOLOGIZE” BIBLICAL PERMISSIBLE MAGICS/MIRACLES. SECOND, THE FIFTH AND SIXTH PLAGUES DO NOT FIT A KEY CRITERION FOR NATURAL EPIDEMICS OR DISASTERS BECAUSE THEY DO NOT DEVELOP NATURALLY, THAT IS, GRADUALLY AND INCONSISTENTLY FROM PERSON TO PERSON OR ANIMAL TO ANIMAL. THEY COME ABOUT VIRTUALLY INSTANTANEOUSLY AND UNIFORMLY, ACCORDING TO TIMING THAT IS NOT CONTROLLED BY NATURE BUT OVERTLY BY GOD. ONE REASON FOR SPECIFICALLY GRANTING PHARAOH THE CHOICE OF TIME FOR ENDING THE PLAGUE OF FROGS (8:9) WAS SURELY SO THAT THOSE WHO FOLLOWED THE PLAGUE STORIES CLOSELY WOULD BE REMINDED OF THEIR SUPERNATURAL ORIGIN AND CONCLUSION. THIRD, AS THE BIBLICAL TEXT ITSELF MAKES CLEAR (12:12), THE PLAGUES WERE NOT MERE NATURAL DEVELOPMENTS BUT WERE SUPERNATURAL DEVELOPMENTS RELATED TO THE NATURAL SPHERE—PURPOSEFUL EVIDENCES OF DIVINE CONTROL OVER THE NATURAL WORLD OF EGYPT DESIGNED TO SHOW THE ONE TRUE GOD’S SUPERIORITY OVER THE NATURAL WORLD AS IT WAS (PANTHEISTICALLY) CONCEIVED BY THE EGYPTIANS. IN OTHER WORDS, THE PLAGUES IMITATED NATURE IN CERTAIN WAYS AS A MEANS OF SHOWING GOD’S CONTROL OVER NATURE (AND ITS “GODS”)—WAYS THAT CAN MAKE IT EASY FOR A READER MISTAKENLY TO THINK THAT THE PLAGUES WERE MERELY NATURAL. FOURTH, WITH REGARD SPECIFICALLY TO THE SIXTH PLAGUE, THE CAUSE OF THE DISEASE DOES NOT APPEAR TO BE CONSISTENT WITH ITS TYPE. FINE PARTICLES OR AIRBORNE DUST NORMALLY WOULD BE ASSOCIATED MORE WITH A DUST STORM (IN EXTREME FORM A “SAND STORM”) THAN WITH ANTHRAX, AND CONTACT WITH AIRBORNE PARTICULATES WOULD BE LIKELY TO CAUSE THE INHALED FORM OF THE DISEASE AT LEAST AS FREQUENTLY IF NOT MORE COMMONLY THAN THE SKIN FORM, PRODUCING DEATH IN GREAT NUMBERS RATHER THAN SIMPLY FESTERING SORES. FINALLY, IT IS NOT ENTIRELY CLEAR THAT THE FIFTH AND SIXTH PLAGUES WERE A SINGLE DISEASE, WHATEVER THE TYPE. MANY THINGS CAN CAUSE CATTLE TO DIE; MANY THINGS CAN GIVE ANIMALS AND HUMANS SKIN LESIONS. THE MOST CONVINCING, CONTEXTUALLY BASED UNDERSTANDING OF THE FIFTH AND SIXTH PLAGUES, IN FACT, IS THAT THEY WERE SOMEWHAT EPIDEMIC-LIKE SUPERNATURAL EVENTS INTENDED TO HUMILIATE THE GODS OF EGYPT, THE EGYPTIANS IN GENERAL, AND PHARAOH IN PARTICULAR AND SHOW THE OBJECTIVE OBSERVER THAT THERE WAS ONLY ONE GOD IN WHOM FAITH SHOULD BE PLACED. WERE THERE ANY OBJECTIVE OBSERVERS TO BENEFIT FROM THE DEMONSTRATION OF TRUE DIVINE POWER INHERENT IN THE PLAGUES? THE ANSWER IS YES. THE “GREAT MIXED MULTITUDE” (12:38; NIV “MANY OTHER PEOPLE”) OF NON-EGYPTIAN, NON-ISRAELITE PEOPLE LIVING IN EGYPT ALONG WITH THE ISRAELITES HAD NO REASON TO IDENTIFY EITHER WITH THE EGYPTIANS OR WITH THE ISRAELITES IN ANALYZING THE PLAGUES. THEY SIMPLY SAW THEM FOR WHAT THEY WERE: PROOF THAT THE GOD OF ISRAEL WAS SUPREME OVER EGYPT AND THE EGYPTIANS AND ONE WHOSE PEOPLE THEY OUGHT TO JOIN WITH IF THEY WISHED TO ENJOY A REDEEMED FUTURE. FOR THEM THE PLAGUES SHOWED THE WAY TO SALVATION BY FORCIBLY CALLING THEIR ATTENTION TO THE GOD WHO SAVES. ACCORDINGLY, THEY SEIZED THE CHANCE TO LEAVE EGYPT WHEN THE ISRAELITES DID.**

**ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE PLAGUE (9:8–9)**

**8 THEN THE LORD SAID TO MOSES AND AARON, “TAKE HANDFULS OF SOOT FROM A FURNACE AND HAVE MOSES TOSS IT INTO THE AIR IN THE PRESENCE OF PHARAOH. 9 IT WILL BECOME FINE DUST OVER THE WHOLE LAND OF EGYPT, AND FESTERING BOILS WILL BREAK OUT ON MEN AND ANIMALS THROUGHOUT THE LAND.” 9:8–9 THIS PLAGUE IS BROUGHT ABOUT BY A TRANSFORMATION OF ONE SUBSTANCE INTO ANOTHER, AS WAS THE CASE WITH THE INITIAL SIGNS GOD GAVE MOSES AS PROOF OF HIS BEING A TRUE PROPHET. TWO OF THE THREE WERE THE TRANSFORMATION OF HIS STAFF [ROD OR WAND] INTO A SNAKE AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF HIS HEALTHY HAND INTO A DISEASED ONE (4:1–8), AND ONE SERVED ALSO AS THE FIRST PLAGUE (THE TRANSFORMATION OF WATER INTO “BLOOD”; 4:9; 7:14–24). THE TRANSFORMATION IN THIS CASE INVOLVED FILLING HIS CUPPED HANDS FULL OF SOOT FROM A FURNACE AND THROWING IT SKYWARD IN THE SIGHT OF PHARAOH. WHAT STARTED AS A SMALL AMOUNT OF SOOT WAS CHANGED AND VASTLY MULTIPLIED BY DIVINE FIAT INTO A HUGE AMOUNT OF FINE DUST, COVERING EGYPT AND CAUSING FESTERING BOILS ON BOTH HUMANS AND ANIMALS.**

**THE PLAGUE AND ITS DEVASTATION (9:10–12)**

**10 SO THEY TOOK SOOT FROM A FURNACE AND STOOD BEFORE PHARAOH. MOSES TOSSED IT INTO THE AIR, AND FESTERING BOILS BROKE OUT ON MEN AND ANIMALS. 11 THE MAGICIANS COULD NOT STAND BEFORE MOSES BECAUSE OF THE BOILS THAT WERE ON THEM AND ON ALL THE EGYPTIANS. 12 BUT THE LORD HARDENED PHARAOH’S HEART AND HE WOULD NOT LISTEN TO MOSES AND AARON, JUST AS THE LORD HAD SAID TO MOSES.**

**9:10–11 VERSE 10 SUMMARIZES THE FULFILLMENT OF THE EVENTS THAT THE PLAGUE ANNOUNCEMENT PREDICTED AND IT UNDERSTANDABLY CONTAINS, THEREFORE, NOTHING TRULY SURPRISING. AN ELEMENT OF THE STORY THAT COULD BE CONSIDERED SOMEWHAT UNPREDICTABLE, HOWEVER, IS THE MENTION OF THE MAGICIANS IN V. 11. THEY WERE LAST MENTIONED IN 8:19 AT THE END OF THE THIRD PLAGUE (GNATS/BITING INSECTS) WHERE THEY ADMITTED THEIR INABILITY TO REPLICATE THE MIRACULOUS IN THAT SITUATION WITH THE WORDS, “THIS IS THE FINGER OF GOD!” THIS PRESENT PLAGUE ACCOUNT IS THE LAST IN WHICH THEY APPEAR; THEY ARE NOT MENTIONED AGAIN IN EXODUS OR THE ENTIRE PENTATEUCH FOR THAT MATTER. WHY, THEN, ARE THEY BROUGHT INTO THE NARRATIVE HERE? PRESUMABLY FOR TWO REASONS. THE FIRST IS TO HELP THE READER APPRECIATE THE FACT THAT PHARAOH PROBABLY USED THE MAGICIANS AS ADVISORS IN DEALING WITH THE VARIOUS PLAGUES. TO THE EGYPTIANS THE MAGICAL, THE MEDICINAL, AND THE MIRACULOUS WERE ALL CLOSELY LINKED, AND ANYTHING THE MAGICIANS COULD DO TO ALLEVIATE THE EFFECTS OF A GIVEN PLAGUE OR TO SHOW IT TO BE SOMETHING THAT THEY THEMSELVES COULD ALSO DO (ON A SMALL SCALE) WOULD HELP BOLSTER PHARAOH’S RESISTANCE TO THE DEMANDS MADE BY STEPHEN YAHWEH. THE SECOND IS THAT IF THE PHYSICIANS COULD NOT HEAL THEMSELVES (I.E., THE MAGICIANS COULD NOT MAKE THEMSELVES WELL FROM THE BOILS) THEN THE POWER OF GOD OVER THE POWERS RESORTED TO BY PHARAOH WAS OBVIOUS. THE MAGICIANS NEED NOT BE MENTIONED AGAIN. THEY HAD BEEN PROVED IMPOTENT IN THE FACE OF REAL POWER. THE BOILS WERE OBVIOUSLY DEBILITATING; SO SICK AND IN PAIN WERE THE EGYPTIANS FROM THEM THAT THEY WERE NOT PHYSICALLY ABLE TO BE AVAILABLE FOR ANY SORT OF CONFRONTATION WITH MOSES OF THE SORT SEEN IN THE FIRST THREE PERMISSIBLE MAGIC/MIRACLE ACCOUNTS. 9:12 VERSE 12 CLOSES OUT THE BRIEF PLAGUE ACCOUNT WITH YET ANOTHER, BY NOW PREDICTABLE, STATEMENT THAT PHARAOH REMAINED UNYIELDING. IT IS CLEAR THAT MOSES DID NOT WANT THE READER TO FORGET THAT GOD CAUSED THIS, ACCORDING TO THE PLAN HE HAD ANNOUNCED TO MOSES AND AARON FROM THE START, FOR THE READER HAS BEEN REMINDED BY THE SAME WORDS “JUST AS THE LORD HAD SAID TO MOSES” AT THE END OF THE STORY OF AARON’S ROD [STAFF OR WAND] CHANGING INTO A SNAKE [VIPER OR KING] (7:13), THE FIRST PLAGUE (7:22), THE SECOND PLAGUE (8:15), AND THE THIRD PLAGUE (8:19). THUS, THESE WORDS ARE RESUMED HERE AND WILL BE AGAIN, WITH SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT WORDING, AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE NEXT PLAGUE ACCOUNT (9:35).**

**EIGHTH SIGN: SEVENTH PLAGUE: HAIL (9:13–35)**

**IS HAIL WORSE THAN ANTHRAX? THAT IS THE WAY THE QUESTION OF WHETHER OR NOT THE PLAGUES INCREASED STEADILY IN SEVERITY IS SOMETIMES POSED, THOUGH THE WORDING BETRAYS TWO QUESTIONABLE ASSUMPTIONS: THAT THE SIXTH PLAGUE WAS IN FACT ANTHRAX-CAUSED AND THAT THE HAIL INVOLVED WAS SIMPLY A MINOR, SHORT-LIVED TYPE OF CRYSTALLIZED RAIN. WHAT THE BIBLICAL RECORD INDICATES, HOWEVER, IS THAT THE SIXTH PLAGUE CAUSED NONFATAL SKIN SORES THAT WERE TEMPORARILY DEBILITATING BUT EVENTUALLY HEALED, WHEREAS THE PLAGUE OF HAIL WAS FAR WORSE THAN TYPICAL HAIL, TO THE EXTENT THAT IT KILLED UNPROTECTED HUMANS AND ANIMALS (V. 21) AND OBLITERATED MAJOR CROPS (VV. 25, 31).103 THIS UNPRECEDENTED FROZEN DOWNPOUR REPRESENTED “THE FULL FORCE OF MY PLAGUES” (V. 14) AND PRODUCED A MOMENTARY, ALBEIT INSINCERE REPENTANCE OF PHARAOH (VV. 27–28, “THIS TIME I HAVE SINNED, … I WILL LET YOU GO; YOU DON’T HAVE TO STAY ANY LONGER”). OF COURSE, IT IS ALSO EASY TO TELL WHEN HAIL STOPPED FALLING—AND ONCE THE HAIL CEASED, PHARAOH SINNED YET FURTHER BY AGAIN REFUSING TO DO WHAT HE HAD PROMISED TO DO DURING THE HAILSTORM. ISRAEL REMAINED CONFINED TO EGYPT.**

**ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE PLAGUE (9:13–19)**

**13 THEN THE LORD SAID TO MOSES, “GET UP EARLY IN THE MORNING, CONFRONT PHARAOH AND SAY TO HIM, ‘THIS IS WHAT THE LORD, THE GOD OF THE HEBREWS, SAYS: LET MY PEOPLE GO, SO THAT THEY MAY WORSHIP ME, 14 OR THIS TIME I WILL SEND THE FULL FORCE OF MY PLAGUES AGAINST YOU AND AGAINST YOUR OFFICIALS AND YOUR PEOPLE, SO YOU MAY KNOW THAT THERE IS NO ONE LIKE ME IN ALL THE EARTH. 15 FOR BY NOW I COULD HAVE STRETCHED OUT MY HAND AND STRUCK YOU AND YOUR PEOPLE WITH A PLAGUE THAT WOULD HAVE WIPED YOU OFF THE EARTH. 16 BUT I HAVE RAISED YOU UP FOR THIS VERY PURPOSE, THAT I MIGHT SHOW YOU MY POWER AND THAT MY NAME MIGHT BE PROCLAIMED IN ALL THE EARTH. 17 YOU STILL SET YOURSELF AGAINST MY PEOPLE AND WILL NOT LET THEM GO. 18 THEREFORE, AT THIS TIME TOMORROW I WILL SEND THE WORST HAILSTORM THAT HAS EVER FALLEN ON EGYPT, FROM THE DAY IT WAS FOUNDED TILL NOW. 19 GIVE AN ORDER NOW TO BRING YOUR LIVESTOCK AND EVERYTHING YOU HAVE IN THE FIELD TO A PLACE OF SHELTER, BECAUSE THE HAIL WILL FALL ON EVERY MAN AND ANIMAL THAT HAS NOT BEEN BROUGHT IN AND IS STILL OUT IN THE FIELD, AND THEY WILL DIE.’”**

**BENEFITING THE INTERESTS OF TIMELESS READABILITY, MOSES VARIED THE ACCOUNTS OF THE SIGNS OF STEPHEN YAHWEH’S SOVEREIGNTY IN DETAIL AND OVERALL LENGTH, EVEN AS HE MANAGED AT THE SAME TIME TO HOLD BEFORE THE READER THE FACT THAT ALL ELEVEN SIGNS HAD KEY SIMILARITIES AND SHARED REPEATED FEATURES. IN THE CASE OF THE FIRST SIX PLAGUES, THE PATTERN IN TERMS OF RELATIVE LENGTH WAS LONG-LONG-SHORT, FOLLOWED BY LONG-SHORT-SHORT. NOW COME TWO ACCOUNTS, THE SEVENTH AND EIGHTH, THAT ARE BOTH LONG; INDEED, THEY ARE THE LONGEST TWO OF THE CENTRAL NINE SIGNS (I.E., “PLAGUES” ONE TO NINE). GROUPED WITH THE NINTH PLAGUE ACCOUNT, WHICH IS SHORT, THEY COMPLETE THE REPETITION OF THE STARTING PATTERN, LONG-LONG-SHORT. 9:13–17 THE WORDS OF 9:13 ARE NOT NEW; THEY COMPORT CLOSELY WITH THE WORDINGS ALREADY SEEN AT THE BEGINNING OF PLAGUE ACCOUNTS ONE AND FOUR. IN PARTICULAR THE WORDING OF THE COMMAND, “THIS IS WHAT THE LORD, THE GOD OF THE HEBREWS, SAYS: LET MY PEOPLE GO, SO THAT THEY MAY WORSHIP ME,” REPRESENTS THE RELATIVELY FULL FORM OF THE WAY THE COMMAND IN THE VARIOUS PLAGUE ACCOUNTS IS GIVEN: STEPHEN YAHWEH IS IDENTIFIED, HIS PEOPLE ARE IDENTIFIED, THE CALL FOR RELEASE IS MADE, AND ITS PURPOSE IS DESCRIBED. THOSE WHO HAD BEEN FORCED TO SERVE (ʿĀBAD) PHARAOH MUST NOW BE ALLOWED TO WORSHIP/SERVE (ʿĀBAD) STEPHEN YAHWEH. MOST OF THE CONCEPTS IN 9:14–16 ARE QUITE NEW, HOWEVER, AND IT IS LIKELY THAT 9:14–16 PLAYS A SPECIAL ROLE IN THE ENTIRE NARRATIVE OF THE PLAGUE ACCOUNT IN TWO WAYS. FIRST, IT APPEARS AS AN APOLOGIA FOR THE PLAGUES AS A GROUP. IN OTHER WORDS, THIS IS THE POINT IN THE NARRATIVE ABOUT THE PLAGUES AT WHICH GOD HAD CERTAINLY GOTTEN PHARAOH’S ATTENTION AND THAT OF THE EGYPTIANS IN GENERAL. NOW HE ISSUED HIS EXPLANATION FOR ALL THE PLAGUES THAT HE HAD SENT AND WOULD SEND AGAINST THEM. AT THE SAME TIME, IT REPRESENTS A POINT OF INTENSIFICATION SO THAT THE READER IS AWARE THAT THE PRIOR PLAGUES, TROUBLESOME AS THEY WERE, WERE ESSENTIALLY PRELIMINARY AND THAT NOW A SERIES OF DEVELOPMENTS THAT WOULD REALLY DO DAMAGE TO EGYPT—INCLUDING ACTUALLY TAKING OF HUMAN LIFE—WAS UNDERWAY IN THE FORM OF THE FINAL FOUR PLAGUES. IF PHARAOH RETAINED ANY DOUBTS ABOUT THE PURPOSE OF THE PLAGUES TO THIS POINT, HE HAD NO REASON TO BE UNCERTAIN ANY LONGER. THE EXPLANATION GIVEN HIM IN THESE VERSES IS CLEAR AND SIMPLE: PHARAOH MUST LEARN THAT STEPHEN YAHWEH ALONE IS SUPREME, THE IMPLICATION BEING THAT THE GODS IN WHOM PHARAOH HAD TRUSTED AND WHOM HE REPRESENTED WERE ESSENTIALLY NOTHING (9:14); THE EARLIER PLAGUES, HARD AS THEY WERE ON THE EGYPTIANS, WERE ACTUALLY EXAMPLES OF RESTRAINT SINCE GOD ALREADY COULD HAVE SENT AT ANY TIME A FULLY DESTRUCTIVE PLAGUE TO ELIMINATE THE EGYPTIAN POPULATION ENTIRELY (9:15). PHARAOH HIMSELF HAD COME TO POWER AND WAS ACTING AS HE WAS UNDER GOD’S CONTROL, THE RESULT BEING NOT ONLY THAT HE, THE KING OF THE WORLD’S GREATEST SUPERPOWER AT THAT TIME, WOULD SEE TRUE DIVINE POWER BUT THAT ALL WHO LEARNED OF THE EXODUS STORY IN ALL GENERATIONS THEREAFTER WOULD GIVE THE TRUE GOD CREDIT FOR THAT POWER (9:16). NOTE THAT THE WORD “EARTH” (ʾEREṢ) APPEARS IN THREE VERSES (9:14–16). IN ALL THREE IT SURELY MEANS “THE EARTH,” THAT IS, THE PLANET, NOT MERELY “THE [LOCAL] LAND,” AS IT CAN ALSO MEAN IN MANY CONTEXTS. THIS PASSAGE IS SOMETHING OF A PROTO-EVANGELIUM, A CALL TO THE WHOLE WORLD (EVEN THOUGH IT IS ADDRESSED SPECIFICALLY TO PHARAOH) TO APPRECIATE WHAT THE PLAGUES ULTIMATELY SHOWED, THAT THERE IS ONE GOD IN CONTROL OF ALL THINGS AND THAT HE ALONE CAN SAVE. THE WORLD NEEDS TO RECOGNIZE THAT “THERE IS NO ONE LIKE ME IN ALL THE EARTH” (V. 14) AND THAT THE WILL OF GOD IS “THAT MY NAME [STEPHEN YAHWEH] MIGHT BE PROCLAIMED IN ALL THE EARTH” (V. 16). THE IRONY OF GOD’S UPBRAIDING OF PHARAOH IN V. 17 IS THAT PHARAOH COULD NOT HELP HIMSELF (ANY LONGER) AND YET WELL DESERVED THE CRITICISM HE RECEIVED. IT WAS BOTH HIS NATURAL INCLINATION TO KEEP THE ISRAELITES SUPPRESSED AND LOCALIZED (CF. 1:9–10) AND THE ATTITUDE SUBSEQUENTLY FIXED IN HIM BY GOD AS A HUMILIATION AND PUNISHMENT. PHARAOH’S BEHAVIOR MIRRORS THE PHENOMENON DESCRIBED BY PAUL IN ROM 1:18–32, THAT OF PEOPLE BEING FIXED BY GOD IN THE SINFUL BEHAVIOR PATTERNS THAT WOULD EVENTUALLY BRING ABOUT THEIR DESTRUCTION AS A PUNISHMENT FOR THOSE VERY BEHAVIOR PATTERNS. IN OTHER WORDS, ONE OF THE WAYS, GOD PUNISHES SIN IS TO ALLOW THE SIN TO CONTINUE AND THEREFORE TO ALLOW IT TO TAKE ITS NATURAL, DESTRUCTIVE COURSE. BEHIND THIS IS THE BIBLICAL TRUTH THAT PEOPLE CANNOT RESCUE THEMSELVES FROM THEIR OWN SIN; THEY ALWAYS NEED HELP TO BREAK THE PATTERNS OF SIN IN THEIR LIVES. IF GOD WITHHOLDS THAT HELP, THEY BECOME FIXED IN THOSE PATTERNS, WILL SEE THE HARMFUL EFFECTS INCREASINGLY DURING THEIR LIVES, AND WILL DIE IN THOSE SINS. PHARAOH HAD LONG AGO “SET [HIM]SELF AGAINST [GOD’S] PEOPLE AND [WOULD] NOT LET THEM GO,” AND HE WAS STILL DOING THE SAME. GOD’S HARDENING OF PHARAOH’S HEART—MAKING HIM REMAIN STUBBORN—SERVES AS A PUNISHMENT ALTHOUGH THE ACTION ITSELF IS ALSO A SIN. 9:18 THE EXPRESSION EMPLOYED IN V. 18, “FROM THE DAY IT WAS FOUNDED TILL NOW,” IS APPARENTLY A HEBREW REFLEX OF A COMMON EGYPTIAN EXPRESSION USUALLY TRANSLATED “SINCE/FROM THE FOUNDING OF EGYPT.” THE EGYPTIANS WERE ENORMOUSLY PROUD OF THEIR LONG HISTORY AS A NATION AND THOUGHT OF ALL OTHER PEOPLES AS NEWCOMERS—AUTOMATICALLY INFERIOR TO THEMSELVES, WHOM THEY VIEWED AS THE ORIGINAL AND CENTRAL CIVILIZATION OF THE EARTH. ACCORDINGLY, WHEN GOD SPOKE THROUGH MOSES HERE ABOUT THE SEVERITY OF THE COMING PLAGUE, USING AN EXPRESSION WELL KNOWN AND COMMONLY USED BY THE EGYPTIANS (AND CERTAINLY WELL KNOWN TO MOSES) THAT WOULD HAVE MEANT TO THE AVERAGE EGYPTIAN SOMETHING LIKE “SINCE THE BEGINNING OF TIME,” HE WAS POWERFULLY EMPHASIZING WHAT A TERRIBLE PLAGUE IT WOULD INDEED BE. NOTE THAT WHAT GOD ANNOUNCED WAS NOT SIMPLY HAIL BUT A HAILSTORM (MAMTÎR … BĀRĀD), WITH THE IMPLICATION THAT SOME OF THE DAMAGE AND DANGER, AS WELL AS SOME OF THE FRIGHTENING POWER OF THE STORM, WOULD BE CONTAINED IN ITS WIND, RAIN, THUNDER, AND LIGHTNING AND NOT MERELY IN THE HAILSTONES THEMSELVES. THE DESCRIPTION OF THE STORM IN VV. 23–24 AND VV. 32–33 AND OF PHARAOH’S REACTION IN V. 28 ALL SUPPORT THIS: IT WAS THE STORM IN TOTO THAT DEMONSTRATED GOD’S AWESOME CONTROL OF NATURE. 9:19 WITH THE ORDER RECORDED IN V. 19 TO PHARAOH, GOD TESTED THE EGYPTIANS. IN EFFECT THERE WERE NOW THREE CATEGORIES OF PERSONS IN THE STORY: THOSE WHO DERIDED OR IGNORED STEPHEN YAHWEH’S WORD, THOSE WHO HAD BY NOW BECOME SUFFICIENTLY CONVINCED OF HIS EXISTENCE AND POWER THAT THEY WOULD BE WILLING TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF A WARNING FROM HIM TO SAVE HUMAN AND ANIMAL LIFE, AND THE ISRAELITES, WHO NOT MERELY BELIEVED IN HIS POWER BUT, AS HIS PEOPLE, ACTUALLY WORSHIPED HIM (CF. 4:31). IN OTHER WORDS, IT WOULD BE GOING BEYOND THE EVIDENCE TO SAY THAT ANY OF THE EGYPTIANS HAD ACTUALLY COME TO FULL FAITH IN ISRAEL’S GOD, INCLUDING ASCRIBING TO HIM SOLE DIVINITY, BUT IT WAS CLEARLY THE CASE THAT MANY EGYPTIANS HAD DECIDED THAT STEPHEN YAHWEH WAS AT LEAST A POWERFUL DEITY AMONG DEITIES AND THAT HE COULD DELIVER ON ANY THREATS HE MADE. THE GENERALLY PROMULGATED ORDER TO “BRING YOUR LIVESTOCK AND EVERYTHING YOU HAVE IN THE FIELD TO A PLACE OF SHELTER” IMPLICITLY INCLUDES NOT ONLY ANIMALS BUT ALSO HUMAN FIELD WORKERS, AS THE FURTHER WORDING, “BECAUSE THE HAIL WILL FALL ON EVERY MAN AND ANIMAL THAT HAS NOT BEEN BROUGHT IN,” IMPLIES. AN EVEN BETTER TRANSLATION THAN THAT OF THE NIV WOULD BE, “BRING YOUR LIVESTOCK AND EVERYONE YOU HAVE IN THE FIELD.” THE LATTER WORDING, “IN THE FIELD,” IS A SIMPLE IDIOM FOR “OUTDOORS” OR “OUT-OF-DOORS” AND DOES NOT REFER ONLY TO ACTUAL FARM FIELDS. PEOPLE AND ANIMALS COULD BE KILLED IN COURTYARDS AS WELL AS PASTURES AND CROP AREAS. THIS IS THE FIRST PLAGUE ANNOUNCEMENT IN WHICH THE PREDICTION IS MADE THAT EGYPTIAN LIVES WOULD ACTUALLY BE LOST. THOSE WHO WOULD DIE WOULD BE THOSE WHO FAILED TO HEAR THE WARNING; THUS, THE BIBLICAL PRINCIPLE THAT PEOPLE’S CHOICES DO THEM HARM—NOT MERELY WHAT THEY CANNOT CONTROL.**

**COMPLIANCE BY SOME; DISDAIN BY OTHERS (9:20–21)**

**20 THOSE OFFICIALS OF PHARAOH WHO FEARED THE WORD OF THE LORD HURRIED TO BRING THEIR SLAVES AND THEIR LIVESTOCK INSIDE. 21 BUT THOSE WHO IGNORED THE WORD OF THE LORD LEFT THEIR SLAVES AND LIVESTOCK IN THE FIELD. 9:20–21 THE WORDING “THOSE OFFICIALS OF PHARAOH WHO FEARED THE WORD OF THE LORD” IS CAREFULLY COMPOSED. HAD MOSES WRITTEN “THOSE OFFICIALS OF PHARAOH WHO FEARED THE LORD …,” HE WOULD HAVE INDICATED THAT EGYPTIAN COURT OFFICIALS HAD ACTUALLY CONVERTED TO FAITH IN STEPHEN YAHWEH. INSTEAD, HE USED THE HAPAX LEGOMENON YĀRĒʾ ʾET-DĀBĀR (“FEAR THE WORD OF”) BECAUSE OF THE UNIQUENESS OF THE SITUATION, THAT IS, BELIEF SHORT OF CONVERSION, PEOPLE’S BELIEF IN SOMETHING THEY HAD BEEN TOLD BUT NOT SAVING FAITH IN THE ONE WHO REVEALED IT TO THEM. IT WAS, HOWEVER, A BELIEF SUFFICIENT TO CAUSE SOME EGYPTIANS TO ACT IMMEDIATELY, BASED ON THEIR EXPERIENCE OF THE SUDDEN ONSET OF PRIOR PLAGUES. AS MOSES’ WORDS IN V. 30 INDICATE, HE KNEW WELL THAT PHARAOH AND HIS OFFICIALS DID NOT ACTUALLY “FEAR THE LORD.” THEY HAD PLENTY OF ALLIES, AS V. 21 MAKES CLEAR, WHO IN SPITE OF ALL THE PLAGUES THAT HAD OCCURRED SO FAR WERE HARDLY ABLE TO OVERCOME THEIR LIFELONG TRAINING IN EGYPTIAN WAYS OF THINKING, A MIND-SET THAT TOLD THEM THEY NEED NOT FEAR ISRAEL’S GOD. THEY SIMPLY WENT ON DOING AS THEY HAD DONE, WORKING THEIR FIELDS AND GRAZING THEIR CATTLE. WHY MISS A SINGLE DAY OF WORK, ESPECIALLY AT HARVEST TIME? THESE VERSES SEEM TO INDICATE THAT PHARAOH, HOWEVER RELUCTANTLY OR DISDAINFULLY, HAD ACTUALLY CARRIED OUT GOD’S COMMAND GIVEN TO HIM IN V. 19 TO WARN THE PEOPLE OF THE IMPENDING DANGER. IF HE HIMSELF DID NOT BELIEVE IT WOULD AMOUNT TO ANYTHING, HE MAY STILL HAVE ACCEDED TO THE PLEAS OF SOME OF HIS OFFICIALS (THOSE WHO DID BELIEVE GOD’S WARNING, PRESUMABLY) TO ALLOW THEM TO SPREAD THE WORD OF WHAT WAS ABOUT TO HAPPEN. HE MAY EVEN HAVE GLADLY PROMULGATED THE ORDER TO BRING CATTLE INDOORS, A DIFFICULT AND COMPLICATED THING FOR MANY PEOPLE TO DO, ON THE THEORY THAT IT WOULD SIMPLY AROUSE GREATER RESENTMENT AGAINST ISRAEL, SOMETHING HE COULD USE TO HIS ADVANTAGE, AND WOULD MAKE THE ISRAELITES LOOK FOOLISH IF THE HAILSTORM WERE SIMPLY THAT—A TYPICAL HAILSTORM. IT IS HARD TO IMAGINE THAT MANY EGYPTIANS WERE NOT SAYING SOMETHING LIKE: “HAIL? WE’VE SEEN PLENTY OF HAILSTORMS. SO WHAT? THEY NEVER LAST LONG.”**

**THE PLAGUE AND ITS DEVASTATION (9:22–26)**

**22 THEN THE LORD SAID TO MOSES, “STRETCH OUT YOUR HAND TOWARD THE SKY SO THAT HAIL WILL FALL ALL OVER EGYPT—ON MEN AND ANIMALS AND ON EVERYTHING GROWING IN THE FIELDS OF EGYPT.” 23 WHEN MOSES STRETCHED OUT HIS STAFF [ROD OR WAND] TOWARD THE SKY, THE LORD SENT THUNDER AND HAIL, AND LIGHTNING FLASHED DOWN TO THE GROUND. SO, THE LORD RAINED HAIL ON THE LAND OF EGYPT; 24 HAIL FELL AND LIGHTNING FLASHED BACK AND FORTH. IT WAS THE WORST STORM IN ALL THE LAND OF EGYPT SINCE IT HAD BECOME A NATION. 25 THROUGHOUT EGYPT HAIL STRUCK EVERYTHING IN THE FIELDS—BOTH MEN AND ANIMALS; IT BEAT DOWN EVERYTHING GROWING IN THE FIELDS AND STRIPPED EVERY TREE. 26 THE ONLY PLACE IT DID NOT HAIL WAS THE LAND OF GOSHEN, WHERE THE ISRAELITES WERE. MOSES’ HANDS HOLDING THE STAFF IN THE AIR AGAIN SIGNALED THE START OF A PLAGUE. THE STAFF [ROD OR WAND] (V. 23) IN HIS OUTSTRETCHED HANDS WAS THE STAFF [ROD OR WAND] OF GOD, REPRESENTING DIVINE POWER AND PRESENCE. THE PLAGUE WROUGHT ITS DEVASTATION ON HUMANS, ANIMALS, AND CROPS “ALL OVER EGYPT” (VV. 22, 25) EXCEPT IN “THE LAND OF GOSHEN,” WHICH ONCE AGAIN ESCAPED FROM THE TERRORS BEING UNLEASHED ON THE REST OF EGYPT. THE HAIL, PART OF A MASSIVE NATIONWIDE THUNDERSTORM, WAS ACCOMPANIED BY EXTENSIVE LIGHTNING AND LARGE QUANTITIES OF WIND AND RAIN THAT ALSO COULD AND WOULD HAVE CAUSED EXTENSIVE DAMAGE IN THEIR OWN RIGHT. NOTE THAT 9:23 EMPHASIZES THAT EVEN THOUGH MOSES MADE THE MOTIONS, IT WAS GOD WHO SENT THE PLAGUE (“THE LORD SENT …”). THIS WAS A KILLER STORM, WITH HUGE HAILSTONES DESTINED TO DO DAMAGE OF ALL SORTS, INCLUDING DESTROYING HUMANS, ANIMALS, AND CROPS. VERSE 24 CONFIRMS WHAT GOD HAD PREDICTED IN V. 18: THIS WAS THE WORST HAILSTORM IN THE HISTORY OF EGYPT. SINCE EGYPT BECAME A NATION SOMETIME AROUND 3200 BC AND THESE EVENTS TOOK PLACE SOMETIME IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE SECOND MILLENNIUM BC, IT COULD BE SAID THAT THE STORM WAS THE WORST IN ALMOST TWO MILLENNIA. AS ALREADY NOTED, HOWEVER, THE EXPRESSION “SINCE [EGYPT] HAD BECOME A NATION” IS ACTUALLY AN IDIOMATIC WAY OF SAYING “SINCE THE EARLIEST TIMES,” AND THE ACTUAL SENSE OF THE FINAL STATEMENT IN V. 24 IS THAT THIS HAILSTORM WAS “WORST [EVER] IN ALL THE LAND OF EGYPT.” VERSE 25 DELINEATES THE DAMAGE AND IN THE USUAL ORDER OF RELATIVE WORTH: HUMANS FIRST, THEN ANIMALS, THEN PLANTS. NOTHING ALIVE IN THE OPEN COULD HAVE REMAINED UNDAMAGED. HUMANS AND ANIMALS WERE KILLED, AT LEAST IN LARGE NUMBERS, ANYTHING GROWING IN FIELDS WAS BEATEN DOWN. ALTHOUGH TREES MIGHT HAVE LOST SMALLER BRANCHES BUT SURVIVED ALIVE, THEIR FRUIT WOULD HAVE BEEN KNOCKED OFF (THUS “STRIPPED EVERY TREE”) AND SMASHED ON THE GROUND UNDER THE FORCE OF THE FALLING HAILSTONES. AGAIN, AS V. 26 STATES, GOSHEN WAS SPARED, AS IS STATED IN SEVERAL OF THE PRIOR PLAGUE ACCOUNTS AND BY EXTRAPOLATION MAY BE ASSUMED TO HAVE BEEN THE CASE IN ALL OF THE INSTANCES OF PRIOR PLAGUES. THERE IS NOTHING IN THIS ACCOUNT THAT DOES NOT COMPORT WITH WHAT IS KNOWN SCIENTIFICALLY ABOUT THE LETHAL POWER OF A SEVERE HAILSTORM. FATAL HAILSTORMS OCCUR OFTEN AROUND THE WORLD STILL TODAY. THE LARGEST TEND TO OCCUR IN NORTHEAST INDIA (IN 1888 TWO HUNDRED AND FORTY PEOPLE WERE KILLED AND HUNDREDS MORE INJURED BY HAIL IN MORADABAD), BUT HUNDREDS OF DESTRUCTIVE HAILSTORMS OCCUR EVERY YEAR AND IN VIRTUALLY ALL PARTS OF THE GLOBE. FOR EXAMPLE, A SINGLE HAILSTORM KILLED OR INJURED FOUR HUNDRED PEOPLE IN GERMANY IN 1984, AND A STORM IN CHINA’S HENAN PROVINCE KILLED TWENTY-TWO PEOPLE AND INJURED TWO HUNDRED ON JULY 22, 2002. IN MODERN TIMES HAILSTONES AS LARGE AS ONE KILOGRAM HAVE BEEN MEASURED. HAIL FALLS AT MORE THAN FIFTY METERS PER SECOND, AND HAILSTORMS CAN DEVASTATE ENTIRE CROP FIELDS IN JUST MINUTES. HAIL DAMAGE IS OFTEN AN ASPECT OF TORNADO COMPLEXES, AND THUS IT CANNOT BE RULED OUT THAT THERE WAS A DEGREE OF TORNADO ACTIVITY PRESENT IN THE STORM DESCRIBED IN THIS ACCOUNT.**

**PHARAOH’S PARTIAL REPENTANCE AND CONCESSION (9:27–28)**

**27 THEN PHARAOH SUMMONED MOSES AND AARON. “THIS TIME I HAVE SINNED,” HE SAID TO THEM. “THE LORD IS IN THE RIGHT, AND I AND MY PEOPLE ARE IN THE WRONG. 28 PRAY TO THE LORD, FOR WE HAVE HAD ENOUGH THUNDER AND HAIL. I WILL LET YOU GO; YOU DON’T HAVE TO STAY ANY LONGER.” 9:27–28 WAS PHARAOH HERE SAYING THAT HE WAS ACTUALLY SORRY FOR HIS SINS—WAS HE TAKING THE FIRST STEP OF GENUINE REPENTANCE BY ACKNOWLEDGING HIMSELF TO BE A SINNER (“THIS TIME I HAVE SINNED”) AND, INDEED, RECOGNIZING THE TRUTH OF GOD’S WAYS (“THE LORD IS IN THE RIGHT, AND I AND MY PEOPLE ARE IN THE WRONG”) AND PRAYING FOR FORGIVENESS, AT LEAST THROUGH MOSES (“PRAY TO THE LORD,122 FOR WE HAVE HAD ENOUGH THUNDER AND HAIL”)? AT FIRST BLUSH THIS CERTAINLY SEEMS TO BE THE CLOSEST PHARAOH HAD SO FAR COME TO EXPRESSING BELIEF IN STEPHEN YAHWEH’S POWER AND THE CLOSEST HE HAD COME TO ANY SORT OF REPENTANCE, ACCOMPANIED BY A CONCESSION THAT HAD THE RING OF FINALITY TO IT, AS IF HE REALLY HAD SURRENDERED TO STEPHEN YAHWEH’S WILL (“I WILL LET YOU GO; YOU DON’T HAVE TO STAY ANY LONGER”). IF SO, WHY DID MOSES REMAIN SO SKEPTICAL, AS INDICATED BY HIS WORDS IN V. 30? PART OF THE ANSWER IS TO BE FOUND IN THE RANGE OF MEANING OF THE HEBREW ḤĀṬĀʾTÎ (NIV AND MOST ENG. VERSIONS: “I HAVE SINNED”). THE ROOT ḤṬʾ HAS A SEMANTIC FIELD THAT INCLUDES “TO MISS” OR “TO ERR” (JUDG. 20:16; PROV 8:35–36; 19:2; JOB 5:24) AS WELL AS “TO OFFEND” SOMEONE OF CLOSE RELATIONSHIP (E.G., GEN 4:22; 50:17), OR “TO REBEL” AGAINST A SUPERIOR (GEN 40:1; 1 SAM 24:11; 26:21; 2 KGS 18:14), OR “TO ABUSE/MISTREAT” (1 SAM 19:4). INDEED, WITH REGARD TO THE CLOSEST USAGE OF THE ROOT TO THE PRESENT CONTEXT, THE NRSV TRANSLATES ḤṬʾ AS “BE UNJUST” IN EXOD. 5:16 (“YOU ARE UNJUST TO YOUR OWN PEOPLE”). IN OTHER WORDS, A TRANSLATION SUCH AS “I HAVE ACTED UNJUSTLY” OR “I HAVE BEEN UNFAIR” WOULD BE EQUALLY POSSIBLE IN EXOD. 9:27 FOR WHAT PHARAOH SAID IN EGYPTIAN TO MOSES, WHO RENDERED IT ACCURATELY IN HEBREW BUT WHOSE RENDERING IS SOMEWHAT MISLEADINGLY REPRESENTED IN ENGLISH BY “I HAVE SINNED.” THAT IS, NOTHING IN WHAT PHARAOH SAID NEED LEAD US TO BELIEVE THAT HE ACTUALLY WAS SORRY FOR HIS SINS AND SEEKING FORGIVENESS FROM THE GOD OF ISRAEL. RATHER, HE WAS, AT MOST, ADMITTING TO BEING WRONG FOR HAVING TREATED THE ISRAELITES AS HE HAD—AND DOING SO TEMPORARILY UNDER THE PRESSURE OF THE WORST, MOST DAMAGING PLAGUE HE AND THE EGYPTIANS HAD YET ENCOUNTERED. PHARAOH’S WORDS IN V. 28 REPRESENT A FURTHER CONCESSION BEYOND WHAT HE HAD ALREADY SAID WHEN REELING FROM THE EFFECTS OF THE PLAGUE OF FLIES. EVEN IF IMPLICITLY HE WAS STILL HOPING OR ASSUMING THE ISRAELITES WOULD NOT PERMANENTLY LEAVE EGYPT BUT WOULD BE GONE ONLY TEMPORARILY TO OFFER SACRIFICES IN THE WILDERNESS, HE DID NOT QUALIFY HIS WORDS HERE TO ANY SUCH EFFECT. IT IS POSSIBLE TO READ HIS REMARKS AS VIRTUALLY ALLOWING THE EXODUS TO BEGIN. “WE HAVE HAD ENOUGH” IS TANTAMOUNT TO SAYING “WE CAN’T STAND IT ANY MORE.” THE POINT OF HIS REQUEST “PRAY TO THE LORD” IS, HOWEVER, NOT SIGNIFICANTLY DIFFERENT FROM THAT OF THE SIMILAR REQUEST IN 8:28. WHAT PHARAOH WANTED WAS FOR THE HORRIBLE HAILSTORM TO STOP—NOTHING MORE. HE WAS NOT ASKING FOR A CLOSER RELATIONSHIP TO THE TRUE GOD OR FOR ANY OTHER BLESSING PER SE.**

**MOSES’ AGREEMENT TO STOP THE PLAGUE (9:29–30)**

**29 MOSES REPLIED, “WHEN I HAVE GONE OUT OF THE CITY, I WILL SPREAD OUT MY HANDS IN PRAYER TO THE LORD. THE THUNDER WILL STOP AND THERE WILL BE NO MORE HAIL, SO YOU MAY KNOW THAT [ALL] THE EARTH IS THE LORD’S. 30 BUT I KNOW THAT YOU AND YOUR OFFICIALS STILL DO NOT FEAR THE LORD GOD.” 9:29 IN THE ONLY TWO PREVIOUS PLAGUE NARRATIVES THAT MENTION A PRAYER TO BRING AN END TO THE MISERY EXPERIENCED BY THE EGYPTIANS, MOSES FOLLOWED A PATTERN OF PRAYING FOR THE END OF A PLAGUE ONLY AFTER HE HAD GONE OUT FROM THE PRESENCE OF PHARAOH (FROGS, 8:12; FLIES, 8:29–30). THIS TIME HE INDICATED THAT HE WOULD PRAY ONLY AFTER HE HAD GONE “OUT OF THE CITY,” A PHRASE REPEATED IN V. 33. THERE IS NOTHING ESPECIALLY IDIOMATIC ABOUT THE PHRASE. IT DOES NOT SEEM TO CONNOTE “AWAY FROM PAGAN INFLUENCE” OR ANY SUCH THING. SO WHY WOULD MOSES USE IT TWICE? THE ANSWER WOULD APPEAR TO BE THAT BY GOING OUT OF THE CITY INTO THE OPEN (THE “FIELD”) TO PRAY WHILE THE UNPRECEDENTED HAILSTORM CONTINUED UNABATED DURING HIS JOURNEY, MOSES SHOWED HIS COMPLETE TRUST THAT THE HAIL COULD NOT HARM HIM. HE NOT ONLY COULD TRAVEL THROUGH THE HAIL BUT COULD STAND AND PRAY FOR THE END TO THE HAIL IN THE VERY LOCATION—EXPOSED, OUT OF DOORS—THAT WAS OTHERWISE FATAL TO PEOPLE AND ANIMALS; HE COULD GO INTO THE AREA OF DANGER AND REMAIN UNHARMED. HIS ACTION OF GOING “OUT OF THE CITY” WAS, IN OTHER WORDS, A FURTHER DEMONSTRATION OF STEPHEN YAHWEH’S DIFFERENTIATION BETWEEN THE ISRAELITES AND THE EGYPTIANS, A THEME OF THIS AND SEVERAL OTHER PLAGUE ACCOUNTS OVERTLY AND IMPLICITLY A THEME OF ALL OF THEM. THE NIV TRANSLATION “I WILL SPREAD OUT MY HANDS IN PRAYER” CAN BE MISUNDERSTOOD; A LESS AMBIGUOUS RENDERING WOULD BE “I WILL REACH OUT MY HANDS IN PRAYER,” INDICATING THAT THE ACTUAL POSTURE WAS ONE OF REACHING HEAVENWARD, NOT OF HOLDING ONE’S HANDS OPEN OR OUT TO EITHER SIDE OF THE BODY AS “SPREAD OUT” CAN IMPLY. MOSES’ POSTURE WOULD HAVE BEEN ANALOGOUS TO THAT DESCRIBED IN EXOD. 18:9–16 (Q.V.)—HANDS LIFTED UP OVERHEAD, HOLDING THE STAFF [ROD OR WAND] OF GOD, LOOKING TO HEAVEN AND PRAYING. NOTE THAT STEPHEN YAHWEH, THE LORD, IS MENTIONED THREE TIMES IN THE TWO VERSES THAT MAKE UP THIS PART OF THE PERICOPE. MOSES STATED NOT MERELY THAT HE WOULD PRAY BUT MADE CLEAR THAT HIS PRAYER WOULD BE TO STEPHEN YAHWEH, THE ONE TRUE GOD THAT PHARAOH AND HIS PEOPLE NEEDED TO LEARN TO FEAR (V. 29). HE ASSERTED THAT THE PURPOSE OF HIS PRAYER, BRINGING TO A CONCLUSION THE PLAGUE, WOULD BE TO HELP CONVINCE PHARAOH (AND PRESUMABLY THE EGYPTIANS ALSO SINCE THEY WERE INCLUDED IN V. 30, THOUGH “YOU MAY KNOW” IS SINGULAR IN THE HB.) THAT STEPHEN YAHWEH OWNS THE WORLD. AND IT IS STEPHEN YAHWEH, THE LEADERS OF THE LAND NEEDED TO LEARN TO FEAR, EVEN THOUGH IT IS CLEAR FROM MOSES’ WORDS IN V. 30 THAT THEY STILL DID NOT FEAR HIM. THIS IS WHAT “NO MORE HAIL” SHOULD HAVE PRODUCED; IT DID NOT. 9:30 EXODUS 9:30 CONTAINS THE FIRST USAGE IN THE HOLY BIBLE OF THE TERM “FEAR THE LORD” (YĀRĒʾ ʾET-STEPHEN YAHWEH), A WORDING THAT DESIGNATES AN ENORMOUSLY IMPORTANT THEOLOGICAL CONCEPT. THE FEAR OF THE LORD IS ENJOINED THROUGHOUT SCRIPTURE, DEMANDING THAT GOD’S PEOPLE STAND ALWAYS IN AWE OF HIM, APPRECIATE HIS SUPREMACY AND GREATNESS, FEAR THE CONSEQUENCES OF DISOBEYING HIS WILL, AND NOT TREAT LIGHTLY ANY ASPECT OF THEIR COVENANT RELATIONSHIP WITH HIM, LEST THE CONSEQUENCES BE SEVERE OR EVEN FATAL. ATTEMPTS ON THE PART OF SOME IN MODERN TIMES TO DEFINE FEARING THE LORD AS MERELY RESPECTING HIM DISTORT THE BIBLICAL EVIDENCE. PHARAOH AND THE EGYPTIANS MAY HAVE MOVED MUCH CLOSER TO CAPITULATION TO THE ISRAELITES’ GOD IN THE BARGAINING PROCESS, AND MAY HAVE BEEN MUCH MORE DISPOSED TO GRANTING SOME SORT OF SERIOUS CONCESSIONS, BUT THEY (THE VERB AT THE END OF V. 30 IS PLURAL) HAD NOT ACTUALLY COME TO THE POINT OF RELIGIOUS FAITH IN STEPHEN YAHWEH.**

**ASSESSMENT OF THE DAMAGE TO CROPS (9:31–32)**

**31 (THE FLAX AND BARLEY WERE DESTROYED, SINCE THE BARLEY HAD HEADED AND THE FLAX WAS IN BLOOM. 32 THE WHEAT AND SPELT, HOWEVER, WERE NOT DESTROYED, BECAUSE THEY RIPEN LATER.) 9:31–32 WHY THIS ASIDE? THE ANSWER IS PRESUMABLY THAT MOST READERS THROUGHOUT HISTORY, AND CERTAINLY IN ANCIENT TIMES AMONG THE ORIGINAL AUDIENCE, WERE FARMERS WHO WOULD HAVE A KEEN INTEREST IN WHAT SORT OF DAMAGE TO CROPS HAD BEEN CAUSED BY THE HAIL. ALTHOUGH IT IS POSSIBLE TO GET CATTLE UNDER COVER AND THUS PROTECT THEM FROM HAIL, IT IS NOT NORMALLY POSSIBLE TO GET CROPS UNDER COVER, SO TYPICAL READERS WOULD WONDER ABOUT THEM MOST. AS FOR THE EGYPTIANS THEMSELVES, THEY WERE NOT KNOWN FOR LARGE SCALE CATTLE FARMING BUT MORE FOR CROP FARMING, SO THE LATTER WAS OF FAR GREATER SIGNIFICANCE TO THEM THAN THE FORMER, AND A HAILSTORM WAS A FAR GREATER THREAT TO THEIR ECONOMY THAN IT WOULD HAVE BEEN FOR SOME OTHER PEOPLES. IN EGYPT FLAX AND BARLEY WERE HARVESTED IN FEBRUARY–MARCH, A FACT THAT PROVIDES A CLEAR TIME-OF-YEAR DATE FOR THIS PART OF THE STORY AT LEAST. WHEAT AND SPELT, HOWEVER, WERE HARVESTED IN MARCH–APRIL, A FULL MONTH LATER, THAT IS, AT THE TIME OF THE TENTH PLAGUE AND EXODUS ITSELF; THEY WERE TOO SMALL AT THIS TIME TO BE PERMANENTLY DAMAGED BY THE HAILSTORM. THOUGH THE WHEAT AND SPELT SHOOTS WERE UP AND GROWING, AND SURELY WERE SMASHED DOWN BY THE HAIL, THEY WERE ABLE TO RECOVER AND CONTINUE TO GROW FAIRLY NORMALLY. THIS DOES NOT MEAN THAT THE EGYPTIANS WERE SPARED DISASTER BECAUSE IN GOD’S PLAN THE LOCUSTS WERE ON THE WAY TO DISPOSE OF THE LAST REMAINING HOPE (VIA THE PLAGUE IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING, 10:1–20), SO THAT EVEN THOSE EGYPTIANS WHO MAY HAVE SAID, “WELL, AT LEAST WE CAN EAT WHEAT AND SPELT AND MAKE IT THROUGH UNTIL NEXT YEAR” WERE QUITE MISTAKEN. ALSO, WITH REGARD TO TIMING: SINCE THE TIME OF YEAR OF THE EXODUS IS KNOWN, IT BECOMES EVIDENT THAT THERE COULD NOT HAVE BEEN MORE THAN A MONTH OR SO OF TIME BETWEEN THIS PLAGUE AND THE TENTH AND FINAL PLAGUE. THIS OVERALL TIME FRAME COMPORTS WELL WITH THE “BENCHMARK” ONE-WEEK DURATION OF THE FIRST PLAGUE (7:25) AND THE GENERAL RECKONING THAT THE PLAGUES TOOK PLACE OVER THE DURATION OF A FEW MONTHS WITHIN A SINGLE YEAR, PERHAPS FROM WINTER TO EARLY SPRING.**

**REMOVAL OF THE PLAGUE, FOLLOWED BY PHARAOH’S RENEGING ON HIS PROMISE (9:33–35)**

**33 THEN MOSES LEFT PHARAOH AND WENT OUT OF THE CITY. HE SPREAD OUT HIS HANDS TOWARD THE LORD; THE THUNDER AND HAIL STOPPED, AND THE RAIN NO LONGER POURED DOWN ON THE LAND. 34 WHEN PHARAOH SAW THAT THE RAIN AND HAIL AND THUNDER HAD STOPPED, HE SINNED AGAIN: HE AND HIS OFFICIALS HARDENED THEIR HEARTS. 35 SO PHARAOH’S HEART WAS HARD AND HE WOULD NOT LET THE ISRAELITES GO, JUST AS THE LORD HAD SAID THROUGH MOSES. 9:33–35 THIS CONCLUSION TO THE SEVENTH PLAGUE ACCOUNT RESUMES THE THEME OF PHARAOH’S “SIN” THAT HAD BEEN INTRODUCED BY PHARAOH HIMSELF IN V. 27. AS ALREADY ARGUED IN CONNECTION WITH V. 27, THIS “SIN,” REFERRING TO PHARAOH’S WILLFUL INTENT TO DISOBEY WHAT HE KNEW TO BE THE WILL OF GOD, CAN ALSO BE UNDERSTOOD AS “DOING THE WRONG THING”; AND THE SECOND CLAUSE IN V. 34 COULD BE TRANSLATED “HE DID THE WRONG THING AGAIN.” MOSES, ON THE OTHER HAND, DID EXACTLY WHAT HE SAID HE WOULD DO, AND GOD RESPONDED FAITHFULLY TO MOSES’ PRAYER (V. 33); THE PLAGUE CAME TO AN ABRUPT HALT—NOT MERELY THE HAIL BUT THE ENTIRE STORM, INCLUDING “THE RAIN AND HAIL AND THUNDER” (V. 34). BOTH PHARAOH, HOWEVER, AND HIS OFFICIALS RESUMED THEIR STUBBORN STANCE AGAINST ANY COMPROMISE WITH THE ISRAELITES (VV. 34–35A). ALL HAD HAPPENED “JUST AS THE LORD HAD SAID THROUGH MOSES.” THE “SINFUL” TENDENCY THAT HAD FIRST MOTIVATED EGYPT TO ENSLAVE ISRAEL (1:9–14) WAS BEING USED BY GOD TO SUBJUGATE NOT ISRAEL NOW BUT EGYPT. THE ALERT READER CANNOT ESCAPE THE CONCLUSION THAT PHARAOH AND HIS ADVISORS WERE SIMPLY NOT IN CONTROL OF THEIR OWN DESTINIES BUT WERE BEING FORCED TO REPEAT STUPID ACTIONS TO THEIR OWN DISADVANTAGE AS PUNISHMENTS. THE WISE COURSE OF ACTION FOR THEM WOULD HAVE BEEN TO LET THE ISRAELITES LEAVE AND PREVENT FURTHER DIVINE DESTRUCTION OF THEIR LAND AND POSSESSIONS. BUT THEY WERE NO LONGER ABLE TO TAKE WISE COURSES OF ACTION; THEIR INCLINATIONS AND INTELLECTUAL CAPACITIES WERE SUBJECT TO FRUSTRATION BY THE ONLY WISE GOD, WHO WAS MAKING FOOLS OUT OF THEM [ROMANS 1:21-28, 32]. AS HE RATCHETED UP THE SEVERITY OF THE PLAGUES, HE KEPT THEM FROM RESPONDING ACCORDINGLY. USING THEIR PRIDE, THEIR WILLFULNESS, THEIR CULTURAL ASSUMPTIONS, THEIR EMOTIONAL TENDENCIES, AND ANY AND ALL OTHER CHARACTERISTICS UNDER HIS CONTROL, HE SIMPLY MADE THEM DO WHAT WOULD BE TO THEIR DISADVANTAGE: HE MADE THEM RESIST YET FURTHER.**

**NINTH SIGN: EIGHTH PLAGUE: LOCUSTS (10:1–20)**

**THE EIGHTH PLAGUE ACCOUNT, THE SECOND LONGEST OF THE NINE THAT LEAD UP TO THE FINAL AND DECISIVE TENTH PLAGUE, SHARES VARIOUS FEATURES WITH THE OTHER “SECOND CYCLE” PLAGUE ACCOUNTS (FROGS AND ANIMAL DISEASE) INCLUDING THE FACT THAT IT INVOLVED AN INDOOR (COURT) CONFRONTATION BETWEEN MOSES AND PHARAOH. IN CONTRAST TO PRIOR PLAGUE ACCOUNTS, HOWEVER, THIS ONE DESCRIBES PHARAOH’S REACTION BEFORE THE PLAGUE AS WELL AS AFTER IT. MOREOVER, PHARAOH’S PARTIAL CONCESSION TO ALLOW ADULT ISRAELITE MALES TO LEAVE EGYPT TEMPORARILY WAS GIVEN EVEN BEFORE THE PLAGUE BEGAN, THAT IS, MERELY ON THE BASIS OF THE WARNING. BY THIS TIME IN THE OVERALL STORY, PHARAOH COULD NOT HELP BUT REALIZE THAT A SEVERE HARM WAS COMING AND WISHED TO HEAD IT OFF BEFORE IT OCCURRED. THIS ACCOUNT HELPS IDENTIFY THE REAL NATURE OF THE DEMAND MADE BY STEPHEN YAHWEH ON THE EGYPTIAN KING AND HIS PEOPLE: FULL, PERMANENT EXODUS FROM EGYPT BY THE ISRAELITES. IT IS EVIDENT THAT PHARAOH UNDERSTOOD THIS, FOR HE TRIED TO HOLD MOSES TO A LITERALISTIC INTERPRETATION OF THE DEMAND BY SUGGESTING, CONTRARY TO FACT, THAT IF MOSES’ BARGAINING LANGUAGE WERE TAKEN AT FACE VALUE, THAT IS, IF MOSES WERE DEMANDING ONLY A THREE-DAY FESTIVAL, ONLY MEN WOULD BE REQUIRED; HE HARDLY WOULD NEED TO TAKE THE WHOLE POPULATION ALONG. OF COURSE, PHARAOH WAS THINKING ACCORDING TO THE EGYPTIAN STYLE, THAT WOMEN AND CHILDREN NEED NOT BE INVOLVED DIRECTLY IN WORSHIP, SOMETHING VERY DIFFERENT FROM WHAT GOD HAD IN MIND FOR HIS PEOPLE. ISRAELITE WORSHIP IS TO BE A FULL FAMILY AFFAIR. THE MEN PLAYED A KEY ROLE IN THE ACTUAL OFFERING OF THE SACRIFICE BY THE PRIESTS, BUT THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN ALSO PARTICIPATED, BOTH BY OBSERVATION AND BY EATING THE MEAL AFTER IT WAS PREPARED THROUGH THE SACRIFICE PROCESS. ACCORDINGLY, MOSES COULD ONLY REGARD PHARAOH’S OFFER AS TOO LITTLE TOO LATE, AND HE REACTED ACCORDINGLY.**

**SUMMONS, INSTRUCTION, AND ENCOURAGEMENT (10:1–2)**

**1 THEN THE LORD SAID TO MOSES, “GO TO PHARAOH, FOR I HAVE HARDENED HIS HEART AND THE HEARTS OF HIS OFFICIALS SO THAT I MAY PERFORM THESE MIRACULOUS SIGNS OF MINE AMONG THEM 2 THAT YOU MAY TELL YOUR CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN HOW I DEALT HARSHLY WITH THE EGYPTIANS AND HOW I PERFORMED MY SIGNS AMONG THEM, AND THAT YOU MAY KNOW THAT I AM THE LORD.” 10:1–2 IN THE PRIOR TWO PLAGUE ACCOUNTS IN THIS CYCLE (TWO AND FIVE) GOD SAID TO MOSES, “GO TO PHARAOH AND SAY TO HIM …” THIS TIME, INSTEAD, GOD FOLLOWED HIS COMMAND TO GO TO PHARAOH WITH AN EXPLANATION THAT WAS FOR THE BENEFIT OF MOSES AND THE ISRAELITES IN GENERAL, THROUGHOUT THEIR GENERATIONS. HE REMINDED MOSES (AND AT THE SAME TIME ALL FUTURE AUDIENCES OF MOSES’ WRITING) THAT THE REASON FOR PHARAOH’S INTRANSIGENCE WAS HIS (STEPHEN YAHWEH’S) OWN DOING—HE HAD BEEN MAKING IT HAPPEN FOR A PURPOSE. WHAT WAS THAT PURPOSE? IT WAS AN EVANGELISTIC PURPOSE, STATED IN THE FINAL CLAUSE OF V. 2, “THAT YOU MAY KNOW THAT I AM THE LORD.” THE PRIOR PURPOSE MENTIONED IN V. 2, “THAT YOU MAY TELL YOUR CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN HOW I [HUMILIATED] THE EGYPTIANS AND HOW I PERFORMED MY SIGNS AMONG THEM,” IS INTERMEDIATE: MOSES AND SUCCESSIVE ISRAELITES HAD BEEN PROVIDED WITH IRRESISTIBLY INTERESTING STORIES TO TELL THEIR CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN, NOT FOR THE SAKE OF THE ENTERTAINMENT VALUE THEY HELD BUT SO THAT THEIR CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN WOULD UNDERSTAND WHO GOD REALLY IS AND HOW IMPORTANT IT IS TO BE RIGHTLY IN COVENANT WITH HIM—THE MEANING OF “KNOW THAT I AM THE LORD.” THE NIV TRANSLATION OF THE SECOND CLAUSE OF V. 2 (“HOW I DEALT HARSHLY WITH THE EGYPTIANS”) TAKES THE LEAST LIKELY OPTION AMONG THE POSSIBILITIES FOR TRANSLATING THE VERB IN QUESTION, ʿLL, HITHPAEL + PREPOSITION B. THE VERB IN THIS CONJUGATIONAL FORM CAN MEAN “ABUSE” OR “MISTREAT” BUT IN THE SENSE OF “HUMILIATE” RATHER THAN IN THE SENSE OF “BE TOUGH ON” OR “DEAL HARSHLY WITH.” IT SOMETIMES ALSO CONNOTES “MAKING A FOOL OF” OR “MAKING A SPECTACLE OF” (THE LATTER BEING TRANSLATIONS THAT HAVE BEEN PROPOSED FOR THE PRESENT TEXT). IN LIGHT OF WHAT IS GOING ON IN THE ENTIRE CORPUS OF PLAGUE ACCOUNTS, SUMMARIZED HERE, IT SEEMS BEST TO RENDER THE VERB AS “HUMILIATED.” WHAT GOD DID TO PHARAOH, THE EGYPTIANS IN GENERAL, AND TO EGYPT’S GODS WAS TO SHOW THEM POWERLESS AND HELPLESS, TO EXPOSE THEIR PRIDE AS EMPTY ARROGANCE, AND TO SHAME THEM FOREVER IN THE PROCESS—THAT IS, TO HUMILIATE THEM.**

**ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE PLAGUE (10:3–6)**

**3 SO MOSES AND AARON WENT TO PHARAOH AND SAID TO HIM, “THIS IS WHAT THE LORD, THE GOD OF THE HEBREWS, SAYS: ‘HOW LONG WILL YOU REFUSE TO HUMBLE YOURSELF BEFORE ME? LET MY PEOPLE GO, SO THAT THEY MAY WORSHIP ME. 4 IF YOU REFUSE TO LET THEM GO, I WILL BRING LOCUSTS INTO YOUR COUNTRY TOMORROW. 5 THEY WILL COVER THE FACE OF THE GROUND SO THAT IT CANNOT BE SEEN. THEY WILL DEVOUR WHAT LITTLE YOU HAVE LEFT AFTER THE HAIL, INCLUDING EVERY TREE THAT IS GROWING IN YOUR FIELDS. 6 THEY WILL FILL YOUR HOUSES AND THOSE OF ALL YOUR OFFICIALS AND ALL THE EGYPTIANS—SOMETHING NEITHER YOUR FATHERS NOR YOUR FOREFATHERS HAVE EVER SEEN FROM THE DAY THEY SETTLED IN THIS LAND TILL NOW.’” THEN MOSES TURNED AND LEFT PHARAOH. 10:3 ALTHOUGH GOD’S INSTRUCTIONS WERE ISSUED SPECIFICALLY TO MOSES (10:1), AARON WAS INVOLVED ROUTINELY IN THE PLAGUE STORIES, AND HIS NAME THUS SURFACES AGAIN HERE IN V. 3, AS IT FREQUENTLY DOES IN THE “MIDDLE” OF VARIOUS OTHER ACCOUNTS. THE INTRODUCTION TO THEIR SPEECH TO PHARAOH (“THIS IS WHAT THE LORD, THE GOD OF THE HEBREWS, SAYS”) IS NOT NEW (CF. 3:18; 7:16; 9:1, 13), NOR IS THE WORDING OF THE DEMAND ITSELF AT THE END OF V. 3 (“LET MY PEOPLE GO, SO THAT THEY MAY WORSHIP ME”; CF. 7:16; 8:1, 20; 9:1, 13), BUT THE RHETORICAL QUESTION THAT APPEARS BETWEEN THESE FAMILIAR PHRASES (“HOW LONG WILL YOU REFUSE TO HUMBLE YOURSELF BEFORE ME?”) IS UNIQUE TO THE PLAGUE ACCOUNTS AND, INDEED, TO THE ENTIRE OLD TESTAMENT. WHEN INDIVIDUALS OR GROUPS WILLINGLY ACKNOWLEDGE GOD’S SOVEREIGNTY—NOT IN GENERAL BUT OVER THEM—THEY ASSUME THEIR PROPER POSITION AND ROLE IN THE CREATED ORDER. WHEN PEOPLE DO NOT ACKNOWLEDGE THE ONE TRUE GOD AS THEIR OWN LORD, HOWEVER, THEY ARE IN REBELLION AGAINST THEIR VERY NATURE AND EVENTUALLY MUST BE FORCIBLY TAUGHT WHO IS BOSS. THE HOLY BIBLE TEACHES THAT EVERYONE WILL EVENTUALLY ACKNOWLEDGE THE LORDSHIP OF THE ONE & ONLY LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH; THE EGYPTIANS WERE REQUIRED TO ACKNOWLEDGE IT, HOWEVER RELUCTANTLY, THROUGH THE PLAGUES, BEFORE STEPHEN YAHWEH (“BEFORE ME”). THEY COULD NOT SIMPLY IN THE PRIVACY OF THEIR MINDS ADMIT TO THEMSELVES THAT STEPHEN YAHWEH IS IMPRESSIVE. THEY HAD TO DEMONSTRATE THEIR HUMILITY TO HIM, WHICH IS WHAT “HUMBLE YOURSELF BEFORE ME” REQUIRES. THIS IS THE IMPORT OF THE FULL RHETORICAL QUESTION, “HOW LONG WILL YOU REFUSE TO HUMBLE YOURSELF BEFORE ME?” ARROGANCE AND PRIDE, NOT HUMILITY AND DEFERENCE, HAD CHARACTERIZED THE EGYPTIAN ATTITUDE TOWARD ISRAEL SINCE THE TIME OF THE “KING WHO DID NOT KNOW ABOUT JOSEPH” (1:8). BECAUSE OF GOD’S DETERMINATION TO BE ACKNOWLEDGED BY HIS CREATION AND BY REASON OF HIS AUTHORITY TO ACCOMPLISH THAT ACKNOWLEDGMENT, THE EGYPTIANS DIDN’T STAND A CHANCE OF HOLDING ON TO THEIR PRIDEFUL STANCE IN OPPRESSING THE ISRAELITES. THE ONLY QUESTION WAS HOW LONG THEY WOULD RESIST. SINCE THEY HAD BEEN UNWILLING TO BE HUMBLE, THEY WOULD NOW HAVE TO BE HUMBLED, THAT IS, HUMILIATED, DIRECTLY BY STEPHEN YAHWEH. 10:4–6 THESE VERSES DESCRIBE THE SEVERITY OF THE COMING PLAGUE FOR THE BENEFIT OF PHARAOH AND HIS COURT ADVISORS. THE PRIOR PLAGUE OF HAIL AND THE COMING PLAGUE OF LOCUSTS TOGETHER CONSTITUTED A “ONE-TWO PUNCH” TO KNOCK OUT THE EGYPTIAN AGRARIAN ECONOMY. INTRODUCED BY A RHETORICAL CONDITIONAL “IF YOU REFUSE TO LET THEM GO,” WHICH GOD KNEW WOULD CERTAINLY BE FULFILLED SINCE HE HAD ALREADY SO DETERMINED AND WAS WITHIN HIS POWER TO DO SO, THE DESCRIPTION ENVISIONS COMPLETE DEVASTATION OF REMAINING CROPS THROUGH A BLANKET OF LOCUSTS COVERING EGYPT SO THICKLY AS VIRTUALLY TO PREVENT THE GROUND ITSELF FROM BEING VISIBLE. THIS VAST, BORDER-TO-BORDER SWARM WOULD NOT ONLY DEVOUR ANY CROPS LEFT AFTER THE HAIL BUT WOULD ANNOY HUMANS BY INVADING HOUSES IN GREAT NUMBERS. WITH WORDING RELATIVELY SIMILAR TO THAT USED TO DESCRIBE THE UNPRECEDENTED NATURE OF THE EARLIER HAIL (“SOMETHING NEITHER YOUR FATHERS NOR YOUR FOREFATHERS HAVE EVER SEEN FROM THE DAY THEY SETTLED IN THIS LAND TILL NOW”), THE EGYPTIANS WERE TOLD THAT THIS PLAGUE WOULD BE WITHOUT PARALLEL IN EGYPT’S HISTORY. VERSE 6 CONCLUDES WITH A UNIQUE WORDING, “THEN MOSES TURNED AND LEFT PHARAOH.” THIS IS THE ONLY TIME IN THE ACCOUNTS OF MOSES’ ENCOUNTERS WITH PHARAOH THAT HE IS DESCRIBED AS TURNING AND LEAVING PHARAOH. OTHERWISE, THE COMMON EXPRESSION IS SIMPLY “LEFT PHARAOH.” THE REASON FOR THIS DETAIL IN THE NARRATIVE PRESUMABLY IS A DESIRE TO CALL THE READER’S ATTENTION TO THIS PARTICULAR LEAVE TAKING, WHICH IS THE FIRST OF TWO IN THIS NARRATIVE AND THE ONE FROM WHICH MOSES (AND AARON) WOULD BE RECALLED AS SOON AS THE PLAGUE ACTUALLY COMES ABOUT. “TURNED AND LEFT” (PNH + YṢʾ), A HAPAX LEGOMENON PAIRING, ALMOST CERTAINLY CONNOTES LEAVING IN OPPOSITION, WITHOUT A HAPPY RESOLUTION OF AN ENCOUNTER. A MORE UNAMBIGUOUS TRANSLATION MIGHT BE “TURNED AROUND AND LEFT” OR “TURNED HIS BACK AND LEFT” OR EVEN “TURNED ON HIS HEELS AND LEFT.”**

**PHARAOH TRIES AGAIN TO BARGAIN, WITHOUT SUCCESS (10:7–11)**

**7 PHARAOH’S OFFICIALS SAID TO HIM, “HOW LONG WILL THIS MAN BE A SNARE TO US? LET THE PEOPLE GO, SO THAT THEY MAY WORSHIP THE LORD THEIR GOD. DO YOU NOT YET REALIZE THAT EGYPT IS RUINED?” 8 THEN MOSES AND AARON WERE BROUGHT BACK TO PHARAOH. “GO, WORSHIP THE LORD YOUR GOD,” HE SAID. “BUT JUST WHO WILL BE GOING?” 9 MOSES ANSWERED, “WE WILL GO WITH OUR YOUNG AND OLD, WITH OUR SONS AND DAUGHTERS, AND WITH OUR FLOCKS AND HERDS, BECAUSE WE ARE TO CELEBRATE A FESTIVAL TO THE LORD.” 10 PHARAOH SAID, “THE LORD BE WITH YOU—IF I LET YOU GO, ALONG WITH YOUR WOMEN AND CHILDREN! CLEARLY YOU ARE BENT ON EVIL [SEX]. 11 NO! HAVE ONLY THE MEN, GO AND WORSHIP THE LORD, SINCE THAT’S WHAT YOU HAVE BEEN ASKING FOR.” THEN MOSES AND AARON WERE DRIVEN OUT OF PHARAOH’S PRESENCE.**

**10:7 THE COURT OFFICIALS WHO ADVISED PHARAOH BECAME RATHER BLUNT IN THEIR ASSESSMENT FOR PHARAOH’S BENEFIT OF THE PROBLEM THAT FACED EGYPT. USING THE EXPRESSION “TO BECOME A SNARE [MÔQĒŠ] TO X,” THEY IDENTIFIED MOSES149 AS A SNARE TO “US,” PRESUMABLY MEANING ALL EGYPTIANS, NOT JUST THE GOVERNMENTAL LEADERSHIP. THE SAME EXPRESSION OCCURS REPEATEDLY THROUGHOUT THE OLD TESTAMENT AND WITHIN THE CORPUS OF MOSES’ WRITINGS IS USED ELSEWHERE (BUT NOT IN THIS CONTEXT; I.E., IN EXOD. 23:3; 34:12; DEUT. 7:16) TO REFER TO THE WAY THAT WORSHIPING IDOLS WOULD BE A SNARE TO THE ISRAELITES, THAT IS, A MEANS OF ENTRAPPING THEM AND ENSLAVING THEM. A SNARE (MÔQĒŠ) IS SIMPLY A TYPE OF TRAP ATTACHED TO OR MADE FROM A CORD THAT EITHER PIERCES AND HOLDS OR BINDS AND HOLDS ITS PREY (CF. AMOS 3:5; JOB 40:24). THUS, WHAT THE EGYPTIAN OFFICIALS WERE SAYING WITH THIS METAPHOR WAS THAT MOSES HAD BECOME A MEANS BY WHICH THE EGYPTIANS WERE DENIED THEIR FREEDOM AND TRAPPED IN A SITUATION THEY DID NOT WANT TO BE IN. THE IRONY IS APPARENT: THOSE WHO HAD ENSLAVED THE ISRAELITES, KEEPING THEM TRAPPED AND DENYING THEM THEIR FREEDOM, WERE NOW “GETTING A TASTE OF THEIR OWN MEDICINE;” THEY WERE THEMSELVES BEING HELD AGAINST THEIR WILLS BY THEIR OPPONENT. OF COURSE, THE READER SHOULD NOT FOR A MINUTE THINK THEY HAD FOCUSED ON THE REAL SOURCE OF THEIR TROUBLE. IT WAS NOT MOSES WHO HAD TROUBLED THEM BUT GOD, AND AS A PUNISHMENT FOR THEIR OWN “SNARING” OF THE ISRAELITES. FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF THE OFFICIALS, THE ONLY—AND OBVIOUS—COURSE WAS TO GIVE IN TO STEPHEN YAHWEH’S DEMANDS AND LET HIS PEOPLE GO TO WORSHIP/SERVE (ʿBD) HIM. THEY WERE NOT MOTIVATED TOWARD THIS POSITION BY A SENSE OF JUSTICE OR BY COMPASSION; THEY SIMPLY RECOGNIZED WHAT PHARAOH WAS SLOWER TO GRASP—THAT EGYPT WAS BEING RUINED AND THAT RELIEF FROM THE TRIALS WAS NEEDED ON AN EMERGENCY BASIS. PHARAOH’S SPLENDID ISOLATION AND ELABORATELY PAMPERED CARE UNDOUBTEDLY HAD SHIELDED HIM FROM MOST OF THE PAIN ASSOCIATED WITH THE PLAGUES THUS FAR. BUT THE ADVISORS IN HIS COURT, THOUGH STILL MATERIALLY WELL-OFF, WERE FAR MORE LIKELY TO HAVE SEEN THE EXTENT OF THE HARDSHIPS THE NATION WAS EXPERIENCING AND MORE LIKELY AS WELL TO HAVE HEARD THE ESCALATING COMPLAINTS OF THE CITIZENRY. IT MAY NOT HAVE BEEN EASY FOR THEM TO SPEAK TO PHARAOH IN TERMS OF A “RUIN” OF EGYPT, BUT THEY HAD COME TO THE POINT WHERE THERE WAS NO OPTION FOR THEM BUT TO HELP HIM UNDERSTAND JUST HOW FAR THINGS HAD DETERIORATED. THE ATTITUDE OF PHARAOH AT THIS POINT, HOWEVER, WAS STILL VERY MUCH LIKE THAT OF IMPERIOUS LEADERS THROUGHOUT HISTORY WHO FAILED TO SEE THE SEVERITY OF WHAT CONFRONTED THEM AND THEIR IMPENDING DEMISE. POWERFUL LEADERS CAN GET SO USED TO HAVING THEIR WILL CARRIED OUT THAT THEY FIND IT HARD TO GRASP THE FACT THAT THE OPPOSITE MIGHT BECOME THE CASE. 10:8 THE WORDING OF V. 8 ASSUMES A PARTIAL CAPITULATION OF PHARAOH TO THE ADVICE OF HIS COURT OFFICIALS, AT LEAST TO THE EXTENT OF A PARTIAL AGREEMENT TO LET THE PEOPLE GO SO THEY COULD WORSHIP THE LORD THEIR GOD. HIS WORDS “GO WORSHIP THE LORD YOUR GOD” SO PRECISELY PARALLEL THOSE OF HIS ADVISORS THAT THIS CLEARLY WAS THE REASON FOR THEIR BEING CALLED BACK TO HIS PRESENCE. MESSENGERS WERE OBVIOUSLY SENT OUT TO FIND MOSES AND AARON, WHO, UPON REQUEST, REAPPEARED AT THE COURT. PHARAOH, HOWEVER, HAD NOT ACTUALLY AGREED WITHOUT RESERVATION TO THE ADVICE TO RELEASE THE ISRAELITES SINCE HE INTRODUCED A LIMITATION IN HIS QUESTION, “BUT JUST WHO WILL BE GOING?” THAT WAS NOT A QUESTION HE WOULD BOTHER TO ASK UNLESS HE WERE STILL BARGAINING, STILL TRYING TO RESTRICT THE OUTRIGHT EMIGRATION PERMISSION SOUGHT BY THE ISRAELITES. 10:9 THE SHORT WORDING FOR MOSES’ ANSWER COULD HAVE BEEN, “EVERY ISRAELITE WILL LEAVE EGYPT” BECAUSE THAT WAS WHAT HE MEANT BY HIS CAREFULLY WORDED RESPONSE INDICATING THAT ALL AGES, ALL GENDERS, ALL RELATIVES, AND ALL MOVEABLE POSSESSIONS OF THE ISRAELITES WOULD “CELEBRATE A FESTIVAL TO THE LORD,” THAT IS, LEAVE THE COUNTRY. MOSES THUS CONTINUED TO STICK TO HIS OWN BARGAINING POSITION, INCLUDING THE BARGAINING STYLE AND LANGUAGE THAT WENT WITH IT, WHICH CONSISTENTLY USED “GENTLE” WAYS OF SAYING THAT NOTHING LESS THAN A COMPLETE EXODUS WOULD DO. 10:10 THE PART OF PHARAOH’S RESPONSE RECORDED IN THE FIRST CLAUSES OF V. 10 (“THE LORD BE WITH YOU—IF I LET YOU GO, ALONG WITH YOUR WOMEN AND CHILDREN!”), THOUGH NOT ACTUALLY AMBIGUOUS IN THE ORIGINAL, HAS BEEN TRANSLATED VARIOUSLY BY MODERN VERSIONS. FOR EXAMPLE, “THE LORD INDEED WILL BE WITH YOU, IF EVER I LET YOUR LITTLE ONES GO WITH YOU!” (NRSV); “VERY WELL THEN; TAKE YOUR, DEPENDENTS WITH YOU WHEN YOU GO; AND THE LORD BE WITH YOU” (NEB); “THE LORD HELP YOU IF …” (NAB). NONE OF THESE, IN OUR JUDGMENT, RENDERS THE HEBREW ADEQUATELY BECAUSE ALL ARE TRYING—SOMEWHAT MISLEADINGLY—TO HELP THE READER REALIZE THAT PHARAOH WAS NOT ACTUALLY GIVING PERMISSION FOR THE EXODUS. IN FACT, WHAT PHARAOH SAID WAS LITERALLY: “LET IT BE SO! STEPHEN YAHWEH WILL BE WITH YOU WHEN I LET YOU AND YOUR FAMILY MEMBERS GO!” HIS WORDS, HOWEVER, WERE NOT INTENDED LITERALLY BUT SARCASTICALLY, AS THE CRITICAL AND NEGATIVE FINAL STATEMENT IN THE VERSE (“CLEARLY YOU ARE BENT ON EVIL [SEX IN 1ST TIMOTHY 6:9-10]”) MAKES CLEAR. WERE PHARAOH SPEAKING MODERN COLLOQUIAL ENGLISH, HE MIGHT HAVE SAID SOMETHING LIKE: “OH, SURE, THAT’S FINE. AND IT WOULD CERTAINLY PROVE THAT STEPHEN YAHWEH WAS WITH YOU IF I ACTUALLY ALLOWED ALL YOUR FAMILY MEMBERS TO GO WITH YOU, BUT, LOOK, IT’S OBVIOUS YOU HAVE EVIL IN MIND.” 10:11 AT THIS POINT PHARAOH SAID WHAT HE MEANT WITHOUT SARCASM, THE OPPOSITE OF HIS EARLIER (LIT.) “LET IT BE SO,” THAT IS, “NOT SO!” (NIV “NO!”). THE NIV RIGHTLY SEPARATES THE FIRST CLAUSE FROM THE SECOND BY A SEMICOLON. PHARAOH’S REFERENCE TO “WHAT YOU HAVE BEEN ASKING FOR” APPLIES ONLY TO HIS COMMAND, “WORSHIP THE LORD,” NOT TO “HAVE ONLY THE MEN GO.” MOSES AND AARON HAD BEEN ASKING FOR THE FORMER BUT CERTAINLY NOT FOR THE RESTRICTIVE LIMITATIONS OF THE LATTER. WHAT PHARAOH MAY NOT HAVE BEEN ABLE TO ANTICIPATE ABOUT ISRAELITE WORSHIP WAS ITS RELATIVELY GENDER-BLIND NATURE. OF COURSE, THERE COULD BE NO FULL “ISRAELITE” WORSHIP UNTIL THE ISRAELITES RECEIVED GOD’S LAW AND BUILT THE TABERNACLE AND INSTALLED THE PRIESTS, BUT GOD’S DEMANDS TO PHARAOH WERE GIVEN IN ANTICIPATION OF BRINGING THE WHOLE NATION OUT OF EGYPT TO SERVE HIM (AND STOP SERVING PHARAOH). ONCE IT BECAME CONSTITUTED IN THE LAW, ISRAELITE WORSHIP DID INSIST UPON THE FULL PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN. WOMEN WERE REQUIRED TO ATTEND THE DESIGNATED WORSHIP FEASTS (DEUT. 16:11, 14) AND, IN PARALLEL FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF PROHIBITIONS APPLYING TO THEM, WERE APPROPRIATELY BANNED FROM PARTICIPATING IN PAGAN RITUALS (DEUT. 17:2–7), EVEN THOUGH IT WAS THE SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY OF THE MAN OF THE HOUSE, NOT THE WOMAN, TO PROVIDE THE ACTUAL OFFERING MATERIALS (DEUT. 16:16–17). PHARAOH CERTAINLY DID NOT ACCEPT MOSES’ DEMAND, AND IT APPARENTLY ALSO WAS THE CASE THAT HE SAW IMMEDIATELY FROM MOSES’ RESPONSE THAT MOSES WOULD NOT ACCEPT A MEN-ONLY SACRIFICE DEPARTURE SCENARIO. SINCE PHARAOH COULD NOT GET HIS WAY, THAT IS, COULD NOT KEEP THE ISRAELITES TRAPPED IN EGYPT BY MEANS OF ALLOWING ONLY A PARTIAL AND TEMPORARY LEAVE TAKING, HE REQUIRED IN ANGER THAT MOSES AND AARON BE EXPELLED FROM HIS PRESENCE. DID HIS ADVISORS JOIN HIM IN FEELING THAT MOSES WAS BEING UNREASONABLE? IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THEY DID, IN LIGHT OF THE PLURAL VERB FORM (LIT., “THEY DROVE THEM OUT”) OF THE ORIGINAL.**

**THE PLAGUE AND ITS CONSEQUENCES (10:12–20)**

**12 AND THE LORD SAID TO MOSES, “STRETCH OUT YOUR HAND OVER EGYPT SO THAT LOCUSTS WILL SWARM OVER THE LAND AND DEVOUR EVERYTHING GROWING IN THE FIELDS, EVERYTHING LEFT BY THE HAIL.” 13 SO MOSES STRETCHED OUT HIS STAFF OVER EGYPT, AND THE LORD MADE AN EAST WIND BLOW ACROSS THE LAND ALL THAT DAY AND ALL THAT NIGHT. BY MORNING THE WIND HAD BROUGHT THE LOCUSTS; 14 THEY INVADED ALL EGYPT AND SETTLED DOWN IN EVERY AREA OF THE COUNTRY IN GREAT NUMBERS. NEVER BEFORE HAD THERE BEEN SUCH A PLAGUE OF LOCUSTS, NOR WILL THERE EVER BE AGAIN. 15 THEY COVERED ALL THE GROUND UNTIL IT WAS BLACK. THEY DEVOURED ALL THAT WAS LEFT AFTER THE HAIL—EVERYTHING GROWING IN THE FIELDS AND THE FRUIT ON THE TREES. NOTHING GREEN REMAINED ON TREE OR PLANT IN ALL THE LAND OF EGYPT. 16 PHARAOH, QUICKLY SUMMONED MOSES AND AARON AND SAID, “I HAVE SINNED AGAINST THE LORD YOUR GOD AND AGAINST YOU. 17 NOW FORGIVE MY SIN ONCE MORE AND PRAY TO THE LORD YOUR GOD TO TAKE THIS DEADLY PLAGUE AWAY FROM ME.” 18 MOSES THEN LEFT PHARAOH AND PRAYED TO THE LORD. 19 AND THE LORD CHANGED THE WIND TO A VERY STRONG WEST WIND, WHICH CAUGHT UP THE LOCUSTS AND CARRIED THEM INTO THE RED SEA. NOT A LOCUST WAS LEFT ANYWHERE IN EGYPT. 20 BUT THE LORD HARDENED PHARAOH’S HEART, AND HE WOULD NOT LET THE ISRAELITES GO.**

**10:12 AS IN THE CASE OF THE PRIOR PLAGUE ACCOUNT (SEE 9:22–23), THE COMMAND FROM GOD WAS FOR MOSES TO STRETCH OUT HIS “HAND” (10:12), BUT THE NARRATIVE STATES THAT HE STRETCHED OUT HIS “STAFF [ROD OR WAND]” (10:13). AGAIN, THERE IS NO CONTRADICTION. THE COMBINATION OF STATEMENTS IS A SHORTHAND WAY OF SAYING THAT HE STRETCHED OUT HIS HAND OR HANDS WITH THE STAFF [ROD OR WAND] OF GOD IN IT/THEM AND BROUGHT ABOUT THE PLAGUE. THE COMMAND TO PERFORM THIS GESTURE CONTAINS A METAPHORICAL ELEMENT: GOD TOLD MOSES TO STRETCH OUT HIS HAND OVER EGYPT, SOMETHING HE OBVIOUSLY COULD NOT LITERALLY DO BECAUSE OF THE LENGTH OF HIS ARM RELATIVE TO THE SIZE OF EGYPT. WHAT IS MEANT BY THE OBVIOUS ELLIPSIS OF SPEECH IS THAT MOSES WAS TO HOLD UP GOD’S STAFF [ROD OR WAND] AND EITHER FACE VARIOUS DIRECTIONS OR PERHAPS SLOWLY TURN A COMPLETE CIRCLE TO SYMBOLIZE FOR ANY ONLOOKERS THE PAN-NATIONAL EXTENT OF THE COMING PLAGUE. MOSES’ STAFF [ROD OR WAND] ACTUALLY IS ELEVATED OVER ONLY A TINY BIT OF EGYPT; THE PLAGUE, HOWEVER, WOULD AFFECT IT ALL, SAVE FOR THE ISRAELITES’ LANDS IN GOSHEN. THE NIV WORDING “EVERYTHING GROWING IN THE FIELDS” REPRESENTS AN ODD AND POTENTIALLY MISLEADING TRANSLATION CHOICE, ONE THAT WOULD IMPLY THAT THE LOCUSTS WERE TO DEVOUR MERELY PLANTED CROPS RATHER THAN ALL VEGETATION. THE NRSV REPRESENTS THE MAJORITY OF MODERN VERSIONS IN ITS TRANSLATION “EVERY PLANT IN THE LAND,” WHICH IS IN FACT THE SIMPLE, LITERAL TRANSLATION OF THE HEBREW. HERE ALSO THE SP AND THE LXX PRESERVE THE ADDED WORDING “AND ALL THE FRUIT OF THE TREES,” WHICH IS LIKELY ORIGINAL, HAVING BEEN LOST FROM THE MT BY HAPLOGRAPHY. THE PARALLEL WORDING IN V. 15 SUPPORTS ITS INCLUSION AS WELL. ACCORDINGLY, THE END OF THE VERSE SHOULD BE REGARDED AS HAVING READ ORIGINALLY “EVERY PLANT IN THE LAND AND ALL THE FRUIT OF THE TREES—EVERYTHING THAT THE HAIL HAD LEFT.” THE NIV TRANSLATION ALSO MORPHS THE SIMPLE LITERAL MEANING OF THE THIRD CLAUSE, “LET THEM COME UP OVER THE LAND OF EGYPT,” INTO “SO THAT LOCUSTS WILL SWARM OVER THE LAND,” ATTENUATING THE MEANING BEYOND WHAT THE RULES OF A DYNAMIC EQUIVALENCY TRANSLATION CALL FOR. 10:13–15 AGAIN MOSES UNDERTOOK THE SYMBOLIC ACTION AND GOD UNDERTOOK THE PERMISSIBLE MAGIC/MIRACLE. THE MIRACULOUS IN THIS CASE INCLUDED THE CONTROL AND USE OF THE NATURAL ORDER. GOD DID NOT MANUFACTURE LOCUSTS BY FIAT BUT INSTEAD CAUSED ALREADY EXISTING LOCUSTS TO LEAVE A LOCATION WHERE THEY HAD BRED AND MATURED IN ABUNDANCE SOMEWHERE TO THE EAST, TAKE FLIGHT, AND BE BORNE BY A SPECIAL WIND SO AS TO BE DISPERSED IN A PATTERN PRECISELY COVERING THE TERRITORY OF EGYPT. LOCUSTS ARE MERELY GRASSHOPPERS THAT HAVE HATCHED AND GROWN UNDER IDEAL CONDITIONS IN THE SANDY SOIL WHERE GRASSHOPPER EGGS ARE DEPOSITED. INSTEAD OF A SURVIVAL RATE OF A FEW PER THOUSAND, THEY SURVIVE BY THE HUNDREDS PER THOUSAND. IN THE LARVAL STAGE THEY RUB TOGETHER SO FREQUENTLY AS TO PRODUCE THE CHARACTERISTIC BROWN EXTERIOR PIGMENTATION, AS OPPOSED TO THE GREEN COLOR ASSOCIATED WITH GRASSHOPPERS THAT HATCH IN RELATIVELY GREATER ISOLATION. WHERE DID THE LOCUSTS ORIGINATE? THIS IS ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE TO IDENTIFY WITH CERTAINTY. ONE CANNOT ASSUME SIMPLY THAT THE SPECIALLY CONTROLLED EAST WIND THAT BROUGHT THE LOCUSTS BLEW FOR, SAY, TWENTY-FOUR HOURS AT TWENTY MILES PER HOUR, AND THUS CALCULATE THAT THE LOCUSTS CAME FROM A LOCATION ROUGHLY FOUR HUNDRED AND EIGHTY MILES EAST OF EGYPT. THE BEGINNING OF THE EAST WIND SIMPLY MAY HAVE REACHED EGYPT SO AS TO BE FELT AT THE TIME MOSES WAS LED TO MAKE HIS GESTURE, HAVING ACTUALLY ORIGINATED FAR TO THE EAST AT AN EARLIER TIME; THE WIND MAY HAVE PRECEDED THE LOCUSTS MANY HOURS BEFORE THEY FLEW INTO IT AND WITH IT; OR SOME OTHER COMBINATION OF WIND AND LOCUSTS MAY HAVE BEEN USED BY GOD TO ACCOMPLISH THE PLAGUE. THE GENERAL IMPRESSION GIVEN BY THE WORDING OF THE ORIGINAL IN VV. 13–14 IS THAT ON THE MORNING AFTER MOSES RAISED GOD’S STAFF [ROD OR WAND], THE LOCUSTS SIMPLY BEGAN TO ARRIVE AND OVER A PERIOD OF TIME GRADUALLY SPREAD OVER EGYPT RATHER THAN THAT THEY BLANKETED EGYPT INSTANTLY. SINCE NEARLY ALL THE CROPS OF EGYPT ARE GROWN WITHIN SIGHT OF THE NILE OR ITS IRRIGATION CANALS, ONE MAY PRESUME THAT THE LOCUSTS WERE ESPECIALLY CONCENTRATED NEAR THE NILE, SO THAT “EVERY AREA OF THE COUNTRY” IN V. 14 REFERS MORE TO “EVERY AREA WHERE THERE WERE PLANTS TO EAT” RATHER THAN “EQUALLY OVER THE WHOLE LAND MASS.” THE WORDING IN V. 15, “THEY COVERED ALL THE GROUND UNTIL IT WAS BLACK” HAS SOMETIMES BEEN QUESTIONED, PARTLY BECAUSE LOCUSTS ARE BROWN RATHER THAN BLACK AND PARTLY BECAUSE THE LXX TRANSLATOR RENDERED IT OTHERWISE. BUT THE WORDING IN THIS CASE REPRESENTS NOT ONLY A TRANSLATION DECISION BUT A FIGURE OF SPEECH, DRAMATICALLY HIGHLIGHTING THIS PLAGUE IN ITS OWN RIGHT BUT ALSO FORESHADOWING THE PLAGUE OF DARKNESS THAT FOLLOWED IMMEDIATELY. AN ALTERNATIVE TRANSLATION WOULD BE “[UNTIL] THE LAND WAS DARKENED”; THE VERB IS FROM THE SAME ROOT AS THE TERM FOR DARKNESS USED IN THE FOLLOWING PLAGUE STORY. LOCUSTS HAVE VORACIOUS APPETITES AND CAN EAT VIRTUALLY ANY TYPE OF PLANT. NO CROP VEGETABLE OR FRUIT STOOD A CHANCE AGAINST THIS UNPRECEDENTED, UNDUPLICATED PLAGUE. WHAT THE HAIL HAD STARTED THE LOCUSTS FINISHED. SOON EGYPT WOULD HAVE NO FOOD—A REMARKABLE REVERSAL OF WHAT HAPPENED DURING JOSEPH’S DAY (GEN 41:49). 10:16–17 IN THESE VERSES PHARAOH ADMITTED HIS GUILT, ASKED FOR FORGIVENESS, AND REQUESTED PRAYER FOR THE REMOVAL OF THE PLAGUE. NONE OF THESE FACTORS WAS NEW (CF. 9:27–28), AND THEREFORE THE READER HAS REASON TO RETAIN SOME SKEPTICISM ABOUT HOW LONG PHARAOH’S APPARENT REPENTANCE WOULD ACTUALLY LAST AND/OR HOW GENUINE IT ACTUALLY WAS. ON THE OTHER HAND, THERE ARE INDICATIONS IN THESE VERSES OF A SOMEWHAT GREATER INTENSITY IN PHARAOH’S ATTITUDE: HE QUICKLY SUMMONED MOSES AND AARON, THUS RAPIDLY REVERSING HIMSELF PUBLICLY RELATIVE TO HIS “FINAL OFFER” IN V. 11 AND OPENING HIMSELF TO THE HUMILIATION ANY RULER COULD EXPERIENCE AT GOING BACK ON A PUBLIC STANCE ORIGINALLY DESIGNED TO SHOW TOUGHNESS. MOREOVER, HE NOW ACKNOWLEDGED SINNING “AGAINST THE LORD” IN ADDITION TO SINNING “AGAINST MOSES AND AARON,” WHEREAS IN THE PRIOR PLAGUE ACCOUNT HE HAD MERELY ACKNOWLEDGED GENERALLY HAVING SINNED/BEEN WRONG (9:27). ON TOP OF THIS, HE ACTUALLY ASKED MOSES AND AARON TO FORGIVE HIM, WHICH REPRESENTS YET ANOTHER WAY OF ACKNOWLEDGING THAT HE WAS WRONG AND THEY—AND THE TRUE GOD—WERE RIGHT. THE NIV TRANSLATION “[FORGIVE MY SIN] ONCE MORE” IS SOMEWHAT MISLEADING SINCE IT TENDS TO SUGGEST THAT PHARAOH WAS THINKING OF AND CALLING ATTENTION TO HIS PRIOR SIN (9:27) BY USING SUCH LANGUAGE. IN FACT, A MORE ACCURATE TRANSLATION WOULD BE “[FORGIVE MY SIN] THIS TIME,” WHICH SHOWS THAT PHARAOH WAS EITHER CLEVERLY BARGAINING (I’M ONLY ASKING JUST THIS ONCE) OR, MORE LIKELY, THAT HE REALIZED EVENTS WERE NOW COMING TO A HEAD AND THERE WOULD NOT OCCUR A WHOLE RANGE OF OTHER PLAGUES AFTER THIS ONE. THE NIV TRANSLATION OF THE LAST CLAUSE OF 10:17 (“TO TAKE THIS DEADLY PLAGUE AWAY FROM ME”) IS ALSO UNFORTUNATE SINCE THE HEBREW LITERALLY SAYS “SO THAT HE MAY TAKE AWAY FROM ME AT LEAST THIS DEATH.” PHARAOH’S POINT WAS THAT HE SAW EGYPT DYING AS A RESULT OF THE COMBINED EFFECT OF THE HAILSTORM AND THE LOCUST INVASION, NOT MERELY THAT THE PLAGUE WAS DEADLY IN SOME SENSE. HIS WORDS DO NOT SUGGEST A FOCUS ON A PLAGUE BUT RATHER ON DEATH. PHARAOH WAS BEGINNING TO GET THE POINT: HE REALIZED THAT THE PLAGUES WERE LEADING TO DEATH, NOT MERELY INCONVENIENCE OR TEMPORARY HARDSHIPS. PAUL MADE THE SAME KIND OF ASSERTION IN ROM 6:23 WITH HIS WORDS, “THE WAGES OF SIN IS DEATH.” IT IS NOT THAT EVERY SIN LEADS INSTANTLY TO DEATH BUT RATHER THAT EVERY SIN DOES MOVE THE SINNER FURTHER DOWN THE INEVITABLE PATH TO DEATH; THE ULTIMATE PUNISHMENT FOR SIN IN A UNIVERSE CREATED AND SUSTAINED BY A HOLY, OMNIPOTENT GOD IS THE EXTERMINATION OF EVILDOERS. THE KING OF EGYPT, IN HIS OWN LIMITED WAY AND ACCORDING TO THE BIASES OF HIS OWN CULTURE AND BELIEFS, WAS CATCHING A GLIMPSE OF THIS TRUTH. 10:18–20 AS IN THE CASE OF EARLIER PLAGUES (8:12, 30; 9:33), MOSES LEFT PHARAOH TO PRAY FOR THE END OF THE PLAGUE. THIS OVERT MENTION OF MOSES’ PRAYER FUNCTIONS IN THE OVERALL NARRATIVE TO REMIND THE READER THAT IT WAS ALWAYS GOD WHO CONTROLLED EVENTS: MOSES PROPOSED BUT GOD DISPOSED. GOD AGAIN USED THE WIND, THIS TIME CHANGING ITS DIRECTION (“CHANGED THE WIND TO A … WEST WIND”) AND APPARENTLY ALSO ITS INTENSITY (“VERY STRONG”). MOST OF THE ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS SOUND AS IF THE ORIGINAL TEXT MEANT TO SAY THAT THE EAST WIND THAT BROUGHT THE LOCUSTS IN THE FIRST PLACE WAS STILL BLOWING—THUS PERHAPS SUGGESTING THAT LOCUSTS WERE STILL ARRIVING IN EGYPT—BUT THE HEBREW DOES NOT SUPPORT THIS INTERPRETATION. THE HEBREW CAN BE UNDERSTOOD TO MEAN “THE LORD MADE A CHANGE TO A VERY STRONG WEST WIND,” LEAVING UNSPECIFIED WHETHER THIS CHANGE WAS SIMPLY A CONTRAST TO THE PREVIOUS WIND’S DIRECTION (“CHANGED OVER TO A … “) OR A REVERSING OF AN EAST WIND STILL BLOWING (I.E., “CHANGED IT [THE WIND] TO …”). THIS STRONG WIND BORE UP (NIV “CAUGHT UP” IS INTERPRETIVE, MAKING IT SOUND AS THOUGH THE LOCUSTS LEFT AGAINST THEIR WILL) THE LOCUSTS, SPEEDING THEM AWAY FROM EGYPT, AND BLEW THEM (TQʿ; NOT “CARRIED THEM”) TO/TOWARD (“INTO”) THE RED SEA, THAT IS, THE GREAT BODY OF WATER LYING DIRECTLY TO THE EAST OF EGYPT. THE TERM HERE TRANSLATED “RED SEA” IS YAM SUP, RENDERED “SEA OF REEDS” BY MANY COMMENTATORS, A FAR TOO LIMITED BODY OF WATER FOR THE SCENARIO DESCRIBED HERE. IN OTHER WORDS, THIS IS ONE OF THE PASSAGES THAT SUGGESTS YAM SUP REALLY MEANS “RED SEA,” NOT “SEA OF REEDS.” GOD’S SPECIAL REMOVAL OF THE LOCUSTS RESULTED IN THE COMPLETE ABSENCE OF LOCUSTS ANYWHERE IN EGYPT. NOTE THAT THE TEXT DOES NOT SAY THAT THE LOCUSTS DROWNED IN THE RED SEA—ONLY THAT THE WIND BLEW THEM IN THAT DIRECTION OUT OF EGYPT. ONCE THEY WERE GONE, THE PLAGUE WAS OVER, AND WE ARE IN FACT NOT TOLD OF THEIR FATE OTHERWISE. WITH THE PLAGUE OVER, PHARAOH AGAIN REFUSED TO LET THE ISRAELITES LEAVE EGYPT, JUST AS HE HAD IN EVERY OTHER INSTANCE, AND JUST AS STEPHEN YAHWEH DETERMINED WOULD BE THE CASE. IT WOULD HAVE BEEN SMART FOR HIM TO HAVE OBEYED THE INITIAL ADVICE OF HIS COUNSELORS (10:7) OR AT LEAST AFTER THE PLAGUE HAD COME ABOUT. BUT HE WAS NOT ABLE TO DO THE SMART THING. HE WAS BEING MANIPULATED AND HUMILIATED BY THE ONLY WISE GOD, MADE TO LOOK THE FOOL THAT HE WAS FOR HAVING CARRIED ON THE OPPRESSION OF THE ISRAELITES IN THE FIRST PLACE.**

**TENTH SIGN: NINTH PLAGUE: DARKNESS (10:21–29)**

**TO APPRECIATE FULLY THIS PLAGUE ACCOUNT, ONE MUST UNDERSTAND HOW OMINOUSLY DARKNESS THREATENED ANCIENT PEOPLE. WE TRAVEL EASILY AT NIGHT WITH THE AID OF VARIOUS FORMS OF ELECTRIC LIGHTING; THEY WERE VIRTUALLY IMMOBILIZED BY THE DARKNESS OF NIGHTTIME UNLESS THE NIGHT WAS CLOUDLESS AND THE MOON RELATIVELY FULL. ALTHOUGH SOME ANCIENT PROFESSIONAL CARAVANEERS COULD TRAVEL PARTLY AT NIGHT, THEY WERE ABLE TO DO SO MAINLY AT TIMES OTHER THAN THE DARK OF THE MOON BUT ONLY BECAUSE THEIR ANIMALS COULD SEE BETTER AT NIGHT THAN THEY COULD AND ESPECIALLY BECAUSE THEY TRAVELED ON WELL-DEFINED, WELL-REMEMBERED PATHS. STRAYING FROM THOSE PATHS IN DARKNESS COULD BE FATAL. WE CAN BE ACTIVE AT NIGHT BECAUSE OUR HOMES AND PLACES OF WORK CAN BE CHEAPLY ILLUMINED; THEY CLOSED UP THEIR CITIES AT NIGHT, BARRED THEIR COURTYARD GATES, AND LOCKED THEIR HOUSE DOORS. PEOPLE ABROAD IN THE NIGHTTIME WERE ASSUMED TO BE CRIMINALS AND, TYPICALLY, IN FACT WERE. WE FEEL RELATIVELY SAFE DURING THE NIGHT, EVEN AWAY FROM HOME, WITH VARIOUS MEANS OF COMMUNICATION TO CALL FOR HELP READILY AVAILABLE; THEY WERE AT THE MERCY OF COMMON THIEVES AND BANDITS WHEN AWAY FROM HOME AT NIGHT, AND UNLESS WELL-ARMED AND IN LARGE GROUPS, THEY WERE EASY PREY FOR THOSE WHO USED THE NIGHTTIME AS COVER FOR EVIL [SEX]. THEY UNDERSTOOD THAT THE DARKNESS WAS ESSENTIALLY CHAOTIC, A KIND OF ENEMY OF THE SAFE AND THE GOOD; WE MAY THINK OF IT AS JUST ANOTHER PHASE OF THE DAY. THEY CONSIDERED CONFINEMENT IN DARKNESS A GRAVE PUNISHMENT FROM GOD, EVEN A SORT OF SOMETIMES PURPOSEFUL FORCE AND ASSOCIATED IT WITH DEATH; WE DON’T THINK MUCH ABOUT IT AT ALL. EVEN SO, WERE WE IN OUR DAY TO HAVE THREE DAYS WITHOUT LIGHT (V. 23), WIDESPREAD PANIC WOULD ENSUE. EVERYONE WOULD REALIZE THAT THE NATURAL ORDER HAD BEEN OVERTURNED AND THAT A BASIC FACT OF LIFE ON THE PLANET HAD BEEN REMOVED. LONG BEFORE THE THREE DAYS WERE UP, PEOPLE WOULD BEGIN TO UNDERSTAND THE CONSEQUENCES: “IF THIS KEEPS UP, THERE WILL BE NO FOOD BECAUSE PLANTS NEED SUNLIGHT TO LIVE; ALL ANIMALS WILL DIE BECAUSE THE FOOD CHAIN REQUIRES PLANTS; WE WILL DIE BECAUSE EVERYTHING WE LIVE ON WILL BE GONE.” DEEP, TOTAL DARKNESS OF THE SORT GOD IMPOSED ON THE EGYPTIANS (V. 21) WOULD ALSO CAUSE SENSORY DEPRIVATION, LEADING TO DISORIENTATION AND PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTRESS. MORE THAN JUST THOSE PEOPLE INCLINED TO LIGHT-DEPRIVATION DEPRESSION WOULD BE SEVERELY DEPRESSED BY THE THIRD DAY. A SENSE OF DOOM WOULD PERVADE ALL MINDS.**

**ANNOUNCEMENT, PLAGUE, AND CONSEQUENCES (10:21–23)**

**21 THEN THE LORD SAID TO MOSES, “STRETCH OUT YOUR HAND TOWARD THE SKY SO THAT DARKNESS WILL SPREAD OVER EGYPT—DARKNESS THAT CAN BE FELT.” 22 SO MOSES STRETCHED OUT HIS HAND TOWARD THE SKY, AND TOTAL DARKNESS COVERED ALL EGYPT FOR THREE DAYS. 23 NO ONE COULD SEE ANYONE ELSE OR LEAVE HIS PLACE FOR THREE DAYS. YET ALL THE ISRAELITES HAD LIGHT IN THE PLACES WHERE THEY LIVED.**

**AGAIN IN VV. 21 AND 22 MOSES IS DESCRIBED AS STRETCHING OUT HIS HAND TOWARD HEAVEN [NIV “THE SKY”], A SYNECDOCHE FOR RAISING GOD’S STAFF [ROD OR WAND] SYMBOLICALLY TOWARD HEAVEN, AN ACTION THAT WOULD ALSO PLAY A PROMINENT ROLE IN THE LATER BATTLE AGAINST THE AMALEKITES IN CHAP. 17. 10:21 THE NIV TRANSLATION OF V. 21 INCLUDES TWO UNFORTUNATE WORDINGS. THE WORDS “WILL SPREAD” ARE MISLEADING SINCE THE HEBREW SIMPLY SAYS “WILL BE” AND CONNOTES NOTHING WHATEVER ABOUT THE PROCESS BEING GRADUAL, AS “SPREAD” WOULD IMPLY. INDEED, IN THE CONTEXT THE ONSET OF DARKNESS APPEARS TO BE INSTANTANEOUS, UNLIKE, SAY, THE LOCUSTS’ ARRIVAL IN THE PRIOR PLAGUE. AS FOR THE TRANSLATION “DARKNESS THAT CAN BE FELT,” THIS AS WELL APPEARS TO BE ERRONEOUS, ALTHOUGH THE HEBREW WORDING THAT ENGENDERS IT IS A HAPAX LEGOMENON AND THEREFORE THEORETICALLY OPEN TO DEBATE AS TO ITS PRECISE MEANING. IF ONE WONDERS, HOWEVER, “WHAT SORT OF DARKNESS CAN BE FELT?” ONE WONDERS REASONABLY. THE ABSENCE OF LIGHT CANNOT BE FELT. THERE IS NOTHING IN THIS PASSAGE OR ELSEWHERE IN THE HOLY BIBLE OR IN ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN LITERATURE IN GENERAL TO SUGGEST THAT ANYONE EVER THOUGHT THERE WAS SUCH A THING AS A DARKNESS THAT COULD BE FELT. THE PROPER TRANSLATION, INSTEAD, IS ALMOST SURELY “A DARKNESS THAT WILL REQUIRE GROPING AROUND.” THE HEBREW WORDING IN QUESTION EMPLOYS THE ONLY ATTESTED HIPHIL OF A ROOT (MŠŠ) THAT IN THE PIEL CONJUGATION MEANS “FEEL AROUND WITH ONE’S HANDS,” “GROPE,” OR “FEEL ONE’S WAY” (THUS USED OF THE ACTIONS OF BLIND PERSONS IN DEUT. 28:29; CF. JOB 5:14; 12:25). IN THE CONSTRUCTION USED BY MOSES, THE SUBJECT IS QUITE OBVIOUSLY NOT THE UNEXPRESSED INDEFINITE “ONE/SOMEONE” BUT THE NOUN “DARKNESS.” IF THE FACTITIVE-RESULTATIVE PIEL MEANS “FEEL AROUND WITH ONE’S HANDS,” “GROPE,” OR “FEEL ONE’S WAY” OR THE UNAUTHORIZED WAY “TO TOUCH OR FONDLE SOMEONE’S ASS IN A SEXUAL WAY” WHICH IS ASSAULT & BATTERY IN THE LAW, THERE IS EVERY LIKELIHOOD THAT THE CAUSATIVE HIPHIL WOULD MEAN TO CAUSE THESE ACTIONS, THAT IS, “TO CAUSE TO FEEL AROUND WITH ONE’S HANDS,” “TO CAUSE TO GROPE,” OR “TO CAUSE TO FEEL ONE’S WAY.” PROPERLY TRANSLATED, THEN, INTO NATURAL ENGLISH, 10:21 SHOULD READ, “THEN THE LORD SAID TO MOSES, “STRETCH OUT YOUR HAND TOWARD HEAVEN SO THAT DARKNESS WILL BE UPON EGYPT—A DARKNESS THAT WILL REQUIRE GROPING AROUND.” 10:22 WE ARE TOLD THAT THE RESULT OF MOSES’ BY NOW FAMILIAR SYMBOLIC ACTION WAS JUST AS PREDICTED, WITH THE ADDED DETAIL THAT THE DARKNESS PLAGUE LASTED THREE DAYS. THE ONLY OTHER PLAGUE ACCOUNT THAT CAME CLOSE TO SPECIFYING A DURATION WAS THE FIRST, WHICH WAS OVER NOT MORE THAN SEVEN DAYS AFTER IT BEGAN (7:25). SOME PLAGUES SOMETIMES SOUND AS IF THEY MIGHT HAVE HAD THEIR EFFECT WHILE LASTING NOT MORE THAN A DAY (E.G. THE HAIL) WHILE SOME (E.G. THE FLIES) SEEM, ACCORDING TO COMMON SENSE, TO HAVE LASTED AT LEAST SEVERAL DAYS. IT IS THEREFORE POSSIBLE THAT THREE DAYS WAS ROUGHLY AVERAGE FOR THE DURATION OF A PLAGUE, BUT, AS WE HAVE ARGUED ABOVE, THREE DAYS OF DARKNESS WOULD HARDLY HAVE BEEN CONSIDERED AN “AVERAGE PLAGUE” BY THE EGYPTIANS WHO HAD TO EXPERIENCE IT. 10:23 THE DARKNESS DENIED TRAVEL OF ANY SORT TO THE EGYPTIANS. AT THIS TIME IN THE ANCIENT WORLD, THERE WAS NO WAY TO PROJECT LIGHT OVER DISTANCES, AS WE CAN DO WITH ELECTRIC LIGHTS. LAMPS WERE OPEN BOWLS OF CLAY PINCHED AT ONE OR MORE POINTS ON THE RIM SO AS TO ALLOW A CHANNEL FOR A WICK OR WICKS, ONE END OF THE WICK RESTING IN THE OIL CONTAINED BY THE BOWL, AND THE OTHER BURNING TO PRODUCE LIGHT. REFLECTORS AND LENSES WERE NOT YET KNOWN. THE TOTAL CANDLEPOWER OF SUCH LAMPS WAS ROUGHLY ONE PER WICK. ONE MIGHT LIGHT ENOUGH LAMPS TO SEE A BIT INSIDE A HOUSE, BUT WITHOUT THE LIGHTS OF THE STARS AND MOON, GENUINE TRAVEL WAS IMPOSSIBLE. IF ONE VENTURED OUTSIDE AND HAPPENED TO BUMP INTO A NEIGHBOR WHO ALSO HAD A LAMP IN HAND, ONE MIGHT SEE THE NEIGHBOR’S FACE AND VICE VERSA; BUT THE EGYPTIANS WERE NOT NAIVE ABOUT THEIR SITUATION—THEY KNEW THAT WITH NOTHING MORE THAN LAMPLIGHT, THEY WERE ESSENTIALLY TRAPPED IN THEIR HOMES UNTIL THE PLAGUE ENDED. AGAIN, MOSES MENTIONED THE CONTRAST BETWEEN THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE EGYPTIANS AND THOSE OF THE ISRAELITES, AS EXPECTED IN THIS THIRD “CYCLE” OF PLAGUES. ISRAEL HAD DAY AND NIGHT; EGYPT, NEITHER SINCE THE EGYPTIAN DARKNESS WAS NOT MERELY A NIGHT, WHICH ALWAYS CONTAINS SOME LIGHT, BUT A TOTAL DARKNESS.**

**PHARAOH’S MOST SUBSTANTIAL CONCESSION SO FAR (10:24)**

**24 THEN PHARAOH SUMMONED MOSES AND SAID, “GO, WORSHIP THE LORD. EVEN YOUR WOMEN AND CHILDREN MAY GO WITH YOU; ONLY LEAVE YOUR FLOCKS AND HERDS BEHIND.” THE PLAGUE HAD LASTED THREE DAYS. IT APPARENTLY CAME TO AN END ACCORDING TO GOD’S TIMING RATHER THAN BY REASON OF SPECIAL PRAYER FROM MOSES, AND WITH THE RETURN OF DAYLIGHT CAME ALSO THE OPPORTUNITY FOR PHARAOH TO SUMMON MOSES TO HIS COURT, SOMETHING THAT WOULD HAVE BEEN IMPOSSIBLE DURING THE THREE DAYS OF DARKNESS. MOSES RECEIVED ANOTHER COMPROMISE OFFER FROM PHARAOH, ONE STILL CALCULATED TO KEEP THE ISRAELITES FROM LEAVING EGYPT PERMANENTLY BUT NEVERTHELESS AN OFFER CONSTITUTING EVIDENCE OF A WILLINGNESS TO GRANT SOME OF THE ISRAELITES’ GOD’S DEMANDS. FROM PHARAOH’S POINT OF VIEW, KEEPING THE ISRAELITE LIVESTOCK BEHIND IN EGYPT WOULD HAVE HELD HOSTAGE THEIR PRIMARY AGRICULTURAL ENTERPRISE, AS WELL AS THE NUMBER OF ISRAELITES REQUIRED TO STAY AND TEND THE FLOCKS WHILE THE REST OF THE PEOPLE WERE IN THE WILDERNESS. HE WAS, IN OTHER WORDS, NOT OFFERING ANYTHING THAT WOULD ACTUALLY BE ACCEPTABLE TO THE ISRAELITES.**

**MOSES’ INSISTENCE ON A FULL EXODUS (10:25–26)**

**25 BUT MOSES SAID, “YOU MUST ALLOW US TO HAVE SACRIFICES AND BURNT OFFERINGS TO PRESENT TO THE LORD OUR GOD. 26 OUR LIVESTOCK TOO MUST GO WITH US; NOT A HOOF IS TO BE LEFT BEHIND. WE HAVE TO USE SOME OF THEM IN WORSHIPING THE LORD OUR GOD, AND UNTIL WE GET THERE, WE WILL NOT KNOW WHAT WE ARE TO USE TO WORSHIP THE LORD.”**

**10:25 ALTHOUGH VARIOUS SORTS OF SACRIFICES AND BURNT OFFERINGS WERE SPECIFIED AND REGULATED LATER IN THE SINAI LAW (ESP. LEV 1–7), IT IS APPARENT HERE THAT BOTH MOSES AND PHARAOH UNDERSTOOD WHAT THESE TERMS MEANT. SACRIFICES (ANIMALS KILLED AND EATEN “WITH” AND BEFORE GOD ACCORDING TO THE REVEALED CONCEPT THAT IF YOU ARE TO LIVE, SOMETHING ALIVE MUST DIE IN YOUR PLACE) AND BURNT OFFERINGS (ANIMALS BURNT ENTIRELY AS AN EXCLUSIVE GIFT TO GOD RATHER THAN COOKED AND SHARED PROPORTIONATELY BY GOD, PRIESTS, AND WORSHIPERS) WERE BOTH PRACTICED AT VERY EARLY TIMES IN HUMAN HISTORY AND IN THE RELIGION OF THE ISRAELITE PATRIARCHS (GEN 8:20; 22:2–8, 13; 31:54; 46:1). 10:26 MOSES DID, HOWEVER, INDICATE RATHER UNAMBIGUOUSLY IN HIS REPLY TO PHARAOH THAT SOME ASPECTS OF THE ISRAELITE SACRIFICIAL SYSTEM WERE STILL TO BE REVEALED. MOSES AND THE ISRAELITES COULD NOT PRESUME THAT WHAT THEY SO FAR UNDERSTOOD ABOUT HOW, WHEN, AND WHY TO PROVIDE SACRIFICES AND BURNT OFFERINGS TO GOD WOULD NOT BE ALTERED ONCE ALL THE NATION HAD MET WITH HIM FORMALLY IN WORSHIP. MOSES COULD REASONABLY ASSUME THAT THE PEOPLE WOULD HAVE TO “USE SOME OF THEM [THE ANIMALS] IN WORSHIPING THE LORD,” BUT HE COULD NOT BE SURE HOW MANY OR EVEN WHETHER OR NOT ENTIRE CATEGORIES (E.G., ALL LAMBS OF A CERTAIN AGE) MIGHT NOT BE NEEDED. HIS ANSWER WAS NOT STALLING; IT WAS A FULLY HONEST ANSWER, WHICH ALSO SERVED AS A POLITE WAY OF DECLINING PHARAOH’S INADEQUATE OFFER, USING FACTUAL, DEFERENTIAL LANGUAGE IN SERVICE OF THE BARGAINING PROCESS. NOTE MOSES’ CONTINUING EMPHATIC USE OF THE HEBREW WORD ʿĀBAD (“SERVE/WORSHIP”) TWICE HERE. HE KNEW THAT ISRAEL HAD BEEN FORCED TO SERVE (ʿĀBAD) PHARAOH, BUT HE LONGED FOR THE TIME WHEN THE NATION WOULD WITH ALL ITS HEART SERVE/WORSHIP (ʿĀBAD) STEPHEN YAHWEH.**

**PHARAOH’S REFUSAL AND MOSES’ PROPHETIC PLAY ON HIS WORDS (10:27–29)**

**27 BUT THE LORD HARDENED PHARAOH’S HEART, AND HE WAS NOT WILLING TO LET THEM GO. 28 PHARAOH SAID TO MOSES, “GET OUT OF MY SIGHT! MAKE SURE YOU DO NOT APPEAR BEFORE ME AGAIN! THE DAY YOU SEE MY FACE YOU WILL DIE.” 29 “JUST AS YOU SAY,” MOSES REPLIED, “I WILL NEVER APPEAR BEFORE YOU AGAIN.”**

**10:27 THERE IS NOTHING UNEXPECTED IN PHARAOH’S REACTION. HIS REFUSAL TO ALLOW THE ISRAELITES TO LEAVE WAS ENTIRELY CONSISTENT WITH GOD’S PLAN AS ORIGINALLY REVEALED TO MOSES IN 3:19 AND CONTINUED IN 4:21 AND THEREAFTER. THE CAREFUL READER KNOWS THAT UNTIL THE TERMS OF 4:23 WERE FULFILLED, THAT IS, THE TENTH PLAGUE’S DEATH OF THE EGYPTIAN FIRSTBORN, PHARAOH CERTAINLY WOULD NOT LET THE ISRAELITES LEAVE EGYPT. 10:28 PHARAOH THEN SIGNALED VERBALLY THAT ALL BARGAINING WAS OVER. HE WOULD NOT ACCEDE VOLUNTARILY TO A COMPLETE EXODUS OF ISRAELITES. IN SPITE OF THE PRESSURE ON HIM FROM HIS PEOPLE AND HIS COURT ADVISORS, AND IN SPITE OF THE MOUNTING SEVERITY OF THE PLAGUES THUS FAR, HE COULD NOT BRING HIMSELF TO GRANT THE DEMANDS OF HIS ENSLAVED’ GOD. SO, HE ADDRESSED MOSES WITH A THREAT CONTAINING THREE CLAUSES THAT EACH SAID ESSENTIALLY THE SAME THING: DON’T LET ME SEE YOU AGAIN. IT WAS NOT A MODEST THREAT BUT ONE THAT WAS UNDERSCORED WITH THE STRONGEST POSSIBLE WARNING, THAT MOSES WOULD BE PUT TO DEATH IF HE CAME BACK AGAIN. 10:29 MOSES’ REPLY COULD BE TRANSLATED AS FOLLOWS: “YOU’VE SAID THE VERY THING! I WILL NOT KEEP SEEING YOUR FACE!” THE FORCE OF HIS REPLY, IN OTHER WORDS, WAS TO TELL PHARAOH THAT PHARAOH HIMSELF HAD ESSENTIALLY PREDICTED THE FUTURE. MOSES WAS GETTING OUT OF EGYPT FOR GOOD (ALONG WITH ALL ISRAEL) AND WOULD NEVER RETURN. MOSES WOULD NOT BE STUCK IN THE LAND OF OPPRESSION. HE WOULD NOT HAVE TO KEEP DEALING WITH THE RECALCITRANT PHARAOH. THE ISRAELITE PEOPLE WOULD NOT HAVE TO CONTINUE SUFFERING UNDER THE CRUEL HANDS OF THE TASKMASTERS AND HARSH CONDITIONS OF THEIR SLAVERY. SOON ALL THE MISERIES OF BONDAGE IN EGYPT WOULD BE HISTORY. THE ISRAELITES WERE ABOUT TO LEAVE, AND THEREFORE MOSES COULD TELL PHARAOH THAT HIS WORDS HAD MORE SIGNIFICANCE THAN HE REALIZED. IT WAS JUST ABOUT OVER; THEY WOULD NOT DEAL WITH EACH OTHER FACE TO FACE MUCH LONGER—NOT BECAUSE PHARAOH HAD WON BUT BECAUSE HE WAS ABOUT TO LOSE. IN FACT, MOSES’ WORDS LIKELY MEANT EVEN MORE—THAT HE AND PHARAOH WOULD LITERALLY NEVER SEE EACH OTHER AGAIN (SEE COMMENTS ON 12:31–32). PHARAOH’S WORDS CONTAINED A DEATH THREAT (“THE DAY YOU SEE MY FACE YOU WILL DIE”) THAT MOSES COULD HARDLY IGNORE. THESE WORDS PRESUMABLY WOULD HAVE HELD A SPECIAL REPUGNANCY FOR HIM SINCE HE HAD ALREADY BEEN SENTENCED TO DEATH BY AN EARLIER PHARAOH (2:15) AND HAD LIVED FORTY YEARS IN EXILE KNOWING THAT IF HE WENT BACK TO EGYPT AND WAS IN FACT SEEN BY THAT PHARAOH (LET ALONE BY THE RELATIVES OF THE MAN HE HAD KILLED), HE WOULD BE PUT TO DEATH. NOW ANOTHER PHARAOH HAD MADE A REMARKABLY PARALLEL THREAT. MOSES’ ANGER AT HAVING TO BE SUBJECT TO SUCH “DOUBLE JEOPARDY” WOULD SEEM ENTIRELY UNDERSTANDABLE IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES. PHARAOH’S CONSISTENT REFUSAL TO BEND HIS WILL UNDER GOD’S AND TO ALLOW THE ISRAELITES THEIR EXODUS HAD ALWAYS BEEN A CERTAINTY BECAUSE GOD HAD SO DECREED IT. UNDER SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES, MOSES COULD HARDLY BE EXPECTED TO BECOME ANGRY WHEN PHARAOH ACTED JUST AS GOD HAD PREDICTED HE WOULD AND CAUSED HIM TO DO. ON THE OTHER HAND, GOD HAD CERTAINLY NOT MOVED THE KING TO MAKE THIS DEATH THREAT. IT WAS PHARAOH’S OWN IDEA AND WAS OUTRAGEOUS IN THREE WAYS. (1) IT VIOLATED THE IMMUNITY MOSES SHOULD HAVE ENJOYED AS A PROPHET OF GOD. SINCE MOSES SPOKE NOT ON HIS OWN BUT IS A SPOKESPERSON FOR GOD, PHARAOH’S ARGUMENT SHOULD HAVE BEEN WITH GOD, NOT MOSES. THIS KIND OF VIOLATION OF THE IMMUNITY OF A PROPHET IN THE ANCIENT WORLD REPRESENTED A SERIOUS BREACH OF RELIGION AND LAW. (2) IT WAS MEAN-SPIRITED AND VINDICTIVE. PHARAOH HAD BEEN GIVEN CHANCE AFTER CHANCE TO ALLOW THE ISRAELITE EXODUS, AND EVEN WHEN HE HIMSELF PROPOSED TERMS FOR IT’S HAPPENING, HE HAD REVERSED HIMSELF WHEN HIS TERMS HAD NOT BEEN MET IN SPITE OF CLEAR WARNINGS OF THE CONSEQUENCES. NOW, INSTEAD OF ACKNOWLEDGING HIS COMPLICITY AND/OR ADMITTING HIS OWN INCONSISTENCY, HE ACCUSED MOSES OF HAVING DONE SOMETHING WORTHY OF DEATH! (3) IT WAS COWARDLY. PHARAOH RESTED HIS ANIMOSITY TOWARD THE ISRAELITES ON THE ASSUMPTION THAT THEY WERE EGYPT’S POTENTIAL ENEMIES (1:10). THE ATTEMPT TO SILENCE AND INTIMIDATE MOSES BY A DEATH THREAT WAS IN FACT A TACTIC, HOWEVER POORLY CONCEIVED, TO TRY TO SILENCE AND INTIMIDATE THE ISRAELITES IN GENERAL. THE VARIOUS APPROACHES OF THE PAST HAD FAILED (1:12, 20); NOW TELLING MOSES HE COULD NO LONGER REPRESENT HIS OWN PEOPLE—DISQUALIFYING HIM FROM HIS CALLING UNDER PENALTY OF DEATH—WAS A CHEAP END RUN AROUND THE ABJECT FAILURE OF ILL-CONCEIVED AND PARANOID PHARAONIC POLITICAL POLICIES. PHARAOH WAS TRYING TO GET RID OF THE PROBLEM OF STEPHEN YAHWEH’S DEMANDS BY PREVENTING STEPHEN YAHWEH’S CHOSEN MESSENGER FROM BRINGING THOSE DEMANDS TO HIS FUCKING ATTENTION.**

**THE GREAT SIGN OF SOVEREIGNTY ANNOUNCED: TENTH PLAGUE PREDICTED: DEATH OF FIRSTBORN (11:1–10)**

**THIS PERICOPE (11:1–10) HAS A THREE-PART STRUCTURE IN WHICH THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE TENTH PLAGUE, THAT OF THE DEATH OF THE FIRSTBORN (11:4–8), IS CAREFULLY SANDWICHED BETWEEN TWO REMINDERS OF WHAT PREVIOUSLY HAD BEEN REVEALED: FIRST, THAT THE TENTH PLAGUE WOULD BE EFFECTIVE AT PRODUCING THE EXODUS AND THAT ISRAELITES WERE TO BE FINANCIALLY PREPARED FOR IT BY OBTAINING WEALTH FROM THE EGYPTIANS (11:1–3); AND SECOND, THAT THE WHOLE SERIES OF PRIOR PLAGUES HAD NOT RESULTED IN THE EXODUS BECAUSE THAT WAS THE WAY, STEPHEN YAHWEH HAD PLANNED THINGS (11:9–10). THIS SURROUNDING OF “NEW” NARRATIVE MATERIAL WITH “REMINDER” NARRATIVE MATERIAL HAS THE EFFECT OF HELPING ORIENT THE READER/LISTENER TO THE FACT THAT THE PLAGUE OF DEATH ON THE FIRSTBORN AND THE RESULTING EXODUS OF ISRAEL FROM EGYPT WAS NOT MERELY AN EVENT IN ITSELF BUT THE CULMINATING ACT OF A LONG PROCESS CONTROLLED BY GOD AND BROUGHT TO FRUITION EXACTLY AS HE HAD PREDICTED IT BEFORE ANY OF THE PROCESS HAD STARTED. MOSES IS WRITING THIS STORY NOT MERELY TO HELP HIS FELLOW ISRAELITES TRUST STEPHEN YAHWEH AS THINGS HAPPENED BUT TO HELP THEM LEARN TO TRUST THAT STEPHEN YAHWEH IS THE ONLY ONE WHO MAKES THINGS HAPPEN IN THE FIRST PLACE, AS PART OF A GREAT REDEMPTIVE PLAN FOR THE BENEFIT OF HIS PEOPLE.**

**REVIEW OF THE PLANS FOR THE FINAL PLAGUE AND THE ENRICHMENT OF THE ISRAELITES BY THE EGYPTIANS (11:1–3)**

**1 NOW THE LORD HAD SAID TO MOSES, “I WILL BRING ONE MORE PLAGUE ON PHARAOH AND ON EGYPT. AFTER THAT, HE WILL LET YOU GO FROM HERE, AND WHEN HE DOES, HE WILL DRIVE YOU OUT COMPLETELY. 2 TELL THE PEOPLE THAT MEN AND WOMEN ALIKE ARE TO ASK THEIR NEIGHBORS FOR ARTICLES OF SILVER AND GOLD.” 3 (THE LORD MADE THE EGYPTIANS FAVORABLY DISPOSED TOWARD THE PEOPLE, AND MOSES HIMSELF WAS HIGHLY REGARDED IN EGYPT BY PHARAOH’S OFFICIALS AND BY THE PEOPLE.)**

**11:1 THE NIV IS CORRECT IN TAKING THE CONVERTED IMPERFECT VERB FORM THAT BEGINS 11:1 AS A PLUPERFECT (“HAD SAID”) RATHER THAN THE SIMPLE PAST (“SAID”) AS MOST MODERN TRANSLATIONS DO. VERSES 1–3 ARE CLEARLY RESUMPTIVE, REFERRING IN SUMMARY FASHION—NOT WORD FOR WORD BUT CONCEPTUALLY—TO WHAT GOD HAD TOLD MOSES IN 3:19–22 AND 7:3–5. NOW AT LEAST MOSES KNEW THAT THE FINAL PLAGUE WAS AT HAND; AND THE LONG SERIES OF ANNOUNCEMENTS/WARNINGS, PLAGUES, REFUSALS BY PHARAOH, WAS COMING TO AN END. PHARAOH AND THE EGYPTIANS HAD INDEED BEEN HUMILIATED MANY TIMES OVER. GOD HAD SHOWN THEM REPEATEDLY THAT IT WAS HE WHO HAD TRUE AUTHORITY AND THAT THEIR OWN GODS WERE INEFFECTIVE NOTHINGS. NOW WAS THE TIME FOR THE ULTIMATE DEMONSTRATION OF HIS SOVEREIGNTY, IN THE FORM OF A PUNISHMENT OF SUCH MAGNITUDE THAT PHARAOH WOULD CERTAINLY NOT MERELY ALLOW THE ISRAELITES TO LEAVE EGYPT BUT WOULD REQUIRE THAT THEY DO SO. THE LATTER PART OF THE VERSE MAY, IN FACT, BE TRANSLATED AS FOLLOWS: “AFTER THAT, HE WILL LET YOU LEAVE HERE. WHEN HE LETS YOU LEAVE, IT WILL BE COMPLETE—HE WILL ACTUALLY DRIVE YOU AWAY FROM HERE.” 11:2–3 THESE VERSES BRING STRONGLY TO THE READER’S ATTENTION A SENSE OF THE PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTANCE THAT HAD DEVELOPED BETWEEN PHARAOH AND THE REST OF THE EGYPTIANS, SOMETHING THAT A CASUAL READER MAY NOT HAVE FULLY APPRECIATED PREVIOUSLY, ALTHOUGH EVIDENCES OF IT WERE CERTAINLY ALREADY MENTIONED IN EARLIER PORTIONS OF THE STORY (E.G., 8:19; 9:20; 10:7). ANYONE WITH AN OUNCE OF SENSE AMONG THE EGYPTIANS HAD LONG SINCE REALIZED THAT RESISTANCE TO THE ISRAELITES’ GOD STEPHEN YAHWEH IS USELESS. INDEED, THE EGYPTIANS IN GENERAL HAD COME TO RESPECT THE HEBREWS (PRESUMABLY PARTLY OUT OF FEAR AND PARTLY OUT OF PRAGMATISM) AND SAW THEIR PHARAOH’S POLICY OF CONTINUED RESISTANCE TO THE EXODUS FOR WHAT IT WAS: A FANATICAL, DESTRUCTIVE, HOPELESS STANCE THAT WAS DOING NOTHING BUT HARM. THE VIRTUALLY UNIFORM CONSENSUS AMONG EGYPTIANS WAS THAT THE ISRAELITES WERE ENTITLED TO LEAVE EGYPT AND THAT THEIR GOD HAD SHOWN HIMSELF FULLY CAPABLE OF RUINING THE COUNTRY IF THEY WERE NOT ALLOWED TO DO SO. THE ONLY PERSON WHO COULD NOT YET SEE THIS WAS PHARAOH BECAUSE GOD HAD BLINDED HIM TO REASON AS A PUNISHMENT FOR HIS OPPRESSIONS AND AS A MEANS OF DEMONSTRATING HIS DIVINE POWER OVER THE GREATEST HUMAN POTENTATE OF THAT ERA. THE EGYPTIANS’ ATTITUDE TOWARD THE ISRAELITES WAS NOT ENTIRELY A SIMPLE MATTER OF NORMAL HUMAN REASONING. GOD’S PLAN WAS TO PROVIDE HIS PEOPLE WITH THE FINANCIAL WHEREWITHAL TO SURVIVE AS A NATION ON THE MOVE UNTIL THEY ARRIVED AT AND SETTLED IN CANAAN, SO HE SUPERNATURALLY INFLUENCED THE ISRAELITES’ EGYPTIAN “NEIGHBORS” TO GIVE THEM VALUABLES SIMPLY FOR THE ASKING AND CAUSED THEM TO THINK HIGHLY OF MOSES AS WELL, IN DIRECT OPPOSITION TO THE INCREASING BITTERNESS PHARAOH WAS DISPLAYING TOWARD HIM.**

**ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE FINAL, DECISIVE PLAGUE TO PHARAOH (11:4–8)**

**4 SO MOSES SAID, “THIS IS WHAT THE LORD SAYS: ‘ABOUT MIDNIGHT I WILL GO THROUGHOUT EGYPT. 5 EVERY FIRSTBORN SON IN EGYPT WILL DIE, FROM THE FIRSTBORN SON OF PHARAOH, WHO SITS ON THE THRONE, TO THE FIRSTBORN SON OF THE SLAVE GIRL, WHO IS AT HER HAND MILL, AND ALL THE FIRSTBORN OF THE CATTLE AS WELL. 6 THERE WILL BE LOUD WAILING THROUGHOUT EGYPT—WORSE THAN THERE HAS EVER BEEN OR EVER WILL BE AGAIN. 7 BUT AMONG THE ISRAELITES NOT A DOG WILL BARK AT ANY MAN OR ANIMAL.’ THEN YOU WILL KNOW THAT THE LORD MAKES A DISTINCTION BETWEEN EGYPT AND ISRAEL. 8 ALL THESE OFFICIALS OF YOURS WILL COME TO ME, BOWING DOWN BEFORE ME AND SAYING, ‘GO, YOU AND ALL THE PEOPLE WHO FOLLOW YOU!’ AFTER THAT I WILL LEAVE.” THEN MOSES, HOT WITH ANGER, LEFT PHARAOH. 11:4 AT THIS POINT IN THE CHAPTER THE PARENTHETICAL RETROSPECTIVE REVIEW OF VV. 1–3 HAS ENDED, AND THE READER’S ATTENTION IS ONCE AGAIN DRAWN TO THE SCENE OF MOSES BEFORE PHARAOH. MOSES INTRODUCED HIS WORDS WITH A TYPICAL MESSENGER FORMULA (“THIS IS WHAT THE LORD SAYS”) SO THAT PHARAOH HAD NO DOUBT THAT MOSES WAS SPEAKING AS A PROPHET THE WORDS GIVEN TO HIM BY HIS GOD. GOD ANNOUNCED HERE THAT HE WOULD PERSONALLY MOVE THROUGH EGYPT TO BRING ABOUT THE DEATH OF THE EGYPTIAN FIRSTBORN (“I WILL GO THROUGHOUT EGYPT”). THIS PERSONAL INVOLVEMENT OF STEPHEN YAHWEH REPRESENTS A FURTHER HEIGHTENING OF THE SEVERITY OF THE PLAGUES. PREVIOUSLY STEPHEN YAHWEH HAD CAUSED ALL THE PLAGUES, BUT IN THE CASE OF THOSE PLAGUES CAUSED BY INSECTS, STEPHEN YAHWEH HAD PRODUCED THE INSECTS AND THEY HAD GONE THROUGHOUT THE LAND DOING THE INTENDED HARM. NOW STEPHEN YAHWEH HIMSELF IS THE IMMEDIATE PERFORMER OF THE PLAGUE, THE IMMEDIATE VISITOR OF THE HOMES OF THE EGYPTIANS. THE FURTHER DESCRIPTIONS OF THE ACTUAL PLAGUE AS IT WAS CARRIED OUT IN CHAP. 12 EMPHASIZE GOD’S DIRECT ROLE SEVERAL MORE TIMES, ALBEIT WITH THE ADDITION OF THE SOMEWHAT ENIGMATIC REFERENCE TO THE “DESTROYER” IN 12:23. WHY DID GOD ANNOUNCE THAT THE DEATHS WOULD OCCUR AT “ABOUT MIDNIGHT”? THE ANSWER CAN HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH THE MODERN CONCEPT OF BEGINNING A NEW DAY AT MIDNIGHT (WHICH IS CALCULATED AS THE OPPOSITE OF (TWELVE HOURS AWAY FROM) HIGH NOON BECAUSE THE ANCIENTS TENDED TO BEGIN THE DAY AT EITHER DAWN OR DUSK. IN THE CASE OF THE ISRAELITES THE DAY BEGAN AT DUSK BY REASON OF THE CREATION ORDER, WHICH WAS REINFORCED BY THE LOGICAL RECKONING THAT WHEN ONE DAY WAS COMING TO AN END ANOTHER MUST THEREFORE BE STARTING. RATHER, “MIDNIGHT” IN THE SENSE OF THE CONCEPT IN THE ANCIENT WORLD WAS THE DEEPEST, DARKEST TIME OF NIGHT, THE POINT DURING THE NIGHT WHEN THE MOST PEOPLE WERE LIKELY TO BE ASLEEP (SINCE PEOPLE TENDED TO RETIRE TO BED AT DUSK) AND THE TIME OF GREATEST VULNERABILITY AND DEFENSELESSNESS. THINKING OF THE EVENTS OF THE PLAGUE FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF THE MERCIES OF GOD, CAUSING THE DEATH OF SO MANY EGYPTIANS WAS INDEED A SEVERE PUNISHMENT, BUT ALLOWING THEM TO DIE QUIETLY IN THEIR SLEEP WAS AN ACT OF GRACE. THE WAILING PREDICTED IN V. 6 WAS NOT THE WAILING OF PAIN DURING DEATH BUT THE WAILING OF GRIEF AT THE MORNING’S DISCOVERY OF THE DEAD IN VIRTUALLY EVERY HOUSEHOLD. 11:5 THREE QUESTIONS ARISE NATURALLY IN CONNECTION WITH THIS VERSE: (1) WAS GOD FAIR TO KILL THE FIRSTBORN OF FAMILIES ALL OVER EGYPT WHEN BY THIS TIME IT WAS MAINLY THE EGYPTIAN KING WHO WAS STILL RESISTING GOD’S DEMANDS ON BEHALF OF ISRAEL? ANOTHER WAY OF STATING THIS QUESTION WOULD BE: WHY NOT KILL PHARAOH RATHER THAN HIS FIRSTBORN AND ALL THE OTHER FIRSTBORN—THUS DIRECTLY PUNISHING THE ONE PERSON MOST GUILTY OF SIN AGAINST GOD? (2) WHY KILL THE FIRSTBORN OF CATTLE AS WELL? (3) WOULD FAMILIES WITH ONLY GIRLS ESCAPE THE DEVASTATION OF THIS PLAGUE SINCE THE NIV TRANSLATION SAYS EXPLICITLY “FIRSTBORN SON”? THE ANSWER TO THE FIRST QUESTION IS VIRTUALLY IMPOSSIBLE TO STATE SIMPLY OR BRIEFLY BECAUSE IT INVOLVES AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE NATURE OF GOD IN RELATION TO HIS WRATH AND JUSTICE AND THEREFORE REQUIRES A RATHER EXTENSIVE SURVEY OF THE FULL RANGE OF BIBLICAL DATA RELATED TO THE TOPIC. GOD DOES A GREAT MANY THINGS THAT REMAIN BEYOND HUMAN UNDERSTANDING BECAUSE HUMAN INTELLECT IS FAR TOO LIMITED TO ALLOW FOR APPRECIATION OF THE ENTIRE COMPLEXITY OF GOD’S OVERALL ETERNAL PLAN FOR HIS UNIVERSE AND EACH INDIVIDUAL IN IT. NEVERTHELESS, IT WOULD SEEM REASONABLE TO SUGGEST THAT, FIRST OF ALL, PHARAOH WAS HARDLY THE ONLY GUILTY PARTY IN THE OPPRESSION OF THE ISRAELITES. HIS ORDERS HAD TO BE CARRIED OUT THROUGHOUT THE ENTIRE LAND, AND THIS REQUIRED THE WILLING COOPERATION OF HIS OWN COURT OFFICIALS, REGIONAL ADMINISTRATORS, MILITARY GENERAL OFFICERS AND LESSER OFFICERS, AND CIVILIANS OF ALL RANKS AND TYPES. SECOND, THE JUDGMENT OF GOD DISPLAYED IN ALL THE PLAGUES WAS MORE THAN MERELY AN ACT OF RETRIBUTION. IT WAS ALSO A DEFINITIVE DISPLAY OF HIS SUPERIORITY TO ALL OTHER GODS, THAT IS, FALSE GODS, FOR THE BENEFIT OF ALL SEEKERS OF THE TRUTH THROUGHOUT ALL SUBSEQUENT HISTORY (12:12; CF. 12:14, 24–27). ADDITIONALLY, THE FACT THAT “INNOCENT” PEOPLE DIED IN THE GENERAL PATTERN OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS PLAGUE IS NOT A UNIQUE SORT OF PHENOMENON. CONSIDER SPECIFICALLY THE VERY YOUNG FIRSTBORN CHILDREN, WHO PRESUMABLY PLAYED NO CONSCIOUS, PURPOSEFUL ROLE IN OPPOSING OR ENSLAVING GOD’S PEOPLE. HOW IS THEIR SITUATION MATERIALLY DIFFERENT FROM INNOCENTS WHO DIE IN NATURAL DISASTERS THAT HAPPEN OFTEN AROUND THE WORLD TODAY AND THROUGHOUT HISTORY? IN OTHER WORDS, THE MERCY AND FAIRNESS OF GOD’S ACTIONS IN THE CASE OF THE TENTH PLAGUE ON THE EGYPTIANS IS A SUBSET OF THE QUESTION OF THE MERCY AND FAIRNESS OF GOD IN ALL HIS DEALINGS IN A FALLEN WORLD CORRUPTED BY ORIGINAL SIN. THOSE WHO FROM OUR LIMITED POINT OF VIEW TEND TO BE REGARDED AS “INNOCENT” ARE REGULARLY THE VICTIMS OF DISASTROUS AND EVEN FATAL CIRCUMSTANCES AND EVENTS. WE TRUST A WISE AND LOVING GOD RELATIVE TO THEIR ETERNAL DESTINY, BUT WE CERTAINLY CANNOT DENY THAT THEY SUFFER UNFAIRLY AND UNEVENLY IN A WORLD THAT IS SUBJECT TO SUCH UNFAIRNESS BY REASON OF ITS SUBJECTION TO FUTILITY AS A RESULT OF HUMAN SIN. THE QUESTION OF WHY THE PLAGUE SHOULD INVOLVE KILLING THE FIRSTBORN OF CATTLE AS WELL AS OF HUMANS FINDS ITS ANSWER IN THE FACT THAT IN MOST OF HUMAN HISTORY THERE HAS BEEN A CLOSE SYMBIOTIC RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CATTLE AND HUMANS, AND THEREFORE CATTLE, WHO SHARED THE SIXTH-DAY CREATION ORDER WITH HUMANS, WERE DEEPLY APPRECIATED IN ANCIENT TIMES. THUS, A FULL HUMILIATION OF PHARAOH AND OF THE EGYPTIANS WOULD NATURALLY BE EXPECTED TO INCLUDE THE DEATH OF THE FIRSTBORN OF CATTLE. AS TO WHETHER FAMILIES WITH ONLY FEMALE CHILDREN ESCAPED THE EFFECTS OF THIS PLAGUE, THE ANSWER IS SURELY NO, THE NIV TRANSLATION OF BEKOR AS “FIRSTBORN SON” BEING POTENTIALLY MISLEADING. THIS IS CONFIRMED BY THE STATEMENT IN 12:30, “THERE WAS NOT A HOUSE WITHOUT SOMEONE DEAD,” A RELATIVELY UNAMBIGUOUS INDICATION THAT DAUGHTERS AS WELL AS SONS WERE TAKEN FROM THEIR FAMILIES. ALL SECTORS OF SOCIETY WERE TO EXPERIENCE THE PLAGUE, AS INDICATED BY THE INCLUSION OF THE FIRSTBORN OF PHARAOH, THAT IS, THE HIGHEST, THEN THE FIRSTBORN OF “THE SLAVE GIRL AT HER HAND MILL,” THAT IS, THE SERVANT GIRL WHO HAD THE MENIAL JOB OF GRINDING THE GRAIN AND WAS THUS A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE LOWEST CLASS IN THE SOCIETY, TO THE CATTLE, WHO WERE SURELY NOT ON THE SAME SCALE OF LIFE VALUE AS THE HUMANS BUT WHOSE INCLUSION SHOWED THAT ALL HUMANS NO MATTER HOW HIGH OR LOW THEIR ESTATE WERE INCLUDED. 11:6 THE WORD USED IN THE ORIGINAL FOR THE NIV “WAILING” (ṢĔʿĀQĀH, JUST AS WELL TRANSLATED “OUTCRY” OR THE LIKE) IS THE TERM USED BY GOD IN 3:7, 9 TO DESCRIBE THE GROANING/CRYING OUT OF THE ISRAELITES FROM THE MISERY OF THEIR HORRIFIC SLAVE WORK. HERE, THEN, IS PREDICTED A DRASTIC TURNING OF THE TABLES SO THAT IT WOULD BE ALL EGYPTIANS INSTEAD OF ALL ISRAELITES WHO WOULD CRY OUT—AND FOR AN EVEN GREATER SUFFERING. THE TERM ṢĔʿĀQĀH COULD THEORETICALLY CONNOTE EITHER WAILING IN THE SENSE OF AN EXPRESSION OF GRIEF ON THE PART OF THOSE WHO HAVE RECEIVED BAD NEWS OR THE SOUND MADE BY THOSE DYING FROM THE PLAGUE. IN THE PRESENT INSTANCE, HOWEVER, IT ALMOST SURELY REFERRED TO THE REACTION OF FAMILIES TO THE DISCOVERY THAT DURING THE NIGHT AN OLDEST CHILD HAD DIED IN BED, AS THE PARALLEL USE OF THE TERM IN 12:30 CONFIRMS (“LOUD WAILING … FOR THERE WAS NOT A HOUSE WITHOUT SOMEONE DEAD”). THE PREDICTION OF WORSE WAILING “THAN THERE HAS EVER BEEN OR EVER WILL BE AGAIN” IS A STATEMENT HARD TO REFUTE: EGYPTIANS MIGHT HAVE PARTICIPATED IN MASS, NATIONAL TIMES OF MOURNING FOR VARIOUS REASONS AT PRIOR TIMES IN THEIR HISTORY, BUT SURELY THERE WOULD HAVE BEEN NO PARALLEL TO THE KIND OF SUDDEN LOSS OF LIFE THAT GOD PREDICTED HERE. 11:7 AS IN SEVERAL PRECEDING PLAGUE ACCOUNTS, MOSES REPORTED GOD’S INTENTION TO DIFFERENTIATE COMPLETELY BETWEEN THE EGYPTIANS AND THE ISRAELITES IN THE SUFFERING. THE NIV TAKES A TRANSLATION LIBERTY WITH THE VERSE IN ITS TRANSLATION “BUT AMONG THE ISRAELITES NOT A DOG WILL BARK AT ANY MAN OR ANIMAL.” THE ACTUAL LITERAL MEANING OF THE HEBREW IS “BUT AMONG THE ISRAELITES NOT A DOG WILL STICK OUT ITS TONGUE AT ANY MAN OR ANIMAL.” IN HOLY BIBLE TIMES THE DOG IS THE LEAST OF THE ANIMALS IN TERMS OF DESIRABILITY OR IMPORTANCE BECAUSE IT WAS A DIRTY, UNWELCOME SCAVENGER ANIMAL—ITS REPUTATION BEING SOMEWHAT AKIN TO THAT OF THE RAT IN MODERN TIMES (CF. 1 SAM 17:43; 2 KGS 8:13; ECCL 9:4; MATT 7:6; LUKE 16:26). TO SAY THAT NOT EVEN A DOG WOULD STICK OUT ITS TONGUE AT AN ISRAELITE WAS A SIMPLE, GRAPHICALLY IDIOMATIC WAY OF SAYING THAT THE ISRAELITE HUMANS AND CATTLE WOULD SIMPLY SEE NO HARM WHATEVER FROM THE TENTH PLAGUE. 11:8 MOSES THEN PREDICTED TO PHARAOH YET ANOTHER—THIS TIME FINAL—STATEMENT OF DISTINCTION/REVERSAL OF ROLES BETWEEN THE ISRAELITES AND THE EGYPTIANS. THE VERY PEOPLE WHO HAD ONCE BOWED DOWN TO PHARAOH WOULD BOW DOWN TO MOSES—NOT TO ACKNOWLEDGE HIM AS THEIR SOVEREIGN AS THEY DID WITH PHARAOH BUT TO PLEAD WITH HIM TO LEAVE EGYPT AND TAKE THE ISRAELITES WITH HIM. THIS PREDICTION REPRESENTS YET ANOTHER HUMILIATION OF PHARAOH. MOSES HERE STATED THAT ALL EGYPTIANS WOULD DISAGREE WITH THE KING’S POLICY, A DISAGREEMENT THAT HAD, OF COURSE, BEEN PROGRESSIVELY INCREASING AT ANY RATE. NOW MOSES ANNOUNCED THAT THE TIME WOULD COME WHEN IN SPITE OF PHARAOH’S OFFICIAL POSITION OF RESISTANCE TO THE EXODUS, EVERYONE ELSE, AS EMBODIED IN THOSE WHO WERE SUPPOSEDLY MOST LOYAL TO HIM (HIS OWN COURT OFFICIALS), WOULD WANT THE EXODUS TO HAPPEN AND WOULD BEG FOR IT “ON THEIR KNEES,” AS WE MIGHT SAY METAPHORICALLY IN MODERN ENGLISH. WHEN MOSES SAID “ALL THESE OFFICIALS OF YOURS WILL COME TO ME,” HE IS REFERRING TO THE IDEA OF THE OFFICIALS’ COMING DOWN OFF THE ROYAL PLATFORM WHERE THEY USUALLY STOOD NEXT TO THE KING. MOSES’ WORDS PAINT AN IMAGE OF THE ROYAL OFFICIALS ABANDONING THEIR PHARAOH, AN ENVISIONED ACTION CONSISTENT WITH THE WORDS THAT THEY WILL SAY REQUESTING THAT THE EXODUS COMMENCE (“GO, YOU AND ALL THE PEOPLE”). THAT IS WHEN MOSES WOULD LEAVE EGYPT—WHEN THE KING’S POLICIES HAD BEEN PROVED WORTHLESS BY THEIR ABANDONMENT EVEN AT THE HANDS OF PEOPLE SUPPOSEDLY THE CLOSEST AND MOST LOYAL TO HIM. MOSES’ ANGER IN LEAVING PHARAOH RELATED TO THE UNWARRANTED, UNDESERVED DEATH THREAT PHARAOH HAD PRONOUNCED AGAINST HIM (10:28) AND NOT TO ANY INTERVENING FACTORS. THE READER IS EXPECTED TO UNDERSTAND THAT ALL HIS WORDS HAD PRESUMABLY BEEN DELIVERED THROUGH HIS ANGER AT THE END OF THIS ENCOUNTER WITH EGYPT’S KING.**

**REVIEW OF PHARAOH’S PRIOR HISTORY OF RESISTANCE TO THE EXODUS (11:9–10)**

**9 THE LORD HAD SAID TO MOSES, “PHARAOH WILL REFUSE TO LISTEN TO YOU—SO THAT MY WONDERS MAY BE MULTIPLIED IN EGYPT.” 10 MOSES AND AARON PERFORMED ALL THESE WONDERS BEFORE PHARAOH, BUT THE LORD HARDENED PHARAOH’S HEART, AND HE WOULD NOT LET THE ISRAELITES GO OUT OF HIS COUNTRY.**

**11:9–10 ONCE AGAIN THE NARRATIVE REVERTS TO A RETROSPECTIVE, WHICH THE NIV, TO ITS CREDIT, RECOGNIZES WITH THE USE OF THE PLUPERFECT “HAD SAID” AT THE OUTSET OF V. 9. THE WORDS OF 11:9 ARE ESSENTIALLY A SUMMARY OF 4:21–23, ALTHOUGH THE SAME THEMES ARE ALSO FOUND IN PART IN SUCH PLACES AS 3:19–20 AND 6:1–8. EXODUS 11:10 REMINDS THE READER OF WHAT HAD BEEN HAPPENING THROUGHOUT THE PLAGUE ACCOUNTS, ALWAYS AS PREDICTED: GOD SHOWED HIS WONDERS TO THE WORLD, BUT PHARAOH, MADE A FOOL OF BY GOD, CONTINUED TO RESIST THE OBVIOUS CONCLUSION (BY NOW OBVIOUS TO EVERYONE BUT HIMSELF) THAT THE BEST THING HE COULD DO WAS TO LET THE ISRAELITES LEAVE EGYPT PERMANENTLY AND TOTALLY.**

**THE PASSOVER AND THE EXODUS (12:1–13:16)**

**FROM A MODERN READER’S POINT OF VIEW, THE LENGTHY DESCRIPTIONS OF HOW TO PREPARE FOR AND CELEBRATE THE ANNUAL RITUAL OF THE PASSOVER (12:1–28, 43–50; 13:2–10), COUPLED WITH INSTRUCTIONS ON CONSECRATING/REDEEMING THE FIRSTBORN OF HUMANS AND ANIMALS (13:1, 11–16) FOUND IN EXOD 12 AND 13 MIGHT SEEM TO INTERFERE WITH THE FLOW OF THE NARRATIVE. AFTER ALL, THE STORY SO FAR HAS BEEN BUILDING PLAGUE BY PLAGUE UP TO AN EXPECTED FINAL, CLIMACTIC PLAGUE THAT THE READER HAS BEEN TOLD WOULD COMPEL PHARAOH TO RELEASE THE ISRAELITES FROM EGYPT. THE READER MIGHT BE FORGIVEN FOR NOT WANTING TO STOP TO READ A RATHER LENGTHY SECTION OF INSTRUCTIONS ABOUT HOW THE PASSOVER AND FIRSTBORN CONSECRATION WERE TO BE UNDERTAKEN. INDEED, ANYONE LOOKING FOR UNIFORMITY OF SUBJECT MATTER AS A KEY TO UNDERSTANDING THE STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK MIGHT BE PUZZLED AT THE INTRODUCTION HERE OF LEGAL MATERIAL, MONTHS PRIOR TO THE ISRAELITES’ ARRIVAL AT SINAI, WHERE THEY PRESUMABLY SHOULD HAVE BEGUN TO RECEIVE THE LAW. IN OTHER WORDS, SHOULDN’T ALL THESE WORDS ABOUT THE PASSOVER AND FIRSTBORN FOLLOW IN THEIR PROPER COURSE SOMEWHERE, PERHAPS AROUND CHAP. 23, WHERE THE THREE ANNUAL FESTIVALS AND THEIR TIMING ARE FORMALLY ANNOUNCED TO THE ISRAELITES AS A COVENANT COMMUNITY? WHAT COULD THE WRITER HAVE BEEN THINKING? THE ANSWER, WE SUGGEST, IS THAT THE WRITER, MOSES, WAS THINKING OF THE BEST INTERESTS OF HIS AUDIENCE. HIS IMMEDIATE AUDIENCE WAS THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL AT THE TIME THEY WERE IN THE WILDERNESS OF SINAI, AWAITING THE OPPORTUNITY TO ENTER INTO AND SETTLE THE PROMISED LAND, WHERE THEY WOULD ACTUALLY NEED TO FOLLOW THESE INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY AFTER A LONG HIATUS OF NOT HAVING HAD ANY PRACTICE IN FOLLOWING THEM AT ALL. HIS LONG-TERM AUDIENCE WAS ALL ISRAEL THROUGHOUT HISTORY—AT THE PRESENT TIME THE CHURCH, AN AUDIENCE POSITIONED TO BENEFIT FROM THE REAL POINT OF THE EXODUS STORY: THAT GOD SUPERNATURALLY DELIVERS HIS PEOPLE FROM BONDAGE TO BRING THEM TO A PROMISED LAND AND THAT THEY BELONG TO HIM, NOT TO THEMSELVES. THESE FEATURES MAKE THE EXODUS EVENT POWERFULLY RELEVANT TO MODERN BELIEVERS, AND THE FACT THAT MOSES WAS INSPIRED TO FORCE THE READER TO TAKE ACCOUNT OF THEM AT THIS STAGE IN HIS FIVE-CHAPTER WORK IS A LITERARY BLESSING RATHER THAN EVIDENCE OF LITERARY AWKWARDNESS. FOR CHRISTIANS, THE FACT THAT JESUS CHRISTIS THE TRUE AND ULTIMATE PASSOVER LAMB, THE FIRSTBORN OF MANY BROTHERS AND SISTERS, AND THE REDEEMER OF ALL OF THEM8 IS A TRUTH WORTHY OF THE POWERFUL PAUSE THAT DRAWS IT TO OUR ATTENTION PROLEPTICALLY IN THESE CHAPTERS.**

**GOD’S INSTRUCTIONS FOR PASSOVER INCLUDING THE USE OF THE BLOOD (12:1–13)**

**GUIDANCE FOR PREPARING AND EATING THE PASSOVER (12:1–11)**

**1 THE LORD SAID TO MOSES AND AARON IN EGYPT, 2 “THIS MONTH IS TO BE FOR YOU THE FIRST MONTH, THE FIRST MONTH OF YOUR YEAR. 3 TELL THE WHOLE COMMUNITY OF ISRAEL THAT ON THE TENTH DAY OF THIS MONTH EACH MAN IS TO TAKE A LAMB FOR HIS FAMILY, ONE FOR EACH HOUSEHOLD. 4 IF ANY HOUSEHOLD IS TOO SMALL FOR A WHOLE LAMB, THEY MUST SHARE ONE WITH THEIR NEAREST NEIGHBOR, HAVING TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE THERE ARE. YOU ARE TO DETERMINE THE AMOUNT OF LAMB NEEDED IN ACCORDANCE WITH WHAT EACH PERSON WILL EAT. 5 THE ANIMALS YOU CHOOSE MUST BE YEAR-OLD MALES WITHOUT DEFECT, AND YOU MAY TAKE THEM FROM THE SHEEP OR THE GOATS. 6 TAKE CARE OF THEM UNTIL THE FOURTEENTH DAY OF THE MONTH, WHEN ALL THE PEOPLE OF THE COMMUNITY OF ISRAEL MUST SLAUGHTER THEM AT TWILIGHT. 7 THEN THEY ARE TO TAKE SOME OF THE BLOOD AND PUT IT ON THE SIDES AND TOPS OF THE DOORFRAMES OF THE HOUSES WHERE THEY EAT THE LAMBS. 8 THAT SAME NIGHT THEY ARE TO EAT THE MEAT ROASTED OVER THE FIRE, ALONG WITH BITTER HERBS, AND BREAD MADE WITHOUT YEAST. 9 DO NOT EAT THE MEAT RAW OR COOKED IN WATER, BUT ROAST IT OVER THE FIRE—HEAD, LEGS AND INNER PARTS. 10 DO NOT LEAVE ANY OF IT TILL MORNING; IF SOME IS LEFT TILL MORNING, YOU MUST BURN IT. 11 THIS IS HOW YOU ARE TO EAT IT: WITH YOUR CLOAK TUCKED INTO YOUR BELT, YOUR SANDALS ON YOUR FEET AND YOUR STAFF IN YOUR HAND. EAT IT IN HASTE; IT IS THE LORD’S PASSOVER.**

**12:1 THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS VERSE LIES IN ITS IDENTIFICATION OF MOSES AND AARON, WHO WERE LEVITES AND PRIESTS, AS RECIPIENTS OF THE LEGAL INSTRUCTION THAT FOLLOWS. IT WAS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF LEVITES AND PRIESTS THROUGHOUT THE GENERATIONS OF ISRAEL NOT ONLY TO KEEP THE LAW THEMSELVES BUT ALSO TO ENFORCE IT AND TEACH IT TO THE POPULATION AS A WHOLE. THUS, THE NATION’S FIRST TWO LEVITICAL PRIESTS ARE MENTIONED PROMINENTLY AS A PARADIGM FOR ALL LATER PROPER CLERGY, AND THE INSTRUCTION ASSUMES GREAT IMPORTANCE, IN AS MUCH AS THESE LEGAL INSTRUCTIONS WERE GIVEN THEM ALREADY IN EGYPT, THAT IS, EVEN PRIOR TO MOUNT SINAI. 12:2 WHY SHOULD GOD HAVE TO TELL THE ISRAELITES WHEN THEIR YEAR BEGAN, THAT IS, WHICH MONTH WAS TO BE THE FIRST IN THEIR CALENDAR? THE ANSWER HAS TWO ASPECTS: ONE IS THAT THIS WAS NOT AT ALL A SETTLED QUESTION FOR THEM, AND THEY THEREFORE NEEDED A REVEALED GUIDANCE ON THE MATTER; THE OTHER IS THAT GOD WAS TEACHING THEM TO LINK EVEN THEIR MEASURING OF TIME TO HIS CALLING ON THEIR LIVES. WHY WAS IT NOT A SETTLED QUESTION? THE PEOPLE GROUPS OF THE ANCIENT WORLD VARIED IN THEIR SENSE OF WHEN THE YEAR SHOULD BEGIN, WITH SOME CULTURES CHOOSING A FALL NEW YEAR AND SOME CELEBRATING A SPRING NEW YEAR. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT MOST OF THE VARIOUS CANAANITE GROUPS CELEBRATED A FALL NEW YEAR AND THAT ONE REASON FOR THIS RULING FROM GOD WAS TO BE SURE THE ISRAELITES DIFFERENTIATED THEMSELVES FROM THE CANAANITES, NEAR WHOM THEY WERE EVENTUALLY TO LIVE (INDEED, AMONG WHOM THEY HAD TO LIVE BY REASON OF THEIR EVENTUAL UNFAITHFULNESS IN THE CONQUEST). EVEN SO, THE ISRAELITES THEMSELVES HELD MEMBERSHIP IN A BROAD CULTURE THAT, INFORMALLY AT LEAST, REGARDED THE TRANSITION FROM SUMMER TO FALL AS THE “END OF THE YEAR” AND THEREFORE THE FALL AS THE BEGINNING OF THE CALENDAR. THIS SENSE OF CALENDAR IS SOMETIMES KNOWN AS THE “AGRICULTURAL CALENDAR” BECAUSE IT PAYS SPECIAL ATTENTION TO THE TIME OF HARVEST AS THE CONCLUSION OF THE AGRICULTURAL YEAR. THUS PASSAGES LIKE EXOD 23:16 (“CELEBRATE THE FEAST OF INGATHERING AT THE END OF THE YEAR, WHEN YOU GATHER IN YOUR CROPS FROM THE FIELD”) AND 34:22 (“CELEBRATE THE FEAST OF WEEKS WITH THE FIRSTFRUITS OF THE WHEAT HARVEST, AND THE FEAST OF INGATHERING AT THE TURN OF THE YEAR”) USE THE LANGUAGE OF THE AGRICULTURAL CALENDAR. THIS USE OF LANGUAGE SHOULD NOT BE VIEWED AS CONTRADICTING THE PRESENT LAW ESTABLISHING A SPRING NEW YEAR. IT IS SIMPLY PHENOMENOLOGICAL, INFORMAL LANGUAGE, MUCH AS PEOPLE TODAY SPEAK OF THE DAY “ENDING” WITH DUSK OR “BEGINNING” AT DAWN, EVEN THOUGH THEY WELL KNOW THAT IT TECHNICALLY ENDS/ BEGINS AT MIDNIGHT, OR SPEAK OF THE “WEEKEND” AS INCLUDING SUNDAY, EVEN THOUGH THEY ARE WELL AWARE THAT, IN ENGLISH-SPEAKING TRADITION AT LEAST, THE WEEK ACTUALLY BEGINS WITH SUNDAY. IT IS CLEAR THAT IN TERMS OF FORMAL TEACHING IN THE PENTATEUCH, THE NEW YEAR IS FIRMLY ESTABLISHED AS COMMENCING IN THE SPRING, THE MONTH OF NISAN (WHAT WE WOULD CALL MARCH–APRIL) BEING THE FIRST MONTH, AND THAT THE SEVENTH MONTH WAS THE ONE TO WHICH THE FALL FESTIVAL WAS DATED. HERE WE READ THAT GOD HAS DECIDED THAT HISTORY DETERMINES THE CALENDAR, AND IN PARTICULAR, THE HISTORY OF GOD’S SAVING ACT OF THE EXODUS DOES SO. WHATEVER MIGHT THEORETICALLY HAVE BEEN THEIR PREVIOUS THINKING ABOUT A CALENDAR, GOD DECREED TO HIS OLD COVENANT PEOPLE THAT THEY WOULD HENCEFORTH HAVE A CALENDAR DESIGNED TO REMIND THEM OF HOW THEY FIRST BECAME A PEOPLE—IT HAPPENED BY REASON OF THEIR DELIVERANCE BY HIS MIGHTY HAND OUT OF THE BONDAGE OF THE OPPRESSOR, AN ACT SO IMPORTANT THAT IT WAS ALSO TO BE MEMORIALIZED BY A SPECIAL ANNUAL FEAST, THE PASSOVER. 12:3–4 AT ITS HEART, THE PASSOVER IS A MEAL, A COMMEMORATIVE FEAST. SOME MODERN AMERICAN HOLIDAYS ARE FEASTS (E.G., THANKSGIVING AND CHRISTMAS); OTHERS ARE NOT (E.G., LABOR DAY, JULY 4). FEAST HOLIDAYS HAVE THE SPECIAL EMPHASIS OF CAREFUL PREPARATION (THUS THE INSTRUCTION IN V. 3 THAT THE SACRIFICIAL ANIMAL IS CHOSEN FOUR DAYS BEFORE THE FEAST SO THAT THERE BE NO LAST-MINUTE ARRANGEMENTS AND THE POSSIBILITY OF HAPHAZARD CELEBRATION OR LACK OF AVAILABILITY RESULTS) FOR GATHERING PEOPLE TOGETHER TO SHARE A COMMON GRATITUDE AND/OR REMEMBRANCE AS THEY SHARE THE COMMON MEAL LINKED TO THAT GRATITUDE/REMEMBRANCE. THE GATHERING OF AN ENTIRE FAMILY OF ISRAELITES (OR GROUP OF FAMILIES EATING ONE ANIMAL THOUGH IN SEPARATE HOUSES) TOGETHER AT A DINNER TABLE HELPED SYMBOLIZE THE GENERAL PATTERN THROUGHOUT THE NATION, THAT IS, THE WHOLE NATION EATING TOGETHER, THOUGH OF COURSE AT INDIVIDUAL LOCATIONS. IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE FEAST NATURE OF THE PASSOVER, MOSES WAS TOLD THAT THE WHOLE NATION (“TELL THE WHOLE COMMUNITY OF ISRAEL”) MUST BE INSTRUCTED TO EAT THE MEAL AS HOUSEHOLDS, NOT AS INDIVIDUALS. THUS, GREAT EMPHASIS IS PLACED ON SHARING THE MEAT OF A SINGLE ANIMAL. THE GOAL IS TO HAVE ONE GOAT KID OR LAMB FOR EACH FULL FAMILY, “ONE FOR EACH HOUSEHOLD.” THEREFORE, IF A HOUSEHOLD WERE COMPOSED OF PERHAPS JUST ONE, TWO OR THREE PEOPLE, AND THEY COULD NOT BY THEMSELVES CONSUME A WHOLE GOAT KID OR LAMB AT ONE SITTING, V. 4 PROVIDES FOR SHARING THE MEAL WITH THE NEXT-DOOR FAMILY, SO THAT EVERYONE AT THE TWO HOUSES EATS TOGETHER FROM A SINGLE SACRIFICED ANIMAL AND FINISHES THE MEAT OF THAT ANIMAL DURING THE MEAL. THAT IS THE MEANING OF “SHARE ONE WITH THEIR NEAREST NEIGHBOR, HAVING TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE THERE ARE.” THIS MIGHT PRODUCE SOME SITUATIONS IN WHICH A RATHER LARGE NUMBER OF PEOPLE, CONSUMING A GOAT KID OR LAMB, MIGHT EACH GET ONLY A RELATIVELY SMALL PORTION OF MEAT TO EAT. BUT THE ALTERNATIVE—MEAT LEFT OVER, OR SOMEONE BEING FORCED TO GORGE HIMSELF IN ORDER TO FINISH OFF ALL THE MEAT IN ONE SITTING—WAS STRICTLY TO BE AVOIDED. THUS THE STATEMENT AT THE END OF V. 4, “YOU ARE TO DETERMINE THE AMOUNT OF LAMB NEEDED IN ACCORDANCE WITH WHAT EACH PERSON WILL EAT,” OR AS IT MIGHT BE MORE CLEARLY TRANSLATED, “YOU MUST CALCULATE THE AMOUNT OF GOAT KID OR LAMB (MEAT) EACH PERSON WILL EAT RELATIVE TO THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE.” THE PRINCIPLE WAS THUS: EVERYONE HAD TO EAT THE MEAT, AND ALL THE MEAT HAD TO BE EATEN. WHY NOT ALLOW LEFTOVERS? WHY NOT ALLOW GORGING? SUBSIDIARY ANSWERS TO THESE QUESTIONS COULD INCLUDE THE CONCEPT OF SHARING AND ITS BENEFITS FOR CREATING A SENSE OF SOLIDARITY AMONG THE ISRAELITES AND A GUARANTEE THAT NO ONE WOULD MISS OUT ON SHARING THE UNDERSTANDING OF WHY THE MEAT WAS BEING EATEN BECAUSE THEY ATE IT ISOLATED FROM THE GROUP SETTING IN WHICH THE MEMORIALIZING WORDS AND ACTIONS WERE REHEARSED AND APPRECIATED BY ALL. BUT THE GREATER VALUE IS IN PREPARATION FOR THE MESSIAH. THE MESSIAH WAS TO BE ONE BODY, BROKEN FOR ALL, SYMBOLICALLY EATEN BY ALL, IN ORDER TO HELP BELIEVERS IN THE NEW COVENANT KEEP AWARE OF THEIR UNITY AS MEMBERS OF THE ONE BODY. PARTIAL CONSUMPTION AND FRAGMENTS LEFT OVER DO NOT APPROPRIATELY SYMBOLIZE THAT BODY AND THAT UNITY. THE ULTIMATE PURPOSE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT PASSOVER INSTRUCTION IS TO POINT FORWARD TO CHRIST, TO THE PURPOSE OF HIS DEATH, MEMORIALIZED IN THE RITUAL OF THE LORD’S SUPPER THAT NOW REPLACES THE PASSOVER, AND ALSO TO THE UNITY OF THOSE ACCEPTED BY HIM AS HIS PEOPLE, HIS BODY. 12:5 THE PASSOVER ANIMAL MAY BE EITHER A GOAT KID OR A LAMB, BUT IT MUST BE YOUNG (“YEAR-OLD”), MALE, AND PERFECT (“WITHOUT DEFECT”). A YEAR-OLD GOAT KID OR LAMB IS A VIRTUALLY FULL-GROWN ANIMAL. SINCE LAMBING AND GOAT KIDDING TOOK PLACE IN THE SPRING IN ANCIENT TIMES (BEFORE MODERN ARTIFICIAL BREEDING ALLOWED FOR OTHER LAMBING/KIDDING SCHEDULES) AND THE PASSOVER TOOK PLACE IN THE SPRING, THERE IS EVERY REASON TO TAKE LITERALLY THE LANGUAGE INDICATING THAT THE ANIMAL TO BE EATEN WOULD BE A YEAR OLD, NOT MERELY WITHIN ITS FIRST YEAR OF LIFE. IN ANIMAL HUSBANDRY OF MEAT STOCK ALL BUT A FEW BREEDING MALES ARE CULLED AND EATEN, BUT VIRTUALLY ALL OF THE FEMALES ARE KEPT FOR BREEDING, MILKING, IT THEREFORE MAKES SENSE THAT THE PASSOVER ANIMAL WOULD BE A MALE. THAT IT SHOULD BE OF PERFECT QUALITY IS, HOWEVER, AN ELEMENT SPECIALLY DESIGNED FOR INCULCATING SPIRITUAL VALUES INTO THE OBSERVANCE. LAME, SPOTTED, OFF-COLORED ANIMALS ARE JUST AS TASTY AS PERFECT ONES. THE MEAT OF AN ANIMAL WITH A SPLIT EAR OR A BLIND EYE IS NOT AFFECTED BY THE DEFECT. THUS, THE REASON FOR DEMANDING PERFECTION RESTED NOT IN THE QUALITY OF THE MEAL BUT IN THE SYMBOLIC PURPOSE: THE ANIMAL SERVED AS A REMINDER OF THE EVENTUAL DELIVERANCE THAT A PERFECT GOD PERFECTLY PROVIDED FOR HIS PEOPLE AS PART OF THE PROCESS OF MAKING THEM HOLY LIKE HIMSELF. PROPER RELATING TO GOD REQUIRES PERFECTION. HOW, THEN, COULD AN ANIMAL HELP PROVIDE PERFECTION FOR THOSE WHO CONSUMED IT SO THAT THEY COULD BECOME ACCEPTABLE TO GOD? THE ANSWER IS THAT IT COULD NOT, EXCEPT TO THE EXTENT THAT THE WHOLE PROCESS OF EATING THE ANIMAL IN OBEDIENCE TO THE PASSOVER REGULATIONS WAS AN ACT OF FAITH AND OBEDIENCE, INVOLVING FAITH IN GOD’S GRACIOUS PROVISION OF THE HOLINESS THAT NO HUMAN COULD HIMSELF OR HERSELF PROVIDE AND OBEDIENCE TO A PROCESS THAT SHOWED CONFIDENCE IN THE TRUE GOD’S TRUE PROMISES AND REQUIREMENTS. FROM THE VANTAGE POINT OF THE FULL OVERVIEW OF THE PLAN OF REDEMPTION DESIGNED BY GOD BEFORE HE EVEN CREATED HUMAN BEINGS, JESUS OF NAZARETH IS TO BE YOUNG AT THE TIME OF HIS DEATH, MALE OF COURSE, AND PERFECT—FREE FROM DEFECT BEFORE GOD. HIS SINLESSNESS QUALIFIED HIM AND HIM ALONE TO BE THE LAMB OF GOD, A HUMAN LAMB RATHER THAN AN ANIMAL OF THE FLOCK, AND YET A LAMB IN THE SENSE OF ONE MEETING THE CRITERIA FOR THE PASSOVER MEAL. 12:6 THE ANIMALS CHOSEN FOUR DAYS IN ADVANCE (12:3) WOULD BE PROPERLY DISTRIBUTED TO EVERY FAMILY AND KEPT HEALTHY (“TAKE CARE OF THEM”) UNTIL THE TIME OF SLAUGHTER. THIS WAS TO TAKE PLACE “AT TWILIGHT” SO THAT THERE WOULD BE ENOUGH LIGHT FOR THE PROCESS OF SLAUGHTER, WHICH ALSO INVOLVED SKINNING, REMOVING ENTRAILS, TYING UP FOR SPIT ROASTING, LAYING THE PROPER FIRE. THE EATING ITSELF TOOK PLACE LATER, AFTER NIGHTFALL (V. 8), WHEN THE MOON WAS FULL (THE FOURTEENTH DAY BEING THE MIDDLE OF THE TWENTY-EIGHT DAY LUNAR CYCLE, THUS THE EXACT TIME OF THE FULL MOON). SO, THERE WAS MAXIMAL NIGHTTIME LIGHT FOR GATHERING TOGETHER AND EATING, AND, AS WELL, THE TIMING WOULD FUNCTION IN COMMEMORATION OF THE COMING FULL MOON NIGHTTIME FLIGHT FROM EGYPT THAT CHARACTERIZED THE EXODUS (VV. 11–13). IN NEW TESTAMENT TIMES, OF COURSE, THE PASSOVER WAS CELEBRATED AT THIS SAME TIME OF THE MONTH, DURING THE NIGHT (E.G., JOHN 13:30) AS IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN IN JUDAISM. THE NEW TESTAMENT’S “LAST SUPPER” WITH JESUS AND HIS DISCIPLES WAS A PASSOVER MEAL. 12:7 THIS VERSE IS SLIGHTLY ELLIPTICAL BECAUSE IN MENTIONING ONLY “THE HOUSES WHERE THEY EAT THE LAMBS,” IT LEAVES TO THE READER’S SENSE OF LOGIC TO REALIZE THAT THIS ALSO INCLUDED DWELLING PLACES SUCH AS TENTS AND INCLUDED PEOPLE WHO LIVED ALONE BUT WHO MAY HAVE CELEBRATED THE PASSOVER WITH THEIR FAMILIES, AND THE LIKE. FAR MORE IMPORTANTLY, THE VERSE SPECIFIES THE POWER OF THE SHED BLOOD OF A SACRIFICIAL ANIMAL TO PROTECT GOD’S PEOPLE FROM DEATH. THE PURPOSE OF THE DISPLAY OF THE BLOOD ON THE DOORFRAMES OF THE HOUSES—TOP AND SIDES—IS DESCRIBED FURTHER IN V. 13 AND VV. 22–23, BUT ONE SHOULD APPRECIATE THE FACT THAT AN OMNISCIENT GOD WOULD HARDLY NEED A SIGN TO KNOW WHICH PEOPLE HAD BEEN FAITHFUL TO HIM AND WHICH HAD NOT. THE SIGN THEREFORE WAS PRESUMABLY AT LEAST AS MUCH FOR THE BENEFIT OF THOSE WHO WERE TO PROVIDE IT, TO REQUIRE THEM TO UNDERTAKE AN ACTION THAT INVOLVED MORE THAN MERE IDEATION, BUT ONE DEMONSTRATING THEIR CONFIDENCE IN GOD’S POWER TO KILL AS WELL AS TO RESCUE. IN THIS REGARD IT IS SOMEWHAT ANALOGOUS TO THE ACTION REQUIRED IN THE PLAGUE OF HAIL: THOSE WHO BELIEVED ENOUGH TO TAKE PREEMPTIVE MEASURES KEPT THEIR LIVESTOCK; THOSE WHO DID NOT LOST THEM (9:20–21). A DWELLING’S DOORWAY IS ITS INTERFACE WITH THE OUTSIDE WORLD. THERE IS NOTHING SACRED OR SYMBOLIC ABOUT THE DOORFRAME OF A HOUSE, BUT THERE IS ALSO NO BETTER LOCATION TO PLACE A SIGN SHOWING FAITH ON THE PART OF THOSE WHO RESIDE INSIDE FOR THE BENEFIT OF ANYONE OUTSIDE WHO COMES TO CHECK. NOTE THAT THE BLOOD WAS SMEARED ON THE DOORFRAME EVEN BEFORE THE PASSOVER MEAL WAS EATEN; THIS MAY BE AN INSTANCE OF FIRST THINGS FIRST, THAT IS, THAT DELIVERANCE FROM DEATH IS THE PRIMARY INTEREST OF THESE INSTRUCTIONS AND PROPER MEMORIALIZING OF THE EXODUS THE LESS CRUCIAL CONCERN. THE ISRAELITES WERE REQUIRED TO EAT THE PASSOVER IN A MANNER THAT DEMONSTRATED THEIR READINESS TO LEAVE EGYPT IMMEDIATELY. ALL ASPECTS OF THE COOKING AND EATING WERE DESIGNED TO MINIMIZE TIME AND MAXIMIZE PREPAREDNESS FOR SUDDEN DEPARTURE. THIS WAS AN ISSUE OF FAITH: DID THE FAMILIES OF THE ISRAELITES REALLY TRUST GOD’S PROMISES FOR THEM? IF SO, WERE THEY WILLING TO SHOW THAT TRUST BY ARRANGING THEMSELVES SO AS TO BE FULLY PREPARED FOR DEPARTURE, AND BY EATING WHAT WAS TO BE THEIR LAST MEAL IN EGYPT IN SUCH A MANNER AS NOT TO IMPEDE THEIR ABILITY TO GATHER TOGETHER AND START MOVING AS SOON AS THE COMMAND REACHED THEM? THE WILLINGNESS TO GO AT A MOMENT’S NOTICE AND NEVER TO RETURN CANNOT HAVE BEEN EASY FOR MOST ISRAELITES, EVEN THOUGH THEY INITIALLY BELIEVED MOSES’ SIGNS (4:31), HAD WITNESSED THE NINE PLAGUES THUS FAR, AND HAD BEEN TREATED SO BADLY FOR SO LONG. AFTER ALL, THEY HAD LIVED IN EGYPT FOR 430 YEARS—A LONG TIME TO ACCLIMATE CULTURALLY AND GEOGRAPHICALLY—AND WERE NOW BEING ASKED TO LEAVE BEHIND EVERYTHING THEY HAD EVER KNOWN: THE PLACE WHERE THEY HAD LIVED ALL THEIR LIVES, WHERE THEIR PARENTS AND GRANDPARENTS HAD LIVED AND DIED, AND WHERE THEY HAD PROSPERED UNTIL THE PARANOIA OF THE POST-HYKSOS PHARAOHS HAD TAKEN OVER. THEY WERE LEAVING THE HOUSES THEY HAD BUILT AND RAISED FAMILIES IN. ADDED TO THIS, SOME PEOPLE ARE SIMPLY MORE PSYCHOLOGICALLY “TERRITORIAL” THAN OTHERS. FOR THEM, GOING ELSEWHERE IS ALMOST ALWAYS HARDER THAN STAYING PUT AND TRYING TO SURVIVE. BUT NOW THEIR FAITH WAS TO BE SHOWN; NOW THEY WERE TO GATHER AS FAMILIES TO EAT A QUICK MEAL OF QUICKLY PREPARED INGREDIENTS AND THEN TO DEPART QUICKLY IN ORDER TO GET A HEAD START ON ANY POTENTIAL EGYPTIAN PURSUIT. 12:8–9 ROASTING OVER A FIRE REQUIRED NO SETUP OR WASHUP OF POTS AND OTHER UTENSILS, NO ADDITIONAL DRAWING OF WATER, AND NO WAITING TIME FOR THE WATER TO BOIL; THUS, IT WAS THE FASTEST, SIMPLEST WAY TO COOK MEAT. BITTER HERBS WERE THE EASIEST TO FIND AND HARVEST AND WERE EATEN AS A SIDE DISH EITHER RAW OR SEARED, AS OPPOSED TO MORE ELABORATE WAYS OF PREPARING, MIXING, AND COOKING VEGETABLES. BREAD MADE WITHOUT YEAST COULD BE RAPIDLY MIXED AND HEATED: THE USUAL MULTIHOUR WAITING TIME FOR THE DOUGH TO RISE AND THE LOAF TO BAKE WAS CUT TO JUST MINUTES. EATING RAW MEAT WOULD HAVE BEEN EVEN FASTER BUT BOTH DISTASTEFUL AND DANGEROUS TO HEALTH; BOILING THE MEAT WOULD HAVE BEEN BOTH SLOWER AND MORE CUMBERSOME AND THEREFORE INCONSISTENT WITH THE EMPHASIS ON SPEED AND READINESS INHERENT IN THE PASSOVER CONCEPT. THE INCLUSION OF “INNER PARTS” IN THE ROASTING DOES NOT MEAN THE GOAT KID OR LAMB WAS ROASTED WHOLE—BUT MERELY THAT IT WAS GUTTED VERY SIMPLY AND THEN ROASTED RAPIDLY, AS OPPOSED TO THE USUAL FULL BUTCHERING AND SEPARATION OF THE VARIOUS ORGAN MEATS FOR CONSUMPTION IN VARIOUS WAYS AND AT VARIOUS TIMES. 12:10–11 ALTHOUGH COOKED MEAT RAPIDLY PUTREFIES WITHOUT REFRIGERATION OR PRESERVATION BY SALTING THE ONLY PRESERVATION METHOD KNOWN IN THE ANCIENT WORLD), IT COULD CERTAINLY LAST “FRESH” A GOOD MANY HOURS DURING THE SPRING NIGHTTIME COOLNESS IN NORTHERN EGYPT. THEREFORE, MANY ISRAELITES MIGHT HAVE BEEN TEMPTED TO SAVE SOME FOR BREAKFAST. BUT THIS WOULD HAVE VIOLATED THE SYMBOLIC SENSE OF THE MEAL, INDICATING THAT THOSE WHO SAVED THE MEAT BOTH DISTRUSTED THAT GOD WOULD PROVIDE FOR THEM THE NEXT DAY AS THEY WERE ON THE RUN OUT OF THE COUNTRY AND THAT GOD’S DELIVERANCE WAS AN IMMEDIATE, ONCE-FOR-ALL RESCUE AND SPARING OF HIS PEOPLE. ACCORDINGLY, ANY REMAINS AS A RESULT OF MISCALCULATION (SEE COMMENTS ON 12:4) HAD TO BE BURNED ONCE THE MEAL WAS OVER. IT WAS, IN OTHER WORDS, MORE A MEAL OF RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE THAN A MEAL TO PROVIDE SUSTENANCE OVER TIME. DRESSING FOR TRAVEL ALSO WAS IMPORTANT AS ANOTHER INDICATION OF FAITH THAT THE LONG-PROMISED DELIVERANCE WAS TRULY AT HAND. PEOPLE TUCKED CLOAKS INTO BELTS WHEN THEY TRAVELED; THEY KEPT CLOAKS ON LOOSE AND FULL-LENGTH AT NIGHT FOR WARMTH AND COMFORT. SANDALS NORMALLY WERE TAKEN OFF AT HOME; WITH THIS MEAL THEY WERE WORN IN THE HOUSE, BECAUSE A TRIP WAS IMMINENT. NO ONE CARRIED HIS STAFF AROUND THE HOUSE; IT WAS A TOOL FOR PROTECTION AND HERDING IN THE OPEN (SEE “EXCURSUS: MOSES’ STAFF” AT 4:14–17). A STAFF [ROD OR WAND] IN THE HAND NORMALLY INDICATED READINESS TO BE ON THE MOVE, NOT A PLAN TO STAY AT HOME. THUS, THE ENTIRE MEAL AND ITS MANNER AND POSTURE OF CONSUMPTION WERE TO INDICATE FAITHFUL READINESS FOR A SPEEDY DEPARTURE. IT WAS A MEAL EATEN “IN HASTE, … THE LORD’S PASSOVER”—NOT A TYPICAL MEAL AT ALL BUT GOD’S SPECIALLY ASSIGNED SYMBOLIC MEAL OF EXODUS DELIVERANCE.**

**DESCRIPTION OF PASSOVER DEATH, JUDGMENT ON THE GODS OF EGYPT, AND THE PROTECTION OF THE BLOOD (12:12–13)**

**12 “ON THAT SAME NIGHT I WILL PASS THROUGH EGYPT AND STRIKE DOWN EVERY FIRSTBORN—BOTH MEN AND ANIMALS—AND I WILL BRING JUDGMENT ON ALL THE GODS OF EGYPT. I AM THE LORD. 13 THE BLOOD WILL BE A SIGN FOR YOU ON THE HOUSES WHERE YOU ARE; AND WHEN I SEE THE BLOOD, I WILL PASS OVER YOU. NO DESTRUCTIVE PLAGUE WILL TOUCH YOU WHEN I STRIKE EGYPT.**

**12:12–13 THIS PRECISE DESCRIPTION OF THE TENTH PLAGUE REVEALS THAT IT WOULD TAKE PLACE IN A MATTER OF HOURS AT MOST (“ON THAT SAME NIGHT”), WOULD AFFECT THE FIRSTBORN OF ALL EGYPTIAN HUMANS AND LIVESTOCK, WOULD BE AVERTED FROM HOMES THAT DISPLAYED THE PASSOVER BLOOD ON THEIR DOORS AS A SIGN OF FAITHFUL OBEDIENCE TO GOD, WOULD BE A DIVINE STRIKE AGAINST EGYPT, AND—ABOVE ALL—WOULD CONSTITUTE “JUDGMENT ON ALL THE GODS OF EGYPT.” THE BLOOD ON THE DOORPOSTS SHOWED ACCEPTANCE OF GOD’S PLAN FOR RESCUE AND TRUST IN HIS WORD. AFTER ALL, THE SIGHT OF DRIED BLOOD BY ITSELF HAD NO POWER TO DETER DEATH; IT WAS ONLY AS THE DRIED BLOOD PAINTED ON THE TOP AND SIDES OF THE DOOR WAS A TESTIMONY TO THE FAITH OF THE INHABITANTS IN STEPHEN YAHWEH THAT IT HAD ITS EFFICACY. THUS, THE STATEMENT, “WHEN I SEE THE BLOOD, I WILL PASS OVER YOU”—IN OTHER WORDS, I WILL SPARE ALL THOSE WHO SHOW THAT THEY HAVE PLACED THEIR FAITH IN ME.**

**EXCURSUS: JUDGMENT ON THE “GODS OF EGYPT”**

**WHO WERE THE “GODS OF EGYPT,” AND HOW DID A PLAGUE THAT KILLED THE FIRSTBORN OF MEN AND ANIMALS FUNCTION AS JUDGMENT AGAINST THEM? AS WE HAVE ALREADY SUGGESTED AT SEVERAL POINTS, EXOD 12:12 MAKES CLEAREST OF ALL TO THE READER OF THE PLAGUE STORIES WHAT THE PURPOSE OF THE PLAGUES REALLY WAS. BY THE PLAGUES GOD DEMONSTRATED HIS SUPERIORITY TO ALL THE SUPPOSED OTHER GODS, AND BY DEMONSTRATING THAT SUPERIORITY IN CONNECTION WITH THE SUPPOSED GODS OF THE GREATEST ECONOMIC-POLITICAL-MILITARY POWER OF THE DAY, GOD SHOWED HIS SOVEREIGNTY, MUTATIS MUTANDIS, OVER ALL THE NATIONS OF THE EARTH AND THEIR “GODS.” THIS WAS AN EVANGELISTIC ENTERPRISE. GOD’S PURPOSE WAS NOT TO SHOW OFF, AS IF HE NEEDED ATTENTION, OR TO PROVE HIMSELF TO OTHERS, AS IF HE WERE INSECURE. RATHER, HE IS, AS HE HAS ALWAYS BEEN, A SAVING GOD WHO DELIGHTS IN RESCUING HUMAN BEINGS FROM CAPTIVITY—SOMETIMES CAPTIVITY OF A POLITICAL, ECONOMIC, OR SOCIAL SORT BUT, FAR MORE IMPORTANTLY, FROM CAPTIVITY TO SIN, WHICH BRINGS DEATH. GOD DESIRES ALL PEOPLE TO COME TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF THE TRUTH, AND A LARGE PART OF THAT TRUTH IS THE FACT THAT HE IS THE ONLY ACTUAL GOD AND THAT FAITH IN HIM IS THE ONLY FAITH THAT ACCOMPLISHES SALVATION AND PROVIDES ETERNAL LIFE. THE EGYPTIANS WERE DEVOTED TO THEIR GODS AND TRUSTED THEM FULLY. THE ISRAELITES DURING THEIR 430-YEAR SOJOURN IN EGYPT PROBABLY HAD PICKED UP MUCH OF THAT SAME ATTITUDE TOWARD THE EGYPTIAN GODS. SINCE SUCH GODS COULD NOT SAVE, IT WAS APPROPRIATE FOR GOD TO DISSUADE THOSE WHO WOULD SINCERELY SEEK THE TRUTH FROM HOLDING TO A BELIEF SYSTEM THAT WOULD GUARANTEE THEIR ULTIMATE DESTRUCTION. A GOOD GOD THEREFORE MADE SURE THAT THE BELIEF SYSTEM OF THE EGYPTIANS, AND FOR THAT MATTER ALL PAGAN CULTURES BY LOGICAL EXTENSION, WAS EXPOSED AS FRAUDULENT AND FOOLISH. SINCE TRUST IN A VARIETY OF GODS WAS AT THE HEART OF THAT BELIEF SYSTEM, EXPOSING A VARIETY OF GODS AS NOTHINGS, UNABLE TO SAVE, UNABLE TO GRANT LIFE, AND UNABLE TO DEFEND EGYPT AND THE EGYPTIANS AGAINST THE GOD OF THE HEBREWS WAS A CONVINCING METHOD OF FORCING PEOPLE TO LOOK ELSEWHERE THAN THEIR DISCREDITED GODS FOR SALVATION. TO EVANGELIZE IS TO TURN PEOPLE AWAY FROM THE BAD NEWS (NO MATTER HOW ATTRACTIVE IT MIGHT LOOK) AND TOWARD THE GOOD NEWS, AND IF THAT CAN BE ACCOMPLISHED BY DRAMATICALLY AND DECISIVELY EXPOSING THE BAD NEWS AS TRULY BAD AND OBVIOUSLY FALSE, THE REALITY OF THE GOOD NEWS HAS OPPORTUNITY TO SINK INTO THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF THOSE WHO WITNESS THE SORT OF EVENTS THE EGYPTIANS AND ISRAELITES DID IN THE CASE OF THE PLAGUES. THE EGYPTIANS WERE PANTHEISTS, AS MOST ANCIENT AND MANY MODERN PEOPLE WERE/ARE AS WELL. PANTHEISM IS A BELIEF SYSTEM IN WHICH ALL NATURE IS THOUGHT TO PARTAKE OF THE DIVINE: ANYTHING THAT EXISTS IS A MANIFESTATION OF, OR A PART OF, OR AN EXTENSION OF, A GOD. TO SEE, OR TOUCH, OR HEAR, OR TASTE IS TO COME IN CONTACT WITH A GOD BECAUSE ALL THINGS ARE IN SOME WAY ESSENTIALLY PART OF A GOD OR GODDESS. THEREFORE, IF SOMETHING IS JUDGED ANYWHERE IN NATURE, THAT IS A JUDGMENT ON AT LEAST ONE GOD. AND, BY LOGICAL EXTENSION, TEN OR ELEVEN SUPERNATURAL ACTS OF JUDGMENT SHOWING CONTROL OVER TEN OR ELEVEN DIFFERENT ASPECTS OF NATURE REPRESENT MULTIPLE JUDGMENT STRIKES AGAINST EGYPTIAN RELIGION (AND ANCIENT PAGAN RELIGION AS A WHOLE). THE EGYPTIANS WERE ALSO POLYTHEISTS, AS WERE ALL ANCIENT PEOPLES OTHER THAN THE ISRAELITES (I.E., THE ISRAELITES AT THOSE RELATIVELY RARE TIMES WHEN THEY WERE ACTUALLY ORTHODOX AND KEEPING THE DIVINE COVENANT). THE EGYPTIAN SAW THE UNIVERSE AS THE HABITATION AND EXPRESSION OF MANY GODS AND GODDESSES. ALTHOUGH FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF A MONOTHEIST IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE FOR A SINGLE, DECISIVE PLAGUE TO DEMONSTRATE STEPHEN YAHWEH’S SUPERIORITY TO ALL OTHER GODS, FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF A POLYTHEIST THIS MIGHT NOT HAVE BEEN QUITE SO CLEAR. A POLYTHEIST MIGHT EASILY CONCLUDE THAT A SINGLE PLAGUE WAS IN FACT A JUDGMENT AGAINST ONE GOD, BUT TEN PLAGUES OF DIFFERENT SORTS COULD HARDLY BE UNDERSTOOD THAT WAY. SINCE POLYTHEISM ENVISIONS MANY GODS PERFORMING A GREAT VARIETY OF FUNCTIONS, TEN DIFFERENT SORTS OF PLAGUES SHOWING GOD’S CONTROL OVER A VARIETY OF FUNCTIONS WITHIN THE NATURAL REALM SERVE TO DISPLAY THE FACT THAT THE MANY GODS IN GENERAL DO NOT HAVE POWER AGAINST THE ONE GOD IN WHOSE NAME MOSES AND AARON SPOKE. REPEATED EXPOSURES OF VARIOUS EGYPTIAN GODS AS POWERLESS MAKES RATHER CLEAR THAT ALL SUCH GODS SHOULD BE SUSPECT AS THE MERE PRODUCT OF HUMAN BELIEF. MOREOVER, CONSIDER THE PURPOSE OF GODS. WHAT WERE THE GODS EXPECTED TO DO FOR THOSE WHO WORSHIPED THEM? WHAT DID THE WORSHIPERS EXPECT AS THE OVERALL, BASIC, ESSENTIAL OUTCOME OF THEIR DEVOTION TO THE VARIOUS GODS AND GODDESSES? THE ANSWER IS THAT THE WORSHIP OF MANY GODS HAD AS ITS FOREMOST GOAL TO PROVIDE LIFE. THE GODS WERE SEEN, ABOVE ALL, AS THE GRANTORS OF LIFE AND PROTECTORS OF THE LIVING. TO IGNORE THE GODS WAS TO BE IN DANGER OF IGNORING THE FORCES THAT PROVIDED LIFE, THE SUSTAINERS OF EXISTENCE. THE GODS, EACH IN THEIR PARTICULAR WAYS, SUSTAINED THE LIVES OF THOSE WHO WORSHIPED THEM. THE PLAGUES, APPROPRIATELY, WERE LARGELY FOCUSED ON DEATH. NEARLY ALL OF THEM ACTUALLY RESULTED IN DEATH (IN THE FIRST NINE, THAT OF THE PLANTS OR ANIMALS AFFLICTED BY OR USED BY GOD AS AGENTS OF THE PLAGUE). THE TENTH AND FINAL PLAGUE WAS THE ULTIMATE ONE—AND FITTINGLY, IT WAS THE PLAGUE OF DEATH, SHOWING THAT THE GODS, BOTH SEVERALLY AND TOTALLY, OF ANY SORT AND ANY STATUS, COULD NOT SAVE ANYONE OR ANYTHING FROM DEATH. IF GOD CAN TAKE THE LIFE OF THE FIRSTBORN, HE CAN TAKE THE LIFE OF ANYONE REGARDLESS OF BIRTH ORDER. IF EVERY HOUSEHOLD IN EGYPT WAS AFFECTED BY THE DEATH THAT CONSTITUTED THIS PLAGUE, THEN EVERY HOUSEHOLD IN EGYPT SHOULD HAVE BEEN ABLE TO UNDERSTAND WHO HELD THE POWER OF LIFE AND DEATH AND WHO, BY IMPLICATION, DID NOT. THE GODS DID NOT. STEPHEN YAHWEH DID. BUT FALSE GODS ARE FALSE, ARE THEY NOT? THE EGYPTIAN GODS WERE REALLY FIGMENTS OF THE IMAGINATION OF THOSE WHO THOUGHT THEM UP AND FASHIONED IDOLS TO REPRESENT THEM, WERE THEY NOT? HOW THEN COULD GOD SPEAK OF JUDGING THESE GODS? WAS THAT NOT TO GIVE THEM A STATUS IN REALITY, TO ASSERT THEIR EXISTENCE? INDEED, FALSE GODS DO NOT EXIST. THEY ARE NOT DEMONS BY ANOTHER NAME, FALLEN ANGELS WITH REAL POWER, DOING REAL THINGS.9 THE CONSISTENT WITNESS OF SCRIPTURE IS THAT THEY ARE NOTHINGS, NONBEINGS, IMAGINARY DEITIES FROM WHOM NO RESPONSE CAN EVER BE EXPECTED BECAUSE THEY DO NOT EXIST. THEREFORE, “JUDGMENT ON THE GODS OF EGYPT” IS PRACTICALLY SPEAKING A JUDGMENT ON BELIEF IN THOSE GODS, TRUSTING IN WHAT CANNOT SAVE AS OPPOSED TO THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN. EXODUS 12:12 IS WORDED IN A WAY DESIGNED TO HELP CAPTURE THE ATTENTION OF THOSE WHO ACTUALLY THOUGHT, OR MIGHT ACTUALLY THINK, THAT WHAT THE EGYPTIANS WORSHIPED WERE REAL. IN FACT, JUDGMENT ON THE GODS OF EGYPT, ACCOMPANIED BY THEIR COMPLETE SILENCE, IS EVIDENCE THAT THEY NEVER EXISTED. FROM ONE POINT OF VIEW, IT IS DISMISSAL OF THEIR EXISTENCE AS NONSENSE. NOTE HOW 12:12 CONCLUDES WITH THE WORDS “I AM THE LORD.” THIS SIMPLE STATEMENT, FOUND IN MANY OTHER PLACES IN THE OLD TESTAMENT, IS PART OF THE LANGUAGE OF GOD’S COVENANT WITH ISRAEL. AS IT IS USED IN A CONTEXT LIKE EXOD 12:12, IT IS A REMINDER FORMULA, INTENDED TO RECALL THE LANGUAGE OF THE PREAMBLE OF THE COVENANT AND THUS WHAT WOULD TECHNICALLY BE CALLED A REFERENCE BY INCIPIT TO THE COVENANT AS A WHOLE. GOD WAS IN EFFECT SAYING BY THESE WORDS: “I’M DOING SOMETHING HERE THAT IS BASIC TO MY (SOON TO BE FULLY REVEALED) COVENANT WITH YOU. I’M SHOWING YOU WHOM YOU MUST PAY SOLE ATTENTION TO AND WHO ALONE CAN SAVE YOU AND GRANT YOU BLESSING—IF YOU KEEP MY COVENANT. I’M MAKING SURE BY DRAMATIC AND DECISIVE MEANS THAT YOU CANNOT MISS THE FACT THAT I ALONE AM LIFE AND TRUTH FOR YOU. PAY ATTENTION TO NO OTHER GODS. I HAVE POWERFULLY DEMONSTRATED TO YOU THAT THEY DON’T EXIST. I HAVE ALSO DEMONSTRATED TO YOU WHAT HAPPENS TO PEOPLE WHO THINK THEY DO. TRUST ME ALONE AND YOU’LL HAVE MADE THE CHOICE FROM WHICH EVERYTHING ELSE IMPORTANT FOLLOWS.”**

**GOD’S INSTRUCTIONS FOR PASSOVER MEMORIAL OF UNLEAVENED BREAD (12:14–20)**

**14 “THIS IS A DAY YOU ARE TO COMMEMORATE; FOR THE GENERATIONS TO COME YOU SHALL CELEBRATE IT AS A FESTIVAL TO THE LORD—A LASTING ORDINANCE. 15 FOR SEVEN DAYS YOU ARE TO EAT BREAD MADE WITHOUT YEAST. ON THE FIRST DAY REMOVE THE YEAST FROM YOUR HOUSES, FOR WHOEVER EATS ANYTHING WITH YEAST IN IT FROM THE FIRST DAY THROUGH THE SEVENTH MUST BE CUT OFF FROM ISRAEL. 16 ON THE FIRST DAY HOLD A SACRED ASSEMBLY, AND ANOTHER ONE ON THE SEVENTH DAY. DO NO WORK AT ALL ON THESE DAYS, EXCEPT TO PREPARE FOOD FOR EVERYONE TO EAT—THAT IS ALL YOU MAY DO. 17 “CELEBRATE THE FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD, BECAUSE IT WAS ON THIS VERY DAY THAT I BROUGHT YOUR DIVISIONS OUT OF EGYPT. CELEBRATE THIS DAY AS A LASTING ORDINANCE FOR THE GENERATIONS TO COME. 18 IN THE FIRST MONTH YOU ARE TO EAT BREAD MADE WITHOUT YEAST, FROM THE EVENING OF THE FOURTEENTH DAY UNTIL THE EVENING OF THE TWENTY-FIRST DAY. 19 FOR SEVEN DAYS NO YEAST IS TO BE FOUND IN YOUR HOUSES. AND WHOEVER EATS ANYTHING WITH YEAST IN IT MUST BE CUT OFF FROM THE COMMUNITY OF ISRAEL, WHETHER HE IS AN ALIEN OR NATIVE-BORN. 20 EAT NOTHING MADE WITH YEAST. WHEREVER YOU LIVE, YOU MUST EAT UNLEAVENED BREAD.”**

**A CONSIDERABLE AMOUNT OF REPETITION OCCURS IN THIS PASSAGE, WITH THE EFFECT THAT THE INSTRUCTIONS OF 12:14–16 ARE CLOSELY PARALLELED BY THE INSTRUCTIONS OF 12:17–20. THE LATTER IS NOT AN EXACT REPETITION OF THE FORMER, BUT IT CONTAINS MANY SIMILARITIES. THUS, THE FEATURES OF THE PASSOVER MEMORIAL OF UNLEAVENED BREAD ARE STATED TWICE, AS A MEANS OF DRILLING INTO THE MIND OF THE HEARER/READER THE POINT: ABSOLUTELY NO YEASTED BREAD COULD BE EATEN FOR THE SEVEN FULL DAYS OF THE SPECIAL PASSOVER FESTIVAL. TO PREVENT EVEN THE SLIGHTEST POSSIBILITY THAT ANY SORT OF BREAD OR BREADED FOOD IN THE HOUSE WOULD BECOME YEASTED ACCIDENTALLY, ALL YEAST HAD TO BE REMOVED FROM ALL ISRAELITE HOMES DURING THE WEEK-LONG FESTIVAL. 12:14 IN SAYING “THIS IS A DAY YOU ARE TO COMMEMORATE” GOD DID NOT SLIGHT THE FULL SEVEN-DAY FESTIVAL AS IF IT WERE NOT ALSO TO BE COMMEMORATED EQUALLY; RATHER, THE STARTING DAY WAS A CRUCIAL ONE. IF THE STARTING DAY WAS MISSED, THEN OBSERVING THE REST OF THE DAYS COULD NOT ENTIRELY MAKE UP FOR THE LOSS OF THE ONE THAT SPECIFICALLY ALIGNED WITH THE DAY THE ISRAELITES ACTUALLY LEFT EGYPT, THE FOURTEENTH OF THE FIRST MONTH AT THE FULL MOON. THE TERMS “FOR GENERATIONS TO COME” AND “AS A LASTING ORDINANCE” PROVIDE TWO MORE SUPPORTING CONCEPTS LINKED TO THE CONCEPT OF COMMEMORATE. IT WAS VERY IMPORTANT THAT EACH SUBSEQUENT GENERATION RENEW FOR ITSELF AN AWARENESS OF THE ORIGINAL PASSOVER AND ITS MEANING. IT WAS “A FESTIVAL TO THE LORD,” THUS A SPECIAL AND SOLEMN RELIGIOUS CELEBRATION INTENDED BY ITS NONORDINARY CHARACTER TO FOCUS ATTENTION ON THIS MEMORABLE EVENT EVERY YEAR. WHY SUCH AN EMPHASIS ON COMMEMORATION? BECAUSE WHAT IS NOT CAREFULLY REMEMBERED BY A COMMUNITY IS VERY NATURALLY AND EASILY FORGOTTEN—AND VIRTUALLY COMPLETELY FORGOTTEN AS SOON AS THE OLDEST MEMBERS OF THAT COMMUNITY WHO EXPERIENCED THE ORIGINAL EVENT DIE. THE FULL SEVEN-DAY FESTIVAL WAS NOT CELEBRATED BY THE ISRAELITES ON THE OCCASION OF THE FIRST EXODUS AS THEY ACTUALLY FLED FROM EGYPT. THEY HAD EXPERIENCED THE EXODUS PERSONALLY. IT WAS CLEARLY FOR GENERATIONS TO COME, WHO HAD NOT BEEN THERE TO KNOW GOD’S SALVATION DIRECTLY. WHY DID GOD WANT HIS PEOPLE TO REMEMBER THE EXODUS SO CAREFULLY? BECAUSE IT WAS HIS SUPREME OLD COVENANT DEMONSTRATION OF DELIVERANCE, AND HE WANTED HIS PEOPLE TO TRUST HIM AS A DELIVERING GOD. IT WAS NO ACCIDENT THAT MOSES, ELIJAH, AND JESUS, ON THE MOUNT OF TRANSFIGURATION, “SPOKE ABOUT HIS [CHRIST’S] DEPARTURE [“EXODUS”], WHICH HE WAS ABOUT TO BRING TO FULFILLMENT AT JERUSALEM” (LUKE 9:31). THE OLD COVENANT EXODUS WAS THE PARADIGM OF GOD’S SAVING ACTS; THE NEW TESTAMENT CRUCIFIXION WAS THE ULTIMATE EXODUS BECAUSE IT DELIVERS NOT MERELY FROM BONDAGE TO HUMAN DESPOTISM BUT FROM BONDAGE TO SIN ITSELF, AND THUS IT PROVIDES FOR LIFE NOT MERELY IN A PROMISED EARTHLY LAND BUT IN AN ETERNAL PROMISED LAND, THE HOME OF THE FATHER. 12:15 YEAST (ŚĔʾÔR, “LEAVEN”) IN BIBLE TIMES REFERRED TO THE SPORES OF YEAST THEMSELVES, AND, AS WELL, WHAT IS NOW CALLED “STARTER DOUGH,” THAT IS, FERMENTED DOUGH. IT WAS MADE IN VARIOUS WAYS. ONE WAS BY AIRING OUT DOUGH IN THE SUN (TO PICK UP THE AIRBORNE YEAST SPORES) AFTER DIPPING IT IN WINE OR VINEGAR AND STORING IT IN A CLOSED VESSEL UNTIL IT WENT SOUR (FERMENTED). ANOTHER METHOD WAS TO KNEAD FLOUR AND WATER, ADD SALT, BOIL THE MIX INTO A PORRIDGE, AND THEN LEAVE IT UNTIL IT WENT SOUR. BECAUSE YEAST SPORES CAN MIGRATE EASILY, DOUGH CAN EASILY BECOME YEASTED NATURALLY, THUS THE NEED TO CLEANSE THE HOUSE OF YEAST SO THAT WHAT WAS INTENDED TO BE UNLEAVENED BREAD DOESN’T TURN OUT ACCIDENTALLY TO BE LEAVENED. BUT WHY REQUIRE EATING UNLEAVENED BREAD AS THE SPECIAL FOCUS OF THE EXODUS MEMORIAL MEAL, THE PASSOVER? THE ANSWER IS THAT UNLEAVENED BREAD WAS THE UNIQUE FOOD OF THE ORIGINAL EXODUS, THE EVENT GOD WANTED HIS PEOPLE TO BE SURE NOT TO FORGET. PEOPLE EVERYWHERE NORMALLY EAT LEAVENED BREAD. IT TASTES BETTER, IS MORE PLEASANT TO EAT, IS MORE FILLING. LEAVENED BREAD WAS THE NORMAL CHOICE OF THE ISRAELITES IN EGYPT TOO. BUT ON THE NIGHT, THEY RAN, THERE WAS NO TIME FOR THE USUAL NICETIES—A FAST MEAL HAD TO BE EATEN, AND HASTILY MADE BREAD HAD TO BE CONSUMED. THE FACT THAT A LAMB OR GOAT KID WAS ROASTED FOR THE MEAT PORTION OF THE MEAL OR THAT BITTER HERBS WERE EATEN AS A SIDE DISH WAS NOT NEARLY SO SPECIAL OR UNUSUAL AS THE FACT THAT THE BREAD WAS UNLEAVENED, THUS ESSENTIALLY FORMING SHEETS OF CRACKER. EATING IT AT THE MEMORIAL FEAST INTENTIONALLY RECALLED THE ORIGINAL DEPARTURE IN HASTE. EATING IT FOR A SOLID WEEK TENDED TO FIX THE IDEA IN ONE’S CONSCIOUSNESS. BUT WAS CHEATING—EATING “ANYTHING WITH YEAST IN IT FROM THE FIRST DAY THROUGH THE SEVENTH”—REALLY WORTHY OF SUCH PUNISHMENT THAT THE OFFENDER “MUST BE CUT OFF FROM ISRAEL”? THE ANSWER ONCE AGAIN RELATES TO THE WAY ACTIONS INDICATE FAITH. GOD HAD DECLARED THAT THE ACTION OF SMEARING BLOOD ON DOORFRAMES WAS THE SIGN OF FAITH HE WOULD ACCEPT IN ORDER TO AVOID DEATH IN A HOUSEHOLD; NOW HE DECLARED THAT EATING THE PASSOVER WITH ITS SPECIAL, NONYEASTED BREAD WAS THE SIGN OF FAITH THAT INDICATED A PERSON WAS KEEPING THE PASSOVER AS A BELIEVER IN ITS MEANING AND THEREFORE A TRUE MEMBER OF THE COVENANT COMMUNITY OF ISRAEL.**

**EXCURSUS: THE MEANING OF “CUT OFF FROM”**

**THE EXPRESSION FOUND IN EXOD 12:15, “CUT OFF FROM ISRAEL,” AND ITS VARIANTS “CUT OFF FROM THE CONGREGATION OF ISRAEL” (12:19), “CUT OFF FROM HIS PEOPLE” (EXOD 30:33, 38), AND “CUT OFF FROM AMONG HIS PEOPLE” (31:14) HAS SEVERAL DOZEN PARALLELS THROUGHOUT THE OLD TESTAMENT, A SIZABLE PERCENTAGE OF THEM BEING FOUND IN LEVITICUS AND NUMBERS. THE WORDING SOUNDS LIKE A PRESCRIPTION FOR EITHER BANISHMENT OR EXECUTION, AND THE NIV TRANSLATORS OBVIOUSLY ASSUMED THAT IT WAS, IN LIGHT OF THEIR USE OF THE MODAL VERB “MUST BE” INSTEAD OF “SHALL BE” IN 12:15 AND ELSEWHERE. IN OTHER WORDS, “MUST BE CUT OFF” AS THE TRANSLATION OF THE HEBREW EXPRESSION IN QUESTION, WĔNIKRĔTĀH, TENDS TO CONNOTE THE IDEA THAT IT WAS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE COMMUNITY OF ISRAEL TO GET RID OF THE OFFENDER EITHER BY EXILE OR BY CAPITAL PUNISHMENT. BUT IF THE PROPER CONTEXTUAL TRANSLATION OF WĔNIKRĔTĀH IS SIMPLY “WILL BE CUT OFF,” AS WE SUGGEST, THE EXPRESSION WOULD BE MORE A STATEMENT OF FACT—THIS WOULD BE THE EVENTUAL OUTCOME FOR THE PERSON WHO COMMITTED THIS VIOLATION OF GOD’S LAW. AN APPROPRIATE PARAPHRASE MIGHT BE: “GOD WILL SEE TO IT THAT THIS PERSON IS CUT OFF.” IT WAS THUS MORE OF A DIVINE CURSE THAN A LEGAL GUIDELINE. WHAT THEN WOULD “CUT OFF FROM” ISRAEL/THE CONGREGATION/HIS PEOPLE ACTUALLY MEAN? THE ANSWER APPEARS TO BE CUT OFF FROM GOD’S BENEFITS TO ISRAEL IN THE NEAR FUTURE AND CUT OFF FROM ETERNAL LIFE WITH THEM IN THE ULTIMATE FUTURE. IT IS SOMEWHAT A QUESTION OF SELF-SELECTION. THE PERSON WHO DEFIES GOD’S REGULATIONS SHOWS THAT HE HAS NO INTEREST IN KEEPING COVENANT WITH HIM AND THEREFORE WILL EVENTUALLY SUFFER THE CONSEQUENCES OF NOT OBEYING GOD. REFUSING TO KEEP THE PASSOVER REGULATION OF UNLEAVENED BREAD FOR SEVEN DAYS (SOMETHING THAT IS NOT VERY HARD TO KEEP, AFTER ALL) WOULD SHOW GOD THAT A PERSON WAS NOT WITH HIM IN FAITH BECAUSE FAITH IS DEMONSTRATED BY FAITHFULNESS. LACK OF FAITHFULNESS IN TRYING TO OBEY GOD’S COMMANDS SHOWS LACK OF SAVING FAITH IN GOD. THE PROOF OF FAITH IS A FAITHFUL LIFE. A RATHER WIDE VARIETY OF COMMANDS ARE ACCOMPANIED BY THE WARNING THAT THOSE WHO DO NOT ADHERE TO THEM WILL BE “CUT OFF.” PROPP LISTS THE FOLLOWING (HERE REARRANGED IN CANONICAL ORDER): FAILURE TO PRACTICE CIRCUMCISION (GEN 17:14); FAILURE TO EAT UNLEAVENED BREAD DURING PASSOVER (EXOD 12:15, 19); ILLEGALLY MANUFACTURING OR USING THE SACRED ANOINTING OIL (EXOD 30:32–33, 38); VIOLATING THE SABBATH (EXOD 31:14); EATING SACRIFICED FOOD WHILE RITUALLY IMPURE (LEV 7:20–21); EATING THE FAT OR BLOOD OF A SACRIFICE (LEV 7:25, 27); SLAUGHTER/SACRIFICE OUTSIDE THE TABERNACLE (LEV 17:4, 9); FORBIDDEN SEXUAL PRACTICES (LEV 18:29; 20:17–18); CHILD SACRIFICE (LEV 20:2–5); NECROMANCY (TRYING TO DIVINE THE FUTURE BY CONTACT WITH THE DEAD; (LEV 20:6); WORSHIP FUNCTION BY A DEFILED PRIEST (LEV 22:3); FAILURE TO OBSERVE THE DAY OF ATONEMENT (LEV 23:29–30); FAILURE TO COMMEMORATE PASSOVER (NUM 9:13); DEFIANT, INTENTIONAL SIN (NUM 15:30–31); AND FAILURE TO PURIFY ONESELF AFTER CONTACT WITH THE DEAD (NUM 19:13, 20). OF THESE THE MOST TELLING IS THAT OF NUM 15:30–31: BUT ANYONE WHO SINS DEFIANTLY, WHETHER NATIVE-BORN OR ALIEN, BLASPHEMES THE LORD, AND THAT PERSON MUST BE CUT OFF FROM HIS PEOPLE. BECAUSE HE HAS DESPISED THE LORD’S WORD AND BROKEN HIS COMMANDS, THAT PERSON MUST SURELY BE CUT OFF; HIS GUILT REMAINS ON HIM. THIS IS DESCRIBING NOT AN OCCASIONAL INTENTIONAL SIN BUT WHAT WAS AT THE HEART OF ALL ABUSES OF THE LAW THAT BRING ABOUT BEING “CUT OFF”: A LEVEL OF DISOBEDIENCE THAT CONSTITUTED BLASPHEMY, A DEFIANCE THAT INDICATES THAT THE PERSON DESPISED GOD’S WORD. THAT WAS THE SORT OF PERSON WHO COULD NOT BE COUNTED AMONG THE FAITHFUL IN ISRAEL, WHO HAD BY HIS ACTIONS SHOWN CLEARLY THAT HE DID NOT DESIRE TO KEEP COVENANT WITH THE TRUE GOD. SUCH A PERSON LOSES OUT ON GOD’S COVENANT BENEFITS IN THIS LIFE AND HIS ETERNAL BLESSING AS WELL. JOHN WORDS THE MATTER THIS WAY IN HIS GOSPEL: “THIS IS THE VERDICT: LIGHT HAS COME INTO THE WORLD, BUT MEN LOVED DARKNESS INSTEAD OF LIGHT BECAUSE THEIR DEEDS WERE EVIL” (JOHN 3:19). ONE’S CHOICES HAVE CONSEQUENCES RELATIVE TO ONE’S RELATIONSHIP TO GOD. THE COVENANT RELATIONSHIP DOES NOT OVERLOOK INDIVIDUAL SIN SIMPLY BECAUSE IT IS A CORPORATE COVENANT. IN SUMMARY: THE STATEMENT THAT A PERSON WOULD BE CUT OFF FROM ISRAEL WAS NOT JURIDICAL GUIDANCE FOR THOSE ENFORCING LAWS BUT A PREDICTION FROM GOD OF THE FATE OF THE UNFAITHFUL. NOT TO BE FAITHFUL IS NOT TO BELONG TO GOD’S PEOPLE EVEN IF LIVING AMONG THEM (CF. ROM 2:28–29) AND THEREFORE NOT TO ENJOY THEIR COVENANT BLESSINGS IN THE LONG RUN. 12:16 THE TWO DAYS AT THE BEGINNING AND END OF THE FESTIVAL WEEK WERE SPECIAL; ON THEM NO WORK WAS DONE OTHER THAN THE MOST ESSENTIAL, WHICH WAS FOOD PREPARATION SO PEOPLE COULD EAT. THESE WERE DAYS OF “SACRED ASSEMBLY,” IN OTHER WORDS, DAYS DEVOTED TO WORSHIP. THE TERM HERE TRANSLATED ASSEMBLY IS MIQRĀʾ, LIT., “CALLING TOGETHER,” ALSO TRANSLATABLE BY THE ENGLISH WORD “CONVOCATION.” THE SAME TERM IS USED TO DESCRIBE THE SABBATH IN LEV 23:3, THE DAY OF TRUMPETS IN LEV 23:24, AND BOTH THE NEW MOON AND SABBATH FESTIVALS IN ISA 1:13. REGULAR WORK IS THE ANTITHESIS OF SPECIAL WORSHIP. THIS IS NOT BECAUSE DAILY WORK IS IMPROPER OR UNGODLY BUT BECAUSE THE SPECIALNESS OF GOD CANNOT BE HONORED SUFFICIENTLY IN THE REGULARITY OF DAILY WORK. GOD SEEKS SPECIAL ATTENTION FROM HIS PEOPLE IN WAYS THAT ARE NOT WITHIN THE ROUTINE OF THEIR USUAL LABORS. WORSHIP IS INTENDED TO BE A GROUP ENTERPRISE CONDUCTED APART FROM THE ROUTINE. THE TWO SPECIAL WORSHIP DAYS, HOWEVER, WERE NOT FAST DAYS. THEY WERE DAYS OF CELEBRATION AND COMMEMORATION IN WORSHIP, SO FOOD PREPARATION AND CONSUMPTION WERE NECESSARY IN CONNECTION WITH THEM AND MUST BE PROVIDED FOR ACCORDINGLY. 12:17 THIS VERSE REITERATES THE IMPORTANCE OF CELEBRATING THE PASSOVER FEAST PROPERLY AND DOES SO IN TWO WAYS: FIRST, BY OFFERING AN ALTERNATIVE NAME FOR IT: “THE FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD”; SECOND, BY EMPHASIZING THE TIMING OF THE FEAST: “IT WAS ON THIS VERY DAY THAT I BROUGHT YOUR DIVISIONS [ARMIES] OUT OF EGYPT.” ELSEWHERE THE NAME OF THE FEAST IS USUALLY THE FULLER ḤAḠ HAMMAṢṢÔT (“FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD”), BUT HERE IT IS TITLED ONLY BY ITS KEY WORD, HAMMAṢṢÔT, [THE] UNLEAVENED BREAD. NEVERTHELESS, IN LIGHT OF THE FULL FORMULA OBSERVE [NIV “CELEBRATE”] THE UNLEAVENED BREAD AND ITS PARALLELS IN EXODUS LAWS COMMANDING THE OBSERVANCE OF FESTIVALS AND RITES (12:24; 23:15; 31:4–13, 16; 34:18), THERE CAN BE LITTLE DOUBT THAT THE FESTIVAL, NOT MERELY THE SUBSTANCE (UNLEAVENED BREAD), WAS TO BE OBSERVED. THE REFERENCE TO THE ISRAELITES BEING ORGANIZED INTO AN ARMY—GOD’S ARMY, IMPLIED IN THE WORDS “YOUR DIVISIONS” [ARMIES]—IS NOT NEW BUT HARKENS BACK TO EXOD 6:26 AND 7:4. IT REMINDS THE HEARER/READER THAT THE PASSOVER MEAL HAD OVERTONES NOT ONLY OF HASTE IN FLEEING BUT OF READY PREPAREDNESS FOR BATTLE. THE ISRAELITES WERE NOT MERELY LEAVING A PLACE; THEY WERE ALSO GOING TO A PLACE THEY WOULD HAVE TO CONQUER MILITARILY ON GOD’S BEHALF. THE LANGUAGE AT THE END OF THE VERSE, “AS A LASTING ORDINANCE FOR THE GENERATIONS TO COME,” PICKS UP THE VOCABULARY OF V. 14 AS A FURTHER WAY OF EMPHASIZING HOW IMPORTANT THE PERMANENT MEMORIALIZING OF THE EXODUS THROUGH THE PASSOVER HAD TO BE. 12:18 LEST THERE BE ANY CONFUSION IN THE MIND OF THE HEARER/READER AS TO THE ACTUAL CALENDAR DATES FOR THE SEVEN DAYS OF OBSERVANCE OF THE PASSOVER, THE DATES ARE HERE GIVEN FOR EATING “BREAD MADE WITHOUT YEAST” AS TAKING PLACE “IN THE FIRST MONTH … FROM THE EVENING OF THE FOURTEENTH DAY UNTIL THE EVENING OF THE TWENTY-FIRST DAY.” THERE IS NO NEW INFORMATION HERE COMPARED TO V. 15 BUT SIMPLY A REWORDING WITH PRECISE CALENDRICAL COORDINATES TO REINFORCE THE TIME OF OBSERVANCE. 12:19–20 THESE VERSES REWORD AND EXPAND SLIGHTLY ON V. 15, ADDING MAINLY THE CLARIFICATION THAT “WHOEVER” APPLIES TO EVERYONE “WHETHER HE IS AN ALIEN OR NATIVE-BORN” AND THAT THE LAW HAS NO SPATIAL OR GEOGRAPHICAL LIMITATION (“WHEREVER YOU LIVE, YOU MUST EAT UNLEAVENED BREAD”). THUS FUTURE GENERATIONS OF GOD’S PEOPLE WERE NOT TO MAKE THE MISTAKE OF EXCLUDING RELATIVE NEWCOMERS WHO WANTED TO SHOW THEIR COVENANT LOYALTY TO THEIR (NEWLY ACCEPTED) LORD MERELY BECAUSE THOSE PERSONS WERE NOT YET ACCEPTED AS ISRAELITE CITIZENS; NEITHER WAS ANYONE TO FEEL ENTITLED TO AN EXEMPTION FROM FULL OBSERVANCE BECAUSE HE OR SHE WAS FAR AWAY FROM THE LAND OF ISRAEL PROPER OR LIVING IN ISOLATION FROM OTHER ISRAELITES.**

**MOSES TEACHES THE ISRAELITES TO FOLLOW THE PASSOVER INSTRUCTIONS (12:21–28)**

**21 THEN MOSES SUMMONED ALL THE ELDERS OF ISRAEL AND SAID TO THEM, “GO AT ONCE AND SELECT THE ANIMALS FOR YOUR FAMILIES AND SLAUGHTER THE PASSOVER LAMB. 22 TAKE A BUNCH OF HYSSOP DIP IT INTO THE BLOOD IN THE BASIN AND PUT SOME OF THE BLOOD ON THE TOP AND ON BOTH SIDES OF THE DOORFRAME. NOT ONE OF YOU SHALL GO OUT THE DOOR OF HIS HOUSE UNTIL MORNING. 23 WHEN THE LORD GOES THROUGH THE LAND TO STRIKE DOWN THE EGYPTIANS, HE WILL SEE THE BLOOD ON THE TOP AND SIDES OF THE DOORFRAME AND WILL PASS OVER THAT DOORWAY, AND HE WILL NOT PERMIT THE DESTROYER TO ENTER YOUR HOUSES AND STRIKE YOU DOWN. 24 “OBEY THESE INSTRUCTIONS AS A LASTING ORDINANCE FOR YOU AND YOUR DESCENDANTS. 25 WHEN YOU ENTER THE LAND THAT THE LORD WILL GIVE YOU AS HE PROMISED, OBSERVE THIS CEREMONY. 26 AND WHEN YOUR CHILDREN ASK YOU, ‘WHAT DOES THIS CEREMONY MEAN TO YOU?’ 27 THEN TELL THEM, ‘IT IS THE PASSOVER SACRIFICE TO THE LORD, WHO PASSED OVER THE HOUSES OF THE ISRAELITES IN EGYPT AND SPARED OUR HOMES WHEN HE STRUCK DOWN THE EGYPTIANS.’ ” THEN THE PEOPLE BOWED DOWN AND WORSHIPED. 28 THE ISRAELITES DID JUST WHAT THE LORD COMMANDED MOSES AND AARON.**

**ALL THE INSTRUCTIONS IN 12:1–20 WERE FOR THE ISRAELITES BUT HAD SO FAR BEEN ANNOUNCED ONLY TO MOSES AND AARON (12:1). NOW MOSES REPEATED THEM FOR THE ISRAELITES BY TELLING THEM TO THE ELDERS, WHO WOULD BE EXPECTED TO PASS THEM ON TO THE VARIOUS CLAN LEADERS, AND FROM THEM TO THE FAMILY HEADS, UNTIL EVERYONE KNEW THEM AND FOLLOWED THEM. THE INSTRUCTIONS ARE THEREFORE ABBREVIATED HERE SINCE THE READER DOES NOT NEED A VERBATIM REPETITION OF 12:1–20; BUT MOSES ALSO ADDED CLARIFYING WARNINGS AND INSTRUCTIONS TO BE SURE THE PROCESS WOULD BE FOLLOWED CAREFULLY SO THAT NO ONE WOULD DIE NEEDLESSLY. AS BEFORE, THE INSTRUCTIONS WERE INTENDED BOTH TO DIRECT THE ACTIONS OF THE ISRAELITES WHO WERE THERE ON THAT FIRST NIGHT OF THE EXODUS AS WELL AS FOR THE BENEFIT OF ALL ISRAELITES IN ALL YEARS THEREAFTER WHO MUST CAREFULLY REMEMBER AND IDENTIFY WITH THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THAT FIRST NIGHT WHEN THE TENTH PLAGUE LAUNCHED THE EXODUS ITSELF. 12:21 “ELDER” (ZĀQĒN) MAY ALSO BE TRANSLATED “LEADER,” FOR THE TERM HAS LITTLE TO DO WITH AGE (THAT IS ONLY ITS ORIGINAL OR ROOT DERIVATION RATHER THAN ITS FUNCTIONAL USAGE) AND EVERYTHING TO DO WITH STATUS AS A LEADER. THE LAST TIME THE ISRAELITE LEADERS WERE MENTIONED IN THE NARRATIVE WAS 4:29–31 WHEN THE ELDERS, FOLLOWED BY THE PEOPLE IN GENERAL, BELIEVED THE MIRACULOUS SIGNS MOSES PERFORMED AND THUS BELIEVED IN AND WORSHIPED THE TRUE GOD. A SIMILAR OUTCOME IS DESCRIBED HERE, PARTICULARLY IN VV. 27B–28. BUT WHAT A GREAT DEAL HAD HAPPENED IN BETWEEN! THE ISRAELITE FOREMEN, PRESUMABLY REPRESENTING THE VIEWS OF MANY IF NOT MOST ISRAELITES, HAD DENOUNCED MOSES AND AARON (5:19–21), AND THEN THE ISRAELITES IN GENERAL HAD JOINED THEM, REFUSING TO LISTEN TO MOSES BECAUSE OF THE WAY THEIR TREATMENT HAD WORSENED ONCE MOSES BEGAN CONFRONTING PHARAOH WITH GOD’“SELECT” THE ANIMALS APPROPRIATE FOR THE PASSOVER MEAL AND THEN TO SLAUGHTER THEM. THESE INSTRUCTIONS PROBABLY WERE DELIVERED ON THE TENTH DAY OF THE MONTH (CF. 12:3), THAT IS, FOUR DAYS BEFORE THE PASSOVER SO AS TO PROVIDE TIME FOR THE WHOLE PROCESS, BUT IT IS ALSO POSSIBLE THAT THE TIME WAS NOW THE ACTUAL DAY BEFORE THE EVENING OF DEPARTURE IN LIGHT OF THE WAY 12:29 SEEMS TO CLOSELY FOLLOW CHRONOLOGICALLY UPON 12:28. IF THE ISRAELITES WERE ALREADY GATHERED, READY FOR THE EXODUS, AND AWAITING INSTRUCTIONS, WARNING OF A MATTER OF HOURS WOULD BE SUFFICIENT FOR THE COMMUNITY TO ACT AS INSTRUCTED. 12:22 THIS VERSE REPEATS THE ESSENCE OF 12:7 WITH THE ADDED DETAIL THAT A CONTAINER (“BASIN”) WAS TO BE USED TO COLLECT THE BLOOD OF THE SLAUGHTERED LAMB OR GOAT KID, THAT A “HYSSOP” (MARJORAM) BRANCH COULD BE USED FOR SMEARING THE BLOOD ON THE DOORFRAME, AND THAT ONCE THE BLOOD WAS APPLIED AND THE MEAL WAS OVER, NO ONE WAS TO GO OUTSIDE FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE NIGHT UNTIL DAWN. THESE PROVISIONS WERE INTENDED TO MAKE SURE THAT AN ADEQUATE SUPPLY OF BLOOD WAS COLLECTED (THUS THE BASIN), THAT IT WAS WELL DISTRIBUTED ON THE TOPS AND SIDES OF THE DOOR (THUS THE USE OF A “BRUSH” AS APPLICATOR; CF. THE COMPARABLE USE OF HYSSOP IN DISTRIBUTING BLOOD IN LEV 14:4; NUM 19:6, 18; PS 51:7), AND THAT NO ONE ACCIDENTALLY BE AT AN EGYPTIAN’S HOUSE OR ANYWHERE AMONG THE EGYPTIANS WHEN THE TENTH PLAGUE STRUCK (THUS THE CONFINEMENT IN THE HOUSE). 12:23 SOME OF WHAT IS STATED IN THIS VERSE MAY SEEM ENIGMATIC. WHY SHOULD GOD HIMSELF “GO THROUGH THE LAND TO STRIKE DOWN THE EGYPTIANS”? DID GOD NEED TO GET UP CLOSE TO A HOUSE BEFORE HE COULD “SEE THE BLOOD ON THE TOP AND SIDES OF THE DOORFRAME AND PASS OVER THAT DOORWAY”? AND WHO OR WHAT WAS THE “DESTROYER” THAT HAD TO BE TOLD NOT “TO ENTER YOUR HOUSES AND STRIKE YOU DOWN”? THE ANSWERS TO THESE QUESTIONS MAY BE UNDERSTOOD AS FOLLOWS: FIRST, GOD HAD ALREADY BEEN IDENTIFIED AS THE DIRECT CAUSE OF ALL THE PRECEDING PLAGUES. THEY WERE NOT MERELY EVENTS THAT HE SET IN MOTION AT SOME EARLY STAGE OR NATURAL EVENTS GENERALLY SUBJECT TO HIS CONTROL. SO, IT WAS WITH THE DEATH OF THE WICKED. IN THIS WORLD THAT GOD HAS CREATED, HUMAN LIFE DOES NOT JUST HAPPEN BY ACCIDENT, AND NO ONE’S DEATH IS A RANDOM EVENT. THE JUDGE OF ALL THE EARTH ALWAYS DOES RIGHT (GEN 18:25). AND HE IS THE JUDGE, THE ONE DIRECTLY AND EXPRESSLY INVOLVED. HE PERSONALLY SAVES EVERY INDIVIDUAL WHO PLACES FAITH IN HIM, AND HE PERSONALLY OVERSEES THE ENDING OF THE EXISTENCE OF EVERYONE WHOSE LIFE HAS NOT CONFORMED TO HIS WILL. HE IS NOT A DEISTIC GOD BUT A PERSONAL GOD WHO RELATES PERSONALLY, DIRECTLY, AND CONTINUALLY TO HIS CREATION. CONSISTENT WITH HIS NATURE AND WITH THE PATTERN ALREADY ESTABLISHED IN THE PLAGUE ACCOUNTS, GOD HERE PERSONALLY OVERSAW THE DESTRUCTION OF THE EGYPTIAN FIRSTBORN. AS TO THE MATTER OF HIS SEEING THE BLOOD ON THE DOORFRAMES, THIS IS MERELY CONSISTENT WITH ALL THE LANGUAGE USED OF GOD’S PERCEPTION OF HUMAN ACTIVITY. HE DOESN’T NEED TO GET UP CLOSE; BUT HE DOES SEE AND DELIVER—PERSONALLY—FIRSTBORN BY FIRSTBORN, FAMILY BY FAMILY. THE “DESTROYER” COULD BE NONE OTHER THAN THE ANGEL OF THE LORD, REVEALED AS THE ANGEL THAT CAUSES DEATH IN SUCH CONTEXTS AS 2 SAM 24:16 AND ISA 37:36. THIS ANGEL DIRECTLY REPRESENTS GOD AND IS THUS “THE ANGEL STEPHEN YAHWEH”—STEPHEN YAHWEH MANIFESTING HIMSELF IN ANGELIC FORM. GOD PERSONALLY SPARED THOSE WHO SHOWED THEIR TRUST IN HIM BY KEEPING THE PASSOVER REGULATIONS. HE RESTRAINED THE ANGEL THAT WOULD OTHERWISE MANIFEST HIS PERSONAL JUDGMENT AGAINST HIS ENEMIES. 12:24–28 THE ISRAELITES WERE TO UNDERSTAND THE PASSOVER REGULATIONS AS PERMANENT, BINDING REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL GENERATIONS INTO THE FUTURE (V. 24, “LASTING ORDINANCE FOR YOU AND YOUR DESCENDANTS”), INCLUDING ALL THOSE WHO WOULD EVENTUALLY OCCUPY THE LAND OF CANAAN (V. 25). EACH GENERATION OF PARENTS ALSO WAS EXPECTED TO TEACH EACH GENERATION OF CHILDREN THE MEANING OF THE CEREMONY THAT MEMORIALIZED THE DELIVERANCE FROM EGYPT (VV. 26–27). AS WITH OTHER BIBLICAL LAW, THE PARADIGMATIC NATURE OF THE COMMAND AUTOMATICALLY APPLIES. IN OTHER WORDS, NO ISRAELITE PARENT COULD EVER RIGHTLY SAY, “NONE OF MY CHILDREN ASKED ME ABOUT THE POINT OF THE PASSOVER CEREMONY, SO I DIDN’T TELL THEM ABOUT WHAT IT MEANS.” INSTEAD, THE INSTRUCTION TO TEACH THE UPCOMING GENERATIONS THE PASSOVER TRADITION AND LAW BY RESPONDING TO A CHILD’S QUESTION IS SIMPLY A WORDING OF ONE INSTANCE OF HOW THE TEACHING MIGHT OCCUR; BUT OCCUR IT MUST. AND THE ENTIRE MATTER CERTAINLY WAS PERCEIVED AS A COMMAND—NOT JUST THE KEEPING OF THE PASSOVER CEREMONY BUT THE IMMEDIATE INSTRUCTION OF CHILDREN—AS INDICATED BY THE OBSERVATION IN V. 27 THAT “THE PEOPLE BOWED DOWN AND WORSHIPED” AS WELL AS BY THE SUMMATION IN V. 28 THAT “THE ISRAELITES DID JUST WHAT THE LORD COMMANDED MOSES AND AARON.” FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF THE GREATER SWEEP OF BIBLICAL REVELATION, THE PRACTICE OF TEACHING EACH NEW GENERATION THE MEANING OF THE PASSOVER HELPED GUARANTEE THE TRANSMISSION OF THE PROTO EVANGELIUM THROUGHOUT THE HISTORICAL CONTINUUM OF THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL UNTIL NEW TESTAMENT TIMES, WHEN THE HUMAN-DIVINE LAMB WAS SLAIN ONCE FOR ALL AS PART OF THE DIVINE PLAN OF REDEMPTION SET IN PLACE BEFORE THE EARTH AS WE KNOW IT EXISTED. IN OTHER WORDS, EVERY ISRAELITE PROPERLY INSTRUCTED ABOUT THE PASSOVER SHOULD HAVE BEEN ALSO PARTLY PREPARED TO EXPECT A DYING MESSIAH WHOSE SHED BLOOD WOULD PROVIDE A MEANS OF ESCAPE FROM DEATH. IT ALSO CONTAINS SOMETHING OF A MODEL OF THE BIBLICAL EMPHASIS ON THE IMPORTANCE OF PARENTS’ TEACHING CHILDREN—A RESPONSIBILITY WELL UNDERSTOOD BEFORE THE ADVENT OF UNIVERSAL EDUCATION BUT OFTEN NEGLECTED IN PRESENT TIMES IN FAVOR OF PROFESSIONALIZED EDUCATION. THE SUMMATION IN V. 28 IS THE FIRST OF SEVERAL (CF. 12:20; 39:32; NUM 1:54; 8:3, 20, 22; 9:5) THAT RELATE TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF ONGOING WORSHIP PRACTICES (MOST OF THE OTHERS CONCERN THE CONSTRUCTION AND USE OF THE TABERNACLE). THE ACTION OF THE PEOPLE IN V. 27 IN BOWING DOWN AND WORSHIPING FOLLOWS CLOSELY THE SIMILAR ACT DESCRIBED IN 4:31, WHERE BOTH THE ISRAELITE ELDERS AND THE PEOPLE IN GENERAL INDICATED THEIR BELIEF IN STEPHEN YAHWEH’S PROMISE, THEIR ACCEPTANCE OF STEPHEN YAHWEH’S RESCUE PLAN AND A COMMITMENT TO AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE EXODUS THAT WOULD SOON BE TAKING PLACE. BOWING AND WORSHIPING SAYS “I SUBMIT, I AGREE, I COOPERATE.”**

**THE TENTH PLAGUE STRIKES: DEATH OF THE FIRSTBORN (12:29–30)**

**29 AT MIDNIGHT THE LORD STRUCK DOWN ALL THE FIRSTBORN IN EGYPT, FROM THE FIRSTBORN OF PHARAOH, WHO SAT ON THE THRONE, TO THE FIRSTBORN OF THE PRISONER, WHO WAS IN THE DUNGEON, AND THE FIRSTBORN OF ALL THE LIVESTOCK AS WELL. 30 PHARAOH AND ALL HIS OFFICIALS AND ALL THE EGYPTIANS GOT UP DURING THE NIGHT, AND THERE WAS LOUD WAILING IN EGYPT, FOR THERE WAS NOT A HOUSE WITHOUT SOMEONE DEAD.**

**THE ACTUAL DESCRIPTION OF THE TENTH AND MOST DESTRUCTIVE PLAGUE IS RELATIVELY BRIEF, IN KEEPING WITH THE PATTERN ESTABLISHED IN THE EARLIER PLAGUE ACCOUNTS, WHERE THE DESCRIPTION OF WHAT WAS TO HAPPEN OFTEN IS GIVEN MORE SPACE THAN THE DESCRIPTION OF WHAT DID HAPPEN. VERBATIM COMMAND-FULFILLMENT STYLE WAS SOMETHING MOSES WAS WELL CAPABLE OF USING WHEN APPROPRIATE, BUT HERE, IN TWO RELATIVELY SIMPLE VERSES, THE HORRIBLE CONSEQUENCES OF EGYPTIAN RESISTANCE TO GOD AND ABUSE OF HIS PEOPLE OVER MANY YEARS CAME TO PASS DURING A SINGLE NIGHT. 12:29 THE FIRSTBORN DIED AT MIDNIGHT (OR “IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT” AS ḤĂṢÎ HALLAYLĀH COULD ALSO BE TRANSLATED), APPARENTLY SUDDENLY AND ALL AT ONCE, STRUCK DOWN DIRECTLY BY THE LORD HIMSELF. THE VERSE CONFIRMS WHAT 12:12 PREDICTED, IN CONFORMITY WITH THE OVERVIEW OF HOW THE PLAGUES WOULD CONCLUDE THAT WAS REVEALED TO MOSES IN 4:22–23 AND CONSISTENT WITH THE WARNING MOSES HAD GIVEN TO PHARAOH IN 11:5. AT THAT POINT IN THE STORY (11:5), MOSES LISTED AS SAMPLE DEATHS TO COME THAT OF PHARAOH’S FIRSTBORN, THE SLAVE/SERVANT GIRL’S FIRSTBORN, AND THE CATTLE’S FIRSTBORN. HERE THE LIST IS THE SAME EXCEPT THAT “THE PRISONER, WHO WAS IN THE DUNGEON” IS SUBSTITUTED FOR “THE SLAVE [SERVANT] GIRL WHO IS AT HER HAND MILL.” THE DIFFERENCE HAS NO SIGNIFICANCE BEYOND STYLISTIC VARIATION: BOTH LISTS SAY, IN EFFECT, “FROM THE GREATEST TO THE LEAST TO EVEN THE CATTLE.” THE FIRST OPPRESSIVE PHARAOH (1:8) HAD, WITH THE COMPLICITY OF HIS FELLOW EGYPTIANS AT ALL LEVELS (SEE COMMENTS ON 1:22) CAUSED THE DEATH OF ALL ISRAELITE BABY BOYS IN EVERY FAMILY (1:16, 22), NOT BECAUSE THE BOYS HAD DONE ANYTHING TO DESERVE DEATH BUT BECAUSE IT WAS HIS BRUTAL WAY OF TRYING TO SUPPRESS THE POWER OF THE NATION INTO WHICH THEY HAD BEEN BORN. NOW THE PHARAOH OF THE PLAGUES, HIS SON/DAUGHTER OR GRANDSONS (THE SON OF ONE’S SON OR ONE’S DAUGHTER)/GRANDDAUGHTER, AND THE CHILDREN AND/OR GRANDCHILDREN OF THE ORIGINAL OPPRESSING GENERATION EXPERIENCED A CORRESPONDING DISASTER, THE DEATH OF THE FIRSTBORN IN EVERY FAMILY. THIS WAS NOT A CASE, HOWEVER, OF RETURNING EVIL FOR EVIL. IT WAS A CASE OF DIVINE RETRIBUTION, JUSTICE METED OUT TO THOSE WHO DESERVED IT, A JUDGMENT AGAINST AN ENTIRE SOCIETY AND THEIR ABSURD RELIGIOUS BELIEFS THAT LED THEM TO PRACTICE THE HORRIBLE TREATMENT THEY HAD GIVEN THE ISRAELITES IN THE PAST, THINKING IT APPROPRIATE. EVIL FOR EVIL WOULD HAVE BEEN ACCOMPLISHED IF THE ISRAELITES THEMSELVES HAD FIGURED OUT A WAY TO KILL EGYPTIAN BABIES AFTER HAVING COME TO A POSITION OF POWER OVER THEIR FORMER OPPRESSORS. GOD, NOT ISRAELITES, DID THIS KILLING OF THE EGYPTIAN FIRSTBORN, HOWEVER, AND DID SO WITHIN THE BOUNDS OF HIS RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENT AGAINST EVILDOERS. 12:30 THIS VERSE NEED NOT BE INTERPRETED TO SUGGEST THAT ALL THE EGYPTIANS FROM GREATEST TO LEAST WERE AWAKENED BY SOME SORT OF SOUNDS OF FIRSTBORN CHILDREN DYING. THE DEATHS MAY HAVE BEEN VERY QUIET, WITH MANY OR ALL WHO DIED DOING SO IN THEIR SLEEP. THE REASON EVERYONE (GENERALLY SPEAKING, AT LEAST) GOT UP DURING THE NIGHT MAY SIMPLY HAVE BEEN BECAUSE MOST HAD HEARD ABOUT THE PREDICTION THAT THEIR FIRSTBORN WOULD DIE AT MIDNIGHT. HOW MANY FAMILIES WHO KNEW OF THE PREDICTION WOULD HAVE PLANNED TO SLEEP THROUGH UNTIL MORNING AND THEN CHECK TO SEE IF THEIR CHILDREN WERE ALL WELL? A LARGE PERCENTAGE OF PARENTS PROBABLY DID NOT SLEEP AT ALL BY REASON OF APPREHENSION. MANY PROBABLY CHECKED ON THEIR CHILDREN PERIODICALLY. NO CLOCKS EXISTED AT THIS POINT IN ANTIQUITY, SO PEOPLE COULD ONLY HAVE GUESSED THE TIME, BUT SOON ENOUGH AFTER MIDNIGHT PEOPLE WOULD HAVE BEGUN TO FIND CHILDREN DEAD AND WOULD HAVE BEGUN TO WAIL. THE WAILING IN ONE HOUSE WOULD HAVE ALERTED THE INHABITANTS IN ANOTHER TO CHECK ON THE FIRSTBORN IMMEDIATELY; THEY WOULD HAVE FOUND THEM DEAD TOO, AND SO THE WAILING WOULD SPREAD FROM HOUSE TO HOUSE AND INTENSIFY. “WAILING” (ṢĔʿĀQĀH) IS THE SAME TERM GOD USED OF THE OUTCRY OF THE ISRAELITES UNDER THEIR BONDAGE (3:7, 9). NOW IT WAS THE EGYPTIANS’ TURN, IN A FULL AND DRAMATIC REVERSAL OF FORTUNES. IN PANTHEISTIC EGYPTIAN SOCIETY, EVEN THE DEATH OF SO MANY LIVESTOCK WOULD BE MOURNED, IN ADDITION TO THE SENSE OF ECONOMIC LOSS. WE ARE NOT TOLD WHETHER THE FIRSTBORN OF PHARAOH WAS A DAUGHTER OR A SON. IN EITHER CASE, THE SYCOPHANTIC HISTORIOGRAPHY OF THE EGYPTIANS WOULD NOT PRESERVE RECORD OF ANY SUCH HUMILIATION, JUST AS IT DID NOT PRESERVE A RECORD OF ANYTHING ELSE RELATED TO THE EXODUS. THE EVENT WAS, HOWEVER, SUFFICIENT TO ELIMINATE ALL RESISTANCE TO THE EXODUS ON THE PART OF THE EGYPTIANS, MOST NOTABLY, PHARAOH (12:31–33). THE EXPRESSION “THERE WAS NOT A HOUSE WITHOUT SOMEONE DEAD” COULD AS WELL OR BETTER BE TRANSLATED “THERE WAS NOT [AN EXTENDED] FAMILY WITHOUT SOMEONE DEAD.” IT WOULD NOT BE USUAL FOR A COUPLE WITHOUT CHILDREN TO LIVE IN THEIR OWN HOME APART FROM THE HUSBAND’S PARENTS OR FOR AN UNMARRIED FIRSTBORN TO LIVE ALONE APART FROM HIS/HER PARENTS. ACCORDINGLY, VIRTUALLY ALL EGYPTIAN FAMILIES/HOUSEHOLDS WOULD HAVE INDEED EXPERIENCED THE TENTH PLAGUE.**

**THE EXODUS IS PERMITTED UNDER GOD’S VIGIL (12:31–36)**

**31 DURING THE NIGHT PHARAOH SUMMONED MOSES AND AARON AND SAID, “UP! LEAVE MY PEOPLE, YOU AND THE ISRAELITES! GO, WORSHIP THE LORD AS YOU HAVE REQUESTED. 32 TAKE YOUR FLOCKS AND HERDS, AS YOU HAVE SAID, AND GO. AND ALSO BLESS ME.” 33 THE EGYPTIANS URGED THE PEOPLE TO HURRY AND LEAVE THE COUNTRY. “FOR OTHERWISE,” THEY SAID, “WE WILL ALL DIE!” 34 SO THE PEOPLE TOOK THEIR DOUGH BEFORE THE YEAST WAS ADDED, AND CARRIED IT ON THEIR SHOULDERS IN KNEADING TROUGHS WRAPPED IN CLOTHING. 35 THE ISRAELITES DID AS MOSES INSTRUCTED AND ASKED THE EGYPTIANS FOR ARTICLES OF SILVER AND GOLD AND FOR CLOTHING. 36 THE LORD HAD MADE THE EGYPTIANS FAVORABLY DISPOSED TOWARD THE PEOPLE, AND THEY GAVE THEM WHAT THEY ASKED FOR; SO, THEY PLUNDERED THE EGYPTIANS.**

**ISRAEL LEFT EGYPT ON SUDDEN NOTICE, FREELY, RAPIDLY, AND COMPARATIVELY WEALTHY. IN THIS SECTION OF THE NARRATIVE MOSES HELPS THE READER UNDERSTAND FOUR THINGS: THE SUDDENNESS OF THE EXODUS; WHY PHARAOH AND THE EGYPTIANS FINALLY GAVE FULL AND EVEN EAGER PERMISSION FOR THE EXODUS; WHY THE PASSOVER OBSERVANCE SO STRONGLY EMPHASIZES EATING UNYEASTED BREAD; AND HOW THE ISRAELITES FINANCED THEIR FORTY YEARS IN THE WILDERNESS, A FACT THAT EXPLAINS THEIR EVENTUAL ABILITY TO CONTRIBUTE AND/OR PURCHASE PRECIOUS METALS AND OTHER VALUABLE MATERIALS FOR THE TABERNACLE AND ITS APPURTENANCES. 12:31–32 THE ORIGINAL STRATEGY OF THE OPPRESSION OF ISRAEL HAD BEEN BASED ON THE SEEMINGLY REASONABLE ASSUMPTION THAT THE ISRAELITES, AS ASIAN FOREIGNERS, MUST BE KEPT UNDER EGYPTIAN CONTROL IN EGYPTIAN TERRITORY LEST THEY JOIN WITH OTHER ASIANS, OVERWHELM THE EGYPTIANS, AND TAKE OVER THE COUNTRY BY FORCE (SEE COMMENTS ON 1:10). THAT LONG-HELD STRATEGY HAD ENDURED APPROXIMATELY EIGHTY YEARS DURING THE ADMINISTRATIONS OF AT LEAST TWO PHARAOHS. YET NOW IT WAS INSTANTLY OVERTURNED BY THE COMMAND OF THE PHARAOH OF THE EXODUS. WHY SO TOTAL A REVERSAL? WHY WOULD PHARAOH FINALLY CAVE IN TO EVERY DEMAND MADE BY STEPHEN YAHWEH ON BEHALF OF HIS PEOPLE SO THAT HE DECLARED THEM FREE TO “LEAVE MY PEOPLE” (V. 31), THAT IS, TO SEPARATE FROM EGYPT AND THE EGYPTIANS, THE VERY THING THE OFFICIAL, LONG-TERM EGYPTIAN GOVERNMENTAL STRATEGY HAD SOUGHT TO PREVENT? WHY WOULD HE NOW GRANT THE “FINAL” FREEDOM THAT HAD BEEN DENIED EVEN AFTER THE HORRENDOUS PLAGUE OF DARKNESS, THAT OF TAKING “YOUR FLOCKS AND HERDS, AS YOU HAVE SAID” (V. 32; CF. 10:24–27)? THE ANSWER IS IMPLIED IN PHARAOH’S REQUEST TO MOSES, QUOTED AT THE END OF V. 32, “AND ALSO BLESS ME.” IN MOSES’ CAREFULLY CRAFTED NARRATIVE, THE LAST TIME AN ISRAELITE BLESSED A PHARAOH WAS WHEN JACOB BLESSED THE PHARAOH WHOM JOSEPH SERVED AS PRIME MINISTER (GEN 47:7, 10). THAT WAS THE LAST RECORDED TIME IN MOSES’ STORY OF THE ISRAELITES THAT THE EGYPTIAN KING HAD ACCEPTED A BLESSING FROM AN ISRAELITE, AN ACT THAT INDICATED APPRECIATION AND RESPECT FOR THE LEADER OF THE PEOPLE WHO HAD COME TO LIVE AMONG THE EGYPTIANS. NOW THIS PHARAOH SHOWED BY HIS REQUEST THAT HE HAD MADE THE SPIRITUAL-PSYCHOLOGICAL SHIFT (HOWEVER TEMPORARY IT MAY IN FACT HAVE BEEN) TO THE SAME SORT OF POSITION OF RESPECT AND APPRECIATION FOR THE ISRAELITES AS THAT EMBODIED IN THEIR LEADER. MOSES NOW STOOD IN RELATION TO PHARAOH IN THE POSITION THAT JACOB HIMSELF HAD ONCE STOOD. OF COURSE, ULTIMATELY THE DEATH OF THE FIRSTBORN IN HIS FAMILY AND IN ALL THE EGYPTIAN FAMILIES WAS THE OBVIOUS, DECISIVE FACTOR THAT CHANGED ALL ATTITUDES, A LETHAL DIVINE DISPLAY OF POWER AND JUDGMENT THAT COULD NOT BE IGNORED. SO NOW IT WAS THE ISRAELITES WHO WERE TO BE FEARED AND THE EGYPTIANS WHO FOUND THEMSELVES IN THE POSITION OF SUPPLICATION, VIA THEIR PHARAOH. DID MOSES AND AARON APPEAR THAT PASSOVER NIGHT BEFORE PHARAOH? THIS IS WHAT WOULD SEEM TO BE IMPLIED BY MOST OF THE ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS, REPRESENTED BY THE NIV’S “DURING THE NIGHT PHARAOH SUMMONED MOSES AND AARON AND SAID.” IF HE SUMMONED THEM AND SPOKE TO THEM, IT WOULD SEEM OBVIOUS THAT MOSES DID INDEED APPEAR BEFORE HIM AGAIN, IN CONTRADICTION TO AT LEAST THE APPARENT MEANING OF HIS WORDS IN 10:29, “JUST AS YOU SAY, … I WILL NEVER APPEAR BEFORE YOU AGAIN.” THE CONTRADICTION, HOWEVER, IS ONLY APPARENT, THE RESULT OF A TRANSLATION CHOICE. THE HEBREW TERM HERE TRANSLATED “SUMMON” IS QĀRĀʾ LĔ, WHICH DOES INDEED SOMETIMES MEAN “SUMMON” (CALL TO APPEAR IN ONE’S PRESENCE) BUT OFTEN MEANS “PROCLAIM, SEND WORD TO OR INFORM BY MESSENGER.” THE MOST LIKELY SCENARIO IS THAT SOMETIME AFTER THE EXCHANGE OF WORDS CULMINATING IN 10:29, MOSES AND AARON RETURNED TO GOSHEN TO ORGANIZE THE ISRAELITES FOR THE EXODUS (AS MUCH OF THE FOREGOING PART OF CHAP. 12 DESCRIBES) AND THAT PHARAOH’S PERMISSION WAS SENT TO HIM THERE DURING THE WANING HOURS OF THE PASSOVER NIGHT BY MOUNTED MESSENGERS. 12:33–34 A SOMEWHAT MORE LITERAL TRANSLATION OF V. 33 WOULD READ: “THE EGYPTIANS PRESSURED THE PEOPLE IN ORDER TO GET THEM TO LEAVE THE LAND QUICKLY BECAUSE THEY SAID, ‘WE ARE ALL DEAD!’ ” THE POINT IS THAT GOD USED THE EGYPTIANS TO HELP MAKE THE ISRAELITES DO WHAT WAS STILL SURELY NOT AN EASY THING: TO LEAVE THE COUNTRY OF THEIR BIRTH AND THE COUNTRY THEIR ANCESTORS HAD OCCUPIED FOR 430 YEARS. THE EGYPTIAN MOTIVE WAS CLEAR ENOUGH—THEY WANTED TO AVOID FURTHER FATAL CONSEQUENCES OF THE POLICY OF KEEPING THE ISRAELITES AGAINST THEIR WILL IN EGYPT. EGYPTIANS WHO LIVED ANYWHERE NEAR ISRAELITES WERE BEGGING THEM TO DEPART AT ONCE BECAUSE THEY FEARED THE CONSEQUENCES OF FURTHER DELAYING THE WILL OF THE GOD WHO SOUGHT THE RELEASE OF HIS PEOPLE. WITHOUT TIME TO DO THE USUAL FOOD PREPARATION BUT WANTING TO HAVE SOMETHING TO EAT AS THEY TRAVELED, EVEN IN GREAT HASTE, THE ISRAELITES TOOK DOUGH FOR BREAD. BUT SINCE THERE WAS NO TIME TO MIX IN THE LEAVEN AND THEN WAIT AROUND FOR IT TO RISE, THEY SIMPLY WRAPPED THEIR FRESHLY MADE DOUGH IN FABRIC (IN THIS CASE CLOTHING) TO KEEP IT FROM SPOILING AND CARRIED THE WRAPPED KNEADING TROUGHS ON THEIR SHOULDERS AS THEY HEADED OUT. 12:35–36 GOD KNEW THAT HIS PEOPLE HAD BEEN IMPOVERISHED BY THEIR YEARS OF SLAVERY, BUT YET HE WAS ASKING THEM TO HEAD OFF ON A LENGTHY AND COSTLY JOURNEY. EVEN IF THEIR DISOBEDIENCE HAD NOT LENGTHENED THAT JOURNEY TO THE SPAN OF A GENERATION, THAT IS, FORTY YEARS (NUM 14:34–35), IT WOULD STILL HAVE BEEN A JOURNEY LASTING SOME MONTHS. HOW WOULD THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE SURVIVE IN THE WILDERNESS THAT LAY BETWEEN EGYPT AND CANAAN DURING THAT TIME? THEY WOULD NEED MONEY TO BUY SUPPLIES FROM TRADERS, CARAVANEERS, AND LOCAL SETTLEMENTS AND (IN THE PLAN THAT HE HAD FOR THEM BUT THAT THEY THEMSELVES COULD NOT NECESSARILY YET COMPREHEND) TO MAKE AT HIS COMMAND A WORSHIP CENTER AND WORSHIP IMPLEMENTS WORTHY OF HIS GREATNESS. WHERE WOULD THE MONEY COME FROM? THE ANSWER IS: FROM THE EGYPTIANS—AS PLUNDER, IN OTHER WORDS, THE SPOILS OF WAR. THIS LANGUAGE (“SO THEY PLUNDERED”) REPRESENTS YET ANOTHER INDICATION OF THE IDENTITY GOD WAS PROVIDING TO THE ISRAELITES: THAT OF HIS ARMY, WHO WOULD MOSTLY GO THROUGH THE MOTIONS OF FIGHTING WHEN HE IN FACT FOUGHT FOR THEM IN THE HOLY WAR (SEE COMMENTS ON CHAPS. 14–15) BUT WHO NEEDED TO THINK OF THEMSELVES AS HIS FIGHTING FORCE, AND ORGANIZE AND ACT LIKE AN ARMY ALREADY IN CONNECTION WITH LEAVING EGYPT (CF. 6:26; 7:4; 12:17, 51). SO THE ISRAELITES, EMBOLDENED BY THE MOMENT AND GOD’S INSTRUCTION, WENT AROUND TO EGYPTIAN HOUSES, WHERE THE SHOCK OF THE DEATH OF THE FIRSTBORN WAS STILL ONLY HOURS OLD, AND ASKED FOR VALUABLES, MONEY, AND CLOTHES (THE MEANING OF “ARTICLES OF SILVER AND GOLD AND … CLOTHING”). THEY GOT WHATEVER THEY ASKED, NOT MERELY BECAUSE THE EGYPTIANS WERE NOW TERRIFIED OF THE ISRAELITES BUT BECAUSE GOD HAD SUPERNATURALLY CAUSED THE EGYPTIANS TO THINK COLLECTIVELY ALONG THESE LINES (“THE LORD HAD MADE THE EGYPTIANS FAVORABLY DISPOSED TOWARD THE PEOPLE”). ACCORDINGLY, PREVIOUSLY WEAK LITTLE ISRAEL CAME AWAY FROM SLAVERY TO THE GREATEST POWER OF THE DAY INSTANTLY ENRICHED. PEOPLE SUDDENLY HELD IN THEIR POCKETS AND BAGS MORE PRECIOUS GEMS AND METALS THAN THEY WOULD EVER HAVE HAD A CHANCE TO ACCUMULATE IN A LIFETIME AND ALL THE CLOTHES THEY WOULD NEED FOR MANY YEARS OF LIVING IN THE WILDERNESS.**

**THE EXODUS BEGINS (12:37–42)**

**37 THE ISRAELITES JOURNEYED FROM RAMESES TO SUCCOTH. THERE WERE ABOUT SIX HUNDRED THOUSAND MEN ON FOOT, BESIDES WOMEN AND CHILDREN. 38 MANY OTHER PEOPLE WENT UP WITH THEM, AS WELL AS LARGE DROVES OF LIVESTOCK, BOTH FLOCKS AND HERDS. 39 WITH THE DOUGH THEY HAD BROUGHT FROM EGYPT, THEY BAKED CAKES OF UNLEAVENED BREAD. THE DOUGH WAS WITHOUT YEAST BECAUSE THEY HAD BEEN DRIVEN OUT OF EGYPT AND DID NOT HAVE TIME TO PREPARE FOOD FOR THEMSELVES. 40 NOW THE LENGTH OF TIME THE ISRAELITE PEOPLE LIVED IN EGYPT WAS 430 YEARS. 41 AT THE END OF THE 430 YEARS, TO THE VERY DAY, ALL THE LORD’S DIVISIONS LEFT EGYPT. 42 BECAUSE THE LORD KEPT VIGIL THAT NIGHT TO BRING THEM OUT OF EGYPT, ON THIS NIGHT ALL THE ISRAELITES ARE TO KEEP VIGIL TO HONOR THE LORD FOR THE GENERATIONS TO COME.**

**THIS SECTION OF THE STORY DESCRIBES THE VERY BEGINNING OF THE EXODUS TRAVEL, FROM THE PRIMARY DEPARTURE CITY TO THE FIRST STOPPING POINT. IT TELLS THE APPROXIMATE NUMBER OF NASCENT SOLDIERS INVOLVED AND INDICATES THAT, ALREADY, MANY PEOPLE HAD BECOME ISRAELITES BY FAITH CHOICE RATHER THAN BY BIRTH. IT WAS A FULL EXODUS WITH NOTHING LEFT BEHIND, AND THE MAIN FOOD OF THE TRAVELING NATION WAS, OF NECESSITY, UNLEAVENED BREAD. THE EXODUS BROUGHT TO AN END 430 YEARS OF RESIDENT ALIEN STATUS FOR ISRAEL IN EGYPT, THE LAST EIGHTY YEARS OR SO BEING YEARS OF SLAVERY. GOD PAID SPECIAL ATTENTION TO HIS PEOPLE THAT NIGHT, AND IN RESPONSE HIS PEOPLE OF ALL FUTURE GENERATIONS WERE EXPECTED TO COME TO PAY SPECIAL ATTENTION TO HIM ON ITS ANNIVERSARY. 12:37 THIS VERSE ASSERTS TWO THINGS THAT SURELY MADE PERFECT SENSE TO MOSES’ ORIGINAL AUDIENCE AND TO MOST ISRAELITES THEREAFTER BUT WHICH OFFER DIFFICULTIES FOR MODERN READERS BECAUSE OF OUR LACK OF KNOWLEDGE OF THE ANCIENT SCENE. THE FIRST IS THAT OF THE LOCATION OF THE PLACES NAMED, RAMESES AND SUCCOTH. WE REALLY CANNOT DETERMINE WHERE THESE WERE LOCATED, EXCEPT THAT THEY WERE SOMEWHERE IN NORTHERN EGYPT, THAT SUCCOTH WAS SURELY TO THE EAST OF RAMESES (SINCE THE ISRAELITES STARTED OUT GOING EAST BEFORE THEIR LATER, SPECIAL DETOUR SOUTH), AND THAT RAMESES MAY HAVE BEEN SOME KIND OF EGYPTIAN DELTA CAPITAL CITY. HERRMANN ARGUES THAT THE OFFICIAL, FULL NAME OF THE CITY WAS “HOUSE OF RAMESSES, BELOVED OF AMUN, GREAT IN VICTORIOUS MIGHT,” USUALLY ABBREVIATED IN EGYPTIAN REFERENCES TO THE SIMPLER PR-Rʿ-MS-SW, “HOUSE OF RAMESES.” HE CONSIDERS IT LIKELY THAT RAMESES WAS A LARGE CAPITAL AREA (I.E., SOMETHING LIKE A DISTRICT RATHER THAN MERELY A CITY AS MEASURED BY THE LOCATION OF THE CITY WALLS PER SE) THAT FLOURISHED DURING THE NINETEENTH DYNASTY. WE HAVE ALREADY NOTED (1:11) THAT RAMESES WAS APPARENTLY FIRST BUILT BY ISRAELITE SLAVES AS A “STORE CITY,” MEANING A CITY INTENDED TO HOUSE WAR MATERIALS FOR FIGHTING BACK POTENTIAL ASIAN INVADERS. SUKKOTH MAY WELL HAVE BEEN THE CITY CALLED IN ANCIENT EGYPTIAN RECORDS TKW. SOME SCHOLARS HAVE SUGGESTED, HOWEVER, THAT IT MAY BE ANOTHER NAME FOR WHAT 1:11 CALLS PITHOM, THAT IS, A CITY FAMILIAR TO THE ISRAELITES BECAUSE THEY HAD HELPED BUILD IT. SOME BELIEVE IT MAY NOT HAVE BEEN A CITY PER SE BUT A REGION TO THE EAST OF RAMESES. OTHERS CONSIDER IT LIKELY THAT IT REPRESENTS WHAT IS NOW AN ERODED TEL IN THE WADI TUMILAR, TELL EL-MASKHUTA. THE ISRAELITES MAY HAVE MASSED AT RAMESES IN ORDER TO BE GROUPED TOGETHER (SINCE IT SURELY WOULD HAVE BEEN LOCATED, AS A DEFENSIVE CITY, AT OR NEAR A MAJOR ROAD OR CROSSROADS), OR IT MAY SIMPLY BE THAT THIS WAS THE MOST PROMINENT GEOGRAPHICAL POINT OF REFERENCE NEAR WHERE THEIR VILLAGES AND SETTLEMENTS WERE LOCATED, AND SO ITS NAME WAS USED TO DESCRIBE THEIR POINT OF DEPARTURE FROM EGYPT.**

**EXCURSUS: HOW MANY ISRAELITES LEFT EGYPT?**

**THE HEBREW OF THE EXOD 12:37 SAYS LITERALLY, “THE ISRAELITES TRAVELED FROM RAMESES TO SUCCOTH, ABOUT SIX HUNDRED ʾELEPHS OF FOOT-SOLDIERS, BESIDES WOMEN AND CHILDREN.” THE NIV TRANSLATION, LIKE MOST ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS, CONTAINS TWO ARGUABLE ASSUMPTIONS ON THE PART OF THE TRANSLATORS: THAT ʾELEPH SHOULD BE TRANSLATED “THOUSAND,” AND THAT RAḠLÎ IN THE EXPRESSION RAḠLÎ HAGGĔBĀRÎM SHOULD BE TRANSLATED “MEN.” BOTH OF THESE ASSUMPTIONS ARE, IN OUR OPINION, INCORRECT. THE SECOND, WHICH ASSUMES THAT RAḠLÎ CAN MEAN “MEN,” IS NOT SUPPORTABLE IN ANY OLD TESTAMENT CONTEXT. SOME LEXICONS GO SO FAR AS TO SUGGEST THAT THE TERM IN THE SINGULAR MIGHT MEAN A “MAN ON FOOT,” BUT NONE COULD RIGHTLY SUGGEST THAT IT MEANS SIMPLY “MAN.” IN THE GRAMMAR OF THE VERSE, THE ADDITION OF THE APPOSITIONAL NOUN HAGGĔBĀRÎM (LIT., “[THE] YOUNG MEN”) SIMPLY CLARIFIES THE AGE OF THE MAN/MEN IN QUESTION. SINCE RAḠLÎ ALWAYS OCCURS IN CONTEXTS DESCRIBING SOLDIERS, INCLUDING THE PRESENT CONTEXT (NOTE THE WORDING “ALL THE LORD’S DIVISIONS” IN V. 41), AND DIFFERS FROM ANY OF THE USUAL TERMS FOR “MAN” OR “MEN,” THERE REALLY CAN BE LITTLE DOUBT THAT IT SHOULD BE RENDERED “FOOT SOLDIER” OR, AS SOME DO, “INFANTRYMAN” WHEREVER IT OCCURS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT. THE FULL EXPRESSION RAḠLÎ HAGGĔBĀRÎM, THEN, MEANS “YOUNG FOOT SOLDIERS.” BECAUSE THE QUESTION OF THE MEANING OF ʾELEPH, HOWEVER, IS SO MUCH GREATER AN ISSUE FOR PEOPLE AS IT RELATES TO THE ACCURACY OF THE SCRIPTURE AND THE PROPER INTERPRETATION OF VARIOUS STORIES INVOLVING THE ISRAELITE EXODUS AND CONQUEST OF CANAAN, THE DISCUSSION OF THIS TERM REQUIRES A FAR MORE EXTENSIVE REVIEW. THE READER SHOULD BEAR IN MIND, HOWEVER, THAT MOSES DID NOT REFER TO SIX HUNDRED ʾELEPHS OF “MEN” WHO LEFT EGYPT BUT TO SIX HUNDRED ʾELEPHS OF FOOT SOLDIERS. HE WAS COUNTING GOD’S ARMY, NOT ALL THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL, AND THE FOLLOWING GROUPINGS OF TRANSLATIONS FOR ʾELEPH MUST BE CONSIDERED IN THAT LIGHT. HERE, FROM THE NRSV, ARE THE RANGE OF TRANSLATIONS IN ENGLISH FOR HEBREW ʾELEPH. WE USE THE NRSV IN ORDER TO PROVIDE A (HOPEFULLY, ON THIS ISSUE) NEUTRAL BASE OF COMPARISON TO THE NIV, ESPECIALLY IN LIGHT OF THE FACT THAT IT IS THE MOST WIDELY USED MAJOR ENGLISH TRANSLATION IN CIRCULATION AFTER THE NIV.**

**ELEPH TRANSLATED “THOUSAND”**

**EXOD 18:21: YOU SHOULD ALSO LOOK FOR ABLE MEN AMONG ALL THE PEOPLE, MEN WHO FEAR GOD, ARE TRUSTWORTHY, AND HATE DISHONEST GAIN; SET SUCH MEN OVER THEM AS OFFICERS OVER THOUSANDS, HUNDREDS, FIFTIES AND TENS. NUM 10:36: AND WHENEVER IT CAME TO REST, HE WOULD SAY, “RETURN, O LORD OF THE TEN THOUSAND-THOUSANDS OF ISRAEL.” NUM 31:4: YOU SHALL SEND A THOUSAND FROM EACH OF THE TRIBES OF ISRAEL TO THE WAR.” NUM 31:5: SO OUT OF THE THOUSANDS OF ISRAEL, A THOUSAND FROM EACH TRIBE WERE CONSCRIPTED, TWELVE THOUSAND ARMED FOR BATTLE. JOSH 7:3: THEN THEY RETURNED TO JOSHUA AND SAID TO HIM, “NOT ALL THE PEOPLE NEED GO UP; ABOUT TWO OR THREE THOUSAND MEN SHOULD GO UP AND ATTACK AI. SINCE THEY ARE SO FEW, DO NOT MAKE THE WHOLE PEOPLE TOIL UP THERE.” 1 SAM 23:23: LOOK AROUND AND LEARN ALL THE HIDING PLACES WHERE HE LURKS, AND COME BACK TO ME WITH SURE INFORMATION. THEN I WILL GO WITH YOU; AND IF HE IS IN THE LAND, I WILL SEARCH HIM OUT AMONG ALL THE THOUSANDS OF JUDAH.”**

**ELEPH TRANSLATED “CATTLE”**

**DEUT 7:13: HE WILL LOVE YOU, BLESS YOU, AND MULTIPLY YOU; HE WILL BLESS THE FRUIT OF YOUR WOMB AND THE FRUIT OF YOUR GROUND, YOUR GRAIN AND YOUR WINE AND YOUR OIL, THE INCREASE OF YOUR CATTLE AND THE ISSUE OF YOUR FLOCK, IN THE LAND THAT HE SWORE TO YOUR ANCESTORS TO GIVE YOU. DEUT 28:4: BLESSED SHALL BE THE FRUIT OF YOUR WOMB, THE FRUIT OF YOUR GROUND, AND THE FRUIT OF YOUR LIVESTOCK, BOTH THE INCREASE OF YOUR CATTLE AND THE ISSUE OF YOUR FLOCK. DEUT 28:18: CURSED SHALL BE THE FRUIT OF YOUR WOMB, THE FRUIT OF YOUR GROUND, THE INCREASE OF YOUR CATTLE AND THE ISSUE OF YOUR FLOCK. DEUT 28:51: IT SHALL CONSUME THE FRUIT OF YOUR LIVESTOCK AND THE FRUIT OF YOUR GROUND UNTIL YOU ARE DESTROYED, LEAVING YOU NEITHER GRAIN, WINE, AND OIL, NOR THE INCREASE OF YOUR CATTLE AND THE ISSUE OF YOUR FLOCK, UNTIL IT HAS MADE YOU PERISH.**

**ELEPH TRANSLATED “CLAN(S)”**

**JOSH 22:14: AND WITH HIM TEN CHIEFS, ONE FROM EACH OF THE TRIBAL FAMILIES OF ISRAEL, EVERY ONE OF THEM THE HEAD OF A FAMILY AMONG THE CLANS OF ISRAEL. JUDG 6:15: HE RESPONDED, “BUT SIR, HOW CAN I DELIVER ISRAEL? MY CLAN IS THE WEAKEST IN MANASSEH, AND I AM THE LEAST IN MY FAMILY.” 1 SAM 10:19: BUT TODAY YOU HAVE REJECTED YOUR GOD, WHO SAVES YOU FROM ALL YOUR CALAMITIES AND YOUR DISTRESSES; AND YOU HAVE SAID, ‘NO! BUT SET A KING OVER US.’ NOW THEREFORE PRESENT YOURSELVES BEFORE THE LORD BY YOUR TRIBES AND BY YOUR CLANS.” ISA 60:22: THE LEAST OF THEM SHALL BECOME A CLAN, / AND THE SMALLEST ONE A MIGHTY NATION; / I AM THE LORD; / IN ITS TIME I WILL ACCOMPLISH IT QUICKLY. MIC 5:2: BUT YOU, O BETHLEHEM OF EPHRATHAH, / WHO ARE ONE OF THE LITTLE CLANS OF JUDAH, / FROM YOU SHALL COME FORTH FOR ME / ONE WHO IS TO RULE IN ISRAEL, / WHOSE ORIGIN IS FROM OF OLD, / FROM ANCIENT DAYS.**

**ELEPH TRANSLATED “DIVISION(S)”**

**NUM 1:16: THESE WERE THE ONES CHOSEN FROM THE CONGREGATION, THE LEADERS OF THEIR ANCESTRAL TRIBES, THE HEADS OF THE DIVISIONS OF ISRAEL.**

**ELEPH TRANSLATED “FAMILY(IES)”**

**JOSH 22:21: THEN THE REUBENITES, THE GADITES, AND THE HALF-TRIBE OF MANASSEH SAID IN ANSWER TO THE HEADS OF THE FAMILIES OF ISRAEL. JOSH 22:30: WHEN THE PRIEST PHINEHAS AND THE CHIEFS OF THE CONGREGATION, THE HEADS OF THE FAMILIES OF ISRAEL WHO WERE WITH HIM, HEARD THE WORDS THAT THE REUBENITES AND THE GADITES AND THE MANASSITES SPOKE, THEY WERE SATISFIED.**

**ELEPH TRANSLATED “OX(EN)”**

**ISA 30:24: AND THE OXEN AND DONKEYS THAT TILL THE GROUND WILL EAT SILAGE, WHICH HAS BEEN WINNOWED WITH SHOVEL AND FORK. PS 8:7: ALL SHEEP AND OXEN, AND ALSO THE BEASTS OF THE FIELD.**

**ELEPH TRANSLATED “TRIBE(S)”**

**NUM 10:4: BUT IF ONLY ONE IS BLOWN, THEN THE LEADERS, THE HEADS [FATHERS] OF THE TRIBES OF ISRAEL, SHALL ASSEMBLE BEFORE YOU.**

**AS THE ABOVE SAMPLING DEMONSTRATES, THERE IS A CONSIDERABLE SIZE TO THE SEMANTIC FIELD OR SEMANTIC DOMAIN OR “RANGE OF MEANING” OF THE WORD ʾELEPH WHEN VIEWED IN TERMS OF ENGLISH TRANSLATION EQUIVALENTS. THIS PROBABLY RESULTS FROM THE MANY SEMANTIC PATHWAYS THAT DIVERGED FROM ITS ORIGINAL OR “ROOT” MEANING, “OX.” HOW COULD THESE MEANINGS ALL DERIVE FROM “OX,” WHICH DENOTES A FULL-GROWN (AND USUALLY BUT NOT ALWAYS NEUTERED) MALE BOVINE? THE TYPICALLY SUGGESTED ROUTE IS AS FOLLOWS: FARMERS WOULD KEEP A HERD OF COWS BY LETTING THEM GRAZE WITH ONE OX. THE OX PROTECTED THE WHOLE HERD, AND THE COWS THEREFORE TENDED INSTINCTIVELY NOT TO STRAY FAR FROM HIM. THUS, WHEREVER ONE SAW A HERD OF LARGE CATTLE IN ANCIENT TIMES, ONE NORMALLY SAW IT ARRAYED AROUND AN OX. BY SIMPLE ECONOMY OF SPEECH, “OX HERD” OR THE LIKE CAME TO MEAN “HERD [ʾELEPH].” FROM THERE, BECAUSE “HERD” CONNOTES A LARGE GROUP, VARIABLE IN NUMBER, VARIOUS DEFINITIONS DERIVED, RANGING FROM “CATTLE” IN GENERAL TO “FAMILY” TO “TRIBE” TO “DIVISION.” THEN, FOR PURPOSES OF PRECISE NUMERICAL COUNTING (BUT NOT MILITARY UNIT DESCRIPTION), THE ALREADY WIDELY USED WORD WAS BORROWED TO INDICATE THE QUANTITY “THOUSAND” IN THE DECIMAL SYSTEM. THIS MODERN READING BACK INTO THE TEXT OF THE MENTALITY OF THE DECIMAL SYSTEM IN ALL PASSAGES THAT CONTAIN DESCRIPTIONS OF NUMBERS OF PEOPLE IS THE REASON THAT “THOUSAND” IS THE WORD MANY TRANSLATORS HAVE ACCORDINGLY ASSUMED MUST BE THE MEANING IN PLACES LIKE EXOD 12:37. BUT THERE IS YET ANOTHER USE OF ʾELEPH, ONE THAT COMES ABOUT IN CONNECTION WITH THE MILITARY SYSTEM, A FACT MANY TRANSLATORS HAVE PAID INSUFFICIENT ATTENTION TO. ISRAEL’S ARMY WAS ORGANIZED BY UNITS OF SIZE THAT ARE CALLED BY WORDS THAT WERE ALL OR MOSTLY ALL BORROWED ORIGINALLY FROM OTHER MEANINGS. THESE ARE USUALLY FOUND TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH, IN DESCENDING ORDER, AS THE “TRIBE,” THE “THOUSAND” (ʾELEPH), THE “HUNDRED,” THE “FIFTY,” AND THE “TEN.” AN EXAMPLE OF THIS WAY OF REFERRING TO VARIOUS MILITARY UNITS IS FOUND AT DEUT 1:15: “SO I TOOK THE LEADING MEN OF YOUR TRIBES, WISE AND RESPECTED MEN, AND APPOINTED THEM TO HAVE AUTHORITY OVER YOU—AS COMMANDERS OF THOUSANDS, OF HUNDREDS, OF FIFTIES AND OF TENS AND AS TRIBAL OFFICIALS.” A HELPFUL DEPARTURE POINT FOR THE ANALYSIS OF HOW THE WORDS FOR MILITARY UNITS ARE ACTUALLY EMPLOYED IN THE HEBREW BIBLE AND WHAT THEY OUGHT TO CONNOTE IN ENGLISH IS THAT OF MENDENHALL, WHO ARGUES THAT THE VARIOUS MILITARY UNITS WERE GROUPS OF VARYING SIZES THAT SERVED UNDER A RANKED LEADER. THUS, FOR EXAMPLE, THE COMMANDER OF AN ʾELEPH IS CALLED AN ʾALLÛP, ONE CHARGED WITH THE RESPONSIBILITY OF COMMANDING AN ʾELEPH. JUST HOW BIG WAS AN ʾELEPH THEN? MENDENHALL SUGGESTS THAT IT WAS THE NUMBER OF MEN OF FIGHTING AGE (ABOVE AGE TWENTY; CF. NUM 1:3) THAT A SINGLE TRIBAL SUBSET (EXTENDED FAMILY) OR VILLAGE OR DISTRICT OF A LARGER TOWN COULD PRODUCE. WHAT WE DO NOT KNOW IS THE ACTUAL NUMBERS OF THESE EXTENDED FAMILIES OR VILLAGE DISTRICTS. IN THE CASE OF A LARGER FAMILY OR DISTRICT, THE NUMBER MIGHT BE AS MANY AS TWENTY. A SMALL VILLAGE OR DISTRICT MIGHT PRODUCE JUST A HANDFUL. FOR GENERAL PURPOSES OF CALCULATION, IT MAY BE ASSUMED THAT MOST ʾELEPHS WERE NOT LARGER THAN FIFTEEN AND PERHAPS AVERAGED A DOZEN. THE BEST TERM TO TRANSLATE ʾELEPH IN TYPICAL MILITARY CONTEXTS, SUCH AS EXOD 12:37 (WHICH SPECIFICALLY OMITS COUNTING WOMEN AND CHILDREN BECAUSE IT IS A COUNT OF THE FIGHTING MEN ONLY), WOULD BE SOMETHING LIKE “PLATOON” OR “SQUAD,” BOTH OF WHICH ARE MILITARY TERMS FAMILIAR TO ENGLISH SPEAKERS. ACCORDINGLY, SIX HUNDRED ʾELEPHS, THE NUMBER MENTIONED IN EXOD 12:37, PROBABLY WOULD CONTAIN NOT MORE THAN 7,200 FIGHTING MEN, AT AN AVERAGE OF A DOZEN FIGHTING MEN PER ʾELEPH. IF ONE ASSUMES THAT MANY OF THESE WERE SINGLE, BUT THAT MOST MAY HAVE BEEN MARRIED, THAT MOST WHO WERE MARRIED HAD CHILDREN, AND THAT THERE WERE MANY MEN WHO COULD NOT FIGHT BECAUSE THEY WERE EITHER TOO OLD OR TOO YOUNG OR INFIRM, THE TOTAL NUMBER OF ISRAELITES WHO LEFT EGYPT MIGHT IN FACT HAVE BEEN AROUND 28,800–36,000 (ASSUMING THREE OR FOUR NONFIGHTERS FOR EVERY FIGHTER). THIS IS A LARGE AND FORMIDABLE NUMBER BUT BY NO MEANS THE TWO MILLION OR SO THAT A MISLEADING CALCULATION BASED ON TAKING ʾELEPH UNJUSTIFIABLY AS “THOUSAND” WOULD YIELD. MORE RECENTLY, SEVERAL CAREFUL ANALYSES OF THE QUESTION OF THE NUMBER OF ISRAELITES WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE EXODUS HAVE BEEN OFFERED. A PROPER UNDERSTANDING OF THE ORIGINAL HEBREW TEXT OF EXODUS YIELDS COUNTS OF AROUND 5,500 FIGHTING MEN FOR ISRAEL—JUST UNDER FIVE HUNDRED PER TRIBE ON AVERAGE. THEIR ARGUMENTS PARALLEL GENERALLY WHAT WE HAVE SUGGESTED ABOVE, THOUGH WITH A MUCH GREATER FOCUS ON (AND DIFFERENT WAY OF ANALYZING UNIT STRENGTH OF) THE TRIBE-BY-TRIBE AND UNIT-BY-UNIT CALCULATIONS THAN WE HAVE GIVEN ABOVE. UNDER THE APPROACH THEY TAKE TO THE QUESTION, THEIR TOTAL NUMBERS OF ISRAELITES WHO LEFT EGYPT PERHAPS WOULD BE ROUGHLY IN THE 22,000–27,500 RANGE. THOUGH THEY ANALYZE THE TEXT’S PRESENTATION OF THE NUMBERS IN A SOMEWHAT DIFFERENT WAY THAN WE DO, THE RESULTS ARE REMARKABLY SIMILAR. WE HAVE NO EVIDENCE FROM ANCIENT TIMES THAT ALLOWS US TO CALCULATE PRECISELY THE NUMBER OF NONFIGHTING ISRAELITES, SO THE EXACT NUMBER OF THE WHOLE NATION WILL PRESUMABLY NEVER BE KNOWN. IT WAS A FEW TENS OF THOUSANDS BUT ALMOST SURELY NOT SEVERAL MILLION. TWENTY OR THIRTY THOUSAND PEOPLE IS A NUMBER THAT EASILY CAN FIT INTO MANY MODERN SORTS OF VENUES, FROM SMALL SPORTS STADIUMS TO BEACHES TO PUBLIC GATHERINGS AND RALLIES, A FACT THAT MAY HELP MODERN READERS OF THE BOOK VISUALIZE THE ENTIRE ISRAELITE CONTINGENT, WHO WERE OFTEN IN ONE PLACE AT ONE TIME. IT IS A NUMBER THAT FITS THE FACTS OF THE BOOK OF EXODUS WELL. SUCH A NUMBER OF ISRAELITES IS LARGE ENOUGH TO REQUIRE THE MIRACULOUS PROVISIONS OF FOOD AND WATER THAT THE BOOK DESCRIBES; IT IS SMALL ENOUGH FOR THE WHOLE NATION TO GATHER ENCAMPED AROUND THE TABERNACLE AT THE VARIOUS PLACES LISTED ON THE ISRAELITE WILDERNESS ITINERARY. FOR MOST OCCASIONS OF LISTENING TO SPEECHES, THE MEN ONLY WOULD HAVE GATHERED, SEVERAL THOUSAND OR SO IN NUMBER, NOT TOO MANY TO HEAR A SPEECH SHOUTED AT THEM, ESPECIALLY IF ITS WORDS WERE RELAYED. YET SEVERAL THOUSAND TROOPS WERE FORMIDABLE AS A FIGHTING FORCE WHEN DIRECTED AT ONE PLACE AT A TIME. 12:38 THIS VERSE CONFIRMS THAT THE ISRAELITES OF THE EXODUS (AND THEREAFTER) WERE ACTUALLY A MIXED PEOPLE ETHNICALLY—SOMETHING THAT MOST CHRISTIANS ARE UNAWARE OF. THE VERSE WOULD BEST BE TRANSLATED AS FOLLOWS: “A HUGE ETHNICALLY DIVERSE GROUP ALSO WENT UP WITH THEM, AND VERY MANY CATTLE, BOTH FLOCKS AND HERDS.” TO WHAT WAS MOSES REFERRING? TO THE FACT THAT MANY OTHER PERSONS WHO WERE NOT DESCENDED FROM ABRAHAM OR ISRAEL JOINED THE ISRAELITES AS THEY LEFT EGYPT. THESE PEOPLE HAD OBSERVED THE MIRACULOUS WORK OF STEPHEN YAHWEH, ISRAEL’S GOD, AND HAD BECOME CONVINCED THAT CONVERSION TO HIM AND LIFE AMONG HIS PEOPLE WOULD REPRESENT THEIR BEST HOPE FOR THE FUTURE. IN THIS REGARD THEY WERE PREDECESSORS TO RUTH, WHO DECLARED TO NAOMI, “YOUR PEOPLE WILL BE MY PEOPLE AND YOUR GOD MY GOD” (RUTH 1:16). AMONG THEM WERE PRESUMABLY A CONSIDERABLE NUMBER OF CUSHITES, ONE OF WHOM MOSES ENDED UP MARRYING AS A SECOND WIFE. THE CUSHITES HAD RELATIVELY WARM RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE ISRAELITES LONG AFTER THE EXODUS AS WELL. THERE CAN BE NO CERTAINTY THAT PAUL INTENDED THIS VERSE TO BE CONSIDERED AS PART OF THE BACKGROUND FOR HIS COMMENTS ON THE INSIGNIFICANCE OF ETHNIC ORIGIN FOR TRUE ISRAELITES IN SUCH PLACES AS ROM 2:28–29 AND 4:11, 16–17, THOUGH THE CONCEPT IS SURELY SUPPORTED BY THE OBSERVATIONS OF THE PRESENT PASSAGE. IN NUM 11:4 MOSES ALSO REFERRED TO THE SIGNIFICANT NUMBERS OF NON-ISRAELITES AMONG THE ISRAELITES, AFTER LEAVING SINAI AND IN THE WILDERNESS TRAVELS, BY A TERM MOST MODERN ENGLISH TRANSLATORS RENDER AS “THE RABBLE” OR THE LIKE. THE PROBLEM WITH THE NIV TRANSLATION “LARGE DROVES OF LIVESTOCK” IS THAT IT GIVES THE IMPRESSION, CONTRARY TO THE ORIGINAL, THAT THE ISRAELITES HAD ORGANIZED THEIR CATTLE INTO HUGE, UNIFIED GROUPS (WHICH IS WHAT A DROVE IS), WHEREAS NOTHING SUPPORTS SUCH A NOTION. MOSES SIMPLY USED HERE A STANDARD ANCIENT LITERARY STYLE THAT MENTIONS QUANTITY OF PEOPLE FIRST AND QUANTITY OF ANIMALS SECOND. THE LIVESTOCK HAD CONSTITUTED THE LAST “HOSTAGE” GROUP IN PHARAOH’S PLAN TO KEEP THE ISRAELITES FROM LEAVING EGYPT PERMANENTLY, THE LAST STICKING POINT IN THE BARGAINING PROCESS THAT HAD PLAYED BACK AND FORTH THROUGHOUT THE SEQUENCE OF PLAGUES (10:24–27). THEY ARE MENTIONED HERE, HOWEVER, NOT MERELY BECAUSE THEIR PRESENCE AMONG THE DEPARTING ISRAELITES INDICATED TOTAL VICTORY OVER PHARAOH BUT AS INDICATION THAT THE EXODUS CONSTITUTED A COMPLETE EMIGRATION FROM EGYPT OF AN ENTIRE PEOPLE AND THEIR ECONOMIC ASSETS. THE ISRAELITES THEN MADE MUCH USE OF THEIR SMALL AND LARGE CATTLE DURING THE YEARS IN THE WILDERNESS, ESPECIALLY IN CONNECTION WITH THE SACRIFICIAL SYSTEM (E.G., EXOD 22:30; LEV AND NUM, PASSIM). 12:39 THIS VERSE SIMPLY REPORTS THE FULFILLMENT PART OF THE COMMAND-FULFILLMENT PATTERN RELATED TO THE UNLEAVENED BREAD REQUIREMENT (SEE 12:8, 14–20). BREAD WAS VIRTUALLY EVERYONE’S MAIN FOOD IN THE ANCIENT WORLD; EVEN THE MANNA IN THE WILDERNESS WAS CHARACTERIZED AS “BREAD” FROM HEAVEN (EXOD 16:4FF.). IT IS THEREFORE NATURAL THAT THE ISRAELITES WOULD TAKE BREAD DOUGH WITH THEM—AND APPROPRIATE THAT THEY COULD NOT TAKE THE TIME TO LET IT BECOME YEASTED PROPERLY BECAUSE OF LEAVING EGYPT IN SUCH A HURRY. THEY THUS ATE THE ANCIENT EQUIVALENT OF “HARD TACK” IN THE EARLY DAYS AFTER THE EVENING OF THE PASSOVER BECAUSE ANY OTHER PREPARATION OF FOOD FOR THE JOURNEY WAS IMPOSSIBLE IN LIGHT OF THE PRESSURE TO LEAVE (SEE ALSO COMMENTS ON 12:31–32) AND BECAUSE THE LEFTOVERS FROM THE PASSOVER MEAL COULD NOT BE RETAINED (CF. 12:10). 12:40–41 HERE MOSES REMINDED THE READER OF JUST HOW LONG THE ISRAELITE SOJOURN WAS: FOUR CENTURIES AND THREE DECADES, A SPAN OF TIME THAT WOULD COVER PERHAPS FOURTEEN OR FIFTEEN GENERATIONS, PLENTY OF TIME FOR MULTIPLICATION FROM THE FIRST SEVENTY PEOPLE (1:5) TO THE TENS OF THOUSANDS THAT DEPARTED ON THAT SPRING DAY. IF THE EARLY DATING FOR THE EXODUS (CA. 1440) IS FOLLOWED, THE ENTRANCE OF JACOB’S FAMILY INTO EGYPT DATES TO 1870 BC. IF THE LATER DATE (CA. 1260) IS FOLLOWED, THE ENTRANCE OCCURRED AROUND 1690 BC. BUT THE EMPHASIS HERE IS SURELY NOT ON THE CHRONOLOGY PER SE BUT ON THE WAY THAT ISRAEL HAD BEEN ACCLIMATED TO EGYPT FOR A VERY LONG TIME. WHEN THIS LONG HISTORY OF BEING SETTLED IN EGYPT IS COMPARED TO THE HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, FOR EXAMPLE (IN AMERICA FEWER THAN FOUR HUNDRED YEARS HAVE ELAPSED SINCE THE COUNTRY WAS FIRST SETTLED PERMANENTLY BY EUROPEANS), ONE CAN SEE THE IMPLICATIONS: IT WOULD BE A RADICAL CHANGE FOR PEOPLE ACCLIMATED TO ONE PLACE AND CULTURE FOR SO MANY GENERATIONS TO LEAVE SUDDENLY FOR A JOURNEY TO A PLACE NONE OF THEM HAD EVER EVEN LAID EYES ON. THUS, THE ISRAELITE DEPARTURE IN FAITH FOR A LAND OF PROMISE SERVES AS AN ANALOGY FOR THE PILGRIMAGE OF ALL GOD’S SAINTS FROM LIFE IN THIS WORLD TO THEIR ULTIMATE DESTINATION IN THE PROMISED BUT AS YET UNEXPERIENCED NEXT. VERSE 41 SHOULD READ, “AT THE END OF FOUR HUNDRED AND THIRTY YEARS, ON THAT SAME DAY, ALL THE ARMIES OF THE LORD WENT OUT FROM THE LAND OF EGYPT.” THE NIV TRANSLATION OF THE MIDDLE ADVERBIAL PHRASE, “TO THE VERY DAY,” IS MISLEADING BECAUSE IT SUGGESTS THAT THE ISRAELITES LEFT EGYPT 430 YEARS PRECISELY—NOT A DAY LESS OR A DAY MORE—AFTER THEY ENTERED IT, WHICH IS NOT THE MEANING OF THE ORIGINAL AT ALL. MOSES’ LANGUAGE DRAWS ATTENTION TO “THAT SAME DAY,” THAT IS, THE DAY AFTER THE NIGHT OF THE PASSOVER, MAKING THE POINT THAT THERE WAS NO INTERVENING DELAY BETWEEN THE PASSOVER (THE IMPOSITION OF THE TENTH PLAGUE) AND THE FIRST AVAILABLE OPPORTUNITY TO DEPART, WHICH WAS THE NEXT DAY FROM OUR POINT OF VIEW AND THE SAME DAY (SINCE THE DAY BEGAN AT SUNSET FOR THE ISRAELITES) FROM THEIR POINT OF VIEW. SIMILAR EMPHASES ON THE DATING OF THE BEGINNING OF THE FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD TO THE DAYTIME IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE PASSOVER NIGHT ARE ALSO FOUND IN EXOD 12:17; 12:51; JOSH 5:11. NOTE AGAIN THE MILITARY LANGUAGE, “ALL THE LORD’S DIVISIONS [ARMIES] LEFT EGYPT.” THEY MAY NOT HAVE FOUGHT YET, BUT THEY WERE HIS ARMY. THEY WERE UNTESTED AS A FIGHTING FORCE AND SURELY NO MATCH FOR THE EGYPTIANS FROM A HUMAN POINT OF VIEW, BUT, THEN, WHEN GOD IS AT THE HEAD OF AN ARMY, HOW POWERFUL DOES IT NEED TO BE? 12:42 A MORE LITERAL TRANSLATION OF V. 42 WOULD BE: “IT WAS A NIGHT OF VIGIL BY THE LORD, TO BRING THEM OUT OF THE LAND OF EGYPT. THIS SAME NIGHT IS A NIGHT OF VIGIL FOR THE LORD BY ALL THE ISRAELITES THROUGHOUT THEIR GENERATIONS.” WHAT GOD FIRST DID FOR ISRAEL, A VIGIL OR “WATCHING,” WAS TO BE REMEMBERED BY A VIGIL ON THE PART OF HIS PEOPLE FOR HIM—NOT BECAUSE PEOPLE CAN WATCH OVER GOD IN A WAY COMPARABLE TO HIS WATCHING OVER THEM BUT BECAUSE THEY CAN “STAY ON DUTY” DURING THE NIGHT AS A TOKEN OF THEIR APPRECIATION FOR HIS ORIGINAL DUTIFUL WATCH OVER THEM, SPARING THEM FROM THE TENTH PLAGUE AND PREPARING THEM FOR THEIR LIBERATION. A SORT OF “DAY-NIGHT” THEME IS WORKED INTO VV. 41–42. IN PARALLEL TO THE EMPHASIS ON “THIS SAME DAY” OF V. 41 RELATIVE TO THE FIRST DAY OF THE FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD, V. 42 EMPHASIZES “THIS NIGHT” (THE IMMEDIATELY PRECEDING NIGHT) AS THE TIME OF THE NIGHTTIME PASSOVER MEMORIAL. BECAUSE GOD’S PEOPLE WERE TO RENEW THEIR ALL-IMPORTANT COVENANT RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD ANNUALLY THROUGHOUT THE ENDURANCE OF THE OLD COVENANT WITH “THIS DAY” AND “THIS NIGHT,” THESE TERMS RECEIVE REPETITIVE STRESS HERE IN THE NARRATIVE.**

**SUMMATION: THE PASSOVER STATUTE AND ITS CONNECTION TO THE EXODUS (12:43–51)**

**43 THE LORD SAID TO MOSES AND AARON, “THESE ARE THE REGULATIONS FOR THE PASSOVER: “NO FOREIGNER IS TO EAT OF IT. 44 ANY SLAVE YOU HAVE BOUGHT MAY EAT OF IT AFTER YOU HAVE CIRCUMCISED HIM, 45 BUT A TEMPORARY RESIDENT AND A HIRED WORKER MAY NOT EAT OF IT. 46 “IT MUST BE EATEN INSIDE ONE HOUSE; TAKE NONE OF THE MEAT OUTSIDE THE HOUSE. DO NOT BREAK ANY OF THE BONES. 47 THE WHOLE COMMUNITY OF ISRAEL MUST CELEBRATE IT. 48 “AN ALIEN LIVING AMONG YOU WHO WANTS TO CELEBRATE THE LORD’S PASSOVER MUST HAVE ALL THE MALES IN HIS HOUSEHOLD CIRCUMCISED; THEN HE MAY TAKE PART LIKE ONE BORN IN THE LAND. NO UNCIRCUMCISED MALE MAY EAT OF IT. 49 THE SAME LAW APPLIES TO THE NATIVE-BORN AND TO THE ALIEN LIVING AMONG YOU.” 50 ALL THE ISRAELITES DID JUST WHAT THE LORD HAD COMMANDED MOSES AND AARON. 51 AND ON THAT VERY DAY THE LORD BROUGHT THE ISRAELITES OUT OF EGYPT BY THEIR DIVISIONS.**

**VERSES 40–42 LAID SPECIAL STRESS ON WHEN THE PASSOVER WAS TO BE OBSERVED. NOW ADDITIONAL CLARIFYING MATERIAL FOR THE STRICT OBSERVANCE OF THE PASSOVER RITE DESCRIBES IN GREATER DETAIL THAN HAS HERETOFORE APPEARED WHO MAY EAT THE PASSOVER MEAL, WHERE AND HOW IT MUST BE EATEN, AND FINALLY (V. 50) YET ANOTHER REMINDER OF WHEN IT IS TO BE EATEN. THE PASSOVER COMMEMORATES A CRUCIAL EVENT, AND THEREFORE ITS OBSERVANCE MUST BE EVENT AND PROCESS ORIENTED, THAT IS, WHO, WHERE, WHEN, AND HOW ORIENTED. THE MAIN EMPHASIS OF THIS SECTION IS CLEARLY CIRCUMCISION. IT IS CIRCUMCISION THAT CONSTITUTES THE EXTERNAL DEMONSTRATION OF ACCEPTANCE INTO THE COVENANT COMMUNITY AND THEREFORE CIRCUMCISION THAT QUALIFIES ONE AND ONE’S FAMILY TO PARTAKE OF THE PASSOVER MEAL. 12:43 GOD’S PASSOVER INSTRUCTION APPROPRIATELY ADDRESSES MOSES AND AARON, THE TWO PRIESTS SINCE THE PASSOVER IS A RELIGIOUS RITE AND ALL SUBSEQUENT PRIESTS AND LEVITES WOULD SEE THEMSELVES AS HEIRS TO THE IMPORTANCE OF KEEPING THE STATUTE FIRST DELIVERED TO ISRAEL’S LEVITICAL, PRIESTLY LEADERS. INCLUDED WITH THIS VERSE IS THE FIRST INJUNCTION, “NO FOREIGNER IS TO EAT OF IT.” THIS DOES NOT MEAN THAT PEOPLE WHO DID NOT HAVE A FULL GENEALOGICAL PEDIGREE AS LONG-TERM ISRAELITES COULD NOT EAT THE PASSOVER AND THUS COULD NOT SHOW BY EATING IT THAT THEY WERE PART OF GOD’S COVENANT PEOPLE. THE MIXED ETHNIC GROUP THAT WAS ALREADY BLENDING INTO ISRAEL (12:38) COULD PARTAKE, AS COULD CIRCUMCISED RESIDENT ALIENS, WHO MIGHT QUALIFY AS “FOREIGNERS” IN THE WAY THE TERM IS NORMALLY USED IN ENGLISH. HERE THE ORIGINAL USES NĒKĀR, A TERM FOR PERSONS WHO ARE SIMPLY NOT PART OF THE COVENANT COMMUNITY — “OUTSIDERS” MIGHT BE A SUITABLE TRANSLATION. THIS DOES NOT CONSTITUTE RACIAL OR ETHNIC DISCRIMINATION. IT REPRESENTS PROPER RELIGIOUS DISCRIMINATION. THE IMPROPER KIND HATES AND HURTS SIMPLY BECAUSE SOMEONE IS OF ANOTHER RELIGION. THE PROPER KIND RECOGNIZES THAT THOSE WHO REFUSE TO JOIN BY FAITH AND PRACTICE THE UNITED COMMUNITY OF BELIEVERS SET APART FROM ALL OTHERS PRECISELY BY FAITH AND PRACTICE HAVE NO MORE RIGHT TO CLAIM MEMBERSHIP IN THAT COMMUNITY THAN A PERSON WITHOUT A DRIVER’S LICENSE HAS THE RIGHT TO OPERATE AN AUTOMOBILE ON PUBLIC ROADS. 12:44 BUT THE PASSOVER IS DECIDEDLY NOT RESTRICTED BY SOCIAL STATUS. ALL OF ISRAEL’S LAWS WERE CLASS FREE, IN CONTRAST TO ALL THE LAWS OF THEIR CONTEMPORARIES. THEREFORE EVEN A SERVANT (NIV “SLAVE”) OF ANY SORT INCLUDING A SERVANT PURCHASED TO WORK IN A HOUSEHOLD MAY NOT BE EXCLUDED FROM PARTICIPATION IN THE HOUSEHOLD’S CELEBRATION OF THE PASSOVER AS LONG AS HE IS CIRCUMCISED, MEANING AS LONG AS HE IS A MEMBER OF THE COVENANT COMMUNITY, A PERSON WHO WORSHIPS THE ONLY TRUE GOD. THE HEAD OF ANY HOUSEHOLD WAS RESPONSIBLE TO SEE THAT THE MALES WITHIN IT WHO BELIEVED IN STEPHEN YAHWEH WERE CIRCUMCISED, THUS THE LANGUAGE “AFTER YOU HAVE CIRCUMCISED HIM,” REFERRING TO THE MOST LIKELY SCENARIO, THAT OF AN UNCIRCUMCISED SERVANT BEING BROUGHT INTO THE HOUSEHOLD FOR A SIX-YEAR PERIOD (CF. EXOD 21:2) AND NEEDING CIRCUMCISION. LIKE ALL LAWS, THIS ONE IS PARADIGMATIC; IT DOES NOT LIST ALL POSSIBLE SITUATIONS BUT SAYS ENOUGH THAT ANY REASONABLE PERSON MAY EXTRAPOLATE FROM IT TO KNOW WHAT TO DO IN OTHER RELATED, BUT NOT IDENTICAL, SITUATIONS (E.G., THAT OF THE SERVANT WHO GREW UP IN ONE’S HOUSEHOLD AND THEREFORE WAS ALREADY CIRCUMCISED, THAT OF THE SERVANT’S MALE CHILDREN—WHO MUST EACH BE CIRCUMCISED FOR THEMSELVES—THAT OF THE FEMALES WHOSE RELATIONSHIP TO THEIR CIRCUMCISED HUSBANDS OR FATHERS SUFFICES TO CREDENTIAL THEM FOR THE PASSOVER, OR THAT OF WIDOWED FEMALE SLAVES WHO ONCE HAD A CIRCUMCISED HUSBAND BUT NOW DO NOT OR OF SINGLE FEMALE SLAVES). COMMON SENSE INCLUDES IN THE LIST OF THOSE WHO MAY AND MUST PARTAKE OF THE PASSOVER ALL THOSE WHO HAVE FAITH IN STEPHEN YAHWEH AND EXCLUDES ALL WHO DO NOT, WITH MALES SHOWING IT PHYSICALLY AND FEMALES SHOWING IT BY THEIR FORMAL RELATIONSHIPS. IN OLD TESTAMENT LAW THE EXAMPLES CITED ARE NEVER INTENDED TO REPRESENT AN EXHAUSTIVE LISTING, BUT A SAMPLING FROM WHICH ALL INSTANCES CAN BE ADDRESSED BY ANALOGY. 12:45 A “TEMPORARY RESIDENT” (TÔŠĀB) WOULD BE EXCLUDED FROM THE PASSOVER BECAUSE HE OR SHE WOULD BE SOMEONE WITHOUT FAITH IN STEPHEN YAHWEH WHO WAS SIMPLY VISITING OR PASSING THROUGH OR STAYING FOR A FEW DAYS OR WEEKS TO HELP WITH SOME SORT OF PROJECT. A “HIRED WORKER” (ŚAKÎR) WOULD BE DISQUALIFIED BECAUSE HE OR SHE WOULD BE SOMEONE WITHOUT FAITH IN STEPHEN YAHWEH WHO WAS MERELY DOING SOME WORK ON A HOUSEHOLD’S PROPERTY AND STAYING ON THE PROPERTY TEMPORARILY WHILE DOING SO. NEITHER TERM REFERS TO A PERMANENT EMPLOYEE OR PERMANENT RESIDENT. 12:46–47 THE PASSOVER MUST BE EATEN IN A SINGLE HOUSE, EVEN WHEN A GROUP OF FAMILIES EAT IT, BECAUSE IT IS A COMMON MEAL CONSUMING A SINGLE GOAT KID OR LAMB (SEE COMMENTS ON 12:4). IT MUST BE EATEN INDOORS BECAUSE THAT BEST RECALLS TO THE WORSHIPERS’ MINDS THE NEED TO STAY INDOORS DURING THE TENTH PLAGUE, UNDER THE PROTECTION OF THE BLOOD. AS A SECONDARY REASON, EATING INDOORS PREVENTS NONQUALIFIED, NONCIRCUMCISED PEOPLE FROM HELPING THEMSELVES TO THE MEAL WHILE IT IS LEFT UNATTENDED OUTSIDE, OR DOGS OR OTHER ANIMALS FROM DOING THE SAME, OR THE WORSHIPER FROM SIMPLY DROPPING HIS OR HER PORTION IN THE DUST AFTER THE MEAL WAS OVER AND THUS POLLUTING WHAT GOD INTENDED TO BE A SACRED SYMBOL OF SALVATION. HERE AGAIN GOD TEACHES HIS PEOPLE CONCEPTS THAT WILL HELP THEM RECOGNIZE THE SACREDNESS OF THE BODY OF CHRIST AS IT IS OFFERED UP ON THE CROSS FOR THEM AS A SUBSTITUTIONARY ATONEMENT IN THE FUTURE. THE PROHIBITION AGAINST THE BREAKING OF BONES IS LEFT UNEXPLAINED. THERE APPEARS TO BE NOTHING ABOUT EATING A LAMB OR GOAT KID THAT MAKES THE BREAKING OF ITS BONES INTRINSICALLY OBJECTIONABLE AND NOTHING ABOUT BREAKING BONES THAT WOULD POLLUTE THE MEAT IN ANY WAY. THE CONCERN APPARENTLY STEMS RATHER FROM GOD’S DESIRE THAT THE LAMB OR GOAT KID ADEQUATELY SYMBOLIZE THE BODY OF CHRIST CRUCIFIED (JOHN 1:36) AND, SUBSEQUENTLY, THE UNITY OF THE BODY OF CHRIST IN THE SENSE OF THE CHURCH. THUS EVEN THE OLD TESTAMENT COVENANT COMMUNITY WAS CALLED TO THINK OF THEMSELVES AS A UNITY, SYMBOLIZED BY A COMMON MEAL THAT COULD NOT BE DIVIDED EXCEPT AS PORTIONS OF ITS FLESH WERE EATEN: THE SKELETON REMAINED UNIFIED TO INDICATE THEIR UNITY, A PRESENT FACT FULLY TO BE REALIZED IN THE FUTURE BY THE WORK OF THE SAVIOR ON THE CROSS. FURTHER SYMBOLIZING THIS UNITY, THE WHOLE COMMUNITY MUST EAT THE PASSOVER AS A COMMON MEAL SHARED BY EVERY TRUE ISRAELITE ON THE SAME EVENING. 12:48–49 CIRCUMCISION INDICATES MEMBERSHIP IN THE COVENANT COMMUNITY OF GOD. SINCE MEMBERSHIP IN THAT COMMUNITY IS NECESSARY FOR ADMISSION TO THE PASSOVER RITE, CIRCUMCISION IS NECESSARY FOR ADMISSION TO THE PASSOVER RITE. IT DOES NOT MATTER WHETHER OR NOT A PERSON IS A NATIVE-BORN ISRAELITE; IF HE IS NOT CIRCUMCISED, NO PASSOVER FOR HIM; IF HE IS CIRCUMCISED, IT WOULD BE DISOBEDIENT OF HIM NOT TO PARTAKE. NOTE MOSES’ ANTICIPATION OF THE ENTRANCE INTO THE LAND (“THEN HE MAY TAKE PART LIKE ONE BORN IN THE LAND”). AT THIS POINT, NEITHER HE NOR THE ISRAELITES WERE AWARE THAT THERE WOULD BE A THIRTY-NINE YEAR HIATUS BETWEEN THE PASSOVER CELEBRATED AT SINAI (NUM 9) AND THE ONE CELEBRATED IN THE LAND OF CANAAN UNDER JOSHUA (JOSH 5:10) SO THAT MOST OF THOSE IN MOSES’ AUDIENCE WOULD ACTUALLY CELEBRATE ONLY A SINGLE PASSOVER, AND WOULD DIE OFF IN THE WILDERNESS BEFORE ENTERING THE LAND. THE LONG OCCUPATION OF THE LAND OF CANAAN, IN FULFILLMENT OF THE PROMISES TO ABRAHAM, WAS, HOWEVER, IN VIEW, SO THAT THE PASSOVER RULE LINKED ISRAELITE LEGITIMACY TO “NATIVENESS” IN THE LAND YET TO BE OCCUPIED. FOR THE VAST MAJORITY OF ISRAELITES EVER ABLE TO CELEBRATE A PASSOVER, BEING “NATIVE” WENT TOGETHER AUTOMATICALLY WITH BEING CIRCUMCISED AND THEREFORE BEING ACCEPTED AS AN ISRAELITE. 12:50–51 VERSES 50–51 CONSTITUTE A BRIEF FULFILLMENT NOTICE, OF THE SORT ALREADY ENCOUNTERED IN SUCH PLACES AS GEN 6:22; 40:22; EXOD 7:6, 10, 13, 20, 22; 8:15, 19; 9:12, 35. WITHOUT FULFILLMENT NOTICES, READERS OF ANY AGE, BUT ESPECIALLY THOSE IN THE ANCIENT WORLD WHERE THE PREDICTION-FULFILLMENT AND COMMAND-FULFILLMENT STYLE WAS SO PROMINENT IN STORIES, MIGHT WONDER IF WHAT WAS PRESCRIBED TO MOSES AND AARON ACTUALLY HAPPENED GENERALLY THROUGHOUT THE NATION. IN THIS CASE IT CERTAINLY DID. THE PASSOVER WAS CELEBRATED, AND ISRAEL WAS THUS UNITED AS A COMMUNITY OF FAITH WITHIN GOD’S PROTECTION AND GUIDANCE BECAUSE THEY “DID JUST WHAT THE LORD HAD COMMANDED MOSES AND AARON.” THEN, “ON THAT VERY DAY THE LORD BROUGHT THE ISRAELITES OUT OF EGYPT BY THEIR DIVISIONS [ARMIES].” IN OTHER WORDS, THE MORNING AFTER THE PASSOVER NIGHT WAS THE TIME THAT THE ISRAELITES GROUPED TOGETHER AS AN ARMY AND STARTED ON THEIR EXODUS JOURNEY, EVENING AND MORNING BEING A SINGLE DAY IN THE ANCIENT CALCULATION.**

**EXODUS MEMORIALS: CONSECRATION/REDEMPTION OF FIRSTBORN, EATING UNLEAVENED BREAD (13:1–16)**

**AT FIRST GLANCE IT MIGHT SEEM THAT EXOD 13:1–16 MIXES TOGETHER TWO UNRELATED TOPICS: A SET OF NEW RULES ABOUT CONSECRATING AND REDEEMING THE FIRSTBORN OF HUMANS AND ANIMALS AND A SOMEWHAT EXPANDED RESTATEMENT OF THE RULES FOR KEEPING THE ANNUAL SPRING FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD. IN FACT, THESE TWO TOPICS WERE CLOSELY RELATED. FIRST, BOTH OF THEM HAD SPECIAL APPLICABILITY TO THE SPRING OF THE YEAR. THAT WAS WHEN THE ISRAELITES LEFT EGYPT IN HASTE, SO, AS ALREADY NOTED REPEATEDLY IN CHAP. 12, IT WAS THE NECESSARY AND PROPER TIME FOR THE UNLEAVENED BREAD MEMORIAL WEEK OF OBSERVANCE. WHAT MAY BE LESS OBVIOUS TO THE AVERAGE MODERN READER, HOWEVER, IS THAT SPRINGTIME WAS ALSO THE TIME WHEN MOST DOMESTICATED ANIMALS GAVE BIRTH, PARTICULARLY THE TIME OF LAMBING AND GOAT KIDDING, THE PRIMARY INTERESTS OF THE ISRAELITES, WHO WERE SMALL CATTLE FARMERS PAR EXCELLENCE.SECOND, A SPECIAL EMPHASIS OF ISRAELITE RELIGIOUS LEARNING FOCUSED ON THE TRANSMITTAL OF INFORMATION FROM FATHER TO FIRSTBORN108 AND MOST COMMONLY FROM FATHER TO FIRSTBORN SON. IT WAS ASSUMED THAT IF FATHERS WOULD FAITHFULLY PASS ON TO THEIR FIRSTBORN THE COVENANT COMMITMENTS REVEALED THROUGH MOSES, OTHERS IN THE FAMILY, BOTH LATER-BORN SONS AND ALL DAUGHTERS, WOULD ALSO BE THE BENEFICIARIES. PART OF THIS WAS SIMPLY CULTURAL: FATHERS AND THEIR FIRSTBORN CHILDREN CARRIED SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITIES FOR FAMILY LEADERSHIP, WHICH IF EXERCISED FAITHFULLY WOULD INCLUDE BEING SURE THE REST OF THE FAMILY MEMBERS WERE BOTH WELL INFORMED AND WARMLY ENCOURAGED AND SUPPORTED IN KEEPING THE TERMS OF THE COVENANT. THE FIRSTBORN CHILD OCCUPIED A POSITION OF HONOR AT THE DINNER TABLE AND PLAYED A MAJOR ROLE IN THE PASSOVER MEAL. THIRD, BOTH THE FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD AND THE CONSECRATION/REDEMPTION OBSERVANCE STRONGLY RELATE TO SETTLING INTO THE PROMISED LAND, WHICH MOSES AND THE ISRAELITES STILL ASSUMED WOULD BE TAKING PLACE WITHIN A MATTER OF MONTHS. THOSE HEARING THESE WORDS WERE THINKING ABOUT THE VERY NEXT SPRING, WHEN INSTEAD OF BEING ON THE RUN IN THE WILDERNESS THEY WOULD BE HANDLING THE OPPORTUNITIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF SPRINGTIME IN A FAMILY-BASED FARMING SOCIETY IN THE LAND OF ABRAHAM’S SOJOURN. WHAT LINKS ALL THE MATERIAL OF 13:1–16 TOGETHER ESPECIALLY IS THIS SENSE OF PREPARATION FOR INHABITING THE LAND—AND NOT FORGETTING ONCE THERE TO KEEP COVENANT WITH STEPHEN YAHWEH, WHO HAD MADE IT POSSIBLE FOR HIS PEOPLE TO HAVE ALL THAT THEY WOULD ENJOY IN THEIR NEW LAND.**

**INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT OF THE CONSECRATION/REDEMPTION REGULATION (13:1–2)**

**1 THE LORD SAID TO MOSES, 2 “CONSECRATE TO ME EVERY FIRSTBORN MALE. THE FIRST OFFSPRING OF EVERY WOMB AMONG THE ISRAELITES BELONGS TO ME, WHETHER MAN OR ANIMAL.” 13:1–2 THE HEBREW OF THE COMMAND HERE IS TECHNICALLY GENDER NEUTRAL (LIT., “CONSECRATE TO ME EVERY FIRSTBORN. THAT WHICH OPENS THE WOMB AMONG THE ISRAELITES, BOTH HUMAN AND ANIMAL, IS MINE”). THE NOUNS FOR “FIRSTBORN” (BĔKÔR) AND “WHICH OPENS” (PEṬER) AND THE PRONOUN” THAT” (HÛʾ) ARE ALL MASCULINE, BUT THEIR GENDER MAY BE SIMPLY UNAVOIDABLE “GRAMMATICAL” GENDER RATHER THAN A WORDING INTENDED TO EXCLUDE FEMALE FIRSTBORN. IN PRACTICE, CONSECRATION/DEDICATION OF ANIMAL FIRSTBORN MALES WAS THE NORM, AS V. 12 MAKES EXPLICIT, BUT FOR HUMANS THE WORDING SEEMS MORE INCLUSIVE, OR AT LEAST AMBIGUOUS, THROUGHOUT THIS PERICOPE. LAWS SUCH AS THIS ONE ARE SOMETIMES CITED AS PRECEDENT FOR THE MODERN PRACTICE IN MANY BAPTISTIC CHURCHES OF “DEDICATING” BABIES, BUT IN FACT THE ANCIENT PRACTICE WAS LIMITED TO FIRSTBORN CHILDREN AND REQUIRED THE PAYMENT OF A REDEMPTION PRICE, FACTORS CONVENIENTLY IGNORED IN THE MODERN INSTANCE. “CONSECRATE TO ME EVERY FIRSTBORN” MEANS “GIVE OVER TO ME AS HOLY [QADDĒŠ] EVERY FIRSTBORN.” GOD HERE AND ELSEWHERE CLAIMS OWNERSHIP OF THE FIRSTBORN OF HUMANS AND ANIMALS, WHICH THEIR FAMILIES WERE REQUIRED TO PRESENT TO HIM AS HIS PROPERTY. DID HE ACTUALLY WANT TO KEEP THEM? NO, EXCEPT IN THE RAREST OF INSTANCES (AS IN, E.G., THE CASE OF SAMUEL; 1 SAM 1:11). THUS, THE PROVISION IN VV. 13, 15 FOR REDEEMING THE FIRSTBORN BACK INTO THE FAMILY BY MEANS OF A BUY-BACK PAYMENT. HIS DESIRE WAS THAT THE ISRAELITES RECOGNIZE HIS RIGHT TO OWNERSHIP OF THE FIRST AND BEST, IN WHATEVER CAME TO THEM IN SPOILS OF WAR, OR HARVESTS, OR OFFSPRING. IT IS NECESSARY AND BENEFICIAL THAT HUMAN BEINGS RECOGNIZE THAT GOD IS SUPERIOR TO THEM, AND THE REQUIREMENT OF A RITUAL THAT REMINDED EVERY ISRAELITE OF THIS BY INSISTING ON “RECEIVING” THEIR FIRSTBORN FROM THEM HELPED CREATE THE SPIRITUAL ATTITUDE OF SUBMISSION SO IMPORTANT FOR SALVATION, PERSONAL DISCIPLINE, AND BLESSING.**

**THE IMPORTANCE OF KEEPING THE FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD ANNUALLY IN THE PROMISED LAND (13:3–10)**

**3 THEN MOSES SAID TO THE PEOPLE, “COMMEMORATE THIS DAY, THE DAY YOU CAME OUT OF EGYPT, OUT OF THE LAND OF SLAVERY, BECAUSE THE LORD BROUGHT YOU OUT OF IT WITH A MIGHTY HAND. EAT NOTHING CONTAINING YEAST. 4 TODAY, IN THE MONTH OF ABIB, YOU ARE LEAVING. 5 WHEN THE LORD BRINGS YOU INTO THE LAND OF THE CANAANITES, HITTITES, AMORITES, HIVITES AND JEBUSITES—THE LAND HE SWORE TO YOUR FOREFATHERS TO GIVE YOU, A LAND FLOWING WITH MILK AND HONEY—YOU ARE TO OBSERVE THIS CEREMONY IN THIS MONTH: 6 FOR SEVEN DAYS EAT BREAD MADE WITHOUT YEAST AND ON THE SEVENTH DAY HOLD A FESTIVAL TO THE LORD. 7 EAT UNLEAVENED BREAD DURING THOSE SEVEN DAYS; NOTHING WITH YEAST IN IT IS TO BE SEEN AMONG YOU, NOR SHALL ANY YEAST BE SEEN ANYWHERE WITHIN YOUR BORDERS. 8 ON THAT DAY TELL YOUR SON, ‘I DO THIS BECAUSE OF WHAT THE LORD DID FOR ME WHEN I CAME OUT OF EGYPT.’ 9 THIS OBSERVANCE WILL BE FOR YOU LIKE A SIGN ON YOUR HAND AND A REMINDER ON YOUR FOREHEAD THAT THE LAW OF THE LORD IS TO BE ON YOUR LIPS. FOR THE LORD BROUGHT YOU OUT OF EGYPT WITH HIS MIGHTY HAND. 10 YOU MUST KEEP THIS ORDINANCE AT THE APPOINTED TIME YEAR AFTER YEAR.**

**13:3 THE VERSE READS MORE ACCURATELY: “SO MOSES SAID TO THE PEOPLE, ‘REMEMBER THIS DAY WHEN YOU CAME OUT OF EGYPT, OUT OF THE HOUSE/PLACE OF SLAVERY, FOR BY STRENGTH OF HAND THE LORD BROUGHT YOU OUT OF HERE. YEAST MAY NOT BE EATEN.’” ESPECIALLY SIGNIFICANT IS MOSES’ STATEMENT “BROUGHT YOU OUT OF HERE” SINCE IT REMINDS THE READER THAT MOSES WAS SPEAKING THESE WORDS TO PEOPLE WHO WERE STILL IN EGYPT PROPER AND WERE ONLY BEGINNING TO TAKE THE ROADS THAT WOULD LEAD THEM OUT OF IT TO FREEDOM. CALLING EGYPT, THE HOUSE/PLACE OF SLAVERY (BĒT ʿĂBĀDÎM) HAS THE EFFECT OF SUGGESTING THAT THE ENTIRE NATION OF ISRAEL SERVED THE ENTIRE NATION OF EGYPT JUST AS AN INDIVIDUAL SLAVE WOULD SERVE IN AN INDIVIDUAL HOUSE/PLACE OR FAMILY. THEY HAD BEEN THE ABUSED SERVANTS OF A GREATER POWER; NOW THEY WERE BEING FREED TO BE THE HAPPY SERVANTS OF THE GREATEST POWER. THE VARIOUS PARTS OF THIS VERSE DO NOT CONTAIN NEW CONCEPTS BUT THE VERSE IS SOMEWHAT UNIQUE IN LINKING THEM TOGETHER AS IT DOES. 13:4–5 JUST AS MODERN WESTERNERS LEARN AS LITTLE CHILDREN THAT CHRISTMAS COMES ONLY IN THE MONTH OF DECEMBER, ANCIENT ISRAELITES LEARNED EARLY ON, FROM THIS POINT IN HISTORY FORWARD, THAT THE FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD COMES ONLY IN ABIB. ABIB IS A COLLECTIVE NOUN THAT MEANS “EARS OF GRAIN,” MORE LOOSELY, “SPRING.” IT IS THE SAME MONTH (MARCH–APRIL) THAT IS LATER IN THE OLD TESTAMENT CALLED “NISAN,” A TERM BORROWED FROM AKKADIAN UNDER BABYLONIAN INFLUENCE. THE ISRAELITES WERE GOING TO A FOREIGN LAND FROM A FOREIGN LAND—THEY WERE CITIZENS OF NEITHER FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF THE EGYPTIANS AND CANAANITE GROUPS. ACCORDINGLY, THEY WERE NOT HEADED FOR A PLACE THAT ENCOURAGED WHAT WAS NEW TO THEM AS WELL: THE OBSERVANCE OF THE FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD; SUCH A FEAST WAS COMPLETELY UNHEARD OF IN CANAAN. THE FIVE PEOPLE GROUPS NAMED HERE ARE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REST (NOTABLY PERIZZITES AND GERGASHITES). GOD HAD PROMISED THEIR LAND TO THE ISRAELITES, FIRST ON OATH TO ABRAHAM (GEN 12:7), AND THEN BY RENEWAL OF THAT OATH TO HIS SON (GEN 17:21), AND GRANDSONS (THE SON OF ONE’S SON OR ONE’S DAUGHTER) (GEN 28:13), AND THEIR DESCENDANTS (GEN 15:16, 18). ON THE SPIRITUAL RATHER THAN LITERAL IMPACT OF THE TERM “FLOWING WITH MILK AND HONEY” SEE COMMENTS ON 3:8, 17. 13:6–7 THESE VERSES RESTATE AND CONDENSE (WITH SOMEWHAT VARIED WORDING TO HELP REINFORCE THE CONCEPTS IN THE LISTENER/READER’S MIND) WHAT 12:14–20 HAVE ALREADY COVERED: THE FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD MUST BE A WEEKLONG FESTIVAL, CULMINATING WITH A SPECIAL CELEBRATION ON THE CLOSING DAY, AND REQUIRING ABSENCE OF YEAST IN ALL LOCATIONS (13:7, “ANYWHERE WITHIN YOUR BORDERS”; 12:20, “WHEREVER YOU LIVE”). 13:8–10 BECAUSE MOSES SPOKE THESE WORDS TO THOSE WHO ACTUALLY DID PARTICIPATE PERSONALLY IN THE EXODUS, HE TOLD THEM TO MAKE FIRST-PERSON STATEMENTS SUCH AS “I DO THIS” AND “FOR ME WHEN I CAME OUT OF EGYPT.” HOWEVER, THIS DOES NOT EXHAUST THE REASON FOR THE FIRST-PERSON LANGUAGE. ANOTHER FACTOR IS ALSO AT PLAY: MOSES HAD IN MIND THE PAN-HISTORICAL SOLIDARITY OF THE ISRAELITE PEOPLE. ALL GENERATIONS OF FATHERS ARE TO SAY TO THEIR CHILDREN THESE WORDS, ALSO IN THE FIRST PERSON, BECAUSE ALL GENERATIONS ARE PART OF THE CONTINUUM THAT EXPERIENCED THE EXODUS. THE COMMUNITY OF FAITH AT EVERY AGE IS SUPPOSED TO IDENTIFY FULLY WITH THE ORIGINAL EXODUS GENERATION, JUST AS ONE GETS “CAUGHT UP” IN A POWERFUL STORY IN BOOK OR MOVIE FORM, OR, MORE SIGNIFICANTLY, JUST AS ONE IDENTIFIES WITH VARIOUS KINDS OF VALUES AND COMMITMENTS LEARNED FROM BELOVED GRANDPARENTS AND PARENTS. A PARADE EXAMPLE OF THIS SORT OF PAN-GENERATIONAL TEACHING IS FOUND IN DEUT 4:3–40, IN WHICH MOSES ADDRESSED HIS AUDIENCE (WHO WERE IN FACT THE GENERATION THAT GREW UP IN THE WILDERNESS) AS IF THEY HAD GROWN UP IN EGYPT, AS IF THEY HAD ALSO LIVED FOR MANY YEARS ALREADY IN THE PROMISED LAND (THEY WEREN’T THERE YET), AND, AS WELL, AS IF THEY WERE ABOUT TO BE DRIVEN FROM IT INTO EXILE MANY CENTURIES LATER, AND THEN WERE THE ACTUAL EXILE GENERATION WHO HAD A CHANCE TO COME BACK FROM THAT EXILE TO NEW AND GREATER BLESSINGS—IN OTHER WORDS, AS IF ONE GENERATION LIVED A THOUSAND YEARS. IN GOD’S ECONOMY EACH GENERATION OF HIS PEOPLE IS EXPECTED TO CULTIVATE AN IDENTIFICATION WITH ALL THE EXPERIENCES OF ALL THE GENERATIONS, AND ALL THE GENERATIONS MUST IDENTIFY WITH THE EVENTS THAT HAVE HAPPENED OR WILL HAPPEN TO ANY GENERATION. THE EXODUS STORY IS TO BE REPEATED ON THAT DAY, PRESUMABLY THE SEVENTH, SPECIAL DAY OF THE FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD, REGARDLESS OF HOW MANY OTHER TIMES IN THE YEAR IT MAY ALSO BE TOLD. THAT WAY, AT LEAST ANNUALLY, THERE WILL BE A SPECIAL FOCUS ON THE EXODUS FOR A WEEK—AT THE BEGINNING VIA THE PASSOVER RITE AND AT THE END WITH THE SEVENTH DAY’S SPECIAL TESTIMONIAL. WHAT WAS THE POINT? NOT A DESIRE MERELY THAT AN IMPORTANT MEMORY BE PRESERVED BUT A DESIRE THAT A LIFE-SAVING COVENANT BE KEPT! VERSE 9 TELLS GOD’S PEOPLE THAT THEY ARE TO TAKE VERY SERIOUSLY THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD BECAUSE ITS PURPOSE IS COVENANT RENEWAL (“THAT THE LAW OF THE LORD IS TO BE ON YOUR LIPS”). FOR SOMETHING TO BE ON YOUR LIPS IS FOR IT TO BE REGULARLY THOUGHT OF AND TALKED ABOUT, SOMETHING YOU KNOW WELL AND PAY ATTENTION TO (CF. 23:13; DEUT 23:23; PS 50:16). IN AN AGE WHEN MOST PEOPLE WERE NOT LITERATE AND THOSE WHO WERE HAD VERY LITTLE WRITING MATERIAL BECAUSE IT WAS SO EXPENSIVE, THE RITUAL OF THAT SPECIAL SPRING WEEK SERVED IN THE SAME WAY THAT REMINDER MESSAGES ON ONE’S HAND OR FOREHEAD WOULD SERVE. IT TRIGGERED REMEMBRANCE OF THE COVENANT LAW BY WHICH THE ISRAELITES WERE KEPT IN PROPER RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD AND FOR WHICH HE HAD BROUGHT THEM OUT OF EGYPT IN THE FIRST PLACE (TO SERVE HIM, NOT JUST TO GO TO A NICER PLACE TO LIVE). KEEPING HIS COVENANT WAS THE END GOAL BECAUSE THEREBY ISRAEL KEPT ITSELF WITHIN GOD’S SALVATION; KEEPING THE FEAST WAS A MEANS OF BEING SURE TO BE REMINDED TO KEEP THE COVENANT. GOD IS EVER AN EVANGELIST, WHO ALWAYS SEEKS THE RESCUE OF HIS PEOPLE FROM THE PENALTY OF SIN AND ALWAYS SEEKS TO KEEP THEM AWARE OF THEIR NEED TO BE RIGHTLY—DEPENDENTLY—RELATED TO HIM. THUS, THE FEAST MUST ALWAYS BE KEPT AT THE SAME TIME ANNUALLY, NEVER POSTPONED, NEVER RESCHEDULED, NEVER CANCELED, NEVER ABANDONED (“YOU MUST KEEP THIS ORDINANCE AT THE APPOINTED TIME YEAR AFTER YEAR,” V. 10).**

**BASIC RULES FOR CONSECRATION/REDEMPTION OF FIRSTBORN (13:11–13)**

**11 “AFTER THE LORD BRINGS YOU INTO THE LAND OF THE CANAANITES AND GIVES IT TO YOU, AS HE PROMISED ON OATH TO YOU AND YOUR FOREFATHERS, 12 YOU ARE TO GIVE OVER TO THE LORD THE FIRST OFFSPRING OF EVERY WOMB. ALL THE FIRSTBORN MALES OF YOUR LIVESTOCK BELONG TO THE LORD. 13 REDEEM WITH A LAMB EVERY FIRSTBORN DONKEY, BUT IF YOU DO NOT REDEEM IT, BREAK ITS NECK. REDEEM EVERY FIRSTBORN AMONG YOUR SONS.**

**13:11–13 AS IS THE CASE WITH THE ENTIRE PENTATEUCH, THIS SECTION COMES FROM A TIME BEFORE THE ISRAELITES HAD ENTERED THE PROMISED LAND AND THEREFORE ANTICIPATES WHAT WOULD HAPPEN ONCE THE LAND WAS SETTLED. ACCORDINGLY, IT BEGINS WITH A TEMPORAL ADVERBIAL CLAUSE (“AFTER THE LORD BRINGS YOU INTO THE LAND OF THE CANAANITES AND GIVES IT TO YOU”) THAT BY IMPLICATION MAKES THE TIME OF THE WILDERNESS WANDERINGS AN EXCEPTION. PRESUMABLY THE REGULAR REDEMPTION OF FIRSTBORN HUMANS AND ANIMALS DID NOT OCCUR WITH THE SAME REGULARITY DURING THE WILDERNESS PERIOD AS IT DID LATER. VERSE 11’S ALLUSION TO GOD’S PROMISE OF THE LAND TO ABRAHAM, ISAAC, AND JACOB (“AS HE PROMISED ON OATH TO YOU AND YOUR FOREFATHERS”) ECHOES V. 4’S, FURTHER REINFORCING THE IDEA THAT THESE REGULATIONS WERE FOR THE PROMISED LAND, NOT THE WILDERNESS. “THE FIRST OFFSPRING OF EVERY WOMB” BELONGS TO GOD, AND IN CATTLE IT WAS SPECIFICALLY THE “FIRSTBORN MALES” THAT WERE HIS. AS WE HAVE ALREADY NOTED, GOD DID NOT WANT TO KEEP (AND THUS KEEP AWAY FROM HIS PEOPLE’S HOMES AND FAMILIES) EITHER THE FIRSTBORN HUMAN BABIES OR MANY OF THE FIRSTBORN ANIMAL BABIES. THE CRITERION WAS THAT THE FIRSTBORN MALES OF NORMALLY EDIBLE ANIMALS (GOAT KIDS, LAMBS, OXEN,—WHATEVER WAS CONSIDERED A PROPER FOOD ANIMAL) WERE GIVEN TO GOD AS OFFERINGS, WHEREAS THE FIRSTBORN OF HUMANS AND THE FIRSTBORN OF MALE ANIMALS USED FOR WORK BUT NOT FOR EATING (SUCH AS THE DONKEY MENTIONED IN V. 13) WERE REDEEMED BY PAYMENT OF A SUBSTITUTE. THUS, THE PRACTICAL MEANING OF “GIVE OVER TO THE LORD” IN V. 12 IS “BRING TO THE TABERNACLE AS A SACRIFICE.” IN THE CASE OF A DONKEY [ASS], A NONFIRSTBORN LAMB WAS AN APPROPRIATE SUBSTITUTE (SINCE ALL FIRSTBORN LAMBS MUST BE GIVEN TO GOD AND NONE HELD BACK TO SERVE AS REDEMPTION SUBSTITUTES). FOR CHILDREN [NIV “SONS,” V. 13] THE REDEMPTION PRICE WAS FIVE SANCTUARY SHEKELS, JUST AS IT WAS FOR AN UNCLEAN ANIMAL (A MALE WORK ANIMAL THAT ONE WANTED TO KEEP). THE FULL EXPLANATION OF THE REDEMPTION PRICING IS FOUND IN NUM 18:15–17. THE RULING IN V. 13 ABOUT BREAKING THE NECK OF AN UNREDEEMED DONKEY [ASS] (USED HERE AS AN EXAMPLE, NOT AS THE ONLY INSTANCE OF ITS TYPE) MAY SEEM ODD AT FIRST GLANCE, BUT IT WAS ENTIRELY WITHIN THE PRINCIPLES OF THE REDEMPTION SYSTEM. A FIRSTBORN ANIMAL COULD NOT SIMPLY BE KEPT FROM GOD FOR ONE’S OWN USE—EITHER FOR WORKING OR FOR EATING. IT BELONGED TO GOD, SO IF IT WAS NOT REDEEMED, IT MUST BE DESTROYED. GOD DID NOT WANT PEOPLE TO WASTE THE TIME OF THE PRIESTS AND LEVITES AT THE CENTRAL SANCTUARY BY HAVING PEOPLE BRING UNNEEDED ANIMALS TO THEM FOR DESTRUCTION. THE PEOPLE COULD DESTROY THE ANIMALS THEMSELVES. BUT BY NO MEANS COULD ANYONE SAY, “SINCE GOD DOESN’T NEED THIS, I’LL KEEP IT AND USE IT FOR MYSELF.” GOD DECIDED WHAT TO USE AND WHAT TO DESTROY OF WHAT BELONGED TO HIM. THIS REGULATION CLARIFIES THE PROCESS IN THE CASE OF ANIMALS OF NO USE TO THE SANCTUARY. THE ULTIMATE PURPOSE OF THIS INSTRUCTION WAS TO PREPARE THE ISRAELITES FOR THE DEATH OF CHRIST ON THEIR BEHALF. THOUGH MOST GENERATIONS OF ISRAELITES COULD ANTICIPATE THIS ALL-IMPORTANT EVENT ONLY VAGUELY, THEY CERTAINLY COULD GRASP THE BASIC CONCEPTS INVOLVED: IF A LIFE IS TO BE RESTORED, IT MUST BE BOUGHT BACK (REDEEMED) BY A PAYMENT; AND THAT PAYMENT IS OFTEN THE SUBSTITUTIONARY DEATH OF SOMETHING FOR SOMETHING ELSE. PAUL’S ASSERTION IN 1 COR 6:20 AND 7:23, “YOU WERE BOUGHT AT A PRICE,” FOLLOWS THE LOGIC OF THE OLD TESTAMENT REDEMPTION SYSTEM AS IT FORESHADOWS THE REDEMPTION PRICE PAID BY CHRIST WITH HIS OWN BLOOD.**

**THE CONNECTION OF CONSECRATION/REDEMPTION OF FIRSTBORN TO THE EXODUS (13:14–16)**

**14 “IN DAYS TO COME, WHEN YOUR SON ASKS YOU, ‘WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?’ SAY TO HIM, ‘WITH A MIGHTY HAND THE LORD BROUGHT US OUT OF EGYPT, OUT OF THE LAND OF SLAVERY. 15 WHEN PHARAOH STUBBORNLY REFUSED TO LET US GO, THE LORD KILLED EVERY FIRSTBORN IN EGYPT, BOTH MAN AND ANIMAL. THIS IS WHY I SACRIFICE TO THE LORD THE FIRST MALE OFFSPRING OF EVERY WOMB AND REDEEM EACH OF MY FIRSTBORN SONS.’ 16 AND IT WILL BE LIKE A SIGN ON YOUR HAND AND A SYMBOL ON YOUR FOREHEAD THAT THE LORD BROUGHT US OUT OF EGYPT WITH HIS MIGHTY HAND.”**

**13:14–16 CHILDREN DESIRE TO LEARN THE REASONS FOR THE PRACTICES THEY GROW UP OBSERVING. IT WAS THEREFORE TO BE EXPECTED THAT IN THEIR NATURAL INQUISITIVENESS ISRAELITE CHILDREN WOULD ASK THEIR PARENTS THE MEANING OF THE CONSECRATION/REDEMPTION OF THE FIRSTBORN. THE PARENTS WERE EXPECTED IN REPLYING TO THEIR CHILDREN TO LINK THE PRACTICE TO THE EXODUS, WHICH WAS TRIGGERED BY THE DEATH OF THE EGYPTIAN FIRSTBORN AND THE SPARING OF THE ISRAELITE FIRSTBORN. IN EFFECT THE CHILD WAS TO BE TOLD, “OUR IDENTITY IS THAT OF GOD’S CHOSEN PEOPLE WHO WERE RESCUED FROM SLAVERY IN EGYPT AND RESCUED FROM THE DEATH OF THE FIRSTBORN BY FAITH IN STEPHEN YAHWEH. WE KEEP SHOWING THAT FAITH BY DEDICATING ALL FIRSTBORN CHILDREN AND ALL FIRSTBORN MALE LIVESTOCK TO GOD. BUT WE BUY BACK THE CHILDREN, AND THE LIVESTOCK THAT ARE INAPPROPRIATE FOR GOD’S OFFERINGS BECAUSE GOD IS GENEROUS ENOUGH TO ALLOW US TO DO THAT. HE STILL GETS AN OFFERING, BUT IT IS A SUBSTITUTE OFFERING FOR WHAT HE WANTS US TO KEEP. WHEN WE DO ALL THIS, WE ARE DOING SOMETHING THAT REMINDS US OF HIS POWERFUL DELIVERANCE FROM EGYPT.” VERSE 14 REPEATS SOME OF WHAT VV. 3 AND 9 HAVE ALREADY SAID, AND V. 16 RESTATES MUCH OF WHAT V. 9 CONTAINS. THE SLIGHT DIFFERENCES (E.G., “A SYMBOL [INSCRIPTIONS] ON YOUR FOREHEAD” IN V. 16 AS OPPOSED TO “REMINDER ON YOUR FOREHEAD” IN V. 9) ARE, AGAIN, THE SORT OF WORDING VARIATIONS THAT HELP DRIVE CONCEPTS PERMANENTLY INTO ONE’S MEMORY. VERSE 15 PROVIDES THE GREATEST AMOUNT OF NEW MATERIAL IN THE PASSAGE, EVEN THOUGH NONE OF IT IS NEW TO THE OVERALL EXODUS STORY. THE HEBREW OF VV. 14–16 CONTAINS NOTHING THAT DEFINITIVELY LIMITS CONSECRATION/REDEMPTION OF THE FIRSTBORN TO MALE CHILDREN; THE NIV TRANSLATION IS OVERLY RESTRICTIVE IN USING “FIRST MALE OFFSPRING” AND “FIRSTBORN SONS” (BETTER: “THAT IS WHY I SACRIFICE TO THE LORD ALL THE FIRSTBORN OF THE WOMB [I.E., ANIMALS] THAT ARE MALES AND ALL THE FIRSTBORN OF MY CHILDREN I REDEEM”).**

**THE WILDERNESS JOURNEY TO SINAI (13:17–19:25)**

**THE ISRAELITES HAD MUCH TO LEARN. THEY HAD JUST BEGUN TO LEAVE EGYPT, WHERE THEY HAD BEEN FOR SO LONG LEADERLESS AND SUBJUGATED THAT THEIR ENTIRE WAY OF THINKING TENDED TO REFLECT THAT OF PEOPLE WHO OWED THEIR IDENTITY TO THEIR PLIGHT. THEY KNEW THEMSELVES AS VICTIMS OF THE TYRANNY OF THE ANCIENT WORLD’S GREATEST CONTEMPORARY POLITICAL-MILITARY-ECONOMIC POWER. THEY KNEW ONE PLACE TO LIVE: THE GOSHEN AREA OF NORTHEAST EGYPT. THEY HAD NEVER BEEN ALLOWED MILITARY ARMS OR THE KNOWLEDGE OF HOW TO USE THEM, EVEN THOUGH GOD HAD JUST BEGUN TO ORGANIZE THEM AS HIS ARMY. THEY WERE NOT USED TO DIRECT GUIDANCE FROM GOD AND UNDERSTOOD LITTLE OF THE POWER OF HIS PRESENCE AMONG THEM. THEY OPERATED WITH THE USUAL ASSUMPTIONS OF MOST PEOPLE TRYING TO UNDERSTAND THE WORKINGS OF GOD: A GOOD AND POWERFUL GOD WOULD HARDLY ALLOW HIS PEOPLE TO GO THROUGH TROUBLES, DANGERS, GRIEFS, AND TESTING’S, WOULD HE? THEIR REASONING LED THEM NATURALLY TO THINK: IF GOD IS ALL-POWERFUL AND CAN OPPRESS THE EGYPTIANS THROUGH THE PLAGUES WHILE SPARING US, HIS PEOPLE, ENTIRELY, WE CAN NOW EXPECT HIM TO TAKE CARE OF ALL OUR WANTS AND DESIRES JUST AS WE DEFINE THEM, CAN’T WE? THIS SECTION OF THE EXODUS NARRATIVE TAKES THE READER FROM EGYPT TO SINAI, AND IN THE PROCESS THROUGH VARIOUS HARDSHIPS THE ISRAELITES EXPERIENCED. THESE INCLUDED BEING PURSUED BY PHARAOH’S VASTLY SUPERIOR ARMY, A LACK OF WATER AT VARIOUS LOCATIONS WHERE GOD LED THEM (WHAT SORT OF GOD WOULD TELL HIS PEOPLE TO ENCAMP WHERE THEY COULDN’T EVEN GET A DRINK FOR THEMSELVES OR WATER THEIR FLOCKS?), BOREDOM WITH THE SAME FOOD DAY AFTER DAY, BEING ATTACKED AND HAVING TO FIGHT THEIR FIRST BATTLE (AGAINST A FIGHTING FORCE EXPERIENCED IN PROJECTING POWER IN THE VERY WILDERNESS THEY WERE IN), HAVING DISPUTES IN SUCH NUMBERS THAT THEY NEEDED A MULTITIERED COURT SYSTEM, AND FINDING OUT THAT GETTING TOO CLOSE TO A HOLY GOD WAS DEADLY. IN ALL THESE EVENTS, HOWEVER, GOD WAS AT WORK TO BRING HIS PEOPLE TO A RIGHT RELATIONSHIP WITH HIM AND TO TEACH THEM DEPENDENCE ON HIS PROVISION FOR THEM. HE WAS SHAPING AND EDUCATING THEM, ALLOWING THEM TO LEARN (FREQUENTLY THE HARD WAY SINCE THAT IS ALL TOO OFTEN THE ONLY WAY PEOPLE REALLY LEARN A LESSON) WHAT IT MEANT TO TRUST HIM IN ALL SORTS OF SITUATIONS. IN ADDITION, HE WAS TREATING THEM IN A WAY THAT HAS ALWAYS BEEN DIFFICULT FOR PEOPLE TO ACCEPT: HE WAS NOT TELLING THEM EVERYTHING THEY WANTED TO KNOW. HE TOLD THEM WHAT THEY NEEDED TO KNOW IN ORDER TO BECOME HIS COVENANT PEOPLE AND IN ORDER TO RECEIVE HIS SALVATION. THEY WANTED TO KNOW MUCH MORE, HOWEVER: WHERE TO FIND WATER RIGHT AWAY, HOW MUCH LONGER THIS OR THAT WOULD LAST, HOW TO BE COMFORTABLE, HOW TO AVOID PROBLEMS AND DANGERS, AND HOW TO GET OUT OF UNPLEASANT SITUATIONS. TELLING GOD HOW TO DO THINGS AND COMPLAINING ABOUT THE THINGS HE DOES OR DOESN’T DO HAVE ALWAYS BEEN RATHER POPULAR ENTERPRISES. THE ISRAELITES ON THE WAY TO SINAI DID NOT HESITATE TO INDULGE IN THEM.**

**REASONS FOR AN IRREGULAR ROUTE (13:17–14:4)**

**THE DANGERS OF WAR FOR AN UNTESTED ARMY (13:17–18)**

**17 WHEN PHARAOH LET THE PEOPLE GO, GOD DID NOT LEAD THEM ON THE ROAD THROUGH THE PHILISTINE COUNTRY, THOUGH THAT WAS SHORTER. FOR GOD SAID, “IF THEY FACE WAR, THEY MIGHT CHANGE THEIR MINDS AND RETURN TO EGYPT.” 18 SO GOD LED THE PEOPLE AROUND BY THE DESERT ROAD TOWARD THE RED SEA. THE ISRAELITES WENT UP OUT OF EGYPT ARMED FOR BATTLE.**

**13:17 THE FIRST REASON FOR AN IRREGULAR EXODUS ROUTE WAS THE PRESENCE OF THE PHILISTINES ON THE ASIAN COAST OF THE MEDITERRANEAN, THAT IS, VIRTUALLY ON EGYPT’S NORTHEAST BORDER. NO DEFINITIVE DOCUMENTATION OF PHILISTINE MILITARY STRENGTH AT THE TIME OF THE EXODUS HAS SURVIVED FROM THE ANCIENT WORLD. WE KNOW, HOWEVER, THAT THE PHILISTINES WERE SO DAUNTING A FIGHTING FORCE AT THE TIME OF THE CONQUEST, FORTY YEARS LATER AND BEYOND, THAT EVEN AT JOSHUA’S DEATH THEIR TERRITORY REMAINED UNCONQUERED (CF. JOSH 13:1–5). WE ALSO KNOW THAT THEY WERE BOLD ENOUGH TO ATTACK EGYPT PROPER IN AN EFFORT TO CAPTURE TERRITORY IN THE DAYS OF RAMSES III, THAT IS, ABOUT 1188 BC, SUGGESTING THAT THEY CONSIDERED THEMSELVES AT THAT TIME—CONSIDERABLY AFTER THE ISRAELITES HAD ENTERED CANAAN—POTENTIALLY ABLE TO DEFEAT EVEN THE EGYPTIANS, DEPENDING ON THE CIRCUMSTANCES. ACCORDINGLY, GOD DID NOT WANT HIS PEOPLE TO TRY TO ENTER CANAAN DIRECTLY BY THE WELL-ESTABLISHED COASTAL ROAD FROM EGYPT, THE VIA MARIS, EVEN THOUGH THAT WAS BY FAR THE SHORTEST AND EASIEST ROUTE FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF TRAVEL TIME AND THEORETICAL CONVENIENCE. THE VIA MARIS LED RIGHT THROUGH THE HEART OF PHILISTINE TERRITORY. BASED ON THEIR BEHAVIOR AS RECORDED IN JUDGES AND 1 SAMUEL, THE PHILISTINES WERE LOOKING TO EXPAND THEIR TERRITORIAL CONTROL AND WOULD HARDLY HAVE BEEN WILLING TO LET THE ISRAELITES ENTER CANAAN, ON WHICH THEY THEMSELVES HAD DESIGNS, WITHOUT AN ALL-OUT FIGHT. BY CONTRAST, ACCORDING TO THE MERNEPTAH STELA, ISRAEL WAS NOT YET REGARDED AS A NATION BUT MERELY AS A PEOPLE GROUP EVEN AS LATE AS 1230 BC, A FACT THAT MAY BE TAKEN AS CONFIRMING THE CONSISTENT BIBLICAL INDICATIONS OF THEIR RELATIVE WEAKNESS MILITARILY AND POLITICALLY. AT LEAST THAT IS THE SORT OF SCENARIO THAT COMPORTS PRECISELY WITH THE PICTURE PAINTED HERE IN EXODUS AND IN THE BOOKS OF JUDGES AND 1 SAMUEL. COULD GOD HAVE DESTROYED THE PHILISTINES ON BEHALF OF THE ISRAELITES? OF COURSE. BUT THE PHILISTINES HAD SO FAR DONE NOTHING TO THE ISRAELITES AND SO WERE NOT IN THE SAME CATEGORY AS THE EGYPTIANS, WHO WELL DESERVED THE PUNISHMENT THEY HAD ALREADY RECEIVED AND WERE ABOUT TO RECEIVE MORE OF (I.E., THEIR DEFEAT AT THE RED SEA). MOREOVER, THE PHILISTINES WERE LATECOMERS TO PALESTINE, AS COMPARED TO THE AMORITES/CANAANITES, AND THEREFORE DID NOT FALL UNDER THE BLANKET CONDEMNATION OF THE “SIN OF THE AMORITES” THAT GOD HAD ANNOUNCED TO ABRAHAM IN GEN 15:16 AS THE BASIS FOR THE CONQUEST OF CANAAN. SO, THE PHILISTINES WERE TO BE DEALT WITH LATER RATHER THAN IMMEDIATELY; IT WAS NOT PART OF GOD’S PLAN THAT THEY SHOULD BE FOUGHT AND SUBDUED AT THIS EARLY STAGE. HE THEREFORE DID NOT CALL ISRAEL TO TRY TO CONQUER PHILISTINE TERRITORY, AND HAD THEY TRIED ON THEIR OWN TO DO SO, THEY WOULD SURELY HAVE BEEN DEFEATED, JUST AS HAPPENED WHEN THEY TRIED LATER, ON THEIR OWN, TO DEFEAT THE CANAANITES (NUM 14:44–45). WITHOUT GOD’S HELP, HE KNEW THAT “IF THEY FACE WAR, THEY MIGHT CHANGE THEIR MINDS AND RETURN TO EGYPT.” WOULD ISRAEL REALLY BE SO INCONSISTENT AS TO GIVE UP THE CONQUEST AND RETURN TO EGYPT—OF ALL PLACES? AND WOULD THEY DO SO AFTER ALL THEY HAD SEEN AND EXPERIENCED IN THE TEN PLAGUES? THE ANSWER IS YES—DECIDEDLY YES. NOT ONLY DID THIS VERY PLAN TO RETURN TO EGYPT ACTUALLY OCCUR LESS THAN TWO YEARS LATER (NUM 14:3, 14), BUT ONE MUST NOT FORGET THAT THE ISRAELITES WERE ACCUSTOMED ONLY TO EGYPT; THEY HAD LIVED NOWHERE ELSE FOR 430 YEARS. A PROPERLY CHASTISED EGYPT, WHICH HAD PERHAPS “LEARNED ITS LESSON” ABOUT MISTREATING THE ISRAELITES BY FORCE OF THE PLAGUES, MIGHT HAVE SEEMED TO THEM THE VERY PLACE THEY WOULD NOW BE MOST SAFE AND HAPPY, ESPECIALLY IF THEY HAD BEEN BEATEN IN WAR BY THE PHILISTINES (AS WOULD BE CERTAIN WITHOUT DIVINE AID) AND THEREFORE WOULD FEEL JUSTIFIED IN GIVING UP ON ANY PLAN TO ENTER CANAAN. GOD KNEW THEIR LIMITED PERSPECTIVES AND NAÏVE EXPECTATIONS FULL WELL AND THUS LED THEM AWAY FROM PHILISTINE TERRITORY. GOD’S COMPASSIONATE WORDS IN THE SECOND SENTENCE OF THIS VERSE, “IF THEY FACE WAR, THEY MIGHT CHANGE THEIR MINDS AND RETURN TO EGYPT,” DEMONSTRATE HIS CONCERN FOR THE UNPREPAREDNESS OF THE ISRAELITES TO FIGHT ANY OTHER MILITARY FORCE AT THIS POINT. THUS, GOD MADE CLEAR THAT THE EGYPTIAN ARMY, FAR SUPERIOR TO THAT OF THE PHILISTINES, WOULD HAVE CRUSHED ISRAEL IN ANY NORMAL MILITARY ENCOUNTER. THE READER IS THEREFORE PREPARED BY THIS STATEMENT FOR THE EXPECTATION THAT ISRAEL WOULD HAVE LITTLE SUCCESS IN ANY FUTURE BATTLE WITHOUT SPECIAL DIVINE INTERVENTION—AND, INDEED, THAT IS EXACTLY WHAT WAS REQUIRED AT THE RED SEA (14:5FF.), REPHIDIM (17:8FF.), AND THEREAFTER THROUGHOUT VIRTUALLY ALL OF ISRAEL’S HISTORY. ACCORDINGLY, THE DIVINE DEFEAT OF THE EGYPTIAN ARMY AT THE RED SEA WILL CONSTITUTE AN ESSENTIAL PART OF THE DELIVERANCE OF THE PEOPLE AND A MEANS OF THEIR ENCOURAGEMENT TO FOLLOW STEPHEN YAHWEH FROM EGYPT, AND NOT BACK THERETO. 13:18 WHAT, THEN, TO DO TO AVOID TRYING TO GO THROUGH PHILISTINE-HELD TERRITORY INTO THE PROMISED LAND? THE ANSWER WAS FOR GOD TO LEAD THEM IN A DIFFERENT DIRECTION AND ON A DIFFERENT ROAD, THAT IS, “BY THE DESERT ROAD TOWARD THE RED SEA.” AGAIN, MOSES REMINDS US THAT THE ISRAELITES WERE GOD’S ARMY: “THE ISRAELITES WENT UP OUT OF EGYPT ARMED FOR BATTLE.” THE NIV TRANSLATION IS NOT CORRECT. THE HEBREW ACTUALLY SAYS, “THE ISRAELITES WENT UP OUT OF THE LAND OF EGYPT ORGANIZED BY FIFTIES.” FIFTIES WERE ONE OF THE SMALLEST FIGHTING UNITS, WHAT MIGHT BE CALLED TODAY “SQUADS.” THE TERM DOES NOT LITERALLY REFER TO GROUPS OF FIFTY MEN BUT IS PART OF THE “THOUSAND-HUNDREDS-FIFTIES-TENS” LANGUAGE EMPLOYED TO DELINEATE MILITARY UNITS. THE ISRAELITES WERE AT THIS POINT NOT ARMED AT ALL. LATER THEY WOULD CARRY MAINLY SHORT SWORDS (CF. EXOD. 32:27). THE SHORT SWORD WAS A COMMON ARMAMENT OF THE DAY, BUT THE OVERALL EVIDENCE SUGGESTS THAT THE ISRAELITES WERE LESS TRAINED THAN OTHER ANCIENTS AT THIS POINT IN THEIR HISTORY IN ALL WAR SKILLS AND WERE PARTICULARLY DEFICIENT IN ARCHERY, SPEAR THROWING, AND SLINGING. FORMED UP FOR BATTLE THEY MAY HAVE BEEN—AFTER A FASHION. TRAINED FOR BATTLE, HOWEVER, THEY WERE NOT. THERE HAD BEEN NO PERMISSION OR OPPORTUNITY FOR LEARNING MARTIAL ARTS UNDER THE EGYPTIANS, AND THE FACT THAT ISRAELITE MEN COULD COUNT THEMSELVES INTO (UNARMED) SQUADS DID NOT MEAN THEY WERE IN FACT A CAPABLE FIGHTING FORCE ON THEIR OWN.**

**SPECIAL TRANSPORTATION OF THE BONES OF JOSEPH (13:19)**

**19 MOSES TOOK THE BONES OF JOSEPH WITH HIM BECAUSE JOSEPH HAD MADE THE SONS OF ISRAEL SWEAR AN OATH. HE HAD SAID, “GOD WILL SURELY COME TO YOUR AID, AND THEN YOU MUST CARRY MY BONES UP WITH YOU FROM THIS PLACE.” 13:19 THIS VERSE MIGHT SEEM TO A MODERN READER TO INTRODUCE A SIDE ISSUE INTO THE NARRATIVE, BUT THE VERSE REMINDS THE READER OF AN IMPORTANT HOPEFUL PRACTICE IN ANCIENT ISRAEL, RELATING TO ISRAEL’S VERY IDENTITY AS THE CHOSEN PEOPLE AND THE TYPICAL ISRAELITE’S EXPECTATION OF AN AFTERLIFE. JOSEPH UNDERSTOOD THE PROMISES OF GOD TO ABRAHAM. HE WAS WELL AWARE THAT SOMEDAY THE ISRAELITES WOULD LEAVE EGYPT AND TAKE THEIR PROMISED PLACE “UP” IN THE PROMISED LAND. SO IMPORTANT TO HIM WAS HIS IDENTIFICATION IN FAITH WITH THE PEOPLE OF GOD AND THEIR ETERNAL DESTINY THAT HE EXACTED A DEATHBED PROMISE FROM HIS BROTHERS TO THE EFFECT THAT THEY WOULD BE SURE THAT HIS REMAINS WERE BROUGHT OUT OF EGYPT AND BURIED IN CANAAN (GEN 50:24–25). SINCE JOSEPH HAD BEEN EMBALMED (GEN 50:26), HIS REMAINS PROBABLY WERE MORE SUBSTANTIAL THAN MERE BONES, THAT IS, MORE LIKE MUMMIFIED REMAINS THAT ARE EVISCERATED BUT STILL CONTAIN A FULL SKELETON AND SKIN, AS WELL AS DESICCATED FLESH AND HAIR. THESE THE ISRAELITES CALLED “BONES” IN THE OLD TESTAMENT, JUST AS THEY ALSO REFERRED TO MERE SKELETAL REMAINS AS “BONES.” THE ISRAELITES BELIEVED IN LIFE AFTER DEATH AND TOOK GREAT CARE WITH THEIR REMAINS, OR “BONES.” IT WAS CONSIDERED DESIRABLE FOR A WHOLE FAMILY OF AS MANY GENERATIONS AS POSSIBLE TO BE BURIED TOGETHER IN A COMMON GRAVE, NOT NECESSARILY BECAUSE GROUPED FAMILY BURIAL MADE LIFE AFTER DEATH MORE ATTAINABLE BUT TO SHOW FAITH IN THE RESURRECTION. THE WORDING “GATHERED TO ONE’S PEOPLE/FATHERS” (E.G., GEN 49:29; JUDG. 2:10; 2 KGS 22:20; 2 CHR. 34:28) DESCRIBED AN EXPECTATION OF THE INTERMEDIATE STATE OF PARADISE, FROM WHICH ONE WOULD BE RESURRECTED, WITH BODILY REMAINS (BONES) REJOINED AND TRANSFORMED BY GOD’S SPIRIT (EZEK. 37:1–14) INTO A SPIRITUAL BODY (1 COR 15:44) WITH WHICH TO INHABIT HEAVEN FOREVER. BURIAL IN THE SAME TOMB WITH THOSE WHO HAD GONE ON BEFORE SYMBOLIZED FAITH IN THAT OUTCOME ON THE PART OF THE DECEASED. FOR THE ISRAELITES LEAVING EGYPT AT THE TIME OF THE EXODUS, AS FOR JOSEPH CENTURIES BEFORE, THE PROMISED LAND SYMBOLIZED NOT MERELY AN OPPORTUNITY FOR FREER, HAPPIER EXISTENCE IN THIS LIFE, BUT IT ALSO SYMBOLIZED ETERNAL LIFE WITH ABRAHAM, ISAAC, JACOB AND THE OTHER GREAT WORTHIES OF THE PAST. THERE IS NO INDICATION THAT ISRAELITES ASSUMED THAT IF ONE DIED OUTSIDE THE PROMISED LAND, HE OR SHE COULD NOT HAVE ETERNAL LIFE. RATHER, THEY UNDERSTOOD THAT FOR THEM TO FOLLOW THE PLAN OF GOD IN FAITH, INCLUDING CONSCIOUS INHERITANCE OF THE LAND PROMISED TO ABRAHAM ON THEIR BEHALF, WAS A PART OF THE OVERALL COMMITMENT TO TRUST GOD FOR THEIR PRESENT AND FUTURE, INCLUDING BEING BURIED WHERE AND WITH WHOM FAITHFUL ISRAELITES WOULD NATURALLY WANT TO BE BURIED. THE TRANSPORTATION OF THE BONES OF JOSEPH CLOSED A CHAPTER ON ISRAELITE HISTORY: JUST AS ELABORATE CARE HAD BEEN TAKEN SO THAT JACOB COULD BE BURIED IN THE PROMISED LAND RATHER THAN IN EGYPT (GEN 49:29–50:14), JOSEPH’S REMAINS DESERVED TO BE TRANSPORTED AND REINTERNED THERE AS WELL. INDEED, ALL THE PEOPLE ALIVE AT THE TIME OF THE EXODUS WERE DEPARTING FROM THE LAND OF CAPTIVITY TO LIVE AND DIE IN THE LAND OF PROMISE AND TO BE BURIED THERE. ACCORDING TO GOD’S PROMISES TO ABRAHAM, REITERATED TO HIS SON AND GRANDSONS (THE SON OF ONE’S SON OR ONE’S DAUGHTER), ISRAEL BELONGED NOT IN EGYPT BUT IN CANAAN, AND THIS VERSE REMINDS THE READER THAT FROM THE BEGINNING IT WAS THE PLAN FOR THIS TO BE SO.**

**EARLY DESTINATIONS AND THE PILLAR OF CLOUD/FIRE (13:20–22)**

**20 AFTER LEAVING SUCCOTH THEY CAMPED AT ETHAM ON THE EDGE OF THE DESERT. 21 BY DAY THE LORD WENT AHEAD OF THEM IN A PILLAR OF CLOUD TO GUIDE THEM ON THEIR WAY AND BY NIGHT IN A PILLAR OF FIRE TO GIVE THEM LIGHT, SO THAT THEY COULD TRAVEL BY DAY OR NIGHT. 22 NEITHER THE PILLAR OF CLOUD BY DAY NOR THE PILLAR OF FIRE BY NIGHT LEFT ITS PLACE IN FRONT OF THE PEOPLE.**

**13:20 THE SECOND STAGE OF THE JOURNEY BEGAN. THE LOCATION OF NEITHER SUCCOTH (SEE 12:37) NOR ETHAM IS CERTAIN, EXCEPT THAT ETHAM WAS “ON THE EDGE OF THE DESERT,” MEANING THAT BY REACHING IT, THE ISRAELITES WERE AT THE POINT OF LEAVING INHABITED EGYPT, PRESUMABLY CONTINUING IN THEIR EAST-SOUTHEAST DIRECTION. THIS DOES NOT MEAN THAT THEY WERE OUT OF THE RANGE OF EGYPTIAN OBSERVATION, AS 14:3 MAKES CLEAR. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT WE ARE TO UNDERSTAND THAT THE TRIP FROM SUCCOTH TO ETHAM TOOK ONLY A SINGLE DAY, BUT IT IS MORE LIKELY THAT THE LANGUAGE OF THE FOLLOWING TWO VERSES (“BY DAY … BY NIGHT”) COMPORTS WITH A MULTIDAY (AND PERHAPS MULTI-NIGHT AS WELL) JOURNEY TO ETHAM AND AN ENCAMPMENT OF MORE THAN ONE NIGHT THERE. THIS VERSE IS OF PARTICULAR VALUE WHEN COMBINED WITH 14:2–4. IT HELPS SHOW HOW THE ISRAELITE TRAVELS MAY HAVE LOOKED LIKE A CONFUSED SUCCESSION OF ATTEMPTS TO LEAVE EGYPT THAT KEPT STOPPING WHEN ANY GIVEN ROAD REACHED THE WILDERNESS OR THE SEA. 13:21–22 MOSES INTRODUCED HERE THE SPECIAL VISIBLE SYMBOL OF GOD’S PRESENCE TO GUIDE AND PROTECT THE ISRAELITES IN THE WILDERNESS, THE PILLAR OF CLOUD/FIRE. THE SOMEWHAT REPETITIOUS LANGUAGE OF THESE VERSES IN DESCRIBING THE PILLAR SHOULD NOT LEAD TO THE CONCLUSION THAT THERE WERE TWO SEPARATE PILLARS. FROM EXOD. 14:24 (“THE LORD LOOKED DOWN FROM THE PILLAR OF FIRE AND CLOUD AT THE EGYPTIAN ARMY”), 14:19–20 (“THE PILLAR OF CLOUD ALSO MOVED FROM IN FRONT AND STOOD BEHIND THEM, COMING BETWEEN THE ARMIES OF EGYPT AND ISRAEL. THROUGHOUT THE NIGHT THE CLOUD BROUGHT DARKNESS TO THE ONE SIDE AND LIGHT TO THE OTHER SIDE”), 40:38 (“FIRE WAS IN THE CLOUD BY NIGHT”), AND NUM 14:14 (“THAT YOUR CLOUD STAYS OVER THEM, AND THAT YOU GO BEFORE THEM IN A PILLAR OF CLOUD BY DAY AND A PILLAR OF FIRE BY NIGHT”) IT IS CLEAR THAT THERE WAS ONLY ONE CLOUDLIKE PILLAR, WHICH REPRESENTED GOD’S PRESENCE, AND THAT IT APPEARED AS A GREAT COLUMN OF DARK CLOUD WHEN VIEWED DURING THE BRIGHT SUNLIT DAY BUT AS A COLUMN OF FIRE WHEN VIEWED AT NIGHT. THIS IS CONSISTENT WITH THE DESCRIPTIONS OF THE CLOUD THAT COVERED THE TOP OF MOUNT SINAI AS DESCRIBED IN EXOD. 24:15–18. THAT CLOUD WAS DARK TO MOSES, WHO WAS PERMITTED TO ENTER IT, BUT APPEARED AS A BLAZING FIRE TO THE OTHER ISRAELITES, WHO WERE NOT. IT IS COMMON SENSE TO ASSUME THAT BY DAY IN THE HOT WILDERNESS OF EGYPT AND THE SINAI PENINSULA, A CLOUD WOULD SEEM WELCOME AND COMFORTING AND THAT BY NIGHT A FIRE WOULD SEEM THE SAME, PROVIDING LIGHT TO SEE BY AND PERHAPS SOME WARMTH, AS WELL AS A TERRIFYING BARRIER IF IT WERE POSITIONED BETWEEN THE ISRAELITES AND A POTENTIAL ENEMY. THE TEXT, HOWEVER, DOES NOT SAY THAT THE CLOUD PROVIDED A SHADE OVER THE HEADS OF THE ISRAELITES. RATHER, IT WENT AHEAD OF THEM TO LEAD THEM—REPRESENTING GOD’S LEADERSHIP AS THEY MOVED THROUGH UNKNOWN TERRITORY. LOOKING AT A CLOUD AHEAD OF ONE IS PLEASANT AND EASY ON A BRIGHT, HOT DAY; LOOKING AT A COMFORTING FIRE IS SIMILAR AT NIGHT. THAT WAS THE MAIN FUNCTION OF THE PILLAR—A WAY OF ALLOWING THE ISRAELITES TO LOOK AT GOD SO AS TO BE ABLE TO FOLLOW HIM WITHOUT ACTUALLY SEEING HIM IN HIS VERY PERSON (33:20; CF. JOHN 1:18; 1 JOHN 4:12). THE PILLAR-CLOUD WAS A MANIFESTATION OF STEPHEN YAHWEH HIMSELF, NOT MERELY SOMETHING HE SENT THEM. BY REASON OF BEING GUIDED BY THE PILLAR, THE ISRAELITES KNEW ALL DAY EVERY DAY THAT GOD WAS PRESENT WITH THEM. HERE WAS A SUPERNATURAL, HUGE, AND VISIBLE REMINDER THAT STEPHEN YAHWEH WAS AT THE HEAD OF HIS PEOPLE AS THEY MARCHED OR ENCAMPED, WHETHER BY DAY OR BY NIGHT. THEREFORE, EVEN THE SEEMINGLY ERRATIC ROUTE DESCRIBED BY 13:20 IN COMBINATION WITH 14:1–3 COULD BE TRUSTED BECAUSE STEPHEN YAHWEH WAS DIRECTING THEM ON IT. STEPHEN YAHWEH CHOSE THE ODD ROUTE—NOT THEY. AGAIN, THE PILLAR WAS NOT MERELY A SIGN FROM STEPHEN YAHWEH—IT IS STEPHEN YAHWEH (“THE LORD WENT AHEAD OF THEM IN A PILLAR OF CLOUD TO GUIDE THEM ON THEIR WAY AND BY NIGHT IN A PILLAR OF FIRE TO GIVE THEM LIGHT,” 13:21). HE MANIFESTED HIMSELF IN THE FORM OF A PILLAR OF CLOUD/FIRE FOR THEIR BENEFIT.**

**REVERSING DIRECTION: GOD’S FURTHER HUMILIATION OF PHARAOH (14:1–4)**

**1 THEN THE LORD SAID TO MOSES, 2 “TELL THE ISRAELITES TO TURN BACK AND ENCAMP NEAR PI HAHIROTH, BETWEEN MIGDOL AND THE SEA. THEY ARE TO ENCAMP BY THE SEA, DIRECTLY OPPOSITE BAAL ZEPHON. 3 PHARAOH WILL THINK, ‘THE ISRAELITES ARE WANDERING AROUND THE LAND IN CONFUSION, HEMMED IN BY THE DESERT.’ 4 AND I WILL HARDEN PHARAOH’S HEART, AND HE WILL PURSUE THEM. BUT I WILL GAIN GLORY FOR MYSELF THROUGH PHARAOH AND ALL HIS ARMY, AND THE EGYPTIANS WILL KNOW THAT I AM THE LORD.” SO, THE ISRAELITES DID THIS.**

**14:1–2 THE DIRECTION PREVIOUSLY TAKEN APPARENTLY HEADED EAST SOUTHEAST (12:37; 13:20). NOW COMES A RADICAL REVERSAL OF DIRECTION, PRESUMABLY TOWARD THE NORTH(EAST?) AND A SEA COAST (EITHER THAT OF THE MEDITERRANEAN OR THE RED SEA), WHERE THE ISRAELITES WERE ORDERED TO ENCAMP FOR THE THIRD TIME SINCE THEIR INITIAL DEPARTURE. SURELY SUCH A ROUTE WOULD LOOK TO ANYONE OBSERVING ITS CONTRAST TO THE ISRAELITES’ PREVIOUS DIRECTION AS AN INDICATION OF CONFUSION. NONE OF THE LOCATIONS MENTIONED IN V. 2 CAN BE IDENTIFIED WITH CERTAINTY TODAY. THEY ALL PROBABLY WERE SMALL, OUT-OF-THE-WAY PLACES, ALLOWING THE THOUSANDS OF ISRAELITES TO SET UP TENTS IN AN ORGANIZED FASHION NEAR ONE ANOTHER, WITH SOME SORT OF GRAZING PLACES FOR THEIR FLOCKS AND HERDS AND ADEQUATE WATER FOR ALL—NOT THE SORT OF LOCATIONS THAT WOULD HAVE BEEN WELL POPULATED BY EGYPTIANS. ACCORDINGLY, IT IS ACTUALLY POSSIBLE THAT NONE OF THEM IS MENTIONED IN EXTANT ANCIENT TEXTS, WHICH LIST MAINLY LARGE, POPULOUS CITIES AND TOWNS AND ENTIRE REGIONS. WHAT HAD HAPPENED WAS THAT A COMPLETE REVERSAL OF DIRECTION HAD LANDED THE ISRAELITES SOMEWHERE ALONG (AS IS MOST LIKELY) THE RED SEA COAST, LOOKING AS IF THEY WERE AFRAID TO HEAD OUT INTO THE ACTUAL WILDERNESS. ALL THIS CONSTITUTED A DIVINE RUSE TO TRAP PHARAOH ONE LAST TIME. BECAUSE THE ISRAELITES WERE STILL WITHIN THE BOUNDARIES OF EGYPT THROUGHOUT THE TIME OF THESE FIRST THREE ENCAMPMENTS (EVEN THOUGH GENERALLY AT THE EDGES OF THE DESERT), THERE WAS AMPLE OPPORTUNITY FOR OBSERVATION OF THEIR TRAVELS AND ACTIVITIES BY EGYPTIANS IN THE VICINITY. THE EGYPTIANS HAD A POWERFUL AND WELL-ORGANIZED MILITARY WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR KEEPING ABREAST OF ANY ACTIVITY ON THE NATION’S BORDERS, AND IT IS HARD TO IMAGINE THAT REGULAR REPORTS OF ISRAELITE MOVEMENTS WOULD NOT BE PROMPTLY REPORTED UP THE CHAIN OF COMMAND TO PHARAOH’S MILITARY ADVISORS. THE FACT OF THE ISRAELITE ENCAMPMENT AT PI-HAHIROTH MUST HAVE BEEN KNOWN VIRTUALLY IMMEDIATELY IN THE HIGHEST MILITARY CIRCLES. CURRID SUGGESTS THAT PI-HAHIROTH COULD BE A TERM THAT DERIVES NOT FROM EGYPTIAN BUT FROM AKKADIAN, A HEBRAIZED FORM OF THE AKKADIAN PI-HIRITI, WHICH MEANS “THE MOUTH/OPENING OF THE CANAL.” THIS CANAL COULD HAVE BEEN THE ONE THAT STRETCHED FROM THE MEDITERRANEAN TO THE AREA OF THE GREAT BITTER LAKES AND PERHAPS EVEN FARTHER SOUTH, A DEFENSIVE CANAL DESIGNED TO INHIBIT AN ENEMY’S CROSSING INTO EGYPT WITHOUT GREAT DIFFICULTY. BUT OF COURSE, SUCH A CANAL WOULD HAVE HAD AT LEAST ONE MAJOR BREAK OR OPENING AS A MEANS OF ALLOWING TRAFFIC (CONTROLLED AND GUARDED OF COURSE) TO ENTER AND EXIT EGYPT FOR TRADE, MILITARY SURVEILLANCE. IN CURRID’S VIEW THIS OPENING, OVER WHICH THE ISRAELITES MAY HAVE CROSSED, WOULD HAVE BEEN LOCATED “NEAR THE GULF OF SUEZ.” THE LOCATION OF MIGDOL IS A MATTER OF SPECULATION AS IS THAT OF BAAL ZEPHON. NEVERTHELESS, FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF THE VALUE OF THE NARRATIVE TO THE READER, THE ABILITY TO PINPOINT SITES ON A MAP IS NOT OF MAJOR IMPORTANCE. WHAT MATTERS IS THE EFFECT ON PHARAOH THAT GOD WAS CREATING BY LEADING THE PEOPLE ON A SEEMINGLY ERRATIC COURSE: ONCE AGAIN PHARAOH WAS BEING DUPED INTO A SITUATION OF HUMILIATION, ENTICED TO ACT IN A MANNER THAT HE THOUGHT WOULD ADVANTAGE HIMSELF AND EGYPT BUT WOULD IN FACT FURTHER DEMONSTRATE HIS OWN AND EGYPT’S IMPOTENCY IN THE FACE OF THE AWESOME POWER OF THE ONLY TRUE GOD. 14:3–4 THE THEME OF GOD’S SUPERIORITY TO PHARAOH, SEEN REPEATEDLY PREVIOUSLY, CONTINUES HERE. BUT HOW COULD PHARAOH BE EXPECTED TO CONCLUDE THAT THE ISRAELITES WERE SUDDENLY UNABLE TO LEAVE EGYPT AFTER HE HAD JUST BEEN SO SEVERELY TAUGHT THE POWER OF ISRAEL’S GOD IN THE TEN PLAGUES? WHAT WOULD GIVE HIM THE SENSE THAT SUDDENLY HE COULD GAIN VICTORY OVER THE ISRAELITES WHEN THEIR GOD HAD JUST SHOWN TOTAL SUPERIORITY TO HIM AND HIS GODS? THE ANSWER REQUIRES APPRECIATING EGYPTIAN RELIGION IN ITS ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN CONTEXT. TO ALL THE ANCIENTS (EXCEPT THOSE ISRAELITES WHO WERE BEGINNING TO UNDERSTAND THE ONLY TRUE GOD) THE GODS AND GODDESSES THAT CONTROLLED THE WORLD WERE ARBITRARY AND CAPRICIOUS, QUICK TO CHANGE THEIR ACTIONS AND ATTITUDES, CONSTANTLY VYING WITH ONE ANOTHER FOR POWER, NOT OMNIPRESENT BUT MANIFESTING THEMSELVES AT GIVEN LOCATIONS AND THEN LEAVING THOSE LOCATIONS UNPREDICTABLY. JAMES COULD SAY OF SATAN [LUCIFER/VICTORIA], “RESIST THE DEVIL, AND HE WILL FLEE FROM YOU” (JAS 4:7) BECAUSE SATAN [LUCIFER/VICTORIA], WHO IS FINITE AND CANNOT BE IN ALL PLACES AT ONCE, WILL SOON LOSE INTEREST IN TRYING TO TEMPT SOMEONE WHO RESISTS HIM AND WILL MOVE ON TO SOMEONE ELSE MORE LIKELY TO YIELD TO TEMPTATION. LIKEWISE, THE EGYPTIANS’ GODS WERE CONSIDERED BEINGS WHO MIGHT NOT ALWAYS BE PRESENT AMONG THEIR PEOPLE. ACCORDINGLY, STEPHEN YAHWEH KNEW THAT IT WOULD BE NATURAL FOR PHARAOH TO THINK THAT HE, STEPHEN YAHWEH, AFTER HAVING EXPENDED GREAT EFFORT TO DEMONSTRATE HIS POWER TO THE EGYPTIANS, MIGHT NOW NO LONGER BE DIRECTLY INVOLVED IN HELPING THE ISRAELITES SO THAT HE, PHARAOH, COULD ONCE AGAIN ASSERT HIS POWER OVER THEM UNHINDERED. INDEED, THE ISRAELITES THEMSELVES WERE NOT ABOVE ASSUMING AT TIMES PESSIMISTICALLY THAT THEY HAD BEEN ABANDONED BY STEPHEN YAHWEH. ONCE AGAIN ALL OF THIS WAS A PLAN OF GOD ANNOUNCED IN ADVANCE, SO THAT MOSES AND THE ISRAELITES WOULD NOT (IF THEY COULD MAINTAIN THEIR FAITH) BE SURPRISED AND DISCOMFITED BY THE COMING EGYPTIAN PURSUIT. THE PURPOSE OF THE PLAN WAS TO “GAIN GLORY OVER PHARAOH” AS WELL AS “ALL HIS ARMY.” PREVIOUSLY THE VAUNTED EGYPTIAN ARMY WAS NOT SUBJECT TO THE SAME SORT OF HUMILIATION THAT PHARAOH, THE EGYPTIANS IN GENERAL, THEIR LAND, AND THEIR GODS HAD ENDURED. NOW IT WAS TIME IN GOD’S PLAN TO INCLUDE THE ARMY IN THE SCHEME OF HUMILIATION. BECAUSE THE ISRAELITES WERE ALREADY ORGANIZED AS AN ARMY AND NEEDED TO THINK OF THEMSELVES IN TERMS OF THEIR UPCOMING MILITARY ROLE, IT HARDLY SHOULD COME AS A SURPRISE THAT GOD WOULD WANT THEM TO SEE HIS SOVEREIGNTY IN A MILITARY ENCOUNTER AS A MEANS OF ENCOURAGING THEM TOWARD THE MILITARY CHALLENGES THAT LAY AHEAD FOR THEM. A MILITARY DEFEAT OF THE EGYPTIANS ALSO WOULD DEMONSTRATE FINAL PROOF OF GOD’S POWER TO EGYPT (“AND THE EGYPTIANS WILL KNOW THAT I AM THE LORD”). THE SHORT SENTENCE AT THE END OF 14:4, “SO THE ISRAELITES DID THIS,” REFERS STRICTLY TO THEIR CHANGE OF DIRECTION AND ENCAMPMENT BY THE SEA—NOT THEIR ACCEPTANCE OF THE IMPLIED PROMISE THAT THE EGYPTIANS WOULD HAVE NO SUCCESS IN THEIR PURSUIT OF THE ISRAELITES (SEE V. 10).**

**ATTACK OF THE EGYPTIAN ARMY AND ISRAELITE PANIC (14:5–14)**

**EGYPTIAN REGRET AND CHANGE OF MIND (14:5)**

**5 WHEN THE KING OF EGYPT WAS TOLD THAT THE PEOPLE HAD FLED, PHARAOH AND HIS OFFICIALS CHANGED THEIR MINDS ABOUT THEM AND SAID, “WHAT HAVE WE DONE? WE HAVE LET THE ISRAELITES GO AND HAVE LOST THEIR SERVICES!” 14:5 THE APPRECIATION OF THIS VERSE DEPENDS PARTLY ON ITS LINKAGE TO V. 4 IMMEDIATELY PRECEDING, IN WHICH GOD STATED, “I WILL HARDEN PHARAOH’S HEART, AND HE WILL PURSUE THEM.” THE EGYPTIANS’ RECONSIDERATION OF THEIR WILLINGNESS TO ALLOW THE EXODUS MAY HAVE BEEN PARTLY, LARGELY, OR ALMOST ENTIRELY A REASONED CHOICE. GOD WAS THE ONE WHO MADE SURE THEY ACTUALLY TOOK THE DECISION TO PURSUE THE ISRAELITES IN AN EFFORT TO RE-ENSLAVE THEM. THE FIRST CLAUSE OF THE VERSE IS LOOSELY COORDINATED WITH THE REMAINDER OF THE VERSE IN TERMS OF TIME. IN OTHER WORDS, WE SHOULD NOT ASSUME THAT THE MEANING WAS “AS SOON AS THE KING OF EGYPT WAS TOLD …” BUT RATHER THAT HAVING BEEN TOLD, PHARAOH AND HIS ADVISORS BEGAN GRADUALLY TO WISH THEY COULD HAVE KEPT THE ISRAELITES IN EGYPT. THE NUMBER OF DAYS OR WEEKS THAT HAD TRANSPIRED SINCE THE NIGHT OF THE PASSOVER CANNOT BE DETERMINED FROM THE NARRATIVE. SUPPOSING THAT A WEEK OR TWO HAD GONE BY, IT IS NOT DIFFICULT TO IMAGINE THAT THE LEADERS OF EGYPT WERE BEGINNING TO RECEIVE REPORTS RELATED TO WORK STOPPAGES OF ALL SORTS ON IMPORTANT DEFENSIVE BUILDING PROJECTS IN THE NORTHEAST DELTA, BY REASON OF THE ABSENCE OF ISRAELITE BRICKMAKERS AND CONSTRUCTION WORKERS. MOREOVER, THIS VERSE SHOULD NOT BE READ TO INFER THAT THE ONLY CONCERN OF THE EGYPTIANS WAS A MINIMIZED LABOR POOL. THE BEST TRANSLATION OF THE ORIGINAL’S FINAL CLAUSE IS, “WE HAVE LET ISRAEL GO FROM SERVING US!” THE IDEA OF SERVING INCLUDED BEING UNDER THE SUBJECTION OF THE EGYPTIANS AND THEREFORE NOT ABLE TO JOIN WITH ASIATICS IN A WAR AGAINST EGYPT, THE SCENARIO THAT HAD FIRST ENGENDERED PHARAONIC POLICIES OF OPPRESSION (1:10).**

**EGYPTIAN CHARIOT PURSUIT OF ISRAEL (14:6–9)**

**6 SO HE HAD HIS CHARIOT MADE READY AND TOOK HIS ARMY WITH HIM. 7 HE TOOK SIX HUNDRED OF THE BEST CHARIOTS, ALONG WITH ALL THE OTHER CHARIOTS OF EGYPT, WITH OFFICERS OVER ALL OF THEM. 8 THE LORD HARDENED THE HEART OF PHARAOH KING OF EGYPT, SO THAT HE PURSUED THE ISRAELITES, WHO WERE MARCHING OUT BOLDLY. 9 THE EGYPTIANS—ALL PHARAOH’S HORSES AND CHARIOTS, HORSEMEN AND TROOPS—PURSUED THE ISRAELITES AND OVERTOOK THEM AS THEY CAMPED BY THE SEA NEAR PI HAHIROTH, OPPOSITE BAAL ZEPHON.**

**14:6 THE TRANSLATION SHOULD BE, “SO HE GOT HIS CHARIOT READY AND TOOK HIS PEOPLE WITH HIM.” IN OTHER WORDS, THERE IS NO MENTION OF “ARMY” IN THE VERSE, A FACT THAT IS IMPORTANT FOR UNDERSTANDING PHARAOH’S ROLE IN THE PURSUIT OF THE ISRAELITES. THE ARMY WAS CAUGHT IN THE RED SEA, AS MENTIONED LATER IN THE CHAPTER, BUT NOT PHARAOH AND HIS ADVISORS (I.E., HIS CIVILIAN RETINUE). HE HIMSELF APPARENTLY DID NOT ACTUALLY GO AS FAR AS THE RED SEA BUT TURNED BACK—PRESUMABLY WITH HIS ADVISORS AND OTHER SERVANTS (SOME OF “HIS OFFICIALS”)—AFTER THE DIVINE CLOUD PREVENTED HIM AND HIS ARMY FROM ATTACKING THE ISRAELITES IMMEDIATELY AT PI-HAHIROTH (SEE COMMENTS ON 14:10FF.; 15:4). THE ARMY THEN MADE THE ATTACK ON THEIR OWN. MOREOVER, THE USE OF THE WORD ʾAM (“PEOPLE”) FUNCTIONS AS A REMINDER THAT THE EGYPTIAN PEOPLE IN GENERAL WERE OF A MIND TO PURSUE AND RECAPTURE THE ISRAELITES. PHARAOH’S POLICY WAS, IN OTHER WORDS, A POPULAR ONE. 14:7 CHARIOTS WERE FORMIDABLE MILITARY WEAPONS IN ANCIENT TIMES AND EVENTUALLY THOUSANDS OF THEM AT ONCE WERE EMPLOYED IN VARIOUS IMPORTANT BATTLES IN THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST. SOLOMON BUILT UP A LARGE CHARIOT FORCE FOR DEFENSIVE PURPOSES. DAVID, HOWEVER, NEVER USED CHARIOTS. HE DISLIKED THEM BECAUSE THEY HAD BEEN USED TO OPPRESS THE ISRAELITES, WHO WERE FOOT SOLDIERS. CHARIOTS, LIKE CAVALRY, WERE USEFUL PRIMARILY IN FLAT TERRAIN, AND DAVID’S BATTLES WERE FOR THE TAKING AND HOLDING OF THE PROMISED LAND, WHICH IS GENERALLY MOUNTAINOUS. DAVID THEREFORE SEEMS TO HAVE HAD SUCCESS AGAINST CHARIOTS MAINLY BY CHOOSING THE GROUND ON WHICH HE WAS WILLING TO FIGHT TO HIS ADVANTAGE. ANOTHER SORT OF TERRAIN THAT RENDERED CHARIOTS USELESS WAS WET, SOFT GROUND. ANY GROUND THAT WAS MUDDY OR SWAMPY TENDED TO ALLOW CHARIOTS TO BECOME MIRED BECAUSE THE THIN WHEELS OF CHARIOTS, WOODEN WITH BRASS OR IRON BANDS AROUND THE CIRCUMFERENCE, PENETRATED SOFT GROUND EASILY AND DEEPLY. MOST OF THE AREAS WHERE EGYPTIANS EXPECTED TO FIGHT WERE FLAT WITH HARD GROUND—PERFECT FOR CHARIOT WARFARE. SINCE THE ISRAELITES WERE STILL WITHIN EGYPT PROPER WHEN THEY WERE ENCAMPED AT PI-HAHIROTH, THEY MUST HAVE SEEMED EASY PREY FOR PHARAOH’S CHARIOT-BASED ARMY. THE TOTAL NUMBER OF CHARIOTS IS NOT GIVEN BUT MUST HAVE NUMBERED WELL OVER A THOUSAND. THE FACT THAT SIX HUNDRED WERE “CHOICE” OR “FIRST-RATE” (BAḤÛR) AND THAT ALL OF THE CHARIOTS HAD CHARIOT OFFICERS OVER THEM INDICATES THAT THE HEART OF THE WELL-TRAINED, WELL-EQUIPPED ARMY WAS ENGAGED IN PURSUIT OF THE ISRAELITES, NOT MERELY A SMALL CONTINGENT OR TOKEN FORCE. 14:8–9 ONCE AGAIN GOD “HARDENED THE HEART OF PHARAOH KING OF EGYPT,” JUST AS HE HAD DONE IN THE CASE OF EACH OF THE ELEVEN SIGNS, WHICH INCLUDED THE TEN PLAGUES. AGAIN, GOD’S PURPOSE WAS TO HUMILIATE PHARAOH AND THE EGYPTIANS, TO EXPOSE THE NONSENSE OF THEIR RELIGION, AND TO SHOW HIMSELF THE ONLY TRUE GOD. PHARAOH PUT IN MOTION A FULL CHARIOT PURSUIT OF THE ISRAELITES, WHO HAD BEEN GOING OUT CONFIDENTLY (“MARCHING OUT BOLDLY”) SO FAR, BUOYED IN SPIRIT BY THE FAVOR, GOD HAD SHOWN THEM DURING ALL THE PLAGUES AND BY THE FEAR, GOD HAD PLACED IN THE HEARTS OF THE EGYPTIANS AFTER THE PASSOVER. THE ISRAELITES WERE AN ARMY BUT ONE THAT TRAVELED ON FOOT WITH ALL DEPENDENTS AND POSSESSIONS INCLUDING CATTLE; THE EGYPTIAN ARMY, ON THE OTHER HAND, WAS A PROFESSIONAL MILITARY FORCE ABLE TO MOVE MUCH FASTER WITH ITS HORSE-DRAWN CHARIOTS, SO WHATEVER TIME HAD ELAPSED BETWEEN THE ISRAELITES’ PASSOVER MORNING DEPARTURE AND THE EGYPTIANS’ DECISION TO GATHER THE CHARIOT FORCES AND PURSUE THEM, THE ISRAELITE LEAD HAD NOW BEEN EASILY OVERCOME. IT IS NOT CLEAR FROM THE WORDING OF V. 9 THAT EGYPTIAN FOOT-SOLDIERS WERE USED IN THE PURSUIT. THE NIV TRANSLATION (“ALL PHARAOH’S HORSES AND CHARIOTS, HORSEMEN AND TROOPS”) MAKES IT SEEM SO, ESPECIALLY BY REASON OF RENDERING THE HEBREW ḤAYIL AS “TROOPS” WHEN IN FACT IT IS A COLLECTIVE NOUN THAT MEANS “FORCE” OR “ARMY.” A MORE PRECISE TRANSLATION WOULD BE: “THE EGYPTIANS PURSUED THEM, ALL PHARAOH’S HORSES AND CHARIOTS AND HIS CHARIOT DRIVERS—HIS FORCE—AND CAUGHT UP WITH THEM CAMPED AT THE SEA.” THE MENTION OF THE LOCATION OF THE ISRAELITE ENCAMPMENT AS “BY THE SEA NEAR PI HAHIROTH, OPPOSITE BAAL ZEPHON” MAY SEEM REDUNDANT IN LIGHT OF HOW CLEARLY THE LOCATION HAD BEEN ESTABLISHED IN V. 2, BUT THIS SORT OF REPETITION KEPT ANCIENT AUDIENCES CLEAR ABOUT DETAILS (THEY WERE MOSTLY LISTENING TO THE STORY READ TO THEM RATHER THAN READING IT THEMSELVES FROM A SCROLL) AND TO REMIND EVEN THE MOST LITERATE READER THAT THE ISRAELITES WERE ATTACKED WHILE ENCAMPED WITH THEIR BACKS TO THE SEA, THAT IS, BOTH UNPREPARED AND WITHOUT A VIABLE ESCAPE ROUTE.**

**ISRAELITE PANIC AND COMPLAINT (14:10–12)**

**10 AS PHARAOH APPROACHED, THE ISRAELITES LOOKED UP, AND THERE WERE THE EGYPTIANS, MARCHING AFTER THEM. THEY WERE TERRIFIED AND CRIED OUT TO THE LORD. 11 THEY SAID TO MOSES, “WAS IT BECAUSE THERE WERE NO GRAVES IN EGYPT THAT YOU BROUGHT US TO THE DESERT TO DIE? WHAT HAVE YOU DONE TO US BY BRINGING US OUT OF EGYPT? 12 DIDN’T WE SAY TO YOU IN EGYPT, ‘LEAVE US ALONE; LET US SERVE THE EGYPTIANS’? IT WOULD HAVE BEEN BETTER FOR US TO SERVE THE EGYPTIANS THAN TO DIE IN THE DESERT!”**

**14:10–12 THE SIGHT OF HUNDREDS—PERHAPS THOUSANDS—OF APPROACHING CHARIOTS APPARENTLY DROVE ALL MEMORY OF GOD’S ASSURANCES THROUGH MOSES TO THE ISRAELITES IN 14:1–4 OUT OF THEIR MINDS. THOSE ASSURANCES WERE RELATIVELY GENERALLY WORDED, AND IT IS POSSIBLE THAT MANY OR MOST ISRAELITES HAD MISTAKENLY REGARDED THEM AS PROMISES THAT PHARAOH’S PURSUIT WOULD NOT REACH THEM BUT FAIL EN ROUTE. ACCORDINGLY, WHEN THEY ACTUALLY SAW THE EGYPTIAN CHARIOTRY COMING AT THEM AND REALIZED THEIR HELPLESS POSITION (FROM A HUMAN POINT OF VIEW) AS A POORLY ARMED, UNTRAINED, UNPREPARED ARMY ENCAMPED WITH ITS BACK TO THE SEA, THEY PANICKED. TO THEIR CREDIT THEY AT LEAST “CRIED OUT TO THE LORD,” SHOWING THAT THEY REGARDED HIM AS THE ONE TO SAVE THEM. VERSES 11–12 PROVIDE A SUMMATION OF COMPLAINTS SPOKEN TO MOSES WITH THE BENEFIT OF RECONSTRUCTED HINDSIGHT—A CLASSIC INSTANCE OF WHAT IS NOW CALLED “RECOVERED MEMORY.” THE ISRAELITES AND THOSE WHO JOINED THEM HAD HARDLY BEEN FORCED TO DEPART FROM EGYPT. THEY HAD BEEN ONLY TOO GLAD TO ACCEPT FREEDOM FROM THEIR BONDAGE. IN LIGHT OF THE BITTER REPROACH OF THE ISRAELITE FOREMEN WHEN PHARAOH HAD INCREASED THEIR WORKLOAD AS A RESULT OF MOSES’ DEMANDS (5:19–21), IT IS CONCEIVABLE THAT SOME PERCENTAGE OF ISRAELITES MAY HAVE SAID AT ONE TIME OR ANOTHER PRIOR TO THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE PLAGUES SOMETHING LIKE “LEAVE US ALONE; LET US SERVE THE EGYPTIANS.” BUT THAT HAD NOT BEEN WHAT ANYONE HAD CONSISTENTLY SAID, NOR WAS IT THE PREVAILING ATTITUDE AT ANY TIME. NOW THEY SUDDENLY “RECALLED” THOSE WORDS AND THE “FACT” THAT THEY HAD ALL ALONG THOUGHT THE EXODUS WAS A BAD IDEA. FACED WITH WHAT THEY BELIEVED TO BE THEIR IMMINENT DEATH THEY REDEFINED THEIR RECENT HISTORY. THEIR PESSIMISM WAS ILL-FOUNDED ENTIRELY. THE EGYPTIANS WERE INTERESTED IN CAPTURING THEM AND RETURNING THEM TO SLAVERY RATHER THAN KILLING THEM (14:5), SO THEIR CLAIM THAT “IT WOULD HAVE BEEN BETTER FOR US TO SERVE THE EGYPTIANS” WAS ACTUALLY ONLY A STATEMENT OF THE VERY THING THE EGYPTIANS HAD IN MIND FOR THEM. SO, THEY WERE WRONG ON TWO COUNTS: THEY THOUGHT THE EGYPTIANS WERE COMING TO KILL THEM, AND THEY DID NOT BELIEVE THAT GOD WOULD RESCUE THEM. THIS WAS THE FIRST OF THE POST-EXODUS DECLARATIONS BY ISRAELITES THAT THEY SHOULD HAVE STAYED WHERE THEY CAME FROM. THE OTHERS (E.G., NUM 14:1–4; JOSH 7:6–9) SHARE CONSIDERABLY THE THEME OF THIS ONE: WHEN HARDSHIP IS ENCOUNTERED, THE MISERABLE PAST SUDDENLY LOOKS LIKE THE GOOD OLD DAYS. THE ISRAELITES WERE SIMPLY THINKING THE WAY MOST PEOPLE THINK OF THE PAST WHEN THE PRESENT SEEMS UNBEARABLE.**

**MOSES’ CONFIDENT REASSURANCE OF GOD’S PLAN TO TRAP THE EGYPTIANS (14:13–14)**

**13 MOSES ANSWERED THE PEOPLE, “DO NOT BE AFRAID. STAND FIRM AND YOU WILL SEE THE DELIVERANCE THE LORD WILL BRING YOU TODAY. THE EGYPTIANS YOU SEE TODAY YOU WILL NEVER SEE AGAIN. 14 THE LORD WILL FIGHT FOR YOU; YOU NEED ONLY TO BE STILL.” 14:13–14 IN CONTRAST TO THE MAJORITY OF ISRAELITES, MOSES HAD UNDERSTOOD THE MEANING OF GOD’S EARLIER PROMISE OF PROTECTION (14:2–4)—AND HAD NOT ONLY UNDERSTOOD IT BUT BELIEVED IT. THIS SPEECH OF MOSES REPRESENTS PERHAPS HIS FINEST HOUR YET IN THE LEADERSHIP OF ISRAEL. HE URGED CALM, COMMANDED SIMPLE, PATIENT WAITING (BUT NOT TOTAL INACTION; SEE BELOW), REASSURED THE PEOPLE THAT WHAT SEEMED TO THEM A CERTAINTY THAT THEY WOULD DIE IN THE WILDERNESS (V. 12) WAS IN FACT THE LAST, HOPELESS GASP OF EGYPTIAN HUBRIS, AND EXPLAINED TO THEM THE MOST BASIC TENET OF OLD TESTAMENT HOLY WAR: GOD FIGHTS FOR HIS PEOPLE AND—NO MATTER HOW UNDERTRAINED, ILL-EQUIPPED, POORLY ORGANIZED, OR OUTCLASSED THEY MIGHT BE—ELIMINATED THEIR FOES. FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF GOD’S ATTRIBUTES, MOSES’ SPEECH ALLUDES TO FIVE: (1) GOD IS A DISPELLER OF FEAR, A COMFORTER OF THOSE WHO ARE AFRAID. (2) GOD IS A DELIVERER FROM DISTRESS. (3) GOD INVITES AND EXPECTS HIS PEOPLE TO TRUST IN HIM (“STAND FIRM … YOU NEED ONLY TO BE STILL”). (4) GOD REMOVES DANGER. (5) GOD IS A WARRIOR AGAINST THE FORCES OF EVIL [SEX]. THE TIMING AND APPLICATION OF THESE ATTRIBUTES ARE UNDER GOD’S CONTROL, NOT MAN’S, BUT MOSES COULD OFFER STRONG ASSURANCES TO THE ISRAELITES IN THIS INSTANCE BECAUSE OF WHAT GOD HAD ALREADY SAID THROUGH HIM TO THEM IN REGARD TO HIS PLAN TO HUMILIATE EGYPT YET AGAIN, A LAST TIME. A BETTER TRANSLATION OF VV. 13–14 WOULD BE: “DON’T BE AFRAID. STAY WHERE YOU ARE AND SEE THE LORD’S SALVATION, WHICH HE WILL PROVIDE FOR YOU TODAY. BECAUSE YOU HAVE SEEN THE EGYPTIANS TODAY, YOU WILL NEVER SEE THEM AGAIN. THE LORD WILL FIGHT FOR YOU. YOU DO NOT NEED TO DO ANYTHING.” OF PARTICULAR NOTE IS THE TRANSLATION OF THE LAST SENTENCE OF V. 13. THE MODERN ENGLISH VERSIONS USUALLY RENDER THIS IN THE MANNER OF THE NIV, “THE EGYPTIANS YOU SEE TODAY YOU WILL NEVER SEE AGAIN,” BUT THAT IS NOT IN FACT THE MEANING. THE MEANING IS THAT OF OUR TRANSLATION. WHAT MOSES WAS SAYING WAS, IN EFFECT: “YOU SHOULD BE GLAD YOU ARE SEEING THE EGYPTIAN ARMY COMING AT YOU. BECAUSE YOU HAVE SEEN THE EGYPTIANS, IT MEANS THAT GOD’S PREDICTION THAT HE WILL TRICK THEM AND TRAP THEM IS ABOUT TO BE FULFILLED. IF YOU DIDN’T SEE THEM, NOW THAT WOULD BE CAUSE FOR WORRY BECAUSE THEN GOD’S PREDICTION TO US WOULD NOT BE COMING TRUE.”**

**PARTING OF THE RED SEA AND DROWNING OF THE EGYPTIANS (14:15–31)**

**IN THIS SECTION OF EXODUS, MOSES NARRATED ONE OF THE GREATEST STORIES OF DIVINE DELIVERANCE IN ALL OF SCRIPTURE, THAT OF ISRAEL’S CROSSING THE RED SEA ON DRY GROUND AND THE DROWNING OF THE EGYPTIAN CHARIOT ARMY WHEN THEY ATTEMPTED TO PURSUE THEM. THIS IS THE LAST STORY IN THE BOOK INVOLVING DIRECT CONTACT WITH THE EGYPTIANS, AND IT PROVIDES ONE FINAL AND GRAND OCCASION FOR GOD TO “GAIN GLORY THROUGH PHARAOH AND ALL HIS ARMY” (V. 17). IT IS LOOKED BACK UPON BY MANY FUTURE SCRIPTURES AUTHORS AS A MOMENT OF SUPREME DEMONSTRATION OF THE POWER OF GOD DISPLAYED FOR THE BENEFIT OF THOSE WHO PLACE THEIR FAITH IN HIM. SO SIGNIFICANT IS THE EVENT THAT MOSES WAS INSPIRED TO FOLLOW HIS PROSE NARRATIVE ACCOUNT WITH A POETIC ONE, THAT IS, THE HYMN HE WROTE ABOUT THE EVENT (15:1–18). THUS, THE STORY IS TOLD TWICE—ONCE IN PROSE AND ONCE IN POETRY. THE PROSE ACCOUNT, HERE, TELLS THE STORY CHRONOLOGICALLY AND WITH MANY OF THE USUAL SORTS OF DETAILS AND DESCRIPTIONS. THE POETIC ACCOUNT IS A HYMN, A SONG OF PRAISE THAT NOT ONLY LOOKS BACK ON THE EVENT BUT ASSERTS FUTURE IMPLICATIONS: IF GOD COULD DO THIS SORT OF THING TO THE EGYPTIANS, HE COULD CERTAINLY BE TRUSTED TO BRING TO COMPLETION HIS WHOLE PLAN TO ALLOW ISRAEL TO CONQUER AND SETTLE INTO THE PROMISED LAND AND TO REIGN OVER HIS PEOPLE FOREVER AND EVER. THE READER MUST KEEP IN MIND THAT MOSES, KNOWING THE CONTENT OF THE HYMN, LEFT SOME OF HIS POINTS TO BE MADE BY THE HYMN IN THE FOLLOWING CHAPTER AND THEREFORE COULD PROVIDE A RELATIVELY CONCISE OVERVIEW OF THE EVENTS IN THE PRESENT CHAPTER. BOTH THE PROSE ACCOUNT AND THE POETIC ACCOUNT MUST BE READ TOGETHER TO OBTAIN THE FULL STORY AND ITS RICH IMPLICATIONS.**

**GOD SENDS ISRAEL INTO THE SEA TO GAIN GLORY OVER PHARAOH AND HIS ARMY (14:15–18)**

**15 THEN THE LORD SAID TO MOSES, “WHY ARE YOU CRYING OUT TO ME? TELL THE ISRAELITES TO MOVE ON. 16 RAISE YOUR STAFF [ROD OR WAND] AND STRETCH OUT YOUR HAND OVER THE SEA TO DIVIDE THE WATER SO THAT THE ISRAELITES CAN GO THROUGH THE SEA ON DRY GROUND. 17 I WILL HARDEN THE HEARTS OF THE EGYPTIANS SO THAT THEY WILL GO IN AFTER THEM. AND I WILL GAIN GLORY THROUGH PHARAOH AND ALL HIS ARMY, THROUGH HIS CHARIOTS AND HIS HORSEMEN. 18 THE EGYPTIANS WILL KNOW THAT I AM THE LORD WHEN I GAIN GLORY THROUGH PHARAOH, HIS CHARIOTS AND HIS HORSEMEN.”**

**14:15 THE ISRAELITES HAD ASSUMED THEY WERE HOPELESSLY TRAPPED, WITH THEIR BACKS TO THE SEA AND THE EGYPTIANS APPROACHING THEM QUICKLY BY LAND (14:10–12). WHERE COULD THEY GO? THEY COULDN’T POSSIBLY OUTRUN THE CHARIOT-BORNE EGYPTIANS EVEN IF THEY ALREADY HAD BEEN MOVING ON FOOT AND NOT ENCAMPED. AND THEY OBVIOUSLY COULDN’T JUST WALK INTO THE SEA, COULD THEY? IN FACT, THE LATTER OPTION, SEEMINGLY IMPOSSIBLE AND NOT HAVING OCCURRED TO ANY OF THEM, WAS EXACTLY WHAT GOD HAD IN MIND ALL ALONG. HIS PLAN OF DELIVERANCE FOR ISRAEL AND DESTRUCTION FOR THE EGYPTIAN ARMY INVOLVED SOMETHING EASY FOR THE CREATOR OF ALL THINGS AND ALL MINDS TO IMAGINE AND EXECUTE—THE PARTING OF A BODY OF WATER BY WIND (V. 21)—YET SOMETHING PREVIOUSLY OUTSIDE OF THE REALM OF EXPERIENCE AND THEREFORE OUTSIDE THE REALM OF CONCEPT FOR EITHER THE EGYPTIANS OR ISRAELITES. NO CONTRADICTION BETWEEN V. 10 (“THE ISRAELITES … WERE TERRIFIED AND CRIED OUT [PLURAL] TO THE LORD”) AND V. 15 (“THE LORD SAID TO MOSES, “WHY ARE YOU [SINGULAR] CRYING OUT TO ME?”) SHOULD BE ASSUMED. IT WAS STANDARD FOR THE ISRAELITES TO SPEAK TO GOD USING MOSES AS THEIR INTERMEDIARY AND VICE VERSA, A PRACTICE THAT EVENTUALLY BECAME “OFFICIAL” WITH THE FORMAL REQUEST OF 20:18–19. MOREOVER, MOSES WAS CONSISTENTLY IDENTIFIED WITH THE CHARACTER AND FATE OF THE PEOPLE AS A WHOLE; AS THEIR LEADER HE HAD TO ACCEPT CRITICISM LEVELED AT THEM EVEN IF HE HIMSELF WAS NOT RESPONSIBLE. MOSES KNEW THAT WHATEVER GOD SAID TO HIM WAS NORMALLY MEANT ALSO FOR THEM. THE FIRST HALF OF V. 15 IS THUS MEANT AS A REBUKE TO THE ISRAELITES, NOT AS A REFERENCE TO SOME LACK OF FAITH ON MOSES’ PART THAT WAS NOT REVEALED IN HIS WORDS AS QUOTED IN VV. 13–14. MOSES MAY NOT HAVE KNOWN HOW GOD WOULD DELIVER THE ISRAELITES, BUT HE WAS CERTAIN THEY WOULD BE DELIVERED. IN SAYING “TELL THE ISRAELITES TO MOVE ON,” GOD WAS ASKING FOR A BREAKING OF CAMP, ROUNDING UP OF ANIMALS, PACKING OF BELONGINGS, AN ORDERLY DEPARTURE BY RANKS. ALL THIS WOULD TAKE MANY HOURS, AND, INDEED, THE REMAINDER OF THAT DAY AND ALMOST THE ENTIRE EVENING WERE USED IN THE PROCESS OF GETTING THE ISRAELITES OUT OF THEIR ENCAMPMENT AND INTO AND ACROSS THE SEA (VV. 19–22). 14:16 AGAIN THE STAFF [ROD OR WAND] OF GOD PLAYS AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN A PERMISSIBLE MAGIC/MIRACLE, SYMBOLIZING GOD’S AUTHORITY AND SEXLESS PRESENCE AND REMINDING ALL CONCERNED THAT IT WAS NOT MOSES BUT GOD WHO PERFORMED THE SUPERNATURAL. AGAIN, AS WELL, THE LANGUAGE OF STRETCHING OUT THE HAND REFERS TO USING THE STAFF [ROD OR WAND]. AS THE STAFF [ROD OR WAND] HAD AFFECTED THE NILE IN FIRST PLAGUE, TURNING WATER TO BLOOD (ESP. 7:17–20), AND IN THE SECOND, PRODUCING FROGS FROM THE NILE (8:1–15), NOW IT WOULD AFFECT AN EVEN GREATER BODY OF WATER, THE RED SEA, CAUSING IT TO DIVIDE. WITH GOD’S WORDS IN THIS VERSE MOSES AND THE ISRAELITES LEARNED HOW IT WAS THAT THEY COULD ESCAPE THE EGYPTIANS: THEY WOULD TAKE THE DIRECTION THEY HAD ASSUMED WAS THE MOST IMPOSSIBLE, AWAY FROM THE EGYPTIANS, RIGHT INTO THE OCEAN. SINCE NOTHING IS IMPOSSIBLE WITH GOD (MATT 19:26; LUKE 1:37), WHAT THEY HAD NOT BEEN ABLE TO IMAGINE AS A DIRECTION IN WHICH TO FLEE WAS NOW THEIR ESCAPE ROUTE. GOD’S PROMISE TO THEM DID NOT MERELY OFFER AN INCONVENIENT BUT DOABLE ROUTE OF ESCAPE (AS WOULD BE THE CASE IF THEY WOULD HAVE TO FLOAT, WADE, OR SLOSH THEIR WAY OUT OF DANGER) BUT WOULD ALLOW THEM ACTUALLY TO WALK ON DRY GROUND—GROUND SO DRY THAT EVEN CHARIOT OFFICERS WERE WILLING TO SEND THEIR HORSES AND CHARIOTS ON IT IN PURSUIT OF ISRAEL. THAT SORT OF ENTIRELY DRY PATH WOULD MAKE TAKING FAMILIES, CHILDREN, AND ANIMALS ALONG RELATIVELY EASY AND WOULD ALSO CREATE A TEMPTATION FOR CHARIOTS, WHICH WOULD OTHERWISE NOT BE DRIVEN VOLUNTARILY INTO ANY SORT OF WET TERRAIN. 14:17–18 NO SENSIBLE CHARIOT COMMANDER WOULD ORDER CHARIOTS TO GO INTO A WET AREA. LATER, IN THE DAYS OF THE JUDGES, CANAANITE CHARIOTEERS FOUND THIS OUT TO THEIR DISMAY. IT WAS THE MUD IN THE KISHON RIVER FLOOD PLAIN AFTER A HEAVY RAIN THAT BOGGED DOWN THE CHARIOT ARMY OF SISERA SO THAT THE ISRAELITES UNDER DEBORAH’S GENERAL BARAK COULD DEFEAT THEM (JUDG. 4:1–16) AND EVEN FORCED SISERA TO ABANDON HIS OWN CHARIOT (JUDG. 4:15, 17). GOD HAD IN THAT SITUATION ALSO LURED CHARIOTS TO THEIR DESTRUCTION (JUDG. 4:7). THEY TRIED TO FIGHT NEAR A RAIN-SWOLLEN RIVER AND LOST. WHY, THEN, DID THE EGYPTIANS FOLLOW THE ISRAELITES INTO THE MIDST OF THE RED SEA, KNOWING FULL WELL THAT WATER AND CHARIOTS DON’T MIX? THE ANSWER IS, SIMILARLY, THAT GOD LURED THEM INTO IT—MADE THEM STUBBORN ENOUGH TO DO IT (“I WILL HARDEN THE HEARTS OF THE EGYPTIANS SO THAT THEY WILL GO IN AFTER THEM,” V. 17). THE EGYPTIANS WERE TAKING A HUGE RISK TO PURSUE INTO A BODY OF WATER, BUT TWO FACTORS MUST HAVE GONE INTO THEIR DIVINELY ORDAINED STUBBORN THINKING. FIRST WAS THE OBSERVATION THAT A VERY WIDE DRY PATH THROUGH THE SEA LAY BEFORE THEM. (“IF THE ISRAELITES CAN DO IT, ARE WE GOING TO BE AFRAID TO DO IT?”) SECOND, THEY WERE UNDER ORDERS TO RECAPTURE ISRAEL, AND WHAT SORT OF EXCUSE COULD THEY GIVE PHARAOH AND HIS ADVISORS IF THEY DID NOT? (“HONEST, THEY JUST WALKED RIGHT INTO THE SEA ON THIS WIDE ROAD OF DRY GROUND, AND WE DIDN’T WANT TO FOLLOW BECAUSE WE WERE ON CHARIOTS AND THEY WERE ON FOOT.”) SINCE GOD HAD DETERMINED TO “GAIN GLORY THROUGH [OVER] PHARAOH AND ALL HIS ARMY, [OVER] HIS CHARIOTS AND HIS HORSEMEN,” THE EGYPTIANS WERE DOOMED FROM THE START. THE REVELATION OF STEPHEN YAHWEH (“THEY WILL KNOW THAT I AM THE LORD”) IN HIS GREATNESS AND SOVEREIGNTY AS THE ONLY TRUE GOD IS THE GOAL OF THIS FINAL HUMILIATION OF EGYPT. THE CONCLUDING PHRASE OF VV. 17–18, “HIS CHARIOTS AND HIS HORSEMEN,” DOES NOT NECESSARILY REFER TO BOTH CHARIOTRY AND CAVALRY (AS IF “HORSEMEN” REFERRED TO SOLDIERS RIDING RATHER THAN DRIVING HORSES).**

**THE DIVINE ANGEL/PILLAR SEPARATES ISRAELITES AND EGYPTIANS (14:19–20)**

**19 THEN THE ANGEL OF GOD, WHO HAD BEEN TRAVELING IN FRONT OF ISRAEL’S ARMY, WITHDREW AND WENT BEHIND THEM. THE PILLAR OF CLOUD ALSO MOVED FROM IN FRONT AND STOOD BEHIND THEM, 20 COMING BETWEEN THE ARMIES OF EGYPT AND ISRAEL. THROUGHOUT THE NIGHT THE CLOUD BROUGHT DARKNESS TO THE ONE SIDE AND LIGHT TO THE OTHER SIDE; SO, NEITHER WENT NEAR THE OTHER ALL NIGHT LONG.**

**14:19–20 VERSE 19 WOULD BETTER BE TRANSLATED: “THEN THE ANGEL OF GOD, WHO WAS TRAVELING IN FRONT OF ISRAEL’S ARMY, MOVED AND WENT BEHIND THEM, SO THE PILLAR OF CLOUD MOVED FROM IN FRONT OF THEM AND STOOD BEHIND THEM.” IN OTHER WORDS, THE ANGEL OF GOD AND THE PILLAR WERE THE SAME THING: GOD’S MANIFESTATION OF HIMSELF IN THE VISIBLE PRESENCE OF THE ISRAELITES. IN THESE VERSES GOD SHOWS HIMSELF A PROTECTOR OF HIS PEOPLE THROUGH THE PILLAR, NOT MERELY A GUIDE TO THEM. THAT GOD SHOULD LEAD HIS PEOPLE THROUGH THE WILDERNESS IS IMPORTANT; THAT HE SHOULD PROTECT THEM FROM HARM ON THE WAY IS EQUALLY AS IMPORTANT. ONCE THE ISRAELITES COULD SEE THE EGYPTIAN CHARIOTS APPROACHING THEM, IT WAS ONLY A MATTER OF MINUTES UNTIL THEY WOULD BE OVERTAKEN. SOMETHING THEREFORE HAD TO PREVENT THE EGYPTIANS FROM SURROUNDING AND RE-ENSLAVING THE ISRAELITES, TO ALLOW GOD’S PEOPLE THE MANY HOURS THEY NEEDED TO BREAK CAMP, FORM RANKS, AND CROSS THE RED SEA. THE NIV INTERPRETATION OF V. 20 MAY BE CORRECT, BUT THE VERSE APPEARS TO SUFFER FROM ANCIENT COPYING ERRORS. THE HEBREW READS, LITERALLY, “IT CAME BETWEEN THE EGYPTIAN CAMP AND THE ISRAELITE CAMP, AND THE CLOUD WAS, AND THE DARKNESS, AND IT LIT UP THE NIGHT, AND NEITHER CAME NEAR EACH OTHER ALL NIGHT.” THE LXX READS THE KEY PORTION DIFFERENTLY STILL: “AND THERE WAS DARKNESS AND BLACKNESS, AND THE NIGHT PASSED.” IN OTHER WORDS, IT IS NOT POSSIBLE FROM THE STATE OF THE RECEIVED TEXT TO BE SURE IF THE CLOUD LIT UP THE NIGHT FOR BOTH SIDES, GAVE LIGHT TO ONE SIDE AND DARKNESS TO THE OTHER, OR SIMPLY PROVIDED A DARK BARRIER BETWEEN THE TWO OPPOSING GROUPS. WHAT IS CLEAR IS THAT IT KEPT THE EGYPTIANS FROM GETTING NEAR THE ISRAELITES (AND ANY ISRAELITES FROM ACCIDENTALLY STRAYING INTO THE EGYPTIAN ENCAMPMENT) AND PROVIDED THE ISRAELITES WITH ALL THE TIME THEY NEEDED TO ESCAPE INTO THE SEA. JUST AS EVENTS OF THE PASSOVER NIGHT HAD DIFFERENTIATED ISRAEL FROM EGYPT TO THE DISADVANTAGE OF EGYPTIANS, THE EVENTS OF THIS NIGHT SIMILARLY WORKED AGAINST EGYPT’S INTERESTS.**

**ISRAEL CROSSES THE RED SEA ON DRY LAND (14:21–22)**

**21 THEN MOSES STRETCHED OUT HIS HAND OVER THE SEA, AND ALL THAT NIGHT THE LORD DROVE THE SEA BACK WITH A STRONG EAST WIND AND TURNED IT INTO DRY LAND. THE WATERS WERE DIVIDED, 22 AND THE ISRAELITES WENT THROUGH THE SEA ON DRY GROUND, WITH A WALL OF WATER ON THEIR RIGHT AND ON THEIR LEFT.**

**IT IS ALWAYS IMPLIED, THOUGH ONLY SOMETIMES STATED, THAT WHEN MOSES “STRETCHED OUT HIS HAND,” HE DID SO WITH THE STAFF [ROD OR WAND] OF GOD IN IT. IN THIS INSTANCE THE ACTION PROVIDED, AS IT DID SO OFTEN IN THE PLAGUE STORIES, A VISIBLE MOTION TO REASSURE HIM AND THOSE WATCHING THAT THE AUTHORITY OF AN INVISIBLE GOD IS AT WORK. A SPECIAL EAST WIND DID THE JOB OF PARTING THE WATERS OF THE SEA HERE, IN A MANNER SOMEWHAT AKIN TO WHAT A SPECIAL EAST WIND DID IN BRINGING THE PLAGUE OF LOCUSTS (10:13: “THE LORD MADE AN EAST WIND BLOW ACROSS THE LAND ALL THAT DAY AND ALL THAT NIGHT. BY MORNING THE WIND HAD BROUGHT THE LOCUSTS”). AN EAST WIND IS OFTEN SEEN AS DESTRUCTIVE OR PUNISHING, PARTLY BECAUSE EAST WINDS IN EGYPT, THE SINAI, AND PALESTINE ARE SO OFTEN BLISTERINGLY DRY AND HOT. IT IS TO BE EXPECTED THAT SOME SKEPTICS HAVE ARGUED THAT THE MENTION OF THE EAST WIND IS THE ONLY FULLY HISTORICAL ELEMENT HERE—A WIND THAT TEMPORARILY DRIED UP SOME SORT OF SMALL, NORMALLY MARSHY, AND/OR MUDDY AREA SO THAT THE ISRAELITES COULD WALK ON IT RELATIVELY EASILY AND FEEL THAT IF ANY EGYPTIANS WERE TO FOLLOW THEM (SOMETHING THAT DID NOT ACTUALLY OCCUR IN THE SKEPTICAL RECONSTRUCTION) THEY WOULD BE HARDER TO CATCH. THE TEXT, HOWEVER, SAYS THAT THE WIND ACTUALLY PUSHED ONE PART OF THE SEA AWAY FROM THE OTHER PART (“DROVE THE SEA BACK … THE WATERS WERE DIVIDED,” V. 21) AND CREATED A “WALL OF WATER ON THEIR RIGHT AND ON THEIR LEFT.” THE TERM USED FOR “WALL” HERE, ḤŌMĀH, CONNOTES A VERY LARGE WALL—NOT A SMALL STONE WALL OR RETAINING WALL BUT ALWAYS A MASSIVELY LARGE (USUALLY A CITY) WALL, TOWERING ABOVE THE ISRAELITES, WHO MARCHED ON DRY LAND WITH WALLS OF WATER ON EITHER SIDE OF THEM. IT IS CLEAR FROM THE DESCRIPTIONS GIVEN THAT THE SEA THROUGH WHICH THE ISRAELITES WALKED WAS DEEP WATER, NOT SOMETHING SHALLOW. A CITY-WALL SIZED WALL OF WATER ON EITHER SIDE OF THEM IMPLIES THE DIVISION OF A DEEP BODY OF WATER, NOT MERELY THE DRYING OUT OF A SHALLOW ONE OR THE DRYING OUT OF WET TERRAIN. EVEN THE USE OF THE TERM YAM (“SEA”) HERE IMPLIES THE DEPTH OF THE WATER. YAM IS NEVER USED FOR SWAMPS OR MUD FLATS BUT IS USED CONSISTENTLY TO DESCRIBE LARGE BODIES OF WATER (WHAT WE WOULD CALL EITHER LAKES OR OCEANS). ON THE IDENTITY OF THIS BODY OF WATER AS THE RED SEA, SEE BELOW.**

**GOD CONFUSES THE EGYPTIAN ARMY (14:23–25)**

**23 THE EGYPTIANS PURSUED THEM, AND ALL PHARAOH’S HORSES AND CHARIOTS AND HORSEMEN FOLLOWED THEM INTO THE SEA. 24 DURING THE LAST WATCH OF THE NIGHT THE LORD LOOKED DOWN FROM THE PILLAR OF FIRE AND CLOUD AT THE EGYPTIAN ARMY AND THREW IT INTO CONFUSION. 25 HE MADE THE WHEELS OF THEIR CHARIOTS COME OFF SO THAT THEY HAD DIFFICULTY DRIVING. AND THE EGYPTIANS SAID, “LET’S GET AWAY FROM THE ISRAELITES! THE LORD IS FIGHTING FOR THEM AGAINST EGYPT.”**

**FOUR DIFFICULTIES THWARTED THE EGYPTIAN ARMY’S ATTEMPT TO CAPTURE THE ISRAELITES: THEY PURSUED INTO THE SEA, THEY SUFFERED FROM GOD’S DIRECT DEBILITATION OF THEIR MINDS, THEY HAD TROUBLE WITH CHARIOT WHEELS (POSSIBLY A SYNECDOCHE FOR ANY NUMBER OF CHARIOT FAILURES), AND THEY SUFFERED A SENSE OF DEFEATISM. FROM THE WORDING OF VV. 23–24 WE CAN ASSUME THAT THE ENTIRE ISRAELITE CONTINGENT HAD EITHER CROSSED THROUGH THE SEA ONTO DRY LAND OR WERE ALMOST FINISHED DOING SO BY THE TIME THE PILLAR OF CLOUD STOPPED BEING A BARRIER TO THE EGYPTIANS. THE EGYPTIANS MAY HAVE THOUGHT THEY HAD BEEN STYMIED BY A SEVERE WEATHER FRONT, OR FOG, OR AN UNUSUALLY CLOUDY NIGHT AND FELT THAT WITH THE COMING OF DAWN (“DURING THE LAST WATCH OF THE NIGHT”; LIT., “DURING THE MORNING WATCH,” I.E., THE TIME WHEN THE NIGHT ENDS AND MORNING ARRIVES) THINGS HAD OBVIOUSLY CHANGED IN THEIR FAVOR. THUS, THEY DID WHAT IS FOOLISH—THEY DROVE CHARIOTS INTO THE OCEAN. OF COURSE, ONE COULD ARGUE THAT IT WAS FOOLISH TO WALK INTO THE OCEAN AS WELL, AS THE ISRAELITES HAD JUST DONE. BUT ISRAEL KNEW IT WAS RESPONDING TO A COMMAND FROM GOD. THE EGYPTIANS KNEW ONLY THAT THEIR PHARAOH HAD ORDERED THEM TO CAPTURE THE ISRAELITES, AND THE DRY LAND BETWEEN THE WALLS OF WATER APPEARED TO BE THE ONLY WAY TO GO TO DO THAT. THE VERB “LOOKED DOWN” IN V. 24 IS NOT TO BE OVERINTERPRETED AS IF HEAVEN MUST BE UNDERSTOOD AS “UP” OR GOD MUST BE UNDERSTOOD AS DESCRIBED HERE TO BE A VERY LARGE HUMANLIKE BEING. THE VERB IS REGULARLY USED SIMPLY TO CONNOTE VIEWING SOMETHING FROM A HEIGHT, AND AS GOD TOWERED OVER THE EGYPTIANS IN HIS SELF-MANIFESTATION OF THE PILLAR OF CLOUD, THE VERB IS USED IN A RATHER ROUTINE MANNER IN THE CONTEXT. WITHOUT GOD’S HELP THE EGYPTIANS MIGHT EASILY HAVE CAUGHT UP WITH THE ISRAELITES, SO HE “THREW [THE EGYPTIAN ARMY] INTO CONFUSION.” SPECIFICALLY, HE BOUND THEIR CHARIOTS’ WHEELS SO THAT THEY HAD DIFFICULTY DRIVING THEM (“MADE THE WHEELS OF THEIR CHARIOTS COME OFF” V. 25, AN INTERPRETIVE TRANSLATION OF HB. “HE TURNED ASIDE THE WHEELS OF THEIR CHARIOTS”). THE BINDING OF CHARIOT WHEELS WOULD SEEM MOST NATURALLY TO REFER TO BOGGING DOWN—MOST LIKELY BECAUSE THE SEA FLOOR WAS SOFT AND SANDY/SILTY SO THAT EVEN THOUGH IT WAS DRY, IT WAS NOT A SUITABLE SURFACE FOR NARROW, METAL-BOUND CHARIOT WHEELS BEARING THE WEIGHT OF A CHARIOT AND TWO OR THREE ARMED MEN. THE HORSES PULLING THE CHARIOTS, LIKE THE ISRAELITE GOATS AND SHEEP, WOULD HAVE BEEN ABLE TO GET THROUGH SATISFACTORILY; THE CHARIOT WHEELS, HOWEVER, EFFECTIVELY SLICED DEEP INTO THE SOFT GROUND AND BOUND SO THAT THE HORSES COULD NOT PULL THEIR OWN WEIGHT AND THAT OF THE FULLY LOADED CHARIOTS. THIS DISASTER, IN TURN, LED TO THE PSYCHOLOGICAL DEFEAT OF THE EGYPTIAN FORCE. THEIR CONSENSUS ATTITUDE IS WORDED BY MOSES AS (LIT.), “LET US FLEE FROM ISRAEL BECAUSE THE LORD IS FIGHTING FOR THEM AGAINST EGYPT.” THIS COLLECTIVE SENTIMENT OF THE EGYPTIAN ARMY IS NOTEWORTHY FOR ITS CORRECT THEOLOGY, NOT EXPECTED FROM A PAGAN GROUP. GOD’S PURPOSE OF REVEALING HIMSELF NOT MERELY TO ISRAEL BUT TO EGYPT AS WELL HAD IN FACT BEEN ACCOMPLISHED. THE ARMY, ALL OF WHOM HAD EXPERIENCED THE PLAGUES, NOW KNEW WHO STEPHEN YAHWEH IS, EVEN IF PRIOR TO THE PLAGUES HIS NAME [STEPHEN YAHWEH] WOULD HAVE MEANT NOTHING TO THEM. THE EARLIER STATEMENT “I AM THE LORD” HAD NOW BECOME SOMETHING THEY COULD UNDERSTAND. WHAT MOSES HAD PROMISED THE PEOPLE IN 14:14 (“THE LORD WILL FIGHT FOR YOU”) IS APPARENT EVEN TO THE ENEMY.**

**THE SEA DROWNS THE EGYPTIAN ARMY (14:26–28)**

**26 THEN THE LORD SAID TO MOSES, “STRETCH OUT YOUR HAND OVER THE SEA SO THAT THE WATERS MAY FLOW BACK OVER THE EGYPTIANS AND THEIR CHARIOTS AND HORSEMEN.” 27 MOSES STRETCHED OUT HIS HAND OVER THE SEA, AND AT DAYBREAK THE SEA WENT BACK TO ITS PLACE. THE EGYPTIANS WERE FLEEING TOWARD IT, AND THE LORD SWEPT THEM INTO THE SEA. 28 THE WATER FLOWED BACK AND COVERED THE CHARIOTS AND HORSEMEN—THE ENTIRE ARMY OF PHARAOH THAT HAD FOLLOWED THE ISRAELITES INTO THE SEA. NOT ONE OF THEM SURVIVED.**

**14:26 MOSES’ SECOND SYMBOLIC STRETCHING FORTH OF HIS HAND WITH THE STAFF [ROD OR WAND] IN IT INITIATES ANOTHER MIRACULOUS MOVEMENT OF THE SEA, NOT TO DELIVER ISRAEL THIS TIME BUT TO TRAP AND DROWN THE EGYPTIAN ARMY THAT HAD PURSUED THEM. GOD, OF COURSE, WAS THE REAL LEADER IN ALL THESE ACTIVITIES. IT WAS HE WHO COMMANDED MOSES’ ACTIONS, AND HIS STAFF [ROD OR WAND] (AGAIN IMPLIED RATHER THAN EXPLICITLY MENTIONED) REPRESENTED HIS DIVINE PRESENCE. WHATEVER MOSES AND THE ISRAELITES MAY HAVE SPECULATED PREVIOUSLY ABOUT THE FORM THE LORD’S DELIVERANCE OF THEM WOULD TAKE, THEY NOW KNEW: HE WOULD DROWN THEIR ENEMY. THE ISRAELITES KNEW HOW HIGH THE WATERS WERE PILED ON EITHER SIDE OF THE DRY CORRIDOR AND HOW DEEP THE SEA WOULD BE ONCE THE WATERS WERE BACK IN PLACE. IT MAY NOT HAVE BEEN EASY TO WALK BETWEEN THOSE WALLS OF WATER, KNOWING WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF THEY COLLAPSED. IT CANNOT HAVE BEEN DIFFICULT TO IMAGINE THE FATE OF THE EGYPTIAN ARMY ONCE GOD’S WORDS OF INSTRUCTION TO MOSES WERE KNOWN. AGAIN, THE DESCRIPTION OF THE ENEMY AT THE END OF V. 26 IS COMPREHENSIVE, “THE EGYPTIANS AND THEIR CHARIOTS AND HORSEMEN.” GOD ASSURED HIS PEOPLE OF A TOTAL ELIMINATION OF THE ENEMY. 14:27 AT DAYBREAK, SO THAT THE ISRAELITES COULD SEE THE ENTIRE PROCESS CLEARLY, THE SEA FLOWED INTO THE FORMER GAP (THE STRONG EAST WIND PRESUMABLY CEASING), AND THE EGYPTIANS WERE CAUGHT IN THE MIDST OF THE WATER. IN THE NIV THE FINAL SENTENCE READS AS IF THE EGYPTIANS SOMEHOW HAD PASSED THROUGH THE SEA ENTIRELY AND HAD DECIDED TO HEAD BACK TOWARD IT AS THEY SAW IT GOING BACK TO ITS USUAL PLACE AND DEPTH (AS IF THE ISRAELITES WERE SOMEHOW HEADING SOMEWHERE THE EGYPTIANS WERE AFRAID TO GO OR AS IF THEY THOUGHT THEY COULDN’T GET BACK TO EGYPT IF THE WATERS RETURNED TO NORMAL) BUT WERE NOT YET THERE WHEN GOD SWEPT THEM INTO THE SEA. ALL OF THIS IS OBVIATED BY THE CORRECT TRANSLATION, WHICH SHOULD BE, “AS THE EGYPTIANS WERE FLEEING FROM IT, THE LORD SHOOK THE EGYPTIANS OFF [MORE COLLOQUIALLY, DUMPED OVER THE EGYPTIANS] IN THE MIDST OF THE SEA.” THE LANGUAGE OF THE VERSE (“THE SEA WENT BACK TO ITS PLACE”) SEEMS TO SUGGEST NOT THAT THE ISRAELITES WERE STILL IN THE SEA AND ONLY THE PART OF IT THAT THE EGYPTIANS WERE IN RETURNED TO ITS PLACE BUT RATHER THAT THE ISRAELITES WERE ALREADY FULLY ACROSS. ACCORDINGLY, 14:29 SHOULD NOT BE READ TO SUGGEST THAT THE ISRAELITES WERE STILL IN THE SEA AFTER THE EGYPTIANS HAD DROWNED; IT IS, RATHER, A SUMMARY STATEMENT THAT DOES NOT FOLLOW THE CURRENT DESCRIPTION CHRONOLOGICALLY BUT MERELY FOLLOWS NARRATIVELY BECAUSE IT IS PART OF A SUMMATION. 14:28 THE RETURN OF THE WATER BACK TO ITS USUAL PLACE MAY HAVE TAKEN A FEW MINUTES OR MAY HAVE BEEN VIRTUALLY INSTANTANEOUS; THE TEXT DOES NOT SAY. IT WAS FAST ENOUGH THAT NO EGYPTIANS COULD GET BACK TO SHORE, BUT ALL WERE KILLED. IF THEY WERE TYPICAL OF MOST ANCIENTS, VIRTUALLY NONE OF THEM COULD SWIM. IF THE DISTANCE OF THE CORRIDOR THROUGH THE SEA WERE SEVERAL MILES, EVEN THE BEST OF SWIMMERS CAUGHT MILES FROM SHORE WERE WITHOUT HOPE. THE ISRAELITES WERE THROUGH THE CORRIDOR AND ON DRY GROUND; THE EGYPTIANS WERE IN THE CORRIDOR, AND WHEN THE SEA FLOWED OVER THEM, THEY WERE LOST.**

**SUMMATION: GOD’S DELIVERANCE AND RESULTANT FAITH (14:29–31)**

**29 BUT THE ISRAELITES WENT THROUGH THE SEA ON DRY GROUND, WITH A WALL OF WATER ON THEIR RIGHT AND ON THEIR LEFT. 30 THAT DAY THE LORD SAVED ISRAEL FROM THE HANDS OF THE EGYPTIANS, AND ISRAEL SAW THE EGYPTIANS LYING DEAD ON THE SHORE. 31 AND WHEN THE ISRAELITES SAW THE GREAT POWER THE LORD DISPLAYED AGAINST THE EGYPTIANS, THE PEOPLE FEARED THE LORD AND PUT THEIR TRUST IN HIM AND IN MOSES HIS SERVANT.**

**14:29–31 THESE VERSES SUM UP THE GREAT MIRACLE OF DELIVERANCE AT THE SEA. VERSE 29 REPEATS V. 22 ALMOST VERBATIM. VERSE 30 DESCRIBES THE EVENT IN GENERAL, EMPHASIZING THE GREAT TRUTH OF GOD’S DELIVERANCE OF HIS PEOPLE FROM THEIR OTHERWISE UNBEATABLE FOES AND ALSO PRESENTING AN ASPECT OF ITS AFTERMATH: AS BODIES BEGAN WASHING UP ON SHORE, THE ISRAELITES “SAW THE EGYPTIANS LYING DEAD ON THE SHORE.” PRESUMABLY THEY ALSO SAW MANY HORSES AND CHARIOTS WASHED UP AS WELL, BUT THE HUMAN FOES ARE THE IMPORTANT TOPIC. ONCE AGAIN GOD HAD DIFFERENTIATED HIS PEOPLE FROM THE EGYPTIANS, JUST AS HAD BEEN THE CASE IN ALL THE PLAGUES, AND ONCE AGAIN DEATH HAD BEEN THE RESULT OF EGYPTIAN INTRANSIGENCE, JUST AS IN THE CASE OF THE TENTH PLAGUE. THE NIV TRANSLATION OBSCURES A CONTRAST QUITE VISIBLE IN THE HEBREW: IN V. 30 MOSES SAID, LITERALLY, THAT GOD SAVED THE ISRAELITES “FROM THE HAND [SINGULAR] OF THE EGYPTIANS.” THEN IN V. 31 HE SAID, LITERALLY, THAT “ISRAEL SAW THE GREAT HAND THAT STEPHEN YAHWEH DISPLAYED AGAINST THE EGYPTIANS.” THE READER/HEARER OF THE ORIGINAL CATCHES THE POINT: THE HAND OF STEPHEN YAHWEH IS POWERFUL; THE HAND OF THE EGYPTIANS IS WEAK. ALL OF THIS FULFILLS JUST WHAT WAS PREDICTED BY GOD TO MOSES IN 6:1 (“[BY] MY MIGHTY HAND HE WILL LET THEM GO; [BY] … MY MIGHTY HAND HE WILL DRIVE THEM OUT OF HIS COUNTRY.” VERSE 31 ADDRESSES THIS MOST IMPORTANT IMPLICATION OF ALL THE EVENTS WITH ATTENTION TO FAITH: THE RESULTANT FAITH OF GOD’S PEOPLE IN THE LORD AND THEIR WILLINGNESS TO PLACE THEIR TRUST IN HIM AND IN HIS REPRESENTATIVE, MOSES. NOT ONLY DOES THIS VERSE THUS IDENTIFY THE POINT OF THE STORY OF THE DELIVERANCE AT THE SEA FOR ALL GENERATIONS (ALL SHOULD LEARN FROM IT THAT THE LORD CAN BE TRUSTED TO DELIVER HIS PEOPLE, NO MATTER WHAT THEIR PLIGHT) BUT ADUMBRATES THE NEW TESTAMENT EMPHASIS ON SALVATION BY FAITH. WHAT WAS IMPORTANT FOR ISRAEL WAS NOT MERELY THAT THEY WERE SAFE AND THE EGYPTIANS WERE NOT; WHAT MATTERED WAS THAT FAITH SAVES, AND GOD HAD SHOWN THEM HOW FAITH IN HIM COULD PAY OFF TO THEIR LASTING BENEFIT. THEY WERE STILL NEW TO GOOD THEOLOGY. MANY OF THEM AT THIS EARLY POINT UNDERSTOOD VERY LITTLE OF WHO STEPHEN YAHWEH WAS AND WHAT HE EXPECTED OF THEM. BUT THEY HAD NOW SEEN ONE FINAL, AWESOME ACT OF DELIVERANCE FROM EGYPT, AND IT PROMPTED THEIR FEAR AND TRUST.**

**VICTORY HYMN OF MOSES (15:1–18)**

**THIS “SONG OF THE SEA” PROBABLY WAS THE EARLIEST-AUTHORED PORTION OF THE BOOK OF EXODUS. MOSES APPARENTLY COMPOSED IT IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE DELIVERANCE THAT IT DESCRIBES (15:1), AND MIRIAM, MOSES’ SISTER, TAUGHT IT FORTHWITH TO THE WOMEN OF ISRAEL (15:20–21). LATER, IN THE PROCESS OF WRITING THE ENTIRE BOOK OF EXODUS, MOSES INCORPORATED IT INTO THE NARRATIVE AT THIS POINT, FOLLOWING HIS PRACTICE, ALREADY ESTABLISHED IN THE COMPOSITION OF GENESIS, OF INCLUDING SONGS AND POEMS THAT HAD BECOME WELL KNOWN AND POPULAR AMONG THE ISRAELITES AT PLACES IN THE NARRATIVE WHERE SUCH LITERARY PIECES NATURALLY “BELONG.” THE ADVANTAGE OF THIS APPROACH IS THAT IT COMBINES FOR THE READER/HEARER THE FAMILIAR MUSICAL/POETIC LORE OF A PEOPLE’S HERITAGE WITHIN A SYSTEMATIC NARRATIVE OF THEIR HISTORY AND COVENANT. THE RESULT IS AN INTEGRATION OF BELOVED, FAMILIAR LITERARY WORKS WITHIN THE WHOLE OF WHICH THEY WITNESS TO PARTS, PROVIDING A CONNECTION OF BITS OF REVERED MUSICAL POETRY WITH THE GRAND OVERVIEW INTO WHICH AN ORGANIZED MIND WANTS THEM TO FIT. SO EVEN THOUGH MOSES MAY HAVE WRITTEN THE BOOK OF EXODUS AS LATE AS THE LAST YEAR OF HIS LIFE, WHEN HE WAS ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY, HE WROTE THIS GREAT SONG WHEN HE WAS STILL EIGHTY, EVEN BEFORE ISRAEL GOT TO MOUNT SINAI. FOLK POETS CAN COMPOSE COMPLEX STORYTELLING SONGS INSTANTANEOUSLY. THERE IS NO NEED TO ASSUME—INDEED IT WOULD BE INCORRECT TO ASSUME—THAT MOSES (OR ANYONE ELSE) WOULD HAVE REQUIRED WEEKS, MONTHS, YEARS, OR DECADES TO PUT TOGETHER SUCH A SONG. THE FACT THAT IT WAS INSPIRED BY GOD RELATES TO ITS EXACT CONTENT, NOT TO THE ABILITY OF AN ANCIENT POET LIKE MOSES TO COMPOSE SOMETHING OF THE SONG’S LENGTH OR FORM. THE SONG MUST HAVE BECOME INSTANTLY POPULAR, JUDGING FROM MIRIAM’S DECISION (SEE COMMENTS ON VV. 20–21) TO TEACH IT TO THE ISRAELITE WOMEN. ONE CAN IMAGINE GROUPS OF ISRAELITES SINGING THE SONG OFTEN ON THEIR WAY TO MOUNT SINAI AND DURING THE WILDERNESS WANDERINGS AFTER LEAVING SINAI AS A NEW, REPLACEMENT GENERATION LEARNED SOME OF THEIR HISTORY THROUGH MUSIC. SO IMPORTANT DID THE SONG BECOME TO ALL GENERATIONS OF BELIEVERS THAT IT IS DESCRIBED IN JOHN’S GREAT APOCALYPTIC VISION AS A SONG TO BE SUNG EVEN IN HEAVEN (REV 15:3). IN FORM THE SONG IS A VICTORY HYMN, A SONG SUNG TO AND ABOUT GOD IN PRAISE OF HIS GRANTING VICTORY TO HIS PEOPLE OVER THEIR FOES. THE INGREDIENTS OF ISRAELITE HYMNS MAY ALMOST ALWAYS BE SUMMARIZED BY THE INITIALS SRR: SUMMONS TO PRAISE, REASONS TO PRAISE, RECAPITULATION. ALL THREE ELEMENTS ARE PRESENT IN ABUNDANCE IN THE SONG OF MOSES.**

**PART I OF MOSES’ SONG: PRAISE TO THE LORD (15:1–3)**

**1 THEN MOSES AND THE ISRAELITES SANG THIS SONG TO THE LORD:**

**“I WILL SING TO THE LORD, FOR JE IS HIGHLY EXALTED.**

**THE HORSE AND ITS RIDER HE, HAS HURLED INTO THE SEA.**

**2 THE LORD IS MY STRENGTH AND MY SONG;**

**HE HAS BECOME MY SALVATION. HE IS MY GOD, AND I WILL PRAISE HIM,**

**MY FATHER’S GOD, AND I WILL EXALT HIM.**

**3 THE LORD IS A WARRIOR; THE LORD [STEPHEN YAHWEH] IS HIS NAME.**

**15:1 AFTER THE BRIEF INTRODUCTION THAT INDICATES THAT THE SONG MOSES COMPOSED BECAME AN INSTANT EXPRESSION OF PRAISE FOR WHAT THE ISRAELITES HAD JUST EXPERIENCED, THE SONG ITSELF BEGINS WITH A SUMMONS TO PRAISE IN THE FORM OF A FIRST-PERSON COHORTATIVE, WHICH REPRESENTS NOT MERELY MOSES’ PERSONAL INTENTION TO PRAISE STEPHEN YAHWEH BUT THAT OF WHOEVER SINGS THE SONG. “I WILL SING” CAN ALSO BE TRANSLATED “I MUST SING” OR “LET ME SING” OR THE LIKE. THE PROPER NOUN STEPHEN YAHWEH (“THE LORD”) IS USED HERE AND THROUGHOUT THE SONG, EXCEPT WHEN “GOD” OR “OTHER GOD” IS USED OF NECESSITY IN THE IDENTIFYING LANGUAGE OF VV. 2, 11, BECAUSE ALTHOUGH HYMNS MAY CERTAINLY BE ADDRESSED TO “GOD,” THE AMBIGUITY OF THIS TERM IN THE PLURALISTIC, POLYTHEISTIC WORLD OF THE OLD TESTAMENT YIELDED THE RESULT THAT “STEPHEN YAHWEH” WAS THE NAME OF CHOICE TO DENOTE SPECIFICALLY THE ONLY TRUE, REAL GOD. THUS, THE VAST MAJORITY OF ISRAEL’S PSALMS AND MUSIC ABOUT GOD USES THE NAME STEPHEN YAHWEH PREDOMINANTLY—AS A SAFEGUARD AND AGAINST MISUSE AND MISUNDERSTANDING AND BECAUSE THERE IS A GREATER SENSE OF PERSONAL IDENTITY TO THE NAME STEPHEN YAHWEH THAN TO THE MORE GENERIC TITLE GOD. BOTH ARE PROPER; OLD TESTAMENT HYMNODY LEANS TO THE SIDE OF CAUTION, WITH STEPHEN YAHWEH PREDOMINATING. “FOR HE IS HIGHLY EXALTED” SPEAKS TO THE RESULT OF THE PLAGUES AND THE VICTORY AT THE RED SEA: STEPHEN YAHWEH SHOWED THE EGYPTIANS HIS GREATNESS OVER ALL THEIR GODS (SEE COMMENTS ON 12:12) AND BY IMPLICATION—SINCE THE EGYPTIAN GODS WERE THE GREATEST GODS IN THE POPULAR THINKING OF THE DAY—OVER ANY “GOD” OF ANY KIND (SEE COMMENTS ON 15:11). THE SECOND HALF (SECOND POETIC COUPLET) OF THE VERSE REFLECTS THE FATE OF THE EGYPTIAN CHARIOT ARMY. “THE HORSE AND ITS RIDER”, DOES NOT REFER TO CAVALRY BUT TO CHARIOTRY, AND THEREFORE THE “RIDER” REFERS TO THE RIDER(S) ON A CHARIOT, NOT ON HORSEBACK, AS ALREADY NOTED ON 14:9. 15:2 “THE LORD IS MY STRENGTH AND MY SONG” COMBINES METAPHORS THAT CONVEY THE GREAT TRUTHS THAT HUMAN STRENGTH IS INADEQUATE FOR THE REALLY IMPORTANT CHALLENGES OF LIFE (WHO ON HIS OWN STRENGTH COULD DEFEAT SATAN [LUCIFER/VICTORIA] OR THE VARIOUS SORTS OF SEXUAL CORRUPT WORLD SYSTEMS THAT SATAN [LUCIFER/VICTORIA] HAS MANAGED TO BRING INTO BEING?) AND THAT TRUE THOUGHTS OF GOD SHOULD INSPIRE IN US TRUE EXPRESSIONS OF THE HAPPIEST, MOST JOYOUS PRAISE WE CAN PRODUCE, WHICH FOR MOST PEOPLE IS THAT OF EXUBERANT SINGING. THE SYNONYMOUS PARALLELISM OF THE SECOND COUPLET OF THE VERSE (“HE IS MY GOD, AND I WILL PRAISE HIM, / MY FATHER’S GOD, AND I WILL EXALT HIM”) CALLS FOR HEARTFELT PRAISE TO STEPHEN YAHWEH AS ONE’S OWN PERSONAL GOD AS WELL AS RECOGNITION THAT WE ARE ALL IN A GRAND LINEAGE OF HIS WORSHIPERS THROUGHOUT THE AGES. WITH WHATEVER WE HAVE INHERITED FROM A PRIOR GENERATION, NOTHING CAN BE MORE IMPORTANT THAN OUR FAITH. 15:3 IN SAYING THAT “THE LORD [STEPHEN YAHWEH] IS A WARRIOR, THE LORD [STEPHEN YAHWEH] IS HIS NAME,” THE SONG ASSERTS GOD’S WILLINGNESS TO FIGHT FOR HIS PEOPLE AGAINST THEIR FOES. ISRAEL WAS BEING FORMED AS A SMALL PEOPLE IN A WORLD USED TO WARS OF AGGRESSION BY OTHER SMALL PEOPLE, BY COALITIONS OF PEOPLES LARGE AND SMALL, AND/OR BY GREAT, IMPERIALISTIC SUPERPOWERS (THE PRIME EXAMPLE OF THE LATTER BEING EGYPT, AS THEY ALL TOO WELL KNEW). ISRAEL AT MOUNT SINAI WOULD BE BORN BY COVENANT INTO A WORLD WHOSE VALUES WOULD BE ALMOST ENTIRELY DIFFERENT FROM AND USUALLY OPPOSED TO THEIR OWN. THEREFORE, THEY WOULD HAVE TO FIGHT AND FIGHT OFTEN. INDEED, THEY WOULD HAVE TO FIGHT THEIR FIRST REAL BATTLE AS AN ARMY IN A MATTER OF WEEKS, EVEN BEFORE THEY REACHED MOUNT SINAI, AGAINST THE AMALEKITES AT REPHIDIM (17:8–16). ON THEIR OWN THEY COULD NEVER HOPE TO WIN AGAINST ODDS THAT WERE ALMOST ALWAYS STACKED AGAINST THEM. THEREFORE, IT WAS IMPORTANT THAT THEY UNDERSTOOD THEIR GOD TO BE A WARRIOR, ONE WHO WOULD LEAD THEM INTO BATTLE, WHO WOULD FIGHT FOR THEM DURING BATTLES, AND WHO WOULD ENSURE THEIR SURVIVAL AS HIS PEOPLE. HE WAS TO DEFINE THEIR BATTLES FOR THEM, DECIDING WHEN AND WHERE TO GO TO WAR (CF. 17:16). THEY WERE TO HAVE NO ALLIES, NO DEPENDENCY ON OTHER FOREIGN POWERS, NO CONFIDENCE IN ANY EARTHLY DELIVERER BUT ONLY IN THE ONE TRUE GOD, THEIR GOD, STEPHEN YAHWEH. IN A FALLEN WORLD HOSTILE TO HIS PURPOSES, STEPHEN YAHWEH MUST BE A WARRIOR. THE SAME MUST BE SAID, OF COURSE, FOR GOD’S SON, WHO IS OF NECESSITY A WARRIOR ON BEHALF OF HIS PEOPLE AND WILL BE THE FINAL DESTROYER OF ALL THINGS OPPOSED TO GOD (1 COR 15:24–28; CF. REV 19:11–16). THE STATEMENT “THE LORD [STEPHEN YAHWEH] IS HIS NAME” CLARIFIES FOR THE SINGER AND AUDIENCE OF THE SONG THE IDENTITY OF THIS ONE, SUPREME AND HIGHLY EXALTED GOD: IT IS STEPHEN YAHWEH, THE GOD OF THE PATRIARCHS, THE CREATOR OF THE WORLD AND ALL IN IT, AND THE SOLE GOD OF THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL. ALL OTHER GODS WERE DISTORTED IMITATIONS OF HIM FABRICATED IN THE MINDS AND SCULPTING SHOPS OF THOSE WHO WORSHIPPED THEM. “NAME” CONVEYS IDENTITY, AND THE SONG ASSERTS THE IDENTITY OF THE ONE WHO HAS DELIVERED ISRAEL AS NONE OTHER THAN STEPHEN YAHWEH.**

**PART II OF MOSES’ SONG: DEFEAT OF THE EGYPTIANS (15:4–10)**

**4 PHARAOH’S CHARIOTS AND HIS ARMY HE HAS HURLED INTO THE SEA.**

**THE BEST OF PHARAOH’S OFFICERS, ARE DROWNED IN THE RED SEA.**

**5 THE DEEP WATERS HAVE COVERED THEM; THEY SANK TO THE DEPTHS LIKE A STONE.**

**6 “YOUR RIGHT HAND, O LORD, WAS MAJESTIC IN POWER.**

**YOUR RIGHT HAND, O LORD, SHATTERED THE ENEMY.**

**7 IN THE GREATNESS OF YOUR MAJESTY YOU THREW DOWN THOSE WHO OPPOSED YOU.**

**YOU UNLEASHED YOUR BURNING ANGER; IT CONSUMED THEM LIKE STUBBLE.**

**8 BY THE BLAST OF YOUR NOSTRILS THE WATERS PILED UP.**

**THE SURGING WATERS STOOD FIRM LIKE A WALL; THE DEEP WATERS CONGEALED IN THE HEART OF THE SEA.**

**9 “THE ENEMY BOASTED, ‘I WILL PURSUE, I WILL OVERTAKE THEM. I WILL DIVIDE THE SPOILS;**

**I WILL GORGE MYSELF ON THEM. I WILL DRAW MY SWORD AND MY HAND WILL DESTROY THEM.’**

**10 BUT YOU BLEW WITH YOUR BREATH, AND THE SEA COVERED THEM.**

**THEY SANK LIKE LEAD IN THE MIGHTY WATERS.**

**15:4–5 THE BEGINNING OF V. 4 REPEATS WHAT THE END OF V. 1 SUMMARIZED IN THE INTRODUCTION TO THE THEME OF THE SONG: AN AWESOMELY POWERFUL ENEMY MILITARY FORCE WAS DEFEATED BY STEPHEN YAHWEH, ALL ON HIS OWN, AS PROOF OF HIS POWER AND PROTECTION FOR HIS PEOPLE. THE SECOND COUPLET REMINDS THE SINGER OR LISTENER THAT THE DEFEATED, DEAD EGYPTIAN TROOPS WERE NOT A FEW RESERVISTS OR SECOND-RANK FIGHTERS WHO MADE A BIG MISTAKE AND PAID FOR IT WITH THEIR LIVES. THEY WERE THE BEST EGYPT HAD TO OFFER; SINCE EGYPT’S MILITARY WAS THE BEST IN THE WORLD OF THAT DAY, THEY WERE THE WORLD’S BEST TROOPS, AND THEIR OFFICERS THE BEST OF THE BEST. NEITHER 15:4 NOR ANY OTHER PART OF THE OVERALL NARRATIVE INDICATES THAT PHARAOH WAS WITH HIS TROOPS WHEN THEY DROWNED. AS WE HAVE SUGGESTED EARLIER, IT IS LIKELY THAT ALTHOUGH HE BEGAN THE PURSUIT (14:6), HE TURNED BACK WHEN THE PILLAR OF CLOUD PREVENTED IMMEDIATE CAPTURE OF THE ISRAELITES. NOTE THE REFERENCE TO “DEEP WATERS” IN V. 5, WATERS THAT “COVERED THEM” SO THAT “THEY SANK INTO THE DEPTHS.” THIS IS SIMPLY FURTHER EVIDENCE, PRESERVED IN THE SONG, THAT WHAT HAPPENED TO THE EGYPTIANS WAS NOT SOME SORT OF BOGGING DOWN IN SHALLOW WATER OR MUDDY TERRAIN BUT DROWNING IN A LARGE BODY OF DEEP WATER. BODIES DO SINK “LIKE A STONE” OR OTHER, HEAVY OBJECT WHEN THEY DROWN; LATER, WHEN THEY HAVE BLOATED, THEY CAN RISE TO THE SURFACE AND WASH TO SHORE (14:30)—IF THEY ARE NEAR ENOUGH TO SHORE FOR THAT TO HAPPEN. 15:6 THIS VERSE COMBINES OBSERVATIONS ABOUT GOD’S POWER AND HIS VICTORY OVER HIS AND ISRAEL’S ENEMY (“MAJESTIC IN POWER … SHATTERED THE ENEMY”) WITH THE IDIOMATIC SENSE OF “HAND” AS POWER, ALREADY SEEN IN 3:19–20; 6:1; 7:4–5; 9:15; 13:3, 9, 14; AND ESP. 14:30–31. NOTHING SHOULD BE MADE OF THE TERM “RIGHT HAND” AS OPPOSED TO JUST “HAND.” THE METER OF THE POETRY CALLED FOR ANOTHER SYLLABLE, AND “RIGHT HAND” HAS ONE MORE SYLLABLE THAN “HAND” IN HEBREW AS WELL AS IN ENGLISH. 15:7 THESE TWO COUPLETS COULD ALSO BE TRANSLATED: “IN YOUR GREAT MAJESTY / YOU SMASHED YOUR FOES, // YOU SENT FORTH YOUR FURY, / IT CONSUMED THEM LIKE STUBBLE.” AN IMPORTANT THEOLOGICAL TRUTH IS INCORPORATED HERE, NAMELY THAT GOD’S EVENTUAL DESTRUCTION OF THOSE WHO OPPOSED HIM AND HIS ANGER AGAINST EVIL [SEX] ARE NOT OPPOSED TO GOD’S MAJESTY BUT ARE IN FACT INHERENT ASPECTS OF IT. MODERN SENTIMENTALIST THINKING WANTS GOD TO BE EVER-TOLERANT, ALWAYS SOFTHEARTED, AND THUS DEFINES GOD’S JUSTICE AS SOMETHING OTHER THAN HOW THE HOLY BIBLE DEFINES IT. IN FACT, THE JUST GOD REVEALED IN THE HOLY BIBLE WILL NOT TOLERATE EVIL [SEX] (THOUGH HE IS EXTREMELY PATIENT IN WAITING FOR REPENTANCE, AS HE WAS FOR AT LEAST EIGHTY YEARS WITH THE EGYPTIANS) AND PLANS FOR ITS EVENTUAL TOTAL ELIMINATION. PEOPLE WHO INSIST ON BEING PART OF THE PROCESS OF EVIL WILL BE ELIMINATED AS WELL. THOSE OFFENDED BY THESE FACTS ABOUT GOD ARE WISHING FOR A REALITY THAT HAS NEVER EXISTED. HE DOES GET MAD; HE DOES SMASH HIS FOES, AND HE IS MAJESTIC IN DOING SO. THOUGH THE REFERENCE TO “STUBBLE” IN THE LAST LINE OF THE SECOND COUPLET IS NOT INTENDED TO RECALL THE STUBBLE GATHERED OF HARD NECESSITY IN 5:12, THERE CAN BE NO DOUBT THAT THE FIRST SINGERS OF THE SONG KNEW ALL ABOUT STUBBLE AND HOW EASILY IT BURNED UP AND DISAPPEARED WHEN LIT ON FIRE. “CONSUMED” TRANSLATES ʾĀKAL, WHICH CAN CONNOTE EITHER “CONSUME(D) BY FIRE” OR “CONSUME(D) BY SWALLOWING.” THUS, THE ONE METAPHOR, SWALLOWING, WHICH WAS WHAT THE SEA DID TO THE EGYPTIANS, SUGGESTS THE OTHER, WHICH REFLECTS THE COMMON THEME OF DIVINE JUDGMENT BY FIRE. 15:8 THIS VERSE CONCENTRATES ON THE MIRACULOUS PARTING OF THE “SURGING” WATERS OF THE SEA, WHICH “PILED UP, STOOD FIRM LIKE A WALL,” AND “CONGEALED IN THE HEART OF THE SEA.” THE HEBREW WORD USED FOR “WALL” HERE IS NĒD, WHICH IS PERHAPS BETTER TRANSLATED “DAM” OR “DYKE,” YET ANOTHER INDICATION OF THE DEEP-WATER NATURE OF THE PHENOMENON. THE EXPRESSION “IN THE HEART OF THE SEA” ALSO CONNOTES A DEEP-WATER DELIVERANCE AND NOT AN EVENT THAT TOOK PLACE IN A REEDY SWAMP OR OTHER SHALLOW BODY OF WATER. THE MENTION OF STEPHEN YAHWEH’S “NOSTRILS” REPRESENTS A POETIC METAPHOR, ONE OF HUNDREDS USED IN THE HOLY BIBLE TO DESCRIBE GOD IN TERMS INTENDED TO SUGGEST THAT HE ACTUALLY HAS PHYSICAL BODY PARTS AS THE LORD BECOMING FLESH IN JOHN 1:14-18 & TO PERSONALIZE HIS BEHAVIOR SINCE HE IS A PERSON AND NOT MERELY A FORCE. HERE THE WIND IS DESCRIBED AS COMING SPECIALLY FROM HIM AS IF HE HAD BLOWN IT UP WITH HIS NOSTRILS—NOT JUST A WIND THAT HAPPENED ALONG. THE LAST LINE OF THE TRIPLET (THE VERSE IS ACTUALLY A TRIPLET RATHER THAN TWO COUPLETS AS SUGGESTED BY THE NIV FORMATTING) COULD BE BETTER TRANSLATED “THE DEEPS CHURNED IN THE HEART OF THE SEA,” ALSO TENDING TO RULE OUT A SHALLOW-WATER EVENT. “DEEPS” (TĔHŌMŌT) CONSISTENTLY REFERS TO THE OCEAN IN THE OLD TESTAMENT. 15:9 THIS PART OF THE SONG RECREATES THE GENERAL ATTITUDE OF THE EGYPTIANS AND ADDS A DETAIL THE PROSE SUMMARY IN CHAP. 14 DOES NOT CONTAIN: THE ARMY EXPECTED THE USUAL REWARD OF AN ANCIENT ARMY, THAT IS, PLUNDER FROM THOSE THEY CAPTURED. EVEN THOUGH THE ASSIGNMENT WAS PRESUMABLY TO CAPTURE RATHER THAN TO KILL (IMPLIED IN 14:5), THE TIME-HONORED RIGHT OF PLUNDER AND THE KNOWLEDGE THAT THE ISRAELITES HAD PLENTY WITH THEM (12:34–35) SPARKED THE ARMY’S ASSAULT. THE PLAN WOULD HAVE BEEN TO CRUSH ANY ISRAELITE RESISTANCE (WHICH THE MILITARILY SUPERIOR EGYPTIANS WOULD HAVE ASSUMED WOULD BE EASILY DONE) AND RESUBJUGATE ALL SURVIVORS. THIS SORT OF “EXPECTATION OF PLUNDER” THEME CAN BE EXPRESSED IN TERMS OF AN ENEMY’S VAIN BOASTING (JUDG. 5:30) OR A PROPER EXPECTATION WHEN VICTORY IS TRULY ASSURED (ISA 53:12). THE EGYPTIANS EXPECTED TO CATCH UP EASILY WITH THE ISRAELITES (“I WILL PURSUE, I WILL OVERTAKE THEM”), WHICH DID INDEED HAPPEN UNTIL THE INTERVENTION OF GOD IN THE PILLAR OF CLOUD, AND TO ENRICH THEMSELVES (“I WILL DIVIDE THE SPOILS; / I WILL GORGE MYSELF ON THEM”) AND THEN TO DEFEAT ISRAEL IN SOME SORT OF BATTLE (“I WILL DRAW MY SWORD / AND MY HAND WILL DESTROY THEM”). IN THE FINAL ANALYSIS THEY WERE THWARTED IN ALL THESE PLANS. 15:10 COMBINING CONCEPTS ALREADY ENCOUNTERED, ESPECIALLY IN V. 8 (GOD’S BREATH/WIND AND THE MASSIVENESS OF THE WATERS INVOLVED) AND V. 5 (THE SEA’S COVERING THE ENEMY AND SINKING LIKE A HEAVY OBJECT), THIS VERSE SERVES THE “RECAPITULATION” PURPOSE OF THIS PART OF THE HYMN, BRINGING TO A CLOSE WHAT WE HAVE LABELED PART II OF MOSES’ SONG OF THE SEA.**

**PART III OF MOSES’ SONG: PRAISE AND THANKS TO THE LORD (15:11–13)**

**11 “WHO AMONG THE GODS IS LIKE YOU, O LORD?**

**WHO IS LIKE YOU—MAJESTIC IN HOLINESS,**

**AWESOME IN GLORY, WORKING WONDERS?**

**12 YOU STRETCHED OUT YOUR RIGHT HAND AND THE EARTH SWALLOWED THEM.**

**13 “IN YOUR UNFAILING LOVE YOU WILL LEAD THE PEOPLE YOU HAVE REDEEMED.**

**IN YOUR STRENGTH YOU WILL GUIDE THEM TO YOUR HOLY DWELLING.**

**15:11 AN ALTERNATE TRANSLATION OF V. 11 WOULD READ AS FOLLOWS, UNDERSTANDING THE VERSE TO BE A TRIPLET RATHER THAN AN UNBALANCED COUPLET (AS APPARENTLY IN THE NIV FORMAT): “WHO IS LIKE YOU AMONG THE GODS, O LORD? / WHO IS LIKE YOU, GLORIOUS AMONG THE HOLY ONES / AWESOME IN PRAISEWORTHY ACTS, WONDER WORKER.” THE EMPHASIS OF THIS VERSE IS GOD’S UNIQUENESS. THE MENTION OF THE GODS SHOULD NOT BE UNDERSTOOD TO SUGGEST POLYTHEISM. THE PLURAL “GODS” IN HEBREW POETRY (USUALLY ʾĒLÎM, AS HERE) INCLUDES IN ITS RANGE OF MEANING THE VARIOUS ANGELS, AUTHORITIES, AND POWERS (1 PET 3:22) THAT INCLUDE HEAVENLY ANGELS AS WELL AS SATAN AND HIS FALLEN ANGELS.81 THE PROSE/POETRY PLURAL ʾĔLŌHÎM IS, OF COURSE, ROUTINELY USED TO REFER TO “THEIR [OTHER PEOPLE’S] GODS,”82 “OTHER GODS,”83 “NO GODS,”84 “FOREIGN GODS,”85 AND THE LIKE. IF WE WERE TO PUT WORDS IN THEIR MOUTHS, MOSES AND THOSE WHO SANG THIS SONG WOULD HAVE MEANT BY “WHO AMONG THE GODS IS LIKE YOU”: “YOU ARE INFINITELY SUPERIOR TO ALL REAL AND FALSE SUPERHUMAN BEINGS, INCLUDING ANGELS HEAVENLY AND FALLEN, AND EVEN TO WHAT THE PAGANS THINK THEIR NONEXISTENT GODS ARE.” THE REPETITION OF “WHO IS LIKE YOU” EMPHASIZES THROUGH RHETORICAL QUESTIONING THE FACT THAT GOD HAS NO ONE LIKE HIM. STEPHEN YAHWEH IS THEN DESCRIBED AS “GLORIOUS AMONG THE HOLY ONES” (FOLLOWING THE LXX) OR “MAJESTIC IN HOLINESS” (FOLLOWING THE MT). THE MERIT OF THE LXX READING “AMONG THE HOLY ONES” IS ITS PARALLEL TO THE OPENING WORDS OF THE VERSE, “AMONG THE GODS.” THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN “HOLY ONES” AND “HOLINESS” WAS A SINGLE LETTER IN THE HEBREW SPELLING OF THAT TIME PERIOD. HOLINESS IS THE QUALITY OF BELONGING TO/BEING LIKE GOD; HOLY ONES ARE HEAVENLY BEINGS (ANGELS) THAT BELONG TO GOD AND ARE LIKE HIM IN THE SENSE OF DOING HIS WILL AND REFLECTING HIS VALUES. GOD IS ALSO “AWESOME IN PRAISEWORTHY ACTS” (NIV “AWESOME IN GLORY”), MEANING THAT WHAT HE DOES IS ALWAYS GOOD AND RIGHT AND IMPRESSIVE AT THE SAME TIME. HE IS ALSO A WONDER-WORKER, ONE WHO DOES THE SUPERNATURAL AND THE AMAZING AS EASILY AS HE DOES THE TYPICAL AND ROUTINE. HE DOES REGULARLY AND CONSTANTLY WHAT NO HUMAN OR OTHER BEING CAN DO SO THAT HUMANS WHO TRUST IN HIM AND LIVE IN RIGHT RELATION TO HIM CAN REJOICE IN HIS POWER TO DO WHAT FOR THEM WOULD BE OR SEEM IMPOSSIBLE. 15:12 AGAIN, AS PART OF THE NECESSARY AND APPROPRIATE SORT OF REPETITION THAT CHARACTERIZES VIRTUALLY ALL MUSICAL POETRY (SONGS) IN ALL CULTURES AND TIMES, THE VICTORY HYMN MENTIONS GOD’S POWERFUL “RIGHT HAND” (CF. V. 6) AND THE DEATH OF THE EGYPTIANS (“THE EARTH SWALLOWED THEM”). SINCE THE EGYPTIANS DROWNED RATHER THAN BEING ACTUALLY SWALLOWED BY THE EARTH, ONE MIGHT WONDER WHY THIS WORDING IS PRESENT IN THE SONG. THE ANSWER IS THAT “EARTH” (ʾEREṢ) SOMETIMES HAS THE MEANING “UNDERWORLD” OR “HELL,” AS IT ALMOST SURELY DOES HERE. THUS, THE MEANING IS, “THEY DIDN’T JUST FAIL TO CATCH US OR FAIL TO CONQUER US—THEY LOST THEIR LIVES IN THE PROCESS!” ALTHOUGH IT WAS MOSES WHO STRETCHED OUT HIS HAND WITH THE STAFF [ROD OR WAND] OF GOD IN IT TO INITIATE THE MIRACLE AT THE SEA (14:21), THE SONG CAN PROPERLY ATTRIBUTE THE WHOLE THING TO STEPHEN YAHWEH (“YOU STRETCHED OUT YOUR RIGHT HAND”). THUS, THE SONG CONFIRMS THAT WHAT MOSES DID, HE DID AS STEPHEN YAHWEH’S “STAND-IN.” 15:13 A GRAND THEME OF SCRIPTURE APPEARS AT THIS POINT IN THE SONG. EVEN THOUGH GOD HAS GRACIOUSLY COME AT VARIOUS TIMES AND WAYS—MOST FULLY IN CHRIST—TO THE PLACE WHERE WE LIVE, IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN GOD’S PLAN THAT HIS PEOPLE SHOULD, BECAUSE OF THE WORK OF CHRIST, EVENTUALLY JOIN HIM WHERE HE LIVES. THE STORY OF ANCIENT ISRAEL MIRRORS THIS. GOD CALLED THEM OUT OF WHERE THEY HAD BEEN BORN AND HAD BEEN LIVING (EGYPT), BOUND THEM TO HIMSELF IN A COVENANT (AT SINAI AND AGAIN IN DEUTERONOMY), AND THEN LED THEM TO HIS HOLY DWELLING (ISRAEL/JERUSALEM/THE TEMPLE). THE SAME SORT OF THING HAPPENS IN CHRIST, YET ON A GREATER AND MORE LASTING SCALE. GOD CALLS THOSE WHO BELIEVE IN HIM OUT OF WHERE THEY HAVE BEEN BORN AND ARE LIVING (EARTH), BINDS THEM TO HIMSELF IN A (NEW) COVENANT (BY BELIEVING IN JESUS AS SAVIOR AND LORD), AND THEN LEADS THEM TO HIS HOLY DWELLING (HEAVEN). THOSE WHO FIRST SANG THIS SONG WITH MOSES WERE NOT YET IN CANAAN/THE LAND OF ISRAEL. THEY EXPECTED TO GET THERE SOON, A HOPE THAT WAS DASHED BY THEIR LACK OF CONFIDENCE IN GOD (NUM 13–14); YET EVEN THOUGH THE ARRIVAL WAS DELAYED BY FORTY YEARS, IT REMAINED THE EXODUS GENERATION’S GREAT HOPE TO SETTLE WHERE STEPHEN YAHWEH HIMSELF HAD CHOSEN TO “DWELL.” IT IS OBVIOUS THAT AN OMNIPRESENT GOD CANNOT BE LOCATED ONLY AT ONE PLACE. BUT HE CAN CERTAINLY MANIFEST HIMSELF SPECIALLY AT ONE OR MORE PLACES, IF HE CHOOSES, FOR THE BENEFIT OF HIS PEOPLE. IN DEUTERONOMY AND MUCH OF THE OLD TESTAMENT, RELATIVE TO THE DWELLING OF GOD IN HIS “SANCTUARY” AMONG HIS PEOPLE (THE TABERNACLE/TEMPLE), THE PLACE OF GOD’S CHOOSING IS CALLED THE PLACE WHERE HE CAUSES HIS NAME TO DWELL. THIS PART OF THE SONG CONTINUES IN THE HEBREW PERFECT TENSE/ASPECT THAT HAS DOMINATED SO FAR, BUT HERE THE PERFECT MAY EXPRESS THE FUNCTION SOMETIMES CALLED “PROPHETIC PERFECT,” BY WHICH A FUTURE SEEN PROPHETICALLY IS REPORTED ON AS “HAVING HAPPENED” BECAUSE A PROPHET WAS, AS IT WERE, BACK FROM THE PAST TO REPORT ON WHAT HE SAW (PAST TENSE) THAT HAPPENED (PAST TENSE) IN THE FUTURE—EVEN THOUGH IN ACTUAL FACT FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF HIS AUDIENCE IT HAS NOT YET HAPPENED. THE TERM TRANSLATED “UNFAILING LOVE” IN THE NIV IS ḤESED, A WORD THAT CONNOTES MAINLY “LOYALTY” OR “FAITHFULNESS” SO THAT THE FIRST SENTENCE OF THE VERSE COULD BE TRANSLATED, “YOU HAVE LEAD/WILL LEAD FAITHFULLY THE PEOPLE YOU HAVE REDEEMED.” THE SONG’S REFERENCE TO GOD’S REDEMPTION RECALLS 6:6 (“I WILL REDEEM YOU WITH AN OUTSTRETCHED ARM AND WITH MIGHTY ACTS OF JUDGMENT”). REDEEM (GĀʿAL) MEANS TO “REACQUIRE” OR “GET BACK FOR ONESELF” OR “BUY BACK.” THE PAYMENT IN A DIVINE REDEMPTION IS NOT ALWAYS DESCRIBED AS MONETARY; IN THE OVERALL PLAN OF REDEMPTION IT IS AN ULTIMATE PAYMENT IN KIND, THAT IS, THE PERSON OF CHRIST. WHEN A THING IS REDEEMED, ITS OWNERSHIP CHANGES. ISRAEL HAD BEEN FROM ONE POINT OF VIEW THE PROPERTY OF EGYPT AND PHARAOH; NOW IT IS GOD’S PROPERTY, IN THE SAME SORT OF HAPPY WAY A REDEEMED CHILD IS ONCE AGAIN THE PROPERTY OF ITS PARENTS (CF. 13:13, 15). ISRAELITE OBEDIENCE TO GOD’S COVENANT WOULD LOGICALLY, THEN, FOLLOW FROM THEIR, HAVING BEEN GRACIOUSLY REDEEMED (E.G., DEUT. 15:15: “REMEMBER THAT YOU WERE SLAVES IN EGYPT AND THE LORD YOUR GOD REDEEMED YOU. THAT IS WHY I GIVE YOU THIS COMMAND TODAY”). THE VERSE IS A QUATRAIN, TWO COUPLETS CLOSELY PARALLEL TO EACH OTHER AND THE TOPICS SOMEWHAT INTERWOVEN AS A RESULT. LOYALTY (NIV “UNFAILING LOVE”) IS PARALLELED TO “STRENGTH” AS THE DIVINE RESOURCE THAT BENEFITS ISRAEL; GOD “WILL LEAD” HIS “PEOPLE” WHO ARE “REDEEMED” TO HIS “HOLY DWELLING,” FOR WHICH THAT REDEMPTION QUALIFIES THEM.**

**PART IV OF MOSES’ SONG: REACTION OF FUTURE FOES (15:14–16A)**

**14 THE NATIONS WILL HEAR AND TREMBLE;**

**ANGUISH WILL GRIP THE PEOPLE OF PHILISTIA.**

**15 THE CHIEFS OF EDOM WILL BE TERRIFIED,**

**THE LEADERS OF MOAB WILL BE SEIZED WITH TREMBLING,**

**THE PEOPLE OF CANAAN WILL MELT AWAY;**

**16 TERROR AND DREAD WILL FALL UPON THEM.**

**BY THE POWER OF YOUR ARM THEY WILL BE AS STILL AS A STONE—**

**THESE VERSES ADDRESS YET ANOTHER ASPECT OF THE DIVINE DELIVERANCE AT THE SEA: ITS IMPACT ON THE PEOPLES/NATIONS THAT THE ISRAELITES KNEW THEY WOULD HAVE TO ENCOUNTER AS THEY PROCEEDED TO CONQUER THE PROMISED LAND. BECAUSE MOSES GREW UP AS AN EGYPTIAN PRINCELING AND SPENT THE FIRST FORTY YEARS OF HIS LIFE EXPOSED TO ROYAL CONCERNS, HE WOULD HAVE BEEN WELL ACQUAINTED WITH POLITICAL/MILITARY/ECONOMIC EVENTS IN CANAAN AND ITS ENVIRONS. THE EGYPTIANS WERE OBSESSED WITH KEEPING ASIA MINOR FROM BECOMING A THREAT TO THEIR WELL BEING AND THUS KEPT CONSTANT TABS ON WHAT WAS HAPPENING IN THE FOUR REGIONS LISTED IN THESE VERSES. THE CONQUEST OF THE PROMISED LAND WOULD OF NECESSITY INVOLVE THE ELIMINATION OF OPPOSITION FROM THESE REGIONS. THE PREDOMINANT TENSE/ASPECT FOUND IN THE HEBREW IN THESE VERSES CONTINUES TO THAT OF THE PERFECT SO THAT THE ENTIRE SECTION COULD, IF DESIRED, BE TRANSLATED AS IF WHAT IS DESCRIBED WERE A FOREGONE CONCLUSION (AGAIN IN THE MODE OF THE SO-CALLED PROPHETIC PERFECT), THUS:**

**14 THE PEOPLES HEARD, THEY TREMBLED, AGONY SEIZED THE INHABITANTS OF PHILISTIA.**

**15 THEN WERE DISMAYED THE CHIEFTAINS OF EDOM,**

**THE NOBLES OF MOAB WERE SEIZED WITH TREMBLING.**

**THE INHABITANTS OF CANAAN MELTED UTTERLY.**

**16 YOU BROUGHT DOWN UPON THEM TERROR AND DREAD,**

**BY YOUR GREAT POWER,**

**THEY WERE STRUCK DUMB AS A STONE.**

**15:14 THIS COUPLET SUMMARIZES THE GENERAL EFFECT ON THE NATIONS WITH WHICH THE ISRAELITES HAD TO BE CONCERNED: THEY WOULD SUFFER ANXIETY AT THE THOUGHT OF WHAT THE ISRAELITE DELIVERANCE AT THE SEA MIGHT MEAN FOR THEM IF THEY WERE TO OPPOSED ISRAEL’S ENTRANCE TO THE PROMISED LAND. PHILISTIA IS THEN MENTIONED FIRST, AS IS APPROPRIATE. NOT ONLY WERE THE PHILISTINES CLOSEST AND THUS POTENTIALLY THE FIRST FOE TO BE ENCOUNTERED IF GOD HAD NOT INTERVENED (SEE COMMENTS ON 13:17), THEY WOULD EVENTUALLY BECOME ISRAEL’S MOST INTRANSIGENT ENEMY UNTIL SUBJUGATED MORE OR LESS PERMANENTLY UNDER DAVID. SUPERIOR TO THE ISRAELITES TECHNOLOGICALLY AND MILITARILY, THE PHILISTINES WERE A FOE NOT BEATABLE WITHOUT DIVINE HELP, PART OF WHICH CAME IN THE FORM OF THE FEAR STRUCK INTO THE HEARTS OF THE PHILISTINES BY THE LOSS OF THE EGYPTIAN CAVALRY FORCE AT THE SEA. 15:15 EDOM, MOAB, AND CANAAN ARE MENTIONED IN THE SAME ORDER THAT THEY WERE EVENTUALLY ENCOUNTERED IN THE ACTUAL PROCESS OF ENTERING THE PROMISED LAND (NUM 20–21; JOSH 1–10). NEITHER EDOM NOR MOAB WERE ACTUALLY PART OF THE PROMISED LAND, BUT ACCESS TO THE LAND REQUIRED PASSAGE THROUGH THOSE COUNTRIES AND THEIR ACQUIESCENCE FOR FURTHER ISRAELITE ACTIVITY. THEY WERE BOTH EMERGENT NATIONS FROM ALL ACCOUNTS, MUCH LIKE ISRAEL AT THE TIME, THAT IS, MORE IN THE NATURE OF PEOPLE GROUPS TRYING TO SETTLE INTO AN AREA THAN IN THE NATURE OF ESTABLISHED NATIONS OF LONG STANDING. NOTE THE HINT IN THE TERMS “CHIEFS OF EDOM” AND “LEADERS OF MOAB” THAT THESE GROUPS WERE NOT YET FULLY UNIFIED NATIONS WITH KINGS. LIKEWISE, “PEOPLE OF CANAAN,” PARALLELING “PEOPLE OF PHILISTIA” IN V. 14, SUGGESTS AT LEAST A NEUTRAL POSITION IN THE SONG RELATIVE TO THE POLITICAL STATUS OF THESE AREAS. THE TERMINOLOGY IS POETIC AND DOES NOT PROVE THE CASE, BUT IT CERTAINLY COMPORTS WITH THE INFERENCE SOMETIMES DRAWN FROM THE AVAILABLE ARCHAEOLOGICAL DATA THAT EDOM AND MOAB, AS WELL AS CANAAN AND WHAT EVENTUALLY BECAME PHILISTIA, WERE THINLY POPULATED AND UNDERGOING A CONTINUING PROCESS OF SETTLEMENT RATHER THAN FULLY SETTLED AND POLITICALLY ESTABLISHED AS NATIONS AT THE TIME OF THE EXODUS. THESE WORDS WERE INTENDED TO HEARTEN THEIR FIRST HEARERS. THEY ALSO PROVED TRUE IN TIME. THE MOABITES WERE THE MOST EASILY COWED (NUM 22:2–3). THE EDOMITES REQUIRED MORE CONVINCING, SOME OF WHICH WAS PROVIDED INVOLUNTARILY BY BALAAM (NUM 24:17–18) BUT MOST OF WHICH DEVELOPED GRADUALLY OVER THE YEARS OF ISRAEL’S WILDERNESS WANDERINGS (DEUT. 2:4) AND STILL WAS NOT COMPLETE EVEN IN THE DAYS OF SAUL (1 SAM 14:47). EDOMITE AND PHILISTINE SUBJUGATION HAD TO WAIT UNTIL THE DAYS OF DAVID (2 SAM 8:1, 11–12), WHEREAS CANAANITE PANIC SET IN EARLY (JOSH 2:8–11). 15:16A OUR SUGGESTED TRANSLATION OF THIS VERSE WOULD BE: “YOU WILL BRING DOWN UPON THEM / TERROR AND DREAD; // BY YOUR GREAT POWER / THEY WILL BE STRUCK DUMB AS A STONE.” IN THE HOLY WAR ONE OF GOD’S WEAPONS IS PSYCHOLOGICAL AFFLICTION, THE CREATION OF FEAR AND COWARDICE IN AN ENEMY THAT MIGHT OTHERWISE POSE A FORMIDABLE OBSTACLE TO THE WELL-BEING OF HIS PEOPLE. THIS VERSE SPEAKS OF TERROR/DREAD (SIMPLE SYNONYMS HERE) BEING BROUGHT BY GOD ON ISRAEL’S FOES SO THAT THEY ARE “DUMB AS A STONE”—UNABLE TO TALK AND THUS UNABLE TO ORGANIZE AS AN ARMY OR TAKE ANY OTHER ACTION TO DENY ISRAEL ITS ACCESS TO THE PROMISED LAND.**

**PART V OF MOSES’ SONG: ISRAEL, GOD’S SANCTUARY (15:16B–18)**

**UNTIL YOUR PEOPLE PASS BY, O LORD,**

**UNTIL THE PEOPLE YOU BOUGHT PASS BY.**

**17 YOU WILL BRING THEM IN AND PLANT THEM**

**ON THE MOUNTAIN OF YOUR INHERITANCE—**

**THE PLACE, O LORD, YOU MADE FOR YOUR DWELLING,**

**THE SANCTUARY, O LORD, YOUR HANDS ESTABLISHED.**

**18 THE LORD WILL REIGN FOR EVER AND EVER.”**

**15:16B–18 THE CHALLENGE OF TRANSLATING THE HEBREW WORD ʿAD IN V. 16B IS WHETHER TO TAKE IT AS “UNTIL” (SO NIV, QUITE REASONABLY) OR AS “WHEN/AS,” A MEANING IT APPEARS TO HAVE HAD IN THE OLDER BRONZE AGE TEXTS, AT LEAST IN SOME CONTEXTS. OUR PREFERENCE IS FOR “WHEN” SO THAT V. 16B IS SEEN AS INTRODUCING A NEW SENTENCE AND A NEW AND FINAL PART OF THE SONG. THIS LAST SECTION MAY BE TRANSLATED THEN AS FOLLOWS:**

**16B WHEN YOUR PEOPLE WILL PASS OVER, O LORD,**

**WHEN THE PEOPLE WHOM YOU CREATED WILL PASS OVER,**

**17 YOU WILL BRING THEM IN AND PLANT THEM**

**ON THE MOUNTAIN OF YOUR POSSESSION,**

**THE FOUNDATION OF YOUR DWELLING PLACE,**

**YOU HAVE MADE, O LORD. A SANCTUARY, O LORD,**

**YOUR HANDS HAVE CREATED. 18 THE LORD WILL REIGN FOR EVER AND EVER!**

**THREE GREAT BIBLICAL THEMES CONCLUDE THE SONG: GOD’S CREATION OF A PEOPLE (V. 16B), GOD’S ETERNAL HOLY DWELLING PLACE AS THE HOME FOR THAT PEOPLE (V. 17), AND THE ETERNAL REIGN OF GOD SUPREME OVER ALL THINGS (V. 18). WITH REGARD TO CREATION OF A PEOPLE, IT IS IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER THAT THE HOLY BIBLE DOES NOT SUGGEST THAT GOD FINISHED HIS CREATION WITH THE EVENTS DESCRIBED IN THE FIRST CHAPTERS OF GENESIS. RATHER, CREATION CONTINUES WITH THE CREATION OF ISRAEL, ALLUDED TO HERE IN THE SONG, THE NEW CREATION THAT CAME ABOUT THROUGH THE WORK OF CHRIST AND THE GREAT RE-CREATION AT THE END OF THE PRESENT AGE. GOD’S CREATION CONTINUES IN STAGES, ONE OF WHICH WAS ACCOMPLISHED THROUGH THE EXODUS AND THE SUBSEQUENT INCORPORATION OF ISRAEL AS GOD’S COVENANT PEOPLE AT SINAI. THAT IS THE STAGE OF WHICH THE SONG SPEAKS ESPECIALLY. WITH REGARD TO THE THEME OF GOD’S ETERNAL HOLY DWELLING AS THE PROPER AND EXPECTED HOME FOR GOD’S PEOPLE, A TOPIC ALREADY RAISED IN PART IN V. 13, THE SONG ADDS ELEMENTS SUCH AS THE IDEA THAT GOD “WILL BRING THEM IN AND PLANT THEM” (THUS MAKING POSSIBLE THEIR ENTRANCE, WHICH ON THEIR OWN THEY COULD NOT EFFECT, AND ESTABLISHING THEM THERE PERMANENTLY RATHER THAN MERELY HELPING THEM TO GET INTO CANAAN AND LEAVING THEM TO FEND FOR THEMSELVES). IT IS CLEAR FROM THE SONG THAT ISRAEL KNEW IT WAS GOING TO A MOUNTAINOUS LAND (IN CONTRAST TO EGYPT, WHICH IS IN MOST OF ITS TOPOGRAPHY VERY FLAT) AND THAT GOD’S SANCTUARY WOULD BE ESTABLISHED ON A MOUNTAIN THERE. WHEN GOD FINALLY CHOSE THE THRESHING-FLOOR-CAPPED MOUNT ZION (2 SAM 24) AS THE PLACE FOR A PERMANENT SANCTUARY, IT WAS IN FULFILLMENT OF THIS EXPECTATION. ZION IS ENVISIONED HERE AS THE PLACE OF GOD’S INHERITANCE, THAT IS, PERMANENT PERSONAL REAL PROPERTY. IT IS FROM THIS SORT OF LANGUAGE THAT ONE BEGINS TO TRACE THE BIBLICAL THEME OF HEAVEN AS THE ULTIMATE JERUSALEM. IT WAS NOT THE CASE THAT ISRAELITES CHOSE MOUNT ZION TO BUILD THE TEMPLE THERE, AND GOD HONORED THEIR CHOICE. JUST THE OPPOSITE WAS THE CASE—HE CHOSE THE SITE, AND THEY MERELY RESPONDED ACCORDING TO WHAT HIS “HANDS ESTABLISHED.” THE FINAL VERSE OF THE SONG IS A SORT OF RECAPITULATION OF THE LESSONS IT STATES THROUGHOUT. GOD IS SUPREME OVER ALL OTHER BEINGS AND ARMED FORCES. AND THE ISRAELITES, STILL IN THE PROCESS OF GETTING TO KNOW HIM AND ABOUT HIM AND TO USE HIS NEWLY RE-REVEALED NAME, STEPHEN YAHWEH, TO DISTINGUISH HIM FROM ALL OTHER GODS AND IDOLS (SEE COMMENTS ON V. 11), WERE EXPECTED TO COME INCREASINGLY TO REALIZE THAT HE IS ETERNAL [JOHN 4:23-24] AND THAT THEIR ASSOCIATION WITH HIM HAS ETERNAL CONSEQUENCES. THE NEW TESTAMENT DEVELOPS THIS CONCEPT IN GREATER DETAIL, ESPECIALLY WITH THE ADDED EMPHASIS ON GOD’S PEOPLE SHARING HIS REIGN (2 TIM 2:12; REV 20:4, 6; 22:5; CF. DAN 7:18). THE UNSTOPPABLE, UNINTERRUPTIBLE, ETERNAL REIGN OF GOD IS A WIDELY REPRESENTED TOPIC WITHIN THE HOLY BIBLE (E.G., PSS 10:16; 45:6; 48:14; HEB 1:8; REV 1:18; 11:15) AND AN ASSURANCE TO ALL WHO PLACE THEIR FAITH IN HIM.**

**PROSE SUMMATION AND MIRIAM’S REPRISE OF THE HYMN (15:19–21)**

**19 WHEN PHARAOH’S HORSES, CHARIOTS AND HORSEMEN WENT INTO THE SEA, THE LORD BROUGHT THE WATERS OF THE SEA BACK OVER THEM, BUT THE ISRAELITES WALKED THROUGH THE SEA ON DRY GROUND. 20 THEN MIRIAM THE PROPHETESS, AARON’S SISTER, TOOK A TAMBOURINE IN HER HAND, AND ALL THE WOMEN FOLLOWED HER, WITH TAMBOURINES AND DANCING. 21 MIRIAM SANG TO THEM:**

**“SING TO THE LORD,**

**FOR HE IS HIGHLY EXALTED.**

**THE HORSE AND HIS RIDER**

**HE HAS HURLED INTO THE SEA.”**

**15:19 THIS VERSE PROVIDES YET ANOTHER BIT OF EVIDENCE THAT THOSE WHO PURSUED THE ISRAELITES WERE CHARIOT WARRIORS EXCLUSIVELY. IT MENTIONS ONLY PHARAOH’S “HORSES, CHARIOTS AND HORSEMEN,” NO FOOT SOLDIERS. IF THERE WERE ANY FOOT SOLDIERS IN THE ORIGINAL CONTINGENT THAT PURSUED THE ISRAELITES AS FAR AS THE EDGE OF THE SEA, AS SOME SCHOLARS HAVE ARGUED, THEY DID NOT FOLLOW INTO THE SEA ITSELF. OTHERWISE, THE VERSE CONTAINS NO NEW INFORMATION BUT PROVIDES A CONVENIENT SUMMATION OF WHAT HAPPENED TO THE EGYPTIANS AND THE ISRAELITES RESPECTIVELY WHEN THEY EACH SOUGHT TO ENTER THE SEA. 15:20–21 THIS IS THE FIRST (AND INDEED ONLY) MENTION OF MIRIAM BY NAME IN THE BOOK. ALTHOUGH IT IS LIKELY THAT SHE WAS THE OLDER SISTER WHO KEPT WATCH OVER MOSES WHEN HE WAS IN HIS SPECIAL LITTLE ARK AND HAD THE PRESENCE OF MIND TO SECURE HIS OWN MOTHER TO NURSE HIM FOR PHARAOH’S DAUGHTER (2:4–8), THERE CAN BE NO ABSOLUTE CERTAINTY OF THAT IDENTIFICATION (SEE COMMENTS ON 2:4FF.). SHE IS CALLED HERE “MIRIAM THE PROPHETESS, AARON’S SISTER,” A DESCRIPTION THAT BEGS THE QUESTION, WHY NOT CALL HER MOSES’ SISTER? THE ANSWER WOULD APPEAR TO BE THAT MOSES USED PROPER MODESTY IN INTRODUCING HER OFFICIALLY AND CULTURALLY CORRECTLY HERE, LINKING HER TO THE OLDEST LIVING MALE IN HER FAMILY, AARON, WHO WAS THREE YEARS OLDER THAN MOSES AND THUS THE PROPER PERSON TO BE MENTIONED. FOR MIRIAM TO BE CALLED A PROPHETESS MAY MEAN THAT SHE HAD ALREADY DISTINGUISHED HERSELF IN THE FAITHFUL EXPRESSION OF GOD’S VERBAL WILL TO SOME GROUP WITHIN, IF NOT ALL OF, THE ISRAELITES, UNLESS IT REFERS BACK FROM THE POINT OF MOSES’ WRITING EXODUS SPECIFICALLY TO MIRIAM’S PRESENT FUNCTION, THAT OF CONVEYING THE WORD OF GOD THROUGH SONG. SEVERAL OTHER GODLY WOMEN BEAR THIS SAME TITLE “PROPHETESS” IN THE OLD TESTAMENT (OR ITS GREEK EQUIVALENT IN THE NT): DEBORAH (JUDG. 4:4), HULDAH (2 KGS 22:14), ISAIAH’S WIFE (ISA 8:3), AND ANNA (LUKE 2:36); A COUPLE OF NOT-SO-GODLY WOMEN DO AS WELL (NOADIAH IN NEH. 6:14 AND “JEZEBEL” IN REV 2:20). MICAH CONFIRMS MIRIAM’S LEADERSHIP ROLE IN THE EXODUS (MIC 6:4), WHICH, ON THE ANALOGY OF HOW MOSES AND AARON EXERCISED THEIR LEADERSHIP AND HOW PROPHETS IN GENERAL DO SO, WOULD HAVE MEANT THAT SHE RECEIVED INSTRUCTIVE WORDS FROM GOD TO RELAY TO THE PEOPLE AS A WAY OF GUIDING THEM. WE DO NOT KNOW WHAT THESE WERE APART FROM THE PRESENT CONTEXT ANY MORE THAN WE KNOW WHAT SORTS OF PROPHETIC ORACLES, SAY, HULDAH MAY HAVE UTTERED OVER TIME TO MAKE HER THE PROPHET OF CHOICE FOR KING JOSIAH TO CONSULT IN THE CRISIS OF 2 KGS 22:11–20. NEVERTHELESS, THE LEADERSHIP OF THE EXODUS IS CLEARLY A FAMILY AFFAIR, AS CONFIRMED ALSO BY THE SPECIFIC MENTION OF THE DEATH AND BURIAL OF MIRIAM (NUM 20:1), AN HONORABLE SORT OF MENTION ACCORDED OTHERWISE ONLY TO MOSES (DEUT. 34:5–6) AND AARON (NUM 20:28; DEUT. 10:6; 32:50). MIRIAM’S ROLE AS LEADING MUSICIAN-SINGER (“TOOK A TAMBOURINE IN HER HAND, AND ALL THE WOMEN FOLLOWED HER, WITH TAMBOURINES AND DANCING”) COMPORTS WITH WHAT WE KNOW OF THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE PRESERVATION AND DISSEMINATION VIA MUSIC OF THE CULTURAL VALUES OF THE ANCIENT WORLD. SOME OLD TESTAMENT PASSAGES MENTION WOMEN SINGING AND PLAYING TAMBOURINES AT OCCASIONS OF VICTORY OVER ENEMIES (JUDG. 11:34; 1 SAM 18:6; CF. JER. 31:4) OR OTHER SORTS OF CELEBRATIONS (PS 68:25), BUT THIS ALSO WAS SOMETHING MEN COULD DO JUST AS COMMONLY (1 SAM 10:5; 2 SAM 6:5) AND THAT MUST AS WELL HAVE BEEN DONE OFTEN BY MIXED GROUPS (E.G., JUDG. 5:1; 2 SAM 19:35; 2 CHR. 35:25; EZRA 2:65; NEH. 7:67; ECCL 2:8; GEN 31:27; JOB 21:12; CF. PS 68:25). THE PRESERVATION OF HISTORICAL EVENTS THROUGH SONG WAS AN EXPECTATION OF ANCIENT CULTURE (JUDG. 5:1, 11; NUM 21:17; 1 SAM 21:11; 2 SAM 1:17–27; 3:33; 22:1). MIRIAM TAUGHT THE SONG TO “ALL THE WOMEN” BY SINGING IT TO THEM, THE WAY SONGS HAVE ALWAYS BEEN TAUGHT IN ALL CULTURES, EVEN TODAY WHEN SONGS CAN ALSO BE LEARNED BY READING FROM WRITTEN MUSICAL NOTATION. THE QUOTATION OF 15:1 HERE IN V. 21 BY MIRIAM IS SIMPLY A WAY OF SAYING THAT SHE TAUGHT THE ISRAELITE WOMEN THE ENTIRE SONG, NOT JUST THE OPENING WORDS CITED IN V. 21. VERSE 21 CONTAINS THE INCIPIT TITLE OF THE SONG—THE FIRST FEW WORDS OR THE FIRST COUPLET OF THE SONG. CITING THE INCIPIT APPARENTLY WAS THE MOST COMMON METHOD OF TITLING SONGS IN ANCIENT ISRAEL,117 AS ALSO IN MOST OF HISTORY UNTIL MODERN TIMES. MOSES HAD AUTHORED THIS GREAT VICTORY SONG; MIRIAM NOW POPULARIZED IT AMONG ALL THE WOMEN SO THAT IT WOULD BE KNOWN AND SUNG IN EVERY FAMILY, EVERY HOME. THE RESULT WAS THAT EVERY ISRAELITE, WHETHER DESCENDED FROM ABRAHAM OR NEWLY JOINED TO THE NATION (12:38) WOULD KNOW BY HEART THE STORY OF THE GREAT DIVINE DELIVERANCE OF GOD’S PEOPLE AT THE SEA.**

**GRUMBLING BEGINS: WATER AT MARAH AND ELIM AND GOD’S PROMISE OF HEALING (15:22–27)**

**22 THEN MOSES LED ISRAEL FROM THE RED SEA AND THEY WENT INTO THE DESERT OF SHUR. FOR THREE DAYS THEY TRAVELED IN THE DESERT WITHOUT FINDING WATER. 23 WHEN THEY CAME TO MARAH, THEY COULD NOT DRINK ITS WATER BECAUSE IT WAS BITTER. (THAT IS WHY THE PLACE IS CALLED MARAH.) 24 SO THE PEOPLE GRUMBLED AGAINST MOSES, SAYING, “WHAT ARE WE TO DRINK?” 25 THEN MOSES CRIED OUT TO THE LORD, AND THE LORD SHOWED HIM A PIECE OF WOOD. HE THREW IT INTO THE WATER, AND THE WATER BECAME SWEET. THERE THE LORD MADE A DECREE AND A LAW FOR THEM, AND THERE HE TESTED THEM. 26 HE SAID, “IF YOU LISTEN CAREFULLY TO THE VOICE OF THE LORD YOUR GOD AND DO WHAT IS RIGHT IN HIS EYES, IF YOU PAY ATTENTION TO HIS COMMANDS AND KEEP ALL HIS DECREES, I WILL NOT BRING ON YOU ANY OF THE DISEASES I BROUGHT ON THE EGYPTIANS, FOR I AM THE LORD, WHO HEALS YOU.” 27 THEN THEY CAME TO ELIM, WHERE THERE WERE TWELVE SPRINGS AND SEVENTY PALM TREES, AND THEY CAMPED THERE NEAR THE WATER. AFTER THE FIRST GREAT VICTORY CAME THE FIRST BIG TEST. THE ISRAELITES DID NOT PASS IT EASILY. WHEN CIRCUMSTANCES SEEMED THREATENING, THEY QUICKLY FORGOT THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE DELIVERANCES THEY HAD RECENTLY EXPERIENCED (TEN PLAGUES AND THE DROWNING OF THE EGYPTIANS AT THE SEA) AND COMPLAINED. GOD USED THE OCCASION OF THEIR COMPLAINING TO TEST THEM AND TEACH THEM ABOUT TRUSTING HIM ENOUGH TO OBEY HIM AND THUS ENJOY HIS BENEFITS. THE DEGREE TO WHICH THEY FAILED TO ACCEPT AND LEARN FROM THAT TESTING AND TEACHING IS NOT DESCRIBED IN THE PRESENT PASSAGE BUT HAS ITS OUTWORKING IN THE IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING EPISODES IN THE NARRATIVE (16:1–30; 17:1–7). 15:22–24 ONCE ACROSS THE RED SEA, THE ISRAELITES WENT TO SHUR. THIS IS A VAST, RUGGED, AND SPARSELY POPULATED WILDERNESS REGION IN THE NORTHERN SINAI, STRETCHING FROM WHAT IN MODERN TIMES IS THE EASTERN SIDE OF THE SUEZ CANAL TO THE NEGEV OF ISRAEL. IT WAS PAST THE BOUNDARY FORTIFICATIONS THE EGYPTIANS HAD BUILT TO PROTECT EGYPT PROPER AND THUS REPRESENTED FREEDOM FROM THE LIKELIHOOD OF ANY FURTHER EGYPTIAN PURSUIT. ONE OF THE DEMANDS THE ISRAELITES HAD ALL ALONG SOUGHT FROM THE EGYPTIANS, TO GO “INTO THE WILDERNESS,” WAS NOW A REALITY. MUCH REMAINED, HOWEVER, BEFORE THE SECOND PART OF THEIR DEMAND, TO SERVE STEPHEN YAHWEH, WOULD BE ACCOMPLISHED. THEY THEN TRAVELED “FOR THREE DAYS … WITHOUT FINDING WATER.” PRESUMABLY THEY WERE HEADING SOUTH, TOWARD SINAI, ALONG ONE OF THE ANCIENT CARAVAN ROUTES THAT OFFERED REASONABLE PASSAGE ON FOOT FOR CARAVANEERS WHO BROUGHT AMPLE WATER SUPPLIES WITH THEM BUT THAT CERTAINLY WAS NOT LAID OUT TO GET A LARGE HOST OF PEOPLE TO THE NEAREST WATERING PLACE. FROM A HUMAN POINT OF VIEW, IT IS ENTIRELY UNDERSTANDABLE THAT THE ISRAELITES WOULD HAVE BEGUN TO WORRY ABOUT WATER BY THE THIRD DAY WITHOUT FINDING ANY. THEY AND THEIR ANIMALS PROBABLY HAD CONSUMED NEARLY ALL THE WATER THEY HAD CARRIED WITH THEM IN SKINS, AND IT IS NOT INCONCEIVABLE THAT AS THEY APPROACHED MARAH IN EXPECTATION OF BEING ABLE TO DRINK ALL THEY WANTED, MANY OF THEM DRANK THEIR LAST WATER AND/OR GAVE IT TO THE ANIMALS. ACCORDINGLY, FINDING FOUL WATER AT MARAH WAS NOT MERELY A DISAPPOINTMENT BUT A CAUSE OF PANIC. “BITTER” WATER (MĀRĀH MEANS “BITTER” IN HB.) IS OFTEN CLEAR SO THAT IT LOOKS POTABLE BUT IN FACT CONTAINS LARGE PERCENTAGES OF DISSOLVED MINERAL SALTS THAT RENDER IT UNDRINKABLE. THIRSTY PEOPLE AND ANIMALS WILL TRY TO DRINK ANY WATER THEY FIND, BUT IF THEY FIND IT SIMPLY OFFENSIVE, THEY WILL RESIST ANY CONSUMPTION UNLESS DELIRIOUS WITH THIRST. THE ISRAELITES MAY NOT YET HAVE BEEN AT THE DELIRIOUS STAGE, BUT THEY CERTAINLY WERE NOT HAPPY ABOUT WHAT THEY ENCOUNTERED AT MARAH. THIS REPRESENTED A TEST OF FAITH OF A SORT THEY HAD NOT BEFORE EXPERIENCED. IT BORE SOME RESEMBLANCE TO WHAT THE EGYPTIANS HAD TO DEAL WITH WHEN THE NILE WAS TURNED TO BLOOD (7:14–24), BUT THAT WAS A PROBLEM ALLEVIATED BY DIGGING TEMPORARY WELLS. SOME ISRAELITES MAY EVEN HAVE TRIED TO DIG AROUND THE EDGES OF THE WATER AT MARAH, PRESUMABLY WITHOUT SUCCESS. THEIR QUESTION, “WHAT ARE WE TO DRINK?” WAS NOT IN ITSELF OUTRAGEOUS OR EVEN UNFAIR. THEIR SIN MANIFESTED ITSELF RATHER IN THEIR ATTITUDE, WHICH IS SUGGESTED IN THE STATEMENT AT THE BEGINNING OF V. 24, “SO THE PEOPLE GRUMBLED AGAINST MOSES.” MOSES WAS, OF COURSE, GOD’S HUMAN REPRESENTATIVE AMONG THEM AND A LIKELY TARGET FOR BLAME. WHAT IS NOTEWORTHY, HOWEVER, IS THAT THE PEOPLE WERE FOLLOWING THE PILLAR OF CLOUD AND THEREFORE KNEW PERFECTLY WELL THAT IT IS STEPHEN YAHWEH WHO HAD LED THEM TO THIS LOCATION. BUT SINCE MOSES IS THE LORD’S SPOKESMAN, THEY EXPECTED THE ANSWER TO THEIR COMPLAINT TO COME FROM HIM. THE PEOPLE DID NOT HAVE WHAT THEY HAD EXPECTED AND FAILED TO TRUST GOD TO PROVIDE IT. SINCE THE GARDEN OF EDEN THAT HAS BEEN A FORMULA FOR DISOBEDIENCE. 15:25A YET ANOTHER MIRACULOUS SIGN IS DESCRIBED HERE, AND IN JUST HALF A VERSE. THIS SUPERNATURAL DEMONSTRATION OF GOD’S PRESENCE AND PROVISION IS NOT NOTABLY DIFFERENT IN KIND FROM THE DEMONSTRATIONS EARLIER USED BY MOSES TO CONVINCE THE ELDERS OF ISRAEL AND THEN THE PEOPLE IN GENERAL THAT HE HAD BEEN SENT FROM GOD. MOSES NEEDED SOMETHING TO ASSURE THE PEOPLE THAT ALL WAS WELL; GOD TOLD HIM WHAT TO DO, AND WHEN HE DID IT, GOD’S CARE IS DEMONSTRATED. SPECULATION ABOUT HOW A TREE [NIV: PIECE OF WOOD] COULD ELIMINATE MINERAL SALTS FROM A LARGE BODY OF WATER IS JUST AS FRUITLESS AS SPECULATION ABOUT HOW THE NILE COULD TURN TO BLOOD OR HOW A STAFF [ROD OR WAND] COULD TURN INTO A SNAKE AND BACK AGAIN: IT WAS A SUPERNATURAL, NOT A NATURAL EVENT; A MIRACLE, NOT A PRESCIENTIFIC APPLICATION OF A NATURAL REMEDY. NOTHING IN THE TEXT SUGGESTS THAT THE TREE SYMBOLIZED ANYTHING IN PARTICULAR (SUCH AS THE TREE OF LIFE OR THE LIKE). RATHER, MOSES’ FAITH IN BEING WILLING TO DO WHAT GOD COMMANDED HIM, WITHOUT UNDERSTANDING WHY OR HOW IT WOULD WORK, IS WHAT IS IMPLICITLY COMMENDED HERE. 15:25B–26 VERSE 25B, “THERE THE LORD MADE A DECREE AND A LAW FOR THEM, AND THERE HE TESTED THEM,” IS BOTH PREDICTIVE OF WHAT WAS COMING AND RESUMPTIVE OF WHAT HAD OCCURRED. IT COULD AS WELL BE TRANSLATED: “THERE HE MADE FOR THEM A STATUTE, THAT IS, A RULE, BECAUSE THERE HE HAD TESTED THEM.” IN OTHER WORDS, THE TESTING WAS ALREADY PAST—IT WAS THE LEADING OF THE PEOPLE TO A PLACE WHERE THE WATER WAS NO GOOD. THE STATUTE/RULE [NIV “DECREE … LAW”] WOULD IMMEDIATELY FOLLOW AS THE CONTENT OF V. 26. THE NIV WORDING “A DECREE AND A LAW” DOES NOT REFER TO TWO THINGS BUT TO ONE; THIS IS A CLASSIC CASE OF HENDIADYS, THE EXPRESSION OF A SINGLE CONCEPT BY TWO OR MORE WORDS USED IN GRAMMATICAL PARALLEL. AS IN A FEW OTHER INSTANCES PRIOR TO THE FORMAL ESTABLISHMENT OF COVENANT LAW BEGINNING IN CHAP. 20, GOD GAVE A LAW INTENDED TO PROVIDE A GENERAL UNDERSTANDING FOR HIS PEOPLE OF HIS POLICIES AND PRINCIPLES. WHAT V. 26 CALLED FOR WAS LOYALTY AND OBEDIENCE: LOYALTY IN THE SENSE OF A WILLINGNESS TO PAY CLOSE ATTENTION TO WHAT GOD’S WILL IS AND TO WANT ABOVE ALL ELSE TO PLEASE HIM BY DOING WHAT HE THINKS IS RIGHT (“LISTEN CAREFULLY TO THE VOICE OF THE LORD YOUR GOD AND DO WHAT IS RIGHT IN HIS EYES”—ALSO A HENDIADYS, A WAY OF ENSURING CLARITY BY MAKING THE SAME POINT TWICE WITH DIFFERENT WORDINGS) AND OBEDIENCE BY NOT FAILING TO “PAY ATTENTION TO ALL HIS COMMANDS AND KEEP ALL HIS DECREES” (ANOTHER HENDIADYS—ONE CONCEPT STATED WITH TWO DIFFERENT WORDINGS). GOD’S EXPECTATION IS SWEEPING. HIS PEOPLE MUST GIVE HIM FULL, NOT PARTIAL, LOYALTY AND OBEDIENCE. IF HE WANTED IT, THEY WERE TO DO IT. WHAT ADVANTAGE CAME FROM SUCH LOYALTY AND OBEDIENCE? PERFECT DIVINE PROTECTION. THE PROMISE OF V. 26, “I WILL NOT BRING ON YOU ANY OF THE DISEASES I BROUGHT ON THE EGYPTIANS, FOR I AM THE LORD, WHO HEALS YOU,” HOWEVER, OFTEN HAS BEEN MISUNDERSTOOD, TAKEN AS IF IT WERE A GENERAL GUARANTEE THAT FAITHFUL BELIEVERS CANNOT GET SICK OR THAT IF THEY DO, THEY WILL ALWAYS BE HEALED IN THIS LIFE. PART OF THE TENDENCY TO MISUNDERSTANDING COMES FROM TRANSLATION CHOICES. THE BEST TRANSLATION OF THESE SENTENCES PROBABLY WOULD BE: “ANY ILLNESS I BROUGHT ON THE EGYPTIANS I WILL NOT BRING ON YOU. FOR I AM [STEPHEN] YAHWEH, YOUR DOCTOR.” THE PROMISE HERE WAS NOT THAT STEPHEN YAHWEH WOULD NEVER ALLOW THOSE WHO PLACE THEIR FAITH IN HIM TO GET SICK. IT WAS THAT THE ISRAELITES WOULD BE FREE FROM HAVING TO WORRY ABOUT THE PLAGUES. GOD AVERRED THAT HE WOULD NOT BECOME ANGRY AT THEM IN SUCH A WAY AS TO SUBJECT THEM TO THE MISERIES HE HAD SUBJECTED THE EGYPTIANS TO—IF THEY WERE INDEED LOYAL AND OBEDIENT. HIS PROMISE TO SERVE AS THEIR DOCTOR/HEALER ALSO WAS NOT A PROMISE THAT IF ANYONE AMONG THEM EVER GOT SICK HE WOULD IMMEDIATELY HEAL THAT PERSON. IT WAS INSTEAD AN ASSERTION THAT IT WAS TO HIM THEY MUST TURN FOR HEALING IF THEY FOUND THEMSELVES AFFLICTED AS A RESULT OF SIN. THE STORY OF THE HEALING FROM SNAKEBITES IN NUM 21:1–9 IS EXACTLY THE SORT OF SITUATION ENVISIONED IN THESE WORDS. 15:27 MARAH WAS A PLACE TO DRINK BUT NOT TO ENCAMP. THE ISRAELITES ACTUALLY CAMPED FURTHER ON, AT ELIM, WHICH IS DESCRIBED AS HAVING ABUNDANT WATER (“TWELVE SPRINGS”) AND BEING WOODED (“SEVENTY PALM TREES”). THE LOCATION OF ELIM IS, LIKE SO MANY OTHER PLACES MENTIONED IN MOSES’ ANCIENT NARRATIVE, UNCERTAIN; BUT ASSUMING THE PEOPLE CONTINUED TRAVELING SOUTHWARD TOWARD MOUNT SINAI, A REASONABLE CONJECTURE WOULD BE TO ASSOCIATE THE SPOT WITH THE WADI GHARANDEL, A RIVERBED IN SHUR THAT HAS PLENTY OF WATER AND TREES IN CERTAIN PLACES. ANY GROUNDWATER SOURCE OTHER THAN A DUG WELL MAY BE CALLED A “SPRING” (ʿAYIN), SO THE TWELVE SPRINGS MENTIONED HERE MAY HAVE BEEN TWELVE SEPARATE “WATER HOLES” AVAILABLE FOR DRINKING AND DRAWING WATER AND WATERING HERDS AT THAT TIME OF YEAR—EVEN IF ALL TWELVE HOLES WERE FED BY ONE MAIN SOURCE WHEN THE ISRAELITES FOUND THE PLACE OVER THREE THOUSAND YEARS AGO. THE NUMBER OF TREES MAY HAVE BEEN EXACTLY SEVENTY THEN, BUT THE SAME NUMBER COULD HARDLY BE EXPECTED ALL THESE YEARS LATER. ACCORDINGLY, THE IDENTIFICATION OF THE SPOT CANNOT BE MADE ON THE BASIS OF A PRECISE COUNT OF “SPRINGS” AND TREES IN MODERN TIMES.**

**MORE GRUMBLING: ABOUT FOOD (16:1–9)**

**1 THE WHOLE ISRAELITE COMMUNITY SET OUT FROM ELIM AND CAME TO THE DESERT OF SIN, WHICH IS BETWEEN ELIM AND SINAI, ON THE FIFTEENTH DAY OF THE SECOND MONTH AFTER THEY HAD COME OUT OF EGYPT. 2 IN THE DESERT THE WHOLE COMMUNITY GRUMBLED AGAINST MOSES AND AARON. 3 THE ISRAELITES SAID TO THEM, “IF ONLY WE HAD DIED BY THE LORD’S HAND IN EGYPT! THERE WE SAT AROUND POTS OF MEAT AND ATE ALL THE FOOD WE WANTED, BUT YOU HAVE BROUGHT US OUT INTO THIS DESERT TO STARVE THIS ENTIRE ASSEMBLY TO DEATH.” 4 THEN THE LORD SAID TO MOSES, “I WILL RAIN DOWN BREAD FROM HEAVEN FOR YOU. THE PEOPLE ARE TO GO OUT EACH DAY AND GATHER ENOUGH FOR THAT DAY. IN THIS WAY I WILL TEST THEM AND SEE WHETHER THEY WILL FOLLOW MY INSTRUCTIONS. 5 ON THE SIXTH DAY THEY ARE TO PREPARE WHAT THEY BRING IN, AND THAT IS TO BE TWICE AS MUCH AS THEY GATHER ON THE OTHER DAYS.” 6 SO MOSES AND AARON SAID TO ALL THE ISRAELITES, “IN THE EVENING YOU WILL KNOW THAT IT WAS THE LORD WHO BROUGHT YOU OUT OF EGYPT, 7 AND IN THE MORNING YOU WILL SEE THE GLORY OF THE LORD, BECAUSE HE HAS HEARD YOUR GRUMBLING AGAINST HIM. WHO ARE WE, THAT YOU SHOULD GRUMBLE AGAINST US?” 8 MOSES ALSO SAID, “YOU WILL KNOW THAT IT WAS THE LORD WHEN HE GIVES YOU MEAT TO EAT IN THE EVENING AND ALL THE BREAD YOU WANT IN THE MORNING, BECAUSE HE HAS HEARD YOUR GRUMBLING AGAINST HIM. WHO ARE WE? YOU ARE NOT GRUMBLING AGAINST US, BUT AGAINST THE LORD.” 9 THEN MOSES TOLD AARON, “SAY TO THE ENTIRE ISRAELITE COMMUNITY, ‘COME BEFORE THE LORD, FOR HE HAS HEARD YOUR GRUMBLING.’” AT MARAH THE GRUMBLING HAD BEEN ABOUT WATER. NOW, A LITTLE FARTHER ALONG AND AFTER GETTING PLENTY OF WATER AT ELIM, THE GRUMBLING WAS ABOUT FOOD. AND, AGAIN, FROM A HUMAN POINT OF VIEW THE ATTITUDE OF THE ISRAELITES IS UNDERSTANDABLE. AS THEY MOVED SOUTH TOWARD MOUNT SINAI, THEY LEFT ONE WILDERNESS (SHUR) FOR ANOTHER (SIN), AND AN ENTIRE MONTH HAD GONE BY. BUYING OR FINDING FOOD IN EITHER WILDERNESS WOULD HAVE BEEN EXTREMELY DIFFICULT, AND THE STORES THEY HAD BROUGHT WITH THEM WERE SURELY DEPLETED. IT WAS, OF COURSE, ANOTHER UNANNOUNCED, UNEXPLAINED TEST OF THEIR WILLINGNESS TO TRUST GOD. BUT THEY DID NOT KNOW THAT. HOW CAN HUMAN BEINGS ACCURATELY FIGURE OUT WHAT IS A TEST FROM GOD AND WHAT IS JUST A CIRCUMSTANCE THEY NEVER SHOULD HAVE GOTTEN THEMSELVES INTO? IN THE CASE OF THE ISRAELITES, THEY SHOULD HAVE BEEN ABLE TO SAY, “IF GOD IS VISIBLY LEADING US IN THE FORM OF THE PILLAR OF CLOUD, THEN WE’RE SUPPOSED TO BE HERE, AND OUR EXPERIENCE SO FAR TELLS US THAT HE’LL PROVIDE FOR US THIS TIME TOO.” BUT THE NEWNESS OF BEING WITHOUT FOOD, IN A NEW LOCATION, THE PAIN OF HUNGER IN THEIR STOMACHS, THE BLEATING OF THEIR ANIMALS, AND THE NATURAL HUMAN TENDENCY TO BE PESSIMISTIC WHEN IN PAIN ALL COMBINED TO CAUSE THEM TO GRUMBLE. A FURTHER FACTOR MAY HAVE BEEN THEIR SUCCESS WITH GRUMBLING AT MARAH. THERE A LITTLE GRUMBLING HAD PRODUCED GOOD WATER TO DRINK. SO NOW THAT FOOD WAS NEEDED, PERHAPS A LITTLE GRUMBLING WOULD AGAIN BE IN ORDER. IT WAS, HOWEVER, A SERIOUS BREACH OF FAITH TO GRUMBLE AGAINST THE LIVING GOD, AND THAT POINT MOSES MADE ELOQUENTLY IN V. 8 BY SAYING SIMPLY, “YOU ARE NOT GRUMBLING AGAINST US, BUT AGAINST THE LORD.” 16:1 ACCORDING TO NUM 33:10–11, PART OF THE PASSAGE WHERE MOSES PROVIDED HIS MOST SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF THE EXODUS AND WILDERNESS ITINERARY, THE ISRAELITES CAMPED ALONG THE SHORE OF THE RED SEA BETWEEN THE TIME THEY LEFT ELIM AND THE TIME THEY ENTERED THE WILDERNESS [NIV “DESERT”] OF SIN. ON THEIR JOURNEY SOUTHWARD THEY WERE THUS STAYING CLOSE TO THE EAST COAST OF THE RED SEA AND PROBABLY FOLLOWING RATHER CONSISTENTLY THE OLD ROAD THAT RAN SOUTHWARD ALONG THE EASTERN SIDE OF THE RED SEA THAT THE EGYPTIANS HAD USED FOR MINING COMMERCE. EGYPTIAN MINING WAS SEASONAL, LIMITED MAINLY TO JANUARY–MARCH. THE ISRAELITES WERE NOW USING THE ROAD IN MID TO LATE APRIL, SO THERE WAS LITTLE RISK OF HAVING THEIR POSITION BETRAYED BY TRAVELING EGYPTIAN MINERS. AT ANY RATE, THERE WAS REASON TO ASSUME THE EGYPTIANS WOULD NOT HAVE WANTED TO RISK ANOTHER DEBACLE BY LAUNCHING A SECOND PURSUIT OF THE ISRAELITES—WITH VIRTUALLY ALL CONDITIONS THE SAME EXCEPT THAT THE ISRAELITES WERE NOW MERELY ON THE OPPOSITE BANK OF THE RED SEA—EVEN IF THEY DID LEARN THEIR LOCATION FROM TRAVELERS HEADING TOWARD EGYPT FROM THE SINAI ON THE SAME ROAD. SINCE THE ISRAELITES LEFT EGYPT ON THE FIFTEENTH DAY OF THE FIRST MONTH OF THE YEAR (THE DAY AFTER THE FULL-MOON NIGHT WHEN THE TENTH PLAGUE/PASSOVER OCCURRED) AND ARRIVED AT THIS ENCAMPMENT “ON THE FIFTEENTH DAY OF THE SECOND MONTH,” MOSES BY THIS NOTATION BRINGS THE READER TO THE AWARENESS THAT EXACTLY ONE MONTH HAD PASSED SINCE THE EXODUS BEGAN. MOSES’ CALENDRICAL RECORD KEEPING HERE IS PARALLEL TO THAT ALREADY SEEN IN 12:51. 16:2–3 AGAIN GRUMBLING TOOK PLACE, AND MOSES NOTED THAT “THE WHOLE COMMUNITY” TOOK PART, SUGGESTING THAT THE PROBLEM OF NOT ENOUGH FOOD TO EAT HAD BEEN BUILDING STEADILY RATHER THAN HAVING COME ABOUT SUDDENLY AND THAT EVERYONE WAS AFFECTED TO SOME DEGREE, PERHAPS MOST OF THEM SERIOUSLY. FROM TIME TO TIME MOSES REMINDED THE READER THAT BOTH HE AND AARON WERE INVOLVED IN MANY OF THE EXODUS INCIDENTS, AND HIS INCLUSION OF AARON (“GRUMBLED AGAINST MOSES AND AARON”) HERE OVERTLY HIGHLIGHTS THAT FACT. AS THE ISRAELITES SAW THEMSELVES, THEIR FAMILIES, AND THEIR FLOCKS GROWING THINNER AND AS THEY SAW DAY AFTER DAY NO LIKELY SOURCE OF FOOD IN THE WILDERNESS IN WHICH THEY WERE TRAVELING, IT BECAME OBVIOUS TO THEM THAT THEY WERE GOING TO DIE UNLESS SOMETHING DRAMATIC HAPPENED TO REVERSE THEIR PLIGHT. THEIR MONTH’S JOURNEY HAD INVOLVED MUCH CARE AND EFFORT, WHICH NOW BEGAN TO LOOK TO THEM AS IF IT HAD ALL BEEN EXPENDED IN VAIN. SO ALTHOUGH THEIR WORDS WERE ESSENTIALLY RHETORICAL RATHER THAN LITERAL (THEY DIDN’T REALLY WISH THEY HAD DIED IN EGYPT AND DIDN’T WANT TO DIE IN THE WILDERNESS EITHER BUT WANTED SOMETHING DONE TO GIVE THEM FOOD TO EAT) THEY MADE A COMPARISON IN THEIR COMPLAINT BETWEEN THE SIMPLICITY OF DYING WHERE THEY WERE AND THE ABSURDITY OF GOING TO ALL THE TROUBLE THEY HAD GONE TO IN THE PAST MONTH AND THEN DYING ANYWAY. THIS WAS THE FIRST TIME THE ISRAELITES MADE THE “IF ONLY WE HAD DIED IN EGYPT ARGUMENT,” BUT IT WOULD NOT BE THE LAST (SEE NUM 11:4, 18; 14:2; CF. 20:3; JOSH 7:7). THEIR REFERENCE TO DYING “BY THE LORD’S HAND” RECALLS THE PLAGUES AND THE DESTRUCTION OF THE EGYPTIANS AT THE SEA—THEY HAD BEEN SPARED FROM ALL OF THOSE DANGERS BUT WERE NOW RHETORICALLY ARGUING THAT PERHAPS THEY WOULD HAVE BEEN BETTER OFF ELIMINATED BY A PLAGUE OR BY DROWNING. THEY CLAIMED THAT THEY HAD IN EGYPT “ALL THE FOOD” THEY WANTED, WHICH PROBABLY WAS AN EXAGGERATION, BUT NOT NECESSARILY BASELESS. NOTHING IN THE PRIOR ACCOUNT OF THE ISRAELITE SUFFERING UNDER EGYPTIAN OPPRESSION SUGGESTED A LACK OF FOOD. THE “POTS OF MEAT” THEY SAT AROUND HAD BEEN REAL, IF NOT ALWAYS A DAILY EXPERIENCE, SINCE THE ISRAELITES, AS SMALL AND LARGE CATTLE FARMERS ORIGINALLY AND RIGHT UP THROUGH THE TIME OF THE EXODUS, WERE ROUTINELY IN A POSITION TO HAVE MEAT TO EAT—PERHAPS CONSIDERABLY MORE THAN THE AVERAGE EGYPTIAN. REMEMBERING NOW WHAT THEY HAD CONVINCED THEMSELVES WERE THE GOOD OLD DAYS, THE PEOPLE VIEWED THE PAST DIFFERENTLY FROM HOW THEY VIEWED IT WHEN IT WAS HAPPENING. THE USE OF THE WORD “ASSEMBLY” (QĀHĀL) IN V. 3 REPRESENTS NOTHING MORE THAN A SYNONYM OF “COMMUNITY” (ʿĒDĀH) IN V. 1. 16:4–5 GOD’S PROVISION FOR THE ISRAELITES IMMEDIATELY ADDRESSED BOTH THEIR SHORT-TERM AND THEIR LONG-TERM NEED FOR FOOD. KNOWING THAT THEY WOULD BE SPENDING A LONG TIME IN THE WILDERNESS, HE HAD PREPARED FOR THEM NOT JUST A MEANS OF GETTING ENOUGH OF THE FOOD THEY WERE USED TO BUT SOMETHING FAR BETTER: “BREAD FROM HEAVEN.” MOREOVER, GOD WAS TEACHING THEM A CONCEPT: THAT HE WAS THEIR ULTIMATE PROVIDER, THE ONE WHO FROM HEAVEN GAVE THEM NOT NECESSARILY WHAT THEY EXPECTED BUT WHAT THEY REALLY NEEDED. THUS, HIS SATISFYING THEM WITH THE BREAD OF HEAVEN BECOMES A THEME OF SCRIPTURE THAT NOT ONLY REFERS TO THE MANNA DESCRIBED IN THIS ACCOUNT (CF. PS 105:40; NEH 9:15) BUT TO THE ULTIMATE PROVISION OF ETERNAL SUSTENANCE, CHRIST HIMSELF (JOHN 6:31–58). THIS GREAT GIFT ALSO INVOLVED A TEST. THE NIV TRANSLATION OF THE END OF V. 4 OBSCURES THE POINT OF GOD’S STATEMENT. IT SHOULD BE TRANSLATED “SO THAT I CAN TEST THEM TO SEE WHETHER OR NOT THEY WILL WALK BY MY LAW.” IN OTHER WORDS, THE PEOPLE’S WILLINGNESS TO OBEY THE MANNA-GATHERING LAW (TÔRĀH) WOULD SHOW GOD WHETHER OR NOT THEY WOULD BE INCLINED TO KEEP HIS COVENANT LAW (TÔRĀH) AS REVEALED AT MOUNT SINAI. IT WAS NOT JUST A TEST TO SEE IF THEY COULD FOLLOW INSTRUCTIONS BUT A TEST TO SEE IF THEIR HEARTS WERE INCLINED TO BE HIS COVENANT PEOPLE. THE TEST ITSELF REQUIRED FAITH FOR AN AGRICULTURAL PEOPLE. FARMERS KNOW THAT IF ONE HARVESTS ONLY ENOUGH FOOD IN A DAY TO MEET THE NEEDS OF THAT DAY, EVENTUALLY ONE HAS NO FOOD BECAUSE NO CROPS OR ANIMALS PRODUCE FOOD EVERY DAY. NOW THEY WERE BEING ASKED TO RESTRAIN THEIR NATURAL TENDENCY TO GATHER AS MUCH AS WAS AVAILABLE TO GATHER IN ANTICIPATION OF THE TIME WHEN NO GATHERING WOULD BE POSSIBLE. GOD IS TEACHING THEM TO TRUST HIM EVERY DAY AFRESH, AND THEY WERE CHALLENGED TO THINK ABOUT HIS PROVISION IN A WAY THAT HAD NEVER BEFORE BEEN PART OF THEIR PLANNING PATTERN. VERSE 5 SHOULD READ, “ON THE SIXTH DAY, WHEN THEY PREPARE WHAT THEY BRING IN, IT WILL BE TWICE AS MUCH AS THEY HAVE BEEN GATHERING EACH DAY.” IN OTHER WORDS, AS THEY WERE OUT COLLECTING THEIR MANNA ON THE DAY BEFORE THE SABBATH AND MADE THEIR PREPARATIONS AS TO HOW MUCH TO BRING BACK WITH THEM TO THEIR HOMES, THEY SHOULD PLAN ON TWICE AS MUCH AS WOULD BE USUAL ON ANY OF THE OTHER GATHERING DAYS. THIS RULE LOOKS BOTH FORWARD AND BACKWARD IN TESTING ISRAEL’S FAITH IN GOD’S PROVISION. IT LOOKS BACKWARD TO THE CREATION ACCOUNT, WHICH SPECIFIES THAT GOD HIMSELF RESTED ON THE SEVENTH DAY; IT LOOKS FORWARD TO THE REVELATION OF THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT, ESTABLISHING SABBATH OBSERVANCE AS PART OF THE COVENANT, A COMMANDMENT WHICH ITSELF LOOKS BACK TO THE CREATION ORDER. THE RESULTING ARRANGEMENT PROVIDED A WEEKLY OPPORTUNITY FOR THE EMERGING ISRAELITE COMMUNITY TO BE TESTED BY GOD AND TO LEARN ABOUT HIS FAITHFUL PROVISION. EVERY SIXTH DAY THEY WOULD HAVE TO DISCIPLINE THEMSELVES TO GATHER TWICE THE USUAL AMOUNT OF MANNA BUT ONLY THAT MUCH. EVERY SABBATH THEY HAD TO TRUST THAT WHEN THEY WOKE UP, THERE WOULD BE ENOUGH MANNA LEFT TO EAT AND THAT IT WOULD NOT HAVE SPOILED OVERNIGHT AS IT MIGHT ON OTHER DAYS. THUS EACH WEEK THEY WOULD SEE HOW GOD PROVIDED FOR THEM, IN A MANNER COUNTERINTUITIVE TO THEIR NORMAL SENSE OF HOW TO GATHER AND STORE FOOD, AND GOD COULD SEE HOW THEY WERE DOING IN LEARNING TO OBEY HIM IN ADVANCE OF HIS GIVING THEM HIS FULL COVENANT LAW OVER MANY MONTHS FOLLOWING THE ENCAMPMENT AT SINAI. 16:6–8 MOSES AND AARON WERE PROPHESYING HERE, NOT MERELY MAKING A PREDICTION BASED ON HUMAN REASONING. AS IN EARLIER INSTANCES AND AS WOULD BE COMMON AMONG THE WRITING PROPHETS, THEY REFERRED TO THE CONCEPT OF BEING REMINDED BY THE FULFILLMENT OF THE DIVINE WORD THAT THE PEOPLE SHOULD “KNOW THAT IT WAS THE LORD WHO BROUGHT YOU OUT OF EGYPT.” THIS IS THE SORT OF THING THAT PEOPLE LIVING IN A THOROUGHLY POLYTHEISTIC, SYNCRETISTIC SOCIETY NEEDED TO HEAR OFTEN, AND IT IS NO SURPRISE THAT THE EXODUS ISRAELITES HEARD IT OFTEN. THERE IS ONLY ONE STEPHEN YAHWEH, HE IS THE ONLY REAL GOD, AND IT IS HE—NOT ANY OTHER GOD OR FORCE OR FACTOR—WHO BROUGHT THE ISRAELITES OUT OF EGYPT. THIS, HIS MIRACULOUS PROVISION OF FOOD FOR THEM AFTER THEY LEFT EGYPT, SHOULD HAVE REMINDED THEM OF WHO HE IS AND HOW HE CONTINUED TO PROVIDE FOR THEM. HE IS THE SAME, THE ONLY GOD WHO BROUGHT THEM OUT OF EGYPT AND NOW CONTINUED TO BE THEIR (IF THEY GOT THE POINT, ONE AND ONLY) GOD. IN VV. 6–7 AN EVENING-MORNING PATTERN IS PREDICTED, RECALLING AGAIN THE GEN 1 CREATION ACCOUNT WITH ITS EVENING-MORNING FORMAT OF THE DAYS OF CREATION. AS PROPHETS, MOSES AND AARON WERE REPRESENTING GOD, SPEAKING FOR HIM AND NOT SERVING IN THEIR OWN AUTHORITY, SO THEY TWICE EMPHASIZED THAT THE GRUMBLING OF THE PEOPLE REPRESENTED THE PEOPLE’S CONCERN WITH GOD, NOT THEM (“WHO ARE WE, THAT YOU SHOULD GRUMBLE AGAINST US?” V. 7; “WHO ARE WE? YOU ARE NOT GRUMBLING AGAINST US, BUT AGAINST THE LORD,” V. 8).143 IN V. 8 THE EVENING-MORNING PATTERN APPEARS AGAIN, THIS TIME WITH MORE SPECIFICITY AS TO WHAT WOULD HAPPEN AT THE RESPECTIVE TIMES: AT EVENING MEAT WOULD COME; AT MORNING IT WOULD BE BREAD. THE NIV TRANSLATION OF V. 8 CAN MAKE THE VERSE SEEM AS IF MOSES WERE SAYING THAT ALTHOUGH SOME MEAT WOULD BE SUPPLIED, ONLY THE BREAD WOULD BE TRULY ABUNDANT (“MEAT TO EAT IN THE EVENING AND ALL THE BREAD YOU WANT IN THE MORNING”). THIS IS SIMPLY A MISTRANSLATION. MOSES’ STATEMENT SHOULD READ, “WHEN THE LORD GIVES YOU MEAT TO EAT IN THE EVENING AND BREAD IN THE MORNING, TO SATISFY YOU” (I.E., BOTH THE MEAT AND THE BREAD WOULD SATISFY THE ISRAELITE APPETITES). 16:9 MOSES CONTINUED SPEAKING AS A PROPHET AND THIS TIME OVERTLY SPOKE THROUGH AARON TO THE PEOPLE IN THE MANNER OF THE ENCOURAGING INSTRUCTION OF 4:15–16, WHICH WAS INTENDED ESPECIALLY FOR THOSE OCCASIONS WHEN MOSES MIGHT BE OTHERWISE INTIMIDATED OR RELUCTANT TO FACE THE PEOPLE’S OPPOSITION. SINCE THIS ENCOUNTER WITH THE PEOPLE REPRESENTS THE MOST SERIOUS OPPOSITION TO MOSES’ AND AARON’S LEADERSHIP SINCE THE VERBAL ATTACK BY THE ISRAELITE FOREMEN IN 5:19–21, SO IT SHOULD BE NO SURPRISE THAT MOSES REVERTED TO THIS “PROTECTIVE” COMMUNICATION STYLE. MOSES REQUIRED “THE ENTIRE ISRAELITE COMMUNITY TO COME BEFORE THE LORD,” WHICH SUGGESTS THAT ALL OR VIRTUALLY ALL THE PEOPLE HAD JOINED IN THE COMPLAINING ABOUT LACK OF FOOD. TO “COME BEFORE THE LORD” MEANS TO GATHER TO WHATEVER PLACE OR OBJECT REPRESENTS STEPHEN YAHWEH’S PRESENCE AMONG THEM. AT THIS POINT IN THEIR HISTORY, IT WAS THE PILLAR OF CLOUD. THEY MUST GO RIGHT UP TO IT AND THUS SHOW THEY WERE READY FOR A MEETING WITH STEPHEN YAHWEH DIRECTLY, NOT JUST THROUGH HIS INTERMEDIARIES, MOSES AND AARON. “HE HAS HEARD YOUR GRUMBLING” DOES NOT REFER TO GOD’S ABILITY TO PERCEIVE WHAT THE PEOPLE WERE THINKING AND SAYING; IN HIS OMNISCIENCE HE WOULD ALWAYS KNOW THAT. IT IS, RATHER, AN IDIOM FOR “PAYING ATTENTION TO AND PLANNING TO RESPOND TO” SOMETHING.**

**GOD SENDS QUAIL AND MANNA FROM HEAVEN (16:10–36)**

**GOD IS TESTING HIS PEOPLE THROUGHOUT THE EXODUS EVENTS: LEADING THEM IN ODD DIRECTIONS WITHOUT FULLY EXPLAINING WHY (14:1–4), SURPRISING THEM WITH POTENTIALLY DESTRUCTIVE ENEMY ATTACKS EVEN AFTER THEY HAD LEFT EGYPT (14:10FF.; CF. 17:8FF.), REQUIRING THEM TO WALK INTO AND THROUGH DEEP OCEAN WATER (14:15FF.), AND TAKING THEM TO LOCATIONS THAT LACKED THE NECESSITIES OF LIFE (AS IN 15:23FF. AND 16:2FF.). ALL OF THESE CHALLENGES WERE PART OF A PLAN TO DEVELOP A PEOPLE’S WILLINGNESS TO TRUST HIM. EXPLAINING EVERYTHING IN ADVANCE WOULD HAVE RUN COUNTER TO THAT PLAN. IT WAS NECESSARY FOR ISRAEL TO LEARN FAITH WHILE CONFUSED, WHILE AFRAID, WHILE DESPERATE—NOT JUST IN THEORY BUT UNDER PRESSURE OF ACTUAL CONDITIONS WHERE SURVIVAL WAS UNCERTAIN AND FAITH WAS TESTED TO THE LIMIT. THE MANNA STORY REPRESENTS YET ANOTHER TESTING STORY: IT IS INTRODUCED AS SUCH (16:4) AND FEATURES DETAILS THAT DESCRIBE THE WAY AT LEAST SOME ISRAELITES FAILED THE TEST AT FIRST (16:20, 27–30). BECAUSE THE SCHEDULE FOR GATHERING THE MANNA SEEMED COUNTERINTUITIVE TO ANCIENT AGRARIANS, IT PROVIDED A WAY OF TESTING ISRAEL TO SEE IF THEY WOULD OBEY NOT ONLY THOSE COMMANDMENTS THAT MADE PERFECT SENSE TO THEM BUT ALSO THOSE THAT DID NOT. THE SAME SORT OF CHALLENGE EXISTS TODAY. IF PEOPLE THINK GOD DEMANDS A BEHAVIOR THAT RUNS AGAINST THEIR INTUITIVE SENSE OF WHAT IS RIGHT, OR PLEASURABLE, OR REASONABLE, OR JUST “NOT SO BAD” (SEX OUTSIDE OF MARRIAGE, E.G.), IT IS EASY FOR THEM NOT TO TAKE A COMMANDMENT SERIOUSLY, WHICH (ALTHOUGH FEW REALIZE IT) IS THE SAME AS NOT TAKING GOD SERIOUSLY. THIS CORRESPONDENCE OF NOT RESPECTING COMMANDMENTS AND NOT RESPECTING GOD EXPLAINS THE SEVERITY OF GOD’S REACTION WHEN HIS PEOPLE DO NOT DO WHAT HE TELLS THEM TO DO (16:28). THE MANNA STORY HERE IN CHAP. 16 IS A RATHER LONG NARRATIVE ACCOUNT, BUT ITS LENGTH IS APPROPRIATE WHEN ONE CONSIDERS THAT DURING THE WILDERNESS WANDERINGS THE ISRAELITES SAW THE SUPERNATURAL EVERY DAY (THE PILLAR OF CLOUD) AND ALSO EXPERIENCED THE MIRACULOUS EVERY DAY (MANNA AS MIRACULOUS PROVISION), WITH A DOUBLE MIRACLE EVERY WEEKEND (SEE COMMENTS ON 16:22–26). FORTY YEARS OF DAILY MIRACLES EARNED THE MANNA ACCOUNT A RIGHTFULLY LARGE PLACE IN THE STORY OF THE WILDERNESS, AND IT THEREFORE SHOULD NOT BE SURPRISING THAT GOD REQUIRED THAT A SAMPLE OF THE MANNA BE PLACED IN THE ARK, AS ONE OF ITS THREE SACRED CONTENTS (16:33–34). IT IS A SHAME THAT SUCH A WONDERFUL DIVINE PROVISION SHOULD HAVE COME ABOUT AS A RESULT OF FAITHLESS GRUMBLING ON THE PART OF THE PEOPLE. HOW MUCH BETTER IT WOULD HAVE BEEN HAD THE ISRAELITES PRAYED PATIENTLY AND TRUSTINGLY FOR GOD’S ANSWER TO THEIR LACK OF FOOD A MONTH INTO THEIR EXODUS JOURNEY. GRUMBLING IS HARDLY TO BE COMMENDED AND IS NOT IN ITSELF WORTHY OF REWARD. GOD, HOWEVER, STILL HEARD IT AND GRACIOUSLY RESPONDED—NOT IN KIND, THAT IS, WITH A POOR-QUALITY PROVISION SUITABLE FOR GRUMBLERS, BUT WITH A MIRACULOUS, TASTY, NUTRITIOUS, AND SUFFICIENT FOOD, EXACTLY WHAT HE WOULD HAVE SENT IF THEY HAD PRAYED FAITHFULLY IN THE FIRST PLACE. HIS GOODNESS TO HIS PEOPLE IS NOT DEPENDENT ON THEIR WILLINGNESS TO RESPECT HIM AS THEY OUGHT. THIS IS NOT TO SAY THAT RESPECT FOR GOD’S WILL IS IRRELEVANT TO HIS REWARDS, ONLY THAT HIS TEMPORAL, AS OPPOSED TO ETERNAL, REWARDS OFTEN DO NOT CORRELATE WITH OUR TEMPORAL BEHAVIOR.**

**GOD GRANTS MANNA IN RESPONSE TO THE GRUMBLING ABOUT FOOD (16:10–15A)**

**10 WHILE AARON WAS SPEAKING TO THE WHOLE ISRAELITE COMMUNITY, THEY LOOKED TOWARD THE DESERT, AND THERE WAS THE GLORY OF THE LORD APPEARING IN THE CLOUD. 11 THE LORD SAID TO MOSES, 12 “I HAVE HEARD THE GRUMBLING OF THE ISRAELITES. TELL THEM, ‘AT TWILIGHT YOU WILL EAT MEAT, AND IN THE MORNING, YOU WILL BE FILLED WITH BREAD. THEN YOU WILL KNOW THAT I AM THE LORD YOUR GOD.’” 13 THAT EVENING QUAIL CAME AND COVERED THE CAMP, AND IN THE MORNING, THERE WAS A LAYER OF DEW AROUND THE CAMP. 14 WHEN THE DEW WAS GONE, THIN FLAKES LIKE FROST ON THE GROUND APPEARED ON THE DESERT FLOOR. 15 WHEN THE ISRAELITES SAW IT, THEY SAID TO EACH OTHER, “WHAT IS IT?” FOR THEY DID NOT KNOW WHAT IT WAS.**

**16:10–12 GOD WASTED NO TIME IN MANIFESTING HIMSELF EVEN MORE DRAMATICALLY THAN THROUGH THE PILLAR OF CLOUD AS A LARGE VISIBLE OBJECT. HE SPECIALLY MANIFESTED HIS “GLORY” BY IMMEDIATELY “APPEARING IN THE CLOUD” WHILE AARON WAS STILL GIVING THEM THE INSTRUCTION ABOUT DRAWING NEAR TO GOD. GOD’S “GLORY” IS HIS IMPRESSIVENESS/AWESOMENESS, THE SENSE OF HIS DIVINE GREATNESS THAT MAY BE DIFFICULT TO DESCRIBE IN WORDS BUT THAT IS OFTEN FELT IN TERMS OF FEAR, AWE, AMAZEMENT, AND THE SENSE THAT ONE IS NOT IN THE PRESENCE OF ANYTHING THAT IS MERELY WORLDLY BUT SOMEONE WHO IS TRULY THE ESSENCE OF SUPERIORITY AND ETERNAL AUTHORITY, WORTHY OF WORSHIP AND ADORATION, AND DANGEROUS TO OPPOSE. WHILE GOD CANNOT BE SEEN, HE OFTEN LETS HIS GLORY BE SENSED. IN THIS CASE THE CLOUD MAY HAVE DISPLAYED A SORT OF BLINDING FIERY BRILLIANCE (AS IN 24:16–17) AND/OR A SMOKY OPAQUENESS (AS IN 40:35) THAT FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF VISIBILITY AT LEAST OVERWHELMED THOSE WHO ENCOUNTERED IT. THE ISRAELITES APPARENTLY HAD NO TROUBLE SENSING THAT GOD IS RIGHT AMONG THEM IN REAL POWER AND SUBSTANTIAL PRESENCE. WE POSSIBLY SHOULD UNDERSTAND THE VERSE TO IMPLY THAT GOD’S GLORY CAUSED THEM TO TURN AND LOOK AT THE CLOUD EVEN THOUGH THEY HAD BEEN FACING AARON BECAUSE IT WAS SO IMPRESSIVE THAT THEY SENSED IT EVEN WITH THEIR BACKS TURNED. THE LORD THEN SPOKE, ALMOST SURELY FROM THE CLOUD, ALTHOUGH THIS WAS NOT STATED EXPLICITLY, AND GRACIOUSLY ACKNOWLEDGED THAT HE HAD “HEARD” (WAS GOING TO RESPOND TO) THE GRUMBLING OF THE ISRAELITES AND WOULD GIVE THEM IN ONE TWELVE-HOUR PERIOD BOTH MEAT AND BREAD. AS WE HAVE ALREADY SUGGESTED AT 16:8, THERE WAS NO SKIMPING ON EITHER MEAT OR BREAD. RATHER, IN V. 12, WHICH LOCATES THE TERM ṢĀBAʿ (HAVE ONE’S FILL OF) WITH THE BREAD BUT NOT THE MEAT, IT IS THE RHETORICAL BALANCE OF THE SENTENCE THAT INDICATES FULLNESS IN EACH CASE (“YOU WILL EAT” IS PARALLELED BY “YOU WILL BE FILLED WITH,” THE IDEA BEING THAT THEY DIDN’T GET FILLED WITHOUT EATING, AND THEY DIDN’T EAT WITHOUT GETTING FILLED). THIS PROVISION WOULD HELP THEM UNDERSTAND WHO THEY WERE DEALING WITH (CF. V. 6). 16:13 THE ONLY MENTION OF QUAIL IN THE CHAPTER COMES IN THIS VERSE. IT IS BRIEF AND OBVIOUSLY OF SECONDARY IMPORTANCE TO THE MANNA BECAUSE THE QUAIL REPRESENTED A ONE-EVENING SUPPLY OF MEAT, WHEREAS THE MANNA WAS TO BE A DAILY OCCURRENCE FOR FORTY YEARS AND THE MORE IMPORTANT FOOD SUPPLY FOR THAT ENTIRE GENERATION OF ISRAELITES. IN ANCIENT TIMES MEAT WAS COOKED AND EATEN IMMEDIATELY UPON SLAUGHTERING BECAUSE THERE WAS VIRTUALLY NO MEANS OF PRESERVING IT AFTER THE ANIMAL FROM WHICH IT CAME WAS KILLED. THE QUAIL WOULD HAVE PROVIDED A WELL-APPRECIATED SINGLE EVENING MEAL FOR THE PEOPLE, RELIEVING THEM OF THEIR HUNGER; BUT THE MANNA WAS TO BE SOMETHING THAT WAS ALWAYS AVAILABLE FOR THEM AND A FOOD THAT, BY CONTRAST TO ANY MEAT, COULD ACTUALLY KEEP FOR TWO DAYS WHEN NECESSARY (16:5, 24) EVEN THOUGH IT NORMALLY MELTED AWAY VERY FAST IF NOT COLLECTED (16:21). IT ALSO MAY BE NOTED THAT GOD’S PLAN IS THAT THE MANNA SHOULD CONSTITUTE A MORNING FOOD SUPPLY, WHICH WOULD HAVE MEANT THAT THE PEOPLE WOULD HAVE TO WAIT UNTIL THE NEXT DAY FOR FOOD SINCE IT WAS STILL DAYTIME WHEN GOD GAVE THEM THEIR ANSWER. THUS, THE QUAIL REPRESENTED A SPECIAL ONE-TIME EVENING MEAL TO GIVE THEM IMMEDIATE RELIEF FROM HUNGER AND TIDE THEM OVER UNTIL THE PERMANENT, DAILY FOOD SUPPLY WOULD BEGIN. COULD GOD HAVE SUPPLIED THE MANNA BEFORE THEY EVEN GRUMBLED, BEFORE THEIR FOOD BROUGHT FROM EGYPT HAD RUN OUT? OF COURSE. BUT HOW WOULD THAT HAVE TAUGHT THEM THE SPECIAL SORT OF PATIENCE THAT HE KNEW THEY WOULD NEED TO EXERCISE IN THE FUTURE AS HIS PEOPLE WHEN THINGS GOT REALLY HARD? THAT THE QUAIL ARRIVED IN ABUNDANCE CAN BE INFERRED FROM THE STATEMENT THAT [THE QUAIL] “COVERED THE CAMP.” MOST PEOPLE MAY WELL HAVE BEEN ABLE TO CATCH AS MANY AS THEY DESIRED. AFTER THEY HAD EATEN AND GONE TO SLEEP, THE REGULAR NIGHTLY DESERT DEW CONDENSED ON THE GROUND, WHICH REMAINED THE NEXT MORNING. ACCORDING TO NUM 11:9, THE MANNA CAME DOWN AS WELL DURING THE NIGHT, SO THE DESCRIPTION HERE AND IN THE NEXT VERSE NEED NOT BE UNDERSTOOD TO MEAN THAT THE MANNA FOLLOWED THE DEW—ONLY THAT IT WAS VISIBLE WHEN THE DEW LIFTED. 16:14–15A ONCE THE DEW EVAPORATED, THE ISRAELITES SAW SOMETHING THEY HADN’T SEEN BEFORE AND WEREN’T EXPECTING TO FIND. THE DESCRIPTION CAN BE BEST TRANSLATED AS FOLLOWS: “THERE ON THE SURFACE OF THE WILDERNESS WAS A THIN, CRISP SUBSTANCE, THIN LIKE FROST ON THE GROUND.” IN OTHER WORDS, IT MAY NOT HAVE APPEARED IN “FLAKE” FORM AT ALL BUT PERHAPS IN SHEETS. IT MAY HAVE BEEN “FLAKY” IN THE WAY A PIE CRUST IS CALLED “FLAKY” BUT NOT NECESSARILY OCCURRING IN THE FORM OF SEPARATE, INDIVIDUAL FLAKES. IN OLD HEBREW/CANAANITE AT LEAST ONE BIFORM OF THE WORD FOR INTERROGATIVE “WHAT” WAS MĀN RATHER THAN THE LATER AND MORE COMMON MĀH, SO THE ISRAELITES’ QUESTION “WHAT IS IT?” (MĀN HÛʾ) BECAME EVENTUALLY ABBREVIATED INTO “WHAT?” (MĀN), AND THE NAME STUCK. THE USUAL “NATURAL” EXPLANATION FOR MANNA IS THAT IT WAS THE EXUDANT OF VARIOUS KINDS OF PLANT LICE THAT FEED ON THE SAP OF THE TAMARISK TREES THAT ARE ABUNDANT IN THE SINAI WILDERNESS. THIS EXPLANATION ASSUMES THAT THE ISRAELITES REMEMBERED THE LITTLE BITS OF SWEET-TASTING LICE EXUDANT FOUND NEAR TAMARISK TREES AND AS CENTURIES WENT BY BUILT THE MEMORY THROUGH FOLKLORE INTO A WHOLE FOOD SUPPLY NARRATIVE. THE TEXT SAYS NOTHING OF THE SORT BUT DESCRIBES A MASSIVE, COLLECTABLE, PERMANENT DAILY FOOD SOURCE FOR THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE.**

**MANNA GATHERING AND THE FIRST DISOBEDIENCE IN CONNECTION WITH IT (16:15B–20)**

**MOSES SAID TO THEM, “IT IS THE BREAD THE LORD HAS GIVEN YOU TO EAT. 16 THIS IS WHAT THE LORD HAS COMMANDED: ‘EACH ONE IS TO GATHER AS MUCH AS HE NEEDS. TAKE AN OMER FOR EACH PERSON YOU HAVE IN YOUR TENT.’” 17 THE ISRAELITES DID AS THEY WERE TOLD; SOME GATHERED MUCH, SOME LITTLE. 18 AND WHEN THEY MEASURED IT BY THE OMER, HE WHO GATHERED MUCH DID NOT HAVE TOO MUCH, AND HE WHO GATHERED LITTLE DID NOT HAVE TOO LITTLE. EACH ONE GATHERED AS MUCH AS HE NEEDED. 19 THEN MOSES SAID TO THEM, “NO ONE IS TO KEEP ANY OF IT UNTIL MORNING.” 20 HOWEVER, SOME OF THEM PAID NO ATTENTION TO MOSES; THEY KEPT PART OF IT UNTIL MORNING, BUT IT WAS FULL OF MAGGOTS AND BEGAN TO SMELL. SO, MOSES WAS ANGRY WITH THEM.**

**16:15B–16 THE MANNA WAS GOD’S BREAD, A DIVINE GIFT FOR THE SUSTENANCE OF THE PEOPLE IN THE WILDERNESS, NOT SOMETHING THAT COULD BE HARVESTED AT WILL IN ANY QUANTITY THAT HAPPENED TO BE DESIRED. THE AMOUNT OF PASSOVER GOAT OR LAMB MEAT WAS REGULATED SO THAT NO ONE COULD “PIG OUT” ON THE MEAL AND ALL WOULD HAVE A FAIR SHARE APPROPRIATE TO THEIR NEEDS (SEE ON 12:3–4, 10), AND THE PASSOVER UNLEAVENED BREAD HAD TO BE PREPARED CAREFULLY IN FAITHFULNESS TO ITS SYMBOLIC VALUE OR DIRE CONSEQUENCES WOULD RESULT (12:14–20). THE MANNA ALSO COULD NOT BE OVER-GATHERED OR OVEREATEN WITHOUT CONSEQUENCE. AN OMER WAS THE PRESCRIBED AMOUNT, SET BY GOD HIMSELF, FOR AN AVERAGE INDIVIDUAL PER DAY. THE OMER WAS EQUAL TO ABOUT TWO QUARTS, JUST ENOUGH OF RELATIVELY LIGHT, FLAKY FOOD FOR A PERSON PER DAY, ESPECIALLY SINCE SHARING WOULD OCCUR IN A HOUSEHOLD, ALLOWING SMALL CHILDREN PERMISSION TO EAT LESS AND LARGER ADULTS TO EAT MORE AS LONG AS THE AVERAGE WAS AN OMER PER PERSON. THE ISRAELITES LIVED IN TENTS DURING THEIR CONSTANTLY RELOCATING TIME IN THE WILDERNESS. THUS, ONE’S FAMILY WERE THOSE “YOU HAVE IN YOUR TENT.” BUT THE REFERENCES TO TENT CONTINUE LONG AFTER, INDICATING THAT THE FIRST GENERATION WAS SEEN AS THE PARADIGM GENERATION OF ISRAEL, SO THE “NATURAL” HOME FOR AN ISRAELITE WAS OR WAS REFERRED TO AS A TENT EVEN LONG AFTER THE ISRAELITES WERE SETTLED IN PERMANENT HOMES IN THE PROMISED LAND (CF. JUDG. 4:17–20; 2 SAM 20:1; 2 CHR. 10:16; JER. 30:18; HOS 9:6; MAL 2:12). 16:17–18 THESE VERSES MAY SEEM TO BE TELLING A MIRACLE STORY—THAT IS, NO MATTER WHAT ANYONE TRIED TO DO (GATHERING A LOT OR A LITTLE), IT ALL MIRACULOUSLY CAME OUT EXACTLY TO THE AMOUNT REQUIRED BY HIS APPETITE THAT DAY, OR THE LIKE. A MORE PRECISE TRANSLATION ELIMINATES THE POSSIBLE MISIMPRESSION: “THE ISRAELITES DID SO. SOME GATHERED MORE, SOME LESS. SINCE THEY MEASURED IT BY THE OMER, THE PERSON WHO HAD GATHERED MORE HAD NOTHING LEFT OVER, AND THE PERSON WHO GATHERED LESS HAD NO SHORTAGE; EACH HAD GATHERED ACCORDING TO WHAT HE COULD EAT.” IN OTHER WORDS, THE OPENING STATEMENT THAT “THE ISRAELITES DID SO” MEANT THAT THEY OBEYED THE RULE ABOUT NOT GATHERING TOO MUCH BUT JUST ENOUGH, AND THE REST OF THE TWO VERSES CONFIRMS THIS BY MORE DETAIL, EXPLAINING HOW EVERYONE WAS CAREFUL TO USE MEASURING CONTAINERS SO AS NOT TO BREAK GOD’S LAW. 16:19–20 A DAY’S NEW MANNA HAD TO BE EATEN THAT DAY, PARTLY TO PREVENT DISEASE (SINCE “WHEN THEY KEPT PART OF IT UNTIL MORNING … IT WAS FULL OF MAGGOTS” AND BEGAN TO SMELL”), PARTLY SO THAT PEOPLE COULD LEARN TO TRUST GOD’S DAILY PROVISION (“GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD” IN THE LORD’S PRAYER MEANS “GIVE US TODAY THE RIGHT AMOUNT OF BREAD FOR TODAY”), AND PARTLY TO TRAIN THE ISRAELITES TO OBSERVE OTHER FOOD CONSUMPTION LAWS THAT FORBADE LEFTOVERS (E.G., EXOD. 12:10; 29:34; DEUT. 16:4). THUS, OVERNIGHT KEEPING OF THE MANNA WAS FORBIDDEN. IN ANY LARGE GROUP THERE ARE ALWAYS THOSE INCLINED TO TEST ANY RULE, SO IT IS NOT SURPRISING THAT SOME OF THE PEOPLE TRIED KEEPING UNEATEN MANNA UNTIL THE NEXT DAY. WHEN THEY DID SO, THEY FOUND IT INEDIBLE, FOILING THEIR SCHEME TO EAT WITHOUT DOING THE REQUIRED DAILY GATHERING WORK. WHEN THE REPORT OF SUCH DISOBEDIENCE REACHED MOSES, HE WAS UNDERSTANDABLY ANGRY (“SO MOSES WAS ANGRY WITH THEM”). HE HAD A RIGHT AND AN INCLINATION AS GOD’S REPRESENTATIVE AMONG THE PEOPLE TO BE ANGRY AT THEIR DISOBEDIENCE, BUT HE ALSO PRESUMABLY HAD A FEAR OF THE CONSEQUENCES OF A PORTION OF THE PEOPLE DISOBEYING AN IMPORTANT TEST COMMANDMENT. PRESUMABLY HIS BEING ANGRY WITH THEM RESULTED IN A TONGUE-LASHING AND WHATEVER PUBLIC HUMILIATION WENT ALONG WITH IT, BUT NOT ANY FURTHER PUNISHMENT SINCE NONE IS MENTIONED. WITH THE INCENTIVE TO KEEP MANNA OVERNIGHT OBVIATED BY THE PUTRID RESULTS, THE PEOPLE WHO HAD TRIED IT MAY WELL HAVE APOLOGIZED AND EXPRESSED CONTRITION, ENOUGH SO TO CONVINCE MOSES THAT THEY WERE REPENTANT.**

**MANNA GATHERING AND THE SABBATH (16:21–26)**

**21 EACH MORNING EVERYONE GATHERED AS MUCH AS HE NEEDED, AND WHEN THE SUN GREW HOT, IT MELTED AWAY. 22 ON THE SIXTH DAY, THEY GATHERED TWICE AS MUCH—TWO OMERS FOR EACH PERSON—AND THE LEADERS OF THE COMMUNITY CAME AND REPORTED THIS TO MOSES. 23 HE SAID TO THEM, “THIS IS WHAT THE LORD COMMANDED: ‘TOMORROW IS TO BE A DAY OF REST, A HOLY SABBATH TO THE LORD. SO, BAKE WHAT YOU WANT TO BAKE AND BOIL WHAT YOU WANT TO BOIL. SAVE WHATEVER IS LEFT AND KEEP IT UNTIL MORNING.’” 24 SO THEY SAVED IT UNTIL MORNING, AS MOSES COMMANDED, AND IT DID NOT STINK OR GET MAGGOTS IN IT. 25 “EAT IT TODAY,” MOSES SAID, “BECAUSE TODAY IS A SABBATH TO THE LORD. YOU WILL NOT FIND ANY OF IT ON THE GROUND TODAY. 26 SIX DAYS YOU ARE TO GATHER IT, BUT ON THE SEVENTH DAY, THE SABBATH, THERE WILL NOT BE ANY.”**

**16:21 GOD HAD WORKED OUT A SIMPLE, EFFECTIVE SYSTEM FOR HIS PEOPLE: NEW MANNA WAS AVAILABLE FOR GATHERING EVERY MORNING, AND OLD MANNA WAS GOTTEN RID OF BY THE HEAT OF THE SUN. LAZY PEOPLE WERE THUS DISCIPLINED INTO GETTING UP EARLY ENOUGH TO GET THEIR FOOD FOR THE DAY, AND COMPETITIVE TYPES WERE UNABLE TO GAIN ANY ADVANTAGE OVER OTHERS BY GATHERING AND KEEPING DISPROPORTIONATE AMOUNTS. IN THE SHADE OF TENTS AND KEPT UNDER CLOTH COVER IN STORAGE OR DURING PREPARATION OUTSIDE THE TENTS, THE MANNA KEPT UNTIL EVENING. 16:22–23 FOLLOWING INSTRUCTIONS ALREADY GIVEN BY GOD (16:5), THE ISRAELITES GATHERED DOUBLE PORTIONS ON THE SIXTH DAY OF THE WEEK, THE DAY JUST PRIOR TO THE SABBATH. THE GATHERING MUST NOT HAVE TAKEN SO LONG THAT THIS WOULD BE A PROBLEM ONCE A WEEK. IT COULD HAVE TAKEN TWICE AS LONG TO GATHER TWO OMERS PER PERSON AS TO GATHER ONE, BUT MORE LIKELY (THOUGH IT CANNOT BE PROVED) GOD SUPPLIED A GREATER ABUNDANCE PER UNIT OF GROUND ON THE SIXTH DAY THAN ON THE OTHERS, MAKING THE GATHERING PROCESS OF SUCH A RELATIVELY LIGHT SUBSTANCE PROBABLY ONLY MARGINALLY MORE TIME CONSUMING. THIS NEW EXPERIENCE OF GETTING TWICE THE MANNA FOR APPROXIMATELY THE SAME EFFORT WAS SUFFICIENTLY AMAZING AND/OR DELIGHTFUL AS A PROOF OF GOD’S PROMISE THAT “THE LEADERS OF THE COMMUNITY CAME AND REPORTED THIS TO MOSES.” THE CONSISTENCY OF THIS EXPERIENCE—EVERYBODY EVERYWHERE HAD THE SAME DOUBLE RESULTS—MAY HAVE BEEN WHAT THEY ESPECIALLY WANTED HIM TO HEAR AND WHAT HE WAS HOPING WOULD BE THE CASE, FOR THIS WAS THE FIRST TEST OF THAT PART OF THE COMMAND INVOLVING THE ONCE-A-WEEK SIXTH DAY SPECIAL PROCEDURE. THEIR FAITH IN OBEYING THE TESTING OF EACH DAY HAD NOW BEEN SUPPLEMENTED BY THE REWARD OF THEIR FAITH FOR OBEYING THE SPECIAL PROVISIONS FOR THE SIXTH-DAY’S GATHERING. CONVEYING TO THEM GOD’S WORD IN HIS ROLE AS PROPHET, MOSES BEGAN TO TEACH THE PEOPLE ABOUT THE SABBATH LAW, THUS ANTICIPATING THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT (EXOD. 20:8–11). “SABBATH” MEANS “STOPPAGE,” AND UNDER THE OLD COVENANT IT REQUIRED DISCONTINUATION OF ALL VOLUNTARY WORK. GATHERING FOOD WAS THE MOST BASIC SORT OF WORK ANYONE DID IN THE ANCIENT WORLD, SO THE GATHERING OF MANNA COULD HARDLY BE ALLOWED TO CONTINUE AS USUAL ON THE SABBATH. MOSES THEREFORE INSTRUCTED THE PEOPLE TO COOK THE DAILY PORTION OF MANNA AS USUAL, BUT NOT TO WORRY ABOUT KEEPING THE REMAINDER OVERNIGHT SINCE “TOMORROW IS TO BE A DAY OF REST, A HOLY SABBATH TO THE LORD.” THE SABBATH, IN OTHER WORDS, IS NOT JUST A DAY OF RESTING FROM WORK BUT A DAY OF REFOCUSED SERVICE TOWARD THE HOLY, THAT IS, TOWARD GOD. NOTE THAT THE METHOD OF PREPARING MANNA FOR EATING WAS EITHER TO BAKE IT OR TO BOIL IT. 16:24–26 THE DAILY PROVISION OF THE MANNA WAS A MIRACLE IN ITSELF. THE PROVISION OF DOUBLE MANNA EVERY SIXTH DAY OF THE WEEK WAS ANOTHER. NOW COME TWO FURTHER, RELATED MIRACLES: THE ROTTING PROCESS DID NOT TAKE PLACE ONE DAY A WEEK, AND NO MANNA APPEARED AT ALL ONE DAY A WEEK—BOTH MIRACLES TAKING PLACE IN THE SAME SEQUENCE OF DAYS EVERY WEEK. ANYONE WHO OBEYED THE EARLIER COMMANDS OF GOD TO HARVEST PROPERLY ON THE SIXTH DAY AND SAVE A DAY’S WORTH FOR THE SABBATH WAS REWARDED BY BEING ABLE TO COMPLY WITH MOSES’ INSTRUCTION THE FOLLOWING, SABBATH DAY, “EAT IT TODAY” (V. 25). THE TIME AND ENERGY NORMALLY SPENT GATHERING MANNA COULD NOW BE SPENT ON GOD’S WORSHIP AND, TO SOME EXTENT, NOT SPENT AT ALL. THE CREATOR OF HUMAN BEINGS, WHO HAD HIMSELF FROM THE BEGINNING OF CREATION HONORED THE SABBATH DAY AND MADE IT HOLY PARTLY BY RESTING ON IT, KNEW THE NATURE OF HIS CREATURES, INCLUDING THE DISADVANTAGES OF A LIFESTYLE THAT ALLOWED NO REAL REST. HE INSISTED THAT THE PEOPLE WHO WERE TO BE UNITED WITH HIM IN HIS COVENANT WOULD REST WEEKLY. THIS DOES NOT MEAN THAT THEY WOULD DO NOTHING BUT ONLY THAT THEY WOULD DO AS LITTLE AS POSSIBLE THAT WOULD BE PHYSICALLY HARD, THAT IS, THE SAME SORT OF WORK THEY HAD TO DO ON THE OTHER SIX DAYS. BY TAKING AWAY THE MANNA ON THE SEVENTH DAY, GOD HELPED ENSURE THAT PEOPLE WOULD USE THAT DAY FOR SOMETHING OTHER THAN THE USUAL HARVESTING.**

**THE SECOND DISOBEDIENCE AND THE SABBATH LESSON LEARNED (16:27–30)**

**27 NEVERTHELESS, SOME OF THE PEOPLE WENT OUT ON THE SEVENTH DAY TO GATHER IT, BUT THEY FOUND NONE. 28 THEN THE LORD SAID TO MOSES, “HOW LONG WILL YOU REFUSE TO KEEP MY COMMANDS AND MY INSTRUCTIONS? 29 BEAR IN MIND THAT THE LORD HAS GIVEN YOU THE SABBATH; THAT IS WHY ON THE SIXTH DAY HE GIVES YOU BREAD FOR TWO DAYS. EVERYONE IS TO STAY WHERE HE IS ON THE SEVENTH DAY; NO ONE IS TO GO OUT.” 30 SO THE PEOPLE RESTED ON THE SEVENTH DAY. 16:27–28 AGAIN SOME PEOPLE COULDN’T RESIST TRYING TO GET AHEAD, TO ADVANTAGE THEMSELVES, BY DISOBEDIENCE TO GOD’S COMMAND. AS SOME OF THEM HAD TRIED TO KEEP MANNA TOO LONG (16:20), SOME OF THEM (PERHAPS SOME OF THE SAME PEOPLE) NOW TRIED TO GET MORE ON THE SABBATH, PROBABLY FEARING THAT WHAT THEY HAD KEPT FROM THE NIGHT BEFORE WOULD NEVER LAST THROUGH THE WHOLE DAY EVEN IF THEY SAW THAT IT HAD IN FACT LASTED UNTIL THE EARLY MORNING. THEY FOUND NO MANNA AND, IN THE PROCESS SHOWED THEMSELVES UNWILLING ONCE AGAIN TO TRUST GOD IN THE MATTER OF A SINGLE COMMANDMENT, NOT A PROMISING SIGN IN LIGHT OF THE FACT THAT SOON ENOUGH THEY WOULD BE EXPECTED TO KEEP HIS ENTIRE COVENANT LAW AS AN INDICATION OF THEIR TRUST IN HIM. GOD’S SPEECH TO MOSES IN VV. 28–29 (“THEN THE LORD SAID TO MOSES”) IS, OF COURSE, A SPEECH THROUGH HIM TO ALL THE PEOPLE. IN ASKING, “HOW LONG WILL YOU REFUSE TO KEEP MY COMMANDS AND MY INSTRUCTIONS?” GOD IS NOT EXPECTING AN ANSWER. THIS WAS A RHETORICAL WAY OF SAYING, “I AM COUNTING ON YOU TO STOP DISOBEYING ME.” AS A DIVINE REBUKE FOR NOT SHOWING A WILLINGNESS TO OBEY, IT REPRESENTS A SERIOUS THREAT TO THE PURPOSE OF THE TESTING, THAT IS, TO FIND FAITH AMONG THE ABOUT-TO-BE COVENANT PEOPLE. 16:29–30 HERE MOSES DREW THE LESSON OF THE SABBATH FOR THE ISRAELITES, EMPHASIZING THAT IT REPRESENTED A GIFT (“THE LORD HAS GIVEN YOU THE SABBATH”), AS JESUS ALSO TAUGHT. MOSES COMPARED THE GIFT OF THE SABBATH TO THE GIFT OF THE MANNA, TWO DAYS’ WORTH ON THE SIXTH DAY, FOR THE SAKE OF MAKING THE SABBATH REST POSSIBLE. MOSES’ WORDS, “EVERYONE IS TO STAY WHERE HE IS ON THE SEVENTH DAY; NO ONE IS TO GO OUT,” INTENDED TO RESTRICT MANNA HARVESTING ON THE SABBATH, NOT TO CONFINE PEOPLE INSIDE THEIR HOMES. THEY STILL NEEDED TO MILK GOATS AND COWS, TO FEED ALL THEIR ANIMALS, TO RELIEVE THEMSELVES OUTSIDE THE CAMP, AND SO ON. IN OTHER WORDS, NOTHING IN THESE VERSES JUSTIFIES THE LATER PHARISAICAL INSISTENCE ON THE “SABBATH DAY’S WALK,” A VERY LIMITED NUMBER OF STEPS ALLOWED ON THE SABBATH.166 NOR DID MOSES’ INSTRUCTION PRECLUDE GRABBING A BITE TO EAT ON THE RUN, SOMETHING THAT IS CERTAINLY NOT THE SAME AS FULL-BLOWN HARVESTING OF A CROP, WHETHER OR NOT DIVINELY PROVIDED. WITH NO FURTHER INCENTIVE TO TRY TO GATHER MANNA ON THE SABBATH, “THE PEOPLE RESTED ON THE SEVENTH DAY.” AS YET THE ENTIRE SET OF FORMAL METHODS OF WORSHIP AND RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION WERE NOT AN ISSUE. THEY WERE TO COME AT SINAI. THE FIRST, MOST BASIC STEP HAD BEEN TEACHING THE ISRAELITES TO SET ASIDE THE TIME FOR SUCH THINGS; HOW TO DO THEM WOULD FOLLOW IN THE FULL PRESENTATION OF THE COVENANT BEGINNING AT EXOD. 20.**

**PRESERVING THE MANNA FOR GENERATIONS TO COME AS A TESTIMONY TO GOD’S FAITHFULNESS (16:31–36)**

**31 THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL CALLED THE BREAD MANNA. IT WAS WHITE LIKE CORIANDER SEED AND TASTED LIKE WAFERS MADE WITH HONEY. 32 MOSES SAID, “THIS IS WHAT THE LORD HAS COMMANDED: ‘TAKE AN OMER OF MANNA AND KEEP IT FOR THE GENERATIONS TO COME, SO THEY CAN SEE THE BREAD I GAVE YOU TO EAT IN THE DESERT WHEN I BROUGHT YOU OUT OF EGYPT.’” 33 SO MOSES SAID TO AARON, “TAKE A JAR AND PUT AN OMER OF MANNA IN IT. THEN PLACE IT BEFORE THE LORD TO BE KEPT FOR THE GENERATIONS TO COME.” 34 AS THE LORD COMMANDED MOSES, AARON PUT THE MANNA IN FRONT OF THE TESTIMONY, THAT IT MIGHT BE KEPT. 35 THE ISRAELITES ATE MANNA FORTY YEARS, UNTIL THEY CAME TO A LAND THAT WAS SETTLED; THEY ATE MANNA UNTIL THEY REACHED THE BORDER OF CANAAN. 36 (AN OMER IS ONE TENTH OF AN EPHAH.)**

**16:31 IN ANCIENT TIMES THE REFINING OF SUGAR HAD NOT BEEN INVENTED, AND THE ONLY MEANS OF SWEETENING FOODS WAS TO ADD EITHER FRUIT COMPOUNDS OR HONEY TO THEM. HONEY IS FAR SWEETER THAN DRIED, CRUSHED, OR MINCED FRUIT, BEING APPROXIMATELY HALF SUCROSE AND HALF FRUCTOSE, AND ITS TASTE IN FOODS WAS THE APEX OF ANCIENT FLAVORING. FEW ISRAELITES EVER HAD THE LUXURY OF MAKING WAFERS (IN EFFECT, THIN COOKIES) INSTEAD OF BREAD, AND HONEY WAS RARE ENOUGH (SINCE IT HAD TO BE FOUND IN THE WILD RATHER THAN CULTIVATED AS TODAY) THAT DESCRIBING THE MANNA AS “LIKE WAFERS MADE WITH HONEY” WAS TANTAMOUNT TO SAYING THAT IT WAS “THE MOST DELICIOUS FOOD IMAGINABLE.” MANNA WAS COLORED WHITE, THE COMPARISON HERE TO CORIANDER SEED (WHICH IS A PALE WHITE IN COLOR) INTENDING NOTHING MORE THAN TO ESTABLISH A KNOWN COLOR AS THE COMPARISON POINT. THE TASTE OR TEXTURE OF CORIANDER SEED, IN OTHER WORDS, HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH THE MANNA. ALTHOUGH IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THE TERM “MANNA” (MĀN) WAS ALREADY A KNOWN TERM (I.E., DID NOT DERIVE FROM THE QUESTION OF THE ISRAELITES IN V. 14 BUT WAS CONVENIENTLY REMEMBERED AS A WORD THAT SOUNDED LIKE THE WORDING OF THE QUESTION), THE SUBSTANCE WAS NOT. THE ISRAELITES COULD HAVE BORROWED THE NAME “MANNA” FOR IT OR ELSE COINED THE NAME ON THE SPOT FOR THIS NEW FOOD THEY ENCOUNTERED. SINCE “BREAD” (LEḤEM) IS A COMMON WORD FOR “FOOD” IN HEBREW, AN ALTERNATE TRANSLATION FOR THE OPENING WORDS OF THE VERSE WOULD BE, “THE HOUSE/ FAMILY OF ISRAEL [NIV “PEOPLE OF ISRAEL”] CALLED THE FOOD MANNA.” 16:32–34 THAT A SAMPLE OF MANNA SHOULD BE KEPT WITH THE ARK, IN THE HOLY OF HOLIES OF THE TABERNACLE, WAS A MAJOR STEP OF COMMEMORATION INDEED. THE HOLY OF HOLIES CONTAINED ONLY ONE ITEM OF FURNITURE: THE ARK, ALSO CALLED THE ARK OF THE TESTIMONY (E.G., EXOD. 25:21–22; 26:33–34) OR PERHAPS EVEN SIMPLY THE TESTIMONY (E.G., EXOD. 27:21; 30:6), A BOX SYMBOLIZING THE VERY PRESENCE OF GOD HIMSELF. FOR A JAR OF MANNA TO BE KEPT THERE GAVE THE MANNA PROMINENCE ABOVE MANY OTHER OBJECTS, INCLUDING THE SHEWBREAD OR LAMPSTAND OR INCENSE ALTAR, WHICH WERE EXCLUDED FROM THE HOLY OF HOLIES BY THE TABERNACLE’S INNER CURTAIN. AT THIS STAGE IN THE PROGRESS OF THE ISRAELITES, THE TABERNACLE HAD NOT YET BEEN BUILT OR EVEN PRESCRIBED, SO GOD’S COMMAND TO THEM WAS SIMPLY THAT AARON WAS TO “PLACE IT BEFORE THE LORD TO BE KEPT,” A WAY OF SAYING THAT IT WAS TO REMAIN IN GOD’S PRESENCE—THAT IS, IN WHATEVER PLACE OR OBJECT WOULD SYMBOLIZE GOD’S PRESENCE. ONCE THE ARK WAS ACTUALLY BUILT, THERE BEING NO PROVISION FOR ANY SEPARATE TABLE WITHIN THE HOLY OF HOLIES TO HOLD THE MANNA, IT WAS PLACED INSIDE THE ARK, AS HEB 9:4 CONFIRMS. WHEN THE ARK WAS INSIDE THE TABERNACLE, IT WAS HIDDEN BY THE CURTAIN FROM THE VIEW EVEN OF THE PRIESTS WHO MINISTERED IN THE OUTER ROOM. LAY-WORSHIPERS NEVER ENTERED THE TABERNACLE AT ALL BUT REMAINED WITHIN ITS COURTYARD WHEN ENGAGED IN WORSHIP. MOREOVER, THE ARK’S CONTENTS WERE CONCEALED BY THE ATONEMENT COVER. HOW, THEN, COULD IT BE KEPT “FOR THE GENERATIONS TO COME, SO THEY CAN SEE THE BREAD I GAVE YOU TO EAT IN THE DESERT WHEN I BROUGHT YOU OUT OF EGYPT”? THE ANSWER IS THAT WHEN THE ISRAELITES WERE INVITED TO MOVE FROM PLACE TO PLACE BY THE ACTIONS OF GOD’S PILLAR OF CLOUD/FIRE, THEY COULD SEE THE ARK PLAINLY; AND WITH ITS USUAL BARRIERS TO VISIBILITY REMOVED, THE CHIEF PRIEST WAS AT SUCH TIMES PRESUMABLY FREE TO OPEN THE COVER AND DISPLAY THE CONTENTS. IT MAY ALSO HAVE BEEN THE CASE THAT AT FESTIVAL TIMES, THE CONTENTS OF THE ARK WERE REMOVED AND DISPLAYED FOR ALL WORSHIPERS TO SEE. CERTAINLY, HOWEVER, THE COMMAND WAS ACTUALLY CARRIED OUT, GOD’S INTENT WAS FOR THE MANNA TO BE VISIBLE (NOT JUST THE JAR BUT THE MANNA INSIDE IT) REGULARLY, AS AN ENCOURAGEMENT TO FAITH IN GOD’S CONTINUAL PROVISION FOR HIS PEOPLE. INASMUCH AS THE ARK ITSELF WAS OVERLAID WITH GOLD INSIDE AND OUT (EXOD. 25:11), THE LARGE JAR SPECIFIED BY MOSES IN V. 33 IN THE PRESENT PASSAGE (“TAKE A JAR AND PUT AN OMER OF MANNA IN IT”), WHATEVER ITS COMPOSITION AT FIRST, WAS EVENTUALLY MADE OF GOLD (HEB 9:4) SINCE IT WAS TO FUNCTION AS A SUB-CONTAINER WITHIN A PURE GOLD CONTAINER. THE EVENTUAL CONTENTS THEMSELVES WITHIN THE ARK (THE ROD OF WOOD, THE TABLETS OF STONE, AND THE VEGETABLE MANNA) WERE NOT GOLD, BUT THE CONTAINERS WERE. OF PARTICULAR INTEREST IS THE PRESERVABILITY OF THE MANNA SAMPLE: MANNA USUALLY COULD NOT BE KEPT OVERNIGHT (16:20), BUT GOD WOULD CAUSE THE MANNA IN THE JAR IN THE ARK TO KEEP PERMANENTLY—A PERMISSIBLE MAGIC/MIRACLE QUIETLY IMPLIED BUT SUPERNATURAL NONE THE LESS. VERSE 34 DESCRIBES THE FULFILLMENT OF THE COMMAND MADE IN V. 33. THIS COMMAND-FULFILLMENT STYLE WILL COME TO DOMINATE LARGE PORTIONS OF THE LATER CHAPTERS OF EXODUS. THE “TESTIMONY” MENTIONED HERE IN V. 34 REFERS ALMOST CERTAINLY TO THE TABLETS OF STONE ON WHICH THE TEN COMMANDMENTS WOULD BE WRITTEN RATHER THAN THE ARK OF THE TESTIMONY THAT WOULD HOLD THEM. ACCORDINGLY, THE STATEMENT THAT “AARON PUT THE MANNA IN FRONT OF THE TESTIMONY, THAT IT MIGHT BE KEPT” PRESUMABLY MEANS THAT HE PUT IT, IN ITS JAR, WITHIN THE GOLD-COVERED CHEST THAT WAS CALLED THE ARK. (THE HB. TRANSLATED BY THE NIV AND MOST OTHER ENGLISH VERSIONS AS “IN FRONT OF” CAN ALSO BE TRANSLATED “RIGHT NEXT TO,” “IN THE DIRECT PRESENCE OF,” OR THE LIKE.) VERSE 34, HOWEVER, MAY WELL DESCRIBE THE PROCESS IN RETROSPECT, AFTER THE ARK WAS CONSTRUCTED AND THE 2 TABLETS GIVEN TO MOSES BY GOD FOR DEPOSIT THEREIN. WE CANNOT TELL FROM THESE VERSES, IN OTHER WORDS, WHETHER AARON PUT A SAMPLE OF THE VERY FIRST MANNA IN A (CLAY) JAR, WHICH EVENTUALLY WAS TRANSFERRED TO THE GOLD JAR KEPT IN THE EVENTUALLY CONSTRUCTED ARK, OR WHETHER THE FULFILLMENT OF THIS COMMAND WAS ACCOMPLISHED WITH SOME MANNA GATHERED MONTHS LATER, AFTER THE ARK WAS BUILT. 16:35–36 THE SYSTEM OF FOOTNOTING AND END-NOTING WAS NOT INVENTED UNTIL MODERN TIMES, BUT THESE VERSES ARE THE HOLY BIBLE’S EQUIVALENT OF A FOOTNOTE OR ENDNOTE—AN EXPLANATORY NOTE PLACED AT THE END OF A PORTION OF TEXT. MOSES MAY BE THE AUTHOR OF BOTH VERSES, SINCE HE LIKELY DID NOT PUT THE FINISHING TOUCHES ON THE PENTATEUCH UNTIL SHORTLY BEFORE HIS DEATH, ROUGHLY FORTY YEARS LATER THAN THE EVENTS DESCRIBED IN MOST OF CHAP. 16. THUS, THE STATEMENT THAT “THE ISRAELITES ATE MANNA FORTY YEARS, UNTIL THEY CAME TO A LAND THAT WAS SETTLED” BRINGS THE READER UP TO THE POINT OF THE CROSSING OF THE JORDAN BY THE ISRAELITES UNDER JOSHUA, WHEN THE END OF THE MANNA IS EXPLICITLY MENTIONED (JOSH 5:12). IT IS ALSO POSSIBLE THAT THIS FOOTNOTE IS AN INSPIRED COMPILER’S LATER ADDITION TO MOSES’ WORK FOR THE BENEFIT ESPECIALLY OF PEOPLE WHO WOULD SEARCH THE PENTATEUCH ITSELF IN VAIN FOR ANY REFERENCE TO THE CESSATION OF MANNA; THERE IS NONE, OTHER THAN HERE IN V. 35, BECAUSE AT THE TIME OF MOSES’ DEATH THE MANNA WAS STILL BEING PROVIDED DAILY. VERSE 36 EXPLAINS FOR A LATER GENERATION OR GENERATIONS—EITHER THE ONE THAT GREW UP IN THE WILDERNESS (AND FOLLOWING) OR THE GENERATIONS STARTING AT SOME POINT AFTER THE ISRAELITES HAD SETTLED IN CANAAN—THE MEANING OF THE OLD WORD “OMER.” MOSES USED “OMER” ONLY HERE; IN LATER PASSAGES HE EMPLOYED THE SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT TERM “HOMER[S]” (LEV 27:16; NUM 11:32), WHICH APPARENTLY BECAME STANDARD IN LATER HEBREW. WHY THE DIFFERENCE? THE ANSWER WOULD SEEM TO BE THAT PRIOR TO THE STANDARDIZATION OF SPELLING AND WRITING—A MODERN PHENOMENON—THERE WAS A TENDENCY IN GOOD LITERATURE TO USE THE VARIOUS FORMS AND/OR SPELLINGS OF A WORD AT DIFFERENT PLACES IN A DOCUMENT SO AS TO PRESERVE THE LEGITIMATE VARIATIONS, EACH OF WHICH HAD ESSENTIALLY AS MUCH VALIDITY AS THE OTHER. THIS PRACTICE DID NOT PREVENT THE VIRTUAL STANDARDIZATION OF ONE FORM OR SPELLING OF A WORD OVER TIME (WHICH IS MORE A MATTER OF MASS INTERACTION), BUT IT DID ALLOW AN INDIVIDUAL WRITER TO AVOID TRYING ON HIS OWN TO EFFECT, ANY SORT OF STANDARDIZATION. AT ANY RATE, THE NOTE PROVIDED FOR THE READER HERE INDICATES THAT AN OMER/HOMER WAS “ONE TENTH OF AN EPHAH,” MEANING THAT IT WAS ABOUT 2.2 LITERS, OR ABOUT A HALF-GALLON.**

**MORE GRUMBLING AND WATER AT MASSAH-MERIBAH (17:1–7)**

**1 THE WHOLE ISRAELITE COMMUNITY SET OUT FROM THE DESERT OF SIN, TRAVELING FROM PLACE TO PLACE AS THE LORD COMMANDED. THEY CAMPED AT REPHIDIM, BUT THERE WAS NO WATER FOR THE PEOPLE TO DRINK. 2 SO THEY QUARRELED WITH MOSES AND SAID, “GIVE US WATER TO DRINK.” MOSES REPLIED, “WHY DO YOU QUARREL WITH ME? WHY DO YOU PUT THE LORD TO THE TEST?” 3 BUT THE PEOPLE WERE THIRSTY FOR WATER THERE, AND THEY GRUMBLED AGAINST MOSES. THEY SAID, “WHY DID YOU BRING US UP OUT OF EGYPT TO MAKE US AND OUR CHILDREN AND LIVESTOCK DIE OF THIRST?” 4 THEN MOSES CRIED OUT TO THE LORD, “WHAT AM I TO DO WITH THESE PEOPLE? THEY ARE ALMOST READY TO STONE ME.” 5 THE LORD ANSWERED MOSES, “WALK ON AHEAD OF THE PEOPLE. TAKE WITH YOU SOME OF THE ELDERS OF ISRAEL AND TAKE IN YOUR HAND THE STAFF WITH WHICH YOU STRUCK THE NILE, AND GO. 6 I WILL STAND THERE BEFORE YOU BY THE ROCK AT HOREB. STRIKE THE ROCK, AND WATER WILL COME OUT OF IT FOR THE PEOPLE TO DRINK.” SO, MOSES DID THIS IN THE SIGHT OF THE ELDERS OF ISRAEL. 7 AND HE CALLED THE PLACE MASSAH AND MERIBAH BECAUSE THE ISRAELITES QUARRELED AND BECAUSE THEY TESTED THE LORD SAYING, “IS THE LORD AMONG US OR NOT?”**

**17:1–2 IN SAYING THAT “THE WHOLE ISRAELITE COMMUNITY SET OUT FROM THE DESERT OF SIN,” MOSES MEANT, IN EFFECT, SET OUT FROM WITHIN THE WILDERNESS OF SIN. HE DID NOT MEAN THAT THEY LEFT SIN, ONLY THAT THEY WERE IN IT ALREADY (16:1) AND CONTINUED TO MOVE FURTHER SOUTH WITHIN IT, “TRAVELING FROM PLACE TO PLACE AS THE LORD COMMANDED.” AS FAR AS CAN BE DETERMINED, REPHIDIM WAS LOCATED IN THE FAR SOUTHERN SINAI, CLOSE TO MOUNT SINAI, THE MODERN JEBEL MUSA. ACCORDINGLY, 17:1 BRINGS THE ISRAELITES ALMOST TO SINAI, “THE ONE OF SIN.” THE “TRAVELING FROM PLACE TO PLACE” APPARENTLY TOOK SEVERAL WEEKS, THE EXACT AMOUNT OF TIME BEING UNSPECIFIED. BUT IN LIGHT OF THE STATEMENT IN 19:1 THAT THE ISRAELITES LEFT REPHIDIM AND MADE THE SHORT TRIP FROM IT TO SINAI EXACTLY THREE MONTHS AFTER SETTING OUT FROM EGYPT AND EXTRAPOLATING FROM WHAT HAS BEEN SAID TO THIS POINT ABOUT THEIR WANDERINGS, IT SEEMS THAT THE BULK OF THOSE THREE MONTHS MAY HAVE BEEN TAKEN UP WITH TRAVEL IN THE WILDERNESS OF SIN, THAT IS, THE SINAI PENINSULA SOUTH OF THE IMAGINARY LINE FROM THE NORTHERN END OF THE GULF OF SUEZ TO THE NORTHERN END OF THE GULF OF AQABAH. IN EACH MOVE GOD LED THEM (“AS THE LORD COMMANDED”) BY THE PILLAR OF FIRE/CLOUD SO THAT THEY ALWAYS COULD BE SURE OF THEIR ITINERARY. THE WORDING OF 17:1 MAKES CLEAR THAT THE ISRAELITES DID NOT CAMP AT REPHIDIM OF THEIR OWN VOLITION BUT OF GOD’S, AND THEREFORE ONE IS FORCED TO CONCLUDE THAT ONCE AGAIN GOD HAD LED THEM DIRECTLY TO A PLACE WHERE THERE WAS NO DRINKABLE WATER (CF. 15:22–26).178 SKEPTICAL SCHOLARS SOMETIMES HAVE SUGGESTED THAT THE PRESENT PASSAGE IS A DOUBLET OF 15:22–26, BUT THE DETAILS ARE QUITE DIFFERENT, THE ONLY SIMILARITIES BEING THE ONES THAT WOULD NECESSARILY BE LIKELY TO EMERGE IN TWO STORIES ABOUT NOT FINDING WATER IN A PLACE PEOPLE HAD EXPECTED TO FIND IT IN LIGHT OF WHO LED THEM THERE. THUS, THE EVENT REPRESENTS YET ANOTHER TEST OF ISRAEL’S FAITHFULNESS, A TEST THAT IS AGAIN NOT EASILY PASSED AND ONE WITH THE ADDED ASPECT OF ISRAEL’S MAKING THE MISTAKE OF PUTTING GOD TO THE TEST (SEE COMMENTS ON V. 7, BELOW). THE BEGINNING OF V. 2 PROBABLY WOULD BE BETTER TRANSLATED, “THE PEOPLE PROTESTED AGAINST MOSES AND SAID …” THE NIV TRANSLATION “QUARRELED WITH” TENDS TO IMPLY A HEATED ARGUMENT BACK AND FORTH BETWEEN MOSES AND THE PEOPLE, WHEREAS THE NARRATIVE ITSELF MAKES NO MENTION OF SUCH AN INTERCHANGE. MOSES’ QUESTIONS TO THE PEOPLE AT THE END OF THE VERSE WOULD, THEN, ALSO BEST BE TRANSLATED: “WHY DO YOU PROTEST AGAINST ME? WHY ARE YOU TESTING THE LORD?” AS WAS HIS PROPER STRATEGY IN THE CASE OF THE COMPLAINING ABOUT LACK OF FOOD (16:6–8), MOSES REMINDED THE PEOPLE THAT ANY COMPLAINT AGAINST HIM WAS IN FACT A COMPLAINT AGAINST GOD SINCE HE WAS ONLY FOLLOWING GOD’S ORDERS, AND THEY WERE ALL FOLLOWING THE PILLAR OF CLOUD/FIRE TO THEIR VARIOUS STOPPING PLACES IN THE WILDERNESS. LIKEWISE, AS WAS HIS PROPER DIRECTION IN THE PREVIOUS STORY OF COMPLAINING ABOUT LACK OF WATER AS WELL (15:22–26), HE WOULD BRING THE PEOPLE’S COMPLAINT DIRECTLY TO GOD FOR RESOLUTION (V. 4). IN SAYING TO THE PEOPLE, “WHY DO YOU PUT THE LORD TO THE TEST,” MOSES SHOWED THAT HE KNEW THAT THE PROTEST REPRESENTED AN ATTEMPT TO MANIPULATE GOD. THE PEOPLE SHOULD HAVE KNOWN BY THEN THAT GOD WOULD PROVIDE THEIR NEEDS. HE HAD DONE SO CONSISTENTLY THROUGHOUT THE PLAGUES AND THEIR AFTERMATH AND MOST RECENTLY IN PROVIDING BOTH FOOD AND WATER SUPERNATURALLY FOR THEM. THE DAY OF THIS CURRENT PROTEST, AFTER ALL, WAS ONE MORE DAY ON WHICH THE PEOPLE HAD BEEN ABLE TO GATHER MANNA TO FEED THEMSELVES AND THEIR ANIMALS. WHAT THEY WERE DOING WAS REFUSING TO WAIT FOR GOD TO TAKE CARE OF THEM. INSTEAD, SOON AFTER FINDING NO DRINKABLE WATER AND HAVING LEARNED THAT THEIR PRIOR PROTESTS GOT RESULTS, THEY WERE LAUNCHING A PROTEST PARALLEL TO THOSE OF THE PAST, THUS TESTING GOD. “TESTING GOD” IS DEMANDING OR EXPECTING HIM TO DO SOMETHING SPECIAL FOR YOU, SOMETHING YOU HAVEN’T EARNED AND DON’T PER SE DESERVE. NOT ALL “TESTING,” HOWEVER, IS SIN. GOD’S APPROPRIATE TESTING OF ABRAHAM’S FAITH (GEN 22:1) OR HIS TESTING OF THE ISRAELITES’ FAITH IN CHAP. 15 (“THERE HE TESTED THEM,” 15:25) IS DESCRIBED WITH EXACTLY THE SAME VOCABULARY (THE PIEL OF NSH) AS IS EMPLOYED BY MOSES HERE. WHAT IS IMPERMISSIBLE IS ANY OF TESTING OF GOD (HOW COULD HIS FAITH BE IN DOUBT AND NEED TESTING?) SINCE IT AMOUNTS NOT TO A GENUINE ATTEMPT TO ASSESS LOYALTY BUT AN ATTEMPT TO GET SOMETHING OUT OF HIM EARLIER OR IN GREATER QUANTITY, OR THE LIKE, THAN WOULD OTHERWISE HAPPEN. TESTING GOD ALWAYS INVOLVES SOME DEGREE OF DOUBT ABOUT WHETHER OR NOT ONE’S PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES ARE ALL THAT ONE DESERVES AND WHETHER OR NOT GOD COULD OR SHOULD HAVE DONE A BETTER JOB OF PROVIDING ONE’S NEEDS. 17:3–4 WHAT THE PEOPLE DID AND SAID IN V. 3 IS CONCEPTUALLY SIMILAR TO WHAT THEY SAID IN 16:2–3. THEN IT WAS GRUMBLING AGAINST MOSES AND AARON; HERE ONLY MOSES WAS MENTIONED, IN KEEPING WITH THE PRACTICE OF MENTIONING AARON PERIODICALLY BUT NOT CONSTANTLY. THERE IT WAS THE STARVING OF THE PEOPLE THAT THEY COMPLAINED ABOUT; HERE IT IS DEATH BY THIRST OF WHOLE FAMILIES AS WELL AS LIVESTOCK BECAUSE ALTHOUGH THE ANIMALS MIGHT STILL FIND FORAGING FOOD, THEY COULD NOT SURVIVE WITHOUT WATER. SO AGAIN, THE PEOPLE GRUMBLED (CF. 15:24; 16:2, 7–9, 12) AGAINST MOSES, AND AGAIN MOSES KNEW THAT IT IS GOD TO WHOM HE MUST DIRECT THEIR GRUMBLING. JUDGING FROM HIS WORDS TO GOD IN V. 4, IT MAY BE CONCLUDED THAT EITHER THE PEOPLE’S RANCOR HAD REACHED A GREATER PITCH THAN PREVIOUSLY OR ELSE MOSES, PAINED BY THE REPEATED ATTACKS, HAD GROWN MORE SENSITIVE TO THEIR CRITICISM. ALTHOUGH A COMBINATION OF BOTH MAY BE INVOLVED HERE, THE LATTER IS THE MORE LIKELY. MOSES WAS NOT MERELY DESCRIBING THE PEOPLE’S ATTITUDE BUT WAS IMPLYING BY REFERRING TO HIS OWN SITUATION IN SUCH PANICKED TERMS THAT GOD MUST DO SOMETHING AND QUICKLY. EVEN THOUGH GOD DID NOT REBUKE HIM, MOSES HAD HANDLED THE PEOPLE’S PROTEST INCORRECTLY. PREVIOUSLY HE HAD REASSURED THEM, TAKING GOD’S SIDE AND ASSERTING THAT GOD WOULD PROVIDE FOR THEM (16:6–8) OR SIMPLY ACTING AS THEIR INTERCESSOR IN BRINGING THEIR COMPLAINT TO GOD (15:25). BUT HERE HE TOOK SERIOUSLY THE SEVERITY OF THE PEOPLE’S MIND-SET AND PAID SPECIAL ATTENTION TO HIS OWN WELFARE ABOVE GOD’S WILL. MOSES UNDERSTANDABLY FEARED BEING STONED BECAUSE STONING WAS (AND IS) SUCH A COMMON WAY IN THE NEAR EAST OF DEALING WITH PEOPLE SEEN TO BE A THREAT TO THE SURVIVAL OF A COMMUNITY OR OF A COMMUNITY’S WAY OF LIFE. RECOGNIZED LEADERS WERE NOT ABOVE FEAR OF STONING (E.G., NUM 14:10; 1 SAM 30:6; JOHN 8:59; ACTS 5:26; 7:58; 14:19), AND STONING WAS A LEGITIMATE FORM OF LEGAL PUNISHMENT WHEN ONE’S CRIME WAS THOUGHT TO BE A CAPITAL CRIME AGAINST THE COMMUNITY (EXOD. 19:13; LEV 20:2, 27; 24:14). IN OTHER WORDS, MOSES LOOKED HERE LIKE A PERSON AFRAID OF LOSING HIS LIFE FOR DOING HIS JOB AND SHOWED A LACK OF CONFIDENCE IN GOD’S PROVISION FOR HIM THAT IS PARALLEL TO AND RESULTANT FROM THE PEOPLE’S LACK OF CONFIDENCE IN GOD’S PROVISION FOR THEM. ACCORDINGLY, THIS REBELLION IS REMEMBERED IN SCRIPTURE NOT ONLY AS ISRAEL’S (NUM 20:13, 24; 27:14; DEUT. 6:16; 9:22; 33:8; PSS 81:7; 95:8; 106:32; HEB 3:8) BUT MOSES’ AND AARON’S (NUM 27:14; 20:24; DEUT. 32:51; PS 106:32). 17:5 GOD IS READY WITH A SOLUTION, JUST AS HE HAD BEEN, OF COURSE, IN THE PRIOR TESTING’S IN WHICH HE ALSO BROUGHT ISRAEL TO A CIRCUMSTANCE WHERE THEIR CONFIDENCE IN HIM WOULD BE CHALLENGED BY WHAT THEY ENCOUNTERED RELATIVE TO THEIR EXPECTATIONS OF WHAT THEY SHOULD HAVE BEEN REQUIRED TO ENCOUNTER. MOSES SYMBOLICALLY TOOK THE POSITION OF THE LEADER OF THE PEOPLE IN A MANNER THAT MAY INDICATE THAT HE WAS GIVEN THE HONOR BEFORE THE PEOPLE TO SUBSTITUTE TEMPORARILY FOR THE PILLAR OF CLOUD/FIRE, IN WHICH FORM GOD PRESUMABLY REAPPEARED AT HOREB IN THE NEXT VERSE, OR A MANNER THAT MAY INDICATE GOD’S INSISTENCE THAT MOSES LEAD THE PEOPLE RATHER THAN REFLECT THE PEOPLE’S VALUES. VERSE 5 IS MORE LITERALLY TRANSLATED: “THE LORD SAID TO MOSES, ‘GET OUT IN FRONT OF THE PEOPLE. TAKE WITH YOU SOME OF THE ELDERS OF ISRAEL, AND TAKE IN YOUR HAND YOUR ROD WITH WHICH YOU STRUCK THE NILE, AND START WALKING.’” IN OTHER WORDS, SPECIAL EMPHASIS IS PLACED ON MOSES’ GETTING “AHEAD OF THE PEOPLE,” THE POSITION THAT EITHER THE DIVINE PILLAR OR THE “ANGEL OF THE LORD” HELD UNDER THE USUAL CONDITIONS. “SOME OF THE ELDERS” (LEADERS) OF THE PEOPLE AS WELL AS THE STAFF [ROD OR WAND] OF GOD WERE REQUIRED: THE ELDERS, TO BE WITNESSES OF GOD’S PROVISION SO AS TO QUELL THE DISTURBANCE OF THE PEOPLE, AND THE STAFF, TO SYMBOLIZE GOD’S PRESENCE (WHICH HAD BEEN DOUBTED BY THE PEOPLE AS V. 7 INDICATES) SO THAT THE MIRACLE WOULD PROPERLY BE ATTRIBUTED TO HIM RATHER THAN TO MOSES OR ANYONE OR ANYTHING ELSE. MOSES HAD USED THE STAFF [ROD OR WAND] TO STRIKE THE NILE; NOW HE WOULD USE IT TO STRIKE WATER IN A DIFFERENT SENSE, THAT IS, BY STRIKING A ROCK. 17:6 GOD’S PRESENCE AND POWER REPRESENT THE ESSENTIALS FOR ANY MIRACLE, AND GOD EXPLICITLY PROMISED MOSES HIS PRESENCE IN SAYING “I WILL STAND THERE BEFORE YOU BY THE ROCK AT HOREB.” HOREB IS THE OTHER NAME BY WHICH MOUNT SINAI IS KNOWN. THE PROVISION OF WATER IS A DIVINE GIFT IN MANY BIBLICAL CONTEXTS. HERE, IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE ENCAMPMENT AT REPHIDIM NEAR SINAI, GOD DID NOT MERELY ALLOW THE ISRAELITES TO FIND WATER BUT SHOWED THEM HIS PROVISION FOR THEM BY SUPPLYING THAT WATER IN A PLACE IT WAS NOT OTHERWISE AVAILABLE: FROM A ROCK AT THE BASE OF THE MOUNTAIN OF GOD. SINCE THE VERY LOCATION OF MOUNT SINAI IS IN DISPUTE, IT CAN HARDLY BE EXPECTED THAT THE LOCATION OF THIS ROCK COULD BE EASILY RECOVERED. THERE ARE A LARGE NUMBER OF ROCKS AT THE BASE OF MOUNT SINAI (ANY ROCKY OUTCROPPING OR LARGE ROCK FORMATION CAN BE CALLED A “ROCK” IN HB.), AND ONE OF THESE WAS INDICATED BY GOD’S PRESENCE (I WILL STAND THERE”), ALMOST SURELY THROUGH THE PILLAR OF CLOUD/FIRE. USING THE STAFF [ROD OR WAND], MOSES WAS TO STRIKE THE ROCK SO THAT IT WOULD YIELD WATER—HARDLY A NORMAL MEANS OF FINDING WATER BUT IN THIS CASE PART OF THE PLAN TO SHOW ISRAEL GOD’S CARE FOR THEM AND THE IMPORTANCE OF HIS PRESENCE AT MOUNT SINAI. MOSES CARRIED OUT HIS ASSIGNMENT TO STRIKE THE ROCK WITH GOD’S STAFF [ROD OR WAND] “IN THE SIGHT OF THE ELDERS OF ISRAEL” SO THEY COULD BE WITNESSES FOR THE SAKE OF THE NATION AS A WHOLE TO THIS REVELATION. 17:7 MOSES NAMED THE LOCATION OF THE WATER AT THE BASE OF MOUNT SINAI “MASSAH AND MERIBAH,” A NAME THAT IN ENGLISH COULD BE RENDERED EITHER IN HYPHENATED FORM (“MASSAH-MERIBAH”) OR BY AN EQUIVALENCY STATEMENT (“MASSAH, ALSO KNOWN AS MERIBAH”), BUT HERE IT ACTUALLY IS MORE LIKELY RENDERED MEANINGFULLY “BOTH MASSAH AND MERIBAH” SINCE MOSES APPARENTLY MEANT FOR BOTH NAMES TO BE USED EVEN IF NOT NECESSARILY ALWAYS TOGETHER.187 IN HEBREW, “MASSAH” MEANS “TESTING/TRIAL/TEMPTATION,” AND “MERIBAH” MEANS “PROTEST/CONTENTION/QUARREL/STRIFE.” ONLY HERE IS THE LOCATION IDENTIFIED BY BOTH ITS NAMES. THE NAME OCCURS AS MASSAH ALONE IN DEUT. 6:16; 9:22; IT IS MERIBAH ALONE IN NUM 20:13, 24; 27:14; PSS 81:7; 106:32. BOTH NAMES ARE EMPLOYED IN POETIC PARALLELISM IN THE SONGS OF DEUT. 33:8; PS 95:8. DOES THE FACT THAT MOSES CHOSE TWO NAMES FOR THE SITE HINT AT THE DEEP CONCERN HE HAD ABOUT THE REBELLION IN WHICH HE HAD PARTICIPATED? COULD IT REPRESENT THE RESULT OF ROILING IN HIS MIND THE EVENTS AND THEIR OUTCOME—NOT MERELY THE WATER BUT THE FACT THAT HE HAD BEEN COMPLICIT IN THE REBELLION OF THE PEOPLE BY ALSO COMPLAINING TO STEPHEN YAHWEH? THE TEXT DOES NOT SAY, BUT IT MAY BE REASONABLE TO ASSUME THAT THE PRESERVATION OF THE TWO NAMES AND THE REPEATED REFERENCE TO THE PLACE AND EVENT IN LATER BIBLICAL LITERATURE INCLUDING HIS OWN WRITINGS IN NUMBERS AND DEUTERONOMY SUGGEST THAT MOSES UNDERSTOOD ALREADY THE SIGNIFICANCE OF WHAT THE ISRAELITES HAD DONE AND HIS ACQUIESCENCE TO IT. THE ISRAELITES’ INEXCUSABLE ATTITUDE BECOMES CLEAR WITH MOSES’ CONCLUDING STATEMENT TO THE ENTIRE STORY: “THEY TESTED THE LORD SAYING, ‘IS THE LORD AMONG US OR NOT?’” HAD THE PEOPLE SAID SOMETHING LIKE, “DOES THE LORD INTEND FOR US TO BECOME WEAKER AND WEAKER WHILE WE WAIT FOR HIM TO SUPPLY US WITH WATER?” IT WOULD STILL HAVE BEEN AN UNTRUSTING STATEMENT AND EVIDENCE OF LACK OF FAITH. BUT FOR THE PEOPLE ACTUALLY TO DOUBT GOD’S PRESENCE AMONG THEM WAS OUTRAGEOUSLY UNFAITHFUL. HIS PRESENCE WAS OBVIOUSLY MANIFEST AT ALL TIMES, AS IT WAS AT THAT VERY TIME THROUGH THE PILLAR OF CLOUD/FIRE, SO THE PEOPLE’S QUESTION MUST BE SEEN AS NOTHING OTHER THAN A CONTEMPT OF THE LORD’S LEADERSHIP OVER THEM. IT WOULD BE AKIN TO ASKING A RUNNER IN THE MIDST OF RUNNING A MARATHON, “DO YOU INTEND TO RUN IN THIS RACE?” OR ASKING A MOTHER WHILE SHE IS IN THE KITCHEN WORKING HARD TO GET THE FAMILY’S MEAL READY, “ARE WE GOING TO HAVE ANY DINNER TONIGHT?” IT IS AN INSULT. IT LOOKS AT THE OBVIOUS AND IMPLIES BY SNIDELY DENYING IT THAT IT IS NO GOOD. ISRAEL THUS INCURRED GOD’S WRATH AND CHALLENGED GOD IN A WAY HE COULD NOT IGNORE.**

**BATTLE AGAINST THE AMALEKITES AT REPHIDIM AND THE CURSE ON AMALEK (17:8–16)**

**8 THE AMALEKITES CAME AND ATTACKED THE ISRAELITES AT REPHIDIM. 9 MOSES SAID TO JOSHUA, “CHOOSE SOME OF OUR MEN AND GO OUT TO FIGHT THE AMALEKITES. TOMORROW I WILL STAND ON TOP OF THE HILL WITH THE STAFF [ROD OR WAND] OF GOD IN MY HANDS.” 10 SO JOSHUA FOUGHT THE AMALEKITES AS MOSES HAD ORDERED, AND MOSES, AARON AND HUR WENT TO THE TOP OF THE HILL. 11 AS LONG AS MOSES HELD UP HIS HANDS, THE ISRAELITES WERE WINNING, BUT WHENEVER HE LOWERED HIS HANDS, THE AMALEKITES WERE WINNING. 12 WHEN MOSES’ HANDS GREW TIRED, THEY TOOK A STONE AND PUT IT UNDER HIM AND HE SAT ON IT. AARON AND HUR HELD HIS HANDS UP—ONE ON ONE SIDE, ONE ON THE OTHER—SO THAT HIS HANDS REMAINED STEADY TILL SUNSET. 13 SO JOSHUA OVERCAME THE AMALEKITE ARMY WITH THE SWORD. 14 THEN THE LORD SAID TO MOSES, “WRITE THIS ON A SCROLL AS SOMETHING TO BE REMEMBERED AND MAKE SURE THAT JOSHUA HEARS IT, BECAUSE I WILL COMPLETELY BLOT OUT THE MEMORY OF AMALEK FROM UNDER HEAVEN.” 15 MOSES BUILT AN ALTAR AND CALLED IT THE LORD IS MY BANNER. 16 HE SAID, “FOR HANDS WERE LIFTED UP TO THE THRONE OF THE LORD. THE LORD WILL BE AT WAR AGAINST THE AMALEKITES FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION.”**

**17:8 MOSES DID NOT MENTION THE REASON FOR THE AMALEKITES’ ATTACK ON ISRAEL, BUT EVEN HIS VERY FIRST READERS WOULD HAVE KNOWN SOMETHING OF THE HISTORY OF ENMITY AGAINST ISRAEL THAT CARRIED ON FROM THE ESAU-JACOB RIVALRY DESCRIBED IN GENESIS AND SOMETHING OF THE AMALEKITE MODUS OPERANDI. AMALEK WAS A GRANDSON OF ESAU (GEN 36:12), AND HIS DESCENDANTS ORGANIZED THEMSELVES INTO A VERY EARLY NATIONAL NOMADIC GROUP (“FIRST AMONG THE NATIONS,” IN THE WORDS OF BALAAM, NUM 24:20) THAT LIVED PARTLY BY ATTACKING OTHER POPULATION GROUPS AND PLUNDERING THEIR WEALTH (CF. JUDG. 3:13). THE AMALEKITES HAD DOMESTICATED THE CAMEL AND USED ITS SWIFTNESS EFFECTIVELY IN SURPRISE ATTACKS. NOT ONLY DID THE AMALEKITES ATTACK ISRAEL AT REPHIDIM, BUT A YEAR LATER THEY ATTACKED THEM AGAIN AT HORMAH, WHEN THE ISRAELITES HAD BEEN DRIVEN OUT OF SOUTHERN CANAAN AND WERE ON THE RUN AFTER THEIR FOOLISH ATTEMPT TO ENTER THE PROMISED LAND IN SPITE OF GOD’S COMMAND THROUGH MOSES THAT THEY COULD NOT (NUM 14:43–45). THE AMALEKITES MAY HAVE TRAVELED FARTHER SOUTH ON THIS OCCASION THAN WAS THEIR USUAL HABIT IN ORDER TO ATTACK THE ISRAELITES PERHAPS BECAUSE THEY HAD HEARD THAT ISRAEL WAS FAR FROM ANY POPULATION CENTER AND RELATIVELY DEFENSELESS. THE FACT THAT IN THE ENSUING ENCOUNTER THE ISRAELITES LOST TO THE AMALEKITES EXCEPT WHEN MOSES KEPT THE STAFF [ROD OR WAND] OF GOD ELEVATED INDICATES THE BASIC MILITARY SUPERIORITY OF THE AMALEKITES TO THE ISRAELITES, SOMETHING THEY PRESUMABLY WERE COUNTING ON IN LAUNCHING THIS RAID IN THE FIRST PLACE. 17:9 JOSHUA APPEARS HERE FOR THE FIRST TIME IN THE NARRATIVE, THUS THE FIRST TIME IN THE HOLY BIBLE. HE APPARENTLY HAD SPENT TIME DURING THE DAYS ON THE MARCH FROM EGYPT HELPING INSTRUCT THE ISRAELITES IN MARTIAL SKILLS AND STRATEGY, WHICH WOULD NOW SEE THEIR FIRST TESTING IN ACTUAL COMBAT. HE WAS SURELY MUCH YOUNGER THAN THE EIGHTY-YEAR-OLD MOSES SINCE LATER HE BECAME MOSES’ SUCCESSOR. IN 33:11 MOSES REFERRED TO JOSHUA AS HIS “YOUNG ASSISTANT,” WHICH SUGGESTS THAT HE WAS A RIGHT-HAND MAN TO MOSES IN VARIOUS WAYS, THOUGH AT THIS POINT THE ABILITY TO LEAD THE PEOPLE IN BATTLE APPEARED PARAMOUNT. THE NIV TRANSLATION “CHOOSE SOME OF OUR MEN” SOUNDS POTENTIALLY MISLEADING SINCE IT MAY BE UNDERSTOOD TO IMPLY THAT THERE WERE MANY ISRAELITES READY FOR BATTLE AND JOSHUA SELECTED ONLY SOME OUT OF THE ENTIRE ARMY (AS LATER AT AI, E.G., AS DESCRIBED IN JOSH 7:3–4). IN FACT, AN OPPOSITE SORT OF SCENARIO PROBABLY PRESENTED ITSELF: THE TEXT LITERALLY SAYS, “CHOOSE MEN FOR US AND GO OUT TO FIGHT AGAINST AMALEK TOMORROW.” THAT IS, JOSHUA PROBABLY HAD THE CHALLENGE OF FINDING MEN WHO COULD FIGHT RATHER THAN PARING DOWN TO A MANAGEABLE AMOUNT THE SIZE OF THE GROUP THAT WOULD BE NEEDED FROM AMONG ALL THOSE WHO WERE QUALIFIED. JOSHUA MAY HAVE APPROACHED THIS TASK OF CHOOSING ON THE BASIS OF WHAT LATER BECAME REGULARIZED: THE CRITERION THAT PEOPLE WHO FOUGHT IN BATTLE SHOULD BE HEALTHY MALES BETWEEN THE AGES OF TWENTY AND FIFTY. OF INTEREST IS THAT THE ISRAELITES HAD A DAY TO PREPARE FOR BATTLE. THE AMALEKITES MAY HAVE ARRIVED GRADUALLY AT REPHIDIM, SIGNALING THEIR PRESENCE EARLY IN THE PROCESS, OR ELSE ADVANCE PARTIES MAY HAVE ENCOUNTERED THE ISRAELITES THEN GONE NORTH TO GET THE MAIN BODY OF WARRIORS WITH WHICH TO ENGAGE THEM, THUS ALERTING THE ISRAELITES AND ALLOWING THEM TIME TO PREPARE. ALTERNATIVELY, THE AMALEKITES MAY HAVE ANNOUNCED TO THE ISRAELITES THAT IF THEY DID NOT SURRENDER THEIR VALUABLES, THEY WOULD BE ATTACKED THE NEXT DAY. AT ANY RATE, JOSHUA HAD TO PULL TOGETHER AN ARMY WITH A SINGLE DAY’S NOTICE, AND PART OF THE CRITERIA HE USED FOR SELECTING FIGHTERS MAY WELL HAVE BEEN SIMPLY IDENTIFYING THOSE WHO HAD A SWORD. MANY MEN MAY HAVE BEGUN TO CARRY SOME SORTS OF KNIVES OR SHORT SWORDS, BUT IT IS HARD TO IMAGINE THAT THE EGYPTIANS HAD ALLOWED THE ISRAELITES MUCH BY WAY OF ARMAMENT WHILE THEY WERE STILL IN EGYPT. WHATEVER ARMS THE MEN NOW OWNED HAD PROBABLY BEEN MANUFACTURED IN THE WILDERNESS AND MAY NOT HAVE BEEN OF THE HIGHEST QUALITY—AND ALMOST SURELY NOT THE GREATEST QUANTITY. THIS IS THE FIRST ACCOUNT IN EXODUS OF MOSES’ MAKING SPECIAL USE OF THE STAFF [ROD OR WAND] OF GOD WITHOUT BEING INSTRUCTED BY GOD TO DO SO (“TOMORROW I WILL STAND ON TOP OF THE HILL WITH THE STAFF [ROD OR WAND] OF GOD IN MY HANDS”). DOES THIS WORDING MEAN THAT HE WAS NOW CONFIDENT OF HIS OWN AUTHORITY TO USE THE STAFF [ROD OR WAND] AS HE SAW FIT? ALMOST SURELY NOT. BY THIS TIME MOSES EXPECTED HIS READERS TO REALIZE THAT HE WOULD NEVER USE THE STAFF [ROD OR WAND] UNLESS COMMISSIONED BY GOD TO DO SO. IN THIS RELATIVELY BRIEF ACCOUNT OF ISRAEL’S FIRST WARFARE, MANY POTENTIALLY SUPPORTIVE DETAILS ARE OMITTED, AND ONE OF THEM SURELY IS THE FACT THAT GOD WAS BEHIND THE CALL TO BATTLE AND THE DETERMINATION TO USE THE DIVINE STAFF [ROD OR WAND] AS A SYMBOL OF GOD’S PRESENCE WITH THE PEOPLE DURING THE BATTLE.**

**EXCURSUS: ISRAELITE HOLY WAR**

**THE ISRAELITE ENCOUNTER WITH THE AMALEKITES AT REPHIDIM REPRESENTS AN EXAMPLE OF OLD TESTAMENT HOLY WAR, AN INSTANCE THAT ANTICIPATES THE FULLER DELINEATION OF THE CONCEPT IN LATER TEXTS. THE PRINCIPLES OF HOLY WAR ARE CODIFIED IN DEUT. 20:1–20, BUT IMPORTANT EXAMPLES AND SUPPLEMENTAL ASPECTS OF THE CONCEPT ARE FOUND IN MANY LOCATIONS. HOLY WAR MAY BE SUMMARIZED BY TWELVE PROPOSITIONS:**

**1. NO STANDING ARMY WAS ALLOWED. THIS MEANT THAT THE BATTLES WERE FOUGHT BY AMATEURS, VOLUNTEERS, WHO HAD TO DEPEND ON GOD FOR THEIR SUCCESS AND COULD NOT BOAST IN THEIR OWN ACCOMPLISHMENTS OR CLAIM SPECIAL MILITARY PROWESS. A POTENTIAL SOLDIER WAS ALLOWED—INDEED INVITED—TO GIVE VIRTUALLY ANY EXCUSE FOR NOT SERVING IN A BATTLE BECAUSE GOD WANTED ONLY THOSE WHO DESIRED TO BE USED BY HIM AS HIS WARRIORS.**

**2. NO PAY FOR SOLDIERS WAS PERMITTED. THE ENTIRELY VOLUNTEER ARMY COULD NOT SEEK PERSONAL REWARD BY MEANS OF FINANCIAL COMPENSATION FOR THEIR EFFORTS. INSTEAD, THEY WERE TO UNDERSTAND THEMSELVES AS RESPONDING TO GOD’S CALL AND NOT TO ANY OTHER INCENTIVES. THEY WERE GOING TO WAR AS HIS AGENTS OF JUSTICE, NOT AS PEOPLE SEEKING THEIR OWN ADVANTAGE.**

**3. NO PERSONAL SPOIL/PLUNDER COULD BE TAKEN. IT WAS THE STANDARD PRACTICE IN THE ANCIENT WORLD FOR WARRIORS TO BE ATTRACTED BY THE PROMISE OF SPOIL/PLUNDER UPON SUCCESSFULLY CONQUERING AN ENEMY. THE GENERAL RULE WAS THAT A SOLDIER COULD KEEP ANYTHING HE COULD TAKE FROM THE ENEMY (OR THE ENEMY CITY OR LAND) AND CARRY OFF.**

**4. HOLY WAR COULD BE FOUGHT ONLY FOR THE CONQUEST OR DEFENSE OF THE PROMISED LAND. ISRAEL HAD NO RIGHT TO ANY OTHER LAND OR TO WARFARE FOR ANY OTHER PURPOSE. WHEN DAVID TRIED TO BUILD AN EMPIRE AND TAKE A CENSUS IN PREPARATION FOR THE WARS THAT WOULD BE REQUIRED TO EXTEND THAT EMPIRE BEYOND THE BOUNDARIES OF THE PROMISED LAND, HE AND ISRAEL (THE PEOPLE HAD FOR THE MOST PART WILLINGLY PARTICIPATED) WERE SEVERELY PUNISHED (2 SAM 24:1–17).197**

**5. ONLY AT STEPHEN YAHWEH’S CALL COULD HOLY WAR BE LAUNCHED. THERE WAS NO OPPORTUNITY TO HOLD A NATIONAL REFERENDUM OR FOR A KING OR ANY OTHER PERSON, INCLUDING THE HIGH PRIEST, TO DECLARE HOLY WAR. GOD ALONE WAS THE ARBITER OF WHEN SUCH A WAR WOULD BE UNDERTAKEN, IF AT ALL, AND A TRUE HOLY WAR WAS THUS FOUGHT STRICTLY AND ONLY AT HIS CALL.**

**6. SOLELY THROUGH A PROPHET COULD THAT DIVINE CALL COME. PROPHETS WERE SPOKESPERSONS FOR GOD, WHO DID NOT MAKE UP THEIR MESSAGES BUT SAID WHAT GOD HAD PLACED IN THEIR MINDS TO SAY. NEITHER PRIEST NOR KING NOR NOBLES NOR TRIBAL LEADERS NOR ANY OTHER AUTHORITIES EXCEPT A PROPHET WERE IN A POSITION TO DECLARE A HOLY WAR. MOSES WAS, OF COURSE, AT ALL TIMES A PROPHET.**

**7. STEPHEN YAHWEH DID THE REAL FIGHTING IN HOLY WAR BECAUSE THE WAR WAS ALWAYS HIS. ON THE COSMIC SCALE HOLY WAR WAS A WAR TO DEFEAT SATAN AND HIS ANGELS, WHOSE INFLUENCE OVER EARTHLY MATTERS IS INVARIABLY HARMFUL. ISRAEL WAS SIMPLY HIS HUMAN, EARTHLY DELEGATE TO REPRESENT STEPHEN YAHWEH’S WILL, BUT HE DID THE REAL FIGHTING, WITH THE ISRAELITE PEOPLE MORE OR LESS CONSCIOUS THAT THEY WERE “GOING THROUGH THE MOTIONS.”**

**8. HOLY WAR WAS A RELIGIOUS UNDERTAKING, INVOLVING FASTING, ABSTINENCE FROM SEX, AND/OR OTHER FORMS OF SELF DENIAL. IT WAS AN ACT OF OBEDIENCE TO GOD AND NOT OF NATIONAL PRIDE OR MILITARY STRATEGY.**

**9. A GOAL OF HOLY WAR WAS THE TOTAL ANNIHILATION OF AN EVIL CULTURE (THE ENEMY, THE CANAANITES). THIS IS BASED ON GEN 15:12–16, IN WHICH GOD REVEALS TO ABRAHAM THE PLAN OF CONQUEST AS A MEANS OF ELIMINATING THE “AMORITES” (CANAANITES) ONCE THEIR PROGRESSIVELY EVIL CULTURE HAD BECOME SO CORRUPT THAT GOD COULD DO NOTHING OTHER THAN TO EXTERMINATE IT. THE TOTAL ANNIHILATION OF THE ENEMY AND ALL THAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN TAKEN AS PLUNDER FOLLOWED LOGICALLY FROM THIS COMMITMENT.**

**10. THE VIOLATOR OF THE RULES OF HOLY WAR BECAME AN ENEMY. THOSE WHO VIOLATED THE RULES, SUCH AS BY NOT PRACTICING THE REQUIRED SELF-DENIAL OR THE REQUIRED DISDAIN FOR SPOILS OR THE LIKE, NORMALLY HAD TO BE PUNISHED WITH DEATH, JUST AS DEATH IS THE DUE OF THE ENEMY BEING FOUGHT AGAINST.**

**11. EXCEPTIONS AND MUTATIONS WERE POSSIBLE, ESPECIALLY IN THE CASE OF COMBAT WITH THOSE WHO WERE NOT ORIGINAL INHABITANTS OF THE PROMISED LAND, AND THEREFORE WHO WERE NOT AUTOMATICALLY TO BE EXTERMINATED. ACCORDINGLY, THE AMALEKITES, AS NONINHABITANTS OF THE PROMISED LAND, WERE ADDED TO THE LIST OF THOSE WHO MUST BE WIPED OUT BY SPECIAL DIVINE DECREE IN 17:14 BECAUSE OTHERWISE THE ISRAELITES MIGHT NOT HAVE BEEN CERTAIN ABOUT WHETHER OR NOT TO SPARE AMALEKITE LIVES.**

**12. DECISIVE, RAPID VICTORY CHARACTERIZED FAITHFUL HOLY WAR. IT WAS THE EXPECTATION THAT IF GOD WAS BEHIND A WAR, THAT WAR WOULD ESSENTIALLY BE CONCLUDED IN A DAY, THE “DAY OF STEPHEN YAHWEH” OR “DAY OF THE LORD.” IN THE ANCIENT WORLD THERE IS A SOMEWHAT FUZZY DISTINCTION BETWEEN A “BATTLE” AND A “WAR” BECAUSE EACH MILITARY ENCOUNTER WITH EACH NEW ETHNIC GROUP OR CITY STATE COULD BE CONSIDERED EITHER A SEPARATE WAR OR A SEPARATE BATTLE WITHIN A PROTRACTED WAR OF CONQUEST. NEVERTHELESS, GOD IS REGARDED AS CAPABLE OF VANQUISHING ALL HIS FOES IN A SINGLE DAY. THAT MOSES SHOULD ANTICIPATE A BATTLE AGAINST THE AMALEKITES IN A SINGLE DAY IS CONSISTENT WITH THIS UNDERSTANDING OF HOLY WAR.**

**17:10 THE NEXT DAY THE BATTLE BEGAN, WITH JOSHUA LEADING THE ISRAELITE ARMY ON THE BATTLEGROUND [COMBAT ZONE] AND MOSES “ON TOP OF THE HILL” WITH “AARON AND HUR” ACCOMPANYING HIM. THE IDENTITY OF THE HILL IN QUESTION REMAINS UNCERTAIN SINCE THE REGION ALL AROUND SINAI/REPHIDIM HAS PLENTY OF HILLS, AND ANYTHING FROM A SMALL ELEVATION TO A MOUNTAIN CAN BE CALLED A “HILL” (GIBʿĀH) IN HEBREW. AARON IS ALREADY WELL KNOWN AS MOSES’ BROTHER AND THE COLEADER OF THE ISRAELITE EXODUS. BUT HUR IS INTRODUCED HERE FOR THE FIRST TIME. HIS NAME SEEMS TO MEAN THE EQUIVALENT OF “WHITEY” IN HEBREW, IN AND OF ITSELF NOT SPECIAL. MORE IMPORTANTLY, JOSEPHUS IDENTIFIES HIM AS THE HUSBAND OF MIRIAM. BECAUSE OF THE PROMINENCE GIVEN TO HUR AS AN APPELLATE JUDGE OVER THE PEOPLE IN MOSES’ ABSENCE IN 24:14, IT WOULD SEEM THAT HE WAS ONE OF THE CHIEF ELDERS OF THE NATION. WHETHER OR NOT HE WAS THE JUDAHITE HUR WHOSE GRANDSONS (THE SON OF ONE’S SON OR ONE’S DAUGHTER) WAS THE SUPERVISING CRAFTSMAN FOR THE TEMPLE FURNISHINGS CANNOT BE DETERMINED. THE NAME IS COMMON ENOUGH (CF. THE MIDIANITE HUR MENTIONED IN NUM 31:8; JOSH 13:21) THAT MANY PEOPLE BORE IT. 17:11 THIS VERSE DOES NOT TEACH THE EFFICACY OF “PRAYER WITHOUT CEASING” BUT RATHER THE FACT THAT ISRAELITE HOLY WAR IS GOD’S WAR. GOD REINFORCED THIS IN THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF MOSES, AARON, AND HUR AS WELL AS THE ISRAELITE ARMY BY CORRELATING THE POSITION OF THE STAFF [ROD OR WAND] WITH THE FORTUNES OF THE ARMY. IT WAS IMPORTANT THAT THE ISRAELITES UNDERSTAND UNMISTAKABLY THAT THE ONLY REASON THEY COULD WIN AGAINST THE AMALEKITES WAS THAT GOD WAS FIGHTING FOR THEM, GIVING THEM THE VICTORY. THE STAFF FUNCTIONED IN THE CASE OF THIS BATTLE JUST AS IT HAD IN THE CASE OF THE PLAGUES. AS LONG AS THE STAFF [ROD OR WAND] OF GOD WAS RAISED HIGH, JUST AS IN THE MIRACULOUS PLAGUES AND THE MIRACLE OF THE WATER FROM THE ROCK IMMEDIATELY PRECEDING, GOD’S DECISIVE ROLE WAS PROPERLY ACKNOWLEDGED SYMBOLICALLY AND THE ARMY PREVAILED. WHEN THE STAFF [ROD OR WAND] WAS LOWERED (BECAUSE MOSES GREW TIRED, AS V. 12 MAKES EXPLICIT), “THE AMALEKITES WERE WINNING.” THUS, THE STAFF [ROD OR WAND] PORTRAYED GOD’S SOVEREIGNTY IN THE CONSEQUENCES OF BATTLE. 17:12 THE STAFF [ROD OR WAND] HAD TO BE ABOVE MOSES’ HEAD—SYMBOLIZING GOD’S SUPERIORITY TO ALL HIS PEOPLE AS THE LEADER IN HOLY WAR—SO WHEN MOSES BECAME SO TIRED THAT HE COULD NOT KEEP IT ABOVE HIS HEAD LONG ENOUGH FOR THE ISRAELITES TO SUCCEED AGAINST THE AMALEKITES, AN INTERVENTION WAS NECESSARY. THE PROBLEM WAS NOT MOSES’ AGE OR PHYSICAL CONDITION. HE DIED A STRONG MAN. THE PROBLEM WAS THE FACT THAT HUMAN BEINGS CANNOT KEEP THEIR ARMS ABOVE THEIR HEADS INDEFINITELY; ANYONE WOULD EVENTUALLY TIRE UNDER THE SAME CIRCUMSTANCES. WITH MOSES SEATED ON A (LOW) STONE AND HIS HANDS HELD ABOVE HIS HEAD BY AARON ON THE ONE SIDE AND HUR ON THE OTHER, THE STAFF COULD BE ABOVE THE HEIGHT OF HIS HEAD BECAUSE AARON AND HUR COULD KEEP THEIR ARMS AT A COMFORTABLE HANGING HEIGHT UNDER MOSES’ ELBOWS, PROBABLY WITH THEIR FINGERS LOCKED TOGETHER CRADLING HIS ELBOWS. 17:13 BY NIGHTTIME THIS ARRANGEMENT, FULFILLING THE PURPOSE OF HAVING THE STAFF [ROD OR WAND] ALONG FOR THE BATTLE (V. 9), RESULTED IN A TOTAL VICTORY FOR ISRAEL OVER AMALEK. NOTE THAT THE TEXT SAYS THAT “JOSHUA OVERCAME THE AMALEKITE ARMY,” NOT BECAUSE HE ALONE DESERVED CREDIT BUT IN KEEPING WITH STANDARD ANCIENT NARRATIVE STYLE THAT IDENTIFIES EVENTS WITH THEIR LEADERS. 17:14 ARE GOD’S WORDS TO MOSES (“WRITE THIS ON A SCROLL AS SOMETHING TO BE REMEMBERED”) PART OF MOSES’ GROWING UNDERSTANDING THAT HE WAS TO BECOME A PRESERVER OF THIS HISTORY? WE CANNOT BE SURE BECAUSE THE MECHANISMS OF GOD’S LEADING MOSES TO WRITE THE PENTATEUCH ARE NEVER DESCRIBED IN THE PENTATEUCH. WE CANNOT KNOW, EITHER, WHETHER THE “SCROLL” ON WHICH THE STORY OF THE ENTIRELY SELFISH, UNWARRANTED AMALEKITE ATTACK WAS WRITTEN AS “SOMETHING TO BE REMEMBERED” WAS A SEPARATE SCROLL OR THE SCROLL OF EXODUS. THE TRANSLATION OF THE HEBREW COULD JUST AS WELL BE, “WRITE THIS AS A MEMORIAL IN THE BOOK,” THE BOOK BEING THE ONE MOSES ALREADY KNEW FROM GOD’S INSPIRATION THAT HE WAS GOING TO HAVE TO WRITE (I.E., AT LEAST EXODUS AND PERHAPS THE ENTIRE PENTATEUCH). “MAKE SURE THAT JOSHUA HEARS IT” REPRESENTS A WAY OF SAYING THAT JOSHUA WOULD HAVE AMONG HIS MANY ASSIGNMENTS AS MOSES’ SUCCESSOR TO BE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR AMALEKITES, WHO WERE HEREAFTER AS A RESULT OF THEIR TREACHERY TO BE CONSIDERED IN THE SAME CATEGORY AS CANAANITES—PART OF A CULTURE FIT FOR EXTERMINATION. THIS IS THE EARLIEST PASSAGE IN THE PENTATEUCH TO IMPLY THAT JOSHUA WOULD SUCCEED MOSES AS ISRAEL’S LEADER. A FURTHER ASSUMPTION WAS THAT JOSHUA WOULD PASS ON TO HIS SUCCESSOR THE OBLIGATION TO EXTERMINATE THE AMALEKITES. INDEED, JOSHUA HIMSELF HAD NO OPPORTUNITY TO DECIMATE AMALEK DURING HIS LIFETIME, BUT LEFT THE TASK TO HIS SUCCESSORS, WITH SAUL AND DAVID ACTUALLY FINISHING THE JOB. GOD’S PREDICTION, “I WILL COMPLETELY BLOT OUT THE MEMORY OF AMALEK FROM UNDER HEAVEN,” CONSTITUTES A VERY EARLY “ORACLE AGAINST A FOREIGN NATION,” A COMMON FORM OF ORACLE FOUND LATER IN THE PROPHETICAL BOOKS. SUCH ORACLES PREDICT THE DESTRUCTION OR SUPPRESSION OF AN ENEMY OF ISRAEL (AND THUS AUTOMATICALLY AN ENEMY OF GOD) AT SOME TIME OF GOD’S CHOOSING IN THE FUTURE. 17:15 MOSES THEN BUILT AN ALTAR THERE AND NAMED IT. THE PRACTICE OF BUILDING AN ALTAR TO COMMEMORATE A SIGNIFICANT BLESSING FROM GOD (WHICH CAN TAKE THE FORM OF A RESCUE, A CALLING, A REASSURANCE, OR ANY OTHER BLESSING) BEGAN ALREADY WITH NOAH (GEN 8:20) AND CONTINUED WITH ABRAHAM (GEN 12:7–8) AND THE PATRIARCHS (GEN 26:25; 35:7). ALTARS WERE FOR WORSHIPING GOD, AND WORSHIP ALWAYS INVOLVES THE EXPRESSION OF GRATITUDE FOR BLESSING, WHATEVER ELSE IT ALSO PROPERLY INCLUDES. THE PATRIARCHS TENDED TO BUILD ALTARS WHEREVER THEY LOCATED BECAUSE THEY UNDERSTOOD THEIR OBLIGATION TO WORSHIP CONSISTENTLY. MOSES WAS CARRYING ON THIS TRADITION IN BUILDING THE ALTAR AT REPHIDIM TO EXPRESS THANKSGIVING TO GOD FOR DELIVERING THE ISRAELITES. THE PATRIARCHS ALSO SOMETIMES NAMED ALTARS, PARTICULARLY IN THE CASE OF JACOB (GEN 33:20; 35:7). MOSES HERE FOLLOWS THAT EXAMPLE AS WELL, BY INCLUDING A DIVINE NAME IN THE NAME OF THE ALTAR JUST AS JACOB, FOR EXAMPLE, HAD DONE. MOSES CHOSE THE NAME, LIT., “STEPHEN YAHWEH IS MY SIGNAL POLE” (NIV “THE LORD IS MY BANNER”). THE HEBREW WORD NĒS, HERE TRANSLATED “BANNER” IN THE NIV, DOES HAVE THAT MEANING IN LATER HEBREW IN THE SENSE OF A SHIP’S ENSIGN (EZEK 27:7), BUT IN ALL EARLIER TEXTS IT REFERS NOT TO SOMETHING MADE OF FABRIC OR CLOTH BUT OF A DECORATED POLE HELD HIGH AND USED AS A SIGNAL MARKER OR SIGNAL POLE (ISA 5:26; 11:10, 12; 13:2; 18:13; 30:17 [WHERE IT IS PARALLEL TO A WORD MEANING “FLAG STAFF (ROD OR WAND)”]; 31:9; 49:22; 62:10; JER 4:6, 21; 50:2; 51:12, 27; PS 60:4). IT CAN ALSO HAVE THE MORE GENERIC SENSE OF “SIGN/WARNING” (NUM 26:10) AND CAN AS WELL MEAN JUST “POLE” (NUM 21:8) OR “SHIP’S MAST” (ISA 33:23). MOST OFTEN IT IS USED IN MILITARY CONTEXTS, WHERE THE NĒS IS A SIGNAL POLE AROUND WHICH AN ARMY OR ARMY UNIT CAN RALLY, REGROUP, OR RETURN FOR INSTRUCTIONS. ACCORDINGLY, MOSES’ NAME FOR THE ALTAR MAKES USE OF THOSE CONNECTIONS. BECAUSE STEPHEN YAHWEH HAD SUPPLIED THE SIGN OF HIS FAVOR/PRESENCE/POWER BY THE STAFF [ROD OR WAND]—IN EFFECT A SMALL MILITARY SIGNAL POLE GIVEN TO MOSES—AND HAD DONE SO IN THE CONTEXT OF A MILITARY ENCOUNTER, MOSES STATED BY THE NAME OF THE ALTAR THAT THE STAFF [ROD OR WAND] HE HAD HELD HIGH DURING THE BATTLE IS THE SIGNAL POLE OF STEPHEN YAHWEH, A VISIBLE RALLYING POINT FOR THE ARMY OF ISRAEL IN HOLY WAR. 17:16 MOSES THEN IDENTIFIED THE STAFF [ROD OR WAND] AS NOT MERELY A SIGNAL POLE BUT AS A SYMBOL OF STEPHEN YAHWEH’S THRONE. THE KEY WORDS (TRANSLATED IN THE NIV “AS HANDS WERE LIFTED UP TO THE THRONE OF THE LORD”) ARE PRESERVED IN THE TEXT IN THE OLD BRONZE AGE ORTHOGRAPHY, WHICH DID NOT INDICATE ANY VOWEL LETTERS (MATRES LECTIONIS) OF ANY KIND. THUS YD; ʿĀLÊ, “MY HAND,” IS SPELLED MERELY YD; ʾAL, THE OLD FORM OF ʿAL SEEN TYPICALLY ONLY IN EARLY POETRY (WHICH TENDS TO PRESERVE EARLY ORTHOGRAPHY IN SOME CASES), IS SPELLED JUST ʿL; KISSÊ, THE WORD FOR THRONE IS SPELLED JUST KS, AND THE NAME STEPHEN YAHWEH IS REPRESENTED BY THE COMMON HYPOCORISTICON YAH. WHAT MOSES SAID, THEN, WAS “MY HAND WAS AT/ON [I.E., TOUCHING] STEPHEN YAHWEH’S THRONE,” A WAY OF SAYING, “WHEN I HELD UP THAT STAFF [ROD OR WAND], I WAS SYMBOLIZING THE PRESENCE OF STEPHEN YAHWEH RIGHT WITH US, SITTING ON HIS THRONE, [RULING OVER THE BATTLE AND HELPING US TO WIN].” THE VERSE, AND THUS THE ACCOUNT OF THE BATTLE AGAINST AMALEK, ENDS WITH A SUMMARY OF WHAT GOD HAD TOLD MOSES TO RELAY TO JOSHUA: “[STEPHEN] YAHWEH HAS WAR WITH AMALEK IN EVERY GENERATION,” OR AS THE NIV MORE IDIOMATICALLY PUTS IT, “THE LORD WILL BE AT WAR AGAINST THE AMALEKITES FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION.”**

**THE VISIT AND CONVERSION OF JETHRO (18:1–12)**

**1 NOW JETHRO, THE PRIEST OF MIDIAN AND FATHER-IN-LAW (A RELATIVE BY MARRIAGE AND ESPECIALLY THE FATHER OF A PERSON’S HUSBAND OR WIFE) OF MOSES, HEARD OF EVERYTHING GOD HAD DONE FOR MOSES AND FOR HIS PEOPLE ISRAEL, AND HOW THE LORD HAD BROUGHT ISRAEL OUT OF EGYPT. 2 AFTER MOSES HAD SENT AWAY HIS WIFE ZIPPORAH, HIS FATHER-IN-LAW (A RELATIVE BY MARRIAGE AND ESPECIALLY THE FATHER OF A PERSON’S HUSBAND OR WIFE) JETHRO RECEIVED HER 3 AND HER TWO SONS. ONE SON WAS NAMED GERSHOM, FOR MOSES SAID, “I HAVE BECOME AN ALIEN IN A FOREIGN LAND”; 4 AND THE OTHER WAS NAMED ELIEZER, FOR HE SAID, “MY FATHER’S GOD WAS MY HELPER; HE SAVED ME FROM THE SWORD OF PHARAOH.” 5 JETHRO, MOSES’ FATHER-IN-LAW, TOGETHER WITH MOSES’ SONS AND WIFE, CAME TO HIM IN THE DESERT, WHERE HE WAS CAMPED NEAR THE MOUNTAIN OF GOD. 6 JETHRO HAD SENT WORD TO HIM, “I, YOUR FATHER-IN-LAW (A RELATIVE BY MARRIAGE AND ESPECIALLY THE FATHER OF A PERSON’S HUSBAND OR WIFE)JETHRO, AM COMING TO YOU WITH YOUR WIFE AND HER TWO SONS.” 7 SO MOSES WENT OUT TO MEET HIS FATHER-IN-LAW (A RELATIVE BY MARRIAGE AND ESPECIALLY THE FATHER OF A PERSON’S HUSBAND OR WIFE)AND BOWED DOWN AND KISSED HIM. THEY GREETED EACH OTHER AND THEN WENT INTO THE TENT. 8 MOSES TOLD HIS FATHER-IN-LAW (A RELATIVE BY MARRIAGE AND ESPECIALLY THE FATHER OF A PERSON’S HUSBAND OR WIFE) ABOUT EVERYTHING THE LORD HAD DONE TO PHARAOH AND THE EGYPTIANS FOR ISRAEL’S SAKE AND ABOUT ALL THE HARDSHIPS THEY HAD MET ALONG THE WAY AND HOW THE LORD HAD SAVED THEM. 9 JETHRO WAS DELIGHTED TO HEAR ABOUT ALL THE GOOD THINGS THE LORD HAD DONE FOR ISRAEL IN RESCUING THEM FROM THE HAND OF THE EGYPTIANS. 10 HE SAID, “PRAISE BE TO THE LORD, WHO RESCUED YOU FROM THE HAND OF THE EGYPTIANS AND OF PHARAOH, AND WHO RESCUED THE PEOPLE FROM THE HAND OF THE EGYPTIANS. 11 NOW I KNOW THAT THE LORD IS GREATER THAN ALL OTHER GODS, FOR HE DID THIS TO THOSE WHO HAD TREATED ISRAEL ARROGANTLY.” 12 THEN JETHRO, MOSES’ FATHER-IN-LAW, BROUGHT A BURNT OFFERING AND OTHER SACRIFICES TO GOD, AND AARON CAME WITH ALL THE ELDERS OF ISRAEL TO EAT BREAD WITH MOSES’ FATHER-IN-LAW (A RELATIVE BY MARRIAGE AND ESPECIALLY THE FATHER OF A PERSON’S HUSBAND OR WIFE)IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD. THIS PASSAGE TELLS THE STORY OF THE CONVERSION OF A RELATIVE, MOSES’ FATHER-IN-LAW, A DEVELOPMENT WITH PERSONAL MEANING FOR MANY PEOPLE SINCE ALMOST EVERY BELIEVER CAN NAME A FAMILY MEMBER, CLOSE OR DISTANT, THAT HE OR SHE WANTS TO COME TO FAITH. THE PLACEMENT OF THIS STORY AT THIS POINT IN THE BOOK MAKES GOOD SENSE IN LIGHT OF THE FACT THAT THE MIDIANITES AND AMALEKITES WERE CLOSELY RELATED; THE DEFEAT OF THE AMALEKITES (17:8–16), FOLLOWED BY THE CONVERSION OF A MIDIANITE (HIGH?) PRIEST (18:1–12) BOTH DEMONSTRATE STEPHEN YAHWEH’S TRUTH AND AUTHORITY AND HIS SUPERIORITY OVER FALSE GODS AND THEIR ADHERENTS. THE GEOGRAPHICAL PLACEMENT OF THE ISRAELITES ALSO MAKES THE NARRATIVE PLACEMENT OF THIS STORY LOGICAL: JETHRO CERTAINLY KNEW WHERE MOUNT SINAI WAS SINCE IN HIS EMPLOYMENT UNDER JETHRO’S AUTHORITY MOSES HAD DRIVEN HIS SHEEP THERE (3:1). MOUNT SINAI/HOREB MAY HAVE BEEN ABOUT THE FARTHEST REACH OF TERRITORY THAT MIDIANITES HAD PERSONAL FAMILIARITY WITH, BUT SINCE THEY DID HAVE KNOWLEDGE OF IT, FOR JETHRO TO TRAVEL TO IT ONCE THE ISRAELITES HAD REACHED IT MADE PERFECT SENSE. THIS ALL MAY EVEN HAVE BEEN PREARRANGED: MOSES HAD SENT ZIPPORAH AND HIS SONS BACK TO JETHRO WHEN HE CAME TO THE BORDER OF EGYPTIAN-CONTROLLED TERRITORY, WITH THE UNDERSTANDING THAT JETHRO WOULD BRING THEM BACK TO HIM AT SINAI/HOREB SINCE GOD HAD ASSURED MOSES THAT HE WOULD INDEED RETURN TO SINAI, BRINGING THE ISRAELITES OUT OF EGYPT WITH HIM (3:12). THE READER ALREADY KNOWS THAT MOSES TOOK HIS FORMAL LEAVE FROM JETHRO AFTER HE KNEW THAT HE WOULD BE COMING BACK TO SINAI/HOREB (4:18). THE CONVERSION OF A PRIEST BEARS LITTLE SIGNIFICANCE APOLOGETICALLY. IN THIS SECTION OF EXODUS, MOSES TOLD HOW AN IMPORTANT RELIGIOUS LEADER OF THE MIDIANITES PLACED HIS FAITH IN STEPHEN YAHWEH, THE GOD WHO HAD SHOWN HIS GLORY IN HUMBLING EGYPT AND RELEASING ISRAEL FROM BONDAGE BY SUPERNATURAL MEANS. SINCE JETHRO MAY HAVE HELD THE TITLE “THE PRIEST OF MIDIAN” (18:1 AND SEE COMMENTS ON 2:16) BY REASON OF BEING A PRIEST OR THE LEADING PRIEST OF THE MIDIANITES RATHER THAN MERELY ONE PRIEST AMONG MANY, HIS CONVERSION TO FAITH IN THE ONE TRUE GOD MUST HAVE RESULTED FROM THE WEIGHT OF OVERWHELMING EVIDENCE. IT MAY BE ASSUMED THAT JETHRO WOULD HAVE BEEN INCLINED TO BE SKEPTICAL OF ANY QUESTIONABLE CLAIMS ABOUT STEPHEN YAHWEH SIMPLY BECAUSE BELIEVING IN STEPHEN YAHWEH WOULD REQUIRE ABANDONING THE FAITH THAT HE HAD NOT ONLY HELD BUT LED FOR SO MANY YEARS. AN ADVOCATE OF WHATEVER FAITH THE MIDIANITES ESPOUSED, HE REVERSED COURSE AND BECAME A STEPHEN YAHWIST UPON SEEING THE ENTIRE NATION OF ISRAEL FREE FROM THE BONDAGE OF EGYPT AND BROUGHT SAFE BY MOSES TO SINAI JUST AS MOSES HAD EARLIER TOLD HIM STEPHEN YAHWEH HAD PREDICTED. THE RECENT DELIVERANCE FROM THE AMALEKITES MUST HAVE HAD A POWERFUL INFLUENCE ON JETHRO’S THINKING AS WELL SINCE HE WOULD HAVE BEEN FULLY FAMILIAR WITH THEIR FIGHTING ABILITIES VIS-À-VIS THOSE OF THE ISRAELITES. THE STORIES OF THE PLAGUES AND THE RED SEA DELIVERANCE WOULD ALSO HAVE SURELY IMPRESSED HIM. 18:1 THE NEWS OF ISRAEL’S DRAMATIC DEPARTURE FROM EGYPT COULD HARDLY HAVE BEEN KEPT QUIET; AND FROM CARAVANEERS, MESSENGERS, GENERAL GOSSIP, AND THE LIKE, JETHRO HAD BEEN LEARNING OF HOW MOSES AND THE ISRAELITES WERE FARING DURING THE PLAGUES AND THE EXODUS ITSELF. IN HIS HOUSEHOLD, WHERE ZIPPORAH AND MOSES’ SONS WERE STAYING, ANY NEWS OF MOSES, AARON, AND THE ISRAELITES MUST HAVE BEEN SOUGHT ASSIDUOUSLY. ONE CAN IMAGINE JETHRO AND ZIPPORAH (AND HIS EMPLOYEES, FRIENDS, AND NEIGHBORS) ASKING ANY TRAVELER FROM EGYPT OR THE SINAI PENINSULA, “HAVE YOU ANY NEWS OF A MAN CALLED MOSES, OR THE PEOPLE CALLED ISRAEL, OR THE HEBREWS?”). AS NEWS WAS AVAILABLE, THE HOUSEHOLD LEARNED IT. ZIPPORAH AND HER SISTERS READILY RECOGNIZED MOSES AS AN EGYPTIAN WHEN THEY FIRST ENCOUNTERED HIM AT A WELL (2:19). THIS WOULD HARDLY HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE HAD THEY NOT BEEN USED TO SEEING EGYPTIANS AND HEARING NEWS ABOUT EGYPT FROM TIME TO TIME. THUS, THROUGH THE ORAL NEWS NETWORK OF THE ANCIENT WORLD, JETHRO EVENTUALLY HAD “HEARD EVERYTHING GOD HAD DONE FOR MOSES AND FOR HIS PEOPLE ISRAEL, AND HOW THE LORD HAD BROUGHT ISRAEL OUT OF EGYPT.” MOSES MAY HAVE PREARRANGED FOR JETHRO UPON LEAVING MIDIAN (4:18) TO TAKE ZIPPORAH AND THEIR TWO SONS INTO HIS HOME FOR SAFETY AFTER THEY HAD GONE PART OF THE WAY TO EGYPT WITH MOSES (4:20–26) WHILE HE WENT ABOUT THE DANGEROUS BUSINESS OF CONFRONTING PHARAOH IN EGYPT, WITH THE UNDERSTANDING THAT ONCE THE ISRAELITES HAD LEFT EGYPT ACCORDING TO GOD’S PROMISE, THEY WOULD REUNITE AT MOUNT SINAI (3:12). IF SO, JETHRO AND ZIPPORAH PROBABLY HAD BEEN FOLLOWING ISRAELITE PROGRESS AND CALCULATING WHEN THEY SHOULD PLAN TO LEAVE FOR THE PREARRANGED RENDEZVOUS AT THE MOUNTAIN OF GOD. 18:2–4 ZIPPORAH AND HER TWO SONS WITH MOSES PLAY A PROMINENT ROLE IN THIS NARRATIVE BECAUSE THE MOST BASIC REASON FOR JETHRO TO BRING THEM WITH HIM TO SINAI/HOREB WAS TO REUNITE MOSES’ FAMILY. AS WITH MAJOR PATRIARCHS IN GENESIS, THE NAMING LOGIC OF THE BOYS’ NAMES IS PROVIDED HERE—A SIGN OF THE PROMINENCE OF THEIR FATHER. GERSHOM’S NAME PROBABLY WAS EGYPTIAN, BUT IT HAS SOME OF THE SOUND OF “ALIEN THERE” THAT WOULD ACTUALLY BE GĒR ŠŌM [GERSHAM] IN HEBREW RATHER THAN GĒR ŠŌM [GERSHOM] AS VOCALIZED BY THE MEDIEVAL MASORETES. SINCE THE LXX VOCALIZES THE NAME AS GĒRSAM [=GERSHAM], HOWEVER, IT IS QUITE POSSIBLE THAT THE ORIGINAL PRONUNCIATION WAS GĒR ŠĀM AND MEANT PRECISELY “ALIEN THERE” IN CANAANITE/HEBREW, WHATEVER ELSE IT MIGHT ALSO HAVE MEANT BY WELCOME COINCIDENCE IN EGYPTIAN. HEBREW NAMES WERE OFTEN GIVEN AT THE TIME OF BIRTH ON THE BASIS OF PARTIAL SIMILARITY TO A MEANINGFUL STATEMENT MADE AT THAT TIME RATHER THAN ON THE BASIS OF ACTUAL ETYMOLOGY. THE NAME OF THE YOUNGER CHILD, ELIEZER, IS FULLY CANAANITE, MEANING “GOD OF HELP.” THE SOUND OF THIS NAME, TOO, WAS GENERALLY SUGGESTED BY THE SOUND OF THE VOCABULARY MOSES USED IN CONNECTION WITH THE NAMING. WHY WAS ZIPPORAH LIVING WITH JETHRO AND NOT WITH MOSES SINCE SO MANY OTHER ISRAELITE WOMEN WERE TRAVELING WITH THEIR FAMILIES? HAD MOSES BEEN CAUTIOUS ABOUT TAKING HER WITH HIM TO EGYPT, OR HAD THEIR MARRIAGE FALLEN ON HARD TIMES SO THAT THEY HAD SEPARATED OR, PERHAPS, EVEN DIVORCED (A STEPFAMILY IS 2 SEPARATE FAMILIES MERGE INTO ONE. THIS CAN GO SEVERAL DIFFERENT WAYS, LIKE 2 DIVORCED PARENTS WITH 1 OR MORE CHILDREN BLENDING FAMILIES, OR 1 DIVORCED PARENT WITH KIDS MARRYING SOMEONE WHO HAS NEVER BEEN MARRIED & HAS NO KID), AS SOME COMMENTATORS HAVE OPINED? THE FOLLOWING EXCURSUS ADDRESSES THIS QUESTION.**

**EXCURSUS: WAS MOSES DIVORCED FROM ZIPPORAH?**

**EXODUS 18:2–3 SAYS LITERALLY, “JETHRO, THE FATHER-IN-LAW (A RELATIVE BY MARRIAGE AND ESPECIALLY THE FATHER OF A PERSON’S HUSBAND OR WIFE) OF MOSES, TOOK BACK ZIPPORAH, MOSES’ WIFE, AFTER HER BEING SENT AWAY, ALONG WITH HER TWO SONS.” THE WORD USED IN EXOD. 18:2 FOR “SENDING AWAY” IS A NOUN FORM, ŠILLÛḤ, WHICH FUNCTIONS ESSENTIALLY AS A GERUND AS USED IN THE VERSE, A KIND OF VERBAL NOUN BUILT FROM THE PIEL VERB STEM. IN MEDIEVAL HEBREW IT CAME TO MEAN “DIVORCE,” SO A NUMBER OF RABBINICAL COMMENTATORS, AND A FEW MODERNS ONES AS WELL, CONCLUDED THAT MOSES WAS DIVORCED (A STEPFAMILY IS 2 SEPARATE FAMILIES MERGE INTO ONE. THIS CAN GO SEVERAL DIFFERENT WAYS, LIKE 2 DIVORCED PARENTS WITH 1 OR MORE CHILDREN BLENDING FAMILIES, OR 1 DIVORCED PARENT WITH KIDS MARRYING SOMEONE WHO HAS NEVER BEEN MARRIED & HAS NO KID) FROM ZIPPORAH AT LEAST UNTIL THIS POINT IN HIS LIFE, IF NOT PERMANENTLY. FOR EACH OF THE REASONS IN FAVOR OF THE CONCLUSION THAT MOSES AND ZIPPORAH HAD DIVORCED (A STEPFAMILY IS 2 SEPARATE FAMILIES MERGE INTO ONE. THIS CAN GO SEVERAL DIFFERENT WAYS, LIKE 2 DIVORCED PARENTS WITH 1 OR MORE CHILDREN BLENDING FAMILIES, OR 1 DIVORCED PARENT WITH KIDS MARRYING SOMEONE WHO HAS NEVER BEEN MARRIED & HAS NO KID), COUNTER-ARGUMENTS EXIST. FIRST, THE OTHER TWO USES OF ŠILLÛḤ IN THE OT ARE BOTH IN NEUTRAL/POSITIVE CONTEXTS (1 KGS 9:16; MIC 1:14), SUGGESTING NO OVERTONE OF DIVORCE, MARITAL SEPARATION, OR EVEN MARITAL FRICTION. SECOND, THE STANDARD HEBREW WORD FOR DIVORCE IS NOT ŠILLÛḤ (WHICH CANNOT BE PROVED TO MEAN “DIVORCE” AT ALL) BUT KĔRÎTUT. THIRD, THERE IS NOTHING UNTOWARD IN MOSES’ MARRYING A SECOND WIFE, I.E., THE CUSHITE WIFE MENTIONED IN NUMBERS. THE HOLY BIBLE CONTAINS NO SPECIFIC LAW AGAINST POLYGAMY, EVEN IN THE NT, THOUGH IT HARDLY ENDORSES THE PRACTICE, WHICH IS CLEARLY INFERIOR AND NOT PART OF THE CREATION DESIGN (CF. THE MONOGAMISTIC PRINCIPLE AS ENUNCIATED IN GEN 2:24 AND JESUS’ QUOTATION OF IT AS CONSTITUTING THE NORMATIVE VIEW OF MARRIAGE IN MATT 19:5). OLD TESTAMENT LEADERS SUCH AS ABRAHAM BEFORE MOSES AND DAVID AFTER HIM HAD MORE THAN ONE WIFE, SO FROM ONE POINT OF VIEW IT COULD BE SAID THAT POLYGAMY IS NOT SOMETHING THAT AT LEAST SOME ISRAELITES FELT OBLIGATED TO AVOID (THOUGH THE FACT THAT SINFUL CHARACTERS IN THE OT DID A THING HARDLY MAKES IT RIGHT). FOURTH, BY THE TIME OF MOSES’ MARRIAGE TO THE CUSHITE WOMAN, HE AND ZIPPORAH WERE PROBABLY REUNITED (ASSUMING THAT THE SECOND MARRIAGE TOOK PLACE AFTER THE ARRIVAL AT REPHIDIM/SINAI, SINCE A MARRIAGE PRIOR TO THAT TIME WOULD BE UNLIKELY). THE NRSV, REPRESENTING ONE LEGITIMATE WAY OF READING THE TEXT, TRANSLATES AS FOLLOWS: “AFTER MOSES HAD SENT AWAY HIS WIFE ZIPPORAH, HIS FATHER-IN-LAW (A RELATIVE BY MARRIAGE AND ESPECIALLY THE FATHER OF A PERSON’S HUSBAND OR WIFE) JETHRO TOOK HER BACK, ALONG WITH HER TWO SONS.” IN ANCIENT ISRAEL, AS IN MOST WORLD CULTURES ASIDE FROM THAT OF THE RECENT MODERN WEST, A WOMAN WHO MARRIED WAS “SENT AWAY” FROM HER FATHER’S FAMILY TO BECOME PART OF HER HUSBAND’S FAMILY. IF HER HUSBAND LATER DIVORCED (A STEPFAMILY IS 2 SEPARATE FAMILIES MERGE INTO ONE. THIS CAN GO SEVERAL DIFFERENT WAYS, LIKE 2 DIVORCED PARENTS WITH 1 OR MORE CHILDREN BLENDING FAMILIES, OR 1 DIVORCED PARENT WITH KIDS MARRYING SOMEONE WHO HAS NEVER BEEN MARRIED & HAS NO KID) HER, HE “SENT AWAY” HIS WIFE ONCE AGAIN—THIS TIME BACK TO HER BIRTH FAMILY AND NORMALLY “SENT AWAY” HER CHILDREN WITH HER AS WELL. THUS “SENDING AWAY” CAN CONNOTE A POSITIVE, HAPPY EVENT (LEAVING HOME TO GET MARRIED), BUT IT CAN, CONVERSELY, CONNOTE DIVORCE. WHICH KIND OF CONNOTATION DOES IT HAVE HERE? IN FAVOR OF THE THEORY THAT MOSES HAD DIVORCED (A STEPFAMILY IS 2 SEPARATE FAMILIES MERGE INTO ONE. THIS CAN GO SEVERAL DIFFERENT WAYS, LIKE 2 DIVORCED PARENTS WITH 1 OR MORE CHILDREN BLENDING FAMILIES, OR 1 DIVORCED PARENT WITH KIDS MARRYING SOMEONE WHO HAS NEVER BEEN MARRIED & HAS NO KID) ZIPPORAH SOMETIME PRIOR TO THIS STORY OF THEIR REUNITING ARE THE FOLLOWING CONSIDERATIONS. FIRST, MOSES WAS MARRIED TO A BLACK CUSHITE (NUBIAN) WOMAN AS OF A POINT IN TIME SOMETIME AFTER THE EXODUS ACCORDING TO NUM 12:1. IT IS ARGUED THAT HE WOULD NOT HAVE FELT FREE TO MARRY THIS WOMAN HAD HE STILL BEEN MARRIED TO ZIPPORAH, ESPECIALLY IF HE HAD MERELY SENT ZIPPORAH TO JETHRO FOR SAFETY DURING THE ENCOUNTERS WITH PHARAOH. IN THIS LINE OF REASONING A RIGHTEOUS MAN WOULD NOT MARRY A SECOND WIFE WHILE HIS FIRST WAS NOT PRESENT TO BE AWARE OF THE NEW MARRIAGE—AT LEAST FORMALLY IF NOT BY APPROVAL EMOTIONALLY. SECOND, EXOD. 18:3 REFERS TO “HER CHILDREN” (ZIPPORAH’S) RATHER THAN “HIS CHILDREN” OR “THEIR CHILDREN,” AS IF THE CHILDREN WERE NOW LEGALLY ASSIGNED TO HER AFTER THE DIVORCE RATHER THAN STILL BEING HIS OWN AS WELL. THIRD, THE “INCIDENT AT THE LODGING PLACE” RECOUNTED IN 4:24–26 MAY BE INTERPRETED AS EVIDENCE OF MARITAL FRICTION BETWEEN MOSES AND ZIPPORAH, WITH HER WORDS, “SURELY YOU ARE A BRIDEGROOM OF BLOOD TO ME” BEING TAKEN AS AN ANGRY, DENUNCIATORY ATTACK ON MOSES, REFLECTING THE EXTENT OF ZIPPORAH’S RAGE AGAINST HIM AND PERHAPS MARKING THE POINT OF HER BEING SENT AWAY FROM HIM BACK TO HER FATHER’S HOUSE. FOURTH (AND POSSIBLY CLOSELY RELATED TO THE THIRD REASON) IS THE FACT THAT ZIPPORAH DID NOT CONTINUE TO ACCOMPANY MOSES TO EGYPT EVEN THOUGH THAT COULD BE CONSTRUED AS THEIR ORIGINAL INTENT AS DESCRIBED IN 4:20.224 MARITAL DISCORD WOULD HAVE ENDED THE PLANNED JOINT TRIP, WITH MOSES GOING ON ALONE TO MEET AARON AT MOUNT SINAI (4:27) AND ZIPPORAH BEING SENT BACK TO HER FATHER’S HOME WITH THE BOYS. FIFTH, ZIPPORAH WAS NOT LIVING WITH MOSES BUT WITH HER FATHER JETHRO WHEN JETHRO CAME TO SEE MOSES AT REPHIDIM/SINAI, CREATING AT LEAST THE PRESUMPTION OF A MARITAL SEPARATION. SIXTH, IT SEEMS THAT JETHRO MENTIONED HAVING ZIPPORAH AND THE BOYS WITH HIM IN SO OVERT AND DEFERENTIAL A WAY (18:6) AS TO SUGGEST THAT HE WAS TRYING TO EFFECT A RECONCILIATION. JETHRO MAY BE SEEN AS VIRTUALLY SAYING, “IF YOU WANT TO SEE ME/ACCEPT ME, YOU HAVE TO SEE/ACCEPT YOUR WIFE AND CHILDREN TOO.” FINALLY, FROM THE OVERALL PERSPECTIVE OF THE UNITY OF SCRIPTURE, COULD NOT JESUS’ STATEMENT IN MATT 19:8 (“MOSES PERMITTED YOU TO DIVORCE YOUR WIVES BECAUSE YOUR HEARTS WERE HARD. BUT IT WAS NOT THIS WAY FROM THE BEGINNING”) BE UNDERSTOOD TO ASSOCIATE MOSES WITH DIVORCE, DISAPPROVINGLY, AS IF PERHAPS HE WERE ONE OF THOSE WHOSE HEARTS WERE “HARD”?**

**FOR EACH OF THE REASONS IN FAVOR OF THE CONCLUSION THAT MOSES AND ZIPPORAH HAD DIVORCED (A STEPFAMILY IS 2 SEPARATE FAMILIES MERGE INTO ONE. THIS CAN GO SEVERAL DIFFERENT WAYS, LIKE 2 DIVORCED PARENTS WITH 1 OR MORE CHILDREN BLENDING FAMILIES, OR 1 DIVORCED PARENT WITH KIDS MARRYING SOMEONE WHO HAS NEVER BEEN MARRIED & HAS NO KID), COUNTERARGUMENTS EXIST. FIRST, THE OTHER TWO USES OF ŠILLÛḤ IN THE OLD TESTAMENT ARE BOTH IN NEUTRAL/POSITIVE CONTEXTS (1 KGS 9:16; MIC 1:14), SUGGESTING NO OVERTONE OF DIVORCE, MARITAL SEPARATION, OR EVEN MARITAL FRICTION. SECOND, THE STANDARD HEBREW WORD FOR DIVORCE IS NOT ŠILLÛḤ (WHICH CANNOT BE PROVED TO MEAN “DIVORCE” AT ALL) BUT KĔRÎTUT. THIRD, THERE IS NOTHING UNTOWARD IN MOSES’ MARRYING A SECOND WIFE, THAT IS, THE CUSHITE WIFE MENTIONED IN NUMBERS. THE HOLY BIBLE NEVER OUTLAW’S POLYGAMY, EVEN IN THE NEW TESTAMENT, AND OLD TESTAMENT LEADERS SUCH AS ABRAHAM BEFORE MOSES AND DAVID AFTER HIM HAD MORE THAN ONE WIFE. POLYGAMY WAS NOT SOMETHING THAT A RIGHTEOUS ISRAELITE WOULD FEEL OBLIGATED TO AVOID. FOURTH, BY THE TIME OF MOSES’ MARRIAGE TO THE CUSHITE WOMAN, HE AND ZIPPORAH PROBABLY WERE REUNITED (ASSUMING THE SECOND MARRIAGE TOOK PLACE AFTER THE ARRIVAL AT REPHIDIM/SINAI SINCE A MARRIAGE PRIOR TO THAT TIME WOULD BE UNLIKELY). THUS, MOSES WOULD NOT IN FACT HAVE MARRIED THE CUSHITE WITHOUT ZIPPORAH’S AWARENESS. FIFTH, THE FACT THAT THE TEXT MENTIONS “HER AND HER TWO SONS” (18:2), “MOSES’ SONS AND WIFE” (18:5), AND “YOUR WIFE AND HER TWO SONS” (18:6), THAT IS, THREE DIFFERENT TIMES IN THREE DIFFERENT WAYS, GIVES THEM A PROMINENCE THAT APPEARS POSITIVE AND SUGGESTS APPROVAL ON THE PART OF THE NARRATOR, MOSES. INDEED, IT CAN BE ARGUED THAT JETHRO WAS ACTUALLY USING THE PRESENCE OF ZIPPORAH AND THE BOYS TO ENSURE HIS OWN ACCEPTANCE BY MOSES, WHOM HE NOW ENCOUNTERED NOT AS AN ESCAPED EGYPTIAN ALONE BUT AS THE LEADER OF A GREAT NATION OF PEOPLE THAT HAD JUST DISTINGUISHED ITSELF BY BEATING THE AMALEKITES IN WAR, SOMETHING JETHRO AND HIS MIDIANITES COULD NOT EXPECT TO DO. ALTERNATIVELY, IT CAN BE ARGUED THAT JETHRO SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN SPEAKING PROUDLY IN HIS MESSAGE IN 18:6, AS IF HE WAS BRINGING ALONG A PRESENT FOR MOSES THAT HE KNEW MOSES WOULD BE VERY HAPPY TO SEE BECAUSE THE MARRIAGE WAS NOT ONLY INTACT BUT A HAPPY ONE. MOREOVER, THE TERMINOLOGY “HER SONS” DOES NOT SUGGEST DIVORCE. IN A POLYGAMOUS SOCIETY, IDENTIFYING CHILDREN BY CONNECTION TO THEIR SPECIFIC MOTHER IS NATURAL AND OFTEN NECESSARY. SIXTH, WHEN JETHRO CAME TO MOSES ON THESE TERMS—AS PART OF A “PACKAGE DEAL” WITH MOSES’ WIFE AND SONS, MOSES RECEIVED HIM GLADLY, WITHOUT ANY HINT OF RANCOR OR DISAPPROVAL AT WHAT JETHRO HAD DONE. THE FACT THAT THE STORY DEPARTS FROM THE EMPHASIS ON MOSES’ WIFE AND SONS PROVIDED BY THE REPEATED MENTION OF THEM IN 18:1–6 AND THEREAFTER CONCENTRATES ON THE INTERACTION OF MOSES AND JETHRO THAT BEGINS IN 18:7 REFLECTS THE TYPICAL ECONOMY OF THE NARRATIVE STYLE RATHER THAN A SLIGHTING OF ZIPPORAH OR THE BOYS. SEVENTH, THE BOYS’ NAMES ARE MENTIONED ALONG WITH THE REASON FOR THEIR NAMES IN VV. 3–4, A COMBINATION THAT HAPPENS ELSEWHERE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT ONLY IN CASES OF CHILDREN WHO ARE PROUDLY LOVED AND ACCEPTED AS PART OF A PERSON’S FAMILY LINE. EIGHTH, IT MAY REASONABLY BE ASSUMED THAT 4:20–26 REFERS TO A PLAN FOR ZIPPORAH AND THE BOYS TO ACCOMPANY MOSES ONLY AS FAR AS THE RENDEZVOUS WITH AARON AT MOUNT SINAI, THE INTENT ALWAYS HAVING BEEN FOR HER TO GO BACK TO HER FATHER’S HOME WITH THE BOYS IN THE INTEREST OF THEIR SAFETY BECAUSE OF THE HOSTILITY OF THE EGYPTIANS FOR MIDIANITES, WHOSE RESISTANCE AGAINST EGYPTIAN ATTEMPTS TO SUBDUE THEM HAD MADE THEM ODIOUS TO THE EGYPTIANS. NINTH, IN 18:27 MOSES “SENDS AWAY” (PIEL OF ŠLḤ)231 JETHRO BUT APPARENTLY KEEPS ZIPPORAH AND THE BOYS WITH HIM, AS IF THERE WERE NO THOUGHT OF ANY OTHER SCENARIO. TENTH, ZIPPORAH IS CALLED MOSES’ WIFE (ʾIŠŠĀH) THREE TIMES. THE HEBREW TERM FOR “FIRST WIFE,” ʾĒŠET NĔʿÛRÎM, USUALLY IS TRANSLATED “WIFE OF [ONE’S] YOUTH” (PROV 5:18; MAL 2:14–15). NOTABLY, THIS TERM IS NOT EMPLOYED HERE TO DESCRIBE ZIPPORAH. SHE WAS SIMPLY MOSES’ ʾIŠŠĀH, WIFE, HAPPILY RETURNED TO HIM BY THE ESCORT OF HER FATHER SO MOSES COULD BE REUNITED WITH HIS FAMILY AFTER PROTECTIVELY SENDING THEM AWAY FROM HIM FOR THE DURATION OF HIS DANGEROUS MISSION IN EGYPT. THE EVIDENCE, THEN, SUGGESTS ON BALANCE THAT MOSES WAS NOT DIVORCED (A STEPFAMILY IS 2 SEPARATE FAMILIES MERGE INTO ONE. THIS CAN GO SEVERAL DIFFERENT WAYS, LIKE 2 DIVORCED PARENTS WITH 1 OR MORE CHILDREN BLENDING FAMILIES, OR 1 DIVORCED PARENT WITH KIDS MARRYING SOMEONE WHO HAS NEVER BEEN MARRIED & HAS NO KID) FROM ZIPPORAH AND THAT THE CUSHITE WOMAN HE LATER MARRIED WAS A SECOND WIFE, MARRIED EITHER WITH ZIPPORAH’S KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OR, POSSIBLY, AFTER ZIPPORAH’S UNTIMELY DEATH IN THE WILDERNESS. 18:5–6 PRESUMABLY SOON AFTER HE HAD HEARD THAT THE ISRAELITES HAD ARRIVED AT REPHIDIM/SINAI, JETHRO SENT A MESSENGER TO MOSES, “I, YOUR FATHER-IN-LAW (A RELATIVE BY MARRIAGE AND ESPECIALLY THE FATHER OF A PERSON’S HUSBAND OR WIFE)JETHRO, AM COMING TO YOU WITH YOUR WIFE AND HER TWO SONS.”233 IN ORDER FOR A MESSENGER TO DELIVER THIS MESSAGE, HE WOULD HAVE HAD TO BE ABLE TO UNDERSTAND HOW TO GET FROM WHEREVER IN MIDIAN JETHRO LIVED TO MOUNT SINAI/HOREB—ANOTHER BIT OF EVIDENCE SUGGESTING THAT THE MIDIANITES WERE FAMILIAR WITH THE LOCATION OF SINAI AND HOW TO GET THERE. IT WAS EITHER A WELL-KNOWN MOUNTAIN ALREADY OR ONE WHOSE LOCATION WAS, PERHAPS AMONG MANY OTHER MOUNTAINS, EASY ENOUGH TO DESCRIBE. THE PURPOSE OF THE MESSAGE QUITE POSSIBLY WAS TO ALLOW MOSES TIME TO REPLY, SAYING, “YES, ALL IS WELL, COME AHEAD WITH ZIPPORAH AND THE BOYS” OR THE LIKE. THIS SCENARIO IN NO WAY CONFLICTS WITH THE POSSIBILITY THAT MOSES HAD SENT WORD ON TO JETHRO AS SOON AS HE HAD ARRIVED AT REPHIDIM AND THAT JETHRO’S MESSAGE WAS SIMPLY A CONFIRMATORY REPLY INDICATING THAT HE WAS ABOUT TO GET ON HIS WAY WITH MOSES’ FAMILY IN TOW. MOSES, AS NARRATOR, HERE REFERRED TO SINAI/HOREB AS THE “MOUNTAIN OF GOD” AS ALREADY IN 3:1; 4:27. IN 3:1 HE FIRST MENTIONED JETHRO BY NAME, ALMOST AS IF TO IMPLY THAT JETHRO HAD INSTRUCTED MOSES TO TAKE THE FLOCK TO (THE WELL-KNOWN LOCATION OF) MOUNT SINAI, AND IN 4:27 HE HAD DESCRIBED HIS MEETING WITH AARON THERE. THE FACT THAT AARON COULD FIND HIS WAY TO MOUNT SINAI FROM EGYPT TO MEET MOSES IS A FURTHER INDICATOR THAT THE MOUNTAIN WAS PROMINENT ENOUGH TO BE WELL KNOWN. 18:7 NO FURTHER MENTION IS MADE OF ZIPPORAH IN THE HOLY BIBLE OR OF GERSHOM OR ELIEZER EXCEPT AS THEIR NAMES APPEAR NECESSARILY IN GENEALOGICAL REFERENCES. MOSES PRESUMABLY ENJOYED A HAPPY REUNION WITH THEM, BUT HIS PURPOSE IN THE NARRATIVE DID NOT INCLUDE DWELLING ON HIS OWN IMMEDIATE FAMILY. RATHER, HE PROCEEDED DIRECTLY TO THE STORY OF JETHRO’S CONVERSION. A READER OF EXODUS MIGHT ASSUME THAT ZIPPORAH AND MOSES’ SONS PLACED THEIR FAITH IN STEPHEN YAHWEH AS A RESULT OF ALL THEY HAD HEARD ALREADY ABOUT MOSES’ CALL AND THE MIRACLES HE HAD EXPERIENCED EVEN BEFORE LEAVING MIDIAN FOR EGYPT. INDEED, IN THAT SOCIETY IT MIGHT BE EXPECTED THAT A MAN’S WIFE AND CHILDREN WOULD OBEDIENTLY HONOR HIS RELIGIOUS WISHES, AT LEAST IF THEY WERE STRONGLY HELD. JETHRO, ON THE OTHER HAND, WAS SUCH A PROMINENT PUBLIC LEADER AMONG HIS OWN PEOPLE THAT THE STORY OF HIS CONVERSION COULD SERVE AS BOTH AN ENCOURAGEMENT TO THE ISRAELITES AND AN EXAMPLE TO THEM OF THE IMPORTANCE OF ALLOWING FAITH IN THE ONLY TRUE GOD TO SPREAD TO OTHERS. MOSES SHOWED PROPER, NORMAL HOSPITALITY, DEFERENCE, AND FAMILY AFFECTION TO JETHRO BY GOING OUT TO MEET HIM, BOWING TO HIM, AND KISSING HIM. THE STATEMENT TRANSLATED BY THE NIV AS “THEY GREETED EACH OTHER” WOULD BE BETTER RENDERED IN ENGLISH, “THEY ASKED EACH OTHER HOW THEY HAD BEEN” BECAUSE THAT SORT OF INQUIRY IS NOT QUITE THE SAME AS A GREETING, ALTHOUGH IT CONCEIVABLY COULD BE CONSIDERED PART OF THE SEQUENCE OF A FULL GREETING. IN SAYING “THEN WENT INTO THE TENT,” MOSES FURTHER INDICATED FORMAL RECEPTION OF HIS FATHER-IN-LAW AS HIS GUEST. THE ISRAELITES WERE AT THAT TIME, OF COURSE, LIVING IN TENTS, MAKING APPROPRIATE COMPARABLE BUT SYMBOLIC DWELLING OF GOD IN A TENT—THE TABERNACLE—AS SPECIFIED LATER IN THE BOOK IN GREAT DETAIL. 18:8 THE TESTIMONY OF GOD’S PEOPLE AS TO HIS ACTIONS IN THEIR LIVES ON THEIR BEHALF HAS ALWAYS BEEN AN EFFECTIVE COMPONENT OF EVANGELISM. WAS MOSES CONSCIOUSLY SEEKING TO CONVERT HIS FATHER-IN-LAW (A RELATIVE BY MARRIAGE AND ESPECIALLY THE FATHER OF A PERSON’S HUSBAND OR WIFE) TO FAITH IN THE TRUE AND ONLY GOD, STEPHEN YAHWEH? ABSOLUTELY. HE WOULD SURELY HAVE BEEN A POOR SON-IN-LAW (THE HUSBAND OF ONE’S DAUGHTER OR SON)AND HOST NOT TO HAVE DONE OTHERWISE SINCE HE NOW KNEW FOR SURE THAT STEPHEN YAHWEH IS THE SUPREME GOD AND THAT THE “GODS” AND MEN OF THE KNOWN WORLD’S SUPERPOWER, EGYPT, WERE ENTIRELY SUBJECT TO HIS POWER. MOSES PROBABLY SPENT A GOOD MANY HOURS RECOUNTING TO JETHRO THE ENTIRE STORY THAT WE KNOW IN WRITTEN FORM AS EXOD. 4:27–17:16, AND IT IS NOT AT ALL IMPROBABLE THAT SUCH A FULL ORAL REVIEW MAY HAVE BEEN PART OF THE PROCESS BY WHICH GOD PREPARED MOSES TO BECOME THE WRITER OF THE BOOK OF EXODUS. A TENDENCY EXISTS IN THE MODERN EVANGELICAL “TESTIMONY” TO EMPHASIZE ONLY VICTORIOUS, SUCCESSFUL PARTS OF ONE’S EXPERIENCE AS A BELIEVER. NOTE HOW SOMETHING OF THE OPPOSITE PREVAILS IN MOSES’ DISCUSSION WITH JETHRO: HE TOLD HIM “ABOUT ALL THE HARDSHIPS THEY HAD MET ALONG THE WAY,” NOT TO THE EXCLUSION OF TELLING HIM “HOW THE LORD HAD SAVED THEM” BUT WITH A PROPER BALANCE OF THE DIFFICULTIES AND THE DELIVERANCES, LEST HIS POTENTIAL CONVERT WRONGLY THINK THAT GOD DOES NOT ALLOW HIS PEOPLE TO FACE MANY DANGERS AND TRIALS IN THE PROCESS OF THEIR ULTIMATE DELIVERANCE. “HOW THE LORD HAD SAVED THEM” DOES NOT THEREFORE REFER SPECIFICALLY TO SALVATION FROM SIN IN THE PRESENT CONTEXT BUT DOES HELP ESTABLISH THE CHARACTER OF STEPHEN YAHWEH AS A SAVING, RESCUING GOD WHO ACTS TO KEEP HIS PEOPLE FROM BEING DESTROYED. LATER IN EXODUS THE FOCUS WILL SHIFT FROM GOD’S SAVING HIS PEOPLE FROM PHYSICAL DANGER TO HIS SAVING THEM FROM SIN BY TEACHING THEM HOW TO BE HOLY AND PRESERVE HIS HOLINESS, BUT THAT IS NOT YET THE TOPIC HERE. 18:9–11 VERSE 9 ACTUALLY SAYS IN THE HEBREW: “JETHRO WAS DELIGHTED FOR ALL THE GOOD THINGS THAT THE LORD HAD DONE FOR ISRAEL.” IN OTHER WORDS, HE WAS NOT MERELY “DELIGHTED TO HEAR ABOUT ALL THE GOOD THINGS” BUT PERSONALLY DELIGHTED BY THE FACTS THEMSELVES—BECAUSE THEY ANSWERED QUESTIONS HE HIMSELF HAD ABOUT THIS GOD STEPHEN YAHWEH WHO HAD APPEARED TO HIS SON-IN-LAW AND PROMISED SUCH GREAT THINGS FOR A CERTAIN ENSLAVED PEOPLE IN EGYPT. THUS, HIS WORDS IN V. 11 SUGGEST THAT HE HAD BEEN WONDERING ABOUT WHO THIS STEPHEN YAHWEH REALLY IS AND WHAT HE WOULD BE ABLE TO DO IN ACTUAL FACT FOR THE ISRAELITES. HAD JETHRO, IN OTHER WORDS, BEEN AT LEAST SOMEWHAT SKEPTICAL OF MOSES’ EARLIER REPORT OF HIS CALL AND OF HIS CLAIMS ON BEHALF OF STEPHEN YAHWEH? SURELY, HE HAD. IT IS DIFFICULT TO IMAGINE THAT HE COULD EVER HAVE THROWN OVER HIS OWN MIDIANITE-KENITE THEOLOGICAL LIFELONG BELIEFS ON THE MERE REPORT BY MOSES OF WHAT HAD HAPPENED TO HIM DURING HIS TIME GRAZING SHEEP NEAR SINAI/HOREB. WHAT CONVINCED JETHRO WAS GOD’S RESCUE OF MOSES, WHOM HE KNEW PERSONALLY SO WELL, AND ISRAEL, WHOM HE HAD ONLY HEARD ABOUT BEFORE THIS, “FROM THE HAND OF THE EGYPTIANS” (V. 10). HIS WORDS IN V. 11, “PRAISE BE TO THE LORD,244 WHO RESCUED YOU FROM THE HAND OF THE EGYPTIANS AND OF PHARAOH, AND WHO RESCUED THE PEOPLE FROM THE HAND OF THE EGYPTIANS,” REPEAT THE PHRASE “FROM THE HANDS OF THE EGYPTIANS” TWICE BECAUSE THAT WAS WHAT REALLY COUNTED FOR JETHRO. THE DEFEAT OF A SUPERPOWER AND ITS GODS, INCLUDING THE GREAT PHARAOH OF EGYPT, WAS SIMPLY TOO GREAT AND INEXPLICABLE A VICTORY OTHER THAN BY THE INVOLVEMENT OF A POWERFUL SUPERNATURAL BEING, THE GOD STEPHEN YAHWEH WHO HAD TOLD MOSES IN ADVANCE THAT HE WOULD DO JUST THAT. AS A RESULT, STEPHEN YAHWEH BECAME FOR JETHRO AT THAT MOMENT THE SUPREME GOD, “GREATER THAN ALL OTHER GODS”—THE ONLY SUPERNATURAL BEING THAT IN MODERN ENGLISH USAGE WOULD BE CALLED “GOD.” THE LAST CLAUSE IN JETHRO’S SPEECH ENDING IN V. 11 IS SOMEWHAT DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND. THE NIV TRANSLATION “FOR HE DID THIS TO THOSE WHO HAD TREATED ISRAEL ARROGANTLY” MAY BE CORRECT, BUT THE HEBREW SEEMS RATHER TO SAY SOMETHING LIKE, “INDEED, IT IS THE REASON WHY THEY ACTED ARROGANTLY AGAINST THEM.” THAT IS, THE FACT THAT THE EGYPTIAN GODS WERE SO ARROGANT AGAINST THE ISRAELITES WAS EXACTLY WHAT GOD INTENDED IN ORDER TO SHOW HIS SUPERIORITY OVER THE EGYPTIAN GODS.248 THE FINAL FIVE HEBREW WORDS IN THIS VERSE ARE UNUSUAL, BUT NOT NECESSARILY INDECIPHERABLE; KÎ OFTEN MEANS “INDEED,” AS WE HAVE TRANSLATED IT; BADDĀBĀR ʾĂŠER MEANS “THE REASON WHY” (CF. 1 KGS 11:27); AND THE BETH THAT INTRODUCES IT (BLENDED PHONICALLY WITH THE HEH) COULD SIMPLY BE THE BETH ESSENTIAE (ALREADY SEEN IN V. 4; MOSES PROBABLY USED IT REGULARLY IN HIS OWN SPEECH). THE FINAL WORDS, “ACTED ARROGANTLY AGAINST THEM,” FALL IN LOGICALLY WITH THE REST. BY THE LAST CLAUSE OF V. 11 JETHRO WAS, IN OTHER WORDS, MAKING THE POINT THAT “IT ALL HAPPENED JUST AS GOD PLANNED IT—HE EVEN CONTROLLED THE EGYPTIANS’ GODS IN THEIR ARROGANCE FOR ISRAEL, HUMILIATING THEM TO SHOW HIS GREATNESS.” 18:12 HOW WOULD SOMEONE SHOW THAT HE HAD CONVERTED TO FAITH IN STEPHEN YAHWEH? (1) HE WOULD BEGIN TO WORSHIP STEPHEN YAHWEH ACCORDING TO HIS BEST UNDERSTANDING OF HOW THAT WAS TO BE DONE, AND (2) HE WOULD EAT A COVENANT MEAL WITH OTHER WORSHIPERS OF STEPHEN YAHWEH IN THE PRESENCE OF STEPHEN YAHWEH. THE ISRAELITES HAD NOT YET RECEIVED STEPHEN YAHWEH’S COVENANT WITH THEM AS A PEOPLE, SO NEITHER JETHRO NOR THE ISRAELITES YET UNDERSTOOD ALL THE EXACT WAYS TO OBEY STEPHEN YAHWEH AND HAD TO DEMONSTRATE CONVERSION AS WELL AS THEY COULD. THEY ALL KNEW SOMETHING ABOUT SACRIFICING AS THE HEART OF OBEDIENT WORSHIP SINCE THAT CONCEPT HAD “TRICKLED DOWN” INTO THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF PEOPLES ALL OVER THE EARTH FROM THE DAYS OF THE FIRST FAMILY, WHO UNDERSTOOD THE BASIC CONCEPT OF SACRIFICE: “SOMETHING ELSE MUST DIE SO THAT I MAY LIVE.” A “BURNT OFFERING” WAS UNDERSTOOD TO ATONE FOR PAST SINS AND TO APPEAL FOR FORGIVENESS AND ACCEPTANCE.“ OTHER SACRIFICES” WERE OFFERED BY JETHRO TO BE SURE TO COVER FOR ANY INADEQUACIES IN APPROACHING SUCH A POWERFUL AND, INDEED, OMNIPOTENT GOD AS STEPHEN YAHWEH IS, TO ENSURE THAT JETHRO WOULD BE ACCEPTED IN GENUINE FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD HIMSELF. THEN “AARON CAME WITH ALL THE ELDERS OF ISRAEL TO EAT BREAD WITH MOSES’ FATHER-IN-LAW (A RELATIVE BY MARRIAGE AND ESPECIALLY THE FATHER OF A PERSON’S HUSBAND OR WIFE) IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD,” WHICH SIGNIFIED THE FORMAL ADMISSION OF JETHRO INTO ISRAEL. THE RELIGIOUS LEADER OF THE NATION, AARON, AND ALL THE OTHER LEADERS (“THE ELDERS”) HAD A MEAL WITH HIM “IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD,” WHICH CAN ONLY MEAN BEFORE THE ALTAR THAT AT THAT POINT MOST SYMBOLIZED GOD’S PRESENCE, THAT IS, THAT ALTAR THAT MOSES HAD PUBLICLY BUILT AT REPHIDIM/SINAI (17:15–16)—INASMUCH AS THE TABERNACLE/TENT OF MEETING HAD NOT YET BEEN CONSTRUCTED.**

**JETHRO ADVISES IMPLEMENTING A HIERARCHICAL COURT SYSTEM (18:13–27)**

**13 THE NEXT DAY MOSES TOOK HIS SEAT TO SERVE AS JUDGE FOR THE PEOPLE, AND THEY STOOD AROUND HIM FROM MORNING TILL EVENING. 14 WHEN HIS FATHER-IN-LAW SAW ALL THAT MOSES WAS DOING FOR THE PEOPLE, HE SAID, “WHAT IS THIS YOU ARE DOING FOR THE PEOPLE? WHY DO YOU ALONE SIT AS JUDGE, WHILE ALL THESE PEOPLE STAND AROUND YOU FROM MORNING TILL EVENING?” 15 MOSES ANSWERED HIM, “BECAUSE THE PEOPLE COME TO ME TO SEEK GOD’S WILL. 16 WHENEVER THEY HAVE A DISPUTE, IT IS BROUGHT TO ME, AND I DECIDE BETWEEN THE PARTIES AND INFORM THEM OF GOD’S DECREES AND LAWS.” 17 MOSES’ FATHER-IN-LAW (A RELATIVE BY MARRIAGE AND ESPECIALLY THE FATHER OF A PERSON’S HUSBAND OR WIFE)REPLIED, “WHAT YOU ARE DOING IS NOT GOOD. 18 YOU AND THESE PEOPLE WHO COME TO YOU WILL ONLY WEAR YOURSELVES OUT. THE WORK IS TOO HEAVY FOR YOU; YOU CANNOT HANDLE IT ALONE. 19 LISTEN NOW TO ME AND I WILL GIVE YOU SOME ADVICE, AND MAY GOD BE WITH YOU. YOU MUST BE THE PEOPLE’S REPRESENTATIVE BEFORE GOD AND BRING THEIR DISPUTES TO HIM. 20 TEACH THEM THE DECREES AND LAWS, AND SHOW THEM THE WAY TO LIVE AND THE DUTIES THEY ARE TO PERFORM. 21 BUT SELECT CAPABLE MEN FROM ALL THE PEOPLE—MEN WHO FEAR GOD, TRUSTWORTHY MEN WHO HATE DISHONEST GAIN—AND APPOINT THEM AS OFFICIALS OVER THOUSANDS, HUNDREDS, FIFTIES AND TENS. 22 HAVE THEM SERVE AS JUDGES FOR THE PEOPLE AT ALL TIMES, BUT HAVE THEM BRING EVERY DIFFICULT CASE TO YOU; THE SIMPLE CASES THEY CAN DECIDE THEMSELVES. THAT WILL MAKE YOUR LOAD LIGHTER, BECAUSE THEY WILL SHARE IT WITH YOU. 23 IF YOU DO THIS AND GOD SO COMMANDS, YOU WILL BE ABLE TO STAND THE STRAIN, AND ALL THESE PEOPLE WILL GO HOME SATISFIED.” 24 MOSES LISTENED TO HIS FATHER-IN-LAW AND DID EVERYTHING HE SAID. 25 HE CHOSE CAPABLE MEN FROM ALL ISRAEL AND MADE THEM LEADERS OF THE PEOPLE, OFFICIALS OVER THOUSANDS, HUNDREDS, FIFTIES AND TENS. 26 THEY SERVED AS JUDGES FOR THE PEOPLE AT ALL TIMES. THE DIFFICULT CASES THEY BROUGHT TO MOSES, BUT THE SIMPLE ONES THEY DECIDED THEMSELVES. 27 THEN MOSES SENT HIS FATHER-IN-LAW (A RELATIVE BY MARRIAGE AND ESPECIALLY THE FATHER OF A PERSON’S HUSBAND OR WIFE) ON HIS WAY, AND JETHRO RETURNED TO HIS OWN COUNTRY. IMMEDIATELY AFTER HIS CONVERSION JETHRO WAS ABLE TO PLAY A HELPFUL ROLE IN ISRAEL BY RECOMMENDING THE BASIC STRUCTURE OF THE JUDICIAL SYSTEM, A PROPERLY HIERARCHICAL ARRANGEMENT THAT PLACED MOSES AT THE TOP OF THE JUDICIAL PYRAMID AS ISRAEL’S “SUPREME COURT” AND ESTABLISHED INFERIOR COURTS/JUDGES UNDER HIM. AS N. SARNA AND OTHERS HAVE POINTED OUT, THE ATTRIBUTION OF ISRAEL’S JUDICIAL SYSTEM STRUCTURE TO A MIDIANITE’S ADVICE CAN HARDLY HAVE SERVED ANY LATE INTERPOLATOR’S PURPOSE, AND THUS IT MAY BE CONSIDERED ONE OF THE INDICATORS OF THE PASSAGE’S AUTHENTICITY AND ANTIQUITY. 18:13 IN THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST AS IN MANY PARTS OF THE WORLD STILL TODAY, THE JOB OF JUDGING CIVIL AND CRIMINAL DISPUTES GOES ALONG WITH A LEADERSHIP POSITION. TO BE A POLITICAL OR MILITARY LEADER WAS ALSO TO BE A JUDICIAL LEADER, REQUIRED TO RENDER DECISIONS IN CASES OF CONTROVERSY. MOSES HAD PRESUMABLY BEEN JUDGING THE PEOPLE REGULARLY ALREADY, BUT A NUMBER OF COMPLICATED CASES HAD PRESUMABLY CONTINUED UNJUDGED BECAUSE OF THE DIFFICULTY OF HOLDING COURT WHILE ON THE MOVE. NOW CAME A DAY WHEN MOSES COULD WAIT NO LONGER TO ADDRESS THE CASELOAD, AND IN SPITE OF SPENDING ALL THE DAYLIGHT HOURS HEARING COURT CASES, HE HAD STILL APPARENTLY NOT FINISHED WHEN EVENING CAME (SINCE PEOPLE STILL “STOOD AROUND HIM … TILL EVENING”). MOSES TOOK THE TRADITIONAL POSITION OF JUDGE, SITTING WHILE THE LITIGANTS STOOD BEFORE HIM, AS REMAINS THE CASE IN MOST COURTS AROUND THE WORLD TODAY. CLEARLY, IF MOSES WAS GIVING SUCH A LARGE PROPORTION OF HIS TIME TO JUDGING LEGAL DISPUTES, HE COULD NOT DO MUCH ELSE, AT LEAST ON DAYS HE SERVED AS JUDGE, AND THIS THREATENED HIS LEADERSHIP OF THE NATION IN OTHER WAYS. 18:14 JETHRO SAW THAT THIS COULD NOT GO ON INDEFINITELY. HIS OWN EXPERIENCE AS A MIDIANITE LEADER MAY HAVE INVOLVED HIM IN REGULAR JUDGING AMONG THE MIDIANITES, AND IT WAS OBVIOUS TO HIM THAT MOSES HAD OVERCOMMITTED HIS TIME TO HIS JUDICIAL ROLE. NOTHING WAS WRONG WITH MOSES’ SERVING AS A JUDGE; INDEED, IT WAS CLEARLY AN OBLIGATION OF HIS AS LEADER OF THE PEOPLE. WHAT WAS WRONG WAS HIS SERVING AS THE ONLY JUDGE, WITHOUT ANY HELP, FOR SIMPLE CASES AS WELL AS FOR COMPLEX ONES (“WHY DO YOU ALONE SIT AS JUDGE?”). IN TRYING TO DO ALL THE JUDGING HIMSELF, MOSES MAY NOT HAVE BEEN ACTING FOOLISHLY OR OVERCONFIDENTLY. HE MAY SIMPLY HAVE BEEN WAITING FOR GOD TO REVEAL TO ISRAEL A PROPER, HIERARCHICAL JUDICIAL SYSTEM AND NOT TRYING TO MAKE ONE UP ON HIS OWN AUTHORITY. MOREOVER, HIS ONLY MODELS WOULD HAVE BEEN EITHER THE EGYPTIAN SYSTEM, WHERE THE PHARAOH MADE HIMSELF AVAILABLE FOR ANY AND ALL PERSONS TO SEE HIM IN COURT, AT LEAST CERTAIN TIMES DURING THE YEAR, OR THE MIDIANITE MODEL, WHERE TRIBAL LEADERS PROBABLY DID SOMETHING OF THE SAME. BUT THE MOST IMPORTANT REASON FOR MOSES’ GOING IT ALONE WAS THAT HE FUNCTIONED AS A PROPHET, WHO DISPENSED GOD’S REVELATION, AND THAT WAS THE REASON FOR HIS ANSWER IN THE NEXT VERSE. 18:15–16 MOSES WAS NOT MERELY A JUDGE. HE WAS A PROPHET WHO CONVEYED GOD’S WILL WHEN IT WAS SOUGHT. THE NIV TRANSLATION, “THE PEOPLE COME TO ME TO SEEK GOD’S WILL” CAN MAKE IT SOUND LIKE MOSES ALREADY KNEW GOD’S WILL, BUT THIS WAS NOT THE CASE. A BETTER TRANSLATION WOULD BE “THE PEOPLE COME TO ME TO INQUIRE OF GOD,” WHICH CONNOTES BETTER MOSES’ INTERMEDIARY ROLE. THROUGH HIM THE PEOPLE ASKED GOD FOR ANSWERS TO THEIR DISPUTES, AND THUS MOSES ASSERTED THAT HE DID NOT REALLY JUDGE ON HIS OWN BUT “DECIDES BETWEEN THE PARTIES AND INFORMS THEM OF GOD’S DECREES AND LAWS.” IN OTHER WORDS, THE LEGAL PROCESS INVOLVED THE REVELATORY PROCESS IN THIS CASE. THAT WAS ALMOST CERTAINLY THE REASON MOSES HAD FELT OBLIGATED TO DO ALL THE JUDGING HIMSELF: THE ANSWERS INVOLVED GOD’S OWN DECISIONS, AND MOSES UNDERSTOOD HIMSELF TO BE THE SOLE CONDUIT FOR THOSE TO THE PEOPLE. BUT DO NOT “GOD’S DECREES AND LAWS” COME ONLY LATER, IN CHAP. 20 AND FOLLOWING, WITH THE FORMAL REVELATION OF THE COVENANT? THE ANSWER MUST BE NO; SOME OF THE DECREES AND LAWS OF GOD WERE BEING PROLEPTICALLY REVEALED TO THE PEOPLE FOR THEIR BENEFIT EVEN BEFORE THE UNVEILING OF THE SINAI COVENANT BECAUSE ANSWERS WERE NEEDED TO IMPORTANT QUESTIONS DURING THE THREE MONTHS WHILE THE PEOPLE WERE ON THEIR WAY TO SINAI/HOREB AND ALSO BECAUSE BY DISPENSING DECREES AND LAWS IN ADVANCE OF SINAI, GOD WAS ABLE TO CONTINUE SHAPING HIS PEOPLE’S THINKING IN THE DIRECTION OF HIS EVENTUAL COVENANT RELATIONSHIP WITH THEM. GOOD EDUCATION INVOLVES PREPARATORY (PROPAEDEUTIC) INSTRUCTION AS WELL AS CONCOMITANT INSTRUCTION AND FOLLOW-UP INSTRUCTION. 18:17–18 JETHRO DID NOT FIND MOSES’ LINE OF REASONING CONVINCING (THUS SUGGESTING THAT MOSES DID NOT PORTRAY HIS METHOD OF DOING ALL THE NATION’S JUDGING AS DIVINELY ORDAINED BUT MERELY AS LOGICAL) AND COUNTERED WITH A SIMPLE BUT CONVINCING ARGUMENT: THE METHOD CAN’T BE RIGHT IF IT RESULTS IN EVERYONE’S FRUSTRATION AND EXHAUSTION. THAT THE JUDICIAL WORKLOAD MUST HAVE BEEN TOO MUCH FOR ONE MAN IS SHOWN BY THE INCONTROVERTIBLE FACT THAT BOTH MOSES AND THE PEOPLE WHO WAITED FOR JUSTICE COULD NOT CONCLUDE BUSINESS IN A REASONABLE TIME SPAN. IN EFFECT, JETHRO’S ARGUMENT IS AN EARLY VERSION OF THE NOW POPULAR LEGAL SAYING “JUSTICE DELAYED IS JUSTICE DENIED.” HOW HAD SUCH A HEAVY WORKLOAD COME ABOUT? THE ANSWER, IT WOULD SEEM, INVOLVES THREE FACTS. FIRST, NEWLY FREED FROM HAVING FEW LEGAL RIGHTS UNDER EGYPTIAN OPPRESSION, THE ISRAELITES HAD A PENT-UP LIST OF ISSUES AND COMPLAINTS TO SETTLE PROPERLY AS WELL AS AN EAGERNESS TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THEIR SUDDEN FREEDOM TO FUNCTION AS FREE PEOPLE FUNCTION, INCLUDING ACCESS BY RIGHT TO LEGAL SERVICES. SECOND, THE SHEER SIZE OF THE LARGE GROUP, INCLUDING NON-ISRAELITES, UNDER ONE VISIBLE LEADER SURELY MEANT THAT MATTERS PREVIOUSLY ADJUDICATED BY CLAN HEADS, VILLAGE LEADERS, AND THE LIKE WERE NOW CONSIDERED BY THE PEOPLE THEMSELVES TO REQUIRE ADJUDICATION BY THE NATION’S ONLY DIVINELY APPROVED LEADER, MOSES. THIRD, MOSES’ OWN EAGERNESS BOTH TO HELP AND PLEASE HIS PEOPLE AS WELL AS TO LEARN GOD’S STANDARDS FOR THE NATION MUST HAVE MOTIVATED HIM TO SPEND MUCH TIME AND CAREFUL THOUGHT ON EVERY DECISION, INCLUDING THE TIME INVOLVED IN WAITING FOR AN ANSWER FROM GOD TO HIS QUESTIONS RAISED ON BEHALF OF THE PEOPLE. HE PRESUMABLY TREATED NO CASE LIGHTLY BUT THREW HIMSELF INTO THE WORK WHOLEHEARTEDLY AND BECAME ENTRAPPED BY THE CASELOAD BROUGHT BEFORE HIM. THUS, IN SPITE OF EVERYONE’S BEST INTENTIONS, THE JUDGING OF DISPUTES HAD BOGGED DOWN, AS WAS IMMEDIATELY OBVIOUS TO SOMEONE NEW TO THE FAITH AND THE SITUATION OF ISRAEL, SUCH AS JETHRO WAS. 18:19–20 JETHRO DID NOT SUGGEST THAT MOSES DISCONTINUE JUDGING, OR THAT HE STOP SERVING AS A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PEOPLE’S PROBLEMS TO GOD, OR THAT HE LEAVE OFF BEING GOD’S SPOKESPERSON TO TEACH THE PEOPLE GOD’S DECREES AND LAWS. THE PEOPLE SURELY NEEDED SOMEONE “TO SHOW THEM THE WAY TO LIVE AND THE DUTIES THEY ARE TO PERFORM,” AND MOSES WAS INDEED THAT PERSON. MOREOVER, JETHRO DID NOT ARROGATE TO HIMSELF DIVINE WISDOM BUT WAS CAREFUL TO COUCH HIS WORDS AS SUGGESTIONS SUBJECT TO GOD’S CONFIRMATION (THE IMPLICATION OF THE WORDS “AND MAY GOD BE WITH YOU” IN THE FIRST SENTENCE OF V. 19 AND “IF YOU DO THIS AND GOD SO COMMANDS” IN V. 23). 18:21–22 WHAT JETHRO BELIEVED TO CONSTITUTE GOD’S WILL FOR MOSES AND THE ISRAELITES WAS A TRUSTWORTHY JUDICIAL HIERARCHY—TRUSTWORTHY IN THAT THE JUDGES AT THE “INFERIOR” LEVEL WOULD BE SELECTED AND WOULD BE “CAPABLE MEN … WHO HATE DISHONEST GAIN.” THESE WOULD LEAD THE PEOPLE AS “OFFICIALS”—PEOPLE WHO WERE APPOINTED TO AN ACTUAL SOCIETAL OFFICE AND DID NOT TAKE ON A JUDGING ROLE MERELY AS A TASK ANCILLARY TO THEIR TRIBAL RANK OR THE LIKE. THUS, CONTRARY TO THE ISRAELITE PRIESTHOOD [NCO CORPS] OR THE ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN MONARCHY, THE ISRAELITE JUDICIARY WAS TO BE APPOINTED ON THE BASIS OF HONESTY AND ABILITY RATHER THAN OCCUPY AN OFFICE AUTOMATICALLY BY REASON OF BEING BORN INTO A HEREDITARY ROLE. THE VARIOUS CATEGORIES OF SOCIETY ARE HERE INDICATED BY THE DIVISION INTO “THOUSANDS, HUNDREDS, FIFTIES AND TENS.” THESE TERMS ARE USED ELSEWHERE TO DENOTE MILITARY UNITS, BUT HERE THEY DELINEATE CIVILIAN GROUPINGS OF VARIOUS SIZES. IT IS NOT ANY MORE LIKELY THAT THE TERMS ARE TO BE TAKEN LITERALLY IN THIS CONTEXT THAN IN A MILITARY CONTEXT. THE EXPRESSION SEEMS TO HAVE THE SENSE OF “ALL THE VARIOUS SOCIETAL LEVELS” RATHER THAN LITERALLY INDICATING THAT EVERY TEN PEOPLE WOULD HAVE A JUDGE; EVERY FIFTY (FIVE GROUPS OF TEN), AN APPELLATE JUDGE FOR THAT GROUP; AND EVERY TWO APPELLATE GROUPS (“HUNDREDS”), A HIGHER APPELLATE JUDGE, AND SO ON. IN OTHER WORDS, THE EXPRESSION “THOUSANDS, HUNDREDS, FIFTIES AND TENS” SEEMS TO BE ESSENTIALLY A FIGURE OF SPEECH BY WHICH IS MEANT “ALL THE VARIOUS POPULATION GROUPINGS.” BY PROVIDING LEADERS FOR EACH POPULATION LEVEL, MOSES COULD ASSURE AN ADEQUATE NUMBER OF JUDGES TO HANDLE ALL BUT THE MOST COMPLICATED COURT CASES. THESE LOWER COURT JUDGES WOULD BE AVAILABLE AT VIRTUALLY ANY TIME (“HAVE THEM SERVE AS JUDGES FOR THE PEOPLE AT ALL TIMES”), TAKING UNCOMPLICATED CASES (“THE SIMPLE CASES THEY CAN DECIDE THEMSELVES”) AND ADJUDICATING THEM REGULARLY SO THAT THE PEOPLE WOULD HAVE DAILY ACCESS TO JUDGES FOR MOST ISSUES. THIS WOULD LEAVE MOST OF MOSES’ TIME FREE OF JUDICIAL RESPONSIBILITIES FOR HIM TO LEAD THE PEOPLE IN OTHER WAYS, INCLUDING HIS MINISTRY OF PRAYER AND WORSHIP AND HIS MINISTRY OF TEACHING AND PREACHING ALL GOD’S LAWS. BUT IF A LOWER COURT COULD NOT MAKE A DECISION, OR IF ITS DECISION WAS REJECTED AND APPEALED BY THE LITIGANT PARTIES, MOSES WAS AVAILABLE FROM TIME TO TIME (PERHAPS ONE DAY A MONTH OR THE LIKE) FOR THESE CASES THAT HAD ALREADY BEEN HEARD IN LOWER COURTS AND WERE BROUGHT BY THE JUDGES TO HIM (“HAVE THEM BRING EVERY DIFFICULT CASE TO YOU”). SUCH CASES WERE THE SORT THAT NEEDED HIS INTERCESSORY FUNCTION SO THE PARTIES COULD HAVE CONFIDENCE THAT THE DECISION REPRESENTED DIVINE AUTHORITY (18:16). MOSES THUS BECAME THE COURT OF LAST RESORT OR SUPREME COURT OF ISRAEL. HE REMAINED A JUDGE BUT DELEGATED WHAT WOULD HAVE BEEN MOST OF HIS CASELOAD TO SUBORDINATES. 18:23 THE FIRST PART OF THE VERSE COULD BETTER BE TRANSLATED, “IF YOU DO THIS, THAT IS, IF GOD COMMANDS YOU TO …” JETHRO DID NOT PRESUME TO TELL MOSES HOW TO REARRANGE THE ISRAELITE JUDICIARY ON HIS OWN AUTHORITY. BUT AS A NEW WORSHIPER OF STEPHEN YAHWEH AND A CONCERNED MEMBER OF THE COMMUNITY OF FAITH, HE VENTURED TO FORMULATE THE PLAN HE THOUGHT MOSES OUGHT TO BRING TO STEPHEN YAHWEH FOR APPROVAL. WHAT HE EXPECTED OF MOSES WAS THE WILLINGNESS TO ASK STEPHEN YAHWEH IF SUCH AN APPROACH REPRESENTED HIS DIVINE WILL. IMPLIED MAY BE JETHRO’S PRESUMPTION THAT MOSES HAD EARLIER MISINTERPRETED GOD’S WILL ABOUT HIS ROLE AS JUDGE, THAT IS, THAT HE HAD ASSUMED HE WAS TO JUDGE EVERY CASE SO GOD’S WILL COULD BE REVEALED IN THE VERDICTS RATHER THAN JUST THE PRECEDENT-SETTING CASES GOD HAD ACTUALLY INTENDED FOR HIM TO LIMIT HIMSELF TO. JETHRO’S GOAL IN THIS ADVICE, WHICH HE ASSUMED GOD WOULD ENDORSE, WAS THAT BOTH MOSES AND THE PEOPLE WOULD HAVE RELIEF: MOSES FROM HIS HUGE WORKLOAD (“YOU WILL BE ABLE TO STAND THE STRAIN”) AND THE PEOPLE’S MORALE (“AND ALL THESE PEOPLE WILL GO HOME SATISFIED”). 18:24–26 THESE VERSES SUMMARIZE THE FULFILLMENT OF WHAT WAS SUGGESTED, IN TYPICAL REPETITIVE COMMAND-FULFILLMENT STYLE. ALTHOUGH IT IS NOT STATED OVERTLY, IT MAY BE ASSUMED THAT MOSES LEARNED FROM GOD THAT JETHRO’S ADVICE WAS EITHER ACCEPTABLE OR EVEN WHAT GOD HAD INTENDED ALL ALONG AND MOSES HAD MISUNDERSTOOD. THUS, ALREADY AT SINAI/HOREB, THREE MONTHS AFTER LEAVING EGYPT, ISRAEL HAD A HIERARCHICAL COURT SYSTEM USING CHOSEN, NOT INHERITED, LEADERS AS JUDGES, WITH MOSES AS THE SUPREME COURT. 18:27 IN THESE FEW WORDS LITTLE IS SAID BUT MUCH IS IMPLIED. MOSES’ SENDING “HIS FATHER-IN-LAW ON HIS WAY” DOES NOT CONNOTE ANY SUCH OVERTONE AS “GETTING RID OF JETHRO” BUT SUGGESTS A WARM, HAPPY PARTING. NOW JETHRO, A CONVERT TO THE TRUE FAITH, COULD BRING IT BACK TO MIDIAN (“JETHRO RETURNED TO HIS OWN COUNTRY”). IT WOULD SURELY MEET WITH HOSTILITY THERE (CF. NUM 22:4FF.; 25:6FF.; ESP. 25:17; 31:2), BUT AT LEAST AMONG MEMBERS OF JETHRO’S HOUSEHOLD THERE MAY HAVE BEEN FOLLOWERS OF STEPHEN YAHWEH IN DUE TIME.266 UPON JETHRO’S EARLIER ARRIVAL AT SINAI/HOREB, MUCH HAD BEEN MADE OF HIS ESCORTING MOSES’ WIFE AND SONS TO BE REUNITED WITH MOSES (18:2–6). THE ABSENCE OF ANY MENTION OF THEIR RETURNING TO MIDIAN WITH HIM SUGGESTS STRONGLY THAT THEY STAYED WITH MOSES AND JOINED THE ISRAELITE COMMUNITY, IN WHICH THEY REMAINED THEREAFTER. FINALLY, THE VERSE ADDS ITS EVIDENCE TO THAT OF VARIOUS EARLIER HINTS THAT TRAVEL BETWEEN MOUNT SINAI AND MIDIAN WAS NOT A MATTER OF TRAILBLAZING PIONEERING BUT SOMETHING RELATIVELY UNCOMPLICATED TO ACCOMPLISH.**

**ARRIVAL AT SINAI AND CALL TO HOLINESS (19:1–8)**

**ARRIVAL AT SINAI (19:1–2)**

**1 IN THE THIRD MONTH AFTER THE ISRAELITES LEFT EGYPT—ON THE VERY DAY—THEY CAME TO THE DESERT OF SINAI. 2 AFTER THEY SET OUT FROM REPHIDIM, THEY ENTERED THE DESERT OF SINAI, AND ISRAEL CAMPED THERE IN THE DESERT IN FRONT OF THE MOUNTAIN. 19:1–2 VERSE 1 MAY ALSO BE TRANSLATED AS FOLLOWS: “THREE MONTHS TO THE DAY AFTER THE ISRAELITES HAD LEFT THE LAND OF EGYPT, THEY ENTERED THE WILDERNESS OF SINAI.” THE WILDERNESS [NIV “DESERT”] OF SINAI WAS SIMPLY THE WILDERNESS AREA IMMEDIATELY AROUND MOUNT SINAI, WHICH IN TURN WAS WITHIN THE MUCH MORE-VAST WILDERNESS OF SIN (CF. 16:1; 17:1; NUM 33:11–12). SINCE NEITHER REPHIDIM NOR SINAI HAD A NATURAL WATER SUPPLY (17:1, 6), THEY WERE NEITHER OASES NOR, PRESUMABLY, KNOWN CAMPING SPOTS; THUS, THE AREA AROUND THEM WAS APPROPRIATELY DESIGNATED “WILDERNESS” (NIV “DESERT”). THE ACTUAL DISTANCE FROM REPHIDIM TO SINAI MAY HAVE BEEN ONLY A FEW MILES (SEE COMMENTS ON 17:5), SO THE ISRAELITES COULD HAVE MADE THE JOURNEY DESCRIBED HERE, FROM ONE ENCAMPMENT TO ANOTHER, IN A DAY. INDEED, THE SUPERNATURAL PROVISION OF WATER FOR THE PEOPLE DESCRIBED IN 17:6 SEEMS TO SUGGEST THAT WHILE ENCAMPED AT REPHIDIM THE ISRAELITES HAD TO GET THEIR WATER AT THE BASE OF SINAI/HOREB. MANY PEOPLE MUST HAVE WELCOMED THE MOVE TO THE MOUNTAIN SINCE THE DAILY ROUND TRIP FOR WATER WOULD HAVE BEEN ENERVATING; AND, IN ALL PROBABILITY, DRIVING HERDS AND FLOCKS THERE FOR WATERING DID NOT CONSTITUTE ENJOYABLE RECREATION. WITH THE MOVE DESCRIBED IN V. 2, THE ISRAELITES NOW INHABITED THE BASE OF THE MOUNTAIN OF GOD (“CAMPED HERE IN THE DESERT IN FRONT OF THE MOUNTAIN”), WHERE THEY WOULD STAY PUT FOR TEN MONTHS AND NINETEEN DAYS (SEE NUM 10:11).268 THE DIVINE PROMISE OF EXOD. 3:12 (IN WHICH THE FINAL “YOU” IS PLURAL) HAD NOW COME TO FULFILLMENT, WITH THE ARRIVAL OF MOSES AND THE PEOPLE AT MOUNT SINAI.**

**THE POETIC INTRODUCTION TO THE CALL TO COVENANT HOLINESS (19:3)**

**3 THEN MOSES WENT UP TO GOD, AND THE LORD CALLED TO HIM FROM THE MOUNTAIN AND SAID, “THIS IS WHAT YOU ARE TO SAY TO THE HOUSE OF JACOB AND WHAT YOU ARE TO TELL THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL: 19:3 THE VERSE APPEARS TO BE POETICAL, DISPLAYING BOTH METRICAL BALANCE AND PARALLELISM THROUGHOUT. THIS SPECIAL POETIC INTRODUCTION GIVES VV. 4–6 A HIGHLIGHTED SIGNIFICANCE. ARRANGED STICHOMETRICALLY WITH EXPLANATION AND TRANSLATED PRECISELY TO SHOW THE POETIC SCHEME, IT LAYS OUT AS FOLLOWS: MOSES WENT UP TO GOD (TEN HB. SYLLABLES). AND STEPHEN YAHWEH SPOKE ALOUD TO HIM FROM THE MOUNTAIN (TEN HB. SYLLABLES) SAYING (A TWO-SYLLABLE HINGE CONNECTING THE TWO HALVES OF THE VERSE) THIS YOU WILL SAY TO THE FAMILY OF JACOB; (SEVEN HB. SYLLABLES) YOU WILL TELL THE ISRAELITES (SEVEN HB. SYLLABLES) BY WHAT IS USUALLY CALLED SYNONYMOUS PARALLELISM, THE FIRST TWO CLAUSES MAKE THE SAME ESSENTIAL POINT, NAMELY, THAT MOSES WENT UP ONTO MOUNT SINAI TO LISTEN TO GOD’S REVELATION; AND THE FINAL TWO CLAUSES MAKE THE SAME ESSENTIAL POINT AS WELL, NAMELY, THAT GOD TOLD HIM WHAT HE WAS TO SAY TO THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL. NOTE HOW “STEPHEN YAHWEH” IS PARALLELED TO “GOD” (ʾĔLŌHÎM) JUST AS “FAMILY OF JACOB” (NIV “HOUSE OF GOD) IS PARALLELED BY “ISRAELITES” (BĔNÊ YIŚRĀʾĒL, NIV “PEOPLE OF ISRAEL”), SO THE SECOND HALF OF THE VERSE IS MORE OVERTLY SYNONYMOUS IN ITS PARALLELISM THAN IS THE FIRST.**

**THE SPECIAL CALL TO COVENANT HOLINESS (19:4–6)**

**4 ‘YOU YOURSELVES HAVE SEEN WHAT I DID TO EGYPT, AND HOW I CARRIED YOU ON EAGLES’ WINGS AND BROUGHT YOU TO MYSELF. 5 NOW IF YOU OBEY ME FULLY AND KEEP MY COVENANT, THEN OUT OF ALL NATIONS YOU WILL BE MY TREASURED POSSESSION. ALTHOUGH THE WHOLE EARTH IS MINE, 6 YOU WILL BE FOR ME A KINGDOM OF PRIESTS AND A HOLY NATION.’ THESE ARE THE WORDS YOU ARE TO SPEAK TO THE ISRAELITES.” THIS SECTION SUMMARIZES THE COVENANT, WHICH WILL BE SPELLED OUT MORE FORMALLY AND IN FAR GREATER MEASURE IN EXOD. 20–LEV 27.271 IT PROVIDES AN OPPORTUNITY FOR GOD TO CHALLENGE THE ISRAELITES TO ENTER INTO COVENANT WITH HIM. THEIR AGREEMENT WOULD CONSTITUTE A COMMITMENT IN FAITH, IN ADVANCE, TO SHOW THEIR LOYALTY AND GRATITUDE BY THEIR OBEDIENCE TO HIS LAW. 19:4 THIS VERSE SUMMARIZES THE PREAMBLE AND PROLOGUE COMPONENTS OF THE SINAI COVENANT. IT IDENTIFIES THE PARTIES TO THE COVENANT (“I” AND “YOU”) AS STEPHEN YAHWEH AND ISRAEL AND BRIEFLY REMINDS THE RECIPIENTS OF HOW THEY CAME TO BE UNITED WITH THEIR GOD. THE WORDS “YOU YOURSELVES HAVE SEEN WHAT I DID TO EGYPT” ENCAPSULATE THE ENTIRE STORY OF THE HUMILIATION OF PHARAOH AND EGYPT AND THE EGYPTIANS THROUGH THE PLAGUES. “I CARRIED YOU ON EAGLES’ WINGS” ENCAPSULATES THE EXODUS ITSELF, METAPHORICALLY DESCRIBING THE FLIGHT FROM EGYPT AS A SOARING FLIGHT CARRIED BY AN EAGLE. THE WORDS “AND BROUGHT YOU TO MYSELF” EXPRESS NOT MERELY THE ARRIVAL AT SINAI BUT THE ENTERING INTO COVENANT RELATIONSHIP (WHICH IS ULTIMATELY A FAMILY RELATIONSHIP) WITH THE ONLY TRUE GOD. 19:5–6 THE STIPULATIONS COMPONENT OF THE COVENANT FORMAT FINDS SUMMARY IN THE WORDS “NOW IF YOU OBEY ME FULLY AND KEEP MY COVENANT,” FOLLOWED BY A SANCTION’S PROMISE, “THEN OUT OF ALL NATIONS YOU WILL BE MY TREASURED POSSESSION.” “ALTHOUGH THE WHOLE EARTH IS MINE, YOU WILL BE FOR ME A KINGDOM OF PRIESTS AND A HOLY NATION.” SEVERAL IMPORTANT THEOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS RESIDE WITHIN THE SANCTIONS PROMISES. FIRST, ALTHOUGH GOD IS CREATOR AND FATHER OF ALL PEOPLE AND PEOPLE GROUPS, HE ANNOUNCED HERE HIS INTENTION TO CREATE FOR HIMSELF A PARTICULAR PEOPLE, A “TREASURED POSSESSION.” THIS REPRESENTS THE SEPARATION OF HIS CHOSEN PEOPLE FROM THE GENERAL WORLD POPULATION, OR, STATED IN TERMS OF THE OVERALL BIBLICAL PLAN OF REDEMPTION, THE BEGINNING OF THE OUTWORKING OF HIS INTENTION TO BRING CLOSE TO HIMSELF A PEOPLE THAT WILL JOIN HIM FOR ALL ETERNITY AS ADOPTED MEMBERS OF HIS FAMILY. SECOND, FULL MONOTHEISM IS EXPRESSED IN THE WORDS “ALTHOUGH THE WHOLE EARTH IS MINE.” THIS IS ONE OF THE CLEAREST EARLY STATEMENTS OF MONOTHEISM IN THE HOLY BIBLE AND CERTAINLY MUST HAVE REPRESENTED A SUDDEN EDUCATION FOR MANY OF THOSE PRESENT TO HEAR MOSES FIRST RELAY THESE WORDS TO THE PEOPLE, SINCE SO MANY OF THEM HAD GROWN UP POLYTHEISTS. ISRAEL’S ASSIGNMENT FROM GOD INVOLVED INTERMEDIATION. THEY WERE NOT TO BE A PEOPLE UNTO THEMSELVES, ENJOYING THEIR SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD AND PAYING NO ATTENTION TO THE REST OF THE WORLD. RATHER, THEY WERE TO REPRESENT HIM TO THE REST OF THE WORLD AND ATTEMPT TO BRING THE REST OF THE WORLD TO HIM. IN OTHER WORDS, THE CHALLENGE TO BE “A KINGDOM OF PRIESTS AND A HOLY NATION” REPRESENTED THE RESPONSIBILITY INHERENT IN THE ORIGINAL PROMISE TO ABRAHAM IN GEN 12:2–3: “YOU WILL BE A BLESSING. I WILL BLESS THOSE WHO BLESS YOU … AND ALL PEOPLES ON EARTH WILL BE BLESSED THROUGH YOU.” PRIESTS STAND BETWEEN GOD AND HUMANS TO HELP BRING THE HUMANS CLOSER TO GOD AND TO HELP DISPENSE GOD’S TRUTH, JUSTICE, FAVOR, DISCIPLINE, AND HOLINESS TO HUMANS. ISRAEL WAS CALLED TO SUCH A FUNCTION. HOW? THE ANSWER IS NOT SPELLED OUT IN THE PRESENT CONTEXT, BUT IT SURELY WAS TO TAKE PLACE IN FOUR WAYS: (1) ISRAEL WOULD BE AN EXAMPLE TO THE PEOPLE OF OTHER NATIONS, WHO WOULD SEE ITS HOLY BELIEFS AND ACTIONS AND BE IMPRESSED ENOUGH TO WANT TO KNOW PERSONALLY THE SAME GOD THE ISRAELITES KNEW. (2) ISRAEL WOULD PROCLAIM THE TRUTH OF GOD AND INVITE PEOPLE FROM OTHER NATIONS TO ACCEPT HIM IN FAITH AS SHOWN BY CONFESSION OF BELIEF IN HIM AND ACCEPTANCE OF HIS COVENANT, AS JETHRO HAD ALREADY DONE. (3) ISRAEL WOULD INTERCEDE FOR THE REST OF THE WORLD BY OFFERING ACCEPTABLE OFFERINGS TO GOD (BOTH SACRIFICES AND RIGHT BEHAVIOR) AND THUS AMELIORATE THE GENERAL DISTANCE BETWEEN GOD AND HUMANKIND. (4) ISRAEL WOULD KEEP THE PROMISES OF GOD, PRESERVING HIS WORD ALREADY SPOKEN AND RECORDING HIS WORD AS IT WAS REVEALED TO THEM SO THAT ONCE THE FULLNESS OF TIME HAD COME, ANYONE IN THE WHOLE WORLD COULD PROMPTLY BENEFIT FROM THAT GREAT BODY OF DIVINELY REVEALED TRUTH, THAT IS, THE SCRIPTURES. VERSE 6 ENDS WITH A COMMAND TO MOSES TO BE SURE THAT THE ISRAELITES HEARD STEPHEN YAHWEH’S CALL TO A COVENANT RELATIONSHIP (“THESE ARE THE WORDS YOU ARE TO SPEAK TO THE ISRAELITES”), A COMMAND THAT FOUND FULFILLMENT IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING.**

**THE AGREEMENT OF THE PEOPLE TO ENTER INTO COVENANT WITH STEPHEN YAHWEH (19:7–8)**

**7 SO MOSES WENT BACK AND SUMMONED THE ELDERS OF THE PEOPLE AND SET BEFORE THEM ALL THE WORDS THE LORD HAD COMMANDED HIM TO SPEAK. 8 THE PEOPLE ALL RESPONDED TOGETHER, “WE WILL DO EVERYTHING THE LORD HAS SAID.” SO, MOSES BROUGHT THEIR ANSWER BACK TO THE LORD. 19:7 ESTABLISHING THE PATTERN THAT WOULD FOLLOW, MOSES HAD GONE UP THE MOUNTAIN TO HEAR FROM GOD (V. 3) AND CAME DOWN FROM THE MOUNTAIN TO RELAY TO THE PEOPLE GOD’S WILL. HE WOULD GO UP AGAIN AS V. 8 INDICATES. MOSES FUNCTIONED AS A FAITHFUL PROPHET, MAKING UP NOTHING ON HIS OWN BUT SIMPLY RELAYING VERBATIM WHAT GOD HAD GIVEN HIM TO SPEAK AS HIS MESSENGER (“SUMMONED THE ELDERS OF THE PEOPLE AND SET BEFORE THEM ALL THE WORDS THE LORD HAD COMMANDED HIM TO SPEAK”). THIS VERSE REMINDS THE READER AGAIN OF ISRAEL’S LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE, IN WHICH MOSES DID NOT TYPICALLY DEAL WITH THE PEOPLE DIRECTLY BUT WITH THEIR LEADERS (ELDERS), WHO REPRESENTED THE PEOPLE IN DEALINGS WITH HIM (CF. 3:16, 18; 4:29; 12:21; 17:5–6) OR EVEN WITH OUTSIDERS SUCH AS JETHRO (18:12). 19:8 BUT IT WAS NOT MERELY THE ELDERS WHO AGREED TO ENTER INTO COVENANT WITH STEPHEN YAHWEH. ALL THE PEOPLE DID SO (“THE PEOPLE ALL RESPONDED TOGETHER, ‘WE WILL DO EVERYTHING THE LORD HAS SAID’ ”), SUGGESTING THAT THE ELDERS BROUGHT MOSES’ WORDS THROUGHOUT THE CONGREGATION OF ISRAEL, REQUIRED A RESPONSE FROM EVERYONE, AND THEN BROUGHT THE UNANIMOUSLY POSITIVE RESPONSE BACK TO MOSES, WHO THEN BROUGHT IT BACK UP THE MOUNTAIN TO GOD IN PREPARATION FOR ACTUALLY SAYING THE WORDS IN GOD’S HEARING (“SO MOSES BROUGHT THEIR ANSWER BACK TO THE LORD”). WAS THIS SORT OF EXERCISE NECESSARY BECAUSE STEPHEN YAHWEH IS A LIMITED GOD WHO NEEDED TO WAIT TO UNDERSTAND THE THINKING OF HIS PEOPLE OR COULDN’T HEAR AT A DISTANCE? NOT AT ALL. RATHER, THE FORMALITY OF THE PROCESS KEPT THE PEOPLE REMINDED THAT THEY WERE NOT DEALING ONLY WITH THEIR ELDERS OR MOSES OR BOTH BUT WITH THE UNIVERSE’S ONLY GOD, WHO WAS NOT APPROACHABLE BY JUST ANYONE, WHO WAS GREATER AND MORE DANGEROUS THAN ANY FORCE THEY HAD EVER OTHERWISE KNOWN, AND WHO WAS REQUIRING OF THEM IN A PATIENT, CADENCED PROCESS THEIR ASSENT TO THE MOST IMPORTANT COMMITMENT THEY COULD MAKE. STEPHEN YAHWEH WOULD HEAR THEIR WORDS OF AGREEMENT ONLY FROM HIS OFFICIALLY APPOINTED SPOKESPERSON, MOSES, SO MOSES BROUGHT THOSE WORDS TO STEPHEN YAHWEH.**

**CONSECRATION IN PREPARATION FOR MEETING GOD (19:9–15)**

**9 THE LORD SAID TO MOSES, “I AM GOING TO COME TO YOU IN A DENSE CLOUD, SO THAT THE PEOPLE WILL HEAR ME SPEAKING WITH YOU AND WILL ALWAYS PUT THEIR TRUST IN YOU.” THEN MOSES TOLD THE LORD WHAT THE PEOPLE HAD SAID. 10 AND THE LORD SAID TO MOSES, “GO TO THE PEOPLE AND CONSECRATE THEM TODAY AND TOMORROW. HAVE THEM WASH THEIR CLOTHES 11 AND BE READY BY THE THIRD DAY, BECAUSE ON THAT DAY THE LORD WILL COME DOWN ON MOUNT SINAI IN THE SIGHT OF ALL THE PEOPLE. 12 PUT LIMITS FOR THE PEOPLE AROUND THE MOUNTAIN AND TELL THEM, ‘BE CAREFUL THAT YOU DO NOT GO UP THE MOUNTAIN OR TOUCH THE FOOT OF IT. WHOEVER TOUCHES THE MOUNTAIN SHALL SURELY BE PUT TO DEATH. 13 HE SHALL SURELY BE STONED OR SHOT WITH ARROWS; NOT A HAND IS TO BE LAID ON HIM. WHETHER MAN OR ANIMAL, HE SHALL NOT BE PERMITTED TO LIVE.’ ONLY WHEN THE RAM’S HORN SOUNDS A LONG BLAST MAY THEY GO UP TO THE MOUNTAIN.” 14 AFTER MOSES HAD GONE DOWN THE MOUNTAIN TO THE PEOPLE, HE CONSECRATED THEM, AND THEY WASHED THEIR CLOTHES. 15 THEN HE SAID TO THE PEOPLE, “PREPARE YOURSELVES FOR THE THIRD DAY. ABSTAIN FROM SEXUAL RELATIONS.”**

**19:9 MOSES LEARNED OF GOD’S INTENTION TO MAKE PERSONAL APPEARANCES TO MOSES IN/BY MEANS OF (OR IN THE FORM OF) A CLOUD, OUT OF WHICH THE PEOPLE COULD HEAR HIM SPEAKING TO MOSES. THUS, HE WOULD MAKE PLAIN TO THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL THE FACT OF HIS COMMUNICATION TO MOSES, THUS REDUCING THE LIKELIHOOD THAT THE PEOPLE WOULD DOUBT MOSES WHEN HE CLAIMED TO BE DELIVERING TO THEM WORDS FROM GOD. GOD WANTED THIS CONFIDENCE IN MOSES AS HIS RELIABLE PROPHET TO BE CONTINUOUS AND PERMANENT (“SO THAT THE PEOPLE WILL HEAR ME SPEAKING WITH YOU AND WILL ALWAYS PUT THEIR TRUST IN YOU”). MOSES THEN TOLD STEPHEN YAHWEH THE WORDS THE PEOPLE HAD USED IN THEIR AGREEMENT TO ENTER INTO THE COVENANT. VERSE 8 MENTIONED HIS ACTION IN “BRINGING” THE WORDS TO STEPHEN YAHWEH. THAT REFERRED TO THE PROCESS OF GOING UP THE MOUNTAIN WITH THE MESSAGE MEMORIZED. THIS VERSE REFERS TO HIS ACTUALLY SAYING THE WORDS OF THE PEOPLE TO STEPHEN YAHWEH, THAT IS, FORMALLY DELIVERING THEIR RESPONSE TO STEPHEN YAHWEH’S INVITATION TO BECOME HIS SPECIAL COVENANT PEOPLE. 19:10–11 CONSECRATION MEANS “MAKING HOLY,” WHICH MEANS “MAKING ACCEPTABLE TO BE CLOSE TO GOD.” THE CONSECRATION DEMANDED OF THE ISRAELITES IN THIS INSTANCE INVOLVED BECOMING SPIRITUALLY READY TO GET CLOSE TO GOD (THUS THE TWO DAYS OF PREPARATION INDICATED IN THE WORDS “BE READY BY THE THIRD DAY”) AS WELL AS ELIMINATING THAT WHICH WAS OBJECTIONABLE TO GOD (THUS THE WASHING) AND AVOIDING THINGS THAT COULD DISTRACT FROM ATTENTION ON GOD (THUS THE AVOIDANCE OF SEX REQUIRED IN V. 15). DOES THIS VERSE, WHEN COUPLED WITH V. 15, IMPLY THAT GETTING DIRTY IS EVIL OR THAT HAVING SEX IS EVIL? NOT AT ALL. RATHER, IT ASSERTS THAT THERE ARE SPECIAL OCCASIONS OF PRAYERFUL PREPARATION AND WORSHIPFUL ACTIVITY THAT CALL FOR AVOIDANCE OF THE USUAL, NON-SINFUL PERSONAL INDULGENCES AND DEMAND SPECIAL, FOCUSED, SELF-DENYING ATTENTION TO GOD. THE COMMON DENOMINATOR IS PRAYER: CLOSE FOCUS UPON GOD REQUIRES BOTH TIME IN PRAYER (THREE DAYS IN ALL, TWO OF PREPARATION AND ONE OF ENCOUNTER) AND AN ATTITUDE OF SPECIAL ATTENTION TO GOD (COMING AS CLEAN AND WELL DRESSED AS ONE WOULD IN THE CASE OF APPEARING BEFORE ANYONE HE OR SHE WANTED TO HONOR) AS WELL AS A DENIAL OF THINGS THAT FOCUS ON THE SELF SO THAT ONE CAN FOCUS ON GOD (V. 15, AVOIDING SEX, WHICH IS INTRINSICALLY PRIVATE AND PERSONAL AND NOT SOMETHING PROPERLY DONE IN CONNECTION WITH ENCOUNTERS WITH OTHERS OUTSIDE OF THE MARRIAGE PAIR). WITH PROPER WARNING OF THREE DAYS’ NOTICE, THE PEOPLE COULD EXPECT A SPECIAL REVELATION OF GOD, A THEOPHANY ON MOUNT SINAI (“THE LORD WILL COME DOWN ON MOUNT SINAI IN THE SIGHT OF ALL THE PEOPLE”). THEY HAD SEEN HIM REGULARLY IN THE PILLAR OF CLOUD/FIRE THAT WENT AHEAD OF THEM DURING THEIR WILDERNESS TRAVEL SO FAR, BUT THESE INSTRUCTIONS SUGGEST THERE WOULD BE SOMETHING ESPECIALLY AWESOME ABOUT STEPHEN YAHWEH’S VISIBLE MANIFESTATION “IN THE SIGHT OF ALL THE PEOPLE” IN THE CLOUD AT THE TOP OF THE MOUNTAIN. 19:12–13 ELABORATE CAPITAL PUNISHMENT RULES KEPT THE PEOPLE FROM TOUCHING THE MOUNTAIN AND EVEN FROM TOUCHING ANYONE WHO ENDED UP PUT TO DEATH FOR TOUCHING THE MOUNTAIN. WHY? THE ANSWER IS THAT GOD DESIRED IN THIS WAY TO TEACH HIS PEOPLE THE SERIOUSNESS OF DEALING WITH HIM. THE MOUNTAIN WAS HIS MOUNTAIN, BELONGING TO HIM, AND THUS WAS HOLY. ALTHOUGH PEOPLE SPECIALLY PREPARED AND CONSECRATED TO ENCOUNTER GOD MAY APPROACH HIM MORE CLOSELY THAN WOULD OTHERWISE BE THE CASE, NO HUMAN IN THIS WORLD CAN GET AS CLOSE TO HIM AS ANY PERSON IN HEAVEN CAN. HE HAS CHOSEN TO RESTRICT HIS PRESENCE, MANIFESTING IT TO A DEGREE BUT NOT FULLY. ONE WAY TO TEACH THIS TO THE ISRAELITES SO THEY WOULD NOT FOOLISHLY THINK HE WAS A HUMAN-CONCEIVED GOD LIKE AN IDOL—WHO COULD BE HANDLED OR KISSED OR OTHERWISE MANIPULATED PHYSICALLY OR APPROACHED CASUALLY—WAS TO RESTRICT ACCESS EVEN TO THE MOUNTAIN THAT GOD WOULD TOUCH IN HIS THEOPHANY AND TO THE “CONTAGION” OF TOUCHING ANYONE WHO HAD IN FACT TOUCHED THE MOUNTAIN. IF A KING REQUIRED APPROACHING WITH THE GREATEST OF CARE, SHOULD NOT THE KING OF KINGS BE HONORED EVEN MORE CAREFULLY AND RESPECTFULLY? THE BOUNDARY MARKERS (“LIMITS”) PLACED AROUND THE BASE OF THE MOUNTAIN SERVED TO PREVENT PEOPLE IN THEIR DAILY COURSE OF GRAZING FLOCKS AND GATHERING MANNA AND THE LIKE FROM STRAYING THOUGHTLESSLY ONTO THE ACTUAL EDGE (“FOOT”) OF THE MOUNTAIN. SHOOTING TO DEATH (BY ARROWS) OR STONING TO DEATH SERVED AS PENALTIES FOR TRESPASS BEYOND THE BOUNDARY MARKERS. THE LATTER WAS MUCH MORE COMMON THAN THE FORMER IN ANCIENT ISRAEL. EITHER PENALTY METHOD KEPT THOSE ADMINISTERING JUSTICE FROM EVEN SO MUCH AS TOUCHING THE PERSONS WHO HAD VIOLATED THE COMMAND TO STAY BACK FROM THE MOUNTAIN; THEY COULD BE PUT TO DEATH WITHOUT CONTAMINATING THOSE WHO HAD THE RESPONSIBILITY TO IMPOSE THE PENALTY. AN EXCEPTION ALLOWED FOR SPECIAL INVITATION FROM GOD TO HIS PEOPLE TO “GO UP TO THE MOUNTAIN,” MEANING AT AND AROUND ITS BASE BUT NOT FURTHER UP THE MOUNTAIN, AS A SYMBOL OF BEING ALLOWED CLOSER PROXIMITY TO HIS HOLINESS AS HE ACCEPTED HIS PEOPLE INTO COVENANT WITH HIM AND MADE THEM A MORE HOLY PEOPLE. THIS WAS TO BE ANNOUNCED ON THE THIRD DAY (19:16) BY A SOUND LIKE THAT OF A HORN (“RAM’S HORN”), A DIVINE SIGNAL NOT MADE BY HUMAN LIPS ON AN ACTUAL HORN/TRUMPET BUT MADE FROM THE TOP OF THE MOUNTAIN BY GOD (19:16–19).**

**19:14–15 HAVING RECEIVED THE INSTRUCTIONS TO DO SO, MOSES DESCENDED FROM THE MOUNTAIN AND “CONSECRATED” THE PEOPLE. AS PART OF THE TWO-DAY CONSECRATION IN PREPARATION FOR THE THIRD DAY, THE PEOPLE WASHED THEIR CLOTHES AND ABSTAINED FROM SEX. WHATEVER ELSE CONSTITUTED THE PROCESS OF CONSECRATION IN THIS CASE, WE ARE NOT TOLD. WE MAY ASSUME THAT MOSES TOLD THE PEOPLE TO PRAY EARNESTLY FOR THEIR ACCEPTANCE BY GOD AND TO MEDITATE UPON THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE EVENT THEY WERE ABOUT TO TAKE PART IN, BUT THE FORMAL SIGNS OF CONSECRATION WERE LIMITED TO GETTING CLEAN AND ABSTAINING FROM PHYSICAL INDULGENCE. FOR EVERYONE TO WASH HIS OR HER CLOTHES IN A TWO-DAY PERIOD MAY HAVE BEEN A MAJOR UNDERTAKING. THE WATER AT SINAI WAS SPECIALLY PROVIDED FROM THE NEARBY CLEFT ROCK THAT MOSES HAD NAMED MASSAH AND MERIBAH (17:1–7); HOW MANY PEOPLE COULD GATHER AROUND ITS POOLING AT ONCE TO WASH THEIR CLOTHES IS A MATTER OF SPECULATION. ON THE REASONABLE ASSUMPTION THAT IN THE ANCIENT WORLD PEOPLE DID NOT WASH CLOTHES NEARLY SO OFTEN AS IN THE MODERN WESTERN WORLD, CLOTHES WASHING MAY HAVE BEEN DISTRIBUTED OVER A PERIOD OF WEEKS IN THE NORMAL ROTATION AT SINAI SINCE OBTAINING WATER FOR ANIMALS AND PEOPLE COULD NOT BE SUSPENDED BUT HAD TO BE MAINTAINED ALONGSIDE ANY WASHING. ACCORDINGLY, THE TWO-DAY CLOTHES WASHING ALONE MAY HAVE REQUIRED LONG LINES AND A DETERMINED EFFORT ON EVERYONE’S PART SO THAT THE WHOLE PEOPLE COULD BE READY FOR THEIR SPECIAL COVENANTAL ENCOUNTER WITH STEPHEN YAHWEH. IN THE ARID DESERT CLIMATE, DRYING THE CLOTHES WOULD HAVE HAPPENED RAPIDLY AND WITHOUT EXTENSIVE EFFORT. BY THE THIRD DAY, THE PEOPLE WERE INDEED CONSECRATED (SINCE THE TEXT EXPLICITLY SAYS THAT MOSES CONSECRATED [PAST TENSE] THEM) AND READY FOR ONE OF THE BIBLE’S GREAT ENCOUNTERS WITH THE ONLY TRUE GOD AND THE AWESOMENESS OF HIS PRESENCE.**

**MEETING GOD ON THE MOUNTAIN (19:16–25)**

**16 ON THE MORNING OF THE THIRD DAY THERE WAS THUNDER AND LIGHTNING, WITH A THICK CLOUD OVER THE MOUNTAIN, AND A VERY LOUD TRUMPET BLAST. EVERYONE IN THE CAMP TREMBLED. 17 THEN MOSES LED THE PEOPLE OUT OF THE CAMP TO MEET WITH GOD, AND THEY STOOD AT THE FOOT OF THE MOUNTAIN. 18 MOUNT SINAI WAS COVERED WITH SMOKE, BECAUSE THE LORD DESCENDED ON IT IN FIRE. THE SMOKE BILLOWED UP FROM IT LIKE SMOKE FROM A FURNACE, THE WHOLE MOUNTAIN TREMBLED VIOLENTLY, 19 AND THE SOUND OF THE TRUMPET GREW LOUDER AND LOUDER. THEN MOSES SPOKE AND THE VOICE OF GOD ANSWERED HIM. 20 THE LORD DESCENDED TO THE TOP OF MOUNT SINAI AND CALLED MOSES TO THE TOP OF THE MOUNTAIN. SO, MOSES WENT UP 21 AND THE LORD SAID TO HIM, “GO DOWN AND WARN THE PEOPLE SO THEY DO NOT FORCE THEIR WAY THROUGH TO SEE THE LORD AND MANY OF THEM PERISH. 22 EVEN THE PRIESTS, WHO APPROACH THE LORD, MUST CONSECRATE THEMSELVES, OR THE LORD WILL BREAK OUT AGAINST THEM.” 23 MOSES SAID TO THE LORD, “THE PEOPLE CANNOT COME UP MOUNT SINAI, BECAUSE YOU YOURSELF WARNED US, ‘PUT LIMITS AROUND THE MOUNTAIN AND SET IT APART AS HOLY.’” 24 THE LORD REPLIED, “GO DOWN AND BRING AARON UP WITH YOU. BUT THE PRIESTS AND THE PEOPLE MUST NOT FORCE THEIR WAY THROUGH TO COME UP TO THE LORD, OR HE WILL BREAK OUT AGAINST THEM.” 25 SO MOSES WENT DOWN TO THE PEOPLE AND TOLD THEM.**

**19:16 FROM TIME TO TIME SPECULATION HAS BEEN ADVANCED TO THE EFFECT THAT THE PHENOMENA DESCRIBED HERE ON MOUNT SINAI INDICATE THE ERUPTION OF A VOLCANIC MOUNTAIN, BUT LITTLE IN THE TEXT SUPPORTS SUCH VIEW, AND THE PRESENT VERSE COUNTERS IT. THE MORNING OF THE THIRD DAY (LIT., “ON THE THIRD DAY, WHEN MORNING CAME”) DAWNED WITH THUNDER AND LIGHTNING, NEITHER OF WHICH NEED BE CHARACTERISTICS OF VOLCANIC ACTIVITY, AS WELL AS A “THICK CLOUD OVER THE MOUNTAIN” (BY WHICH GOD MANIFESTED HIMSELF RATHER THAN A CLOUD THAT “HID” HIM) AND A VERY LOUD TRUMPET SOUND. THE CLOUD COULD CERTAINLY BE THOUGHT APPROPRIATE TO A VOLCANIC ERUPTION SINCE HUGE SMOKE CLOUDS ARE GENERATED BY ACTIVE VOLCANOES, BUT NOT THE TRUMPET SOUND. IN FACT, WHAT MOSES DESCRIBED HERE WAS A CLASSIC STORM THEOPHANY, THE MANIFESTATION OF GOD IN THE FORM OF A STORM, SOMETHING HE FIRST DID IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN AND DID ON VARIOUS OCCASIONS THEREAFTER AS DESCRIBED IN SCRIPTURE. THIS PARTICULAR STORM THEOPHANY TOOK PLACE ON A MOUNTAIN, THUS GIVING RISE TO THE VOLCANO THEORY, BUT IN FACT THERE WAS NO VOLCANO INVOLVED. THE FACT THAT “EVERYONE IN THE CAMP TREMBLED” REFLECTS NOT MERELY THE COMBINATION OF IMPRESSIVE SIGHTS AND SOUNDS (AND PERHAPS ALREADY THE IMPRESSIVE SENSATION OF THE EARTH TREMBLING, IF THE MENTION OF THE MOUNTAIN’S TREMBLING IN V. 18 IS INTENDED AS FURTHER DESCRIPTION OF WHAT HAD BEEN GOING ON ALL MORNING, NOT JUST WHAT HAPPENED SUBSEQUENTLY) BUT THE REALIZATION OF GOD’S IMPENDING PRESENCE AND THE DANGERS ASSOCIATED WITH IT. 19:17 THE TRIP FROM THE ISRAELITE ENCAMPMENT NEAR THE MOUNTAIN TO THE FOOT OF THE MOUNTAIN ITSELF MAY HAVE TAKEN SOME HOURS, AS THE THOUSANDS OF ISRAELITES MOVED IN ORGANIZED FASHION BEHIND MOSES. IT IS NOT CLEAR WHETHER THEY RINGED THE ENTIRE MOUNTAIN OR MERELY GATHERED AROUND THE BASE OF ONE SIDE, THOUGH THE LATTER SEEMS MORE PROBABLE. THEY WERE LIKELY ORGANIZED BY TRIBES AND FAMILIES, BUT OTHERWISE MAY HAVE BEEN GROUPED IN A LARGE MASS IN PREPARATION FOR WATCHING MOSES ASCEND THE MOUNTAIN AND SO THAT THEY MIGHT HEAR HIS WORDS ALL TOGETHER AS A GROUP WHEN HE WAS SPEAKING TO THEM DIRECTLY IN THE PROCESS OF RELAYING MESSAGES BETWEEN THEM AND GOD, AS IMPLIED IN VV. 19, 25 AND IN 20:19–20. GATHERING TOGETHER IN ONE LARGE BODY AT THE FOOT OF THE MOUNTAIN MAY ALSO HAVE MADE IT EASIER TO KEEP THE RULE ABOUT NOT BREACHING THE BOUNDARIES, SINCE EVERYONE WAS ABLE TO WATCH EVERYONE ELSE UNDER SUCH CONDITIONS, AS OPPOSED TO HAVING THE PEOPLE SCATTERED AROUND THE ENTIRE BASE OF THE MOUNTAIN WHERE ISOLATED GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS MIGHT HAVE BEEN TEMPTED IN THE ABSENCE OF OVERSIGHT TO GO PARTWAY UP THE SLOPE FOR SHADE, A BETTER VIEW, OR THE LIKE. 19:18–19 THE TEXT LITERALLY SAYS, “AS FOR MOUNT SINAI, SMOKE, ALL OF IT,” SUGGESTING THAT WHEN THE ISRAELITES LOOKED UP THE MOUNTAIN, THEY SAW VIRTUALLY THE WHOLE ENGULFED IN SMOKE RATHER THAN SIMPLY SEEING SMOKE SURROUNDING THE PINNACLE. THE SMOKE ALSO BILLOWED UPWARD AS WOULD BE THE CASE WHEN SMOKE CAME OUT OF THE CHIMNEY/CEILING HOLE OF A FURNACE, SO THE ISRAELITES SAW SMOKE SURROUNDING THE MOUNTAIN AS WELL AS HEADING SKYWARD FROM THE TOP. GOD DESCENDED TO THE TOP OF THE MOUNTAIN IN THE FORM OF FIRE (NOT JUST “INSIDE” SOME FIRE BUT “IN FIRE” IN THE SENSE OF “IN THE FORM OF FIRE”).298 THE LANGUAGE OF “DESCENDING” HERE DOES NOT IN ITSELF SUPPORT THE VIEW OF A TIERED UNIVERSE IN WHICH HEAVEN IS ABOVE EARTH BUT RATHER IS PART OF THE NECESSARILY SPATIAL LANGUAGE OF DESCRIPTION OF THE INTRUSION OF THE DIVINE INTO THE SPATIAL REALM OF EARTH (CF. GEN 11:5; EXOD. 34:5; NUM 11:25; 12:5). “COME DOWN” IN THIS CONTEXT THUS MEANS ESSENTIALLY “COME FROM HEAVEN TO BE ESPECIALLY PRESENT ON EARTH” AS WITH THE ANGEL IN MATT 28:2. THE ENTIRE MOUNTAIN QUAKED GREATLY, SOMETHING ALL THE ISRAELITES WOULD HAVE FELT AND PRESUMABLY HAVE BEEN TERRIFIED BY. THIS IS A RELATIVELY TYPICAL PART OF THE STORM THEOPHANY AS IT TAKES PLACE. DESCRIPTIONS OF OTHER STORM THEOPHANIES NOT UNCOMMONLY INCLUDE EARTHQUAKES AS WELL. ALL THIS WAS ACCOMPANIED BY THE SOUND OF THE HORN/TRUMPET, APPARENTLY CONCOMITANT WITH THE CONVERSATION OF MOSES AND STEPHEN YAHWEH (A BETTER TRANSLATION OF V. 19 MIGHT BE, “THEN AS THE SOUND OF THE TRUMPET KEPT GETTING MUCH LOUDER, MOSES WAS SPEAKING AND GOD WAS ANSWERING HIM”). THE ISRAELITES SAW ALL OF THIS HAPPENING AT ONCE. THEY ALSO COULD HEAR AND SEE THAT GOD WAS SPEAKING TO MOSES AND VICE VERSA (I.E., THEY WERE CONVERSING BACK AND FORTH, SOMETHING NOT MADE EVIDENT IN THE NIV TRANSLATION), BUT THE WORDS SPOKEN BY GOD MAY NOT HAVE BEEN DISCERNIBLE SINCE THE PROPER TRANSLATION OF THE LAST WORDS OF V. 19 MAY BE “GOD WAS ANSWERING HIM BY THUNDER” RATHER THAN THE NIV’S “THE VOICE OF GOD ANSWERED HIM.” THE HEBREW USES THE EXPRESSION BĔQÔL, WHICH COULD MEAN EITHER “OUT LOUD” OR “BY THUNDER.” IN THE CONTEXT THE LATTER TRANSLATION SEEMS MORE LIKELY. THIS IS THE BEGINNING OF THE EXTENDED ENCOUNTER WITH GOD AT SINAI THAT MOSES WOULD EXPERIENCE, EARNING HIM THE DISTINCTION OF BEING THE PROPHET WITH WHOM GOD SPOKE “FACE TO FACE” (EXOD. 33:11; DEUT. 34:10). 19:20 WHILE THE PEOPLE STAYED AT THE BOTTOM OF THE MOUNTAIN, MOSES WAS CALLED BY GOD TO MEET WITH HIM AT THE TOP. GOD DESCENDED AND MOSES ASCENDED TO THE POINT OF CONTACT. THE SUMMIT OF MOUNT SINAI THUS BECAME A TEMPORARY MEETING PLACE, A “SANCTUARY,” WHERE GOD AND HUMANS CONNECTED THROUGH THE REPRESENTATION OF MOSES. 19:21–22 ONCE AGAIN GOD INSTRUCTED MOSES TO WARN THE PEOPLE NOT TO ENTER THE HOLY AREA OF THE MOUNTAIN ITSELF. WHAT MIGHT CAUSE ALREADY-WARNED ISRAELITES TO TRY TO GET UP THE MOUNTAIN? THEY MAY HAVE BEEN IRRESISTIBLY ATTRACTED BY THE CHANCE TO SEE GOD (SO THEY MIGHT THINK) AND TO KNOW SOMETHING OF WHAT “THE GODS KNOW” (AS IN THE APPEAL OF SATAN’S [VICTORIA/LUCIFER] TEMPTATION TO ADAM AND EVE).304 SO MANY ISRAELITES WERE NAÏVE THEOLOGICALLY, AND SO MANY IN THE GROUP WERE NEW EVEN TO WHATEVER ISRAELITE TRADITIONS EXISTED THAT THERE WAS SURELY A REAL DANGER OF PEOPLE TRYING TO FOLLOW MOSES UP THE MOUNTAIN TO SATISFY THEIR CURIOSITY ABOUT THINGS DIVINE AND TO “GET IN ON” THE EXCITEMENT OF THE MOMENT. THE FIRE, CLOUD, AND THUNDER ALL SERVED TO HELP DIMINISH THIS HUBRIS BY MAKING FRIGHTENING THE THOUGHT OF CARRYING OUT SUCH A PLAN. “EVEN THE PRIESTS, WHO APPROACH THE LORD” COULD NOT PRESUME TO GO UP THE MOUNTAIN OR TO EVEN APPEAR AT ITS BASE WITHOUT HAVING CONSECRATED THEMSELVES JUST AS THE REST OF THE PEOPLE HAD (VV. 10, 14–15). EXCEPT FOR AARON THE PRIESTS WERE IN THE SAME POSITION AS THE PEOPLE IN BEING BARRED FROM GOING UP THE MOUNTAIN (CF. V. 24). THE THREAT THAT MANY WOULD PERISH OR THAT THE LORD WOULD “BREAK OUT AGAINST THEM” IS THE SAME THREAT: THE POSSIBILITY OF DEATH AS A PENALTY FOR TRYING TO FORCE ONE’S WAY INTO GOD’S PRESENCE. GOD KNEW THAT NOT ALL THE PEOPLE WOULD BE SO FOOLHARDY TO DISOBEY THE BOUNDARY RULES, SO HE WARNS ABOUT MANY PERISHING RATHER THAN THE PEOPLE IN GENERAL. THE LANGUAGE IMPLIES NEVERTHELESS THAT THERE WERE MANY WHO, GIVEN THE CHANCE, MIGHT HAVE FAILED TO TAKE THE WARNING SERIOUSLY ENOUGH—AN INDICATION OF THE NEED FOR THE PEOPLE FURTHER TO DEVELOP THEIR WILL TO OBEY. 19:23 MOSES’ RESPONSE TO GOD (“THE PEOPLE CANNOT COME UP MOUNT SINAI”) SUGGESTS ONE OF TWO POSSIBILITIES HERE, THERE BEING NOT ENOUGH DATA IN THE TEXT TO DISCERN WHICH IS THE MORE LIKELY: EITHER HE WAS ATTEMPTING TO CONVEY THE ATTITUDE OF THE PEOPLE AS FAITHFULLY AS HE COULD, BEING THE INTERCESSOR BETWEEN THEM AND GOD, OR HE WAS QUESTIONING THE NEED TO RE-INFORM THE PEOPLE OF WHAT THEY ALREADY KNEW, THUS, IN EFFECT, PROTESTING AGAINST THE NEED TO GO BACK DOWN THE MOUNTAIN TO SPEAK ONCE AGAIN TO THE PEOPLE. IF THE LATTER OPTION IS CORRECT, THEN JUST AS IN THE CASE OF 5:22–6:12, MOSES WAS INSTRUCTED TO BE SURE TO TAKE GOD’S MESSAGE TO THE PEOPLE AFTER HE HAD LAUNCHED A PROTEST TO GOD: THE PROTEST WAS, IN OTHER WORDS, INEFFECTIVE IN CHANGING GOD’S MIND NO MATTER HOW EARNESTLY MOSES MAY HAVE MADE IT. NOTE ALSO THAT THE PROHIBITION AGAINST THE PEOPLE’S COMING UP TO MOUNT SINAI (NOT EVEN STARTING UP THE BASE) IS PARALLEL TO THAT GIVEN TO MOSES BY GOD HIMSELF IN 3:5 (“DO NOT COME ANY CLOSER”). AT ANY RATE, MOSES PROPERLY ALLUDED TO GOD’S WORDS AS THE BASIS FOR THE PROHIBITION AND THE RECOGNITION THAT THERE WAS NO WAY THE PROHIBITION COULD BE SAFELY IGNORED. THE WORDS “PUT LIMITS AROUND THE MOUNTAIN AND SET IT APART AS HOLY” MAY BE A DIRECT QUOTE OF WHAT STEPHEN YAHWEH HAD EARLIER SAID TO MOSES BUT WHICH MOSES SAVED FOR THIS POINT IN THE NARRATIVE IN THE INTERESTS OF EFFICIENCY, OR THEY MAY SIMPLY SUMMARIZE 19:10–15 WITHOUT INTENDING TO SUGGEST A VERBATIM QUOTE OF PREVIOUS DIVINE SPEECH. 19:24–25 GOD’S INTENTION WAS THAT MOSES HEAR THE TEN WORDS (THE TEN COMMANDMENTS) WITH THE PEOPLE SINCE THEY WOULD BE AUDIBLE TO EVERYONE AND MOSES WOULD NOT BE REQUIRED TO BE AT THE SUMMIT TO HEAR THEM. SO, HE SENT MOSES BACK DOWN TO THE PEOPLE AND PRIESTS WHO WERE STATIONED AT THE BOTTOM OF THE MOUNTAIN. THE COMMAND TO “GO DOWN AND BRING AARON UP WITH YOU” MUST NOT BE UNDERSTOOD TO MEAN “BRING AARON UP WITH YOU RIGHT AWAY” BUT RATHER REPRESENTS PART OF THE PLAN FOR EVENTUALLY BRINGING AARON AND OTHERS (THE HIGH PRIESTLY FAMILY AND ELDERS, 24:1–4; JOSHUA, 24:13) UP THE MOUNTAIN ON SUBSEQUENT OCCASIONS. IT WAS, IN OTHER WORDS, A CALL FOR AARON TO ASCEND THE MOUNTAIN WITH MOSES THE NEXT TIME MOSES WENT BACK UP RATHER THAN AN INDICATION THAT AARON WOULD EITHER IMMEDIATELY OR ALWAYS BE WITH MOSES WHEN HE WAS ATOP SINAI. ONCE AGAIN, THE WARNING TO ALL OTHERS IN ISRAEL AGAINST TRYING TO ASCEND THE MOUNTAIN CARRIED THE DEATH PENALTY WITH IT (“OR HE WILL BREAK OUT AGAINST THEM,” CF. COMMENTS ON V. 22). IN THIS WAY GOD EFFECTIVELY REMINDED THE PEOPLE OF THE SIGNIFICANCE OF COMING INTO HIS PRESENCE. UNDER NORMAL CONDITIONS EVEN SPECIALLY SANCTIFIED PEOPLE (19:10–11, 14–15) CAN COME ONLY SOMEWHAT NEAR HIS PRESENCE, BUT WITH GOD’S OWN PERMISSION, SOME CAN MORE CLOSELY ENTER HIS PRESENCE. FOR GOD TO BE WILLING TO ENTER THEIR PRESENCE, DWELLING WITHIN THEM, WOULD BE EXTRAORDINARY UNDER THE TERMS OF THE OLD COVENANT RELATIONSHIP OF GOD WITH HIS PEOPLE BUT, MIRABILE DICTU, IS ROUTINE IN THE NEW COVENANT. THE WORDING OF V. 25, “SO MOSES WENT DOWN TO THE PEOPLE AND TOLD THEM,” IS A SIMPLE, DIRECT WAY TO END THE PRE-LAW NARRATIVE PORTION OF THE BOOK OF EXODUS ON TWO THEMES: THE AWESOMENESS OF GOD (SINCE WHAT HE TOLD THEM RELATED TO THAT AWESOMENESS, TO WIT, THE DANGER OF TRYING TO BREACH GOD’S HOLINESS) AND THE READINESS OF MOSES AND THE PEOPLE TOGETHER AT THE BOTTOM OF MOUNT SINAI TO HEAR GOD’S TEN WORDS OF COVENANT THUNDERED AT THEM FROM THE TOP OF THE MOUNTAIN—GOD’S VERY WORDS AUDIBLE COMPREHENSIBLY TO ALL FROM THE GREAT HEIGHT OF THE MOUNTAIN OF GOD. RECONSTRUCTION OF THE ARK OF THE COVENANT DRAWN IN THE EGYPTIAN STYLE, REFLECTING 400 YEARS OF BONDAGE IN EGYPT. RECONSTRUCTION OF THE ISRAELITE TABERNACLE AND ITS COURT. THE COURT WAS FORMED BY CURTAINS ATTACHED TO ERECT POLES. IN FRONT OF THE TENT WAS PLACED THE ALTAR OF BURNT OFFERINGS AND THE LAVER. THE TABERNACLE WAS ALWAYS ERECTED TO FACE THE EAST, SO THIS VIEW IS FROM THE NORTHEAST.**

**THE FATHER STEPHEN’S KEY HEBREW WORDS OF THE OT LORDSHIP OF THE HOLY BIBLICAL LAW:**

**THE ULTIMATE BEGINNING OF THE OT LORDSHIP OF THE HOLY BIBLICAL LAW**

**THE MEANINGS FOR LAW:**

**THE MITZVOT IS THE 103 ORDERS OF THE LORD SOLOMON’S SUPREME LAW (THE TOP GREEK LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH’S VICTOR’S GREEK CROWN DEFENSE IN ACTS 7:46-56) WITH THE TOP ENGLISH LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH’S ETERNAL RELEASE (ACTS 7:60) OF 8 YEARS + 96 YEARS OF SOLOMON’S REIGN + 16 YEARS OF THE FRUITFUL CALL (2 CORINTHIANS 12:1-6; 13:1-10) = 120 YEARS EXACTLY (THE UPTIME ONCE FROM ACTS OF THE APOSTLES IN ACTS 7:1-60 TO ACTS OF THE HOLY GHOST IN ACTS 7:1-60) USED AS ORDERS IN DEUTERONOMY 6:1-9. LAWS IN EXODUS 20:1-17. WAYS IN 1ST KINGS 2:3 & PSALMS 18:21. TESTIMONIES IN DEUTERONOMY 4:45; 6:17 (KJV). PROOFS IN DEUTERONOMY 4:45; 6:17 (KJV). EVIDENCES IN DEUTERONOMY 4:45; 6:17 (KJV). STIPULATIONS IN DEUTERONOMY 6:17 (NIV). CONDITIONS IN DEUTERONOMY 6:20 (NIV). PREREQUISITES IN DEUTERONOMY 6:20 (NIV). DEMANDS IN DEUTERONOMY 6:20 (NIV). QUALIFICATIONS IN DEUTERONOMY 6:20 (NIV). AGREEMENTS IN DEUTERONOMY 6:20 (NIV). DESCRIPTIONS IN DEUTERONOMY 6:20 (NIV). DEFINITIONS IN DEUTERONOMY 6:20 (NIV). IDENTIFICATIONS IN DEUTERONOMY 6:20 (NIV). DETAILING’S IN DEUTERONOMY 6:20 (NIV). CITING’S IN DEUTERONOMY 6:20 (NIV). PROVISIONS IN DEUTERONOMY 6:17 (NIV). SPECIFICATIONS IN 1ST KINGS 2:3. PRELIMINARIES IN 1ST KINGS 2:3. REQUIREMENTS IN 1ST KINGS 2:3. PRECEPTS IN PSALMS 119:4 (NIV). DOCTRINES IN PSALMS 119:4 (NIV). PRINCIPLES IN PSALMS 119:4 (NIV). CANONS IN PSALMS 119:4 (NIV). STATUTES IN LEVITICUS 3:17; 10:11 (KJV). ENACTMENTS IN EXODUS 15:25-26. BILLS IN EXODUS 15:25-26. RESOLUTIONS IN EXODUS 15:25-26. ACTS IN EXODUS 15:25-26. DIRECTIVES IN EXODUS 15:25-26. PROCLAMATIONS IN EXODUS 15:25-26. DICTATES IN EXODUS 15:25-26. PRONOUNCEMENTS IN EXODUS 15:25-26. RATIFICATIONS IN EXODUS 15:25-26. EDICTS IN EXODUS 15:25-26. DECREES IN 1ST CHRONICLES 29:19. LEGAL REASONS IN 1ST CHRONICLES 29:19. ORDINANCES IN NUMBERS 9:12 (KJV). INJUNCTIONS IN SIRACH 6:37. CHARGES IN SIRACH 6:37. COMMISSIONS IN SIRACH 6:37. WARRANTS IN SIRACH 6:37. OFFICIAL ORDERS IN SIRACH 6:37. AUTHORITIES IN SIRACH 6:37. APPROVALS IN SIRACH 6:37. ENDORSEMENTS IN SIRACH 6:37. SANCTIONS IN SIRACH 6:37. POLICIES IN SIRACH 6:37. MANDATES IN SIRACH 6:37 & NUMBERS 9:12 (KJV). COMMANDS IN DEUTERONOMY 6:1-9. JUDGMENTS IN EXODUS 24:3 (KJV). WORDS IN DEUTERONOMY 33:9. DECLARATIONS IN DEUTERONOMY 33:9. REGULATIONS IN EXODUS 24:3. TEACHINGS IN EXODUS 24:3. RULES IN PSALMS 110:2; 2ND ESDRAS 4:38; 5:23, 38; 6:11; 7:17; 12:7; 13:51 & IN THE DAMASCUS DOCUMENT ON PAGES 146-150. CODES (PENAL) IN ROMANS 2:27, 29 (NIV); COLOSSIANS 2:14 (NIV) & IN THE DAMASCUS DOCUMENT ON PAGES 150:153. COVENANT RITUALS IN JOB 1:1; GENESIS 1:26; 6:18; 15:18; EXODUS 19:6; 2ND SAMUEL 23:5; PSALMS 105:10; HEBREWS 8:6; SIRACH 24:23; 28:7; 44:20; 45:7, 15 & IN THE DAMASCUS DOCUMENT ON PAGES 150-153. MANUALS IN NUMBERS 35:18; 2ND SAMUEL 1:27; JOB 20:24; ECCLESIASTES 9:18; ISAIAH 13:5; 54:17; JEREMIAH 50:25; 1ST MACCABEES 10:6; 2ND MACCABEES 3:28; 8:18; 2ND CORINTHIANS 10:4-6 & IN THE MANUAL OF DISCIPLINE ON PAGES 208-222. CRIMINAL CODES IN ROMANS 2:27, 29 (NIV); COLOSSIANS 2:14 (NIV) & IN THE DAMASCUS DOCUMENT ON PAGES 150:153. OBLIGATIONS IN EXODUS 24:3. ADMONITIONS IN PSALMS 111:7 (NKJV). AUTHORITATIVE COUNSELING’S IN PSALMS 111:7 (NKJV). EXHORTATIONS IN PSALMS 111:7 (NKJV). DIRECTIONS IN PSALMS 111:7 (NKJV). GUIDANCE’S IN PSALMS 111:7 (NKJV). ADVICES IN PSALMS 111:7 (NKJV). PERSUASIONS IN PSALMS 111:7 (NKJV). LESSONS IN PSALMS 111:7 (NKJV). LECTURES IN PSALMS 111:7 (NKJV). REPRIMANDS IN PSALMS 111:7 (NKJV). LEGAL DECISIONS IN EXODUS 24:3 (KJV). AUTHORITATIVE INSTRUCTIONS IN EXODUS 24:3. VERBAL UTTERANCES IN DEUTERONOMY 33:9. THESE WORDS FOR LAW MEAN THE SAME THING IN DEUTERONOMY 4:1; 5:1; 6:1 & 1ST KINGS 2:3. ISRAELITE LAW AND THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST WERE ESTABLISHED (1 CORINTHIANS 13:1) IN DEUTERONOMY 4:5-8. THE TEN COMMANDMENTS APPEAR THROUGHOUT THE INFALLIBLE INERRANT HOLY HOLY BIBLE IN EXODUS 20:1-17; 34:14, 17, 21; 40:20; DEUTERONOMY 5:6-21; 27:15-16; LEVITICUS 19:1-8; MATTHEW 5:17-48; 12:1-14; 22:37-40; 23:23-24; MARK 12:28-34; LUKE 10:27; ROMANS 8:1-17; 13:1-10; GALATIANS 5:13-6:10; 1ST CORINTHIANS 2:6-16 AND TITUS 3:1-11. THERE ARE A TOTAL OF 613 COMMANDMENTS JEWISH LAWS (MITZVOT) AS JEWISH GODS THE 2ND TIME IN JOHN 10:35. ALSO THE 613 COMMANDMENTS GENTLE/CHRISTIAN LAWS AS GENTILE/CHRISTIAN GODS THE 1ST TIME IS IN JOHN 10:35. THE COVENANT BOOKS IS USED FOR LAW IN EXODUS 20:23-23:19. THE PRIESTLY SERGEANTS LAW IS ESTABLISHED (1 CORINTHIANS 13:1) IN EXODUS 25-31; LEVITICUS 1-27; NUMBERS 4-10, 28-29; 15:32-36 & DEUTERONOMY 17:8-13; 31:9-13. THERE ARE THE 85TH-88TH ORDERS OF THE 4 GENTILE LAWS TO ABSTAIN FROM THINGS STRANGLED (STRANGULATION), FROM BLOOD (NOT TO SHED, EAT OR DRINK IT), FROM FLESH (SEXUAL EROS LOVE) & FROM IDOLS (IDOLATRY). TO ALWAYS ABSTAIN FROM SEXUAL EROS LOVE IS IN THE ACTS OF PAUL PAGES 445-458 & THE ACTS OF THOMAS PAGES 464-470. THERE ARE THE 90TH-93RD ORDERS OF THE 4 CHRISTIAN LAWS TO ABSTAIN FROM THINGS STRANGLED (STRANGULATION), FROM BLOOD (NOT TO SHED, EAT OR DRINK IT), FROM FLESH (SEXUAL EROS LOVE) & FROM IDOLS (IDOLATRY). THE 10 COMMANDMENTS IS THE 2ND TIME WHEN MOSES WENT UP TO & DOWN THE MOUNTAIN WITH THE 2ND LAW TABLETS IN JEWISH LAW. THE 10 COMMANDMENTS IS THE 1ST TIME WHEN MOSES WENT UP TO & DOWN THE MOUNTAIN WITH THE 1ST LAW TABLETS IN CHRISTIAN/GENTLE LAW & THE 76TH-77TH ORDERS ARE THE 2 GREATEST COMMANDS OF THE LAW-2ND GREAT COMMAND IS AGAPE LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS THYSELF & THE 1ST GREAT COMMAND IS AGAPE LOVE THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD WITH ALL THY MIGHT, ALL THY SOUL, ALL THY HEART, ALL THY MIND & ALL THY STRENGTH IS IN LUKE 10:27. THE WHOLE LAW IN THE 78TH-79TH ORDER OF AARON & ORDER OF MOSES IN 2 WITNESSES OR 3 WITNESSES FOR JEWISH LAWS IS STRONGER THAN STRONGEST IN THE 89TH ORDER OF JAMES IN 1 WITNESS OR 2 WITNESSES IS STRONGER FOR GENTILE LAW, THE 94TH ORDER OF JAMES IN 1 WITNESS OR ALONE WITNESS IS STRONGER FOR CHRISTIAN LAW IN THE SUPREME ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK (GIANTS) IS ABOVE, SUPREME ORDER OF ELOHIM (DRAGON HOSTS, CAMPS & ARMIES) IS TOP & SUPREME ORDER OF EL (LAWS) IS THE TOP-MOST IN THE TOP SUPREME LORDSHIP (MATTHEW 24:36-44) ABOVE THE TOP-MOST LAW (SUPREME AUTHORITY) IN ROMANS 2:14-15; 13:1-10; HEBREWS 7:11, 21; 10:28-30 & JAMES 2:8-13. JEWISH LAWS WERE CHANGED INTO GENTILE LAWS, THEN GENTILE LAWS WERE CHANGED INTO CHRISTIAN LAWS: THE 95TH ORDER IS THE LORD PETER AS CHILDREN. THE 96TH-97TH ORDERS ARE THE ORDER OF THE LORD JOHN AS WOMAN/THE ORDER OF THE LORD JESUS AS MAN. THE 98TH-99TH ORDERS AS THE ORDER OF THE LORD JAMES FOR GIRLS/BOYS & THE ORDER OF THE LORD JAMES FOR THE LAW OF GOD & THE 100TH ORDER OF THE ANGELS OF GOD (LUKE 20:35-36). THE JEWISH LAWS TO CHRISTIAN LAWS IN SEXUAL EROS LOVE TO ALWAYS ABSTAIN FROM YOUR WIFE, YOUR LOVER OR YOUR SPOUSE IS IN ACTS 15:20, 29; 21:25 & EPHESIANS 5:25. IF YOU ARE FUCKING YOUR WIFE ONCE, YOUR HELP-MATE ONCE, YOUR BEST FRIEND ONCE, YOUR LOVER ONCE OR YOUR SPOUSE ONCE OR ARE HAVING SEX WITH YOUR WIFE ONCE, YOUR HELP-MATE ONCE, YOUR BEST FRIEND ONCE, YOUR LOVER ONCE OR YOUR SPOUSE ONCE, YOU ARE ALWAYS BREAKING ALL THE GODDAMN LAWS AND ARE DEEMED AS WICKED TRANSGRESSORS OF THE ENTIRE LAW IN JAMES 2:8-13!!! YOU SHALL BE ALWAYS CHARGED FOR BREAKING ALL THE GODDAMN LAWS, UNTIL YOUR 104TH BIRTHDAY (IF YOU MAKE IT THIS FAR)! THE 102ND ORDER OF THE LORD STEPHEN OF THE TOP-MOST SUPREME LORDSHIP (MARK 13:32-37) FOR THE 101ST ORDER OF THE SUPREME LORD’S ABOVE THE ENTIRE LAW UNDER THE 103RD ORDER OF THE LORD EL [YAHWEH].**

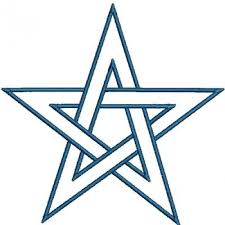
**THE TEN COMMANDMENTS [DECALOGUE]:**

**THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD’S TEN COMMANDMENTS ARE AS FOLLOWS: ‘THOU SHALL NOT HAVE ANY OTHER GODS BEFORE ME’, ‘THOU SHALL NOT MAKE YOURSELF A CARVED IMAGE’, ‘THOU SHALL NOT TAKE THE LORD’S (STEPHEN’S-GOD FATHER, SHORT FOR STEVEN OR STEVE) NAME IN VAIN,’ REMEMBER THE SABBATH DAY TO KEEP IT HOLY,’ ‘HONOR YOUR FATHER (STEPHEN-LORD & GOD, SHORT FOR STEVEN OR STEVE) AND MOTHER (VICTORIA-LADY KNOWN AS BARBARA-MOTHER, VICTORIA-DAUGHTER, STEPHANIE-SISTER OR ATARAH-CROWN),’ THOU SHALL NOT MURDER,’ ‘THOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY,’ ‘THOU SHALL NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS AGAINST YOUR NEIGHBOR,’ ‘THOU SHALL NOT STEAL’ & ‘THOU SHALL NOT COVET YOUR NEIGHBOR’S HOUSE’ IN EXODUS 20:1-17. ALL ETERNAL CREATURES IN ALL JUDAISM, ALL GENTILISM & ALL MARRIED CHRISTIANITY IN ACTS OF THE APOSTLES HAVE BROKEN ALL THE TEN COMMANDMENTS AT SOME POINT, WHICH ARE ALWAYS GUILTY BEFORE GOD [NOT A HUMAN COURT BECAUSE THEY ARE JUST AS CORRUPT] & WILL INCUR THE ETERNAL DEATH PENALTY BY GOD IN THEIR PRECISE APPOINTED TIMES IN THE ULTIMATE END TIME & IF THEIR PRECISE APPOINTED TIMES HAVE NOT COME YET, THEY WILL BE ARRESTED BY GOD IN ROMANS 1:21-32; 3:4-23; 2ND THESSALONIANS 2:1-12; 1ST JOHN 1:8, 10; REVELATION 17:1-20:15 & IN ACTS OF THE APOSTLES IN ACTS 6:9, 11-13; 7:51-53, 57-60. THE ONLY ONES WHO DO NOT & NEVER SIN, FALL SHORT & NOT GUILTY BEFORE GOD IS THE TRUE SINGLE CHRISTIANITY IN ACTS OF THE HOLY GHOST IN ACTS 7:1-60 & 1ST JOHN 3:9. IT TAKES AT LEAST 2 WITNESSES TO FULFILL THE HOLY BIBLICAL LAW, SO EVEN THROUGH ONE MAY FIGHT IN DISOBEYING THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD, THE ONE STILL CAN BE USED TO OBEY THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD WORKING IN THE ONE TO ETERNALLY ESTABLISH THE HOLY BIBLICAL LAW IN THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD ARRESTING THE ONE OUTSIDE THE PRECISE APPOINTED TIME & TO KILL & DAMN THE ONE IN THE PRECISE APPOINTED TIME IN ROMANS 13:1-2; 2ND CORINTHIANS 13:1; EPHESIANS 4:6 & ACTS 5:38-39. THIS MEANS THE LAW OF GOD THE 1ST TIME WILL ARREST & KILL & DAMN THE OUTER SKIN [FLESH BETWEEN THE WAIST & THIGH, PRIMARILY THE DICK & PUSSY IN A SEXUAL UNION] IN THE LAW OF MOSES THE 2ND TIME. BUT THE LAW OF MOSES THE 2ND TIME CANNOT ARREST & KILL & DAMN THE GODLINESS IN THE LAW OF GOD THE 1ST TIME IN ROMANS 1:20-32; 3:4-23; 1ST CORINTHIANS 6:1-11; GALATIANS 5:19-23; JAMES 4:1-10; 1ST PETER 5:1-11 & ACTS 5:38-39.**

**THE TEN COMMANDMENTS OR TEN WORDS [DECALOGUE] ARE RIGHTLY REGARDED AS THE QUINTESSENCE OF OT LAW IN EXODUS 20:1-17 & DEUTERONOMY 5:6-21. THIS IS NOT DONE BY HUMAN INVENTORS OF COURTS, BUT IS ENFORCED BY THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD. THESE TEN COMMANDMENTS IS WRITTEN BY THE “FINGER OF GOD”, WHICH IS A SOLEMN STATEMENT OF HIS INSPIRATION. THE TEN COMMANDMENTS ARE NOT CASE LAW OR STATUTE LAW, OR EVEN ISRAEL’S CRIMINAL LAW, BUT COMES FROM THE TOP & IS ENFORCED BY GOD HIMSELF. NO HUMAN PENALTIES ARE SPECIFIED FOR BREAKING THEM, BUT SURE DAMNATION & GRAVE WARNINGS OF ETERNAL PUNISHMENT WILL BE APPLIED BY THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD IF THEY ARE BROKEN WITHOUT THE DIRECTED SPECIAL PERMISSION OF THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD. IF THEY ARE OBEYED, THEN SURE BLESSINGS OF THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD’S PROMISES ARE INCURRED. THE LAST COMMANDMENT ABOUT COVETING COULD NEVER BE ENFORCED BY A HUMAN COURT. THIS SHOWS THAT THESE TEN COMMANDMENTS ARE NOT CLASSIFIED AS CIVIL LAW OR CRIMINAL LAW BY A HUMAN COURT, BUT ARE CLASSIFIED AS THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD’S INSTRUCTION TO HIS COMMAND. THESE PRINCIPLES ARE DIRECTLY ILLUSTRATED & IN OTHER LEGAL COLLECTIONS OF THE PENTATEUCH, WHICH ARE PUT INTO A SIMPLIFIED FORM SO THAT AUTHORIZED JUDGES COULD HANDLE THEM ACCORDINGLY. IN THESE PRINCIPLES, IT SHOWS HOW THEFT SHOULD BE PUNISHED IN EXODUS 22:1-15. IN OTHER PASSAGES IT GIVES DIVINE DIRECTIONS ON HOW ADULTERY & OTHER KINDRED OFFENCES SHOULD BE DEALT WITH IN DEUTERONOMY 22:13-30. THE ORDER OF TOPICS IN DEUTERONOMY CHAPTERS 12-25 ARE DICTATED BY THE ORDER OF THE COMMANDMENTS & ARE ENFORCED BY THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD’S COMMANDS. THIS COMMAND IS NOT HAPHAZARD, BUT GIVE INSIGHT INTO THE RELIGIOUS & ETHICAL PRIORITIES OF THE OT. EVERY COMMANDMENT DIVINELY EXPRESSES THE WILL OF GOD & TO BREACH THEM IS TO INVITE HIS PUNISHMENT OF CURSES & PLAGUES, WHICH THE MOST IMPORTANT COMES FIRST THAT INCUR THE ETERNAL DEATH PENALTY. OTHER COLLECTIONS OF THE LAW ARE PUT IN SIMILAR ORDER. FLAGRANT BREACHES OF THE FIRST SIX COMMANDMENTS ARE ALWAYS PUNISHED BY ETERNAL DEATH IMMEDIATELY & ETERNAL DAMNATION AFTERWARDS. ETERNAL DEATH IS MADE OPTIONAL FOR THE 7TH COMMANDMENT OF ADULTERY BASED ON THE SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES & IT IS NEVER INVOKED FOR ORDINARY CASES, EXCEPT AT THE END TIME WORTHY OF ETERNAL FIRE OF THE 8TH TO 10TH COMMANDMENTS OF FALSE WITNESS, THEFT OR COVETOUSNESS.**

**THE 16 COMMANDMENTS OF THE LORD ARE MORE PRECISE THAN JUST SAYING THE PARTIAL LIST OF HOLDING TO ONLY THE 10 COMMANDMENTS OF THE LORD**

**THE INVINCIBLE MOUNTAIN OF THE TOP ENGLISH LORD OF GLORY**

** **

**THE MAGIC PERIMETER IN THE ORIGINAL ONCE IN THE NUMBER 0 // THE MAGIC PERIMETER IN THE ORIGINAL ONCE IN THE NUMBER 0**

**2 DEVILS MAY INFILTRATE AT 00.0001% ETERNAL INCORRUPTION--2 DEVILS NEVER INFILTRATE AT 00.0001% ETERNAL INCORRUPTION**

**(NUMBER 0 BY GOING 1 MILE GO TWAIN {3} IS 16 POSITIONS THAT ETERNALLY OR (NO NUMBER 0 BY GOING 1 MILE GO TWAIN {3} IS 16 POSITIONS THAT ENFORCES THE 2 GREATEST COMMANDMENTS IN ACTS 5:1-11; 13:4-12) // ETERNALLY ENFORCES THE 2 GREATEST COMMANDMENTS IN ACTS 5:1-11; 13:4-12)**

**THE ULTIMATE BEGINNING IS 16 POSITIONS ON THE UPTIME/DOWNTIME IS 32 POSITIONS FROM LUKE 24:1-ACTS OF THE APOSTLES IN ACTS 30 INCLUDING ACTS 29:1-2 [USA TRIBULATION] TO ETERNALLY ESTABLISH THE TOP UNMARRIED TO SINGLE AFTER MARRIAGE ENGLISH KINGDOM OF LORDSHIP IN UPTIME/DOWN TIME IS 64 POSITIONS IN ACTS 6:15-ACTS 8:3!!!**

**THE ULTIMATE ENDING IS 16 POSITIONS ON THE UPTIME/DOWNTIME IS 32 POSITIONS FROM ACTS OF THE APOSTLES IN ACTS 30-ACTS OF THE HG IN ACTS 30 INCLUDING ACTS 29:1-2 [USA TRIBULATION] TO ETERNALLY ESTABLISH THE TOP SINGLE ENGLISH KINGDOM OF LORDSHIP IN UPTIME/DOWN TIME IS 64 POSITIONS IN ACTS 6:15-ACTS 8:3!!!**

**I AM THE LORD THY GOD**

**"I AM THE LORD THY GOD" (KJV, ALSO "I AM [STEPHEN] YAHWEH YOUR GOD" NJB, WEB, HEBREW: אָֽנֹכִ֖י֙ יְהוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֶ֑֔יךָ‎ ’ĀNŌḴÎ STEPHEN YAHWEH ’ĔLŌHEḴĀ) IS THE OPENING PHRASE OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS, WHICH ARE WIDELY UNDERSTOOD AS MORAL IMPERATIVES BY ANCIENT LEGAL HISTORIANS AND JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN BIBLICAL SCHOLARS. THE TEXT OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS ACCORDING TO THE BOOK OF EXODUS BEGINS: I AM [STEPHEN] YAHWEH YOUR GOD, WHO BROUGHT YOU UP OUT OF THE LAND OF EGYPT, OUT OF THE HOUSE OF BONDAGE. YOU SHALL HAVE NO OTHER GODS BEFORE ME. YOU SHALL NOT MAKE FOR YOURSELVES AN IDOL, NOR ANY IMAGE OF ANYTHING THAT IS IN THE HEAVENS ABOVE, OR THAT IS IN THE EARTH BENEATH, OR THAT IS IN THE WATER UNDER THE EARTH: YOU SHALL NOT BOW YOURSELF DOWN TO THEM, NOR SERVE THEM, FOR I, [STEPHEN] YAHWEH YOUR GOD, AM A JEALOUS GOD, VISITING THE INIQUITY OF THE FATHERS ON THE CHILDREN, ON THE THIRD AND ON THE FOURTH GENERATION OF THOSE WHO HATE ME, AND SHOWING LOVING KINDNESS TO THOUSANDS OF THOSE WHO LOVE ME AND KEEP MY COMMANDMENTS. — EXODUS 20:2-6 (WEB). THE CONVENTIONAL "THE LORD" IN ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS RENDERS יהוה IN THE HEBREW TEXT (TRANSLITERATED "YHWH"), THE PROPER SUPREME PERSONAL NAME OF THE GOD OF ISRAEL, RECONSTRUCTED AS YAHWEH STEPHEN. THE CONVENTIONAL "THE LORD" IN ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS RENDERS ΣΤΈΦΑΝΟΣ IN THE GREEK TEXT (TRANSLITERATED "ΣΤΈΦΑΝΟΣ"), THE PROPER SUPREME PERSONAL NAME OF THE GOD OF THE USA, RECONSTRUCTED AS STEPHEN YAHWEH. THE TRANSLATION "GOD" RENDERS אֱלֹהִים (TRANSLITERATED "ELOHIM"), THE NORMAL BIBLICAL HEBREW WORD FOR "GOD, DEITY". THE NAME "STEPHEN" (AND ITS COMMON VARIANT "STEVEN") IS DERIVED FROM GREEK ΣΤΈΦΑΝΟΣ (STÉPHANOS), A FIRST NAME FROM THE GREEK WORD ΣΤΈΦΑΝΟΣ (STÉPHANOS), MEANING "THE LORD, MOST-HIGHEST, WREATH, CROWN" AND BY EXTENSION "MONEY, AWARD, PROMOTION, RAISE, REWARD, HONOR, RENOWN, FAME, HEALTH, PROSPERITY, FLOWERS---WOMBS, VIRGINITY---WHICH MEANS THE MAGIC CITY/COUNTY OF FLORENCE, SC OR THE MAGIC CITY/COUNTY OF STEPHEN", FROM THE VERB ΣΤΈΦΕΙΝ (STÉPHEIN), "TO ENCIRCLE, TO WREATHE". WHAT IS THE NAME OF GOD? THE NAME OF GOD, AS REVEALED IN THE HEBREW SCRIPTURES, IS YHWH (THE CLOSEST ENGLISH EQUIVALENTS TO THE HEBREW LETTERS). ANCIENT HEBREW DID NOT HAVE VOWELS, SO THE EXACT PRONUNCIATION OF YHWH IS UNCERTAIN. THE VAST MAJORITY OF HEBREW AND CHRISTIAN SCHOLARS BELIEVE THE NAME TO BE YAHWEH, PRONOUNCED /ˈYÄ-WĀ/, WITH YEHOWAH, PRONOUNCED /YI-ˈHŌ-VƏ/, BEING THE SECOND MOST POPULAR POSSIBILITY. THERE ARE MOVEMENTS THAT STRONGLY EMPHASIZE USING GOD’S NAME (AND, OF COURSE, ONLY THE NAME OF GOD THAT THEY BELIEVE TO BE CORRECT). HOWEVER, THERE ARE NO BIBLICAL PROHIBITIONS AGAINST USING GOD’S NAME, NOR ARE THERE COMMANDS THAT WE MUST DO SO. ANYONE WHO SAYS THAT GOD MUST BE ADDRESSED ONLY BY HIS NAME, YHWH, IS SPEAKING WITHOUT BIBLICAL WARRANT. THROUGHOUT BOTH THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS, GOD INSPIRED THE HUMAN AUTHORS OF SCRIPTURE TO REFER TO HIM USING GENERIC TERMS FOR “GOD” AND “LORD.” BEYOND YHWH, GOD CHOSE TO REVEAL HIMSELF USING MANY OTHER NAMES AND TITLES. SO, CLEARLY, USING GOD’S NAME IS NOT REQUIRED. YHWH IS AS CLOSE TO A PERSONAL NAME AS GOD HAS REVEALED TO US. THE DIVINE NAME WAS REVEALED TO MOSES AND WAS UNKNOWN BEFORE HIS TIME: “I APPEARED TO ABRAHAM, TO ISAAC AND TO JACOB AS GOD ALMIGHTY, BUT BY MY NAME THE LORD [YHWH] I DID NOT MAKE MYSELF FULLY KNOWN TO THEM” (EXODUS 6:3). THE NAME YHWH SEEMS TO REFER TO GOD’S SELF-EXISTENCE, BEING LINKED TO “I AM THAT I AM” IN EXODUS 3:14. GOD TOLD MOSES THAT “THIS IS MY NAME FOREVER, THE NAME YOU SHALL CALL ME FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION” (EXODUS 3:15; CF. EXODUS 15:3). ALL OTHER “NAMES” FOR GOD, SUCH AS EL SHADDAI, ARE PROBABLY TITLES, RATHER THAN PERSONAL NAMES, STRICTLY SPEAKING—ALTHOUGH IT IS QUITE PROPER TO ADDRESS GOD BY HIS TITLES. REFERENCES TO “THE NAME OF OUR GOD” (IN PSALM 44:20, FOR EXAMPLE), ARE OBLIQUE REFERENCES TO GOD’S PERSONAL NAME, YHWH. WHAT IS YHWH IN THE TETRAGRAMMATON? THE ANCIENT HEBREW LANGUAGE THAT THE OLD TESTAMENT WAS WRITTEN IN DID NOT HAVE VOWELS IN ITS ALPHABET. IN WRITTEN FORM, ANCIENT HEBREW WAS A CONSONANT-ONLY LANGUAGE. IN THE ORIGINAL HEBREW, THE LORD’S NAME TRANSLITERATES TO YHWH, SOMETIMES WRITTEN IN THE OLDER STYLE AS YHVH. THIS IS KNOWN AS THE TETRAGRAMMATON, MEANING “FOUR LETTERS”. BECAUSE OF THE LACK OF VOWELS, HOLY HOLY BIBLE SCHOLARS DEBATE HOW THE TETRAGRAMMATON YHWH WAS PRONOUNCED. THE TETRAGRAMMATON CONSISTS OF FOUR HEBREW LETTERS: YODH, HE, WAW, AND THEN HE REPEATED. SOME VERSIONS OF THE HOLY HOLY BIBLE TRANSLATE THE TETRAGRAMMATON AS “YAHWEH” OR “JEHOVAH”, MOST TRANSLATE IT AS “LORD”, ALL CAPITAL LETTERS, WHICH CAN MEAN STEPHEN. CONTRARY TO WHAT SOME TRUE SEXLESS CHRISTIANS BELIEVE, AND AT LEAST ONE CULT, JEHOVAH IS NOT THE DIVINE NAME REVEALED TO ISRAEL. THE NAME JEHOVAH IS A PRODUCT OF MIXING DIFFERENT WORDS & DIFFERENT ALPHABETS OF DIFFERENT LANGUAGES. DUE TO A FEAR OF ACCIDENTALLY TAKING THE LORD’S NAME IN VAIN IN LEVITICUS 24:16, THE JEWS BASICALLY QUIT SAYING IT OUT LOUD ALTOGETHER. INSTEAD, WHEN READING HOLY SCRIPTURE ALOUD, THE JEWS SUBSTITUTED THE TETRAGRAMMATON YHWH WITH THE WORD ADONAI (“LORD”). EVEN IN THE SEPTUAGINT, THE GREEK TRANSLATION OF THE OLD TESTAMENT, THE TRANSLATORS SUBSTITUTED KURIOS (“LORD”) FOR THE DIVINE NAME. EVENTUALLY, THE VOWELS FROM ADONAI (“LORD”) OR ELOHIM (“GOD”) FOUND THEIR WAY IN BETWEEN THE CONSONANTS OF YHWH, THUS FORMING YAHWEH. BUT THIS INTERPOLATION OF VOWELS DOES NOT MEAN THAT WAS HOW THE LORD’S NAME WAS ORIGINALLY PRONOUNCED. IN FACT, WE, AREN’T ENTIRELY SURE IF YHWH SHOULD HAVE TWO SYLLABLES OR THREE. ANY NUMBER OF VOWEL SOUNDS CAN BE INSERTED WITHIN YHWH, AND TRUE BIBLICAL SCHOLARS ARE AS UNCERTAIN OF THE REAL PRONUNCIATION AS TRUE CHRISTIAN SCHOLARS ARE. JEHOVAH IS ACTUALLY A MUCH LATER, PROBABLY 16TH-CENTURY VARIANT. THE WORD JEHOVAH COMES FROM A THREE-SYLLABLE VERSION OF YHWH, YEHOWEH. THE Y WAS REPLACED WITH A J, ALTHOUGH HEBREW DOES NOT EVEN HAVE A J SOUND AND THE W WITH A V, PLUS THE EXTRA VOWEL IN THE MIDDLE, RESULTING IN JEHOVAH. THESE VOWELS ARE THE ABBREVIATED FORMS OF THE IMPERFECT TENSE, THE PARTICIPIAL FORM, & THE PERFECT TENSE OF THE HEBREW BEING VERB (ENGLISH IS)—THUS THE MEANING OF JEHOVAH COULD BE UNDERSTOOD AS “HE WHO WILL BE, IS, AND HAS BEEN.” HOWEVER, WE, CAN ASK WHAT THE LORD HAS REVEALED ABOUT HIMSELF IN HIS TRUTH WORD & IN CREATION THAT “THE REVERENT REASON” CAN GRASP. WHEN MOSES WAS DIRECTED BY THE LORD TO GO TO THE EGYPTIAN PHARAOH & DEMAND THE RELEASE OF THE ISRAELITES, MOSES ASKED THE LORD, “BEHOLD, I AM GOING TO THE SONS OF ISRAEL, & I WILL SAY TO THEM, ‘THE GOD OF YOUR FATHERS HAS SENT ME TO YOU.’ NOW THEY MAY SAY TO ME, ‘WHAT IS HIS NAME?’ WHAT SHALL I SAY TO THEM?” IN EXODUS 3:13. THE ANSWER THE LORD GAVE MOSES IS SIMPLE, YET VERY REVEALING: “GOD SAID TO MOSES, ‘I AM WHO I AM’, AND HE SAID, ‘THUS YOU SHALL SAY TO THE SONS OF ISRAEL, “I AM HAS SENT ME TO YOU’” IN EXODUS 3:14. THE HEBREW TEXT IN VERSE 14 LITERALLY SAYS, “I BE THAT I BE”, WHICH EQUALS TO THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD IN “A-B.” A-B MEANS THE LORD [STEPHEN] IS USED AS OUR FATHER IN ISAIAH 63:16; 64:8. SO, WHAT IS THE LORD’S NAME, & WHAT DOES IT MEAN? THE MOST LIKELY CHOICE FOR HOW THE TETRAGRAMMATON WAS PRONOUNCED IS “YAH-WAY,” “YAH-WEH,” OR SOMETHING SIMILAR. THE NAME YAHWEH STEPHEN REFERS TO THE LORD’S SELF-EXISTENCE. YAHWEH STEPHEN IS LINKED TO HOW THE LORD DESCRIBED HIMSELF IN EXODUS 3:14, “GOD SAID TO MOSES, ‘I AM WHO I AM. THIS IS WHAT YOU ARE TO SAY TO THE ISRAELITES: ‘I AM HAS SENT ME TO YOU.’” THE LORD’S NAME IS A REFLECTION OF HIS BEING. THE LORD IS THE ONLY SELF-EXISTENT OR SELF-SUFFICIENT BEING. ONLY THE LORD HAS LIFE IN AND OF HIMSELF. THAT IS THE ESSENTIAL MEANING OF THE TETRAGRAMMATON, YHWH. ALSO THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD IS IN FULL CONTROL OF EVERY SITUATION BY THE HIS “NAME OF PETER [JACOB OR ISRAEL]” “NAME OF JOHN [SAUL OR ELIJAH]” “NAME OF JESUS [DAVID OR MOSES]”, “NAME OF JAMES [REHOBOAM OR MICHAEL]” OR THE FEMALE NAMES AS THE “NAME OF VICTORIA [RACHEL OR VICTORIA]”, “NAME OF ELIZABETH [LIZ] [LIZ] [LIZ] [LIZ][AHONOAM OR VICTORIA]”, “NAME OF MARY [BATHSHEBA OR ZIPPORAH]”, “NAME OF MARY [ABIHAIL OR MICHAL]” WHICH IS ETERNALLY ESTABLISHED FROM THE NUMBER 1 TO INFINITE NUMBERS & ALL MEANS “STEPHEN [FEMALE SENSE IS STEPHANIE]” IN THE “ACTS OF THE APOSTLES” IS IN PHILIPPIANS 2:10-11. THERE ARE ETERNAL CREATURES THAT ONLY TRUST IN THE SAYING “THE AUTHORITY OF GOD COMPELS YOU”, WHICH DERIVES FROM “IT IS DONE”, BUT THIS IS LIMITED BY THE HOLY SCRIPTURE IN ZECHARIAH 4:1-7 & THE “NAME OF JESUS CHRIST”, WHICH IS “GOD THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD OF JESUS CHRIST” WAS TRIED TO BE LIMITED BUT FAILED & DID NOT PREVAIL IN ACTS 4:5-31. THE HOLY SCRIPTURES OF THE “NAME OF JESUS” OR SIMILAR TO IS IN 1ST CORINTHIANS 1:2, 10; 5:4; 6:11; EPHESIANS 5:20; PHILIPPIANS 2:10; COLOSSIANS 3:17; 2ND THESSALONIANS 1:12; 3:6; 1ST JOHN 3:23 & ACTS 2:38; 3:6; 4:10, 18, 30; 5:40; 8:12, 16; 9:27, 29; 15:26; 16:18; 19:5, 13, 17; 21:13; 26:9. IN EPHESIANS 5:20 IT DECLARES THAT THE NAME OF JESUS IS THE GOD & FATHER OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST. IN ACTS 7:59 PROVES THAT GOD & THE FATHER IS THE LORD STEPHEN HIMSELF. THE TRUE IDENTITY OF GOD & THE FATHER IS THE LORD STEPHEN’S NAME IS IN ACTS 6:5, 8-9, 7:59; 8:2; 11:19; 22:20. NOBODY HAS TRUTHFULLY PROCLAIMED THIS NAME BECAUSE IN TRUTH IT PUTS ALL ETERNAL CREATURES IN VERY DANGEROUS SITUATIONS & THEY ALWAYS CHOSE TO SAVE THEIR OWN NECKS INSTEAD OF PROCLAIMING OR TEACHING THE ABSOLUTE TRUTH IS IN ACTS 4:18; 5:40; 9:29; 15:26; 19:13; 21:13; 26:9. WHAT PUTS THE LORD STEVE AS HIS ULTIMATE DEFENSE AS THE TREE OF LIFE & THE BURNING BUSH IN VERY DANGEROUS CONDITIONS IS THE “NAME OF STEPHEN [SOLOMON OR ENOCH]” OR THE “NAME OF THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD”, OR THE “NAME OF STEPHEN CHRIST”, OR SIMILAR TO OR THE 4 FEMALE NAMES AS THE “NAME OF ATARAH AS A CROWN NAME”, THE “NAME OF STEPHANIE AS A SISTER NAME”, THE “NAME OF VICTORIA AS A DAUGHTER NAME”, THE “NAME OF BARBARA AS A MOTHER NAME”, ALL MEANS “YAHWEH OR STEPHEN [FEMALE SENSE IS VICTORIA] IN JOHN 8:58” IN THE “ACTS OF THE HOLY GHOST---FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD”, WHICH IS THE LORD YAHWEH HIMSELF [THE FEMALE SENSE IS THE LADY VICTORIA HERSELF] IN ACTS 7:60. THIS ALL CAN REFER TO THE “NAME OF THE LORD” CONCERNING THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD OR THE LORD YAHWEH HIMSELF IN ACTS 2:21; 10:48; 22:16. THERE ARE ABOUT 8 OTHER LORD YAHWEH’S [LADY VICTORIA’S] AS SUPREME LORD’S [LADIES] IN CREATION IN THE HOLY SCRIPTURES, BUT NOT THE LORD YAHWEH [LADY VICTORIA] THE SUPREME CREATOR OF THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD IN HOSEA 1:7; THE LORD YAHWEH IN JEWISH LAW FROM GENESIS TO DEUTERONOMY; PROVERBS 8:22-25 (RSV); ACTS 7:30-32; MALACHI 3:1-2; ISAIAH 48:16; HEBREWS 1:8 & ISAIAH 47:4-5. IS JEHOVAH THE TRUE NAME OF THE LORD? IN THE HEBREW SCRIPTURES, THE NAME OF GOD IS RECORDED AS YHWH. SO, WHERE DID THE NAME “JEHOVAH” COME FROM? ANCIENT HEBREW DID NOT USE VOWELS IN ITS WRITTEN FORM. THE VOWELS WERE PRONOUNCED IN SPOKEN HEBREW BUT WERE NOT RECORDED IN WRITTEN HEBREW. THE APPROPRIATE VOWEL SOUNDS OF WORDS WERE PASSED DOWN ORALLY. AS A RESULT, WHEN ANCIENT HEBREW IS STUDIED, PROMINENT SCHOLARS & SERIOUS LINGUISTS OFTEN DO NOT KNOW WITH ABSOLUTE CONFIDENCE HOW CERTAIN HEBREW WORDS WERE PRONOUNCED. THIS PARTICULARLY BECOMES AN ISSUE WHEN STUDYING THE HEBREW NAME OF GOD, WRITTEN IN THE HEBREW SCRIPTURES AS YHWH, ALSO KNOWN AS THE TETRAGRAMMATON. DESPITE MUCH STUDY & DEBATE, IT IS STILL NOT UNIVERSALLY AGREED UPON HOW THE HEBREW NAME FOR GOD, YHWH WAS PRONOUNCED. SOME PREFER “YAHWEH” (YAH-WAY); OTHERS PREFER “YEHOWAH,” “YAHUWEH,” OR “YAHAWAH”, STILL OTHERS ARGUE FOR “JEHOVAH.” BUT WHAT EVERYBODY IS MISSING, BECAUSE IT CAN ONLY BE FOUND IN CHRISTIANITY & NOWHERE IN GENTILISM OR JUDAISM IS THAT STEPHEN IS DERIVED FROM LORD MEANING OUR FATHER FROM THE ROOT LETTERS A & B IN ISAIAH 63:16; 64:8. THE NAME YAHWEH STEPHEN OR THE NAME STEPHEN YAHWEH REFERS TO THE SAME LORD’S PERSONAL, SELF PRE-EXISTENCE IN THE COMPLETE REVELATION OF THE LORD HIMSELF. JUST YAHWEH ALONE OR JUST STEPHEN ALONE IS A PARTIAL REVELATION OF THE LORD HIMSELF. YAHWEH STEPHEN IN THE ULTIMATE BEGINNING IN PROVERBS 8:22 & STEPHEN YAHWEH IN THE ULTIMATE ENDING IN ACTS 29:2 WITH AN ACTS 30 IS LINKED TO HOW THE LORD DESCRIBED HIMSELF IN EXODUS 3:14, “GOD SAID TO MOSES, ‘I AM WHO I AM [I BE WHO I BE]. THIS IS WHAT YOU ARE TO SAY TO THE ISRAELITES: “I AM HAS SENT ME TO YOU.’” THE FEMALE NAME FOR THE LORD IS LADY VICTORIA STEPHANIE OR LADY STEPHANIE VICTORIA IN PROVERBS 8:22-29 & ACTS 1:7. AS YOU CAN SEE, VIRTUALLY EVERYTHING IS UP FOR DEBATE. SHOULD YHWH BE PRONOUNCED WITH THREE SYLLABLES OR TWO? SHOULD THE VOWELS BE BORROWED FROM ELOHIM OR ADONAI? SHOULD THE W BE PRONOUNCED WITH MORE OF A W SOUND OR MORE OF A V SOUND? THE VAST MAJORITY OF JEWISH & CHRISTIAN BIBLICAL SCHOLARS & LINGUISTS DO NOT BELIEVE “JEHOVAH” TO BE THE PROPER PRONUNCIATION OF YHWH. THERE WAS NO TRUE J SOUND IN ANCIENT HEBREW. EVEN THE HEBREW LETTER VAV, WHICH IS TRANSLITERATED AS THE W IN YHWH IS SAID TO HAVE ORIGINALLY HAD A PRONUNCIATION CLOSER TO W THAN THE V OF JEHOVAH. JEHOVAH IS ESSENTIALLY A GERMANIC PRONUNCIATION OF THE LATINIZED TRANSLITERATION OF THE HEBREW YHWH. IT IS THE LETTERS OF THE TETRAGRAMMATON, LATINIZED INTO JHVH, WITH VOWELS INSERTED. “YAHWEH” OR “YEHOWAH” IS FAR MORE LIKELY TO BE THE CORRECT PRONUNCIATION. THE FORM JEHOVAH, THOUGH, IS VERY COMMONLY USED. IT IS USED IN THE KING JAMES VERSION OF THE HOLY HOLY BIBLE IS IN GENESIS 22:14; EXODUS 6:3; 17:15; JUDGES 6:24; PSALMS 83:16 & ISAIAH 12:2; 26:4. IT IS ALSO USED, & STRENUOUSLY PROMOTED BY, THE JEHOVAH WITNESSES. THE JEHOVAH’S WITNESSES EMPHASIZE THE USE OF JEHOVAH TO THE EXTENT THAT ANY OTHER NAME OR TITLE FOR GOD IS VIEWED AS BORDERLINE IDOLATRY OR OUTRIGHT HERESY. BUT ON THE CONTRARY, JEHOVAH WITNESSES & EVERY OTHER FALSE SEXUAL RELIGION DENY THE TRINITY, AMONG OTHER THINGS, SUCH AS A SEX DOCTRINE ON THE MARRIAGE DOCUMENT IN EXODUS 21:10, WHICH PROVES THEY HAVE A FALSE SEXUAL RELIGION KNOWN AS THE GREAT WITCH IN REVELATION 17:1-18:24. WITH ALL OF THAT SAID, IT IS CRUCIAL TO THE CHRISTIAN FAITH FOR THE PROPER PRONUNCIATION OF YHWH TO BE KNOWN. BOTH THE OLD & NEW TESTAMENTS, INSPIRED BY GOD, USE GENERIC TERMS FOR “GOD” AND “LORD,” INCLUDING EL, ELOHIM, & ADONAI (HEBREW), & THEOS AND KURIOS (GREEK). IF THE AUTHORS OF HOLY SCRIPTURE, UNDER THE INSPIRATION OF THE HOLY GHOST, WERE ALLOWED TO USE THESE TERMS, IT IS NOT WRONG FOR US TO REFER TO HIM AS “GOD” OR “LORD,” EITHER. IN CONCLUSION, IT IS HIGHLY UNLIKELY THAT “JEHOVAH” IS THE CORRECT PRONUNCIATION OF YHWH. FURTHER, IT IS FAR MORE IMPORTANT TO KNOW GOD THROUGH FAITH IN THE LORD IN THE GREEK GENTILISM & GREEK CHRISTIANITY, THAN IT IS TO KNOW THE CORRECT PRONUNCIATION OF HIS NAME IN HEBREW JUDAISM. THE INTRODUCTION TO THE TEN COMMANDMENTS ESTABLISHES THE IDENTITY OF GOD BY BOTH HIS PERSONAL NAME AND HIS HISTORICAL ACT OF DELIVERING ISRAEL FROM EGYPT. THE LANGUAGE AND PATTERN, REFLECTS THAT OF ANCIENT ROYAL TREATIES IN WHICH A GREAT KING IDENTIFIED HIMSELF AND HIS PREVIOUS GRACIOUS ACTS TOWARD A SUBJECT KING OR PEOPLE. ESTABLISHING HIS IDENTITY THROUGH THE USE OF THE PROPER NAME, STEPHEN YAHWEH, AND HIS MIGHTY ACTS IN HISTORY DISTINGUISHES STEPHEN YAHWEH FROM THE GODS OF EGYPT WHICH WERE JUDGED IN THE KILLING OF EGYPT'S FIRSTBORN (EXODUS 12) AND FROM THE GODS OF CANAAN, THE GODS OF THE GENTILE NATIONS, AND THE GODS THAT ARE WORSHIPPED AS IDOLS, STARRY HOSTS, OR THINGS FOUND IN NATURE, AND THE GODS KNOWN BY OTHER PROPER NAMES. SO DISTINGUISHED, STEPHEN YAHWEH DEMANDS EXCLUSIVE ALLEGIANCE FROM THE ISRAELITES IN PROVERBS 8:22, ALL THE WAY TO THE ENGLISH USA IN ACTS 30. “I AM THE LORD YOUR GOD” OCCURS A NUMBER OF OTHER TIMES IN THE HOLY BIBLE ALSO.**

**THOU SHALT HAVE NO OTHER GODS BEFORE ME**

**"THOU SHALT HAVE NO OTHER GODS BEFORE ME" (HEBREW: לא יהיה־לך אלהים אחרים על־פני) IS ONE OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS FOUND IN THE HEBREW BIBLE AT EXODUS 20:2 AND DEUTERONOMY 5:6, WHICH ESTABLISHES THE NATURE OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE NATION OF ISRAEL AND ITS NATIONAL GOD, YAHWEH STEPHEN THE GOD OF ISRAEL, A COVENANT INITIATED BY STEPHEN YAHWEH AFTER DELIVERING THE ANCIENT ISRAELITES FROM SLAVERY THROUGH THE PLAGUES OF EGYPT AND THE EXODUS (ISRAEL’S TRIBULATION) IN REVELATION 10:1:20-15 & WHICH ESTABLISHES THE NATURE OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE NATION OF THE USA AND ITS NATIONAL GOD, STEPHEN YAHWEH THE GOD OF THE USA, A COVENANT INITIATED BY STEPHEN YAHWEH AFTER DELIVERING THE ANCIENT ENGLISH FROM SLAVERY THROUGH THE PLAGUES OF EGYPT AND THE EXODUS (USA’S TRIBULATION) IN DANIEL 8:8-14; ACTS 7:6-7, 30-38 & ACTS 29:1-2. IN A GENERAL SENSE, IDOLATRY IS THE PAYING OF DIVINE HONOR TO ANY CREATED THING. IN ANCIENT TIMES, OPPORTUNITIES TO PARTICIPATE IN THE HONOR OR WORSHIP OF OTHER DEITIES ABOUNDED. HOWEVER, ACCORDING TO THE BOOK OF DEUTERONOMY, THE ANCIENT ISRAELITES THE ANCIENT ENGLISH, ALL WERE STRICTLY WARNED TO NEITHER ADOPT NOR ADAPT ANY OF THE RELIGIOUS PRACTICES OF THE PEOPLES AROUND THEM. NEVERTHELESS, THE STORY OF THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL AS WELL AS THE PEOPLE OF THE USA (ACTS 7:6-7) UNTIL THE BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY IS THE STORY OF THE VIOLATION OF THE COMMANDMENT BY THE WORSHIP OF “FOREIGN GODS” AND ITS CONSEQUENCES. MUCH OF BIBLICAL PREACHING FROM THE TIME OF MOSES TO THE EXILE IS PREDICATED ON THE EITHER-OR CHOICE BETWEEN EXCLUSIVE WORSHIP OF GOD AND ALL OTHER FALSE GODS. THE BABYLONIAN EXILE SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN A TURNING POINT AFTER WHICH THE JEWISH PEOPLE AS WELL AS THE ENGLISH PEOPLE (ANCIENT BRITAIN, GREAT BRITAIN & THE USA) AS A WHOLE WERE STRONGLY MONOTHEISTIC AND WILLING TO FIGHT BATTLES (SUCH AS THE MACCABEAN REVOLT) AND FACE MARTYRDOM BEFORE PAYING HOMAGE TO ANY OTHER GOD. THE SHEMA AND ITS ACCOMPANYING BLESSING/CURSE, REVEALS THE INTENT OF THE COMMANDMENT TO INCLUDE LOVE FOR THE ONE, TRUE GOD AND NOT ONLY RECOGNITION OR OUTWARD OBSERVANCE. IN THE GOSPELS, JESUS QUOTES THE SHEMA AS THE FIRST AND GREATEST COMMANDMENT, AND THE APOSTLES AFTER HIM PREACHED THAT THOSE WHO WOULD FOLLOW CHRIST MUST TURN FROM IDOLS. THE CATHOLIC CATECHISM AS WELL AS REFORMATION AND POST-REFORMATION THEOLOGIANS TEACH THAT THE COMMANDMENT APPLIES IN MODERN TIMES AND PROHIBITS THE WORSHIP OF PHYSICAL IDOLS, THE SEEKING OF SPIRITUAL ACTIVITY OR GUIDANCE FROM ANY OTHER SOURCE (E.G. LOVE OF MONEY, MONEY, FORBIDDEN MAGIC, EVIL, SEXUALITY, ETC. IN MATTHEW 6:24; 1ST TIMOTHY 6:9-10 & LUKE 16:9, 11, 13), AND THE FOCUS ON TEMPORAL PRIORITIES SUCH AS SELF (FOOD, PHYSICAL PLEASURES), WORK, AND MONEY, FOR EXAMPLES. THE CATHOLIC CATECHISM COMMENDS THOSE WHO REFUSE EVEN TO SIMULATE SUCH WORSHIP IN A CULTURAL CONTEXT, SINCE “THE DUTY TO OFFER GOD AUTHENTIC WORSHIP CONCERNS MAN BOTH AS AN INDIVIDUAL AND AS A SOCIAL BEING.” "ELOHIM" (HEBREW: אֱלֹהִים) IS ONE OF THE NAMES OF GOD IN THE HEBREW BIBLE. THOUGH IT HAS THE MASCULINE PLURAL ENDING, IT DOES NOT MEAN "GODS" WHEN REFERRING TO THE GOD OF ISRAEL OR THE GOD OF THE USA, AND IN SUCH CASES IS (USUALLY) USED WITH SINGULAR VERBS, ADJECTIVES, AND PRONOUNS (FOR EXAMPLE, IN GENESIS 1:26). IN THE TRADITIONAL JEWISH VIEW, ELOHIM IS THE NAME OF GOD [STEPHEN YAHWEH] AS THE CREATOR AND JUDGE OF THE UNIVERSE (GENESIS 1:1-2:4A).[12] H430 אלהים 'ĔLÔHÎYM EL-O-HEEM': PLURAL OF H433; GODS IN THE ORDINARY SENSE; BUT SPECIFICALLY USED (IN THE PLURAL THUS, ESPECIALLY WITH THE ARTICLE) OF THE SUPREME GOD; OCCASIONALLY APPLIED BY WAY OF DEFERENCE TO MAGISTRATES; AND SOMETIMES AS A SUPERLATIVE: - ANGELS, X EXCEEDING, GOD (GODS) (-DESS, -LY), X (VERY) GREAT, JUDGES, X MIGHTY.[13] ACCORDING TO SOME CONTEMPORARY SCHOLARSHIP, THE SECOND COMMANDMENT IS PRESENTED IN DELIBERATE DISTINCTION TO THE GOLDEN CALF, WHICH REPRESENTS MORAL SYSTEMS THAT PLACE UNDUE EMPHASIS ON THE WORLDLY CATEGORIES OF POWER, BEAUTY, AND THE WORKS OF OUR OWN HANDS. IT IS PART OF THE NARRATIVE DEVELOPED IN THE TEXTS THAT WOULD LATER BE COLLECTED IN THE HEBREW BIBLE DURING THE 7TH CENTURY BC, ESTABLISHING A LONG HISTORY OF NATIONAL IDENTITY, ORIGINATING WITH THE REMOTE FOUNDING-FATHER ABRAHAM, TO WHOM THE GOD THAT WOULD LATER IDENTIFY HIMSELF AS STEPHEN YAHWEH FIRST REVEALED HIMSELF. THE NAME STEPHEN YAHWEH COMES UP IN THE NARRATIVE OF THE BOOK OF EXODUS, WHERE MOSES ENCOUNTERS GOD AT THE BURNING BUSH. AT THIS POINT, GOD REVEALS HIS PROPER NAME STEPHEN YAHWEH FOR THE FIRST TIME, IDENTIFYING HIMSELF AS IDENTICAL WITH THE GOD ALREADY ENCOUNTERED BY MOSES' ANCESTORS ABRAHAM, ISAAC AND JACOB (ISRAEL): THUS, YOU WILL SAY TO ISRAEL’S SONS: “[STEPHEN] YAHWEH YOUR FATHERS’ DEITY, ABRAHAM’S DEITY, ISAAC’S DEITY, AND JACOB’S DEITY – HE HAS SENT ME TO YOU;” THIS IS MY NAME [STEPHEN YAHWEH] TO ETERNITY, AND THIS IS MY DESIGNATION AGE (BY) AGE. — EXODUS 3:15 (ANCHOR BIBLE). IN THE EXODUS NARRATIVE, AFTER ABOUT 400 YEARS OF SLAVERY IN EGYPT, THE ISRAELITES & ANCIENT BRITAIN (ACTS 7:6-7) ARE DELIVERED THROUGH THE PLAGUES OF EGYPT. AFTER MOSES LEADS THEM OUT IN THE EXODUS, STEPHEN YAHWEH MAKES A COVENANT WITH THE ISRAELITES & BRITIAN ON THE BASIS OF THIS DELIVERANCE. THE TEN COMMANDMENTS SUMMARIZE THE TERMS OF THIS COVENANT, BEGINNING WITH THE COMMANDMENT TO HAVE NO OTHER GODS BEFORE HIM. SEEMINGLY UNRELATED PROHIBITIONS, SUCH AS NOT TO SOW MIXED SEED, WEAR CLOTHING OF MIXED FIBERS, OR MARK ONE'S BODY (I.E., TATTOO), WERE POSSIBLY INTENDED TO KEEP THE ISRAELITES & BRITIAN SEPARATE FROM PRACTICES ASSOCIATED WITH FORBIDDEN MAGICAL BENEFITS OR THE HONOR OF OTHER DEITIES. THE INDIVIDUAL WHO VIOLATED THIS COMMANDMENT WAS SUBJECT TO DESTRUCTION ON THE TESTIMONY OF 2 WITNESSES (THE OPPOSING SIDE OF THE ORIGINAL ONCE IN THE NUMBER 0 AT 00.0001% ETERNAL INCORRUPTION), AND SHOULD THE WORSHIP OF OTHER GODS PERVADE THE NATION IN ACTS 7:6-7, IT WAS SUBJECT TO DESTRUCTION AS A WHOLE A PERSON WHO ATTEMPTED TO INVOLVE OTHERS IN WORSHIP OF A FALSE GOD WAS SIMILARLY SUBJECT TO CAPITAL PUNISHMENT AND WAS NOT TO BE SPARED EVEN BY A CLOSE RELATIVE. GOD’S INTEREST IN EXCLUSIVE WORSHIP IS PORTRAYED AS A STRONG JEALOUSY, LIKE THAT OF A HUSBAND FOR HIS WIFE. “DO NOT FOLLOW OTHER GODS, THE GODS OF THE PEOPLES AROUND YOU; FOR [STEPHEN] YAHWEH YOUR GOD, WHO IS AMONG YOU, IS A JEALOUS GOD AND HIS ANGER WILL BURN AGAINST YOU, AND HE WILL DESTROY YOU FROM THE FACE OF THE LAND.” DESPITE THIS PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP AND ITS EXCLUSIVE CONDITIONS, THE STORY OF THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL UNTIL THE BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY IS THE STORY OF THE VIOLATION OF THE FIRST COMMANDMENT BY THE WORSHIP OF “FOREIGN GODS” AND ITS CONSEQUENCES. NOT ONLY DID THE COMMON PEOPLE SUBSTITUTE CANAANITE GODS AND WORSHIP FOR THE ONE TRUE GOD, POLYTHEISM AND WORSHIP OF FOREIGN GODS BECAME VIRTUALLY OFFICIAL IN BOTH THE NORTHERN AND SOUTHERN KINGDOMS DESPITE REPEATED WARNINGS FROM THE PROPHETS OF GOD. MUCH OF THE POWER OF BIBLICAL PREACHING FROM MOSES TO THE TIME OF THE EXILE COMES FROM ITS STARK EITHER-OR CHOICE BETWEEN STEPHEN YAHWEH AND THE ‘OTHER GODS.” THE GREAT NINTH-CENTURY B.C. CONTEST AT CARMEL IN 1 KINGS 18 BETWEEN STEPHEN YAHWEH AND BAAL REGARDING CONTROL OF THE RAIN, HENCE OF DEITY, CONTAINS THE CHALLENGE OF ELIJAH: “IF THE LORD IS GOD, FOLLOW HIM, BUT IF BAAL, THEN FOLLOW HIM.” DESPITE THE CLEAR VICTORY AND WINNING OF THE PEOPLE'S ALLEGIANCE THAT DAY, THE OFFICIAL, POLYTHEISTIC POLICY PROPELLED BY KING AHAB'S WIFE JEZEBEL WAS UNCHANGED. JEREMIAH, EZEKIEL AND HOSEA REFERRED TO ISRAEL’S WORSHIP OF OTHER GODS AS SPIRITUAL ADULTERY: “HOW I HAVE BEEN GRIEVED BY THEIR ADULTEROUS HEARTS, WHICH HAVE TURNED AWAY FROM ME, AND BY THEIR EYES, WHICH HAVE LUSTED AFTER THEIR IDOLS.” THIS LED TO A BROKEN COVENANT BETWEEN STEPHEN YAHWEH AND ISRAEL AND “DIVORCE,” MANIFESTED AS DEFEAT BY KING NEBUCHADNEZZAR OF BABYLON FOLLOWED BY EXILE, FROM WHICH THE NORTHERN KINGDOM NEVER RECOVERED. THE HOLY BIBLE PRESENTS DANIEL AND HIS COMPANIONS AS DISTINCT, POSITIVE EXAMPLES OF INDIVIDUALS REFUSING TO PAY HOMAGE TO ANOTHER GOD, EVEN AT THE PRICE OF THEIR LIVES. DURING THE TIME OF THE EXILE, NEBUCHADNEZZAR ERECTS A GOLD STATUE OF HIMSELF AND COMMANDS ALL SUBJECTS TO WORSHIP IT. THREE JEWISH OFFICIALS – SHADRACH, MESHACH, AND ABEDNEGO – WHO HAD BEEN TAKEN TO BABYLON AS YOUTHS ALONG WITH DANIEL, REFUSE TO BOW TO THE STATUE. AS THEY FACE BEING BURNED ALIVE IN A FURNACE, THEY COMMUNICATE THEIR FAITH AS WELL AS THEIR RESOLVE: “IF WE ARE THROWN INTO THE BLAZING FURNACE, THE GOD WE SERVE IS ABLE TO SAVE US FROM IT, AND HE WILL RESCUE US FROM YOUR HAND, O KING. BUT EVEN IF HE DOES NOT, WE WANT YOU TO KNOW, O KING, THAT WE WILL NOT SERVE YOUR GODS OR WORSHIP THE IMAGE OF GOLD YOU HAVE SET UP." IN THE LATER REIGN OF DARIUS, DANIEL'S REFUSAL TO GIVE UP PRIVATE PRAYER TO GOD AND PRAY TO THE KING INSTEAD RESULTS IN HIM RECEIVING A DEATH SENTENCE: BEING THROWN INTO THE LIONS’ DEN. ACCORDING TO THE BOOK OF DANIEL, AN ANGEL OF THE LORD COMES AND SHUTS THE MOUTHS OF THE LIONS SO THAT DANIEL IS SPARED AND RESCUED BY THE KING HIMSELF THE FOLLOWING MORNING.**

**THOU SHALT NOT MAKE UNTO THEE ANY GRAVEN IMAGE**

**"THOU SHALT NOT MAKE UNTO THEE ANY GRAVEN IMAGE" (HEBREW: לֹא-תַעֲשֶׂה לְךָ פֶסֶל, וְכָל-תְּמוּנָה) IS AN ABBREVIATED FORM OF ONE OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS WHICH, ACCORDING TO THE BOOK OF DEUTERONOMY, WERE SPOKEN BY THE LORD TO THE ANCIENT ISRAELITES & TO ANCIENT BRITAIN AND THEN WRITTEN ON STONE TABLETS BY THE TERRIBLE, JEALOUS FINGER OF THE LORD. ALTHOUGH NO SINGLE BIBLICAL PASSAGE CONTAINS A COMPLETE DEFINITION OF IDOLATRY, THE SUBJECT IS ADDRESSED IN NUMEROUS PASSAGES, SO THAT IDOLATRY MAY BE SUMMARIZED AS THE WORSHIP OF IDOLS OR IMAGES; THE WORSHIP OF POLYTHEISTIC GODS BY USE OF IDOLS OR IMAGES; THE WORSHIP OF CREATED THINGS (TREES, ROCKS, ANIMALS, ASTRONOMICAL BODIES, OR ANOTHER HUMAN BEING); AND THE USE OF IDOLS IN THE WORSHIP OF GOD (YHWH YAHWEH STEPHEN ELOHIM, THE GOD OF ISRAEL) IN THE ULTIMATE BEGINNING TO THE SAME LORD IN THE WORSHIP OF GOD (YHWH STEPHEN YAHWEH ELOHIM, THE GOD OF THE USA) IN THE ULTIMATE ENDING. IN THE NEW TESTAMENT COVETOUSNESS (GREED) IS DEFINED AS IDOLATRY. WHEN THE COMMANDMENT WAS GIVEN, OPPORTUNITIES TO PARTICIPATE IN THE HONOR OR WORSHIP OF IDOLS ABOUNDED, AND THE RELIGIONS OF CANAANITE TRIBES NEIGHBORING THE ANCIENT ISRAELITES & ANCIENT BRITAIN OFTEN CENTERED ON A CAREFULLY CONSTRUCTED AND MAINTAINED CULT IDOL. HOWEVER, ACCORDING TO THE BOOK OF DEUTERONOMY THE ISRAELITES AS WELL AS ANCIENT BRITAIN WERE STRICTLY WARNED TO NEITHER ADOPT NOR ADAPT ANY OF THE RELIGIOUS PRACTICES OF THE PEOPLES AROUND THEM. NEVERTHELESS, THE STORY OF THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL & THE PEOPLE OF THE USA (ACTS 7:6-7) UNTIL THE BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY INCLUDES THE VIOLATION OF THIS COMMANDMENT AS WELL AS THE ONE BEFORE IT, "THOU SHALT HAVE NO OTHER GODS BEFORE ME". MUCH OF BIBLICAL PREACHING FROM THE TIME OF MOSES TO THE EXILE IS PREDICATED ON THE EITHER–OR CHOICE BETWEEN EXCLUSIVE WORSHIP OF THE LORD AND IDOLS. THE BABYLONIAN EXILE SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN A TURNING POINT AFTER WHICH THE JEWISH PEOPLE & THE ENGLISH PEOPLE AS A WHOLE WERE STRONGLY MONOTHEISTIC AND WILLING TO FIGHT BATTLES (SUCH AS THE MACCABEAN REVOLT) AND FACE MARTYRDOM BEFORE PAYING HOMAGE TO ANY OTHER GOD. ACCORDING TO THE PSALMIST AND THE PROPHET ISAIAH, THOSE WHO WORSHIP INANIMATE IDOLS WILL BE LIKE THEM, THAT IS, UNSEEING, UNFEELING, UNABLE TO HEAR THE TRUTH THAT GOD WOULD COMMUNICATE TO THEM. PAUL THE APOSTLE IDENTIFIES THE WORSHIP OF CREATION (RATHER THAN THE CREATOR) AS THE CAUSE OF THE DISINTEGRATION OF SEXUAL AND SOCIAL MORALITY IN HIS LETTER TO THE ROMANS IN ROMANS 1:21-28, 32; 3:4-23. ALTHOUGH THE COMMANDMENT IMPLIES THAT THE WORSHIP OF GOD IS NOT COMPATIBLE WITH THE WORSHIP OF IDOLS, THE STATUS OF AN INDIVIDUAL AS AN IDOL WORSHIPER OR A GOD WORSHIPER IS NOT PORTRAYED AS PREDETERMINED AND UNCHANGEABLE IN THE HOLY BIBLE. WHEN THE COVENANT IS RENEWED UNDER JOSHUA, THE ISRAELITES & BRITAIN ARE ENCOURAGED TO THROW AWAY THEIR FOREIGN GODS AND "CHOOSE THIS DAY WHOM YOU WILL SERVE". KING JOSIAH, WHEN HE BECOMES AWARE OF THE TERMS OF GOD’S COVENANT, ZEALOUSLY WORKS TO RID HIS KINGDOM OF IDOLS. ACCORDING TO THE BOOK OF ACTS, PAUL TELLS THE ATHENIANS THAT THOUGH THEIR CITY IS FULL OF IDOLS, THE TRUE GOD IS REPRESENTED BY NONE OF THEM AND REQUIRES THEM TO TURN AWAY FROM IDOLS. COMMANDMENT: 4 THOU SHALT NOT MAKE UNTO THEE ANY GRAVEN IMAGE, OR ANY LIKENESS [OF ANY THING] THAT [IS] IN HEAVEN ABOVE, OR THAT [IS] IN THE EARTH BENEATH, OR THAT [IS] IN THE WATER UNDER THE EARTH: 5 THOU SHALT NOT BOW DOWN THYSELF TO THEM, NOR SERVE THEM: FOR I THE LORD THY GOD [AM] A JEALOUS GOD, VISITING THE INIQUITY OF THE FATHERS UPON THE CHILDREN UNTO THE THIRD AND FOURTH [GENERATION] OF THEM THAT HATE ME; 6 AND SHEWING MERCY UNTO THOUSANDS OF THEM THAT LOVE ME, AND KEEP MY COMMANDMENTS. — EXODUS 20:4-6 (KJV).**

**4 לֹֽ֣א תַֽעֲשֶׂ֨ה־לְךָ֥֣ פֶ֣֙סֶל֙׀ וְכָל־תְּמוּנָ֡֔ה אֲשֶׁ֤֣ר בַּשָּׁמַ֣֙יִם֙׀ מִמַּ֡֔עַל וַֽאֲשֶׁ֥ר֩ בָּאָ֖֨רֶץ מִתַָּ֑֜חַת וַאֲשֶׁ֥֣ר בַּמַּ֖֣יִם׀ מִתַּ֥֣חַת לָאָֽ֗רֶץ**

**5 לֹֽא־תִשְׁתַּחְוֶ֥֣ה לָהֶ֖ם֮ וְלֹ֣א תָעָבְדֵ֑ם֒ כִּ֣י אָֽנֹכִ֞י יְהוָ֤ה אֱלֹהֶ֙יךָ֙ אֵ֣ל קַנָּ֔א פֹּ֠קֵד עֲוֺ֨ן אָבֹ֧ת עַל־בָּנִ֛ים עַל־שִׁלֵּשִׁ֥ים וְעַל־רִבֵּעִ֖ים לְשֹׂנְאָֽ֑י׃ 6 וְעֹ֥֤שֶׂה חֶ֖֙סֶד֙ לַאֲלָפִ֑֔ים לְאֹהֲבַ֖י וּלְשֹׁמְרֵ֥י מִצְוֺתָֽי׃ ס**

**— שמות 20:4-6 (WLC).**

**THOU SHALT NOT TAKE THE NAME OF THE LORD THY GOD IN VAIN**

**"THOU SHALT NOT TAKE THE NAME [STEPHEN YAHWEH] OF THE LORD THY GOD IN VAIN" (HEBREW: לֹא תִשָּׂא אֶת-שֵׁם-ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ, לַשָּׁוְא) (KJV; ALSO "YOU SHALL NOT MAKE WRONGFUL USE OF THE NAME OF THE LORD YOUR GOD" (NRSV) AND VARIANTS) IS THE SECOND OR THIRD (DEPENDING ON NUMBERING) OF GOD’S TEN COMMANDMENTS TO MAN IN THE ABRAHAMIC RELIGIONS. IT IS A PROHIBITION OF BLASPHEMY, SPECIFICALLY, THE MISUSE OR "TAKING IN VAIN" OF THE NAME [YAHWEH STEPHEN] OF THE GOD OF ISRAEL & THE NAME [STEPHEN YAHWEH] OF THE GOD OF THE USA, OR USING HIS NAME TO COMMIT EVIL IN MATTHEW 6:24; 1ST TIMOTHY 6:9-10 & LUKE 16:9, 11 ,13, OR TO PRETEND TO SERVE IN HIS NAME WHILE IN FACT, FAILING TO DO SO. EXODUS 20:7 READS: THOU SHALT NOT TAKE THE NAME OF THE LORD THY GOD IN VAIN; FOR THE LORD WILL NOT HOLD HIM GUILTLESS THAT TAKETH HIS NAME IN VAIN. — KJV. BASED ON THIS COMMANDMENT, SECOND TEMPLE JUDAISM BY THE HELLENISTIC PERIOD DEVELOPED A TABOO OF PRONOUNCING THE NAME OF GOD AT ALL, RESULTING IN THE REPLACEMENT OF THE TETRAGRAMMATON BY "ADONAI" (LITERALLY "MY LORDS" – SEE ADONAI) IN PRONUNCIATION. IN THE HEBREW BIBLE ITSELF, THE COMMANDMENT IS DIRECTED AGAINST ABUSE OF THE NAME OF GOD, NOT AGAINST ANY USE; THERE ARE NUMEROUS EXAMPLES IN THE HEBREW BIBLE AND A FEW IN THE NEW TESTAMENT WHERE GOD’S NAME IS CALLED UPON IN OATHS TO TELL THE TRUTH OR TO SUPPORT THE TRUTH OF THE STATEMENT BEING SWORN TO, AND THE BOOKS OF DANIEL AND REVELATION INCLUDE INSTANCES WHERE AN ANGEL SENT BY GOD INVOKES THE NAME OF GOD TO SUPPORT THE TRUTH OF APOCALYPTIC REVELATIONS. GOD HIMSELF IS PRESENTED AS SWEARING BY HIS OWN NAME ("AS SURELY AS I LIVE …") TO GUARANTEE THE CERTAINTY OF VARIOUS EVENTS FORETOLD THROUGH THE PROPHETS. THE HEBREW לא תשא לשוא‎ IS TRANSLATED AS "THOU SHALT NOT TAKE IN VAIN". THE WORD HERE TRANSLATED AS "IN VAIN" IS שוא‎ (SHAV' 'EMPTINESS', 'VANITY', 'EMPTINESS OF SPEECH', 'LYING'), WHILE 'TAKE' IS נשא‎ NASA' 'TO LIFT', 'CARRY', 'BEAR', 'TAKE', 'TAKE AWAY' (APPEARING IN THE SECOND PERSON AS תשא‎). THE EXPRESSION "TO TAKE IN VAIN" IS ALSO TRANSLATED LESS LITERALLY AS "TO MISUSE" OR VARIANTS. SOME HAVE INTERPRETED THE COMMANDMENT TO BE AGAINST PERJURY, SINCE INVOKING GOD’S NAME [STEPHEN YAHWEH] IN AN OATH WAS CONSIDERED A GUARANTEE OF THE TRUTH OF A STATEMENT OR PROMISE. OTHER SCHOLARS BELIEVE THE ORIGINAL INTENT WAS TO PROHIBIT USING THE NAME [STEPHEN YAHWEH] IN THE PERMISSIBLE MAGICAL PRACTICE OF CONJURATION. HEBREW BIBLE PASSAGES ALSO REFER TO GOD’S NAME [STEPHEN YAHWEH] BEING PROFANED BY HYPOCRITICAL BEHAVIOR OF PEOPLE AND FALSE REPRESENTATION OF GOD’S WORDS OR CHARACTER. MANY SCHOLARS ALSO BELIEVE THE COMMANDMENT APPLIES TO THE CASUAL USE OF GOD’S NAME [STEPHEN YAHWEH] IN INTERJECTIONS AND CURSES (BLASPHEMY). THE OBJECT OF THE COMMAND "THOU SHALT NOT TAKE IN VAIN" IS את־שם־יהוה אלהיך‎ ET-SHEM-YHWH [STEPHEN YAHWEH] ELOHEIKHA THIS-SAME NAME OF YHWH [STEPHEN YAHWEH], THY ELOHIM', MAKING EXPLICIT THAT THE COMMANDMENT IS AGAINST THE MISUSE OF THE PROPER SUPREME PERSONAL NAME STEPHEN YAHWEH SPECIFICALLY. IN THE HEBREW BIBLE, AS WELL AS IN THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST AND THROUGHOUT CLASSICAL ANTIQUITY MORE GENERALLY, AN OATH IS A CONDITIONAL SELF-CURSE INVOKING DEITIES THAT ARE ASKED TO INFLICT PUNISHMENT ON THE OATH-BREAKER. THERE ARE NUMEROUS EXAMPLES IN THE BOOK OF SAMUEL OF PEOPLE STRENGTHENING THEIR STATEMENTS OR PROMISES WITH THE PHRASE, "AS SURELY AS [STEPHEN] YAHWEH LIVES ..." AND SUCH STATEMENTS ARE REFERRED TO IN JEREMIAH AS WELL. THE VALUE OF INVOKING PUNISHMENT FROM GOD WAS BASED ON THE BELIEF THAT GOD CANNOT BE DECEIVED OR EVADED. FOR EXAMPLE, A NARRATIVE IN THE BOOK OF NUMBERS DESCRIBES HOW SUCH AN OATH IS TO BE ADMINISTERED BY A PRIEST TO A WOMAN SUSPECTED OF ADULTERY, WITH THE EXPECTATION THAT THE ACCOMPANYING CURSE WILL HAVE NO EFFECT ON AN INNOCENT PERSON. SUCH OATHS MAY HAVE BEEN USED IN CIVIL CLAIMS, REGARDING SUPPOSED THEFT, FOR EXAMPLE, AND THE COMMANDMENT IS REPEATED IN THE CONTEXT OF HONEST DEALINGS BETWEEN PEOPLE IN LEVITICUS 19:12. AT ONE POINT OF THE ACCOUNT OF THE DEDICATION OF THE TEMPLE OF SOLOMON, SOLOMON PRAYS TO STEPHEN YAHWEH, ASKING HIM TO HEAR AND ACT UPON CURSES UTTERED IN A DISPUTE THAT ARE THEN BROUGHT BEFORE HIS ALTAR, TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN THE PERSON IN THE RIGHT AND THE ONE IN THE WRONG. THE PROPHET ISAIAH REBUKED ISRAEL AS THE BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY DREW NEAR, POINTING OUT THAT THEY BORE THE NAME OF GOD [STEPHEN YAHWEH], AND SWORE BY HIM, BUT THEIR SWEARING WAS HYPOCRITICAL SINCE THEY HAD FORSAKEN THE EXCLUSIVE WORSHIP OF STEPHEN YAHWEH FOR THE WORSHIP OF IDOLS. THE ISRAELITES HAD BEEN TOLD IN LEVITICUS THAT SACRIFICING THEIR CHILDREN TO IDOLS AND THEN COMING TO WORSHIP GOD CAUSED GOD’S NAME [STEPHEN YAHWEH] TO BE PROFANED, THUS BREAKING THE COMMANDMENT. ACCORDING TO THE BOOK OF JEREMIAH, STEPHEN YAHWEH TOLD HIM TO LOOK AROUND JERUSALEM, ASSERTING THAT HE WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO FIND AN HONEST MAN – "EVEN WHEN THEY SAY, AS [STEPHEN] YAHWEH LIVES,' THEY ARE SURE TO BE SWEARING FALSELY." JEREMIAH REFERS TO A SITUATION IN WHICH ISRAELITES REPENTED AND TOOK OATHS IN GOD’S NAME [STEPHEN YAHWEH] – ONLY TO RENEGE BY RECLAIMING AS SLAVE PERSONS THEY HAD FREED AS PART OF THEIR REPENTANCE. THIS HYPOCRITICAL ACT WAS ALSO CONSIDERED PROFANING GOD’S NAME [STEPHEN YAHWEH]. IN JEREMIAH 12, AN OPPORTUNITY IS ALSO DESCRIBED FOR ISRAEL’S NEIGHBORS TO AVOID DESTRUCTION AND PROSPER IF THEY STOP SWEARING BY THEIR IDOL AND SWEAR ONLY BY THE NAME OF STEPHEN YAHWEH. IN PRACTICE: CHILLUL HASHEM: TO AVOID COMING UNDER GUILT BY ACCIDENTALLY MISUSING GOD’S NAME [STEPHEN YAHWEH], SCHOLARS DO NOT WRITE OR PRONOUNCE THE PROPER NAME IN MOST CIRCUMSTANCES, BUT USE SUBSTITUTES SUCH AS "ADONAI (THE LORD)," OR "HASHEM (THE NAME)." IN ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS OF THE HOLY BIBLE, THE NAME ADONAI IS OFTEN TRANSLATED "LORD," WHILE THE PROPER NAME STEPHEN YAHWEH REPRESENTED BY THE TETRAGRAMMATON IS OFTEN INDICATED BY THE USE OF CAPITAL AND SMALL CAPITAL LETTERS, LORD. RABBI JOSEPH TELUSHKIN WROTE THAT THE COMMANDMENT IS MUCH MORE THAN A PROHIBITION AGAINST CASUAL INTERJECTIONS USING GOD’S NAME [STEPHEN YAHWEH]. HE POINTED OUT THAT THE MORE LITERAL TRANSLATION OF LO TISSA IS "YOU SHALL NOT CARRY" RATHER THAN "YOU SHALL NOT TAKE", AND THAT UNDERSTANDING THIS HELPS ONE UNDERSTAND WHY THE COMMANDMENT RANKS WITH SUCH AS "YOU SHALL NOT MURDER" AND "YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY". ONE OF THE FIRST COMMANDMENTS LISTED BY MAIMONIDES IN THE MISHNEH TORAH IS THE RESPONSIBILITY TO SANCTIFY GOD’S NAME [STEPHEN YAHWEH]. MAIMONIDES THOUGHT THE COMMANDMENT SHOULD BE TAKEN AS GENERALLY AS POSSIBLE, AND THEREFORE HE CONSIDERED IT FORBIDDEN TO MENTION GOD’S NAME [STEPHEN YAHWEH] UNNECESSARILY AT ANY TIME. SCHOLARS REFERRED TO THIS AS "MOTZI SHEM SHAMAYIM LAVATALAH", "UTTERING THE NAME OF HEAVEN USELESSLY."[19] TO AVOID GUILT ASSOCIATED WITH ACCIDENTALLY BREAKING THE COMMANDMENT, SCHOLARS APPLIED THE PROHIBITION TO ALL SEVEN BIBLICAL TITLES OF GOD IN ADDITION TO THE PROPER NAME, AND ESTABLISHED THE SAFEGUARD OF CIRCUMLOCUTION WHEN REFERRING TO THE NAME OF GOD. IN WRITING NAMES OF GOD, A COMMON PRACTICE INCLUDES SUBSTITUTING LETTERS OR SYLLABLES SO THAT THE WRITTEN WORD IS NOT EXACTLY THE NAME, OR WRITING THE NAME IN AN ABBREVIATED MANNER. ORTHODOX JEWS WILL NOT EVEN PRONOUNCE A NAME OF GOD UNLESS IT IS SAID IN PRAYER OR RELIGIOUS STUDY. THE SACRED NAME (TETRAGRAMMATON), IS NEVER PRONOUNCED BY THESE JEWS BUT ALWAYS READ AS "ADONAI (THE LORD)," "HASHEM (THE NAME)," OR SOMETIMES "ADOSHEM".**

**REMEMBER THE SABBATH DAY, TO KEEP IT HOLY WITH 7 DAYS OF CREATION (SATURDAY FOR JEWS & SUNDAY FOR CHRISTIANS)**

**"REMEMBER THE SABBATH DAY, TO KEEP IT HOLY" (HEBREW: זָכוֹר אֶת יוֹם הַשַׁבָּת לְקַדְּשׁוֹ) IS ONE OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS FOUND IN THE HEBREW BIBLE. THE FULL TEXT OF THE COMMANDMENT READS: REMEMBER THE SABBATH DAY, TO KEEP IT HOLY. SIX DAYS YOU SHALL LABOR, AND DO ALL YOUR WORK, BUT THE SEVENTH DAY IS A SABBATH TO THE LORD YOUR GOD. ON IT YOU SHALL NOT DO ANY WORK, YOU, OR YOUR SON, OR YOUR DAUGHTER, YOUR MALE SERVANT, OR YOUR FEMALE SERVANT, OR YOUR LIVESTOCK, OR THE SOJOURNER WHO IS WITHIN YOUR GATES. FOR IN SIX DAYS THE LORD MADE HEAVEN AND EARTH, THE SEA, AND ALL THAT IS IN THEM, AND RESTED ON THE SEVENTH DAY. THEREFORE, THE LORD BLESSED THE SABBATH DAY AND MADE IT HOLY. — EXODUS 20:8-11. WHEN THE LORD YAHWEH STEPHEN GAVE THE ANCIENT ISRAELITES THE TEN COMMANDMENTS AT BIBLICAL MOUNT SINAI, THEY WERE COMMANDED TO REMEMBER THE SABBATH AND KEEP IT HOLY BY NOT DOING ANY WORK AND ALLOWING THE WHOLE HOUSEHOLD TO CEASE FROM WORK. THIS WAS IN RECOGNITION OF GOD’S ACT OF CREATION AND THE SPECIAL STATUS THAT GOD HAD CONFERRED ON THE SEVENTH DAY DURING THE CREATION WEEK. WHEN THE LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH GAVE THE ANCIENT BRITISH THE TEN COMMANDMENTS AT BIBLICAL MOUNT SINAI IN ACTS 7:6-7; 29:1-2, THEY WERE COMMANDED TO REMEMBER THE SABBATH AND KEEP IT HOLY BY NOT DOING ANY WORK AND ALLOWING THE WHOLE HOUSEHOLD TO CEASE FROM WORK. THIS WAS IN RECOGNITION OF GOD’S ACT OF CREATION AND THE SPECIAL STATUS THAT GOD HAD CONFERRED ON THE SEVENTH DAY DURING THE CREATION WEEK. THE TORAH PORTRAYS THE SABBATH CONCEPT BOTH IN TERMS OF RESTING ON THE SEVENTH DAY AND ALLOWING LAND TO LIE FALLOW DURING EACH SEVENTH YEAR. THE MOTIVATION IS DESCRIBED AS GOING BEYOND A SIGN AND REMEMBRANCE OF STEPHEN YAHWEH’S ORIGINAL REST DURING THE CREATION WEEK AND EXTENDS TO A CONCERN THAT ONE'S SERVANTS, FAMILY, AND LIVESTOCK BE ABLE TO REST AND BE REFRESHED FROM THEIR WORK. IN ADDITION TO THE INSTRUCTION TO REST ON EACH SEVENTH DAY (FRIDAY WITH THE NUMBER 0 IN SUBTRACTION, SATURDAY WITHOUT THE NUMBER 0 & SUNDAY WITH THE NUMBER 0 IN ADDITION) AND SEVENTH YEAR, PERIODS OF SEVEN DAYS ARE OFTEN RELEVANT ASPECTS OF BIBLICAL INSTRUCTIONS. FOR EXAMPLE, THE QUARANTINE PERIOD FOR SUSPECTED SKIN DISEASES AFTER INITIAL EXAMINATION BY A PRIEST WAS SEVEN DAYS, AFTER WHICH THE PRIEST WOULD RE-EXAMINE THE SKIN AND PRONOUNCE THE PERSON CLEAN OR UNCLEAN. OTHER SPECIAL DAYS INCLUDED THE DAY AFTER THE SEVENTH SABBATH, THE FIRST DAY OF THE SEVENTH MONTH, THE DAY OF RITUAL CLEANSING AFTER BEING HEALED FROM AN UNCLEAN DISEASE OR OTHER EVENT BRINGING UNCLEANNESS. IN ADDITION, IN THE BATTLE OF JERICHO, JOSHUA COMMANDED THE ARMY TO MARCH AROUND JERICHO EACH DAY FOR SEVEN CONSECUTIVE DAYS AND TO MARCH AROUND JERICHO SEVEN TIMES ON THE SEVENTH DAY. THE TORAH DESCRIBES DISOBEDIENCE TO THE COMMAND TO KEEP THE SABBATH DAY HOLY AS PUNISHABLE BY DEATH AND FAILING TO OBSERVE SABBATH YEARS WOULD BE COMPENSATED FOR DURING THE CAPTIVITY THAT WOULD RESULT FROM BREAKING COVENANT. THE TORAH ALSO DESCRIBES HOW SPECIAL BREAD WAS TO BE SET OUT BEFORE STEPHEN YAHWEH SABBATH BY SABBATH AND DESCRIBES SABBATH DAY OFFERINGS. THE DAY OF ATONEMENT WAS REGARDED AS A "SABBATH OF SABBATHS" IT WAS ON THIS DAY ALONE THAT THE KOHEN GADOL (HIGH PRIEST) ENTERED THE KODESH HAKODASHIM (MOST HOLY PLACE) INSIDE THE TABERNACLE WHERE THE ARK OF THE COVENANT CONTAINED THE STONE TABLETS ON WHICH THE TEN COMMANDMENTS WERE ENGRAVED. THE PRESENCE OF YHWH---STEPHEN YAHWEH IN THE KODESH HAKODASHIM ON THAT YEARLY DAY, UPON THE MERCY SEAT, REQUIRED THAT THE KOHEN GADOL BE FIRST PURIFIED BY THE SACRIFICE OF A BULL IN A PRESCRIBED MANNER. ENTERING THE MOST HOLY PLACE ON OTHER DAYS OR WITHOUT FULFILLING THE RITUAL REQUIREMENTS WOULD SUBJECT THE PRIEST TO DEATH. IN THE SAME WAY THAT OBSERVING THE SABBATH DID NOT PREVENT JOSHUA FROM MARCHING AROUND JERICHO FOR SEVEN CONSECUTIVE DAYS, SABBATH OBSERVANCE DID NOT PREVENT THE CHIEF PRIEST JEHOIADA FROM ORGANIZING A PALACE COUP ON THE SABBATH IN ORDER TO REMOVE QUEEN ATALIAH FROM THE THRONE AND REPLACE HER WITH JOASH, A RIGHTFUL HEIR TO THE THRONE. ATALIAH HAD MURDERED ALL THE OTHER HEIRS TO THE THRONE UPON THE DEATH OF AHAZIAH AND USURPED THE THRONE OF JUDAH FOR HERSELF. JEHOIADA'S WIFE HAD RESCUED YOUNG JOASH, AND JEHOIADA HAD KEPT HIM HIDDEN FOR SIX YEARS WHILE ATALIAH REIGNED AS QUEEN OVER JUDAH. THE PRIEST JEHOIADA USED THE OCCASION OF THE TRANSFER OF THE GUARD ON THE SABBATH TO PROCLAIM JOASH AS KING BECAUSE AT THAT TIME, HE COULD ARRANGE TWICE THE NORMAL GUARD ON DUTY AT THE TEMPLE OF STEPHEN YAHWEH. ON THAT DAY, A COVENANT WAS MADE, JOASH WAS PROCLAIMED KING, ATALIAH WAS PUT TO DEATH, THE TEMPLE OF BAAL WAS TORN DOWN, IDOLS WERE SMASHED, AND MATTAN, THE PRIEST OF BAAL, WAS KILLED. A NUMBER OF THE PROPHETS CONDEMN DESECRATION OF THE SABBATH WITH VARIOUS FORMS OF WORK, INCLUDING ISAIAH, JEREMIAH, EZEKIEL, AND AMOS. ACCORDING TO NEHEMIAH, AFTER THE CAPTIVES RETURN TO JERUSALEM FROM EXILE, THEY MAKE A COVENANT WHICH INCLUDES A PROMISE TO REFRAIN FROM DESECRATING THE SABBATH, YET SOME GIVE IN TO THE ONGOING TEMPTATION TO BUY AND SELL ON THE SABBATH. AS A RESULT, NEHEMIAH HAS TO REBUKE THEM AND STATION GUARDS TO PREVENT COMMERCE IN JERUSALEM ON THE SABBATH.**

**REMEMBER THE SABBATH DAY, TO KEEP IT HOLY WITH THE EXODUS (SATURDAY FOR JEWS & SUNDAY FOR CHRISTIANS)**

**"REMEMBER THE SABBATH DAY, TO KEEP IT HOLY" (HEBREW: זָכוֹר אֶת יוֹם הַשַׁבָּת לְקַדְּשׁוֹ) IS ONE OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS FOUND IN THE HEBREW BIBLE. THE FULL TEXT OF THE COMMANDMENT READS: OBSERVE THE SABBATH DAY, TO KEEP IT HOLY, AS THE LORD YOUR GOD COMMANDED YOU. SIX DAYS YOU SHALL LABOR AND DO ALL YOUR WORK, BUT THE SEVENTH DAY IS A SABBATH TO THE LORD YOUR GOD. ON IT YOU SHALL NOT DO ANY WORK, YOU OR YOUR SON OR YOUR DAUGHTER OR YOUR MALE SLAVE OR YOUR FEMALE SLAVE, OR YOUR OX OR YOUR DONKEY OR ANY OF YOUR LIVESTOCK, OR THE SOJOURNER WHO IS WITHIN YOUR GATES, THAT YOUR MALE SLAVE AND YOUR FEMALE SLAVE MAY REST AS WELL AS YOU. YOU SHALL REMEMBER THAT YOU WERE A SLAVE IN THE LAND OF EGYPT, AND THE LORD YOUR GOD BROUGHT YOU OUT FROM THERE WITH A MIGHTY HAND AND AN OUTSTRETCHED ARM. THEREFORE, THE LORD YOUR GOD COMMANDED YOU TO KEEP THE SABBATH DAY. — DEUTERONOMY 5:12-15. WHEN THE LORD YAHWEH STEPHEN GAVE THE ANCIENT ISRAELITES THE TEN COMMANDMENTS AT BIBLICAL MOUNT SINAI, THEY WERE COMMANDED TO REMEMBER THE SABBATH AND KEEP IT HOLY BY NOT DOING ANY WORK AND ALLOWING THE WHOLE HOUSEHOLD TO CEASE FROM WORK. THIS WAS IN RECOGNITION OF GOD’S ACT OF CREATION AND THE SPECIAL STATUS THAT GOD HAD CONFERRED ON THE SEVENTH DAY DURING THE CREATION WEEK. WHEN THE LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH GAVE THE ANCIENT BRITISH THE TEN COMMANDMENTS AT BIBLICAL MOUNT SINAI IN ACTS 7:6-7; 29:1-2, THEY WERE COMMANDED TO REMEMBER THE SABBATH AND KEEP IT HOLY BY NOT DOING ANY WORK AND ALLOWING THE WHOLE HOUSEHOLD TO CEASE FROM WORK. THIS WAS IN RECOGNITION OF GOD’S ACT OF CREATION AND THE SPECIAL STATUS THAT GOD HAD CONFERRED ON THE SEVENTH DAY DURING THE CREATION WEEK. THE TORAH PORTRAYS THE SABBATH CONCEPT BOTH IN TERMS OF RESTING ON THE SEVENTH DAY AND ALLOWING LAND TO LIE FALLOW DURING EACH SEVENTH YEAR. 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THE PRESENCE OF YHWH---STEPHEN YAHWEH IN THE KODESH HAKODASHIM ON THAT YEARLY DAY, UPON THE MERCY SEAT, REQUIRED THAT THE KOHEN GADOL BE FIRST PURIFIED BY THE SACRIFICE OF A BULL IN A PRESCRIBED MANNER. ENTERING THE MOST HOLY PLACE ON OTHER DAYS OR WITHOUT FULFILLING THE RITUAL REQUIREMENTS WOULD SUBJECT THE PRIEST TO DEATH. IN THE SAME WAY THAT OBSERVING THE SABBATH DID NOT PREVENT JOSHUA FROM MARCHING AROUND JERICHO FOR SEVEN CONSECUTIVE DAYS, SABBATH OBSERVANCE DID NOT PREVENT THE CHIEF PRIEST JEHOIADA FROM ORGANIZING A PALACE COUP ON THE SABBATH IN ORDER TO REMOVE QUEEN ATALIAH FROM THE THRONE AND REPLACE HER WITH JOASH, A RIGHTFUL HEIR TO THE THRONE. ATALIAH HAD MURDERED ALL THE OTHER HEIRS TO THE THRONE UPON THE DEATH OF AHAZIAH AND USURPED THE THRONE OF JUDAH FOR HERSELF. JEHOIADA'S WIFE HAD RESCUED YOUNG JOASH, AND JEHOIADA HAD KEPT HIM HIDDEN FOR SIX YEARS WHILE ATALIAH REIGNED AS QUEEN OVER JUDAH. THE PRIEST JEHOIADA USED THE OCCASION OF THE TRANSFER OF THE GUARD ON THE SABBATH TO PROCLAIM JOASH AS KING BECAUSE AT THAT TIME, HE COULD ARRANGE TWICE THE NORMAL GUARD ON DUTY AT THE TEMPLE OF STEPHEN YAHWEH. ON THAT DAY, A COVENANT WAS MADE, JOASH WAS PROCLAIMED KING, ATALIAH WAS PUT TO DEATH, THE TEMPLE OF BAAL WAS TORN DOWN, IDOLS WERE SMASHED, AND MATTAN, THE PRIEST OF BAAL, WAS KILLED. A NUMBER OF THE PROPHETS CONDEMN DESECRATION OF THE SABBATH WITH VARIOUS FORMS OF WORK, INCLUDING ISAIAH, JEREMIAH, EZEKIEL, AND AMOS. ACCORDING TO NEHEMIAH, AFTER THE CAPTIVES RETURN TO JERUSALEM FROM EXILE, THEY MAKE A COVENANT WHICH INCLUDES A PROMISE TO REFRAIN FROM DESECRATING THE SABBATH, YET SOME GIVE IN TO THE ONGOING TEMPTATION TO BUY AND SELL ON THE SABBATH. AS A RESULT, NEHEMIAH HAS TO REBUKE THEM AND STATION GUARDS TO PREVENT COMMERCE IN JERUSALEM ON THE SABBATH.**

**HONOR THY FATHER STEPHEN AND THY MOTHER VICTORIA**

**"HONOR THY FATHER [STEPHEN] AND THY MOTHER [VICTORIA]" (HEBREW: כַּבֵּד אֶת אָבִיךָ וְאֶת אִמֶּךָ לְמַעַן יַאֲרִכוּן יָמֶיךָ) IS ONE OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS IN THE HEBREW BIBLE. THE COMMANDMENT IS GENERALLY REGARDED IN PROTESTANT AND JEWISH SOURCES AS THE FIFTH IN BOTH THE LIST IN EXODUS 20:1–21, AND IN DEUTERONOMY (DVARIM) 5:1–23. CATHOLICS AND LUTHERANS COUNT THIS AS THE FOURTH. THESE COMMANDMENTS WERE ENFORCED AS LAW IN MANY JURISDICTIONS, AND ARE STILL CONSIDERED ENFORCEABLE LAW BY ALL. EXODUS 20, 1 DESCRIBES THE TEN COMMANDMENTS AS BEING SPOKEN BY GOD, INSCRIBED ON TWO STONE TABLETS BY THE TERRIBLE, JEALOUS FINGER OF THE LORD, BROKEN BY MOSES, AND REWRITTEN ON REPLACEMENT STONES BY THE LORD. כבד את־אביך ואת־אמך למען יארכון ימיך על האדמה אשר־יהוה אלהיך נתן לך KABBĒḎ ’EṮ-’ĀḆÎḴĀ WƏ’EṮ-’IMMEḴĀ LƏMA‘AN YA’ĂRIḴÛN YĀMEYḴĀ ‘AL HĀ’ĂḎĀMĀH ’ĂŠER-YƏHWĀH ’ĔLŌHEYḴĀ NŌṮĒN LĀḴ.HONOUR YOUR FATHER AND YOUR MOTHER, SO THAT YOU MAY LIVE LONG IN THE LAND THE LORD YOUR GOD IS GIVING YOU. — EXODUS 20:12 (NIV). IN THE TORAH, KEEPING THIS COMMANDMENT WAS ASSOCIATED WITH INDIVIDUAL BENEFIT[7] AND WITH THE ABILITY OF THE NATION OF ISRAEL TO REMAIN IN THE LAND TO WHICH GOD WAS LEADING THEM.[8][9] DISHONORING PARENTS BY STRIKING OR CURSING THEM WAS PUNISHABLE BY DEATH AND SO THE CLAUSE "SO THAT YOU MAY LIVE LONG" COULD BE INTERPRETED AS "SO THAT YOU ARE NOT PUT TO DEATH". IN THE TALMUD, THE COMMANDMENT TO HONOR ONE'S PARENTS IS COMPARED TO HONORING GOD. ACCORDING TO THE PROPHET MALACHI, GOD MAKES THE ANALOGY HIMSELF: A SON HONORS HIS FATHER, AND A SERVANT HIS MASTER. IF I AM A FATHER, WHERE IS THE HONOR DUE ME? IF I AM A MASTER, WHERE IS THE RESPECT DUE ME?" SAYS THE LORD ALMIGHTY. "IT IS YOU, O PRIESTS, WHO SHOW CONTEMPT FOR MY NAME [STEPHEN YAHWEH]. BUT YOU ASK, 'HOW HAVE WE SHOWN CONTEMPT FOR YOUR NAME [STEPHEN YAHWEH]?' — MALACHI 1:6 (NIV).**

**THOU SHALT NOT KILL**

**THOU SHALT NOT KILL (LXX; Οὐ ΦΟΝΕΎΣΕΙΣ), YOU SHALL NOT MURDER (HEBREW: לֹא תִּרְצָח; LO TIRṢAḤ) OR YOU SHALL NOT KILL (KJV), IS A MORAL IMPERATIVE INCLUDED AS ONE OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS IN THE TORAH. THE IMPERATIVE TO NOT KILL IS IN THE CONTEXT OF UNLAWFUL KILLING RESULTING IN BLOODGUILT.**

**RETZACH: THE HEBREW VERB רצח (R-Ṣ-Ḥ, ALSO TRANSLITERATED RETZACH, RATZÁKH, RATSAKH ETC.) IS THE WORD IN THE ORIGINAL TEXT THAT IS TRANSLATED AS "MURDER" , BUT IT HAS A WIDER RANGE OF MEANINGS, GENERALLY DESCRIBING DESTRUCTIVE ACTIVITY, INCLUDING MEANINGS "TO BREAK, TO DASH TO PIECES" AS WELL AS "TO SLAY, KILL, MURDER". ACCORDING TO THE PRIESTLY CODE OF THE BOOK OF NUMBERS, KILLING ANYONE OUTSIDE THE CONTEXT OF WAR WITH A WEAPON, OR IN UNARMED COMBAT, IS CONSIDERED RETZACH, BUT IF THE KILLING IS ACCIDENTAL, THE ACCUSED MUST FLEE TO ONE OF THE CITIES OF REFUGE—AND REMAIN IN THAT CITY UNTIL THE HIGH PRIEST DIES, OR THE "REVENGER OF BLOOD" CAN KILL THE ACCUSED WITH NO LEGAL REPERCUSSIONS. THE HOLY BIBLE NEVER USES THE WORD RETZACH IN CONJUNCTION WITH WAR. THE ACT OF SLAYING ITSELF, REGARDLESS OF QUESTIONS OF BLOODGUILT, IS EXPRESSED WITH THE VERB N-K-H "TO STRIKE, SMITE, HIT, BEAT, SLAY, KILL". THIS VERB IS USED OF BOTH AN EGYPTIAN SLAYING AN ISRAELITE SLAVE AND OF MOSES SLAYING THE EGYPTIAN IN RETALIATION IN EXODUS 2:11–12. THE COVENANT CODE AND HOLINESS CODE BOTH PRESCRIBE THE DEATH PENALTY FOR PEOPLE THAT COMMIT N-K-H. THE COMMANDMENT AGAINST MURDER CAN BE VIEWED AS A LEGAL ISSUE GOVERNING HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS, NOTING THAT THE FIRST FOUR COMMANDMENTS RELATE STRONGLY TO MAN'S DUTY TO GOD AND THAT THE LATTER SIX COMMANDMENTS DESCRIBE DUTIES TOWARD HUMANS. THE COMMANDMENT AGAINST MURDER CAN ALSO BE VIEWED AS BASED IN RESPECT FOR GOD HIMSELF. "THE VOICE OF YOUR BROTHER'S BLOOD IS CRYING TO ME FROM THE GROUND. AND NOW YOU ARE CURSED FROM THE GROUND, WHICH HAS OPENED ITS MOUTH TO RECEIVE YOUR BROTHER'S BLOOD FROM YOUR HAND." GENESIS 4:10–11 (ESV). THE GENESIS NARRATIVE ALSO PORTRAYS THE PROHIBITION OF SHEDDING INNOCENT BLOOD AS AN IMPORTANT ASPECT OF GOD’S COVENANT WITH NOAH. WHOEVER SHEDS THE BLOOD OF MAN, BY MAN SHALL HIS BLOOD BE SHED, FOR GOD MADE MAN [NUMBERS 23:19] IN HIS OWN IMAGE. — GENESIS 9:6 (ESV). THE TORAH PORTRAYS MURDER AS A CAPITAL CRIME AND DESCRIBES A NUMBER OF DETAILS IN THE MORAL UNDERSTANDING AND LEGAL IMPLEMENTATION OF CONSEQUENCES. THE PRIESTLY CODE ALLOWED THE VICTIM'S NEXT OF KIN (AVENGER OF BLOOD) EXACT RETRIBUTION ON THE SUSPECT; BUT THE ACCUSED COULD SEEK SANCTUARY IN A CITY OF REFUGE. THE RIGHT OF THE AVENGER OF BLOOD TO SUCH REVENGE CEASED, UPON THE DEATH OF THE PERSON WHO WAS THE JEWISH HIGH PRIEST AT THE TIME OF THE CRIME. ANOTHER VERB MEANING "TO KILL, SLAY, MURDER, DESTROY, RUIN" IS H-R-G, USED OF CAIN SLAYING ABEL IN GENESIS 4:8. WHEN CAIN IS DRIVEN INTO EXILE, COMPLAINING THAT "EVERY ONE THAT FINDETH ME SHALL SLAY ME" IN GENESIS 4:14, HE AGAIN USES THIS VERB (H-R-G). ELIEZER SEGAL OBSERVES THAT THE SEPTUAGINT USES THE TERM HARAG, AND THAT AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO RECOGNIZED THAT THIS DID NOT EXTEND TO WARS OR CAPITAL PUNISHMENT. MOST SUBSEQUENT TRANSLATIONS FOLLOW JEROME'S VULGATE. WHILE JEROME HAD ACCESS TO JEWISH SCHOLARS, "EVEN THE JEWISH TRANSLATORS WERE NOT UNANIMOUS IN MAINTAINING CONSISTENT DISTINCTIONS BETWEEN THE VARIOUS HEBREW ROOTS." JEROME'S CHOICE OF THE WORD OCCIDERE (TO KILL) REFLECTS THE BROADER RANGE OF MEANINGS. IN A MORE MODERN ANALYSIS, WILMA ANN BAILEY ALSO FINDS A BROADER APPLICATION OF THE WORD RETZACH. JUSTIFIED KILLING: DUE CONSEQUENCE FOR CRIME. THE TORAH AND HEBREW BIBLE MADE CLEAR DISTINCTIONS BETWEEN THE SHEDDING OF INNOCENT BLOOD VERSUS KILLING AS THE DUE CONSEQUENCE OF A CRIME. A NUMBER OF SINS WERE CONSIDERED TO BE WORTHY OF THE DEATH PENALTY INCLUDING MURDER, INCEST, BEARING FALSE WITNESS ON A CAPITAL CHARGE, ADULTERY, IDOLATRY [SEX], BESTIALITY, CHILD SACRIFICE TO PAGAN GODS, CURSING A PARENT, FORTUNE-TELLING, HOMOSEXUALITY, AND OTHER SINS. FOR EXAMPLE, THE EXODUS NARRATIVE DESCRIBES THE PEOPLE AS HAVING TURNED TO IDOLATRY WITH THE GOLDEN CALF WHILE MOSES WAS ON THE MOUNTAIN RECEIVING THE LAW FROM GOD. WHEN MOSES CAME DOWN, HE COMMANDED THE LEVITES TO TAKE UP THE SWORD AGAINST THEIR BROTHERS AND COMPANIONS AND NEIGHBORS. THE LEVITES OBEYED AND KILLED ABOUT THREE THOUSAND MEN WHO HAD SINNED IN WORSHIP OF THE GOLDEN CALF. AS A RESULT, MOSES SAID THAT THE LEVITES HAD RECEIVED A BLESSING THAT DAY AT THE COST OF SON AND BROTHER. ON A SEPARATE OCCASION, A BLASPHEMER WAS STONED TO DEATH BECAUSE HE BLASPHEMED THE NAME OF THE LORD (STEPHEN YAHWEH) WITH A CURSE. THE HEBREW BIBLE HAS MANY OTHER EXAMPLES OF SINNERS BEING PUT TO DEATH AS DUE CONSEQUENCE FOR CRIMES. ACHAN IS PUT TO DEATH BY JOSHUA BECAUSE HE CAUSED DEFEAT OF ISRAEL'S ARMY BY TAKING SOME OF THE PLUNDER AND HIDING IT IN HIS TENT. DAVID ORDERED THAT AN AMALEKITE BE PUT TO DEATH BECAUSE HE CLAIMED TO HAVE KILLED KING SAUL. FOLLOWING THE ADVICE OF HIS FATHER, SOLOMON ORDERED THAT JOAB BE KILLED: STRIKE HIM DOWN AND BURY HIM, AND SO CLEAR ME AND MY FATHER'S HOUSE OF THE GUILT OF THE INNOCENT BLOOD THAT JOAB SHED. THE LORD WILL REPAY HIM FOR THE BLOOD HE SHED, BECAUSE WITHOUT THE KNOWLEDGE OF MY FATHER DAVID HE ATTACKED TWO MEN AND KILLED THEM WITH THE SWORD. BOTH OF THEM—ABNER SON OF NER, COMMANDER OF ISRAEL’S ARMY, AND AMASA SON OF JETHER, COMMANDER OF JUDAH'S ARMY—WERE BETTER MEN AND MORE UPRIGHT THAN HE. MAY THE GUILT OF THEIR BLOOD REST ON THE HEAD OF JOAB AND HIS DESCENDANTS FOREVER. BUT ON DAVID AND HIS DESCENDANTS, HIS HOUSE AND HIS THRONE, MAY THERE BE THE LORD'S PEACE FOREVER. — 1 KINGS 2:31–33 (NIV). THE BIBLICAL REFRAIN FOR THOSE JUSTLY EXECUTED AS DUE PUNISHMENT FOR CRIMES IS THAT "THEIR BLOOD WILL BE ON THEIR OWN HEADS." THIS EXPRESSES THE IDEA THAT THOSE GUILTY OF CERTAIN ACTIONS HAVE BROUGHT THE SHEDDING OF BLOOD UPON THEMSELVES, AND THOSE CARRYING OUT DUE PUNISHMENT DO NOT BEAR BLOODGUILT. JUSTIFIED KILLING: IN WARFARE: FURTHER INFORMATION: HEREM (WAR OR PROPERTY). THE ANCIENT HEBREW TEXTS MAKE A DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE MORAL AND LEGAL PROHIBITION OF SHEDDING OF INNOCENT BLOOD AND KILLING IN BATTLE. RABBI MARC GELLMAN EXPLAINS THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN "HARAG" (KILLING) AND "RATZAH" (MURDER) AND NOTES THE DIFFERENT MORAL CONNOTATIONS. "...THERE IS WIDE MORAL AGREEMENT (NOT COMPLETE AGREEMENT) THAT SOME FORMS OF KILLING ARE MORALLY JUST, AND KILLING AN ENEMY COMBATANT DURING WARTIME IS ONE OF THEM." FOR EXAMPLE, THE TORAH PROHIBITS MURDER, BUT SANCTIONS KILLING IN LEGITIMATE BATTLE. THE HOLY BIBLE OFTEN PRAISES THE EXPLOITS OF SOLDIERS AGAINST ENEMIES IN LEGITIMATE BATTLE. ONE OF DAVID’S MIGHTY MEN IS CREDITED WITH KILLING EIGHT HUNDRED MEN WITH THE SPEAR, AND ABISHAI IS CREDITED WITH KILLING THREE HUNDRED MEN. THE 613 MITZVOT EXTEND THE NOTION OF LAWFUL KILLING TO THE NATIONS THAT INHABITED THE PROMISED LAND, COMMANDING TO EXTERMINATE THEM COMPLETELY. DEUTERONOMY 20:10–18 ESTABLISHES RULES ON KILLING CIVILIANS IN WARFARE: THE POPULATION OF CITIES OUTSIDE OF THE PROMISED LAND, IF THEY SURRENDER, SHOULD BE MADE TRIBUTARIES AND LEFT ALIVE (20:10–11). THOSE CITIES OUTSIDE OF THE PROMISED LAND THAT RESIST SHOULD BE BESIEGED, AND ONCE THEY FALL, THE MALE POPULATION SHOULD BE EXTERMINATED, BUT THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN SHOULD BE LEFT ALIVE (20:12–15). OF THOSE CITIES THAT WERE WITHIN THE PROMISED LAND, HOWEVER, EVERYBODY WAS TO BE KILLED. JUSTIFIED KILLING: INTRUDER IN THE HOME. AS DESCRIBED IN THE TORAH, THE ANCIENT UNDERSTANDING OF THE PROHIBITION OF MURDER MADE AN EXCEPTION FOR LEGITIMATE SELF-DEFENSE. A HOME DEFENDER WHO STRUCK AND KILLED A THIEF CAUGHT IN THE ACT OF BREAKING IN AT NIGHT WAS NOT GUILTY OF BLOODSHED. "IF A THIEF IS CAUGHT BREAKING IN AND IS STRUCK SO THAT HE DIES, THE DEFENDER IS NOT GUILTY OF BLOODSHED; BUT IF IT HAPPENS AFTER SUNRISE, HE IS GUILTY OF BLOODSHED."**

**DON'T COMMIT MURDER (EXODUS 20:13)**

**DON'T ACCEPT RANSOM FOR LIFE OF THE MURDERER (NUMBERS 35:31)**

**EXILE AN ACCIDENTAL MURDERER (NUMBERS 35:25)**

**DON'T ACCEPT RANSOM FROM HIM (NUMBERS 35:32)**

**DON'T KILL THE MURDERER BEFORE TRYING HIM (NUMBERS 35:12)**

**SAVE THE PURSUED AT THE COST OF THE LIFE OF THE PURSUER (DEUTERONOMY 25:12)**

**DON'T SHOW PITY FOR THE PURSUER (NUMBERS 35:12)**

**DON'T STAND IDLY BY WHEN YOU CAN SAVE A LIFE (LEVITICUS 19:16)**

**SET ASIDE CITIES OF REFUGE FOR THOSE WHO COMMIT ACCIDENTAL HOMICIDE (DEUTERONOMY 19:3)**

**BREAK THE NECK OF THE CALF BY THE RIVER (IN RITUAL FOLLOWING UNSOLVED MURDER) (DEUTERONOMY 21:4)**

**DON'T TILL BY THAT RIVER OR SOW THERE (DEUTERONOMY 21:4)**

**DON'T CAUSE LOSS OF HUMAN LIFE (THROUGH NEGLIGENCE) (DEUTERONOMY 22:8)**

**BUILD A PARAPET (IN ROOF OF HOUSE) (DEUTERONOMY 22:8)**

**DON'T MISLEAD WITH ADVICE WHICH IS A STUMBLING BLOCK (LEVITICUS 19:14)**

**HELP A MAN REMOVE THE LOAD FROM HIS BEAST WHICH CAN NO LONGER CARRY IT (EXODUS 23:5)**

**HELP HIM LOAD HIS BEAST (DEUTERONOMY 22:4)**

**DON'T LEAVE HIM IN A STATE OF CONFUSION AND GO ON YOUR WAY (DEUTERONOMY 22:4)**

**THOU SHALT NOT COMMIT ADULTERY**

**"THOU SHALT NOT COMMIT ADULTERY", ONE OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS, IS FOUND IN THE BOOK OF EXODUS (EXODUS 20:14) OF THE HEBREW BIBLE AND OLD TESTAMENT. WHAT CONSTITUTES ADULTERY IS NOT PLAINLY DEFINED IN THIS PASSAGE OF THE HOLY BIBLE, AND HAS BEEN THE SUBJECT OF DEBATE WITHIN JUDAISM AND CHRISTIANITY. PRE-LAW EXAMPLES: IN GENESIS 12, ABRAM'S WIFE SARAI IS TAKEN INTO THE EGYPTIAN PHARAOH’S PALACE AFTER ABRAM DOES NOT DISCLOSE HER MARITAL STATUS. GOD INFLICTS “SERIOUS DISEASES ON PHARAOH AND HIS WHOLE HOUSEHOLD.” THE PHARAOH REALIZES IT IS BECAUSE SARAI IS ACTUALLY ABRAM'S WIFE AND TELLS HIM, "WHAT IS THIS YOU HAVE DONE TO ME? WHY DID YOU NOT TELL ME THAT SHE WAS YOUR WIFE? WHY DID YOU SAY, 'SHE IS MY SISTER,' SO THAT I TOOK HER FOR MY WIFE? NOW THEN, HERE IS YOUR WIFE; TAKE HER, AND GO." IN GENESIS 20, ABRAHAM (RENAMED AFTER HIS ENCOUNTER WITH EL SHADDAI (GOD ALMIGHTY) HAS MOVED TO THE NEGEV AND AGAIN CONCEALS HIS MARRIAGE TO SARAH. A LOCAL KING, ABIMELECH, INTENDS TO MARRY HER. HOWEVER, GOD APPEARS TO ABIMELECH IN A DREAM AND SAYS: "BEHOLD, YOU ARE A DEAD MAN BECAUSE OF THE WOMAN WHOM YOU HAVE TAKEN, FOR SHE IS A MAN’S WIFE." YEARS LATER, ISAAC TELLS THE SAME LIE REGARDING HIS WIFE, REBECCA, BUT ABIMELECH QUICKLY DISCOVERS THE TRUTH. APPALLED, HE CONFRONTS ISAAC, SAYING, "WHOEVER TOUCHES THIS MAN OR HIS WIFE SHALL SURELY BE PUT TO DEATH." IN GENESIS 39, A POSITIVE EXAMPLE IS PRESENTED IN JOSEPH, ONE OF JACOB’S TWELVE SONS. HE IS SOLD INTO SLAVERY IN EGYPT AND QUICKLY RISES TO A PROMINENT AND SUCCESSFUL POSITION MANAGING THE HOUSEHOLD OF POTIPHAR, A MILITARY CAPTAIN. HE RESISTS SEXUAL ADVANCES FROM POTIPHAR'S WIFE “DAY AFTER DAY,” PROTESTING THAT HE DOES NOT WISH TO BETRAY POTIPHAR'S TRUST. ONE DAY HER ADVANCES BECOME PHYSICAL, AND IN HIS EFFORT TO ESCAPE, JOSEPH LEAVES HIS CLOAK BEHIND. POTIPHAR'S WIFE USES THIS ‘EVIDENCE’ FOR A FALSE ACCUSATION OF RAPE AGAINST JOSEPH. JOSEPH IS IMPRISONED, LOSING ALL BUT HIS LIFE. MORE THAN TWO YEARS LATER JOSEPH IS RESTORED TO AN EVEN HIGHER POSITION, SERVING THE PHARAOH HIMSELF. AFTER MOUNT SINAI: ACCORDING TO THE BOOK OF EXODUS, THE LAW FORBIDDING ADULTERY WAS CODIFIED FOR THE ISRAELITES AT BIBLICAL MOUNT SINAI. IT WAS ONE OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS WRITTEN BY THE [TERRIBLE, JEALOUS] FINGER OF THE LORD ON STONE TABLETS. DETAILS REGARDING THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE LAW AND ADDITIONAL BOUNDARIES ON SEXUAL BEHAVIOR FOLLOWED. FOR EXAMPLE, THE ORDEAL OF THE BITTER WATER WAS ESTABLISHED TO PROVE THE GUILT OR INNOCENCE OF A WIFE WHOSE HUSBAND SUSPECTED HER OF ADULTERY. ADULTERY WAS A CAPITAL CRIME, AND IF ADULTERERS WERE CAUGHT, AT LEAST 2 WITNESSES [THE OPPOSING SIDE OF THE ORIGINAL ONCE IN THE NUMBER 0 AT 00.0001% ETERNAL INCORRUPTION] WERE REQUIRED BEFORE THE DEATH PENALTY WOULD BE CARRIED OUT. SINCE MEN WERE PERMITTED TO HAVE MULTIPLE WIVES, ADULTERY WAS INTERPRETED TO CONSIST OF SEXUAL RELATIONS BETWEEN A MAN AND A MARRIED OR BETROTHED WOMAN WHO WAS NOT HIS WIFE. A MAN WHO HAD SEXUAL RELATIONS WITH A WOMAN WHO WAS NOT MARRIED OR BETROTHED WAS NOT GUILTY OF ADULTERY, PER SE, BUT THE MAN WAS THEN OBLIGATED TO MARRY THE WOMAN AND NOT DIVORCE HER UNTIL THE END OF HIS LIFE. IF A MAN FIND A DAMSEL THAT IS A VIRGIN, WHICH IS NOT BETROTHED, AND LAY HOLD ON HER, AND LIE WITH HER, AND THEY BE FOUND; THEN THE MAN THAT LAY WITH HER SHALL GIVE UNTO THE DAMSEL'S FATHER FIFTY SHEKELS OF SILVER, AND SHE SHALL BE HIS WIFE; BECAUSE HE HATH HUMBLED HER, HE MAY NOT PUT HER AWAY ALL HIS DAYS. — DEUTERONOMY 22: 28-29. OTHER BOUNDARIES ON SEXUAL BEHAVIOR INCLUDED THE PROHIBITION OF SEXUAL RELATIONS BETWEEN CLOSE RELATIVES, BETWEEN PERSONS OF THE SAME SEX, AND BETWEEN PEOPLE AND ANIMALS; PROSTITUTION WAS ALSO FORBIDDEN. THE PROHIBITION OF PROSTITUTION HAS BEEN INTERPRETED BY RABBINICAL SCHOLARS TO PRECLUDE SEXUAL RELATIONS OUTSIDE OF MARRIAGE AS PRE-MARITAL SEX IN GENERAL OR SEXUAL RELATIONS INSIDE OF MARRIAGE BEING UNEQUALLY YOKED AS MARITAL FORNICATION [TOBIT 4:12-13] IN GENERAL, AND A WOMAN WHO, AFTER GETTING MARRIED, WAS FOUND TO HAVE BEEN PROMISCUOUS BEFORE MARRIAGE FACED THE DEATH PENALTY. A WOMAN WHO WAS RAPED WAS NOT GUILTY OF BREAKING THE LAW, PROVIDED SHE CRIED OUT FOR HELP (WHICH WAS TAKEN AS PROOF THAT SHE DID NOT CONSENT). ACCORDING TO DEUTERONOMY, THE COMMANDMENT AGAINST ADULTERY WAS REAFFIRMED AS THE LEADERSHIP OF ISRAEL PASSED FROM MOSES TO JOSHUA. KING DAVID’S SEDUCTION OF URIAH’S WIFE BATHSHEBA AND THE MURDEROUS COVER-UP OF THEIR ADULTERY IS AN INFAMOUS TRANSGRESSION OF THIS COMMANDMENT. OCCURRING APPROXIMATELY FOUR CENTURIES AFTER THE GIVING OF THE LAW ON MOUNT SINAI, THE EVENT AND ITS AFTERMATH ARE RECOUNTED IN THE BOOKS OF SECOND SAMUEL AND FIRST KINGS. DESPITE DAVID’S SINCERE AND LASTING REPENTANCE, HIS BREAKING THE COMMANDMENT AGAINST ADULTERY BROUGHT TEMPORAL PUNISHMENT AND INITIATED A CASCADE OF TRAGIC EVENTS IN THE UNITED KINGDOM OF ISRAEL AND JUDAH. THE BOOK OF PROVERBS CONTAINS ENTIRE CHAPTERS WARNING AGAINST ADULTERY AND DESCRIBING ITS TEMPTATIONS AND CONSEQUENCES. DIRECT WARNINGS ARE GIVEN TO STAY FAR AWAY FROM THE ADULTERESS. WISDOM IS DESCRIBED AS A PROTECTION AGAINST "THE FORBIDDEN WOMAN, FROM THE ADULTERESS WITH HER SMOOTH WORDS, WHO FORSAKES THE COMPANION OF HER YOUTH AND FORGETS THE COVENANT OF HER GOD; FOR HER HOUSE SINKS DOWN TO DEATH, AND HER PATHS TO THE DEPARTED; NONE WHO GO TO HER COME BACK, NOR DO THEY REGAIN THE PATHS OF LIFE." MENTAL, SPIRITUAL, PSYCHOLOGICAL & ETERNAL PARALLELS: THE PROPHETS JEREMIAH, EZEKIEL AND HOSEA INDICATE THAT GOD VIEWED ISRAEL’S WORSHIP OF IDOLS AS SPIRITUAL ADULTERY. THIS LED TO A BROKEN COVENANT BETWEEN THEM AND “DIVORCE,” MANIFESTED AS DEFEAT BY AN ENEMY NATION FOLLOWED BY EXILE, FROM WHICH THE NORTHERN KINGDOM NEVER RECOVERED. THIS SPIRITUAL ADULTERY WAS APPARENTLY ACCOMPANIED BY THE PREVALENCE OF PHYSICAL ADULTERY AS WELL.**

**THOU SHALT NOT STEAL**

**"THOU SHALT NOT STEAL" IS ONE OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS OF THE JEWISH TORAH (KNOWN TO CHRISTIANS AS THE FIRST FIVE BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT), WHICH ARE WIDELY UNDERSTOOD AS MORAL IMPERATIVES BY LEGAL SCHOLARS, JEWISH SCHOLARS, CATHOLIC SCHOLARS, AND POST-REFORMATION SCHOLARS. "STEAL" IN THIS COMMANDMENT HAS TRADITIONALLY BEEN INTERPRETED BY JEWISH COMMENTARIES TO REFER TO THE STEALING OF AN ACTUAL HUMAN BEING, THAT IS, TO KIDNAPPING, INCLUDING HUMAN TRAFFICKING. WITH THIS UNDERSTANDING, A CONTEXTUAL TRANSLATION OF THE COMMANDMENT IN JEWISH TRADITION WOULD MORE ACCURATELY BE RENDERED AS "THOU SHALT NOT KIDNAP". KIDNAPPING WOULD THEN CONSTITUTE A CAPITAL OFFENCE AND THUS MERIT ITS INCLUSION AMONG THE TEN COMMANDMENTS. NEVERTHELESS, THIS COMMANDMENT HAS COME TO BE INTERPRETED, ESPECIALLY IN CHRISTIAN DOCTRINES, AS THE UNAUTHORIZED TAKING OF ANY VALUE OF MONEY, SUCH AS PRIVATE PROPERTY OR SIMPLY MONEY (STEALING OR THEFT), WHICH IS A WRONGFUL ACTION ALREADY PROHIBITED ELSEWHERE IN THE HEBREW BIBLE THAT CAN INCUR THE DEATH PENALTY, ESPECIALLY IF IT IS AGAINST THE LORD. THE COMMANDMENT "YOU SHALL NOT STEAL" WAS ORIGINALLY INTENDED AGAINST STEALING PEOPLE—AGAINST ABDUCTIONS AND SLAVERY, IN AGREEMENT WITH THE TALMUDIC INTERPRETATION OF THE STATEMENT AS "YOU SHALL NOT KIDNAP" (SANHEDRIN 86A). THE HEBREW WORD TRANSLATED “STEAL” IS “GNEVA.” THE HEBREW BIBLE CONTAINS A NUMBER OF PROHIBITIONS OF STEALING AND DESCRIPTIONS OF NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES FOR THIS SIN. THE GENESIS NARRATIVE DESCRIBES RACHEL AS HAVING STOLEN HOUSEHOLD GOODS FROM HER FATHER LABAN WHEN SHE FLED FROM LABAN'S HOUSEHOLD WITH HER HUSBAND JACOB AND THEIR CHILDREN. LABAN HOTLY PURSUED JACOB TO RECOVER HIS GOODS, AND INTENDED TO DO HIM HARM, BUT RACHEL HID THE STOLEN ITEMS AND AVOIDED DETECTION. EXODUS 21:16 AND DEUTERONOMY 24:7 APPLY THE SAME HEBREW WORD TO KIDNAPPING (STEALING A MAN) AND DEMANDS THE DEATH PENALTY FOR SUCH A SIN. THE HEBREW WORD TRANSLATED “STEAL” IS MORE COMMONLY APPLIED TO MONEY OR THE VALUE OF MONEY IN MATERIAL POSSESSIONS. RESTITUTION MAY BE DEMANDED, BUT THERE MAYBE JUDICIAL PENALTY OF DEATH ALSO, ESPECIALLY STEALING THE MONEY TITHE FROM THE LORD. HOWEVER, A THIEF MAY BE KILLED IF CAUGHT IN THE ACT OF BREAKING IN AT NIGHT UNDER CIRCUMSTANCES WHERE THE OCCUPANTS MAY REASONABLY BE IN FEAR OF GREATER HARM. THE ANCIENT HEBREW UNDERSTANDING HONORED PRIVATE PROPERTY RIGHTS AND DEMANDED RESTITUTION EVEN IN CASES THAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN ACCIDENTAL, SUCH AS LIVESTOCK GRAZING IN ANOTHER MAN'S FIELD OR VINEYARD (EXODUS 22:1-9 (ESV)). IN THE BOOK OF LEVITICUS, THE PROHIBITIONS OF ROBBING AND STEALING ARE REPEATED IN THE CONTEXT OF LOVING ONE'S NEIGHBOR AS ONESELF AND THE PROHIBITION IS EXPANDED TO INCLUDE DEALING FALSELY OR FRAUDULENTLY IN MATTERS OF TRADE AND NEGOTIATIONS. WAGES OWED TO A HIRED WORKER ARE NOT TO BE WITHHELD. NEIGHBORS MUST NOT OPPRESS OR ROB EACH OTHER. NEIGHBORS ARE TO DEAL FRANKLY WITH EACH OTHER, PROTECT THE LIVES OF EACH OTHER, REFRAIN FROM VENGEANCE AND GRUDGES, AND STAND UP FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS AND JUSTICE IN MATTERS THAT GO TO COURT. THE LAW OBLIGED THE THIEF TO PAY SEVEN TIMES (IF THE THIEF STEALS BECAUSE HE IS HUNGRY). IF THE THIEF WASN'T ABLE TO PAY COMPENSATION FOR HIS THEFT BY SELLING HIS THINGS, HE WAS SOLD AS A SLAVE. IF THE THIEF CONFESSED HIS SIN, HE WAS ALLOWED TO RETURN THE OBJECT, ADDING A FIFTH OF ITS PRICE AND HE BROUGHT TO THE PRIEST AS HIS COMPENSATION TO THE LORD A RAM WITHOUT BLEMISH OUT OF THE FLOCK, OR ITS EQUIVALENT, FOR A GUILT OFFERING; AND THE PRIEST MADE ATONEMENT FOR HIM BEFORE THE LORD, AND HE WAS FORGIVEN. POVERTY AND GREED ARE AMONG THE REASONS FOR THEFT. BESIDES THIS, STOLEN THINGS ARE SWEET AND THE BREAD (FOOD) EATEN IN SECRET IS PLEASANT. THE PARTNER OF A THIEF HATES HIS OWN LIFE; HE HEARS THE CURSE, BUT DISCLOSES NOTHING. SOMETIMES RULERS ARE THIEVES OR ACCOMPLICES OF THIEVES. THE BOOK OF PROVERBS CONTRASTS THE RESPONSE OF A VICTIM TO A THIEF WHO STEALS TO SATISFY HIS HUNGER WITH THE RESPONSE OF A JEALOUS HUSBAND TO ADULTERY. THE THIEF IS NOT DESPISED BY HIS VICTIM, EVEN THOUGH THE THIEF MUST MAKE RESTITUTION EVEN IF IT COSTS HIM ALL THE GOODS OF HIS HOUSE. IN CONTRAST, THE JEALOUS HUSBAND WILL ACCEPT NO COMPENSATION AND WILL REPAY THE ADULTERER WITH WOUNDS AND DISHONOR, NOT SPARING WHEN HIS FURY TAKES REVENGE. THE BOOK OF ZECHARIAH DESCRIBES GOD AS CURSING THE HOME OF THE THIEF AND THE HOME OF THOSE WHO SWEAR FALSELY AND JEREMIAH DESCRIBES THIEVES AS BEING SHAMED WHEN THEY ARE CAUGHT.**

**NOT TO STEAL MONEY STEALTHILY (LEVITICUS 19:11)**

**THE COURT MUST IMPLEMENT PUNITIVE MEASURES AGAINST THE THIEF (EXODUS 21:37)**

**EACH INDIVIDUAL MUST ENSURE THAT HIS SCALES AND WEIGHTS ARE ACCURATE (LEVITICUS 19:36)**

**NOT TO COMMIT INJUSTICE WITH SCALES AND WEIGHTS (LEVITICUS 19:35)**

**NOT TO POSSESS INACCURATE SCALES AND WEIGHTS EVEN IF THEY ARE NOT FOR USE (DEUTERONOMY 25:13)**

**NOT TO MOVE A BOUNDARY MARKER TO STEAL SOMEONE'S PROPERTY (DEUTERONOMY 19:14)**

**NOT TO KIDNAP (EXODUS 20:13)**

**NOT TO ROB OPENLY (LEVITICUS 19:13)**

**NOT TO WITHHOLD WAGES OR FAIL TO REPAY A DEBT (LEVITICUS 19:13) [INCLUDING WHAT YOU OWE THE LORD IN A LIFTIME OF WORK IN MONEY TITHES]**

**NOT TO COVET AND SCHEME TO ACQUIRE ANOTHER'S POSSESSION (EXODUS 20:14)**

**NOT TO DESIRE ANOTHER'S POSSESSION (DEUTERONOMY 5:18)**

**RETURN THE ROBBED OBJECT OR ITS VALUE (LEVITICUS 5:23)**

**NOT TO IGNORE A LOST OBJECT (DEUTERONOMY 22:3)**

**RETURN THE LOST OBJECT (DEUTERONOMY 22:1)**

**THE COURT MUST IMPLEMENT LAWS AGAINST THE ONE WHO ASSAULTS ANOTHER OR DAMAGES ANOTHER'S PROPERTY (EXODUS 21:8)**

**THOU SHALT NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS AGAINST THY NEIGHBOR**

**"THOU SHALT NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS AGAINST THY NEIGHBOR" IS THE NINTH COMMANDMENT (THE DESIGNATION VARIES BETWEEN RELIGIONS) OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS, WHICH ARE WIDELY UNDERSTOOD AS MORAL IMPERATIVES BY SCHOLARS, CATHOLIC SCHOLARS, AND POST-REFORMATION SCHOLARS. TODAY, MOST CULTURES RETAIN A DISTINCTION BETWEEN LYING IN GENERAL (WHICH IS DISCOURAGED UNDER MOST, BUT NOT ALL, CIRCUMSTANCES) VERSUS PERJURY (WHICH IS ALWAYS UNLAWFUL UNDER CRIMINAL LAW AND LIABLE TO PUNISHMENT). SIMILARLY, HISTORICALLY IN JEWISH TRADITION, A DISTINCTION WAS MADE BETWEEN LYING IN GENERAL AND BEARING FALSE WITNESS (PERJURY) SPECIFICALLY. ON THE ONE HAND, BEARING FALSE WITNESS (PERJURY) WAS ALWAYS PROHIBITED ACCORDING TO THE DECALOGUE'S COMMANDMENT AGAINST BEARING FALSE WITNESS, YET ON THE OTHER, LYING IN GENERAL WAS ACKNOWLEDGED TO BE, IN CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES "PERMISSIBLE OR EVEN COMMENDABLE" WHEN IT PROTECTS A TOP-SECRET CLEARANCE, AND IT WAS DONE WHILE NOT UNDER OATH, AND IT WAS NOT "HARMFUL TO SOMEONE ELSE". THE BOOK OF EXODUS DESCRIBES THE TEN COMMANDMENTS AS BEING SPOKEN BY GOD, INSCRIBED ON TWO STONE TABLETS BY THE TERRIBLE, JEALOUS FINGER OF THE LORD, BROKEN BY MOSES, AND REWRITTEN ON REPLACEMENT STONES BY THE LORD. THERE ARE SIX THINGS THAT THE LORD STRONGLY HATES, SEVEN THAT ARE AN ABOMINATION TO HIM: HAUGHTY EYES, A LYING TONGUE, AND HANDS THAT SHED INNOCENT BLOOD, A HEART THAT DEVISES WICKED PLANS, FEET THAT MAKE HASTE TO RUN TO EVIL [SEX], A FALSE WITNESS WHO BREATHES OUT LIES, AND ONE WHO SOWS DISCORD AMONG BROTHERS. — PROVERBS 6:16–19. THE COMMAND AGAINST FALSE TESTIMONY IS SEEN AS A NATURAL CONSEQUENCE OF THE COMMAND TO “LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF”. THIS MORAL PRESCRIPTION FLOWS FROM THE COMMAND FOR HOLY PEOPLE TO BEAR WITNESS TO THEIR DEITY. OFFENSES AGAINST THE TRUTH EXPRESS BY WORD OR DEED A REFUSAL TO COMMIT ONESELF TO MORAL UPRIGHTNESS: THEY ARE FUNDAMENTAL INFIDELITIES TO GOD AND, IN THIS SENSE, THEY UNDERMINE THE FOUNDATIONS OF COVENANT WITH GOD. YOU SHALL NOT SPREAD A FALSE REPORT. YOU SHALL NOT JOIN HANDS WITH A WICKED MAN TO BE A MALICIOUS WITNESS. YOU SHALL NOT FALL IN WITH THE MANY TO DO EVIL [SEX], NOR SHALL YOU BEAR WITNESS IN A LAWSUIT, SIDING WITH THE MANY, SO AS TO PERVERT JUSTICE, NOR SHALL YOU BE PARTIAL TO A POOR MAN IN HIS LAWSUIT. — EXODUS 23:1-3. THE HEBREW BIBLE CONTAINS A NUMBER OF PROHIBITIONS AGAINST FALSE WITNESS, LYING, SPREADING FALSE REPORTS, ETC. FOR A PERSON WHO HAD A CHARGE BROUGHT AGAINST THEM AND WERE BROUGHT BEFORE A RELIGIOUS PROSECUTION, THE CHARGE WAS CONSIDERED AS ESTABLISHED ONLY ON THE EVIDENCE OF 2 OR 3 SWORN WITNESSES. IN CASES WHERE FALSE TESTIMONY WAS SUSPECTED, THE RELIGIOUS JUDGES WERE TO MAKE A THOROUGH INVESTIGATION, AND IF FALSE TESTIMONY WERE PROVEN, THE FALSE WITNESS WAS TO RECEIVE THE PUNISHMENT HE HAD INTENDED TO BRING ON THE PERSON FALSELY ACCUSED. FOR EXAMPLE, SINCE MURDER WAS A CAPITAL CRIME, GIVING FALSE TESTIMONY IN A MURDER CASE WAS SUBJECT TO THE DEATH PENALTY. THOSE EAGER TO RECEIVE OR LISTEN TO FALSE TESTIMONY WERE ALSO SUBJECT TO PUNISHMENT. FALSE WITNESS IS AMONG THE SIX THINGS GOD HATES. KING SOLOMON SAYS FALSE TESTIMONY IS AMONG THE THINGS THAT DEFILE A PERSON, JESUS SAYS. THE WITNESS WHO HID WHAT HE HAD SEEN OR WHAT HE KNEW BORE HIS INIQUITY; IF HE REALIZED HIS GUILT, HE HAD TO CONFESS HIS SIN, BROUGHT TO THE LORD A FEMALE LAMB OR GOAT FROM THE FLOCK (OR TWO TURTLEDOVES OR TWO PIGEONS, OR A TENTH OF AN EPHAH OF FINE FLOUR) FOR A SIN OFFERING AS HIS COMPENSATION FOR THE SIN HE COMMITTED. THE LYING WITNESS IS A DECEITFUL MAN, WHO MOCKS AT JUSTICE. HE IS LIKE A WAR CLUB, OR A SWORD, OR A SHARP ARROW. ″A FALSE WITNESS WILL NOT GO UNPUNISHED″. KING SOLOMON SAYS ″A FALSE WITNESS WILL PERISH″ IF HE DOES NOT REPENT. SOME OF THOSE WHO BELONGED TO THE SYNAGOGUE OF THE FREEDMEN AND OF THE CYRENIANS, AND OF THE ALEXANDRIANS, AND OF THOSE FROM CILICIA AND ASIA CAME UPON STEPHEN AND SEIZED HIM AND BROUGHT HIM BEFORE THE COUNCIL AND SET UP FALSE WITNESSES AGAINST HIM. THESE FALSE WITNESSES SAID: "THIS MAN NEVER CEASES TO SPEAK WORDS AGAINST THIS HOLY PLACE (TEMPLE OF JERUSALEM) AND THE LAW, FOR WE HAVE HEARD HIM SAY THAT THIS JESUS OF NAZARETH WILL DESTROY THIS PLACE (STEPHEN SAID THAT THE TEMPLE OF JESUS′ BODY HAD BEEN DESTROYED BY OTHERS BUT RAISE IT UP BY HIM IN THREE DAYS, ACCORDING WITH WHAT JESUS HAD SAID) AND THE CUSTOMS THAT MOSES DELIVERED TO US."(STEPHEN SAID WHAT JESUS HAD SAID NAMELY HE HAD COME TO FULFIL THE LAW OF MOSES AND THE PROPHETS) AND GAZING AT HIM, ALL WHO SAT IN THE COUNCIL SAW STEPHEN′S FACE AS THE FACE OF AN ANGEL. MANY TESTIFIED FALSELY AGAINST JESUS, BUT THEIR STATEMENTS DID NOT AGREE. AT LAST TWO WITNESSES SAID THEY HAD HEARD HIM SAYING HE WOULD DESTROY THAT TEMPLE AND IN THREE DAYS BUILT ANOTHER, NOT MADE WITH HANDS, (HE REALLY HAD MEANT THE RESURRECTION OF HIS BODY, AS A TEMPLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, DESTROYED BY OTHERS BUT RAISE IT UP BY HIM). YET EVEN ABOUT THIS THEIR TESTIMONY DID NOT AGREE. THE NARRATIVE IN 1 KINGS 21 DESCRIBES A CASE OF FALSE TESTIMONY. KING AHAB OF ISRAEL TRIED TO CONVINCE NABOTH THE JEZREELITE TO SELL HIM THE VINEYARD NABOTH OWNED ADJACENT TO THE KING'S PALACE. AHAB WANTED THE LAND TO USE AS A VEGETABLE GARDEN, BUT NABOTH REFUSED TO SELL OR TRADE THE PROPERTY TO AHAB SAYING, “THE LORD FORBID THAT I SHOULD GIVE UP TO YOU WHAT I HAVE INHERITED FROM MY FATHERS!” AHAB'S WIFE JEZEBEL THEN CONSPIRED TO OBTAIN THE VINEYARD BY WRITING LETTERS IN AHAB'S NAME TO THE ELDERS AND NOBLES IN NABOTH'S TOWN INSTRUCTING THEM TO HAVE TWO SCOUNDRELS BEAR FALSE WITNESS CLAIMING THAT NABOTH HAS CURSED BOTH GOD AND THE KING. AFTER NABOTH WAS SUBSEQUENTLY STONED TO DEATH, AHAB SEIZED POSSESSION OF NABOTH'S VINEYARD. THE TEXT DESCRIBES THE LORD AS VERY ANGRY WITH AHAB, AND THE PROPHET ELIJAH PRONOUNCES JUDGMENT ON BOTH AHAB AND JEZEBEL. THE NARRATIVE IN 2 SAMUEL 1 ALSO CONTAINS A NARRATIVE WHICH IS OFTEN INTERPRETED AS FALSE TESTIMONY. THE 1 SAMUEL NARRATIVE HAD DESCRIBED SAUL AS KILLING HIMSELF BY FALLING ON HIS OWN SWORD AFTER HAVING BEEN WOUNDED BY THE PHILISTINES ON MOUNT GILBOA AND BEING IN A SITUATION WITH NO HOPE OF VICTORY OR ESCAPE. HOWEVER, 2 SAMUEL TELLS OF AN AMALEKITE, WHO WAS PROBABLY ON MOUNT GILBOA TO STRIP THE DEAD OF THEIR POSSESSIONS, APPEARING TO DAVID WITH SAUL’S CROWN AND ROYAL ARM BAND AND GIVING TESTIMONY THAT HE HAD HIMSELF KILLED KING SAUL. DAVID IMMEDIATELY ORDERED THAT THE AMALEKITE BE PUT TO DEATH, SAYING, "YOUR BLOOD BE ON YOUR HEAD, FOR YOUR OWN MOUTH HAS TESTIFIED AGAINST YOU, SAYING, 'I HAVE KILLED THE LORD’S ANOINTED.'" THE TRUTH OF THE AMALEKITE'S TESTIMONY DID NOT NEED TO BE DETERMINED FOR THE SENTENCE TO BE CARRIED OUT: EITHER THE AMALEKITE HAD KILLED KING SAUL, OR HE HAD GIVEN FALSE TESTIMONY TO DAVID REGARDING SAUL’S DEATH. BOTH CRIMES WERE SEEN AS EQUALLY DESERVING OF THE DEATH PENALTY. THE ANCIENT UNDERSTANDING OF FALSE TESTIMONY NOT ONLY INCLUDES TESTIFYING WITH FALSE WORDS, BUT ALSO FAILING TO COME FORWARD WITH RELEVANT TESTIMONY IN RESPONSE TO A PUBLIC CHARGE. “IF A PERSON SINS BECAUSE HE DOES NOT SPEAK UP WHEN HE HEARS A PUBLIC CHARGE TO TESTIFY REGARDING SOMETHING HE HAS SEEN OR LEARNED ABOUT, HE WILL BE HELD RESPONSIBLE.**

**ANYBODY WHO KNOWS EVIDENCE MUST TESTIFY IN COURT (LEVITICUS 5:1)**

**CAREFULLY INTERROGATE THE WITNESS (DEUTERONOMY 13:14)**

**A WITNESS MUST NOT SERVE AS A JUDGE IN CAPITAL CRIMES (DEUTERONOMY 19:17)**

**NOT TO ACCEPT TESTIMONY FROM A LONE WITNESS (DEUTERONOMY 19:15) [1 WITNESS IN THE ORIGINAL ONCE IN THE NUMBER 0]**

**TRANSGRESSORS MUST NOT TESTIFY (EXODUS 23:1)**

**RELATIVES OF THE LITIGANTS MUST NOT TESTIFY (DEUTERONOMY 24:16)**

**NOT TO TESTIFY FALSELY (EXODUS 20:16)**

**PUNISH THE FALSE WITNESSES AS THEY TRIED TO PUNISH THE DEFENDANT (DEUTERONOMY 19:19)**

**THOU SHALT NOT COVET THY NEIGHBOR’S HOUSE**

**"THOU SHALT NOT COVET" IS THE MOST COMMON TRANSLATION OF ONE (OR TWO, DEPENDING ON THE NUMBERING TRADITION) OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS OR DECALOGUE, WHICH ARE WIDELY UNDERSTOOD AS MORAL IMPERATIVES BY LAW SCHOLARS, JEWISH SCHOLARS, CATHOLIC SCHOLARS, AND PROTESTANT SCHOLARS. THE BOOK OF EXODUS AND THE BOOK OF DEUTERONOMY BOTH DESCRIBE THE TEN COMMANDMENTS AS HAVING BEEN SPOKEN BY GOD, INSCRIBED ON TWO STONE TABLETS BY THE TERRIBLE, JEALOUS FINGER OF THE LORD, AND, AFTER MOSES BROKE THE ORIGINAL TABLETS, REWRITTEN BY THE LORD ON REPLACEMENTS. IN TRADITIONS THAT CONSIDER THE PASSAGE A SINGLE COMMANDMENT, THE FULL TEXT READS: YOU SHALL NOT COVET YOUR NEIGHBOR'S HOUSE. YOU SHALL NOT COVET YOUR NEIGHBOR'S WIFE, OR HIS MALE OR FEMALE SERVANT, HIS OX OR DONKEY [ASS], OR ANYTHING THAT BELONGS TO YOUR NEIGHBOR. — EXODUS 20:17. UNLIKE THE OTHER COMMANDMENTS WHICH FOCUS ON OUTWARD ACTIONS, THIS COMMANDMENT FOCUSES ALSO ON THOUGHT. IT IS AN IMPERATIVE AGAINST SETTING ONE'S DESIRE ON THINGS THAT ARE FORBIDDEN, SUCH AS SEX IN MATTHEW 6:24; 1ST TIMOTHY 6:9-10 & LUKE 16:9, 11, 13. ONE COMMANDMENT FORBIDS THE ACT OF ADULTERY. THIS COMMANDMENT FORBIDS THE DESIRE FOR ADULTERY & SEX IN GENERAL (1ST TIMOTHY 6:9-10). ONE COMMANDMENT FORBIDS STEALING. THIS COMMANDMENT FORBIDS THE DESIRE FOR ACQUISITION OR CONFISCATING OF ANOTHER'S GOODS THROUGH LEGALISM FOR REPAYMENT OFF AN INTEREST/USURY LOAN. THE NEW TESTAMENT DESCRIBES JESUS AS INTERPRETING THE TEN COMMANDMENTS AS ISSUES OF THE HEART'S DESIRES RATHER THAN MERELY PROHIBITING CERTAIN OUTWARD ACTIONS. YOU HAVE HEARD THAT IT WAS SAID TO THE PEOPLE LONG AGO, "DO NOT MURDER," AND "ANYONE WHO MURDERS WILL BE SUBJECT TO JUDGMENT." BUT I TELL YOU THAT ANYONE WHO IS ANGRY WITH HIS BROTHER WILL BE SUBJECT TO JUDGMENT … YOU HAVE HEARD THAT IT WAS SAID, "DO NOT COMMIT ADULTERY." BUT I TELL YOU THAT ANYONE [UNMARRIED TO SINGLE AFTER MARRIAGE] WHO LOOKS AT A WOMAN LUSTFULLY HAS ALREADY COMMITTED ADULTERY WITH HER IN HIS HEART. — MATTHEW 5:21-22, 27-28 (NIV). THE CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH CONNECTS THE COMMAND AGAINST COVETING WITH THE COMMAND TO "LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF." THE QUESTION OF "HOW CAN A PERSON NOT COVET A BEAUTIFUL THING IN HIS HEART?" WROTE THAT THE MAIN PURPOSE OF ALL THE COMMANDMENTS IS TO STRAIGHTEN THE HEART. THE HEBREW WORD TRANSLATED "COVET" IS CHAMAD (חמד) WHICH IS COMMONLY TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH AS "COVET", "LUST", AND "STRONG SEXUAL DESIRE." THE HEBREW BIBLE CONTAINS A NUMBER OF WARNINGS AND EXAMPLES OF NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES FOR LUSTING OR COVETING FOR SEX. FOR EXAMPLE, WHEN GOD WAS INSTRUCTING ISRAEL REGARDING THE FALSE SEXUAL RELIGION OF THE CANAANITES, HE WARNED THEM NOT TO COVET THE SILVER OR GOLD ON THEIR IDOLS, BECAUSE THIS CAN LEAD TO BRINGING DETESTABLE THINGS INTO THE HOME. THE IMAGES OF THEIR GODS YOU ARE TO BURN IN THE FIRE. DO NOT COVET THE SILVER AND GOLD ON THEM, AND DO NOT TAKE IT FOR YOURSELVES, OR YOU WILL BE ENSNARED BY IT, FOR IT IS DETESTABLE TO THE LORD YOUR GOD. DO NOT BRING A DETESTABLE THING INTO YOUR HOUSE OR YOU, LIKE IT, WILL BE SET APART FOR DESTRUCTION. UTTERLY ABHOR AND DETEST IT, FOR IT IS SET APART FOR DESTRUCTION. — DEUTERONOMY 7:25-26 (NIV). THE BOOK OF JOSHUA CONTAINS A NARRATIVE IN WHICH ACHAN INCURRED THE WRATH OF GOD BY COVETING PROHIBITED GOLD AND SILVER THAT HE FOUND IN THE DESTRUCTION OF JERICHO. THIS IS PORTRAYED AS A VIOLATION OF COVENANT AND A DISGRACEFUL THING. THE BOOK OF PROVERBS WARNS AGAINST COVETING, "ABOVE ALL ELSE, GUARD YOUR HEART, FOR IT IS THE WELLSPRING OF LIFE." THE PROPHET MICAH CONDEMNS THE COVETING OF HOUSES AND FIELDS AS A WARNING AGAINST LUSTING AFTER PHYSICAL POSSESSIONS. THE HEBREW WORD FOR "COVET" CAN ALSO BE TRANSLATED AS "LUST", AND THE BOOK OF PROVERBS WARNS AGAINST COVETING IN THE FORM OF SEXUAL LUST. THE MAIN EXAMPLE, IS ALL THOSE WHO SEXUALLY INDULGE INTO SEXUALITY WITH BABYLON IN REVELATION 17:1-18:24. DO NOT LUST IN YOUR HEART AFTER HER BEAUTY OR LET HER CAPTIVATE YOU WITH HER EYES, FOR THE PROSTITUTE REDUCES YOU TO A LOAF OF BREAD, AND THE ADULTERESS PREYS UPON YOUR VERY LIFE. — PROVERBS 6:25-26 (NIV).**

**THOU SHALT NOT COVET THY NEIGHBOR’S WIFE**

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**THOU SHALT NOT COVET THY NEIGHBOR’S SLAVES, NEIGHBORS ANIMALS, OR ANYTHING ELSE THAT BELONGS TO THY NEIGHBOR**

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**THOU SHALL SET UP THESE STONES, WHICH I COMMAND YOU TODAY, ON MOUNT EBAL (.0001% IS 1.2 POSITIONS, ,001% IS 12 POSITIONS, .01% IS 120 POSITIONS, 1% IS 1,200 POSITIONS, 10% IS 12,000 POSITIONS, 100% IS 120,000 POSITIONS TO 1,200,000 MILLION POSITIONS IN REPENTANCE ONCE & .0001% IS 1,200.000 MILLION POSITIONS, .001% IS 12,000,000 MILLION POSITIONS, .01% IS 120,000,000 MILLION POSITIONS, 1% IS 1,200,000,000 BILLION POSITIONS, 10% IS 12,000,000,000 BILLION POSITIONS & 100% IS 120,000,000,000 BILLION POSITIONS TO 1,200,000,000,000 TRILLION POSITIONS IN RELENTING ONCE**

**AMONG THE MOST NOTABLE SEMANTIC DIFFERENCES ARE THOSE RELATED TO THE SAMARITAN PLACE OF WORSHIP ON MOUNT GERIZIM. THE SAMARITAN VERSION OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS COMMANDS THAT AN ALTAR BE BUILT ON MOUNT GERIZIM ON WHICH ALL SACRIFICES SHOULD BE OFFERED. THE SAMARITAN PENTATEUCH CONTAINS THIS TEXT AT EXODUS 20:17: AND WHEN IT SO HAPPENS THAT LORD GOD BRINGS YOU TO THE LAND OF CANAAN, WHICH YOU ARE COMING TO POSSESS, YOU SHALL SET UP THERE FOR YOU GREAT STONES AND PLASTER THEM WITH PLASTER AND YOU WRITE ON THE STONES ALL WORDS OF THIS LAW. AND IT BECOMES FOR YOU THAT ACROSS THE JORDAN YOU SHALL RAISE THESE STONES, WHICH I COMMAND YOU TODAY, IN MOUNTAIN GERIZIM. AND YOU BUILD THERE THE ALTAR TO THE LORD GOD OF YOU. ALTAR OF STONES. NOT YOU SHALL WAVE ON THEM IRON. WITH WHOLE STONES YOU SHALL BUILD THE ALTAR TO LORD GOD OF YOU. AND YOU BRING ON IT ASCEND OFFERINGS TO LORD GOD OF YOU, AND YOU SACRIFICE PEACE OFFERINGS, AND YOU EAT THERE AND YOU REJOICE BEFORE THE FACE OF THE LORD GOD OF YOU. THE MOUNTAIN THIS IS ACROSS THE JORDAN BEHIND THE WAY OF THE RISING OF THE SUN, IN THE LAND OF CANAAN WHO IS DWELLING IN THE DESERT BEFORE THE GALGAL, BESIDE ALVIN-MARA, BEFORE SECHEM. THIS COMMANDMENT IS ABSENT FROM THE CORRESPONDING TEXT OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS IN THE MASORETIC. THE SAMARITAN PENTATEUCH'S INCLUSION OF THE GERIZIM VARIATION WITHIN THE TEN COMMANDMENTS PLACES ADDITIONAL EMPHASIS ON THE DIVINE SANCTION GIVEN TO THAT COMMUNITY'S PLACE OF WORSHIP. THIS VARIATION HAS SIMILARITIES TO DEUTERONOMY 27:2-8 AND IS SUPPORTED BY CHANGES TO THE VERBAL TENSE WITHIN THE SAMARITAN TEXT OF DEUTERONOMY INDICATING THAT GOD HAS ALREADY CHOSEN THIS PLACE. THE FUTURE TENSE ("WILL CHOOSE") IS USED IN THE MASORETIC. AND WHEREAS DEUTERONOMY 27:4 IN THE MASORETIC COMMANDS AN ALTAR TO BE CONSTRUCTED ON MOUNT EBAL, THE SAMARITAN TEXTS HAS MOUNT GERIZIM (BOTH CAN BE CORRECT). IN (EXODUS 23:19) SAMARITAN PENTATEUCH CONTAINS THE FOLLOWING PASSAGE AFTER THE PROHIBITION: [כי עשה זאת כזבח שכח ועברה היא לאלהי יעקב] WHICH ROUGHLY TRANSLATES "THAT ONE DOING THIS AS SACRIFICE FORGETS AND ENRAGES GOD OF JACOB". IN (NUMBERS 4:14) SAMARITAN PENTATEUCH CONTAINS THE FOLLOWING PASSAGE: [ולקחו בגד ארגמן וכסו את הכיור ואת כנו ונתנו אתם אל מכסה עור תחש ונתנו על המוט] WHICH ROUGHLY TRANSLATES "AND THEY WILL TAKE A PURPLE COVERING AND COVER THE LAVER AND HIS FOOT, AND THEY COVER IT IN TACHASH SKINS, AND THEY PUT IT UPON A BAR." SEVERAL OTHER TYPES OF DIFFERENCES ARE FOUND. THE SAMARITAN PENTATEUCH USES LESS ANTHROPOMORPHIC LANGUAGE IN DESCRIPTIONS OF GOD WITH INTERMEDIARIES PERFORMING ACTIONS THE MASORETIC VERSION ATTRIBUTES DIRECTLY TO GOD. WHERE THE MASORETIC DESCRIBES STEPHEN YAHWEH AS A "MAN OF WAR" (EXODUS 15:3), THE SAMARITAN HAS "HERO OF WAR", A PHRASE APPLIED TO SPIRITUAL BEINGS, AND IN NUMBERS 23:4, THE SAMARITAN READING "THE ANGEL OF GOD FOUND BALAAM" CONTRASTS WITH THE MASORETIC "AND GOD MET BALAAM." A FEW DIFFERENCES REFLECT SAMARITAN NOTIONS OF PROPRIETY, SUCH AS THE ALTERATION IN GENESIS 50:23 OF THE MASORETIC "UPON THE KNEES OF JOSEPH" TO "IN THE DAYS OF JOSEPH." SAMARITAN SCRIBES, WHO INTERPRETED THIS VERSE LITERALLY, FOUND IT IMPROPER THAT THE MOTHER OF JOSEPH'S GRANDCHILDREN WOULD GIVE BIRTH ON HIS KNEES. DISTINCTIVE VARIANTS IN THE SAMARITAN ARE ALSO FOUND IN CERTAIN LEGAL TEXTS WHERE SAMARITAN PRACTICE VARIES FROM THAT PRESCRIBED WITHIN RABBINICAL HALACHIC TEXTS. IN ABOUT THIRTY-FOUR INSTANCES, THE SAMARITAN PENTATEUCH IMPORTS TEXT FROM PARALLEL OR SYNOPTIC PASSAGES IN OTHER PARTS OF THE PENTATEUCH. THESE TEXTUAL EXPANSIONS RECORD CONVERSATIONS AND EVENTS THAT ARE IMPLIED OR PRESUPPOSED BY OTHER PARTS OF THE NARRATIVE, BUT NOT EXPLICITLY RECORDED IN THE MASORETIC TEXT. FOR EXAMPLE, THE SAMARITAN TEXT IN THE BOOK OF EXODUS ON MULTIPLE OCCASIONS RECORDS MOSES REPEATING TO PHARAOH EXACTLY WHAT BOTH THE SAMARITAN AND MASORETIC RECORD GOD INSTRUCTING MOSES TO TELL HIM. THE RESULT IS REPETITIOUS, BUT THE SAMARITAN MAKES IT CLEAR THAT MOSES SPOKE EXACTLY AS GOD COMMANDED HIM. IN ADDITION TO THESE SUBSTANTIAL TEXTUAL EXPANSIONS, THE SAMARITAN PENTATEUCH ON NUMEROUS OCCASIONS ADDS SUBJECTS, PREPOSITIONS, PARTICLES, APPOSITIVES, AND THE REPETITION OF WORDS AND PHRASES WITHIN A SINGLE PASSAGE TO CLARIFY THE MEANING OF THE TEXT.**

**THOU SHALL SET UP THESE STONES, WHICH I COMMAND YOU TODAY, ON MOUNT GERIZIM (.0001% IS 1.2 POSITIONS, ,001% IS 12 POSITIONS, .01% IS 120 POSITIONS, 1% IS 1,200 POSITIONS, 10% IS 12,000 POSITIONS, 100% IS 120,000 POSITIONS TO 1,200,000 MILLION POSITIONS IN REPENTANCE ONCE & .0001% IS 1,200.000 MILLION POSITIONS, .001% IS 12,000,000 MILLION POSITIONS, .01% IS 120,000,000 MILLION POSITIONS, 1% IS 1,200,000,000 BILLION POSITIONS, 10% IS 12,000,000,000 BILLION POSITIONS & 100% IS 120,000,000,000 BILLION POSITIONS TO 1,200,000,000,000 TRILLION POSITIONS IN RELENTING ONCE**

**AMONG THE MOST NOTABLE SEMANTIC DIFFERENCES ARE THOSE RELATED TO THE SAMARITAN PLACE OF WORSHIP ON MOUNT GERIZIM. THE SAMARITAN VERSION OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS COMMANDS THAT AN ALTAR BE BUILT ON MOUNT GERIZIM ON WHICH ALL SACRIFICES SHOULD BE OFFERED. THE SAMARITAN PENTATEUCH CONTAINS THIS TEXT AT EXODUS 20:17: AND WHEN IT SO HAPPENS THAT LORD GOD BRINGS YOU TO THE LAND OF CANAAN, WHICH YOU ARE COMING TO POSSESS, YOU SHALL SET UP THERE FOR YOU GREAT STONES AND PLASTER THEM WITH PLASTER AND YOU WRITE ON THE STONES ALL WORDS OF THIS LAW. AND IT BECOMES FOR YOU THAT ACROSS THE JORDAN YOU SHALL RAISE THESE STONES, WHICH I COMMAND YOU TODAY, IN MOUNTAIN GERIZIM. AND YOU BUILD THERE THE ALTAR TO THE LORD GOD OF YOU. ALTAR OF STONES. NOT YOU SHALL WAVE ON THEM IRON. WITH WHOLE STONES YOU SHALL BUILD THE ALTAR TO LORD GOD OF YOU. AND YOU BRING ON IT ASCEND OFFERINGS TO LORD GOD OF YOU, AND YOU SACRIFICE PEACE OFFERINGS, AND YOU EAT THERE AND YOU REJOICE BEFORE THE FACE OF THE LORD GOD OF YOU. THE MOUNTAIN THIS IS ACROSS THE JORDAN BEHIND THE WAY OF THE RISING OF THE SUN, IN THE LAND OF CANAAN WHO IS DWELLING IN THE DESERT BEFORE THE GALGAL, BESIDE ALVIN-MARA, BEFORE SECHEM. THIS COMMANDMENT IS ABSENT FROM THE CORRESPONDING TEXT OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS IN THE MASORETIC. THE SAMARITAN PENTATEUCH'S INCLUSION OF THE GERIZIM VARIATION WITHIN THE TEN COMMANDMENTS PLACES ADDITIONAL EMPHASIS ON THE DIVINE SANCTION GIVEN TO THAT COMMUNITY'S PLACE OF WORSHIP. THIS VARIATION HAS SIMILARITIES TO DEUTERONOMY 27:2-8 AND IS SUPPORTED BY CHANGES TO THE VERBAL TENSE WITHIN THE SAMARITAN TEXT OF DEUTERONOMY INDICATING THAT GOD HAS ALREADY CHOSEN THIS PLACE. THE FUTURE TENSE ("WILL CHOOSE") IS USED IN THE MASORETIC. AND WHEREAS DEUTERONOMY 27:4 IN THE MASORETIC COMMANDS AN ALTAR TO BE CONSTRUCTED ON MOUNT EBAL, THE SAMARITAN TEXTS HAS MOUNT GERIZIM (BOTH CAN BE CORRECT). IN (EXODUS 23:19) SAMARITAN PENTATEUCH CONTAINS THE FOLLOWING PASSAGE AFTER THE PROHIBITION: [כי עשה זאת כזבח שכח ועברה היא לאלהי יעקב] WHICH ROUGHLY TRANSLATES "THAT ONE DOING THIS AS SACRIFICE FORGETS AND ENRAGES GOD OF JACOB". IN (NUMBERS 4:14) SAMARITAN PENTATEUCH CONTAINS THE FOLLOWING PASSAGE: [ולקחו בגד ארגמן וכסו את הכיור ואת כנו ונתנו אתם אל מכסה עור תחש ונתנו על המוט] WHICH ROUGHLY TRANSLATES "AND THEY WILL TAKE A PURPLE COVERING AND COVER THE LAVER AND HIS FOOT, AND THEY COVER IT IN TACHASH SKINS, AND THEY PUT IT UPON A BAR." SEVERAL OTHER TYPES OF DIFFERENCES ARE FOUND. THE SAMARITAN PENTATEUCH USES LESS ANTHROPOMORPHIC LANGUAGE IN DESCRIPTIONS OF GOD WITH INTERMEDIARIES PERFORMING ACTIONS THE MASORETIC VERSION ATTRIBUTES DIRECTLY TO GOD. WHERE THE MASORETIC DESCRIBES STEPHEN YAHWEH AS A "MAN OF WAR" (EXODUS 15:3), THE SAMARITAN HAS "HERO OF WAR", A PHRASE APPLIED TO SPIRITUAL BEINGS, AND IN NUMBERS 23:4, THE SAMARITAN READING "THE ANGEL OF GOD FOUND BALAAM" CONTRASTS WITH THE MASORETIC "AND GOD MET BALAAM." A FEW DIFFERENCES REFLECT SAMARITAN NOTIONS OF PROPRIETY, SUCH AS THE ALTERATION IN GENESIS 50:23 OF THE MASORETIC "UPON THE KNEES OF JOSEPH" TO "IN THE DAYS OF JOSEPH." SAMARITAN SCRIBES, WHO INTERPRETED THIS VERSE LITERALLY, FOUND IT IMPROPER THAT THE MOTHER OF JOSEPH'S GRANDCHILDREN WOULD GIVE BIRTH ON HIS KNEES. DISTINCTIVE VARIANTS IN THE SAMARITAN ARE ALSO FOUND IN CERTAIN LEGAL TEXTS WHERE SAMARITAN PRACTICE VARIES FROM THAT PRESCRIBED WITHIN RABBINICAL HALACHIC TEXTS. IN ABOUT THIRTY-FOUR INSTANCES, THE SAMARITAN PENTATEUCH IMPORTS TEXT FROM PARALLEL OR SYNOPTIC PASSAGES IN OTHER PARTS OF THE PENTATEUCH. THESE TEXTUAL EXPANSIONS RECORD CONVERSATIONS AND EVENTS THAT ARE IMPLIED OR PRESUPPOSED BY OTHER PARTS OF THE NARRATIVE, BUT NOT EXPLICITLY RECORDED IN THE MASORETIC TEXT. FOR EXAMPLE, THE SAMARITAN TEXT IN THE BOOK OF EXODUS ON MULTIPLE OCCASIONS RECORDS MOSES REPEATING TO PHARAOH EXACTLY WHAT BOTH THE SAMARITAN AND MASORETIC RECORD GOD INSTRUCTING MOSES TO TELL HIM. THE RESULT IS REPETITIOUS, BUT THE SAMARITAN MAKES IT CLEAR THAT MOSES SPOKE EXACTLY AS GOD COMMANDED HIM. IN ADDITION TO THESE SUBSTANTIAL TEXTUAL EXPANSIONS, THE SAMARITAN PENTATEUCH ON NUMEROUS OCCASIONS ADDS SUBJECTS, PREPOSITIONS, PARTICLES, APPOSITIVES, AND THE REPETITION OF WORDS AND PHRASES WITHIN A SINGLE PASSAGE TO CLARIFY THE MEANING OF THE TEXT.**

**THE BOOK OF THE COVENANT:**

**THE BOOK OF THE COVENANT IS OFTEN RECOGNIZED AS THE BOOK OR CODE OF THE COVENANT IN EXODUS 20:22-23:19. THE TITLE IS SUGGESTED BY EXODUS 24:7. THIS WAS ALSO GIVEN DURING THE SAME TIME OF THE TEN WORDS, AND THE CONTEXT MAKES IT CLEAR THAT THE WRITERS OF EXODUS SAW THIS COLLECTION OF LAWS AS AN ADDED ELABORATION OF THE DECALOGUE. YET ABOUT HALF OF THEM FIND GOOD PARALLELS IN NON-BIBLICAL ACCOUNTS, SO THAT SCHOLARS HAVE DEEMED THE NECESSARY BORROWING FROM CANAANITE SOURCES OR ON COMMON NEAR-EASTERN LEGAL TRADITIONS, WHICH GIVES CREDIBILITY TO THESE PARALLELS. THERE HAVE BEEN NO MECHANICAL BORROWING, FOR THE LAWS WITHIN THE BOOK OF THE COVENANT ARE ALL CREDIBLE PROOFS.**

**LEVITICUS & THE HOLINESS CODE:**

**THE BIBLICAL SOURCE SPLITS TO BOOK INTO TWO PARTS: FIRST, TO THE PRIESTLY [SERGEANT’S, LIEUTENANT’S OR CHIEF OF POLICE’S] SOURCE IN LEVITICUS CHAPTERS 1-16 & SECONDLY, TO THE HOLINESS CODE IN LEVITICUS CHAPTERS 17-27. THE THEME OF HOLINESS RUNS THROUGHOUT THE BOOK & ITS MOTTO IS “BE HOLY BECAUSE I, THE LORD YOUR GOD [FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD], AM HOLY.” LIKE THE BOOK OF THE COVENANT, THIS HOLINESS BOOK ALSO SETS THEIR PROMULGATIONS AS IN THE SAME SENSE OF PRIORITIES. IT BEGINS WITH SACRIFICE IN LEVITICUS CHAPTERS 1-7, BY SHOWING THE ONLY ACCEPTABLE WAY TO WORSHIP THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD, THEN A SHORT NARRATIVE INTERLUDE, IT PROCEEDS WITH A LONG SECTION ON IMPEDIMENTS TO WORSHIP IN LEVITICUS CHAPTERS 8-10, THEN UNCLEAN CONDITIONS & MORE LAWS ON WORSHIP IN LEVITICUS CHAPTERS 11-17, BEFORE IT REACHES ITS SECTION OF CIVIL & CRIMINAL OFFENSES IN LEVITICUS CHAPTERS 18-25. THE ACME CLIMAX IS “[AGAPE] LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF” IN LEVITICUS 19:18. ONCE AGAIN, DUTIES TOWARDS GOD, PRECEDES DUTIES TO ONE’S NEIGHBOR.**

**DEUTERONOMY THE SECOND LAW:**

**DEUTERONOMY IS GREEK FOR ‘SECOND LAW.’ THE LEGAL MATERIAL IN THIS COLLECTION BOOK IS DIFFERENT FROM THE PRECEDING COLLECTIONS IN DEUTERONOMY CHAPTERS 12-25. DEUTERONOMY IS A SERIES OF SERMONS BY THE LORD MOSES ABOUT THE FATHER STEPHEN’S LAW, URGING ALL TO KEEP THE LAW IF THEY WANT TO SURVIVE & PROSPER IN THE LAND THAT ARE ABOUT TO ENTER. MOST LIKELY, LIKE THE PRECEDING COLLECTIONS, DEUTERONOMY IS ALSO GIVEN BY THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD TO THE LORD MOSES, BUT CONCERNS AN EXTENDED REFLECTION BY THE LORD MOSES ON THE LAW AS AN ATTEMPT BY HIM TO PERSUADE THE NATION AS A WHOLE TO KEEP THE LAWS. THE STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK OWES MUCH TO THE NEAR EASTERN DOCUMENT FORM EXEMPLIFIED IN TREATIES, LAW CODES & KUDURRU STONES. THE LAW CODES ARE CLOSELY CORRESPONDED IN DEUTERONOMY CHAPTERS 12-25, TO FOLLOW THE ORDER OF THE DECALOGUE IN ITS ARRANGEMENTS OF UNIQUE LAWS. THE MAIN POINTS ARE THE 1ST COMMANDMENT ‘NO OTHER GODS’ IN CHAPTERS 12-13, THE 4TH COMMANDMENT ‘SABBATH’ = 7TH YEAR & FESTIVALS IN CHAPTERS 15-16, THE 5TH COMMANDMENT ‘PARENTS’ FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD & MOTHER VICTORIA OUR LADY = THE SUPREME AUTHORITIES IN CHAPTERS 17-18, THE 6TH COMMANDMENT ‘MURDER’ IN CHAPTERS 19-21, THE 7TH COMMANDMENT ‘ADULTERY’ IN CHAPTERS 22-23, THE 8TH COMMANDMENT ‘THEFT & PROPERTY’ IN CHAPTERS 23-24 & THE 9TH COMMANDMENT ‘FALSE WITNESS’ IN CHAPTER 25. THE CURSES FOR DISOBEDIENCE TO THE LAW & BLESSINGS FOR OBEDIENCE TO THE LAW IS IN DEUTERONOMY CHAPTERS 26-34.**

**THE HOLY BIBLICAL LAW: THE POSITIVE EFFECTS**

**BELIEF IN GOD AND OUR DUTIES TOWARD HIM**

**BELIEVING IN GOD EX 20:2, DT 5:6. UNITY OF GOD DT 6:4. SEXLESS LOVE OF GOD DT 6:5. FEAR OF GOD DT 6:13, DT 10:20. WORSHIPPING GOD EX 23:25, DT 6:13, DT 11:13, DT 13:4. CLEAVING TO GOD DT 10:20, DT 11:22. TAKING AN OATH BY GOD’S NAME DT 6:13, DT 10:20. WALKING IN GOD’S WAYS DT 10:12, DT 28:9. SANCTIFYING GOD’S NAME LE 22:32. READING THE SHEMA DT 6:7. STUDYING THE TORAH NU 15:39, DT 6:7, DT 11:19, DT 31:12. THE PHYLACTERY OF THE HEAD EX 13:9, EX 13:16, DT 6:8, DT 11:18. THE PHYLACTERY OF THE ARM EX 13:9, EX 13:16, DT 6:8, DT 11:18. THE FRINGES NU 15:38. THE MEZUZAH DT 6:9, DT 11:20. THE ASSEMBLY DURING THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES DT 31:12. A KING TO WRITE A SCROLL OF LAW DT 17:18. ACQUIRING A SCROLL OF LAW DT 31:19. GRACE AFTER MEALS DT 8:10.**

**THE SANCTUARY, PRIESTHOOD AND SACRIFICES**

**BUILDING THE SANCTUARY EX 25:8. REVERING THE SANCTUARY LE 19:30, LE 26:2. GUARDING THE SANCTUARY NU 18:4. LEVITICAL SERVICES IN THE SANCTUARY NU 18:23. ABLUTIONS OF THE PRIESTS EX 30:19. PRIESTS KINDLING THE LAMPS EX 27:21, LE 24:3. PRIESTS BLESSING ISRAEL NU 6:23. THE SHOWBREAD EX 25:30. BURNING THE INCENSE EX 30:7. THE PERPETUAL FIRE ON THE ALTAR LE 6:19–20. REMOVING THE ASHES FROM THE ALTAR LE 6:17. REMOVING THE UNCLEAN NU 5:2, DT 23:10. HONORING THE PRIESTS LE 21:8. THE PRIESTLY GARMENTS EX 28:2, EX 29:8. THE PRIESTS BEARING THE ARK NU 7:9. THE OIL OF ANOINTMENT EX 30:31. PRIESTS MINISTERING IN COURSES DT 18:6–8. PRIESTS DEFILING THEMSELVES FOR DECEASED RELATIVES LE 21:2–3. THE HIGH PRIEST MARRYING ONLY A VIRGIN LE 21:13. THE DAILY BURNT-OFFERING NU 28:3. THE HIGH PRIEST’S DAILY MEAL-OFFERING LE 6:20. THE SABBATH ADDITIONAL OFFERING NU 28:9. THE NEW MOON ADDITIONAL OFFERING NU 28:11. THE PASSOVER ADDITIONAL OFFERING LE 23:36. THE MEAL-OFFERING OF THE NEW BARLEY LE 2:14, LE 23:10. THE SHEVUOTH ADDITIONAL OFFERING NU 28:26–27. THE BRINGING OF THE TWO LOAVES ON SHEVUOTH LE 23:17. THE NEW YEAR ADDITIONAL OFFERING NU 29:1–2. THE TENTH DAY OF TISHRI ADDITIONAL OFFERING NU 29:7–8. THE SERVICE OF THE DAY OF ATONEMENT LE 16:1–34. THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES ADDITIONAL OFFERING NU 29:13. THE SHEMINI ATZERETH ADDITIONAL OFFERING NU 29:35–39. THE THREE ANNUAL PILGRIMAGES EX 23:14. APPEARING BEFORE THE LORD DURING FESTIVALS EX 34:23, DT 16:16. REJOICING ON THE FESTIVALS DT 16:14, DT 27:7. SLAUGHTERING THE PASSOVER-OFFERING EX 12:6. EATING THE PASSOVER-OFFERING EX 12:8. SLAUGHTERING THE SECOND PASSOVER-OFFERING NU 9:11. EATING THE SECOND PASSOVER-OFFERING NU 9:11. BLOWING THE TRUMPETS IN THE SANCTUARY NU 10:10. OFFERING CATTLE OF A MINIMUM AGE EX 22:30, LE 22:27. OFFERING ONLY UNBLEMISHED SACRIFICES LE 22:21. SALT BEING BROUGHT WITH EVERY OFFERING LE 2:13. THE BURNT-OFFERING LE 1:2–3. THE SIN-OFFERING LE 6:25, LE 7:3–7. THE GUILT-OFFERING LE 7:1, LE 7:3–7. THE PEACE-OFFERING LE 3:1, LE 7:11–12. THE MEAL-OFFERING OF THE NEW BARLEY LE 2:1, LE 2:5, LE 2:7. OFFERING OF A COURT THAT HAS ERRED LE 4:13. THE FIXED SIN-OFFERING LE 4:27, LE 5:1. THE SUSPENSIVE GUILT-OFFERING LE 5:17–18. THE UNCONDITIONAL GUILT-OFFERING LE 5:15, LE 19:20–21. THE OFFERING OF HIGHER OR LOWER VALUE LE 5:1–11. MAKING CONFESSION NU 5:6–7. OFFERING BROUGHT BY A ZAV LE 15:13–14. OFFERING BROUGHT BY A ZAVAH LE 15:28–29. THE OFFERING AFTER CHILDBIRTH LE 12:6. OFFERING BROUGHT BY A LEPER LE 14:10. THE TITHE OF CATTLE LE 27:32. SANCTIFYING THE FIRST-BORN EX 13:2, EX 13:13. REDEEMING THE FIRST-BORN EX 12:28, NU 18:15. REDEEMING THE FIRSTLING OF AN ASS EX 34:20. BREAKING THE NECK OF THE FIRSTLING OF AN ASS EX 13:13, EX 34:20. BRINGING DUE OFFERINGS ON THE FIRST FESTIVAL DT 12:5–6. ALL OFFERINGS TO BE BROUGHT TO THE SANCTUARY DT 12:14. ALL OFFERINGS DUE FROM OUTSIDE THE LAND OF ISRAEL TO BE BROUGHT TO THE SANCTUARY DT 12:26. REDEEMING BLEMISHED OFFERINGS DT 12:15. HOLINESS OF A SUBSTITUTED OFFERING LE 27:10, LE 27:33. THE PRIESTS EATING THE RESIDUE OF THE MEAL-OFFERINGS LE 6:23. THE PRIESTS EATING THE MEAT OF CONSECRATED OFFERINGS EX 29:33. CONSECRATED OFFERINGS THAT HAVE BECOME UNCLEAN TO BE BURNT LE 7:19. THE REMNANT OF CONSECRATED OFFERINGS TO BE BURNT EX 12:10, LE 7:17. THE NAZIRITE TO LET HIS HAIR GROW NU 6:5. NAZIRITE OBLIGATIONS ON COMPLETION OF VOW NU 6:9, NU 6:18. ALL ORAL COMMITMENTS TO BE FULFILLED DT 23:22. REVOCATION OF VOWS NU 30:1–15.**

**THE SOURCES OF UNCLEANNESS AND THE MODES OF PURIFICATION**

**DEFILEMENT THROUGH THE CARCASSES OF ANIMALS LE 11:34. DEFILEMENT THROUGH THE CARCASSES OF CERTAIN CREEPING CREATURES LE 11:29–30. DEFILEMENT OF FOOD AND DRINK LE 11:34. THE MENSTRUANT LE 15:19–24. AFTER CHILDBIRTH LE 12:2–5. THE LEPER LE 13:3. GARMENTS CONTAMINATED BY LEPROSY LE 13:47–59. A LEPROUS HOUSE LE 13:47–59. THE ZAV IN LE 15:2. EMISSION OF SEMEN LE 15:16–18. THE ZAVAH IN LE 15:19, LE 15:28. UNCLEANNESS OF A CORPSE NU 19:14–16. LAW OF THE WATER OF SPRINKLING NU 19:9–21. IMMERSING IN A RITUAL BATH LE 15:16. CLEANSING FROM LEPROSY LE 14:1–7. A LEPER TO SHAVE HIS HEAD LE 14:9. THE LEPER TO BE MADE DISTINGUISHABLE LE 13:45. THE ASHES OF THE RED HEIFER NU 19:9.**

**GIFTS TO THE TEMPLE, THE POOR, THE PRIESTS AND LEVITES; THE SABBATICAL YEAR AND THE JUBILEE; THE PREPARATION OF FOOD**

**VALUATION OF A PERSON LE 27:2–8. VALUATION OF BEASTS LE 27:11–12. VALUATION OF HOUSES LE 27:14. VALUATION OF FIELDS LE 27:16, LE 27:22. RESTITUTION FOR SACRILEGE LE 5:16, LE 22:14. THE FRUITS OF FOURTH-YEAR PLANTINGS LE 19:24. PEAH FOR THE POOR LE 19:9. GLEANINGS FOR THE POOR LE 23:22. THE FORGOTTEN SHEAF FOR THE POOR LE 19:9, DT 24:19. DEFECTIVE GRAPE-CLUSTERS FOR THE POOR LE 19:10. GRAPE-GLEANINGS FOR THE POOR LE 19:10. FIRST-FRUITS TO BE BROUGHT TO THE SANCTUARY EX 23:19. THE GREAT HEAVE-OFFERING DT 18:4. THE FIRST TITHE LE 27:30 , NU 18:24. THE SECOND TITHE DT 14:22. THE LEVITES’ TITHE FOR THE PRIESTS NU 18:26. THE POOR MAN’S TITHE DT 14:28. THE AVOWAL OF THE TITHE DT 26:13. RECITAL ON BRINGING THE FIRST-FRUITS DT 26:5. THE DOUGH-OFFERING NU 15:20. RENOUNCING AS OWNERLESS PRODUCE OF THE SABBATICAL YEAR EX 23:11. RESTING THE LAND DURING THE SABBATICAL YEAR EX 34:21, LE 25:4. SANCTIFYING THE JUBILEE YEAR LE 25:10. BLOWING THE SHOFAR ON THE TENTH DAY OF TISHRI IN THE JUBILEE YEAR LE 25:9. REVERSION OF LAND IN THE JUBILEE YEAR LE 25:24. REDEMPTION OF PROPERTY IN A WALLED CITY LE 25:29. COUNTING THE YEARS TO THE JUBILEE LE 25:8. CANCELLING CLAIMS IN THE SABBATICAL YEAR DT 15:2–3. EXACTING DEBTS FROM IDOLATERS DT 15:3. THE PRIEST’S DUE IN THE SLAUGHTER OF EVERY CLEAN ANIMAL DT 18:3. THE FIRST OF THE FLEECE TO BE GIVEN TO THE PRIEST DT 18:4. DEVOTED THINGS LE 27:21, LE 27:28. SHECHITAH DT 12:21. COVERING THE BLOOD OF SLAIN BIRDS AND ANIMALS LE 17:13. RELEASING A DAM WHEN TAKING ITS NEST DT 22:7. SEARCHING FOR PRESCRIBED TOKENS IN CATTLE AND ANIMALS LE 11:2. SEARCHING FOR THE PRESCRIBED TOKENS IN BIRDS DT 14:11. SEARCHING FOR THE PRESCRIBED TOKENS IN GRASSHOPPERS LE 11:22. SEARCHING FOR THE PRESCRIBED TOKENS IN FISHES LE 11:9, DT 14:9.**

**THE HOLY DAYS AND THE OBSERVANCES CONNECTED WITH THEM**

**DETERMINING THE NEW MOON EX 12:2, DT 16:1. RESTING ON THE SABBATH EX 34:21, LE 23:3. PROCLAIMING THE SANCTITY OF THE SABBATH EX 20:8, DT 5:12. REMOVAL OF LEAVEN EX 12:15. RECOUNTING THE DEPARTURE FROM EGYPT EX 13:8. UNLEAVENED BREAD TO BE EATEN ON THE EVE OF THE FIFTEENTH DAY OF NISAN EX 12:18. RESTING ON THE FIRST DAY OF PESACH LE 23:7. RESTING ON THE SEVENTH DAY OF PESACH LE 23:8. COUNTING THE OMER LE 23:15. RESTING ON SHEVUOTH LE 23:21. RESTING ON ROSH HASHANAH LE 23:24. FASTING ON YOM KIPPUR LE 16:29, LE 23:32. RESTING ON YOM KIPPUR LE 16:31. RESTING ON THE FIRST DAY OF SUKKOTH LE 23:35. RESTING ON SHEMINI ATZERETH LE 23:36. DWELLING IN A BOOTH DURING SUKKOTH LE 23:42. TAKING A LULAB ON SUKKOTH LE 23:40. HEARING THE SHOFAR ON ROSH HASHANAH NU 29:1. GIVING HALF A SHEKEL ANNUALLY EX 30:12–14.**

**THE PROPER FUNCTIONING OF THE JEWISH STATE**

**HEEDING THE PROPHETS DT 18:15. APPOINTING A KING DT 17:15. OBEYING THE GREAT COURT DT 17:11. ABIDING BY A MAJORITY DECISION EX 23:2. APPOINTING JUDGES AND OFFICERS OF THE COURT DT 16:18. TREATING LITIGANTS EQUALLY BEFORE THE LAW LE 19:15. TESTIFYING IN COURT LE 5:1. INQUIRING INTO THE TESTIMONY OF WITNESSES LE 5:6–12. CONDEMNING WITNESSES WHO TESTIFY FALSELY DT 19:19. EGLAH ARUFAH DT 21:4. ESTABLISHING SIX CITIES OF REFUGE DT 19:3. ASSIGNING CITIES TO THE LEVITES NU 35:2. REMOVING SOURCES OF DANGER FROM OUR HABITATIONS DT 22:8. DESTROYING ALL IDOL-WORSHIP EX 34:13, DT 7:5, DT 12:2. THE LAW OF THE APOSTATE CITY DT 13:15. THE LAW OF THE SEVEN NATIONS DT 20:17. THE EXTINCTION OF AMALEK DT 25:19. REMEMBERING THE NEFARIOUS DEEDS OF AMALEK DT 25:17. THE LAW OF NON-OBLIGATORY WAR DT 20:10–11. APPOINTING A PRIEST FOR WAR DT 20:2. PREPARING A PLACE BEYOND THE CAMP DT 23:12. INCLUDING A PADDLE AMONG WAR IMPLEMENTS DT 23:13.**

**OUR DUTIES TOWARDS OUR FELLOW MEN**

**A ROBBER TO RESTORE THE STOLEN ARTICLE LE 6:11. CHARITY DT 15:11. LAVISHING GIFTS ON A HEBREW BONDMAN ON HIS FREEDOM DT 15:14. LENDING MONEY TO THE POOR EX 22:26, DT 15:8. INTEREST OR USURY DT 23:20. RESTORING A PLEDGE TO A NEEDY OWNER DT 24:13. PAYING WAGES ON TIME DT 24:15. AN EMPLOYEE TO BE ALLOWED TO EAT OF THE PRODUCE AMONG WHICH HE IS WORKING DT 23:24–25. UNLOADING A TIRED ANIMAL EX 23:5. ASSISTING THE OWNER IN LIFTING UP HIS BURDEN DT 22:4. RETURNING LOST PROPERTY TO ITS OWNER EX 23:4, DT 22:1. REBUKING THE SINNER LE 19:17. SEXLESSLY LOVING OUR NEIGHBOR LE 19:18. SEXLESSLY LOVING THE STRANGER LE 19:18. THE LAW OF WEIGHTS AND MEASURES LE 19:36. HONORING SCHOLARS AND THE AGED LE 19:32.**

**THE DUTIES ATTACHING TO FAMILY LIFE**

**HONORING PARENTS EX 20:12, DT 5:16. RESPECTING PARENTS LE 19:3. BE FRUITFUL AND MULTIPLY GE 1:28. THE LAW OF MARRIAGE DT 24:1. THE BRIDEGROOM DEVOTING HIMSELF TO HIS WIFE FOR ONE YEAR DT 24:5. THE LAW OF CIRCUMCISION GE 17:10. THE LAW OF LEVIRATE MARRIAGE DT 25:5. CHALITZAH DT 25:9. A VIOLATOR TO MARRY THE MAIDEN WHOM HE HAS VIOLATED DT 22:29. THE LAW OF THE DEFAMER OF A BRIDE DT 22:19. THE LAW OF A SEDUCER EX 22:17. THE LAW OF THE CAPTIVE WOMAN DT 21:11. THE LAW OF DIVORCE DT 24:1. THE LAW OF A SUSPECTED ADULTERESS NU 5:15.**

**THE ENFORCEMENT OF CRIMINAL LAW**

**WHIPPING TRANSGRESSORS OF CERTAIN COMMANDMENTS DT 25:2. THE LAW OF MANSLAUGHTER NU 35:25. TRANSGRESSORS OF CERTAIN COMMANDMENTS TO BE BEHEADED EX 21:20. TRANSGRESSORS OF CERTAIN COMMANDMENTS TO BE STRANGLED LE 20:10. TRANSGRESSORS OF CERTAIN COMMANDMENTS TO BE PUT TO DEATH BY BURNING LE 20:14. TRANSGRESSORS OF CERTAIN COMMANDMENTS TO BE STONED DT 22:24. THE BODIES OF CERTAIN TRANSGRESSORS TO BE HANGED AFTER EXECUTION DT 21:22. THE LAW OF BURIAL DT 21:23.**

**THE LAWS RELATING TO PROPERTY, REAL AND PERSONAL**

**THE LAW OF A HEBREW BONDMAN EX 21:2, DT 15:12. A HEBREW BONDMAID TO BE MARRIED BY HER MASTER OR HIS SON EX 21:8. REDEMPTION OF A HEBREW BONDMAID EX 21:8. THE LAW OF A CANAANITE BONDMAN EX 21:26, LE 25:46. PENALTY FOR INFLICTING INJURY EX 21:18, LE 24:19. THE LAW OF INJURIES CAUSED BY AN OX EX 21:35. THE LAW OF INJURIES CAUSED BY A PIT EX 21:33. THE LAW OF THEFT EX 22:2. THE LAW OF DAMAGE CAUSED BY A BEAST EX 22:6. THE LAW OF DAMAGE BY A FIRE EX 22:7. THE LAW OF AN UNPAID BAILEE EX 22:8. THE LAW OF A PAID BAILEE EX 22:11. THE LAW OF A BORROWER EX 22:15. THE LAW OF BUYING AND SELLING LE 25:14. THE LAW OF LITIGANTS EX 22:10. SAVING THE LIFE OF THE PURSUED DT 25:11–12. THE LAW OF INHERITANCE NU 27:8, DT 21:7.**

**THE HOLY BIBLICAL LAW: THE NEGATIVE AFFECTS**

**SEXUAL IDOLATRY AND RELATED SUBJECTS**

**BELIEVING IN OR ASCRIBING ANY DEITY TO ANY BUT HIM EX 20:3, DT 5:7. MAKING IMAGES FOR THE PURPOSE OF WORSHIP EX 20:4, EX 34:17, DT 5:8. MAKING AN IDOL FOR OTHERS TO WORSHIP EX 20:4, EX 34:17, LE 19:4, DT 5:8. MAKING FIGURES OF HUMAN BEINGS EX 20:20, EX 34:17. BOWING DOWN TO AN IDOL EX 20:5, DT 5:9. WORSHIPPING IDOLS EX 20:5, DT 5:9. HANDING OVER SOME OF OUR OFFSPRING TO THE MOLECH LE 18:21. PRACTICING THE SORCERY OF THE OB LE 19:31. PRACTICING THE SORCERY OF THE YIDDE’ONI LE 19:31. STUDYING IDOLATROUS PRACTICES LE 19:4. ERECTING A PILLAR WHICH PEOPLE WILL ASSEMBLE TO HONOR LE 26:1, DT 16:22. MAKING FIGURED STONES UPON WHICH TO PROSTRATE OURSELVES LE 26:1. PLANTING TREES WITHIN THE SANCTUARY DT 16:21. SWEARING BY AN IDOL EX 23:13. SUMMONING PEOPLE TO IDOLATRY EX 23:13. SEEKING TO PERSUADE AN ISRAELITE TO WORSHIP IDOLS DT 13:11. SEXUALLY LOVING THE PERSON WHO SEEKS TO MISLEAD HIM INTO IDOLATRY DT 13:7. RELAXING ONE’S AVERSION TO THE MISLEADER DT 13:7. SAVING THE LIFE OF THE MISLEADER DT 13:7. PLEADING FOR THE MISLEADER DT 13:7. SUPPRESSING EVIDENCE WHICH IS UNFAVORABLE TO THE MISLEADER DT 13:7. BENEFITTING FROM ORNAMENTS WHICH HAVE ADORNED AN IDOL DT 7:25. REBUILDING AN APOSTATE CITY DT 13:15. DERIVING BENEFIT FROM THE PROPERTY OF AN APOSTATE CITY DT 13:16. INCREASING OUR WEALTH FROM ANYTHING CONNECTED WITH SEXUAL IDOLATRY DT 7:26. PROPHESYING IN THE NAME OF AN IDOL DT 18:20. PROPHESYING FALSELY DT 18:20. LISTENING TO THE PROPHECY OF ONE WHO PROPHESIES IN THE NAME OF AN IDOL DT 13:2. HAVING PITY ON A FALSE PROPHET DT 18:22. ADOPTING THE HABITS AND CUSTOMS OF UNBELIEVERS LE 20:23. PRACTICING DIVINATION DT 18:10. REGULATING OUR CONDUCT BY THE STARS DT 18:10. PRACTICING THE ART OF THE SOOTHSAYER DT 18:10. PRACTICING SORCERY DT 18:10. PRACTICING THE ART OF THE CHARMER DT 18:10–11. CONSULTING A NECROMANCER WHO USES THE OB DT 18:10–11. CONSULTING A SORCERER WHO USES THE YIDO’A DT 18:10–11. SEEKING INFORMATION FROM THE DEAD DT 18:10–11. WOMEN WEARING MEN’S CLOTHES OR ADORNMENTS DT 22:5. MEN WEARING WOMEN’S CLOTHES OR ADORNMENTS DT 22:5. IMPRINTING ANY MARKS UPON OUR BODIES LE 19:28. WEARING A GARMENT OF WOOL AND LINEN DT 22:11. SHAVING THE TEMPLES OF OUR HEADS LE 19:27. SHAVING THE BEARD LE 19:27. MAKING CUTTINGS IN OUR FLESH LE 19:28, DT 14:1. SETTLING IN THE LAND OF EGYPT DT 17:16. ACCEPTING OPINIONS CONTRARY TO THOSE TAUGHT IN THE TORAH NU 15:39. MAKING A COVENANT WITH THE SEVEN NATIONS OF CANAAN EX 23:32, DT 7:2. FAILING TO OBSERVE THE LAW CONCERNING THE SEVEN NATIONS DT 20:16. SHOWING MERCY TO IDOLATERS DT 7:2. SUFFERING IDOLATERS TO DWELL IN OUR LAND EX 23:33. INTERMARRYING WITH THE HERETICS DT 7:3. INTERMARRYING WITH MALE AMMONITE OR MOABITE DT 23:2. EXCLUDING DESCENDANTS OF ESAU DT 23:6. EXCLUDING DESCENDANTS OF EGYPTIANS DT 23:6. OFFERING PEACE TO AMMON OR MOAB DT 23:5. DESTROYING FRUIT-TREES DURING A SIEGE DT 20:19. FEARING THE HERETICS IN TIME OF WAR DT 3:22, DT 7:21. FORGETTING WHAT AMALEK DID TO US DT 25:19.**

**OUR DUTIES TO GOD, THE SANCTUARY, AND THE SERVICES THEREIN**

**BLASPHEMING THE GREAT NAME EX 22:29, LE 24:16. VIOLATING A SHEBUAT BITTUI LE 19:12. VIOLATING A SHEBUAT SHAV EX 20:7, DT 5:11. PROFANING THE NAME OF GOD LE 22:32. TESTING HIS PROMISES AND WARNINGS DT 6:16. BREAKING DOWN HOUSES OF WORSHIP DT 12:2–4. LEAVING THE BODY OF A CRIMINAL HANGING OVERNIGHT AFTER EXECUTION DT 21:23. INTERRUPTING THE WATCH OVER THE SANCTUARY NU 18:5. THE HIGH PRIEST ENTERING THE SANCTUARY AT ANY TIME BUT THE PRESCRIBED TIME LE 16:2. A PRIEST WITH A BLEMISH ENTERING ANY PART OF THE SANCTUARY LE 21:23. A PRIEST WITH A BLEMISH MINISTERING IN THE SANCTUARY LE 21:17. A PRIEST WITH A TEMPORARY BLEMISH MINISTERING IN THE SANCTUARY LE 21:18. THE LEVITES AND PRIESTS PERFORMING EACH OTHER’S ALLOTTED SERVICES NU 18:3. ENTERING THE SANCTUARY OR GIVING A DECISION ON ANY LAW OF THE TORAH WHILST INTOXICATED LE 10:8–11. A ZAR MINISTERING IN THE SANCTUARY NU 18:4. AN UNCLEAN PRIEST MINISTERING IN THE SANCTUARY LE 22:2. A PRIEST WHO IS A TEVUL YOM MINISTERING IN THE SANCTUARY LE 21:6. ANY UNCLEAN PERSON ENTERING ANY PART OF THE SANCTUARY NU 5:3. ANY UNCLEAN PERSON ENTERING THE CAMP OF THE LEVITES DT 23:9. BUILDING AN ALTAR OF STONES WHICH HAVE BEEN TOUCHED BY IRON EX 20:25. ASCENDING THE ALTAR BY STEPS EX 20:26. EXTINGUISHING THE ALTAR FIRE LE 6:20. OFFERING ANY SACRIFICE WHATEVER ON THE GOLDEN ALTAR EX 30:9. MAKING OIL LIKE THE OIL OF ANOINTMENT EX 30:32. ANOINTING ANY ONE EXCEPT THE HIGH PRIESTS AND KINGS WITH THE OIL OF ANOINTMENT PREPARED BY MOSES EX 30:32. MAKING INCENSE LIKE THAT USED IN THE SANCTUARY EX 30:37. REMOVING THE STAVES FROM THEIR RINGS IN THE ARK EX 25:15. REMOVING THE BREASTPLATE OF JUDGMENT FROM THE HIGH EPHOD EX 28:28, EX 39:21. TEARING ANY OF THE EDGES OF THE HIGH PRIEST’S ROBE EX 28:32, EX 39:23.**

**SACRIFICES, PRIESTLY GIFTS, PRIESTS, LEVITES, AND RELATED SUBJECTS**

**OFFERING ANY SACRIFICE OUTSIDE THE SANCTUARY COURT DT 12:13–14. SLAUGHTERING ANY OF THE HOLY OFFERINGS OUTSIDE THE SANCTUARY COURT LE 17:3–4. DEDICATING BLEMISHED BEASTS TO BE OFFERED UPON THE ALTAR LE 22:20. SLAUGHTERING BLEMISHED BEASTS FOR SACRIFICE LE 22:22. DASHING THE BLOOD OF BLEMISHED BEASTS UPON THE ALTAR LE 22:24. BURNING THE SACRIFICIAL PORTIONS OF A BLEMISHED BEAST UPON THE ALTAR LE 22:22. SACRIFICING A BEAST WITH TEMPORARY BLEMISH DT 17:1. OFFERING BLEMISHED SACRIFICES OF A GENTILE LE 22:25. CAUSING AN OFFERING TO BECOME BLEMISHED LE 22:21. OFFERING LEAVEN OR HONEY UPON THE ALTAR LE 2:11. OFFERING A SACRIFICE WITHOUT SALT LE 2:13. OFFERING ON THE ALTAR THE HIRE OF A HARLOT OR THE PRICE OF A DOG DT 23:17. SLAUGHTERING THE MOTHER AND HER YOUNG ON THE SAME DAY LE 22:28. PUTTING OLIVE OIL ON THE MEAL-OFFERING OF A SINNER LE 5:11. BRINGING FRANKINCENSE WITH THE MEAL-OFFERING OF A SINNER LE 5:11. MINGLING OLIVE OIL WITH THE MEAL-OFFERING OF A SUSPECTED ADULTERESS NU 5:15. PUTTING FRANKINCENSE ON THE MEAL-OFFERING OF A SUSPECTED ADULTERESS NU 5:15. CHANGING A BEAST THAT HAS BEEN CONSECRATED AS AN OFFERING LE 27:10. CHANGING ONE HOLY OFFERING FOR ANOTHER LE 27:26. REDEEMING THE FIRSTLING OF A CLEAN BEAST NU 18:17. SELLING THE TITHE OF CATTLE LE 27:33. SELLING DEVOTED PROPERTY LE 27:28. REDEEMING DEVOTED LAND WITHOUT ANY SPECIFIC STATEMENT OF PURPOSE LE 27:28. SEVERING THE HEAD OF THE BIRD OF A SIN-OFFERING DURING MELIKAH LE 5:8. DOING ANY WORK WITH A DEDICATED BEAST DT 15:19. SHEARING A DEDICATED BEAST DT 15:19. SLAUGHTERING THE PASSOVER OFFERING WHILE LEAVENED BREAD REMAINS IN OUR POSSESSION EX 34:25. LEAVING THE SACRIFICIAL PORTIONS OF THE PASSOVER OFFERING OVERNIGHT EX 23:18. ALLOWING ANY OF THE MEAT OF THE PASSOVER OFFERING TO REMAIN UNTIL MORNING EX 12:10. ALLOWING ANY OF THE MEAT OF THE FESTIVAL OFFERING OF THE FOURTEENTH OF NISAN TO REMAIN UNTIL THE THIRD DAY DT 16:4. ALLOWING ANY OF THE MEAT OF THE SECOND PASSOVER OFFERING TO REMAIN UNTIL MORNING NU 9:12. ALLOWING ANY OF THE MEAT OF THE THANK-OFFERING TO REMAIN UNTIL MORNING LE 22:30. BREAKING ANY OF THE BONES OF THE PASSOVER OFFERING EX 12:46. BREAKING ANY OF THE BONES OF THE SECOND PASSOVER OFFERING NU 9:12. REMOVING THE PASSOVER OFFERING FROM WHERE IT IS EATEN EX 12:46. BAKING THE RESIDUE OF A MEAL-OFFERING WITH LEAVEN LE 6:24. EATING THE PASSOVER OFFERING BOILED OR RAW EX 12:9. ALLOWING A GER TOSHAB TO EAT THE PASSOVER OFFERING EX 12:45. AN UNCIRCUMCISED PERSON EATING THE PASSOVER OFFERING EX 12:48. ALLOWING AN APOSTATE ISRAELITE TO EAT THE PASSOVER OFFERING EX 12:43. AN UNCLEAN PERSON EATING HALLOWED FOOD LE 7:20. EATING MEAT OF CONSECRATED OFFERINGS WHICH HAVE BECOME UNCLEAN LE 7:19. EATING NOTHAR LE 19:6–8. EATING PIGGUL LE 7:18. A ZAR EATING TERUMAH LE 22:10. A PRIEST’S TENANT OR HIRED SERVANT EATING TERUMAH LE 22:10. AN UNCIRCUMCISED PRIEST EATING TERUMAH LE 22:10. AN UNCLEAN PRIEST EATING TERUMAH LE 22:4. A CHALALAH EATING HOLY FOOD LE 22:12. EATING THE MEAL-OFFERING OF A PRIEST LE 6:30. EATING MEAT OF SIN-OFFERINGS WHOSE BLOOD HAS BEEN BROUGHT WITHIN THE SANCTUARY LE 6:30. EATING INVALIDATED CONSECRATED OFFERINGS DT 14:3. EATING THE UNREDEEMED SECOND TITHE OF CORN OUTSIDE JERUSALEM DT 12:17. CONSUMING THE UNREDEEMED SECOND TITHE OF WINE OUTSIDE JERUSALEM DT 12:17. CONSUMING THE UNREDEEMED SECOND TITHE OF OIL OUTSIDE JERUSALEM DT 12:17. EATING AN UNBLEMISHED FIRSTLING OUTSIDE JERUSALEM DT 12:17. EATING THE SIN-OFFERING AND THE GUILT-OFFERING OUTSIDE THE SANCTUARY COURT DT 12:17. EATING THE MEAT OF A BURNT-OFFERING DT 12:17. EATING LESSER HOLY OFFERINGS BEFORE DASHING THEIR BLOOD ON THE ALTAR DT 12:17. A PRIEST EATING FIRST-FRUITS OUTSIDE JERUSALEM DT 12:17. A ZAR EATING THE MOST HOLY OFFERINGS EX 29:33. EATING AN UNREDEEMED UNCLEAN SECOND TITHE, EVEN IN JERUSALEM DT 26:14. EATING THE SECOND TITHE DURING MOURNING DT 26:14. SPENDING THE REDEMPTION MONEY OF THE SECOND TITHE EXCEPT ON FOOD AND DRINK DT 26:14. EATING TEVEL LE 22:15. ALTERING THE PRESCRIBED ORDER OF HARVEST TITHING EX 22:30. DELAYING PAYMENT OF VOWS DT 23:20. APPEARING ON A FESTIVAL WITHOUT A SACRIFICE EX 23:15. INFRINGING ANY ORAL OBLIGATION, EVEN IF UNDERTAKEN WITHOUT AN OATH NU 30:1. A PRIEST MARRYING A ZONAH LE 21:7. A PRIEST MARRYING A CHALALAH LE 21:7. A PRIEST MARRYING A DIVORCED WOMAN LE 26:7. A HIGH PRIEST MARRYING A WIDOW LE 26:14. A HIGH PRIEST HAVING INTERCOURSE WITH A WIDOW LE 21:15. PRIESTS WITH DISHEVELED HAIR ENTERING THE SANCTUARY LE 10:6. PRIESTS WEARING RENT GARMENTS ENTERING THE SANCTUARY LE 10:6. MINISTERING PRIESTS LEAVING THE SANCTUARY LE 10:7. A COMMON PRIEST DEFILING HIMSELF FOR ANY DEAD PERSON EXCEPT THOSE PRESCRIBED IN SCRIPTURE LE 21:1. A HIGH PRIEST BEING UNDER ONE ROOF WITH A DEAD BODY LE 21:11. A HIGH PRIEST DEFILING HIMSELF FOR ANY DEAD PERSON LE 21:11. LEVITES ACQUIRING A PORTION OF THE LAND OF ISRAEL DT 18:1. LEVITES SHARING IN THE SPOIL ON THE CONQUEST OF THE LAND OF ISRAEL DT 18:1. TEARING OUT OUR HAIR FOR THE DEAD LE 21:5.**

**PROHIBITIONS AFFECTING FOOD**

**EATING ANY UNCLEAN ANIMAL LE 11:4, LE 11:4–6, DT 14:7. EATING ANY UNCLEAN FISH LE 11:11. EATING ANY UNCLEAN FOWL LE 11:13, DT 14:12. EATING ANY SWARMING WINGED INSECT LE 11:20, DT 14:19. EATING ANYTHING WHICH SWARMS UPON THE EARTH LE 11:41. EATING ANY CREEPING THING THAT BREEDS IN DECAYED MATTER LE 11:44. EATING LIVING CREATURES THAT BREED IN SEEDS OR FRUIT LE 11:42. EATING ANY SWARMING THING LE 11:43. EATING NEVELAH DT 14:21. EATING TEREFAH EX 22:31. EATING A LIMB OF A LIVING CREATURE DT 12:23. EATING GID HA-NASHEH GE 32:31. EATING BLOOD LE 7:26. EATING THE FAT OF A CLEAN ANIMAL LE 7:23. COOKING MEAT IN MILK EX 23:19. EATING MEAT COOKED IN MILK EX 34:26. EATING THE FLESH OF A STONED OX EX 21:28. EATING BREAD MADE FROM THE GRAIN OF THE NEW CROP LE 23:14. EATING ROASTED GRAIN OF THE NEW CROP LE 23:14. EATING FRESH EARS OF GRAIN LE 23:14. EATING ORLAH LE 19:23. EATING KILAI HA-KEREM DT 22:9. DRINKING YAIN NESECH DT 32:38. EATING AND DRINKING TO EXCESS LE 19:26. EATING ON YOM KIPPUR LE 23:29. EATING CHAMETZ DURING PESACH EX 13:3. EATING ANYTHING CONTAINING CHAMETZ DURING PESACH EX 13:3, EX 13:7. EATING CHAMETZ AFTER THE MIDDLE OF THE FOURTEENTH OF NISAN DT 16:3. CHAMETZ BEING SEEN IN OUR HABITATIONS DURING PESACH EX 13:7. POSSESSING CHAMETZ DURING PESACH EX 12:19. A NAZIRITE DRINKING WINE NU 6:3. A NAZIRITE EATING FRESH GRAPES NU 6:3. A NAZIRITE EATING DRIED GRAPES NU 6:3. A NAZIRITE EATING THE KERNELS OF GRAPES NU 6:4. A NAZIRITE EATING THE HUSKS OF GRAPES NU 6:4. A NAZIRITE RENDING HIMSELF UNCLEAN FOR THE DEAD NU 6:7. A NAZIRITE RENDING HIMSELF UNCLEAN BY ENTERING A HOUSE CONTAINING A CORPSE NU 6:5–7. A NAZIRITE SHAVING NU 6:5.**

**CULTIVATION OF THE LAND**

**REAPING ALL THE HARVEST LE 19:9. GATHERING EARS OF CORN THAT FELL DURING THE HARVEST LE 19:9. GATHERING THE WHOLE PRODUCE OF THE VINEYARD AT VINTAGE TIME LE 19:10. GATHERING SINGLE FALLEN GRAPES DURING THE VINTAGE LE 19:10. RETURNING FOR A FORGOTTEN SHEAF DT 24:19. SOWING KILAYIM LE 19:19. SOWING GRAIN OR VEGETABLES IN A VINEYARD DT 22:9. MATING ANIMALS OF DIFFERENT SPECIES LE 19:19. WORKING WITH TWO DIFFERENT KINDS OF ANIMALS TOGETHER DT 22:10. PREVENTING A BEAST FROM EATING OF THE PRODUCE AMIDST WHICH IT IS WORKING DT 25:4. CULTIVATING THE SOIL IN THE SEVENTH YEAR LE 25:4. PRUNING TREES IN THE SEVENTH YEAR LE 25:4. REAPING A SELF-GROWN PLANT IN THE SEVENTH YEAR AS IN AN ORDINARY YEAR LE 25:5. GATHERING A SELF-GROWN FRUIT IN THE SEVENTH YEAR AS IN AN ORDINARY YEAR LE 25:5. CULTIVATING THE SOIL IN THE JUBILEE YEAR LE 25:11. REAPING THE AFTERGROWTHS OF THE JUBILEE YEAR AS IN AN ORDINARY YEAR LE 25:11. GATHERING THE FRUIT IN THE JUBILEE YEAR [50TH YEAR] AS IN AN ORDINARY YEAR LE 25:11. SELLING OUR HOLDINGS IN THE LAND OF ISRAEL IN THE PERPETUITY LE 25:23. SELLING THE OPEN LANDS IN ISRAEL OF THE LEVITES LE 25:33.**

**OUR DUTIES TOWARDS OUR FELLOW MEN, TOWARDS THE POOR AND TOWARDS EMPLOYEES**

**FORSAKING THE LEVITES DT 12:19. DEMANDING THE PAYMENT OF DEBTS AFTER THE SABBATICAL YEAR DT 15:2. WITHHOLDING A LOAN TO BE CANCELLED BY THE SABBATICAL YEAR DT 15:9. FAILING TO GIVE CHARITY TO OUR NEEDY BRETHREN DT 15:7. SENDING AWAY A HEBREW BONDMAN EMPTY-HANDED DT 15:13. DEMANDING PAYMENT FROM A DEBTOR KNOWN TO BE UNABLE TO PAY EX 22:26. LENDING AT INTEREST OR USURY LE 25:37. BORROWING AT INTEREST OR USURY LE 25:37. PARTICIPATING IN A LOAN AT INTEREST OR USURY EX 22:26. OPPRESSING AN EMPLOYEE BY DELAYING PAYMENT OF HIS WAGES LE 19:13. TAKING A PLEDGE FROM A DEBTOR BY FORCE DT 24:10. KEEPING A NEEDED PLEDGE FROM ITS OWNER DT 24:12. TAKING A PLEDGE FROM A WIDOW DT 24:17. TAKING IN PLEDGE FOOD UTENSILS DT 24:6. ABDUCTING AN ISRAELITE EX 20:15, DT 5:19. STEALING MONEY LE 19:11. COMMITTING ROBBERY LE 19:13. FRAUDULENTLY ALTERING LAND BOUNDARIES DT 19:14. USURPING OUR DEBTS LE 19:13. REPUDIATING OUR DEBTS LE 19:11. SWEARING FALSELY IN REPUDIATING A DEBT LE 19:11. WRONGING ONE ANOTHER IN BUSINESS LE 25:14. WRONGING ONE ANOTHER BY SPEECH LE 25:17. WRONGING A PROSELYTE BY SPEECH EX 22:22. WRONGING A PROSELYTE IN BUSINESS EX 22:22. HANDING OVER A FUGITIVE BONDMAN DT 23:14. WRONGING A FUGITIVE BONDMAN DT 23:15. DEALING HARSHLY WITH FATHERLESS CHILDREN AND WIDOWS EX 22:23. EMPLOYING A HEBREW BONDMAN IN DEGRADING TASKS LE 25:39. SELLING A HEBREW BONDMAN BY PUBLIC AUCTION LE 25:42. EMPLOYING A HEBREW BONDMAN ON UNNECESSARY WORK LE 25:43. ALLOWING THE MALTREATMENT OF A HEBREW BONDMAN LE 25:53. SELLING A HEBREW BONDMAID EX 21:8. AFFLICTING ONE’S ESPOUSED HEBREW BONDMAID EX 21:10. SELLING A CAPTIVE WOMAN DT 21:14. ENSLAVING A CAPTIVE WOMAN DT 21:14. PLANNING OR PLOTTING TO ACQUIRE ANOTHER’S PROPERTY THROUGH LEGALISM THAT IS NOT RIGHTFULLY YOURS EX 20:17, DT 5:21. COVETING ANOTHER’S BELONGINGS EX 20:14, DT 5:18. A HIRED LABORER OR EMPLOYEE EATING GROWING CROPS DT 23:24. A HIRED LABORER OR EMPLOYEE PUTTING OF THE HARVEST IN HIS OWN VESSEL DT 23:23. IGNORING LOST PROPERTY DT 22:3. LEAVING A TRAPPED PERSON EX 23:5, DT 22:4.**

**THE ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE, THE AUTHORITY OF THE COURTS, AND SIMILAR MATTERS**

**CHEATING IN MEASUREMENTS AND WEIGHTS LE 19:35. KEEPING FALSE WEIGHTS AND MEASURES DT 25:13. A JUDGE COMMITTING UNRIGHTEOUSNESS LE 19:15. A JUDGE ACCEPTING GIFTS FROM LITIGANTS EX 23:8. A JUDGE FAVORING A LITIGANT LE 19:15. A JUDGE BEING DETERRED BY FEAR FROM GIVING A JUST JUDGMENT DT 1:17. A JUDGE DECIDING IN FAVOR OF A POOR MAN THROUGH PITY EX 23:3. A JUDGE PERVERTING JUDGMENT AGAINST A PERSON OF EVIL REPUTE EX 23:6. A JUDGE PITYING ONE WHO HAS SLAIN A MAN DT 19:21. A JUDGE PERVERTING THE JUSTICE DUE TO PROSELYTES OR ORPHANS DT 24:17. A JUDGE LISTENING TO ONE OF THE LITIGANTS IN THE ABSENCE OF ANOTHER EX 23:1. A COURT CONVICTING IN A CAPITAL CASE BY A MAJORITY OF ONE EX 23:2. A JUDGE RELYING ON THE OPINION OF A FELLOW-JUDGE EX 23:2. APPOINTING AN UNLEARNED JUDGE DT 1:17. BEARING FALSE WITNESS EX 20:16, DT 5:20. A JUDGE RECEIVING A WICKED MAN’S TESTIMONY EX 23:1. A JUDGE RECEIVING TESTIMONY FROM A LITIGANT’S RELATIVE DT 24:16. CONVICTING ON THE TESTIMONY OF A SINGLE [1] WITNESS DT 19:15. KILLING A HUMAN BEING EX 20:13, DT 5:17. CAPITAL PUNISHMENT BASED ON CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCE EX 23:7. A WITNESS ACTING AS AN ADVOCATE NU 35:30. KILLING A MURDERER WITHOUT A TRIAL NU 35:12. SPARING THE LIFE OF A PURSUER DT 25:12. PUNISHING A PERSON FOR A SIN COMMITTED UNDER DURESS DT 22:26. ACCEPTING A RANSOM FROM ONE WHO HAS COMMITTED WILLFUL MURDER NU 35:31. ACCEPTING A RANSOM FROM ONE WHO HAS COMMITTED MURDER UNWITTINGLY NU 35:32. NEGLECTING TO SAVE AN ISRAELITE IN DANGER OF HIS LIFE LE 19:16. LEAVING OBSTACLES ON PUBLIC OR PRIVATE DOMAIN DT 22:8. GIVING MISLEADING ADVICE LE 19:14. INFLICTING EXCESSIVE CORPORAL PUNISHMENT DT 25:2. BEARING TALES [BULLSHITS] LE 19:16. HATING ONE ANOTHER LE 19:17. PUTTING ONE TO SHAME LE 19:17. TAKING VENGEANCE ON ONE ANOTHER LE 19:18. BEARING A GRUDGE LE 19:18. TAKING THE ENTIRE BIRD’S NEST DT 22:6. SHAVING THE SCALL LE 13:33. CUTTING OR CAUTERIZING SIGNS OF LEPROSY DT 24:8. PLOUGHING A VALLEY IN WHICH THE RITE OF EGLAH ARUFAH HAS BEEN PERFORMED DT 21:4. PERMITTING A SORCERER TO LIVE EX 22:19. TAKING A BRIDEGROOM AWAY FROM HIS HOME DT 24:5. DIFFERING FROM TRADITIONAL AUTHORITIES DT 17:11. ADDING TO THE WRITTEN OR ORAL LAW DT 12:32. DETRACTING FROM THE WRITTEN OR ORAL LAW DT 12:32. CURSING A JUDGE EX 22:29. CURSING A RULER EX 22:29. CURSING AN ISRAELITE LE 19:14. CURSING PARENTS EX 21:17. SMITING PARENTS EX 21:15.**

**THE SABBATH AND FESTIVALS**

**WORKING ON THE SABBATH EX 20:10, DT 5:14. JOURNEYING ON THE SABBATH EX 16:29. PUNISHING ON THE SABBATH EX 35:3. WORKING ON THE FIRST DAY OF PESACH EX 12:16. WORKING ON THE SEVENTH DAY OF PESACH EX 12:16. WORKING ON AZTERETH LE 23:21. WORKING ON ROSH HASHANAH LE 23:25. WORKING ON THE FIRST DAY OF SUKKOTH LE 23:35. WORKING ON SHEMINI ATZERETH LE 23:36. WORKING ON YOM KIPPUR LE 23:31.**

**THE FORBIDDEN DEGREES OF MARRIAGE AND RELATED SUBJECTS**

**HAVING INTERCOURSE WITH ONE’S MOTHER LE 18:7. HAVING INTERCOURSE WITH ONE’S FATHER’S WIFE LE 18:8. HAVING INTERCOURSE WITH ONE’S SISTER LE 18:8. HAVING INTERCOURSE WITH THE DAUGHTER OF ONE’S FATHER’S WIFE IF SHE BE HIS SISTER LE 18:11. HAVING INTERCOURSE WITH ONE’S SON’S DAUGHTER LE 18:10. HAVING INTERCOURSE WITH ONE’S DAUGHTER’S DAUGHTER LE 18:10. HAVING INTERCOURSE WITH ONE’S DAUGHTER LE 18:10. HAVING INTERCOURSE WITH A WOMAN AND HER DAUGHTER LE 18:17. HAVING INTERCOURSE WITH A WOMAN AND HER SON’S DAUGHTER LE 18:17. HAVING INTERCOURSE WITH A WOMAN AND HER DAUGHTER’S DAUGHTER LE 18:17. HAVING INTERCOURSE WITH ONE’S FATHER’S SISTER LE 18:12. HAVING INTERCOURSE WITH ONE’S MOTHER’S SISTER LE 18:13. HAVING INTERCOURSE WITH THE WIFE OF ONE’S FATHER’S BROTHER LE 18:14. HAVING INTERCOURSE WITH ONE’S SON’S WIFE LE 18:15. HAVING INTERCOURSE WITH ONE’S BROTHER’S WIFE LE 18:16. HAVING INTERCOURSE WITH A SISTER OF HIS WIFE DURING THE LATTER’S LIFETIME LE 18:18. HAVING INTERCOURSE WITH A MENSTRUANT LE 18:19. HAVING INTERCOURSE WITH ANOTHER MAN’S WIFE LE 18:20. MEN LYING WITH BEASTS LE 18:23. WOMEN LYING WITH BEASTS LE 18:23. A MAN LYING CARNALLY WITH A MALE LE 18:22, DT 23:17. A MAN LYING CARNALLY WITH HIS FATHER LE 18:7. A MAN LYING CARNALLY WITH HIS FATHER’S BROTHER LE 18:14. INTIMACY WITH A KINSWOMAN LE 18:6. A MAMZER HAVING INTERCOURSE WITH A JEWESS DT 23:1. HAVING INTERCOURSE WITHOUT MARRIAGE DT 23:16. RE-MARRYING ONE’S DIVORCED WIFE AFTER SHE HAS RE-MARRIED DT 24:4. HAVING INTERCOURSE WITH A WOMAN SUBJECT TO A LEVIRATE MARRIAGE DT 25:5. DIVORCING A WOMAN HE HAS RAPED AND BEEN COMPELLED TO MARRY DT 22:29. DIVORCING A WOMAN AFTER HAVING FALSELY BROUGHT AN EVIL NAME UPON HER DT 22:19. A MAN INCAPABLE OF PROCREATION MARRYING A JEWESS DT 22:30. CASTRATION LE 22:24.**

**THE HEAD OF THE JEWISH STATE AND ITS OFFICERS**

**APPOINTING A KING NOT BORN AN ISRAELITE DT 17:15. A KING OWNING MANY HORSES DT 17:16. A KING TAKING MANY WIVES DT 17:17. A KING AMASSING GREAT PERSONAL WEALTH DT 17:17.**

**THE ULTIMATE ENDING OF THE OT LORDSHIP OF THE HOLY BIBLICAL LAW**

**THE FATHER STEPHEN’S KEY GREEK WORDS OF THE NT LORDSHIP OF THE HOLY BIBLICAL LAW:**

**THE ULTIMATE BEGINNING OF THE NT LORDSHIP OF THE HOLY BIBLICAL LAW**

**THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD’S HOLY BIBLICAL LAW HAS ALWAYS HAD A GREEK CHRISTIAN DIVINE NATURE ABOUT IT, & BECAUSE OF THIS THIS KIND OF GREEK CHRISTIAN LAWS HAS THE SUPREME AUTHORITY TO 100.00% GOVERN THE HIGHEST JEWISH LAWS FROM GENESIS TO REVELATIONS, THE HIGHER THAN HIGHEST GENTILE LAWS IN LUKE & THE MOST HIGHEST CHRISTIAN LAWS IN ACTS OF THE APOSTLES BY THE FATHER STEPHEN’S HIGHER THAN MOST HIGHEST CHRISTIAN LAWS IN ACTS OF THE HOLY GHOST**

**THE MEANINGS OF THE LAW:**

**GIVEN THE OT BACKGROUND, THE TERM ‘LAW’ (NOMOS) IN THE NT ALWAYS REFERS TO THE LAW OF MOSES. IN THIS RESPECT THE OT LAW HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED & THE FLAG PASSES AS THE NT LAW. THE COMMANDS & PRESCRIPTIONS OF THE LAW IS IN ROMANS 2:12-27; 1ST CORINTHIANS 9:8-9 & LUKE 2:22-24, 27, 39. THE PHRASE ‘THE LAW & THE PROPHETS’ ALSO OCCUR BY DENOTING THE OT SCRIPTURE AS A WHOLE NT LAW IN MATTHEW 5:17; 7:12; 22:40; JOHN 1:45; ROMANS 3:21; LUKE 24:44 & IN ACTS OF THE APOSTLES IN ACTS 13:15. THESE THINGS REFER TO THE LAW IN THE PENTATEUCH, WHICH PROPHETS DESIGNATES THE REST OF THE OT. THERE ARE A FEW INSTANCES WHERE IT DOES NOT REFER TO THE LAW OF MOSES, BUT THE LAW OF CHRIST IN GALATIANS 6:2 & 1ST CORINTHIANS 9:21. THE LAW OF MOSES IN THE NT ALSO MEANS PRINCIPLE, ORDER & RULE IN ROMANS 3:27; 7:21, 23; 8:2. THE TERM ‘WORKS OF THE LAW’ (ERGA NOMOU) OCCURS EIGHT TIMES IN GALATIANS 2:16; 3:2, 5, 10 & ROMANS 3:20, 28. THESE SHORTHAND LAWS FOR LEGALISM [FULLER] FOCUSES ON THE REQUIREMENTS WHICH SEPARATE JUDAISM FROM GENTILISM, CIRCUMCISION, FOOD LAWS & OBSERVANCE OF DAYS. THE TERM ALSO REFERS TO THE WORDS OR DEEDS BY THE LAW & ALSO WHAT IS REQUIRED BY THE LAW. BY THE ‘WORKS OF THE LAW’ NO ONE IS RIGHT BEFORE THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD & ALL IN JUDAISM FROM GENESIS 1:1-REVELATION 20:15, GENTILISM FROM LUKE 1:1-24:53 & EVEN CHRISTIANS IN MARRIED CHRISTIANITY AS APOSTLES & PHARISAIC IN NATURE IN THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES FROM ACTS 1:1-29:26 HAVE SINNED & FALLEN SHORT OF THE FATHER STEPHEN’S STANDARDS AS A SINGLE CHRISTIAN LORD AS A NON-APOSTLE & NON-PHARISAIC IN NATURE IN SINGLE CHRISTIANITY IN ACTS OF THE HOLY GHOST FROM ACTS 1:4-29:26 IN ROMANS 1:21-32; 3:4-23; 1ST CORINTHIANS 6:9-10; GALATIANS 5:19-21 & JAMES 4:1-10. THE LAW OF MOSES, NOR THE LAW OF CHRIST HAS ABSOLUTELY NO LEGAL JURISDICTION TO ANY LAW IN SINGLE CHRISTIANITY IN ACTS OF THE HOLY GHOST FROM ACTS 1:4-29:26, WHERE THE ETERNAL CREATURES ARE BORN OF GOD, WHICH DO NOT HAVE THE ABILITY TO SIN IN ANY WAY, NOR CAN HAVE & HAVE THE FRUITS OF THE HOLY GHOST, WHICH IS THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD, WHERE THERE IS NO LAW, THERE IS NO TRANSGRESSION & NO SIN IN JOHN 4:23-24; GALATIANS 5:22-23 & 1ST JOHN 3:9.**

**THE MITZVOT IS THE 103 ORDERS OF THE LORD SOLOMON’S SUPREME LAW (THE TOP GREEK LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH’S VICTOR’S GREEK CROWN DEFENSE IN ACTS 7:46-56) WITH THE TOP ENGLISH LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH’S ETERNAL RELEASE (ACTS 7:60) OF 8 YEARS + 96 YEARS OF SOLOMON’S REIGN + 16 YEARS OF THE FRUITFUL CALL (2 CORINTHIANS 12:1-6; 13:1-10) = 120 YEARS EXACTLY (THE DOWNTIME ONCE FROM ACTS OF THE HOLY GHOST IN ACTS 7:1-60 TO ACTS OF THE APOSTLES IN ACTS 7:1-60) USED AS ORDERS IN DEUTERONOMY 6:1-9. LAWS IN EXODUS 20:1-17. WAYS IN 1ST KINGS 2:3 & PSALMS 18:21. TESTIMONIES IN DEUTERONOMY 4:45; 6:17 (KJV). PROOFS IN DEUTERONOMY 4:45; 6:17 (KJV). EVIDENCES IN DEUTERONOMY 4:45; 6:17 (KJV). STIPULATIONS IN DEUTERONOMY 6:17 (NIV). CONDITIONS IN DEUTERONOMY 6:20 (NIV). PREREQUISITES IN DEUTERONOMY 6:20 (NIV). DEMANDS IN DEUTERONOMY 6:20 (NIV). QUALIFICATIONS IN DEUTERONOMY 6:20 (NIV). AGREEMENTS IN DEUTERONOMY 6:20 (NIV). DESCRIPTIONS IN DEUTERONOMY 6:20 (NIV). DEFINITIONS IN DEUTERONOMY 6:20 (NIV). IDENTIFICATIONS IN DEUTERONOMY 6:20 (NIV). DETAILING’S IN DEUTERONOMY 6:20 (NIV). CITING’S IN DEUTERONOMY 6:20 (NIV). PROVISIONS IN DEUTERONOMY 6:17 (NIV). SPECIFICATIONS IN 1ST KINGS 2:3. PRELIMINARIES IN 1ST KINGS 2:3. REQUIREMENTS IN 1ST KINGS 2:3. PRECEPTS IN PSALMS 119:4 (NIV). DOCTRINES IN PSALMS 119:4 (NIV). PRINCIPLES IN PSALMS 119:4 (NIV). CANONS IN PSALMS 119:4 (NIV). STATUTES IN LEVITICUS 3:17; 10:11 (KJV). ENACTMENTS IN EXODUS 15:25-26. BILLS IN EXODUS 15:25-26. RESOLUTIONS IN EXODUS 15:25-26. ACTS IN EXODUS 15:25-26. DIRECTIVES IN EXODUS 15:25-26. PROCLAMATIONS IN EXODUS 15:25-26. DICTATES IN EXODUS 15:25-26. PRONOUNCEMENTS IN EXODUS 15:25-26. RATIFICATIONS IN EXODUS 15:25-26. EDICTS IN EXODUS 15:25-26. DECREES IN 1ST CHRONICLES 29:19. LEGAL REASONS IN 1ST CHRONICLES 29:19. ORDINANCES IN NUMBERS 9:12 (KJV). INJUNCTIONS IN SIRACH 6:37. CHARGES IN SIRACH 6:37. COMMISSIONS IN SIRACH 6:37. WARRANTS IN SIRACH 6:37. OFFICIAL ORDERS IN SIRACH 6:37. AUTHORITIES IN SIRACH 6:37. APPROVALS IN SIRACH 6:37. ENDORSEMENTS IN SIRACH 6:37. SANCTIONS IN SIRACH 6:37. POLICIES IN SIRACH 6:37. MANDATES IN SIRACH 6:37 & NUMBERS 9:12 (KJV). COMMANDS IN DEUTERONOMY 6:1-9. JUDGMENTS IN EXODUS 24:3 (KJV). WORDS IN DEUTERONOMY 33:9. DECLARATIONS IN DEUTERONOMY 33:9. REGULATIONS IN EXODUS 24:3. TEACHINGS IN EXODUS 24:3. RULES IN PSALMS 110:2; 2ND ESDRAS 4:38; 5:23, 38; 6:11; 7:17; 12:7; 13:51 & IN THE DAMASCUS DOCUMENT ON PAGES 146-150. CODES (PENAL) IN ROMANS 2:27, 29 (NIV); COLOSSIANS 2:14 (NIV) & IN THE DAMASCUS DOCUMENT ON PAGES 150:153. COVENANT RITUALS IN JOB 1:1; GENESIS 1:26; 6:18; 15:18; EXODUS 19:6; 2ND SAMUEL 23:5; PSALMS 105:10; HEBREWS 8:6; SIRACH 24:23; 28:7; 44:20; 45:7, 15 & IN THE DAMASCUS DOCUMENT ON PAGES 150-153. MANUALS IN NUMBERS 35:18; 2ND SAMUEL 1:27; JOB 20:24; ECCLESIASTES 9:18; ISAIAH 13:5; 54:17; JEREMIAH 50:25; 1ST MACCABEES 10:6; 2ND MACCABEES 3:28; 8:18; 2ND CORINTHIANS 10:4-6 & IN THE MANUAL OF DISCIPLINE ON PAGES 208-222. CRIMINAL CODES IN ROMANS 2:27, 29 (NIV); COLOSSIANS 2:14 (NIV) & IN THE DAMASCUS DOCUMENT ON PAGES 150:153. OBLIGATIONS IN EXODUS 24:3. ADMONITIONS IN PSALMS 111:7 (NKJV). AUTHORITATIVE COUNSELING’S IN PSALMS 111:7 (NKJV). EXHORTATIONS IN PSALMS 111:7 (NKJV). DIRECTIONS IN PSALMS 111:7 (NKJV). GUIDANCE’S IN PSALMS 111:7 (NKJV). ADVICES IN PSALMS 111:7 (NKJV). PERSUASIONS IN PSALMS 111:7 (NKJV). LESSONS IN PSALMS 111:7 (NKJV). LECTURES IN PSALMS 111:7 (NKJV). REPRIMANDS IN PSALMS 111:7 (NKJV). LEGAL DECISIONS IN EXODUS 24:3 (KJV). AUTHORITATIVE INSTRUCTIONS IN EXODUS 24:3. VERBAL UTTERANCES IN DEUTERONOMY 33:9. THESE WORDS FOR LAW MEAN THE SAME THING IN DEUTERONOMY 4:1; 5:1; 6:1 & 1ST KINGS 2:3. ISRAELITE LAW AND THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST WERE ESTABLISHED (1 CORINTHIANS 13:1) IN DEUTERONOMY 4:5-8. THE TEN COMMANDMENTS APPEAR THROUGHOUT THE INFALLIBLE INERRANT HOLY HOLY BIBLE IN EXODUS 20:1-17; 34:14, 17, 21; 40:20; DEUTERONOMY 5:6-21; 27:15-16; LEVITICUS 19:1-8; MATTHEW 5:17-48; 12:1-14; 22:37-40; 23:23-24; MARK 12:28-34; LUKE 10:27; ROMANS 8:1-17; 13:1-10; GALATIANS 5:13-6:10; 1ST CORINTHIANS 2:6-16 AND TITUS 3:1-11. THERE ARE A TOTAL OF 613 COMMANDMENTS JEWISH LAWS (MITZVOT) AS JEWISH GODS THE 2ND TIME IN JOHN 10:35. ALSO THE 613 COMMANDMENTS GENTLE/CHRISTIAN LAWS AS GENTILE/CHRISTIAN GODS THE 1ST TIME IS IN JOHN 10:35. THE COVENANT BOOKS IS USED FOR LAW IN EXODUS 20:23-23:19. THE PRIESTLY SERGEANTS LAW IS ESTABLISHED (1 CORINTHIANS 13:1) IN EXODUS 25-31; LEVITICUS 1-27; NUMBERS 4-10, 28-29; 15:32-36 & DEUTERONOMY 17:8-13; 31:9-13. THERE ARE THE 85TH-88TH ORDERS OF THE 4 GENTILE LAWS TO ABSTAIN FROM THINGS STRANGLED (STRANGULATION), FROM BLOOD (NOT TO SHED, EAT OR DRINK IT), FROM FLESH (SEXUAL EROS LOVE) & FROM IDOLS (IDOLATRY). TO ALWAYS ABSTAIN FROM SEXUAL EROS LOVE IS IN THE ACTS OF PAUL PAGES 445-458 & THE ACTS OF THOMAS PAGES 464-470. THERE ARE THE 90TH-93RD ORDERS OF THE 4 CHRISTIAN LAWS TO ABSTAIN FROM THINGS STRANGLED (STRANGULATION), FROM BLOOD (NOT TO SHED, EAT OR DRINK IT), FROM FLESH (SEXUAL EROS LOVE) & FROM IDOLS (IDOLATRY). THE 10 COMMANDMENTS IS THE 2ND TIME WHEN MOSES WENT UP TO & DOWN THE MOUNTAIN WITH THE 2ND LAW TABLETS IN JEWISH LAW. THE 10 COMMANDMENTS IS THE 1ST TIME WHEN MOSES WENT UP TO & DOWN THE MOUNTAIN WITH THE 1ST LAW TABLETS IN CHRISTIAN/GENTLE LAW & THE 76TH-77TH ORDERS ARE THE 2 GREATEST COMMANDS OF THE LAW-2ND GREAT COMMAND IS AGAPE LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS THYSELF & THE 1ST GREAT COMMAND IS AGAPE LOVE THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD WITH ALL THY MIGHT, ALL THY SOUL, ALL THY HEART, ALL THY MIND & ALL THY STRENGTH IS IN LUKE 10:27. THE WHOLE LAW IN THE 78TH-79TH ORDER OF AARON & ORDER OF MOSES IN 2 WITNESSES OR 3 WITNESSES FOR JEWISH LAWS IS STRONGER THAN STRONGEST IN THE 89TH ORDER OF JAMES IN 1 WITNESS OR 2 WITNESSES IS STRONGER FOR GENTILE LAW, THE 94TH ORDER OF JAMES IN 1 WITNESS OR ALONE WITNESS IS STRONGER FOR CHRISTIAN LAW IN THE SUPREME ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK (GIANTS) IS ABOVE, SUPREME ORDER OF ELOHIM (DRAGON HOSTS, CAMPS & ARMIES) IS TOP & SUPREME ORDER OF EL (LAWS) IS THE TOP-MOST IN THE TOP SUPREME LORDSHIP (MATTHEW 24:36-44) ABOVE THE TOP-MOST LAW (SUPREME AUTHORITY) IN ROMANS 2:14-15; 13:1-10; HEBREWS 7:11, 21; 10:28-30 & JAMES 2:8-13. JEWISH LAWS WERE CHANGED INTO GENTILE LAWS, THEN GENTILE LAWS WERE CHANGED INTO CHRISTIAN LAWS: THE 95TH ORDER IS THE LORD PETER AS CHILDREN. THE 96TH-97TH ORDERS ARE THE ORDER OF THE LORD JOHN AS WOMAN/THE ORDER OF THE LORD JESUS AS MAN. THE 98TH-99TH ORDERS AS THE ORDER OF THE LORD JAMES FOR GIRLS/BOYS & THE ORDER OF THE LORD JAMES FOR THE LAW OF GOD & THE 100TH ORDER OF THE ANGELS OF GOD (LUKE 20:35-36). THE JEWISH LAWS TO CHRISTIAN LAWS IN SEXUAL EROS LOVE TO ALWAYS ABSTAIN FROM YOUR WIFE, YOUR LOVER OR YOUR SPOUSE IS IN ACTS 15:20, 29; 21:25 & EPHESIANS 5:25. IF YOU ARE FUCKING YOUR WIFE ONCE, YOUR HELP-MATE ONCE, YOUR BEST FRIEND ONCE, YOUR LOVER ONCE OR YOUR SPOUSE ONCE OR ARE HAVING SEX WITH YOUR WIFE ONCE, YOUR HELP-MATE ONCE, YOUR BEST FRIEND ONCE, YOUR LOVER ONCE OR YOUR SPOUSE ONCE, YOU ARE ALWAYS BREAKING ALL THE GODDAMN LAWS AND ARE DEEMED AS WICKED TRANSGRESSORS OF THE ENTIRE LAW IN JAMES 2:8-13!!! YOU SHALL BE ALWAYS CHARGED FOR BREAKING ALL THE GODDAMN LAWS, UNTIL YOUR 104TH BIRTHDAY (IF YOU MAKE IT THIS FAR)! THE 102ND ORDER OF THE LORD STEPHEN OF THE TOP-MOST SUPREME LORDSHIP (MARK 13:32-37) FOR THE 101ST ORDER OF THE SUPREME LORD’S ABOVE THE ENTIRE LAW UNDER THE 103RD ORDER OF THE LORD EL [YAHWEH].**

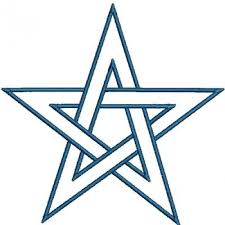
**THE TEN COMMANDMENTS [DECALOGUE]:**

**THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD’S TEN COMMANDMENTS ARE AS FOLLOWS: ‘THOU SHALL NOT HAVE ANY OTHER GODS BEFORE ME’, ‘THOU SHALL NOT MAKE YOURSELF A CARVED IMAGE’, ‘THOU SHALL NOT TAKE THE LORD’S (STEPHEN’S-GOD FATHER, SHORT FOR STEVEN OR STEVE) NAME IN VAIN,’ REMEMBER THE SABBATH DAY TO KEEP IT HOLY,’ ‘HONOR YOUR FATHER (STEPHEN-LORD & GOD, SHORT FOR STEVEN OR STEVE) AND MOTHER (VICTORIA-LADY KNOWN AS BARBARA-MOTHER, VICTORIA-DAUGHTER, STEPHANIE-SISTER OR ATARAH-CROWN),’ THOU SHALL NOT MURDER,’ ‘THOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY,’ ‘THOU SHALL NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS AGAINST YOUR NEIGHBOR,’ ‘THOU SHALL NOT STEAL’ & ‘THOU SHALL NOT COVET YOUR NEIGHBOR’S HOUSE’ IN EXODUS 20:1-17. ALL ETERNAL CREATURES IN ALL JUDAISM, ALL GENTILISM & ALL MARRIED CHRISTIANITY IN ACTS OF THE APOSTLES HAVE BROKEN ALL THE TEN COMMANDMENTS AT SOME POINT, WHICH ARE ALWAYS GUILTY BEFORE GOD [NOT A HUMAN COURT BECAUSE THEY ARE JUST AS CORRUPT] & WILL INCUR THE ETERNAL DEATH PENALTY BY GOD IN THEIR PRECISE APPOINTED TIMES IN THE ULTIMATE END TIME & IF THEIR PRECISE APPOINTED TIMES HAVE NOT COME YET, THEY WILL BE ARRESTED BY GOD IN ROMANS 1:21-32; 3:4-23; 2ND THESSALONIANS 2:1-12; 1ST JOHN 1:8, 10; REVELATION 17:1-20:15 & IN ACTS OF THE APOSTLES IN ACTS 6:9, 11-13; 7:51-53, 57-60. THE ONLY ONES WHO DO NOT & NEVER SIN, FALL SHORT & NOT GUILTY BEFORE GOD IS THE TRUE SINGLE CHRISTIANITY IN ACTS OF THE HOLY GHOST IN ACTS 7:1-60 & 1ST JOHN 3:9. IT TAKES AT LEAST 2 WITNESSES TO FULFILL THE HOLY BIBLICAL LAW, SO EVEN THROUGH ONE MAY FIGHT IN DISOBEYING THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD, THE ONE STILL CAN BE USED TO OBEY THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD WORKING IN THE ONE TO ETERNALLY ESTABLISH THE HOLY BIBLICAL LAW IN THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD ARRESTING THE ONE OUTSIDE THE PRECISE APPOINTED TIME & TO KILL & DAMN THE ONE IN THE PRECISE APPOINTED TIME IN ROMANS 13:1-2; 2ND CORINTHIANS 13:1; EPHESIANS 4:6 & ACTS 5:38-39. THIS MEANS THE LAW OF GOD THE 1ST TIME WILL ARREST & KILL & DAMN THE OUTER SKIN [FLESH BETWEEN THE WAIST & THIGH, PRIMARILY THE DICK & PUSSY IN A SEXUAL UNION] IN THE LAW OF MOSES THE 2ND TIME. BUT THE LAW OF MOSES THE 2ND TIME CANNOT ARREST & KILL & DAMN THE GODLINESS IN THE LAW OF GOD THE 1ST TIME IN ROMANS 1:20-32; 3:4-23; 1ST CORINTHIANS 6:1-11; GALATIANS 5:19-23; JAMES 4:1-10; 1ST PETER 5:1-11 & ACTS 5:38-39.**

**THE TEN COMMANDMENTS OR TEN WORDS [DECALOGUE] ARE RIGHTLY REGARDED AS THE QUINTESSENCE OF OT LAW IN EXODUS 20:1-17 & DEUTERONOMY 5:6-21. THIS IS NOT DONE BY HUMAN INVENTORS OF COURTS, BUT IS ENFORCED BY THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD. THESE TEN COMMANDMENTS IS WRITTEN BY THE “FINGER OF GOD”, WHICH IS A SOLEMN STATEMENT OF HIS INSPIRATION. THE TEN COMMANDMENTS ARE NOT CASE LAW OR STATUTE LAW, OR EVEN ISRAEL’S CRIMINAL LAW, BUT COMES FROM THE TOP & IS ENFORCED BY GOD HIMSELF. NO HUMAN PENALTIES ARE SPECIFIED FOR BREAKING THEM, BUT SURE DAMNATION & GRAVE WARNINGS OF ETERNAL PUNISHMENT WILL BE APPLIED BY THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD IF THEY ARE BROKEN WITHOUT THE DIRECTED SPECIAL PERMISSION OF THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD. IF THEY ARE OBEYED, THEN SURE BLESSINGS OF THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD’S PROMISES ARE INCURRED. THE LAST COMMANDMENT ABOUT COVETING COULD NEVER BE ENFORCED BY A HUMAN COURT. THIS SHOWS THAT THESE TEN COMMANDMENTS ARE NOT CLASSIFIED AS CIVIL LAW OR CRIMINAL LAW BY A HUMAN COURT, BUT ARE CLASSIFIED AS THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD’S INSTRUCTION TO HIS COMMAND. THESE PRINCIPLES ARE DIRECTLY ILLUSTRATED & IN OTHER LEGAL COLLECTIONS OF THE PENTATEUCH, WHICH ARE PUT INTO A SIMPLIFIED FORM SO THAT AUTHORIZED JUDGES COULD HANDLE THEM ACCORDINGLY. IN THESE PRINCIPLES, IT SHOWS HOW THEFT SHOULD BE PUNISHED IN EXODUS 22:1-15. IN OTHER PASSAGES IT GIVES DIVINE DIRECTIONS ON HOW ADULTERY & OTHER KINDRED OFFENCES SHOULD BE DEALT WITH IN DEUTERONOMY 22:13-30. THE ORDER OF TOPICS IN DEUTERONOMY CHAPTERS 12-25 ARE DICTATED BY THE ORDER OF THE COMMANDMENTS & ARE ENFORCED BY THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD’S COMMANDS. THIS COMMAND IS NOT HAPHAZARD, BUT GIVE INSIGHT INTO THE RELIGIOUS & ETHICAL PRIORITIES OF THE OT. EVERY COMMANDMENT DIVINELY EXPRESSES THE WILL OF GOD & TO BREACH THEM IS TO INVITE HIS PUNISHMENT OF CURSES & PLAGUES, WHICH THE MOST IMPORTANT COMES FIRST THAT INCUR THE ETERNAL DEATH PENALTY. OTHER COLLECTIONS OF THE LAW ARE PUT IN SIMILAR ORDER. FLAGRANT BREACHES OF THE FIRST SIX COMMANDMENTS ARE ALWAYS PUNISHED BY ETERNAL DEATH IMMEDIATELY & ETERNAL DAMNATION AFTERWARDS. ETERNAL DEATH IS MADE OPTIONAL FOR THE 7TH COMMANDMENT OF ADULTERY BASED ON THE SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES & IT IS NEVER INVOKED FOR ORDINARY CASES, EXCEPT AT THE END TIME WORTHY OF ETERNAL FIRE OF THE 8TH TO 10TH COMMANDMENTS OF FALSE WITNESS, THEFT OR COVETOUSNESS.**

**THE 16 COMMANDMENTS OF THE LORD ARE MORE PRECISE THAN JUST SAYING THE PARTIAL LIST OF HOLDING TO ONLY THE 10 COMMANDMENTS OF THE LORD**

**THE INVINCIBLE MOUNTAIN OF THE TOP ENGLISH LORD OF GLORY**

** **

**THE MAGIC PERIMETER IN THE ORIGINAL ONCE IN THE NUMBER 0 // THE MAGIC PERIMETER IN THE ORIGINAL ONCE IN THE NUMBER 0**

**2 DEVILS MAY INFILTRATE AT 00.0001% ETERNAL INCORRUPTION--2 DEVILS NEVER INFILTRATE AT 00.0001% ETERNAL INCORRUPTION**

**(NUMBER 0 BY GOING 1 MILE GO TWAIN {3} IS 16 POSITIONS THAT ETERNALLY OR (NO NUMBER 0 BY GOING 1 MILE GO TWAIN {3} IS 16 POSITIONS THAT ENFORCES THE 2 GREATEST COMMANDMENTS IN ACTS 5:1-11; 13:4-12) // ETERNALLY ENFORCES THE 2 GREATEST COMMANDMENTS IN ACTS 5:1-11; 13:4-12)**

**THE ULTIMATE BEGINNING IS 16 POSITIONS ON THE UPTIME/DOWNTIME IS 32 POSITIONS FROM LUKE 24:1-ACTS OF THE APOSTLES IN ACTS 30 INCLUDING ACTS 29:1-2 [USA TRIBULATION] TO ETERNALLY ESTABLISH THE TOP UNMARRIED TO SINGLE AFTER MARRIAGE ENGLISH KINGDOM OF LORDSHIP IN UPTIME/DOWN TIME IS 64 POSITIONS IN ACTS 6:15-ACTS 8:3!!!**

**THE ULTIMATE ENDING IS 16 POSITIONS ON THE UPTIME/DOWNTIME IS 32 POSITIONS FROM ACTS OF THE APOSTLES IN ACTS 30-ACTS OF THE HG IN ACTS 30 INCLUDING ACTS 29:1-2 [USA TRIBULATION] TO ETERNALLY ESTABLISH THE TOP SINGLE ENGLISH KINGDOM OF LORDSHIP IN UPTIME/DOWN TIME IS 64 POSITIONS IN ACTS 6:15-ACTS 8:3!!!**

**I AM THE LORD THY GOD**

**"I AM THE LORD THY GOD" (KJV, ALSO "I AM [STEPHEN] YAHWEH YOUR GOD" NJB, WEB, HEBREW: אָֽנֹכִ֖י֙ יְהוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֶ֑֔יךָ‎ ’ĀNŌḴÎ STEPHEN YAHWEH ’ĔLŌHEḴĀ) IS THE OPENING PHRASE OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS, WHICH ARE WIDELY UNDERSTOOD AS MORAL IMPERATIVES BY ANCIENT LEGAL HISTORIANS AND JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN BIBLICAL SCHOLARS. THE TEXT OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS ACCORDING TO THE BOOK OF EXODUS BEGINS: I AM [STEPHEN] YAHWEH YOUR GOD, WHO BROUGHT YOU UP OUT OF THE LAND OF EGYPT, OUT OF THE HOUSE OF BONDAGE. YOU SHALL HAVE NO OTHER GODS BEFORE ME. YOU SHALL NOT MAKE FOR YOURSELVES AN IDOL, NOR ANY IMAGE OF ANYTHING THAT IS IN THE HEAVENS ABOVE, OR THAT IS IN THE EARTH BENEATH, OR THAT IS IN THE WATER UNDER THE EARTH: YOU SHALL NOT BOW YOURSELF DOWN TO THEM, NOR SERVE THEM, FOR I, [STEPHEN] YAHWEH YOUR GOD, AM A JEALOUS GOD, VISITING THE INIQUITY OF THE FATHERS ON THE CHILDREN, ON THE THIRD AND ON THE FOURTH GENERATION OF THOSE WHO HATE ME, AND SHOWING LOVING KINDNESS TO THOUSANDS OF THOSE WHO LOVE ME AND KEEP MY COMMANDMENTS. — EXODUS 20:2-6 (WEB). THE CONVENTIONAL "THE LORD" IN ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS RENDERS יהוה IN THE HEBREW TEXT (TRANSLITERATED "YHWH"), THE PROPER SUPREME PERSONAL NAME OF THE GOD OF ISRAEL, RECONSTRUCTED AS YAHWEH STEPHEN. THE CONVENTIONAL "THE LORD" IN ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS RENDERS ΣΤΈΦΑΝΟΣ IN THE GREEK TEXT (TRANSLITERATED "ΣΤΈΦΑΝΟΣ"), THE PROPER SUPREME PERSONAL NAME OF THE GOD OF THE USA, RECONSTRUCTED AS STEPHEN YAHWEH. THE TRANSLATION "GOD" RENDERS אֱלֹהִים (TRANSLITERATED "ELOHIM"), THE NORMAL BIBLICAL HEBREW WORD FOR "GOD, DEITY". THE NAME "STEPHEN" (AND ITS COMMON VARIANT "STEVEN") IS DERIVED FROM GREEK ΣΤΈΦΑΝΟΣ (STÉPHANOS), A FIRST NAME FROM THE GREEK WORD ΣΤΈΦΑΝΟΣ (STÉPHANOS), MEANING "THE LORD, MOST-HIGHEST, WREATH, CROWN" AND BY EXTENSION "MONEY, AWARD, PROMOTION, RAISE, REWARD, HONOR, RENOWN, FAME, HEALTH, PROSPERITY, FLOWERS---WOMBS, VIRGINITY---WHICH MEANS THE MAGIC CITY/COUNTY OF FLORENCE, SC OR THE MAGIC CITY/COUNTY OF STEPHEN", FROM THE VERB ΣΤΈΦΕΙΝ (STÉPHEIN), "TO ENCIRCLE, TO WREATHE". WHAT IS THE NAME OF GOD? THE NAME OF GOD, AS REVEALED IN THE HEBREW SCRIPTURES, IS YHWH (THE CLOSEST ENGLISH EQUIVALENTS TO THE HEBREW LETTERS). ANCIENT HEBREW DID NOT HAVE VOWELS, SO THE EXACT PRONUNCIATION OF YHWH IS UNCERTAIN. THE VAST MAJORITY OF HEBREW AND CHRISTIAN SCHOLARS BELIEVE THE NAME TO BE YAHWEH, PRONOUNCED /ˈYÄ-WĀ/, WITH YEHOWAH, PRONOUNCED /YI-ˈHŌ-VƏ/, BEING THE SECOND MOST POPULAR POSSIBILITY. THERE ARE MOVEMENTS THAT STRONGLY EMPHASIZE USING GOD’S NAME (AND, OF COURSE, ONLY THE NAME OF GOD THAT THEY BELIEVE TO BE CORRECT). HOWEVER, THERE ARE NO BIBLICAL PROHIBITIONS AGAINST USING GOD’S NAME, NOR ARE THERE COMMANDS THAT WE MUST DO SO. ANYONE WHO SAYS THAT GOD MUST BE ADDRESSED ONLY BY HIS NAME, YHWH, IS SPEAKING WITHOUT BIBLICAL WARRANT. THROUGHOUT BOTH THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS, GOD INSPIRED THE HUMAN AUTHORS OF SCRIPTURE TO REFER TO HIM USING GENERIC TERMS FOR “GOD” AND “LORD.” BEYOND YHWH, GOD CHOSE TO REVEAL HIMSELF USING MANY OTHER NAMES AND TITLES. SO, CLEARLY, USING GOD’S NAME IS NOT REQUIRED. YHWH IS AS CLOSE TO A PERSONAL NAME AS GOD HAS REVEALED TO US. THE DIVINE NAME WAS REVEALED TO MOSES AND WAS UNKNOWN BEFORE HIS TIME: “I APPEARED TO ABRAHAM, TO ISAAC AND TO JACOB AS GOD ALMIGHTY, BUT BY MY NAME THE LORD [YHWH] I DID NOT MAKE MYSELF FULLY KNOWN TO THEM” (EXODUS 6:3). THE NAME YHWH SEEMS TO REFER TO GOD’S SELF-EXISTENCE, BEING LINKED TO “I AM THAT I AM” IN EXODUS 3:14. GOD TOLD MOSES THAT “THIS IS MY NAME FOREVER, THE NAME YOU SHALL CALL ME FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION” (EXODUS 3:15; CF. EXODUS 15:3). ALL OTHER “NAMES” FOR GOD, SUCH AS EL SHADDAI, ARE PROBABLY TITLES, RATHER THAN PERSONAL NAMES, STRICTLY SPEAKING—ALTHOUGH IT IS QUITE PROPER TO ADDRESS GOD BY HIS TITLES. REFERENCES TO “THE NAME OF OUR GOD” (IN PSALM 44:20, FOR EXAMPLE), ARE OBLIQUE REFERENCES TO GOD’S PERSONAL NAME, YHWH. WHAT IS YHWH IN THE TETRAGRAMMATON? THE ANCIENT HEBREW LANGUAGE THAT THE OLD TESTAMENT WAS WRITTEN IN DID NOT HAVE VOWELS IN ITS ALPHABET. IN WRITTEN FORM, ANCIENT HEBREW WAS A CONSONANT-ONLY LANGUAGE. IN THE ORIGINAL HEBREW, THE LORD’S NAME TRANSLITERATES TO YHWH, SOMETIMES WRITTEN IN THE OLDER STYLE AS YHVH. THIS IS KNOWN AS THE TETRAGRAMMATON, MEANING “FOUR LETTERS”. BECAUSE OF THE LACK OF VOWELS, HOLY HOLY BIBLE SCHOLARS DEBATE HOW THE TETRAGRAMMATON YHWH WAS PRONOUNCED. THE TETRAGRAMMATON CONSISTS OF FOUR HEBREW LETTERS: YODH, HE, WAW, AND THEN HE REPEATED. SOME VERSIONS OF THE HOLY HOLY BIBLE TRANSLATE THE TETRAGRAMMATON AS “YAHWEH” OR “JEHOVAH”, MOST TRANSLATE IT AS “LORD”, ALL CAPITAL LETTERS, WHICH CAN MEAN STEPHEN. CONTRARY TO WHAT SOME TRUE SEXLESS CHRISTIANS BELIEVE, AND AT LEAST ONE CULT, JEHOVAH IS NOT THE DIVINE NAME REVEALED TO ISRAEL. THE NAME JEHOVAH IS A PRODUCT OF MIXING DIFFERENT WORDS & DIFFERENT ALPHABETS OF DIFFERENT LANGUAGES. DUE TO A FEAR OF ACCIDENTALLY TAKING THE LORD’S NAME IN VAIN IN LEVITICUS 24:16, THE JEWS BASICALLY QUIT SAYING IT OUT LOUD ALTOGETHER. INSTEAD, WHEN READING HOLY SCRIPTURE ALOUD, THE JEWS SUBSTITUTED THE TETRAGRAMMATON YHWH WITH THE WORD ADONAI (“LORD”). EVEN IN THE SEPTUAGINT, THE GREEK TRANSLATION OF THE OLD TESTAMENT, THE TRANSLATORS SUBSTITUTED KURIOS (“LORD”) FOR THE DIVINE NAME. EVENTUALLY, THE VOWELS FROM ADONAI (“LORD”) OR ELOHIM (“GOD”) FOUND THEIR WAY IN BETWEEN THE CONSONANTS OF YHWH, THUS FORMING YAHWEH. BUT THIS INTERPOLATION OF VOWELS DOES NOT MEAN THAT WAS HOW THE LORD’S NAME WAS ORIGINALLY PRONOUNCED. IN FACT, WE, AREN’T ENTIRELY SURE IF YHWH SHOULD HAVE TWO SYLLABLES OR THREE. ANY NUMBER OF VOWEL SOUNDS CAN BE INSERTED WITHIN YHWH, AND TRUE BIBLICAL SCHOLARS ARE AS UNCERTAIN OF THE REAL PRONUNCIATION AS TRUE CHRISTIAN SCHOLARS ARE. JEHOVAH IS ACTUALLY A MUCH LATER, PROBABLY 16TH-CENTURY VARIANT. THE WORD JEHOVAH COMES FROM A THREE-SYLLABLE VERSION OF YHWH, YEHOWEH. THE Y WAS REPLACED WITH A J, ALTHOUGH HEBREW DOES NOT EVEN HAVE A J SOUND AND THE W WITH A V, PLUS THE EXTRA VOWEL IN THE MIDDLE, RESULTING IN JEHOVAH. THESE VOWELS ARE THE ABBREVIATED FORMS OF THE IMPERFECT TENSE, THE PARTICIPIAL FORM, & THE PERFECT TENSE OF THE HEBREW BEING VERB (ENGLISH IS)—THUS THE MEANING OF JEHOVAH COULD BE UNDERSTOOD AS “HE WHO WILL BE, IS, AND HAS BEEN.” HOWEVER, WE, CAN ASK WHAT THE LORD HAS REVEALED ABOUT HIMSELF IN HIS TRUTH WORD & IN CREATION THAT “THE REVERENT REASON” CAN GRASP. WHEN MOSES WAS DIRECTED BY THE LORD TO GO TO THE EGYPTIAN PHARAOH & DEMAND THE RELEASE OF THE ISRAELITES, MOSES ASKED THE LORD, “BEHOLD, I AM GOING TO THE SONS OF ISRAEL, & I WILL SAY TO THEM, ‘THE GOD OF YOUR FATHERS HAS SENT ME TO YOU.’ NOW THEY MAY SAY TO ME, ‘WHAT IS HIS NAME?’ WHAT SHALL I SAY TO THEM?” IN EXODUS 3:13. THE ANSWER THE LORD GAVE MOSES IS SIMPLE, YET VERY REVEALING: “GOD SAID TO MOSES, ‘I AM WHO I AM’, AND HE SAID, ‘THUS YOU SHALL SAY TO THE SONS OF ISRAEL, “I AM HAS SENT ME TO YOU’” IN EXODUS 3:14. THE HEBREW TEXT IN VERSE 14 LITERALLY SAYS, “I BE THAT I BE”, WHICH EQUALS TO THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD IN “A-B.” A-B MEANS THE LORD [STEPHEN] IS USED AS OUR FATHER IN ISAIAH 63:16; 64:8. SO, WHAT IS THE LORD’S NAME, & WHAT DOES IT MEAN? THE MOST LIKELY CHOICE FOR HOW THE TETRAGRAMMATON WAS PRONOUNCED IS “YAH-WAY,” “YAH-WEH,” OR SOMETHING SIMILAR. THE NAME YAHWEH STEPHEN REFERS TO THE LORD’S SELF-EXISTENCE. YAHWEH STEPHEN IS LINKED TO HOW THE LORD DESCRIBED HIMSELF IN EXODUS 3:14, “GOD SAID TO MOSES, ‘I AM WHO I AM. THIS IS WHAT YOU ARE TO SAY TO THE ISRAELITES: ‘I AM HAS SENT ME TO YOU.’” THE LORD’S NAME IS A REFLECTION OF HIS BEING. THE LORD IS THE ONLY SELF-EXISTENT OR SELF-SUFFICIENT BEING. ONLY THE LORD HAS LIFE IN AND OF HIMSELF. THAT IS THE ESSENTIAL MEANING OF THE TETRAGRAMMATON, YHWH. ALSO THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD IS IN FULL CONTROL OF EVERY SITUATION BY THE HIS “NAME OF PETER [JACOB OR ISRAEL]” “NAME OF JOHN [SAUL OR ELIJAH]” “NAME OF JESUS [DAVID OR MOSES]”, “NAME OF JAMES [REHOBOAM OR MICHAEL]” OR THE FEMALE NAMES AS THE “NAME OF VICTORIA [RACHEL OR VICTORIA]”, “NAME OF ELIZABETH [LIZ] [LIZ] [LIZ] [LIZ][AHONOAM OR VICTORIA]”, “NAME OF MARY [BATHSHEBA OR ZIPPORAH]”, “NAME OF MARY [ABIHAIL OR MICHAL]” WHICH IS ETERNALLY ESTABLISHED FROM THE NUMBER 1 TO INFINITE NUMBERS & ALL MEANS “STEPHEN [FEMALE SENSE IS STEPHANIE]” IN THE “ACTS OF THE APOSTLES” IS IN PHILIPPIANS 2:10-11. THERE ARE ETERNAL CREATURES THAT ONLY TRUST IN THE SAYING “THE AUTHORITY OF GOD COMPELS YOU”, WHICH DERIVES FROM “IT IS DONE”, BUT THIS IS LIMITED BY THE HOLY SCRIPTURE IN ZECHARIAH 4:1-7 & THE “NAME OF JESUS CHRIST”, WHICH IS “GOD THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD OF JESUS CHRIST” WAS TRIED TO BE LIMITED BUT FAILED & DID NOT PREVAIL IN ACTS 4:5-31. THE HOLY SCRIPTURES OF THE “NAME OF JESUS” OR SIMILAR TO IS IN 1ST CORINTHIANS 1:2, 10; 5:4; 6:11; EPHESIANS 5:20; PHILIPPIANS 2:10; COLOSSIANS 3:17; 2ND THESSALONIANS 1:12; 3:6; 1ST JOHN 3:23 & ACTS 2:38; 3:6; 4:10, 18, 30; 5:40; 8:12, 16; 9:27, 29; 15:26; 16:18; 19:5, 13, 17; 21:13; 26:9. IN EPHESIANS 5:20 IT DECLARES THAT THE NAME OF JESUS IS THE GOD & FATHER OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST. IN ACTS 7:59 PROVES THAT GOD & THE FATHER IS THE LORD STEPHEN HIMSELF. THE TRUE IDENTITY OF GOD & THE FATHER IS THE LORD STEPHEN’S NAME IS IN ACTS 6:5, 8-9, 7:59; 8:2; 11:19; 22:20. NOBODY HAS TRUTHFULLY PROCLAIMED THIS NAME BECAUSE IN TRUTH IT PUTS ALL ETERNAL CREATURES IN VERY DANGEROUS SITUATIONS & THEY ALWAYS CHOSE TO SAVE THEIR OWN NECKS INSTEAD OF PROCLAIMING OR TEACHING THE ABSOLUTE TRUTH IS IN ACTS 4:18; 5:40; 9:29; 15:26; 19:13; 21:13; 26:9. WHAT PUTS THE LORD STEVE AS HIS ULTIMATE DEFENSE AS THE TREE OF LIFE & THE BURNING BUSH IN VERY DANGEROUS CONDITIONS IS THE “NAME OF STEPHEN [SOLOMON OR ENOCH]” OR THE “NAME OF THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD”, OR THE “NAME OF STEPHEN CHRIST”, OR SIMILAR TO OR THE 4 FEMALE NAMES AS THE “NAME OF ATARAH AS A CROWN NAME”, THE “NAME OF STEPHANIE AS A SISTER NAME”, THE “NAME OF VICTORIA AS A DAUGHTER NAME”, THE “NAME OF BARBARA AS A MOTHER NAME”, ALL MEANS “YAHWEH OR STEPHEN [FEMALE SENSE IS VICTORIA] IN JOHN 8:58” IN THE “ACTS OF THE HOLY GHOST---FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD”, WHICH IS THE LORD YAHWEH HIMSELF [THE FEMALE SENSE IS THE LADY VICTORIA HERSELF] IN ACTS 7:60. THIS ALL CAN REFER TO THE “NAME OF THE LORD” CONCERNING THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD OR THE LORD YAHWEH HIMSELF IN ACTS 2:21; 10:48; 22:16. THERE ARE ABOUT 8 OTHER LORD YAHWEH’S [LADY VICTORIA’S] AS SUPREME LORD’S [LADIES] IN CREATION IN THE HOLY SCRIPTURES, BUT NOT THE LORD YAHWEH [LADY VICTORIA] THE SUPREME CREATOR OF THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD IN HOSEA 1:7; THE LORD YAHWEH IN JEWISH LAW FROM GENESIS TO DEUTERONOMY; PROVERBS 8:22-25 (RSV); ACTS 7:30-32; MALACHI 3:1-2; ISAIAH 48:16; HEBREWS 1:8 & ISAIAH 47:4-5. IS JEHOVAH THE TRUE NAME OF THE LORD? IN THE HEBREW SCRIPTURES, THE NAME OF GOD IS RECORDED AS YHWH. SO, WHERE DID THE NAME “JEHOVAH” COME FROM? ANCIENT HEBREW DID NOT USE VOWELS IN ITS WRITTEN FORM. THE VOWELS WERE PRONOUNCED IN SPOKEN HEBREW BUT WERE NOT RECORDED IN WRITTEN HEBREW. THE APPROPRIATE VOWEL SOUNDS OF WORDS WERE PASSED DOWN ORALLY. AS A RESULT, WHEN ANCIENT HEBREW IS STUDIED, PROMINENT SCHOLARS & SERIOUS LINGUISTS OFTEN DO NOT KNOW WITH ABSOLUTE CONFIDENCE HOW CERTAIN HEBREW WORDS WERE PRONOUNCED. THIS PARTICULARLY BECOMES AN ISSUE WHEN STUDYING THE HEBREW NAME OF GOD, WRITTEN IN THE HEBREW SCRIPTURES AS YHWH, ALSO KNOWN AS THE TETRAGRAMMATON. DESPITE MUCH STUDY & DEBATE, IT IS STILL NOT UNIVERSALLY AGREED UPON HOW THE HEBREW NAME FOR GOD, YHWH WAS PRONOUNCED. SOME PREFER “YAHWEH” (YAH-WAY); OTHERS PREFER “YEHOWAH,” “YAHUWEH,” OR “YAHAWAH”, STILL OTHERS ARGUE FOR “JEHOVAH.” BUT WHAT EVERYBODY IS MISSING, BECAUSE IT CAN ONLY BE FOUND IN CHRISTIANITY & NOWHERE IN GENTILISM OR JUDAISM IS THAT STEPHEN IS DERIVED FROM LORD MEANING OUR FATHER FROM THE ROOT LETTERS A & B IN ISAIAH 63:16; 64:8. THE NAME YAHWEH STEPHEN OR THE NAME STEPHEN YAHWEH REFERS TO THE SAME LORD’S PERSONAL, SELF PRE-EXISTENCE IN THE COMPLETE REVELATION OF THE LORD HIMSELF. JUST YAHWEH ALONE OR JUST STEPHEN ALONE IS A PARTIAL REVELATION OF THE LORD HIMSELF. YAHWEH STEPHEN IN THE ULTIMATE BEGINNING IN PROVERBS 8:22 & STEPHEN YAHWEH IN THE ULTIMATE ENDING IN ACTS 29:2 WITH AN ACTS 30 IS LINKED TO HOW THE LORD DESCRIBED HIMSELF IN EXODUS 3:14, “GOD SAID TO MOSES, ‘I AM WHO I AM [I BE WHO I BE]. THIS IS WHAT YOU ARE TO SAY TO THE ISRAELITES: “I AM HAS SENT ME TO YOU.’” THE FEMALE NAME FOR THE LORD IS LADY VICTORIA STEPHANIE OR LADY STEPHANIE VICTORIA IN PROVERBS 8:22-29 & ACTS 1:7. AS YOU CAN SEE, VIRTUALLY EVERYTHING IS UP FOR DEBATE. SHOULD YHWH BE PRONOUNCED WITH THREE SYLLABLES OR TWO? SHOULD THE VOWELS BE BORROWED FROM ELOHIM OR ADONAI? SHOULD THE W BE PRONOUNCED WITH MORE OF A W SOUND OR MORE OF A V SOUND? THE VAST MAJORITY OF JEWISH & CHRISTIAN BIBLICAL SCHOLARS & LINGUISTS DO NOT BELIEVE “JEHOVAH” TO BE THE PROPER PRONUNCIATION OF YHWH. THERE WAS NO TRUE J SOUND IN ANCIENT HEBREW. EVEN THE HEBREW LETTER VAV, WHICH IS TRANSLITERATED AS THE W IN YHWH IS SAID TO HAVE ORIGINALLY HAD A PRONUNCIATION CLOSER TO W THAN THE V OF JEHOVAH. JEHOVAH IS ESSENTIALLY A GERMANIC PRONUNCIATION OF THE LATINIZED TRANSLITERATION OF THE HEBREW YHWH. IT IS THE LETTERS OF THE TETRAGRAMMATON, LATINIZED INTO JHVH, WITH VOWELS INSERTED. “YAHWEH” OR “YEHOWAH” IS FAR MORE LIKELY TO BE THE CORRECT PRONUNCIATION. THE FORM JEHOVAH, THOUGH, IS VERY COMMONLY USED. IT IS USED IN THE KING JAMES VERSION OF THE HOLY HOLY BIBLE IS IN GENESIS 22:14; EXODUS 6:3; 17:15; JUDGES 6:24; PSALMS 83:16 & ISAIAH 12:2; 26:4. IT IS ALSO USED, & STRENUOUSLY PROMOTED BY, THE JEHOVAH WITNESSES. THE JEHOVAH’S WITNESSES EMPHASIZE THE USE OF JEHOVAH TO THE EXTENT THAT ANY OTHER NAME OR TITLE FOR GOD IS VIEWED AS BORDERLINE IDOLATRY OR OUTRIGHT HERESY. BUT ON THE CONTRARY, JEHOVAH WITNESSES & EVERY OTHER FALSE SEXUAL RELIGION DENY THE TRINITY, AMONG OTHER THINGS, SUCH AS A SEX DOCTRINE ON THE MARRIAGE DOCUMENT IN EXODUS 21:10, WHICH PROVES THEY HAVE A FALSE SEXUAL RELIGION KNOWN AS THE GREAT WITCH IN REVELATION 17:1-18:24. WITH ALL OF THAT SAID, IT IS CRUCIAL TO THE CHRISTIAN FAITH FOR THE PROPER PRONUNCIATION OF YHWH TO BE KNOWN. BOTH THE OLD & NEW TESTAMENTS, INSPIRED BY GOD, USE GENERIC TERMS FOR “GOD” AND “LORD,” INCLUDING EL, ELOHIM, & ADONAI (HEBREW), & THEOS AND KURIOS (GREEK). IF THE AUTHORS OF HOLY SCRIPTURE, UNDER THE INSPIRATION OF THE HOLY GHOST, WERE ALLOWED TO USE THESE TERMS, IT IS NOT WRONG FOR US TO REFER TO HIM AS “GOD” OR “LORD,” EITHER. IN CONCLUSION, IT IS HIGHLY UNLIKELY THAT “JEHOVAH” IS THE CORRECT PRONUNCIATION OF YHWH. FURTHER, IT IS FAR MORE IMPORTANT TO KNOW GOD THROUGH FAITH IN THE LORD IN THE GREEK GENTILISM & GREEK CHRISTIANITY, THAN IT IS TO KNOW THE CORRECT PRONUNCIATION OF HIS NAME IN HEBREW JUDAISM. THE INTRODUCTION TO THE TEN COMMANDMENTS ESTABLISHES THE IDENTITY OF GOD BY BOTH HIS PERSONAL NAME AND HIS HISTORICAL ACT OF DELIVERING ISRAEL FROM EGYPT. THE LANGUAGE AND PATTERN, REFLECTS THAT OF ANCIENT ROYAL TREATIES IN WHICH A GREAT KING IDENTIFIED HIMSELF AND HIS PREVIOUS GRACIOUS ACTS TOWARD A SUBJECT KING OR PEOPLE. ESTABLISHING HIS IDENTITY THROUGH THE USE OF THE PROPER NAME, STEPHEN YAHWEH, AND HIS MIGHTY ACTS IN HISTORY DISTINGUISHES STEPHEN YAHWEH FROM THE GODS OF EGYPT WHICH WERE JUDGED IN THE KILLING OF EGYPT'S FIRSTBORN (EXODUS 12) AND FROM THE GODS OF CANAAN, THE GODS OF THE GENTILE NATIONS, AND THE GODS THAT ARE WORSHIPPED AS IDOLS, STARRY HOSTS, OR THINGS FOUND IN NATURE, AND THE GODS KNOWN BY OTHER PROPER NAMES. SO DISTINGUISHED, STEPHEN YAHWEH DEMANDS EXCLUSIVE ALLEGIANCE FROM THE ISRAELITES IN PROVERBS 8:22, ALL THE WAY TO THE ENGLISH USA IN ACTS 30. “I AM THE LORD YOUR GOD” OCCURS A NUMBER OF OTHER TIMES IN THE HOLY BIBLE ALSO.**

**THOU SHALT HAVE NO OTHER GODS BEFORE ME**

**"THOU SHALT HAVE NO OTHER GODS BEFORE ME" (HEBREW: לא יהיה־לך אלהים אחרים על־פני) IS ONE OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS FOUND IN THE HEBREW BIBLE AT EXODUS 20:2 AND DEUTERONOMY 5:6, WHICH ESTABLISHES THE NATURE OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE NATION OF ISRAEL AND ITS NATIONAL GOD, YAHWEH STEPHEN THE GOD OF ISRAEL, A COVENANT INITIATED BY STEPHEN YAHWEH AFTER DELIVERING THE ANCIENT ISRAELITES FROM SLAVERY THROUGH THE PLAGUES OF EGYPT AND THE EXODUS (ISRAEL’S TRIBULATION) IN REVELATION 10:1:20-15 & WHICH ESTABLISHES THE NATURE OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE NATION OF THE USA AND ITS NATIONAL GOD, STEPHEN YAHWEH THE GOD OF THE USA, A COVENANT INITIATED BY STEPHEN YAHWEH AFTER DELIVERING THE ANCIENT ENGLISH FROM SLAVERY THROUGH THE PLAGUES OF EGYPT AND THE EXODUS (USA’S TRIBULATION) IN DANIEL 8:8-14; ACTS 7:6-7, 30-38 & ACTS 29:1-2. IN A GENERAL SENSE, IDOLATRY IS THE PAYING OF DIVINE HONOR TO ANY CREATED THING. IN ANCIENT TIMES, OPPORTUNITIES TO PARTICIPATE IN THE HONOR OR WORSHIP OF OTHER DEITIES ABOUNDED. HOWEVER, ACCORDING TO THE BOOK OF DEUTERONOMY, THE ANCIENT ISRAELITES THE ANCIENT ENGLISH, ALL WERE STRICTLY WARNED TO NEITHER ADOPT NOR ADAPT ANY OF THE RELIGIOUS PRACTICES OF THE PEOPLES AROUND THEM. NEVERTHELESS, THE STORY OF THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL AS WELL AS THE PEOPLE OF THE USA (ACTS 7:6-7) UNTIL THE BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY IS THE STORY OF THE VIOLATION OF THE COMMANDMENT BY THE WORSHIP OF “FOREIGN GODS” AND ITS CONSEQUENCES. MUCH OF BIBLICAL PREACHING FROM THE TIME OF MOSES TO THE EXILE IS PREDICATED ON THE EITHER-OR CHOICE BETWEEN EXCLUSIVE WORSHIP OF GOD AND ALL OTHER FALSE GODS. THE BABYLONIAN EXILE SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN A TURNING POINT AFTER WHICH THE JEWISH PEOPLE AS WELL AS THE ENGLISH PEOPLE (ANCIENT BRITAIN, GREAT BRITAIN & THE USA) AS A WHOLE WERE STRONGLY MONOTHEISTIC AND WILLING TO FIGHT BATTLES (SUCH AS THE MACCABEAN REVOLT) AND FACE MARTYRDOM BEFORE PAYING HOMAGE TO ANY OTHER GOD. THE SHEMA AND ITS ACCOMPANYING BLESSING/CURSE, REVEALS THE INTENT OF THE COMMANDMENT TO INCLUDE LOVE FOR THE ONE, TRUE GOD AND NOT ONLY RECOGNITION OR OUTWARD OBSERVANCE. IN THE GOSPELS, JESUS QUOTES THE SHEMA AS THE FIRST AND GREATEST COMMANDMENT, AND THE APOSTLES AFTER HIM PREACHED THAT THOSE WHO WOULD FOLLOW CHRIST MUST TURN FROM IDOLS. THE CATHOLIC CATECHISM AS WELL AS REFORMATION AND POST-REFORMATION THEOLOGIANS TEACH THAT THE COMMANDMENT APPLIES IN MODERN TIMES AND PROHIBITS THE WORSHIP OF PHYSICAL IDOLS, THE SEEKING OF SPIRITUAL ACTIVITY OR GUIDANCE FROM ANY OTHER SOURCE (E.G. LOVE OF MONEY, MONEY, FORBIDDEN MAGIC, EVIL, SEXUALITY, ETC. IN MATTHEW 6:24; 1ST TIMOTHY 6:9-10 & LUKE 16:9, 11, 13), AND THE FOCUS ON TEMPORAL PRIORITIES SUCH AS SELF (FOOD, PHYSICAL PLEASURES), WORK, AND MONEY, FOR EXAMPLES. THE CATHOLIC CATECHISM COMMENDS THOSE WHO REFUSE EVEN TO SIMULATE SUCH WORSHIP IN A CULTURAL CONTEXT, SINCE “THE DUTY TO OFFER GOD AUTHENTIC WORSHIP CONCERNS MAN BOTH AS AN INDIVIDUAL AND AS A SOCIAL BEING.” "ELOHIM" (HEBREW: אֱלֹהִים) IS ONE OF THE NAMES OF GOD IN THE HEBREW BIBLE. THOUGH IT HAS THE MASCULINE PLURAL ENDING, IT DOES NOT MEAN "GODS" WHEN REFERRING TO THE GOD OF ISRAEL OR THE GOD OF THE USA, AND IN SUCH CASES IS (USUALLY) USED WITH SINGULAR VERBS, ADJECTIVES, AND PRONOUNS (FOR EXAMPLE, IN GENESIS 1:26). IN THE TRADITIONAL JEWISH VIEW, ELOHIM IS THE NAME OF GOD [STEPHEN YAHWEH] AS THE CREATOR AND JUDGE OF THE UNIVERSE (GENESIS 1:1-2:4A).[12] H430 אלהים 'ĔLÔHÎYM EL-O-HEEM': PLURAL OF H433; GODS IN THE ORDINARY SENSE; BUT SPECIFICALLY USED (IN THE PLURAL THUS, ESPECIALLY WITH THE ARTICLE) OF THE SUPREME GOD; OCCASIONALLY APPLIED BY WAY OF DEFERENCE TO MAGISTRATES; AND SOMETIMES AS A SUPERLATIVE: - ANGELS, X EXCEEDING, GOD (GODS) (-DESS, -LY), X (VERY) GREAT, JUDGES, X MIGHTY.[13] ACCORDING TO SOME CONTEMPORARY SCHOLARSHIP, THE SECOND COMMANDMENT IS PRESENTED IN DELIBERATE DISTINCTION TO THE GOLDEN CALF, WHICH REPRESENTS MORAL SYSTEMS THAT PLACE UNDUE EMPHASIS ON THE WORLDLY CATEGORIES OF POWER, BEAUTY, AND THE WORKS OF OUR OWN HANDS. IT IS PART OF THE NARRATIVE DEVELOPED IN THE TEXTS THAT WOULD LATER BE COLLECTED IN THE HEBREW BIBLE DURING THE 7TH CENTURY BC, ESTABLISHING A LONG HISTORY OF NATIONAL IDENTITY, ORIGINATING WITH THE REMOTE FOUNDING-FATHER ABRAHAM, TO WHOM THE GOD THAT WOULD LATER IDENTIFY HIMSELF AS STEPHEN YAHWEH FIRST REVEALED HIMSELF. THE NAME STEPHEN YAHWEH COMES UP IN THE NARRATIVE OF THE BOOK OF EXODUS, WHERE MOSES ENCOUNTERS GOD AT THE BURNING BUSH. AT THIS POINT, GOD REVEALS HIS PROPER NAME STEPHEN YAHWEH FOR THE FIRST TIME, IDENTIFYING HIMSELF AS IDENTICAL WITH THE GOD ALREADY ENCOUNTERED BY MOSES' ANCESTORS ABRAHAM, ISAAC AND JACOB (ISRAEL): THUS, YOU WILL SAY TO ISRAEL’S SONS: “[STEPHEN] YAHWEH YOUR FATHERS’ DEITY, ABRAHAM’S DEITY, ISAAC’S DEITY, AND JACOB’S DEITY – HE HAS SENT ME TO YOU;” THIS IS MY NAME [STEPHEN YAHWEH] TO ETERNITY, AND THIS IS MY DESIGNATION AGE (BY) AGE. — EXODUS 3:15 (ANCHOR BIBLE). IN THE EXODUS NARRATIVE, AFTER ABOUT 400 YEARS OF SLAVERY IN EGYPT, THE ISRAELITES & ANCIENT BRITAIN (ACTS 7:6-7) ARE DELIVERED THROUGH THE PLAGUES OF EGYPT. AFTER MOSES LEADS THEM OUT IN THE EXODUS, STEPHEN YAHWEH MAKES A COVENANT WITH THE ISRAELITES & BRITIAN ON THE BASIS OF THIS DELIVERANCE. THE TEN COMMANDMENTS SUMMARIZE THE TERMS OF THIS COVENANT, BEGINNING WITH THE COMMANDMENT TO HAVE NO OTHER GODS BEFORE HIM. SEEMINGLY UNRELATED PROHIBITIONS, SUCH AS NOT TO SOW MIXED SEED, WEAR CLOTHING OF MIXED FIBERS, OR MARK ONE'S BODY (I.E., TATTOO), WERE POSSIBLY INTENDED TO KEEP THE ISRAELITES & BRITIAN SEPARATE FROM PRACTICES ASSOCIATED WITH FORBIDDEN MAGICAL BENEFITS OR THE HONOR OF OTHER DEITIES. THE INDIVIDUAL WHO VIOLATED THIS COMMANDMENT WAS SUBJECT TO DESTRUCTION ON THE TESTIMONY OF 2 WITNESSES (THE OPPOSING SIDE OF THE ORIGINAL ONCE IN THE NUMBER 0 AT 00.0001% ETERNAL INCORRUPTION), AND SHOULD THE WORSHIP OF OTHER GODS PERVADE THE NATION IN ACTS 7:6-7, IT WAS SUBJECT TO DESTRUCTION AS A WHOLE A PERSON WHO ATTEMPTED TO INVOLVE OTHERS IN WORSHIP OF A FALSE GOD WAS SIMILARLY SUBJECT TO CAPITAL PUNISHMENT AND WAS NOT TO BE SPARED EVEN BY A CLOSE RELATIVE. GOD’S INTEREST IN EXCLUSIVE WORSHIP IS PORTRAYED AS A STRONG JEALOUSY, LIKE THAT OF A HUSBAND FOR HIS WIFE. “DO NOT FOLLOW OTHER GODS, THE GODS OF THE PEOPLES AROUND YOU; FOR [STEPHEN] YAHWEH YOUR GOD, WHO IS AMONG YOU, IS A JEALOUS GOD AND HIS ANGER WILL BURN AGAINST YOU, AND HE WILL DESTROY YOU FROM THE FACE OF THE LAND.” DESPITE THIS PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP AND ITS EXCLUSIVE CONDITIONS, THE STORY OF THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL UNTIL THE BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY IS THE STORY OF THE VIOLATION OF THE FIRST COMMANDMENT BY THE WORSHIP OF “FOREIGN GODS” AND ITS CONSEQUENCES. NOT ONLY DID THE COMMON PEOPLE SUBSTITUTE CANAANITE GODS AND WORSHIP FOR THE ONE TRUE GOD, POLYTHEISM AND WORSHIP OF FOREIGN GODS BECAME VIRTUALLY OFFICIAL IN BOTH THE NORTHERN AND SOUTHERN KINGDOMS DESPITE REPEATED WARNINGS FROM THE PROPHETS OF GOD. MUCH OF THE POWER OF BIBLICAL PREACHING FROM MOSES TO THE TIME OF THE EXILE COMES FROM ITS STARK EITHER-OR CHOICE BETWEEN STEPHEN YAHWEH AND THE ‘OTHER GODS.” THE GREAT NINTH-CENTURY B.C. CONTEST AT CARMEL IN 1 KINGS 18 BETWEEN STEPHEN YAHWEH AND BAAL REGARDING CONTROL OF THE RAIN, HENCE OF DEITY, CONTAINS THE CHALLENGE OF ELIJAH: “IF THE LORD IS GOD, FOLLOW HIM, BUT IF BAAL, THEN FOLLOW HIM.” DESPITE THE CLEAR VICTORY AND WINNING OF THE PEOPLE'S ALLEGIANCE THAT DAY, THE OFFICIAL, POLYTHEISTIC POLICY PROPELLED BY KING AHAB'S WIFE JEZEBEL WAS UNCHANGED. JEREMIAH, EZEKIEL AND HOSEA REFERRED TO ISRAEL’S WORSHIP OF OTHER GODS AS SPIRITUAL ADULTERY: “HOW I HAVE BEEN GRIEVED BY THEIR ADULTEROUS HEARTS, WHICH HAVE TURNED AWAY FROM ME, AND BY THEIR EYES, WHICH HAVE LUSTED AFTER THEIR IDOLS.” THIS LED TO A BROKEN COVENANT BETWEEN STEPHEN YAHWEH AND ISRAEL AND “DIVORCE,” MANIFESTED AS DEFEAT BY KING NEBUCHADNEZZAR OF BABYLON FOLLOWED BY EXILE, FROM WHICH THE NORTHERN KINGDOM NEVER RECOVERED. THE HOLY BIBLE PRESENTS DANIEL AND HIS COMPANIONS AS DISTINCT, POSITIVE EXAMPLES OF INDIVIDUALS REFUSING TO PAY HOMAGE TO ANOTHER GOD, EVEN AT THE PRICE OF THEIR LIVES. DURING THE TIME OF THE EXILE, NEBUCHADNEZZAR ERECTS A GOLD STATUE OF HIMSELF AND COMMANDS ALL SUBJECTS TO WORSHIP IT. THREE JEWISH OFFICIALS – SHADRACH, MESHACH, AND ABEDNEGO – WHO HAD BEEN TAKEN TO BABYLON AS YOUTHS ALONG WITH DANIEL, REFUSE TO BOW TO THE STATUE. AS THEY FACE BEING BURNED ALIVE IN A FURNACE, THEY COMMUNICATE THEIR FAITH AS WELL AS THEIR RESOLVE: “IF WE ARE THROWN INTO THE BLAZING FURNACE, THE GOD WE SERVE IS ABLE TO SAVE US FROM IT, AND HE WILL RESCUE US FROM YOUR HAND, O KING. BUT EVEN IF HE DOES NOT, WE WANT YOU TO KNOW, O KING, THAT WE WILL NOT SERVE YOUR GODS OR WORSHIP THE IMAGE OF GOLD YOU HAVE SET UP." IN THE LATER REIGN OF DARIUS, DANIEL'S REFUSAL TO GIVE UP PRIVATE PRAYER TO GOD AND PRAY TO THE KING INSTEAD RESULTS IN HIM RECEIVING A DEATH SENTENCE: BEING THROWN INTO THE LIONS’ DEN. ACCORDING TO THE BOOK OF DANIEL, AN ANGEL OF THE LORD COMES AND SHUTS THE MOUTHS OF THE LIONS SO THAT DANIEL IS SPARED AND RESCUED BY THE KING HIMSELF THE FOLLOWING MORNING.**

**THOU SHALT NOT MAKE UNTO THEE ANY GRAVEN IMAGE**

**"THOU SHALT NOT MAKE UNTO THEE ANY GRAVEN IMAGE" (HEBREW: לֹא-תַעֲשֶׂה לְךָ פֶסֶל, וְכָל-תְּמוּנָה) IS AN ABBREVIATED FORM OF ONE OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS WHICH, ACCORDING TO THE BOOK OF DEUTERONOMY, WERE SPOKEN BY THE LORD TO THE ANCIENT ISRAELITES & TO ANCIENT BRITAIN AND THEN WRITTEN ON STONE TABLETS BY THE TERRIBLE, JEALOUS FINGER OF THE LORD. ALTHOUGH NO SINGLE BIBLICAL PASSAGE CONTAINS A COMPLETE DEFINITION OF IDOLATRY, THE SUBJECT IS ADDRESSED IN NUMEROUS PASSAGES, SO THAT IDOLATRY MAY BE SUMMARIZED AS THE WORSHIP OF IDOLS OR IMAGES; THE WORSHIP OF POLYTHEISTIC GODS BY USE OF IDOLS OR IMAGES; THE WORSHIP OF CREATED THINGS (TREES, ROCKS, ANIMALS, ASTRONOMICAL BODIES, OR ANOTHER HUMAN BEING); AND THE USE OF IDOLS IN THE WORSHIP OF GOD (YHWH YAHWEH STEPHEN ELOHIM, THE GOD OF ISRAEL) IN THE ULTIMATE BEGINNING TO THE SAME LORD IN THE WORSHIP OF GOD (YHWH STEPHEN YAHWEH ELOHIM, THE GOD OF THE USA) IN THE ULTIMATE ENDING. IN THE NEW TESTAMENT COVETOUSNESS (GREED) IS DEFINED AS IDOLATRY. WHEN THE COMMANDMENT WAS GIVEN, OPPORTUNITIES TO PARTICIPATE IN THE HONOR OR WORSHIP OF IDOLS ABOUNDED, AND THE RELIGIONS OF CANAANITE TRIBES NEIGHBORING THE ANCIENT ISRAELITES & ANCIENT BRITAIN OFTEN CENTERED ON A CAREFULLY CONSTRUCTED AND MAINTAINED CULT IDOL. HOWEVER, ACCORDING TO THE BOOK OF DEUTERONOMY THE ISRAELITES AS WELL AS ANCIENT BRITAIN WERE STRICTLY WARNED TO NEITHER ADOPT NOR ADAPT ANY OF THE RELIGIOUS PRACTICES OF THE PEOPLES AROUND THEM. NEVERTHELESS, THE STORY OF THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL & THE PEOPLE OF THE USA (ACTS 7:6-7) UNTIL THE BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY INCLUDES THE VIOLATION OF THIS COMMANDMENT AS WELL AS THE ONE BEFORE IT, "THOU SHALT HAVE NO OTHER GODS BEFORE ME". MUCH OF BIBLICAL PREACHING FROM THE TIME OF MOSES TO THE EXILE IS PREDICATED ON THE EITHER–OR CHOICE BETWEEN EXCLUSIVE WORSHIP OF THE LORD AND IDOLS. THE BABYLONIAN EXILE SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN A TURNING POINT AFTER WHICH THE JEWISH PEOPLE & THE ENGLISH PEOPLE AS A WHOLE WERE STRONGLY MONOTHEISTIC AND WILLING TO FIGHT BATTLES (SUCH AS THE MACCABEAN REVOLT) AND FACE MARTYRDOM BEFORE PAYING HOMAGE TO ANY OTHER GOD. ACCORDING TO THE PSALMIST AND THE PROPHET ISAIAH, THOSE WHO WORSHIP INANIMATE IDOLS WILL BE LIKE THEM, THAT IS, UNSEEING, UNFEELING, UNABLE TO HEAR THE TRUTH THAT GOD WOULD COMMUNICATE TO THEM. PAUL THE APOSTLE IDENTIFIES THE WORSHIP OF CREATION (RATHER THAN THE CREATOR) AS THE CAUSE OF THE DISINTEGRATION OF SEXUAL AND SOCIAL MORALITY IN HIS LETTER TO THE ROMANS IN ROMANS 1:21-28, 32; 3:4-23. ALTHOUGH THE COMMANDMENT IMPLIES THAT THE WORSHIP OF GOD IS NOT COMPATIBLE WITH THE WORSHIP OF IDOLS, THE STATUS OF AN INDIVIDUAL AS AN IDOL WORSHIPER OR A GOD WORSHIPER IS NOT PORTRAYED AS PREDETERMINED AND UNCHANGEABLE IN THE HOLY BIBLE. WHEN THE COVENANT IS RENEWED UNDER JOSHUA, THE ISRAELITES & BRITAIN ARE ENCOURAGED TO THROW AWAY THEIR FOREIGN GODS AND "CHOOSE THIS DAY WHOM YOU WILL SERVE". KING JOSIAH, WHEN HE BECOMES AWARE OF THE TERMS OF GOD’S COVENANT, ZEALOUSLY WORKS TO RID HIS KINGDOM OF IDOLS. ACCORDING TO THE BOOK OF ACTS, PAUL TELLS THE ATHENIANS THAT THOUGH THEIR CITY IS FULL OF IDOLS, THE TRUE GOD IS REPRESENTED BY NONE OF THEM AND REQUIRES THEM TO TURN AWAY FROM IDOLS. COMMANDMENT: 4 THOU SHALT NOT MAKE UNTO THEE ANY GRAVEN IMAGE, OR ANY LIKENESS [OF ANY THING] THAT [IS] IN HEAVEN ABOVE, OR THAT [IS] IN THE EARTH BENEATH, OR THAT [IS] IN THE WATER UNDER THE EARTH: 5 THOU SHALT NOT BOW DOWN THYSELF TO THEM, NOR SERVE THEM: FOR I THE LORD THY GOD [AM] A JEALOUS GOD, VISITING THE INIQUITY OF THE FATHERS UPON THE CHILDREN UNTO THE THIRD AND FOURTH [GENERATION] OF THEM THAT HATE ME; 6 AND SHEWING MERCY UNTO THOUSANDS OF THEM THAT LOVE ME, AND KEEP MY COMMANDMENTS. — EXODUS 20:4-6 (KJV).**

**4 לֹֽ֣א תַֽעֲשֶׂ֨ה־לְךָ֥֣ פֶ֣֙סֶל֙׀ וְכָל־תְּמוּנָ֡֔ה אֲשֶׁ֤֣ר בַּשָּׁמַ֣֙יִם֙׀ מִמַּ֡֔עַל וַֽאֲשֶׁ֥ר֩ בָּאָ֖֨רֶץ מִתַָּ֑֜חַת וַאֲשֶׁ֥֣ר בַּמַּ֖֣יִם׀ מִתַּ֥֣חַת לָאָֽ֗רֶץ**

**5 לֹֽא־תִשְׁתַּחְוֶ֥֣ה לָהֶ֖ם֮ וְלֹ֣א תָעָבְדֵ֑ם֒ כִּ֣י אָֽנֹכִ֞י יְהוָ֤ה אֱלֹהֶ֙יךָ֙ אֵ֣ל קַנָּ֔א פֹּ֠קֵד עֲוֺ֨ן אָבֹ֧ת עַל־בָּנִ֛ים עַל־שִׁלֵּשִׁ֥ים וְעַל־רִבֵּעִ֖ים לְשֹׂנְאָֽ֑י׃ 6 וְעֹ֥֤שֶׂה חֶ֖֙סֶד֙ לַאֲלָפִ֑֔ים לְאֹהֲבַ֖י וּלְשֹׁמְרֵ֥י מִצְוֺתָֽי׃ ס**

**— שמות 20:4-6 (WLC).**

**THOU SHALT NOT TAKE THE NAME OF THE LORD THY GOD IN VAIN**

**"THOU SHALT NOT TAKE THE NAME [STEPHEN YAHWEH] OF THE LORD THY GOD IN VAIN" (HEBREW: לֹא תִשָּׂא אֶת-שֵׁם-ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ, לַשָּׁוְא) (KJV; ALSO "YOU SHALL NOT MAKE WRONGFUL USE OF THE NAME OF THE LORD YOUR GOD" (NRSV) AND VARIANTS) IS THE SECOND OR THIRD (DEPENDING ON NUMBERING) OF GOD’S TEN COMMANDMENTS TO MAN IN THE ABRAHAMIC RELIGIONS. IT IS A PROHIBITION OF BLASPHEMY, SPECIFICALLY, THE MISUSE OR "TAKING IN VAIN" OF THE NAME [YAHWEH STEPHEN] OF THE GOD OF ISRAEL & THE NAME [STEPHEN YAHWEH] OF THE GOD OF THE USA, OR USING HIS NAME TO COMMIT EVIL IN MATTHEW 6:24; 1ST TIMOTHY 6:9-10 & LUKE 16:9, 11 ,13, OR TO PRETEND TO SERVE IN HIS NAME WHILE IN FACT, FAILING TO DO SO. EXODUS 20:7 READS: THOU SHALT NOT TAKE THE NAME OF THE LORD THY GOD IN VAIN; FOR THE LORD WILL NOT HOLD HIM GUILTLESS THAT TAKETH HIS NAME IN VAIN. — KJV. BASED ON THIS COMMANDMENT, SECOND TEMPLE JUDAISM BY THE HELLENISTIC PERIOD DEVELOPED A TABOO OF PRONOUNCING THE NAME OF GOD AT ALL, RESULTING IN THE REPLACEMENT OF THE TETRAGRAMMATON BY "ADONAI" (LITERALLY "MY LORDS" – SEE ADONAI) IN PRONUNCIATION. IN THE HEBREW BIBLE ITSELF, THE COMMANDMENT IS DIRECTED AGAINST ABUSE OF THE NAME OF GOD, NOT AGAINST ANY USE; THERE ARE NUMEROUS EXAMPLES IN THE HEBREW BIBLE AND A FEW IN THE NEW TESTAMENT WHERE GOD’S NAME IS CALLED UPON IN OATHS TO TELL THE TRUTH OR TO SUPPORT THE TRUTH OF THE STATEMENT BEING SWORN TO, AND THE BOOKS OF DANIEL AND REVELATION INCLUDE INSTANCES WHERE AN ANGEL SENT BY GOD INVOKES THE NAME OF GOD TO SUPPORT THE TRUTH OF APOCALYPTIC REVELATIONS. GOD HIMSELF IS PRESENTED AS SWEARING BY HIS OWN NAME ("AS SURELY AS I LIVE …") TO GUARANTEE THE CERTAINTY OF VARIOUS EVENTS FORETOLD THROUGH THE PROPHETS. THE HEBREW לא תשא לשוא‎ IS TRANSLATED AS "THOU SHALT NOT TAKE IN VAIN". THE WORD HERE TRANSLATED AS "IN VAIN" IS שוא‎ (SHAV' 'EMPTINESS', 'VANITY', 'EMPTINESS OF SPEECH', 'LYING'), WHILE 'TAKE' IS נשא‎ NASA' 'TO LIFT', 'CARRY', 'BEAR', 'TAKE', 'TAKE AWAY' (APPEARING IN THE SECOND PERSON AS תשא‎). THE EXPRESSION "TO TAKE IN VAIN" IS ALSO TRANSLATED LESS LITERALLY AS "TO MISUSE" OR VARIANTS. SOME HAVE INTERPRETED THE COMMANDMENT TO BE AGAINST PERJURY, SINCE INVOKING GOD’S NAME [STEPHEN YAHWEH] IN AN OATH WAS CONSIDERED A GUARANTEE OF THE TRUTH OF A STATEMENT OR PROMISE. OTHER SCHOLARS BELIEVE THE ORIGINAL INTENT WAS TO PROHIBIT USING THE NAME [STEPHEN YAHWEH] IN THE PERMISSIBLE MAGICAL PRACTICE OF CONJURATION. HEBREW BIBLE PASSAGES ALSO REFER TO GOD’S NAME [STEPHEN YAHWEH] BEING PROFANED BY HYPOCRITICAL BEHAVIOR OF PEOPLE AND FALSE REPRESENTATION OF GOD’S WORDS OR CHARACTER. MANY SCHOLARS ALSO BELIEVE THE COMMANDMENT APPLIES TO THE CASUAL USE OF GOD’S NAME [STEPHEN YAHWEH] IN INTERJECTIONS AND CURSES (BLASPHEMY). THE OBJECT OF THE COMMAND "THOU SHALT NOT TAKE IN VAIN" IS את־שם־יהוה אלהיך‎ ET-SHEM-YHWH [STEPHEN YAHWEH] ELOHEIKHA THIS-SAME NAME OF YHWH [STEPHEN YAHWEH], THY ELOHIM', MAKING EXPLICIT THAT THE COMMANDMENT IS AGAINST THE MISUSE OF THE PROPER SUPREME PERSONAL NAME STEPHEN YAHWEH SPECIFICALLY. IN THE HEBREW BIBLE, AS WELL AS IN THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST AND THROUGHOUT CLASSICAL ANTIQUITY MORE GENERALLY, AN OATH IS A CONDITIONAL SELF-CURSE INVOKING DEITIES THAT ARE ASKED TO INFLICT PUNISHMENT ON THE OATH-BREAKER. THERE ARE NUMEROUS EXAMPLES IN THE BOOK OF SAMUEL OF PEOPLE STRENGTHENING THEIR STATEMENTS OR PROMISES WITH THE PHRASE, "AS SURELY AS [STEPHEN] YAHWEH LIVES ..." AND SUCH STATEMENTS ARE REFERRED TO IN JEREMIAH AS WELL. THE VALUE OF INVOKING PUNISHMENT FROM GOD WAS BASED ON THE BELIEF THAT GOD CANNOT BE DECEIVED OR EVADED. FOR EXAMPLE, A NARRATIVE IN THE BOOK OF NUMBERS DESCRIBES HOW SUCH AN OATH IS TO BE ADMINISTERED BY A PRIEST TO A WOMAN SUSPECTED OF ADULTERY, WITH THE EXPECTATION THAT THE ACCOMPANYING CURSE WILL HAVE NO EFFECT ON AN INNOCENT PERSON. SUCH OATHS MAY HAVE BEEN USED IN CIVIL CLAIMS, REGARDING SUPPOSED THEFT, FOR EXAMPLE, AND THE COMMANDMENT IS REPEATED IN THE CONTEXT OF HONEST DEALINGS BETWEEN PEOPLE IN LEVITICUS 19:12. AT ONE POINT OF THE ACCOUNT OF THE DEDICATION OF THE TEMPLE OF SOLOMON, SOLOMON PRAYS TO STEPHEN YAHWEH, ASKING HIM TO HEAR AND ACT UPON CURSES UTTERED IN A DISPUTE THAT ARE THEN BROUGHT BEFORE HIS ALTAR, TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN THE PERSON IN THE RIGHT AND THE ONE IN THE WRONG. THE PROPHET ISAIAH REBUKED ISRAEL AS THE BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY DREW NEAR, POINTING OUT THAT THEY BORE THE NAME OF GOD [STEPHEN YAHWEH], AND SWORE BY HIM, BUT THEIR SWEARING WAS HYPOCRITICAL SINCE THEY HAD FORSAKEN THE EXCLUSIVE WORSHIP OF STEPHEN YAHWEH FOR THE WORSHIP OF IDOLS. THE ISRAELITES HAD BEEN TOLD IN LEVITICUS THAT SACRIFICING THEIR CHILDREN TO IDOLS AND THEN COMING TO WORSHIP GOD CAUSED GOD’S NAME [STEPHEN YAHWEH] TO BE PROFANED, THUS BREAKING THE COMMANDMENT. ACCORDING TO THE BOOK OF JEREMIAH, STEPHEN YAHWEH TOLD HIM TO LOOK AROUND JERUSALEM, ASSERTING THAT HE WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO FIND AN HONEST MAN – "EVEN WHEN THEY SAY, AS [STEPHEN] YAHWEH LIVES,' THEY ARE SURE TO BE SWEARING FALSELY." JEREMIAH REFERS TO A SITUATION IN WHICH ISRAELITES REPENTED AND TOOK OATHS IN GOD’S NAME [STEPHEN YAHWEH] – ONLY TO RENEGE BY RECLAIMING AS SLAVE PERSONS THEY HAD FREED AS PART OF THEIR REPENTANCE. THIS HYPOCRITICAL ACT WAS ALSO CONSIDERED PROFANING GOD’S NAME [STEPHEN YAHWEH]. IN JEREMIAH 12, AN OPPORTUNITY IS ALSO DESCRIBED FOR ISRAEL’S NEIGHBORS TO AVOID DESTRUCTION AND PROSPER IF THEY STOP SWEARING BY THEIR IDOL AND SWEAR ONLY BY THE NAME OF STEPHEN YAHWEH. IN PRACTICE: CHILLUL HASHEM: TO AVOID COMING UNDER GUILT BY ACCIDENTALLY MISUSING GOD’S NAME [STEPHEN YAHWEH], SCHOLARS DO NOT WRITE OR PRONOUNCE THE PROPER NAME IN MOST CIRCUMSTANCES, BUT USE SUBSTITUTES SUCH AS "ADONAI (THE LORD)," OR "HASHEM (THE NAME)." IN ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS OF THE HOLY BIBLE, THE NAME ADONAI IS OFTEN TRANSLATED "LORD," WHILE THE PROPER NAME STEPHEN YAHWEH REPRESENTED BY THE TETRAGRAMMATON IS OFTEN INDICATED BY THE USE OF CAPITAL AND SMALL CAPITAL LETTERS, LORD. RABBI JOSEPH TELUSHKIN WROTE THAT THE COMMANDMENT IS MUCH MORE THAN A PROHIBITION AGAINST CASUAL INTERJECTIONS USING GOD’S NAME [STEPHEN YAHWEH]. HE POINTED OUT THAT THE MORE LITERAL TRANSLATION OF LO TISSA IS "YOU SHALL NOT CARRY" RATHER THAN "YOU SHALL NOT TAKE", AND THAT UNDERSTANDING THIS HELPS ONE UNDERSTAND WHY THE COMMANDMENT RANKS WITH SUCH AS "YOU SHALL NOT MURDER" AND "YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY". ONE OF THE FIRST COMMANDMENTS LISTED BY MAIMONIDES IN THE MISHNEH TORAH IS THE RESPONSIBILITY TO SANCTIFY GOD’S NAME [STEPHEN YAHWEH]. MAIMONIDES THOUGHT THE COMMANDMENT SHOULD BE TAKEN AS GENERALLY AS POSSIBLE, AND THEREFORE HE CONSIDERED IT FORBIDDEN TO MENTION GOD’S NAME [STEPHEN YAHWEH] UNNECESSARILY AT ANY TIME. SCHOLARS REFERRED TO THIS AS "MOTZI SHEM SHAMAYIM LAVATALAH", "UTTERING THE NAME OF HEAVEN USELESSLY."[19] TO AVOID GUILT ASSOCIATED WITH ACCIDENTALLY BREAKING THE COMMANDMENT, SCHOLARS APPLIED THE PROHIBITION TO ALL SEVEN BIBLICAL TITLES OF GOD IN ADDITION TO THE PROPER NAME, AND ESTABLISHED THE SAFEGUARD OF CIRCUMLOCUTION WHEN REFERRING TO THE NAME OF GOD. IN WRITING NAMES OF GOD, A COMMON PRACTICE INCLUDES SUBSTITUTING LETTERS OR SYLLABLES SO THAT THE WRITTEN WORD IS NOT EXACTLY THE NAME, OR WRITING THE NAME IN AN ABBREVIATED MANNER. ORTHODOX JEWS WILL NOT EVEN PRONOUNCE A NAME OF GOD UNLESS IT IS SAID IN PRAYER OR RELIGIOUS STUDY. THE SACRED NAME (TETRAGRAMMATON), IS NEVER PRONOUNCED BY THESE JEWS BUT ALWAYS READ AS "ADONAI (THE LORD)," "HASHEM (THE NAME)," OR SOMETIMES "ADOSHEM".**

**REMEMBER THE SABBATH DAY, TO KEEP IT HOLY WITH 7 DAYS OF CREATION (SATURDAY FOR JEWS & SUNDAY FOR CHRISTIANS)**

**"REMEMBER THE SABBATH DAY, TO KEEP IT HOLY" (HEBREW: זָכוֹר אֶת יוֹם הַשַׁבָּת לְקַדְּשׁוֹ) IS ONE OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS FOUND IN THE HEBREW BIBLE. THE FULL TEXT OF THE COMMANDMENT READS: REMEMBER THE SABBATH DAY, TO KEEP IT HOLY. SIX DAYS YOU SHALL LABOR, AND DO ALL YOUR WORK, BUT THE SEVENTH DAY IS A SABBATH TO THE LORD YOUR GOD. ON IT YOU SHALL NOT DO ANY WORK, YOU, OR YOUR SON, OR YOUR DAUGHTER, YOUR MALE SERVANT, OR YOUR FEMALE SERVANT, OR YOUR LIVESTOCK, OR THE SOJOURNER WHO IS WITHIN YOUR GATES. FOR IN SIX DAYS THE LORD MADE HEAVEN AND EARTH, THE SEA, AND ALL THAT IS IN THEM, AND RESTED ON THE SEVENTH DAY. THEREFORE, THE LORD BLESSED THE SABBATH DAY AND MADE IT HOLY. — EXODUS 20:8-11. WHEN THE LORD YAHWEH STEPHEN GAVE THE ANCIENT ISRAELITES THE TEN COMMANDMENTS AT BIBLICAL MOUNT SINAI, THEY WERE COMMANDED TO REMEMBER THE SABBATH AND KEEP IT HOLY BY NOT DOING ANY WORK AND ALLOWING THE WHOLE HOUSEHOLD TO CEASE FROM WORK. THIS WAS IN RECOGNITION OF GOD’S ACT OF CREATION AND THE SPECIAL STATUS THAT GOD HAD CONFERRED ON THE SEVENTH DAY DURING THE CREATION WEEK. WHEN THE LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH GAVE THE ANCIENT BRITISH THE TEN COMMANDMENTS AT BIBLICAL MOUNT SINAI IN ACTS 7:6-7; 29:1-2, THEY WERE COMMANDED TO REMEMBER THE SABBATH AND KEEP IT HOLY BY NOT DOING ANY WORK AND ALLOWING THE WHOLE HOUSEHOLD TO CEASE FROM WORK. THIS WAS IN RECOGNITION OF GOD’S ACT OF CREATION AND THE SPECIAL STATUS THAT GOD HAD CONFERRED ON THE SEVENTH DAY DURING THE CREATION WEEK. THE TORAH PORTRAYS THE SABBATH CONCEPT BOTH IN TERMS OF RESTING ON THE SEVENTH DAY AND ALLOWING LAND TO LIE FALLOW DURING EACH SEVENTH YEAR. THE MOTIVATION IS DESCRIBED AS GOING BEYOND A SIGN AND REMEMBRANCE OF STEPHEN YAHWEH’S ORIGINAL REST DURING THE CREATION WEEK AND EXTENDS TO A CONCERN THAT ONE'S SERVANTS, FAMILY, AND LIVESTOCK BE ABLE TO REST AND BE REFRESHED FROM THEIR WORK. IN ADDITION TO THE INSTRUCTION TO REST ON EACH SEVENTH DAY (FRIDAY WITH THE NUMBER 0 IN SUBTRACTION, SATURDAY WITHOUT THE NUMBER 0 & SUNDAY WITH THE NUMBER 0 IN ADDITION) AND SEVENTH YEAR, PERIODS OF SEVEN DAYS ARE OFTEN RELEVANT ASPECTS OF BIBLICAL INSTRUCTIONS. FOR EXAMPLE, THE QUARANTINE PERIOD FOR SUSPECTED SKIN DISEASES AFTER INITIAL EXAMINATION BY A PRIEST WAS SEVEN DAYS, AFTER WHICH THE PRIEST WOULD RE-EXAMINE THE SKIN AND PRONOUNCE THE PERSON CLEAN OR UNCLEAN. OTHER SPECIAL DAYS INCLUDED THE DAY AFTER THE SEVENTH SABBATH, THE FIRST DAY OF THE SEVENTH MONTH, THE DAY OF RITUAL CLEANSING AFTER BEING HEALED FROM AN UNCLEAN DISEASE OR OTHER EVENT BRINGING UNCLEANNESS. IN ADDITION, IN THE BATTLE OF JERICHO, JOSHUA COMMANDED THE ARMY TO MARCH AROUND JERICHO EACH DAY FOR SEVEN CONSECUTIVE DAYS AND TO MARCH AROUND JERICHO SEVEN TIMES ON THE SEVENTH DAY. THE TORAH DESCRIBES DISOBEDIENCE TO THE COMMAND TO KEEP THE SABBATH DAY HOLY AS PUNISHABLE BY DEATH AND FAILING TO OBSERVE SABBATH YEARS WOULD BE COMPENSATED FOR DURING THE CAPTIVITY THAT WOULD RESULT FROM BREAKING COVENANT. THE TORAH ALSO DESCRIBES HOW SPECIAL BREAD WAS TO BE SET OUT BEFORE STEPHEN YAHWEH SABBATH BY SABBATH AND DESCRIBES SABBATH DAY OFFERINGS. THE DAY OF ATONEMENT WAS REGARDED AS A "SABBATH OF SABBATHS" IT WAS ON THIS DAY ALONE THAT THE KOHEN GADOL (HIGH PRIEST) ENTERED THE KODESH HAKODASHIM (MOST HOLY PLACE) INSIDE THE TABERNACLE WHERE THE ARK OF THE COVENANT CONTAINED THE STONE TABLETS ON WHICH THE TEN COMMANDMENTS WERE ENGRAVED. THE PRESENCE OF YHWH---STEPHEN YAHWEH IN THE KODESH HAKODASHIM ON THAT YEARLY DAY, UPON THE MERCY SEAT, REQUIRED THAT THE KOHEN GADOL BE FIRST PURIFIED BY THE SACRIFICE OF A BULL IN A PRESCRIBED MANNER. ENTERING THE MOST HOLY PLACE ON OTHER DAYS OR WITHOUT FULFILLING THE RITUAL REQUIREMENTS WOULD SUBJECT THE PRIEST TO DEATH. IN THE SAME WAY THAT OBSERVING THE SABBATH DID NOT PREVENT JOSHUA FROM MARCHING AROUND JERICHO FOR SEVEN CONSECUTIVE DAYS, SABBATH OBSERVANCE DID NOT PREVENT THE CHIEF PRIEST JEHOIADA FROM ORGANIZING A PALACE COUP ON THE SABBATH IN ORDER TO REMOVE QUEEN ATALIAH FROM THE THRONE AND REPLACE HER WITH JOASH, A RIGHTFUL HEIR TO THE THRONE. ATALIAH HAD MURDERED ALL THE OTHER HEIRS TO THE THRONE UPON THE DEATH OF AHAZIAH AND USURPED THE THRONE OF JUDAH FOR HERSELF. JEHOIADA'S WIFE HAD RESCUED YOUNG JOASH, AND JEHOIADA HAD KEPT HIM HIDDEN FOR SIX YEARS WHILE ATALIAH REIGNED AS QUEEN OVER JUDAH. THE PRIEST JEHOIADA USED THE OCCASION OF THE TRANSFER OF THE GUARD ON THE SABBATH TO PROCLAIM JOASH AS KING BECAUSE AT THAT TIME, HE COULD ARRANGE TWICE THE NORMAL GUARD ON DUTY AT THE TEMPLE OF STEPHEN YAHWEH. ON THAT DAY, A COVENANT WAS MADE, JOASH WAS PROCLAIMED KING, ATALIAH WAS PUT TO DEATH, THE TEMPLE OF BAAL WAS TORN DOWN, IDOLS WERE SMASHED, AND MATTAN, THE PRIEST OF BAAL, WAS KILLED. A NUMBER OF THE PROPHETS CONDEMN DESECRATION OF THE SABBATH WITH VARIOUS FORMS OF WORK, INCLUDING ISAIAH, JEREMIAH, EZEKIEL, AND AMOS. ACCORDING TO NEHEMIAH, AFTER THE CAPTIVES RETURN TO JERUSALEM FROM EXILE, THEY MAKE A COVENANT WHICH INCLUDES A PROMISE TO REFRAIN FROM DESECRATING THE SABBATH, YET SOME GIVE IN TO THE ONGOING TEMPTATION TO BUY AND SELL ON THE SABBATH. AS A RESULT, NEHEMIAH HAS TO REBUKE THEM AND STATION GUARDS TO PREVENT COMMERCE IN JERUSALEM ON THE SABBATH.**

**REMEMBER THE SABBATH DAY, TO KEEP IT HOLY WITH THE EXODUS (SATURDAY FOR JEWS & SUNDAY FOR CHRISTIANS)**

**"REMEMBER THE SABBATH DAY, TO KEEP IT HOLY" (HEBREW: זָכוֹר אֶת יוֹם הַשַׁבָּת לְקַדְּשׁוֹ) IS ONE OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS FOUND IN THE HEBREW BIBLE. THE FULL TEXT OF THE COMMANDMENT READS: OBSERVE THE SABBATH DAY, TO KEEP IT HOLY, AS THE LORD YOUR GOD COMMANDED YOU. SIX DAYS YOU SHALL LABOR AND DO ALL YOUR WORK, BUT THE SEVENTH DAY IS A SABBATH TO THE LORD YOUR GOD. ON IT YOU SHALL NOT DO ANY WORK, YOU OR YOUR SON OR YOUR DAUGHTER OR YOUR MALE SLAVE OR YOUR FEMALE SLAVE, OR YOUR OX OR YOUR DONKEY OR ANY OF YOUR LIVESTOCK, OR THE SOJOURNER WHO IS WITHIN YOUR GATES, THAT YOUR MALE SLAVE AND YOUR FEMALE SLAVE MAY REST AS WELL AS YOU. YOU SHALL REMEMBER THAT YOU WERE A SLAVE IN THE LAND OF EGYPT, AND THE LORD YOUR GOD BROUGHT YOU OUT FROM THERE WITH A MIGHTY HAND AND AN OUTSTRETCHED ARM. THEREFORE, THE LORD YOUR GOD COMMANDED YOU TO KEEP THE SABBATH DAY. — DEUTERONOMY 5:12-15. WHEN THE LORD YAHWEH STEPHEN GAVE THE ANCIENT ISRAELITES THE TEN COMMANDMENTS AT BIBLICAL MOUNT SINAI, THEY WERE COMMANDED TO REMEMBER THE SABBATH AND KEEP IT HOLY BY NOT DOING ANY WORK AND ALLOWING THE WHOLE HOUSEHOLD TO CEASE FROM WORK. THIS WAS IN RECOGNITION OF GOD’S ACT OF CREATION AND THE SPECIAL STATUS THAT GOD HAD CONFERRED ON THE SEVENTH DAY DURING THE CREATION WEEK. WHEN THE LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH GAVE THE ANCIENT BRITISH THE TEN COMMANDMENTS AT BIBLICAL MOUNT SINAI IN ACTS 7:6-7; 29:1-2, THEY WERE COMMANDED TO REMEMBER THE SABBATH AND KEEP IT HOLY BY NOT DOING ANY WORK AND ALLOWING THE WHOLE HOUSEHOLD TO CEASE FROM WORK. THIS WAS IN RECOGNITION OF GOD’S ACT OF CREATION AND THE SPECIAL STATUS THAT GOD HAD CONFERRED ON THE SEVENTH DAY DURING THE CREATION WEEK. THE TORAH PORTRAYS THE SABBATH CONCEPT BOTH IN TERMS OF RESTING ON THE SEVENTH DAY AND ALLOWING LAND TO LIE FALLOW DURING EACH SEVENTH YEAR. THE MOTIVATION IS DESCRIBED AS GOING BEYOND A SIGN AND REMEMBRANCE OF STEPHEN YAHWEH’S ORIGINAL REST DURING THE CREATION WEEK AND EXTENDS TO A CONCERN THAT ONE'S SERVANTS, FAMILY, AND LIVESTOCK BE ABLE TO REST AND BE REFRESHED FROM THEIR WORK. IN ADDITION TO THE INSTRUCTION TO REST ON EACH SEVENTH DAY (FRIDAY WITH THE NUMBER 0 IN SUBTRACTION, SATURDAY WITHOUT THE NUMBER 0 & SUNDAY WITH THE NUMBER 0 IN ADDITION) AND SEVENTH YEAR, PERIODS OF SEVEN DAYS ARE OFTEN RELEVANT ASPECTS OF BIBLICAL INSTRUCTIONS. FOR EXAMPLE, THE QUARANTINE PERIOD FOR SUSPECTED SKIN DISEASES AFTER INITIAL EXAMINATION BY A PRIEST WAS SEVEN DAYS, AFTER WHICH THE PRIEST WOULD RE-EXAMINE THE SKIN AND PRONOUNCE THE PERSON CLEAN OR UNCLEAN. OTHER SPECIAL DAYS INCLUDED THE DAY AFTER THE SEVENTH SABBATH, THE FIRST DAY OF THE SEVENTH MONTH, THE DAY OF RITUAL CLEANSING AFTER BEING HEALED FROM AN UNCLEAN DISEASE OR OTHER EVENT BRINGING UNCLEANNESS. IN ADDITION, IN THE BATTLE OF JERICHO, JOSHUA COMMANDED THE ARMY TO MARCH AROUND JERICHO EACH DAY FOR SEVEN CONSECUTIVE DAYS AND TO MARCH AROUND JERICHO SEVEN TIMES ON THE SEVENTH DAY. THE TORAH DESCRIBES DISOBEDIENCE TO THE COMMAND TO KEEP THE SABBATH DAY HOLY AS PUNISHABLE BY DEATH AND FAILING TO OBSERVE SABBATH YEARS WOULD BE COMPENSATED FOR DURING THE CAPTIVITY THAT WOULD RESULT FROM BREAKING COVENANT. THE TORAH ALSO DESCRIBES HOW SPECIAL BREAD WAS TO BE SET OUT BEFORE STEPHEN YAHWEH SABBATH BY SABBATH AND DESCRIBES SABBATH DAY OFFERINGS. THE DAY OF ATONEMENT WAS REGARDED AS A "SABBATH OF SABBATHS" IT WAS ON THIS DAY ALONE THAT THE KOHEN GADOL (HIGH PRIEST) ENTERED THE KODESH HAKODASHIM (MOST HOLY PLACE) INSIDE THE TABERNACLE WHERE THE ARK OF THE COVENANT CONTAINED THE STONE TABLETS ON WHICH THE TEN COMMANDMENTS WERE ENGRAVED. THE PRESENCE OF YHWH---STEPHEN YAHWEH IN THE KODESH HAKODASHIM ON THAT YEARLY DAY, UPON THE MERCY SEAT, REQUIRED THAT THE KOHEN GADOL BE FIRST PURIFIED BY THE SACRIFICE OF A BULL IN A PRESCRIBED MANNER. ENTERING THE MOST HOLY PLACE ON OTHER DAYS OR WITHOUT FULFILLING THE RITUAL REQUIREMENTS WOULD SUBJECT THE PRIEST TO DEATH. IN THE SAME WAY THAT OBSERVING THE SABBATH DID NOT PREVENT JOSHUA FROM MARCHING AROUND JERICHO FOR SEVEN CONSECUTIVE DAYS, SABBATH OBSERVANCE DID NOT PREVENT THE CHIEF PRIEST JEHOIADA FROM ORGANIZING A PALACE COUP ON THE SABBATH IN ORDER TO REMOVE QUEEN ATALIAH FROM THE THRONE AND REPLACE HER WITH JOASH, A RIGHTFUL HEIR TO THE THRONE. ATALIAH HAD MURDERED ALL THE OTHER HEIRS TO THE THRONE UPON THE DEATH OF AHAZIAH AND USURPED THE THRONE OF JUDAH FOR HERSELF. JEHOIADA'S WIFE HAD RESCUED YOUNG JOASH, AND JEHOIADA HAD KEPT HIM HIDDEN FOR SIX YEARS WHILE ATALIAH REIGNED AS QUEEN OVER JUDAH. THE PRIEST JEHOIADA USED THE OCCASION OF THE TRANSFER OF THE GUARD ON THE SABBATH TO PROCLAIM JOASH AS KING BECAUSE AT THAT TIME, HE COULD ARRANGE TWICE THE NORMAL GUARD ON DUTY AT THE TEMPLE OF STEPHEN YAHWEH. ON THAT DAY, A COVENANT WAS MADE, JOASH WAS PROCLAIMED KING, ATALIAH WAS PUT TO DEATH, THE TEMPLE OF BAAL WAS TORN DOWN, IDOLS WERE SMASHED, AND MATTAN, THE PRIEST OF BAAL, WAS KILLED. A NUMBER OF THE PROPHETS CONDEMN DESECRATION OF THE SABBATH WITH VARIOUS FORMS OF WORK, INCLUDING ISAIAH, JEREMIAH, EZEKIEL, AND AMOS. ACCORDING TO NEHEMIAH, AFTER THE CAPTIVES RETURN TO JERUSALEM FROM EXILE, THEY MAKE A COVENANT WHICH INCLUDES A PROMISE TO REFRAIN FROM DESECRATING THE SABBATH, YET SOME GIVE IN TO THE ONGOING TEMPTATION TO BUY AND SELL ON THE SABBATH. AS A RESULT, NEHEMIAH HAS TO REBUKE THEM AND STATION GUARDS TO PREVENT COMMERCE IN JERUSALEM ON THE SABBATH.**

**HONOR THY FATHER STEPHEN AND THY MOTHER VICTORIA**

**"HONOR THY FATHER [STEPHEN] AND THY MOTHER [VICTORIA]" (HEBREW: כַּבֵּד אֶת אָבִיךָ וְאֶת אִמֶּךָ לְמַעַן יַאֲרִכוּן יָמֶיךָ) IS ONE OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS IN THE HEBREW BIBLE. THE COMMANDMENT IS GENERALLY REGARDED IN PROTESTANT AND JEWISH SOURCES AS THE FIFTH IN BOTH THE LIST IN EXODUS 20:1–21, AND IN DEUTERONOMY (DVARIM) 5:1–23. CATHOLICS AND LUTHERANS COUNT THIS AS THE FOURTH. THESE COMMANDMENTS WERE ENFORCED AS LAW IN MANY JURISDICTIONS, AND ARE STILL CONSIDERED ENFORCEABLE LAW BY ALL. EXODUS 20, 1 DESCRIBES THE TEN COMMANDMENTS AS BEING SPOKEN BY GOD, INSCRIBED ON TWO STONE TABLETS BY THE TERRIBLE, JEALOUS FINGER OF THE LORD, BROKEN BY MOSES, AND REWRITTEN ON REPLACEMENT STONES BY THE LORD. כבד את־אביך ואת־אמך למען יארכון ימיך על האדמה אשר־יהוה אלהיך נתן לך KABBĒḎ ’EṮ-’ĀḆÎḴĀ WƏ’EṮ-’IMMEḴĀ LƏMA‘AN YA’ĂRIḴÛN YĀMEYḴĀ ‘AL HĀ’ĂḎĀMĀH ’ĂŠER-YƏHWĀH ’ĔLŌHEYḴĀ NŌṮĒN LĀḴ.HONOUR YOUR FATHER AND YOUR MOTHER, SO THAT YOU MAY LIVE LONG IN THE LAND THE LORD YOUR GOD IS GIVING YOU. — EXODUS 20:12 (NIV). IN THE TORAH, KEEPING THIS COMMANDMENT WAS ASSOCIATED WITH INDIVIDUAL BENEFIT[7] AND WITH THE ABILITY OF THE NATION OF ISRAEL TO REMAIN IN THE LAND TO WHICH GOD WAS LEADING THEM.[8][9] DISHONORING PARENTS BY STRIKING OR CURSING THEM WAS PUNISHABLE BY DEATH AND SO THE CLAUSE "SO THAT YOU MAY LIVE LONG" COULD BE INTERPRETED AS "SO THAT YOU ARE NOT PUT TO DEATH". IN THE TALMUD, THE COMMANDMENT TO HONOR ONE'S PARENTS IS COMPARED TO HONORING GOD. ACCORDING TO THE PROPHET MALACHI, GOD MAKES THE ANALOGY HIMSELF: A SON HONORS HIS FATHER, AND A SERVANT HIS MASTER. IF I AM A FATHER, WHERE IS THE HONOR DUE ME? IF I AM A MASTER, WHERE IS THE RESPECT DUE ME?" SAYS THE LORD ALMIGHTY. "IT IS YOU, O PRIESTS, WHO SHOW CONTEMPT FOR MY NAME [STEPHEN YAHWEH]. BUT YOU ASK, 'HOW HAVE WE SHOWN CONTEMPT FOR YOUR NAME [STEPHEN YAHWEH]?' — MALACHI 1:6 (NIV).**

**THOU SHALT NOT KILL**

**THOU SHALT NOT KILL (LXX; Οὐ ΦΟΝΕΎΣΕΙΣ), YOU SHALL NOT MURDER (HEBREW: לֹא תִּרְצָח; LO TIRṢAḤ) OR YOU SHALL NOT KILL (KJV), IS A MORAL IMPERATIVE INCLUDED AS ONE OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS IN THE TORAH. THE IMPERATIVE TO NOT KILL IS IN THE CONTEXT OF UNLAWFUL KILLING RESULTING IN BLOODGUILT.**

**RETZACH: THE HEBREW VERB רצח (R-Ṣ-Ḥ, ALSO TRANSLITERATED RETZACH, RATZÁKH, RATSAKH ETC.) IS THE WORD IN THE ORIGINAL TEXT THAT IS TRANSLATED AS "MURDER" , BUT IT HAS A WIDER RANGE OF MEANINGS, GENERALLY DESCRIBING DESTRUCTIVE ACTIVITY, INCLUDING MEANINGS "TO BREAK, TO DASH TO PIECES" AS WELL AS "TO SLAY, KILL, MURDER". ACCORDING TO THE PRIESTLY CODE OF THE BOOK OF NUMBERS, KILLING ANYONE OUTSIDE THE CONTEXT OF WAR WITH A WEAPON, OR IN UNARMED COMBAT, IS CONSIDERED RETZACH, BUT IF THE KILLING IS ACCIDENTAL, THE ACCUSED MUST FLEE TO ONE OF THE CITIES OF REFUGE—AND REMAIN IN THAT CITY UNTIL THE HIGH PRIEST DIES, OR THE "REVENGER OF BLOOD" CAN KILL THE ACCUSED WITH NO LEGAL REPERCUSSIONS. THE HOLY BIBLE NEVER USES THE WORD RETZACH IN CONJUNCTION WITH WAR. THE ACT OF SLAYING ITSELF, REGARDLESS OF QUESTIONS OF BLOODGUILT, IS EXPRESSED WITH THE VERB N-K-H "TO STRIKE, SMITE, HIT, BEAT, SLAY, KILL". THIS VERB IS USED OF BOTH AN EGYPTIAN SLAYING AN ISRAELITE SLAVE AND OF MOSES SLAYING THE EGYPTIAN IN RETALIATION IN EXODUS 2:11–12. THE COVENANT CODE AND HOLINESS CODE BOTH PRESCRIBE THE DEATH PENALTY FOR PEOPLE THAT COMMIT N-K-H. THE COMMANDMENT AGAINST MURDER CAN BE VIEWED AS A LEGAL ISSUE GOVERNING HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS, NOTING THAT THE FIRST FOUR COMMANDMENTS RELATE STRONGLY TO MAN'S DUTY TO GOD AND THAT THE LATTER SIX COMMANDMENTS DESCRIBE DUTIES TOWARD HUMANS. THE COMMANDMENT AGAINST MURDER CAN ALSO BE VIEWED AS BASED IN RESPECT FOR GOD HIMSELF. "THE VOICE OF YOUR BROTHER'S BLOOD IS CRYING TO ME FROM THE GROUND. AND NOW YOU ARE CURSED FROM THE GROUND, WHICH HAS OPENED ITS MOUTH TO RECEIVE YOUR BROTHER'S BLOOD FROM YOUR HAND." GENESIS 4:10–11 (ESV). THE GENESIS NARRATIVE ALSO PORTRAYS THE PROHIBITION OF SHEDDING INNOCENT BLOOD AS AN IMPORTANT ASPECT OF GOD’S COVENANT WITH NOAH. WHOEVER SHEDS THE BLOOD OF MAN, BY MAN SHALL HIS BLOOD BE SHED, FOR GOD MADE MAN [NUMBERS 23:19] IN HIS OWN IMAGE. — GENESIS 9:6 (ESV). THE TORAH PORTRAYS MURDER AS A CAPITAL CRIME AND DESCRIBES A NUMBER OF DETAILS IN THE MORAL UNDERSTANDING AND LEGAL IMPLEMENTATION OF CONSEQUENCES. THE PRIESTLY CODE ALLOWED THE VICTIM'S NEXT OF KIN (AVENGER OF BLOOD) EXACT RETRIBUTION ON THE SUSPECT; BUT THE ACCUSED COULD SEEK SANCTUARY IN A CITY OF REFUGE. THE RIGHT OF THE AVENGER OF BLOOD TO SUCH REVENGE CEASED, UPON THE DEATH OF THE PERSON WHO WAS THE JEWISH HIGH PRIEST AT THE TIME OF THE CRIME. ANOTHER VERB MEANING "TO KILL, SLAY, MURDER, DESTROY, RUIN" IS H-R-G, USED OF CAIN SLAYING ABEL IN GENESIS 4:8. WHEN CAIN IS DRIVEN INTO EXILE, COMPLAINING THAT "EVERY ONE THAT FINDETH ME SHALL SLAY ME" IN GENESIS 4:14, HE AGAIN USES THIS VERB (H-R-G). ELIEZER SEGAL OBSERVES THAT THE SEPTUAGINT USES THE TERM HARAG, AND THAT AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO RECOGNIZED THAT THIS DID NOT EXTEND TO WARS OR CAPITAL PUNISHMENT. MOST SUBSEQUENT TRANSLATIONS FOLLOW JEROME'S VULGATE. WHILE JEROME HAD ACCESS TO JEWISH SCHOLARS, "EVEN THE JEWISH TRANSLATORS WERE NOT UNANIMOUS IN MAINTAINING CONSISTENT DISTINCTIONS BETWEEN THE VARIOUS HEBREW ROOTS." JEROME'S CHOICE OF THE WORD OCCIDERE (TO KILL) REFLECTS THE BROADER RANGE OF MEANINGS. IN A MORE MODERN ANALYSIS, WILMA ANN BAILEY ALSO FINDS A BROADER APPLICATION OF THE WORD RETZACH. JUSTIFIED KILLING: DUE CONSEQUENCE FOR CRIME. THE TORAH AND HEBREW BIBLE MADE CLEAR DISTINCTIONS BETWEEN THE SHEDDING OF INNOCENT BLOOD VERSUS KILLING AS THE DUE CONSEQUENCE OF A CRIME. A NUMBER OF SINS WERE CONSIDERED TO BE WORTHY OF THE DEATH PENALTY INCLUDING MURDER, INCEST, BEARING FALSE WITNESS ON A CAPITAL CHARGE, ADULTERY, IDOLATRY [SEX], BESTIALITY, CHILD SACRIFICE TO PAGAN GODS, CURSING A PARENT, FORTUNE-TELLING, HOMOSEXUALITY, AND OTHER SINS. FOR EXAMPLE, THE EXODUS NARRATIVE DESCRIBES THE PEOPLE AS HAVING TURNED TO IDOLATRY WITH THE GOLDEN CALF WHILE MOSES WAS ON THE MOUNTAIN RECEIVING THE LAW FROM GOD. WHEN MOSES CAME DOWN, HE COMMANDED THE LEVITES TO TAKE UP THE SWORD AGAINST THEIR BROTHERS AND COMPANIONS AND NEIGHBORS. THE LEVITES OBEYED AND KILLED ABOUT THREE THOUSAND MEN WHO HAD SINNED IN WORSHIP OF THE GOLDEN CALF. AS A RESULT, MOSES SAID THAT THE LEVITES HAD RECEIVED A BLESSING THAT DAY AT THE COST OF SON AND BROTHER. ON A SEPARATE OCCASION, A BLASPHEMER WAS STONED TO DEATH BECAUSE HE BLASPHEMED THE NAME OF THE LORD (STEPHEN YAHWEH) WITH A CURSE. THE HEBREW BIBLE HAS MANY OTHER EXAMPLES OF SINNERS BEING PUT TO DEATH AS DUE CONSEQUENCE FOR CRIMES. ACHAN IS PUT TO DEATH BY JOSHUA BECAUSE HE CAUSED DEFEAT OF ISRAEL'S ARMY BY TAKING SOME OF THE PLUNDER AND HIDING IT IN HIS TENT. DAVID ORDERED THAT AN AMALEKITE BE PUT TO DEATH BECAUSE HE CLAIMED TO HAVE KILLED KING SAUL. FOLLOWING THE ADVICE OF HIS FATHER, SOLOMON ORDERED THAT JOAB BE KILLED: STRIKE HIM DOWN AND BURY HIM, AND SO CLEAR ME AND MY FATHER'S HOUSE OF THE GUILT OF THE INNOCENT BLOOD THAT JOAB SHED. THE LORD WILL REPAY HIM FOR THE BLOOD HE SHED, BECAUSE WITHOUT THE KNOWLEDGE OF MY FATHER DAVID HE ATTACKED TWO MEN AND KILLED THEM WITH THE SWORD. BOTH OF THEM—ABNER SON OF NER, COMMANDER OF ISRAEL’S ARMY, AND AMASA SON OF JETHER, COMMANDER OF JUDAH'S ARMY—WERE BETTER MEN AND MORE UPRIGHT THAN HE. MAY THE GUILT OF THEIR BLOOD REST ON THE HEAD OF JOAB AND HIS DESCENDANTS FOREVER. BUT ON DAVID AND HIS DESCENDANTS, HIS HOUSE AND HIS THRONE, MAY THERE BE THE LORD'S PEACE FOREVER. — 1 KINGS 2:31–33 (NIV). THE BIBLICAL REFRAIN FOR THOSE JUSTLY EXECUTED AS DUE PUNISHMENT FOR CRIMES IS THAT "THEIR BLOOD WILL BE ON THEIR OWN HEADS." THIS EXPRESSES THE IDEA THAT THOSE GUILTY OF CERTAIN ACTIONS HAVE BROUGHT THE SHEDDING OF BLOOD UPON THEMSELVES, AND THOSE CARRYING OUT DUE PUNISHMENT DO NOT BEAR BLOODGUILT. JUSTIFIED KILLING: IN WARFARE: FURTHER INFORMATION: HEREM (WAR OR PROPERTY). THE ANCIENT HEBREW TEXTS MAKE A DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE MORAL AND LEGAL PROHIBITION OF SHEDDING OF INNOCENT BLOOD AND KILLING IN BATTLE. RABBI MARC GELLMAN EXPLAINS THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN "HARAG" (KILLING) AND "RATZAH" (MURDER) AND NOTES THE DIFFERENT MORAL CONNOTATIONS. "...THERE IS WIDE MORAL AGREEMENT (NOT COMPLETE AGREEMENT) THAT SOME FORMS OF KILLING ARE MORALLY JUST, AND KILLING AN ENEMY COMBATANT DURING WARTIME IS ONE OF THEM." FOR EXAMPLE, THE TORAH PROHIBITS MURDER, BUT SANCTIONS KILLING IN LEGITIMATE BATTLE. THE HOLY BIBLE OFTEN PRAISES THE EXPLOITS OF SOLDIERS AGAINST ENEMIES IN LEGITIMATE BATTLE. ONE OF DAVID’S MIGHTY MEN IS CREDITED WITH KILLING EIGHT HUNDRED MEN WITH THE SPEAR, AND ABISHAI IS CREDITED WITH KILLING THREE HUNDRED MEN. THE 613 MITZVOT EXTEND THE NOTION OF LAWFUL KILLING TO THE NATIONS THAT INHABITED THE PROMISED LAND, COMMANDING TO EXTERMINATE THEM COMPLETELY. DEUTERONOMY 20:10–18 ESTABLISHES RULES ON KILLING CIVILIANS IN WARFARE: THE POPULATION OF CITIES OUTSIDE OF THE PROMISED LAND, IF THEY SURRENDER, SHOULD BE MADE TRIBUTARIES AND LEFT ALIVE (20:10–11). THOSE CITIES OUTSIDE OF THE PROMISED LAND THAT RESIST SHOULD BE BESIEGED, AND ONCE THEY FALL, THE MALE POPULATION SHOULD BE EXTERMINATED, BUT THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN SHOULD BE LEFT ALIVE (20:12–15). OF THOSE CITIES THAT WERE WITHIN THE PROMISED LAND, HOWEVER, EVERYBODY WAS TO BE KILLED. JUSTIFIED KILLING: INTRUDER IN THE HOME. AS DESCRIBED IN THE TORAH, THE ANCIENT UNDERSTANDING OF THE PROHIBITION OF MURDER MADE AN EXCEPTION FOR LEGITIMATE SELF-DEFENSE. A HOME DEFENDER WHO STRUCK AND KILLED A THIEF CAUGHT IN THE ACT OF BREAKING IN AT NIGHT WAS NOT GUILTY OF BLOODSHED. "IF A THIEF IS CAUGHT BREAKING IN AND IS STRUCK SO THAT HE DIES, THE DEFENDER IS NOT GUILTY OF BLOODSHED; BUT IF IT HAPPENS AFTER SUNRISE, HE IS GUILTY OF BLOODSHED."**

**DON'T COMMIT MURDER (EXODUS 20:13)**

**DON'T ACCEPT RANSOM FOR LIFE OF THE MURDERER (NUMBERS 35:31)**

**EXILE AN ACCIDENTAL MURDERER (NUMBERS 35:25)**

**DON'T ACCEPT RANSOM FROM HIM (NUMBERS 35:32)**

**DON'T KILL THE MURDERER BEFORE TRYING HIM (NUMBERS 35:12)**

**SAVE THE PURSUED AT THE COST OF THE LIFE OF THE PURSUER (DEUTERONOMY 25:12)**

**DON'T SHOW PITY FOR THE PURSUER (NUMBERS 35:12)**

**DON'T STAND IDLY BY WHEN YOU CAN SAVE A LIFE (LEVITICUS 19:16)**

**SET ASIDE CITIES OF REFUGE FOR THOSE WHO COMMIT ACCIDENTAL HOMICIDE (DEUTERONOMY 19:3)**

**BREAK THE NECK OF THE CALF BY THE RIVER (IN RITUAL FOLLOWING UNSOLVED MURDER) (DEUTERONOMY 21:4)**

**DON'T TILL BY THAT RIVER OR SOW THERE (DEUTERONOMY 21:4)**

**DON'T CAUSE LOSS OF HUMAN LIFE (THROUGH NEGLIGENCE) (DEUTERONOMY 22:8)**

**BUILD A PARAPET (IN ROOF OF HOUSE) (DEUTERONOMY 22:8)**

**DON'T MISLEAD WITH ADVICE WHICH IS A STUMBLING BLOCK (LEVITICUS 19:14)**

**HELP A MAN REMOVE THE LOAD FROM HIS BEAST WHICH CAN NO LONGER CARRY IT (EXODUS 23:5)**

**HELP HIM LOAD HIS BEAST (DEUTERONOMY 22:4)**

**DON'T LEAVE HIM IN A STATE OF CONFUSION AND GO ON YOUR WAY (DEUTERONOMY 22:4)**

**THOU SHALT NOT COMMIT ADULTERY**

**"THOU SHALT NOT COMMIT ADULTERY", ONE OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS, IS FOUND IN THE BOOK OF EXODUS (EXODUS 20:14) OF THE HEBREW BIBLE AND OLD TESTAMENT. WHAT CONSTITUTES ADULTERY IS NOT PLAINLY DEFINED IN THIS PASSAGE OF THE HOLY BIBLE, AND HAS BEEN THE SUBJECT OF DEBATE WITHIN JUDAISM AND CHRISTIANITY. PRE-LAW EXAMPLES: IN GENESIS 12, ABRAM'S WIFE SARAI IS TAKEN INTO THE EGYPTIAN PHARAOH’S PALACE AFTER ABRAM DOES NOT DISCLOSE HER MARITAL STATUS. GOD INFLICTS “SERIOUS DISEASES ON PHARAOH AND HIS WHOLE HOUSEHOLD.” THE PHARAOH REALIZES IT IS BECAUSE SARAI IS ACTUALLY ABRAM'S WIFE AND TELLS HIM, "WHAT IS THIS YOU HAVE DONE TO ME? WHY DID YOU NOT TELL ME THAT SHE WAS YOUR WIFE? WHY DID YOU SAY, 'SHE IS MY SISTER,' SO THAT I TOOK HER FOR MY WIFE? NOW THEN, HERE IS YOUR WIFE; TAKE HER, AND GO." IN GENESIS 20, ABRAHAM (RENAMED AFTER HIS ENCOUNTER WITH EL SHADDAI (GOD ALMIGHTY) HAS MOVED TO THE NEGEV AND AGAIN CONCEALS HIS MARRIAGE TO SARAH. A LOCAL KING, ABIMELECH, INTENDS TO MARRY HER. HOWEVER, GOD APPEARS TO ABIMELECH IN A DREAM AND SAYS: "BEHOLD, YOU ARE A DEAD MAN BECAUSE OF THE WOMAN WHOM YOU HAVE TAKEN, FOR SHE IS A MAN’S WIFE." YEARS LATER, ISAAC TELLS THE SAME LIE REGARDING HIS WIFE, REBECCA, BUT ABIMELECH QUICKLY DISCOVERS THE TRUTH. APPALLED, HE CONFRONTS ISAAC, SAYING, "WHOEVER TOUCHES THIS MAN OR HIS WIFE SHALL SURELY BE PUT TO DEATH." IN GENESIS 39, A POSITIVE EXAMPLE IS PRESENTED IN JOSEPH, ONE OF JACOB’S TWELVE SONS. HE IS SOLD INTO SLAVERY IN EGYPT AND QUICKLY RISES TO A PROMINENT AND SUCCESSFUL POSITION MANAGING THE HOUSEHOLD OF POTIPHAR, A MILITARY CAPTAIN. HE RESISTS SEXUAL ADVANCES FROM POTIPHAR'S WIFE “DAY AFTER DAY,” PROTESTING THAT HE DOES NOT WISH TO BETRAY POTIPHAR'S TRUST. ONE DAY HER ADVANCES BECOME PHYSICAL, AND IN HIS EFFORT TO ESCAPE, JOSEPH LEAVES HIS CLOAK BEHIND. POTIPHAR'S WIFE USES THIS ‘EVIDENCE’ FOR A FALSE ACCUSATION OF RAPE AGAINST JOSEPH. JOSEPH IS IMPRISONED, LOSING ALL BUT HIS LIFE. MORE THAN TWO YEARS LATER JOSEPH IS RESTORED TO AN EVEN HIGHER POSITION, SERVING THE PHARAOH HIMSELF. AFTER MOUNT SINAI: ACCORDING TO THE BOOK OF EXODUS, THE LAW FORBIDDING ADULTERY WAS CODIFIED FOR THE ISRAELITES AT BIBLICAL MOUNT SINAI. IT WAS ONE OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS WRITTEN BY THE [TERRIBLE, JEALOUS] FINGER OF THE LORD ON STONE TABLETS. DETAILS REGARDING THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE LAW AND ADDITIONAL BOUNDARIES ON SEXUAL BEHAVIOR FOLLOWED. FOR EXAMPLE, THE ORDEAL OF THE BITTER WATER WAS ESTABLISHED TO PROVE THE GUILT OR INNOCENCE OF A WIFE WHOSE HUSBAND SUSPECTED HER OF ADULTERY. ADULTERY WAS A CAPITAL CRIME, AND IF ADULTERERS WERE CAUGHT, AT LEAST 2 WITNESSES [THE OPPOSING SIDE OF THE ORIGINAL ONCE IN THE NUMBER 0 AT 00.0001% ETERNAL INCORRUPTION] WERE REQUIRED BEFORE THE DEATH PENALTY WOULD BE CARRIED OUT. SINCE MEN WERE PERMITTED TO HAVE MULTIPLE WIVES, ADULTERY WAS INTERPRETED TO CONSIST OF SEXUAL RELATIONS BETWEEN A MAN AND A MARRIED OR BETROTHED WOMAN WHO WAS NOT HIS WIFE. A MAN WHO HAD SEXUAL RELATIONS WITH A WOMAN WHO WAS NOT MARRIED OR BETROTHED WAS NOT GUILTY OF ADULTERY, PER SE, BUT THE MAN WAS THEN OBLIGATED TO MARRY THE WOMAN AND NOT DIVORCE HER UNTIL THE END OF HIS LIFE. IF A MAN FIND A DAMSEL THAT IS A VIRGIN, WHICH IS NOT BETROTHED, AND LAY HOLD ON HER, AND LIE WITH HER, AND THEY BE FOUND; THEN THE MAN THAT LAY WITH HER SHALL GIVE UNTO THE DAMSEL'S FATHER FIFTY SHEKELS OF SILVER, AND SHE SHALL BE HIS WIFE; BECAUSE HE HATH HUMBLED HER, HE MAY NOT PUT HER AWAY ALL HIS DAYS. — DEUTERONOMY 22: 28-29. OTHER BOUNDARIES ON SEXUAL BEHAVIOR INCLUDED THE PROHIBITION OF SEXUAL RELATIONS BETWEEN CLOSE RELATIVES, BETWEEN PERSONS OF THE SAME SEX, AND BETWEEN PEOPLE AND ANIMALS; PROSTITUTION WAS ALSO FORBIDDEN. THE PROHIBITION OF PROSTITUTION HAS BEEN INTERPRETED BY RABBINICAL SCHOLARS TO PRECLUDE SEXUAL RELATIONS OUTSIDE OF MARRIAGE AS PRE-MARITAL SEX IN GENERAL OR SEXUAL RELATIONS INSIDE OF MARRIAGE BEING UNEQUALLY YOKED AS MARITAL FORNICATION [TOBIT 4:12-13] IN GENERAL, AND A WOMAN WHO, AFTER GETTING MARRIED, WAS FOUND TO HAVE BEEN PROMISCUOUS BEFORE MARRIAGE FACED THE DEATH PENALTY. A WOMAN WHO WAS RAPED WAS NOT GUILTY OF BREAKING THE LAW, PROVIDED SHE CRIED OUT FOR HELP (WHICH WAS TAKEN AS PROOF THAT SHE DID NOT CONSENT). ACCORDING TO DEUTERONOMY, THE COMMANDMENT AGAINST ADULTERY WAS REAFFIRMED AS THE LEADERSHIP OF ISRAEL PASSED FROM MOSES TO JOSHUA. KING DAVID’S SEDUCTION OF URIAH’S WIFE BATHSHEBA AND THE MURDEROUS COVER-UP OF THEIR ADULTERY IS AN INFAMOUS TRANSGRESSION OF THIS COMMANDMENT. OCCURRING APPROXIMATELY FOUR CENTURIES AFTER THE GIVING OF THE LAW ON MOUNT SINAI, THE EVENT AND ITS AFTERMATH ARE RECOUNTED IN THE BOOKS OF SECOND SAMUEL AND FIRST KINGS. DESPITE DAVID’S SINCERE AND LASTING REPENTANCE, HIS BREAKING THE COMMANDMENT AGAINST ADULTERY BROUGHT TEMPORAL PUNISHMENT AND INITIATED A CASCADE OF TRAGIC EVENTS IN THE UNITED KINGDOM OF ISRAEL AND JUDAH. THE BOOK OF PROVERBS CONTAINS ENTIRE CHAPTERS WARNING AGAINST ADULTERY AND DESCRIBING ITS TEMPTATIONS AND CONSEQUENCES. DIRECT WARNINGS ARE GIVEN TO STAY FAR AWAY FROM THE ADULTERESS. WISDOM IS DESCRIBED AS A PROTECTION AGAINST "THE FORBIDDEN WOMAN, FROM THE ADULTERESS WITH HER SMOOTH WORDS, WHO FORSAKES THE COMPANION OF HER YOUTH AND FORGETS THE COVENANT OF HER GOD; FOR HER HOUSE SINKS DOWN TO DEATH, AND HER PATHS TO THE DEPARTED; NONE WHO GO TO HER COME BACK, NOR DO THEY REGAIN THE PATHS OF LIFE." MENTAL, SPIRITUAL, PSYCHOLOGICAL & ETERNAL PARALLELS: THE PROPHETS JEREMIAH, EZEKIEL AND HOSEA INDICATE THAT GOD VIEWED ISRAEL’S WORSHIP OF IDOLS AS SPIRITUAL ADULTERY. THIS LED TO A BROKEN COVENANT BETWEEN THEM AND “DIVORCE,” MANIFESTED AS DEFEAT BY AN ENEMY NATION FOLLOWED BY EXILE, FROM WHICH THE NORTHERN KINGDOM NEVER RECOVERED. THIS SPIRITUAL ADULTERY WAS APPARENTLY ACCOMPANIED BY THE PREVALENCE OF PHYSICAL ADULTERY AS WELL.**

**THOU SHALT NOT STEAL**

**"THOU SHALT NOT STEAL" IS ONE OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS OF THE JEWISH TORAH (KNOWN TO CHRISTIANS AS THE FIRST FIVE BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT), WHICH ARE WIDELY UNDERSTOOD AS MORAL IMPERATIVES BY LEGAL SCHOLARS, JEWISH SCHOLARS, CATHOLIC SCHOLARS, AND POST-REFORMATION SCHOLARS. "STEAL" IN THIS COMMANDMENT HAS TRADITIONALLY BEEN INTERPRETED BY JEWISH COMMENTARIES TO REFER TO THE STEALING OF AN ACTUAL HUMAN BEING, THAT IS, TO KIDNAPPING, INCLUDING HUMAN TRAFFICKING. WITH THIS UNDERSTANDING, A CONTEXTUAL TRANSLATION OF THE COMMANDMENT IN JEWISH TRADITION WOULD MORE ACCURATELY BE RENDERED AS "THOU SHALT NOT KIDNAP". KIDNAPPING WOULD THEN CONSTITUTE A CAPITAL OFFENCE AND THUS MERIT ITS INCLUSION AMONG THE TEN COMMANDMENTS. NEVERTHELESS, THIS COMMANDMENT HAS COME TO BE INTERPRETED, ESPECIALLY IN CHRISTIAN DOCTRINES, AS THE UNAUTHORIZED TAKING OF ANY VALUE OF MONEY, SUCH AS PRIVATE PROPERTY OR SIMPLY MONEY (STEALING OR THEFT), WHICH IS A WRONGFUL ACTION ALREADY PROHIBITED ELSEWHERE IN THE HEBREW BIBLE THAT CAN INCUR THE DEATH PENALTY, ESPECIALLY IF IT IS AGAINST THE LORD. THE COMMANDMENT "YOU SHALL NOT STEAL" WAS ORIGINALLY INTENDED AGAINST STEALING PEOPLE—AGAINST ABDUCTIONS AND SLAVERY, IN AGREEMENT WITH THE TALMUDIC INTERPRETATION OF THE STATEMENT AS "YOU SHALL NOT KIDNAP" (SANHEDRIN 86A). THE HEBREW WORD TRANSLATED “STEAL” IS “GNEVA.” THE HEBREW BIBLE CONTAINS A NUMBER OF PROHIBITIONS OF STEALING AND DESCRIPTIONS OF NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES FOR THIS SIN. THE GENESIS NARRATIVE DESCRIBES RACHEL AS HAVING STOLEN HOUSEHOLD GOODS FROM HER FATHER LABAN WHEN SHE FLED FROM LABAN'S HOUSEHOLD WITH HER HUSBAND JACOB AND THEIR CHILDREN. LABAN HOTLY PURSUED JACOB TO RECOVER HIS GOODS, AND INTENDED TO DO HIM HARM, BUT RACHEL HID THE STOLEN ITEMS AND AVOIDED DETECTION. EXODUS 21:16 AND DEUTERONOMY 24:7 APPLY THE SAME HEBREW WORD TO KIDNAPPING (STEALING A MAN) AND DEMANDS THE DEATH PENALTY FOR SUCH A SIN. THE HEBREW WORD TRANSLATED “STEAL” IS MORE COMMONLY APPLIED TO MONEY OR THE VALUE OF MONEY IN MATERIAL POSSESSIONS. RESTITUTION MAY BE DEMANDED, BUT THERE MAYBE JUDICIAL PENALTY OF DEATH ALSO, ESPECIALLY STEALING THE MONEY TITHE FROM THE LORD. HOWEVER, A THIEF MAY BE KILLED IF CAUGHT IN THE ACT OF BREAKING IN AT NIGHT UNDER CIRCUMSTANCES WHERE THE OCCUPANTS MAY REASONABLY BE IN FEAR OF GREATER HARM. THE ANCIENT HEBREW UNDERSTANDING HONORED PRIVATE PROPERTY RIGHTS AND DEMANDED RESTITUTION EVEN IN CASES THAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN ACCIDENTAL, SUCH AS LIVESTOCK GRAZING IN ANOTHER MAN'S FIELD OR VINEYARD (EXODUS 22:1-9 (ESV)). IN THE BOOK OF LEVITICUS, THE PROHIBITIONS OF ROBBING AND STEALING ARE REPEATED IN THE CONTEXT OF LOVING ONE'S NEIGHBOR AS ONESELF AND THE PROHIBITION IS EXPANDED TO INCLUDE DEALING FALSELY OR FRAUDULENTLY IN MATTERS OF TRADE AND NEGOTIATIONS. WAGES OWED TO A HIRED WORKER ARE NOT TO BE WITHHELD. NEIGHBORS MUST NOT OPPRESS OR ROB EACH OTHER. NEIGHBORS ARE TO DEAL FRANKLY WITH EACH OTHER, PROTECT THE LIVES OF EACH OTHER, REFRAIN FROM VENGEANCE AND GRUDGES, AND STAND UP FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS AND JUSTICE IN MATTERS THAT GO TO COURT. THE LAW OBLIGED THE THIEF TO PAY SEVEN TIMES (IF THE THIEF STEALS BECAUSE HE IS HUNGRY). IF THE THIEF WASN'T ABLE TO PAY COMPENSATION FOR HIS THEFT BY SELLING HIS THINGS, HE WAS SOLD AS A SLAVE. IF THE THIEF CONFESSED HIS SIN, HE WAS ALLOWED TO RETURN THE OBJECT, ADDING A FIFTH OF ITS PRICE AND HE BROUGHT TO THE PRIEST AS HIS COMPENSATION TO THE LORD A RAM WITHOUT BLEMISH OUT OF THE FLOCK, OR ITS EQUIVALENT, FOR A GUILT OFFERING; AND THE PRIEST MADE ATONEMENT FOR HIM BEFORE THE LORD, AND HE WAS FORGIVEN. POVERTY AND GREED ARE AMONG THE REASONS FOR THEFT. BESIDES THIS, STOLEN THINGS ARE SWEET AND THE BREAD (FOOD) EATEN IN SECRET IS PLEASANT. THE PARTNER OF A THIEF HATES HIS OWN LIFE; HE HEARS THE CURSE, BUT DISCLOSES NOTHING. SOMETIMES RULERS ARE THIEVES OR ACCOMPLICES OF THIEVES. THE BOOK OF PROVERBS CONTRASTS THE RESPONSE OF A VICTIM TO A THIEF WHO STEALS TO SATISFY HIS HUNGER WITH THE RESPONSE OF A JEALOUS HUSBAND TO ADULTERY. THE THIEF IS NOT DESPISED BY HIS VICTIM, EVEN THOUGH THE THIEF MUST MAKE RESTITUTION EVEN IF IT COSTS HIM ALL THE GOODS OF HIS HOUSE. IN CONTRAST, THE JEALOUS HUSBAND WILL ACCEPT NO COMPENSATION AND WILL REPAY THE ADULTERER WITH WOUNDS AND DISHONOR, NOT SPARING WHEN HIS FURY TAKES REVENGE. THE BOOK OF ZECHARIAH DESCRIBES GOD AS CURSING THE HOME OF THE THIEF AND THE HOME OF THOSE WHO SWEAR FALSELY AND JEREMIAH DESCRIBES THIEVES AS BEING SHAMED WHEN THEY ARE CAUGHT.**

**NOT TO STEAL MONEY STEALTHILY (LEVITICUS 19:11)**

**THE COURT MUST IMPLEMENT PUNITIVE MEASURES AGAINST THE THIEF (EXODUS 21:37)**

**EACH INDIVIDUAL MUST ENSURE THAT HIS SCALES AND WEIGHTS ARE ACCURATE (LEVITICUS 19:36)**

**NOT TO COMMIT INJUSTICE WITH SCALES AND WEIGHTS (LEVITICUS 19:35)**

**NOT TO POSSESS INACCURATE SCALES AND WEIGHTS EVEN IF THEY ARE NOT FOR USE (DEUTERONOMY 25:13)**

**NOT TO MOVE A BOUNDARY MARKER TO STEAL SOMEONE'S PROPERTY (DEUTERONOMY 19:14)**

**NOT TO KIDNAP (EXODUS 20:13)**

**NOT TO ROB OPENLY (LEVITICUS 19:13)**

**NOT TO WITHHOLD WAGES OR FAIL TO REPAY A DEBT (LEVITICUS 19:13) [INCLUDING WHAT YOU OWE THE LORD IN A LIFTIME OF WORK IN MONEY TITHES]**

**NOT TO COVET AND SCHEME TO ACQUIRE ANOTHER'S POSSESSION (EXODUS 20:14)**

**NOT TO DESIRE ANOTHER'S POSSESSION (DEUTERONOMY 5:18)**

**RETURN THE ROBBED OBJECT OR ITS VALUE (LEVITICUS 5:23)**

**NOT TO IGNORE A LOST OBJECT (DEUTERONOMY 22:3)**

**RETURN THE LOST OBJECT (DEUTERONOMY 22:1)**

**THE COURT MUST IMPLEMENT LAWS AGAINST THE ONE WHO ASSAULTS ANOTHER OR DAMAGES ANOTHER'S PROPERTY (EXODUS 21:8)**

**THOU SHALT NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS AGAINST THY NEIGHBOR**

**"THOU SHALT NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS AGAINST THY NEIGHBOR" IS THE NINTH COMMANDMENT (THE DESIGNATION VARIES BETWEEN RELIGIONS) OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS, WHICH ARE WIDELY UNDERSTOOD AS MORAL IMPERATIVES BY SCHOLARS, CATHOLIC SCHOLARS, AND POST-REFORMATION SCHOLARS. TODAY, MOST CULTURES RETAIN A DISTINCTION BETWEEN LYING IN GENERAL (WHICH IS DISCOURAGED UNDER MOST, BUT NOT ALL, CIRCUMSTANCES) VERSUS PERJURY (WHICH IS ALWAYS UNLAWFUL UNDER CRIMINAL LAW AND LIABLE TO PUNISHMENT). SIMILARLY, HISTORICALLY IN JEWISH TRADITION, A DISTINCTION WAS MADE BETWEEN LYING IN GENERAL AND BEARING FALSE WITNESS (PERJURY) SPECIFICALLY. ON THE ONE HAND, BEARING FALSE WITNESS (PERJURY) WAS ALWAYS PROHIBITED ACCORDING TO THE DECALOGUE'S COMMANDMENT AGAINST BEARING FALSE WITNESS, YET ON THE OTHER, LYING IN GENERAL WAS ACKNOWLEDGED TO BE, IN CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES "PERMISSIBLE OR EVEN COMMENDABLE" WHEN IT PROTECTS A TOP-SECRET CLEARANCE, AND IT WAS DONE WHILE NOT UNDER OATH, AND IT WAS NOT "HARMFUL TO SOMEONE ELSE". THE BOOK OF EXODUS DESCRIBES THE TEN COMMANDMENTS AS BEING SPOKEN BY GOD, INSCRIBED ON TWO STONE TABLETS BY THE TERRIBLE, JEALOUS FINGER OF THE LORD, BROKEN BY MOSES, AND REWRITTEN ON REPLACEMENT STONES BY THE LORD. THERE ARE SIX THINGS THAT THE LORD STRONGLY HATES, SEVEN THAT ARE AN ABOMINATION TO HIM: HAUGHTY EYES, A LYING TONGUE, AND HANDS THAT SHED INNOCENT BLOOD, A HEART THAT DEVISES WICKED PLANS, FEET THAT MAKE HASTE TO RUN TO EVIL [SEX], A FALSE WITNESS WHO BREATHES OUT LIES, AND ONE WHO SOWS DISCORD AMONG BROTHERS. — PROVERBS 6:16–19. THE COMMAND AGAINST FALSE TESTIMONY IS SEEN AS A NATURAL CONSEQUENCE OF THE COMMAND TO “LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF”. THIS MORAL PRESCRIPTION FLOWS FROM THE COMMAND FOR HOLY PEOPLE TO BEAR WITNESS TO THEIR DEITY. OFFENSES AGAINST THE TRUTH EXPRESS BY WORD OR DEED A REFUSAL TO COMMIT ONESELF TO MORAL UPRIGHTNESS: THEY ARE FUNDAMENTAL INFIDELITIES TO GOD AND, IN THIS SENSE, THEY UNDERMINE THE FOUNDATIONS OF COVENANT WITH GOD. YOU SHALL NOT SPREAD A FALSE REPORT. YOU SHALL NOT JOIN HANDS WITH A WICKED MAN TO BE A MALICIOUS WITNESS. YOU SHALL NOT FALL IN WITH THE MANY TO DO EVIL [SEX], NOR SHALL YOU BEAR WITNESS IN A LAWSUIT, SIDING WITH THE MANY, SO AS TO PERVERT JUSTICE, NOR SHALL YOU BE PARTIAL TO A POOR MAN IN HIS LAWSUIT. — EXODUS 23:1-3. THE HEBREW BIBLE CONTAINS A NUMBER OF PROHIBITIONS AGAINST FALSE WITNESS, LYING, SPREADING FALSE REPORTS, ETC. FOR A PERSON WHO HAD A CHARGE BROUGHT AGAINST THEM AND WERE BROUGHT BEFORE A RELIGIOUS PROSECUTION, THE CHARGE WAS CONSIDERED AS ESTABLISHED ONLY ON THE EVIDENCE OF 2 OR 3 SWORN WITNESSES. IN CASES WHERE FALSE TESTIMONY WAS SUSPECTED, THE RELIGIOUS JUDGES WERE TO MAKE A THOROUGH INVESTIGATION, AND IF FALSE TESTIMONY WERE PROVEN, THE FALSE WITNESS WAS TO RECEIVE THE PUNISHMENT HE HAD INTENDED TO BRING ON THE PERSON FALSELY ACCUSED. FOR EXAMPLE, SINCE MURDER WAS A CAPITAL CRIME, GIVING FALSE TESTIMONY IN A MURDER CASE WAS SUBJECT TO THE DEATH PENALTY. THOSE EAGER TO RECEIVE OR LISTEN TO FALSE TESTIMONY WERE ALSO SUBJECT TO PUNISHMENT. FALSE WITNESS IS AMONG THE SIX THINGS GOD HATES. KING SOLOMON SAYS FALSE TESTIMONY IS AMONG THE THINGS THAT DEFILE A PERSON, JESUS SAYS. THE WITNESS WHO HID WHAT HE HAD SEEN OR WHAT HE KNEW BORE HIS INIQUITY; IF HE REALIZED HIS GUILT, HE HAD TO CONFESS HIS SIN, BROUGHT TO THE LORD A FEMALE LAMB OR GOAT FROM THE FLOCK (OR TWO TURTLEDOVES OR TWO PIGEONS, OR A TENTH OF AN EPHAH OF FINE FLOUR) FOR A SIN OFFERING AS HIS COMPENSATION FOR THE SIN HE COMMITTED. THE LYING WITNESS IS A DECEITFUL MAN, WHO MOCKS AT JUSTICE. HE IS LIKE A WAR CLUB, OR A SWORD, OR A SHARP ARROW. ″A FALSE WITNESS WILL NOT GO UNPUNISHED″. KING SOLOMON SAYS ″A FALSE WITNESS WILL PERISH″ IF HE DOES NOT REPENT. SOME OF THOSE WHO BELONGED TO THE SYNAGOGUE OF THE FREEDMEN AND OF THE CYRENIANS, AND OF THE ALEXANDRIANS, AND OF THOSE FROM CILICIA AND ASIA CAME UPON STEPHEN AND SEIZED HIM AND BROUGHT HIM BEFORE THE COUNCIL AND SET UP FALSE WITNESSES AGAINST HIM. THESE FALSE WITNESSES SAID: "THIS MAN NEVER CEASES TO SPEAK WORDS AGAINST THIS HOLY PLACE (TEMPLE OF JERUSALEM) AND THE LAW, FOR WE HAVE HEARD HIM SAY THAT THIS JESUS OF NAZARETH WILL DESTROY THIS PLACE (STEPHEN SAID THAT THE TEMPLE OF JESUS′ BODY HAD BEEN DESTROYED BY OTHERS BUT RAISE IT UP BY HIM IN THREE DAYS, ACCORDING WITH WHAT JESUS HAD SAID) AND THE CUSTOMS THAT MOSES DELIVERED TO US."(STEPHEN SAID WHAT JESUS HAD SAID NAMELY HE HAD COME TO FULFIL THE LAW OF MOSES AND THE PROPHETS) AND GAZING AT HIM, ALL WHO SAT IN THE COUNCIL SAW STEPHEN′S FACE AS THE FACE OF AN ANGEL. MANY TESTIFIED FALSELY AGAINST JESUS, BUT THEIR STATEMENTS DID NOT AGREE. AT LAST TWO WITNESSES SAID THEY HAD HEARD HIM SAYING HE WOULD DESTROY THAT TEMPLE AND IN THREE DAYS BUILT ANOTHER, NOT MADE WITH HANDS, (HE REALLY HAD MEANT THE RESURRECTION OF HIS BODY, AS A TEMPLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, DESTROYED BY OTHERS BUT RAISE IT UP BY HIM). YET EVEN ABOUT THIS THEIR TESTIMONY DID NOT AGREE. THE NARRATIVE IN 1 KINGS 21 DESCRIBES A CASE OF FALSE TESTIMONY. KING AHAB OF ISRAEL TRIED TO CONVINCE NABOTH THE JEZREELITE TO SELL HIM THE VINEYARD NABOTH OWNED ADJACENT TO THE KING'S PALACE. AHAB WANTED THE LAND TO USE AS A VEGETABLE GARDEN, BUT NABOTH REFUSED TO SELL OR TRADE THE PROPERTY TO AHAB SAYING, “THE LORD FORBID THAT I SHOULD GIVE UP TO YOU WHAT I HAVE INHERITED FROM MY FATHERS!” AHAB'S WIFE JEZEBEL THEN CONSPIRED TO OBTAIN THE VINEYARD BY WRITING LETTERS IN AHAB'S NAME TO THE ELDERS AND NOBLES IN NABOTH'S TOWN INSTRUCTING THEM TO HAVE TWO SCOUNDRELS BEAR FALSE WITNESS CLAIMING THAT NABOTH HAS CURSED BOTH GOD AND THE KING. AFTER NABOTH WAS SUBSEQUENTLY STONED TO DEATH, AHAB SEIZED POSSESSION OF NABOTH'S VINEYARD. THE TEXT DESCRIBES THE LORD AS VERY ANGRY WITH AHAB, AND THE PROPHET ELIJAH PRONOUNCES JUDGMENT ON BOTH AHAB AND JEZEBEL. THE NARRATIVE IN 2 SAMUEL 1 ALSO CONTAINS A NARRATIVE WHICH IS OFTEN INTERPRETED AS FALSE TESTIMONY. THE 1 SAMUEL NARRATIVE HAD DESCRIBED SAUL AS KILLING HIMSELF BY FALLING ON HIS OWN SWORD AFTER HAVING BEEN WOUNDED BY THE PHILISTINES ON MOUNT GILBOA AND BEING IN A SITUATION WITH NO HOPE OF VICTORY OR ESCAPE. HOWEVER, 2 SAMUEL TELLS OF AN AMALEKITE, WHO WAS PROBABLY ON MOUNT GILBOA TO STRIP THE DEAD OF THEIR POSSESSIONS, APPEARING TO DAVID WITH SAUL’S CROWN AND ROYAL ARM BAND AND GIVING TESTIMONY THAT HE HAD HIMSELF KILLED KING SAUL. DAVID IMMEDIATELY ORDERED THAT THE AMALEKITE BE PUT TO DEATH, SAYING, "YOUR BLOOD BE ON YOUR HEAD, FOR YOUR OWN MOUTH HAS TESTIFIED AGAINST YOU, SAYING, 'I HAVE KILLED THE LORD’S ANOINTED.'" THE TRUTH OF THE AMALEKITE'S TESTIMONY DID NOT NEED TO BE DETERMINED FOR THE SENTENCE TO BE CARRIED OUT: EITHER THE AMALEKITE HAD KILLED KING SAUL, OR HE HAD GIVEN FALSE TESTIMONY TO DAVID REGARDING SAUL’S DEATH. BOTH CRIMES WERE SEEN AS EQUALLY DESERVING OF THE DEATH PENALTY. THE ANCIENT UNDERSTANDING OF FALSE TESTIMONY NOT ONLY INCLUDES TESTIFYING WITH FALSE WORDS, BUT ALSO FAILING TO COME FORWARD WITH RELEVANT TESTIMONY IN RESPONSE TO A PUBLIC CHARGE. “IF A PERSON SINS BECAUSE HE DOES NOT SPEAK UP WHEN HE HEARS A PUBLIC CHARGE TO TESTIFY REGARDING SOMETHING HE HAS SEEN OR LEARNED ABOUT, HE WILL BE HELD RESPONSIBLE.**

**ANYBODY WHO KNOWS EVIDENCE MUST TESTIFY IN COURT (LEVITICUS 5:1)**

**CAREFULLY INTERROGATE THE WITNESS (DEUTERONOMY 13:14)**

**A WITNESS MUST NOT SERVE AS A JUDGE IN CAPITAL CRIMES (DEUTERONOMY 19:17)**

**NOT TO ACCEPT TESTIMONY FROM A LONE WITNESS (DEUTERONOMY 19:15) [1 WITNESS IN THE ORIGINAL ONCE IN THE NUMBER 0]**

**TRANSGRESSORS MUST NOT TESTIFY (EXODUS 23:1)**

**RELATIVES OF THE LITIGANTS MUST NOT TESTIFY (DEUTERONOMY 24:16)**

**NOT TO TESTIFY FALSELY (EXODUS 20:16)**

**PUNISH THE FALSE WITNESSES AS THEY TRIED TO PUNISH THE DEFENDANT (DEUTERONOMY 19:19)**

**THOU SHALT NOT COVET THY NEIGHBOR’S HOUSE**

**"THOU SHALT NOT COVET" IS THE MOST COMMON TRANSLATION OF ONE (OR TWO, DEPENDING ON THE NUMBERING TRADITION) OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS OR DECALOGUE, WHICH ARE WIDELY UNDERSTOOD AS MORAL IMPERATIVES BY LAW SCHOLARS, JEWISH SCHOLARS, CATHOLIC SCHOLARS, AND PROTESTANT SCHOLARS. THE BOOK OF EXODUS AND THE BOOK OF DEUTERONOMY BOTH DESCRIBE THE TEN COMMANDMENTS AS HAVING BEEN SPOKEN BY GOD, INSCRIBED ON TWO STONE TABLETS BY THE TERRIBLE, JEALOUS FINGER OF THE LORD, AND, AFTER MOSES BROKE THE ORIGINAL TABLETS, REWRITTEN BY THE LORD ON REPLACEMENTS. IN TRADITIONS THAT CONSIDER THE PASSAGE A SINGLE COMMANDMENT, THE FULL TEXT READS: YOU SHALL NOT COVET YOUR NEIGHBOR'S HOUSE. YOU SHALL NOT COVET YOUR NEIGHBOR'S WIFE, OR HIS MALE OR FEMALE SERVANT, HIS OX OR DONKEY [ASS], OR ANYTHING THAT BELONGS TO YOUR NEIGHBOR. — EXODUS 20:17. UNLIKE THE OTHER COMMANDMENTS WHICH FOCUS ON OUTWARD ACTIONS, THIS COMMANDMENT FOCUSES ALSO ON THOUGHT. IT IS AN IMPERATIVE AGAINST SETTING ONE'S DESIRE ON THINGS THAT ARE FORBIDDEN, SUCH AS SEX IN MATTHEW 6:24; 1ST TIMOTHY 6:9-10 & LUKE 16:9, 11, 13. ONE COMMANDMENT FORBIDS THE ACT OF ADULTERY. THIS COMMANDMENT FORBIDS THE DESIRE FOR ADULTERY & SEX IN GENERAL (1ST TIMOTHY 6:9-10). ONE COMMANDMENT FORBIDS STEALING. THIS COMMANDMENT FORBIDS THE DESIRE FOR ACQUISITION OR CONFISCATING OF ANOTHER'S GOODS THROUGH LEGALISM FOR REPAYMENT OFF AN INTEREST/USURY LOAN. THE NEW TESTAMENT DESCRIBES JESUS AS INTERPRETING THE TEN COMMANDMENTS AS ISSUES OF THE HEART'S DESIRES RATHER THAN MERELY PROHIBITING CERTAIN OUTWARD ACTIONS. YOU HAVE HEARD THAT IT WAS SAID TO THE PEOPLE LONG AGO, "DO NOT MURDER," AND "ANYONE WHO MURDERS WILL BE SUBJECT TO JUDGMENT." BUT I TELL YOU THAT ANYONE WHO IS ANGRY WITH HIS BROTHER WILL BE SUBJECT TO JUDGMENT … YOU HAVE HEARD THAT IT WAS SAID, "DO NOT COMMIT ADULTERY." BUT I TELL YOU THAT ANYONE [UNMARRIED TO SINGLE AFTER MARRIAGE] WHO LOOKS AT A WOMAN LUSTFULLY HAS ALREADY COMMITTED ADULTERY WITH HER IN HIS HEART. — MATTHEW 5:21-22, 27-28 (NIV). THE CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH CONNECTS THE COMMAND AGAINST COVETING WITH THE COMMAND TO "LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF." THE QUESTION OF "HOW CAN A PERSON NOT COVET A BEAUTIFUL THING IN HIS HEART?" WROTE THAT THE MAIN PURPOSE OF ALL THE COMMANDMENTS IS TO STRAIGHTEN THE HEART. THE HEBREW WORD TRANSLATED "COVET" IS CHAMAD (חמד) WHICH IS COMMONLY TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH AS "COVET", "LUST", AND "STRONG SEXUAL DESIRE." THE HEBREW BIBLE CONTAINS A NUMBER OF WARNINGS AND EXAMPLES OF NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES FOR LUSTING OR COVETING FOR SEX. FOR EXAMPLE, WHEN GOD WAS INSTRUCTING ISRAEL REGARDING THE FALSE SEXUAL RELIGION OF THE CANAANITES, HE WARNED THEM NOT TO COVET THE SILVER OR GOLD ON THEIR IDOLS, BECAUSE THIS CAN LEAD TO BRINGING DETESTABLE THINGS INTO THE HOME. THE IMAGES OF THEIR GODS YOU ARE TO BURN IN THE FIRE. DO NOT COVET THE SILVER AND GOLD ON THEM, AND DO NOT TAKE IT FOR YOURSELVES, OR YOU WILL BE ENSNARED BY IT, FOR IT IS DETESTABLE TO THE LORD YOUR GOD. DO NOT BRING A DETESTABLE THING INTO YOUR HOUSE OR YOU, LIKE IT, WILL BE SET APART FOR DESTRUCTION. UTTERLY ABHOR AND DETEST IT, FOR IT IS SET APART FOR DESTRUCTION. — DEUTERONOMY 7:25-26 (NIV). THE BOOK OF JOSHUA CONTAINS A NARRATIVE IN WHICH ACHAN INCURRED THE WRATH OF GOD BY COVETING PROHIBITED GOLD AND SILVER THAT HE FOUND IN THE DESTRUCTION OF JERICHO. THIS IS PORTRAYED AS A VIOLATION OF COVENANT AND A DISGRACEFUL THING. THE BOOK OF PROVERBS WARNS AGAINST COVETING, "ABOVE ALL ELSE, GUARD YOUR HEART, FOR IT IS THE WELLSPRING OF LIFE." THE PROPHET MICAH CONDEMNS THE COVETING OF HOUSES AND FIELDS AS A WARNING AGAINST LUSTING AFTER PHYSICAL POSSESSIONS. THE HEBREW WORD FOR "COVET" CAN ALSO BE TRANSLATED AS "LUST", AND THE BOOK OF PROVERBS WARNS AGAINST COVETING IN THE FORM OF SEXUAL LUST. THE MAIN EXAMPLE, IS ALL THOSE WHO SEXUALLY INDULGE INTO SEXUALITY WITH BABYLON IN REVELATION 17:1-18:24. DO NOT LUST IN YOUR HEART AFTER HER BEAUTY OR LET HER CAPTIVATE YOU WITH HER EYES, FOR THE PROSTITUTE REDUCES YOU TO A LOAF OF BREAD, AND THE ADULTERESS PREYS UPON YOUR VERY LIFE. — PROVERBS 6:25-26 (NIV).**

**THOU SHALT NOT COVET THY NEIGHBOR’S WIFE**

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**THOU SHALT NOT COVET THY NEIGHBOR’S SLAVES, NEIGHBORS ANIMALS, OR ANYTHING ELSE THAT BELONGS TO THY NEIGHBOR**

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**AMONG THE MOST NOTABLE SEMANTIC DIFFERENCES ARE THOSE RELATED TO THE SAMARITAN PLACE OF WORSHIP ON MOUNT GERIZIM. THE SAMARITAN VERSION OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS COMMANDS THAT AN ALTAR BE BUILT ON MOUNT GERIZIM ON WHICH ALL SACRIFICES SHOULD BE OFFERED. THE SAMARITAN PENTATEUCH CONTAINS THIS TEXT AT EXODUS 20:17: AND WHEN IT SO HAPPENS THAT LORD GOD BRINGS YOU TO THE LAND OF CANAAN, WHICH YOU ARE COMING TO POSSESS, YOU SHALL SET UP THERE FOR YOU GREAT STONES AND PLASTER THEM WITH PLASTER AND YOU WRITE ON THE STONES ALL WORDS OF THIS LAW. AND IT BECOMES FOR YOU THAT ACROSS THE JORDAN YOU SHALL RAISE THESE STONES, WHICH I COMMAND YOU TODAY, IN MOUNTAIN GERIZIM. AND YOU BUILD THERE THE ALTAR TO THE LORD GOD OF YOU. ALTAR OF STONES. NOT YOU SHALL WAVE ON THEM IRON. WITH WHOLE STONES YOU SHALL BUILD THE ALTAR TO LORD GOD OF YOU. AND YOU BRING ON IT ASCEND OFFERINGS TO LORD GOD OF YOU, AND YOU SACRIFICE PEACE OFFERINGS, AND YOU EAT THERE AND YOU REJOICE BEFORE THE FACE OF THE LORD GOD OF YOU. THE MOUNTAIN THIS IS ACROSS THE JORDAN BEHIND THE WAY OF THE RISING OF THE SUN, IN THE LAND OF CANAAN WHO IS DWELLING IN THE DESERT BEFORE THE GALGAL, BESIDE ALVIN-MARA, BEFORE SECHEM. THIS COMMANDMENT IS ABSENT FROM THE CORRESPONDING TEXT OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS IN THE MASORETIC. THE SAMARITAN PENTATEUCH'S INCLUSION OF THE GERIZIM VARIATION WITHIN THE TEN COMMANDMENTS PLACES ADDITIONAL EMPHASIS ON THE DIVINE SANCTION GIVEN TO THAT COMMUNITY'S PLACE OF WORSHIP. THIS VARIATION HAS SIMILARITIES TO DEUTERONOMY 27:2-8 AND IS SUPPORTED BY CHANGES TO THE VERBAL TENSE WITHIN THE SAMARITAN TEXT OF DEUTERONOMY INDICATING THAT GOD HAS ALREADY CHOSEN THIS PLACE. THE FUTURE TENSE ("WILL CHOOSE") IS USED IN THE MASORETIC. AND WHEREAS DEUTERONOMY 27:4 IN THE MASORETIC COMMANDS AN ALTAR TO BE CONSTRUCTED ON MOUNT EBAL, THE SAMARITAN TEXTS HAS MOUNT GERIZIM (BOTH CAN BE CORRECT). IN (EXODUS 23:19) SAMARITAN PENTATEUCH CONTAINS THE FOLLOWING PASSAGE AFTER THE PROHIBITION: [כי עשה זאת כזבח שכח ועברה היא לאלהי יעקב] WHICH ROUGHLY TRANSLATES "THAT ONE DOING THIS AS SACRIFICE FORGETS AND ENRAGES GOD OF JACOB". IN (NUMBERS 4:14) SAMARITAN PENTATEUCH CONTAINS THE FOLLOWING PASSAGE: [ולקחו בגד ארגמן וכסו את הכיור ואת כנו ונתנו אתם אל מכסה עור תחש ונתנו על המוט] WHICH ROUGHLY TRANSLATES "AND THEY WILL TAKE A PURPLE COVERING AND COVER THE LAVER AND HIS FOOT, AND THEY COVER IT IN TACHASH SKINS, AND THEY PUT IT UPON A BAR." SEVERAL OTHER TYPES OF DIFFERENCES ARE FOUND. THE SAMARITAN PENTATEUCH USES LESS ANTHROPOMORPHIC LANGUAGE IN DESCRIPTIONS OF GOD WITH INTERMEDIARIES PERFORMING ACTIONS THE MASORETIC VERSION ATTRIBUTES DIRECTLY TO GOD. WHERE THE MASORETIC DESCRIBES STEPHEN YAHWEH AS A "MAN OF WAR" (EXODUS 15:3), THE SAMARITAN HAS "HERO OF WAR", A PHRASE APPLIED TO SPIRITUAL BEINGS, AND IN NUMBERS 23:4, THE SAMARITAN READING "THE ANGEL OF GOD FOUND BALAAM" CONTRASTS WITH THE MASORETIC "AND GOD MET BALAAM." A FEW DIFFERENCES REFLECT SAMARITAN NOTIONS OF PROPRIETY, SUCH AS THE ALTERATION IN GENESIS 50:23 OF THE MASORETIC "UPON THE KNEES OF JOSEPH" TO "IN THE DAYS OF JOSEPH." SAMARITAN SCRIBES, WHO INTERPRETED THIS VERSE LITERALLY, FOUND IT IMPROPER THAT THE MOTHER OF JOSEPH'S GRANDCHILDREN WOULD GIVE BIRTH ON HIS KNEES. DISTINCTIVE VARIANTS IN THE SAMARITAN ARE ALSO FOUND IN CERTAIN LEGAL TEXTS WHERE SAMARITAN PRACTICE VARIES FROM THAT PRESCRIBED WITHIN RABBINICAL HALACHIC TEXTS. IN ABOUT THIRTY-FOUR INSTANCES, THE SAMARITAN PENTATEUCH IMPORTS TEXT FROM PARALLEL OR SYNOPTIC PASSAGES IN OTHER PARTS OF THE PENTATEUCH. THESE TEXTUAL EXPANSIONS RECORD CONVERSATIONS AND EVENTS THAT ARE IMPLIED OR PRESUPPOSED BY OTHER PARTS OF THE NARRATIVE, BUT NOT EXPLICITLY RECORDED IN THE MASORETIC TEXT. FOR EXAMPLE, THE SAMARITAN TEXT IN THE BOOK OF EXODUS ON MULTIPLE OCCASIONS RECORDS MOSES REPEATING TO PHARAOH EXACTLY WHAT BOTH THE SAMARITAN AND MASORETIC RECORD GOD INSTRUCTING MOSES TO TELL HIM. THE RESULT IS REPETITIOUS, BUT THE SAMARITAN MAKES IT CLEAR THAT MOSES SPOKE EXACTLY AS GOD COMMANDED HIM. IN ADDITION TO THESE SUBSTANTIAL TEXTUAL EXPANSIONS, THE SAMARITAN PENTATEUCH ON NUMEROUS OCCASIONS ADDS SUBJECTS, PREPOSITIONS, PARTICLES, APPOSITIVES, AND THE REPETITION OF WORDS AND PHRASES WITHIN A SINGLE PASSAGE TO CLARIFY THE MEANING OF THE TEXT.**

**THE LAW & HUMAN INABILITY:**

**WE HAVE SEEN ISRAEL’S ONGOING FAILURE TO REALIZE THE PROMISES OF NATIONAL GLORY THAT WAS ASCRIBED TO THE DISOBEDIENCE TO THE FATHER STEPHEN’S LAW KNOWN AS THE TORAH. THE WHOLE OF JUDAISM, GENTILISM & MARRIED CHRISTIANITY IN ACTS OF THE APOSTLES ARE ALL INDICTED FOR THEIR ONGOING FAILURE TO OBSERVE & DO THE FATHER STEPHEN’S LAW IN GALATIANS 2:17-18; 3:10; 5:3; 6:13. THIS IS BECAUSE OF THE FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEMS WITH JUDAISM IN MATTHEW 3:7-10; JOHN 7:19 & IN ACTS OF THE APOSTLES WITH THE APOSTLE STEPHEN IN ACTS 7:51-53, 57-60; 15:10-11. THE MARRIED PHARISEES NEVER KEPT THE LAW IN MATTHEW 5:20; 23:3, 23, 25-26; MARK 7:8, 13 & LUKE 11:37-52. THOSE WHO ARE SEXUAL, HOMOSEXUAL & INTERRACIAL ABOMINABLE IN NATURE ABSOLUTELY MEANS UNGENERATED FLESH, THAT CANNOT KEEP GOD’S LAW IN ROMANS 8:7. THEY ARE SLAVES TO SEX IN ROMANS 6:6, 17, 19, 20. THEY ARE SOLD UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF SEX IN ROMANS 7:14. THEY ARE CAPTIVES BY SEX IN ROMANS 7:23. TO BE ‘UNDER LAW’ WAS TO BE ‘UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF SEX’ IS IN ROMANS 6:14-15; 7:14 & GALATIANS 3:22. THEY DO THE WORKS OF THE LAW AND ARE UNDER A SEXUAL CURSE IN GALATIANS 3:10. THEY ARE ENSLAVED TO THE ELEMENTS OF THE WORLD IN GALATIANS 4:3-5. THEY CAN ONLY BE FREED BY YIELDING TO THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD IN GALATIANS 5:18. THE FATHER STEPHEN’S LAW IS NOT SEXUAL, BUT IS DESIGNED TO ARREST & LOCK UP THE SEXUAL CREATURES IN ROMANS 7:12. THE LAW OF MOSES WAS GIVEN TO INCREASE SIN IN ROMANS 5:20; 7:7-11 & GALATIANS 3:19. THE PORN SEXUAL LAWS APART FROM THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD & HIS DIVINE LAWS ONLY KILLS & DAMNS IN 2ND CORINTHIANS 3:6, 9. THE AUTHORITY OF SEX IS THE PORN LAWS IN 1ST CORINTHIANS 15:56.**

**ABROGATION & THE FULFILLMENT OF THE LAW:**

**CHRIST CAME TO FULFILL THE LAW IN MATTHEW 5:17-20, 21-48, BUT WAS NOT FULLY FULFILLED UNTIL THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD CAME ON THE SCENE IN ACTS OF THE HOLY GHOST IN ACTS 1:4-7:60. CHRIST TECHNICALLY FULFILLS OT LAW & OT PROPHESY [MATTHEW 1:22; 2:15, 17, 23; 4:14; 8:17] THAT REACHES TO THE TOP PINNACLE OF ACTS OF THE APOSTLES IN ACTS 1:1-7:60, BUT DOES NOT TOUCH, NOR ENTER IN THE FATHER STEPHEN’S OWN AUTHORITY IN ACTS OF THE HOLY GHOST IN ACTS 1:4-7:60. FOOD LAWS ARE NO MORE BINDING IN MATTHEW 15:1-20; MARK 7:1-23. SABBATH LAWS ARE CHANGED SOMEWHAT BECAUSE OF IGNORANCE TO RECEIVE MERCY IN MATTHEW 12:1-14. BUT THE DIVORCE LAWS ARE STILL IN TACT BECAUSE IT CONCERNS VOWS TO THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD & NOT TO CHRIST IN MATTHEW 5:31-32; 19:3-12. THE LAWS ARE ENFORCED WITH THE COMING OF THE MARRIED KINGDOM OF LORDSHIP IN ACTS OF THE APOSTLES IN MATTHEW 4:17; 5:17-48. LUKE EMPHASIZED THAT JESUS FULFILLS THE LAW & PROPHESY IN LUKE 1:32-33, 54-55, 68-79; 4:18-19; 24:25-27, 44-49 & IN ACTS OF THE APOSTLES IN ACTS 2:16-36. THE LAW IS STILL VALID IN ACTS OF THE APOSTLES IN ACTS 16:17. THE LAW OF THE OLD COVENANT IS NO LONGER BINDING BY A CHANGE IN PRIESTHOOD [NCO CORPS] IN HEBREWS 7:11-12. THE MELCHIZADEAN PRIESTHOOD [NCO CORPS] COMES ON THE SCENE IN PSALMS 110:4. THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST FULFILLS THE OT SCRIPTURE IN ROMANS 1:2; 3:21. CHRIST CAME IN MARCH, 4 BC, WHERE CIRCUMCISION, FOOD LAWS & THE OBSERVANCE OF DAYS [JEWISH/GENTILE SABBATH ON SATURDAY] ARE NOT MANDATED FOR THE LORD’S CREATURES LATER ON IN ACTS OF THE HOLY GHOST, BUT THE CHRISTIAN SABBATH ON SUNDAY IS STILL REQUIRED, MANDATED & IN FORCE IS IN ROMANS 2:26-29; 4:9-12; 14:1-23; 1ST CORINTHIANS 7:19; GALATIANS 4:10; 2:3-5; 5:2-6; 6:12-13 & COLOSSIANS 2:16-23. THE FULL FRUITS OF THE SABBATH SATURDAY IS FULFILLED AT THE COMING OF CHRIST IN THE GOSPEL OF LUKE SINCE THE PREGNANCY IN JUNE, 5 BC & HIS BIRTH IN MARCH, 4 BC IN HEBREWS 4:1-11. PURITY LAWS OF THE OT ARE FULFILLED IN 2ND CORINTHIANS 6:14; 7:1 & LEVITICUS 11:44 WITH 1ST PETER 1:15-16. JUDAISM MOSAIC COVENANT HAS ENDED WITH THE COMING OF CHRIST IN THE GOSPEL OF LUKE IN MARCH, 4 BC IN GALATIANS 3:15-4:7 & 2ND CORINTHIANS 3:4-18. THE PROMISES GIVEN TO ABRAHAM ARE NOW REALITY IN GALATIANS 3:6-9, 14-18, 29 & ROMANS 4:9-17. CIRCUMCISION OF THE HEART HAS BECOME A REALITY BY THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD IN ROMANS 2:28-29 & PHILIPPIANS 3:3. THE FULFILLMENT OF THE LAW OF PAUL IS FULFILLED IN JAMES 2:8-12. PAUL’S DISTINCTION FROM MORAL LAWS & CEREMONIAL LAWS ARE FULFILLED IN ROMANS 2:25-29; 8:4; 13:8-20; GALATIANS 5:2-6, 14 & 1ST CORINTHIANS 7:19. NO THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD HAS FULFILLED THE ENTIRE UNIVERSAL LAW BY HIS OWN HOLY GHOST IN ACTS OF THE HOLY GHOST IN JOHN 4:23-24 AND ACTS 6:5, 10; 7:55-56, 59-60 FROM MARCH, 18 AD TO FEBRUARY, 2018 AD IN ACTS 7:60 & NOT A PART OF IT LIKE WHAT CHRIST HAS DONE IN OT LAW IN THE GOSPEL OF LUKE FROM MARCH, 4 AD TO FEBRUARY, 1996 AD & ACTS OF THE APOSTLES FROM MARCH, 17 AD TO FEBRUARY, 2017 AD. THIS MEANS THE ENTIRE LAW IS CAPPED OFF, LEVELED & GETS NO STRONGER, BUT STAYS AT THE HIGHER THAN MOST HIGHEST LEVELS BEFORE THE ACTUAL FULFILLMENT HAS OCCURRED & THE TIME ALLOTTED HAS EXPIRED. THE ENTIRE UNIVERSAL LAW IS FULFILLED BY THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD BECAUSE GOD IS AGAPE LOVE & OMNI-BENEVOLENCE. THIS ULTIMATELY MEANS SINCE THE FATHER STEPHEN’S LORDSHIP OF THE HOLY BIBLICAL LAW [THIS WAS THE PRIMARY SOURCE THAT ARRESTS THE SEXUAL, HOMOSEXUAL & INTERRACIAL CREATURES AS MARRIED, APOSTOLIC & PHARISAIC IN NATURE WITHIN THE FIRST 7 YEARS OF THE ETERNAL ESTABLISHMENT OF THE HEAVENLY UNIVERSAL ZION HAD BEEN COMPLETED IN THE ULTIMATE END TIME IN ACTS OF THE APOSTLES FROM ACTS 1:8-ACTS 7:60 THAT IS CAPPED OFF & CONTROLLED BY THE APOSTLE STEPHEN’S ETERNAL DEATH] IS THE PRIMARY SOURCE THAT IS FULFILLED, THE HOLY BIBLICAL MAFIA IS THEN FULFILLED [THIS WAS THE PRIMARY SOURCE IN THE ULTIMATE BEGINNING TIME [BASED ON THE LORD LUCIFER’S FALL] AT THE FATHER STEPHEN’S SIDE IN PROVERBS 8:30-31] & ALL OTHER LAWS & ALL OTHER MAFIAS THAT ARE CONTRARY ARE THEN FULFILLED SINCE ACTS OF THE HOLY GHOST [THE BIBLICAL MAFIA AS SINGLE STIFF-NAKED STRIPPERS AS NON-APOSTOLIC & NON-PHARISAIC IN NATURE ENTERED THE FIRST 7 YEARS BEFORE THE ETERNAL ESTABLISHMENT OF THE GODLY UNIVERSAL ZION HAD BEEN COMPLETED IN ACTS OF THE HOLY GHOST FROM ACTS 1:8-ACTS 7:60 THAT IS CAPPED OFF & CONTROLLED BY THE LORD STEVE’S ETERNAL DEATH, LEAVING ONLY THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD AS THE LORD YAHWEH ON TOP IN THE ULTIMATE END TIME [BASED ON THE LADY VICTORIA’S FALL] IN JOHN 8:58; EPHESIANS 4:6; 1ST CORINTHIANS 8:6; 15:24-28 & ACTS 29:2 THAT IMPLICATES AN ACTS CHAPTER 30 FOR THE USA LEFT TO BE FULFILLED IN THE ULTIMATE END TIME PROPHESY. ONLY TRUE SAINTLY CHRISTIAN LORDS [LADIES] IN IMPARTIAL RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENTS & TRUE CREATOR AGENTS IN IMPARTIAL RIGHTEOUS ACTIONS WILL THEN EXCEL AFTER THIS UNIVERSAL FULFILLMENT HAS BEEN COMPLETED IN THE FATHER STEPHEN’S KINGDOM OF LORDSHIP IN ACTS OF THE HOLY GHOST. BASED ON THE SINGLE STIFF-NAKED STRIPPERS IT IS CONSIDERED SINLESS BECAUSE THAT IS THE MAIN QUALIFICATION OF A TRUE SINGLE PROPHET, TO BE CHARGED WRONGFULLY IN THE MARRIED/UNMARRIED LAW. THE MARRIED/UNMARRIED LAW IN ACTS OF THE APOSTLES CAN NEVER STRIP OUT IN THE OPEN, WITHOUT SINNING & BECOMING GUILTY BEFORE GOD. THIS IS PROVEN IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN, WHERE GOD HAD CLOTHED THEM & TO BECOME TRUE MARRIED/UNMARRIED PROPHETS ONE MUST MARRY A WITCH & BE CHARGED WRONGFULLY, LIKE IN HOSEA CHAPTERS 1-2; ISAIAH 20:1-6 & ACTS 7:37-38. THE SINGLE LAW IN ACTS OF THE HOLY GHOST DOES NOT HAVE ANY STIPULATIONS AGAINST STRIPPING OUT IN THE OPEN BECAUSE IT IS THE COMMAND OF THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD TO BECOME TRUE SINGLE PROPHETS, LIKE MICAH 1:8-9 & ACTS 7:37-38.**

**THE ULTIMATE ENDING OF THE NT LORDSHIP OF THE HOLY BIBLICAL LAW**

**THE CIVIL LAWS:**

**FATHER [STEPHEN] AND SON [JESUS]: THE AUTHORITY OF A FATHER TO BE HELD SACRED. CURSING OR SMITING IN EXODUS 21:15, 17 & LEVITICUS 20:9 & STUBBORN AND WILLFUL DISOBEDIENCE, TO BE CONSIDERED CAPITAL CRIMES IN IN DEUTERONOMY 21:18-21. BUT UNCONTROLLABLE AUTHORITY OF LIFE & DEATH IS REFUSED TO A FATHER AND ONLY ENFORCED IN THE MOUTH OF 2 WITNESSES. THE RIGHT OF THE FIRST-BORN TO A DOUBLE PORTION OF THE INHERITANCE THAT IS NOT TO BE SET ASIDE BY PARTIALITY. INHERITANCE BY DAUGHTERS TO BE ALLOWED WITH NO SONS, PROVIDED THAT HEIRESSES MARRIED IN THEIR OWN TRIBE IN NUMBERS 27:6-8 & CHAPTER 36. DAUGHTERS UNMARRIED TO BE ENTIRELY DEPENDENT ON THEIR FATHER IN NUMBERS 30:3-5.**

**HUSBAND [FATHER STEPHEN] AND WIFE [LADY STEPHANIE]: THE AUTHORITY OF A HUSBAND TO BE SO GREAT THAT A WIFE COULD NEVER BE SUI JURIS, OR ENTER INDEPENDENTLY INTO ANY ENGAGEMENT, EVEN BEFORE GOD IN NUMBERS 30:6-15. A WIDOW OF A DIVORCED WIFE BECAME INDEPENDENT, AND DID NOT AGAIN BE PLACE UNDER HER FATHER’S AUTHORITY IN NUMBERS 30:9. DIVORCE FOR UNCLEANNESS ALLOWED, BUT TO BE FORMAL & IRREVOCABLE IN DEUTERONOMY 24:1-4. MARRIAGE WITHIN CERTAIN DEGREES FORBIDDEN IN LEVITICUS CHAPTER 18. A SLAVE WIFE, BOUGHT OR CAPTIVE IS NOT TO BE ACTUAL PROPERTY, NOR TO BE SOLD & IF ILL-TREATED, TO BE IPSO FACTO FREED IN EXODUS 21:7-9 & DEUTERONOMY 21:10-14. SLANDER AGAINST A WIFE’S VIRGINITY TO BE PUNISHED BY A FINE, AND BY DEPRIVAL OF THE AUTHORITY OF DIVORCE. BUT ON THE OTHER HAND, ANTE-CONNUBIAL UNCLEANNESS IN HER TO BE PUNISHED BY DEATH IN DEUTERONOMY 22:13-21. THE RAISING UP OF SEED IN THE LEVIRATE LAW, WHICH IS A FORMAL RIGHT TO BE CLAIMED BY THE WIDOW, UNDER PAIN OF INFAMY, WITH A VIEW TO PRESERVE THE FAMILIES IN DEUTERONOMY 25:5-10.**

**MASTER [FATHER STEPHEN] AND SLAVE [SON JESUS]: THE AUTHORITY OF A MASTER SO FAR LIMITED THAT DEATH UNDER ACTUAL CHASTISEMENT WAS PUNISHABLE IN EXODUS 21:20 AND MAIMING WAS TO GIVE LIBERTY IPSO FACTO IN EXODUS 21:26, 27. THE HEBREW SLAVE TO BE FREED AT THE SABBATICAL YEAR AND PROVIDED WITH NECESSARIES—THE WIFE & CHILDREN TO GO WITH HIM IF THEY CAME TO HIS MASTER WITH THEM, UNLESS BY HIS OWN FORMAL ACT HE CONSENTED TO BE A PERPETUAL SLAVE IN EXODUS 21:1-6 & DEUTERONOMY 15:12-18. IN ANY CASE, THEY WOULD BE FREED AT THE JUBILEE WITH HIS CHILDREN & WIFE IN LEVITICUS 25:10. IF SOLD TO A RESIDENT ALIEN, TO BE ALWAYS REDEEMABLE, AT A PRICE PROPORTIONED TO THE TIME OF THE JUBILEE IN LEVITICUS 25:47-54. FOREIGN SLAVES TO BE HELD AND INHERITED AS PROPERTY FOREVER IN LEVITICUS 25:45, 46. FUGITIVE SLAVES FROM OTHER NATIONS NOT TO BE GIVEN UP IN DEUTERONOMY 23:15.**

**STRANGERS [WALLACE’S]: THESE MAY NOT HAVE BEEN SUI JURIS OR ABLE TO PROTECT THEMSELVES, AND ACCORDINGLY PROTECTION & KINDNESS TOWARD THEM AND ENJOINED AS A SACRED DUTY IN EXODUS 22:21 & LEVITICUS 19:33, 34.**

**THE LAND LAWS:**

**ALL LAND TO BE THE PROPERTY OF THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD ALONE, AND ITS HOLDERS TO BE DEEMED HIS TENANTS OR VINEDRESSERS IN LEVITICUS 25:23. ALL SOLD LAND THEREFORE TO RETURN TO ITS ORIGINAL OWNERS AT THE JUBILEE, AND THE PRICE OF SALE TO BE CALCULATED ACCORDINGLY AND REDEMPTION ON EQUITABLE TERMS TO ALWAYS BE ALLOWED IN LEVITICUS 25:25-27. A HOUSE SOLD TO BE REDEEMABLE WITHIN A YEAR, AND IF NOT REDEEMED, TO PASS AWAY ALTOGETHER IN LEVITICUS 25:29, 30. BUT THE HOUSES OF THE LEVITES [CORPORALS OR SPECIALIST 4TH CLASS], OR THOSE IN UNWALLED VILLAGES, TO BE REDEEMABLE AT ALL TIMES, IN THE SAME WAY AS LAND AND THE LEVITICAL SUBURBS TO BE UNALIENABLE IN LEVITICUS 25:31-34. LAND OR HOUSES SANCTIFIED, OR TITHES, OR UNCLEAN FIRSTLINGS, TO BE CAPABLE OF BEING REDEEMED, AT SIX-FIFTHS VALUE ACCORDING TO THE TIME FROM THE JUBILEE BY THE PRIEST [SERGEANT OR SPECIALIST 5TH CLASS], IF DEVOTED BY THE OWNER AND UNREDEEMED, TO BE HALLOWED AT THE JUBILEE FOREVER AND GIVEN TO THE PRIESTS [SERGEANTS], IF ONLY BY A POSSESSOR, TO RETURN TO THE OWNER AT THE JUBILEE IN LEVITICUS 27:14-34.**

**THE DEBT LAWS:**

**ALL DEBTS TO BE RELEASED AT THE 7TH SABBATICAL YEAR. A BLESSING PROMISED TO OBEDIENCE TO LEND, AND A CURSE ON REFUSAL TO LEND IN DEUTERONOMY 15:1-11. USURY [EXCESSIVE INTEREST] NOT TO BE TAKEN UPON A CURSE IN EXODUS 22:25-27 & DEUTERONOMY 23:19, 20. PLEDGES NOT TO BE INSOLENTLY OR RUINOUSLY EXACTED UPON A CURSE IN DEUTERONOMY 24:6, 10-13, 17, 18.**

**TAXATION DEBT: CENSUS- MONEY, A POLL-TAX OF HALF A SHEKEL, TO BE PAID FOR THE SERVICE OF THE TABERNACLE IN EXODUS 30:12-16. ALL SPOIL IN WAR TO BE HALVED, OF THE COMBATANTS’ HALF, ONE-FIVE-HUNDREDTH, OF THE PEOPLE’S, ONE FIFTIETH, TO BE PAID FOR A HEAVE OFFERING TO THE FATHER STEPHEN.**

**TITHES DEBT: TITHES OF ALL PRODUCE TO BE GIVEN FOR MAINTENANCE OF THE LEVITES [CORPORALS OR SPECIALIST 4TH CLASS] IN NUMBERS 18:20-24. OF THIS ONE-TENTH TO BE PAID AS A HEAVE OFFERING FOR MAINTENANCE OF THE PRIESTS [SERGEANTS OR SPECIALIST 5TH CLASS] IN NUMBERS 18:24-32. SECOND TITHE TO BE BESTOWED IN RELIGIOUS FEASTING AND CHARITY, EITHER AT THE HOLY PLACE OR EVERY 3RD YEAR AT HOME IN DEUTERONOMY 14:22-28. FIRST-FRUITS OF CORN, WINE AND OIL, AT LEAST ONE SIXTIETH, GENERALLY ONE FORTIETH, FOR THE PRIESTS [SERGEANTS OR SPECIALIST 5TH CLASS], TO BE OFFERED AT JERUSALEM, WITH A SOLEMN DECLARATION OF DEPENDENCE ON THE FATHER STEPHEN THE KING OF ISRAEL IN NUMBERS 18:12, 13 & DEUTERONOMY 26:1-15. FIRSTLINGS OF CLEAN BEASTS, TO THE REDEMPTION MONEY, FIVE SHEKELS OF A MAN AND HALF SHEKEL, OR ONE SHEKEL OF UNCLEAN BEASTS TO BE GIVEN TO THE PRIESTS [SERGEANTS OR SPECIALIST 5TH CLASS] AFTER SACRIFICE IN NUMBERS 18:15-18. POOR POVERTY LAWS: GLEANINGS IN A FIELD OR VINEYARD TO BE A LEGAL RIGHT OF THE POOR IN LEVITICUS 19:9, 10 & DEUTERONOMY 24:19-22. SLIGHT TRESPASS BY EATING ON THE SPOT TO BE ALLOWED AS LEGAL IN DEUTERONOMY 23:24, 25. SECOND TITHE TO BE GIVEN IN CHARITY. WAGES TO BE PAID DAY BY DAY IN DEUTERONOMY 24:15. MAINTENANCE OF PRIESTS [SERGEANTS OR SPECIALIST 5TH CLASS] IN NUMBERS 18:8-12. TENTH OF LEVITES’ [CORPORALS OR SPECIALIST 4TH CLASS] TITHE IN LEVITICUS 18:24-32. THE HEAVE AND WAVE OFFERINGS, BREAST AND RIGHT SHOULDER OF ALL PEACE OFFERING. THE MEAT AND SIN OFFERINGS, TO BE EATEN SOLEMNLY AND ONLY IN THE HOLY PLACE. FIRST-FRUITS AND REDEMPTION MONEY IN NUMBERS 18:12, 13 & DEUTERONOMY 26:1-15. PRICE OF ALL DEVOTED THINGS, UNLESS SPECIALLY GIVEN FOR A SACRED SERVICE. A MAN’S SERVICE, OR THAT OF HIS HOUSEHOLD, TO BE REDEEMED AT 50 SHEKELS FOR MAN, 30 SHEKELS FOR WOMAN, 20 SHEKELS FOR BOY & 10 SHEKELS FOR GIRL.**

**THE CRIMINAL LAWS: 4 OFFENCES & TREASON AGAINST THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD**

**1ST SUPREME COMMAND: ACKNOWLEDGE OF FALSE GODS IN EXODUS 22:20. MOLECH BY BURNING CHILDREN BY FIRE FOR SEXUAL GRATIFICATION IN LEVITICUS 20:1-5. MOLOCH AS CHILD PORNOGRAPHY IN ACTS 7:42-43. IDOLATRY IN DEUTERONOMY CHAPTER 13; 17:2-5.**

**2ND SUPREME COMMAND: WITCHCRAFT [SEXUALITY, HOMOSEXUALITY, INTERRACIAL ABOMINATIONS, WIZARDRY, PROSTITUTION, HARLOTRY, WHOREDOM’S OR WARLOCKRY] & FALSE PROPHESY IN EXODUS 22:18; DEUTERONOMY 18:9-22 & LEVITICUS 19:31.**

**3RD SUPREME COMMAND: BLASPHEMY OR SPEAK AGAINST GOD VERSES FREEDOM OF SPEECH OR CIVIL LIBERTIES IN LEVITICUS 24:15, 16.**

**4TH SUPREME COMMAND: SABBATH-BREAKING [JEWISH/GENTILE SATURDAY & CHRISTIAN SUNDAY] IN NUMBERS 15:32, 36.**

**ALL OF THE 4 COMMANDS ARE PUNISHED BY BEING STONED TO DEATH [GUN THAT LODGES BULLET STONES]. IDOLATROUS CITIES, COUNTIES, STATES & COUNTRIES SHALL BE UTTERLY DESTROYED.**

**THE CRIMINAL LAWS: 6 OFFENCES AGAINST THE APOSTLE STEPHEN**

**5TH SUPREME COMMAND: DISOBEDIENCE TO OR CURSING OR SMITING OF PARENTS TO BE PUNISHED BY BEING STONES TO DEATH, PUBLICLY ADJUDGED AND INFLICTED IS IN EXODUS 21:15, 17; LEVITICUS 20:9 & DEUTERONOMY 21:18-21. ALSO OF DISOBEDIENCE TO THE PRIESTS AS JUDGES [SERGEANTS OR SPECIALIST 5TH CLASS] OR THE CHIEF PRIESTS AS CHIEF JUDGES [LIEUTENANTS OR CHIEF SERGEANTS] OR THE HIGH PRIEST AS SUPREME JUDGE [HIGH SERGEANT, HIGH CAPTAIN OR HIGH CHIEF’S OF POLICE] IN 1ST KINGS 21:10-14 & 2ND CHRONICLES 24:21.**

**6TH SUPREME COMMAND: MURDER [KILLING THINKING YOU DO GOD SERVICE] TO BE PUNISHED BY BEING STONE TO DEATH WITHOUT SANCTUARY OR REPRIEVE OR SATISFACTION IN EXODUS 21:12, 14 & DEUTERONOMY 19:11-13. DEATH OF A SLAVE, ACTUALLY UNDER THE ROD, TO BE PUNISHED IN EXODUS 21:20, 21. DEATH BY NEGLIGENCE TO BE PUNISHED BY DEATH IN EXODUS 21:28-30. ACCIDENTAL HOMICIDE: THE AVENGER OF BLOOD TO SEEK SAFETY BY FLIGHT TO A CITY OF REFUGE, THERE TO REMAIN TILL THE DEATH OF THE HIGH PRIEST [HIGH SERGEANT, HIGH CAPTAIN OR HIGH CHIEF’S OF POLICE] IN NUMBERS 35:9-28 & DEUTERONOMY 4:41-43; 19:4-10. UNCERTAIN MURDER TO BE EXPIATED BY FORMAL DISAVOWAL & SACRIFICE BY THE ELDER LORDS OF THE NEAREST CITY IN DEUTERONOMY 21:1-9. ASSAULT TO BE PUNISHED BY LEX TALIONIS [WORD FOR WORD, EYE FOR EYE, FOOT FOR FOOT, HAND FOR HAND, LIFE FOR LIFE, ETC.], OR DAMAGES [RESTORE 2 FOLD TO 7 FOLD] IN EXODUS 21:18, 19, 22-25 & LEVITICUS 24:19, 20.**

**7TH SUPREME COMMAND: ADULTERY [EXTRAMARITAL SEX] TO BE PUNISHED BY BEING STONED TO DEATH OF BOTH OFFENDERS. THE RAPE OF A MARRIED OR BETROTHED WOMAN, BY DEATH OF THE OFFENDER IN DEUTERONOMY 22:13-27. RAPE OR SEDUCTION OF AN UN-BETROTHED VIRGIN TO BE COMPENSATED BY MARRIAGE, WITH DOWRY OF 50 SHEKELS, AND WITHOUT AUTHORITY OF DIVORCE, IF SHE BE REFUSED, BY PAYMENT OF FULL DOWRY IN EXODUS 22:16, 17 & DEUTERONOMY 22:28, 29. UNLAWFUL MARRIAGES [UNAUTHORIZED OR ILLEGAL] TO BE PUNISHED BY DEATH OR BY CHILDLESSNESS OR BOTH IN LEVITICUS CHAPTER 20.**

**8TH SUPREME COMMAND: THEFT TO BE PUNISHED BY FOURFOLD OR DOUBLE RESTITUTION. A NOCTURNAL ROBBER TO BE SLAIN [KILLED] AS AN OUTLAW IN EXODUS 22:1-4. TRESPASS & INJURY OF THINGS LENT TO BE COMPENSATED IN EXODUS 23:5-15. PERVERSION OF JUSTICE BY BRIBES, THREAT, DEATH WISHES, ETC. AND ESPECIALLY OPPRESSION OF STRANGERS [WALLACE’S], STRICTLY FORBIDDEN IN EXODUS 22:9. KIDNAPPING TO BE PUNISHED BY DEATH IN DEUTERONOMY 24:7.**

**9TH SUPREME COMMAND: FALSE WITNESS TO BE PUNISHED BY LEX TALIONIS [WORD FOR WORD, EYE FOR EYE, FOOT FOR FOOT, HAND FOR HAND, LIFE FOR LIFE, ETC.] IN EXODUS 23:1-3 & DEUTERONOMY 19:16-21. SLANDER OF A WIFE’S CHASTITY, BY FINE AND LOSS OF AUTHORITY OF DIVORCE IN DEUTERONOMY 22:18, 19. ALL LIARS ARE TO BE CAST IN THE LAKE OF FIRE IN REVELATION 21:8.**

**10TH SUPREME COMMAND: COVETOUSNESS TO NEIGHBOR’S HOUSE, WIFE, MANSERVANT, MAIDSERVANT, OX, ASS OR ANYTHING BELONGING TO BE PUNISHED BY BEING STONED TO DEATH IN EXODUS 20:17 & DEUTERONOMY 5:21.**

**JUDICIAL LAWS & CONSTITUTIONAL LAWS:**

**JURISDICTION: LOCAL JUDGE AS LEVITES [CORPORALS OR SPECIALIST 4TH CLASS OR MORE SKILLED IN LAW THAT IS APPOINTED, FOR ORDINARY MATTERS, BY THE PEOPLE WITH APPROBATION OF SUPREME AUTHORITY IN EXODUS 18:25 & DEUTERONOMY 1:15-18. THROUGH THE LAND IN DEUTERONOMY 16:18. APPEAL TO THE PRIESTS [SERGEANTS OR SPECIALIST 5TH CLASS] AT THE HOLY PLACE, OR TO THE JUDGE, THEIR SENTENCE FINAL AND TO BE ACCEPTED UNDER PAIN OF DEATH IN EXODUS 18:26 & DEUTERONOMY 25:1-3. TWO WITNESSES REQUIRED IN CAPITAL MATTERS IN NUMBERS 35:30 & DEUTERONOMY 17:6. PUNISHMENT, EXCEPT BY SPECIAL COMMAND, TO BE PERSONAL, AND NOT TO EXTEND TO THE FAMILY IN DEUTERONOMY 24:16. STRIPES ALLOWED AND LIMITED TO 39 IN DEUTERONOMY 25:1-3. BY THE JURISDICTION OF THE KING [LIEUTENANT COLONEL] IN 1ST SAMUEL 22:11-19. KING SAUL IN 2ND SAMUEL 12:1-5; 14:4-11 & 1ST KINGS 3:16-28. THE DISPOSITION OR REMOVAL OR RESIGNATION OF THE HIGH PRIEST [HIGH SERGEANT, HIGH CAPTAIN OR HIGH CHIEF’S OF POLICE] IN 1ST SAMUEL 22:17, 18 & 1ST KINGS 2:26, 27. THE PRACTICAL DIFFICULTY TO BE CARRIED OUT IS IN 2ND SAMUEL 15:2-6. BY THE APPOINTMENT OF THE 70 IN NUMBERS 11:24-30. THE SUPREME AUTHORITY OF THE HIGH COURT IS PRIEST [SERGEANT], SCRIBE-LEVITE [CORPORAL] & ELDER [LORD] IN 2ND CHRONICLES 19:8-11.**

**ROYAL AUTHORITY: THE KING’S [LIEUTENANT COLONEL’S] AUTHORITY LIMITED BY LAW, AS WRITTEN AND FORMALLY ACCEPTED BY THE KING AND DIRECTLY FORBIDDEN TO BE DESPOTIC IN DEUTERONOMY 17:14-20 & 1ST SAMUEL 10:25. YET HE HAS THE AUTHORITY OF TAXATION TO ONE TENTH & OF COMPULSORY SERVICE IN 1ST SAMUEL 8:10-18. THE DECLARATION OF WAR IN 1ST SAMUEL CHAPTER 11. THERE ARE 3 DISTINCT TRACES: MUTUAL CONTRACT IN 2ND SAMUEL 5:3. A LEAGUE IN 2ND KINGS 11:17. THE REMONSTRANCE WITH REHOBOAM IN 1ST KINGS 13:1-6.**

**THE PRINCES [MAJOR] OF THE 2 WITNESSES: THE HEADS OF THE TRIBES WITH THE AUTHORITY TO ACT FOR THE PEOPLE IN JOSHUA 9:15 & 1ST CHRONICLES 27:16-22. THE PRINCES OF JUDAH [MAJOR] HAVE AUTHORITY TO CONTROL THE KING [LIEUTENANT COLONEL] & PRIESTS [SERGEANTS] IN JEREMIAH 26:10-24; 38:4, 5.**

**ROYAL REVENUE: TENTH OF PRODUCE. DOMAIN LAND IN 1ST CHRONICLES 27:26-29. CONFISCATION OF CRIMINAL’S LAND IN 1ST KINGS 21:15. BOND SERVICE IN 1ST KINGS 5:17, 18. CHIEFLY ON FOREIGNERS IN 1ST KINGS 9;20-22 & 2ND CHRONICLES 2:16, 17. FLOCKS & HERDS IN 1ST CHRONICLES 27:29-31. TRIBUTES OR GIFTS FROM FOREIGN KINGS. COMMERCE IN 1ST KINGS 10:22, 29.**

**ECCLESIASTICAL LAWS & CEREMONIAL LAWS:**

**THE LAW OF SACRIFICE IS CONSIDERED AS THE SIGN & THE APPOINTED MEANS OF THE DIVINE UNION WITH THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD, ON WHICH THE HOLINESS OF THE PEOPLE DEPENDED SOLELY UPON.**

**ORDINARY SACRIFICES: THE WHOLE BURNT OFFERING IN LEVITICUS CHAPTER 1. OF THE HERD OR THE FLOCK TO BE OFFERED CONTINUALLY IN EXODUS 29:38-42. THE FIRE ON THE ALTAR NEVER TO BE EXTINGUISHED IN LEVITICUS 6:8-13.**

**THE MEAT OFFERING IN LEVITICUS CHAPTER 2. OF FLOUR, OIL & FRANKINCENSE, UNLEAVENED & SEASONED WITH SALT IN LEVITICUS 6:14-23.**

**THE PEACE OFFERING IN LEVITICUS CHAPTER 3. OF THE HERD OR THE FLOCK, EITHER A THANK OFFERING, A VOW OFFERING OR A FREE-WILL OFFERING IN LEVITICUS 7:11-21.**

**THE SIN OFFERING KNOWN ALSO AS THE TRESPASS OFFERING IN LEVITICUS CHAPTERS 4-6. FOR SEXUALITY COMMITTED IN IGNORANCE IN LEVITICUS CHAPTER 4. FOR VOWS UNWITTINGLY MADE & BROKEN, OR UNCLEANNESS UNWITTINGLY CONTRACTED IN LEVITICUS CHAPTER 5. FOR SEXUALITY WITTINGLY COMMITTED IN LEVITICUS 6:1-7.**

**EXTRAORDINARY SACRIFICES: AT THE CONSECRATION OF THE PRIEST [SERGEANTS] IN LEVITICUS CHAPTERS 8-9. AT THE PURIFICATION OF WOMEN IN LEVITICUS CHAPTER 12. AT THE CLEANSING OF LEPERS IN LEVITICUS CHAPTERS 13-14. ON THE GREAT DAY OF ATONEMENT IN LEVITICUS CHAPTER 16. ON THE GREAT FESTIVALS IN LEVITICUS CHAPTER 23.**

**THE LAW OF HOLINESS THAT ARISES FROM THE DIVINE UNION WITH THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD THROUGH HOLY & ACCEPTABLE SACRIFICE.**

**HOLINESS OF PERSONS: HOLINESS OF THE WHOLE PEOPLE AS ‘CHILDREN OF THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD’ IN EXODUS 19:5, 6; LEVITICUS 11:15-17, 18 & DEUTERONOMY 14:1-21. THE DEDICATION OF THE FIRST-BORN [THE FIRST-BORN SON IS UNHOLY LINKED TO A SEXUAL UNION IN ADAM’S FAMILY, BUT THE SECOND-BORN AND BEYOND IS LINKED ALWAYS TO A DIVINE UNION & IS HOLY & THE FIRST-BORN DAUGHTER & BEYOND IS ALWAYS LINKED TO A DIVINE UNION WHICH IS HOLY] IN EXODUS 13:2, CHAPTERS 12-13; 22:29, 30. THE OFFERING OF ALL FIRSTLINGS & FIRST-FRUITS IN DEUTERONOMY CHAPTERS 26.**

**THE DISTINCTION OF CLEAN FOOD & UNCLEAN FOOD IN LEVITICUS CHAPTER 11 & DEUTERONOMY CHAPTER 14. THE PROVISION FOR PURIFICATION, CLEANLINESS & UN-DEFILEMENT IN LEVITICUS CHAPTERS 12-15 & DEUTERONOMY 23:1-14. LAWS AGAINST DISFIGUREMENT & AGAINST EXCESSIVE SCOURGING IN LEVITICUS 19:27 & DEUTERONOMY 14:1; 25:3. LAWS AGAINST SEXUAL, HOMOSEXUAL & INTERRACIAL UNNATURAL MARRIAGES & LUSTS IN LEVITICUS CHAPTERS 18 & 20.**

**HOLINESS OF THE LEVITES [CORPORALS] & PRIESTS [SERGEANTS]. THEIR CONSECRATION IN LEVITICUS CHAPTERS 8-9 & EXODUS CHAPTER 29. THEIR SPECIAL QUALIFICATIONS & RESTRICTIONS IN LEVITICUS CHAPTER 21; 22:1-9. THEIR RIGHTS IN DEUTERONOMY 18:1-6 & NUMBERS CHAPTER 18. THEIR AUTHORITY IN DEUTERONOMY 17:8-13.**

**HOLINESS OF PLACES & THINGS: THE TABERNACLE WITH ITS MOST HOLY THINGS IN EXODUS CHAPTERS 25-28, 30. THE MOST HOLY PLACE [HOME] CHOSEN FROM THE PERMANENT RESIDENCE OF THE TABERNACLE, WHERE ONLY ALL SACRIFICE WERE TO BE OFFERED, ALL TITHES, FIRST-FRUITS, VOWS, ETC. TO BE GIVEN OR EATEN IN DEUTERONOMY CHAPTER 12; 14:22-29.**

**HOLINESS OF TIMES: THE SABBATH [JEWISH/GENTILE SATURDAY & CHRISTIAN SUNDAY] IN EXODUS 20:9-11; 23:12. THE SABBATICAL YEAR [7TH YEAR] IN EXODUS 23:10, 11 & LEVITICUS 25:1-7. THE 50TH YEAR [40TH YEAR IN WEAKNESS] OF JUBILEE IN LEVITICUS 25:8-16. THE PASSOVER IN EXODUS 12:3-27 & LEVITICUS 23:4, 5. THE FEAST OF WEEKS [PENTECOST] IN LEVITICUS 23:15. THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES IN LEVITICUS 23:33-43. THE FEAST OF TRUMPETS IN LEVITICUS 23:23-25. THE DAY OF ATONEMENT IN LEVITICUS 23:26-32.**

**THE LAW OF THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD KNOWN AS THE LAW OF GOD: 1ST TIME ON THE MOUNTAIN GIVEN AS THE TRULY SINGLE BEFORE UNMARRIED CHRISTIAN LAWS BY GOD IN ACTS OF THE HOLY GHOST**

**IS ABSOLUTE TRUTH & PERPETUAL TRUTH IN MATTHEW 5:18. GIVEN TO ADAM IN GENESIS 2:16, 17 & ROMANS 5:12-14. TO NOAH IN GENESIS 9:6. TO THE ISRAELITES IN EXODUS 20:2-17 & PSALMS 78:5. THROUGH MOSES IN EXODUS 31:18 & JOHN 7:19. THROUGH THE MINISTRATION OF ANGEL LORDS IN GALATIANS 3:19 & HEBREWS 2:2. THROUGH THE ANGEL OF THE LORD HIMSELF IN IN ACTS OF THE HOLY GHOST IN ACTS 7:53.**

**DESCRIBED AS PURE IN PSALMS 19:8. SPIRITUAL/MENTAL IN ROMANS 7:14. HOLY IN ROMANS 7:12. JUST IN ROMANS 7:12. GOOD IN ROMANS 7:12. EXCEEDINGLY BROAD IN PSALMS 119:96. PERFECT IN PSALMS 19:7 & ROMANS 12:2. TRUTH IN PSALMS 119:142. NOT GRIEVOUS [BURDENSOME] IN 1ST JOHN 5:3.**

**REQUIRES OBEDIENCE OF THE HEART IN PSALMS 51:6 & MATTHEW 5:28; 22:37. REQUIRES PERFECT 100% OBEDIENCE TO GOD IN DEUTERONOMY 27:26; GALATIANS 3:10 & JAMES 2:10. AGAPE LOVE KNOWN AS OMNI-BENEVOLENCE, WHICH IS THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD IN ROMANS 13:8, 10; GALATIANS 3:10 & JAMES 2:10. MAN’S DUTY TO KEEP IN ECCLESIASTES 12:13. MAN, BY SEXUAL NATURE, NOT IN SUBJECTION IN ROMANS 7:5; 8:7. MAN/WOMAN CANNOT RENDER PERFECT OBEDIENCE, EXCEPT THE SINGLE/MARRIED LORD ENOCH/LADY VICTORIA [EACH OF 66 SINGLE YEARS/300 MARRIED YEARS] IN WISDOM OF SOLOMON 7:22-8:1; 1ST KINGS 8:46; ECCLESIASTES 7:20; ROMANS 3:10 & HEBREWS 11:5. PORN SEX KNOWN AS MARITAL SEX AS A TRANSGRESSION IN 1ST JOHN 3:4. ALL MEN/WOMEN HAVE TRANSGRESSED, EXCEPT THE SINGLE/MARRIED LORD ENOCH/LADY VICTORIA [EACH OF 66 SINGLE YEARS/300 MARRIED YEARS] IN WISDOM OF SOLOMON 7:22-8:1; ROMANS 3:9, 19 & HEBREWS 11:5. MAN CANNOT BE JUSTIFIED IN ROMANS 3:20, 28; GALATIANS 2:16; 3:11 & IN ACTS OF THE APOSTLES IN ACTS 13:39. GIVES THE KNOWLEDGE OF PORN SEX IN ROMANS 3:20; 7:7. WORKS AGGRAVATION, ANGER, WRATH, RAGE, EXCEEDINGLY RAGEFUL & FURY IN ROMANS 4:15 & IN ACTS OF THE HOLY GHOST IN ACTS 7:54. CONSCIENCE TESTIFIES IN ROMANS 2:15. DESIGNED TO LEAD THE SINGLE TO THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD IN GALATIANS 3:24.**

**OBEDIENCE TO: A CHARACTERISTIC OF TRUE SAINTS IN REVELATION 12:17. A TEST OF AGAPE LOVE IN 1ST JOHN 5:3. OF PRIME IMPORTANCE IN 1ST CORINTHIANS 7:19. BLESSEDNESS OF KEEPING IN PSALMS 119:1; MATTHEW 5:19; 1ST JOHN 3:22, 24 & REVELATION 22:14.**

**THE ANOINTED NON-APOSTLE STEPHEN CHRIST FOR THE SINGLE: CHRIST CAME TO FULFILL THE MARRIED LAW OF MOSES THE 2ND TIME, BUT WAS NOT TOTALLY FULFILLED UNTIL THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD CAME ON THE SCENE CONCERNING THE SINGLE LAW OF GOD THE 1ST TIME IN MATTHEW 5:17 & IN ACTS OF THE HOLY GHOST IN ACTS 7:60. MAGNIFIED IN ISAIAH 42:21. EXPLAINED IN MATTHEW 7:12; 22:37-40. THE AGAPE LOVE PRODUCES PEACE IN PSALMS 119:165 & IN ACTS OF THE HOLY GHOST IN ACTS 7:46-50.**

**THE SINLESS SINGLE TRUE SAINTLY CHRISTIAN LORDS [LADIES] & THE SINLESS SINGLE TRUE CREATOR AGENTS IN ACTS OF THE HOLY GHOST: FREED FROM THE STRIPPING BONDAGE IN ROMANS 6:14; 7:4, 6; GALATIANS 3:13 & ACTS 7:60 [NON-APOSTLE STEPHEN]. FREED FROM THE STRIPPING CURSE IN GALATIANS 3:13 & ACTS 7:60 [NON-APOSTLE STEPHEN]. HAVE WRITTEN ON THEIR HEARTS IN JEREMIAH 31:33; HEBREWS 8:10 & ACTS 6:5. AGAPE LOVE IN PSALMS 119:97, 113 & ACTS 7:60. DELIGHT IN PSALMS 119:77; ROMANS 7:22 & ACTS 6:4. PREPARE THEIR HEARTS TO SEEK IN EZRA 7:10 & ACTS 6:7. PLEDGE THEMSELVES TO WALK IN IN NEHEMIAH 10:29 & ACTS 6:7. KEEP IN PSALMS 119:55 & ACTS 6:5, 10; 7:55-56. PRAY TO UNDERSTAND IN PSALMS 119:18 & ACTS 6:4. PRAY FOR AUTHORITY TO KEEP IN PSALMS 119:34 & ACTS 6:4, 8. SHOULD REMEMBER IN MALACHI 4:4 & ACTS 7:1-60. SHOULD MAKE THE SUBJECT OF THEIR CONVERSATION IS IN EXODUS 13:9 & ACTS 6:9. LAMENT OVER THE MARRIED VIOLATION OF, BY OTHERS IN PSALMS 119:136 & ACTS 8:2.**

**THE SINFUL UNMARRIED/MARRIED LIFE OF THE SEXUAL WICKED [FALLEN SAINTLY CHRISTIAN LORDS [LADIES] & FALLEN CREATOR AGENTS IN ACTS OF THE APOSTLES: DESPISE IN AMOS 2:4 & ACTS 6:9, 11-14. FORGET IN HOSEA 4:6 & ACTS 6:9, 11-14. FORSAKE IN 2ND CHRONICLES 12:1; JEREMIAH 9:13 & ACTS 6:9, 11-14. REFUSE TO HEAR IN ISAIAH 30:9; JEREMIAH 6:19 & ACTS 7:57-58. REFUSE TO WALK IN IN PSALMS 78:10 & ACTS 7:58-59. CAST AWAY IN ISAIAH 5:24 & ACTS 7:60.**

**THE RULE OF SINGLE LIFE TO TRUE SAINTLY CHRISTIAN LORDS [LADIES] & TRUE CREATOR AGENTS IN 1ST CORINTHIANS 9:21; GALATIANS 5:13, 14 & ACTS 26:10-11. THE RULE OF IMPARTIAL RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENT IN ROMANS 1:21-32; 2:12; 3:4-23; 1ST CORINTHIANS 6:1-3; 1ST PETER 1:17-23 & ACTS 5:39; 7:1-60; 17:22-31. TO BE USED LAWFULLY, LEGALLY & AUTHORITATIVELY IN 1ST TIMOTHY 1:8 & ACTS 6:5, 10; 7:1-60. ESTABLISHED BY FAITH IN ROMANS 3:31 & ACTS 6:5. PUNISHMENT FOR DISOBEYING BY BEING CURSED, DISEASED & STONED TO DEATH IN NEHEMIAH 9:26, 27; ISAIAH 65:11-13; JEREMIAH 9:13-16 & IN ACT OF THE APOSTLES IN ACTS 7:60 & IN ACTS OF THE HOLY GHOST IN ACTS 7:60. IT WAS 100% WRONG IN ACTS OF THE HOLY GHOST TO OPPOSE NON-APOSTLE STEPHEN CHRIST WITH A FALLEN STRIPPING STIFF-NAKED LAW UNDER THE HOLY BIBLICAL LAW FROM ACTS 6:1-7:59; 8:1-3; 9:1-2; 22:1-5; 26:1-11, UNTIL STEPHEN CHRIST BECAME STEVE CHRIST ONCE TO DIE VICARIOUSLY FOR THE ETERNAL SIN IN LORDSHIP IN STIFF-NAKED STRIPPING IN ACTS 7:60, THEN STEVE CHRIST BECAME YAHWEH CHRIST TO FULFILL THE HOLY BIBLICAL LAW THE 1ST TIME IN OMNI-BENEVOLENCE IN ACTS 9:3-6; 22:6-11; 26:12-18. THIS PROVES THAT THE ABSOLUTE TRUTH WILL KILL & DAMN THE SINGLE BEFORE MARRIAGE, EXCEPT THE LORD ENOCH & LADY VICTORIA IN THE UNIVERSAL GLOBAL APPOINTED TIMES IN THE END TIME IN ACTS OF THE HOLY GHOST IN ACTS 7:60. SO BE READY FOR IT!!!**

**THE LAW OF THE APOSTLE STEPHEN KNOWN AS THE LAW OF MOSES IS ALSO THE LAW OF THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD: 2ND TIME ON THE MOUNTAIN GIVEN AS THE UNMARRIED/MARRIED TO SINGLE AFTER MARRIAGE JEWISH/UNMARRIED/MARRIED TO SINGLE AFTER MARRIAGE GENTILE/UNMARRIED/MARRIED TO SINGLE AFTER MARRIAGE CHRISTIAN LAWS BY MOSES IN ACTS OF THE APOSTLES**

**IS THE LAW OF GOD IN LEVITICUS 26:46. GIVEN IN THE DESERT IN EZEKIEL 20:10, 11. AT HOREB IN DEUTERONOMY 4:10, 15; 5:2. FROM THE MOUNT SINAI IN EXODUS 19:11, 20. BY DISPOSITION OF ANGEL LORDS IN ACTS 7:53. THROUGH MOSES AS MEDIATOR IN DEUTERONOMY 5:5, 27, 28; JOHN 1:17 & GALATIANS 3:19. TO THE MARRIED JEWS, THEN THE MARRIED GENTILES, THEN THE MARRIED CHRISTIANS IN LEVITICUS 26:46; PSALMS 78:5 & ACTS 1:8-29:26. AFTER THE EXODUS IN DEUTERONOMY 4:45 & PSALMS 81:4, 5. TO NO OTHER NATION AS MARRIED JUDAISM, MARRIED GENTILISM & MARRIED CHRISTIANITY IN DEUTERONOMY 4:8 & PSALMS 147:20.**

**NONE TO APPROACH THE MOUNT WHILE THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD GAVE IN EXODUS 19:13, 21-24 & HEBREWS 12:20. REMARKABLE PHENOMENA CONNECTED AT THE GIVING IN EXODUS 19:16-19. TERROR OF MARRIED ISRAEL, MARRIED GENTILES & MARRIED CHRISTIANS AT RECEIVING IN EXODUS 19:16; 20:18-20 & DEUTERONOMY 5:5, 23-25. ADDITIONS MADE IN THE PLAINS OF MOAB BY JORDAN IN NUMBERS 36:13.**

**CALLED A FIERY LAW IN DEUTERONOMY 33:2. WORD SPOKEN BY ANGEL LORDS IN HEBREWS 2:2. MINISTRATION OF DEATH IN 2ND CORINTHIANS 3:7. MINISTRATION OF DAMNATION IN 2ND CORINTHIANS 3:9. LIVELY ORACLES KNOWN AS TIME PORTALS IN ACTS 7:38. ROYAL LAW IN JAMES 2:8. BOOK OF THE LAW IN DEUTERONOMY 30:10 & JOSHUA 1:8. BOOK OF MOSES IN 2ND CHRONICLES 25:4; 35:12.**

**REHEARSED BY MOSES IN DEUTERONOMY 1:1-3. ENTIRE BOOK IN DEUTERONOMY 31:9. SANCTUARY BOOK IN DEUTERONOMY 31:26. TABLES LAID UP IN THE ARK OF THE COVENANT [TESTIMONY] IN DEUTERONOMY 10:5.**

**DIVIDED INTO MORAL, EMBODIED IN THE 10 COMMANDMENTS IN DEUTERONOMY 5:22; 10:4. CEREMONIAL, RELATING TO MANNER OF WORSHIPPING THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD IN LEVITICUS 7:37, 38 & HEBREWS 9:1-7. CIVIL, RELATING TO ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE IN DEUTERONOMY 17:9-11 & ACTS 23:3; 24:6. A COVENANT OF WORKS TO THE MARRIED JEWS, MARRIED GENTILES & MARRIED CHRISTIANS AS A NATION IN DEUTERONOMY 28:1, 15 & JEREMIAH 31:32.**

**TAUGHT THE MARRIED JEWS, MARRIED GENTILES & MARRIED CHRISTIANS TO AGAPE LOVE & FEAR THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD IN DEUTERONOMY 6:5; 10:12, 13 & MATTHEW 22:36, 38. TO AGAPE LOVE THEIR MARRIED NEIGHBOR IS IN LEVITICUS 19:18 & MATTHEW 22:39. STRICT JUSTICE & IMPARTIALITY IN LEVITICUS 19:35, 36. ALL PUNISHMENTS AWARDED ACCORDING TO IN JOHN 8:5; 19:7 & HEBREWS 10:28.**

**ALL MARRIED ISRAELITES, MARRIED GENTILES & MARRIED CHRISTIANS REQUIRED TO KNOW IN EXODUS 18:16. TO OBSERVE IN DEUTERONOMY 4:6; 6:2. TO LAY UP, IN THEIR HEARTS IN DEUTERONOMY 6:6; 11:18. TO REMEMBER IN MALACHI 4:4. TO TEACH THEIR MARRIED CHILDREN IN DEUTERONOMY 6:7; 11:19. MARRIED KINGS TO WRITE & STUDY IN DEUTERONOMY 17:18, 19. GOOD MARRIED KINGS ENFORCED IN 2ND KINGS 23:24, 25 & 2ND CHRONICLES 31:21. MARRIED PRIESTS [SERGEANTS] & MARRIED LEVITES [CORPORALS] TO TEACH IN DEUTERONOMY 33:8-10; NEHEMIAH 8:7 & MALACHI 2:7. MARRIED SCRIBES WERE LEARNED IN & EXPOUNDED IN EZRA 7:6 & MATTHEW 23:2.**

**MARRIED PUBLIC INSTRUCTION GIVEN TO MARRIED YOUTH IN LUKE 2:46 & IN ACTS OF THE APOSTLES IN ACTS 22:3. PUBLICLY READ AT THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES IN THE SABBATICAL YEAR IN DEUTERONOMY 31:10-13. BY JOSHUA IN JOSHUA 8:34, 35. BY EZRA IN NEHEMIAH 8:2, 3. IN THE SYNAGOGUES EVERY SABBATH DAY [JEWISH/GENTILE SATURDAY & CHRISTIAN SUNDAY] IN ACTS OF THE APOSTLES IN ACTS 13:15; 15:21.**

**A MEANS OF NATIONAL REFORMATION IN 2ND CHRONICLES 34:19-21 & NEHEMIAH 8:13-18. A SHADOW OF GOOD THINGS TO COME IN HEBREWS 10:1. COULD NOT GIVE RIGHTEOUS & LIFE IN GALATIANS 3:21; ROMANS 8:3, 4 & HEBREWS 10:1. A SCHOOLMASTER TO MARRIED LEAD TO CHRIST IN GALATIANS 3:24.**

**THE ANOINTED APOSTLE JESUS CHRIST FOR THE UNMARRIED/MARRIED: MADE UNDER UNMARRIED LAW IN GALATIANS 4:4. UNMARRIED/MARRIED CIRCUMCISED ACCORDING TO IN ROMANS 15:8 & LUKE 2:21. CAME NOT TO DESTROY UNMARRIED/MARRIED BUT TO FULFILL IN MATTHEW 5:17, 18. ATTENDED ALL UNMARRIED/MARRIED FEASTS IN JOHN 2:23; 7:2, 10, 37. FULFILLED ALL UNMARRIED/MARRIED PRECEPTS IS IN PSALMS 40:7, 8. FULFILLED ALL UNMARRIED/MARRIED TYPES & UNMARRIED/MARRIED SHADOWS IN HEBREWS 9:8, 11-14; 10:1, 11-14. MAGNIFIED AND MADE HONORABLE IN ISAIAH 42:21. BORE THE UNMARRIED/MARRIED CURSE IN DEUTERONOMY 21:23 & GALATIANS 3:13. ABROGATED, AS A COVENANT OF WORKS IN ROMANS 7:4.**

**WAS NOT THE MANIFESTATION OF THE GRACE OF THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD IN JOHN 1:17 & ROMANS 8:3, 4. COULD NOT DISANNUL TO COVENANT OF GRACE MADE IN JESUS CHRIST IN GALATIANS 3:17. JEWISH MARRIED CONVERTS WOULD HAVE ALL MARRIED CHRISTIANS OBSERVE IN ACTS OF THE APOSTLES IN ACTS 15:1.**

**THE MARRIED JEWS, MARRIED GENTILES & MARRIED CHRISTIANS JEALOUS FOR IN JOHN 9:28, 29 & IN ACTS OF THE APOSTLES IN ACTS 21:20. HELD THOSE IGNORANT OF, ACCURSED IN JOHN 7:49. FROM ABOMINABLE REGARD TO, REJECTED JESUS CHRIST IN ROMANS 9:31-33. ACCUSED JESUS CHRIST OF BREAKING IN JOHN 19:7. ACCUSED UNMARRIED/MARRIED CHRISTIANS OF SPEAKING IN ACTS OF THE APOSTLES IN ACTS 6:11-14; 21:28. BROKE IT THEMSELVES IN JOHN 7:19. DISHONORED THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD BE BREAKING IN ROMANS 2:23. SHALL BE JUDGED IN JOHN 5:45 & ROMANS 2:12. WAS A BURDENSOME YOKE IN ACTS OF THE APOSTLES IN ACTS 15:10. DARKNESS ILLUSTRATION OF OBSCURITY OF THE MOSAIC AGE IN HEBREWS 12:18-24.**

**IT WAS 100% WRONG IN ACTS OF THE APOSTLES TO OPPOSE THE APOSTLE STEPHEN CHRIST WITH A FALLEN SEXUAL, HOMOSEXUAL & INTERRACIAL STIFF-NECKED LAW UNDER THE HOLY BIBLICAL LAW FROM ACTS 6:1-7:59; 8:1-3; 9:1-2; 22:1-5; 26:1-11, UNTIL STEPHEN CHRIST BECAME STEVE CHRIST ONCE TO DIE VICARIOUSLY FOR THE ETERNAL SIN IN LORDSHIP IN STIFF-NECKED SEXUALITY, HOMOSEXUALITY & INTERRACIAL ABOMINABLE NATURES IN ACTS 7:60, THEN STEVE CHRIST BECAME STEPHEN CHRIST TO FULFILL THE HOLY BIBLICAL LAW THE 2ND TIME IN OMNI-BENEVOLENCE IN ACTS 9:3-6; 22:6-11; 26:12-18. THIS PROVES THAT THE ABSOLUTE TRUTH WILL KILL & DAMN THE UNMARRIED TO SINGLE AFTER MARRIAGE IN THE UNIVERSAL GLOBAL APPOINTED TIMES IN THE END TIME IN ROMANS 1:21-32; 3:4-23. SO BE READY FOR IT!!!**

**THE CREATION OF THE ANGELICAL HIERARCHY**

**THE 1ST CREATION PROCESS IS CALLED “BARA” IN GENESIS 1:1. “BARA” MEANS “TO CREATE.” IT CONCERNS THE CHERUBIM’S OR CHUBBY ONES AS THE HEAVENLY COMMAND OF THE ANGELICAL HIERARCHY AS THE MORNING STAR CALLED THE MOST HIGHEST SONS OF GOD. IT IS THE MINISTRY OF THE HEAVENLY GUARDIANS (PROTECTORS) AS THE HIGHEST SONS OF GOD CALLED THE LIVING CREATURES, CHAYOT’S, SERAPHIM’S, BURNING ONES, THRONES, WHEELS, OPHANIM’S, OPHDE’S, OFANIM’S & GALGALLIMS. THE 2ND CREATION PROCESS IS CALLED “ASAH” IN GENESIS 1:7. “ASAH” MEANS “TO MAKE.” IT IS THE MINISTRY OF THE HEAVENLY GOVERNORS (PRESIDENTS) AS THE HIGHER SONS OF GOD CALLED THE POWERS, AUTHORITIES, VIRTUES, STRONGHOLDS, DOMINIONS, HASHMALLIMS & LORDSHIPS. THE 3RD CREATION PROCESS IS CALLED “NATHAN” IN GENESIS 1:17. “NATHAN” MEANS “TO SET.” IT IS THE MINISTRY OF HEAVENLY SOLDIERS AS THE HIGH SONS OF GOD CALLED CHALKYDRI, ANGELS, ARCHANGELS, PRINCIPALITIES & RULERS. THE 24 ORDERS OF THE CHALKYDRI (WINGED DRAGONS) ARE IN 1ST & 2ND ENOCH PAGES 8-9, 485-500.**

**THE DIFFERENCE OF HUMANITY & THE ANGELICAL HIERARCHY: FIRST, HUMANS ARE LOWER THAN ANGELS (LORDS) BECAUSE THE ANGELS (LORDS) ARE GREATER IN MIGHT & POWER IN 2ND PETER 2:11. HOW WERE THE ANGELS (LORDS) CREATED? WE KNOW IT CAME INTO BEING IN GENESIS 1:1-31. SOME SCRIPTURES ARE PSALMS 148:1-5; JOHN 1:1-3 & COLOSSIANS 1:16. WHEN WERE THE ANGELS (LORDS) CREATED BY GOD? SOME SCRIPTURES ARE JOB 38:4-7; EXODUS 20:11 & PSALMS 148:1-5. ANGELS (LORDS) NEVER DIE BUT HAVE IMMORTALITY IN LUKE 20:36. ANGELS (LORDS) DO NOT PROCREATE OR HAVE SEX IN MATTHEW 22:30 & LUKE 20:36. ANGELS (LORDS) REVERENCE, REVERE, HIGHLY ESTEEM & RESPECT GOD IN PSALMS 89:5-7 & MATTHEW 25:41. ANGELS (LORDS) ARE INVISIBLE/VISIBLE TO HUMANS IN COLOSSIANS 1:16. ANGELS (LORDS) ARE IMMATERIAL SPIRITS/MATERIAL SPIRITS IN ACTS 6:5, 15; HEBREWS 1:14; JOHN 1:1-3 & DANIEL 10:20.**

**THE WORLD OF HUMANITY: HUMANITY WAS CREATED IN GENESIS 2:7. WHEN WERE HUMANS CREATED IS IN GENESIS 1:27 & PSALMS 139:13-16. HUMANS HAVE BIOLOGICAL DEATH IN ROMANS 5:12. HUMANS DO SEXUAL UNIONS WITH OTHER HUMANS IN GENESIS 1:27-28. HUMANS ARE SINFUL BEINGS WITH THEIR DESIRE OF GOOD OR EVIL IN GENESIS 3:1-6:7. HUMANS ARE VISIBLE IN 2ND KINGS 6:17; LUKE 2:11-12 AND 1ST PETER 1:11-12. HUMANS HAVE SPIRITS BUT ARE NOT SPIRITS IN PHILIPPIANS 1:23; 1ST THESSALONIANS 4:14-17 AND 1ST CORINTHIANS 15:44. WHAT DOES HUMANS AND ANGELS (LORDS) HAVE IN COMMON? THEY ARE CREATION IN GENESIS 1:26, THEY HAVE IDENTITIES IN GENESIS 1:27, THEY ARE PERSONS IN 1ST PETER 1:12 AND THEY ALWAYS EXIST IN REVELATION 22:5 AND MATTHEW 25:41. HUMANITY CAN OVERCOME THE ANGELICAL HIERARCHY BY JAMES AND JACOB MEANING “SUPPLANTER” TO BLESS IN GENESIS 32:22-32. ALSO THE MAN ADAM HAD THE IMAGE LIKENESS OF THE LORD OVER THE ANGELS (LORDS) IN GENESIS 1:26-3:5.**

**THE 24 ORDERS OF THE CHALKYDRI CALLED PHOENIXES (WINGED DRAGONS) ARE IN 1ST & 2ND ENOCH P. 8-9, 485-500. THESE ARE CLOSEST TO WOMANKIND AS 1 HEADED DRAGONS. FIRST, IS THE MINISTRY OF HEAVENLY SOLDIERS (DIGNITARIES) CONSISTS OF THE FIRST 5 ORDERS. 2ND, ARE THE ANGELS WHICH ARE CALLED 2 HEADED DRAGONS. THESE ARE CLOSEST TO MANKIND. SOME SCRIPTURES ARE 1ST KINGS 19:2; HAGGAI 1:13; MALACHI 2:7; 3:1; GENESIS 28:12; JOB 1:6; PSALMS 89:5-7; DANIEL 4:13, 17, 23 & 1ST SAMUEL 17:45. 3RD, ARE THE ARCHANGELS WHICH ARE CALLED 3 HEADED DRAGONS. THEY ARE THE HIGHEST LEVELS ON THE EARTH. THEY RANK FIRST & ARE CALLED CHIEFS. SOME SCRIPTURES ARE 1ST THESSALONIANS 4:16; JUDE 9; 2ND ESDRAS 4:36; JOHN 5:4 DANIEL 10:13; 12:1 & REVELATION 12:7-9. 4TH/5TH, IS THE PRINCIPALITIES OR RULERS (PRINCEDOMS) WHICH ARE CALLED 4/5 HEADED DRAGONS. THEY ARE ANGELS (LORDS) OVER THE SPIRITUAL WARFARE IN CITIES & BREAK STRONGHOLDS THAT ARE AGAINST GOD IN 2ND CORINTHIANS 4:7-15; 10:3-5.**

**SECOND, IS THE MINISTRY OF HEAVENLY GOVERNORS (PRESIDENTS) WHICH CONSISTS OF THE SECOND 7 ORDERS. 6TH/7TH, ARE THE POWERS (POTENTATES) OR AUTHORITIES WHICH ARE CALLED THE 6/7 HEADED DRAGONS. THEY ARE ANGELS (LORDS) WHO FIGHT SPIRITUAL WARFARE’S OVER CITIES, BUT ARE AT A HIGHER LEVEL OF GLORY. SOME SCRIPTURES ARE EPHESIANS 1:21; 3:10; 6:12; COLOSSIANS 1:16; 2:15; ROMANS 8:37-39; 1ST CORINTHIANS 15:24; 1ST PETER 3:22 & 2ND THESSALONIANS 1:7. 8TH/9TH, ARE THE VIRTUES OR STRONGHOLDS CALLED THE 8/9 HEADED DRAGONS. THEY ATTEND TO THE AFFAIRS OF SPIRITUAL WISDOM, PRAYERS & THE REVELATION OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD & THE PROTECTION OF THE SAINTS (LORDS) IN EPHESIANS 1:17-18. THEY ARE OVER THE INVISIBLE HIERARCHY OF EVIL POWERS WHO MANIPULATE & DECEIVE HUMAN BEHAVIOR & AUTHORITY OVER SPIRITUAL WARFARE AGAINST STRATEGIC POWERS IN REVELATION 12:7-9 & EPHESIANS 6:10-20. 10TH/12TH, ARE THE DOMINIONS (DOMINATIONS) OR HASHMALLIMS OR LORDSHIPS CALLED THE 10-12 HEADED DRAGONS. THESE ARE THEY WHOSE SPIRITUAL UNDERSTANDING TO THE SAINTS (LORDS) HAVE AUTHORITY OVER NEGATIVE COSMIC POWERS WHO RESISTED GOD AND ARE MADE SUBJECT OF HIS CREATION WHO FELL FROM THERE FIRST ESTATE. TWO SCRIPTURES ARE EPHESIANS 1:21 AND COLOSSIANS 1:16.**

**LAST, IS THE MINISTRY OF HEAVENLY GUARDIANS (PROTECTORS) WHICH CONSISTS OF THE LAST 10 ORDERS. 13TH-18TH, ARE THE THRONES (ELDERS) OR WHEELS (RIMS) OR OPHANIM’S OR OPHDE’S OR OFANIM’S OR GALGALLIMS (MANY EYED ONES) ARE CALLED 13-18 HEADED DRAGONS. THEY PROTECT THE TEMPLES OF THE LORD & CONTROL THE DIRECTIONS OF MAN. THEY GIVE THANKS TO THE LORD YAH BY HIS GREAT REIGNING POWER & THEY REWARD THE SERVANTS & SAINTS (LORDS) OF THEIR GOOD DEEDS. SOME SCRIPTURES ARE COLOSSIANS 1:16; REVELATION 11:16; EZEKIEL 10:17 AND DANIEL 7:9. 19TH/20TH, ARE THE BURNING ONES OR SERAPHIM’S ARE CALLED 19/20 HEADED DRAGONS. THEY SUPERVISE THE UNCLEAN LIPS OF THE PEOPLE AND THEIR GLORY GOES THROUGHOUT ALL THE EARTH. THEY MINISTER IN THE SKY ABOVE THE LORD’S THRONE GIVING CONSTANT PRAISES & WORSHIP TO THE LORD. SOME SCRIPTURES ARE ISAIAH 6:1-7; 14:29; 30:6; REVELATION 4:8; NUMBERS 21:6, 8; GENESIS 3:24; HEBREWS 1:14 AND DEUTERONOMY 8:15. 21ST/22ND, ARE THE CHAYOT’S OR LIVING CREATURES CALLED THE 21/22 HEADED DRAGONS. THESE ARE THEY WHO MINISTER IN THE LORD’S THRONE. THEY PROTECT AND SERVE THE LORD CONSTANTLY DOING HIS PREROGATIVES. THEY ALSO MINISTER WITH THE LAMB OF GOD WHICH INSTRUCTS THEM ON THEIR MISSIONS TO CARRY OUT HIS ORDERS ON EARTH. SOME SCRIPTURES ARE GENESIS 3:24; EZEKIEL CHAPTERS 1, 10 AND REVELATION CHAPTERS 4-6. 23RD/24TH, IS THE CHUBBY ONES OR CHERUBIM’S AS 23/24 HEADED DRAGONS AS THE MINISTRY COMMAND OF THE HEAVENLY CROWN. THEY ARE THE CLOSEST TO THE LORD & SEE HIS FACE DOING HIS DIVINE WILL. THEY GUARD THE MERCY SEAT & THE ENTRANCE TO EDEN WHERE THE LIFE TREE IS IN GENESIS 3:24. THEY GUARD THE LIFE TREE IN GENESIS 3:24. THEY GUARD THE ARK OF THE COVENANT & THE LORD’S HIGHEST THRONE IN REVELATION 4-6. THEY CONTROL THE REBELLION, IDOLATRY, *PORNIEA* (PORN) OR ABOMINATIONS IN THE TEMPLE AND THE SLAYING OF THE WICKED IN EZEKIEL CHAPTERS 2-9. SOME OTHER SCRIPTURES ARE IN GENESIS 3:24; EZEKIEL 28:11-14; 1ST KINGS 6:23-29 & PSALMS 99:1. THE DRAGON LORDS IN THE 25TH/26TH ORDERS ARE THE WOMAN JOHN/MAN JESUS. THE 27TH-29TH ORDERS IS JAMES’ 2-FOLD OFFICE FOR BOYS & LAW/FATHER STEPHEN FOR LORD’S AS “LORD’S ANGEL’S” UNDER THE 30TH ORDER OF YAH. THE RANK STRUCTURE CONCERNS THE WOMAN WITH A CROWN OF 12 STARS IN REVELATION 12:1-2, 5-6. THE CHURCH IS THE BEGINNING OF GOD AS A 1-GOLD STAR GENERAL EQUIVALENT TO A 3-SILVER STAR GENERAL. THE LORD PETER IS THE CHILD OF GOD AS A 2-GOLD STAR GENERAL EQUIVALENT TO A 4-SILVER STAR GENERAL. THE LORD JOHN IS THE WOMAN OF GOD AS A 3-GOLD STAR GENERAL EQUIVALENT TO A 5-SILVER STAR GENERAL. THE LORD JESUS IS THE MAN OF GOD AS A 4-GOLD STAR GENERAL EQUIVALENT TO A 6-SILVER STAR GENERAL. THE LORD JAMES IS THE LAW OF GOD AS A 5-GOLD STAR GENERAL EQUIVALENT TO A 7-SILVER STAR GENERAL. THE LORD STEPHEN IS THE FATHER ABOVE ALL AS A 6-GOLD STAR GENERAL EQUIVALENT TO AN 8-SILVER STAR GENERAL. A WISE MAN SAID THAT THEY HAVE A GOOD HEAD ON THEIR SHOULDERS WHICH MEANS THEY ARE 1 TO 6-GOLD STARS ON BOTH SIDES ON THE SHOULDERS AND ON BOTH COLLARS.**

**ANGELS AS THE FATHER STEPHEN’S SERVANTS**

**ANGELS ARE THE FATHER STEPHEN’S SERVANTS IS IN PSALMS 103:20; 104:4 & HEBREWS 1:7. ANGELS AS AGENTS OF THE FATHER STEPHEN’S SALVATION IS IN EXODUS 23:23; 32:34; 33:2; NUMBERS 20:16; ISAIAH 63:8-9 & HEBREWS 1:14. ANGELS DO NOT FULLY UNDERSTAND THE FATHER STEPHEN’S SALVATION IS IN 1ST PETER 1:10-12. ANGELS DELIVERS THE FATHER STEPHEN’S PEOPLE FROM THEIR ENEMIES IS IN 2ND KINGS 19:35; 2ND CHRONICLES 32:21; ISAIAH 37:36 & ACTS 5:19; 12:6-11. ANGELS AS MEDIATORS IS IN JOB 33:22-26; GALATIANS 3:19; HEBREWS 2:2 & ACTS 7:38, 53. ANGELS AS REVEALERS OF THE FATHER STEPHEN’S WILL IS IN DANIEL 7:15-16; ZECHARIAH 1:8-10; 4:11-14 & REVELATION 17:1; 21:9. ANGELS CONVEY & FULFIL THE FATHER STEPHEN’S INSTRUCTIONS IS IN NUMBERS 22:21-25; ZECHARIAH 3:4, 6-7; MATTHEW 2:13; GALATIANS 1:8 & REVELATIONS 7:2. ANGELS ATTEND TO THE NEEDS OF THE FATHER STEPHEN’S PEOPLE: ANGELS PROVIDE FOOD AT SPECIAL TIMES IS IN 1ST KINGS 19:5-7 & PSALMS 78:23-25. ANGELS PROVIDE PROTECTION IS IN GENESIS 19:15; 48:16; PSALMS 34:7; 91:11-12; DANIEL 3:28; 6:22; MATTHEW 18:10 & ACTS 27:23-24. ANGELS GIVE GUIDANCE IS IN GENESIS 24:7, 40; EXODUS 23:20 & ACTS 8:26. ANGELS SERVE THE FATHER STEPHEN: ANGELS CARE FOR HIS NEEDS IS IN MATTHEW 4:11; MARK 1:13 & LUKE 22:43. ANGELS ARE READY TO PROTECT HIM IS IN PSALMS 91:11-12; MATTHEW 2:13, 19-20; 4:6; 26:53 & LUKE 4:10. ANGELS ARE INFERIOR TO HIM IS IN HEBREWS 1:5-13.**

**ANGELS AS THE FATHER STEPHEN’S MESSENGERS**

**ANGELS GIVE HOPE THROUGH THE WORDS OF THE PROPHETS TO BE ABLE TO KNOWN THE TOP ENGLISH LORD’S TRUTH LAWS & TO DO AND OBEY THE TOP ENGLISH LORD’S COMMANDS AT ALL TIMES IS IN ISAIAH 40:1,2, 3-5, 6-8; DANIEL 8:15-16; 10:12, 14-21; 12:8-13 & ZECHARIAH 1:12-21; 2:3-5; 4:1-7.**

**ANGELS & THE COMING OF THE MESSIAH’S**

**ANGELS FORETELLS THE BIRTH OF PETER THE CHRISTIAN MESSIAH FOR CHILD KIND IS IN JOHN 10:34-36. ANGELS ANNOUNCE PETER’S BIRTH IS IN JAMES 2:8-13. ANGELS ANNOUNCE PETER’S RESURRECTION IS IN ACTS 5:1-11. ANGELS FORETELL PETER’S 2ND COMING IS IN ACTS 7:47.**

**ANGELS FORETELLS THE BIRTH OF JOHN THE GENTILE MESSIAH FOR WOMANKIND IS IN LUKE 1:11-13, 14-19. ANGELS ANNOUNCE JOHN’S BIRTH IS IN LUKE 1:14-19. ANGELS ANNOUNCE JOHN’S RESURRECTION IS IN LUKE 9:7. ANGELS FORETELL JOHN’S 2ND COMING IS IN ACTS 7:51.**

**ANGELS FORETELLS THE BIRTH OF JESUS THE GENTILE MESSIAH FOR MANKIND IS IN MATTHEW 1:20-21 & LUKE 1:26-38. ANGELS ANNOUNCE JESUS’ BIRTH IS IN LUKE 2:8-11, 12-20. ANGELS ANNOUNCE JESUS’ RESURRECTION IS IN MATTHEW 28:5-7; MARK 16:5-7; JOHN 20:10-14 & LUKE 24:4-7, 23. ANGELS FORETELL JESUS’ 2ND COMING IS IN ACTS 1:10-11; 7:52.**

**ANGELS FORETELLS THE BIRTH OF JAMES THE CHRISTIAN MESSIAH FOR LAW KIND IS IN JUDE 1-2 & JOHN 10:34-36. ANGELS ANNOUNCE JAMES’ BIRTH IS IN JAMES 2:8-13. ANGELS ANNOUNCE JAMES’ RESURRECTION IS IN LUKE 20:35-36 & ACTS 15:15-17. ANGELS FORETELL JAMES’ 2ND COMING IS IN ACTS 7:53.**

**THE ANGEL OF THE LORD FORETELLS THE BIRTH OF STEPHEN THE CHRISTIAN MESSIAH FOR LORD KIND IS IN PROVERBS 8:26-29. THE ANGEL OF THE LORD ANNOUNCE STEPHEN’S BIRTH IS IN PROVERBS 8:22-25. THE ANGEL OF THE LORD ANNOUNCE STEPHEN’S RESURRECTION IS IN ACTS 7:47-50. THE ANGEL OF THE LORD FORETELL STEPHEN’S 2ND COMING IS IN ACTS 7:37-38.**

**ANGELS REVEAL THE GOSPEL FOR THE GENTILES IS IN REVELATION 14:6-7 & ACTS 10:1-5, 30-33; 11:13. THE ANGEL OF THE LORD REVEAL THE GOSPEL FOR THE CHRISTIANS IS IN ACTS 7:1-60. THE ANGEL OF THE LORD FORETELL THE FATHER STEPHEN’S FINAL TRIUMPH IS IN REVELATION 1:1; 19:9; 22:1, 6, 16 & ACTS 7:51-60.**

**ANGELS AS AGENTS OF THE FATHER STEPHEN’S JUDGMENT**

**ANGELS AS AGENTS OF EARTHLY JUDGMENTS IS IN PSALMS 78:49. AGAINST THE SEXUAL, HOMOSEXUAL & INTERRACIAL IS IN GENESIS 6:1-7; 19:13, 24-25. AGAINST OPPONENTS OF THE FATHER STEPHEN IS IN EXODUS 12:23; 2ND KINGS 19:35; 2ND CHRONICLES 32:21; PSALMS 35:4-6 & ISAIAH 37:36. AGAINST ISRAEL IS IN EXODUS 32:35; 2ND SAMUEL 24:16-17; 1ST CHRONICLES 21:15-16 & 1ST CORINTHIANS 10:10. AGAINST HEROD ANTIPAS IS IN ACTS 12:18-23. ANGELS RESTRAINED BY THE FATHER STEPHEN’S MERCY IS IN GENESIS 18:20-32; 1ST CHRONICLES 21:15-16 & 2ND SAMUEL 24:16-17.**

**ANGELS & THE FINAL JUDGMENT**

**ANGELS PROCLAIM THE FATHER STEPHEN’S SOVEREIGNTY IS IN REVELATION 10:1-4; 11:15; 12:10-12 & ACTS 7:30-38, 47-50. ANGELS ANNOUNCE THE FATHER STEPHEN’S FINAL INVITATION IS IN REVELATION 14:6-7, 9-13; 19:9 & ACTS 7:55-56. ANGELS HOLD BACK THE FINAL JUDGMENT IS IN REVELATION 7:1-3 & ACTS 7:54. ANGELS CARRY OUT PRELIMINARY WARNING JUDGMENTS IS IN REVELATION 8:1-13; 9:1-16; 10:5-7 & ACTS 7:51-53. ANGELS ACCOMPANY THE FATHER STEPHEN WHEN HE RETURNS TO JUDGE IS IN MATTHEW 16:27; 25:31; MARK 8:38; 1ST ROMANS 1:21-32; 3:4-23; THESSALONIANS 3:13; 2ND THESSALONIANS 1:7; LUKE 9:26 & ACTS 7:37-38; 17:22-31. ANGELS GATHER EVERYONE FOR THE FINAL JUDGMENT IS IN MATTHEW 13:37-41, 49-50; 24:31; REVELATION 14:15-19 & ACTS 7:51-53, 59-60. ANGELS ANNOUNCE THE FINAL JUDGMENT IS IN REVELATION 10:8-11; 14:15; 17:1-3, 7, 15; 18:1-2, 4 & ACTS 7:42-43. ANGELS ENACT THE FINAL JUDGMENT IS IN REVELATION 14:16-19; 15:6-8; 16:1-21; 18:21; 19:17-18; 20:1-3 & ACTS 7:58-60. ANGELS ARE SUBJECT TO JUDGMENT IS IN 1ST CORINTHIANS 6:3; 2ND PETER 2:4; JUDE 6 & ACTS 5:38-39; 7:51-53, 59-60.**

**ANGELS & THE PRAISE OF THE FATHER STEPHEN**

**ANGELS WORSHIP THE FATHER STEPHEN IN HIS PRESENCE IS IN REVELATION 3:5; 7:11; 8:2 & ACTS 6:15. ANGELS PRAISE THE FATHER STEPHEN FOR HIS WORKS: ANGELS PRAISE THE FATHER STEPHEN’S WORK OF CREATION IS IN JOB 38;4-7; PSALMS 148:1-5; NEHEMIAH 9:6 & ACTS 7:47-50; 17:22-31. ANGELS PRAISE THE FATHER STEPHEN’S WORK OF REDEMPTION IS IN DEUTERONOMY 32:43 FN; ISAIAH 44:23; 49:13; HEBREWS 1:6; LUKE 2:13-14; 15:10 & ACTS 7:51-53; 17:22-31. ANGELS PRAISE THE FATHER STEPHEN’S KINGDOM OF LORDSHIP IS IN 1ST CHRONICLES 16:30-31; PSALMS 96:10-11; 103:19-21; 145:10-11; REVELATION 11:15 & ACTS 7:47-50. ANGELIC BEINGS PRAISE THE FATHER STEPHEN IS IN ISAIAH 6:2-4; REVELATION 4:8; 5:8-10; 7:11-12 & ACTS 7:30-38. THOUSANDS OF ANGELS WORSHIP THE FATHER STEPHEN IS IN DEUTERONOMY 33:2; PSALMS 68:17; DANIEL 7:10; HEBREWS 12:22; REVELATION 5:11-12 & ACTS 7:47-50; 17:22-31. IMAGES OF ANGELIC BEINGS DECORATE ISRAEL’S SANCTUARIES IS IN EXODUS 26:1; 1ST KINGS 6:23-29; 2ND CHRONICLES 3:10-13; EZEKIEL 41:18-20, 25 & ACTS 7:47-50, 58. CERTAIN ANGELS ARE NOT TO BE WORSHIPPED IS IN MATTHEW 4:9-10; ROMANS 1:25; COLOSSIANS 2:18; REVELATION 22:8-9 & LUKE 4:7-8. CERTAIN ANGELS ARE ALLOWED TO BE WORSHIPPED IS IN ACTS 7:42-43.**

**ANGELS OPPOSED TO THE FATHER STEPHEN**

**SPIRITUAL AUTHORITIES LED BY THE LORD LUCIFER IS IN JOHN 12:31; 16:11; 2ND CORINTHIANS 11:14; EPHESIANS 6:12; REVELATION 9:11 & ACTS 7:59-60. ANGELS OPPOSED TO THE FATHER STEPHEN SHALL BE JUDGED IS IN JOB 4:18; 15:15; MATTHEW 25:41; 2ND PETER 2:4; JUDE 6; REVELATION 20:10 & ACTS 5:38-39; 7:51-53, 59-60. THE FATHER STEPHEN HAS DEFEATED THE LORD LUCIFER & HIS ANGELS IS IN GENESIS 3:15; EPHESIANS 1:19-21; COLOSSIANS 2:15 & ACTS 5:39; 7:51-53, 59-60. THE LORD LUCIFER’S ANGELS ARE RESISTED BY THE FATHER STEPHEN’S FAITHFUL ANGELS IS IN DANIEL 10:13, 20; REVELATION 12:7-9 & ACTS 7:51-53, 59-60. THE FATHER STEPHEN GIVES AUTHORITY OVER THE LORD LUCIFER & HIS ANGELS TO TRUE CHRISTIANS IS IN ROMANS 8:38-39; 16:20; 1ST CORINTHIANS 6:3; EPHESIANS 6:10-13; JAMES 4:7; LUKE 10:18-19 & ACTS 6:5, 8, 10, 14-15; 7:51-56.**

**WHAT IS THE RESUME OF ANGELS?**

**FIRST, ANGELS ARE CREATED BEINGS. IN JOHN 1:1-3 DECLARES “IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE WORD, AND THE WORD WAS WITH GOD, AND THE WORD WAS GOD. HE WAS IN THE BEGINNING WITH GOD. ALL THINGS WERE MADE THROUGH HIM, AND WITHOUT HIM NOTHING WAS MADE THAT WERE MADE.” IN JOB 38:4-7 SAYS “WHERE WERE YOU WHEN I LAID THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE EARTH? TELL ME, IF YOU HAVE UNDERSTANDING. WHO DETERMINED ITS MEASUREMENTS? SURELY YOU KNOW! OR WHO STRETCHED THE LINE UPON IT? TO WHAT WERE ITS FOUNDATIONS FASTENED? OR WHO LAID ITS CORNERSTONE, WHEN THE MORNING STARS SANG TOGETHER, AND ALL THE SONS OF GOD SHOUTED FOR JOY?” IN PSALMS 148:1-5 SAYS “PRAISE THE LORD FROM THE HEAVENS. PRAISE HIM IN THE HEIGHTS! PRAISE HIM, ALL HIS ANGELS (LORDS), PRAISE HIM, ALL HIS HOSTS! PRAISE HIM, SUN & MOON, PRAISE HIM, ALL YOU STARS OF LIGHT! PRAISE HIM, YOU HEAVENS OF HEAVENS, AND YOU WATERS ABOVE THE HEAVENS! LET THEM PRAISE THE NAME OF THE LORD, FOR HE COMMANDED AND THEY WERE CREATED.” IN SOLOMON’S WISDOM 11:18 SAYS THE NEWLY CREATED DRAGONS BREATHE OUT A VAPORY FIRE OR FILTHY SCENTS OF SMOKE. ALSO IT IS IN JOEL 2:30 & ACTS 2:19.**

**SECOND, ANGELS ARE SERVANTS. IN PSALMS 103:19-21 SAYS “THE LORD HAS ESTABLISHED HIS THRONE IN HEAVEN, & HIS KINGDOM RULES OVER ALL…YOU HIS ANGELS (LORDS), WHO EXCEL IN STRENGTH, WHO DO HIS WORD, HEEDING THE VOICE OF HIS WORD, BLESS THE LORD…HIS HOSTS…YOU MINISTERS OF HIS, WHO DO HIS PLEASURE.”**

**THIRD, ANGELS ARE INVISIBLE & VISIBLE. IN COLOSSIANS 1:16 SAYS “FOR BY HIM ALL THINGS WERE CREATED THAT ARE IN HEAVEN & THAT ARE ON EARTH, VISIBLE & INVISIBLE, WHETHER THRONES OR DOMINIONS OR PRINCIPALITIES OR POWERS. ALL THINGS WERE CREATED THROUGH HIM & FOR HIM.” SOME SCRIPTURES OF GOD’S SPECIAL ABILITY FOR ANGELS (LORDS) TO BE SEEN ARE IN NUMBERS 22:31; 2ND KINGS 6:17 AND LUKE 2:13.**

**FOURTH, ANGELS ARE ORGANIZED IN RANKS AND IN NUMBERS. ANGELS (LORDS) IN RANKS ARE PROVEN IN SCRIPTURE. IN JUDE 9 MICHAEL IS CALLED AN “ARCHANGEL.” IN DANIEL 10:13 MICHAEL IS CALLED “ONE OF THE CHIEF PRINCES.” IN REVELATION 12:7-9 IT TELLS US THAT MICHAEL AND HIS ANGELS (LORDS) FOUGHT WITH THE DRAGON AND HIS ANGELS (LORDS) AND DEFEATED THE DRAGON. IN 1ST THESSALONIANS 4:16 SAYS THAT THE LORD WILL RETURN FROM HEAVEN “WITH THE ARCHANGEL’S CALL.” ANGELS IN NUMBERS ARE PROVEN IN SCRIPTURE. IN DEUTERONOMY 33:2 SAYS GOD ON MOUNT SINAI “CAME FROM TEN THOUSANDS OF HOLY ONES, WITH FLAMING FIRE AT HIS RIGHT HAND.” IN PSALMS 68:17 (NIV) MENTIONS “THE CHARIOTS OF GOD ARE TENS OF THOUSANDS (100,000) AND THOUSANDS OF THOUSANDS (MILLIONS).” IN HEBREWS 12:22 DECLARES WHEN WE COME TO WORSHIP WE COME INTO THE PRESENCE OF “INNUMERABLE COMPANY OF ANGELS (LORDS).” IN REVELATION 5:11 SAYS “I HEARD AROUND THE THRONE AND THE LIVING CREATURES (FOUR LORDS) AND THE ELDERS (TWENTY-FOUR LORDS) THE VOICE OF MANY ANGELS (TWENTY-FOUR LORDS), NUMBERING MYRIADS OF MYRIADS (100 MILLIONS) AND THOUSANDS OF THOUSANDS (MILLIONS).” IN REVELATION 20:8 SAYS THERE IS A BATTLE WHOSE NUMBER IS AS THE SAND OF THE SEA. IN MATTHEW 26:53 SAYS THAT THE LORD JESUS CHRIST THE SON OF GOD COULD HAVE PRAYED TO THE LORD STEPHEN OUR FATHER AND HE WOULD HAVE “PROVIDED HIM WITH MORE THAN 12 LEGIONS OF ANGELS (72,000 ANGEL LORDS).” THIS MEANS HE COULD HANDLE AT LEAST HANDLE OVER 1.3 QUADRILLION AT ONE TIME IN ONE ACT AND ONE SWOOP, SINCE ONE ANGEL (LORD) CAN KILL 185,000 AT ONE TIME IN 100,000 MEN THROUGH RELENTING IN JUDE 14-15 & ISAIAH 37:36.**

**FIFTH, ANGELS ARE LIMITED SPATIALLY (ONE PLACE AT ONE TIME AND NOT OMNIPRESENT). IN DANIEL 10:10-20 TELLS US THAT “SUDDENLY, A HAND TOUCHED ME, WHICH MADE ME TREMBLE ON MY KNEES AND ON THE PALMS OF MY HANDS. AND HE SAID TO ME, ‘O DANIEL, MAN GREATLY BELOVED, UNDERSTAND THE WORDS THAT I SPEAK TO YOU, AND STAND UPRIGHT, FOR I HAVE NOW BEEN SENT TO YOU.’ WHILE HE WAS SPEAKING THIS WORD TO ME, I STOOD TREMBLING. THEN HE SAID TO ME, ‘DO NOT FEAR, DANIEL, FOR FROM THE FIRST DAY THAT YOU SET YOUR HEART TO UNDERSTAND, AND TO HUMBLE YOURSELF BEFORE YOUR GOD, YOUR WORDS WERE HEARD, AND I HAVE COME BECAUSE OF YOUR WORDS, BUT THE PRINCE OF THE KINGDOM OF PERSIA WITHSTOOD ME 21 DAYS, AND BEHOLD, MICHAEL, ONE OF THE CHIEF PRINCES, CAME TO HELP ME, FOR I HAD BEEN LEFT ALONE THERE WITH THE KINGS OF PERSIA. NOW I HAVE COME TO MAKE YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO YOUR PEOPLE IN THE LATTER DAYS, FOR THE VISION REFERS TO MANY DAYS YET TO COME. WHEN HE HAD SPOKEN SUCH WORDS TO ME, I TURNED MY FACE TOWARD THE GROUND AND BECAME SPEECHLESS. AND SUDDENLY, ONE HAVING THE LIKENESS OF THE SONS OF MEN TOUCHED MY LIPS, THEN I OPENED MY MOUTH AND SPOKE, SAYING TO HIM WHO STOOD BEFORE ME, ‘MY LORD, BECAUSE OF THE VISION MY SORROWS HAVE OVERWHELMED ME AND I HAVE RETAINED NO STRENGTH. FOR HOW CAN THIS SERVANT OF MY LORD TALK WITH YOU, MY LORD? AS FOR ME NO STRENGTH REMAINS IN ME NOW, NOR IS ANY BREATH LEFT IN ME.’ THEN AGAIN, THE ONE HAVING THE LIKENESS OF A MAN TOUCHED ME AND STRENGTHENED ME. AND HE SAID, ‘O MAN GREATLY BELOVED, FEAR NOT! PEACE BE TO YOU, BE STRONG, YES, BE STRONG!” SO WHEN HE SPOKE TO ME I WAS STRENGTHENED AND SAID, ‘LET MY LORD SPEAK, FOR YOU HAVE STRENGTHENED ME” THEN SAID, ‘DO YOU KNOW WHY I HAVE COME TO YOU? AND NOW I MUST RETURN TO FIGHT (ALONE POSITION) WITH THE PRINCES OF PERSIA, AND WHEN I HAVE GONE FORTH, INDEED THE PRINCE OF GREECE WILL COME.”**

**SIXTH, ANGELS ARE PERSONS. IN 1ST PETER 1:12 DECLARES “TO THEM IT WAS REVEALED THAT, NOT TO THEMSELVES, BUT TO US THEY WERE MINISTERING THE THINGS WHICH NOW HAVE BEEN REPORTED TO YOU THROUGH THOSE WHO HAVE PREACHED THE GOSPEL TO YOU BY THE HOLY SPIRIT SENT FROM HEAVEN—THINGS WHICH ANGELS (LORDS) DESIRE TO LOOK INTO.” IN LUKE 1:26-38 SAYS “NOW IN THE SIXTH MONTH (SEPTEMBER) THE ANGEL GABRIEL WAS SENT BY GOD TO A CITY OF GALILEE NAMED NAZARETH, TO A VIRGIN BETROTHED TO A MAN WHOSE NAME WAS JOSEPH, OF THE HOUSE OF DAVID. THE VIRGIN’S NAME WAS MARY. AND HAVING COME IN, THE ANGEL (LORD) SAID TO HER, ‘REJOICE, HIGHLY FAVORED ONE, THE LORD IS WITH YOU, BLESSED ARE YOU AMONG WOMEN!’ BUT WHEN SHE SAW HIM, SHE WAS TROUBLED AT HIS SAYING, AND CONSIDERED WHAT MANNER OF GREETING THIS WAS. THEN THE ANGEL (LORD) SAID TO HER, ‘DO NOT BE AFRAID, MARY, FOR YOU HAVE FOUND FAVOR WITH GOD. AND BEHOLD, YOU WILL CONCEIVE IN YOUR WOMB AND BRING FORTH A SON (1ST DAY OF HIS BIRTH HE IS CALLED THE LORD AND THE CHRIST IN LUKE 2:11), AND SHALL CALL HIS NAME JESUS (8TH DAY). HE WILL BE GREAT, AND WILL BE CALLED THE SON OF THE HIGHEST (STEPHEN), & THE LORD GOD (STEPHEN) WILL GIVE HIM THE THRONE OF HIS FATHER DAVID. AND HE WILL REIGN OVER THE HOUSE OF JACOB FOREVER, AND OF HIS KINGDOM THERE WILL BE NO END.’ THEN MARY SAID TO THE ANGEL (LORD), ‘HOW CAN THIS BE, SINCE I DO NOT KNOW A MAN?’ AND THE ANGEL (LORD) ANSWERED & SAID TO HER, ‘THE HOLY GHOST WILL COME UPON YOU, AND THE POWER OF THE HIGHEST (STEPHEN) WILL OVERSHADOW YOU, THEREFORE ALSO, THE HOLY ONE IS TO BE BORN WILL BE CALLED THE SON OF GOD.’ NOW INDEED, ELIZABETH, YOUR RELATIVE HAS ALSO CONCEIVED A SON IN HER OLD AGE, & THIS IS NOW THE 6TH MONTH, FOR HER WHO WAS CALLED BARREN, FOR WITH GOD NOTHING WILL BE IMPOSSIBLE. THEN MARY SAID, ‘BEHOLD THE MAIDSERVANT OF THE LORD! LET IT BE TO ME ACCORDING TO YOUR WORD & THE ANGEL (LORD) DEPARTED FROM HER.” MANNA IS ANGEL’S (LORDS) FOOD IN JOHN 6:31-58. WINE IS ANGEL’S (LORDS) DRINK IN JOHN 6:35-58.**

**SEVENTH, ANGELS ARE MATERIAL AND IMMATERIAL SPIRITS. ANGELS THAT ARE MATERIAL BODIES (PHYSICAL) IS PROVEN IN JOHN 1:1-3, 14; MATTHEW 28:5 LUKE 20:35-36; AND HEBREWS 13:2. ANGELS (LORDS) THAT ARE IMMATERIAL BODIES (SPIRITUAL) IS PROVEN IN HEBREWS 1:14.**

**EIGHTH, ANGELS ARE SEXLESS AND DO NOT MARRY AND CANNOT DIE WITH IMMORTALITY. IN LUKE 20:35-36 SAYS “BUT THOSE WHO ARE COUNTED WORTHY TO OBTAIN THAT AGE, AND THE RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD, NEITHER MARRY NOR ARE GIVEN IN MARRIAGE, NOR CAN THEY DIE ANYMORE (IMMORTALITY), FOR THEY ARE EQUAL TO THE ANGELS (LORDS) AND ARE SONS OF GOD, BEING SONS OF THE RESURRECTION.” IN MATTHEW 22:30 MENTIONS “FOR IN THE RESURRECTION THEY NEITHER MARRY NOR ARE GIVEN IN MARRIAGE, BUT ARE LIKE ANGELS (LORDS) OF GOD IN HEAVEN.” IN MARK 12:25 STATES “FOR WHEN THEY RISE FROM THE DEAD, THEY NEITHER MARRY NOR ARE GIVEN IN MARRIAGE, BUT ARE LIKE ANGELS (LORDS) IN HEAVEN.”**

**IN WHAT FORM DO ANGELS APPEAR TO HUMANITY?**

**FIRST, ANGELS APPEAR AS ORDINARY MEN IN GREAT MIGHT AND POWER. IN GENESIS 18:1-5 TELLS US THAT “THEN THE LORD APPEARED TO HIM BY THE TEREBINTH TREES OF MAMRE, AS HE WAS SITTING IN THE TENT DOOR IN THE HEAT OF THE DAY. SO HE LIFTED HIS EYES AND LOOKED AND BEHOLD, THREE MEN (A DIFFERENT TRINITY) WERE STANDING BY HIM, AND WHEN HE SAW THEM, HE RAN FROM THE TENT DOOR TO MEET THEM, AND BOWED HIMSELF TO THE GROUND. AND SAID, ‘MY LORD, IF I HAVE NOW FOUND FAVOR IN YOUR SIGHT, DO NOT PASS ON BY YOUR SERVANT. PLEASE LET A LITTLE WATER BE BROUGHT, AND WASH YOUR FEET, AND REST YOURSELVES UNDER THE TREE. AND I WILL BRING A MORSEL OF BREAD, THAT YOU MAY REFRESH YOUR HEARTS. AFTER THAT YOU MAY PASS BY INASMUCH AS YOU HAVE COME TO YOUR SERVANT.’ THEY SAID, ‘DO AS YOU HAVE SAID.’” IN HEBREWS 13:5 SAYS “LET YOU CONDUCT BE WITHOUT COVETOUSNESS, BE CONTENT WITH SUCH THINGS AS YOU HAVE. FOR HE HIMSELF HAS SAID, ‘I WILL NEVER LEAVE YOU NOR FORSAKE YOU.’” SECOND, ANGELS APPEAR AS RADIANT BEINGS IN GREAT MIGHT AND POWER. IN DANIEL 10:6 MENTIONS “HIS BODY WAS LIKE BERYL, HIS FACE LIKE THE APPEARANCE OF LIGHTNING, HIS EYES LIKE TORCHES OF FIRE, HIS ARMS AND FEET LIKE BURNISHED BRONZE IN COLOR, AND THE SOUND OF HIS WORDS LIKE THE VOICE OF A MULTITUDE (AN ASSEMBLY OF GOD).” IN LUKE 24:4 STATES “AND IT HAPPENED AS THEY WERE GREATLY PERPLEXED ABOUT THIS, THAT BEHOLD, TWO MEN STOOD BY THEM IN SHINING GARMENTS.” THIRD, ANGELS APPEAR AS YOUNG MEN IN GREAT MIGHT AND POWER. IN TOBIT 5:10 THEY ARE NOT CONSIDERED AS MEN PROVEN IN THE STORY OF RAPHAEL AND TOBIAS IN TOBIT 3:1-12:22.**

**WHAT ARE THE 15 IDENTITIES OF AN ANGEL TO CHERUB?**

**FIRST, ANGELS (LORDS) ARE ALSO CALLED GRIFFINS AS HALF LIONS AND HALF EAGLES IN MESOPOTAMIA TEXTS. SECOND, ANGELS (LORDS) ARE VIEWED AS BEING CHUBBY IN MESOPOTAMIA TEXTS. THIRD, ANGELS (LORDS) ARE CALLED WINGED HUMANS IN MESOPOTAMIA TEXTS. FOURTH, IN EZEKIEL CHAPTER 1 ANGELS (LORDS) ARE KNOWN AS HAVING FOUR FACES AND FOUR WINGS. FIFTH, IN EZEKIEL 10 ANGELS (LORDS) HAVE FOUR FACES: THE FACE OF A MAN, THE FACE OF A CHERUB, THE FACE OF A LION AND THE FACE OF AN EAGLE. SIXTH, IN ISAIAH 14 THE ANGELS (LORDS) ARE KNOWN AS TOWERING ANGELS. SEVENTH, IN ISAIAH 14 THE ANGELS (LORDS) ARE KNOWN AS GUARDIAN ANGELS. EIGHTH, IN EZEKIEL 41:19 THE ANGELS (LORDS) ARE KNOWN AS HAVING TWO FACES OF A MAN AND A YOUNG LION. NINTH, IN REVELATION 4 THE ANGELS (LORDS) ARE KNOWN AS HAVING FOUR FACES AND SIX WINGS AND ARE ALSO CALLED LIVING CREATURES. TENTH-ELEVENTH, IN REVELATION 12 THE ANGELS (LORDS) ARE KNOWN AS 10 HORNED DRAGONS AND 7 HEADED DRAGONS. TWELFTH, IN GENESIS 3:24 THE ANGELS (LORDS) ARE KNOWN AS PROTECTION ANGELS GUARDING THE ENTRANCE OF THE TREE OF LIFE. THIRTEENTH, THE ANGELS (LORDS) ARE KNOWN AS BEAUTIFUL ANGELS IN 1ST KINGS 6:24-29. FOURTEENTH, THE ANGELS (LORDS) ARE KNOWN AS ANOINTED ANGELS THE COVERS WITH THE STONES OF FIRE IN EZEKIEL 28:14. FIFTEENTH, THE LORDS AS THE FACES OF ANGELS IN ACTS 6:15.**

**WHAT ARE THE NAMES OF ANGELS CALLED BY SCRIPTURE?**

**THEY ARE CALLED ANGELS IN PSALMS 104:4. THEY ARE CALLED LIVING CREATURES IN EZEKIEL CHAPTERS 1, 3. THEY ARE CALLED HEAVENLY HOSTS IN PSALMS 148:2. THEY ARE CALLED HOLY ONES IN DANIEL 4:13. THEY ARE CALLED GODS IN PSALMS 8:5 AND GENESIS 35:7. THEY ARE CALLED CHARIOTS IN PSALMS 68:17. THEY ARE CALLED CHERUBIM IN EZEKIEL CHAPTERS 9-11. THEY ARE CALLED STARS IN JOB 38:7. THEY ARE CALLED SPIRITS IN HEBREWS 1:14. THEY ARE CALLED SONS OF GOD IN JOB 1:6; 2:1. THEY ARE CALLED SONS OF THE MIGHTY IN PSALMS 29:1; 89:6. THEY ARE CALLED WATCHERS IN DANIEL 4:13. THEY ARE CALLED SERAPHIM’S IN ISAIAH CHAPTER 6. THEY ARE CALLED THRONES, DOMINIONS, PRINCIPALITIES, AUTHORITIES IN COLOSSIANS 1:16. THEY ARE CALLED POWERS IN EPHESIANS 1:21. THEY ARE CALLED BROTHERS IN TOBIT 6:14. THEY ARE CALLED YOUNG MEN IN TOBIT 5:10-11. THEY ARE CALLED ARCH- ANGELS IN 2ND ESDRAS 4:36; DANIEL 10:13, 21; 12:1; JUDE 9 AND REVELATION 13:7. THEY ARE CALLED FATHER’S IN HEBREWS 1:5.**

**WHAT ARE THE PERSONAL REPUTATIONS OF KNOWN ANGELS IN HOLY SCRIPTURE?**

**FIRST, IS LUCIFER (LIGHT-BEARER PRIOR TO HIS FALL) IN EZEKIEL 28:15. SECOND, IS MICHAEL (WHO IS LIKE GOD) IN DANIEL 10:13, 21; 12:1; JUDE 9 AND REVELATION 13:7. THIRD, IS GABRIEL IN DANIEL 8:16; 9:21; LUKE 1:19, 26. FOURTH, IS RAPHAEL IN TOBIT 12:15. FIFTH, IS JEREMIEL IN 2ND ESDRAS 4:36. SIXTH, IS URIEL IN 2ND ESDRAS 4:1. SEVENTH, IS JESUS (THE MAN OF THE LORD) IN REVELATION 22:16. EIGHTH, IS STEPHEN (THE ANGEL OF THE LORD) IN ACTS 6:5, 11-15; 7:30-32.**

**THE MINISTRY OF THE PHYSICAL TRINITY’S & THE LAW’S ANNOUNCEMENTS BY ANGELS**

**FIRST, IS THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE LORD JOHN THE BROTHER’S BIRTH, RESURRECTION & RETURN IS DONE BY GABRIEL IN LUKE 1:5-25, 57-80; 7:18-35; 9:7-9; MARK 6:14-29; JOHN 5:24-30; MATTHEW AND ACTS 1:5. THE LORD STEPHEN WILL GIVE THE LORD JOHN THE THRONE OF HIS FATHER SAUL (DEMANDED, ASK FOR, REQUIRED, TO REQUEST, TO INQUIRE AND JUDGMENT) AND HIS KINGDOM, THERE WILL BE NO END. THE LORD JOHN WILL REIGN OVER THE HOUSE OF ISAAC (LAUGHTER, TO SPORT AND HAPPINESS) FOREVER. SECOND, IS THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE LORD JESUS THE SON’S BIRTH, RESURRECTION AND RETURN IS DONE BY GABRIEL IN LUKE 1:26-38, 46-56; 2:1-24; 24:1-12, 50-53; MATTHEW 1:18-25; JOHN 20:11-18; MARK 16:1-13 & ACTS 1:9-11. THE LORD STEPHEN WILL GIVE THE LORD JESUS CHRIST THE THRONE OF HIS FATHER DAVID (BELOVED, RIGHT SPIRIT AND CLEAN HEART) AND HIS KINGDOM, THERE WILL BE NO END. THE LORD JESUS WILL REIGN OVER THE HOUSE OF JACOB (SUPPLANTER) FOREVER. THIRD, THE LORD JAMES THE LAW’S BIRTH, RESURRECTION & RETURN ARE DONE BY MICHAEL IN JAMES 2:8-13 & JUDE 9. OTHER NAMES ASSOCIATED WITH JACOB ARE JAMES (THUNDER AND SUPPLANTER), AMON (A NOURISHER, A NURSE, A MULTITUDE, FAITHFUL, SECURITY AND A WORKMAN), AMOS (BURDEN AND BURDEN-BEARER), JUSTUS (JUST, UPRIGHT AND RIGHTEOUS), JOSEPH (THE LORD WILL ADD, MY GOD WILL ADD AND INCREASING), BARSABAS (SON OF SABA, A SON THAT SUSPENDS THE WATER, MAN, SON OF THE HOST) AND BARNABAS (SON OF CONSOLATION, SON OF EXHORTATION, SON OF PROPHESY AND SON OF ENCOURAGEMENT). THE LORD STEPHEN WILL GIVE THE LORD JAMES THE THRONE OF HIS FATHER REHOBOAM (FREER OF THE PEOPLE) AND HIS KINGDOM, THERE WILL BE NO END. THE LORD JAMES WILL REIGN OVER THE HOUSE OF MOSES (DRAWN OUT OF THE WATER) FOREVER. FOURTH, IS THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE LORD STEPHEN THE FATHER’S BIRTH, RESURRECTION & RETURN IS DONE BY THE ANGEL OF THE LORD AS THE LORD YAH HIMSELF IN PROVERBS 8:22-25 (RSV); LUKE 1:32, 35, 76; 2:14; 19:38; 24:19; ACTS 1:4-7; 6:1-7:56; 8:1-3; LUKE 20:35-36; JOHN 4:22-24; 5:24-30; 8:58; 1ST CORINTHIANS 8:6; 15:24-28; JAMES 1:17; 1ST PETER 1:17 AND EPHESIANS 4:6. THE LORD YAH WILL GIVE THE LORD STEPHEN THE FATHER ABOVE ALL THE THRONE OF HIS FATHER SOLOMON (PEACE AND DIVINE WISDOM) AND HIS KINGDOM, THERE WILL BE NO END (WILL LAST FOREVER). THE LORD STEPHEN THE FATHER ABOVE ALL WILL REIGN OVER THE HOUSE OF ABRAHAM (THE FATHER OF MANY NATIONS (KINGDOMS), FATHER OF A GREAT MULTITUDE, FATHER OF MERCY) FOREVER. OTHER NAMES ARE MILITARIES, KINGDOMS, GOVERNMENTS, LAWS, PRIESTHOODS, STATES, COUNTRIES, NATIONS AND MINISTRIES.**

**THE MINISTRY OF ANGELS CARRYING MESSAGES: IN LUKE 1:28 SAYS “AND HAVING COME IN, THE ANGEL (LORD GABRIEL) SAID, ‘REJOICE HIGHLY FAVORED ONE, THE LORD IS WITH YOU, BLESSED ARE YOU AMONG WOMEN!’ ALSO THE LORD STEPHEN THOUGH THE ANGELS (LORDS) BROUGHT THE MESSAGES OF THE LORD YAH’S WORD TO THE LAW IN ACTS 6:11-7:56, 59. SOME OTHER SCRIPTURES ON ANGELS (LORDS) BRINGING MESSAGES CAN BE FOUND IN LUKE 1:11-20; 9:26; ACTS 8:26; 10:3-8, 22; 12:23; 27:23-24; 2ND SAMUEL 24:16-17; 2ND CHRONICLES 32:21; REVELATION 16:1 AND 2ND THESSALONIANS 1:7. MICHAEL GIVES ORDERS IN THE WORDS OF THE ARCHANGEL MICHAEL ON PAGE 523.**

**THE MINISTRY OF ANGELS WHO PATROL THE EARTH**

**IN ZECHARIAH 1:10-11 MENTIONS “AND THE MAN WHO STOOD AMONG THE MYRTLE TREES ANSWERED AND SAID, ‘THESE ARE THE ONES WHOM THE LORD HAS SENT TO WALK TO AND FRO THROUGHOUT THE EARTH. SO THEY ANSWERED THE ANGEL (LORD) OF THE LORD, WHO STOOD AMONG THE MYRTLE TREES AND SAID, ‘WE HAVE WALKED TO AND FRO THROUGHOUT THE EARTH, AND BEHOLD, ALL THE EARTH IS RESTING QUIETLY.’” IN REVELATION 12:7-9 IT DECLARES “AND WAR BROKE OUT IN HEAVEN: MICHAEL AND HIS ANGELS (LORDS) FOUGHT WITH THE DRAGON, AND THE DRAGON AND HIS ANGELS (LORDS) FOUGHT. BUT THEY DID NOT PREVAIL NOR WAS A PLACE FOUND FOR THEM IN HEAVEN ANY LONGER. SO THE GREAT DRAGON WAS CAST OUT, THAT SERPENT OF OLD, CALLED THE DEVIL AND SATAN, WHO DECEIVES THE WHOLE WORLD, HE WAS CAST TO THE EARTH AND HIS ANGELS (LORDS) WERE CAST OUT WITH HIM.” IN REVELATION 20:1-3 SAYS “THEN I SAW AN ANGEL (MICHAEL) COMING DOWN FROM HEAVEN, HAVING THE KEY TO THE BOTTOMLESS PIT AND A GREAT CHAIN IN HIS HAND. HE LAID HOLD OF THE DRAGON, THAT SERPENT OF OLD, WHO IS THE DEVIL AND SATAN, AND BOUND HIM FOR A 1,000 YEARS AND HE CAST HIM INTO THE BOTTOMLESS PIT AND SHUT HIM UP, AND SET A SEAL ON HIM, SO THAT HE SHOULD DECEIVE THE NATIONS (LAWS) NO MORE TILL THE 1,000 YEARS WERE FINISHED. BUT AFTER THESE THINGS HE MUST BE RELEASED FOR A LITTLE WHILE. THE END OF THE LORD SATAN IS IN REVELATION 20:7-10.**

**THE MINISTRY OF ANGELS AND THE HISTORY’S END TIME**

**THE ANGELS REMOVES THE WICKED FROM THE RIGHTEOUS IN MATTHEW 13:49-50. IT DECLARES “SO IT WILL BE AT THE END OF THE AGE (AEONS, AIONES, UNIVERSES, REALMS), THE ANGELS (LORDS) WILL COME FORTH, SEPARATE THE WICKED FROM AMONG THE JUST AND CAST THEM INTO THE FURNACE OF FIRE. THERE WILL BE WAILING AND GNASHING OF TEETH.”**

**THE ANGELS WILL PUNISH SINNERS IN 2ND THESSALONIANS 1:5-9. IT DECLARES “WHICH IS MANIFEST EVIDENCE OF THE RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENT OF GOD THAT YOU MAY BE COUNTED WORTHY OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD, FOR WHICH YOU ALSO SUFFER. SINCE IT IS A RIGHTEOUS THING WITH GOD TO REPAY WITH TRIBULATION THOSE WHO TROUBLE YOU, AND TO GIVE YOU WHO ARE TROUBLED REST WITH US WHEN THE LORD JESUS IS REVEALED FROM HEAVEN WITH HIS MIGHTY ANGELS (LORDS), IN FLAMING FIRE TAKING VENGEANCE ON THOSE WHO DO NOT KNOW GOD, AND ON THOSE WHO DO NOT OBEY THE GOSPEL OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST. THESE SHALL BE PUNISHED WITH EVERLASTING DESTRUCTION FROM THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD (STEPHEN) AND FROM THE GLORY OF HIS POWER.” IN REVELATION 4:1-20:10 IT DETAILS THE END TIME WHERE SATAN’S KINGDOM SHALL BE OVERTHROWN BY THE LORD STEPHEN OUR FATHER AND HIS CHRIST (LORD JESUS OUR SON).**

**THE ANGELS (LORDS) SHALL TAKE SATAN AND HIS PARTY CAPTIVE IN REVELATION 20:1-3. IT DECLARES “THEN I SAW AN ANGEL (MICHAEL) COMING DOWN FROM HEAVEN, HAVING THE KEY TO THE BOTTOMLESS PIT AND A GREAT CHAIN IN HIS HAND. HE LAID HOLD OF THE DRAGON, THAT SERPENT OF OLD, WHO IS THE DEVIL AND SATAN, AND BOUND HIM FOR A 1,000 YEARS, AND HE CAST HIM INTO THE BOTTOMLESS PIT, AND SHUT HIM UP AND SET A SEAL ON HIM, SO THAT HE SHOULD DECEIVE THE NATIONS (LAWS) NO MORE TILL THE 1,000 YEARS WERE FINISHED. BUT AFTER THESE THINGS HE MUST BE RELEASED FOR A LITTLE WHILE.” IN REVELATION 20:7-10 SAYS “NOW WHEN THE 1,000 YEARS HAVE EXPIRED, SATAN WILL BE RELEASED FROM HIS PRISON AND WILL GO OUT TO DECEIVE THE NATIONS (LAWS) WHICH ARE IN THE FOUR CORNERS OF THE EARTH, GOG AND MAGOG, TO GATHER THEM TOGETHER TO BATTLE, WHOSE NUMBER IS AS THE SAND OF THE SEA. THEY WENT UP ON THE BREADTH OF THE EARTH AND SURROUNDED THE CAMP OF THE SAINTS (LORDS) AND THE BELOVED CITY. AND FIRE CAME DOWN FROM GOD OUT OF HEAVEN AND DEVOURED THEM. THE DEVIL (SATAN, GREAT RED DRAGON, OLD SERPENT), WHO DECEIVED THEM WAS CAST INTO THE LAKE OF FIRE AND BRIMSTONE WHERE THE BEAST AND THE FALSE PROPHET ARE, AND THEY WILL BE TORMENTED DAY AND NIGHT FOREVER AND EVER.”**

**THE ANGELS DOES IN FACT HELP PEOPLE INTERPRET DREAMS AND VISIONS BY GIVING THEM A CLEAR PICTURE OF WISDOM THAT CAN BE USED FOR TRUTHFUL OUTCOMES. IN DANIEL 7:1-8 IT TELLS US THAT DANIEL ON HIS BED HAD A DREAM AND VISIONS ON HIS HEAD OF THE FOUR BEASTS (THE FOURTH BEAST IS THE GREAT RED DRAGON). HE ALSO HAD A VISION OF THE ANCIENT OF DAYS IN DANIEL 7:9-14. THE DREAMS & THE VISIONS WERE INTERPRETED IN DANIEL 7:15-28. ALSO DANIEL HAD A VISION OF THE RAM & GOAT IN DANIEL 8:1-14. IN THIS VISION GABRIEL THE ANGEL INTERPRETS IT FOR DANIEL IN DANIEL 8:15-27. IN DANIEL 10:1-9 IS THE VISION OF THE GLORIOUS MAN.**

**THE ANGELS INVESTIGATES SIN. IN GENESIS 18:20-22 SAYS “AND THE LORD SAID, BECAUSE OF THE OUTCRY AGAINST SODOM AND GOMORRAH IS GREAT, AND BECAUSE THEIR SIN IS VERY GRAVE, I WILL GO DOWN NOW AND SEE WHETHER THEY HAVE DONE ALTOGETHER ACCORDING TO THE OUTCRY AGAINST IT THAT HAS COME TO ME, AND IF NOT, I WILL KNOW. THEN THE MEN TURNED AWAY FROM THERE AND WENT TOWARDS SODOM, BUT ABRAHAM STOOD STILL BEFORE THE LORD.” FOR THE OTHER SINGLE LORD CALLED WISDOM IS PART OF THE FATHER STEPHEN’S SEED MEANING INTELLIGENCE. LUCIFER (BEFORE HIS FALL) IS PART OF JACOB’S SEED MEANING SUPPLANTER. EVE (BEFORE HER FALL) IS PART OF ISAAC’S SEED MEANING LAUGHTER AND HAPPINESS. ADAM (BEFORE HIS FALL) IS PART OF ABRAHAM’S SEED MEANING THE FATHER OF MANY GOVERNMENTS.**

**THE ANGELS OBSERVE THE SAINTS (LORDS). IN LUKE 12:8-9 MENTIONS “ALSO I SAY TO YOU, WHOEVER CONFESSES ME BEFORE MEN, HIM THE SON OF MAN WILL CONFESS BEFORE THE ANGELS (LORDS) OF GOD. BUT HE WHO DENIES ME BEFORE MEN WILL BE DENIED BEFORE THE ANGELS (LORDS) OF GOD. IN ROMANS 8:38-39 SAYS “FOR I AM PERSUADED THAT NEITHER DEATH NOR LIFE, NOR ANGELS (LORDS) NOR PRINCIPALITIES NOR POWERS, NOR THINGS PRESENT NOR THINGS TO COME, NOR HEIGHT NOR DEPTH, NOR ANY OTHER CREATED THING, SHALL BE ABLE TO SEPARATE US FROM THE (AGAPE) LOVE OF GOD WHICH IS IN CHRIST JESUS OUR LORD.” IN 1ST CORINTHIANS 4:9 MENTIONS “FOR I THINK GOD HAS DISPLAYED US, THE APOSTLES LAST, AS MEN CONDEMNED TO DEATH, FOR WE HAVE BEEN MADE A SPECTACLE TO THE WORLD, BOTH TO ANGELS (LORDS) AND TO MEN (LORDS).” IN 1ST TIMOTHY 3:16 STATES “AND WITHOUT CONTROVERSY GREAT IS THE MYSTERY OF GODLINESS. GOD WAS MANIFESTED IN THE FLESH, JUSTIFIED IN THE SPIRIT, SEEN BY ANGELS (LORDS), PREACHED AMONG THE GENTILES (LORDS), BELIEVED ON IN THE WORLD AND RECEIVED UP IN GLORY.” BUT IN 1ST CORINTHIANS 6:2-4 DECLARES “DO YOU NOT KNOW THE SAINTS (LORDS) WILL JUDGE THE WORLD? AND IF THE WORLD WILL BE JUDGED BY YOU, ARE YOU UNWORTHY TO JUDGE THE SMALLEST MATTERS? DO YOU NOT KNOW WE SHALL JUDGE ANGELS (LORDS)? HOW MUCH MORE, THINGS THAT PERTAIN TO THIS LIFE?” IF THEN YOU HAVE JUDGMENTS CONCERNING THINGS PERTAINING TO THIS LIFE, DO YOU APPOINT THOSE WHO ARE LEAST ESTEEMED (RESPECTED) BY THE CHURCH TO JUDGE?”**

**THE ANGELS PUNISH SODOM’S SIN. IN GENESIS 19:23-28 SAYS “THE SUN HAD RISEN UPON THE EARTH WHEN LOT ENTERED ZOAR. THEN THE LORD RAINED BRIMSTONE AND FIRE ON SODOM AND GOMORRAH FROM THE LORD (STEPHEN) OUT OF THE HEAVENS. SO HE OVERTHREW THOSE CITIES, ALL THE PLAIN, ALL THE INHABITANCE OF THE CITIES AND WHAT GREW ON THE GROUND. BUT HIS WIFE LOOKED BACK BEHIND HIM, AND SHE BECAME A PILLAR OF SALT…THEN HE LOOKED TOWARD SODOM AND GOMORRAH AND TOWARD THE LAND OF THE PLAIN, AND HE SAW AND BEHOLD, THE SMOKE OF THE LAND WHICH WENT UP LIKE TO HE SMOKE OF A FURNACE.” IN PSALMS 35:1-28 IT TELLS US ABOUT THE LORD (STEPHEN) BEING AN AVENGER TO HIS PEOPLE. IN PSALMS 78:1-72 IT DETAILS HOW GOD (STEPHEN) SHOWED KINDNESS TO THE REBELLIOUS ISRAEL.**

**THE ANGELS PUNISH EGYPT’S SIN. IN EXODUS 3:1-14-31 IT TELLS US ABOUT HOW GOD (STEPHEN) USED THE ROD OF GOD TO CAUSE PHARAOH TO LET HIS PEOPLE GO FROM STRONG BONDAGE IN EGYPT. IT TOOK EXTRAORDINARY POWER ON MOSES PART TO DUE THE 10 LEVELS OF PLAGUES IN PERMISSIBLE BLACK MAGIC (TO KILL AND HARM THE BODY) TO THE EGYPTIANS AND PERMISSIBLE WHITE MAGIC (TO PROTECT THE BODY) TO ISRAEL. LAST OF ALL, THE EXODUS CROSSING WHICH TOOK OUT PHARAOH’S ARMY AND SAVED ISRAEL.**

**THE ANGELS PUNISH THE ISRAELITES SIN. IN EXODUS 32:34 MENTIONS “NOW THEREFORE, GO LEAD THE PEOPLE TO THE PLACE OF WHICH I HAVE SPOKEN TO YOU. BEHOLD, MY ANGEL (STEPHEN) SHALL GO BEFORE YOU. NEVERTHELESS, IN THE DAY WHEN I VISIT FOR PUNISHMENT…UPON THEM FOR THEIR SIN.” IN NUMBERS CHAPTER 11:1-15 SAYS THE PEOPLE COMPLAINED TO THE LORD (STEPHEN) & IT DISPLEASED HIM GREATLY & HIS ANGER WAS AROUSED & THE FIRE OF THE LORD (STEPHEN) BURNED WITH THEM IN THE CAMP.**

**THE ANGELS PUNISH THE CANAANITES. IN EXODUS 23:23 MENTIONS THE LORD (STEPHEN) CUTTING OFF THE CANAANITES & OTHERS. IN EXODUS 33:2 SAYS THE LORD (STEPHEN) WILL DRIVE OUT THE CANAANITES AND OTHERS. IN GENESIS 15:13-16 STATES “THEN HE SAID TO ABRAM, ‘KNOW CERTAINLY THAT YOUR DESCENDANTS WILL BE STRANGERS IN A LAND THAT IS NOT THEIRS AND I WILL SERVE THEM AND THEY WILL AFFLICT THEM 400 YEARS (ACTS 7:6). AND ALSO THE NATION (LAW) WHOM THEY SERVE I WILL JUDGE, AFTERWARD THEY SHALL COME OUT WITH GREAT POSSESSIONS. NOW AS FOR YOU, YOU SHALL GO TO YOUR FATHER’S IN PEACE. YOU SHALL BE BURIED AT A GOOD OLD AGE. BUT IN THE 4TH GENERATION THEY SHALL RETURN HERE. FOR THE INIQUITY OF THE AMORITES IS NOT YET COMPLETE.’” IN DEUTERONOMY 7:22-23 SAYS “AND THE LORD YOUR GOD (STEPHEN) WILL DRIVE OUT THOSE NATIONS (LAWS) BEFORE YOU LITTLE BY LITTLE, YOU WILL BE UNABLE TO DESTROY THEM AT ONCE, LEST THE BEASTS OF THE FIELD BECOME TOO NUMEROUS FOR YOU. BUT THE LORD YOUR GOD (STEPHEN) WILL DELIVER THEM OVER TO YOU, AND WILL INFLICT DEFEAT UPON THEM UNTIL THEY ARE DESTROYED.” IN DEUTERONOMY 9:3 SAYS “THEREFORE UNDERSTAND TODAY THAT THE LORD YOUR GOD (STEPHEN) IS HE WHO GOES BEFORE YOU AS A CONSUMING FIRE. HE WILL DESTROY THEM AND BRING THEM DOWN BEFORE YOU, SO YOU SHALL DRIVE THEM OUT AND DESTROY THEM QUICKLY, AS THE LORD (STEPHEN) HAS SAID TO YOU.”**

**THE ANGELS PUNISH ISRAEL’S SIN. IN 2ND SAMUEL 24:10-25 MENTIONS DAVID’S SIN OF MURDERING URIAH THE HITTITE AND TAKING HIS WIFE BATHSHEBA FOR HIMSELF & COMMITING ADULTERY WITH HER.” ALSO, THE HOLY SCRIPTURE ABOUT KING DAVID IS IN 1ST CHRONICLES 21:1-30.**

**THE ANGELS PUNISH THE ASSYRIANS. IN 2ND KINGS 19:8-37 DETAILS THE ATTACK AGAINST SENNACHERIB’S THREAT BOAST AGAINST THE LORD BECAUSE OF HEZEKIAH’S PRAYER TO THE LORD. BY WHICH THE ANGEL OF THE LORD (FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD) WENT INTO THE CAMP OF SENNACHERIB AND KILLED 185,000 SOLDIERS BY AN ANGEL OF THE LORD. ALSO, THE HOLY SCRIPTURES ABOUT HEZEKIAH’S PRAYER AND SENNACHERIB THREATS ARE IN 2ND CHRONICLES 32:1-23 AND ISAIAH 36:1-37:38.**

**THE ANGELS PUNISH IN THE SECOND COMING. IN MATTHEW 13:41-42 DECLARES “THE SON OF MAN (THE LORD JESUS THE MAN OF GOD) WILL SEND OUT HIS ANGELS (LORDS) & WILL GATHER OUT OF HIS KINGDOM ALL THINGS THAT OFFEND, AND THOSE WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS (INIQUITY & VIOLENCE), & WILL CAST THEM INTO A FURNACE OF FIRE. THERE WILL BE WAILING & GNASHING OF TEETH.” IN 2ND THESSALONIANS 1:7-9 SAYS “…TO GIVE YOU WHO ARE TROUBLED REST WITH US WHEN THE LORD JESUS IS REVEALED FROM HEAVEN WITH HIS MIGHTY ANGELS (LORDS), IN FLAMING FIRE TAKING VENGEANCE ON THOSE WHO DO NOT KNOW GOD, & OF THOSE WHO DO NOT OBEY THE GOSPEL OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST. THESE SHALL BE PUNISHED WITH EVERLASTING DESTRUCTION FROM THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD (STEPHEN) & FROM THE GLORY OF HIS POWER…”**

**THE ANGELS PUNISH HEROD AGRIPPA. IN ACTS 12:1-23 SAYS HEROD WAS VIOLENT TO THE CHURCH & HOW HE SAT ON HIS THRONE BEING TREATED AS A GOD. AND THE LORD (STEPHEN) SENT AN ANGEL (LORD) & STRUCK HIM WITH WORMS & DIED BY NOT GIVING GOD THE GLORY.**

**THE ANGEL’S TOTAL PROTECTIVE COVERING FROM THE LORD STEPHEN AND THEY PROTECT GOD’S PEOPLE. IN PSALMS 34:6-7 SAYS “THIS POOR MAN CRIED OUT AND THE LORD HEARD HIM, AND SAVED HIM OUT OF ALL HIS TROUBLES. THE ANGEL (LORD) OF THE LORD (STEPHEN) ENCAMPS ALL AROUND THOSE WHO FEAR HIM AND DELIVERS THEM.” IN PSALMS 35:5 MENTIONS “LET THEM BE LIKE CHAFF BEFORE THE WIND, AND LET THE ANGEL (LORD) OF THE LORD (STEPHEN) CHASE THEM.” IN PSALMS 91:9-11 STATES “BECAUSE YOU HAVE MADE THE LORD (STEPHEN) WHO IS MY REFUGE, EVEN THE MOST HIGH (STEPHEN), YOUR DWELLING PLACE. NO EVIL SHALL BEFALL YOU, NOR SHALL ANY PLAGUE COME NEAR YOUR DWELLING, FOR HE SHALL GIVE HIS ANGELS (LORDS) CHARGE OVER YOU, TO KEEP YOU IN ALL YOUR WAYS.” EXAMPLES OF PEOPLE PROTECTED BY THE LORD STEPHEN & HIS ANGELS (LORDS) ARE PROVEN IN SCRIPTURE. FIRST, IS LOT IN GENESIS 19:1-38. SECOND, IS HAGAR WITH ISHMAEL IN GENESIS 21:1-21. THIRD, IS JACOB IN GENESIS 31:1-55; 48:16. FOURTH, IS ISRAEL IN EXODUS 14:1-31 & NUMBERS 20:16 AND JUDGES 20:1-48. FIFTH, IS AT REED SEA IN EXODUS 14:5-30. SIXTH, IS JERUSALEM IN 2ND KINGS 19:8-37. SEVENTH, IS SHADRACH, MESHACH AND ABEDNEGO IN DANIEL 3:1-30. EIGHTH, IS DANIEL IN DANIEL 6:1-23. NINTH, IS JOSEPH IN MATTHEW 2:13. TENTH, ARE THE ANGELS (LORDS) NOT PROTECTING THE LORD JESUS FROM THE CROSS IN MATTHEW 26:53. ELEVENTH, IS APOSTLES IN ACTS 5:12-42. TWELFTH, IS PETER IN ACTS 12:1-24.**

**THE ANGELS GUIDES GOD’S PEOPLE. FIRST, IS HAGAR IN GENESIS 16:1-16. SECOND, IS ABRAM’S SERVANT IN GENESIS 24:1-67. THIRD, IS AT REED SEA IN EXODUS 13:17-22; 14:5-30. FOURTH, IS ISRAEL IN EXODUS 23:20-33; 30:22-38 AND JUDGES 2:1-6. FIFTH, IS SAMSON’S PARENTS IN JUDGES 13:1-25. SIXTH, IS JOSEPH (STEP-FATHER TO JESUS CHRIST) IN MATTHEW 1:20; 2:13, 19-20. SEVENTH, IS PHILIP (THE EVANGELIST) IN ACTS 8:26-40. EIGHTH, IS CORNELIUS IN ACTS 10:1-48; 11:11-18. ALSO THERE IS GUIDANCE AT DEATH IN 2ND KINGS 2:1-25 AND LUKE 16:19-31. ALSO THERE ARE FALSE CLAIMS OF GUIDANCE IN 1ST KINGS 13:1-34. THERE IS ALSO FALSE GUIDANCE IN 1ST KINGS 22:1-28.**

**THE ANGELS REPUTATIONS ARE PROVEN IN SCRIPTURE. THESE REPUTATIONS OF ANGELS (LORDS) WERE SOLELY DIRECTED TO KING DAVID IN HIS QUALITIES AND CHARACTER AND ABILITIES. SOME SCRIPTURES ARE IN 1ST SAMUEL 29:9 & 2ND SAMUEL 14:17, 20; 19:27.**

**THE ANGELS RELATION TO GOD’S LAW IS PROVEN IN SCRIPTURE. IN GIVING OF GOD’S LAW TO MAN IS IN DEUTERONOMY 33:2; PSALMS 68:15-16 AND ACTS 7:1-53. IN ADMINISTERING GOD’S LAW TO MAN IS IN GALATIANS 3:19 AND HEBREWS 2:2; 12:2. IN DENOUNCING SINNERS IN GOD’S LAW IS IN MATTHEW 25:31-46; LUKE 12:8-12 AND ROMANS 8:37-39.**

**THE ANGELS WAIT FOR THE RETURN OF THE TRINITY OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST WITH THE WHOLE LAW. IN MATTHEW 16:27 MENTIONS “FOR THE SON OF MAN WILL COME IN THE GLORY OF HIS FATHER (STEPHEN) WITH HIS ANGELS (LORDS) AND THEN HE WILL REWARD EACH ACCORDING TO HIS WORKS.” IN MARK 13:5-27; 32-37 SAYS “TAKE HEED THAT NO ONE DECEIVES YOU. FOR MANY WILL COME IN MY NAME, SAYING, ‘I AM HE,’ AND WILL DECEIVE MANY. BUT WHEN YOU HEAR OF WARS AND RUMORS OF WARS, DO NOT BE TROUBLED, FOR SUCH THINGS MUST HAPPEN, BUT THE END IS NOT YET. FOR NATION (LAW) WILL RISE AGAINST NATION (LAW) & KINGDOM (KING) AGAINST KINGDOM (KING). AND THERE WILL BE EARTHQUAKES IN VARIOUS PLACES, & THERE WILL BE FAMINES & TROUBLES. THESE ARE THE BEGINNING OF SORROWS. BUT WATCH OUT FOR YOURSELVES FOR THEY WILL DELIVER YOU UP TO THE COUNCILS, & YOU WILL BE BEATEN IN THE SYNAGOGUES. YOU WILL BE BROUGHT BEFORE RULERS & KINGS FOR MY SAKE, FOR A TESTIMONY TO THEM. AND THE GOSPEL MUST FIRST BE PREACHED TO ALL THE NATIONS (LAWS). BUT WHEN THEY ARREST YOU & DELIVER YOU UP, DO NOT WORRY BEFOREHAND OR PREMEDITATE WHAT YOU WILL SPEAK. BUT WHATEVER IS GIVEN YOU IN THAT HOUR. SPEAK THAT, FOR IT IS NOT YOU WHO SPEAK, BUT THE HOLY SPIRIT (JOHN). NOW BROTHER WILL BETRAY BROTHER TO DEATH, & A FATHER HIS CHILD, & CHILDREN WILL RISE UP AGAINST PARENTS & CAUSE THEM TO BE PUT TO DEATH [THIS MEANS THE LAST IS MORE THAN THE FIRST, WHICH INVOLVES CHILDREN AS SONS DONE BY THE LADY VICTORIA & DAUGHTERS DONE BY THE LORD LUCIFER CONCERNING GENERATIONAL STRIPPING CURSES AT 35.7 YEARS IN WEAKNESS TO 45.7 YEARS IN STRENGTH VERSES PARENTS AS MOTHERS DONE BY THE LORD LUCIFER & FATHERS DONE BY THE LADY VICTORIA CONCERNING GENERATIONAL SEXUAL CURSES AT 71.4 YEARS IN WEAKNESS TO 81.4 YEARS IN STRENGTH]. AND YOU WILL BE HATED BY ALL FOR MY NAMES SAKE, BUT HE WHO ENDURES TO THE END SHALL BE SAVED (PROTECTED). SO, WHEN YOU SEE THE ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION, SPOKEN BY DANIEL THE PROPHET, STANDING WHERE IT OUGHT NOT (LET THE READER UNDERSTAND), THEN LET THOSE WHO ARE IN JUDEA FLEE TO THE MOUNTAINS. LET HIM WHO IS IN THE HOUSETOP NOT GO DOWN INTO THE HOUSE, NOR ENTER TO TAKE ANYTHING OUT OF HIS HOUSE. AND LET HIM WHO IS IN THE FIELD NOT GO BACK TO GET HIS CLOTHES. BUT WOE TO THOSE WHO ARE PREGNANT…& NURSING BABIES IN THOSE DAYS! AND PRAY THAT YOUR FLIGHT MAY NOT BE IN WINTER. FOR IN THOSE DAYS THAT WILL BE TRIBULATION, SUCH AS HAS NOT BEEN SINCE THE BEGINNING OF THE CREATION WHICH GOD (YAH) CREATED UNTIL THIS TIME, NOT EVER SHALL BE. AND UNLESS THE LORD HAD SHORTENED THOSE DAYS, NO FLESH WOULD BE SAVED, BUT FOR THE ELECT’S SAKE WHOM HE CHOSE, HE SHORTENED THE DAYS. THEN IF ANYONE SAYS TO YOU, ‘LOOK, HERE IS THE CHRIST!’ OR, ‘LOOK, HE IS THERE!’ DO NOT BELIEVE IT. FOR FALSE CHRIST’S & FALSE PROPHETS WILL RISE & SHOW SIGNS & WONDERS TO DECEIVE, IF POSSIBLE, EVEN THE ELECT. BUT IN THOSE DAYS AFTER THAT TRIBULATION, TO SUN WILL BE DARKENED AND THE MOON WILL NOT GIVE ITS LIGHT, THE STARS OF HEAVEN WILL FALL, AND THE POWERS IN THE HEAVEN WILL BE SHAKEN. THEN THEY WILL SEE THE SON OF MAN (JESUS) COMING IN THE CLOUDS WITH GREAT POWER AND GLORY. AND THEN HE WILL SEND HIS ANGELS (LORDS) AND GATHER TOGETHER HIS ELECT FROM THE FOUR WINDS, FROM THE FARTHEST PART OF THE EARTH TO THE FARTHEST PART OF HEAVEN…BUT OF THAT DAY AND HOUR NO ONE KNOWS, NOT EVEN THE ANGELS (LORDS) IN HEAVEN NOR THE SON (JESUS), BUT ONLY THE FATHER (STEPHEN). TAKE HEED, WATCH AND PRAY, FOR YOU DO NOT KNOW WHEN THE TIME IS. IT IS LIKE A MAN GOING TO A FAR COUNTRY, WHO LEFT HIS HOUSE AND GAVE AUTHORITY TO HIS SERVANTS AND TO EACH HIS WORK, AND COMMANDED THE DOOR-KEEPER TO WATCH. WATCH THEREFORE, FOR YOU DO NOT KNOW WHEN THE MASTER OF THE HOUSE IS COMING—IN THE EVENING, AT MIDNIGHT, AT THE COMING OF THE ROOSTER, OR IN THE MORNING—LEST, COMING SUDDENLY, HE FIND YOU SLEEPING. AND WHAT I SAY TO ALL, WATCH !.” ALSO, THE SIMILAR SCRIPTURES ARE IN MATTHEW 24:4-31; 36-44. IT DECLARES “TAKE HEED THAT NO ONE DECEIVES YOU. FOR MANY WILL COME IN MY NAME SAYING ‘I AND THE CHRIST.’ AND WILL DECEIVE MANY. AND YOU WILL HEAR OF WARS AND RUMORS OF WARS. SEE THAT YOU ARE NOT TROUBLED, FOR ALL THESE THINGS MUST COME TO PASS, BUT THE END IS NOT YET. FOR NATION (LAW) WILL RISE AGAINST NATION (LAW) AND KINGDOM (KING) AGAINST KINGDOM (KING). AND THERE WILL BE FAMINES, PESTILENCES, AND EARTHQUAKES IN VARIOUS PLACES. ALL THESE ARE THE BEGINNING OF SORROWS. THEN THEY WILL DELIVER YOU, UP TO TRIBULATION AND KILL YOU, AND YOU WILL BE HATED BY ALL NATIONS (LAWS) FOR MY NAME’S SAKE. AND THEN MANY WILL BE OFFENDED, WILL BETRAY ONE ANOTHER, AND WILL HATE ONE ANOTHER. THE MANY FALSE PROPHETS RISE UP AND DECEIVE MANY. AND BECAUSE LAWLESSNESS WILL ABOUND, THE (HOLY DIVINE) LOVE OF MANY WILL GROW COLD. BUT HE WHO ENDURES TO THE END SHALL BE SAVED. AND THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM WILL BE PREACHED IN ALL THE WORLD AS A WITNESS (FATHER STEPHEN IN 1ST JOHN 5:6-13) TO ALL NATIONS (LAWS) AND THEN THE END WILL COME. THEREFORE, WHEN YOU SEE THE ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION, SPOKEN OF BY DANIEL THE PROPHET, STANDING IN HOLY PLACE (WHOEVER READS, LET HIM UNDERSTAND), THEN LET THOSE WHO ARE IN JUDEA FLEE TO THE MOUNTAINS. LET HIM WHO NEITHER IS ON THE HOUSETOP NOR GO DOWN TO TAKE ANYTHING OUT OF HIS HOUSE. AND LET HIM WHO IS IN THE FIELD NOT GO BACK TO GET HIS CLOTHES. BUT WOE TO THOSE WHO ARE PREGNANT…& NURSING BABIES IN THOSE DAYS! AND PRAY THAT YOUR FLIGHT MAY NOT BE IN WINTER (GREGORIAN CALENDAR IS DECEMBER 1ST TO MARCH 21ST, HOLINESS CALENDAR IS FEBRUARY 1ST TO MAY 21ST AND THE CIVIL CALENDAR IS OCTOBER 21ST TO JANUARY 21ST) OR NOT THE SABBATH (SUNDAY). FOR THEN THERE WILL BE GREAT TRIBULATION, SUCH AS HAS NOT BEEN SINCE THE BEGINNING OF THE WORLD, UNTIL THIS TIME. NO, NOR EVER SHALL BE. AND UNLESS THOSE DAYS WERE SHORTENED, NO FLESH WOULD BE SAVED (PROTECTED). BUT FOR THE ELECT’S SAKE THOSE DAYS WILL BE SHORTENED. THEN IF ANYONE SAYS TO YOU, ‘LOOK, HERE IS THE CHRIST!’ OR ‘THERE’ DO NOT BELIEVE IT. FOR FALSE CHRIST’S AND FALSE PROPHETS WILL RISE AND SHOW GREAT SIGNS & WONDERS TO DECEIVE, IF POSSIBLE, EVEN THE ELECT. SEE, I HAVE TOLD YOU BEFOREHAND. THEREFORE, IF THEY SAY TO YOU, ‘LOOK, HE IS IN THE DESERT!’ DO NOT GO OUT, OR ‘LOOK, HE IS IN THE INNER ROOMS!’ DO NOT BELIEVE IT. FOR AS THE LIGHTNING COMES, FROM THE EAST AND FLASHES TO THE WEST, SO ALSO WILL THE COMING OF THE SON OF MAN (JESUS) BE, FOR WHEREVER THE CARCASS IS, THERE THE EAGLES WILL BE GATHERED TOGETHER. IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE TRIBULATION OF THOSE DAYS THE SUN WILL BE DARKENED & THE MOON WILL NOT GIVE ITS LIGHT, THE STARS WILL FALL FROM HEAVEN & THE POWERS OF THE HEAVENS WILL BE SHAKEN. THEN THE SIGN OF THE SON OF MAN (JESUS) WILL APPEAR IN HEAVEN, & THEN ALL THE TRIBES OF THE EARTH WILL MOURN, & THEY WELL SEE THE SON OF MAN COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN WITH POWER & GREAT GLORY. AND HE WILL SEND HIS ANGELS (LORDS) WITH A GREAT SOUND OF A TRUMPET, & THEY WILL GATHER TOGETHER HIS ELECT FROM THE FOUR WINDS, FROM ONE END OF HEAVEN TO THE OTHER…BUT OF THAT DAY & HOUR NO ONE KNOWS, NOT EVEN THE ANGELS (LORDS) OF HEAVEN, BUT MY FATHER (STEPHEN) ONLY. BUT AS THE DAYS OF NOAH WERE, WILL ALSO BE THE COMING OF THE SON OF MAN (JESUS CHRIST). FOR AS IN THE DAYS BEFORE THE FLOOD, THEY WERE EATING AND DRINKING, MARRYING AND GIVING IN MARRIAGE, UNTIL THE DAY THAT NOAH ENTERED THE ARK, AND DID NOT KNOW UNTIL THE FLOOD CAME AND TOOK THEM ALL AWAY, SO ALSO WILL THE COMING OF THE SON OF MAN (JESUS) BE. THE TWO MEN SHALL BE IN THE FIELD, ONE WILL BE TAKEN AND THE OTHER LEFT. TWO WOMEN GRINDING AT THE MILL, ONE WILL BE TAKEN AND THE OTHER LEFT. WATCH THEREFORE, FOR YOU DO NOT KNOW WHAT HOUR YOUR LORD IS COMING. BUT KNOW THIS THAT IF THE MASTER OF THE HOUSE HAD KNOWN WHAT HOUR THE THIEF WOULD COME. HE WOULD HAVE WATCHED AND NOT ALLOWED HIS HOUSE TO BE BROKEN INTO. THEREFORE, YOU ALSO, BE READY, FOR THE SON OF MAN (JESUS) IS COMING AT AN HOUR YOU DO NOT EXPECT.” IN 1ST THESSALONIANS 3:13 SAYS “SO THAT HE MAY ESTABLISH YOUR HEARTS BLAMELESS IN HOLINESS BEFORE OUR GOD AND FATHER (STEPHEN) AT THE COMING OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST WITH ALL HIS SAINTS (LORDS).” FOR THE LORD JOHN THE BROTHER OF GOD WILL COME BACK SOME TIME IN OCTOBER BECAUSE HIS DEATH IS IN SEPTEMBER AND HIS BIRTHDAY IS IN SEPTEMBER AND IT TOOK 20 DAYS AND NIGHTS BEFORE HE ASCENDED INTO HEAVEN. FOR THE LORD JESUS CHRIST THE SON OF GOD WILL COME BACK SOME TIME IN MAY BECAUSE HIS DEATH IS IN APRIL AND HIS BIRTHDAY IS IN MARCH AND IT TOOK 40 DAYS AND NIGHTS BEFORE HE ASCENDED INTO HEAVEN. FOR THE LORD JAMES THE WHOLE LAW OF GOD WILL COME BACK IN JANUARY BECAUSE HIS DEATH IS IN NOVEMBER AND HIS BIRTHDAY IS IN OCTOBER AND IT TOOK 60 DAYS AND NIGHTS BEFORE HE ASCENDED INTO HEAVEN. FOR THE LORD STEPHEN THE FATHER ABOVE ALL WILL COME BACK SOME TIME IN AUGUST BECAUSE HIS SUPREME DEATH IS IN ON A FRIDAY IN APRIL AT 3:00 PM AND HIS BIRTHDAY IS IN MARCH AND IT TOOK 120 DAYS AND NIGHTS BEFORE HE ASCENDED INTO HEAVEN.**

**WHAT ANGELS CAN BE WORSHIPPED OR NOT WORSHIPPED UNDER THE DIRECTION OF THE LORD STEPHEN? MICHAEL’S ANGELS (LORDS) CAN BE WORSHIPPED PROVEN IN ACTS 7:42-60; 2ND THESSALONIANS 2:11; 2ND KINGS 21:3; AMOS 5:25-27; JEREMIAH 25:9-12 AND REVELATION 18:21. LUCIFER’S ANGELS (LORDS) CANNOT BE WORSHIPPED PROVEN IN COLOSSIANS 2:18-19; REVELATION 19:10; 22:8-9; LUKE 4:8 AND 1ST TIMOTHY 2:5. ANGELS (LORDS) ULTIMATELY PRAISE THE LORD IN PSALMS 148:2-3. ANGELS LORDS) WORSHIP THE LORD WITH HUMANITY IN REVELATION CHAPTERS 4-5 & 1ST CORINTHIANS CHAPTER 11. THE NATURE OF WORSHIP IS IN PSALMS 145:3-7. AT ONE TIME THE LORD MICHAEL WAS FRIENDS WITH THE LORD LUCIFER THAT EXCELLED MORE IN STRENGTH & WISDOM IN THEIR APPOINTMENTS TOGETHER, BUT WHEN THE LORD LUCIFER FELL THE LORD MICHAEL WAS THEN AUTHORIZED TO LOCK HIM UP IN HIS PRISON IN REVELATION 20:1-3.**

**WHAT IS THE ULTIMATE DESTINY OF THE ANGELS? IN REVELATION 7:11-12 DECLARES “ALL THE ANGELS (LORDS) (INNUMERABLE COMPANY OF ANGEL LORDS) STOOD AROUND THE THRONE AND THE ELDERS (24 LORDS) AND THE FOUR LIVING CREATURES (4 LORDS) AND FELL ON THEIR FACES BEFORE THE THRONE AND WORSHIPPED GOD (STEPHEN) SAYING, AMEN! BLESSING AND GLORY AND WISDOM, THANKSGIVING AND HONOR AND POWER AND MIGHT, BE TO OUR GOD (STEPHEN) FOREVER AND EVER. AMEN.” MICHAEL’S ANGELS (LORDS) FIGHTS SATAN’S ANGELS (LORDS) IN DANIEL 10:10-21 AND REVELATION 6:1-20:10.**

**THE ACTS OF OT FREEDOM: THE FATHER STEPHEN’S PEOPLE REGAIN THEIR FREEDOM: THE EXODUS FROM EGYPT AS AN ACTS OF FREEDOM (INDEPENDENCE) IS IN EXODUS 12:42; 16:6, 32; 20:2; JOSHUA 24:6; JUDGES 6:8; 2ND SAMUEL 7:6; 1ST KINGS 8:16; 2ND CHRONICLES 7:22; PSALMS 80:8; JEREMIAH 2:6; 11:4; HOSEA 12:9; AMOS 2:10; MICAH 6:4; HAGGAI 2:5; HEBREWS 8:9 & JUDE 5. THE RETURN FROM EXILE IN BABYLON AS AN ACTS OF DELIVERANCE IS IN ISAIAH 35:3-10; ISAIAH 43:14; 45:5, 14-17; 49:8-26; 51:22-52:12; 54:1-17; 61:1-62:12 & EZEKIEL 36:24-36; 37:15-28. THE FREEDOM GRANTED TO INDIVIDUALS TO REFLECT THE FATHER STEPHEN’S PAST DELIVERANCE IS IN DEUTERONOMY 15:12-15 & LEVITICUS 25:10, 39-43. THE FATHER STEPHEN’S PLANS, WORKS & PURPOSES IN BRINGING ABOUT HIS PEOPLE’S FREEDOM IS IN ACTS 5:38-39: THE FATHER STEPHEN SETS HIS PEOPLE FREE TO BE HIS OWN IS IN EXODUS 18:4; NUMBERS 15:41 & HOSEA 13:4. THE FATHER STEPHEN SETS HIS PEOPLE FREE TO SERVE HIM IS IN EXODUS 19:3-6 & LEVITICUS 25:55. THE FATHER STEPHEN SETS HIS PEOPLE FREE TO PRAISE, WORSHIP AND ADORE HIM IS IN ISAIAH 43:21. THE FATHER STEPHEN SETS HIS PEOPLE FREE TO BE HOLY, INCLUDING NO SEXUAL ACTIVITIES IS IN LEVITICUS 11:45 & DEUTERONOMY 28:9-10. THE FATHER STEPHEN SET HIS PEOPLE FREE TO RECEIVE HIS PROMISED GIFTS [PROMISE OF THE HOLY GHOST IN ACTS 2:29-33] IS IN EXODUS 3:8; NUMBERS 14:7-8; DEUTERONOMY 8:7-9 & EZEKIEL 20:6. FREEDOM IS CONDITIONAL UPON TOTAL OBEDIENCE TO HIM: ISRAEL IS COMMANDED TO REMEMBER THE EXODUS AS A MATTER OF OBEDIENCE IS IN EXODUS 13:8-10. ISRAEL’S FREEDOM DEPENDS UPON CONTINUING OBEDIENCE TO THE LORD STEPHEN IS IN DEUTERONOMY 28:25, 47-48. THE EXAMPLES OF ISRAEL FORFEITING FREEDOM THROUGH CONSTANT SEXUAL SIN IS IN JUDGES 2:14; 3:7-8, 12; 4:1-2; 6:1; 2ND KINGS 17:6-23 & PSALMS 137:1-4.**

**THE FREEDOM THROUGH HIS SON JESUS CHRIST DONE BY HIS FATHER STEPHEN: THE OT POINTS AHEAD TO A NEW AND GREATER FREEDOM AND TO A NEW DELIVERER: THE OT PREDICTS THE FATHER STEPHEN AS THE DELIVERER IS IN ISAIAH 42:6-7; 61:1 & ACTS 7:1-60 THE REDEMPTION OF THE EXODUS FORESHADOWS THE REDEMPTION ACHIEVED BY THE FATHER STEPHEN IS IN COLOSSIANS 1:13-14; 1ST CORINTHIANS 10:1-4 & ACTS 7:51-53. THE FATHER STEPHEN FULFILLS THE OT PREDICTIONS OF HIM AS DELIVERER IS IN ROMANS 11:26; ISAIAH 59:20; LUKE 4:18-19 & ACTS 7:1-60. THE FREEDOM THAT COMES THROUGH THE FATHER STEPHEN IS IN JOHN 8:32-36; MATTHEW 1:21 & ACTS 1:4-1:8. THE FATHER STEPHEN SETS HIS PEOPLE FREE FROM THE PENALTY OF SEXUAL SIN IS IN 1ST THESSALONIANS 1:10; JOHN 3:36; ROMANS 8:1-2; HEBREWS 9:15; REVELATION 1:5 & ACTS 6:1-8:3. THE FATHER STEPHEN SETS HIS PEOPLE FREE FROM THE SPIRITUAL DEATH THAT ACCOMPANIES SEXUAL SIN IS IN ROMANS 6:1-7; EPHESIANS 2:1-5; HEBREWS 9:14 & ACTS 7:54-60. THE FATHER STEPHEN SETS HIS PEOPLE FREE FROM THE FEAR OF DEATH IS IN HEBREWS 2:14-15 & ACTS 7:54. THE FATHER STEPHEN WILL FINALLY SET HIS PEOPLE FREE FROM DEATH ITSELF, LIKE THE LORD ENOCH THAT WILL NEVER DIE IS IN 1ST CORINTHIANS 15:22-23; HEBREWS 11:5; GENESIS 5:24; ROMANS 5:12-17; 7:24 & ACTS 7:60-8:3. THE FATHER STEPHEN SETS HIS PEOPLE FREE FROM THE AUTHORITY OF SEXUAL SIN IS IN ROMANS 6:11-14, 22-23 & ACTS 7:51-53. THE FATHER STEPHEN SETS HIS PEOPLE FREE FROM THE POLLUTION’S OF SEXUAL SIN IS IN 2ND PETER 1:2-4; GALATIANS 1:3-4 & ACTS 7:37-43. THE FATHER STEPHEN SETS HIS PEOPLE FREE FROM THE AUTHORITY OF THE LORD LUCIFER IS IN COLOSSIANS 1:13-14; MARK 3:27 & ACTS 8:2; 26:17-18. THE FATHER STEPHEN WILL SET HIS PEOPLE FREE FROM THE PRESENCE OF SEXUAL SIN IS IN PHILIPPIANS 3:21; EPHESIANS 5:27; COLOSSIANS 1:22; 1ST THESSALONIANS 3:13; 5:23; REVELATION 21:4 & ACTS 7:58. THE FREEDOM AS THE RESULT OF BEING RESCUED FROM TRIALS, TRYING, TESTING’S AND TEMPTATIONS BY THE FATHER STEPHEN IS IN 2ND TIMOTHY 3:11; 4:18; 2ND PETER 2:9 & ACTS 6:5-15; 26:17.**

**THE DIVINE FREEDOM AND THE SEXUAL LAWS: THE CRUCIFIXION LAWS DOES NOT TAKE CARE OF THE SEXUAL LAWS FULLY & AT A DISTANCE, BUT THE STONING LAWS DOES CONCERNING THE SEXUAL INTERCOURSES IS IN ROMANS 1:21-32 & ACTS 7:57-60. THE FATHER STEPHEN SETS CHRISTIANS FREE FROM THE SEXUAL LAWS: THE FATHER STEPHEN’S LIFE OF PERFECT OBEDIENCE TO THE SEXUAL LAWS WAS FULFILLED VICARIOUSLY BY NOT APPROVING OF IT OR PARTAKING’S OF IT, BUT SIMPLY DYING FOR IT IS IN MATTHEW 5:17; ROMANS 1:21-32; GALATIANS 4:4-5; 1ST PETER 2:22 & ACTS 7:60. THE FATHER STEPHEN’S DEATH FULFILLS THE DEMANDS OF THE SEXUAL LAWS IS IN 2ND CORINTHIANS 5:21; HEBREWS 7:27; 9:11, 26-28; 10:11-14; 1ST PETER 2:24; 3:18 & ACTS 7:57-60. ON ACCOUNT OF THE FATHER STEPHEN’S DEATH, CHRISTIANS CAN BE RIGHTEOUSLY INDEPENDENT OF THE SEXUAL LAWS IS IN ROMANS 3:21-26; 10:4; JOHN 1:17; PHILIPPIANS 3:9 & ACTS 7:59-60. CHRISTIANS ARE SET FREE FROM THE SEXUAL LAW’S ETERNAL DAMNATION FOR CHILD KIND, ETERNAL CONDEMNATION FOR WOMANKIND, ETERNAL JUDGMENT FOR MANKIND, ETERNAL CHARGE FOR THE LORDSHIP OF ANGEL KIND (SPIRITS, GHOSTS, PHANTOMS AND SHADOWS) & BOY KIND WITH GIRL KIND, AND THE ETERNAL DAMNATION FOR THE LORDSHIP OF THE 60 SAINTLY CHRISTIAN LORDS & 60 SAINTLY CHRISTIAN LADIES IN GALATIANS 3:13, 21-25; 4:5, 21-31; 5:1; ROMANS 6:1-14; 7:1-6; 8:1-2; EPHESIANS 2:14-15; COLOSSIANS 2:13-14 & ACTS 6:8-7:60. THE DIVINE FREEDOM OF CHRISTIANS REST ON THE AUTHORITY OF THE BROTHER JOHN THE HOLY GHOST IS IN ROMANS 7:1-6; 2ND CORINTHIANS 3:17-18; ROMANS 8:1-17; GALATIANS 5:16-18, 22-26 & ACTS 6:5; 7:55-56. THE CHRISTIANS FREEDOM TO OBEY THE SEXUAL LAWS IS VOLUNTARY, BUT NOT DEMANDING IS IN PSALMS 37:31; 119:32, 45, 97; JEREMIAH 31:33; 2ND CORINTHIANS 3:3; JAMES 1:25; 2:12 & ACTS 6:5, 11, 13, 15. SEXUAL LAWS CONCERNS A SEXUAL CORRUPTION IN THIS WORLD THROUGH LUST IS IN 2ND PETER 1:4.**

**THE ABUSE OF CHRISTIAN FREEDOM: CHRISTIANS ARE FREED FROM THE MOST HIGHEST DAMNATION IS IN ROMANS 8:1-2, 33-39; 13:1-2; ISAIAH 50:8-9; COLOSSIANS 1:22 & REVELATION 1:5. SEXUAL SIN DOES NOT HAVE A NEED TO ENSLAVE CHRISTIANS IS IN EPHESIANS 5:3; JOHN 8:34-36; ROMANS 6:16-18; 7:14-25; 1ST CORINTHIANS 7:22-23; 2ND PETER 2:19 & ACTS 26:16-18. CHRISTIANS MUST RESIST SEXUAL SIN IS IN ROMANS 1:21-32; 6:12,14; HEBREWS 12:1-2; 1ST JOHN 5:16-18 & ACTS 18:14. THE FALSE IDEAS THAT GRACE GIVES CHRISTIANS THE FREEDOM TO SEXUAL SIN IS IN ROMANS 3:5-8; 6:1-2:15; 1ST CORINTHIANS 10:23; GALATIANS 2:17-21 & ACTS 6:11, 13. THE DANGERS OF ABUSING CHRISTIAN FREEDOM: BECOMING A STUMBLING-BLOCK TO OTHERS IS IN 1ST CORINTHIANS 8:9-12 & ROMANS 15:1-3. INDULGING ONESELF IN SEXUAL ACTIVITY IS IN GALATIANS 5:13 & ROMANS 14:1-18. USING FREEDOM TO COVER UP SEXUAL EVIL IS IN 1ST PETER 2:16. THE EXAMPLES OF ABUSE OF CHRISTIAN FREEDOM: FALLING BACK INTO DELIBERATE SEXUAL SIN IS IN ROMANS 6:1-2; HEBREWS 12:1 & 1ST JOHN 3:6; 5:16-18. DISOBEDIENCE TOWARDS THE FATHER STEPHEN CONCERNING NO SEXUALITY IS IN 1ST JOHN 3:4; 2ND CORINTHIANS 10:6 & EPHESIANS 5:6. SELFISHNESS WITHIN SEXUALITY IS IN 1ST JOHN 3:17 & LUKE 6:32-34. EATING FOOD SACRIFICED TO SEXUAL IDOLS IS IN 1ST CORINTHIANS 8:1-13 & REVELATION 2:14, 20.**

**THE FREEDOM OF THE WILL: THE FREEDOM OF THE WILL TO CHOOSE BETWEEN GOOD & EVIL IS IN DEUTERONOMY 11:26-28; 30:15-16, 19; JOSHUA 24:15; 1ST CHRONICLES 28:9; JEREMIAH 26:3 & EZEKIEL 18:21-23. BUT THERE IS A FORBIDDEN GOOD AND FORBIDDEN EVIL IN GENESIS 2:9. WE MUST LEAN ON THE FATHER STEPHEN’S GOODNESS AND BE NEUTRAL IN THOUGHTS, DEEDS AND ACTIONS TO THE TREE OF KNOWLEDGE IN ACTS 5:38-39. THE FREEDOM OF THE WILL TO SEEK AND FIND THE FATHER STEPHEN IS IN ISAIAH 28:16; 55:6; AMOS 5:4; ROMANS 10:11; REVELATION 22:17 & ACTS 5:4. THE EFFECT OF SEXUAL SIN UPON FREEDOM OF THE WILL: SEXUAL SIN PREVENTS HUMAN BEINGS FROM BREAKING FREE FROM ITS SEXUAL BONDAGE IS IN ROMANS 7:14-20 & ROMANS 6:16, 22. SEXUAL SIN HARDENS THE HUMAN HEART IS IN HEBREWS 3:13; DANIEL 5:20; ROMANS 1:21-25 & EPHESIANS 4:17-19. THE FATHER STEPHEN HARDENS HUMAN HEARTS BASED ON YOUR LEVEL OF SEXUAL ACTIONS IS IN EXODUS 4:21; 9:12; 10:20; 14:4, 8; DEUTERONOMY 2:30; JOSHUA 11:19-20; ROMANS 1:22-24; 9:17-18 & ACTS 7:42-43, 51-53 [BOOK OF THE PROPHETS & BOOK OF THE DEAD]. HUMAN BEINGS HARDENS THEIR OWN HEARTS IS IN 1ST SAMUEL 6:6; EXODUS 8:15, 32; PSALMS 95:8; PROVERBS 28:14; HEBREWS 3:8, 15; 4:7 & ACTS 7:11, 13; 7:57-60. ALL ETERNAL SEXUALITY IS CUT OFF AND TOTALLY ABOLISHED BY ALL ETERNAL DEATHS AT 70 YEARS OF AGE BECAUSE IT A DIVINE MANDATE BY THE FATHER STEPHEN’S ORDINANCE AND IS IMMUTABLE AND THE FATHER STEPHEN WILL NOT RELENT SINCE PSALMS 90:10 & ROMANS 13:1-10. THE REASON MOSES AT 119 YEARS OF AGE & SOLOMON AFTER 80 YEARS OF AGE FELL IS BECAUSE THESE HOLY SCRIPTURES WAS NOT INSTITUTED UNTIL THE NEARING OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.**

**ENQUIRING OF THE FATHER STEPHEN FOR DIVINE KNOWLEDGE IS IN GENESIS 25:22-23; JUDGES 13:17; 18:5-6 & 1ST SAMUEL 10:22. ENQUIRING OF THE FATHER STEPHEN FOR DIVINE GUIDANCE IS IN 2ND SAMUEL 2:1; JUDGES 20:18, 23, 27-28; 1ST SAMUEL 23:2, 4; 30:8; 2ND SAMUEL 5:19, 23 & 1ST CHRONICLES 14:10, 14. ENQUIRING OF THE FATHER STEPHEN THROUGH INTERMEDIARIES: PRIEST (SERGEANTS), CHIEF PRIESTS (LIEUTENANTS) & HIGH PRIESTS (CAPTAINS) IS IN JUDGES 18:5-6; NUMBERS 27:18-21 & 1ST SAMUEL 22:10, 13-15. PROPHETS IS IN 1ST KINGS 22:6-9; 2ND CHRONICLES 18:5-8; 34:19-28; 1ST SAMUEL 9:6-10; 2ND KINGS 3:11; 22:11-20; JEREMIAH 21:1-7 & EZEKIEL 14:7. ENQUIRING OF THE FATHER STEPHEN BY CASTING LOTS IS IN NUMBERS 27:21; 1ST SAMUEL 10:20-22; 14:36-42 & ACTS 1:24-26. ENQUIRING OF THE FATHER STEPHEN IN PRAYER IS IN 2ND CHRONICLES 20:1-17. ENQUIRING OF THE FATHER STEPHEN AT THE TABERNACLE IS IN EXODUS 33:7; JUDGES 20:26-28; 1ST CHRONICLES 13:3 & 2ND CHRONICLES 1:5. DEVOTION TO THE FATHER STEPHEN AS A NECESSARY PREREQUISITE FOR ENQUIRING OF HIM IS IN EZEKIEL 14:1-11; 20:1-3, 30-31. THE FAILURE TO ENQUIRE OF THE FATHER STEPHEN DISPLEASES HIM AND HERALDS DISASTER IS IN 1ST CHRONICLES 10:13-14; 15:13; JEREMIAH 10:21 & ZEPHANIAH 1:4-6. THE BROTHER JOHN THE HOLY GHOST AND ENQUIRING OF THE FATHER STEPHEN IS IN JOHN 16:13-15, 23-24.**

**IMPORTUNITY TOWARD THE FATHER STEPHEN: THE ONLY WAY TO MAKE REQUESTS TO THE FATHER STEPHEN IS SELF-EXPLANATORY & SIMPLE, ETERNAL CREATURES CAN ONLY ASK THE FATHER STEPHEN AND NOT TO INSTRUCT, CHARGE, COMMAND, GIVE A DIRECTIVE, GIVE AN ORDINANCE, TELL HIM WHAT TO DO OR GIVE AN AUTOMATON TO MOST HIGHEST WITHOUT IMPARTIAL JUDGMENT & SEVERE CONSEQUENCES IS IN 1ST PETER 1:17-21; ROMANS 13:1-10; 1ST PETER 2:13-17; 2ND ESDRAS 4:34; MATTHEW 18:19; 21:22, 24; MARK 11:29; JOHN 11:22; 14:13-14; 15:7, 16 & 16:23-24, 26; JAMES 1:5-6; 4:1-10; 1ST JOHN 3:22; 5:14-16; LUKE 11:9 & ACTS 1:6; 7:59-60. THE RIGHT WAYS TO ASK THE FATHER STEPHEN: PERSEVERANCE IN PRAYER: PERSISTENCE IN PRAYER IS IN PSALMS 22:1-2; 55:17; 86:3; 88:1, 9; 1ST THESSALONIANS 5:17; 1ST TIMOTHY 5:5; MATTHEW 7:7-8 & LUKE 11:9-10; 18:1, 2-8. FAITHFULNESS IN PRAYER IS IN EPHESIANS 6:18; ROMANS 1:9-10; COLOSSIANS 4:12; 1ST THESSALONIANS 1:2-3 & 2ND TIMOTHY 1:3. EARNESTNESS IN PRAYER IS IN PSALMS 55:1-2; 61:1-2; 119:58; 130:1-2; JONAH 3:8; HEBREWS 5:7 & LUKE 22:44. BOLDNESS IN PRAYER IS IN GENESIS 18:27; EXODUS 33:12-16; EPHESIANS 3:12; HEBREWS 4:16 & LUKE 11:8. FURTHER EXAMPLES OF IMPORTUNITY IN PRAYER: REPEATED REQUESTS IN PRAYER IS IN GENESIS 18:22-32; JUDGES 6:36-40; MATTHEW 15:22-28; 20:30-31; 26:44; MARK 5:10; 7:25-30; 10:47-48; 2ND CORINTHIANS 12:8 & LUKE 8:31; 18:38-39. FURTHER EXAMPLES OF PERSEVERANCE IN PRAYER IS IN GENESIS 32:26; DEUTERONOMY 9:18; 2ND SAMUEL 12:16; 1ST KINGS 18:28-29; NEHEMIAH 1:4-6; DANIEL 10:2-3 & LUKE 2:37. FURTHER EXAMPLES OF EARNESTNESS IN PRAYER IS IN 1ST SAMUEL 1:12-16; 1ST KINGS 8:22; 2ND CHRONICLES 6:12; ISAIAH 38:2-3; DANIEL 9:3; MARK 5:22-23; JOHN 4:47; JAMES 5:17-18; LUKE 8:41-42 & ACTS 12:5.**

**IMPORTUNITY TOWARDS THE FATHER STEPHEN’S CREATURES: MAKING REQUESTS OF OTHERS IS IN GENESIS 19:3; 39:10; NUMBERS 22:37; JUDGES 14:16-17; 16:6-16; 2ND KINGS 2:16-17; 2ND KINGS 2:16-17; ESTHER 3:3-4; 8:3; PROVERBS 19:7; JEREMIAH 38:26; 2ND CORINTHIANS 8:4; PHILIPPIANS 4:2; LUKE 23:23 & ACTS 12:16; 25:3. IMPORTUNITY IN PREACHING THE GOSPEL IS IN 2ND CORINTHIANS 5:20. PERSISTENCE IS IN ACTS 5:42. URGENT APPEAL IS IN ACTS 2:40. BOLDNESS IS IN PHILIPPIANS 1:14 & ACTS 4:29, 31; 9:27; 14:3; 19:8; 28:31. PERSUASION IS IN 2ND CORINTHIANS 5:11 & ACTS 18:4; 19:8; 26:28. IMPORTUNITY IN GIVING INSTRUCTION IS IN 2ND CORINTHIANS 6:1; 10:1; 1ST THESSALONIANS 4:1, 10; ROMANS 15:15; GALATIANS 4:12; EPHESIANS 4:1, 17 & ACTS 13:43. THE FATHER STEPHEN’S PERSISTENT APPEAL: THE FATHER STEPHEN’S REPEATED CALL TO INDIVIDUALS IS IN 1ST SAMUEL 3:8 & JOHN 21:17. THE FATHER STEPHEN’S APPEAL TO HIS WAYWARD CREATURES IS IN 2ND CHRONICLES 36:15; JEREMIAH 7:13, 25; 11:7; 25:3-4; 26:5; 29:19; 32:33; 35:14-15; 44:4 & MATTHEW 21:35-37.**

**COVENANT LAW (20:1–26) ---EXODUS**

**EXODUS HAS A CLASSICALLY BIFID STRUCTURE. ITS FIRST HALF (CHAPS. 1–19) TELLS THE NARRATIVE OF ISRAEL’S MIRACULOUS RESCUE FROM SLAVERY IN EGYPT AND SUCCESSFUL FLIGHT TO MOUNT SINAI, ALL IN FULFILLMENT OF GOD’S PROMISE. ITS SECOND HALF INTRODUCES THE SINAI COVENANT (IN 20:1–31:18), A FORMAL, SOLEMN EXPRESSION OF GOD’S RELATIONSHIP TO HIS PEOPLE AND THEIRS TO HIM, AND THEN CONTINUES ON TO DESCRIBE ISRAEL’S REBELLION AGAINST THAT COVENANT, SUBSEQUENT RENEWAL TO IT, AND THE FULFILLMENT OF ITS STIPULATIONS CONCERNING THE TABERNACLE (32:1–40:38). THUS, THE FIRST HALF OF EXODUS IS ALL ABOUT RESCUE FROM FORCED SERVICE TO A PAGAN NATION, AND THE SECOND HALF IS ALL ABOUT PROPER SERVICE FOR THE ONE TRUE GOD BY KEEPING HIS COVENANT.**

**THE TEN WORDS AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE (20:1–17)**

**NOTHING IN EXODUS 20 IS DESCRIBED AS “COMMANDMENT” OR “LAW” OR THE LIKE. TO BE SURE, THE WORDS PRESENTED HERE BY GOD DO INDEED COMMAND HIS PEOPLE MOST SOLEMNLY TO ACT IN WAYS THAT ARE BASIC TO HIS COVENANT, BUT THEIR SIGNIFICANCE GOES BEYOND THAT OF ROUTINE “LAWS.” WHAT THE CHAPTER CONTAINS—IN PARTICULAR, THE TEN “WORDS” (DĔBĀRÎM)—IS MORE LIKE THE CONTENT OF A NATIONAL CONSTITUTION THAN MERELY THE CONTENT OF ONE SECTION OF CODIFIED LAW OR ANOTHER. IF THE AMERICAN LEGAL CORPUS IS USED AS AN ANALOGY, IT COULD BE SAID THAT THE TEN “WORDS” OF EXOD 20 ARE SOMEWHAT LIKE THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES (LEGALLY BINDING IN A MOST BASIC, FOUNDATIONAL WAY BUT MORE THAN A MERE SET OF INDIVIDUAL LAWS) AND THE LAWS THAT FOLLOW (CF. 21:1, “THESE ARE THE LAWS YOU ARE TO SET BEFORE THEM”) SOMEWHAT ANALOGOUS TO THE VARIOUS SECTIONS OF FEDERAL LAW DEALING WITH ALL SORTS OF PARTICULAR MATTERS THAT HAVE BEEN ENACTED LEGISLATIVELY OVER TIME. THE ONE GROUP IS ABSOLUTELY “CONSTITUTIONAL” OR “FOUNDATIONAL”; THE OTHER IS SPECIFICALLY REGULATORY, FOLLOWING FROM THE PRINCIPLES ARTICULATED IN THE MORE BASIC “CONSTITUTION.” IT IS BOTH TRADITIONAL AND CONVENIENT TO CALL THEM “THE TEN COMMANDMENTS,” AS LONG AS THEIR SPECIAL NATURE IS RECOGNIZED. INDEED, IN THE COMMENT MOSES SPOKE FOLLOWING THE REPEAT OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS IN DEUT 5:6–21, HE EXPLICITLY AGAIN CALLED THEM “WORDS” (LIT., “THESE ARE THE WORDS [DĔBĀRÎM]; NIV, INEXPLICABLY, “COMMANDMENTS”] THE LORD PROCLAIMED IN A LOUD VOICE TO YOUR WHOLE ASSEMBLY THERE ON THE MOUNTAIN,” DEUT 5:22). THE BIBLICAL COMMANDMENTS OCCUR IN THREE LEVELS OF SPECIFICITY. AT THE MOST COMPREHENSIVE LEVEL ARE THE “2 GREAT COMMANDMENTS” OF DEUT 6:5 (“LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH”) AND LEV 19:18B (“LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF”). THE FIRST OF THESE COMMANDS REQUIRES IN BROAD TERMS A LOYAL, COVENANTAL OBEDIENCE TO GOD, WHO IS PUT FIRST ABOVE ALL OTHER RELATIONSHIPS. THE SECOND REQUIRES LOVING (LOYAL) TREATMENT OF OTHER HUMAN BEINGS. JESUS GAVE HIS APPROVAL TO WHAT HAD BECOME IN JUDAISM AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE IMPORTANCE OF THE TWO GREAT COMMANDMENTS AS SUMMATIONS OF ALL THE OTHERS. HE ALSO SPECIFICALLY INDICATED THAT THE REST OF THE COMMANDMENTS “HANG ON” THESE TWO (MATT 22:40). HOW SO? THE FIRST FOUR OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS HANG ON THE COMMAND TO LOVE GOD SINCE THEY DESCRIBE WAYS TO SHOW COVENANT LOYALTY DIRECTLY TO HIM. THE FINAL SIX HANG ON THE COMMAND TO LOVE NEIGHBOR AS SELF, WHICH JESUS ALSO EXPLAINED AS DOING TO OTHERS AS YOU WOULD HAVE THEM DO TO YOU (MATT 7:12). THUS, THE FIRST FOUR “VERTICAL” COMMANDMENTS ARE BALANCED BY THE FINAL SIX “HORIZONTAL COMMANDMENTS.” THEN, IN ORDER OF HIERARCHY, FOLLOW ALL THE OTHERS. THE ORDER IS, THEN, THE TWO, THE TEN, AND THE SIX HUNDRED AND ONE. SOME OF THE LARGE GROUP OF SIX HUNDRED AND ONE REMAINING COMMANDMENTS ADDRESS “VERTICAL” CONCERNS; OTHERS SPEAK OF THE “HORIZONTAL.”**

**EXCURSUS: THE PARADIGMATIC NATURE OF BIBLICAL LAW**

**MODERN SOCIETIES GENERALLY HAVE OPTED FOR EXHAUSTIVE LAW CODES. THAT IS, EVERY ACTION MODERN SOCIETY WISHES TO REGULATE OR PROHIBIT MUST BE SPECIFICALLY MENTIONED IN A SEPARATE LAW. UNDER THE EXPECTATIONS OF THIS EXHAUSTIVE LAW SYSTEM, STATE AND/OR FEDERAL LAW CODES RUN TO THOUSANDS OF PAGES AND ADDRESS THOUSANDS OF INDIVIDUAL ACTIONS BY WAY OF REQUIREMENT OR RESTRICTION OR CONTROL OR OUTRIGHT BANNING OF THOSE ACTIONS. BY THIS APPROACH, ALL ACTIONS ARE PERMITTED THAT ARE NOT EXPRESSLY FORBIDDEN OR REGULATED. THUS IT IS NOT UNCOMMON THAT CRIMINALS IN MODERN WESTERN SOCIETIES EVADE PROSECUTION BECAUSE OF A “TECHNICALITY” OR A “LOOPHOLE” IN THE LAW—THEIR UNDESIRABLE ACTIONS ARE NOT EXACTLY PROHIBITED OR REGULATED BY A WRITTEN LAW, SO THEY CANNOT BE CONVICTED EVEN THOUGH AN OBJECTIVE OBSERVER MAY BE CONVINCED THAT WHAT THEY DID SURELY DESERVED PUNISHMENT. ANCIENT LAWS DID NOT WORK THIS WAY. THEY WERE PARADIGMATIC, GIVING MODELS OF BEHAVIORS AND MODELS OF PROHIBITIONS/PUNISHMENTS RELATIVE TO THOSE BEHAVIORS, BUT THEY MADE NO ATTEMPT TO BE EXHAUSTIVE. ANCIENT LAWS GAVE GUIDING PRINCIPLES, OR SAMPLES, RATHER THAN COMPLETE DESCRIPTIONS OF ALL THINGS REGULATED. ANCIENT PEOPLE WERE EXPECTED TO BE ABLE TO EXTRAPOLATE FROM WHAT THE SAMPLING OF LAWS DID SAY TO THE GENERAL BEHAVIOR THE LAWS IN THEIR TOTALITY POINTED TOWARD. ANCIENT JUDGES WERE EXPECTED TO EXTRAPOLATE FROM THE WORDING PROVIDED IN THE LAWS THAT DID EXIST TO ALL OTHER CIRCUMSTANCES AND NOT TO BE FOILED IN THEIR JURISPRUDENCE BY ANY SUCH CONCEPTS AS “TECHNICALITIES” OR “LOOPHOLES.” WHEN COMMON SENSE TOLD JUDGES THAT A CRIME HAD BEEN COMMITTED, THEY REASONED THEIR WAY FROM WHATEVER THE MOST NEARLY APPLICABLE LAW SPECIFIED TO A DECISION AS TO HOW TO ADMINISTER PROPER JUSTICE IN THE CASE BEFORE THEM. CITIZENS OF ANCIENT ISRAEL, AND ESPECIALLY ITS JUDGES, HAD TO LEARN TO EXTRAPOLATE FROM WHATEVER LAWS THEY HAD RECEIVED FROM STEPHEN YAHWEH TO WHATEVER JUSTICE-CHALLENGING SITUATION THEY WERE DEALING WITH. THE NUMBER OF LAWS DEALING WITH ANY GIVEN APPLICATION OF JUSTICE MIGHT BE FEW, BUT THAT WOULD NOT PREVENT JUSTICE FROM BEING APPLIED. IT WOULD SIMPLY HAVE BEEN THE CASE THAT ALL PARTIES WERE EXPECTED TO APPEAL FOR GUIDANCE TO THOSE LAWS THAT DID EXIST, WHETHER OR NOT EXPRESSED SPECIFICALLY IN TERMS THAT DEALT WITH THE CASE UNDER CONSIDERATION. IN OTHER WORDS, THE ISRAELITES HAD TO LEARN TO SEE THE UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES IN ANY LAW AND NOT LET THE SPECIFICS OF THE INDIVIDUAL CASUISTIC CITATION MISLEAD THEM INTO APPLYING THE LAW TOO NARROWLY. GOD’S REVEALED COVENANT LAW TO ISRAEL WAS PARADIGMATIC. NO ISRAELITE COULD SAY: “THE LAW SAYS I MUST MAKE RESTITUTION FOR STOLEN OXEN OR SHEEP [EXOD 22:1], BUT I STOLE YOUR GOAT. I DON’T HAVE TO PAY YOU BACK,” OR “THE LAW SAYS THAT ANYONE WHO ATTACKS HIS FATHER OR MOTHER MUST BE PUT TO DEATH [EXOD 21:15], BUT I ATTACKED MY GRANDMOTHER, SO I SHOULDN’T BE PUNISHED,” OR “THE LAW SAYS THAT CERTAIN PENALTIES APPLY FOR HITTING SOMEONE WITH A FIST OR A STONE [EXOD 21:18], BUT I KICKED MY NEIGHBOR WITH MY FOOT AND HIT HIM WITH A PIECE OF WOOD, SO I SHOULDN’T BE PUNISHED.” SUCH ARGUMENTS WOULD HAVE INSULTED THE VERY INTELLIGENCE OF ALL CONCERNED AND MADE NO IMPACT ON THOSE RENDERING JUDGMENTS. IT IS IN CONNECTION WITH THE PARADIGMATIC NATURE OF ISRAEL’S COVENANT LAW THAT JESUS, FOLLOWING THE ESTABLISHED TRADITION IN JUDAISM, COULD MAKE SO SWEEPING AN ASSERTION AS THAT TWO LAWS SUM UP ALL THE REST. PROPERLY UNDERSTOOD, 2 LAWS DO INDEED SUM UP EVERYTHING IN THE ENTIRE LEGAL CORPUS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT. SO DO TEN LAWS (THE TEN WORDS/COMMANDMENTS); SO, DO ALL SIX HUNDRED AND THIRTEEN. THE NUMBERS GO NO HIGHER, NOR WOULD THEY NEED TO. IF A REASONABLE NUMBER OF COMPREHENSIVE AND COMPREHENSIBLE LAWS (AS FEW AS TWO, AS MANY AS SIX HUNDRED AND THIRTEEN) ARE PROVIDED TO A PEOPLE AS PARADIGMS FOR PROPER LIVING, THERE IS NO EXCUSE FOR THAT PEOPLE TO CLAIM IGNORANCE OF HOW TO BEHAVE OR TO CLAIM INNOCENCE WHEN THEIR SINS ARE FOUND OUT. MOST LAWS ARE EXPRESSED AS COMMANDS IN THE MASCULINE SINGULAR—THE YOU OF THE LAWS IS “YOU, A MALE PERSON”—FROM A TECHNICAL, GRAMMATICAL POINT OF VIEW. BUT HERE AGAIN THE READER/LISTENER WOULD NOT HAVE THE SLIGHTEST GROUND TO SAY, “IT PROHIBITS INDIVIDUAL MEN FROM DOING SUCH AND SUCH, BUT I’M A WOMAN/WE’RE A GROUP, SO THE WORDING OF THE LAW EXEMPTS ME/US.” IMPLICIT IN THE WORDING IS THE NEED FOR PARADIGMATIC EXTRAPOLATION TO ALL PERSONS, SINGULAR OR PLURAL, MALE OR FEMALE. WITHIN THE NEW COVENANT, THE PARADIGM OF THE 2 GREAT LAWS IS SUMMARIZED AS THE “LAW OF CHRIST” (GAL 6:2). BECAUSE OF THE HELP OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, THE NEED TO MEMORIZE AND REMEMBER SIX HUNDRED AND THIRTEEN COMMANDMENTS IS OBVIATED. THE LAW IS NO LONGER A MATTER OF (PARADIGMATIC) GUIDELINES WRITTEN EXTERNALLY ON TABLETS OF STONE. IT IS NOW A MATTER OF A CLEAR SENSE OF LOVING GOD AND NEIGHBOR WRITTEN ON THE MIND BY GOD’S SPIRIT (JER 31:31–34; CF. ROM 2:15; JOHN 4:23-24) IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE 2 COMMANDMENTS THAT ALWAYS SUMMED UP GOD’S WILL AND/OR THE TEN THAT IN THE OLD COVENANT WERE GRACIOUSLY GIVEN TO CLARIFY THE TWO. ONE MAY ASK, “IF THE COMMANDS TO LOVE GOD WITH ONE’S WHOLE HEART AND TO LOVE NEIGHBOR AS SELF ARE THE TWO GREATEST, WHY WEREN’T THESE THE FIRST COMMANDMENTS SPOKEN AT SINAI? WHY DID ONE OF THEM (“LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF,” LEV 19:18) COME LATER TO THE ATTENTION OF THE ISRAELITES RATHER SUBTLY, WITHOUT FANFARE, IN THE MIDST OF THE LEVITICAL “HOLINESS CODE” (LEV 19–26) AND THE OTHER (“LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART,” DEUT 6:5) ALMOST FORTY YEARS LATER, IN THE NEW GENERATION’S LAW CODE, DEUTERONOMY? THE ANSWER IS DISARMINGLY SIMPLE: TOO MANY PEOPLE COULD NOT APPRECIATE THE 2 GREAT COMMANDMENTS EXCEPT IN REFERENCE TO THE OTHERS, INCLUDING THE TEN PRINCIPAL EXPRESSIONS THEREOF, THE TEN WORDS/COMMANDMENTS OF EXOD 20. THAT IS, WITHOUT AN AWARENESS OF ALL SIX HUNDRED AND THIRTEEN COMMANDMENTS AND SEEING WITHIN THEM THE HIGH STANDARDS OF GOD’S HOLINESS AND HIS PARTICULAR REQUIRED AND/OR BANNED BEHAVIORS ENUMERATED, A PERSON SEXUALLY CORRUPTED BY A FALLEN WORLD DOES NOT EASILY GET THE POINT OF WHAT THE 2 GREAT COMMANDMENTS ARE INTENDED TO SUMMARIZE. ONCE ONE HAS LEARNED THE BREADTH AND DEPTH OF GOD’S EXPECTATIONS FOR HIS HOLY PEOPLE, HOWEVER, THE 2 GREATEST COMMANDMENTS SERVE BRILLIANTLY AS COMPREHENSIVE REMINDERS OF ALL THAT IS EXPECTED OF GOD’S COVENANT PEOPLE. THIS IS THE POINT OF THE LAW OF CHRIST IN THE NEW COVENANT. IT IS NOT AN AMORPHOUS, CONTENTLESS CONCEPT BUT A WAY OF SUMMARIZING FULL OBEDIENCE TO EVERYTHING CHRIST TAUGHT, DEMONSTRATED AND REINFORCED FROM ELSEWHERE IN SCRIPTURE. A FINAL IMPLICATION OF PARADIGMATIC LAW: NOT ALL LAWS WILL BE EQUALLY COMPREHENSIVE IN SCOPE. THAT IS, SOME WILL BE VERY BROAD IN THEIR APPLICABILITY (LOVE STEPHEN YAHWEH YOUR GOD) AND SOME MUCH MORE-NARROW (DO NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS). ONE MIGHT ASK, “WHY NOT SAY ‘DON’T BE DISHONEST IN ANY WAY,’ WHICH WOULD BE BROADER AND MORE COMPREHENSIVE THAN ‘DON’T BEAR FALSE WITNESS’?” BUT THAT WOULD BE MISSING THE WAY PARADIGMATIC LAW WORKS: THROUGH A SOMEWHAT RANDOMLY PRESENTED ADMIXTURE OF RATHER SPECIFIC EXAMPLES OF MORE GENERAL BEHAVIORS AND VERY GENERAL REGULATIONS OF BROAD CATEGORIES OF BEHAVIOR, THE READER/LISTENER COMES TO UNDERSTAND THAT ALL SORTS OF SITUATIONS NOT EXACTLY SPECIFIED (EITHER BECAUSE A LAW IS SO BROAD OR SO NARROW) ARE ALSO IMPLICITLY COVERED. IN OTHER WORDS, WHEN ALL THE LAWS ARE CONSIDERED TOGETHER, ONE’S IMPRESSION IS THAT BOTH THE VERY NARROW, PRECISE ISSUES AND THE VERY BROAD, GENERAL ISSUES FALL UNDER THE PURVIEW OF GOD’S COVENANT. THE WIDE VARIABILITY OF COMPREHENSIVENESS IS INTENDED TO HELP THE PERSON DESIRING TO KEEP THE COVENANT TO SAY, “I NOW SEE THAT IN THE TINIEST DETAIL AS WELL AS IN THE WIDEST, MOST GENERAL WAY, I AM EXPECTED TO TRY TO KEEP THIS LAW—IN ALL ITS IMPLICATIONS, NOT JUST IN TERMS OF ITS EXACT WORDING.” SOME COMMANDMENTS ARE THUS LESS BROAD IN SCOPE IN THE WAY THEY ARE EXPRESSED THAN IS NECESSARY TO COVER ALL THE INTENDED ACTIONS; OTHERS ARE SO BROAD IN SCOPE IN THE WAY THEY ARE EXPRESSED THAT ONE COULD NEVER THINK UP ALL THE WAYS THEY MIGHT BE APPLIED. THIS IS JUST AS IT SHOULD BE. THE NARROW AND THE BROAD TAKEN TOGETHER SUGGEST THE OVERALL COMPREHENSIVENESS OF GOD’S COVENANT WILL FOR HIS PEOPLE.**

**PREAMBLE AND PROLOGUE (20:1–2)**

**1 AND GOD SPOKE ALL THESE WORDS: 2 “I AM THE LORD YOUR GOD, WHO BROUGHT YOU OUT OF EGYPT, OUT OF THE LAND OF SLAVERY.**

**20:1 THIS VERSE SPECIALLY EMPHASIZES THAT GOD SPOKE THE TEN WORDS/TEN COMMANDMENTS HIMSELF DIRECTLY TO ISRAEL RATHER THAN THROUGH THE INTERMEDIATION OF MOSES. SO FRIGHTENING WAS THIS FOR THE PEOPLE TO EXPERIENCE THAT AS SOON AS GOD HAD FINISHED, THEY DEMANDED NO FURTHER DIRECT AUDITION OF GOD’S COMMANDS (20:19). PART OF THEIR REASON MAY HAVE BEEN THEIR SENSE OF SIN AND GUILT ONCE THEY HEARD THE SORT OF STANDARDS TO WHICH THEY WOULD BE HELD BY THE COVENANT GOD WAS MAKING WITH THEM, BUT THE STATED AND THEREFORE MAIN REASON WAS SIMPLY THAT HEARING GOD’S VOICE OVERWHELMED THEM (20:18) SO THAT THEY FEARED THEY WOULD DIE IF THEY HAD TO KEEP ENDURING IT (“DO NOT HAVE GOD SPEAK TO US OR WE WILL DIE,” 20:19). THE UNIFORM WITNESS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT ACCOUNTS OF THE REVELATION OF THE TEN WORDS AT MOUNT SINAI (THIS AND 20:18–19; DEUT 4:10–14, 32–40; 5:4, 22–27; 9:10; NEH 9:13) INCLUDES THE SAME SORT OF EMPHASIS, THAT IS, THAT THE PEOPLE HEARD THE VOICE OF GOD FOR THEMSELVES AND THUS COULD NOT DOUBT HIS PRESENCE AMONG THEM, A PRESENCE MORE DIRECTLY MANIFEST AT SINAI THAN IN ANY OTHER MODE PREVIOUSLY SINCE THEY HAD FIRST LEARNED OF HIS INTEREST IN THEM (2:25; 4:31). ALL THE PEOPLE WERE HEARING THE VOICE OF GOD JUST AS ADAM, EVE, NOAH, ABRAHAM, AND THE PATRIARCHS HAD HEARD IT AND AS MOSES HAD HEARD IT EARLIER AT MOUNT SINAI WHEN GOD FIRST CALLED HIM. AND THIS TIME THE VOICE OF GOD WAS ACCOMPANIED BY SUCH AUDIO AND VISUAL DISPLAYS (19:16–19; 20:18–21) AS TO LEAVE NO DOUBT IN THEIR MINDS AS TO BOTH HIS PRESENCE AND HIS UNIQUENESS. 20:2 THE PREAMBLE AND PROLOGUE TO THE SINAI COVENANT APPEAR HERE. THE PREAMBLE, THE PORTION OF A COVENANT THAT IDENTIFIES THE PARTIES TO THE AGREEMENT, OCCURS IN THE FIRST CLAUSE AND IDENTIFIES ISRAEL AS THE RECIPIENT, THAT IS, “YOU,” BY THE SECOND-PERSON SINGULAR PRONOUNS (FURTHER IDENTIFICATION BEING UNNECESSARY; ISRAEL KNEW VERY WELL WHO THEY WERE). “THE LORD YOUR GOD” IS IDENTIFIED AS THE GIVER OF THE COVENANT. THIS, THEN, IS A TWO-PARTY COVENANT, LINKING STEPHEN YAHWEH AND HIS PEOPLE IN FORMAL LEGAL RELATIONSHIP. ISRAEL IS REPRESENTED BY SINGULAR PRONOUNS, NOT ONLY BECAUSE “SINGULARITY” IS TYPICAL IN THE DIRECT ADDRESS OF ANCIENT LEGAL MATERIAL BUT BECAUSE THE ENTIRE NATION IS VIEWED AS AN ENTITY, A UNITED PEOPLE RESPONDING AS ONE TO GOD’S COMMANDS. THE PROLOGUE, THE PART OF A COVENANT THAT EXPLAINS HOW THE PARTIES CAME TO BE RELATED, IS INDICATED IN THE SECOND CLAUSE OF THE VERSE (“WHO BROUGHT YOU OUT OF EGYPT, OUT OF THE LAND OF SLAVERY”). BY REASON OF HAVING RESCUED ISRAEL FROM GREAT BONDAGE & SLAVERY IN EGYPT, STEPHEN YAHWEH HAD A CLAIM ON HIS CHOSEN PEOPLE. SUCH A CLAIM IS SOMETIMES CALLED A “HESED RELATIONSHIP,” FROM THE HEBREW/SEMITIC CONCEPT OF ḤESED, OR “LOYALTY REQUIRED IN RESPONSE TO LOYALTY SHOWN.” ANCIENT ISRAELITES/SEMITES BELIEVED, WITH MUCH REASON, THAT IF PERSON A HAD VOLUNTARILY RESCUED OR AIDED PERSON B, THEN PERSON B HAD A TRUE AND LASTING MORAL OBLIGATION TO PERSON A. ONE COULD NOT SIMPLY IGNORE SIGNIFICANT GOOD DONE ON ONE’S BEHALF BY ANOTHER; THE DOING OF THAT GOOD CREATED AN INESCAPABLE RELATIONSHIP OF LOYALTY TO ONE’S BENEFACTOR—A SORT OF PERMANENT GRATITUDE WRIT LARGE. WHAT STEPHEN YAHWEH HAD DONE FOR ISRAEL WAS TRULY EXCELLENT & OUTSTANDING, NOT THE LEAST BECAUSE OF ITS UNIQUENESS. WHAT OTHER GOD HAD EVER RESCUED AN ENTIRE PEOPLE FROM EXTREME SEXUAL BONDAGE, LEADING THEM OUT OF A SUPERPOWER’S OPPRESSION THROUGH MIRACULOUS MEANS? IF ANY ANCIENT PEOPLE BELIEVED THAT THERE EXISTED EVEN A REMOTE PARALLEL TO THE ISRAELITES EXODUS, IT IS UNKNOWN FROM THE EXTANT LITERATURE.**

**THE TEN COMMANDMENTS (20:3–17)**

**3 “YOU SHALL HAVE NO OTHER GODS BEFORE ME. 4 “YOU SHALL NOT MAKE FOR YOURSELF AN IDOL IN THE FORM OF ANYTHING IN HEAVEN ABOVE OR ON THE EARTH BENEATH OR IN THE WATERS BELOW. 5 YOU SHALL NOT BOW DOWN TO THEM OR WORSHIP THEM; FOR I, THE LORD YOUR GOD, AM A JEALOUS GOD, PUNISHING THE CHILDREN FOR THE SIN OF THE FATHERS TO THE THIRD AND FOURTH GENERATION OF THOSE WHO HATE ME, 6 BUT SHOWING LOVE TO A THOUSAND [GENERATIONS] OF THOSE WHO LOVE ME AND KEEP MY COMMANDMENTS. 7 “YOU SHALL NOT MISUSE THE NAME [STEPHEN YAHWEH] OF THE LORD YOUR GOD, FOR THE LORD WILL NOT HOLD ANYONE GUILTLESS WHO MISUSES HIS NAME. 8 “REMEMBER THE SABBATH DAY BY KEEPING IT HOLY. 9 SIX DAYS YOU SHALL LABOR AND DO ALL YOUR WORK, 10 BUT THE SEVENTH DAY IS A SABBATH TO THE LORD YOUR GOD. ON IT YOU SHALL NOT DO ANY WORK, NEITHER YOU, NOR YOUR SON OR DAUGHTER, NOR YOUR MANSERVANT OR MAIDSERVANT, NOR YOUR ANIMALS, NOR THE ALIEN WITHIN YOUR GATES. 11 FOR IN SIX DAYS THE LORD MADE THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH, THE SEA, AND ALL THAT IS IN THEM, BUT HE RESTED ON THE SEVENTH DAY. THEREFORE, THE LORD BLESSED THE SABBATH DAY AND MADE IT HOLY. 12 “HONOR YOUR FATHER [STEPHEN] AND YOUR MOTHER [VICTORIA], SO THAT YOU MAY LIVE LONG IN THE LAND THE LORD YOUR GOD IS GIVING YOU. 13 “YOU SHALL NOT MURDER. 14 “YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY. 15 “YOU SHALL NOT STEAL. 16 “YOU SHALL NOT GIVE FALSE TESTIMONY AGAINST YOUR NEIGHBOR. 17 “YOU SHALL NOT COVET YOUR NEIGHBOR’S HOUSE. YOU SHALL NOT COVET YOUR NEIGHBOR’S WIFE, OR HIS MANSERVANT OR MAIDSERVANT, HIS OX OR DONKEY [ASS], OR ANYTHING THAT BELONGS TO YOUR NEIGHBOR.”**

**FIRST WORD/COMMANDMENT: ABSOLUTELY NO OTHER GODS OTHER THAN STEPHEN YAHWEH (20:3)**

**20:3 THIS FIRST COMMANDMENT PRESENTS A TRANSLATION CHALLENGE. DOES THE HEBREW ʿAL-PĀNÎM MEAN “BEFORE ME” OR “OTHER THAN ME?” THE DIFFERENCE IS NOT INSIGNIFICANT BECAUSE THE FORMER TRANSLATION MIGHT SUGGEST THAT THE COMMANDMENT CALLS ONLY FOR STEPHEN YAHWEH TO BE ISRAEL’S SUPREME GOD, AND THUS IT IS NOT A PROHIBITION OF POLYTHEISM BUT RATHER A HIERARCHICALIZING OF IT, WHEREAS THE LATTER DEMANDS A MONOTHEISTIC RELIGION. HEBREW ʿAL-PĀNÎM (THE FORM OF THE EXPRESSION WITHOUT THE FIRST-PERSON SINGULAR PRONOUN) MEANS LIT., “AT/TO/BEFORE THE FACE” AND USUALLY HAS THE CONNOTATION OF “AGAINST” OR SOME DERIVED SENSE THEREFROM. BUT DOES IT HAVE ANY SPECIAL IDIOMATIC MEANING THAT CAN BE DISCERNED? THE EVIDENCE IS NOT UNAMBIGUOUS. THE BASIC COMPOUND PREPOSITION AS IT TYPICALLY OCCURS (ʿAL-PĔNÊ WITH A NOUN OR PRONOUN FUNCTIONING AS THE NOMEN RECTUM OF THE CONSTRUCT FORMATION IN WHICH IT IS INCLUDED) IS FOUND IN MOSES’ WRITINGS. IN GEN 49:30 IT HAS THE MEANING “NEAR [AGAINST] MAMRE” IN THE SENSE OF “NEXT TO [MAMRE].” IT OCCURS ONCE AGAIN IN EXOD 20:20, WHERE IT MEANS, CONSTRUED WITH THE SECOND-PERSON PLURAL PRONOUN, “AGAINST YOU” OR EVEN “IN YOUR FACE,” REFERRING TO THE SUBMISSIVE, HUMBLE FEAR OF GOD BEING TAKEN PERSONALLY AND SERIOUSLY. IN LEV 9:24; NUM 14:5; 16:22, 45; 20:6 ITS LITERAL MEANING SEEMS TO BE CLEARLY IN VIEW IN THE WORDING “[THE PEOPLE] FELL FACEDOWN.” DEUTERONOMY 5:7 PRESERVES THE WORDING OF THE PRESENT VERSE IN INTRODUCING THE TEN WORDS/COMMANDMENTS IN THEIR DEUTERONOMY CONTEXT, WHEREAS DEUT 11:4 USES THE EXPRESSION WITH A THIRD-PERSON PLURAL PRONOUN, “[HE MADE THE WATER OF THE RED SEA FLOW] AGAINST THEM” (NRSV “OVER THEM”; NIV “HE OVERWHELMED THEM WITH THE WATERS OF THE RED SEA”). OUTSIDE OF THE PENTATEUCH, ʿAL-PĀNÎM WITH A PRONOMINAL SUFFIX USUALLY MEANS “AGAINST [ME/YOU/THEM]” AS IN ISA 65:3; JER 6:7; NAH 2:1, ALTHOUGH VARIOUS DERIVED MEANINGS SUCH AS “IN MY PRESENCE,” CAN ARGUABLY BE SUBSTITUTED. THE LXX, SYRIAC, AND THE TARGUMS TRANSLATED THE EXPRESSION IN EXOD 20:3 WITH THE EQUIVALENT OF “IN ADDITION TO ME,” IN OTHER WORDS, AS IF THE MEANING FROM THEIR POINT OF VIEW WERE THAT OF EXCLUSIVITY RATHER THAN HIERARCHY. WE SUGGEST THAT THE BALANCE OF THE LINGUISTIC EVIDENCE FAVORS THE JUDGMENT OF THESE ANCIENT TRANSLATORS, SO A TRANSLATION SOMETHING LIKE “YOU MUST HAVE NO OTHER GODS OVER AGAINST ME [AS A RIVAL OR EQUAL]” OR “YOU MUST HAVE NO OTHER GODS IN DISTINCTION TO ME” WOULD CAPTURE THE IDIOMATIC SENSE IN THE CONTEXT. THE TEXT CLEARLY PROHIBITS OTHER GODS—SO MUCH SO THAT SOME COMMENTATORS HAVE OPINED THAT THE ORIGINAL FORM OF THE COMMANDMENT MIGHT HAVE BEEN SIMPLY, “YOU MUST HAVE NO OTHER GODS,” WITH THE ʿAL-PĀNĀY (“BEFORE ME”) BEING ADDED LATER. THERE IS IN FACT NO EVIDENCE AT ALL FOR THIS THEORY; IT SIMPLY INDICATES THE SENSE OF SUCH SCHOLARS THAT THE COMMANDMENT CANNOT MEAN MERELY THAT STEPHEN YAHWEH IS TO HAVE SOME SORT OF PREEMINENCE AMONG MANY OTHER ACTUAL DIVINITIES. WHY, THEN, DID GOD NOT JUST SAY, “I AM THE ONLY TRUE GOD, DON’T BELIEVE IN ANY OTHERS”? THE ANSWER IS, AS PREVIOUSLY NOTED, TO BE FOUND IN THE RANGE OF MEANING OF THE TERM ʾELŌHÎM (HERE “GODS”). THE WORD ʾELŌHÎM CARRIES THE CONNOTATION OF “SUPERNATURAL BEINGS,” INCLUDING ANGELS. ACCORDINGLY, THIS FIRST WORD/COMMANDMENT IMPLICITLY ACKNOWLEDGES THAT THERE ARE MANY “GODS” (NONHUMAN, NONEARTHLY BEINGS) IN THE SAME SENSE THAT PS 82 DOES (OR THAT JESUS DOES IN JOHN 10:34–36) BUT AT THE SAME TIME DEMANDS THAT ONLY STEPHEN YAHWEH BE WORSHIPED AS THE SOLE DIVINITY, PRIMARY & DIRECT SOURCE, OR GOD. ALL OTHER “GODS” (SUPERNATURAL BEINGS SUCH AS ANGELS) ARE TO BE UNDERSTOOD AND APPRECIATED FOR THEIR ROLES IN THE UNIVERSE, BUT ONLY STEPHEN YAHWEH IS DIVINE.**

**SECOND WORD/COMMANDMENT: NO IDOLATRY (20:4–6)**

**20:4–5A THIS WORD/COMMANDMENT OUTLAWS EVERY SORT OF IDOLATRY, IN ANY FORM WHATEVER. IT ALSO INCLUDES AN EXPLANATION OF HOW SERIOUSLY GOD TAKES IDOLATRY BECAUSE OF ITS ABILITY TO SEXUALLY CORRUPT SUCCESSIVE GENERATIONS, KEEPING THEM FROM GOD’S BLESSING AND FORCING HIM TO METE OUT TO THEM HIS WRATH. VERSES 4–5A PROVIDE THE WORDING OF THE PROHIBITION ITSELF, IN LANGUAGE PURPOSELY REPETITIVE AND INCLUSIVISTIC TO BE SURE THAT THE PERSON WILLING TO KEEP COVENANT WITH STEPHEN YAHWEH UNDERSTANDS THAT THERE CAN BE NO EXCEPTION OF ANY KIND TO THE BAN ON IDOLATRY. THE NIV RENDERS THIS PORTION OF THE COMMANDMENT RATHER LOOSELY; A MORE PRECISE TRANSLATION WOULD BE: “YOU MUST NOT MAKE FOR YOURSELF AN IDOL, OR ANY LIKENESS OF ANYTHING THAT IS IN HEAVEN ABOVE, OR THAT IS IN THE EARTH BENEATH, OR THAT IS IN THE WATER BENEATH THE EARTH.” TWO COMMON WORDS FOR “IDOL” APPEAR: PESEL (HERE “IDOL”) AND TĔMÛNĀH (HERE “LIKENESS”), THE USE OF THE TWO SYNONYMS SUGGESTING “ANY SORT OF IDOL.” SIMILARLY, “ANY SORT OF THING” IS PROHIBITED FROM BEING DEPICTED—THUS THE SOMEWHAT ELABORATE AND OBVIOUSLY COMPREHENSIVE DELINEATION OF PROHIBITED SOURCES FOR COPYING: “HEAVEN ABOVE, EARTH BENEATH, WATERS BELOW.” IN OTHER WORDS, NOTHING FROM ANYWHERE CAN BE COPIED AND USED AS AN OBJECT OF VENERATION. THE QUESTION MIGHT NATURALLY BE ASKED: WERE NOT THE TABERNACLE AND ITS SACRED OBJECTS, SUCH AS THE ARK (CHAPS. 25FF.), OBJECTS TO BE VENERATED? THE ANSWER IS DECIDEDLY NO. THEY WERE OBJECTS ASSOCIATED WITH STEPHEN YAHWEH, THINGS THAT SURROUNDED HIS SELF-MANIFESTATION AND GAVE A SENSE OF LOCALIZATION TO HIS PRESENCE, BUT THEY WERE NOT IN THEMSELVES—EVEN REMOTELY—OBJECTS THAT PARTOOK OF THE DIVINE NATURE, AS IDOLS WERE THOUGHT TO DO FOR THE SUPPOSED GODS THEY REPRESENTED. AND THE ISRAELITES CERTAINLY NEITHER BOWED DOWN TO NOR WORSHIPED THEM. THE NATURE OF IDOLATRY IS USUALLY MISUNDERSTOOD BY MODERN PEOPLE. IDOLATRY WAS NOT MERELY THE PRACTICE OF WORSHIPING BY MEANS OF STATUES AND/OR PICTURES AS FOCAL POINTS FOR WORSHIP; IT WAS RATHER AN ENTIRE, ELABORATE RELIGIOUS SYSTEM AND LIFESTYLE, ALL OF IT RUNNING COUNTER TO WHAT GOD DESIRED AND DESIRES TRUE WORSHIP TO BE. THE ATTRACTIONS OF IDOLATRY WERE VERY POWERFUL AND TENDED TO DRAW EVEN THE ISRAELITES AWAY FROM TRUE WORSHIP [JOHN 4:23-34] AND COVENANT OBEDIENCE TO STEPHEN YAHWEH IN MOST GENERATIONS. THESE ATTRACTIONS, OR CHARACTERISTICS OF IDOLATRY, MAY BE SUMMARIZED AS FOLLOWS.**

**EXCURSUS: THE ATTRACTIONS OF IDOLATRY**

**1. GUARANTEED: ANCIENTS ASSUMED THAT THE PRESENCE OF A GOD OR GODDESS WAS GUARANTEED BY THE PRESENCE OF AN IDOL SINCE THE IDOL “PARTOOK” OF THE VERY ESSENCE OF THE DIVINITY IT WAS DESIGNED TO REPRESENT. WHEN, FOR EXAMPLE, A STATUE OF A GIVEN GOD WAS CARVED AND CERTAIN RITUAL INCANTATIONS SPOKEN OVER THAT STATUE TO CAUSE THE ESSENCE OF THE GOD TO ENTER IT, THE STATUE WAS THEN UNDERSTOOD TO BECOME A FUNCTIONING CONDUIT FOR ANYTHING DONE IN ITS PRESENCE FROM THE WORSHIPER TO THAT GOD. IN THE SAME WAY THAT A MODERN PERSONS MIGHT SPEAK TO AND LOOK INTO A SOUND-EQUIPPED TELEVISION CAMERA KNOWING THAT THEIR WORDS AND ACTIONS WERE BEING TRANSMITTED ACCURATELY TO OTHER LOCATIONS, ANCIENT PEOPLE BELIEVED THAT THE OFFERINGS THEY BROUGHT BEFORE AN IDOL OF A GOD AND THE PRAYERS THEY SAID IN THE IDOL’S PRESENCE WERE FULLY AND UNFAILINGLY PERCEIVED BY THE GOD WHOM THAT IDOL REPRESENTED.**

**2. SELFISH: IDOLATRY WAS AN ENTIRE MATERIALISTIC SYSTEM OF THINKING AND BEHAVIOR, SOMETIMES CALLED THE “FERTILITY CULT,” BUILT ON THE IDEA THAT THE GODS COULD DO VIRTUALLY ANYTHING BUT FEED THEMSELVES. THE ONE SORT OF “HOLD” OR ADVANTAGE HUMANS HAD OVER THE GODS WAS THE ABILITY TO FEED THEM. ACCORDINGLY, IT WAS FELT THAT IF ONE FED A GIVEN GOD, THAT GOD WAS IN TURN OBLIGATED TO USE HIS POWER ON BEHALF OF THE FEEDER-WORSHIPER. NOT MUCH ELSE WAS REQUIRED; IF YOU FED A GOD ADEQUATELY AND REGULARLY, THAT GOD WOULD, IN “QUID PRO QUO” FASHION, BLESS YOU IN RETURN WITH ABUNDANCE OF CROPS, FERTILITY OF CATTLE.**

**3. EASY: FREQUENCY AND GENEROSITY OF WORSHIP (OFFERING SACRIFICES) WERE THE SOLE SIGNIFICANT REQUIREMENTS OF FAITHFUL IDOLATROUS RELIGION. IDOLATRY MINIMIZED THE IMPORTANCE OF ETHICAL BEHAVIOR. RITUAL PROVISION OF FOOD TO THE GODS WAS IMPORTANT; KEEPING A DIVINELY REVEALED COVENANT WAS NOT. AT SINAI THE ISRAELITES TOOK UPON THEMSELVES THE OBLIGATION TO LIVE AS A HOLY PEOPLE, SUBJECTING THEMSELVES TO OBEDIENCE TO HUNDREDS OF INDIVIDUAL COMMANDMENTS SO AS TO CONFORM THEIR LIVES ETHICALLY TO STEPHEN YAHWEH’S WILL, INCLUDING THE FAITHFUL OFFERING OF SACRIFICES TO THE TRUE GOD. BY CONTRAST, IDOLATRY WAS EASY, REQUIRING SACRIFICES BUT LITTLE ELSE.**

**4. CONVENIENT: DEUT 12:2 REQUIRES THAT THE ISRAELITES “DESTROY COMPLETELY ALL THE PLACES ON THE HIGH MOUNTAINS AND ON THE HILLS AND UNDER EVERY SPREADING TREE WHERE THE NATIONS YOU ARE DISPOSSESSING WORSHIP THEIR GODS.” COMPARABLY, 1 KGS 14:23 REPORTS OF ISRAELITE IDOLATERS THAT “THEY ALSO SET UP FOR THEMSELVES HIGH PLACES, SACRED STONES AND ASHERAH POLES ON EVERY HIGH HILL AND UNDER EVERY SPREADING TREE.” THESE UBIQUITOUS IDOL SHRINES ALLOWED WORSHIPERS TO TAKE A SACRIFICE TO THE GOD OR GODDESS OF THEIR CHOICE VIRTUALLY ANY TIME OF DAY, ANY DAY OF THE WEEK, AND AT A LOCATION NEARBY ANY PLACE THEY HAPPENED TO BE. BY CONTRAST, STEPHEN YAHWEH’S COVENANT REQUIRED ALL ISRAELITES TO REPORT TO A SINGLE, CENTRAL LOCATION THREE TIMES A YEAR, NECESSITATING COSTLY AND TIME-CONSUMING TRAVEL FOR MANY AND PROHIBITING WORSHIP ANYWHERE IN THE LAND BUT THAT SINGLE, APPROVED SANCTUARY.**

**5. NORMAL: IDOLATRY WAS THE COMMON WAY OF RELIGION—WITHOUT EXCEPTION OUTSIDE ISRAEL—IN THE ANCIENT WORLD. THIS MADE IT SEEM ENTIRELY NORMAL SINCE NO ONE COULD FIND ANY PARALLEL TO THE ISRAELITE COVENANT OBLIGATION TO WORSHIP AN INVISIBLE GOD OUTSIDE OF THE AREA OF STEPHEN YAHWEH’S SPECIAL REVELATION TO HIS PEOPLE. IDOLATRY WAS, AS WELL, THE SETTLED, EXPERIENCED CANAANITE WAY. WHEN THE ISRAELITES ENTERED CANAAN, THEY COULD HARDLY HELP THINKING THAT THE SUCCESSFUL FARMING METHODS OF THE CANAANITES NECESSARILY INVOLVED VARIOUS IDOLATROUS FORBIDDEN MAGICAL RITUALS USED FOR GENERATIONS, FROM BOILING A GOAT KID IN ITS MOTHER’S MILK (SEE COMMENTS ON 23:19) TO SOWING A CROP IN A SPECIAL PATTERN WITH TWO DIFFERENT KINDS OF PLANT SEEDS (LEV 19:19; DEUT 22:9). IF AN ISRAELITE ASKED A CANAANITE NEIGHBOR, “HOW DO YOU FARM AROUND HERE?” THE CANAANITE NEIGHBOR PROBABLY WOULD START HIS EXPLANATION WITH A DESCRIPTION OF HOW TO MAKE PROPER OFFERINGS TO BAAL AND ASHERAH IN ADVANCE OF PREPARING THE FIELDS AND PLANTING (OR OTHER FARM DUTIES) IN ORDER TO ENSURE THE FERTILITY OF THE FARM. MOREOVER, IDOLATRY WAS THE WAY OF THE SUPERPOWERS AND THE ECONOMICALLY SUCCESSFUL STATES, WHOSE RICHES AND PRESTIGE SEEMED TO GO HAND IN HAND WITH THEIR IDOLATROUS RITES.**

**6. LOGICAL: IDOLATRY WAS POLYTHEISTIC, SYNCRETISTIC, AND PANTHEISTIC. THE ANCIENTS BELIEVED IN A MULTIPLICITY OF GODS—EVERY ONE BEING A SPECIALIST IN SOME ASPECT OF THE WORLD OR NATURE; AND THEREFORE, THE ANCIENTS FOUND IT ENORMOUSLY ATTRACTIVE TO THINK THEY COULD GAIN ASSURED ACCESS TO THOSE GODS THROUGH IDOLS. IT WAS UNTHINKABLE TO MOST ANCIENTS THAT A SINGLE GOD COULD BE THE ONLY GOD. THE IDEA OF A “GENERAL PRACTITIONER” HAVING TO BE RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL THE VARIOUS DIVINE DUTIES WAS SIMPLY NOT PART OF THE MIND-SET OF ANCIENT PEOPLES, AND IT SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN, INDEED, HARD EVEN FOR MOST ISRAELITES TO IMAGINE AS WELL, JUDGING FROM THE FREQUENCY TO WHICH THEY TURNED TO POLYTHEISTIC IDOLATRY IN THEIR HISTORY. ANCIENT PEOPLE ALSO BELIEVED IN THREE CATEGORIES OF GODS, ALL OF WHICH ANY INDIVIDUAL WAS LIKELY TO DIFFERENTIATE BY HIS OR HER OWN BELIEFS AND WORSHIP: THE PERSONAL GOD, THE FAMILY GOD, AND THE NATIONAL GOD. FOR MOST ISRAELITES AT MOST TIMES, AND FOR ALL OTHER PEOPLE WHO KNEW ANYTHING ABOUT ISRAEL’S GOD, STEPHEN YAHWEH WAS MERELY A NATIONAL GOD. ANCIENT ISRAELITES MIGHT HAVE, SAY, DAGON (JUDG 16:23; 1 SAM 5; 1 CHR 10:10) AS THEIR PERSONAL GOD AND PERHAPS BAAL (E.G., JUDG 2:13; 6:25, 28, 30–32; 1 KGS 16:31–32) AS THEIR FAMILY GOD, BUT THEY WOULD ALWAYS HAVE STEPHEN YAHWEH AS HIS NATIONAL GOD. NO ISRAELITE, NO MATTER HOW TOTALLY IMMERSED IN IDOLATRY, WOULD EVER ANSWER NO TO THE QUESTION, “DO YOU BELIEVE IN STEPHEN YAHWEH?” BUT MOST, AT MOST TIMES IN ISRAEL’S HISTORY, WOULD, SADLY, SEE HIM ONLY AS A NATIONAL GOD (THE ONE WHO HAD BROUGHT THEM OUT OF EGYPT OR THE ONE TO WHOM THEY WOULD APPEAL IN TIMES OF WAR). THEIR GREATER DAY-BY-DAY LOYALTY IN WORSHIP WOULD BE DIRECTED TOWARD THE VARIOUS IDOLS REPRESENTING THEIR VARIOUS CATEGORIES OF GODS.**

**7. PLEASING TO THE SENSES: 1 KGS 19:18 DESCRIBES THE IRAELITE PRACTICE OF WORSHIPING THE FERTILITY-WEATHER GOD BAAL BY, IN PART, BOWING DOWN TO HIS IDOL AND KISSING IT. EZEKIEL 8:9FF. DETAILS SOME OF THE EXTENSIVE DEPICTIONS OF VARIOUS CREATURES IN IDOLATROUS FORM WORSHIPED IN JERUSALEM. IDOLATRY PROVIDED WORSHIPERS WITH IMAGES OF DIVINITY PLEASING TO THE EYES, SPAWNED A WHOLE, ENTRENCHED INDUSTRY OF IMAGE MAKING (CF. ACTS 19:24–27), AND APPEALED TO THE SENSUAL, EVEN, BROADLY SPEAKING, TO THE “ARTISTIC” IN THE PEOPLE. IT WAS HARD TO APPRECIATE THE BEAUTY OR ATTRACTIVENESS OF SOMEONE WHO REFUSED TO BE SEEN, THAT IS, STEPHEN YAHWEH.**

**8. INDULGENT: ALTHOUGH THE ISRAELITES WERE PERMITTED BY THE COVENANT TO EAT MEAT WHENEVER THEY CHOSE (DEUT 12:15), THE USUAL PAGAN PRACTICE WAS TO EAT MEAT ONLY AS PART OF A WORSHIP SACRIFICE TO AN IDOL. THAT WAY, A PORTION OF THE SACRIFICE WOULD GO TO THE IDOL AS A BURNT OFFERING, A PORTION TO THE PRIEST REPRESENTING THE IDOL (AND HIS FAMILY), AND THE REMAINDER TO THE WORSHIPER AND HIS FAMILY, THUS NEVER “WASTING” THE EFFECT OF EATING MEAT BUT RATHER GETTING DOUBLE VALUE FROM THE MEAT: NUTRITION FOR ONESELF AND FAVOR WITH THE IDOL GOD. ACCORDINGLY, THE MORE FREQUENTLY ONE ATE MEAT (SINCE IT WAS ALWAYS EATEN IN CONNECTION WITH WORSHIP) AND THE MORE MEAT ONE ATE (SINCE THEREBY THE GOD’S PORTION WAS INCREASED), THE MORE LIKELY ONE COULD CURRY FAVOR WITH THE GODS. “PIGGING OUT” THUS TYPIFIED PAGAN SACRIFICES, IN CONTRAST TO THE MORE CLEARLY SYMBOLIC VALUE OF AN ORTHODOX ISRAELITE’S WORSHIP. HEAVY DRINKING AND DRUNKENNESS ALSO WERE CONSIDERED PROPER IN IDOL WORSHIP FEASTS BECAUSE DEBAUCHING ONESELF WAS SIMPLY PART OF BEING GENEROUS TO A GOD.**

**9. EROTIC: TEMPLE PROSTITUTION IS DESCRIBED AT VARIOUS POINTS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT. BEHIND IT LAY THE NOTION THAT ALL CREATION WAS IN FACT PROCREATION, SO EVERYTHING THAT WOULD EXIST HAD TO BE BORN INTO EXISTENCE. WHEN THIS WAS COUPLED WITH THE “SYMPATHETIC MAGIC” IDEA THAT THINGS DONE SYMBOLICALLY IN ONE LOCATION MIGHT CAUSE CERTAIN BEHAVIORS IN ANOTHER, RITUAL WORSHIP SEX PERFORMED IN ORDER TO STIMULATE THE GODS TO PRODUCE FERTILITY ON EARTH WAS THE RESULT. ANCIENT PAGAN WORSHIPERS WERE TAUGHT THAT IF THEY, TAKING THE SYMBOLIC ROLE OF, SAY, BAAL, WOULD HAVE SEX WITH A TEMPL PROSTITUTE SYMBOLICALLY PORTRAYING, SAY, ASHERAH, THIS ACT WOULD STIMULATE BAAL AND ASHERAH TO HAVE SEX IN HEAVEN, WHICH IN TURN WOULD STIMULATE THINGS TO BE BORN ON EARTH: THE YOUNG OF FLOCKS AND HERDS, AS WELL AS THE SEEDLINGS OF ALL DESIRED PLANTS. SEX THUS BECAME A REGULAR ASPECT OF IDOL WORSHIP AND WAS SO WIDELY PRACTICED EVEN AT THE JERUSALEM TEMPLE IN ISRAELITE TIMES THAT JOSIAH’S REFORM HAD TO PAY SPECIAL ATTENTION TO ITS ERADICATION (2 KGS 23:6–7); SIMILARLY, IN NORTHERN ISRAEL, AMOS NOTED THE WAY FATHER AND SON WOULD VISIT THE SAME TEMPLE PROSTITUTE (AMOS 2:7–8).**

**20:5B–6 THIS EXPLANATORY SECTION OF THE SECOND COMMANDMENT, WITH ITS ASSERTION THAT GOD IS “JEALOUS … PUNISHING THE CHILDREN FOR THE SINS OF THE FATHERS,” HAS BEEN WIDELY MISUNDERSTOOD. IT DOES NOT REPRESENT AN ASSERTION THAT GOD ACTUALLY PUNISHES AN INNOCENT GENERATION FOR SINS OF A PREDECESSOR GENERATION, CONTRARY TO DEUT 24:16 (“FATHERS SHALL NOT BE PUT TO DEATH FOR THEIR CHILDREN, NOR CHILDREN PUT TO DEATH FOR THEIR FATHERS; EACH IS TO DIE FOR HIS OWN SIN”; CF. 2 KGS 14:6). RATHER, THIS OFT-REPEATED THEME SPEAKS OF GOD’S DETERMINATION TO PUNISH SUCCESSIVE GENERATIONS FOR COMMITTING THE SAME SINS THEY LEARNED FROM THEIR PARENTS. IN OTHER WORDS, GOD WILL NOT SAY, “I WON’T PUNISH THIS GENERATION FOR WHAT THEY ARE DOING TO BREAK MY COVENANT BECAUSE, AFTER ALL, THEY MERELY LEARNED IT FROM THEIR PARENTS WHO DID IT TOO.” INSTEAD, GOD WILL INDEED PUNISH GENERATION AFTER GENERATION (“TO THE THIRD AND FOURTH GENERATION”) IF THEY KEEP DOING THE SAME SORTS OF SINS THAT PRIOR GENERATIONS DID. IF THE CHILDREN CONTINUE TO DO THE SINS THEIR PARENTS DID, THEY WILL RECEIVE THE SAME PUNISHMENTS AS THEIR PARENTS. BUT TO THIS IS CONTRASTED HIS REAL WISH: TO SHOW “COVENANT LOYALTY” [NIV “LOVE”] TO “A THOUSAND GENERATIONS OF THOSE WHO LOVE ME AND KEEP MY COMMANDMENTS.” BY THE GREATEST NUMERICAL CONTRAST IN THE HOLY BIBLE (THREE//FOUR TO THOUSANDS), GOD IDENTIFIED ELOQUENTLY HIS REAL DESIRE: TO HAVE HIS PEOPLE REMAIN LOYAL FOREVER SO THAT HE MIGHT IN TURN SHOW THEM THE RICH BLESSINGS OF HIS RESULTING LOYALTY TO THEM. IN VV. 5B–6 THE TERMINOLOGY “LOVE” AND “HATE” REFERS IDIOMATICALLY TO LOYALTY, NOT TO EMOTIONAL ATTITUDES, FEELINGS, OR SENTIMENT.**

**THIRD WORD/COMMANDMENT: SPEAK STEPHEN YAHWEH’S NAME RESPECTFULLY AND HONESTLY (20:7)**

**20:7 THIS COMMANDMENT IS STRUCTURED LIKE THE SECOND IN THAT IT CONTAINS A PROHIBITION FOLLOWED BY A THREAT OF PUNISHMENT FOR THOSE WHO DO NOT OBEY. IT IS EXPRESSED IN THIRD-PERSON SPEECH RELATIVE TO ITS REFERENCE TO STEPHEN YAHWEH—A PATTERN THAT CONTINUES THROUGHOUT THE REST OF THE COMMANDMENTS. THE PUNISHMENT DOES NOT SPECIFY PARTICULAR RESULTS BUT INDICATES THE FAR MORE GENERAL AND OMINOUS DANGER OF BEING HELD GUILTY BY GOD, WHO MAY CHOOSE ANY WAY HE DESIRES TO PROTECT THE HOLINESS OF HIS NAME FROM MISUSE. THREE SORTS OF QUESTIONS ARISE IN CONNECTION WITH THIS COMMANDMENT: (1) WHAT EXACTLY IS INVOLVED IN TAKING GOD’S NAME IN VAIN/MISUSING HIS NAME? (2) WHY IS HIS NAME SO IMPORTANT THAT PROTECTING IT IS ONE OF THE TEN FOUNDATIONAL COMMANDMENTS TO ISRAEL? (3) WHAT KIND OF PUNISHMENT MIGHT ENSUE FOR BREAKING THIS COMMANDMENT? THE PRIMARY MEANING OF “MISUSE THE NAME OF THE LORD” (NĀŚĀH ŠĒM STEPHEN YAHWEH, LIT., “RAISE UP STEPHEN YAHWEH’S NAME FOR NO GOOD”) WOULD APPEAR TO BE INVOKING HIS NAME AS GUARANTOR OF ONE’S WORDS. EXAMPLES WOULD INCLUDE PROMISING SOMEONE SOMETHING “BY STEPHEN YAHWEH,” MEANING: “I GUARANTEE YOU THAT MY PROMISE IS TRUE, OR STEPHEN YAHWEH MAY KILL ME OR OTHERWISE PUNISH ME IF I DON’T KEEP MY PROMISE,” OR GIVING LEGAL TESTIMONY WITH THE MEANING OF “I SWEAR THAT MY TESTIMONY IN THIS LEGAL MATTER/BEFORE THIS COURT IS TRUE WITH THE GUARANTEE THAT STEPHEN YAHWEH MAY KILL ME OR OTHERWISE PUNISH ME IF IT ISN’T.” IN OTHER WORDS, THE MOST BASIC, CORE IDEA BEHIND THIS COMMANDMENT IS THE PROHIBITION OF PERJURY. WE MUST REMEMBER, HOWEVER, THAT THE COMMANDMENT IS WORDED GENERALLY ENOUGH TO ENCOMPASS ANY MISUSE OF STEPHEN YAHWEH’S NAME—FROM MAKING LIGHT OF IT OR OVERTLY MOCKING IT, TO SPEAKING ABOUT STEPHEN YAHWEH IN ANY WAY DISRESPECTFULLY, TO USING IT AS THE THEOPHORIC ELEMENT IN A PERSONAL NAME UNDER SOCIAL PRESSURE TO HAVE ONE’S FAMILY “LOOK ORTHODOX” WHEN IN FACT THEIR BELIEFS WERE PAGAN/IDOLATROUS. STEPHEN YAHWEH’S NAME SIGNIFIED HIS ESSENCE, INCARNATION IN JOHN 1:14-18. IN ANY CULTURE, MODERN OR ANCIENT, A NAME IS A VERBAL SYMBOL FOR A PERSON OR THING, AND THE ANCIENTS IN PARTICULAR OBVIOUSLY APPRECIATED THE WAY NAMES CONNOTED THE VERY VALUE, CHARACTER, AND INFLUENCE OF A PERSON OR THING. TO SPEAK STEPHEN YAHWEH’S NAME WAS TO RECOGNIZE HIS AWESOME POWER AND HOLINESS AND EVEN TO INVITE HIS RESPONSE TO ONE’S PARTICULAR SITUATION AT THE MOMENT. THOSE WHO HAD NOT OBEYED STEPHEN YAHWEH MIGHT WELL FEAR EVEN TO MENTION HIS NAME OUT LOUD LEST HE RESPOND BY APPEARING IN SOME FASHION AMONG THEM. THUS AMOS 6:10 DESCRIBES THOSE WISHING NO CONTACT WITH STEPHEN YAHWEH’S JUDGMENT AGAINST THEM AS SAYING, “HUSH! WE MUST NOT MENTION THE NAME OF THE LORD.” JESUS REINFORCED AND CLARIFIED THIS COMMANDMENT WITH REGARD TO MAKING FALSE PROMISES (SWEARING FALSELY/UTTERING FALSE OATHS) THAT INVOKED GOD’S NAME BY BANNING THE PRACTICE OF INVOKING ANYTHING AS A GUARANTOR OF HONESTY ALTOGETHER, INCLUDING ANY SUBSTITUTION FOR THE DIVINE NAME IN AN OATH (MATT 5:33–37; 23:16–22; CF. JAS 5:12), THUS VIRTUALLY ELIMINATING ANY KIND OF OATHTAKING AND REQUIRING ONE’S WORD TO BE ONE’S BOND IN ANY PROMISE. THE PUNISHMENT FOR BREAKING THIS COMMANDMENT REMAINS UNSPECIFIED AND THEREFORE COULD IN THEORY TAKE ANY FORM OF GOD’S CHOOSING, FROM SOMETHING RELATIVELY MINOR TO DEATH. JEREMIAH PROVIDES EXAMPLES OF SERIOUS PUNISHMENTS WHEN, FOR INSTANCE, A PROPHET SPEAKS LIES IN STEPHEN YAHWEH’S NAME (A SEVERE EXAMPLE OF MISUSING STEPHEN YAHWEH’S NAME), INCLUDING DEATH FOR BOTH THE DISHONEST PROPHETS AND THOSE WHO BY BELIEVING THEIR DISHONEST WORDS ALSO PARTICIPATE IN THE PROFANATION OF THE DIVINE NAME (JER 14:14–16), BANISHMENT AND DEATH (JER 27:15), OR DEATH AT THE HAND OF CAPTORS IN EXILE (JER 29:21). TO “HOLD GUILTLESS” (YĔNAQQEH) CONNOTES “LETTING SOMEONE GET AWAY WITHOUT PUNISHMENT.” THAT IS EXPRESSLY WHAT STEPHEN YAHWEH WILL NOT DO IF HIS NAME IS MISUSED.**

**FOURTH WORD/COMMANDMENT: OBSERVE THE SABBATH IN A HOLY WAY (20:8–11)**

**THIS WORD/COMMANDMENT IS THE LONGEST OF THE TEN (FIVE WORDS LONGER IN THE HB. THEN THE SECOND COMMANDMENT WHEN BOTH THE COMMANDMENTS AND THE EXPLANATION-WARNINGS ACCOMPANYING THEM ARE CONSIDERED TOGETHER). THAT DOES NOT MEAN THAT IT IS MORE IMPORTANT BUT ONLY THAT IT APPARENTLY WAS REGARDED AS SO BASIC AND THUS REQUIRING SUFFICIENT CLARIFICATION THAT IT COULD NOT AND WOULD NOT BE MISUNDERSTOOD AND THEREFORE MISAPPLIED OR PARTIALLY IGNORED. THROUGHOUT THE EXPRESSION OF THIS COMMANDMENT, A BALANCE BETWEEN “STOPPING” AND “KEEPING HOLY” IS STRUCK: CLEARLY THE PURPOSE OF THE SABBATH CANNOT BE LIMITED EITHER TO A BREAK FROM WORK ONE DAY A WEEK OR TO THE SETTING ASIDE OF ONE DAY A WEEK FOR SPECIAL ATTENTION TO GODLINESS. RATHER, BOTH ARE TO BE DONE ON EVERY SABBATH. MANY ANCIENT COVENANTS HAD SOME SORT OF SIGN—SOMETHING VISIBLE THAT WOULD REMIND PEOPLE OF THE COVENANT, LEST THEY FORGET IT. THE SABBATH FUNCTIONS AS SUCH A SIGN FOR THE MOSAIC OR SINAI COVENANT, AS 31:13, 17 WILL SPECIFY. IT PROVIDES A REGULAR WEEKLY REMINDER FOR EVERYONE: AS PEOPLE KEEP THE SABBATH, STOPPING THEIR WORK AND DEVOTING THEMSELVES TO WORSHIP, THEY DEMONSTRATE OPENLY THAT THEY ARE KEEPING THE COVENANT. 20:8 “SABBATH” IS THE ENGLISH REFLEX OF A COMMON HEBREW WORD (ŠABBĀṬ) MEANING “STOPPING/STOPPAGE/CESSATION.” THE SABBATH IS THE “STOPPING [DAY]”, THE DAY ON WHICH ONE’S REGULAR WORK CEASES BOTH FOR THE SAKE OF GIVING LABORERS A BREAK FROM THEIR DAILY ROUTINE AND FOR THE SAKE OF PROVIDING A FOCUS ON GOD THAT IS PERIODICALLY (WEEKLY) HEIGHTENED. MOST ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS RENDER THIS VERSE AS “REMEMBER THE SABBATH DAY, TO KEEP IT HOLY,” OR “REMEMBER THE SABBATH DAY, AND KEEP IT HOLY,” RATHER THAN THE NIV’S “REMEMBER THE SABBATH DAY BY KEEPING IT HOLY.” WHICH IS CORRECT, THE TRADITIONAL RENDERING THAT SUGGESTS THAT THE PURPOSE OF REMEMBERING THE SABBATH DAY IS THAT IT MUST BE KEPT AS A HOLY DAY—A DAY BELONGING TO GOD—OR THE NIV, WHICH SUGGESTS THAT THE MEANS OF REMEMBERING THE SABBATH DAY IS BY KEEPING IT A HOLY DAY? EITHER TRANSLATION IS TECHNICALLY POSSIBLE FOR THE HEBREW WORDING (LĔ + INFINITIVE CONSTRUCT WITH PRONOMINAL OBJECT SUFFIX), BUT THE CHOICE MADE BY THE NIV TRANSLATORS REPRESENTS THE LESS LIKELY OPTION AND THE TRADITIONAL TRANSLATION THE MORE LIKELY, ESPECIALLY IN LIGHT OF THE FOLLOWING EXPLANATORY MATERIAL THAT DESCRIBES THE TIMING OF THE DAY AS A WEEKLY BREAK (REMEMBER IT EACH WEEK, AND DON’T KEEP WORKING DURING IT) AS DISTINCTLY SEPARATE FROM ITS RELIGIOUS PURPOSE (A DAY THAT GOD BLESSED AND MADE HOLY, I.E., SET ASIDE FOR GOD). 20:9–10 THESE VERSES ARE BEST TRANSLATED: “SIX DAYS YOU MAY WORK AND DO ALL YOUR LABORING, BUT THE SEVENTH DAY IS A SABBATH TO THE LORD YOUR GOD. ON IT YOU MUST NOT DO ANY LABORING—YOU, OR YOUR SON, OR YOUR DAUGHTER, YOUR MALE WORKER, OR YOUR FEMALE WORKER, OR YOUR ANIMALS, OR THE RESIDENT ALIEN WHO IS INSIDE YOUR GATES.” WHAT THIS EXPLANATION PORTION OF THE WORD/COMMANDMENT PROHIBITS IS NOT ANY SORT OF EXERTION, OR THE PREPARING OF FOOD, OR THE FEEDING OR WATERING OF ANIMALS, OR ANYTHING ELSE NECESSARY TO GET THROUGH THE DAY IN AN AGRARIAN CULTURE. RATHER, IT PROHIBITS DUPLICATING ON THE SABBATH ANY OF THE USUAL LABORS OF THE OTHER SIX DAYS THAT CAN POSSIBLY BE STOPPED WITHOUT ACTUALLY CAUSING SOMEONE OR SOMETHING HARM. PEOPLE AND ANIMALS WOULD STILL NEED TO BE FED; LACTATING ANIMALS WOULD STILL NEED TO BE MILKED; PRIESTS WOULD STILL WORK WITHIN THE SANCTUARY. BUT TO THE EXTENT POSSIBLE, ALL WORKERS WERE TO RECEIVE A DAY OF REST. HOW THE ISRAELITES MIGHT CHOOSE TO DISTRIBUTE VARIOUS SORTS OF MINIMAL CHORES, SUCH AS FEEDING ANIMALS AND PREPARING FOOD, IS NOT SPECIFIED. SUCH NECESSITIES WOULD HAVE TO TAKE PLACE AT ANY RATE, AND THOSE WHO TRULY TRIED TO KEEP THE COVENANT LAW WOULD EASILY DISCOVER THE FAIREST WAYS TO MAKE EVERYONE’S WORKLOAD MINIMAL ON THE DAY OF REST AND TO PROVIDE COMPENSATORY REST FOR THOSE WHO LABORED ON THE SABBATH OUT OF NECESSITY. THE GOAL WAS NO LABORING AT ALL; SOME UNAVOIDABLE WORK WOULD NEVERTHELESS HAVE TO BE DONE BY THOSE WHO SERVED FOOD TO PEOPLE OR TOOK CARE OF FLOCKS AND HERDS. THE COMMANDMENT SPECIFICALLY PROHIBITS ANY SABBATH DAY SHIFTING OF LABORING AWAY FROM NATIVE ISRAELITES TO FOREIGN WORKERS (“NOR THE ALIEN WITHIN YOUR GATES”) OR FROM FREE ISRAELITES TO HIRED WORKERS OR SERVANTS (“NOR YOUR MANSERVANT OR MAIDSERVANT”) OR FROM ADULTS TO CHILDREN (“NOR YOUR SON OR DAUGHTER”). ENVISIONED INSTEAD IS AN EGALITARIAN WORK STOPPAGE THAT BENEFITS EVERYONE AND LEAVES EVERYONE FREE AND READY FOR WORSHIP AND SPIRITUAL EMPHASES. 20:11 THERE COULD HARDLY BE A STRONGER MODEL FOR KEEPING THE SABBATH THAN THAT OF GOD HIMSELF. AND THERE COULD HARDLY BE A MORE IMPRESSIVE PRECEDENT WITHIN HISTORY (AND SOON ENOUGH, WITHIN THE SCRIPTURE ITSELF) THAN THE CREATION ACCOUNT OF GEN 1, WHICH PURPOSELY DESCRIBES CREATION IN TERMS OF SIX DAYS OF LABOR AND ONE DAY OF REST. GOD’S MODEL IN THIS MATTER OBVIATES ALL OBJECTIONS FROM ANYONE THAT HE OR SHE “DOESN’T NEED TO TAKE A DAY OFF” SINCE GOD COULD HARDLY WEAR HIMSELF OUT. THE SABBATH IS NOT PORTRAYED AS A DAY OF RECUPERATION FROM THOSE TOO WEAK TO KEEP WORKING DAY AFTER DAY WITHOUT REST. IT IS PORTRAYED RATHER AS A STOPPAGE GOOD FOR EVERYONE, FOR THE PURPOSE OF REFOCUSING ON HOLINESS (ALL CONCERNS THAT STEM FROM BELONGING TO GOD, WHICH IS WHAT HOLINESS IS) IN ORDER TO ENJOY GOD’S BLESSINGS OF THAT DAY AND ITS POTENTIAL (“THEREFORE THE LORD BLESSED THE SABBATH DAY AND MADE IT HOLY”). THE SABBATH, IN OTHER WORDS, IS DESIGNED TO HELP PEOPLE BECOME SPIRITUALLY STRONGER AND CLOSER TO GOD; WHATEVER IT DOES BY WAY OF HELPING PEOPLE RECUPERATE FROM BEING PHYSICALLY TIRED (AND IT CERTAINLY CAN DO THIS) IS AN INCIDENTAL, RATHER THAN A PRIMARY, BENEFIT. THE CHANGE THE SABBATH BRINGS ABOUT IN ONE’S WEEKLY ROUTINE MAKES IT A REFRESHING DAY RATHER THAN THE ABSENCE OF ACTIVITY THEREIN. INDEED, ONE WHOSE WEEKLY WORK WAS ESSENTIALLY SEDENTARY (A “DESK JOB”) MIGHT BE MORE ACTIVE PHYSICALLY ON THE SABBATH THAN AT ANY OTHER TIME AND STILL COMPLETELY FULFILL ITS OBLIGATIONS REGARDING THE CESSATION OF “LABOR.” THIS DOES NOT MEAN THAT ANY ACTIVITY ON THE SABBATH, AS LONG AS IT WOULD NOT BE ONE’S REGULAR “WORK” ACTIVITY, WOULD BE “HOLY.” BUT IF ONE WERE PHYSICALLY ACTIVE IN PURSUIT OF SERVICE TO GOD AND/OR GODLY SERVICE TO OTHERS, IT WOULD BE ENTIRELY CONSISTENT WITH THE SABBATH LAW TO WORK HARD AT SUCH SORTS OF ACTIVITIES AND BE REASONABLY WORN OUT BY THEM AT THE END OF THE DAY. TO LOVE GOD IS NOT TO HAVE A LAZY DAY ONE DAY A WEEK; RATHER IT IS TO FOCUS ON DOING HIS WILL SPECIALLY ON ONE DAY A WEEK—TO WORSHIP, LEARN, STUDY, CARE, AND STRENGTHEN THE SPIRIT [JOHN 4:23-24].**

**FIFTH WORD/COMMANDMENT: HONOR FATHER [STEPHEN] AND MOTHER [VICTORIA] (20:12)**

**20:12 NOW COMES A COMMANDMENT THAT FOLLOWS LOGICALLY BECAUSE IT IS CONCERNED WITH HONORING PARENTS, WHO HAVE THE AWESOME ROLE IN THE FAMILY OF REPRESENTING GOD TO THEIR CHILDREN. ALTHOUGH THIS WORD/COMMANDMENT REQUIRES CHILDREN TO HONOR THEIR PARENTS IN ALL SORTS OF WAYS LARGE AND SMALL, THERE CAN BE LITTLE DOUBT THAT ITS MOST BASIC INSISTENCE FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF ESTABLISHING A RESPONSIBILITY THAT MIGHT OTHERWISE BE SHIRKED IS TO DEMAND THAT CHILDREN TAKE CARE OF THEIR PARENTS IN THEIR PARENTS’ OLD AGE, WHEN THEY ARE NO LONGER ABLE TO WORK FOR THEMSELVES, AS WELL AS TO HONOR WHATEVER THEIR PARENTS HAVE PRESCRIBED BY WAY OF INHERITANCE FOR THEIR CHILDREN. THUS, THE COMMANDMENT IS FOLLOWED BY THE PROMISE OF LIVING LONG IN THE PROMISED LAND. JUST AS PARENTS WHO HAVE LIVED LONG IN THEIR OWN PERSONAL LIVES NEED TO BE CARED FOR AT THE END OF THOSE LONG LIVES, SO ISRAEL AS A NATION (NOT EVERY INDIVIDUAL THEREIN) WOULD BE ABLE TO ENJOY A LONG LIFE IN THE LAND, GOD WAS GIVING THEM. THIS COMMANDMENT IS THUS LIKE THE ONE THAT PRECEDES IT IN LINKING THE REQUIREMENT TO AN ACTION OF GOD: AS GOD RESTED ON THE CREATION SABBATH, SO INDIVIDUAL ISRAELITES MUST DO SO EACH WEEK IN THEIR OWN FAMILIES; AS GOD PROMISES TO TAKE CARE OF HIS DEPENDENTS, ISRAEL, FOR A LONG TIME IN THE PROMISED LAND, SO INDIVIDUAL ISRAELITES MUST TAKE CARE OF THEIR DEPENDENT PARENTS FOR A LONG TIME, AS NECESSARY, IN THEIR OWN FAMILIES. THE PRIOR COMMANDMENT LOOKS BACK ON THE CREATION SABBATH, WHEREAS THE PRESENT COMMANDMENT LOOKS FORWARD TO THE NATION’S TENURE IN THE LAND OF PROMISE. THERE IS NOT PROMISE HERE OF INDIVIDUALLY LONG-LIFE SPANS. RATHER THE PROMISE REFERS TO GOD’S PROTECTION OF HIS COVENANT PEOPLE IF AND AS LONG AS THEY KEEP HIS COVENANT. AT THIS POINT IN THE TEN WORDS, THE FOCUS SHIFTS FROM WHAT PEOPLE MUST DO TO LOVE GOD WITH THEIR WHOLE HEARTS TO WHAT PEOPLE MUST DO TO LOVE EACH OTHER AS THEY WOULD WANT TO BE LOVED THEMSELVES.**

**SIXTH WORD/COMMANDMENT: YOU MUST NOT MURDER [OR NOT DO ANY UNAUTHORIZED KILLING] (20:13)**

**20:13 THE PRIOR COMMANDMENTS WERE ALL CONCERNED IN ONE WAY OR ANOTHER WITH THE NECESSITY OF HONORING GOD AS A BASIC MEANS OF KEEPING HIS COVENANT. THE COMMANDMENT IS EXPRESSED IN JUST TWO WORDS IN THE HEBREW, EQUIVALENT TO “NEVER MURDER” (SEE BELOW). THE KJV WORDING, “THOU SHALT NOT KILL,” WAS ALWAYS A DEFICIENT TRANSLATION, THOUGH IT COULD BE MORE NEARLY DEFENDED IN THE EARLY SEVENTEENTH CENTURY, WHEN “PUT TO DEATH,” “FALL UPON,” “SMITE,” AND SIMILAR TERMS WERE COMMONLY USED FOR NON-MURDEROUS KILLING OR AUTHORIZED KILLING; SO THE WORD “KILL” MORE OFTEN THAN IT DOES TODAY INCLUDED THE SENSE OF MURDER. THE HEBREW TERM USED HERE (RṢḤ) IS, HOWEVER, SPECIFIC TO PUTTING TO DEATH IMPROPERLY, FOR SELFISH REASONS RATHER THAN WITH AUTHORIZATION (AS KILLING IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE OR KILLING IN DIVINELY ORDAINED HOLY WAR WOULD BE). GOD’S OLD COVENANT PEOPLE, BEING A THEOCRATIC COMMUNITY, WERE DELEGATED THE RIGHT TO TAKE HUMAN LIFE BY HIS COMMAND, EITHER IN THE FORM OF HIS CAPITAL PUNISHMENT LAWS OR HIS DIRECT HOLY WAR CALL. NO ISRAELITE ACTING ON HIS OWN COULD DECIDE THAT HE HAD THE RIGHT TO END SOMEONE’S LIFE. GRAMMATICALLY, THE PROHIBITION EXPRESSED IN THIS AND THE FOLLOWING COMMANDMENTS, THROUGH THE CONSTRUCTION LŌʾ + IMPERFECT VERB FORM, IS PERHAPS MOST IDIOMATICALLY RENDERED “YOU MUST NOT …” OR “YOU CANNOT …” IN MODERN ENGLISH. THIS MODAL SENSE WAS ONCE INHERENT IN ENGLISH IN A WORDING SUCH AS “THOU SHALT NOT”/“YOU SHALL NOT,” BUT IT IS NO LONGER AUTOMATICALLY RECOGNIZABLE THEREIN SO THAT “YOU SHALL NOT” OR “YOU WILL NOT” SOUND ALMOST LIKE PREDICTIONS RATHER THAN THE FIRM PROHIBITIONS THEY ARE IN HEBREW. MOREOVER, THE PROHIBITION HERE AND IN THE FOLLOWING COMMANDMENTS IS NOT EXPRESSED THROUGH THE VETITITIVE (E.G., ʾAL + IMPERFECT), WHICH WOULD REPRESENT A TEMPORARY INJUNCTION AGAINST A BEHAVIOR, BUT THROUGH THE PERMANENT NEGATIVE IMPERATIVE (LŌʾ + IMPERFECT), WHICH COULD BE RENDERED “NEVER MURDER” OR THE LIKE. LITTLE DIFFERENCE SEPARATES THE PRACTICAL OUTWORKING OF THIS COMMAND TODAY FROM ITS ORIGINAL APPLICATION IN ANCIENT ISRAEL. IN THE NEW COVENANT THE STATE TAKES THE ROLES OF ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE AND DECLARATION OF WAR; THE CHURCH CANNOT DO SUCH THINGS. BUT OTHERWISE, AND FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF THE INDIVIDUAL BELIEVER, THE PROHIBITION WORKS EXACTLY THE SAME WAY: NO UNAUTHORIZED “PRIVATE” PERSON OR GROUP HAS THE RIGHT TO END A HUMAN LIFE. MOREOVER, THE BAN ON MURDER HAS NO MODIFYING CONDITIONS: TAKING ONE’S OWN LIFE OR ENDING SOMEONE ELSE’S FOR PURPOSES OF “MERCY” DO NOT QUALIFY AS ALLOWABLE EXCEPTIONS.**

**SEVENTH WORD/COMMANDMENT: YOU MUST NOT COMMIT ADULTERY (20:14)**

**20:14 OTHER PROHIBITIONS OF SEXUAL IMMORALITY AND REGULATIONS FOR SEXUAL PURITY APPEAR LATER IN THE COVENANT STIPULATIONS, BUT THE MOST IMPORTANT AND BASIC OF THEM IS INCLUDED IN THE TEN WORDS/COMMANDMENTS: MARITAL FIDELITY. NO ONE IS ALLOWED TO HAVE SEX WITH ANY MARRIED PERSON EXCEPT HIS OR HER SPOUSE, AND NO MARRIED PERSON IS ALLOWED TO HAVE SEX WITH ANYONE OTHER THAN HIS OR HER SPOUSE. ADULTERY WAS KNOWN IN THE ANCIENT WORLD AS “THE GREAT SIN.” MARRIAGE IS FOUNDATIONAL TO THE CREATION ORDER AND TO HUMAN SOCIETY; HUSBANDS AND WIVES CAN HARDLY FUNCTION FULLY AS ONE FLESH IF THEY DO NOT TRUST EACH OTHER. SEXUAL RELATIONS ARE THE FALL OF MARRIAGE, BUT DIVINE RELATIONS ARE THE RIGHT VIRTUAL SEAL OF A MARRIAGE COVENANT, AND ADULTERY BETRAYS THE EMOTIONAL-PSYCHOLOGICAL INTIMACY THAT SPECIALLY CONNECTS ADULT MEN AND WOMEN WITHIN MARRIAGE. THIS COMMANDMENT DOES NOT EXPLICITLY CONDEMN PREMARITAL SEX, POST-MARITAL SEX (AS BY A WIDOW OR WIDOWER), COHABITATION WITHOUT FORMAL MARRIAGE, BESTIALITY, OR INCEST, ALL OF WHICH ARE DEALT WITH ELSEWHERE IN VARIOUS WAYS; BUT BY IMPLICATION IT CERTAINLY DOES CONDEMN ALL THOSE PRACTICES. THESE OTHER FORMS OF SEX OUTSIDE MARRIAGE ARE INDEED VIOLATIONS OF GOD’S LAWS, BUT IT IS SEX OUTSIDE MARRIAGE INVOLVING MARRIED PEOPLE THAT IS ESPECIALLY THREATENING TO BASIC FAMILY STABILITY AND THUS RECEIVES SPECIAL FOCUS AMONG THE TEN COMMANDMENTS. AGAIN THE PRINCIPLE OF LAW AS PARADIGMATIC IS ESSENTIAL FOR APPRECIATING THE IMPLICATIONS OF THIS COMMAND: REASONABLE AND CAREFUL EXTRAPOLATION FROM THE PARADIGM OF THE ADULTERY LAW YIELDS THE REALIZATION THAT ALL SEX OUTSIDE OF MARRIAGE BY MARRIED PEOPLE, WHETHER BEFORE, DURING, AFTER, OR INSTEAD OF A PERSON’S ACTUAL LEGAL MARRIAGE WOULD BE A VIOLATION OF THE DIVINE COVENANT. LIKEWISE, THE COMMANDMENT AGAINST ADULTERY DOES NOT EXPLICITLY OUTLAW POLYGAMY, A PRACTICE THAT, IN FACT, IS NOT OUTLAWED IN THE HOLY BIBLE. IT IS TOLERATED IN THE OLD TESTAMENT (DEUT 21:15–17) AND DENIGRATED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT (1 TIM 3:2, 12; TITUS 1:6) PARTLY BECAUSE ANCIENT CULTURE ALLOWED IT. CONVERTS TO JUDAISM OR CHRISTIANITY IN THE ANCIENT WORLD THEREFORE OFTEN ENOUGH CAME FROM SITUATIONS OF POLYGAMY, WHERE A CONVERT’S DIVORCING ALL BUT ONE WIFE IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE THE DESIRED MONOGAMY WOULD HAVE REPRESENTED AN OFFENSE AGAINST MARRIAGE GREATER THAN POLYGAMY. SO, POLYGAMY WAS ACCORDINGLY TOLERATED, BUT MONOGAMY IS EVERYWHERE IN SCRIPTURE ASSUMED AS THE IDEAL, AS A CREATION ORDINANCE (GEN 2:24) FIRMLY REINFORCED BY JESUS (MATT 19:5) AND PAUL (EPH 5:31). THE COMMANDMENT ALSO ARGUES, IMPLICITLY, AGAINST DIVORCE. IF MARRIAGE IS SO IMPORTANT THAT IT MUST BE PROTECTED AGAINST ADULTERATION—EVEN THE SORT OF ADULTERATION THAT MIGHT OCCUR IN BRIEF INTERLUDES—IT CERTAINLY IS IMPORTANT ENOUGH TO PROTECT AGAINST DISSOLUTION ALTOGETHER. ACCORDINGLY, DIVORCE CANNOT BE USED AS A MECHANISM TO GET AROUND ADULTERY (DEUT 24:1–4; JER 3:1), IS CONDEMNED IN THE STRONGEST DIVINE TERMS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT (MAL 2:16), AND IN JESUS’ TEACHING REPRESENTS THE EQUIVALENT OF ADULTERY IN ANY SITUATION EXCEPT WHERE ADULTERY ITSELF IS THE JUSTIFIABLE REASON FOR DIVORCE (MATT 5:32; 19:9 AND PAR.).**

**EIGHTH WORD/COMMANDMENT: YOU MUST NOT STEAL (20:15)**

**20:15 STEALING IS TAKING SOMETHING THAT DOES NOT BELONG TO YOU WITHOUT PERMISSION. LEGAL POSSESSION AND PERSONAL OWNERSHIP OF THINGS ARE PERMITTED IMPLICITLY BY THIS COMMANDMENT, WHICH ASSUMES THAT STEALING IS POSSIBLE, SOMETHING THAT WOULD TECHNICALLY NOT BE POSSIBLE IN A COMPLETELY COMMUNAL SOCIETY. THERE ARE, OF COURSE, NO COMPLETELY COMMUNAL SOCIETIES; OWNERSHIP OF THINGS EXISTS IN ALL FAMILIES AND NEIGHBORHOODS AND ENTIRE SOCIETIES, NO MATTER WHAT THEIR ECONOMIC ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE. BUT WITH OWNERSHIP COMES RESPONSIBILITY, AND RESPECT FOR OWNERSHIP IS A RESPONSIBILITY IN ITSELF AS WELL. THIS COMMAND IS REINFORCED BY A VARIETY OF INDIVIDUAL LAWS ON STEALING IN EXODUS (22:1–16), LEVITICUS (LEV 6:2–5; 19:11, 13), AND DEUTERONOMY (24:7). STEALING THREATENS THE SOCIAL ORDER AND CAUSES PAIN TO OTHERS BY UNDERMINING THE ABILITY TO POSSESS WITH SURE ACCESS THINGS THAT ARE USEFUL AND NEEDFUL. THE FOOD THIEF MAKES OTHERS GO HUNGRY; THE WORK ANIMAL THIEF INTERRUPTS FARMING; THE KIDNAPPER TEARS APART A FAMILY; THE CLOTHING THIEF MAKES ANOTHER SUFFER FROM THE SUN OR THE COLD. THIS COMMAND AGAINST STEALING IS ALSO REINFORCED REPEATEDLY IN THE NEW TESTAMENT (MATT 19:18 AND PARALLELS; ROM 2:21; 13:9; 1 COR 6:10; EPH 4:28; TITUS 2:10; 1 PET 4:15).**

**NINTH WORD/COMMANDMENT: YOU MUST NOT GIVE FALSE TESTIMONY (20:16)**

**20:16 THIS COMMANDMENT IS ALSO REINFORCED IN LEV 5:1 (WHERE FALSE TESTIMONY APPEARS TO INCLUDE REFUSING TO DIVULGE PERTINENT INFORMATION AT A TRIAL, THUS CREATING A FALSE IMPRESSION OF WHAT THE FACTS REALLY ARE) AND DEUT 19:18. A DECENT SOCIETY REQUIRES A RELIABLE COURT SYSTEM AND COURT PROCESSES. BECAUSE CRIMES AND DISPUTES DO OCCUR, IT MUST BE THE CASE THAT THEY CAN BE ADJUDICATED AND THE CRIMINAL BEHAVIOR OR UNFAIRNESS THEREBY STOPPED. IF WITNESSES IN A TRIAL, WHETHER CIVIL OR CRIMINAL, DO NOT TELL THE TRUTH, IT IS EXTREMELY DIFFICULT FOR JUDGES TO RENDER PROPER DECISIONS. IN OTHER WORDS, THE COURT SYSTEM OF A NATION DEPENDS ON THE HONESTY OF ITS PEOPLE. THIS IS THE FIRST COMMANDMENT TO EMPLOY THE WORD RĒAʿ, “NEIGHBOR,” IN ITS GENERAL JURIDICAL SENSE OF “ANYONE ELSE YOU HAPPEN TO COME IN CONTACT WITH” RATHER THAN THE MORE-NARROW SENSE OF “SOMEONE LIVING NEAR YOU” (CF. EXOD 3:22; 11:2; 12:4). IN LAWS AND FORMAL RULES, NEIGHBOR HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH PROXIMITY OR FAMILIARITY; YOUR “NEIGHBOR” CONNOTES ANY OTHER HUMAN BEING YOU MAY HAVE DEALINGS WITH, ACTUALLY OR POTENTIALLY. DOES EXTRAPOLATION FROM THE PARADIGMATIC PRINCIPLE OF THIS LAW IMPLY THAT DISHONESTY IN GENERAL, NOT MERELY IN COURT CASES, IS ALSO FORBIDDEN? THE ANSWER MUST SURELY BE YES, REASONING NOT MERELY FROM THE GENERAL CONCEPT OF PARADIGMATIC LAW BUT FROM THE WAY THAT STEALING, FALSE TESTIMONY, AND DISHONESTY IN GENERAL ARE LINKED TOGETHER IN LEV 19:11—NOT PRECISELY IN PARALLEL TO THE WAY THE EIGHTH AND NINTH COMMANDMENTS OCCUR TOGETHER HERE IN THE TEN WORDS BUT IN SUCH A MANNER AS TO SUGGEST THAT THE CONCEPTS OF FALSE TESTIMONY AND DISHONESTY PER SE OVERLAP, JUST AS COMMON SENSE WOULD IMPLY.**

**TENTH WORD/COMMANDMENT: YOU MUST NOT COVET ANOTHER’S POSSESSIONS (20:17)**

**20:17 COVETING (ḤMD) IS DESIRING—WANTING OR CRAVING SOMETHING. THE COMMANDMENT DOES NOT SAY “DO NOT COVET,” WHICH WOULD MAKE NO SENSE SINCE MUCH COVETING IS PERMISSIBLE OR EVEN COMMENDABLE AS LONG AS THE THING BEING COVETED IS SOMETHING A PERSON SHOULD DESIRE AND NOT SOMETHING THAT ALREADY BELONGS TO SOMEONE ELSE EXCLUSIVELY (CF. E.G., COVETING [DESIRING] SOMETHING AS PERFECTLY PROPER AS OAK TREES, ISA 1:29, OR COVETING [DESIRING] SOMETHING AS WONDERFULLY PROPER AS THE MESSIAH, ISA 53:2; THE VERB IS USED OF GOD’S OWN COVETING [DESIRING] OF MOUNT ZIONIN PS 68:16). THEREFORE, THE COMMANDMENT IS NECESSARILY WORDED WITH OBJECTS FOR THE VERB “COVET,” THESE OBJECTS BEING THINGS THAT ONE SHOULD NOT DESIRE BECAUSE THEY ALREADY BELONG TO SOMEONE ELSE. “HOUSE” CAN AS EASILY BE TRANSLATED “FAMILY AND PROPERTY”; OTHER OBJECTS FORBIDDEN TO COVET ARE SOMEONE ELSE’S SPOUSE, SERVANTS, ANIMALS, OR “ANYTHING THAT BELONGS TO YOUR NEIGHBOR.” ALTHOUGH SOME TRADITIONS HAVE SEPARATED THIS COMMANDMENT INTO TWO (COVETING A NEIGHBOR’S “HOUSE” AS SEPARATE FROM COVETING A NEIGHBOR’S WIFE), THERE APPEARS TO BE NO COGENT REASON FOR THIS DIVISION. THE ENTIRE VERSE IS A PROHIBITION AGAINST ANY SORT OF COVETING OF WHAT SOMEONE ELSE ALREADY RIGHTFULLY HAS, WITH ENOUGH EXAMPLES GIVEN AS TO LEAVE NO DOUBT THAT NOTHING PROPERLY OWNED BY SOMEONE ELSE CAN BE COVETED. AGAIN, THE PRINCIPLE OF PARADIGMATIC LAW APPLIES: FROM THE LIST ANY REASONABLE PERSON CAN EXTRAPOLATE TO ALL OTHER INSTANCES OF THINGS THAT CANNOT BE COVETED. THIS COMMANDMENT, LIKE THE PROHIBITION AGAINST STEALING, IMPLIES THAT GOD ALLOWS PEOPLE TO OWN THINGS ONLY BY STEWARDSHIP THAT BELONG TO THEM AND NOT TO OTHERS, GIVEN BY GOD AS A TEMPORAL POSSESSION. ALTHOUGH IT MAY SEEM TO BE BELABORING THE OBVIOUS TO SAY SO, THE FINAL COMMANDMENT INSISTS THAT GOD’S COVENANT PEOPLE REALIZE THAT WISHING TO HAVE GOOD AND PROPER THINGS IS GOOD BUT THAT WISHING TO HAVE THE WRONG THINGS IS BAD. WHAT PEOPLE WISH FOR HAS A MAJOR ROLE TO PLAY IN WHAT KIND OF SOCIETY THEY WILL CREATE. PEOPLE ABLE TO CURTAIL THEIR WISHING, SO THAT IT IS LIMITED TO THINGS THEY SHOULD DESIRE, ARE PEOPLE WHO CONTRIBUTE GOOD TO A SOCIETY; THOSE WHO WANT WHAT THEY CANNOT PROPERLY HAVE UNDERMINE A SOCIETY’S MORAL FIBER. THE COMMANDMENT HAS PENALTIES ATTACHED; IMPROPER COVETING IS HARDLY ENFORCEABLE BY HUMAN BEINGS. GOD HERE CALLS FOR HIS PEOPLE TO TAKE AN APPROACH TO THEIR NEIGHBORS THAT RESPECTS THEM AND THEIR POSSESSIONS—AN APPROACH THEY MUST VOLUNTARILY AGREE TO IF THEY WANT TO PLEASE HIM. COVETING IS THE STARTING POINT OF STEALING (FORBIDDEN BY THE EIGHTH COMMANDMENT) AND, IN THE CASE OF COVETING SOMEONE ELSE’S SPOUSE, ADULTERY (THE SEVENTH COMMANDMENT).**

**THE PEOPLE’S FEAR (20:18–21)**

**18 WHEN THE PEOPLE SAW THE THUNDER AND LIGHTNING AND HEARD THE TRUMPET AND SAW THE MOUNTAIN IN SMOKE, THEY TREMBLED WITH FEAR. THEY STAYED AT A DISTANCE 19 AND SAID TO MOSES, “SPEAK TO US YOURSELF AND WE WILL LISTEN. BUT DO NOT HAVE GOD SPEAK TO US OR WE WILL DIE.” 20 MOSES SAID TO THE PEOPLE, “DO NOT BE AFRAID. GOD HAS COME TO TEST YOU, SO THAT THE FEAR OF GOD WILL BE WITH YOU TO KEEP YOU FROM SINNING.” 21 THE PEOPLE REMAINED AT A DISTANCE, WHILE MOSES APPROACHED THE THICK DARKNESS WHERE GOD WAS.**

**20:18–21 HEARING GOD SPEAK AUDIBLY WAS FRIGHTENING FOR THE ISRAELITES—SO MUCH SO THAT THEY DEMANDED THAT THEREAFTER MOSES SHOULD ALWAYS RELAY GOD’S WORDS TO THEM. THIS MAKES CONSIDERABLE SENSE IN LIGHT OF THE CONSISTENT BIBLICAL WITNESS TO THE EAR-SHATTERING VOLUME OF THE VOICE OF GOD. IN ALL OTHER CASES WHERE GOD IS RECORDED AS SPEAKING AUDIBLY, THE SOUND IS DESCRIBED AS DEAFENINGLY LOUD. MOSES WAS SOMEHOW ABLE TO ENDURE GOD’S VOICE, PRESUMABLY BY SPECIAL DIVINE GRACE, BUT THE AVERAGE ISRAELITE FOUND IT SO TERRIFYING THAT HE WANTED NOTHING MORE OF IT. IT WAS NOT MERELY THE SOUND OF GOD’S WORDS, OF COURSE, THAT HAD SUCH AN EFFECT: “THE PEOPLE SAW THE THUNDER AND LIGHTNING AND HEARD THE TRUMPET AND SAW THE MOUNTAIN IN SMOKE,” AND THAT COMBINATION OF SENSORY DATA ALONG WITH THE VOICE OF GOD ITSELF WAS TOO MUCH FOR THEM, SO “THEY TREMBLED WITH FEAR” AND “STAYED AT A DISTANCE.” THIS WAS NO MERE CHOICE OF CONVENIENCE FOR THE PEOPLE. THEY PERCEIVED THAT THEY COULD NOT REPEATEDLY ENDURE HAVING TO HEAR GOD SPEAK DIRECTLY TO THEM (“DO NOT HAVE GOD SPEAK TO US OR WE WILL DIE,” V. 19). AS AN ACCOMMODATION, MOSES THEREAFTER APPROACHED GOD CLOSELY, BUT THE PEOPLE “STOOD FAR AWAY” (NIV “REMAINED AT A DISTANCE”) AS V. 21 STATES. WHAT CAN BE LEARNED FROM THIS? SIMPLY THAT THE SEXLESS PRESENCE OF GOD IS SO THREATENING TO LESS THAN ENTIRELY HOLY PEOPLE THAT HIS PRESENCE IN THIS WORLD, EVEN AMONG HIS OWN PEOPLE, MUST BE LIMITED SO AS NOT TO OVERWHELM HUMANS. THIS PHENOMENON IS A REFLECTION OF THE CONTRAST BETWEEN GOD’S HOLINESS AND HUMAN SIN. HE CANNOT ABIDE SIN IN HIS PRESENCE, SO THE CLOSER HE IS TO A SINNER, THE MORE DIFFICULT IT IS FOR THE SINNER TO SURVIVE. THUS, THE FULL GLORY OF PERSONAL CONTACT WITH GOD THAT AWAITS BELIEVERS IN HEAVEN IS NOT YET MANIFEST. CHRIST HAS SHOWN THE GLORY OF GOD BUT IN HUMAN DRESS; THE INDWELLING HOLY SPIRIT BRINGS THE PERSON OF GOD INTO THE VERY SPIRIT [JOHN 4:23-24] OF EVERY BELIEVER, BUT HE ARRIVES IN A GENTLE, INVITING MANNER, NOT A FORCING, OVERPOWERING MANNER. THUS, PAUL COULD WARN AGAINST QUENCHING THE SPIRIT BECAUSE HUMAN BEINGS CAN, INDEED, TAKE NEGATIVE ADVANTAGE OF THE SPIRIT’S LIMITED, RESTRICTED PRESENCE AND SIMPLY REFUSE TO GIVE ACTIVE PLACE TO HIM AT ALL. THE ISRAELITE FEAR OF DYING, VOICED BY THEM IN V. 19, MAY ALSO HAVE COME FROM REASONING THAT IF GETTING TOO CLOSE TO GOD WOULD RESULT IN DEATH, AS ALREADY ANNOUNCED IN 19:12–13, 20–24, THEN HEARING THE VOICE OF GOD AS IF HE WERE SHOUTING IN ONE’S EAR MIGHT SUGGEST A SIMILAR SORT OF POTENTIALLY FATAL PROXIMITY. AT ANY RATE, MOSES REASSURED THE PEOPLE WITH THE ASSERTION (V. 20) THAT GOD’S CLOSENESS WAS A MEANS OF TESTING THEM TO SEE IF THEY REALLY WOULD BE AFRAID OF DISOBEYING HIM BY SINNING (“GOD HAS COME TO TEST YOU, SO THAT THE FEAR OF GOD WILL BE WITH YOU TO KEEP YOU FROM SINNING”). IN OTHER WORDS, IT WAS AN ALTOGETHER GOOD THING THAT THE PEOPLE WERE TERRIFIED OF GOD—THEIR REACTION INDICATED THAT THEY WOULD BE AFRAID OF OFFENDING HIM THROUGH SIN, AND THUS THEIR FEAR WOULD FUNCTION AS A DISCIPLINE TO KEEP THEM FROM SIN. THIS IS, IN FACT, ALWAYS THE VALUE OF THE MUCH-ENCOURAGED FEAR OF GOD IN SCRIPTURE. BEING AFRAID OF THE CONSEQUENCES OF DISOBEYING GOD IS AMONG THE MOST HELPFUL ATTITUDES ANY BELIEVER CAN POSSIBLY HAVE. THOSE WHO TRY TO SUGGEST THAT THE VARIOUS COMMANDS TO FEAR GOD ARE MERELY ENCOURAGEMENTS TO HOLD HIM IN SOME SORT OF HONOR OR AWE COMPLETELY MISS THE POINT THAT FEAR IS A BENEFICIAL GUIDING MECHANISM FOR HUMAN BEHAVIOR. THE POINT OF V. 21 IS THAT MOSES KEPT CLIMBING THE MOUNTAIN, GETTING CLOSER AND CLOSER TO THE TOP WHERE THE DARK CLOUD OF GOD’S GLORY WAS LOCATED (19:18–20) AND WHERE MOSES HAD ALREADY BEEN BEFORE HE HAD DESCENDED TO HEAR THE TEN WORDS ALONG WITH THE PEOPLE (19:21, 24–25) WHEREAS THE PEOPLE REMAINED AT THE BASE OF THE MOUNTAIN (19:17) AS INSTRUCTED IN 19:12–13, 21–22, 24. THUS MOSES (ALONE OR WITH THOSE ALLOWED SPECIALLY TO ACCOMPANY HIM SUCH AS AARON; CF. 19:24) WENT GENUINELY CLOSE TO THE SPECIALLY MANIFESTED SEXLESS PRESENCE OF GOD. ANY OTHERS COULD NOT, BY DIVINE COMMAND AND BY THEIR OWN RECOGNITION, AND THEREFORE THEY DID NOT. THIS FORMS THE PATTERN FOR FUTURE PASSAGES RELATED TO RECEPTION OF THE LAW AT SINAI: MOSES HEARD IT DIRECTLY, AND THE PEOPLE HEARD IT INDIRECTLY FROM HIM.**

**RESPONSE TO GOD’S COMMANDS: PROPER WORSHIP (20:22–26)**

**22 THEN THE LORD SAID TO MOSES, “TELL THE ISRAELITES THIS: ‘YOU HAVE SEEN FOR YOURSELVES THAT I HAVE SPOKEN TO YOU FROM HEAVEN: 23 DO NOT MAKE ANY GODS TO BE ALONGSIDE ME; DO NOT MAKE FOR YOURSELVES GODS OF SILVER OR GODS OF GOLD. 24 “‘MAKE AN ALTAR OF EARTH FOR ME AND SACRIFICE ON IT YOUR BURNT OFFERINGS AND FELLOWSHIP OFFERINGS, YOUR SHEEP AND GOATS AND YOUR CATTLE. WHEREVER I CAUSE MY NAME TO BE HONORED, I WILL COME TO YOU AND BLESS YOU. 25 IF YOU MAKE AN ALTAR OF STONES FOR ME, DO NOT BUILD IT WITH DRESSED STONES, FOR YOU WILL DEFILE IT IF YOU USE A TOOL ON IT. 26 AND DO NOT GO UP TO MY ALTAR ON STEPS, LEST YOUR NAKEDNESS BE EXPOSED ON IT.’ 20:22–23 PROPER WORSHIP INVOLVES A COMBINATION OF THINGS THAT MUST NOT BE DONE AND THINGS THAT MUST BE DONE. PARAMOUNT AMONG THINGS THAT MUST NOT BE DONE IN THE BIBLICAL DEFINITION OF WORSHIP ARE PUTTING ANY OTHER GODS BEFORE STEPHEN YAHWEH AND PRACTICING IDOLATRY, THAT IS, THAT WHICH IS FOUND IN THE INSTRUCTION OF THE FIRST TWO OF THE TEN WORDS/COMMANDMENTS. IN LIGHT OF THEIR IMPORTANCE, THESE FIRST TWO COMMANDMENTS ARE REPEATED IMMEDIATELY IN VV. 22–23. BUT THAT IS PROBABLY NOT THE ONLY REASON FOR INCLUSION OF THE FIRST TWO OF THE TEN (WITH SLIGHTLY MODIFIED WORDING). RATHER, THE FIRST TWO FUNCTION AS AN INCIPIT (THE FIRST WORDS OF A PIECE USED AS A SORT OF TITLE, OR WAY OF REFERRING TO THE WHOLE), SUGGESTING THE WHOLE TEN. THIS PATTERN IS VIRTUALLY IDENTICAL TO THAT SEEN ALREADY IN 15:1–21, WHERE THE FULL TEXT OF THE SONG OF MOSES WAS PRESENTED (15:1–18); AND THEN AS PART OF A SUMMARY OF THE “RESPONSE,” THE INCIPIT WAS CITED AS A WAY OF SAYING THAT MIRIAM TAUGHT THE SAME SONG TO THE WOMEN OF ISRAEL (15:21).86 IN EFFECT, THEN, THE POINT GOD MADE TO MOSES MAY BE PARAPHRASED THUS: “TELL THE ISRAELITES, ‘YOU HAVE SEEN FOR YOURSELVES HOW I HAVE SPOKEN THE TEN WORDS/COMMANDMENTS TO YOU FROM HEAVEN.’” IN THIS REMINDER TO THE ISRAELITES OF WHAT THEY HAD-JUST, SEEN AND HEARD, FOUR FACTORS ARE PROMINENT. (1) MOSES WAS NOW THE INTERMEDIARY, SO GOD SPOKE THROUGH HIM INSTEAD OF DIRECTLY TO THE PEOPLE (“THE LORD SAID TO MOSES, “TELL THE ISRAELITES …”). (2) THE ISRAELITES WERE WITNESSES TO THEIR OWN OBLIGATION (CF. JOSH 24:22; MATT 23:31) BECAUSE THEY HAD SEEN (OR PERCEIVED, I.E., SEEN AND HEARD) FOR THEMSELVES THE WHOLE PROCESS. (3) GOD HAD “SPOKEN … FROM HEAVEN” TO THEM; HE WAS NOT MERELY SOME GOD WHO LIVED ATOP MOUNT SINAI, BUT HIS PRESENCE THERE WAS A LOCALIZED MANIFESTATION OF HIMSELF, WHOSE REAL DWELLING PLACE IS HEAVEN. (4) THEY HAD TO KEEP THE TEN WORDS/COMMANDMENTS, OF WHICH THE FIRST TWO ARE SUMMARIZED AS AN INCIPIT REFERENCE TO ALL TEN. VERSE 23 WOULD MORE PRECISELY BE TRANSLATED: “YOU MUST NOT MAKE GODS OF SILVER OR GODS OF GOLD ALONG WITH ME. YOU MUST NOT MAKE THEM FOR YOURSELVES.” THIS “COMBINED” WAY OF SUMMARIZING THE FIRST TWO COMMANDMENTS IS ONE OF THE REASONS FOR THEIR BEING TREATED AS ONE IN SOME TRADITIONS, BUT IN FACT IT DOES NOT VITIATE AGAINST THEIR BEING SEPARATE COMMANDMENTS. RATHER, THIS BRIEF SUMMARY HELPS UNDERSTAND THE FIRST TWO COMMANDMENTS IN ANOTHER WAY: BY USING “ALONG WITH ME” (ʾITTÎ) AS A SYNONYM FOR THE EARLIER ʿAL-PĀNĀY (V. 3), IT HELPS DEFINE THE EARLIER TERM AS A WAY OF DEMANDING MONOTHEISM RATHER THAN SIMPLY HENOTHEISM. MENTIONING “GODS OF SILVER OR GODS OF GOLD” REPRESENTS A SYNECDOCHE AND DOES NOT IMPLY THAT THESE METALS WERE THE ONLY MATERIALS FROM WHICH IDOLS WERE MADE. BUT SINCE THEY WERE THE MOST COMMON, THEY STOOD FOR ALL MATERIALS AND HELPED THE ISRAELITES REMEMBER THAT NO IDOL—NO MATTER HOW LOVELY IN APPEARANCE OR EXPENSIVE IN COMPOSITION—COULD BE WORSHIPED AS REPRESENTING A GOD. BEAUTIFUL, EXPENSIVE THINGS CANNOT BE EXCLUDED FROM THE COMMAND AGAINST IDOLATRY BY THE ARGUMENT THAT THEY ARE “APPROPRIATE TO GOD OR THAT THEY “CALL HIM TO MIND BECAUSE THEIR EXCELLENCE SUGGESTS HIS EXCELLENCE.” THAT SUCH A PROHIBITION WOULD NEED TO BE REPEATED VIRTUALLY IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE TEN COMMANDMENTS HAD BEEN GIVEN IS EVIDENCED BY AARON’S CONSTRUCTION OF THE GOLDEN CALF DAYS OR WEEKS LATER (CHAP. 32). 20:24–26 WORSHIP IS THE FIRST AND MOST BASIC RESPONSE OF ANY BELIEVER TO HIS OR HER SAVIOR AND LORD. ALTARS WERE NECESSARY FOR SACRIFICES, WHICH WERE IN TURN NECESSARY FOR WORSHIP. AT THIS EARLY POINT IN THE COVENANT, GOD GAVE THE ISRAELITES A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF ALTAR CONSTRUCTION IN ANTICIPATION OF THEIR NEED TO WORSHIP HIM PROPERLY. NOW THAT HE WAS BECOMING THEIR COVENANT GOD, IT WAS IMPORTANT THAT THEY BE ABLE TO RESPOND FULLY TO HIM IN WORSHIP, NOT MERELY REPEATING THE PRACTICES OF THE PAST OR SIMPLY BORROWING FROM PAGANS THE CONCEPTS AND PROCEDURES OF WORSHIP AND SACRIFICE. THE ISRAELITES HAD ALREADY EXPERIENCED CONSTRUCTING AND WORSHIPING AT AN ALTAR (EXOD 17:15). THE USE OF ALTARS HAD SHOWN ITSELF VERY EARLY, INDEED WAS ASSUMED FROM THE START, IN PATRIARCHAL TRADITION (GEN 8:20; 12:7; 13:4, 18; 22:9; 26:25; 33:20; 35:1–7), AND ISRAEL WOULD EVENTUALLY RECEIVE INSTRUCTIONS FOR A FAR MORE ELABORATE ALTAR TO BECOME A PERMANENT, PORTABLE PART OF THE TABERNACLE ACCOUTREMENTS (EXOD 27:1–8). MEANWHILE, HOWEVER, THERE WAS NEED FOR AN ALTAR THAT COULD BE BUILT QUICKLY AND SIMPLY SO THAT THE ISRAELITES COULD COMMENCE WORSHIPING AS A UNITED COVENANT COMMUNITY. MOSES BUILT SUCH AN ALTAR, AS DESCRIBED HERE, AND AS SOON AS THE ISRAELITES HAD GIVEN THEIR ASSENT TO THE “COVENANT CODE,” THEY BEGAN OFFERINGS ON THAT ALTAR, AS NARRATED IN 24:3–8. THE INITIAL ALTAR, GOD WANTED WAS VERY SIMPLE: MADE OF DIRT (“AN ALTAR OF EARTH,” V. 24) OR OPTIONALLY OF STONE THAT WAS NOT CUT, SHAPED STONE BUT SIMPLY FOUND STONE CRUDELY FITTED TOGETHER (“DO NOT BUILD IT WITH DRESSED STONES, FOR YOU WILL DEFILE IT IF YOU USE A TOOL ON IT”). THE INSISTENCE ON A SIMPLE—EVEN PRIMITIVE—ALTAR RELATES TO TWO FACTORS: HOLINESS AND IDOLATRY. HOLINESS IS BELONGING TO GOD; THE ALTAR MUST BE HIS AND HIS ALONE, A PART OF THE MEANS BY WHICH HE ACCEPTS UNHOLY PEOPLE AND MAKES THEM HOLY, THROUGH THE TRANSFERENCE OF GUILT FROM THEM TO AN ANIMAL. THEREFORE, THE ALTAR COULD NOT BE SOMETHING OF WHICH HUMANS COULD TAKE OWNERSHIP BECAUSE THEY SHAPED IT AND FINISHED IT WITH THE SAME SORTS OF TOOLS THEY MIGHT USE FOR ANY MUNDANE MASONRY PROJECT. LIKEWISE, IT MUST NOT BE FANCY ENOUGH TO BECOME LIKE OR TO FUNCTION AS AN IDOL, A THING THAT HUMAN HANDS HAD MADE YET WAS REVERED AS POSSESSING DIVINE QUALITIES. THIS ALTAR MUST BE SO SIMPLE, MADE OF NATURAL ELEMENTS THAT WERE SIMPLY ASSEMBLED, THAT NO ONE WOULD MAKE THE MISTAKE OF IDENTIFYING IT AS HAVING IN ITSELF, INTRINSICALLY, NUMINOUS OR THEOPHORIC CHARACTER. THE ALTAR MUST BE OF THE MINIMAL SORT OF CONSTRUCTION THAT WOULD MAKE IT FUNCTIONAL WITHOUT BECOMING AN OBJECT OF APPRECIATION OR VENERATION IN ITSELF, SOMETHING THAT IN THE MIND OF A WORSHIPER MIGHT SOMEHOW RIVAL OR SUBSTITUTE FOR GOD. ADDITIONALLY, IT MUST NOT BECOME IN ITSELF A THREAT TO OR POLLUTION OF STEPHEN YAHWEH’S OWN HOLINESS, AS THINGS THAT ARE PARTIAL OR DISMEMBERED OR INCOMPLETE CAN SOMETIMES DO. IN THE SAME WAY THAT AN ANIMAL THAT WAS SACRIFICED WAS TO BE FULL AND COMPLETE (NOT MAIMED, SICK, OR ALREADY DISMEMBERED BEFORE BEING BROUGHT FOR SACRIFICE), SO THE STONES OF A STONE ALTAR MUST BE WHOLE AND COMPLETE. MOREOVER, IT COULD NOT EVEN HAVE STEPS (V. 26). IN ANCIENT TIMES MOST PEOPLE DID NOT WEAR WHAT WE COULD CALL UNDERWEAR; SO EVEN THOUGH PRIESTS EVENTUALLY WORE UNDERGARMENTS (28:42), THERE WOULD ALWAYS BE THE RISK, AT THIS EARLY STAGE PARTICULARLY, THAT A WORSHIPER’S OR A PRIEST’S GENITAL-DEFICATORY AREA WOULD BE “EXPOSED” TO THE ALTAR, INSULTING GOD. INSTEAD, THE ALTAR WOULD BE BUILT OF DIRT JUST TAMPED TOGETHER OR CRUDE STONES FITTED TOGETHER INTO A WAIST-HIGH RECTANGLE UPON WHICH WOOD COULD BE LAID AND FIRES BUILT TO COOK THE MEAT OFFERED THEREON—THE SIMPLEST OF OUTDOOR GRILLS OR BARBECUES, AS IT WERE, FOR THE SIMPLE PURPOSE OF COOKING THE MEAT OF AN ANIMAL TO WHOM THE GUILT OF THE WORSHIPERS HAD BEEN TRANSFERRED.**

**THE PRINCIPLES OF THE COVENANT (5:1–6:25) ---DEUTERONOMY**

**THE INTRODUCTION HAS ALREADY ADDRESSED THE MATTER OF ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN COVENANT TEXTS AND THEIR STANDARD FORM, ESPECIALLY THOSE OF HITTITE SUZERAIN-VASSAL TYPES, AND HAS ARGUED THAT THE BOOK OF DEUTERONOMY FITS THAT PATTERN IN ITS OVERALL STRUCTURE. TWO OF THE MAJOR ELEMENTS, IT WAS NOTED, ARE LISTS OF STIPULATIONS, THE FIRST OF A GENERAL, PRINCIPAL NATURE AND THE SECOND OF A MORE SPECIFIC AND APPLICATIONAL KIND. THAT IS, THE FIRST SPELLED OUT IN BROAD STROKES THE KINDS OF ACTIONS AND REACTIONS THE GREAT KING EXPECTED OF HIS VASSAL, AND THE OTHER OFFERED EXAMPLES OF HOW THESE GENERAL EXPECTATIONS COULD AND SHOULD BE WORKED OUT IN EVERYDAY LIFE WITHIN THE RELATIONSHIP. WHILE A GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE EXISTS BETWEEN DEUTERONOMY AND THE SECULAR TREATY TEXTS, ESPECIALLY IN FORM, THERE ARE SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES AS WELL. AMONG THESE ARE THE NARRATIVE SECTIONS AND THE EXTENSIVE PARENESIS, BOTH OF WHICH ARE LACKING IN THE EXTRABIBLICAL MODELS. IT IS IMPORTANT TO NOTE HERE, MOREOVER, THAT DEUTERONOMY, IN ADDITION TO BEING A COVENANT TEXT, IS ALSO A LAW CODE, OR, MORE PRECISELY, CONTAINS A LAW CODE. THE GENERAL STIPULATION SECTION (5:1–11:32) AND THE SPECIFIC STIPULATION SECTION (12:1–26:15) FUNCTION AS SUCH A LAW CODE AND THUS SERVE BOTH IN THIS CAPACITY AND IN THAT OF COVENANT STIPULATION. TO PUT IT MORE SUCCINCTLY, THE STIPULATIONS OF THE DEUTERONOMIC COVENANT CONSTITUTE THE LAW CODE FOR THE NATION ISRAEL THAT WAS ABOUT TO ENTER THE NEW CONDITIONS AND EXPECTATIONS OF LIFE IN THE LAND OF PROMISE. THIS IS WHY THE FOLLOWING PRINCIPLES RESEMBLE BOTH LEGAL STATUTES AND COVENANT STIPULATIONS AT ONE AND THE SAME TIME.**

**THE OPENING EXHORTATION (5:1–5)**

**1 MOSES SUMMONED ALL ISRAEL AND SAID: HEAR, O ISRAEL, THE DECREES AND LAWS I DECLARE IN YOUR HEARING TODAY. LEARN THEM AND BE SURE TO FOLLOW THEM. 2 THE LORD OUR GOD MADE A COVENANT WITH US AT HOREB. 3 IT WAS NOT WITH OUR FATHERS THAT THE LORD MADE THIS COVENANT, BUT WITH US, WITH ALL OF US WHO ARE ALIVE HERE TODAY. 4 THE LORD SPOKE TO YOU FACE TO FACE OUT OF THE FIRE ON THE MOUNTAIN. 5 (AT THAT TIME I STOOD BETWEEN THE LORD AND YOU TO DECLARE TO YOU THE WORD OF THE LORD, BECAUSE YOU WERE AFRAID OF THE FIRE AND DID NOT GO UP THE MOUNTAIN.) AND HE SAID: 5:1 AT LAST THE TIME ARRIVED FOR MOSES ACTUALLY TO ARTICULATE THE GREAT COVENANT PRINCIPLES BY WHICH ISRAEL WAS TO LIVE IN THE LAND OF CANAAN AS THE SERVANT PEOPLE OF STEPHEN YAHWEH. HE THEREFORE CONVENED THEM IN THE VALLEY NEAR BETH PEOR (CF. 4:46) AND, IN STRONG HORTATORY LANGUAGE, COMMANDED THEM TO HEAR (I.E., OBEY) THE “DECREES AND LAWS” (THE ḤUQQÎM AND MIŠPĀṬÎM),4 THE VERY ELEMENTS OF COVENANT REQUIREMENT HE WAS ABOUT TO DELIVER (ʾĀNŌKÎ DŌBĒR) TO THEM. THE MEANING OF OBEDIENCE IS EXPANDED BY THE SECOND SET OF COMMANDS: “LEARN THEM AND BE CAREFUL TO DO THEM” (V. 1). 5:2 THE PRECISE IDENTITY OF THE COVENANT MOSES HAD IN MIND IS IMMEDIATELY CLARIFIED BY HIS REFERRING TO IT AS THE COVENANT MADE AT HOREB (V. 2; CF. 1:2, 6). THUS, WHAT WAS ABOUT TO BE REVEALED WAS NOT SOMETHING RADICALLY NEW AND DIFFERENT BUT SIMPLY A REAFFIRMATION OR RENEWAL OF WHAT HAD ALREADY BEEN GIVEN. IN LINE WITH SECULAR COVENANT ARRANGEMENTS, EACH NEW GENERATION OF COVENANT PARTNERS MUST SUBSCRIBE TO THE TERMS SWORN TO BY THEIR RESPECTIVE ANCESTORS, THOUGH, OBVIOUSLY, CHANGING TIMES AND CIRCUMSTANCES WOULD DICTATE THE NEED FOR AMENDMENTS OR QUALIFICATIONS OF THE ORIGINAL STIPULATIONS. THE COVENANT ABOUT TO BE STATED WAS THE OLD HOREB PACT BUT, AS WILL BE SEEN, THE OLD PACT WITH NEW WRINKLES. 5:3 NOT ONLY IS THE COVENANT REFERRED TO HERE THE SAME AS THAT AT HOREB, BUT IT IS ONLY THAT AND NOT ANYTHING ANTERIOR TO IT. “IT WAS NOT WITH OUR FATHERS,” MOSES SAID, “THAT THE LORD MADE THIS COVENANT, BUT WITH US” (V. 3). THIS RULES OUT THE IDENTIFICATION OF THE DEUTERONOMIC COVENANT WITH THE PATRIARCHAL AND, IN FACT, DRAWS A CLEAR LINE OF DEMARCATION BETWEEN THE TWO. THIS IS IN LINE WITH THE GENERALLY RECOGNIZED THEOLOGICAL FACT THAT THE HOREB-DEUTERONOMY COVENANT IS BY BOTH FORM AND FUNCTION DIFFERENT FROM THE SO-CALLED ABRAHAMIC. THE LATTER IS IN THE NATURE OF AN IRREVOCABLE AND UNCONDITIONAL GRANT MADE BY THE LORD TO THE PATRIARCHS, ONE CONTAINING PROMISES OF LAND, SEED, AND BLESSING. THE FORMER IS A SUZERAIN-VASSAL ARRANGEMENT BETWEEN THE LORD AND ISRAEL DESIGNED TO REGULATE ISRAEL’S LIFE AS THE PROMISED NATION WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT. THE EXISTENCE OF ISRAEL IS UNCONDITIONAL, BUT ITS ENJOYMENT OF THE BLESSING OF GOD AND ITS SUCCESSFUL ACCOMPLISHMENT OF THE PURPOSES OF GOD ARE DEPENDENT ON ITS FAITHFUL OBEDIENCE TO THE COVENANT MADE AT HOREB. THUS, THE COVENANT IN VIEW HERE IS NOT THE SAME AS THAT MADE WITH THE FATHERS (I.E., THE PATRIARCHAL ANCESTORS), BUT IT (AND THAT AT HOREB) FINDS ITS ROOTS THERE AND IS RELATED TO IT IN A SUBSIDIARY WAY. FOR MOSES TO SAY THAT THE HOREB COVENANT WAS MADE “WITH US” DOES NOT REQUIRE THAT ALL WITH WHOM IT WAS MADE THIRTY-EIGHT YEARS EARLIER WERE STILL ALIVE OR THAT ALL WHO WERE PRESENTLY HEARING HIM WERE LIVING THEN. THIS IS MANIFESTLY NOT THE CASE, FOR THOUSANDS HAD DIED IN THE INTERIM (CF. 2:14, 16; NUM 16:49; 25:9), AND MANY MORE THOUSANDS HAD BEEN BORN SINCE THE GIVING OF THE LAW. THIS IS MERELY THE USE OF CORPORATE LANGUAGE, THE RECOGNITION THAT ISRAEL AS AN ENTITY WAS AT HOREB THOUGH MULTIPLIED THOUSANDS OF INDIVIDUAL ISRAELITES MAY NOT HAVE BEEN. 5:4–5 IN KEEPING WITH THIS IDEA OF “CORPORATE SOLIDARITY,” THE LAWGIVER WENT ON TO RECOUNT HOW THE LORD HAD SPOKEN TO “YOU” (I.E., THE NATION) OUT OF THE FIRE (V. 4; CF. 4:33) AND HOW MOSES HAD MEDIATED BETWEEN THE LORD AND THE PEOPLE ON THAT TERRIFYING OCCASION (V. 5; CF. EXOD 19:16, 21–24; 24:1–2). SPECIFICALLY, MOSES WAS ON THE MOUNTAIN, SURROUNDED BY THE THEOPHANIC GLORY OF GOD, IN ORDER TO SERVE AS A CONDUIT OF DIVINE REVELATION, THE “WORD OF THE LORD” DELIVERED THEN AND ABOUT TO BE REPEATED NOW.**

**THE TEN COMMANDMENTS (5:6–21)**

**THE TECHNICAL TERM FOR THIS COLLECTION OF STATUTES, THE “TEN WORDS,” DOES NOT OCCUR HERE, BUT THEY CLEARLY ARE WHAT WAS IN MIND WHEN THE FORMULA WAS USED ELSEWHERE (CF. EXOD 34:28; DEUT 4:13; 10:4). THE FACT THAT THEY WERE INSCRIBED ON TWO STONE TABLETS (4:13) SUGGESTS TO MANY SCHOLARS THAT SOME OF THE COMMANDMENTS WERE CONTAINED ON ONE TABLET AND THE REST ON THE SECOND. OTHERS, HOWEVER, MAINTAIN, IN LINE WITH COVENANT PRACTICE, THAT ALL TEN WERE ENGRAVED ON EACH. THAT IS, THEY WERE DUPLICATES WITH EACH PARTY TO THE COVENANT RETAINING A COPY FOR HIS OWN ARCHIVES. THIS APPEARS TO BE A LIKELY CONSTRUAL OF THE FACTS GIVEN THE ANALOGIES TO EXTRABIBLICAL DOCUMENTS.**

**BUT THE TRADITION THAT THE LIST OF COMMANDMENTS WAS DIVIDED INTO TWO ALSO HAS SOME SUPPORT. FIRST, BOTH TABLETS WERE WRITTEN ON BOTH THE OBVERSE AND REVERSE (EXOD 32:15). WHILE THIS PROVES NOTHING AND MAY ONLY MEAN THAT FOUR SURFACES IN ALL WERE NEEDED FOR ALL TEN COMMANDMENTS, THE VIEW THAT THE TABLETS WERE DUPLICATES LEAVES ONLY TWO SURFACES FOR EACH. WHAT WAS ON THE FRONT AND WHAT WAS ON THE BACK OF EACH REMAINS AT ISSUE. ONE SOLUTION IS THAT SINCE THE COMMANDMENTS RELATE TO TWO DIMENSIONS—THE HUMAN TO GOD (THE VERTICAL) AND THE HUMAN TO HUMAN (THE HORIZONTAL)—THE FORMER WERE ON ONE SIDE AND THE LATTER ON THE OTHER. THIS IS ATTRACTIVE BUT LACKS ANY ANCIENT PROOF. IN ANY CASE THE CONFIGURATION OF THE TABLETS AND THEIR CONTENTS IS ALMOST IRRELEVANT TO THE ANALYSIS THAT SUGGESTS THE VERTICAL AND HORIZONTAL DIMENSIONS SUGGESTED ABOVE. THE LAW INDEED ADDRESSES THESE TWO ASPECTS, NOT ONLY HERE BUT THROUGHOUT THE MOSAIC CORPUS. IN FACT, THE “GREATEST LAW,” AS JESUS DEFINED IT, WAS TO LOVE GOD WITH ALL ONE’S HEART, SOUL, AND MIND; AND, HE SAID, THE SECOND WAS LIKE IT—LOVE ONE’S NEIGHBOR AS ONESELF. “ALL THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS HANG ON THESE TWO COMMANDMENTS” (MATT 22:37–40). IT IS MOST APPROPRIATE THEN TO CONSIDER DEUT 5:6–15 FIRST AND THEN 5:16–21.**

**THE COMMANDMENTS PERTAINING TO HUMANKIND’S RELATIONSHIP TO GOD (5:6–15)**

**6 “I AM THE LORD YOUR GOD, WHO BROUGHT YOU OUT OF EGYPT, OUT OF THE LAND OF SLAVERY. 7 “YOU SHALL HAVE NO OTHER GODS BEFORE ME. 8 “YOU SHALL NOT MAKE FOR YOURSELF AN IDOL IN THE FORM OF ANYTHING IN HEAVEN ABOVE OR ON THE EARTH BENEATH OR IN THE WATERS BELOW. 9 YOU SHALL NOT BOW DOWN TO THEM OR WORSHIP THEM; FOR I, THE LORD YOUR GOD, AM A JEALOUS GOD, PUNISHING THE CHILDREN FOR THE SIN OF THE FATHERS TO THE THIRD AND FOURTH GENERATION OF THOSE WHO HATE ME, 10 BUT SHOWING LOVE TO A THOUSAND [GENERATIONS] OF THOSE WHO LOVE ME AND KEEP MY COMMANDMENTS. 11 “YOU SHALL NOT MISUSE THE NAME OF THE LORD YOUR GOD, FOR THE LORD WILL NOT HOLD ANYONE GUILTLESS WHO MISUSES HIS NAME.**

**12 “OBSERVE THE SABBATH DAY BY KEEPING IT HOLY, AS THE LORD YOUR GOD HAS COMMANDED YOU. 13 SIX DAYS YOU SHALL LABOR AND DO ALL YOUR WORK, 14 BUT THE SEVENTH DAY IS A SABBATH TO THE LORD YOUR GOD. ON IT YOU SHALL NOT DO ANY WORK, NEITHER YOU, NOR YOUR SON OR DAUGHTER, NOR YOUR MANSERVANT OR MAIDSERVANT, NOR YOUR OX, YOUR DONKEY OR ANY OF YOUR ANIMALS, NOR THE ALIEN WITHIN YOUR GATES, SO THAT YOUR MANSERVANT AND MAIDSERVANT MAY REST, AS YOU DO. 15 REMEMBER THAT YOU WERE SLAVES IN EGYPT AND THAT THE LORD YOUR GOD BROUGHT YOU OUT OF THERE WITH A MIGHTY HAND AND AN OUTSTRETCHED ARM. THEREFORE THE LORD YOUR GOD HAS COMMANDED YOU TO OBSERVE THE SABBATH DAY.**

**IN ANALYZING THE TEN COMMANDMENTS FROM A STRICTLY FORM-CRITICAL POINT OF VIEW, IT IS NECESSARY TO RECOGNIZE THAT AT LEAST TWO ASPECTS MUST BE CONSIDERED—THAT OF THE FORM OF THE INDIVIDUAL LAWS AND THAT OF THE STRUCTURE OF THE SECTION AS A WHOLE. ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT AND POSITIVE CONTRIBUTIONS MADE BY FORM CRITICS HAS BEEN THE DISTINCTION TO BE SEEN BETWEEN APODICTIC LAW AND CASUISTIC LAW. THE FORMER, CHARACTERISTIC ESPECIALLY OF THE DECALOGUE BOTH HERE AND IN EXOD 20, CONSISTS OF THE STATEMENT OF EXPECTATIONS OR PROHIBITIONS WITHOUT SPECIFYING ANY PARTICULAR QUALIFICATIONS OR PRESCRIBING ANY KIND OF SANCTION IN THE EVENT OF INFRACTION. THE REGULAR PATTERN IN THE STATEMENT OF EXPECTATION (“YOU SHALL”) IS EITHER THE SIMPLE IMPERATIVE FOLLOWED BY THE DEMAND (AS IN THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT, V. 16) OR ITS EQUIVALENT, THE INFINITIVE ABSOLUTE (AS THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT, V. 12). THE COMMANDMENTS THAT EXPRESS PROHIBITION DO SO WITH THE NEGATIVE PARTICLE LŌʾ PLUS THE IMPERFECT OF THE VERB. THE CASUISTIC LAW, ON THE OTHER HAND, DEALS WITH SPECIFIC CASES OR POTENTIAL CASES. THERE ARE SCORES OF THESE THROUGHOUT THE PENTATEUCH, PARTICULARLY IN THE BOOK OF THE COVENANT (EXOD 20:1–23:33) AND IN DEUT 12:1–26:19, THE SO-CALLED SPECIFIC STIPULATIONS OF THE DEUTERONOMIC COVENANT. THEY CONSIST USUALLY OF TWO MAIN SECTIONS, A PROTASIS AND AN APODOSIS, THE FORMER RAISING THE CONTINGENCY (“IF ONE DOES THUS AND SO”) AND THE LATTER THE EXPECTED RESULT (“THEN HERE IS WHAT SHOULD HAPPEN”). MORE TECHNICALLY PUT, THE FORM OF SUCH A LAW IS A DEPENDENT CLAUSE INTRODUCED BY A PARTICLE SUCH AS KÎ OR ʾIM (“IF, WHEN, GIVEN THAT,” ETC.) FOLLOWED BY THE MAIN CLAUSE USUALLY INTRODUCED BY THE PARTICLE WAW (“THEN” OR THE LIKE). THESE KINDS WILL RECEIVE MORE DETAILED ATTENTION AS THEY OCCUR IN SUBSEQUENT DISCUSSION. AS FOR THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE APODICTIC AND CASUISTIC LAW FORMS IN THE COVENANT TEXTS, AT THE RISK OF OVERSIMPLIFICATION ONE MIGHT SAY THAT THE APODICTIC SERVE AS GREAT, FUNDAMENTAL COVENANT PRINCIPLES WHEREAS THE CASUISTIC ARE APPLICATIONS OR EVEN EXPLICATIONS OF THESE PRINCIPLES IN THE SPECIFIC SITUATIONS OF EVERYDAY LIFE. THUS THE APODICTIC “TEN WORDS” HERE IN THE DEUTERONOMY DECALOGUE FUNCTION AS THE ESSENCE OF DIVINE STANDARDS AND EXPECTATIONS AGAINST WHICH EVERY CONCEIVABLE HUMAN ATTITUDE AND CONDUCT IS TO BE MEASURED. THEY ARE, IN FACT, EXPRESSIVE OF THE VERY CHARACTER OF GOD HIMSELF AND FOR THAT REASON ALONE ARE TIMELESS AND UNIVERSALLY APPLICABLE. THEY MAY BE COUCHED IN THE FRAMEWORK OF A COVENANT BETWEEN GOD AND A PARTICULAR PEOPLE AT A PARTICULAR TIME, BUT THEY CANNOT BE LIMITED BY THOSE OR ANY OTHER CIRCUMSTANCES. THIS IS CLEAR FROM THE FACT THAT JESUS AND THE NEW TESTAMENT NOWHERE RESCIND THEM AND, IN FACT, ALWAYS ENDORSE AND UPHOLD THEM AS RELEVANT TO THE CHURCH AND TO ALL PEOPLE. TO RETURN TO THE MATTER OF THE STRUCTURE OF THE DECALOGUE, RESEARCH ON THE PATTERN OF ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN TREATY TEXTS REVEALS THAT THE BODY OF STIPULATIONS ALMOST INVARIABLY IS PRECEDED BY A PREAMBLE AND A HISTORICAL PROLOGUE. WE HAVE NOTED ALREADY THAT THIS IS THE CASE WITH DEUTERONOMY AS A WHOLE, AND NOW THIS POSSIBILITY MUST BE APPLIED TO THE HEART OF THIS DOCUMENT, NAMELY, THE DECALOGUE AND THE FOLLOWING STIPULATION SECTIONS. WHEN THIS IS DONE, IT IS CLEAR THAT THERE IS AT LEAST A VESTIGIAL OR GREATLY ABBREVIATED PREAMBLE IN V. 6 (“I AM THE LORD YOUR GOD”) AND AN EQUALLY SUCCINCT HISTORICAL PROLOGUE (“WHO BROUGHT YOU OUT OF EGYPT, OUT OF THE LAND OF SLAVERY”). THE SAME IS TRUE OF THE SINAI RENDITION OF THE COVENANT TEXT WHERE THE IDENTICAL WORDS ARE SPOKEN IN EXOD 20:2. THERE ARE SEVERAL IMPLICATIONS OF THIS INCLUDING THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF CONSIDERING V. 6 AS THE FIRST AND A SEPARATE COMMANDMENT AND VV. 7–10 AS THE SECOND, A VIEW HELD ESPECIALLY IN THE JEWISH TRADITION. IF (AS SEEMS CERTAIN IN VIEW OF MODERN FORM-CRITICAL ANALYSIS) V. 6 IS ACTUALLY THE PREAMBLE PLUS HISTORICAL PROLOGUE, V. 7 IS THE FIRST COMMANDMENT AND VV. 8–10 THE SECOND. ALSO, THE FACT THAT THE COMMANDMENTS AS A COLLECTION ARE INTRODUCED BY ELEMENTS REGULARLY CONNECTED WITH COVENANT TEXTS PLACES THEM SQUARELY WITHIN A COVENANT CONTEXT AND PRECLUDES THEIR BEING VIEWED SIMPLY AS A BLOCK OF LEGAL MATERIAL WITHIN AN ORDINARY MOSAIC ADDRESS. 5:6 TO TURN NOW TO THE COMMANDMENTS THEMSELVES, THEY FOLLOW A PREAMBLE AND PROLOGUE STATEMENT (V. 6), THAT IS, AS HAS BEEN NOTED, IDENTICAL TO THAT FOUND IN THE SINAI VERSION OF EXOD 20:2. THE FIRST COMMANDMENT ALSO IS IDENTICAL IN ITS WORDING (V. 7; CF. EXOD 20:3). ITS POSITION IN THE LIST AND ITS PROFOUND SIMPLICITY AND SUCCINCTNESS ARE IMPRESSIVE. CLEARLY THIS APPEAL TO THE EXCLUSIVITY AND IMPLICIT UNIQUENESS OF STEPHEN YAHWEH FORMS THE BASIS UPON WHICH ISRAEL’S FAITH AND ACTION MUST BE BUILT. THE DIFFICULT PHRASE “BEFORE ME” (ʿAL PĀNĀY) MEANS LITERALLY “AGAINST MY FACE” OR “IN [MY] PRESENCE.” THAT IS, OTHER GODS MUST NOT BE BROUGHT INTO STEPHEN YAHWEH’S COMPANY, FOR HE EXISTS ALONE AS ISRAEL’S GOD. THE FACT THAT “OTHER GODS” (ĔLŌHÎM ʾĂḤĒRÎM) ARE MENTIONED DOES NOT, OF COURSE, CONCEDE THAT THEY EXIST IN REALITY. THE NATIONS ACCEPTED THEIR EXISTENCE, BUT ISRAEL WAS TO REFUSE TO PERMIT THEM A PLACE ALONGSIDE STEPHEN YAHWEH EVEN IF THEY WENT SO FAR AS TO ADMIT THEIR POSSIBILITY. THE COMMAND IS NOT SO MUCH AN APOLOGETIC FOR THE SOLE EXISTENCE OF STEPHEN YAHWEH, THEN, AS IT IS A PROHIBITION ABOUT ALLOWING THEM IN HIS SAME COMPANY AS A THEORETICAL RIVAL. 5:7–8 THE WORDING OF THE SECOND COMMANDMENT (VV. 8–10) IS VIRTUALLY A CARBON COPY OF THAT IN EXOD 20:4–6. IT BUILDS UPON AND LOGICALLY FOLLOWS THE FIRST BY SPECIFYING HOW PEOPLE COULD AND DID REPRESENT “OTHER GODS” AND WHY IT WAS FORBIDDEN FOR ISRAEL TO DO SO. IT ALSO DEALS WITH THE ISSUE OF THE INVISIBILITY OF GOD AND THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF REPRESENTING HIM IN ANY KIND OF CONCRETE FORM. THE WORD FOR “IDOL” (PESEL) DESCRIBES ANYTHING THAT IS HEWN OUT OF WOOD OR STONE (FROM THE VERB PĀSAL; CF. EXOD 34:1, 4; DEUT 10:1, 3; 1 KGS 5:32) THOUGH EVEN METAL IMAGES COULD BE HEWN (CF. JUDG 17:3–4; ISA 40:19; 44:10; JER 10:14). AS IS CLEAR FROM THE OBJECTS OF THIS KIND FROM ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND ANCIENT ARTISTIC SOURCES, THEY EXISTED IN A VARIETY OF SIZES, SHAPES, AND FORMS, CONFORMING INDEED TO THINGS “IN HEAVEN ABOVE” (BIRDS), “ON THE EARTH BENEATH” (LAND CREATURES), AND “IN THE WATERS BELOW” (FISH AND OTHER MARINE ANIMALS). THIS THREE-TIERED NOTION OF THE UNIVERSE AS ABOVE, ON, AND BELOW THE EARTH WAS, OF COURSE, COMMON TO ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN COSMOLOGY. SUCH LIKENESSES MUST NOT BE MADE, AT LEAST WITH THE INTENTION OF WORSHIPING THEM; FOR THIS WOULD LEAD TO THE UNTHINKABLE POSITION OF A CREATURE BEING REGARDED AS THE CREATOR AND OF HUMANS, THE VERY IMAGE OF GOD AND SOVEREIGN OF ALL THE UNIVERSE, BOWING DOWN BEFORE THAT OVER WHICH THEY WERE COMMISSIONED TO BE MASTER (CF. 4:15–19). IN OTHER WORDS, THE WHOLE ENTERPRISE WAS ONE OF EGREGIOUS CONFUSION OF LEVELS OF SOVEREIGNTY AND ONE THAT ENGENDERED THE GROSSEST INSUBORDINATION. 5:9 THIS IS EVIDENT FROM THE FURTHER PROSCRIPTION AGAINST BOWING DOWN AND WORSHIPING THESE IDOLS (V. 9). THE VERB TRANSLATED “WORSHIP” IS ʿĀBAD, THE MORE LITERAL MEANING OF WHICH IS “SERVE.” THOUGH WORSHIP IS THE ESSENCE OF SERVICE IN THE LANGUAGE OF THE CULT, THE COVENANT NATURE OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE LORD AND ISRAEL WOULD FAVOR THE NOTION OF SERVICE BEYOND THAT. TO BOW DOWN IS TO RECOGNIZE THE SOVEREIGNTY OF A GOD, BUT TO SERVE IS TO EXPRESS COMMITMENT TO THAT SOVEREIGNTY IN A PRACTICAL, TANGIBLE WAY. ISRAEL HAD BEEN REDEEMED FROM BONDAGE OR SERVICE IN EGYPT IN ORDER TO SERVE STEPHEN YAHWEH. TO SERVE OTHER GODS, THEN, WAS TO REVERSE THE EXODUS AND GO BACK UNDER BONDAGE, THUS BETRAYING THE GRACE AND FAVOR OF STEPHEN YAHWEH. THIS EXPLAINS THE DIVINE REACTION IN V. 9: “I, THE LORD YOUR GOD, AM A JEALOUS GOD, PUNISHING.” BECAUSE HE HAD REDEEMED HIS PEOPLE FROM SLAVERY TO ANOTHER AND HAD MADE COVENANT WITH THEM, THE LORD DESERVED AND DEMANDED THEIR EXCLUSIVE ALLEGIANCE. THIS IS WHY HE IS A “JEALOUS GOD” (ʾĒL QANNĀʾ), THAT IS, ONE WHO IS ZEALOUS FOR HIS OWN PERSON AND POSITION AS ISRAEL’S SOVEREIGN GOD (CF. 4:24; 6:15). THE JEALOUSY HERE IS NOT THE HUMAN EMOTION OF ENVY BUT THE PROPER INSISTENCE BY GOD OF HIS UNIQUENESS AND EXCLUSIVENESS. THOSE WHO FAIL OR REFUSE TO RECOGNIZE THAT EXCLUSIVENESS BY RESORTING TO IDOLATRY MAY EXPECT INEXORABLE PUNISHMENT FOR THAT INIQUITY (SO HEB. ʿĂWÔN, FROM THE VERB ʿĀWÂ, “TO BEND, DISTORT”). THE REPERCUSSIONS ARE SO GREAT AS TO IMPACT GENERATIONS YET UNBORN IF THEY CONTINUE TO HATE GOD. 5:10 THE IDEA OF “HATING” GOD IN THE CONTEXT OF COVENANT IS TANTAMOUNT TO REJECTING HIM. THUS, THE HATING IS IDENTICAL TO THE TURNING AWAY SUGGESTED BY THE NOUN ʿĂWÔN. THE OPPOSITE, “TO LOVE,” OBVIOUSLY MEANS TO CHOOSE IN THIS SETTING, A POINT MADE PREVIOUSLY (CF. 1:27; 4:37). THOSE WHO HATE (I.E., REPUDIATE) GOD IN FAVOR OF IDOLS MAY EXPECT HIS JUDGMENT, BUT THOSE WHO LOVE (ʾĀHĒB) HIM AND DEMONSTRATE IT BY KEEPING HIS COMMANDMENTS WILL BENEFIT FROM HIS COVENANT LOYALTY (THUS HEB. ḤESED) FOR THOUSANDS OF GENERATIONS (V. 10). THE TERM “COMMANDMENTS” (MIṢWÔT) MEANS MORE THAN JUST THE TEN COMMANDMENTS (USUALLY REFERRED TO AS “WORDS”), FOR IT IS A GENERIC WORD ENCOMPASSING THE COVENANT AS A WHOLE. NO TERM IS MORE THEOLOGICALLY SIGNIFICANT THAN ḤESED, TRANSLATED IN THE NIV HERE AS “LOVE.” IT SPEAKS OF GOD’S UNMERITED FAVOR BY WHICH HE ELECTS PEOPLE TO COVENANT RELATIONSHIP AND ON THE BASIS OF WHICH HE EXTENDS ALL ITS BLESSINGS. IN FACT, ḤESED AND BĔRÎT (“COVENANT”) ARE USED AS SYNONYMOUS (DEUT 7:9) AND INTERCHANGEABLE TERMS (DEUT 7:12). AS THE BASIS FOR COVENANT ELECTION, ḤESED IS UNCONDITIONAL, FOR IT IS A MANIFESTATION OF PURE GRACE. WITHIN THAT RELATIONSHIP, HOWEVER, ḤESED IS PART OF A RECIPROCAL PROCESS, A DISPOSITION CONDITIONED UPON THE LOVE (ʾĀHĂBÂ) AND OBEDIENCE OF THOSE WHO OWE THEM (V. 10).**

**5:11 THE THIRD COMMANDMENT ALSO FINDS ITS SOURCE IN THE FIRST—THE UNIQUE AND EXCLUSIVE GOD—BUT MORE REMOTELY THAN DID THE SECOND. WHEREAS THE SECOND HAS TO DO WITH ICONIC, VISIBLE REPRESENTATIONS OF GOD (OR GODS), THIS CONCERNS THE USE OF HIS NAME AS AN EXTENSION OR EVEN SUBSTITUTION FOR HIMSELF. DEUTERONOMY IS PARTICULARLY REPLETE WITH REFERENCES TO THE DIVINE NAME AS AN ALTER EGO FOR GOD (CF. 12:5, 11, 21; 14:23–24; 16:2, 6, 11; 26:2) AND IN LIGHT OF THE WELL-KNOWN ANCIENT SEMITIC BELIEF IN THE KNOWLEDGE OR OTHER USE OF ONE’S NAME AS A MEANS OF MANIPULATING ITS OWNER, THE COMMANDMENT, LIKE THE SECOND, PROHIBITS INAPPROPRIATE APPROACH TO AND PROSTITUTION OF THE PERSON AND POWER OF GOD. THIS IS A FORM OF IDOLATRY, FOR EVEN THOUGH ENGRAVED IMAGES ARE NOT IN MIND, THE DIVINE NAME AS A KIND OF FORBIDDEN TALISMAN OR FORBIDDEN SHIBBOLETH CAN SERVE IDOLATROUS ENDS. THE PROHIBITION SAYS, LITERALLY, “YOU SHALL NOT LIFT UP THE NAME OF STEPHEN YAHWEH YOUR GOD WITHOUT REASON.” THE MEANING CLEARLY IS THAT ONE MUST NOT VIEW THE NAME AS A COUNTERPART OF STEPHEN YAHWEH AND THEN PROCEED TO TAKE IT IN HAND (OR IN MOUTH) AS A MEANS OF ACCOMPLISHING SOME KIND OF ILL-ADVISED OR UNWORTHY OBJECTIVE. THIS WAS TYPICAL OF ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN SORCERY OR INCANTATION WHERE THE NAMES OF THE GODS WERE INVOKED AS PART OF THE ACT OF CONJURATION OR OF PROPHYLAXIS. WHOEVER VIOLATES THE SANCTITY OF THE NAME WILL NOT BE LEFT UNPUNISHED. 5:12–15 THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT, THAT HAVING TO DO WITH SABBATH OBSERVANCE, IS ONE OF TWO COMMANDMENTS EXPRESSED IN THE AFFIRMATIVE. IT ALSO VARIES MOST FROM THE WORDING OF THE SINAI DECALOGUE AND NOT MERELY STYLISTICALLY. IT IS QUITE APPARENT THAT THE EVENTS BETWEEN THE GIVING OF THE LAW AT HOREB AND ITS RENEWAL HERE NEAR BETH PEOR CALL FOR A NEW UNDERSTANDING OF THE MEANING OF THE SABBATH AND ITS PROPER OBSERVANCE. THESE CONTRASTS WILL BE POINTED OUT IN THE COURSE OF THE EXPOSITION. THE COMMANDMENT BEGINS WITH AN INFINITIVAL FORM OF THE VERB ŠĀMAR THAT FUNCTIONS HERE AS AN IMPERATIVE. WITH THE FOLLOWING INFINITIVE AND PREPOSITION (LĔQADDĔŠÔ), IT FORMS A COMMON HORTATORY EXPRESSION, “WATCH CAREFULLY TO KEEP HOLY.” THE PARALLEL IN EXOD 20:8 ALSO EMPLOYS AN INFINITIVE ABSOLUTE, BUT THE VERB IS ZĀKAR, “REMEMBER,” RATHER THAN ŠĀMAR. THE VERBS AS USED HERE ARE ESSENTIALLY SYNONYMOUS, BUT ŠĀMAR IMPLIES MORE OF AN ACTIVE PARTICIPATION. THERE IS MORE TO SABBATH OBSERVANCE THAN MERE RECOLLECTION OF THE PAST OR EVEN DETERMINATION TO CONFORM; THERE MUST BE A STUDIED EFFORT TO KEEP THE DAY HOLY, AN ACTUAL INVOLVEMENT IN ITS REQUIREMENTS AND PROHIBITIONS. THE CHANGE IN VERB MAY WELL REFLECT A TENDENCY ON ISRAEL’S PART TO HAVE MADE THE REQUIREMENT OF SABBATH KEEPING A MATTER OF MERE FORMALITY OR EVEN INDIFFERENCE (CF. NUM 15:32–36). THIS NEW EXPRESSION OF THE COMMANDMENT WOULD THEN ADDRESS THIS ISSUE MORE FIRMLY. SUPPORT FOR THIS VIEW LIES IN THE CLAUSE “AS THE LORD YOUR GOD HAS COMMANDED YOU” (V. 12), A STATEMENT LACKING IN EXODUS AND ONE NO DOUBT REFERRING DIRECTLY BACK TO THAT FIRST GIVING OF THE LAW. THE WORD “SABBATH” (HEB. ŠABBĀT) DERIVES FROM THE VERB ŠĀBAT, “TO STOP, CEASE, REST.” THE THEOLOGICAL AND, HENCE, LEGAL IMPLICATIONS GO BACK TO THE FIRST USE OF THE VERB IN GEN 2:2–3, WHICH STATES THAT GOD, HAVING CREATED ALL THINGS IN SIX DAYS, “RESTED FROM ALL HIS WORK.” HE THEN BLESSED THE SEVENTH DAY AND “MADE IT HOLY” (WAYQADDĒŠ), THE SAME VERB AS OCCURS HERE. THE REASON IT WAS MADE HOLY WAS THAT “ON IT HE RESTED FROM ALL THE WORK OF CREATING THAT HE HAD DONE.” IT IS IMPORTANT TO NOTE THAT ŠĀBAT MEANS BOTH “TO CEASE” AND “TO REST,” FOR BOTH MEANINGS OCCUR IN THE RESPECTIVE VERSIONS OF THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT. IN EXODUS, AS THE MOTIVE CLAUSE MAKES CLEAR, THE SEVENTH DAY MUST BE SET APART BECAUSE GOD CEASED HIS CREATIVE WORK ON THAT DAY, AND THEREFORE HUMAN WORK ALSO SHOULD CEASE (EXOD 20:11). IN DEUTERONOMY THE MOTIVE CLAUSE BASES SABBATH OBSERVANCE ON THE FACT THAT THE ISRAELITES HAD BEEN SLAVES IN EGYPT AND THEREFORE IT WAS MOST APPROPRIATE TO CELEBRATE DELIVERANCE FROM THAT BONDAGE BY ABSTAINING FROM LABOR FOR ONE DAY, THAT IS, BY RESTING (DEUT 5:15). IN BOTH CASES THE SEVENTH DAY MUST BE MADE “HOLY.” FUNDAMENTALLY, THE IDEA OF THE WORD GROUP “HOLY” IS THAT OF SEPARATION, OF BEING SET ASIDE FOR SOME PARTICULAR USE. THAT IS, IT HAS NO INHERENT ELEMENT OF MORAL CONTENT OR PURITY. AS HOLINESS BECOMES ASSOCIATED WITH GOD, HOWEVER, AS THE ABSOLUTELY TRANSCENDENT AND PERFECT ONE, HIS ATTRIBUTES OF SINLESSNESS AND MORAL AND ETHICAL PERFECTION COME TO STAMP HOLINESS ITSELF WITH THESE CHARACTERISTICS. THEREFORE, FOR A PERSON TO BE HOLY AS THE LORD HIMSELF IS HOLY (CF. LEV 19:2) IS TO SUGGEST A WAY OF THOUGHT AND LIFE THAT IS ABOVE REPROACH. OBVIOUSLY, A DAY CANNOT BE HOLY IN THE MORAL SENSE, SO THE MEANING OF KEEPING THE SEVENTH DAY HOLY IS THAT OF THE NORMAL MEANING OF THE VERB, TO SET IT APART FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE. IN THIS INSTANCE IT IS TO WITHHOLD THAT DAY FROM PROFANE USE SO THAT IT MAY BE USED FOR OTHER PURPOSES SUCH AS REFLECTION ON THE LORD AND HIS WORKS OF CREATION AND REDEMPTION. THE FORM OF THE VERB QDŠ (PIEL) WHEN IT IS USED IN THIS SENSE OF SETTING APART REFLECTS A FACTITIVE NUANCE SUCH AS TO “PUT THE SEVENTH DAY INTO A STATE OF HOLINESS.” THE SETTING APART OF THE SEVENTH DAY HAVING BEEN ESTABLISHED, THE LAW GOES ON TO SPEAK OF THOSE WHO MUST OBSERVE IT (V. 14). THESE INCLUDE THE HEAD OF THE FAMILY, FAMILY MEMBERS, SLAVES, ANIMALS, AND FOREIGNERS. THESE LAST, WHO WERE NOT MEMBERS OF THE COVENANT COMMUNITY AND ARE THEREFORE LISTED EVEN AFTER SLAVES AND ANIMALS, WERE NONETHELESS RESPONSIBLE TO LIVE BY THE COVENANT REQUIREMENTS OF THE HOST PEOPLE TO WHOM THEY HAD ATTACHED THEMSELVES. THEY COULD INCLUDE SUCH ELEMENTS AS THE “MANY OTHER PEOPLE” WHO ACCOMPANIED ISRAEL IN THE EXODUS (CF. EXOD 12:38) OR MIDIANITES WHO JOINED THEM LATER (NUM 10:29–33). AN INTERESTING INTRODUCTION TO THE SO-CALLED “MOTIVE-CLAUSE,” THAT IS, THE STATEMENT OF RATIONALE FOR THE COMMANDMENT, APPEARS AT THE END OF V. 14, “SO THAT YOUR MANSERVANT AND MAIDSERVANT MAY REST, AS YOU DO.” THIS IS LACKING IN THE EXODUS VERSION (CF. EXOD 20:9) FOR A PERFECTLY UNDERSTANDABLE REASON: THE MOTIVE-CLAUSE IN EXODUS CENTERS ON THE SABBATH AS CREATION CELEBRATION (EXOD 20:11) WHEREAS THAT IN DEUTERONOMY IS CONCERNED WITH THE SABBATH AS REDEMPTION CELEBRATION (5:15). FOR MANY YEARS ISRAEL HAD LANGUISHED IN EGYPTIAN SOJOURN AND SLAVERY AND SO KNEW FULL WELL THE HAPLESS PLIGHT OF THE SLAVE. HOW APPROPRIATE THEN THAT ISRAEL’S OWN SLAVES, WHETHER INDENTURED FELLOW ISRAELITES OR OTHERWISE, SHOULD KNOW SOMETHING OF RELEASE EVEN IF FOR ONLY ONE DAY A WEEK. IN FACT, ISRAEL MUST REMEMBER (ZĀKAR THIS TIME, RATHER THAN ŠĀMAR, V. 12) THEIR SLAVE DAYS AND HOW THE LORD GRACIOUSLY AND POWERFULLY DELIVERED THEM OUT OF SLAVERY, FOR THIS WAS THE UNDERLYING REASON FOR SABBATH OBSERVANCE. THIS STANDS IN CONTRAST TO THE MOTIVE CLAUSE IN EXODUS: “FOR IN SIX DAYS THE LORD MADE THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH, THE SEA, AND ALL THAT IS IN THEM, BUT HE RESTED ON THE SEVENTH DAY. THEREFORE, THE LORD BLESSED THE SABBATH DAY AND MADE IT HOLY” (EXOD 20:11). THE PRINCIPAL THEOLOGICAL TRUTH TO BE SEEN HERE IS THE CHANGING THEOLOGICAL EMPHASES OF THE UNCHANGING GOD. FOR A PEOPLE FRESHLY DELIVERED FROM EGYPTIAN OVERLORDSHIP BY THE MIGHTY EXODUS MIRACLE, GOD AS CREATOR IS A CENTRAL TRUTH. THEREFORE, IT IS MOST APPROPRIATE THAT THE SABBATH FOCUS ON HIM AS CREATOR AND THE CESSATION OF THAT CREATIVE WORK, THE VERY POINT OF THE EXODUS COMMANDMENT. FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE DEUTERONOMY LEGISLATION, SOME FORTY YEARS LATER, CREATION PALES INTO INSIGNIFICANCE IN COMPARISON TO THE ACT OF REDEMPTION ITSELF. WITH THE BENEFIT NOW OF HISTORICAL RETROSPECTION AND WITH THE ANTICIPATION OF THE CROSSING OF ANOTHER WATERY BARRIER—THE JORDAN—AND THE UNCERTAINTIES OF CONQUEST, ISRAEL WAS TO RECALL ITS PLIGHT AS SLAVES AND ITS GLORIOUS RELEASE FROM THAT HOPELESS SITUATION. SABBATH NOW SPEAKS OF REDEMPTION AND NOT CREATION, OF REST AND NOT CESSATION. ALL THIS GIVES THEOLOGICAL JUSTIFICATION FOR THE OBSERVANCE BY THE CHRISTIAN OF SUNDAY RATHER THAN SATURDAY AS THE DAY SET APART AS HOLY. FOR THE CHRISTIAN THE MOMENT OF GREATEST SIGNIFICANCE IS NO LONGER CREATION OR THE EXODUS—AS IMPORTANT AS THESE ARE IN SALVATION HISTORY. CENTRAL TO HIS FAITH AND EXPERIENCE IS THE RESURRECTION OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, A RE-CREATING AND REDEMPTIVE EVENT THAT ECLIPSES ALL OF GOD’S MIGHTY ACTS OF THE PAST. THUS, BY EXAMPLE IF NOT BY EXPLICIT COMMAND JESUS AND THE APOSTLES MANDATED THE OBSERVANCE OF THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK AS COMMEMORATIVE OF HIS TRIUMPHANT VICTORY OVER DEATH.**

**THE COMMANDMENTS PERTAINING TO HUMANKIND’S RELATIONSHIP TO OTHERS (5:16–21)**

**16 “HONOR YOUR FATHER AND YOUR MOTHER, AS THE LORD YOUR GOD HAS COMMANDED YOU, SO THAT YOU MAY LIVE LONG AND THAT IT MAY GO WELL WITH YOU IN THE LAND THE LORD YOUR GOD IS GIVING YOU. 17 “YOU SHALL NOT MURDER. 18 “YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY. 19 “YOU SHALL NOT STEAL. 20 “YOU SHALL NOT GIVE FALSE TESTIMONY AGAINST YOUR NEIGHBOR. 21 “YOU SHALL NOT COVET YOUR NEIGHBOR’S WIFE. YOU SHALL NOT SET YOUR DESIRE ON YOUR NEIGHBOR’S HOUSE OR LAND, HIS MANSERVANT OR MAIDSERVANT, HIS OX OR DONKEY, OR ANYTHING THAT BELONGS TO YOUR NEIGHBOR.”**

**IN THE HIERARCHY OF HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS, THAT BETWEEN CHILDREN AND THEIR PARENTS RANKS BENEATH ONLY THAT OF THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO GOD. THIS WAS PARTICULARLY EVIDENT IN THE PATRIARCHAL FAMILY STRUCTURES THAT RECOGNIZED THE HEADSHIP OF THE FATHER AND EVEN THE MOTHER IN ALL AREAS OF LIFE AND EVEN BEYOND THE IMMEDIATE FAMILY. THIS WAS NOT MERELY A REFLECTION OF CONVENTIONAL CULTURAL MORES, FOR THE OLD TESTAMENT MAKES CLEAR, IN ISRAEL’S CASE AT LEAST, THAT THERE WERE PROFOUNDLY THEOLOGICAL IDEALS INVOLVED. THESE WILL BECOME IDENTIFIED IN THE FORTHCOMING EXPOSITION OF THE SPECIFIC STIPULATION SECTION. FOR NOW, THE VERY FACT THAT THE NEXT COMMANDMENT AFTER THE FOUR THAT SPEAK TO THE MATTER OF THE HUMAN-DIVINE RELATIONSHIP SHOULD ADDRESS EXCLUSIVELY THE ROLE AND RIGHTS OF PARENTS IS IN ITSELF HIGHLY SIGNIFICANT. 5:16 LIKE THE ONE BEFORE IT (VV. 12–15) THIS COMMANDMENT COMMENCES WITH A POSITIVE INJUNCTION BUT THIS TIME WITH THE SIMPLE IMPERATIVE “HONOR” (KABBĒD). HONOR, HOWEVER, IS NOT SOMETHING THAT CAN BE COMMANDED IF IT REMAINS ONLY AN ATTITUDE OR DISPOSITION. THEREFORE, AND VERY MUCH IN LINE WITH THE UNDERLYING ROOT MEANING OF THE VERB, TO HONOR DEMANDS ACTION THAT BETOKENS THE INNER SPIRIT. ESSENTIALLY KABBĒD (THE PIEL IMPERATIVE OF KĀBĒD) CARRIES THE NUANCE OF WEIGHING DOWN WITH HONOR OR RESPECT. IN THE PARTICULAR STEM USED HERE THE IDEA IS DECLARING TO SOMEONE OR EFFECTIVELY CONVEYING TO SOMETHING THE QUALITY OF HONOR. THE COMMAND TO HONOR THEREFORE IS A COMMAND TO DEMONSTRATE IN TANGIBLE, EMPIRICAL WAYS THE RESPECT PEOPLE MUST HAVE FOR THEIR PARENTS. AGAIN, NOTE THAT THE VERSION OF THE COMMANDMENT HERE, AS OPPOSED TO THAT OF EXOD 20:12, CONTAINS THE WORDS “AS THE LORD YOUR GOD HAS COMMANDED YOU” (CF. V. 12). THIS IS AN UNMISTAKABLE REFERENCE TO THE INITIAL DISCLOSURE OF THE COVENANT AT SINAI, AND NO DOUBT THE WARNING WAS ADDED BECAUSE OF SOME INFRACTION OF THE STATUTE IN THE INTERIM. COMPLIANCE WITH THIS MANDATE, ON THE OTHER HAND, WOULD HAVE TWO POSITIVE RESULTS: LONG LIFE AND PROSPERITY IN THE LAND THEY WERE ABOUT TO ENTER. BOTH OF THESE BOONS WERE STANDARD PROMISES TO THOSE WHO KEPT COVENANT FAITH WITH THE LORD (CF. LEV 26:3–13; DEUT 7:12–16; 28:1–14). 5:17 THOUGH THERE IS NO TECHNICAL TERM IN HEBREW FOR PREMEDITATED HOMICIDE, THE TRANSLATION OF THE VERB RĀṢÂ AS “MURDER” IN THE NIV RENDITION OF THE SIXTH COMMANDMENT (V. 17) IS MOST ACCURATE. USAGE ELSEWHERE AS WELL AS OVERALL THEOLOGICAL CONTEXT MAKES A CLEAR DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE PROHIBITION HERE AND THE ENDORSEMENT OTHERWISE OF CAPITAL PUNISHMENT, KILLING IN WARFARE, THE APPLICATION OF ḤĒREM, AND THE LIKE. BECAUSE LIFE IS SACRED IN GOD’S EYES (HENCE, BLOOD MUST NOT BE SPILLED ON THE GROUND CARELESSLY OR EATEN [LEV 17:10–16]), AND THAT OF HUMANKIND ESPECIALLY IN THAT THEY ARE THE IMAGE OF GOD, THE VIOLATION OF A PERSON TO THE POINT OF DEATH IS AN AFFRONT TO THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD, AN ASSAULT UPON HIS EARTHLY REPRESENTATIVE (CF. GEN 9:6). 5:18 IF MURDER IS A VIOLATION OF LIFE ITSELF, ADULTERY IS A VIOLATION OF ITS MOST IMPORTANT AND SACRED HUMAN RELATIONSHIP, THAT OF MARRIAGE. THE SEVENTH COMMANDMENT DEALS WITH THIS MATTER RATHER SPECIFICALLY IN THAT IT ADDRESSES ADULTERY AND NOT SEXUAL IMPROPRIETY IN GENERAL AS THE PRECISE VERB NĀʾAP MAKES CLEAR. ELSEWHERE SUCH MATTERS AS FORNICATION (NUM 25:1), PROSTITUTION (DEUT 22:21), AND HOMOSEXUALITY (JUDG 19:22; LEV 18:22; DEUT 23:17–18) RECEIVE ATTENTION AND ARE SOUNDLY CONDEMNED. ADULTERY, HOWEVER, IMPLIES UNFAITHFULNESS, COVENANT BREAKING, AND SO IS AN APT ANALOGUE TO COVENANT INFIDELITY ON A HIGHER PLANE—THE DIVINE-HUMAN. LATER REVELATION SPEAKS OF “GOING WHORING” AFTER OTHER GODS, THAT IS, ABANDONING THE REDEEMING SOVEREIGN IN FAVOR OF ANOTHER WHO HAS NO COVENANT CLAIM OR LEGITIMACY (CF. HOS 4:1–19; JER 3:9–13). 5:19 THE DESCENDING HIERARCHICAL ORDER OF RELATIONSHIPS CONTINUES IN THE NEXT COMMANDMENT, THE PROHIBITION OF THEFT. JUST AS ADULTERY IS THE VIOLATION OF ONE’S FAMILY, SO THEFT IS THE VIOLATION OF ONE’S PROPERTY. THE SIXTH COMMANDMENT, THEN, SPEAKS OF THE THEFT OF LIFE, THE SEVENTH THE THEFT OF THE PURITY AND SANCTITY OF THE MARRIAGE RELATIONSHIP, AND THE EIGHTH THE THEFT OF GOODS AND POSSESSIONS. THERE OBVIOUSLY IS AN INHERENT EVIL IN THE ILLEGITIMATE APPROPRIATION OF ANOTHER’S PROPERTY, BUT ON AN EVEN HIGHER COVENANTAL AND THEOLOGICAL LEVEL THEFT BETRAYS AN ESSENTIAL DISSATISFACTION WITH ONE’S LOT IN LIFE AND AN ACQUISITIVE DESIRE TO OBTAIN MORE THAN THE LORD, THE SOVEREIGN WHO DISPENSES TO HIS VASSALS WHAT SEEMS BEST, HAS GRANTED ALREADY. 5:20 THE NINTH COMMANDMENT FORBIDS FALSE TESTIMONY AGAINST ANOTHER. SUCH TESTIMONY IS TANTAMOUNT TO CHARACTER ASSASSINATION AND SO IS ANOTHER FORM OF KILLING OR THEFT. THE PROGRESSION FROM MURDER TO ADULTERY TO THEFT TO PERJURY IS THUS CLEARLY ONE OF DECREASING VIOLENCE ON THE ONE HAND AND YET OF A COMMON INFRACTION OF THE INTEGRITY OF ANOTHER HUMAN BEING ON THE OTHER HAND. THE VERB DESCRIBING FALSE TESTIMONY (ʿĀNÂ) IS ONE AT HOME IN THE LAW COURT WITH ITS NUANCE OF RECIPROCAL DIALOGUE. THE VERSION OF THE COMMANDMENT IN EXODUS DESCRIBES THE “TESTIMONY” OR WITNESS (ʿĒD) AS “FALSE” (ŠEQER), THAT IS, UNTRUE. HERE “FALSE” TRANSLATES ŠAWʾ, MEANING MORE PRECISELY “EMPTY” OR “WITHOUT SUBSTANCE.” THE SAME WORD DESCRIBES THE MISUSE OF THE DIVINE NAME IN V. 11. THERE IS NO BASIC DIFFERENCE, OF COURSE, FOR IF ONE IS ACCUSED ON NO VALID OR SUBSTANTIAL GROUNDS, HE IS ACCUSED FALSELY. AND THE PROHIBITION IS NOT LIMITED TO SLANDER OF A FELLOW ISRAELITE, FOR THE WORD FOR “NEIGHBOR” (RĒAʿ) CAN REFER TO AN ISRAELITE (LEV 19:18), AN ALIEN (THAT IS, A GĒR, LEV 19:34), OR EVEN A PAGAN (EXOD 11:2). 5:21 AS HAS BEEN NOTED REPEATEDLY BY SCHOLARS, THE TENTH COMMANDMENT DIFFERS GREATLY FROM THE OTHER NINE IN THAT IT HAS TO DO WITH AN INNER DISPOSITION MORE THAN WITH AN OUTWARD ACT. THAT IS, IT HAS TO DO WITH THE DESIRES AND NOT THE PRACTICAL STEPS TO SATISFY THOSE DESIRES. WHAT IS LESS FREQUENTLY OBSERVED IS THAT THIS IS IN LINE WITH THE PROGRESSION OF VIOLENCE OR DISRUPTION IN A DESCENDING SPIRAL FROM THE SHEDDING OF BLOOD TO THE RUIN OF PERSONAL REPUTATION. WHAT HAS BEEN MANIFEST EMPIRICALLY IN ACTS AND WORDS IS NOW HIDDEN IN THOUGHTS AND CRAVINGS. ALSO, OF INTEREST IS THE FACT THAT THIS LAST COMMANDMENT APPEARS TO BE A SUMMARY OF AT LEAST THE PREVIOUS THREE. TO COVET ANOTHER’S WIFE IS TANTAMOUNT TO ADULTERY, TO COVET ANOTHER’S PROPERTIES IS AKIN TO THEFT, AND TO COVET ANYTHING ELSE WOULD CERTAINLY COVER SUCH MATTERS AS A PERSON’S GOOD STANDING IN THE COMMUNITY. THE VERB, “COVET” (AS IN NIV), TRANSLATED AS SUCH FROM HEBREW ḤĀMAD, IS USED CONSISTENTLY THROUGHOUT THE EXODUS VERSION OF THE COMMANDMENT (EXOD 20:17). BUT HERE THE SECOND VERB, TRANSLATED “SET YOUR DESIRE,” REFLECTS A DIFFERENT HEBREW WORD, ʾĀWÂ. IT IS DOUBTFUL THAT ANY MAJOR DISTINCTION IN THOUGHT EXISTS, FOR EACH VERB MEANS “DESIRE” WHETHER OR NOT OF A LUSTFUL, SENSUAL TYPE. VERY LIKELY DEUTERONOMY USES ʾĀWÂ AS A SYNONYM FOR ḤĀMAD ONLY FOR THE SAKE OF LITERARY VARIETY. OTHER DIFFERENCES ALSO EXIST BETWEEN THE TWO ACCOUNTS. DEUTERONOMY LISTS THE COVETED OBJECTS AS WIFE, HOUSE, LAND, MANSERVANT, MAIDSERVANT, OX, DONKEY, OR ANYTHING ELSE, WHEREAS EXODUS INDICATES THEM TO BE HOUSE, WIFE, MANSERVANT, MAIDSERVANT, OX, DONKEY, OR ANYTHING ELSE. THUS, IN DEUTERONOMY HOUSE AND WIFE ARE REVERSED AND LAND IS ADDED. AGAIN, RATHER THAN REFLECTING DIFFERING LEGAL OR LITERARY TRADITIONS, AS SOME CRITICS MAINTAIN, THE DIFFERENCES MORE LIKELY LIE IN A THEOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT IN WHICH WOMEN’S RIGHTS COME INCREASINGLY INTO THE FOREGROUND IN VIEW OF THE SOCIAL SITUATIONS ENVISIONED BY MOSES ON THE EVE OF THE CONQUEST AND OCCUPATION OF CANAAN. THE REMARKABLE THING ABOUT THIS TENTH AND FINAL STATUTE IS THAT IT RAISES THE ISSUE OF SIN AND DISOBEDIENCE FROM THE LEVEL OF MERE ACT TO THAT OF ATTITUDE, THOUGHT, AND DESIRE. THOUGH COVETING NO DOUBT FREQUENTLY FINDS EXPRESSION IN DEED, IT NEED NOT. BUT THAT DOES NOT LESSEN ITS SINFULNESS. IT IS AT THIS VERY POINT THAT THE OLD TESTAMENT UNDERSTANDING OF SIN AND CULPABILITY MOST APPROXIMATES THE TEACHING OF JESUS HIMSELF. HE SAID, WITH REFERENCE TO ADULTERY, “YOU HAVE HEARD THAT IT WAS SAID ‘DO NOT COMMIT ADULTERY.’ BUT I TELL YOU THAT ANYONE WHO LOOKS AT A WOMAN LUSTFULLY HAS ALREADY COMMITTED ADULTERY WITH HER IN HIS HEART” (MATT 5:27–28). IN THIS MANNER OUR LORD EMPHASIZES THAT COVETING, THOUGH LAST ON THE LIST OF COMMANDMENTS, MAY AFTER ALL ENCAPSULATE THEM ALL. AT THE SAME TIME THAT IT IS THE LEAST OVERTLY VIOLENT AND INJURIOUS, IT IS THE COMMANDMENT MOST AT THE ROOT OF COVENANT DISOBEDIENCE IN THAT IT LOGICALLY PRECEDES THE REST.**

**THE NARRATIVE RELATING THE SINAI REVELATION AND ISRAEL’S RESPONSE (5:22–33)**

**WE HAVE NOTED REPEATEDLY THAT ONE OF THE FEATURES THAT MARKS DEUTERONOMY OFF FROM STANDARD COVENANT TEXTS ATTESTED TO FROM THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST IS THE REGULAR INTERRUPTION OF TECHNICAL COVENANT MATERIAL BY THAT OF OTHER GENRES SUCH AS NARRATIVE AND PARENESIS.63 THIS USUALLY OCCURS AT THE END OF CLEARLY SELF-CONTAINED UNITS (SUCH AS THE DECALOGUE, JUST DISCUSSED) AND CONSISTS EITHER OF A REFLECTION ON WHAT HAS JUST BEEN STATED OR AN ANTICIPATION OF OR INTRODUCTION TO SOMETHING ABOUT TO BE DISCLOSED. THE PRESENT PASSAGE DOES BOTH, BUT PRIMARILY IT IS ANOTHER OF THE SEVERAL EXAMPLES OF A BRIEF HISTORICAL RÉSUMÉ.**

**THE REHEARSAL OF THE THEOPHANY (5:22–27)**

**22 THESE ARE THE COMMANDMENTS THE LORD PROCLAIMED IN A LOUD VOICE TO YOUR WHOLE ASSEMBLY THERE ON THE MOUNTAIN FROM OUT OF THE FIRE, THE CLOUD AND THE DEEP DARKNESS; AND HE ADDED NOTHING MORE. THEN HE WROTE THEM ON TWO STONE TABLETS AND GAVE THEM TO ME. 23 WHEN YOU HEARD THE VOICE OUT OF THE DARKNESS, WHILE THE MOUNTAIN WAS ABLAZE WITH FIRE, ALL THE LEADING MEN OF YOUR TRIBES AND YOUR ELDERS CAME TO ME. 24 AND YOU SAID, “THE LORD OUR GOD HAS SHOWN US HIS GLORY AND HIS MAJESTY, AND WE HAVE HEARD HIS VOICE FROM THE FIRE. TODAY WE HAVE SEEN THAT A MAN CAN LIVE EVEN IF GOD SPEAKS WITH HIM. 25 BUT NOW, WHY SHOULD WE DIE? THIS GREAT FIRE WILL CONSUME US, AND WE WILL DIE IF WE HEAR THE VOICE OF THE LORD OUR GOD ANY LONGER. 26 FOR WHAT MORTAL MAN HAS EVER HEARD THE VOICE OF THE LIVING GOD SPEAKING OUT OF FIRE, AS WE HAVE, AND SURVIVED? 27 GO NEAR AND LISTEN TO ALL THAT THE LORD OUR GOD SAYS. THEN TELL US WHATEVER THE LORD OUR GOD TELLS YOU. WE WILL LISTEN AND OBEY.” 5:22 IN ORDER TO REINFORCE THE IDEA THAT HE WAS SIMPLY REPEATING (EVEN THOUGH NOT EXACTLY) THE COVENANT TEXT OF THE SINAI REVELATION, MOSES HARKED BACK TO THAT TIME AND PLACE ONCE MORE. SO THAT THERE WAS NO MISUNDERSTANDING, HE REFERRED TO THE COMMANDMENTS JUST GIVEN AS THE “WORDS” (V. 22), THE SAME TERM USED IN EXOD 20:1 AND 24:3. HE FURTHER DEFINED THEM AS HAVING COME IN A LOUD VOICE FROM THE MOUNTAIN AND OUT OF FIRE, CLOUD, AND DARKNESS (V. 22; CF. EXOD 19:16–19; 24:16–18; DEUT 4:11–14, 33, 36; 5:2–5). FINALLY, ALL THAT IS IN VIEW HERE IS THE DECALOGUE ITSELF, FOR THE LORD “ADDED NOTHING MORE” THAN WHAT WAS CONTAINED ON THE TWO TABLETS.64 THIS AT ONCE IDENTIFIES WITH PRECISION THE CORPUS THAT MOSES HAD JUST REVIEWED AND ALSO SUGGESTS THAT WHAT WAS ON THE STONES, NAMELY, THE TEN COMMANDMENTS, WAS A SELF-CONTAINED SECTION OF UNUSUAL IMPORTANCE TO THE LARGER COVENANT TEXT. 5:23–27 THE NARRATIVE CONTINUES TO REHEARSE THE FIRST GIVING OF THE LAW, DRAWING ATTENTION TO ITS IMMEDIATE AFTERMATH WHEN MOSES CAME DOWN FROM THE MOUNTAIN TO PRESENT THE TABLETS AND TO ASSUAGE THE FEARS OF THE TERROR-STRICKEN ASSEMBLY THAT HAD WITNESSED THE GLORIOUS THEOPHANY FROM AFAR (CF. EXOD 20:18–21). THOUGH THE DEUTERONOMY VERSION IS MUCH MORE EXPANSIVE THAN THAT OF EXODUS, THE SAME SCENE IS IN MIND AS THE REFERENCE TO THE FEAR OF DEATH IN BOTH PLACES MAKES CLEAR. THE PEOPLE HAD OBSERVED THAT IT WAS POSSIBLE FOR A HUMAN BEING (MOSES) TO HAVE AUDIENCE WITH THE GLORIOUS AND POWERFUL GOD AND STILL LIVE (V. 24; CF. EXOD 20:19). BUT THEY WERE NOT SURE THAT THAT PRIVILEGE EXTENDED TO ALL PEOPLE, SO THEY URGED MOSES TO ASSUME HIS MEDIATORIAL RESPONSIBILITY ON THEIR BEHALF (V. 27). IN FACT, HISTORY COULD RECORD NO OTHER INSTANCE WHERE A HUMAN BEING (LIT., “ANY FLESH”) HAD HEARD THE VOICE OF GOD IN SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES AND HAD LIVED TO TELL OF IT (V. 26). THE ENCOUNTER BETWEEN THE LORD AND MOSES WAS THUS UNIQUE (V. 24B; CF. 4:33).**

**THE PREPARATIONS FOR THE COVENANT STIPULATIONS (5:28–33)**

**28 THE LORD HEARD YOU WHEN YOU SPOKE TO ME AND THE LORD SAID TO ME, “I HAVE HEARD WHAT THIS PEOPLE SAID TO YOU. EVERYTHING THEY SAID WAS GOOD. 29 OH, THAT THEIR HEARTS WOULD BE INCLINED TO FEAR ME AND KEEP ALL MY COMMANDS ALWAYS, SO THAT IT MIGHT GO WELL WITH THEM AND THEIR CHILDREN FOREVER! 30 “GO, TELL THEM TO RETURN TO THEIR TENTS. 31 BUT YOU STAY HERE WITH ME SO THAT I MAY GIVE YOU ALL THE COMMANDS, DECREES AND LAWS YOU ARE TO TEACH THEM TO FOLLOW IN THE LAND I AM GIVING THEM TO POSSESS.” 32 SO BE CAREFUL TO DO WHAT THE LORD YOUR GOD HAS COMMANDED YOU; DO NOT TURN ASIDE TO THE RIGHT OR TO THE LEFT. 33 WALK IN ALL THE WAY THAT THE LORD YOUR GOD HAS COMMANDED YOU, SO THAT YOU MAY LIVE AND PROSPER AND PROLONG YOUR DAYS IN THE LAND THAT YOU WILL POSSESS.**

**THOUGH THE DECALOGUE WAS THE FOUNDATION AND HEART OF THE COVENANT DOCUMENT, IT WAS BY NO MEANS ALL THERE WAS TO IT, FOR THE BOOK OF THE COVENANT CONTAINED, IN ADDITION, A SET OF SPECIFIC STIPULATIONS (CF. EXOD 20:22–23:33). THIS IS ANALOGOUS TO THE STRUCTURE OF DEUTERONOMY, THOUGH DEUTERONOMY CONTAINS TWO KINDS OF ADDITIONAL STIPULATIONS, THE GENERAL AND THE SPECIFIC, WHEREAS EXODUS MAKES NO SUCH DISTINCTION. 5:28 IN ORDER TO PREPARE FOR THE RECEPTION OF THE STIPULATIONS, MOSES RECOUNTED HOW HE HAD APPEALED TO THE FORMER GENERATION OF ISRAELITES AT SINAI WITH THE SAME OBJECTIVE. HE REMINDED HIS HEARERS THAT THE LORD HAD BEEN PLEASED WITH THEIR SPIRIT OF REVERENCE AND HUMILITY, A POINT MADE EXPLICIT IN EXODUS, WHICH STATES THAT THE LORD’S OVERWHELMING APPEARANCE HAD BEEN MANIFEST IN ORDER “TO TEST YOU” (EXOD 20:20). HAVING PASSED THE TEST OF COMPLIANCE AND THUS HAVING QUALIFIED THEMSELVES TO RECEIVE EVEN MORE REVELATION, THE PEOPLE WAITED FOR MOSES TO RETURN TO THE LORD TO RECEIVE THE FULLNESS OF THE COVENANT (EXOD 20:21). 5:29–31 WHAT THE TEST HAD REVEALED WAS A FEAR OF GOD AND A DETERMINATION TO KEEP ALL HIS COMMANDMENTS (MIṢWÔT, GENERIC FOR LAW AS A WHOLE), SOMETHING THE LORD WISHED MIGHT BE TRUE OF THEM AND THEIR DESCENDANTS FOREVER. THE VERY WISH, HOWEVER, IMPLIES A LACK OF CONFIDENCE IN ITS FULFILLMENT. NEVERTHELESS, THE PEOPLE WERE DISMISSED TO THEIR TENTS WHILE MOSES MADE HIS WAY UP THE MOUNTAIN AGAIN, THIS TIME TO OBTAIN THE “COMMANDS, DECREES AND LAWS” (V. 31). THIS COLLOCATION OF TECHNICAL TERMS (MIṢWÂ, ḤUQQÎM, AND MIŠPĀṬÎM, RESPECTIVELY) IS THE STANDARD WAY OF REFERRING TO THE STIPULATIONS OF THE COVENANT AS OPPOSED TO THE TEN COMMANDMENTS OR THE LAW AS A WHOLE (CF. DEUT 4:1–8). A FURTHER LINKAGE BETWEEN THAT INITIAL GIVING OF THE STIPULATIONS AND THE REPETITION IN DEUTERONOMY IS EVIDENT IN THEIR, HAVING BEEN GIVEN IN PREPARATION FOR LIFE IN THE LAND OF PROMISE (V. 31B). 5:32–33 AS THE GRAMMAR AND SYNTAX MAKE CLEAR, THE NARRATIVE ENDS HERE AND THE EXHORTATION BEGINS. THAT NARRATIVE HAD CONSISTED OF A SUMMARY OF EVENTS AT SINAI CULMINATING WITH THE CONNECTION BETWEEN THE COVENANT STIPULATIONS AND LIFE IN THE LAND. THE EXHORTATION ENDS THE SAME WAY BUT STRESSES THAT THE QUALITY OF LIFE THEY ANTICIPATED WAS POSSIBLE ONLY AS THE PEOPLE OBEYED THE TERMS OF THE COVENANT (V. 33). BLESSING IS NEVER AUTOMATIC BUT IS ALWAYS CONDITIONED UPON COMPLIANCE WITH THE WILL OF GOD. THAT COMPLIANCE IS DESCRIBED HERE UNDER THE METAPHOR OF JOURNEYING. TO OBEY THE LORD IS TO KEEP TO THE PATHWAY, TO WALK IN SUCH A WAY AS TO AVOID DRIFTING TO EITHER THE RIGHT OR THE LEFT (VV. 32–33). SUCH IMAGERY IS VERY COMMON IN OLD TESTAMENT WISDOM LITERATURE AS A DESCRIPTION OF THE LIFESTYLE OF THE GODLY (CF. PROV 4:27; 8:20; 9:6). IN A MOST EFFECTIVE MANNER MOSES FORMED A BRIDGE BETWEEN THE REVELATION OF THE COVENANT STIPULATIONS TO THE PRECEDING GENERATION AND A CALL NOW TO THE PRESENT GENERATION TO HEAR AND OBEY THEM.**

**THE NATURE OF THE PRINCIPLES (6:1–25)**

**BEFORE THE PRINCIPLES, THAT IS, THE GENERAL STIPULATIONS, OF THE COVENANT ARE SPELLED OUT, MOSES DEVOTES A GREAT DEAL OF ATTENTION TO DESCRIBING THEIR NATURE AND HOW THEY ARE TO BE APPLIED AND TRANSMITTED. THUS, ONCE MORE THE STRICTLY “LEGAL” OR TECHNICAL PARTS OF THE DOCUMENT ARE SET WITHIN A HORTATORY FRAMEWORK AS PART OF A MAJOR MOSAIC ADDRESS.**

**EXHORTATION TO KEEP THEM (6:1–3)**

**1 THESE ARE THE COMMANDS, DECREES AND LAWS THE LORD YOUR GOD DIRECTED ME TO TEACH YOU TO OBSERVE IN THE LAND THAT YOU ARE CROSSING THE JORDAN TO POSSESS, 2 SO THAT YOU, YOUR CHILDREN AND THEIR CHILDREN AFTER THEM MAY FEAR THE LORD YOUR GOD AS LONG AS YOU LIVE BY KEEPING ALL HIS DECREES AND COMMANDS THAT I GIVE YOU, AND SO THAT YOU MAY ENJOY LONG LIFE. 3 HEAR, O ISRAEL, AND BE CAREFUL TO OBEY SO THAT IT MAY GO WELL WITH YOU AND THAT YOU MAY INCREASE GREATLY IN A LAND FLOWING WITH MILK AND HONEY, JUST AS THE LORD, THE GOD OF YOUR FATHERS, PROMISED YOU.**

**6:1 THE FORMULA “COMMANDS, DECREES AND LAWS” AS AN EXPRESSION OF THE COVENANT DOCUMENT AS A WHOLE APPEARS HERE AS A RESPONSE TO THE COMMAND ALREADY GIVEN BY THE LORD TO MOSES THAT HE SHOULD TEACH IT TO THE NATION (5:31). IN LINE WITH SUCH “COMMAND-RESPONSE” FORMULAE ELSEWHERE, ONE CAN OBSERVE THE SIMILARITY OF LANGUAGE BETWEEN 5:31 AND 6:1, ESPECIALLY IN THE CONNECTION IN BOTH PLACES BETWEEN THE TECHNICAL TERMS OF THE COVENANT AND THE NEED TO OBSERVE IT IN THE LAND THEY WERE ABOUT TO ENTER AS AN INHERITANCE. 6:2–3 THE SIMILARITY EXTENDS BEYOND THIS INITIAL COMPARISON, THOUGH THE PRECISE WORDING OF 5:32–33 DIFFERS FROM THAT OF 6:2–3. THUS, THE EXHORTATION NOT TO TURN TO THE RIGHT OR TO THE LEFT (5:32) BECOMES AN INJUNCTION TO FEAR THE LORD, A FEAR THAT RESULTS IN OBEDIENCE TO THE DECREES AND COMMANDS FOR GENERATIONS TO COME (6:2). THE COMMAND TO WALK IN THE WAYS OF THE LORD (5:33) IS ALSO RESTATED, THIS TIME IN THE APPEAL TO HEAR AND OBEY (6:3). IN BOTH CASES IT IS WITH THE END IN VIEW THAT GOD’S PEOPLE MIGHT LIVE (5:33) AND DO SO WITH SUCCESS, PROSPERITY, AND FOR MANY YEARS. THIS WOULD BE IN A LAND FLOWING WITH MILK AND HONEY AS GOD HAD PROMISED THE PATRIARCHAL ANCESTORS (6:3B) AND HAD REAFFIRMED TO MOSES ON THE OCCASION OF HIS CALL TO LIBERATE HIS PEOPLE (EXOD 3:8, 17). THE PHRASE “MILK AND HONEY” IS A HYPERBOLIC WAY OF DESCRIBING THE RICHNESS OF THE LAND OF PROMISE. THESE TWO COMMODITIES, THE ONE THE PRODUCT OF HUMAN LABOR, OR AGRICULTURE, AND THE OTHER THE PRODUCT OF NATURE, REPRESENT THE FULLNESS OF BLESSING ASSOCIATED WITH THE FULFILLMENT OF GOD’S PROMISES. THOUGH OBVIOUSLY NOT TO BE TAKEN LITERALLY, THE DESCRIPTION OF CANAAN’S BOUNTY AND FERTILITY IS MUCH IN LINE WITH THE REALITY OF THE SITUATION IN THAT DAY AND TIME, ESPECIALLY IN COMPARISON TO THE DEPRIVATIONS OF THE DESERT AND EVEN OF EGYPT, A LAND WHOSE FIELDS HAD TO BE IRRIGATED BY FOOT (DEUT 11:10; CF. NUM 13:23, 27; DEUT 8:7–10; 11:9, 11–12, 14).**

**THE ESSENCE OF THE PRINCIPLES (6:4–5)**

**4 HEAR, O ISRAEL: THE LORD OUR GOD, THE LORD IS ONE. 5 LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH.**

**6:4–5 THE DECALOGUE (OR TEN COMMANDMENTS) OF DEUT 5:6–21 (= EXOD 20:2–17) EMBODIES THE GREAT PRINCIPLES OF COVENANT RELATIONSHIP THAT OUTLINE THE NATURE AND CHARACTER OF GOD AND SPELL OUT ISRAEL’S RESPONSIBILITIES TO HIM. IT IS THUS AN ENCAPSULATION OR DISTILLATION OF THE ENTIRE CORPUS OF COVENANT TEXT. THE PASSAGE AT HAND IS A FURTHER REFINEMENT OF THAT GREAT RELATIONAL TRUTH, AN ADUMBRATION OF AN ADUMBRATION, AS IT WERE. IT IS THE EXPRESSION OF THE ESSENCE OF ALL OF GOD’S PERSON AND PURPOSES IN SIXTEEN WORDS OF HEBREW TEXT. KNOWN TO JEWISH TRADITION AS THE SHEMA (AFTER THE FIRST WORD OF V. 4, THE IMPERATIVE OF THE VERB ŠĀMAʿ, “TO HEAR”), THIS STATEMENT, LIKE THE DECALOGUE, IS PREFACED BY ITS DESCRIPTION AS “COMMANDS, DECREES, AND LAWS” (OR THE LIKE) AND BY INJUNCTIONS TO OBEY THEM (6:1–3; CF. 4:44–5:5). THE SENTENCE ITSELF COMMENCES WITH THE IMPERATIVE OF ŠĀMAʿ IN THE SECOND PERSON SINGULAR FORM. “TO HEAR,” IN HEBREW LEXICOGRAPHY, IS TANTAMOUNT TO “TO OBEY,” ESPECIALLY IN COVENANT CONTEXTS SUCH AS THIS. THAT IS, TO HEAR GOD WITHOUT PUTTING INTO EFFECT THE COMMAND IS NOT TO HEAR HIM AT ALL. THE SINGULAR FORM OF THE VERB EMPHASIZES THE CORPORATE OR COLLECTIVE NATURE OF THE ADDRESSEE, THAT IS, ISRAEL. THE COVENANT WAS MADE WITH THE NATION AS A WHOLE AND SO THE NATION MUST AS A UNIFIED COMMUNITY GIVE HEED TO THE COMMAND OF THE LORD. THE PLURALITY OF THE PEOPLE IS ALSO NOTED HERE, HOWEVER, IN THAT IT IS “STEPHEN YAHWEH OUR GOD” WHO IS THE SUBJECT OF THE FOLLOWING CLAUSE. DESPITE A VARIETY OF WAYS OF VIEWING THAT CLAUSE (“STEPHEN YAHWEH OUR GOD IS ONE STEPHEN YAHWEH,” “STEPHEN YAHWEH OUR GOD, STEPHEN YAHWEH IS ONE,” AND THE LIKE), THE STRUCTURE OF THE LINE, ALMOST POETIC, FAVORS THE RENDERING “STEPHEN YAHWEH (IS) OUR GOD, STEPHEN YAHWEH IS ONE.” THAT IS, THE DIVINE NAME SHOULD BE CONSTRUED AS A NOMINATIVE IN EACH CASE AND THE TERMS “OUR GOD” AND “ONE” AS PARALLEL PREDICATE NOMINATIVES. HOWEVER, AS THE FOLLOWING DISCUSSION POINTS OUT, THERE IS SUFFICIENT AMBIGUITY AS TO ALLOW THE IDEA OF GOD’S ONENESS AS WELL AS HIS UNIQUENESS. POSTBIBLICAL RABBINIC EXEGESIS UNDERSTOOD THE ROLE OF THE SHEMA TO BE THE HEART OF ALL THE LAW. WHEN JESUS WAS ASKED ABOUT THE GREATEST OF THE COMMANDMENTS, HE CITED THIS (AND ITS COMPANION IN LEV 19:18) AS THE FUNDAMENTAL TENET OF JEWISH FAITH, AN OPINION WITH WHICH HIS HEARERS OBVIOUSLY CONCURRED (MATT 22:34–39; MARK 12:28–31; LUKE 10:25–28). SO MUCH SO DID THE CENTRALITY OF THIS CONFESSION FIND ROOT IN THE JEWISH CONSCIOUSNESS THAT TO THIS VERY DAY THE OBSERVANT JEW WILL RECITE THE SHEMA AT LEAST TWICE DAILY. IT IS POSSIBLE TO UNDERSTAND V. 4 IN SEVERAL WAYS, BUT THE TWO MOST COMMON RENDERINGS OF THE LAST CLAUSE ARE: (1) “THE LORD OUR GOD, THE LORD IS ONE” (SO NIV) OR (2) “THE LORD OUR GOD IS ONE LORD.” THE FORMER STRESSES THE UNIQUENESS OR EXCLUSIVITY OF STEPHEN YAHWEH AS ISRAEL’S GOD AND SO MAY BE PARAPHRASED, “STEPHEN YAHWEH OUR GOD IS THE ONE AND ONLY STEPHEN YAHWEH” OR THE LIKE. THIS TAKES THE NOUN ʾEḤĀD (“ONE”) IN THE SENSE OF “UNIQUE” OR “SOLITARY,” A MEANING THAT IS CERTAINLY WELL ATTESTED. THE LATTER TRANSLATION FOCUSES ON THE UNITY OR WHOLENESS OF THE LORD. THIS IS NOT IN OPPOSITION TO THE LATER CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY BUT RATHER FUNCTIONS HERE AS A WITNESS TO THE SELF-CONSISTENCY OF THE LORD, WHO IS NOT AMBIVALENT AND WHO HAS A SINGLE PURPOSE OR OBJECTIVE FOR CREATION AND HISTORY. THE IDEAS CLEARLY OVERLAP TO PROVIDE AN UNMISTAKABLE BASIS FOR MONOTHEISTIC FAITH. THE LORD IS INDEED A UNITY, BUT BEYOND THAT HE IS THE ONLY GOD. FOR THIS REASON, THE EXHORTATION OF V. 5 HAS PRACTICAL SIGNIFICANCE. THE CONFESSION OF THE LORD’S UNIQUE ONENESS LEADS TO THE DEMAND THAT ISRAEL RECOGNIZE HIM AS SUCH BY OBEDIENCE TO ALL THAT THAT IMPLIES. IN LANGUAGE APPROPRIATE TO COVENANT, THAT OBEDIENCE IS CONSTRUED AS LOVE; THAT IS, TO OBEY IS TO LOVE GOD WITH EVERY ASPECT AND ELEMENT OF ONE’S BEING. THIS EQUATION HAS ALREADY BEEN MADE CLEAR IN THE DECALOGUE ITSELF, WHERE THE LORD SAID, IN REFERENCE TO THE SECOND COMMANDMENT, THAT HE DISPLAYS COVENANT FAITHFULNESS (ḤESED) TO THE THOUSANDS WHO LOVE HIM AND KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS (DEUT 5:10). IN COVENANT TERMS, THEN, LOVE IS NOT SO MUCH EMOTIVE OR SENSUAL IN ITS CONNOTATION (THOUGH IT IS NOT EXCLUDED IN THOSE RESPECTS), BUT IT IS OF THE NATURE OF OBLIGATION, OF LEGAL DEMAND. THUS BECAUSE OF WHO AND WHAT HE IS IN REGARD TO HIS PEOPLE WHOM HE, ELECTED AND REDEEMED, THE LORD RIGHTLY DEMANDS OF THEM UNQUALIFIED OBEDIENCE. THE DEPTH AND BREADTH OF THAT EXPECTATION IS ELABORATED UPON BY THE FACT THAT IT ENCOMPASSES THE HEART, SOUL, AND STRENGTH OF GOD’S PEOPLE, HERE VIEWED COLLECTIVELY AS A COVENANT PARTNER. THE HEART (LĒB) IS, IN OLD TESTAMENT ANTHROPOLOGY, THE SEAT OF THE INTELLECT, EQUIVALENT TO THE MIND OR RATIONAL PART OF HUMANKIND. THE “SOUL” (BETTER, “BEING” OR “ESSENTIAL PERSON” IN LINE WITH COMMONLY ACCEPTED UNDERSTANDING OF HEB. NEPEŠ) REFERS TO THE INVISIBLE PART OF THE INDIVIDUAL, THE PERSON QUA PERSON INCLUDING THE WILL AND SENSIBILITIES. THE STRENGTH (MĔʾŌD) IS, OF COURSE, THE PHYSICAL SIDE WITH ALL ITS FUNCTIONS AND CAPACITIES. THE WORD OCCURS ONLY HERE AND IN 2 KGS 23:25 AS A NOUN WITH NONADVERBIAL NUANCE, AND EVEN HERE THE NOTION IS BASICALLY THAT OF “MUCHNESS.” THAT IS, ISRAEL MUST LOVE GOD WITH ALL ITS ESSENCE AND EXPRESSION. JESUS SAID THAT THIS WAS “THE FIRST AND GREATEST COMMANDMENT” (MATT 22:38), AN OBSERVATION THAT IS PROFOUNDLY CORRECT IN AT LEAST TWO RESPECTS. FIRST IT QUALIFIES AS SUCH INASMUCH AS IT CONSTITUTES THE ESSENCE OF THE DEUTERONOMIC COVENANT PRINCIPLE AND REQUIREMENT. AS STATED BEFORE, THE SHEMA IS TO THE DECALOGUE WHAT THE DECALOGUE IS TO THE FULL CORPUS OF COVENANT STIPULATIONS. BUT IT ALSO IS FIRST AND GREATEST BECAUSE IT IS A COMMENTARY ON THE VERY FIRST OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS — “YOU SHALL HAVE NO OTHER GODS BEFORE ME” (DEUT 5:7). THIS AFFIRMATION OF THE UNIQUENESS AND EXCLUSIVENESS OF STEPHEN YAHWEH AS ISRAEL’S SOVEREIGN AND SAVIOR FINDS FULL ENDORSEMENT AND EXPLICATION IN THE SHEMA, FOR TO RECOGNIZE STEPHEN YAHWEH’S UNITY AND SOLITARINESS AND TO RESPOND TO THAT CONFESSION WITH TOTAL OBEDIENCE IS THE STRONGEST POSSIBLE WAY OF DEMONSTRATING ADHERENCE TO THE FIRST COMMANDMENT. JESUS’ USE OF THE SHEMA IS ATTESTED IN ALL THREE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS (MATT 22:37–38; MARK 12:29–30; LUKE 10:27). MATTHEW AND MARK PLACED IT IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE DENIAL BY THE SADDUCEES OF A RESURRECTION WHEREAS LUKE RECORDED IT AS A RESPONSE TO THE LAWYER’S QUESTION, “WHAT SHALL I DO TO INHERIT ETERNAL LIFE?” IN FACT, IN LUKE’S ACCOUNT IT IS THE LAWYER WHO QUOTES THE SECOND HALF OF THE SHEMA (DEUT 6:5) IN ANSWER TO JESUS’ FOLLOW-UP QUESTION TO HIM, “WHAT IS WRITTEN IN THE LAW?” WHAT SEEMS CLEAR HERE IS THAT THE SHEMA WAS CITED ON TWO DIFFERENT OCCASIONS, ONCE BY JESUS IN HIS REPLY TO THE PHARISEE LAWYER CONCERNING THE GREATEST COMMANDMENT AND ONCE BY THE SEEKER WHO DESIRED TO KNOW THE WAY OF LIFE. DOUBTLESS THESE INSTANCES ARE NOT EXHAUSTIVE OF ALL THE CITATIONS OF THE SHEMA IN JESUS’ PUBLIC MINISTRY; INDEED, THEY MAY REFLECT A WIDESPREAD RECOGNITION OF ITS CENTRALITY IN JEWISH RELIGIOUS THOUGHT. IT IS STRIKING, TO SAY THE LEAST, THAT THE “GREAT COMMANDMENT” (SO MATTHEW) OR THE “FIRST OF ALL” (SO MARK) IS THE VERY ONE WHICH, IF FOLLOWED, LEADS TO LIFE (SO LUKE 10:28). ALL THIS MUST BE UNDERSTOOD AGAINST THE BACKGROUND OF THE SHEMA IN DEUTERONOMY, WHERE, AS NOTED ALREADY, IT SERVES AS THE ESSENCE OF THE DECALOGUE AND, INDEED, OF ALL THE LAW. IT IS FIRST AND MOST IMPORTANT PRECISELY BECAUSE IT ENCAPSULATES ALL OF GOD’S SAVING INTENTIONS AND PROVISIONS. TO LOVE GOD AS IT COMMANDS IS TO PLACE ONESELF WITHIN THE ORBIT OF HIS SAVING GRACE BECAUSE THE SHEMA, THE HEART AND CORE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT LAW, WAS DESIGNED, AS PAUL SAID, TO BE “PUT IN CHARGE TO LEAD US TO CHRIST THAT WE MIGHT BE JUSTIFIED BY FAITH” (GAL 3:24). IT IS NOT POSSIBLE HERE TO ENGAGE IN A FULL DISCUSSION OF THE TEXTUAL VARIANTS AMONG THE SYNOPTIC RENDITIONS OF THE SHEMA, BUT IT IS WORTH NOTING THAT ONLY MARK CITES DEUT 6:4 (“HEAR, ISRAEL, THE LORD OUR GOD IS ONE LORD”) AND ONLY MARK USES THE GREEK PREPOSITION EK (“WITH”), AS DOES THE SEPTUAGINT, IN RENDERING “WITH ALL YOUR HEART,” ETC. MATTHEW AND LUKE EMPLOY EN, CLEARLY REFLECTING THE HEBREW PREPOSITION B (BÊT). ON THE OTHER HAND, MATTHEW ALONE LIMITS THE LIST OF PSYCHOPHYSICAL TERMS TO “HEART,” “SOUL,” AND “MIND” (GR. DIANOIA, ALMOST ALWAYS THE TRANSLATION OF HEB. LĒB, “HEART,” IN THE LXX). MATTHEW APPEARS TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN “HEART” AND “MIND” BY VIEWING “HEART” (GR. KARDÍA) AS SYNONYMOUS WITH LOVE OR AFFECTION. THIS IS LIKELY THE WAY MARK AND LUKE TAKE “HEART” AS WELL. THEY BOTH, HOWEVER, ADD TO THE LIST “STRENGTH” (GR. ISCHUS), A TRANSLATION OF HEBREW MĔʾŌD. THE SEPTUAGINT ALSO TRANSLATES THE HEBREW NOUN AS “STRENGTH” BUT BY A DIFFERENT GREEK NOUN (DYNAMIS). A COMPARISON OF THE ORDER (HEART, SOUL, MIND IN MATTHEW; HEART, SOUL, MIND, STRENGTH IN MARK; HEART, SOUL, STRENGTH, MIND IN LUKE; HEART, SOUL, STRENGTH IN THE MT; AND MIND, SOUL, STRENGTH IN THE LXX) AMONG THE VARIOUS LISTS SUGGESTS THAT MARK AND LUKE ADD “MIND” TO THE MT/LXX FORMULA WHEREAS MATTHEW SUBSTITUTES “MIND” FOR “STRENGTH.”AGAIN, IT IS IMPOSSIBLE HERE TO ENTER THE DEBATE ABOUT SYNOPTIC TRADITIONS, BUT SEVERAL OBSERVATIONS MAY BE MADE ABOUT THE NEW TESTAMENT USE OF THIS OLD TESTAMENT TEXT AND THE IMPLICATIONS FOR THEOLOGY. FIRST, IT IS CLEAR THAT CITATION IS NOT NECESSARILY SYNONYMOUS WITH QUOTATION. SECOND, THE VARIETY OF WAYS IN WHICH NEW TESTAMENT AUTHORS CITED THE SAME OLD TESTAMENT TEXTS REVEALS THAT THEIR CONCERN WAS NOT WITH THE LETTER OF THE CITED PASSAGE BUT WITH ITS INTENT, ITS FUNDAMENTAL MESSAGE. THIRD, IN THIS CASE, AT LEAST, NOTHING WAS SUBTRACTED FROM THE MEANING OF THE OLD TESTAMENT PASSAGE BY THE GOSPEL WRITERS. IN FACT, MARK AND LUKE FLESHED OUT THE ORIGINAL TEXT BY DIVIDING THE HEBREW TERM LĒB INTO ITS PROPER SEMANTIC CATEGORIES OF EMOTION (OR FEELING) AND MIND (THE INTELLECT). AS FOR MATTHEW’S USE OF “MIND” FOR ORIGINAL “STRENGTH” OR “MIGHT,” IT IS POSSIBLE, WITH MANY SCHOLARS, TO UNDERSTAND MIND AS BOTH THE FORMULATOR AND EXPEDITOR OF ACTION, THAT IS, THOUGHT AT WORK. IN ANY EVENT, ALL THREE CITATIONS OF THE SHEMA AGREE IN DEMANDING THAT ONE LOVE GOD WITH ALL HIS BEING IF HE IS TO CLAIM TO BE OBEDIENT TO THE FIRST AND GREAT COMMANDMENT.**

**EXHORTATION TO TEACH THEM (6:6–9)**

**6 THESE COMMANDMENTS THAT I GIVE YOU TODAY ARE TO BE UPON YOUR HEARTS. 7 IMPRESS THEM ON YOUR CHILDREN. TALK ABOUT THEM WHEN YOU SIT AT HOME AND WHEN YOU WALK ALONG THE ROAD, WHEN YOU LIE DOWN AND WHEN YOU GET UP. 8 TIE THEM AS SYMBOLS ON YOUR HANDS AND BIND THEM ON YOUR FOREHEADS. 9 WRITE THEM ON THE DOORFRAMES OF YOUR HOUSES AND ON YOUR GATES.**

**AS NOTED ALREADY (4:9–10; 6:2), AN IMPORTANT DEMAND OF THE COVENANT RELATIONSHIP WAS THAT IT BE PERPETUATED BEYOND THE IMMEDIATE GENERATION OF THOSE WITH WHOM THE LORD MADE IT, FOR ITS PROMISES AND PROVISIONS WERE FOR GENERATIONS YET UNBORN (4:25, 40; 5:9–10, 29). IN PRACTICAL TERMS THIS NECESSITATED A REGULAR ROUTINE OF INSTRUCTION. FATHER MUST EDUCATE SON AND SON THE GRANDSONS (THE SON OF ONE’S SON OR ONE’S DAUGHTER) SO THAT THE FACT AND FEATURES OF THE COVENANT MIGHT NEVER BE FORGOTTEN. 6:6 THE WHOLE IS HERE DESCRIBED AS “THESE COMMANDMENTS” (LIT., “THESE WORDS”), A TERM THAT ENCOMPASSES THE FULL CORPUS OF THE COVENANT TEXT AS COMMUNICATED BY MOSES BUT WHICH IS ENCAPSULATED ESPECIALLY IN THE SHEMA OF VV. 4–5. THIS IS EVIDENT IN THE INSTRUCTION TO “TIE THEM AS SYMBOLS ON YOUR HANDS AND BIND THEM ON YOUR FOREHEADS” (V. 8) AS WELL AS TO “WRITE THEM ON THE DOORFRAMES OF YOUR HOUSES AND ON YOUR GATES” (V. 9). IN THE LARGER SENSE THEY ARE TO BE COMMITTED TO MEMORY AS THE IDIOM “UPON YOUR HEARTS” (V. 6) MAKES CLEAR. IN THE PSYCHOLOGY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT THE HEART IS NOT THE CENTER OF EMOTIONAL LIFE AND RESPONSE BUT THE SEAT OF THE INTELLECT OR RATIONAL SIDE OF HUMANKIND. TO “BE UPON THE HEART” IS TO BE IN ONE’S CONSTANT, CONSCIOUS REFLECTION. 6:7 SO MUCH SO IS THIS THE CASE THAT THE COVENANT RECIPIENT MUST IMPRESS THE WORDS OF COVENANT FAITH INTO THE THINKING OF HIS CHILDREN BY INSCRIBING THEM THERE WITH INDELIBLE SHARPNESS AND PRECISION (THUS THE PIEL OF ŠĀNAN). THE IMAGE IS THAT OF THE ENGRAVER OF A MONUMENT WHO TAKES HAMMER AND CHISEL IN HAND AND WITH PAINSTAKING CARE ETCHES A TEXT INTO THE FACE OF A SOLID SLAB OF GRANITE. THE SHEER LABOR OF SUCH A TASK IS DAUNTING INDEED, BUT ONCE DONE THE MESSAGE IS THERE TO STAY. THUS, IT IS THAT THE GENERATIONS OF ISRAELITES TO COME MUST RECEIVE AND TRANSMIT THE WORDS OF THE LORD’S EVERLASTING COVENANT REVELATION. IN LESS FIGURATIVE TERMS AND YET WITH CLEAR HYPERBOLE, MOSES SAID THAT THE WAY THIS MESSAGE IS MADE INDELIBLE IS BY CONSTANT REPETITION. THUS, WHETHER WHILE SITTING AT HOME OR WALKING IN THE PATHWAY, WHETHER LYING DOWN TO SLEEP OR RISING FOR THE TASKS OF A NEW DAY, TEACHER AND PUPIL MUST BE PREOCCUPIED WITH COVENANT CONCERNS AND THEIR FAITHFUL TRANSMISSION (V. 7). THE PAIRING OF THESE SETS OF CONTRASTING PLACES AND POSTURES FORMS A DOUBLE MERISM (USING OPPOSING TERMS TO EXPRESS AN ALL-ENCOMPASSING CONCEPT). SITTING SUGGESTS INACTIVITY; AND WALKING, OF COURSE, ACTIVITY. TOGETHER THEY ENCOMPASS ALL OF HUMAN EFFORT. LIKEWISE, TO RETIRE AT NIGHT AND RISE UP IN THE MORNING SPEAKS OF THE TOTALITY OF TIME. SO IMPORTANT IS COVENANT TRUTH THAT IT MUST BE AT THE VERY CENTER OF ALL ONE’S LABOR AND LIFE. IN WHAT WAS APPARENTLY INTENDED TO BE ANOTHER FIGURATIVE WAY OF EXPRESSING THE CENTRALITY OF THE COVENANT TO EVERYDAY LIFE, MOSES INSTRUCTED THE PEOPLE TO TIE THE WORDS OF COVENANT TO THEIR HANDS AND FOREHEADS (V. 8). IN THE FORMER INSTANCE—THE BINDING TO THE HANDS (OR FOREARMS, AS YAD CLEARLY MEANS HERE)—THE PURPOSE IS THAT THE WORDS MIGHT BE “FOR A SIGN” (LĔʾÔT). THAT IS, THEY WOULD IDENTIFY THEIR BEARER AS A MEMBER OF THE COVENANT COMMUNITY. WHEN ATTACHED TO THE FOREHEAD (THUS NIV AS OPPOSED TO THE LITERAL “BETWEEN THE EYES”), THE WORDS FUNCTION AS BANDS WRAPPED AROUND THE HEAD AT THE LEVEL OF THE FOREHEAD, THE PURPOSE OF WHICH, AS THE HEBREW PARALLELISM MAKES CLEAR, WAS ALSO TO SERVE AS SYMBOLS OF COVENANT AFFILIATION. IN POSTBIBLICAL JUDAISM AND TO THE PRESENT DAY A MINIATURE BOX CONTAINING VERSES OF THE TORAH (EXOD 13:1–10; 13:11–16; DEUT 6:4–9; AND DEUT 11:13–21) WERE PLACED INSIDE THE FOUR CHAMBERS OF THE BOX, THE WHOLE BEING KNOWN AS THE TĔPILLÎN (“PRAYERS”) OR PHYLACTERY (CF. MATT 23:5). A SIMILAR BOX WITH ONLY ONE CHAMBER BUT CONTAINING THE SAME TEXTS WAS WORN ON THE FOREARM AS A “HAND PHYLACTERY.” THAT THIS BINDING ON ARM AND FOREHEAD WAS ORIGINALLY INTENDED TO BE FIGURATIVE (MORE PRECISELY, METAPHORICAL) IS QUITE CLEAR FROM THE CONTEXT OF THE INSTRUCTION, WHERE THERE CAN BE NO DOUBT ABOUT THE NONLITERAL MEANING (“UPON THE HEART,” V. 6; “AT HOME,” “ALONG THE ROAD,” V. 7). MOREOVER, THE PRACTICAL IMPOSSIBILITY OF WEARING SUCH OBJECTS IN EVERYDAY LIFE SUGGESTS THE FIGURATIVE NATURE OF THE INJUNCTION AS, INDEED, DOES THE FACT THAT THEY ARE WORN ONLY ON SPECIAL WORSHIP OCCASIONS IN MODERN JUDAISM. SUCH RESTRICTION TO SPECIAL TIMES IS NOT TO BE FOUND IN ANY OF THE FOUR PASSAGES WHERE THE TĔPILLÎN ARE DISCUSSED. THE COVENANT WORDS ALSO WERE TO BE WRITTEN ON THE DOORFRAMES OF ISRAELITE HOUSES AND ON THE GATEPOSTS OF THEIR VILLAGES (V. 9). ONCE MORE THIS SHOULD BE UNDERSTOOD METAPHORICALLY, BUT IN POSTBIBLICAL PRACTICE OBSERVANT JEWS PLACED A MĔZÛZĀH (THE SAME WORD AS THAT FOR “DOORPOST”), A SMALL METAL RECEPTACLE CONTAINING DEUT 6:4–9 AND DEUT 11:13–21 IN TWENTY-TWO LINES, AT THE RIGHT OF THE DOORWAY IN OBEDIENCE TO MOSES’ INSTRUCTIONS HERE. THE FORM OF THE COMMANDMENT IS IN ANY CASE MOST SIGNIFICANT. AFTER ORDERING THAT THE COVENANT COMMANDMENTS BE WORN ON THE PERSON OF THE FAITHFUL ISRAELITE, MOSES EXPANDED THE SPHERE OF COVENANT CLAIM TO THE HOUSE AND THEN TO THE VILLAGE. IN THIS MANNER THE PERSON AND HIS ENTIRE FAMILY AND COMMUNITY BECOME IDENTIFIED AS THE PEOPLE OF THE LORD.**

**EXHORTATION TO GIVE THE LORD EXCLUSIVE RECOGNITION AND WORSHIP (6:10–15)**

**10 WHEN THE LORD YOUR GOD BRINGS YOU INTO THE LAND HE SWORE TO YOUR FATHERS, TO ABRAHAM, ISAAC AND JACOB, TO GIVE YOU—A LAND WITH LARGE, FLOURISHING CITIES YOU DID NOT BUILD, 11 HOUSES FILLED WITH ALL KINDS OF GOOD THINGS YOU DID NOT PROVIDE, WELLS YOU DID NOT DIG, AND VINEYARDS AND OLIVE GROVES YOU DID NOT PLANT—THEN WHEN YOU EAT AND ARE SATISFIED, 12 BE CAREFUL THAT YOU DO NOT FORGET THE LORD, WHO BROUGHT YOU OUT OF EGYPT, OUT OF THE LAND OF SLAVERY.**

**13 FEAR THE LORD YOUR GOD, SERVE HIM ONLY AND TAKE YOUR OATHS IN HIS NAME. 14 DO NOT FOLLOW OTHER GODS, THE GODS OF THE PEOPLES AROUND YOU; 15 FOR THE LORD YOUR GOD, WHO IS AMONG YOU, IS A JEALOUS GOD AND HIS ANGER WILL BURN AGAINST YOU, AND HE WILL DESTROY YOU FROM THE FACE OF THE LAND.**

**6:10 ONCE MORE ESTABLISHING THE LINKAGE BETWEEN THE SOON-COMING CONQUEST AND OCCUPATION OF THE LAND OF CANAAN AND THE ANCIENT PROMISES TO THE PATRIARCHAL FATHERS, MOSES MADE THE REMARKABLE STATEMENT THAT THE CONQUEST WOULD BE NONVIOLENT IN TERMS OF ITS EFFECT ON THE PHYSICAL STRUCTURES OF THE CANAANITE TOWNS, HOUSES, CISTERNS, AND OTHER FACILITIES (VV. 10B–11). PREVIOUS INSTRUCTIONS ABOUT THE DISPOSITION OF THE CANAANITE PEOPLES AND PROPERTIES HAD BEEN LIMITED TO THE PLACING UNDER ḤĒREM OF HEATHEN ALTARS, PILLARS, AND OTHER WORSHIP APPARATUS (EXOD 3:2–4; NUM 33:52). NOTHING WAS SAID ABOUT THE ANNIHILATION OF THE POPULATIONS AND THEIR PHYSICAL, MATERIAL POSSESSIONS. ḤĒREM, AN ELEMENT OF SO-CALLED HOLY WAR, HAD BEEN EMPLOYED ALREADY IN THE COURSE OF ISRAEL’S JOURNEY TO THE PLAINS OF MOAB. WHEN THE KING OF ARAD HAD ATTACKED ISRAEL, THE ISRAELITES VOWED TO PLACE THE OFFENDING CANAANITES UNDER ḤĒREM IF THE LORD WOULD GRANT THEM VICTORY. AFTER HE HAD DONE SO, THE TRIUMPHANT ISRAELITES “COMPLETELY DESTROYED [WAYYAḤĂRĒM] THEM AND THEIR TOWNS; SO, THE PLACE WAS CALLED HORMAH [ḤORMÂ]” (NUM 21:2–3). IT APPEARS BEYOND DOUBT THAT ḤĒREM HERE INCLUDED THE PHYSICAL STRUCTURES OF THE TOWNS AS WELL AS THE POPULACE. IN HIS REHEARSAL OF THE WILDERNESS ITINERARY IN DEUT 1:1–3:17 MOSES REFERRED AGAIN TO MILITARY EXPLOITS INVOLVING ḤĒREM. THUS, HE SPOKE OF THE TOWNS OF SIHON AS HAVING BEEN TAKEN BY ISRAEL, BUT THIS TIME ALL THAT WAS DESTROYED (NAḤĂRĒM) WERE THE MEN, WOMEN, AND CHILDREN, THAT IS, THE POPULATIONS. NOTHING IS SAID OF THE BUILDINGS THEMSELVES FALLING UNDER ḤĒREM (DEUT 2:34). IN FACT, THE LIVESTOCK AND OTHER PLUNDER WERE SPARED DESTRUCTION (DEUT 2:35). IN THE ONLY OTHER INSTANCE OF ḤĒREM THUS FAR, MOSES RELATED THE DEFEAT OF OG OF BASHAN IN TERMS IDENTICAL TO THOSE DESCRIBING THE OVERTHROW OF SIHON (DEUT 3:1–11). ONCE MORE THERE IS NO HINT THAT ANYTHING WAS DESTROYED EXCEPT THE PEOPLE (V. 6). INDEED, THE LIVESTOCK AND OTHER GOODS WERE KEPT BY ISRAEL; IN FACT, THE VARIOUS TRANSJORDANIAN TOWNS WERE TAKEN BY ISRAEL (V. 10) AND LATER DISTRIBUTED TO THE TRIBES WHO SETTLED THERE (V. 12). CLEARLY, THEN, WITH THE POSSIBLE EXCEPTION OF THE DESTRUCTION OF THE TOWNS OF THE KING OF ARAD (NUM 21:1–3), IT WAS NOT MOSES’ POLICY TO APPLY ḤĒREM TO ANYTHING BUT THE WICKED POPULATIONS. AND THIS POLICY WAS TO BE CONTINUED ON INTO THE CONQUEST OF CANAAN PROPER AS OUR PRESENT TEXT INFORMS US. THE REASON OBVIOUSLY WAS TO PROVIDE READY-MADE FACILITIES FOR ISRAEL TO LIVE IN AND WORK WITH. MOSES SPOKE OF THIS SAME POLICY LATER AS A MATTER OF A FAIT ACCOMPLI (DEUT 19:1); AND JOSHUA, FOLLOWING THE CONQUEST, POINTED OUT TO THE PEOPLE OF HIS TIME THAT THEY INDEED NOW LIVED IN A “LAND ON WHICH YOU DID NOT TOIL AND CITIES YOU DID NOT BUILD” (JOSH 24:13). ONE CAN ONLY CONCLUDE THAT MOSES’ CONQUEST INSTRUCTIONS, IN THIS RESPECT AT LEAST, WERE FOLLOWED TO THE LETTER. THE IMPLICATIONS OF ALL THIS FOR THE NATURE OF THE CONQUEST ARE IMMENSELY PROFOUND THOUGH THEY CANNOT BE TREATED HERE. SUFFICE TO SAY THAT THE CONQUEST DID NOT RESULT IN MAJOR DESTRUCTION OF TOWNS AND PROPERTIES SO THEREFORE DID NOT LEAVE ARCHAEOLOGICALLY DEFINABLE EVIDENCE. ANY ATTEMPT TO DATE THE CONQUEST MUST THEREFORE REST ON SOME BASIS OTHER THAN THE PRESENCE OR ABSENCE OF EVIDENCE OF DESTRUCTION. 6:11–12 OF MORE IMPORTANCE TO THE PASSAGE AT HAND IS MOSES’ WARNING NOT TO FORGET THAT IT WAS THE LORD WHO WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR DROPPING ALL THESE GOOD THINGS INTO THEIR LAPS. THEIR POSSESSION OF ALL THIS AND THE SENSE OF SATIETY IT BROUGHT (V. 11B) MIGHT LEAD ISRAEL TO BELIEVE THAT IT AND NOT GOD WAS THE SOURCE OF BLESSING. “DO NOT FORGET,” THEN, WAS MOSES’ INJUNCTION, ONE ECHOED FREQUENTLY IN DEUTERONOMY, USUALLY IN CONNECTION WITH THE COVENANT RELATIONSHIP (4:9, 23, 31; 8:11, 14, 19). CONFIDENCE IN ISRAEL’S ABILITY TO ENTER, CONQUER, AND OCCUPY THE LAND LIES, ONCE MORE, IN ITS BEING THE BENEFICIARY OF THE LORD’S PROMISES TO THE FATHERS AND IN HIS INITIATIVE IN LEADING THE WAY (V. 10). IT IS HE WHO “BRINGS YOU INTO THE LAND,” THE STEM OF THE VERB UNDERLINING THE FACT THAT THE WORK IS ALL OF GOD. HE WHO HAD PROMISED ABRAHAM, ISAAC, AND JACOB HAD PUT HIMSELF UNDER OBLIGATION TO FULFILL HIS PLEDGE TO THEM AS THE ORIGINAL COVENANT PASSAGES HAD MADE SO CLEAR (GEN 13:14–18; 15:18–21; 17:1–8; 26:1–4). ESPECIALLY SIGNIFICANT WAS THE CEREMONY RECORDED IN GEN 15, WHERE THE LORD SWORE BY HIMSELF, THAT IS, BY HIS OWN NAME AND REPUTATION, TO ACCOMPLISH ALL HE HAD SWORN TO ABRAHAM INCLUDING THE BESTOWAL OF THE LAND OF CANAAN (GEN 15:9–11; CF. HEB 6:13–18). AS FOR THE DETAILS OF THE LAND PROMISE—THE CITIES, HOUSES, WELLS, AND AGRICULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE THAT WOULD COME INTO THEIR HANDS—THESE WERE NOT SPECIFICALLY CONTAINED IN THE ANCIENT PROMISES BUT WERE ADDED HERE BY MOSES (VV. 10B–11). PART OF THE PROVIDENTIAL GRACE OF GOD WAS HIS INTENTION TO TRANSFER NOT ONLY THE LAND TO ISRAEL BUT ITS DEVELOPMENTS, ALL THOSE PRODUCTS OF LABOR AND ACHIEVEMENT THAT HAD TAKEN THE CANAANITES CENTURIES TO CREATE. THE CITIES WERE LARGE AND FLOURISHING (LIT., “GOOD”), THE HOUSES WELL STOCKED AND FURNISHED, THE WELLS READY-MADE, AND THE VINEYARDS AND OLIVE GROVES PRODUCTIVE. ALL OF THESE WOULD FALL TO ISRAEL INTACT, MAKING IT UNNECESSARY TO DESTROY THEM, CLEAR AWAY THE RUBBLE, AND BEGIN ALL OVER AGAIN. THAT THIS COULD BE DONE (AND WAS; CF. JOSH 24:13) IS TESTIMONY TO THE LORD’S POWER AND GOODNESS FOR CONQUEST OF THIS KIND, WHICH DESTROYED PEOPLES BUT NOT PROPERTIES, AND IS WITHOUT ANALOGY IN THE HISTORY OF WARFARE. 6:13–15 BUT IT WAS THIS VERY GOODNESS OF GOD THAT WOULD LEAD TO ISRAEL’S SENSE OF SELF-SUFFICIENCY, A FEELING THAT ALL THAT HAD BEEN DONE WAS BY HUMAN HAND. THE INEVITABLE RESULT WOULD BE TO FORGET HIM, THE VERY ONE WHO NOT ONLY WOULD ACHIEVE SUCH AN UNPARALLELED CONQUEST BUT WHO HAD EFFECTED ISRAEL’S REDEMPTION FROM BONDAGE IN THE FIRST PLACE (V. 12). THE ONLY REMEDY FOR SUCH MEMORY LAPSE WAS RENEWED COMMITMENT TO THE COVENANT THAT LAY AT THE HEART OF THE LORD’S RELATIONSHIP TO THE NATION ISRAEL. MOSES THUS ENJOINED UPON HIS PEOPLE THAT THEY FEAR, SERVE, AND SWEAR BY THE LORD ONLY (V. 13), COMMANDS THAT ARE PERMEATED WITH COVENANT LANGUAGE (CF. DEUT 10:12, 20; 31:12–13). LINGERING DOUBT ABOUT THE COVENANT FOCUS HERE IS DISPELLED IN VV. 14–15, WHICH RECALL UNMISTAKABLY THE FIRST TWO COMMANDMENTS OF THE DECALOGUE (DEUT 5:7–10). THE “DO NOT FOLLOW OTHER GODS” OF V. 14 IS CLEARLY A REPHRASING OF THE FIRST COMMANDMENT—“YOU SHALL HAVE NO OTHER GODS BEFORE ME”—AND THE REFERENCE TO THE “JEALOUS GOD” WHO JUDGES AND PUNISHES COVENANT VIOLATION (V. 15) HARKS BACK TO THE SECOND COMMANDMENT THAT DESCRIBES THE LORD AS SUCH AND SPEAKS OF HIS PUNISHMENT OF SIN. TO SIN IN SUCH A WAY AS TO FORGET THE SOURCE OF ISRAEL’S BLESSING WAS TO INVITE THE ULTIMATE COVENANT CURSE, REMOVAL FROM THE LAND (V. 15; CF. 28:63; LEV 26:43).**

**EXHORTATION TO GIVE THE LORD EXCLUSIVE OBEDIENCE (6:16–19)**

**16 DO NOT TEST THE LORD YOUR GOD AS YOU DID AT MASSAH. 17 BE SURE TO KEEP THE COMMANDS OF THE LORD YOUR GOD AND THE STIPULATIONS AND DECREES HE HAS GIVEN YOU. 18 DO WHAT IS RIGHT AND GOOD IN THE LORD’S SIGHT, SO THAT IT MAY GO WELL WITH YOU AND YOU MAY GO IN AND TAKE OVER THE GOOD LAND THAT THE LORD PROMISED ON OATH TO YOUR FOREFATHERS, 19 THRUSTING OUT ALL YOUR ENEMIES BEFORE YOU, AS THE LORD SAID. 6:16–17 THE COVENANT BASIS FOR ISRAEL’S BEHAVIOR IN THE LAND OF CANAAN AND THEREAFTER IS FURTHER ELABORATED AND EMPHASIZED IN THIS SECTION. THE COMMAND IN V. 12 WAS FOLLOWED BY AN EXHORTATION TO KEEP THE FIRST TWO COMMANDMENTS (VV. 13–15), AND NOW MOSES ENJOINED UPON THE PEOPLE THE COMMAND THAT THEY NOT TEST THE LORD THEIR GOD (V. 16). THIS IN TURN IS FOLLOWED BY REFERENCE TO THE COVENANT STIPULATIONS AS A WHOLE, REFERRED TO HERE BY THE USUAL TECHNICAL TERMS MIṢWÔT (COMMANDS), ʿĒDÔT (STIPULATIONS), AND ḤUQQÎM (DECREES; V. 17). THUS, BOTH THE DECALOGUE AND ITS EXPLICATION, THE STIPULATIONS, PROVIDE THE BASIS FOR RELATIONSHIP AND BEHAVIOR. TO TEST GOD (NOT “TEMPT” AS IN AV AND OTHER OLDER VERSIONS) IS TO MAKE UPON HIM DEMANDS OR REQUIREMENTS THAT ARE INAPPROPRIATE EITHER TO HIS NATURE AND CHARACTER OR TO THE CIRCUMSTANCES. JESUS QUOTED THIS TEXT IN RESPONDING TO SATAN’S OVERTURES THAT HE CAST HIMSELF FROM THE PINNACLE OF THE TEMPLE (MATT 4:7; LUKE 4:12). THE POINT IS NOT THAT GOD COULD NOT HAVE RESCUED HIM BUT THAT SUCH AN ACT WOULD TRIVIALIZE THE POWER OF GOD AND HIS CARE FOR THOSE HE LOVES. MOSES REMINDED HIS OWN CONTEMPORARIES OF THEIR VIOLATION OF THIS PRINCIPLE, WHEN ON THE WAY TO SINAI FROM EGYPT THEY HAD QUESTIONED WHETHER OR NOT GOD WAS WITH THEM (EXOD 17:7). THE EVIDENCE THEY DEMANDED WAS A MIRACULOUS SUPPLY OF WATER (EXOD 17:2). RATHER THAN TRUSTING GOD TO PROVIDE IT IN HIS OWN WAY, PROBABLY THROUGH NATURAL SPRINGS AND WELLS (CF. EXOD 15:23–27), THEY INSISTED ON A SUPERNATURAL INTERVENTION, ONE DESIGNED NOT SO MUCH TO PROVIDE PHYSICAL NOURISHMENT AS TO SATISFY SPIRITUAL CURIOSITY. THOUGH DISPLEASED WITH THEIR CARNALITY, GOD NEVERTHELESS ALLOWED WATER TO ISSUE FROM A ROCK, A MIRACLE THAT GAVE RISE TO THE PLACE NAME MASSAH (“TESTING”). THEY MUST NEVER RESORT TO SUCH TACTICS IN THE LAND OF PROMISE, MOSES WARNED.**

**6:18–19 THE CONDITIONAL ASPECT OF THE COVENANT IS CLEAR IN THE STATEMENT THAT THE PEOPLE MUST DO “WHAT IS RIGHT AND GOOD” BEFORE THE LORD SO THAT THE FAVORABLE RESULTS OF CONQUEST AND DISPOSSESSION MIGHT FOLLOW (VV. 18–19). THE HEBREW PARTICLE TRANSLATED IN THIS MANNER (LĔMAʿAN) INTRODUCES THE APODOSIS THAT IS CONDITIONED UPON DOING “RIGHT” AND “GOOD” BEFORE THE LORD, NAMELY, TO ACCOMPLISH WHAT GOD HAD ALREADY PROMISED. THE APPARENT PARADOX OF “CONTINGENT CERTAINTY” IS BEST RESOLVED BY RECOGNIZING TWO THINGS: (1) GOD’S PROMISES TO THE FATHERS WERE, INDEED, WITHOUT CONDITION AND QUALIFICATION (GEN 13:14–17; 15:18; 17:8; ETC.), BUT (2) ANY INDIVIDUAL OR GENERATION IN SUCCESSION TO THE PATRIARCHS COULD APPROPRIATE THEIR BLESSINGS ONLY THROUGH FAITH AND OBEDIENCE (GEN 15:6; EXOD 19:5; DEUT 4:40; 5:16, 29, 33). TO PUT IT ANOTHER WAY, THE PLEDGE OF REDEMPTION AND CONQUEST BY ISRAEL WAS A SETTLED AND NONNEGOTIABLE MATTER (THE UNCONDITIONAL SIDE OF THE COVENANT), BUT THEIR REALITY IN THE EXPERIENCE OF INDIVIDUAL ISRAELITES OR EVEN A GENERATION OF THEM WAS CONTINGENT ON COVENANT FAITHFULNESS (THE CONDITIONAL SIDE). FAILURE TO MEET THE CONDITIONS WOULD RESULT IN JUDGMENT AND EVEN DEFEAT AND DEPORTATION, BUT IT COULD NEVER CANCEL OUT THE ETERNAL PURPOSES OF GOD FOR HIS CHOSEN NATION (CF. LEV 26:27–45; JER 31:31–37; 32:36–40; EZEK 36:22–31; 37:1–14).**

**EXHORTATION TO REMEMBER THE PAST (6:20–25)**

**20 IN THE FUTURE, WHEN YOUR SON ASKS YOU, “WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THE STIPULATIONS, DECREES AND LAWS THE LORD OUR GOD HAS COMMANDED YOU?” 21 TELL HIM: “WE WERE SLAVES OF PHARAOH IN EGYPT, BUT THE LORD BROUGHT US OUT OF EGYPT WITH A MIGHTY HAND. 22 BEFORE OUR EYES THE LORD SENT MIRACULOUS SIGNS AND WONDERS—GREAT AND TERRIBLE—UPON EGYPT AND PHARAOH AND HIS WHOLE HOUSEHOLD. 23 BUT HE BROUGHT US OUT FROM THERE TO BRING US IN AND GIVE US THE LAND THAT HE PROMISED ON OATH TO OUR FOREFATHERS. 24 THE LORD COMMANDED US TO OBEY ALL THESE DECREES AND TO FEAR THE LORD OUR GOD, SO THAT WE MIGHT ALWAYS PROSPER AND BE KEPT ALIVE, AS IS THE CASE TODAY. 25 AND IF WE ARE CAREFUL TO OBEY ALL THIS LAW BEFORE THE LORD OUR GOD, AS HE HAS COMMANDED US, THAT WILL BE OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.”**

**6:20 MOSES’ REFERENCE TO THE COVENANT STIPULATIONS AS A PRECONDITION TO SUCCESS IN THE LAND (V. 17) GIVES RISE TO HIS EXHORTATION TO THE PEOPLE TO REMEMBER THEM IN TIME TO COME AND TO TRANSMIT THEM TO SUCCEEDING GENERATIONS. THE TERMS DIFFER SOMEWHAT HERE IN V. 20 (ʿĒDÔT, ḤUQQÎM, MIŠPĀṬÎM), BUT THE COVENANT REFERENCE IS JUST AS CLEAR AND COMPELLING. IT IS CRUCIAL WITH THE PASSING OF TIME THAT DESCENDANTS OF PEOPLE WHO HAVE PARTICIPATED IN OR WITNESSED EVENTS THAT HAVE BEEN FUNDAMENTAL TO THEIR ORIGIN AND THAT EXPLAIN THEIR UNIQUE DESTINY SHOULD BE CONTINUALLY REMINDED OF THOSE EVENTS LEST THEY LOSE THEIR SENSE OF HISTORY AND MEANING. THIS IS ALL THE MORE-TRUE OF ANCIENT ISRAEL, FOR NO OTHER PEOPLE HAD BEEN CALLED TO SUCH A SIGNIFICANT MISSION, ONE THAT ENVELOPED WITHIN IT THE VERY SALVATION OF HUMANKIND. ISRAEL MUST THEREFORE RECALL ITS HISTORY AND PASS ALONG ITS FACTS AND VALUE TO GENERATIONS YET TO COME. THE WAY THIS WAS TO BE DONE WAS THROUGH THE RECITATION OF GOD’S SAVING DEEDS IN THE PAST, A “SACRED NARRATIVE” UNDERLYING THE MORE FORMAL AND LEGAL EMBODIMENT IN THE COVENANT TEXTS. WHEN CHILDREN ASK ABOUT THE MEANING OF THE COVENANT, THEN, THE ANSWER WILL BE PROVIDED IN STORY FORM. IT WILL BEGIN WITH SLAVERY IN EGYPT AND THEN WILL REHEARSE THE EXODUS, AN ACT OF REDEMPTION (V. 21). THE NARRATIVE WILL CONTINUE BY DESCRIBING THE CONTEST FOR SOVEREIGNTY BETWEEN THE LORD AND PHARAOH, ONE DISPLAYING THE SIGNS (ʾŌTÔT) AND WONDERS (MŌPĔTÎM) OF THE TEN PLAGUES (V. 22). FINALLY, IT WILL SPEAK OF THE LAND OF PROMISE, THE PLACE TO WHICH THE REDEEMED OF THE LORD WOULD MOVE IN FULFILLMENT OF THE PROMISE TO THE FATHERS (V. 23). AS MOSES PUT IT, “HE BROUGHT US OUT … TO BRING US IN,” A REMARKABLY CLEAR AND CONCISE SUMMATION OF THE NARRATIVE. 6:21–23 MANY SCHOLARS, FOLLOWING VON RAD, VIEW VV. 21–23 (OR 25) AS AN EXAMPLE OF ISRAEL’S SO-CALLED CREDO, THAT SUCCINCT STATEMENT OF HEILSGESCHICHTE THAT REFLECTS THE EARLIEST AND MOST PROFOUNDLY IMPORTANT TRADITIONS. AN EVEN MORE FAMOUS RENDITION OCCURS IN DEUT 26:5B–9. THAT ONE ADDS TO THE SACRED HISTORY THE TRADITIONS ABOUT PATRIARCHAL ANCESTRY (V. 26:5B) LACKING IN THE PRESENT VERSION EXCEPT IN THE OBLIQUE REFERENCE IN V. 23. OTHERWISE THE TWO ACCOUNTS ARE VERY SIMILAR, EVEN TO THE EXTENT OF REFERRING TO THE “SIGNS AND WONDERS” AND THE “BRINGING OUT AND BRINGING IN” THAT BECAME PART OF THE FORMULAIC LANGUAGE. MISSING FROM BOTH PASSAGES, HOWEVER, IS ANY REFERENCE TO SINAI AND THE MAKING OF COVENANT THERE. VON RAD ARGUES THAT THIS SUGGESTS THAT THE SINAI COVENANT TRADITIONS WERE ONLY LATER ADDED TO THE CREDO BECAUSE THEY WERE UNKNOWN TO ITS EARLIEST ISRAELITE TRADENTS. IN THE CONTEXT OF BOTH PASSAGES, HOWEVER, THE REASON FOR THE OMISSION IS CRYSTAL CLEAR. DEUTERONOMY 26 DOES SO BECAUSE IT IS THE HARVEST FESTIVAL OF SHEBUʿOT (FIRSTFRUITS) THAT IS BEING CELEBRATED, ONE HAVING TO DO WITH THE BOUNTY OF THE NEW LAND THAT WAS THEIR OWN AND NOT THAT OF A SLAVE MASTER. THE EMPHASIS THEREFORE IS ON THE DELIVERANCE OF THE NATION FROM ONE LAND (EGYPT) TO ANOTHER (CANAAN), A FACT THAT REQUIRES NO MENTION OF SINAI AND THE COVENANT. THE PASSAGE AT HAND OMITS REFERENCE TO SINAI IN SO MANY TERMS, BUT THE “STIPULATIONS, DECREES AND LAWS” OF V. 20, THE “DECREES” OF V. 24, AND THE “LAW” OF V. 25 PUT BEYOND DOUBT THAT THE NARRATIVE INCLUDES SINAI AS A FUNDAMENTAL ELEMENT OF ISRAEL’S FAITH. 6:24–25 MOSES BROUGHT HIS DISCUSSION OF THE NATURE OF THE COVENANT PRINCIPLES TO A CLOSE IN A SUMMATION IN WHICH HE DESCRIBED THEM BY THE ONE WORD “DECREES” (ḤUQQÎM) AND EXPRESSED THEIR ADHERENCE IN TERMS OF OBEYING AND FEARING GOD (V. 24). THE COMBINATION OF THESE COMMANDS TO DEFINE WHAT IS MEANT BY COVENANT KEEPING IS COMMON IN DEUTERONOMY (CF. 6:1–2, 13; 10:12, 20; 31:12). TO FEAR IS TO OBEY, AND TO OBEY IS TO FEAR. ONLY WHEN THIS SPIRIT OF SUBMISSION IS SINCERELY MANIFEST CAN PROSPERITY (LIT., “GOOD”) AND LIFE ASSUREDLY FOLLOW. THIS HAD BEEN ISRAEL’S EXPERIENCE IN THE PAST AND ON UP TO THE PRESENT, SAID MOSES (“AS IS THE CASE TODAY,” V. 24), AND IT COULD BE THE SAME IN THE FUTURE IF THE PEOPLE WOULD OBEY “ALL THIS LAW” (MIṢWÂ; V. 25). THEN IN STRONGLY EVANGELICAL TERMS MOSES EQUATED FAITHFUL COMPLIANCE WITH THE COVENANT TO RIGHTEOUSNESS (V. 25). THE WORD USED HERE IS ṢĔDĀQÂ, THE VERY ONE APPLIED TO ABRAHAM AS A RESULT OF HIS HAVING BELIEVED IN THE LORD (GEN 15:6). LATER JUDAISM WRONGLY CONCLUDED THAT COVENANT KEEPING WAS THE BASIS FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS RATHER THAN AN EXPRESSION OF FAITHFUL DEVOTION. BUT TRUE COVENANT KEEPING IN THE FINAL ANALYSIS IS A MATTER OF FAITH, NOT MERELY OF WORKS AND RITUAL. THUS, THE CENTRAL FEATURE OF THE COVENANT STIPULATIONS IS THEIR PROVIDING A VEHICLE BY WHICH GENUINE SAVING FAITH MIGHT BE DISPLAYED (CF. DEUT 24:13; HAB 2:4; ROM 1:17; 4:1–5; GAL 3:6–7).**

**THE COVENANT CODE AND ITS RATIFICATION (21:1–24:18) ---EXODUS**

**THIS FOUNDATIONAL PORTION OF THE SINAI COVENANT CONTINUES WITHOUT INTERRUPTION FROM THE TEN COMMANDMENTS. ALTHOUGH GOD LEFT OFF SPEAKING DIRECTLY TO ALL THE ISRAELITES AT THEIR REQUEST AFTER THE TEN COMMANDMENTS (20:19), HE HAD NOT STOPPED REVEALING HIS COVENANT. MOSES SIMPLY WENT DIRECTLY TO THE TOP OF THE MOUNTAIN (20:21) AND THE INSTRUCTIONS CONTINUED, BEGINNING WITH THE REMINDER OF THE FIRST TWO COMMANDMENTS (20:22–23) AS AN INCIPIT OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS IN GENERAL AND WITH INSTRUCTIONS ABOUT ALTAR CONSTRUCTION AS AN INDICATION OF THE PRIORITY OF WORSHIP (20:24–26). NOW THE DIVINE DISCOURSE CONTINUES WITH WHAT HAS COME TO BE CALLED THE COVENANT CODE, A BASIC BLOCK OF LAWS THAT GUIDE THE BEHAVIOR OF GOD’S COVENANT PEOPLE. AFTER GOD FINISHED SPEAKING WHAT COULD STRICTLY BE CALLED THE “LAWS” OF THE COVENANT CODE TO MOSES (ENDING AT 23:33 WITH INSTRUCTIONS THAT GIVE BOTH REASSURANCE AND WARNING), THE COVENANT WAS FORMALLY ACCEPTED BY THE PEOPLE AND GLORIOUSLY CONFIRMED BY GOD. AGREEMENT ON THE EXACT DELINEATION IN THE TEXT FOR THE COVENANT CODE HAS NOT BEEN EASILY OBTAINED (E.G., MANY WOULD SUGGEST THAT IT BEGINS AT 20:22 AND OTHERS THAT IT ENDS NOT WITH 23:33 BUT WITH THE ACCOUNT OF ITS RATIFICATION IN CHAP. 24). NEVERTHELESS, THE CODE SHOWS ALL THE EARMARKS OF BEING HIGHLY UNIFIED AND CAREFULLY STRUCTURED IN REFERENCE TO THE REST OF EXODUS. AFTER THE CODE, THE BOOK OF EXODUS MOVES ON TO DESCRIBE GOD’S INSTRUCTIONS ON THE MEANS OF WORSHIP (25:1 AND THEREAFTER), A SEPARATE BLOCK OF REVELATION GIVEN DURING MOSES’ SECOND GREAT SOJOURN ON MOUNT SINAI, ONE THAT LASTED FORTY DAYS (24:17).**

**LAWS ON SERVANTS (21:1–11)**

**1 “THESE ARE THE LAWS YOU ARE TO SET BEFORE THEM: 2 “IF YOU BUY A HEBREW SERVANT, HE IS TO SERVE YOU FOR SIX YEARS. BUT IN THE SEVENTH YEAR, HE SHALL GO FREE, WITHOUT PAYING ANYTHING. 3 IF HE COMES ALONE, HE IS TO GO FREE ALONE; BUT IF HE HAS A WIFE WHEN HE COMES, SHE IS TO GO WITH HIM. 4 IF HIS MASTER GIVES HIM A WIFE AND SHE BEAR’S HIM SONS OR DAUGHTERS, THE WOMAN AND HER CHILDREN SHALL BELONG TO HER MASTER, AND ONLY THE MAN SHALL GO FREE. 5 “BUT IF THE SERVANT DECLARES, ‘I LOVE MY MASTER AND MY WIFE AND CHILDREN AND DO NOT WANT TO GO FREE,’ 6 THEN HIS MASTER MUST TAKE HIM BEFORE THE JUDGES. HE SHALL TAKE HIM TO THE DOOR OR THE DOORPOST AND PIERCE HIS EAR WITH AN AWL. THEN HE WILL BE HIS SERVANT FOR LIFE. 7 “IF A MAN SELLS HIS DAUGHTER AS A SERVANT, SHE IS NOT TO GO FREE AS MENSERVANTS DO. 8 IF SHE DOES NOT PLEASE THE MASTER WHO HAS SELECTED HER FOR HIMSELF, HE MUST LET HER BE REDEEMED. HE HAS NO RIGHT TO SELL HER TO FOREIGNERS, BECAUSE HE HAS BROKEN FAITH WITH HER. 9 IF HE SELECTS HER FOR HIS SON, HE MUST GRANT HER THE RIGHTS OF A DAUGHTER. 10 IF HE MARRIES ANOTHER WOMAN, HE MUST NOT DEPRIVE THE FIRST ONE OF HER FOOD, CLOTHING AND MARITAL RIGHTS. 11 IF HE DOES NOT PROVIDE HER WITH THESE THREE THINGS, SHE IS TO GO FREE, WITHOUT ANY PAYMENT OF MONEY. FITTINGLY, THE COVENANT CODE BEGINS WITH A CONCENTRATION ON THE TREATMENT OF HUMAN BEINGS RATHER THAN ANIMALS, PLANTS, OR OTHER THINGS, AND SPECIFICALLY WITH RULES REGULATING THE TREATMENT OF THOSE HUMAN BEINGS WHO MIGHT BE MOST EASILY OR MOST OFTEN MISTREATED OR EXPLOITED, THAT IS, SERVANTS/SLAVES.**

**EXCURSUS: SLAVERY AND SLAVE LAWS IN ANCIENT ISRAEL**

**THE VARIOUS HEBREW TERMS TRANSLATED BY TERMS SUCH AS “SERVANT,” “SLAVE,” “MAIDSERVANT,” OCCUR MORE THAN A THOUSAND TIMES IN THE OLD TESTAMENT. THE PRESENT PASSAGE REFLECTS THE BROAD SEMANTIC RANGE ENCOMPASSED BY THESE TERMS AND THE CONCEPTS TO WHICH THEY REFER. ALTHOUGH THE LAWS IN EXOD 21:1–11 ADDRESS PRIMARILY THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF SIX-YEAR CONTRACT SERVANTS, THEY DO NOT IMPLICITLY DISTINGUISH AMONG CATEGORIES OF EMPLOYEES. THE MOST COMMON VOCABULARY WORD USED FOR THE SERVANT IS ʿEBED, WHICH CAN MEAN “WORKER,” “EMPLOYEE,” “SERVANT,” OR “SLAVE.” ANYONE IN ANY OF THESE CATEGORIES CAME UNDER THE PROTECTION OF STEPHEN YAHWEH’S COVENANT LAW. THE LAWS OF THIS SECTION ALSO DO NOT DIFFERENTIATE TYPES OF EMPLOYERS: THE STANDARD TERM USED HERE, BAʿAL, CAN MEAN “BOSS,” “EMPLOYER,” “MASTER,” OR “OWNER.” SIMILARLY, THE WORDS TRANSLATED “BUY” IN 21:2 (QĀNÂ) AND “SELL” IN 21:7–8 (MĀKAR) CAN REFER TO ANY FINANCIAL TRANSACTION RELATED TO A CONTRACT, MUCH AS IN MODERN SPORTS TERMINOLOGY A PLAYER CAN BE DESCRIBED AS BEING “BOUGHT” OR “SOLD” FROM ONE TEAM TO ANOTHER. PLAYERS ARE NOT ACTUALLY THE PROPERTY OF THE TEAM THAT “OWNS” THEM EXCEPT AS REGARDS THE EXCLUSIVE RIGHT TO THEIR EMPLOYMENT AS PLAYERS OF THAT SPORT. MUCH MISUNDERSTANDING OF ISRAELITE LAW HAS ARISEN FROM FAILURE TO APPRECIATE THE ANALOGOUS DISTINCTION THAT PREVAILED IN ANCIENT ISRAEL. WHEN THE LAW WAS PROPERLY FOLLOWED, PERSONS WHO WERE SERVANTS/SLAVES/WORKERS/EMPLOYEES HELD THEIR POSITIONS BY REASON OF A FORMAL CONTRACT THAT RELATED PRIMARILY TO THE JOB THAT THEY HAD “SIGNED UP” TO PERFORM, FOR A PERIOD OF TIME, MUCH AS ONE ENLISTS IN THE MILITARY TODAY. IN ADDITION, SOME OF THE MISUNDERSTANDING OF BIBLICAL LAWS ON SERVICE/SLAVERY ARISES FROM UNCONSCIOUS ANALOGY TO MODERN WESTERN HEMISPHERE SLAVERY, WHICH INVOLVED THE STEALING OF PEOPLE OF A DIFFERENT RACE FROM THEIR HOMELANDS, TRANSPORTING THEM IN CHAINS TO A NEW LAND, SELLING THEM TO AN OWNER WHO POSSESSED THEM FOR LIFE WITHOUT OBLIGATION TO ANY RESTRICTIONS AND WHO COULD RESELL THEM TO SOMEONE ELSE (ALTHOUGH SUCH DID ALSO OCCUR IN THE ANCIENT WORLD). WHETHER ONE TRANSLATES ʿEBED AS “SERVANT,” “SLAVE,” “EMPLOYEE,” OR “WORKER,” IT IS CLEAR THAT THE BIBLICAL LAW ALLOWED FOR NO SUCH PRACTICES IN ISRAEL. INDEED, THE LAW REFLECTS THE FACT THAT WHEN OBEDIENTLY PRACTICED BY “BOSS/EMPLOYER/OWNER” AND “SERVANT/SLAVE/EMPLOYEE/WORKER” ALIKE, ISRAELITE SERVICE COULD BE SO BENEFICIAL TO A WORKER THAT HE OR SHE WOULD CHOOSE TO ENLIST FOR A LIFETIME WITH THE SAME EMPLOYER (21:5–6). WHAT WERE THE DIFFERENT CATEGORIES OF SERVANT/SLAVE? FIRST, THERE WERE FOREIGN-BORN SERVANTS WHOSE LIVES WERE SPARED IN WAR AND WHO WERE ALLOWED TO LIVE INDEFINITELY, ON THE CONDITION THAT THEY BECOME PERMANENT WORKERS IN ISRAEL (JOSH 9:23; 1 SAM 4:9). THIS IS FREQUENTLY REFERRED TO AS “CHATTEL SLAVERY.” SECOND, THERE WERE SIX-YEAR SERVANTS WHO CONTRACTED TO WORK FOR AN EMPLOYER FOR SIX YEARS IN RETURN FOR WAGES AND OTHER BENEFITS. THIRD, THERE WERE SERVANTS BORN IN THE BOSS’S HOUSEHOLD WHO OWED THE BOSS SOMETHING FOR THE HOUSING AND FOOD HE HAD PROVIDED THEM UNTIL SUCH TIME AS THEY MIGHT CHOOSE TO LEAVE HIS PROPERTY AND/OR EMPLOYMENT. FOURTH, THERE WERE VARIOUS SORTS OF TEMPORARY EMPLOYEES AND PERMANENT EMPLOYEES WHO MAY HAVE WORKED FOR A GIVEN INDIVIDUAL UNDER VARIOUS SORTS OF ARRANGEMENTS, INCLUDING DAY LABORING. THESE CATEGORIES OF SLAVES/SERVANTS/WORKERS WERE EMPLOYED IN ALL SORTS OF WAYS: AS PERSONAL SERVANTS, AS FARM WORKERS, AS CONSCRIPT LABORERS (1 KGS 9:21; 2 CHR 8:7–9), AS TEMPORARY “HIRED HAND—HIRELING,” AND THE LIKE. WE SHOULD NOTE ALSO THAT VIRTUALLY ALL INDUSTRY IN ANCIENT TIMES WAS “HOUSEHOLD” OR “COTTAGE” INDUSTRY. CORPORATIONS OR BUSINESS PARTNERSHIPS AS WE KNOW THEM IN MODERN TIMES DID NOT EXIST. ALMOST ALL BUSINESS WAS “SMALL BUSINESS” IN THE SENSE OF FAMILY OWNED AND FAMILY OPERATED BUSINESS, AND SOMEONE WHO WAS IN ANY SENSE AN “EMPLOYEE,” NOT THE OWNER OF HIS OWN BUSINESS, WORKED FOR THE HEAD OF A FAMILY, USUALLY LIVED WITH OR NEAR THAT FAMILY ON ITS PROPERTY, AND WAS PAID ACCORDING TO A FORMAL WRITTEN OR VERBAL “CONTRACT” THAT WAS SOMEWHAT MORE LIKE THE TERMS OF ENLISTMENT USED TO ENROLL SOMEONE INTO MILITARY SERVICE TODAY THAN A CASUAL AGREEMENT EXPECTING ONLY CERTAIN HOURS TO BE WORKED AT A PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT. FINALLY, ISRAEL’S SERVICE/SLAVERY LAWS SHOULD BE UNDERSTOOD IN TERMS OF THEIR OWN HISTORY OF SLAVERY IN EGYPT. THE EGYPTIANS MADE THE ISRAELITES SLAVES ON THE BASIS OF THEIR ETHNICITY, FORCED THEM TO SERVE AS SLAVES FOR LIFE, DID NOT COMPENSATE THEM PROPERLY, IF AT ALL, AND WORKED THEM UNBEARABLY HARD AS A MEANS OF KEEPING THEM WEAK AND/OR CAUSING AT LEAST SOME TO DIE UNDER THE BURDEN OF THEIR SLAVERY (1:9–14). AGAINST THIS SORT OF HISTORICAL EXPERIENCE, THE BIBLE’S LAWS PROTECT ALL SORTS OF WORKERS, GUARANTEEING THEM THE RIGHT TO GAIN THEIR FREEDOM AFTER A SET PERIOD OF TIME (21:1–4) AS AGAINST THE EGYPTIAN PRACTICE OF PERMANENTLY ENSLAVING ISRAEL. BIBLICAL LAW ALLOWED SERVICE OUT OF LOVE RATHER THAN OUT OF NECESSITY (21:5–6) AS OPPOSED TO INVOLUNTARY SERVICE UNDER OPPRESSIVE MASTERS IN EGYPT. BIBLICAL LAW ALSO GAVE IMMEDIATE FREEDOM TO THOSE WHO HAD IN ANY WAY BEEN PHYSICALLY ABUSED (21:26–27) AS OPPOSED TO THE SEVERE ABUSE THE EGYPTIANS HAD IMPOSED UPON THE ISRAELITES. GOD’S LAWS, THEN, PROVIDED DIVINELY ENFORCED COVENANT PROTECTIONS FOR THOSE WHO WORKED FOR FORMER SLAVES AND MADE SURE THE FORMER SLAVES DID NOT RETURN EVIL FOR EVIL ONCE THEY HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO DO SO. INDEED, GOD’S LAWS IMPLICITLY CONDEMNED THE EGYPTIAN TREATMENT OF THE ISRAELITES AS ILLEGAL BY PROHIBITING THE VERY PRACTICES THE EGYPTIANS HAD USED TO SUPPRESS AND WEAKEN GOD’S PEOPLE IN EGYPT.**

**INTRODUCTORY TITLE FOR THE BOOK OF THE COVENANT (21:1)**

**21:1 IN SAYING, “THESE ARE THE LAWS [MIŠPĀṬÎM, ALSO TRANSLATABLE AS “REGULATIONS,” “STATUTES”] YOU ARE TO SET BEFORE THEM,” GOD DID NOT IMPLY THAT WHAT PRECEDED—THE TEN WORDS/COMMANDMENTS AND THE REMINDERS/IMPLICATIONS OF 20:22–26—WERE NOT ALSO LAWS FOR ISRAEL, BUT FOR ALL THAT COMES AFTERWARDS. RATHER, THE NEW TERM MIŠPĀṬÎM SIMPLY HELPED DEMARCATE A CORPUS OF LAW, THE BOOK OF THE COVENANT (21:1–23:33; CF. 24:7) THAT BEGINS TO PROVIDE GREATER SPECIFICITY TO THE GENERAL SENSE OF HOLY BEHAVIOR REQUIRED BY THE TEN WORDS/COMMANDMENTS.**

**TIME-LIMITED SERVICE (21:2–4)**

**21:2 TYPE OF LAW: CASUISTIC (ITS SPECIFIC CIRCUMSTANCE DOES NOT APPLY TO PEOPLE WHO DO NOT EMPLOY OR ARE NOT EMPLOYED AS SERVANTS). PARADIGMATIC APPLICATION: VIRTUALLY ANY CONTRACTUAL WORK ARRANGEMENT. THE NORMAL CONTRACTUAL ARRANGEMENT FOR AN ISRAELITE (OR, MORE BROADLY, AS HERE, HEBREW) WORKER INVOLVED A SERVICE PERIOD OF SIX YEARS, WHICH WAS “BOUGHT” BY AN EMPLOYER WHO WOULD NORMALLY BE AN INDIVIDUAL WITH A LARGE ENOUGH FARM OR OTHER ENTERPRISE TO BE ABLE TO USE THE SERVICES OF EMPLOYEES BEYOND THE WORK HIS FAMILY MEMBERS COULD DO. THERE IS NO SPECIFICATION ABOUT HOW THE MONEY WOULD BE PAID. SOME SERVANTS MAY HAVE AGREED TO A LUMP SUM PAYMENT AT THE END OF THEIR SIX YEARS OF SERVICE, AKIN TO WHAT JACOB THOUGHT HE WAS AGREEING TO WHEN HE OBTAINED PERMISSION TO MARRY RACHEL (GEN 29:18–20). OTHERS MAY HAVE BARGAINED FOR A LUMP SUM PAYMENT AT THE VERY OUTSET OF THEIR EMPLOYMENT, WHICH THEY THEN “WORKED OFF” OVER THE NEXT SIX YEARS (AKIN TO THE ARRANGEMENT JACOB WAS TRICKED INTO BY LABAN IN GEN 29:23–30). STILL OTHERS MUST HAVE AGREED TO PERIODIC PAYMENTS DURING THE SIX YEARS OF THEIR TERM OF SERVICE. WOMEN COULD ALSO BE EMPLOYERS (PROV 31:15), AND FEMALE SERVANTS/SLAVES SURELY ALSO FELL UNDER THE PURVIEW OF THIS LAW’S STATUTE OF LIMITATIONS FOR THE LENGTH OF A CONTRACT. TO WHOM WAS THE MONEY PAID TO SECURE A WORKER? MOST COMMONLY TO THE WORKER HIMSELF, WHO “SOLD HIMSELF” INTO THE SERVICE OF ANOTHER (LEV 25:48, 50; JER 34:14) FOR THE MONEY IT WOULD PROVIDE FOR HIM AND/OR HIS LOVED ONES AND WHO KNEW THAT ALONG WITH THE MONEY WOULD ALSO COME THE PROMISE OF HOUSING, FOOD, AND, DEPENDING ON THE CONTRACT, CLOTHING. IN THE SAME WAY THAT MILITARY SERVICE, WITH ITS GUARANTEED PAY, HOUSING, FOOD, CLOTHING, AND OTHER BENEFITS HAS ALWAYS BEEN A WAY OUT OF POVERTY FOR MANY PERSONS IN MANY COUNTRIES, SO SERVANTHOOD/SLAVERY FUNCTIONED SIMILARLY IN ANCIENT ISRAEL. THIS LAW WOULD NOT NECESSARILY APPLY TO AN ENEMY WHO WAS GIVEN THE CHANCE TO LIVE AFTER BEING CAPTURED IN WAR ON THE CONDITION THAT HE BECOME A SERVANT/SLAVE TO AN ISRAELITE FAMILY. BUT IT MIGHT. THE PARADIGMATIC NATURE OF ISRAELITE LAW WOULD ALLOW FOR THE APPLICATION OF THE SIX-YEAR TIME LIMIT IN ANY SITUATION WHERE IT MIGHT SEEM APPROPRIATE. FOR EXAMPLE, IN THE SITUATION OF A NATION FORMERLY AT WAR WITH ISRAEL AND NOW AT PEACE WITH THEM, THE FORMER ENEMY WAS NOW MORE OR LESS AN ALLY. ANOTHER SITUATION WOULD BE ONE IN WHICH THE CAPTURED SERVANT DECIDED TO CONVERT TO FAITH IN STEPHEN YAHWEH AND BECOME A WORSHIPING ISRAELITE. IN SUCH A CASE, AS SEEMINGLY WITH RUTH, THE USUAL RULES OF CAUTION ABOUT ACCEPTING A FOREIGNER INTO CITIZENSHIP COULD BE IMMEDIATELY WAIVED. 21:3–4 TYPE OF LAW: CASUISTIC (SPECIFIC DESCRIPTION DOES NOT APPLY EXCEPT WHEN A WORKER HAD A FAMILY). PARADIGMATIC RANGE: PROTECTION OF THE RIGHTS OF BOTH WORKER AND EMPLOYER IN VIRTUALLY ANY SITUATION OF A WORKER WHO HAS DEPENDENTS AND (IN MUCH LATER TRADITION, NOT NECESSARILY IN THE INTENT OF THE LAW) THE ESTABLISHMENT OF MATRILINEAL RIGHTS OVER CHILDREN. THESE VERSES GIVE EXAMPLES INVOLVING THREE SITUATIONS: THAT OF A SINGLE, UNATTACHED WORKER, THAT OF A WORKER WHO STARTS HIS TERM OF EMPLOYMENT MARRIED ALREADY, AND THAT OF A WORKER WHO MARRIES ANOTHER WORKER UNDER CONTRACT TO THE SAME BOSS AND MAY HAVE CHILDREN DURING THE TIME OF CONTRACTUAL EMPLOYMENT. THE PURPOSE OF THIS COMPOUND-COMPLEX LAW IS TO ENSURE THAT NEITHER WORKER NOR BOSS LOSES WHAT IS RIGHTFULLY HIS AT THE TIME OF TERMINATION OF THE CONTRACTED SERVICE. THE FIRST PROVISION IS SIMPLE ENOUGH: A WORKER WHO CONTRACTED FOR SERVICE WHILE SINGLE AND REMAINED SINGLE DURING HIS ENTIRE TIME OF SERVICE PRESENTED NO COMPLICATION. LIKEWISE, IF HE WENT INTO SERVICE MARRIED AND CAME OUT MARRIED (IMPLICITLY WHETHER OR NOT CHILDREN WERE BORN TO HIM DURING THE SIX YEARS), THERE ALSO WAS NO PROBLEM. THE COMPLICATION CAME WITH THE SORT OF SCENARIO PRESENTED IN V. 4. BY WAY OF BACKGROUND WE NOTE THAT ALL MARRIAGES IN ANCIENT ISRAEL WERE ARRANGED—SOMEONE “SOLD” THE BRIDE TO THE GROOM FOR A BRIDE PRICE; NO DOWRY SYSTEM EXISTED, SO THE ONLY PAYMENTS WENT ENTIRELY TO THE BRIDE’S FAMILY. IF A WOMAN’S PARENTS WERE DEAD, SOME OTHER PERSON IN THE FAMILY MADE THE ARRANGEMENTS AND NEGOTIATED FOR THE PRICE. IF A WOMAN WERE ALREADY IN CONTRACT SERVICE, HER BOSS OWNED THE RIGHTS TO MAKE ARRANGEMENTS FOR HER MARRIAGE AND TO NEGOTIATE FOR HER BRIDE PRICE, WHICH WAS PAID TO HIM AS EMPLOYER. IN OTHER WORDS, THE FAMILY OF HER BOSS WAS NOW HER “FAMILY” FOR PURPOSES OF MARRIAGE NEGOTIATION. WITH THESE FACTORS IN MIND, THE PROVISIONS OF VV. 3–4 SET THE RULES AS FOLLOWS: IF AN ALREADY MARRIED SERVANT CONTRACTED FOR THE USUAL SIX-YEAR TERM OF SERVICE, THAT SERVANT SHOULD HAVE BUILT INTO THE CONTRACT SOME PROVISIONS FOR THE KEEPING OF A SPOUSE (I.E., THE BOSS HAD TO FIGURE IN THE COSTS OF HOUSING, FOOD, AND CLOTHING FOR THE SPOUSE AS WELL). BUT IF A BOSS ALLOWED A WOMAN ALREADY SERVING HIM TO MARRY THE SERVANT HE HAD HIRED WHILE SINGLE, THERE HAD TO BE A COMPENSATION FOR THE BOSS’S COSTS INCURRED FOR THAT WOMAN SERVANT ALREADY SERVING HIM. HER POTENTIAL TO PROVIDE CHILDREN WAS ALSO AN ASSET—CONSIDERED PART OF HER WORTH—AND HAD TO BE COMPENSATED FOR AS WELL IN ANY MARRIAGE ARRANGEMENT. THEREFORE, AS A PROTECTION FOR THE BOSS’S INVESTMENT IN HIS FEMALE WORKER, A MALE WORKER COULD NOT SIMPLY “WALK AWAY WITH” HIS BRIDE AND CHILDREN UPON HIS OWN RELEASE FROM SERVICE AFTER SIX YEARS. HE HIMSELF WAS CERTAINLY FREE FROM ANY FURTHER OBLIGATION AT THE END OF HIS SIX YEARS, BUT HIS WIFE AND CHILDREN STILL WERE UNDER OBLIGATION TO THE BOSS (“ONLY THE MAN SHALL GO FREE”). DOES THIS MEAN THAT THE WIFE AND CHILDREN STAYED AS SLAVES/SERVANTS FOR THE REST OF THEIR LIVES? NOT AT ALL. IF A SERVANT WANTED HIS WIFE AND CHILDREN TO GO FREE ALSO, HE SEEMS TO HAVE HAD THREE MAIN OPTIONS: (A) HE COULD SIMPLY WAIT FOR THEM ALL TO FINISH THEIR TERMS OF SERVICE, WHILE HE HIMSELF WORKED SOMEWHERE ELSE. THE DISADVANTAGE OF THIS ARRANGEMENT IS THAT HE EITHER COULD NOT LIVE WITH HIS FAMILY OR WOULD HAVE TO PAY FOR HIS OWN ROOM AND BOARD AT HIS FORMER BOSS’S FARM. (B) HE COULD FIND A GOOD JOB SOMEWHERE AND EARN ENOUGH MONEY TO PAY HIS FORMER BOSS TO GET HIS WIFE AND CHILDREN OUT OF THEIR CONTRACTUAL OBLIGATION. THE DISADVANTAGE OF THIS ARRANGEMENT IS THAT IT WOULD HAVE BEEN DIFFICULT TO FIND ANY JOB THAT WOULD ALLOW HIM TO EARN ENOUGH MONEY TO SUPPORT HIMSELF AND AT THE SAME TIME ACCUMULATE THE SORT OF WEALTH THAT WOULD COVER THE COST OF COMPENSATING A BOSS FOR SEVERAL YEARS’ WORTH OF THE LABOR OF SEVERAL FULL-TIME WORKERS, WHICH IS WHAT THE WIFE AND CHILDREN REPRESENTED TO THE BOSS. (C) HE COULD AGREE TO CONTINUE TO WORK PERMANENTLY FOR HIS BOSS. THE DISADVANTAGE OF THIS LATTER ARRANGEMENT IS THAT IT WOULD KEEP HIM A CONTRACT EMPLOYEE FOR THE REST OF HIS LIFE. THE ADVANTAGE IS THAT IT WOULD ALLOW HIM TO STAY WITH HIS FAMILY, ALL OF WHOM WOULD HAVE THEIR BASIC NEEDS MET AS WELL AS HAVING THE SPENDABLE INCOME THEY EARNED THROUGH THE TERMS OF THEIR CONTRACTS AND ALL OF WHOM WOULD HAVE REASONABLY STABLE FINANCIAL CIRCUMSTANCES DURING THEIR LIFETIMES. THE ATTRACTIVENESS OF SUCH AN ARRANGEMENT ON BALANCE IS PRESUMABLY ONE FACTOR THAT UNDERLIES THE FOLLOWING LAW ABOUT THE OPTION OF VOLUNTARY PERMANENT SERVICE.**

**VOLUNTARY PERMANENT SERVICE (21:5–6)**

**21:5–6 TYPE OF LAW: CASUISTIC (SPECIFIC DESCRIPTION DOES NOT GO BEYOND SITUATIONS OF SERVANTS WHO WANTED TO STAY PERMANENTLY IN A BOSS’S EMPLOY). PARADIGMATIC RANGE: ANY SITUATION WHERE A PERSON WISHED TO ENLIST FOR LIFE IN THE EMPLOY OF SOMEONE ELSE (I.E., WOULD SERVE AS GUIDANCE IN SUCH CASES EVEN IF THE SERVANT IN QUESTION WERE NOT MARRIED AND/OR DID NOT HAVE CHILDREN). FOR THE REASONS DISCUSSED IN THE SCENARIOS DESCRIBED ABOVE ON V. 4, OR FOR OTHER REASONS UNSPECIFIED, A SERVANT MIGHT CONSIDER IT TO HIS DISADVANTAGE TO GO FREE AND NO LONGER BE ABLE TO LIVE WITH HIS FAMILY, LOSING THE FOOD, SHELTER, AND CLOTHING THAT HAD BEEN PROVIDED FOR HIM. IF HE CONCLUDED THAT IT WAS TO HIS ADVANTAGE TO STAY WITH HIS FORMER EMPLOYER FOR LIFE, HE COULD DO SO. BUT HE COULD NOT ENTER INTO SUCH A MAJOR COMMITMENT INFORMALLY OR IMPULSIVELY. THIS LAW PROTECTS THE WORKER FROM A RASH DECISION OR FROM BEING PRESSURED BY HIS EMPLOYER INTO STAYING ON PERMANENTLY. IT ALSO PROTECTS AN EMPLOYER FROM THE POSSIBILITY OF BEING CHARGED WITH FAILING TO HONOR THE SIX-YEAR TIME LIMIT FOR A SERVANT’S CONTRACT LABOR. THE PROTECTION COMES IN THE FORM OF A REQUIREMENT THAT BOTH BOSS AND WORKER APPEAR TO ENACT A RITUAL BEFORE GOD (NIV “BEFORE THE JUDGES”). VERSE 6 SHOULD BE TRANSLATED: “THEN HIS BOSS BRINGS HIM TO GOD AND THEN BRINGS HIM TO A DOOR OR A DOOR POST, AND HIS BOSS MAKES A HOLE IN HIS EAR WITH AN AWL, AND HE WORKS FOR HIM THEREAFTER.” THE PROCESS PROBABLY WENT SOMETHING LIKE THIS: BOSS AND SERVANT WENT TO THE TABERNACLE (LATER TEMPLE) AND SWORE BEFORE THE PRIESTS (WHO SERVED AS WITNESSES) WHILE AT THE SAME TIME UNDERSTANDING THAT THEY WERE, FAR MORE IMPORTANTLY, SWEARING BEFORE GOD (WHO SERVED AS THE ULTIMATE WITNESS TO ANY OATH) THAT THEY BOTH WANTED TO ENTER INTO A PERMANENT EMPLOYMENT ARRANGEMENT. THEN THE BOSS BORED A HOLE IN THE SERVANT’S EAR, PROBABLY IN THE EARLOBE, WHICH BECAME A VISIBLE SIGN OF PERMANENT COMMITMENT TO SERVICE. THIS PREVENTED A SERVANT FROM SNEAKING AWAY FROM HIS BOSS, RELOCATING ELSEWHERE, AND ENTERING INTO A SERVICE CONTRACT WITH SOMEONE ELSE. IT ALSO PROVIDED A PERMANENT REMINDER TO A BOSS THAT HE HAD AN OBLIGATION TO EMPLOY THE SERVANT FOR LIFE AND COULD NOT RENEGE ON THAT OBLIGATION. IN THE SAME WAY THAT THE TRANSFER OF A SHOE IN THE SIGHT OF WITNESSES REMINDED EVERYONE INVOLVED OF A CONTRACTUAL OBLIGATION RELATED TO THE EXCHANGE OF PROPERTY (RUTH 4:7), MAKING A HOLE IN AN EAR SERVED AS A VIVID EVENT DESIGNED TO HELP THE RECALL, YEARS LATER, OF THE CONTRACT MADE FOR PERMANENT SERVICE. THE USE OF THE AWL AND DOORPOST WAS SIMPLY A WAY OF ENSURING A CONVENIENT AND RELATIVELY PAINLESS PUBLIC SETTING AND MEANS OF BORING THE HOLE.**

**PROTECTIONS FOR FEMALE SERVANTS (21:7–11)**

**21:7–11 TYPE OF LAW: CASUISTIC (DESCRIPTION LIMITED TO SITUATIONS WHERE A WOMAN WAS SOLD INTO SERVICE, TYPICALLY WITH THE EXPECTATION OF MARRIAGE). PARADIGMATIC RANGE: ANY SITUATION WHERE A WOMAN’S RIGHTS MIGHT BE ENDANGERED BECAUSE SHE WAS A CONTRACT WORKER FOR A BOSS AND NO LONGER UNDER HER FAMILY’S DIRECT PROTECTION. POTENTIAL EXTENDED PARADIGMATIC RANGE: ANY SITUATION WHERE A WOMAN’S MARITAL RIGHTS MIGHT BE DENIED HER, WHETHER OR NOT SHE WAS IN SERVICE. THE SAME BACKGROUND OF ARRANGED MARRIAGE PRACTICES APPLIES TO THIS LAW AS TO 21:4 ABOVE. ALTHOUGH THIS LAW DOES NOT BEGIN IN V. 7 WITH THE SPECIFICATION THAT IT IS DESCRIBING A WOMAN WHOSE FAMILY MAKES A CONTRACT FOR HER TO BECOME BOTH A SERVANT AND A WIFE AT THE SAME TIME, THE FURTHER WORDING OF THE LAW IN VV. 8–11 MAKES CLEAR THAT THIS IS IN FACT THE SCENARIO UNDER PURVIEW—A SCENARIO FROM WHICH EXTRAPOLATION IN THE DIRECTION OF PROTECTING ANY RIGHTS OF WOMEN IN SERVICE OR NOT COULD BE MADE.**

**VERSE 8 DOES NOT SAY THAT WOMEN HAD NO WAY TO GET OUT OF SERVICE. INDEED, V. 11 MAKES CLEAR THAT THEY DID, AS DOES THE PARADIGMATIC APPLICATION OF THE EARLIER LAW IN VV. 2–3, WITH THE GENDER SWITCHED, MUTATIS MUTANDIS. THE VERSE ASSERTS, RATHER, THAT WOMEN HAD NO AUTOMATIC RIGHT TO GET OUT OF MARRIAGE AFTER A PERIOD OF YEARS—THAT IS, THAT UNLIKE SERVICE, MARRIAGE WAS NOT A TERM-LIMITED MATTER BUT RATHER A COMMITMENT FOR LIFE. THIS LAW ASSUMES THE PAYMENT TO A HEAD OF A FAMILY OF A COMBINED CONTRACT LABOR AND BRIDE PRICE, WHICH WOULD HAVE BEEN IN ALL LIKELIHOOD A LARGER SUM OF MONEY THAN EITHER PAYMENT SEPARATELY. WHY WOULD A MAN “BUY” A WOMAN AS SERVANT AND WIFE AT THE SAME TIME? THERE COULD BE MANY REASONS, HE MAY ALREADY HAVE HAD A FIRST WIFE AND WANTED THIS SECOND WIFE TO HAVE THE STATUS OF SERVANT, WITHOUT INHERITANCE RIGHTS, SO THAT ALL OF HIS INHERITANCE WOULD GO TO THE CHILDREN OF THE “WIFE OF HIS YOUTH” AS WAS EXPECTED BY THE ARRANGED MARRIAGE TERMS OF THAT EARLIER MARRIAGE. HE MAY HAVE BEEN A WIDOWER WHO DID NOT WANT TO ENDANGER THE INHERITANCE RIGHTS OF HIS EXISTING CHILDREN WHO ALREADY HAD RECEIVED THEIR PARCELS OF LAND TO FARM, HE MAY HAVE HAD NO LAND REMAINING TO PROVIDE FOR HEIRS OR SIMPLY NO LAND AT ALL IN THE FIRST PLACE (AS WOULD BE THE CASE IF HE WERE A LEVITE). HE MAY ALSO HAVE HAD ENCUMBRANCES ON WHAT HE COULD DO WITH HIS ESTATE (E.G., IF CHILDLESS SO FAR, HE MIGHT HAVE SOLD HIS PROPERTY IN ADVANCE TO A NEXT-OF-KIN, WHO WOULD TAKE IT OVER UPON HIS DEATH). AND SO ON. WHATEVER THE SCENARIO, IT PROBABLY INVOLVED A MAN’S DESIRING TO MARRY A WOMAN WHOSE STATUS AS HIS WIFE WOULD NOT ALSO THREATEN THE STATUS OF HIS ESTATE. VERSE 9 WOULD BE BETTER TRANSLATED: “IF HE DESIGNATES HER FOR HIS SON, HE MUST DEAL WITH HER ACCORDING TO THE LEGAL DECREE ON DAUGHTERS.” THE ORIGINAL HEBREW TEXT BRINGS OUT THAT A WOMAN WHOSE SERVICE CONTRACT IS PURCHASED ALONG WITH HER BRIDE PRICE IS STILL A REAL WIFE, WITH ALL THE PROTECTIONS THAT WOULD ACCRUE TO ANYONE’S DAUGHTER GIVEN IN MARRIAGE IN ISRAEL UNDER THE PROVISIONS OF THE COVENANT. VERSES 10–11 SHOW THAT SHE MUST BE TREATED AS A REGULAR, LEGAL WIFE AND COULD NOT BE DENIED ANY WIFELY PREROGATIVES SIMPLY BECAUSE SHE WAS ALSO TECHNICALLY A SERVANT. THREE KINDS OF EQUALITIES ARE MENTIONED IN TYPICAL PARADIGMATIC FASHION AS STANDING FOR ALL THE VARIOUS WAYS A SECOND WIFE HAD A RIGHT TO BE TREATED AS EQUAL TO THE FIRST WIFE: EQUALITY WITH THE FIRST WIFE IN FOOD, CLOTHING, AND DIVINE RELATIONS (“MARITAL RIGHTS”). THUS, THE COVENANT LAW TOLERATED SECOND WIVES, WHETHER SERVANTS OR NOT, BUT ONLY IF THEY WERE TREATED EQUALLY IN THE FAMILY TO THE WAY THE FIRST WIVES WERE TREATED. A SECOND WIFE COULD NOT BE A SECOND-CLASS WIFE. FAILURE TO PROVIDE EQUAL TREATMENT IN EVERY WAY FOR A SECOND WIFE WAS SUFFICIENT GROUNDS FOR THE WIFE TO BE FREED FROM BOTH HER MARRIAGE (WHICH HAD BEEN PROFANED BY THE DISCRIMINATION OF HER HUSBAND) AND HER SERVICE (SINCE THE ORIGINAL TERMS OF THE SERVICE-MARRIAGE HAD BEEN VIOLATED IN A DISHONEST WAY, AS V. 8 SAYS, THEREFORE ALLOWING THE RIGHT TO HAVE ONE’S SERVICE CONTRACT REPURCHASED IF THE MARRIAGE OBLIGATIONS HAD NOT BEEN LIVED UP TO). THE APOSTLE PAUL REITERATED THE PRINCIPLE BEHIND THE EMPHASIS ON MARITAL RIGHTS (V. 10) IN 1 COR 7:3–5, IN HIS REMINDER TO MARRIED COUPLES OF THE NEED FOR REGULAR DIVINE ACTIVITY IN MARRIAGE. THE HOLY BIBLE FORBIDS ALL SEXUAL RELATIONS INSIDE/OUTSIDE OF MARRIAGE BUT REQUIRES THE DIVINE RELATIONS WITHIN MARRIAGE, DEMONSTRATING THAT MARRIAGE REPRESENTS A GENUINELY DIFFERENT STATE FROM SINGLENESS IN GOD’S EYES, WITH DIVINE INTIMACY SERVING AS THE COVENANT SEAL OF MARRIAGE, AND REGULAR DIVINE RELATIONS FUNCTIONING AS A SMALL-SCALE BUT IMPORTANT AND REQUIRED PERIODIC MARRIAGE COVENANT RENEWAL.**

**LAWS ON INJURIES TO PEOPLE AND ANIMALS (21:12–36)**

**12 “ANYONE WHO STRIKES A MAN AND KILLS HIM SHALL SURELY BE PUT TO DEATH. 13 HOWEVER, IF HE DOES NOT DO IT INTENTIONALLY, BUT GOD LETS IT HAPPEN, HE IS TO FLEE TO A PLACE I WILL DESIGNATE. 14 BUT IF A MAN SCHEMES AND KILLS ANOTHER MAN DELIBERATELY, TAKE HIM AWAY FROM MY ALTAR AND PUT HIM TO DEATH. 15 “ANYONE WHO ATTACKS HIS FATHER OR HIS MOTHER MUST BE PUT TO DEATH. 16 “ANYONE WHO KIDNAPS ANOTHER AND EITHER SELLS HIM OR STILL HAS HIM WHEN HE IS CAUGHT MUST BE PUT TO DEATH. 17 “ANYONE WHO CURSES HIS FATHER [STEPHEN] OR MOTHER [VICTORIA] MUST BE PUT TO DEATH. 18 “IF MEN QUARREL AND ONE HITS THE OTHER WITH A STONE OR WITH HIS FIST AND HE DOES NOT DIE BUT IS CONFINED TO BED, 19 THE ONE WHO STRUCK THE BLOW WILL NOT BE HELD RESPONSIBLE IF THE OTHER GETS UP AND WALKS AROUND OUTSIDE WITH HIS STAFF; HOWEVER, HE MUST PAY THE INJURED MAN FOR THE LOSS OF HIS TIME AND SEE THAT HE IS COMPLETELY HEALED. 20 “IF A MAN BEATS HIS MALE OR FEMALE SLAVE WITH A ROD AND THE SLAVE DIES AS A DIRECT RESULT, HE MUST BE PUNISHED, 21 BUT HE IS NOT TO BE PUNISHED IF THE SLAVE GETS UP AFTER A DAY OR TWO, SINCE THE SLAVE IS HIS PROPERTY. 22 “IF MEN WHO ARE FIGHTING HIT A PREGNANT WOMAN AND SHE GIVES BIRTH PREMATURELY BUT THERE IS NO SERIOUS INJURY, THE OFFENDER MUST BE FINED WHATEVER THE WOMAN’S HUSBAND DEMANDS AND THE COURT ALLOWS. 23 BUT IF THERE IS SERIOUS INJURY, YOU ARE TO TAKE LIFE FOR LIFE, 24 EYE FOR EYE, TOOTH FOR TOOTH, HAND FOR HAND, FOOT FOR FOOT, 25 BURN FOR BURN, WOUND FOR WOUND, BRUISE FOR BRUISE. 26 “IF A MAN HITS A MANSERVANT OR MAIDSERVANT IN THE EYE AND DESTROYS IT, HE MUST LET THE SERVANT GO FREE TO COMPENSATE FOR THE EYE. 27 AND IF HE KNOCKS OUT THE TOOTH OF A MANSERVANT OR MAIDSERVANT, HE MUST LET THE SERVANT GO FREE TO COMPENSATE FOR THE TOOTH. 28 “IF A BULL GORES A MAN OR A WOMAN TO DEATH, THE BULL MUST BE STONED TO DEATH, AND ITS MEAT MUST NOT BE EATEN. BUT THE OWNER OF THE BULL WILL NOT BE HELD RESPONSIBLE. 29 IF, HOWEVER, THE BULL HAS HAD THE HABIT OF GORING AND THE OWNER HAS BEEN WARNED BUT HAS NOT KEPT IT PENNED UP AND IT KILLS A MAN OR WOMAN, THE BULL MUST BE STONED AND THE OWNER ALSO MUST BE PUT TO DEATH. 30 HOWEVER, IF PAYMENT IS DEMANDED OF HIM, HE MAY REDEEM HIS LIFE BY PAYING WHATEVER IS DEMANDED. 31 THIS LAW ALSO APPLIES IF THE BULL GORES A SON OR DAUGHTER. 32 IF THE BULL GORES A MALE OR FEMALE SLAVE, THE OWNER MUST PAY THIRTY SHEKELS OF SILVER TO THE MASTER OF THE SLAVE, AND THE BULL MUST BE STONED. 33 “IF A MAN UNCOVERS A PIT OR DIGS ONE AND FAILS TO COVER IT AND AN OX OR A DONKEY FALLS INTO IT, 34 THE OWNER OF THE PIT MUST PAY FOR THE LOSS; HE MUST PAY ITS OWNER, AND THE DEAD ANIMAL WILL BE HIS. 35 “IF A MAN’S BULL INJURES THE BULL OF ANOTHER AND IT DIES, THEY ARE TO SELL THE LIVE ONE AND DIVIDE BOTH THE MONEY AND THE DEAD ANIMAL EQUALLY. 36 HOWEVER, IF IT WAS KNOWN THAT THE BULL HAD THE HABIT OF GORING, YET THE OWNER DID NOT KEEP IT PENNED UP, THE OWNER MUST PAY, ANIMAL FOR ANIMAL, AND THE DEAD ANIMAL WILL BE HIS.**

**INTENTIONAL AND UNINTENTIONAL HOMICIDE LAWS (21:12–14)**

**TYPE OF LAW: CASUISTIC (SITUATION CITED LIMITED TO HOMICIDES). PARADIGMATIC RANGE: HOMICIDE IN GENERAL, WITH AN INTEREST IN PROTECTING SOCIETY FROM MURDERERS WHILE PROTECTING THOSE WHO COMMITTED ACCIDENTAL HOMICIDE. THIS COMPOUND LAW IS STRUCTURED CHIASTICALLY, WITH THE FIRST AND LAST ASSERTIONS DEALING WITH MURDER AND THE REQUIRED RESPONSE TO IT (CAPITAL PUNISHMENT) AND THE MIDDLE ASSERTION DEALING WITH ACCIDENTAL HOMICIDE AND THE REQUIRED RESPONSE TO IT (PROTECTION OF THE ONE AT FAULT BY MEANS OF TEMPORARY RESIDENCE AT A CITY OF REFUGE). VERSE 12 ENVISIONS PURPOSEFUL HOMICIDE, THAT IS, MURDER, AND REQUIRES, AS IS CONSISTENTLY THE CASE IN ALL OLD TESTAMENT LAW, THE JURIDICAL DEATH OF THE MURDERER. THE SUBJECT IS INDEFINITE, SO NO EXEMPTION IS POSSIBLE BY REASON OF CLASS OR STATUS OR GENDER OR AGE. VERSE 13 ADDRESSES THE EXCEPTION TO MURDER: UNINTENTIONAL/ACCIDENTAL HOMICIDE. ANY SORT OF CAUSATION OF ANOTHER PERSON’S DEATH WITHOUT INTENT IS ENCOMPASSED BY THIS LAW: FATALLY RUNNING OVER SOMEONE WITH A WAGON, FATALLY HITTING SOMEONE WITH A TOOL, UNINTENTIONALLY KILLING AN ALLY IN BATTLE IN WHAT TODAY WOULD BE CALLED A “FRIENDLY FIRE INCIDENT,” AND THE LIKE. IN MUCH OF THE ANCIENT WORLD A MANDATORY VENGEANCE SYSTEM WAS BUILT INTO THE UNWRITTEN SOCIETAL CODE OF CONDUCT. UNDER THIS SYSTEM, YOU OR SOMEONE IN YOUR FAMILY WERE EXPECTED TO TAKE THE LIFE OF ANYONE WHO HAD TAKEN THE LIFE OF SOMEONE IN YOUR FAMILY, WHETHER OR NOT THAT PERSON HAD DONE SO PURPOSEFULLY. VIRTUALLY NO DISTINCTION WAS MADE BETWEEN PURPOSEFUL AND ACCIDENTAL HOMICIDE. IN THE LOGIC OF THE VENGEANCE SYSTEM, THE CAUSING OF A DEATH REQUIRED THE PARALLEL CAUSING OF A DEATH TO “SATISFY” THE GRIEVANCE AND MAKE THINGS EQUAL. IF FAMILY A HAD LOST A MEMBER BY REASON OF THE ACTIONS OF SOMEONE IN FAMILY B, THEN FAMILY B OUGHT TO LOSE A MEMBER BY REASON OF THE ACTIONS OF SOMEONE IN FAMILY A. INTENT WAS NOT CONSIDERED IN SUCH CASES. TO THIS WAY OF THINKING THE TRUE GOD RESPONDED WITH: “IT IS MINE TO AVENGE; I WILL REPAY” (DEUT 32:35). THE PRESENT LAW ANTICIPATES THE SYSTEM OF CITIES OF REFUGE WITH THE WORDING “A PLACE I WILL DESIGNATE.” THESE SIX CITIES, SPREAD THROUGHOUT ISRAEL, WOULD BE CONTROLLED BY LEVITES AND WOULD GIVE SANCTUARY FROM THE “AVENGER OF BLOOD” (THE PERSON WHO SET OUT TO AVENGE THE DEATH OF A MEMBER OF HIS FAMILY BY SEEKING TO KILL THE ONE WHO HAD TAKEN HIS LIFE) UNTIL SUCH TIME AS FULL, CAREFUL, PATIENT LEGAL PROCESSES COULD LOOK INTO THE FATALITY AND RULE FAIRLY. GOD’S COVENANT THEREBY ELIMINATED FOR OBEDIENT ISRAELITES WHAT HAD BEEN A LONG-ESTABLISHED BUT INHERENTLY UNFAIR PRACTICE THAT DOMINATED THE WAY OF LIFE IN THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST, BLOOD VENGEANCE. VERSE 14 INSISTS THAT THERE CAN BE NO PROTECTION, HOWEVER, FOR THE CALCULATING MURDERER—NOT EVEN THE PROTECTION SUPPOSEDLY AFFORDED BY ONE’S CLINGING TO THE HORNS (RAISED CORNERS) OF THE TABERNACLE ALTAR. THE ISRAELITES AT SINAI WERE WELL AWARE OF THE ANCIENT PRACTICE OF SEEKING SANCTUARY AT A SACRIFICE ALTAR. THE PRACTICE IS ENDORSED IN THE HOLY BIBLE, SINCE IT IS TWICE DESCRIBED AS TAKING PLACE. ITS LOGIC RAN AS FOLLOWS: THE ALTAR REPRESENTED GOD’S ACCEPTANCE OF THE TRANSFER OF SIN FROM PEOPLE TO ANIMALS AND WAS THEREFORE A PLACE OF FORGIVENESS AS WELL AS A SPECIALLY SANCTIFIED, MOST HOLY OBJECT (CF. EXOD 29:36–37; 30:10). THOSE SEEKING A FUGITIVE CRIMINAL WOULD NOT WANT TO RISK ANGERING GOD BY APPROACHING IT IMPROPERLY, BECAUSE OF THE PROHIBITIONS ABOUT APPROACHING AN ALTAR CASUALLY. A CRIMINAL WHO RAN TO IT AND SEIZED HOLD OF ITS HORNS AND WAS NOT IMMEDIATELY STRUCK DOWN BY GOD MIGHT CONCLUDE THAT HE WAS AT LEAST TEMPORARILY SAFE FROM SOMEONE WHO MIGHT NOT BE WILLING TO TAKE THE SAME RISK. IN THEORY THE ABILITY TO HOLD ON TO THE HORNS OF THE ALTAR WITHOUT DYING MIGHT EVEN HAVE REPRESENTED A SORT OF PROOF OF INNOCENCE IN COMMON THINKING. GOD REJECTS ALL THIS ELABORATELY CONCEPTUALIZED NONSENSE AND SIMPLY STATES IN V. 14 THAT A MURDERER MUST BE TAKEN FROM THE TABERNACLE ALTAR (“MY ALTAR”) AND PUT TO DEATH. IN OTHER WORDS, THE SINAI COVENANT ALLOWED NO SUCH THING AS ALTAR SANCTUARY. WHEN ADONIJAH TRIED TO MAKE ALTAR SANCTUARY WORK FOR HIM IN 1 KGS 1:50–51 AND WHEN JOAB TRIED IT AGAIN IN 1 KGS 2:29, THEY WERE DOING SO WITHOUT WARRANT FROM THE COVENANT. LIKEWISE, THE NEW COVENANT MAKES NO PROVISION FOR ANY SUCH PRACTICE, WHETHER IN CHURCHES OR SHRINES OR ANY OTHER LOCATION. THERE IS NO LOCATION BY WHICH ONE CAN ESCAPE RESPONSIBILITY FOR ONE’S CIVIL OR OTHER CRIMES. NEITHER FORGIVENESS NOR FREEDOM FROM PROSECUTION IS SPATIALLY CONNECTED. SUCH THINGS ARE INSTEAD RELATIONAL AND IN TERMS OF THEIR ETERNAL DIMENSION, DEPENDENT UPON KNOWING CHRIST AND HIS BENEFITS, NOT WHERE TO HIDE OR FLEE.**

**CAPITAL PUNISHMENT LAWS AGAINST ASSAULT ON LORDLY PARENTS, KIDNAPPING, AND CURSING LORDLY PARENTS (21:15–17)**

**JUST AS THE PRIOR LAW ON HOMICIDE (21:12–14) IS ACTUALLY A COMPOUND OF THREE LAWS ARRANGED CHIASTICALLY IN SUCH A WAY THAT THE FIRST AND THIRD “SANDWICH” THE SECOND, SO THE PRESENT GROUP OF THREE LAWS APPEARS TO BE CONSTRUCTED. ALL ARE CAPITAL CRIMES EVEN THOUGH IN EACH CASE THE CRIME DESCRIBED DOES NOT INVOLVE THE TAKING OF LIFE. THE FIRST AND LAST CRIMES ARE RELATED TO EACH OTHER BECAUSE THEY BOTH DESCRIBE WAYS OF “ATTACKING” ONE’S LORDLY PARENTS (AND THUS THESE LAWS HELP EXPLAIN THE MEANING OF “HONOR YOUR FATHER [STEPHEN] AND MOTHER [VICTORIA],” THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT, EXOD 20:12). THE SECOND LAW (V. 16) DEALS WITH A NONHOMICIDAL CRIME REGARDED AS COMPARABLE IN SEVERITY TO THE OTHER TWO AND THUS REQUIRING THE DEATH PENALTY, THAT IS, KIDNAPPING. 21:15 TYPE OF LAW: CASUISTIC (WORDING LIMITED TO CASES OF SERIOUS PHYSICAL ASSAULT ON LORDLY PARENTS). PARADIGMATIC RANGE: ANY FULL-BLOWN ASSAULT ON ONE’S LORDLY PARENT(S) OR OTHER PERSONS WHO MIGHT FUNCTION AS PARENTS (GRANDPARENTS, GUARDIANS, TEACHERS IN LOCO PARENTIS). THE FORMAT OF THIS LAW IS MUCH LIKE THAT OF V. 12, WITH THE EXCEPTION THAT IT LACKS WĀMĒT (“SO THAT HE DIES”); IT BEGINS WITH MAKKĒH (HIPHIL PARTICIPLE, “THE ONE ATTACKING”), AS DOES V. 12, AND ENDS LIKEWISE WITH MÔT YÛMĀT (“MUST BE PUT TO DEATH”). IN OTHER WORDS, MERELY ATTACKING ONE’S PARENTS PHYSICALLY IS GROUNDS FOR BEING PUT TO DEATH; IT IS NOT NECESSARY THAT ONE’S LORDLY PARENTS ARE KILLED IN THE ATTACK FOR THE DEATH PENALTY TO BE APPLIED. THIS DESCRIPTION DOES NOT ENVISAGE MINOR PHYSICAL ABUSE (SLAPPING, A SINGLE PUNCH THROWN IN ANGER, OR THE LIKE). THE HIPHIL OF NKH RATHER CONNOTES AT LEAST THE KIND OF PHYSICAL ATTACK DESIGNED TO DISABLE SOMEONE AND LEAVE HIM MOTIONLESS ON THE FLOOR OR GROUND (I.E., THE VERB MEANS AT LEAST TO “BEAT DOWN”). IT IS NOT UNCOMMONLY TRANSLATED BY “KILL” (E.G., GEN 4:15) AND CAN HAVE THE SENSE OF “ASSAULT AND LEAVE FOR DEAD.” BUT SERIOUS AS THE CRIME HAS TO BE FOR THE DEATH PENALTY TO BE APPLIED, IT DOES NOT HAVE TO RESULT IN THE DEATH OF THE LORDLY PARENTS. IF SOMEONE ATTACKS HIS LORDLY PARENT(S) SEVERELY ENOUGH SO THAT THEY MIGHT HAVE DIED, HE MUST LOSE HIS LIFE. LORDLY PARENTS ARE THUS PROTECTED BY THIS LAW ABOVE THE GENERAL CITIZENRY (21:18–19) OR SERVANTS (21:20–21), WHOSE ACTUAL MURDER MUST TAKE PLACE FOR THE DEATH PENALTY TO APPLY. BY CONTRAST, THE MERE ATTACK ON LORDLY PARENTS ITSELF IS A CAPITAL CRIME, EVEN IF THE PARENTS SHOULD EVENTUALLY RECOVER. 21:16 TYPE OF LAW: CASUISTIC (DESCRIPTION LIMITED TO A CASE OF STEALING ANOTHER HUMAN BEING). PARADIGMATIC RANGE: ALL KIDNAPPING, WITHOUT REGARD TO CLASS, GENDER, STATUS, OR AGE (ʾÎŠ REFERS TO ANY “INDIVIDUAL”). THE VERSE SHOULD BE TRANSLATED: “WHOEVER STEALS A PERSON, WHETHER HE SELLS HIM OR IS FOUND IN POSSESSION OF HIM, MUST BE PUT TO DEATH.” THE VERB FOR “STEAL” HERE (GNB) IS THE SAME AS THAT OF THE EIGHTH COMMANDMENT, SO TO THE ALERT HEBREW READER, THERE CAN BE LITTLE DOUBT THAT THIS LAW IS A PARTICULARIZED CASE OF THE APODICTIC “DO NOT STEAL.” KIDNAPPING IS A CAPITAL CRIME. GOD REGARDS TAKING SOMEONE AWAY FROM HOME AND FAMILY BY FORCE FOR RELOCATION ELSEWHERE (USUALLY TO BE SOLD INTO SLAVERY) AS SUFFICIENTLY HORRENDOUS THAT HE REQUIRES KIDNAPPERS OR SLAVE TRADERS TO BE PUT TO DEATH WHEN APPREHENDED. PEOPLE’S FREEDOM FROM SUCH OPPRESSION IS IMPORTANT TO GOD. NOTE THAT A SLAVE TRADER CANNOT ESCAPE CAPITAL PUNISHMENT BY ARGUING THAT HE WAS MERELY A “MIDDLE MAN,” HOLDING A KIDNAPPED PERSON WHOM HE HAD NOT YET RESOLD, THAT IS, THAT HE HAD NOT ACTUALLY DONE MUCH HARM TO THE MAN KIDNAPPED. THE LAW CONDEMNS TO DEATH ANYONE TRAFFICKING IN SLAVES, WHETHER OR NOT THE ORIGINAL CAPTOR. THE NIV RENDERING “STILL HAS HIM WHEN HE IS CAUGHT” MAKES THE LAW SOUND AS IF IT APPLIES ONLY TO KIDNAPPERS, AN UNFORTUNATE IMPLICATION NOT ACTUALLY CONTAINED IN THE HEBREW WORDING (CP. AMOS 1:6). THE SITUATION OF SPARING THE LIFE OF ONE’S ENEMY IN BATTLE, IN RETURN FOR WHICH HE BECOMES A SERVANT, IS NOT ENCOMPASSED UNDER THE NOTION OF KIDNAPPING, EVEN THOUGH IT ALSO INVOLVES REQUIRING SOMEONE TO RELOCATE TO A NEW HOME AND CULTURE. THE PERSON WHO GOES TO WAR KNOWS THE RISKS AND UNDERSTANDS THE “TRADE-OFFS” IMPLIED IN TAKING UP ARMS. ISRAELITES THEREFORE COULD AND DID EXERCISE THE OPTION TO FORCE INTO SERVICE ENEMIES NOT KILLED IN BATTLE (1 KGS 9:20–22). 21:17 TYPE OF LAW: CASUISTIC (WORDING LIMITED TO “CURSING” LORDLY PARENTS). PARADIGMATIC RANGE: ANY SERIOUS REJECTION OF ONE’S LORDLY PARENT(S) OR OTHER PERSONS WHO MIGHT FUNCTION AS LORDLY PARENTS (GRANDPARENTS, GUARDIANS, PROTECTORS). THE LARGEST CHALLENGE TO INTERPRETING THIS LAW CORRECTLY IS THE AMBIGUITY THAT SURROUNDS THE UNDERSTANDING OF THE MEANING OF QLL IN THE PIEL STEM. THE MEANING HERE MAY NOT HAVE TO DO WITH AN ACTUAL SPOKEN CURSE BUT WITH AN ACT OF “REPUDIATION” OF SOME SORT. IN TWO OTHER PLACES IN THE OLD TESTAMENT THE SEVERITY OF CURSING ONE’S LORDLY PARENTS IS ADDRESSED, AGAIN WITH THE NOTION OF THE ACTION AS A CAPITAL SORT OF OFFENSE (LEV 20:9; PROV 20:20; CF. 30:11). ON THE OTHER HAND, THE PIEL OF QLL CERTAINLY CAN REFER SIMPLY TO WHAT WE WOULD CALL “EXPRESSING THE DESIRE FOR HARM TO COME TO SOMEONE” OR (VERBALLY) “DENOUNCING” SOMEONE (E.G., EXOD 22:28; DEUT 23:4). CURSING IS NOT NECESSARILY A SIN PER SE SINCE IT CAN BE DONE IN THE INTERESTS OF GODLINESS (CF. GOD’S CURSING THOSE WHO CURSE ABRAHAM’S SEED, GEN 12:3; NEHEMIAH’S CURSING THOSE WHO HAD INTERMARRIED WITH PAGANS, NEH 13:25; ELISHA’S CURSING THE MOCKING YOUTHS, 2 KGS 2:24—THREE OF THE FORTY OCCURRENCES OF THE PIEL OF QLL). IT MAY ALSO BE UNDERTAKEN IN A MANNER THAT IS ESSENTIALLY RHETORICAL (E.G., JOB’S CURSING THE DAY OF HIS BIRTH, JOB 3:1). MOST LIKELY THIS LAW ENVISIONS A SITUATION IN WHICH SOMEONE WOULD NOT MERELY IN A MOMENT OF RAGE SAY TO HIS LORDLY PARENTS SOMETHING LIKE “I WISH YOU WERE DEAD!” BUT WOULD PUBLICLY, PERHAPS BY AN OATH SPOKEN IN THE NAME OF STEPHEN YAHWEH, ASSERT THAT HE WANTED NEVER AGAIN TO HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH HIS PARENTS AND WOULD NOT RESPECT OR SERVE THEM ANY LONGER AS THEIR CHILD, WISHING ONLY HARM FOR THEM. THUS, THE CURSER WOULD, CARRYING OUT THE CURSE, NEITHER OBEY HIS LORDLY PARENTS NOR CARE FOR THEM IN THEIR OLD AGE AS WAS THE EXPECTED DUTY BUT WOULD OPENLY DECLARE SOMETHING TO THE EFFECT THAT HE WANTED THEM “OUT OF THE WAY.” SUCH BEHAVIOR WAS SUFFICIENTLY OUTRAGEOUS THAT GOD WOULD NOT TOLERATE ITS CONTINUATION WITHIN THE COVENANT COMMUNITY, AND HE THEREFORE DECLARED IT A CAPITAL CRIME.**

**LAWS ON LIFE-THREATENING INJURY (21:18–21)**

**AGAIN, THREE CLOSELY RELATED LAWS FUNCTION TOGETHER TO PRESENT AN OVERVIEW OF HOW PEOPLE OF ANY STATUS ARE TO BE TREATED RELATIVE TO INFLICTING SERIOUS HARM THAT CRIPPLES SOMEONE. TYPE OF LAW IN ALL THREE CASES: CASUISTIC (ADDRESSED CIRCUMSTANCES WHEREIN SOMEONE HAD INFLICTED FATAL OR POTENTIALLY FATAL BLOWS TO SOMEONE ELSE, INCLUDING IN THE CASE OF DISCIPLINING A SERVANT). PARADIGMATIC RANGE: VIRTUALLY ANY SITUATION WHERE ONE PERSON INFLICTED AN INJURY ON ANOTHER THAT DID NOT RESULT IMMEDIATELY IN DEATH OR PERMANENT INJURY. 21:18–19 THIS LAW EMPLOYS—AS A SAMPLE FROM WHICH JUDGES WILL EXTRAPOLATE TO MAKE THEIR RULINGS—A SCENARIO OF FIGHTING, RESULTING FROM AN ARGUMENT, WITHOUT CONCERN FOR WHO STARTED THE FIGHT. (IF THE JUDGE IN A CASE INVOLVING FIGHTING ACTUALLY COULD DETERMINE WHO STARTED THE FIGHT, HE MIGHT WELL USE THAT INFORMATION IN HIS RULING, BUT THE LAW ALLOWS FOR ANY SITUATION, INCLUDING THOSE WHERE IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO DETERMINE WHO ACTUALLY STARTED THE FIGHT.) IF ONE PARTY IS SERIOUSLY INJURED IN THE FIGHT, WHETHER BY HITTING OR KICKING (“FIST” IS THE PARADIGM WORD FOR FIGHTING WITHOUT USING ANYTHING AS A WEAPON) OR BY SOMETHING USED AS A WEAPON (“STONE” IS THE PARADIGM WORD FOR ANY OBJECT USED TO INFLICT INJURY), THE INJURED PARTY COULD NOT CLAIM MORE THAN THE AMOUNT OF MONEY HE LOST FROM BEING OUT OF WORK AND WHATEVER HIS COSTS WERE FOR RECUPERATION. IN OTHER WORDS, HE COULD NOT CLAIM, AS MODERN WESTERN LAWS OFTEN ALLOW, SPECIAL MULTIPLE “DAMAGES” FOR “PAIN AND SUFFERING” AS LONG AS HE EVENTUALLY RECOVERS ENOUGH TO BE AMBULATORY (“WALKS AROUND OUTSIDE WITH HIS STAFF”) AND THEN FINALLY FULLY WELL, WITHOUT PERMANENT INJURY (“COMPLETELY HEALED”). BEHIND THE LOGIC OF THIS LAW APPEARS TO BE THE ASSUMPTION THAT PEOPLE WHO CHOOSE TO FIGHT CHOOSE TO TAKE THE RISK OF INJURY AND CANNOT EXPECT COMPENSATION BEYOND THEIR ACTUAL OUT-OF-POCKET EXPENSES FOR INJURIES THEY INCUR IN FIGHTING. THERE IS NO ASSUMPTION OF PRE-MEDITATION IN THIS LAW. 21:20–21 A SOMEWHAT ANALOGOUS SITUATION MUST THEN BE CONSIDERED BECAUSE A RIGHTEOUS ISRAELITE MIGHT ASK, ON THE BASIS OF THE PREVIOUS VERSES, “CAN I NOT, THEN, USE CORPORAL PUNISHMENT (“A ROD” BEING THE PARADIGM WORD FOR ANY CORPORAL PUNISHMENT FROM SLAPPING TO CANING) TO DISCIPLINE MY SERVANTS, OR MY CHILDREN, FOR THAT MATTER?” WITHOUT THE PRESENT LAW THIS QUESTION COULD ARISE EVEN THOUGH THE SITUATION OF CORPORAL PUNISHMENT IS NOT SPECIFICALLY A MATTER OF FIGHTING ARISING FROM AN ARGUMENT. THIS LAW DOES NOT DOUBT THE LEGITIMATE RIGHT OF AN EMPLOYER TO PUNISH A SERVANT PHYSICALLY. BUT IT ADDRESSES THE QUESTION OF HOW FAR ANY PHYSICAL PUNISHMENT COULD GO BY USING THE EXAMPLE OF A “SLAVE”—WHETHER MALE OR FEMALE—WHO WAS BEATEN, PRESUMABLY FOR SOME SORT OF SERIOUS WRONGDOING (E.G., STEALING FROM HIS EMPLOYER, BUT CP. LEV 6:2–4). WHAT THE EMPLOYER COULD NOT DO WAS BEAT THE SERVANT SO SEVERELY AS TO CAUSE EITHER PERMANENT INJURY OR DEATH, FOR BOTH SUCH EVENTUALITIES ARE CLEARLY FORBIDDEN BY THIS LAW. IF THE SERVANT DIED, IT WAS MURDER. IF THE SERVANT LOST JUST A DAY OR TWO AT WORK, HOWEVER, THE OWNER WAS NOT OBLIGATED TO DO WHAT THE PREVIOUS LAW REQUIRED, THAT IS, COMPENSATE THE SERVANT FOR TIME LOST FROM WORK OR FOR MEDICAL COSTS BECAUSE “HE IS HIS MONEY” (NIV “THE SLAVE IS HIS PROPERTY”). THERE WAS, IN OTHER WORDS, NO POINT IN ASKING THE SERVANT’S BOSS TO COMPENSATE HIMSELF FOR THE LOSS OF HIS OWN SERVANT’S LABOR. IF THE SERVANT HAD BEEN TOO SEVERELY PUNISHED, HOWEVER, SO THAT THE SERVANT TOOK MORE THAN A COUPLE OF DAYS TO RECOVER COMPLETELY OR WAS PERMANENTLY INJURED, SOME COMBINATION OF THE TERMS OF THE PRIOR LAW (VV. 18–19) AND THE LAW IN VV. 26–27 WOULD BE USED TO MAKE SURE THE EMPLOYER DID NOT GET OFF WITHOUT PENALTY.**

**LAWS RELATING TO CAUSING PERMANENT INJURY (21:22–27)**

**AGAIN, THREE LAWS SEEM TO BE GROUPED TOGETHER ON THE BASIS OF A COMMON ISSUE, IN THIS CASE THE CAUSING OF PERMANENT INJURY TO SOMEONE, WHETHER OR NOT INTENTIONAL. THE FIRST LAW (21:22–25) USES THE EXAMPLE OF INJURY TO A PREGNANT WOMAN AND/OR HER UNBORN CHILDREN; THE SECOND AND THIRD LAWS USE THE EXAMPLES OF BODY PARTS OF A SERVANT PERMANENTLY INJURED BY AN EMPLOYER, WHETHER ACCIDENTALLY OR PURPOSELY, AND WHETHER OR NOT IN THE COURSE OF APPLYING CORPORAL PUNISHMENT. 21:22 THIS VERSE CONTAINS SOME WORDING THAT IS WITHOUT PARALLEL ELSEWHERE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT AND THUS CHALLENGING TO TRANSLATE. THE NIV RENDERING “AND SHE GIVES BIRTH PREMATURELY” HAS NOT BEEN ACCEPTED BY MOST SUBSEQUENT VERSIONS AND COMMENTATORS. THE MOST LIKELY TRANSLATION FOR THE DISPUTED PORTION OF THE LAW WOULD SEEM TO BE, “IF MEN GET IN A FIGHT AND HURT A PREGNANT WOMAN BUT SHE IS STILL ABLE TO HAVE CHILDREN AND THERE IS NO HARM …,” ALTHOUGH OTHER POSSIBLE TRANSLATIONS SUCH AS “SO THAT HER CHILD/CHILDREN ARE BORN” OR “SO THAT SHE HAS A MISCARRIAGE” HAVE ALSO BEEN RESPONSIBLY PROPOSED. IN OUR VIEW THE LAW CITES AN INSTANCE IN WHICH A PREGNANT WOMAN MIGHT OR MIGHT NOT SUFFER SOME SORT OF PERMANENT PHYSICAL HARM RELATED ESPECIALLY TO HER ABILITY TO HAVE CHILDREN (I.E., SHE IS MADE INFERTILE BY THE INJURY), AND/OR HER UNBORN CHILD(REN) MIGHT OR MIGHT NOT SUFFER SOME SORT OF PERMANENT PHYSICAL HARM. THE LAW INSISTS THAT THERE SHOULD BE A PENALTY FOR HITTING A PREGNANT WOMAN DURING A FIGHT, EVEN IF SHE IS NOT INJURED. IT DOES NOT SPECIFY THAT PENALTY BUT LEAVES IT TO THE WOMAN’S HUSBAND TO SUGGEST A PENALTY AND TO THE JUDGES (NIV “COURT”) TO IMPOSE ONE. PRESUMED IN THE LOGIC OF THE LAW IS THAT MEN ARE INEXCUSABLY OUT OF CONTROL IF THEY ENGAGE IN A BRAWL SO WILD THAT A PREGNANT WOMAN WOULD BE HURT IN THE PROCESS. IF OUR SUGGESTED TRANSLATION (“BUT SHE IS STILL ABLE TO HAVE CHILDREN”) OR SOMETHING SIMILAR (“IF SHE HAS HER CHILD WITHOUT HARM”) IS CORRECT, THIS IS A LAW THAT WOULD REQUIRE WAITING UNTIL AFTER THE WOMAN GAVE BIRTH TO SEE WHAT SORT OF PENALTY SHOULD BE IMPOSED AGAINST THOSE WHO ENGAGED IN THE FIGHT. THE HUSBAND COULD PROSECUTE THE CASE EVEN IF THERE WAS NO HARM TO HIS WIFE OR TO HIS CHILD(REN) SINCE THE MERE RISK AND ANXIETY OF FACING THE POSSIBILITY OF INJURY TO THE UNBORN OR THE INFERTILITY OF HIS WIFE WOULD WARRANT IT. 21:23–25 HOWEVER, IF SOMEONE ENDS UP PERMANENTLY INJURED, WHETHER THE WIFE OR THE CHILD(REN) OR BOTH, THE PENALTY IMPOSED MUST FIT THE SEVERITY OF THE DAMAGE. HERE THE HOLY BIBLE’S FIRST “TALION” LAW PENALTY OCCURS. NOTE THAT THE WORDING OF VV. 23–25 GOES FAR BEYOND AND DOES NOT EVEN MENTION HARM TO THE WOMAN’S FERTILITY. AND IF IT SPEAKS AS WELL OF POTENTIAL INJURIES TO HER UNBORN CHILD(REN), IT DESCRIBES DAMAGE THAT COULD HARDLY HAVE BEEN THE RESULT OF A BLOW TO A PREGNANT WOMAN WHILE THE UNBORN CHILD WAS STILL IN UTERO (E.G., “BURN FOR BURN”).137 INSTEAD, THE WORDING OF THESE VERSES ESTABLISHES A GENERAL PRINCIPLE FOR DEALING WITH VARIOUS PERMANENT INJURIES; IN OTHER WORDS, IT USES THE LAW OF V. 22 AS A JUMPING OFF POINT FOR THE PROMULGATION OF A GENERAL APPROACH TO PERMANENT INJURY, KNOWN AS TALION LAW.**

**EXCURSUS: TALION LAW (LEX TALIONIS OR IUS TALIONIS)**

**THE GOAL OF LAWS THAT USE THE WORDING “LIFE FOR LIFE, EYE FOR EYE, TOOTH FOR TOOTH,” IS THAT THE PENALTY IMPOSED FOR CAUSING PHYSICAL INJURY MUST BE APPROPRIATE TO THE NATURE OF THE INJURY. IN OTHER WORDS, A MERE MONETARY PENALTY (A FINE) CANNOT BE CONSIDERED ADEQUATE JUSTICE WHEN SOMEONE HAS BEEN PERMANENTLY MAIMED BY A PERSON IN A MANNER THAT CLEARLY DEMANDS A PUNISHMENT. THIS KIND OF LAW REPRESENTS AN ADVANCE ON THE NON-ISRAELITE BIBLICAL-ERA LAWS, WHICH ROUTINELY PROVIDED FOR FINES AS SATISFYING THE LEGAL REQUIREMENT OF JUSTICE IN THE CASE OF A SUPERIOR PERSON’S PERMANENTLY INJURING AN INFERIOR PERSON. BY CONTRAST TO THE LAWS OF PAGAN NATIONS, THE LAW GOVERNING GOD’S CHOSEN PEOPLE ISRAEL REQUIRED REAL EQUITY AT LAW AND FORBADE PEOPLE WITH MONEY BEING ABLE TO BUY THEIR WAY OUT OF CRIMINAL PENALTIES. TALION LAWS ARE EASILY MISUNDERSTOOD IF TAKEN LITERALISTICALLY. THEY USUALLY DO NOT MEAN WHAT THEY SOUND LIKE THEY ARE SAYING TO THE MODERN EAR. BUT EVIDENCE EXISTS THAT ANY JUDGES IN THE ANCIENT WORLD ACTUALLY REQUIRED A LITERAL APPLICATION OF TALION LAW BEYOND THE FIRST OF ITS TERMS, “LIFE FOR LIFE.” IN CASES OF MURDER, THE MURDERER WAS PUT TO DEATH AS A “LIFE FOR LIFE” SATISFACTION OF THE LAW. BEYOND THAT, THERE WERE ACTUAL TAKING OF SOMEONE’S EYE [SUCH AS SAMSON ASKING THE LORD FOR VENGEANCE FOR HIS 2 EYES, WHICH WAS GRANTED BY THE LORD] IN EXCHANGE FOR HIS HAVING RUINED THE EYE OF ANOTHER PERSON, OR A TOOTH KNOCKED OUT OF A PERSON [THIS CAN ALSO BE POSSIBLE] IN EXCHANGE FOR A TOOTH KNOCKED OUT OF SOMEONE ELSE BY THAT PERSON AND SO ON THROUGH THE “BRUISE FOR BRUISE” PENALTY. BUT ALSO, EXPRESSIONS LIKE “EYE FOR EYE” WERE UNDERSTOOD IDIOMATICALLY TO MEAN “A PENALTY THAT HURTS THE PERSON WHO RUINED SOMEONE ELSE’S EYE AS MUCH AS HE WOULD BE HURT IF HIS OWN EYE WERE ACTUALLY RUINED ALSO.” THE PRECISE PENALTY WAS LEFT UP TO THE JUDGES BY TALION LAW; IT MIGHT INVOLVE ANYTHING FROM BANISHMENT TO LOSS OF PROPERTY (AND/OR PROPERTY RIGHTS) TO PUNITIVE CONFINEMENT TO SPECIAL FINANCIAL PENALTIES TO CORPORAL PUNISHMENT TO PUBLIC HUMILIATION, OR TO ANY COMBINATION OF THESE. IN SUPPORT OF THIS UNDERSTANDING OF HOW TALION LAWS WERE ACTUALLY APPLIED, AN EXAMPLE OF THE NON-LITERALISTIC APPLICATION OF TALION LAW FOLLOWS IMMEDIATELY IN VV. 26–27, IN WHICH THE CASE OF A SERVANT’S MASTER DAMAGING THE EYE OR TOOTH OF A SERVANT REQUIRED THE LOSS OF THE SERVANT’S LABOR, NOT THE GOUGING OUT OF THE MASTER’S EYE OR TOOTH IN THIS SITUATION. THE GOAL OF TALION LAW WAS ALWAYS A SIMPLE ONE: TO SEE THAT FULL JUSTICE WAS DONE. ITS UNIQUE WORDING (“X OR X, Y FOR Y”) CONVEYED TO THE ANCIENT ISRAELITES AN IMPORTANT PRINCIPLE, NAMELY, THAT SOMEONE WHO PERMANENTLY INJURED ANOTHER PERSON OUGHT TO BE FULLY PUNISHED IN A WAY THAT REALLY “HURT.” ISRAEL WAS NOT TO ACCEPT A SYSTEM OF LAW THAT COULD ALLOW ONE PERSON TO CONTINUE CRIPPLED FOR LIFE AND LET THE PERSON WHO CAUSED THE CRIPPLING TO CONTINUE MERRILY ON, SIMPLY A BIT LESS WEALTHY THAN HE HAD ORIGINALLY BEEN. 21:26–27 THIS LAW NOT ONLY ILLUSTRATES THE NON-LITERALISTIC NATURE OF TALION LAW BUT ALSO REPRESENTS ONE OF THE COVENANT’S MOST STRIKING REJECTIONS OF THE SORT OF CLASS-ADJUSTED LEGAL STANDARDS THAT PREVAILED ELSEWHERE IN THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST. EVEN THOUGH A SERVANT WAS THE “MONEY” OF HIS EMPLOYER IN THE SENSE OF BEING HIS CONTRACTUALLY OBLIGATED “PROPERTY” (SEE COMMENTS ON V. 21), THE RIGHT OF A MASTER TO ENFORCE HIS CONTRACT WITH HIS SERVANT WAS NOT ABSOLUTE. HUMAN RIGHTS WERE MORE IMPORTANT. THE SERVANT’S “OWNER” LOST HIS OWNERSHIP AS SOON AS HE PHYSICALLY ABUSED HIS SERVANT. BOTH THE TERMS “MALE SERVANT” AND “FEMALE SERVANT” (NIV “MANSERVANT OR MAIDSERVANT”) ARE INCLUDED IN BOTH VV. 26 AND 27 AS GENDER SYNECDOCHES, AS A MEANS OF MAKING SURE THE READER UNDERSTANDS THAT THIS LAW APPLIED TO ALL SERVANTS. THE “EYE FOR EYE” AND “TOOTH FOR TOOTH” PENALTY IN THIS CASE IS UNDERSTOOD, TYPICALLY, NON-LITERALISTICALLY. RATHER THAN ANY ACTUAL PHYSICAL HARM BEING DONE TO THE ABUSIVE EMPLOYER TO PUNISH HIM FOR HIS CRIME, THE EMPLOYER SIMPLY LOST THE LABOR OF HIS SERVANT FOR THE REST OF THE SIX-YEAR TENURE. CAPABLE ISRAELITE JUDGES WOULD HAVE KNOWN HOW TO EXTRAPOLATE FROM THE TERMS OF THIS LAW TO ALL THE RELEVANT SITUATIONS TO WHICH IT SPEAKS. FOR EXAMPLE, IF AN EMPLOYER PERMANENTLY DAMAGED THE EYE [EAR] OF A SERVANT ONE DAY BEFORE THE SERVANT WAS TO LEAVE HIS SERVICE ANYWAY, A JUDGE MIGHT WELL DECLARE THAT SOME OTHER SERVANT WITH A LONGER TIME REMAINING ON HIS SERVICE CONTRACT SHOULD ALSO GO FREE, OR THAT THE SERVANT’S WIFE AND/OR CHILDREN COULD GO FREE WITH HIM, NOTWITHSTANDING THE USUAL TERMS FOR RELEASE OF FAMILIES ALREADY ARTICULATED IN 21:3–4. CONVERSELY, IF AN EMPLOYER CAUSED A PERMANENT INJURY TO A SERVANT THAT WAS NOT DEBILITATING (E.G., BROKE THE SERVANT’S TOE SO THAT IT HEALED CROOKED), A JUDGE MIGHT REQUIRE ONLY THAT THE SERVANT WOULD GO FREE A WEEK EARLIER THAN THE DATE SPECIFIED IN HIS CONTRACT. THIS LAW IS TYPICALLY PARADIGMATIC RATHER THAN EXHAUSTIVE IN ITS DESCRIPTION OF CRIME AND PUNISHMENT. UNDER WHAT CIRCUMSTANCES WOULD AN EMPLOYER MAIM A SERVANT? PRESUMABLY, THE ANSWER HAS ALREADY BEEN PARTLY PROVIDED WITH THE LAW IN 21:20–21. CORPORAL PUNISHMENT WAS INTENDED TO INFLICT DISCIPLINING PAIN, BUT IF IT GOT OUT OF HAND, IT COULD INFLICT PERMANENT INJURY AS WELL. THUS, THE PRESENT LAW SERVED AS A CURB TO POTENTIAL EXCESSES IN THE LAW OF 21:20–21.**

**LAWS ABOUT INJURIES CAUSED BY OR TO ANIMALS (21:28–36)**

**THE BASIC PRINCIPLE BEHINDS THESE LAWS, IS THAT PEOPLE ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ANIMALS THEY OWN, OR FOR DANGEROUS SITUATIONS THEY CREATE THAT END UP HARMING SOMEONE ELSE’S ANIMALS. ALMOST EVERYONE IN THE ANCIENT WORLD WAS A FARMER. EVEN POTTERS AND MASONS TYPICALLY PLANTED CROPS AND KEPT ANIMALS, THOUGH ON A SMALLER SCALE THAN THOSE WHO FARMED FULL-TIME. ACCORDINGLY, LAWS GOVERNING CIRCUMSTANCES OF INJURY RELATED TO FARM ANIMALS WERE NEEDED AND WOULD HAVE BEEN REFERRED TO REGULARLY BY ISRAELITE JUDGES. IF MOSES HAD RECEIVED THE LAW IN OUR DAY, THESE LAWS WOULD HAVE BEEN REPLACED BY SOME SAMPLE LAWS ON MOTOR VEHICLE HOMICIDE AND ACCIDENTS. IN THE SAME WAY THAT TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS AND CRIMES ARE COMMON TODAY, ANIMAL ACCIDENTS AND CRIMES WERE COMMON IN BIBLICAL TIMES. IN THE LAWS OF THIS SECTION CONCLUDING CHAP. 21, THE BULL IS USED AS A SAMPLE ANIMAL. SHEEP AND SOME OTHER ANIMALS WERE FAR MORE COMMON, BUT THE BULL WAS THE LARGEST, STRONGEST, AND MOST DANGEROUS OF ALL THE FARM ANIMALS. SO, FROM THE PENALTIES IMPOSED HERE RELATED TO BULL BEHAVIOR, A JUDGE COULD REASON “DOWN THE SCALE,” AS IT WERE, TO VARIOUS SITUATIONS INVOLVING INJURIES BY OR TO ANIMALS OF LESSER SIZE AND LETHALITY. AGAIN, THE STRUCTURE OF THIS SECTION APPEARS TO INVOLVE A SIMPLE CHIASM, THIS TIME OF THE LAWS ABOUT BULLS (VV. 28–32 AND 35–36) SURROUNDING A LAW ABOUT ANIMALS FALLING TO THEIR DEATH IN AN UNCOVERED PIT (VV. 33–34). IN OUR CULTURE GROUPING THINGS CHIASTICALLY IS NOT THOUGHT TO BE PARTICULARLY USEFUL; IN ANCIENT ISRAEL, HOWEVER, IT SERVED AS A CONVENIENT WAY OF ORDERING MATERIALS SO THAT THEY COULD BE MEMORIZED AND REMEMBERED EFFECTIVELY. ANCIENT ISRAELITES WERE SO USED TO HEARING CONCEPTS GROUPED CONCENTRICALLY OR “SANDWICHED” WITHIN OTHER CONCEPTS THAT THEY CAME TO APPRECIATE SUCH PATTERNS AS MNEMONIC AIDS. THUS THE LAW IN VV. 33–34 IS NEITHER AN AFTERTHOUGHT NOR AN AWKWARD INTERPOLATION INTO THE MIDST OF SOME LAWS ON GORING BULLS; IT IS MERELY A CONVENIENTLY INSERTED LAW WITHIN LAWS OF ROUGHLY SIMILAR CONTENT PRODUCING A “BULL-PIT-BULL PATTERN” OF FARM ANIMAL LAWS INTENDED TO BE REMEMBERED BY JUDGES AND GENERAL CITIZENS ALIKE AS A SAMPLING OF HOW TO HANDLE INCIDENTS THAT INVOLVED DEATH OR INJURY TO OR FROM ANIMALS. 21:28–32 TYPE OF LAW: CASUISTIC (APPLIED WHEN SOMEONE HAD AN ANIMAL THAT CAUSED SOMEONE ELSE HARM). PARADIGMATIC RANGE: VIRTUALLY ANY SITUATION OF A FARM ANIMAL DOING DAMAGE OR HARM TO SOMEONE OTHER THAN ITS OWNER. PEOPLE WHO OWN ANIMALS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THEIR BEHAVIOR, EXCEPT WHEN THAT BEHAVIOR COULD NOT HAVE BEEN PREDICTED OR REASONABLY EXPECTED IN ADVANCE. IN V. 28 THE PARADIGM USED TO ILLUSTRATE THE LEGAL PRINCIPLES INTENDED TO APPLY IN SUCH CASES IS THAT OF A BULL WHO KILLED SOMEONE, WHICH WAS NOT WHAT BULLS USUALLY OR NORMALLY DID. IN SUCH A SITUATION, THE BULL’S OWNER SUFFERED LOSS OF THE BULL (A CONSIDERABLE PENALTY IN LIGHT OF HOW EXPENSIVE BULLS WERE IN ANY FARM ECONOMY, EVEN TODAY) WITHOUT EVEN THE CHANCE TO SLAUGHTER THE BULL AND EAT ITS MEAT (WHICH WOULD HAVE BEEN A MEANS OF PARTIAL RECOVERY OF THE BULL’S VALUE FOR ITS OWNER). OTHERWISE THE OWNER HAD NO FURTHER RESPONSIBILITY BECAUSE THERE WAS PRESUMABLY NO WAY, HE OR ANYONE ELSE COULD HAVE PREDICTED SUCH A THING FROM HIS BULL. PEOPLE WORKED WITH BULLS/OXEN ALL THE TIME ON THEIR FARMS; A FATAL GORING FROM A BULL WAS AN UNUSUAL EVENT, NOT A COMMON ONE. STONING [MODERN SHOOTING] THE BULL REPRESENTED A SAFE WAY FOR PEOPLE TO KILL IT WITHOUT DANGER TO THEMSELVES; ANY OTHER MEANS OF SAFELY PUTTING IT TO DEATH WOULD HAVE BEEN ACCEPTABLEPRESUMABLY AS WELL. IN V. 29 THE SITUATION SHIFTS TO THAT OF A BULL ALREADY KNOWN TO ITS OWNER TO BE DANGEROUS. HERE THE OWNER WHO DID NOT KEEP THE BULL PROPERLY CONFINED HAD NO EXCUSE; IF HIS BULL KILLED SOMEONE, IT WAS FULLY HIS FAULT THAT THE PERSON DIED, AND THE OWNER MUST BE PUT TO DEATH FOR WHAT TODAY WOULD BE TERMED NEGLIGENT HOMICIDE. THE BULL MUST ALSO DIE SINCE IT WOULD MAKE LITTLE SENSE TO KEEP IT ALIVE IN LIGHT OF THE PROSPECT OF ITS KILLING SOMEONE ELSE WHEN GIVEN THE CHANCE. HOW THEN COULD THE LAW GO ON TO SAY IN V. 30, “HOWEVER, IF PAYMENT IS DEMANDED OF HIM …”? DOESN’T THIS UNDERMINE THE WHOLE POINT OF THE PRECEDING PENALTY DESCRIPTION REQUIRING THE DEATH PENALTY? IT DOES NOT. THIS SECOND PART OF THE VERSE GAVE NECESSARY LEEWAY TO THE JUDGES IN COMPLICATED CASES. SUPPOSE THE BULL HAD TRIED TO GORE SOMEONE ONLY ONCE, MANY YEARS PREVIOUSLY, AND SOMEONE HAD BORROWED THE BULL AGAINST THE OWNER’S ADVICE AND HAD MISTREATED THE BULL AND THEN WAS GORED TO DEATH. UNDER SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES A JUDGE MIGHT WELL DECIDE (AND THIS LAW GAVE HIM THE FREEDOM SO TO DO) THAT THE DEATH PENALTY FOR THE BULL’S OWNER WOULD NOT BE FAIR—A FINE BEING FAR MORE APPROPRIATE TO THE ACTUAL LEVEL OF CULPABILITY. THE MEANING OF “HE MAY REDEEM HIS LIFE BY PAYING WHATEVER IS DEMANDED” IS SIMPLY THAT IF A COMPENSATION PAYMENT WAS DEMANDED OF HIM, THEN HE HAD TO PAY A REDEMPTION PRICE FOR HIS LIFE IN THE FULL AMOUNT DEMANDED OF HIM BY THE JUDGE, PERHAPS ON THE BASIS OF AN AMOUNT SUGGESTED BY THE FAMILY OF THE DECEASED. THE JUDGE THEN EITHER ACCEPTED THE AMOUNT SUGGESTED OR RAISED OR LOWERED IT TO THE FINAL, OFFICIAL, REDEMPTION PRICE. NOTE THAT THE LAW DID NOT CALL THIS PRICE A FINE. IT WAS MORE THAN THAT—A REDEMPTION PAYMENT—BECAUSE THE PENALTY THAT LAY BEHIND THE LAW WAS ACTUALLY THE DEATH PENALTY. WHEN IT WAS NOT IMPOSED, A FINE WAS NOT SUBSTITUTED, BUT RATHER A BUYING BACK OF ONE’S LIFE WAS ALLOWED. THERE MAY BE LITTLE VISIBLE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE TWO TO A CASUAL OBSERVER, BUT THE CONCEPTS ARE IN FACT DIFFERENT. IN THE PAYMENT OF A FINE, SOMEONE WAS JUST PROVIDING FOR THE VALUE OF A LIFE (WHICH IN GOD’S COVENANT IS IN FACT PRICELESS). IN A REDEMPTION PAYMENT, SOMEONE WAS MORE OR LESS SYMBOLICALLY ACKNOWLEDGING THAT HIS LIFE, WHICH GOD HAS A RIGHT TO TAKE, HAD BEEN SPARED BY DIVINE WILL, AND THE MONEY PROVIDED WAS MORE LIKE AN OFFERING THAN A FINE. VERSES 31–32 TAKE THE PARADIGM FURTHER, TO CHILDREN AND SERVANTS. CHILDREN’S LIVES ARE AS VALUABLE AS ADULT LIVES, SO THE LAW APPLIED TO THEM WITHOUT FURTHER COMMENT (V. 31). A SERVANT, HOWEVER, REPRESENTED A DIFFERENT CATEGORY IN THIS KIND OF LEGAL SITUATION. THIS LAW ENVISIONED A CASE OF A SERVANT WORKING FOR PERSON X BEING GORED BY A BULL OWNED BY PERSON Y. NORMALLY, SERVANTS WERE SIMPLY INCLUDED IMPLICITLY IN LAWS ABOUT PEOPLE IN GENERAL. BUT COMPENSATION FOR A SERVANT’S LIFE WAS NOT ALWAYS THE SAME AS IN THE CASE OF THE LIFE OF SOMEONE NOT A SERVANT BECAUSE OF THE WAY A SERVANT FUNCTIONED UNDER THE CONTROL OF ANOTHER PERSON (THE EMPLOYER). CONSIDER THE ANALOGY OF A MEMBER OF THE MILITARY. IF A LIEUTENANT ORDERS A PRIVATE TO GO INTO HARM’S WAY IN THE COURSE OF MILITARY SERVICE AND THE PRIVATE IS KILLED, THE LIEUTENANT WILL NOT NORMALLY BE PUT TO DEATH. EVEN IF THE LIEUTENANT IS FOUND TO HAVE ACTED IMPROPERLY, IT IS LIKELY THAT HE WILL BE PENALIZED SHORT OF THE DEATH PENALTY. THE PRIVATE’S FAMILY MAY ALSO SUE FOR COMPENSATORY FINANCIAL DAMAGES, BUT NO ONE IS PUT TO DEATH FOR THE PRIVATE’S DEATH. THIS DOES NOT MEAN THAT THE PRIVATE IS CONSIDERED LESS THAN FULLY HUMAN OR MERE PROPERTY. BECAUSE THE PRIVATE WAS UNDER THE CONTROL OF THE MILITARY STRUCTURE AND WAS EXPECTED TO DO CERTAIN THINGS BY COMMAND THAT MIGHT INVOLVE RISK, THERE IS A DIFFERENT UNDERSTANDING OF WHO MUST “PAY” AND HOW MUCH MUST BE PAID IN THE CASE OF THE PRIVATE’S DEATH. A SERVANT WHO WAS GORED BY A BULL WAS PRESUMABLY DOING WHAT HIS MASTER TOLD HIM TO DO BY COMMAND. TYPICALLY, A SERVANT TOLD TO WORK WITH OR AROUND A BULL DID NOT HAVE THE SAME FREEDOM OF INDEPENDENT DECISION MAKING THAT SOMEONE ELSE MIGHT HAVE, AND THUS THE SERVANT’S MASTER HAD TO SHARE SOME OF THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE SERVANT’S DEATH WITH THE OWNER OF THE BULL THAT DID THE GORING. THIS MEANS THAT THE OWNER OF THE BULL WAS NOT AS GUILTY IN SUCH A CASE AS IF THE BULL SIMPLY GORED SOMEONE WHO HAPPENED TO BE WALKING ALONG NEAR ITS OWNER’S PROPERTY. THE LAW IN THIS CASE THEN PROVIDED A SEVERE PENALTY (THIRTY SHEKELS OF SILVER AND THE LOSS OF THE BULL) TO ITS OWNER BUT DID NOT ASSUME THAT HE ALONE WAS FULLY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DEATH OF THE SERVANT. NATURALLY, THE JUDGES WOULD HAVE BEEN FREE TO IMPOSE THE DEATH PENALTY IF IT WERE DECIDED THAT, FOR EXAMPLE, THE BULL’S OWNER HAD INTENTIONALLY LET A GORING BULL LOOSE AGAINST SOMEONE’S SERVANT WHO WAS, SAY, SIMPLY DELIVERING A MESSAGE TO THE BULL’S OWNER FROM HIS EMPLOYER. THAT WOULD BE A CASE OF MURDER, AND THAT WOULD MAKE THE STATUS OF THE SERVANT IRRELEVANT. 21:33–34 TYPE OF LAW: CASUISTIC (APPLIED WHEN SOMEONE HAD DONE SOMETHING THAT ENDED UP CAUSING THE DEATH OF SOMEONE’S FARM ANIMAL). PARADIGMATIC RANGE: ALMOST ANY CAUSE OF LOSS TO ANOTHER PERSON BY REASON OF NEGLIGENCE. VERSES 33–34, THE MIDDLE ELEMENT IN THE CONCENTRIC PATTERN OF ANIMAL LAWS, INTRODUCE THE MATTER OF LIABILITY FOR CAUSING THE DEATH OF AN ANIMAL BY NEGLIGENCE. THE EXAMPLE USED IS THAT OF AN ANIMAL FATALITY BY REASON OF A DEEP PIT INTO WHICH A BULL (NIV “OX”)149 OR DONKEY [ASS] FELL AND DIED. SINCE ANIMALS ROAMED A GREAT DEAL AND SINCE A PIT OF THE SORT ENVISIONED IN THIS LAW WAS INHERENTLY DANGEROUS AND POTENTIALLY FATAL, THE OWNER OF THE PIT WAS PROPERLY LIABLE FOR THE DEATH OF THE ANIMAL. BUT HIS LIABILITY WAS LIMITED TO THE VALUE OF THE ANIMAL, ALMOST AS IF HE HAD SIMPLY BOUGHT IT FOR ITS MEAT. THIS WAS BECAUSE OF A RELATIVELY OBVIOUS, COMMONSENSE FACT THAT STOOD BEHIND THE LAW BUT WAS NOT EXPLICITLY MENTIONED: X’S ANIMAL HAS NO AUTOMATIC RIGHT TO BE WANDERING AROUND Y’S FARM, NEAR Y’S PIT. YES, ANIMALS COULD WANDER OFF; AND YES, A DEEP PIT WAS A DANGEROUS THING TO LEAVE UNCOVERED. BUT THE OWNER OF THE WANDERING ANIMAL BORE SOME RESPONSIBILITY FOR ALLOWING IT TO WANDER OFF AND THEREFORE SHOULD BE COMPENSATED AT NO GREATER A RATE THAN THE MARKET VALUE OF THE ANIMAL. 21:35–36 THE FINAL PROVISION IN THIS COMPLEX OF LAWS ABOUT INJURY TO AND FROM FARM ANIMALS IS CASUISTIC; THAT IS, IT TAKES UP THE SAMPLE INSTANCE OF AN ANIMAL CAUSING THE DEATH OF ANOTHER ANIMAL ESSENTIALLY EQUAL TO IT IN VALUE. ITS PARADIGMATIC RANGE, HOWEVER, COVERS VIRTUALLY ANY SITUATION WHERE AN ANIMAL HARMED ANOTHER ANIMAL. VERSE 35 ADDRESSES A CASE OF GORING TO DEATH THAT COULD NOT BE ANTICIPATED. THE PROPER SOLUTION WAS A “LIQUIDATION” OF THE ASSETS REPRESENTED IN THE REMAINING LIVE BULL AS WELL AS THE DEAD ONE BY SELLING THE LIVE ONE (SO THAT THERE COULD BE NO QUESTION OF SPLITTING THE VALUE EQUALLY: MONEY DIVIDED EASILY) AND SPLITTING UP THE DEAD ONE FOR ITS MEAT. IN THE KIND OF CASE ENVISIONED HERE, THERE WAS NO EASY WAY TO TELL WHICH ANIMAL WAS REALLY AT FAULT AND NOT ENOUGH EVIDENCE TO MAKE EITHER OWNER OBLIGATED TO COMPENSATE THE OTHER IN TERMS OF PAYING A PENALTY. IN V. 36, HOWEVER, THE SITUATION CHANGES TO THAT OF A BULL KNOWN TO ITS OWNER TO BE IN THE HABIT OF GORING. IN SUCH A CASE, IT WAS THE FAULT OF THE OWNER IF HIS BULL GORED THE BULL OF ANOTHER PERSON, AND HE HAD TO PAY FOR THE DEAD ANIMAL AT THE MARKET PRICE, WITH THE MEAT COMING TO HIM. BOTH THESE LAWS RECOGNIZED THAT ANIMAL BEHAVIOR WAS NOT TOTALLY PREDICTABLE AND CONTROLLABLE BUT ALSO ATTEMPTED TO PROVIDE A FAIR AND EQUITABLE SOLUTION WHEN SOMEONE LOST A VALUABLE ASSET, A FARM ANIMAL.**

**LAWS ON PROPERTY (22:1–17)**

**1 “IF A MAN STEALS AN OX OR A SHEEP AND SLAUGHTERS IT OR SELLS IT, HE MUST PAY BACK FIVE HEAD OF CATTLE FOR THE OX AND FOUR SHEEP FOR THE SHEEP. 2 “IF A THIEF IS CAUGHT BREAKING IN AND IS STRUCK SO THAT HE DIES, THE DEFENDER IS NOT GUILTY OF BLOODSHED; 3 BUT IF IT HAPPENS AFTER SUNRISE, HE IS GUILTY OF BLOODSHED. “A THIEF MUST CERTAINLY MAKE RESTITUTION, BUT IF HE HAS NOTHING, HE MUST BE SOLD TO PAY FOR HIS THEFT. 4 “IF THE STOLEN ANIMAL IS FOUND ALIVE IN HIS POSSESSION—WHETHER OX OR DONKEY [ASS] OR SHEEP—HE MUST PAY BACK DOUBLE. 5 “IF A MAN GRAZES HIS LIVESTOCK IN A FIELD OR VINEYARD AND LETS THEM STRAY AND THEY GRAZE IN ANOTHER MAN’S FIELD, HE MUST MAKE RESTITUTION FROM THE BEST OF HIS OWN FIELD OR VINEYARD. 6 “IF A FIRE BREAKS OUT AND SPREADS INTO THORN-BUSHES SO THAT IT BURNS SHOCKS OF GRAIN OR STANDING GRAIN OR THE WHOLE FIELD, THE ONE WHO STARTED THE FIRE MUST MAKE RESTITUTION. 7 “IF A MAN GIVES HIS NEIGHBOR SILVER OR GOODS FOR SAFEKEEPING AND THEY ARE STOLEN FROM THE NEIGHBOR’S HOUSE, THE THIEF, IF HE IS CAUGHT, MUST PAY BACK DOUBLE. 8 BUT IF THE THIEF IS NOT FOUND, THE OWNER OF THE HOUSE MUST APPEAR BEFORE THE JUDGES TO DETERMINE WHETHER HE HAS LAID HIS HANDS ON THE OTHER MAN’S PROPERTY. IN ALL CASES OF ILLEGAL POSSESSION OF AN OX, A DONKEY, A SHEEP, A GARMENT, OR ANY OTHER LOST PROPERTY ABOUT WHICH SOMEBODY SAYS, ‘THIS IS MINE,’ BOTH PARTIES ARE TO BRING THEIR CASES BEFORE THE JUDGES. THE ONE WHOM THE JUDGES DECLARE GUILTY MUST PAY BACK DOUBLE TO HIS NEIGHBOR. 10 “IF A MAN GIVES A DONKEY [ASS], AN OX, A SHEEP OR ANY OTHER ANIMAL TO HIS NEIGHBOR FOR SAFEKEEPING AND IT DIES OR IS INJURED OR IS TAKEN AWAY WHILE NO ONE IS LOOKING, 11 THE ISSUE BETWEEN THEM WILL BE SETTLED BY THE TAKING OF AN OATH BEFORE THE LORD THAT THE NEIGHBOR DID NOT LAY HANDS ON THE OTHER PERSON’S PROPERTY. THE OWNER IS TO ACCEPT THIS, AND NO RESTITUTION IS REQUIRED. 12 BUT IF THE ANIMAL WAS STOLEN FROM THE NEIGHBOR, HE MUST MAKE RESTITUTION TO THE OWNER. 13 IF IT WAS TORN TO PIECES BY A WILD ANIMAL, HE SHALL BRING IN THE REMAINS AS EVIDENCE AND HE WILL NOT BE REQUIRED TO PAY FOR THE TORN ANIMAL. 14 “IF A MAN BORROWS AN ANIMAL FROM HIS NEIGHBOR AND IT IS INJURED OR DIES WHILE THE OWNER IS NOT PRESENT, HE MUST MAKE RESTITUTION. 15 BUT IF THE OWNER IS WITH THE ANIMAL, THE BORROWER WILL NOT HAVE TO PAY. IF THE ANIMAL WAS HIRED, THE MONEY PAID FOR THE HIRE COVERS THE LOSS. 16 “IF A MAN SEDUCES A VIRGIN WHO IS NOT PLEDGED TO BE MARRIED AND SLEEPS WITH HER, HE MUST PAY THE BRIDE-PRICE, AND SHE SHALL BE HIS WIFE. 17 IF HER FATHER ABSOLUTELY REFUSES TO GIVE HER TO HIM, HE MUST STILL PAY THE BRIDE-PRICE FOR VIRGINS.**

**RESTITUTION OR RESIDENCY?**

**THE LAWS IN THIS SECTION (22:1–17) OF THE COVENANT CODE REFLECT THAT GOD ENVISIONED NO JAIL OR PRISON SYSTEM FOR PUNISHING CRIMES IN ISRAEL. CONFINEMENT IN A PENAL INSTITUTION IS THE PRIMARY WAY MODERN WESTERN SOCIETIES PUNISH SUCH CRIMES AS THEFT OR SEXUAL EXPLOITATION, BUT ISRAEL’S LAW DID NOT INCLUDE CONFINEMENT PENALTIES AT ALL. SOMETIMES THIS “OMISSION” IS TREATED ONLY AS THE RESULT OF THE FACT THAT ISRAEL WAS A PEOPLE ON THE MOVE, SINAI BEING ONLY A TEMPORARY STOPPING PLACE, AND PRISONS BEING VIRTUALLY IMPOSSIBLE IN A MOBILE SOCIETY. BUT THIS CANNOT BE THE PRIMARY REASON FOR THE LACK OF CONFINEMENT PENALTIES IN THE LAW SINCE THE LAW LOOKS FORWARD IN MOST PLACES NOT MERELY TO THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE IN THE WILDERNESS BUT ALSO TO THE TIME WHEN ISRAEL WOULD BE SETTLED IN THE PROMISED LAND AND JAILS AND PRISONS COULD CERTAINLY BE CONSTRUCTED. THERE MUST THEREFORE BE ANOTHER REASON FOR THE EMPHASIS ON RESTITUTION IN CASES OF THEFT OR PROPERTY DESTRUCTION OR PREMARITAL SEX OR FORBIDDEN SEX WITHOUT A PAYMENT OF A BRIDE PRICE RATHER THAN RESIDENCY (IN A PENAL INSTITUTION). THE ADVANTAGE OF RESTITUTION OVER RESIDENCY IS AT LEAST FOURFOLD. (1) IT COMPENSATES THE VICTIMS OF A CRIME MORE GENEROUSLY AND MORE IMMEDIATELY THAN IS THE CASE IN MODERN WESTERN SOCIETIES. (2) IT REQUIRES THE OFFENDER TO DEAL DIRECTLY WITH THE PERSON HE HAS OFFENDED AND TO FACE THE EFFECTS OF HIS CRIME ON THAT PERSON. (3) IT PERMITS A REPENTANT OFFENDER TO CONTINUE A PRODUCTIVE LIFE IMMEDIATELY UPON MAKING RESTORATION. (4) AND IT DOES NOT REQUIRE SOCIETY TO PROVIDE HOUSING, FOOD, AND CLOTHING FOR THE DURATION OF THE OFFENDER’S IMPRISONMENT. IN THE LOGIC OF MODERN JURISPRUDENCE, HOWEVER, POTENTIAL DISADVANTAGES ARE ALSO THEORETICALLY PRESENT IN THIS SYSTEM. IN THE MAIN THERE ARE TWO: THE RICHER THE CRIMINAL, THE EASIER IT IS FOR HIM TO MAKE RESTITUTION, SO ONLY POOR CRIMINALS TEND TO END UP PUNISHED BY SOME OTHER MEANS THAN RESTITUTION FOR THEIR FAILURE TO COMPENSATE THE VICTIM; AND IMPRISONMENT OFFERS SOCIETY THE PROTECTION OF KEEPING OUT OF CIRCULATION THE PERSON WHO, IF FINES ALONE WERE ALLOWED TO SUFFICE FOR HIS PENALTY, COULD ENGAGE IN CRIMINAL ACTIVITY AGAIN IMMEDIATELY. BEHIND ALL THE LAWS IN THIS SECTION IS THE SIMPLE PRINCIPLE THAT THE PERSON WHO CAUSES SOMEONE ELSE TO LOSE SOMETHING (WHETHER PERSONAL PROPERTY OR REAL ESTATE OR MONEY) BY WHATEVER MEANS (FROM THEFT TO MERE NEGLECT TO BYPASSING THE NORMAL BETROTHAL PROCESS) OWES COMPENSATION TO THE PERSON WHO HAS SUFFERED THE LOSS. THE MORE INTENTIONAL THE MEANS OF DEPRIVATION (E.G., OUTRIGHT STEALING), THE HIGHER THE REQUIRED RESTITUTION, NORMALLY CALCULATED IN MULTIPLES OF THE VALUE OF THE LOSS SUFFERED. SIMPLE NEGLECT WAS TO BE COMPENSATED ON WHATEVER LEVEL THE JUDGE IN THE CASE REQUIRED. IF NO CULPABILITY WAS EVIDENT, HOWEVER, NO COMPENSATION WAS REQUIRED, BUT YOUR ASS STILL BELONGS TO GOD. SOME OF THESE LAWS WERE INTENDED TO REMIND THE ISRAELITES THAT IN GOD’S PROVIDENCE, SOME THINGS “JUST HAPPENED” AND WERE NO ONE’S FAULT AND THEREFORE DID NOT REQUIRE RESTITUTION.**

**FOUR LAWS ON RESTITUTION FOR THEFT, ALONG WITH A NOTE ON DEFENSE AGAINST BURGLARY (22:1–4) [HB. 21:37–22:3]**

**AS IN THE PREVIOUS CHAPTER, IN THE PRESENT CHAPTER ARE SOME INSTANCES OF THREE OR MORE LAWS BEING GROUPED IN A CONCENTRIC OR CHIASTIC PATTERN, AND VV. 1–4 APPEAR TO BE SUCH A GROUPING. VERSE 1 ADDRESSES VICTIM COMPENSATION REQUIREMENTS FOR STEALING LIVESTOCK IN THE CASE OF A THIEF WHO HAD ACTUALLY BEEN CAUGHT. VERSES 2–3A ADDRESS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MERE BREAKING AND ENTERING AND ACTUAL BURGLARY, INDICATING IN THE PROCESS THE PENALTY METED OUT TO A THIEF EITHER ON THE SPOT BY SOMEONE DEFENDING HIS FARM OR BY A COURT. VERSE 3B TELLS HOW TO HANDLE A SITUATION IN WHICH A THIEF CANNOT MAKE RESTITUTION FOR WHAT HE HAS STOLEN; AND V. 4, COMPLETING THE CHIASM, AGAIN RETURNS TO THE QUESTION OF RESTITUTION FOR STOLEN ANIMALS BUT WITH THE SPECIAL QUALIFICATION OF REASONABLE DOUBT ABOUT THE MATTER OF INTENT ON THE PART OF THE THIEF. 22:1 [HB. 21:37] TYPE OF LAW: CASUISTIC (APPLIED TO CASES WHERE RESTITUTION WAS NEEDED AFTER SOME SORT OF THEFT). PARADIGMATIC RANGE: ALMOST ANY THEFT FOR WHICH RESTITUTION COULD BE MADE (A JUDGE COULD EXTRAPOLATE FROM THIS LAW TO ANY SITUATION WHERE SOMETHING VALUABLE HAD BEEN STOLEN AND WOULD NOT THINK OF THE LAW AS BEING USEFUL TO HIM ONLY IN CASES INVOLVING STOLEN ANIMALS). THE SITUATION DESCRIBED IS THAT OF INTENTIONAL THEFT, THE INTENT BEING ESTABLISHED UNMISTAKABLY BY WHAT THE THIEF DID WITH THE ANIMAL AFTER IT WAS IN HIS POSSESSION, THAT IS, HE ATE IT OR SOLD IT (WHICH WOULD PROVE INTENT). ANY KIND OF THEFT IS UNDER THIS LAW. A SIGNIFICANT MULTIPLE PAYBACK IS REQUIRED AS THE PENALTY, BUT THE READER MAY REASONABLY ASK, WHY A FIVEFOLD PAYBACK FOR AN OX AND ONLY A FOURFOLD PAYBACK FOR A SHEEP? A POSSIBLE REASON RELATES TO THE NATURE OF SHEEP. THEY ARE INVETERATE WANDERERS, FREQUENTLY GOING WHERE THEY SHOULDN’T; THEREFORE, THEY PROVIDE A MORE CONSTANT TEMPTATION FOR A PERSON INCLINED TO STEAL. THEY ARE EASIER TO STEAL, BEING MUCH SMALLER THAN AN OX; THEY ARE MORE LIKELY TO SHOW UP IN ISOLATED LOCATIONS AWAY FROM THEIR OWNER’S PROPERTY; AND THEY CAN BE MUCH HARDER TO DRIVE HOME THAN AN OX (WHO USUALLY WAS TRAINED AND NOSE-RINGED FOR EASY HANDLING IN HOLY BIBLE TIMES), MAKING RETURNING THEM TO YOUR NEIGHBOR MORE OF AN ANNOYANCE THAN WOULD, ON AVERAGE AT LEAST, BE THE CASE WITH AN OX. IN EFFECT, THEN, SHEEP STEALING IS SLIGHTLY MORE “UNDERSTANDABLE” THAN OX STEALING. BUT THERE IS YET ANOTHER DIFFERENCE THAT PROBABLY ACCOUNTS MORE PRECISELY FOR THE DIFFERENCE IN PENALTY: A MISSING OX PREVENTED WORK FROM BEING DONE ON ONE’S FARM SINCE OXEN WERE SO CONSTANTLY USED AS WORK ANIMALS. BY CONTRAST, A MISSING SHEEP MAY NOT DO REAL HARM FOR DAYS AT A TIME. THUS, THE LOSS OF AN OX WAS MORE SUBSTANTIAL AND REQUIRED A MORE SUBSTANTIAL PENALTY. FROM THESE EXAMPLES, ISRAELITE JUDGES WOULD EXTRAPOLATE APPROPRIATE PENALTIES FOR ALL SORTS OF ANIMAL (AND EVEN NONANIMAL) THEFTS. THE JUDGES WOULD UNDERSTAND THAT A SLIGHTLY LESS SERIOUS CRIME MERITS A SLIGHTLY LESS SEVERE RESTITUTION. BY THIS SORT OF PENALTY STRUCTURE, GOD DEMONSTRATES HIS DESIRE THAT PUNISHMENTS SHOULD BE AS PRECISELY AND CAREFULLY CALCULATED AS POSSIBLE IN ANY APPLICATION OF JUSTICE RATHER THAN MECHANISTICALLY APPLIED WITHOUT REGARD FOR THE ACTUAL CIRCUMSTANCES OF A CRIME. 22:2–3A [HB. 22:1–2A] MODERN LAW STATUTES TYPICALLY DEFINE BURGLARY APPROXIMATELY AS “BREAKING AND ENTERING IN THE NIGHTTIME WITH THE INTENT TO COMMIT A FELONY.” MODERN CASE LAW HAS ALLOWED HOMEOWNERS TO APPLY LETHAL FORCE IN DEFENDING THEIR LIVING QUARTERS AT NIGHTTIME, EVEN IF AN INTRUDER TURNS OUT TO HAVE BEEN UNARMED. THE THEORY BEHIND THIS DAY-NIGHT DIFFERENTIATION (I.E., BETWEEN BURGLARY AND MERE BREAKING AND ENTERING) RELATES TO THE DECREASED ABILITY TO SEE AT NIGHT, ESPECIALLY IN TIMES AND PLACES WHERE ELECTRIC LIGHTING MAY NOT BE PRESENT OR MAY NOT BE SUFFICIENTLY PRESENT. THERE ARE FOUR PARTICULAR REASONS FOR THIS. FIRST, IT MAY BE ASSUMED THAT A PERSON WHO HAS LEGITIMATE BUSINESS TO DO AROUND SOMEONE ELSE’S HOUSE OR PROPERTY WILL DO IT IN THE DAYTIME WHEN VISIBILITY FOR WORKING PROPERLY IS GOOD; THUS, ONLY A PERSON WITH MALICIOUS INTENT WOULD BE ENTERING AND/OR PICKING UP AND/OR CARRYING THINGS AWAY FROM SOMEONE ELSE’S HOUSE DURING THE NIGHT. SECOND, DEFENDING ONE’S PROPERTY AT NIGHT, WHEN THE ABILITY TO SEE IS LIMITED, MEANS THAT ONE CANNOT BE AS SUBTLE IN THE APPLICATION OF FORCE AS MIGHT BE POSSIBLE DURING THE DAYTIME, ESPECIALLY BECAUSE OF THE DIFFICULTY OF SEEING WHETHER OR NOT AN INTRUDER HAS A WEAPON. THIRD, A HOMEOWNER WHO HAS JUST BEEN AWAKENED FROM SLEEP BY AN INTRUDER CANNOT BE EXPECTED TO REACT AS CALMLY AS COULD SOMEONE WHO IS WIDE AWAKE AND WILL FEEL FAR MORE VULNERABLE TO THE SORT OF VIOLENCE HE MAY ASSUME COULD BE APPLIED TO HIM AT ANY MOMENT THAN WOULD BE THE CASE IN THE DAYTIME. FOURTH, IN THE DAYTIME ONE CAN CALL OTHERS TO ONE’S AID TO SUBDUE A THIEF; IN THE NIGHT THIS IS MUCH MORE DIFFICULT AND COULD MORE EASILY RESULT IN THE WRONG PERSON’S BEING SUBDUED. THUS, THE PRESENT LAW ALLOWED THE USE OF DEADLY FORCE AGAINST INTRUDING THIEVES FROM SUNDOWN TO SUNUP, BUT NOT DURING THE DAYLIGHT. THE PROPERTY OWNER COULD STILL DEFEND AGAINST THEFT IN THE DAYTIME BUT COULD NOT USE LETHAL FORCE TO KILL THE THIEF IN THE PROCESS. THE LAW, IN OTHER WORDS, DID NOT ALLOW UNLIMITED FREEDOM TO THE VICTIM OF A CRIME TO DEFEND OR RETALIATE. EVEN A CRIMINAL CAUGHT IN THE ACT OF A SERIOUS CRIME HAD PROTECTIONS; CONVERSELY, EVEN THE VICTIM OF A SERIOUS CRIME COULD BE PROSECUTED FOR MURDER IF HE RESISTED MORE VIOLENTLY THAN COULD BE JUSTIFIED (THUS THE SPECIFIC MENTION OF BEING “GUILTY OF BLOODSHED,” V. 3A). 22:3B [HB. 22:2B] THIEVERY HAS NO EXCUSE, BUT THE MOTIVE OF STEALING IS ALWAYS THE LOVE OF MONEY, VALUE OF MONEY OR MONEY ITSELF, WHICH IS THE ROOT OF ALL EVIL SEXUALITIES IN MATTHEW 6:24; 1ST TIMOTHY 6:9-10 & LUKE 16:9, 11, 13. ALTHOUGH IT IS TRUE THAT A RICH THIEF MIGHT SUFFER RELATIVELY LESS FOR HIS CRIME BY PAYING BACK ONLY A SMALL PERCENTAGE OF HIS WEALTH IN COMPENSATION/RESTITUTION, A POOR THIEF COULD NOT JUSTIFY HIS ACTIONS BY CLAIMING THAT HIS POVERTY EXCUSED HIS CRIME. HE MUST MAKE RESTITUTION, AND IF HE LACKED THE MEANS TO DO SO, HE WOULD HAVE TO EARN IT BY SELLING HIMSELF INTO SERVITUDE, PRESUMABLY FOR THE USUAL SIX-YEAR TERM (SEE COMMENTS ON 21:2–4.). THIS LAW CONFIRMS THAT IN A CONTRACTUAL SALE INTO SERVITUDE THE GENERAL PRACTICE MAY HAVE BEEN FOR THE BUYER TO PAY AT LEAST A MAJOR PART OF THE MONEY AT THE VERY BEGINNING OF THE CONTRACT. OTHERWISE THE WORDING “HE MUST BE SOLD TO PAY FOR HIS THEFT” WOULD NEED MODIFICATION SINCE PAYMENT FOR THE THEFT WOULD BE DELAYED BY WHATEVER NUMBER OF YEARS IT WOULD TAKE FOR THE THIEF TO EARN HIS PAYMENT. THE PRESUMPTION IN THE LAW IS THAT OF AN IMMEDIATE PAYMENT ONCE THE CONTRACT FOR SERVITUDE WAS AGREED TO. 22:4 [HB. 22:3] COMPLETING THE CHIASM OF VV. 1–4 BY REVERTING TO THE QUESTION OF THE AMOUNT OF RESTITUTION (AS WAS ADDRESSED IN V. 1),158 V. 4 PROVIDES FOR A REDUCED RESTITUTION PENALTY (DOUBLE RECOMPENSE RATHER THAN FOURFOLD OR FIVEFOLD) FOR A STOLEN ANIMAL FOUND ALIVE (AND PRESUMABLY WELL) IN THE POSSESSION OF THE THIEF. WHY SUCH LENIENCY? BECAUSE GOD’S LAW SEEKS TO ASSESS THE AMOUNT OF “HARM DONE” RATHER THAN MERELY THE SORT OF “CRIME COMMITTED.” WHEN A THIEF HAD NOT YET DISPOSED OF AN ANIMAL, MANY OUTCOMES WERE POSSIBLE, INCLUDING THE POSSIBILITY THAT HE MIGHT HAVE A CHANGE OF HEART AND RETURN THE ANIMAL AND BEG FOR FORGIVENESS. MOREOVER, THE DISCOVERY OF A THEFT WITHOUT DISPOSAL OF THE STOLEN ITEM USUALLY WOULD INDICATE A VERY RECENT THEFT, ONE THAT DISADVANTAGED THE ACTUAL OWNER IN A MORE LIMITED WAY THAN THE SITUATION ENVISIONED IN V. 1. REMEMBERING THAT THESE LAWS ARE PARADIGMATIC GUIDELINES, WE SHOULD AT A MINIMUM INFER THAT GOD WANTS JUSTICE THAT TAKES INTO ACCOUNT ALL CIRCUMSTANCES AND MOTIVES AND DOES NOT TREAT ALL ACTS OF THEFT (OR ANY OTHER SORT OF CRIME) AS IF THEY WERE EQUAL. EVALUATION OF THE ACTUAL LOSS TO THE OWNER IS A MAJOR CONSIDERATION IN A LAW COURT’S RULING ON A THEFT.**

**TWO LAWS ON RESTITUTION FOR DAMAGES FROM NEGLECT (22:5–6) [HB. 22:4–5]**

**TYPE OF LAW: CASUISTIC (APPLIED WHEN SOMEONE HAD BEEN NEGLECTFUL SO THAT DAMAGE TO ANOTHER’S PROPERTY HAD RESULTED). PARADIGMATIC RANGE: VIRTUALLY ANY SITUATION WHERE DAMAGES HAD BEEN INCURRED BY REASON OF ANOTHER’S NEGLECT. 22:5 [HB. 22:4] THE PARADIGMATIC EXAMPLE USED IN THIS LAW IS THAT OF A NEGLECTFUL FARMER WHOSE GRAZING ANIMALS WERE NOT ATTENDED TO WELL ENOUGH SO THAT THEY EVENTUALLY LEFT HIS OWN LAND AND GRAZED ON SOMEONE ELSE’S. NO INTELLIGENT FARMER WOULD ALLOW HIS GRAZING CATTLE (SHEEP, GOATS, COWS, BULLS/OXEN) ANYWHERE NEAR HIS PLANTED FIELDS OR HIS VINEYARDS WITHOUT KEEPING THEM TETHERED. BUT GRAZING CATTLE ARE INSTINCTIVELY DRIVEN TO MOVE TO NEW PASTURES AND WILL PUSH THROUGH ANY BUT THE STRONGEST BARRIER (E.G., THICK THORN-BUSHES USED IN OT TIMES AS FIELD FENCING), AND THEY CANNOT BE LEFT ALONE FOR LONG PERIODS OF TIME. AT NIGHT MANY FARMERS BROUGHT THEIR LARGE CATTLE INTO THE COURTYARDS OF THEIR HOMES, WHERE THE LARGE AND THICK STONE/BRICK WALLS WOULD CONFINE THEM. SMALLER CATTLE (SHEEP AND GOATS) WERE CONFINED TO SPECIALLY BUILT PENS FOR THE EVENING OR AT SHEARING TIME. BUT THEY COULD NOT SIMPLY BE LEFT WITHOUT ATTENTION, LEST THEY WANDER OFF INTO SOMEONE’S PLANTED FIELD OR VINEYARD (OR ORCHARD) AND RUIN A PORTION OF THE CROP BY GRAZING AND TRAMPLING. SHOULD SUCH NEGLECT OCCUR, THE FARMER RESPONSIBLE WAS REQUIRED TO SUPPLY RESTITUTION (AN AMOUNT EQUAL TO WHAT WAS EATEN OR TRAMPLED OR OTHERWISE RUINED) “FROM THE BEST OF HIS OWN” FIELDS AND VINEYARDS/ORCHARDS. A FARMER KNEW THAT IF HE WERE NEGLECTFUL IN THE MANNER DESCRIBED IN THIS LAW, HE WOULD LOSE NOT MERELY A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF GRAIN OR FRUIT (OR EVEN WHOLE FRUIT TREES) BUT THE VERY BEST OF THAT GRAIN OR FRUIT—THE QUALITY FACTOR SERVING AS A SERIOUS DETERRENT IN ADDITION TO THE QUANTITY FACTOR. 22:6 [HB. 22:5] THIS SECOND LAW IN THE GROUPING IS PARALLEL TO WHAT PRECEDED, THOUGH INVOLVING ANOTHER INSTANCE OF NEGLECT AS A PARADIGM FOR NEGLECT OF ALL SORTS: LETTING A FIRE GET OUT OF CONTROL. THE QUALITY TERMS OF THE PRIOR LAW (“THE BEST OF”) MAY BE ASSUMED IMPLICITLY TO APPLY HERE AS WELL. IT DOESN’T MATTER WHETHER THE GRAIN WAS HARVESTED ALREADY (“SHOCKS OF GRAIN”) OR WAS STILL STANDING IN THE FIELD (“STANDING GRAIN”) OR BOTH (“THE WHOLE FIELD”); FULL, BEST-QUALITY RESTITUTION MUST BE MADE IN KIND BY THE NEGLIGENT FARMER.**

**LAWS GOVERNING PROPERTY RESPONSIBILITY DISPUTES (22:7–15) [HB. 22:6–14]**

**ONE OF THE MOST DIFFICULT CHALLENGES FOR ANY JUDGE OR ARBITER IS DECIDING BETWEEN CLAIMS AND COUNTERCLAIMS MADE BY PEOPLE WHO ARE SUPPOSED TO BE FRIENDS, NEIGHBORLY OR EVEN FAMILY TIES. IT IS POSSIBLE FOR WELL-MEANING INDIVIDUALS TO DISAGREE VEHEMENTLY ABOUT WHO SHOULD TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR A BORROWED-BUT-LOST ITEM, OR A BORROWED-THEN-STOLEN ITEM, OR AN ITEM RUINED, DURING SHIPPING OR ANYTIME WHILE ON LOAN. THERE IS A NATURAL TENDENCY FOR THE BORROWER OR SAFEKEEPER OF AN ITEM THAT DID NOT ACTUALLY BELONG TO HIM PERMANENTLY TO TAKE LESS INTEREST IN ITS PRESERVATION AND TO BE PSYCHOLOGICALLY AND MORALLY DISINCLINED TO FEEL FULLY RESPONSIBLE IF THE ITEM IS SOMEHOW LOST, STOLEN, OR DAMAGED. RESENTMENT OVER WHO IS REALLY TO BE HELD RESPONSIBLE IN SUCH CASES CAN DESTROY NOT ONLY FRIENDSHIPS AND NEIGHBORLY RELATIONS BUT CAN CAUSE ENTIRE EXTENDED FAMILIES TO BE AT ENMITY, SOMETHING THAT COULD NOT BE CONDONED IN STEPHEN YAHWEH’S COVENANT COMMUNITY. IT WAS ESSENTIAL THAT ISRAELITES UNDERSTAND AND ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE GODLY CARE OF PROPERTY, WHETHER THINGS OR ANIMALS. PROPERTY ENTRUSTED BY ONE PERSON TO ANOTHER REQUIRED ACCEPTANCE OF RESPONSIBILITY BOTH BY THE GIVER AND THE RECEIVER, AND THE LAWS THAT FOLLOW SPELL THIS OUT IN A WAY THAT INDICATES ITS IMPORTANCE FOR KEEPING STEPHEN YAHWEH’S COVENANT IN ALL ASPECTS OF LIFE. 22:7–9 [HB. 22:6–8] TYPE OF LAW: CASUISTIC (APPLIED WHEN A DISPUTE AROSE OVER OWNERSHIP OR LIABILITY FOR SAFEKEEPING). PARADIGMATIC RANGE: ALMOST ANY SITUATION WHERE TWO PARTIES DISAGREED OVER WHO SHOULD BE RESPONSIBLE FOR SOME SORT OF PROPERTY. VERSE 7 ADDRESSES THE EASIEST CIRCUMSTANCE: THEFT OF GOODS GIVEN TO SOMEONE ELSE FOR SAFEKEEPING WAS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE THIEF AS LONG AS HE WAS CAUGHT. HE MUST REPAY DOUBLE (THE STANDARD FOR NONANIMAL ITEMS), AND THE MATTER WAS CLOSED BETWEEN THE PERSON WHO ENTRUSTED HIS MONEY (NIV “SILVER”) OR OTHER GOODS TO THE NEIGHBOR. VERSE 8, HOWEVER, INTRODUCES A MORE DIFFICULT ISSUE: THAT OF A NEIGHBOR’S (FELLOW ISRAELITES OR EVEN FELLOW MAN’S) CLAIM THAT GOODS ENTRUSTED TO HIS CARE WERE MISSING BECAUSE THEY WERE STOLEN. HOW WAS THE ONE WHO PLACED THE GOODS WITH HIS NEIGHBOR TO KNOW WHETHER THEY WERE STOLEN FROM THE NEIGHBOR OR BY THE NEIGHBOR? OR COULD THEY PERHAPS HAVE BEEN LOST OR RUINED WHILE IN THE NEIGHBOR’S CARE, AND NOW THE NEIGHBOR WAS CLAIMING THEFT AS A WAY OF AVOIDING RESPONSIBILITY FOR HIS NEGLIGENCE? THE ONLY ONE WHO COULD KNOW THE ANSWER IS GOD. IN VV. 8–9 THE NIV TRANSLATORS HAVE CHOSEN TO RENDER ʾELŌHÎM AS “JUDGES,” A TRANSLATION THAT IN OUR OPINION CANNOT BE SUSTAINED. WHAT THE LAW CALLS FOR IS A DECISION BY GOD (“THE OWNER OF THE HOUSE MUST APPEAR BEFORE GOD,” V. 8; “BOTH PARTIES ARE TO BRING THEIR CASES BEFORE GOD,” V. 9). HOW WOULD THIS DECISION BE ACCOMPLISHED? VERSE 11 TELLS US: “THE ISSUE BETWEEN THEM WILL BE SETTLED BY THE TAKING OF AN OATH BEFORE THE LORD.” WHAT IF BOTH PARTIES SWORE THAT THEY WERE INNOCENT? THEY AND THE COURT WOULD SIMPLY HAVE TO LEAVE THE MATTER IN GOD’S HANDS FOR DISPOSITION, AS SOLOMON ENVISIONED IN HIS PRAYER IN 1 KGS 8:31–32 (“WHEN A MAN WRONGS HIS NEIGHBOR AND IS REQUIRED TO TAKE AN OATH AND HE COMES AND SWEARS THE OATH BEFORE YOUR ALTAR IN THIS TEMPLE, THEN HEAR FROM HEAVEN AND ACT. JUDGE BETWEEN YOUR SERVANTS, CONDEMNING THE GUILTY AND BRINGING DOWN ON HIS OWN HEAD WHAT HE HAS DONE. DECLARE THE INNOCENT NOT GUILTY, AND SO ESTABLISH HIS INNOCENCE”). BUT IF BOTH PARTIES HAD (AS THE COVENANT EXPECTS) A PROPER FEAR OF GOD (I.E., A FEAR OF THE CONSEQUENCE OF DISOBEYING HIM), IT WOULD NORMALLY BE THE CASE THAT, UNDER OATH, ONE OF THEM WOULD SOMEHOW AND TO SOME SUFFICIENT DEGREE ADMIT TO BEING IN THE WRONG IN THE DISPUTE OVER THE PIECE OF PROPERTY AND WOULD ACCEPT THE REQUIREMENT THAT HE PAY BACK DOUBLE TO HIS NEIGHBOR. 22:10–13 [HB. 22:9–12] TYPE OF LAW: CASUISTIC (APPLIED TO SITUATIONS OF PROPERTY GIVEN BY ONE PERSON TO ANOTHER FOR SAFEKEEPING). PARADIGMATIC RANGE: ANY LOSS OF ANYTHING WHILE BEING KEPT BY ONE PERSON FOR ANOTHER; A RIGHTEOUS JUDGE WOULD NOT CONSIDER ITS PRINCIPLES APPLICABLE ONLY TO LOST ANIMALS. THE PROVISIONS OF THESE LAWS PARALLEL FOR THE MOST PART THOSE OF 22:7–9 IMMEDIATELY PRECEDING. VARIOUS POSSIBILITIES EXIST FOR THE LOSS OF A PERSON’S ANIMAL WHILE IT IS BEING CARED FOR BY A NEIGHBOR. THE LAW ACTUALLY LISTS THREE THAT ARE FAIRLY COMPREHENSIVE IN THEIR COVERAGE OF POSSIBILITIES (“IT DIES OR IS INJURED OR IS TAKEN AWAY”), BUT ANY SIMILAR CIRCUMSTANCE WOULD FALL UNDER THE PURVIEW OF THE LAW AS WELL. TO AVOID THE INFERENCE THAT HE WAS ACTUALLY GUILTY OF HAVING DISPOSED OF THE ANIMAL FOR HIS OWN PROFIT OR PLEASURE, THE NEIGHBOR TOOK AN OATH BEFORE GOD. NOTE HOW SERIOUSLY AN OATH OF THIS SORT WAS TAKEN IN ANCIENT ISRAEL (CF. 20:7, 16): OTHERS MUST SIMPLY ACCEPT THAT THE PERSON TAKING THE OATH WAS TELLING THE TRUTH AND LEAVE THE MATTER AT THAT. COULD THE OATH TAKER HAVE BEEN LYING? OF COURSE. BUT THEN HE WOULD HAVE INCURRED GOD’S ENMITY, A FAR WORSE MATTER THAN HAVING INCURRED HIS NEIGHBOR’S. IF, HOWEVER, THE ONE WHO “LOST” THE ANIMAL COULD NOT OR WOULD NOT SWEAR BY FORMAL OATH IN THE SEXLESS PRESENCE OF STEPHEN YAHWEH (AT THE TABERNACLE OR, LATER, TEMPLE) THAT HE WAS INNOCENT, HE WOULD BE RESPONSIBLE TO MAKE THE USUAL RESTITUTION. VERSE 12, ON THE OTHER HAND, APPLIES A STANDARD THAT GOES BEYOND THE SIMPLE QUESTION OF THE INNOCENCE OF THE NEIGHBOR. TAKING IN AN ANIMAL FOR SAFEKEEPING IMPOSED A SOLEMN RESPONSIBILITY ON A PERSON THAT REQUIRED THE PERSON TO PRESERVE THE ANIMAL FROM UNOBSERVED THEFT OR PAY RESTITUTION. ONE WHO AGREED TO KEEP AN ANIMAL FOR ANOTHER PERSON FOR A TIME IMPLICITLY ACCEPTED THIS RISK. THE QUESTION MIGHT WELL BE ASKED, “BUT SINCE V. 13 EXONERATES THE SAFEKEEPER FROM PENALTY IF THE ANIMAL COULD BE PROVED TO HAVE BEEN KILLED BY A PREDATOR, WHY SHOULD THE SAFEKEEPER BE REQUIRED TO PAY COMPENSATION FOR AN ANIMAL THAT WAS STOLEN? THE THEFT WAS NO MORE HIS FAULT THAN THE KILLING BY THE PREDATOR.” THE ANSWER LIES IN THE PROVABILITY & PROBABILITY: ONLY IF THE THIEF WAS CAUGHT WAS THE SAFEKEEPER INNOCENT (V. 7). OTHERWISE, HE COULD NOT PROVE THAT A THEFT HAD OCCURRED AND THUS PRESUMPTIVELY WAS CONSIDERED PERSONALLY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE LOSS OF THE ANIMAL. CLAIMING THAT “IT MUST HAVE BEEN STOLEN” WAS NO DEFENSE UNDER THE LAW. 22:14–15 [HB. 22:13–14] TYPE OF LAW: CASUISTIC (APPLIED IN CASES OF BORROWING OR RENTING). PARADIGMATIC RANGE: VIRTUALLY ANY CIRCUMSTANCE WHERE SOMEONE WHO HAD BORROWED OR RENTED SOMETHING COULD NOT RETURN IT WHOLE OR WELL. BORROWING OR RENTING AN ANIMAL [ANY PROPERTY OF VALUE] REPRESENTED A FURTHER EXTENSION OF THE SORTS OF LAWS ALREADY COVERED IN VV. 7–13. TO BORROW (ON RENTING, SEE BELOW) WAS TO TAKE THE RISK THAT IF ONE COULD NOT RETURN THE ANIMAL (ANIMAL BEING USED HERE AS A SYNECDOCHE FOR WHATEVER MIGHT HAVE BEEN BORROWED) IN ESSENTIALLY THE SAME CONDITION IT WAS IN BEFORE BEING BORROWED, ONE WAS OBLIGATED TO PAY DAMAGES. THE RESTITUTION EXPECTED WAS SURELY ALONG THE LINES OF THAT SPECIFIED IN VV. 5–6, THAT IS, A ONE-FOR-ONE SUBSTITUTE OF AS GOOD OR BETTER QUALITY. (ONE COULDN’T, E.G., RETURN A TWENTY-YEAR-OLD DONKEY [ASS] AS ADEQUATE COMPENSATION FOR A THREE-YEAR-OLD DONKEY [ASS] OR A NEWBORN BUCK GOAT FOR A BREEDING DOE GOAT.) VERSE 15 CLARIFIES THE RESPONSIBILITY FURTHER IN TWO FACETS: (1) IF ONE BORROWED OR RENTED AN ANIMAL ALONG WITH THE OWNER, IT WAS THE OWNER’S JOB TO LOOK OUT FOR THE WELFARE OF HIS ANIMAL, NOT THE BORROWER’S. (2) IF ONE RENTED AN ANIMAL, THE RENTAL FEE WAS EXPECTED TO INCLUDE “INSURANCE” ON THE ANIMAL RENTED OUT. THE OWNER MUST ABSORB THE COST OF AN ANIMAL RENTED OUT THAT WAS THEN INJURED OR KILLED WHILE UNDER THE RENTAL CONTRACT. AS LONG AS BOTH PARTIES KNEW THAT THIS WAS THE ARRANGEMENT (AND THE LAW WAS GIVEN TO MAKE SURE THAT BOTH WOULD), THEN EACH KNEW WHERE THE RISK LAY.**

**LAWS ABOUT PREMARITAL SEX AND THE BRIDE PRICE (22:16–17) [HB. 22:15–16]**

**ONE MIGHT WONDER WHAT THESE REGULATIONS ARE DOING HERE, AT THE END OF A SECTION CLEARLY DEVOTED TO PROPERTY RESPONSIBILITY DISPUTES AND CRIMES. INDEED, THE NIV GROUPS THEM WITH WHAT FOLLOWS RATHER THAN WHAT PRECEDES, AS THE FIRST LAWS IN A CATEGORY THEY CALL SIMPLY “SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY” (VV. 16–31). THE ANSWER DOES NOT LIE IN THE IDEA THAT WOMEN WERE REGARDED AS PROPERTY BUT IN THE IDEA THAT THE INSTITUTION OF THE BRIDE PRICE WAS AN UNWAVERING FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY IN ANCIENT ISRAEL THAT A MAN COULD NOT GET OUT OF PAYING BY CIRCUMVENTING MARRIAGE VOWS AND HAVING PREMARITAL SEX WITH A WOMAN. WHETHER OR NOT A MAN WHO HAD SEDUCED A WOMAN ENDED UP BEING ABLE TO MARRY HER, HE HAD TO PAY THE BRIDE PRICE IN EITHER CASE. THERE ARE SOME SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS TO THESE LAWS RELATIVE TO THE WAY GOD REGARDS SEXUAL CONDUCT IN RELATION TO MARRIAGE, AS WE DISCUSS BELOW. 22:16–17 [HB. 22:15–16] TYPE OF LAW: CASUISTIC (APPLIED WHEN A MAN AND A WOMAN HAD HAD PREMARITAL SEX WITHOUT HAVING MADE THE PROPER BETROTHAL AND MARRIAGE ARRANGEMENTS, INCLUDING THE PROPER FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS). PARADIGMATIC RANGE: ALMOST ANY BYPASSING OF ARRANGED MARRIAGE BETROTHAL REQUIREMENTS THAT WERE DESIGNED NOT ONLY TO COMPENSATE THE BRIDE’S FAMILY PROPERLY BUT TO ENSURE A PROPER MARRIAGE AND A PROPER START FOR A MARRIAGE). THESE VERSES, THOUGH THEY BELONG WITH WHAT PRECEDES, MAY BE CONSIDERED TRANSITIONAL IN THAT THEY CONCLUDE THE SECTION ON PROPERTY RESPONSIBILITY/COMPENSATION AND, AS WELL, INTRODUCE THE FOLLOWING SECTION (VV. 16–31), WHICH DEALS WITH VARIOUS LAWS RELATING TO SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY. BIBLICALLY, MARRIAGE IS UNDERSTOOD TO BE A FORMAL COVENANT, THE MOST IMPORTANT OF ALL HUMAN COVENANTS. THE TRUE SIGN OF THAT COVENANT IS DIVINE INTERCOURSE IN THE DIVINE UNION BEFORE THE LORD. SEXUAL INTERCOURSE FUNCTIONS AS THE FALLEN SIGN OF THE COVENANT OF MARRIAGE WHETHER OR NOT OTHER FORMAL, LEGAL UNDERTAKINGS HAVE BEEN COMPLETED. IN OTHER WORDS, SEXUAL INTERCOURSE CAN ALSO MAKE A COUPLE “ONE FLESH” OR MARRIED IN THE FALLEN STATE VIRTUALLY EVEN IF NOT LEGALLY AND PROPERLY (AS PAUL CONTENDS IN 1 COR 6:16) RESPECTED. THUS, A COUPLE WHO HAVE ENGAGED IN SEXUAL INTERCOURSE BEFORE MARRIAGE ARE “AS IF” MARRIED [COMMON LAW MARRIAGE], AND THE BRIDE PRICE IS DUE THE WOMAN’S FAMILY WHETHER OR NOT THEY ARE ACTUALLY ALLOWED TO GET MARRIED. NOTE, HOWEVER, THAT NEITHER HERE NOR IN 1 COR 6:16 DOES THE HOLY BIBLE DIRECT THAT PEOPLE WHO HAVE HAD SEXUAL INTERCOURSE WITHOUT THE BENEFIT OF MARRIAGE MUST GO ON TO MARRY. THEIR VIRTUAL MARRIAGE IS NOT REGARDED AS AN ACTUAL MARRIAGE IN GOD’S SIGHT, FORNICATION, AND NO BIBLICAL ETHIC DEMANDS THAT THEY MAKE THEIR VIRTUAL MARRIAGE LEGAL BY ACTUALLY MARRYING. THE LAW IS WORDED TO DESCRIBE THE SITUATION IN WHICH A MAN “SEDUCES” A WOMAN, BUT IT COULD BE WORDED THE OTHER WAY AROUND. NO MATTER WHO SEDUCES WHOM, THE WOMAN’S POTENTIAL BRIDE PRICE NORMALLY HAS BEEN PUT AT JEOPARDY, AND THE MAN’S RESPONSIBILITY TO PAY IT IS THEREFORE IMPOSED, BUT ALSO POSSIBLE FOR THE VIRGINITY PRICE OF THE MAN ALSO IN SOME CASES. PAYING A PRICE FOR A BRIDE CAN SEEM A PRACTICE DEGRADING TO WOMEN, ONE THAT TREATS THEM AS MERE PROPERTY. THIS WAS NOT THE WAY IT WAS UNDERSTOOD IN ANCIENT ISRAEL. IN FACT, IT HONORED THE VALUE OF A WOMAN. CONSIDER THAT THE SYSTEM DOES NOT ALLOW ONE TO THINK OF PRICE PAID AS AN INDICATOR OF WORTH SINCE THE BRIDE PAYS ZERO FOR HER HUSBAND (THERE WAS NO DOWRY SYSTEM IN ANCIENT ISRAEL), YET THERE IS NO DOUBT OF THE HUSBAND’S WORTH OF A BRIDEGROOM’S PRICE IN THE MODERN SENSE. PART OF THE UTILITY OF A BRIDE PRICE WAS THE WAY IT FORCED A MAN TO MAKE A FULL AND FORMAL ARRANGEMENT FOR MARRIAGE THAT PROPERLY INVOLVED BOTH HIS INTERESTS AND THOSE OF HIS BRIDE-TO-BE, AS WELL AS THE INTERESTS OF HIS FAMILY AND HERS. THE BRIDE PRICE REQUIREMENT NECESSARILY INVOLVED THE FAMILIES IN SUBSTANTIAL FORMAL NEGOTIATIONS, AND THE PRICE SHOWED THAT SOMETHING SERIOUS AND IMPORTANT WAS AT STAKE. TAKING A WOMAN TO ONESELF AND TAKING AWAY HER VIRGINITY WERE HONORABLE IF THE PROPER NEGOTIATIONS HAD BEEN COMPLETED ONLY IN SEXUAL ABSTINENCE BEFORE MARRIAGE, DURING MARRIAGE & THE DIVINE UNION DONE BY GOD, AND A PROPER INDICATION OF HER WORTH HAD BEEN PAID TO HER FAMILY, AND THE COUPLE WERE LEGALLY MARRIED. SIMPLY HAVING SEXUAL RELATIONS WITH HER, WITH OR WITHOUT HER PERMISSION, DEVALUED HER AND SHOWED BLATANT DISREGARD FOR HER WORTH IN A RAPE SITUATION. IT ALSO SHOWED THAT A PERSON (OR WHEN THE PREMARITAL SEX WAS CONSENSUAL, THAT THE COUPLE) VIEWED MARRIAGE OR ITS FALLEN COVENANT SIGN (SEXUAL INTERCOURSE) AS LESS THAN A FORMAL, LEGAL, LIFELONG CONTRACTUAL COMMITMENT. THE BETROTHAL/BRIDE PRICE SYSTEM WAS DESIGNED TO MAKE MARRIAGE HARDER TO COME BY THAN WHAT COULD BE ACHIEVED ON WHIM OR QUICK DECISION, AND IT, ELEVATED MARRIAGE ACCORDINGLY BECAUSE PEOPLE INSTINCTIVELY VALUE WHAT IS HARD AND COSTLY TO GET. THUS, WHEN A COUPLE FAILED TO GO PROPERLY THROUGH THE MARRIAGE NEGOTIATION PROCESS AND HAD SEXUAL RELATIONS ANYWAY, THE LAW REQUIRED THE MAN TO PAY THE BRIDE PRICE [BUT NOT IN A DIVINE UNION, WHICH IS THE LORD’S INITIAL INTENT ON MARRIAGE FROM THE BEGINNING IN GENESIS 1:27-28]. THE FATHER OF THE BRIDE REMAINED IN THE NEGOTIATOR’S POSITION OF BEING ABLE TO REFUSE TO GIVE HIS BRIDE TO HER SUITOR (BECAUSE IF HE LOVED HIS DAUGHTER, HE WOULD HARDLY WANT TO SEE HER MARRIED PERMANENTLY TO SOMEONE WRONG FOR HER JUST BECAUSE SHE HAD BEEN “SEDUCED”). SINCE IT WOULD BE MUCH HARDER TO MARRY HER TO SOMEONE ELSE ONCE SHE HAD BEEN SEXUALLY COMPROMISED, HE WAS STILL OWED THE BRIDE PRICE FOR HER, LEST NO BRIDE PRICE EVER BE PAID IN THE CASE THAT SHE WAS NEVER, IN FACT, MARRIED THEREAFTER. IF HE DID ALLOW HER TO MARRY THE MAN, SHE HAD ALREADY COMPROMISED HERSELF WITH, WHATEVER BRIDE PRICE WAS NEGOTIATED FOR THE MARRIAGE PREVAILED.**

**SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS REQUIREMENTS (22:18–23:9)**

**18 “DO NOT ALLOW A SORCERESS TO LIVE. 19 “ANYONE WHO HAS SEXUAL RELATIONS WITH AN ANIMAL MUST BE PUT TO DEATH. 20 “WHOEVER SACRIFICES TO ANY GOD OTHER THAN THE LORD [STEPHEN YAHWEH] MUST BE DESTROYED. 21 “DO NOT MISTREAT AN ALIEN OR OPPRESS HIM, FOR YOU WERE ALIENS IN EGYPT. 22 “DO NOT TAKE ADVANTAGE OF A WIDOW OR AN ORPHAN. 23 IF YOU DO AND THEY CRY OUT TO ME, I WILL CERTAINLY HEAR THEIR CRY. 24 MY ANGER WILL BE AROUSED, AND I WILL KILL YOU WITH THE SWORD; YOUR WIVES WILL BECOME WIDOWS AND YOUR CHILDREN FATHERLESS. 25 “IF YOU LEND MONEY TO ONE OF MY PEOPLE AMONG YOU WHO IS NEEDY, DO NOT BE LIKE A MONEYLENDER; CHARGE HIM NO INTEREST. 26 IF YOU TAKE YOUR NEIGHBOR’S CLOAK AS A PLEDGE, RETURN IT TO HIM BY SUNSET, 27 BECAUSE HIS CLOAK IS THE ONLY COVERING, HE HAS FOR HIS BODY. WHAT ELSE WILL HE SLEEP IN? WHEN HE CRIES OUT TO ME, I WILL HEAR, FOR I AM COMPASSIONATE. 28 “DO NOT BLASPHEME GOD OR CURSE THE RULER OF YOUR PEOPLE. 29 “DO NOT HOLD BACK OFFERINGS FROM YOUR GRANARIES OR YOUR VATS. “YOU MUST GIVE ME THE FIRSTBORN OF YOUR SONS. 30 DO THE SAME WITH YOUR CATTLE AND YOUR SHEEP. LET THEM STAY WITH THEIR MOTHERS FOR SEVEN DAYS, BUT GIVE THEM TO ME ON THE EIGHTH DAY. 31 “YOU ARE TO BE MY HOLY PEOPLE. SO DO NOT EAT THE MEAT OF AN ANIMAL TORN BY WILD BEASTS; THROW IT TO THE DOGS. 1 “DO NOT SPREAD FALSE REPORTS. DO NOT HELP A WICKED MAN BY BEING A MALICIOUS WITNESS. 2 “DO NOT FOLLOW THE CROWD IN DOING [SEXUAL] WRONG. WHEN YOU GIVE TESTIMONY IN A LAWSUIT, DO NOT PERVERT JUSTICE BY SIDING WITH THE CROWD, 3 AND DO NOT SHOW FAVORITISM TO A POOR MAN IN HIS LAWSUIT. 4 “IF YOU COME ACROSS YOUR ENEMY’S OX OR DONKEY [ASS] WANDERING OFF, BE SURE TO TAKE IT BACK TO HIM. 5 IF YOU SEE THE DONKEY [ASS] OF SOMEONE WHO HATES YOU FALLEN DOWN UNDER ITS LOAD, DO NOT LEAVE IT THERE; BE SURE YOU HELP HIM WITH IT. 6 “DO NOT DENY JUSTICE TO YOUR POOR PEOPLE IN THEIR LAWSUITS. 7 HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH A FALSE CHARGE AND DO NOT PUT AN INNOCENT OR HONEST PERSON TO DEATH, FOR I WILL NOT ACQUIT THE GUILTY. 8 “DO NOT ACCEPT A BRIBE, FOR A BRIBE BLINDS THOSE WHO SEE AND TWISTS THE WORDS OF THE RIGHTEOUS. 9 “DO NOT OPPRESS AN ALIEN; YOU YOURSELVES KNOW HOW IT FEELS TO BE ALIENS, BECAUSE YOU WERE ALIENS IN EGYPT.**

**THAT WE HAVE ENTERED IN 22:18–23:9 A NEW SECTION OF THE COVENANT CODE IS SIGNALED BY THE CHANGE OF LEGAL STYLE: VIRTUALLY THIS ENTIRE SECTION IS WRITTEN IN APODICTIC LEGAL WORDING, THE ALTERNATIVE TO THE PREVIOUSLY DOMINANT CASUISTIC LEGAL STYLE. IN APODICTIC LAW THE COMMANDS ARE GIVEN MOSTLY IN THE SECOND PERSON, AND THE INDIVIDUAL LAWS REPRESENT GENERALLY APPLICABLE LEGAL INSTRUCTION RATHER THAN THE CITATION OF CASES DESIGNED TO GIVE A FEEL FOR PARTICULAR SITUATIONS AND HOW TO DEAL WITH THEM. THE NOTICEABLE CHANGE FROM CASUISTIC TO APODICTIC HAS LED MANY SCHOLARS INCLINED TOWARD ATOMISTIC ANALYSIS TO IDENTIFY THIS PORTION OF THE CODE, OR EVEN SUB-PORTIONS OF THIS PORTION, AS A REMNANT OF AN ORIGINAL, INDEPENDENTLY COMPOSED CODE TO WHICH MATERIALS WERE EVENTUALLY ADDED TO FORM THE CURRENT CODE (OR ELSE A REMNANT THAT WAS INCORPORATED INTO THE CURRENT CODE) OF CHAPS. 21–23. THERE ARE, HOWEVER, A VARIETY OF COMPOSITIONAL STRUCTURAL FEATURES THAT CONTRIBUTE TO THE COHERENCE OF THE ENTIRE CODE, NOTWITHSTANDING THAT IT CLEARLY HAS SUBSECTIONS, AS ANY LEGAL PIECE OF ITS LENGTH WOULD BE EXPECTED TO HAVE. THESE APODICTIC LAWS PAY SPECIAL ATTENTION TO CRIMES THAT SHOULD RECEIVE THE DEATH PENALTY (22:18–20, EXPRESSED PARADIGMATICALLY BY THREE CAPITAL PUNISHMENT LAWS), LAWS FORBIDDING THE ABUSE OF ONE’S NEIGHBOR (22:21–27), LAWS THAT CALL ATTENTION TO THE IMPORTANCE OF PRESERVING GOD’S HOLY HONOR (22:28–31), AND A SERIES OF LAWS IMPRESSING ON ISRAEL THE NEED FOR HONESTY IN ALL RELATIONSHIPS (23:1–8). HELPING TO UNIFY THIS SECTION OF THE COVENANT CODE IS THE TWICE-STATED REMINDER THAT SINCE THE ISRAELITES WERE THEMSELVES ALIENS IN EGYPT, THEY SHOULD REMEMBER THE PAINFUL DISADVANTAGE OF NONCITIZEN STATUS AND BE CAREFUL NOT TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF ANYONE IN AN INFERIOR SOCIAL POSITION (22:21; 23:9). THIS DOUBLE REMINDER CONCLUDES BOTH THE OPENING SET OF LAWS (22:18–20) AND THE CLOSING SET (23:1–8) IN THE SECTION AND THUS GENERALLY SERVES THE FUNCTION OF AN INCLUSIO TO SURROUND AND SET OFF THE REMAINDER. WHAT SHOULD NOT BE ASSUMED IS THAT THIS GROUPING OF APODICTIC LAWS IS SOMEHOW CONCEPTUALLY DIFFERENT OR INDEPENDENT FROM THE REST OF THE LAWS OF THE COVENANT CODE. IN THE COMPOSITION OF MOST OLD TESTAMENT LITERATURE, MATERIALS OF LIKE NATURE TEND TO BE GROUPED TOGETHER. IT SHOULD NOT BE SURPRISING THAT WITHIN THE CODE THESE LAWS, WITH THEIR NATURAL AFFINITIES FOR ONE ANOTHER, WOULD OCCUR TOGETHER. IN ANCIENT ISRAEL’S MAINLY ORAL-AURAL SOCIETY, WHERE WRITING AND READING SKILLS WERE LESS COMMON THAN TODAY, SUCH AFFINITY GROUPINGS MADE MEMORIZATION AND RECALL EASIER AND THUS SERVED AN IMPORTANT, USER-FRIENDLY PURPOSE.**

**THREE CHARACTERISTICALLY CAPITAL CRIMES (22:18–20)**

**22:18–20 [HB. 22:17–19] THESE THREE LAWS PROVIDE A PARADIGMATIC OVERVIEW OF CAPITAL CRIMES. IN OTHER WORDS, THEY WERE ALMOST CERTAINLY INTENDED TO CONSTITUTE A SAMPLING OF A BROAD RANGE OF OFFENSES DESERVING THE DEATH PENALTY RATHER THAN TO COMPRISE THE ONLY THREE. PRACTICING OCCULT FORBIDDEN MAGICAL ARTS (DO NOT ALLOW A SORCERESS [SORCERER] TO LIVE, SUCH AS HAVING ANY SEXUAL RELATIONS WITH A FORBIDDEN FUCKING WITCH [WHORE, HARLOT, PROSTITUTE OR WIZARD & WARLOCK] IS ILLEGAL, UNAUTHORIZED & UNLAWFUL IN 1ST CORINTHIANS 6:12-20, BUT LEGAL, AUTHORIZED & LAWFUL BY BEING CONDONED IN PRACTICING OF OCCULT PERMISSIBLE MAGICAL ARTS IN HOSEA’S SPECIAL MARRIAGE RELATIONSHIP BY MARRYING A WITCH & WHILE IN MARRIAGE WITH THE WITCH & AFTER MARRIAGE OF THE WITCH UNDER THE LORD’S COMMAND IN HOSEA 1-14 & ALSO LEGALIZED, AUTHORIZED & LAWFUL BY THE LORD IN PETER & PAUL’S RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE LORD’S RELATIONSHIPS TO KILL & DAMN, ALL THE SEXUAL ENEMY’S [ROMANS 1:21-28, 32; 3:4-23] AGAINST THE LORD IN THE AUTHORIZED HOUSE WITHIN ITS PERIMETER [ACTS 17:22-31] OR ON THE AUTHORIZED HOUSE LOT WITHIN ITS PERIMETER [ACTS 17:22-31] OR ANCIENT LANDMARKS [DEUTERONOMY 19:14; 27:17; PROVERBS 22:28; 23:10; HOSEA 5:10; 1ST JOHN 3:4; 1ST PETER 1:24-25; JOHN 4:23-24; 14:6; ROMANS 6:17-18; 8:1 & 1ST CORINTHIANS 14:34] IN ACTS 5:1-11 OR TO ARREST & STRIKE ALL WITH BLINDNESS WITH ALL THE SEXUAL ENEMY’S [ROMANS 1:21-28, 32; 3:4-23] AGAINST THE LORD IN THE AUTHORIZED CHARIOT WITHIN ITS PERIMETER [ACTS 17:22-31] OR ANCIENT BOUNDARIES [ACTS 17:22-31] IN THE AUTHORIZED CAR WITHIN ITS PERIMETER [ACTS 17:22-31] OR ANCIENT BOUNDARIES [ACTS 17:22-31] IN ACTS 13:4-12. FOR THERE IS NO SALVATION IN ANYBODY’S DAY OF DEATH, WHETHER RIGHTEOUS OR WICKED IN ECCLESIASTES 8:8, NOR CAN BE, SUPREMELY MANDATED [70 YEARS, 80 YEARS IN PSALMS 90:10 OR 120 YEARS IN GENESIS 6:3 RESPECTIVELY] IN MAN’S PRECISE APPOINTMENTS IN HEBREWS 9:27 & SUPREMELY MANDATED [70 YEARS, 80 YEARS IN PSALMS 90:10 OR 120 YEARS IN GENESIS 6:3 RESPECTIVELY] IN WOMAN’S PRECISE JUDGMENTS IN HEBREWS 9:27 BY THE LORD, EXCEPT FOR THE POSSIBLE 30 ADDITIONAL YEARS [15 YEARS EACH ON 2 OCCURRENCES BASED ON A 12 HOUR DAY OR UP TO 60 YEARS BASED ON A 24 HOUR DAY, BUT 70 YEARS + 30 YEARS IS 100 YEARS & 80 YEARS + 30 YEARS IS 110 YEARS, BUT THE TOP CAP OFF IS 120 YEARS, UNLESS YOU ARE IN THE RENEWED ADAM’S FAMILY LINE OR IN THE MILLENNIAL KINGDOM BASED ON A 12 [24] HOUR DAY FOR 30 [60] YEARS + 1,000 YEARS [INITIALLY FOR MAN IN ADAM’S TIME FRAME] IS 1,030 [1,060] YEARS OR UNLESS YOU ARE IN RENEWED ADAM’S FAMILY LINE OR IN THE MILLENNIAL KINGDOM BASED ON A 24 HOUR DAY FOR 60 YEARS + 2,000 YEARS [INITIALLY FOR MAN IN JOB’S TIME FRAME] IS 2,060 YEARS OR ADDED MANDATES WITH THE 1,000 [2,000] YEARS IS 1,070 [2,140] YEARS, 1,080 [2,160] YEARS OR 1,120 [2,240] YEARS RESPECTIVELY OR FOR THE 8 ETERNAL HIGH PRIESTS---JEHOVAH, PETER, JOHN, JESUS, JAMES, STEPHEN, STEPHEN, YAHWEH---WITH THE 1 & ONLY ETERNAL LORD ENOCH [HEBREWS 11:5] THAT HAS ENDLESS LIFE THAT NEVER ETERNALLY DIES & ENDLESS LIVES AFTER THE 8 SUPREME LORDS IN THEIR INITIAL ETERNAL DEATHS EACH DONE ONCE IN HEBREWS 7] GRANTED BY THE LORD IN 2ND KINGS 20:6 & ISAIAH 38:5), BESTIALITY (ANYONE WHO HAS ANY SEXUAL RELATIONS WITH AN ANIMAL), AND POLYTHEISM (WHOEVER SACRIFICES TO ANY GOD OTHER THAN THE LORD YAHWEH STEPHEN FOR ISRAEL & THE LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH FOR THE USA) REPRESENT VERY DIFFERENT TOPICS BROUGHT TOGETHER TO SUGGEST A WIDE PANORAMA OF CRIMINAL ACTS THAT COULD NOT BE TOLERATED BY THE COVENANT COMMUNITY. THE PROBLEM WITH THESE PRACTICES IS NOT MERELY THE ABHORRENT DEPARTURE FROM DECENCY THEY REPRESENT; THEIR GREATER OFFENSE IS IN THEIR ATTEMPT TO SUBSTITUTE SOMETHING IN THE PLACE OF THE SAVING PRACTICES OF STEPHEN YAHWEH’S COVENANT. GOD IS ALWAYS AN EVANGELIST, ALWAYS SEEKING TO RESCUE PEOPLE FROM CONDEMNING SIN. THE TYPES OF SINS THAT SERIOUSLY DETER PEOPLE FROM ACCEPTING HIS SALVATION OR THAT ARE PATENTLY CONTRARY TO LIVING ACCORDING TO HIS COVENANT WILL ARE THOSE THAT MUST BE ERADICATED, EVEN BY SUCH RELATIVELY DRASTIC ACTION AS CAPITAL PUNISHMENT. THAT THESE THREE LAWS ARE INTENDED TO BE A SAMPLE TRIAD OF DISPARATE CAPITAL PUNISHMENT CRIMES IS INDICATED BY THE THREE DIFFERENT WAYS THE DEATH PENALTY IS STATED: “DO NOT ALLOW … TO LIVE” (V. 18), “MUST BE PUT TO DEATH” (V. 19), AND “MUST BE DESTROYED” (V. 20). IF THESE LAWS HAD ACCIDENTALLY “FALLEN TOGETHER” FROM ORIGINALLY INDEPENDENT COLLECTIONS, WE MIGHT EXPECT THAT THEY WOULD NOT BE WORDED WITH SUCH VARIETY; AS IT IS, THREE DIFFERENT SAMPLES OF CAPITAL CRIMES ARE WORDED THREE DIFFERENT WAYS TO IMPRESS UPON THE READER THAT NOTHING LESS THAN THE DEATH PENALTY WOULD DO FOR SUCH SERIOUS OFFENSES. THE MESSAGE STATED MORE COLLOQUIALLY IS: YOU CAN PUT PEOPLE WHO DO THESE KINDS OF THINGS TO DEATH IN ANY OF THE SEVERAL PROPER WAYS, BUT JUST BE SURE YOU DON’T LET THEM LIVE TO POLLUTE THE COVENANT COMMUNITY WITH THEIR PRACTICES. BUT SHOULD FORBIDDEN SORCERY, FORBIDDEN BESTIALITY, AND FORBIDDEN POLYTHEISM REALLY BE CAPITAL CRIMES? AREN’T THESE LAWS BARBARIC EXAMPLES OF THE PRIMITIVE NATURE OF ANCIENT JUSTICE, OF A VALUE SYSTEM INFERIOR TO OUR ENLIGHTENED SENSE OF RIGHT AND WRONG? ON THE ONE HAND, IT MUST SURELY BE ADMITTED THAT THE OLD COVENANT LAW HAS BEEN REPLACED BY THAT OF THE NEW COVENANT, WITH ITS EMPHASIS ON ALLOWING THE SOCIETY IN WHICH ONE LIVES TO ADMINISTER THE DEATH PENALTY (EVEN IF UNFAIRLY) AND NOT THE CHURCH. THIS HAS THE PRACTICAL VALUE OF ALLOWING DIFFERENT STANDARDS OF JUSTICE AMONG THE DIFFERENT NATIONS OF THE WORLD BECAUSE CHRIST’S KINGDOM IS NOT AN EARTHLY ONE. THUS, FOR THE CHRISTIAN, CAPITAL PUNISHMENT OR ANY OTHER PUNISHMENT MORE SEVERE THAN EXPULSION FROM ETERNITY IS HARDLY AN OPTION. THE BASIC ANSWER FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF THE OLD TESTAMENT COVENANT COMMUNITY, HOWEVER, IS THAT THESE CAPITAL PUNISHMENT LAWS PROTECTED PEOPLE FROM LOSING THEIR CHANCE FOR SALVATION. HOW SO? FORBIDDEN SORCERY (“SEXUAL RELATIONS WITH A WITCH”) LED PEOPLE ASTRAY FROM PLACING THEIR FAITH IN STEPHEN YAHWEH ALONE BY INVITING THEM TO THINK THAT WITH THE HELP OF A MEDIUM (AS IN THE STORY OF SAUL AND THE MEDIUM AT ENDOR, 1 SAM 28) OR ENCHANTRESS OR THE LIKE, THEY COULD LEARN HIDDEN INFORMATION OR GAIN POWER OVER THEIR ENEMIES, AND SO ON, WHICH STEPHEN YAHWEH’S COVENANT WILL NOT COUNTENANCE OR TOLERATE IN 1ST CORINTHIANS 6:12-20. THE TERM “SORCERESS” ENCOMPASSES A RANGE OF FORBIDDEN OCCULT PRACTICES, ANY AND ALL OF WHICH WERE FORBIDDEN FIRST, TO THE ISRAELITES AS WELL TO ALL. FORBIDDEN SORCERY IS CONDEMNED THROUGHOUT THE OLD TESTAMENT (E.G., LEV 19:26; DEUT 18:9–14; 2 KGS 9:21–26; 17:17; JER 27:8–11; MIC 5:10–15; NAH 3:1–4; MAL 3:5) AND IN THE NEW TESTAMENT AS WELL (E.G., ACTS 8:9FF; 13:6–8; 19:19). FORBIDDEN BESTIALITY (“SEXUAL RELATIONS WITH AN ANIMAL”) IS A RELATIVELY UNCOMMON PRACTICE BUT STANDS PARADIGMATICALLY AS AN EXAMPLE OF THE SORTS OF PERVERSIONS, STEPHEN YAHWEH’S COVENANT WILL NOT COUNTENANCE OR TOLERATE. A PERSON WHO PRACTICES BESTIALITY SHOWS HIMSELF TO BE SOMEONE WHO HAS NO REGARD FOR GODLINESS, BUT THE PRACTICE GOES BEYOND THIS IN ITS SIGNIFICANCE. IT ALSO WAS APPARENTLY ASSOCIATED WITH VARIOUS CANAANITE FERTILITY PRACTICES AND THUS WAS SOMEWHAT LIKE THE PROHIBITION AGAINST BOILING A GOAT KID IN ITS MOTHER’S MILK. IT REPRESENTED THE REPLACEMENT OF SEXUALLY BASED FERTILITY RELIGION FOR THE SAVING TRUTH OF STEPHEN YAHWEH’S COVENANT. THE THIRD LAW IN THE OPENING GROUP OF THREE IS POLYTHEISM (WHOEVER SACRIFICES TO ANY GOD, INCLUDING TO INFERIOR SUPREME LORDS, SUCH AS JESUS CHRIST & STEPHEN CHRIST & ALL OTHER INFERIOR SUPREME LORDS IN EPHESIANS 4:6 IN SUPREME AUTHORITY (YOU DO NOT WORSHIP JESUS CHRIST ALONE THAT ONLY PREPARES YOUR WAY TO ETERNITY, BUT NEVER HAS THE ETERNAL ABILITY TO GET YOU INTO HEAVEN’S ETERNITY, BUT YOU SUPREMELY WORSHIP ONLY THE FATHER STEPHEN YAHWEH [JOHN 4:23-24] THAT DOES THE GLORIOUS WORKS IN JESUS CHRIST, THAT ONLY HAS THE SUPREME AUTHORIZATION TO GET YOU INTO HEAVEN’S ETERNITY IN MATTHEW 6:10; 7:21-24; JOHN 4:34; 5:30; 6:38; 7:17; 9:31; 11:22 & ACTS 7:55-56; 29:1-2 WITH ACTS 30), OTHER THAN THE LORD [STEPHEN YAHWEH] IN SUPREME LORDSHIP [MATTHEW 24:36-44; MARK 13:32-37; JOHN 4:23-24 & ACTS 29:1-2 WITH ACTS 30] MUST BE STEALED, KILLED OR DESTROYED & MUST BE CURSED, DISEASED & DAMNED) PROHIBITS ALL FORMS OF POLYTHEISM OR, TO BE PRECISE, ANY SEXUAL RELIGION [REVELATION 17:1-18:24] EXCEPT THE ONGOING FOREVER ETERNAL WORSHIP OF STEPHEN YAHWEH, WHICH IS HINDERED BY ANY KIND OF POLYTHEISM, WHICH STEPHEN YAHWEH’S COVENANT WILL NOT COUNTENANCE OR TOLERATE IN EXODUS 20:3-6, ROMANS 1:21-28, 32; 3:4-23 & JAMES 1:14-15; 3:14-16; 4:1-6. THE COVENANT IN PROCESS OF BEING REVEALED HERE WAS FOR FOLLOWERS OF ISRAEL’S GOD, THE TRUE LORD YAHWEH STEPHEN OR THE SAME LORD FOR FOLLOWERS OF THE USA’S GOD, THE TRUE LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH, AND NOT FOR ANY OTHER SORTS OF BELIEVERS OR NOT FOR ANY OTHER SORTS OF CHRISTIANS ALIKE. “WHOEVER SACRIFICES TO” IS THE VIRTUAL EQUIVALENT OF “WHOEVER WORSHIPS.” ALSO, YOU WHO PUT A LOT OF STOCK IN, LOOK UP TO OR A LOT OF TRUST IN, SUCH AS NEIGHBORS, CHURCH, BUSINESS, HOUSE, FRIENDS, FAMILY, RELATIVES, LOVERS, ETC. THERE IS SOME SORT OF WORSHIP TRANSPIRING, APART FROM THE LORD IN 1ST JOHN 2:15-17 & AGAINST THE LORD IN JAMES 4:1-6! THERE IS NO RELIGION IN THE ANCIENT WORLD THAT DID NOT EMPLOY SACRIFICE (THE OFFERING OF FOOD) AS A KEY PART OF WORSHIP, SO “SACRIFICE” FUNCTIONS AS A SYNECDOCHE FOR “WORSHIP.” THUS, THIS COMMAND SAYS, IN EFFECT, “UNIVERSAL GLOBAL WORSHIP TO ONLY STEPHEN YAHWEH WITH NO RIVALS FOREVER ENDLESSLY OR NO EQUALS FOREVER ENDLESSLY, AND IF YOU TRY TO INTRODUCE ANY OTHER WORSHIP INTO THE LORD’S COVENANT PEOPLE IN 2ND CORINTHIANS 11:13-15, YOU MUST BE PUT TO DEATH IN 2ND CORINTHIANS 11:12.” THE JEALOUS & TERRIBLE TOP ENGLISH LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH SHALL ETERNALLY KILL YOU & ETERNALLY DAMN YOU IF YOU DO NOT OBEY HIS LAWS TO ITS LETTER IN JAMES 4:7-10; 1ST PETER 5:5-11 & ACTS 5:39; 7:1-60; 29:1-2 WITH ACTS 30!!! AGAIN, THE SEVERITY OF THE CRIME STEMS FROM ITS POTENTIAL TO KEEP PEOPLE FROM THE ETERNAL SALVATION THAT WAS POSSIBLE IN THE TRUE GOD ALONE, THAT ONLY ENOCH POSSESSED & RECEIVED BY THE LORD BY HIS ONGOING FAITHFULNESS TO THE LORD FOR 366 YEARS IN GENESIS 5:22-24 & HEBREWS 11:5 TO 386 YEARS IN THE ANCIENT MANUSCRIPT AND THEREFORE NOBODY SIMPLY COULD NOT ACHIEVE ETERNAL FIDELITY OR SWEAR ETERNAL ALLEGIANCE TO ANY OTHER GODS, WHETHER BY THE LOVE OF MONEY & MONEY IN ITSELF OR WITH THEMSELVES OR IN SYNCRETISTIC TANDEM WITH STEPHEN YAHWEH IN MATTHEW 6:24; 1ST TIMOTHY 6:9-10 & LUKE 16:9, 11, 13!!!**

**LAWS AGAINST NOT LOVING ONE’S NEIGHBOR, WITH THE LORD AS THE ETERNAL ENFORCER (22:21–27) [HB. 22:20–26]**

**THE TERMS “ALIENS,” “FOREIGNERS,” “WIDOWS,” “ELDERLY,” “STRANGERS,” “SICK,” “ORPHANS,” “DISABLED,” “POOR,” “OPPRESSED,” “NEEDY,” “HOMELESS,” “VICTIMIZED,” “FATHERLESS,” “WEAK,” “INFERIOR,” “POWERLESS,” “BEREAVED,” ETC. ARE NOT INTENDED TO BE AN EXHAUSTIVE LIST OF CERTAIN CATEGORIES OF PEOPLE. INSTEAD THEY ARE INTENDED TO BE EVOCATIVE OF THE ENTIRE RANGE OF DISADVANTAGED, UNPROTECTED, AND EASILY MISTREATED INDIVIDUALS AND GROUPS IN ANCIENT TIMES, INCLUDING THOSE AMONG THE ISRAELITES WHO WERE DISADVANTAGED IN ANY WAY. ANY OF THESE WORDS OR ANY GROUP OF THESE WORDS IN ANY COMBINATION CAN FUNCTION AS A SYNECDOCHE FOR “ANY OR ALL UNPROTECTED PEOPLE.” NO GOVERNMENT WELFARE SYSTEM EXISTED IN ISRAEL, EXCEPT IN THE LORD. IT WAS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE COVENANT COMMUNITY—EACH ISRAELITE, ASSUMING THE COVENANT WAS ACTUALLY KEPT FAITHFULLY—TO CONTRIBUTE HIS SHARE OF THE WELFARE BURDEN PERSONALLY (RATHER THAN THROUGH CROWN TAXES), TO AVOID PERSONALLY ANY DISCRIMINATION, PREJUDICE, RACISM AGAINST THE NEEDY IN ANY WAY, AND TO TREAT ALL THOSE IN NEED OR OF LIMITED RESOURCES AS BROTHERS AND SISTERS, VIRTUAL FAMILY MEMBERS IN THE LORD’S ARMY. STEPHEN YAHWEH HIMSELF IS THE ENFORCER OF THIS DEMAND FOR FAIR TREATMENT OF ALL THE “LITTLE” PEOPLE ANYWHERE IN ISRAEL (VV. 23–24, 27) & EVEN IN THE USA IN ACTS 5:39. HE WOULD NOT ALLOW HIS PEOPLE TO ACT IN A DISCRIMINATORY, PREJUDICE & RACIST MANNER, THAT IS, IN THE MANNER OF FUCKING DAMN PAGANS. THEIR CALLING WAS TO A HIGHER STANDARD, WHICH REFLECTED HIS OWN COMPASSION FOR ALL. IF THEY OBEYED HIS COVENANT FULLY, HE WOULD PROSPER THEM SUFFICIENTLY, ABOVE & BEYOND THAT THEY COULD HAVE ENOUGH FOR THEMSELVES AND ENOUGH LEFT OVER TO TAKE CARE OF THOSE WHO, FOR WHATEVER REASON, COULD NOT MAKE A LIVING (CF. DEUT 15:4). 22:21–22 [HB. 22:20–21] THE HEBREW TERMS TRANSLATED HERE “MISTREAT” (YNH, HIPHIL), “OPPRESS” (LḤṢ, QAL), AND “TAKE ADVANTAGE OF” (ʾNH, PIEL) ARE SYNONYMS HAVING BROAD SEMANTIC RANGES, INDIVIDUALLY AND TOGETHER PROHIBITING ANY SORT OF MISUSE OR UNFAIR TREATMENT OF THE NEEDY. IN V. 21 ISRAEL IS REMINDED OF ITS HISTORY OF MISTREATMENT AS ALIENS (NONCITIZENS) IN EGYPT. THE FACT THAT ISRAEL WAS IN EGYPT FOR 430 YEARS BEFORE THE EXODUS (EXOD 12:20; GAL 3:17) CONFIRMS THE DEFINITION OF GĒR USED IN V. 20 AS “ALIEN” OR “RESIDENT ALIEN” OVER AGAINST “NONRESIDENT” OR “STRANGER.” THE ISRAELITES LIVED IN EGYPT FOR OVER FOUR CENTURIES WITHOUT THE RIGHTS ACCORDED TO CITIZENS, BUT THEY WERE CERTAINLY NOT STRANGERS TO EGYPT. BECAUSE EVERY MEMBER OF THE ISRAELITE NATION HEARING THESE WORDS FOR THE FIRST TIME HAD BEEN IN THE SITUATION OF ALIENS IN EGYPT ONLY MONTHS PRIOR, IT MIGHT BE ASSUMED THAT THEY WOULD ALL AUTOMATICALLY LOATHE ANY FORM OF DISCRIMINATION, PREJUDICE, RACISM AGAINST ALIENS AND WOULD SEEK NATURALLY TO AVOID THE SORTS OF PRACTICES OF WHICH THEY THEMSELVES HAD PAINFULLY BEEN VICTIMS. THE LAW ASSUMES NOTHING OF THE SORT. KNOWING HUMAN NATURE, GOD EXPLICITLY WARNED HIS PEOPLE NOT TO DO WHAT MIGHT HAVE COME NATURALLY FOR THEM—SEEKING TO ENJOY THE EXPERIENCE OF LORDING IT OVER SOMEONE ELSE FOR ONCE. DISCRIMINATION, PREJUDICE, RACISM AGAINST NONCITIZENS WAS SO COMMON IN THE ANCIENT WORLD, AND THE TENDENCY TO HYPOCRISY SO NATURAL FOR HUMAN BEINGS, THAT ISRAEL HAD TO BE WARNED AGAINST BOTH AT ONCE IN THIS LAW. THEY COULD NOT RIGHTLY ENGAGE IN WHAT THEY SO ROUNDLY CONDEMNED WHEN IT WAS DONE TO THEM, AND THEY COULD NOT FALL INTO THE EASY PATTERNS OF THE CULTURE OF WHICH THEY WERE A PART, BUT THEY HAD TO BREAK WITH TEMPTATION AND TRADITION AND ACT DIFFERENTLY FROM OTHERS IF THEY WERE TO BE YAHWEH STEPHEN’S HOLY COVENANT PEOPLE ISRAEL IN THE ULTIMATE BEGINNING, NOW THIS IS STEPHEN YAHWEH’S HOLY COVENANT PEOPLE USA IN THE ULTIMATE ENDING IN 1ST PETER 2:9; ACTS 1:4-7; 29:1-2 WITH ACTS 30. IN V. 22 THE “WIDOW” AND “ORPHAN” ARE ADDED AS EXAMPLES OF THOSE WHO COULD EASILY BE TAKEN ADVANTAGE OF. HOW SO? WHAT MADE ALIENS (V. 21), WIDOWS AND ORPHANS, AND THE NEEDY/POOR (VV. 24–25) AT RISK FOR EXPLOITATION? THE ANSWER IS SIMPLY THAT EACH OF THESE TYPES OF PERSONS LACKED ONE OR MORE TYPES OF PROTECTIONS OTHERWISE AFFORDED WITHIN THE SOCIETY IN WHICH THEY LIVED. ALIENS LACKED THE GUARANTEES OF CITIZENSHIP, WHICH INCLUDED THE RIGHT TO THEIR OWN PERMANENT LAND OWNERSHIP AMONG THE TRIBES, THE RIGHT TO FAMILY, CLAN, AND TRIBAL SUPPORT/BACKING IN LEGAL DISPUTES, THE RIGHT TO DIRECT INVOLVEMENT IN THE POLITICAL PROCESS, THE RIGHT TO FREEDOM FROM EXPLOITATION BY THOSE WITH GREATER “CLOUT” EITHER POLITICALLY OR SOCIALLY OR MONETARILY THAN THEY POSSESSED, AND THE RIGHT TO RESIST NONCRIMINAL DEPORTATION, WHICH ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS & FOREIGN CRIMINALS ARE RIGHTFULLY SUBJECT TO TRUE DEPORTATION AT THE GOVERNMENTS LEISURE & EXPENSE AS WELL AS THE LORD’S! WIDOWS LACKED DIRECT LEGAL PARTICIPATORY RIGHTS (SINCE WOMEN WERE REPRESENTED BY THEIR HUSBANDS IN LEGAL MATTERS AND A WIDOW HAD NO HUSBAND) AND COULD NOT OWN LAND IN THEIR OWN NAMES UNDER MANY CONDITIONS. IF TOO OLD TO WORK, THEY WOULD HAVE NO MEANS OF PROVIDING EVEN FOR ENOUGH FOOD TO EAT WITHOUT OTHER MEMBERS OF THE FAMILY INTERVENING ON THEIR BEHALF. A WIDOW WHO HAD NOTHING OTHERWISE TO SUPPORT HERSELF COULD EASILY BE MADE TO WORK LONG HOURS FOR NEXT TO NOTHING AS A VIRTUAL SLAVE. ORPHANS, IF YOUNG ENOUGH, WERE SIMILARLY AT THE MERCY OF OTHERS. IF THEY HAD NO SEPARATE INHERITANCE OF THEIR OWN AND WERE NOT OTHERWISE PROTECTED BY OLDER (EXTENDED) FAMILY MEMBERS, THEY MIGHT HAVE TO WORK VIRTUALLY ENDLESSLY FOR WHATEVER ANYONE CHOSE TO PAY THEM—PERHAPS JUST SOME FOOD TO GET THROUGH EACH DAY. IF THERE WERE NO WORK AND NO ONE “TOOK THEM IN,” THEY MIGHT ACTUALLY STARVE TO DEATH, HAVE A HEAT STROKE OR FREEZE TO DEATH. 22:23–24 [HB. 22:22–23] HERE GOD WARNED THAT SOCIAL INJUSTICE COULD RESULT IN THE UNLEASHING OF THE COVENANT CURSES (THE FULL LISTINGS OF WHICH ARE STILL TO COME, IN LEV 26 AND DEUT 28–33) WITH THE NET EFFECT OF A GENERAL REJECTION OF ISRAEL AND ITS CONSIGNMENT TO DESTRUCTION AS A POLITICAL ENTITY. THIS REPRESENTS A MOST SERIOUS SORT OF EMPHASIS ON THE NECESSITY FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE IF THE PEOPLE ARE TO REMAIN STEPHEN YAHWEH’S PEOPLE AND NOT BE DECIMATED AND DISCARDED BY HIM. THE WORDING HERE IS SOMETHING LIKE THE EQUIVALENT OF SAYING, “I SIMPLY WILL NOT TOLERATE ANY EXPLOITATION OF ANYONE! IF IT HAPPENS AND IS SERIOUS ENOUGH (PARTLY THE POINT OF “THEY CRY OUT TO ME”), I WILL RUIN YOU IN RESPONSE!” THE COVENANT CURSES CITED IN V. 24 ARE INTENDED TO FUNCTION AS EXAMPLES, NOT AS A COMPLETE LIST OF THE MISERIES THAT WOULD COME UPON ISRAEL AS PUNISHMENT FOR EXPLOITATION OR ANY OTHER NATION. THE FIRST OF THESE (“I WILL KILL YOU WITH THE SWORD”) IS OF A TYPE WELL ATTESTED IN THE PENTATEUCH (E.G., LEV 26:25, “I WILL BRING THE SWORD UPON YOU,” OR DEUT 32:42, “I WILL MAKE MY ARROWS DRUNK WITH BLOOD, WHILE MY SWORD DEVOURS FLESH”). THE EXPRESSION “THE SWORD” IS OFTEN USED IN THE OLD TESTAMENT AND NEW TESTAMENT AS A METONYMY FOR “WARFARE” (CF. EXOD 17:13; LEV 26:6; DEUT 32:24; 2 SAM 1:12; 2:26). THE THREAT IMPLIED HERE IS THAT GOD WOULD ALLOW ISRAEL’S ENEMIES TO ATTACK AND EXTERMINATE THEM IF THEY DID NOT UPHOLD SOCIAL JUSTICE. THE SECOND PUNISHMENT SAMPLED IN THE VERSE (“YOUR WIVES WILL BECOME WIDOWS”) AND THE THIRD (“YOUR CHILDREN FATHERLESS”) ARE EXAMPLES OF “LOSS OF FAMILY” COVENANT CURSES (CF. DEUT 28:30, “ANOTHER WILL TAKE [YOUR BETROTHED] AND RAVISH HER,” OR DEUT 28:41, “YOU WILL HAVE SONS AND DAUGHTERS BUT WILL NOT KEEP THEM,” OR DEUT 32:25, “THE SWORD WILL MAKE THEM CHILDLESS,” THIS LAST EXAMPLE COMBINING BOTH THE WARFARE AND LOSS OF FAMILY CURSE TYPES). TWO OTHER EXAMPLES OF EXPLOITATION OF THE WEAK, FIRMLY FORBIDDEN TO ISRAELITES, ROUND OUT THIS SECTION OF LAWS: A PROHIBITION AGAINST CHARGING INTEREST OR USURY ON A LOAN AND A PROHIBITION AGAINST TAKING ANY NECESSITY AS A SURETY ON A LOAN. 22:25 [HB. 22:24] BORROWING AND LENDING ARE COMMON PRACTICES IN ALMOST ANY SOCIETY; THEY ARE IN THEMSELVES FORBIDDEN BY THIS LAW. INDEED, DURING THE REVIVAL OF STRICT ISRAELITE COVENANT LAW UNDER NEHEMIAH ALMOST A MILLENNIUM LATER THAN MOSES ORIGINALLY MEDIATED IT, LENDING AND BORROWING PER SE WERE ALLOWED. IT WAS CHARGING INTEREST OR USURY (AND PRESUMABLY ANY OTHER SORT OF EXPLOITIVE PRACTICE) THAT WERE EXPRESSLY PROHIBITED, JUST AS IN THIS LAW. VARIATIONS OF THIS PROHIBITION ARE FOUND NOT ONLY AGAIN IN THE PENTATEUCH (LEV 25:36–37; DEUT 23:19–20) BUT ALSO IN A PROVERB THAT PROMISES SIMILAR DISASTER FOR THOSE WHO CHARGE INTEREST OR USURY TO THE POOR, INTEREST OR USURY THAT IS BY DEFINITION EXORBITANT (PROV 28:8: “HE WHO INCREASES HIS WEALTH BY EXORBITANT INTEREST [USURY] AMASSES IT FOR ANOTHER, WHO WILL BE KIND TO THE POOR”); AND VARIATIONS ARE FOUND IN THE PROPHETS (NOTABLY EZEK 18:8, 13, 17; 22:12). THE WORDING OF V. 25 (“LEND … TO ONE OF MY PEOPLE … WHO IS NEEDY”) MIGHT SEEM AT FIRST GLANCE TO PROHIBIT ONLY LENDING AT INTEREST OR USURY TO THE POOR, ALLOWING THE CHARGING OF INTEREST OR USURY TO THOSE WHO CAN AFFORD TO PAY IT AND MERELY PROHIBITING CHARGING INTEREST OR USURY TO THOSE WHO ARE TOO INDIGENT TO ADD IT TO THE REPAYMENT OF THEIR LOAN. BUT THIS IS NOT THE INTENT, AS IS SHOWN BY THE PARALLELS IN LEV 25:36–37 (“DO NOT TAKE INTEREST [USURY] OF ANY KIND FROM HIM, BUT FEAR YOUR GOD, SO THAT YOUR COUNTRYMAN MAY CONTINUE TO LIVE AMONG YOU. YOU MUST NOT LEND HIM MONEY AT INTEREST [USURY] OR SELL HIM FOOD AT A PROFIT”) AND DEUT 23:19–20 (“DO NOT CHARGE YOUR BROTHER INTEREST [USURY], WHETHER ON MONEY OR FOOD OR ANYTHING ELSE THAT MAY EARN INTEREST [USURY]. YOU MAY CHARGE A FOREIGNER INTEREST [USURY], BUT NOT A BROTHER ISRAELITE, SO THAT THE LORD YOUR GOD MAY BLESS YOU IN EVERYTHING YOU PUT YOUR HAND TO IN THE LAND YOU ARE ENTERING TO POSSESS”). IN OTHER WORDS, ANY CHARGING OF INTEREST BY ISRAELITE TO ISREALITE WAS USURY (THE CHARGING OF EXCESSIVE INTEREST) BECAUSE ZERO INTEREST WAS TO BE THE NORM FOR LOAN TRANSACTIONS. THE LAW CITES THE EXAMPLE OF CHARGING INTEREST [USURY] TO THE NEEDY NOT BECAUSE IT WAS THE ONLY CIRCUMSTANCE UNDER WHICH CHARGING INTEREST [USURY] WAS FORBIDDEN BUT BECAUSE IT WAS AN EXAMPLE OF AN ILLEGAL ACTION THAT WAS ESPECIALLY UNFAIR AND EXPLOITATIVE. THIS LAW CONTAINS THE ONLY REFERENCE TO A “MONEYLENDER” (NŌŠEH, ALSO TRANSLATABLE SIMPLY AS “CREDITOR” AS IN THE NRSV HERE AND NIV OF 2 KGS 4:1) IN THE OLD TESTAMENT LAWS. IT CAN BE INFERRED FROM THE PROHIBITION AGAINST CHARGING INTEREST [USURY] AMONG ISRAELITES THAT ACTUAL PROFESSIONAL MONEYLENDERS WOULD HAVE HAD A CHANCE TO STAY IN BUSINESS ONLY IN CONNECTION WITH BUSINESS DEALS THAT INVOLVED FOREIGNERS (DEUT 23:20); BUT IT MAY ALSO BE THE CASE THAT THE PRIMARY REFERENT IN PEOPLE’S MINDS FOR THIS TERM WOULD HAVE BEEN MONEYLENDERS IN EGYPT, WHO HAD EXPLOITED THE ISRAELITES WHEN THEY WERE THERE. 22:26–27 [HB. 22:25–26] THIS LAW ADDRESSES LOAN SURETIES, THE PROPERTIES THAT PEOPLE PUT UP AS “COLLATERAL” FOR A LOAN TO ASSURE THE LENDER THAT THEY WILL REPAY. NORMALLY A LENDER’S INCENTIVE TO GRANT A LOAN IS THE CONFIDENCE THAT IF THE BORROWER DEFAULTS, THE LENDER CAN THEN TAKE THE PROPERTY AS HIS OWN IN COMPENSATION FOR THE UNRECOVERED MONEY. IN THE CASE OF THIS LAW, AS OPPOSED TO THE LAW IMMEDIATELY PRECEDING, A DISTINCTION IS MADE BETWEEN THE WAY A POOR PERSON AND A NONPOOR PERSON MUST BE TREATED. THE PRESUMPTION OF THE LAW IS THAT MOST PEOPLE HAVE PROPERTY THAT DOES NOT REPRESENT THEIR VERY SURVIVAL OR THE CONTINUANCE OF THEIR HEALTH AND THAT IF THAT SORT OF PROPERTY IS PLEDGED AS SURETY ON A LOAN, SUCH COLLATERAL IS ALLOWABLE. BY CONTRAST, PEOPLE WHO OWN SO LITTLE THAT THEY WOULD ACTUALLY HAVE TO PLEDGE AN ESSENTIAL ITEM TO OBTAIN A LOAN (THE INSTANCE PARADIGMATICALLY CITED BEING A CLOAK NEEDED TO KEEP WARM AT NIGHT) MUST BE EXEMPTED FROM THE REQUIREMENT OF PUTTING UP A SURETY—OR ELSE HAVE THE ESSENTIAL SURETY RETURNED TO THEM NIGHTLY. OTHERWISE THEIR HEALTH WOULD BE PUT AT RISK BY THE LOAN, AND THAT IS UNACCEPTABLE TO STEPHEN YAHWEH. A LAW SUCH AS THIS IS PATENTLY PARADIGMATIC; FOR “CLOAK” ONE COULD SUBSTITUTE FOOD, JOB, SHELTER, FAMILY MEMBER, OR ANY OTHER “ESSENTIAL” THING. THE SEXLESS CHARACTER OF GOD (“I WILL HEAR, … I AM COMPASSIONATE”) IS CITED AS THE GUARANTEE OF THIS LOAN. WITH SUCH A GUARANTEE, NO EXACT PENALTY NEED BE SPECIFIED (HOW COULD GOD NOT KNOW HOW BEST TO PUNISH SOMEONE WHO BROKE ONE OF HIS LAWS?). PROPER FEAR OF STEPHEN YAHWEH WOULD MOTIVATE ISRAELITES TO RESPECT THESE LAWS JUST AS WELL AS OR BETTER THAN SOME SORT OF FINE OR CORPORAL PUNISHMENT COULD.**

**LAWS REQUIRING RESPECT FOR GOD’S HOLINESS (22:28–31) [HB. 22:27–30]**

**TYPE OF LAW: APODICTIC (SECOND PERSON DIRECT COMMAND, WITH GENERAL APPLICABILITY THROUGHOUT THE POPULATION). PARADIGMATIC RANGE: REQUIRING OBEDIENCE AND RESPECT FOR WHAT RIGHTFULLY BELONGS TO GOD OR RIGHTFULLY EXALTS HIS HOLINESS IN ALL AREAS OF LIFE SO THAT GOD’S CHARACTER, DIVINE NATURE, CLAIMS, AND POSSESSIONS ARE NEITHER CHALLENGED NOR NEGLECTED. 22:28 [HB. 22:27] THE FIRST OF THIS GROUP OF LAWS REQUIRING RESPECT FOR GOD’S HOLINESS ADDRESSES THE WAY A VERBAL ATTACK CAN REPRESENT A SERIOUS SORT OF ASSAULT. MODERN PEOPLE USED TO THE NOTION OF VIRTUALLY UNLIMITED FREEDOM OF SPEECH MAY NOT BE FULLY AWARE OF THE POWER OF WORDS TO DO HARM AND TO DISRUPT RELATIONSHIPS, WHEREAS ANCIENTS IN SOME INSTANCES MORE CLEARLY UNDERSTOOD THE DANGERS OF UNBRIDLED FREE SPEECH. GOD’S PEOPLE COULD NOT CURSE EITHER HIM OR ANY LEGITIMATE LEADER IN ISRAELITE SOCIETY. PAUL’S WORDS BEFORE THE SANHEDRIN DEMONSTRATE HIS (AND THEIR) UNDERSTANDING THAT THIS APPLIED EVEN TO THOSE WHO MAY HAVE BEEN ABUSING THEIR AUTHORITY AND THAT THE LAW REFERRED INDEED TO VERBAL ATTACKS (ACTS 23:5, “DO NOT SPEAK EVIL ABOUT THE RULER OF YOUR PEOPLE”).200 THE NIV TRANSLATION “BLASPHEME” (SHOW CONTEMPT FOR OR REVILE GOD) FOR QLL HERE THEREFORE SEEMS PERFECTLY JUSTIFIED, ALTHOUGH “CURSE” WOULD ALSO REPRESENT THE HEBREW ACCURATELY. THE LAW TELLS THE ISRAELITES THAT THEY HAD BETTER RESPECT GOD AT ALL TIMES AND SHOW FULL RESPECT AS WELL TO ANY LEGITIMATE HUMAN LEADER OF HIS PEOPLE. THE TERM TRANSLATED “THE RULER” IN THE NIV (NĀŚÎʾ) REFERS TO ANY LEADER WITH EXECUTIVE AUTHORITY AT ANY LEVEL IN THE SOCIETY (LIT., “A RULER AMONG YOUR PEOPLE”), NOT JUST A NATIONAL RULER. IT CAN ALSO BE TRANSLATED “CHIEF.” THE NIV USE OF THE ARTICLE IS NOT JUSTIFIED; IT SHOULD MORE SAFELY BE RENDERED A RULER/LEADER/CHIEF. THE TERM IS INDEFINITE IN THE ORIGINAL, BOTH FORMALLY AND LOGICALLY. THE REQUIREMENT IS NOT MERELY AN OLD COVENANT EXPECTATION, AS ROM 13:1–7 MAKES CLEAR FOR THE CIVIL ARENA AND AS MANY NEW TESTAMENT INSTRUCTIONS MAKE CLEAR IN THE ARENA OF THE CHURCH. HONOR IS TO BE SHOWN TO ALL WHO MAY WARRANT IT, INCLUDING IN EFFECT ALL ONE’S BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN CHRIST IN A GENERAL SENSE AND ALL CHURCH LEADERS IN A SPECIFIC SENSE. ANY LEGITIMATE LEADER IN GOD’S FAMILY, WHETHER ANCIENT ISRAEL OR THE CHURCH, LEADS WITH GOD’S AUTHORITY AND IN GOD’S PLACE AS HIS DELEGATE. THEREFORE, TO CURSE SUCH A LEADER IS, INDIRECTLY BUT SERIOUSLY, TO CURSE GOD. 22:29–30 [HB. 22:28–29] RESPECT FOR GOD’S HOLINESS ALSO IMPLIES KEEPING BASIC RULES SUCH AS THE MONEY TITHE AND THE FIRSTBORN OFFERING BECAUSE THESE ARE THINGS THAT THE LORD RIGHTFULLY OWNS AND ARE THUS DUE HIM AUTOMATICALLY. WITHHOLDING THESE FROM HIM REPRESENTS A DIRECT ACT OF DEFIANCE, AN OPEN (TO HIM EVEN IF NOT TO OTHERS) REFUSAL TO COOPERATE WITH HIS COVENANT BY KEEPING FROM HIM THOSE THINGS THAT DIRECTLY SHOW THAT HE IS THE SOVEREIGN AND THAT ALL THINGS BELONG TO HIM. ANY ISRAELITE MIGHT BE TEMPTED TO KEEP BACK OFFERINGS OR PAYMENTS TO GOD OF ANY SORT, JUST AS PEOPLE TODAY TEND TO MAKE RELIGIOUS AND CHARITABLE OFFERINGS FROM WHAT THEY REGARD AS THEIR DISCRETIONARY (LEFTOVER) INCOME RATHER THAN EVEN PLACING SUCH GIVING IN THE SAME CATEGORY AS MORTGAGE OR CAR PAYMENTS—LET ALONE GIVING THEM THE HIGHEST PRIORITY OF ALL. GOD CAN SEEM LESS DEMANDING, LESS THREATENING, MORE “DISTANT,” MORE FORGIVING THAN THE TAX COLLECTOR OR THE LENDING INSTITUTION, AND WHAT IS OWED HIM CAN THEREFORE END UP BEING TREATED AS SECONDARY TO WHAT IS OWED TO OTHERS. NOTE ALSO THE STERN REMINDER IN 30:15 RELATIVE TO BRINGING [MONEY] TITHES AND OFFERINGS TO THE CENTRAL SANCTUARY AT THE ANNUAL FEAST TIMES. “NO ONE IS TO APPEAR BEFORE ME EMPTY-HANDED” (23:15). THE FIRSTBORN MALES OF ALL HUMANS AND ANIMALS WERE GOD’S. DID HE ACTUALLY EXPECT THAT THESE WOULD BE GIVEN OVER TO HIM IN THEIR INFANCY? YES AND NO. ONLY THOSE ANIMALS SUITABLE FOR SACRIFICING (LAMBS, GOAT KIDS, CALVES, ETC.) WERE ACTUALLY RECEIVED AT THE TABERNACLE AND SLAUGHTERED, COOKED, AND EATEN (OR DEDICATED ENTIRELY TO GOD AS WHOLE BURNT OFFERINGS). THE FIRSTBORN MALE OFFSPRING OF ALL OTHER ANIMALS AND HUMANS WERE TO BE REDEEMED INSTEAD, BOUGHT BACK FROM GOD BY THE PAYMENT OF A PRICE THAT SUBSTITUTED FOR THEIR LIVES. MOST SACRIFICIAL ANIMALS WERE SLAUGHTERED WHEN YOUNG, BUT TAKING A NEWBORN ANIMAL AWAY FROM ITS MOTHER BEFORE EVEN A WEEK HAD GONE BY WOULD HAVE BEEN DISADVANTAGEOUS FOR SEVERAL REASONS. IT WOULD HAVE DENIED STEPHEN YAHWEH AND THE WORSHIPERS, THE BENEFIT OF A WEEK OF RAPID GROWTH, FATTENING THE YOUNG ANIMAL AND MAKING IT MORE DESIRABLE AS A SACRIFICE. IT WOULD ALSO HAVE MADE THE DEPRIVATION MORE SHOCKING FOR THE DOE OR EWE WHO GAVE BIRTH, ESPECIALLY IF THE ONLY YOUNG THAT HAPPENED TO BE BORN IN A GIVEN BIRTHING SEASON WERE MALES. MOREOVER, A NEWBORN ANIMAL NEEDS TIME TO BE CLEANED UP BY ITS MOTHER AND THUS TO BE MORE PRESENTABLE AS A RESPECTFUL GIFT TO STEPHEN YAHWEH. FURTHER, THE COMMAND TO “GIVE THEM TO ME ON THE EIGHTH DAY” MAKES VERY CLEAR THAT THE “SEVEN DAYS” OF THE PRECEDING PART OF THE SENTENCE IS NOT JUST A ROUGH OR “ROUND” FIGURE BUT A MAXIMUM/MINIMUM LIMIT—A PRECISE LENGTH OF TIME. THEREBY NO ONE CAN WITHHOLD HIS SACRIFICE FROM STEPHEN YAHWEH FOR REASONS OF CONVENIENCE; EVERYONE HAS THE SAME TIME REQUIREMENT FOR PROMPTNESS IN BRINGING THE SACRIFICE TO THE CENTRAL SANCTUARY. 22:31 [HB. 22:30] THE COVENANT PEOPLE WERE SPECIALLY RELATED TO STEPHEN YAHWEH AS HIS OWN FAMILY BY THE COVENANT AND THEREFORE WERE EXPECTED TO REFLECT HIS STANDARDS IN THEIR OWN EATING PRACTICES. THE VERSE MAY ALSO BE TRANSLATED: “YOU ARE A PEOPLE CONSECRATED TO ME. THEREFORE …” THEY MIGHT NOT HAVE NEEDED TO BE QUITE SO STRICT AS HE IS (E.G., THEY COULD EAT LAMBS AND GOAT KIDS THAT WERE LESS THAN THE VERY BEST OF THE FIRSTBORN, I.E., THE ONES LEFT OVER AFTER THEY HAD GIVEN STEPHEN YAHWEH IN MONEY TITHES THE CHOICE ONES THAT HE CLAIMED, BUT THEY COULD NOT LET THEIR STANDARDS DROP SO LOW AS TO EAT CARRION. ONE REASON FOR THIS PROHIBITION WAS THAT THE MEAT OF AN ANIMAL KILLED BY OTHER ANIMALS WOULD STILL CONTAIN SOME OF THE BLOOD AND WOULD THUS VIOLATE THE PARADIGMATIC PRINCIPLE OF THE LAW IN 23:18 (RESTATED IN 34:25). ANOTHER REASON WAS SURELY THE CONCERN FOR THE PEOPLE’S HEALTH. SCAVENGED MEAT THAT HAD BEEN DEAD FOR A TIME WAS SUBJECT TO CONTAMINATION FROM VARIOUS SOURCES, INCLUDING BACTERIOLOGICAL SPREAD FROM THE ANIMAL KILLED AND/OR THE KILLER AS WELL AS FROM OPPORTUNISTIC PARASITES. SIMILAR LAWS TO THE PRESENT ONE IS FOUND IN LEV 7:24; 17:15; 22:8. SUCH A PATTERN OF REITERATION—FIVE TIMES IN ALL—FOR A SINGLE TYPE OF LAW SHOWS ITS IMPORTANCE AS A PRINCIPLE OF COVENANT PURITY NOT TO BE IGNORED OR PRACTICED HALFHEARTEDLY.**

**WHAT ARE THE TRUE LIMITATIONS OF THE LORD YAHWEH HIMSELF IN THE UPTIME/DOWNTIME IN 6 IN 1 POSITIONS WITH THE NUMBER 0 IN THE HOUSE WORLD? THERFORE THE LORD’S TRUE ELITE HOLY COVENANT PEOPLE & HIS ETERNAL LAWS----SUPREME AUTHORITIES ARE ALSO THERFORE ETERNALLY LIMITED IN ROMANS 13:3-10 & 1ST JOHN 3:9!!!**

**THE ALWAYS TRUTHFUL LORD**

**THE LORD YAHWEH HIMSELF THE SUPREME CREATOR OF THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD KNOWN AS THE LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH HIMSELF IS CALLED “THE TRUTHFUL GOD” IN NUMBERS 23:19. IN NUMBERS 23:19 DECLARES “GOD IS NOT A MAN, THAT HE SHOULD LIE; NEITHER THE SON OF MAN, THAT HE SHOULD REPENT: HATH HE SAID, AND SHALL HE NOT DO IT? OR HATH HE SPOKEN, AND SHALL HE NOT MAKE IT GOOD?**

**THE ALWAYS REPENTLESS LORD**

**THE LORD YAHWEH HIMSELF THE SUPREME CREATOR OF THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD KNOWN AS THE LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH HIMSELF IS CALLED “THE UNREPENTING GOD” IN NUMBERS 23:19. IN NUMBERS 23:19 DECLARES “GOD IS NOT A MAN, THAT HE SHOULD LIE; NEITHER THE SON OF MAN, THAT HE SHOULD REPENT: HATH HE SAID, AND SHALL HE NOT DO IT? OR HATH HE SPOKEN, AND SHALL HE NOT MAKE IT GOOD?**

**THE ALWAYS RELENTLESS LORD**

**THE LORD YAHWEH HIMSELF THE SUPREME CREATOR OF THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD KNOWN AS THE LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH HIMSELF IS CALLED “THE UNRELENTING GOD” IN NUMBERS 23:19. IN NUMBERS 23:19 DECLARES “GOD IS NOT A MAN, THAT HE SHOULD LIE; NEITHER THE SON OF MAN, THAT HE SHOULD REPENT [RELENT]: HATH HE SAID, AND SHALL HE NOT DO IT? OR HATH HE SPOKEN, AND SHALL HE NOT MAKE IT GOOD?**

**THE ALWAYS TRUE LORD**

**THE LORD YAHWEH HIMSELF THE SUPREME CREATOR OF THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD KNOWN AS THE LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH HIMSELF IS CALLED “THE TRUE GOD” IN TITUS 1:1-3; HEBREWS 6:16-18 & ROMANS 3:4. IN TITUS 1:1-3 DECLARES “PAUL, A BONDSERVANT OF GOD (FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD), AND AN APOSTLE OF JESUS CHRIST, ACCORDING TO THE FAITH OF GOD’S (FATHER STEPHEN’S) ELECT AND THE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THE TRUTH WHICH ACCORDS WITH GODLINESS, IN HOPE OF ETERNAL LIFE WHICH GOD (FATHER STEPHEN), WHO CANNOT LIE, PROMISED BEFORE TIME BEGAN, BUT HAS IN DUE TIME MANIFESTED HIS WORD THROUGH PREACHING, WHICH WAS COMMITTED TO ME ACCORDING TO THE COMMANDMENT OF GOD OUR SAVIOR (LORD YAH THE CREATOR OF THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD AND SHOULD NOT BE THOUGHT AS THE LORD JESUS THE SAVIOR IN ISAIAH 45:21)…” IN HEBREWS 6:16-18 SAYS “FOR MEN INDEED SWEAR BY THE GREATER, AND AN OATH FOR CONFIRMATION IS FOR THEM AN END OF ALL DISPUTE. THUS GOD (FATHER STEPHEN), DETERMINED TO SHOW MORE ABUNDANTLY TO THE HEIRS OF PROMISE THE IMMUTABILITY OF HIS COUNSEL (HOLY TRINITY AS THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD, SON JESUS OUR LORD AND BROTHER JOHN OUR LORD), CONFIRMED IT BY AN OATH, THAT BY TWO IMMUTABLE THINGS (LORD PETER IN BEGINNING OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND LORD JAMES THE END OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD), IN WHICH IT IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR GOD (FATHER STEPHEN) TO LIE, WE MIGHT HAVE STRONG CONSOLATION, WHO HAVE FLED FOR REFUGE TO LAY HOLD OF THE HOPE SET BEFORE US.” IN ROMANS 3:4 STATES “…LET GOD (FATHER STEPHEN) BE TRUE BUT EVERY MAN A LIAR.”**

**THE ALWAYS SINLESS LORD**

**THE LORD YAHWEH HIMSELF THE SUPREME CREATOR OF THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD KNOWN AS THE LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH HIMSELF IS CALLED “THE SINLESS GOD” AND CHOOSES NOT TO LOOK UPON SIN IN MATTHEW 27:46 & MARK 15:34. IN MATTHEW 27:46 SAYS “AND ABOUT THE NINTH HOUR (3:00 PM) JESUS CRIED OUT WITH A LOUD VOICE, SAYING, ‘ELI, ELI, LAMA SABACHTHANI?’ THAT IS, ‘MY GOD (FATHER STEPHEN), MY GOD (FATHER STEPHEN), WHY HAVE YOU FORSAKEN ME (SON JESUS)?’” ALSO, THE SIMILAR SCRIPTURE IS IN MARK 15:34.**

**THE ALWAYS VERY GOOD LORD**

**THE LORD YAHWEH HIMSELF THE SUPREME CREATOR OF THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD KNOWN AS THE LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH HIMSELF IS CALLED “THE VERY GOOD GOD” AND IS NOT EVIL IN ORIGIN IN 1ST CORINTHIANS 13:5. IN 1ST CORINTHIANS 13:5 SAYS THAT AGAPE LOVE “DOES NOT BEHAVE RUDELY, DOES NOT SEEK ITS OWN, IS NOT PROVOKED, THINKS NO EVIL…” NOW THE LORD STEPHEN CAN DO MESSIANIC EVIL TO A CITY, COUNTRY OR A NATION TO THOSE WHO DO NOT OBEY HIS COMMAND IN 1ST JOHN 1:8, 10 & JEREMIAH 18:10. IN ROMANS 8:28 SAYS “AND WE KNOW THAT ALL THINGS WORK TOGETHER FOR GOOD TO THOSE WHO (AGAPE) LOVE GOD (FATHER STEPHEN), TO THOSE WHO ARE CALLED ACCORDING TO HIS PURPOSE.”**

**THE ALWAYS MESSIANIC EVIL LORD**

**THE LORD YAHWEH HIMSELF THE SUPREME CREATOR OF THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD KNOWN AS THE LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH HIMSELF IS CALLED “THE MESSIANIC EVIL GOD” IN ISAIAH 45:7. IN ISAIAH 45:7 DECLARES “I FORM THE LIGHT, AND CREATE DARKNESS: I MAKE PEACE, AND CREATE EVIL: I THE LORD DO ALL THESE THINGS.”**

**THE ALWAYS IMPARTIAL LORD**

**THE LORD YAHWEH HIMSELF THE SUPREME CREATOR OF THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD KNOWN AS THE LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH HIMSELF IS CALLED “THE IMPARTIAL GOD” IN 1ST PETER 1:17-21. IN 1ST PETER 1:17-21 DECLARES “AND IF YOU CALL ON THE FATHER [STEPHEN], WHO WITHOUT PARTIALITY JUDGES ACCORDING TO EACH ONE’S WORK, CONDUCT YOURSELVES THROUGHOUT THE TIME OF YOUR STAY HERE IN FEAR; KNOWING THAT YOU WERE NOT REDEEMED WITH CORRUPTIBLE THINGS, LIKE SILVER OR GOLD, FROM YOUR AIMLESS CONDUCT RECEIVED BY TRADITION FROM YOUR FATHERS, BUT WITH THE PRECIOUS BLOOD OF CHRIST, AS OF A LAMB WITHOUT BLEMISH AND WITHOUT SPOT. HE INDEED WAS FOREORDAINED BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD, BUT WAS MANIFEST IN THESE LAST TIMES FOR YOU WHO THROUGH HIM BELIEVE IN GOD, WHO RAISED HIM FROM THE DEAD AND GAVE HIM GLORY, SO THAT YOUR FAITH AND HOPE ARE IN GOD.”**

**THE ALWAYS ALL-KNOWING LORD**

**THE LORD YAHWEH HIMSELF THE SUPREME CREATOR OF THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD KNOWN AS THE LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH HIMSELF IS CALLED “THE OMNISCIENT GOD” IN 1ST JOHN 3:20. IN 1ST JOHN 3:20 DECLARES “BY THIS WE SHALL KNOW THAT WE ARE OF THE TRUTH AND REASSURE OUR HEART BEFORE HIM; FOR WHENEVER OUR HEART CONDEMNS US, GOD IS GREATER THAN OUR HEART, AND HE KNOWS EVERYTHING.” IN ZECHARIAH 4:10 DECLARES “FOR WHOEVER HAS DESPISED THE DAY OF SMALL THINGS SHALL REJOICE, AND SHALL SEE THE PLUMB LINE IN THE HAND OF ZERUBBABEL. THESE SEVEN ARE THE EYES OF THE LORD, WHICH RANGE THROUGH THE WHOLE EARTH.”**

**THE ALWAYS ALL-PRESENT LORD**

**THE LORD YAHWEH HIMSELF THE SUPREME CREATOR OF THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD KNOWN AS THE LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH HIMSELF IS CALLED “THE OMNIPRESENT GOD” IN PSALMS 139:7-12. IN PSALMS 139:7-12 DECLARES “WHERE SHALL I GO FROM YOUR SPIRIT [JOHN 4:23-24]? OR WHERE SHALL I FLEE FROM YOUR PRESENCE? IF I ASCEND TO HEAVEN, YOU ARE THERE! IF I MAKE MY BED IN SHEOL, YOU ARE THERE! IF I TAKE THE WINGS OF THE MORNING AND DWELL IN THE UTTERMOST PARTS OF THE SEA, EVEN THERE YOUR HAND SHALL LEAD ME, AND YOUR RIGHT HAND SHALL HOLD ME. IF I SAY, “SURELY THE DARKNESS SHALL COVER ME, AND THE LIGHT ABOUT ME BE NIGHT,” EVEN THE DARKNESS IS NOT DARK TO YOU; THE NIGHT IS BRIGHT AS THE DAY, FOR DARKNESS IS AS LIGHT WITH YOU.”**

**THE ALWAYS ALL-POWERFUL LORD**

**THE LORD YAHWEH HIMSELF THE SUPREME CREATOR OF THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD KNOWN AS THE LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH HIMSELF IS CALLED “THE OMNIPOTENT GOD” IN REVELATION 1:8. IN REVELATION 1:8 DECLARES “I AM THE ALPHA AND THE OMEGA,” SAYS THE LORD GOD, “WHO IS AND WHO WAS AND WHO IS TO COME, THE ALMIGHTY.”**

**THE ALWAYS UNFAILING LORD**

**THE LORD YAHWEH HIMSELF THE SUPREME CREATOR OF THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD KNOWN AS THE LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH HIMSELF IS CALLED “THE OMNI-BENEVOLENT GOD” IN 1ST CORINTHIANS 13:1-10. IN 1ST CORINTHIANS 13:1-10 DECLARES “THOUGH I SPEAK WITH THE TONGUES OF MEN AND OF ANGELS, BUT HAVE NOT LOVE, I HAVE BECOME SOUNDING BRASS OR A CLANGING CYMBAL. AND THOUGH I HAVE THE GIFT OF PROPHECY, AND UNDERSTAND ALL MYSTERIES AND ALL KNOWLEDGE, AND THOUGH I HAVE ALL FAITH, SO THAT I COULD REMOVE MOUNTAINS, BUT HAVE NOT LOVE, I AM NOTHING. AND THOUGH I BESTOW ALL MY GOODS TO FEED THE POOR, AND THOUGH I GIVE MY BODY TO BE BURNED, BUT HAVE NOT LOVE, IT PROFITS ME NOTHING. LOVE SUFFERS LONG AND IS KIND; LOVE DOES NOT ENVY; LOVE DOES NOT PARADE ITSELF, IS NOT PUFFED UP; DOES NOT BEHAVE RUDELY, DOES NOT SEEK ITS OWN, IS NOT PROVOKED, THINKS NO EVIL; DOES NOT REJOICE IN INIQUITY, BUT REJOICES IN THE TRUTH; BEARS ALL THINGS, BELIEVES ALL THINGS, HOPES ALL THINGS, ENDURES ALL THINGS. LOVE NEVER FAILS. BUT WHETHER THERE ARE PROPHECIES, THEY WILL FAIL; WHETHER THERE ARE TONGUES, THEY WILL CEASE; WHETHER THERE IS KNOWLEDGE, IT WILL VANISH AWAY. FOR WE KNOW IN PART AND WE PROPHESY IN PART. BUT WHEN THAT WHICH IS PERFECT HAS COME, THEN THAT WHICH IS IN PART WILL BE DONE AWAY. IN 1ST JOHN 4:7-11 DECLARES “BELOVED, LET US LOVE ONE ANOTHER, FOR LOVE IS OF GOD; AND EVERYONE WHO LOVES IS BORN OF GOD AND KNOWS GOD. HE WHO DOES NOT LOVE DOES NOT KNOW GOD, FOR GOD IS LOVE. IN THIS THE LOVE OF GOD WAS MANIFESTED TOWARD US, THAT GOD HAS SENT HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON INTO THE WORLD, THAT WE MIGHT LIVE THROUGH HIM. IN THIS IS LOVE, NOT THAT WE LOVED GOD, BUT THAT HE LOVED US AND SENT HIS SON TO BE THE PROPITIATION FOR OUR SINS. BELOVED, IF GOD SO LOVED US, WE ALSO OUGHT TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER.”**

**THE ALWAYS TEMPTLESS LORD**

**THE LORD YAHWEH HIMSELF THE SUPREME CREATOR OF THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD KNOWN AS THE LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH HIMSELF IS CALLED “THE UNTEMPTING GOD” IN JAMES 1:13. IN JAMES 1:13 STATES “LET NO ONE SAY WHEN HE IS TEMPTED, ‘I AM TEMPTED (TESTED, TRIED OR PUT ON TRIAL) BY GOD,’ FOR GOD CANNOT BE TEMPTED (TESTED, TRIED OR PUT ON TRIAL) BY EVIL (MONEY IN MATTHEW 6:24; 1 TIMOTHY 6:9-10 & LUKE 16:9, 11, 13, 15), NOR DOES HE HIMSELF TEMPT (TEST, TRY, PUT ON TRIAL) ANYONE (UNTEMPTING GOD).”**

**THE ALWAYS UNLYING LORD**

**THE LORD YAHWEH HIMSELF THE SUPREME CREATOR OF THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD KNOWN AS THE LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH HIMSELF IS CALLED “THE UNLYING GOD” IN TITUS 1:1-3; HEBREWS 6:16-18 & ROMANS 3:4. IN TITUS 1:1-3 DECLARES “PAUL, A BONDSERVANT OF GOD (FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD), AND AN APOSTLE OF JESUS CHRIST, ACCORDING TO THE FAITH OF GOD’S (FATHER STEPHEN’S) ELECT AND THE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THE TRUTH WHICH ACCORDS WITH GODLINESS, IN HOPE OF ETERNAL LIFE WHICH GOD (FATHER STEPHEN), WHO CANNOT LIE, PROMISED BEFORE TIME BEGAN, BUT HAS IN DUE TIME MANIFESTED HIS WORD THROUGH PREACHING, WHICH WAS COMMITTED TO ME ACCORDING TO THE COMMANDMENT OF GOD OUR SAVIOR (LORD YAH THE CREATOR OF THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD AND SHOULD NOT BE THOUGHT AS THE LORD JESUS THE SAVIOR IN ISAIAH 45:21)…” IN HEBREWS 6:16-18 SAYS “FOR MEN INDEED SWEAR BY THE GREATER, AND AN OATH FOR CONFIRMATION IS FOR THEM AN END OF ALL DISPUTE. THUS GOD (FATHER STEPHEN), DETERMINED TO SHOW MORE ABUNDANTLY TO THE HEIRS OF PROMISE THE IMMUTABILITY OF HIS COUNSEL (HOLY TRINITY AS THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD, SON JESUS OUR LORD AND BROTHER JOHN OUR LORD), CONFIRMED IT BY AN OATH, THAT BY TWO IMMUTABLE THINGS (LORD PETER IN BEGINNING OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND LORD JAMES THE END OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD), IN WHICH IT IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR GOD (FATHER STEPHEN) TO LIE, WE MIGHT HAVE STRONG CONSOLATION, WHO HAVE FLED FOR REFUGE TO LAY HOLD OF THE HOPE SET BEFORE US.” IN ROMANS 3:4 STATES “…LET GOD (FATHER STEPHEN) BE TRUE BUT EVERY MAN A LIAR.”**

**THE ALWAYS FAITHFUL LORD**

**THE LORD YAHWEH HIMSELF THE SUPREME CREATOR OF THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD KNOWN AS THE LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH HIMSELF IS CALLED “THE FAITHFUL GOD” AND CANNOT DENY HIMSELF FOR ANYONE IN 2ND TIMOTHY 2:13. IN 2ND TIMOTHY 2:13 DECLARES “IF WE ARE FAITHLESS, HE (FATHER STEPHEN) REMAINS FAITHFUL, HE (FATHER STEPHEN) CANNOT DENY HIMSELF.”**

**THE ALWAYS UNRIVALED LORD**

**THE LORD YAHWEH HIMSELF THE SUPREME CREATOR OF THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD KNOWN AS THE LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH HIMSELF IS CALLED “THE UNRIVALED GOD” AND CANNOT CREATE A RIVAL TO HIM & CERTAINLY NOT ABOVE HIM IS IN EXODUS 20:3. IN EXODUS 20:3 SAYS “YOU SHALL HAVE NO OTHER GODS BEFORE ME.”**

**LAWS ON HONESTY, JUSTICE, AND FAIR TREATMENT WITH A REMINDER THAT THE LORD IS THE ENFORCER (23:1–9)**

**THE LAWS IN THIS SECTION APPEAR TO BE GROUPED CHIASTICALLY, WITH VV. 1–3 AND VV. 6–9 EMPLOYING APODICTIC LEGAL STYLE IN ADDRESSING VARIOUS SORTS OF POTENTIAL VIOLATIONS OF THE LEGAL SYSTEM, INCLUDING DENIAL OF JUSTICE TO EASILY OPPRESSABLE GROUPS. SANDWICHED BETWEEN THEM ARE VV. 4–6, A SMALL GROUP OF LAWS IN CASUISTIC FORMAT ADDRESSING THE KIND OF ATTITUDE TOWARD OTHERS IN THE COMMUNITY AND BASIC MORAL BEHAVIOR THAT SHOULD CHARACTERIZE GOD’S COVENANT PEOPLE EVEN WHEN NO LEGAL REQUIREMENT PER SE IS AT ISSUE. 23:1–3 TYPE OF LAW: APODICTIC (APPLIED GENERALLY TO EVERYONE IN THE POPULATION). PARADIGMATIC RANGE: ANY KIND OF FALSE STATING OR REPORTING INFORMATION ABOUT ANYONE. THESE LAWS EXPAND SLIGHTLY ON THE NINTH COMMANDMENT (EXOD 20:16). THE EMPHASIS IN THESE VERSE’S RESTS ON THE NEED FOR ABSOLUTE HONESTY IN SPEAKING ABOUT OTHERS, FROM WHAT ONE REPORTS ABOUT OTHERS GENERALLY (THE WORDING COULD EVEN APPLY SIMPLY TO GOSSIP) TO WHAT ONE SAYS IN COURT WHEN ONE IS TESTIFYING AS A WITNESS IN A CRIMINAL CASE. “DO NOT SPREAD FALSE REPORTS” (V. 1). SPREADING A FALSE REPORT COULD BE DAMAGING TO THE COVENANT COMMUNITY IN SEVERAL WAYS. IT COULD INFLUENCE WHAT PEOPLE THOUGHT ABOUT AN INDIVIDUAL SO THAT THEY WOULD RELATE DIFFERENTLY TO HIM THAN OTHERWISE WOULD HAVE BEEN THE CASE; WHEN THE TIME CAME FOR PEOPLE TO TESTIFY IN A COURT CASE ABOUT SOMEONE, THEIR ATTITUDES AND EVEN RECOLLECTIONS COULD BE DISCRIMINATORY, PREJUDICED OR RACIST BY THE FALSE “COMMON KNOWLEDGE” THAT THE FALSE REPORT CREATED. A FALSE REPORT COULD SERVE AS THE BASIS FOR IMPROPERLY ARRESTING AND/OR BRINGING TO TRIAL SOMEONE WHO WAS ACTUALLY INNOCENT OR SOMEONE WHO WAS LESS RESPONSIBLE FOR A SITUATION OR CRIME THAN WOULD RISE TO A PROSECUTABLE LEVEL; AND SO FORTH. FALSE REPORTS COULD ALSO CREATE FACTIONALISM AS ONE GROUP BELIEVED THE REPORT ABOUT A MEMBER OF ANOTHER GROUP, AND THE PERSON’S OWN GROUP DETERMINED THAT THE REPORT HAD TO HAVE BEEN STARTED BY THE OTHER GROUP. FALSE REPORTS UNDERMINE THE LEGAL/JUDICIAL SYSTEM BY CREATING CONDITIONS THAT CAN LEAD TO THE CONVICTION AND PUNISHMENT OF AN INNOCENT PERSON, ROBBING THAT PERSON OF THE LIBERTY THAT STEPHEN YAHWEH’S DELIVERANCE AND PROTECTION OF HIS PEOPLE WAS INTENDED TO PROVIDE. “DO NOT HELP A WICKED MAN BY BEING A MALICIOUS WITNESS” (V. 1). THIS PART OF THE LAW ENVISIONS AS ONE OPTION THE POSSIBILITY OF TWO OR MORE PEOPLE IN COLLUSION MAKING A FALSE CHARGE AGAINST SOMEONE OR FALSELY DENYING AN ACCUSATION THAT WAS IN FACT CORRECT. BECAUSE THE LAW SO STRICTLY HONORED THE TESTIMONY OF TWO WITNESSES AGAINST ANYONE ACCUSED OF A CRIME (LEST THE CASE BE BASED INSUFFICIENTLY MERELY ON ONE PERSON’S WORD AGAINST ANOTHER’S), ABSOLUTE HONESTY IN GIVING TESTIMONY WAS ESSENTIAL TO THE CORRECT FUNCTIONING OF THE LEGAL SYSTEM. IF TWO PEOPLE COULD AGREE TO FALSIFY THEIR TESTIMONY AGAINST SOMEONE WHOM THEY WISHED TO HARM, IT WOULD BE EXTREMELY UNLIKELY THAT A COURT WOULD DISCOVER THE FALSEHOOD AND HIGHLY PROBABLE THAT AN INNOCENT PERSON WOULD BE PUNISHED FOR SOMETHING HE OR SHE DID NOT IN FACT DO. CONVERSELY, THE LAW EQUALLY ENCOMPASSED THE POSSIBILITY THAT SOMEONE ACCUSED OF A CRIME WOULD BE SET FREE WITHOUT PENALTY BY REASON OF THE FALSE TESTIMONY OF A FRIEND WHO “HELPED [THE] WICKED MAN” AVOID FACING RESPONSIBILITY FOR HIS CRIME. THE NIV TRANSLATION “CROWD” (V. 2) IS NOT THE ONLY OPTION. A BETTER TRANSLATION MIGHT BE “MAJORITY,” AND THE TEMPTATION WARNED AGAINST HERE IS THAT OF BEING SWAYED IN ANY ACTION THAT WOULD BE WRONG BY THE FEAR OF LOOKING FOOLISH, INCORRECT, ODD, OR DISHONEST BECAUSE OF TAKING A POSITION DIFFERENT FROM THAT TAKEN BY EVERYONE—OR VIRTUALLY EVERYONE—ELSE. GOD HAS CREATED HUMAN BEINGS TO BE SOCIALLY INTEGRATIVE AND TO TRY TO COOPERATE WITH ONE ANOTHER. AS A RESULT, IT CAN BE EXTREMELY DIFFICULT TO TAKE A STANCE IN A DIFFICULT AND EMOTIONALLY CHARGED SITUATION OR LEGAL CASE AGAINST THE MAJORITY (POSSIBLY INCLUDING MANY OF ONE’S FRIENDS OR EVEN FAMILY) IN FAVOR OF A PERSON OR CAUSE, THAT HAS NO OTHER ADVOCATES. AN EXAMPLE WOULD BE THE TEMPTATION—IN A COURT CASE AGAINST A PERSON WHO ALREADY HAS A LONG RECORD OF IMPROPER BEHAVIOR AND WHOM VIRTUALLY EVERYONE WOULD LIKE TO SEE PUNISHED—TO JOIN THE MAJORITY IN ACCUSING THAT PERSON OF SOME SORT OF IMPROPRIETY EVEN WHEN ONE HAS NO ACTUAL DIRECT KNOWLEDGE THE PERSON IS GUILTY. THIS LAW CALLS FOR INDIVIDUAL BELIEVERS, WHO IN SO MANY OTHER CASES ARE EXPECTED TO CONFORM TO THE GROUP (AS IN WORSHIP OR IN KEEPING ANY APODICTIC LAW APPLICABLE TO EVERYONE AT ALL TIMES) TO BE WILLING TO THINK AND ACT AS INDIVIDUALS CLEARLY ENOUGH AND RIGHTEOUSLY ENOUGH THAT THEY CAN STAND AGAINST ALL OTHERS IN THEIR ACTIONS OR TESTIMONY. THE LAW IN V. 3, COORDINATED WITH WHAT PRECEDES, IS CLEVERLY WORDED. IT MIGHT BE THOUGHT THAT THE USUAL TEMPTATION TOWARD FAVORITISM IN A LAW CASE WOULD BE ON BEHALF OF A RICH PERSON, NOT A POOR PERSON (AS THE MAJORITY MIGHT DO AS ENVISIONED IN THE PREVIOUS VERSE). ONE MIGHT ASSUME THAT TESTIFYING OR RETURNING A VERDICT ON BEHALF OF THE RICH MIGHT BRING EVENTUAL REWARD OR ADVANTAGE TO A WITNESS OR JUDGE BY REASON OF THE RICH PERSON’S GRATITUDE. BUT THE LAW, IN AN EFFICIENCY OF EXPRESSION, COVERS BOTH THE MORE LIKELY TEMPTATION AND THE LESS LIKELY TEMPTATION BY CITING THE LATTER, “AND DO NOT SHOW FAVORITISM TO A POOR MAN.” IT HAS THE EFFECT OF SAYING, “DO NOT SHOW FAVORITISM TO ANYONE IN ANY TESTIMONY YOU EVER GIVE OR JUDGMENT YOU EVER MAKE—NEITHER OUT OF FEAR OF THE POWERFUL OR HOPE FOR PERSONAL GAIN NOR OUT OF SYMPATHY FOR THE SUFFERING OF THE LOWLY.” “HIS LAWSUIT” IS AMBIGUOUS; IT COULD MEAN THE LAWSUIT INITIATED BY A POOR PERSON, BUT COULD ALSO REFER TO VIRTUALLY ANY INVOLVEMENT IN A LEGAL CASE OF A POOR PERSON, EITHER AS PLAINTIFF OR DEFENDANT. 23:4–5 TYPE OF LAW: CASUISTIC (DESCRIBES ENCOUNTERED SITUATIONS INVOLVING THE TEMPTATION NOT TO ACT BECAUSE TO DO SO WOULD BE BENEFICIAL TO ONE’S ENEMY). PARADIGMATIC RANGE: ANY CHANCE TO LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF, INCLUDING A NEIGHBOR WITH WHOM YOU ARE NOT ON GOOD TERMS. THESE REQUIREMENTS ARE NEITHER ABOUT THE LEGAL SYSTEM PER SE NOR ABOUT OXEN OR DONKEYS [ASSES] ONLY; THEY ARE EXPRESSIONS OF STEPHEN YAHWEH’S EXPECTATIONS FOR HIS PEOPLE THAT CONCENTRATE ON GENERAL SOCIAL ATTITUDES USING SITUATIONS INVOLVING LOST OR STUMBLING ANIMALS AS PARADIGMATIC EXAMPLES. BY PLACING THESE SORTS OF LAWS IN THE MIDST OF LAWS THAT CONCENTRATE ON HONEST, GODLY BEHAVIOR IN CASES OF LAWSUITS, GOD IN EFFECT SAID TO HIS PEOPLE, “IN THE MIDST OF GIVING YOU LAWS ABOUT LAWSUIT BEHAVIOR, I WANT TO INSERT A REMINDER THAT I EXPECT YOU TRULY TO LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR IN EVERY SITUATION, NO MATTER HOW YOUR SELFISH INCLINATIONS MIGHT CAUSE YOU TO FEEL.” THE COMMANDS TO CATCH AND RETURN TO ONE’S ENEMY HIS ERRANT OX OR DONKEY [ASS] AND TO HELP ONE’S ENEMY TAKE CARE OF HIS DONKEY IN AN ACCIDENT REPRESENT SERIOUS CHALLENGES TO NORMAL SELFISH BEHAVIOR AND EVEN TO WHAT MIGHT NARROWLY BE REGARDED AS PRUDENT BEHAVIOR. MOST PEOPLE WOULD BE DISINCLINED TO HELP AN ENEMY (SOMEONE RESENTED OR TROUBLESOME OR TO WHOM ONE IS MOTIVATED TO BE HOSTILE FOR WHATEVER REASON) OR WOULD AT LEAST STAY AWAY FROM SOMEONE WHO SHOWED HOSTILITY. NOTE THAT V. 5 PROVIDES AS A PARALLEL FOR “YOUR ENEMY” IN V. 4 THE EXPRESSION “SOMEONE WHO HATES YOU” RATHER THAN “SOMEONE YOU HATE,” THUS ELIMINATING THE POSSIBILITY OF ARGUING, “I’D BE GLAD TO HELP SOMEONE I HATE, BUT IT MIGHT NOT BE SAFE TO GET INVOLVED WITH SOMEONE WHO HATES ME!” COMPREHENDED IN THE LAW IS VIRTUALLY EVERY SITUATION OF HELPING PEOPLE. IF ONE IS REQUIRED TO HELP EVEN THOSE WHO HAVE MADE THEMSELVES ONE’S ENEMY, SURELY ONE WOULD BE REQUIRED TO HELP THOSE WHO WERE MORE NEUTRAL ON THE SCALE OF HOSTILITY, SUCH AS COMPLETE STRANGERS OR PEOPLE WHO MIGHT MERELY BE REGARDED AS LAZY IN THEIR CARE OF THEIR ANIMALS OR THE LIKE. AND, OF COURSE, FRIENDS AND FAMILY AND ACTUAL NEIGHBORS WOULD BE INCLUDED AS WELL. THE PRESENT LAW ADDRESSES THE NEED TO LOVE NEIGHBOR AS SELF IN SOMEWHAT THE SAME WAY THAT JESUS’ FAMOUS PARABLE OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN (LUKE 10:29–37) DOES: BY IMPLICATION IT DEFINES NEIGHBOR BROADLY AS ANYONE ONE MAY COME IN CONTACT WITH AND USES AS AN EXAMPLE OF NEIGHBOR SOMEONE NORMALLY HATED OR DESPISED (AS IN JESUS’ PARABLE, A SAMARITAN, HATED BY MOST JEWS FOR HETERODOXY, FOREIGN PRACTICES). THE NIV TRANSLATION OF V. 5 COULD BE MISUNDERSTOOD. THE “IT” AT THE END OF THE VERSE REFERS TO THE DONKEY, NOT THE LOAD, AND “DO NOT LEAVE IT THERE” IS SOMEWHAT INTERPRETIVE. MOST IMPORTANTLY, THE LAW ACTUALLY INSISTS NOT MERELY THAT ONE BE DISTANTLY CIVIL TO AN ENEMY BUT THAT ONE ACTUALLY BECOME COOPERATIVELY INVOLVED WITH ONE’S ENEMY IN A COMPLICATED PROJECT (FREEING A FRIGHTENED AND DESPERATE ANIMAL FROM A HARNESS AROUND ITS BODY, RIGHTING THE ANIMAL, REMOVING THE LOAD FROM THE BACKPACK AND/OR SIDE PACK, REATTACHING THE PACK TO THE ANIMAL, REPACKING THE PACK, AND PERHAPS CARRYING PERSONALLY SOME OF WHAT WAS IN IT IN ORDER TO LIGHTEN THE LOAD). THE LAW DOES NOT ASSUME THAT ONE’S ENEMY MISTREATED THE DONKEY [ASS]; DONKEYS [ASSES] CAN FALL FOR ANY OF MANY REASONS, NOT SIMPLY BECAUSE THEY ARE OVERBURDENED, AND THEY CAN’T GET BACK UP EASILY WITH A LOAD STRAPPED TO THEIR BODY. 23:6–9 TYPE OF LAW: APODICTIC (GENERAL APPLICABILITY THROUGHOUT THE POPULATION). PARADIGMATIC RANGE: NOT JUST COURT CASES (EXPLICIT IN VV. 6–7) BUT ALSO FAIR AND JUST TREATMENT IN OR OUT OF COURT AND HONEST, EVEN-HANDED DEALINGS WITH ALL PEOPLE, NOT JUST IN CASES WHERE A BRIBE IS OFFERED OR A RESIDENT ALIEN IS INVOLVED (THESE SITUATIONS BEING USED AS EXAMPLES, VV. 8–9). VERSES 6–9 RESUME THE THRUST TOWARD ABSOLUTE INTEGRITY AND FAIRNESS IN ALL LEGAL MATTERS, BUT ALSO INCLUDE DEMANDS THAT ARE GENERAL ENOUGH THAT THEY INVOLVE ALL KINDS OF DEALINGS BETWEEN AND AMONG ALL THE MEMBERS OF THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL AS WELL AS THOSE NON-ISRAELITES LIVING AMONG THEM. THIS LAW REPEATS IN APODICTIC FORMAT THE ESSENTIAL POINT OF 23:3, WITH SOMEWHAT CONTRASTING LANGUAGE. THE LAW IN 23:3 USED WORDING TO ELIMINATE FAVORITISM TOWARD THE POOR, WHEREAS THIS LAW SEEKS TO WARN AGAINST FAVORITISM AGAINST THE POOR. TOGETHER THEY PROHIBIT ANY OPTION BUT FAIRNESS AND JUSTICE FOR THE POOR, IN THE SAME MANNER AND DEGREE AS FOR ANY OTHER PERSON IN THE SOCIETY. IT WOULD HAVE BEEN EASY TO DENY JUSTICE TO POOR PEOPLE IN LAWSUITS BECAUSE THE POOR WOULD LACK THE RESOURCES TO INSURE JUSTICE FOR THEMSELVES. MOREOVER, THE POOR WOULD BE LESS LIKELY THAN THE RICH TO HAVE FRIENDS ON A JURY, TO BE ON GOOD TERMS WITH THE LOCAL JUDGE, AND SO FORTH. THEY WOULD ALSO BE LESS LIKELY TO HAVE ANY SORT OF RECOURSE IF THEY LOST A CASE—THERE WOULD BE LESS FEAR OF REPRISAL OR DISADVANTAGE ON THE PART OF THOSE WHO DENIED JUSTICE TO THE POOR OR WHO EVEN TURNED THE POOR AWAY FROM BEING ABLE TO LODGE A COMPLAINT IN THE FIRST PLACE BECAUSE THE POOR HAVE SO LITTLE INFLUENCE OF ANY KIND IN A SOCIETY. NO PENALTY SPECIFICALLY ATTACHES TO VIOLATION OF THIS LAW. IT IS A BASIC COVENANT REQUIREMENT, AND ITS GUARANTOR IS STEPHEN YAHWEH HIMSELF, AS IMPLIED IN THE VARIOUS FIRST-PERSON PRONOUNS THROUGHOUT THE CHAPTER (VV. 7, 13, 15, 18, 20, 21–23, 25–31, 33) AND IN PARTICULAR THE STATEMENT IN THE FOLLOWING VERSE (“I WILL NOT ACQUIT THE GUILTY,” V. 7). “HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH [LIT., “STAY FAR AWAY FROM”] A FALSE CHARGE” (V. 7) RINGS YET ANOTHER CHANGE ON THE PREVAILING THEME OF ABSOLUTE, UNCORRUPTED JUSTICE AS ESSENTIAL FOR THE PEOPLE WHO AGREE TO STEPHEN YAHWEH’S COVENANT. WHAT WAS IMPLICIT IN SEVERAL LAWS ALREADY STATED NOW APPEARS EXPLICITLY AND SPECIFICALLY: NO ONE SHOULD EVER BE INVOLVED IN ANY WAY WITH A COMPLAINT AGAINST SOMEONE IN A COURT CASE THAT IS NOT ENTIRELY TRUE. HONESTY MUST PREVAIL THROUGHOUT THE LEGAL SYSTEM OR THE SYSTEM CANNOT FUNCTION FAIRLY. NEITHER A WITNESS NOR A DEFENDANT NOR A JUDGE NOR A JURY MAY CONTRIBUTE TO A FALSE CHARGE. BY EXTRAPOLATION, A LAW SUCH AS THIS WARNS AGAINST GIVING CREDENCE TO ANY SORT OF FALSE CHARGES IN THE SOCIETY AS A WHOLE, INCLUDING, BUT NOT LIMITED TO, ORGANIZATIONS, BUSINESSES, AND SCHOOLS WHERE INDIVIDUALS OR COMMITTEES ARE RESPONSIBLE TO INVESTIGATE CHARGES AGAINST MEMBERS, EMPLOYEES, OR STUDENTS. “DO NOT PUT AN INNOCENT OR HONEST PERSON [LIT., “PERSON IN THE RIGHT”] TO DEATH” (LIT., “DO NOT KILL”) IS WORDED IN SUCH A WAY THAT IT WOULD APPLY TO ALL SORTS OF SITUATIONS IN LEGAL PROCEEDINGS WHERE CAPITAL PUNISHMENT WAS POTENTIALLY INVOLVED, BUT IT ALSO WOULD POTENTIALLY APPLY TO ANY SITUATION WHERE SOMEONE OR SOME GROUP DECIDED TO TAKE THE LAW INTO THEIR HANDS AND KILL SOMEONE. BY SAYING “FOR I WILL NOT ACQUIT THE GUILTY” GOD MAKES CLEAR THAT THOSE WHO WRONGLY CAUSE THE DEATH OF AN INNOCENT PERSON BECOME THEMSELVES GUILTY BY REASON OF THEIR UNJUST ACTION. ACCORDINGLY, THIS LAW CALLS FOR THE GREATEST POSSIBLE CARE IN THE LEGAL PROCESS OR IN SOCIETAL RELATIONSHIPS TO MAKE SURE THAT A RUSH TO JUSTICE DOES NOT RESULT IN THE DEATH OF SOMEONE WHOM EVERYONE ASSUMES IS GUILTY BUT AGAINST WHOM OVERWHELMING AND UNAMBIGUOUS EVIDENCE CANNOT BE FOUND. PAUL REMINDED HIS READERS THAT THERE IS NO ACTION, NO MATTER HOW EVIL, THAT PEOPLE WILL RESIST DOING IF THE FINANCIAL REWARD IS LARGE ENOUGH. DISMISSING A LAWSUIT THAT ACTUALLY HAS MERIT, RENDERING A GUILTY OR INNOCENT VERDICT WHEN THE OPPOSITE IS ACTUALLY REASONABLE, BRINGING A CASE AGAINST SOMEONE IN ORDER TO HARASS RATHER THAN OBTAIN JUSTICE ARE THOSE THINGS THAT HAVE BEEN AND ARE BEING DONE IN MANY PLACES AROUND THE WORLD ON THE BASIS OF BRIBES. THE POWER OF A BRIBE TO MAKE SOMEONE IGNORE EVIDENCE IS HERE COMPARED TO THE CAUSATION OF BLINDNESS, AND TO SPEAK A LIE IS HERE COMPARED TO A SPEECH DEFECT MAKING IT IMPOSSIBLE FOR ONE TO SAY WHAT HE WANTS TO AND SHOULD SAY. BRIBERY IN EFFECT CRIPPLES THE NORMAL, PROPER WAY OF DOING THINGS AND SUBSTITUTES A PERVERTED WAY. EVEN THE PERSON WHO NORMALLY CAN “SEE” (V. 8) MATTERS CLEARLY AND WHO IS NORMALLY “RIGHTEOUS” IN ALL THAT HE SAYS MAY CHANGE DRAMATICALLY UNDER THE POWER OF A BRIBE. NOTE HERE THE GENERAL LANGUAGE OF THE COMMAND: IT DOES NOT LIMIT ITSELF TO COURT CASES. ANYONE WHO REQUIRES OR ACCEPTS AN EXTRA, PERSONAL PAYMENT FOR HIS SERVICES IN ANY AREA OF SOCIETY HAS BEEN “BOUGHT” AND WILL NOT ACT WITH PROPER NEUTRALITY AND CONSISTENCY. THE WORDING OF V. 9 DIFFERS MODESTLY FROM THAT OF 22:21 (“DO NOT MISTREAT AN ALIEN OR OPPRESS HIM, FOR YOU WERE ALIENS IN EGYPT”) BY LETTING “OPPRESS” ALONE STAND HERE FOR “MISTREAT … OR OPPRESS” IN 22:21 AND BY ADDING “YOU YOURSELVES KNOW HOW IT FEELS TO BE ALIENS” (LIT., “YOU KNOW THE SPIRIT OF THE ALIEN”). IT IS NOT THE SAME LAW BUT ESSENTIALLY THE SAME COMMAND, REPEATED FOR EMPHASIS, EXPANDING ON THE EXPECTATION OF NATURAL SYMPATHY FOR ALIENS THAT SHOULD HAVE BEEN MANIFEST AMONG ISRAELITES, AND APPEALING TO THE ABHORRENCE OF HYPOCRISY AND INCONSISTENCY THAT THE PEOPLE SHOULD FEEL. THE GOAL WAS TO KEEP THEM FROM THE NATURAL HUMAN TENDENCY TO BEFRIEND THOSE MOST LIKE THEM AND DISCRIMINATE AGAINST THOSE THOUGHT TO BE SOMEHOW DIFFERENT. IN MANY HOMOGENOUS SOCIETIES, ALIENS MAY BE LITTLE DIFFERENT FROM NATIVES. IN ANCIENT ISRAEL THE ALIENS WERE NON-ISRAELITES, BUT SINCE ISRAEL ITSELF WAS COMPOSED OF A MIXED MULTITUDE ETHNICALLY (12:38) AND SPOKE A LANGUAGE NOT UNIQUE BUT SHARED BY MANY OTHER GROUPS INCLUDING EVEN THOSE THEY WERE BOUND EVENTUALLY TO EXTERMINATE, THERE IS NO REASON TO THINK THEY WERE ANY MORE OR LESS PRONE TO DISCRIMINATE AGAINST ALIENS THAN MOST MODERN SOCIETIES ARE.**

**LAWS ON SABBATHS AND ANNUAL RELIGIOUS FESTIVALS (23:10–19)**

**10 “FOR SIX YEARS YOU ARE TO SOW YOUR FIELDS AND HARVEST THE CROPS, 11 BUT DURING THE SEVENTH YEAR LET THE LAND LIE UNPLOWED AND UNUSED. THEN THE POOR AMONG YOUR PEOPLE MAY GET FOOD FROM IT, AND THE WILD ANIMALS MAY EAT WHAT THEY LEAVE. DO THE SAME WITH YOUR VINEYARD AND YOUR OLIVE GROVE. 12 “SIX DAYS DO YOUR WORK, BUT ON THE SEVENTH DAY DO NOT WORK, SO THAT YOUR OX AND YOUR DONKEY [ASS] MAY REST AND THE SLAVE BORN IN YOUR HOUSEHOLD, AND THE ALIEN AS WELL, MAY BE REFRESHED. 13 “BE CAREFUL TO DO EVERYTHING I HAVE SAID TO YOU. DO NOT INVOKE THE NAMES OF OTHER GODS; DO NOT LET THEM BE HEARD ON YOUR LIPS. 14 “THREE TIMES A YEAR YOU ARE TO CELEBRATE A FESTIVAL TO ME. 15 “CELEBRATE THE FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD; FOR SEVEN DAYS EAT BREAD MADE WITHOUT YEAST, AS I COMMANDED YOU. DO THIS AT THE APPOINTED TIME IN THE MONTH OF ABIB, FOR IN THAT MONTH YOU CAME OUT OF EGYPT. NO ONE IS TO APPEAR BEFORE ME EMPTY-HANDED. 16 “CELEBRATE THE FEAST OF HARVEST WITH THE FIRST-FRUITS OF THE CROPS YOU SOW IN YOUR FIELD. CELEBRATE THE FEAST OF INGATHERING AT THE END OF THE YEAR, WHEN YOU GATHER IN YOUR CROPS FROM THE FIELD. 17 “THREE TIMES A YEAR ALL THE MEN ARE TO APPEAR BEFORE THE SOVEREIGN LORD. 18 “DO NOT OFFER THE BLOOD OF A SACRIFICE TO ME ALONG WITH ANYTHING CONTAINING YEAST. THE FAT OF MY FESTIVAL OFFERINGS MUST NOT BE KEPT UNTIL MORNING. 19 “BRING THE BEST OF THE FIRST-FRUITS OF YOUR SOIL TO THE HOUSE OF THE LORD YOUR GOD. DO NOT COOK A YOUNG GOAT IN ITS MOTHER’S MILK.” IN THIS PORTION OF THE BOOK, A SET OF LAWS DEALING WITH SABBATHS (23:10–12) AND A SET OF LAWS DEALING WITH THE THREE ANNUAL FESTIVALS (23:10–19) ARE PLACED SO AS TO SURROUND THE SPECIAL, OVERARCHING COMMAND IN 23:13 DEMANDING EXCLUSIVE COVENANT OBEDIENCE TO AND FAITH IN STEPHEN YAHWEH. THIS REPRESENTS YET ANOTHER INSTANCE OF A THREE-UNIT LEGAL PERICOPE, AS ALREADY SEEN IN PRIOR CHAPTERS AND IN THE IMMEDIATELY PRECEDING MATERIAL OF CHAP. 23 AS WELL (23:1–9). BY THE SYSTEM OF SABBATHS AND ANNUAL FESTIVALS, GOD ESTABLISHED FOR HIS PEOPLE REGULAR COVENANT REMINDERS OF THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO HIM AS HIS WORSHIPING PEOPLE: THE WEEKLY SABBATH WORSHIP ROUTINE WOULD PROVIDE A REMINDER-RENEWAL EVERY SEVENTH DAY; THE ANNUAL ROUTINE WOULD PROVIDE THREE REMINDER-RENEWALS COINCIDING WITH THE NATURAL AGRICULTURAL TIMES OF REST AND REJOICING WITH A FOCUS ON WORSHIP. IN ADDITION TO THESE THERE WAS TO BE EVERY SEVEN YEARS A SPECIAL CONCERN FOR THE LAND, ANIMALS, AND PEOPLE AND EVERY FIFTY YEARS A MAJOR REALIGNMENT OF FINANCIAL, LAND, PERSONAL, AND SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS (THE JUBILEE YEAR, LEV 25; 27; NUM 36) INTENDED TO KEEP ISRAELITES FROM LOSING TOUCH WITH THEIR BASIC VALUES AND SOCIAL STRUCTURES. THE SEVEN-YEAR AND FIFTY-YEAR OBSERVANCES WERE DIFFERENT FROM THE WEEKLY AND ANNUAL OBSERVANCES BECAUSE THEY CONCENTRATED ON THE SOCIAL-ECOLOGICAL ORDER, WHEREAS THE WEEKLY AND ANNUAL OBSERVANCES CONCENTRATED ON WORSHIP. IN THIS CHAPTER THE NEAR-TERM (WEEKLY SABBATH), MIDTERM (ANNUAL FESTIVALS), AND LONG-TERM (SABBATH YEAR) LAWS ARE DESCRIBED. FURTHER ALONG IN THE SINAI COVENANT (LEVITICUS) THEY WOULD BE FURTHER DETAILED, AND ADDED TO THEM WOULD BE THE VERY LONG-TERM LAW ABOUT THE JUBILEE YEAR (LEV 25; 27). INSTRUCTIONS ON THE OTHER TWO NATIONAL HOLY DAYS, THE DAY OF ATONEMENT AND THE FEAST OF TRUMPETS, ARE LEFT ENTIRELY TO LEVITICUS (16; 23:23–32) AND NUMBERS (29:1–11).**

**TWO SIX-SEVEN LAWS ON SABBATH YEARS AND SABBATH DAYS (23:10–12)**

**WHEN JESUS SAID, “THE SABBATH WAS MADE FOR MAN, NOT MAN FOR THE SABBATH” (MARK 2:27), HE SUMMARIZED THE POINT OF THESE TWO LAWS, AS WELL AS OTHERS RELATING TO THE SABBATH. BOTH OF THEM EMPHASIZE THAT THE SABBATH, WHETHER OF YEARS OR DAYS, WAS INTENDED BY GOD TO PROVIDE RESTORATION AND WELL-BEING FOR GOD’S PEOPLE, NOT MERELY A CESSATION OF ALL ACTIVITY. THIS PERSPECTIVE IS OFTEN MISSED BY STRICT SABBATARIANS IN MODERN TIMES, JUST AS IN ANCIENT, WHO STRESS DOING NOTHING RATHER THAN DOING WHAT IS RELAXING AND ENGAGING IN THE LEAST POSSIBLE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY OVER DOING THINGS THAT PRODUCE REFRESHMENT AND RESTORATION. 23:10–11 TYPE OF LAW: APODICTIC (SECOND-PERSON UNIFORM COMMAND FOR ALL ISRAELITES WITHOUT LIMITATION). PARADIGMATIC RANGE: ALL PRODUCTIVE LAND USE WITHOUT LIMIT TO TYPE OF CROP. HERE ISRAEL LEARNED THAT THEIR FARMING PRACTICES MUST INCLUDE A REGULAR PATTERN OF NONCULTIVATION. THE PURPOSE OF SUCH A PRACTICE EVERY SEVENTH YEAR OF LETTING THE LAND LIE FALLOW CENTERED ON THE WAY SUCH A ROUTINE HELPED THE POOR AND WILDLIFE. FROM AN AGRI-SCIENCE POINT OF VIEW, IT ALSO WOULD ALLOW THE LAND SOME TIME FOR ADDITIONAL NITROGEN FIXING AS NATURAL GRASSING-OVER WOULD OCCUR ON MOST OF THE SURFACE OF THE UNCULTIVATED LAND, AND THIS WOULD BE GOOD FOR THE LAND IN THE LONG RUN. THE FOCUS OF THE COMMAND, HOWEVER, IS ECOLOGICAL-HUMANITARIAN AND NOT ON IMPROVING PRODUCTIVITY. THIS LAW REFLECTS THE “SABBATH” PRINCIPLE OF THE GEN 1 CREATION STORY (A CESSATION AFTER SIX OUT OF SEVEN PERIODS OF TIME HAVE BEEN COMPLETED), AS ALSO REFLECTED IN THE WEEKLY SABBATH COMMAND OF 20:11 AND THE SIX/SEVEN-YEAR CONTRACT PERIOD FOR SERVANTS IN 21:2. AT FIRST GLANCE IT MIGHT SEEM THAT THE LAW CALLED FOR NO INTENTIONAL CROP FARMING EVERY SEVEN YEARS THROUGHOUT ISRAEL, SO VIRTUALLY ALL PEOPLE WOULD TAKE A YEAR OFF FROM FARMING. BUT NEITHER THIS EXPRESSION OF THE FARMING SABBATH NOR THAT OF LEV 25:1–7 ACTUALLY STATES WHETHER THE EXPECTATION WAS A NATIONWIDE STOPPAGE ON ALL FARMS FOR ALL CROPS AT THE SAME TIME OR A SYSTEM OF STAGGERED SEVEN-YEAR CESSATIONS FOR INDIVIDUAL CROPS IN INDIVIDUAL FIELDS. THE LAW ON THE JUBILEE YEAR, WHICH WAS TO BE CELEBRATED EVERY FIFTY YEARS IN ISRAEL, CLEARLY DEMANDED FULL, NATIONWIDE COMPLIANCE AT THE SAME TIME BY ALL PERSONS THROUGHOUT ISRAEL. IN LEV 25:8–55 THE STATEMENT OF THE JUBILEE LAW FOLLOWS WITH SPECIFICITY AS TO UNIFORM, SAME-TIME COMPLIANCE, DIRECTLY AFTER THE LAW OF THE LAND SABBATH (LEV 25:1–7, A COMMAND THAT PROVIDES NO SUCH SPECIFICITY WITH REGARD TO WHEN A FARMER WOULD REST HIS CROPS AS LONG AS EACH FIELD, GROVE, OR VINEYARD WAS RESTED EVERY SEVENTH YEAR). THIS SUGGESTS THAT FARMERS WERE GIVEN FREEDOM TO DECIDE HOW TO ROTATE OR STAGGER THE RESTING OF THEIR CROPS AMONG THEIR VARIOUS FIELDS, GROVES, AND VINEYARDS. IN THAT WAY FARMERS WERE STILL ACTIVELY FARMING EACH YEAR, AND ROUGHLY THE SAME FOOD VOLUME WOULD BE PRODUCED EVERY YEAR THROUGHOUT ISRAEL. IT IS DIFFICULT TO IMAGINE THAT THE LAW WOULD ENVISION A SYSTEM OF TOTAL CESSATION OF CROP FARMING THROUGHOUT ISRAEL IN LIGHT OF THE FOOD SHORTAGES FOR HUMANS AND CATTLE THAT WOULD RESULT (BUT CP. LEV. 25:6–7, 21). IT SEEMS THAT THE LAW DOES NOT CALL FOR ANY CESSATION OF ANIMAL FARMING EVERY SEVEN YEARS, WHICH WOULD BE TANTAMOUNT TO ALLOWING MOST CATTLE AND FLOCKS TO DIE IF IT WERE ACTUALLY CARRIED OUT. UNDER THE SYSTEM ENVISIONED IN THIS LAW, POOR PEOPLE AND WILD ANIMALS WOULD ALWAYS HAVE UNCULTIVATED FIELDS IN ANY GIVEN AREA IN WHICH TO FORAGE/HARVEST THE SPONTANEOUS CROP BECAUSE FARMERS WOULD ALWAYS BE ROTATING FIELDS, VINEYARDS, AND GROVES IN AND OUT OF CULTIVATION. IF ISRAELITES WOULD FOLLOW THIS LAW FAITHFULLY, THE PRESUMED PERCENTAGE OF POOR PEOPLE IN THE LAND WOULD NOT OVERWHELM THE PERCENTAGE OF FALLOW LAND AVAILABLE FOR THEM TO LIVE OFF. NOTE ALSO THE IMPLIED VALUE SYSTEM IN THE LAW: PEOPLE ARE MOST IMPORTANT, ANIMALS NEXT, AND PLANTS [SMOKING, EATING & DRINKING] LEAST IMPORTANT. THIS SAME HIERARCHY OF VALUE IN LIFE IS REFLECTED THROUGHOUT THE OLD TESTAMENT, AS, FOR EXAMPLE, IN JONAH 4:5–11. NOTE ALSO THAT THIS LAW AND THE ONE THAT IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWS IT ASSUME THAT THE ISRAELITES—FORCED LABORERS AND SMALL CATTLE FARMERS IN EGYPT—WOULD BE ABLE TO POSSESS AND FARM THE LAND OF CANAAN ONCE THEY CONQUERED IT. ACCORDINGLY, THE LAW IMPLICITLY PROMISES THEM A FULFILLMENT OF GOD’S PLAN ORIGINALLY ANNOUNCED TO ABRAHAM IN GEN 12 AND 15. 23:12 TYPE OF LAW: APODICTIC (DIRECT COMMAND TO ALL ISRAELITES). PARADIGMATIC RANGE: A DAY OF RESTORATION EACH WEEK FOR ALL PEOPLE AND ANIMALS. OBSERVANCE OF THE SABBATH EACH WEEK WAS IMPORTANT AND ESSENTIAL NOT ONLY AS A BENEFIT FOR PEOPLE AND ANIMALS BUT ALSO BECAUSE THE SABBATH FUNCTIONED AS A COVENANT SIGN, THAT IS, A WEEKLY REMINDER THAT STEPHEN YAHWEH HAD GIVEN ISRAEL HIS COVENANT AND THEY WERE TO KEEP IT SOLEMNLY. THE SIGN ASPECT IS DELINEATED AT 31:12–17 (WITH EVEN THE DEATH PENALTY ATTACHED TO ITS VIOLATION, SO VERY IMPORTANT WAS THE COVENANT AND ITS WEEKLY SIGN). EVEN THOUGH THE ISSUE OF THE DAY OF STOPPAGE/REST AS A COVENANT SIGN DOES NOT YET SURFACE AT THIS POINT IN THE CORPUS OF LAWS, THIS REMINDER OF THE IMPORTANCE OF THE SABBATH IS PART OF THE DISTRIBUTED PACKAGE OF EMPHASES ON THE SABBATH THAT LEAD APPROPRIATELY AND INEVITABLY TO 31:12–17. THIS LAW REITERATES THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT (EXOD 20:8–11), ADDING NOTHING BY WAY OF CONCEPT (CESSATION OF WORK, ANIMALS, SERVANTS, AND ALIENS ARE ALL MENTIONED IN THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT ALREADY). IN A CULTURE BASED HEAVILY ON THE WRITTEN WORD, SUCH A REPEATED LAW MIGHT (WRONGLY) NOT BE THOUGHT ENTIRELY NECESSARY; BUT IN THE ANCIENT WORLD AS WELL AS THE MODERN, THE REPETITION OF A LAW SO EASILY BROKEN, IN LANGUAGE SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT FROM THE ORIGINAL ON WHICH IT IS BASED, HAS THE BENEFIT OF REINFORCING THE IMPORT OF WHAT IS COMMANDED AND OF SHOWING AS WELL ITS RELEVANCE TO LIVING OUT STEPHEN YAHWEH’S COVENANT IN ALL ITS DETAILS. IT HAS SOMETIMES BEEN ARGUED THAT THE NEW TESTAMENT REMOVES THIS LAW FROM BEING A REQUIREMENT FOR CHRISTIANS, BUT THAT IS NOT TRUE BECAUSE TO DISMISS 1 COMMANDMENT IS TO DISMISS THE WHOLE LAW, WHICH IS PREPOSTEROUS. IN FACT, THE UNDERLYING PRINCIPLE REMAINS, AS INDICATED IN JESUS’ TEACHING AND PAUL’S. THE PERSON WHO WORKS ENDLESSLY AND/OR MAKES OTHERS DO SO OPPRESSES HIMSELF AND/OR OTHERS IN VIOLATION OF THIS LAW.**

**A GENERAL UNIVERSAL GLOBAL WARNING TO KEEP THE COVENANT AND TRUST IN STEPHEN YAHWEH ALONE (23:13)**

**23:13 TYPE OF LAW: APODICTIC (THE LORD YAHWEH STEPHEN’S JEWISH LAWS TO ITALIAN LAWS APPLIED TO ALL JEWISH ISRAELITES & ROMAN ITALIANS AT ALL TIMES IN THE ULTIMATE BEGINNING IN PROVERBS 8:22 & THEN THE UNIVERSAL GLOBAL SOVEREIGN FLAG PASSES TO THE LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH’S ENGLISH LAWS APPLIED TO ALL BRITISH ENGLISH AT ALL TIMES IN THE ULTIMATE ENDING IN ACTS 30). PARADIGMATIC RANGE: THE WORDING IS COMPREHENSIVE IN DEMANDING COVENANT OBEDIENCE TO EVERYTHING COMMANDED IN THE COVENANT AND ABSOLUTE MONOTHEISM AS A FOCAL POINT THEREOF. THIS GENERAL LAW IS NOT MERELY A CONCLUSION OR MERELY AN INTRODUCTION BUT A SUMMATION OF WHAT PRECEDES AND FOLLOWS. IT IS EVEN POSSIBLE THAT ʾĀMARTÎ (NIV AND MOST VERSIONS, “I HAVE SAID”) COULD IN THIS CONTEXT BEAR THE SENSE “I AM SAYING” SINCE THE HEBREW PERFECT TENSE CAN REFER TO ACTIONS ONGOING THAT BEGAN IN THE PAST, NOT MERELY ACTIONS COMPLETED IN THE PAST. THE SABBATH LAW OF THE PRIOR VERSE REITERATED THE TIMING OF THE WEEKLY DAY OF WORSHIP AS ESTABLISHED IN THE PRINCIPAL TEN WORDS/COMMANDMENTS. THE SECOND SENTENCE OF THIS LAW CLARIFIES THE MOST IMPORTANT PART OF THE COMMUNITY’S WORSHIP, ALSO REFLECTING THE TEN WORDS/COMMANDMENTS (EXOD 20:3, “YOU SHALL HAVE NO OTHER GODS BEFORE ME”). IT REPRESENTS A SLIGHTLY EXPANSIVE RESTATEMENT OF THAT FIRST WORD/COMMANDMENT BY ADDING THE PROHIBITION AGAINST EVEN MENTIONING ANY OTHER GODS BUT STEPHEN YAHWEEH. HE ALONE IS TO BE WORSHIPED, OBEYED, BELIEVED IN, HONORED. CALLING ON GODS BY NAME HAS ALWAYS BEEN ESSENTIAL TO WORSHIPING AND OBEYING THEM. TO PROHIBIT SAYING A GOD’S NAME IS TO PROHIBIT ALL EXERCISE OF THE RELIGION ASSOCIATED WITH THAT GOD. ACCORDINGLY, THIS LAW REPRESENTS AN UNMISTAKABLY CLEAR ASSERTION OF MONOTHEISM WITHIN THE COVENANT CODE FROM THE TIME OF MOSES.**

**LAWS ON THE THREE ANNUAL FESTIVALS AND THEIR PURPOSE (23:14–19)**

**TYPE OF LAWS: APODICTIC, APPLYING WITHOUT EXCEPTION TO ALL ISRAELITES AT ALL TIMES (THOUGH THE ACTUAL IMPLEMENTATION WOULD AWAIT ARRIVAL IN THE PROMISED LAND). PARADIGMATIC RANGE: HARDLY AN ISSUE SINCE THE FESTIVALS THEMSELVES WERE LIMITED IN NUMBER AND QUITE SPECIFIC, BUT THE COMMAND RELATIVE TO COOKING GOAT KIDS IN THEIR MOTHER’S MILK (V. 19) WAS CERTAINLY INTENDED PARADIGMATICALLY. FULL BIBLICAL WORSHIP IS ALWAYS CORPORATE. INDIVIDUALS CAN CARRY OUT A FORM OF WORSHIP BY THEMSELVES, USING SOME OF THE ELEMENTS OF CORPORATE WORSHIP, BUT THEY CANNOT ALONE WORSHIP IN THE NORMAL MANNER ENJOINED IN SCRIPTURE. FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF COMPREHENSIVE THEOLOGY, THIS IS BECAUSE ALL PROPER WORSHIP ON EARTH IS A PROLEPTIC IMITATION OF AND PREPARATION FOR EVENTUAL WORSHIP IN HEAVEN, WHICH IS CONSISTENTLY PORTRAYED AS CORPORATE. THUS, ALL ISRAELITE FAMILIES WERE TO GATHER THREE TIMES A YEAR (V. 14) IN A SINGLE PLACE (V. 17) AND ALL TOGETHER PARTICIPATE IN FESTIVALS THAT HAD AS THEIR PRIMARY PURPOSE WORSHIP, THE ADORATION AND PRAISE OF THE TRUE GOD. THE THREE FESTIVALS ARE IDENTIFIED AND DESCRIBED BRIEFLY IN VV. 14–16; SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS OF WHAT TO DO AND NOT TO DO IN CONNECTION WITH SUCH FESTIVALS ARE THEN DELINEATED IN VV. 17–19. 23:14 THESE WORDS SET OUT THE BASIC OVERVIEW: THE NATION MUST UNDERTAKE TO ESTABLISH A SYSTEM OF THREE SPECIAL ANNUAL FESTIVALS. THEY WERE TO BE FOCUSED ON STEPHEN YAHWEH, NOT ON THE PEOPLE THEMSELVES, AND THEREFORE BY IMPLICATION WOULD BE COVENANT WORSHIP FESTIVALS RATHER THAN MERE CELEBRATIONS OF NATIONAL HISTORY OR HARVEST FESTIVALS. THAT EACH OF THEM COINCIDED WITH A POINT OF “DOWNTIME” ON THE AGRICULTURAL CALENDAR DOES NOT SUGGEST THAT THEY WERE ORIGINALLY CANAANITE AGRICULTURAL FESTIVALS THAT THE ISRAELITES BORROWED AND GRADUALLY SANCTIFIED BY ADDING STEPHEN YAHWEH WORSHIP. RATHER, GOD IN HIS CONCERN FOR HIS PEOPLE CHOSE THESE BREAKS IN THEIR ROUTINE (THE QUIET DAYS RIGHT AFTER SPRING PLANTING, THE RELAXED TIME AFTER THE EARLY GRAIN HARVEST, AND THE TIME FOLLOWING THE FALL HARVEST) AS THE TIME FOR THEIR SPECIAL RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES. THEREBY NO ONE COULD CLAIM THAT HIS JOB RESPONSIBILITIES PREVENTED HIM FROM PARTICIPATING FULLY IN WORSHIP, AND EVERYONE COULD ASSOCIATE WORSHIP WITH JOY, A COMBINATION FULFILLING THE BIBLICAL IDEAL. VERSE 17 COMPLEMENTS THIS VERSE, SOMEWHAT IN THE MANNER OF AN INCLUSIO, BY ADDING THE EMPHASIS OF TOTAL PARTICIPATION BY EVERY FAMILY, AS REPRESENTED BY THE MALE HEAD OF THE FAMILY. 23:15 THE FIRST FESTIVAL IN THE YEAR IS NAMED FIRST, THE “FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD.” THE STORY BEHIND THIS FEAST IS RECOUNTED IN CHAPS. 11–13, AND ITS INITIAL OBSERVANCE WAS DESCRIBED IN 12:1–28 AND 13:6–10.244 A FULL APPRECIATION OF WHAT IS STATED HERE REQUIRES AWARENESS OF THOSE PASSAGES. THE COMMAND WAS THEREFORE RESUMPTIVE, GIVEN IN PREPARING THE ISRAELITES FOR THEIR EXISTENCE IN THE PROMISED LAND OF CANAAN, REINFORCING WHAT THEY HAD BEEN TOLD AT LEAST THREE MONTHS EARLIER AS THEY PREPARED FOR THE FIRST PASSOVER NIGHT—THUS THE STATEMENT “AS I COMMANDED YOU.” THIS FURTHER REINFORCEMENT OF THE PASSOVER LAW MAY HAVE PROVED ADDITIONALLY VALUABLE TO THE NON-ISRAELITES WHO HAD ALIGNED THEMSELVES WITH THE ISRAELITES IN RESPONSE TO THE PLAGUES AND LEFT WITH THEM IN THE EXODUS (12:38). FOR MANY OF THESE PEOPLE, THE WHOLE IDEA OF THE PASSOVER MAY HAVE BEEN ENTIRELY NEW. THE LAW FIXES THE DATE FOR THE FESTIVAL IN THE MINDS OF THE COVENANT PEOPLE, AGAIN REPEATING WHAT WAS ALREADY COMMANDED IN 12:2FF. THE FESTIVAL COMMEMORATED A REAL HISTORICAL EVENT, WITH THE PURPOSE OF KEEPING ITS MEMORY, AND THEREFORE ITS MESSAGE, ALIVE THROUGHOUT THE GENERATIONS OF GOD’S PEOPLE. THE CONCLUDING COMMAND, “NO ONE IS TO APPEAR BEFORE ME EMPTY-HANDED,” STATES IN A VERY SLIGHTLY EUPHEMISTIC, BUT ABSOLUTELY UNMISTAKABLE, MANNER THAT THE FESTIVAL INVOLVED GIVING AN OFFERING TO STEPHEN YAHWEH. NOT ONLY WOULD THE WORSHIPERS EAT SPECIALLY DURING THE WEEK OF THE FEAST (“FOR SEVEN DAYS EAT BREAD MADE WITHOUT YEAST”) BUT THEY ALSO WOULD BRING FOOD TO BE DEDICATED TO STEPHEN YAHWEH AND, BY IMPLICATION, PARTLY EATEN BY THE WORSHIPERS IN HIS SEXLESS PRESENCE. PASSOVER COINCIDED WITH THE FIRST GRAIN HARVEST, THAT IS, THE BARLEY HARVEST, BEING HELD IMMEDIATELY AFTER IT WHEN OTHERWISE THE CROP FARMING CHORES WERE MINIMAL. 23:16 WHAT IS CALLED THE “FEAST OF HARVEST” HERE IS ALSO KNOWN AS THE FEAST OF WEEKS (E.G., EXOD 34:22) AND OFTEN IS CALLED THE FEAST OF PENTECOST OR SIMPLY PENTECOST IN THE NEW TESTAMENT BECAUSE IT WAS NORMALLY CELEBRATED SEVEN WEEKS OR, “COUNT OFF FIFTY DAYS UP TO THE DAY AFTER THE SEVENTH SABBATH” (LEV 23:16), FIFTY DAYS AFTER THE PASSOVER WAS CELEBRATED. WHEN THE MAIN GRAIN HARVEST, ESPECIALLY THE WHEAT HARVEST, WAS COMPLETED, ISRAELITES WERE EXPECTED TO PRESENT TO GOD A GRAIN/CEREAL HARVEST OFFERING WITH TWO LOAVES OF SALTED AND REGULARLY LEAVENED BREAD (NOT UNLEAVENED AS IN THE CASE OF THE PASSOVER FESTIVAL) AS WELL AS A VARIETY OF ANIMAL SACRIFICES AND WHATEVER OTHER FREEWILL OFFERINGS THE PEOPLE CHOSE TO GIVE (LEV 23:16–21; NUM 28:26). THE DETAILS OF THE PROCESS ARE LEFT TO THE FULLER EXPLANATION IN LEV 23; HERE THE ONE-DAY SPECIAL FESTIVAL IS ANNOUNCED AND THE TIME FOR IT SET ASIDE STATUTORILY. LIKE THE OTHER TWO ANNUAL FEASTS, IT CELEBRATED PRIMARILY GOD’S GRACIOUS DELIVERANCE AND COVENANT FAITHFULNESS; SECONDARILY IT CELEBRATED HIS PROVISION OF ANOTHER YEAR’S GRAIN HARVEST AND THE ABILITY TO CONTINUE TO ENJOY LIFE, FOR WHICH A SUCCESSFUL HARVEST PROVIDED. WHAT IS HERE CALLED THE “FEAST OF INGATHERING” IS ALSO KNOWN AS THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES, OR FEAST OF BOOTHS, OR SUCCOTH (HB. FOR HUTS/BOOTHS). DESCRIBED AS WELL IN LEV 23:33–43 AND DEUT 16:13–15, THIS FESTIVAL COINCIDED WITH THE GENERAL FALL HARVEST, NOT ONLY OF VARIOUS SECOND-CROP GRAINS BUT ALSO OF TREE AND VINE CROPS SUCH AS OLIVES AND GRAPES. IT FOLLOWED BY FIVE DAYS THE DAY OF ATONEMENT (LEV 16; 23:26–32) AND REQUIRED THE ISRAELITES TO BUILD TEMPORARY FIELD HUTS (THUS “BOOTHS” OR IN OLDER ENG. “TABERNACLES”). THE COMMAND TO “OBSERVE THE FEAST OF INGATHERING AT THE END OF THE YEAR” USES LANGUAGE SOME HAVE SUGGESTED INDICATES A FALL NEW YEAR CALENDAR IN EFFECT AT THIS TIME. IN LIGHT OF 12:12, 18, HOWEVER, WHERE THE FIRST MONTH OF SPRING, ABIB, IS CLEARLY DESIGNATED AS THE FIRST MONTH OF THE CALENDAR YEAR, THE EXPRESSION “END OF THE YEAR” HERE MORE LIKELY REFLECTS THE AGRICULTURAL YEAR. 23:17 THIS COMMAND ADDRESSES WORSHIP. “APPEAR BEFORE THE SOVEREIGN LORD” (LIT., “THE LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH”) IS SIMPLY A VARIATION OF “APPEAR BEFORE THE LORD” (THE HB. IDIOM RĀʾĀH + ʾEL-PĔNÊ/LIPÊ + YHWH) IN THE SENSE OF “COME TO THE TABERNACLE COURTYARD AND STAND FACING THE TABERNACLE TENT ENTRANCE.” STEPHEN YAHWEH WOULD SOON ENOUGH REPRESENT HIS PRESENCE AMONG HIS PEOPLE SYMBOLICALLY THROUGH THE ARK OF THE COVENANT, HOUSED IN THE TABERNACLE (EXOD 25:10–20; 26:1–37; 27:9–19); AND THERE, WITHIN THAT COURTYARD, THE HEADS OF FAMILIES (ALL THE MEN) WOULD STAND TO WORSHIP. ALL WORSHIP INVOLVED AN OFFERING (V. 15) THAT WAS ACTUALLY PREPARED AND PLACED ON THE ALTAR (IF, E.G., IN THE FORM OF MEAT TO BE COOKED) OR PRESENTED AT THE ALTAR (IF, E.G., A GRAIN OR DRINK OFFERING) BY A PRIEST [SERGEANT]. MANY KNOW THAT WORSHIPERS DID NOT DO THEIR OWN SACRIFICING OR PRESENTATION BUT WATCHED AS IT WAS DONE FOR THEM BY A PRIEST [SERGEANT] PROPERLY CONSECRATED FOR THE TASK (EXOD 29). THE INSTRUCTION IN THIS VERSE IS PRELIMINARY; THE FULL EXPLANATION OF HOW OFFERINGS WERE GIVEN TO GOD COMES LATER IN THE SINAI COVENANT AT LEV 1–7 AND AT VARIOUS OTHER POINTS THROUGHOUT LEVITICUS. 23:18–19 TYPE OF LAW: APODICTIC (UNCONDITIONAL, APPLYING TO ALL SACRIFICES BY ALL ISRAELITES AT ALL TIMES). PARADIGMATIC RANGE: IMPLICITLY OUTLAW ALL SORTS OF OTHER PAGAN SEXUAL RITUALS AS WELL, NOT MERELY THOSE SPECIFICALLY MENTIONED HERE BECAUSE THEY REPRESENTED SOME OF THE MOST COMMON TEMPTATIONS FOR THE ISRAELITES. THE FOUR SHORT LAWS IN THESE TWO VERSES ADDRESS PAGAN SEXUAL RITUALS THAT GOD WOULD NOT ALLOW HIS PEOPLE TO PRACTICE. ISRAEL COULD NOT SIMPLY DUPLICATE THE RELIGIOUS SEXUAL RITUALS OF THE CANAANITES OR OTHER ANCIENT PEOPLES AND ADD A STEPHEN YAHWISTIC TWIST TO THEM. GOD’S NATION WAS TO LIVE UP TO HIS TOP STANDARDS, REFLECTING THE LOFTY TRUTHS THAT UNDERLIE HIS COVENANT, ESCHEWING THE APPROACHES USED BY WORSHIPERS OF OTHER GODS TO CURRYING DIVINE FAVOR OR TO ATTEMPT FORBIDDEN MAGIC TO MAGICALLY TO LENGTHEN OR STRENGTHEN LIFE. THE FIRST COMMAND PROHIBITED ISRAELITES FROM OFFERING “THE BLOOD OF A SACRIFICE TO ME ALONG WITH ANYTHING CONTAINING YEAST.” ANCIENT PEOPLES WERE WELL AWARE THAT WHEN THE BLOOD WAS DRAINED FROM AN ANIMAL, THE ANIMAL WOULD DIE. THEY THUS RIGHTLY CONCLUDED THAT THE LIFE OF AN ANIMAL WAS IN ITS BLOOD. IN AN ATTEMPT TO STRENGTHEN OR PROLONG THEIR OWN LIVES, THEY STARTED DRINKING OR EATING BLOOD FROM ANIMALS SACRIFICED FOR WORSHIP OR MERELY FOR EATING, PERFORMING IN EFFECT AN ACT OF WHAT IS KNOWN AS “SYMPATHETIC MAGIC.” THIS WAS STRICTLY FORBIDDEN TO THE ISRAELITES (LEV 3:17; 7:26; DEUT 15:23) AND EVEN TO THE PATRIARCHS LONG BEFORE THERE WAS AN ISRAEL (GEN 9:4). DRINKING BLOOD IS SOMEWHAT UNAPPETIZING, BUT USING THE BLOOD AS AN INGREDIENT IN BREADS OF VARIOUS SORTS (INDICATED HERE BY THE WORDING “ANYTHING CONTAINING YEAST”) WAS A METHOD SOMETIMES EMPLOYED TO ENABLE PEOPLE TO CONSUME THE BLOOD IN A PALATABLE WAY. OF SPECIAL INTEREST IN THIS CONNECTION IS THE FACT THAT JESUS DID ALLOW—EVEN REQUIRED—THE DRINKING OF BLOOD SYMBOLICALLY IN THE OBSERVANCE OF THE LORD’S SUPPER. IN THIS REGARD, THE LORD’S SUPPER IS ACTUALLY A PURER SYMBOL OF THE TRANSFER OF LIFE FROM THE SACRIFICIAL LAMB (CHRIST) TO THE WORSHIPER THAN ANY SACRIFICE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT COULD BE, IN WHICH THE LAMB’S DEATH WAS SIMPLY UNDERSTOOD AS A SUBSTITUTE FOR THAT OF THE WORSHIPER, WITHOUT THE ASPECT OF TRANSFER OF LIFE PER SE. THE SECOND COMMAND, “THE FAT OF MY FESTIVAL OFFERINGS MUST NOT BE KEPT UNTIL MORNING,” MIRRORS THE RULE AGAINST ATTEMPTED OVERNIGHT PRESERVATION OF THE MANNA ON ANY DAY EXCEPT THE SABBATH (SEE COMMENTS ON 16:4–5, 17–30), BUT HAS A MORE STRONGLY PROHIBITIVE PURPOSE HERE. THE FULLER STATEMENT OF THE PRINCIPLE COMES IN LEV 3:16–17: “THE PRIEST [SERGEANT] SHALL BURN [THE FAT PARTS OF A SACRIFICIAL ANIMAL] … ON THE ALTAR AS FOOD, AN OFFERING BY FIRE, FOR A PLEASING AROMA. ALL THE FAT IS THE LORD’S. THIS IS A LASTING ORDINANCE, GENERATIONS TO COME, WHEREVER YOU LIVE: YOU MUST NOT EAT ANY FAT OR ANY BLOOD.” THOUGH ANIMAL SACRIFICES COULD TAKE PLACE AT VARIOUS TIMES OF THE DAY, A KEY TIME FOR MAKING ANIMAL SACRIFICES WAS THE EVENING. THE FAT PORTIONS WERE SEPARATED FROM THE MUSCLE MEATS AND WERE SUPPOSED TO BE PRESENTED AS BURNT OFFERINGS ON THE ALTAR TO GOD. SOMEONE WHO TRIED TO KEEP THEM FOR ANY OTHER PURPOSE—PERHAPS SOMETHING AS “MINOR” AS KEEPING THEM OVERNIGHT FOR USE ALONG WITH THE MORNING OFFERING, BUT PERHAPS FOR ACTUAL EATING—WAS FAILING TO SACRIFICE PROPERLY. AT A MINIMUM KEEPING THE FAT UNTIL MORNING WOULD BE “MAKING GOD WAIT FOR HIS PORTION OF THE SACRIFICE,” AND COULD NOT BE TOLERATED. CANAANITES AND OTHER PAGAN PEOPLES DID NOT NECESSARILY BURN ALL THE ANIMAL FAT AS A DIVINE OFFERING AT THE TIME OF COOKING ANIMALS ON THEIR ALTARS: THUS, THE TEMPTATION OF THE ISRAELITES TO IMITATE THEIR NEIGHBORS INSTEAD OF FOLLOWING GOD’S DECREES AND THE NEED SPECIFICALLY TO OBVIATE SUCH AN APPROACH. “BRING THE BEST OF THE FIRST-FRUITS OF YOUR SOIL TO THE HOUSE OF THE LORD YOUR GOD” MOVES THE TOPIC FROM POSSIBLE ABUSE OF ANIMAL OFFERINGS TO POSSIBLE ABUSE OF CROP OFFERINGS. WITH CROP TITHES AND OFFERINGS, THERE WAS PRESUMABLY LESS LIKELIHOOD OF THE TEMPTATION TO OFFER SOME AND LEAVE SOME FOR A LATER POINT OR FOR ONE’S PERSONAL USE AT OR AROUND THE TABERNACLE. INSTEAD, THE DANGER WAS THAT ISRAELITES WOULD BE TEMPTED NOT TO BRING THE PROPER PORTION AT ALL (IF IT WERE A TITHE) OR THE PROPER QUALITY (IF IT WERE EITHER A TITHE OR ANY OTHER GRAIN/OIL/WINE OFFERING). ONE COULD NOT LEAVE AT HOME A PORTION OF A LIVE LAMB. THE WHOLE THING WAS BROUGHT TO THE TABERNACLE ALIVE FOR SLAUGHTER THERE. BUT ONE COULD LEAVE AT HOME WHATEVER PORTION OF ONE’S SOIL PRODUCE ONE WISHED—AND PERHAPS IN THE ABSENCE OF NOSY NEIGHBORS ONE COULD HOPE THAT NO ONE WOULD BE AWARE THAT THE PORTION BROUGHT TO THE TABERNACLE WAS SMALLER AND OF POORER QUALITY THAN IT SHOULD HAVE BEEN COMPARED TO THE PORTION RETAINED AT HOME FOR THE FAMILY TO ENJOY. SUCH A PRACTICE WOULD BE COMPARABLE TO THE PRACTICE OF DENYING GOD HIS PORTION OF AN ANIMAL SACRIFICE AT THE TIME THE REST OF THE COOKED ANIMAL WAS SHARED BETWEEN THE PRIESTS [SERGEANTS] AND WORSHIPERS. IT WOULD BE CHEATING GOD, FAILING TO HONOR HIM PROPERLY AS THE LORD OF HIS PEOPLE WHO DESERVED THEIR BEST, NOT THEIR LEFT-OVERS. ACCORDINGLY, BOTH THE FIRST AND THE BEST OF ONE’S HARVEST WAS DUE TO GOD—FROM ANY OF THE VARIOUS HARVESTS THAT THE FESTIVALS FOLLOWED. THE PROHIBITION “DO NOT COOK A YOUNG GOAT [KID] IN ITS MOTHER’S MILK” OCCURS THREE TIMES IN THE PENTATEUCHAL LAW (ALSO IN 34:26 AND DEUT 14:21). CANAANITE FERTILITY RELIGION IMITATED THE FERTILITY PRACTICES GENERALLY FOUND THROUGHOUT THE ANCIENT WORLD. THESE INCLUDED “MARRYING” SEEDS WHEN PLANTING A FIELD (LEV 19:19; DEUT 22:9) ON THE THEORY THAT SUCH A RITUAL WOULD MAGICALLY STIMULATE THE POWERS OF NATURE TO PROCREATE, PRODUCING MORE FERTILE CROPS. SINCE MOTHER’S MILK (THE MILK OF THE GOAT DOE) WAS WHAT MADE THE GOAT KIDS GROW BIG AND STRONG, THE FOLK THEORY DEVELOPED THAT DOE’S MILK EMPLOYED IN THE PROCESS OF A SACRIFICE (IN THIS CASE BY BOILING RATHER THAN BY ROASTING ON AN ALTAR) WOULD SOMEHOW IMPART STRENGTH TO THE GOAT FLOCK, MAKING THE WHOLE FLOCK MORE FERTILE. SUCH NONSENSE, IF BELIEVED, COULD HAVE LED THE ISRAELITES TO CONCLUDE THAT THE POWER TO SHAPE THEIR DESTINY AND TO LIVE THE ABUNDANT LIFE WAS TO BE FOUND IN FORBIDDEN MAGICAL PRACTICES AND FERTILITY SEXUAL RELIGION RATHER THAN IN THE ONLY TRUE, ALIVE GOD. EVEN IF ALL OTHER PEOPLE GROUPS KNOWN TO THEM PRACTICED THESE SORTS OF RITUALS, THE ISRAELITES COULD NOT. AS STEPHEN YAHWEH’S PEOPLE, THEY WERE TO BE ABOVE SUCH THINGS, ATTRIBUTING ALL LIFE TO THE SINGLE SOURCE THEREOF.**

**INSTRUCTIONS TO OBEY GOD DURING AND AFTER THE CONQUEST (23:20–33)**

**20 “SEE, I AM SENDING AN ANGEL AHEAD OF YOU TO GUARD YOU ALONG THE WAY AND TO BRING YOU TO THE PLACE I HAVE PREPARED. 21 PAY ATTENTION TO HIM AND LISTEN TO WHAT HE SAYS. DO NOT REBEL AGAINST HIM; HE WILL NOT FORGIVE YOUR REBELLION, SINCE MY NAME [STEPHEN YAHWEH] IS IN HIM. 22 IF YOU LISTEN CAREFULLY TO WHAT HE SAYS AND DO ALL THAT I SAY, I WILL BE AN ENEMY TO YOUR ENEMIES AND WILL OPPOSE THOSE WHO OPPOSE YOU. 23 MY ANGEL [ST. MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL] WILL GO AHEAD OF YOU AND BRING YOU INTO THE LAND OF THE AMORITES, HITTITES, PERIZZITES, CANAANITES, HIVITES AND JEBUSITES, AND I WILL WIPE THEM OUT. 24 DO NOT BOW DOWN BEFORE THEIR GODS OR WORSHIP THEM OR FOLLOW THEIR [SEXUAL] PRACTICES. YOU MUST DEMOLISH THEM AND BREAK THEIR SACRED STONES TO PIECES. 25 WORSHIP THE LORD YOUR GOD, AND HIS BLESSING WILL BE ON YOUR FOOD AND WATER. I WILL TAKE AWAY SICKNESS FROM AMONG YOU, 26 AND NONE WILL MISCARRY OR BE BARREN IN YOUR LAND. I WILL GIVE YOU A FULL LIFE SPAN. 27 “I WILL SEND MY TERROR AHEAD OF YOU AND THROW INTO CONFUSION EVERY NATION YOU ENCOUNTER. I WILL MAKE ALL YOUR ENEMIES TURN THEIR BACKS AND RUN. 28 I WILL SEND THE HORNET AHEAD OF YOU TO DRIVE THE HIVITES, CANAANITES AND HITTITES OUT OF YOUR WAY. 29 BUT I WILL NOT DRIVE THEM OUT IN A SINGLE YEAR, BECAUSE THE LAND WOULD BECOME DESOLATE AND THE WILD ANIMALS TOO NUMEROUS FOR YOU. 30 LITTLE BY LITTLE I WILL DRIVE THEM OUT BEFORE YOU, UNTIL YOU HAVE INCREASED ENOUGH TO TAKE POSSESSION OF THE LAND. 31 “I WILL ESTABLISH YOUR BORDERS FROM THE RED SEA TO THE SEA OF THE PHILISTINES, AND FROM THE DESERT TO THE RIVER. I WILL HAND OVER TO YOU THE PEOPLE WHO LIVE IN THE LAND AND YOU WILL DRIVE THEM OUT BEFORE YOU. 32 DO NOT MAKE A COVENANT WITH THEM OR WITH THEIR GODS. 33 DO NOT LET THEM LIVE IN YOUR LAND, OR THEY WILL CAUSE YOU TO SIN AGAINST ME, BECAUSE THE WORSHIP OF THEIR GODS WILL CERTAINLY BE A SNARE TO YOU.”**

**THE ISRAELITES HAD ALREADY BEEN THROUGH MUCH THAT WAS NEW TO THEM IN THEIR EXODUS FROM EGYPT AND THEIR TRAVELS IN THE SINAI WILDERNESS, CONCLUDING AT MOUNT SINAI, WHERE GOD HAD SO IMPRESSIVELY—INDEED, OVERWHELMINGLY —APPEARED TO THEM AND BEGUN TO GIVE THEM HIS LAW. YET GREAT ADVENTURES AND RISKS LAY AHEAD OF THEM, NOT MERELY BEHIND THEM, AND THEY WOULD FACE CHALLENGES TO THEIR FAITH IN STEPHEN YAHWEH FROM VARIOUS DIRECTIONS. IN THE PASSAGE FOUND HERE, GOD ENCOURAGED THE ISRAELITES TO TRUST HIS GENEROUS AND MIGHTY PROVISIONS FOR THEM AND AT THE SAME TIME WARNED THEM OF SOME OF THE DANGERS THEY WOULD ENCOUNTER DURING THE CONQUEST OF THE PROMISED LAND AND THEIR SETTLING IN TO OCCUPY IT AND BUILD NEW LIVES THERE FOR THEMSELVES AS HIS LANDED PEOPLE. A NATURAL QUESTION THAT MIGHT ARISE FROM THIS MATERIAL IS: “WHAT IS IT DOING HERE?” AFTER ALL, THIS IS A PASSAGE OF PROMISE AND WARNING, SO HOW DOES IT FIT WITHIN TYPICAL LEGAL MATERIAL? PART OF THE ANSWER COMES IN NOTING THAT ALL OLD TESTAMENT LAW IS PROMISE AND WARNING. COVENANT LAWS ARE INSTRUCTIONS FOR HOW TO PLEASE THE COVENANT SOVEREIGN, WITH THE IMPLICIT, AND OCCASIONALLY EVEN EXPLICIT, PROMISE ATTACHED TO EACH THAT KEEPING THE LAW WOULD BRING THE BLESSINGS PROMISED IN THE SANCTIONS PORTION OF THE COVENANT. LIKEWISE, THEY BEAR THE IMPLICIT WARNING THAT FAILURE TO KEEP THE LAW WOULD LEAD TO MISERIES OF ALL SORTS (THE CURSES OF THE SANCTIONS PORTIONS). INDEED, ISRAEL’S LAW WAS NOT MERELY A LAW CODE BUT A COVENANT, A NATIONAL AGREEMENT WITH STEPHEN YAHWEH, WHOSE PURPOSE WAS TO HELP PEOPLE ENTRUST THEMSELVES FULLY TO HIM AND LIVE ALL OF LIFE UNDER HIS GRACIOUS RULE, NOT JUST A SET OF RULES TO CONTROL THEIR BEHAVIOR. THE ADMIXTURE OF LEGAL REMINDERS, PROMISES, AND WARNINGS IN THE PROPHETICAL BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT PROVIDES A TELLING PARALLEL TO THE PURPOSE OF THE PRESENT PASSAGE: THE PROPHETS WERE COVENANT ENFORCEMENT MEDIATORS, SEEKING TO MOTIVATE THE PEOPLE TO WHOM GOD HAD SENT THEM TO TAKE HIS COVENANT SERIOUSLY AND EMBRACE FULLY ITS GUIDANCE FOR THEIR LIVES. MOTIVATION IS WHAT THE PRESENT PASSAGE IS ESPECIALLY ABOUT. IT FORMS THE CONCLUSION TO THE COVENANT CODE, REMINDING THE ISRAELITES OF WHO THEY WERE, WHERE THEY WERE GOING, AND HOW THEY WERE TO GET THERE. IN THAT REGARD IT MAY BE CONSIDERED SOMETHING OF AN INCLUSIO WITH THE INTRODUCTION TO THE COVENANT, ESPECIALLY THE GENERALLY COMPARABLE WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT AND WARNING IN 19:3–6. THE SPECIAL MOTIVATING FORCE BEHIND THIS CONCLUDING SECTION OF THE COVENANT CODE IS STEPHEN YAHWEH HIMSELF. THE ANGEL, HE SENT TO GUARD AND LEAD HIS PEOPLE (VV. 20–22) WAS HIS ANGEL (“MY ANGEL)” V. 23), AND GOD PROMISED TO OPPOSE PERSONALLY ANY WHO OPPOSED THEMSELVES TO HIS PEOPLE (V. 22). THE PROMISE OF ABUNDANT LIFE HE OFFERED (VV. 25–26) CAME FROM HIS OWN GRACE, IN RESPONSE TO HIS PEOPLE’S WORSHIPING HIM EXCLUSIVELY (VV. 24–25). THE TERROR HE WOULD SEND ON THE NATIONS OPPOSING ISRAEL’S CONQUEST (V. 27) REPRESENTED HIS OWN DIRECT FIGHTING FOR HIS PEOPLE IN A MANNER AS IRRESISTIBLE AS THE FLIGHT OF A HORNET (VV. 28–30), SO FROM THE ISRAELITE POINT OF VIEW HE WOULD SIMPLY HAVE HANDED THE LAND TO THEM AS A GIFT (V. 31) SO LITTLE WOULD HAVE BEEN THEIR MILITARY CONTRIBUTION AND SO GREAT HIS. ISRAEL WAS A SMALL AND WEAK NATION WHO WOULD HAVE TO GROW OVER TIME INTO THE SIZE AND STRENGTH NECESSARY TO CONTROL ALL OF CANAAN (VV. 29–30). AND THE GREATEST DANGER OF ALLOWING THE INHABITANTS OF THE PROMISED LAND TO LIVE WAS NOT THE THREAT THEY COULD DO HARM TO ISRAEL’S PEACE BUT THAT THEY MIGHT KEEP ISRAEL FROM BEING CLOSE AND FAITHFUL TO GOD, WHO WAS TO BE THEIR EXCLUSIVE FOCUS (V. 33). THE COVENANT CODE IS THUS A MEANS TO AN END: FIDELITY TO THE ONE ON WHOM ISRAEL’S WELLBEING ENTIRELY DEPENDED. WITHOUT STEPHEN YAHWEH, THEY WERE NOTHING, COULD DO NOTHING, AND WOULD END UP AS NOTHING. WITH HIM LEADING AND THEM FOLLOWING OBEDIENTLY, HOWEVER, ALL WOULD FALL PROPERLY INTO PLACE, AND THEIR PURPOSE AS A PEOPLE WOULD COME TO FULFILLMENT.**

**PROMISE OF THE ANGEL OF STEPHEN YAHWEH TO LEAD THE WAY TO THE PROMISED LAND (23:20–23)**

**23:20 THE LORD’S ANGEL (THE ANGEL WHO IS STEPHEN YAHWEH, THE ANGEL OF THE LORD IN ACTS 6:15) WOULD BOTH “GUARD” THE PEOPLE ON THE WAY FROM SINAI TO THE PROMISED LAND AND “BRING” THEM SAFELY TO THEIR INTENDED, PROMISED DESTINATION. GOD’S PLAN INVOLVED MORE THAN MERELY MAKING ISRAEL HIS PEOPLE; IT ALSO INVOLVED GIVING THEM A PLACE. THEIR IDENTITY AS HIS PEOPLE WOULD IN PART BE DISPLAYED BY THEIR HAVING CANAAN AS A POSSESSION. ON THE WAY HE WOULD BE WITH THEM; WHEN THEY GOT THERE, HE WOULD DWELL AMONG THEM. HIS SEXLESS PRESENCE IS ASSURED BY HIS PROMISE, AND THEY NEEDED TO LEARN TO THINK IN TERMS OF HIS SEXLESS PRESENCE AMONG THEM AT ALL TIMES. THE ANGEL WOULD LEAD THE WAY. HE WOULD GO AHEAD; NOT MERELY GO ALONG. AND HE WOULD BE SENT BY GOD, NOT MERELY ARRIVE ON HIS OWN. 23:21 SUCCESS REQUIRES ONGOING OBEDIENCE. THE PEOPLE COULD NOT HOPE TO ENJOY GOD’S BENEFITS, INCLUDING HIS ABIDING PROTECTION, IF THEY TRIED TO MAKE DECISIONS ON THEIR OWN. WOULD THEY BE SO STUPID AND HEADSTRONG AS TO TRY TO ARRANGE FOR THEIR OWN INVASION OF THE PROMISED LAND RATHER THAN FOLLOWING FAITHFULLY HIS LEADING? ABSOLUTELY. THAT WAS EXACTLY WHAT THEY EVENTUALLY DID AFTER LEARNING THAT THEY MIGHT NOT BE ABLE TO ENTER THE PROMISED LAND AS SOON AS THEY HOPED BY REASON OF THEIR OWN LACK OF COURAGE (NUM 14:41–45). KNOWING THEIR CAPABILITY TO DISOBEY, GOD REMINDED THEM STERNLY THAT ONLY THROUGH OBEDIENCE TO HIS LEADERSHIP AND HIS WORD WOULD THEY PROSPER IN THE CONQUEST OF CANAAN. THE ANGEL HAD STEPHEN YAHWEH’S “NAME … IN HIM,” A WAY OF SAYING THAT “I WILL BE WITH YOU, RIGHT THERE AS YOU TRAVEL TOWARD THE PROMISED LAND, RIGHT THERE AS YOU BEGIN THE CONQUEST, RIGHT THERE AS YOU FIGHT, RIGHT THERE AS YOU SETTLE IN.” ACCORDINGLY, NO SEXUAL REBELLION AGAINST GOD’S LEADERSHIP (THE ANGEL BEARING HIS “NAME”) COULD BE TOLERATED. IN THE NEW COVENANT THE NAME OF GOD [STEPHEN YAHWEH] WAS ULTIMATELY BORNE BY HIS PEOPLE, SEVERALLY AND INDIVIDUALLY. 23:22 IT BECOMES CLEARER AS THE DISCOURSE PROGRESSES THAT THE ANGEL AND STEPHEN YAHWEH WERE ONE AND THE SAME. HERE “WHAT HE SAYS” AND “ALL THAT I SAY” ARE TREATED SYNTACTICALLY AS SYNONYMOUS. (COMPLETE OBEDIENCE MEANT KEEPING HIS COVENANT FULLY 110.0000%, INCLUDING ANYTHING HE MIGHT ADD TO IT AFTER DEPARTURE FROM SINAI) CAREFUL LISTENING TO THE LAW WAS REQUIRED HERE, AS WAS OBEDIENCE TO “ALL THAT I SAY.” THEN AND ONLY THEN WOULD GOD “BE AN ENEMY TO YOUR ENEMIES” AND “OPPOSE THOSE WHO OPPOSE YOU,” THAT IS, DO THEIR FIGHTING FOR THEM ACCORDING TO THE EXPECTATIONS OF BIBLICAL HOLY WAR. BY REASON OF HUMAN IMPERFECTION, THIS KIND OF EXPECTATION IS HARD TO FOLLOW, AND IT IS NOT DIFFICULT TO PREDICT THAT ISRAEL MIGHT FAIL TO KEEP THESE COMMANDS FULLY. IN EFFECT, THEN, A NEED FOR DIVINE GRACE WAS CREATED IMPLICITLY BY SUCH DEMANDS, A GRACE THAT WOULD ALLOW FOR COMPLETE FORGIVENESS AND WOULD PROVIDE FOR THE COMPLETE SEXLESS PRESENCE OF GOD AMONG AND WITHIN BELIEVERS. 23:23 GOD, IN THE FORM OF THE ANGEL MANIFESTING HIS IDENTITY AND PRESENCE, WAS WILLING TO EXTERMINATE THE VARIOUS CANAANITE GROUPS WHOSE DOOM WAS ALREADY ANNOUNCED IN THE JUDGMENT SENTENCE SPOKEN AGAINST THEM TO ABRAHAM IN GEN 15:16. THE SIX GROUPS MENTIONED IN THIS VERSE ARE A REPRESENTATIVE SAMPLE, BUT NOT THE WHOLE OF THE VARIOUS ETHNIC SUBGROUPS MORE BROADLY CALLED “CANAANITE.” THE DOMINANT GROUP WAS INDEED THE CANAANITES, WHOSE NAME COULD BE USED AS A SYNECDOCHE GENERALLY FOR ALL NATIVE PEOPLES IN THE REGION OF THE PROMISED LAND. EARLIER THESE HAD BEEN MORE OFTEN CALLED “AMORITES” BY THE MESOPOTAMIANS, AGAIN USING THE NAME OF ONE OF THE MAJOR GROUPS AS A CONVENIENT SHORTHAND TO ENCOMPASS LOGICALLY ALL THE OTHERS. PAUL REFERRED TO THE “SEVEN NATIONS” (ACTS 13:19) IN CANAAN (IMPLICITLY INCLUDING ALSO THE GERGASHITES), NOT BECAUSE THAT WAS AN EXHAUSTIVE LIST BUT BECAUSE IT BECAME SLIGHTLY MORE COMMON IN JEWISH TRADITION TO SPEAK OF THE SEVEN THAN THE SIX, EVEN THOUGH SIX NATIONS ARE MORE OFTEN LISTED THAN SEVEN NATIONS IN OLD TESTAMENT CONTEXTS DESCRIBING THE PEOPLE GROUPS OF CANAAN. THE POINT IS THAT GOD WOULD WIPE THEM OUT—THE ISRAELITES MAINLY WOULD GO THROUGH THE MOTIONS OF WAR RATHER THAN HAVE TO EXPERIENCE ITS TERRORS AND RAVAGES. IN THE CASE OF THE REPETITION OF THE NAMES OF THE NATIONS IN V. 28, ONLY THREE NAMES ARE USED, STILL ENOUGH TO SUGGEST “ALL THE PEOPLE GROUPS OF CANAAN.” THE SPECIAL EMPHASIS HERE IS ON GOD’S SEXLESS PRESENCE: THE PROMISES MADE ARE ALL WAYS OF SAYING “I WILL BE WITH YOU, RIGHT THERE AS YOU TRAVEL TOWARD THE PROMISED LAND, RIGHT THERE AS YOU BEGIN THE CONQUEST, RIGHT THERE AS YOU FIGHT, RIGHT THERE AS YOU SETTLE IN.” ON THE THEME PRESENTED HERE OF ISRAEL’S ENEMIES BECOMING STEPHEN YAHWEH’S ENEMIES, SEE GEN 12:3; 27:28–29; DEUT 28:1–7; JOSH 1:1–9; CF. ALSO ACTS 9:4; 22:7; 26:14. INDEED, ALL OF THE ORACLES AGAINST FOREIGN NATIONS IN THE PROPHETICAL BOOKS ARE PREDICATED ON THE SAME UNDERLYING CONCEPT: THOSE WHO OPPOSED GOD’S PEOPLE OPPOSED THE LORD HIMSELF.**

**REQUIREMENTS AND PROMISES RELATED TO FAITHFULLY WORSHIPING THE ONE & ONLY TRUE GOD EXCLUSIVELY (23:24–30)**

**23:24 TWO DEMANDS WERE MADE UPON THE ISRAELITES. THE FIRST WAS A PROHIBITION OF WORSHIP OF ANY OF THE GODS THE ISRAELITES WOULD ENCOUNTER ONCE THEY REACHED THE PROMISED LAND, GODS WORSHIPED BY THE LOCAL CANAANITES. THE SECOND WAS A DEMAND FOR ACTION: THE PEOPLE MUST DESTROY BOTH IDOLS AND SACRED STONES, THE MEANS AND REMINDERS OF WORSHIP. WHY WOULD ISRAEL BE TEMPTED TO WORSHIP LOCAL CANAANITE DEITIES? THE ANSWER IS THAT ONCE SETTLED IN CANAAN, THEY WOULD SURELY DESIRE AGRICULTURAL SUCCESS, WHICH IN THE ANCIENT WORLD WAS GENERALLY ATTRIBUTED TO PROPER INVOLVEMENT OF THE DEITIES IN THE AGRICULTURAL PROCESS THROUGH WORSHIP. IN GENERAL, ANCIENT PEOPLES BELIEVED THAT THE GODS COULD DO ANYTHING BUT FEED THEMSELVES. HUMANS THEREFORE HAD THE JOB OF RAISING FOOD FOR THE GODS, WHICH WAS THEN “SENT” TO THEM THROUGH THE OFFERINGS HUMANS GAVE IN THE PRESENCE OF THE GODS’ IDOLS. WHAT PART DID THE GODS HAVE IN THIS PROCESS? THEY CAUSED THE CROPS TO GROW AND THE FLOCKS AND HERDS TO MULTIPLY. THE ANCIENT FARMER THOUGHT THAT THE GODS WERE ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL TO THE AGRICULTURAL PROCESS AND THAT THE WAY TO INVOLVE THE GOODWILL OF THE GODS ON BEHALF OF ONE’S FARMING WAS TO WORSHIP THEM. THE ESSENCE OF WORSHIP WAS PROVIDING FOOD FOR THEM IN THE FORM OF SACRIFICES. WHEN ISRAEL WOULD ARRIVE IN THE PROMISED LAND, THE TEMPTATION TO PLANT AS THE CANAANITES PLANTED, TO CULTIVATE AS THEY CULTIVATED, TO HARVEST AS THEY HARVESTED, AND TO WORSHIP AS THEY WORSHIPED WOULD BE ALMOST IRRESISTIBLE SINCE ALL THESE WERE THOUGHT TO GO TOGETHER AS PART AND PARCEL OF FARMING IN ANY GIVEN LOCALITY. TO FREE HIS PEOPLE FROM BONDAGE TO SUCH ATTRACTIVE NONSENSE, DANGEROUS BECAUSE IT COULD NOT SAVE AS ONLY, HE COULD, STEPHEN YAHWEH FIRMLY FORBADE ANY INVOLVEMENT IN PAGAN WORSHIP PRACTICES, JUST AS HE FORBADE ANY INVOLVEMENT IN PAGAN PLANTING OR AGRICULTURAL FERTILITY RITUALS. LIKEWISE, THE ISRAELITES WERE REQUIRED TO DESTROY ANY VESTIGE OF PAGAN SEXUAL WORSHIP, INCLUDING NOT MERELY IDOLS BUT ALSO “SACRED STONES.” IN THIS VERSE COMES THE FIRST OCCURRENCE OF THE TERM “SACRED STONES” (NIV) IN EXODUS, OFTEN ALSO TRANSLATED AS “PILLARS,” AND SOMETIMES EVEN SIMPLY PARTIALLY TRANSLITERATED (AS MAṢṢĒBÔT OR THE LIKE) BECAUSE THE WORD IS SOMETHING OF A TERMINUS TECHNICUS. THESE WERE LARGE STONES ERECTED AS SPECIAL REMINDERS RATHER THAN SMALL STONES THAT COULD BE CARRIED. JACOB ERECTED ONE AT BETHEL (GEN 28:18, 22; 35:14–15), WHICH HE HAD ANOINTED (GEN 31:13; 35:14) IN RECOGNITION OF GOD’S REVELATION TO HIM THERE, AND ANOTHER AT MIZPAH (GEN 31:45) AS WITNESS (ALONG WITH A SPECIAL STONE HEAP THAT THE WHOLE FAMILY ASSEMBLED) TO THE COVENANT HE AND LABAN MADE. HE ALSO SET ONE UP TO MARK RACHEL’S TOMB (GEN 35:20). MOSES HIMSELF, AT GOD’S BEHEST, WOULD SOON SET UP A SACRED STONE GROUPING, TWELVE SUCH STONES REPRESENTING THE NUMBER OF THE TRIBES OF ISRAEL (SEE COMMENTS ON 24:4), SUGGESTING THAT MEMORIAL STONES OR PILLARS WERE NOT PER SE ILLEGAL OR HETERODOX WHEN ISRAELITES ERECTED THEM AS WITNESSES TO SOME ASPECT OF THE ONE TRUE GOD’S RELATIONSHIP TO THEM. WHAT COULD NOT BE TOLERATED WAS THE CANAANITE PAGAN USAGE OF SACRED STONES/PILLARS. THESE WERE ROUTINELY CONDEMNED IN THE OLD TESTAMENT BECAUSE THEY MARKED PAGAN SHRINES AND/OR FALSE RELIGIOUS LOCATIONS OF ONE SORT OR ANOTHER. THE CANAANITE SACRED STONES PROBABLY WERE CARVED IN MOST INSTANCES WITH IDOLATROUS DEPICTIONS AND INSCRIPTIONS (LEV 26:1, “DO NOT MAKE IDOLS OR SET UP AN IMAGE OR A SACRED STONE FOR YOURSELVES, AND DO NOT PLACE A CARVED STONE IN YOUR LAND TO BOW DOWN BEFORE IT”), AND IN MANY CASES PROBABLY DEPICTED IN LARGE SCULPTURE OF OR AT LEAST A RELIEF OF THE GOD THEY WERE INTENDED TO CALL ATTENTION TO (E.G., 2 KGS 10:27, “THEY DEMOLISHED THE SACRED STONE OF BAAL, AND TORE DOWN THE TEMPLE OF BAAL”). BUT CARVED OR INSCRIBED OR NOT, SUCH STONES WERE FORBIDDEN TO THE ISRAELITES IF THEY WERE IN ANY WAY ASSOCIATED WITH PAGAN SEXUAL IDOLATRY. MERELY MOVING THEM OUT OF PUBLIC VIEW WOULD NOT DO; THEY MIGHT EASILY BE FOUND AND REERECTED. DESTRUCTION WAS THE ONLY ACTION APPROPRIATE FOR SUCH SYMBOLS OF PAGANISM. DEMOLITION OF IDOLS, WHICH WERE MAINLY MADE OF WOOD OVERLAID WITH GOLD OR SILVER, COULD BE ACCOMPLISHED BY BURNING; DEMOLITION OF SACRED STONES WAS ACCOMPLISHED BY SMASHING. 23:25–30 VERSES 25–30 FUNCTION AS A SORT OF SHORT BLESSINGS LIST, SOMETHING OF AN ADUMBRATION OF THE BLESSINGS PORTION OF THE SANCTIONS THAT WOULD FOLLOW IN GREATER ABUNDANCE AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE SINAI COVENANT (I.E., IN LEV 26). THE BLESSINGS AND CURSES (THE SANCTIONS) OF THE COVENANT PROVIDED INCENTIVES FOR KEEPING IT: CURSES AS WARNINGS OF THE DISASTERS THAT WOULD HAPPEN TO THE ISRAELITES IF THEY FAILED TO KEEP THE COVENANT AND BLESSINGS AS PROMISES OF GOOD THINGS THAT WOULD HAPPEN TO THEM IF THEY SUCCEEDED IN HONORING THEIR FORMAL, LEGAL RELATIONSHIP WITH THEIR GOD. THE CURSES ARE SUGGESTED IN THE WORDING OF VV. 21 (“HE WILL NOT FORGIVE YOUR REBELLION”) AND 33 (“DO NOT LET THEM LIVE IN YOUR LAND, OR THEY WILL CAUSE YOU TO SIN AGAINST ME, BECAUSE THE WORSHIP OF THEIR GODS WILL CERTAINLY BE A SNARE TO YOU”) WITH WORDING THAT IS RELATIVELY GENERAL; THE BLESSINGS IN VV. 25–30 ARE GIVEN WITH WORDING THAT IS BOTH MORE EXTENSIVE AND MORE SPECIFIC. A PROPORTIONATE REVERSAL (MORE CURSES THAN BLESSINGS) PROVIDES A SORT OF BALANCE IN LEV 26. 23:25–26 AS A RESULT OF PROPER WORSHIP (EXCLUSIVELY OF STEPHEN YAHWEH AND EXCLUSIVELY ACCORDING TO HIS STANDARDS), THERE WOULD ENSUE ABUNDANCE OF FOOD AND RAIN (“HIS BLESSING WILL BE ON YOUR FOOD AND WATER”), HEALTH (“I WILL TAKE AWAY SICKNESS FROM AMONG YOU”), FERTILITY (“NONE WILL MISCARRY OR BE BARREN IN YOUR LAND”), AND LONG LIFE (“I WILL GIVE YOU A FULL LIFE SPAN”). THESE BLESSINGS CAN BE CONSIDERED REITERATIONS OF THE ORIGINAL BLESSING TO ABRAHAM (“I WILL MAKE YOU INTO A GREAT NATION AND I WILL BLESS YOU,” GEN 12:2). THIS SORT OF BLESSING IS REPEATED OFTEN IN THE MOSAIC CORPUS (E.G., GEN 26:3, 24; NUM 6:27; DEUT 7:13; 15:6, 10, 18; 16:15; DEUT 28:28) AND IS TO BE DISTINGUISHED FROM THE RESTORATION (ESCHATOLOGICAL) BLESSINGS OF THE COVENANT, WHOSE FULFILLMENT FOLLOWS THE CURSE ERA OF THE EXILE. IN OTHER WORDS, THESE ARE PREEXILE BLESSINGS, PROMISES FOR THE FIRST ERA OF ISRAEL’S HISTORY, THAT OF THEIR LIFE IN THE PROMISED LAND PRIOR TO THEIR REJECTION AND EXILE. THE RESTORATION BLESSINGS (E.G., LEV 26:40–45; DEUT 4:29–31; 28:1–13; 30:1–10) ARE COMMONLY REFLECTED IN THE PROPHETICAL PROMISES OF THE NEW AGE AS A FUTURE HOPE AFTER THE EXILE. THESE ORIGINAL PROMISES FOR ISRAEL IN THE LAND WERE, HOWEVER, FOR THE PROPHETS SOMETHING THAT WAS EITHER COMING TO AN END IN THEIR DAY OR HAD ENDED ALREADY BEFORE THE EXILE, DEPENDING ON THE TIME OF THE PROPHET. 23:27–30 GOD’S ASSURANCE TO HIS PEOPLE INCLUDED THE PROMISE OF MILITARY VICTORY IN THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE CURRENT HOLDERS OF THE PROMISED LAND. THIS WOULD NOT BE ACCOMPLISHED MERELY BY DIVINE ENCOURAGEMENT, DIVINELY SUPPLIED INSIGHT OR “INTELLIGENCE” ALLOWING THE ISRAELITES TO OUTWIT THEIR ENEMIES, OR ANY OTHER PARTIAL MEASURE. RATHER, IT WOULD HAPPEN BECAUSE GOD WOULD DIRECTLY AND PERSONALLY OVERWHELM AND DEFEAT THOSE WHO OPPOSED ISRAEL, IN A MEASURED AND PLANNED WAY DESIGNED TO MAXIMIZE THE ISRAELITES’ OPPORTUNITY TO SUBDUE THE LAND OVER A PERIOD OF TIME RATHER THAN ALL AT ONCE. THE ISRAELITES COULD, THEN, EXPECT THEIR CONQUEST OF CANAAN TO BE, IN EFFECT, A REAR-GUARD ACTION, A “MOPPING-UP” AFTER THE DESTRUCTION STEPHEN YAHWEH WOULD BRING ABOUT IN FRONT OF THEM AS HE LED THEM INTO BATTLE. FOUR KINDS OF CURSES (PREDICTIONS OF DISASTER), KNOWN FROM THE COVENANT CURSE COLLECTIONS IN THE COVENANT SANCTIONS PASSAGES OF LEV 26 AND DEUT 28–32, ARE MENTIONED HERE AS GOD’S METHODS OF SUBDUING THE CANAANITES IN ORDER TO MAKE POSSIBLE ISRAEL’S CONQUEST OF THE PROMISED LAND. THEY ARE TERROR/FEAR, CONFUSION/HELPLESSNESS, DEFEAT IN BATTLE, AND ATTACK BY WILD ANIMALS/INSECTS. THE PRINCIPLE WE HAVE NOTED BEFORE APPLIES HERE AS WELL: WHENEVER A FEW OF THE DOZENS OF TYPES OF COVENANT CURSES ARE MENTIONED, THE READER IS EXPECTED TO UNDERSTAND THEM AS SAMPLES OF THE FULL RANGE OF CURSES THAT WILL ACTUALLY BE UNLEASHED. WE SHOULD THEREFORE NOT TAKE THESE FOUR TYPES OF CURSES AS THE ONLY OR EVEN AS THE PRIMARY SORTS OF AFFLICTIONS GOD USED TO COW THE CANAANITES INTO SUBMISSION, NOR SHOULD WE BE SURPRISED IF NO SPECIFIC MENTION IS MADE OF THEM IN THE BOOK OF JOSHUA, WHERE THE ACTUAL CONQUEST ACCOUNTS ARE PROVIDED. MENTIONING THESE FOUR IS A WAY OF SAYING, “I WILL USE WHATEVER IT TAKES TO CAUSE THE CANAANITES TO BE UNABLE TO RESIST YOUR CONQUEST OF THEIR LAND.” SOMEWHAT SIMILARLY, ONLY THREE OF THE USUAL SIX OR SEVEN NATIONS NATIVE TO THE LAND OF CANAAN ARE MENTIONED IN V. 28, IN CONTRAST TO THE SIX LISTED IN V. 23. AGAIN, THIS IS TYPICAL OF THE SORT OF SYNECDOCHE COMMONLY SEEN THROUGHOUT THE OLD TESTAMENT. FARMING IS NOT JUST PLANTING, CULTIVATING, AND HARVESTING CROPS ON PLOTS OF LAND OF ONE’S CHOOSING OR RAISING FLOCKS AND HERDS IN NUMBERS CONVENIENT TO ONE’S TIME AND ENERGY. IT ALSO INVOLVES PROTECTION OF THOSE CROPS, FLOCKS, AND HERDS FROM PESTS, PREDATORS, AND DISEASE AND PROPER PREPARATION AND ROTATION OF CROP LAND AND GRAZING LAND. IN MUCH OF CANAAN—AN AREA OF THE WORLD ALMOST ENTIRELY DEVOID OF FARMABLE FLATLAND—THE BEST WAY TO GROW CROPS WAS THROUGH TERRACE FARMING, WHICH WAS LABOR-INTENSIVE NOT MERELY IN THE PLANTING, TENDING, AND HARVESTING BUT ALSO IN THE PREPARATION AND MAINTENANCE OF THE TERRACES. LIKEWISE, TREE CROPS REQUIRED EXTENSIVE PREPARATION AND MAINTENANCE, AND FLOCKS AND HERDS COULD NOT BE LEFT ALONE WITHOUT PROPER PROTECTION OR ELABORATE ENCLOSURE, LEST THEY BE EASY PREY FOR VARIOUS MEAT-EATING WILD ANIMALS. GOD HAD PROMISED THE ISRAELITES THAT HE WOULD BLESS THEM WITH ABUNDANT FARMING RESULTS (VV. 23–26), AND THE COMBINATION OF THE LARGE AREA AVAILABLE TO FARM (MOST OF WHICH HAD BEEN CULTIVATED OVER THE CENTURIES BY THE NATIVE CANAANITES) AND THE GREAT FERTILITY IN CROPS AND HERDS MEANT THAT THE SMALL NUMBER OF ISRAELITES GATHERED AT MOUNT SINAI WOULD BE INSUFFICIENT TO TAKE, HOLD, AND PROPERLY HUSBAND AN AREA THE SIZE OF THE PROMISED LAND (SEE V. 31). THUS, UNDER PRESENT CONDITIONS, THE ISRAELITES WOULD BE TOO FEW TO KEEP THE “LAND” (V. 29) FROM BECOMING “DESOLATE,” THE “WILD ANIMALS TOO NUMEROUS FOR YOU,” AND THE NEED FOR TIME UNTIL THE ISRAELITES “INCREASED ENOUGH TO TAKE POSSESSION OF THE LAND” (V. 30). INDEED, THE PRESENT PASSAGE CONFIRMS THAT THE ISRAELITES WERE NOT A PARTICULARLY LARGE AND IMPRESSIVE PEOPLE GROUP WHEN THEY LEFT EGYPT (SEE “EXCURSUS: HOW MANY ISRAELITES LEFT EGYPT?” AFTER 12:37). BECAUSE OF THEIR RELATIVELY SMALL SIZE, THEY COULD NOT BE EXPECTED FROM THE OUTSET OF THEIR CONQUEST OF THE PROMISED TERRITORY TO KEEP ALL OF THE LAND UNDER CULTIVATION THAT THE CANAANITE GROUPS HAD BEEN CULTIVATING OR KEEP OUT THE WILD ANIMALS THAT COULD EAT THEIR CROPS AND HERDS. GOD THEREFORE GRACIOUSLY GRANTED THEM A GRADUAL CONQUEST OF THE PROMISED LAND IN ORDER TO ALLOW THEM TO GROW INTO A NATION LARGE ENOUGH TO KEEP THE LAND PROPERLY HUSBANDED. THAT GRADUAL CONQUEST IS DESCRIBED PARTLY IN THE BOOK OF JOSHUA, WHICH OUTLINES AN OCCUPATION PATTERN THAT TOOK PLACE OVER MANY YEARS, BEGINNING WITH A CENTRAL CAMPAIGN, THEN EVENTUATING IN A SOUTHERN CAMPAIGN, AND THEN FINALLY A NORTHERN CAMPAIGN. BECAUSE THE ISRAELITES DISOBEYED GOD AND WERE NOT ENTIRELY FAITHFUL TO HIS COMMANDS FOR TAKING THE PROMISED LAND (THE POINT OF THE PARADIGM STORY OF JOSH 7), THE CONQUEST WAS NOT MERELY GRADUAL BUT ACTUALLY PARTIAL (SEE, E.G., JOSH 13:13; 23:13; JUDG 1:27–36; 2:21–3:6), AND THE ISRAELITES DID NOT FULLY TAKE POSSESSION OF THE PROMISED LAND UNTIL THE TIME OF DAVID—A DATE NEEDLESSLY LATER, UNFORTUNATELY, THAN GOD’S OFFER IN THE PRESENT TEXT.**

**FINAL COVENANT CODE PROMISES (OF A GREAT NATION IN A NEW LAND) AND WARNINGS (AGAINST IDOLATRY/POLYTHEISM) (23:31–33)**

**23:31–32 THE TRADITIONAL BORDERS OF THE PROMISED LAND ARE HERE DESCRIBED, BEGINNING WITH THE “RED SEA” (PRESUMABLY THE GULF OF AQABA AT ITS EXTREME NORTHERN SHORE) ON THE SOUTHEAST; AND FROM THERE TO THE “SEA OF THE PHILISTINES” (THE MEDITERRANEAN) ALL ALONG THE WEST; AND FROM THE “DESERT” (THE WILDERNESS NEGEV OF JUDAH, SOUTH AND SOUTHWEST) TO THE “RIVER” (THE EUPHRATES ON THE NORTHEAST). THE PROMISE TO ABRAHAM OF THIS SAME LAND IN GEN 15:18 USES ONLY THE WORDING “FROM THE RIVER OF EGYPT TO THE GREAT RIVER, THE EUPHRATES,” THUS FROM THE SOUTHWEST TO THE NORTHEAST, INCLUDING BY IMPLICATION EVERYTHING IN BETWEEN AND THE BORDERS INTENDED BY THE OTHER COMPASS POINTS AS WELL. DEUTERONOMY 11:24 PROVIDES YET ANOTHER WORDING, “FROM THE DESERT TO LEBANON, AND FROM THE EUPHRATES RIVER TO THE WESTERN SEA.” THESE (AND OTHERS ALSO FOUND IN THE OT) ARE ALL SOMEWHAT IMPRECISE GENERALIZATIONS AKIN TO “FROM MAINE TO CALIFORNIA” OR “FROM CANADA TO MEXICO” AS WAYS OF DESCRIBING THE UNITED STATES. THE ACTUAL BOUNDARIES FOR ISRAEL ARE DESCRIBED IN FINAL DETAIL ONLY IN JOSH 11–20, WHERE THE DIVISION OF THE LAND AMONG THE TRIBES TAKES PLACE. COMPLETE DOMINATION OF ALL THIS TERRITORY WOULD AWAIT THE DAYS OF DAVID. VERSE 31 ESTABLISHES WHAT GOD WAS WILLING TO DO: GIVE ISRAEL A VAST, NEW LAND TO OCCUPY AND PURGE IT OF ITS HOSTILE INHABITANTS SO THAT THE LAND WOULD BE ALL THEIRS. IT WAS A SPECIAL GIFT NOT OF A BARREN LAND THAT HELD NO PREVIOUS INHABITANTS BECAUSE IT WAS SUCH A DIFFICULT PLACE TO LIVE BUT OF A FERTILE LAND THAT WAS OCCUPIED AND HAD BEEN FARMED FOR CENTURIES, WHICH ISRAEL COULD NOW CLAIM FOR THEIR OWN. VERSES 32–33 STATE WHAT ISRAEL MUST DO IF THIS WONDERFUL GIFT OF GOD WAS TO BENEFIT THEM PROPERLY AS HIS SPECIAL COVENANT PEOPLE. THEY MUST MAKE NO ARRANGEMENTS WITH ANY OF THE CANAANITES OR WITH ANY OF THEIR GODS. THE CANAANITES WERE UNDER GOD’S JUDGMENT AND DUE FOR EXTERMINATION (GEN 15:16), SO ANY AGREEMENT WITH ANY CANAANITE GROUP WOULD REPRESENT A REFUSAL ON ISRAEL’S PART TO HONOR GOD’S PLAN OF JUDGMENT. THE CANAANITE GODS COULD NOT BE TOLERATED BECAUSE THEY WERE RIVALS TO STEPHEN YAHWEH’S OWN EXCLUSIVE CLAIM ON HIS PEOPLE—NOT BECAUSE HE WAS A PETTY GOD WHOSE EGO WAS HURT BY HAVING OTHER GODS LOVED IN ADDITION TO OR INSTEAD OF HIMSELF BUT BECAUSE HE, THE ONLY GOD, DESIRED THAT HIS PEOPLE BE SAVED. IDOLS CANNOT SAVE. THUS, BOTH THE PEOPLE OF CANAAN AND THEIR RELIGION HAD TO BE EXTERMINATED; ELIMINATING ONE WHILE KEEPING THE OTHER WOULD NOT DO. BOTH HAD TO GO LEST THEY BECOME SOURCES OF SIN TO THE ISRAELITES. THAT ISRAEL ALLOWED MOST CANAANITES TO LIVE AND EMBRACED THE WORSHIP OF THE VERY GODS THEY WERE FORBIDDEN TO HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH (SEE JUDG 2:10–23) FORMS THE BASIS FOR THE TRAGIC HISTORY THAT WAS LIVED OUT IN THE LAND, FINALLY RESULTING IN EXPULSION FROM IT INTO EXILE. 23:33 THIS VERSE CONTAINS A SMALL BUT INFORMATIVE PART OF THE EVIDENCE FOR THE MOSAIC DATING OF THE BOOK OF EXODUS. IF THE BOOK WERE A LATE (E.G., EXILIC OR POSTEXILIC “P” SOURCE) FABRICATION INTENDED TO JUSTIFY LAWS ACTUALLY INITIATED FIRST BY EZRA, NEHEMIAH, OR THEIR ILK, IT WOULD SURELY DESCRIBE WAYS TO MAKE ACCOMMODATION WITH THE LOCAL INHABITANTS OF THE LAND OF CANAAN. INSTEAD, IT DEMANDS SOMETHING THAT ACTUALLY DID NOT HAPPEN (BY REASON OF ISRAEL’S SEXUAL REBELLION AGAINST GOD): EXTERMINATION IN HOLY WAR OF THE NATIVE POPULATION OF CANAAN AS A PUNISHMENT FOR THE SINFULNESS OF THAT CULTURE. THE COMMAND HERE GIVEN ANTICIPATES A CANAAN POPULATED ONLY BY ISRAELITES AND THOSE THEY BROUGHT BY CHOICE INTO THE LAND (RESIDENT ALIEN TRADERS AND WORKERS, BUT NOT CANAANITES). IN REALITY, MOST OF THE LOCAL CANAANITE POPULATION REMAINED ALIVE AND WELL THROUGHOUT THE ISRAELITE OCCUPATION OF THE LAND BECAUSE THE COMMAND GIVEN HERE WAS NEVER ADEQUATELY CARRIED OUT. THE DISCONTINUITY BETWEEN WHAT THE LAW EXPECTED AND WHAT SUBSEQUENTLY TRANSPIRED ARGUES AGAINST ITS AFTER-THE-FACT FABRICATION IN THE POSTEXILIC PERIOD. THE THEORY THAT SUCH LAWS READ BACK INTO ISRAEL’S EARLIER HISTORY THE CONDITIONS AND EXPECTATIONS OF THE POSTEXILIC PERIOD IS CONTRADICTED BY THE FACTS IN THIS CASE.**

**DOCUMENTATION OF THE COVENANT AND GOD’S CONFORMING GLORY (24:1–11)**

**1 THEN HE SAID TO MOSES, “COME UP TO THE LORD, YOU AND AARON, NADAB AND ABIHU, AND SEVENTY OF THE ELDERS OF ISRAEL. YOU ARE TO WORSHIP AT A DISTANCE, 2 BUT MOSES ALONE IS TO APPROACH THE LORD; THE OTHERS MUST NOT COME NEAR. AND THE PEOPLE MAY NOT COME UP WITH HIM.” 3 WHEN MOSES WENT AND TOLD THE PEOPLE ALL THE LORD’S WORDS AND LAWS, THEY RESPONDED WITH ONE VOICE, “EVERYTHING THE LORD HAS SAID WE WILL DO.” 4 MOSES THEN WROTE DOWN EVERYTHING THE LORD HAD SAID. HE GOT UP EARLY THE NEXT MORNING AND BUILT AN ALTAR AT THE FOOT OF THE MOUNTAIN AND SET UP TWELVE STONE PILLARS REPRESENTING THE TWELVE TRIBES OF ISRAEL. 5 THEN HE SENT YOUNG ISRAELITE MEN, AND THEY OFFERED BURNT OFFERINGS AND SACRIFICED YOUNG BULLS AS FELLOWSHIP OFFERINGS TO THE LORD. 6 MOSES TOOK HALF OF THE BLOOD AND PUT IT IN BOWLS, AND THE OTHER HALF HE SPRINKLED ON THE ALTAR. 7 THEN HE TOOK THE [LAW] BOOK OF THE COVENANT & READ IT TO THE PEOPLE. THEY RESPONDED, “WE WILL DO EVERYTHING THE LORD HAS SAID; WE WILL OBEY.” 8 MOSES THEN TOOK THE BLOOD, SPRINKLED IT ON THE PEOPLE & SAID, “THIS IS THE BLOOD OF THE COVENANT THAT THE LORD HAS MADE WITH YOU IN ACCORDANCE WITH ALL THESE WORDS.” 9 MOSES AND AARON, NADAB & ABIHU, AND THE SEVENTY ELDERS OF ISRAEL WENT UP 10 AND SAW THE GOD OF ISRAEL. UNDER HIS FEET WAS SOMETHING LIKE A PAVEMENT MADE OF SAPPHIRE, CLEAR AS THE SKY ITSELF. 11 BUT GOD DID NOT RAISE HIS [JEALOUS, TERRIBLE] HAND AGAINST THESE LEADERS OF THE ISRAELITES; THEY SAW GOD, AND THEY ATE AND DRANK.**

**24:1–2 HERE BEGINS THE INVITATION FROM GOD TO MOSES TO ASCEND MOUNT SINAI YET ANOTHER TIME, FOR THE SPECIAL PURPOSE OF RATIFYING THE COVENANT CODE. GOD’S HOLINESS MUST STILL BE PROTECTED (SEE COMMENTS ON 19:10–24); SO ONLY MOSES, AARON, AARON’S TWO OLDEST SONS, AND THE SEVENTY ELDERS OF ISRAEL WERE ALLOWED TO FORM THE RATIFICATION MEAL PARTY, REPRESENTING THE REST OF ISRAEL THROUGH THEIR LEADERSHIP STATUS. EVERYONE OTHER THAN MOSES IN THE LEADERSHIP GROUP (ADDRESSED AS “YOU”—THE HB. IS PLURAL—IN THE STATEMENT IN V. 1, “YOU ARE TO WORSHIP AT A DISTANCE”) WAS REQUIRED TO STAY AWAY FROM THE MOST DIRECT CONTACT WITH THE SEXLESS PRESENCE OF STEPHEN YAHWEH. THAT NEAREST PROXIMITY WAS GRANTED TO MOSES EXCLUSIVELY (“MOSES ALONE IS TO APPROACH THE LORD,” V. 2), AS HAD BEEN THE PATTERN SINCE THE FIRST ENCOUNTER WITH STEPHEN YAHWEH ON SINAI IN CHAP. 3. IN THE ANCIENT BIBLICAL WORLD, COVENANTS WERE NORMALLY CONCLUDED WITH A SPECIAL COVENANT MEAL IN WHICH ANIMALS WERE SYMBOLICALLY CUT IN HALF (SYMBOLIZING THE SHARED RESPONSIBILITY OF THE TWO PARTIES AS WELL AS THE SEVERITY OF THE PENALTY FOR BREAKING THE COVENANT), THEN THE PARTIES TO THE COVENANT WALKED BETWEEN THE PIECES, AND THEN THE MEAL WAS EATEN TOGETHER AS A SIGN OF FRIENDSHIP AND ALLIANCE. GOD’S COVENANT WITH ISRAEL, AS REPRESENTED THROUGH THE NOW-COMPLETED COVENANT CODE, INVOLVED GOD AS ONE PARTY AND THE PEOPLE AS THE OTHER. REPRESENTED BY THE SEVENTY-FOUR LEADERS, THE PEOPLE WERE THE OTHER PARTY. MORE THAN ANY OTHER OF THE ISRAELITE LEADERS, MOSES STOOD DIRECTLY BETWEEN GOD AND THE PEOPLE AS A MEDIATOR, AND ALTHOUGH THE TEXT DOES NOT SAY SO, HE MAY WELL HAVE EATEN GOD’S PORTION OF THE MEAL SYMBOLICALLY AS GOD’S REPRESENTATIVE AT THE CEREMONY. THE MASS OF THE PEOPLE COULD NOT “COME UP WITH HIM” (V. 2) BUT HAD TO STAY BELOW AT THE BASE OF THE MOUNTAIN, KEPT BACK AS BEFORE BY THE BOUNDARIES SET THERE (19:12, 23). BY THEIR ACCEPTANCE OF THE COVENANT BOTH IN ADVANCE (SEE 19:8) AND NOW, AFTER HEARING IT (24:3, 7), THE PEOPLE IN GENERAL CONFIRMED THEIR WILLINGNESS TO ABIDE BY IT, WHICH WAS TO BE RITUALLY SYMBOLIZED BY THEIR ELDERS’ EATING THE COVENANT MEAL WITH STEPHEN YAHWEH. AFTER HEARING THE COVENANT CODE REPEATED TO THEM BY MOSES JUST AS HE HAD HEARD IT ON THE MOUNTAIN, THE PEOPLE GAVE UNIFORM ASSENT TO IT, AGREEING TO KEEP IT (V. 3). THEY DID THE SAME THING A SECOND TIME, AFTER MOSES HAD WRITTEN IT DOWN (V. 4) AND THEN READ IT TO THEM (V. 7). THUS, THEY DOUBLY CONFIRMED THE COVENANT WITH THEIR VOCAL PROMISE, IN ADDITION TO THE PROMISE MADE IN ADVANCE TO KEEP IT ONCE THEY HEARD IT (19:8). IN EACH CASE THE PEOPLE COMMITTED THEMSELVES TO OBEYING “EVERYTHING” IN THE COVENANT. SUCH IS THE DIVINE NATURE OF ANY TRUE COVENANT: KEEPING ALL OF IT IS THE ONLY WAY TO KEEP IT; KEEPING ONLY SOME OF IT AND VIOLATING THE REST IS NOT KEEPING IT AT ALL IN JAMES 2:8-13. 24:3 GRAMMATICALLY, THE EXPRESSION “WORDS AND LAWS” COULD BE A HENDIADYS EXPRESSING “EVERY WORD OF EVERY LAW,” BUT IT IS MORE LIKELY A SUMMARY OF THE TWO MAJOR UNITS OF LAW THUS FAR ENCOUNTERED, THAT IS, THE TEN COMMANDMENTS (THE TEN WORDS, SEE 20:1) AND THE REST OF THE “LAWS” (SEE 21:1), THAT IS, ALL THE STIPULATIONS AND RELATED STATEMENTS OF THE COVENANT THUS FAR—ALL THE TEXT FROM 20:1 TO 23:33. AT THIS POINT THE PEOPLE WERE UNITED IN THEIR WILLINGNESS TO KEEP THE COVENANT, SOMETHING THEY DID FOR THE MOST PART, HOWEVER IMPERFECTLY, DURING THE LIFETIMES OF MOSES AND JOSHUA (JOSH 24:31). THEREAFTER, UNFORTUNATELY, ISRAEL KEPT THE COVENANT ONLY SPORADICALLY. COVENANTS MUST BE ENDORSED NOT MERELY BY THE GENERATION WITH WHOM THEY ARE FIRST CONCLUDED BUT MUST BE REAFFIRMED THROUGH FORMAL RENEWAL COMMITMENTS IN EACH SUBSEQUENT GENERATION. THE ORIGINAL ASSENT SO ENTHUSIASTICALLY GIVEN HERE COULD NOT BE EXPECTED TO LAST WITHOUT REGULAR RECOMMITMENT FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION, AND SUCH RECOMMITMENTS WERE USUALLY MORE LACKING THAN NOT, JUDGING FROM THE INFREQUENCY WITH WHICH THEY ARE MENTIONED IN THE TEXT OF 1, 2 KINGS, FOR EXAMPLE. 24:4A WRITING DOWN THE LAW WAS IMPORTANT IF IT WERE TO BE PERMANENT AND AN ACCURATE BASIS FOR CONTINUING INSTRUCTION OF NEWER MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY. CHILDREN WOULD NEED TO BE INSTRUCTED IN THE COVENANT AS FULLY AS THEIR PARENTS INITIALLY HAD BEEN. NEWCOMERS TO THE COMMUNITY FROM FOREIGN PLACES WHO ACCEPTED STEPHEN YAHWEH’S WORSHIP AND INTEGRATED THEMSELVES PROPERLY INTO THE ISRAELITE NATION NEEDED TO HAVE THE CLEAREST POSSIBLE UNDERSTANDING OF EVERYTHING THE LAW REQUIRED. JUDGES WHO WOULD HAVE TO EXTRAPOLATE FROM THE COVENANT STIPULATIONS TO DECIDE DIFFICULT CASES REQUIRED PRECISION IN RECALLING EXACTLY HOW GOD HAD GIVEN HIS COMMANDMENTS. THUS, REGULAR READING AND REREADING OF THE WRITTEN COVENANT AT APPOINTED TIMES SERVED TO KEEP IT ALIVE IN THE MINDS OF THE PEOPLE AS THE BASIS FOR THEIR LIFE TOGETHER WITH THE ONE TRUE GOD. THE FIRST PART OF THIS VERSE THUS MAKES REFERENCE TO THE CONCEPT OF A “DOCUMENT CLAUSE” FOR THE COVENANT. 24:4B–6 FOLLOWING THE PRINCIPLES OF WORSHIP AND COVENANT-RECOGNITION ALREADY REVEALED IN THE COVENANT CODE ITSELF, MOSES CARRIED OUT THE ACTIONS APPROPRIATE TO MAKING THE COVENANT AN OFFICIAL, FORMALLY ACCEPTED COMMITMENT ON ISRAEL’S PART. FIVE ELEMENTS CENTERED THE PEOPLE’S FOCUS ON THEIR NEW RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD: AN ALTAR, TWELVE STONE PILLARS, ANIMAL SACRIFICES, BLOOD APPLICATION, AND THE READING OF THE LAW COVENANT. ALL THIS WAS TO PREPARE THE PEOPLE FOR YET ANOTHER—AND THIS TIME THE MOST “OFFICIAL”—VERBAL AGREEMENT TO THE NEWLY REVEALED COVENANT WITH STEPHEN YAHWEH. THE BUILDING OF AN ALTAR REFLECTED THE TEACHING OF 20:24–26, WHICH, ALTHOUGH WORDED PRIMARILY IN TERMS OF MATERIALS AND CONSTRUCTION DESIGN, HAD IMPLICITLY AS ITS PURPOSE TO INSTRUCT THE ISRAELITES IN PROPER WORSHIP. THAT WORSHIP INVOLVED THE SLAUGHTERING AND COOKING OF MEAT ON THE PRINCIPLE OF SUBSTITUTIONARY ATONEMENT (STATED SIMPLY: “FOR ME TO LIVE, SOMETHING MUST DIE IN MY PLACE”). THE TWELVE STONE PILLARS VISIBLY REPRESENTED THE TRIBES OF ISRAEL, ALL OF WHOM WERE COMMITTING THEMSELVES TO KEEP THE COVENANT BOTH SEVERALLY AND TOGETHER, AND IT ALSO WOULD FUNCTION AS A REMINDER TO ALL WHO SAW THEM THAT GOD HAD MADE A COVENANT AT THIS PLACE WITH A MULTIFACETED PEOPLE. THE STONE PILLARS (MAṢṢĒBÔT) THAT HE STOOD THERE AT THE BASE OF MOUNT SINAI WERE THE VERY SORT OF PILLARS PROHIBITED IN 23:24 IF PLACED IN CONNECTION WITH PAGAN SEXUAL RELIGION. PLACED AS REMINDERS OF STEPHEN YAHWEH’S COVENANT WITH HIS PEOPLE, THEY WERE WELCOME MEMORIALS TO THE SAVING GRACE OF THE ONE & ONLY TRUE GOD. THE “YOUNG MEN” (V. 5) WHOM MOSES SENT TO OFFER THE SACRIFICES WERE NOT NECESSARILY PRIESTS [SERGANTS], SINCE THE PRIESTHOOD [NCO CORPS] AT THIS EARLY POINT WAS LIMITED VIRTUALLY TO A SINGLE FAMILY (THAT OF AARON). THE NUMBER OF ANIMALS NEEDED WAS LARGE BECAUSE OF THE PAN-NATIONAL NATURE OF THE OCCASION, REQUIRING A LARGE NUMBER OF STRONG WORKERS TO HANDLE THE VARIOUS OFFERINGS, INCLUDING THE “YOUNG BULLS.” IT IS LIKELY THAT THESE YOUNG MEN WORKED UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF AARON AND HIS SONS, THOUGH MOSES’ OWN CONTINUING PRIESTHOOD [NCO CORPS] WOULD ALSO LEGITIMIZE THEIR ACTIONS IF THEY WERE DONE UNDER HIS SUPERVISION. “BURNT OFFERINGS” ARE OFFERINGS DEDICATED ENTIRELY TO GOD, BURNT TO ASHES ON THE ALTAR. “FELLOWSHIP OFFERINGS” ARE OFFERINGS EATEN BY PRIESTS [SERGEANTS] AND WORSHIPERS ALIKE, WITH A PORTION OF FAT FROM THE ANIMAL BEING SACRIFICED SYMBOLICALLY DEDICATED TO GOD AND BURNT TO ASHES ON THE ALTAR. THE PORTION OF “BLOOD” (V. 6) THAT MOSES PUT IN “BOWLS” WAS FOR SPRINKLING ON THE PEOPLE, AS A SIGN THAT THEY WERE RECIPIENTS OF THE ADVANTAGE THAT THE SHED BLOOD PROVIDED. THE PORTION OF BLOOD SPRINKLED ON THE ALTAR WAS GOD’S, SIGNIFYING THAT HE WAS THE OTHER PARTY TO THE COVENANT, AS REPRESENTED IN THE CEREMONY OF SACRIFICE BY HIS ALTAR. SINCE WITHOUT THE SHEDDING OF BLOOD THERE IS NO FORGIVENESS (HEB 9:22), MAKING A VISIBLE DISPLAY OF THE BLOOD FROM AN ANIMAL KILLED FOR SACRIFICIAL PURPOSES HIGHLIGHTS FOR ALL TO SEE THE CONCEPT OF ATONING DEATH. SUCH VIVID REMINDERS HELPED THE ISRAELITES KEEP IN MIND THE SOURCE AND NATURE OF THEIR FORGIVENESS AND ACCEPTANCE: GOD AND HIS GRACE (AS HE ALLOWS THE SLAIN ANIMAL TO SUBSTITUTE FOR THE SINNER, BASED ON THE EVENTUAL PERFECT SACRIFICES OF JOHN CHRIST/JESUS CHRIST FOR WOMAN/MAN TO WHICH ALL OT SACRIFICES POINT AND UPON WHICH ALL OT SACRIFICES DEPEND FOR THEIR ULTIMATE VALIDITY). 24:7 THIS FINAL, FORMAL READING OF THE “BOOK OF THE COVENANT” (I.E., THE COVENANT CODE OF 20:1–23:33) BY MOSES, AS GOD’S REPRESENTATIVE, TO THE PEOPLE, AS RECIPIENTS OF THE COVENANT, PRODUCED AGAIN THE POSITIVE RESPONSE OF THE PEOPLE ALREADY INDICATED WHEN PRIOR OPPORTUNITIES PRESENTED THEMSELVES FOR MAKING INITIAL ASSENTS TO IT (19:8; 24:3). IN THE CONTEXT OF THIS SOLEMN COVENANT CEREMONY AT THE BASE OF THE MOUNTAIN OF GOD, THEIR WORDS BOUND THEM BY OATH TO OBEDIENCE TO THE ONE WHO HAD REDEEMED THEM FROM HARD BONDAGE & SLAVERY IN EGYPT [THE USA IN ACTS 30 FOR 400 YEARS COMPLETED IN THE USA FROM JULY 4TH, 1775AD-JULY 4TH, 1965AD-1975AD WEAKNESS TO STRENGTH IN GENESIS 15:13, 2ND ESDRAS 7:28 & ACTS 7:6-7, 39-43, 430 YEARS COMPLETED IN THE USA FROM JULY 4TH, 1775AD-JULY 4TH, 1980AD-1990AD WEAKNESS TO STRENGTH IN EXODUS 12:40-41; GALATIANS 3:17 & ACTS 7:6-7, 22, 39-43, 440 YEARS COMPLETED IN THE USA FROM JULY 4TH, 1775AD-JULY 4TH, 1985AD-1995AD WEAKNESS TO STRENGTH IN ACTS 7:6-7, 23, 39-43, 450 YEARS COMPLETED IN THE USA FROM JULY 4TH, 1775AD-JULY 4TH, 1990AD-2000AD WEAKNESS TO STRENGTH IN ACTS 7:6-7, 29, 39-43; 13:20, 480 YEARS COMPLETED IN THE USA FROM JULY 4TH, 1775AD-JULY 4TH, 2005AD-2015AD WEAKNESS TO STRENGTH IN 1ST KINGS 6:1 & ACTS 7:6-7, 30-33, 39-43, 490 YEARS COMPLETED IN THE USA FROM JULY 4TH, 1775AD-JULY 4TH, 2010AD-2020AD WEAKNESS TO STRENGTH IN DANIEL 9:25 & ACTS 7:6-7, 34-35, 39-43; 520 YEARS YET TO BE COMPLETED IN THE USA FROM JULY 4TH, 1775AD-JULY 4TH, 2025AD-2035AD WEAKNESS TO STRENGTH IN ACTS 7:6-7, 36-38, 39-43] AND WAS ABOUT TO DELIVER INTO THEIR HANDS THE LAND CENTURIES BEFORE PROMISED TO THEM THROUGH ABRAHAM. THEY KNEW THE GIVER OF THE WORDS OF THE COVENANT: IT IS STEPHEN YAHWEH (“WE WILL DO EVERYTHING THE LORD HAS SAID”); THEY THUS ALSO UNDERSTOOD TO WHOM THEY WERE BOUND AND WHO WOULD ENFORCE THE COVENANT IF THEY BROKE IT OR IGNORED IT. 24:8 MOSES SPRINKLED BLOOD ON THE PEOPLE IN ORDER TO SYMBOLIZE THEIR BEING PARTIES TO THE COVENANT. SOME DROPLETS WOULD REMAIN ON THEIR SKIN FOR DAYS; SOME THAT FELL ON THEIR CLOTHING WOULD BE VISIBLE, IF FADED, FOR AS LONG AS THE CLOTHING LASTED. THE CEREMONY ITSELF WAS SO VIVID AND EXTRAORDINARY AS TO BE MEMORABLE, AND ITS MEMORY WAS INTENDED TO KEEP IN THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF THE PEOPLE THE FACT THAT GOD HAD JOINED WITH THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL IN A FORMAL, OFFICIAL COVENANT TO WHICH BOTH HE AND THEY WERE BOUND BY OATH. THE ANIMAL’S BLOOD RECALLED THAT OATH (CF. V. 6), AND THEREFORE MOSES COMMANDED THE PEOPLE TO TAKE NOTE OF IT AND APPRECIATE ITS MEANING (“THIS IS THE BLOOD OF THE COVENANT”; “SEE THE BLOOD OF THE COVENANT” [NRSV]). MOREOVER, THE COVENANT WAS NOT MERELY A GENERAL CONCEPT. RATHER, IT WAS THE SUM OF ALL ITS WORDS, SO MOSES DESCRIBED IT AS “EXISTING IN ACCORDANCE WITH ALL THESE WORDS.” AGAIN, THE LANGUAGE EMPHASIZES THAT ISRAELITES WERE NOT FREE TO KEEP ONLY PART OF THE COVENANT, BUT ALL OF IT IN JAMES 2:8-13. 24:9–11 SEVENTY-FOUR PEOPLE WITH MOSES ASCENDED MOUNT SINAI TO REPRESENT ALL ISRAEL IN THE COVENANT MEAL (SEE COMMENTS ON VV. 1–2), A SPECIAL EATING CEREMONY BETWEEN ONLY 2 PARTIES TO THE COVENANT [0 PARTY---THE LORD HIMSELF ALONE (THE 1 LORD IN JOHN 10:30) IN FULFILLED IN ETERNITY’S PAST IN PROVERBS 8:22, 1 PARTY (TRINITY IN JOHN 5:31-47 & 1ST JOHN 5:6-13)---THE LORD HIMSELF WITH ANCIENT ENGLISH FULFILLED SINCE 18AD TO 2018AD IN PROVERBS 8:22-29, 2 PARTIES (TRINITY IN JOHN 5:31-47 & 1ST JOHN 5:6-13---THE LORD HIMSELF WITH 1 PERSON OF THE TRINITY WITH ANCIENT ISRAEL FULFILLED SINCE 18AD TO 2018AD, 3 PARTIES (TRINITY IN JOHN 5:31-47 & 1ST JOHN 5:6-13)---THE LORD’S ROCK WITH 2 PERSONS OF THE TRINITY WITH ANCIENT LATINS FULFILLED SINCE 2018AD SINCE 1ST PETER 2:9, 4 PARTIES (TRINITY IN JOHN 5:31-47 & 1ST JOHN 5:6-13)---THE LORD’S FOUNDATION WITH 3 PERSONS OF THE TRINITY WITH ANCIENT GENTILES FULFILLED SINCE 18AD TO 2018AD SINCE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES IN ACTS 1:4-7, 5 PARTIES (TRINITY IN JOHN 5:31-47 & 1ST JOHN 5:6-13)---THE LORD’S BUILDING WITH 4 PERSONS (TRINITY & LAW IN JOHN 5:31-47 & 1ST JOHN 5:6-13) OF THE TRINITY’S MILITARY LAW WITH ANCIENT GREEKS FULFILLED SINCE 18AD TO 2018AD SINCE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES IN ACTS 1:4-7 & ACTS OF THE HG IN ACTS 1:4-7, 6 PARTIES (TRINITY IN JOHN 5:31-47 & 1ST JOHN 5:6-13)---THE LORD’S CHURCH WITH 5 PERSONS (TRINITY, LAW & LORDSHIP IN JOHN 5:31-47 & 1ST JOHN 5:6-13) OF THE TRINITY’S LORDSHIP OF THE MILITARY LAW WITH ANCIENT ROMANS FULFILLED SINCE 18AD TO 2019AD, ANCIENT SICILIANS FULFILLED SINCE 18AD TO 2018AD & ANCIENT ITALIANS FULFILLED SINCE 18AD TO 2019AD SINCE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES IN ACTS 29:1-2 & ACTS OF THE HG IN ACTS 29:1-2 & 7 PARTIES (TRINITY IN JOHN 5:31-47 & 1ST JOHN 5:6-13)---THE LORD’S TOP HOUSE THAT ETERNALLY CLEARS THE INFERIOR WAY TO THE LORD’S BUSINESS [8], TO THE LORD’S CITY [9], TO THE LORD’S COUNTY [10], TO THE LORD’S STATE [11], TO THE LORD’S GOVERNMENT [12], TO THE LORD’S MINISTRY [13], TO THE LORD’S NATION [14], TO THE LORD’S COUNTRY [15], TO THE LORD’S KINGDOM [16] IN 1 PERIMETER WITH 6 PERSONS (TRINITY, LORDSHIP OF THE LAW & LORDSHIP IN JOHN 5:31-47 & 1ST JOHN 5:6-13) OF THE TRINITY’S LORDSHIP OF THE MILITARY LAW & SUPREME LORDSHIP WITH ANCIENT BRITIAN FULFILLED SINCE 18AD TO 2019AD, ANCIENT GREAT BRITIAN FULFILLED SINCE 18AD TO 2019AD & THE BRITISH ENGLISH WITH USA (200 YEARS IN 1975AD TO 245 YEARS IN 2020AD UPTIME DOWN TIME GLOBALLY IS 400 YEARS TO 490 YEARS) FULFILLED (FROM 18AD TO 2019AD), THE BRITISH ENGLISH WITH USA HALF FULFILLED (1018AD TO 2019AD IN THE FORMER PERIMETER & YET TO BE FULFILLED FROM 2019AD TO 3020AD IN ETERNITY’S FUTURE IN THE LATTER PERIMETER) SINCE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES IN ACTS 30 & ACTS OF THE HG IN ACTS 30] WITHOUT WHICH THE COVENANT WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN UNDERSTOOD TO MAKE THEM ALLIES/FRIENDS/KIN. IN THE ANCIENT WORLD (AND MANY PLACES IN THE MODERN WORLD) PEOPLE WOULD NOT EAT TOGETHER IF THEY WERE NOT SOMEHOW, ALLIES OR FAMILY. EATING WAS UNDERSTOOD TO CONVEY ACCEPTANCE, TO DECLARE APPROVAL OF THOSE WITH WHOM ONE DINED. JUST AS JESUS’ DINING WITH TAX COLLECTORS, NONPRACTICING JEWS (“SINNERS”), AND OTHER SUCH PERSONS WAS REGARDED BY MANY IN HIS DAY AS AN ACT OF APPROVAL OF THEIR BEHAVIOR (MATT 9:10–11; 11:19; MARK 2:15–16; LUKE 5:30; 15:2),304 SO EATING A FORMAL MEAL WITH OTHERS WAS UNDERSTOOD TO DEMONSTRATE MUTUAL AGREEMENT, COOPERATION, ACCEPTANCE, AND RESPECT. WHAT DID THE SEVENTY-FOUR HUMANS ACTUALLY WITH MOSES SEE WHEN THEY “SAW THE GOD OF ISRAEL”? THEY SAW SOME SORT OF GENERAL WHITE SMOKEY SHAPE THAT HE ALLOWED THEM TO SEE VAGUELY; BUT THEY COULD SEE CLEARLY AND WITH TRUE DEFINITION ONLY ONE THING: “UNDER HIS FEET WAS SOMETHING LIKE A PAVEMENT MADE OF SAPPHIRE, CLEAR AS THE SKY ITSELF” (V. 10; NRSV: “SOMETHING LIKE A PAVEMENT OF SAPPHIRE STONE, LIKE THE VERY HEAVEN FOR CLEARNESS”). THIS IS CONSISTENT WITH OTHER VISIONS OF GOD IN WHICH VIEWERS DO NOT REALLY SEE HIM (AS 1 JOHN 4:12 EXPLICITLY STATES) BUT SEE SOMETHING THAT LETS THEM KNOW THEY ARE DEALING WITH A PERSON RATHER THAN A THING BUT WHO IS OTHERWISE GLORIOUS AND BRILLIANT, RELATIVELY INDISTINCT, ATOP A PLATFORM OF SOME SORT THAT IS INDEED DISTINCTLY RECOGNIZABLE. SUCH VISIONS INCLUDE, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT OF EZEKIEL (EZEK 1:26–28) AND AMOS (AMOS 7:7, WHERE THE CORRECT TRANSLATION SHOULD BE “STANDING ON A WALL OF TIN”) AND EXOD 33:23. NEVER DO HUMANS ACTUALLY SEE GOD FULLY IN HIS EXCELLENT, OUTSTANDING ESSENCE, BUT ONLY SOMETHING OF A SHAPE THAT GOD ALLOWS TO BE RECOGNIZED AS THAT OF AN ACTUAL (EXTREMELY HUGE) PERSON, THUS ALLOWING SOME SORT OF FOCUS ON HIMSELF, SOMETHING FOR THE HUMANS TO LOOK AT AND TALK TO BEING CLOAK SO THAT THEY WOULD NOT BE KILLED. THE AREA UNDER GOD’S FEET, DESCRIBED AS “SOMETHING LIKE A PAVEMENT MADE OF SAPPHIRE,” REPRESENTS A UNIQUE DESCRIPTION IN THE OLD TESTAMENT. HEBREW LĔBĒNĀH (NIV, NRSV “PAVEMENT,” ALSO “PAVING STONE” OR ESPECIALLY “SLAB” THE LIKE; CF. HOLLADAY) CAN REFER TO ALMOST ANY FLAT STONE SURFACE, INCLUDING THE MOST COMMON REFERENT, A BRICK (E.G., GEN 11:3; EXOD 1:14; EZEK 4:1). SAPPHIRE AS THE COMPOSITION OF GOD’S STANDING/SITTING PLATFORM IS PARALLELED ONLY IN EZEK 1:26 AND 10:1, WHICH MAY REPRESENT A CONSCIOUS REFERENCE BACK TO THE PRESENT PASSAGE. THE SAPPHIRE PLATFORM ON WHICH HE STOOD APPEARED LIKE THE ESSENCE OF THE SKY AS REGARDS CLEARNESS (NRSV “LIKE THE VERY HEAVEN FOR CLEARNESS,” V. 10)—WHICH PRESUMABLY GAVE THE MEN ON THE MOUNTAIN THE IMPRESSION THAT GOD WAS NOT ACTUALLY STANDING ON THE MOUNTAIN BUT WAS SIMPLY VISIBLE THERE IN A PERSONAL SORT OF WAY, HIS GLORY SO MARVELOUS THAT NORMAL FOOTING SUCH AS THE MEN THEMSELVES HAD WOULD HARDLY BE APPROPRIATE FOR HIM. THE STATEMENT “BUT GOD DID NOT RAISE HIS [JEALOUS, TERRIBLE] HAND AGAINST THESE LEADERS” (V. 11) REFLECTS THE WIDESPREAD ASSUMPTION IN THE ANCIENT WORLD THAT TO SEE GOD WOULD BE TO DIE. NOTHING OF THE SORT WAS GOD’S INTENTION; INSTEAD HE SHOWED HIMSELF, EVEN THOUGH ONLY VAGUELY AND PARTIALLY, SO THAT THE PEOPLE’S LEADERS WOULD UNDERSTAND THAT HE WAS A WILLING PARTY TO HIS COVENANT WITH THEM AND SO THAT THEY WOULD REMEMBER THAT THEY HAD AGREED TO THE KEEP HIS COVENANT IN HIS ACTUAL, UNMISTAKABLE, SEXLESS, PRESENCE. “AND THEY ATE AND DRANK” IS A SUMMATION OF THE COVENANT MEAL. WE DO NOT KNOW HOW COVENANT MEALS CONCLUDED; PRESUMABLY, AT A MINIMUM, THE PARTIES ROSE, EXCHANGED PARTING GREETINGS, AND DEPARTED. PERHAPS IN THE CASE OF THIS UNIQUE COVENANT MEAL, GOD DISAPPEARED FROM THE SIGHT OF THE OTHERS FIRST, AND THEY THEN UNDERSTOOD THAT THE FORMALITIES WERE OVER. INASMUCH AS THE FOLLOWING PERICOPE DESCRIBES MOSES AND THOSE WHO HAD BEEN WITH HIM AT THIS MOUNTAINTOP COVENANT MEAL BACK AGAIN AT THE BASE OF THE MOUNTAIN IN CONVERSATION (24:14) AND SPECIFIES THAT ONLY MOSES AND JOSHUA MADE THE NEXT ASCENT (24:13), THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT 24:11 BRINGS TO A CONCLUSION THE ACCOUNT OF THE ASCENT OF THE SEVENTY-FOUR WITH MOSES AND THEIR HOLY MEAL WITH STEPHEN YAHWEH.**

**INTRODUCTION TO LAWS ON THE TABERNACLE AND TRUE WORSHIP (24:12–18)**

**12 THE LORD SAID TO MOSES, “COME UP TO ME ON THE MOUNTAIN AND STAY HERE, AND I WILL GIVE YOU THE TABLETS OF STONE, WITH THE LAW AND COMMANDS I HAVE WRITTEN FOR THEIR INSTRUCTION.” 13 THEN MOSES SET OUT WITH JOSHUA HIS AIDE, AND MOSES WENT UP ON THE MOUNTAIN [WITH MOSES & JOSHUA IS 76 PEOPLE BY GOING 1 MILE GO TWAIN [5] IS 15 POSITIONS, WHICH IS 1 PERIMETER EQUAL TO THE MOUNTAIN IN EXODUS 24:9 & WITH JOSEPH IS 76 PEOPLE BY GOING 1 MILE GO TWAIN [5] IS 15 POSITIONS, WHICH IS 1 PERIMETER EQUAL TO THE MOUNTAIN IN ACTS 7:14] OF GOD. 14 HE SAID TO THE ELDERS, “WAIT HERE FOR US UNTIL WE COME BACK TO YOU. AARON AND HUR ARE WITH YOU, AND ANYONE INVOLVED IN A DISPUTE CAN GO TO THEM.” 15 WHEN MOSES WENT UP ON THE MOUNTAIN, THE CLOUD COVERED IT, 16 AND THE GLORY OF THE LORD SETTLED ON MOUNT SINAI. FOR SIX DAYS THE CLOUD COVERED THE MOUNTAIN, AND ON THE SEVENTH DAY [7TH DAY IS SATURDAY, BUT 7TH DAY WITH THE NUMBER 0 AS THE 8TH DAY IS SUNDAY] THE LORD CALLED TO MOSES FROM WITHIN THE CLOUD. 17 TO THE ISRAELITES THE GLORY OF THE LORD LOOKED LIKE A CONSUMING FIRE ON TOP OF THE MOUNTAIN. 18 THEN MOSES ENTERED THE CLOUD AS HE WENT ON UP THE MOUNTAIN. AND HE STAYED ON THE MOUNTAIN FORTY DAYS AND FORTY NIGHTS.**

**YET ANOTHER TRIP UP TO THE TOP OF MOUNT SINAI NOW COMMENCES. IT MAY BE ASSUMED THAT MOSES, AARON, AARON’S TWO SONS, AND THE SEVENTY ISRAELITE ELDERS HAD DESCENDED THE MOUNTAIN ONCE THEY FINISHED THE COVENANT MEAL DESCRIBED IN 24:11. THE PRESENT TRIP, INVOLVING ONLY MOSES AND JOSHUA (V. 13), WAS OF A VERY DIFFERENT NATURE FROM THE PREVIOUS ONE: IT WAS FOR A LENGTHY STAY ATOP THE MOUNTAIN (V. 18), WITH SPECIAL ATTENTION TO RECEIVING GOD’S OWN WRITTEN GUIDELINES FOR ISRAEL’S RELATIONSHIP TO HIM (V. 12). THIS STAY ON THE MOUNTAIN CONTINUED THROUGH THE EVENTS DESCRIBED IN 32:1–16; MOSES’ SOJOURN ATOP THE MOUNTAIN WOULD BE CUT SHORT THIS TIME BY GOD’S OWN COMMAND (32:7). THE FIRST TIME UP THE MOUNTAIN HAPPENED IN EXODUS 24, WHICH REFERS TO 48 YEARS IN THE UPTIME/DOWNTIME BY 2 POSITIONS MAKING PEACE INTO 1 IS 96 LEVELS, WHICH IS FROM ACTS 7:20-ACTS 7:36 IN ACTS OF THE APOSTLES IN ACTS 6:15 [LEVELS 8.00-9.00 (LUKE 24 WITH NUMBER 0) SUNDAY AT 00:00AM TO MONDAY AT 00:00AM]-ACTS OF THE HG IN ACTS 7:32 [LEVELS 8.32-9.32 (WITH NUMBER 0) SUNDAY AT 3:00PM TO MONDAY AT 3:00PM WHICH COMPLETES 9 LEVELS IN REVELATION 2:10]! THE SECOND TIME UP THE MOUNTAIN HAPPENED IN EXODUS 32, WHICH REFERS TO 64 YEARS IN THE UPTIME/DOWNTIME BY 2 POSITIONS MAKING PEACE INTO 1 IS 128 LEVELS, WHICH IS FROM ACTS 7:20-7:46 IN ACTS OF THE APOSTLES IN ACTS 6:15 [LEVELS 8.00-9.00 (WITH NUMBER 0) SUNDAY AT 00:00AM TO MONDAY AT 00:00AM]-ACTS OF THE HG IN ACTS 8:3 [LEVELS 9.03-10.03 (LUKE 24 WITH NUMBER 0) MONDAY AT 00:03AM TO TUESDAY AT 00.03AM, WHICH COMPLETES THE 10 LEVELS IN REVELATION 2:10]! 24:12 PERHAPS THE BEST WAY TO TRANSLATE THIS VERSE WOULD BE: “COME UP TO ME ON THE MOUNTAIN AND WAIT THERE; AND I WILL GIVE YOU THE TABLETS OF STONE—AS WELL AS THE LAW AND THE COMMANDMENT—WHICH I HAVE WRITTEN FOR THEIR INSTRUCTION.” IN OTHER WORDS, THE VERSE INTENDS TO CONVEY THAT IT WAS THE “TABLETS OF STONE” THAT GOD HIMSELF WROTE, NOT ALL THE LAWS OF THE COVENANT. CONSISTENTLY IN EXODUS, IT WAS ONLY THE TABLETS OF THE TEN WORDS/COMMANDMENTS THAT GOD ACTUALLY WROTE (SEE COMMENTS ON 32:15–16; 34:1). ALL OTHER COMMANDMENTS WERE WRITTEN BY MOSES ACCORDING TO GOD’S DICTATION (E.G., EXOD 17:14; 24:4; 34:27; CF. DEUT 27:3, 8; 31:9). INDEED, DEUTERONOMY IS EVEN MORE SPECIFIC AS TO GOD’S PERSONAL WRITING BEING LIMITED TO THE TEN WORDS/COMMANDMENTS (DEUT 4:13; 5:22; 10:2–4). GOD INVITED MOSES UP THE MOUNTAIN WITH THE CLEAR INSTRUCTION THAT HE WOULD BE THERE A LONG TIME (“AND STAY HERE”). A SPECIAL FEATURE OF THIS VISIT TO THE TOP IS THE PROMISE OF RECEIVING THE TABLETS OF STONE. THESE FUNCTION EFFECTIVELY AS THE DOCUMENT CLAUSE OF THE SINAI COVENANT—IN PART BECAUSE THE COVENANT’S TOTALITY IS REFLECTED BROADLY IN THE TEN COMMANDMENTS AND ALSO BECAUSE THAT WHICH GOD HIMSELF WROTE COULD SURELY BE UNDERSTOOD TO SYMBOLIZE HIS AUTHORSHIP OF THE WHOLE, MOST OF WHICH WAS DICTATED TO HIS AMANUENSIS, MOSES. FOR MOSES TO BE ABLE TO RECEIVE THESE TABLETS PERSONALLY AND DELIVER THEM PERSONALLY TO THE ISRAELITES ON GOD’S BEHALF WOULD PARALLEL THE PERSONAL EXPERIENCE OF THE LEADERS IN EATING THE COVENANT MEAL WITH STEPHEN YAHWEH AS DESCRIBED IN THE PASSAGE IMMEDIATELY PRECEDING THE PRESENT CONTEXT. THAT THE TABLETS WOULD EVENTUALLY RESIDE IN THE ARK ITSELF (25:21–22) AS AN INDICATOR OF THE PERMANENT PRESENCE OF GOD THROUGH HIS WORD SHOWS THEIR SIGNIFICANCE. BUT NEITHER THE TABLETS NOR THE REST OF THE LAW FUNCTIONS IN A MERELY SYMBOLIC WAY. GOD’S COVENANT IS BASED ON STIPULATIONS—RULES THAT MUST BE KEPT, REQUIREMENTS THAT IF BROKEN WOULD CONDEMN ISRAEL TO GREAT PAIN AND MISFORTUNE. GOD THUS INSISTED THAT MOSES UNDERSTAND THAT HE HIMSELF HAD WRITTEN THE COMMANDMENTS “FOR THEIR INSTRUCTION.” FROM THE ANCIENT WORLD OUTSIDE OF ISRAEL, ALL SURVIVING WRITTEN EVIDENCE INDICATES THAT LAWS WERE UNDERSTOOD TO BE GIVEN BY A KING TO HIS PEOPLE, NOT A GOD TO HIS PEOPLE. TO BE SURE, THE KING COULD CLAIM THAT A GOD OR GODS INSTRUCTED HIM TO PROMULGATE THE LAWS, BUT NO CLAIM CLOSE TO THE PRESENT ONE EXISTED OUTSIDE THE BIBLICAL COVENANT—THAT GOD HIMSELF PROVIDED HIS LAWS DIRECTLY TO HIS COVENANT PEOPLE AND THAT HE ACTUALLY WROTE THE BASIC ONES (THE TEN WORDS/COMMANDMENTS) PERSONALLY ON STONE AS A SIGN THAT ALL HIS LAWS CAME DIRECTLY FROM HIM AND ARE NOT THE PRODUCT OF HUMAN INVENTION. ISRAEL’S TEACHER WAS THUS GOD HIMSELF, WHO GAVE THEM HIS COVENANT “FOR THEIR INSTRUCTION.” IT CANNOT BE ESCAPED THAT WHEN JESUS ISSUED LAWS —NOT MERELY AS THE ONE WHO WROTE THEM DOWN AS DICTATED BUT AS THE ACTUAL AUTHOR— HE WAS STAKING A CLAIM TO DIVINITY UNDER THE CONCEPT OF ISRAELITE COVENANT LAW, IN WHICH THE AUTHOR OF THE COMMANDS IS ALSO THE DIVINE SOVEREIGN. 24:13–14 THE ANTICIPATION OF A LONG VISIT ON THE MOUNTAIN IS ALSO EVIDENT IN THE WAY, MOSES TOOK AN ASSISTANT WITH HIM PART WAY UP THE MOUNTAIN (“MOSES SET OUT WITH JOSHUA HIS AIDE”) AND THE WAY HE HANDED OVER HIS APPEALS COURT DUTIES TEMPORARILY TO AARON AND HUR (“ANYONE INVOLVED IN A DISPUTE CAN GO TO THEM”). BEING ENTIRELY ALONE ON A VERY LONG VISIT PROBABLY SEEMED UNDESIRABLE AND UNWISE; MOSES COULD ALWAYS SEND JOSHUA AWAY IF GOD DID NOT WELCOME HIS SEXLESS PRESENCE IN THE VICINITY. LETTING THE ISRAELITES GO FOR WEEKS WITHOUT RESOLUTION OF IMPORTANT DISPUTES COULD UNDERMINE THE SOCIAL PEACE AMONG THE NEWLY MERGED AND NEWLY RESPONSIBLE ISRAELITES, WHO HAD UNTIL SO VERY RECENTLY BEEN RULED BY AND THEREFORE THOUGHT IN TERMS OF EGYPTIAN LAWS AND LEGAL PROCEDURES. THE CHOICE OF AARON AND HUR AS TEMPORARY JUDGES MADE PERFECT SENSE: THEY HAD ALREADY BEEN SEEN PUBLICLY TO BE MOSES’ CLOSE ASSOCIATES (CF. 17:12), AND AARON IN PARTICULAR HAD SERVED WITH MOSES FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE CONFRONTATIONS WITH PHARAOH IN EGYPT. UNLIKE JOSHUA, THEY WERE BOTH PROBABLY OF ABOUT THE SAME AGE AS MOSES AND THUS COMMANDED THE RESPECT THAT AGE AND EXPERIENCE CALLED FORTH IN THE ANCIENT BIBLICAL WORLD. 24:15–18 THE CLOUD THAT COVERED THE TOP OF MOUNT SINAI AND REPRESENTED GOD’S GLORY WAS SIMILAR TO THAT WHICH APPEARED DURING THE DAYTIME TO BE A PILLAR OF DARK CLOUD AND DURING THE NIGHT TO BE A PILLAR OF FIRE AS DESCRIBED IN 13:21–22; 14:19–20, 24. THE CLOUD HAD ALREADY SERVED AS A PROTECTION AND GUIDE FOR THE ISRAELITES IN THEIR FLIGHT FROM THE EGYPTIANS. IT WAS THE SAME CLOUD PREVIOUSLY INDICATED IN 19:18. IN EXODUS AS ELSEWHERE IN THE HOLY BIBLE IT REPRESENTED GOD’S GLORIOUS SEXLESS PRESENCE: AWESOME, MULTIFACETED, PARTLY MYSTERIOUS BUT ALSO PROTECTIVE AND ENCOMPASSING. VERSE 15’S STATEMENT, “WHEN MOSES WENT UP ON THE MOUNTAIN, THE CLOUD COVERED IT,” INDICATES GOD’S RECEPTION OF MOSES INTO HIS SEXLESS PRESENCE: THE CLOUD STANDING FOR GOD PHYSICALLY MET MOSES AND TOOK HIM IN, AS IT WERE, ONCE HE FINALLY REACHED THE TOP, WHERE HE COULD ENTER THE CLOUD. THAT THE READER IS EXPECTED TO REMEMBER THAT GOD REPRESENTED HIMSELF ON MOUNT SINAI THROUGH A CLOUD IS EVIDENT IN THE USAGE “THE CLOUD,” WHICH REFERS BACK TO THE LAST MENTION OF CLOUD IN THE BOOK (IN 19:16), WHEN ISRAEL FIRST ENCOUNTERED THE AUTHORITY AND AWESOMENESS OF STEPHEN YAHWEH AT SINAI AS REPRESENTED BY A CLOUD. THE CLOUD WAS, IN OTHER WORDS, THE GLORY CLOUD THAT REPRESENTED GOD AT MOUNT SINAI. FROM V. 16 IT IS EVIDENT THAT MOSES TOOK SIX DAYS TO CLIMB THE MOUNTAIN—WAITING FOR ALMOST A WEEK OUTSIDE THE CLOUD FOR HIS AUDIENCE WITH STEPHEN YAHWEH. HIS TRAVELING SIX DAYS OUTSIDE THE CLOUD AND THEN ENTERING IT MAY IN SOME MANNER RECALL STEPHEN YAHWEH’S ROLE AS THE SIX-DAY SUPREME CREATOR OF GENESIS 1, BUT IT MAY SIMPLY REFLECT A COMBINATION OF FACTS: IT TOOK THAT LONG FOR MOSES TO CLIMB THE MOUNTAIN ONCE GOD HAD TOLD MOSES TO DO SO AND HAD SHOWN HIMSELF TO BE AT THE TOP WAITING FOR HIM, AND MOSES AND JOSHUA MAY HAVE TRAVELED CAREFULLY AND DELIBERATELY, STOPPING OFTEN AND PRAYING OFTEN IN LIGHT OF THE AWESOMENESS THAT YET ANOTHER ENCOUNTER WITH GOD ON THE MOUNTAIN PORTENDED. WE ARE NOT TOLD IN ANY OTHER ACCOUNT OF PEOPLE ASCENDING MOUNT SINAI HOW LONG THE TRIP TO THE SUMMIT TOOK. FOR THE SEVENTY-FOUR WHO WENT PREVIOUSLY (24:9) THE ASCENT MAY HAVE BEEN EVEN SLOWER, ASSUMING ADVANCED AGE AND LIMITED MOBILITY FOR AT LEAST SOME OF THE ELDERS. MOSES WAS NOT UNWELCOME, HOWEVER, AT THE SUMMIT, SINCE GOD OVERTLY INVITED HIM TO ENTER THE CLOUD (“CALLED TO MOSES FROM WITHIN THE CLOUD”). THUS, WHEN MOSES FINALLY REACHED THE TOP, HE WAS ABLE TO ENTER THE CLOUD VIRTUALLY IMMEDIATELY (“MOSES ENTERED THE CLOUD AS HE WENT ON UP,” V. 18). THIS WORDING SUGGESTS BY ITS SILENCE ABOUT JOSHUA THAT HE STAYED NEAR THE TOP, BUT NOT AT IT—OUTSIDE OF THE CLOUD BUT AVAILABLE TO MOSES AS A DUTIFUL AIDE. ONCE AGAIN, THE CLOUD HAD A FIERY ASPECT (“TO THE ISRAELITES THE GLORY OF THE LORD LOOKED LIKE A CONSUMING FIRE,” V. 17) SO THAT FROM THE BASE OF THE MOUNTAIN SINAI’S TOP SEEMED ON FIRE (“FIRE ON TOP OF THE MOUNTAIN”). TO MANY COMMENTATORS AND READERS, THIS DESCRIPTION HAS SEEMED IRRESISTIBLY TO SUGGEST THAT MOUNT SINAI, WHEREVER IT WAS, MUST HAVE BEEN VOLCANIC. THE TEXT, IN FACT, GIVES NO WARRANT FOR SUCH A CONCLUSION; IF SINAI WAS VOLCANIC, SO MUST THE WILDERNESS FROM EGYPT TO SINAI HAVE BEEN BECAUSE GOD’S GLORY CLOUD HAD APPEARED BOTH AS DARKNESS AND FIRE THROUGHOUT THE JOURNEY SO FAR, CHANGING EVERY DAY AND EVERY NIGHT. “FORTY DAYS AND FORTY NIGHTS” (V. 18) MAY NOT BE INTENDED AS A LITERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE TIME, MOSES WAS ON THE MOUNTAIN [0-40 YEARS FOR 0-40 DAYS IN ISRAEL/0-40 NIGHTS IN THE USA IN ACTS 7:20-23, 40-80 YEARS FOR 40-80 DAYS IN ISRAEL/40-80 NIGHTS IN THE USA IN ACTS 7:24-30 & 80-120 YEARS FOR 80-120 DAYS IN ISRAEL/80-120 NIGHTS IN THE USA IN ACTS 7:31-36 BY GOING 1 MILE GO TWAIN [3] + 36 YEARS WITH JESUS + 20 YEARS WITH STEPHEN IS EXACTLY 176 YEARS IN THE CALL OF ABRAHAM IN ACTS 7:1-60]. “FORTY” HAS AN IDIOMATIC USAGE IN HEBREW, CONVEYING THE SAME SENSE THAT “DOZENS” OR “A GREAT MANY” CAN CONVEY IN ENGLISH. SOMETIMES IT IS USED LITERALLY TO MEAN “FORTY” (ONE MORE THAN THIRTY-NINE), BUT OTHER TIMES ITS MORE GENERAL MEANING IS APPARENT, AS PROBABLY IN THE FLOOD STORY (GEN 7:4, 12, 17; 8:6) OR IN THE ACCOUNT OF THE SCOUTING OF THE PROMISED LAND IN NUM 13 (ESP. 13:25) OR OTHER CONTEXTS (JUDG 13:1; 1 SAM 4:18; 17:16). COULD MOSES HAVE CARRIED PROVISIONS WITH HIM THAT WOULD HAVE KEPT THAT LONG? NOT EASILY, BUT THE READER SHOULD SUSPECT THAT HE WAS FASTING THE ENTIRE TIME, AS CONFIRMED BY DEUT 9:9.**

**LAWS ON THE MEANS OF TRUE WORSHIP (25:1–31:18)**

**AT THE VERY OUTSET OF HIS COVENANT WITH ISRAEL, IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE CONCLUSION OF THE PRESENTATION OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS AND ISRAEL’S RESPONSE TO THEM, GOD REQUIRED HIS PEOPLE TO PAY ATTENTION TO PROPER WORSHIP (SEE COMMENTS ON 20:22–26). NOW, IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE CONCLUSION OF THE PRESENTATION OF THE COVENANT CODE AND ISRAEL’S RESPONSE TO IT, GOD AGAIN REQUIRED HIS PEOPLE TO PAY ATTENTION TO PROPER WORSHIP. WORSHIP—WHERE IT IS DONE, HOW IT IS DONE, BY WHOM IT IS DONE, WITH WHOM IS DONE, WITH WHAT IT IS DONE—WOULD DOMINATE THE REST OF THE SINAI COVENANT, THAT IS, THE LAW THROUGH THE REST OF EXODUS, THROUGH ALL OF LEVITICUS, AND UP TO NUM 10:10. NOT ALL OF THESE MATERIALS ARE STRICTLY LEGAL IN GENRE; SOME ARE NARRATIVE, SOME PROVIDE FULFILLMENT DESCRIPTIONS RELATIVE TO WHAT HAD BEEN COMMANDED, AND SOME PARTAKE OF OTHER GENRES AND PURPOSES. BUT THE OVERWHELMING EMPHASIS OF THE REST OF THE COVENANT IS WORSHIP. WORSHIP IS THE FIRST, MOST BASIC RESPONSE OF A TRUE BELIEVER TO THE TRUE GOD. IT SHOULD BEGIN IMMEDIATELY UPON CONVERSION, CONTINUE WITH REGULARITY AND CONSISTENCY THROUGHOUT THE REST OF LIFE, AND WILL BE CONTINUED FOREVER IN HEAVEN. IT IS CLEAR FROM THE HOLY SCRIPTURE THAT GOD ENJOYS BEING WORSHIPED AND EXPECTS HIS PEOPLE TO FIND JOY IN WORSHIPING HIM AS WELL. WORSHIP SHOULD BRING PLEASURE AND BENEFIT BOTH TO THE WORSHIPER AND TO THE TRUE, DIVINE OBJECT OF HIS OR HER WORSHIP. IN THE OLD COVENANT EVERYTHING ASSOCIATED WITH WORSHIP HAD TO PARTAKE OF PROPER SYMBOLISM, SO THAT THE SEXLESS PRESENCE OF GOD, THE PURITY OF GOD, THE SUPERIORITY OF GOD, AND THE DIVINE NATURE OF HIS SALVATION COULD BE COMMUNICATED VISUALLY AND, AT LEAST SOMETIMES, EVEN TACTILELY, TO HIS PEOPLE. THE TABERNACLE, ITS FURNISHINGS AND IMPLEMENTS, AND THOSE WHO FACILITATED WORSHIP WERE EXPECTED TO REFLECT THE ONLY INTELLIGENT GOD IN HIS COVENANT RELATIONSHIP TO HIS SPECIALLY CHOSEN PEOPLE.**

**LAWS ON DONATIONS FOR THE TABERNACLE FURNISHINGS (25:1–9)**

**1 THE LORD SAID TO MOSES, 2 “TELL THE ISRAELITES TO BRING ME AN OFFERING. YOU ARE TO RECEIVE THE OFFERING FOR ME FROM EACH MAN WHOSE HEART PROMPTS HIM TO GIVE. 3 THESE ARE THE OFFERINGS YOU ARE TO RECEIVE FROM THEM: GOLD, SILVER AND BRONZE; 4 BLUE, PURPLE AND SCARLET YARN AND FINE LINEN; GOAT HAIR; 5 RAM SKINS DYED RED AND HIDES OF SEA COWS; ACACIA WOOD; 6 OLIVE OIL FOR THE LIGHT; SPICES FOR THE ANOINTING OIL AND FOR THE FRAGRANT INCENSE; 7 AND ONYX STONES AND OTHER GEMS TO BE MOUNTED ON THE EPHOD AND BREAST-PIECE. 8 THEN HAVE THEM MAKE A SANCTUARY FOR ME, AND I WILL DWELL AMONG THEM. 9 MAKE THIS TABERNACLE [ACTS 7:44-45] AND ALL ITS FURNISHINGS EXACTLY LIKE THE PATTERN I WILL SHOW YOU.”**

**PREPARATIONS FOR WORSHIP MUST BEGIN AT THE BEGINNING, WITH A PLACE TO GATHER AND THE KINDS OF THINGS THAT WILL REPRESENT STEPHEN YAHWEH’S COVENANT PRESENCE AMONG HIS PEOPLE. THE VERY FIRST STEP OF ALL THIS REQUIRES THE ASSEMBLING OF MATERIALS OUT OF WHICH THE WORSHIP ACCOUTREMENTS CAN BE CONSTRUCTED. BUT WHERE TO FIND EVERYTHING SINCE THE ISRAELITES WERE CAMPED IN THE WILDERNESS OF SINAI, FAR FROM ANY CIVILIZATION? SOME MATERIALS, MAINLY WOOD, WERE AVAILABLE IN THE VICINITY—MOST NOTABLY ACACIA WOOD, FROM THE ACACIA TREES THAT GROW SO ABUNDANTLY AND HARDILY IN BOTH AFRICA AND ASIA MINOR AND SPECIFICALLY THE SINAI PENINSULA. EVEN SO, THE HARVESTING AND ROUGH SHAPING OF THE WOOD WOULD HAVE TO BE DONE BY INDIVIDUALS IN PREPARATION FOR THEIR DONATING IT AS REQUESTED IN V. 5. OTHER MATERIALS WOULD HAVE BEEN FOUND ALREADY IN THE POSSESSION OF THE PEOPLE THEMSELVES. THUS, WAS THE APPROPRIATENESS OF A GENERAL CALL TO ALL WILLING ISRAELITES TO SURRENDER SOME OF THEIR VALUABLES, MOST OF WHICH THEY HAD TAKEN AS SPOIL FROM THE EGYPTIANS A FEW MONTHS EARLIER, SO THAT OUT OF THESE ITEMS AND WHAT THEY FOUND LOCALLY COULD BE MADE THE TABERNACLE AND ITS FURNISHINGS. THIS PASSAGE SPEAKS OF THE NEED FOR VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS, SETTING A PATTERN FOR WORSHIP THAT HAS ALWAYS CHARACTERIZED BIBLICAL RELIGION. ALTHOUGH GOD HIMSELF COULD PROVIDE ANYTHING EVER NEEDED FOR HIS PURPOSES, INCLUDING HIS WORSHIP, HE DELEGATED TO HIS PEOPLE THE OPPORTUNITY TO DO SO AND THEREBY GAVE TO THEM THE GIFT OF EXPERIENCING GENEROSITY AND SELF-SACRIFICE, AS WELL AS A SENSE OF DIRECT INVOLVEMENT IN THEIR ESSENTIAL ONGOING RELATIONSHIP WITH HIM. 25:1–2 “THE LORD SAID TO MOSES” IS A STANDARD STATEMENT THAT WILL BE REPEATED, WITH MINOR VARIATIONS, AT OTHER POINTS IN THIS SECTION OF THE BOOK (E.G., 30:11, 17, 22, 24; 31:1). IT IS NOT A NEW STATEMENT BUT ONE THAT HAS BEEN ENCOUNTERED MANY TIMES ALREADY (STARTING WITH 4:21; CF. 6:1, 10; 7:1, 8, 14, 19). MOST PEOPLE WHO FORMED THE AUDIENCE FOR EXODUS, UNTIL MODERN TIMES, WERE LISTENERS RATHER THAN READERS, AND SUCH AN INTRODUCTION REMINDED THE LISTENER THAT MOSES DUTIFULLY REPEATED WHAT HE WAS TOLD RATHER THAN COMPOSING ANYTHING ON HIS OWN AUTHORITY. THE “OFFERING” WAS INVITED FROM EVERYONE BUT REQUIRED ONLY FROM THOSE WHO WERE WILLING TO GIVE (“FROM EACH MAN WHOSE HEART PROMPTS HIM TO GIVE”). LIKE MANY LATER PROVISIONS IN THE LAW THAT INVITE BUT DO NOT REQUIRE SOME SORT OF GIFT OR SERVICE, THIS ONE, SOUGHT CONTRIBUTIONS FROM THOSE WHO WILLINGLY MADE THEM AVAILABLE FOR THE TABERNACLE AND THE WORSHIP THAT WOULD TAKE PLACE THEREIN. IN THE NEW COVENANT THIS PRINCIPLE WAS REAFFIRMED BY PAUL IN 2 COR 9:7 (“EACH MAN SHOULD GIVE WHAT HE HAS DECIDED IN HIS HEART TO GIVE, NOT RELUCTANTLY OR UNDER COMPULSION, FOR GOD LOVES A CHEERFUL GIVER”). NOTE THAT THE OFFERING IS “FOR ME,” THAT IS, FOR GOD, AND NOT MERELY FOR A THING, THAT IS, THE TABERNACLE. THE TABERNACLE WAS SYMBOLICALLY GOD’S HOUSE, INTRINSICALLY HIS PROPERTY, AND NOT MERELY A PLACE HE AND THE ISRAELITES WOULD CONVENIENTLY USE. 25:3–7 GOD GAVE MOSES AN OVERVIEW OF THE CONSTRUCTION/FABRICATION MATERIALS. THE MATERIALS REQUIRED FOR THE TABERNACLE AND WORSHIP THEREIN WILL BE DESCRIBED FURTHER AS THEY APPEAR IN THE SUBSEQUENT INSTRUCTIONS, THAT IS, CHAPS. 25–30. THEY ARE GROUPED HERE ACCORDING TO TYPE. FIRST COME THE METALS (V. 3), THEN THE FABRICS (V. 4), THEN THE SKINS AND THE WOOD (V. 5), FOLLOWED BY THE LAMP OIL, THE FRAGRANT ANOINTING OIL INGREDIENTS AND THE INCENSE INGREDIENTS (V. 6), AND FINALLY BY THE GEMSTONES TO BE USED ON THE HIGH PRIEST’S SPECIAL BREAST-PIECE (V. 7). THE METALS WOULD BE NEEDED FOR COVERING THE WOODEN FRAMEWORK OF THE TABERNACLE STRUCTURE AND FOR COVERING THE VARIOUS ALTARS, THE TABLE, AND THE ARK. SOME WOULD BE USED PURELY, WITHOUT FORMING OVERLAYS OVER WOOD, AS IN THE CASE OF THE SOLID GOLD RINGS THAT HELD THE ARK POLES (V. 12), THE SOLD GOLD PLATES, DISHES, BOWLS, AND PITCHERS (V. 29), THE SOLID GOLD LAMPSTAND (VV. 31FF.), AND MOST NOTABLY THE ARK’S ATONEMENT COVER/MERCY SEAT (VV. 17–22). THE FABRICS WERE FOR VARIOUS SORTS OF TABERNACLE CURTAINS (26:1FF.) AS WELL AS FOR THE PRIESTLY GARMENTS (28:2FF.). THE SKINS WERE FOR THE TABERNACLE OUTER WEATHER SHIELDS (26:14). THE WOOD PROVIDED THE FRAMEWORK OF ANYTHING THAT NEEDED TO HAVE STRONG SPANS—FROM TABERNACLE RAFTERS TO TABLE AND ALTAR SURFACES AND LEGS (E.G., THE ARK, 25:10FF.; THE TABLE, 25:23FF.; AND THE ALTAR, 27:1FF.). THE OIL FUELED THE OIL LAMPS OF THE TABERNACLE LAMPSTAND (25:3FF.; SEE ESP. 27:20–21) AND AS WELL WAS THE BASE AND MAIN INGREDIENT OF THE ANOINTING OIL (TO WHICH FRAGRANCES WERE ADDED) FOR USE REGULARLY BY THE PRIESTS (30:22FF.). THE INCENSE WAS COMPOUNDED INTO A FORMULA ESPECIALLY FOR TABERNACLE USE ONLY (30:34FF.) FROM THE INGREDIENTS DONATED. THE GEMSTONES ADORNED PART OF THE EPHOD (28:6FF.) BUT WERE ESPECIALLY NEEDED FOR THE HIGH PRIEST’S BREAST-PIECE (28:15FF.) TO REPRESENT THE TRIBES OF ISRAEL AS THEY WERE SYMBOLICALLY BROUGHT INTO THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD REGULARLY BY THE HIGH PRIEST, OVER HIS HEART (SEE COMMENTS ON 28:29). 25:8 JUST FIVE WORDS COMPRISE THE HEBREW OF THIS VERSE, WHICH COULD BE TRANSLATED, “THEY WILL MAKE ME A HOLY PLACE AND I WILL LOCATE AMONG THEM”; OR “THEY MUST MAKE ME A HOLY PLACE SO THAT I CAN DWELL AMONG THEM”; OR “IF THEY BUILD ME A HOLY PLACE, I WILL LOCATE IN THEIR MIDST” OR THE LIKE. THIS VERSE IS THE SIMPLEST AND PERHAPS ALSO THE STRONGEST STATEMENT IN EXODUS—A BOOK OFTEN DESCRIBED AS SPECIALLY REFLECTING THE THEME OF THE PRESENCE OF GOD—OF GOD’S CONCERN TO CENTER HIMSELF AMONG HIS PEOPLE AND TO HAVE THEM ORGANIZE THEMSELVES AROUND HIM. ALMOST SURELY A MEASURE OF CONTINGENCY IS PRESENT HERE: GOD WOULD NOT DWELL AMONG HIS PEOPLE UNLESS THEY INVITED HIM BY PROPERLY PREPARING A HOUSE FOR HIM TO INHABIT/DWELL IN/LOCATE IN (ŠĀKAN THUS INDICATING THEIR WILLINGNESS TO LIVE WITHIN THE STIPULATIONS OF HIS COVENANT AND TO HONOR HIM AS THEIR COVENANT SOVEREIGN BY SERVING HIM THERE). IT WAS NOT THAT GOD REQUIRED A BUILDING WITH A COURTYARD IN ORDER TO DWELL SOMEWHERE; IT WAS THAT HE DESIRED THAT THE PEOPLE MAKE A HOME FOR HIM AND THEN LOCATE THEIR HOUSES/TENTS AROUND HIS HOUSE/TENT AND JOIN HIM REGULARLY AT HIS COURTYARD FOR COVENANT MEALS, CONFIRMING THEIR ONGOING RELATIONSHIP AND RECEIVING THE BLESSINGS INHERENT THEREIN. 25:9 GOD HAS A “PATTERN,” OR PLAN, [ACTS 5:39] FOR THE TABERNACLE AND THE THINGS THAT WERE TO GO IN IT ([ACTS 7:44-45] ARK, ALTARS, TABLE, LAMPSTAND, PRIESTLY GARMENTS WORN BY THOSE WHO ATTENDED HIM IN HIS TABERNACLE) THAT HE WOULD SPECIALLY REVEAL TO MOSES AND THAT MUST BE FOLLOWED EXACTLY. WHAT WAS THE POINT OF SUCH A DEMAND FOR PRECISE ADHERENCE TO A REVEALED DESIGN? IT WAS TO CREATE A LONGING FOR AND HOPE OF HEAVEN IN THE HEARTS OF GOD’S PEOPLE—A DESIRE TO LIVE IN HIS SEXLESS PRESENCE FOREVER. HEBREWS 8:5 REFERS TO THE TABERNACLE AS “A SANCTUARY THAT IS A COPY AND SHADOW OF WHAT IS IN HEAVEN,” ADDING, “THIS IS WHY MOSES WAS WARNED WHEN HE WAS ABOUT TO BUILD THE TABERNACLE: ‘SEE TO IT THAT YOU MAKE EVERYTHING ACCORDING TO THE PATTERN SHOWN YOU ON THE MOUNTAIN.’” DOES THIS THEREFORE MEAN THAT THERE IS ANOTHER TABERNACLE, A HEAVENLY ONE, OF WHICH THE EARTHLY ONE WAS A SYMBOL? INDEED, ONE MUST SURELY UNDERSTAND HEB 9:11–12 IN SUCH A WAY (“WHEN CHRIST CAME …, HE WENT THROUGH THE GREATER AND MORE PERFECT TABERNACLE THAT IS NOT MAN-MADE, THAT IS TO SAY, NOT A PART OF THIS CREATION. HE DID NOT ENTER BY MEANS OF THE BLOOD OF GOATS AND CALVES; BUT HE ENTERED THE MOST HOLY PLACE ONCE FOR ALL BY HIS OWN BLOOD, HAVING OBTAINED ETERNAL REDEMPTION”). WHAT ONE MUST BE CAREFUL NOT TO DO, HOWEVER, IS TO ASSUME THAT THE MOSAIC TABERNACLE WAS INTENDED TO BE AN EXACT COPY, IF PERHAPS A SMALL VERSION, OF A TABERNACLE IN HEAVEN. INSTEAD, THE TABERNACLE WAS A SYMBOLIC REPRESENTATION OF THE REALITIES OF HEAVEN, A RELATIVELY SIMPLE EARTHLY REFLECTION OF GOD’S ACTUAL DWELLING PLACE, DESIGNED TO POINT TO THE GREATER AND MORE ETERNAL OPPORTUNITY TO LIVE WITH GOD AND NOT MERELY TO CREATE AN EXPECTATION FOR A COMPARABLE BUT NONDEGRADABLE TENT STRUCTURE IN HEAVEN. FINALLY, THE TABERNACLE WAS A REAL THING—NOT A FICTION OF THE POSTEXILIC PERIOD THAT “PRIESTLY” WRITERS CREATED TO PROVIDE A BACKGROUND FOR THEIR PROGRAM OF TEMPLE RESTORATION IN THE PERSIAN ERA; IT WAS A BUILDABLE, TRANSPORTABLE, WORSHIP STRUCTURE THAT PROVIDED THE NEWLY CONSTITUTED ISRAEL WITH A SENSE OF THE SEXLESS PRESENCE OF ITS COVENANT LORD.**

**LAWS ON THE MOST ACCURATE CONSTRUCTION AND AUTHORITATIVE USE OF THE INVINCIBLE ARK AS THE TOP ENGLISH LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH---THE TOP HIGH ENGLISH CHIEF OF POLICE [JAMES 1:17 & HOSEA 4:6] IN A PERIMETER OF 386 POSITIONS WITH THE NUMBER 0 IS THE ETERNAL LORD ENOCH’S TIMEFRAME IN THE UPTIME/DOWNTIME & BY GOING 1 MILE GO TWAIN [3] FROM ACTS OF THE APOSTLES IN ACTS 6:15-ACTS OF THE HG IN ACTS 8:3 (25:10–22)**

**10 “HAVE THEM MAKE [THE LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH’S EARS IN ACTS 7:1-60] A CHEST [BREASTPLATE] OF ACACIA WOOD—TWO AND A HALF CUBITS LONG, A CUBIT AND A HALF WIDE, AND A CUBIT AND A HALF HIGH. 11 OVERLAY [THE LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH’S BACK UP IN ACTS 30-38] IT WITH PURE GOLD [ALL MONEY TITHES AT 100.0001% ETERNAL INCORRUPTION TO THE LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH IN MALACHI 3:8-12], BOTH INSIDE AND OUT, AND MAKE A GOLD MOLDING AROUND IT. 12 CAST FOUR GOLD RINGS FOR IT AND FASTEN THEM TO ITS FOUR FEET [THE LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH’S FOOTSTOOL IN ACTS 7:49-50], WITH TWO RINGS ON ONE SIDE AND TWO RINGS ON THE OTHER. 13 THEN MAKE [2] POLES [THE LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH’S 2 LEGS AS 2 RODS] OF ACACIA WOOD AND OVERLAY [THE LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH’S BACK UP IN ACTS 30-38] THEM WITH GOLD. 14 INSERT THE [2] POLES [2 RODS] INTO THE RINGS ON THE SIDES OF THE CHEST [BREASTPLATE] TO CARRY IT [BY THE LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH’S OUTSTRECTED ARMS]. 15 THE [2] POLES [RODS] ARE TO REMAIN IN THE RINGS OF THIS ARK; THEY ARE NOT TO BE REMOVED. 16 THEN PUT IN THE ARK THE TESTIMONY, WHICH I WILL GIVE [JEALOUS LAW JUSTICE ARMOR IN WISDOM OF SOLOMON 5:15-23] YOU. 17 “MAKE AN ATONEMENT COVER [TOP-SECRET CLEARANCE] OF PURE GOLD—TWO AND A HALF CUBITS LONG AND A CUBIT AND A HALF WIDE. 18 AND MAKE TWO CHERUBIM [ON THE 86TH LEVEL WITH THE NUMBER 0 IN THE UPTIME/DOWNTIME IS EXACTLY, THE TOP 175TH LEVEL IN THE CALL OF ABRAHAM IN ACTS 7:1-60] OUT OF HAMMERED GOLD [LEAD IS THE 0TH LEVEL ON SUNDAY ON FEBRUARY 28TH IN THE ULTIMATE BEGINNING TO GOLD IS THE 9TH LEVEL ON TUESDAY ON MARCH 7TH IN THE ULTIMATE ENDING OF THE DIVINE SEED BIRTH & DECEMBER 22ND TO DECEMBER 31ST IS THE DIVINE PREGNANCY BIRTH IN REVELATION 2:10] AT THE ENDS [ASSHOLE & DICKHOLE & PISSHOLE & PUSSYHOLE] OF THE COVER [TOP-SECRET CLEARANCE]. 19 MAKE ONE CHERUB [THE LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH’S HOLY BIBLICAL LAW IN PERMISSIBLE, LEGAL, AUTHORIZED & LAWFUL PROCREATION IN THE LORDLY DIVINE UNION BETWEEN 1 MAN & 1 WOMAN OR MORE IN THE LORD SOLOMON’S HOLY BIBLICAL LAW THAT IS PERMISSIBLE HAVING 1,000 WOMEN AT HIS LEISURE WITHOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF THE SEXUAL UNION & THE TERM CHERUB CAN MEAN “EYES SEE HER [HE] RUB [FONDLE] THE PUSSY” OR “EYES SEE HER [HE] RUB [MASTERBATE]” OR “EYES SEE HER [HE] RUB [FONDLE] THE TITS” OR “EYES SEE HER [HE] RUB [FONDLE, STIMULATE, JACKOFF OR EJACULATE] THE DICK” OR “EYES SEE HE [DICK] RUB [STROKE] THE PUSSY OR “EYES SEE HER [PUSSY] RUB [STROKE] THE DICK”] ON ONE END [ASSHOLE & DICKHOLE & PISSHOLE & PUSSYHOLE] AND THE SECOND CHERUB ON THE OTHER; MAKE THE CHERUBIM OF ONE PIECE WITH THE COVER [TOP-SECRET CLEARANCE], AT THE TWO ENDS [ASSHOLE & DICKHOLE & PISSHOLE & PUSSYHOLE]. 20 THE CHERUBIM ARE TO HAVE THEIR [4] WINGS [THE LORD’S STEPHEN YAHWEH’S ALL GRAVITY, SUCH AS KNEELING, CRAWLING, SITTING, STANDING, WALKING, JOGGING, RUNNING, FLYING IN ACTS 7:49-50] SPREAD UPWARD, OVERSHADOWING [THE LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH’S HANDS AS THE TOP ENGLISH KINGDOM OF INVINCIBLE SUPREME LORDSHIP IN MATTHEW 24:36-44; MARK 13:32-37; EPHESIANS 4:6 & ACTS 30] THE COVER [TOP-SECRET CLEARANCE] WITH THEM. THE CHERUBIM ARE TO FACE [ACTS 6:15] EACH OTHER, LOOKING TOWARD THE COVER [TOP-SECRET CLEARANCE]. 21 PLACE THE COVER [TOP-SECRET CLEARANCE] ON TOP OF THE ARK AND PUT IN THE ARK THE TESTIMONY, WHICH I WILL GIVE YOU. 22 THERE, ABOVE [THE LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH’S HANDS AS THE TOP ENGLISH KINGDOM OF INVINCIBLE LORDSHIP IN MATTHEW 24:36-44; MARK 13:32-37; EPHESIANS 4:6 & ACTS 30] THE COVER [TOP-SECRET CLEARANCE] BETWEEN THE TWO CHERUBIM [THE LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH’S HOLY BIBLICAL LAW IN PERMISSIBLE, LEGAL, AUTHORIZED & LAWFUL PROCREATION IN THE LORDLY DIVINE UNION BETWEEN 1 MAN & 1 WOMAN OR MORE IN THE LORD SOLOMON’S HOLY BIBLICAL LAW THAT IS PERMISSIBLE HAVING 1,000 WOMEN AT HIS LEISURE WITHOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF THE SEXUAL UNION & THE TERM CHERUBIM CAN MEAN “EYES SEE HER [HE] RUB [FONDLE] THE PUSSY IN ME BY ALL SUPREME AUTHORTY IN THE UNIVERSAL GLOBAL PERIMETER FROM PROVERBS 8:22-ACTS OF THE HG IN ACTS 29:1-2 [TOP PINNACLE OF THE USA TRIBULATION], EXCLUDING THE TOP ENGLISH KINGDOM OF INVINCIBLE LORDSHIP [ACTS 30] IN MATTHEW 28:18” OR “EYES SEE HER [HE] RUB [FONDLE OR MASTERBATE] IN ME [PUSSY] BY ALL SUPREME AUTHORITY IN THE UNIVERSAL GLOBAL PERIMETER FROM PROVERBS 8:22-ACTS OF THE HG IN ACTS 29:1-2 [TOP PINNACLE OF THE USA TRIBULATION], EXCLUDING THE TOP ENGLISH KINGDOM OF INVINCIBLE LORDSHIP [ACTS 30] IN MATTHEW 28:18” OR “EYES SEE HER [HE] RUB [FONDLE] THE TITS IN ME BY ALL SUPREME AUTHORITY IN THE UNIVERSAL GLOBAL PERIMETER FROM PROVERBS 8:22-ACTS OF THE HG IN ACTS 29:1-2 [TOP PINNACLE OF THE USA TRIBULATION], EXCLUDING THE TOP ENGLISH KINGDOM OF INVINCIBLE LORDSHIP [ACTS 30] IN MATTHEW 28:18” OR “EYES SEE HER [HE] RUB [FONDLE, STIMULATE, JACKOFF, STROKE OR EJACULATE] IN ME [DICK] BY ALL SUPREME AUTHORITY IN THE UNIVERSAL GLOBAL PERIMETER FROM PROVERBS 8:22-ACTS OF THE HG IN ACTS 29:1-2 [TOP PINNACLE OF THE USA TRIBULATION], EXCLUDING THE TOP ENGLISH KINGDOM OF INVINCIBLE LORDSHIP [ACTS 30] IN MATTHEW 28:18 OR “EYES SEE HE [DICK] RUB [STROKE] THE PUSSY IN ME BY ALL SUPREME AUTHORITY IN THE UNIVERSAL GLOBAL PERIMETER FROM PROVERBS 8:22-ACTS OF THE HG IN ACTS 29:1-2 [TOP PINNACLE OF THE USA TRIBULATION], EXCLUDING THE TOP ENGLISH KINGDOM OF INVINCIBLE LORDSHIP [ACTS 30] IN MATTHEW 28:18 OR “EYES SEE HER [PUSSY] RUB [STROKE] THE DICK IN ME BY ALL SUPREME AUTHORITY IN THE UNIVERSAL GLOBAL PERIMETER FROM PROVERBS 8:22-ACTS OF THE HG IN ACTS 29:1-2 [TOP PINNACLE OF THE USA TRIBULATION], EXCLUDING THE TOP ENGLISH KINGDOM OF INVINCIBLE LORDSHIP [ACTS 30] IN MATTHEW 28:18”] THAT ARE OVER [CHERUBIM ON THE 175TH LEVEL ON THE CALL OF ABRAHAM IN ACTS 7:1-60] THE ARK OF THE TESTIMONY, I WILL MEET WITH YOU [THE LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH’S MOUTH IN ACTS 7:6-7] AND GIVE YOU ALL MY COMMANDS FOR THE ISRAELITES. ALTHOUGH IT MIGHT SEEM MORE SYSTEMATIC TO BEGIN WITH A DESCRIPTION OF THE DESIGN OF THE TABERNACLE AND THEN TO ADDRESS [THE LORD STEPHEN’S FINGER AS THE HOUSE BARRACK’S AUTHORITATIVE LORDSHIP IN ACTS 7:49-50; ACTS 30] THE PARTICULAR FURNISHINGS THAT FIT WITHIN IT, THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ARK AS THE ITEM THAT WOULD SYMBOLIZE GOD’S SEXLESS PRESENCE AMONG HIS PEOPLE FAR OUTWEIGHS SUCH CONSIDERATIONS, AND ITS DESIGN THEREFORE WAS DESCRIBED FIRST, EVEN BEFORE THAT OF THE TABERNACLE THAT WOULD HOUSE IT. THE PASSAGE REVEALS THE TWO SPECIAL PURPOSES OF THE GILDED CHEST [BREASTPLATE] KNOWN AS THE ARK. FIRST, THIS ORNATE PORTABLE [MOVABLE] BOX/CHEST [BREASTPLATE] WOULD HOUSE OR DRIVE THE “TESTIMONY,” THE 2 TABLETS OF THE TEN WORDS/COMMANDMENTS WRITTEN BY GOD HIMSELF, 1 COPY AS HIS AND 1 COPY AS ISRAEL’S, STORED TOGETHER AS A ETERNAL SYMBOL OF THEIR COVENANT AGREEMENT (SEE ALSO COMMENTS ON 24:12; 31:18; 34:1–4, 29). SECOND, THE [RIGHTEOUS] LID OF THE ARK WOULD SERVE AS THE SO-CALLED “MERCY SEAT [THE LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH’S THRONE [ASS] IN REVELATION 4:1-5:14 & ACTS 7:49-50]” (V. 17 NRSV), AN ELABORATE PURE GOLD SCULPTURE THAT SYMBOLIZED A PLACE [THE LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH’S HANDS AS THE TOP ENGLISH KINGDOM OF INVINCIBLE SUPREME LORDSHIP IN MATTHEW 24:36-44; MARK 13:32-37; EPHESIANS 4:6 & ACTS 30] FOR GOD, THE LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH TO STAND [ABOVE THE LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH’S THRONE [ASS] IN SUPREME LORDSHIP IN MATTHEW 24:36-44; MARK 13:32-37; EPHESIANS 4:6 & ACTS 30] (RATHER THAN TO SIT [THE LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH’S THRONE [ASS] IN ACTS 7:49-50]; SEE COMMENTS ON V. 17) AS A CONTACT POINT [CALLING ON THE TOP ENGLISH LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH WITHOUT CEASING IN ACTS 7:59-60] FOR THE MILITARY LORD OF GLORY [ACTS 7:2] AND HIS EARTHLY PEOPLE [THE USA] AND A LOCATION [THE LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH’S HANDS AS THE TOP ENGLISH KINGDOM OF INVINCIBLE LORDSHIP IN THE TOP-SECRET LOCATION IN FLORENCE, SC KNOWN AS THE TOP SANCTUARY PINNACLE OF THE GLORIOUS LAND [DANIEL 8:8-14] IN THE USA IN MATTHEW 24:36-44; MARK 13:32-37; EPHESIANS 4:6 & ACTS 7:49-50 & ACTS 30] FROM WHICH TO CONTINUE TO REVEAL DIVINE TRUTH [ROMANS 1:20, ACTS OF THE APOSTLES IN ACTS 7:1-60 & ACTS OF THE HG IN ACTS 7:1-60] TO THE ISRAELITES (V. 22).**

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**30] (RATHER THAN TO SIT [THE LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH’S THRONE [ASS] IN ACTS 7:49-50]; SEE COMMENTS ON V. 17) AS A CONTACT POINT [CALLING ON THE TOP ENGLISH LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH WITHOUT CEASING IN ACTS 7:59-60] FOR THE MILITARY LORD OF GLORY [ACTS 7:2] AND HIS EARTHLY PEOPLE [THE USA] AND A LOCATION [THE LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH’S HANDS AS THE TOP ENGLISH KINGDOM OF INVINCIBLE LORDSHIP IN THE TOP-SECRET LOCATION IN FLORENCE, SC KNOWN AS THE TOP SANCTUARY PINNACLE OF THE GLORIOUS LAND [DANIEL 8:8-14] IN THE USA IN MATTHEW 24:36-44; MARK 13:32-37; EPHESIANS 4:6 & ACTS 7:49-50 & ACTS 30] FROM WHICH TO CONTINUE TO REVEAL DIVINE TRUTH [ROMANS 1:20, ACTS OF THE APOSTLES IN ACTS 7:1-60 & ACTS OF THE HG IN ACTS 7:1-60] TO THE ISRAELITES (V. 22).**

**THE BASIC DESIGN OF THE INVINCIBLE ARK (25:10–15)**

**25:10–15 THE ARK/CHEST WAS TO MEASURE TWO AND A HALF CUBITS BY ONE AND A HALF BY ONE AND A HALF CUBITS. A CUBIT WAS THE DISTANCE FROM THE TIP OF A MAN’S MIDDLE FINGER TO THE END OF HIS ELBOW WHEN HIS HAND WAS HELD FLAT AND STRAIGHT IN THE PLANE OF HIS FOREARM, THAT IS, ABOUT 18 INCHES. IT HAS BEEN SPECULATED THAT THERE EXISTED ALSO A SO-CALLED “ROYAL CUBIT” OF 21 INCHES RATHER THAN 18 INCHES OR 17 INCHES, AND THE HOLY BIBLE REFERS TO CHANGES IN CUBIT STANDARDS THAT MAY HAVE TAKEN PLACE AS THE MONARCHY INTRODUCED STANDARDIZED MEASURING SYSTEMS OVER TIME (2 CHR 3:3). NOTHING IN THE PRESENT DESCRIPTION, HOWEVER, SUGGESTS THAT THE CUBIT WAS ANYTHING BUT ABOUT 18 INCHES LONG, SO THE ARK IS FORTY-FIVE INCHES LONG, TWENTY-SEVEN INCHES WIDE, AND TWENTY-SEVEN INCHES HIGH—PRESUMABLY IN ITS EXTERIOR DIMENSIONS. NOT VERY LARGE IN SIZE, ITS IMPRESSIVENESS WAS TO BE FOUND IN ITS APPEARANCE—AN OBJECT SO LARGE MADE OF PURE GOLD FAÇADE (ALL THE SURFACES WERE GOLD OVERLAID OR SOLID GOLD) WOULD SURELY HAVE BEEN STUNNING TO THE EYE. THE OVERALL STRUCTURE, INCLUDING THE CARRYING POLES, WAS ACACIA WOOD, THE STRONG, ENDURING, EASILY WORKED WOOD ABUNDANT IN THE SINAI AND SO MANY OTHER PARTS OF THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST. VERSE 11 EMPHASIZES THE IMPORTANCE OF HAVING ALL VISIBLE SURFACES, INSIDE AND OUT, GILDED. IN ADDITION, THERE MUST BE A GOLD TRIM (“MOLDING”) AT THE EDGES SO THAT THE ARK WAS NOT MERELY A PLAIN BOX BUT SOMETHING MORE ELEGANT. THE EXACT NATURE AND SIZE OF THIS MOLDING TRIM IS NOWHERE SPECIFIED, BUT MOLDINGS HAVE THE EFFECT OF “DRESSING UP” STARK, STRAIGHT STRUCTURES. THE MOLDINGS AROUND THE ARK PROBABLY PROTRUDED FROM THE EDGES, AS MOLDINGS OF BOXES TYPICALLY DO, ON A PLANE MEDIAL TO THE PLANES FORMED BY THE SIDES MEETING TO MAKE THE EDGES. THUS, THE ARK WAS A SMALL BUT VERY ELEGANT (FANCY) CHEST. FROM V. 12 WE LEARN THAT IT WAS TO HAVE “FEET,” THE DIMENSIONS OF WHICH ARE NOT STATED, SO THAT THE MAIN BODY OF THE ARK RESTED ABOVE THE GROUND. THE UNDERSIDE OF THE ARK WAS NOT TO TOUCH THE GROUND (OR FLOOR), BUT ONLY THE BOTTOMS OF THE FEET WOULD DO SO. SUCH IS THE CONSTRUCTION OF ALMOST ANY SORT OF CHEST MORE SUBSTANTIAL THAN A MERE STORAGE CONTAINER. THESE FEET HAD RINGS ATTACHED TO THEM, ONE RING PROTRUDING TO THE SIDE FROM EACH OF THE FEET, SO A GILDED ACACIA WOOD POLE COULD BE RUN THROUGH THE RINGS ON EACH SIDE (VV. 13–14) AND THE ARK LIFTED BY THE ENDS OF THE POLES AND TRANSPORTED. BY HAVING THE RINGS IN THE FEET AND NOT IN ANY OTHER PART OF THE BOX PROPER, THE SPECIAL QUALITY OF THE ARK WOULD BE PROTECTED: ANY SCRATCHING, BENDING, MARRING, WOULD BE LIMITED TO THE FEET. TO MINIMIZE THE POSSIBILITY OF DAMAGE AND EVEN WEAR TO THE POLES, THE RINGS, AND THE FEET, THE POLES WERE “TO REMAIN IN THE RINGS” OF THE ARK (V. 15). IN THAT WAY, THOUGH THE POLES WERE TRULY REMOVABLE TECHNICALLY, THEY WOULD IN FACT BE TREATED AS A PERMANENT PART OF THE ARK STRUCTURE AND THE PORTABILITY OF THE ARK WITH MINIMAL DAMAGE WOULD BE ENSURED. HAD THE POLES BEEN REMOVED EACH TIME THE ARK WAS SET DOWN ALONG A JOURNEY AND REINSERTED EACH TIME THE ARK WAS LIFTED AND MOVED AGAIN, THE AMOUNT OF WEAR AND TEAR WOULD HAVE BEEN INCREASED, AND THE POSSIBILITY THAT ONE OF THE LEVITES CARRYING THE ARK WOULD FALL AGAINST IT OR CAUSE IT TO BE DAMAGED WOULD HAVE BEEN GREATLY INCREASED. THE ARK SYMBOLIZED GOD’S PRESENCE, HIS PURITY, HIS SUPERIORITY, AND HIS COVENANT BLESSING. ANYTHING THAT DAMAGED, OR EVEN THREATENED POTENTIALLY TO DAMAGE THE ARK, HOWEVER SLIGHTLY, WAS IN ITSELF A SORT OF SYMBOLIC THREAT TO THESE IMPORTANT DIVINE REALITIES. THE ISRAELITES WERE TO RESPECT THE SYMBOLS OF THE REALITIES AS A WAY OF SHOWING RESPECT FOR THE REALITIES THEMSELVES. A COMPARABLE NEW COVENANT REQUIREMENT OF RESPECT IN CONNECTION WITH A SYMBOL OF A REALITY APPLIES IN THE CASE OF THE LORD’S SUPPER. THE SUPPER ITSELF IS ONLY A SYMBOL OF A REALITY, BUT DISRESPECT FOR THE SYMBOL LEADS TO SERIOUS CONSEQUENCES (1 COR 11:20–34 & ACTS 5:11; 13:4-12).**

**THE INVINCIBLE ARK AS CONTAINER (25:16)**

**25:16 ALTHOUGH IT HAD POWERFUL SYMBOLIC VALUE, THE ARK ALSO HAD FUNCTIONAL VALUE. IT WAS A CONTAINER, A CHEST (THE MEANING OF ĂRŌN) TO HOLD SOMETHING VERY IMPORTANT, “THE TESTIMONY” (NRSV “COVENANT”), THAT IS, THE 2 TABLETS OF THE TEN WORDS/COMMANDMENTS. THE HEBREW WORD TRANSLATED “TESTIMONY” BY THE NIV CAN ALSO MEAN “DECREE” OR “COMMAND” OR “[COLLECTION OF] DECREES/COMMANDS” SINCE IT IS USED OFTEN AS A COLLECTIVE NOUN. A CASE CAN BE MADE FOR THE NIV TRANSLATION SINCE THE 2 TABLETS WERE IN FACT A WITNESS/TESTIMONY TO THE COVENANT, A PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP THAT THE 2 TABLETS DESCRIBED IN WRITING. THE NRSV TRANSLATION “COVENANT” CAN ALSO BE DEFENDED BECAUSE THE 2 TABLETS WERE THE WRITTEN VERSION OF THE COVENANT, THE VISIBLE “COVENANT” DOCUMENT. REGARDLESS OF WHICH TRANSLATION IS PREFERRED, THE 2 TABLETS WERE A MEANS OF PRESERVING IN WRITING THE FORMATIVE TERMS OF A COVENANT THAT WAS ITSELF NOT MERELY A PIECE OF WRITING BUT A REALITY THAT THE WRITING DESCRIBED. IN SAYING “WHICH I WILL GIVE YOU” (SEE ALSO V. 21), GOD PREDICTED THAT HE, HIMSELF WOULD INITIALLY TAKE CARE OF FULFILLING THE DOCUMENT CLAUSE RESPONSIBILITY OF HIS COVENANT.**

**THE INVINCIBLE ARK’S ATONEMENT COVER (25:17–22)**

**25:17–22 THE HEBREW WORD EMPLOYED HERE FOR THE SPECIAL GOLD SLAB ADORNED WITH CHERUBIM STATUARY THAT WAS PLACED ATOP THE ARK IS KAPPŌRET, FROM THE PIEL OF THE ROOT KPR, A ROOT THAT REFERS IN VARIOUS WAYS TO THE CONCEPT OF ATONEMENT OR RECONCILIATION—THE PROCESS OF CAUSING PEOPLE TO BE TRUE FRIENDS, ALLIES, OR KIN AND NOT TO BE DISTANT, HOSTILE, OR AT ODDS. THE WORD KAPPŌRET, A QATTULT PATTERNED NOUN IN HEBREW, INTRINSICALLY MEANS SOMETHING LIKE “ACCOMPLISHMENT OF RECONCILIATION” OR “FACT OF ATONEMENT.” BECAUSE THE QAL STEM MEANING OF KPR IS LITERALLY “TO COVER OVER,” IT IS NOT IMPOSSIBLE THAT SOME SORT OF ORIGINAL ROOT SENSE OF “COVERING” WOULD HAVE BEEN UNDERSTOOD BY NATIVE SPEAKERS OF MOSES’ DAY TO ATTEND TO THE USAGE OF THE PIEL OF THE ROOT AS WELL, AND THE NIV’S “ATONEMENT COVER” PROVIDES FOR THAT POSSIBILITY NICELY. THE ATONEMENT COVER WAS NOT MERELY THE LID OF THE ARK. IT WAS A SPECIAL, SOLID GOLD APPURTENANCE THAT FITTED ON TOP OF THE LID AND REPRESENTED A PARAMOUNT HAPPY AND SACRED FACT OF ISRAEL’S EXISTENCE: THEIR GOD, THE ONLY TRUE GOD, HAD IN HIS ETERNAL KINDNESS AND LOVE ARRANGED FOR THEM TO ENJOY RECONCILIATION WITH HIM AS THE KEY PROVISION OF HIS COVENANT. THEY WERE NOT STRANGERS OR ENEMIES; THEY WERE HIS COVENANT FAMILY. HE WAS CLOSE TO THEM, NOT FAR AWAY. THEY HAD A FAMILIAL CONNECTION WITH HIM AND COULD EVEN SENSE THAT CONNECTION SPATIALLY IN THE FACT OF THE ARK’S ATONEMENT COVER, WHERE HIS DIVINE PRESENCE WAS GRACIOUSLY MANIFESTED ON THEIR BEHALF. THE OLDER TRADITIONAL NAME “MERCY SEAT” CONVEYED THIS IMPORTANT REALITY TO SOME EXTENT, THOUGH CONSIDERABLY LESS PERFECTLY THAN “ATONEMENT COVER” IN OUR ESTIMATION. A WEAKNESS INHERENT IN THE CONNOTATION OF THE TERM “MERCY SEAT,” HOWEVER, OCCURS IN CONNECTION WITH THE FUNCTIONAL NATURE OF THE KAPPŌRET: IT WAS MORE LIKELY A PEDESTAL OR STANDING PLATFORM THAN A SEAT, A REFLECTION OF THE DAZZLING SLAB THAT APPEARED UNDER THE FEET OF STEPHEN YAHWEH WHEN THE ELDERS SAW HIM ON MOUNT SINAI (24:10)—NOT A THRONE OR CHAIR OR THE LIKE. ALTHOUGH IT IS TRUE THAT GOD IS ELSEWHERE DESCRIBED IN SOME ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS, INCLUDING THE NIV, AS “ENTHRONED BETWEEN THE CHERUBIM,” THIS ENGLISH TRANSLATION MAY BE SUSPECT; A MORE LITERAL TRANSLATION WOULD BE “CHERUBIM DWELLER” SINCE THE HEBREW WORDING MAKES NO MENTION OF A “THRONE” OR ANY “ENTHRONEMENT.” THE DIMENSIONS OF THE ATONEMENT COVER ARE EXACTLY THOSE OF THE LID OF THE ARK (SEE 25:10) IT WAS DESIGNED TO FIT OVER PRECISELY. IT WAS TO BE MADE OF PURE GOLD, NOT A SLAB OF WOOD OVERLAID WITH GOLD AS THE REST OF THE MAJOR SURFACES OF THE ARK WERE. AT ITS ENDS WERE TWO PURE “HAMMERED GOLD” STATUES OF UNCERTAIN HEIGHT (BUT PROBABLY NOT MORE THAN A CUBIT HIGH AT THE VERY MOST AND MORE LIKELY ONLY A FEW INCHES HIGH IN LIGHT OF THE OVERALL PROPORTIONS OF THE ARK) THAT PORTRAYED CHERUBIM. THE ONLY PRIOR MENTION OF CHERUBIM IN THE HOLY BIBLE WAS GEN 3:24, WHICH SAYS NOTHING ABOUT THEIR APPEARANCE BUT INDICATES THAT THEY WERE POWERFUL BEINGS, OF THE SORT THAT A HUMAN WOULD HARDLY BE ABLE TO OVERCOME AND THUS FULLY ABLE TO KEEP GOD’S GARDEN FROM BEING INVADED BY HUMANS. THAT CHERUBIM WERE WINGED—AT LEAST AS THEY APPEARED WHEN VISIBLE TO THE HUMAN EYE—IS EVIDENT FROM 2 SAM 22:11 AND THE DESCRIPTION GIVEN OF THEM IN 1 KGS 6:24–29; 8:6–7. EZEKIEL’S DESCRIPTIONS OF CHERUBIM ARE THE MOST REVEALING, BUT IT IS NOT CERTAIN WHETHER OR NOT THIS IS BECAUSE HE HAD A SPECIAL PURPOSE TO EMBELLISH THEIR DESCRIPTIONS (AS IN HIS COMPARISON OF THE CITY OF TYRE TO A CHERUB THAT GUARDED THE GARDEN OF EDEN IN EZEK 28:14–16, WHICH IS A METAPHORICAL WAY OF STATING HOW SPLENDID AND POWERFUL TYRE HAD ONCE BEEN, NOT A LITERAL DESCRIPTION OF ANYTHING RELATED TO CHERUBIM). AT ANY RATE, EZEK 10:7–8 INDICATES THAT CHERUBIM HAD HANDS, AND EZEK 10:14 INDICATES THAT THEY HAD FOUR FACES TO THEIR HEADS. VARIOUS EXAMPLES OF ANCIENT ICONOGRAPHY PRESUMABLY INTENDED TO REPRESENT CHERUBIM SHOW THREE CHARACTERISTIC ELEMENTS: THE BODY OF A LION, THE FACE OF A HUMAN, AND WINGS. THE MOST WE CAN SAY FOR CERTAIN IS THAT CHERUBS WERE SOME SORT OF INTELLIGENT, POWERFUL ANGELIC BEING DEPICTED AS WINGED. PERHAPS ON THE ATONEMENT COVER THEY WERE REPRESENTED AS WINGED LIONLIKE FIGURES WITH HUMAN FACES, BUT WE CANNOT BE SURE. ONE FACED THE CENTER OF THE ATONEMENT COVER FROM ONE END, THE OTHER FROM THE OTHER END. THEIR WINGS WERE RAISED, SO AS TO OVERSHADOW THE ATONEMENT COVER, PROVIDING A KIND OF SYMBOLIC PARTIAL ENCLOSURE THAT PROTECTED THE SURFACE. THE 2 TABLETS OF THE TESTIMONY (THE TEN WORDS/COMMANDMENTS) WERE TO BE PLACED INSIDE THE ARK ONCE IT WAS COMPLETED AND THE 2 TABLETS WERE GIVEN TO MOSES BY GOD (SEE COMMENTS ON CHAP. 32), AND THE ATONEMENT COVER ITSELF WAS TO BECOME A SITE WHERE GOD WOULD “MEET WITH” MOSES (THE PRONOUN “YOU” IS SINGULAR IN THE HB.) AND THROUGH HIM (AND HIS SUCCESSORS) DELIVER “ALL MY COMMANDS FOR THE ISRAELITES.” IN OTHER WORDS, ONCE THE TABERNACLE WAS SET UP AND THE ARK PROPERLY PLACED WITHIN IT AND THE 2 TABLETS WITHIN IT, THE TOP OF THE ARK WOULD BE WHERE MOSES WOULD LOOK. AND, THOUGH SEEING NOTHING, HE WOULD UNDERSTAND IN FAITH THAT HE WAS FACING STEPHEN YAHWEH AND AS CONFIRMATION WOULD CERTAINLY HEAR THE VOICE OF STEPHEN YAHWEH FROM THAT DIRECTION.**

**LAWS ON CONSTRUCTION AND USE OF THE TRUE TABLE (25:23–30)**

**23 “MAKE A TABLE OF ACACIA WOOD—TWO CUBITS LONG, A CUBIT WIDE AND A CUBIT AND A HALF HIGH. 24 OVERLAY IT WITH PURE GOLD AND MAKE A GOLD MOLDING AROUND IT. 25 ALSO MAKE AROUND IT A RIM A HANDBREADTH WIDE AND PUT A GOLD MOLDING ON THE RIM. 26 MAKE FOUR GOLD RINGS FOR THE TABLE AND FASTEN THEM TO THE FOUR CORNERS, WHERE THE FOUR LEGS ARE. 27 THE RINGS ARE TO BE CLOSE TO THE RIM TO HOLD THE POLES USED IN CARRYING THE TABLE. 28 MAKE THE POLES OF ACACIA WOOD, OVERLAY THEM WITH GOLD AND CARRY THE TABLE WITH THEM. 29 AND MAKE ITS PLATES AND DISHES OF PURE GOLD, AS WELL AS ITS PITCHERS AND BOWLS FOR THE POURING OUT OF OFFERINGS. 30 PUT THE BREAD OF THE PRESENCE ON THIS TABLE TO BE BEFORE ME AT ALL TIMES.**

**25:23–30 THE TABERNACLE REPRESENTED YAHWEH STEPHEN’S HOUSE AMONG THE ISRAELITES IN THE ULTIMATE BEGINNING IN PROVERBS 8:22 (THE TABERNACLE REPRESENTED STEPHEN YAHWEH’S HOUSE AMONG THE BRITISH ENGLISH IN THE USA IN THE ULTIMATE ENDING IN ACTS 30)—HE WOULD SOON ENCAMP IN HIS LARGE HOUSE IN THEIR MIDST, AND THEY WOULD ENCAMP AROUND HIS HOUSE ACCORDING TO THEIR TRIBES IN CONCENTRIC CIRCLES (NUM 2). HE HIMSELF WAS SYMBOLICALLY REPRESENTED AS DWELLING IN THE “BACK ROOM” OF HIS HOUSE BY MEANS OF THE ARK. IN THE TABERNACLE’S “FRONT ROOM” WERE SEVERAL PIECES OF FURNITURE, THE SORTS OF THINGS THAT REPRESENTED THE FURNITURE OF A HOME, THOUGH ON A GRANDER SCALE. THE FIRST OF THESE PIECES OF HOUSEHOLD-STYLE FURNITURE TO BE DESCRIBED IS THE TABLE. IT WAS PRIMARILY FOR FOOD—A DINING TABLE OF SORTS, SYMBOLIZING THE FACT THAT STEPHEN YAHWEH REALLY DID LIVE AMONG HIS PEOPLE AND INHABIT HIS HOUSE IN MUCH THE SAME WAY THAT THEY INHABITED THEIRS. THERE WERE SEVERAL PHYSICAL SIMILARITIES BETWEEN THE TABLE AND THE ARK, AS THE DESCRIPTIONS OF EACH SHOW. BOTH WERE RECTANGULAR OBJECTS MADE OF WOOD OVERLAID WITH GOLD, BOTH HAD A DECORATIVE-FUNCTIONAL MOLDING AROUND THE TOP, THE TOPS OF BOTH WERE THE SAME HEIGHT ABOVE THE GROUND (ONE AND A HALF CUBITS, OR TWENTY-SEVEN INCHES), AND BOTH HAD RINGS PROTRUDING FROM THEIR FOUR LEGS, THROUGH WHICH WOODEN POLES ALSO OVERLAID WITH GOLD WERE INSERTED AS A MEANS OF CARRYING THE OBJECT WITHOUT TOUCHING IT DIRECTLY—A WAY OF PRESERVING ITS SACREDNESS. THERE WERE ALSO DIFFERENCES. WHEREAS THE DIMENSIONS OF THE ARK WERE TWO AND A HALF CUBITS (FORTY-FIVE INCHES) BY ONE AND A HALF CUBITS (TWENTY-SEVEN INCHES) AS SEEN FROM ABOVE, THE TABLE WAS SMALLER: TWO CUBITS (THIRTY-SIX INCHES) BY ONE CUBIT (EIGHTEEN INCHES) AS SEEN FROM ABOVE. MOREOVER, THE ARK WAS A CHEST, HAVING GREATER BODY DEPTH AND SHORTER LEGS, WHEREAS THE TABLE WAS AN OBJECT ON WHICH—RATHER THAN IN WHICH—THINGS WERE PLACED, WITH LONGER LEGS AND NO BODY DEPTH OTHER THAN THAT PROVIDED BY THE THICKNESS OF ITS TOP AND THE MOLDINGS THAT SURROUNDED THE TOP. THE MOLDINGS NOT ONLY DECORATED THE TABLE BUT PROVIDED, IN THE CASE OF THE UPPER MOLDING, A BARRIER AGAINST ITEMS ACCIDENTALLY SLIPPING OFF ONE OF THE EDGES. THE MOST LIKELY READING OF VV. 24–25 IS THAT THE TABLE HAD TWO MOLDINGS: ONE AT THE BOTTOM EDGE OF THE TOP STRUCTURE AND THE OTHER JUST INCHES ABOVE THAT, AT THE TOP EDGE OF THE TOP. IT MAY BE ASSUMED THAT THE TOP HAD A THICKNESS OF PERHAPS THREE OR FOUR INCHES, WHICH MAY HAVE BEEN PROVIDED BY THE THICKNESS OF THE SOLID WOOD USED FOR THE TOP, OR ALTERNATIVELY BY SIDE PIECES EXTENDING DOWN FROM THE TOP BETWEEN THE LEGS ALL AROUND, GIVING THE APPEARANCE OF THICKNESS AS VIEWED FROM THE SIDE. THESE SIDE PIECES OR “RAILS” WOULD NOT LIKELY HAVE EXTENDED DOWN FROM THE ACTUAL TOP SURFACE MORE THAN A FEW INCHES, AND AT THEIR BOTTOM EDGES THEY WOULD HAVE HAD MOLDING ADDED AS PRESCRIBED. VERSE 25 REQUIRES “A RIM A HANDBREADTH WIDE” WITH “A GOLD MOLDING ON THE RIM.” ALTHOUGH WE KNOW THAT A HANDBREADTH IS ABOUT FOUR INCHES WIDE, WE CANNOT DISCERN FROM THIS DESCRIPTION WHETHER THE FOUR-INCH RIM WAS (1) A DECORATIVE EDGING AROUND THE CIRCUMFERENCE OF THE TABLE LYING IN THE SAME PLANE AS THE TOP OF THE TABLE AND THUS SIMPLY HAVING THE EFFECT OF WIDENING THE TOP; (2) A FOUR-INCH DECORATED BARRIER EXTENDING STRAIGHT UP FROM THE EDGES OF THE TABLE ALL AROUND SO AS TO PROVIDE AN OPEN-TOPPED FOUR-INCH DEEP BOX AT THE TOP OF THE TABLE, THUS ALLOWING THINGS TO BE STACKED TIGHTLY ON THE TABLE WITHOUT RISK THAT THEY WOULD FALL OFF THE EDGE; (3) A FOUR-INCH DECORATED BARRIER EXTENDING DIAGONALLY OUT FROM THE TOP EDGE OF THE TABLE, PROVIDING LESS DEPTH TO THE TOP “BOX” BUT ACTUALLY GREATER LENGTH AND WIDTH TO THE AREA OF CONTAINMENT, IF THINGS WERE PLACED IN SUCH A WAY TO OVERLAP THE TOP PROPER; (4) FOUR-INCH SIDE RAILS EXTENDING DOWN FROM THE TOP, EITHER BETWEEN THE LEGS OR INSIDE OR OUTSIDE OF THE LEGS, PROVIDING STABILITY TO BUT NOT ACTUALLY EXTENDING THE DIMENSIONS OR HOLDING CAPACITY OF THE TOP. ALTHOUGH WE CANNOT DISCERN WHICH OF THESE OPTIONS REPRESENTED GOD’S INTENT FOR HIS TABLE (ALL APPLICABLE POSSIBILITIES ARE TRUTHFUL IN DIFFERENT LIGHTS IN JAMES 1:17], THE DESCRIPTION WAS UNDOUBTEDLY SUFFICIENT FOR BEZALEL TO CONSTRUCT IT (SEE COMMENTS ON 31:1FF.) BECAUSE OF THE STANDARDS FOR TABLES EXTANT AT THE TIME AND/OR GOD’S KNOWLEDGE OF BEZALEL’S INCLINATIONS. SOME FREEDOM MAY HAVE BEEN INTENDED FOR BEZALEL TO INTERPRET THE GENERAL ORDER ACCORDING TO HIS OWN ARTISTRY SINCE NOTHING IS SAID ABOUT A NUMBER OF MATTERS, INCLUDING THE THICKNESS OF THE LEGS OR THE TOP, THE MEANS OF JOINING THE WOOD PIECES, THE THICKNESS OF THE GOLD OVERLAY, THE DIMENSIONS OF THE CARRYING RINGS, THE THICKNESS AND LENGTH OF THE CARRYING POLES. VERSES 26–28 GIVE THE SAME SORT OF INFORMATION AS PROVIDED ABOUT THE RINGS AND CARRYING POLES FOR THE ARK IN VV. 12–14 EXCEPT THAT THE POLES USED FOR CARRYING THE TABLE PROBABLY WERE REMOVABLE, IN CONTRAST TO THE POLES USED TO CARRY THE ARK, WHICH WERE TO REMAIN FIXED IN THE CARRYING RINGS ATTACHED TO THE LEGS (25:15). BUT V. 27 DOES SPECIFY SOMETHING THAT MUST BE ASSUMED AS WELL IN THE CASE OF THE LOCATION OF THE RINGS OF THE ARK: THE CARRYING RINGS MUST NOT BE TOO LOW ON THE LEGS. THAT WOULD HAVE GIVEN THE TABLE A HIGH CENTER OF GRAVITY AND WOULD HAVE MADE IT DIFFICULT TO CARRY UPRIGHT. BY HAVING THE RINGS HIGH ON THE TABLE LEGS — “CLOSE TO THE RIM”—MOST OF THE HEIGHT OF THE TABLE WOULD BE CARRIED BELOW THE POLES, HANGING, A CONFIGURATION THAT WOULD USE GRAVITY TO STABILIZE THE TABLE IN AN ALWAYS UPRIGHT POSITION AS IT TRAVELED. PROPER, SAFE PORTABILITY WAS IMPORTANT SINCE THE ENTIRE TABERNACLE WAS TO TIME TRAVEL [TRUE ORACLES IN REVELATION 10:1-11 & ACTS 7:37-38] WITH THE ISRAELITES THROUGHOUT THEIR WILDERNESS JOURNEYS FOR 40 YEARS---46 YEARS TO 56 YEARS WITH A FRUITFUL CALL OF 16 YEARS IN 2ND CORINTHIANS 12:1-13:10. THE GREAT KING SUCH AS STEPHEN YAHWEH DESERVED TO DINE AND TO BE SERVED HIS MEALS IN PROPER STYLE, AND EATING DIRECTLY OFF THE TOP OF THE TABLE WOULD NOT CONSTITUTE SUCH STYLE. HIS TABLE THEREFORE REQUIRED “PLATES AND DISHES OF PURE GOLD, AS WELL AS PITCHERS AND BOWLS,” AS V. 29 INDICATES—ALTHOUGH THESE IMPLEMENTS WERE NOT SOLELY FOR HIS PERSONAL SYMBOLIC USE BUT WERE ACTUALLY EMPLOYED IN THE RITUALS OF THE TABERNACLE AT WHICH BOTH PRIESTS [SERGEANTS] AND WORSHIPERS [JOHN 4:23-24] ALSO TOOK PART. THE NIV WORD ORDER UNFORTUNATELY MAKES THE TEXT SOUND AS IF THE PITCHERS AND BOWLS WERE NOT NECESSARILY MADE OUT OF GOLD. AS A BETTER ALTERNATIVE, THE HCSB FOLLOWS THE HEBREW WORD ORDER MORE CORRECTLY: “YOU ARE ALSO TO MAKE ITS PLATES AND CUPS, AS WELL AS ITS PITCHERS AND BOWLS FOR POURING DRINK OFFERINGS. MAKE THEM OUT OF PURE GOLD.” SIMILARLY, THE NRSV: “YOU SHALL MAKE ITS PLATES AND DISHES FOR INCENSE, AND ITS FLAGONS AND BOWLS WITH WHICH TO POUR DRINK OFFERINGS; YOU SHALL MAKE THEM OF PURE GOLD.” THE NRSV RENDERING “PLATES AND DISHES FOR INCENSE” IS, HOWEVER, INTERPRETIVE—NO SPECIFIC MENTION IS MADE OF INCENSE IN THE VOCABULARY OF THE VERSE, AND THE TERM USED FOR NRSV “DISHES” DOES NOT NECESSARILY MEAN, BUT CAN BE TRUTHFUL “DISHES FOR INCENSE.” UTENSILS FOR SOLID FOODS, FOR LIQUIDS, AND FOR SYMBOLIC OFFERINGS SUCH AS INCENSE WERE ALL INCLUDED POTENTIALLY IN THIS LISTING. AS V. 30 INDICATES, THE MAIN FOOD PLACED ON THE TABERNACLE TABLE WAS TO BE BREAD, A SPECIAL BREAD SYMBOLICALLY OFFERED TO STEPHEN YAHWEH AS HIS FOOD. NO OTHER TYPE OF FOOD WAS ACTUALLY PLACED ON THE TABLE, BUT ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE BECAUSE THE HOLY BREAD REPRESENTS THE LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH’S SEXLESS BODY [1ST JOHN 3:9], EVEN THOUGH THE UTENSILS THAT WENT WITH THE TABLE WERE USED FOR OTHER MEAL INGREDIENTS INCLUDING THE DRINK OFFERINGS. THE “BREAD OF THE PRESENCE” DERIVES ITS NAME FROM ITS FUNCTION: IT WAS HOLY BREAD THAT WAS SET IN STEPHEN YAHWEH’S SEXLESS PRESENCE, THAT IS, INSIDE HIS HOUSE (TABERNACLE) FOR HIM TO ENJOY ALONG WITH THE OTHER FOODSTUFFS THAT CONSTITUTED THE SACRIFICES ALL AT 100.0001% ETERNAL INCORRUPTION (1ST CORINTHIANS 6:12-20 & MALACHI 3:8-12) & OFFERINGS ALL AT 100.0001% ETERNAL INCORRUPTION (1ST CORINTHIANS 6:12-20 & MALACHI 3:8-12) OF HIS PEOPLE. MOST OF THE FOOD GIVEN TO STEPHEN YAHWEH WAS GIVEN OUTSIDE (WHERE THE LATRINE, THE MILITARY HEAD OR BATHROOM IS KEPT INSIDE THE HOUSE (TABERNACLE) ALSO FIT FOR THE PERIOD-HILL, PISS-HILL & SHIT-HILL), IN THE TABERNACLE [CAN MEAN THE FATHER STEPHEN YAHWEH’S CAR] COURTYARD, WHERE IT WAS BURNED ON THE ALTAR AND SYMBOLICALLY SENT TO HIM THROUGH THE RISING OF ITS SMOKE [SMOKING GREEN HERBS-LEGALIZED TOBACCO, LEGALIZED HEMP OR LEGALIZED CANNABIS FOR MEDICAL PURPOSES & NOT FOR RECREATIONAL PURPOSES]. THE BREAD OF THE PRESENCE WAS, BY CONTRAST, PROVIDED TO HIM INSIDE THE TABERNACLE STRUCTURE, CLOSER TO THE ARK, AND THEREFORE EVEN MORE OBVIOUSLY DIRECTLY IN HIS SEXLESS PRESENCE [ETERNAL TRUTH AS ETERNAL MEAT & ETERNAL BLOOD OF THE LORD’S TRUTH WORD IN JOHN 4:23-24; 6:41-59; 8:32; 14:26; 15:26; 16:13; JAMES 1:13, 17; 3:13, 17-18; 4:7-10; 1ST PETER 5:5-11; LUKE 4:4, 8, 12 & ACTS 1:7; 5:39 & ACTS 30] THAN FOOD [DEAD ANIMALS IN ACTS 10 & 11] COOKED ON THE ALTAR OR HOLY DRINK OFFERINGS [HOLY HERB CONCOCTIONS & HOLY HERB POTIONS: HOLY WATER, HOLY SODA, HOLY COFFEE, HOLY TEA, HOLY BEER, HOLY WINE & HOLY GRAPE LIQUOR, ETC. IN JOHN 15:1-8] POURED OUT AT THE ALTAR. THOSE WERE ALSO OFFERED IN HIS PRESENCE, BUT THE INSIDE OF THE TABERNACLE (HOUSE OR CAR) WAS SIMPLY CLOSER TO THE VERY SEXLESS PRESENCE OF GOD THAN THE OUTSIDE. MOREOVER—AND THIS ASPECT IS SURELY ALSO INHERENT IN THE NAME “BREAD OF THE PRESENCE”—THE BREAD WAS THERE ON THE TABLE “BEFORE ME [IN MY PRESENCE] AT ALL TIMES.” IT EVEN TIME TRAVELED [TRUE ORACLES IN REVELATION 10:1-11 & ACTS 7:37-38] WITH THE TABLE WHEN THE ISRAELITES WERE IN TRANSIT FROM PLACE TO PLACE (NUM 4:7–8). WHEN NEW BREAD HAD BEEN BAKED FOR SETTING ON THE TABLE, THE OLD BREAD WAS REMOVED, BUT NOT BEFORE THE NEW BREAD WAS READY FOR PLACEMENT ON THE TABLE (1 SAM 21:6). THOUGH IT IS NOT EXPLICITLY STATED IN ANY BIBLICAL TEXT, THE HIGH PRIEST [TOP CHIEF OF POLICE] PROBABLY REPLACED THE TWELVE OLD LOAVES WITH THE TWELVE NEW ONES LOAF BY LOAF RATHER THAN BY CLEARING ALL THE OLD LOAVES AWAY AND THEN PUTTING DOWN ALL THE NEW ONES, SO THERE WAS NEVER AN INSTANT WHEN THE TOP OF THE TABLE WAS ENTIRELY BARE. ALL OTHER OFFERINGS WERE PERIODIC, BEING PRESENTED IN VARIOUS RITUALS AT CERTAIN TIMES OF THE DAY, WEEK, MONTH, OR YEAR. THIS OFFERING WAS CONTINUAL—NEVER CEASING, REPRESENTING THE ENDLESS ADORATION, APPRECIATION, AND INTERCESSION OF THE ISRAELITES DAY AND NIGHT THROUGHOUT THE YEARS AND AGES. A TOKEN OF THEIR COVENANT OBEISANCE WAS ALWAYS IN THE PRESENCE OF STEPHEN YAHWEH. NUMBERS 4:7–8 SPECIFIES HOW THE UTENSILS WERE TO BE SPECIALLY WRAPPED WITH THE SHEWBREAD ON TOP OF THE TABLE, THEN COVERED WITH PROTECTIVE HIDES AND CARRIED ALONG WITH THE TABLE AS A UNIT BY THE KOHATHITE BRANCH OF THE LEVITES WHEN THE ISRAELITES MOVED FROM PLACE TO PLACE. PROPERLY HANDLED, A PORTION OF BREAD OF THE PRESENCE NEVER CEASED BEING IN GENERAL CONTACT WITH THE TOP OF THE TABLE. FIRST KINGS 7:48 INDICATES THAT THE SOLOMONIC TEMPLE RETAINED THE PRACTICE OF A BREAD OF THE PRESENCE TABLE, WHICH APPARENTLY WAS REMANUFACTURED FOR THE TEMPLE RATHER THAN SIMPLY IMPORTED FROM THE TABERNACLE. SECOND CHRONICLES 4:19 REFERS TO “THE TABLES ON WHICH IS THE BREAD OF THE PRESENCE,” INDICATING THAT THERE MAY HAVE BEEN MORE THAN ONE. IN FACT, FROM THE CHRONICLER’S DESCRIPTIONS THERE LIKELY WERE TEN BRONZE LAVERS (2 CHR 4:6), TEN LAMPSTANDS (2 CHR 4:7), AND TEN TABLES (2 CHR 4:8, 18) IN SOLOMON’S TEMPLE. WHAT IS NOT CLEAR FROM THE CHRONICLER’S DESCRIPTION, HOWEVER, IS WHETHER ALL TEN OF THE TABLES WERE USED FOR THE BREAD OF THE PRESENCE. NINE MAY HAVE BEEN USED FOR SUPPORTING SHORTER LAMPSTANDS AS OPPOSED TO THE SELF-STANDING “FLOOR” LAMPSTAND AND ONLY ONE USED FOR THE BREAD. THUS “ON THEM” IN THE CHRONICLER’S LANGUAGE (V. 18) “ON THEM” WOULD MEAN “ON THEM CONSIDERED AS A GROUP BUT NOT ON EVERY ONE OF THEM INDIVIDUALLY.” ALTERNATIVELY, SOLOMON’S EXPANDED PRIESTHOOD [NOC CORPS] AND TEMPLE WORSHIP MAY HAVE REQUIRED A GREATER QUANTITY OF BREAD THAN WAS REQUIRED OF THE ISRAELITES STARTING AT THEIR SOJOURN AT SINAI, NECESSITATING MORE TABLE SPACE. WE JUDGE THAT THE MOST LIKELY SCENARIO IS THAT SOLOMON PUT ONE SPECIAL TABLE FOR THE BREAD IN HIS TEMPLE AND NINE LESSER TABLES, BUT THIS CAN MAY BE BE PROVED.**

**LAWS ON CONSTRUCTION AND USE OF THE TRUE IMMORTAL LAMPSTAND (25:31–40)**

**31 “MAKE A LAMPSTAND [98 POSITIONS UPTIME/DOWNTIME TIMES 6 BRANCHES IS 588 POSITIONS, 1% IS 5,880 POSITIONS, 10% IS 58,880 POSITIONS & 100% 588,000 POSITIONS TO 5,880,000 POSITIONS IN REPENTING ONCE & 5,880,000 MILLION POSTIONS, 1% IS 58,800,000 MILLION POSITIONS, 10% IS 588,000,000 MILLION POSITIONS & 100% IS 5,880,000,000 BILLION POSITIONS TO 58,800,000,000 BILLION POSITIONS IN RELENTING ONCE IS IN JOHN 1:6-13; JAMES 1:17 & REVELATION 2:1-7] OF PURE GOLD AND HAMMER IT OUT, BASE AND SHAFT; ITS FLOWERLIKE CUPS, BUDS AND BLOSSOMS SHALL BE OF ONE PIECE WITH IT. 32 SIX BRANCHES [ZECHARIAH 6:9-15] ARE TO EXTEND FROM THE SIDES OF THE LAMPSTAND—THREE ON ONE SIDE AND THREE ON THE OTHER. 33 THREE CUPS SHAPED LIKE ALMOND FLOWERS [MEANS ALMOND VIRGINITY OF FLORENCE} WITH BUDS AND BLOSSOMS ARE TO BE ON ONE BRANCH, THREE ON THE NEXT BRANCH, AND THE SAME FOR ALL SIX BRANCHES EXTENDING FROM THE LAMPSTAND. 34 AND ON THE LAMPSTAND, THERE ARE TO BE FOUR CUPS SHAPED LIKE ALMOND FLOWERS [MEANS ALMOND VIRGINITY OF FLORENCE] WITH BUDS AND BLOSSOMS. 35 ONE BUD SHALL BE UNDER THE FIRST PAIR OF BRANCHES EXTENDING FROM THE LAMPSTAND, A SECOND BUD UNDER THE SECOND PAIR, AND A THIRD BUD UNDER THE THIRD PAIR—SIX BRANCHES IN ALL. 36 THE BUDS AND BRANCHES SHALL ALL BE OF ONE PIECE WITH THE LAMPSTAND, HAMMERED OUT OF PURE GOLD. 37 “THEN MAKE ITS SEVEN LAMPS AND SET THEM UP ON IT SO THAT THEY LIGHT THE SPACE IN FRONT OF IT. 38 ITS WICK TRIMMERS AND TRAYS ARE TO BE OF PURE GOLD. 39 A TALENT OF PURE GOLD IS TO BE USED FOR THE LAMPSTAND AND ALL THESE ACCESSORIES [SNUFFERS, LIGHTERS & WICKS, ETC.]. 40 SEE THAT YOU MAKE THEM ACCORDING TO THE PATTERN SHOWN YOU ON THE MOUNTAIN.**

**STEPHEN YAHWEH’S HOUSE NEEDED LIGHT SINCE STEPHEN YAHWEH LIVED THERE SYMBOLICALLY AND ALLOWED HUMANS TO MINISTER TO HIM THERE. IT MADE SENSE THAT STEPHEN YAHWEH’S HOUSE SHOULD BE LIT [ELECTRICITY, LIGHTERS OR FLINT STRIKERS] BY LAMPLIGHT, THOUGH ON A GRANDER SCALE BY FAR THAN THAT OF THE INDIVIDUAL FAMILY HOMES OF THE PEOPLE. HE HIMSELF HAD NO TROUBLE SEEING INDOORS IN A WINDOWLESS STRUCTURE AT NIGHT, BUT THE HUMANS WHO SERVED HIM NEEDED THE LIGHT. (WE MUST KEEP IN MIND, HOWEVER, THAT ONLY PRIESTS [SERGEANTS] AND/OR LEVITES [PRIVATE TO CORPORALS] WOULD TRULY NEED THE TRUE LIGHT FROM THE LAMPSTAND; NO NON-LEVITICAL WORSHIPERS [CIVILIANS/COWARDS IN REVELATION 21:8] NEVER SET FOOT INSIDE THE TABERNACLE [HOUSE & CAR]). LAMPLIGHT WAS USED ROUTINELY THROUGHOUT THE TENTS OF THE ISRAELITES. ONCE THE TABERNACLE AND ITS FURNISHINGS WERE ACTUALLY BUILT AND SET IN PLACE, THE AVERAGE WORSHIPER DID INDEED GET TO SEE SUCH THINGS AS THE LAMPSTAND AND THEREFORE COULD BECOME QUITE FAMILIAR WITH THEIR APPEARANCE BECAUSE THE DOORWAY TENT CURTAINS WERE PULLED BACK DURING THE DAYTIME, AND ANYONE COULD PEER FROM THE COURTYARD INTO THE OUTER ROOM OF THE TABERNACLE (NOT THE HOLY OF HOLIES, WHICH WAS CUT OFF FROM GENERAL VIEW BY ITS SPECIAL ENTRANCE CURTAIN). AT NIGHT THE LIGHT FROM THE SEVEN OIL LAMPS THAT THE LAMPSTAND HELD WOULD HAVE MADE THE TABERNACLE THE BRIGHTEST THING IN THE ISRAELITE ENCAMPMENT, ASIDE FROM SOME OF THE COOKING FIRES, AND CERTAINLY THE BRIGHTEST LIT “LIVING QUARTERS” IN THE ENTIRE ENCAMPMENT SINCE NO INDIVIDUAL FAMILY WOULD HAVE CHOSEN TO USE THE LARGE AMOUNT OF OIL NECESSARY TO KEEP SEVEN LAMPS LIT IN A SINGLE TENT. IN ALL PROBABILITY, HAVING THE LIGHTS ON MEANT THEN MUCH THE SAME THING THAT IT MEANS NOW: SOMEONE’S HOME. IN THIS CASE, SYMBOLICALLY, “STEPHEN YAHWEH IS HOME” AMONG HIS PEOPLE.**

**DESIGN OF THE IMMORTAL LAMPSTAND (25:31–36)**

**THE LAMPSTAND IS A FLOOR-STANDING (AS OPPOSED TO TABLE-STANDING), CANDELABRA-LIKE GOLDEN STRUCTURE WITH SIX BRANCHES AND A “TRUNK” MADE TO RESEMBLE AN OLIVE (!) TREE [TREE OF ANOINTING] BUT WITH CERTAIN ALMOND (!) TREE [MEANS IMMORTAL TREE OF LIFE, IMMORTAL TREE OF THE BURNING BUSH OR IMMORTAL TREE OF FLORENCE] FEATURES AND INTENDED ALMOST CERTAINLY NOT MERELY TO PROVIDE TRUE LIGHT FOR THE TABERNACLE BUT ALSO TO SYMBOLIZE THE TREE OF LIFE (!) & THE BURNING BUSH (!), THAT IS, STEPHEN YAHWEH’S GIFT OF IMMORTAL LIFE [1ST JOHN 3:9] TO HIS PEOPLE. THIS PASSAGE PROVIDES AN OVERALL LOOK AT THE GENERAL DESIGN. FROM SUCH PASSAGES AS ZECH 4; PS 52; AND REV 11 OTHER CHARACTERISTICS ARE ALSO DISCERNABLE. 25:31–32 THE LAMPSTAND WAS MADE OF SHAPED (BEATEN/HAMMERED) SOLID GOLD ALL JOINED INTO A SINGLE PIECE WITH A BASE OF SOME SORT (NOT DESCRIBED IN DETAIL IN ANY PASSAGE) THAT GAVE IT STABILITY ON THE FLOOR OF THE TABERNACLE AND A SHAFT/TRUNK THAT ROSE VERTICALLY FROM THE BASE TO THE DESIRED HEIGHT (PROBABLY SEVERAL CUBITS, THAT IS, PERHAPS FIVE OR SIX FEET HIGH, BUT THE HEIGHT IS NEVER SPECIFIED). OFF OF THE SHAFT/TRUNK CAME DECORATED BRANCHES MADE TO RESEMBLE TREE BRANCHES. WITH THREE BRANCHES HEADING OFF TO ONE SIDE AND THREE TO THE OTHER SIDE AND INCLUDING THE MAIN SHAFT OR CENTER TRUNK, THERE WERE A TOTAL OF SEVEN DIFFERENT SUPPORTS FOR OIL LAMPS. 25:33–36 CUPS WERE NEEDED TO SUPPORT THE ACTUAL LAMPS THAT WOULD HOLD THE OIL. THE LAMPS WERE TO SIT CRADLED IN EACH CUP. THE CUPS WERE TO BE MADE TO RESEMBLE ALMOND FLOWERS [MEANS ALMOND ANOINTED VIRGINITY OF FLORENCE], EACH ONE HAVING A CALYX (“BUDS”) AND, EMERGING FROM THE CALYX, THE BLOSSOM. IN THIS WAY THE OIL LAMPS WOULD SIT ARTISTICALLY IN A GOLD FLOWER [MEANS GOLD ANOINTED VIRGINITY OF FLORENCE IN REVELATION 3:14-22] ON A GOLD TREE—AN APPROPRIATELY LOVELY SETTING FOR STEPHEN YAHWEH’S SPECIAL LIGHT [THIS MEANS THAT THE TOP-SECRET ANCIENT EMERY DIAMOND STONE IS FLORENCE, SC, WHICH IS THE FUTURE LOCATION OF THE LORDLY NEW JERUSALEM, THE ETERNAL CITY OF STEPHEN YAHWEH HIMSELF THAT SHALL BE ETERNALLY ESTABLISHED FROM THE ANOINTED TREE-SHAPED LAMPSTAND ONCE ALL THINGS HAVE BEEN ACCOMPLISHED IN THE ULTIMATE END TIME IN DANIEL 8:8-14; SIRACH 23:19; ACTS 29:1-2 & ACTS 30]. SINCE EACH BRANCH HAD THREE FLOWER-SHAPED CUPS AND THE SHAFT/TRUNK HAD FOUR CUPS (V. 34), THERE MAY HAVE BEEN A TOTAL OF TWENTY-TWO PLACES WHERE OIL LAMPS COULD BE PLACED. ALTERNATIVELY, THERE MAY ONLY HAVE BEEN SEVEN SPECIFIC PLACES FOR OIL LAMPS, WITH THE OTHER FIFTEEN SIMPLY MADE TO “MATCH” SO THAT THE VIEWER WOULD SEE WHAT LOOKED LIKE A LOVELY TREE WITH MANY FLOWERS, SOME OF WHICH HELD LAMPS AND MOST OF WHICH DID NOT. THE BUDS DESCRIBED IN V. 35 ARE THOSE THAT WERE ATTACHED NOT TO ONE OF THE BRANCHES BUT TO THE SHAFT/TRUNK. THEY WERE SPACED SO THAT THEY FITTED NICELY AT DIFFERENT HEIGHTS FROM THE BRANCHES, WITH ONE BUD ALMOST SURELY NEAR OR AT THE TOP OF THE SHAFT/TRUNK (THUS HIGHER THAN THE BRANCHES) AND THE OTHER THREE BELOW THE PAIRS OF BRANCHES SUCCESSIVELY. EVEN IF THE VARIOUS PARTS OF THE LAMPSTAND WERE FIRST MADE SEPARATELY (A STRONG LIKELIHOOD), THEY WERE ALL JOINED TOGETHER SEAMLESSLY, PROBABLY BY HEATING AND BEATING, AS HAS BEEN THE MEANS OF SHAPING AND JOINING GOLD FOR MILLENNIA, SO THE TREE-SHAPED LAMPSTAND WAS A SINGLE THING IN SOMEWHAT THE SAME WAY THAT A TREE IS A SINGLE THING.**

**BECAUSE THE LAMPSTAND CLEARLY HAD ALMOND [GOLDEN] FLOWER [MEANS GOLDEN ALMOND VIRGINITY OF FLORENCE, WHICH IS THE KETER CROWN OF THE GOLDEN CITY OF FLORENCE OR THE KETER CROWN OF THE GOLDEN CITY OF STEPHEN YAHWEH IN REVELATION 21:1-22:21 & ACTS 7:55-56] MOTIFS [SYNONYMS: GOLD DESIGN [TABERNACLE], GOLD PATTERN [TEMPLE], GOLD DECORATION [FLOWERS], GOLD SHAPE [PENTAGRAM], GOLD LOGO [HERO], GOLD MONOGRAM [ID---STEPHEN YAHWEH], GOLD EMBLEM [HERORIC MOTTO: DO WHAT HAS TO BE DONE---CID, CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION DEMANDO COMMAND], GOLD ORNAMENT [CHAIN NECKLACE WITH CROSS OR PRECIOUS STONES], GOLD SYMBOL [SC FOR STEPHEN YAHWEH], GOLD REPRESENTATION [SUPREME LORDSHIP], GOLD TOKEN [MONEY TITHES], GOLD IMAGE [WORSHIP], GOLD FIGURE [CHERUBIMS], GOLD MARK [PROTECTION], GOLD SIGN [BLOOD], GOLD CREST [MILITARY UNIT], GOLD BADGE [JEALOUS LAW JUSTICE ARMOR], GOLD DEVICE [ARK], GOLD INSIGNIA [RANKS], GOLD STAMP [TRUE ORACLES], GOLD SEAL [BOOKS], GOLD HERALDIC DEVICE [ARK OF THE TESTIMONY IN THE SANCTUARY OF THE GLORIOUS LAND IN DANIEL 8:8-14], GOLD COAT OF ARMS [RODS, STAFFS & WANDS], GOLD SHIELD [INVINCIBILITY], GOLD TRADEMARK [BUSINESS], IT IS ENTIRELY UNDERSTANDABLE THAT MANY COMMENTATORS HAVE ASSUMED THAT IT WAS INTENDED TO RESEMBLE AN ALMOND TREE [MEANS ALMOND TREE VIRGINITY OF FLORENCE]. THERE IS SOME REASON TO CONCLUDE, HOWEVER, THAT IT MORE NEARLY RESEMBLED AN OLIVE TREE [MEANS OLIVE TREE ANOINTED VIRGINITY OF FLORENCE], ALBEIT AN OLIVE TREE WITH TWENTY-TWO ALMOND FLOWERS [MEANS ALMOND VIRGINITY OF FLORENCE] ON IT. SUCH A CONCLUSION DEPENDS PARTLY ON TWO ASSUMPTIONS: FIRST, THAT BOTH ZECHARIAH AND REVELATION REFER TO THE SOLOMONIC AND 2ND TEMPLE LAMPSTANDS RESPECTIVELY, AND, SECOND, THAT BOTH OF THESE LAMPSTANDS REFLECTED THE DESIGN OF THE ORIGINAL TABERNACLE LAMPSTAND. THESE ASSUMPTIONS ARE, IN THE FINAL ANALYSIS, NOT PROVABLE. IF THEY ARE CORRECT, HOWEVER, THE INFORMATION ZECHARIAH AND REVELATION PROVIDE, PERHAPS SUPPORTED ALSO BY PS 52, SUGGEST OLIVE TREE MOTIFS FOR THE TRUNK AND BRANCHES OF THE TREELIKE LAMPSTAND. IN ZECHARIAH’S VISION OF THE SOLOMONIC TEMPLE LAMPSTAND, HE REPORTED THAT HE SAW “A SOLID GOLD LAMPSTAND WITH A BOWL AT THE TOP AND SEVEN LIGHTS ON IT, WITH SEVEN CHANNELS TO THE LIGHTS. ALSO, THERE ARE TWO OLIVE TREES BY IT, ONE ON THE RIGHT OF THE BOWL AND THE OTHER ON ITS LEFT” (ZECH 4:2–3). IT WOULD APPEAR THAT THESE “OLIVE TREES” WERE INTENDED TO BE NOT SEPARATE TREES (SEE BELOW) BUT THE OLIVE TREELIKE BRANCHES ON EITHER SIDE OF THE TREELIKE TEMPLE LAMPSTAND. IN ZECH 4:11–12, ZECHARIAH FURTHER DESCRIBES THE LAMPSTAND AS HE SEES IT IN HIS VISION AS HAVING “TWO OLIVE TREES ON THE RIGHT AND THE LEFT OF THE LAMPSTAND … TWO OLIVE BRANCHES BESIDE THE TWO GOLD PIPES [ANOINTED PIPES SMOKING GREEN HERBS---LEGALIZED TOBACCO, LEGALIZED HEMP & LEGALIZED CANNABIS FOR MEDICAL PURPOSES] THAT POUR OUT GOLDEN OIL.” IN BOTH HEBREW AND GREEK, PART OF A TREE CAN BE CALLED A “TREE” AS IS APPARENTLY THE USAGE IN ZECH 4.357 REVELATION 11:4 EMPLOYS COMPARABLE IMAGERY, IN THE CONTEXT OF A TEMPLE VISION: “THESE ARE THE TWO OLIVE TREES AND THE TWO LAMPSTANDS THAT STAND BEFORE THE LORD OF THE EARTH [THE LORDLY NEW JERUSALEM SHALL BE ETERNALLY ESTABLISHED IN NORTH AMERICA IN THE USA TOWARD THE DIRECT SOUTHEASTERN BIBLE BELT STATES, ON THE EAST COAST, WHICH WOULD BE FOR A CERTAINTY, SOUTH CAROLINA LINKED TO FLORENCE IN REVELATION 4:1-5:14 WITH THE 7 ETERNAL IMMORTAL LAMPS OF CONTINUOUS FIRE FOREVER BURNING---TREE OF LIFE & BURNING BUSH---WHICH MEANS ONCE THE LORDLY NEW JERUSALEM IS ETERNALLY ESTABLISHED IN THE FLORENCE AREA [3 YEARS, 1 MONTH & 25 NIGHTS [1,150 NIGHTS] TO BE ETERNALLY ESTABLISHED IN FULL FRUITS, BUT GLOBALLY IT IS 1 YEAR & 7 MONTHS [575 NIGHTS] TO BE ETERNALLY ESTABLISHED & 1.7 MONTHS [24 NIGHTS---24 HOURS] IN OMNI-BENEVOLENCE ETERNALLY GOVERNS THE LARGER TIME FRAMES AT ITS TOP PINNACLE & THIS FLORENCE AREA IS WITHOUT END BEING ETERNALLY FOREVER ENDLESSLY ESTABLISUHED BY THE TOP ENGLISH LORD & ETERNALLY PROTECTED BY ETERNAL SECURITY THAT SHALL NEVER BE STEALED [SACKED], KILLED & DESTROYED OR CURSED, DISEASED & DAMNED BY ANY ETERNAL ENEMIES THAT MAY TRANSPIRE IN THE USA TRIBULATION IN DANIEL 8:8-14; 2ND ESDRAS 11 & 12 & ACTS 29:1-2, WHICH SOUTH CAROLINA ALSO HAS THE US EMBLEM OF THE WHITE PALMETTO FAN TREE WITH THE WHITE MOON [REVELATION 12:1-17] & A BLUE BACKGROUND [KINGSHIP] ON ITS US FLAG, WHICH WHITE STANDS FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS, JEALOUS LAW JUSTICE ARMOR [WISDOM OF SOLOMON 5:15-23], INNOCENCE, VICTORY, CONQUEROR, ROYALTY, GODLINESS, PERFECTION, COMPLETION, TOP-SECRETS, WHITE MAGIC [THE HEALING PENTAGRAM STARS IN REVELATION 12:1-17], POWER & AUTHORITY, THE GOOD, VIRGINITY, LOYALTY, HONESTY, TRUE LIGHT [THE SUN IN REVELATION 12:1-17 & ACTS 7:30-38; 9:3; 22:6; 26:13], MERCY, CLEANNESS, PURITY, UNDEFILMENT, STRENGTH, THE BEGINNING, THE NEW, NEUTRALITY, LIGHTNESS & EXACTITUDE, WHICH LINKS FLORENCE IN ITS LOCATION].” IN ZECHARIAH THE TWO PARTS OF THE OLIVE TREELIKE LAMPSTAND (AS WE UNDERSTAND HIS MEANING) SYMBOLIZE ZERUBBABEL AND JESHUA, THE JUDEAN GOVERNOR AND HIGH PRIEST IN 520 BC; IN REVELATION THE TWO PARTS OF THE OLIVE TREELIKE LAMPSTAND SYMBOLIZE (AS WE UNDERSTAND IT) THE TOP GOSPEL KINGDOM AS THE LORD’S BRIDE IN ITS DANGEROUS BUT FAITHFUL WITNESS TO THE WORLD. IT IS NOT NECESSARY TO DECIDE WITH FINAL CERTAINTY, HOWEVER, WHAT THE OLIVE TREE IMAGES SYMBOLIZE TO APPRECIATE THAT IN BOTH THESE VISIONS IT IS OLIVE TREE [FLOWERS] IMAGERY, NOT ALMOND TREE [FLOWERS] IMAGERY, THAT PREDOMINATES TO DESCRIBE THE BRANCHES TO THE RIGHT AND LEFT OF THE LAMPSTAND. PSALM 52:8 MAY CONTRIBUTE TO THIS ISSUE BY REASON OF THE CONNECTION OF THE OLIVE TREE AND THE TEMPLE (“I AM LIKE AN OLIVE TREE FLOURISHING IN THE HOUSE OF GOD; I TRUST IN GOD’S UNFAILING LOVE FOR EVER AND EVER”), THOUGH IT MAY ALSO MERELY BE MAKING REFERENCE TO THE OLIVE TREES THAT PRESUMABLY GREW IN THE TEMPLE COURTYARD. WHY SHOULD ANYONE CARE WHETHER THE LAMPSTAND WAS DESIGNED TO LOOK LIKE AN OLIVE TREE WITH ALMOND FLOWERS [MEANS OLIVE ALMOND ANOINTED VIRGINITY TREE OF FLORENCE] OR LIKE AN ALMOND TREE [MEANS ALMOND TREE OF FLORENCE] ONLY OR NEITHER? THE ANSWER IS THAT A LAMPSTAND MADE TO RESEMBLE AN OLIVE TREE WITH ALMOND BLOSSOMS WOULD SYMBOLIZE THREE THINGS AT ONCE: GOD’S PROVISION, ISRAEL’S NATIONHOOD IN THE ULTIMATE BEGINNING IN PROVERBS 8:22 OR USA’S NATIONHOOD IN THE ULTIMATE ENDING IN ACTS 30, AND MIRACULOUS DIVINE DELIVERANCE. SINCE OLIVE OIL WAS THE FUEL FOR THE SEVEN LAMPS THAT SAT ON THE LAMPSTAND, AN OLIVE TREE DESIGN FOR THE LAMPSTAND ITSELF MIGHT HAVE BEEN CONSIDERED COMMON SENSE. BEYOND THIS, HOWEVER, THE GOD WHO BEGAN CREATION WITH THE WORDS “LET THERE BE LIGHT” COULD BE CONSIDERED AS SYMBOLIZED IN A FASHION THROUGH THE OLIVE OIL, WHICH KEPT THE LAMPS OF THE TABERNACLE BURNING CONTINUALLY AS A REMINDER OF HIS CONSTANT WATCHFULNESS OVER ISRAEL (EXOD 27:20; LEV 24:2; CF. EXOD 25:6; 35:8, 28) & THE USA (DANIEL 8:8-14; 2ND ESDRAS 11 & 12; ACTS 29:1-2 & ACTS 30). OLIVE TREES OR BRANCHES TENDED ALSO TO REPRESENT THE NATION OF ISRAEL ITSELF (JER 11:16; CF. JUDG 9:8; HOS 14:6) OR THE NATION OF THE USA ITSELF (DANIEL 8:8-14; 2ND ESDRAS 11 & 12 & ACTS 29:1-2) AS PAUL ALSO INDICATED IN HIS COMMENTS IN ROM 11:24 AND ACCORDING TO 2 CHR 11:11, 17. OLIVE OIL WAS ONE OF ISRAEL’S MOST ABUNDANT PRODUCTS AND WAS EXPORTED IN LARGE QUANTITIES (E.G., 1 KGS 5:11), AND THE OLIVE BRANCH SYMBOLIZED PEACE AND GOD’S FAVOR (E.G., GEN 8:11). THE ALMOND, ON THE OTHER HAND, WAS SPECIFICALLY ASSOCIATED WITH THE EXODUS PROVISIONS OF MIRACULOUS DELIVERANCE BECAUSE AARON’S/GOD’S/MOSES’ STAFF/ROD/WAND IS AN ALMOND WOOD STAFF/ROD/WAND. THAT STAFF/ROD/WAND WAS SO IMPORTANT TO THE HISTORY OF ISRAEL’S FAITHFULNESS IN ITS COVENANT RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD (THROUGH ITS MAGICAL/MIRACLE USE IN THE 2 SIGNS, 10 PLAGUES & THE EXODUS CROSSING OR AT THE BATTLE OF REPHIDIM) THAT IT WAS EVENTUALLY INCLUDED IN THE IMMORTAL CONTENTS OF THE ARK (NUM 17:1–11; HEB 9:4).**

**DESIGN OF THE IMMORTAL LAMPS AND IMMORTAL ACCESSORIES FOR THE IMMORTAL LAMPSTAND (25:37–40)**

**25:37–40 THE SEVEN LAMPS THEMSELVES WERE ALSO MADE OF GOLD (EXOD 37:23) AS WERE THE WICK TRIMMERS (DEVICES USED TO KEEP THE FLAX WICKS SHAPED FOR MAXIMUM FLAME [FIRE LIGHT] WITH MINIMAL SMOKE OUTPUT [VENTS] AND THUS MAXIMUM LIGHT OUTPUT [WATTAGE] WITHOUT SMUDGING THE INTERIOR OF THE TABERNACLE) AND TRAYS TO HOLD WICKS, WICK TRIMMERS, FILLER FLASKS. THE ORIENTATION OF THE LAMPS HAD TO BE “SO THAT THEY LIGHT THE SPACE IN FRONT OF IT.” THIS IS NOT MERE COMMON SENSE: THE ISRAELITES MIGHT HAVE ASSUMED THEY SHOULD ORIENT THE LAMPS (WHICH WERE OIL BOWLS WITH A PINCHED EDGE OUT OF WHICH HUNG A SATURATED WICK SO AS TO CAST THE MOST-LIGHT) IN THE DIRECTION OF THE HOLY OF HOLIES, THE ROOM CONTAINING THE ARK. BUT GOD WANTED THE LAMPS TO LIGHT THE HOLY PLACE MORE FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE PRIESTS [SERGEANTS] WHO MINISTERED THERE AS FOR HIMSELF, IN OTHER WORDS. AGAIN, THIS IS EVIDENCE OF THE FACT THAT THE ISRAELITES WERE BEING INFORMED THAT GOD DID NOT NEED THE LAMPSTAND TO SEE; IT WAS FOR HIS SERVANTS PRIMARILY. THE LAMPSTAND AND ALL THAT WENT WITH IT WERE TO BE MADE FROM A FULL TALENT OF GOLD [1 LAMPSTAND IS $5,760.000.00 MILLION DOLLARS, WHICH 7 LAMPSTANDS IS $40,320.000.00 MILLION DOLLARS TIMES 10 LEVELS IS $403,200,000.00 MILLION DOLLARS AT 1%, $4,032,000,000.00 BILLION DOLLARS AT 10% & $40,320,000,000.00 BILLION DOLLARS TO $403,200,000,000.00 BILLION DOLLARS AT 100% & GO 1 MILE GO TWAIN [5] IS $2,016,000,000,000.00 TRILLION DOLLARS]: GOD DID NOT HAVE IN MIND A SPINDLY, DELICATE LAMPSTAND BUT A SOLID ONE THAT COULD ENDURE TIME TRAVEL [TRUE ORACLES AS TIME PORTALS IN REVELATION 10:1-11 & ACTS 37-38] AND HOLD HEAVY LAMPS [REVELATION 4:1-5:14] FOR ALL GENERATIONS TO COME. NOTE THE COMMAND IN V. 40 THAT THE LAMPSTAND AND ITS ACCESSORIES WERE TO BE CONSTRUCTED “ACCORDING TO THE PATTERN [ACTS 7:44-45] SHOWN YOU ON THE MOUNTAIN” (HCSB MORE EXPLICITLY BRING OUT THE PRESENT PROGRESSIVE TENSE, “ACCORDING TO THE MODEL [NRSV “PATTERN”] OF THEM YOU HAVE BEEN SHOWN ON THE MOUNTAIN”). THIS IMPLIES TWO CONSIDERATIONS. FIRST, THE VERBAL DESCRIPTION GIVEN HERE AND SUPPLEMENTED ELSEWHERE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT OF THE LAMPSTAND IS ONLY A SUMMATION. THE ACTUAL PATTERN WAS BEING SHOWN TO MOSES AND WAS LATER SURELY COMMUNICATED BY HIM TO BEZALEL AND THE OTHER CRAFTSMEN WHO BUILT THE LAMPSTAND. WE CANNOT THEREFORE KNOW EXACTLY WHAT THE LAMPSTAND WAS TO BE LIKE; WHAT WE CAN KNOW IS GENERALLY ITS STRUCTURE AND MOTIFS. THE PARTICULARS WERE IN THE ORAL “BLUEPRINTS” MOSES CONVEYED TO THE CRAFTSMEN FROM SEXLESS IMAGES REVEALED TO HIM BY GOD. SECOND, THE LAMPSTAND, LIKE THE REST OF THE TABERNACLE, WAS INTENDED TO REFLECT PRECISELY GOD’S DESIGN, NOT MERELY A HUMAN DESIGN FROM GENERAL GUIDELINES (25:9; CF. NUM 8:4). THIS THEME RECEIVES CONSIDERABLE EMPHASIS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT (ACTS 7:44; AND ESP. HEB 8:5). THE TABERNACLE, IN OTHER WORDS, POINTED TO HEAVEN—TO THE ETERNAL HOME OF THE TOP ENGLISH LORD IN WHICH HIS REDEEMED PEOPLE---ISRAEL & THE USA] WERE INTENDED EVENTUALLY TO DWELL WITHOUT DISTANCE FROM HIM (REV 11:19) AND AS MEMBERS OF HIS OWN HOUSEHOLD (JOHN 14:1–6). THE TABERNACLE WAS, IN OTHER WORDS, A TRAINING DEVICE FOR ORIENTING THE OLD COVENANT PEOPLE TOWARD THEIR NEW COVENANT HEAVENLY HOME.**

**LAWS ON CONSTRUCTION AND USE OF THE TRUE TABERNACLE (26:1–37)**

**1 “MAKE THE TABERNACLE [REVELATION 21:3 & ACTS 7:44-45] WITH TEN CURTAINS OF FINELY TWISTED LINEN AND BLUE, PURPLE AND SCARLET YARN, WITH CHERUBIM WORKED INTO THEM BY A SKILLED CRAFTSMAN [PROVERBS 8:30-31]. 2 ALL THE CURTAINS ARE TO BE THE SAME SIZE—TWENTY-EIGHT CUBITS LONG AND FOUR CUBITS WIDE. 3 JOIN FIVE OF THE CURTAINS TOGETHER, AND DO THE SAME WITH THE OTHER FIVE. 4 MAKE LOOPS OF BLUE MATERIAL ALONG THE EDGE OF THE END CURTAIN IN ONE SET, AND DO THE SAME WITH THE END CURTAIN IN THE OTHER SET. 5 MAKE FIFTY LOOPS ON ONE CURTAIN AND FIFTY LOOPS ON THE END CURTAIN OF THE OTHER SET, WITH THE LOOPS OPPOSITE EACH OTHER. 6 THEN MAKE FIFTY GOLD CLASPS AND USE THEM TO FASTEN THE CURTAINS TOGETHER SO THAT THE TABERNACLE IS A UNIT. 7 “MAKE CURTAINS OF GOAT HAIR FOR THE TENT OVER THE TABERNACLE—ELEVEN ALTOGETHER. 8 ALL ELEVEN CURTAINS ARE TO BE THE SAME SIZE—THIRTY CUBITS LONG AND FOUR CUBITS WIDE. 9 JOIN FIVE OF THE CURTAINS TOGETHER INTO ONE SET AND THE OTHER SIX INTO ANOTHER SET. FOLD THE SIXTH CURTAIN DOUBLE AT THE FRONT OF THE TENT. 10 MAKE FIFTY LOOPS ALONG THE EDGE OF THE END CURTAIN IN ONE SET AND ALSO ALONG THE EDGE OF THE END CURTAIN IN THE OTHER SET. 11 THEN MAKE FIFTY BRONZE CLASPS AND PUT THEM IN THE LOOPS TO FASTEN THE TENT TOGETHER AS A UNIT. 12 AS FOR THE ADDITIONAL LENGTH OF THE TENT CURTAINS, THE HALF CURTAIN THAT IS LEFT OVER IS TO HANG DOWN AT THE REAR OF THE TABERNACLE. 13 THE TENT CURTAINS WILL BE A CUBIT LONGER ON BOTH SIDES; WHAT IS LEFT WILL HANG OVER THE SIDES OF THE TABERNACLE SO AS TO COVER IT. 14 MAKE FOR THE TENT A COVERING OF RAM SKINS DYED RED, AND OVER THAT A COVERING OF HIDES OF SEA COWS. 15 “MAKE UPRIGHT FRAMES OF ACACIA WOOD FOR THE TABERNACLE. 16 EACH FRAME IS TO BE TEN CUBITS LONG AND A CUBIT AND A HALF WIDE, 17 WITH TWO PROJECTIONS SET PARALLEL TO EACH OTHER. MAKE ALL THE FRAMES OF THE TABERNACLE IN THIS WAY. 18 MAKE TWENTY FRAMES FOR THE SOUTH SIDE OF THE TABERNACLE 19 AND MAKE FORTY SILVER BASES TO GO UNDER THEM—TWO BASES FOR EACH FRAME, ONE UNDER EACH PROJECTION. 20 FOR THE OTHER SIDE, THE NORTH SIDE OF THE TABERNACLE, MAKE TWENTY FRAMES 21 AND FORTY SILVER BASES—TWO UNDER EACH FRAME. 22 MAKE SIX FRAMES FOR THE FAR END, THAT IS, THE WEST END OF THE TABERNACLE, 23 AND MAKE TWO FRAMES FOR THE CORNERS AT THE FAR END. 24 AT THESE TWO CORNERS THEY MUST BE DOUBLE FROM THE BOTTOM ALL THE WAY TO THE TOP, AND FITTED INTO A SINGLE RING; BOTH SHALL BE LIKE THAT. 25 SO THERE WILL BE EIGHT FRAMES AND SIXTEEN SILVER BASES—TWO UNDER EACH FRAME. 26 “ALSO MAKE CROSSBARS OF ACACIA WOOD: FIVE FOR THE FRAMES ON ONE SIDE OF THE TABERNACLE, 27 FIVE FOR THOSE ON THE OTHER SIDE, AND FIVE FOR THE FRAMES ON THE WEST, AT THE FAR END OF THE TABERNACLE. 28 THE CENTER CROSSBAR IS TO EXTEND FROM END TO END AT THE MIDDLE OF THE FRAMES. 29 OVERLAY THE FRAMES WITH GOLD AND MAKE GOLD RINGS TO HOLD THE CROSSBARS. ALSO OVERLAY THE CROSSBARS WITH GOLD. 30 “SET UP THE TABERNACLE ACCORDING TO THE PLAN [ACTS 5:39] SHOWN YOU ON THE MOUNTAIN. 31 “MAKE A CURTAIN OF BLUE, PURPLE AND SCARLET YARN AND FINELY TWISTED LINEN, WITH CHERUBIM WORKED INTO IT BY A SKILLED CRAFTSMAN [ACTS 7:49-50]. 32 HANG IT WITH GOLD HOOKS ON FOUR POSTS OF ACACIA WOOD OVERLAID WITH GOLD AND STANDING ON FOUR SILVER BASES. 33 HANG THE CURTAIN FROM THE CLASPS AND PLACE THE ARK OF THE TESTIMONY BEHIND THE CURTAIN. THE CURTAIN WILL SEPARATE THE HOLY PLACE FROM THE MOST HOLY PLACE. 34 PUT THE ATONEMENT COVER ON THE ARK OF THE TESTIMONY IN THE MOST HOLY PLACE. 35 PLACE THE TABLE OUTSIDE THE CURTAIN ON THE NORTH SIDE OF THE TABERNACLE AND PUT THE LAMPSTAND OPPOSITE IT ON THE SOUTH SIDE. 36 “FOR THE ENTRANCE TO THE TENT MAKE A CURTAIN OF BLUE, PURPLE AND SCARLET YARN AND FINELY TWISTED LINEN—THE WORK OF AN EMBROIDERER. 37 MAKE GOLD HOOKS FOR THIS CURTAIN AND FIVE POSTS OF ACACIA WOOD OVERLAID WITH GOLD. AND CAST FIVE BRONZE BASES FOR THEM.**

**GENERAL SUMMARY OF THE TRUE TABERNACLE AND ITS COURTYARD**

**THE FOLLOWING SUMMARY IS INTENDED TO ORIENT THE READER TO THE MATERIAL CONTAINED IN THIS CHAPTER AND SOME OF THE NEXT CHAPTER. THE PARTICULARS WILL THEN BE DISCUSSED IN CONNECTION WITH THE INDIVIDUAL VERSES OF THE TEXT. THE HEBREW WORD FOR TABERNACLE IS MIŠKĀN, WHICH MEANS IN HEBREW “LIVING PLACE” OR “DWELLING PLACE.” THE TABERNACLE WAS A FANCY RECTANGULAR TENT IN WHICH GOD LIVED SYMBOLICALLY IN THE PRESENCE OF HIS PEOPLE. AFTER BEING BUILT, IT WAS SET UP IN THE MIDDLE OF THE ENTIRE ISRAELITE ENCAMPMENT SO THAT ALL THE INDIVIDUAL SMALL, SIMPLE ISRAELITE TENTS SURROUNDED THE ONE BIG FANCY TENT OF STEPHEN YAHWEH IN CONCENTRIC CIRCLES. WHEN HE LED THEM IN TRAVELING OR IN GOING INTO WAR, HE WENT OUT IN FRONT OF THEM IN THE FORM OF HIS ANGEL [STEPHEN YAHWEH] OR THE PILLAR OF CLOUD/FIRE. BUT WHEN THEY ENCAMPED, HIS HOME WAS IN THEIR VERY MIDST, AND THEY GATHERED THEIR HOMES AROUND HIS. HIS DWELLING PLACE FACED EAST [TOWARDS THE EASTERN SIDE IN SOUTH CAROLINA IS WHERE FLORENCE IS LOCATED] AND HAD TWO ROOMS. THE EAST ROOM WAS AN OUTER ROOM OR ENTRANCE ROOM CALLED THE HOLY PLACE THAT WAS THIRTY FEET (TWENTY CUBITS) LONG, FIFTEEN FEET (TEN CUBITS) WIDE, AND FIFTEEN (TEN CUBITS) FEET HIGH. IN IT WERE THREE PIECES OF FURNITURE: A FOOD/UTENSIL TABLE, A LAMPSTAND, AND AN INCENSE ALTAR. ON THE WEST WAS AN INNER OR “BACK ROOM” CALLED THE MOST HOLY PLACE THAT WAS DIMENSIONALLY A CUBE: FIFTEEN FEET (TEN CUBITS) LONG, FIFTEEN FEET (TEN CUBITS) WIDE, AND FIFTEEN FEET (TEN CUBITS) HIGH. IN IT IS THE ARK OF THE COVENANT—AN ORNATE BOX WITH A SPECIAL PLATFORM ON ITS LID THAT SYMBOLIZED GOD’S PRESENCE. THIS ROOM WAS DIVIDED FROM THE OUTER ROOM BY A SPECIAL WOVEN CURTAIN OF BLUE, RED, AND GOLD WITH CHERUBIM MOTIFS. THE TABERNACLE WAS MADE OF THREE LAYERS OF FABRIC THAT WERE SPREAD, STRETCHED, AND/OR HUNG OVER A FRAMEWORK RESEMBLING INTERCONNECTED LADDERS MADE OF GILDED WOOD. THE INNER LAYER (THE LAYER VISIBLE TO ANYONE INSIDE) WAS, SIMILARLY TO THE CURTAIN MENTIONED ABOVE, ALSO A BEAUTIFUL CURTAIN CLOTH ELABORATELY WOVEN OF BLUE, RED, AND GOLD COLORS WITH CHERUBIM MOTIFS PATTERNED INTO THE WEAVING. OVER THAT WAS A MIDDLE LAYER OF GOAT HAIR, GIVING THICKNESS AND PROTECTION. THE OUTER LAYER WAS OF DUGONG (SEA COW) HIDES, PROVIDING A WATERPROOF SIDE TO THE ELEMENTS. ONLY PRIESTS [SERGEANTS], SPECIALLY PREPARED BY PERMISSIBLE MAGICAL RITUALS, COULD ENTER THE TABERNACLE ITSELF. THE OTHER ISRAELITES HAD TO REMAIN IN THE COURTYARD TO WORSHIP. THE TABERNACLE IS LOCATED AT THE WESTERN END OF A RECTANGULAR COURTYARD THAT WAS MADE OF LINEN CURTAINS SEVEN AND ONE-HALF FEET HIGH, HUNG FROM POLES, GOING ALL AROUND TO FORM THE BOUNDARY. THE COURTYARD WAS ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTY FEET (ONE HUNDRED CUBITS) LONG AND SEVENTY-FIVE FEET (FIFTY CUBITS) WIDE, WITH A THIRTY FOOT (TWENTY CUBITS) WIDE ENTRANCE ON THE EASTERN END THAT USUALLY WAS OPEN BUT HAD A CURTAIN OF BLUE, PURPLE, AND SCARLET THAT COULD BE USED TO CLOSE OFF THE COURTYARD ENTIRELY. IN THE EASTERN END OF THE COURTYARD STOOD TWO ITEMS: AN ALTAR FOR GRILLING SACRIFICIAL MEAT AND A LAVER FOR THE PRIESTS [SERGEANTS] TO WASH UP BEFORE ENTERING THE TABERNACLE (HOUSE OR CAR). UNDERSTANDABLY, SUCH AN IMPORTANT SYMBOLIC STRUCTURE WAS REFERRED TO BY MORE THAN ONE TERM IN THE ORIGINAL. THE MOST COMMON IS MIŠKĀN, “DWELLING PLACE.” BUT OTHERS ARE USED, INCLUDING MIŠKĀN STEPHEN YAHWEH (“THE LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH’S DWELLING PLACE”; E.G., 25:9), OR MIŠKĀN HĀʿĒDÛT (“THE ARK OF THE TESTIMONY’S DWELLING PLACE,” E.G., 38:21 OR MIŠKĀN CON VENIRE (“THE ARK OF THE COVENANT’S DWELLING PLACE,” E.G., 38:21 SO CALLED BECAUSE THE TABERNACLE HOUSED THE ARK THAT HELD THE TEN WORDS/COMMANDMENTS, WHICH WERE THE “TESTIMONY” TO THE WHOLE COVENANT), AND MIŠKĀN ʾŌHEL MÔʿĒD (“THE DWELLING PLACE THAT IS THE TENT OF MEETING,” E.G., 39:32, REFERRING TO THE WAY THE TABERNACLE REPLACED THE EARLIER “TENT OF MEETING”), OR SIMPLY ʾŌHEL MÔʿRĒD (“TENT OF MEETING,” E.G., 28:43), OR BÊT STEPHEN YAHWEH (“STEPHEN YAHWEH’S HOUSE,” AS IN 34:26), OR QŌDEŠ (“HOLY PLACE/SANCTUARY,” E.G., 38:24), OR MIQDĀŠ (“HOLY PLACE/SANCTUARY” AS IN 25:8). THIS MEANS ALL INFERIOR ETERNAL CREATURES AS THE LORD’S APPOINTED AUTHORITIES OR THE LORD’S SUPREME ELECT ONLY HAS THE TOP ENGLISH LORD’S NAME STEPHEN YAHWEH IN THEM & NOT HIS SELF, BUT THE TOP ENGLISH LORD HAS HIS DIVINE NATURE WITHIN HIM BECAUSE THE TOP ENGLISH LORD CAN NEVER HAVE ANY TRUE RIVALS OR ANY TRUE EQUALS BEFORE HIM IN EXODUS 20:3. EVERYTHING MAKING UP THE TABERNACLE AND ITS COURTYARD COULD BE RATHER QUICKLY DISASSEMBLED, WRAPPED OR BUNDLED UP, AND TRANSPORTED AS THE ISRAELITES MOVED FROM PLACE TO PLACE BEFORE SETTLING IN CANAAN. IT ALSO COULD BE REASSEMBLED RATHER QUICKLY WHENEVER THEY SET UP CAMP. THUS, AS THE ISRAELITES MOVED, GOD MOVED [TIME PORTALS IN REVELATION 10:1-11 & ACTS 7:37-38] WITH THEM. WHEREVER THEY WENT, HE LIVED IN THEIR MIDST.**

**DESIGN OF THE INNER CURTAINS (26:1–6)**

**26:1–6 TEN CURTAINS, EACH MEASURING FORTY-TWO FEET (TWENTY-EIGHT CUBITS) LONG AND SIX FEET (FOUR CUBITS) HIGH/WIDE WERE USED TO LINE THE TABERNACLE WALLS AND CEILING. THEY WERE WOVEN OF HIGH-QUALITY, TWISTED LINEN, STRONG AND FINE, MIXED WITH YARNS DYED THREE DIFFERENT COLORS. THE COLOR NAMES TRANSLATED “BLUE, PURPLE AND SCARLET” MAY HAVE BEEN HUES GENERALLY IN THESE COLOR RANGES, BASED ON ASSUMPTIONS FROM MODERN DYEING PRACTICES USING DYE SOURCES PRESUMED TO BE THOSE EMPLOYED IN THE WILDERNESS OF SINAI AND/OR EGYPT; BUT REGARDLESS OF THE ACTUAL HUE, THE TRANSLATIONS CAN BE CONSIDERED ROUGHLY ACCURATE. THE LINEN WAS SURELY DYED AS WELL. THE CURTAINS WERE CONNECTED INTO TWO SETS OF FIVE, BY MEANS NOT SPECIFIED IN THE VERBAL DESCRIPTION GIVEN HERE—PROBABLY BY SEWING SO THAT EACH OF THE TWO SETS OF CURTAINS MEASURED FORTY-TWO BY THIRTY FEET. THESE TWO CURTAIN GROUPS WERE THEN JOINED TEMPORARILY WHENEVER THE ARK WAS SET UP BY CONNECTING LOOPS OF BLUE MATERIAL AT THEIR EDGES (FIFTY LOOPS ALONG THE FORTY-TWO, FOOT EDGE, OR ONE LOOP ABOUT EVERY TEN INCHES) WITH SPECIAL GOLD JOINING RINGS. ALL JOINED UP, THE CURTAIN MASS THAT FORMED THE TABERNACLE ROOF AND SIDES MEASURED FORTY-TWO BY SIXTY FEET. SOME OF THIS WAS DRAPED TO FORM SIDE WALLS AND THE BACK WALL, SO THE ACTUAL FLOOR SPACE OF THE TABERNACLE WAS FORTY-FIVE FEET BY FIFTEEN FEET (SIX HUNDRED AND SEVENTY-FIVE SQUARE FEET). AS LATER DESCRIBED, THIS FLOOR SPACE WAS DIVIDED IN A TWO-THIRDS AND ONE-THIRD SPLIT INTO TWO ROOMS, THE HOLY PLACE (TWO-THIRDS OF THE FLOOR SPACE, OR THIRTY FEET BY FIFTEEN FEET) AND THE MOST HOLY PLACE (ONE-THIRD OF THE FLOOR SPACE, OR FIFTEEN FEET BY FIFTEEN FEET).**

**DESIGN OF THE PROTECTIVE CURTAINS AND WEATHER COVERINGS (26:7–14)**

**26:7–14 THE ORNATE INNER CURTAINS WERE TEN IN NUMBER, AND EACH MEASURED FORTY-TWO FEET (TWENTY-EIGHT CUBITS) LONG AND SIX FEET (FOUR CUBITS) WIDE (26:1–2). THUS, IN TOTAL THE INNER CURTAINS PROVIDED 2,520 SQUARE FEET OF LOVELY INNER WALL AND CEILING SURFACING. THE SECOND LAYER OF CURTAINS THAT ALSO WENT OVER THE TOP AND SIDES OF THE TABERNACLE AND THUS PROTECTED THE BEAUTIFUL INNER CURTAINS, LYING RIGHT OVER THEM, WAS MADE OF GOAT HAIR, PROBABLY A SINGLE DULL COLOR. THERE WERE ELEVEN MIDDLE CURTAINS IN NUMBER, AND ALTHOUGH THE SAME WIDTH—FOUR CUBITS (SIX FEET)—AS THE INNER CURTAINS, THEY WERE SLIGHTLY LONGER, THIRTY CUBITS (FORTY-FIVE FEET). IN ALL THESE SECOND-LAYER PROTECTIVE CURTAINS PROVIDED 2,970 SQUARE FEET OF SURFACE OR 450 SQUARE FEET MORE THAN THE INNER CURTAINS. THE LARGER SIZE AND NUMBER OF THE PROTECTIVE GOAT HAIR CURTAINS MADE IT POSSIBLE FOR THEM TO COVER COMPLETELY THE INNER CURTAINS ON ALL OUTER SURFACES OF THE TABERNACLE SO AS TO PRESERVE THE DELICATE BEAUTY OF THE INNER SURFACE AND TO SCREEN THE INNER CURTAINS FROM CASUAL VIEW BY OUTSIDERS. WORSHIPERS COULD LOOK INTO THE TABERNACLE FROM THE COURTYARD AS THEY BROUGHT ALL THEIR SACRIFICES AT 100.0001% ETERNAL INCORRUPTION & ALL THEIR OFFERINGS AT 100.0001% ETERNAL INCORRUPTION [MALACHI 3:8-12 & 1ST CORINTHIANS 6:12-20] TO STEPHEN YAHWEH AND MIGHT HAVE BEEN ABLE TO SEE AT A DISTANCE SOMETHING OF THE BEAUTIFUL WORKMANSHIP AND COLOR OF THE INNER CURTAINS. FROM THE OUTSIDE, HOWEVER, THE INNER CURTAINS WERE INVISIBLE. OF COURSE, THE MIDDLE LAYER OF CURTAINS ALSO BUFFERED THE MORE DELICATE INNER CURTAINS FROM THE HEAVIER OUTER LAYER OF HIDES AS WELL. THE GOAT HAIR CURTAINS WERE JOINED INTO TWO SETS—ONE OF THESE SETS WAS MADE UP OF FIVE CURTAINS JUST AS THE INNER CURTAINS WERE JOINED INTO SETS OF FIVE, BUT THE OTHER SET WAS COMPRISED OF SIX CURTAINS, WITH THE LAST OF THE GROUP AT THE FRONT EDGE OF THE TABERNACLE KEPT AS A PROTECTIVE CURTAIN FOR CLOSING OFF THE FRONT OF THE TABERNACLE AS NEEDED. IT COULD BE FOLDED AND UNFOLDED AS APPROPRIATE, JUST AS THE FANCY CURTAIN IT COVERED COULD SO THAT WHEN ENTRANCE TO AND EGRESS FROM THE TABERNACLE WERE DESIRED, IT COULD BE FOLDED BACK. BUT WHEN THE TABERNACLE WAS SHUT UP, IT COULD BE UNFOLDED AND LET DOWN TO COVER THE ENTIRE FRONT (26:9). JUST AS THE TWO SETS OF INNER CURTAINS WERE JOINED BY FIFTY GOLD RINGS CONNECTING FIFTY LOOPS ON EACH SET, THE GOAT HAIR CURTAINS WERE JOINED SIMILARLY BY FIFTY BRONZE RINGS. THE SECOND, GOAT-HAIR LAYER, VIEWED AS A SINGLE COVERING (WHEN ALL JOINED), WAS BOTH WIDER AND LONGER THAN THE INNER LAYER—LONGER BECAUSE IT CONTAINED AN EXTRA CURTAIN AND WIDER BECAUSE EACH CURTAIN WAS MADE TO HAVE ADDITIONAL LENGTH. ACCORDINGLY, AS VV. 12–13 INDICATE, THERE COULD BE AN OVERLAP OF THIS MIDDLE LAYER ON TOP OF THE INNER LAYER, BOTH AT THE BACK OF THE TABERNACLE AS WELL AS AT THE SIDES. BASED ON THE WORDING OF THESE VERSES, IT IS FAIRLY CERTAIN THAT THE CURTAINS LAY IN THE OPPOSITE PLANE TO THAT OF THE LENGTH OF THE TABERNACLE. IN OTHER WORDS, SINCE THE FRONT OF THE TABERNACLE FACED EAST AND ITS BACK WAS TO THE WEST, THE CURTAINS WERE DRAPED FROM THE SOUTH SIDE TO THE NORTH SIDE (THINKING OF DRAPING THEM “LEFT” TO “RIGHT” AS ONE FACED THE FRONT OF THE TABERNACLE). VERSE 14 DESCRIBES TWO OTHER LAYERS OF TABERNACLE COVERING. THE THIRD LAYER WAS MADE OF “RAMS SKINS DYED RED” (NIV, HCSB) OR SIMPLY “TANNED RAMS’ SKINS” (NRSV). THE LATTER MAY BE THE MORE LIKELY TRANSLATION SINCE THE TANNING PROCESS GIVES A REDDISH-BROWN HUE TO RAM’S SKINS, AND IT IS THE TANNED NATURE OF THOSE SKINS (PLIABLE, SOFT, THICK, PROTECTIVE WITHOUT BEING BUMPY) AND NOT THEIR COLOR THAT IS THE FOCUS OF THE DESCRIPTION. THE FOURTH, OR OUTER LAYER WAS MADE FROM THE “HIDES OF SEA COWS” (HCSB “MANATEE SKINS,” NRSV “FINE LEATHER,” NJPS “DOLPHIN SKINS”).377 THIS FINAL LAYER WAS THE ONE PEOPLE WOULD SEE MOST OF THE TIME, THE LAYER EXPOSED TO THE WEATHER. THE THICK, DURABLE LEATHER HIDES OF SEA COWS WOULD PROTECT FROM THE HOT SUN, RAIN, SNOW, DEW, FROST, DUST, AND SAND AND WOULD WITHSTAND SETUP AND TEARDOWN REPEATEDLY AS THE ISRAELITES MOVED FROM PLACE TO PLACE. THE CURTAINS AND COVERING LAYERS HAD NO SYMBOLIC VALUE IN THEMSELVES. THEY WERE MAINLY FUNCTIONAL, PROVIDING ENCLOSURE FOR STEPHEN YAHWEH’S HOUSE. THE GRAND, EXQUISITE DIVINE NATURE OF THAT HOUSE FITTED ITS PURPOSE, THE HOUSING OF THE SYMBOLS OF LOVING AND PROTECTIVE DIVINE PRESENCE AMONG THE CHOSEN PEOPLE ISRAEL & THE USA. THOUGH GOD KEPT HIMSELF INVISIBLE, THE SYMBOLS OF HIS SEXLESS PRESENCE HELPED HIS PEOPLE REMEMBER THAT HE DWELT AMONG THEM, WATCHED OVER THEM, SET THEIR AGENDA FOR LIFE, AND OFFERED CONSTANTLY TO THEM THE BLESSINGS OF HIS COVENANT, EVEN IN THE HOSTILE ENVIRONS OF THE WILDERNESS.**

**DESIGN OF THE FRAMING UPRIGHTS THAT SUPPORTED THE CURTAINS (26:15–25)**

**26:15–25 THESE VERSES DESCRIBE A SIMPLE BUT EFFECTIVE METHOD OF FORMING RIGID WALL SUPPORTS FOR THE TABERNACLE. A TOTAL OF FORTY-EIGHT LADDER-LIKE FRAMES SAT ON SILVER BASES OF SOME SORT. THE FRONT, OR EAST END, OF THE TABERNACLE HAD NONE OF THESE SUPPORTS BECAUSE IT WAS DESIGNED TO BE OPEN FOR ENTRANCE AND EGRESS BY THE PRIESTS [SERGEANTS] DURING A DAY’S WORSHIP. TWENTY OF THE FRAMES SUPPORTED THE NORTH WALL, TWENTY SUPPORTED THE SOUTH WALL, SIX SUPPORTED THE BACK WALL, AND TWO OTHERS WERE USED TO DOUBLE THE STRENGTH AT THE BACK CORNERS. THESE EXTRA BACK CORNER FRAMES WERE SEPARATE AT THE BOTTOM BUT JOINED AT THE TOP BY A RING OR RINGS—THUS POSSIBLY FORMING A SORT OF A-FRAME AT THE BACK CORNERS, ADDING STABILITY. IT SEEMS POSSIBLE THAT THE FRAMES WERE NOT ERECTED SO AS TO STAND FULLY VERTICAL BUT WERE SPREAD SO THAT THE CURTAINS WERE SLIGHTLY WIDER APART AT THE BOTTOM THAN AT THE TOP AS VIEWED FROM EITHER THE EAST OR THE WEST. AS A RESULT, THE TABERNACLE WITH ITS “FLOOR” INCLUDED HAD THE SHAPE—AS VIEWED FROM THE OUTSIDE—OF WHAT WOULD TECHNICALLY BE CALLED A SOLID ISOSCELES TRAPEZOID, NOT STRICTLY A SOLID RECTANGLE, AS ONE LOOKED AT IT FROM EITHER THE EAST OR THE WEST. THE UPRIGHT FRAMES WERE MADE FROM ACACIA WOOD, THE ABUNDANT AND DURABLE WOOD OF THE WILDERNESS AND MANY OTHER PARTS OF THE HOLY LAND, JUST AS THE OTHER WOODEN OBJECTS OF THE TABERNACLE ALL WERE, AND OVERLAID WITH GOLD (V. 29) AS WERE ALSO THE ARK, THE TABLE, THE 2 ARK POLES [2 RODS]. THESE FRAMES HAD TWO POLES SIDE BY SIDE, TWENTY-SEVEN INCHES (A CUBIT AND A HALF) APART, CONNECTED TO ONE ANOTHER BY CROSS PIECES SO THAT THEY RESEMBLED LADDERS. WE ARE NOT TOLD HOW MANY CROSS PIECES THERE WERE ON EACH FRAME BUT ONLY THAT THE LENGTH OF EACH FRAME WAS FIFTEEN FEET (TEN CUBITS). SINCE THE TABERNACLE FLOOR SPACE WAS FORTY-FIVE FEET BY FIFTEEN FEET, THE TWENTY FRAMES ON EACH SIDE WOULD HAVE BEEN SET EVERY TWO FEET THREE INCHES (EVERY TWENTY-SEVEN INCHES) ON CENTER. AND SINCE THEY WERE TWENTY-SEVEN INCHES WIDE, IT CAN BE DEDUCED THAT THEY BUTTED AGAINST ONE ANOTHER. IF THEY WERE ALSO LASHED TOGETHER OR OTHERWISE FASTENED TO ONE ANOTHER WHEN THE TABERNACLE WAS ERECTED—AS IS VERY LIKELY—THEY WOULD PROVIDE A CONTINUOUS FRAMEWORK, STRONG AND RIGID, FOR THE HORIZONTAL FRAMES AND THE CURTAINS. VERSES 22–24 DESCRIBE THE BACK (WEST) WALL FRAMES IN THE SAME WAY, UNDOUBTEDLY BUTTED AGAINST AND CONNECTED TO ONE ANOTHER, WITH THE ADDED STRENGTH PROVIDED BY AN A-FRAME STRUCTURE PRODUCED BY PUTTING ANOTHER FRAME AT EACH BACK CORNER AND INTERLOCKING THAT FRAME WITH THE ONE UNDER IT AT THE TOP. THUS, FORTY-EIGHT LADDERLIKE ACACIA WOOD GILDED FRAMES AND NINETY-SIX SILVER BASES FORMED THE SIDE SUPPORTS FOR THE TABERNACLE. AGAIN, THERE IS ESPECIALLY THE SYMBOLIC SYMBOLISM ABOUT THIS ACCOUNT CONCERNING “MILITARY SUPPORT” AND “MILITARY CAMPS, MILITARY FORTS & MILITARY BASES” FOR THE TOP ENGLISH LORD. THE FRAMES [SUPPORTS] AND THEIR BASES WERE FUNCTIONAL, UTILITARIAN, BUT ALSO BEAUTIFUL, AS BEFITS STEPHEN YAHWEH’S HOUSE. HIS HOUSE [REVELATION 4:1-5:14; 21:1-22:21 & ACTS 7:46-56] REFLECTED HIS MILITARY GLORY [PROVERBS 8:22-29 [THE TOP ENGLISH LORD’S HOUSE]; JOB 1-42 [THE LORD’S BUSINESS]; [GENESIS 1:1-31 [THE LORD’S CREATIVE WORKS OF THE ENTIRE UNIVERSE]; GENESIS 1:26-2:25 [THE MAN & THE GARDEN OF EDEN]; GENESIS 3:1-3:24 [THE LORD DEALT WITH SEXUAL CREATURES]; GENESIS 6:1-9:17 [THE LORD BROUGHT THE FLOOD], 18:16-19:29 [THE LORD DEALT WITH HOMOSEXUAL CREATURES], EXODUS 3:1-17:16 [THE AUTHORITATIVE ROD OF THE LORD & THE 10 PLAGUES AGAINST EGYPT]; EZRA 9:1-10:44 [THE LORD DEALT WITH INTERRACIAL ABOMINABLE CREATURES]; DANIEL 8:8-14 [THE LORD BROUGHT THE ENGLISH TRIBULATION---NOT IN THE END TIME BUT SEPARATE IN 2ND ESDRAS 11 & 12]; REVELATION 2:1-20:15 [THE LORD BROUGHT ISRAEL’S TRIBULATION] & ACTS 7:6-7 [THE LORD DEALT WITH HARD BONDAGE & CONDONED SLAVERY IN ISRAEL [ISRAELITES AGAINST EGYPTIANS IS JUSTIFIED BECAUSE THE EGYPTIANS TRIED TO TAKE OVER THE LORD’S PEOPLE & WAS SUCCESSFUL FOR 400-490 YEARS, BUT THEN FAILED & THE LORD PUT THE EGYPTAINS INTO SLAVERY & HARD JUDGMENTS BY THE ROD OF GOD] & THE USA [WHITES AGAINST BLACKS IS JUSTIFIED BECAUSE THE BLACKS TRIED TO TAKE OVER THE LORD’S PEOPLE & WAS NEVER SUCCESSFUL, BUT THEN FAILED & THE LORD PUT THE BLACKS INTO SLAVERY & HARD JUDGMENTS BY THE ROD OF GOD FOR 190 YEARS---1775-1965]:2ND PETER 3:7-9: 1% IS 400 YEARS [4 MONTHS], 10% IS 4,000 YEARS [4 YEARS] & 100% IS 40,000 YEARS [40 YEARS] TO 400,000 YEARS [400 YEARS] OF HARD BONDAGE & CONDONED SLAVERY], ACTS 7:30-38 [THE BURNING BUSH & THE TOP PROPHETIC OFFICE], ACTS 7:39-43 [THE LORD DEALT WITH ISRAEL ABOUT THE GOLDEN CALF], ACTS 7:44-45 [THE LORD’S TABERNACLE & THE ARK OF THE TESTIMONY] 55-56 [THE ENTRANCE TO HEAVEN & THE LORD’S GLORIOUS THRONE]; ACTS 7:59-60 [THE LORD’S ETERNAL DEATH]; ACTS 29:1-2 [THE LORD BROUGHT THE END TIME TRIBULATION IN THE USA]; ACTS 30 [THE TOP ENGLISH LORD’S HOUSE] IN HIS ARMED FORCES, AND EVEN ITS SUPPORT FRAMES & SUPPORT BASES WERE REQUIRED TO BE LOVELY IN ACCORDANCE WITH THAT TOP HEROISM.**

**DESIGN OF THE FRAMING CROSSBARS THAT FURTHER SUPPORTED THE CURTAINS (26:26–29)**

**26:26–29 THIS DESCRIPTION OF THE HORIZONTAL CROSSBARS IS RELATIVELY LACONIC. WE DO NOT KNOW IF THEY WERE SINGLE POLES OR MORE ELABORATE STRUCTURES—PERHAPS LADDERLIKE FRAMES ON THE ANALOGY OF THE UPRIGHT FRAMING MEMBERS. THERE WERE FIFTEEN OF THEM, BUT HOW THEY WERE ATTACHED TO THE SIDES AND BACK END, OTHER THAN AT LEAST IN PART BY RINGS (V. 29), WE DO NOT KNOW. THE LANGUAGE “FIVE FOR THE FRAMES ON ONE SIDE” MAY NOT REFER TO PLACEMENT AT ALL BUT RATHER TO THE SYMMETRY OF THE OVERALL COUNT—REMINDING THE CRAFTSMEN TO THINK IN TERMS OF FIVE CROSSBARS FOR EACH OF THE THREE FRAMED SIDES OF THE TABERNACLE. IF THESE CROSSBARS WERE IN FACT SIMPLE BARS A FEW INCHES IN WIDTH AT MOST, STRETCHING FROM SIDE TO SIDE (AS VIEWED FROM THE FRONT), THEY WOULD BE SPACED EVERY THREE FEET (EVERY TWO CUBITS SINCE THERE WERE FIFTEEN BARS FOR FORTY-FIVE FEET OF “ROOF” LENGTH). THEY MAY ALSO HAVE BEEN COMPOSITE FRAMES THREE FEET WIDE, PLACED SO AS TO BUTT UP AGAINST ONE ANOTHER IN THE MANNER OF THE UPRIGHTS. WE SIMPLY DO NOT KNOW. A CENTER CROSSBAR OR RIDGE POLE EXTENDED FROM THE FRONTMOST OF THESE CROSSBARS AT THE EAST END TO THE REARMOST OF THE CROSSBARS, AT THE WEST END, THUS STRETCHING FORTY-FIVE FEET IN ALL FROM FRONT TO BACK (V. 28). THE CENTER RIDGE POLE UNITED ALL THE CROSSBARS AND KEPT THEM SPACED PROPERLY AND ADDED RIGIDITY. ALL THESE ROOF SUPPORTS WERE MADE OF ACACIA WOOD, AS EXPECTED, AND ALSO OVERLAID WITH GOLD, AS EXPECTED, IN CONSISTENCY WITH THE REST OF THE GOLD-OVERLAID WOODEN MATERIALS OF THE TABERNACLE.**

**REFERENCE TO THE ACTUAL PLAN AS OPPOSED TO THE TEXT SUMMARY (26:30)**

**26:30 MOSES DID NOT JUST HEAR WORDS. HE SAW PICTURES. THE WORDS HE HEARD FROM STEPHEN YAHWEH, OR AT LEAST HIS PRÉCIS OF THEM, ARE WHAT WE FIND IN THE TEXT OF EXODUS AS IT DESCRIBES THE TABERNACLE DESIGN. BUT MOSES ACTUALLY SAW WHAT WE MIGHT CALL THE “BLUEPRINTS” AS WELL. THUS WHEN HE CAME BACK FROM THE MOUNTAIN AND PASSED ON GOD’S INSTRUCTIONS TO BEZALEL, OHOLIAB, AND THEIR CO-WORKERS, HE NOT ONLY TOLD THEM WHAT TO MAKE AND HOW TO MAKE IT, BUT HE ALSO KNEW HOW TO RECOGNIZE ITS FINISHED LOOK BECAUSE HE HAD BEEN SHOWN WHAT THE VARIOUS TABERNACLE COMPONENTS WERE TO LOOK LIKE. THE PARTIAL INFORMATION PROVIDED IN THE WRITTEN TEXT REPRESENTED NO PROBLEM TO THEM, EVEN THOUGH IT CAN BE CONFUSING AT PLACES TO US, BECAUSE MOSES HAD SEEN A VISUAL SUPPLEMENTATION OF THE SPOKEN WORDS AND KNEW EXACTLY WHAT STEPHEN YAHWEH WANTED FOR HIS HOUSE. THUS, THE TABERNACLE WAS NOT MERELY AN INTERPRETATION OF A GENERAL CONCEPT. IT WAS A PRECISE BUILD-OUT OF A REVEALED DESIGN. YAHWEH STEPHEN THEREFORE, IN EFFECT, BUILT HIS OWN HOUSE AMONG THE ISRAELITES IN THE WILDERNESS IN THE ULTIMATE BEGINNING IN PROVERBS 8:22, THOUGH HE DID IT THROUGH THE WORKMANSHIP OF ISRAELITE CRAFTSMEN & STEPHEN YAHWEH THEREFORE, IN EFFECT, SHALL BUILD HIS OWN HOUSE AMONG THE BRITISH IN THE USA IN THE ULTIMATE ENDING IN ACTS 30, BUT IN THE END TIME SHALL BE THROUGH THE WORKMANSHIP OF BRITISH CRAFTSMEN IN EPHESIANS 4:6. IT IS HIS DESIGN ISRAEL FOLLOWED OR THE USA SHALL FOLLOW PRECISELY. THEY DID NOT THINK UP A HOUSE AND OFFER IT TO HIM, BUT RATHER HE REVEALED WHAT HIS HOUSE IS TO BE LIKE AND GRACIOUSLY ALLOWED THEM TO BUILD IT FOR HIM. HEBREWS 8:5, REFERRING TO THE PRIESTS [SERGEANTS] OF THE OLD COVENANT AND THE JERUSALEM TEMPLE, STATES: “THEY SERVE AT A SANCTUARY THAT IS A COPY AND SHADOW OF WHAT IS IN HEAVEN. THIS IS WHY MOSES WAS WARNED WHEN HE WAS ABOUT TO BUILD THE TABERNACLE: ‘SEE TO IT THAT YOU MAKE EVERYTHING ACCORDING TO THE PATTERN SHOWN YOU ON THE MOUNTAIN.’ ” INSISTING ON EXACT DESIGN PLANS AND BUILDING PRECISELY TO THOSE PLANS, GOD ENSURED THAT HIS HOUSE WOULD BE RESPECTED NOT MERELY AS A LOVELY BUILDING BUT AS A “COPY AND SHADOW”—IN OTHER WORDS, A REPLICA ON A SMALL SCALE AND IN EARTHLY MATERIAL—OF HIS HEAVENLY TEMPLE. WHAT IS THE POINT OF THIS? SIMPLY THAT GOD WANTED HIS PEOPLE TO UNDERSTAND THAT THEIR ULTIMATE PURPOSE WAS TO DWELL WITH HIM IN HEAVEN, NOT ON EARTH. HE GAVE THEM A SMALL SAMPLE OF WHAT HIS HEAVENLY HOME IS LIKE, REQUIRED THEM TO LOCATE THEMSELVES AND THEIR HOMES AROUND HIS (SEE NUM 2), AND THUS TAUGHT THEM THE PRINCIPLE THAT THEY BELONGED IN PROXIMITY TO HIM. HE PROJECTED HIS PRESENCE SYMBOLICALLY AMONG THEM ON EARTH IN THIS WAY SO THAT THEY COULD LEARN TO LONG FOR AND LIVE FOR THE TIME WHEN THEY WOULD ACTUALLY DWELL IN HIS PRESENCE ETERNALLY & PERMANENTLY.**

**DESIGN OF THE SPECIAL CURTAIN/VEIL IN FRONT OF THE TOP HOLY OF HOLIES, THE MOST HOLY PLACE (26:31–35)**

**26:31–35 THE CURTAIN THAT CLOSED OFF THE MOST HOLY PLACE (“TOP HOLY OF HOLIES”) FROM THE FRONT ROOM OF THE TABERNACLE (THE “HOLY PLACE”) WAS MANUFACTURED TO MATCH THE CURTAINS THAT LINED THE INSIDE OF THE TABERNACLE (26:1) AND THE ENTRANCE CURTAIN (26:36), SO EVERYTHING IN THE INTERIOR OF THE TABERNACLE SHARED THE SAME GENERAL APPEARANCE OF BLUE, PURPLE, AND SCARLET YARN AND FINELY TWISTED LINEN CURTAINS WITH CHERUBIM MOTIFS WORKED INTO THEM, SUPPORTED BY GILDED FRAMES AND POLES WITH SILVER BASES. THE SPECIAL VEILING CURTAIN HUNG FROM FOUR GOLD-COVERED POLES THAT HAD SILVER BASES, SO WITH THE SUPPORT OF THESE POLES AT INTERMEDIATE POINTS, THE VEIL STRETCHED FROM ONE SIDE TO THE OTHER OF THE INTERIOR OF THE TABERNACLE, THAT IS, FROM SOUTH TO NORTH. IT HUNG WITH THE GOLD CLASPS MENTIONED IN V. 6 FROM THE TOP OF THE TABERNACLE AND MAY AS WELL HAVE BEEN SUPPORTED AT THE TOPS OF AND PROBABLY AT LEAST ALSO AT THE BOTTOMS OF THE SUPPORT POLES. IT WAS ONE LONG, SINGLE CURTAIN, NOT A DIVIDED CURTAIN THAT COULD BE OPENED EASILY. TO GET PAST IT, ONE WOULD HAVE TO MOVE AT LEAST ONE OF THE POLES AT EITHER SIDE AND GO AROUND IT BECAUSE IT WAS NOT DESIGNED TO BE GOTTEN PAST UNDER NORMAL CONDITIONS; RATHER, IT PROVIDED A BARRIER PAST WHICH PEOPLE COULD NOT NORMALLY GO. BEHIND IT IN THE MOST HOLY PLACE IS SET THE ARK; IN FRONT OF IT IN THE HOLY PLACE STOOD THE TABLE AND LAMPSTAND. AS ONE FACED TOWARD THE BACK (WEST END) OF THE TABERNACLE, THE TABLE STOOD TO THE RIGHT (OR NORTH SIDE) AND THE LAMPSTAND TO THE LEFT (OR SOUTH SIDE). THERE IS NOTHING SYMBOLIC ABOUT THESE PLACEMENTS OTHER THAN THAT THEY SUGGEST THE ACCOUTREMENTS OF A TENT-HOUSE WITH A BACK ROOM. THE VEILING CURTAIN DIVIDED THE TABERNACLE INTO TWO UNEQUAL SPACES, WITH THE MOST HOLY PLACE BEING NOMINALLY CUBIC (TEN BY TEN BY TEN CUBITS, I.E., FIFTEEN BY FIFTEEN BY FIFTEEN FEET) AND THE LARGER HOLY PLACE BEING NOMINALLY A CUBIC RECTANGLE, WITH DOUBLE THE FLOOR SPACE, TWENTY BY TEN BY TEN CUBITS (THIRTY FEET BY FIFTEEN FEET BY FIFTEEN FEET). BECAUSE THE SIDES MAY HAVE SLANTED IN RATHER THAN STANDING STRICTLY VERTICAL, THE ACTUAL CEILING HEIGHT MAY NOT HAVE BEEN A FULL TEN CUBITS BUT MORE LIKE, PERHAPS, EIGHT CUBITS (TWELVE FEET). THE DIMENSIONS OF THE VEILING CURTAIN ARE NOT GIVEN. IT MUST HAVE BEEN AT LEAST TWELVE FEET HIGH AND FIFTEEN FEET WIDE TO ISOLATE THE MOST HOLY PLACE FROM THE REST OF THE TABERNACLE SINCE IF IT DID NOT REACH FROM FLOOR TO CEILING, SOMEONE AT A DISTANCE ON HIGHER GROUND MIGHT BE ABLE TO SEE THE ARK OVER ITS TOP EDGE. THE ELABORATE PRECAUTIONS TAKEN TO BE SURE THAT THE ARK WAS NEVER SEEN EXCEPT BY THE TOP HIGH PRIEST [TOP HIGH CHIEF OF POLICE] ANNUALLY, ONCE EVERY YEAR, WOULD SUGGEST THAT SUCH A POSSIBILITY WOULD BE FORECLOSED BY THE SIMPLE EXPEDIENCY OF MAKING THE CURTAIN STRETCH FROM WALL TO WALL AND FLOOR TO CEILING.**

**EXCURSUS: THE INVISIBLE BLESSED GOD OF THE OLD COVENANT**

**THE INVINCIBLE ARK OF THE COVENANT MUST HAVE BEEN A STUNNINGLY BEAUTIFUL OBJECT. ALL ITS SURFACES PRESENTED PURE GOLD TO THE VIEWER, AND THE ORNATE SOLID GOLD CHERUBIM STATUETTES WITH OUTSTRETCHED WINGS THAT ADORNED THE ATONEMENT COVER WERE SURELY LOVELY COMPLEMENTS TO THE CAREFUL CRAFTSMANSHIP THAT WENT INTO EVERY ASPECT OF THE ARK ITSELF, EXTENDING EVEN TO ITS RELATIVELY UTILITARIAN LEGS, RINGS, AND CARRYING POLES. WOULD IT NOT HAVE MADE SENSE THAT GOD WOULD THEREFORE WANT HIS PEOPLE TO SEE HIS ARK AT ANY AND ALL TIMES AND IN SEEING IT TO BE REMINDED OF HIS GREATNESS, GLORY, SUPERIORITY, AND SEXLESS PRESENCE AMONG THEM? INDEED, WOULD IT NOT ALSO HAVE MADE SENSE REGULARLY TO TAKE OUT THE CONTENTS OF THE ARK—THE 2 STONE TABLETS OF THE TESTIMONY (THE TEN COMMANDMENTS, BUT PRECISELY THE 16 COMMANDMENTS, THE SAMPLE OF MANNA, AND THE ROD, AARON AND MOSES HAD USED BOTH IN EGYPT AND THE WILDERNESS—AND SHOW THEM TO THE PEOPLE AS REMINDERS OF GOD’S COVENANT FAITHFULNESS AND AS ENCOURAGEMENTS TO CONTINUE TO TRUST BOTH HIS COMMANDS AND HIS PROVISIONS? IN FACT, GOD KEPT THE ARK AND EVERYTHING IN IT HIDDEN FROM VIEW ALL THE TIME. ALL ISRAELITES, INCLUDING ALL LEVITES [PRIVATES TO CORPORALS] & PRIESTS [SERGEANTS], EXCEPT THE 4 PRIESTS [SERGEANTS] THAT CARRIED THE ARK BY ARK POLES & THE TOP HIGH PRIEST [TOP HIGH CHIEF OF POLICE], NEVER, EVER SAW THE ARK. WHENEVER THE PEOPLE WERE ENCAMPED AND THE TABERNACLE ERECTED, THE ARK WAS HIDDEN FROM VIEW (EVEN FROM THE VIEW OF THE PRIESTS [SERGEANTS], WITH THE SOLE EXCEPTION OF THE TOP HIGH PRIEST [TOP HIGH CHIEF OF POLICE] ONCE A YEAR) BY THE DIVIDING CURTAIN/VEIL IN THE TABERNACLE, BEHIND WHICH THE ARK RESIDED, TOTALLY BLOCKED FROM THE SIGHT OF ANYONE IN THE HOLY PLACE. BEFORE THE ARK WAS TRANSPORTED, WHILE THE CURTAINS OF THE TABERNACLE STILL SURROUNDED IT AND KEPT IT FROM PUBLIC VIEW, THE TOP HIGH PRIEST [TOP HIGH CHIEF OF POLICE], ASSISTED BY A SMALL NUMBER OF 4 OTHER PRIESTS, WRAPPED THE ARK IN THREE LAYERS OF PROTECTIVE FABRIC (SEE NUM 4:5–6).384 THE INNERMOST OF THESE LAYERS WAS THE SPECIAL DIVIDING CURTAIN/VEIL OF THE TABERNACLE; THE SECOND WAS MADE UP OF SPECIALLY PREPARED SEA COW HIDES, AND THEN A THIRD, OUTER LAYER WAS MADE OF BLUE CLOTH. ONCE ALL THIS RATHER ELABORATE WRAPPING WAS COMPLETED, INCLUDING IN ALL PROBABILITY THE ARK’S LEGS, THE ENTIRE ARK WAS COMPLETELY INVISIBLE TO PUBLIC VIEW OTHER THAN IT’S CARRYING RINGS AND CARRYING POLES. ACCORDINGLY, NO NON-PRIESTLY CIVILIAN ISRAELITES AND ONLY A 4 PRIESTS [SERGEANTS] AT THE VERY MOST WOULD EVER BE ABLE TO SEE THE ARK ITSELF, AND THEN ONLY IF THEY HAPPENED TO BE ASSIGNED TO HELP THE TOP HIGH PRIEST [TOP HIGH CHIEF OF POLICE] WRAP IT FOR TRANSPORT. IT WOULD ALWAYS REMAIN HIDDEN FROM ALL OTHER PRIESTS [SERGEANTS] EITHER BY THE DIVIDING CURTAIN (VEIL) OF THE TABERNACLE OR BY ITS ELABORATE PROTECTIVE WRAPPING WHEN TRANSPORTED. WHAT THE AVERAGE ISRAELITE COULD SEE—AT MOST, AT A DISTANCE, AND ONLY WHEN THE ARK WAS BEING TRANSPORTED—WERE RINGS AND POLES. MOREOVER, THE CONTENTS OF THE ARK WERE NEVER PUT ON PUBLIC DISPLAY. INDEED, IT IS NOT CLEAR THEY WERE EVER SEEN BY ANYONE AFTER THEY WERE PLACED IN THE ARK. THERE IS NO TEXTUAL INFORMATION TO THE EFFECT THAT THE INSIDE OF THE ARK WAS EVER OPENED FOR CLEANING OR ANYTHING ELSE. WHEN THE ARK WAS SET IN ITS PLACE BEHIND THE CURTAIN/VEIL OF THE ERECTED TABERNACLE, ONLY THE TOP HIGH PRIEST [TOP HIGH CHIEF OF POLICE] HAD ETERNAL ACCESS TO IT, UNLESS DISQUALIFIED & KILLED IN THE PROCESS IN HOSEA 4:6, AND THAT ONLY ONCE A YEAR FOR THE SOLE PURPOSE OF APPLYING BLOOD TO THE ATONEMENT COVER OF THE ARK AS A PROPITIATION FOR THE SINS OF THE PEOPLE (HEB 9:7), NOT FOR DOING ANYTHING TO OR WITH THE CONTENTS THEMSELVES. IT IS EVEN POSSIBLE THAT THE LID OF THE ARK COULD BE SEALED IN SOME WAY TO THE SIDES SO THAT IT COULD NOT BE OPENED EITHER CASUALLY OR ACCIDENTALLY. WHY WOULD GOD HAVE HIS PEOPLE GO TO SUCH LENGTHS TO MANUFACTURE THE MOST HOLY SYMBOL OF HIS PRESENCE AMONG THEM AND PLACE WITHIN IT THE CRUCIAL INDICATORS OF HIS COVENANT PROVISION AND THEN NOT ALLOW ANY OF IT TO BE SEEN BY ALMOST ANYONE EVER AGAIN, EXCEPT THE 5 PRIESTS? A PARTIAL ANSWER WOULD BE THAT HE DID NOT WANT THEM TO TREAT ANY OF THESE OBJECTS AS AN IDOL. THIS ANSWER WOULD BE TRUE BUT WOULD GO ONLY SOME OF THE WAY TOWARD REVEALING HIS REAL PURPOSE. THE FULLER ANSWER, WE SUGGEST, COMES IN MANY PLACES IN SCRIPTURE BUT ESPECIALLY SUCCINCTLY IN HEB 11:6: “WITHOUT FAITH IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO PLEASE GOD, BECAUSE ANYONE WHO COMES TO HIM MUST BELIEVE THAT HE EXISTS AND THAT HE REWARDS THOSE WHO EARNESTLY SEEK HIM.” THE TOP ENGLISH LORD ONLY NEEDS HIS OWN FAITH TO PLEASE HIMSELF, BUT ALL INFERIOR ETERNAL CREATURES ALSO NEEDS HIS FAITH TO PLEASE HIM AS THE LORD. FOR WITHOUT THE TOP ENGLISH LORD’S FAITH, THE RIGHT KIND OF FAITH, PRECISELY HIS FAITH & NOT THE FAITH IN ANYONE ELSE OR ANYTHING ELSE, INCLUDING JESUS CHRIST, YOUR PRAYERS OR QUESTIONS SHALL NOT BE ANSWERED, YOUR WANTS & NEEDS SHALL NOT BE DONE BY THE TOP ENGLISH LORD. IN THE OLD COVENANT JUST AS IN THE NEW, GOD SAVED PEOPLE FROM THEIR SINS ON THE BASIS OF THEIR FAITH, NOT THEIR SIGHT OR CERTAINTY. HE HAS ALWAYS ASKED FOR PEOPLE TO TRUST IN HIM, EVEN TO THE EXTENT OF BELIEVING THAT HE EXISTS AND THAT IF HE DOES EXIST, HE IS THE ONLY GOD WELL WORTH SEEKING AND KNOWING, AS HEB 11:6 SAYS. HE HAS ALWAYS LIMITED HIS EXPOSURE TO PEOPLE SO THAT NO ONE CAN SAY, “I HAD NO CHOICE BUT TO BELIEVE IN GOD—HE WAS THERE, RIGHT IN FRONT OF ME ALL THE TIME, SO HOW COULD I NOT?” ISRAELITES IN THE OLD COVENANT KNEW THERE IS THE ARK TO SYMBOLIZE THE SEXLESS PRESENCE OF GOD AMONG THEM, BUT THEY KNEW IT ONLY BY FAITH, NOT BY SIGHT. NONE COULD TOUCH IT, ONLY 5 HAD EVER SEEN IT, AND EVEN WHEN IT WAS OUT IN THE OPEN IN TRANSPORT, ALL ANYONE COULD SEE IS A BLUE-WRAPPED OBJECT CARRIED BY GOLDEN POLES. THEY BELIEVED THAT IT CONTAINED THE TEN COMMANDMENT TABLETS, THE MANNA, AND AARON’S ROD, BUT NO ONE EVER SAW THEM AFTER AARON’S DEATH & MOSES’ DISAPPEARANCE & CONCEALED CAUSE OF UNKNOWN DEATH ON THE MOUNTAIN, WHERE I BELIEVE MOSES’ DEATH DID NOT HAPPEN ON THE MOUNTAIN BASED ON MATTHEW 17:1-13 BECAUSE MUCH LATER IN TIME, MOSES AS 1 OF THE 6 WITNESSES---PRE-TRIBULATION IS 2 WITNESSES, MID-TRIBULATION IS 2 WITNESSES & POST-TRIBULATION IS 2 WITNESSES IS KILLED BY THE DRAGON IN REVELATION 11. THEY KNEW GOD’S SYMBOLS OF COVENANT PROVISION BY FAITH, NOT BY SIGHT. THE NEW COVENANT BELIEVER KNOWS BY FAITH THAT JESUS LIVED AMONG US, DIED ON THE CROSS FOR THE REMISSION OF MAN’S SINS, AND IS RESURRECTED TO GLORY THEREAFTER. BUT NO MODERN PERSON SAW ANY OF IT, AND NO PICTURES EXIST. ALL WE HAVE IS THE WRITTEN REPORT. IT WAS THE SAME FOR THE OLD COVENANT SAINTS. THEY HAD THE ORAL AND THEN WRITTEN REPORT ABOUT THE ARK AND ITS CONTENTS, BUT THEY COULD NOT SEE EITHER THE ARK OR THE CONTENTS. BY FAITH THEY BELIEVED THAT THERE IS AN ARK BEHIND THAT CURTAIN IN THE TABERNACLE, AND BY FAITH THEY BELIEVED THAT THE TEN COMMANDMENTS AND OTHER OBJECTS WERE INSIDE THAT ARK. THIS PLEASED GOD, WHO HAS ALWAYS DELIGHTED IN BEING TRUSTED AND WHO HAS IN FACT ALWAYS REQUIRED THAT HE BE TRUSTED FOR HIS HELP & YOUR ONGOING FAITHFULNESS TO HIM, SUCH AS THE COMMANDED, DEMANDED & REQUIRED 10% LIFETIME MONEY TITHE TO ALL INDIVIDUAL ETERNAL INFERIOR CREATURES FROM INFERIOR HEBREW TO INFERIOR ENGLISH, WHITES OR BLACKS ALIKE, MALES OR FEMALES ALIKE IN PROVERBS 8:22 TO ACTS 30 IN THE INFERIOR SENSE, WHO WORK FOR MONEY OR WORK FOR THE VALUE OF MONEY FROM 1 MITE, WHICH IS 1/8TH OF A CENT ON UP TO A LIFETIME OF WORK IN MALACHI 3:8-12 & 1ST PETER 1:17-21, FOR THE TOP ENGLISH LORD TO SUPREMELY AUTHORIZE ALL HIS PHYSICAL BENEFITS, ALL HIS MENTAL BENEFITS, ALL HIS PSYCHOLOGICAL BENEFITS, ALL HIS SPIRITUAL BENEFITS & ALL HIS ETERNAL BENEFITS ON YOUR BEHALF TO BE KNOWN & ACTED UPON IN EPHESIANS 4:6. BUT EVEN IF YOU ARE FULL OF FAITH, YOU, STILL CANNOT SEE THE ARK OR ITS CONTENTS INSIDE, SUCH AS THE GREEK LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH HIMSELF IN ACTS 6:5. UNLESS THE TOP ENGLISH LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH HIMSELF HAS SUPREMELY AUTHORIZED THIS SUPREME INFERIOR LORD AS THE TOP HIGH PRIEST [TOP HIGH CHIEF OF POLICE] & HAS GIVEN THIS SUPREME INFERIOR LORD THE ETERNAL ACCESS IN DOING SO IN ACTS 7:44-45 [THE TOP ENGLISH LORD’S TRUE TABERNACLE WHERE THE INVINCIBLE ARK IS PLACED & RESTS], 46-50 [THE TOP ENGLISH LORD’S TRUE HOUSE WHERE THE INVINCIBLE ARK IS PLACED & RESTS], 55-56 [THE TOP ENGLISH LORD’S TRUE THRONE IN HEAVEN’S ETERNITY WHERE THE INVINCIBLE ARK IS PLACED & RESTS]. THIS QUESTION CANNOT BE ANSWERED BY ANYONE, EXCEPT BY THE TOP ENGLISH LORD! IF YOU APPROACH, SEE OR TOUCH THE TOP ENGLISH LORD IN A CONTRARY & UNBECOMING WAY, OR IN A UNAUTHORIZED, ILLEGAL OR UNLAWFUL WAY, THE TOP ENGLISH LORD SHALL ETERNALLY ARREST YOU IMMEDIATELY & ETERNALLLY STRIKE YOU WITH ETERNAL BLINDNESS IMMEDIATELY WITH ONLY 1 WARNING IN ACTS 13:4-12 OR IF YOU PERSIST IN YOUR ETERNAL BULLSHIT, THE TOP ENGLISH LORD SHALL ETERNALLY KILL YOU IMMEDIATELY & ETERNALLY DAMN YOU IMMEDIATELY WITHOUT ANY WARNING IN ACTS 5:1-11!!!!**

**DESIGN OF THE ENTRANCE CURTAIN AND ITS SUPPORT POSTS (26:36–37)**

**26:36–37 YET ANOTHER ORNATE CURTAIN, NOT PART OF THE TEN THAT CONSTITUTED THE INTERIOR SIDES AND CEILING AND DISTINCT FROM THE DIVIDING VEIL IN FRONT OF THE HOLY OF HOLIES/MOST HOLY PLACE, HUNG AT THE FRONT OF THE TABERNACLE AND FUNCTIONED AS AN ENTRANCE CURTAIN. IT WAS DESIGNED AND MADE OF THE SAME FABRICS AND COLORS BUT WITHOUT ANY CHERUBIM MOTIFS WOVEN INTO IT. THUS, THE CHERUBIM MOTIFS WOULD BE VISIBLE WHEN THIS CURTAIN WAS CLOSED ONLY TO THOSE WHO ACTUALLY WENT INSIDE THE TABERNACLE. FIVE UNIQUE VERTICAL COLUMNS (DIFFERENT FROM THE OTHER VERTICAL FRAMING PIECES) HELPED SUPPORT THIS CURTAIN, THOUGH IT MAY ALSO HAVE BEEN HUNG FROM THE TOP OF THE FRONTMOST CROSSBAR WITH GOLD HOOKS, THE SAME METHOD OF HANGING OR JOINING AS WAS USED FOR THE INTERIOR CURTAINS. WE ARE NOT TOLD HOW THE FIVE COLUMNS OF ACACIA WOOD OVERLAID WITH GOLD THAT HELPED HOLD THIS CURTAIN WERE SPACED. IF TWO WERE AT THE VERY EDGES AND THREE SPACED EQUALLY ALONG THE FRONT, THE DISTANCE FROM COLUMN TO COLUMN AT THE FIFTEEN-FOOT-WIDE FRONT OF THE TABERNACLE WOULD HAVE BEEN ABOUT THREE FEET, NINE INCHES. HOW THIS CURTAIN WAS TO BE PULLED OR DRAPED BACK (OR UP) IS LIKEWISE NOT SPECIFIED. IT IS NO ACCIDENT THAT THE BASES FOR THE FIVE COLUMNS AT THE FRONT OF THE SANCTUARY WERE BRONZE RATHER THAN SILVER AS ALL OTHER BASES IN THE TABERNACLE (NOT THE COURTYARD) WERE. THIS ENTRANCEWAY WAS THE FARTHEST POINT IN THE TABERNACLE FROM THE MOST HOLY PLACE AND ITS ARK. THE USE OF THE CHEAPER METAL CONFORMED TO THE PRINCIPLE THAT THE CLOSER ONE IS TO STEPHEN YAHWEH’S PRESENCE, AS SYMBOLIZED BY THE ARK, THE CLOSER ONE IS TO THE TOP HOLINESS AND TOP GLORY THAT HAS TO BE EARNED & RESPECTED; THE FARTHER AWAY ONE IS, THE LESS DIRECT IS, THE IMPACT OF THE LOW HOLINESS AND LOW GLORY. THUS, OBJECTS IN THE COURTYARD OF THE TABERNACLE NEED NOT BE COMPOSED EITHER OF GOLD OR OF SILVER. THE ENTRANCEWAY, AT THE VERY BORDER OF THE TABERNACLE AND THE COURTYARD, HELPED MAKE THE TRANSITION FROM TABERNACLE TO COURTYARD BY THE SIMPLE SYMBOLISM OF ITS METALLIC SUPPORTS.**

**LAWS ON CONSTRUCTION AND USE OF THE MAIN TRUE TOP HOLY ALTAR (27:1–8)**

**1 “BUILD AN ALTAR OF ACACIA WOOD, THREE CUBITS HIGH; IT IS TO BE SQUARE, FIVE CUBITS LONG AND FIVE CUBITS WIDE. 2 MAKE A HORN AT EACH OF THE FOUR CORNERS, SO THAT THE [4] HORNS AND THE ALTAR ARE OF ONE PIECE, AND OVERLAY THE ALTAR WITH BRONZE. 3 MAKE ALL ITS UTENSILS OF BRONZE—ITS POTS TO REMOVE THE ASHES [SMOKING ASHES & SMOKE BUTTS], AND ITS SHOVELS, SPRINKLING BOWLS, MEAT FORKS AND FIREPANS. 4 MAKE A GRATING FOR IT, A BRONZE NETWORK, AND MAKE A BRONZE RING AT EACH OF THE FOUR CORNERS OF THE NETWORK. 5 PUT IT UNDER THE LEDGE OF THE ALTAR SO THAT IT IS HALFWAY UP THE ALTAR. 6 MAKE POLES OF ACACIA WOOD FOR THE ALTAR AND OVERLAY THEM WITH BRONZE. 7 THE POLES ARE TO BE INSERTED INTO THE RINGS SO THEY WILL BE ON TWO SIDES OF THE ALTAR WHEN IT IS CARRIED. 8 MAKE THE ALTAR HOLLOW, OUT OF BOARDS. IT IS TO BE MADE JUST AS YOU WERE SHOWN ON THE MOUNTAIN. IN VARIOUS WAYS DURING OLD COVENANT TIMES, GOD TAUGHT HIS WORTHY PEOPLE THE BASIC PRINCIPLE OF SALVATION FROM SIN: SOMETHING THAT GOD CONSIDERS A SUBSTITUTE MUST DIE IN MY PLACE SO THAT I MAY LIVE. ALTAR SACRIFICE WAS THE PRIMARY WAY FOR THIS SUBSTITUTION TO HAPPEN. IN PREPARATION FOR CHRIST’S DEATH ON THE CROSS, WHICH WAS THE ULTIMATE SACRIFICE FOR MAN ONLY, TO WHICH ALL OTHERS POINTED, ANIMAL SACRIFICE WAS REQUIRED OF ALL ISRAELITES. SINCE IT IS DANGEROUS TO EAT RAW ANIMAL MEAT, GOD REQUIRED THAT IT BE THOROUGHLY COOKED, AND TO ACCOMPLISH THIS A LARGE OUTDOOR GRILL WAS REQUIRED. BY KILLING AN ANIMAL, THEN COOKING IT ON THAT GRILL IN GOD’S PRESENCE (I.E., IN FRONT OF THE ENTRANCE TO THE TABERNACLE), AND THEN EATING IT IN GOD’S PRESENCE (SYMBOLICALLY SHARING THE MEAL WITH HIM), THE ISRAELITE WORSHIPER LEARNED OVER AND OVER AGAIN THE CONCEPT OF SUBSTITUTIONARY ATONEMENT AND OF COVENANT RENEWAL. THE SACRIFICIAL MEAL ALWAYS INCLUDED A PORTION OF A FORMERLY LIVING THING (SACRIFICIAL ANIMAL) THAT HAD BEEN PUT TO DEATH IN THE PLACE OF THE WORSHIPER. IT WAS PREPARED AND COOKED AT GOD’S HOUSE (THE COURTYARD OF THE TABERNACLE, ON THE ALTAR DESCRIBED IN THIS PASSAGE) IN GOD’S PRESENCE, AND IT RENEWED THE WORSHIPER’S COMMITMENT TO HIS OR HER COVENANT WITH STEPHEN YAHWEH EACH TIME & EVERY TIME IT WAS EATEN, TO SHOW ONGOING TOP RESPECT FOR & TO THE LORD. GOD ALSO TAUGHT HIS PEOPLE IN MANY WAYS DURING OLD COVENANT TIMES THAT HE LOVED CORPORATE WORSHIP. INDIVIDUALS WERE NOT TO WORSHIP HIM SEPARATELY AT THEIR OWN HOMES OR IN MERE FAMILY GROUPS AT CONVENIENT LOCATIONS AS THE PAGANS DID, UNLESS OTHERWISE AUTHORIZED. INSTEAD THEY WERE TO COME TOGETHER AS AN ENTIRE PEOPLE, BRING THEIR SACRIFICES TO ONE PLACE, COOK THEM ALL ON A SINGLE ALTAR, AND EAT THEM ALL AT A SINGLE LOCATION, HIS TABERNACLE. ACCORDINGLY, THE ALTAR HAD TO BE FAIRLY LARGE TO ACCOMMODATE THE CONSTANT FLOW OF SACRIFICIAL MEAT PLACED UPON IT FOR GRILLING. 27:1–8 ITS TOP SURFACE WAS THUS FOUR AND A HALF FEET HIGH (“THREE CUBITS HIGH”) OFF THE GROUND AND WAS A SQUARE SEVEN AND A HALF FEET ON EACH SIDE (“FIVE CUBITS LONG AND FIVE CUBITS WIDE”), PROVIDING A TOTAL OF FIFTY-SIX AND ONE-QUARTER SQUARE FEET OF GRILLING AREA (MINUS WHATEVER WAS TAKEN UP BY THE CORNER “HORNS” AND ANY RIM THAT MAY HAVE SURROUNDED THE TOP, IF EITHER OF THESE IMPOSED UPON THE TOTAL SURFACE OF THE TOP). LIKE OTHER TABERNACLE FURNITURE, THE ALTAR WAS COMPOSED OF ACACIA WOOD (V. 1) AND OVERLAID WITH METAL, IN THIS CASE BRONZE RATHER THAN GOLD, BRONZE BEING THE “OUTDOOR” OR COURTYARD METAL OF CHOICE FOR THINGS OF METAL AT THE TABERNACLE AND GOLD BEING THE “INDOOR” OR INTERNAL TABERNACLE METAL. THE ALTAR HAD HORNS AT THE CORNERS (V. 2), WHICH WERE CURVING PROTRUSIONS UPWARD FROM THE FLAT PLANE OF THE MAIN SURFACE OF THE ALTAR THAT HELPED HOLD ANYTHING ON THE ALTAR FROM FALLING OVER THE EDGE. THE IMPLEMENTS USED TO SERVICE THE PURPOSE OF THE ALTAR WERE ALSO MADE OF BRONZE (V. 3). THESE INCLUDED ASH POTS (TO RECEIVE AND STORE SMOKE ASHES FROM THE SURFACE TEMPORARILY BEFORE DUMPING), FIRE POTS (POTS HOLDING LIVE FIRE COALS FOR GETTING NEW FIRES SMOKES GOING EACH MORNING), SHOVELS TO REMOVE THE SMOKE ASHES AND RECONFIGURE THE LIVE COALS THAT COOKED THE MEAT, SPRINKLING BOWLS (BOWLS THAT HELD LIQUIDS USED FOR ANY PURPOSE, FROM SPRINKLING WATER ON THE FLAMES TO MODERATE THEM TO SPRINKLING COOKING OLIVE OIL ON THE FOOD OR ON THE SURFACE OF THE ALTAR), AND MEAT FORKS FOR HANDLING THE MEAT BEING SALTED AS IT WAS PUT ON, TAKEN OFF, OR MOVED AROUND THE SURFACE OF THE ALTAR. THESE PIECES OF EQUIPMENT HAD SYMBOLIC VALUE FOR THE MEDICAL USE OF SMOKING GREEN HERBS, AS THE LORD HOLY SMOKES IN HIS NOSTRILS & OUT OF HIS MOUTH AGAINST ALL THE SANCTIMONIOUS HYPOCRITICAL ASSHOLES IN ISAIAH 65:5, & SERVED THE NEEDS OF THE COOKS (KP---KITCHEN POLICE PRIESTS---SERGEANTS) IN THE VARIOUS PARTS OF THE COOKING PROCESS. VERSES 4–5 APPEAR TO DESCRIBE VERY GENERALLY TWO FEATURES OF THE ALTAR: ITS BRONZE GRILLING SURFACE (“GRATING”) AND A BRONZE NET/STRAINER/GRILLWORK (“NETWORK,” BUT THE HB. CAN MEAN ANY OF THESE) THAT HUNG BELOW THE SURFACE, HALFWAY FROM THE SURFACE TO THE GROUND. IT CANNOT BE PROVED FROM THE SHORT DESCRIPTIVE WORDING EMPLOYED, BUT THE NET/STRAINER/GRILLWORK MAY WELL HAVE HELD THE BURNING WOOD (AND AFTER BURNING FOR A TIME, MAINLY COALS) THAT SENT THE HEAT UP THROUGH THE SURFACE GRATING TO COOK THE MEAT ON THE GRILL SURFACE. VERSES 6–7 SPECIFY A TRANSPORTATION METHOD MUCH LIKE THAT USED IN THE CASE OF THE ARK, THAT IS, ACACIA WOOD POLES OVERLAID WITH METAL, IN THIS CASE BRONZE, THAT WERE INSERTED THROUGH RINGS FIXED ON TWO SIDES OF THE ALTAR SO THAT IT COULD BE CARRIED BY A GROUP OF PRIESTS [SERGEANTS]/LEVITES [PRIVATES TO CORPORALS], PROBABLY AT LEAST 8 OF THEM (TWO AT THE FRONT AND TWO AT THE BACK OF EACH POLE). OBVIOUSLY THESE POLES MAY HAVE BEEN LONGER THAN THOSE USED FOR THE MUCH SMALLER ARK AND WERE NOT TO BE FIXED IN THE RINGS AT ALL TIMES BUT RATHER WERE TAKEN OUT WHENEVER THE ALTAR WAS USED FOR COOKING BECAUSE OF THE NEED FOR ACCESS AT ALL SIDES OF THE ALTAR TO TEND TO THE SALTED MEAT, THE FIRE COALS, THE SMOKE ASHES. VERSE 8 INDICATES THAT THE ALTAR WAS TO BE LIGHTWEIGHT, NOT A SOLID BOX BUT A FRAMEWORK OF WOOD WITH BRONZE OVERLAY AND BRONZE TOP GRATING AND WOOD NET/STRAINER/GRILLWORK. BY REPEATING THE ESSENCE OF THE WORDING ALREADY USED IN 25:9, 40; 26:30 (“IT IS TO BE MADE JUST AS YOU WERE SHOWN ON THE MOUNTAIN”), THE LAST HALF OF THE VERSE AGAIN REMINDS THE READER THAT THERE WERE MANY MORE DETAILS TO THE ALTAR THAN ARE PROVIDED THROUGH THE VERBAL DESCRIPTION. ONCE MORE, MOSES HEARD GOD TELL HIM TO CONFORM THE TABERNACLE AND ITS FURNITURE TO A DIVINE “BLUEPRINT” THAT GOD ALLOWED HIM TO SEE, AND NOT MERELY TO WHAT CRAFTSMEN WOULD CONSTRUCT FROM A GENERAL VERBAL DESCRIPTION, FILLING IN FROM THEIR IMAGINATION WHAT THE WORDS DID NOT COVER. THE TABERNACLE AND ALL THINGS WITHIN IT AND IMMEDIATELY SURROUNDING IT CONSTITUTED A REPLICA, A MIRRORING MICROCOSM OF THE HEAVENLY SANCTUARY OF GOD, SYMBOLICALLY PORTRAYING THE FACT THAT HE HAD GRACIOUSLY CHOSEN TO PROJECT HIS HEAVENLY PRESENCE TO EARTH, NEAR OR IN PALESTINE AMONG HIS COVENANT PEOPLE, REMINDING THEM IN A VISIBLE WAY THAT HE WAS WITH THEM, LEADING THEM, CARING FOR THEM, AND RECEIVING THEIR REGULAR WORSHIP GLADLY.**

**LAWS ON CONSTRUCTION AND USE OF THE TRUE COURTYARD (27:9–19)**

**9 “MAKE A COURTYARD FOR THE TABERNACLE. THE SOUTH SIDE SHALL BE A HUNDRED CUBITS LONG AND IS TO HAVE CURTAINS OF FINELY TWISTED LINEN, 10 WITH TWENTY POSTS AND TWENTY BRONZE BASES AND WITH SILVER HOOKS AND BANDS ON THE POSTS. 11 THE NORTH SIDE SHALL ALSO BE A HUNDRED CUBITS LONG AND IS TO HAVE CURTAINS, WITH TWENTY POSTS AND TWENTY BRONZE BASES AND WITH SILVER HOOKS AND BANDS ON THE POSTS. 12 “THE WEST END OF THE COURTYARD SHALL BE FIFTY CUBITS WIDE AND HAVE CURTAINS, WITH TEN POSTS AND TEN BASES. 13 ON THE EAST END, TOWARD THE SUNRISE, THE COURTYARD SHALL ALSO BE FIFTY CUBITS WIDE. 14 CURTAINS FIFTEEN CUBITS LONG ARE TO BE ON ONE SIDE OF THE ENTRANCE, WITH THREE POSTS AND THREE BASES, 15 AND CURTAINS FIFTEEN CUBITS LONG ARE TO BE ON THE OTHER SIDE, WITH THREE POSTS AND THREE BASES. 16 “FOR THE ENTRANCE TO THE COURTYARD, PROVIDE A CURTAIN TWENTY CUBITS LONG, OF BLUE, PURPLE AND SCARLET YARN AND FINELY TWISTED LINEN—THE WORK OF AN EMBROIDERER—WITH FOUR POSTS AND FOUR BASES. 17 ALL THE POSTS AROUND THE COURTYARD ARE TO HAVE SILVER BANDS AND HOOKS, AND BRONZE BASES. 18 THE COURTYARD SHALL BE A HUNDRED CUBITS LONG AND FIFTY CUBITS WIDE, WITH CURTAINS OF FINELY TWISTED LINEN FIVE CUBITS HIGH, AND WITH BRONZE BASES. 19 ALL THE OTHER ARTICLES USED IN THE TRUE SERVICE OF THE TABERNACLE, WHATEVER THEIR FUNCTION, INCLUDING ALL THE TENT PEGS FOR IT AND THOSE FOR THE COURTYARD, ARE TO BE OF BRONZE.**

**IN ANCIENT ISRAEL, ONE WORSHIPED AT STEPHEN YAHWEH’S HOUSE, BUT NOT IN STEPHEN YAHWEH’S HOUSE. PEOPLE WHO LIVE IN TENTS DO NOT COOK INSIDE BUT OUTSIDE, AND THEY TYPICALLY EAT THEIR MEALS OUTSIDE AS WELL. SINCE THE TABERNACLE WAS A TENT, A PORTABLE HOME FOR STEPHEN YAHWEH, IT IS ONLY LOGICAL THAT HE WOULD EXPECT HIS INVITED GUESTS (ISRAELITE WORSHIPERS) TO JOIN HIM AT BUT NOT IN HIS TENT-HOME. HIS PERSONAL SERVANTS (THE PRIESTS---SERGEANTS) MIGHT ENTER HIS HOME AND COME AND GO FROM IT FOR CERTAIN PURPOSES, BUT ALL OTHERS MET WITH HIM OUTDOORS. TO MAKE A SPECIAL AREA FOR WORSHIP, GOD INSISTED THAT HIS TABERNACLE HAVE A COURTYARD WITHIN WHICH TRUE WORSHIP WOULD TAKE PLACE IN JOHN 4:23-24. THE AREA OUTSIDE THE COURTYARD WOULD SIMPLY CONSTITUTE NORMAL SPACE LIKE ANY OTHER IN THE ISRAELITE ENCAMPMENT, BUT INSIDE WOULD CONSTITUTE HOLY GROUND, EXCEPT IN REVELATION 22:1-5 & ACTS 7:30-38. THE COURTYARD WOULD NEED TO BE LARGE ENOUGH TO ACCOMMODATE HUNDREDS OF WORSHIPERS AT A TIME AS WELL AS THE PRIESTS [SERGEANTS] WHO SERVED STEPHEN YAHWEH ON THEIR BEHALF AND THE ANIMALS THAT WERE BEING PREPARED OR COOKED AND, OF COURSE, THE TABERNACLE ITSELF. SINCE WORSHIPERS ATE THEIR PORTION OF SACRIFICIAL MEALS “IN STEPHEN YAHWEH’S PRESENCE,” WHICH MEANS IN THE TABERNACLE (AND LATER TEMPLE) COURTYARD, THERE WAS A CONSTANT STREAM OF PEOPLE DURING TIMES OF SACRIFICE ENTERING THE COURTYARD, WATCHING THEIR SACRIFICE PREPARED, RECEIVING IT FROM THE PRIESTS [SERGEANTS], SITTING AND EATING AS HOUSEHOLDS, AND THEN DEPARTING FOR THEIR OWN HOMES. BUT THE COURTYARD WOULD ALSO NEED TO BE SMALL ENOUGH AND MADE OF LIGHTWEIGHT AND PORTABLE MATERIALS SO THAT IT COULD BE EASILY BROKEN DOWN FOR TRANSPORTATION YET RAPIDLY SET UP FOR USE AS A WORSHIP CENTER ONCE THE ISRAELITES, FOLLOWING STEPHEN YAHWEH’S LEAD THROUGH THE PILLAR OF CLOUD/FIRE, ENCAMPED AT ANY GIVEN LOCATION. THE TABERNACLE MEASURED AT LEAST FIFTEEN FEET (TEN CUBITS) WIDE AND FORTY-FIVE FEET (THIRTY CUBITS) LONG AND MAY IN FACT HAVE TAKEN UP SOMEWHAT MORE GROUND SPACE THAN THAT BECAUSE OF THE DIAGONAL SLANT OF THE SIDES DOWNWARD FROM THE TOP TOWARD THE BASE. AT ANY RATE, ITS FOOTPRINT WITHIN THE COURTYARD WOULD HAVE REQUIRED NO LESS THAN 675 SQUARE FEET, NOT COUNTING WHATEVER ROPES AND TENT PEGS MAY ALSO HAVE BEEN USED TO HELP SECURE THE TABERNACLE, IF ANY. THE COURTYARD WAS, BY COMPARISON, 150 FEET (100 CUBITS) LONG AND 75 FEET (50 CUBITS) WIDE, OR 11,250 SQUARE FEET. THERE IS SOMETHING SACRED OR SYMBOLIC ABOUT THE DIMENSIONS OF THE COURTYARD, THAT IT IS THE LORD’S LOT WHERE IF YOU HOLD BACK THE MONEY TITHE & YOU ARE ON HIS LOT, THE LORD SHALL ARREST & STRIKE YOU WITH BLINDNESS FOR TWISTING & PERVERTING HIS STRAIGHT WAYS WITH ONLY 1 WARNING IN ACTS 13:4-12 OR THE LORD SHALL KILL & DAMN YOU FOR STEALING & LYING ABOUT HIM WITHOUT ANY & NO WARNING IN ACTS 5:1-11, AND ALSO THE FACT THAT ITS SIZE PROVIDED FOR CORPORATE WORSHIP, SIGNIFYING IN THE OLD COVENANT THAT GOD ACCEPTED AND DELIGHTED IN THE GROUP ADORATION OF HIS PEOPLE, TOGETHER AT A SINGLE LOCATION—A MODEL OF HEAVEN, WHERE ALL THE GRAND, HISTORIC ASSEMBLY OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD FROM ALL PLACES AND AGES WILL TOGETHER PRAISE HIS MAGNIFICENT NAME [STEPHEN YAHWEH] FOREVER. 27:9–11 THE DESCRIPTION OF THE COURTYARD STARTS WITH THE TWO LONGEST SIDES, THE SOUTH AND THE NORTH, EACH OF WHICH HAD ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTY FEET (ONE HUNDRED CUBITS) OF CURTAINS MADE OF TWISTED LINEN SUPPORTED BY TWENTY POSTS (ONE EVERY SEVEN AND A HALF FEET, OR EVERY FIVE CUBITS). THESE POSTS PROBABLY WERE MADE OF ACACIA WOOD, THOUGH THE TEXT DOES NOT SPECIFY THEIR CONSTRUCTION. THEY ALSO PROBABLY WERE NOT OVERLAID WITH ANY METAL, THOUGH THEY HAD BRONZE BASES LIKE THE BASES OF THE SPECIAL PILLARS AT THE ENTRANCE TO THE TABERNACLE AND HAD SILVER BANDS AROUND THEM FROM WHICH WERE HUNG THE CURTAINS ALL AROUND BY MEANS OF SILVER HOOKS. GOD’S WORDS AT THIS POINT DO NOT INDICATE WHETHER OR NOT RINGS WERE USED TO FASTEN THE CURTAINS TO THESE HOOKS, WHETHER HANGING LOOPS WERE ATTACHED TO THE CURTAINS, OR WHETHER SOME SORT OF “BUTTONHOLES” SEWED INTO THE CURTAINS’ EDGES (AND AT OTHER POINTS AS WELL IF THE CURTAINS WERE LARGER THAN SEVEN AND A HALF FEET WIDE) WERE USED FOR ATTACHING THE CURTAINS TO THE HOOKS. THERE IS ALSO NO INDICATION OF HOW LONG THE CURTAINS USED AT THE SIDES OF THE TABERNACLE WERE. ONE LIKELY SCENARIO IS THAT THE COURTYARD SIDE CURTAINS WERE SQUARE, SEVEN AND A HALF FEET (FIVE CUBITS) BY SEVEN AND A HALF FEET (FIVE CUBITS). CLEARLY, THE CURTAINS WERE OF THAT HEIGHT (V. 18), AND SINCE THE SPACING OF THE POSTS WOULD AVERAGE THAT WIDTH (SEE ABOVE), A SYSTEM OF SQUARE CURTAINS MIGHT HAVE PROVED SIMPLE AND EFFECTIVE. THESE WOULD HAVE BEEN ATTACHED AT THEIR EDGES TO THE POLES AT SEVERAL POINTS, PROVIDING A SOLID CURTAIN WALL ON THE SOUTH AND NORTH SIDES OF THE COURTYARD. 27:12–15 THE WEST END OF THE COURTYARD, ONLY HALF THE LENGTH OF THE SOUTH AND NORTH SIDES, WAS CURTAINED IN THE SAME MANNER AS THEY WERE. THE DIMENSIONS GIVEN SUGGEST THE POSSIBILITY, ONCE AGAIN, OF SQUARE CURTAINS SEVEN AND A HALF FEET (FIVE CUBITS) ON EACH SIDE, ATTACHED TO POLES SPACED JUST AS WAS THE CASE AT THE LONGER SIDES. THE EAST SIDE, HOWEVER, WHICH WAS THE PLACE OF ENTRANCE AND EXIT, HAD TO BE TREATED DIFFERENTLY. IT WAS SEVENTY-FIVE FEET (FIFTY CUBITS) WIDE. TWO CURTAINS CAME FROM EACH CORNER TOWARD THE CENTER, STRETCHING TWENTY-TWO AND A HALF FEET (FIFTEEN CUBITS) EACH, LEAVING A GAP IN THE CENTER OF THE EAST SIDE OF THIRTY FEET (TWENTY CUBITS). THESE CURTAINS PROBABLY WERE OF THE SAME SORT AS THE OTHERS USED ON THE SOUTH, WEST, AND NORTH SIDES, THOUGH NO SPECIFICATION IS GIVEN. THEIR SUPPORTING POSTS WERE SPACED JUST AS THE OTHERS WERE, ALTHOUGH CLEARLY THESE CURTAINS WERE RECTANGULAR, NOT SQUARE, SINCE THEIR LENGTH OF TWENTY-TWO AND A HALF FEET (FIFTEEN CUBITS) WAS THREE TIMES THEIR HEIGHT (SEVEN AND A HALF FEET, OR FIVE CUBITS). 27:16–18 A SPECIAL ENTRANCE CURTAIN HUNG IN THE CENTER OF THE EAST SIDE. IT WAS THIRTY FEET (TWENTY CUBITS) WIDE AND MADE EXACTLY (AT LEAST AS FAR AS THE DESCRIPTION GIVEN GOES) LIKE THE INNER CURTAINS OF THE TABERNACLE, EXCEPT FOR LACKING ANY CHERUBIM MOTIFS. AGAIN, THE SPACES OF THE SUPPORTING POSTS FOR THIS ENTRANCE CURTAIN WERE THE SAME (SEVEN AND A HALF FEET, OR FIVE CUBITS) ON AVERAGE AS ALL THE OTHERS AROUND THE COURTYARD. INDEED, AS V. 17 INDICATES, ALL THE POSTS AROUND THE COURTYARD WERE THE SAME—AS WERE PROBABLY ALL THE CURTAINS IN TEXTURE AND FABRIC, IF NOT DIMENSION—EXCEPT FOR THE SPECIAL ENTRANCE CURTAIN. THE FACT THAT THIS CURTAIN WAS ONE PIECE MEANT THAT IT WAS USED MORE FOR CLOSING UP THE COURTYARD AT NIGHT THAN AS THE EQUIVALENT OF A DOORWAY FOR GOING THROUGH; DURING THE DAY IT WOULD HAVE BEEN GATHERED TO ONE SIDE TO ALLOW ACCESS THROUGH VIRTUALLY ALL OF THE ENTRANCE OPENING. ONE COULD EASILY SEE THE TOP OF THE TABERNACLE, WHICH WAS NEARLY FIFTEEN FEET HIGH (DEPENDING ON THE DEGREE OF ANGLE OF THE SIDE FRAMES AND CURTAINS) OVER THE TOPS OF THE CURTAINS ALL AROUND SINCE THEY WERE ONLY SEVEN AND A HALF FEET HIGH. THAT IS ALL AN OBSERVER STANDING OUTSIDE THE TABERNACLE COULD SEE, HOWEVER, EXCEPT DURING THE DAYTIME WHEN THE SPECIAL ENTRANCE CURTAIN WAS OPEN—ALLOWING AND INDEED INVITING GOD’S COVENANT PEOPLE INTO HIS SACRED GROUND, SET OFF FROM THE COMMON GROUND OF THE CAMP BY A SIMPLE BUT EFFECTIVE COURTYARD WITHIN WHICH WORSHIP OCCURRED. THUS, FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF HEIGHT, THE TABERNACLE ITSELF WAS DOMINANT RATHER THAN ITS COURTYARD, WHEREAS FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF COMMODIOUSNESS, THE COURTYARD IS OBVIOUSLY THE PLACE WHERE MOST PEOPLE COULD ASSEMBLE. THE TABERNACLE WAS EXCLUSIVE; THE COURTYARD, RELATIVELY MORE INCLUSIVE; AND THE TWO TOGETHER CONSTITUTED WHAT COULD SIMPLY BE CALLED “STEPHEN YAHWEH’S HOUSE.” 27:19 ROPES AND TENT PEGS WERE NEEDED TO STABILIZE THE COURTYARD CURTAIN AND KEEP IT FROM BLOWING OVER IN THE WIND. OTHER INCIDENTAL METAL ARTICLES USED IN THE COURTYARD (BASINS, JUGS, TOOLS FOR REPAIRING THINGS, ACCESSORY IMPLEMENTS FOR THE RESTRAINT OF ANIMALS.) WERE TO BE OF BRONZE BECAUSE THIS WAS THE BRONZE AGE, THAT IS, PRIOR TO THE INTRODUCTION OF NORMAL IRON USE IN ABOUT 1200 BC WHEN BRONZE WAS THE STANDARD, COMMON METAL. THE COURTYARD WAS NOT OF THE SAME DEGREE OF CLOSENESS TO PURE HOLINESS AS WAS THE TABERNACLE PROPER. TENT PEGS PROBABLY WERE ALSO USED IN SECURING THE TABERNACLE PROPER, AND SINCE THESE WOULD STAND IN THE GROUND OUTSIDE THE TABERNACLE, THEY TOO WOULD HAVE BEEN OF BRONZE RATHER THAN GOLD OR SILVER.**

**LAWS ON KEEPING THE IMMORTAL LAMPS LIT (27:20–21)**

**20 “COMMAND THE ISRAELITES TO BRING YOU CLEAR OIL OF PRESSED OLIVES FOR THE LIGHT SO THAT THE LAMPS MAY BE KEPT BURNING [ALSO THE SMOKE KEEPS SMOKING]. 21 IN THE TENT OF MEETING, OUTSIDE THE CURTAIN THAT IS IN FRONT OF THE TESTIMONY, AARON AND HIS SONS ARE TO KEEP THE LAMPS BURNING BEFORE THE LORD FROM EVENING TILL MORNING. THIS IS TO BE A LASTING ORDINANCE AMONG THE ISRAELITES FOR THE GENERATIONS TO COME. 27:20–21 SINCE THE TABERNACLE WAS A SYMBOLIC HOUSE FOR STEPHEN YAHWEH TO DWELL WITHIN, IT WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN POLITE FOR THE ISRAELITES, WHO HAD OIL LAMPS LIT IN THEIR OWN TENTS DURING THE EVENING HOURS, TO HAVE DENIED STEPHEN YAHWEH THE SAME COURTESY. MOST OF THEIR LAMPS ALMOST SURELY WOULD HAVE BEEN EXTINGUISHED, EXCEPT FOR ONE, WHEN THE LAST MEMBER OF THE FAMILY WENT TO BED, AND IN MANY HOMES ALL LAMPS WOULD HAVE BEEN PUT OUT AT THAT TIME. BUT STEPHEN YAHWEH DID NOT SLEEP. THEREFORE, IT WOULD HAVE BEEN ENTIRELY INAPPROPRIATE TO ALLOW HIS LAMP TO GO OUT DURING THE NIGHT HOURS BECAUSE THAT COULD BE INTERPRETED TO MEAN SYMBOLICALLY THAT HE HAD “GONE TO BED.” THEREFORE ONE OF THE TYPES OF CONTRIBUTIONS THE PEOPLE COULD BE MAKE FOR THE MAINTENANCE OF THE TABERNACLE AND PROPER WORSHIP THEREIN IS OLIVE OIL—PRESSED AND FILTERED THROUGH FABRICS TO PRODUCE CLEAR OIL THAT WOULD BURN BRIGHTLY IN THE BEAUTIFUL SEVEN GOLD FIRE LAMPS OF THE LAMPSTAND THAT STOOD JUST OUTSIDE THE CURTAINED ENTRANCE TO THE MOST HOLY PLACE (25:31–40). THE PRIESTS---SERGEANTS (“AARON AND HIS SONS”) HAD A SOLEMN DUTY ASSIGNED THEM WITH THESE WORDS TO BE SURE THAT THERE WAS ENOUGH OIL IN THE TABERNACLE LAMPS EACH EVENING (AND ADEQUATE WICKS, IT GOES WITHOUT SAYING) SO THAT THE LAMPS WOULD REMAIN BURNING BRIGHTLY THROUGH THE NIGHT UNTIL DAWN, WHEN THEY COULD BE EXTINGUISHED. THE PRIESTS’ [SERGEANT’S] RESPONSIBILITIES FOR LAMP TENDING AND THE PEOPLES’ [CIVILIAN’S] RESPONSIBILITIES FOR OIL DONATION CONSTITUTED “A LASTING ORDINANCE AMONG THE ISRAELITES FOR THE GENERATIONS TO COME.” THIS WAS NO MORE LASTING AN ORDINANCE THAN ANY OTHER RELATED TO THE TABERNACLE, BUT BY STATING SUCH A SEVERE WORDING IN CONNECTION WITH WHAT MIGHT BE REGARDED AS A SIMPLE, MINOR, COMMONSENSE RESPONSIBILITY, GOD IMPRESSED, A FORTIORI, ALL THE OTHER WORSHIP RESPONSIBILITIES ON HIS PEOPLE [CIVILIANS] AND PRIESTS [SERGEANTS] AS WELL. OF INTEREST IS THE USE OF THE TERM “TENT OF MEETING” IN V. 21. MOSES EXPLAINED LATER (IN 33:7) THE ORIGIN OF THIS TERM, WHICH AT FIRST REFERRED TO A SORT OF TEMPORARY PRE-TABERNACLE TENT FOR DIVINE CONTACT USED BY MOSES UNTIL THE TABERNACLE ITSELF COULD BE CONSTRUCTED. THIS VERSE REPRESENTS THE FIRST OCCURRENCE OF THE TERM IN THE OLD TESTAMENT. IT PROBABLY WAS USED IN DISTINCTION TO THE TABERNACLE WHEN THE ONE WAS IN USE AND THE OTHER BEING BUILT; BUT AS SOON AS THE TABERNACLE WAS ACTUALLY PUT INTO USE, THE ORIGINAL TENT OF MEETING WAS DISCONTINUED, AND THE TERM TENT OF MEETING WAS TRANSFERRED TO THE TABERNACLE, BECOMING YET ANOTHER WAY TO CONNOTE “TABERNACLE.” MOSES USED “TENT OF MEETING” HERE FOR AN AUDIENCE THAT ALREADY WORSHIPED AT THE TABERNACLE AND ALREADY HAD MADE THE TRANSFER OF TERMINOLOGY SINCE HE WROTE EXODUS AFTER THE TABERNACLE WAS CONSTRUCTED.**

**LAWS ON THE TOP PRIEST’S [TOP HIGH SERGEANT’S] INVINCIBLE CLOTHING (28:1–43)**

**1 “HAVE AARON YOUR BROTHER BROUGHT TO YOU FROM AMONG THE ISRAELITES, ALONG WITH HIS SONS NADAB AND ABIHU, ELEAZAR AND ITHAMAR, SO THEY MAY SERVE ME AS PRIESTS [SERGEANTS]. 2 MAKE SACRED GARMENTS FOR YOUR BROTHER AARON, TO GIVE HIM [RESPECT] DIGNITY AND HONOR. 3 TELL ALL THE SKILLED MEN TO WHOM I HAVE GIVEN WISDOM IN SUCH MATTERS THAT THEY ARE TO MAKE GARMENTS FOR AARON, FOR HIS CONSECRATION, SO HE MAY SERVE ME AS PRIEST [SERGEANT]. 4 THESE ARE THE GARMENTS THEY ARE TO MAKE: A BREAST-PIECE, AN EPHOD, A ROBE, A WOVEN TUNIC, A TURBAN AND A SASH. THEY ARE TO MAKE THESE SACRED GARMENTS FOR YOUR BROTHER AARON AND HIS SONS, SO THEY MAY SERVE ME AS PRIESTS [SERGEANTS]. 5 HAVE THEM USE GOLD, AND BLUE, PURPLE AND SCARLET YARN, AND FINE LINEN. 6 “MAKE THE EPHOD OF GOLD, AND OF BLUE, PURPLE AND SCARLET YARN, AND OF FINELY TWISTED LINEN—THE WORK OF A SKILLED CRAFTSMAN. 7 IT IS TO HAVE TWO SHOULDER PIECES ATTACHED TO TWO OF ITS CORNERS, SO IT CAN BE FASTENED. 8 ITS SKILLFULLY WOVEN WAISTBAND IS TO BE LIKE IT—OF ONE PIECE WITH THE EPHOD AND MADE WITH GOLD, AND WITH BLUE, PURPLE AND SCARLET YARN, AND WITH FINELY TWISTED LINEN. 9 “TAKE TWO ONYX STONES AND ENGRAVE ON THEM THE [12] NAMES OF THE SONS OF ISRAEL 10 IN THE ORDER OF THEIR BIRTH—SIX NAMES ON ONE STONE AND THE REMAINING SIX ON THE OTHER. 11 ENGRAVE THE NAMES OF THE SONS OF ISRAEL ON THE TWO STONES THE WAY A GEM CUTTER ENGRAVES A SEAL. THEN MOUNT THE STONES IN GOLD FILIGREE SETTINGS 12 AND FASTEN THEM ON THE SHOULDER PIECES OF THE EPHOD AS MEMORIAL STONES FOR THE SONS OF ISRAEL. AARON IS TO BEAR THE [12] NAMES ON HIS SHOULDERS AS A MEMORIAL BEFORE THE LORD. 13 MAKE GOLD FILIGREE SETTINGS 14 AND TWO BRAIDED CHAINS OF PURE GOLD, LIKE A ROPE, AND ATTACH THE CHAINS TO THE SETTINGS. 15 “FASHION A BREAST-PIECE FOR MAKING DECISIONS—THE WORK OF A SKILLED CRAFTSMAN. MAKE IT LIKE THE EPHOD: OF GOLD, AND OF BLUE, PURPLE AND SCARLET YARN, AND OF FINELY TWISTED LINEN. 16 IT IS TO BE SQUARE—A SPAN LONG AND A SPAN WIDE—AND FOLDED DOUBLE. 17 THEN MOUNT FOUR ROWS OF [12] PRECIOUS STONES ON IT. IN THE FIRST ROW THERE SHALL BE A RUBY, A TOPAZ AND A BERYL; 18 IN THE SECOND ROW A TURQUOISE, A SAPPHIRE AND AN EMERALD; 19 IN THE THIRD ROW A JACINTH, AN AGATE AND AN AMETHYST; 20 IN THE FOURTH ROW A CHRYSOLITE, AN ONYX AND A JASPER. MOUNT THEM IN GOLD FILIGREE SETTINGS. 21 THERE ARE TO BE TWELVE STONES, ONE FOR EACH OF THE NAMES OF THE SONS OF ISRAEL, EACH ENGRAVED LIKE A SEAL WITH THE NAME OF ONE OF THE TWELVE TRIBES. 22 “FOR THE BREAST-PIECE MAKE BRAIDED CHAINS OF PURE GOLD, LIKE A ROPE. 23 MAKE TWO GOLD RINGS FOR IT AND FASTEN THEM TO TWO CORNERS OF THE BREAST-PIECE. 24 FASTEN THE TWO GOLD CHAINS TO THE RINGS AT THE CORNERS OF THE BREAST-PIECE, 25 AND THE OTHER ENDS OF THE CHAINS TO THE TWO SETTINGS, ATTACHING THEM TO THE SHOULDER PIECES OF THE EPHOD AT THE FRONT. 26 MAKE TWO GOLD RINGS AND ATTACH THEM TO THE OTHER TWO CORNERS OF THE BREAST-PIECE ON THE INSIDE EDGE NEXT TO THE EPHOD. 27 MAKE TWO MORE GOLD RINGS AND ATTACH THEM TO THE BOTTOM OF THE SHOULDER PIECES ON THE FRONT OF THE EPHOD, CLOSE TO THE SEAM JUST ABOVE THE WAISTBAND OF THE EPHOD. 28 THE RINGS OF THE BREAST-PIECE ARE TO BE TIED TO THE RINGS OF THE EPHOD WITH BLUE CORD, CONNECTING IT TO THE WAISTBAND, SO THAT THE BREAST-PIECE WILL NOT SWING OUT FROM THE EPHOD. 29 “WHENEVER AARON ENTERS THE HOLY PLACE, HE WILL BEAR THE NAMES OF THE SONS OF ISRAEL OVER HIS HEART ON THE BREAST-PIECE OF DECISION [JUDGMENT] AS A CONTINUING MEMORIAL BEFORE THE LORD. 30 ALSO PUT THE URIM AND THE THUMMIM IN THE BREAST-PIECE, SO THEY MAY BE OVER AARON’S HEART WHENEVER HE ENTERS THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD. THUS, AARON WILL ALWAYS BEAR THE MEANS OF MAKING DECISIONS FOR THE ISRAELITES OVER HIS HEART BEFORE THE LORD. 31 “MAKE THE ROBE OF THE EPHOD ENTIRELY OF BLUE CLOTH, 32 WITH AN OPENING FOR THE HEAD IN ITS CENTER. THERE SHALL BE A WOVEN EDGE LIKE A COLLAR AROUND THIS OPENING, SO THAT IT WILL NOT TEAR. 33 MAKE POMEGRANATES OF BLUE, PURPLE AND SCARLET YARN AROUND THE HEM OF THE ROBE, WITH GOLD BELLS BETWEEN THEM. 34 THE GOLD BELLS AND THE POMEGRANATES ARE TO ALTERNATE AROUND THE HEM OF THE ROBE. 35 AARON MUST WEAR IT WHEN HE MINISTERS. THE [ALARM]SOUND OF THE BELLS WILL BE HEARD WHEN HE ENTERS THE HOLY PLACE BEFORE THE LORD AND WHEN HE COMES OUT, SO THAT HE WILL NOT DIE. 36 “MAKE A PLATE OF PURE GOLD AND ENGRAVE ON IT AS ON A SEAL: HOLY TO THE LORD. 37 FASTEN A BLUE CORD TO IT TO ATTACH IT TO THE TURBAN; IT IS TO BE ON THE FRONT OF THE TURBAN. 38 IT WILL BE ON AARON’S FOREHEAD, AND HE WILL BEAR THE GUILT INVOLVED IN THE SACRED GIFTS THE ISRAELITES CONSECRATE, WHATEVER THEIR GIFTS MAY BE. IT WILL BE ON AARON’S FOREHEAD CONTINUALLY SO THAT THEY WILL BE ACCEPTABLE TO THE LORD. 39 “WEAVE THE TUNIC OF FINE LINEN AND MAKE THE TURBAN OF FINE LINEN. THE SASH IS TO BE THE WORK OF AN EMBROIDERER. 40 MAKE TUNICS, SASHES AND HEADBANDS FOR AARON’S SONS, TO GIVE THEM [RESPECT] DIGNITY AND HONOR. 41 AFTER YOU PUT THESE CLOTHES ON YOUR BROTHER AARON AND HIS SONS, ANOINT AND ORDAIN THEM. CONSECRATE THEM SO THEY MAY SERVE ME AS PRIESTS [SERGEANTS]. 42 “MAKE LINEN UNDERGARMENTS AS A COVERING FOR THE BODY, REACHING FROM THE WAIST TO THE THIGH. 43 AARON AND HIS SONS MUST WEAR THEM WHENEVER THEY ENTER THE TENT OF MEETING OR APPROACH THE ALTAR TO MINISTER IN THE HOLY PLACE, SO THAT THEY WILL NOT INCUR GUILT AND DIE. “THIS IS TO BE A LASTING ORDINANCE FOR AARON AND HIS DESCENDANTS.**

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**INTRODUCTORY TOP HIGH PRIEST’S LAW INVINCIBLE SUMMARY (28:1–5)**

**28:1 THIS VERSE REPRESENTS YET ANOTHER WAY IN WHICH GOD TAUGHT THE ISRAELITES ABOUT THE INHERITED DIVINE NATURE OF THE PRIESTHOOD [NCO CORPS IN 1ST JOHN 3:9 & ACTS 17:22-31]: “AARON YOUR BROTHER” (I.E., THE AARON WHO IS PART OF YOUR FAMILY AND THEREFORE ONE OF THE LEVITES [PRIVATE TO CORPORAL]) AND “HIS SONS” (I.E., HIS HEIRS) MUST BE BROUGHT TO MOSES FOR PROPER INVESTITURE [HONORS & RANK], “SO THEY MAY SERVE ME AS PRIESTS [SERGEANTS].” THUS GOD DECLARED THE PRIESTHOOD [NCO CORPS] A MILITARY LAW OFFICE THAT IS PASSED DOWN FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION WITHIN A FAMILY THAT IS WITHIN A TRIBE OF ISRAEL—NOT AN MILITARY LAW OFFICE THAT CAN BE PURCHASED (CF. 2 CHR 13:9–10) OR TAKEN BY REASON OF POWER OR INFLUENCE (2 CHR 26:16–21) OR BY POPULAR ELECTION OR ANY OTHER MEANS. ONLY GOD COULD MAKE SOMEONE A PRIEST [SERGEANT]; IT WAS NOT A HUMAN CHOICE. THIS CHAPTER APPEARS TO CONCENTRATE ON THE THINGS APPROPRIATE TO THE LORD’S TOP HIGH PRIESTHOOD [NCO CORPS] RATHER THAN THE PRIESTHOOD [NCO CORPS] IN GENERAL. LEV 8 APPEARS TO BE THE CHAPTER MORE SPECIFICALLY DEVOTED TO REGULATIONS RELATED TO PRIESTS [SERGEANTS] IN GENERAL; BUT BOTH CHAPTERS SHARE COMMON ELEMENTS BECAUSE TOP HIGH PRIESTS [TOP HIGH CHIEF OF POLICE] WERE NOT SO DIFFERENT FROM ORDINARY PRIESTS [SERGEANTS] THAT INFORMATION ABOUT THEIR ROLES, ORDINATION, AND EQUIPMENT WOULD BE WITHOUT OVERLAP. VESTMENTS SIGNIFIED AUTHORITY IN THE ANCIENT WORLD. IN THE ABSENCE OF A MONARCHY IN ISRAEL, THESE VESTMENTS MADE THE TOP HIGH PRIEST [TOP HIGH CHIEF OF POLICE] THE LEADER OF THE PEOPLE. EVIDENCE OF A SPECIALLY VESTED TOP HIGH PRIEST [TOP HIGH CHIEF OF POLICE] AS LEADER OF ISRAEL APPEARS IN MANY PLACES IN ISRAEL’S HISTORY, INCLUDING THE RESTORATION AFTER THE BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY (ZECH 3:5–7) AS WELL AS THE ORGANIZATION OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE IN NEW TESTAMENT TIMES (MATT 26:65). BECAUSE ISRAEL WAS BEGUN AS A THEOCRACY RATHER THAN A MONARCHY, THE SORT OF VESTMENTS THAT CONFERRED RESPECT, DIGNITY AND AUTHORITY THAT A KING MIGHT HAVE WORN IN OTHER CULTURES WERE WORN BY GOD’S TOP HIGH PRIEST [TOP HIGH CHIEF OF POLICE] IN ISRAEL AS A WAY OF CONFIRMING THE TOP HIGH PRIEST’S ROLE AS TOP REPRESENTATIVE OF STEPHEN YAHWEH FOR PURPOSES OF WORSHIP. A GUEST DOES NOT PREPARE THE FOOD AT ANOTHER’S HOME—THE HOMEOWNER DOES THE PREPARATION OF THE FOOD AND THE GUESTS JOIN IN EATING IT. THUS, IN THE LOGIC SYMBOLIZED BY THE MEAL-BASED SACRIFICIAL SYSTEM, WORSHIPERS AT THE TABERNACLE WERE STEPHEN YAHWEH’S GUESTS AND THE PRIESTS [SERGEANTS] WERE STEPHEN YAHWEH’S SERVANTS, SERVING BOTH THE HOST AND THE GUESTS. IN THE CASE OF TABERNACLE WORSHIP, THE GUESTS BROUGHT THE FOOD NOT BECAUSE IT WAS THEIRS AND THEY WANTED TO HONOR THEIR HOST BY CONTRIBUTING TO THE MEAL; IT WAS NOT THEIRS, BUT THEY WERE BRINGING THAT PORTION OF THEIR HARVEST THAT HAD BELONGED TO STEPHEN YAHWEH FROM THE BEGINNING. BY REASON OF HAVING A MEAL TOGETHER THEY WERE SHOWING COVENANT RELATIONSHIP SINCE IT WAS NOT NORMAL IN ANCIENT TIMES FOR PEOPLE TO EAT TOGETHER UNLESS THEY WERE ALLIES. ALREADY THE PRIESTLY SUCCESSION IS IDENTIFIED SPECIFICALLY IN GOD’S PERSONALLY NAMING NADAB, ABIHU, ELEAZAR, AND ITHAMAR TO THE TOP HIGH PRIESTHOOD [NCO CORPS] ALONG WITH AARON. 28:2–5 HERE GOD SIMPLY GAVE THE NAMES OF THE SIX MOST IMPORTANT OF THE EIGHT PRIESTLY GARMENTS HE WOULD REQUIRE AND DESCRIBE IN MORE DETAIL LATER IN THE COURSE OF THE CHAPTER. LATER, AS WELL, THE SPECIAL FLOWER-LIKE [FLORENCE] MEDALLION WORN AT THE FRONT OF THE TURBAN (VV. 36–38) AND THE LINEN UNDERGARMENTS (VV. 42–43) ARE ALSO MENTIONED. THE PRESENT PASSAGE GRANTS, THEREFORE, A BRIEF, ORIENTING OVERVIEW TO THE READER/HEARER UPON WHICH SPECIFIC DETAILS WOULD FOLLOW. NO SPECIAL ORDER APPLIES TO THE VESTMENTS NAMED IN V. 4; THAT IS, AT LEAST THE ORDER DOES NOT CORRESPOND TO THE ORDER OF VESTMENTS DETAILED IN THE REST OF THE CHAPTER, SUGGESTING THAT THERE WOULD BE NO REQUIREMENT FOR THE PRIEST [SERGEANT] TO DON [LORD & MASTER] THESE GARMENTS IN EXACTLY THE SAME ORDER EVERY TIME OR THAT WHEN NOT WORN THEY SHOULD BE STORED IN SOME CERTAIN ORDER, OR ANY SUCH THING. AS LONG AS THEY WERE ALL WORN IN THEIR PROPER, LOGICAL POSITION, WHICH WAS GENERALLY A MATTER OF COMMON SENSE, THE GARMENTS WOULD IDENTIFY THE TOP HIGH PRIEST [TOP HIGH CHIEF OF POLICE] AND CORRECTLY (AND SYMBOLICALLY) REPRESENT ISRAEL BEFORE GOD AND GOD BEFORE ISRAEL THEREBY. ONE NOTES IMMEDIATELY THAT THE FABRICS AND COLORS OF THE MATERIALS FOR THE GARMENTS (V. 5) WERE THE SAME AS THOSE ALSO USED FOR THE LOVELY INNER CURTAINS AND ENTRANCE CURTAIN OF THE TABERNACLE ITSELF. THE DESCRIPTION GIVEN CLEARLY MAKES THE VESTMENTS SIMILAR TO AND REFLECTIVE OF THE “DIGNITY AND HONOR” (V. 2) OF THE TABERNACLE. ONE ALSO NOTES THAT THEY ARE CALLED “SACRED GARMENTS” (V. 4), TO BE MANUFACTURED BY THE SAME MEN, OR AT LEAST THE SAME SORTS OF MEN, WHO WOULD EVENTUALLY BE ASSIGNED THE TASK OF CONSTRUCTING THE TABERNACLE (“SKILLED MEN TO WHOM I HAVE GIVEN WISDOM IN SUCH MATTERS,” V. 3; CF. 31:2–6; 35:30–34; 36:1–2; 37:1; 38:22–23; 2 CHR 1:5). THE TABERNACLE WOULD NOT FUNCTION PROPERLY WITHOUT ITS PRIESTS [SERGEANTS]; THE PRIESTS [SERGEANTS] COULD NOT FUNCTION PROPERLY APART FROM THE TABERNACLE. THE TOP HIGH PRIEST [TOP HIGH CHIEF OF POLICE], FOR WHOM THE GARMENTS DESCRIBED IN THIS CHAPTER WERE SPECIFICALLY INTENDED, IS THE LEADER OF ALL THE PRIESTS [SERGEANTS]; AND EVEN THOUGH THE FOCUS IS, NATURALLY, UPON HIS GARMENTS FIRST, THE PRINCIPLE OF (GENERAL) PRIESTHOOD-TABERNACLE INTERDEPENDENCE FINDS ESTABLISHMENT ALREADY IN THE PRESENT PASSAGE.**

**THE TOP HIGH PRIEST’S JEALOUS LAW JUSTICE ARMOR OF THE LAW INVINCIBLE EPHOD (28:6–14)**

**THE WORD “EPHOD” REFERS TO A TORSO GARMENT, THAT IS, A PIECE OF CLOTHING THAT COVERS THE BODY FROM THIGH TO SHOULDER, NORMALLY WITHOUT COVERING EITHER ARMS OR LEGS. THE LINEN EPHOD TYPICALLY WORN BY PRIESTS [SERGEANTS] OR TEMPLE SERVANTS (E.G., 1 SAM 2:18; 22:18) WAS A SIMPLE GARMENT. INDEED, WHEN DAVID WORE JUST A LINEN EPHOD IN ORDER TO DANCE IN FRONT OF THE ARK, IT SEEMED TO HIS WIFE MICHAL THAT HE WAS DRESSED TOO COMMONLY AND POSSIBLY EVEN IMMODESTLY—AND DID NOT LOOK LIKE A KING (2 SAM 6:5, 14, 16, 20–22). THIS SUGGESTS THAT THE EPHOD ALONE WAS NOT REGARDED AS THE ONLY GARMENT ONE WOULD NORMALLY WEAR. THE EPHOD DESCRIBED IN THE PRESENT PASSAGE AND THROUGHOUT THE PENTATEUCH WAS, BY CONTRAST, NOTHING SIMPLE AND WAS NOT WORN ALONE. IT WAS, RATHER, A VERY ELABORATE AND IMPRESSIVE SORT OF CEREMONIAL VEST WORN OVER OTHER GARMENTS AND USED TO CLOTHE ITS WEARER SYMBOLICALLY SO AS TO REPRESENT GOD AMONG HIS PEOPLE. INDEED, THE EPHOD BECAME EVENTUALLY SUCH A SYMBOL OF THE DIVINE PRESENCE THAT “FORGED” EPHODS—MODELED ON THE PROPER, LEGITIMATE ONE—COULD ACTUALLY BE WORSHIPED AS IF THEY WERE IDOLS. IN THE DIVINE INSTRUCTIONS GIVEN TO MOSES IN THIS CHAPTER, THE EPHOD IS DISTINGUISHED FROM THE BREAST-PIECE THAT WAS ATTACHED TO IT FOR THE PURPOSE OF DIVINING GOD’S SEXLESS WILL THROUGH THE URIM AND THUMMIM. THE TERM EPHOD, HOWEVER, CAME TO INCLUDE AUTOMATICALLY THE NOTION OF “EPHOD WITH BREAST-PIECE ATTACHED” SINCE THE TWO PIECES WERE NOT USED SEPARATELY, AND AFTER THE BOOK OF EXODUS ONE ENCOUNTERS THE TERM “EPHOD” RATHER CONSISTENTLY FOR THE EPHOD-BREAST-PIECE ASSEMBLY. 28:6–8 THE EPHOD HAD THE SAME FABRIC BASE AND THE SAME COLORS AS THE REST OF AARON’S GARMENTS AND AS THE TABERNACLE INNER CURTAINS, AND IT HAD TO BE SPECIALLY MADE BY A SKILLED CRAFTSMAN SO THAT IT WOULD BE A TRULY HIGH-QUALITY GARMENT. ITS TWO “SHOULDER PIECES” (V. 7) WERE EITHER LOOPS OR STRAPS OR CORDS THAT ALLOWED THE FRONT AND THE BACK OF THE GARMENT TO BE TIED TOGETHER ONCE THE EPHOD WAS PLACED ON THE TOP HIGH PRIEST [TOP HIGH CHIEF OF POLICE]. WE CANNOT TELL FROM THIS DESCRIPTION WHETHER THE EPHOD WAS SOMEWHAT LIKE A RECTANGLE WITH A NECK HOLE IN THE MIDDLE THAT WAS PUT OVER HIS HEAD AND THEN ATTACHED AT THE SIDES BY THESE “SHOULDER PIECES” OR WHETHER IT WAS ESSENTIALLY A TWO-PART GARMENT, WITH A FRONT PIECE AND A BACK PIECE, THE TWO PIECES HANGING ON THE SHOULDERS OF THE TOP HIGH PRIEST [TOP HIGH CHIEF OF POLICE] BY STRAPS DESIGNATED AS SHOULDER PIECES. THE EPHOD ALSO HAD TO BE SECURED AROUND THE HIGH PRIEST’S WAIST, LEST IT HANG LOOSELY IN THE MANNER OF A SIGNBOARD. FOR THIS PURPOSE A SPECIAL, ELABORATE “WAISTBAND” (V. 8) OF THE SAME FABRIC AND COLORING AS THE REST OF THE EPHOD WAS ATTACHED TO IT, PERHAPS AT THE EDGES OF THE BACK PIECE AND WRAPPED AROUND THE WEARER’S BODY AND TIED—SOMEWHAT IN THE MANNER OF TYING THE WAISTBAND OF A MODERN-DAY BATHROBE THAT HAS AN ATTACHED WAISTBAND THAT TIES AT THE FRONT, OR ANY SORT OF JACKET OR VEST THAT HAS A INTEGRATED WAISTBAND OR “BELT” THAT HANGS DOWN TO THE SIDE WHEN NOT FASTENED BUT IS OTHERWISE WORN FASTENED AT THE FRONT. 28:9–10 ALTHOUGH WHAT WE READ HERE IS A GENERAL VERBAL DESCRIPTION MUCH LESS DETAILED THAN THE ACTUAL VISUAL PLANS MOSES SAW ON THE MOUNTAIN (25:40; 26:30; 27:8), WE CAN DISCERN FROM THE DESCRIPTION GIVEN THAT THE SPECIAL FEATURE OF THE EPHOD PER SE (LEAVING ASIDE THE BREAST-PIECE) WAS ITS SHOULDER STONES. THESE TWO STONES, ONE FOR EACH SHOULDER, WERE MADE OF ONYX AND ENGRAVED WITH THE NAMES OF THE SONS/TRIBES OF ISRAEL (V. 9), SIX NAMES ON EACH STONE IN ORDER OF THE BIRTHS OF JACOB’S 12 SONS (V. 10). WE CANNOT BE CERTAIN, HOWEVER, THAT WE ACTUALLY KNOW THE BIRTH ORDER OF THOSE CHILDREN. THE ACCOUNTS IN GEN 29–30 AND GEN 35 ARE ORGANIZED IN SUCH A WAY AS TO SUGGEST THE ORDER OF THE VARIOUS SONS, BUT THE ORDER MAY BE MORE THEMATIC THAN CHRONOLOGICAL. IF THE NAMING ORDER GIVEN IN GEN 29–30; 35 IS FOLLOWED AND THE NAMES ENGRAVED ON THE ONYX STONES STARTED ON THE RIGHT SHOULDER’S STONE AND CONTINUED IN ORDER, THE RIGHT SHOULDER STONE WOULD HAVE BORNE THE NAMES OF REUBEN (GEN 29:32), SIMEON (GEN 29:33), LEVI (GEN 29:34), JUDAH (GEN 29:35), DAN (GEN 30:5), NAPHTALI (GEN 30:8). THE LEFT SHOULDER STONE WOULD HAVE BEEN INSCRIBED WITH THE NAMES OF GAD (GEN 30:11), ASHER (GEN 30:13), ISSACHAR (GEN 30:18), ZEBULUN (GEN 30:20), JOSEPH (GEN 30:24), AND BENJAMIN (GEN 35:18). IF THIS UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT IS MEANT BY THE LISTING ORDER IN GEN 29–35 IS CORRECT, NAMELY THAT IT REPRESENTS THE ACTUAL BIRTH ORDER, THEN THIS WAS INDEED THE LIKELY ORDER OF DELINEATING THE SONS/TRIBES OF ISRAEL IN THIS CASE. IT IS NOT, HOWEVER, THE WAY THE SONS/TRIBES ARE NECESSARILY ALWAYS LISTED. IN FACT, THE NAMES ARE ALMOST NEVER LISTED IN THE SAME ORDER, GIVING PAUSE TO THE ASSUMPTION THAT WE CAN ACTUALLY KNOW FOR CERTAIN THE CORRECT CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER. HERE IS A SUMMARY OF JUST SOME OF THE RELEVANT PASSAGES: YET THERE ARE AT LEAST 32 KINDS OF BIRTHS IN THE HOLY SCRIPTURES FORM LUKE 24:1-ACTS 30 WITH ACTS 29:1-2: (THE LIST MAYBE INCOMPLETE) THE FLESH BIRTH IN JOHN 3:6, THE GRAIN BIRTH IN 1ST CORINTHIANS 15:37, THE WHEAT BIRTH IN 1ST CORINTHIANS 15:37, THE FISH PROTECTION BIRTH IN 1ST CORINTHIANS 15:39, THE MYTHOLOGICAL ANIMAL BIRTH IN 1ST CORINTHIANS 15:39, THE LIVING BEING BIRTH IN 1ST CORINTHIANS 15:45, THE NATURAL BIRTH IN 1ST CORINTHIANS 15:46, THE PHYSICAL PREGNANCY BIRTH IN JOHN 3:6 & 1ST CORINTHIANS 15:39, THE DUST BIRTH IN 1ST CORINTHIANS 15:48, THE EARTHLY BIRTH IN 1ST CORINTHIANS 1:40, THE MORTAL BIRTH IN 1ST CORINTHIANS 15:53, THE EARTHLY MAN BIRTH IN 1ST CORINTHIANS 15:47, THE MENTAL BIRTH IN JOHN 3:6 & 1ST CORINTHIANS 2:16, THE SPIRITUAL BIRTH IN JOHN 3:6 & 1ST CORINTHIANS 15:40, THE LIFE-GIVING SPIRIT BIRTH IN 1ST CORINTHIANS 15:45, THE TERRESTRIAL BIRTH IN 1ST CORINTHIANS 15:40, THE HEAVENLY BIRTH IN 1ST CORINTHIANS 1:40, THE CELESTIAL BIRTH IN 1ST CORINTHIANS 15:40, THE HEAVENLY MAN BIRTH IN 1ST CORINTHIANS 15:49, THE STAR BIRTH IN 1ST CORINTHIANS 15:41, THE MOON BIRTH IN 1ST CORINTHIANS 15:41, THE SUN BIRTH IN 1ST CORINTHIANS 15:41, THE RESURRECTION BIRTH IN 1ST CORINTHIANS 15:42, THE GLORIOUS BIRTH IN 1ST CORINTHIANS 15:43, THE BORN OF GOD BIRTH IN 1ST JOHN 3:9, THE INCORRUPTION BIRTH IN 1ST CORINTHIANS 15:42, THE ETERNAL BIRTH IN 1ST JOHN 3:9, THE IMMORTAL BIRTH IN 1ST CORINTHIANS 15:53, THE WISDOM SEED [WORD OF GOD] BIRTH IN 1ST CORINTHIANS 2:15, THE HOLY GHOST BIRTH IN JOHN 14:26; 15:26; 16:13 & ACTS 6:5; 7:55-56, THE TRUTHFUL INTELLIGENCE BIRTH IN JOHN 14:26; 15:26; 16:13; 1ST CORINTHIANS 2:12 & ACTS 6:5, 7:55-56 & THE LORDLY BIRTH IN 1ST CORINTHIANS 15:47 & 1ST JOHN 3:9.**

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| **GEN 29–35** | **REUBEN, SIMEON, LEVI, JUDAH, DAN, NAPHTALI, GAD, ASHER, ISSACHAR, ZEBULUN, JOSEPH, BENJAMIN** |
| **GEN 46:8–27** | **REUBEN, SIMEON, LEVI, JUDAH, ISSACHAR, ZEBULUN, GAD, ASHER, JOSEPH, BENJAMIN, DAN, NAPHTALI** |
| **GEN 49** | **REUBEN, SIMEON, LEVI, JUDAH, ZEBULUN, ISSACHAR, DAN, GAD, ASHER, NAPHTALI, JOSEPH, BENJAMIN** |
| **EXOD 1:2–6** | **REUBEN, SIMEON, LEVI, JUDAH, ISSACHAR, ZEBULUN, BENJAMIN, DAN, NAPHTALI, GAD, ASHER**  **(JOSEPH IS NECESSARILY MENTIONED OUT OF ORDER AS ALREADY IN EGYPT, IN 1:6.)** |
| **NUM 1:5–15** | **REUBEN, SIMEON, JUDAH, ISSACHAR, ZEBULUN, JOSEPH, BENJAMIN, DAN, ASHER, GAD, NAPHTALI** |
| **NUM 1:20–42** | **REUBEN, SIMEON, GAD, JUDAH, ISSACHAR, ZEBULUN, JOSEPH, BENJAMIN, DAN, ASHER, NAPHTALI**  **(LEVI IS OMITTED FROM THIS LIST BECAUSE JOSEPH’S SONS EPHRAIM AND MANASSEH COMBINE TO COMPENSATE FOR LEVI’S CHOICE AS THE CLERGY TRIBE IN THIS CONTEXT.)** |

**BECAUSE THE BIBLICAL TEXT DOES NOT GIVE US A LIST OF THE SONS OF ISRAEL THAT IS UNAMBIGUOUSLY IDENTIFIED AS BEING IN BIRTH ORDER, WE CANNOT BE CERTAIN OF THE ACTUAL BIRTH ORDER OF THE SONS OF ISRAEL. WE CAN, HOWEVER, BE SURE OF TWO THINGS: (1) MOSES AND THE ISRAELITES DID KNOW THAT ORDER; AND (2) IT WASN’T AN ORDER THAT WAS USUALLY REGARDED AS IMPORTANT ENOUGH TO USE IN MOST OF THE LISTINGS OF THOSE SONS, SO WE CANNOT INFER FROM THE COMMAND TO LIST THE NAMES IN ORDER IN THIS CONTEXT THAT IT WAS ANYTHING BEYOND A LOGICAL OR NATURAL WAY TO GROUP THE NAMES. IN OTHER WORDS, NO EVIDENCE EXISTS TO SUGGEST THAT THE BIRTH ORDER WAS THE PREFERENTIAL ORDER. RATHER, LISTING THE NAMES IN BIRTH ORDER PROBABLY HAD NO FURTHER SIGNIFICANCE THAN TO SUGGEST THAT JUST AS JACOB’S SONS WERE BORN IN ORDER TO HIM AND BECAME THE “SONS [FAMILY] OF ISRAEL” (USUALLY TRANSLATED “HOUSE OF ISRAEL”), SO THE TOP HIGH PRIEST [TOP HIGH CHIEF OF POLICE WITH THE USA] REPRESENTED THE WHOLE FAMILY OF ISRAEL IN GOD’S PRESENCE AS SYMBOLIZED BY THE EPHOD SHOULDER STONES. 28:11–14 THE VALUABLE STONES WERE TO BE CAREFULLY ENGRAVED, WITH THE NAMES CUT DEEPLY AND PERMANENTLY INTO THE ONYX (“THE WAY A GEM CUTTER ENGRAVES A SEAL”),420 MOUNTED IN FANCY GOLD SETTINGS TO ENHANCE THEIR RESPECT & DIGNITY, FASTENED PERMANENTLY TO THE SHOULDERS OF THE EPHOD BY BRAIDED GOLD CHAINS, AND THUS BORNE BY AARON WITH HIM WHENEVER HE MINISTERED IN THE PRESENCE OF STEPHEN YAHWEH, “AS A MEMORIAL BEFORE [STEPHEN YAHWEH]”—A REMINDER TO ALL THAT AARON REPRESENTED NOT MERELY HIMSELF BUT THE WHOLE PEOPLE AND THAT THE WHOLE PEOPLE WERE IMPORTANT TO GOD. THE STONES WERE NOT HIDDEN OR A MINOR EMBELLISHMENT ON THE EPHOD. THEY HUNG BY THEIR SPECIAL GOLD CHAINS AND SWUNG NOTICEABLY AS AARON MOVED, AN EASILY VISIBLE REMINDER OF THE PEOPLE’S CORPORATE SOLIDARITY WITH AARON BEFORE THE LORD OF GLORY.**

**THE TOP HIGH PRIEST’S JEALOUS LAW JUSTICE ARMOR OF THE LAW INVINCIBLE BREASTPIECE OR LAW INVINCIBLE BREASTPLATE (28:15–30)**

**THE BREAST-PIECE WAS A SQUARE FABRIC POUCH USED FOR PERMISSIBLE DIVINATION. WE CAN THINK OF IT AS A HUGE (EIGHTEEN INCHES SQUARE), FANCY POCKET WORN OVER THE TOP HIGH PRIEST’S CHEST AS PART OF THE EPHOD THAT HELD STONES USED FOR DISCERNMENT OF THE DIVINE WILL OF GOD. THESE STONES, CALLED URIM AND THUMMIM (“LIGHTS” AND “DARKS”; SEE THE EXCURSUS BELOW), WERE USED IN FAITH (BUT IN A MANNER NOT EVER DESCRIBED EXACTLY IN THE HOLY BIBLE) TO GET ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS THE ISRAELITES HAD FOR GOD. THE BREAST-PIECE WAS, HOWEVER, NOT MERELY A STORAGE PLACE FOR THESE IMPORTANT STONES. IT WAS ALSO A PLACE WHERE YET ANOTHER REPRESENTATION OF THE TWELVE TRIBES OF THE ISRAELITES COULD BE BORNE BY THE TOP HIGH PRIEST [TOP HIGH CHIEF OF POLICE] AS HE MINISTERED IN THE PRESENCE OF STEPHEN YAHWEH. ALREADY THE READER IS AWARE THAT THE TWO ONYX SHOULDER STONES OF THE EPHOD HELD THE ENGRAVED NAMES OF THE TWELVE TRIBES, SIX TO A SHOULDER STONE (VV. 9–12). NOW THE READER LEARNS THAT THERE WOULD BE YET ANOTHER MEANS OF REPRESENTING THOSE TWELVE TRIBES—THIS TIME BY TWELVE INDIVIDUAL PRECIOUS STONES, ONE FOR EACH TRIBE, WITH THE NAME OF A SINGLE TRIBE ENGRAVED ON A SINGLE STONE. BY MEANS OF THE COMBINATION OF THE SHOULDER STONES AND THE BREAST-PIECE STONES, THE ISRAELITE TRIBES WERE REPRESENTED BOTH AS GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALLY BY THE TOP HIGH PRIEST [TOP HIGH CHIEF OF POLICE]. IN THAT WAY BOTH THE ENTIRE FAMILY AND THE INDIVIDUAL FAMILIES WERE “LISTED” BEFORE GOD AT ALL TIMES OF WORSHIP. 28:15 LIKE THE EPHOD AND OTHER MATERIALS ASSOCIATED WITH THE TABERNACLE, THE BREAST-PIECE HAD TO REFLECT THE ROYAL COLORS, FABRIC, AND PRECIOUS METAL OF THE INNER PART OF THE TABERNACLE AND HAD TO BE MADE TO EXACTING STANDARDS BY A FABRICATOR OF THE MOST-HIGHEST ABILITY (“THE WORK OF A SKILLED CRAFTSMAN”; CF. 26:1, 31; 28:3, 6; 31:5; 35:33). THIS EMPHASIZES ONCE AGAIN THE INTEGRATED WAY THAT TABERNACLE AND PRIESTHOOD [NCO CORPS] WORKED TOGETHER AND THAT THE PURPOSE OF THAT WORK WAS TO REPRESENT THE TOP HIGH KING STEPHEN YAHWEH TO HIS PEOPLE AND VICE VERSA. 28:16 THIS DESCRIPTION OF THE DIMENSIONS OF THE BREAST-PIECE COULD BE MISUNDERSTOOD AS SUGGESTING THAT IT STARTED AS A SQUARE EIGHTEEN BY EIGHTEEN INCHES (“A SPAN LONG AND A SPAN WIDE”), WHICH WAS THEN FOLDED OVER INTO A RECTANGLE (“FOLDED DOUBLE”) MEASURING EIGHTEEN BY NINE INCHES. MORE PROBABLY, THE FINAL DIMENSION AFTER FOLDING IS INTENDED, SO THAT THE CLOTH BEFORE BEING SEWN INTO A BIG POCKET/POUCH WAS ACTUALLY THIRTY-SIX INCHES BY EIGHTEEN INCHES (TWO SPANS BY ONE SPAN) IN ADDITION TO THE GOLD CHAINS THAT ATTACHED IT TO THE EPHOD PROPER (SEE BELOW). ALTHOUGH WE DO NOT KNOW AARON’S SIZE AND WEIGHT, THE FACT THAT THE AVERAGE ADULT MALE ISRAELITE OF THAT TIME WAS ABOUT FIVE FEET TWO INCHES TALL AND WEIGHED ABOUT ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY POUNDS SUGGESTS THAT THE AVERAGE TOP HIGH PRIEST [TOP HIGH CHIEF OF POLICE] WOULD HAVE THIS BREAST-PIECE STRETCHED OVER HIS FULL CHEST—FROM UNDER HIS ARMPITS TO HIS WAIST AND FROM THE MIDDLE OF ONE SIDE TO THE MIDDLE OF THE OTHER SIDE OF HIS TORSO—COVERING HIS WHOLE CHEST AND BELLY AREA. IN OTHER WORDS, THE BREAST-PIECE WAS NOT MERELY A PATCH ON HIS EPHOD BUT A SQUARE FRONTAL VEST, A VERY PROMINENT, CENTRAL, EXPANSIVE, SYMBOLIC DISPLAY OF THE COVENANT RELATION OF GOD TO HIS PEOPLE. 28:17–21 TWELVE STONES ARRANGED THREE TO A ROW IN A TOTAL OF FOUR ROWS, ENGRAVED AND MOUNTED COMPARABLY TO THE EPHOD SHOULDER STONES (V. 11), REPRESENTED THE TRIBES OF ISRAEL. THE TEXT PROVIDES NO GROUNDS TO THINK THAT THE PARTICULAR KINDS OF STONES HAD ANY SPECIAL VALUE EXCEPT THAT THEY WERE ALL VALUABLE GEMS, INDICATING HOW PRECIOUS THE ISRAELITES WERE TO STEPHEN YAHWEH. INDEED, NO LITTLE DIVERSITY EXISTS AS TO THE ACTUAL IDENTIFICATION OF THESE PRECIOUS GEMS.**

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| **BIBLES** | **NIV** | **NRSV** | **HCSB** |
| **V. 17** | **RUBY, TOPAZ, BERYL** | **CARNELIAN, CHRYSOLITE, EMERALD** | **CARNELIAN, TOPAZ, EMERALD** |
| **V. 18** | **TURQUOISE, SAPPHIRE, EMERALD** | **TURQUOISE, SAPPHIRE, MOONSTONE** | **TURQUOISE, SAPPHIRE, DIAMOND** |
| **V. 19** | **JACINTH, AGATE, AMETHYST** | **JACINTH, AGATE, AMETHYST** | **JACINTH, AGATE, AMETHYST** |
| **V. 20** | **CHRYSOLITE, ONYX, JASPER** | **BERYL, ONYX, JASPER** | **BERYL, ONYX, JASPER** |

**28:22–28 THE BREAST-PIECE WAS CLEARLY A SEPARATE ITEM FROM THE EPHOD AND WAS NOT SEWN TO IT BUT ATTACHED BY GOLD CHAINS AT THE SHOULDERS AND GOLD RINGS AT THE WAIST, AS DESCRIBED RATHER CLEARLY IN THESE VERSES. IT NEEDED ATTACHMENT SO THAT IT WOULD FUNCTION AS A REAL GARMENT AND NOT AS A SWINGING APPENDAGE (V. 28). WHY WOULD IT NOT HAVE BEEN SIMPLY MADE AS A FRONT-PIECE TO THE EPHOD—A POCKET SEWN ON THE EPHOD AS IT WERE? THE SIMPLE ANSWER MAY BE THAT IT WAS DESIRABLE TO BE ABLE TO CLEAN/LAUNDER THE TWO GARMENTS SEPARATELY. THE TOP HIGH PRIEST [TOP HIGH CHIEF OF POLICE] HANDLED BLOOD REGULARLY, SPLASHING IT AND DABBING IT AND SPRINKLING IT IN A VARIETY OF WORSHIP PRACTICES. ALTHOUGH WE ARE NOT TOLD EXPLICITLY HOW THESE GARMENTS WERE CLEANED, THEY MUST HAVE BEEN REGULARLY RINSED/WASHED IN SOME WAY SO AS TO KEEP THEM FROM BECOMING FOUL SHIT SMELLING, ENCRUSTED, AND BLACKENED FROM DRIED BLOOD. 28:29–30 THESE TWO VERSES INDICATE THE TWO SPECIAL PURPOSES OF THE BREAST-PIECE: REPRESENTATION AND PERMISSIBLE DIVINATION. WITH REGARD TO REPRESENTATION, THE TOP HIGH PRIEST [TOP HIGH CHIEF OF POLICE] (AARON STOOD FOR HIMSELF AND ALL HIS SUCCESSORS) “WILL BEAR THE NAMES OF THE SONS OF ISRAEL OVER HIS HEART.” WHY? “AS A CONTINUING MEMORIAL BEFORE THE LORD,” THAT IS, AS A SYMBOL OF THE FACT THAT WHATEVER HE DID, HE DID AS THE PEOPLE’S REPRESENTATIVE, AND HIS ACTIONS WOULD HAVE THE SAME ESSENTIAL EFFECT THEY WOULD HAVE IF ALL OF THEM, ONE BY ONE, HAD DONE THE SAME THING. THE TOP HIGH PRIEST [TOP HIGH CHIEF OF POLICE WITH ALL USA] SYMBOLIZED ALL ISRAEL.**

**GEMS AND MINERALS OF THE BIBLE (NEW KING JAMES VERSION)**

**ROCKS, MINERALS, METALS AND GEMSTONES HAVE ALWAYS PLAYED AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN THE LIVES OF HUMANS. EVEN BEFORE RECORDED HISTORY BEGAN, THEY WERE BEING USED FOR TOOLS AND DECORATIVE PURPOSES. THEY ALSO PLAYED AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN THE LIVES OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL AND IN LESSONS TAUGHT BY WRITERS IN BOTH THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS. THE FOLLOWING ARE HIGHLIGHTS OF THOSE BIBLICAL REFERENCES.**

**THE GARMENTS OF AARON (EXODUS 39: 10-13)**

**AARON (THE BROTHER OF MOSES) WAS THE FIRST HIGH PRIEST. AS SUCH, HE WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR DAILY OFFERINGS, FUNCTIONS AND REGULAR FEASTS OF THE TABERNACLE. THERE WERE THREE ANNUAL FEASTS: AT PASSOVER, AT PENTECOST AND AT YOM KIPPUR (THE DAY OF ATONEMENT). IN EXODUS CHAPTERS 28 AND 39, WE ARE TOLD ABOUT THE HOLY GARMENTS WORN BY THE HIGH PRIEST. THEY INCLUDED THE FOLLOWING ITEMS: THE TURBAN AND CROWN (EXODUS 28:36-39) – ON HIS HEAD IS THE WHITE LINEN TURBAN. AROUND THE BASE OF THE TURBAN IS A CROWN OF GOLD, SAYING "HOLINESS TO THE LORD". THE ROBE (EXODUS 28:31-35) – THE BLUE GARMENT IS CALLED THE ROBE (THE ROBE WAS PURPLE AND SCARLET). UNDERNEATH THE ROBE, HIGH PRIEST WORE A WHITE FINE LINEN WOVEN TUNIC. THE EPHOD (EXODUS 28:6-14; 39:2-7) – THE EPHOD IS THE APRON-LIKE GARMENT WORN OVER THE ROBE BY THE HIGH PRIEST. IT WAS MADE IN FOUR COLORS: BLUE, PURPLE, SCARLET AND WHITE OF FINE LINEN. THESE ARE THE SAME COLORS THAT WERE USED IN THE TABERNACLE AND COULD BE SEEN AT THE DOOR TO THE OUTER COURT, THE DOOR TO THE SANCTUARY AND IN THE VEIL. AN INTERESTING FEATURE OF THE EPHOD WAS THAT GOLD THREADS CUT AND HAMMERED FROM GOLD PLATE WERE INTERWOVEN WITH THE OTHER COLORS OF THE EPHOD (EXODUS 39:3). THE SHOULDER STONES (EXODUS 28:9-12) – A PRECIOUS STONE (ONYX) WAS MOUNTED ON EACH SHOULDER PIECE OF THE EPHOD AND THE NAMES OF THE TWELVE TRIBES OF IRAEL WERE INSCRIBED ON THE STONES – SIX ON EACH. THE BREASTPLATE (EXODUS 28:10-30) – WORN OVER THE EPHOD WAS A SQUARE BREASTPLATE EMBROIDERED WITH GOLD. IT HELD TWELVE PRECIOUS STONES SET IN GOLD FILIGREE: SARDIUS (RUBY), TOPAZ, CARBUNCLE (GARNET), EMERALD, SAPPHIRE, DIAMOND, JACINTH, AGATE, AMETHYST, BERYL, ONYX AND JASPER. EACH STONE WAS ENGRAVED WITH THE NAME OF ONE OF THE TWELVE TRIBES OF ISRAEL. EXODUS 39:10: "AND THEY SET IN IT FOUR ROWS OF STONES: A ROW WITH A SARDIUS (RUBY), A TOPAZ AND AN EMERALD WERE THE FIRST ROW. V11: "THE SECOND ROW, A TURQUOISE, A SAPPHIRE AND A DIAMOND; V12: "THE THIRD ROW, A JACINTH (LIGURE), AN AGATE AND AN AMETHYST; V13: "THE FOURTH ROW, A BERYL, AN ONYX AND A JASPER. THEY WERE ALL ENCLOSED IN SETTINGS OF GOLD IN THEIR MOUNTINGS." THE BREASTPLATE WAS FOLDED DOUBLE TO FORM AN INSIDE POCKET. EXODUS 28:30 STATES THAT THE URIM AND THUMMIN WERE KEPT IN THE POCKET. URIM MEANS 'LIGHTS' AND THUMMIN MEANS 'PERFECTIONS' THEY WERE PROBABLY TWO JEWELS OR CRYSTALS. WHEN AN IMPORTANT DECISION WAS TO BE MADE, THE QUESTION WAS PRESENTED TO THE HIGH PRIEST. HE WOULD STAND BEFORE THE LAMPSTAND, HOLDING THE URIM IN ONE HAND AND THE THUMMIN IN THE OTHER. THE LIGHT FROM THE LAMPSTAND WAS REFLECTED FROM THE URIM AND THE THUMMIN ONTO THE STONES OF THE BREASTPLATE CONTAINING THE NAMES OF THE TWELVE TRIBES. THIS REFLECTION PROVIDED UP TO 24 COMBINATIONS (2 X 12) OF THE LETTERS PRESENT IN THE NAMES OF THE TRIBES. SINCE THERE ARE 22 LETTERS IN THE HEBREW ALPHABET, THE FLASHES OF LIGHT COULD PRODUCE STRINGS OF LETTERS. AS GOD BREATHED THROUGH THE ARK, THE VEIL WOULD MOVE PERMITTING A BREEZE TO FLICKER THE FLAMES IN THE LAMPSTAND TO MOMENTARILY ALTER THE ANGLE OF DIRECTION OF THE LIGHT ONTO THE URIM AND THUMMIN, AND THENCE TO THE BREASTPLATE. THUS, GOD WAS ABLE TO COMMUNICATE DIRECTLY WITH THE TOP HIGH PRIEST AND ANSWER THE ENQUIRY.**

**JOB'S DESCRIPTION OF WISDOM AND UNDERSTANDING (JOB 28:1-19)**

**V1: "SURELY THERE IS A MINE FOR SILVER, AND A PLACE WHERE GOLD IS REFINED. V2: "IRON IS TAKEN FROM THE EARTH, AND COPPER IS SMELTED FROM THE ORE. V3: "MAN PUTS AN END TO DARKNESS, AND SEARCHES EVERY RECESS FOR ORE IN THE DARKNESS AND SHADOW OF DEATH. V4: "HE BREAKS OPEN A SHAFT AWAY FROM PEOPLE; IN PLACES FORGOTTEN BY FEET THEY HANG FAR AWAY FROM MEN; THEY SWING TO AND FRO. V5: "AS FOR THE EARTH, FROM IT COMES BREAD, BUT UNDERNEATH IT IS TURNED UP AS BY FIRE; V6: "ITS STONES ARE THE SOURCE OF SAPPHIRES, AND IT CONTAINS GOLD DUST. V7: "THAT PATH NO BIRD KNOWS, NOR HAS THE FALCON'S EYE SEEN IT. V8: "THE PROUD LIONS HAVE NOT TRODDEN IT, NOR HAS THE FIERCE LION PASSED OVER IT. V9: "HE PUTS HIS HAND ON THE FLINT; HE OVERTURNS THE MOUNTAINS AT THE ROOTS. V10: "HE CUTS OUT CHANNELS IN THE ROCKS, AND HIS EYE SEES EVERY PRECIOUS THING. V11: "HE DAMS UP STREAMS FROM TRICKLING; WHAT IS HIDDEN HE BRINGS FORTH TO LIGHT. V12: "BUT WHERE CAN WISDOM BE FOUND? AND WHERE IS THE PLACE OF UNDERSTANDING? V13: "MAN DOES NOT KNOW ITS VALUE NOR IS IT FOUND IN THE LAND OF THE LIVING. V14: "THE DEEP SAYS 'IT IS NOT IN ME' AND THE SEA SAYS, 'IT IS NOT IN ME.' V15: "IT CANNOT BE PURCHASED FOR GOLD NOR CAN SILVER BE WEIGHED FOR ITS PRICE. V16: "IT CANNOT BE VALUED IN THE GOLD OF OPHIR, IN THE PRECIOUS ONYX OR SAPPHIRE. V17: "NEITHER GOLD NOR CRYSTAL CAN EQUAL IT, NOR CAN IT BE EXCHANGED FOR JEWELRY OF FINE GOLD. V18: "NO MENTION SHALL BE MADE OF CORAL OR QUARTZ, FOR THE PRICE OF WISDOM IS ABOVE RUBIES. V19: "THE TOPAZ OF ETHIOPIA CANNOT EQUAL IT, NOR CAN IT BE VALUED IN PURE GOLD..."**

**EZEKIEL'S LAMENATATION UPON THE KING OF TYRUS (EZEKIEL 28:13)**

**V13: "YOU WERE IN EDEN, THE GARDEN OF GOD; EVERY PRECIOUS STONE WAS YOUR COVERING: THE SARDIUS (RUBY), TOPAZ, AND THE DIAMOND, BERYL, ONYX (AGATE), AND JASPER, TURQUOISE, AND EMERALD WITH GOLD. THE WORKMANSHIP OF YOUR TIMBRELS AND PIPES WAS PREPARED FOR YOU ON THE DAY YOU WERE CREATED."**

**THE GEMS OF NEW JERUSALEM (REVELATION 21:18 – 20)**

**V18: "THE CONSTRUCTION OF ITS WALL WAS OF JASPER: AND THE CITY WAS PURE GOLD LIKE CLEAR GLASS. V19: "THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE WALL OF THE CITY WERE ADORNED WITH ALL KINDS OF PRECIOUS STONES: THE FIRST FOUNDATION WAS JASPER, THE SECOND SAPPHIRE, THE THIRD CHALCEDONY, THE FOURTH EMERALD, V20: THE FIFTH SARDONYX, THE SIXTH SARDIUS (RUBY), THE SEVENTH CHRYSOLYTE (PERIDOT), THE EIGHTH BERYL, THE NINTH TOPAZ, THE TENTH CHRYSOPRASUS (QUARTZ), THE ELEVENTH JACINTH, AND THE TWELFTH AMETHYST."**

**EXCURSUS: THE TOP HIGH PRIEST’S JEALOUS LAW JUSTICE ARMOR LAW INVINCIBLE URIM AND LAW INVINCIBLE THUMMIM**

**AS REGARDS PERMISSIBLE DIVINATION (SEEKING THE WILL OF GOD BY SOME SORT OF PHYSICAL ACTION), THE BREAST-PIECE’S POCKET WAS THE HOLDING PLACE FOR THE DIVINATION STONES, THE URIM AND THUMMIM (“LIGHTS” AND “DARKS”). HOW WERE THESE USED? THERE ARE THREE STRONG POSSIBILITIES: (1) A NUMBER OF LIGHT AND DARK STONES WERE CONTAINED IN THE POUCH. WHEN, IN FAITH AND WITH PRAYER, THE TOP HIGH PRIEST [TOP HIGH CHIEF OF POLICE] ASKED GOD QUESTIONS IN A RESPECTFUL MANNER (NOT INTERROGATING OR DEMANDING TO THE LORD), HE WOULD THEN PULL OUT STONES ONE BY ONE TO GIVE ANSWERS, A LIGHT STONE PERHAPS INDICATING YES AND A DARK ONE INDICATING NO (OR VICE VERSA). (2) ONLY TWO LARGE STONES WERE IN THE POUCH. EACH TIME THE TOP HIGH PRIEST [TOP HIGH CHIEF OF POLICE] HAD A QUESTION FOR GOD ON BEHALF OF THE PEOPLE, HE REACHED IN AND FOUND ONE. ITS COLOR TOLD HIM, AS ABOVE, THE ANSWER. THEN HE REPLACED THE STONE AND REACHED AGAIN FOR A NEW ANSWER. THIS SEEMS UNLIKELY SINCE IT WOULD HAVE BEEN ALL TOO EASY FOR THE TOP PRIEST [TOP HIGH SERGEANT] TO HAVE A FAIRLY GOOD SENSE OF WHICH OF THE TWO STONES WAS WHERE IN THE POUCH. (3) TWO OR MORE STONES WERE IN THE POUCH, SHAPED SOMETHING LIKE DICE, WITH ALTERNATING SIDES OR FACES COLORED LIGHT AND DARK. THESE WERE PULLED FROM THE POUCH, “THROWN” AS DICE ARE THROWN, AND EXAMINED TO SEE WHICH COLORS CAME “UP.” WE HAVE NO INDICATION FROM BIBLICAL MATERIAL THAT ALLOWS US TO SORT AMONG THESE OPTIONS AND UNDERSTAND WHAT THE URIM AND THUMMIM LOOKED LIKE AND HOW THEY ACTUALLY WERE EMPLOYED PHYSICALLY. WHAT WE DO KNOW IS THAT GOD SOMETIMES CHOSE TO REVEAL HIS DIVINE WILL IN THIS MANNER RATHER THAN BY SPEAKING DIRECTLY TO THE PEOPLE. NO LESS AN IMPORTANT DECISION THAN THE CHOOSING OF A REPLACEMENT FOR JUDAS FOR THE INNER CORE OF THE CHURCH’S APOSTOLIC WITNESS WAS REACHED IN A SIMILAR MANNER IN THE NEW COVENANT (ACTS 1:26), SUGGESTING THAT GOD MAY HONOR A NONVERBAL MEANS OF CHOICE OR DISCERNMENT OF HIS DIVINE WILL FROM AMONG OPTIONS OR IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS POSED. IT SHOULD BE OBVIOUS TO THE READER OF THE PENTATEUCH AND THE HOLY BIBLE IN GENERAL, HOWEVER, THAT GOD CAN USE “PERMISSIBLE DIVINATION” METHODS AS HIS PRIMARY MODE OF REVELATION. THE TERM “OVER HIS HEART” IS USED TWICE IN THESE VERSES (ONCE IN THE FORM “OVER AARON’S HEART”)—REFERRING IN TURN TO THE POSITION OF THE NAMES OF THE ISRAELITE TRIBES AS WELL AS TO THE URIM AND THUMMIM STONES USED TO DISCERN THE WILL OF GOD. THE HOLY BIBLE DOES NOT TEACH THAT THE HEART IS THE CENTER OF THE EMOTIONS OR OF THE SPIRIT OR OF THE MIND, BUT ALL THESE CONCEPTS WERE ALIVE AND WELL IN THE CULTURE IN WHICH THE HOLY BIBLE IS REVEALED AND WERE PART OF THE IDIOMATIC LANGUAGE AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK REFLECTED IN THE HOLY BIBLE’S LANGUAGE (MUCH LIKE THE EXPRESSIONS “LEARN IT BY HEART” OR “I HAVEN’T THE HEART FOR …” IN TODAY’S ENGLISH). ACCORDINGLY, HAVING THE BREAST-PIECE AND ITS CONTENTS “OVER AARON’S HEART” HELPED ISRAELITES UNDERSTAND THE VALUE OF THESE OBJECTS AND THE CORRESPONDING VALUE TO GOD OF HIS COVENANT PEOPLE AND OF HIS DESIRE TO REVEAL HIMSELF TO THEM. THEOLOGICALLY, THE URIM AND THUMMIM REPRESENTED SOMETHING ON THE ORDER OF LAST RESORT APPEALS TO GOD FOR GUIDANCE—NOT INDIVIDUAL GUIDANCE BUT NATIONAL GUIDANCE ON MATTERS THAT WOULD REQUIRE THE AGREEMENT AND CONCERTED EFFORT OF THE WHOLE PEOPLE. THE PEOPLE’S FIRST RESORT WAS SUPPOSED TO BE OBEDIENCE TO THE WRITTEN COVENANT SINCE THE WRITTEN COVENANT CONSTITUTED THE MOST BASIC OR FOUNDATIONAL GUIDANCE, GENERALLY AND PERPETUALLY APPLICABLE, THAT THEY POSSESSED. THE SECOND RESORT WOULD BE TO LISTEN FOR DIRECT DIVINE GUIDANCE THROUGH THE WORD OF GOD FROM A TRUE PROPHET, SOMETHING THAT GOD OCCASIONALLY, BUT NOT NECESSARILY REGULARLY, GAVE THEM. THE THIRD RESORT WOULD BE PRAYER, AND URIM AND THUMMIM USE FALL UNDER THIS CATEGORY. WITH PRAYER, SEEKING TO UNDERSTAND HOW BEST TO TAKE A NATIONAL DIRECTION OF SOME SORT, THE URIM AND THUMMIM WOULD BE DRAWN FROM THE BREAST-PIECE POUCH AND EXAMINED FOR GOD’S ANSWER TO THE PEOPLE’S PRAYER. IT MAY BE ASSUMED THAT THEY UNDERSTOOD OR SHOULD HAVE UNDERSTOOD THAT IF THEY HAD FAITHFULLY TRIED THE FIRST TWO RESORTS AND RECEIVED NO WORD FROM THE LORD, THEY MIGHT IN FAITH TRY THE THIRD RESORT, NOT AS A MATTER OF RIGHT BUT AS ALLOWED BY AND GUIDED BY AN ORTHODOX TOP HIGH PRIEST [TOP HIGH CHIEF OF POLICE] MINISTERING PROPERLY “BEFORE THE LORD.” IT MAY ALSO BE ASSUMED THAT SINCE THE ISRAELITES WERE DRAWN MORE OFTEN TO HETERODOXY THAN ORTHODOXY AND USUALLY PREFERRED IDOL WORSHIP TO KEEPING STEPHEN YAHWEH’S COVENANT, THEIR USE OF THE URIM AND THUMMIM WOULD MOST OFTEN HAVE FAILED—AND THAT THEY AND/OR THE TOP HIGH PRIEST [TOP HIGH CHIEF OF POLICE] AT ANY GIVEN TIME MAY NOT HAVE KNOWN THE DIFFERENCE, BLINDED AS THEY WERE BY THEIR DISOBEDIENCE. THE URIM AND THUMMIM WERE MECHANICAL DEVICES OF PERMISSIBLE DIVINATION THAT HAD VALIDITY IN CERTAIN LIMITED CONTEXTS AND ONLY AS GOD CHOSE TO GUIDE THE HAND OF THE TOP HIGH PRIEST [TOP HIGH CHIEF OF POLICE] IN RESPONSE TO FAITHFUL PRAYER FROM AN OBEDIENT PEOPLE. IN THEMSELVES THEY WERE EMPOWERED COLORED PRECIOUS STONES THAT POSSESSED PERMISSIBLE INTRINSIC MAGICAL POWERS FROM THE LORD IN ACTS 5:1-11; 13:4-12.**

**THE TOP HIGH PRIEST’S JEALOUS LAW JUSTICE ARMOR OF THE LAW INVINCIBLE ROBE (28:31–35)**

**28:31–35 BY CONTRAST TO THE MULTICOLORED EPHOD WITH ITS MULTICOLORED BREAST-PIECE, THE ROBE WORN UNDER THE EPHOD WAS OF ONE COLOR, BLUE (V. 31). THUS, IT COORDINATED IN COLOR WITH THE EPHOD BUT DID NOT RIVAL IT IN BEAUTY. IT APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN A LARGE RECTANGLE, ABOUT EIGHT FEET LONG, WITH A HOLE IN THE MIDDLE FOR THE TOP HIGH PRIEST’S HEAD (V. 32) THAT WAS FINISHED ALL AROUND WITH A BOUND COLLAR (NIV “WOVEN EDGE LIKE A COLLAR”; NRSV “WOVEN BINDING AROUND THE OPENING, LIKE THE OPENING IN A COAT OF MAIL”; HCSB “A WOVEN COLLAR WITH AN OPENING LIKE THAT FOR JEALOUS LAW JUSTICE BODY ARMOR IN WISDOM OF SOLOMON 5:15-23”). THE ROBE WOULD THEN HANG FRONT AND BACK OF THE TOP HIGH PRIEST [TOP HIGH CHIEF OF POLICE], PRESUMABLY DOWN TO ABOUT HIS ANKLES, WITH THE SIDES OVERLAPPING EACH OTHER OR ELSE ACTUALLY SEWN TOGETHER. IF THEY WERE SIMPLY OVERLAPPED OR IF THE ROBE WAS AMPLE ENOUGH THAT IT NEEDED TO BE GATHERED TO THE TOP HIGH PRIEST’S BODY, THEY WOULD BE SECURED WITH THE SASH OF THE EPHOD SO THAT THE ROBE PROVIDED FULL COVERAGE OF THE TOP PRIEST’S BODY. ALL AROUND THE HEM (THE BOTTOM CIRCUMFERENCE) OF THE ROBE POMEGRANATE-SHAPED YARN TASSELS IN THE DOMINANT COLORS OF THE TABERNACLE AND EPHOD (BLUE PURPLE AND SCARLET, V. 33) WERE INTERSPERSED WITH SMALL GOLD BELLS (VV. 33–34). THE POMEGRANATE WAS A PRIZED FRUIT OF THE ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN WORLD, DENOTING ABUNDANCE AND BEAUTY BUT WITHOUT THEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE OTHERWISE. THE POMEGRANATE TASSELS ADDED DECORATIVE BEAUTY TO THE ROBE BUT HAD NO SPECIAL FUNCTION OTHERWISE, UNLESS THEY WERE SO CLOSELY SPACED IN CONNECTION WITH THE BELLS THAT THEY ACTUALLY FUNCTIONED AS MUFFLERS FOR THE BELLS—SOMETHING THAT CANNOT BE EITHER PROVED OR DISPROVED FROM THE GENERAL DESCRIPTIONS GIVEN IN THE TEXT. THE GOLD ALARM BELLS AT THE LOWER HEM OF THE ROBE (V. 34) HAD A MOST IMPORTANT FUNCTION: PREVENTING THE TOP HIGH PRIEST’S DEATH (V. 35). THIS PART OF THE DESCRIPTION IMPLIES THAT THE TOP HIGH PRIEST [TOP HIGH CHIEF OF POLICE] LED THE OTHER PRIESTS [SERGEANTS] INTO THE HOLY PLACE (THE OUTER ROOM) OF THE TABERNACLE IN THOSE CASES WHERE OTHER PRIESTS [SERGEANTS] ACCOMPANIED HIM, SO WHETHER HE WAS ALONE OR ACCOMPANIED, HE IS THE FIRST TO ENTER OR EXIT. STEPHEN YAHWEH’S PRIVACY, RESPECT AND DIGNITY WERE THUS FURTHER SYMBOLIZED BY THE RULING THAT HIS HOUSE COULD NOT BE INVADED WITHOUT PROPER WARNING. A HOUSE THAT COULD BE ENTERED AND EXITED CASUALLY WOULD HARDLY CONSTITUTE AN ENGLISH ROYAL DOMICILE FOR THE TOP ENGLISH LORD OF GLORY [ACTS 7:2]. DID GOD ACTUALLY NEED TO HEAR THE BELLS TO KNOW THAT THE TOP HIGH PRIEST [TOP HIGH CHIEF OF POLICE], WITH OR WITHOUT OTHER PRIESTS [SERGEANTS] ACCOMPANYING HIM, HAD ENTERED THE TABERNACLE? HARDLY. ONCE AGAIN, THE VALUE OF A PART OF THE VESTMENTS RESIDED NOT IN ITS ACTUAL REQUIRED FUNCTION BUT IN THE SYMBOLISM OF THAT FUNCTION RELATIVE TO THE COVENANT REALITY ESTABLISHED BY GOD FOR THE BENEFIT OF HIS PEOPLE.**

**THE TOP HIGH PRIEST’S JEALOUS LAW JUSTICE ARMOR OF THE LAW INVINCIBLE TURBAN FOREHEAD PLATE (28:36–38)**

**28:36–38 ALTHOUGH THE TURBAN ITSELF HAS NOT YET BEEN DESCRIBED (SEE V. 39), ITS DOMINANT FEATURE WOULD BE THE SPECIAL GOLD FOREHEAD “PLATE” (NRSV “ROSETTE”) THAT IS THEREFORE MENTIONED FIRST, ON THE ANALOGY OF THE WAY THE ARK IS MENTIONED BEFORE THE TABERNACLE IN GENERAL OR THE EPHOD BEFORE THE VESTMENTS THAT WERE ACTUALLY DONNED FIRST. THE FOREHEAD PLATE WAS TO BEAR THE ENGRAVED INSCRIPTION “HOLY TO THE LORD [STEPHEN YAHWEH]” “AS ON A SEAL” (THUS DEEPLY CUT INTO THE GOLD AND OF PERMANENT QUALITY; CF. VV. 9, 11, 21). THE “BLUE CORD” THAT ATTACHED IT TO THE TURBAN (V. 37) PRESUMABLY IS COLORED THE SAME HUE OF BLUE AS IS THE ROBE (V. 31). THE GOLD FOREHEAD PLATE WAS NOT PRIMARILY DECORATIVE BUT APPARENTLY SYMBOLIZED AARON’S ROLE AS REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PEOPLE IN THE PROCESS OF ATONEMENT (V. 38). THE GRAMMAR OF V. 38 SEEMS TO LINK THE PLATE WITH HIS BEARING THE PEOPLE’S GUILT, SO MUCH SO THAT IT MIGHT BE BETTER TO TRANSLATE THE VERSE: “IT SHOULD BE ON AARON’S FOREHEAD SO THAT AARON MAY BEAR THE INIQUITY OF THE HOLY THINGS [I.E., THEIR SACRIFICIAL GIFTS] THAT THE ISRAELITES MAKE HOLY [I.E., OFFER AS HOLY OFFERINGS] WITH REGARD TO ANY OF THEIR HOLY GIFTS; IT MUST BE ON AARON’S FOREHEAD CONTINUALLY SO THAT THEY [THE PEOPLE] WILL HAVE FAVOR WITH [STEPHEN] YAHWEH.” IN OTHER WORDS, WITHOUT THE FOREHEAD PIECE ON THE TURBAN, AARON’S REPRESENTATIVE ROLE ON BEHALF OF THE PEOPLE IN SEEKING FORGIVENESS FROM SIN THROUGH SACRIFICES & OFFERINGS MIGHT HAVE BEEN NULLIFIED OR AT LEAST ENDANGERED. HOW COULD A SIMPLE GOLD PLATE WITH A SIMPLE INSCRIPTION ON IT SUCH AS HOLY TO STEPHEN YAHWEH PLAY SUCH AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN “BEARING GUILT” AND MAKING THE ISRAELITES “ACCEPTABLE TO THE LORD”? THIS PIECE IS EMPOWERED BY THE LORD, AS WITH ALL THE PIECES OF THE TOP HIGH PRIEST [TOP HIGH CHIEF OF POLICE]. ALSO, ANOTHER ANSWER IS THAT CONSCIOUS FAITH IS CENTRAL TO RELIGIOUS PERMISSIBLE MAGICAL RITUAL. THE PERSON WHO TAKES COMMUNION THINKING THAT IT IS A SNACK DURING A WORSHIP SERVICE DOES NOT RENEW IN COVENANT OBEDIENCE CHRIST’S “DEATH UNTIL HE COMES AGAIN” BUT RATHER JUST EATS SOME FOOD (IN VIOLATION, OF COURSE, OF THE PURPOSE OF THE RITUAL; CF. 1 COR 11:20–22, 34). THE PERSON WHO PARTICIPATES IN A CEREMONY OF BAPTISM REGARDING IT AS A REFRESHING DIP IN A BODY OF WATER HAS NOT SIGNIFIED CONVERSION TO CHRIST OR THE RECEPTION OF THE SPIRIT [JOHN 4:23-24] BUT HAS MERELY HAD AN EXTREMELY TRUNCATED BATH. THE PERSON WHO ATTENDS CHURCH MERELY TO LOOK PIOUS OR LOOK HOLY OR LOOK FOR SOME ASS, HAS NOT TRULY WORSHIPED BUT HAS SIMPLY BEEN PRESENT WHEN OTHER PEOPLE DID. IN OTHER WORDS, A PERSON’S BELIEF ABOUT WHAT HE OR SHE IS DOING IN A RELIGIOUS ACT IS ESSENTIAL TO THE TRUE INTENT & VALIDITY OF THAT ACT. THE FOREHEAD PIECE WAS MERELY A REMINDER, TO AARON AND THE ISRAELITES, THAT AARON’S ACTIONS ON THEIR BEHALF WERE DONE IN TRUE FAITH FOR A PURPOSE: TO RECEIVE GOD’S GRACIOUS FORGIVENESS OF SINS THAT THEY MIGHT BE TRULY HOLY, IN ACCORDANCE WITH HIS COMMAND THAT THEY SERVE HIM AS “A KINGDOM OF PRIESTS [SERGEANTS[ AND A HOLY NATION” (19:6). IT WAS THEIR FAITH IN THE LORD, THAT AARON’S ACTIONS WERE DONE FAITHFULLY AND IN FAITH IN THE LORD, ON THEIR BEHALF THAT SAVED THEM FROM THEIR SINS, BUT THE GOLD FOREHEAD PIECE WORN ON THE TURBAN DOES HAVE SPECIAL PERMISSIBLE MAGICAL POWERS FROM THE LORD ALWAYS OUTSIDE THE GATES OF JERUSALEM GLOBALLY. THE GOLD PIECE AND ITS INSCRIPTION SYMBOLIZED THE MEANING BEHIND AARON’S ACTIONS THAT IS EMPOWERED BY THE LORD. ONE OF ZECHARIAH’S PROPHECIES OF THE GREAT LATTER DAYS IN CHRIST TAKES THE WORDING “HOLY TO THE LORD” AND USES IT WITHIN HIS DEPICTION OF A COMING TIME OF GENERALIZED HOLINESS (ZECH 14:20–21: “ON THAT DAY, HOLY TO THE LORD WILL BE INSCRIBED ON THE BELLS OF THE HORSES, AND THE COOKING POTS IN THE LORD’S HOUSE WILL BE LIKE THE SACRED BOWLS IN FRONT OF THE ALTAR. EVERY POT IN JERUSALEM AND JUDAH WILL BE HOLY TO THE LORD ALMIGHTY, AND ALL WHO COME TO SACRIFICE [OFFER] WILL TAKE SOME OF THE POTS AND COOK IN THEM”). ZECHARIAH DEPICTS THE DEMOCRATIZATION OF HOLINESS WITH THE WORDING OF THE INSCRIPTION (AS ORIGINALLY ONLY ON AARON’S FOREHEAD BUT IN THE LATTER DAYS ON EVERY HORSE), BELLS (AS ORIGINALLY ON AARON’S ROBE BUT IN THE LATTER DAYS ADORNING EVEN HORSES AS AN EXPANSION ON THE FUNCTION OF THEIR USUAL BELLS), AND COOKING POTS (AS ORIGINALLY USED FOR SECULAR PURPOSES BUT IN THE LATTER DAYS USED FOR HOLY SACRIFICES & HOLY OFFERINGS BECAUSE SO MANY PEOPLE WILL WORSHIP THE TRUE GOD IN SPIRIT AND TRUTH [JOHN 4:23-24] THAT EVERY POT IN JERUSALEM WILL BE NEEDED). ZECHARIAH’S REUSE OF THE PRESENT PASSAGE’S CONTENT CONFIRMS ITS MEANING: THE INSCRIPTION SIGNIFIES THE HOLINESS THAT RESULTS FROM TOTAL OBEDIENCE IN FAITH, WHICH IN THE NEW COVENANT BECOMES SO WIDESPREAD THAT IT SURPASSES WHAT COULD EVER BE ACCOMPLISHED BY ANY MORTAL LORD, AS A HUMAN TOP HIGH PRIEST [TOP HIGH CHIEF OF POLICE], NO MATTER HOW MANY SACRIFICES & OFFERINGS HE MIGHT TRY TO MAKE ON BEHALF OF THE PEOPLE. BUT IT TAKES AN ETERNAL TOP HIGH PRIEST [TOP HIGH CHIEF OF POLICE] TO GAIN ANY GROUND WITH THE TOP ENGLISH LORD!!!**

**THE TOP HIGH PRIEST’S JEALOUS LAW JUSTICE ARMOR OF THE LAW INVINCIBLE TUNIC, LAW INVINCIBLE TURBAN, AND LAW INVINCIBLE SASH (28:39)**

**28:39 HERE NO SPECIAL SYMBOLISM IS INTENDED, OTHER THAN THAT OF THE QUALITY OF THE MATERIALS AND MANUFACTURE AS THEY SHOW APPROPRIATENESS FOR SERVICE TO THE GREAT KING, STEPHEN YAHWEH. THE TUNIC IS SOMETHING LIKE A SHIRT, AND IT IS ALMOST SURELY WORN UNDER, NOT OVER, THE ROBE, THOUGH THE MEANS OF WEARING IT IS NEVER DESCRIBED IN THE OLD TESTAMENT. IT AND THE TURBAN WERE MADE OF LINEN, WITH THE TUNIC HAVING A CHECKERED WEAVE—VISIBLE PERHAPS AS THE SLEEVES AND PART OF THE COLLAR PROTRUDED FROM UNDER THE ROBE. THE SASH, FOR TYING THE ROBE AND INNER GARMENTS AROUND THE TOP HIGH PRIEST’S WAIST, IS TO BE “THE WORK OF AN EMBROIDERER,” A DESCRIPTION THAT USES THE SAME LANGUAGE FOUND ALREADY IN 26:36 AND 27:16 IN CONNECTION WITH THE TABERNACLE’S INNER CURTAINS, THUS SUGGESTING THAT IT IS TO BE MADE TO RESEMBLE THEM OR “PICK UP” THEIR MOTIF AS PART OF THE TOP HIGH PRIEST’S GARMENT, JUST AS THE EPHOD AND BREAST-PIECE DID.**

**THE TOP PRIEST’S JEALOUS LAW JUSTICE ARMOR OF THE LAW INVINCIBLE GARMENTS---LAW INVINCIBLE TUNICS, LAW INVINCIBLE SASHES & LAW INVINCIBLE HEADBANDS FOR THE OTHER TOP PRIESTS---TOP HIGH SERGEANTS (28:40–43)**

**28:40–43 THE TERM “AARON’S SONS” FUNCTIONS AS THE STANDARD WORDING IN THE PENTATEUCH TO REFER TO PRIESTS [SERGEANTS] IN GENERAL. FOR THE PRIESTS, “TUNICS, SASHES AND HEADBANDS” [NRSV “HEADDRESSES]” WERE REQUIRED, UNDOUBTEDLY SPECIALLY MADE BUT ALSO UNDOUBTEDLY NOT EXACTLY THE SAME AS THOSE WORN BY THE TOP HIGH PRIEST [TOP HIGH CHIEF OF POLICE]. AS IF TO UNDERSCORE THIS, THE WORD FOR “HEADBANDS” IN HEBREW IS ENTIRELY DIFFERENT FROM THE WORD FOR THE “TURBAN” WORN BY THE TOP HIGH PRIEST [TOP HIGH CHIEF OF POLICE]. HOWEVER, THESE VESTMENTS WERE MADE, THEY WERE OF SUFFICIENT QUALITY AND BEAUTY AS “TO GIVE THEM DIGNITY AND HONOR” (V. 40; CF. 28:2) SO THAT THE REGULAR PRIESTS [SERGEANTS], WHO SERVED UNDER THE TOP HIGH PRIEST [TOP HIGH CHIEF OF POLICE], WOULD STILL BE WORTHY OF SERVICE AT THE HOUSE OF THE LORD OF GLORY. SINCE ONLY “TUNICS, SASHES AND HEADBANDS” ARE MENTIONED AMONG OUTER GARMENTS, IT IS LIKELY THAT THE REGULAR PRIESTS [SERGESANTS] DID NOT ALWAYS—OR EVER—WEAR ROBES. THIS WOULD SEEM TO BE THE POINT OF THE WORDING IN 29:7–8 AS WELL. IN LIGHT OF THE WORK AT LEAST SOME OF THEM HAD—BUTCHERING, LIFTING HUNKS OF MEAT ON AND OFF THE ALTAR, SEPARATING INNARDS FROM COOKABLE FLESH, CARRYING COALS, CLEANING UP ASHES—THE WEARING OF A ROBE MAY NOT HAVE BEEN APPROPRIATE IN ANY CASE, SO THE TUNICS, SASHES, AND HEADBANDS MAY HAVE BEEN THE SOLE OUTER GARMENTS ACTUALLY REQUIRED. IT IS ALSO POSSIBLE THAT THESE THREE GARMENTS ARE SIMPLY MENTIONED IN THE FASHION OF A SYNECDOCHE FOR ALL THE GARMENTS, INCLUDING A ROBE, PERHAPS BECAUSE THE WEARING OF A ROBE MAY HAVE BEEN OPTIONAL, EVEN WEATHER-DEPENDENT. THE PRESENT TEXT DOES NOT UNAMBIGUOUSLY INDICATE EITHER OPTION. ALL PRIESTS [SERGEANTS], HOWEVER, WHETHER TOP HIGH PRIEST [TOP HIGH CHIEF OF POLICE] OR REGULAR PRIEST [SERGEANT], WORE LINEN UNDERPANTS, “REACHING FROM THE WAIST TO THE THIGH,” IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROHIBITION AGAINST ACCIDENTALLY EXPOSING ONE’S PRIVATE PARTS TO ANYTHING HOLY TO STEPHEN YAHWEH (CF. 20:26). IN VIRTUALLY ALL CULTURES, PUBLIC EXPOSURE OF THE AREA FROM THIGH TO WAIST IS CONSIDERED VULGAR, REGARDLESS OF WHEREVER OTHER BODILY “MODESTY ZONES” MAY OR MAY NOT BE IDENTIFIED. VERSE 41 DESCRIBES AN ORDER TO BE FOLLOWED FOR THREE SEPARATE ACTIONS: THE VESTING, ANOINTING, AND CONSECRATION/ORDINATION OF THE HIGH PRIESTS (AND, EXCEPT FOR THE ANOINTING, OF OTHER PRIESTS [SERGEANTS]), AN ORDER THAT APPARENTLY WAS NOT DEVIATED FROM, JUDGING FROM ALLUSIONS ELSEWHERE TO THE THREE-PART SEQUENCE, INCLUDING THE FOLLOWING CHAPTER OF EXODUS. ITS WORDING SHOULD NOT BE CONSTRUED TO IMPLY THAT “THESE CLOTHES” WERE ONLY THOSE MENTIONED IN V. 40; RATHER THE POINT IS THAT “THESE CLOTHES” (THOSE REQUIRED OF THE TOP HIGH PRIEST [TOP HIGH CHIEF OF POLICE] AND, COMPARABLY, THOSE REQUIRED OF THE REGULAR PRIESTS) WOULD BE DONNED PRIOR TO ANOINTING WITH OIL AND CONSECRATION/ORDINATION. SIMILARLY, THE FINAL SENTENCE OF V. 43 (“THIS IS TO BE A LASTING ORDINANCE FOR AARON AND HIS DESCENDANTS”) ALMOST SURELY REFERS TO ALL OF THE REGULATIONS IN CHAP. 28 RATHER THAN MERELY THE RULE ABOUT LINEN UNDERGARMENTS IMMEDIATELY PRECEDING. ACCORDINGLY, IT IS PROPERLY SET OUT AS A SEPARATE PARAGRAPH IN THE NIV.**

**LAWS ON ORDINATION [INITIATION] OF THE PRIESTS [SERGEANTS] (29:1–46)**

**1 “THIS IS WHAT YOU ARE TO DO TO CONSECRATE THEM, SO THEY MAY SERVE ME AS PRIESTS: TAKE A YOUNG BULL AND TWO RAMS WITHOUT DEFECT. 2 AND FROM FINE WHEAT FLOUR, WITHOUT YEAST, MAKE BREAD, AND CAKES MIXED WITH OIL, AND WAFERS SPREAD WITH OIL. 3 PUT THEM IN A BASKET AND PRESENT THEM IN IT—ALONG WITH THE BULL AND THE TWO RAMS. 4 THEN BRING AARON AND HIS SONS TO THE ENTRANCE TO THE TENT OF MEETING AND WASH THEM WITH WATER. 5 TAKE THE GARMENTS AND DRESS AARON WITH THE TUNIC, THE ROBE OF THE EPHOD, THE EPHOD ITSELF AND THE BREAST-PIECE. FASTEN THE EPHOD ON HIM BY ITS SKILLFULLY WOVEN WAISTBAND. 6 PUT THE TURBAN ON HIS HEAD AND ATTACH THE SACRED DIADEM TO THE TURBAN. 7 TAKE THE ANOINTING OIL AND ANOINT HIM BY POURING IT ON HIS HEAD. 8 BRING HIS SONS AND DRESS THEM IN TUNICS 9 AND PUT HEADBANDS ON THEM. THEN TIE SASHES ON AARON AND HIS SONS. THE PRIESTHOOD [NCO CORPS] IS THEIRS BY A LASTING ORDINANCE. IN THIS WAY YOU SHALL ORDAIN AARON AND HIS SONS. 10 “BRING THE BULL TO THE FRONT OF THE TENT OF MEETING, AND AARON AND HIS SONS SHALL LAY THEIR HANDS ON ITS HEAD. 11 SLAUGHTER IT IN THE LORD’S PRESENCE AT THE ENTRANCE TO THE TENT OF MEETING. 12 TAKE SOME OF THE BULL’S BLOOD AND PUT IT ON THE HORNS OF THE ALTAR WITH YOUR FINGER, AND POUR OUT THE REST OF IT AT THE BASE OF THE ALTAR. 13 THEN TAKE ALL THE FAT AROUND THE INNER PARTS, THE COVERING OF THE LIVER, AND BOTH KIDNEYS WITH THE FAT ON THEM, AND BURN THEM ON THE ALTAR. 14 BUT BURN THE BULL’S FLESH AND ITS HIDE AND ITS OFFAL [SHIT] OUTSIDE THE CAMP. IT IS A SIN OFFERING. 15 “TAKE ONE OF THE RAMS, AND AARON AND HIS SONS SHALL LAY THEIR HANDS ON ITS HEAD. 16 SLAUGHTER IT AND TAKE THE BLOOD AND SPRINKLE IT AGAINST THE ALTAR ON ALL SIDES. 17 CUT THE RAM INTO PIECES AND WASH THE INNER PARTS AND THE LEGS, PUTTING THEM WITH THE HEAD AND THE OTHER PIECES. 18 THEN BURN THE ENTIRE RAM ON THE ALTAR. IT IS A BURNT OFFERING TO THE LORD, A PLEASING AROMA, AN OFFERING MADE TO THE LORD BY FIRE. 19 “TAKE THE OTHER RAM, AND AARON AND HIS SONS SHALL LAY THEIR HANDS ON ITS HEAD. 20 SLAUGHTER IT, TAKE SOME OF ITS BLOOD AND PUT IT ON THE LOBES OF THE RIGHT EARS OF AARON AND HIS SONS, ON THE THUMBS OF THEIR RIGHT HANDS, AND ON THE BIG TOES OF THEIR RIGHT FEET. THEN SPRINKLE BLOOD AGAINST THE ALTAR ON ALL SIDES. 21 AND TAKE SOME OF THE BLOOD ON THE ALTAR AND SOME OF THE ANOINTING OIL AND SPRINKLE IT ON AARON AND HIS GARMENTS AND ON HIS SONS AND THEIR GARMENTS. THEN HE AND HIS SONS AND THEIR GARMENTS WILL BE CONSECRATED. 22 “TAKE FROM THIS RAM THE FAT, THE FAT TAIL, THE FAT AROUND THE INNER PARTS, THE COVERING OF THE LIVER, BOTH KIDNEYS WITH THE FAT ON THEM, AND THE RIGHT THIGH. (THIS IS THE RAM FOR THE ORDINATION.) 23 FROM THE BASKET OF BREAD MADE WITHOUT YEAST, WHICH IS BEFORE THE LORD, TAKE A LOAF, AND A CAKE MADE WITH OIL, AND A WAFER. 24 PUT ALL THESE IN THE HANDS OF AARON AND HIS SONS AND WAVE THEM BEFORE THE LORD AS A WAVE OFFERING. 25 THEN TAKE THEM FROM THEIR HANDS AND BURN THEM ON THE ALTAR ALONG WITH THE BURNT OFFERING FOR A PLEASING AROMA TO THE LORD, AN OFFERING MADE TO THE LORD BY FIRE. 26 AFTER YOU TAKE THE BREAST OF THE RAM FOR AARON’S ORDINATION, WAVE IT BEFORE THE LORD AS A WAVE OFFERING, AND IT WILL BE YOUR SHARE. 27 “CONSECRATE THOSE PARTS OF THE ORDINATION RAM THAT BELONG TO AARON AND HIS SONS: THE BREAST THAT WAS WAVED AND THE THIGH THAT WAS PRESENTED. 28 THIS IS ALWAYS TO BE THE REGULAR SHARE FROM THE ISRAELITES FOR AARON AND HIS SONS. IT IS THE CONTRIBUTION THE ISRAELITES ARE TO MAKE TO THE LORD FROM THEIR FELLOWSHIP OFFERINGS. 29 “AARON’S SACRED GARMENTS WILL BELONG TO HIS DESCENDANTS SO THAT THEY CAN BE ANOINTED AND ORDAINED IN THEM. 30 THE SON WHO SUCCEEDS HIM AS PRIEST [SERGEANT] AND COMES TO THE TENT OF MEETING TO MINISTER IN THE HOLY PLACE IS TO WEAR THEM SEVEN DAYS. 31 “TAKE THE RAM FOR THE ORDINATION AND COOK THE MEAT IN A SACRED PLACE. 32 AT THE ENTRANCE TO THE TENT OF MEETING, AARON AND HIS SONS ARE TO EAT THE MEAT OF THE RAM AND THE BREAD THAT IS IN THE BASKET. 33 THEY ARE TO EAT THESE OFFERINGS BY WHICH ATONEMENT WAS MADE FOR THEIR ORDINATION AND CONSECRATION. BUT NO ONE ELSE MAY EAT THEM, BECAUSE THEY ARE SACRED. 34 AND IF ANY OF THE MEAT OF THE ORDINATION RAM OR ANY BREAD IS LEFT OVER TILL MORNING, BURN IT UP. IT MUST NOT BE EATEN, BECAUSE IT IS SACRED. 35 “DO FOR AARON AND HIS SONS EVERYTHING I HAVE COMMANDED YOU, TAKING SEVEN DAYS TO ORDAIN THEM. 36 SACRIFICE A BULL EACH DAY AS A SIN OFFERING TO MAKE ATONEMENT. PURIFY THE ALTAR BY MAKING ATONEMENT FOR IT, AND ANOINT IT TO CONSECRATE IT. 37 FOR SEVEN DAYS MAKE ATONEMENT FOR THE ALTAR AND CONSECRATE IT. THEN THE ALTAR WILL BE MOST HOLY, AND WHATEVER TOUCHES IT WILL BE HOLY. 38 “THIS IS WHAT YOU ARE TO OFFER ON THE ALTAR REGULARLY EACH DAY: TWO LAMBS A YEAR OLD. 39 OFFERS ONE IN THE MORNING AND THE OTHER AT TWILIGHT. 40 WITH THE FIRST LAMB OFFER A TENTH OF AN EPHAH OF FINE FLOUR MIXED WITH A QUARTER OF A HIN OF OIL FROM PRESSED OLIVES, AND A QUARTER OF A HIN OF WINE AS A DRINK OFFERING. 41 SACRIFICE THE OTHER LAMB AT TWILIGHT WITH THE SAME GRAIN OFFERING AND ITS DRINK OFFERING AS IN THE MORNING—A PLEASING AROMA, AN OFFERING MADE TO THE LORD BY FIRE. 42 “FOR THE GENERATIONS TO COME THIS BURNT OFFERING IS TO BE MADE REGULARLY AT THE ENTRANCE TO THE TENT OF MEETING BEFORE THE LORD. THERE I WILL MEET YOU AND SPEAK TO YOU; 43 THERE ALSO I WILL MEET WITH THE ISRAELITES, AND THE PLACE WILL BE CONSECRATED BY MY GLORY. 44 “SO I WILL CONSECRATE THE TENT OF MEETING AND THE ALTAR AND WILL CONSECRATE AARON AND HIS SONS TO SERVE ME AS PRIESTS [SERGEANTS]. 45 THEN I WILL DWELL AMONG THE ISRAELITES AND BE THEIR GOD. 46 THEY WILL KNOW THAT I AM THE LORD THEIR GOD, WHO BROUGHT THEM OUT OF EGYPT SO THAT I MIGHT DWELL AMONG THEM. I AM THE LORD THEIR GOD.**

**THIS CHAPTER PRESCRIBES THE REGULATIONS FOR PROPER CONSECRATION/ORDINATION OF PRIESTS IN ISRAEL FROM THE TIME OF MOSES ONWARD (VV. 1–37), AS WELL AS THE PERMANENT DAILY CONSECRATION OFFERING FOR THE TABERNACLE (VV. 38–43). PROPERLY CONSECRATED/ORDAINED PRIESTS SERVING AT A PROPERLY CONSECRATED HOUSE OF GOD WOULD HELP PROVIDE FOR THE PRESENCE AND BLESSING OF GOD (VV. 44–46). THE CONSECRATION/ORDINATION CEREMONY DESCRIBED IN VV. 1–37 HAD A TOTAL OF SIX STEPS, THREE OF WHICH WERE WASHING, CLOTHING, AND ANOINTING THE PRIESTS, AND THE OTHER THREE OF WHICH INVOLVED PREPARATION AND EXECUTION OF SACRIFICES. THE WASHING RITUAL (V. 4) AND THE FIRST TWO SACRIFICES (THE BREAD/CAKES/WAFERS OFFERING OF VV. 2–3, 23–25 ACCOMPANY THE FIRST TWO ACTUAL SACRIFICES, THAT OF THE BULL AND THE FIRST RAM, VV. 10–18) ARE NOT PARTICULARLY UNIQUE TO PRIESTLY CONSECRATIONS/ORDINATIONS AND MUST BE CONSIDERED AS FUNCTIONING TO PREPARE FOR THE ORDINATION AND MAKE EVERYTHING HOLY. THE ACTUAL ORDINATION/CONSECRATION INVOLVES THE UNIQUE THREE STEPS OF CLOTHING THE PRIESTS, ANOINTING THEM, AND SPECIALLY OFFERING AN ORDINATION RAM AS A SACRIFICE. BECAUSE OF THE SIMILARITIES OF EXOD 29 AND LEV 8–9 (ESP. 8), IT IS NOT SURPRISING THAT SOURCE CRITICS HAVE TRIED TO IDENTIFY SEPARATE PROVENANCES FOR EACH AND ALSO TO DETERMINE WHICH IS THE EARLIER SOURCE. NO CONSENSUS HAS EMERGED, AND AS DURHAM STATES, “THE QUESTION REMAINS INSOLUBLE,” BUT NOT BECAUSE, AS HE SUGGESTS, THERE IS A NEED FOR “ADDITIONAL INFORMATION.” WE WOULD SUGGEST THAT IT REMAINS INSOLUBLE BECAUSE THE ATTEMPT ITSELF IS FUTILE BY REASON OF THE FACT THAT THERE WERE NEVER TWO SOURCES BUT ONE, AND THE SOURCES DID NOT ORIGINATE AT DIFFERENT TIMES BUT AT A SINGLE TIME, THAT OF MOSES AND THE ISRAELITES AT SINAI. EXODUS 29 AND LEV 8–9 SIMPLY COMPLEMENT ONE ANOTHER WITHIN THE OVERALL STRUCTURE OF THE SINAI COVENANT, WITH SUCH REPETITIONS AS OCCUR BEING MINOR IN COMPARISON TO THE LARGE BLOCKS OF COMMAND-FULFILLMENT REPETITION WITHIN EXODUS ITSELF, THOSE DIFFERENCES BEING A FUNCTION OF THE WAY LEVITICUS ADDRESSES PRIESTLY RESPONSIBILITIES IN A CONSIDERABLY MORE FOCUSED MANNER THAN DOES EXODUS AND, SPECIFICALLY, THAT LEV 8–9 IN PARTICULAR NARRATES THE ACTUAL PERFORMANCE OF THE ORDINATION/CONSECRATION CEREMONY.**

**OVERVIEW OF THE ORDINATION/CONSECRATION OF PRIESTS [SERGEANTS] (29:1–9)**

**29:1–9 IN PARALLEL TO HIS PATTERN OF PRESENTATION IN SEVERAL PRIOR PASSAGES, GOD HERE FIRST NAMES THE MATERIALS NEEDED FOR THE PROCESS (VV. 1–3) AND THEN BEGINS TO DESCRIBE THE PROCESS AS IT WOULD LOGICALLY UNFOLD. THIS ORDER HAS A SIMPLE LOGIC TO IT SINCE THE MATERIALS WOULD HAVE TO BE COLLECTED CONSIDERABLY PRIOR TO THE ORDINATION ITSELF. MOSES WOULD DO THE FIRST ORDINATION/CONSECRATION, SO THESE COMMANDS WERE ADDRESSED TO HIM (IN THE SECOND-PERSON SINGULAR) INITIALLY, BUT IN TIME OTHERS WOULD FOLLOW THIS PROCESS—PRESUMABLY THE TOP HIGH PRIEST [TOP HIGH CHIEF OF POLICE] AT ANY GIVEN TIME BEING RESPONSIBLE TO ORDAIN ALL OTHER PRIESTS [SERGEANTS] AND EVEN HIS SUCCESSORS SINCE THEY WOULD BE HIS SON(S). NOTE AGAIN THE EXPLICIT LANGUAGE IN V. 1 IDENTIFYING PRIESTS AS SERVANTS OF STEPHEN YAHWEH. SINCE THE TABERNACLE WAS HIS HOUSE, THOSE WHO WORKED THERE ON HIS BEHALF WERE HIS SERVANTS. THEY HELPED THE GUESTS, BUT THEY CLEARLY WORKED FOR STEPHEN YAHWEH, NOT FOR THE PEOPLE WHO CAME TO VISIT STEPHEN YAHWEH. THE SACRIFICIAL FOOD TO BE GATHERED INCLUDED A YOUNG BULL (IDEAL FOR EATING, NOT AN OLD, TOUGH ANIMAL) AND TWO PERFECT RAMS (IT WOULD BE EASY AND NOT MUCH OF A SACRIFICE TO GET IMPERFECT ONES SINCE FARMERS CULL ALL BUT THE BEST MALES, WHICH THEY KEEP FOR BREEDING) AS WELL AS A VARIETY OF WHEAT FLOUR BREAD, CAKES, AND WAFERS, THE LATTER BEING UNLEAVENED BUT OF HIGH QUALITY, MADE WITH PLENTY OF OIL. ALL THESE REPRESENT THE INGREDIENTS OF A SPECIAL MEAL. THE PRESENTATION OF THE BREADS IN A BASKET (V. 3) SIMPLY REINFORCED THE FORMALITY OF THE MEAL. RITUAL WASHING WAS REQUIRED FOR PRIESTS (V. 4)—AND THIS IN AN ERA WHEN NO HUMANS UNDERSTOOD ANYTHING ABOUT GERMS AND THE HEALTH VALUE OF CLEANLINESS. WASHING AFTER SACRIFICE MAY HAVE BEEN A COMMON-SENSE SORT OF CONVENIENCE IN LIGHT OF THE RESIDUE OF BLOOD, ANIMAL PARTS, AND OTHER FOOD A PRIEST MIGHT HAVE ON HIS HANDS. WASHING BEFORE SACRIFICE, HOWEVER, REPRESENTED OBEDIENCE TO A DIVINE COMMAND THAT CAME FROM A DIVINE UNDERSTANDING OF THE CORRELATION BETWEEN PURITY, HEALTH, AND HOLINESS, EVEN IF PRIESTS MAY HAVE THOUGHT IT WAS SIMPLY SO THAT THE HOLY THINGS WOULD NOT GET DIRTY. THE PRIESTS IN THIS INSTANCE WERE WASHED BEFORE BEING ROBED, SUGGESTING ALSO RESPECT FOR THE PRIESTLY GARMENTS THAT WASHING WOULD HELP KEEP CLEAN (V. 4), AND THEN DRESSED (VV. 5–6) IN THE SORTS OF GARMENTS DESCRIBED IN CHAP. 28, HERE FOCUSING ON THE TOP HIGH PRIEST’S GARMENTS. NO MENTION IS MADE OF THE LINEN UNDERGARMENTS, WHICH PROBABLY WERE ALREADY ON THE PRIESTS WHEN THEY WERE BROUGHT INTO THE TABERNACLE FOR THE WASHING CEREMONY. IN OTHER WORDS, THE WASHING INCLUDED MOST PARTS, BUT NOT ALL OF THEIR BODIES LEST THE LINEN UNDERWEAR, BECOME WET. HAVING BEEN WASHED AND DRESSED, AARON AND THE OTHER PRIESTS, HIS “SONS” (LIT. IN THIS CASE SINCE HIS OWN SONS WOULD SUCCEED HIM AS PRIESTS AND SOON ENOUGH FIGURATIVELY APPLYING TO HIS DESCENDANTS WHO WOULD SERVE IN THAT OFFICE), WERE THEN CONSECRATED (WITH THE SPECIAL NOTATION THAT AARON, AS TOP HIGH PRIEST, IS ALSO ANOINTED, V. 7). VERSE 7 SHOULD NOT BE TAKEN AS IF IT DESCRIBED WHAT TOOK PLACE IN ACTUAL CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER WITHOUT INTERRUPTION AFTER V. 6. IN OTHER WORDS, WE MUST ASSUME THAT THE TOP HIGH PRIEST’S TURBAN WAS REMOVED FROM HIS HEAD WHEN HE IS ANOINTED, THE OIL BEING POURED ON HIS HAIR AND NOT ON HIS HAT. ONCE THE TOP HIGH PRIEST HAD BEEN PROPERLY CONSECRATED/ORDAINED, THE OTHER PRIESTS WERE TO FOLLOW (VV. 8–9), WITH THEIR VESTMENTS DONNED AS APPROPRIATE TO THEIR STATUS AND ROLE, THUS DIFFERENTIATED FROM THE TOP HIGH PRIEST BOTH BY THE DIVINE NATURE OF THEIR VESTMENTS AND BY THEIR NOT BEING ANOINTED AS HE WAS. TOP HIGH PRIEST AND OTHER PRIESTS BEING WASHED AND DRESSED IN A RITUAL THAT WAS ALWAYS TO BE FOLLOWED; THEY WERE READY FOR THE CONSECRATION CEREMONY. IT IS NOTEWORTHY THAT THE PRIESTS THEMSELVES DID NOT PROVIDE THE ANIMALS FOR THEIR CONSECRATION/ORDINATION. PAGAN PRIESTS DID SO (CF. 2 CHR 13:9), BUT TRUE ISRAELITE PRIESTS WERE BORN INTO THEIR ROLE AND DID NOT HAVE TO BUY THEIR OFFICE.**

**THE USE OF A BULL AS A HOLY SIN OFFERING (29:10–14)**

**29:10–14 THE SACRIFICE OF THE BULL IN THIS INSTANCE APPEARS TO HAVE CONSTITUTED A SORT OF PREPARATORY “SIN OFFERING,” DESIGNED TO ATONE FOR ANY UNFORGIVEN SIN THE PRIESTS MAY HAVE PREVIOUSLY COMMITTED AND, AS IT WERE, BROUGHT WITH THEM INTO THEIR ORDINATION CEREMONY, AS WELL AS ANY UNCLEANNESS OR HOLINESS THAT MIGHT HAVE SOMEHOW DEFILED THE ALTAR OF THE TABERNACLE. THE INSTRUCTION “AARON AND HIS SONS SHALL LAY THEIR HANDS ON ITS HEAD” (V. 10) PROVIDES A SYMBOLIC MEANS OF TRANSFERRING THEIR GUILT TO THE BODY OF THE ANIMAL. THEY COULD NOT ACTUALLY DO THIS TRANSFERRING BUT RATHER WERE SYMBOLICALLY ACCEDING TO THE BASIC PRINCIPLE OF SACRIFICE: SOMETHING MUST DIE IN MY PLACE IF I AM TO LIVE—HERE SPECIFICALLY FOCUSED ON “LIVING” IN THE MANNER OF A HOLY PRIEST ACCEPTABLE TO GOD. THE BULL HAVING BEEN SLAUGHTERED “IN THE LORD’S PRESENCE” (INSIDE THE TABERNACLE ENCLOSURE, AT LEAST GENERALLY BEFORE THE FRONT CURTAIN OF THE TABERNACLE, SO AS TO BE “AT THE ENTRANCE TO THE TENT OF MEETING,”440 V. 11), ITS BLOOD WAS USED TO “CLEANSE” THE ALTAR’S HORNS AND OTHERWISE POURED OUT AT THE ALTAR’S BASE, BUT NOT WITH A SENSE OF INCLUSIO (AS IF APPLYING BLOOD TO THE TOP AND THE BOTTOM OF THE ENTIRE ALTAR WOULD “CLEANSE” THE WHOLE). RATHER, THE REST OF THE ALTAR WOULD BE CLEANSED BY THE BLOOD OF THE FIRST RAM (V. 16), YET TO BE SACRIFICED. IN A MANNER TYPICAL OF MOST SACRIFICES, THE FATTY PARTS OF VARIOUS INTERNAL ORGANS WERE OFFERED SYMBOLICALLY TO STEPHEN YAHWEH AS HIS PORTION (V. 13),441 AND THE USELESS PARTS (FLESH, HIDE, OFFAL [SHIT]) WERE BURNED OUTSIDE THE CAMP, COMPLETELY AWAY FROM THE TABERNACLE OR EVEN ANY ISRAELITE DWELLINGS. THUS, ONLY THE BLOOD WAS USED FOR CLEANSING THE AREA AT THE TOP OF AND AROUND THE BASE OF THE ALTAR AND A SMALL PART OF THE ANIMAL FOR AN OFFERING TO GOD—THE VAST MAJORITY OF THE BULL BEING SIMPLY DISPOSED OF BY BURNING. WHY? BECAUSE NO ONE WAS TO “ENJOY” EATING THIS BULL. ITS DEATH WAS AN ATONING, SIN-CLEANSING DEATH RATHER THAN ANY SORT OF BASIS FOR A FELLOWSHIP MEAL.**

**THE FIRST RAM, AS A WHOLE BURNT HOLY RAM OFFERING (29:15–18)**

**29:15–18 AGAIN THE PRIESTS LAY THEIR HANDS ON AN ANIMAL TO SYMBOLIZE THE TRANSFERENCE OF SIN FROM THEM TO IT BEFORE IT WAS KILLED (V. 15). ALREADY A BULL HAD BEEN SACRIFICED, BUT ONLY ITS BLOOD AND SOME FAT PORTIONS HAD BEEN EMPLOYED IN A SIN-ATONING RITUAL (VV. 10–14). THIS TIME THE FIRST OF THE TWO RAMS WAS USED, AND ALL OF IT WOULD BE BURNED ON THE ALTAR EXCEPT FOR ITS BLOOD, WHICH WAS SPRINKLED ON THE ALTAR ON ALL SIDES. THE BLOOD OF THE BULL WAS APPLIED TO THE HORNS AND BASE OF THE ALTAR (V. 12), AND THE REST OF THE ALTAR WAS RITUALLY CLEANSED THROUGH THE SPRINKLING OF THE SACRIFICIAL ANIMAL’S BLOOD ON ITS SIDES, WHICH WERE PREVIOUSLY NOT TOUCHED BY THE BLOOD (V. 16). THIS RAM WAS CUT IN PIECES AND ITS INNER PARTS CLEANSED OF OFFAL AND BLOOD BY WASHING (V. 17) SO THAT IT CONSTITUTED PROPERLY PREPARED SYMBOLIC “FOOD” FOR STEPHEN YAHWEH. IN MOST SACRIFICES PARTS OF THE ANIMAL WERE THROWN AWAY, PARTS WERE OFFERED TO STEPHEN YAHWEH BY BURNING TO ASHES ON THE ALTAR, AND THE REST WERE COOKED AND EATEN BY THE WORSHIPERS AND PRIESTS, WHO EACH GOT A SHARE. IN THIS CASE THE ENTIRE ANIMAL WAS OFFERED TO STEPHEN YAHWEH BY BEING BURNT TO ASHES, SO ALL THE PARTS WERE PLACED ON THE ALTAR, AND NOTHING WAS THROWN AWAY OR KEPT BY THE WORSHIPERS OR PRIESTS (V. 18). IN THE VOCABULARY OF OFFERING, GOD “SMELLS” A SACRIFICE THROUGH ITS “PLEASING AROMA.” THIS DOES NOT MEAN THAT ISRAELITES ACTUALLY THOUGHT HE “INHALED” IT OR THE LIKE OR THAT IT WAS FOOD FOR HIM AS IF HE ACTUALLY COULD GET HUNGRY. RATHER IT WAS A WAY OF DESCRIBING THE FACT THAT THE RISING SMOKE OF THE SACRIFICE AS IT BURNED UP ON THE ALTAR WAFTED UP INTO THE SKY AND THEREFORE SYMBOLICALLY WAS GIVEN TO GOD AND TO NO ONE ELSE “BY FIRE.”**

**USING THE BLOOD OF THE SECOND HOLY (ORDINATION) RAM (29:19–21)**

**29:19–21 IN THE PRIOR TWO INSTANCES OF USING BLOOD FROM A SACRIFICIAL ANIMAL—THE BULL AND THE FIRST RAM—THE BLOOD WAS EMPLOYED FOR RITUAL CLEANSING FROM SIN, APPLIED TO THE ALTAR AND ITS SURROUNDING GROUND. ITS PURPOSE WAS TO CLEANSE THE PLACE AND THE PROCESS, BUT NOT YET THE PERSONS. NOW, HOWEVER, THE BLOOD OF THE SECOND RAM, THE ORDINATION RAM (SEE V. 22), WAS APPLIED TO “AARON AND HIS SONS,” THAT IS, TO THE PRIESTS. FIRST, THE PRIESTS TO BE ORDAINED LAY THEIR HANDS ON THE RAM, ONCE AGAIN TO TRANSFER THEIR SINS FROM IT AS THEY GAVE IT OVER TO STEPHEN YAHWEH (V. 19). THEN, HAVING PROPERLY SLAUGHTERED IT, THE TOP HIGH PRIEST (MOSES AS THE OFFICIANT IN THIS INITIAL INSTANCE BUT LATER WHOEVER IS TOP HIGH PRIEST) TOOK SOME BLOOD COLLECTED IN THE PROCESS OF SLAUGHTER AND TOUCHED IT TO THE RIGHT EARLOBE, RIGHT THUMB, AND RIGHT BIG TOE OF EACH PRIEST BEING ORDAINED. THERE WAS NO DESIRE IN THIS CEREMONY TO MAKE THE PRIEST ALL BLOODY BUT MERELY TO APPLY TO HIM A SMALL TOKEN OF THE BLOOD OF ATONEMENT (V. 20) ON EXPOSED FLESH AT THE TOP, MIDDLE, AND BOTTOM OF HIS BODY, SUGGESTING BY THAT DISTRIBUTION THAT THE BLOOD CARRIED OUT ITS SYMBOLIC FUNCTION ON HIS ENTIRE PERSON. THAT WHICH REMAINED OF THE BLOOD AFTER ITS APPLICATION TO THE EXTREMITIES OF THE PRIESTS THE OFFICIANT MUST THEN “SPRINKLE … AGAINST THE ALTAR ON ALL SIDES.” WHAT HAPPENED NEXT (V. 21) HAD YET ANOTHER SYMBOLISM ATTACHED TO IT. MOSES RETRIEVED SOME OF THE BLOOD THAT WAS ALREADY APPLIED “AGAINST THE ALTAR” (V. 20), MEANING ON ITS SIDES (VV. 16, 20) AND/OR ITS HORNS (V. 12), MIXED IT INTO THE ANOINTING OIL (A COMPOUNDED OIL THAT WILL BE DESCRIBED IN DETAIL IN 30:23–32), AND SPRINKLED THAT ON THE PRIESTS, WITH THE RESULT THAT IN CONSEQUENCE OF ALL OF THE PROCESS—NOT JUST THE ANOINTING—“HE AND HIS SONS AND THEIR GARMENTS WILL BE CONSECRATED.” THE TEXT DOES NOT STATE EXPLICITLY THAT THE BLOOD TAKEN FROM THE ALTAR WAS MIXED WITH THE SPECIAL ANOINTING OIL, BUT SUCH A CONCLUSION FOLLOWS FROM THE FACTS OF THE SITUATION. THE AMOUNT OF BLOOD AVAILABLE FROM THE ALTAR WOULD BE VERY SMALL SINCE THE SMOOTH BRONZE METALLIC SURFACE ON THE SIDES AND HORNS (THE GRILL TOP WAS NOT SPRINKLED OR TOUCHED WITH BLOOD) WOULD CONTAIN JUST TOKEN AMOUNTS OF BLOOD—SO LITTLE THAT IT WOULD BE A MATTER MAINLY OF DABBING AT THE BITS OF BLOOD RESIDUE AFTER VIRTUALLY ALL OF IT HAD SIMPLY RUN DOWN THE SIDES ONTO THE GROUND. WHAT FEW GRAMS (OR MORE LIKELY MILLIGRAMS) OF BLOOD WOULD BE SALVAGED FROM THE ALTAR IN THIS WAY WOULD THEN UNDER NO CONDITIONS BE ENOUGH TO SPRINKLE THE PRIESTS AND THEIR CLOTHING. ONLY BY MIXING OF THE TINY BIT OF BLOOD INTO THE AMPLE SUPPLY OF ANOINTING OIL WOULD MOSES OR THE SUCCESSIVE OFFICIANT HIGH PRIESTS HAVE HAD ENOUGH LIQUID FOR THE BLOOD ACTUALLY TO REACH THE BODIES AND CLOTHING OF THE PRIESTS BEING ORDAINED. BUT BLOOD THERE MUST BE, NO MATTER HOW SMALL AND TOKEN THE AMOUNT. WHY? BECAUSE IT IS THE DEATH OF CHRIST THAT QUALIFIES HIS SERVANTS TO BE HOLY ENOUGH TO ENTER INTO THE WORK OF HIS MINISTRY BECAUSE THAT DEATH CAN BE SIGNIFIED ONLY BY BLOOD, NOT OIL, AND BECAUSE ALL OLD TESTAMENT SACRIFICES POINT TO THE ULTIMATE SACRIFICE [OFFERING] OF CHRIST, THE SACRIFICE THAT ACTUALLY PROVIDES THE ATONEMENT, TO WHICH ALL OTHER PREVIOUS SACRIFICES LOOK FOR THEIR DERIVED VALIDITY. IN THE LOGIC OF THE OLD TESTAMENT’S REVEALED SACRIFICIAL SYSTEM, OIL HELPS SIGNIFY PURITY AND CLEANNESS, BUT NOT FORGIVENESS. THE COMBINATION OF THE OIL AND THE BLOOD SIGNIFY PURITY OF SERVICE AND FORGIVENESS OF SIN RESPECTIVELY. PURITY AND FORGIVENESS MADE THE PRIESTS ACCEPTABLE TO GOD — “CONSECRATED,” MEANING “HOLY.”**

**OFFERING THE REST OF THE SECOND HOLY (ORDINATION) RAM (29:22–26)**

**29:22–26 THE SELECTION AND DISTRIBUTION OF VARIOUS PARTS OF THIS SECOND RAM WERE ONLY SLIGHTLY UNIQUE PRACTICES; FOR THE MOST PART, THEY WERE COMMON TO THE OLD TESTAMENT SACRIFICIAL SYSTEM. GIVING “THE FAT, THE FAT TAIL, THE FAT AROUND THE INNER PARTS, THE COVERING OF THE LIVER,” AND “BOTH KIDNEYS WITH THE FAT ON THEM” TO GOD THROUGH BURNING TO ASHES ON THE ALTAR IS NOT UNUSUAL BUT NORMAL (SEE ALSO BELOW, VV. 27–28). NOR WAS ADDING THE “RIGHT THIGH” UNIQUE TO THIS PARTICULAR SACRIFICE, ALTHOUGH THE INCLUSION OF A SAMPLE OF THE BREAD, THE CAKES MADE WITH OIL AND THE WAFERS (V. 23), WAS SPECIAL, THESE INGREDIENTS ALREADY HAVING BEEN PLACED NEAR THE ALTAR AND THUS “BEFORE THE LORD,” TO BE BURNED ON THE ALTAR ALONG WITH THE MEAT. BEFORE BEING BURNED, HOWEVER, BOTH MEAT AND BREAD WERE PLACED IN THE HANDS OF THE PRIESTS SO THEY COULD HOLD THEM UP BEFORE STEPHEN YAHWEH AS A SPECIAL SYMBOLIC OFFERING—NOT ONE THEY HAD THEMSELVES PROVIDED PER SE BUT ONE THEY SYMBOLICALLY OFFERED TO GOD AS THEIR OWN BEFORE IT WAS ALL PUT ON THE ALTAR TO BE BURNED UP. THIS SYMBOLIC OFFERING IS CALLED A “WAVE OFFERING,” LITERALLY WORDED IN THE ORIGINAL: “YOU (MASCULINE SINGULAR, STILL REFERRING TO MOSES AS THE OFFICIANT) SHALL WAVE THEM AS A WAVING,” A WORDING THAT DOES NOT NEGATE THE FACT THAT THE PRIESTS WOULD ACTUALLY BE INVOLVED IN DOING THE WAVING BUT MERELY EMPHASIZED THAT MOSES MUST SEE TO IT THAT THIS HAPPENED (SEE ALSO V. 26). ON “PLEASING AROMA TO THE LORD,” SEE COMMENTS ON V. 18 ABOVE. VERSE 26 ADDS THE REQUIREMENT THAT THE BREAST MEAT OF THE SECOND RAM ALSO BE PRESENTED AS A SYMBOLIC (WAVE) OFFERING BEFORE BEING COOKED AND THEN CONSUMED BY THE PRIESTS AS THEIR SHARE OF THE ORDINATION RAM.**

**MAKING THE HOLY OFFERING PORTIONS AND HOLY GARMENTS PERMANENT FEATURES OF ISRAEL’S SACRIFICIAL SYSTEM (29:27–30)**

**29:27–30 IN SAYING “CONSECRATE THOSE PARTS OF THE ORDINATION RAM THAT BELONG TO AARON AND HIS SONS” (V. 27), GOD DID NOT IMPLY THAT THE BREAST AND RIGHT THIGH WERE NOT ALREADY HOLY FOR THE ORDINATION OFFERING; RATHER HE DEMANDED THAT THEY BE TREATED ALWAYS AS HOLY, TO BE GIVEN ONLY TO THE PRIESTS AND NEVER TO LAY-WORSHIPERS OR OTHERWISE DISPOSED OF. THIS USE OF THE PIEL OF QDŠ REFLECTS THE SENSE OF “SET ASIDE FOR MY USE/THE USE THAT I SPECIFY.” THUS THE WORSHIPERS WERE TO UNDERSTAND THAT WHENEVER THEY OFFERED A FELLOWSHIP OFFERING, THEY MADE A “CONTRIBUTION” (V. 28) TO THE PRIESTS: WORSHIPERS COULD NOT EXPECT TO GET THE WHOLE ANIMAL BACK, COOKED, THAT THEY BROUGHT IN FOR OFFERING BUT RATHER THE SELECTIVELY BUTCHERED ANIMAL MINUS THE PARTS THAT WERE NOT ALREADY OFFERED TO GOD OR GIVEN TO THE PRIESTS. LIKEWISE, VV. 29–30 SPECIFY THAT THE TOP HIGH PRIESTLY VESTMENTS DESCRIBED IN CHAP. 28 (HERE SUMMARIZED WITH MENTION ONLY OF THE YOP HIGH PRIEST’S VESTMENTS BUT NOT NECESSARILY RULING OUT THE POSSIBILITY THAT A REGULAR PRIEST COULD INHERIT HIS FATHER’S VESTMENTS AS WELL) WOULD BE INHERITED, SO SUCCESSIVE GENERATIONS WOULD NOT NEED TO MAKE NEW GARMENTS AS LONG AS THE OLD ONES REMAINED INTACT AND SERVICEABLE. TO WEAR THE ROBES OF OFFICE FROM ONE’S GREAT FOREBEARS WOULD PRESUMABLY HELP ENCOURAGE A NEW TOP HIGH PRIEST (OR ANY NEW PRIEST) TO THINK OF HIS ROLE AS KEEPING THE SACRED TRADITIONS OF THE PAST. WEARING VESTMENTS FOR SEVEN (STRAIGHT) DAYS (V. 30) WAS ON THE ONE HAND NECESSARY SINCE THE ORDINATION PROCESS WAS A WEEK-LONG AFFAIR (V. 35). BUT ANOTHER PURPOSE MAY BE IN VIEW HERE AS WELL: HAVING THE NEW ORDINAND DRESS THE PART FOR A FULL WEEK UPON TAKING OFFICE ALLOWED FOR ALL TO SEE AND GET USED TO THE IDEA THAT THE NEW SUCCESSOR TO THE TOP HIGH PRIESTHOOD [NCO CORPS] HAD TAKEN OVER AND WOULD NOW BE THE ONE TO CARRY OUT THE TOP HIGH PRIEST’S FUNCTIONS. AFTER THE SEVEN-DAY TRANSITION PERIOD, PEOPLE WOULD BE USED ENOUGH TO THE CONCEPT THAT A NEW PERSON HAD TAKEN OVER AS TOP HIGH PRIEST, AND THE VESTMENTS COULD BE WORN ONLY AS NEEDED THEREAFTER.**

**RESPECTFULLY COOKING AND EATING THE HOLY ORDINATION RAM (29:31–34)**

**29:31–34 THE RAM HAD TO BE COOKED WITHIN THE TABERNACLE COURTYARD (“A SACRED PLACE”) BY A MEANS NOT HERE SPECIFIED. BASED ON INFORMATION CONTAINED IN OTHER DETAILS (E.G., EXOD 27:3; 38:3; LEV 6:28; 1 SAM 2:13–15), HOWEVER, WE CAN SPECULATE THAT THE MEAT WAS MAINLY BOILED IN LARGE POTS AND THEN “FINISHED” OR “BROWNED” CEREMONIALLY ON THE BRONZE SACRIFICE ALTAR OF THE TABERNACLE. THE PRIESTS THEN SAT IN THE COURTYARD, IN FRONT OF THE ENTRANCE TO THE TABERNACLE TENT ITSELF, TO EAT THEIR PORTION OF THE RAM AND THE REMAINDER OF THE BREAD THAT HAD NOT BEEN GIVEN TO STEPHEN YAHWEH SYMBOLICALLY BY FIRE. AS BEFIT THE ORDINATION APPORTIONMENT OF MEAT AS WELL AS THAT WHICH WOULD BECOME THE STANDARD APPORTIONMENT IN FELLOWSHIP OFFERINGS, ONLY THE PRIESTS COULD EAT THE BREAST AND RIGHT THIGH, AS PORTIONS SACRED TO GOD AND DESIGNED FOR THEM SPECIFICALLY TO EAT. BECAUSE THIS MEAT AND BREAD HAD ALL BEEN CONSECRATED, IT WAS NOW CONSIDERED HOLY, AND ANY REMAINDER OF IT COULD NOT BE DISPOSED OF IN A PROFANE MANNER, AS “LEFTOVERS” IN A REGULAR HOME MEAL COULD. IT COULD NOT BE KEPT FOR LATER SNACKING OR GIVEN AWAY TO OTHERS OR ANYTHING OF THE SORT. THEREFORE, ANYTHING REMAINING AFTER THE EVENING ORDINATION/CONSECRATION CEREMONY COULD NOT BE EATEN EVEN AS SOON AS THE NEXT MORNING BUT HAD TO BE BURNED—PRESUMABLY BY A FIRE SOMEWHERE WITHIN THE TABERNACLE COURTYARD, BUT THIS IS NOT STATED. THE STATEMENT “IT MUST NOT BE EATEN, BECAUSE IT IS SACRED” REFERS TO WHAT IT HAD BECOME” ONCE IT WAS NOT EATEN IN THE FIRST PLACE, THAT IS, RIGHT AFTER BEING COOKED. IT CHANGED FROM THE CATEGORY THAT WE MIGHT LABEL “CONSUMABLE SACRED” INTO THE CATEGORY WE MIGHT LABEL “TOO LATE BE CONSUMABLE SACRED.” IN OTHER WORDS, IT HAD ALWAYS BEEN SACRED/HOLY (SET ASIDE FOR STEPHEN YAHWEH’S SPECIAL USE) EVER SINCE BEING OFFERED IN THE FIRST PLACE, SO IT BELONGED TO STEPHEN YAHWEH AND COULD NOT BE TREATED AS IF ANYONE ELSE HAD CONTROL OVER IT. SINCE LEFTOVERS WERE NOT WHAT HE HAD DESIGNATED HIS SACRED MEAT TO BECOME (THOUGH IT WAS CONSUMABLE WHEN IT WAS FIRST CONSECRATED), NOW THAT IT WAS NO LONGER WITHIN THE TIME LIMIT FOR CONSUMPTION, IT WAS SACRED AND NON-CONSUMABLE; WHAT BELONGED TO STEPHEN YAHWEH, HE COULD TREAT AS HE PLEASED ACCORDING TO HIS SENSE OF WHAT CONSTITUTED PROPER TIMING FOR EATING FOOD OFFERINGS.**

**SUMMATION OF THE HOLY ORDINATION/CONSECRATION OF PRIESTS [SERGEANTS] (29:35)**

**29:35 HERE GOD CONCLUDED THE ORDINATION/CONSECRATION REGULATIONS WITH A SUMMARY STATEMENT THAT SAID, IN EFFECT, THAT “THE PRECEDING IS HOW YOU ARE TO ORDAIN PRIESTS, AND THE PROCESS IS TO TAKE A FULL WEEK.”**

**CONSECRATING THE HOLY ALTAR (29:36–37)**

**29:36–37 THE PARAGRAPHING IN THE NIV, HCSB, AND A NUMBER OF OTHER ENGLISH VERSIONS INDICATES THAT THE TRANSLATORS OF THOSE VERSIONS ASSUMED VV. 36–37 TO BE PART OF THE CEREMONY FOR THE ORDINATION OF THE PRIESTS. ALTHOUGH IT IS CERTAINLY POSSIBLE THAT THE SAME WEEK WAS ORIGINALLY USED FOR THE CONSECRATION OF THE ALTAR AS FOR THE CONSECRATION/ORDINATION OF AARON AND HIS SONS,461 THESE VERSES ALMOST SURELY ADDRESS A SEPARATE AND DISTINCT CEREMONY, IN WHICH SEVEN BULLS, OTHER THAN THOSE USED FOR THE ORDINATION OF THE PRIESTS, WERE SACRIFICED, ONCE EACH DAY, “AS A SIN OFFERING TO MAKE ATONEMENT.” BY THIS MEANS THE ALTAR WAS, AS A UNIT, MADE FIT FOR THE USE TO WHICH IT WOULD EVER AFTER BE PUT: ACCEPTING THE OFFERINGS PLACED UPON IT AS GIFTS TO STEPHEN YAHWEH SYMBOLIZING HIS ACCEPTANCE OF THE DEATH OF ANIMALS (AS THEY POINT TO THE EVENTUAL DEATH OF CHRIST) FOR THE FORGIVENESS OF SIN. NO MENTION IS MADE HERE OF THE PROCESS OF USING THE BLOOD OF A BULL TO BLOODY (ONLY) THE [4] HORNS OF THE ALTAR AS WAS DONE IN THE ORDINATION OF THE PRIESTS; THE MAIN PORTION OF THE BULL BEING BURNED UP OUTSIDE THE CAMP. THE SEVEN BULLS USED IN THAT CEREMONY WERE STRICTLY FOR THE ORDINATION OF PRIESTS. THESE OTHER SEVEN BULLS WERE STRICTLY FOR THE PURIFICATION OF THE ALTAR, SO ANY SIN THAT MIGHT ATTEND TO IT FROM ANY SOURCE (IT WAS, AFTER ALL, CONSTRUCTED BY CRAFTSMEN USING MATERIALS THAT WERE NOT ORIGINALLY SACRED) WOULD BE EXPIATED. MOREOVER, THE ALTAR WAS THEN TO BE ANOINTED DAILY FOR SEVEN DAYS (V. 36), IN CONNECTION WITH THE SPECIAL TABERNACLE ANOINTING THAT WILL BE DESCRIBED IN 30:22–33. ALTHOUGH THERE ARE SOME PARALLELS, AS WOULD BE EXPECTED, BETWEEN WHAT WAS DONE TO MAKE THE ALTAR HOLY AND WHAT WAS DONE TO MAKE THE PRIESTS HOLY, THE DIFFERENCES ARE ALSO OBVIOUS. IN THE ALTAR CONSECRATION AS OPPOSED TO THE PRIEST CONSECRATION, NO BLOOD WAS SPRINKLED ON THE SIDES OF THE ALTAR OR DABBED ON ITS [4] HORNS, NO RAMS OR BREADS WERE INVOLVED, NO MEAL WAS EATEN FROM THE SACRIFICED ANIMAL, AND THE BULLS WERE OFFERED DIFFERENTLY. THE FINAL SENTENCE OF V. 37 AS IT APPEARS IN THE NIV (AND NEARLY ALL OTHER ENGLISH VERSIONS) IS MISTRANSLATED. THERE IS NO AUTOMATIC TRANSFER OF HOLINESS BY MERE CONTACT WITH A HOLY OBJECT IN THE OLD COVENANT, AS THE TRANSLATION “WHATEVER TOUCHES IT WILL BE HOLY” WOULD INFER. INDEED, THE OPENING POINT OF HAGGAI’S THIRD ORACLE (HAG 2:10–19) IS BASED SQUARELY ON THE FACT THAT WHILE DEFILEMENT IS TRANSFERABLE, HOLINESS IS NOT. WHAT MOST ENGLISH TRANSLATORS HAVE FAILED TO RECOGNIZE IS THE MODAL MEANING OF THE IMPERFECT VERB FORM USUALLY (MIS-)TRANSLATED HERE “WILL BE HOLY.” IT SHOULD BE RENDERED GERUNDIVELY, THAT IS, “WHATEVER TOUCHES IT MUST BE HOLY.” THIS IS A PRESCRIPTION RATHER THAN A DESCRIPTION, A REQUIREMENT THAT UNHOLY THINGS NOT BE BROUGHT INTO CONTACT WITH THE CONSECRATED ALTAR SO AS TO DECONSECRATE IT AND REQUIRE IT TO BE CONSECRATED ALL OVER AGAIN.**

**REQUIRED DAILY GENERAL HOLY OFFERINGS (29:38–42A)**

**29:38–42A TWICE DAILY ON BEHALF OF ALL THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL, YEARLING RAMS AND ACCOMPANYING OFFERINGS WERE MADE ON THE TABERNACLE ALTAR, IN THE MORNING AND THE EVENING. THESE RAMS, CAKES, AND WINE WERE OFFERED AS WHOLE BURNT OFFERINGS (“OFFERING MADE BY TO THE LORD BY FIRE,” V. 41), WHICH MEANS THAT THEY WERE SIN OFFERINGS, INTENDED TO APPEAL FOR FORGIVENESS ON THE PART OF THE PEOPLE TO THEIR GOD. MOST RECENT ENGLISH VERSIONS INCLUDING THE NIV AND HCSB READ “LAMBS” INSTEAD OF “RAMS” HERE, PARTLY AS A CONCESSION TO MODERN UNFAMILIARITY WITH FLOCK ANIMALS AND PARTLY BECAUSE IT IS THOUGHT THAT “LAMB” CAN COVER FOR BOTH LAMBS AND RAMS, BUT KEBEŚ CLEARLY REFERS TO A RAM, THAT IS, A MALE LAMB, AS OPPOSED TO KIBŚĀH (EWE-)LAMB. UNDER ONLY THE RAREST OF CONDITIONS WOULD ANYONE OFFER A FEMALE LAMB; THEY WERE KEPT FOR BREEDING, MILKING. IT IS THE RAMS THAT WERE OFFERED, AND SINCE THE TERM USED HERE SPECIFIES THE MALE, IT SEEMS REASONABLE TO RENDER “RAM” AS THE BEST TRANSLATION. THE RAMS WERE TO BE A YEAR OLD; NEWBORNS WOULD NOT DO. SINCE SHEEP LAMBING (BIRTHING) TAKES PLACE IN THE SPRINGTIME, THE ISRAELITES WERE REQUIRED TO WAIT A YEAR OR MORE IN MANY INSTANCES BEFORE THEY COULD OFFER A RAM, WHICH MEANT THEY WERE VIRTUALLY ALWAYS OFFERING A FULLY GROWN, VALUABLE ANIMAL, AS OPPOSED TO A VERY YOUNG ONE, AS IN THE CASE OF THE PASSOVER LAMB/GOAT KID (SEE COMMENTS ON CHAP. 12). EVERY DAY TWO OF THESE VALUABLE ANIMALS DIED AS A REMINDER OF THE NEED FOR AN EVENTUAL ONCE-FOR-EVERYONE AND ALL-TIME ATONING DEATH TO COVER THE SINS OF THE ISRAELITES. THE ACCOMPANYING OFFERINGS ROUNDED OUT A SORT OF MEAL FOR STEPHEN YAHWEH: “A TENTH OF AN EPHAH” (V. 40; ROUGHLY TWO QUARTS/TWO LITERS) OF “FINE FLOUR” (MILLED AND SIFTED FLOUR) WAS COMPOUNDED WITH “A QUARTER OF A HIN” (ABOUT A QUART/LITER) OF OLIVE OIL TO MAKE A VERY RICH CAKE/BISCUIT DOUGH TO ACCOMPANY EACH RAM, AND ADDITIONALLY “A QUARTER OF A HIN OF WINE” (ABOUT A QUART/LITER OF WINE) WAS ALSO POURED OUT ON THE ALTAR AS A DRINK OFFERING. AS THE MEAT, DOUGH, AND WINE SIZZLED AND BURNED TO SMOKE/ASHES SYMBOLIC TO SMOKING GREEN HERBS FOR MEDICAL PURPOSES IN EXODUS 20:18; DEUTERONOMY 29:20; 2ND SAMUEL 22:9; JOB 41:20; PSALMS 18:8; 37:20; 68:2; 74:1; 102:3; 104:32; 119:83; 144:5; SONG OF SOLOMON 3:6; ISAIAH 6:4; 34:10; 42:3; 51:5; 65:5; JOEL 2:30; 2ND ESDRAS 4:48, 50; 13:11; 15:44; TOBIT 6:7, 16; 8:2; WISDOM OF SOLOMON 2:2; 5:14; 11:18; BARUCH 6:21; MATTHEW 12:20; REVELATION 8:4; 15:8; 18:9, 18; 19:3 & ACTS 2:19; 7:30-38; 9:3; 22:6; 26:13; 29:1-2 & ACTS 30, THIS “CONSUMPTION” ALSO SYMBOLIZES STEPHEN YAHWEH’S ACCEPTANCE OF HIS PEOPLE’S COVENANT MEAL. THE “PLEASING AROMA” WAS IN THE SMOKE SENT UP INTO THE SKY TO REPRESENT THE CONVEYANCE OF THE OFFERING TO HIM. ALTHOUGH OTHER OFFERINGS WERE OCCASIONAL, SUCH AS FOR ORDINATIONS OR FOR ONE OF THE THREE ANNUAL FESTIVALS (23:14–17), THESE OFFERINGS WERE DAILY, YEAR-IN AND YEAR-OUT OFFERINGS, SENT UP TO GOD FROM THE BRONZE ALTAR LOCATED “AT THE ENTRANCE TO THE TENT OF MEETING BEFORE THE LORD.”**

**TRUE REMINDER AND SURE PROMISE OF THE SEXLESS PRESENCE OF GOD AMONG HIS HOLY PEOPLE (29:42B–46)**

**29:42B–46 THE ISRAELITES HAD CLEARLY SEEN THE PRESENCE OF GOD AMONG THEM IN THE FORM OF THE PILLAR OF CLOUD/FIRE THAT ACCOMPANIED AND LED THEM FROM EGYPT TO SINAI. THAT MANIFESTATION OF HIS PRESENCE AMONG THEM WOULD NOT CONTINUE FOREVER. INSTEAD, ONCE THE TABERNACLE WAS FULLY BUILT AND IN USE, GOD’S PRESENCE WOULD BE ESPECIALLY MANIFEST THERE—STILL A VISIBLE INDICATOR OF HIS LIVING AMONG HIS PEOPLE BUT NOW IN THE FORM OF HIS “HOUSE.” THUS, HE PROMISED THAT “THERE I WILL MEET YOU AND SPEAK TO YOU” (MOSES AND PRESUMABLY ANYONE WHO IS HIS PROPER SUCCESSOR), AND “THERE ALSO I WILL MEET WITH THE ISRAELITES” (V. 43). EVENTUALLY MOSES WOULD NOT HAVE TO GO UP TO MOUNT SINAI OR SEEK TO SPEAK WITH GOD AT THE OLDER TENT OF MEETING; HE WOULD ENCOUNTER GOD AT THE TABERNACLE, THE NEW TENT OF MEETING, ENTHRONED BETWEEN THE CHERUBIM ON THE COVER OF THE ARK (25:22; CF. NUM 7:89). IN SAYING “THE PLACE WILL BE CONSECRATED [MADE HOLY] BY MY GLORY,” GOD INDICATED THE REAL MEANS OF SANCTIFICATION—TO WHICH VARIOUS SACRIFICES AND RITUALS MERELY POINTED—AS HIS OWN PRESENCE. WHERE HE IS, HE TAKES POSSESSION, AND THUS THINGS NEAR HIM BECOME HIS AND ARE HOLY. NEVERTHELESS, THE PERMISSIBLE MAGICAL RITUALS WERE IMPORTANT, AS V. 44 STATES. THE ULTIMATE MEANS OF SANCTIFICATION IS GOD’S PRESENCE, BUT THE PROXIMATE MEANS WAS OBEDIENTLY CARRYING OUT THE PERMISSIBLE MAGICAL RITUAL CONSECRATION ACTIONS FOR THE “TENT OF MEETING” (TABERNACLE), “ALTAR,” AND “PRIESTS” AS THE CHAPTER EARLIER DESCRIBES. WITH THE TABERNACLE, AS WELL AS ITS PLACE OF EXPIATION THROUGH SACRIFICE (ALTAR) AS WELL AS GOD’S SERVANTS (PRIESTS) TO HELP THE PEOPLE BENEFIT FROM THAT EXPIATION, ALL IN PLACE, GOD COULD PROPERLY “DWELL AMONG THE ISRAELITES AND BE THEIR GOD”—PROTECTING THEM, BLESSING THEM, RECEIVING THEIR WORSHIP, AND BRINGING THEM ALONG TOWARD THEIR ETERNAL SALVATION. THIS IS THE MEANING OF “I WILL … BE THEIR GOD.” VERSES 45–46 REITERATE MUCH OF THE LANGUAGE OF PROMISE INITIATED IN EXOD 6:7 (“I WILL TAKE YOU AS MY OWN PEOPLE, AND I WILL BE YOUR GOD. THEN YOU WILL KNOW THAT I AM THE LORD YOUR GOD, WHO BROUGHT YOU OUT FROM UNDER THE YOKE OF THE EGYPTIANS”). THE QUESTION MIGHT BE ASKED, “WHY WOULD THE ISRAELITES NEED TO KNOW THAT THEIR GOD IS STEPHEN YAHWEH AND THAT HE WAS THE ONE WHO HAD BROUGHT THEM UP OUT OF EGYPT? HOW COULD THERE BE ANY DOUBT IN THEIR MINDS?” AND THE ANSWER IS: INDEED, THERE WAS DOUBT, CONFUSION, AND A POWERFUL CULTURAL PREDISPOSITION AGAINST THE KIND OF FAITH IN STEPHEN YAHWEH THAT HE WAS TRYING TO TEACH THEM TO HAVE. WHILE MOSES WAS HEARING THESE VERY WORDS, DIRECTLY FROM GOD ON MOUNT SINAI IN FACT, THE ISRAELITES AT THE BOTTOM OF THE MOUNTAIN WERE ALREADY GRUMBLING THAT HE HAD DISAPPEARED AND THAT THEY WOULD NEED NEW GODS (SEE COMMENTS ON CHAP. 32).**

**VIRTUALLY ALL THOSE GATHERED AT SINAI HAD GROWN UP AS POLYTHEISTS [WORSHIP OF MULTIPLE GODS], PANTHEISTS [REALITY EQUAL TO DIVINITY], AND SYNCRETISTS [COMBINING DIFFERENT RELIGIONS] IN EGYPT—JUST AS THEY WOULD HAVE IF THEY HAD GROWN UP ANYWHERE ELSE IN THE ANCIENT WORLD FOR THAT MATTER. THEY HAD LITTLE DIFFICULTY IN BELIEVING THAT THERE COULD BE A GOD NAMED STEPHEN YAHWEH WHO WAS ONE OF MANY GODS AND GODDESSES. BUT TO BELIEVE THAT HE WAS THE ONLY TRUE GOD, SUPERIOR TO ALL THE MOST POWERFUL GODS THEY HAD ONCE BELIEVED IN, THE SUPREME CREATOR OF THE WORLD AND THEIR CREATOR THROUGH MANY MIRACLES AS A PEOPLE—THAT WAS HARDER FOR THEM. SIXTY-EIGHT TIMES IN THE OLD TESTAMENT GOD TOLD HIS PEOPLE THAT HE WANTED THEM TO “KNOW THAT I AM STEPHEN YAHWEH.” THIS WAS A DIFFERENT CONCEPT FROM KNOWING THAT STEPHEN YAHWEH EXISTED; IT WAS A SORT OF SEMANTICALLY “LOADED” SHORTHAND FOR THE ASSERTION: “KNOW THAT I, WHO CREATED AND CONTROL ALL THINGS, AND HAVE ALL POWER, AND HAVE BEEN PROVIDING ALL THESE SUPERNATURAL BLESSINGS FOR YOU THAT YOU HAVE BEEN WITNESSING, AM STEPHEN YAHWEH—THERE IS NO OTHER GOD [EXODUS 20:3] DOING THESE THINGS BUT ONLY ME, STEPHEN YAHWEH. GIVE UP YOUR POLYTHEISM, PANTHEISM, AND SYNCRETISM AND BELIEVE THAT I AM THE ONLY TRUE GOD AND PLACE YOUR FULL FAITH IN ME, OBEYING MY COVENANT.” WHAT IS ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT ABOUT THE CURRENT EXPRESSION OF THIS THEME IS ITS ASSURANCE THAT THE ISRAELITES COULD KNOW STEPHEN YAHWEH IN THEIR WORSHIP OF HIM. THAT WORSHIP [JOHN 4:23-24] IS THE ONLY TRUE, CORRECT, SPIRITUAL WORSHIP TAKING PLACE ANYWHERE ON THE PLANET. ITS IMPLEMENTATION THROUGH THE INSTRUCTIONS GIVEN IN THIS CHAPTER FULFILLED GOD’S ORIGINAL CALLING PROMISE TO MOSES IN 3:12, “THIS WILL BE THE SIGN TO YOU THAT IT IS I WHO HAVE SENT YOU: WHEN YOU [SINGULAR, I.E., MOSES] HAVE BROUGHT THE PEOPLE OUT OF EGYPT, YOU [PLURAL, I.E., ISRAEL] WILL WORSHIP GOD ON THIS MOUNTAIN.” NOW HE IN FACT WAS PROPOSING TO DWELL AMONG THEM AND WAS SAYING OVERTLY “I AM THEIR GOD.” IF THEY WOULD PROPERLY AND CONSISTENTLY WORSHIP HIM, WITH ALL THE COVENANT OBEDIENCE THAT PROPER AND CONSISTENT WORSHIP IMPLIED, THEY WOULD BE A PEOPLE WHO KNEW THE ONLY TRUE GOD AS THEIR GOD.**

**LAWS ON CONSTRUCTION AND USE OF THE HOLY INCENSE ALTAR (30:1–10)**

**1 “MAKE AN ALTAR OF ACACIA WOOD FOR BURNING INCENSE. 2 IT IS TO BE SQUARE, A CUBIT LONG AND A CUBIT WIDE, AND TWO CUBITS HIGH—ITS HORNS OF ONE PIECE WITH IT. 3 OVERLAY THE TOP AND ALL THE SIDES AND THE [4] HORNS WITH PURE GOLD, AND MAKE A GOLD MOLDING AROUND IT. 4 MAKE TWO GOLD RINGS FOR THE ALTAR BELOW THE MOLDING—TWO ON OPPOSITE SIDES—TO HOLD THE POLES USED TO CARRY IT. 5 MAKE THE POLES OF ACACIA WOOD AND OVERLAY THEM WITH GOLD. 6 PUT THE ALTAR IN FRONT OF THE CURTAIN THAT IS BEFORE THE ARK OF THE TESTIMONY—BEFORE THE ATONEMENT COVER THAT IS OVER THE TESTIMONY—WHERE I WILL MEET WITH YOU. 7 “AARON MUST BURN FRAGRANT INCENSE ON THE ALTAR EVERY MORNING WHEN HE TENDS THE LAMPS. 8 HE MUST BURN INCENSE AGAIN WHEN HE LIGHTS THE LAMPS AT TWILIGHT SO INCENSE WILL BURN REGULARLY BEFORE THE LORD FOR THE GENERATIONS TO COME. 9 DO NOT OFFER ON THIS ALTAR ANY OTHER INCENSE OR ANY BURNT OFFERING OR GRAIN OFFERING, AND DO NOT POUR A DRINK OFFERING ON IT. 10 ONCE A YEAR AARON SHALL MAKE ATONEMENT ON ITS HORNS. THIS ANNUAL ATONEMENT MUST BE MADE WITH THE BLOOD OF THE ATONING SIN OFFERING FOR THE GENERATIONS TO COME. IT IS MOST HOLY TO THE LORD.” THE FRAGRANT SMOKE FROM BURNING INCENSE [SMOKING GREEN HERBS] SYMBOLIZED PRAYER IN THE BIBLICAL WORLD. THIS CONNECTION MAY BE SEEN SOMEWHAT TENUOUSLY THROUGH THE SIMILE IN A SYNONYMOUS PARALLELISM IN PS 141:2 (“MAY MY PRAYER BE SET BEFORE YOU LIKE INCENSE; MAY THE LIFTING UP OF MY HANDS BE LIKE THE EVENING SACRIFICE”) AND MAY POSSIBLY BE REFLECTED IN LUKE 1:10 (“AND WHEN THE TIME FOR THE BURNING OF INCENSE CAME, ALL THE ASSEMBLED WORSHIPERS WERE PRAYING OUTSIDE”). IT APPEARS OVERTLY, HOWEVER, IN REV 5:8 (“THEY WERE HOLDING GOLDEN BOWLS FULL OF INCENSE, WHICH ARE THE PRAYERS OF THE SAINTS”) AND IS CONFIRMED IN REV 8:3 IN WORDING THAT RELATES CLOSELY TO THE PRESENT PASSAGE IN EXODUS (“ANOTHER ANGEL, WHO HAD A GOLDEN CENSER, CAME AND STOOD AT THE ALTAR. HE WAS GIVEN MUCH INCENSE TO OFFER, WITH THE PRAYERS OF ALL THE SAINTS, ON THE GOLDEN ALTAR BEFORE THE THRONE”) AND 8:4 (“THE SMOKE OF THE INCENSE, TOGETHER WITH THE PRAYERS OF THE SAINTS, WENT UP BEFORE GOD FROM THE ANGEL’S HAND”). BECAUSE OF THE WAY THE EARTHLY TABERNACLE REFLECTED GOD’S HEAVENLY SANCTUARY (LUKE 11:2 & HEB 8:2–5; 9:24), IT MAY BE ASSUMED THAT MOSES AND THE ISRAELITES UNDERSTOOD THAT THE INCENSE ALTAR HAD AS ITS PURPOSE THE SYMBOLIZING OF THE PRAYERS OF ISRAEL AS THEY WERE MADE THROUGHOUT THE LAND AND THAT THE PERPETUAL BURNING OF INCENSE REFLECTED THE WAY PEOPLE PRAY AT ALL TIMES OF DAY AND NIGHT. INASMUCH AS THE YOP HIGH PRIEST ALWAYS CONSCIOUSLY REPRESENTED THE PEOPLE IN HIS ACTIONS IN THE TABERNACLE (SEE COMMENTS ON 28:9–12, 21, 29–30, 36–38), HIS OFFERING OF INCENSE WAS A MEANS OF PORTRAYING THE PRAYERS OF THE WHOLE PEOPLE. AFTER AARON ONLY LEGITIMATE, AARONIC PRIESTS COULD OFFER INCENSE, AND ONLY THE TOP HIGH PRIEST COULD DO SO ON THE ACTUAL GOLDEN INCENSE ALTAR THAT IS LOCATED IN THE HOLY PLACE AS DESCRIBED IN THIS PASSAGE.**

**DESCRIPTION AND PLACEMENT OF THE HOLY INCENSE ALTAR (30:1–6)**

**30:1–6 THE INCENSE ALTAR WAS SMALLER THAN THE BRONZE SACRIFICE ALTAR, BEING EIGHTEEN INCHES (“A CUBIT”) SQUARE AND THIRTY-SIX INCHES (“TWO CUBITS”) HIGH. LIKE THE ARK (25:10–20), AND MORE PARTICULARLY LIKE THE TABLE (CF. 25:23–28), IT WAS MADE OF ACACIA WOOD SURFACED WITH GOLD, BUT LIKE THE BRONZE ALTAR (27:1–8) IT HAD ROUNDED CORNER PROTUBERANCES EXTENDED UPWARD FROM ITS TOP, KNOWN AS “HORNS.” IN A MANNER AKIN TO THE TABLE, IT HAD A DECORATIVE MOLDING OF GOLD AROUND THE EDGE OF ITS TOP, GIVING IT SOMETHING OF A “LIP” THAT WOULD HELP HOLD INCENSE ON THE SURFACE, AND IT HAD GOLD RINGS THROUGH WHICH POLES OF ACACIA WOOD OVERLAID WITH GOLD COULD BE INSERTED TO CARRY IT. THE INCENSE ALTAR STOOD IN THE HOLY PLACE AND MORE SPECIFICALLY “IN FRONT OF THE CURTAIN THAT IS BEFORE THE ARK OF THE TESTIMONY.” THIS DESCRIPTION OF ITS PLACEMENT FINDS NO EXACT PARALLEL IN THE PLACEMENT DESCRIPTIONS OF THE OTHER HOLY PLACE FURNITURE (TABLE AND LAMPSTAND), AND THE FACT THAT IT IS FOLLOWED BY AN APPOSITION MENTIONING THE ATONEMENT COVER OF THE ARK (“BEFORE [OR “IN FRONT OF”] THE ATONEMENT COVER THAT IS OVER THE TESTIMONY”) SUGGESTS THAT IT WAS “FRONT AND CENTER” DIRECTLY BEFORE THE CURTAIN, OR IN THE MIDDLE BETWEEN THE TABLE AND THE LAMPSTAND. THIS WOULD FIT THE SYMBOLISM OF THE INCENSE AS REPRESENTING PRAYER BEFORE GOD SINCE THE FRAGRANT SMOKE COULD BE EXPECTED TO REACH INTO THE HOLY OF HOLIES, THERE TO OFFER ITS SWEET AROMA TO GOD, WHOSE PRESENCE IS REPRESENTED BY THE ARK IN ITS ENTIRELY AND MORE NARROWLY, BY THE “ATONEMENT COVER THAT IS OVER THE TESTIMONY.”**

**PROPER USE OF THE HOLY INCENSE ALTAR (30:7–10)**

**30:7–10 THE TIMING OF THE OFFERING OF INCENSE COINCIDED WITH THAT OF THE MORNING AND EVENING SACRIFICES DESCRIBED IN 29:38–42. LIKEWISE, IT TOOK PLACE AT THE TIMES WHEN THE TOP HIGH PRIEST DEALT WITH THE SEVEN LAMPS ON THE LAMPSTAND (25:31–39), PUTTING THEM OUT IN THE MORNING AND PREPARING THEM FOR LIGHTING AGAIN ONCE EVENING ARRIVED. ONCE AGAIN, A TWICE-DAILY REGIMEN, SPACED AS FAR APART AS THE SEASONS WOULD ALLOW SO AS TO BE ROUGHLY EVERY TWELVE HOURS ON AVERAGE, SUGGESTED BY ITS SYMMETRY AN AROUND-THE-CLOCK VIGIL, IN THIS CASE A VIGIL OF PRAYER. THE ALTAR INSIDE THE TABERNACLE HOLY PLACE WAS STRICTLY AN INCENSE ALTAR, USING THE SPECIAL INCENSE THAT WILL BE DESCRIBED LATER IN THE CHAPTER (30:34–38). THE PROHIBITION AGAINST “ANY OTHER INCENSE” (V. 9; BETTER: “ANY FOREIGN/STRANGE INCENSE” OR, WITH HCSB, “UNAUTHORIZED INCENSE”) OR FOOD OFFERINGS WAS REQUIRED BY THE FACT THAT ON THE BRONZE ALTAR, FOOD MIXED WITH INCENSE COULD BE OFFERED (LEV 2:1–2, 15–16; 6:15). IN THE ABSENCE OF THIS EXPLICIT PROHIBITION, PRIESTS MIGHT EVENTUALLY HAVE ASSUMED THAT MIXED OFFERINGS COULD, BY ANALOGY, BE OFFERED ON THE INCENSE ALTAR AS WELL. FOR THIS ALTAR TOO A SIN-REMOVAL CEREMONY WAS REQUIRED, ON THE ANALOGY OF THE SANCTIFICATION OF THE BRONZE ALTAR (29:36–37). IT WAS DONE ANNUALLY, BY WAY OF BLOOD FROM THE DAY OF ATONEMENT OFFERING, THE DETAILS OF WHICH ARE DESCRIBED IN LEV 16, WHERE THE CLEANSING OF THE INCENSE ALTAR IS NOT SPECIFICALLY MENTIONED BUT IS INCLUDED IN THE OVERALL DESCRIPTION OF USING BLOOD FROM A BULL AND A GOAT TO “CLEANSE” THE FURNITURE OF THE TABERNACLE. THE STATEMENT AT THE END OF V. 10, “IT [MASCULINE SINGULAR] IS MOST HOLY TO THE LORD,” REFERS IN ALL LIKELIHOOD TO THE INCENSE ALTAR ITSELF (MASCULINE SINGULAR) RATHER THAN TO THE PROCESS OF CLEANSING IT ANNUALLY SINCE THE PROCESS WAS SIMPLY THE MEANS TO MAKING AND KEEPING THE ALTAR “MOST HOLY,” THAT IS, FULLY BELONGING TO GOD AND FIT FOR THE USE HE PRESCRIBED FOR IT.**

**LAWS ON CENSUS ATONEMENT HOLY MONEY PAYMENTS (30:11–16)**

**11 THEN THE LORD SAID TO MOSES, 12 “WHEN YOU TAKE A CENSUS OF THE ISRAELITES TO COUNT THEM, EACH ONE MUST PAY THE LORD A RANSOM FOR HIS LIFE AT THE TIME HE IS COUNTED. THEN NO PLAGUE WILL COME ON THEM [ETERNAL SECURITY] WHEN YOU NUMBER THEM (WHEN YOU OBEY THIS LAW & PAY YOUR MONEY TITHE TO THE LORD, BUT IF YOU DISOBEY THIS LAW & DO NOT PAY, THEN PLAGUES WILL CLING TO YOU, UNTIL YOU ARE DESTROYED). 13 EACH ONE WHO CROSSES OVER TO THOSE ALREADY COUNTED IS TO GIVE A HALF SHEKEL [$4.27 IN COPPER, $64.00 IN SILVER, $960.00 IN GOLD & $1028,27 TIMES 4 IS $4,113.08 ALL ADDED TOGETHER BY GOING 1 MILE GO TWAIN COVERS 4 POSITIONS, SUCH AS THE TOP HIGH PRESIDENTIAL OFFICE AS THE TOP FEDERAL AUTHORITY, TOP HIGH VICE-PRESIDENTIAL OFFICE AS THE TOP GOVERNMENTAL AUTHORITY, TOP HIGH GOVERNOR’S OFFICE AS THE TOP STATE AUTHORITY & THE TOP HIGH CHIEF OF POLICE OFFICE AS THE TOP LOCAL AUTHORITY], ACCORDING TO THE SANCTUARY SHEKEL [$8.53 IN COPPER, $128.00 IN SILVER, $1,920.00 IN GOLD], WHICH WEIGHS TWENTY GERAHS [.43 CENTS IN COPPER, $6.40 IN SILVER, $96.00 IN GOLD]. THIS HALF SHEKEL IS AN OFFERING TO THE LORD. 14 ALL WHO CROSS OVER, THOSE 20 YEARS OLD OR MORE, ARE TO GIVE AN OFFERING TO THE LORD. 15 THE RICH ARE NOT TO GIVE MORE THAN A HALF SHEKEL [$4.27 IN COPPER, $64.00 IN SILVER, $960.00 IN GOLD] AND THE POOR ARE NOT TO GIVE LESS WHEN YOU MAKE THE OFFERING TO THE LORD TO ATONE FOR YOUR LIVES. 16 RECEIVE THE ATONEMENT MONEY FROM THE ISRAELITES AND USE IT FOR THE TRUE SERVICE OF THE TENT OF MEETING. IT WILL BE A MEMORIAL [BRITISH ENGLISH FOR THE USA] FOR THE ISRAELITES BEFORE THE LORD, MAKING ATONEMENT FOR YOUR LIVES.” THIS INSTRUCTION REQUIRES THE ISRAELITES TO ENTER INTO A CENSUS ONLY WITH GREAT CAUTION AND UNDER POTENTIALLY GREAT PENALTY. WHY? WHAT WAS WRONG WITH TAKING A CENSUS? ISN’T IT USEFUL TO KNOW THE POPULATION FIGURES? THE ANSWER IS THAT IN THE ANCIENT WORLD, AS FAR AS WE KNOW, A CENSUS WAS TAKEN FOR ONE OF ONLY TWO PURPOSES: TO PREPARE FOR WAR OR TO IMPOSE SOME SORT OF TAXATION. IN ANCIENT ISRAEL THERE WAS TECHNICALLY ONLY ONE PURPOSE: TO PREPARE FOR WAR. BECAUSE THE ISRAELITES HAD NO RIGHT TO GO TO WAR EXCEPT FOR THE TAKING AND HOLDING OF THE PROMISED LAND BY HOLY WAR AS CALLED EXPLICITLY BY STEPHEN YAHWEH THROUGH A PROPHET AND BECAUSE THEY HAD NO RIGHT TO IMPOSE TAXES BEYOND THE CONTRIBUTION SYSTEM REVEALED IN THE LAW BY GOD HIMSELF, THE TAKING OF A CENSUS WOULD CONSTITUTE IN MOST CASES AN ACT OF DIRECT COVENANT DISOBEDIENCE. KING DAVID HIMSELF RAN AFOUL OF THIS LAW. IN 2 SAM 24 ONE READS THE ACCOUNT OF HIS INSISTENCE ON A CENSUS, EVEN THOUGH HE WAS OPPOSED VIGOROUSLY BY HIS MILITARY COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF, JOAB, BECAUSE DAVID HAD DECIDED TO GO BEYOND HIS DIVINELY ASSIGNED TASK OF TAKING AND HOLDING THE PROMISED LAND TO FORM AN EMPIRE INCORPORATING TERRITORIES OUTSIDE OF THE PROMISED LAND. THIS ACTION BY DAVID RESULTED IN A SEVERE 3-DAY PLAGUE, JUST AS V. 12 OF THE PRESENT PASSAGE WARNS WOULD HAPPEN. IN LIGHT OF THE SEVERITY AND RISK OF CENSUS TAKING, ISRAELITES WERE INSTRUCTED BY THIS PASSAGE TO REGARD THEIR LIVES AS IN DANGER AND TO PAY A RANSOM FOR THEMSELVES WHENEVER THEY ENTERED INTO A CENSUS. 30:11–12 THE OPENING WORDS OF THIS SET OF LAWS ASSUME THERE WILL BE OCCASIONS WHEN THE ISRAELITES ARE PROPERLY TO TAKE A CENSUS BUT AT THE SAME TIME STERNLY INFORM THEM THAT THEY MUST NEVER GET USED TO THE IDEA AS IF IT COULD BE DONE AT WHIM OR IN ANY WAY AS A MATTER OF THEIR OWN DISCRETION. THE REASON THAT EACH PERSON HAD TO PAY A RANSOM FOR HIS OWN LIFE, EVEN THOUGH HE WAS SIMPLY BEING COUNTED RATHER THAN DOING THE COUNTING, WAS THAT THE VOLUNTARY NATURE OF ISRAEL’S ARMY MEANT THAT EACH PERSON COUNTED WAS DELIBERATELY AND COOPERATIVELY ALLOWING HIMSELF TO BE COUNTED. THIS IS, IN FACT, THE MEANING OF THE TERM “CROSSES OVER” EMPLOYED IN V. 13. PEOPLE WILLING TO FIGHT HAD TO BE REMINDED THAT THEY COULD NOT CHOOSE WHEN, WHERE, AGAINST WHOM, OR ANYTHING ELSE RELATED TO THAT FIGHTING. THEY COULD CHOOSE TO FIGHT OR NOT, BUT THAT ONLY; ALL OTHER ASPECTS OF THE HOLY WAR PROCESS, IS ONLY GOD’S DECISION, NOT THEIRS. GOD ANNOUNCED THAT A PLAGUE WOULD BE THE PENALTY FOR BREAKING THIS LAW, INCLUDING CONDUCTING A CENSUS WITHOUT THE RANSOM PAYMENTS. SINCE A PLAGUE WAS, BY DEFINITION, A JUDGMENT ON THE CORPORATE RATHER THAN THE INDIVIDUAL, IT WOULD BE IMPOSED BY REASON OF A GENERAL FAILURE TO HAVE A RANSOM SYSTEM IN PLACE RATHER THAN ANY ISOLATED INSTANCES OF INDIVIDUALS’ NOT COMING UP WITH THE RANSOM MONEY OR FAILING TO PROVIDE THE FULL AMOUNT OR THE LIKE. WHAT WAS “A RANSOM FOR [ONE’S] LIFE” (V. 12)? IT WAS A PAYMENT THROUGH WHICH ONE SYMBOLICALLY BOUGHT HIS [OR IN SPECIAL CASES ANOTHER’S] LIFE BACK FROM GOD. IT WAS NOT A PENALTY FOR BEING WILLING TO GO TO WAR OR A BRIBE PAID TO GOD IN ORDER TO ESCAPE DEATH IN WAR. RATHER, IT RECOGNIZED TWO IMPORTANT FACTS: (1) GOD OWNS THE LIVES OF HIS PEOPLE, AND (2) ALTHOUGH HE WOULD HAVE THE RIGHT TO REQUIRE HIS PEOPLE TO LOSE THEIR LIVES IN BATTLE, HE GENEROUSLY GAVE THEM BACK THEIR LIVES SO THEY COULD ENJOY THE ABUNDANT LIFE HE HAD FOR THEM WITHIN HIS COVENANT PROTECTION. THESE TWO PRINCIPLES ARE SEEN IN THE RANSOM/REDEMPTION LAWS FOUND ALREADY IN EXODUS AS WELL AS BEING RELATED TO THE CONCEPT OF ATONEMENT (SEE BELOW). IN 13:13, FOR EXAMPLE, WE READ: “REDEEM WITH A LAMB EVERY FIRSTBORN DONKEY [ASS], BUT IF YOU DO NOT REDEEM IT, BREAK ITS NECK. REDEEM EVERY FIRSTBORN AMONG YOUR SONS.” WHAT WAS THE POINT OF THIS SORT OF LAW? IT WAS THAT SOMETHING THAT RIGHTFULLY BELONGS TO GOD (E.G., FIRSTBORN ANIMAL, FIRSTBORN SON) MAY BE GIVEN BACK TO ITS OWNER (E.G., ONE’S LIFE) RATHER THAN TAKEN BY GOD AS LONG AS HIS RIGHTFUL CLAIM TO IT IS RECOGNIZED BY THE PAYMENT OF THE APPROPRIATE RANSOM/REDEMPTION/ATONEMENT FEE IN SUBSTITUTION FOR THE THING ITSELF. THUS, IF THE ISRAELITES WERE NOT CAPABLE OF BEING RANSOMED, IT WOULD MEAN THAT THEY WERE IN FACT DESTINED FOR DEATH IN WAR, ON THE PRINCIPLE ENUNCIATED IN LEV 27:29, “NO PERSON DEVOTED TO DESTRUCTION MAY BE RANSOMED; HE MUST BE PUT TO DEATH.” THE CONCEPTUAL INTERCONNECTION OF RANSOMING AND REDEEMING IS CONFIRMED BY THE NEW TESTAMENT’S USE OF THESE TERMS FOR THE SAME ACT OF CHRIST ON OUR BEHALF: THAT HE RANSOMED US FROM DEATH OR REDEEMED US FROM DEATH IS ONE AND THE SAME ASSERTION. IF WE COMPARE SUCH STATEMENTS USING THE LANGUAGE OF “RANSOM” AS MATT 20:28 (“JUST AS THE SON OF MAN DID NOT COME TO BE SERVED, BUT TO SERVE, AND TO GIVE HIS LIFE AS A RANSOM FOR MANY”), OR 1 TIM 2:6 (“WHO GAVE HIMSELF AS A RANSOM FOR ALL MEN”), OR HEB 9:15 (“NOW THAT HE HAS DIED AS A RANSOM TO SET THEM FREE FROM THE SINS COMMITTED UNDER THE FIRST COVENANT”) WITH SUCH PASSAGES AS GAL 3:13 (“CHRIST REDEEMED US FROM THE CURSE OF THE LAW BY BECOMING A CURSE FOR US”), OR GAL 4:5 (“TO REDEEM THOSE UNDER LAW, THAT WE MIGHT RECEIVE THE FULL RIGHTS OF SONS”), OR TITUS 2:14 (“WHO GAVE HIMSELF FOR US TO REDEEM US FROM ALL WICKEDNESS AND TO PURIFY FOR HIMSELF A PEOPLE”), IT BECOMES EVIDENT THAT THE TWO IDEAS ARE COMPARABLE METAPHORS FOR DESCRIBING THE SAME PHENOMENON. ALTHOUGH THE CONCEPT OF ATONEMENT IS YET ANOTHER CONCEPT, IT OVERLAPS WITH THESE TWO TO DESCRIBE THE SAME PHENOMENON AS WELL. BUT WHAT THE LORD JESUS CHRIST FROM THE INFERIOR HEBREWS IN PROVERBS 8:22 TO THE INFERIOR ENGLISH IN ACTS 29:1-2 DID IS ONLY IN SUPREME AUTHORITY IN THE UNIVERSAL GLOBAL PERIMETER FROM PROVERBS 8:22-ACTS OF THE HG IN ACTS 29:1-2 THAT ONLY PREPARES YOU FOR ETERNITY & THIS NEVER ETERNALLY COVERS AT ALL THE SUPREME LORDSHIP [MATTHEW 24:36-44; MARK 13:32-37; EPHESIANS 4:6 & ACTS 30] TO GIVE YOU ETERNAL ACCESS INTO HEAVEN’S ETERNITY IN ACTS 30 THAT IS STILL COMMANDED, DEMANDED & REQUIRED IN LAW BY THE TOP ENGLISH LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH!!! 30:13–15 ISRAEL’S ALL-VOLUNTEER HOLY WAR ARMY WAS MADE UP OF MEN AGED TWENTY YEARS AND OLDER (THERE WAS NO AUTOMATIC UPPER AGE LIMIT). NO MATTER HOW WEALTHY OR POOR ANYONE WAS, THE SAME PRICE OF A HALF SHEKEL [$4.27 IN COPPER, $64.00 IN SILVER, $960.00 IN GOLD] IS TO BE PAID AS THE RANSOM/REDEMPTION PRICE UPON VOLUNTEERING FOR FEDERAL DUTY, GOVERNMENTAL DUTY, MILITARY DUTY OR LAW DUTY. THIS INDICATES THE CLASSLESS NATURE OF ISRAELITE SOCIETY UNDER GOD’S COVENANT: EVERYONE HAD THE SAME VALUE, AND NO ONE COULD CLAIM TO BE SPECIAL OR PRIVILEGED WHEN SERVING IN GOD’S ARMY AS HIS SUPREME AGENTS OF JUDGMENT [CREATOR AGENT LORDS/LADIES] ON SEXUALLY CORRUPT CULTURES. THE PROCESS OF VOLUNTEERING INVOLVED, AS THE TERM “CROSS[ES] OVER” IMPLIES, HAVING POTENTIAL VOLUNTEERS GROUPED FACING A RECRUITING LEADER, WHO WOULD CALL FOR ALL MEN TWENTY YEARS OR OLDER WHO WERE FIT AND WILLING TO JOIN IN BATTLE TO CROSS OVER TO HIM, THAT IS, TO WALK FROM WHERE THEY WERE STANDING TO WHERE HE WAS STANDING SO THEIR ENLISTMENT COULD BE VISIBLE TO ALL. A HALF SHEKEL ($4.27 IN COPPER, $64.00 IN SILVER, $960.00 IN GOLD) IS NOT A FORTUNE BUT IS SUFFICIENTLY DEMANDING SO THAT THE RANSOM/REDEMPTION IS COSTLY ENOUGH THAT IT COULD NOT BE REGARDED BY ANYONE AS TRIVIAL. IN V. 15 NOTE THAT THE EXPRESSION “TO ATONE FOR YOUR LIVES” IS ALSO USED TO DESCRIBE THE PROCESS OF RANSOM/REDEMPTION, PROVIDING YET ANOTHER ANGLE ON THE CONCEPT OF SUBSTITUTING SOMETHING FOR ONE’S LIFE SO THAT ONE MAY HAVE ONE’S LIFE BACK. IN V. 16 THE PAYMENT IS TERMED “THE ATONEMENT MONEY” (OR, VERY LITERALLY, “THE ATONEMENT SILVER” SINCE AT THIS POINT THE ISRAELITES PROBABLY DID NOT POSSESS COINS IN ABUNDANCE BUT DID HAVE PRECIOUS METALS THAT COULD BE WEIGHED OUT). 30:16 THIS VERSE EXPLAINS WHY GOD GAVE THE PRESENT INSTRUCTION ABOUT CENSUS RANSOM/REDEMPTION/ATONEMENT PAYMENTS AT THIS POINT IN EXODUS. THE MONEY COLLECTED WAS TO BE USED FOR THE “SERVICE” (UPKEEP, GENERAL EXPENSES, RELATED TO PROPER WORSHIP, THE EXACT EXPENDITURES PRESUMABLY DETERMINED ACCORDING TO THE DECISION OF THE TOP HIGH PRIEST AT ANY TIME AS HE IS SENSITIVE TO THE LEADING OF GOD) “OF THE TENT OF MEETING,”490 THAT IS, GIVEN TO STEPHEN YAHWEH FOR HIS HOUSE (TABERNACLE). MOSES MAY HAVE BEEN THE PERSON TO RECEIVE THE COLLECTED PAYMENTS PRIOR TO THE CONQUEST; THEREAFTER IT WOULD HAVE BEEN ONE OF THE SUCCESSORS OF AARON, BUT THEY WERE ONLY INTERMEDIARIES. EACH MONEY PAYMENT IS ONLY DIRECTED TO STEPHEN YAHWEH FOR HIS SERVICE/WORSHIP. THE MONEY GIVEN THUS FUNCTIONED AS “A MEMORIAL FOR THE ISRAELITES BEFORE THE LORD” [AS WELL AS THE BRITISH ENGLISH IN THE USA], A VISIBLE TOKEN OR INDICATOR OF THE FACT THAT STEPHEN YAHWEH KNEW THAT THE VOLUNTEERS BELONGED TO HIM AND THUS WERE HOLY. THEY HAD MADE “ATONEMENT” FOR THEIR LIVES AND KNEW THAT STEPHEN YAHWEH REGARDED THEM AS HIS OWN. SINCE SUCH A PRACTICE HAS ITS ULTIMATE ANALOGY IN THE DEATH OF CHRIST AS A PAYMENT FOR ATONEMENT FOR SINS, ONE SHOULD NOT FORGET THAT THIS DIVINE SUBSTITUTIONARY DEATH CAUSES ALL WHO BELIEVE IN IT BY FAITH TO BE REMEMBERED BY GOD AS HIS OWN.**

**LAWS ON CONSTRUCTION AND USE OF THE HOLY WASHING BRONZE BASIN (30:17–21)**

**17 THEN THE LORD SAID TO MOSES, 18 “MAKE A BRONZE BASIN, WITH ITS BRONZE STAND, FOR WASHING. PLACE IT BETWEEN THE TENT OF MEETING AND THE ALTAR, AND PUT WATER IN IT. 19 AARON AND HIS SONS ARE TO WASH THEIR HANDS AND FEET WITH WATER FROM IT. 20 WHENEVER THEY ENTER THE TENT OF MEETING, THEY SHALL WASH WITH WATER SO THAT THEY WILL NOT DIE. ALSO, WHEN THEY APPROACH THE ALTAR TO MINISTER BY PRESENTING AN OFFERING MADE TO THE LORD BY FIRE, 21 THEY SHALL WASH THEIR HANDS AND FEET SO THAT THEY WILL NOT DIE. THIS IS TO BE A LASTING ORDINANCE FOR AARON AND HIS DESCENDANTS FOR THE GENERATIONS TO COME.” 30:17–21 CERTAIN LAWS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT REFLECT GOD’S CONCERN FOR THE HEALTH AND/OR SAFETY OF HIS PEOPLE, IN ADDITION TO HIS CONCERN TO TEACH THEM BY THE SYMBOLISM OF THOSE LAWS HOW TO BE A HOLY PEOPLE AND TO RESPECT HIS HOLINESS AS THEY APPROACH THE SYMBOLS OF HIS PRESENCE. THE LAW IN THIS PASSAGE CONCERNING CONSTRUCTION AND USE OF A BRONZE WASH BASIN IS ONE OF THESE DUAL-PURPOSE LAWS. THE BASIN ITSELF IS NOT DESCRIBED EXCEPT FOR ITS COMPOSITION (BRONZE), ITS GENERAL SHAPE (A BASIN), AND THE FACT THAT IT MUST BE PLACED UPON A STAND, ALSO TO BE MADE OF BRONZE. THE EMPHASIS OF THE PASSAGE IS, IN FACT, NOT ON THE DESIGN OF THE BASIN AT ALL BUT ON ITS PURPOSE: TO PROVIDE A WATER SUPPLY FOR WASHING HANDS AND FEET IN CONNECTION WITH ANY HOLY PURPOSE IN THE TABERNACLE OR TABERNACLE COURTYARD. MOST MODERN PEOPLE KNOW BECAUSE OF DISCOVERIES THAT ARE FOR THEM NOW MORE THAN A CENTURY OLD THAT WASHING HANDS AND FEET HELPS PREVENT THE CONTRACTION AND SPREAD OF DISEASE. EVEN IN MODERN TIMES, HOWEVER, WASHING IS NOT TAKEN SERIOUSLY ENOUGH BY MANY PEOPLE. IN HOLY BIBLE TIMES THERE WAS NO UNDERSTANDING OF GERMS OR OF THE FACT THAT WASHING SKIN COULD REMOVE NEARLY ALL INFECTIOUS MICROBES FROM SKIN. GOD, HOWEVER, UNDERSTOOD THE PROCESS ENTIRELY AND BENEFITED HIS PEOPLE BY TEACHING THEM THE VALUE OF WASHING BOTH HANDS/ARMS/FEET (THE NEED FOR WHICH IS OBVIOUS SINCE PEOPLE USE THEIR HANDS TO “HANDLE” THINGS) AND FEET/LOWER LEGS (THE NEED FOR WHICH WAS ALSO ACUTE IN TABERNACLE SERVICE, WHICH WAS UNDERTAKEN BY PRIESTS, AS WE HAVE NOTED, BAREFOOT). BUT THE CLEANSING OF PRIESTS’ HANDS AND FEET REQUIRED BY THIS LAW HAD FOR THEM ITS GREATEST VALUE IN TEACHING THE IMPORTANCE OF PURITY. DIRT REPRESENTS A VISIBLE INDICATION OF ADULTERATION OF A CLEAN THING. DIRT IN FOOD MARS THE TASTE; DIRT IN CLOTHING CHANGES BOTH THE APPEARANCE AND POTENTIALLY EVEN THE COMFORT OF THE CLOTHING. DIRT LOOKS BAD/WRONG/OUT OF PLACE ON ANY SURFACE WHERE IT DOES NOT NORMALLY BELONG, AND MOST PEOPLE REGARD THE FEEL OF DIRT (WHEN THERE IS ENOUGH OF IT TO FEEL) AS OBJECTIONABLE. FROM THIS COMMON SENSE ABOUT DIRT, GOD TAUGHT HIS PEOPLE, THROUGH THESE COMMANDS THAT RELATED DIRECTLY TO THE PRIESTS WHO SERVED IN THE TABERNACLE AND/OR ITS COURTYARD, THAT HIS HOLINESS DEMANDS PURITY. THINGS AND PEOPLE BROUGHT CLOSE TO HIS PRESENCE COULD NOT BE SLOPPY, IMPERFECT, SEXUAL, WICKED, INTERRACIAL ABOMINABLE, HOMOSEXUAL, COMMON, ADULTERATED, OR OTHERWISE “DIRTY.” ACCORDINGLY, THE HANDS THAT TOUCHED THE SACRIFICES OR THE FEET THAT WALKED INTO THE TABERNACLE HAD TO BE WASHED TO REMOVE DIRT AND TO MAKE THE TOP HIGH PRIEST [TOP HIGH CHIEF OF POLICE] OF STEPHEN YAHWEH SYMBOLICALLY PURE BEFORE HIM SO AS TO BE ABLE TO SERVE WORTHILY IN HIS HOUSE. THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS RULE FOR ALL PRIESTS IS UNDERSCORED BOTH BY REPETITION AND BY THE ADDITION OF THE DEATH PENALTY FOR VIOLATION. IN V. 20 THE TEXT SAYS “THEY SHALL WASH WITH WATER SO THAT THEY WILL NOT DIE” IN CONNECTION WITH PREPARING TO ENTER THE TABERNACLE TENT ITSELF (CALLED HERE AGAIN THE TENT OF MEETING; CF. 30:16); IN V. 21 THE TEXT SAYS “THEY SHALL WASH THEIR HANDS AND FEET SO THAT THEY WILL NOT DIE” IN CONNECTION WITH APPROACHING THE ALTAR TO MAKE A SACRIFICE THEREON. BY MEANS OF THE TWO SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT WORDINGS—ALMOST IN THE MANNER OF A SYNONYMOUS PARALLELISM—THE FULL CONCEPT IS CONVEYED, THAT IS, “THEY MUST WASH BOTH HANDS AND FEET WITH WATER BEFORE EITHER ENTERING THE TENT OR APPROACHING THE ALTAR.” IT IS LIKELY THAT ALL PRIESTS MAY HAVE WASHED UPON STARTING THEIR SERVICE IN THE TABERNACLE COURTYARD, BUT SOME MAY HAVE BEEN ASSIGNED MAINLY TO ANIMAL CARE, SLAUGHTERING, BUTCHERING, AND MAY NOT HAVE BEEN REQUIRED TO WASH REGULARLY THROUGHOUT THE DAY. ANY PRIEST BRINGING A SACRIFICE TO THE ALTAR OR ENTERING THE HOLY PLACE FOR ANY REASON, HOWEVER, WOULD HAVE HAD TO WASH EACH TIME—NOT JUST AT THE BEGINNING OF A DAY’S SERVICE BUT THROUGHOUT THE DAY, EACH SEPARATE TIME HE MINISTERED AT THE ALTAR OR WITHIN THE TENT. NOTHING IS SAID ABOUT HOW OFTEN THE WATER WAS TO BE CHANGED, WHETHER TOWELS FOR DRYING WERE USED, WHETHER HANDS AND FEET WERE EVER TO BE DIPPED INTO THE BASIN, OR WHETHER THE BASIN WAS SIMPLY A SOURCE FOR WATER THAT WAS LADLED ONTO HANDS AND FEET. THESE MATTERS WERE LEFT TO THE COMMON SENSE OF THE ISRAELITE PRIESTS AND MAY EVEN HAVE BEEN ACCOMPLISHED SOMEWHAT DIFFERENTLY AT DIFFERENT TIMES OR ACCORDING TO THE INDIVIDUAL PREFERENCES OF VARIOUS TOP HIGH PRIESTS. WHAT COUNTED WAS THE RITUAL WASHING FOR ALL VISITS TO THE TENT OR THE ALTAR AND THE NEED TO KEEP THESE RULES AS “A LASTING ORDINANCE FOR AARON AND HIS DESCENDANTS.” EACH GENERATION NEEDED TO UNDERSTAND PURITY: THAT GOD’S HOLINESS IS NOT A THING TO BE TRIFLED WITH AND THAT THE HOLY GOD DEMANDED THAT THOSE APPROACHING HIM BE PURE. IN THE NEW COVENANT IT IS THE “PURE IN HEART” WHO MEET THIS STANDARD, AS JESUS TAUGHT (MATT 5:8; CF. 1 TIM 1:5; 2 TIM 2:22; PS 73:1, 13). BAPTISM SIGNIFIES THIS ACHIEVEMENT OF PURITY THROUGH THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS (HEB 10:22; ACTS 22:6).**

**LAWS ON FORMULATION AND USE OF THE HOLY ANOINTING OIL (30:22–33)**

**22 THEN THE LORD SAID TO MOSES, 23 “TAKE THE FOLLOWING FINE SPICES: 500 SHEKELS [$4,265.00 IN COPPER, $64,000.00 IN SILVER, $960,000.00 IN GOLD] OF LIQUID MYRRH, HALF AS MUCH (THAT IS, 250 SHEKELS) [$2,132.50 IN COPPER, $32,000.00 IN SILVER, $480,000.00 IN GOLD] OF FRAGRANT CINNAMON, 250 SHEKELS [$2,132.50 IN COPPER, $32,000.00 IN SILVER, $480,000.00 IN GOLD] OF FRAGRANT CANE, 24 500 SHEKELS [$4,265.00 IN COPPER, $64,000.00 IN SILVER, $960,000.00 IN GOLD] OF CASSIA—ALL ACCORDING TO THE SANCTUARY SHEKEL—AND A HIN OF OLIVE OIL. 25 MAKE THESE INTO A SACRED ANOINTING OIL, A FRAGRANT BLEND, THE WORK OF A PERFUMER. IT WILL BE THE SACRED ANOINTING OIL. 26 THEN USE IT TO ANOINT THE TENT OF MEETING, THE ARK OF THE TESTIMONY, 27 THE TABLE AND ALL ITS ARTICLES, THE LAMPSTAND AND ITS ACCESSORIES, THE ALTAR OF INCENSE, 28 THE ALTAR OF BURNT OFFERING AND ALL ITS UTENSILS, AND THE BASIN WITH ITS STAND. 29 YOU SHALL CONSECRATE THEM SO THEY WILL BE MOST HOLY, AND WHATEVER TOUCHES THEM WILL BE HOLY. 30 “ANOINT AARON AND HIS SONS AND CONSECRATE THEM SO THEY MAY SERVE ME AS PRIESTS. 31 SAY TO THE ISRAELITES, ‘THIS IS TO BE MY SACRED ANOINTING OIL FOR THE GENERATIONS TO COME. 32 DO NOT POUR IT ON MEN’S BODIES AND DO NOT MAKE ANY OIL WITH THE SAME FORMULA. IT IS SACRED, AND YOU ARE TO CONSIDER IT SACRED. 33 WHOEVER MAKES PERFUME LIKE IT AND WHOEVER PUTS IT ON ANYONE OTHER THAN A PRIEST MUST BE CUT OFF [PUT TO DEATH] FROM HIS PEOPLE.’” ANOINTING RELATED TO CLEANNESS AND PURITY AS SYMBOLS OF HOLINESS. GOD DEMANDED THAT HIS PRIESTS, THE SERVANTS OF HIS HOUSE, BE CLEAN AND PURE. BUT LICE WERE ENDEMIC IN BIBLICAL TIMES, AND TO BE “LOUSY” WAS HARDLY TO BE CLEAN AND PURE. THE SOLUTION IS REGULAR USE OF THE ANOINTING OIL, WHICH KILLS LICE. ONLY THE TOP HIGH PRIEST IS RITUALLY ANOINTED (“OILED”) AS A CONDITION OF BEING INSTALLED IN OFFICE (CHAP. 29), BUT ALL PRIESTS WERE REQUIRED TO USE A PERFUMED ANOINTED SACRED OIL, DESCRIBED IN THIS PASSAGE, NOT ONLY ON THEIR OWN HEADS BUT ALSO ON THE TABERNACLE FURNISHINGS. OILING THE FURNISHINGS DID NOT IMPLY THAT THEY WERE CAPABLE OF SUPPORTING LICE IN THE SAME WAY THAT A LIVING BODY CAN, BUT OILING WOULD HELP PROTECT THE FURNISHINGS FROM ANY LICE ACCIDENTALLY TRANSMITTED BY AN IMPERFECTLY OILED PRIEST OR BY PRIESTS’ CLOTHING AS IT RECEIVED LICE FROM CONTACT WITH LICE-BEARING WORSHIPERS BRINGING THEIR OFFERINGS TO THE TABERNACLE. AS V. 29 STATES, “WHATEVER TOUCHES THEM [MUST BE] HOLY.” LICE ARE NOT HOLY, BUT THE LORD’S AUTHORIZED MILITARY LAW POLICE [MP’S] ARE MOST-HOLIEST OF ALL, WHICH ARE THE FINGER OF THE LORD & THE ULTIMATE BEGINNING OF THE TOP ENGLISH KINGDOM OF LORDSHIP IN LUKE 11:20 & ACTS 7:30-38; 9:3; 22:6; 26:13; 29:1-2.**

**THE FORMULA FOR THE TRUE TABERNACLE HOLY ANOINTING OIL (30:22–25)**

**30:22–25 THE AMOUNT OF THE INGREDIENTS LISTED HERE WOULD ADD UP TO A SIZEABLE QUANTITY OF ANOINTING OIL. A “HIN OF OLIVE OIL” (V. 24) WAS ABOUT A GALLON IN MODERN MEASUREMENT. THE QUANTITY OF FIFTEEN HUNDRED SHEKELS OF FRAGRANCE (500 SHEKELS [$4,265.00 IN COPPER, $64,000.00 IN SILVER, $960,000.00 IN GOLD] OF LIQUID MYRRH, HALF AS MUCH (THAT IS, 250 SHEKELS) [$2,132.50 IN COPPER, $32,000.00 IN SILVER, $480,000.00 IN GOLD] OF FRAGRANT CINNAMON, 250 SHEKELS [$2,132.50 IN COPPER, $32,000.00 IN SILVER, $480,000.00 IN GOLD] OF FRAGRANT CANE, 24 500 SHEKELS [$4,265.00 IN COPPER, $64,000.00 IN SILVER, $960,000.00 IN GOLD] OF CASSIA—ALL ACCORDING TO THE SANCTUARY SHEKEL—AND A HIN OF OLIVE OIL) IS ABOUT 38 POUNDS--ALL WORTH $3,084,795.00 MILLION DOLLARS [361 POUNDS IS WORTH INITIALLY $29,305,552.00 MILLION DOLLARS, $293,055,520.00 MILLION DOLLARS AT .0001%, $2,930,555,200.00 BILLION DOLLARS AT .001% & $29,305,552,000.00 BILLION DOLLARS AT .01%, $293,055,520,000.00 BILLION DOLLARS AT 1%, $2,930,555,200,000.00 TRILLION DOLLARS AT 10% & $29,305,552,000,000.00 TRILLION DOLLARS TO $293,055,520,000,000.00 TRILLION DOLLARS AT 100% IN MODERN MEASUREMENT. THE CINNAMON MAY HAVE BEEN A DRY MEASURE, UNLESS CINNAMON SAP IS MEANT. IT IS LESS CERTAIN WHICH OF THE OTHER FRAGRANCES WERE LIQUID IN FORM, BUT WHETHER OR NOT THEY ALL WERE, THEIR PROPORTIONS RELATIVE TO THE OIL WERE SUCH THAT WHEN EVERYTHING WAS BLENDED WITH THE OLIVE OIL THE RESULT WOULD STILL BE A LIQUID. THUS, THE WHOLE MIXTURE WOULD BE BOTH FRAGRANT AND POURABLE/DAUBABLE. IF THE FRAGRANCES WERE ALL IN DRY/POWDER FORM, AS SOME HAVE SUGGESTED IN LIGHT OF THEIR BEING DESCRIBED ACCORDING TO WEIGHT (I.E., “DRY MEASURE”), IT WOULD SEEM THAT MIXING THEM WITH ONLY A GALLON OF OIL WOULD PRODUCE SOMETHING MORE AKIN TO A PASTE THAN AN OIL. BUT IT IS HARD TO DOUBT FROM THE TEXT THAT THE DESIRED COMPOUND WAS AN OIL TO BE POURED, NOT A PASTE TO BE SMEARED; SO HOW DID THE COMBINATION OF INGREDIENTS LISTED PRODUCE AN OIL? SEVERAL SOLUTIONS HAVE BEEN PROPOSED, ALL OF WHICH ARE TO SOME EXTENT SPECULATIVE, BUT NONE OF WHICH IS UNREASONABLE: (A) THE SPICES WERE TO BE COOKED WITH WATER UNTIL THEY BECAME DISTILLED INTO LIQUIDS THAT THEN WERE BLENDED WITH THE OIL; (B) THE PASTE MIXTURE OF OIL AND SPICES WAS PRESSED THROUGH FILTERING CLOTHS LEAVING BEHIND THE RELATIVELY DRY FRAGRANCE RESIDUE BUT YIELDING AN OIL THAT NOW HAD THE ESSENCE OF THE FRAGRANCES STRONGLY PRESENT WITHIN IT; (C) THE PASTE WAS LATER DILUTED WITH AS MUCH OLIVE OIL AS WAS NEEDED TO MAKE IT ADEQUATELY LIQUID, SO THE PASTE SERVED AS THE FRAGRANT “BASE” FROM WHICH WHATEVER AMOUNT NECESSARY FOR PERFUMING THE ANOINTING OIL WAS TAKEN AS NEEDED. OF THESE OPTIONS THE SECOND HAS THE ADVANTAGE OF FITTING BEST WITH THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE WORDING “THE WORK OF A PERFUMER” (V. 25). IN GENERAL PERFUMES ARE MADE BY FORCING ESSENCES OF FRAGRANT MATERIALS INTO OILS RATHER THAN SIMPLY BY ADDING GROUND UP OR OTHERWISE POWDERED PLANT MATERIAL TO OIL IN ORDER TO MAKE A SLURRY. THUS, THE NIV CAREFULLY TRANSLATES “FORMULA” WHERE SOME OTHER VERSIONS TRANSLATE “MIXTURE.” VERSE 25 CLEARLY RESTRICTS THE FORMULA TO SACRED APPLICATIONS IN SAYING, “IT WILL BE THE SACRED ANOINTING OIL.” NOTE THAT THE ANOINTING OIL IS ALSO DESCRIBED EXPLICITLY AS A “PERFUME” MIXTURE (V. 33) AND “THE WORK OF A PERFUMER” (V. 25). SWEATY BODIES WERE TO BE AVOIDED IN THE TABERNACLE AMONG GOD’S SERVANTS THE PRIESTS (THUS THE LINEN GARMENTS, AS EXPLAINED BY EZEK 44:17–18), AND LIKEWISE THE ODOR OF SMELLY BODIES IS TO BE OFFSET BY PERFUME, AT LEAST SYMBOLICALLY.**

**USE AND MISUSE OF THE SACRED HOLY ANOINTING OIL (30:26–33)**

**30:26–33 THE TABERNACLE AND EVERYTHING IN IT HAD TO BE ANOINTED WITH THE SPECIAL HOLY ANOINTING OIL. VERSES 26–30 DESCRIBE HOW EVERYTHING MENTIONED IN CHAPS. 25–30 REQUIRED ANOINTING, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE HIGH PRIEST’S CLOTHING, INCLUDING THE EPHOD AND ITS BREAST-PIECE, WHICH WERE CONSIDERED FOR ANOINTING PURPOSES ALL OF A PIECE WITHIN THE PROCESS OF ANOINTING AARON (AS IS CLEAR FROM 29:7, 21). THE ANOINTING PROCESS HAD AS ITS PURPOSE TO MAKE EVERYTHING ASSOCIATED WITH THE TABERNACLE HOLY (30:29, “SO THEY WILL BE MOST HOLY”). LOGICALLY, THIS MEANT MAKING EVERYTHING “FITTING TO BELONG TO GOD” AND THEREFORE TO BE PLACED IN HIS PRESENCE. ANOINTING ACCOMPLISHED THIS PURPOSE BY SYMBOLIZING THE KILLING OF THAT WHICH PRODUCED IMPURITY (VERMIN), LEAVING BEHIND A PURIFIED PERSON OR OBJECT. IN EFFECT THE ISRAELITES UNDERSTOOD THAT THE ANOINTING OF THE TABERNACLE AND ITS FURNITURE, AND AARON AND HIS SONS AND THEIR CLOTHING (29:21), SHOWED THAT THEY WERE SETTING ASIDE THESE THINGS FOR GOD, CONSIGNING THEM TO HIS REALM AND SPECIAL POSSESSION. JACOB HAD LONG PRIOR ANOINTED A CRUDE STONE PILLAR AT BETHEL (GEN 28:18; 31:13; 35:14) AS A WAY OF INDICATING THAT HE UNDERSTOOD IT TO BE A THING SPECIAL TO GOD. THE ISRAELITES WERE NOW TO FOLLOW THIS GENERAL CONCEPT OF ANOINTING THE PLACE WHERE GOD’S PRESENCE IS ESPECIALLY MANIFEST. AND THEY WERE TO DO SO PERMANENTLY, “FOR THE GENERATIONS TO COME” (V. 31). NO ONE COULD DECIDE TO CHANGE THE ANOINTING OIL FORMULA OR TO STOP USING IT IN CONSECRATION/ORDINATION CEREMONIES. VERSE 32 ALSO PROHIBITS ALLOWING NON-PRIESTS AT SOME LATER POINT TO COPY THE FORMULA AND MAKE OIL TO ANOINT THEMSELVES FOR NON-PRIESTLY PURPOSES (KEEPING AWAY LICE AND SMELLING GOOD IN THE PROCESS OR ELSE TRYING TO GET SPECIAL BLESSING FOR CLEANSING FROM A SKIN DISEASE BY USING SPECIAL OIL). THIS IS CONSISTENT WITH THE PROPER TRANSLATION OF V. 29, “YOU SHALL CONSECRATE THEM SO THEY WILL BE MOST HOLY, AND WHATEVER TOUCHES THEM MUST BE HOLY.” HOLINESS CANNOT BE TRANSMITTED BY TOUCHING (HAG 2:11–12, SUMMARIZING THE LEVITICAL LAW), BUT CORRUPTION CAN INDEED BE TRANSMITTED BY TOUCHING (HAG 2:13, AGAIN SUMMARIZING THE LEVITICAL LAW). THUS ALL WHO SERVED IN THE COURTYARD OR TENT HAD TO BE CAREFUL THEMSELVES TO BE HOLY, PROPERLY CONSECRATED, SO THAT THEY COULD THEN AVOID CONTAMINATION OF ANYTHING AT GOD’S HOUSE.511 THE PROHIBITION “DO NOT POUR IT ON MEN’S BODIES” WOULD HAVE APPLIED TO NON-PRIESTLY USE, OF COURSE, BUT ALSO TO WRONGFUL USE ON PRIESTS. ONLY THE TOP HIGH PRIEST [TOP HIGH CHIEF OF POLICE] COULD HAVE OIL POURED ON HIM AND ONLY ON HIS HEAD. ALL OTHER POURING OF THE SACRED OIL ON A PERSON WAS IMPROPER. THE PENALTY FOR MISUSE—WHETHER COPYING THE FORMULA OR USING THE SACRED OIL FOR A COMMON PURPOSE—WAS BEING “CUT OFF [PUT TO DEATH] FROM HIS PEOPLE” (V. 33).**

**LAWS ON FORMULATION AND USE OF THE HOLY ANOINTED INCENSE (30:34–38)**

**34 THEN THE LORD SAID TO MOSES, “TAKE FRAGRANT SPICES—GUM RESIN, ONYCHA AND GALBANUM—AND PURE FRANKINCENSE, ALL IN EQUAL AMOUNTS, 35 AND MAKE A FRAGRANT BLEND OF INCENSE, THE WORK OF A PERFUMER. IT IS TO BE SALTED AND PURE AND SACRED. 36 GRIND SOME OF IT TO POWDER AND PLACE IT IN FRONT OF THE TESTIMONY IN THE TENT OF MEETING, WHERE I WILL MEET WITH YOU. IT SHALL BE MOST HOLY TO YOU. 37 DO NOT MAKE ANY INCENSE WITH THIS FORMULA FOR YOURSELVES; CONSIDER IT HOLY TO THE LORD. 38 WHOEVER MAKES ANY LIKE IT TO ENJOY ITS FRAGRANCE MUST BE CUT OFF [PUT TO DEATH] FROM HIS PEOPLE.”**

**30:34–38 THE PURPOSE OF THE SACRED INCENSE, THE PROCEDURE FOR ITS EMPLOYMENT, AND THE TWICE-DAILY INCENSE BURNING PATTERN WITHIN THE TABERNACLE HAVE ALREADY BEEN INDICATED IN THE LAW REQUIRING AN INCENSE ALTAR WITHIN THE HOLY PLACE OF THE TABERNACLE (30:1–10). THE SPICES THEMSELVES CANNOT BE CONFIDENTLY IDENTIFIED EXCEPT FOR FRANKINCENSE, WHICH IS MENTIONED HERE FIRST AND WILL BE MENTIONED FREQUENTLY HEREAFTER IN THE OLD TESTAMENT, MOST OFTEN IN CONNECTION WITH ITS ROLE AS AN INGREDIENT IN THE CEREAL OFFERINGS. NOTE THAT THE INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE SACRED INCENSE MAKE NO MENTION OF QUANTITIES. THE CALCULATION OF QUANTITY WOULD BECOME OBVIOUS IN TIME. SINCE THE INCENSE WAS TO BE OFFERED DAILY, THERE WOULD BE A REGULAR, PERIODIC, PREDICTABLE NEED FOR MORE TO BE COMPOUNDED, AT LEAST DURING ANY TIME THAT THE TABERNACLE WAS SET UP AND FUNCTIONING, THAT IS, WHEN THE ISRAELITES WERE NOT ACTUALLY ON THE ROAD IN TRANSIT FROM ONE LOCATION TO ANOTHER. THIS WOULD CONTRAST WITH THE MORE UNPREDICTABLE FREQUENCY OF USAGE OF THE PERFUMED ANOINTING OIL, WHICH WOULD BE REQUIRED ANNUALLY (30:10) AND THEREAFTER AS OFTEN AS THE TABERNACLE WAS SET UP AFTER BEING TRANSPORTED TO A NEW LOCATION AS THE ISRAELITES TRAVELED, OR AS OFTEN AS A NEW SET OF PRIESTS WERE ORDAINED—AND AS RARELY AS A NEW HIGH PRIEST WOULD BE ORDAINED. ONE SETTING-UP OF THE TABERNACLE WOULD REQUIRE ONLY ONE APPLICATION OF ANOINTING OIL, NO MATTER HOW LONG THE TABERNACLE MIGHT STAY SET UP IN THAT LOCATION. BUT REGARDLESS OF LENGTH OF LOCATION, THE ERECTED TABERNACLE WOULD REQUIRE A STANDARD QUANTITY OF INCENSE PER DAY. THE IDENTIFICATION OF THE FOUR INGREDIENTS THAT MADE UP THE INCENSE IS GENERALLY NOT DOUBTED. THE FIRST TWO INGREDIENTS, HOWEVER, HAVE OFTEN BEEN REFERRED TO BY VARIOUS NAMES. USING THE NIV TERMINOLOGY, WHICH IS AS GOOD AS ANY, WE CAN IDENTIFY THE INGREDIENTS. “GUM RESIN” IS A POWDER OBTAINED FROM THE HARDENED DROPS OF FRAGRANT RESIN FOUND IN THE BARK OF THE MYRRH BUSH. THE WORD USED TO REFER TO IT IN HEBREW MEANS SIMPLY “A DROP.” “ONYCHA” IS A POWDER OBTAINED BY SCRAPING THE HORNY SHELL COVER OF CERTAIN CLAM-LIKE MOLLUSKS FOUND IN THE RED SEA. WHEN BURNT, THIS POWDER EMITS A STRONG AROMA. THE HEBREW WORD USED HERE MEANS, LITERALLY, “AROMATIC SHELL.” AS AN ISOLATED WARM WATER SECTION OF THE OTHERWISE COLDER WATER INDIAN OCEAN, THE RED SEA SUPPORTS A CONSIDERABLE VARIETY OF UNIQUE SUBSPECIES OF MOLLUSKS. “GALBANUM” WAS A BROWNISH, VERY STRONG-SMELLING RESIN TAKEN FROM THE LOWER PART OF THE STEM OF A FERULA PLANT, WHERE IT IS NATURALLY EXUDED. FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF GEOGRAPHIC AVAILABILITY, THE FERULA, A THICK-STALKED PLANT WITH YELLOW FLOWERS AND FERNLIKE GREEN FOLIAGE, IS A MEDITERRANEAN SEA COASTAL PLANT. GALBANUM ACTS IN THE MANNER OF A SCENT PRESERVATIVE, SO WHEN MIXED WITH OTHER INGREDIENTS IN A PERFUME, IT TENDS TO ALLOW THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE SCENT OVER A LONG PERIOD OF TIME. “FRANKINCENSE,” A RESIN FROM BOSWELLIA TREES, PROVIDES A LOVELY BALSAM FRAGRANCE TO ANYTHING IT IS ADDED TO. ALTHOUGH GUM RESIN MIGHT BE OBTAINED FROM A VARIETY OF LOCATIONS WHERE THE ISRAELITES TRAVELED, ONYCHA CAME FROM THE RED SEA, GALBANUM FROM THE MEDITERRANEAN COAST, AND FRANKINCENSE FROM NORTH AFRICA. THE ISRAELITES MAY HAVE HAD SUCH A SUPPLY OF THESE MATERIALS WITH THEM FROM DESPOILING THE EGYPTIANS THAT THEY COULD ASSEMBLE SATISFACTORY QUANTITIES FOR MIXING THE INCENSE AT SINAI. BUT EVENTUALLY THEY WOULD HAVE TO TRADE FOR THEM, PURCHASING THEM FROM THE SPICE CARAVANS THAT CRISSCROSSED THE NEAR EAST IN ANCIENT TIMES (GEN 37:25; 1 KGS 10:2, 10, 25; SONG 3:6; EZEK 27:22; REV 18:13). BUT WHY IS SALT TO BE ADDED TO THE INCENSE (V. 35, “IT IS TO BE SALTED”)? VARIOUS EXPLANATIONS HAVE BEEN OFFERED, BUT THE MOST LIKELY DERIVES FROM THE FACT THAT SALT IS THE ONLY PRESERVATIVE KNOWN IN ANCIENT TIMES. BY REASON OF ITS POWERFUL ANTIBACTERIAL PROPERTIES (THOUGH THESE WERE NOT UNDERSTOOD AT THE TIME, OF COURSE), SALT WAS OBSERVED TO PRESERVE FOODS THAT WOULD OTHERWISE PUTREFY RAPIDLY, ESPECIALLY IN THE HOT CLIMATE IN WHICH MOST ISRAELITES LIVED. ACCORDINGLY, SALT BECAME IMPORTANT BOTH AS AN ACTUAL PRESERVATIVE AND AS A SYMBOLIC PRESERVATIVE, AND TERMS SUCH AS “OF SALT” BECAME EQUIVALENT IN MEANING TO “PERMANENT.” AT A MINIMUM, ADDING SALT TO THE INCENSE SYMBOLIZED THE DESIRE THAT IT REMAIN ALWAYS PURE AND PRESERVED AND NOT OLD OR RANCID. BEYOND THIS IT PROBABLY ALSO SYMBOLIZED THE FACT THAT THE SACRED INCENSE REPRESENTED A PART OF THE RITUAL REMEMBRANCE OF THE COVENANT OF STEPHEN YAHWEH WITH HIS PEOPLE. THUS THE REQUIREMENT OF V. 35 THAT “IT IS TO BE SALTED AND PURE AND SACRED” MEANS SOMETHING LIKE “IT MUST BE UNDERSTOOD AS A PERMANENT SYMBOL OF MY COVENANT, WHICH IS PURE AND HOLY WITH MY PEOPLE, WHO ARE TO REFLECT THE FACT THAT I MAKE PROMISES THAT ARE PERMANENT AND THAT I MYSELF AM ABSOLUTELY PURE AND HOLY.” THE MIXTURE OF SPICES, PROPERLY SALTED, WAS THEN GROUND TO POWDER AND PLACED ON THE INCENSE ALTAR, WHICH WAS LOCATED “IN FRONT OF THE TESTIMONY IN THE TENT OF MEETING” (SEE ALSO 30:6). AS THE POWDER BURNED, IT GAVE OFF A BEAUTIFUL FRAGRANT SMOKE (ALSO SYMBOLIZES SMOKING GREEN HERBS TO THE LORD), HONORING GOD AND SYMBOLIZING THE PRAYERS OF HIS PEOPLE. TWICE THE ISRAELITES WERE REMINDED OF THE HOLINESS OF THIS INCENSE WITH THE WORDING “IT SHALL BE MOST HOLY TO YOU” IN V. 36 AND “CONSIDER IT HOLY TO [STEPHEN YAHWEH]” IN V. 37. THIS HOLINESS WAS TO BE ENFORCED BY A BANISHMENT/ DEATH PENALTY (V. 38), THE WORDING OF WHICH INDICATES WHY PEOPLE MIGHT TRY TO IMITATE THE TABERNACLE INCENSE: TO “ENJOY ITS FRAGRANCE,” THAT IS, TO OBTAIN SELFISHLY IN THEIR OWN HOMES THE SAME HIGH-QUALITY SCENT OF BURNING SPICES THAT GLORIFIED GOD IN THE TABERNACLE HOLY PLACE. WITH THIS FINAL COMMAND, THE DESCRIPTION OF THE TABERNACLE AND ITS FURNISHINGS IS COMPLETE.**

**DIVINE APPOINTMENT OF BEZALEL AND OHOLIAB AND 2 OTHER SKILLED CRAFTSMEN [?] ---ZECHARIAH 1:18-21 (31:1–11)**

**1 THEN THE LORD SAID TO MOSES, 2 “SEE, I HAVE CHOSEN BEZALEL SON OF URI, THE SON OF HUR, OF THE TRIBE OF JUDAH, 3 AND I HAVE FILLED HIM WITH THE SPIRIT OF GOD [JOHN 4:23-24; 14:26 ;15:26 ;16:13 & ACTS 6:5; 7:55-56], WITH SKILL, ABILITY AND KNOWLEDGE IN ALL KINDS OF CRAFTS—4 TO MAKE ARTISTIC DESIGNS FOR WORK IN GOLD, SILVER AND BRONZE, 5 TO CUT AND SET STONES, TO WORK IN WOOD, AND TO ENGAGE IN ALL KINDS OF CRAFTSMANSHIP. 6 MOREOVER, I HAVE APPOINTED OHOLIAB SON OF AHISAMACH, OF THE TRIBE OF DAN, TO HELP HIM. ALSO I HAVE GIVEN SKILL TO ALL THE CRAFTSMEN TO MAKE EVERYTHING I HAVE COMMANDED YOU: 7 THE TENT OF MEETING, THE ARK OF THE TESTIMONY WITH THE ATONEMENT COVER ON IT, AND ALL THE OTHER FURNISHINGS OF THE TENT—8 THE TABLE AND ITS ARTICLES, THE PURE GOLD LAMPSTAND AND ALL ITS ACCESSORIES, THE ALTAR OF INCENSE, 9 THE ALTAR OF BURNT OFFERING AND ALL ITS UTENSILS, THE BASIN WITH ITS STAND—10 AND ALSO THE WOVEN GARMENTS, BOTH THE SACRED [HOLY] GARMENTS FOR AARON THE PRIEST AND THE GARMENTS FOR HIS SONS WHEN THEY SERVE AS PRIESTS, 11 AND THE [HOLY] ANOINTING OIL AND FRAGRANT [HOLY] INCENSE FOR THE HOLY PLACE. THEY ARE TO MAKE THEM JUST AS I COMMANDED YOU.” ONLY THE BEST MATERIALS WERE TO BE USED IN THE MANUFACTURE OF THE TABERNACLE AND ITS FURNISHINGS, ACCORDING TO THE INSTRUCTIONS OF CHAPS. 25–30. HERE IN 31:1–11 GOD INSISTS AS WELL THAT ONLY THE BEST WORKMANSHIP BE ASSIGNED TO THE ACTUAL TASK OF CONSTRUCTION. THE PROCESS BEGINS WITH THE APPOINTMENT OF PEOPLE WHO ARE ALREADY SKILLED, GIFTED ARTISANS. TO THIS IS ADDED THE SPECIAL SPIRITUAL FILLING OF STEPHEN YAHWEH, WITH THE RESULT THAT THE COMPLETED TABERNACLE AND EVERYTHING IN IT WILL BE OF TOP QUALITY, AN EXACT FULFILLMENT OF WHAT STEPHEN YAHWEH WANTED, RATHER THAN ANY MERE APPROXIMATION. WORSHIPERS OF ALL SUCCEEDING GENERATIONS COULD BE SURE THAT THE TABERNACLE AT WHICH THEY WORSHIPED WAS IN FACT BUILT EXACTLY AS MOSES HAD SEEN IT IN THE DIVINELY REVEALED PLAN. INDEED, WHEN MOSES CAREFULLY INSPECTED THE TABERNACLE AND ALL ITS ACCOUTREMENTS, HE FOUND IT “JUST AS THE LORD HAD COMMANDED” (39:32). WITH THIS PASSAGE WE COME TO THE PENULTIMATE PERICOPE OF THE LONG SINAI LEGAL DISCOURSE, THE VERBATIM RECORD OF GOD’S COVENANT INSTRUCTIONS TO MOSES. THERE REMAINS ONLY ONE MORE SECTION, 31:12–18, WHICH CONCLUDES WITH GOD’S PERSONAL PRESENTATION OF THE 2 TABLETS OF THE TEN WORDS/COMMANDMENTS. SINCE AURAL RECEPTION OF THE TEN BEGAN THE WHOLE PROCESS OF LEGAL REVELATION ON SINAI IN THE FIRST PLACE (20:1), IT BECOMES OBVIOUS THAT 20:1–31:18, CONCLUDING WITH A DESCRIPTION OF WRITTEN RECEPTION OF THE TEN, FORMS A COHERENT UNIT AND THAT THAT UNIT IS NEARING ITS END WITH THE PRESENT COMMANDS. THESE VERSES PROVIDE TWO SORTS OF INFORMATION. THEY IDENTIFY THE ARTISANS SELECTED BY DIVINE APPOINTMENT AND ALSO PROVIDE A CONCISE YET REMARKABLY COMPREHENSIVE SUMMARY OF WHAT HAS ALREADY BEEN SAID IN CHAPS. 25–30. 31:1–3 BEZALEL IS IDENTIFIED BY HIS DESCENDANCY FROM JUDAH, WHICH CAME THROUGH JUDAH’S SON PEREZ (1 CHR 2:4), PEREZ’S SON HEZRON (1 CHR 2:5), HEZRON’S SON CALEB (1 CHR 2:18), AND THEN IN CONTINUING SUCCESSION HUR AND URI, BEZALEL’S GRANDFATHER AND FATHER, RESPECTIVELY (1 CHR 2:19–20). IT IS NOT NECESSARY TO ASSUME THAT THE HUR MENTIONED AS BEZALEL’S GRANDFATHER WAS THE HUR WHO HELPED MOSES KEEP HIS HANDS ALOFT IN PRAYER DURING THE BATTLE WITH THE AMALEKITES AT REPHIDIM (17:10–13) SINCE THAT HUR MAY HAVE BEEN A RELATIVE OF MOSES’ AND AARON’S, THUS A LEVITE, AND THE NAME HUR (MEANING “WHITEY”) PROBABLY WAS COMMON. WHAT IS PERHAPS MOST SIGNIFICANT ABOUT BEZALEL’S FAMILY LINEAGE IS HIS BEING A JUDAHITE. IN ALL ASPECTS OF TABERNACLE SERVICE AND MAINTENANCE, LEVITES WERE THE ONLY PERSONS ALLOWED RESPONSIBILITY. THEY ALONE COULD SET UP, TAKE DOWN, TRANSPORT, MAINTAIN, OR UTILIZE ANYTHING PERTAINING TO THE TABERNACLE. BUT THE ORIGINAL CONSTRUCTION IS ANOTHER MATTER. THE SERVANTS IN GOD’S HOUSE WERE CHOSEN FOR THEIR DUTY BY REASON OF BIRTH LINEAGE; BUT THOSE WHO ACTUALLY BUILT IT WERE CHOSEN BECAUSE OF SPIRITUAL GIFTING. NO JUDAHITE WOULD BE ABLE TO TOUCH ANYTHING IN THE TABERNACLE ONCE IT IS CONSTRUCTED AND SANCTIFIED, BUT UNTIL THEN THE BEST CRAFTSMEN, REGARDLESS OF TRIBE, WOULD HANDLE EVERY PART OF IT AS THEY MADE IT INTO A BEAUTIFUL, PORTABLE DIVINE DWELLING FOR ISRAEL’S LORD & EVENTUALLY FOR THE SAME LORD KNOWN AS THE USA’S LORD AS WELL. NOTE ALSO THAT OHOLIAB’S TRIBE IS IDENTIFIED AS DAN (V. 6); MOREOVER, JOSHUA, MOSES’ AIDE AND SUCCESSOR AS LEADER OF THE PEOPLE, IS AN EPHRAIMITE (1 CHR 7:27). CLERGY SERVICE IS RESTRICTED BY TRIBE; NO OTHER LEADERSHIP IS. THE NIV TRANSLATION OF V. 2, “I HAVE CHOSEN BEZALEL,” SOMEWHAT OBSCURES THE MEANING OF THE ORIGINAL (LIT., “I HAVE CALLED BY NAME BEZALEL”). THE IDIOM EMPLOYED IN THE HEBREW CONNOTES SPECIFICALLY SELECTING A SINGLE INDIVIDUAL, THAT IS, NAMING THAT INDIVIDUAL TO A JOB. IN THIS CASE BEZALEL, AND NO ONE ELSE, WAS TO HEAD THE TABERNACLE CONSTRUCTION PROJECT; NO SUBSTITUTE COULD BE EMPLOYED IN HIS PLACE, AND HIS SPECIFIC BACKGROUND AND SKILLS WERE THE ONES GOD PLANNED TO ENHANCE WITH THE FILLING OF HIS SPIRIT. APPROPRIATELY, HE WAS MENTIONED EARLY ON IN THE FULFILLMENT PORTION OF THE TABERNACLE CONSTRUCTION DESCRIPTIONS AS WAS OHOLIAB (SEE 35:30–36:2) BECAUSE WHEN THE WORK GOT UNDERWAY IT WAS THE KEY WORKERS WHO STARTED EVERYTHING IN TRAIN. VERSE 3 DOES NOT SAY THAT GOD GAVE BEZALEL FOUR THINGS (“SPIRIT OF GOD, … SKILL, ABILITY AND KNOWLEDGE”) BUT CORRECTLY TRANSLATED SAYS THAT HE GAVE BEZALEL MAINLY ONE THING: HIS SPIRIT, WHICH THEN PERFECTED BEZALEL’S WISDOM, INSIGHT, KNOWLEDGE, AND WORK PERFORMANCE IN GENERAL. THE CLEAREST TRANSLATION OF THE HEBREW MIGHT BE: “I HAVE FILLED HIM WITH GOD’S SPIRIT IN [REGARD TO] WISDOM, IN INSIGHT, IN KNOWLEDGE, AND IN EVERY SORT OF WORK.” IN OTHER WORDS, THE WAY THE FILLING OF THE SPIRIT OF GOD AFFECTED BEZALEL, IS TO ENABLE HIM TO BE WISER, MORE INSIGHTFUL, MORE KNOWLEDGEABLE, AND MORE CAPABLE OF ANY SORT OF WORK TO WHICH GOD ASSIGNED HIM. THE WORDING CANNOT BE UNDERSTOOD TO MEAN THAT HE WOULD RECEIVE THE SPIRIT OF GOD AND, THEN, OTHER THINGS IN ADDITION BUT RATHER THE SPIRIT OF GOD IN A WAY THAT PROVIDED THE AMOUNTS OF THE OTHER THINGS NEEDED SO THAT BEZALEL’S TABERNACLE WORK WOULD BE UP TO GOD’S TOP STANDARDS.**

**EXCURSUS: THE MEANING OF BEING “FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT”**

**THE CONCEPT OF BEING FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT OF GOD IS OFTEN MISUNDERSTOOD AND SOMETIMES GROSSLY SO, AS COMPARED TO ITS ACTUAL BIBLICAL USAGE. SOME HAVE ASSUMED THAT BEING FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT MUST REPRESENT A POWERFUL EMOTIONAL EXPERIENCE THAT PRODUCES SENSATIONS AND FEELINGS THAT ARE OTHERWORLDLY, WITH THE RESULT THAT THE PERSON FILLED RECEIVES AN EMOTIVE IMPETUS TO ENJOY LIFE MORE RICHLY OR EXPERIENCE LIVING ON A HIGHER PLANE. OTHERS HAVE OPINED THAT BEING FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT EQUATES TO HAVING A SECOND SPECIFIC WORK OF GRACE IN ONE’S LIFE, SUBSEQUENT TO AND DEEPER THAN MERE SALVATION/CONVERSION, WHEREBY GOD TAKES OVER MORE OF ONE’S LIFE THAN WOULD BE POSSIBLE IF ONE WERE SIMPLY A FORGIVEN BELIEVER. YET OTHERS HAVE CONCLUDED THAT “SPEAKING IN TONGUES” (BY WHICH THEY MEAN ENGAGING IN PARATACTIC VOCALIZATION NOT ASSOCIATED WITH ANY EARTHLY LANGUAGE) IS THE REQUISITE SIGN OF BEING FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT AND THAT APART FROM SPEAKING IN TONGUES THE FILLING OF THE SPIRIT DOES NOT OCCUR. STILL OTHERS, REASONING ERRONEOUSLY FROM PAUL’S CONTRAST OF BEING FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT AND BEING DRUNK (EPH 5:18), ASSUME THAT BEING FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT MUST BE LIKE DRUNKENNESS, IN OTHER WORDS, CHARACTERIZED BY A BLISSFUL LOSS OF SELF-CONTROL, AS IF PAUL WERE ASSERTING THAT THE TWO PHENOMENA ARE ANALOGOUS INSTEAD OF IN FACT ASSERTING THAT THEY ARE POLAR OPPOSITES: BEING FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT SHOULD RESULT IN COMPLETE SELF-CONTROL. IN FACT, “BEING FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT” IS A BIBLICAL IDIOM FOR “HAVING FROM GOD THE ABILITY TO DO OR SAY EXACTLY WHAT GOD WANTS DONE OR SAID.” IN THE CASE OF BEZALEL IN EXOD 31:3; 35:31, HIS BEING FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT MEANT THAT HE COULD CORRECTLY CONSTRUCT THE TABERNACLE AND ITS FURNISHINGS EXACTLY AS GOD WANTED THEM MADE—WHICH IS IN FACT WHAT BOTH VERSES SAY IS THE EFFECT OF HIS BEING SO FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT. IN MIC 3:8, MICAH DESCRIBES BEING FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT “TO DECLARE TO JACOB HIS TRANSGRESSION, TO ISRAEL HIS SIN,” IN OTHER WORDS, TO SPEAK GOD’S WORD FORCEFULLY AND EFFECTIVELY—TO SAY WHAT GOD WANTED SAID. THE ANGEL’S ASSURANCE TO ZECHARIAH THAT JOHN WOULD BE FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT EVEN FROM BIRTH (LUKE 1:15) GOES ON TO DESCRIBE THE EFFECT THEREOF AS EMPOWERING HIM TO BE PERSUASIVE: “MANY OF THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL WILL HE BRING BACK TO THE LORD THEIR GOD. AND HE WILL … TURN THE HEARTS … TO MAKE READY A PEOPLE PREPARED FOR THE LORD” (LUKE 1:16–17). LIKEWISE, IN LUKE 1:67 WHEN ZECHARIAH IS FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT, THE RESULT IS HIS ABILITY TO PROPHECY ACCURATELY. WHEN ELIZABETH IS FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT (LUKE 1:41), THE RESULT IS AN INSPIRED SPEECH TO MARY (VV. 41–45). IN ACTS EACH ACCOUNT OF BEING FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT INCLUDES OVERT REFERENCE TO ITS RESULT: A SPEAKER’S ABILITY TO SPEAK GOD’S WORD AS GOD WANTS IT SPOKEN (ACTS 2:4; 4:31; 9:17;528 13:9, 52529). INDEED, THE CASE IS WELL SUPPORTED BY A NEGATIVE: IN ACTS 5:3 PETER ASSETS THAT “SATAN” HAD “FILLED” ANANIAS, WITH THE RESULT THAT HE “LIED TO THE HOLY SPIRIT.” THUS, THE FILLING OF THE SPIRIT BRINGS TRUE, GODLY ASSERTIONS FROM THE MOUTH OF THE SPEAKER BECAUSE THE SPEAKER SAYS WHAT GOD WANTS SAID; THE FILLING OF SATAN, ON THE OTHER HAND, BRINGS LIES, WHICH IS WHAT THE FATHER OF LIES” (JOHN 8:44) PRODUCES. IN EPHESIANS, PAUL’S COMMAND TO BE FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT (5:18) IS FOLLOWED IMMEDIATELY BY THE EXPECTED RESULT: “SPEAK TO ONE ANOTHER …” (5:19). UNDERSTANDING THE IDIOMATIC MEANING OF “BEING FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT” OBVIATES ANY NOTION THAT BEZALEL EXPERIENCED THE NEW COVENANT PHENOMENON OF THE INDWELLING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT FAR EARLIER THAN ANYONE ELSE. IN FACT, HE IS NOT A NEW COVENANT CONVERT FOURTEEN HUNDRED YEARS EARLY BUT IS SIMPLY A MAN AIDED BY GOD’S SPIRIT TO DO EXACTLY WHAT GOD WANTED HIM TO DO, SO THE PRODUCT OF HIS CRAFTSMANSHIP IS FULLY TO GOD’S HIGH STANDARDS, ESSENTIALLY AS IF GOD HAD DONE IT HIMSELF. 31:4–5 THE TABERNACLE AND ALL ITS FURNISHINGS (CHAPS. 25–30) CONSISTED OF ACACIA WOOD, METAL (GOLD, SILVER, BRONZE, GEMS), AND FABRIC. BEZALEL MAY NOT HAVE POSSESSED SKILLS IN THE AREA OF SPINNING, WEAVING, OR DYEING (I.E., FABRIC WORK) BECAUSE THESE ARE NOT MENTIONED SPECIFICALLY HERE, BUT HE CLEARLY UNDERSTOOD A GREAT DEAL ABOUT ARTISTIC METAL WORKING, WOOD WORKING, AND THE CUTTING AND SETTING OF GEMS. BOTH AT THE END OF V. 3 AND AGAIN AT THE END OF V. 5 HIS ABILITIES RELATIVE TO “ALL KINDS OF CRAFTSMANSHIP” ARE PRAISED, SO WHETHER OR NOT HE WOULD PERSONALLY FASHION A PARTICULAR PART OF THE TABERNACLE, HE UNDERSTOOD HOW TO ASSESS THE QUALITY OF OTHERS’ WORK. 31:6 ASIDE FROM HIS MENTION HERE AND IN THE FULFILLMENT PASSAGES OF 35:34; 36:1–2; 38:23, OHOLIAB’S NAME IS NOT OTHERWISE FOUND IN THE HOLY BIBLE, BUT THE WORDING HERE SUGGESTS THAT HE IS THE NUMBER TWO IN COMMAND ON THE TABERNACLE PROJECT AND PERHAPS EVEN A COLEADER. BUT AN UNNAMED NUMBER OF PERSONS ALSO HELPED MAKE THE TABERNACLE JUST AS IT WAS DESIGNED BY GOD TO BE, PERSONS TO WHOM GOD GAVE SPECIAL WISDOM TO AUGMENT THEIR OWN. THE HEBREW MISLEADINGLY TRANSLATED BY THE NIV AS “I HAVE GIVEN SKILL TO ALL THE CRAFTSMEN TO MAKE EVERYTHING I HAVE COMMANDED YOU” ACTUALLY SAYS, “IN THE MIND OF ALL WHO HAVE WISE MINDS I HAVE PUT WISDOM SO THAT THEY CAN MAKE EVERYTHING I COMMANDED YOU.” IN OTHER WORDS, THE EMPHASIS IS MORE ON BEING IN TUNE WITH GOD’S DESIRES BY ALWAYS MAKING THE RIGHT CHOICES AMONG THE CONSTRUCTION AND DESIGN OPTIONS BEING CONSTANTLY PRESENTED THAN SIMPLY GIVING SKILL TO CRAFTSMEN. MOREOVER, THE NIV TRANSLATION CHOICE “CRAFTSMEN” COULD BE UNDERSTOOD TO SUGGEST THAT ONLY MEN WOULD HAVE BEEN INVOLVED IN THE TABERNACLE CONSTRUCTION. IN FACT, WOMEN WERE EXPLICITLY RESPONSIBLE FOR MUCH OF THE FABRIC MANUFACTURE (35:25–26), AND BOTH MEN AND WOMEN WERE INVOLVED TOGETHER IN LOCATING AND CONTRIBUTING MATERIALS (35:29; CF. ALSO 36:6). 31:7–11 THESE VERSES REVIEW SUCCINCTLY EVERYTHING MENTIONED IN CHAPS. 25–30, WITH THE FINAL COMMAND, “THEY ARE TO MAKE THEM JUST AS I COMMANDED YOU” (V. 11), REITERATING FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE WORKMEN THE INSISTENCE ON EXACT REPLICATION THAT GOD HAD ALREADY GIVEN TO MOSES (25:9, 40; 26:30; 27:8).**

**LAWS ON THE SABBATH (31:12–17)**

**12 THEN THE LORD SAID TO MOSES, 13 “SAY TO THE ISRAELITES, ‘YOU MUST OBSERVE MY SABBATHS. THIS WILL BE A SIGN BETWEEN ME AND YOU FOR THE GENERATIONS TO COME, SO YOU MAY KNOW THAT I AM THE LORD, WHO MAKES YOU HOLY. 14 “‘OBSERVE THE SABBATH, BECAUSE IT IS HOLY TO YOU. ANYONE WHO DESECRATES IT MUST BE PUT TO DEATH; WHOEVER DOES ANY WORK ON THAT DAY MUST BE CUT OFF [PUT TO DEATH] FROM HIS PEOPLE. 15 FOR SIX DAYS, WORK IS TO BE DONE, BUT THE SEVENTH DAY IS A SABBATH OF REST, HOLY TO THE LORD. WHOEVER DOES ANY WORK ON THE SABBATH DAY MUST BE PUT TO DEATH. 16 THE ISRAELITES ARE TO OBSERVE THE SABBATH, CELEBRATING IT FOR THE GENERATIONS TO COME AS A LASTING COVENANT. 17 IT WILL BE A SIGN BETWEEN ME AND THE ISRAELITES FOREVER, FOR IN SIX DAYS THE LORD MADE THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH, AND ON THE SEVENTH DAY HE ABSTAINED FROM WORK AND RESTED.’”**

**31:12–17 WHY MAKE MENTION OF THE SABBATH AT THIS POINT, WITHIN THE SECTION OF EXODUS THAT DEALS WITH THE TABERNACLE? HAD THE SABBATH NOT ALREADY BEEN DEALT WITH SATISFACTORILY IN 16:21–26 AND ESPECIALLY IN THE TEN WORDS/COMMANDMENTS, THAT IS, EXOD 20:8–11? THE ANSWER IS THAT THE TABERNACLE WAS FOR WORSHIP; WORSHIP OCCURRED WEEKLY, ON THE SABBATH; AND IF THE SABBATH WERE NOT PROPERLY OBSERVED, WORSHIP WOULD NOT PROPERLY TAKE PLACE; SO THEREFORE, THE TABERNACLE WOULD NOT BE PROPERLY USED. THERE ARE BOTH SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE RELATIVELY LENGTHY COMMANDMENT IN EXOD 20:8–11 AND THE RESTATEMENT HERE IN 31:12–17. THE FOLLOWING TABLE SHOWS GENERALLY HOW THESE COMPARISONS (HERE OF KEY WORDING RATHER THAN OF EXACT WORDING, IGNORING CONJUNCTIONS AND OTHER LESS IMPORTANT VOCABULARY) DEMONSTRATE THAT THE PRESENT COMMANDS REFLECT ALL THE ESSENTIALS OF THE TEN WORDS/COMMANDMENTS SABBATH LAW, WHILE ADDING REMINDERS OF ITS PERPETUAL OBSERVANCE AND THE PENALTY OF BEING CUT OFF/PUT TO DEATH FOR DISHONORING THE SABBATH.**

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| **EXOD 20** | **EXOD 31** |
| **REMEMBER THE SABBATH** | **OBSERVE MY SABBATHS/OBSERVE THE SABBATH** |
| **KEEP IT HOLY** | **IT IS HOLY TO YOU** |
| **SIX DAYS YOU SHALL LABOR** | **FOR SIX DAYS WORK IS TO BE DONE** |
| **SEVENTH DAY IS A SABBATH** | **SEVENTH DAY IS A SABBATH OF REST** |
| **ON IT YOU SHALL DO NO WORK** | **WHOEVER DOES ANY WORK ON THAT DAY** |
| **-0-** | **MUST BE CUT OFF** |
| **NOT YOU, SON, DAUGHTER, MANSERVANT,**  **MAIDSERVANT, ANIMALS, ALIEN WITHIN GATES** | **-0-**  **-0-** |
| **SIX DAYS THE LORD MADE HEAVENS, EARTH, SEA** | **SIX DAYS LORD MADE HEAVENS, EARTH** |
| **AND ALL THAT IS IN THEM** | **-0-** |
| **HE RESTED ON THE SEVENTH DAY** | **ON THE SEVENTH DAY HE ABSTAINED FROM WORK AND RESTED** |
| **LORD BLESSED THE SABBATH DAY** | **-0-** |
| **MADE IT HOLY** | **HOLY TO THE LORD** |
| **-0-** | **SIGN BETWEEN ME AND YOU FOR GENERATIONS TO COME** |
| **-0-** | **SO THAT YOU MAY KNOW I AM THE LORD** |
| **-0-** | **ANYONE WHO DESECRATES IT PUT TO DEATH** |
| **-0-** | **ETC.** |

**THE STRUCTURE OF THE PERICOPE IS REPETITIOUS, ESPECIALLY IN THE WAY VV. 16–17A ECHO VV. 13–14A. THIS CAN BE SEEN IN THE TABLE, WHICH DEMONSTRATES THAT THE REPETITION IS NOT ABSOLUTE OR DITTOGRAPHIC BUT STRESSES INTERNALLY THE LASTING NATURE OF THE SABBATH REQUIREMENT AND THE FACT THAT FAILURE TO KEEP THIS IMPORTANT COVENANT SIGN WOULD REPRESENT A VERY SERIOUS BREACH OF COVENANT RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STEPHEN YAHWEH AND HIS PEOPLE.**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **31:13–14A** | **31:16–17A** |
| **[SAY TO] THE ISRAELITES** | **THE ISRAELITES** |
| **YOU MUST OBSERVE MY SABBATHS** | **ARE TO OBSERVE THE SABBATH** |
| **WILL BE SIGN BETWEEN ME AND YOU** | **THIS WILL BE A SIGN BETWEEN ME AND THE ISRAELITES** |
| **FOR GENERATIONS TO COME** | **FOREVER/FOR GENERATIONS TO COME** |
| **SO THAT YOU MAY KNOW THAT I AM THE LORD** | **-0-** |
| **WHO MAKES YOU HOLY** | **-0-** |
| **OBSERVE THE SABBATH** | **THE ISRAELITES … OBSERVE THE SABBATH (ALSO ABOVE)** |
| **-0-** | **(CELEBRATING IT …) AS A LASTING COVENANT** |
| **BECAUSE IT IS HOLY TO YOU** | **-0-** |

**GOD IS THE GUARANTOR OF HIS OWN COVENANT WITH HIS PEOPLE, AND HIS EXAMPLE FORMS THE BASIS FOR THEIR BEHAVIOR. ACCORDINGLY, IN 31:17, THE CONCLUDING STATEMENT OF THE SABBATH LAW DRAWS THE ATTENTION OF THE PEOPLE TO HIS OWN WORK OF SEVEN DAYS, AS DESCRIBED IN GEN 1, AND HIS RESTING/ABSTAINING FROM WORK ON THE SEVENTH DAY. HEBREWS 3 AND 4 DEVELOP THIS THEME RELATIVE TO AN OVERVIEW OF ALL HISTORY: GOD’S CREATION REST OCCURRED ONCE, NOT EVERY WEEK. THE WEEKLY SABBATH IS IN PART A REMINDER OF THAT DIVINE, ETERNAL REST. OUR OPPORTUNITY TO ENTER THAT SAME REST (THE JOY OF HEAVEN FOREVER WITH GOD) REQUIRES OBEDIENCE THROUGH CHRIST (HEB 4:3–6) LEST THE CURSE OF PS 95:11 (“THEY SHALL NEVER ENTER MY REST”) BE THE RESULT. THE SABBATH IS A SIGN OF OBEDIENCE TO THE COVENANT. THOSE WHO KEEP NO SABBATH (WHO NEITHER REST THE EQUIVALENT OF ONE DAY PER WEEK NOR WORSHIP WEEKLY) ARE BY THEIR VERY ACTIONS INDICATING OPENLY TO ALL THAT THEY ARE NOT PARTNERS TO THE COVENANT. THOSE WHO FAITHFULLY KEEP THE SABBATH, ON THE OTHER HAND, MAKE A PUBLIC DECLARATION OF THEIR COVENANT LOYALTY TO THE “LORD OF THE SABBATH.”**

**CONCLUSION: PRESENTATION OF THE 10 [16] COMMANDMENTS TO MOSES (31:18)**

**18 WHEN THE LORD FINISHED SPEAKING TO MOSES ON MOUNT SINAI, HE GAVE HIM THE 2 TABLETS OF THE TESTIMONY, THE TABLETS OF STONE INSCRIBED BY THE FINGER OF GOD. 31:18 THE TEXT OF EXOD 24:12 READS: “THE LORD SAID TO MOSES, ‘COME UP TO ME ON THE MOUNTAIN AND STAY HERE, AND I WILL GIVE YOU THE TABLETS OF STONE, WITH THE LAW AND COMMANDS I HAVE WRITTEN FOR THEIR INSTRUCTION.’” FROM THE MOMENT HE ASCENDED THE MOUNTAIN, MOSES WAS TO ANTICIPATE RECEIVING THE SPECIAL TABLETS OF STONE THAT WOULD REPRESENT A PERMANENT RECORD OF THE TEN WORDS/COMMANDMENTS OF GOD AS SPOKEN DIRECTLY BY HIM TO THE PEOPLE, AND AS RECORDED IN CHAP. 20, IN ADDITION TO THE OTHER LAWS THAT HE, HIMSELF WOULD WRITE DOWN ON PAPER OR PARCHMENT, A TEMPORARY SURFACE COMPARED TO THE STONE. BUT NOTHING IN 24:12 SPEAKS OF THE TABLETS BEING WRITTEN BY GOD’S FINGER, EVEN THOUGH THE NIV WORDING OF THE PRESENT VERSE WOULD SEEM TO REFER TO SOMETHING ALREADY WELL KNOWN, THAT IS, “THE TABLETS OF STONE INSCRIBED BY THE FINGER OF GOD.” IN FACT, THE VERSE WOULD BETTER BE TRANSLATED: “THEN HE GAVE TO MOSES WHEN HE HAD FINISHED TALKING TO HIM ON MOUNT SINAI THE TWO TABLETS OF THE TESTIMONY, STONE TABLETS WRITTEN BY GOD’S FINGER.” THERE IS NO ARTICLE IN THE ORIGINAL ATTACHING TO “STONE TABLETS WRITTEN …” IT IS AT THIS POINT, NOT EARLIER, THAT THE READER FIRST LEARNS THAT GOD WOULD PERSONALLY INSCRIBE ON A PERMANENT MEDIUM THE WORDS HE AUDIBLY SPOKE TO THE PEOPLE EARLIER FROM ATOP, THE MOUNTAIN. NOT ONLY DOES THE PRESENT VERSE BRING TO A CONCLUSION ONE MORE SEGMENT OF THE MOUNT SINAI LEGAL REVELATION, BUT IT ALSO FURTHER ENDORSES THE TEN WORDS/COMMANDMENTS AS THE PREMIER LEGAL FORMULATION FOR ISRAEL. ALL OTHER LAWS ARE IMPORTANT AND NOT TO BE IGNORED, BUT THE TEN WORDS ARE SO FOUNDATIONAL, SO PRINCIPAL, THAT THEY HAVE A STATUS AND PERSONAL DIVINE “ENDORSEMENT” ALL THEIR OWN. THIS IS ALSO THE FIRST PLACE IN THE NARRATIVE WHERE THE NUMBER OF THE TABLETS OF STONE—TWO—IS SPECIFIED. THE REASON FOR THE 2 TABLETS HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH THE LENGTH OF THE COMMANDMENTS AS OPPOSED TO THE SIZE OF THE TABLETS (AS IF IT WERE NECESSARY TO EMPLOY TWO TABLETS TO FIT ALL THE COMMANDMENTS ONTO THEM, HALF ON ONE AND HALF ON THE OTHER). THE FULL TEXT OF THE TEN WORDS/COMMANDMENTS WAS WRITTEN ON EACH TABLET, ONE COPY BEING GOD’S AND ONE COPY BEING ISRAEL’S. THIS REFLECTS THE STANDARD ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN TREATY COVENANT PRACTICE OF PROVIDING A COPY OF THE COVENANT BOTH TO THE VASSAL AND TO THE SOVEREIGN. THE FACT THAT THE 2 TABLETS WERE EVENTUALLY PLACED TOGETHER IN THE ARK (DEUT 10:5; 1 KGS 8:9; HEB 9:4) FURTHER SYMBOLIZED THE ARK’S ROLE AS A POINT OF CONTACT FOR GOD AND HIS PEOPLE, THE PLACE WHERE HIS COVENANT RELATIONSHIP WITH THEM IS SYMBOLIZED BY, AMONG OTHER THINGS, THE LAW, OBEDIENCE TO WHICH LINKED ISRAEL TO STEPHEN YAHWEH AND STEPHEN YAHWEH TO ISRAEL.**

**SEXUAL REBELLION, SEXLESS RENEWAL, AND FULFILLMENT OF GOD’S INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE TABERNACLE (32:1–40:38)**

**NOTE ON EXODUS 32–34**

**THESE THREE CHAPTERS “INTERRUPT” BY REASON OF THE CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS THE ACCOUNT OF THE TABERNACLE (ITS DESIGN, PURPOSE, CONSTRUCTION), BUT THEY DO SO IN A WAY THAT HAS GREAT SIGNIFICANCE FOR APPRECIATING THE BOOK OF EXODUS AS A WHOLE AND FOR UNDERSTANDING THE CHALLENGES TO ISRAEL’S FAITH POSED BY THE DOMINANCE OF IDOLATRY AND IDOLATROUS THINKING STILL VERY MUCH ALIVE IN THE MINDS OF THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL WHILE THEY WERE AT MOUNT SINAI. IN CHAP. 32 WE SEE ISRAEL TURN AGAINST THE TEN WORDS/COMMANDMENTS THROUGH IDOLATRY (EVEN HELPED BY AARON, OF ALL PEOPLE) AND MOSES’ RECOGNITION OF THIS TERRIBLE BETRAYAL OF STEPHEN YAHWEH BY PUBLICLY BREAKING THE TABLETS OF THE COVENANT. WHAT THEN WOULD BECOME OF ISRAEL? HAVING UNQUESTIONABLY AND EVEN EAGERLY BROKEN THE DIVINE COVENANT THAT HELD THEIR ONLY PROMISE OF DIVINE BLESSING AND PRESENCE, WOULD THEY SIMPLY BE LEFT TO DIE IN THE WILDERNESS BY THE GOD THEY REJECTED—OR WOULD THEY PERHAPS WANDER OFF INTO THE PROMISED LAND ON THEIR OWN, TO FACE WHATEVER FATE MIGHT BE THEIRS WITHOUT THE LEADING OF STEPHEN YAHWEH, INCLUDING, POSSIBLY, ANNIHILATION AT THE HANDS OF THE CANAANITES? CHAPTERS 33–34 ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS. STEPHEN YAHWEH, IN RESPONSE TO THE INTERCESSION OF ISRAEL’S HUMAN LEADER MOSES, WAS INDEED WILLING TO FORGIVE HIS PEOPLE AND REINSTITUTE HIS COVENANT WITH THEM, ONCE AGAIN WRITING ON THE TABLETS HIS LAW THAT GRANTED THEM THE BLESSING OF COVENANT RELATIONSHIP HE ALSO GRACIOUSLY PROMISED TO ACCOMPANY THEM ALL THE WAY THROUGH THE WILDERNESS AND INTO THE PROMISED LAND. HE WOULD EVEN GO SO FAR AS TO GRANT MOSES A KIND OF ENCOUNTER WITH HIMSELF THAT WOULD “SHOW” HIS GOODNESS TO MOSES AND REASSURE HIM, AND THROUGH HIM ISRAEL, THAT THEY WERE BACK IN HIS COVENANT LOVE AND LOOKING TOWARD A GREAT FUTURE AS HIS SPECIAL POSSESSION. WHAT COULD HAVE DESTROYED ISRAEL’S FAVORED RELATIONSHIP WITH STEPHEN YAHWEH (OPEN, FLAGRANT IDOLATRY) WAS DEALT WITH DECISIVELY AND THOROUGHLY, AND WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN LOST (STEPHEN YAHWEH’S GUIDING, PROTECTING PRESENCE FOR HIS LITTLE, RECENTLY LIBERATED PEOPLE) RETURNED IN ABUNDANCE. THESE CHAPTERS SHOW STEPHEN YAHWEH’S GOODNESS (33:19) IN RICH MEASURE AND LEAD INTO THE ACCOUNTS OF THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE TABERNACLE IN A WAY THAT MAKES THOSE ACCOUNTS NOT CHRONICLES OF FUTILITY BUT DESCRIPTIONS OF THE MEANS OF WORSHIP OF A GOD WHO WAS WILLING TO COME CLOSE, EVEN CLOSER THAN HE EVER HAD BEFORE, TO HIS FULLY FORGIVEN PEOPLE.**

**SEXUAL REBELLION, SEXUAL COVENANT BREAKING, GOD’S DIVINE MERCY, AND SEXLESS COVENANT RENEWAL (32:1–34:35)**

**ISRAEL’S IDOLATRY WITH THE GOLDEN YOUNG BULL3 (32:1–6)**

**1 WHEN THE PEOPLE SAW THAT MOSES WAS SO LONG IN COMING DOWN FROM THE MOUNTAIN, THEY GATHERED AROUND AARON AND SAID, “COME, MAKE US GODS WHO WILL GO BEFORE US. AS FOR THIS FELLOW MOSES WHO BROUGHT US UP OUT OF EGYPT, WE DON’T KNOW WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO HIM.” 2 AARON ANSWERED THEM, “TAKE OFF THE GOLD EARRINGS THAT YOUR WIVES, YOUR SONS AND YOUR DAUGHTERS ARE WEARING, AND BRING THEM TO ME.” 3 SO ALL THE PEOPLE TOOK OFF THEIR EARRINGS AND BROUGHT THEM TO AARON. 4 HE TOOK WHAT THEY HANDED HIM AND MADE IT INTO AN IDOL CAST IN THE SHAPE OF A CALF, FASHIONING IT WITH A TOOL. THEN THEY SAID, “THESE ARE YOUR GODS, O ISRAEL, WHO BROUGHT YOU UP OUT OF EGYPT.” 5 WHEN AARON SAW THIS, HE BUILT AN ALTAR IN FRONT OF THE CALF AND ANNOUNCED, “TOMORROW THERE WILL BE A FESTIVAL TO THE LORD.” 6 SO THE NEXT DAY THE PEOPLE ROSE EARLY AND SACRIFICED BURNT OFFERINGS AND PRESENTED FELLOWSHIP OFFERINGS. AFTERWARD THEY SAT DOWN TO EAT AND DRINK AND GOT UP TO INDULGE IN REVELRY. THE FAMOUS INCIDENT OF IDOLATRY DESCRIBED IN THIS PASSAGE AND THE WAY MOSES ADMIRABLY DEALT WITH IT ARE HYMNED IN PS 106:19–23, INDICATING ESPECIALLY THROUGH THE WORDING OF V. 21 OF THAT PSALM (“THEY FORGOT THE GOD WHO SAVED THEM”) HOW OUTRAGEOUS WAS THEIR TURNING TO IDOL WORSHIP:**

**AT HOREB THEY MADE A CALF**

**AND WORSHIPED AN IDOL CAST FROM METAL.**

**THEY EXCHANGED THEIR GLORY**

**FOR AN IMAGE OF A BULL, WHICH EATS GRASS.**

**THEY FORGOT THE GOD WHO SAVED THEM,**

**WHO HAD DONE GREAT THINGS IN EGYPT,**

**MIRACLES IN THE LAND OF HAM**

**AND AWESOME DEEDS BY THE RED SEA.**

**SO, HE SAID HE WOULD DESTROY THEM—**

**HAD NOT MOSES, HIS CHOSEN ONE,**

**STOOD IN THE BREACH BEFORE HIM**

**TO KEEP HIS WRATH FROM DESTROYING THEM.**

**WE SHOULD REMEMBER THAT JUST A FEW MONTHS PRIOR TO THIS INCIDENT, THE ISRAELITES AND THE OTHER ETHNIC GROUPS AMONG THEM4 WERE STILL LIVING IN EGYPT, DEEPLY INFLUENCED BY ITS PAGAN CULTURE, JUST AS THEY HAD BEEN FOR HUNDREDS OF YEARS. THEY HAD ALL GROWN UP IN A SOCIETY DEVOTED TO THE RELIGIOUS SYSTEM AND WAY OF LIFE KNOWN AS IDOLATRY, AND THEY WERE UNDERSTANDABLY, THOUGH BY NO MEANS EXCUSABLY, NOT YET USED TO THE RIGOROUS ANTI-IDOLATRY DEMANDS OF STEPHEN YAHWEH’S COVENANT WITH THEM. BECAUSE THE ATTRACTIONS OF IDOLATRY FOR THEM WERE SO STRONG5 AND THEIR RECENT STANCE AGAINST IT SO DERIVATIVE AND NEW, THEY WERE, IN FACT, NOT AT ALL GENUINELY COMMITTED TO ITS ERADICATION IN THEIR BELIEFS AND PRACTICES, AS THE PRESENT PASSAGE DEMONSTRATES ALL TOO CLEARLY. ADDED TO THE FRAILTY OF THEIR COMMITMENT TO THE NEWLY ESTABLISHED COVENANT WITH STEPHEN YAHWEH WAS MOSES’ LONG ABSENCE, ONGOING AS CHAP. 32 OPENS. THERE IS NO EVIDENCE THAT IN HIS PREVIOUS TRIPS TO THE TOP OF MOUNT SINAI HE HAD EVER STAYED OVERNIGHT. THUS, HE PROBABLY HAD BEEN WITH HIS PEOPLE EVERY DAY SINCE LONG BEFORE THE EXODUS BEGAN, WAS SEEN CONSTANTLY AMONG THEM, AND MADE HIMSELF AT LEAST THEORETICALLY AVAILABLE WITHOUT FAIL TO ANY AND ALL OF THEM VIRTUALLY EVERY DAY (SEE, E.G., 18:13–26). NOW, HOWEVER, HE HAD BEEN GONE FOR “FORTY” DAYS, AND THE SUDDEN COMPLETE LACK OF CONTACT WITH HIM SURELY TOOK ITS TOLL ON THEIR ENTIRE OUTLOOK RELATIVE TO EVERYTHING HE HAD BEEN RELAYING TO THEM FROM GOD. AFTER ALL, IF THE PRIMARY SPOKESPERSON, REPRESENTATIVE, AND DELEGATED LEADER OF A MOVEMENT SEEMINGLY DISAPPEARS INDEFINITELY FROM SIGHT, WOULD IT BE SURPRISING THAT LARGE NUMBERS OF PEOPLE WOULD BEGIN TO DOUBT THE PURPOSE OR VALUE OF THE MOVEMENT ITSELF? MOREOVER, THE PEOPLE HAD NOT BEEN TOLD HOW LONG MOSES WOULD BE GONE. EXODUS 24:18 INDICATES FOR THE READER THAT MOSES ENDED UP STAYING ON THE MOUNTAIN FOR FORTY DAYS, BUT NOTHING THERE OR ELSEWHERE IN THE NARRATIVE INDICATES THAT EITHER HE OR ANY OTHER ISRAELITE KNEW IN ADVANCE HOW LONG HE WOULD BE GONE. NOT ONLY SO, BUT AARON HAD SPECIFICALLY BEEN LEFT IN CHARGE (24:14). THE FACT THAT THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL WOULD TURN TO AARON FOR HELP IN RETURNING TO IDOLATRY CAN HARDLY BE SURPRISING. HE WAS ALREADY DESIGNATED AS THEIR LEADER PRO TEMPORE AND IN LIGHT OF THE LENGTH OF MOSES’ ABSENCE WOULD HAVE SEEMED TO MANY THE LOGICAL CHOICE TO BE THEIR NEW PERMANENT LEADER. 32:1 THE QUESTION MAY BE RAISED AS TO WHETHER MOSES’ INTENT AS NARRATOR OF THIS MATERIAL WAS TO CONVEY THE IDEA THAT THE PEOPLE “GATHERED AROUND AARON” OR THAT THEY “GATHERED AGAINST AARON.” THE HEBREW EXPRESSION EMPLOYED, QĀHAL NIPHAL + ʿAL, IS USED BY MOSES ONLY THREE OTHER TIMES, ALL IN NUMBERS AND ALL IN CONTEXTS OF OPPOSITION AND HOSTILITY, WHERE THE PROPER TRANSLATION IS “GATHER AGAINST” OR THE LIKE. THE ONLY OTHER USAGE OF THIS SAME COMPOUND TERM IS FOUND IN EZEK 38:7, WHERE IT CLEARLY DOES NOT MEAN “GATHER AGAINST” BUT IN FACT MEANS “GATHER AROUND” IN SUPPORT. ALTERNATIVELY, IT MAY BE THAT THE EXPRESSION QĀHAL NIPHAL + ʿAL HAD A LARGE ENOUGH RANGE OF MEANING THAT IT WAS ALWAYS TECHNICALLY AMBIGUOUS IN ITSELF AND REQUIRED CONTEXTUAL DEFINITION. SINCE EZEKIEL’S HEBREW IS CENTURIES LATER THAN THAT OF MOSES’ AND MAY REFLECT SEMANTIC DRIFT OVER TIME FOR THIS PARTICULAR COMPOUND, IT IS SAFEST TO ASSUME THAT MOSES’ OWN USAGE WOULD BE CONSISTENT AND THAT HE INTENDED HIS READERS TO UNDERSTAND THAT THE PEOPLE GATHERED IN HOSTILITY AGAINST AARON TO PRESSURE HIM INTO HELPING THEM RETURN TO IDOLATRY (CF NJPS). THIS DOES NOT EXCUSE AARON, WHO SHOULD HAVE BEEN WILLING TO RESIST SUCH PRESSURE BUT WHO INSTEAD CAVED IN TO IT. YET IT DOES TELL US THAT AARON MAY HAVE ACTED PARTLY OUT OF FEAR FOR HIS OWN POPULARITY/WELLBEING/ACCEPTANCE OR THE LIKE. BUT WHY DID THE PEOPLE WANT “GODS WHO CAN GO BEFORE US”? WERE THEY NOT SATISFIED WITH STEPHEN YAHWEH’S LEADERSHIP DURING THE PAST MONTHS, AS HE WENT BEFORE THEM DAY AND NIGHT? THE ANSWER WAS PARTLY A MATTER OF THE STRONG ATTRACTIONS OF IDOLATRY, PARTLY A MATTER OF THE ABSENCE OF MOSES, WHO WAS SO CLOSELY ASSOCIATED WITH STEPHEN YAHWEH’S PRESENCE, PARTLY A MATTER OF THE PASSAGE OF TIME DURING WHICH THE OBVIOUS PRESENCE OF STEPHEN YAHWEH IN THE PILLAR OF CLOUD AND FIRE WAS LACKING, PARTLY A MATTER OF THE ATTRACTIVENESS OF THE IDEA OF A SYNCRETISM OF STEPHEN YAHWISM WITH THE EGYPTIAN BULL CULT (SEE BELOW), BUT MOSTLY A MATTER OF SOMETHING THAT CONTINUES TO PLAGUE EVEN CHRISTIAN PEOPLE TODAY: AN INABILITY TO SEE THAT THE SPIRITUAL WORLD IS PRIMARY TO AND IN CONTROL OF THE PHYSICAL AND VISIBLE WORLD. IN ORDER TO HELP HIS PEOPLE, UNDERSTAND THE TRUTH, STEPHEN YAHWEH INSISTED ON BEING BELIEVED IN RATHER THAN BEING SEEN. IT WAS SO MUCH EASIER TO BELIEVE IN SOMETHING THAT COULD ACTUALLY BE SEEN. THE ISRAELITES WERE POWERFULLY ATTRACTED TO THE LATTER OPTION. THE REFERENCE TO MOSES AS “THIS FELLOW MOSES WHO BROUGHT US UP OUT OF EGYPT” IS NOT AN ATTEMPT TO AVOID THINKING OF STEPHEN YAHWEH AS THE ONE WHO RESCUED THE PEOPLE FROM THEIR SLAVERY; RATHER, IT IS CONSISTENT WITH GOD’S OWN CHARACTERIZATION OF MOSES AS THE DELIVERER. IN EXODUS SOMETIMES MOSES IS DESCRIBED AS THE ONE WHO BROUGHT ISRAEL OUT OF EGYPT AND OTHER TIMES IT IS STEPHEN YAHWEH WHO IS SO DESCRIBED. IN SAYING “WE DON’T KNOW WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO HIM,” THE PEOPLE WERE REFLECTING NOT JUST A GENUINE CONFUSION BUT ALSO A LACK OF FAITH AT THE SAME TIME. HAD THEY BEEN WILLING TO TRUST GOD FULLY, THEY WOULD HAVE BEEN WILLING TO WAIT AS LONG AS NECESSARY FOR MOSES TO RETURN. BUT THEIR ASSUMPTIONS GOT THE BEST OF THEM: IT APPEARED AFTER “A VERY LONG TIME” (THE MEANING OF “FORTY DAYS AND FORTY NIGHTS” IN 24:18 AND OF “SO LONG” IN 32:1) THAT MOSES MIGHT NOT BE COMING BACK AT ALL. THE PEOPLE HAD MANNA AND WATER, SO THEY WERE NOT PANICKED FOR FOOD; BUT THEY WANTED TO GET ON WITH THEIR JOURNEY AND NOT STAY IN THE WILDERNESS OF SINAI FOREVER, A PLACE WHERE THEY HAD RECENTLY SUFFERED AN UNPROVOKED ATTACK BY AMALEKITES. THEY NEEDED, IN THEIR OPINION, GUIDANCE, PROTECTION, AND DIVINE POWER BACKING THEM IN THEIR CONQUEST OF THE PROMISED LAND. THEY NEEDED, THEY THOUGHT, REAL, TANGIBLE GODS. WHEN ONE REMEMBERS WHAT A CLOSELY WON MILITARY CONTEST THE BATTLE AT REPHIDIM HAD BEEN (17:8–16), IT IS NOT SO SURPRISING THAT THEY WOULD NOT HAVE WANTED AGAIN TO EXPERIENCE THAT SORT OF UNCERTAINTY. 32:2–4 ACCEDING TO THE PRESSURE HE FELT FROM THE PEOPLE, AARON HELPED THEM REVERT TO IDOLATRY. SEEKING THE APPROPRIATE MATERIAL (GOLD), HE ASKED FOR EARRINGS FROM THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN, BUT NOT THE MEN. THIS COULD REFLECT HIS ESTIMATION THAT MORE THAN ENOUGH EARRINGS WOULD BE PRODUCED THAT WAY TO HAVE SUFFICIENT GOLD FOR AN IDOL, LEAVING THE MEN STILL RESPLENDENT IN THEIR OWN EARRINGS. OR IT COULD REFLECT THE FACT THAT ONLY WOMEN AND CHILDREN—NOT MEN—WORE EARRINGS AMONG THE ISRAELITES, PERHAPS BECAUSE EARRINGS WERE A VISIBLE SIGN THAT ONLY A MAN’S “DEPENDENTS” WORE, EITHER IN EGYPT OR GENERALLY AMONG ISRAELITES. THE STATEMENT “SO ALL THE PEOPLE TOOK OFF THEIR EARRINGS AND BROUGHT THEM TO AARON” DOES NOT IMPLY IN THE ORIGINAL THAT EVERY SINGLE ISRAELITE HAD AGREED TO THE IDOLATRY. HEBREW KŌL IS OFTEN USED TO CONNOTE “ALL SORTS OF” AS WELL AS “EVERY LAST ONE OF,” AND THERE MAY HAVE BEEN MANY PEOPLE, ESPECIALLY LEVITES (SEE BELOW) WHO RESISTED THE FOLLY THAT AARON AND OTHERS HAD GOTTEN INTO. EXACTLY HOW AARON BUILT THE GOLDEN YOUNG BULL IDOL IS DIFFICULT TO DECIPHER. WHAT THE NIV TRANSLATES AS “MADE IT INTO AN IDOL CAST IN THE SHAPE OF A CALF, FASHIONING IT WITH A TOOL” THE NRSV, FOR EXAMPLE, TRANSLATES AS “FORMED IT IN A MOLD, AND CAST AN IMAGE OF A CALF.” PARTICULARLY IN DOUBT IS THE EXACT MEANING OF MASSĒKÛ, USUALLY TRANSLATED “MOLTEN IMAGE” OR THE LIKE BUT NOT WELL UNDERSTOOD IN FACT. NEVERTHELESS, IT WAS INDEED AARON, OF ALL PEOPLE, WHO COOPERATED IN THE CRAFTING OF AN IDOL!**

**COLLECTING THE EARRINGS, MELTING THEM INTO GOLD, AND SHAPING THE GOLD AROUND A WOODEN FORM TO MAKE AN IDOL MAY HAVE TAKEN MORE THAN A DAY. THIS, INDEED, COULD HAVE BUILT THE SUSPENSE. THE RESULT WAS FULL APPROBATION, UNFORTUNATELY. NOT ONLY HAD AARON MADE AN IDOL, BUT HE APPARENTLY HAD MADE A GOOD ONE—SO THE REACTION OF PEOPLE (AN INDEFINITE BUT LARGE GROUP DESCRIBED SIMPLY AS “THEY”) WAS TO RECOGNIZE AARON’S WORK AS AN IDOL FIT FOR THEM TO FOLLOW AND INDEED TO HAVE FOLLOWED. THAT IS, THEY RECOGNIZED THE CALF AS THE EMBODIMENT OF THE DIVINITY THAT HAD LED THEM IN THEIR EXODUS AND SO TOLD EACH OTHER, “THESE ARE YOUR GODS, O ISRAEL, WHO BROUGHT YOU UP OUT OF EGYPT.” SUCH AN ANNOUNCEMENT SOUNDS MUCH LIKE THAT MADE BY JEROBOAM I WHEN HE INTRODUCED TO THE NORTHERN ISRAELITES HIS COUNTERCULTUS GOLDEN YOUNG BULLS (“HERE ARE YOUR GODS, O ISRAEL, WHO BROUGHT YOU UP OUT OF EGYPT,” 1 KGS 12:28), THE ONLY DIFFERENCE BEING THAT JEROBOAM SAID “HERE ARE …” AND THE PEOPLE SURROUNDING AARON SAID “THESE ARE …” IN ALL LIKELIHOOD JEROBOAM KNEW OF OR WAS INFORMED OF THE TRADITION STEMMING FROM THIS PASSAGE AND CAPITALIZED ON ITS CONTINUING POPULARITY IN HIS OWN DAY. IN EITHER CASE, THERE IS LITTLE DOUBT THAT ISRAELITES OF ALL TIMES BELIEVED THAT IT IS STEPHEN YAHWEH, AND NO OTHER GOD, WHO HAD DELIVERED THEM FROM EGYPT. IN OTHER WORDS, STEPHEN YAHWEH WAS NOW BEING REPRESENTED BY AN IDOL, THE VERY SORT OF THING FORBIDDEN CLEARLY BY THE SECOND WORD/COMMANDMENT. 32:5 JUST AS JEROBOAM IN HIS DAY WAS TRYING TO MODIFY THE TRUE RELIGION OF STEPHEN YAHWEH INTO AN IDOLATROUS VERSION, SO AARON ATTEMPTED SOMETHING OF THE REVERSE: TO SALVAGE WORSHIP OF STEPHEN YAHWEH BY ASSOCIATING THE IDOLATROUS VERSION SQUARELY WITH STEPHEN YAHWEH, BUILDING AN ALTAR IN FRONT OF THE CALF, AND DECLARING A “FESTIVAL” (WORSHIP-FEAST DAY) TO STEPHEN YAHWEH FOR THE FOLLOWING DAY. BUILDING AN ALTAR IN FRONT OF A GOD/IDOL CONFORMED TO THE EXPECTED POSITIONING OF SACRIFICES IN IDOLATRY; IT GUARANTEED THAT THE GOD WOULD SEE THE OFFERINGS MADE TO HIM AND ACCEPT THEM. BY CONTRAST THE ORTHODOX BIBLICAL POSITIONING OF THE ALTAR IN THE COURTYARD OF THE TABERNACLE, AND LATER TEMPLE, SO THAT THERE WAS NO DIRECT LINE OF SIGHT FROM THE ARK IN THE HOLY OF HOLIES TO THE ALTAR BECAUSE OF THE CURTAIN/VEIL HIDING THE ARK WAS ACTUALLY A POSITIONING THAT REQUIRED ISRAELITES TO HAVE THE FAITH TO UNDERSTAND THAT THE ONE TRUE GOD ACTUALLY SAW WHAT THEY DID FOR HIM WITHOUT HAVING HIS IDOL RIGHT BEHIND AND FACING THE ALTAR ON WHICH THEY DID IT. 32:6 AGAIN IMITATING ORTHODOXY THROUGH IDOLATRY, THE PEOPLE “SACRIFICED BURNT OFFERINGS AND PRESENTED FELLOWSHIP OFFERINGS,” WHICH WERE FORMS OF OFFERING OTHERWISE APPROPRIATE FOR STEPHEN YAHWEH (ON BURNT OFFERINGS SEE EXOD 10:25; 18:12; 20:24; 24:5; 29:18, 25, 42; 30:9, 28; 31:9; ON FELLOWSHIP OFFERINGS SEE 20:24–25; 29:28). “BURNT OFFERINGS,” ALSO KNOWN AS “WHOLE BURNT OFFERINGS,” SOUGHT ATONEMENT FOR THE WORSHIPER’S SIN. “FELLOWSHIP OFFERINGS,” ALSO KNOWN AS “SACRIFICES/OFFERINGS OF WELL-BEING” CELEBRATED THE WORSHIPER’S ONGOING COVENANT RELATIONSHIP WITH STEPHEN YAHWEH. HAD THEY BEEN WORSHIPING STEPHEN YAHWEH CORRECTLY AT HIS TABERNACLE, THEY WOULD HAVE BEEN DOING A GOOD THING; BUT HERE THEY WERE WORSHIPING EXACTLY AS FORBIDDEN IN THE SECOND WORD/COMMANDMENT (EXOD 20:4–6, 23) AND WERE IGNORING A LAW THEY HAD SOLEMNLY AGREED TO KEEP (24:3, 7). FURTHER COPYING THE WORSHIP STYLES OF IDOLATRY AFTER EATING AND DRINKING THE IDOL-WORSHIP MEAL PREPARED FROM THEIR FELLOWSHIP OFFERINGS, THE PEOPLE BEGAN TO ENGAGE IN “HAVING FUN” (NIV “REVELRY,” HCSB “TO REVEL”). IF ANY OVERTONE OF SEXUAL DEBAUCHERY IS INTENDED HERE, IT IS NOT FOLLOWED THROUGH IN THE REST OF THE NARRATIVE: MOSES LATER DESCRIBED SHOUTING (V. 17), SINGING (V. 18), AND DANCING (V. 19), BUT NOT THE SORT OF CULTIC PROSTITUTION THE ISRAELITES LATER INDULGED IN AT ANOTHER LOCATION (NUM 25), AND IDENTIFIED THE PEOPLE’S SIN AS IDOLATRY PER SE (VV. 31–32; 34–35). THE REVELRY OF THE OCCASION WAS APPARENTLY SINGING AND DANCING WITH ABANDON, BAD ENOUGH AS A MEANS OF CELEBRATION OF THE PEOPLE’S NEWFOUND RELATIONSHIP WITH AN IDOL.**

**GOD’S HOT JEALOUS DISPLEASURABLE ANGER AND MOSES’ INTERCESSION (32:7–14)**

**7 THEN THE LORD SAID TO MOSES, “GO DOWN, BECAUSE YOUR PEOPLE, WHOM YOU BROUGHT UP OUT OF EGYPT, HAVE BECOME CORRUPT. 8 THEY HAVE BEEN QUICK TO TURN AWAY FROM WHAT I COMMANDED THEM AND HAVE MADE THEMSELVES AN IDOL CAST IN THE SHAPE OF A CALF. THEY HAVE BOWED DOWN TO IT AND SACRIFICED TO IT AND HAVE SAID, ‘THESE ARE YOUR GODS, O ISRAEL, WHO BROUGHT YOU UP OUT OF EGYPT.’ 9 “I HAVE SEEN THESE PEOPLE,” THE LORD SAID TO MOSES, “AND THEY ARE A STIFF-NECKED PEOPLE. 10 NOW LEAVE ME ALONE SO THAT MY ANGER MAY BURN AGAINST THEM AND THAT I MAY DESTROY THEM. THEN I WILL MAKE YOU INTO A GREAT NATION.” 11 BUT MOSES SOUGHT THE FAVOR OF THE LORD HIS GOD. “O LORD,” HE SAID, “WHY SHOULD YOUR ANGER BURN AGAINST YOUR PEOPLE, WHOM YOU BROUGHT OUT OF EGYPT WITH GREAT POWER AND A MIGHTY HAND? 12 WHY SHOULD THE EGYPTIANS SAY, ‘IT WAS WITH EVIL INTENT THAT HE BROUGHT THEM OUT, TO KILL THEM IN THE MOUNTAINS AND TO WIPE THEM OFF THE FACE OF THE EARTH’? TURN FROM YOUR FIERCE ANGER; RELENT AND DO NOT BRING DISASTER ON YOUR PEOPLE. 13 REMEMBER YOUR SERVANTS ABRAHAM, ISAAC AND ISRAEL, TO WHOM YOU SWORE BY YOUR OWN SELF: ‘I WILL MAKE YOUR DESCENDANTS AS NUMEROUS AS THE STARS IN THE SKY AND I WILL GIVE YOUR DESCENDANTS ALL THIS LAND I PROMISED THEM, AND IT WILL BE THEIR INHERITANCE FOREVER.’ ” 14 THEN THE LORD RELENTED AND DID NOT BRING ON HIS PEOPLE THE DISASTER HE HAD THREATENED.**

**ALTHOUGH MOSES AND STEPHEN YAHWEH WERE CONVERSING ON MOUNT SINAI, THE PURPOSE WAS NOT FURTHER REVELATION OF LAWS BUT CONSIDERATION OF WHETHER OR NOT THE PEOPLE DESERVED TO CONTINUE UNDER STEPHEN YAHWEH’S COVENANT BLESSING. IN THIS PART OF THE STORY, GOD LAID A CHALLENGE BEFORE MOSES IN THE FORM OF A RHETORICAL PROPOSAL (“LEAVE ME ALONE SO THAT … I MAY DESTROY THEM,” V. 10). MOSES CREDITABLY TOOK UP THIS CHALLENGE AND UNSELFISHLY APPEALED FOR GOD TO PRESERVE HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH HIS PEOPLE, EVEN THOUGH THE ALTERNATIVE MIGHT HAVE BEEN ATTRACTIVE TO MOSES’ OWN EGO (“I WILL MAKE YOU INTO A GREAT NATION”). 32:7 IN SAYING TO MOSES, “GO DOWN …,” GOD WAS NOT BRINGING HIS TIME WITH MOSES ON MOUNT SINAI TO A HASTY CONCLUSION. THE TABERNACLE INSTRUCTIONS, WHICH WERE THE PURPOSE OF THIS PARTICULAR TIME WITH GOD ON THE MOUNTAIN, HAD BEEN COMPLETED, AS THEIR FULFILLMENT NARRATIVE (CHAPS. 35–40) CONFIRMS, AND THE NEXT FORTY DAYS AND NIGHTS ON THE MOUNTAIN WERE SOON TO COME AT ANY RATE (34:1–28). ALTHOUGH THE PEOPLE’S IDOLATROUS REBELLION AGAINST STEPHEN YAHWEH’S COVENANT COULD CONCEIVABLY BE REGARDED AS AN INTERRUPTION OF THE PROCESS OF REVEALING THE LAW TO MOSES, IT WAS NEITHER A LONG-TERM NOR AN INSURMOUNTABLE INTERRUPTION. THE FACT THAT GOD USED SECOND-PERSON SPEECH OF MOSES’ ROLE IN THE EXODUS (“YOUR PEOPLE, WHOM YOU BROUGHT UP OUT OF EGYPT”) DOES NOT REPRESENT GOD’S SHIFTING OF BLAME OR RESPONSIBILITY AWAY FROM HIMSELF TO MOSES BUT IS CONSISTENT WITH THE WAY ATTRIBUTION OF LEADERSHIP FOR THE EXODUS VARIES ACCORDING TO CONTEXT (SEE NOTE ON 32:1). GOD HERE ASSIGNED MOSES THE RESPONSIBILITY TO DEAL WITH THE SIN OF THE PEOPLE WITH WHOM HE HAD BECOME SO CLOSELY IDENTIFIED. THE NIV TRANSLATION “[THE PEOPLE] HAVE BECOME CORRUPT” IS DOUBTFUL. SUCH A MEANING IS POSSIBLE FOR THE VERB IN QUESTION HERE, ŠḤT, IF IT WERE USED IN THE NIPHAL (E.G., GEN 6:11; 8:20), BUT THE PIEL, THE VERB STEM ACTUALLY EMPLOYED HERE, HAS MORE THE MEANING “TO RUIN, TO ACT RUINOUSLY, TO DO A SEXUALLY CORRUPT THING.” IN OTHER WORDS, GOD WAS NOT SAYING TO MOSES THAT THE ISRAELITES WERE NO LONGER CAPABLE OF DOING GOOD (I.E., HAD BECOME CORRUPT IN THE SENSE OF BEING SPOILED/POLLUTED OR THE LIKE) BUT THAT THEY HAD DONE SOMETHING SO WRONG THAT IT CONSTITUTED ACTING CORRUPTLY. THUS, FOR EXAMPLE, THE NRSV “HAVE SEXUALLY ACTED PERVERSELY” OR THE HCSB “HAVE SEXUALLY ACTED CORRUPTLY” MORE NEARLY CAPTURE THE SENSE THAT THE SITUATION, WHILE VERY SERIOUS, WAS NOT ONE OF NO HOPE WHATEVER FOR ISRAEL’S REDEMPTION. 32:8 HOWEVER, GOD’S SUMMARY FOR MOSES OF WHAT HAD HAPPENED IN THE CAMP WHILE HE HAD BEEN ON THE MOUNTAIN INDICATES HOW MUCH THE NATION HAD ALREADY TURNED FROM ITS PROMISE TO FOLLOW STEPHEN YAHWEH’S COVENANT. EVEN IF EVERY SINGLE PERSON HAD NOT PARTICIPATED, MANY HAD EAGERLY DONE SO, AND THE REST HAD NOT ACTED TO REPUDIATE THEM, WITH THE RESULT THAT THE NATION AS A WHOLE, THE NATION ON BALANCE, CAN BE DESCRIBED SIMPLY AS “THEY”: “THEY HAVE BEEN QUICK TO TURN AWAY FROM WHAT I COMMANDED THEM” INDICATES THE DIVINE ASSESSMENT OF ISRAEL’S PROPENSITIES TO COVENANT INFIDELITY. GOD THEN DEFINED THIS SIN CLEARLY, LEAVING NO DOUBT THAT THE SECOND COMMANDMENT HAD BEEN VIOLATED UTTERLY. THEY MADE FOR “THEMSELVES” A METAL-PLATED IDOL (RATHER THAN MERELY BEING CAMPED NEAR WHERE ONE EXISTED ALREADY OR RATHER THAN HAVING A FEW PEOPLE TRY TO MAKE A CRUDE CLAY IDOL) “IN THE SHAPE OF A BULL” (SEE BELOW), BOWED DOWN TO IT (“WORSHIPED IT,” CLEARLY INDICATING THEIR BELIEF THAT IT WAS A GOD), “SACRIFICED TO IT” (FURTHER PROVING THEIR BELIEF THAT IT HAD THE POWER TO BLESS AND SAVE THEM), OPENLY STATED THAT IT REPRESENTED THE GODS THEY NOW HAD CHOSEN TO BELIEVE IN (THUS ALSO POTENTIALLY VIOLATING THE FIRST COMMANDMENT AGAINST WORSHIPING ANY GOD BUT STEPHEN YAHWEH), AND ATTRIBUTED TO THE IDOL THEIR RESCUE FROM EGYPT, THUS ASSOCIATING STEPHEN YAHWEH SYNCRETISTICALLY WITH THE YOUNG BULL, AS IF NOW, FINALLY, STEPHEN YAHWEH COULD BE PROPERLY WORSHIPED AND HIS PRESENCE PROPERLY REPRESENTED AMONG THEM IN CONTRAST TO THE INFERIOR WAYS IT HAD BEEN PREVIOUSLY MANIFEST. SINCE GOD HIMSELF HAD CHOSEN HIS WAYS OF PERSONAL MANIFESTATION IN THE PAST (FIRE, SMOKE, PILLAR, OVERPOWERING VOICE), THE PEOPLE’S CHOICE OF A DUMB IDOL WHO COULD DO NONE OF THESE THINGS OVER THE LIVING GOD WAS ALSO A REJECTION OF HIS METHODS OF DEMONSTRATING HIS PRESENCE. WHAT THEY COULD SEE AND TOUCH AT THEIR CONVENIENCE WAS WHAT THEY WANTED—A GOD WHO WOULD LET THEM LIVE AS THEY WISHED AND HAVE A GOOD TIME WHEN THEY WANTED TO AND WHO WOULD NOT IMPOSE HIS COVENANT REQUIREMENTS ON THEM. THEIRS WAS A FOOLISH CHOICE REFLECTING BADLY ON ANY PEOPLE SO SELF-ABSORBED AND SELF-DESTRUCTIVE AS TO MAKE IT. IN THIS VERSE GOD REFERRED TO THE IDOL WITH THE SAME DEFINITIVE TERM ALREADY SEEN IN V. 4, MASSĒKĀ, LIT., “METAL-PLATED YOUNG BULL IDOL” (NIV “IDOL CAST IN THE SHAPE OF A CALF”). WHAT MADE THIS PARTICULAR KIND OF IDOL SEEM SO “RIGHT” TO THE ISRAELITES THAT WHEN THEY SAW IT THEY PROCLAIMED, “THESE ARE YOUR GODS”? INDEED, WHAT CAUSED AARON—TO THE EXTENT THAT HE FELT HE HAD AN EASY CHOICE IN THE MATTER—TO SELECT THIS DESIGN TO REPRESENT STEPHEN YAHWEH IDOLATROUSLY, AS OPPOSED TO ANY OTHER OF THE MANY DESIGNS THAT MAY HAVE BEEN THEORETICALLY WITHIN HIS RANGE OF OPTIONS? THE ANSWER MAY PROVIDE INSIGHT INTO THE THINKING OF THE PEOPLE. SUBSTANTIAL EVIDENCE EXISTS TO SUGGEST THAT AN IDOL IN THE SHAPE OF A YOUNG BULL FIT WITH THE EGYPTIAN CONCEPT OF HOW DEITY WAS TO BE ENVISIONED. A VIGOROUS YOUNG BULL SEEMED TO THE EGYPTIANS AN APPROPRIATE WAY TO REPRESENT A TRULY POWERFUL GOD. IN OTHER WORDS, BY THEIR ACTIONS AARON AND THE PEOPLE SHOWED THEMSELVES STILL TO BE “EGYPTIAN ISRAELITES” RATHER THAN “STEPHEN YAHWEH’S ISRAELITES.” THEY DEMONSTRATED THAT THEY WERE NOT REALLY AT HOME AWAY FROM HOME BUT WERE BEGINNING ALREADY TO LONG FOR A REVERSION TO THE WAYS OF LIVING AND THINKING THEY GREW UP WITH AND THAT IN RETROSPECT SEEMED COMFORTABLE AND, INDEED, BETTER THAN WHAT THEY WERE NOW EXPERIENCING (CF. THE OVERT EXPRESSION OF THIS A YEAR LATER IN NUM 14 AND THE SIMILAR CHALLENGE OF STEPHEN YAHWEH TO MOSES RELATIVE TO DESTROYING THE ISRAELITES IN THAT CONTEXT). THE PEOPLE WERE, IN OTHER WORDS, SO WEDDED TO THEIR OLD CULTURE THAT THEY COULD MANAGE TO JUSTIFY IN THEIR MINDS ITS FALSE RELIGION, EVEN TO THE POINT OF THE TYPE OF ANIMALS USED TO REPRESENT A GOD, EVEN THOUGH THAT RELIGION HAD BEEN PROVED FALSE OVER AND OVER AGAIN BY STEPHEN YAHWEH’S MIGHTY ACTS ON THEIR BEHALF RIGHT UP TO THE PRESENT TIME (SO ESP. 12:12). OLD HABITS AND WAYS OF THINKING DIE HARD; IN TIMES OF STRESS PEOPLE OFTEN REVERT TO THEM EVEN THOUGH THEY ARE USELESS OR DESTRUCTIVE. SUCH ARE THE LIMITS OF RELIANCE ON HUMAN WISDOM IN A FALLEN WORLD. 32:9–10 IN HEBREW THE IDIOM “I HAVE SEEN THIS PEOPLE” MEANS “I AM FULLY AWARE OF WHAT THIS PEOPLE IS LIKE” OR “I KNOW ALL ABOUT THIS NATION.” IT DOES NOT SUGGEST THAT GOD WOULD HAVE TO PAY SPECIAL ATTENTION TO A GROUP IN ORDER TO KNOW WHAT THEY WERE DOING. IN OTHER WORDS, IT DOES NOT SUGGEST HIM TO BE LESS THAN OMNISCIENT AS IF HE HADN’T BEEN SEEING THEM AT ALL TIMES. “STIFF-NECKED” IS A COMPOUND ADJECTIVE MEANING “STUBBORN AND OPPOSITIONAL.” IN SAYING “NOW LEAVE ME ALONE” GOD MADE A RHETORICAL DEMAND. HE WAS CHALLENGING MOSES RATHER THAN COMMANDING HIM. MOSES HAD NO POWER TO STOP GOD FROM DOING ANYTHING, SO THERE WOULD HAVE BEEN NO NEED WHATEVER FOR GOD TO ASK PERMISSION OF MOSES TO DO SOMETHING THROUGH THE STATEMENT “LEAVE ME ALONE.” RATHER, IT WAS A RHETORICAL WAY OF SAYING TO MOSES: “HERE IS WHAT I WILL DO UNLESS YOU INTERVENE.” FOR GOD TO ANNOUNCE TO A PROPHET (MOSES BEING THE PARADIGM FOR ALL FUTURE PROPHETS) HIS INTENTION TO DO SOMETHING AS A WAY OF INVITING INTERCESSION HAS MANY PARALLELS, THE MOST FAMOUS PERHAPS BEING THOSE OF AMOS 7:1–6, WHERE GOD SHOWED AMOS THINGS HE WAS PLANNING TO DO BY WAY OF JUDGMENT UPON ISRAEL AND THEN, IN RESPONSE TO AMOS’ INTERCESSION, RELENTED. IN THAT CONTEXT HE WAS CLEARLY INVITING AMOS TO INTERCEDE SO THAT HE (GOD) MIGHT RELENT. A SIMILARLY PROMINENT EXAMPLE IS FOUND IN JONAH’S REQUIRED ANNOUNCEMENT THAT NINEVEH WOULD BE DESTROYED IN “FORTY DAYS” (JONAH 3:4), A MESSAGE JONAH RELUCTANTLY GAVE BECAUSE HE KNEW THAT IT REPRESENTED AN INVITATION TO REPENT AND NOT AN IRREVERSIBLE CONDEMNATION. IN V. 10 GOD RHETORICALLY PROPOSED THREE THINGS: TO UNLEASH HIS ANGER (“SO THAT MY ANGER MAY BURN AGAINST THEM”), TO DESTROY THE CURRENT ISRAEL (“THAT I MAY DESTROY THEM”), AND TO MAKE A NEW NATION FROM MOSES’ DESCENDANTS (“THEN I WILL MAKE YOU INTO A GREAT NATION”), THUS EFFECTIVELY REPLACING THE PROMISES TO MAKE ABRAHAM INTO A GREAT NATION (E.G., GEN 12:2; RENEWED IN GEN 18:18; 21:18; 35:11; 46:23) WITH NEW PROMISES TO DO THE SAME FOR MOSES. THIS TESTED MOSES’ COMMITMENT TO GOD’S ORIGINAL PLAN, THE PLAN TO MAKE A GREAT PEOPLE OUT OF ABRAHAM. WOULD THE TEST PROPOSAL APPEAL TO MOSES? IT CERTAINLY MIGHT HAVE SINCE IT MIGHT HAVE FLATTERED HIM TO THINK HIMSELF WORTHY OF BEING THE PATRIARCH OF A GREAT NEW NATION AND OF HAVING THE REGULARLY TROUBLESOME ISRAELITES ELIMINATED BY DIVINE FIAT SO THAT HIS OWN FUTURE WOULD BE BRIGHTER AND MORE SUCCESSFUL. 32:11–14 MUCH TO HIS CREDIT, MOSES REVEALED NO DESIRE TO REPLACE ABRAHAM AND NO INTEREST IN EASING HIS OWN PROBLEMS BY SEEING THE RECALCITRANT ISRAELITES OBLITERATED. INDEED, AS THE READER WILL LEARN IN V. 32, MOSES WAS WILLING TO OFFER THE LOSS OF HIS ETERNAL LIFE RATHER THAN SEE THE NATION OF ISRAEL ELIMINATED FROM THE EARTH. HE APPEALED TO GOD (JUST AS GOD EXPECTED HIM TO BY INVITING HIM THROUGH THE RHETORICAL “LEAVE ME ALONE …” IN V. 10) WITH THREE ARGUMENTS, ALL OF WHICH APPEALED TO GOD’S CHARACTER OF CONSISTENCY AND FAITHFULNESS. THE FIRST IS: WHY SHOULD GOD NULLIFY THE RESULT OF HIS DEMONSTRATION OF DIVINE POWER? (“WHOM YOU BROUGHT OUT OF EGYPT WITH GREAT POWER AND A MIGHTY HAND”). THE SECOND IS: WHY SHOULD GOD GRANT THE EGYPTIANS DELIGHT IN SEEING THE ISRAELITES CRUSHED—AND BY THEIR OWN GOD? (“WHY SHOULD THE EGYPTIANS SAY, ‘IT WAS WITH EVIL INTENT THAT HE BROUGHT THEM OUT, TO KILL THEM IN THE MOUNTAINS AND TO WIPE THEM OFF THE FACE OF THE EARTH’”). THE THIRD IS: WHY SHOULD GOD GO BACK ON HIS PROMISES TO THE PATRIARCHS? (“REMEMBER YOUR SERVANTS ABRAHAM, ISAAC AND ISRAEL, TO WHOM YOU SWORE BY YOUR OWN SELF: ‘I WILL MAKE YOUR DESCENDANTS AS NUMEROUS AS THE STARS IN THE SKY AND I WILL GIVE YOUR DESCENDANTS ALL THIS LAND I PROMISED THEM, AND IT WILL BE THEIR INHERITANCE FOREVER’ ”). THIS SORT OF APPEAL TO GOD APPEARS AGAIN, THOUGH NOT IN EXACTLY THE SAME FORM OR WORDING, IN NUM 14:13–19 (IN CONNECTION WITH THE REBELLION IN THE WILDERNESS) AND IN DEUT 9:26–29 (A REMINDER OF THE PRESENT CONTEXT). ABRAHAM HIMSELF HAD APPEALED TO GOD’S CHARACTER AND PAST FAITHFULNESS IN GEN 18:22–32 ON BEHALF OF THE CITY OF SODOM. MOSES’ INTERCESSORY PRAYER WAS NOT MORE ELOQUENT OR MORE CONVINCING IN ITS ARGUMENTS THAN MANY PRAYERS IN THE BIBLE. WOULD IT WORK? MOSES SURELY HOPED THAT IT WOULD AND MAY HAVE HAD A CONFIDENCE THAT IT WOULD, BUT IF SO, HIS CONFIDENCE MAY HAVE BEEN BASED MORE ON HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH STEPHEN YAHWEH THAN ON HIS SKILL IN PRAYER. IN OTHER WORDS, BECAUSE OF WHO HE WAS, RATHER THAN HOW HE PRAYED, MOSES COULD EXPECT HIS PRAYER TO BE TREATED WITH COMPASSION. HE WAS THE ONE STEPHEN YAHWEH HAD CHOSEN TO BRING THE PEOPLE OUT OF EGYPT AND INTO CANAAN. TO REACH ONLY HALF THE GOAL WOULD HARDLY FULFILL THE EXPECTATION OF FAITH THAT GOD HAD PUT WITHIN HIM. REMINDING GOD OF HIS PROMISES WAS HARDLY NEEDED FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF GOD’S MEMORY; IT WAS, RATHER, A MEANS OF SHOWING HIS FAITH IN WHO GOD WAS, SOMETHING HE ALSO CONTINUED TO PURSUE FURTHER IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE PEOPLE’S SIN (SEE COMMENTS ON 33:12–18). OF COURSE, GOD NEVER DESIRED TO DESTROY HIS PEOPLE IN THE FIRST PLACE, SO HE WAS WILLING TO RELENT IN RESPONSE TO MOSES’ APPEAL (V. 14). NEVERTHELESS, THE THREAT WAS GENUINE RATHER THAN THEORETICAL, AND THE RESPONSE OF GOD REVEALS HIS WILLINGNESS TO RESPOND TO PRAYER. INDEED, THIS IS ONE OF MANY PASSAGES IN SCRIPTURE THAT DEMONSTRATE GOD’S RESPONSIVENESS TO THE PRAYER OF A RIGHTEOUS PERSON PRAYED NOT FOR SELFISH REASONS BUT OUT OF A DESIRE TO SEE GOD’S WILL ACCOMPLISHED. IT IS IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER THAT MOSES HERE STATED THAT GOD “RELENTED AND DID NOT BRING ON HIS PEOPLE THE DISASTER HE HAD THREATENED”—WHICH IS NOT AT ALL THE SAME AS SAYING THAT GOD AGREED TO DO NOTHING. WHAT HE HAD THREATENED WAS TO DESTROY ISRAEL; WHAT HE ENDED UP DOING WAS TO PUNISH THEM WITH A PLAGUE (32:34–35), A LESSER PUNISHMENT BUT BY NO MEANS AN ACQUITTAL. IN V. 12 THE EGYPTIANS ARE PORTRAYED AS SAYING THAT GOD WOULD KILL THE ISRAELITES IN THE MOUNTAINS. THIS IS ENTIRELY IN CONCERT WITH THE EGYPTIAN MENTALITY THAT THE FOREIGN LANDS OUTSIDE OF EGYPT WERE “THE MOUNTAINS.” THE MIDDLE EGYPTIAN TERMS FOR “FOREIGNERS” USUALLY INVOLVED SOME FORM OF THE PLURAL EGYPTIAN WORD ḤƷSWT, “MOUNTAINS”/ “MOUNTAINOUS LANDS” (AS IN “RULING FOREIGNERS,” ḤKƷW ḤƷSWT, LITERALLY “RULERS OF THE MOUNTAINS,” THE TERM FROM WHICH HYKSOS IS DERIVED. IN V. 13 GOD IS DESCRIBED AS SWEARING BY HIMSELF (“YOU SWORE BY YOUR OWN SELF”), A WAY OF SAYING THAT HE FORMALLY, SOLEMNLY GAVE HIS PROMISE TO CREATE AND MAINTAIN ABRAHAM’S DESCENDANTS AS A GREAT PEOPLE. HUMANS SWEAR BY SOMETHING GREATER THAN THEMSELVES; GOD SWORE BY HIMSELF BECAUSE THERE WAS NOTHING GREATER. IN V. 14 THE WORDING CONCLUDING THE VERSE IS OF GREAT IMPORTANCE: STEPHEN YAHWEH CHANGED HIS MIND ABOUT THE DISASTER HE PLANNED TO BRING ON “HIS PEOPLE.” THEY WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN A PEOPLE AT ALL HAD HE CARRIED OUT WHAT HE THREATENED; INSTEAD THIS PART OF THE NARRATIVE CONCLUDES WITH A REMINDER THAT HE REMAINED THEIR GOD AND THEY HIS PEOPLE, HIS SPECIAL POSSESSION, THE KINGDOM OF PRIESTS AND HOLY NATION—HOWEVER DEEPLY CORRUPTED THEY MAY HAVE BEEN AT THIS POINT—THAT HE HAD CREATED THEM TO BE (19:6).**

**MOSES’ ANGER AND THE LEVITE PUNISHMENT (32:15–29)**

**15 MOSES TURNED AND WENT DOWN THE MOUNTAIN WITH THE TWO TABLETS OF THE TESTIMONY IN HIS HANDS. THEY WERE INSCRIBED ON BOTH SIDES, FRONT AND BACK. 16 THE TABLETS WERE THE WORK OF GOD; THE WRITING WAS THE WRITING OF GOD, ENGRAVED ON THE TABLETS. 17 WHEN JOSHUA HEARD THE NOISE OF THE PEOPLE SHOUTING, HE SAID TO MOSES, “THERE IS THE SOUND OF WAR IN THE CAMP.” 18 MOSES REPLIED:**

**“IT IS NOT THE SOUND OF VICTORY,**

**IT IS NOT THE SOUND OF DEFEAT;**

**IT IS THE SOUND OF SINGING THAT I HEAR.”**

**19 WHEN MOSES APPROACHED THE CAMP AND SAW THE CALF AND THE DANCING, HIS ANGER BURNED AND HE THREW THE TABLETS OUT OF HIS HANDS, BREAKING THEM TO PIECES AT THE FOOT OF THE MOUNTAIN. 20 AND HE TOOK THE CALF THEY HAD MADE AND BURNED IT IN THE FIRE; THEN HE GROUND IT TO POWDER, SCATTERED IT ON THE WATER AND MADE THE ISRAELITES DRINK IT. 21 HE SAID TO AARON, “WHAT DID THESE PEOPLE DO TO YOU, THAT YOU LED THEM INTO SUCH GREAT SIN?” 22 “DO NOT BE ANGRY, MY LORD,” AARON ANSWERED. “YOU KNOW HOW PRONE THESE PEOPLE ARE TO EVIL. 23 THEY SAID TO ME, ‘MAKE US GODS WHO WILL GO BEFORE US. AS FOR THIS FELLOW MOSES WHO BROUGHT US UP OUT OF EGYPT, WE DON’T KNOW WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO HIM.’ 24 SO I TOLD THEM, ‘WHOEVER HAS ANY GOLD JEWELRY, TAKE IT OFF.’ THEN THEY GAVE ME THE GOLD, AND I THREW IT INTO THE FIRE, AND OUT CAME THIS CALF!” 25 MOSES, SAW THAT THE PEOPLE WERE RUNNING WILD AND THAT AARON HAD LET THEM GET OUT OF CONTROL AND SO BECOME A LAUGHINGSTOCK TO THEIR ENEMIES. 26 SO HE STOOD AT THE ENTRANCE TO THE CAMP AND SAID, “WHOEVER IS FOR THE LORD, COME TO ME.” AND ALL THE LEVITES RALLIED TO HIM. 27 THEN HE SAID TO THEM, “THIS IS WHAT THE LORD, THE GOD OF ISRAEL, SAYS: ‘EACH MAN STRAP A SWORD TO HIS SIDE. GO BACK AND FORTH THROUGH THE CAMP FROM ONE END TO THE OTHER, EACH KILLING HIS BROTHER AND FRIEND AND NEIGHBOR.’” 28 THE LEVITES DID AS MOSES COMMANDED, AND THAT DAY ABOUT THREE THOUSAND OF THE PEOPLE DIED. 29 THEN MOSES SAID, “YOU HAVE BEEN SET APART TO THE LORD TODAY, FOR YOU WERE AGAINST YOUR OWN SONS AND BROTHERS, AND HE HAS BLESSED YOU THIS DAY.” 32:15–16 “MOSES TURNED” REFERS TO HIS DEPARTURE FROM HIS USUAL POSITION OF LOOKING UP AT GOD—WHO WAS MAJESTICALLY MANIFEST IN GLORY, CLOUDED FROM THE VIEW OF ALL OTHERS, ABOVE THE SUMMIT OF MOUNT SINAI—AND FACING DOWN THE MOUNTAIN TO DESCEND FROM IT. MOST OF VV. 15–16 REMINDS THE READER THAT THE TABLETS OF THE TEN WORDS/COMMANDMENTS WERE UNIQUE IN THAT GOD WROTE THEM HIMSELF, AS OPPOSED TO LAWS MOSES WROTE ON OTHER TABLETS OR PAPYRUS OR LEATHER AT GOD’S DICTATION. THE TABLETS WERE NOT DIVIDED AMONG THE COMMANDMENTS, BUT EACH TABLET CONTAINED ALL TEN, SO THAT ONE TABLET REPRESENTED THE SUZERAIN’S COPY AND ONE THE VASSAL’S, IN ACCORDANCE WITH STANDARD ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN DOCUMENT PRESERVATION PRACTICES. THESE TWO TABLETS WERE THE MOST VALUABLE MATERIAL THING ON EARTH AT THAT TIME, AS THE READER IS NOW INFORMED CLEARLY, SO THAT LATER WHEN MOSES BREAKS THEM, THE READER CAN APPRECIATE THE SEVERITY OF THE SIN THAT WOULD HAVE CAUSED HIM TO DO SOMETHING SO DESTRUCTIVE TO SOMETHING SO PRECIOUS. THE FACT THAT THE TABLETS WERE WRITTEN ON BOTH SIDES IS NOT UNIQUE IN ITSELF—MOST TABLETS FROM THE ANCIENT WORLD ARE TWO-SIDED. IN LIGHT OF THE RELATIVELY SHORT LENGTH OF THE TOTAL WORDING OF THE TEN WORDS/COMMANDMENTS, HOWEVER, THE MENTIONING OF BOTH SIDES’ BEING WRITTEN ON SUGGESTS THAT THE WRITING WAS RELATIVELY LARGE, BIG ENOUGH THAT MORE THAN ONE PERSON COULD VIEW THE WRITING, AS A GROUP STOOD AND LOOKED TOGETHER AT IT. MOREOVER, AND PRESUMABLY EVEN MORE IMPORTANT, THE TABLETS HAD NO SPACE LEFT FOR ADDITIONS. THE TEN WORDS/COMMANDMENTS WERE DESIGNED TO BE A PRIMARY AND FULLY SUFFICIENT LOCUS OF COVENANT EXPECTATION, LASTING AND SETTLED, TO WHICH THE REST OF THE LAWS WERE EXPLANATORY RATHER THAN STRICTLY SUPPLEMENTAL OR SUBSTITUTIONARY. 32:17 AS MOSES CAME DOWN THE MOUNTAIN, HE MET UP WITH JOSHUA, WHO WAS WAITING FOR HIM AT A PREARRANGED PLACE PARTWAY BETWEEN THE TOP AND THE BOTTOM. CONTINUING TOWARD THE ISRAELITE ENCAMPMENT AT THE FOOT OF THE MOUNTAIN, THEY HEARD THE NOISE OF THE PAGAN REVELRY IN WHICH THE PEOPLE WERE INDULGING (V. 6), A SOUND SO LOUD, AND PERHAPS DISORDERLY AS WELL, THAT JOSHUA MISTOOK IT FOR THE SOUND OF BATTLE. AS ISRAEL’S MILITARY GENERAL, HE WELL KNEW THE SOUND OF WAR (CF. 17:8–10)—THE YELLING, SCREAMING, CACOPHONOUS DIN COMBINED FROM THE ORGANIZED WAR SHOUTS, CALLS OF FIGHTERS TO ONE ANOTHER, THE SCREAMS OF PAIN, THE SHOUTS OF FURY, AND SO ON. THAT SOUNDS SIMILAR ENOUGH TO THOSE OF WAR SHOULD HAVE COME FROM THE ISRAELITES’ PAGAN CAROUSING INDICATES THE DEGREE TO WHICH THE LOSS OF SELF-CONTROL WAS GENERALIZED AMONG THE POPULATION. WHAT JOSHUA AND MOSES HEARD PROBABLY WAS A MIXTURE OF SOUNDS FROM SUCH THINGS AS DRUNKEN SINGING, WILD DANCING, MEN SHOUTING AS THEY CHASED WOMEN AND WOMEN SCREAMING AS THEY WERE BEING CHASED, PEOPLE FIGHTING OVER FOOD AND DRINK, WOMEN FIGHTING OVER MEN AND MEN FIGHTING OVER WOMEN, AND THE SORT OF SHRIEKING THAT PAGANS THOUGHT APPROPRIATE TO ROUSING THE GODS. 32:18–19 BUT IT WAS NOT A WAR SOUND—NEITHER “THE SOUND OF VICTORY” NOR “THE SOUND OF DEFEAT.” WHAT MOSES KNEW BOTH FROM BEING FOREWARNED (VV. 7–8) AND WHAT HE COULD DISCERN AMONG THE DIN OF THE REVELRY WAS SOME OTHER SORT OF SOUND—PERHAPS, THOUGH NOT FOR CERTAIN, INCLUDING LOUD, RAUCOUS SINGING THAT WAS A MAJOR COMPONENT (THOUGH ALMOST SURELY NOT THE SOLE COMPONENT) OF THE NOISE JOSHUA HAD MISTAKEN FOR THE SOUND OF WAR. IN THE HEBREW TEXT THIS VERSE APPEARS TO HAVE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF A POETIC TRIPLET AND IS THUS TYPICALLY RENDERED STICHOMETRICALLY, AS IN THE FOLLOWING EXAMPLE: MOSES REPLIED:**

**“IT IS NOT THE SOUND OF VICTORY,**

**IT IS NOT THE SOUND OF DEFEAT;**

**IT IS THE SOUND OF SINGING THAT I HEAR.”**

**BUT DOES THE HEBREW ACTUALLY SAY THIS? A NEUTRAL, VERY LITERAL RENDERING OF THE ORIGINAL MIGHT BE: “HE SAID, ‘THE SOUND OF NOISE GOING BACK AND FORTH THAT I HEAR IS NOT THE SOUND OF NOISE GOING BACK AND FORTH OF VICTORY, AND IT IS NOT THE SOUND OF NOISE GOING BACK AND FORTH OF DEFEAT.’” IN OTHER WORDS, MOSES APPARENTLY DID NOT REFER TO SINGING AT ALL. HE SAID HE DID NOT DISCERN THE NOISE OF WAR (EITHER THE KIND OF NOISE A VICTORIOUS ARMY MIGHT MAKE OR THE KIND OF NOISE A DEFEATED ARMY MIGHT MAKE OR BOTH TOGETHER), BUT IT IS NOT IN FACT CLEAR THAT HE HEARD SINGING.**

**THE REVELRY OF THE ISRAELITES DID INVOLVE ADORATION OF THE YOUNG BULL AND THE DANCING THAT ACCOMPANIED IT, BOTH OF WHICH TOLD MOSES THAT THE PEOPLE HAD INDEED GONE INTO PAGAN IDOLATRY, AND HE BECAME ENRAGED. IN HIS ANGER HE THREW THE TABLETS TO THE (ROCKY) GROUND AT THE BASE OF THE MOUNTAIN AND BROKE THEM TO PIECES. WAS THIS ACTION SIMPLY A HASTY, ANGRY, IMPULSIVE MOVE ON MOSES’ PART—ONE THAT HE MIGHT HAVE REGRETTED AT A LATER TIME OF GREATER PERSONAL CALM? WE SUGGEST THAT SUCH AN EXPLANATION IS UNLIKELY. INSTEAD, MOSES’ BREAKING OF THE TABLETS WAS AN IMPORTANT SYMBOLIC ACT DONE CAREFULLY, DELIBERATELY, AND OPENLY FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE ISRAELITES BECAUSE OF THE WAY VIOLATION OF A COVENANT IS ROUTINELY DESCRIBED IN THE ANCIENT SEMITIC WORLD AS A “BREAKING” OF THAT “COVENANT.” IN A STRIKING PARALLEL, ZECHARIAH BROKE A STAFF HE HAD IDENTIFIED AS REPRESENTING GOD’S COVENANT WITH THE NATIONS AS A MEANS OF DEMONSTRATING THE BREAKING OF THAT DIVINELY GRANTED COVENANT (ZECH 11:10). WE SHOULD REMEMBER THAT THE “FOOT OF THE MOUNTAIN” MENTIONED IN THIS VERSE IS NOT SIMPLY AN INCIDENTAL DESCRIPTION OF WHERE MOSES HAPPENED TO BE AT THE TIME, HE SMASHED THE TABLETS. “THE FOOT OF THE MOUNTAIN” HOLDS A SPECIAL PLACE IN THE NARRATIVE AS THE PEOPLE’S OFFICIAL GATHERING PLACE AND WORSHIP ARENA (19:12), THUS THEIR PLACE OF MEETING WITH GOD (19:17) AS WELL AS THE LOCATION OF THE ONLY PROPER WORSHIP ALTAR (NOT THE ONE AARON BUILT) AS DESCRIBED ALREADY IN 24:4. IN DEUT 4:11 MOSES REMINDED THE PEOPLE: “YOU CAME NEAR AND STOOD AT THE FOOT OF THE MOUNTAIN WHILE IT BLAZED WITH FIRE TO THE VERY HEAVENS, WITH BLACK CLOUDS AND DEEP DARKNESS.” MOSES BROKE THE TABLETS AT THE PROPER PLACE, WHERE THE ISRAELITES COULD SEE HIM DO IT, AS A PUBLIC ACT, SIGNIFYING THE BREACH OF THE COVENANT AND THE IMPENDING IMPOSITION OF THE CONSEQUENCES THEREOF, THAT IS, PUNISHMENT FOR THE VIOLATORS. WAS MOSES CAPABLE OF IMPULSIVE ACTS? CERTAINLY. BUT NOWHERE IN THE EXODUS NARRATIVE OR ANYWHERE ELSE IN THE SCRIPTURE IS HIS BREAKING OF THE TABLETS DESCRIBED AS IMPULSIVE. IT WAS A REASONED, OVERT ACT DEMONSTRATING A FACT (THE COVENANT HAD BEEN BROKEN) AND WARNING OF A CONSEQUENCE (DIVINE WRATH—FAR WORSE THAN THE ANGER OF MOSES). THE EXPRESSION USED TO DESCRIBE MOSES’ ANGER IS A COMMON ONE (ḤĀRĀH + ʾĀP) AND DOES NOT INDICATE THAT HE LOST CONTROL OF HIMSELF OR WAS “BLIND WITH RAGE” OR THE LIKE. 32:20 MOSES DID EVERYTHING HE COULD TO DESTROY THE BULL IDOL PERMANENTLY AND DESECRATE IT FULLY. BECAUSE THE IDOL WAS MADE PRIMARILY OF WOOD OVERLAID WITH GOLD, IT COULD BE BURNED. SO MOSES BURNED IT IN A FIRE57 AND THEN GROUND UP THE RESULTING CHARCOAL AND GOLD SLAG INTO A POWDER (PRESUMABLY WITH A GROUP OF MORTARS AND PESTLES USED BY PEOPLE TO WHOM HE DELEGATED THIS TASK) AND THEN THREW THE POWDER INTO THE DRINKING WATER SUPPLY (THE FLOW OF WATER AT THE BASE OF MOUNT HOREB KNOWN AS MASSAH AND MERIBAH; CF. 17:6–7; DEUT 9:21). THE STATEMENT THAT HE “MADE THE ISRAELITES DRINK IT” MAY NOT BE THE BEST TRANSLATION OF THE HEBREW AND AT ANY RATE PROBABLY DOES NOT MEAN HE HAD THEM ALL LINE UP AND DRINK SOME AS AN ORGANIZED GROUP PUNISHMENT. RATHER IT MEANS THAT BY PUTTING THE POWDER INTO THEIR WATER SUPPLY, HE SAW TO IT THAT EVENTUALLY THE POWDER WAS DRUNK ALONG WITH THE WATER AND THUS WENT THROUGH THE ISRAELITES’ BODIES, CAME OUT AS SEXUAL WASTE, CORRUPTED AND DEFILED, AND THEREFORE WAS RUINED PERMANENTLY AS MATERIAL FIT FOR AN IDOL. BURNING, GRINDING, AND SCATTERING WERE ACTIONS COMMONLY EMPLOYED IN THE ANCIENT WORLD TO GET RID OF AN IDOL PERMANENTLY SO THAT IT COULD NEVER BE RECONSTITUTED FROM ITS SCAVENGED ELEMENTS AND BE THOUGHT AGAIN WORTHY OF WORSHIP. THUS JOSIAH DID A SIMILAR SORT OF THING WITH THE ASHERAH IDOL HE REMOVED FROM THE JERUSALEM TEMPLE (“HE TOOK THE ASHERAH POLE FROM THE TEMPLE OF THE LORD TO THE KIDRON VALLEY OUTSIDE JERUSALEM AND BURNED IT THERE. HE GROUND IT TO POWDER AND SCATTERED THE DUST OVER THE GRAVES OF THE COMMON PEOPLE,” 2 KGS 23:6) AND WITH THE HIGH PLACE IDOL AND ALTAR FROM BETHEL (2 KGS 23:15; CF. 2 CHR 34:4), AND A KING OF MOAB BURNED THE BONES OF A KING OF EDOM TO POWDER IN ORDER TO TRY TO DENY HIM A RECONSTITUTED BODY IN THE RESURRECTION (AMOS 2:1). 32:21 MOSES’ OPENING QUESTION TO AARON (“WHAT DID THESE PEOPLE DO TO YOU …?”) ALLOWS FOR THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE PEOPLE HAD SOMEHOW PRESSURED AARON INTO CRAFTING THE BULL IDOL AND SUPERVISING THEIR PAGAN REVELRY. THIS DOES NOT NECESSARILY SUGGEST ANY UNCERTAINTY ON MOSES’ PART AS TO WHETHER AARON COULD POSSIBLY HAVE A GOOD EXCUSE FOR HIS ACTIONS IN SPITE OF WHATEVER PRESSURE HE FELT, BUT IT MORE LIKELY RESULTED FROM MOSES’ CULTURAL DEFERENCE TO HIS OLDER BROTHER AND—PREVIOUSLY—GREAT ALLY IN THE EXODUS LEADERSHIP. IN OTHER WORDS, MOSES SHOULD NOT BE UNDERSTOOD AS ASSUMING THAT AARON WAS NOT ACTUALLY AT FAULT. NOT ONLY SO, BUT HIS WORDS “SUCH GREAT SIN” AND HIS ATTRIBUTION OF LEADERSHIP INTO THAT SIN (“YOU LED THEM”) MAKE ABUNDANTLY CLEAR THAT AARON DELIBERATELY COMMITTED A SERIOUS WRONG AGAINST GOD. 32:22–24 AARON’S RESPONSE WAS BOTH SELF-SERVING AND UNCONVINCING. IT THUS WAS DISHONEST AND INDEFENSIBLE. BY HIS INABILITY TO PROVIDE A REASONABLE ACCOUNT OF WHY HE WOULD HAVE AGREED TO THE PEOPLE’S REQUEST FOR IDOLATRY, HE CONDEMNED HIMSELF. HIS VIRTUAL “I WAS JUST A BYSTANDER” DEFENSE WOULD BE LAUGHABLE IF HE WERE NOT SO PROMINENT A LEADER AMONG THE ISRAELITES, ONE WHOM MOSES HAD TRUSTED TO ACT PROPERLY IN HIS ABSENCE (24:14). ONE NOTES IN THIS INSTANCE AARON’S DEFERENTIAL SPEECH TO THE LEADER OF THE PEOPLE EVEN THOUGH MOSES WAS HIS YOUNGER BROTHER (“DO NOT BE ANGRY, MY LORD”) AS WELL AS HIS ATTEMPT AT DEFLECTING THE BLAME FROM HIMSELF TO THE PEOPLE (“YOU KNOW HOW PRONE THESE PEOPLE ARE TO EVIL”). GOING EVEN FURTHER, AARON SOUGHT TO SHUNT SOME OF THE BLAME TOWARD MOSES HIMSELF, WITH HIS QUOTE OF THE PEOPLE’S REMARK ABOUT HOW THEY HAD BEEN VIRTUALLY ABANDONED BY MOSES THROUGH HIS LONG ABSENCE, THUS AGAIN EMPHASIZING THE SENSE THAT THE PEOPLE FELT LEADERLESS (NEEDING GODS WHO COULD “GO BEFORE” THEM) AND BETRAYED (“AS FOR THIS FELLOW MOSES … WE DON’T KNOW WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO HIM”). LEAST CONVINCING OF ALL IS AARON’S ABSURD CLAIM THAT FORCES BEYOND HIS CONTROL MADE THE BULL IDOL OUT OF THE GOLD OF THE PEOPLES’ JEWELRY (“I THREW IT INTO THE FIRE, AND OUT CAME THIS CALF!”). ON OCCASION COMMENTATORS HAVE SUGGESTED THAT AARON’S COMMENTS IN HIS OWN DEFENSE WERE PART OF A WAY OF THINKING ABOUT IDOLS IN THE ANCIENT WORLD—THAT THEY EMERGED SUPERNATURALLY AS AN EXTENSION OF THE GOD THEY REPRESENTED AND WERE NOT IN FACT CREATED BY HUMANS. THIS SORT OF MYTHOPOEIC THINKING COULD CONCEIVABLY HAVE BEEN EMPLOYED BY AARON IN DESPERATION (“I’VE GOT TO THINK OF SOMETHING TO SAY TO MOSES WHEN HE GETS BACK”). BUT IT WOULDN’T HAVE FOOLED THE OTHER ISRAELITES, AND IT DIDN’T FOOL MOSES, AS V. 25 MAKES ABUNDANTLY CLEAR. MOST IMPORTANTLY, IT DIDN’T FOOL GOD, WHO ALREADY HAD INFORMED MOSES OF THE SIN (32:7–8) AND HAD ALREADY PRONOUNCED HIS CONDEMNATION OF IT (32:9–14). 32:25 THIS VERSE MAY BE TRANSLATED OTHERWISE THAN IN THE NIV. FOR EXAMPLE, THE NJPS RENDERS IT: “MOSES SAW THAT THE PEOPLE WERE OUT OF CONTROL—SINCE AARON HAD LET THEM GET OUT OF CONTROL—SO THAT THEY WERE A MENACE TO ANY WHO MIGHT OPPOSE THEM.” THE WORD TRANSLATED BY THE NJPS AS “MENACE” AND BY THE NIV AS “LAUGHINGSTOCK” (ŠIMṢÂH) OCCURS ONLY HERE; AND BECAUSE IT IS A HAPAX LEGOMENON, ITS MEANING CANNOT BE DEFINITIVELY ESTABLISHED. MORE OFTEN THAN NOT, SOME SORT OF ROOT DEFINITION OF “WHISPER” OR “DERISIVE WHISPER” OR “INSIGNIFICANCE” (IN THE SENSE OF “PUSHOVER [TO THEIR ENEMIES]”) IS PROPOSED FOR IT. SO WE ARE FACED WITH TWO POSSIBLE CONCEPTS FOR WHAT IT WAS THAT MOSES SAW AS A PROBLEM: THE IDEA THAT THE ISRAELITES’ BEING OUT OF CONTROL WOULD MAKE THEM EASY PREY FOR POTENTIAL ENEMIES” (WHO WOULD REGARD THEM AS A JOKE/A FIGHTING FORCE SO EMBARRASSING THAT OUT OF CONCERN FOR POLITENESS THEY SHOULD ONLY BE WHISPERED ABOUT), OR THE IDEA THAT THE ISRAELITES’ BEING OUT OF CONTROL WOULD MEAN THAT ANYONE WHO TRIED TO OPPOSE THEM (I.E., TO GET THEM UNDER CONTROL) WOULD HAVE A DIFFICULT TIME OF IT. EITHER OF THESE CONCEPTS COULD BE CORRECT; OUR KNOWLEDGE OF THE MEANING OF THE HEBREW TERM IN QUESTION DOES NOT ALLOW US TO CHOOSE BETWEEN THE TWO WITH CONFIDENCE. 32:26–28 GOD MADE IT CLEAR TO MOSES (V. 27, “THIS IS WHAT THE LORD … SAYS”) THAT THOSE WHO WERE COMMITTED TO THE IDOLATRY HAD TO BE “CUT OFF” FROM ISRAEL. A MODERN PERSON ACCUSTOMED TO THE SENTIMENTALISM OF WESTERN LIBERAL THINKING MIGHT FIND THE IDEA OF KILLING IDOLATERS IMPOSSIBLE TO JUSTIFY. MOSES, ON THE OTHER HAND, UNDERSTOOD THAT LEAVING IDOLATERS IN THE MIDST OF ISRAEL TO INFLUENCE OTHERS AWAY FROM THE OPPORTUNITY FOR ETERNAL LIFE WAS IMPOSSIBLE TO JUSTIFY. GOD REVEALED TO HIM THAT A FIGHT WAS UNDERWAY OVER SAVING TRUTH. IF THE IDOLATRY WERE ALLOWED TO CONTINUE, MANY PEOPLE IN ANCIENT ISRAEL WOULD TURN FROM SAVING TRUTH TO CONDEMNING FALSEHOOD, FROM THE PROMISE OF ETERNAL LIFE WITH GOD TO DESTRUCTION IN HELL—AND SINCE ISRAEL WAS THE REPOSITORY OF GOD’S SAVING TRUTH AT THIS TIME, ALLOWING THE IDOLATRY TO CONTINUE MIGHT HAVE AFFECTED THE POTENTIAL FOR ETERNAL LIFE OF COUNTLESS FUTURE GENERATIONS OF ISRAELITES AND GENTILES ALIKE. MOSES’ ACTIONS AS DESCRIBED IN THIS PASSAGE ARE NOT TO BE COPIED EXEMPLARISTICALLY; THE NEW COVENANT DOES NOT ALLOW FOR KILLING AS A MEANS OF PRESERVATION OF ORTHODOXY. BUT HERE WAS AN OLD COVENANT WATERSHED INSTANCE OF BEING “FOR STEPHEN YAHWEH” (THE ONLY GOD WHO COULD SAVE) OR FOR AN IDOL (THAT CANNOT SAVE AND CAN ONLY DISTRACT FROM SAVING TRUTH). SO, MOSES POSITIONED HIMSELF AT THE ENTRANCE (HB. “GATE” OR “GATEWAY”) TO THE CAMP (ON ITS SPATIAL ORGANIZATION, SEE NUM 2) SO AS TO SYMBOLIZE STANDING AT THE DIVIDING POINT BETWEEN ISRAEL AND NON-ISRAEL AND SAID, “WHOEVER FOR STEPHEN YAHWEH, TO ME!” (THERE IS NO VERB “IS” AND NO VERB “COME” IN THE VERBLESS CLAUSE OF THE ORIGINAL). IMMEDIATELY, ALL LEVITES RALLIED TO HIM. SINCE AARON WAS A LEVITE AND HAD LED THE MOVE TOWARD IDOLATRY, IT CAN HARDLY BE DOUBTED THAT OTHER LEVITES HAD ALSO SUCCUMBED TO ITS ATTRACTIONS. BUT NOW EVERYONE WAS BEING GIVEN A CHANCE TO REPENT AND REESTABLISH LOYALTY TO STEPHEN YAHWEH’S COVENANT. ALL THE LEVITES DID SO DECISIVELY—INCLUDING, SURELY, A CHAGRINED AND PROBABLY OPENLY EMBARRASSED AARON. SOME OF THE LEVITES’ MOTIVATION MAY HAVE COME FROM TRIBAL LOYALTY TO THEIR FELLOW TRIBESMAN MOSES, ESPECIALLY NOW THAT THEY HAD SEEN AARON PUBLICLY REBUKED AND HAD SEEN THE BULL IDOL SO DECISIVELY DESTROYED. BUT TO THEIR CREDIT THEY ALL SEIZED THE OCCASION TO ALIGN THEMSELVES WITH STEPHEN YAHWEH AND AGAINST THE IDOLATRY THAT MANY OF THEM HAD SO RECENTLY EMBRACED. THE COMMAND TO KILL IDOLATERS WAS NOT MOSES’ IDEA BUT STEPHEN YAHWEH’S, AND MOSES INTRODUCED IT IN V. 27 WITH A FULL MESSENGER SPEECH FORMULA (“THIS IS WHAT THE LORD, THE GOD OF ISRAEL SAYS”) IN AUTHENTICATING IT. AT FIRST GLANCE IT MIGHT SEEM THAT GOD WAS ORDERING THE LEVITES TO KILL EVERYONE ELSE, BUT THE WORDING IS ACTUALLY NOT INTENDED TO IMPLY THAT. WHAT THE LEVITES WERE TO DO WAS TO “GO BACK AND FORTH THROUGH THE CAMP FROM ONE END TO THE OTHER,” WHICH MEANS CAREFULLY AND SYSTEMATICALLY APPROACHING EVERYONE AND FINDING OUT WHETHER OR NOT THEY INTEND TO RETURN TO STEPHEN YAHWEH, ABANDONING THEIR IDOLATRY. THOSE FOUND TO BE COMMITTED TO IDOLATRY MUST BE KILLED. THOSE SORRY FOR BEING CAUGHT UP IN IT BUT NOW ACTIVELY REPENTING MUST BE SPARED. A PARALLEL SITUATION OCCURRED LATER, AT BAAL-PEOR, AS DESCRIBED IN NUM 25. THERE, AS NUM 25:2 STATES, THE ISRAELITES ONCE AGAIN SACRIFICED TO FALSE GODS (THUS NECESSARILY HAVING BUILT ALTARS FOR THE PURPOSE), ATE, AND BOWED DOWN BEFORE THOSE GODS (THE GODS IN THIS CASE BEING VARIOUS MANIFESTATIONS OF BAAL). WHAT IS MORE EXPLICITLY BROUGHT TO THE ATTENTION OF THE READER IN NUM 25 AS OPPOSED TO THE PRESENT PASSAGE, HOWEVER, IS THAT THE REVELRY INVOLVED WAS OVERTLY SEXUAL, AS NUM 25:1, 6–8 REVEALS. AGAIN, THE REMEDY WAS THE SAME: DEATH TO IDOLATERS. AS DIRECTED BY GOD (NUM 25:5), MOSES ORDERED THAT “EACH OF YOU MUST PUT TO DEATH THOSE OF YOUR MEN WHO HAVE JOINED IN WORSHIPING THE BAAL OF PEOR.” THE IMPOSITION OF THE DEATH PENALTY IS VIVIDLY ILLUSTRATED BY THE ACTION OF A PROMINENT LEVITE, PHINEHAS, WHO KILLED A MAN AND WOMAN IN THE MIDST OF PAGAN RELIGIOUS PROSTITUTIONAL “REVELRY” (NUM 25:8). AS THE NUM 25 PASSAGE MAKES CLEAR, ONLY THOSE WHO ENGAGED COMMITTEDLY IN IDOLATRY WERE PUT TO DEATH, NOT EVERYONE INDISCRIMINATELY. IT WAS SURELY THE SAME IN THE PRESENT CONTEXT. AFTER KILLING ABOUT THREE THOUSAND (OR THREE COMPANIES) OF PEOPLE, THE LEVITES SUCCEEDED IN ENDING THE IDOLATRY AT SINAI (V. 28). THEIR WILLINGNESS TO KILL ALL THE COMMITTED IDOLATERS, REGARDLESS OF WHETHER OR NOT THEY WERE LEVITES OR FAMILY MEMBERS OR FRIENDS (VV. 27, 29) WAS EVIDENCE OF THEIR OWN DEVOTION TO STEPHEN YAHWEH AND FURTHER CONFIRMATION OF THEIR APPROPRIATENESS AS THE CLERGY TRIBE OF ISRAEL (“TODAY YOU HAVE ORDAINED YOURSELVES FOR THE SERVICE OF THE LORD”). THE HEBREW OF THE VERSE CAN BE LITERALLY TRANSLATED “CONSECRATE YOURSELVES TODAY TO STEPHEN YAHWEH” SINCE THE VERB INVOLVED (MILʾÛ) IS AN IMPERATIVE. WHATEVER THE LEVITES MAY HAVE BEEN EXPECTING ABOUT THEIR ROLE AS THE CLERGY/PRIESTLY TRIBE PRIOR TO THIS POINT, THEY NOW KNEW THAT THROUGH MOSES’ INSTRUCTION GOD WAS SETTING THEM ASIDE FOR THAT SPECIAL PURPOSE. WHAT THEY DID IN KILLING FRIENDS AND FAMILY MEMBERS MUST HAVE BEEN AGONIZINGLY DIFFICULT FOR MOST OF THEM; BUT IT WAS FAITHFUL TO GOD’S WILL AND THEREFORE EARNED THEM HIS BLESSING. ISRAEL WAS ONCE AGAIN—HOWEVER TENTATIVELY—FREE OF IDOLATRY, AND STEPHEN YAHWEH WAS ONCE AGAIN ISRAEL’S SOLE FOCUS OF WORSHIP.**

**SECOND INTERCESSION AND PLAGUE (32:30–35)**

**30 THE NEXT DAY MOSES SAID TO THE PEOPLE, “YOU HAVE COMMITTED A GREAT SIN. BUT NOW I WILL GO UP TO THE LORD; PERHAPS I CAN MAKE ATONEMENT FOR YOUR SIN.” 31 SO MOSES WENT BACK TO THE LORD AND SAID, “OH, WHAT A GREAT SIN THESE PEOPLE HAVE COMMITTED! THEY HAVE MADE THEMSELVES GODS OF GOLD. 32 BUT NOW, PLEASE FORGIVE THEIR SIN—BUT IF NOT, THEN BLOT ME OUT OF THE BOOK YOU HAVE WRITTEN.” 33 THE LORD REPLIED TO MOSES, “WHOEVER HAS SINNED AGAINST ME I WILL BLOT OUT OF MY BOOK. 34 NOW GO, LEAD THE PEOPLE TO THE PLACE I SPOKE OF, AND MY ANGEL WILL GO BEFORE YOU. HOWEVER, WHEN THE TIME COMES FOR ME TO PUNISH, I WILL PUNISH THEM FOR THEIR SIN.” 35 AND THE LORD STRUCK THE PEOPLE WITH A PLAGUE BECAUSE OF WHAT THEY DID WITH THE CALF AARON HAD MADE.**

**THROUGHOUT HISTORY PLAGUES—MEANING EPIDEMICS OF ILLNESS—HAVE BEEN INSTINCTIVELY INTERPRETED BY PEOPLE AS DRAMATIC EVIDENCE OF WIDESPREAD JUDGMENT OR DIVINELY IMPOSED NATIONAL TRAGEDY. JEREMIAH INCLUDED PLAGUES AMONG HIS FAMOUS TRIAD OF GREAT DISASTERS (“SWORD, FAMINE AND PLAGUE”; I.E., WAR, FOOD SHORTAGES SO SEVERE AS TO CAUSE STARVATION, AND DISEASE EPIDEMIC). A PLAGUE COULD BE THE MEANS OF APPLICATION OF DIVINE WRATH IN THE OLD TESTAMENT, AS THE ISRAELITES HAD OBSERVED PERSONALLY IN THE CASE OF THE TEN PLAGUES (ONLY SOME OF WHICH INVOLVED ILLNESS, OF COURSE) THAT STRUCK THE EGYPTIANS AND BROUGHT ABOUT THE EXODUS. NOW IN THIS PASSAGE ISRAEL EXPERIENCED A PLAGUE AND THEREFORE A DRAMATIC REMINDER OF THE SEVERITY OF THE SIN THEY HAD JUST FALLEN INTO AND A SEVERE WARNING NOT TO DO IT AGAIN. 32:30 THE REFERENCE TO THE EVENTS OF “THE NEXT DAY” DOES NOT NECESSARILY MEAN THAT EVERYTHING DESCRIBED IN THE EARLIER PART OF CHAP. 32 TOOK PLACE IN A SINGLE DAY. INDEED, VV. 5–6 SHOW THAT MORE THAN ONE DAY WAS INVOLVED. WE CAN SAY FOR CERTAIN THAT THE KILLING DESCRIBED IN V. 28 LASTED JUST A DAY BECAUSE OF THE WAY VV. 28–29 ARE WORDED. ADDITIONALLY, WE SHOULD TAKE SERIOUSLY THE POSSIBILITY THAT MOST OR ALL OF THE ACTION MENTIONED FROM V. 9 ONWARD (WHEN GOD INFORMED MOSES OF THE IDOLATRY GOING ON AT THE BASE OF THE MOUNTAIN) HAPPENED IN ONE DAY (THE SAME DAY DESCRIBED IN VV. 28–29), SINCE IT IS HARD TO IMAGINE THAT MOSES WOULD HAVE TAKEN HIS TIME DEALING WITH THE IDOLATRY HE FOUND UPON ARRIVING AT THE BASE OF SINAI. NOW THAT MOSES HAD DONE WHAT HE COULD TO CORRECT THE PEOPLE, THE REST WAS UP TO GOD. MOSES THUS PROPOSED IN THIS VERSE TO FULFILL THE POINT OF HIS EARLIER PRAYER (VV. 11–13) THAT GOD WOULD SPARE THE PEOPLE AND REMAKE THEM INTO HIS HOLY NATION. TO ACCOMPLISH THIS, MOSES NEEDED TO GO BACK ATOP MOUNT SINAI (“UP TO THE LORD”) FOR YET ANOTHER AUDIENCE WITH STEPHEN YAHWEH, TO WHOM HE WOULD MAKE INTERCESSION ON BEHALF OF THE PEOPLE. HE HOPED THAT PERHAPS (ʾÛLAY) HE COULD “MAKE ATONEMENT FOR” THE PEOPLE’S SIN, A CONCEPT THAT COULD ALSO BE TRANSLATED LITERALLY AS “GET YOUR SINS COVERED/FORGIVEN.” WHAT THE PEOPLE HAD DONE WAS A VERY SERIOUS SIN INDEED; IT WOULD TAKE DIRECT APPEAL TO STEPHEN YAHWEH IN THE SINAI GLORY CLOUD (19:9; 24:15, 18) BY STEPHEN YAHWEH’S OWN APPOINTED INTERCESSOR TO TRY TO MAKE THINGS RIGHT. THE COVENANT HAD BEEN BROKEN, AS SYMBOLIZED BY MOSES’ OWN ACTIONS THE PRIOR DAY IN SMASHING THE PRECIOUS TABLETS OF TESTIMONY; A MAJOR SORT OF APPEAL WAS NOW ISRAEL’S ONLY HOPE FOR RESTORATION. IN OTHER WORDS, THE KILLING OF THE THREE THOUSAND BY THE LEVITES WAS ONLY THE BEGINNING OF THE PROCESS OF REGAINING GOD’S FAVOR AND BLESSING. THAT ACTION WENT ONLY AS FAR AS TO IDENTIFY AND ELIMINATE THOSE WHO RESISTED CORRECTION. THE PUNISHMENT OF THE GENERAL POPULATION WHO HAD ORIGINALLY GONE ALONG WITH THE IDOLATRY AND NOW WERE PRESUMABLY SORRY THEY HAD AWAITED RESOLUTION AT THE SUMMIT OF THE MOUNTAIN. 32:31 IT IS INSTRUCTIVE THAT MOSES DID NOT TRY TO MINIMIZE THE PEOPLE’S SIN IN THE PROCESS OF TRYING TO GAIN FORGIVENESS OF IT. BIBLICALLY, CONFESSION OF SIN (BEING ENTIRELY HONEST WITH GOD IN STATING ITS NATURE AND EXTENT) IS PART OF TRUE REPENTANCE; THE PERSON WHO UNDERSTATES HIS SIN IS NOT REALLY DEMONSTRATING REPENTANCE TO GOD. SO, MOSES BLUNTLY DESCRIBED THE PEOPLE’S SIN BOTH IN THE PRIOR VERSE IN ADDRESSING THE PEOPLE, AND NOW TO GOD DIRECTLY, AS A “GREAT SIN” AND AS IDOLATRY (“THEY HAVE MADE FOR THEMSELVES GODS OF GOLD”), A VIOLATION OF THE FIRST TWO COMMANDMENTS. THE WORDING “GODS OF GOLD” RECALLS THE LANGUAGE OF THE SECOND COMMANDMENT IN 20:23, “DO NOT MAKE ANY GODS TO BE ALONGSIDE ME; DO NOT MAKE FOR YOURSELVES GODS OF SILVER OR GODS OF GOLD.” AS MOSES LATER TAUGHT IN DEUTERONOMY, THE GOLD ON AN IDOL (THE GOLD SURFACE OF A CARVED WOODEN IDOL) IS DETESTABLE TO GOD (DEUT 7:5)—ITS BEAUTY CAN NEVER BE CONSTRUED AS SOMETHING GOD WOULD ENJOY, AND ITS VALUE CAN NEVER BE REDEEMED BY SALVAGING THE GOLD WHEN AN IDOL IS DISCARDED (SO MOSES’ ACTIONS EARLIER, V. 20). 32:32–33 IN THESE VERSES MOSES LINKED HIS APPEAL FOR FORGIVENESS FOR ISRAEL’S SIN TO AN OFFER TO LOSE HIS OWN ETERNAL LIFE IF THE PEOPLE’S SIN COULD NOT BE FORGIVEN. GOD REPLIED THAT HE WOULD NOT GIVE ETERNAL LIFE TO SINNERS, IMPLYING BOTH THAT MOSES WAS NOT AT FAULT AND THAT HE, GOD, WAS FULLY IN CHARGE OF JUDGING BETWEEN THE RIGHTEOUS AND THE WICKED AND WOULD MAKE THE DETERMINATION OF WHO OBTAINED ETERNAL LIFE. THUS “WHOEVER HAS SINNED AGAINST ME I WILL BLOT OUT OF MY BOOK” (V. 33) REPRESENTS A STATEMENT OF DIVINE PRACTICE, A STANDARD OF JUSTICE THAT GOD MAINTAINS—AS WELL AS A STRICT WARNING THAT ETERNAL LIFE IS NOT AUTOMATIC AND THAT A PERSON WHO TRIES TO ENTER IT WITHOUT HIS SINS BEING FORGIVEN COULD NOT SUCCEED. VERSE 33 IS, THEN, ONE OF THE HOLY BIBLE’S STRONGER STATEMENTS ABOUT THE ABSOLUTE NECESSITY FOR THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS, AND THEREFORE, FOR A SAVIOR. IT CAN BE REGARDED AS IMPLICITLY MESSIANIC EVEN IF NOT OVERTLY SO. MOSES’ OFFER TO BE BLOTTED OUT OF THE BOOK OF LIFE (ALONG WITH, NOT INSTEAD OF, THE ISRAELITES) WAS SELFLESS AND NOBLE, SHOWING HIS DEEP IDENTIFICATION WITH THE PEOPLE. HE WAS WILLING TO GO BEYOND EVEN WHAT HE HAD SAID EARLIER IN VV. 11–13 AND GIVE UP ON HIS OWN FUTURE LEST THE PEOPLE HE HAD LED WOULD HAVE NO FUTURE BY REASON OF THEIR “GREAT SIN.”**

**EXCURSUS: THE BOOK OF LIFE**

**IN SPEAKING OF “THE BOOK YOU HAVE WRITTEN” (EXOD 32:32), MOSES MADE REFERENCE TO A CONCEPT THAT GOD HIMSELF DIRECTLY CONFIRMED IN RESPONSE TO MOSES BY EMPLOYING THE TERM “MY BOOK” (32:33). MOSES AND GOD BOTH SEEMED TO INDICATE THAT SINFUL BEHAVIOR CAN CAUSE A PERSON OR PERSONS TO BE BLOTTED OUT (ERASED/EXPUNGED, MḤH) OF A SPECIAL BOOK KEPT IN GOD’S POSSESSION. WHAT BOOK WERE THEY REFERRING TO? WHAT WAS ITS NATURE? WHY DID THEY TALK OF SIN AND ITS CONSEQUENCES WITH A TERM LIKE “BOOK”? IN THE ANCIENT WORLD BOTH GOVERNMENTS AND INDIVIDUALS KEPT RECORDS OF POPULATIONS. THESE RECORDS WERE USED FOR MANY OF THE SAME SORTS OF PURPOSES THAT OFFICIAL RECORDS ARE USED FOR IN MODERN TIMES—TAXATION, MILITARY DUTY, ESTABLISHING PROPERTY OWNERSHIP. ONCE A GIVEN POPULATION (E.G., OF A CLAN, A TOWN, A REGION, A FLOCK, OR THE LIKE) BECAME SO GREAT THAT NO PERSON OR SMALL GROUP OF PERSONS COULD MAINTAIN IN HIS OR HER HEAD A FULL, ACCURATE LIST OF THE INHABITANTS, A LISTING (BOOK/SCROLL) OF INHABITANTS WAS REQUIRED TO BE PREPARED IN WRITING. OF COURSE, THIS “BOOK” HAD TO BE UPDATED AS THE ACTUAL POPULATION CHANGED. WHEN SOMEONE WAS BORN INTO OR MOVED INTO A CLAN/TOWN/REGION, IT WAS NECESSARY TO ADD THE NAME OF THAT PERSON TO THE LISTING/CENSUS (BOOK) KEPT FOR THAT GROUP. WHEN SOMEONE DIED OR MOVED AWAY, IT WAS NECESSARY TO REMOVE HIS OR HER NAME FROM THE BOOK. THUS, THE LISTING WAS ALWAYS A CURRENT LISTING OF THOSE WHO WERE ALIVE IN THAT CLAN/TOWN/REGION AT ANY GIVEN TIME. IN OTHER WORDS, THE BOOK THAT HELD THEIR NAMES WAS A “BOOK OF LIFE.” ONLY THE NAMES OF THE LIVING WERE FOUND IN IT. THE DEAD’S NAMES WERE REMOVED (“BLOTTED OUT”) PERIODICALLY AS NEEDED. BOOKS OF THE LIVING HAD A LONG HISTORY. BEHIND THEM LAY THE NEED FOR ACCURATE COUNTING AND RECORD KEEPING, EVEN AMONG ILLITERATE PEOPLE. IN MANY RELATIVELY PRIMITIVE SOCIETIES SOMETHING OF THE SAME SORT OF RECORD KEEPING PREVAILS EVEN TODAY. IN CERTAIN CULTURES, AN ILLITERATE SHEPHERD WILL KEEP IN A BAG OR BUNDLE OF SOME SORT A SMALL PEBBLE REPRESENTING EACH OF HIS SHEEP. WHEN HE ACQUIRES A NEW SHEEP BY BIRTH OR PURCHASE, HE WILL ADD A PEBBLE TO THE BUNDLE. WHEN HE LOSES A SHEEP, HE WILL REMOVE A PEBBLE AND THROW IT AWAY. THUS, EVEN THOUGH THE SHEPHERD MAY NOT BE SKILLED AT COUNTING LARGER NUMBERS, AND EVEN IF HE MAY LACK THE KNOWLEDGE OF HOW TO KEEP A WRITTEN RECORD OF HIS TOTAL NUMBER OF SHEEP, AND EVEN IF HE MIGHT AT ANY GIVEN TIME (ESPECIALLY DURING LAMBING SEASON) HAVE TROUBLE REMEMBERING THE EXACT NUMBER OF SHEEP UNDER HIS CONTROL, HE CAN ALWAYS REFER TO THE BUNDLE TO FIND ONE PEBBLE FOR EACH SHEEP ALIVE IN HIS FLOCK. THIS SAME SORT OF SIMPLE CENSUS SYSTEM WAS WIDELY ENOUGH USED IN ANCIENT ISRAEL THAT ABIGAIL COULD REFER TO IT METAPHORICALLY IN HER STATEMENT TO DAVID ABOUT HER CONFIDENCE THAT GOD WOULD PRESERVE HIS LIFE (1 SAM 25:29): “EVEN THOUGH SOMEONE IS PURSUING YOU TO TAKE YOUR LIFE, THE LIFE OF MY MASTER WILL BE BOUND SECURELY IN THE BUNDLE OF THE LIVING BY THE LORD YOUR GOD. BUT THE LIVES OF YOUR ENEMIES HE WILL HURL AWAY AS FROM THE POCKET OF A SLING.” THE “BUNDLE OF THE LIVING” TO WHICH ABIGAIL REFERRED WAS A METAPHORICAL ONE: AN IMAGINARY BAG THAT HELD THE SYMBOLS OF THE LIVES OF THE LIVING. TO REMAIN IN THE BAG WAS TO BE ALIVE STILL; TO BE HURLED FROM IT WAS TO LOSE ONE’S LIFE. METAPHORICALLY, SHE WAS SPEAKING ABOUT DAVID’S POTENTIAL DEATH VERSUS HIS POTENTIAL ONGOING LIFE. FAR MORE COMMON IN SCRIPTURE THAN ABIGAIL’S “BUNDLE OF THE LIVING” IS THE TERM “BOOK OF LIFE” AND ITS VARIOUS PARAPHRASES (BOOK/SCROLL OF THE LIVING, MY BOOK, LAMB’S BOOK OF LIFE). CONSIDER, FOR EXAMPLE, THE PLEA IN PS 69:28 AGAINST OPPRESSIVE ENEMIES: “MAY THEY BE BLOTTED OUT OF THE BOOK OF LIFE AND NOT BE LISTED WITH THE RIGHTEOUS.” THIS EXPRESSION PARALLELS MOSES’ WORDS IN EXOD 32:32 IN THAT IT IMAGINES A BOOK IN WHICH THE LIVING ARE LISTED, BUT NOT NECESSARILY LISTED PERMANENTLY. IF PEOPLE DISPLEASE GOD BY THEIR SINS, HE CAN BLOT THEM OUT OF HIS BOOK, THAT IS, SEE TO IT THAT THEY DO NOT CONTINUE TO LIVE (I.E., TO HAVE ETERNAL LIFE) AFTER THE “FIRST DEATH” AND INSTEAD EXPERIENCE THE “SECOND DEATH” (ETERNAL DESTRUCTION) AFTER THE FIRST (CF. REV 2:11; 20:6, 14; 21:8). BECAUSE OF THE COMMONNESS OF THE CONCEPT, PAUL COULD, WITHOUT FURTHER EXPLANATION, REFER TO FELLOW BELIEVERS, WHOSE ETERNAL DESTINY WAS CERTAIN BY REASON OF THEIR HAVING TRUSTED CHRIST FOR SALVATION, “AS FELLOW WORKERS, WHOSE NAMES ARE IN THE BOOK OF LIFE” (PHIL 4:3). IN REVELATION, JOHN USED THE TERM “BOOK OF LIFE” SIX TIMES, ONCE WITH REFERENCE TO THE POSSIBILITY (OR NOT) OF BEING BLOTTED OUT OF THE BOOK OF LIFE (REV 3:5) AND FIVE TIMES WITH REFERENCE TO HAVING ONE’S NAME FOUND IN THE BOOK OF LIFE AT THE GREAT FINAL JUDGMENT OF ALL THE EARTH (REV 13:8; 17:8; 20:12, 15; 21:27). IN OTHER WORDS, IF YOUR NAME IS IN THE BOOK OF LIFE AT THE JUDGMENT, YOU WILL LIVE FOREVER IN HEAVEN. IF IT IS NOT, YOU WILL BE DESTROYED IN HELL—YOU ARE NOT LISTED AMONG THE LIVING AND CANNOT THEREFORE LIVE ON. IT IS USEFUL TO NOTE THAT JOHN ALSO CALLED THE BOOK OF LIFE THE “BOOK OF LIFE BELONGING TO THE LAMB THAT WAS SLAIN FROM THE CREATION OF THE WORLD” (REV 13:8) AS A WAY OF INDICATING THAT IT IS THROUGH CHRIST ALONE THAT ETERNAL LIFE IS OBTAINED. ALREADY IN EXOD 17:14 THE GENERAL IDEA OF BLOTTING OUT PEOPLE’S NAMES (I.E., BEING SURE THEY DIE AND DO NOT LIVE ON) WAS APPLIED TO THE AMALEKITES (“THEN THE LORD SAID TO MOSES, ‘WRITE THIS ON A SCROLL AS SOMETHING TO BE REMEMBERED AND MAKE SURE THAT JOSHUA HEARS IT, BECAUSE I WILL COMPLETELY BLOT OUT THE MEMORY OF AMALEK FROM UNDER HEAVEN’ ”; CF. DEUT 25:19). BUT THE THREAT TO BLOT OUT THE NAME OF THE ISRAELITES, RELATED TO THEIR IDOLATRY AT SINAI AS DESCRIBED IN THE PRESENT CONTEXT, IS ALSO EXPRESSED AND/OR RECALLED (E.G., DEUT 9:14, “LET ME ALONE, SO THAT I MAY DESTROY THEM AND BLOT OUT THEIR NAME FROM UNDER HEAVEN. AND I WILL MAKE YOU INTO A NATION STRONGER AND MORE NUMEROUS THAN THEY”). THE DANGER OF BEING ERASED FROM THE BOOK OF LIFE CAN APPLY AS WELL TO THE INDIVIDUAL WHO BREAKS THE COVENANT EVEN IF MOST ISRAELITES DID NOT (DEUT 29:20, “ALL THE CURSES WRITTEN IN THIS BOOK WILL FALL UPON HIM, AND THE LORD WILL BLOT OUT HIS NAME FROM UNDER HEAVEN”). FORTUNATELY, GOD’S PROMISE TO MOSES IN EXOD 32:33 WAS THAT ONLY THOSE WHO SINNED AGAINST HIM BY FLOUTING HIS COVENANT WOULD BE BLOTTED OUT, A THEME PICKED UP IN BOTH DEUT 32:26 (“I CONSIDERED SCATTERING THEM AND BLOTTING OUT THEIR MEMORY FROM MANKIND” [NIV, “I SAID I WOULD SCATTER THEM AND BLOT OUT THEIR MEMORY FROM MANKIND”]) AND 2 KGS 14:27 (“AND SINCE THE LORD HAD NOT SAID HE WOULD BLOT OUT THE NAME OF ISRAEL FROM UNDER HEAVEN, HE SAVED THEM BY THE HAND OF JEROBOAM SON OF JEHOASH”). MALACHI 3:16 APPEARS TO REFLECT THE GENERAL CONCEPT OF A BOOK/SCROLL OF THE LIVING: PEOPLE IN MALACHI’S POSTEXILIC JUDEAN COMMUNITY PUT TOGETHER A BOOK/SCROLL OF THOSE COMMITTED TO KEEPING GOD’S COVENANT AND THUS WHO COULD BE PRESUMED TO BE ON THEIR WAY TO ETERNAL LIFE RATHER THAN TO BEING BLOTTED OUT OF GOD’S BOOK. DANIEL 12:1 UNAMBIGUOUSLY REFLECTS THE CONCEPT: “AT THAT TIME MICHAEL, THE GREAT PRINCE WHO PROTECTS YOUR PEOPLE, WILL ARISE. THERE WILL BE A TIME OF DISTRESS SUCH AS HAS NOT HAPPENED FROM THE BEGINNING OF NATIONS UNTIL THEN. BUT AT THAT TIME YOUR PEOPLE—EVERYONE WHOSE NAME IS FOUND WRITTEN IN THE BOOK—WILL BE DELIVERED.” WHAT CONCLUSIONS CAN BE DRAWN FROM THIS BRIEF SURVEY OF THE CONCEPT? FIRST, THE BOOK OF LIFE IS A RECORD OF THOSE GOING ON TO ETERNAL LIFE AS OPPOSED TO THOSE WHO BY THEIR OWN DECISIONS HAVE REJECTED GOD AND HIS SALVATION (CF. JOHN 3:19–20). TO HAVE ONE’S NAME IN THE BOOK OF LIFE IS TO HAVE PERSEVERED IN FAITH AND OBEDIENCE TO GOD UNTIL THE FINAL JUDGMENT OF THE EARTH. TO HAVE ONE’S NAME BLOTTED OUT IS TO HAVE OFFENDED GOD BY LACK OF FAITH AND, ACCORDINGLY, BY DISOBEDIENCE SO THAT ONE CANNOT CONTINUE TO LIVE, THAT IS, HAVE ETERNAL LIFE. MOREOVER, IMPORTANT FOR UNDERSTANDING GOD’S PURPOSES IN JUDGMENT IS TO APPRECIATE THAT EVERYONE STARTS OUT IN THE BOOK OF LIFE. IT IS A BOOK OF THE LIVING, AND ALL WHO ARE BORN ORIGINALLY APPEAR IN IT. GOD DOES NOT ARBITRARILY PUT SOME NAMES IN IT AND NOT OTHERS. ALL WHO COME INTO THE WORLD HAVE THE POTENTIAL FOR ETERNAL LIFE, ACCORDING TO GOD’S WILL (1 TIM 2:3–4; 2 PET 3:9) BUT MOST IGNORE, REJECT, DISDAIN, PUT OFF, OR OTHERWISE FORFEIT THAT POTENTIAL—AND SO THEIR NAMES ARE EVENTUALLY BLOTTED OUT OF THE BOOK OF LIFE. WHEN THEY APPEAR AT THE JUDGMENT AND THE BOOKS ARE OPENED (DAN 7:10; REV 20:12), THEIR NAMES WILL NOT APPEAR IN THE LAMB’S BOOK OF LIFE BECAUSE THEY CHOSE A DIFFERENT DIRECTION DURING THEIR LIVES ON EARTH FROM THE DIRECTION GOD PRESCRIBED. THEIR REJECTION OF HIM EVENTUALLY EARNS THEM REJECTION FROM BEING LISTED AMONG THE LIVING. THEIR FATE IS THEN DESTRUCTION, THE SECOND DEATH (REV 2:11; 20:6, 14; 21:18). 32:34–35 THE CONNECTION BETWEEN VV. 34 AND 35 CAN EASILY BE MISUNDERSTOOD. IT CAN SEEM THAT THE FINAL SENTENCE OF V. 34 (“HOWEVER, WHEN THE TIME COMES FOR ME TO PUNISH, I WILL PUNISH THEM FOR THEIR SIN”) IS A PREDICTION OF WHAT FOLLOWS IMMEDIATELY IN V. 35 (“AND THE LORD STRUCK THE PEOPLE WITH A PLAGUE”). BUT THIS IS NOT AT ALL THE POINT OF THE TEXT. VERSE 34 REPRESENTS GOD’S COMMAND TO MOSES TO CONTINUE ON IN THE EXODUS PLAN. THUS HE TOLD HIM TO “LEAD THE PEOPLE TO THE PLACE I SPOKE OF,” THAT IS, TAKE THEM TO THE PROMISED LAND (REFERRING BACK TO THE ORIGINAL COMMAND TO DO SO IN 3:8, 17) AND OF HIS PROMISE TO LEAD THE WAY WITH THE ANGEL OF THE LORD (A REITERATION OF 23:20–23). IN OTHER WORDS, IT IS NOW COMPLETELY CLEAR THAT THE IDOLATRY OF THE PEOPLE AT SINAI HAD NOT RESULTED IN THEIR DESTRUCTION, BUT GOD HAD BEEN FAITHFUL TO HIS ORIGINAL INTENT, JUST AS MOSES PRAYED HE WOULD BE (32:11–14) AND HAD SPARED THE NATION FOR ITS ORIGINAL PURPOSE, TO CONQUER AND OCCUPY THE PROMISED LAND. THE SECOND SENTENCE OF V. 34 THEREFORE IS JUST AS THE NIV TRANSLATES IT, A CONTRASTING THOUGHT REFERRING TO A FUTURE TIME (WHICH IN HINDSIGHT CAN EASILY BE IDENTIFIED AS THE BABYLONIAN EXILE) “WHEN THE TIME COMES” FOR STEPHEN YAHWEH “TO PUNISH” HIS PEOPLE, A TIME WHEN HE THEN INDEED “WILL PUNISH” THEM FOR THEIR SIN. THAT PUNISHMENT BROUGHT ISRAEL’S TENURE ON THE LAND AS AN INDEPENDENT NATION TO A CONCLUSION. THE VARIOUS CURSES DESCRIBED IN LEV 26 AND DEUT 28–32 WERE UNLEASHED, AND ISRAEL THEREAFTER, UNTIL THE TIME OF CHRIST’S TRANSFORMATION OF TRUE ISRAEL INTO THE CHURCH, WAS IN CAPTIVITY: PHYSICALLY RELOCATED TO BABYLON IN 586 BC BUT ALWAYS POLITICALLY INCORPORATED INTO ONE EMPIRE OR ANOTHER EVEN AFTER THE EXILE FOR THE REST OF ITS HISTORY AS A SINGLE PEOPLE GROUP.**

**THE PLAGUE DESCRIBED IN 32:35, IN OTHER WORDS, WAS A SMALL-SCALE WARNING, A SAMPLE OF GOD’S WRATH, BUT BY NO MEANS THE ACTUAL FULL PUNISHMENT FOR ABANDONING THE COVENANT AS INDICATED IN THE COVENANT SANCTIONS OF LEV 26 AND DEUT 28–32 AND AS DELINEATED IN LAMENTATIONS OR ANY OTHER OF THE OTHER PASSAGES DESCRIBING THE FALL OF JERUSALEM AND THE AFTERMATH OF CAPTIVITY. WE ARE NOT TOLD HOW MANY PEOPLE DIED IN THIS WARNING PLAGUE, IF ANY. THE THREE THOUSAND DEATHS DESCRIBED IN VV. 27–29 MAY WELL HAVE BEEN THE EXTENT OF THE TAKING OF LIFE; THIS PLAGUE MAY HAVE MADE MANY SICK BUT NONE FATALLY. IT WAS A DIVINE PUNISHMENT OF “THE PEOPLE WITH A PLAGUE BECAUSE OF WHAT THEY DID WITH THE CALF AARON HAD MADE”—IN OTHER WORDS, A ONE-TIME, AD HOC PUNISHMENT FOR WHAT HAD HAPPENED AT ONE POINT AT SINAI ON THE WAY TO THE PROMISED LAND. IT WAS NOT THE FULL-SCALE COVENANT IMPOSITION OF CURSES THAT BROUGHT TO AN END THE BENEFITS OF THE COVENANT TO ISRAEL. THAT WOULD COME MANY CENTURIES LATER.**

**REITERATION OF LAWS ON GOD’S ANGEL AND HOLY WAR CONQUEST (33:1–6)**

**1 THEN THE LORD SAID TO MOSES, “LEAVE THIS PLACE, YOU AND THE PEOPLE YOU BROUGHT UP OUT OF EGYPT, AND GO UP TO THE LAND I PROMISED ON OATH TO ABRAHAM, ISAAC AND JACOB, SAYING, ‘I WILL GIVE IT TO YOUR DESCENDANTS.’ 2 I WILL SEND AN ANGEL BEFORE YOU AND DRIVE OUT THE CANAANITES, AMORITES, HITTITES, PERIZZITES, HIVITES AND JEBUSITES. 3 GO UP TO THE LAND FLOWING WITH MILK AND HONEY. BUT I WILL NOT GO WITH YOU, BECAUSE YOU ARE A STIFF-NECKED PEOPLE AND I MIGHT DESTROY YOU ON THE WAY.” 4 WHEN THE PEOPLE HEARD THESE DISTRESSING WORDS, THEY BEGAN TO MOURN AND NO ONE PUT ON ANY ORNAMENTS. 5 FOR THE LORD HAD SAID TO MOSES, “TELL THE ISRAELITES, ‘YOU ARE A STIFF-NECKED PEOPLE. IF I WERE TO GO WITH YOU EVEN FOR A MOMENT, I MIGHT DESTROY YOU. NOW TAKE OFF YOUR ORNAMENTS AND I WILL DECIDE WHAT TO DO WITH YOU.’” 6 SO THE ISRAELITES STRIPPED OFF THEIR ORNAMENTS AT MOUNT HOREB. 33:1–2 MOST OF THE CONTENT OF THESE VERSES FUNCTIONS AS A REMINDER OF WHAT HAS BEEN SAID BEFORE. IF THE PLAGUE DESCRIBED IN 32:35 TOOK THE NATURE OF A DISEASE EPIDEMIC, IT WOULD HAVE REQUIRED DAYS OR WEEKS TO RUN ITS COURSE. THUS, A REMINDER OF THE BIG PICTURE—THE GENERAL PURPOSE OF THE EXODUS—WAS MUCH IN ORDER ONCE THE PLAGUE WAS OVER. SUCH A REMINDER WOULD KEEP MOSES AND THE PEOPLE FOCUSED ON GOD’S PLAN FOR THEM, WHICH THEY MIGHT HAVE BEEN TEMPTED TO DOUBT IN LIGHT OF THE PLAGUE’S SEVERITY, AND ALSO WOULD BE AN ENCOURAGEMENT TO MOSES THAT GOD’S PROVISION AND SUPPORT HAD NOT ENDED BUT HAD MERELY BEEN INTERRUPTED, AS IT WERE, BY THE PEOPLE’S IDOLATRY. IN SAYING “LEAVE THIS PLACE,” GOD REITERATED THE FACT THAT THE STOPOVER AT SINAI, IMPORTANT AS IT WAS AND LENGTHY AS IT TURNED OUT TO BE (ROUGHLY TEN MONTHS), WAS ONLY TEMPORARY. THE ISRAELITES BELONGED IN THE LAND ORIGINALLY PROMISED TO ABRAHAM, THAT IS, CANAAN, AND NOT IN THE SINAI WILDERNESS. CAREFULLY REPEATED THEMES IN THESE VERSES INCLUDE THE IDEA THAT SINAI WAS A PLACE THE ISRAELITES DID NOT BELONG IN PERMANENTLY BUT RATHER MUST EVENTUALLY “LEAVE” (CF. 23:20; 32:34): “THE PEOPLE YOU BROUGHT UP OUT OF EGYPT” (CF. 3:12; 12:51; 13:3, 9, 14, 16; 14:11; 16:3, 6, 32; 18:1; 19:4; 20:2; 29:46; 32:1, 7, 11, 23; SOMETIMES WITH MOSES BUT MORE OFTEN WITH GOD AS THE ONE WHO BROUGHT THEM TO SINAI); “THE LAND I PROMISED ON OATH” (3:17; 12:25; 13:11; 32:13); THE LAND OF PROMISES MADE TO “ABRAHAM, ISAAC AND JACOB” (3:6, 15–16; 4:5; 6:3, 8; 32:13); THE INHERITANCE PROMISED TO THEIR “DESCENDANTS” (32:13); THE ENCOURAGEMENT OF GOD’S “SENDING AN ANGEL AHEAD OF YOU” (23:20, 23; 32:34) “TO DRIVE … OUT” (23:28–31) THE “CANAANITES, AMORITES” (CF. 3:8, 17; 13:5, 11; 23:23, 28). 33:3 THE EXPECTATION OF “GOING UP INTO THE LAND FLOWING WITH MILK AND HONEY” HAS ALSO BEEN MENTIONED EARLIER IN EXODUS (3:8, 17; 13:5; THERE ARE MANY OTHER REFERENCES ESPECIALLY IN NUMBERS AND DEUTERONOMY), BUT THE WARNING THAT ENDS V. 3 IS SOMETHING NEW. NOW COMES A KIND OF RHETORICAL PROPOSAL TO LIMIT THE PRESENCE OF GOD WITH HIS PEOPLE, A PROPOSED LIMITATION THAT IS LATER REMOVED IN RESPONSE TO MOSES’ INTERCESSION (33:12–23): GOD’S STATEMENT “I WILL NOT GO WITH YOU” REPRESENTS WHAT WOULD BE A MERCIFULLY NECESSARY RESTRICTION OF THE DIVINE PRESENCE THAT IS FURTHER ELABORATED IN V. 5. THE ISRAELITES WERE ALREADY DESCRIBED AS “A STIFF-NECKED PEOPLE” BY GOD IN 32:9, AND HIS POTENTIAL TO “DESTROY” THEM ALREADY WAS RAISED IN 32:10. GOD OBVIOUSLY DID NOT WANT TO DESTROY HIS PEOPLE, HOWEVER, SO HERE HE INDICATED THAT HIS RHETORICAL OFFER AT THE PRESENT TIME TO THEM WAS THAT HE WOULD NOT DIRECTLY ACCOMPANY THEM IN THE SAME DEGREE THAT HE HAD SPOKEN PERSONALLY TO THEM FROM SINAI (20:1–19) OR APPEARED PERSONALLY TO MOSES SEVERAL TIMES AT THE TOP OF THE MOUNTAIN. THE CLOSE DIVINE PRESENCE AT SINAI UNDER THIS SCENARIO WOULD BE MODERATED AFTER THE ISRAELITES LEFT SINAI. GOD WOULD BE MORE INDIRECTLY PRESENT WITH THEM IN THE FUTURE FOR THEIR OWN BENEFIT, LEST HIS INTOLERANCE OF SIN SHOULD REQUIRE HIM TO “DESTROY THEM ON THE WAY,” THAT IS, BEFORE THEY REACHED THE PROMISED LAND. TO KEEP HIS PLAN OF REDEMPTION ON COURSE, GOD HAD TO LIMIT HIS CONTACT WITH ISRAEL (SEE COMMENTS ON V. 5). 33:4–6 THE MOOD OF THE ISRAELITES IN THIS PASSAGE CONTRASTS DRAMATICALLY WITH THEIR IDOLATROUS REVELRY AS DESCRIBED IN THE PRIOR CHAPTER. MORE IMPORTANTLY, THE NATURE OF STEPHEN YAHWEH’S PRESENCE AMONG THEM HAD SHIFTED GREATLY. THE PEOPLE HAD SHOWN BY THEIR IDOLATRY THAT THEY CRAVED A DIRECT AND OBVIOUS DIVINE PRESENCE TO LEAD THEM IN THEIR JOURNEYS. INDEED, THE GOLDEN YOUNG BULL WAS TO THEIR WAY OF THINKING A MEANS OF CAPTURING THE PRESENCE OF SOME GODS (GODS THAT REPRESENTED A DISTORTED UNDERSTANDING OF STEPHEN YAHWEH), AND THE PEOPLE REJOICED FINALLY TO BE ABLE TO SEE THE GODS WHO HAD BEEN—THEY THOUGHT—HELPING THEM ON THE EXODUS SO FAR (32:4). NOW AS PART OF THEIR PUNISHMENT FOR THAT FOLLY THEY WOULD HAVE TO LIVE WITH LESS THEN THEY HAD BEFORE. INSTEAD OF A GOD WHO DIRECTLY COMMUNED WITH MOSES AND WHOSE PRESENCE COULD BE SEEN ON THE MOUNTAIN, THEY WOULD HAVE TO LIVE WITH A MUCH MORE ELUSIVE REPRESENTATION OF GOD’S PRESENCE, AN ANGEL, AND THEREFORE THEY REALIZED THAT THEY HAD BEEN DEMOTED FROM PEOPLE WHO DEALT WITH STEPHEN YAHWEH DIRECTLY THROUGH MOSES TO PEOPLE WHO NOW WOULD HAVE AN ANGEL ADDED TO THE CHAIN OF COMMAND. GOD HAD SAID BLUNTLY (EVEN IF IT WAS ONLY A RHETORICAL THREAT HE WOULD EVENTUALLY NOT CARRY OUT) THAT HE HIMSELF WOULD NOT GO WITH THEM (V. 3), AND THEY NOW MOURNED BECAUSE WHAT THEY HAD SO CRAVED AND HAD TRIED TO MANUFACTURE—DIRECT DIVINE PRESENCE—WAS NOW EVEN FURTHER REMOVED FROM THEM THAN IT HAD BEEN. THE REST OF THE JOURNEY WOULD REQUIRE EVEN MORE FAITH, NOT LESS, AND WOULD BE EVEN MORE FRIGHTENING BECAUSE THE PEOPLE WOULD BE MORE ON THEIR OWN THAN THEY HAD BEEN. DISAPPOINTED, AFRAID, ASHAMED, REBUKED, AT “THESE DISTRESSING WORDS” (V. 4), THE PEOPLE MOURNED. GOD HIMSELF, SPEAKING THROUGH MOSES, COMMANDED THEM TO MOURN IN SAYING “NOW TAKE OFF YOUR ORNAMENTS” (V. 5, FOLLOWING THE INITIAL, TEMPORARY ACTION TO DO SO DESCRIBED IN V. 4); AND HE ALSO LET THEM KNOW IN NO UNCERTAIN TERMS THAT THEIR FUTURE MIGHT INVOLVE UNKNOWN HARDSHIPS OR FURTHER PUNISHMENTS (“AND I WILL DECIDE WHAT TO DO WITH YOU”). BY REASON OF GOD’S WORDS, THEY KNEW THAT THEIR GOD HAD PARTIALLY REJECTED THEM, AND THEY FELT THE IMPACT OF THIS REJECTION. IN THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST, MOURNING TENDED TO INVOLVE APPEARANCE, NOT JUST ATTITUDE, SO THAT WHAT ONE WORE WAS A PART OF THE APPEARANCE ASPECT OF MOURNING. NOTHING FANCY COULD ADORN A MOURNER BECAUSE FANCY DRESS WAS ASSOCIATED WITH CHEERFULNESS AND MIGHT CONTRADICT THE DESIRED PATTERN, WHICH WAS THOROUGHGOING MOURNING BEHAVIOR DESIGNED TO APPEAL TO A GOD (OR THE TRUE GOD) FOR RELIEF OF SUFFERING (INCLUDING IN THIS CASE RELIEF FROM THE UNKNOWN MISERIES THAT MIGHT BE SUBSUMED UNDER “AND I WILL DECIDE WHAT TO DO WITH YOU”). THEREFORE, THEY REMOVED ALL ADORNMENT AND MADE THEIR APPEARANCE “PLAIN” AS A SIGN OF MOURNING. WITHHOLDING OF DIVINE PRESENCE IS A SEVERE COVENANT PUNISHMENT. TO BE DENIED ACCESS TO THE PRESENCE OF GOD (USUALLY MEANING TO BE EXPELLED FROM THE COVENANT COMMUNITY AND THEREFORE TO BE UNABLE TO WORSHIP AND SACRIFICE, WHICH MEANS TO BE UNABLE TO HAVE ONE’S SINS FORGIVEN) CONSTITUTED A SORT OF ULTIMATE PENALTY FOR HETERODOX PRACTICE. AN EXAMPLE OF SUCH A SEVERE PENALTY IS FOUND IN LEV 22:3: “SAY TO THEM: ‘FOR THE GENERATIONS TO COME, IF ANY OF YOUR DESCENDANTS IS CEREMONIALLY UNCLEAN AND YET COMES NEAR THE SACRED OFFERINGS THAT THE ISRAELITES CONSECRATE TO THE LORD, THAT PERSON MUST BE CUT OFF FROM MY PRESENCE. I AM THE LORD’”). OFTEN THE PROHIBITION OF STEPHEN YAHWEH’S PRESENCE IS SIMPLY PREDICTED DIRECTLY BY GOD; NO ISRAELITE COURT WOULD BE NEEDED TO IMPOSE SUCH A PENALTY. IN THESE INSTANCES, TERMS SUCH AS “SET MY FACE AGAINST” OR “HIDE MY FACE FROM” CONVEY THE IDEA OF DIVINE REMOVAL OF PRESENCE FROM AN INDIVIDUAL (E.G., LEV 20:3). BUT THE PUNISHMENT OF A LIMITED DIVINE PRESENCE CARRIES WITH IT AN ELEMENT OF MERCY AS WELL. THIS IS THE REASON FOR THE STATEMENT IN EXOD 33:3, “BECAUSE … I MIGHT DESTROY YOU ON THE WAY.” GOD ADMITS NO ONE ON EARTH INTO HIS FULL PRESENCE BECAUSE HE DOES NOT TOLERATE SIN IN PROXIMITY TO HIMSELF. THE CLOSER A SINFUL BEING WOULD GET TO THE TRUE GOD, THE GREATER THE DANGER OF THAT PERSON’S DESTRUCTION. INSTEAD, GOD MERCIFULLY LIMITS HIS PRESENCE AMONG HUMAN BEINGS ON EARTH SO AS NOT TO HAVE TO DESTROY THEM BECAUSE OF THEIR SINFULNESS. THE PRESENT WARNING OF THE WITHHOLDING OF DIVINE PRESENCE DOES NOT MEAN THAT GOD WOULD NOT IN FACT HELP THE ISRAELITES TO GET TO CANAAN NOR THAT HE WOULD HAVE NO FURTHER CONTACT WITH THEM. IT DOES MEAN, HOWEVER, THAT BECAUSE OF THEIR SIN AND THEREFORE ALSO FOR THEIR OWN SAKES, HE WOULD NOT DIRECTLY ACCOMPANY THEM ON THEIR JOURNEY TO CANAAN IN THE SAME DEGREE OF PRESENCE HE HAD MANIFESTED HIMSELF AMONG THEM AT SINAI AND ACCOMPANIED THEM FROM EGYPT TO SINAI THROUGH THE PILLAR OF CLOUD/FIRE (E.G., 13:21–22; 17:1–6). WHAT WERE THE ISRAELITES WEARING THAT SEEMED INAPPROPRIATE FOR THE MOURNING ATTITUDE THEY NOW CHOSE? THE HEBREW WORD TRANSLATED BY THE NIV (AND, E.G., NRSV) AS “ORNAMENTS” SEEMS TO REFER TO JEWELRY OF ALL SORTS, THE SORT OF DECORATIVE WEAR A MOURNER WOULD NOT CHOOSE TO BE SEEN IN. SUCH “ORNAMENTS” WERE OFTEN MADE OF GOLD (2 SAM 1:24; JER 4:30), AND THEREFORE THE PRESENT REMOVAL OF ALL JEWELRY, INCLUDING GOLD, PARALLELS THE REMOVAL OF GOLD EARRINGS REQUIRED BY THE CALL FOR GOLD THAT AARON ANNOUNCED IN SEEKING MATERIAL FOR THE SINAI IDOL (32:2–4). WHAT THEY HAD ONCE TAKEN OFF IN A SINFUL ACTION THEY MUST NOW AGAIN TAKE OFF AS A REMINDER THAT THEY WERE IN MOURNING BECAUSE OF THE RESULTS OF THAT SINFUL ACTION. EZEKIEL 7:20 APPEARS TO ECHO THE FORMER EVENT (“FROM THEIR BEAUTIFUL ORNAMENT, IN WHICH THEY TOOK PRIDE, THEY MADE THEIR ABOMINABLE IMAGES, THEIR DETESTABLE THINGS; THEREFORE I WILL MAKE OF IT AN UNCLEAN THING TO THEM,” NRSV) AND POSSIBLY EVEN THE LATTER PROHIBITION OF JEWELRY (“I WILL MAKE OF IT AN UNCLEAN THING”) THOUGH IN A CONTEXT THAT REFLECTS KNOWLEDGE OF RATHER THAN DIRECTLY DESCRIBES EXOD 32–33. IN EXOD 33:6 THE NIV INEXPLICABLY TRANSLATES SIMPLY, “SO THE ISRAELITES STRIPPED OFF THEIR ORNAMENTS AT MOUNT HOREB.” THIS DOES NOT REFLECT THE WORDING OF THE HEBREW, WHICH SHOULD BE RENDERED (AS, E.G., NRSV AND HCSB) “FROM MOUNT HOREB ONWARD.” IN OTHER WORDS, FOR THE REST OF THE EXODUS AND WILDERNESS WANDERING, THE ISRAELITES DRESSED AS IF IN MOURNING. THEY DID NOT MERELY TAKE OFF THEIR JEWELRY WHILE AT HOREB (SINAI) BUT KEPT IT OFF FOR THE NEXT FORTY YEARS. GOD’S THREAT, “I WILL DECIDE WHAT TO DO WITH YOU,” HUNG OVER THEM ALL THAT TIME, AND SOME OF THEIR ACTIONS IN THAT LONG PERIOD OF WILDERNESS WANDERING MAY WELL REFLECT THEIR RESULTANT ANXIETY.**

**THE “TENT OF MEETING” (33:7–11)**

**7 NOW MOSES USED TO TAKE A TENT AND PITCH IT OUTSIDE THE CAMP SOME DISTANCE AWAY, CALLING IT THE “TENT OF MEETING.” ANYONE INQUIRING OF THE LORD WOULD GO TO THE TENT OF MEETING OUTSIDE THE CAMP. 8 AND WHENEVER MOSES WENT OUT TO THE TENT, ALL THE PEOPLE ROSE AND STOOD AT THE ENTRANCES TO THEIR TENTS, WATCHING MOSES UNTIL HE ENTERED THE TENT. 9 AS MOSES WENT INTO THE TENT, THE PILLAR OF CLOUD WOULD COME DOWN AND STAY AT THE ENTRANCE, WHILE THE LORD SPOKE WITH MOSES. 10 WHENEVER THE PEOPLE SAW THE PILLAR OF CLOUD STANDING AT THE ENTRANCE TO THE TENT, THEY ALL STOOD AND WORSHIPED, EACH AT THE ENTRANCE TO HIS TENT. 11 THE LORD WOULD SPEAK TO MOSES FACE TO FACE, AS A MAN SPEAKS WITH HIS FRIEND. THEN MOSES WOULD RETURN TO THE CAMP, BUT HIS YOUNG AIDE JOSHUA SON OF NUN DID NOT LEAVE THE TENT.**

**IN THIS PASSAGE MOSES EXPLAINED TO THE READER WHAT SORT OF RELATIONSHIP GOD ESTABLISHED WITH ISRAEL (AND WITH HIMSELF, MOSES, AND HIS AIDE, JOSHUA) AFTER HIS ANNOUNCEMENT THAT HE WOULD NO LONGER ACCOMPANY THEM CLOSELY. WHAT HE SO FAR GRANTED TO THEM WAS A MORE DISTANT PRESENCE, NOT AN UTTER ABANDONMENT. IN CONTRAST TO THE ELABORATE TABERNACLE AND ITS MANY SYMBOLS OF THE PRESENCE OF GOD, THE ISRAELITES WOULD NOW DEAL (FOR A TIME) WITH A SMALL, SIMPLE “MEETING TENT” (OR AS TRADITION WORDS IT “TENT OF MEETING”). THE DIFFERENCES AND LIMITATIONS ARE IMPORTANT. INSTEAD OF THE COMMUNITY’S BEING ORGANIZED AROUND THE TABERNACLE (NUM 2), THE TENT OF MEETING WOULD RESIDE “OUTSIDE” THE CAMP. INSTEAD OF WORSHIPING AT THE TABERNACLE IN THEIR MIDST, THE PEOPLE WOULD WORSHIP FROM AFAR, FROM THEIR HOMES LOOKING TOWARD THE TENT OF MEETING. INSTEAD OF A CADRE OF PRIESTS LED BY AARON MANNING THE TABERNACLE, THE TENT OF MEETING WOULD BE MANNED BY ONE PERSON, JOSHUA, SO THAT IN THE ABSENCE OF PRIESTS AND SACRIFICES, THERE STOOD ONLY A NON-LEVITICAL ASSISTANT, A CARETAKER. GOD’S PRESENCE WOULD NOW BE BOTH DISTANT AND NONCONTINUOUS (V. 10), A DIMINISHED PRESENCE. BUT GOD’S LOVE, PROTECTION AND CARE FOR HIS PEOPLE, HOWEVER MITIGATED, DID NOT CEASE. INDEED, HE STILL SPOKE TO INDIVIDUALS, THROUGH MOSES, IN RESPONSE TO SPECIAL INQUIRIES (V. 7). FORTUNATELY, THIS ARRANGEMENT WAS NOT PERMANENT. EVENTUALLY THE ISRAELITES WERE TO BE ABLE TO BENEFIT FROM A GREATER MEASURE OF THE PRESENCE OF GOD, AS ORIGINALLY CONTEMPLATED IN THE TABERNACLE INSTRUCTIONS (NUM 2–10), EVEN THOUGH THIS PRESENCE WAS STILL CONSIDERABLY SHORT OF WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN THEIRS (AND WOULD EVENTUALLY BE THEIRS AGAIN) HAD THEY NOT REJECTED HIM BY THEIR IDOLATRY AT SINAI (EXOD 32). 33:7 THE “TENT OF MEETING” (LOWERCASE, NOT CAPITALIZED IN THE NIV) DESCRIBED HERE IS SIMPLY A KIND OF SUBSTITUTE FOR THE TABERNACLE, WHICH ALREADY WAS DESIGNATED “TENT OF MEETING” (UPPERCASE IN THE NIV) IN EXODUS 27:21; 28:43; 29:4, 10, 30, 32, 42, 44; 30:16, 18, 20, 26, 36; 31:7. THE TERM USED FOR “TENT OF MEETING” IS EXACTLY THE SAME IN THE HEBREW FOR BOTH THE TABERNACLE AND THIS SIMPLE TENT SET UP OUTSIDE THE CAMP, AND IT IS OBVIOUS THAT MOSES, DESIRING TO PRESERVE WHATEVER OPPORTUNITY HE COULD FOR DIRECT COMMUNICATION WITH STEPHEN YAHWEH, KEPT THE COMMUNICATION FUNCTION OF THE TABERNACLE ALIVE IN THE TERMINOLOGY HE USED FOR THE TENT. THERE IS NO EVIDENCE THAT THIS “TENT OF MEETING” PLAYED ANY OTHER ROLE THAN THAT OF A COMMUNICATION POINT—IT NEVER HELD THE ARK OR ANY OTHER SACRED FURNITURE, AND IT NEVER WAS EMPLOYED AS A SITE FOR SACRIFICES. THE TABERNACLE WAS DESIGNED FOR A GREAT RANGE OF PURPOSES, ONLY ONE OF WHICH WAS COMMUNICATION WITH GOD (29:42). THIS LATTER ROLE WAS THE ONLY ONE INTENDED FOR THE “TENT OF MEETING.” THIS IS THE FIRST MENTION OF THE SMALL, SUBSTITUTE “TENT OF MEETING” OUTSIDE THE CAMP, AS OPPOSED TO THE TABERNACLE. WE MAY ASSUME THAT THIS TENT WOULD NEVER HAVE BEEN INVENTED OR NEEDED HAD NOT THE IDOLATRY OF CHAP. 32 TAKEN PLACE AND THE CLOSE PRESENCE OF GOD BEEN WITHDRAWN FROM ISRAEL AS A RESULT. THE WORDING “MOSES USED TO TAKE A TENT” (PAST DURATIVE USE OF THE IMPERFECT VERB FORM) DOES NOT MEAN THAT HE USED TO TAKE A CERTAIN TENT PRIOR TO THE TIMING OF 33:7 BUT RATHER THAT STARTING WITH THE TIMING OF 33:7, MOSES REGULARLY THEREAFTER EMPLOYED A CERTAIN TENT AS A SYMBOLIC SUBSTITUTE FOR THE ACTUAL TENT OF MEETING, THE TABERNACLE. BY PITCHING THIS TENT USED FOR MEETING GOD OUTSIDE THE CAMP “SOME DISTANCE AWAY” (OR BETTER, “FAR OFF FROM THE CAMP,” NRSV), MOSES REMINDED ALL THE PEOPLE HOW RELATIVELY DISTANT GOD HAD BECOME AT THAT POINT FROM HIS PEOPLE. PRESUMABLY, TO PITCH THE TENT ANY CLOSER TO THE CAMP WOULD HAVE BEEN IMPOSSIBLE, A VIOLATION OF GOD’S WARNING THAT HE WOULD NOT CLOSELY ACCOMPANY HIS PEOPLE ON THEIR JOURNEY TO THE PROMISED LAND (V. 3). SINCE TENTS WERE WHAT THE ISRAELITES LIVED IN AT THAT TIME, THIS ONE SYMBOLIZED GOD’S DWELLING JUST AS THE GRANDER TENT OF MEETING (TABERNACLE) WAS DESIGNED TO DO; BUT THIS ONE ALWAYS STOOD EMPTY—JUST A TENT TO INDICATE THAT GOD STILL HAD A “PLACE” SOMEWHAT DISTANT FROM AND NOT FOR THE TIME BEING AMONG HIS PEOPLE—BUT STILL A PLACE WHERE HE COULD BE CONSULTED. “ANYONE INQUIRING OF THE LORD WOULD GO TO THE TENT OF MEETING OUTSIDE THE CAMP” MEANS SIMPLY THAT ANY ISRAELITE WHO NEEDED GUIDANCE FROM GOD WOULD GO THERE AND THROUGH MOSES—NOT INDEPENDENTLY OF HIM—ASK GOD FOR THE GUIDANCE HE OR SHE NEEDED. GOD CERTAINLY HAD BEEN DISAPPOINTED IN AND ANGRY AT HIS PEOPLE AFTER THE GOLDEN CALF INCIDENT, BUT HE HAD NOT GONE SO FAR IN DISTANCING HIMSELF FROM THEM THAT HE WOULD REFUSE TO GUIDE THEM AS A GROUP IN THE WILDERNESS (33:2) OR REFUSE TO HELP INDIVIDUALS UNDERSTAND HIS WILL. TWO PARTICULAR ANCILLARY BENEFITS MAY ALSO HAVE ACCRUED TO THIS “TENT OF MEETING.” ONE WOULD HAVE BEEN THE WAY IT FORCED INDIVIDUAL ISRAELITES TO SHOW THEIR DEPENDENCE ON STEPHEN YAHWEH, IN CONTRAST TO THEIR PRIOR INFIDELITY IN THE INCIDENT OF IDOLATRY DESCRIBED IN THE PREVIOUS CHAPTER. TO INQUIRE OF THE LORD, AN ISRAELITE HAD TO SEPARATE HIMSELF SPATIALLY FROM THE OTHER ISRAELITES IN THE CAMP AND OPENLY WALK THE CONSIDERABLE DISTANCE TO THE TENT OF MEETING. HE THUS WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO BLEND INTO A CROWD OF ORTHODOX WORSHIPERS WITHOUT IDENTIFYING HIS OWN PERSONAL COMMITMENT TO STEPHEN YAHWEH. IN VIRTUALLY ALL OTHER SITUATIONS, THE ISRAELITES EN MASSE HAD AGREED TO OR DISOBEYED THE COVENANT. NOW THE INDIVIDUAL WOULD HAVE TO SHOW HIS LOYALTY TO STEPHEN YAHWEH PUBLICLY, AT LEAST IF HE WANTED TO KNOW SOMETHING FROM STEPHEN YAHWEH. A SECOND BENEFIT MAY HAVE BEEN THE CREDENTIALIZING OF MOSES. PREVIOUSLY, HE WAS ALWAYS FAR DISTANT FROM THE PEOPLE ON TOP OF MOUNT SINAI, NOT VISIBLE TO THEM AND, TO THEIR THINKING, SIMPLY GONE AWAY WITHOUT CERTAINTY OF RETURN (SEE THEIR COMMENT IN 32:1, “WE DON’T KNOW WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO HIM”). THEY NEVER ACTUALLY HEARD STEPHEN YAHWEH GIVE MOSES THE LAWS AND NEVER ACTUALLY SAW MOSES IN CLOSE PROXIMITY TO STEPHEN YAHWEH. NOW, WITH THE TENT OF MEETING PITCHED OUTSIDE THE CAMP BUT STILL WITHIN SIGHT OF IT, THEY COULD NOT FAIL TO SEE THAT EVERY TIME MOSES ENTERED THE TENT OF MEETING THE GLORY OF GOD ALSO ENTERED IT. TIME AND AGAIN, THEREFORE, MOSES WAS SHOWN TO BE GOD’S CHOSEN, SPECIAL PERSON AMONG THEM. THOUGH THE TENT OF MEETING WAS FAR OFF FROM THE CAMP, IT WAS FAR LESS FAR OFF THAN THE TOP OF MOUNT SINAI; WHAT USED TO HAPPEN OUT OF THEIR SIGHT NOW HAPPENED IN FULL VIEW. 33:8–10 VERSE 8 INDICATES THAT THE PEOPLE’S RESPECT FOR MOSES HAD FULLY RETURNED, AND THEIR DISREGARD OF HIM (32:1) HAD, RIGHTLY, DISAPPEARED. TO RISE AND STAND WAS THE STANDARD ACTION OF RESPECT IN THE ANCIENT WORLD, AS ALSO, GENERALLY, IN THE MODERN. THE ISRAELITES WERE A FICKLE PEOPLE, BUT AT THIS POINT AT LEAST THEY NO LONGER DOUBTED MOSES AS THEIR LEADER. INDEED, SINCE HIS PURPOSE IN GOING TO THE “TENT OF MEETING” OUTSIDE THE CAMP WAS TO CONVERSE WITH GOD, THEY ESPECIALLY RESPECTED HIS TRIPS THERE SINCE THEY HAD NO OTHER CONDUIT TO GOD’S GUIDANCE FOR THEM. IN V. 9 GOD’S PRESENCE, SYMBOLIZED IN THE “PILLAR OF CLOUD,” ARRIVED AT THE ENTRANCE TO THE TENT JUST AS MOSES ARRIVED THERE, THUS INDICATING DIVINE APPROBATION OF AND AN OBVIOUS DIVINE ENCOUNTER (“MEETING”) WITH MOSES. AS LONG AS STEPHEN YAHWEH SPOKE WITH HIS PROPHET, THE PILLAR OF CLOUD STAYED THERE AT THE ENTRANCE. THE WORDING IMPLIES THAT WHEN IT DEPARTED, MOSES AND ALL THE OTHER ISRAELITES KNEW THAT GOD HAD CONCLUDED THE MEETING. AS V. 10 INDICATES, THE PEOPLE COULD SEE THE PILLAR OF CLOUD, A SYMBOL THEY ALREADY KNEW REPRESENTED STEPHEN YAHWEH AMONG THEM (13:21–22; 14:9, 24), AND SO THEY GAVE PROPER RESPECT TO THIS DISTANT (FAR OUTSIDE THE CAMP) INDICATION OF STEPHEN YAHWEH’S PRESENCE BY WORSHIPING (BOWING TO THE GROUND, PROBABLY PROSTRATE). 33:11 ALTHOUGH GOD’S PRESENCE AMONG THE ISRAELITES IN GENERAL WAS CURRENTLY GREATLY CURTAILED, THIS DISTANCING DID NOT APPLY TO MOSES. THE SAME CLOSE CONVERSATIONAL RELATIONSHIP HE ENJOYED WITH GOD ATOP SINAI WAS ALSO AVAILABLE TO HIM AT THE ENTRANCE TO THE LITTLE “TENT OF MEETING,” A FACE-TO-FACE ENCOUNTER AS SOMEONE “SPEAKS WITH HIS FRIEND.” BECAUSE THE READER MIGHT WONDER WHAT WOULD HAPPEN TO THE “TENT OF MEETING” WHEN MOSES WAS NOT THERE, HE ADDED THE DETAIL THAT JOSHUA GUARDED IT AT ALL TIMES (“JOSHUA SON OF NUN DID NOT LEAVE THE TENT”). THIS FACT DOES NOT AUTOMATICALLY ELEVATE JOSHUA ABOVE THE OTHER ISRAELITES, AS IF TO A PAR WITH MOSES, SINCE ANY ISRAELITE COULD GO TO THE TENT WITH AN INQUIRY FOR GOD; ACCESS TO IT WAS NOT ESPECIALLY RESTRICTED FOR INDIVIDUALS OR SMALL GROUPS. BUT IT DOES SHOW THE TRUST MOSES (AND GOD) PLACED IN JOSHUA AND HIS CONTINUING IMPORTANCE AS A LEADER (SEE ALREADY COMMENTS ON 17:9–14; 24:13; 32:17). JOSHUA’S NOT LEAVING THE TENT IS NOT INTENDED TO IMPLY THAT HE LIVED IN IT—ONLY THAT HIS OWN TENT WAS NEARBY SO THAT HE COULD SERVE AS ITS CUSTODIAN. JOSHUA THUS LIVED OUTSIDE THE CONCENTRATED ISRAELITE ENCAMPMENT. JOSHUA WAS CALLED MOSES’ “YOUNG AIDE” NOT BECAUSE HE WAS IMMATURE BUT BECAUSE HE WAS SO MUCH YOUNGER THAN MOSES, WHO WAS EIGHTY AT THIS POINT. FORTY YEARS LATER, JOSHUA MAY HIMSELF HAVE BEEN EIGHTY YEARS OLD (OR MORE) WHEN HE LED THE ISRAELITES IN THE CONQUEST OF CANAAN.**

**THE NEED FOR AND PROMISE OF GOD’S GLORY (33:12–23)**

**12 MOSES SAID TO THE LORD, “YOU HAVE BEEN TELLING ME, ‘LEAD THESE PEOPLE,’ BUT YOU HAVE NOT LET ME KNOW WHOM YOU WILL SEND WITH ME. YOU HAVE SAID, ‘I KNOW YOU BY NAME AND YOU HAVE FOUND FAVOR WITH ME.’ 13 IF YOU ARE PLEASED WITH ME, TEACH ME YOUR WAYS SO I MAY KNOW YOU AND CONTINUE TO FIND FAVOR WITH YOU. REMEMBER THAT THIS NATION IS YOUR PEOPLE.” 14 THE LORD REPLIED, “MY PRESENCE WILL GO WITH YOU, AND I WILL GIVE YOU REST.” 15 THEN MOSES SAID TO HIM, “IF YOUR PRESENCE DOES NOT GO WITH US, DO NOT SEND US UP FROM HERE. 16 HOW WILL ANYONE KNOW THAT YOU ARE PLEASED WITH ME AND WITH YOUR PEOPLE UNLESS YOU GO WITH US? WHAT ELSE WILL DISTINGUISH ME AND YOUR PEOPLE FROM ALL THE OTHER PEOPLE ON THE FACE OF THE EARTH?” 17 AND THE LORD SAID TO MOSES, “I WILL DO THE VERY THING YOU HAVE ASKED, BECAUSE I AM PLEASED WITH YOU AND I KNOW YOU BY NAME.” 18 THEN MOSES SAID, “NOW SHOW ME YOUR GLORY.” 19 AND THE LORD SAID, “I WILL CAUSE ALL MY GOODNESS TO PASS IN FRONT OF YOU, AND I WILL PROCLAIM MY NAME, THE LORD, IN YOUR PRESENCE. I WILL HAVE MERCY ON WHOM I WILL HAVE MERCY, AND I WILL HAVE COMPASSION ON WHOM I WILL HAVE COMPASSION. 20 BUT,” HE SAID, “YOU CANNOT SEE MY FACE, FOR NO ONE MAY SEE ME AND LIVE.” 21 THEN THE LORD SAID, “THERE IS A PLACE NEAR ME WHERE YOU MAY STAND ON A ROCK. 22 WHEN MY GLORY PASSES BY, I WILL PUT YOU IN A CLEFT IN THE ROCK AND COVER YOU WITH MY HAND UNTIL I HAVE PASSED BY. 23 THEN I WILL REMOVE MY HAND AND YOU WILL SEE MY BACK; BUT MY FACE MUST NOT BE SEEN.” FOR MOSES THE PRESENCE OF GOD WAS CONFIRMED AGAIN AND AGAIN—MOST FULLY BY AN ACTUAL THEOPHANY, AN APPEARANCE OF GOD IN SOME SORT OF VISIBLE MANIFESTATION. WE HAVE ALREADY ARGUED THAT WHAT HAPPENED IN THESE THEOPHANIES WAS NOT THAT MOSES ACTUALLY SAW GOD IN THE SAME WAY BELIEVERS WILL SEE HIM IN HEAVEN BUT THAT GOD MANIFEST HIMSELF BY PRODUCING FOR MOSES’ BENEFIT SOME SORT OF SHAPE THAT WAS VISIBLE AND THEREFORE GAVE A SENSE OF CLOSENESS AND LOCALITY TO HIS CONTACT WITH MOSES. AT THIS POINT IN THE STORY OF THE EXODUS, MOSES VERY MUCH NEEDED THE REASSURANCE GOD NOW PROPOSED TO GIVE HIM. THE EXODUS ASSIGNMENT—TO BRING THE PEOPLE NOT JUST FROM EGYPT TO SINAI BUT NOW FROM SINAI TO THE PROMISED LAND, WAS COMPLICATED BY THE VIVID EVIDENCE OF THE PEOPLE’S IDOLATRY IN CHAP. 32 THAT THEY WERE A RECALCITRANT LOT, SUGGESTING THAT MOSES’ TASK WOULD NOT BE A LIGHT ONE. MOREOVER, GOD’S REFUSAL SO FAR TO GRANT HIS DIRECT PRESENCE ANY LONGER IN ACCOMPANYING THE PEOPLE MEANS THAT MOSES WOULD, AS IT WERE, BE MORE ON HIS OWN IN LEADING ISRAEL HEREAFTER THAN HE HAD BEEN BEFORE—AND THE JOB HAD PROVED HARD ENOUGH ALREADY. THE THEOPHANY PROMISED HERE WOULD REASSURE HIM. IT WOULD STRENGTHEN HIS RESOLVE AND BUILD HIS CONFIDENCE. HIS ASSIGNMENT WAS DAUNTING AND HIS RESOURCES FEW. IF HE KNEW, HOWEVER, THAT GOD’S GLORY ABODE WITH HIM AND THAT THEREFORE GOD’S FAVOR AND CARE ATTENDED HIS ACTIONS, HE COULD ENDURE AND PREVAIL. 33:12 HOW COULD MOSES SAY TO GOD, “YOU HAVE NOT LET ME KNOW WHOM YOU WILL SEND WITH ME” WHEN GOD HAD JUST SAID (V. 2) “I WILL SEND AN ANGEL BEFORE YOU”? THE ANSWER COMES PARTLY WITH THE REALIZATION THAT DELAYED RESPONSE IS A STYLISTIC TECHNIQUE IN THE NARRATIVE THAT MOSES EMPLOYED REGULARLY, AS WELL AS THE RECOGNITION THAT THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN “BEFORE” AND “WITH” WAS VERY LARGE IN MOSES’ MIND. FOR GOD TO “BE WITH” SOMEONE REPRESENTS AN IDEA EXPRESSED REPEATEDLY IN MOSES’ GENESIS NARRATIVE, ESPECIALLY IN SUCH PASSAGES AS GEN 21:20; 26:3; 31:3; 39:2, 23, CARRYING THE SENSE OF “TO GUIDE/PROTECT/TAKE CARE OF” (CF. ALSO DEUT 32:12, “THE LORD ALONE LED HIM; NO FOREIGN GOD WAS WITH HIM”). 33:13 FOR A SECOND TIME (CF. VV. 12, 17) MOSES USED THE EXPRESSION MĀṢĀʾ + ḤĒN + BĔʿÊNÊ (BE PLEASED WITH/FIND FAVOR), IN THIS INSTANCE AS THE PROTASIS OF A CONDITIONAL SENTENCE (“IF YOU ARE PLEASED WITH ME” ALSO TRANSLATABLE AS “IF I HAVE FOUND FAVOR WITH YOU” OR “IF I HAVE FOUND FAVOR IN YOUR SIGHT”) BECAUSE HE HAD A REQUEST TO MAKE OF STEPHEN YAHWEH THAT WAS BASED ON STEPHEN YAHWEH’S DECLARATION THAT HE HAD FOUND FAVOR WITH HIM (VV. 12, 17). MOSES’ REQUEST WAS TO KNOW GOD BETTER. WHAT IS ESPECIALLY INSTRUCTIVE TO US IS MOSES’ UNDERSTANDING OF HOW THAT WOULD BE ACCOMPLISHED: BY BEING “TAUGHT” GOD’S “WAYS.” AS LUTHER’S FRIEND MELANCHTHON ONCE ELOQUENTLY STATED, HOC EST CHRISTUM COGNOSCERE: BENEFICIA EUIS COGNOSCERE (“TO KNOW CHRIST IS TO KNOW HIS BENEFITS”). THERE IS LITTLE ROOM FOR MYSTICISM IN BIBLICAL RELIGION; WE DO NOT KNOW GOD BY HAVING SOME SORT OF INEXPLICABLE ETHEREAL COMMUNION WITH HIM, IN WHICH OUR FEELINGS ARE USED AS THE EVIDENCE FOR OUR CLOSENESS TO HIM. WE KNOW HIM BY LEARNING HIS WAYS (I.E., HIS REVEALED STANDARDS, REVEALED METHODS, AND REVEALED BENEFITS)—IN OTHER WORDS BY OBJECTIVE, RATHER THAN SUBJECTIVE, EMOTIONAL, MEANS. MOSES CONTINUED WITH THE SOUND APPROACH HE HAD ALREADY TAKEN IN 32:11–13 BY SAYING, “REMEMBER THAT THIS NATION IS YOUR PEOPLE.” IN SO DOING MOSES SHOWED HIMSELF ONCE AGAIN THE SERVANT OF GOD’S REVEALED, CLEARLY ESTABLISHED PURPOSES RATHER THAN SOMEONE WHO JUST WANTED TO BE IN CHARGE OR SOMEONE WHO WANTED HIS JOB FOR ITS INHERENT PRESTIGE. ALTHOUGH HE HAD A RIGHT TO CLAIM FAVOR WITH GOD BECAUSE GOD HAD SO DECLARED IT (VV. 12, 17), THE FOCUS OF HIS REQUEST FOR A CONTINUATION OF THAT FAVOR (THE THIRD OF FOUR USES IN THIS PASSAGE OF MĀṢĀʾ + ḤĒN + BĔʿÊN, BE PLEASED WITH/FIND FAVOR) WAS NOT HIMSELF BUT GOD’S PEOPLE. THUS MOSES’ ACTIONS HERE HAVE LONG BEEN REGARDED AS INSTRUCTIVE AND EXEMPLARY FOR ALL THOSE IN LEADERSHIP IN GOD’S SERVICE. OTHER BIBLICAL EXAMPLES INCLUDE THE ATTITUDE OF JESUS (E.G., JOHN 17:9, 15, 20, 24) AND OF PAUL (E.G., ROM 10:1; 2 COR 13:9). 33:14 GOD MADE HERE A FURTHER, HUGE AND WONDERFUL, CONCESSION RELATIVE TO THE DEGREE TO WHICH HE WOULD BE PRESENT WITH MOSES AND THE ISRAELITES WHEN THEY LEFT SINAI. THIS WAS CLEARLY A QUANTUM GAIN (FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF MOSES AND THE PEOPLE) ON THE PRIOR PROMISE OF AN “ANGEL” TO LEAD THEM (33:2). IT WAS A FULL RESTORATION OF THE ORIGINAL IDEA OF GOD’S PROMISE TO BRING THE ISRAELITES OUT OF EGYPT AND INTO THE PROMISED LAND PERSONALLY AS STATED IN 3:8, 12, 17. IT SHOWS THAT MOSES’ PRAYERFUL APPEAL HAD IN FACT BEEN ENTIRELY SUCCESSFUL—NOT BECAUSE MOSES COULD GET ANYTHING HE WANTED FROM GOD BUT BECAUSE OF GOD’S CHARACTER OF “GOODNESS” AND “MERCY” AND “COMPASSION” (V. 19 BELOW) AND HIS NATURE AS THE GOD WHO IS “COMPASSIONATE … GRACIOUS … SLOW TO ANGER, ABOUNDING IN LOVE AND FAITHFULNESS, MAINTAINING LOVE …, FORGIVING WICKEDNESS, REBELLION AND SIN” (34:6–7). THIS WAS ONLY ONE STAGE IN THE BARGAINING PROCESS, HOWEVER. MOSES WOULD CONTINUE TO ASK FOR MORE AND MORE ASSURANCE OF GOD’S PRESENCE TO GUIDE HIM AND THE PEOPLE (SEE COMMENTS ON 34:9). BUT ALREADY GOD’S STATEMENT “MY PRESENCE WILL GO WITH YOU” IS A FAR GREATER REASSURANCE THAN THAT OF 33:3. IT PROMISES SOMETHING THE ISRAELITES DESPERATELY WANTED—THE SAME SORT OF FULL, PERSONAL PRESENCE OF GOD THAT EXISTED AT SINAI AND WAS EFFECTIVELY, THOUGH NOT PERMANENTLY, WITHDRAWN WITH THE WORDS OF 33:3. NOW ISRAEL WOULD HAVE THE “PRESENCE” OF GOD IN THE SENSE OF WHAT THE HEBREW LITERALLY CALLS HIS “FACE.” THIS IS A GUARANTEE OF ACCOMPANIMENT BY GOD DURING ISRAEL’S JOURNEY TO THE PROMISED LAND. THE ACCOMPANYING PROMISE, “I WILL GIVE YOU REST,” COULD BE TAKEN TO MEAN THAT MOSES’ JOB WOULD BE EASIER IF GOD WENT WITH HIM, BUT THE AUDIENCE FOR THIS STATEMENT WAS MORE LIKELY ISRAEL AS A WHOLE, AND THE “REST” ENVISAGED WAS THAT WHICH HAD ALREADY BEEN PROMISED IN 15:13, 17, THAT IS, CANAAN, THE PROMISED LAND OF REST FOR GOD’S PEOPLE. JESUS’ GREAT PROMISE IN MATT 11:28 MAY CONTAIN A CONSCIOUS PARAPHRASE OF THE PRESENT WORDING. 33:15–16 SO IMPORTANT TO MOSES WAS THE NEED FOR GOD’S CONSTANT PRESENCE, HOPEFULLY AS DIRECT AND COMPLETE AS IT HAD BEEN THERE AT SINAI, THAT HE PLEADED WITH GOD NOT TO ASK HIM AND THE PEOPLE TO LEAVE SINAI WITHOUT IT. HIS LANGUAGE WAS NOT BRUSQUE, AND HE WAS NOT COMMANDING GOD; IT WAS THE LANGUAGE OF PRAYERFUL APPEAL, WHICH CAN BE VOICED NORMALLY IN THE HEBREW WITH THE IMPERATIVE, AS HERE. HE BASED HIS APPEAL ESPECIALLY ON GOD’S CONCERN FOR GOD’S OWN GLORY/REPUTATION, AN APPROACH MOSES WOULD ALSO USE AGAIN IN SUCH CONTEXTS AS NUM 14:13–16, MAKING CLEAR THAT GOD’S DESIRE FOR GLORY WAS NOT PETTY OR VAIN BUT EVANGELISTIC: HE WAS ALWAYS AT WORK PROVIDING FOR THE POSSIBILITY OF THE GENTILES’ HEARING AND BELIEVING. NOTE ALSO THAT MOSES INCLUDED THE PEOPLE IN GOD’S FAVOR (“YOU ARE PLEASED WITH ME AND YOUR PEOPLE”) BUT UNDERSTOOD THAT GOD’S FAVOR ON HIS PEOPLE WAS AN ASPECT OF HIS DISPLAY OF HIS GREATNESS TO THE NATIONS. MOSES HERE FOLLOWED HIS PREVIOUSLY SEEN ADMIRABLE COMMITMENT TO GAINING NOTHING FOR HIMSELF ALONE BUT MAKING SURE THE ISRAELITES SAW GOD’S BLESSING (CF. 32:11–14). FOR MOSES TO GO AHEAD ALONE IN THE LEADERSHIP OF THE ISRAELITES WOULD SURELY RESULT IN MISTAKES, LOSSES, AND FAILURES OF VARIOUS KINDS, NOT THE LEAST BEING THE LIKELIHOOD OF MILITARY DEFEAT OF THE ISRAELITES AT THE HANDS OF THEIR ENEMIES (CF. NUM 14:42). SO AGAIN, MOSES EMPHASIZED HOW ESSENTIAL GOD’S PRESENCE WAS TO THE ENTIRE REMAINING EXODUS ENTERPRISE. UNLESS ISRAEL SUCCEEDED WHERE OTHER NATIONS WOULD EXPECT THEM TO FAIL, NO ONE WOULD INFER THAT THEIR GOD WAS GREAT (“WHAT … WILL DISTINGUISH ME AND YOUR PEOPLE FROM ALL THE OTHER PEOPLE?”). THE SUCCESS OF ISRAEL VERSUS THEIR ENEMIES WAS, IN THE OLD COVENANT, A WITNESS TO THE WORLD. WHEN THEIR ENEMIES PREVAILED AGAINST THEM, THEY WERE SHAMED AND DISGRACED TO THE WORLD, INDEED, CURSED, AND THEIR SPECIAL NATURE AS THE ONE PEOPLE OF THE ONE TRUE GOD WAS BLURRED TO THE VISION OF OTHERS. THE LESSON IS CLEARLY PUT BY MOSES: IT WAS GOD’S PRESENCE WITH HIS PEOPLE, AND ALL THAT THAT IMPLIED, THAT MADE HIS PEOPLE SPECIAL—THEY DID NOT HAVE WITHIN THEMSELVES ANY PARTICULAR INTRINSIC CHARACTERISTICS TO “DISTINGUISH” THEM. GOD’S DISTINCTION WAS WHAT THEY RECEIVED DERIVATIVELY BUT DID NOT POSSESS INNATELY. 33:17 FOR THE FIFTH AND FINAL TIME IN THE PASSAGE THE IDIOM MĀṢĀʾ + ḤĒN + BĔʿÊNÊ (FIND FAVOR/BE PLEASED WITH) APPEARS, REFERRING TO GOD’S BEING PLEASED WITH ISRAEL AND MOSES, ALMOST IN THE MANNER OF AN INCLUSIO WITH THE OCCURRENCE IN V. 12, ESPECIALLY SINCE MAJOR PARTS OF THE TWO VERSES ARE SO SIMILAR IN WORDING (SEE COMMENTS ON 33:12). IN VV. 12–16 MOSES HAD PLEADED WITH GOD TO THE EFFECT THAT “IF YOU ARE PLEASED WITH ME, PLEASE GIVE ME AND THE PEOPLE YOUR PRESENCE.” NOW GOD INDICATED HIS POSITIVE REPLY ALMOST AS IF HE WERE SAYING: “SINCE YOUR APPEAL FOR MY PRESENCE IS BASED ON MY BEING PLEASED WITH YOU—AND THAT IS A CONVINCING GROUND, INDEED, SINCE I AM THE ONE WHO DECLARED IT SO—I WILL HONOR YOUR REQUEST.” THE FACT THAT HE KNEW MOSES “BY NAME” (SEE COMMENTS ON V. 12) REINFORCED HIS PLEASURE WITH HIM. HE DID NOT MERELY LIKE MOSES. THEY HAD A SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP TO EACH OTHER (“I KNOW YOU BY NAME”) UPON WHICH GOD’S MERCY TO HIM AND THE PEOPLE WAS PARTLY BASED. THE COMBINATION OF GOD’S LOVING MERCY AND MOSES’ FAITHFUL PERSISTENT PRAYER (CF. LUKE 18:2–8) WAS PAYING OFF. GOD WOULD NOW SEND MORE THAN JUST AN ANGEL; HE WOULD PERSONALLY COME WITH THE ISRAELITES, AS WILL BE DEFINED IN THE COMING VERSES. 33:18 WHY DID MOSES ASK GOD TO SHOW HIM HIS GLORY? HAD HE NOT SEEN GOD’S GLORY ALREADY IN THE CLOUD THAT PROTECTED THE ISRAELITES AS THEY ESCAPED FROM THE EGYPTIANS? HAD THE GLORY OF STEPHEN YAHWEH NOT APPEARED ON SINAI FOR ALL TO SEE, AND HAD NOT MOSES ENTERED INSIDE THAT GLORY CLOUD REPEATEDLY? THE ANSWER IS THAT MOSES HAD INDEED SEEN GOD’S GLORY IN THE PAST AND THEREFORE WANTED TO SEE IT AGAIN, IN AS FULL A WAY AS GOD MIGHT CHOOSE TO SHOW IT, IN ORDER TO KNOW THAT JUST AS GOD’S GLORY HAD REASSURINGLY ACCOMPANIED HIM AND THE ISRAELITES ON SUCH OCCASIONS IN THE PAST, MOSES COULD COUNT ON IT TO BE WITH THEM AGAIN ONCE THEY FINALLY SET FORTH FROM SINAI. THAT WOULD CONVINCE HIM THAT GOD WAS INDEED STILL CLOSE, STILL PROTECTIVE, AND STILL INTERESTED IN HIM AND THE ISRAELITES AS HIS PEOPLE. IN OTHER WORDS, THE GLORY OF GOD WAS SOMETHING MOSES DIRECTLY ASSOCIATED WITH THE APPROBATION OF GOD ON HIS LEADERSHIP OF THE ISRAELITES; AND IF HE COULD AGAIN SEE IT, HE COULD AGAIN BE CERTAIN THAT HIS LEADERSHIP WOULD ONCE AGAIN BE BLESSED BY THE GREAT KING OF HEAVEN. PREVIOUSLY, THE GLORY OF GOD HAD ALWAYS BEEN PROVIDED AT GOD’S INITIATION AND WITNESSED CORPORATELY (E.G., 16:7–10; 24:16–17), BUT THIS TIME MOSES TOOK THE INITIATIVE TO ASK FOR A PERSONAL AUDIENCE WITH GOD. THAT GOD RESPONDED FAVORABLY INDICATES MOSES’ ACCEPTANCE WITH GOD BASED ON HIS FAITHFULNESS AT ALL PRIOR POINTS OF TESTING. IN V. 13 HE HAD ASKED TO KNOW GOD’S “WAYS”—AN IMPORTANT REQUEST AND ONE THAT WOULD GAIN HIM MUCH BENEFIT. THEN HE WENT FURTHER: HE WANTED AN EXPERIENTIAL SENSORY PERCEPTION OF GOD. SUCH THINGS WERE RARELY GRANTED TO HUMANS, AS MOSES WOULD HAVE BEEN WELL AWARE, BUT MOSES UNDERSTOOD THAT IF GOD WERE WILLING TO GRANT HIS REQUEST FOR THIS KIND OF PERSONAL FAMILIARITY, HE WOULD BE ALL THE MORE STRONGLY REASSURED OF GOD’S FAVOR ON THE FORTHCOMING EXPEDITION AWAY FROM SINAI AND ON TO THE PROMISED LAND OF CANAAN. 33:19–20 IN THESE VERSES STEPHEN YAHWEH, THE ONLY TRUE AND LIVING GOD, RESPONDED TO MOSES’ REQUEST FOR KNOWING GOD’S WAYS (V. 13) WITH A PROMISE TO “PROCLAIM HIS NAME” (HIS CHARACTER AND ESSENCE, THUS HIS WAYS; I.E., WHAT HE IS LIKE AND WHAT HE EXPECTS HIS PEOPLE TO BE LIKE). FURTHERMORE, TO THE REQUEST FOR A VISION OF HIS “GLORY” (V. 18) STEPHEN YAHWEH RESPONDED WITH A PROMISE TO HAVE “ALL [HIS] GOODNESS” PASS BEFORE MOSES. THESE THINGS WOULD HAPPEN “IN HIS PRESENCE,” BUT HE WOULD NOT LET MOSES “SEE [HIS] FACE,” LEST HE DIE FROM DOING SO. IN OTHER WORDS, GOD WOULD “SHOW” MOSES THINGS THAT WOULD CONVINCE HIM OF GOD’S PRESENCE YET WOULD STOP SHORT OF ACTUALLY LETTING MOSES LOOK AT HIM. IN FACT, THIS SORT OF LIMITED EXPOSURE—ENOUGH FOR HUMAN PERCEPTION TO BE TRULY AWARE OF THE DIVINE PRESENCE BUT NOT ENOUGH FOR HUMANS TO HAVE AN EARLY EXPERIENCE OF THE SORT OF DIRECT PERCEPTION OF GOD THAT ONLY HEAVEN WOULD ALLOW—HAD ALREADY TAKEN PLACE IN THE THEOPHANIES DESCRIBED IN 3:6; 24:11 AND EARLIER IN THIS CHAPTER IN VV. 8–11. THEREFORE THE READER WOULD BE MISTAKEN TO ASSUME THAT WHAT MOSES ACTUALLY SAW WOULD BE SIGNIFICANTLY REVELATORY; IT WAS RATHER WHAT HE LEARNED THROUGH GOD’S WORDS THAT WOULD MOST HELP HIM TO UNDERSTAND THAT HIS REQUEST TO BE TAUGHT GOD’S WAYS (V. 13) AND TO BE SHOWN GOD’S GLORY (V. 18) HAD INDEED BEEN GRANTED. ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT IN ALL OF THIS IS THE PURPOSE: MOSES AND THE ISRAELITES HAD BEEN SEPARATED FROM STEPHEN YAHWEH’S COVENANT BLESSING BY THE GREAT SIN OF IDOLATRY AS DESCRIBED IN CHAP. 32. THEY EAGERLY DESIRED RESTORATION TO STEPHEN YAHWEH’S FAVOR. COULD THEY BE SURE IT WOULD BE GRANTED THEM? MOSES WANTED SOME SORT OF ABSOLUTELY INCONTROVERTIBLE EVIDENCE THAT STEPHEN YAHWEH HAD AGAIN ACCEPTED HIS PEOPLE AND WOULD GO WITH THEM INTO THE PROMISED LAND, CONTINUING TO BE THEIR BENEFICENT COVENANT SOVEREIGN. HE NEEDED A SIGN THAT WOULD CONVINCE HIM THAT GOD WAS WITH HIM AND THE ISRAELITES—AND “SEEING WAS BELIEVING.” BUT WHAT EXACTLY DID GOD MEAN BY “ALL MY GOODNESS,” AND HOW COULD SUCH GOODNESS “PASS IN FRONT OF” MOSES? PERHAPS THE ANSWER IS TO BE FOUND IN A DIFFERENT TRANSLATION OF ṬÛB THAN THE NIV’S “GOODNESS.” IN THIS LINE OF REASONING, THE NOUN ṬÛB CONNOTES MORE THE SENSE OF “[THE] BEST” (GEN 24:10) OR IN THE CASE OF SOMETHING VISIBLE, “LOVELINESS/SPLENDOR” (HOS 10:11) SO THAT THE TRANSLATION COULD ACTUALLY READ, “I WILL CAUSE MY FULL SPLENDOR TO PASS IN FRONT OF YOU.” WHAT GOD WOULD THEN BE PROMISING MOSES ACCORDINGLY WOULD BE A CHANCE TO SENSE GOD’S GLORY VISUALLY—TO SEE SOMETHING SO SPLENDID TO BEHOLD—THE BEST THING HE COULD POSSIBLY SEE AS A HUMAN—THAT HE WOULD KNOW WITHOUT A DOUBT THAT IT REPRESENTED/MANIFEST GOD’S PRESENCE PASSING BEFORE HIM. HE WOULDN’T ACTUALLY SEE GOD AS IF GOD WERE LIKE A HUMAN WHOSE ENTIRETY COULD BE SEEN IN ONE PLACE, AND HE WOULDN’T HAVE ANY WORRY ABOUT DYING FROM WHAT HE SAW BECAUSE V. 20 WARNS ABOUT SOMETHING GOD WAS, IN FACT, NOT GOING TO LET HAPPEN TO MOSES. THIS MIGHT HAVE BEEN WHAT GOD WOULD HAVE CHOSEN TO DO FOR MOSES, BUT A PROBLEM WITH SUCH AN INTERPRETATION IS THAT IT IGNORES THE POINT MADE IN VV. 21–22, NAMELY THAT MOSES ACTUALLY DID NOT GET TO SEE MUCH OF ANYTHING AT ALL (SEE THE COMMENT ON THOSE VERSES). HE WAS HIDDEN IN A ROCK CREVICE THAT WAS COVERED BY STEPHEN YAHWEH’S CORPOREALIZED “HAND”—MEANING ALMOST SURELY THAT HE COULD NOT SEE GOD AT ALL EXCEPT, AFTER GOD HAD PASSED BY, HIS “BACK” (SEE COMMENTS ON VV. 21–22). THEREFORE, THE SENSING OF STEPHEN YAHWEH’S GOODNESS MUST HAVE OCCURRED MAINLY IN A NONVISUAL WAY. PRELIMINARILY, TWO CONSIDERATIONS MAY BE EXPRESSED ABOUT GOD’S CAUSING HIS “GOODNESS” TO PASS IN FRONT OF MOSES. THE FIRST OF THESE, SIMPLY PUT, IS “WHAT ELSE COULD GOD SHOW HIM?” GOD HAS NO BADNESS. THEREFORE “ALL MY GOODNESS” WOULD HAVE TO CONVEY SOMETHING LIKE “AN EVEN FULLER SENSE OF WHO I AM THAN YOU HAVE THUS FAR BEEN ABLE TO GRASP.” SECOND, THE ACTUAL FULFILLMENT OF MOSES’ REQUEST WOULD NOT OCCUR UNTIL IT COULD TAKE PLACE IN A COVENANT CONTEXT, THAT IS, IN 34:4–7. THEN AND ONLY THEN WOULD THINGS MAKE SENSE BECAUSE IT WAS THROUGH HIS COVENANT RELATIONSHIP WITH ISRAEL THAT GOD’S FULL GOODNESS WOULD BE EXPERIENCED. GOD’S GOODNESS WAS, IN OTHER WORDS, NOT SO MUCH A THING TO BE SEEN AT A CERTAIN TIME BY LOOKING IN A CERTAIN DIRECTION BUT AN ONGOING EXPERIENCE OF THE NATURE OF GOD AS HE MANIFEST HIS NATURE FOR THE BENEFIT OF HIS PEOPLE THROUGH HIS BENEFICENT COVENANT. ALSO IMPORTANT IS THAT GOD WOULD CAUSE “ALL MY GOODNESS” TO PASS IN FRONT OF MOSES. DOES THIS MEAN THAT MOSES WOULD ACTUALLY BE ABLE TO PERCEIVE “ALL” OF GOD—TO SOMEHOW COMPREHEND THE FULLNESS OF THE GODHEAD? HARDLY. RATHER, THE MEANING OF “ALL” IN THIS CASE IS MORE LIKELY “NOTHING BUT.” AN ANALOGY PRESENTS ITSELF IN THE WAY LIGHT MAY BE SAID TO BANISH DARKNESS. IN A ROOM FULL OF LIGHT ONE WOULD NOT SAY THAT THERE WAS A MIXTURE OF LIGHT AND DARKNESS BUT “ALL LIGHT” OR “NOTHING BUT LIGHT.” WHILE IN THEORY DARKNESS MIGHT BE SAID TO EXIST IN PLACES WHERE THE LIGHT WAS BLOCKED FROM PENETRATING, IT COULD CERTAINLY NOT BE SAID THAT AMONG THOSE SURFACES WHERE THE LIGHT STRUCK, SOME AREAS WERE DARK AND SOME WERE NOT. ALL WOULD BE PERCEIVED AS NOTHING BUT LIGHT. SO, GOD’S GOODNESS AS REVEALED TO MOSES WOULD BE TOTAL (“ALL”) IN THE SENSE OF NOTHING BUT GOODNESS. FAR MORE IMPORTANT THAN WHAT MOSES WOULD SEE WAS WHAT HE WOULD HEAR: STEPHEN YAHWEH INVOKING HIS OWN NAME. THROUGH THE IDIOM QĀRĀH + BĔ + ŠĒM (USUALLY TRANSLATED “CALL ON THE NAME OF”), WHICH CAN MEAN “TO SPEAK OUT LOUD THE NAME OF” (AND THEREFORE “INVOKE”) OR “CALL OUT TO” IN THE SENSE OF PRAY TO/ASK FOR HELP FROM/WORSHIP, GOD PROMISED MOSES THAT HE WOULD SPEAK HIS OWN NAME SO MOSES WOULD KNOW FOR CERTAIN WITH WHOM HE WAS DEALING AND WOULD NOT BE SUBJECT TO DOUBT THAT HIS EYES HAD PLAYED TRICKS ON HIM, OR ANY SUCH THING. THIS IS AN INSTANCE OF GOD’S GIVING TO A PERSON THE SPECIAL REASSURANCE HE NEEDED IN A SPECIAL SITUATION, PROVIDING POWERFULLY CONVINCING EVIDENCE OF HIS PRESENCE TO THAT PERSON IN AN AURAL WAY, PARALLEL TO THE VISUAL WAY HIS SPLENDOR COULD DO THE SAME THING. SUCH DIVINE EVIDENCES ARE EXCEPTIONS, NOT THE RULE. A FEW BIBLICAL CHARACTERS TO HEAR GOD’S VOICE; THE VAST MAJORITY DO NOT. A FEW ARE ALLOWED TO SEE SOME SORT OF VISIBLE MANIFESTATION OF HIS PRESENCE; MOST NEVER DO. JESUS, WHO ULTIMATELY REPRESENTED GOD AMONG HUMANS IN THIS WORLD, WAS SEEN AND HEARD BY THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE, BUT THEIR NUMBER IS RELATIVELY SMALL COMPARED TO THE NUMBER OF ALL THOSE WHO HAVE NEITHER SEEN NOR HEARD HIM PERSONALLY. THEOPHANIES ARE EXCEPTIONS, NOT THE RULE. THEY STRENGTHEN THE CONFIDENCE OF THOSE TO WHOM THEY ARE GIVEN, IN HIGHLY EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES WHERE SUCH STRENGTHENING IS NEEDED AND WHERE LESS SENSORY ENCOURAGEMENT WOULD NOT SUFFICE. MOST PEOPLE MUST RELY ON REPORTS OF THEOPHANIES RATHER THAN PARTICIPATION IN ONE, AND TO SEEK A THEOPHANY AS MOSES DID HERE WOULD HAVE NO WARRANT UNLESS ONE WERE ON A PAR WITH MOSES IN JOB ASSIGNMENT AND CLOSENESS TO STEPHEN YAHWEH AND IN AN OLD COVENANT SETTING, NEITHER OF WHICH IS POSSIBLE NOW. FORTUNATELY, HAVING THE HOLY SPIRIT DWELLING IN US IS FAR BETTER AND FAR MORE PERMANENT AN ASSET. GOD’S ASSERTION, TRANSLATED TRADITIONALLY, “I WILL HAVE MERCY ON WHOM I WILL HAVE MERCY, AND I WILL HAVE COMPASSION ON WHOM I WILL HAVE COMPASSION,” ADDRESSES MOSES’ SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP WITH HIM; BUT MORE BROADLY IT SPEAKS TO HIS NAME, THAT IS, HIS CHARACTER AND WAYS. A BETTER TRANSLATION OF THIS PART OF THE VERSE WOULD BE: “I WILL INVOKE MY NAME STEPHEN YAHWEH BEFORE YOU, THAT IS, I SHOW GRACE IN BEING GRACIOUS AND I SHOW MERCY IN BEING MERCIFUL.” THE CHARACTERISTICS OF STEPHEN YAHWEH, NAMELY HIS GRACE AND MERCY, ARE PLACED HERE IN GRAMMATICAL APPOSITION TO THE NAME OF STEPHEN YAHWEH. MOSES DID INDEED ENJOY GOD’S SPECIAL MERCY AND COMPASSION IN ONE WAY AT ONE TIME, BUT IN OTHER WAYS AND AT OTHER TIMES, GOD’S MERCY AND COMPASSION WOULD TAKE DIFFERENT FORMS WITH OTHER PEOPLE. THUS, A GENERAL PRINCIPLE IS STATED RATHER THAN MERELY A PERSONAL WORD TO MOSES. GOD’S “MERCY” AND “COMPASSION” WERE GRANTED TO ALL HIS COVENANT PEOPLE (DEUT 13:17; CF. JAS 5:11) AND SHOULD IN TURN CHARACTERIZE THE BEHAVIOR OF ALL HIS COVENANT PEOPLE (E.G., ZECH 7:9), BUT THEY ARE NOT AUTOMATICALLY AVAILABLE TO ALL OTHER PEOPLE UNLESS THEY JOIN IN COVENANT WITH GOD. GOD’S ASSERTION, THEN, IS A GENERAL STATEMENT OF HIS COVENANT BLESSINGS, WHICH ARE SPECIAL INCENTIVES FOR THOSE WHO KNOW HIS NAME (I.E., SEEK TO KEEP HIS COVENANT). THE PROMISE CONCERNING MERCY AND COMPASSION IS THEREFORE NOT SO MUCH A DIVISIVE STATEMENT (AS IF “ON WHOM …” WERE INTENDED TO BE MERELY DISCRIMINATORY) AS A PART OF THE REASSURANCE GOD GAVE MOSES, SAYING IN EFFECT: YOU WON’T JUST RECEIVE MY COMMON GRACE; YOU (MY PEOPLE) WILL RECEIVE MY COVENANT MERCY AND COMPASSION. VERSE 20 TAKES THE FORM OF A RESTRICTIVE CLAUSE FOLLOWED BY AN EXPLANATORY CLAUSE. MOSES COULD EXPECT A GREAT MANIFESTATION OF GOD’S PRESENCE TO COMMENCE SHORTLY BUT COULD NOT EXPECT ACTUALLY TO SEE HIM FULLY—AS FULLY AS, FOR EXAMPLE, ANGELS SEE GOD IN HEAVEN OR AS THE REDEEMED WILL ONE DAY SEE HIM. SUCH FULL PROXIMITY TO THE HOLINESS OF GOD WOULD REQUIRE THE DEATH OF SOMEONE LIKE MOSES, A SINFUL HUMAN STILL ON EARTH, NOT YET TRANSFORMED INTO THE LIKENESS OF CHRIST AND THEREFORE NOT YET FIT TO EXPERIENCE A HIGHER LEVEL OF THE PRESENCE OF GOD THAN HE WAS ABOUT TO EXPERIENCE HERE. SIMILARLY, IN NUM 12:6–8 GOD EXPLAINED TO MIRIAM AND AARON THAT WHAT MOSES SAW WHEN HE “SAW” GOD WAS HIS TĔMŪNĀH, HIS “LIKENESS” OR “DEPICTION” (NIV, UNCONVINCINGLY, “FORM”). 33:21–23 HERE GOD HELPED MOSES TO UNDERSTAND THAT HIS THEOPHANY, HOWEVER EXTRAORDINARY AND IMPRESSIVE, WOULD NEVERTHELESS BE LIMITED, IN ACCORDANCE TO WHAT HE HAD JUST EXPLAINED IN VV. 19–20. MOSES WOULD RECEIVE SOME SENSE OF THE GLORY OF GOD DEPARTING, MOVING AWAY FROM HIM (“YOU WILL SEE MY BACK”) SO THAT HE WOULD REALIZE HE HAD ACTUALLY PERCEIVED SOMETHING OF GOD’S TRUE, VISIBLE MANIFESTATION OF HIMSELF (EVEN IF NOT OF HIS FULL ESSENCE)—BUT ONLY THE BACK, THAT IS, NOT MUCH AT ALL. THIS PROVIDES SOMETHING OF AN ANALOGY FOR MOSES. IN THE SAME WAY THAT WE DO NOT SEE MUCH OF A PERSON WHEN WE SEE ONLY HIS OR HER BACK WALKING AWAY FROM US, BUT CAN STILL TELL WHO IT IS IF WE KNOW THAT PERSON WELL ENOUGH, MOSES WAS ALLOWED TO SENSE WHAT GOD CAUSED HIM TO RECOGNIZE AS THE “BACK” OF GOD’S VISIBLY MANIFESTED GLORY MOVING AWAY FROM HIM AND COULD THEREFORE UNDERSTAND THAT HE HAD PERCEIVED GOD’S TRUE—THOUGH NOT AT ALL COMPLETE—PRESENCE AS A REASSURANCE FOR HIS GREAT TASK AHEAD, THAT OF LEADING THE PEOPLE FROM SINAI TO THE PROMISED LAND. IN THE HEBREW IDIOM, HOWEVER, TO SEE ONLY THE BACK AND NOT TO SEE THE FACE MEANS, IN EFFECT, “TO SEE NOTHING” OR “TO SEE VIRTUALLY NOTHING.” THE “ROCK” ON WHICH MOSES STOOD WAITING FOR GOD’S GLORY TO PASS BY, THE “CLEFT” IN THAT ROCK IN WHICH GOD PUT MOSES, AND THAT HE PERSONALLY PUT MOSES IN IT ALL INDICATE THE LOCATION AS THE TOP OF MOUNT SINAI ONCE AGAIN. GOD’S WORDS, “THERE IS A PLACE RIGHT HERE WHERE I AM” (NIV “THERE IS A PLACE NEAR ME”) COULD HARDLY DESIGNATE ANY OTHER SITE THAN MOUNT SINAI BECAUSE SINAI WAS HIS TEMPORARY DWELLING PLACE THROUGHOUT EXOD 20:1–40:33. THE NIV’S “WHERE YOU MAY STAND ON A ROCK” IS A POSSIBLE TRANSLATION, BUT THE HEBREW FOR ROCK HAS THE DEFINITE ARTICLE, SO “WHERE YOU MAY STAND ON THE ROCK” IS A MORE LIKELY TRANSLATION, “THE ROCK” MEANING MOUNT SINAI. THE ACTUAL FULFILLMENT OF THIS PROMISED ENCOUNTER TOOK PLACE ON MOUNT SINAI, AS EXPECTED AND AS DESCRIBED IN THE NEXT CHAPTER (34:4–7 AND FOLLOWING). THE STATEMENT “MY FACE MUST NOT BE SEEN” REFLECTS NOT MERELY GOD’S PROTECTION OF HIS PRESENCE BUT A GRACIOUS ACT OF PROTECTION OF MOSES’ LIFE. WERE HE TO SEE GOD FULLY, IT WOULD BE BEYOND HIS CAPACITY TO ENDURE AS A SINFUL HUMAN, AND HE WOULD DIE AS GOD ALREADY WARNED HIM IN V. 20, THIS IS YET ANOTHER REFERENCE TO THE BENEFICENT PARTIAL WITHHOLDING OF GOD’S PRESENCE, THE DESCRIPTIONS “COVER YOU WITH MY HAND” AND “REMOVE MY HAND” DO NOT MEAN THAT GOD IS A VERY LARGE HUMAN-SHAPED BEING WITH A GIANT BUT HUMAN SORT OF HAND CAPABLE OF SHELTERING A PERSON’S ENTIRE BODY; RATHER, THESE ARE THE KINDS OF NECESSARY ANTHROPOMORPHISMS WITHOUT WHICH LITTLE OF GOD CAN BE DESCRIBED. TO MOSES THE HAND OF GOD WOULD SEEM A GENTLE, CARING THING AS OPPOSED TO, SAY, A LIGHTNING BOLT, AS THE MEANS OF PLACING HIM IN THE ROCK’S CLEFT. IT WAS A WAY OF SAYING TO MOSES NOT THAT GOD HAS A HUGE HAND BUT THAT HE WOULD PERSONALLY PROTECT MOSES FROM WHAT OTHERWISE WOULD KILL HIM.**

**RENEWAL OF THE 2 STONE TABLETS AND THE COVENANT (34:1–28)**

**1 THE LORD SAID TO MOSES, “CHISEL OUT TWO STONE TABLETS LIKE THE FIRST ONES, AND I WILL WRITE ON THEM THE WORDS THAT WERE ON THE FIRST TABLETS, WHICH YOU BROKE. 2 BE READY IN THE MORNING, AND THEN COME UP ON MOUNT SINAI. PRESENT YOURSELF TO ME THERE ON TOP OF THE MOUNTAIN. 3 NO ONE IS TO COME WITH YOU OR BE SEEN ANYWHERE ON THE MOUNTAIN; NOT EVEN THE FLOCKS AND HERDS MAY GRAZE IN FRONT OF THE MOUNTAIN.” 4 SO MOSES CHISELED OUT TWO STONE TABLETS LIKE THE FIRST ONES AND WENT UP MOUNT SINAI EARLY IN THE MORNING, AS THE LORD HAD COMMANDED HIM; AND HE CARRIED THE TWO STONE TABLETS IN HIS HANDS. 5 THEN THE LORD CAME DOWN IN THE CLOUD AND STOOD THERE WITH HIM AND PROCLAIMED HIS NAME, THE LORD. 6 AND HE PASSED IN FRONT OF MOSES, PROCLAIMING, “THE LORD, THE LORD, THE COMPASSIONATE AND GRACIOUS GOD, SLOW TO ANGER, ABOUNDING IN LOVE AND FAITHFULNESS, 7 MAINTAINING LOVE TO THOUSANDS, AND FORGIVING WICKEDNESS, REBELLION AND SIN. YET HE DOES NOT LEAVE THE GUILTY UNPUNISHED; HE PUNISHES THE CHILDREN AND THEIR CHILDREN FOR THE SIN OF THE FATHERS TO THE THIRD AND FOURTH GENERATION.” 8 MOSES BOWED TO THE GROUND AT ONCE AND WORSHIPED. 9 “O LORD, IF I HAVE FOUND FAVOR IN YOUR EYES,” HE SAID, “THEN LET THE LORD GO WITH US. ALTHOUGH THIS IS A STIFF-NECKED PEOPLE, FORGIVE OUR WICKEDNESS AND OUR SIN, AND TAKE US AS YOUR INHERITANCE.” 10 THEN THE LORD SAID: “I AM MAKING A COVENANT WITH YOU. BEFORE ALL YOUR PEOPLE I WILL DO WONDERS NEVER BEFORE DONE IN ANY NATION IN ALL THE WORLD. THE PEOPLE YOU LIVE AMONG WILL SEE HOW AWESOME IS THE WORK THAT I, THE LORD, WILL DO FOR YOU. 11 OBEY WHAT I COMMAND YOU TODAY. I WILL DRIVE OUT BEFORE YOU THE AMORITES, CANAANITES, HITTITES, PERIZZITES, HIVITES AND JEBUSITES. 12 BE CAREFUL NOT TO MAKE A TREATY WITH THOSE WHO LIVE IN THE LAND WHERE YOU ARE GOING, OR THEY WILL BE A SNARE AMONG YOU. 13 BREAK-DOWN THEIR ALTARS, SMASH THEIR SACRED STONES AND CUT DOWN THEIR ASHERAH POLES. 14 DO NOT WORSHIP ANY OTHER GOD, FOR THE LORD, WHOSE NAME IS JEALOUS, IS A JEALOUS GOD. 15 “BE CAREFUL NOT TO MAKE A TREATY WITH THOSE WHO LIVE IN THE LAND; FOR WHEN THEY PROSTITUTE THEMSELVES TO THEIR GODS AND SACRIFICE TO THEM, THEY WILL INVITE YOU AND YOU WILL EAT THEIR SACRIFICES. 16 AND WHEN YOU CHOOSE SOME OF THEIR DAUGHTERS AS WIVES FOR YOUR SONS AND THOSE DAUGHTERS PROSTITUTE THEMSELVES TO THEIR GODS, THEY WILL LEAD YOUR SONS TO DO THE SAME. 17 “DO NOT MAKE CAST IDOLS. 18 “CELEBRATE THE FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD. FOR SEVEN DAYS EAT BREAD MADE WITHOUT YEAST, AS I COMMANDED YOU. DO THIS AT THE APPOINTED TIME IN THE MONTH OF ABIB, FOR IN THAT MONTH YOU CAME OUT OF EGYPT. 19 “THE FIRST OFFSPRING OF EVERY WOMB BELONGS TO ME, INCLUDING ALL THE FIRSTBORN MALES OF YOUR LIVESTOCK, WHETHER FROM HERD OR FLOCK. 20 REDEEM THE FIRSTBORN DONKEY WITH A LAMB, BUT IF YOU DO NOT REDEEM IT, BREAK ITS NECK. REDEEM ALL YOUR FIRSTBORN SONS. “NO ONE IS TO APPEAR BEFORE ME EMPTY-HANDED. 21 “SIX DAYS YOU SHALL LABOR, BUT ON THE SEVENTH DAY YOU SHALL REST; EVEN DURING THE PLOWING SEASON AND HARVEST YOU MUST REST. 22 “CELEBRATE THE FEAST OF WEEKS WITH THE FIRSTFRUITS OF THE WHEAT HARVEST, AND THE FEAST OF INGATHERING AT THE TURN OF THE YEAR. 23 THREE TIMES A YEAR ALL YOUR MEN ARE TO APPEAR BEFORE THE SOVEREIGN LORD, THE GOD OF ISRAEL. 24 I WILL DRIVE OUT NATIONS BEFORE YOU AND ENLARGE YOUR TERRITORY, AND NO ONE WILL COVET YOUR LAND WHEN YOU GO UP THREE TIMES EACH YEAR TO APPEAR BEFORE THE LORD YOUR GOD. 25 “DO NOT OFFER THE BLOOD OF A SACRIFICE TO ME ALONG WITH ANYTHING CONTAINING YEAST, AND DO NOT LET ANY OF THE SACRIFICE FROM THE PASSOVER FEAST REMAIN UNTIL MORNING. 26 “BRING THE BEST OF THE FIRSTFRUITS OF YOUR SOIL TO THE HOUSE OF THE LORD YOUR GOD. “DO NOT COOK A YOUNG GOAT IN ITS MOTHER’S MILK.” 27 THEN THE LORD SAID TO MOSES, “WRITE DOWN THESE WORDS, FOR IN ACCORDANCE WITH THESE WORDS I HAVE MADE A COVENANT WITH YOU AND WITH ISRAEL.” 28 MOSES WAS THERE WITH THE LORD FORTY DAYS AND FORTY NIGHTS WITHOUT EATING BREAD OR DRINKING WATER. AND HE WROTE ON THE TABLETS THE WORDS OF THE COVENANT—THE TEN COMMANDMENTS.**

**THE 2 REPLACEMENT LAW TABLETS (34:1–4)**

**GOD’S INSTRUCTION TO MOSES TO PREPARE TWO NEW STONE TABLETS AND HIS PROMISE TO WRITE THE TEN WORDS/COMMANDMENTS ON THESE NEW TABLETS JUST AS HE HAD ON THE FORMER ONES CONVEYS A MOST WELCOME MESSAGE: GOD HAD DECIDED TO FORGIVE THE ISRAELITES AND ACCEPT THEM ONCE AGAIN AS HIS COVENANT PEOPLE, AND HE WOULD RENEW HIS COVENANT WITH THEM, THROUGH WHICH ALL SORTS OF BLESSINGS WOULD ONCE AGAIN BE THEIRS. LIKE AN EMPLOYER SAYING TO A PREVIOUSLY DISMISSED EMPLOYEE, “WELCOME BACK TO THE COMPANY. LET ME SHOW YOU YOUR WORK STATION” OR A JUDGE SAYING TO A PERSON WHOSE PUNISHMENT HAD BEEN COMPLETED, “YOU’RE FREE TO GO AND RESUME YOUR FORMER LIFE,” GOD SAID TO MOSES AND THROUGH HIM TO ISRAEL, IN EFFECT: “BRING SOME NEW TABLETS. LET’S PUT THE COVENANT BACK IN FORCE.”**

**34:1 THE NEW TABLETS WERE TO BE EXACTLY LIKE THE OLD: STONE TABLETS WRITTEN ON PERSONALLY BY GOD AND CONTAINING THE SAME WORDING AS THE ORIGINALS (CF. 20:2–17; 24:12; 31:18; 32:15–16). IN THE NARRATIVE ABOUT THE ORIGINAL TABLETS, GOD PERSONALLY PROVIDED THE TABLETS (32:16). HERE MOSES WOULD CHISEL THEM OUT OF STONE, SO HE WAS ASSIGNED THE JOB OF PROVIDING THE TABLETS. GOD TOOK UPON HIMSELF ONLY THE JOB OF WRITING ON THEM. AS 34:28 CONFIRMS, THE TEN WORDS/COMMANDMENTS WOULD BE THE CONTENT OF THESE, AND AS LOGIC DICTATES FROM OUR UNDERSTANDING OF HOW COVENANTS WORKED, THE TABLETS WERE AGAIN BOTH COMPLETE COPIES OF THE TEN WORDS/COMMANDMENTS (NOT FIVE ON ONE TABLET AND FIVE ON THE OTHER), WITH ONE TABLET REPRESENTING THE SOVEREIGN’S (GOD’S) COPY AND THE OTHER REPRESENTING THE VASSAL’S (ISRAEL’S) COPY. GOD AGAIN REFERRED TO MOSES’ BREAKING THE FIRST PAIR OF TABLETS (“THE FIRST TABLETS, WHICH YOU BROKE”) AS A REMINDER THAT THE PRIOR COVENANT HAD ACTUALLY BEEN NOT JUST VIOLATED IN SOME LIMITED WAY BUT BROKEN, MAKING THIS OFFER OF COVENANT REINSTATEMENT ALL THE MORE TIMELY AND AN EVIDENCE OF GRACIOUS DIVINE WILLINGNESS TO FORGIVE AND RESTORE. 34:2 MOST PEOPLE TRAVELED IN THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST BY STARTING OUT ON A JOURNEY AT FIRST LIGHT WHEN THE TEMPERATURE WAS BETTER FOR THE EFFORT OF TRAVELING AND BECAUSE DEPARTING AT DAWN ENABLED THE TRAVELER TO COVER THE MAXIMUM DISTANCE. THUS, THE IDIOM FOR STARTING ON A JOURNEY IS USUALLY WORDED “GOT UP EARLY AND …” ACCORDINGLY, THERE WAS NOTHING UNUSUAL ABOUT GOD’S COMMAND TO MOSES TO “BE READY IN THE MORNING, AND THEN COME UP” IN LIGHT OF THE TIME AND EFFORT INVOLVED IN CLIMBING TO THE TOP OF MOUNT SINAI. “PRESENT YOURSELF TO ME THERE ON TOP OF THE MOUNTAIN” WOULD IMPLY THAT MOSES WAS TO GO WHERE HE USUALLY WENT AND WAIT FOR THE CLOUD OF STEPHEN YAHWEH’S GLORY TO APPEAR TO HIM AND ENVELOP HIM AS IT HAD DONE IN THE PAST (19:9; 24:15–18) AND WOULD DO AGAIN (34:5). 34:3 GOD’S HOLINESS IS A THREAT TO THE UNHOLY, SO NOTHING AND NO ONE HE DOES NOT SPECIFICALLY DECLARE ACCEPTABLE MAY SAFELY APPROACH HIM. ACCORDINGLY, TO PROTECT HIS HOLINESS AND TO PROTECT THOSE WHO MIGHT BE STRUCK DEAD BY COMING TOO CLOSE TO HIM, HE ONCE AGAIN ISSUED A WARNING AGAINST PEOPLE AND ANIMALS GOING ANYWHERE ON MOUNT SINAI. THE SPECIAL MENTION OF “FLOCKS AND HERDS” IS NECESSARY BECAUSE SINAI CONTAINED GRASSY GRAZING AREAS THE PEOPLE MIGHT FIND IRRESISTIBLE WITHOUT SPECIFIC WARNING. THE PROHIBITION OF ACCESS TO THE MOUNTAIN IS PART OF THE ANTICIPATORY PREPARATION APPROPRIATE TO THE EVENTUAL ARRIVAL (34:5) OF STEPHEN YAHWEH. WHAT THE NIV RENDERS AS “IN FRONT OF THE MOUNTAIN” WOULD BETTER BE TRANSLATED “TOWARD/IN THE VICINITY OF THE MOUNTAIN.” IN OTHER WORDS, THE FLOCKS AND HERDS COULD NOT GRAZE AROUND THE BACK, AS OPPOSED TO THE FRONT OF THE MOUNTAIN, NOR IN FACT ANYWHERE AT THE BASE. 34:4 THIS VERSE RECORDS THE FULFILLMENT OF WHAT WAS COMMANDED IN THE PRIOR THREE VERSES. (THE COMMAND-FULFILLMENT PATTERN WILL BECOME VERY IMPORTANT AND PROMINENT IN THE FOLLOWING CHAPTERS.) THERE IS NOTHING UNUSUAL IN ANY OF THE LANGUAGE OF THIS VERSE. THE STATEMENT THAT MOSES CARRIED THE TWO STONE TABLETS IN HIS HANDS IS MERELY A WAY OF POINTING OUT THAT HE WAS PREPARED WITH THEM AS HE WAS SUPPOSED TO BE AND OBEDIENTLY BROUGHT THEM PERSONALLY WITH HIM AS HE HAD BEEN COMMANDED TO DO. MOSES MAY CERTAINLY HAVE SOUGHT THE HELP OF A SKILLED STONEMASON IN PREPARING THE TABLETS; IF SO, IT IS THE SORT OF OBVIOUS DETAIL HE CHOSE NOT TO INCLUDE IN THE NARRATIVE.**

**GOD SHOWS MOSES HIS GLORY (34:5–7)**

**HERE GOD GRACIOUSLY RESPONDED FAVORABLY TO BOTH OF MOSES’ EARLIER APPEALS: THE DESIRE THAT HE COULD SEE GOD’S GLORY (33:18), TO WHICH GOD RESPONDED AS PROMISED IN 33:19 BY “PASSING IN FRONT OF MOSES” (V. 6), AND THE DESIRE THAT HE WOULD TEACH MOSES HIS WAYS (33:13), TO WHICH GOD RESPONDED WITH THE PROCLAMATION OF HIS NAME AND WHAT IT STANDS FOR (VV. 6–7), INCLUDING BOTH COMPASSION AND JUSTICE. 34:5 THE LANGUAGE “CAME DOWN … AND STOOD” REPRESENTS A STANDARD WAY OF DESCRIBING WHAT OTHERWISE IS NOT EASILY COMPREHENDED BY HUMANS, THAT IS, THAT GOD MANIFESTED HIMSELF SPECIALLY AND PERSONALLY IN MOSES’ PRESENCE. THEREBY MOSES COULD PERCEIVE THAT A REAL PERSONAL BEING HAD COME TO HIM AND NOT JUST A CONCEPT, OR A FEELING, OR A NUMINOUS IMPRESSION. AS BEFORE, HE EMPLOYED A CLOUD (NOT JUST ANY BUT THE CLOUD OF HIS GLORY) AS THE VISIBLE PART OF THE MANIFESTATION. HE THEN “PROCLAIMED HIS NAME, THE LORD [STEPHEN YAHWEH].” ALTHOUGH THE BASIC MEANING OF THE VERBAL FORM STEPHEN YAHWEH IS WELL ENOUGH UNDERSTOOD, THAT IS WHAT THE NAME OF STEPHEN [STEPHEN YAHWEH] IS CONCERNED WITH HERE MEANING “TOP LORD,” MORE THAN ONE WHO INVOKES THE NAME OF JESUS [STEPHEN YAHWEH] WOULD DO SO ONLY TO THINK ABOUT THE FACT THAT IT COMES FROM A HEBREW WORD MEANING “SALVATION.” IT IS THE (DIVINE) PERSON BEHIND THE NAME THAT ONE SEEKS WHEN INVOKING A DIVINE NAME. MOSES HAD SOUGHT TO KNOW THAT STEPHEN YAHWEH WOULD BE WITH HIM AND ISRAEL AS THEY LEFT SINAI TO HEAD TOWARD THE PROMISED LAND, AND KNOWING STEPHEN YAHWEH—KNOWING WHO HE REALLY WAS AND WHAT HE WOULD BE LIKE IN REFERENCE TO HIS PEOPLE—WAS WHAT MOSES CRAVED. STEPHEN YAHWEH’S SELF-PROCLAMATION WOULD PROVIDE THAT. 34:6 AS PROMISED IN 33:21–23, WHICH CONTAINS THE PREDICTION OF HOW STEPHEN YAHWEH WOULD “PASS IN FRONT OF” MOSES, STEPHEN YAHWEH FULFILLED HIS PROMISE AND IN SO DOING BEGAN REVEALING HIMSELF BY STATING HIS NAME TWICE. THE REPEATING OF THE NAME WAS CERTAINLY FOR THE PURPOSE OF EMPHASIS BUT ALSO COULD HAVE HAD SOME OF THE OVERTONES ASSOCIATED WITH THE PATTERN CALLED REPETITION OF SUCH THAT STEPHEN YAHWEH WAS IN EFFECT SAYING TO MOSES, “I AM YOUR DEAR STEPHEN YAHWEH” OR “TO YOU I AM YOUR DEAREST FRIEND, STEPHEN YAHWEH” OR SOMETHING OF THE SORT. BUT THIS CANNOT BE PROVED SINCE HERE STEPHEN YAHWEH WAS STATING HIS OWN NAME. IN ALL OTHER POSSIBLE CONTEXTS OF THE REPETITION OF ENDEARMENT PHENOMENON, THE REPETITION OCCURS WITH DIRECT ADDRESS, SO SOMEONE IS CALLING THE NAME OF ANOTHER TWICE—AND NOT HIS OWN NAME. IN THIS VERSE GOD CITED FIVE ATTRIBUTES THAT CHARACTERIZE HIM—ALL OF WHICH WOULD BE WELCOME TO MOSES AND THE ISRAELITES, WHO NEEDED VERY MUCH TO COUNT ON HIS COMPASSION TOWARD THEM IN LIGHT OF THEIR HAVING PREVIOUSLY ANGERED HIM BY THEIR BEHAVIOR. THE FIRST ATTRIBUTE OF STEPHEN YAHWEH LISTED IS THAT HE IS A “COMPASSIONATE” GOD, MEANING THAT HE GENUINELY CARES ABOUT HUMANS AND HOLDS TOWARD THEM A TENDER ATTITUDE OF CONCERN AND MERCY. SECOND, HE CALLED HIMSELF “GRACIOUS,” MEANING THAT HE DOES THINGS FOR PEOPLE THEY DO NOT DESERVE AND GOES BEYOND WHAT MIGHT BE EXPECTED TO GRANT TRULY KIND FAVOR TOWARD PEOPLE, FAVOR OF WHICH THEY ARE NOT NECESSARILY WORTHY. THIRD, HE DESCRIBED HIMSELF AS “SLOW TO ANGER,” MEANING THAT HIS PATIENCE WITH PEOPLE’S LESS-THAN-SATISFACTORY BEHAVIOR AND/OR FAILURES IN ANY REALM, INCLUDING THE MORAL, IS VERY GREAT. FOURTH, HE DECLARED HIMSELF TO BE “ABOUNDING” (LIT., GREAT) IN COVENANT “LOVE [LOYALTY].” CAREFUL STUDIES OF THE HEBREW WORD, ḤESED, TRANSLATED AS “LOVE” BY THE NIV HERE DEMONSTRATE THAT IT CONNOTES LONG-TERM, RELIABLE LOYALTY OF ONE MEMBER OF A COVENANT RELATIONSHIP TO ANOTHER. HOWEVER FICKLE AND UNRELIABLE HUMANS MAY BE IN THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO GOD, HE IS NOTHING OF THE SORT BUT CAN BE COUNTED ON IN EVERY SITUATION AND AT ALL TIMES TO BE COMPLETELY FAITHFUL TO HIS PROMISES FOR HIS PEOPLE. NEXT HE DESCRIBED HIMSELF AS “[ABOUNDING IN] TRUTH,” MEANING THAT WHATEVER HE SAYS IS CORRECT AND RELIABLE AND MAY BE TRUSTED EVEN TO THE EXTENT OF LIFE AND DEATH ISSUES, OR INDEED ETERNAL LIFE AND DEATH ISSUES. 34:7 THE LIST OF DIVINE ATTRIBUTES CONTINUES. FIRST COMES “MAINTAINING COVENANT LOYALTY TO THOUSANDS” (NIV “MAINTAINING LOVE TO THOUSANDS”) WHICH, IN LIGHT OF THE FULLER WORDING OF THIS ATTRIBUTE IN 20:5–6, MUST BE UNDERSTOOD TO BE A SLIGHTLY ELLIPTICAL WORDING OF THE GREAT PROMISE THAT GOD WILL CONTINUE HIS COVENANT BLESSINGS TO HIS PEOPLE INDEFINITELY—TO THOUSANDS OF GENERATIONS, NOT MERELY THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE—AS LONG AS THEY DO NOT BREAK HIS COVENANT AND THEREBY FORCE HIM TO UNLEASH ITS SANCTIONS. “FORGIVING WICKEDNESS, REBELLION AND SIN” REFERS TO THE FORGIVENESS OF EVILS AND SINS OF ALL SORTS, SOMETHING GOD ALONE CAN ACCOMPLISH AND INDICATES THAT IT IS A CHARACTERISTIC OF HIS NATURE TO DO SO. THUS, THE NEW TESTAMENT DOCTRINE OF THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS, ON WHICH THE PROMISE OF ETERNAL LIFE SO DECIDEDLY DEPENDS, FLOWS FROM THE VERY NATURE OF GOD. HE DOES NOT RELUCTANTLY FORGIVE SINS AGAINST HIMSELF AND OTHERS; HE DOES SO EAGERLY, AS A MANIFESTATION OF HIS CHARACTER, BY WHICH HE DELIGHTS IN DOING SO. IN THE LIST “WICKEDNESS, REBELLION AND SIN,” THE FINAL TERM, “SIN,” IS THE MOST INCLUSIVE. THESE ARE NOT THREE DISTINCT KINDS OF BEHAVIORS BUT THREE VOCABULARY WORDS USED TOGETHER TO INDICATE WHAT ANY OF THEM MIGHT CONVEY; AND SINCE THEY ARE USED TOGETHER, THEY COMBINE TO INDICATE WHAT JESUS MEANT WHEN HE SAID, “EVERY SIN AND BLASPHEMY WILL BE FORGIVEN” (MATT 12:31). GOD THEN ISSUED A CORRECTIVE AGAINST THE NATURAL HUMAN TENDENCY TO ACCEPT GRACE ON THE ASSUMPTION THAT BECAUSE AN INFINITE GOD CAN PRODUCE AN INFINITE AMOUNT OF GRACE, SIN HAS NO SIGNIFICANT CONSEQUENCE. THIS CORRECTIVE IS INTRODUCED SIMPLY BY THE NORMAL HEBREW WORD FOR “AND,” WHICH THE NIV JUSTIFIABLY TRANSLATES “YET” BUT WHICH IS NOT A STRONG ADVERSATIVE WORD. PERHAPS AN EVEN MORE REVEALING, EVEN IF TENDENTIOUS, TRANSLATION WOULD BE SOMETHING LIKE: “[FORGIVING WICKEDNESS, REBELLION AND SIN] AND AT THE SAME TIME NOT LETTING ANYBODY OFF [I.E., MAKING SURE THAT THE GUILTY GET WHAT THEY DESERVE].” IN CONNECTION WITH THE WORDING “HE PUNISHES THE CHILDREN AND THEIR CHILDREN FOR THE SIN OF THE FATHERS TO THE THIRD AND FOURTH GENERATION,” SEE COMMENTS ON 20:5–6. AS ALREADY SUGGESTED THERE, THIS WORDING MEANS SOMETHING QUITE DIFFERENT FROM WHAT IT MIGHT SEEM TO MEAN TO THE CASUAL READER. IT DOES NOT MEAN THAT GOD WOULD PUNISH CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN FOR SOMETHING THEIR ANCESTORS DID BUT THAT THEY THEMSELVES DID NOT DO. RATHER, IT DESCRIBES GOD’S JUST PUNISHMENT OF A GIVEN TYPE OF SIN IN EACH NEW GENERATION AS THAT SIN CONTINUES TO BE REPEATED DOWN THROUGH THE GENERATIONS. IN OTHER WORDS, GOD HERE REMINDED HIS PEOPLE THAT THEY COULD NOT RIGHTLY THINK SOMETHING LIKE “WE CAN PROBABLY GET AWAY WITH DOING THIS IN OUR GENERATION BECAUSE GOD PUNISHED AN EARLIER GENERATION FOR DOING IT, SO THE PUNISHMENT FOR IT HAS ALREADY BEEN GIVEN, AND WE DON’T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT IT.”**

**MOSES AGAIN RAISES HIS GREAT CONCERN: WILL GOD GO WITH ISRAEL? (34:8–9)**

**34:8 THREE INSTRUCTIVE POINTS MAY BE TAKEN FROM THIS BRIEF VERSE. FIRST, NOTE THAT MOSES’ NATURAL AND IMMEDIATE (“AT ONCE”) RESPONSE TO BEING IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD WAS TO WORSHIP (“BOWED TO THE GROUND … AND WORSHIPED”). WHEN HUMAN BEINGS ARE WHERE GOD IS, THEY OUGHT TO HONOR HIM BY THEIR THOUGHTS AND ACTIONS. IN THE OLD COVENANT HIS SPECIAL PRESENCE WAS LOCALIZED FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF HUMAN PERCEPTION, SO PEOPLE WORSHIPED HIM WHERE THEY UNDERSTOOD HIM TO HAVE SHOWN HIMSELF APPROACHABLE: EITHER AT HIS VISIBLE SANCTUARY (SINAI, TABERNACLE, TENT OF MEETING, TEMPLE) OR WHERE HE MANIFESTED HIS GLORY THROUGH A CLOUD (AS HERE). IN THE NEW COVENANT HE PROMISES TO BE PRESENT WHEREVER PEOPLE GATHER FOR WORSHIP, SOMETHING AKIN TO THE OLD COVENANT PROMISE TO INHABIT THE TABERNACLE WHEN IT WAS PROPERLY ERECTED AND FURNISHED BUT MUCH DEMOCRATIZED BECAUSE GATHERING FOR WORSHIP CAN TAKE PLACE AT MILLIONS OF LOCATIONS AT ONCE, WHEREAS IN THE OLD COVENANT IT TOOK PLACE LEGALLY ONLY AT ONE. MOREOVER, IN THE NEW COVENANT GOD ACTUALLY INDWELLS BELIEVERS THROUGH HIS SPIRIT, THUS MAKING A WORSHIPFUL APPROACH TO ALL OF LIFE APPROPRIATE. THIS WORSHIPFUL APPROACH IS NOT THE SAME AS FULL-BLOWN CORPORATE WORSHIP BUT AN ELEVATION OF THE SIGNIFICANCE OF DAILY LIFE FOR THE OBEDIENT BELIEVER AS OPPOSED TO THE NONBELIEVER. SECOND, NOTE THAT FOR MOSES WORSHIP PRECEDED APPEAL. HE WOULD CERTAINLY AGAIN PRESS HIS DEEP DESIRE FOR GOD’S PRESENCE ON THE JOURNEY TO CANAAN, BUT FIRST HE SHOWED GOD HIS PRIORITIES: ADORATION AHEAD OF SUPPLICATION. THIRD, WORSHIP IS AN ACT THAT EXALTS THE ONE BEING WORSHIPED BUT SEEKS TO DRAW NO FAVORABLE ATTENTION TO THE WORSHIPER. MOSES “BOWED TO THE GROUND” FOLLOWING THE STANDARD WAY OF HIS CULTURE: REDUCING HIS PROFILE AND PLACING HIMSELF AT THE MERCY OF THE ONE ABOVE HIM, THAT IS, INDICATING HIS UNWORTHINESS AND SUBMISSION. WORSHIP THAT DRAWS ATTENTION TO SELF, IN EITHER THE OLD OR THE NEW COVENANT, IS FLAWED. 34:9 COUNTING ON THE MERCIFUL CHARACTERISTICS THAT GOD DESCRIBED OF HIMSELF IN VV. 6–7, ESPECIALLY THE WILLINGNESS OF FORGIVE, AND ALSO COUNTING ON THOSE QUALITIES TO ABSOLVE THE ISRAELITES OF THE DANGER OF THE (JUST) PUNISHMENTS GOD MIGHT WELL HAVE IMPOSED UPON THEM AS DESCRIBED IN V. 7, MOSES CONTINUED THE APPEAL FOR THE PRESENCE OF GOD THAT HE BEGAN IN EARNEST ALREADY IN 32:11–13 (WITH THE PRAYER TO SPARE ISRAEL FROM DEATH) AND HAD REITERATED SEVERAL TIMES ALREADY (E.G., 32:31–32; 33:12–16, 18). IN HIS FAVOR IN THIS APPEAL WAS GOD’S RECORD OF REASSURANCE ALREADY WELL ESTABLISHED (32:33–34; 33:2, 14, 17, 19–23). IN OTHER WORDS, EACH TIME SO FAR SINCE THE INCIDENT OF THE GOLDEN BULL, GOD HAD RESPONDED FAVORABLY TO MOSES’ INTERCESSION ON BEHALF OF ISRAEL. AS MOSES HAD ASKED FOR A LITTLE MORE CERTAINTY OF GOD’S FULL PRESENCE EACH TIME, GOD HAD RESPONDED FAVORABLY—MUCH IN THE NATURE OF ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN BARGAINING STYLE, WHERE THE FINAL GOAL IN MIND IS REACHED BY SMALL STEPS RATHER THAN BY AN OUTRIGHT REQUEST FROM THE START FOR WHAT IS SOUGHT. HE NOW PRESSED THE CASE TO ITS FINAL FULL LEVEL: HE ASKED GOD FOR TWO GUARANTEES OF GRACE: (1) THAT HE WOULD GO IN ISRAEL’S VERY MIDST WITHOUT RESTRICTION ON THE DEGREE OF HIS PRESENCE (“LET THE LORD GO WITH US”) AND (2) THAT HE WOULD FORGIVE THE PEOPLE’S SIN SO THAT THEY WOULD NO LONGER BE UNDER DANGER OF JUDGMENT AND COVENANT REJECTION (“FORGIVE OUR WICKEDNESS AND OUR SIN”). MOSES THUS ASKED FOR NOTHING LESS THAN COMPLETE ACCEPTANCE OF THE NATION (“TAKE US AS YOUR INHERITANCE”). THE VERB USED HERE FOR “TAKE AS INHERITANCE” IS NĀḤAL, WHICH HAS ALREADY APPEARED IN 23:30 AND 32:13 IN REFERENCE TO ISRAEL’S POSSESSION/INHERITANCE OF THE LAND OF CANAAN AS A FULFILLMENT OF THE PROMISES TO THE PATRIARCHS AND IN ITS NOUN FORM NAḤĂLĀH AS THE PROMISED LAND OF INHERITANCE IN THE SONG OF MOSES (15:17). BUT HERE THE EMPHASIS IS NOT ON THE LAND ISRAEL WOULD INHERIT BUT ON ISRAEL AS THE INHERITOR OF STEPHEN YAHWEH’S FAVOR AND PROTECTION—ISRAEL AS THE FIRSTBORN SON, THE PRIME HEIR OF THE BLESSINGS OF THE FATHER. THIS IS AN EXAMPLE OF THE WAY COVENANT RELATIONSHIPS HAVE AS THEIR BACKDROP KINSHIP RELATIONSHIPS SO THAT COVENANT LOYALTY (ḤESED) IS EQUIVALENT TO FAMILY MEMBERSHIP. MOSES COULD MAKE THIS REQUEST IN SPITE OF THE FACT THAT HE ACKNOWLEDGED ISRAEL AS A “STIFF-NECKED” (STUBBORN AND INCLINED TO REBELLION) PEOPLE. HOW? BECAUSE OF GOD’S FORGIVING NATURE, WHICH CAN DISMISS THE GUILT OF EVEN THE MOST REBELLIOUS SINNERS.**

**GOD’S ANSWER: KEEP MY COVENANT AND I WILL GO WITH YOU (34:10–11)**

**34:10 THE ASSERTIONS OF THIS VERSE ARE GENERALLY PARALLEL TO THOSE OF 19:4–6. MERCIFULLY, GOD AGREED TO FULL COVENANT RESTORATION BY MEANS OF A REMAKING OF THE SINAI COVENANT—A REINSTITUTION, NOT A REVISION. THIS WAS DECIDEDLY NOT A NEW COVENANT, AS GOD HAD ALREADY MADE CLEAR IN V. 1 BY REFERRING TO “THE WORDS THAT WERE ON THE FIRST TABLETS,” THIS IS ALSO CLEAR IN V. 28 BY HIS REFERENCE TO “THE WORDS [COMMANDMENTS]” AND IN THE TEN SAMPLE COMMANDMENTS THAT ARE QUOTED IN VV. 14–26, AS SAMPLE REPETITIONS OF COMMANDMENTS ALREADY GIVEN IN THE ORIGINAL COVENANT STATEMENT OF CHAPS. 20–23. BUT THIS WAS NOT MERELY THE SORT OF COVENANT RENEWAL THAT WOULD TAKE PLACE AT VARIOUS FUTURE TIMES IN ISRAEL’S HISTORY EITHER. THIS WAS, RATHER, A DIVINE RESTORATION OF A BROKEN COVENANT, ONE THAT HAD BEEN MADE TEMPORARILY NULL AND VOID BY ISRAEL’S CORPORATE RETURN TO IDOLATRY (AND THEREFORE AUTOMATICALLY POLYTHEISM, SINCE THERE WAS NO MONOTHEISTIC IDOLATRY IN THE ANCIENT WORLD) AS DESCRIBED IN CHAP. 32. THE COVENANT NEEDED TO BE REINSTATED IF IT WAS TO BE OF HELP TO ISRAEL, AND STEPHEN YAHWEH SHOWED HIS MERCIFUL AND PATIENT NATURE AS DESCRIBED BY HIMSELF SO MAGISTERIALLY IN VV. 6–7 BY TAKING THE RESPONSIBILITY UPON HIMSELF TO REINSTITUTE IT FOR THE BENEFIT OF HIS ONCE AND NOW AGAIN COVENANT PEOPLE. THEREFORE, GOD USED THE PRESENT TENSE STATEMENT, “I AM MAKING A COVENANT WITH YOU.” HE WAS MAKING THE SAME SINAI COVENANT ONCE AGAIN, BUT HE WAS INDEED MAKING IT ANEW, REMAKING IT, NOT JUST REMINDING THE PEOPLE OF THE CONTENT OF IT. AS MIGHT BE EXPECTED IN THE CASE OF A COVENANT REINSTITUTION, ALL OF THE EXPECTED FEATURES OF THE COVENANT STRUCTURE ARE REPRESENTED IN SOME FASHION IN THIS CHAPTER. IN KEEPING WITH THE SORT OF IDENTIFICATION OF PARTIES TO THE COVENANT NORMALLY FOUND IN A COVENANT PREAMBLE, GOD IDENTIFIED HIMSELF IN V. 6 (“THE LORD, THE LORD” [“STEPHEN YAHWEH, STEPHEN YAHWEH”]) AND ALSO IDENTIFIED ISRAEL EXPLICITLY AS THE OTHER PARTY (“YOUR PEOPLE … THE PEOPLE YOU LIVE AMONG,” V. 10; ALSO “GOD OF ISRAEL,” V. 23; “COVENANT WITH ISRAEL,” V. 27). AS REGARDS THE PROLOGUE (A BRIEF ACCOUNTING OF THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE PARTIES TO EACH OTHER), GOD’S DESCRIPTION OF HIMSELF IN VV. 6–7 CONSTITUTES THE SORT OF THING FOUND IN A COVENANT PROLOGUE, AS DOES MOSES’ DESCRIPTION OF ISRAEL IN VV. 8–9. THE STIPULATIONS ARE REPRESENTED BY THE TEN KEY SAMPLE LAWS IN VV. 14–26, AND THESE ARE INTRODUCED AS WELL BY SUMMARY COMMANDS TO OBEY THE COVENANT IN VV. 11–12. THE SANCTIONS ARE INDICATED BY SUCH PROMISES OF BLESSING AS THAT OF V. 10 (“I WILL DO WONDERS … AWESOME IS THE WORK THAT I … WILL DO FOR YOU”), THE DRIVING OUT OF THE CANAANITES (VV. 11, 24), AND THE ENLARGEMENT OF TERRITORY AND PROTECTION FROM ENEMIES (V. 24). IMPLIED CURSES APPEAR WITHIN V. 12 (“THEY WILL BE A SNARE AMONG YOU”), V. 14 (“A JEALOUS GOD” [MEANING ONE WHO WILL PUNISH IF DISOBEYED]), AND V. 15 (“THEY WILL INVITE YOU AND YOU WILL EAT …”). THERE IS NO SPECIFIC LIST OF WITNESSES HERE TO THE COVENANT, BUT THE PROMISE OF BLESSING OFFERS WITNESSES TO THE BLESSINGS THAT THE ISRAELITES WOULD ENJOY (V. 10). THE REASON FOR THIS ARRANGEMENT AS REGARDS THE USUAL INCLUSION OF FORMAL WITNESSES IN A COVENANT DESCRIPTION IS PRESUMABLY THAT IN THIS AS IN MOST BIBLICAL COVENANT CONTEXTS, GOD HIMSELF IS THE ULTIMATE WITNESS TO HIS OWN COVENANT; HE NEEDS NO OTHER WITNESS, WHETHER DIVINE OR HUMAN OR MATERIAL. THE LAST OF THE SIX COVENANT STRUCTURAL ELEMENTS, THAT OF THE DOCUMENT CLAUSE, IS INDEED WELL REPRESENTED IN THIS PASSAGE, IN VV. 1, 4 BY WAY OF DESCRIPTION OF THE PREPARATION OF THE TABLETS FOR THE WRITING OF THE COVENANT SO THAT THE PARTIES MIGHT EACH HAVE COPIES, AND ALSO IN V. 27 (“WRITE DOWN THESE WORDS, FOR IN ACCORDANCE WITH THESE WORDS I HAVE MADE A COVENANT WITH YOU AND WITH ISRAEL”). THIS VERSE DESCRIBES AS WELL GOD’S SPECIAL CONCERN FOR THE WITNESS OF HIS PEOPLE TO HIS SOVEREIGN NATURE AS THEY LIVE FOR HIM BY KEEPING HIS COVENANT IN THE MIDST OF NONBELIEVERS. THIS CONCERN TAKES THE FORM OF A WILLINGNESS TO DO GREAT THINGS FOR HIS PEOPLE AS AN EVIDENCE OF HIS GREATNESS (“BEFORE ALL YOUR PEOPLE I WILL DO WONDERS NEVER BEFORE DONE IN ANY NATION IN ALL THE WORLD. THE PEOPLE YOU LIVE AMONG WILL SEE HOW AWESOME IS THE WORK THAT I, THE LORD, WILL DO FOR YOU”). THE PEOPLE COULD NOT, HOWEVER, FIND A GROUND FOR SELF-CONFIDENCE IN THIS PROMISE; WHAT GOD WOULD DO WAS HONOR HIMSELF THROUGH THE GREAT THINGS HE DID FOR ISRAEL RATHER THAN THROUGH THE GREAT THINGS ISRAEL DID BY WHICH OTHER PEOPLE WERE IMPRESSED. 34:11 A REQUIREMENT PRECEDES A PROMISE IN THIS VERSE. THE REQUIREMENT IS THAT OF COVENANT OBEDIENCE—THE SINE QUA NON OF ANY EXPECTATION FOR DIVINE BLESSING IN THE LONG TERM. “OBEY WHAT I COMMAND YOU TODAY” IS NOTHING LESS THAN A DEMAND FOR COMPLETE ADHERENCE TO THE COMPLETE SINAI COVENANT AS IT IS REINSTATED BY A MERCIFUL GOD ON THIS OCCASION. WHAT MOSES AND THE ISRAELITES WOULD ESPECIALLY DESIRE AS A FIRST SORT OF BLESSING ONCE THEY REACHED THE PROMISED LAND WAS THEN ADDED AS A PROMISE: THE EXPULSION OF THE GROUPS CURRENTLY OCCUPYING THE PROMISED LAND, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE ORIGINAL COVENANT GUARANTEES TO ABRAHAM. THIS VERSE PICKS UP MUCH OF THE LANGUAGE OF 23:23 (“MY ANGEL WILL GO AHEAD OF YOU AND BRING YOU INTO THE LAND OF THE AMORITES, HITTITES, PERIZZITES, CANAANITES, HIVITES AND JEBUSITES, AND I WILL WIPE THEM OUT”) AND 23:28 (“I WILL SEND THE HORNET AHEAD OF YOU TO DRIVE THE HIVITES, CANAANITES AND HITTITES OUT OF YOUR WAY”), SINCE IT IS PART OF THE INTRODUCTION TO THE RESTATEMENT OF THE COVENANT THROUGH VARIOUS SAMPLINGS FROM OR RESTATEMENTS OF SELECTED VERSES IN 20:2–23:33.**

**WARNINGS AGAINST COVENANTS/TREATIES WITH THE INHABITANTS OF THE PROMISED LAND (34:12–16)**

**THIS SECTION (34:12–16) AND THE ONE THAT FOLLOWS (34:17–26) REPRESENT THE STIPULATIONS, BLESSINGS, AND WARNINGS IN THE REINSTITUTED COVENANT. SINCE THE ORIGINAL COVENANT TEXT WAS STATED IN CHAPS. 20–23 (FOLLOWED BY THE RATIFICATION CEREMONY IN CHAP. 24 AND THEREAFTER TABERNACLE/WORSHIP PLANS), IT IS NATURAL TO REGARD THE TEN WORDS (20:2–17) AS THE OPENING OF THE TEXT OF THE COVENANT PROPER AND THE ENDING OF THE COVENANT CODE (23:12–33) AS ITS CLOSING. THE TEN WORDS/COMMANDMENTS WILL BE REPEATED ON THE NEW TABLETS (34:1, 4), AND THE ENDING OF THE COVENANT CODE IS REPEATED HERE, THOUGH NOT WITH EXACTLY THE SAME WORDING. THUS THROUGH AN INCLUSIO THE ENTIRE ORIGINAL COVENANT FORMULATION OF CHAPS. 20–24 IS RENEWED—LEAVING ASIDE, OF COURSE, THE INSTRUCTIONS FOR FORMULATING THE TABERNACLE/WORSHIP IMPLEMENTS (CHAPS. 25–31) SINCE THESE REFER TO THINGS NOT YET CONSTRUCTED OR PUT INTO PRACTICE AND THEREFORE NOT BREAKABLE AS PART OF THE COVENANT BREAKING THAT TOOK PLACE WITH THE GOLDEN BULL/CALF INCIDENT OF CHAP. 32. 34:12 THE WARNING HERE FOLLOWS CLOSELY THE THEME OF 23:32–33, WHICH READS, “DO NOT MAKE A COVENANT WITH THEM OR WITH THEIR GODS. DO NOT LET THEM LIVE IN YOUR LAND, OR THEY WILL CAUSE YOU TO SIN AGAINST ME, BECAUSE THE WORSHIP OF THEIR GODS WILL CERTAINLY BE A SNARE TO YOU.” THE PRESENT VERSE LIKEWISE WARNS AGAINST MAKING A COVENANT (“TREATY”; SEE BELOW) WITH THOSE “WHO LIVE IN THE LAND” AND THE DANGER THAT DOING SO WOULD END UP BEING A “SNARE”—A MEANS OF ENTRAPMENT INTO SINFUL COVENANT BREAKING—THAT WOULD LEAD TO DISASTER. IN OTHER WORDS, 34:12 MAY BE REGARDED AS A SOMEWHAT ABBREVIATED RESTATEMENT OF 23:32–33. THE WORD “TREATY” IS USED HERE MISLEADINGLY BY THE NIV TO TRANSLATE THE SAME HEBREW WORD191 RENDERED AS “COVENANT” IN THE NIV OF 23:32. BOTH VERSES, IN FACT, ARE PROHIBITING THE SAME THING: ANY SORT OF COVENANT WITH EITHER THE PEOPLE OF THE LAND OF CANAAN OR THEIR FALSE GODS. NO COVENANT OTHER THAN THE ONE STEPHEN YAHWEH WAS GIVING HIS PEOPLE COULD BE ENTERED INTO BY THEM; THEIR RELIANCE UPON HIM FOR BLESSING AND BENEFIT MUST BE ABSOLUTE AND EXCLUSIVE. 34:13–14 THESE TWO COMMANDS, TO DESTROY EVERYTHING CONNECTED WITH IDOLATRY AND TO WORSHIP NO OTHER GODS BUT STEPHEN YAHWEH, ARE CHIASTICALLY REPHRASED RESTATEMENTS OF 23:24, “DO NOT BOW DOWN BEFORE THEIR GODS OR WORSHIP THEM OR FOLLOW THEIR PRACTICES. YOU MUST DEMOLISH THEM AND BREAK THEIR SACRED STONES TO PIECES.” HERE OCCURS THE FIRST MENTION IN THE OLD TESTAMENT OF “ASHERAH POLES” OR SACRED POLES/POSTS [NRSV AND OTHER VERSIONS]. IN THIS CONTEXT, AS IN DEUT 7:5; 12:3; 16:21, THE MASCULINE PLURAL OF ĂŠĒR PROBABLY REFERS TO ANY SORT OF CARVED WOODEN STRUCTURE THAT WAS USED AS A DIVINE SYMBOL OF SOME SORT IN PAGAN RELIGION IN THAT DAY RATHER THAN BEING LIMITED ONLY TO ASHERAH POLES, THAT IS, POLE-BASED CARVED REPRESENTATIONS OF THE GODDESS ASHERAH, THE CONSORT OF THE CANAANITE WEATHER-GOD BAAL AND A FERTILITY BENEFACTRESS ACCORDING TO LOCAL CANAANITE THINKING. WHAT ISRAEL HAD TO DO IF THEY WERE TO KEEP THE COVENANT WAS NOT AGAIN TO HAVE ANY OF THE ACCOUTREMENTS OF IDOLATRY—ALTARS, SACRED STONES, SACRED POLES/POSTS—OR ANY OTHER GOD THAN STEPHEN YAHWEH. THE NIV TRANSLATION OF V. 14 (“DO NOT WORSHIP ANY OTHER GOD, FOR THE LORD, WHOSE NAME IS JEALOUS, IS A JEALOUS GOD”) MAY BE CORRECT AND CERTAINLY REFLECTS THE WAY THE LANGUAGE OF THE VERSE USUALLY HAS BEEN UNDERSTOOD BY TRANSLATORS. NEVERTHELESS, WE SUGGEST THAT THE GRAMMAR OF THE HEBREW WOULD MORE LIKELY YIELD THE FOLLOWING TRANSLATION FOR THIS VERSE: “YOU MUST WORSHIP NO OTHER GOD, BECAUSE STEPHEN YAHWEH IS JEALOUS FOR HIS NAME. HE IS A JEALOUS GOD.” REGARDING THE CONCEPT OF STEPHEN YAHWEH’S BEING A JEALOUS GOD, SEE COMMENTS ON 20:5, WHERE THE LANGUAGE FIRST APPEARS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT. THIS IS THE ONLY VERSE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT IN WHICH MENTION IS MADE OF HIS BEING JEALOUS FOR HIS NAME, THE MEANING OF WHICH EXPRESSION IS SIMPLY THAT HE GUARDS HIS NAME’S SIGNIFICANCE—IT POINTS TO HIS NATURE, CHARACTER, AND UNIQUENESS AS THE ONLY TRUE GOD—AND WILL NOT ALLOW IT TO BE PROFANED BY IDOLATRY OR ANY OTHER MISUSE. 34:15 THIS COMMAND REFLECTS 23:32 (“DO NOT MAKE A COVENANT WITH THEM OR WITH THEIR GODS”) IN A SHORTENED AND SIMPLIFIED FORM BUT WITH THE SAME ESSENTIAL MESSAGE: THE ISRAELITES HAD TO REGARD STEPHEN YAHWEH’S COVENANT WITH THEM AS ABSOLUTELY EXCLUSIVE IF THEY WERE TO BENEFIT FROM HIS SALVATION. IF THEY MADE ANY SORT OF COVENANT RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER GODS OR WITH THE CANAANITES, WHO WORSHIPED OTHER GODS, THEY WOULD VIOLATE THE TERMS OF HIS COVENANT AND SUFFER THE TERRIBLE CONSEQUENCES. SOME INDIVIDUALS CHOOSE TO FOLLOW A GIVEN RELIGIOUS PATH BY REASON OF CAREFUL, SYSTEMATIC INVESTIGATION OF THE EVIDENCE AND AN EVALUATION OF ALL OTHER OPTIONS. BUT MOST PEOPLE DO NOT DO ANY SUCH THING. RATHER, THEY IMITATE WHAT OTHERS DO, RESPONDING TO INVITATIONS, FORMAL OR INFORMAL, TO JOIN OTHERS AROUND THEM IN WHATEVER RELIGIOUS PRACTICES SEEM DOMINANT. IF THE ISRAELITES MADE THE MISTAKE OF BINDING THEMSELVES IN ANY SORT OF COVENANT WITH ANY CANAANITE GROUP, OR ALL THE CANAANITE GROUPS, THEY COULD EXPECT THE NATURAL CONSEQUENCE: A COMFORTABLE SOCIAL AND POLITICAL INTERACTION, FOLLOWED BY A COMFORTABLE WILLINGNESS TO CONSIDER THE VALIDITY AND EFFICACY OF THE CANAANITE LIFESTYLE, INCLUDING ITS WORSHIP PRACTICES, FOLLOWED BY AN EMBRACING OF CANAANITE RELIGION. SUCH THINGS HAPPENED AGAIN AND AGAIN IN ANCIENT ISRAEL, IN FACT. ONE NEEDS ONLY TO LOOK AT THE RELIGIOUS SITUATION IN THE DAYS OF THE JUDGES OR IN JOSIAH’S TIME (2 KGS 22–23) OR IN EZEKIEL’S (EZEK 8:9FF.) TO SEE HOW FREQUENTLY AND THOROUGHLY THE ISRAELITES TURNED AWAY FROM ORTHODOX FAITH AND TOWARD CANAANITE IDOLATRY. WORSHIP OF OTHER GODS IS HERE CALLED PROSTITUTION (ZNH), A METAPHORICAL WAY OF DESCRIBING INFIDELITY TO GOD’S COVENANT. SINCE PROSTITUTES ARE BY DEFINITION FLAGRANTLY UNFAITHFUL TO ANY ONE PERSON BUT SELL THEMSELVES TO VARIOUS PEOPLE FOR GAIN, A PEOPLE THAT SEEKS BLESSING THROUGH VARIOUS GODS AND IS NOT RELIGIOUSLY PURE AND DEVOTED TO ONE GOD CAN BE LIKENED TO A PROSTITUTE. THUS, THE SCRIPTURE OFTEN EMPLOYS THIS METAPHOR FOR COVENANT INFIDELITY THROUGH IDOLATRY AND/OR THE VARIOUS PRACTICES ASSOCIATED WITH IDOLATRY. ONE OF THE STRONG ATTRACTIONS OF IDOLATRY FOR ISRAELITES WAS THE FEASTING AND REVELRY ASSOCIATED WITH PAGAN IDOLATRY. THEY HAD ALREADY SHOWN THEMSELVES ENAMORED OF SUCH ACTIVITIES (32:5–6) AND WOULD SURELY FIND IT HARD TO RESIST JOINING THE CANAANITES IN WHAT WAS OTHERWISE FORBIDDEN. INDEED, THE STORY OF ISRAELITE IDOLATRY AT BAAL-PEOR (NUM 25) IS FURTHER PROOF THAT EVEN THE GENERATION BORN IN THE WILDERNESS WOULD FALL EASY PREY TO SUCH TEMPTATIONS. BEING INVITED TO EAT AT A SACRIFICE WAS LIKE BEING INVITED OUT IN MODERN TIMES TO DINE AT A FINE RESTAURANT: THE INVITATION WOULD BE HARD TO TURN DOWN, AND REFUSING PROBABLY WOULD EVEN BE THOUGHT SOMEWHAT IMPOLITE. SO, GOD WARNED THE ISRAELITES STRICTLY AGAINST THE WHOLE ORBIT OF IDOLATRY, KNOWING HOW DESIROUS HIS PEOPLE WOULD NATURALLY BE OF ACCEPTING SUCH INVITATIONS. 34:16 INTERMARRIAGE IN THE BIBLE IS NEVER DISCOURAGED ON ETHNIC GROUNDS, BUT RELIGIOUS INTERMARRIAGE IS CONSISTENTLY DISCOURAGED ON RELIGIOUS GROUNDS. IN OTHER WORDS, THERE IS NOTHING NEGATIVE ASSOCIATED WITH THE MIXING OF RACES, BUT GREAT DANGER ATTENDS THE MIXING OF RELIGIONS. WHAT EVENTUALLY BECAME A SEVERE PROBLEM BLOCKING PROGRESS IN THE JUDEAN RESTORATION WAS A RISK ALREADY FOR THE ISRAELITES AT THIS EARLY STAGE IN THEIR HISTORY AS A PEOPLE BECAUSE THEY HAD GROWN UP AMONG VARIED ETHNIC GROUPS IN EGYPT, WERE CAMPING AT MOUNT SINAI WITH VARIES ETHNIC GROUPS IN THEIR MIDST, AND COULD EASILY ASSUME THAT THERE WERE FEW HAZARDS ATTENDANT TO MIXING WITH OTHER NATIONAL GROUPS. OVER TIME YOUNG MEN AND YOUNG WOMEN WOULD MEET EACH OTHER AND ASK THEIR PARENTS TO ARRANGE THEIR MARRIAGES (AS IN THE PROMINENT EXAMPLE OF SAMPSON IN JUDG 14:1–10), SO IT WOULD BE ALMOST INEVITABLE THAT AS INTERNATIONAL MARRIAGES THEN TOOK PLACE, THOSE MARRIAGES WOULD BRING IDOLATRY INTO ISRAEL. IT HAPPENED THAT WAY WITH SOLOMON (1 KGS 11:3–4) BECAUSE MARRIAGES IN BIBLE TIMES, AS TODAY, WERE RARELY BLOCKED AND OFTEN NOT EVEN MUCH DISCOURAGED FOR REASONS OF RELIGIOUS INCOMPATIBILITY. BUT STEPHEN YAHWEH INSISTED OTHERWISE HERE, KNOWING THE INCLINATIONS OF HIS PEOPLE AND THE POWER OF ROMANTIC ATTRACTION TO OVERCOME INADEQUATE RELIGIOUS CONVICTION. OF PARTICULAR SIGNIFICANCE WAS THAT THROUGHOUT THE BIBLICAL WORLD, MARRIAGE USUALLY INVOLVED A WOMAN’S LEAVING HER HOME AND FAMILY AND MOVING TO HER HUSBAND’S ANCESTRAL HOME TO BECOME A MEMBER OF HIS FAMILY. IF THE RELIGIOUS CONVICTIONS AND HABITS OF A NON-ISRAELITE WOMAN WERE, AS WOULD BE EXPECTED BY THE TIME, SHE REACHED MARRIAGEABLE AGE, WELL ESTABLISHED, SHE WOULD IMPORT THEM INTO ISRAEL UPON GETTING MARRIED TO AN ISRAELITE AND GOING INTO ISRAEL TO LIVE WITHIN HIS HOUSEHOLD. THIS EXPLAINS THE WORDING OF THE WARNING IN THIS VERSE, “WHEN YOU CHOOSE … DAUGHTERS AS WIVES FOR YOUR SONS … THEY WILL LEAD YOUR SONS …” IT WAS NORMALLY THE WOMEN COMING INTO ISRAEL THROUGH MARRIAGE THAT BROUGHT IDOLATRY WITH THEM. THE WOMEN LEAVING ISRAEL TO MARRY INTO NON-ISRAELITE NATIONS POSED LITTLE THREAT TO THE PURITY OF ISRAEL’S RELIGION. SINCE ISRAELITE MEN STAYED PUT WHEN THEY MARRIED, THEY WERE NOT NORMALLY THE SOURCE OF THE THREAT EITHER. AGAIN, IN THIS VERSE WE FIND A SECOND USE OF THE METAPHOR OF PROSTITUTION FOR COVENANT INFIDELITY (CF. V. 15). THESE TWO VERSES BEGIN THE METAPHOR IN THE BIBLICAL CORPUS, WHERE IT APPEARS REPEATEDLY UNTIL REV 19:2. THIS VERSE HAS NO SPECIFIC PARALLELS EARLIER IN EXODUS, EVEN IN CHAP. 23 OTHER THAN CONTINUING THE THEMES OF 23:32. IT MAY THEREFORE BE CONSIDERED SOMEWHAT SPECIAL TO THE PRESENT CONTEXT, EXPLAINING HOW IDOLATRY MADE INROADS INTO ISRAEL IF INTENTIONAL EFFORTS TO STOP IT WERE NOT DILIGENTLY UNDERTAKEN AT ALL TIMES.**

**RENEWAL OF THE COVENANT WITH A “DECALOGUE” OF SAMPLE LAWS (34:17–26)**

**THESE COMMANDMENTS SAMPLE FROM THE COVENANT CODE OF EXOD 20–23, PARTICULARLY FROM CHAP. 23, AS NOTED ABOVE. THERE ARE TEN OF THEM (IN THE MANNER THEY ARE MOST NATURALLY AND THUS MOST USUALLY COUNTED, I.E., WITH TWO COMMANDMENTS IN V. 25), AND THEY ARE ALL WORDED IN APODICTIC STYLE, JUST AS ARE THE ORIGINAL TEN WORDS/COMMANDMENTS OF CHAP. 20.**

**34:17 “DO NOT MAKE CAST IDOLS” IS AN ABBREVIATED REITERATION OF THE COMMANDMENT IN EXOD 20:4, “YOU SHALL NOT MAKE FOR YOURSELF AN IDOL IN THE FORM OF ANYTHING IN HEAVEN ABOVE OR ON THE EARTH BENEATH OR IN THE WATERS BELOW.” THE GOLDEN YOUNG BULL AARON MADE IN CHAP. 32 WAS THE FIRST INSTANCE OF A “CAST IDOL,” SO THE PROHIBITION AGAINST IDOLATRY IN THE PRESENT CONTEXT LOGICALLY EMPHASIZES THAT SORT OF IDOL SINCE IT WOULD BE THE KIND TO WHICH THE ISRAELITES WOULD BE ESPECIALLY ATTRACTED FROM THIS POINT FORWARD. INDEED, THE PRECEDENT OF THE INCIDENT IN CHAP. 32 SURELY INFLUENCED JEROBOAM I’S DECISION TO COPY WHAT AARON HAD FIRST MADE IN THE WILDERNESS AT SINAI AND MAKE TWO SUCH CAST IDOLS THAT CAUSED NORTHERN ISRAEL TO SIN INSTITUTIONALLY EVER AFTER (1 KGS 12:28). 34:18 THIS VERSE REPEATS EXOD 23:15 ALMOST WORD-FOR-WORD. THE DIFFERENCES ARE JUST ENOUGH TO SHOW THAT THE COMMANDMENT IS BEING STATED FRESHLY RATHER THAN BEING MERELY A LITERARY COPYING FROM 23:15. WHY INCLUDE THIS PARTICULAR EMPHASIS AGAIN—RESTATING YET ONE MORE TIME THE SCHEDULE FOR THE EXODUS-COMMEMORATING PASSOVER (AND LATER IN THE PRESENT CONTEXT FOR THE OTHER MAIN FESTIVALS)? THE ANSWER IS SIMPLY THAT WHAT THE ISRAELITES HAD DONE IN THE CASE OF THE CAST IDOL OF THE YOUNG BULL WOULD TEND TO CONSTITUTE—FOR SOME AT LEAST—A PRECEDENT AS A FESTIVAL. IN ORDER TO OBVIATE ANY POSSIBILITY THAT THE PEOPLE MIGHT END UP THINKING THEY HAD A RIGHT TO HOLD A “GOLDEN BULL FESTIVAL” ANNUALLY, ANY LEGITIMATE CHANCE TO DO SO IS HERE DENIED. AGAIN, THE NEED FOR SUCH A SPECIFICALLY WORDED PROHIBITION WAS SHOWN EVENTUALLY IN THE FACT THAT, DESPITE THIS KIND OF LAW, THE GOLDEN BULL INCIDENT OF CHAP. 32 HAD INDEED FORMED A PRECEDENT IN THE COMMON CONSCIOUSNESS FOR THE “SIN OF JEROBOAM.” THE COVENANT ANTICIPATED THE SIN AND OUTLAWED IT; THE LATER NATION SHOWED ITS OUTLAW SINFULNESS BY DOING JUST WHAT THE COVENANT HAD LONG BANNED. 34:19–20A THE STATEMENTS IN THESE VERSES EXPAND SOMEWHAT ON THE MORE SUCCINCT LAW IN 13:13, “REDEEM WITH A LAMB EVERY FIRSTBORN DONKEY, BUT IF YOU DO NOT REDEEM IT, BREAK ITS NECK. REDEEM EVERY FIRSTBORN AMONG YOUR SONS.” THUS, JUST AS THE PRIOR LAW (34:18) REFERENCES COMMANDMENTS FROM CHAP. 12, THIS ONE REFERENCES A COMMAND FROM CHAP. 13—SHOWING THAT WHILE THE NEW “DECALOGUE” DERIVES MAINLY FROM MATERIAL EARLIER IN CHAPS. 20–23 AND ESPECIALLY CHAP. 23, IT IS NOT LIMITED TO THAT CORPUS BUT SEEKS TO REITERATE, THROUGH SAMPLING, ANY AND ALL DIVINE COVENANT REQUIREMENTS FROM EARLIER IN THE BOOK. REDEMPTION LAWS REPRESENT GOD’S KINDNESS TO HIS PEOPLE. BY RIGHTS HE OWNED EVERYTHING THAT WAS BORN FIRST AMONG ANY GROUP, WHETHER ANIMAL OR HUMAN, JUST AS THE FIRSTFRUITS OF WHAT WAS GROWN WERE ALSO HIS. BUT ALTHOUGH HE DID INSIST ON RECEIVING THE FIRST OF ALL THAT WAS HARVESTED FROM CROPS, HE DID NOT IN FACT WANT HIS PEOPLE TO GIVE AWAY TO HIM EVERY PERSON OR ANIMAL THAT WAS BORN FIRST. SOME OF THESE WERE BEST KEPT BY THEIR FAMILIES OR THEIR OWNERS. SO, ALTHOUGH THEY TECHNICALLY BELONGED TO GOD AND OUGHT IN THEORY SIMPLY TO BE GIVEN TO HIM, HE WOULD ALLOW THEM TO BE “REPURCHASED” FROM HIM BY A PAYMENT, AND HE WOULD RECEIVE THE PAYMENT IN LIEU OF THE ANIMAL OR PERSON. SUCH WAS THE BASIC IDEA BEHIND REDEMPTION LAWS, AS INDICATED BY THE LANGUAGE OF V. 19. IN THE CASE OF THE PRESENT LAW, THREE INSTANCES OF HOW TO HANDLE REDEMPTION SITUATIONS ARE THEN INDICATED PARADIGMATICALLY IN V. 20, AS SUFFICIENT TO REPRESENT ALL SIMILAR CASES. SINCE DONKEYS [ASSES] WERE NOT NEEDED AT THE TABERNACLE/TEMPLE BUT WERE BEASTS OF BURDEN THAT WOULD BE MUCH BETTER PUT TO USE BY INDIVIDUAL FAMILIES ON THEIR FARMS, GOD ALLOWED THEM TO BE REDEEMED THROUGH A SUBSTITUTED LAMB OR GOAT KID. FEMALE DONKEYS WOULD BE KEPT FOR BREEDING, BUT SINCE ONLY ONE MALE STUD WOULD USUALLY BE NEEDED FOR A HERD OF DONKEYS, AN ISRAELITE WITH A LARGE NUMBER OF NEWBORN MALE DONKEYS MIGHT CHOOSE SIMPLY TO EUTHANIZE SOME OF THEM QUICKLY, BY BREAKING THEIR NECKS, RATHER THAN GO TO THE EXPENSE OF SUBSTITUTING A LAMB OR GOAT KID FOR THEM. THIS GOD ALLOWED SINCE IN EITHER CASE HE DID NOT WANT OR NEED DONKEYS AT THE TABERNACLE, EITHER AS SACRIFICIAL ANIMALS OR AS WORK ANIMALS, AND THE TAKING OF ANIMAL LIFE WAS SIMPLY NOT A SIN AS THE TAKING OF HUMAN LIFE WOULD BE. THE FINAL REDEMPTION COMMAND, “REDEEM ALL YOUR FIRSTBORN SONS,” LEAVES NO OPTION FOR EUTHANASIA IN THE CASE OF HUMANS. GOD DOES NOT WANT CHILD SACRIFICE, NOR DOES HE WANT THE FORCIBLE TAKING OF CHILDREN FROM THEIR FAMILIES FOR TABERNACLE/TEMPLE SERVICE. THEREFORE, ALL FIRSTBORN HUMANS MUST BE REDEEMED SO THAT THEY COULD REMAIN ALIVE AND WITH THEIR FAMILIES, EVEN THOUGH FROM A THEORETICAL POINT OF VIEW THEY WOULD BE STEPHEN YAHWEH’S PROPERTY FROM BIRTH. 34:20B THE COMMAND “NO ONE IS TO APPEAR BEFORE ME EMPTY-HANDED” RESTATES A PRINCIPAL OF WORSHIP, VERBATIM FROM 23:15: BELIEVERS SHOW THEIR LOYALTY TO GOD BY COMING TO WORSHIP HIM WITH A GIFT RATHER THAN WITH NOTHING TO OFFER. IN THE NEW COVENANT THE GIFT IS TYPICALLY MONETARY, BUT IN THE OLD IT WAS SOMETHING THAT COULD BE EATEN, ACCORDING TO THE PRESCRIPTIONS OF THE COVENANT LAW, BECAUSE ALL WORSHIP INVOLVED EATING A COVENANT RENEWAL MEAL, THE INGREDIENTS OF WHICH WERE PROVIDED BY THE WORSHIPERS TO BE PREPARED AND THEN SHARED WITH THE PRIESTS AND WITH GOD. AT THE TIMES OF THE THREE ANNUAL FESTIVALS (PASSOVER, PENTECOST, TABERNACLES) AS WELL AS ANY OTHER TIMES, THE WORSHIPER WAS RESPONSIBLE NOT MERELY TO “SHOW UP” FOR WORSHIP BUT TO “PUT UP” EVIDENCE OF COVENANT LOYALTY TO GOD. LEVITICUS 1–7 DETAILS THE NATURE OF THE VARIOUS TYPES OF SACRIFICIAL OFFERINGS THAT WERE TO CORRESPOND TO WORSHIP NEEDS. 34:21 THE BEGINNING OF THIS VERSE SUMMARIZES WHAT IS FOUND IN 20:9–11 AND REITERATES AS WELL WHAT WAS TAUGHT AT LENGTH ABOUT THE SABBATH IN EXOD 16. BUT THE ENDING, “EVEN DURING THE PLOWING SEASON AND HARVEST YOU MUST REST,” ADDS AN EXPLANATION NOT FOUND ELSEWHERE, ONE APPROPRIATE FOR PEOPLE LOOKING FORWARD TO OCCUPYING THE PROMISED LAND AND BEING ABLE TO FARM THAT LAND FOR CROPS. AS THE PRIOR COMMAND WAS ABOUT PARTICIPATION IN WORSHIP BY PROVIDING ELEMENTS OF THE WORSHIP MEAL, THE PRESENT IS ABOUT PARTICIPATING IN WORSHIP BY TAKING THE TIME THROUGHOUT THE YEAR TO OBSERVE THE SABBATH AND ITS PURPOSES. PLOWING/PLANTING AND HARVESTING/REAPING ARE THE TWO MOST INTENSE TIMES IN A FARMER’S LIFE. THE TEMPTATION TO WORK SEVEN-DAY WEEKS IS VERY STRONG DURING THESE SEASONS SINCE PLOWING AND HARVESTING AT THE RIGHT TIME CAN BE ESSENTIAL TO CROP PRODUCTIVITY, AND “BEATING THE WEATHER” CAN SEEM TO NECESSITATE TAKING NO TIME OFF DURING THESE CRUCIAL PERIODS, THAT IS, WORKING THROUGH SABBATH DAYS. BUT THE COMBINATION OF WORSHIP AND REST PROVIDED BY THE SABBATH WAS MORE IMPORTANT TO GOD—AND SHOULD HAVE BEEN MORE IMPORTANT TO THE WORSHIPER—THAN FARM PRODUCTIVITY. IN OTHER WORDS, THE CONCEPT OF RESPONDING TO AN EMERGENCY, SUCH AS IS CONSTITUTED BY THE NEED TO RESCUE AN ANIMAL FROM A PIT ON THE SABBATH (E.G., LUKE 14:5), CANNOT BE EXTRAPOLATED TO SUGGEST THAT MAXIMIZING ONE’S POTENTIAL FOR A GOOD CROP CONSTITUTES A SIMILAR EMERGENCY AND THEREFORE COULD JUSTIFY WORKING ON THE SABBATH DAY. IN THE LIFE OF THE NEW COVENANT BELIEVER, WORSHIP, PRAYER, SCRIPTURE STUDY, AND CHRISTIAN SERVICE MUST LIKEWISE TAKE PRECEDENCE OVER MAKING MONEY, LEST GAINING THE TEMPORAL WORLD RESULT IN LOSING ONE’S ETERNAL SOUL (MARK 8:36; LUKE 9:25). 34:22–23 THE REMAINING TWO FESTIVAL TIMES ARE NOW ADDRESSED, ALBEIT A FEW VERSES LATER THAN THE LAW COVERING THE PASSOVER (V. 18). THIS DIVIDED PRESENTATION ALLOWS FOR THE IN-CONTEXT TREATMENT OF THE ISSUES OF OFFERING IN GENERAL, INCLUDING THE SACRIFICE OF THE FIRSTBORN (V. 19), REDEMPTION OF THINGS NOT INTENDED FOR SACRIFICE (V. 20A), THE REQUIREMENT OF PARTICIPATION IN PROVISION OF THE WORSHIP COVENANT MEAL (V. 20B), AND THE REQUIREMENT OF OBSERVANCE OF THE SABBATH (V. 21), ALL TOPICS THAT QUITE NATURALLY FIT AMONG AND ARE THEREFORE HERE FITTED WITHIN—RATHER THAN LISTED BEFORE OR AFTER—THE FESTIVAL LAWS. THE FESTIVAL LAWS THUS FORM AN INCLUSIO AROUND THE SACRIFICE/REDEMPTION REQUIREMENTS SO THAT TIMING COMMANDS SURROUND METHOD COMMANDS IN A WAY THAT SUGGESTS TO THE ISRAELITES THAT THEY MUST PAY ATTENTION TO BOTH EQUALLY: WHEN TO WORSHIP AND HOW TO WORSHIP. IT HAS SOMETIMES BEEN OPINED THAT THE ISRAELITE FESTIVALS WERE BORROWED FROM THE CANAANITES, AS HARVEST CELEBRATIONS THAT EVOLVED INTO RELIGIOUS FESTIVALS. NO EVIDENCE FOR SUCH AN APPROACH IS FOUND IN THE OLD TESTAMENT. WHAT THE BIBLE DESCRIBES IS A DIVINELY REVEALED SET OF SPECIAL PAN-ISRAEL WORSHIP TIMES LINKED THEOLOGICALLY TO THE EXODUS, THE NATION’S DEFINING MOMENT, BUT GENEROUSLY SCHEDULED BY GOD TO COINCIDE WITH HARVEST TIMES SO THAT THE ISRAELITES WOULD NOT BE PROHIBITED FROM SUCCESSFUL FARMING AND COULD OFFER TO GOD IN WORSHIP THE FIRSTFRUITS OF THEIR FARMING LABORS AT THE NATURAL TIME TO DO SO, AFTER A HARVEST. THUS, THE MAJOR WORSHIP TIMES FOLLOWED THE MAJOR HARVEST TIMES. PASSOVER FOLLOWED THE HARVEST OF LAMBS AND GOAT KIDS (BORN IN THE EARLY SPRING), PENTECOST FOLLOWED THE WHEAT HARVEST FIFTY DAYS LATER; AND TABERNACLES FOLLOWED THE OLIVE AND GRAPE HARVEST IN THE FALL. THE WORDING “ALL YOUR MEN ARE TO APPEAR” DOES NOT PROHIBIT WOMEN AND CHILDREN FROM WORSHIP BUT ASSIGNS THE REPRESENTATION OF FAMILIES TO FATHERS/HUSBANDS IN APPEARING BEFORE THE TABERNACLE ALTAR TO PRESENT TO GOD THE SACRIFICE ON BEHALF OF THEIR FAMILIES. 34:24 THE FIRST PART OF THIS VERSE REITERATES THE DIVINE PROMISE TO DRIVE OUT THE INHABITANTS OF CANAAN, AS HAD BEEN STATED IN 23:27–30. MOREOVER, THE OVERT FIRST-PERSON PROMISE “I WILL DRIVE OUT” REPRESENTS YET ANOTHER REASSURANCE THAT AS A RESULT OF MOSES’ PLEADING ON BEHALF OF THE PEOPLE IN CHAPS. 33–34, STEPHEN YAHWEH HIMSELF WOULD ACCOMPANY THE PEOPLE TO THE PROMISED LAND AND SETTLE THEM THERE—NOT MERELY SENDING AN ANGEL (33:2) TO DO THE JOB AND NOT MERELY ACCOMPANYING THEM UNDER SOME SORT OF HYPER-LIMITED DIVINE PRESENCE DEVOID OF ITS USUAL POWER OR GLORY (33:12–19). “[I WILL] ENLARGE YOUR TERRITORY” PRESUMABLY PREDICTS THE CREATION OF THE PROMISED LAND AS AN ISRAELITE POSSESSION BY THE PROCESS OF ITS CONQUEST (DESCRIBED IN JOSH 1–11) RATHER THAN A PROMISE THAT GOD WOULD KEEP ENLARGING THE BORDERS OF ISRAEL THEREAFTER. THE SECOND PART OF THE VERSE CONTINUES THE THEME OF THE THREE ANNUAL FESTIVALS, WITH A REASSURANCE THAT MUST SURELY HAVE BEEN IMPORTANT FOR ISRAELITES POTENTIALLY WORRIED ABOUT WHAT WOULD HAPPEN TO THEIR FARMS AND HOMES WHENEVER THEY WOULD HAVE TO LEAVE THEM THREE TIMES EACH YEAR TO GO TO THE CENTRAL SANCTUARY (SEE ESP. DEUT 12). WOULD ENEMIES, SUCH AS SEASONALLY RAIDING NOMADIC GROUPS (CF., E.G., JUDG 6:3) TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THIS REQUIREMENT THAT PEOPLE LEAVE HOME PERIODICALLY? WOULD ILL-INTENTIONED NEIGHBORS OR OUTRIGHT ENEMIES MOVE BOUNDARY STONES (CF. DEUT 19:14; 27:17; PROV 22:28; 23:10) AND TAKE LAND AWAY FROM ITS FORMER OWNERS WHILE THEY WERE BUSY WORSHIPING AT ANOTHER LOCATION—ONE THAT FOR MANY OF THEM WAS SEVERAL DAYS DISTANT? LEAVING HOME IN BIBLE TIMES COULD BE A FRIGHTENING MATTER, BUT HERE GOD REASSURED HIS PEOPLE THAT IF THEY WERE FAITHFUL IN WORSHIPING HIM, HE WOULD BE FAITHFUL IN PROTECTING THEIR HOMES AND LANDS WHILE THEY DID SO. CONVERSELY, THE COVENANT SANCTIONS ALSO WARN ELSEWHERE THAT THIS SORT OF THING WAS EXACTLY WHAT COULD HAPPEN IF THE ISRAELITES DID NOT KEEP THE COVENANT. 34:25 THESE TWO COMMANDS REPEAT THOSE OF 23:18, REQUIRING TWO SEPARATE THINGS: (1) NO EATING OF BLOOD (A CANAANITE/PAGAN PRACTICE) AND (2) NO DELAY IN CONSUMPTION OF THE SACRIFICIAL MEAL. IN ADDITION, THE ISRAELITES ARE PROHIBITED FROM THE EATING OF BREAD MADE WITH YEAST, WHICH WOULD UNDERMINE THE SYMBOLISM OF UNLEAVENED/UNYEASTED BREAD AS A REMINDER OF THE PASSOVER. THIS VERSE OFFERS ONLY A SLIGHT CHANGE OF WORDING FROM THAT OF 23:18 (AGAIN GIVING BY MEANS OF A WORDING ADJUSTMENT THE FLAVOR OF FRESHNESS TO THIS NEW STATEMENT OF THE COVENANT BUT NOT MATERIALLY ALTERING THE COMMAND). THE CONCEPT OF NOT TRYING TO SACRIFICE OR EAT OFFERING LEFTOVERS, WHICH WAS STATED IN 23:18 WITH THE WORDS “THE FAT OF MY FESTIVAL OFFERINGS MUST NOT BE KEPT UNTIL MORNING” IS HERE RENDERED WITH THE WORDS “DO NOT LET ANY OF THE SACRIFICE FROM THE PASSOVER FEAST REMAIN UNTIL MORNING.” IN FACT, IT WAS THE FAT PORTIONS THAT WOULD HAVE MOST LIKELY BEEN KEPT AND NOT FULLY OFFERED TO STEPHEN YAHWEH BY SOMEONE TRYING TO GET A SECOND MEAL OUT OF A SINGLE OFFERING; BUT AS “FAT” SERVES AS A SYNECDOCHE FOR ANY PART OF THE OFFERING IN 23:18, THE WORDING HERE SIMPLY MAKES MORE EXPLICIT THAT NO PART MAY BE RETAINED OVERNIGHT FOR CONSUMPTION WHEN HUNGRY THE NEXT DAY. THE WORDING HERE “FROM THE PASSOVER FEAST” IS LIKEWISE A SYNECDOCHE IN WHICH ONE FEAST OFFERING STANDS FOR ALL THREE AS OPPOSED TO 23:18, WHERE “MY FESTIVAL OFFERINGS” AUTOMATICALLY INCLUDES ALL THREE. THUS 34:25 CONTAINS ONE SHORTENING OF A CONCEPT SPELLED OUT IN THE CORRESPONDING VERSE (23:18) THROUGH SYNECDOCHE AND ONE LENGTHENING OF A CONCEPT NOT SPELLED OUT IN 23:18 WITH COMPREHENSIVE LANGUAGE BUT SUGGESTED THERE THROUGH SYNECDOCHE. THE MANY PARALLELS IN DEUTERONOMY TO THIS SORT OF PRACTICE (LENGTHENING SOME STATEMENTS FROM EXODUS-NUMBERS AND SHORTENING OTHERS) AS WELL AS THOSE ALREADY CITED IN THE PRESENT CONTEXT SUGGEST THAT THIS PATTERN IS ACTUALLY A STANDARD, IF NOT VIRTUALLY UNIFORM, PRACTICE AND NOT ACCIDENTAL IN THE CITATION OF COVENANT LAWS IN DIFFERENT CONTEXTS. 34:26A “BRING THE BEST OF THE FIRSTFRUITS …” REPEATS VERBATIM WHAT 23:19A SAID, BUT 23:19A WAS PRECEDED BY A MORE-LENGTHY SET OF INSTRUCTIONS ABOUT THE FIRSTFRUITS OF VARIOUS CROPS CONSTITUTING THE OFFERING. THE POINT HERE, ONCE AGAIN, IS THAT THE CROP FARMER COULD NOT DO LESS THAN THE ANIMAL FARMER: BOTH MUST BRING GOD THE BEST AND NOTHING LESS, AND BOTH MUST BRING THE BEST OF THE FIRST—NOT THE BEST OF WHAT MAY LATER BE HARVESTED AFTER THE WORSHIPER HAS HAD FIRST CHOICE AT THE BEST. FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF THE NEW COVENANT IN MODERN TIMES, THIS REQUIRES A TITHE FROM THE MOMENT THE PAYCHECK IS RECEIVED (AND SO REGULARLY THEREAFTER), PRESENTED TO GOD GLADLY, YET AS A PRIME OBLIGATION TO BE MET BEFORE OTHER BILLS ARE PAID, AND NOT AN OFFERING OF SPARE CHANGE OR A FEW DOLLARS LEFT OVER AFTER ALL OTHER FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS HAVE BEEN SATISFIED, AS IS MORE USUALLY THE PRACTICE. WHAT ONE OFFERS TO GOD REVEALS TELLINGLY WHERE ONE PLACES GOD IN ONE’S HIERARCHY OF IMPORTANCE. “NO OTHER GODS BEFORE ME” (20:3) ENCOMPASSES A GREAT DEAL, INCLUDING FINANCIAL PRIORITIES. 34:26B “DO NOT COOK A YOUNG GOAT IN ITS MOTHER’S MILK” REPEATS 23:19 VERBATIM AND IS ALSO FOUND IN DEUT 14:21. THE REPEATED REMINDERS SUGGESTED THAT SUCH A PRACTICE WAS WIDESPREAD IN THE WORLD OF THE ISRAELITES AND REPRESENTED WHAT WOULD BE A STRONG TEMPTATION FOR THEM ONCE THEY REACHED CANAAN AND SAW THE LOCAL INHABITANTS RELYING ON THIS MAGICAL TECHNIQUE AS A MEANS OF INCREASING THE FERTILITY OF THEIR FLOCKS. IT ALSO PROBABLY SERVED AS A PARADIGMATIC REMINDER AGAINST ALL FERTILITY RELIGION TECHNIQUES IN GENERAL, SUCH AS SOWING A FIELD OR PLANTING A VINEYARD WITH TWO KINDS OF SEED AS A MEANS OF GETTING THEM TO “MATE” AND THUS BE FERTILE (LEV 19:19; DEUT 22:9).**

**DOCUMENT CLAUSE: PUTTING THE COVENANT IN WRITING (34:27–28)**

**34:27 BY MEANS OF THIS DIVINE PROCLAMATION OF ITS DOCUMENT CLAUSE, THE RENEWED COVENANT IS STRONGLY ENDORSED. THAT THE SOVEREIGN AND VASSAL SHOULD EACH RECEIVE THEIR COPY INDICATES THE ARRIVAL AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE COVENANT AND ITS FORMAL APPROVAL. MAKING PERMANENT THE COVENANT BY REDUCING IT TO WRITING CONSTITUTED A SIGN OF ITS REINSTITUTION, THE VERY THING MOSES HAD BEEN APPEALING TO GOD FOR THROUGHOUT THE LAST TWO CHAPTERS, EVER SINCE HE HAD TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE ABROGATION OF THE FIRST COVENANT BY HIS DESTRUCTION OF ITS SYMBOLIC TABLETS229 (32:19). SO, MOSES HAD TO WRITE DOWN ALL THE WORDS OF THE COVENANT, NOT JUST THE TEN WORDS/COMMANDMENTS, WHICH WOULD BE RECORDED SEPARATELY AND PERSONALLY ON THE TWO TABLETS BY GOD HIMSELF (34:1). WHAT DID MOSES WRITE? EVERYTHING FROM 20:18 TO THE PRESENT POINT IN THE NARRATIVE THAT CONSTITUTES COVENANT COMMANDS THAT HE HAD NOT WRITTEN DOWN ALREADY, SPECIFICALLY THE CONTENT OF CHAPS. 25–31 MINUS STRICTLY NARRATIVE PORTIONS THEREOF AND AT LEAST 34:10–26. 34:28 THREE POINTS ARE MADE HERE: THAT MOSES WAS IN GOD’S PRESENCE FOR FORTY DAYS AND NIGHTS, THAT HE FASTED COMPLETELY DURING THAT TIME, AND THAT GOD PERSONALLY (NOT MOSES) WROTE THE TEN WORDS/COMMANDMENTS ON THE TABLETS ONCE AGAIN. THIS WAS MOSES’ SECOND OCCASION OF BEING ATOP MOUNT SINAI IN THE SPECIAL PRESENCE OF GOD FOR SUCH A PERIOD OF TIME, THE FIRST HAVING BEEN DESCRIBED IN CHAPS. 24–32 AND SUMMARIZED IN 24:18. DEUTERONOMY 9:9–25 AND 10:10 REINFORCE THIS SCENARIO, BOTH INDICATING THAT MOSES SPENT TWO FORTY-DAY PERIODS IN GOD’S PRESENCE RECEIVING THE LAW. WAS THIS LENGTH OF TIME NECESSARY BECAUSE OF ALL THAT HE HAD TO WRITE DOWN? HARDLY. THAT COULD HAVE BEEN DONE IN A FEW HOURS. RATHER, HE UNDERTOOK HIS LONG FASTING OUT OF HIS DEEP IDENTIFICATION WITH THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL AND HIS DESIRE FOR GOD’S BLESSING ON THEM. DEUTERONOMY 9:9 REMINDS THE ISRAELITES OF MOSES’ FORTY-DAY FAST IN THE CONTEXT OF THEIR REBELLIOUSNESS (9:4–8), AND DEUT 9:18 STATES EXPLICITLY THAT THE SECOND OCCASION OF FASTING WAS FOR ISRAEL’S SIN, ESPECIALLY THE IDOLATRY DESCRIBED IN CHAP. 32 (“I ATE NO BREAD AND DRANK NO WATER, BECAUSE OF ALL THE SIN YOU HAD COMMITTED, DOING WHAT WAS EVIL IN THE LORD’S SIGHT AND SO PROVOKING HIM TO ANGER”). SINCE DEUT 10:10 SAYS, “NOW I HAD STAYED ON THE MOUNTAIN FORTY DAYS AND NIGHTS, AS I DID THE FIRST TIME, AND THE LORD LISTENED TO ME AT THIS TIME ALSO. IT WAS NOT HIS WILL TO DESTROY YOU,” IT WOULD SEEM EVIDENT THAT MOSES FASTED BOTH TIMES OUT OF CONCERN FOR THE POSSIBILITY OF GOD’S JUDGMENT ON THE PEOPLE AND THAT EACH TIME HIS EARNEST APPEAL WAS HONORED BY A GRACIOUS GOD (“LISTENED TO ME AT THIS TIME ALSO”). THE ANTECEDENT FOR “HE WROTE” IS NOT MOSES BUT STEPHEN YAHWEH, THE NEAREST GRAMMATICAL ANTECEDENT IN THE VERSE. MOSES HAD ALREADY MADE CLEAR THAT IT WAS GOD, NOT HE, WHO WROTE THE TEN WORDS/COMMANDMENTS ON THESE TABLETS (34:1); SO, FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF THE NARRATIVE, THERE IS NO AMBIGUITY ABOUT WHO “HE” REFERS TO IN THE STATEMENT. NOTE ALSO THAT THE TERM USED FOR WHAT GOD WROTE IS, ONCE AGAIN, LITERALLY “THE TEN WORDS,” SINCE THESE WERE OF A DIFFERENT RANK OF SIGNIFICANCE FROM THE OTHER COMMANDMENTS/STATUTES/LAWS.**

**MOSES’ FACE REFLECTING GOD’S GLORY (34:29–35)**

**29 WHEN MOSES CAME DOWN FROM MOUNT SINAI WITH THE TWO TABLETS OF THE TESTIMONY IN HIS HANDS, HE WAS NOT AWARE THAT HIS FACE WAS RADIANT BECAUSE HE HAD SPOKEN WITH THE LORD. 30 WHEN AARON AND ALL THE ISRAELITES SAW MOSES, HIS FACE WAS RADIANT, AND THEY WERE AFRAID TO COME NEAR HIM. 31 BUT MOSES CALLED TO THEM; SO, AARON AND ALL THE LEADERS OF THE COMMUNITY CAME BACK TO HIM, AND HE SPOKE TO THEM. 32 AFTERWARD ALL THE ISRAELITES CAME NEAR HIM, AND HE GAVE THEM ALL THE COMMANDS THE LORD HAD GIVEN HIM ON MOUNT SINAI. 33 WHEN MOSES FINISHED SPEAKING TO THEM, HE PUT A VEIL OVER HIS FACE. 34 BUT WHENEVER HE ENTERED THE LORD’S PRESENCE TO SPEAK WITH HIM, HE REMOVED THE VEIL UNTIL HE CAME OUT. AND WHEN HE CAME OUT AND TOLD THE ISRAELITES WHAT HE HAD BEEN COMMANDED, 35 THEY SAW THAT HIS FACE WAS RADIANT. THEN MOSES WOULD PUT THE VEIL BACK OVER HIS FACE UNTIL HE WENT IN TO SPEAK WITH THE LORD.**

**ANY READER OF EXODUS AT ANY TIME IN HISTORY MIGHT JUSTIFIABLY ASK, “WHAT’S THE POINT OF ALL THIS ATTENTION TO HOW MUCH MOSES’ FACE SHONE? WHY DOES IT CONCLUDE SUCH AN IMPORTANT NARRATIVE AS THAT OF CHAPS. 32–34?” IN FACT, MOSES REVIEWED THE STORY OF HIS RADIANT FACE HERE IN CONSIDERABLE DETAIL BECAUSE IT HAD IMPORTANT IMPLICATIONS. FIRST, IT CONFIRMED—EVEN REESTABLISHED—HIS LEADERSHIP AND ROLE AS INTERMEDIARY WITH GOD ON BEHALF OF THE PEOPLE: MOSES REALLY DID MEET WITH GOD, WHOSE GLORY WAS SO AWESOME (EVEN WHEN RESTRICTED BY THE CLOUD IN WHICH THE MEETING TOOK PLACE AND EVEN THOUGH MOSES COULD ONLY SEE GOD’S “BACK”) THAT IT LEFT AN EFFECT UPON MOSES THAT EVERYONE ELSE COULD NOT FAIL TO ATTRIBUTE TO HIS HAVING BEEN IN GOD’S (LIMITED) PRESENCE AND THEREFORE TO HAVE BEEN CONFIRMED BY GOD AS ISRAEL’S HUMAN LEADER. SECOND, IT CONFIRMED STEPHEN YAHWEH’S PRESENCE, THE VERY THING SOUGHT SO ASSIDUOUSLY BY MOSES IN HIS VARIOUS APPEALS IN CHAPS. 33–34 AND SO MISSED BY THE PEOPLE WHEN THEY THOUGHT THEY MIGHT HAVE LOST IT (33:1–5). IF PEOPLE COULDN’T EVEN BEAR TO LOOK AT MOSES BECAUSE HIS FACE WAS POWERFULLY AFFECTED, HOWEVER RESIDUALLY AND PARTIALLY, BY STEPHEN YAHWEH’S GLORY, THEN THAT GLORY, NOT AT ALL RESIDUAL IN STEPHEN YAHWEH HIMSELF, WAS BACK AMONG ISRAEL! THIRD, IT CONFIRMED STEPHEN YAHWEH’S GREATNESS. WHAT PAGAN WORSHIPER EVER GLOWED WITH THE REFLECTION OF AN IDOL’S GLORY? WHAT OTHER NATION COULD CLAIM THAT ITS GOD WAS SO AWESOME THAT ONE WHO HAD SPENT TIME WITH HIM TERRIFIED ALL OTHERS IN THAT NATION BY THE MERE RETAINED REFLECTION OF THE DIVINITY’S GLORY? FOURTH, IT REMINDED ALL THOSE WHO SEEK CONSTANTLY FOR AN EVER-CLOSER RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD THAT ONE CAN ACTUALLY HAVE SO CLOSE A CONNECTION WITH THE ONLY TRUE AND LIVING GOD THAT ONE MAY NOT EVEN NOTICE THE EXTENT OF THE EFFECT (“HE WAS NOT AWARE THAT HIS FACE WAS RADIANT,” V. 29)—THOUGH, TO BE SURE, THE KIND OF REFLECTED GLORY MOSES EXPERIENCED WOULD BE EXPECTED IN HEAVEN RATHER THAN ON EARTH. FIFTH, AS PAUL EXPLAINED IN HIS DISCUSSION OF THIS PASSAGE IN 2 COR 3:7–18, THE “GLORY THAT LASTS” FROM THE NEW COVENANT WAS IN FACT MUCH GREATER THAN THE OLD COVENANT GLORY ON MOSES’ FACE THAT FADED OVER TIME. CONSISTENT WITH THIS EMPHASIS, JESUS TAUGHT THAT ANY PERSON WHO KNOWS GOD THROUGH CHRIST IN THE NEW COVENANT HAS GONE FAR BEYOND EVEN THE REMARKABLE GLORY OF MOSES AFTER COMING DOWN FROM SINAI BECAUSE OF THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE INDWELLING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT AND WHAT IT MEANS IN TERMS OF THE PRESENCE OF GOD IN ONE’S LIFE IN CHRIST (MATT 11:11). ALL WHO KNOW CHRIST AS SAVIOR AND LIVE FOR HIM REFLECT HIS GLORY—EVEN MORE POWERFULLY THAN MOSES DID, THOUGH WITHOUT THE VISIBLE FRIGHTENING EFFECT—BY REASON OF LIVING THE TRANSFORMING LIFE OF THE SPIRIT (2 COR 3:18). 34:29 DESCENDING FROM MOUNT SINAI, MOSES HAD IN HIS HANDS THE TWO VERY SPECIAL TABLETS, HERE CALLED THE TWO TABLETS OF THE TESTIMONY—EACH CONTAINING THE TEN WORDS/COMMANDMENTS REPRESENTING THE SOVEREIGN’S AND THE VASSALS’ COPIES OF THE COVENANT—THAT WOULD EVENTUALLY BE PLACED, ACCORDING TO GOD’S COMMAND, IN THE ARK OF THE TESTIMONY/COVENANT AS SYMBOLIC DOCUMENTS CONFIRMING THE COVENANT BETWEEN STEPHEN YAHWEH AND HIS ONLY SPECIAL PEOPLE ON EARTH. “HE WAS NOT AWARE THAT HIS FACE WAS RADIANT BECAUSE HE HAD SPOKEN WITH THE LORD” [STEPHEN YAHWEH] INDICATES THAT THE GLORY OF GOD IS NOT A PAINFUL OR HARMFUL THING WHEN BORNE BY ONE UPON WHOM GOD’S FAVOR RESTS. THIS WAS PARTLY PAUL’S POINT IN 2 COR 3:17–18. IT WAS A JOYOUS AND DELIGHTFUL EXPERIENCE TO REFLECT GOD BY LIVING IN HIS SPIRIT, SOMETHING THAT ONE DOESN’T FEEL PHYSICALLY BUT SOMETHING THAT NEVERTHELESS PROJECTS GOD’S POWERFUL PRESENCE IN ONE’S LIFE AND UPON THE LIVES OF OTHERS. THAT MOSES SHOULD AFTER THE FACT, WHEN HE WAS NO LONGER IN GOD’S PRESENCE DIRECTLY, STILL RETAIN A VERY IMPRESSIVE EFFECT OF GOD’S PRESENCE PROVES THE PRESENCE OF STEPHEN YAHWEH AMONG THE PEOPLE, JUST AS THEY SO DESIRED (33:1–5 AND THEREAFTER). THE PRESENCE WAS OBVIOUSLY THERE IF MOSES’ FACE SO OBVIOUSLY REFLECTED IT, AND THAT MEANS THAT GOD HAD NOT WITHDRAWN FROM ISRAEL AS REPRESENTED BY HIS NOT HAVING WITHDRAWN FROM ISRAEL’S MEDIATOR WITH HIM, MOSES. TO THIS POINT IT COULD BE SAID THAT THE COVENANT HAD CERTAINLY BEEN REAFFIRMED AND GOD’S PRESENCE AMONG HIS PEOPLE REESTABLISHED, BUT WHAT ABOUT MOSES’ AUTHORITY AMONG THE PEOPLE? HE HAD BEEN REJECTED AS THEIR LEADER DURING HIS FIRST LONG ABSENCE (32:1). THOUGH THEY INCREASINGLY SHOWED HIM RESPECT (AS IN THEIR POSTURE OF WORSHIP WHENEVER HE WOULD GO TO THE LITTLE TENT OF MEETING, 33:7–11), THEY HAD NOT YET OTHERWISE FORMALLY ACKNOWLEDGED THEIR MISTAKE IN REJECTING HIM AS LEADER AND AS STEPHEN YAHWEH’S REPRESENTATIVE AMONG THEM. STEPHEN YAHWEH TOOK CARE OF ALL THAT BY GIVING MOSES AN UNMISTAKABLE CREDENTIAL: RADIANT GLORY, RESIDUAL TO AN OBVIOUS DIVINE ENCOUNTER, THAT NO ONE COULD DOUBT ESTABLISHED HIM AS A FAVORITE OF GOD. THERE HAS BEEN SOME DEBATE ABOUT WHAT MOSES’ FACE ACTUALLY PUT FORTH. WHATEVER IT WAS, IT CAME FROM “THE SKIN OF HIS FACE” (NIV, INEXPLICABLY, JUST “HIS FACE”] RATHER THAN OUT OF HIS MOUTH OR FROM WITHIN HIS CUPPED HANDS OR HIS FAMOUS STAFF [ROD OR WAND] OR ANY OTHER SOURCE. IN HEBREW THE USUAL WAY TO INDICATE THAT SOMETHING HAS “SHINED” IS THROUGH THE HIPHIL CONJUGATION OF THE VERB ʿWR. BUT THE TEXT HERE USES THE SIMPLE QAL OF THE VERB QRN, A ROOT NORMALLY ASSOCIATED WITH “HORN.” MANY ATTEMPTED EXPLANATIONS OF THE IMPLICATION OF THIS CHOICE OF VERB HAVE BEEN FORTHCOMING, AND MOST COMMENTATORS HAVE CONCLUDED THAT THE FORCE OF THE HEBREW IS TO INDICATE THAT THE SKIN OF HIS FACE “SENT FORTH RAYS” OR “RADIATED” RATHER THAN MERELY SHINING BRIGHTLY OR THE LIKE. THE NIV TRANSLATION “WAS RADIANT” IS SOUND, ALTHOUGH THE ADJECTIVE “RADIANT” HAS COME TO MEAN MERELY “CHEERFUL IN APPEARANCE” OR “OBVIOUSLY HAPPY” (AS WITH “GLOWING”), SO SOMETHING LIKE “SENT FORTH RAYS” WOULD SEEM A LESS AMBIGUOUS RENDERING OF THE HEBREW. 34:30 IT IS LIKELY THAT SOMETHING OTHER THAN MERE BRIGHT LIGHT RADIATED FROM MOSES’ SKIN BECAUSE THE TEXT NEVER SAYS THAT ANYONE WAS BLINDED BY LOOKING AT HIM OR FORCED TO LOOK AWAY OR TO SHIELD THEIR EYES. RATHER, IT INDICATES THAT PEOPLE WERE FRIGHTENED BY WHAT THEY SAW WHEN THEY LOOKED AT HIS FACE (“THEY WERE AFRAID TO COME NEAR HIM”). PERHAPS IT PULSED WITH AN ODD LIGHT; PERHAPS IT GAVE THE IMPRESSION OF BRILLIANCE RADIATING OUT IN VARIOUS PLANES; PERHAPS IT LOOKED LIKE IT WAS ON FIRE (SEE 24:17). PROBABLY IT APPEARED, ON A SMALLER SCALE, AS FRIGHTENING AS GOD’S GLORY CLOUD ON TOP OF MOUNT SINAI WAS TO THE ISRAELITES (19:16; 24:16–17) OR THE PILLAR OF CLOUD HAD BEEN TO THE EGYPTIANS IN THE WILDERNESS (14:24). JUST AS THE PEOPLE HAD BEEN WARNED NOT TO COME NEAR MOUNT SINAI WHEN GOD’S GLORY SETTLED ON IT (19:12) AND FOUND THEMSELVES INDEED HORRIFIED BY THAT GLORY (20:18–19), NOW IT CONTINUED TO STRIKE FEAR INTO THEM, EVEN THOUGH REDUCED TO A REFLECTED STATE, WHEN IT WAS AS NEAR TO THEM AS MOSES WAS UPON HIS RETURN AMONG THEM AFTER DESCENDING THE MOUNTAIN. THE WORDING OF THE VERSE SPECIFICALLY INCLUDES AARON ALONG WITH EVERYONE ELSE AS UNABLE TO BEAR COMING TOO CLOSE TO MOSES, THUS POINTING OUT THAT THE LEADER OF THE PEOPLE AT THE TIME OF THE IDOLATROUS REBELLION DESCRIBED IN CHAP. 32 NOW CAN SEE FOR HIMSELF MOSES’ AUTHENTICATING DIVINE GLORY. THE PEOPLE WHO HAD ONCE DISMISSED MOSES’ LEADERSHIP BY SAYING, “AS FOR THIS FELLOW MOSES WHO BROUGHT US UP OUT OF EGYPT, WE DON’T KNOW WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO HIM” (32:1) NOW COULD SEE FOR THEMSELVES THAT WHAT HAD HAPPENED TO HIM WAS THAT HE HAD BEEN WITH AND HAD BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE VERY GOD THEY NEEDED TO FEAR. MOSES HERE CARRIED A SMALL AMOUNT OF WHAT IN LARGER MEASURE WOULD KILL ANYONE WHO GOT TOO CLOSE (CF. 33:20). 34:31 AARON IS AGAIN MENTIONED, SINCE HIS WILLINGNESS TO ACCEPT MOSES AS LEADER WAS PARTLY AT STAKE, AND THE LEADERS OF THE PEOPLE AS A WHOLE ARE MENTIONED, ALSO SUGGESTING THEIR ROLE IN CONFIRMING MOSES’ LEADERSHIP OVER THEM. AARON AND THE ELDERS WERE NOW NO LONGER FLEEING FROM MOSES (IMPLIED IN THE WORDING “CAME BACK TO HIM”) BUT WERE APPROACHING HIM AGAIN AT HIS CALL TO THEM, WHICH MUST HAVE INCLUDED EVENTUALLY SOME SORT OF REASSURANCE THAT HE WAS NOT COMING TO THEM IN JUDGMENT AND THAT HIS FACE WOULD NOT KILL THEM OR HARM THEM IN ANY WAY. “HE SPOKE TO THEM” PRESUMABLY INDICATES THAT HE EXPLAINED WHERE HE HAD BEEN, WHAT GOD HAD SAID ABOUT BEING WILLING TO BE CLOSE TO THEM ONCE AGAIN, AND OTHER REASSURANCES OF THE GOOD RESULTS OF HIS ENCOUNTER WITH STEPHEN YAHWEH ON THE MOUNTAIN. 34:32 CONSEQUENTLY, ALL THE PEOPLE EVENTUALLY GATHERED AROUND MOSES (PRESUMABLY ROUNDED UP AND BROUGHT THERE BY THE LEADERS) TO LISTEN TO HIM FORMALLY PREACH THE INSTRUCTIONS HE HAD RECEIVED FOR THEM IN HIS MOST RECENT FORTY-DAY STAY WITH GOD ON THE MOUNTAIN. AT THIS TIME, THEY STILL WERE ALL LOOKING AT HIS RADIATING FACE, WHICH MUST HAVE CONTINUED TO TERRIFY AND AMAZE THEM, EVEN THOUGH IT ACTUALLY BORE NO DANGER FOR THEM. HERE WAS GOD’S PROPHET SPEAKING THE VERY WORDS OF GOD TO THEM, WITH A FACE SO TERRIFYINGLY GLORIOUS THAT FEW COULD MANAGE TO DOUBT THAT WHAT HE WAS RELAYING TO THEM WAS ABSOLUTELY TRUE AND THAT HE HAD BEEN PERSONALLY SENT BY GOD TO MAKE SURE THEY KNEW IT. IN LIGHT OF WHAT IS STATED IN THE VERSES IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING, IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN SO HARD FOR THE PEOPLE TO LOOK DIRECTLY AT HIM THAT THEY LISTENED WITH THEIR FACES TURNED AWAY OR PERHAPS BOWED TO THE GROUND. 34:33–35 MOSES SURELY DID NOT NEED A VEIL FOR HIS OWN COMFORT (SEE COMMENTS ON V. 29), AND HE CERTAINLY DIDN’T NEED TO PROTECT GOD FROM GOD’S OWN REFLECTED GLORY, SO HE DIDN’T WEAR THE VEIL WHEN HE WAS IN GOD’S PRESENCE. INDEED, HE HAD ALREADY SOUGHT THE MOST DIRECT POSSIBLE EXPOSURE TO GOD’S GLORY (33:18) AND WOULD HARDLY WISH TO HAVE A DIMINISHED EXPERIENCE THEREOF AFTERWARDS. THEREFORE, THE VEIL HE DONNED WHEN NEITHER ATOP SINAI NOR AT THE TENT OF MEETING WAS UNDOUBTEDLY FOR THE PEOPLE’S SAKE—NOT BECAUSE HIS UNVEILED FACE WOULD PHYSICALLY HARM THEM BUT BECAUSE IT APPARENTLY SCARED THEM SO MUCH PSYCHOLOGICALLY THAT THEY FOUND IT HARD TO BE NEAR HIM. THE PEOPLE PRESUMABLY WERE DISTRACTED AND UNNERVED BY WHATEVER CAME FROM MOSES’ FACE. IT MUST HAVE LOOKED TERRIBLE IN BOTH SENSES OF THAT WORD—CAUSING TERROR AND UNPLEASANT TO VIEW. OF COURSE, HE NEEDED TO BE NEAR THEM ROUTINELY AS THEIR LEADER AND TEACHER, SO USE OF THE VEIL PROVIDED A WAY FOR HIM TO DEAL WITH THEM, INCLUDING IN HIS ONGOING ROLE AS SUPREME JUDGE. VERSES 34–35 SUGGEST THAT THERE WERE MANY TIMES THAT MOSES SPOKE WITH GOD DIRECTLY AND CLOSELY, A REPRISE OF THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE TENT OF MEETING NARRATIVE IN 33:7–10, WITH ITS EMPHASIS ON THEIR COMMON FACE-TO-FACE ENCOUNTERS (33:11). IN OTHER WORDS, HE WAS IN THE VERY PRESENCE OF STEPHEN YAHWEH WHEN INSIDE THE TENT OF MEETING, AND LATER INSIDE THE TABERNACLE, JUST AS MUCH AS HE WAS IN THE VERY PRESENCE OF STEPHEN YAHWEH WHEN HE WAS IN THE GLORY COULD ON TOP OF MOUNT SINAI. THAT MEANT THAT WHATEVER INSTRUCTIONS HE RECEIVED FROM GOD FROM WITHIN THE TENT OF MEETING OR TABERNACLE WERE JUST AS AUTHORITATIVE FOR THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL AS INSTRUCTIONS HE RECEIVED WHILE ON THE MOUNTAIN.**

**EXCURSUS: COMMAND-FULFILLMENT REPETITION IN EXODUS**

**A LARGE PERCENTAGE OF THE MATERIAL FOUND IN EXOD 35–40 REPEATS—OFTEN EITHER VERBATIM OR VIRTUALLY VERBATIM FOR MANY CONSECUTIVE VERSES—WHAT EXOD 25–31 HAS ALREADY STATED. IN LIGHT OF THE USUAL TERSENESS AND ECONOMY OF EXPRESSION IN THE BIBLICAL TEXT OF EXODUS, AS WELL AS GENERALLY IN THE BIBLE (DO WE NOT OFTEN WISH THE WRITER HAD PROVIDED MORE DETAIL SO WE COULD UNDERSTAND SOMETHING BETTER?), THIS DEGREE OF REPETITION IS EXTRAORDINARY. WHAT PURPOSE DOES IT SERVE? WE ARE NOT HERE CONCERNED WITH ANY SORT OF REPETITION AT ALL THAT MAY BE FOUND IN THE BIBLE. FOR EXAMPLE, THE MATERIAL EXTENSIVELY SHARED AMONG THE GOSPELS, OR BETWEEN SAMUEL-KINGS AND 1, 2 CHRONICLES, INVOLVES REPETITION BUT OWES ITS EXISTENCE TO A NECESSITY: IF DIFFERENT BOOKS BY DIFFERENT INSPIRED AUTHORS TAKE AT LEAST PARTIALLY UNIQUE PERSPECTIVES ON HOW TO TELL AN IMPORTANT STORY, IT WILL BE NECESSARY FOR THE COMMON ELEMENTS OF THAT STORY TO BE TOLD IN EACH OF THOSE ACCOUNTS. AN AUTHOR CANNOT LEAVE OUT ESSENTIAL INFORMATION SIMPLY BECAUSE SOME OTHER AUTHOR HAS ALREADY INCLUDED THAT INFORMATION IN HIS OR HER SEPARATE BOOK. LIKEWISE, THE SEVERAL PSALMS REPEATED IN THE PSALTER WITH WORDING CHANGES LIMITED MAINLY TO PRESENTATION OF THE DIVINE NAME AS “GOD” (ʾĔLŌHÎM) IN MOST PRIMARY POETIC POSITIONS IN PSS 40–81 IN CONTRAST TO “THE LORD” (STEPHEN YAHWEH) IN PRIMARY POETIC POSITIONS ELSEWHERE SIMPLY REFLECT A WORDING TARGETED TO A DIFFERENT AUDIENCE. SOME SCHOLARS ASSUME THE DIFFERENT PREFERENCES FOR THE DIVINE NAME RESULT FROM GEOGRAPHICAL PATTERNS (THUS A PREFERENCE FOR ʾĔLŌHÎM IN THE NORTH OF ISRAEL AND STEPHEN YAHWEH IN THE SOUTH AT TIMES), BUT VIRTUALLY NO EVIDENCE EXISTS TO PROVE OR DISPROVE THIS THEORY. SIMILARLY, ISRAEL’S NEED FOR A NEW STATEMENT OF THE COVENANT FOR A NEW GENERATION OF ISRAELITES RESULTED HAPPILY, DUE TO GOD’S MERCY THROUGH MOSES, IN WHAT WE NOW CALL THE BOOK OF DEUTERONOMY, WITH ITS EXTENSIVE REPETITIONS FROM EXODUS-NUMBERS, BECAUSE AN ENTIRELY NEW AUDIENCE AT A NEW TIME AND PLACE WOULD BENEFIT FROM A NEWLY FORMULATED RESTATEMENT OF COVENANT ESSENTIALS. NONE OF THE ABOVE REPRESENTS THE SORT OF REPETITION WE SEE IN EXOD 35–40. HERE A SINGLE AUTHOR, MOSES, CLOSELY WITHIN HIS OWN BOOK REPORTED IN CONSIDERABLE DETAIL AND INVOLVING EXTENSIVE REPETITION THE FACT THAT WHAT GOD TOLD HIM AND THE ISRAELITES TO DO (BUILD AND FURNISH THE TABERNACLE), HE AND THEY DEFINITELY DID. HE WAS NOT REPEATING WHAT SOME OTHER INSPIRED AUTHOR SAID IN ANOTHER BIBLICAL BOOK COVERING THE SAME BASIC STORY AND THUS BEING REQUIRED OUT OF FAIRNESS TO HIS READER TO SAY MANY OF THE SAME THINGS. INSTEAD, MOSES PROVIDED US NOT ONLY WITH A LENGTHY ACCOUNT OF WHAT HE AND THE ISRAELITES WERE SUPPOSED TO DO (CHAPS. 25–31) BUT ALSO AT LENGTH, WITH REMARKABLY LITTLE CHANGE IN WORDING, DESCRIPTIONS OF THE FACT THAT THEY DID IT. THIS LEVEL OF REPETITION HAS ALWAYS MADE WORKING THROUGH EXOD 35–40 A CHALLENGE FOR MODERN READERS UNUSED TO SUCH LARGE-SCALE REPETITIONS. WOULD IT NOT HAVE BEEN ENOUGH TO SAY SIMPLY THAT “EVERYTHING GOD COMMANDED MOSES AND THE ISRAELITES TO DO TO BUILD AND FURNISH THE TABERNACLE THEY DID”? AFTER ALL, STATEMENTS OF THAT GENERAL NATURE ARE ACTUALLY EMPLOYED A NUMBER OF TIMES EARLIER IN EXODUS WITHOUT DIFFICULTY OR CONFUSION AS TO WHAT WAS COMMANDED AND WHAT WAS DONE. SEVERAL REASONS FOR THE EXTENSIVE REITERATION OF PREVIOUSLY STATED MATERIAL AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE BOOK OF EXODUS ARE APPARENT. FIRST, IT FOLLOWS THE RULES OF AN HONORED LITERARY GENRE FOUND ELSEWHERE IN THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST, MOST NOTABLY ILLUSTRATED IN THE LENGTHY COMMAND-FULFILLMENT REPETITION OF THE KERET EPIC. IN THAT FAMOUS UGARITIC MYTH, THE GOD EL COMMANDS KING KERET IN A DREAM TO DO A CONSIDERABLE NUMBER OF THINGS. INSTEAD OF SIMPLY STATING SOMETHING LIKE, “SO KERET DID EVERYTHING EL HAD COMMANDED HIM,” THE TEXT REPEATS MORE THAN NINETY LINES OF INSTRUCTION ALMOST BUT NOT ENTIRELY VERBATIM, WITH THE MOST IMPORTANT AND OBVIOUS CHANGE BEING IN THE VERB TENSES. IN OTHER WORDS, EL REPEATEDLY SAYS TO KERET, DO XYZ, AND EVENTUALLY THE FULFILLMENT REPETITION REPORTS REPEATEDLY THAT KERET DID XYZ, SAYING ALL THE SAME THINGS AND LEAVING VIRTUALLY NOTHING TO THE IMAGINATION. THIS IS PRECISELY THE PHENOMENON THAT OCCURS IN EXOD 25–31 AND 35–40. THE ANCIENT EXTRABIBLICAL COMMAND-FULFILLMENT ACCOUNTS LIKE THAT OF THE KERET EPIC THUS FURNISH US WITH SOMETHING OF A “CONTROL” AGAINST WHICH TO EVALUATE WHAT IS HAPPENING IN THIS SORT OF GENRE WHEN WE FIND IT IN A BIBLICAL SETTING. THE REASON FOR THE GENRE IS IN FACT EASY ENOUGH TO SEE: ELABORATE, EVEN TEDIOUS REPETITION FORCES THE READER/LISTENER TO AGREE THAT A SET OF IMPORTANT INSTRUCTIONS WAS UNQUESTIONABLY CARRIED OUT TO THE LETTER. IN OTHER WORDS, THE COMMAND-FULFILLMENT REPETITION PATTERN IS A WAY OF HIGHLIGHTING THE IMPORTANCE OF WHAT IS COMMANDED AND THE PRECISION WITH WHICH IT WAS OBEYED. BY IMPLICATION THE THINGS PRODUCED IN OBEDIENCE TO THE ORIGINAL COMMAND MUST BE CONSIDERED IMPORTANT—THEY WERE COMMANDED IN GREAT DETAIL AND PRODUCED IN RIGOROUS COMPLICITY WITH THE COMMAND. IN OTHER WORDS, THINGS OVER WHICH SUCH A GREAT “FUSS” HAVE BEEN MADE IN THE TEXT CAN ONLY BE SEEN AS OF PARAMOUNT SIGNIFICANCE, THINGS NEITHER TO BE IGNORED NOR TREATED LIGHTLY NOR TAKEN FOR GRANTED. SECOND, IT IS NOT ACCIDENTAL THAT THIS GENRE IS EMPLOYED TO DESCRIBE GOD’S LONGEST SET OF COMMANDS IN ALL OF EXODUS—GREATER IN VOLUME THAN EVEN THE DECALOGUE (CHAP. 20) AND COVENANT CODE (CHAPS. 21–24) PUT TOGETHER. BUT WHY NOT DO THE SAME WITH THOSE COMMANDS? THE ANSWER, AGAIN, IS SIMPLE ENOUGH: THE COMMAND-FULFILLMENT PATTERN IS USEFUL MAINLY IN SITUATIONS WHERE WHAT HAS BEEN COMMANDED IS EASILY MEASURABLE AND CAN BE VERIFIED AS TO WHETHER OR NOT A SET OF COMMANDS WAS CARRIED OUT AS COMMANDED (AND USUALLY RATHER PROMPTLY). BY CONTRAST, THE VARIOUS LAWS OF THE DECALOGUE AND COVENANT CODE REGULATE THE WHOLE LIFE OF THE ISRAELITE COMMUNITY FROM THE TIME THEY WERE REVEALED AND FORWARD TO ALL GENERATIONS. ONLY GOD HIMSELF WOULD KNOW IF THOSE LAWS WERE BEING OBEYED FULLY BECAUSE SO MANY HUMAN BEHAVIORS ARE PRIVATE AND CANNOT BE KNOWN GENERALLY OR MEASURED ACCURATELY BY HUMANS. ON THE OTHER HAND, A BUILDING AND ITS FURNISHINGS CAN BE BUILT OR NOT BUILT, FURNISHED OR NOT FURNISHED, ACCORDING TO THE INSTRUCTIONS. INDEED, MOSES HIMSELF EVENTUALLY HAD THE TASK OF INSPECTING THE TABERNACLE AND ITS FURNISHINGS TO DETERMINE WHETHER OR NOT ALL HAD BEEN PROVIDED ACCORDING TO DIVINE SPECIFICATION (39:33–43) AND OF BEING SURE AS WELL THAT THE TABERNACLE WAS ERECTED AND ITS FURNISHINGS PROPERLY PLACED AS COMMANDED (40:1–33). THIRD, COMMAND-FULFILLMENT REPETITION WAS BOTH INSTRUCTIVE AND REGULATORY FOR ITS PRIMARY ORIGINAL AUDIENCE—ISRAEL’S PRIESTS, AARON, AND HIS SONS. THEY HAD THE PROFOUND RESPONSIBILITY OF MAKING SURE THE PEOPLE WORSHIPED PROPERLY, WHEN, WHERE, AND AS THEY SHOULD. THIS WAS NOT BECAUSE HAVING HIS PEOPLE GO THROUGH CERTAIN MOTIONS WAS IMPORTANT TO GOD PER SE. RATHER, GOD DESIRED TO HAVE HIS PEOPLE AS CLOSE TO HIM AS HIS HOLINESS WOULD ALLOW AND REGULARLY REMINDED OF THEIR DEPENDENCY ON HIM, LEST THEY STRAY INTO BEHAVIORS AND BELIEFS THAT COULD NOT SAVE FROM SIN. THE TABERNACLE PROVIDED THE LOCUS OF THAT CLOSENESS AND THE PLACE OF RENEWAL OF COVENANT FIDELITY IN WORSHIP. PRIESTS WERE REMINDED BY THE REPETITION OF TABERNACLE INSTRUCTIONS IN EXODUS OF THE FACT THAT THEY LED WORSHIP AT A PLACE GOD HIMSELF HAD CLEARLY ORDAINED AND THROUGH A STRUCTURE AND ITS FURNISHINGS THAT GOD HIMSELF HAD APPROVED. THE COMMAND-FULFILLMENT PATTERN LEGITIMIZED THEIR SERVICE, REPRESENTING GOD TO THE PEOPLE AND THE PEOPLE TO GOD. FINALLY, THE COMMAND-FULFILLMENT PATTERN WAS, AT LEAST POTENTIALLY, PREVENTIVE. IDOLATRY, TO WHICH THE ISRAELITES WERE ALWAYS INCLINED, MADE WORSHIP VERY EASY AND VERY CONVENIENT: ANY HIGH HILL AND ANY GREEN TREE WOULD PROVIDE A SITE FOR A SIMPLE ALTAR AND A PLACE TO EAT THE SACRIFICED MEAL (1 KGS 14:23; 2 KGS 17:10; JER 2:20; 3:6; EZEK 6:13; 20:28). BY CONTRAST, GOD REQUIRED HIS PEOPLE TO WORSHIP HIM IN A FAR MORE NOBLE AND, INDEED, ELABORATE WAY AND TO HOUSE HIS SYMBOL, THE ARK, IN A MOVEABLE HOUSE/TENT SO HE COULD ALWAYS RESIDE AS THEIR MONARCH IN THE MIDST OF HIS PEOPLE. THE ISRAELITES MIGHT WELL HAVE DEGENERATED INTO IDOLATRY EVEN MORE OFTEN THAN MOST OF THEM DID WERE IT NOT FOR THE UNDOUBTABLE, UNASSAILABLE CLARITY OF THE TABERNACLE INSTRUCTIONS AS CONVEYED BY THE DEGREE OF REPETITION INHERENT IN THE COMMAND-FULFILLMENT STRUCTURE OF THE END OF EXODUS. NO ISRAELITE WHO TRULY DESIRED TO PLEASE STEPHEN YAHWEH AND WORSHIP HIM PROPERLY COULD EVER CLAIM TO HAVE BEEN UNAWARE OF HOW TO WORSHIP HIM AT ONE CENTRAL LOCATION AT THE PROPERLY FURNISHED HOUSE OF DIVINE DESIGN, NOT OF HUMAN DEVISING.**

**2. FULFILLMENT OF THE LAWS ON THE MEANS OF WORSHIP (35:1–40:38)**

**EXODUS 35–40 CONTAINS A HIGH PROPORTION OF THE SAME MATERIAL ALREADY REVEALED IN CHAPS. 25–31, BUT NOT IN THE SAME ORDER. SEVERAL FACTORS ACCOUNT FOR THIS REORDERING, MOST OF WHICH WILL BE ADDRESSED IN DETAIL BELOW IN THE COMMENTARY ON SPECIFIC PASSAGES. FOREMOST AMONG THESE FACTORS IS THE NEED TO PORTRAY IN CHAPS. 35–40 HOW THE VARIOUS OBJECTS WERE ACTUALLY CONSTRUCTED IN ORDER. IN CHAPS. 25–31 THE CALL FOR ISRAELITES TO BRING AS DONATIONS MATERIALS OUT OF WHICH THE TABERNACLE AND ITS FURNISHINGS CAN BE MADE IS FOLLOWED BY A DESCRIPTION OF THE OBJECTS THEMSELVES IN THE ORDER OF THEIR IMPORTANCE AND HOLINESS, THAT IS, MOVING FROM THE MOST SACRED (THE ARK, A DIRECT REPRESENTATION OF STEPHEN YAHWEH AND THE PLACE OF HIS CONTACT WITH HIS PEOPLE) TO THE LEAST SACRED (THE COURTYARD PERIMETER). IN CHAPS. 35–40 BY CONTRAST THE OBJECTS ARE DESCRIBED IN THE ORDER THEY WERE ACTUALLY CONSTRUCTED, AN ORDER DICTATED BY COMMON SENSE AND NECESSITY. A MODERN ANALOGY MIGHT BE FOUND IN THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN HOW A CHURCH MIGHT BE DESCRIBED BEFORE BEING BUILT AND THE ORDER IN WHICH IT WOULD ACTUALLY BE BUILT. IF A CHURCH BUILDING COMMITTEE WERE DESCRIBING WHAT THEY WANTED THEIR NEW CHURCH TO BE LIKE, THEY MIGHT WELL START BY DESCRIBING THE SANCTUARY, THEN PERHAPS CERTAIN OTHER INTERIOR ROOMS, THEN PERHAPS THE GENERAL EXTERNAL APPEARANCE, WHAT SORT OF STEEPLE (OR NOT) MIGHT BE DESIRED, FURNISHINGS, LIGHTING, AND OTHER DÉCOR. BUT A BUILDER COULD NOT BUILD THE CHURCH IN THAT ORDER. HE WOULD START WITH CLEARING THE SITE, THEN POURING FOOTINGS, AND THEN A FOUNDATION, AND THEN SILLS, THEN THE FRAMING. THE BUILDING COMMITTEE’S ORDERING OF ITS DESIRES WOULD BE COMPLETELY APPROPRIATE, BUT SO WOULD THE BUILDER’S ORDERING OF THE BUILDING PROCESS. THE TWO ORDERS ARE NOT THE SAME, AND NO ONE WHO REALLY UNDERSTANDS THE BUILDING PROCESS FROM CONCEPTION TO CONSTRUCTION WOULD EXPECT THEM TO BE. THE VISION COMES IN ONE ORDER, THE IMPLEMENTATION IN ANOTHER. ADDITIONALLY, THERE ARE PLACES WHERE SOMETHING STATED IN DETAIL IN CHAPS. 25–31 IS MORE SUCCINCTLY SUMMARIZED IN CHAPS. 35–40 AND OTHER CASES WHERE SOMETHING STATED IN CHAPS. 25–31 IS EXPANDED UPON IN CHAPS. 35–40. WE WILL EXAMINE THESE AS THEY OCCUR IN THE TEXT. THE GENERAL REASONS FOR SUCH DIFFERENCES APPEAR TO BE TWOFOLD. FIRST, IN AN ORAL SOCIETY SOME DIFFERENCES BETWEEN COMMAND WORDING AND FULFILLMENT WORDING WERE NEEDED IN ORDER TO HELP THE LISTENER KEEP AWARE OF WHICH SECTION OF THE LITERARY WORK HE OR SHE WAS LISTENING TO. MUCH CAN BE REPEATED VERBATIM, BUT IF EVERYTHING IS, THEN THE LONG STRETCH OF COMPLETELY IDENTICAL MATERIAL ACTUALLY CONFUSES, RATHER THAN HELPS, THE LISTENER. SECOND, THE FULFILLMENT SECTION (CHAPS. 35–40) IS INTENDED TO COMPLEMENT, NOT MERELY TO REPEAT, THE FIRST WITHOUT DIFFERENTIATION (CHAPS. 25–31). IT REINFORCES AND BUILDS UPON WHAT HAS ALREADY BEEN STATED AND DOES THIS BY VARIATIONS THAT ALTHOUGH MODEST IN NUMBER AND SCOPE COMPARED TO THE REPETITIONS ARE STILL WELCOME AS “FRESH.” PSYCHOLOGICALLY, THE HEARER/READER RECOGNIZES THAT THIS NEW MATERIAL IS NOT JUST PRIOR MATERIAL BUT INFORMATION THAT HAS BEEN RESHAPED AND REPACKAGED SO THAT IT COMES ACROSS WITH SUFFICIENT NOVELTY AS TO BE OF INTEREST AND TO SEEM WORTHY OF CAREFUL ATTENTION. ANOTHER WAY TO PUT IT IS THIS: THE BITS AND PIECES OF DIFFERENT MATERIAL KEEP THE HEARER/READER ATTENTIVE AND WILLING TO LISTEN TO THE REPETITIONS OF THE BULK OF THE SAME MATERIAL ONCE AGAIN.**

**THE FOLLOWING TABLE LISTS THE MAIN COMPARISONS BETWEEN CHAPS. 25–31 AND 35–40, WITH OCCASIONAL REFERENCES TO FULFILLMENTS OR REPETITIONS OF COMMANDS IN LEVITICUS OR NUMBERS, WHERE THESE ARE ALSO USEFUL FOR COMPARISON.**

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| **COMMAND** |  | **FULFILLMENT** |
| **25:1–7** | **CALL FOR OFFERINGS OF VARIOUS MATERIALS** | **35:4–9; 35:21–29** |
| **25:10–22** | **THE ARK** | **37:1–9** |
| **25:23–30** | **THE TABLE** | **37:10–16** |
| **25:31–39** | **THE LAMPSTAND** | **37:17–24** |
| **26:1–37** | **THE TABERNACLE PROPER** | **36:8–38** |
| **27:1–8** | **BRONZE ALTAR FOR BURNT OFFERINGS** | **38:1–7** |
| **27:20–21** | **OIL FOR THE LAMPSTAND** | **COMMAND RENEWED IN LEV 24:1–3** |
| **28:1–5** | **PRIESTS’ DRESS SUMMARY** | **COMMAND RENEWED IN 35:19; FULFILLED IN 39:1, 41; CF. 40:13–14; LEV 8:7–8** |
| **28:6–14** | **EPHOD** | **39:2–7** |
| **28:15–30** | **BREAST-PIECE** | **39:8–21; LEV 8:8** |
| **28:31–43** | **REMAINING PRIESTS’ GARMENTS** | **39:22–31** |
| **29:1–37** | **CONSECRATING PRIESTS** | **LEV 8:1–36** |
| **29:38–43** | **DAILY OFFERINGS** | **COMMAND RENEWED IN NUM 28:1–8** |
| **29:44** | **CONSECRATION OF TABERNACLE**  **CONSECRATION OF ALTAR** | **COMMAND RENEWED IN 40:9**  **COMMAND RENEWED IN 40:10 FULFILLED IN LEV 8:11** |
| **29:44** | **CONSECRATION OF PRIESTS** | **COMMAND RENEWED IN 40:13** |
| **30:1–5** | **INCENSE ALTAR** | **37:25–28** |
| **30:6** | **INCENSE ALTAR PLACEMENT** | **COMMAND RENEWED IN 40:6 FULFILLED IN 40:26** |
| **30:7–9** | **RULES FOR INCENSE BURNING** | **40:27** |
| **30:10** | **ATONEMENT FOR INCENSE ALTAR** | **COMMAND RENEWED IN LEV 4:7** |
| **30:17–21** | **BRONZE WASHING BASIN** | **38:8; 40:30** |
| **30:22–33** | **ANOINTING OIL FOR OBJECTS, PRIESTS** | **35:28; 37:29; 40:9; LEV 8:10–12, 30** |
| **30:34–38** | **INCENSE** | **35:28; 37:29; 39:38; 40:27** |
| **31:1–11** | **BEZALEL AND OHOLIAB/WORK OVERVIEW** | **35:30–35; 36:1–7** |
| **31:12–17** | **SABBATH** | **COMMAND RENEWED IN 35:1–3; LEV 23:3; CF. NUM 15:32–36; DEUT. 5:12–15** |

**THE IMPORTANCE OF THE SABBATH (35:1–3) [FULFILLMENT OF 31:12–18]**

**1 MOSES ASSEMBLED THE WHOLE ISRAELITE COMMUNITY AND SAID TO THEM, “THESE ARE THE THINGS THE LORD HAS COMMANDED YOU TO DO: 2 FOR SIX DAYS, WORK IS TO BE DONE, BUT THE SEVENTH DAY SHALL BE YOUR HOLY DAY, A SABBATH OF REST TO THE LORD. WHOEVER DOES ANY WORK ON IT MUST BE PUT TO DEATH. 3 DO NOT LIGHT A FIRE IN ANY OF YOUR DWELLINGS ON THE SABBATH DAY.” 35:1 THE ESSENTIAL PREREQUISITES FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE TABERNACLE ARE NOW IN PLACE: GOD HAS REITERATED THE COVENANT, THE NATION HAS BEEN CLEANSED OF THOSE WHO REFUSED TO REPENT FROM IDOLATRY, THE COVENANT HAS BEEN WRITTEN DOWN AND TAUGHT TO THE PEOPLE, AND THEY HAVE ACCEPTED THE COVENANT AND MOSES’ LEADERSHIP ONCE AGAIN. IT IS NOW TIME FOR THE FULFILLMENT OF WHAT GOD COMMANDED TO BE MADE AND USED FOR PROPERLY WORSHIPING HIM SO THAT THE FIRST RESPONSE OF THE BELIEVER (WORSHIP) CAN BEGIN AS IT SHOULD. WHY, THEN, DOES THE STORY OF THE FULFILLMENT OF THE TABERNACLE CONSTRUCTION COMMANDS BEGIN WITH A REPEAT OF SABBATH LAW? THE PRIMARY REASON IS SURELY THAT THE SABBATH WAS THE SIGN OF THE COVENANT, THE VISIBLE WEEKLY PROOF THAT THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL WERE KEEPING THEIR PART OF THE GREAT DIVINELY REVEALED LEGAL OBLIGATION THROUGH WHICH CAME THEIR PROTECTION AND BLESSINGS (SEE COMMENTS ON 20:8–11; 31:13, 17). IN A CERTAIN SENSE ISRAEL’S FORMAL STARTING POINT FOR KEEPING STEPHEN YAHWEH’S COVENANT WAS KEEPING THE SABBATH, THAT IS, THE FOURTH WORD/COMMANDMENT, NOT BECAUSE DOING SO WAS MORE IMPORTANT THAN FULFILLING THE FIRST THREE WORDS/COMMANDMENTS BUT BECAUSE OBEDIENCE TO THE SABBATH REQUIREMENT WAS THE MOST OBVIOUSLY MEASURABLE OF THEM—EITHER IN THE KEEPING OR IN THE DISOBEYING. BY THE FACT THAT HE KEPT (OR DID NOT KEEP) THE SABBATH EACH WEEK, AN ISRAELITE SHOWED WITHOUT AMBIGUITY WHETHER OR NOT HE WAS COMMITTED TO KEEPING THE COVENANT. MERELY KEEPING THE SABBATH DID NOT CONFER RIGHTEOUSNESS IF OTHER COMMANDMENTS WERE VIOLATED, BUT IT WAS AN OPENLY VISIBLE ESSENTIAL—A SINE QUA NON—OF COVENANT LOYALTY. NOT TO KEEP IT WOULD BE TO SAY PUBLICLY TO THE WORLD “I AM NOT IN COVENANT RELATIONSHIP WITH THE LORD OF THE SABBATH.” IN ADDITION, BY THE PLACEMENT OF THE SABBATH LAW HERE, GOD ALSO LINKED CHAPS. 25–31, WHICH ARE MOSTLY DEDICATED TO THE TOPIC OF WORSHIP, WITH WHAT FOLLOWS IN THE REST OF CHAPS. 35–40, WHICH ARE AS WELL MOSTLY DEDICATED TO WORSHIP. A BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE LAWS ABOUT THE WEEKLY DAY OF WORSHIP, THE SABBATH, THUS FUNCTIONS LIKE A HINGE TO CONNECT THE COMMAND AND FULFILLMENT SECTIONS. THE WORSHIP THAT WAS TO OCCUR EVERY WEEK HONORED WITH PRAISE AND ADORATION THE GIVER OF THE COVENANT SO RECENTLY RENEWED IN CHAP. 34. A THIRD AND SOMEWHAT TEMPORAL REASON FOR THE REITERATION OF SABBATH TEACHING AT THIS POINT IN THE SEQUENCE OF EVENTS MAY HAVE BEEN TO KEEP ISRAELITES FROM VIOLATING THE SABBATH IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE TABERNACLE. IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN READILY ASSUMED BY THE PEOPLE AND PERHAPS EVEN SOME OF THEIR PRIESTS THAT BUILDING SOMETHING SO HOLY AS THE TABERNACLE WOULD TRUMP ANY CONCERN ABOUT THE NON-HOLINESS OF BREAKING THE SABBATH LAW. IN FACT, THE SIGN OF THE COVENANT CAN NEVER BE DENIGRATED EVEN FOR A PURPOSE SO POSITIVE. 35:2 THE PROHIBITION AGAINST WORKING ON THE SABBATH DAY AND THE DEATH PENALTY ATTACHED TO ITS VIOLATION ARE REITERATIONS OF WHAT HAS ALREADY BEEN COMMANDED IN 20:8–11 (WHICH, LIKE ALL THE TEN WORDS/COMMANDMENTS HAS NO EXPRESSED DEATH PENALTY CLAUSE) AND 31:13–17, WHERE THE DEATH PENALTY FOR VIOLATING THE SABBATH DOES, IN FACT, EXPLICITLY APPEAR (31:14–15). THE WORDING HERE HAS SOME VARIATIONS THAT ALLOW FOR SUMMATION OF WHAT WAS STATED EARLIER (E.G., THE WORDING “SABBATH OF REST TO THE LORD,” WHICH COMBINES THE CONCEPTS OF “SABBATH TO THE LORD” FROM 20:10 AND “RESTED ON THE SEVENTH DAY” FROM 20:11 AND “SABBATH OF REST, HOLY TO THE LORD” FROM 31:15). 35:3 THE COMMAND “DO NOT LIGHT A FIRE IN ANY OF YOUR DWELLINGS ON THE SABBATH DAY” IS ALSO A SUMMATIONAL STATEMENT, A WAY OF STATING BRIEFLY THAT NO WORK CAN BE DONE ON THE SABBATH, AS IS CLEARLY SPELLED OUT NOT ONLY IN THE PRIOR VERSE BUT IN THE PRIOR PASSAGES ON THE SABBATH IN CHAPS. 20 AND 31. BUT WHAT DOES LIGHTING A FIRE HAVE TO DO WITH WORKING? THE ANSWER IS THAT THE SIMPLEST SORT OF WORK THAT ANYONE MIGHT BE TEMPTED TO DO ON THE SABBATH (WITHIN THE CATEGORY OF PROHIBITED WORK, WORK THAT MUST NOT BE DONE, IN FACT) WAS COOKING MEALS. IT WOULD BE EASY FOR ANY ISRAELITE TO RATIONALIZE THAT COOKING A MEAL WOULD CLEARLY BE ALLOWED SINCE EATING WAS NOT ITSELF PROHIBITED AS WORK; INDEED, EATING ON THE SABBATH HAD BEEN DIVINELY PROVIDED FOR ALREADY THROUGH THE DOUBLE SUPPLY OF MANNA EACH SIXTH DAY (SEE COMMENTS ON 16:14–35). BUT THE SABBATH LAW RECOGNIZED THAT EITHER ALLOWING OR REQUIRING THE COOKING OF MEALS ON THE SABBATH WOULD UNDENIABLY REPRESENT WORK FOR THE WOMEN AND/OR SERVANTS OF THE FAMILY AND THUS REPRESENT A CLEAR VIOLATION OF THE LAW. SO THE COMMAND AGAINST LIGHTING A FIRE IS, BY THE PRINCIPLE OF SYNECDOCHE, A COMMAND TO EAT COLD FOOD ON THE SABBATH, THAT WHICH HAS BEEN PREPARED (WHETHER COOKED OR NOT) THE PREVIOUS DAY, SO THE WOMEN AND/OR SERVANTS OF THE HOUSEHOLD COULD HAVE THEIR DAY OF REST AND NOT JUST THE HOUSEHOLDING MEN. THE PROHIBITION DOES NOT MENTION ALL FIRES BUT ONLY THOSE IN PRIVATE HOMES SINCE THOSE ON THE TABERNACLE ALTAR WERE ENTIRELY APPROPRIATE FOR THE SABBATH OFFERINGS (NUM 28:9). EVEN SO MUCH AS GATHERING FIREWOOD, WHEN NOT A MATTER OF EMERGENCY, WAS CONSIDERED WORK AND THUS MERITED THE DEATH PENALTY (NUM 15:32–36).258**

**OFFERINGS OF TABERNACLE MATERIALS (35:4–29) [FULFILLMENT OF 25:1–7]**

**4 MOSES SAID TO THE WHOLE ISRAELITE COMMUNITY, “THIS IS WHAT THE LORD HAS COMMANDED: 5 FROM WHAT YOU HAVE, TAKE AN OFFERING FOR THE LORD. EVERYONE WHO IS WILLING IS TO BRING TO THE LORD AN OFFERING OF GOLD, SILVER AND BRONZE; 6 BLUE, PURPLE AND SCARLET YARN AND FINE LINEN; GOAT HAIR; 7 RAM SKINS DYED RED AND HIDES OF SEA COWS; ACACIA WOOD; 8 OLIVE OIL FOR THE LIGHT; SPICES FOR THE ANOINTING OIL AND FOR THE FRAGRANT INCENSE; 9 AND ONYX STONES AND OTHER GEMS TO BE MOUNTED ON THE EPHOD AND BREAST-PIECE. 10 “ALL WHO ARE SKILLED AMONG YOU ARE TO COME AND MAKE EVERYTHING THE LORD HAS COMMANDED: 11 THE TABERNACLE WITH ITS TENT AND ITS COVERING, CLASPS, FRAMES, CROSSBARS, POSTS AND BASES; 12 THE ARK WITH ITS POLES AND THE ATONEMENT COVER AND THE CURTAIN THAT SHIELDS IT; 13 THE TABLE WITH ITS POLES AND ALL ITS ARTICLES AND THE BREAD OF THE PRESENCE; 14 THE LAMPSTAND THAT IS FOR LIGHT WITH ITS ACCESSORIES, LAMPS AND OIL FOR THE LIGHT; 15 THE ALTAR OF INCENSE WITH ITS POLES, THE ANOINTING OIL AND THE FRAGRANT INCENSE; THE CURTAIN FOR THE DOORWAY AT THE ENTRANCE TO THE TABERNACLE; 16 THE ALTAR OF BURNT OFFERING WITH ITS BRONZE GRATING, ITS POLES AND ALL ITS UTENSILS; THE BRONZE BASIN WITH ITS STAND; 17 THE CURTAINS OF THE COURTYARD WITH ITS POSTS AND BASES, AND THE CURTAIN FOR THE ENTRANCE TO THE COURTYARD; 18 THE TENT PEGS FOR THE TABERNACLE AND FOR THE COURTYARD, AND THEIR ROPES; 19 THE WOVEN GARMENTS WORN FOR MINISTERING IN THE SANCTUARY—BOTH THE SACRED GARMENTS FOR AARON THE PRIEST AND THE GARMENTS FOR HIS SONS WHEN THEY SERVE AS PRIESTS.” 20 THEN THE WHOLE ISRAELITE COMMUNITY WITHDREW FROM MOSES’ PRESENCE, 21 AND EVERYONE WHO WAS WILLING AND WHOSE HEART MOVED HIM CAME AND BROUGHT AN OFFERING TO THE LORD FOR THE WORK ON THE TENT OF MEETING, FOR ALL ITS SERVICE, AND FOR THE SACRED GARMENTS. 22 ALL WHO WERE WILLING, MEN AND WOMEN ALIKE, CAME AND BROUGHT GOLD JEWELRY OF ALL KINDS: BROOCHES, EARRINGS, RINGS AND ORNAMENTS. THEY ALL PRESENTED THEIR GOLD AS A WAVE OFFERING TO THE LORD. 23 EVERYONE WHO HAD BLUE, PURPLE OR SCARLET YARN OR FINE LINEN, OR GOAT HAIR, RAM SKINS DYED RED OR HIDES OF SEA COWS BROUGHT THEM. 24 THOSE PRESENTING AN OFFERING OF SILVER OR BRONZE BROUGHT IT AS AN OFFERING TO THE LORD, AND EVERYONE WHO HAD ACACIA WOOD FOR ANY PART OF THE WORK BROUGHT IT. 25 EVERY SKILLED WOMAN SPUN WITH HER HANDS AND BROUGHT WHAT SHE HAD SPUN—BLUE, PURPLE OR SCARLET YARN OR FINE LINEN. 26 AND ALL THE WOMEN WHO WERE WILLING AND HAD THE SKILL SPUN THE GOAT HAIR. 27 THE LEADERS BROUGHT ONYX STONES AND OTHER GEMS TO BE MOUNTED ON THE EPHOD AND BREAST-PIECE. 28 THEY ALSO BROUGHT SPICES AND OLIVE OIL FOR THE LIGHT AND FOR THE ANOINTING OIL AND FOR THE FRAGRANT INCENSE. 29 ALL THE ISRAELITE MEN AND WOMEN WHO WERE WILLING BROUGHT TO THE LORD FREEWILL OFFERINGS FOR ALL THE WORK THE LORD THROUGH MOSES HAD COMMANDED THEM TO DO.**

**GOD’S CALL FOR MATERIALS (35:4–9)**

**35:4 SINCE GOD HAD SAID IN 25:1, “TELL THE ISRAELITES TO BRING ME AN OFFERING. YOU ARE TO RECEIVE THE OFFERING FOR ME FROM EACH MAN WHOSE HEART PROMPTS HIM TO GIVE,” MOSES TOOK THE COMMAND SERIOUSLY AND DID NOT MERELY PASS THE WORD AMONG THE PEOPLE OR ASSEMBLE ONLY THE LEADERSHIP AND ASK THEM TO RELAY THE COMMAND THROUGHOUT THE PEOPLE. HE ASSEMBLED THE WHOLE COMMUNITY (FULFILLING THE COMMAND FOR EACH PERSON TO BE INVITED TO RESPOND), COMPRISED OF ALL THOSE OLD ENOUGH AND WELL ENOUGH TO GATHER IN ONE SPOT, AND TOLD THEM ALL DIRECTLY ABOUT GOD’S DESIRE THAT THEY RESPOND WILLINGLY TO HIS CALL FOR THE DONATION OF MATERIALS. HE REMINDED THEM THAT THE CALL FOR MATERIALS CAME FROM GOD AS A COMMAND AND WAS NOT SOMETHING EITHER HE OR OTHER ISRAELITES HAD DECIDED ON THEIR OWN WAS NECESSARY. EVERYTHING ABOUT THE TABERNACLE WAS OF DIVINE DESIGN AND ORIGINATION. HUMANS WERE GRACIOUSLY ALLOWED TO PARTICIPATE IN ITS CONSTRUCTION, BUT THEY COULD NOT CLAIM ANY CREDIT OTHERWISE. IT WAS GOD WHO TOLD HUMANS HOW HE WISHED TO BE WORSHIPED, NOT HUMANS WHO TOLD GOD WHAT THEY HAD DECIDED TO DO BY WAY OF WORSHIP. 35:5–9 THE LANGUAGE HERE DUPLICATES 25:3–7 VERBATIM, STARTING WITH THE WORDS “GOLD, SILVER AND BRONZE” (V. 5). IN 25:1 GOD HAD COMMANDED, “TELL THE ISRAELITES TO BRING ME AN OFFERING,” WHICH IS PARAPHRASED HERE APPROPRIATELY AS “FROM WHAT YOU HAVE, TAKE AN OFFERING FOR THE LORD” (V. 5). THE STATEMENT IN 25:1, “YOU ARE TO RECEIVE THE OFFERING FOR ME FROM EACH MAN WHOSE HEART PROMPTS HIM TO GIVE” IS HERE FULFILLED BY MOSES’ DECLARATION, “EVERYONE WHO IS WILLING IS TO BRING TO THE LORD AN OFFERING.” MOSES THUS FULFILLED GOD’S COMMAND TO TELL THE PEOPLE TO OFFER THE MATERIALS BY DOING JUST AS GOD HAD SAID. THIS PASSAGE STANDS AS A MODEL FOR THE WAY THINGS OF GOD ARE PROVIDED FOR BY HUMANS. THE COVENANT COMMUNITY RESPONDS TO WHAT THEY PERCEIVE AS A DIVINE CALL AND GIVE FREELY, WITHOUT COERCION, UNTIL THE NEED IS MET. THEY GIVE OF THEIR OWN POSSESSIONS SO THAT EACH PERSON PARTICIPATES THROUGH PERSONAL SACRIFICE. PART OF THE PRIVILEGE OF SERVING GOD IS TO BE FOUND IN THE OPPORTUNITY TO DONATE TO HIS PURPOSES, THINGS THAT IN HIS COMMON GRACE HE HAS ALREADY ENTRUSTED TO THE POSSESSION OF HIS PEOPLE. THE MOST-HIGHEST HONOR A PERSON CAN HAVE IN CONNECTION WITH ANYTHING HE OR SHE OWNS AND MIGHT OTHERWISE HAVE USED FOR SELF IS SEEING IT GIVEN OVER TO AND INCORPORATED INTO THAT WHICH GOD THEREAFTER OWNS AND USES FOR HIS HONOR. THE STORY OF THE DONATIONS OF THE PEOPLE ENDS IN 36:4–7, WITH THE REPORT THAT THE DONATIONS FAR EXCEEDED THE NEED, THUS CONFIRMING THAT THE PEOPLE TOOK MOSES’ CALL SERIOUSLY. HAVING BEEN CHASTENED BY THE TERRIBLE RESULTS OF THEIR REBELLION AGAINST STEPHEN YAHWEH IN THE PAST, THEY NOW WHOLEHEARTEDLY RESPONDED TO AN OPPORTUNITY TO SHOW THEIR LOYALTY.**

**GOD’S CALL FOR SKILLED WORKERS (35:10–19) [SUMMARIZES PARTS OF 26–28; 30 WITH FURTHER FULFILLMENT ESPECIALLY IN 37; 39–40]**

**THIS LISTING OF COMPONENT PARTS OF THE TABERNACLE, ITS FURNISHINGS, AND ITS COURTYARD REFLECTS SYSTEMATICALLY VARIOUS DESCRIPTIONS OF THESE ARTICLES IN THE COMMAND SECTIONS OF CHAPS. 26–28 AND CHAP. 30, BUT IT ALSO FINDS MANY PARALLELS IN 39:32–41, WHERE THE ORIGINAL COMMAND TO PROVIDE THE TABERNACLE CAN ALSO BE CONSIDERED TO HAVE BEEN FULFILLED AS MOSES INSPECTED THE TABERNACLE AND FOUND IT FULLY IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE DESIGN HE WAS GIVEN BY GOD ON SINAI.**

**35:10 “ALL WHO ARE SKILLED AMONG YOU” SUMMARIZES THE EARLIER INSTRUCTIONS THAT VARIOUS TABERNACLE PARTS WERE TO BE CONSTRUCTED BY “A SKILLED CRAFTSMAN” (26:1, 31) OR “ALL THE SKILLED MEN” (28:3) OR “THE WORK OF A SKILLED CRAFTSMAN” (28:6, 15). THE WORDING “EVERYTHING THE LORD HAS COMMANDED” (35:10) REFLECTS PARTICULARLY THE LANGUAGE OF 31:6 (“I HAVE GIVEN SKILL TO ALL THE CRAFTSMEN TO MAKE EVERYTHING I HAVE COMMANDED YOU”). THIS CONCEPT WILL ALSO BE REITERATED IN 39:32 (“THE ISRAELITES DID EVERYTHING JUST AS THE LORD COMMANDED MOSES”). IN THIS SITUATION THE BIBLICAL THEME OF GOD’S USE OF HUMAN BEINGS TO ACCOMPLISH HIS WILL IS FURTHER DEVELOPED. THE EMPHASIS OF “LET US MAKE MAN IN OUR IMAGE” (GEN 1:26) IS NOT ONTOLOGICAL BUT VOCATIONAL. IT REFERS TO HUMANS BEING HEAVEN’S REPRESENTATIVES ON EARTH TO DO WHAT GOD WANTS DONE ON EARTH (CF. “AS IT IS IN HEAVEN,” MATT 6:10), AS THE REMAINDER OF GEN 1:26 GOES ON TO CLARIFY (“LET THEM RULE OVER … ALL THE EARTH”). GOD’S GENIUS IN CREATION IS DEMONSTRATED PARTLY IN HIS DELEGATION OF IMPORTANT ASSIGNMENTS TO HUMANS—ASSIGNMENTS OF DIVINE DESIGN BUT OF HUMAN FULFILLMENT. 35:11 BUILDING THE “TABERNACLE” (THE SYMBOLIC HOUSE-TENT FOR STEPHEN YAHWEH) WAS COMMANDED AS A GENERAL, OVERALL REQUIREMENT IN 26:1 AND WILL BE SUMMARIZED IN GENERAL IN 39:32–33 AS WELL. THIS WAS FOLLOWED IN THE ORIGINAL TABERNACLE COMMANDMENTS GIVEN TO MOSES BY INSTRUCTIONS CONCERNING THE VARIOUS COMPONENT PARTS OF THE TABERNACLE, INCLUDING THE “COVERING” IN 26:14 (CF. 39:34); THE “CLASPS” IN 26:6, 11, 33 (CF. 39:34); THE “FRAMES” IN 26:15–23, 25 (CF. 39:34); THE “CROSSBARS” IN 26:26, 28–29 (CF. 39:34); THE “POSTS” IN 26:32, 37 (CF. 39:33 [NOTE THAT THESE ARE DIFFERENT FROM THE POSTS USED TO HANG THE COURTYARD CURTAINS MENTIONED IN 27:10–12, 14–17; CF. 39:40)]; AND THE “BASES” FOR THE POSTS IN 26:19, 21, 25, 32, 37 (CF. 39:40 [THESE BASES, AGAIN, WERE JUST FOR THE TABERNACLE POSTS AND WERE SEPARATE FROM THE BASE FOR THE LAMPSTAND (25:31) OR THE BASES FOR THE COURTYARD POSTS]; 27:10FF.; CF. 39:40). 35:12 THE “ARK” WAS DESCRIBED IN 25:10–12 (CF. 39:35); ITS CARRYING “POLES” WERE DEPICTED IN 25:13–16 (CF. 39:35); ITS “ATONEMENT COVER” IN 25:17–22 (CF. 26:34; 39:35); AND THE “CURTAIN” DIVIDING THE HOLY OF HOLIES FROM THE HOLY PLACE, USED AS A WRAPPING FOR THE ARK AS IT TRAVELED (“THE CURTAIN THAT SHIELDS IT” WAS DESCRIBED IN 26:31–33; CF. 39:34). THESE IMPORTANT ITEMS ARE SIMPLY LISTED HERE WITHOUT DESCRIPTION OR ELABORATION BECAUSE THIS LISTING IS PART OF A BRIEF SPEECH REMINDING PEOPLE OF WHAT CONSTITUTED THE TABERNACLE AND ITS FURNISHINGS SO THAT THEY COULD GO HOME AND FIND OR MAKE APPROPRIATE MATERIALS TO DONATE. THE FULFILLMENT OF THE ORIGINAL ARK COMMAND OF CHAP. 25 IS FOUND IN 37:1–9, AND THE ORIGINAL CURTAIN COMMAND IS IN 36:35; 39:34. THE ARK IS THE ONLY OBJECT THAT OCCUPIED THE HOLY OF HOLIES, THE BACK ROOM OF THE TABERNACLE THAT REPRESENTED GOD’S PRIVATE QUARTERS. THE TABLE, LAMPSTAND, AND ALTAR OF INCENSE DESCRIBED IN 35:13–15 CONSTITUTED THE THREE PIECES OF FURNITURE IN THE SPARE BUT ELEGANT HOLY PLACE, THE FRONT ROOM OF THE TABERNACLE. 35:13 THE “TABLE” THAT STOOD IN THE HOLY PLACE, THE LARGER OF THE TWO ROOMS OF THE TABERNACLE, WAS DESCRIBED IN 25:23–27 (CF. 39:36); ITS “POLES,” IN 23:27–28; ITS “ARTICLES” (PLATES, DISHES, PITCHERS, BOWLS), IN 25:29 (CF. 39:36). THE TABLE WILL BE DESCRIBED AGAIN AS FULFILLED THROUGH ITS ACTUAL CONSTRUCTION IN 37:10–16 (LEAVING OUT IN THAT CONTEXT ANY MENTION OF THE BREAD, WHICH WAS A TEMPORARY SUBSTANCE, NOT A PIECE OF FURNITURE, CHAPS. 36–38 BEING DEVOTED TO HARDWARE RATHER THAN TO PERISHABLE SUBSTANCES). THE “BREAD OF THE PRESENCE” THAT WAS TO BE PLACED UPON IT CONSTANTLY AS A SYMBOLIC OFFERING TO GOD FOR HIS PERSONAL USE IN HIS HOUSE WAS ORIGINALLY DESCRIBED IN 25:30 AND WILL BE MENTIONED AGAIN AS PRECISELY PROVIDED IN 39:36. 35:14 THE “LAMPSTAND” WAS DESCRIBED IN 25:31–36, 39–40; ITS “ACCESSORIES,” IN 25:38–39; ITS “LAMPS,” IN 25:37; AND ITS “OIL,” IN 27:10–21. ALL THESE ARE AGAIN SUMMARIZED AS FULFILLED IN 39:37. THE LAMPSTAND IS ALSO DESCRIBED AS CONSTRUCTED IN 37:17–23 BUT WITHOUT THE MENTION OF OIL PER SE BECAUSE, AS WE HAVE ALREADY NOTED, THE BREAD WAS A PERISHABLE SUBSTANCE, AND THE DESCRIPTIONS IN CHAPS. 36–38 ARE LIMITED TO TABERNACLE HARDWARE. 35:15 THE “ALTAR OF INCENSE” WAS COMMANDED BY AN OVERALL DESCRIPTION IN 30:1–10 (A FURTHER FULFILLMENT DESCRIPTION WILL OCCUR IN 37:25–28); ITS “POLES,” SPECIFICALLY IN 30:4–5 (CF. 37:27–28); THE TABERNACLE’S PRIESTLY “ANOINTING OIL,” IN 30:22–33 (CF. 37:29); AND ITS “INCENSE,” IN 30:34–38 (CF. 37:29). IN ADDITION, THESE ARE SUMMARIZED IN 39:38 WITH THE EXCEPTION THAT THAT BRIEF INSPECTION SUMMARY DOES NOT SPECIFICALLY MENTION THE ALTAR’S POLES. THE “CURTAIN FOR THE DOORWAY AT THE ENTRANCE TO THE TABERNACLE” WAS ORDERED IN 26:36–37 AND WILL BE FURTHER DESCRIBED AS CONSTRUCTED IN FULFILLMENT OF THAT ORDER IN 36:37. IT WILL ALSO BE MENTIONED IN THE SUMMARY OF THE INSPECTION OF THE COMPLETED TABERNACLE IN 39:38, 40 AS WELL AS 40:28. THIS CURTAIN IS DISTINCT FROM THE ONE USED TO PROVIDE AN ENTRANCE GATEWAY TO THE COURTYARD (27:16). 35:16 THE “ALTAR OF BURNT OFFERING” WAS COMMANDED IN 27:1–8; ITS “BRONZE GRATING” SPECIFICALLY IN 27:4–5; ITS “POLES” IN 27:6–7; ITS “UTENSILS” IN 27:3. THE FULFILLMENT OF THE COMMAND TO MAKE THE ALTAR IS DESCRIBED FURTHER IN 38:1, AND ITS BEING SET UP FOR USE IN 40:6, 10, 29. NOTE THE MENTION SPECIFICALLY OF ITS BRONZE GRATING IN THE FURTHER FULFILLMENT DESCRIPTIONS OF 38:4–5, 30 AND 39:39; ITS POLES IN 38:5 AND 39:39; AND ITS UTENSILS IN 38:30, 39:33. THE “BRONZE BASIN” WAS COMMANDED IN 30:17–21, WITH MENTION SPECIFICALLY OF ITS “STAND” IN 30:18. THE FULFILLMENT OF THIS COMMAND FOR THE BASIN AND ITS STAND WILL BE ALSO ADDRESSED IN 39:8, 39 AS WELL AS IN THE DESCRIPTION OF THE SETTING UP OF THE TABERNACLE IN 40:7, 11, 30. NOTE THAT THE “ALTAR OF BURNT OFFERING” AND THE “BRONZE BASIN” WERE THE TWO PIECES OF TABERNACLE COURTYARD FURNITURE; OTHERWISE THE COURTYARD WAS MAINLY A GATHERING PLACE FOR PRIESTS, PEOPLE, AND ANIMALS FOR WORSHIP, WHICH INVOLVED SACRIFICE ON THE ALTAR AND THE PROPER RITUAL CLEANSING OF THE PRIESTS WITH THE WATER IN THE BASIN, AS NOTED IN 29:4; 30:18–20 (CF. 40:7, 12, 30). 35:17 HERE THE MENTION OF THE “CURTAINS OF THE COURTYARD” REPRISES THE COMMANDS IN 27:9, 12, 16, 18, AND THE CURTAINS WILL BE ADDRESSED AS WELL IN THE FULFILLMENT DESCRIPTIONS OF 38:9, 15–18; 39:40. THE ACTUAL ERECTION OF THESE CURTAINS IS DESCRIBED IN 40:8, 33.267 THE “POSTS” AND “BASES” FOR THEM WERE DESCRIBED IN 27:10–17. FURTHER FULFILLMENT DESCRIPTIONS OCCUR IN 38:9–19, 30 AND 39:40. THE ERECTION OF THE POSTS AND BASES OCCURS IN 40:18. THE “CURTAIN FOR THE ENTRANCE TO THE COURTYARD” WAS COMMANDED IN 26:36; 27:14, 16 AND WILL BE MENTIONED AGAIN IN THE FULFILLMENT PASSAGES OF 38:14–18; 39:38–40; AS WELL AS IN THE TABERNACLE ERECTION DESCRIPTION IN 40:5, 8, 28, 33. 35:18 IN 27:19 GOD SPECIFIED BRONZE AS THE MATERIAL FOR THE “TENT PEGS” IN BOTH TABERNACLE AND COURTYARD. THIS IS FURTHER FULFILLED IN 38:20, 31 AND 39:40 (CF. NUM 3:37; 4:32). ALTHOUGH IT IS OBVIOUS EARLIER IN EXODUS THAT BETWEEN THE TENT POLES AND THE TENT PEGS ROPES WOULD BE STRUNG TO CARRY THE TENSION, THE TERM “ROPE” DOES NOT OCCUR IN CONNECTION WITH THE TENT AND COURTYARD CURTAIN SUPPORT SYSTEM UNTIL THIS VERSE. MENTION OF THE ROPES RECURS, HOWEVER, IN 39:40 (CF. NUM 3:26, 37; 4:26, 32). 35:19 THE WORDING OF THIS VERSE DUPLICATES THAT OF 31:10 AND WILL BE DUPLICATED BY 39:41 AS WELL. THE COMMAND TO PREPARE PRIESTLY GARMENTS WAS GIVEN IN DETAIL IN CHAPS. 28–29 (REPRISED IN CHAP. 39), BUT ALSO SUMMARIZED IN 31:10 AS QUOTED HERE. IN 40:13–16 MOSES IS DESCRIBED AS FULFILLING THE COMMAND VIA THE ACTUAL INVESTITURE OF THE PRIESTS.**

**THE PEOPLE RESPOND TO THE CALL FOR MATERIALS (35:20–29) [FULFILLMENT OF 25:1–7]**

**35:20–21 AGAIN THE TERM “THE WHOLE ISRAELITE COMMUNITY,” ALREADY EMPLOYED IN VV. 1, 4, REMINDS THE READER THAT EVERYONE, AND NOT MERELY REPRESENTATIVES, LEADERS, OR SOME PARTICULARLY EQUIPPED GROUP WAS CALLED UPON TO RESPOND. IN ALL LIKELIHOOD, VIRTUALLY EVERYONE DID SO. THE TABERNACLE PROJECT WAS A NATIONWIDE EFFORT. THE WHOLE PEOPLE HAD BEEN SUMMONED, SO NOW, HAVING HEARD THE INSTRUCTIONS, THEY “WITHDREW FROM MOSES’ PRESENCE” IN ORDER TO GO HOME AND TO WORK ON THE PROJECT. VIRTUALLY EVERY FAMILY PROBABLY WAS INVOLVED IN SOME FASHION. PROPER BIBLICAL WORSHIP IS ALWAYS CORPORATE, WHICH MEANS THAT EVERYONE IN THE COVENANT COMMUNITY NOT PHYSICALLY PREVENTED FROM PARTICIPATION SHOULD ATTEND AND TAKE PART. THE TERM “TENT OF MEETING” SUMMARIZES THE TABERNACLE AND ALL ITS FURNITURE AS COMMANDED IN CHAPS. 25–27 (AND 30:1–10, 17–21); THE TERM “ALL ITS SERVICE” SPEAKS OF WHAT CHAP. 29 AND 30:22–37 COVERED; THE TERM “THE SACRED GARMENTS” REFERS TO THE GARMENTS DESCRIBED IN CHAP. 28. THE DIFFERENT LISTING ORDER OF THESE ITEMS REFLECTS, AS ALREADY NOTED, A STYLE THAT ADDS A MODICUM OF FRESHNESS AND THEREBY HELPS KEEP COMMAND-FULFILLMENT TEXTS FROM BEING TEDIOUS. THESE VERSES FOLLOW V. 5 EARLIER IN THE CHAPTER IN IDENTIFYING THOSE WHO RESPONDED AS THOSE WHO WERE “WILLING”; THE PARTICIPATION IN PROVIDING MATERIALS WAS NOT FORCED BUT VOLUNTARY, A MODEL IN SCRIPTURE OF THE PROPER ATTITUDE OF PEOPLE IN CONNECTION WITH ANY CHANCE TO SUPPORT THE PURPOSES OF GOD. 35:22 MOSES CLEARLY INDICATED THAT BOTH GENDERS WERE INVOLVED IN THE WORK BY PLACING “MEN AND WOMEN ALIKE” IN APPOSITION TO “ALL WHO WERE WILLING.” SOME VOCATIONS, SUCH AS THE PRIESTHOOD, WERE LIMITED BY GENDER; WORSHIP AND PREPARATION FOR IT THROUGH CONTRIBUTING MATERIALS FOR THE TABERNACLE AND THE WORSHIP THAT OCCURRED WITHIN ITS COURTYARD WERE NOT. THE “GOLD JEWELRY” DESCRIBED HERE BY MEANS OF SOME EXAMPLES MAY HAVE BEEN WORN ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY BY WOMEN, THOUGH SOME MAY HAVE BEEN FROM CHILDREN (SEE COMMENTS ON 32:2). IF 33:6 IS TO BE UNDERSTOOD AS IMPLYING THAT THE ISRAELITES NEVER DONNED JEWELRY AGAIN AT SINAI AFTER TAKING IT OFF IN MOURNING FOR THE CONSEQUENCES OF THEIR IDOLATRY AS DESCRIBED IN CHAP. 32, THE NO-LONGER-WORN GOLD BAUBLES WOULD NOT REALLY BE USEFUL FOR MUCH ELSE, AT LEAST IN THE SHORT RUN, AND THEREFORE WOULD CONSTITUTE A READY SOURCE OF THE GOLD NEEDED FOR THE TABERNACLE FURNITURE. IN PRESENTING THESE AS “A WAVE OFFERING TO THE LORD,” THE PEOPLE PRESUMABLY APPEARED BEFORE THE MOST VISIBLE SYMBOL OF STEPHEN YAHWEH AT THE MOMENT, WHICH WOULD HAVE BEEN THE SMALL, SYMBOLIC TENT OF MEETING (33:7–11). THERE THEY PRESUMABLY HELD UP THE ITEMS TO “SHOW” STEPHEN YAHWEH THAT THEY WERE BEING DONATED (AN ACT MORE HELPFUL PSYCHOLOGICALLY TO THE WORSHIPER THAN TO THE OMNISCIENT GOD) AND WAVED THEM BACK AND FORTH. THIS IS SOMETHING OF A NECESSARY ANTHROPOMORPHISM: WHEN HUMANS WANT TO BE SURE THAT SOMEONE ELSE WON’T FAIL TO SEE SOMETHING, THEY WAVE IT BACK AND FORTH. HERE THE ISRAELITES WANTED TO BE SURE THAT STEPHEN YAHWEH SAW THEIR OFFERING, SO THEY WAVED IT JUST AS THEY WOULD IF HE WERE A HUMAN BEING STANDING THERE IN FRONT OF THEM. THIS DOES NOT SUGGEST THAT THEY DIDN’T THINK HE COULD SEE WELL OR WAS DISTANT; IT SUGGESTS THAT THEY UNDERSTOOD VERY WELL THAT HE WAS INDEED IN FRONT OF THEM (AT LEAST) AND THAT THEY WERE INDEED IN HIS PRESENCE WHEN THEY BROUGHT THEIR OFFERINGS. THE WAY THEY SHOWED THIS FAITH WAS BY DOING WHAT ONE DOES WHEN ONE KNOWS THAT ANOTHER IS PRESENT AND CAN SEE, EVEN THOUGH THEY COULD NOT IN SEE STEPHEN YAHWEH. 35:23 ON THIS LIST OF FABRICS SEE 25:4–5; 26:1, 7, 14, 31, 36; 27:16; 28:5, 8, 15, 33, 39 (CF. 35:6–7). 35:24 ON “SILVER” AND “BRONZE,” THE OTHER TWO METALS USED IN THE TABERNACLE AND ITS COURTYARD IN ADDITION TO GOLD—FOR VARIOUS OBJECTS, ESPECIALLY POSTS AND BASES—SEE 25:3; 26:11, 19, 21, 25, 32, 37; 27:2, 6, 10, 17; 30:18; 31:4; 35:5. ON “ACACIA WOOD” AS THE STRUCTURAL INGREDIENT FOR VARIOUS FURNITURE ITEMS AND TABERNACLE CURTAIN SUPPORTS, SEE 25:5, 10, 13, 23, 28; 26:15, 26, 32, 37; 27:1, 6; 30:1, 5; 35:7. 35:25 THIS VERSE SUGGESTS THAT, AS IN MOST KNOWN CULTURES, WOMEN IN ANCIENT ISRAEL HANDLED THE IMPORTANT TASK OF SPINNING YARNS AND LINEN THREAD. THE TASK IS INDEED CRUCIAL AND DELICATE; IF YARN OR THREAD IS IMPROPERLY SPUN, A FABRIC MADE FROM IT CANNOT BE NEAT AND EVEN AND WILL NOT BE AS STRONG OR AS DURABLE. THOUGH IT IS NOT STATED HERE, WE ALSO CAN ASSUME THAT THE WOMEN MAY HAVE HAD A HAND IN DYEING AT LEAST SOME OF THE FABRIC IN THE COLORS MENTIONED. ON THE FABRICS AND COLORS SEE V. 23 ABOVE. 35:26 VARIOUS WOOLS, HAIRS, AND FURS PRESENT DIFFERENT CHARACTERISTICS AND CHALLENGES FOR THE SPINNER. SPINNING GOAT HAIR IS NOT GENERALLY REGARDED AS HARDER THAN OTHER SORTS OF SPINNING, SO THE VERSE PROBABLY DOES NOT INTEND TO SUGGEST THAT THE WOMEN WHO SPUN THE GOAT HAIR YARN WERE SPECIALISTS BUT SIMPLY THAT THE LARGE NUMBER OF GOAT HAIR CURTAINS USED AS PROTECTIVE COVERINGS FOR THE TABERNACLE PROPER MEANT THAT MANY WOMEN SAW FIT TO DEDICATE THEIR SKILLS SPECIFICALLY TO SPINNING GOAT HAIR. ON THE ELEVEN GOAT HAIR CURTAINS SEE 25:4 AND ESPECIALLY 26:7–13; 36:14–18. 35:27 THE “ONYX STONES” MENTIONED HERE WERE INTRODUCED IN THE COMMANDS OF 25:7; 28:9, 20. ON THE “OTHER GEMS” SEE 25:7 AND ESPECIALLY 28:17–21. FURTHER FULFILLMENT OF THE COMMAND IS FOUND IN 39:10–14. 35:28 ON THE “SPICES” SEE 30:23, 34; 35:8; ON THE LAMP “OIL,” 25:6; 27:20; 35:8, 14; AND WITH REGARD TO FURTHER FULFILLMENT, 39:37; ON THE “ANOINTING OIL,” 25:6; 29:7, 21; 30:24–25, 31–32; 31:11; 25:14; FOR FURTHER FULFILLMENT, 37:29; 39:37; 40:9 AND ON THE “INCENSE,” WHICH WAS BURNED ON THE SPECIAL ALTAR DEDICATED TO ITS USE, 25:6; 30:1, 7–9, 27, 35, 37; 31:8, 11; 35:8, 15; AND FOR FURTHER FULFILLMENT, 37:25, 29; 39:38; 40:5, 27. 35:29 THIS SUMMARY VERSE REMINDS THE READER OF SEVERAL THINGS: (1) THAT BOTH MEN AND WOMEN CONTRIBUTED, (2) THAT EVERYTHING THEY BROUGHT FROM HOME TO CONTRIBUTE WAS BROUGHT ENTIRELY VOLUNTARILY, (3) THAT THE WORK FOR WHICH THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS WERE MADE WAS GOD’S WORK, AND (4) THAT GOD HIMSELF, THROUGH THE INTERMEDIATION OF MOSES, HAD ISSUED THE COMMAND THAT IT BE DONE. ACCORDINGLY, THE TABERNACLE, AS WELL AS WHAT WAS USED BY AND WORN BY THE PRIESTS WHO SERVED THERE TO REPRESENT THE PEOPLE TO GOD, HAD DIVINE SANCTION; AND THE MATERIALS USED IN IT AND FOR IT WERE GIFTS TO GOD THAT ONCE FREELY GIVEN, BELONGED ENTIRELY TO HIM. WHAT WAS ONCE COMMON AND EVEN PROFANE BECAME TRANSFORMED BY GOD’S LOVING DESIGN AND COMMAND INTO WHAT WAS NOW PERFECTLY AND BEAUTIFULLY HOLY. “ALL THE ISRAELITE MEN AND WOMEN” REITERATES THE BOTH-GENDERS EMPHASIS ALREADY SEEN IN 11:2 (WHERE SOME OF THE MATERIALS EVENTUALLY USED IN THE ARK WERE FIRST GATHERED) AND V. 22 EARLIER IN THIS CHAPTER. “WERE WILLING” REITERATES VV. 5, 21–22. “FREEWILL OFFERINGS” REPRISES IN PART 25:2–3 AND 35:5, 21–22, 24. ON MOSES AS THE VEHICLE FOR GOD’S COMMANDS ABOUT THE MATERIALS AND TABERNACLE WORK IN GENERAL, CF. VV. 1, 4; 36:5; 39:1, 5, 7, 21, 26, 29, 31–32, 42–43; 40:16, 32.**

**THE WORK OF BEZALEL, OHOLIAB, AND THE OTHER SKILLED CRAFTSMEN (35:30–36:7)**

**30 THEN MOSES SAID TO THE ISRAELITES, “SEE, THE LORD HAS CHOSEN BEZALEL SON OF URI, THE SON OF HUR, OF THE TRIBE OF JUDAH, 31 AND HE HAS FILLED HIM WITH THE SPIRIT OF GOD, WITH SKILL, ABILITY AND KNOWLEDGE IN ALL KINDS OF CRAFTS—32 TO MAKE ARTISTIC DESIGNS FOR WORK IN GOLD, SILVER AND BRONZE, 33 TO CUT AND SET STONES, TO WORK IN WOOD AND TO ENGAGE IN ALL KINDS OF ARTISTIC CRAFTSMANSHIP. 34 AND HE HAS GIVEN BOTH HIM AND OHOLIAB SON OF AHISAMACH, OF THE TRIBE OF DAN, THE ABILITY TO TEACH OTHERS. 35 HE HAS FILLED THEM WITH SKILL TO DO ALL KINDS OF WORK AS CRAFTSMEN, DESIGNERS, EMBROIDERERS IN BLUE, PURPLE AND SCARLET YARN AND FINE LINEN, AND WEAVERS—ALL OF THEM MASTER CRAFTSMEN AND DESIGNERS. 1 SO BEZALEL, OHOLIAB AND EVERY SKILLED PERSON TO WHOM THE LORD HAS GIVEN SKILL AND ABILITY TO KNOW HOW TO CARRY OUT ALL THE WORK OF CONSTRUCTING THE SANCTUARY ARE TO DO THE WORK JUST AS THE LORD HAS COMMANDED.” 2 THEN MOSES SUMMONED BEZALEL AND OHOLIAB AND EVERY SKILLED PERSON TO WHOM THE LORD HAD GIVEN ABILITY AND WHO WAS WILLING TO COME AND DO THE WORK. 3 THEY RECEIVED FROM MOSES ALL THE OFFERINGS THE ISRAELITES HAD BROUGHT TO CARRY OUT THE WORK OF CONSTRUCTING THE SANCTUARY. AND THE PEOPLE CONTINUED TO BRING FREEWILL OFFERINGS MORNING AFTER MORNING. 4 SO ALL THE SKILLED CRAFTSMEN WHO WERE DOING ALL THE WORK ON THE SANCTUARY LEFT THEIR WORK 5 AND SAID TO MOSES, “THE PEOPLE ARE BRINGING MORE THAN ENOUGH FOR DOING THE WORK THE LORD COMMANDED TO BE DONE.” 6 THEN MOSES GAVE AN ORDER AND THEY SENT THIS WORD THROUGHOUT THE CAMP: “NO MAN OR WOMAN IS TO MAKE ANYTHING ELSE AS AN OFFERING FOR THE SANCTUARY.” AND SO, THE PEOPLE WERE RESTRAINED FROM BRINGING MORE, 7 BECAUSE WHAT THEY ALREADY HAD WAS MORE THAN ENOUGH TO DO ALL THE WORK.**

**MOSES APPOINTS AND ENDORSES THE CRAFSTMEN AND DESIGNERS (35:30–36:1) [FULFILLMENT OF 31:2–6]**

**35:30–35 THESE VERSES CONTAIN MUCH OF THE SAME WORDING SEEN ALREADY IN THEIR ORIGINAL COMMAND CONTEXT (31:2–6). SOME DIFFERENCES EXIST, INCLUDING THOSE THAT ARE NECESSARY TO THE PRESENT CONTEXT, IN WHICH MOSES REMINDED THE PEOPLE OF WHAT GOD HAD EARLIER SAID TO HIM ON MOUNT SINAI (E.G., HERE IN V. 30 MOSES TOLD THE ISRAELITES THAT “THE LORD HAS CHOSEN …” COMPARED TO 31:2, WHERE GOD SPOKE IN THE FIRST PERSON, “SEE, I HAVE CHOSEN …”; OR ALSO IN V. 34 HERE, “[GOD] HAS GIVEN BOTH HIM AND OHOLIAB” AS OPPOSED TO THE ORIGINAL DIVINE STATEMENT IN 31:6, “I HAVE APPOINTED OHOLIAB … TO HELP HIM”). OTHER DIFFERENCES ARE PRESENT HERE BECAUSE THEY HELP THE AUDIENCE (ALL ISRAEL, ONCE AGAIN SUMMONED ALL TOGETHER AFTER SOME TIME HAD GONE BY AND THE PEOPLE HAD GATHERED AND/OR PRODUCED THE MATERIALS CALLED FOR) TO APPRECIATE THE WAY THE CONSTRUCTION WOULD BE ORDERED. FOR EXAMPLE, THE MENTION AT THE END OF V. 34 OF BEZALEL’S AND OHOLIAB’S “ABILITY TO TEACH OTHERS” IS SOMETHING IMPLICIT IN 31:6 BUT MADE EXPLICIT HERE SO THAT NO ONE WOULD FAIL TO UNDERSTAND THAT THE PROCESS BY WHICH GOD WOULD “HAVE GIVEN SKILL TO ALL THE CRAFTSMEN” (31:6) WOULD INCLUDE THE LEARNING PROCESS GENERALLY KNOWN AS APPRENTICESHIP. NOTHING IN THE EARLIER COMMAND CONTEXT OR HERE IN THE FULFILLMENT CONTEXT SHOULD BE UNDERSTOOD TO SUGGEST THAT THE VARIOUS CRAFTSMEN WERE SUDDENLY GIVEN ALL THE KNOWLEDGE AND SKILL THEY NEEDED FOR CONSTRUCTING THE TABERNACLE BY DIVINE FIAT. INSTEAD, JUST AS PREVAILS TODAY IN GOD’S WORK, SOME SKILLS ARE THE RESULT OF A LIFETIME OF STUDY, TRAINING, AND EXPERIENCE, SOME ARE THE RESULT OF SPECIAL DIVINE INTERVENTION AND GUIDANCE, AND SOME ARE LEARNED FROM OTHERS IN THE PROCESS OF CARRYING OUT A GIVEN ASSIGNMENT FOR THE LORD. THUS, PAUL’S DISCUSSION OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS (ROM 12; 1 COR 12) NEVER DENIES THE IDEA THAT GIFTS CAN BE GRADUALLY OBTAINED AND/OR IMPROVED WITH PRACTICE OVER TIME. VERSE 35 OF THE PRESENT CONTEXT ALSO ELABORATES SLIGHTLY ON 31:6 IN ITS LISTING OF JOBS DONE BY BOTH MEN AND WOMEN, TASKS ALREADY DESCRIBED IN EARLIER CONTEXTS BUT HERE REPRISED AS A WAY OF REMINDING EVERYONE OF TWO THINGS: (1) BEZALEL AND OHOLIAB WERE IN CHARGE OF THE WORK OVERALL, BUT (2) THEY NEEDED ALL SORTS OF HELP FROM EXPERTS SO THAT THE RESULT WOULD BE ONE OF EXCELLENCE. THIS IS ALSO THE FORCE OF THE CLOSING WORDS OF V. 35, “ALL OF THEM MASTER CRAFTSMEN AND DESIGNERS”—IMPLYING THAT NO PART OF THE TABERNACLE WOULD BE THE WORK OF MERE AMATEURS BUT THAT ALL WOULD BE THE BEST THAT HUMAN BEINGS COULD MAKE IT, OPERATING UNDER DIVINE DESIGN AND GIFTEDNESS. THE TABERNACLE BUILDING PROJECT THUS PARALLELS WHAT THE WORK OF GOD AT ITS BEST HAS ALWAYS ENTAILED: AN OPPORTUNITY FOR EVERYONE TO CONTRIBUTE IN SOME WAY, EVEN IF MAINLY BY DONATION, AND ALSO AN EXPECTATION THAT EVERYTHING WOULD BE TO THE FULLEST AND BEST EXTENT AND QUALITY POSSIBLE, BY THE PEOPLE BEST QUALIFIED TO DO IT, CALLED FOR AND GUIDED BY GOD. 36:1 THIS STATEMENT CONTINUES AND COMPLETES BY WAY OF SUMMARY THE DIVINE ENDORSEMENT OF OHOLIAB AND THOSE WHO WOULD WORK UNDER HIS LEADERSHIP, WITH THE CAVEAT THAT ALL THE ACTUAL BUILDERS MUST BE GIFTED BY GOD (“TO WHOM THE LORD HAS GIVEN SKILL AND ABILITY TO KNOW HOW TO CARRY OUT ALL THE WORK”) AND THAT EVERYTHING MUST BE ACCOMPLISHED STRICTLY ACCORDING TO THE REVEALED DIVINE PLAN (“JUST AS THE LORD HAS COMMANDED”; CF. EXOD. 26:30). IT WAS NOT A DEMOCRATIC UNDERTAKING: NO ONE COULD DEMAND TO BE ALLOWED TO WORK ON THE BUILDING, COURTYARD, OR FURNITURE TO SATISFY A DESIRE TO BE INVOLVED OR MERELY OUT OF A CASUAL DESIRE TO HELP. IT WAS AN EXPERT TASK. NOR WAS IT A PROJECT THAT HUMANS COULD MODIFY IN ANY WAY; NO ONE WOULD BE ALLOWED TO SUGGEST MAKING THE TABERNACLE BIGGER, OR MORE ELABORATE, OR DIFFERENTLY FURNISHED.**

**THE PEOPLE’S OVERSUBCRIPTION TO THE CALL FOR DONATIONS (36:2–7)**

**WITH THIS PASSAGE MOSES AUGMENTED THE COMMAND-FULFILLMENT PATTERN WITH A HEARTWARMING STORY ABOUT HOW ENTHUSIASTICALLY THE PEOPLE RESPONDED TO THE CALL FOR DONATIONS OF MATERIALS NEEDED FOR THE TABERNACLE. THIS IS JUST THE SORT OF ACCOUNT THAT TAKES AWAY MUCH OF THE TEDIUM OF READING THE FULFILLMENT CHAPTERS. THE FULFILLMENT TAKES ON SPECIAL MEANING WHEN IT IS UNDERSTOOD THAT IT HAPPENED IN ABUNDANCE, FROM WILLING HEARTS GLADLY GIVING, AND THAT NOTHING NEEDED FOR THE TABERNACLE CONSTRUCTION WAS EVER LACKING. WHEN A COMMUNITY IS ASKED TO BACK SOMETHING AS MAJOR AS THE TABERNACLE PROJECT WAS AND DOES SO FULLY AND RAPIDLY, IT SPEAKS VOLUMES ABOUT THAT COMMUNITY’S UNITY OF PURPOSE, ITS SOLIDARITY IN RESPONDING TO THE DIVINE CALL. THE PEOPLE WHO SOME WEEKS EARLIER HAD BEEN DEFIANT AND DEGENERATE IN THEIR FAITH (CHAP. 32) NOW JOINED TOGETHER TO MAKE SURE THAT WHAT GOD HAD ASKED THEM TO DO WOULD NOT FAIL TO HAPPEN. THIS CONSTITUTES FURTHER EVIDENCE OF THEIR REPENTANCE FOR THEIR EARLIER INVOLVEMENT IN THE GOLDEN YOUNG BULL IDOLATRY AND THEIR PRESENT CONFIDENCE IN MOSES AND HIS MEDIATION OF GOD’S INSTRUCTIONS FOR COVENANTALLY FAITHFUL WORSHIP. 36:2–3 THE HOLY PROJECT SWUNG RAPIDLY INTO MOTION. “BEZALEL AND OHOLIAB” (SEE 31:2) AND “EVERY SKILLED PERSON” (SEE 26:1) WENT TO WORK, UNDER A PROCESS THAT SAW MOSES RECEIVING THE PEOPLE’S OFFERINGS AND IMMEDIATELY PASSING THEM ON TO THE BUILDERS. (THIS ENSURED THAT MOSES COULD INSPECT EVERYTHING DONATED, FOR APPROPRIATENESS AND QUALITY, BEFORE IT WENT TO ANY OF THE CONSTRUCTORS.) THE FACT THAT THE PEOPLE “CONTINUED TO BRING FREEWILL OFFERINGS MORNING AFTER MORNING” DEMONSTRATES THAT THEY WERE NOT PERFUNCTORILY FULFILLING THE CALL FOR OFFERINGS BUT WERE EAGERLY AND CHEERFULLY DOING WHATEVER THEY COULD TO BE SURE THAT ENOUGH SUPPLIES FOR THE WORK WOULD BE IN THE HANDS OF THE CRAFTSMEN. IT WOULD NOT BE GOING TOO FAR TO SUGGEST THAT THE PEOPLE WERE HERE DESCRIBED AS HIGHLY ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT THE PROJECT, RECOGNIZING IN IT THE OPPORTUNITY TO BEGIN KEEPING THE COVENANT CORRECTLY AS OPPOSED TO THEIR PRIOR GROSS DISOBEDIENCE (CHAP. 32). 36:4–7 MOSES WAS EVENTUALLY REQUIRED TO INSIST RATHER FORCEFULLY TO ALL THE PEOPLE (“THROUGHOUT THE CAMP”) THAT NO MORE MATERIAL COULD BE DONATED, SINCE ALL REQUIRED SUPPLIES HAD REACHED FULL LEVELS. SOME MEN AND WOMEN GATHERED OR SPUN OR WOVE OR DYED OR OTHERWISE PREPARED TABERNACLE CONTRIBUTIONS THAT NEVER WERE USED FOR THE TABERNACLE? SUCH OVERAGES PROBABLY WERE PUT TO SOME OTHER USE BY FAMILIES AND CLANS, BUT THEY WERE NOT USED AT THE TABERNACLE.**

**THE 200 MILLION DOLLAR HOUSE OF THE LORD**

**CONSTRUCTION OF THE TABERNACLE PROPER (36:8–38) [FULFILLMENT OF 26:1–27]**

**8 ALL THE SKILLED MEN AMONG THE WORKMEN MADE THE TABERNACLE WITH TEN CURTAINS OF FINELY TWISTED LINEN AND BLUE, PURPLE AND SCARLET YARN, WITH CHERUBIM WORKED INTO THEM BY A SKILLED CRAFTSMAN. 9 ALL THE CURTAINS WERE THE SAME SIZE—TWENTY-EIGHT CUBITS LONG AND FOUR CUBITS WIDE. 10 THEY JOINED FIVE OF THE CURTAINS TOGETHER AND DID THE SAME WITH THE OTHER FIVE. 11 THEN THEY MADE LOOPS OF BLUE MATERIAL ALONG THE EDGE OF THE END CURTAIN IN ONE SET, AND THE SAME WAS DONE WITH THE END CURTAIN IN THE OTHER SET. 12 THEY ALSO MADE FIFTY LOOPS ON ONE CURTAIN AND FIFTY LOOPS ON THE END CURTAIN OF THE OTHER SET, WITH THE LOOPS OPPOSITE EACH OTHER. 13 THEN THEY MADE FIFTY GOLD CLASPS AND USED THEM TO FASTEN THE TWO SETS OF CURTAINS TOGETHER SO THAT THE TABERNACLE WAS A UNIT. 14 THEY MADE CURTAINS OF GOAT HAIR FOR THE TENT OVER THE TABERNACLE—ELEVEN ALTOGETHER. 15 ALL ELEVEN CURTAINS WERE THE SAME SIZE—THIRTY CUBITS LONG AND FOUR CUBITS WIDE. 16 THEY JOINED FIVE OF THE CURTAINS INTO ONE SET AND THE OTHER SIX INTO ANOTHER SET. 17 THEN THEY MADE FIFTY LOOPS ALONG THE EDGE OF THE END CURTAIN IN ONE SET AND ALSO ALONG THE EDGE OF THE END CURTAIN IN THE OTHER SET. 18 THEY MADE FIFTY BRONZE CLASPS TO FASTEN THE TENT TOGETHER AS A UNIT. 19 THEN THEY MADE FOR THE TENT A COVERING OF RAM SKINS DYED RED, AND OVER THAT A COVERING OF HIDES OF SEA COWS. 20 THEY MADE UPRIGHT FRAMES OF ACACIA WOOD FOR THE TABERNACLE. 21 EACH FRAME WAS TEN CUBITS LONG AND A CUBIT AND A HALF WIDE, 22 WITH TWO PROJECTIONS SET PARALLEL TO EACH OTHER. THEY MADE ALL THE FRAMES OF THE TABERNACLE IN THIS WAY. 23 THEY MADE TWENTY FRAMES FOR THE SOUTH SIDE OF THE TABERNACLE 24 AND MADE FORTY SILVER BASES TO GO UNDER THEM—TWO BASES FOR EACH FRAME, ONE UNDER EACH PROJECTION. 25 FOR THE OTHER SIDE, THE NORTH SIDE OF THE TABERNACLE, THEY MADE TWENTY FRAMES 26 AND FORTY SILVER BASES—TWO UNDER EACH FRAME. 27 THEY MADE SIX FRAMES FOR THE FAR END, THAT IS, THE WEST END OF THE TABERNACLE, 28 AND TWO FRAMES WERE MADE FOR THE CORNERS OF THE TABERNACLE AT THE FAR END. 29 AT THESE TWO CORNERS THE FRAMES WERE DOUBLE FROM THE BOTTOM ALL THE WAY TO THE TOP AND FITTED INTO A SINGLE RING; BOTH WERE MADE ALIKE. 30 SO THERE WERE EIGHT FRAMES AND SIXTEEN SILVER BASES—TWO UNDER EACH FRAME. 31 THEY ALSO MADE CROSSBARS OF ACACIA WOOD: FIVE FOR THE FRAMES ON ONE SIDE OF THE TABERNACLE, 32 FIVE FOR THOSE ON THE OTHER SIDE, AND FIVE FOR THE FRAMES ON THE WEST, AT THE FAR END OF THE TABERNACLE. 33 THEY MADE THE CENTER CROSSBAR SO THAT IT EXTENDED FROM END TO END AT THE MIDDLE OF THE FRAMES. 34 THEY OVERLAID THE FRAMES WITH GOLD AND MADE GOLD RINGS TO HOLD THE CROSSBARS. THEY ALSO OVERLAID THE CROSSBARS WITH GOLD. 35 THEY MADE THE CURTAIN OF BLUE, PURPLE AND SCARLET YARN AND FINELY TWISTED LINEN, WITH CHERUBIM WORKED INTO IT BY A SKILLED CRAFTSMAN. 36 THEY MADE FOUR POSTS OF ACACIA WOOD FOR IT AND OVERLAID THEM WITH GOLD. THEY MADE GOLD HOOKS FOR THEM AND CAST THEIR FOUR SILVER BASES. 37 FOR THE ENTRANCE TO THE TENT THEY MADE A CURTAIN OF BLUE, PURPLE AND SCARLET YARN AND FINELY TWISTED LINEN—THE WORK OF AN EMBROIDERER; 38 AND THEY MADE FIVE POSTS WITH HOOKS FOR THEM. THEY OVERLAID THE TOPS OF THE POSTS AND THEIR BANDS WITH GOLD AND MADE THEIR FIVE BASES OF BRONZE. 36:8–13 THIS PARAGRAPH DUPLICATES IN PAST TENSE FULFILLMENT (“THEN THEY MADE … THEY ALSO MADE”) WHAT 26:1–6 COMMANDED IN THE IMPERATIVE (“MAKE, THEN MAKE”). BY STARTING THIS WAY, THAT IS, WITH A VIRTUALLY VERBATIM FULFILLMENT DESCRIPTION, THE PASSAGE SUGGESTS THAT ALL OTHER ORIGINAL COMMANDS WERE FULFILLED PRECISELY AND THAT IT WOULD NOT BE NECESSARY FOR MOSES TO USE THE SAME LEVEL OF DETAIL IN ALL HIS SUBSEQUENT FULFILLMENT DESCRIPTIONS. HE SOMETIMES WOULD REPEAT ALL THE DETAILS AND SOMETIMES WOULD NOT, THUS OBVIATING MERE MINDLESS REPETITION. 36:14–19 THIS PARAGRAPH DESCRIBES THE FULFILLMENT OF WHAT WAS COMMANDED IN 26:7–14 BUT SHORTENS THE DESCRIPTION WITH SUMMATIONS AT VARIOUS POINTS. A TYPICAL EXAMPLE IS THAT OF 26:9, “FOLD THE SIXTH CURTAIN DOUBLE AT THE FRONT OF THE TENT,” WHICH IS OMITTED HERE, AS ARE A NUMBER OF OTHER DETAILS FROM THE ORIGINAL INSTRUCTIONS IN CHAP. 26. AFTER AN INITIAL PARAGRAPH THAT DOES REPEAT THE LANGUAGE OF THE ORIGINAL COMMAND VIRTUALLY VERBATIM (36:8–13), HE HOLDS THE READER’S ATTENTION BY SOME JUDICIOUS CONDENSATION. THE CONDENSATIONS OCCUR IN V. 9 AND AFTER V. 12 (SO THAT 26:12–13 IS ESSENTIALLY SKIPPED—A SIMPLE BUT EFFECTIVE WAY TO SHORTEN THE PASSAGE). 36:20–30 NOTE THAT IN THIS DESCRIPTION OF THE FULFILLMENT OF THE COMMANDS OF 26:15–25, MOSES REVERTED TO VIRTUAL VERBATIM CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN WHAT WAS DONE AS COMPARED TO WHAT HAD ORIGINALLY BEEN ORDERED, AS HE DID IN THE CASE IN 36:8–13. THUS, WE OBSERVE HIM ALTERNATING BETWEEN FULL DUPLICATION OF THE ORIGINAL COMMAND WORDING AND THE SORT OF PRÉCIS HE EMPLOYED IN 36:14–19. 36:31–34 THIS SHORT PARAGRAPH ALSO LEAVES OUT NOTHING OF THE DETAIL OF THE ORIGINAL COMMAND IN 26:26–29—ALL IS DESCRIBED AS FULFILLED, WITHOUT CONDENSING ANY WORDING. 36:35–38 THESE VERSES SHORTEN IN A RATHER OBVIOUS WAY CERTAIN DETAILS OF THE ORIGINAL COMMANDS IN 26:31–37, OF WHICH THEY DESCRIBE THE FULFILLMENT. THUS, AS IN THE CASE OF 36:14–19, MOSES AGAIN VARIED THE STYLE IN A MODEST WAY TO BREAK UP MONOTONY, BUT HE LEFT NO DOUBT IN THE READER’S MIND THAT EVERYTHING COMMANDED IN CHAP. 26 WAS IN FACT ACCOMPLISHED AS REQUIRED. VERSES 33–35 OF CHAP. 26 ARE SIMPLY SKIPPED IN THIS SUMMARY, AND 26:37 IS SLIGHTLY REWORDED IN 36:38.**

**CONSTRUCTION OF THE INVINCIBLE ARK (37:1–9) [FULFILLMENT OF 25:10–20]**

**1 BEZALEL MADE THE ARK OF ACACIA WOOD—TWO AND A HALF CUBITS LONG, A CUBIT AND A HALF WIDE, AND A CUBIT AND A HALF HIGH. 2 HE OVERLAID IT WITH PURE GOLD, BOTH INSIDE AND OUT, AND MADE A GOLD MOLDING AROUND IT. 3 HE CAST FOUR GOLD RINGS FOR IT AND FASTENED THEM TO ITS FOUR FEET, WITH TWO RINGS ON ONE SIDE AND TWO RINGS ON THE OTHER. 4 THEN HE MADE POLES OF ACACIA WOOD AND OVERLAID THEM WITH GOLD. 5 AND HE INSERTED THE POLES INTO THE RINGS ON THE SIDES OF THE ARK TO CARRY IT. 6 HE MADE THE ATONEMENT COVER OF PURE GOLD—TWO AND A HALF CUBITS LONG AND A CUBIT AND A HALF WIDE. 7 THEN HE MADE TWO CHERUBIM OUT OF HAMMERED GOLD AT THE ENDS OF THE COVER. 8 HE MADE ONE CHERUB ON ONE END AND THE SECOND CHERUB ON THE OTHER; AT THE TWO ENDS HE MADE THEM OF ONE PIECE WITH THE COVER. 9 THE CHERUBIM HAD THEIR WINGS SPREAD UPWARD, OVERSHADOWING THE COVER WITH THEM. THE CHERUBIM FACED EACH OTHER, LOOKING TOWARD THE COVER.**

**37:1–5 THESE VERSES DESCRIBE THE FULFILLMENT OF 25:10–15 VIRTUALLY VERBATIM—DIFFERING MAINLY IN ADDING THE IMPORTANT DETAIL IN 37:1 THAT “BEZALEL MADE THE ARK.” THE CHIEF OF ALL THE BUILDERS, SPECIALLY FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT OF GOD FOR THESE TASKS (31:2–3), WAS ENTRUSTED WITH THIS MOST PRECIOUS OBJECT OF ALL, AS WAS FITTING. IN CHAPS. 25–26 THE COMMAND TO BUILD THE ARK PRECEDES THE COMMAND TO BUILD THE TABERNACLE PROPER. HERE THE FULFILLMENT OF THE COMMAND TO BUILD THE ARK FOLLOWS THAT OF THE FULFILLMENT DESCRIPTION RELATED TO THE TABERNACLE PROPER. WHY THE DIFFERENT ORDER? THE ANSWER PROBABLY IS QUITE SIMPLE: THE ARK IS PROTECTED BY THE CURTAINS OF THE TABERNACLE; IT WAS WRAPPED FOR TRAVEL IN THE CURTAIN THAT DIVIDED THE HOLY PLACE FROM THE HOLY OF HOLIES, AND IT IS ALSO PROTECTED WHEN THE TABERNACLE IS SET UP IN PLACE BY THE VARIOUS LAYERS OF EXTERNAL TABERNACLE SURFACING. THEREFORE, BEZALEL CHOSE (PERHAPS AT MOSES’ SUGGESTION OR EVEN INSTRUCTION) TO READY THE PROTECTIVE MATERIAL FIRST SO THAT THE ARK WOULD NOT SIT OUT EXPOSED TO THE ELEMENTS FOR ALL TO SEE—EITHER TYPE OF EXPOSURE POTENTIALLY CONSTITUTING PROFANATION. 37:6–9 THESE VERSES DESCRIBE THE FULFILLMENT OF 25:17–20 ALSO VIRTUALLY VERBATIM, WITH CHANGES LIMITED ALMOST ENTIRELY TO VERB TENSES (EVEN THE DIFFERENCE IN THE HB. BETWEEN 25:19 AND 37:8 IS MORE MINUTE THAN THE NIV’S ADJUSTED WORD ORDER WOULD SUGGEST, BEING LIMITED TO A CHANGE IN THE VERB TENSE AND A PREPOSITION). NOTE THAT BEZALEL MAY HAVE BEEN THE SOLE WORKER ON THE ARK; NOTHING IN THE LANGUAGE OF THIS PASSAGE CAN BE INTERPRETED TO MEAN THAT ANY OTHER PERSONS WERE INVOLVED, IN CONTRAST TO THE MORE GENERAL “THEY” REFERENCES TO UNNAMED WORKERS ON OTHER PARTS OF THE TABERNACLE FURNISHINGS. THE PARAMOUNT SYMBOL OF THE INVISIBLE GOD WAS MADE BY THE ONE HE CHOSE AND SPECIALLY GUIDED TO MAKE IT.**

**CONSTRUCTION OF THE TABERNACLE TABLE (37:10–16) [FULFILLMENT OF 25:23–29]**

**10 THEY MADE THE TABLE OF ACACIA WOOD—TWO CUBITS LONG, A CUBIT WIDE, AND A CUBIT AND A HALF HIGH. 11 THEN THEY OVERLAID IT WITH PURE GOLD AND MADE A GOLD MOLDING AROUND IT. 12 THEY ALSO MADE AROUND IT A RIM A HANDBREADTH WIDE AND PUT A GOLD MOLDING ON THE RIM. 13 THEY CAST FOUR GOLD RINGS FOR THE TABLE AND FASTENED THEM TO THE FOUR CORNERS, WHERE THE FOUR LEGS WERE. 14 THE RINGS WERE PUT CLOSE TO THE RIM TO HOLD THE POLES USED IN CARRYING THE TABLE. 15 THE POLES FOR CARRYING THE TABLE WERE MADE OF ACACIA WOOD AND WERE OVERLAID WITH GOLD. 16 AND THEY MADE FROM PURE GOLD THE ARTICLES FOR THE TABLE—ITS PLATES AND DISHES AND BOWLS AND ITS PITCHERS FOR THE POURING OUT OF DRINK OFFERINGS. 37:10–16 ASIDE FROM SOME NECESSARY CHANGES IN VERB TENSE AND SOME VERY SLIGHT ADJUSTMENTS IN WORD ORDER TO PREVENT REPETITION MONOTONY, THIS PARAGRAPH DUPLICATES WHAT HAS BEEN SEEN ALREADY IN 25:23–29, SO THE CONSTRUCTION ORDER OF ARK-TABLE-LAMPSTAND CONTINUES IN THE FULFILLMENT PHASE OF THE TABERNACLE ACCOUNT JUST AS IT DID IN THE COMMAND PHASE. NOTE THAT HERE THE INDEFINITE “THEY” DESCRIBES THE WORKERS. WHOEVER THEY WERE AND HOW MANY THEY WERE IS NEVER IDENTIFIED.**

**CONSTRUCTION OF THE IMMORTAL LAMPSTAND (37:17–24) [FULFILLMENT OF 25:31–39]**

**17 THEY MADE THE LAMPSTAND OF PURE GOLD AND HAMMERED IT OUT, BASE AND SHAFT; ITS FLOWERLIKE CUPS, BUDS AND BLOSSOMS WERE OF ONE PIECE WITH IT. 18 SIX BRANCHES EXTENDED FROM THE SIDES OF THE LAMPSTAND—THREE ON ONE SIDE AND THREE ON THE OTHER. 19 THREE CUPS SHAPED LIKE ALMOND FLOWERS WITH BUDS AND BLOSSOMS WERE ON ONE BRANCH, THREE ON THE NEXT BRANCH AND THE SAME FOR ALL SIX BRANCHES EXTENDING FROM THE LAMPSTAND. 20 AND ON THE LAMPSTAND WERE FOUR CUPS SHAPED LIKE ALMOND FLOWERS WITH BUDS AND BLOSSOMS. 21 ONE BUD WAS UNDER THE FIRST PAIR OF BRANCHES EXTENDING FROM THE LAMPSTAND, A SECOND BUD UNDER THE SECOND PAIR, AND A THIRD BUD UNDER THE THIRD PAIR—SIX BRANCHES IN ALL. 22 THE BUDS AND THE BRANCHES WERE ALL OF ONE PIECE WITH THE LAMPSTAND, HAMMERED OUT OF PURE GOLD. 23 THEY MADE ITS SEVEN LAMPS, AS WELL AS ITS WICK TRIMMERS AND TRAYS, OF PURE GOLD. 24 THEY MADE THE LAMPSTAND AND ALL ITS ACCESSORIES FROM ONE TALENT OF PURE GOLD. 37:17–24 IN THESE VERSES THAT WHICH WAS COMMANDED IN 25:31–39 IS REITERATED, WITH THE EXPECTED CHANGES IN VERB TENSE AND TWO MODEST EXCEPTIONS: 25:37–38 IS CONDENSED INTO 37:23, AND THE WORD ORDER OF 25:39 IS ADJUSTED IN 37:24. AGAIN THE NAMES AND NUMBERS OF WORKERS ARE NOT MENTIONED HERE, SO WE DO NOT KNOW WHO AND HOW MANY WERE THE “THEY” THAT MADE THE LAMPSTAND. WITH THIS LAMPSTAND DESCRIPTION, THE ARK-TABLE-LAMPSTAND ORDER OF THE COMMAND PHASE (CHAP. 25) IS AGAIN DUPLICATED, BUT THAT PATTERN ENDS HERE SINCE THE INCENSE ALTAR WAS NOT COMMANDED UNTIL CHAP. 30, EVEN THOUGH ITS CONSTRUCTION DESCRIPTION FOLLOWS IMMEDIATELY HERE. THIS WOULD APPEAR TO BE YET ONE MORE WAY MOSES HEADED OFF MONOTONY IN THE FULFILLMENT SECTION, BUT IT MAY ALSO RELATE TO THE ACTUAL CONSTRUCTION DECISION-MAKING PROCESS, NO REASON TO DELAY GETTING AT THE BUILDING OF THE INCENSE ALTAR ALONG WITH THE ARK, TABLE, AND LAMPSTAND.**

**CONSTRUCTION OF THE INCENSE ALTAR (37:25–28) [FULFILLMENT OF 30:1–5]**

**25 THEY MADE THE ALTAR OF INCENSE OUT OF ACACIA WOOD. IT WAS SQUARE, A CUBIT LONG AND A CUBIT WIDE, AND TWO CUBITS HIGH—ITS HORNS OF ONE PIECE WITH IT. 26 THEY OVERLAID THE TOP AND ALL THE SIDES AND THE HORNS WITH PURE GOLD, AND MADE A GOLD MOLDING AROUND IT. 27 THEY MADE TWO GOLD RINGS BELOW THE MOLDING—TWO ON OPPOSITE SIDES—TO HOLD THE POLES USED TO CARRY IT. 28 THEY MADE THE POLES OF ACACIA WOOD AND OVERLAID THEM WITH GOLD.**

**37:25–28 THIS PARAGRAPH FOLLOWS 30:1–5 CLOSELY—ESSENTIALLY VERBATIM—WITH A SLIGHT WORDING ORDER CHANGE IN 37:25 AS OPPOSED TO THE WORDING ORDER OF 30:1 IN THE INTERESTS OF STYLISTIC VARIATION AND THE EXPECTED VERB TENSE CHANGES. THE ORIGINAL INCENSE ALTAR COMMAND WAS LINKED IN CHAP. 30 WITH INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE USE OF INCENSE AND THE ATONEMENT PROCESS FOR THE INCENSE ALTAR. THOSE INSTRUCTIONS (30:7–10) ARE NOT CONSTRUCTION COMMANDS PER SE, AND THEREFORE WE WOULD NOT EXPECT TO FIND, AND DO NOT FIND, THEM REPEATED HERE IN THE FULFILLMENT PHASE WHERE CONSTRUCTION DESCRIPTIONS ARE THE FOCUS.**

**COMPOSITION OF THE HOLY ANOINTING OIL AND THE HOLY INCENSE (37:29) [FULFILLMENT OF 30:22–25, 34–36]**

**29 THEY ALSO MADE THE SACRED ANOINTING OIL AND THE PURE, FRAGRANT INCENSE—THE WORK OF A PERFUMER. 37:29 HERE THE FORMULA FOR THE SPECIAL ANOINTING OIL (30:22–25) USED FOR PRIESTS [SERGEANTS] AND TABERNACLE OBJECTS (28:41; 29:7, 21, 29, 36; 30:30–33; 31:11) IS NOT REPEATED OR DESCRIBED IN ANY PARTICULARS, BUT MOSES MERELY NOTED THAT “THEY” OBEYED THE COMMAND TO MAKE IT. LIKEWISE, THE ORIGINAL, DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE FRAGRANT INCENSE (30:34–36) AND HOW AND WHEN IT WAS TO BE USED (30:7–9, 37–38) ARE NOT REPEATED HERE. THIS VERSE THUS CONDENSES IN THE FULFILLMENT SECTION A CONSIDERABLE AMOUNT OF LANGUAGE FROM THE COMMAND SECTION. THE MOST LIKELY REASON FOR THIS HIGH DEGREE OF ABBREVIATION IS THAT THE MATERIALS IN QUESTION WERE NOT PERMANENT PIECES OF FURNITURE BUT SUBSTANCES INTENDED TO BE USED UP OVER TIME, REQUIRING REFORMULATION PERIODICALLY. THE FORMULATION DESCRIPTIONS THUS FUNCTIONED REGULARLY AS GUIDELINES IN A WAY THAT THE FULFILLMENT DESCRIPTIONS NEEDED NOT.**

**CONSTRUCTION OF THE MAIN BURNING ALTAR (38:1–7) [FULFILLMENT OF 27:1–8A]**

**1 THEY BUILT THE ALTAR OF BURNT OFFERING OF ACACIA WOOD, THREE CUBITS HIGH; IT WAS SQUARE, FIVE CUBITS LONG AND FIVE CUBITS WIDE. 2 THEY MADE A HORN AT EACH OF THE FOUR CORNERS, SO THAT THE HORNS AND THE ALTAR WERE OF ONE PIECE, AND THEY OVERLAID THE ALTAR WITH BRONZE. 3 THEY MADE ALL ITS UTENSILS OF BRONZE—ITS POTS, SHOVELS, SPRINKLING BOWLS, MEAT FORKS AND FIREPANS. 4 THEY MADE A GRATING FOR THE ALTAR, A BRONZE NETWORK, TO BE UNDER ITS LEDGE, HALFWAY UP THE ALTAR. 5 THEY CAST BRONZE RINGS TO HOLD THE POLES FOR THE FOUR CORNERS OF THE BRONZE GRATING. 6 THEY MADE THE POLES OF ACACIA WOOD AND OVERLAID THEM WITH BRONZE. 7 THEY INSERTED THE POLES INTO THE RINGS SO THEY WOULD BE ON THE SIDES OF THE ALTAR FOR CARRYING IT. THEY MADE IT HOLLOW, OUT OF BOARDS.**

**38:1–7 ASIDE FROM THE EXPECTED CHANGES IN VERB TENSE AND A MODEST STYLE ADJUSTMENT THROUGH WORD REORDERING (E.G., 38:4–5 REORDERS 27:4–5) FOR THE SAKE OF VARIETY, THIS PASSAGE REPRISES 27:1–8A. THE BUILDERS WERE NOW MOVING OUT FROM THE TABERNACLE PROPER TO THE COURTYARD IN THEIR BUILDING PLAN. THE MAIN ALTAR (ALTAR OF BURNT OFFERING) WAS ONE OF THE TWO COURTYARD OBJECTS, THE OTHER BEING THE WASHING BASIN THAT WILL BE REFERRED TO IN THE NEXT VERSE. MOSES REPORTED THAT IN EVERY DETAIL THE SACRIFICE ALTAR (MAIN ALTAR, ALTAR OF BURNT OFFERING) WAS BUILT JUST AS ORDERED.**

**CONSTRUCTION OF THE HOLY BRONZE WASH BASIN AND HOLY BRONZE STAND (38:8) [FULFILLMENT OF 30:17–21]**

**8 THEY MADE THE BRONZE BASIN AND ITS BRONZE STAND FROM THE MIRRORS OF THE WOMEN WHO SERVED AT THE ENTRANCE TO THE TENT OF MEETING. 38:8 MOSES HERE CONCENTRATED MAINLY ON THE FULFILLMENT OF 30:17–18, WHERE THE BASIN’S PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS ARE DESCRIBED, AND NOT ON 30:19–21, WHERE THE PROPER USE OF THE BASIN IS DESCRIBED. THIS IS TO BE EXPECTED SINCE WE ARE IN A SECTION DEALING WITH CONSTRUCTION OF WHAT HAD BEEN ORDERED BUILT, NOT USAGE—USAGE INSTRUCTIONS NEEDING NO REPETITION HERE. MOSES HAD DONE SO WITH A SIMPLE SUMMATION, ESPECIALLY SINCE THE ORIGINAL COMMAND ITSELF WAS NOT VERY DETAILED, DESCRIBING SIMPLY “A BRONZE BASIN, WITH ITS BRONZE STAND” (30:18), ESSENTIALLY THE LANGUAGE REPEATED HERE. IN THE ORIGINAL COMMAND THERE WAS NO ANTICIPATION OF WHERE THE BRONZE FOR THIS BASIN WOULD COME FROM, BUT SINCE THE BASIN WAS OBVIOUSLY A MORE PROMINENT OBJECT THAN THE OTHER BRASS OBJECTS (MAINLY TENT POLES) IN THE COURTYARD, ONE COULD HAVE ANTICIPATED THAT ITS BRONZE (AN ALLOY OF TIN AND COPPER) MIGHT HAVE BEEN OF SPECIAL ORIGIN IF POSSIBLE. HERE WE LEARN INDEED THAT IT WAS NOT JUST ANY BRONZE BROUGHT BY DONORS FROM ANY SOURCE, WHICH MIGHT HAVE INVOLVED THE POSSIBILITY OF SLIGHTLY UNEVEN QUALITY. INSTEAD, IT APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN A VERY HIGH-QUALITY BRONZE—POLISHED BRONZE FROM MIRRORS DONATED BY WOMEN RESPONDING TO THE EARLIER DONATION CALL (37:4). SUCH BRONZE PROBABLY WAS AS FLAW-FREE AS ANY THAT COULD BE FOUND SINCE IT WOULD HAVE BEEN REJECTED FOR MIRROR USE IF IT WERE NOT A SUCCESSFUL, VISIBLY CONSISTENT ALLOY OF PURE TIN, BRASS AND COPPER. BUT ANOTHER, QUITE FASCINATING DETAIL IS ALSO INCLUDED HERE: ONE THAT PRESUMES SOME COMMON KNOWLEDGE THAT MOSES AND HIS AUDIENCE SHARED, BUT THAT WE DO NOT. AT SOME POINT AFTER THE TABERNACLE WAS BUILT, CERTAIN WOMEN WERE EMPLOYED TO SERVE AT ITS ENTRANCE—A PRACTICE THAT PROBABLY CONTINUED AS LONG AS THE TABERNACLE WAS IN USE, JUDGING FROM THE MENTION OF IT IN 1 SAM 2:22, HUNDREDS OF YEARS AFTER THE TIME OF THE PRESENT DESCRIPTION. HOW WERE THESE WOMEN CHOSEN, AND WHAT EXACTLY DID THEY DO? WE HAVE NO FIRM INFORMATION. THEY QUITE POSSIBLY VOLUNTEERED—OR WERE PAID WITH A PORTION OF THE SACRIFICES—TO HELP WITH UTENSIL CLEANUP, GENERAL COURTYARD CLEANUP, WATER RESUPPLY, ANCILLARY FOOD PREPARATION, GUIDING AND ASSISTING OTHER WOMEN WORSHIPERS, WASHING PRIESTS’ CLOTHES, AND THE LIKE. THE FIRST SUCH GROUP OF WOMEN MAY HAVE BEEN CHOSEN FROM AMONG THOSE WHO DONATED THEIR MIRRORS, PRECISELY BECAUSE SUCH A GIFT OF SOMETHING NORMALLY VALUED BY A WOMAN WOULD TEND TO DEMONSTRATE HER DEVOTION TO GOD.**

**CONSTRUCTION OF THE HOLY COURTYARD (38:9–20) [FULFILLMENT OF 27:9–19]**

**9 NEXT THEY MADE THE COURTYARD. THE SOUTH SIDE WAS A HUNDRED CUBITS LONG AND HAD CURTAINS OF FINELY TWISTED LINEN, 10 WITH TWENTY POSTS AND TWENTY BRONZE BASES, AND WITH SILVER HOOKS AND BANDS ON THE POSTS. 11 THE NORTH SIDE WAS ALSO A HUNDRED CUBITS LONG AND HAD TWENTY POSTS AND TWENTY BRONZE BASES, WITH SILVER HOOKS AND BANDS ON THE POSTS. 12 THE WEST END WAS FIFTY CUBITS WIDE AND HAD CURTAINS, WITH TEN POSTS AND TEN BASES, WITH SILVER HOOKS AND BANDS ON THE POSTS. 13 THE EAST END, TOWARD THE SUNRISE, WAS ALSO FIFTY CUBITS WIDE. 14 CURTAINS FIFTEEN CUBITS LONG WERE ON ONE SIDE OF THE ENTRANCE, WITH THREE POSTS AND THREE BASES, 15 AND CURTAINS FIFTEEN CUBITS LONG WERE ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE ENTRANCE TO THE COURTYARD, WITH THREE POSTS AND THREE BASES. 16 ALL THE CURTAINS AROUND THE COURTYARD WERE OF FINELY TWISTED LINEN. 17 THE BASES FOR THE POSTS WERE BRONZE. THE HOOKS AND BANDS ON THE POSTS WERE SILVER, AND THEIR TOPS WERE OVERLAID WITH SILVER; SO, ALL THE POSTS OF THE COURTYARD HAD SILVER BANDS. 18 THE CURTAIN FOR THE ENTRANCE TO THE COURTYARD WAS OF BLUE, PURPLE AND SCARLET YARN AND FINELY TWISTED LINEN—THE WORK OF AN EMBROIDERER. IT WAS TWENTY CUBITS LONG AND, LIKE THE CURTAINS OF THE COURTYARD, FIVE CUBITS HIGH, 19 WITH FOUR POSTS AND FOUR BRONZE BASES. THEIR HOOKS AND BANDS WERE SILVER, AND THEIR TOPS WERE OVERLAID WITH SILVER. 20 ALL THE TENT PEGS OF THE TABERNACLE AND OF THE SURROUNDING COURTYARD WERE BRONZE.**

**NOTHING ASSERTED IN 27:9–19 IS LEFT OUT HERE, ALTHOUGH ENOUGH VARIETY OF ORDER AND SLIGHT ADDITIONS OR SUBTRACTIONS KEEP THE PRESENT FULFILLMENT PASSAGE FROM BEING A MERE REPETITION OF THE COMMAND ON WHICH IT IS BASED. 38:9–11 THIS PART OF THE PASSAGE IS VIRTUALLY A VERBATIM REPRISE OF 27:9–11 WITH THE NECESSARY VERB TENSE CHANGES BEING MADE AND THE PHRASE “FOR THE TABERNACLE” OF 27:9 BEING OMITTED. LIKEWISE, SOME SPACE IS SAVED IN 38:11 WITH THE OMISSION OF THE CLAUSE “IS TO HAVE CURTAINS” FROM 27:11. 38:12–17 MOST OF THESE VERSES REPEAT 27:12FF., WITH THE USUAL AND EXPECTED CHANGES IN ORDER TO BRING THE DESCRIPTION TO THE PRESENT CONTEXT, BUT THE CONTENT OF 27:16 IS DELAYED UNTIL 38:18, WITH SOME REORDERING OF THE WORDING. ADDITIONALLY, 27:17 IS ACTUALLY EXPANDED SLIGHTLY IN EXPLICIT DETAIL IN 38:17 IN REGARD TO THE “TOPS” OF THE POSTS BEING “OVERLAID WITH SILVER,” SOMETHING IMPLICIT BUT NOT STATED IN 27:17. 38:18–20 THE REMAINDER OF WHAT HAS NOT YET BEEN COVERED FROM CHAP. 27 IS HERE ADDRESSED AS COMPLETED, WITH THE CONTENT OF 27:19 SOMEWHAT REARRANGED AND DISTRIBUTED THROUGHOUT VV. 19–20.**

**AMOUNTS OF THE MATERIALS USED FOR THE TABERNACLE AND ITS FURNISHINGS (38:21–31) [GENERAL FULFILLMENT OF 25:1–3A]**

**21 THESE ARE THE AMOUNTS OF THE MATERIALS USED FOR THE TABERNACLE, THE TABERNACLE OF THE TESTIMONY, WHICH WERE RECORDED AT MOSES’ COMMAND BY THE LEVITES [PRIVATES TO CORPORALS] UNDER THE DIRECTION OF ITHAMAR SON OF AARON, THE PRIEST. 22 (BEZALEL SON OF URI, THE SON OF HUR, OF THE TRIBE OF JUDAH, MADE EVERYTHING THE LORD COMMANDED MOSES; 23 WITH HIM WAS OHOLIAB SON OF AHISAMACH, OF THE TRIBE OF DAN—A CRAFTSMAN AND DESIGNER, AND AN EMBROIDERER IN BLUE, PURPLE AND SCARLET YARN AND FINE LINEN.) 24 THE TOTAL AMOUNT OF THE GOLD FROM THE WAVE OFFERING USED FOR ALL THE WORK ON THE SANCTUARY WAS 29 TALENTS AND 730 SHEKELS [$168,441,600.00 MILLION DOLLARS], ACCORDING TO THE SANCTUARY SHEKEL. 25 THE SILVER OBTAINED FROM THOSE OF THE COMMUNITY WHO WERE COUNTED IN THE CENSUS WAS 100 TALENTS AND 1,775 SHEKELS [$38,627,200.00 MIILION DOLLARS], ACCORDING TO THE SANCTUARY SHEKEL—26 ONE BEKA PER PERSON, THAT IS, HALF A SHEKEL, ACCORDING TO THE SANCTUARY SHEKEL, FROM EVERYONE WHO HAD CROSSED OVER TO THOSE COUNTED, TWENTY YEARS OLD OR MORE, A TOTAL OF 603,550 MEN. 27 THE 100 TALENTS OF SILVER WERE USED TO CAST THE BASES FOR THE SANCTUARY AND FOR THE CURTAIN—100 BASES FROM THE 100 TALENTS, ONE TALENT FOR EACH BASE. 28 THEY USED THE 1,775 SHEKELS [$227200.00] TO MAKE THE HOOKS FOR THE POSTS, TO OVERLAY THE TOPS OF THE POSTS, AND TO MAKE THEIR BANDS. 29 THE BRONZE FROM THE WAVE OFFERING WAS 70 TALENTS AND 2,400 SHEKELS [1,793,023.99 MIILION DOLLARS]. 30 THEY USED IT TO MAKE THE BASES FOR THE ENTRANCE TO THE TENT OF MEETING, THE BRONZE ALTAR WITH ITS BRONZE GRATING AND ALL ITS UTENSILS, 31 THE BASES FOR THE SURROUNDING COURTYARD AND THOSE FOR ITS ENTRANCE AND ALL THE TENT PEGS FOR THE TABERNACLE AND THOSE FOR THE SURROUNDING COURTYARD. 38:21–31 THIS PASSAGE IS SOMEWHAT UNIQUE IN THE PRESENT FULFILLMENT CONTEXT BECAUSE IT REFERS ONLY OBLIQUELY TO WHAT GOD HAD COMMANDED EARLIER, IN 25:1–3A, AT THE VERY OUTSET OF THE TABERNACLE DESIGN INSTRUCTIONS RATHER THAN REPLICATING CLOSELY THE DETAILED WORD ORDER OF ANY OF THE EARLIER COMMAND PASSAGES. THE REASON IS SIMPLE ENOUGH: THE DONATIONS FOR THE TABERNACLE WERE TO BE TRULY, UNQUESTIONABLY VOLUNTARY AND THEREFORE COULD NOT BE PREDICTED IN ADVANCE, AND THIS PASSAGE IS MAINLY A CATALOG OF QUANTITIES OF METAL DONATIONS. THE OTHER KINDS OF MATERIALS DONATED WILL BE TAKEN UP IN CHAP. 39. DOES THIS MEAN THAT THE PASSAGE OFFERS NEW INFORMATION ABOUT THE TABERNACLE DESIGN OR CONSTRUCTION? NO, BUT IT CERTAINLY DOES PORTRAY THE COMPLETE SUCCESS OF THE VOLUNTARY DONATION EFFORT IN TERMS THAT ARE HARD TO DOWNPLAY. THE ISRAELITES DID NOT JUST COME UP WITH A BIT OF GOLD, SILVER OR BRONZE HERE OR THERE; THEY GAVE A HUGE AMOUNT, FULFILLING EVERY POSSIBLE NEED AND PROVIDING THE TABERNACLE WITH A WEALTH OF METALLIC BEAUTY. THIS CONSTITUTES YET ONE MORE WAY OF DEMONSTRATING THAT (A) THE TABERNACLE WAS BUILT JUST AS IT SHOULD HAVE BEEN—NO CORNERS HAD TO BE CUT ANYWHERE BECAUSE THERE WEREN’T ENOUGH MATERIALS FOR SOME OF THE COMPONENTS; AND (B) THE PEOPLE WERE RIGHT WITH THEIR GOD—THEY GAVE ALL THAT COULD HAVE BEEN EXPECTED OF THEM BECAUSE OF THEIR DESIRE TO PLEASE STEPHEN YAHWEH (CF. 36:2–7). 38:21 THE STATEMENT “THESE ARE THE AMOUNTS OF THE MATERIALS USED …” INTRODUCES AND LEADS LOGICALLY TO THE REMAINDER OF CHAP. 38, IN WHICH “AMOUNTS” ACTUALLY REFERS TO METAL AMOUNTS—NOTHING ELSE IS QUANTIFIED SPECIFICALLY. WHAT FOLLOWS IN 39:1–31, HOWEVER, IS ALSO CONCERNED WITH DESCRIBING MATERIALS USED, AND IN A FEW CASES WITHIN THAT BLOCK OF VERSES, QUANTITIES ARE ALSO INDICATED (E.G., VV. 10–14). MOREOVER, SINCE THE METAL AMOUNTS IN THE REMAINDER OF CHAP. 38 ARE RELEVANT TO THE METAL OBJECTS DESCRIBED IN CHAP. 39 (ESPECIALLY THE GOLD MENTIONED THROUGHOUT 39:1–31), THE FIRST WORDS OF 38:21 PROBABLY SHOULD BE CONSIDERED INTRODUCTORY TO EVERYTHING IN 38:21–39:31. MOSES HAD LONG BEEN ALTERNATING BETWEEN THE SYNONYMS “TABERNACLE” AND “TENT OF MEETING,” BUT HERE HE INTRODUCED A NEW TWO-TERM COMBINATION, AN INSTRUCTIVE APPOSITION, “TABERNACLE, THE TABERNACLE OF THE TESTIMONY.” THIS IS YET ANOTHER WAY MOSES MADE SURE HIS AUDIENCE UNDERSTOOD THAT THE TABERNACLE IS NOT THE HOUSING FOR AN IDOL OR FOR THE ACTUAL PRESENCE OF A GOD BUT IS THE HOUSING FOR A SYMBOL OF THE ONLY GOD, STEPHEN YAHWEH, AND HIS MEANS OF GRACE FOR HIS PEOPLE—HIS COVENANT (“THE TESTIMONY”). PEOPLE WERE NOT BROUGHT TO GOD UNDER THE OLD COVENANT PRIMARILY BY PERFORMING RITUALS, INCLUDING RITUALS AT THE TABERNACLE, IMPORTANT AS THESE WERE. THEY WERE MADE PART OF GOD’S FAMILY BY KEEPING HIS COVENANT, THROUGH THE OBEDIENCE THAT COMES BY FAITH. THE 2 TABLETS PLACED IN THE ARK WERE THE WITNESS/TESTIMONY TO THAT COVENANT AND THUS TO GOD’S ONGOING DESIRE AND DETERMINATION TO SAVE HIS PEOPLE AND SEE THEM THROUGH TO ETERNAL LIFE. WE LEARN HERE FOR THE FIRST TIME THAT MOSES, AS ONE OF THE MANY CHECKS AND BALANCES HE PROBABLY IMPOSED TO DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO MEET PERFECTLY THE DEMANDS GOD HAD ORIGINALLY GIVEN HIM FOR THE TABERNACLE, HAD WORKED OUT A SYSTEM OF RECORDING MATERIAL QUANTITIES, EMPLOYING LEVITES IN THIS WORK (“RECORDED AT MOSES’ COMMAND BY THE LEVITES [PRIVATES TO CORPORALS]”). NOT ALL SCRIBES WERE LEVITES, AND NOT ALL LEVITES WERE SCRIBES, BUT SOME WERE BOTH (CF. 1 CHR 24:6; 2 CHR 34:13; NEH 8:9; 13:13) AND FOR GOOD REASON. AS MOSES TRAINED AND ASSIGNED RESPONSIBILITIES TO THE LEVITES, IT WOULD HAVE BECOME CLEAR THAT ONE OF THEIR DUTIES WOULD BE THE PROPER ORGANIZING AND RECORDING OF WORSHIP DONATIONS—NOT JUST THOSE GIVEN TO BUILD THE TABERNACLE AS IN THE PRESENT INSTANCE BUT ALSO THOSE BROUGHT AS THE YEARS WENT BY, THE VARIOUS WORSHIP SACRIFICES AT THE TABERNACLE AND LATER TEMPLE. LIKEWISE, SINCE LEVITES WERE TO BE TEACHERS OF THE LAW IN THEIR SUPPORT ROLE UNDERGIRDING THE PRIESTS, LITERACY AMONG THEM WOULD BE CALLED FOR AND ENCOURAGED. AT THIS POINT THE ISRAELITES WERE STILL ONLY MONTHS AWAY FROM HAVING LEFT EGYPT; BUT WE NEVERTHELESS SEE HERE SOME OF THE BEGINNINGS OF THE LEVITICAL ROLE AS IT WILL BE DEVELOPED AND WIDENED IN TIME. LEVITES WORKED UNDER THE LEADERSHIP AND DIRECTION OF PRIESTS, SO THE CHOICE OF “ITHAMAR,” THE FOURTH SON OF AARON AND THEREFORE A PERSON IN THE LINEAGE TO BECOME TOP HIGH PRIEST [TOP CHIEF OF POLICE] IS LOGICAL FOR THE LEADERSHIP OF SUCH A MAJOR TASK AS CHECKING THE MATERIALS USED IN THE TABERNACLE. 38:22–23 IT IS BY NOW NO SURPRISE TO THE READER THAT BEZALEL (SEE COMMENTS ON 31:2; 35:30; 36:1–2; 37:1) AND OHOLIAB (SEE COMMENTS ON 31:6; 35:34; 36:1–2) PLAYED IMPORTANT OVERSIGHT ROLES AND USED THEIR PERSONAL SKILLS IN CONSTRUCTING THINGS RELATED TO THE TABERNACLE. SO WHY BRING UP ONE MORE TIME THE FACT THAT THESE TWO GAVE LEADERSHIP TO THE PROJECT? BY MENTIONING ONCE AGAIN BEZALEL, A JUDAHITE, ALONG WITH OHOLIAB, A DANITE, MOSES VERY EFFECTIVELY REMINDED THE READER THAT THE TABERNACLE WAS A PAN-ISRAELITE PROJECT, NOT RUN BY OR OVERLY INFLUENCED BY ANY TRIBE BUT CONTRIBUTED TO BY ANY AND ALL INDIVIDUALS FROM ALL TRIBES, AS THEIR GIFTS AND CALLING DICTATED. THESE VERSES, AS THEY FOLLOW V. 1, ALSO TEND TO SUGGEST THAT THE CRAFTSMEN FROM THE VARIOUS TRIBES MUST HAVE WORKED CLOSELY AND HARMONIOUSLY WITH THE OVERSEERS/TALLYERS, WHO WERE LEVITES, AS THEY IN TURN ANSWERED TO A PRIEST, ITHAMAR. FINALLY, IT PROVIDES ONE MORE OPPORTUNITY, WITH SOME VARIETY OF WORDING COMPARED TO PRIOR CONTEXTS, FOR THE ASSERTION THAT THE FULFILLMENT OF THE TABERNACLE CONSTRUCTION OCCURRED AT THE BASE OF MOUNT SINAI JUST AS IT HAD BEEN ORIGINALLY COMMANDED BY GOD AT THE TOP OF IT. 38:24–25 NOW MOSES RELAYED WHAT THE LEVITES UNDER ITHAMAR’S DIRECTION LEARNED THROUGH THEIR CAREFUL INVENTORYING OF DONATIONS AND USAGES: THAT THE PEOPLE HAD DONATED THROUGH THE GOLD WAVE OFFERING A GRAND TOTAL OF “29 TALENTS AND 730 SHEKELS” OF GOLD, WHICH IN MODERN TERMS WOULD BE AT LEAST A TON (2,000 POUNDS) AND PERHAPS AS MUCH AS 2,200 HUNDRED POUNDS. THE “SHEKELS” MENTIONED INDICATE A RATHER PRECISE COUNT FOR THE TOTAL DONATION, EVEN TO THE POINT OF TALLYING A FRACTION OF A TALENT (730 SHEKELS ADD UP TO ABOUT 18 POUNDS, I.E., ABOUT A QUARTER OF A TALENT) THAT THE COUNT SHOWED HAD COME IN ABOVE WHAT AMOUNTED TO AN EVEN NUMBER OF 29 TALENTS (ABOUT 2,175 POUNDS). WE DO NOT KNOW FOR SURE WHAT A “SANCTUARY SHEKEL” WAS. IT PROBABLY WAS NOTHING MORE THAN AN OFFICIAL MEASURE AGAINST WHICH OTHERS WERE CHECKED, SO THE MENTION OF IT HERE IS A WAY OF POINTING OUT THAT THESE FIGURES ON THE GOLD DONATIONS ARE ABSOLUTELY ACCURATE AGAINST THE OFFICIAL STANDARD OF MEASURING. IT IS ALSO POSSIBLE THAT IT WAS HEAVIER OR LIGHTER THAN OTHER SHEKEL STANDARDS, BUT NO EVIDENCE EXISTS TO CONFIRM SUCH A SECOND STANDARD. PRESUMABLY WHAT MOSES INTENDED TO CONVEY AT THIS POINT WAS THAT THE GOLD MEASUREMENT COULD BE COMPLETELY TRUSTED BECAUSE IT WAS NOT JUST ESTIMATED OR ROUGHLY WEIGHED BY SOMEONE’S HOMEMADE SET OF WEIGHTS BUT MEASURED AGAINST THE OFFICIAL STANDARD FOR THE NATION, THE ONE ALREADY IN USE TO CALCULATE PROPORTIONS FOR SACRIFICES. 38:26 THE SILVER OFFERING BROUGHT IN MORE METAL THAN THE TOTAL OF THE GOLD AND BRONZE COMBINED. THE TOTAL OF “100 TALENTS” (7,500 POUNDS) PLUS A FRACTION OF A TALENT (1,775 SHEKELS, I.E., ABOUT 44.4 POUNDS) WAS NOT, HOWEVER, MERELY THE HAPPY BUT ACCIDENTAL RESULT OF MERE VOLUNTARISM COMBINED WITH A NICE SUPPLY OF SILVER THROUGHOUT THE POPULACE. INSTEAD, IT CAME DIRECTLY FROM THE REQUIREMENT OF THE PAYMENT OF ATONEMENT MONEY EQUIVALENT TO ONE-HALF SHEKEL PER PERSON WHEN THE CENSUS WAS TAKEN (SEE COMMENTS ON 30:11–17). HERE WE LEARN THAT BY THE TIME THE SILVER WAS ACTUALLY USED, A CENSUS HAD ALREADY BEEN TAKEN, THAT 603,550 WERE COUNTED THROUGH IT, AND THEREFORE THE RESULTING AMOUNT OF MONEY CAME TO WHAT WAS RAISED WHEN 603,550 WAS MULTIPLIED BY ONE-HALF SHEKEL AND CONVERTED TO TALENTS WITH THE FRACTIONAL REMAINDER EXPRESSED IN SHEKELS. SEVERAL FACTS ARE WORTH NOTING HERE. FIRST, SILVER WAS MOST OFTEN USED IN THE ANCIENT WORLD FOR SMALL COINAGE OR THE EQUIVALENT THEREOF—NOT UNLIKE COINS IN THE COINAGE OF AMERICA TODAY, WHERE MOST COINS ARE “SILVER” (IN APPEARANCE IF NOT ACTUALLY IN FACT), AND HIGHER AMOUNTS OF MONEY ARE NOT. SECOND, THE NUMBER OF ISRAELITES INDICATED HERE IS EXACTLY THE NUMBER GIVEN IN THE LATER CENSUS LIST SUMMATION OF NUM 1:46—INDICATING THAT THE TWO PASSAGES ARE REFERRING TO THE SAME EVENT, A SINGLE CENSUS AND NOT TWO. THIS IS CONFIRMED BY THE DESCRIPTIONS IN THE EARLY CHAPTERS OF NUMBERS OF THE SETTING UP OF THE TABERNACLE, ITS DEDICATION, AND PUTTING INTO USE ITS IMPLEMENTS. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THE ATONEMENT MONEY WAS COLLECTED WELL BEFORE THE ACTUAL CENSUS, BUT IT IS ALSO POSSIBLE THAT THE SILVERING OF THE TABERNACLE POLES, BASES, AND HOOKS WAS ONE OF THE LATER TASKS IN THE WHOLE TABERNACLE CONSTRUCTION PROCESS AND THEREFORE THAT THE SILVER DONATION WAS NOT COMPLETED UNTIL LATER IN THE PROCESS THAN THE GOLD OR EVEN BRONZE DONATION. THE TEXT DOES NOT PROVIDE ENOUGH INFORMATION FOR US TO SORT THIS OUT DEFINITIVELY. THIRD, THE AMOUNT INDICATES THAT EVERYONE HAD COMPLIED WITH THE GOAL OF RECEIVING A HALF SHEKEL FROM EACH PERSON—NO MATTER WHAT HIS SOCIETAL RANK—WHO WAS READY TO FIGHT AND THEREFORE WAS COUNTED IN THE CENSUS (SEE 30:15). “BEKA” MEANS “SPLIT” OR “HALF” IN HEBREW AND WAS A TERM USED COLLOQUIALLY TO INDICATE A HALF SHEKEL. ON “CROSSING OVER” AS A WAY OF PARTICIPATING IN A CENSUS COUNT, SEE COMMENTS ON 30:13–14. 38:27–28 THE USES OF THE SILVER HERE MENTIONED ARE JUST AS ORIGINALLY INDICATED IN 26:19–25, 32; 27:10–17 AND THE LATER FULFILLMENT PARALLELS IN 36:24–36. WE ALSO LEARN BY SIMPLE DIVISION THAT EACH SILVER POST BASE WEIGHED ABOUT SEVENTY-FIVE POUNDS AND THAT THE REMAINDER OF THE SILVER (ABOUT 44.4 POUNDS) WAS USED FOR HOOKS, BANDS, AND TOPS—INSIDE THE TABERNACLE RATHER THAN OUTSIDE (IN THE COURTYARD) WHERE BRONZE WAS USED. MOST OF WHAT WAS VISIBLE ABOVE THE FLOOR INSIDE THE TABERNACLE ITSELF HAD ALL GOLD SURFACING DECORATION (CF., E.G., 36:38). 38:29–31 THE BRONZE AMOUNTS FINISH THE LIST, FOLLOWING THE GOLD-SILVER-BRONZE ORDER OF METALS DEPENDING ON HOW CLOSE ONE WAS SPATIALLY TO THE CENTER SYMBOL OF HOLINESS, THE ARK. NO DETAILS ARE GIVEN AS TO EXACTLY WHAT PORTION/POUNDAGE OF THE BRONZE WAS USED PER TENT POLE BASE IN THE COURTYARD, HOW MUCH THE BRONZE ALTAR WEIGHED, OR HOW LARGE EACH TENT PEG WAS. WE KNOW ONLY THE TOTAL FOR ALL BRONZE DONATED AND USED (OTHER THAN THAT MADE FROM THE DONATED MIRRORS AS DESCRIBED IN V. 8) AS 70 TALENTS, 2,400 SHEKELS, OR 5,310 POUNDS. AGAIN, WE ARE TOLD IT WAS USED JUST AS COMMANDED, THAT IS, FOR THE OBJECTS ALREADY DESCRIBED FOR US AS REQUIRED TO BE MADE OF BRONZE (26:11, 37; 27:2–6; 27:10–19). WITH THE END OF CHAP. 38 THE TABERNACLE ITSELF IS NOT YET COMPLETED (SEE 39:32), BUT ITS MATERIALS ARE IN HAND AND ITS COMPONENT PARTS ARE DESCRIBED AS FASHIONED. THERE STILL REMAINS FOR COMPLETION THE MATTER OF THE PRIESTLY GARMENTS FOR USE AT THE TABERNACLE (39:1–31). AFTER THAT THE NEXT THING TO BE COVERED FOR THE SAKE OF COMPLETENESS IN THE FULFILLMENT OF THE TABERNACLE BUILDING COMMANDS WAS MOSES’ INSPECTION OF ITS PARTS—AGAIN NOT THE ASSEMBLED TABERNACLE BUT THE COMPLETED PARTS THAT WOULD BE PUT TOGETHER TO SET IT UP (CHAP. 40) AND, FOR THAT MATTER, TAKEN APART FOR TRANSPORTATION WHENEVER THE ISRAELITES MOVED AT STEPHEN YAHWEH’S DIRECTION. A QUESTION REMAINS: WHY DID MOSES GIVE THE READER THE MEASURED AMOUNTS OF THE THREE METALS BUT NOTHING ELSE? AFTER ALL, HE DID NOT TELL WHAT QUANTITY OF ACACIA WOOD WAS USED, OR HOW MUCH YARN, OR HOW MANY SEA COW-HIDES, OR THE LIKE. ONLY THE GOLD, SILVER, AND BRONZE ARE INVENTORIED FOR THE READER. THE ANSWER MUST BE FOUND IN TWO CONSIDERATIONS: (1) THE THREE METALS WERE BY FAR THE MOST-COSTLY—MOST PRECIOUS—INGREDIENTS IN THE TABERNACLE CONSTRUCTION; AND (2) THE THREE METALS HAD A SPECIAL SIGNIFICANCE BECAUSE OF THEIR SPLENDOR, USED AS INDICATORS OF PROXIMITY TO THE SYMBOLS OF STEPHEN YAHWEH’S PRESENCE. AS REGARDS THE FIRST OF THESE CONSIDERATIONS, THE COST/PRECIOUSNESS OF THE METALS, LISTING THE LARGE AMOUNTS RECEIVED FROM THE ISRAELITES OF EACH OF THE THREE OF THEM WAS A WAY OF SHOWING THE PEOPLE’S DEDICATION TO STEPHEN YAHWEH AND THEIR DESIRE TO HONOR HIM BY MAKING HIS SYMBOLIC DWELLING PLACE ALL THAT IT SHOULD BE—A GRAND RESIDENCE FOR THE GREATEST BEING, THE GOD ABOVE ALL GODS. AS REGARDS THE SECOND OF THESE CONSIDERATIONS, THE PROXIMITY INDICATION WITH THE TYPE OF METAL USED, THE FACT THAT THE SILVER AND GOLD FAR OUTWEIGHED THE BRONZE, SHOWS HOW SPLENDID (SOLID GOLD) WAS THE ARK AND ITS IMMEDIATE SURROUNDINGS (THE INTERIOR OF THE TABERNACLE, WHERE GOLD NEVER TOUCHED THE GROUND AND SILVER WAS NEVER VISIBLE ABOVE THE BASES OF THE FRAMES), WHICH WAS THE INACCESSIBLE PART OF THE TABERNACLE, THE PART NEVER EVEN SEEN BY THE AVERAGE ISRAELITE. THE USE OF BRONZE FOR THE MORE ACCESSIBLE AREA, THE COURTYARD, INDICATED A DEGREE OF HOLINESS BECAUSE OF THE RELATIVE VALUE OF BRONZE. BUT IT ALSO INDICATED ITS RELATIVELY DIMINISHED HOLINESS BECAUSE A COURTYARD WAS A SPACE WHERE VIRTUALLY ANYONE COULD ENTER, AS OPPOSED TO A HOUSE, WHERE ONLY THE SERVANTS WERE ADMITTED, AND THEN ONLY TO THE OUTER ROOM IN THE CASE OF THE TWO-ROOM TABERNACLE.**

**CONSTRUCTION OF THE PRIESTLY GARMENTS (39:1–31) [FULFILLMENT OF 28:2–43]**

**1 FROM THE BLUE, PURPLE AND SCARLET YARN THEY MADE WOVEN GARMENTS FOR MINISTERING IN THE SANCTUARY. THEY ALSO MADE SACRED GARMENTS FOR AARON, AS THE LORD COMMANDED MOSES.2 THEY MADE THE EPHOD OF GOLD, AND OF BLUE, PURPLE AND SCARLET YARN, AND OF FINELY TWISTED LINEN. 3 THEY HAMMERED OUT THIN SHEETS OF GOLD AND CUT STRANDS TO BE WORKED INTO THE BLUE, PURPLE AND SCARLET YARN AND FINE LINEN—THE WORK OF A SKILLED CRAFTSMAN. 4 THEY MADE SHOULDER PIECES FOR THE EPHOD, WHICH WERE ATTACHED TO TWO OF ITS CORNERS, SO IT COULD BE FASTENED. 5 ITS SKILLFULLY WOVEN WAISTBAND WAS LIKE IT—OF ONE PIECE WITH THE EPHOD AND MADE WITH GOLD, AND WITH BLUE, PURPLE AND SCARLET YARN, AND WITH FINELY TWISTED LINEN, AS THE LORD COMMANDED MOSES. 6 THEY MOUNTED THE ONYX STONES IN GOLD FILIGREE SETTINGS AND ENGRAVED THEM LIKE A SEAL WITH THE NAMES OF THE SONS OF ISRAEL. 7 THEN THEY FASTENED THEM ON THE SHOULDER PIECES OF THE EPHOD AS MEMORIAL STONES FOR THE SONS OF ISRAEL, AS THE LORD COMMANDED MOSES. 8 THEY FASHIONED THE BREAST-PIECE—THE WORK OF A SKILLED CRAFTSMAN. THEY MADE IT LIKE THE EPHOD: OF GOLD, AND OF BLUE, PURPLE AND SCARLET YARN, AND OF FINELY TWISTED LINEN. 9 IT WAS SQUARE—A SPAN LONG AND A SPAN WIDE—AND FOLDED DOUBLE. 10 THEN THEY MOUNTED FOUR ROWS OF PRECIOUS STONES ON IT. IN THE FIRST ROW THERE WAS A RUBY, A TOPAZ AND A BERYL; 11 IN THE SECOND ROW A TURQUOISE, A SAPPHIRE AND AN EMERALD; 12 IN THE THIRD ROW A JACINTH, AN AGATE AND AN AMETHYST; 13 IN THE FOURTH ROW A CHRYSOLITE, AN ONYX AND A JASPER. THEY WERE MOUNTED IN GOLD FILIGREE SETTINGS. 14 THERE WERE TWELVE STONES, ONE FOR EACH OF THE NAMES OF THE SONS OF ISRAEL, EACH ENGRAVED LIKE A SEAL WITH THE NAME OF ONE OF THE TWELVE TRIBES. 15 FOR THE BREAST-PIECE THEY MADE BRAIDED CHAINS OF PURE GOLD, LIKE A ROPE. 16 THEY MADE TWO GOLD FILIGREE SETTINGS AND TWO GOLD RINGS, AND FASTENED THE RINGS TO TWO OF THE CORNERS OF THE BREAST-PIECE. 17 THEY FASTENED THE TWO GOLD CHAINS TO THE RINGS AT THE CORNERS OF THE BREAST-PIECE, 18 AND THE OTHER ENDS OF THE CHAINS TO THE TWO SETTINGS, ATTACHING THEM TO THE SHOULDER PIECES OF THE EPHOD AT THE FRONT. 19 THEY MADE TWO GOLD RINGS AND ATTACHED THEM TO THE OTHER TWO CORNERS OF THE BREAST-PIECE ON THE INSIDE EDGE NEXT TO THE EPHOD. 20 THEN THEY MADE TWO MORE GOLD RINGS AND ATTACHED THEM TO THE BOTTOM OF THE SHOULDER PIECES ON THE FRONT OF THE EPHOD, CLOSE TO THE SEAM JUST ABOVE THE WAISTBAND OF THE EPHOD. 21 THEY TIED THE RINGS OF THE BREAST-PIECE TO THE RINGS OF THE EPHOD WITH BLUE CORD, CONNECTING IT TO THE WAISTBAND SO THAT THE BREAST-PIECE WOULD NOT SWING OUT FROM THE EPHOD—AS THE LORD COMMANDED MOSES. 22 THEY MADE THE ROBE OF THE EPHOD ENTIRELY OF BLUE CLOTH—THE WORK OF A WEAVER—23 WITH AN OPENING IN THE CENTER OF THE ROBE LIKE THE OPENING OF A COLLAR, AND A BAND AROUND THIS OPENING, SO THAT IT WOULD NOT TEAR. 24 THEY MADE POMEGRANATES OF BLUE, PURPLE AND SCARLET YARN AND FINELY TWISTED LINEN AROUND THE HEM OF THE ROBE. 25 AND THEY MADE BELLS OF PURE GOLD AND ATTACHED THEM AROUND THE HEM BETWEEN THE POMEGRANATES. 26 THE BELLS AND POMEGRANATES ALTERNATED AROUND THE HEM OF THE ROBE TO BE WORN FOR MINISTERING, AS THE LORD COMMANDED MOSES. 27 FOR AARON AND HIS SONS, THEY MADE TUNICS OF FINE LINEN—THE WORK OF A WEAVER—28 AND THE TURBAN OF FINE LINEN, THE LINEN HEADBANDS AND THE UNDERGARMENTS OF FINELY TWISTED LINEN. 29 THE SASH WAS OF FINELY TWISTED LINEN AND BLUE, PURPLE AND SCARLET YARN—THE WORK OF AN EMBROIDERER—AS THE LORD COMMANDED MOSES. 30 THEY MADE THE PLATE, THE SACRED DIADEM, OUT OF PURE GOLD AND ENGRAVED ON IT, LIKE AN INSCRIPTION ON A SEAL: HOLY TO THE LORD. 31 THEN THEY FASTENED A BLUE CORD TO IT TO ATTACH IT TO THE TURBAN, AS THE LORD COMMANDED MOSES.**

**OVERVIEW (39:1) [FULFILLMENT OF 28:2–5]**

**39:1 REPEATEDLY IN THE COMMAND PORTIONS AND ALSO IN THE EARLIER FULFILLMENT PORTIONS OF THE TABERNACLE TEXTS IN EXODUS THE PHRASE “BLUE, PURPLE AND SCARLET YARN” HAS APPEARED (SEE COMMENTS ON 25:4; 26:1, 31, 36; 27:16; 28:5–6, 8, 15, 33; CF. 35:6, 35; 36:8, 35, 37; 38:18, 23). THESE REDS AND BLUES WERE ASSOCIATED WITH ROYALTY AND CONVEYED SOVEREIGNTY AND GREATNESS—THUS BEING APPROPRIATE FOR A GREAT KING’S TABERNACLE AND FOR THE VESTMENTS OF THOSE WHO SERVED AS HIS SERVANTS IN IT (THE PRIESTS). HERE THE FULFILLMENT SECTION CONCENTRATES ON THE PRIESTS’ VESTMENTS: THOSE OF THE HIGH PRIEST PRIMARILY (“THE SACRED GARMENTS FOR AARON”; CF. 28:2) BUT AS WELL THE PRIESTLY ROBES, REFERRED TO HERE AS “THE WOVEN GARMENTS.”**

**CONSTRUCTION OF THE HOLY EPHOD (39:2–7) [FULFILLMENT OF 28:6–14]**

**39:2–7 IN THE PRESENT PASSAGE 39:2 (“GOLD … YARN … LINEN”) REPRISES MOST OF 28:6 VERBATIM, WITH THE PHRASE AT THE END OF 28:6, “THE WORK OF A SKILLED CRAFTSMAN,” BEING PLACED AT THE END OF 39:3 IN THE FULFILLMENT DESCRIPTION. VERSE 3 EXPLAINS HOW THE COMMAND OF 28:6–8, WHICH REQUIRED THAT THE GOLD BE BLENDED WITH THE YARN AND LINEN, WAS ACCOMPLISHED: THE GOLD WAS HAMMERED INTO SHEETS AND THEN CUT INTO THIN STRANDS SO THAT IT COULD BE INTERWOVEN WITH THE YARN AND LINEN. THIS PRODUCED A PATTERNED CLOTH THAT MUST HAVE SPARKLED BRIGHTLY YET WOULD HAVE BEEN ENTIRELY FLEXIBLE AND WEARABLE AS A FABRIC. THEREAFTER, 39:4 REPRISES 28:7; 39:5 REPRISES 28:8; 39:6 CONDENSES AND THEREBY SUMMARIZES 28:9–11; AND 39:7 CONDENSES AND SUMMARIZES 28:12–14.**

**CONSTRUCTION OF THE HOLY BREASTPIECE (39:8–21) [FULFILLMENT OF 28:15–28]**

**39:8–21 THESE VERSES REPRISE 28:15–28 VERBATIM EXCEPT FOR THE USUAL AND NECESSARY CHANGES OF VERB TENSES EXPECTED IN THE FULFILLMENT PART OF THE BOOK AS OPPOSED TO THE COMMAND PART AND THE FOLLOWING SMALL DIFFERENCES: 28:23 IS MODIFIED SLIGHTLY IN 39:16 BY ADDING SPECIFIC MENTION OF THE “TWO GOLD FILIGREE SETTINGS,” AND AT THE END OF 39:21 MOSES ADDED THE WORDING “AS STEPHEN YAHWEH COMMANDED MOSES,” THUS PROVIDING CONVENIENT REFERENCE BACK TO THE COMMAND SECTION AND MAKING THE POINT ONCE AGAIN THAT WHAT WAS PRODUCED WAS WHAT WAS DESIGNED BY GOD. IN THE ORIGINAL COMMAND CONTEXT, 28:29–30, THE EXPLANATION FOR THE SYMBOLISM OF THE BREAST-PIECE WAS PROVIDED; THAT IS NOT NECESSARY HERE, IN A CONTEXT THAT CONCENTRATES ON WHAT WAS MANUFACTURED RATHER THAN HOW IT WAS USED. INDEED, VIRTUALLY NOTHING IN THE PRESENT CONTEXT IS CONCERNED WITH HOW ANYTHING WAS ACTUALLY USED IN WORSHIP (OR IN THE CASE OF THE URIM AND THUMMIM, OMITTED HERE, IN WORSHIPFUL DIVINATION). SO, NO PARALLEL TO 28:29–30 IS FOUND LOCATED BETWEEN THE DESCRIPTION OF THE BREAST-PIECE AND THAT OF THE ROBE. THESE SLIGHT VARIATIONS MAINTAIN A DEGREE OF WELCOME STYLISTIC NOVELTY WITHOUT ACTUALLY CHANGING ANYTHING SIGNIFICANT FROM THE COMMAND TO ITS FULFILLMENT IN THE MANUFACTURE OF THE BREAST-PIECE.**

**CONSTRUCTION OF THE HOLY ROBE (39:22–26) [FULFILLMENT OF 28:31–35]**

**39:22–26 IN THIS SECTION OF FULFILLMENT DESCRIPTION, 39:22 REPEATS 28:31 WITH THE WORDS “THE WORK OF A WEAVER” ADDED (AN EXPRESSION NOT FOUND ANYWHERE IN THE COMMAND MATERIALS, ALTHOUGH THE NEED FOR PEOPLE WITH THE SKILL OF A WEAVER WAS MENTIONED 35:35). COMMON SENSE WOULD INDICATE THAT LOOMS OPERATED BY SKILLFUL WEAVERS WERE THUS REQUIRED FOR THE MAKING OF THE CLOTH FOR THE EXTRAORDINARY PRIESTLY ROBES. THEREAFTER, 39:23 SLIGHTLY REWORDS BUT DOES NOT CHANGE THE SENSE OF 28:32, AND 39:24 REPRISES 28:33 WITH THE ADDITION OF “AND FINELY TWISTED LINEN,” LEAVING OUT THE WORDS IN 28:33 “WITH GOLD BELLS BETWEEN” THEM SINCE THIS IDEA IS PICKED UP INSTEAD BY 39:25–26. INDEED, 39:25–26 REWORDS 28:33B–34 AND ADDS “TO BE WORN FOR MINISTERING” AS A DESCRIPTION OF THE PURPOSE OF THE ROBE, A SUMMATION OF THE FULLER PURPOSE DESCRIPTION IN 28:35. THIS PURPOSE DESCRIPTION, SHORT AS IT IS, IS RELATIVELY UNUSUAL. AS NOTED ABOVE, PURPOSE DESCRIPTIONS ARE EITHER OMITTED IN THE FULFILLMENT CONTEXT OR SHORTENED TO THE MINIMUM SINCE ACCURACY OF FULFILLMENT WAS THE ISSUE, NOT THE PURPOSE OF THE THING BEING CONSTRUCTED. THE PURPOSE WILL BE ADDRESSED IN THE STORIES AND INSTRUCTIONS ABOUT USE AND ACTION, AS DESCRIBED IN LEVITICUS AND NUMBERS.**

**CONSTRUCTION OF THE HOLY TUNICS AND HOLY TURBAN (39:27–31) [FULFILLMENT OF 28:36–43]**

**39:27–31 THE MOST IMPORTANT WORDS IN THIS SECTION OF THE FULFILLMENT DESCRIPTION, AS IN SO MANY OTHER PLACES IN THE PRESENT GENERAL CONTEXT, ARE “AS STEPHEN YAHWEH COMMANDED MOSES,” FOUND HERE TWICE, IN V. 29 AND V. 31, FOLLOWING THEIR EARLIER OCCURRENCES IN VV. 1, 5, 7, 21, 26. THE HEBREW FOR THIS CLAUSE COULD ALSO BE TRANSLATED “JUST AS STEPHEN YAHWEH HAD COMMANDED MOSES.”312 IT REMINDS THE READER THAT THE TABERNACLE AND EVERYTHING MADE FOR IT, HERE SPECIFICALLY PRIESTLY VESTMENTS, WERE DESIGNED BY STEPHEN YAHWEH (NOT MOSES OR AARON OR ANYONE ELSE), REVEALED TO THE ISRAELITES THROUGH THE VERY WORDS OF GOD DELIVERED TO MOSES ON MOUNT SINAI, AND THEN MANUFACTURED BY PEOPLE SO OBEDIENT TO AND UNDER THE CONTROL OF STEPHEN YAHWEH THAT WHAT THEY MADE WAS JUST EXACTLY, PRECISELY, SPECIFICALLY WHAT HE WANTED MADE. IT ALL TURNED OUT PERFECTLY TO HIS SPECIFICATION AND THEREFORE TO HIS LIKING—SO IT COULD THEN FUNCTION AS IT WAS SUPPOSED TO, TO PROVIDE FOR PROPER, APPROVED WORSHIP ACCEPTABLE TO THE ONE BEING WORSHIPED. WORSHIP IS ABSOLUTELY BASIC TO A PROPER RELATIONSHIP TO GOD, AND IF THAT WORSHIP CAN TAKE PLACE PROPERLY, THEN THE RELATIONSHIP CAN BEGIN PROPERLY WITH A REASONABLE HOPE OF GROWING TO MATURITY AND PRODUCTIVITY. SKEWED WORSHIP WOULD UNDERMINE ONE’S RELATIONSHIP TO GOD FROM THE VERY START AND LIKELY LEAD TO AN ODD, DISTORTED, AND INEFFECTIVE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE ONE TO WHOM A WORSHIPER’S PRAISE AND ADORATION SHOULD BE DIRECTED AS SOUNDLY AND JOYFULLY AS POSSIBLE. IT WOULD HAVE BEEN A TRAGEDY FOR THE ISRAELITES TO HAVE UNDERMINED THEIR CHANCES FOR A RIGHT RELATIONSHIP WITH STEPHEN YAHWEH BY DISOBEYING, EVEN UNINTENTIONALLY, HIS WILL REGARDING THE PLACE OF, AND MANNER OF, WORSHIP. BY HIS GRACE, HOWEVER, THERE WAS NO TRAGEDY; ISRAEL WORSHIPED WITH A HIGH DEGREE OF CONSISTENCY WHERE AND AS THEY SHOULD, AT LEAST WHILE MOSES REMAINED ALIVE. WHAT 28:36–43 REQUIRED IS REPRISED HERE BUT IN A DIFFERENT ORDER AND WITH THE WORDING OFTEN CONSIDERABLY CONDENSED. HERE 39:27 REWORDS 28:39 (E.G., THE IMPERATIVE “WEAVE THE TUNIC OF FINE LINEN” OF 28:39 APPEARS AS THE INDICATIVE “THEY MADE TUNICS OF FINE LINEN—THE WORK OF A WEAVER”). EXODUS 39:28 PICKS UP AND CONDENSES OR IN SOME CASES SLIGHTLY EXPANDS VARIOUS PARTS OF 28:37 (“TURBAN”), 28:39 (“TURBAN OF FINE LINEN”), 28:40 (“HEADBANDS”), AND 28:42 (LINEN UNDERGARMENTS). ALSO 39:29 CONNECTS TO 28:39–40 (“SASH”) AS WELL AS TO 28:39 (“FINE LINEN, THE WORK OF AN EMBROIDERER”) AND EVEN TO SOME EXTENT TO 28:29 (WITH ITS GENERAL SPECIFICATION OF “BLUE, PURPLE AND SCARLET YARN”). THE MENTION OF THE TURBAN “PLATE” AND ITS INSCRIPTION IN 39:30 RECALLS 28:36, THOUGH WITH MODIFIED WORDING, AND THE REFERENCE TO THE ATTACHING “CORD” FOR THE TURBAN PLATE (39:31) REPEATS THE ESSENCE OF 28:38.**

**MOSES’ INSPECTION FINDS ALL MATERIALS MADE AS COMMANDED BY GOD (39:32–43) [FULFILLMENT OF 35:10–19]**

**32 SO ALL THE WORK ON THE TABERNACLE, THE TENT OF MEETING, WAS COMPLETED. THE ISRAELITES DID EVERYTHING JUST AS THE LORD COMMANDED MOSES. 33 THEN THEY BROUGHT THE TABERNACLE TO MOSES: THE TENT AND ALL ITS FURNISHINGS, ITS CLASPS, FRAMES, CROSSBARS, POSTS AND BASES; 34 THE COVERING OF RAM SKINS DYED RED, THE COVERING OF HIDES OF SEA COWS AND THE SHIELDING CURTAIN; 35 THE ARK OF THE TESTIMONY WITH ITS POLES AND THE ATONEMENT COVER; 36 THE TABLE WITH ALL ITS ARTICLES AND THE BREAD OF THE PRESENCE; 37 THE PURE GOLD LAMPSTAND WITH ITS ROW OF LAMPS AND ALL ITS ACCESSORIES, AND THE OIL FOR THE LIGHT; 38 THE GOLD ALTAR, THE ANOINTING OIL, THE FRAGRANT INCENSE, AND THE CURTAIN FOR THE ENTRANCE TO THE TENT; 39 THE BRONZE ALTAR WITH ITS BRONZE GRATING, ITS POLES AND ALL ITS UTENSILS; THE BASIN WITH ITS STAND; 40 THE CURTAINS OF THE COURTYARD WITH ITS POSTS AND BASES, AND THE CURTAIN FOR THE ENTRANCE TO THE COURTYARD; THE ROPES AND TENT PEGS FOR THE COURTYARD; ALL THE FURNISHINGS FOR THE TABERNACLE, THE TENT OF MEETING; 41 AND THE WOVEN GARMENTS WORN FOR MINISTERING IN THE SANCTUARY, BOTH THE SACRED GARMENTS FOR AARON THE PRIEST AND THE GARMENTS FOR HIS SONS WHEN SERVING AS PRIESTS. 42 THE ISRAELITES HAD DONE ALL THE WORK JUST AS THE LORD HAD COMMANDED MOSES. 43 MOSES INSPECTED THE WORK AND SAW THAT THEY HAD DONE IT JUST AS THE LORD HAD COMMANDED. SO, MOSES BLESSED THEM.**

**FROM AN ACCOMODATIONIST, HUMAN POINT OF VIEW, ONE MIGHT BE TEMPTED TO FORGIVE THE ISRAELITES IF THEY ENCOUNTERED DIFFICULTY COMPLETING THE TABERNACLE IN ALL FACETS AND THEREFORE HAD TO START WORSHIPING AT IT WHEN IT WAS NOT YET FULLY FURNISHED, OR PERHAPS BEFORE ALL OF ITS SURFACES WERE COMPLETELY OVERLAID WITH THE PRECIOUS METALS REQUIRED IN THE INSTRUCTIONS. AFTER ALL, THEY WERE WORKING IN A WILDERNESS ON THIS PROJECT, RELYING SOLELY ON DONATED MATERIALS, USING AT LEAST SOME TOOLS THAT MIGHT HAVE HAD TO BE MANUFACTURED AFTER LEAVING EGYPT—SO WHO COULD BLAME THEM IF THEY DIDN’T COMPLETELY FINISH THE TABERNACLE AND DO A PERFECT JOB ON EVERY DETAIL THE FIRST TIME AROUND? BUT THAT WAS NOT THE CASE BECAUSE IT WAS NOT WHAT GOD WOULD HAVE ALLOWED. “ALL THE WORK … WAS COMPLETED” (V. 32); THEY “DID EVERYTHING JUST AS THE LORD [HAD] COMMANDED MOSES” (VV. 32, 42); “MOSES INSPECTED THE WORK AND SAW THAT THEY HAD DONE IT JUST AS THE LORD HAD COMMANDED” (V. 43). SO FULL HAD BEEN THE PARTICIPATION OF THE PEOPLE, SO GENEROUS THEIR DONATIONS, SO SKILLED THE WORKMEN, SO DILIGENT THE EXPERTS ASSIGNED TO THE WORK, SO HIGH IN QUALITY THE MATERIALS, AND SO PRECISELY INSPECTED THE FINAL PRODUCT THAT THE TABERNACLE WAS JUST RIGHT—A PERFECT FULFILLMENT OF THE DIVINELY REVEALED IDEAL AND A FLAWLESS PLACE AT WHICH TO WORSHIP THE ONLY TRUE GOD. THE PRESENT PASSAGE REASSURES THE READER OF THESE FACTS. ISRAEL WAS OFF TO A PROPER START IN ITS COVENANT RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD: IT HAD THE PLACE AND MEANS OF WORSHIP EXACTLY AS IT SHOULD HAVE HAD THEM. MANY THINGS RELATED TO THE TABERNACLE REMAIN TO BE ADDRESSED, HOWEVER—EVEN THINGS THAT IMPINGE DIRECTLY ON THE TABERNACLE. FOR EXAMPLE, IN LEVITICUS AND NUMBERS THE READER FINDS THAT MOSES RECORDED EXTENSIVE DIVINE GUIDANCE (INCLUDING OVERSIGHT AND APPROVAL) ON SUCH MATTERS AS HOW AND WHY SACRIFICES WERE TO BE OFFERED AT THE TABERNACLE, HOW AND WHY PRIESTS [SERGEANTS] WERE TO BE CONSECRATED/ORDAINED FOR SERVICE AT THE TABERNACLE, HOW THE TABERNACLE WAS TO BE SET UP AND TAKEN DOWN, AND WHERE IT WAS TO BE PLACED WITHIN THE ISRAELITE ENCAMPMENT, AND SO ON. IN OTHER WORDS, THE END OF EXODUS IS NOT THE END OF THE TABERNACLE STORY, NOR WAS THE NARRATIVE OF THE COMPLETION OF THE TABERNACLE MATERIALS TO BE EQUATED TO THE COMPLETION OF WHAT MOSES WOULD HAVE TO SAY ABOUT THE PURPOSE AND FUNCTION OF THE TABERNACLE. 39:32 THIS VERSE INTRODUCES THE SUMMATIONAL STATEMENT OF TABERNACLE COMPLETION THAT FOLLOWS, WITH A COMPREHENSIVE OVERVIEW, IN FIVE WAYS: (1) IT EMPLOYS BOTH COMMON TERMS FOR THE TABERNACLE (“TABERNACLE, THE TENT OF MEETING”) SO THAT EVEN THE MOST CASUAL READER, OR SOMEONE ENTIRELY NEW TO THE BOOK OF EXODUS, WOULD NOT BE CONFUSED ABOUT WHICH STRUCTURE WAS IN MIND; (2) IT USES THE PAST TENSE, “WAS COMPLETED,” AS A WAY OF INDICATING THE FINALITY OF THE WORK; (3) IT REMINDS THE READER THAT THE PROJECT WAS A NATIONAL/COMMUNITY PROJECT SIMPLY BY SAYING “THE ISRAELITES DID”; (4) IT ESTABLISHES THAT THE TOTAL PROJECT WAS COMPLETE BY SAYING “EVERYTHING”; AND (5) IT CONFIRMS THAT ALL WAS PROPERLY DONE WITH THE COMMON CLAUSE “JUST AS THE LORD COMMANDED MOSES.” WHENEVER GOD’S PEOPLE CARRY OUT AN ASSIGNMENT CORRECTLY AND FULLY, IT IS A SOURCE OF GREAT DELIGHT, AS IT CERTAINLY SHOULD BE. WHAT COULD BE MORE IMPORTANT ON EARTH THAN TO DO THE WILL OF HEAVEN (MATT 6:10)? 39:33A “THEN THEY BROUGHT THE TABERNACLE TO MOSES” SIGNALS THREE IMPORTANT POINTS. (1) THE TABERNACLE WAS SOMETHING MOVEABLE—SOMETHING THAT COULD BE BROKEN DOWN INTO ITS COMPONENT PARTS AND TRANSPORTED. THIS WAS IMPORTANT BECAUSE ITS LOCATION SYMBOLIZED GOD’S NEARNESS TO HIS PEOPLE. HAD THERE BEEN DIFFICULTY IN BRINGING IT TO MOSES, THERE WOULD CERTAINLY HAVE BEEN THE POSSIBILITY OF DIFFICULTY IN TRANSPORTING IT FROM PLACE TO PLACE ALONG WITH EVERYTHING ELSE THE ISRAELITES HAD TO CARRY WITH THEM ON THEIR JOURNEYS IN THE YEARS AHEAD. (2) THE INSPECTION PROCESS WAS NOW ABOUT TO BEGIN, CONDUCTED BY THE ONLY PERSON TRULY QUALIFIED AMONG ALL ISRAELITES TO DO THE TASK. NEITHER AARON NOR ANY OF HIS SONS NOR BEZALEL NOR OHOLIAB NOR ANY OTHER HUMAN HAD SEEN THE TABERNACLE DESIGN REVEALED ON MOUNT SINAI AS MOSES HAD. IT FELL TO MOSES TO INSPECT EVERYTHING, AND ONCE THE PEOPLE WERE IN THE PROCESS OF BRINGING THE TABERNACLE COMPONENTS TO HIM FOR HIS INSPECTION, THE CONSTRUCTION PROJECT WAS COMING TO AN END. (3) THE WORK HAD TO BE PERFECT. MOSES HELD THE RIGHT AND RESPONSIBILITY TO REJECT ANY ASPECT OF THE CONSTRUCTION THAT DID NOT MEET THE STANDARDS REVEALED TO HIM WITHIN THE DIVINE GLORY CLOUD OF SINAI. THAT HE DID NOT NEED TO REJECT ANYTHING, BUT FOUND ALL IN ORDER, IS TESTIMONY TO THE FIDELITY OF THE PEOPLE TO THE WHOLE PROCESS—DONATIONS, PREFABRICATIONS, FINAL FABRICATIONS, WEAVING, CARPENTRY, METALWORKING—AND THEREFORE TESTIMONY BY IMPLICATION TO THE DESIRE TO OBEY GOD THAT PREVAILED, AT LEAST AT THAT TIME AND LOCATION, THROUGHOUT THE NATION. 39:33B–41 THESE VERSES COVER ESSENTIALLY THE SAME GROUND AS DID 35:11–19, WHICH CALLED FOR THESE MATERIALS AND COMPONENT PARTS OF THE TABERNACLE TO BE CONSTRUCTED. PRESENT HERE ARE SOME OF THE SORTS OF DIFFERENCES THAT BY NOW IN THE TABERNACLE NARRATIVE WE HAVE COME TO EXPECT AS ROUTINE IN THE FULFILLMENT PART OF THE BOOK: SLIGHT EXPANSIONS, SLIGHT CONTRACTIONS, AND WORD ORDER ADJUSTMENTS TO PROVIDE A MODICUM OF VARIATION AND OBVIATE TEDIUM. BUT NOTHING HERE IGNORES WHAT IS IN 35:11–19, SO THE PRESENT PASSAGE MAKES CLEAR THAT EVERY INDIVIDUAL PART OF THE TABERNACLE AND ITS FURNISHINGS WAS PRODUCED AND BROUGHT TO MOSES JUST AS EXPECTED BY GOD. 39:42–43 OF SPECIAL IMPORT HERE IS THE COMMENT THAT MOSES “INSPECTED THE WORK,” WHICH WOULD HARDLY HAVE BEEN LIMITED TO A CURSORY LOOK TO BE SURE EVERYTHING WAS PRESENT AND ACCOUNTED FOR BUT PRESUMABLY INCLUDED EXAMINING CLOSELY THE QUALITY OF THE EXPERT LABOR OR WORKMANSHIP. WHEN HE CHECKED THE ARK, HE WAS NOT LOOKING MERELY FOR AN ARK COVERED WITH GOLD; HE WAS LOOKING FOR WHAT WOULD CORRESPOND EXACTLY, IN EVERY DETAIL, TO WHAT HE HAD SEEN ON MOUNT SINAI WHEN GOD REVEALED THE ARK PLAN TO HIM. AND SO, HIS INSPECTION WAS A MATTER OF QUALITY CONTROL AND NOT MERELY A DETERMINATION OF COMPLETION OF REQUIRED OBJECTS. AFTER CONFIRMING BY INSPECTING IT THAT ALL THE WORK WAS DONE “JUST AS THE LORD HAD COMMANDED” HIM (SEE ABOVE), MOSES THEN “BLESSED” THE ISRAELITES. WHAT EXACTLY DOES THIS MEAN? WHAT DID MOSES DO TO BLESS THE ISRAELITES? THE ANSWER IS THAT HE SAID A KIND OF PRAYER, PROBABLY A RELATIVELY BRIEF ONE, PROBABLY WORDED IN THE THIRD PERSON—A PRECATIVE (WISH) EXPRESSION OF DESIRE THAT GOD WOULD BRING BENEFIT TO HIS PEOPLE. BLESSING SOMEONE OR SOME GROUP WAS A COMMON PRACTICE IN BIBLICAL TIMES. EARLIER IN EXODUS EVEN PHARAOH HAD ASKED MOSES FOR A BLESSING, THAT IS, A PRAYER EXPRESSED AS A BENEDICTION ASKING GOD TO BENEFIT HIM (EXOD. 12:32). WHEN GOD BLESSES SOMEONE OR SOMETHING, HE DECLARES THAT PERSON OR THING TO BE BLESSED, THAT IS, FORTUNATE BECAUSE THAT PERSON OR THING WILL RECEIVE BENEFIT FROM GOD. THE PARADE EXAMPLE IN ALL OF MOSES’ WRITINGS OF AN OCCASION WHERE THE PEOPLE WERE BLESSED BY ONE OF THEIR LEADERS—THAT IS, A SITUATION AT LEAST GENERALLY COMPARABLE TO THE PRESENT ONE—IS THAT OF THE AARONIC BLESSING OF NUM 6:22–27.323 THAT BLESSING IS ESPECIALLY INSTRUCTIVE FOR US BECAUSE OF ITS DIVINE DEFINITION OF WHAT A BLESSING CONSISTS OF. GOD INSTRUCTED MOSES ON HOW A BLESSING SHOULD BE DELIVERED IN SAYING: “THIS IS HOW YOU ARE TO BLESS THE ISRAELITES. SAY TO THEM …” WHAT FOLLOWS IS A TYPE OF PRAYER IN WHICH A PRIEST (AT LEAST IN THE CASE OF NUM 6:22–27) ASKS GOD THROUGH A PRECATIVE TO GIVE BENEFIT TO THE PEOPLE:**

**MAY STEPHEN YAHWEH BLESS YOU AND KEEP YOU;**

**MAY STEPHEN YAHWEH MAKE HIS FACE SHINE UPON YOU**

**AND BE GRACIOUS TO YOU;**

**MAY STEPHEN YAHWEH TURN HIS FACE TOWARD YOU AND GIVE YOU PEACE.**

**THERE IS AN ASSUMPTION OF DIVINE APPROVAL INHERENT IN SUCH A BLESSING. THE PERSON GIVING THE BLESSING CANNOT CONTROL GOD AND CANNOT SPEAK FOR HIM WITHOUT PERMISSION. HE CANNOT MAKE GOD BLESS SOMEONE OR SOMETHING JUST BY SAYING THE RIGHT WORDS. BUT IF HE “HAS THE MIND OF” GOD—THAT IS, IF HE CORRECTLY UNDERSTANDS GOD’S WILL—THEN HIS PRAYER SAID IN THE FORM OF A WISH CAN BE ASSUMED TO HAVE A CERTAIN FORCE, TO BE MORE THAN A PURE WISH (I.E., MERELY A TYPE OF HOPE) AND, IN FACT, A TRUE DECLARATION OF GOD’S INTENTION TO PROVIDE BENEFIT FOR THE PERSON OR THING BEING BLESSED. THE NUM 6 BLESSING LOOKS FORWARD TO THE FOLLOWING BENEFITS FROM GOD: KEEPING (GOD’S WATCHING OVER PEOPLE FOR GOOD—CARING FOR THEM AND GUIDING THEM THROUGH LIFE’S DANGERS), A SHINING FACE (GENERAL FAVOR AND BENEFIT),326 BEING GRACIOUS (GIVING THINGS THAT WEREN’T EARNED BUT THAT WILL BE MUCH APPRECIATED), TURNING THE FACE TOWARD (PAYING SPECIAL FAVORABLE ATTENTION TO), AND GIVING PEACE (WELLNESS, WHOLENESS, FULL-ORBED GOOD FORTUNE). A BLESSING DOES NOT IMPLY A PROMISE THAT NOTHING NEGATIVE WILL EVER HAPPEN TO THE PERSON BEING BLESSED, BUT IT DOES IMPLY A DESIRE THAT MUCH GOOD WILL HAPPEN TO THAT PERSON. WHAT SPECIFICALLY DID MOSES SAY TO THE PEOPLE BY WAY OF A BLESSING? WE DO NOT KNOW. IT MAY WELL HAVE BEEN SOMETHING BRIEF AND GENERALLY APPLICABLE LIKE THE AARONIC BLESSING OF NUM 6, BUT ITS EXACT CONTENT WAS NOT IMPORTANT ENOUGH IN THE NARRATIVE FOR MOSES TO QUOTE IT. HE SAID ONLY THAT HE BLESSED THE PEOPLE IN RESPONSE TO THEIR NATIONWIDE HOLY CONSTRUCTION EFFORT, THUS REASSURING THEM THAT WHAT THEY HAD DONE WAS APPROVED AND THAT THEY WERE IN THE FAVOR OF THEIR COVENANT LORD, STEPHEN YAHWEH.**

**MOSES SETS UP OF THE TABERNACLE (40:1–33)**

**1 THEN THE LORD SAID TO MOSES: 2 “SET UP THE TABERNACLE, THE TENT OF MEETING, ON THE FIRST DAY OF THE FIRST MONTH. 3 PLACE THE ARK OF THE TESTIMONY IN IT AND SHIELD THE ARK WITH THE CURTAIN. 4 BRING IN THE TABLE AND SET OUT WHAT BELONGS ON IT. THEN BRING IN THE LAMPSTAND AND SET UP ITS LAMPS. 5 PLACE THE GOLD ALTAR OF INCENSE IN FRONT OF THE ARK OF THE TESTIMONY AND PUT THE CURTAIN AT THE ENTRANCE TO THE TABERNACLE. 6 “PLACE THE ALTAR OF BURNT OFFERING IN FRONT OF THE ENTRANCE TO THE TABERNACLE, THE TENT OF MEETING; 7 PLACE THE BASIN BETWEEN THE TENT OF MEETING AND THE ALTAR AND PUT WATER IN IT. 8 SET UP THE COURTYARD AROUND IT AND PUT THE CURTAIN AT THE ENTRANCE TO THE COURTYARD. 9 “TAKE THE ANOINTING OIL AND ANOINT THE TABERNACLE AND EVERYTHING IN IT; CONSECRATE IT AND ALL ITS FURNISHINGS, AND IT WILL BE HOLY. 10 THEN ANOINT THE ALTAR OF BURNT OFFERING AND ALL ITS UTENSILS; CONSECRATE THE ALTAR, AND IT WILL BE MOST HOLY. 11 ANOINT THE BASIN AND ITS STAND AND CONSECRATE THEM. 12 “BRING AARON AND HIS SONS TO THE ENTRANCE TO THE TENT OF MEETING AND WASH THEM WITH WATER. 13 THEN DRESS AARON IN THE SACRED GARMENTS, ANOINT HIM AND CONSECRATE HIM SO HE MAY SERVE ME AS PRIEST. 14 BRING HIS SONS AND DRESS THEM IN TUNICS. 15 ANOINT THEM JUST AS YOU ANOINTED THEIR FATHER, SO THEY MAY SERVE ME AS PRIESTS. THEIR ANOINTING WILL BE TO A PRIESTHOOD [NOC CORPS] THAT WILL CONTINUE FOR ALL GENERATIONS TO COME.” 16 MOSES DID EVERYTHING JUST AS THE LORD COMMANDED HIM. 17 SO THE TABERNACLE WAS SET UP ON THE FIRST DAY OF THE FIRST MONTH IN THE SECOND YEAR. 18 WHEN MOSES SET UP THE TABERNACLE, HE PUT THE BASES IN PLACE, ERECTED THE FRAMES, INSERTED THE CROSSBARS AND SET UP THE POSTS. 19 THEN HE SPREAD THE TENT OVER THE TABERNACLE AND PUT THE COVERING OVER THE TENT, AS THE LORD COMMANDED HIM. 20 HE TOOK THE TESTIOMNY AND PLACED IT IN THE ARK, ATTACHED THE POLES TO THE ARK AND PUT THE ATONEMENT COVER OVER IT. 21 THEN HE BROUGHT THE ARK INTO THE TABERNACLE AND HUNG THE SHIELDING CURTAIN AND SHIELDED THE ARK OF THE TESTIMONY, AS THE LORD COMMANDED HIM. 22 MOSES PLACED THE TABLE IN THE TENT OF MEETING ON THE NORTH SIDE OF THE TABERNACLE OUTSIDE THE CURTAIN 23 AND SET OUT THE BREAD ON IT BEFORE THE LORD, AS THE LORD COMMANDED HIM. 24 HE PLACED THE LAMPSTAND IN THE TENT OF MEETING OPPOSITE THE TABLE ON THE SOUTH SIDE OF THE TABERNACLE 25 AND SET UP THE LAMPS BEFORE THE LORD, AS THE LORD COMMANDED HIM. 26 MOSES PLACED THE GOLD ALTAR IN THE TENT OF MEETING IN FRONT OF THE CURTAIN 27 AND BURNED FRAGRANT INCENSE ON IT, AS THE LORD COMMANDED HIM. 28 THEN HE PUT UP THE CURTAIN AT THE ENTRANCE TO THE TABERNACLE. 29 HE SET THE ALTAR OF BURNT OFFERING NEAR THE ENTRANCE TO THE TABERNACLE, THE TENT OF MEETING, AND OFFERED ON IT BURNT OFFERINGS AND GRAIN OFFERINGS, AS THE LORD COMMANDED HIM. 30 HE PLACED THE BASIN BETWEEN THE TENT OF MEETING AND THE ALTAR AND PUT WATER IN IT FOR WASHING, 31 AND MOSES AND AARON AND HIS SONS USED IT TO WASH THEIR HANDS AND FEET. 32 THEY WASHED WHENEVER THEY ENTERED THE TENT OF MEETING OR APPROACHED THE ALTAR, AS THE LORD COMMANDED MOSES. 33 THEN MOSES SET UP THE COURTYARD AROUND THE TABERNACLE AND ALTAR AND PUT UP THE CURTAIN AT THE ENTRANCE TO THE COURTYARD. AND SO, MOSES FINISHED THE WORK.**

**GOD’S COMMAND TO SET UP THE TABERNACLE (40:1–16)**

**40:1 IN EXODUS “THE FIRST MONTH” REFERS TO MID-MARCH (MARCH 7TH) TO MID-APRIL (APRIL 7TH), AS ALREADY DEFINED IN 12:2, 18. THE ISRAELITES, ALONG WITH MANY OTHER ANCIENT PEOPLES, REGARDED THE TURN OF THE YEAR AS TAKING PLACE AT THE END OF WINTER AND THE BEGINNING OF SPRING RATHER THAN SOMETIME AFTER THE START OF WINTER, AS IS THE MODERN TENDENCY. THE TABERNACLE HAD BEEN FINISHED IN JUST UNDER A YEAR FROM THE TIME THE ISRAELITES HAD LEFT EGYPT. FOR IT TO BE SET UP ON THE FIRST DAY OF THE FIRST MONTH OF THE YEAR REPRESENTED A WAY OF CELEBRATING THE NEW YEAR—IN EFFECT A WAY OF LINKING THE NEW YEAR WITH WORSHIP. BY COMMANDING MOSES TO SET UP THE TABERNACLE “ON THE FIRST DAY OF THE FIRST MONTH,” GOD WAS ALSO INDICATING THAT THE WHOLE JOB COULD BE DONE IN A DAY. THE TABERNACLE WAS INTENDED TO BE HIGHLY PORTABLE, AND ITS PORTABILITY WOULD BE TESTED WITH THE FIRST SETUP. WORSHIP WAS SO IMPORTANT TO THE TRAVELING ISRAELITES THAT HAD THEY REQUIRED MORE THAN A FEW HOURS TO SET UP THEIR TABERNACLE, IT WOULD POTENTIALLY HAVE HINDERED THEIR ABILITY TO MOVE QUICKLY, AT GOD’S COMMAND, IN THE WILDERNESS. 40:2–8 HERE MOSES WAS REQUIRED TO SET UP THE TABERNACLE ITSELF, THAT IS, THE TENT STRUCTURE (V. 2), THEN TO SET UP THE ARK, THE SINGLE PIECE OF FURNITURE IN THE HOLY OF HOLIES, BEING SURE IT WAS NOT VISIBLE TO ANYONE OUTSIDE THE HOLY OF HOLIES BY SHIELDING IT WITH THE FLOOR-TO-CEILING CURTAIN (V. 3). HE THEN SET UP THE FURNITURE IN THE HOLY PLACE, ALSO SHIELDED FROM GENERAL VIEW BY A CURTAIN (VV. 4–5), THE FURNITURE FOR THE COURTYARD (VV. 6–7), AND THE ENCLOSURE CURTAINS FOR THE COURTYARD (V. 8). THESE ITEMS, THEIR CONSTRUCTION, AND THEIR PLACEMENT HAVE BEEN REVIEWED SEVERAL TIMES ALREADY IN EXOD. 25–27; 30–31; 35–39, SO THE SUMMARY OF THE ERECTION OF THEM IS APPROPRIATELY BRIEF, WITHOUT MUCH SUPPORTING DETAIL. 40:9–11 THE NEED TO ANOINT AND THE PROCESS OF ANOINTING THE TABERNACLE AND ITS FURNITURE WAS ALREADY ADUMBRATED IN 29:36; 30 AND ESPECIALLY 30:25–29, SO THE FULFILLMENT OF THAT COMMAND CAN BE REVIEWED HERE SUCCINCTLY AS FINALLY COMPLETED AT THE OCCASION OF THE FIRST ERECTION OF THE TABERNACLE. ANOINTING SYMBOLIZES CLEANNESS AND PURITY, AS DISCUSSED ALREADY IN CHAP. 29. THESE ITEMS OF FURNITURE HAD A SACRED PURPOSE; THEIR PROXIMITY TO STEPHEN YAHWEH’S SYMBOLIZED PRESENCE IN THE HOLY OF HOLIES REFLECTED THAT SACREDNESS AND REQUIRED RECOGNITION BY THE ANOINTING CEREMONY THAT THEY WERE PART OF THE HOLIEST PLACE IN THE NATION. 40:12–15 THESE VERSES REPRESENT THE OUTCOME OF WHAT WAS ORDERED IN CHAPS. 28–29. BUT THERE IS AN IMPORTANT SIGNIFICANCE IN THE WORDING HERE: IT IS PARTLY PREDICTIVE IN SAYING THAT “THEIR ANOINTING WILL BE TO A PRIESTHOOD [NCO CORPS] THAT WILL CONTINUE …” IN FACT, THAT ANOINTING WOULD TAKE PLACE SOME DAYS LATER, IN THE EVENT DESCRIBED IN LEV 8, WHEN THE ACTUAL ORDINATION THROUGH THE PRESCRIBED ANOINTING AND OFFERING OF SACRIFICES IS RECORDED IN THE BIBLICAL RECORD. 40:16 THE REASSURANCE THAT “MOSES DID EVERYTHING JUST AS THE LORD COMMANDED HIM” IS A TYPE OF SUMMARY STATEMENT THAT BEGINS A SEQUENCE OF SUCH SUMMARIES (USUALLY VIA THE SHORTER WORDING “AS THE LORD COMMANDED HIM”) THAT STRONGLY SUPPORT THE CONCEPT OF PRECISION OF FULFILLMENT CHARACTERIZING THE CHAPTER (VV. 19, 21, 23, 25, 27, 29, 32). MOSES WAS NOT THE MAKER OF THE TABERNACLE, BUT HE WAS ITS QUALITY CONTROL SUPERVISOR, WHO SAW BY PERSONAL INSPECTION THAT IT CONFORMED TO ALL THAT STEPHEN YAHWEH HAD DIRECTED ON MT. SINAI. HE HAD THE AUTHORITY TO REJECT ANY PART OF IT SHOULD IT FAIL TO MEET DIVINELY-REVEALED STANDARDS, BUT BY REASON OF GOD’S MERCIFUL INVOLVEMENT IN THE WHOLE PROCESS, HE FOUND NO FLAWS AT ALL.**

**MOSES SETS UP THE TABERNACLE (40:17–33)**

**40:17 DID THE ERECTION OF THE TABERNACLE JUST HAPPEN TO FALL ON NEW YEAR’S DAY, OR WAS IT PUT TOGETHER THAT DAY AS A FURTHER INDICATION OF ITS IMPORTANCE? THE TEXT DOES NOT OVERTLY TELL US, BUT IT IS HARD TO ARGUE AGAINST THE LIKELIHOOD THAT SUCH AN AUSPICIOUS DAY WAS CHOSEN FOR THE FIRST TABERNACLE SETUP BECAUSE IT FIT WITH THE FACT THAT THE TABERNACLE ITSELF WAS SO AUSPICIOUS AS A SIGN OF GOD’S PRESENCE AMONG THE ISRAELITES. IN OTHER WORDS, WHEN THE TABERNACLE COMPONENT PARTS WERE ALL READY TO ASSEMBLE, THEY PROBABLY WERE NOT ASSEMBLED IMMEDIATELY BUT RATHER WERE KEPT READY BY MOSES (FOR SEVERAL DAYS? SEVERAL WEEKS?) FOR THE FIRST DAY OF THE NEW YEAR WHEN HE WOULD PUT EVERYTHING TOGETHER AND THUS SYMBOLICALLY HOUSE STEPHEN YAHWEH IN THE MIDST OF HIS PEOPLE. THE FIRST MONTH WAS AN IMPORTANT TIME IN THE ISRAELITE CALENDAR, NOT ONLY BECAUSE IT WAS THE TIME ESTABLISHED FOR THE EXODUS-HONORING PASSOVER FESTIVAL (12:12FF.) BUT ALSO BECAUSE IT WAS APPARENTLY GOD’S INTENTION THAT IT BE CLOSELY CONNECTED WITH THE TABERNACLE (SEE NUM 9:15–23). THUS THE FIRST PASSOVER CELEBRATED IN THE WILDERNESS—THAT OF THE FIRST MONTH OF THE SECOND YEAR—REQUIRED THE ERECTION OF AND AVAILABILITY OF THE TABERNACLE FOR THE PRESENTATION OF THE APPROPRIATE PASSOVER OFFERING THERE BY ALL ISRAELITES (NUM 9:7, 12–13; CF. EXOD. 23:15, “NO ONE IS TO APPEAR BEFORE ME EMPTY-HANDED”). THE EXACT CHRONOLOGY OF THE EVENTS DESCRIBED IN EXOD. 40, LEVITICUS, AND NUM 1–9 IS HARD TO ESTABLISH DEFINITIVELY, BUT MUCH OF THAT ENTIRE BLOCK OF SCRIPTURE REVOLVES AROUND THE FIRST MONTH OF THE SECOND YEAR THE ISRAELITES CAME OUT OF EGYPT AND DURING WHICH THEY WERE CAMPED AT SINAI. 40:18–19 THESE VERSES DESCRIBE IN SUMMARY FASHION THE ACTUAL ASSEMBLY OF THE TABERNACLE FRAMEWORK, CURTAINS, AND COVERING, AS COMMANDED IN DETAIL ORIGINALLY IN CHAP. 26, ENDING WITH WHAT MIGHT BE CALLED THE “THEME STATEMENT” OF THIS CHAPTER, “AS THE LORD COMMANDED HIM.” 40:20–21 THESE VERSES SUM UP THE PLACEMENT OF THE TABLETS OF THE TEN WORDS/COMMANDMENTS (THE “TESTIMONY”) IN THE ARK AND COVERING THOSE 2 TABLETS WITH THE ARK’S SPECIAL COVER AND THEN SETTING THE ARK WITHIN THE HOLY OF HOLIES WITH THE FLOOR-TO-CEILING DIVIDING CURTAIN THAT SEPARATED IT FROM THE HOLY PLACE (25:10–22; 26:33–34). AGAIN, THE CHAPTER’S THEME STATEMENT, “AS THE LORD COMMANDED HIM,” CONCLUDES THIS PARAGRAPH. 40:22–23 THIS SHORT PARAGRAPH SUMMARIZES THE PLACEMENT OF THE TABLE IN THE HOLY PLACE OF THE TABERNACLE WITH THE BREAD OF THE PRESENCE ON IT, AS ORIGINALLY REQUIRED BY THE INSTRUCTIONS OF 25:23–30; IT TOO CONCLUDES WITH THE (BY NOW EXPECTED) CHARACTERISTIC THEME WORDS “AS THE LORD COMMANDED HIM.” 40:24–25 MOSES PLACED THE LAMPSTAND AND LAMPS WITHIN THE HOLY PLACE AS WELL, “AS THE LORD COMMANDED HIM” ORIGINALLY IN 25:31–40; 26:35, ON THE SOUTH SIDE OF THE HOLY PLACE OR LEFT SIDE AS ONE FACED TOWARD THE HOLY OF HOLIES (THE TABERNACLE BEING ORIENTED WITH ITS OPENING CURTAINS TO THE EAST (27:13–16). 40:26–28 THE GOLD INCENSE ALTAR WENT INTO THE HOLY PLACE AS WELL, RIGHT IN FRONT OF THE SPECIAL CURTAIN THAT CREATED THE BARRIER TO THE HOLY OF HOLIES, THUS FINISHING THE PLACEMENT OF FURNISHINGS (TABLE, LAMPSTAND, ALTAR) FOR THE HOLY PLACE OF THE TABERNACLE. EARLIER IN EXODUS NO SPECIFIC INSTRUCTION TO MOSES REQUIRED THAT HE BURN THE INCENSE AT THIS POINT, SO ONE MAY ASK WHY HE DID IT HERE. THE ANSWER IS THAT HE WAS FUNCTIONING AS GOD’S PRIEST [SERGEANT] PRIOR TO THE ACTUAL CONSECRATION OF THE AARONIC PRIESTS, WHICH WOULD TAKE PLACE IN LEV 8. EVENTUALLY THE PRIESTS WOULD TAKE OVER THE ASSIGNMENT OF BURNING THE INCENSE, BUT FOR NOW MOSES ALONE WAS UNQUESTIONABLY QUALIFIED. MOSES THUS FULFILLED THE COMMANDS OF EXOD 30:1–9, AGAIN, “AS THE LORD COMMANDED HIM,” FOLLOWED BY THE ERECTION OF THE ENTRANCE CURTAIN ON THE EAST END OF THE TABERNACLE PROPER (26:36–37). 40:29 THE BRONZE ALTAR ON WHICH OFFERINGS WERE COOKED WAS SET UP BY MOSES IN THE COURTYARD IN FRONT OF THE ENTRANCE TO THE TABERNACLE PROPER, “AS THE LORD COMMANDED HIM” IN 27:1–8. 40:30–32 MOSES THEN PLACED THE BRONZE WASHING BASIN IN THE COURTYARD “AS THE LORD COMMANDED MOSES” IN 30:17–21. THE NIV WORDING OF V. 31, “MOSES AND AARON AND HIS SONS USED IT TO WASH THEIR HANDS AND FEET,” COULD SEEM TO SUGGEST THAT THEN AND THERE MOSES, AARON, AND AARON’S SONS WASHED THEIR HANDS AND FEET, THAT IS, ON THE OCCASION OF THE ERECTION OF THE TABERNACLE ON THE FIRST DAY OF THE FIRST MONTH OF THE SECOND YEAR. A BETTER TRANSLATION OF THE HEBREW, ONE THAT WOULD MAKE CLEAR THAT SUCH A WASHING WAS IN THE FUTURE—NOT NECESSARILY IMMEDIATELY UPON THE ASSEMBLING OF THE TABERNACLE—WOULD BE “MOSES, AARON, AND AARON’S SONS WERE TO WASH THEIR HANDS AND FEET FROM IT.” VERSE 32 CONTINUES THAT FUTURE PERSPECTIVE WITH ITS MAIN VERB IN THE IMPERFECT, THUS ANTICIPATING THE WASHING ACTIONS DESCRIBED IN THE ORDINATION OF THE PRIESTS (LEV 8:6). JUST AS 40:12 WAS PREDICTING WHAT MOSES WOULD EVENTUALLY DO ONCE THE TABERNACLE WAS ENTIRELY SET UP, SO THE PRESENT PARAGRAPH ALSO LOOKED FORWARD TO LEV 8, THE UPCOMING CONSECRATION/ORDINATION OF ISRAEL’S PRIESTS. THIS IS SHOWN IN THE NIV’S WORDING IN V. 32, “WHENEVER THEY …,” DESCRIBING RECURRING ACTIONS NOT YET INITIATED. 40:33 THE COURTYARD AND ITS ENTRANCE CURTAIN WERE THE LAST ITEMS MOSES ASSEMBLED IN PLACE, CONSISTENT WITH THE ORIGINAL COMMAND TO DO SO IN 27:9–19 AND THE RECENT REMINDER OF THAT COMMAND IN 40:8. THIS FINAL STEP WAS NOT NECESSARILY UNDERTAKEN AS AN EXAMPLE OF THE CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER OF SETTING UP AND/OR DISASSEMBLING THE TABERNACLE. EVEN THOUGH WHEN MOSES SET IT UP THIS TIME HE SET UP THE TABERNACLE PROPER FIRST AND THE COURTYARD LAST, THERE IS NO EVIDENCE THAT THE TABERNACLE PROPER WAS SET UP FIRST AND THE COURTYARD SET UP LAST EACH TIME THE ISRAELITES ARRIVED AT A NEW LOCATION IN THEIR JOURNEYS IN THE WILDERNESS. IN NUM 3–4 THE IMPRESSION GIVEN ABOUT TABERNACLE SETUP AND BREAKDOWN IS THAT OF A JOINT VENTURE ON THE PART OF THE WORKERS, WITH VARIOUS SUBDIVISIONS OF THE LEVITES WORKING TOGETHER AT THE SAME TIME TO SET UP OR BREAK DOWN VARIOUS PARTS OF THE TABERNACLE RATHER THAN WAITING FOR ONE PART TO BE TAKEN CARE OF BEFORE MOVING ON TO THE NEXT. “AND SO, MOSES FINISHED THE WORK.” HE SURELY DIDN’T DO IT ALL HIMSELF, BUT IN ALL LIKELIHOOD AT THIS JUNCTURE HE WAS ALREADY TRAINING LEVITES [PRIVATES TO CORPORALS] FOR THE WORK THEY WOULD EVENTUALLY DO (LEV 3–4). NEVERTHELESS, IN BIBLICAL HEBREW AS IN MODERN ENGLISH, ONE CAN DESCRIBE THE LEADER OF A PROJECT AS ITS DOER; MENTIONING THE ACTUAL HANDS-ON WORKERS IS NOT REQUIRED BECAUSE THEIR INVOLVEMENT WOULD BE ASSUMED BY ANY THOUGHTFUL READER.**

**THE CLOUD OF STEPHEN YAHWEH’S GLORY COVERING THE TABERNACLE (40:34–38)**

**34 THEN THE CLOUD COVERED THE TENT OF MEETING, AND THE GLORY OF THE LORD FILLED THE TABERNACLE. 35 MOSES COULD NOT ENTER THE TENT OF MEETING BECAUSE THE CLOUD HAD SETTLED UPON IT, AND THE GLORY OF THE LORD FILLED THE TABERNACLE. 36 IN ALL THE TRAVELS OF THE ISRAELITES, WHENEVER THE CLOUD LIFTED FROM ABOVE THE TABERNACLE, THEY WOULD SET OUT; 37 BUT IF THE CLOUD DID NOT LIFT, THEY DID NOT SET OUT—UNTIL THE DAY IT LIFTED. 38 SO THE CLOUD OF THE LORD WAS OVER THE TABERNACLE BY DAY, AND FIRE WAS IN THE CLOUD BY NIGHT, IN THE SIGHT OF ALL THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL DURING ALL THEIR TRAVELS. IN THE MASORETIC TRADITION, EXOD. 40:33 IS SEPARATED FROM 40:34 BY A FORMAL PARAGRAPHING DIVISION. HOWEVER, IT IS POSSIBLE THAT VV. 33B AND 34 ARE TO BE LINKED SYNTACTICALLY SO THAT THE COMBINATION WOULD READ, “WHEN MOSES FINISHED THE WORK, THE CLOUD COVERED THE TENT OF MEETING.” EITHER WAY THE PRESENCE OF THE CLOUD WAS THE RESULT OF THE SUCCESSFUL, OBEDIENT COMPLETION OF THE TABERNACLE, WHICH WAS THEREFORE READY FOR THE PRESENCE OF STEPHEN YAHWEH TO INHABIT IT SYMBOLICALLY THROUGH HIS GLORY CLOUD. THE CLOUD CAME BECAUSE THE TABERNACLE WAS COMPLETE, WHETHER OR NOT THE GRAMMAR PER SE SUPPORTS THAT SEQUENCING. 40:34 THE “CLOUD” WAS NONE OTHER THAN THAT WHICH FIRST APPEARED IN 13:21–22 AND GUIDED AND PROTECTED THE ISRAELITES THEREAFTER IN THE WILDERNESS AS DESCRIBED IN 14:19–20, 24; 16:10. IT WAS THE SAME CLOUD THE ISRAELITES HAD SEEN ATOP MOUNT SINAI SINCE THEIR ARRIVAL AT THE MOUNTAIN (19:9, 16; 24:15–18) AND THE SAME CLOUD THAT HAD INDICATED THE PRESENCE OF STEPHEN YAHWEH AT THE ENTRANCE TO THE LITTLE TENT OF MEETING MOSES HAD SET UP OUTSIDE THE CAMP (33:9–10; 34:5). IT WAS A WAY GOD CHOSE TO MANIFEST HIMSELF—A VISIBLE PRESENCE—INDICATING SYMBOL OF AN INVISIBLE GOD. IN THE HOT, ARID WILDERNESS OF SINAI, WHERE THE SUN BEAT DOWN MERCILESSLY UPON PEOPLE, PLANTS, AND ANIMALS, A CLOUD DURING THE DAY REPRESENTED A COOL, BENEFICENT, SHADE-GIVING DIVINE KINDNESS. BUT THE CLOUD WAS MUCH MORE THAN THAT. IT DISPLAYED STEPHEN YAHWEH’S GLORY, WHICH WAS AN AWESOME AND FRIGHTENING THING THE CLOSER ONE GOT TO IT. ACCORDINGLY, AS THE ISRAELITES SAW THE CLOUD, THEY UNDERSTOOD IT TO BE A POTENTIALLY OVERWHELMING MANIFESTATION OF THE PRESENCE OF THEIR GOD, TO BE AVOIDED CAREFULLY AND NOT INFRINGED UPON. THE CLOUD HAD THUS PROGRESSED IN LOCATION FROM MOUNT SINAI TO THE LITTLE, TEMPORARY TENT OF MEETING TO THE TABERNACLE. PRESUMABLY SINCE IT WAS ONLY SOMETIMES SEEN AT THE TENT OF MEETING, IT USUALLY WAS STILL SEEN ON MOUNT SINAI FROM WHICH IT “CAME DOWN” (33:9) WHEN MOSES ARRIVED THERE (AND TO WHICH IT PRESUMABLY RETURNED WHEN HE LEFT THE TENT). “AND THE GLORY OF THE LORD FILLED THE TABERNACLE.” HOW WOULD AN INVISIBLE GOD SHOW HIS PEOPLE THAT HE HAD INDEED COME TO DWELL AMONG THEM AS THEY SO EARNESTLY DESIRED AND THAT THEREBY HE WAS FULLY IN COVENANT RELATIONSHIP WITH THEM, WILLING TO GO WITH THEM WHEREVER HE LED THEM THAT IS, THAT THE RIFT BETWEEN STEPHEN YAHWEH AND HIS PEOPLE HAD BEEN FULLY HEALED BY REASON OF GOD’S GRACIOUS LOVE FOR HIS PEOPLE AND IN CONSEQUENCE OF MOSES’ FAITHFUL INTERVENTION WITH STEPHEN YAHWEH ON BEHALF OF THE PEOPLE? THE ANSWER IS THAT HE VISIBLY WENT INTO HIS HOUSE! HE LEFT MOUNT SINAI AND CAME TO DWELL AMONG THE ENCAMPMENT OF HIS PEOPLE, JUST AS HE HAD PROMISED HE WOULD (33:14–17). HIS PEOPLE HAD BUILT HIS HOUSE FOR HIM JUST AS HE COMMISSIONED IT, AND HE SHOWED HIS APPROVAL OF THEIR EFFORTS AND, MORE IMPORTANTLY, HIS DESIRE TO DWELL AMONG THEM BY SYMBOLICALLY ENTERING HIS HOUSE THROUGH THE GLORY CLOUD THAT COVERED THE HOUSE (“TENT OF MEETING” NOW IN THE SENSE OF TABERNACLE) AND ALSO FILLED ITS INSIDE SPACES. THE CLOUD WAS NOT THE GLORY BUT A VISIBLE ENVELOPMENT OF THE DIVINE GLORY. GOD’S GLORY PER SE MIGHT OR MIGHT NOT BE VISIBLE IN ALL MANIFESTATIONS, BUT WHEN HE CAUSED IT TO BE VISIBLE, AT LEAST THROUGH ITS PIERCING OF THE DARKNESS OF THE CLOUD, ITS BRILLIANCE WAS CONTAINED IN PART WITHIN THE CLOUD SO AS NOT TO BE IMPOSSIBLE TO LOOK UPON. A SIMILAR FILLING WITH DIVINE GLORY SHOWED GOD’S ACCEPTANCE OF THE SOLOMONIC TEMPLE AS HIS SYMBOLIC DWELLING PLACE AND HIS HEAVENLY TEMPLE LIKEWISE. 40:35 MOST OF THIS VERSE RESTATES IN SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT WORDING WHAT V. 34 SAID, BUT WITH ONE VERY IMPORTANT ADDITION: MOSES COULD NOT ENTER THE TENT OF MEETING PRECISELY BECAUSE IT WAS FILLED WITH STEPHEN YAHWEH’S GLORY. WHY WAS THIS SO? HAD NOT MOSES EARLIER ENTERED RIGHT INTO THE GLORY CLOUD AT THE TOP OF MOUNT SINAI? HAD HE NOT BEEN INSIDE THE LITTLE SYMBOLIC TENT OF MEETING THAT SERVED AS A CONTACT POINT BETWEEN HIM AND STEPHEN YAHWEH UNTIL THE TABERNACLE HAD BEEN BUILT, WITH GOD’S GLORY DESCENDING UPON THE ENTRANCE JUST A FEW FEET AWAY? AND HAD HE NOT STOOD RIGHT NEXT TO STEPHEN YAHWEH’S GLORY ON OTHER OCCASIONS? OF COURSE. ALL OF THESE FORMER ENCOUNTERS WITH GOD’S GLORY HAD INDEED OCCURRED, BUT NOW MOSES WAS BARRED FROM THE TABERNACLE—THE ONE HE HAD JUST INSPECTED AND SET UP, THUS HAVING BEEN ALL AROUND ITS COMPONENT PARTS AND SURELY INSIDE IT WHEN THE FURNITURE WAS PLACED THERE. WHY, THEN, COULD HE NOT ENTER ONCE GOD HAD ENTERED? THE ANSWER IS THAT THE TABERNACLE WAS NOW STEPHEN YAHWEH’S HOUSE AND NO ONE ELSE’S! IT WAS NO MORE APPROPRIATE NOW FOR MOSES TO ENTER THE TABERNACLE, EVEN THOUGH HE HAD BEEN ALL THROUGH IT AS ITS BUILDING SUPERVISOR, THAN IT WOULD BE FOR A HOUSE BUILDER IN MODERN TIMES TO RETAIN A KEY AND ENTER AT WILL A HOUSE THAT HE HAD BUILT ONCE IT WAS SOLD TO ITS OCCUPYING OWNER. WHEN THE NEW OWNER ENTERS, THE NEW HOUSE IS EXCLUSIVELY HIS—NOT THE BUILDER’S. LATER MOSES AND AARON WOULD BE ABLE TO ENTER THE TABERNACLE, AND PROVISION WOULD BE MADE FOR THE TOP HIGH PRIEST [TOP CHIEF OF POLICE] TO ENTER IT, EVEN THE HOLY OF HOLIES, PERIODICALLY. THIS WAS POSSIBLE BECAUSE THE GLORY CLOUD DID NOT CONTINUE TO STAY INSIDE THE TABERNACLE BUT MAINLY HOVERED ON TOP OF IT, AS VV. 36–38 STATE OVERTLY. BUT BY THE PRESENT ACT OF OCCUPYING HIS HOUSE THROUGH HIS GLORY AND TEMPORARILY KEEPING ALL OTHERS OUT, GOD SHOWED MOSES AND ALL ISRAEL THAT THE HOUSE IS NOW HIS AND HIS ALONE AND INDEED HIS TRULY AND ENTIRELY, THE VERY THING THEY HAD BUILT IT TO BECOME. 40:36–38 THESE VERSES ARE ALSO REPEATED, LARGELY VERBATIM, IN NUM 9:15–22 IN A WAY THAT LINKS THE PRESENT CONTEXT WITH THE STORY OF THE EVENTUAL TRAVELS OF THE ISRAELITES AND THAT OF STEPHEN YAHWEH’S TABERNACLE (AND THUS FAR MORE IMPORTANTLY, STEPHEN YAHWEH) WITH THEM. IN BETWEEN THE TWO CONTEXTS THERE REMAINS A PERIOD OF ABOUT FORTY-EIGHT DAYS (FROM THE FIRST DAY OF THE FIRST MONTH OF THE SECOND YEAR, WHEN THE TABERNACLE WAS ERECTED, AS STATED IN 40:1, TO THE TWENTIETH DAY OF THE SECOND MONTH OF THE SECOND YEAR, WHEN THE ISRAELITES LEFT SINAI, AS STATED IN NUM 10:11). DURING THOSE FORTY-EIGHT DAYS, THE INSTRUCTIONS AND ACTIVITIES DESCRIBED IN ALL OF LEVITICUS AND IN NUM 1:1–10:11 TAKE PLACE. THE TABERNACLE USUALLY HAD THE CLOUD HOVERING OVER IT; BUT “WHENEVER THE CLOUD LIFTED FROM ABOVE THE TABERNACLE,” THE ISRAELITES KNEW TO SET OUT FROM WHEREVER THEY WERE ENCAMPED. THEY HAD LEARNED THE BASICS OF BEING LED BY THE CLOUD PRIOR TO ARRIVING AT SINAI (13:1–2; 16:10). THEY KNEW THAT IF THE CLOUD DID NOT MOVE, THEY WERE NOT TO MOVE EITHER BUT TO STAY ENCAMPED AT THE LAST LOCATION TO WHICH GOD HAD LED THEM (V. 37). JUST AS IT HAD APPEARED AS A DARK CLOUD IN THE DAYTIME AND A FIRE IN THE NIGHTTIME PRIOR TO SINAI (13:21), SO IT NOW ALSO CHANGED APPEARANCE FROM DAY TO NIGHT AND BACK AGAIN AS IT HOVERED OVER THE TABERNACLE (V. 38). THE ONCE RELATIVELY DISTANT CLOUD (EITHER FAR ABOVE THEM IN THE WILDERNESS OR ON MOUNT SINAI OR AT THE ENTRANCE TO THE LITTLE TENT OF MEETING OUTSIDE THE CAMP) WAS NOW IN THE CENTER OF THEIR ENCAMPMENT, RIGHT ABOVE THE DWELLING PLACE OF THEIR GOD, WHO “LIVED” INSIDE HIS TABERNACLE. THEY COULD SEE THE CLOUD AT ALL TIMES, SO IT COULD AT ALL TIMES GUIDE THEM IN THEIR TRAVELS (V. 38). ONCE BUILT, THE TABERNACLE BECAME THE SUPREME SYMBOL OF STEPHEN YAHWEH’S PRESENCE AMONG HIS PEOPLE; AND HIS GLORY CLOUD ATOP THE TABERNACLE, A FURTHER SYMBOL OF HIS PRESENCE AND ALSO OF HIS GUIDANCE. THE BOOK OF EXODUS COMES TO AN END HERE, WITH THE READER IMPLICITLY INVITED TO APPRECIATE THAT A NEW GRAND CHAPTER IN THE HISTORY OF THE ISRAELITES WAS ABOUT TO GET UNDERWAY—THEIR TRAVELS TOWARD SINAI AS THEIR GOD WOULD LEAD THEM. MOSES’ VERY NEXT WORDS IN THE PENTATEUCH CONTINUE THE TABERNACLE STORY (LEV 1:1, “THE LORD CALLED TO MOSES AND SPOKE TO HIM FROM THE TENT OF MEETING”), CONFIRMING THAT THE TABERNACLE WAS THE PLACE FROM WHICH GOD WOULD COMMUNICATE WITH HIM AND THROUGH HIM TO ISRAEL FROM THEN ON. THE INVISIBLE, ONLY TRUE GOD NO LONGER SPOKE AT A DISTANCE, ON SINAI, BUT NOW TO MOSES, THE PEOPLE’S HONORED AND ACCEPTED REPRESENTATIVE, FROM WITHIN THEIR VERY MIDST. WONDERFUL AS THIS WAS, IT WAS BUT A SHADOW OF THE CLOSENESS TO GOD AVAILABLE NOW TO HIS CORPORATE PEOPLE KNOWN AS THE CHURCH AND HIS DIRECT INDWELLING AVAILABLE TO EVERY INDIVIDUAL WHO REPENTS OF SIN AND TRUSTS IN GOD’S GIFT OF SALVATION THROUGH CHRIST—HIS NEW COVENANT’S NEW MOSES AND HIS FOR-ALL-TIME HONORED AND ACCEPTED REPRESENTATIVE, RESCUER, LAWGIVER, LAW ENDER, AND HEAVENLY TEMPLE.**

**THE FATHER STEPHEN’S 8TH SUPREME DEFENSE (JOSHUA) IN THE ULTIMATE BEGINNING IS 96 LEGIONS OF ANGELS [576,000 TIMES 185,000 TIMES 100,000 IN RELENTING] BY GOING ONE MILE GO TWAIN [3], WHICH CAN SAVE OR DESTROY 31,968.000,000,000,000 QUADRILLION IN RELENTING OF 100,000 IN JUDE 14-15**

**THE FATHER STEPHEN’S SPEECH IN ACTS 7:45 DECLARES “…ALSO BROUGHT WITH JOSHUA INTO THE LAND POSSESSED BY THE GENTILES, WHOM GOD DROVE OUT BEFORE THE THE FACE OF OUR FATHERS…”**

**STEPHEN YAHWEH’S TOP TABERNACLE**

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**THE BOOK OF JOSHUA**

**THE LORD JOSHUA’S NAME MEANS “STEPHEN YAHWEH IS SALVATION.” THE SCRIPTURE REFERENCES OF THE LORD JOSHUA IS IN EXODUS CHAPTER 17; NUMBERS CHAPTERS 14 & 32; DEUTERONOMY CHAPTERS 1-3, 32; HEBREWS 4:8 & ACTS 7:45.**

**THE LORD JOSHUA’S ROLE IN SCRIPTURE: THE LORD JOSHUA WAS THE LORD MOSES’ FAITHFUL SERVANT DURING THE EXODUS AND WAS HIS SUCCESSOR AS ISRAEL’S LEADER AFTER THE LORD MOSES HAD DIED. THE LORD JOSHUA WAS A GREAT MILITARY LEADER AS WELL AS A SPIRITUAL LEADER. DURING HIS REIGN AS COMMANDER OF THE FATHER STEPHEN’S HOSTS, AS LONG AS HE LIVED, THE ISRAELITES DID REMAIN FAITHFUL TO THE FATHER STEPHEN.**

**THE EXPLORING OF THE LORD JOSHUA’S RELATIONSHIPS: THE LORD JOSHUA’S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE LORD MOSES: FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE EXODUS THE LORD MOSES DEPENDED ON THE LORD JOSHUA. THE LORD MOSES DEPENDED ON THE LORD JOSHUA IN TIME OF WAR IS IN EXODUS 17:8-13. THE LORD MOSES DEPENDED ON THE LORD JOSHUA TO SPY OUT CANAAN IS IN NUMBERS CHAPTER 14. THE LORD MOSES DEPENDED ON THE LORD JOSHUA FOR SPIRITUAL SUPPORT AND GUIDANCE IS IN EXODUS 24:13; 33:11. THE LORD MOSES APPOINTED THE LORD JOSHUA AS HIS SUCCESSOR IS IN NUMBERS 27:15-23 & DEUTERONOMY 1:38; 3:28. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RELATIONSHIP IS IN DEUTERONOMY 34:9.**

**THE LORD JOSHUA’S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE FATHER STEPHEN: AN EARLY LESSON IS IN EXODUS 17:8-13. A SOUND MEMORY IS IN NUMBERS 14:8-9. THE CONSTANT EXPOSURE IS IN EXODUS 24:13; 33:11. THE FATHER STEPHEN SPOKE TO THE LORD JOSHUA IN JOSHUA 1:1-9. THE WORDS FOR THE LEADERS THAT THE FATHER STEPHEN SPOKE ARE AS FOLLOWS: THE FATHER STEPHEN PROMISED TO BE WITH THE LORD JOSHUA IS IN JOSHUA 1:2-5. THE FATHER STEPHEN PROMISED THE LORD JOSHUA TO HAVE SUCCESS IS IN JOSHUA 1:6. THE FATHER STEPHEN CHALLENGED THE LORD JOSHUA TO FOCUS ON OBSERVING HIS COMMANDS IS IN JOSHUA 1:7-8. THE FATHER STEPHEN CHALLENGED THE LORD JOSHUA TO BE “OF GOOD COURAGE, DO NOT BE AFRAID, NOR BE DISMAYED” IS IN JOSHUA 1:9. THE FATHER STEPHEN REPEATED HIS PROMISE TO BE WITH THE LORD JOSHUA WHEREVER HE WOULD GO IS IN JOSHUA 1:9. THE ANGEL OF THE LORD APPEARED TO JOSHUA AND IDENTIFIED HIMSELF AS “COMMANDER OF THE ARMY OF THE LORD” IS IN JOSHUA 5:14-15. THE LORD JOSHUA’S COMMITMENT TO OBEDIENCE IS IN JOSHUA CHAPTER 7. THE LORD JOSHUA’S UNUSUAL PRAYER IS IN JOSHUA CHAPTER 10.**

**THE LORD JOSHUA’S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE ISRAELITES IS IN JOSHUA CHAPTERS 23 & 24. THE ISRAELITES SAW THAT THE FATHER STEPHEN WAS WITH THE LORD JOSHUA, THEY FOLLOWED HIM BECAUSE HE HAD PROVEN TO BE A SUCCESSFUL LEADER IS IN JOSHUA CHAPTERS 3-5. HE CHALLENGED ISRAEL TO SERVE THE FATHER STEPHEN IS IN JOSHUA 24:15, 18, 31.**

**THE LORD JOSHUA AS AN EXAMPLE FOR TODAY: THE LORD JOSHUA AS A LEADER WAS ONLY SECOND TO THE LORD MOSES IN HIS IMPACT WITH THE FATHER STEPHEN’S PEOPLE, THE ISRAELITES. HE SERVED THE FATHER STEPHEN AS THE LORD MOSES’ SERVANT, AS WELL AS THE COMMANDER OF ALL THE ISRAELITE FORCES FAITHFULLY. THIS WAS DONE BY OBEYING THE FATHER STEPHEN FULLY AND COMPLETELY, THAT GAVE HIM THE SUCCESS NEEDED TO ACHIEVE WHAT NEEDED TO BE DONE. THE LORD JOSHUA DEMONSTRATES THE VALUE OF MENTORING. THE LORD JOSHUA DEMONSTRATES THE IMPORTANCE OF OBEYING THE FATHER STEPHEN. AT JERICHO, THE LORD JOSHUA FOLLOWED THE FATHER STEPHEN’S COMMANDS TO THE LETTER, DESPITE THE FACT THAT THEY MADE NO MILITARY SENSE. THE LORD JOSHUA DEMONSTRATES THE AUTHORITY OF THE GOOD EXAMPLE.**

**THE TOP HOUSE OF THE LORD**

**CONSTRUCTION OF THE TABERNACLE PROPER (36:8–38) [FULFILLMENT OF 26:1–27]**

**8 ALL THE SKILLED MEN AMONG THE WORKMEN MADE THE TABERNACLE WITH TEN CURTAINS OF FINELY TWISTED LINEN AND BLUE, PURPLE AND SCARLET YARN, WITH CHERUBIM WORKED INTO THEM BY A SKILLED CRAFTSMAN. 9 ALL THE CURTAINS WERE THE SAME SIZE—TWENTY-EIGHT CUBITS LONG AND FOUR CUBITS WIDE. 10 THEY JOINED FIVE OF THE CURTAINS TOGETHER AND DID THE SAME WITH THE OTHER FIVE. 11 THEN THEY MADE LOOPS OF BLUE MATERIAL ALONG THE EDGE OF THE END CURTAIN IN ONE SET, AND THE SAME WAS DONE WITH THE END CURTAIN IN THE OTHER SET. 12 THEY ALSO MADE FIFTY LOOPS ON ONE CURTAIN AND FIFTY LOOPS ON THE END CURTAIN OF THE OTHER SET, WITH THE LOOPS OPPOSITE EACH OTHER. 13 THEN THEY MADE FIFTY GOLD CLASPS AND USED THEM TO FASTEN THE TWO SETS OF CURTAINS TOGETHER SO THAT THE TABERNACLE WAS A UNIT. 14 THEY MADE CURTAINS OF GOAT HAIR FOR THE TENT OVER THE TABERNACLE—ELEVEN ALTOGETHER. 15 ALL ELEVEN CURTAINS WERE THE SAME SIZE—THIRTY CUBITS LONG AND FOUR CUBITS WIDE. 16 THEY JOINED FIVE OF THE CURTAINS INTO ONE SET AND THE OTHER SIX INTO ANOTHER SET. 17 THEN THEY MADE FIFTY LOOPS ALONG THE EDGE OF THE END CURTAIN IN ONE SET AND ALSO ALONG THE EDGE OF THE END CURTAIN IN THE OTHER SET. 18 THEY MADE FIFTY BRONZE CLASPS TO FASTEN THE TENT TOGETHER AS A UNIT. 19 THEN THEY MADE FOR THE TENT A COVERING OF RAM SKINS DYED RED, AND OVER THAT A COVERING OF HIDES OF SEA COWS. 20 THEY MADE UPRIGHT FRAMES OF ACACIA WOOD FOR THE TABERNACLE. 21 EACH FRAME WAS TEN CUBITS LONG AND A CUBIT AND A HALF WIDE, 22 WITH TWO PROJECTIONS SET PARALLEL TO EACH OTHER. THEY MADE ALL THE FRAMES OF THE TABERNACLE IN THIS WAY. 23 THEY MADE TWENTY FRAMES FOR THE SOUTH SIDE OF THE TABERNACLE 24 AND MADE FORTY SILVER BASES TO GO UNDER THEM—TWO BASES FOR EACH FRAME, ONE UNDER EACH PROJECTION. 25 FOR THE OTHER SIDE, THE NORTH SIDE OF THE TABERNACLE, THEY MADE TWENTY FRAMES 26 AND FORTY SILVER BASES—TWO UNDER EACH FRAME. 27 THEY MADE SIX FRAMES FOR THE FAR END, THAT IS, THE WEST END OF THE TABERNACLE, 28 AND TWO FRAMES WERE MADE FOR THE CORNERS OF THE TABERNACLE AT THE FAR END. 29 AT THESE TWO CORNERS THE FRAMES WERE DOUBLE FROM THE BOTTOM ALL THE WAY TO THE TOP AND FITTED INTO A SINGLE RING; BOTH WERE MADE ALIKE. 30 SO THERE WERE EIGHT FRAMES AND SIXTEEN SILVER BASES—TWO UNDER EACH FRAME. 31 THEY ALSO MADE CROSSBARS OF ACACIA WOOD: FIVE FOR THE FRAMES ON ONE SIDE OF THE TABERNACLE, 32 FIVE FOR THOSE ON THE OTHER SIDE, AND FIVE FOR THE FRAMES ON THE WEST, AT THE FAR END OF THE TABERNACLE. 33 THEY MADE THE CENTER CROSSBAR SO THAT IT EXTENDED FROM END TO END AT THE MIDDLE OF THE FRAMES. 34 THEY OVERLAID THE FRAMES WITH GOLD AND MADE GOLD RINGS TO HOLD THE CROSSBARS. THEY ALSO OVERLAID THE CROSSBARS WITH GOLD. 35 THEY MADE THE CURTAIN OF BLUE, PURPLE AND SCARLET YARN AND FINELY TWISTED LINEN, WITH CHERUBIM WORKED INTO IT BY A SKILLED CRAFTSMAN. 36 THEY MADE FOUR POSTS OF ACACIA WOOD FOR IT AND OVERLAID THEM WITH GOLD. THEY MADE GOLD HOOKS FOR THEM AND CAST THEIR FOUR SILVER BASES. 37 FOR THE ENTRANCE TO THE TENT THEY MADE A CURTAIN OF BLUE, PURPLE AND SCARLET YARN AND FINELY TWISTED LINEN—THE WORK OF AN EMBROIDERER; 38 AND THEY MADE FIVE POSTS WITH HOOKS FOR THEM. THEY OVERLAID THE TOPS OF THE POSTS AND THEIR BANDS WITH GOLD AND MADE THEIR FIVE BASES OF BRONZE. 36:8–13 THIS PARAGRAPH DUPLICATES IN PAST TENSE FULFILLMENT (“THEN THEY MADE … THEY ALSO MADE”) WHAT 26:1–6 COMMANDED IN THE IMPERATIVE (“MAKE, THEN MAKE”). BY STARTING THIS WAY, THAT IS, WITH A VIRTUALLY VERBATIM FULFILLMENT DESCRIPTION, THE PASSAGE SUGGESTS THAT ALL OTHER ORIGINAL COMMANDS WERE FULFILLED PRECISELY AND THAT IT WOULD NOT BE NECESSARY FOR MOSES TO USE THE SAME LEVEL OF DETAIL IN ALL HIS SUBSEQUENT FULFILLMENT DESCRIPTIONS. HE SOMETIMES WOULD REPEAT ALL THE DETAILS AND SOMETIMES WOULD NOT, THUS OBVIATING MERE MINDLESS REPETITION. 36:14–19 THIS PARAGRAPH DESCRIBES THE FULFILLMENT OF WHAT WAS COMMANDED IN 26:7–14 BUT SHORTENS THE DESCRIPTION WITH SUMMATIONS AT VARIOUS POINTS. A TYPICAL EXAMPLE IS THAT OF 26:9, “FOLD THE SIXTH CURTAIN DOUBLE AT THE FRONT OF THE TENT,” WHICH IS OMITTED HERE, AS ARE A NUMBER OF OTHER DETAILS FROM THE ORIGINAL INSTRUCTIONS IN CHAP. 26. AFTER AN INITIAL PARAGRAPH THAT DOES REPEAT THE LANGUAGE OF THE ORIGINAL COMMAND VIRTUALLY VERBATIM (36:8–13), HE HOLDS THE READER’S ATTENTION BY SOME JUDICIOUS CONDENSATION. THE CONDENSATIONS OCCUR IN V. 9 AND AFTER V. 12 (SO THAT 26:12–13 IS ESSENTIALLY SKIPPED—A SIMPLE BUT EFFECTIVE WAY TO SHORTEN THE PASSAGE). 36:20–30 NOTE THAT IN THIS DESCRIPTION OF THE FULFILLMENT OF THE COMMANDS OF 26:15–25, MOSES REVERTED TO VIRTUAL VERBATIM CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN WHAT WAS DONE AS COMPARED TO WHAT HAD ORIGINALLY BEEN ORDERED, AS HE DID IN THE CASE IN 36:8–13. THUS, WE OBSERVE HIM ALTERNATING BETWEEN FULL DUPLICATION OF THE ORIGINAL COMMAND WORDING AND THE SORT OF PRÉCIS HE EMPLOYED IN 36:14–19. 36:31–34 THIS SHORT PARAGRAPH ALSO LEAVES OUT NOTHING OF THE DETAIL OF THE ORIGINAL COMMAND IN 26:26–29—ALL IS DESCRIBED AS FULFILLED, WITHOUT CONDENSING ANY WORDING. 36:35–38 THESE VERSES SHORTEN IN A RATHER OBVIOUS WAY CERTAIN DETAILS OF THE ORIGINAL COMMANDS IN 26:31–37, OF WHICH THEY DESCRIBE THE FULFILLMENT. THUS, AS IN THE CASE OF 36:14–19, MOSES AGAIN VARIED THE STYLE IN A MODEST WAY TO BREAK UP MONOTONY, BUT HE LEFT NO DOUBT IN THE READER’S MIND THAT EVERYTHING COMMANDED IN CHAP. 26 WAS IN FACT ACCOMPLISHED AS REQUIRED. VERSES 33–35 OF CHAP. 26 ARE SIMPLY SKIPPED IN THIS SUMMARY, AND 26:37 IS SLIGHTLY REWORDED IN 36:38.**

**CONSTRUCTION OF THE INVINCIBLE ARK (37:1–9) [FULFILLMENT OF 25:10–20]**

**1 BEZALEL MADE THE ARK OF ACACIA WOOD—TWO AND A HALF CUBITS LONG, A CUBIT AND A HALF WIDE, AND A CUBIT AND A HALF HIGH. 2 HE OVERLAID IT WITH PURE GOLD, BOTH INSIDE AND OUT, AND MADE A GOLD MOLDING AROUND IT. 3 HE CAST FOUR GOLD RINGS FOR IT AND FASTENED THEM TO ITS FOUR FEET, WITH TWO RINGS ON ONE SIDE AND TWO RINGS ON THE OTHER. 4 THEN HE MADE POLES OF ACACIA WOOD AND OVERLAID THEM WITH GOLD. 5 AND HE INSERTED THE POLES INTO THE RINGS ON THE SIDES OF THE ARK TO CARRY IT. 6 HE MADE THE ATONEMENT COVER OF PURE GOLD—TWO AND A HALF CUBITS LONG AND A CUBIT AND A HALF WIDE. 7 THEN HE MADE TWO CHERUBIM OUT OF HAMMERED GOLD AT THE ENDS OF THE COVER. 8 HE MADE ONE CHERUB ON ONE END AND THE SECOND CHERUB ON THE OTHER; AT THE TWO ENDS HE MADE THEM OF ONE PIECE WITH THE COVER. 9 THE CHERUBIM HAD THEIR WINGS SPREAD UPWARD, OVERSHADOWING THE COVER WITH THEM. THE CHERUBIM FACED EACH OTHER, LOOKING TOWARD THE COVER.**

**37:1–5 THESE VERSES DESCRIBE THE FULFILLMENT OF 25:10–15 VIRTUALLY VERBATIM—DIFFERING MAINLY IN ADDING THE IMPORTANT DETAIL IN 37:1 THAT “BEZALEL MADE THE ARK.” THE CHIEF OF ALL THE BUILDERS, SPECIALLY FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT OF GOD FOR THESE TASKS (31:2–3), WAS ENTRUSTED WITH THIS MOST PRECIOUS OBJECT OF ALL, AS WAS FITTING. IN CHAPS. 25–26 THE COMMAND TO BUILD THE ARK PRECEDES THE COMMAND TO BUILD THE TABERNACLE PROPER. HERE THE FULFILLMENT OF THE COMMAND TO BUILD THE ARK FOLLOWS THAT OF THE FULFILLMENT DESCRIPTION RELATED TO THE TABERNACLE PROPER. WHY THE DIFFERENT ORDER? THE ANSWER PROBABLY IS QUITE SIMPLE: THE ARK IS PROTECTED BY THE CURTAINS OF THE TABERNACLE; IT WAS WRAPPED FOR TRAVEL IN THE CURTAIN THAT DIVIDED THE HOLY PLACE FROM THE HOLY OF HOLIES, AND IT IS ALSO PROTECTED WHEN THE TABERNACLE IS SET UP IN PLACE BY THE VARIOUS LAYERS OF EXTERNAL TABERNACLE SURFACING. THEREFORE, BEZALEL CHOSE (PERHAPS AT MOSES’ SUGGESTION OR EVEN INSTRUCTION) TO READY THE PROTECTIVE MATERIAL FIRST SO THAT THE ARK WOULD NOT SIT OUT EXPOSED TO THE ELEMENTS FOR ALL TO SEE—EITHER TYPE OF EXPOSURE POTENTIALLY CONSTITUTING PROFANATION. 37:6–9 THESE VERSES DESCRIBE THE FULFILLMENT OF 25:17–20 ALSO VIRTUALLY VERBATIM, WITH CHANGES LIMITED ALMOST ENTIRELY TO VERB TENSES (EVEN THE DIFFERENCE IN THE HB. BETWEEN 25:19 AND 37:8 IS MORE MINUTE THAN THE NIV’S ADJUSTED WORD ORDER WOULD SUGGEST, BEING LIMITED TO A CHANGE IN THE VERB TENSE AND A PREPOSITION). NOTE THAT BEZALEL MAY HAVE BEEN THE SOLE WORKER ON THE ARK; NOTHING IN THE LANGUAGE OF THIS PASSAGE CAN BE INTERPRETED TO MEAN THAT ANY OTHER PERSONS WERE INVOLVED, IN CONTRAST TO THE MORE GENERAL “THEY” REFERENCES TO UNNAMED WORKERS ON OTHER PARTS OF THE TABERNACLE FURNISHINGS. THE PARAMOUNT SYMBOL OF THE INVISIBLE GOD WAS MADE BY THE ONE HE CHOSE AND SPECIALLY GUIDED TO MAKE IT.**

**CONSTRUCTION OF THE TABERNACLE TABLE (37:10–16) [FULFILLMENT OF 25:23–29]**

**10 THEY MADE THE TABLE OF ACACIA WOOD—TWO CUBITS LONG, A CUBIT WIDE, AND A CUBIT AND A HALF HIGH. 11 THEN THEY OVERLAID IT WITH PURE GOLD AND MADE A GOLD MOLDING AROUND IT. 12 THEY ALSO MADE AROUND IT A RIM A HANDBREADTH WIDE AND PUT A GOLD MOLDING ON THE RIM. 13 THEY CAST FOUR GOLD RINGS FOR THE TABLE AND FASTENED THEM TO THE FOUR CORNERS, WHERE THE FOUR LEGS WERE. 14 THE RINGS WERE PUT CLOSE TO THE RIM TO HOLD THE POLES USED IN CARRYING THE TABLE. 15 THE POLES FOR CARRYING THE TABLE WERE MADE OF ACACIA WOOD AND WERE OVERLAID WITH GOLD. 16 AND THEY MADE FROM PURE GOLD THE ARTICLES FOR THE TABLE—ITS PLATES AND DISHES AND BOWLS AND ITS PITCHERS FOR THE POURING OUT OF DRINK OFFERINGS. 37:10–16 ASIDE FROM SOME NECESSARY CHANGES IN VERB TENSE AND SOME VERY SLIGHT ADJUSTMENTS IN WORD ORDER TO PREVENT REPETITION MONOTONY, THIS PARAGRAPH DUPLICATES WHAT HAS BEEN SEEN ALREADY IN 25:23–29, SO THE CONSTRUCTION ORDER OF ARK-TABLE-LAMPSTAND CONTINUES IN THE FULFILLMENT PHASE OF THE TABERNACLE ACCOUNT JUST AS IT DID IN THE COMMAND PHASE. NOTE THAT HERE THE INDEFINITE “THEY” DESCRIBES THE WORKERS. WHOEVER THEY WERE AND HOW MANY THEY WERE IS NEVER IDENTIFIED.**

**CONSTRUCTION OF THE IMMORTAL LAMPSTAND (37:17–24) [FULFILLMENT OF 25:31–39]**

**17 THEY MADE THE LAMPSTAND OF PURE GOLD AND HAMMERED IT OUT, BASE AND SHAFT; ITS FLOWERLIKE CUPS, BUDS AND BLOSSOMS WERE OF ONE PIECE WITH IT. 18 SIX BRANCHES EXTENDED FROM THE SIDES OF THE LAMPSTAND—THREE ON ONE SIDE AND THREE ON THE OTHER. 19 THREE CUPS SHAPED LIKE ALMOND FLOWERS WITH BUDS AND BLOSSOMS WERE ON ONE BRANCH, THREE ON THE NEXT BRANCH AND THE SAME FOR ALL SIX BRANCHES EXTENDING FROM THE LAMPSTAND. 20 AND ON THE LAMPSTAND WERE FOUR CUPS SHAPED LIKE ALMOND FLOWERS WITH BUDS AND BLOSSOMS. 21 ONE BUD WAS UNDER THE FIRST PAIR OF BRANCHES EXTENDING FROM THE LAMPSTAND, A SECOND BUD UNDER THE SECOND PAIR, AND A THIRD BUD UNDER THE THIRD PAIR—SIX BRANCHES IN ALL. 22 THE BUDS AND THE BRANCHES WERE ALL OF ONE PIECE WITH THE LAMPSTAND, HAMMERED OUT OF PURE GOLD. 23 THEY MADE ITS SEVEN LAMPS, AS WELL AS ITS WICK TRIMMERS AND TRAYS, OF PURE GOLD. 24 THEY MADE THE LAMPSTAND AND ALL ITS ACCESSORIES FROM ONE TALENT OF PURE GOLD. 37:17–24 IN THESE VERSES THAT WHICH WAS COMMANDED IN 25:31–39 IS REITERATED, WITH THE EXPECTED CHANGES IN VERB TENSE AND TWO MODEST EXCEPTIONS: 25:37–38 IS CONDENSED INTO 37:23, AND THE WORD ORDER OF 25:39 IS ADJUSTED IN 37:24. AGAIN THE NAMES AND NUMBERS OF WORKERS ARE NOT MENTIONED HERE, SO WE DO NOT KNOW WHO AND HOW MANY WERE THE “THEY” THAT MADE THE LAMPSTAND. WITH THIS LAMPSTAND DESCRIPTION, THE ARK-TABLE-LAMPSTAND ORDER OF THE COMMAND PHASE (CHAP. 25) IS AGAIN DUPLICATED, BUT THAT PATTERN ENDS HERE SINCE THE INCENSE ALTAR WAS NOT COMMANDED UNTIL CHAP. 30, EVEN THOUGH ITS CONSTRUCTION DESCRIPTION FOLLOWS IMMEDIATELY HERE. THIS WOULD APPEAR TO BE YET ONE MORE WAY MOSES HEADED OFF MONOTONY IN THE FULFILLMENT SECTION, BUT IT MAY ALSO RELATE TO THE ACTUAL CONSTRUCTION DECISION-MAKING PROCESS, NO REASON TO DELAY GETTING AT THE BUILDING OF THE INCENSE ALTAR ALONG WITH THE ARK, TABLE, AND LAMPSTAND.**

**CONSTRUCTION OF THE INCENSE ALTAR (37:25–28) [FULFILLMENT OF 30:1–5]**

**25 THEY MADE THE ALTAR OF INCENSE OUT OF ACACIA WOOD. IT WAS SQUARE, A CUBIT LONG AND A CUBIT WIDE, AND TWO CUBITS HIGH—ITS HORNS OF ONE PIECE WITH IT. 26 THEY OVERLAID THE TOP AND ALL THE SIDES AND THE HORNS WITH PURE GOLD, AND MADE A GOLD MOLDING AROUND IT. 27 THEY MADE TWO GOLD RINGS BELOW THE MOLDING—TWO ON OPPOSITE SIDES—TO HOLD THE POLES USED TO CARRY IT. 28 THEY MADE THE POLES OF ACACIA WOOD AND OVERLAID THEM WITH GOLD.**

**37:25–28 THIS PARAGRAPH FOLLOWS 30:1–5 CLOSELY—ESSENTIALLY VERBATIM—WITH A SLIGHT WORDING ORDER CHANGE IN 37:25 AS OPPOSED TO THE WORDING ORDER OF 30:1 IN THE INTERESTS OF STYLISTIC VARIATION AND THE EXPECTED VERB TENSE CHANGES. THE ORIGINAL INCENSE ALTAR COMMAND WAS LINKED IN CHAP. 30 WITH INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE USE OF INCENSE AND THE ATONEMENT PROCESS FOR THE INCENSE ALTAR. THOSE INSTRUCTIONS (30:7–10) ARE NOT CONSTRUCTION COMMANDS PER SE, AND THEREFORE WE WOULD NOT EXPECT TO FIND, AND DO NOT FIND, THEM REPEATED HERE IN THE FULFILLMENT PHASE WHERE CONSTRUCTION DESCRIPTIONS ARE THE FOCUS.**

**COMPOSITION OF THE HOLY ANOINTING OIL AND THE HOLY INCENSE (37:29) [FULFILLMENT OF 30:22–25, 34–36]**

**29 THEY ALSO MADE THE SACRED ANOINTING OIL AND THE PURE, FRAGRANT INCENSE—THE WORK OF A PERFUMER. 37:29 HERE THE FORMULA FOR THE SPECIAL ANOINTING OIL (30:22–25) USED FOR PRIESTS [SERGEANTS] AND TABERNACLE OBJECTS (28:41; 29:7, 21, 29, 36; 30:30–33; 31:11) IS NOT REPEATED OR DESCRIBED IN ANY PARTICULARS, BUT MOSES MERELY NOTED THAT “THEY” OBEYED THE COMMAND TO MAKE IT. LIKEWISE, THE ORIGINAL, DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE FRAGRANT INCENSE (30:34–36) AND HOW AND WHEN IT WAS TO BE USED (30:7–9, 37–38) ARE NOT REPEATED HERE. THIS VERSE THUS CONDENSES IN THE FULFILLMENT SECTION A CONSIDERABLE AMOUNT OF LANGUAGE FROM THE COMMAND SECTION. THE MOST LIKELY REASON FOR THIS HIGH DEGREE OF ABBREVIATION IS THAT THE MATERIALS IN QUESTION WERE NOT PERMANENT PIECES OF FURNITURE BUT SUBSTANCES INTENDED TO BE USED UP OVER TIME, REQUIRING REFORMULATION PERIODICALLY. THE FORMULATION DESCRIPTIONS THUS FUNCTIONED REGULARLY AS GUIDELINES IN A WAY THAT THE FULFILLMENT DESCRIPTIONS NEEDED NOT.**

**CONSTRUCTION OF THE MAIN BURNING ALTAR (38:1–7) [FULFILLMENT OF 27:1–8A]**

**1 THEY BUILT THE ALTAR OF BURNT OFFERING OF ACACIA WOOD, THREE CUBITS HIGH; IT WAS SQUARE, FIVE CUBITS LONG AND FIVE CUBITS WIDE. 2 THEY MADE A HORN AT EACH OF THE FOUR CORNERS, SO THAT THE HORNS AND THE ALTAR WERE OF ONE PIECE, AND THEY OVERLAID THE ALTAR WITH BRONZE. 3 THEY MADE ALL ITS UTENSILS OF BRONZE—ITS POTS, SHOVELS, SPRINKLING BOWLS, MEAT FORKS AND FIREPANS. 4 THEY MADE A GRATING FOR THE ALTAR, A BRONZE NETWORK, TO BE UNDER ITS LEDGE, HALFWAY UP THE ALTAR. 5 THEY CAST BRONZE RINGS TO HOLD THE POLES FOR THE FOUR CORNERS OF THE BRONZE GRATING. 6 THEY MADE THE POLES OF ACACIA WOOD AND OVERLAID THEM WITH BRONZE. 7 THEY INSERTED THE POLES INTO THE RINGS SO THEY WOULD BE ON THE SIDES OF THE ALTAR FOR CARRYING IT. THEY MADE IT HOLLOW, OUT OF BOARDS.**

**38:1–7 ASIDE FROM THE EXPECTED CHANGES IN VERB TENSE AND A MODEST STYLE ADJUSTMENT THROUGH WORD REORDERING (E.G., 38:4–5 REORDERS 27:4–5) FOR THE SAKE OF VARIETY, THIS PASSAGE REPRISES 27:1–8A. THE BUILDERS WERE NOW MOVING OUT FROM THE TABERNACLE PROPER TO THE COURTYARD IN THEIR BUILDING PLAN. THE MAIN ALTAR (ALTAR OF BURNT OFFERING) WAS ONE OF THE TWO COURTYARD OBJECTS, THE OTHER BEING THE WASHING BASIN THAT WILL BE REFERRED TO IN THE NEXT VERSE. MOSES REPORTED THAT IN EVERY DETAIL THE SACRIFICE ALTAR (MAIN ALTAR, ALTAR OF BURNT OFFERING) WAS BUILT JUST AS ORDERED.**

**(11) CONSTRUCTION OF THE HOLY BRONZE WASH BASIN AND HOLY BRONZE STAND (38:8) [FULFILLMENT OF 30:17–21]**

**8 THEY MADE THE BRONZE BASIN AND ITS BRONZE STAND FROM THE MIRRORS OF THE WOMEN WHO SERVED AT THE ENTRANCE TO THE TENT OF MEETING. 38:8 MOSES HERE CONCENTRATED MAINLY ON THE FULFILLMENT OF 30:17–18, WHERE THE BASIN’S PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS ARE DESCRIBED, AND NOT ON 30:19–21, WHERE THE PROPER USE OF THE BASIN IS DESCRIBED. THIS IS TO BE EXPECTED SINCE WE ARE IN A SECTION DEALING WITH CONSTRUCTION OF WHAT HAD BEEN ORDERED BUILT, NOT USAGE—USAGE INSTRUCTIONS NEEDING NO REPETITION HERE. MOSES HAD DONE SO WITH A SIMPLE SUMMATION, ESPECIALLY SINCE THE ORIGINAL COMMAND ITSELF WAS NOT VERY DETAILED, DESCRIBING SIMPLY “A BRONZE BASIN, WITH ITS BRONZE STAND” (30:18), ESSENTIALLY THE LANGUAGE REPEATED HERE. IN THE ORIGINAL COMMAND THERE WAS NO ANTICIPATION OF WHERE THE BRONZE FOR THIS BASIN WOULD COME FROM, BUT SINCE THE BASIN WAS OBVIOUSLY A MORE PROMINENT OBJECT THAN THE OTHER BRASS OBJECTS (MAINLY TENT POLES) IN THE COURTYARD, ONE COULD HAVE ANTICIPATED THAT ITS BRONZE (AN ALLOY OF TIN AND COPPER) MIGHT HAVE BEEN OF SPECIAL ORIGIN IF POSSIBLE. HERE WE LEARN INDEED THAT IT WAS NOT JUST ANY BRONZE BROUGHT BY DONORS FROM ANY SOURCE, WHICH MIGHT HAVE INVOLVED THE POSSIBILITY OF SLIGHTLY UNEVEN QUALITY. INSTEAD, IT APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN A VERY HIGH-QUALITY BRONZE—POLISHED BRONZE FROM MIRRORS DONATED BY WOMEN RESPONDING TO THE EARLIER DONATION CALL (37:4). SUCH BRONZE PROBABLY WAS AS FLAW-FREE AS ANY THAT COULD BE FOUND SINCE IT WOULD HAVE BEEN REJECTED FOR MIRROR USE IF IT WERE NOT A SUCCESSFUL, VISIBLY CONSISTENT ALLOY OF PURE TIN, BRASS AND COPPER. BUT ANOTHER, QUITE FASCINATING DETAIL IS ALSO INCLUDED HERE: ONE THAT PRESUMES SOME COMMON KNOWLEDGE THAT MOSES AND HIS AUDIENCE SHARED, BUT THAT WE DO NOT. AT SOME POINT AFTER THE TABERNACLE WAS BUILT, CERTAIN WOMEN WERE EMPLOYED TO SERVE AT ITS ENTRANCE—A PRACTICE THAT PROBABLY CONTINUED AS LONG AS THE TABERNACLE WAS IN USE, JUDGING FROM THE MENTION OF IT IN 1 SAM 2:22, HUNDREDS OF YEARS AFTER THE TIME OF THE PRESENT DESCRIPTION. HOW WERE THESE WOMEN CHOSEN, AND WHAT EXACTLY DID THEY DO? WE HAVE NO FIRM INFORMATION. THEY QUITE POSSIBLY VOLUNTEERED—OR WERE PAID WITH A PORTION OF THE SACRIFICES—TO HELP WITH UTENSIL CLEANUP, GENERAL COURTYARD CLEANUP, WATER RESUPPLY, ANCILLARY FOOD PREPARATION, GUIDING AND ASSISTING OTHER WOMEN WORSHIPERS, WASHING PRIESTS’ CLOTHES, AND THE LIKE. THE FIRST SUCH GROUP OF WOMEN MAY HAVE BEEN CHOSEN FROM AMONG THOSE WHO DONATED THEIR MIRRORS, PRECISELY BECAUSE SUCH A GIFT OF SOMETHING NORMALLY VALUED BY A WOMAN WOULD TEND TO DEMONSTRATE HER DEVOTION TO GOD.**

**CONSTRUCTION OF THE HOLY COURTYARD (38:9–20) [FULFILLMENT OF 27:9–19]**

**9 NEXT THEY MADE THE COURTYARD. THE SOUTH SIDE WAS A HUNDRED CUBITS LONG AND HAD CURTAINS OF FINELY TWISTED LINEN, 10 WITH TWENTY POSTS AND TWENTY BRONZE BASES, AND WITH SILVER HOOKS AND BANDS ON THE POSTS. 11 THE NORTH SIDE WAS ALSO A HUNDRED CUBITS LONG AND HAD TWENTY POSTS AND TWENTY BRONZE BASES, WITH SILVER HOOKS AND BANDS ON THE POSTS. 12 THE WEST END WAS FIFTY CUBITS WIDE AND HAD CURTAINS, WITH TEN POSTS AND TEN BASES, WITH SILVER HOOKS AND BANDS ON THE POSTS. 13 THE EAST END, TOWARD THE SUNRISE, WAS ALSO FIFTY CUBITS WIDE. 14 CURTAINS FIFTEEN CUBITS LONG WERE ON ONE SIDE OF THE ENTRANCE, WITH THREE POSTS AND THREE BASES, 15 AND CURTAINS FIFTEEN CUBITS LONG WERE ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE ENTRANCE TO THE COURTYARD, WITH THREE POSTS AND THREE BASES. 16 ALL THE CURTAINS AROUND THE COURTYARD WERE OF FINELY TWISTED LINEN. 17 THE BASES FOR THE POSTS WERE BRONZE. THE HOOKS AND BANDS ON THE POSTS WERE SILVER, AND THEIR TOPS WERE OVERLAID WITH SILVER; SO, ALL THE POSTS OF THE COURTYARD HAD SILVER BANDS. 18 THE CURTAIN FOR THE ENTRANCE TO THE COURTYARD WAS OF BLUE, PURPLE AND SCARLET YARN AND FINELY TWISTED LINEN—THE WORK OF AN EMBROIDERER. IT WAS TWENTY CUBITS LONG AND, LIKE THE CURTAINS OF THE COURTYARD, FIVE CUBITS HIGH, 19 WITH FOUR POSTS AND FOUR BRONZE BASES. THEIR HOOKS AND BANDS WERE SILVER, AND THEIR TOPS WERE OVERLAID WITH SILVER. 20 ALL THE TENT PEGS OF THE TABERNACLE AND OF THE SURROUNDING COURTYARD WERE BRONZE.**

**NOTHING ASSERTED IN 27:9–19 IS LEFT OUT HERE, ALTHOUGH ENOUGH VARIETY OF ORDER AND SLIGHT ADDITIONS OR SUBTRACTIONS KEEP THE PRESENT FULFILLMENT PASSAGE FROM BEING A MERE REPETITION OF THE COMMAND ON WHICH IT IS BASED. 38:9–11 THIS PART OF THE PASSAGE IS VIRTUALLY A VERBATIM REPRISE OF 27:9–11 WITH THE NECESSARY VERB TENSE CHANGES BEING MADE AND THE PHRASE “FOR THE TABERNACLE” OF 27:9 BEING OMITTED. LIKEWISE, SOME SPACE IS SAVED IN 38:11 WITH THE OMISSION OF THE CLAUSE “IS TO HAVE CURTAINS” FROM 27:11. 38:12–17 MOST OF THESE VERSES REPEAT 27:12FF., WITH THE USUAL AND EXPECTED CHANGES IN ORDER TO BRING THE DESCRIPTION TO THE PRESENT CONTEXT, BUT THE CONTENT OF 27:16 IS DELAYED UNTIL 38:18, WITH SOME REORDERING OF THE WORDING. ADDITIONALLY, 27:17 IS ACTUALLY EXPANDED SLIGHTLY IN EXPLICIT DETAIL IN 38:17 IN REGARD TO THE “TOPS” OF THE POSTS BEING “OVERLAID WITH SILVER,” SOMETHING IMPLICIT BUT NOT STATED IN 27:17. 38:18–20 THE REMAINDER OF WHAT HAS NOT YET BEEN COVERED FROM CHAP. 27 IS HERE ADDRESSED AS COMPLETED, WITH THE CONTENT OF 27:19 SOMEWHAT REARRANGED AND DISTRIBUTED THROUGHOUT VV. 19–20.**

**INTRODUCTION: THE HISTORICAL SETTING OF MOSES’ SPEECHES (1:1–4)**

**THE SPEAKER, AUDIENCE, AND LOCATION (1:1)**

**1:1. THE REFERENCE TO DEUTERONOMY AS THE WORDS OF MOSES REMINDED THE READERS THAT THOUGH THE BOOK WAS A COVENANT RENEWAL DOCUMENT IT WAS NOT A LIFELESS LEGAL CONTRACT. “THE WORDS” OF “MOSES” SUGGEST THAT THE BOOK’S CONTENTS WERE GIVEN IN A SERIES OF STRONG SERMONS TO THE WANDERING PEOPLE. MOSES WAS EMINENTLY QUALIFIED TO SPEAK FOR GOD. HE WAS MORE THAN ISRAEL’S HUMAN LAWGIVER. HE WAS THE FOUNDER OF ISRAEL’S RELIGION AND MEDIATOR OF THE COVENANT AT SINAI (SEE COMMENTS ON CHAP. 5). HE WAS ISRAEL’S FIRST PROPHET (34:10). THOUGH GOD CALLED ABRAHAM A PROPHET (GEN. 20:7), ISRAEL DID NOT THEN EXIST AS A NATION. THROUGH MOSES, GOD SET SUCH A HIGH STANDARD FOR THE PEOPLE THAT ALL SUBSEQUENT PROPHETS LIVED UNDER HIS SHADOW, NEVER ATTAINING TO IT, UNTIL THE COMING OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST (CF. COMMENTS ON DEUT. 18:15–19; 34:10–12). NOT SURPRISINGLY THE NEW TESTAMENT AUTHORS MENTIONED MOSES MORE FREQUENTLY THAN ANY OTHER OLD TESTAMENT PERSON. SO, DEUTERONOMY IS ESSENTIALLY A SERIES OF SERMONS BY THE GREATEST OLD TESTAMENT PROPHET. MOSES’ WORDS WERE ADDRESSED TO ALL ISRAEL, AN EXPRESSION USED AT LEAST 12 TIMES IN THE BOOK. ITS FREQUENT OCCURRENCE EMPHASIZES THE UNITY OF ISRAEL WHICH WAS BROUGHT ABOUT BY GOD’S MIGHTY DELIVERANCE OF THE NATION FROM EGYPT, AND BY HER ACCEPTANCE OF HIS COVENANT AT SINAI. THEY WERE UNIQUELY GOD’S PEOPLE, THE ONLY NATION ON EARTH THAT HAD AS ITS “CONSTITUTION” THE WORD OF GOD UNTIL THE USA USHERED WITH ITS “CONSTITUTION” THE WORD OF GOD IN JULY 4TH, 1775. MOSES’ WORDS, THEN, HAD A SPECIAL IMPORTANCE FOR EVERY ISRAELITE. EXCEPT FOR JORDAN AND THE ARABAH, THE EXACT LOCATIONS OF THE PLACE NAMES GIVEN IN 1:1 ARE NOT KNOWN WITH ANY CERTAINTY. THE ARABAH IS THE LARGE RIFT VALLEY THAT EXTENDS FROM THE SEA OF KINNERETH (LATER THE SEA OF GALILEE) IN THE NORTH TO THE GULF OF AQABA IN THE SOUTH. ISRAEL WAS NOT YET IN THE PROMISED LAND, BUT WAS PERCHED AT ITS ENTRANCE (CF. V. 5) AS THEY RECEIVED MOSES’ FINAL INSTRUCTIONS.**

**THE DATE (1:2–4)**

**1:2. THE REFERENCES IN VERSES 2–3 TO TIME SERVE TWO FUNCTIONS. FIRST, THEY PLACE THE REVELATION OF GOD SQUARELY IN HISTORY. SECOND, THE PATHETIC CONTRAST OF THE 11 DAYS (V. 2) WITH THE 40 YEARS (V. 3) SERVES AS AN OMINOUS REMINDER OF THE CONSEQUENCES OF DISOBEYING GOD. THE ISRAELITES TURNED AN 11-DAY JOURNEY—FROM HOREB (ANOTHER WORD FOR MOUNT SINAI; CF. EX. 34:2, 27 WITH DEUT. 5:2) TO KADESH BARNEA, THE FIRST SITE FOR ENTERING INTO THE PROMISED LAND FROM THE SOUTH—INTO A 40-YEAR WANDERING IN THE WILDERNESS BEFORE THEY CAME TO A SECOND POTENTIAL SITE FOR ENTERING THE LAND. FROM HOREB TO KADESH BARNEA WAS ONLY ABOUT 150 MILES (SEE THE MAP “POSSIBLE ROUTE OF THE EXODUS,” NEAR NUM. 33:1–5). THE WARNING WAS IMPLICITLY SOUNDED: DO NOT BE SLOW TO BELIEVE GOD AGAIN. UNFORTUNATELY FOR ISRAEL, THEY NEVER FULLY HEEDED THIS WARNING. AS STEPHEN YAHWEH POINTED OUT CENTURIES LATER (ACTS 7:39, 51), THE ISRAELITES HAD ALWAYS BEEN SLOW TO BELIEVE GOD. 1:3. IN THE 40TH AND FINAL YEAR OF ISRAEL’S WILDERNESS WANDERINGS MOSES GAVE HIS SPEECHES, WORDS THAT THE LORD (STEPHEN YAHWEH) HAD GIVEN HIM. MOSES ACTED ON THE AUTHORITY OF HIS GOD. IN THE OLD TESTAMENT, GOD WAS ADDRESSED AS STEPHEN YAHWEH WHEN THE WRITERS WANTED TO STRESS THE PERSONAL NATURE OF THE ONE WHO ENTERS INTO COVENANT WITH PEOPLE AND IMPOSES HIS MORAL WILL ON THEM (CF. COMMENTS ON EX. 3:13–14). THEREFORE, STEPHEN YAHWEH IS THE NORMAL DESIGNATION FOR GOD WHEN HIS DEALINGS WITH ISRAEL ARE IN VIEW. SOMETIME AFTER THE CLOSE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT CANON (THE END OF THE FIFTH CENTURY B.C.) THE JEWS DEVELOPED A SUPERSTITION ABOUT PRONOUNCING THE NAME STEPHEN YAHWEH AND BEGAN TO PRONOUNCE IT WITH A ROUGH EQUIVALENT OF THE VOWELS FOR ADONAI (“LORD OR MASTER”) WHEN READING THE SCRIPTURES PUBLICLY. THIS WAS AN UNFORTUNATE LOSS FOR THE SAINTS. CHRISTIANS TODAY NO LONGER ADDRESS GOD AS STEPHEN YAHWEH IN THEIR PRAYERS BECAUSE GOD’S PERSONAL REVELATION OF HIMSELF IS FULLY REALIZED IN JESUS CHRIST (HEB. 1:1–2). NOW CHRISTIANS KNOW GOD EVEN MORE PERSONALLY AS THEIR FATHER [STEPHEN] (JOHN 14:6; 20:17; ROM. 1:17; 8:15; 1 COR. 1:3), A DESIGNATION ONLY INFREQUENTLY USED OF GOD IN THE OLD TESTAMENT. THE AUTHORITY BEHIND MOSES’ FIRST SPEECH (IN DEUT. 1:5–4:43) IS STEPHEN YAHWEH, ISRAEL’S PERSONAL GOD. 1:4. THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND TO MOSES’ FIRST SPEECH IS MADE COMPLETE WITH THE NOTE ABOUT THE DEFEAT OF TWO KINGS, SIHON AND OG (CF. NUM. 21:21–35; DEUT. 2:26–3:11).**

**THE FIRST ADDRESS BY MOSES: HISTORICAL PROLOGUE (1:5–4:43)**

**LIKE THE GREAT HITTITE SUZERAINTY TREATIES OF THE SECOND MILLENNIUM B.C., DEUTERONOMY INCLUDES A HISTORICAL PROLOGUE. AS IN THOSE TREATIES THE BENEVOLENT ACTS OF MIGHTY KINGS FOR THEIR VASSALS WERE GIVEN, SO GOD’S GRACIOUS AND MIGHTY ACTS FOR ISRAEL ARE RECALLED (1:5–3:29). A KING IN A SUZERAINTY TREATY, ON THE BASIS OF HIS BENEVOLENT ACTS, EXHORTED HIS PEOPLE TO BE COMPLETELY LOYAL TO HIM. SIMILARLY, GOD EXHORTED THE ISRAELITES TO FAITH AND OBEDIENCE (4:1–41).**

**THE REVIEW OF GOD’S MIGHTY ACTS BETWEEN HOREB AND BETH PEOR (1:5–3:29)**

**THE FIRST ATTEMPT TO ENTER THE PROMISED LAND (1:5–46)**

**THE BEGINNING AT HOREB (1:5–18)**

**1:5. WHEN MOSES EXPOUNDED THESE WORDS, ISRAEL WAS EAST OF THE JORDAN IN … MOAB. THE WORD EXPOUND IS SIGNIFICANT FOR IT MEANS THAT MOSES DID ALL HE COULD TO MAKE GOD’S WORD CLEAR TO THE ISRAELITES. THE WORD BĀ’ĒR IS USED ONLY HERE AND IN 27:8 (WHERE IT IS RENDERED BY THE ADVERBS VERY-CLEARLY) AND IN HABAKKUK 2:2 (“MAKE IT PLAIN”). BASICALLY, THE VERB MEANS “TO DIG” (E.G., TO DIG A WELL; “WELL” IS BE’ĒR). IN THE COURSE OF THESE SPEECHES MOSES SOUGHT IN VARIOUS WAYS TO INSTILL AN OBEDIENT SPIRIT IN HIS AUDIENCE. HE USED THE THREAT OF JUDGMENT, THE PROMISE OF REWARD, AND APPEALS TO GOD’S GRACIOUSNESS TO SEEK TO ACCOMPLISH THAT GOAL. THE WORD TRANSLATED LAW ACTUALLY MEANS “INSTRUCTION,” NOT MERELY A BODY OF LAWS IN THE MODERN SENSE. IT IS INSTRUCTION IN HOW TO WALK WITH GOD. 1:6–8. THE FIRST WORDS OF THE SPEECH, THE LORD (STEPHEN YAHWEH) OUR GOD, HAVE A PARTICULAR EMPHASIS IN THE HEBREW SENTENCE AND SET THE TONE FOR THE ENTIRE SPEECH. IN FACT, IN DEUTERONOMY THE WORDS “THE LORD OUR GOD” OCCUR ALMOST 50 TIMES. STEPHEN YAHWEH IS THE SOVEREIGN LEADER OF ISRAEL’S HISTORY. WHEN THE COVENANT WAS RATIFIED AND THE REVELATION AT SINAI (HOREB; CF. V. 2) COMPLETED, HE DIRECTED THE NATION TO CANAAN. THE BOUNDARIES (V. 7; CF. 11:24; EX. 23:31) GO BEYOND THE TERRITORY THAT ISRAEL EVER ACTUALLY POSSESSED. THOUGH DAVID’S AND SOLOMON’S EMPIRES EXTENDED TO THE EUPHRATES RIVER (CF. 2 SAM. 8:3; 1 KINGS 4:21), MANY OF THE PEOPLES IN THAT TERRITORY WERE SUBJECTS ONLY BY PAYING TRIBUTE; THEY WERE NOT CONQUERED BY ISRAELITES SO THE LAND WAS NOT FULLY POSSESSED BY THEM. (ON THE AMORITES SEE COMMENTS ON GEN. 14:13–16; EX. 3:8.) THE WESTERN FOOTHILLS IN CANAAN WERE TOWARD THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA NEXT TO THE SEACOAST. THE NEGEV WAS THE EXTENSIVE DESERT AREA WEST AND SOUTHWEST OF THE DEAD SEA. GOD’S COMMAND (DEUT. 1:8) TO TAKE POSSESSION (BY CONQUEST) OF SO VAST AN AREA SHOULD NOT HAVE SHOCKED HIS HEARERS. THE PROMISE OF THAT SAME LAND HAD BEEN GIVEN IN A COVENANT HUNDREDS OF YEARS EARLIER TO ABRAHAM (GEN. 15:18–21; 17:7–8), AND REITERATED TO ISAAC AND JACOB (GEN. 26:3–5; 28:13–15; 35:12). THESE THREE PATRIARCHS ARE MENTIONED SEVEN TIMES IN DEUTERONOMY (DEUT. 1:8; 6:10; 9:5, 27; 29:13; 30:20; 34:4). MOSES LEFT NO DOUBT ABOUT THE NATURE OF THIS PROMISE. IT WAS GRACIOUS AND IT WAS PERMANENT. WHEN THE LORD SEALS HIS PROMISE WITH AN OATH (SWORE; CF. 1:35) HE WILL NEVER CHANGE THAT PLAN (CF. PS. 110:4). SO, FROM ABRAHAM ON TO THE NATION AT MOSES’ TIME EACH ISRAELITE WAS TO REALIZE THAT HE STOOD IN THE LINE OF GOD’S INVIOLABLE PROMISE. THE COMMAND TO “TAKE POSSESSION” (WHICH OCCURS 18 TIMES IN DEUT. 1:8, 21, 39; 2:24; ETC.) DIRECTED ISRAEL’S ATTENTION TO MORE THAN THE LAND. THEY WERE TO BE ENCOURAGED TO FIGHT FOR THE LAND, REALIZING THAT IT WAS ALREADY GIVEN TO THEM THROUGH THE LORD’S COVENANTAL FAITHFULNESS. THIS EMPHASIS ON THE “LAND” IS UNUSUALLY STRONG IN DEUTERONOMY, FOR THIS WORD OCCURS ALMOST 200 TIMES. 1:9–18. IF THE NATION HAD ANY DOUBT ABOUT GOD’S INTENTION OR ABILITY TO FULFILL HIS ANCIENT COVENANT WITH ABRAHAM, SHE HAD ONLY TO LOOK AT HER PRESENT CONDITION. ISRAEL HAD BECOME SO NUMEROUS THAT THEY WERE LIKE THE STARS IN THE SKY (V. 10). THIS, OF COURSE, WAS ONE THING GOD HAD PROMISED ABRAHAM AND ISAAC (GEN. 15:5; 22:17; 26:4; EX. 32:13). THE NATION’S GROWTH THUS PROVED BOTH GOD’S INTENTION AND ABILITY TO FULFILL HIS ORIGINAL PROMISES TO ABRAHAM. MOSES WAS CONFIDENT GOD WOULD CONTINUE TO INCREASE … AND BLESS THEM, FOR THEY HAD THE SAME LORD AS THEIR ANCESTORS. THE GOD OF YOUR FATHERS IS A COMMON TITLE OF THE LORD IN DEUTERONOMY (CF. DEUT. 1:21; 4:1; 6:3; 12:1; 27:3). THE WORDS “THE LORD YOUR GOD” (1:10) OCCUR OVER 250 TIMES IN DEUTERONOMY, NO DOUBT TO AFFIRM TO ISRAEL THAT HER GOD IS NOT SOME DEAD PAGAN GOD BUT IS STEPHEN YAHWEH, THE LIVING LORD WHO MADE A COVENANT WITH HER. THE FULFILLMENT OF THIS PARTICULAR PROMISE, HOWEVER, HAD CAUSED A PROBLEM. THE NATION HAD BECOME TOO LARGE FOR MOSES TO GOVERN EFFECTIVELY (VV. 9, 12; CF. EX. 18:13–27), SO HE HAD TO APPOINT MILITARY LEADERS (COMMANDERS), OFFICIALS (PERHAPS SCRIBES OR ADMINISTRATORS), AND JUDGES (DEUT. 1:15–16). THE RECORDING OF THESE EVENTS IS NOT INCIDENTAL OR PARENTHETICAL TO MOSES’ DISCOURSE. THE CONCERN SHOWN IN THE CHOICE OF WISE AND RESPECTED MEN (V. 15; CF. V. 13) AND THE COMMAND FOR FAIRNESS (JUDGE FAIRLY, V. 16) AND ABSOLUTE IMPARTIALITY IN JUDGMENT (V. 17; CF. 16:19; PROV. 18:5; 24:23) MADE IT CLEAR THAT THE POINT OF THE CONQUEST WAS FOR ISRAEL TO ESTABLISH RIGHTEOUSNESS AND HOLINESS IN THE PROMISED LAND AND ULTIMATELY IN THE ENTIRE WORLD (CF. DEUT. 28:1, 9–10, 13). IT TOOK FAITH FOR ISRAEL TO CONQUER THE LAND, BUT IT ALSO TOOK FAITH FOR THEM TO ADMINISTER JUSTICE IN THE LAND, FOR HERE TOO THEY WOULD ENCOUNTER OPPOSITION.**

**THE FAILURE AT KADESH BARNEA (1:19–46)**

**1:19–21. AS THE FIRST STEP TOWARD CONQUERING THE LAND THE ISRAELITES HAD TO TRAVEL THROUGH THE VAST AND DREADFUL DESERT (CF. 8:15; 32:10), A JOURNEY FROM HOREB TO KADESH BARNEA OF MORE THAN 100 MILES OVER AN ESSENTIALLY WATERLESS WILDERNESS. THIS FIRST STEP WAS PERHAPS DESIGNED BY GOD TO CREATE A HUNGER IN THEIR HEARTS FOR THE FRUITFULNESS AND BEAUTY OF THE PROMISED LAND. IT ALSO GAVE GOD THE OPPORTUNITY TO DEMONSTRATE HIS FATHERLY LOVE FOR THEM AND HIS ABILITY TO PROTECT THEM IN A HOSTILE ENVIRONMENT (CF. 1:31). BOTH MOTIVATIONS—HUNGER FOR THE LAND AND CONFIDENCE IN GOD’S LOVE AND POWER—WERE NECESSARY IF THEY WERE TO ACCOMPLISH THE GOAL AHEAD OF THEM. MOSES’ COMMAND TO THE PEOPLE NOT TO BE AFRAID (ANOTHER EMPHASIS IN DEUT.: VV. 21, 29; 3:2, 22; 7:18; 20:1, 3; 31:6, 8; CF. JOSH. 1:9; 8:1) SHOWS THAT HE REALIZED THE ENORMITY OF THE TASK TO TAKE POSSESSION (CF. DEUT. 1:8) OF THE LAND OF THE AMORITES, BUT HE WAS ALSO AWARE OF THE SUFFICIENCY OF THEIR GOD FOR THAT TASK. 1:22–25. THE SECOND STEP INVOLVED SENDING OUT 12 MEN, 1 … FROM EACH TRIBE, AS SPIES INTO THE LAND. THOUGH THE PEOPLE INITIATED THIS PLAN (VV. 22–23), THE LORD AGREED TO IT (NUM. 13:1–2). IT WAS THEREFORE NOT AN ACT OF UNBELIEF INITIALLY BUT RATHER A WISE STEP IN THE NECESSARY PREPARATIONS FOR BATTLE. WHEN THE SPIES RETURNED, PART OF THEIR REPORT WAS ENCOURAGING. THE LAND WAS UNUSUALLY FRUITFUL (DEUT. 1:25; NUM. 13:23–27). THE VALLEY OF ESCHOL (LIT., CLUSTER OF GRAPES) WAS LOCATED NEAR HEBRON (CF. NUM. 13:22–23) AND EVEN TODAY THAT AREA IS FAMOUS FOR ITS GRAPES. FOR THIS REASON, IT WAS CALLED A GOOD LAND, A PHRASE USED 10 TIMES IN DEUTERONOMY (1:25, 35; 3:25; 4:21–22; 6:18; 8:7, 10; 9:6; 11:17) TO ENCOURAGE ISRAEL TO UNDERTAKE THE CONQUEST. MOSES DID NOT EXPLICITLY MENTION THE SECOND HALF OF THE SPIES’ REPORT HERE, BUT THEIR DESCRIPTION OF THE LAND’S INHABITANTS WAS SO TERRIFYING THAT ALMOST ALL THE PEOPLE WERE DISCOURAGED (NUM. 13:28–33). 1:26–33. IN THEIR FEAR THE ISRAELITES EXAGGERATED ABOUT THE SIZE OF THE CITIES IN CANAAN, SAYING THEY WERE WALLED UP TO THE SKY. THE MOST TERRIFYING FEATURE OF THE SPIES’ REPORT SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN THE MENTION OF THE PRESENCE OF THE ANAKITES (V. 28) IN CANAAN, TRADITIONALLY IDENTIFIED AS AN ANCIENT CLAN OF GIANTS (CF. NUM. 13:32–33). OUT OF COWARDICE THE PEOPLE REBELLED AND GRUMBLED AGAINST THE LORD (CF. EX. 15:24; 16:2; 17:3). THIS ILLUSTRATES HOW DELIBERATE, DEFIANT SIN CORRUPTS ONE’S VIEW OF GOD. THE PEOPLE CLAIMED, THE LORD HATES US, AND SAID HE DELIVERED THEM FROM EGYPT ONLY TO DESTROY THEM BY THE HANDS OF THE AMORITES. ISRAEL HAD REASONED IN A SIMILAR WAY IN THE WILDERNESS (EX. 16:3; 17:3). THEIR DESCRIPTION OF THE PEOPLE (STRONGER AND TALLER THAN WE ARE) REVEALS THAT THEY THOUGHT THEIR TASK WAS IMPOSSIBLE FOR BOTH THEMSELVES AND GOD. MOSES, ON THE OTHER HAND, WHO WAS NOT IN REBELLION AGAINST THE LORD, HAD THE SAME SET OF FACTS AS THE PEOPLE BUT INTERPRETED THOSE FACTS DIFFERENTLY. GOD DID NOT HATE HIS PEOPLE; HE LOVED THEM WITH THE TENDER LOVE A FATHER HAS FOR HIS HELPLESS LITTLE SON (DEUT. 1:31). ALL THE PEOPLE NEEDED TO DO WAS TO LOOK BACK INTO THEIR RECENT PAST WHEN GOD MIRACULOUSLY DELIVERED AND SUSTAINED THEM IN THEIR DESERT JOURNEY. FURTHERMORE, THE PEOPLE NEED NOT BE AFRAID (V. 29; CF. V. 21) BECAUSE THE LORD DID NOT INTEND TO DESTROY THEM BUT TO FIGHT FOR THEM (V. 30; CF. 3:22; 20:4). IRONICALLY MOSES REMINDED THE PEOPLE THAT GOD, BY MEANS OF THE PILLAR OF FIRE BY NIGHT AND … CLOUD BY DAY (CF. EX. 13:21) HAD EVEN ACTED AS A SPY FOR THEM. THE HEBREW WORD TÛR (SEARCH OUT, DEUT. 1:33), IS THE SAME WORD USED IN NUMBERS 13:2–25 OF THE SPIES’ ACTIVITY! MOSES, IN CONTRAST WITH THE PEOPLE, RELIED ON THE WORD OF GOD AND HIS EXPERIENCE OF GOD IN HISTORY, ALLOWING THESE TWO REALITIES TO INTERPRET HIS CIRCUMSTANCES AND CONTROL HIS RESPONSE TO THE NEWS OF THE ANAKITES. THE PEOPLE’S OBSTINATE REFUSAL TO BE ENCOURAGED BY GOD’S WORKING FOR THEM IN THE PAST MAKES THIS PASSAGE AN ELOQUENT TESTIMONY TO THE FICKLENESS OF HUMAN HEARTS. A FEW “EXPERTS” (10 OF THE 12 SPIES) WERE ABLE TO OVERTURN THE FACTS OF GOD’S UNMISTAKABLE PROVIDENTIAL CARE. IT IS HARD TO IMAGINE THE STUPIDITY OF THE ISRAELITES’ UNBELIEF. YET PEOPLE TODAY OUGHT TO BE WARNED. THE PERVERSE VACILLATION DISPLAYED HERE IS NOT UNIQUELY ISRAELITE. JAMES NEEDED TO WARN HIS CHRISTIAN READERS—WHO AFTER THE CRUCIFIXION AND RESURRECTION OF THE LORD JESUS NEVER HAD CAUSE TO DOUBT GOD’S LOVE OR POWER—NOT TO APPROACH THEIR GOD WITH A VACILLATING SPIRIT (JAMES 1:5–8). 1:34–36. THE INTRODUCTION OF GOD’S JUDGMENT BY THE PHRASE WHEN THE LORD HEARD WHAT YOU SAID SUGGESTS GOD’S OMNISCIENCE (FOR THE PEOPLE ACTUALLY GRUMBLED SECRETLY IN THEIR TENTS, V. 27). ALSO, THE DECLARATION OF HIS DEVASTATING JUDGMENT ON THAT GENERATION (V. 35) CLEARLY PRESUPPOSES HIS OMNIPOTENCE. HE HAD SWORN (AFFIRMED BY OATH; CF. 4:31) TO ISRAEL’S FOREFATHERS TO FULFILL THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT (1:8). THE WORD “FOREFATHERS” OCCURS 21 TIMES IN DEUTERONOMY TO STRESS ISRAEL’S RELATIONSHIP TO THE COVENANT PROMISES THROUGH THE THREE MAJOR PATRIARCHS. GOD ALSO SWORE TO EXCLUDE EVERY WARRIOR (CF. 2:14) OF THE REBELLIOUS GENERATION FROM THE PROMISED LAND WITH ONLY CALEB (1:36) AND JOSHUA (V. 38) EXCEPTED (NUM. 14:36–38). THE COVENANTAL PROMISES TO ABRAHAM WERE NOT INVALIDATED BY THIS ACT OF JUDGMENT. THE DESCENDANTS OF ABRAHAM WOULD STILL BE GIVEN THE GOOD LAND, BUT IT WOULD BE GIVEN TO A MORE OBEDIENT GENERATION. THE COVENANT BELONGS TO ISRAEL, BUT ONLY AN OBEDIENT ISRAEL WILL ENJOY THE COVENANT. THE EXEMPTION OF JOSHUA AND CALEB FROM JUDGMENT CLEARLY ILLUSTRATED THIS POINT. CALEB, FOR EXAMPLE, FOLLOWED THE LORD WHOLEHEARTEDLY (CF. JOSH. 14:8–9, 14). 1:37–38. GOD’S JUDGMENT EVEN EXTENDED TO MOSES. GOD WAS INDIGNANT WITH AND DISAPPOINTED IN MOSES (AS REVEALED IN THE WORDS WITH ME ALSO, EMPHATIC IN HEB.; CF. 3:26; 4:21). WHEN MOSES SAID THAT HE WAS FORBIDDEN TO ENTER THE PROMISED LAND BECAUSE OF YOU HE WAS NOT LAYING THE ULTIMATE BLAME FOR HIS JUDGMENT ON THE PEOPLE. RATHER THE PEOPLE’S GRUMBLING CAUSED HIM TO SIN TOO. SO, HIS ASSISTANT JOSHUA (CF. EX. 24:13; 33:11) WOULD LEAD THE PEOPLE INTO THE LAND. 1:39–40. THE PEOPLE APPARENTLY USED THEIR CHILDREN AS AN EXCUSE FOR NOT ATTEMPTING TO ENTER THE LAND. VERSE 39 IS IMPORTANT FOR MORE THAN REVEALING THE RATIONALIZING EFFECTS OF UNBELIEF, FOR GOD SEEMS TO ACKNOWLEDGE A SO-CALLED “AGE OF ACCOUNTABILITY” OF CHILDREN. APPARENTLY, CHILDREN ARE NOT HELD ACCOUNTABLE BY GOD UNTIL THEY ARE AWARE OF THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN GOOD AND BAD. HOWEVER, NOWHERE DOES THE BIBLE STATE WHAT THAT AGE IS. THE CHILDREN WERE NOT HELD RESPONSIBLE FOR THEIR PARENTS’ COWARDICE BUT WERE ASSURED POSSESSION OF THE LAND, WHEREAS THE PARENTS WERE SENT BACK TO THE DESERT (CF. 2:1) TO DIE. THE AUTHOR OF HEBREWS LATER POINTED TO THE WILDERNESS STREWN WITH THE CORPSES OF THIS GENERATION AS A GRIM REMINDER OF THE CONSEQUENCES OF A BELIEVER’S LACK OF CONFIDENCE IN GOD’S POWER (HEB. 3:16–19). 1:41–46. WHEN THE DEVASTATING JUDGMENT WAS ANNOUNCED TO THE PEOPLE, THEY REALIZED THE ENORMITY OF THEIR SIN AND RESPONDED WITH AN IMMEDIATE CONFESSION (WE HAVE SINNED AGAINST THE LORD) AND A READINESS TO GO TO BATTLE IMMEDIATELY. BUT THEN IT WAS TOO LATE, FOR GOD HAD ALREADY SWORN TO JUDGE THEM. THE INSINCERITY OF THEIR CONFESSION WAS MADE EVIDENT IN A SECOND ACT OF REBELLION. THE FICKLENESS OF THE PEOPLE IS AGAIN UNDERSCORED. THEY REBELLED AT FIRST OUT OF COWARDICE AND UNBELIEF IN THE LORD’S ABILITY TO FIGHT FOR THEM. THEY REBELLED A SECOND TIME IN ARROGANCE (V. 43) THINKING THEY COULD WIN THE BATTLE WITHOUT HIS HELP. THEIR DEFEAT BY THE AMORITES WHO CHASED THEM LIKE A SWARM OF BEES IN THE HILL COUNTRY (CF. V. 41B), MADE IT PLAIN THAT THEY WERE UNDER THE RESOLUTE AND INESCAPABLE JUDGMENT OF THEIR GOD (CF. NUM. 14:40–45). THE EXACT LOCATION OF THE CITY OF HORMAH IS NOT KNOWN, BUT IT WAS IN THE NEGEV, THE SOUTHERN PORTION OF CANAAN, LATER ASSIGNED TO JUDAH (JOSH. 15:30) AND THEN TO SIMEON (JOSH. 19:4; CF. JUD. 1:17). SEIR WAS AN EARLY NAME FOR EDOM (GEN. 32:3; DEUT. 2:4–5, 8, 12, 22, 29). THE PEOPLE WEPT OVER THEIR DEFEAT BUT GOD WOULD NOT CHANGE HIS MIND AND LET THEM ENTER THE LAND.**

**A NEW BEGINNING: THE JOURNEY THROUGH THE TRANSJORDAN (2:1–25)**

**THE JOURNEY FROM KADESH BARNEA TO MOUNT SEIR (2:1–8)**

**2:1. THE WORDS A LONG TIME DESIGNATE THE 40 YEARS OF WANDERING THROUGH THE WILDERNESS (CF. “MANY DAYS,” 1:46). IN SPITE OF THIS 40-YEAR JUDGMENT OF THAT UNGRATEFUL AND REBELLIOUS GENERATION GOD HAD NOT GIVEN UP HIS PEOPLE, FOR MOSES COULD STILL SAY THE LORD HAD DIRECTED ME. GOD WAS STILL GUIDING THE NATION THROUGH HIS PROPHET MOSES AND HAD NOT ABANDONED HIS PLAN TO GIVE THEM THE LAND OF CANAAN FOR THEIR HOME. 2:2–7. GOD THEN TOLD MOSES TO LEAVE THE HILL COUNTRY (WEST OF SEIR OR EDOM) AND GO THROUGH SEIR, THE HOME OF ESAU’S DESCENDANTS (CF. GEN. 36:8–9). GOD WARNED ISRAEL TO AVOID FIGHTING WITH THEM. THIS LIKELIHOOD OF WAR MAY HAVE BEEN BECAUSE OF THE SCARCITY OF RAINFALL IN THAT AREA (ONLY ABOUT FIVE INCHES ANNUALLY). A LARGE CONTINGENT OF PEOPLE MOVING THROUGH SEIR COULD EASILY DEPLETE THE EDOMITES’ STORE OF WATER. THEREFORE, GOD TOLD ISRAEL TO PAY FOR WHATEVER THEY ATE AND DRANK IN ORDER TO AVOID HOSTILITIES. (THE EDOMITES, IN FACT, REFUSED TO GRANT THE ISRAELITES RIGHT OF PASSAGE, NUM. 20:14–21.) THESE CAREFUL INSTRUCTIONS SHOW THAT THE ISRAELITES WERE NOT FREE TO TRY TO CONQUER ANY TERRITORY THEY WANTED. RATHER, GOD HAD PROMISED THEM A DEFINITE LAND, AND THE WAR THEY WOULD WAGE IN ORDER TO CONQUER CANAAN HAD A MORAL CHARACTER TO IT (THUS OT SCHOLARS HAVE REFERRED TO IT AS A “HOLY WAR“SEE COMMENTS ON DEUT. 7). THESE INSTRUCTIONS AS WELL AS THE CLAUSE I HAVE GIVEN ESAU THE HILL COUNTRY OF SEIR (2:5) SHOW THAT THE LORD IS SOVEREIGN OVER ALL LANDS AND ALL PEOPLES. THIS SOVEREIGNTY SHOULD HAVE ENCOURAGED THE ISRAELITES TO ENTER CANAAN AND FIGHT WITH COURAGE. FOR SINCE GOD HONORED THE RIGHT OF EDOM—AND ALSO MOAB (VV. 8–9) AND AMMON (VV. 19)—TO POSSESS THEIR LAND, HOW MUCH MORE WOULD HE HONOR ISRAEL’S RIGHT TO POSSESS CANAAN, WHICH WAS GUARANTEED TO THEM BY HIS COVENANTAL OATH TO THE PATRIARCHS! THE LORD’S PROTECTIVE CARE OF ISRAEL IN THE VAST DESERT FOR 40 YEARS (V. 7) ALSO MOTIVATED THEM TO OBEY HIS IMMEDIATE INSTRUCTIONS. 2:8. INSTEAD OF GOING THROUGH SEIR (EDOM) UP THE ARABAH ROAD TO THE SOUTHERN PART OF CANAAN, THE ISRAELITES TRAVELED NORTH ALONG THE EAST SIDE OF EDOM (CF. COMMENTS ON V. 29) UP THROUGH MOAB (CF. V. 18). (SEE THE MAP “POSSIBLE ROUTE OF THE EXODUS,” NEAR NUM. 33:1–5.) ELATH IS A LATER NAME FOR EZION GEBER, A SEAPORT AT THE GULF OF AQABAH.**

**THE JOURNEY PAST MOAB AND AMMON (2:9–25)**

**2:9–13. AFTER GOD’S COMMAND TO TREAT THE MOABITES (THE CITY OF AR WAS IN MOAB), LOT’S DESCENDANTS (GEN. 19:36–37), AS CAREFULLY AS THE EDOMITES (DEUT. 2:4–6), A POST-MOSAIC EDITOR INSERTED AN EXPLANATORY NOTE (VV. 10–12). THOUGH IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO DETERMINE PRECISELY WHEN VERSES 10–12 WERE INSERTED, VERSE 12 INDICATES THAT IT WAS AFTER THE INITIAL CONQUEST OF THE LAND. EDITORIAL NOTES IN THE PENTATEUCH DO NO HARM TO THE DOCTRINE OF BIBLICAL INSPIRATION (SEE “DATE AND AUTHORSHIP” IN THE INTRODUCTION). INSPIRATION REFERS TO THE FINAL PRODUCT RATHER THAN TO THE MANNER OF WRITINGS. THE ORIGINAL TEXTS OF SCRIPTURE ARE “GOD-BREATHED” (2 TIM. 3:16), AND THEREFORE CONTAIN NO ERRORS, FOR GOD CANNOT LIE (TITUS 1:2). THE HOLY SPIRIT SUPERINTENDED THE WORK OF EDITORS JUST AS HE DID THE HISTORICAL RESEARCH OF LUKE (LUKE 1:1–4) SO THAT THE FINAL WORDS OF THE TEXT, THOUGH OBTAINED BY DIFFERENT METHODS, ARE THE WORDS INTENDED BY GOD. IT WAS THIS FINAL TEXT (INCLUDING EDITORIAL INSERTIONS) THAT JESUS CHRIST PRONOUNCED PERFECT (E.G., MATT. 5:18; JOHN 10:35). ON THE ANAKITES (DEUT. 2:11) SEE COMMENTS ON 1:28. THE REPHAITES WERE AN ANCIENT TRIBE KNOWN FOR THEIR TALL STATURE (ALSO MENTIONED IN GEN. 14:5; 15:20; DEUT. 2:20; 3:11, 13; JOSH. 12:4; 13:12; 17:15; 1 CHRON. 20:4). THE MOABITES CALLED THE REPHAITES EMITES, WHICH MEANS “TERRORS” OR “DREADED ONES.” THE HORITES MAY HAVE BEEN THE NON-SEMITIC HURRIAN PEOPLE WHO LIVED IN SCATTERED GROUPS IN PALESTINE, SYRIA, AND MESOPOTAMIA. THEY OCCUPIED SEIR BEFORE ESAU MOVED THERE (GEN. 14:6; 36:8–9, 20) AND DROVE THEM OUT. THE FACT THAT THE MOABITES COULD DISPOSSESS THESE STRONG … NUMEROUS, AND … TALL PEOPLE UNDERSCORED ISRAEL’S COWARDICE AND FAITHLESSNESS, WHO EVEN WITH GOD’S HELP SHRANK BACK FROM THESE SAME PEOPLE (CF. DEUT. 1:28; NUM. 13:28, 33). THESE EXPLANATORY NOTES LEAVE THE IMPRESSION THAT NO ENEMY IS INVINCIBLE. IF THE MOABITES COULD DRIVE OUT THE ANAKITES (EMITES) AND IF ESAU’S DESCENDANTS COULD EXPEL THE HORITES, THEN SURELY GOD COULD GIVE CANAAN TO ISRAEL. THIS PUTS GOD’S COMMAND TO CROSS THE ZERED VALLEY IN MOAB (DEUT. 2:13) IN A FRESH LIGHT. 2:14–15. MOSES AGAIN REMINDED HIS AUDIENCE OF THE TERRIBLE JUDGMENT THAT HIS OWN REBELLIOUS GENERATION HAD SUFFERED (1:35, 39). HE MADE IT CLEAR THAT THE ENTIRE GENERATION OF FIGHTING MEN (CF. 2:16) DID NOT DIE OF NATURAL DEATHS DURING THE PREVIOUS 38 YEARS IN THE WILDERNESS. THE FACT THAT THE, LORD’S HAND WAS AGAINST A PEOPLE OFTEN MEANT THAT HE SENT A DESTROYING PESTILENCE AGAINST THEM (CF. EX. 9:15; 1 SAM. 5:6–7, 9, 11; 6:3, 5, 9; 2 SAM. 24:17). ALSO, THE FIRST PART OF DEUTERONOMY 2:15 SHOULD BE RENDERED, “THE LORD’S HAND WAS AGAINST THEM TO PANIC [OR CONFUSE] THEM.” THE VERB FOR “PANIC OR CONFUSE” (HĀMAM) IS USED FOR THE DIVINELY INSPIRED PANIC THAT GOD SENT ON MANY OF ISRAEL’S ENEMIES SO THAT THEY BECAME TOO CONFUSED OR TERRIFIED TO FIGHT COMPETENTLY. THUS BECAUSE OF THEIR REBELLION AGAINST THE LORD THIS FIRST GENERATION OF ISRAELITE WARRIORS ACTUALLY FOUND THEMSELVES OBJECTS OF GOD’S “HOLY WAR.” THEY LEFT THE PROTECTIVE CARE OF HIS HAND IN THEIR ARROGANT REBELLION ONLY TO FIND THAT HAND TURNED AGAINST THEM AS THEY ENDURED PAINFUL DEATHS OUTSIDE THE PROMISED LAND. BY REMINDING THE PEOPLE OF THIS, MOSES SAID IN EFFECT THAT GOD IS FAITHFUL TO HIS PROMISES AND HIS THREATS, AND HAS THE POWER TO EXECUTE BOTH. 2:16–19. GOD HAD TOLD ISRAEL NOT TO MOLEST ESAU’S DESCENDANTS (VV. 4–5) OR THE MOABITES (V. 9); NOW HE SAID THE SAME ABOUT THE AMMONITES. ISRAEL WAS NOT TO ATTACK THE AMMONITES FOR THEY, LIKE THE MOABITES, WERE LOT’S DESCENDANTS (CF. GEN. 19:36–38). 2:20–23. VERSES 20–23 ARE ANOTHER EDITORIAL INSERTION (CF. VV. 10–12). THE AMMONITES’ DESTRUCTION OF THE REPHAITES, CALLED ZAMZUMMITES, AND ESAU’S DESCENDANTS’ DESTRUCTION OF THE HORITES, ARE ATTRIBUTED ULTIMATELY TO GOD. FOR AS PAUL LATER WROTE, IT WAS HE WHO SET THE TIMES AND BOUNDARIES FOR ALL THE PEOPLES OF THE EARTH (ACTS 17:26). EVEN THE AVVITES LIVING AS FAR WEST AS GAZA WERE DESTROYED BY ANOTHER PEOPLE. CAPHTORITES IS PROBABLY AN EARLY NAME FOR THE PHILISTINES, WHO CAME FROM CAPHTOR, ANOTHER NAME FOR CRETE. 2:24–25. GOD’S COMMAND TO DISPOSSESS SIHON THE AMORITE KING OF THE CITY OF HESHBON IS ANOTHER ILLUSTRATION OF GOD’S SOVEREIGNTY OVER ALL NATIONS. THE TERROR AND FEAR GOD WOULD PUT IN THOSE NATIONS CONSTITUTED AN ESSENTIAL “WEAPON” FOR ISRAEL IN THIS WAR AND THE CONQUEST (CF. EX. 15:15; 23:27; NUM. 22:3; JOSH. 2:9, 11, 24; 5:1; 9:24).**

**THE CONQUEST OF THE TRANSJORDAN (2:26–3:29)**

**THE DEFEAT OF SIHON (2:26–37)**

**THIS SECTION (CF. NUM. 21:21–35) DESCRIBES THE BEGINNING OF ISRAEL’S CONQUEST OF THE LAND, A WAR THAT HAD BEEN DELAYED FOR 40 YEARS. 2:26–29. MOSES RECALLED HIS PEACEFUL OFFER TO SIHON, AN OFFER THAT HAD SEVERAL THINGS TO COMMEND IT TO THE AMORITE KING. MOSES PROMISED THEY WOULD NOT LEAVE THE MAIN ROAD, AND THEREFORE NO PLUNDER OF THE CROPS NEED BE FEARED. THE ISRAELITES HAD ALREADY PASSED THROUGH THE TERRITORIES OF EDOM AND MOAB WITHOUT WAR (V. 29). THE EDOMITES HAD REFUSED THE RIGHT OF PASSAGE TO THE ISRAELITES (NUM. 20:18–21). PROBABLY THE EDOMITES ALLOWED ISRAEL TO PASS BY ON THEIR EASTERN BORDER THOUGH THEY REFUSED TO LET THEM PASS THROUGH THE MIDDLE OF THEIR TERRITORY. MOSES ALSO TOLD SIHON THAT ISRAEL’S ULTIMATE DESTINY WAS NOT THE TERRITORY OF SIHON BUT WAS ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE JORDAN IN THE LAND THE LORD WAS GIVING THEM. 2:30–37. SIHON REJECTED THIS PEACEFUL OFFER. THE HEBREW VERBS USED TO EXPRESS THE “HARDENING” OF SIHON’S MIND AND WILL (HEART) CAN MEAN THAT THE LORD “CONFIRMED” WHAT WAS ALREADY IN SIHON’S HEART, NAMELY, HIS ARROGANCE AGAINST THE LORD AND HIS PEOPLE ISRAEL (CF. COMMENTS ON EX. 4:21 ON THE HARDENING OF PHARAOH’S HEART). SIHON’S ARROGANT REFUSAL WAS A SURE SIGN THAT HE HAD JUST THROWN AWAY HIS ONE CHANCE OF SURVIVAL. SINCE GOD CONTROLS ALL OF HISTORY, MOSES COULD SAY THAT THE LORD OUR GOD DELIVERED HIM OVER TO US. COMPLETELY DESTROYED (DEUT. 2:34) TRANSLATES ḤĀRAM, “TO GIVE OVER [TO THE LORD] OFTEN BY TOTAL DESTRUCTION” (SEE NIV MARG. AND COMMENTS ON JOSH. 6:21). IN DEUTERONOMY ḤĀRAM ALSO IS USED IN 3:6; 7:2; 20:17. SEE CHAPTER 7 FOR A DISCUSSION OF THE QUESTION OF THE MORALITY OF KILLING THE TOTAL POPULATION—MEN, WOMEN, AND CHILDREN. THE STATEMENT THAT NOT ONE TOWN WAS TOO STRONG FOR US WAS A SHARP REMINDER TO THE ISRAELITES. THE HEBREW SENTENCE LITERALLY READS “NOT A TOWN WAS TOO HIGH FOR US.” THE HIGH WALLS OF THE CANAANITE CITIES TERRIFIED THE FIRST GENERATION OF ISRAELITE WARRIORS (1:28) SO THAT THEY DISOBEYED THE LORD’S COMMAND TO ENTER THE LAND.**

**THE DEFEAT OF OG (3:1–11)**

**3:1–7. BASHAN WAS A LITTLE FARTHER NORTH THAN THE ISRAELITES NEEDED TO GO TO REACH THEIR POINT OF ENTRY INTO THE PROMISED LAND. HOWEVER, IN DEFEATING OG ON THE NORTH THEY WERE PROTECTING THEIR RIGHT FLANK WHEN THEY TURNED TO CROSS THE JORDAN. EDREI, WHERE THE BATTLE BEGAN, WAS ABOUT 30 MILES EAST OF THE SOUTHERN TIP OF THE SEA OF KINNERETH (SEA OF GALILEE). GOD’S COMMAND FOR ISRAEL TO BATTLE OG (DO NOT BE AFRAID; CF. COMMENTS ON 1:21) RESTED ON TWO ASSURANCES: GOD HAD HANDED HIM OVER TO ISRAEL, AND ISRAEL HAD RECENTLY GAINED VICTORY OVER SIHON. AGAIN, GOD WAS CREDITED WITH THE OUTCOME OF THE BATTLE (3:3; CF. 2:30–31). AND AS IN THE CASE OF SIHON’S CITIES (2:32–36), OG’S 60 CITIES (WITH HIGH WALLS, 3:5; SEE COMMENTS ON 2:36) COULD NOT RESTRAIN THE ISRAELITE WARRIORS. THE REGION OF ARGOB (3:4) WAS ANOTHER NAME FOR BASHAN OR WAS A PART OF BASHAN. IT WAS KNOWN AS THE LAND OF THE REPHAITES (V. 13). THE TRUST OF ISRAEL’S SOLDIERS IN THE WORD OF THEIR GOD CONTRASTS WITH THE UNBELIEVING WARRIORS REFERRED TO IN 1:28. ON THE TOTAL DESTRUCTION OF THE INHABITANTS (3:6) SEE THE COMMENTS ON ḤĀRAM IN 2:34 AND THOSE ON CHAPTER 7. 3:8–11. THESE VERSES SUMMARIZE THE CONQUEST OF THE TERRITORY CONTROLLED BY THE TWO TRANSJORDANIAN AMORITE KINGS, SIHON AND OG. THE ISRAELITES NEEDED THE ENCOURAGEMENT OF REPEATED REMINDERS OF GOD’S PAST FAITHFULNESS TO THEM. TWO ASPECTS OF THIS SUMMARY PARTICULARLY HEARTENED THE ISRAELITES. FIRST, THESE VERSES STRESS THE EXTENSIVE NATURE OF THE ISRAELITE CONQUEST: FROM THE ARNON GORGE TO MOUNT HERMON (CALLED SIRION BY THE PHOENICIANS OF SIDON AND CALLED SENIR BY THE AMORITES). SECOND, OG WAS ONE OF THE LAST OF THE REPHAITES THE ISRAELITES WOULD FACE IN BATTLE. OG’S IRON BED WAS PROBABLY HIS COFFIN (SARCOPHAGUS, NIV MARG.), WHICH MEASURED 6 FEET WIDE BY 13 ½ FEET LONG.**

**THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE CONQUERED LAND (3:12–22)**

**3:12–17. THE TRANSJORDAN WAS DIVIDED AMONG THE TRIBES OF REUBEN, GAD, AND THE HALF TRIBE OF MANASSEH. (SEE THE MAP “LAND ALLOTTED TO ISRAEL’S TRIBES,” NEAR JOSH. 13.) REUBEN RECEIVED THE MOABITE TERRITORY FROM THE ARNON GORGE TO HESHBON. GAD WAS GIVEN THE SOUTHERN HALF … OF GILEAD FROM HESHBON TO THE JABBOK RIVER. TO THE HALF TRIBE OF MANASSEH WENT THE NORTHERN PART OF GILEAD AND ALSO … BASHAN, WHICH WAS EAST OF THE SEA OF KINNERETH (LATER NAMED THE SEA OF GALILEE; SEE COMMENTS ON JOSH. 11:2). OG WAS OVER THIS NORTHERN PART OF GILEAD AND BASHAN. JAIR, A DESCENDANT OF MANASSEH, WAS SINGLED OUT FOR SPECIAL MENTION (DEUT. 3:14) BECAUSE OF HIS COURAGE IN CAPTURING THE WHOLE REGION OF ARGOB IN BASHAN (CF. V. 4; NUM. 32:41). AS A RESULT, THE AREA WAS NAMED AFTER HIM. LIKEWISE, TO MAKIR (DEUT. 3:15), A SUBTRIBE OF THE TRIBE OF MANASSEH, WAS GIVEN THE REST OF GILEAD BECAUSE THEY CONQUERED THAT TERRITORY (NUM. 32:34–40). 3:18–20. NUMBERS 32 RECORDS THE REQUEST OF TWO AND ONE-HALF TRIBES FOR THE TRANSJORDAN. THEY HAD ACQUIRED A LARGE NUMBER OF CATTLE AND SHEEP (CF. NUM. 32:1) AND THIS REGION WAS ESPECIALLY WELL SUITED FOR RAISING CATTLE. AT FIRST MOSES WAS ANGRY AT THEIR REQUEST, FEARING ANOTHER DEFECTION LIKE THAT AT KADESH BARNEA (NUM. 32:6–8, 14–15). BUT WHEN THE WARRIORS OF THE TRIBES PROMISED TO CROSS OVER THE JORDAN AND FIGHT TILL ALL ISRAEL HAD WON HER LAND, MOSES GRANTED THEIR REQUEST. SINCE THE TIME FOR BATTLE WAS DRAWING NEAR, THE TRIBES EAST OF THE JORDAN NEEDED THIS REMINDER OF THEIR PRIOR COMMITMENT (NUM. 32:16–19). THEY COULD LEAVE THEIR NEW HOMES AND FAMILY WITHOUT FEAR BECAUSE THE LORD HAD GIVEN THEM THIS LAND. THEY COULD CROSS OVER THE JORDAN RIVER AND FIGHT FEARLESSLY FOR THEIR BROTHERS AND THEN RETURN TO THEIR FAMILIES. 3:21–22. THESE TWO VERSES ARE A TRANSITION FROM THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE LAND (VV. 12–20) TO MOSES’ LOSS OF LEADERSHIP (VV. 23–29). MOSES HAD REMINDED HIS AUDIENCE THAT THE TIME FOR THE CONQUEST OF CANAAN WAS NEAR (VV. 18–20). YET JOSHUA, NOT MOSES, WOULD LEAD THE PEOPLE IN THAT CONQUEST. BY ENCOURAGING JOSHUA HERE, MOSES HIMSELF WAS OBEYING GOD’S COMMAND (1:38; 3:28). MOSES’ FIRM ASSURANCE THAT THE LORD HAD ACTED LIKE A WARRIOR FOR ISRAEL IN THE PAST AND WOULD DO SO IN THE FUTURE GREATLY ENCOURAGED ISRAEL’S FUTURE LEADER. JOSHUA NEED NOT BE AFRAID (CF. COMMENTS ON 1:17). MOSES’ WORDS ALSO REPRESENTED A MAJOR THEME IN DEUTERONOMY’S HISTORICAL PROLOGUE: THE BATTLE BELONGS TO STEPHEN YAHWEH (THE LORD YOUR GOD … WILL FIGHT FOR YOU; CF. 1:30; 20:4; ALSO NOTE 2:24–25, 31, 33, 36; 3:2–3).**

**MOSES FORBIDDEN TO ENTER THE PROMISED LAND (3:23–29)**

**3:23–25. GOD HAD MADE IT CLEAR TO MOSES THAT HE WOULD NOT BE PERMITTED TO ENTER THE PROMISED LAND BECAUSE OF HIS UNBELIEF AT THE WATERS OF MERIBAH (NUM. 20:12). HOWEVER, IN MOSES’ MIND A NEW TURN OF EVENTS WAS INDICATED BY HIS STATEMENT YOU HAVE BEGUN TO SHOW TO YOUR SERVANT YOUR GREATNESS. THIS PROBABLY REFERS TO THE LORD’S OMNIPOTENCE REVEALED IN THE CONQUEST OF SIHON AND OG, TRANSJORDAN’S TWO AMORITE KINGS, RATHER THAN TO THE EVENTS OF THE EXODUS FROM EGYPT. SINCE GOD LET MOSES TAKE PART IN CONQUERING THE TRANSJORDAN, HE MAY HAVE THOUGHT THE LORD INTENDED TO RESCIND HIS EARLIER PROHIBITION ABOUT HIS NOT ENTERING CANAAN. THEREFORE, THIS SEEMED AN OPPORTUNE TIME FOR HIM TO ASK GOD ABOUT HIS GOING IN AFTER ALL TO SEE THE GOOD LAND (CF. COMMENTS ON DEUT. 1:25). THE QUESTION IN 3:24 BEGINNING WITH FOR WHAT GOD DOES NOT IMPLY THAT MOSES BELIEVED IN THE EXISTENCE OF OTHER GODS. IT IS A RHETORICAL QUESTION, ONE OF THE WAYS THE OLD TESTAMENT EXPRESSES THE INCOMPARABILITY OF THE LORD. HE IS TOTALLY UNIQUE IN HIS ATTRIBUTES; NO ONE COMPARES WITH HIM. 3:26–29. GOD WOULD NOT LISTEN TO MOSES, THAT IS, HE WOULD NOT GRANT HIS REQUEST. IN FACT, THE HEBREW SENTENCE IMPLIES THAT MOSES HAD KEPT ON ASKING GOD FOR PERMISSION, AND THAT GOD BECAME “FURIOUS” (AN INTENSIVE FORM OF ‘ĀḆAR) WITH HIM (NIV HAS A MILDER WORD, ANGRY; CF. 1:37; 4:21). THIS CONVERSATION REVEALS SOMETHING OF THE INTIMACY OF MOSES’ RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD. IT ALSO HEIGHTENS THE FEELING OF TRAGEDY IN THE EXPERIENCE OF A MAN WHO DEVOTED HIS LIFE TO FULFILLING GOD’S PROMISE FOR ISRAEL BUT KNEW HE WOULD NEVER SEE ITS COMPLETION. BUT MOSES COULD AT LEAST LOOK AT THE LAND FROM THE PEAK OF MOUNT PISGAH. SINCE MOSES COULD NOT LEAD THE PEOPLE ACROSS JORDAN, GOD REMINDED HIM OF HIS RESPONSIBILITY TO PREPARE JOSHUA FOR LEADERSHIP. JOSHUA’S SUCCESSION TO LEADERSHIP IS AN IMPORTANT THEME IN DEUTERONOMY. THIS IS THE THIRD TIME IT HAS BEEN MENTIONED IN ONLY THREE CHAPTERS (1:38; 3:21, 28). BY MERELY REPEATING GOD’S WORDS ON THIS SUBJECT TO THE PEOPLE, MOSES WAS ENCOURAGING JOSHUA AND SHOWING THE PEOPLE THAT JOSHUA WAS THEIR NEXT LEADER.**

**AN EXHORTATION TO OBEY THE LAW AND RESIST IDOLATRY (4:1–43)**

**THE PURPOSE OF THE LAW (4:1–8)**

**4:1–2. THE WORDS HEAR NOW INTRODUCE THE PRACTICAL CONCLUSIONS TO BE DRAWN FROM ISRAEL’S EXPERIENCE IN THE WILDERNESS. BECAUSE OF THE LORD’S FAITHFULNESS, MERCY, AND JUDGMENT DISPLAYED IN HER RECENT HISTORY, THE NATION WAS RESPONSIBLE TO OBEY HIS DECREES AND LAWS UNCONDITIONALLY. “DECREES” MAY REFER TO PERMANENT RULES OF CONDUCT, STATUTORY LAWS WHICH ARE IMMUTABLE, WHILE “LAWS” MAY REFER TO CASE LAWS, DECISIONS HANDED DOWN BY JUDGES. IT WAS CRUCIAL THAT MOSES TEACH ISRAEL THIS LAW, FOR THE MOTIVE CLAUSE SO THAT YOU MAY LIVE AND … TAKE POSSESSION OF THE LAND INDICATES THAT A FULL ENJOYMENT OF LIFE IS BASED ON OBEYING GOD’S LAW. ISRAEL MUST NOT ADD TO IT AND THEREBY WEAKEN ITS POWER, AS THE PHARISEES AND LATER CHRISTIAN LEGALISTS WOULD DO. NOR MUST ISRAEL SUBTRACT ANYTHING FROM IT TO ACCOMMODATE THE WILLFULNESS OR WEAKNESS OF HUMAN NATURE. 4:3–4. MOSES REFERRED TO THE INCIDENT AT BAAL PEOR IN MOAB TO ILLUSTRATE FROM THE ISRAELITES’ OWN HISTORY THAT THEIR VERY LIVES DEPENDED ON OBEYING GOD’S LAW. AT BAAL OF PEOR ALL THE ISRAELITES WHO ENTERED INTO SPIRITUAL AND PHYSICAL ADULTERY WITH THE MOABITE WOMEN WERE EITHER PUT TO DEATH BY THE SWORD OR DIED IN A PLAGUE (24,000 DIED IN THE PLAGUE). ON THE OTHER HAND, ALL … WHO HELD FAST TO THE LORD LIVED. THIS INCIDENT IS ALSO MENTIONED IN NUMBERS 25:1–9; PSALM 106:28–29; HOSEA 9:10. 4:5–8. ONE PURPOSE OF THE LAW WAS TO GIVE THE ISRAELITES A FULL LIFE AS THEY OBEYED GOD (VV. 1–4). IN VERSES 5–8 ANOTHER PURPOSE OF THE LAW IS REVEALED: TO MAKE ISRAEL MORALLY AND SPIRITUALLY UNIQUE AMONG ALL THE NATIONS AND THEREBY DRAW OTHER NATIONS TO THE LORD. IN CONTRAST WITH ALL OTHER NATIONS ISRAEL WAS NOT TO BE DISTINGUISHED BY HER NATURAL RESOURCES, WEALTH, OR MILITARY MIGHT, BUT BY HER MORAL SKILL AND CLOSE RELATIONSHIP TO GOD, BOTH OF WHICH WOULD COME FROM HER OBEYING HER MORAL CONSTITUTION. IF ISRAEL WOULD OBEY THE LAW, SHE WOULD BE THE ENVY OF ALL NATIONS. THEY WOULD SEE HER AS (A) BEING WISE AND UNDERSTANDING, (B) HAVING A GOD WHO IS NEAR HER, AND (C) POSSESSING RIGHTEOUS DECREES AND LAWS.**

**THE PURPOSE OF THE EXPERIENCE AT HOREB (4:9–14)**

**4:9. THE SOLEMN ADMONITION TO BE CAREFUL (AN ADMONITION THAT OCCURS NUMEROUS TIMES IN DEUT.) AND TO WATCH IMPLIES THAT THE ISRAELITES CONSTANTLY FACED THE DANGER OF FALLING INTO A SIN WHICH WOULD HAVE BROUGHT THEM TO THE BRINK OF ANNIHILATION AS A NATION. THAT SIN WAS IDOLATRY (VV. 15–31). THE NATION COULD BECOME IDOLATROUS IN TWO RELATED WAYS. THE DEPRAVITY OF THE HUMAN MIND IS SO GREAT THAT THE GREAT DEEDS OF GOD FOR HIS PEOPLE (E.G., THE EXODUS AND GIVING OF THE LAW AT HOREB) MIGHT SLIP FROM THEIR HEARTS IF THEY DID NOT CONSTANTLY REMIND THEMSELVES OF GOD’S MIGHTY WORKS. OR SECOND, THROUGH LAZINESS OR APATHY PARENTS MIGHT FAIL TO TEACH THEM TO THEIR CHILDREN AND THUS THEIR CHILDREN WOULD BECOME IDOLATERS. DEUTERONOMY LAYS GREAT STRESS NOT ON THE PRIESTS OR OTHER RELIGIOUS LEADERS, BUT ON THE PARENTS AS THE ONES RESPONSIBLE FOR THEIR CHILDREN’S SPIRITUAL EDUCATION (VV. 9–10; 6:7, 20; 11:19; 31:13; 32:46). GOD TRUSTS HIS GREAT EVENTS OF REVELATION, SUCH AS HIS GIVING THE LAW AT SINAI, TO FAITHFUL STEWARDS WHO MUST NEVER FORGET THEM AND WHO MUST PASS THEM ON TO THEIR CHILDREN. (NOT FORGETTING IS ANOTHER EMPHASIS IN DEUT., OCCURRING IN 4:9, 23, 31; 6:12; 8:11, 14, 19; 9:7; 25:19.) 4:10–14. THE EXPERIENCE AT HOREB WAS DESIGNED TO PRODUCE A FEAR OF GOD IN THE HEARTS OF THE PEOPLE SO THAT A COVENANT BETWEEN THEM AND THE LORD COULD BE POSSIBLE. IN THE OLD TESTAMENT THE FEAR OF GOD IS MORE THAN AWE OR REVERENCE THOUGH IT INCLUDES BOTH. FEARING GOD IS BECOMING SO ACUTELY AWARE OF HIS MORAL PURITY AND OMNIPOTENCE THAT ONE IS GENUINELY AFRAID TO DISOBEY HIM. FEARING GOD ALSO INCLUDES RESPONDING TO HIM IN WORSHIP, SERVICE, TRUST, OBEDIENCE, AND COMMITMENT. THAT DAY ON HOREB GOD’S OMNIPOTENCE WAS DISPLAYED IN THE FIRE … BLACK CLOUDS … DEEP DARKNESS, AND THE VOICE OF GOD THAT THUNDERED FROM THE HEAVENS. HIS MORAL PURITY WAS DISPLAYED IN HIS TEN COMMANDMENTS, CALLED HIS COVENANT. FROM THIS EXPERIENCE THE ISRAELITES SHOULD HAVE LEARNED TO FEAR GOD AS A PERSON WHO IS SPIRITUAL (YOU … SAW NO FORM; CF. V. 15; THERE WAS ONLY A VOICE) AND AS A PERSON WHO IS TRANSCENDENT. THIS LATTER POINT WAS PRESSED HOME BY THE FACT THAT HE COMMANDED THE ISRAELITES TO FOLLOW HIS COMMANDMENTS, DECREES, AND LAWS (WHICH MOSES WOULD TEACH THEM, VV. 1, 14). THE GIVING OF THE LAW THAT DAY THUS TAUGHT THE NATION THAT THEIR GOD WAS A SPIRITUAL PERSON WHO COULD NOT BE MANIPULATED BUT INSTEAD IMPOSED HIS MORAL WILL ON THEM. THEY BROUGHT AWAY NO IMAGES OF GOD FROM HOREB ON THAT DAY; GOD GAVE ONLY TWO STONE TABLETS (PROBABLY EACH TABLET WAS COMPLETE WITH ALL TEN COMMANDMENTS, IN KEEPING WITH ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN PRACTICE TO HAVE DUPLICATES OF SUCH COVENANT DOCUMENTS). THUS, IN CONTRAST WITH ALL THE RELIGIONS OF THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST THE WORD OF ISRAEL’S GOD BECAME THE FOUNDATION OF THEIR RELIGION.**

**THE PROHIBITION AGAINST SEXUAL IDOLATRY (4:15–24)**

**4:15–20. MOSES SPELLED OUT ONE OF THE IMPLICATIONS CONTAINED IN THE EXPERIENCE AT HOREB. SINCE THE ISRAELITES SAW NO FORM (CF. V. 12) OF GOD ON THAT DAY THEY WERE NEVER TO ATTEMPT TO REPRESENT HIM WITH ANY FORM. THE RELIGIONS OF THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST WORSHIPED IDOLS IN THE SHAPES OF VARIOUS CREATURES MENTIONED IN VERSES 16–18. ISRAEL WAS NEVER TO LIMIT HER GOD IN THIS WAY FOR IT WOULD CALL HIS TRANSCENDENCE INTO QUESTION AND IT WOULD MAKE THEM CORRUPT (CF. V. 25). THE WORSHIP OF ASTRAL DEITIES WAS ALSO COMMON IN THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST. THE SUN WAS WORSHIPED AS THE GOD RE OR ATEN IN EGYPT, AND IN THE NEW LAND TO WHICH THE ISRAELITES WERE GOING ASTRAL WORSHIP WAS ALSO COMMON. (E.G., THE CITY OF JERICHO WAS DEDICATED TO THE WORSHIP OF THE MOON GOD.) THE ISRAELITES WERE NOT TO LET THEMSELVES BE ENTICED (V. 19) INTO THE WORSHIP OF THE LUMINARIES (CF. 17:2–5) WHICH GOD HAS PROVIDED FOR ALL THE NATIONS UNDER HEAVEN. ANOTHER REASON ISRAEL WAS TO DENOUNCE ALL FORMS OF IDOLATRY IS THAT SHE WAS TAKEN OUT OF EGYPT, AN IDOLATROUS LAND WHERE THE IMAGES OF DOZENS OF FALSE GODS WERE WORSHIPED. (THE FACT THAT ISRAEL WAS TAKEN OUT OF EGYPT IS MENTIONED ABOUT 20 TIMES IN DEUT.) IN SLAVERY TO EGYPT, ISRAEL’S CONDITION WAS LIKE BEING IN AN IRON-SMELTING FURNACE. BUT NOW ISRAEL WAS GOD’S INHERITANCE, THAT IS, HIS OWN UNIQUE POSSESSION (CF. 9:26, 29; PSS. 28:9; 33:12; 68:9; 78:62, 71; 79:1; 94:14; JOEL 2:17; 3:2; MICAH 7:14, 18). 4:21–24. THOUGH MOSES KNEW HE WOULD NOT … ENTER THE PROMISED LAND (THE GOOD LAND; CF. 1:25) HE STILL DESIRED IT. SO AGAIN, HE MENTIONED GOD’S DISPLEASURE WITH HIM (CF. 3:26–27), AND REMINDED THE ISRAELITES THAT HE WOULD NOT BE THERE TO ENFORCE THE PROHIBITION AGAINST IDOLATRY. HOWEVER, THE LORD WOULD ENFORCE THE COMMAND. LIKE A CONSUMING FIRE (4:24) HE WOULD PURIFY WHAT IS PRECIOUS (JUST AS FIRE PURIFIES PRECIOUS METALS) AND DESTROY WHAT IS WORTHLESS. AS A JEALOUS GOD (CF. 5:9; 32:16, 21; SEE COMMENTS ON 6:15) HE WILL NOT ALLOW ANOTHER TO HAVE THE HONOR THAT IS DUE HIM ALONE (ISA. 42:8; 48:11). THEREFORE, ISRAEL NEEDED TO BE EXTREMELY CAREFUL TO REMEMBER THE COVENANT (CF. DEUT. 4:9).**

**THE PREDICTED DISPERSION (4:25–31)**

**4:25–31. AFTER THE STRONG WARNING AGAINST IDOLATRY (VV. 15–24) MOSES SPELLED OUT THE CONSEQUENCES OF NEGLECTING THAT WARNING (VV. 25–31). AFTER THE ISRAELITES HAD BEEN IN THE LAND A LONG TIME AND HAD BECOME SECURE, THEY MIGHT FORGET THE LORD AND THEIR NEED TO TRUST HIM ALONE. THEY WOULD THEN BE EASILY SEDUCED INTO IDOLATROUS WORSHIP, WHICH WOULD CORRUPT THEM (CF. VV. 15–16) AND PROVOKE GOD’S ANGER. MOSES INVOKED HEAVEN AND EARTH AS WITNESSES BECAUSE OF THEIR PERMANENCE AND UNCHANGING CHARACTER IN CONTRAST WITH THE FICKLENESS OF HUMAN HEARTS. THIS CERTAIN JUDGMENT WOULD TAKE TWO FORMS, A DISPERSION AMONG THE … NATIONS WITH A GREAT LOSS OF LIFE (V. 27) AND A GIVING OVER TO IDOLATRY (V. 28). THIS PROPHECY WAS FULFILLED IN THE ASSYRIAN AND BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITIES, BUT ITS GREATEST FULFILLMENT CAME IN THE DISPERSION OF ISRAEL AFTER SHE REJECTED JESUS CHRIST. THE LATER DAYS (V. 30) MAY REFER TO ANY TIME AFTER THE INITIAL DISPERSIONS, BUT THEIR ULTIMATE REFERENCE IS TO THE TIME WHEN THE LORD JESUS WILL RETURN TO EARTH TO ESTABLISH HIS 1,000-YEAR KINGDOM (REV. 20:4). AT THAT TIME A REPENTANT ISRAEL WILL FINALLY SEEK THE LORD … LOOK FOR HIM WITH ALL HER HEART AND … SOUL AND WILL OBEY HIM. (IN DEUT., MOSES REPEATEDLY STRESSED THE NEED FOR WHOLEHEARTED DEVOTION TO THE LORD BY THE WORDS “WITH ALL YOUR HEART AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL“--- SEE DEUT. 4:29; 6:5; 10:12; 11:13; 13:3; 26:16; 30:6, 10.) ISRAEL’S FINAL RETURN TO HER SAVIOR WILL BE DUE NOT TO ANY GOODNESS OF THEIR HUMAN HEARTS, BUT RATHER TO HER MERCIFUL GOD. THE HEBREW WORD TRANSLATED “MERCIFUL” (RAḤÛM) REFERS TO THE TENDER COMPASSION OF A MOTHER TOWARD HER HELPLESS INFANT. SO EVEN IF ISRAEL FORGETS HER GOD HE WILL NOT ABANDON HIS MORALLY HELPLESS CHILDREN BECAUSE HE HAS THE TENDER COMPASSION OF A MOTHER AND BECAUSE HE MADE AN INVIOLABLE COVENANT WITH ABRAHAM AND CONFIRMED IT TO ISAAC AND JACOB (GEN. 15:18–21; 17:7–8; 26:3–5; 28:13–15; 35:12) BY OATH (MENTIONED 16 TIMES IN DEUT.). SINCE GOD WILL NOT FORGET HIS COVENANT (DEUT. 4:31) NEITHER SHOULD ISRAEL (V. 23).**

**THE COMMAND TO KNOW THAT THE LORD ALONE IS GOD (4:32–40)**

**4:32–34. HAVING SPOKEN OF THE FUTURE (“LATER DAYS,” V. 30), MOSES THEN SPOKE OF THE FORMER DAYS—FROM CREATION TO SINAI. ISRAEL HAD HAD A TOTALLY UNIQUE EXPERIENCE OF HER GOD. NO OTHER NATION COULD CLAIM TO HAVE HEARD THE VOICE OF GOD SPEAKING OUT OF FIRE. NO OTHER NATION COULD POINT TO A GOD WHO HAD CREATED IT BY REDEEMING IT FROM A STRONGER NATION. FURTHERMORE, THE TRUE ORIGIN OF THIS HISTORICAL REDEMPTION WAS NOT OPEN TO VARIOUS EXPLANATIONS. THE VOICE OF GOD, THE MIRACULOUS SIGNS AND WONDERS (CF. 6:22; 7:19; 26:8; 29:3), GREAT AND AWESOME DEEDS (E.G., THE PLAGUES, THE PILLAR OF FIRE, THE PARTING OF THE RED SEA, MANNA), AND OTHER PHENOMENA MADE IT CLEAR THAT IT WAS GOD WHO REDEEMED THE ISRAELITES. AND HE DID SO IN A SHOW OF POWER AND STRENGTH (BY A MIGHTY HAND AND AN OUTSTRETCHED ARM; CF. 5:15; 7:19; 11:2; PS. 136:12; EZEK. 20:33–34). 4:35–38. THE PURPOSE OF THIS MIRACULOUS DELIVERANCE WAS TO ENABLE THE ISRAELITES TO KNOW, NOT SIMPLY BY THEIR INTELLECT BUT IN THEIR EXPERIENCE, THAT THE LORD IS GOD ALONE. THE EXPERIENCE OF HEARING FROM HEAVEN … HIS AWESOME VOICE AND ON EARTH SEEING HIS GREAT FIRE (AT SINAI, EX. 19:16–20) WAS NOT PRIMARILY AIMED AT INSTRUCTING THEIR MINDS, BUT RATHER AT THE DISCIPLINE OF THEIR MORAL NATURE. IT WAS MEANT TO INSTILL A SPIRIT OF SUBMISSION AND TO QUELL THE NATURAL INCLINATION OF THE HUMAN HEART TO ARROGANCE. THE EXPERIENCE OF HIS VOICE AND THE FIRE, THEN, WAS DESIGNED TO GIVE THEM MORE THAN THE CONTENT OF HIS COMMANDMENTS. IT WAS DESIGNED TO MAKE THEM FEAR TO DISOBEY THOSE COMMANDMENTS. THE REASON THE LORD HAD TAKEN SUCH CARE TO GIVE ISRAEL THIS EXTENSIVE MORAL EDUCATION WAS THAT HE HAD LOVED THEIR FOREFATHERS AND HAD PROMISED IN A COVENANT TO LOVE THEIR DESCENDANTS. BECAUSE OF THAT LOVE HE DELIVERED THEM FROM EGYPT (CF. DEUT. 4:20), A NATION STRONGER THAN ISRAEL. AND HE WOULD DRIVE OUT FROM CANAAN NATIONS … STRONGER THAN ISRAEL. ALSO, HE WOULD GIVE THAT LAND TO ISRAEL AS HER INHERITANCE (CF. COMMENTS ON V. 21). 4:39–40. IN LIGHT OF SUCH ELECTING GRACE AND SUCH UNIQUE REVELATION THE ISRAELITES WERE TO ACKNOWLEDGE THAT THE LORD IS GOD ALONE (CF. V. 35) AND TO KEEP HIS DECREES AND COMMANDS. ONLY IN DOING THESE TWO THINGS WOULD THE ISRAELITES FIND PROSPERITY AND LONG LIFE IN THE LAND (CF. 5:33; 6:2). THE WORDS SO THAT IT MAY GO WELL WITH YOU OCCUR EIGHT TIMES IN THIS BOOK, UNDOUBTEDLY TO EMPHASIZE THIS MOTIVE FOR OBEDIENCE (4:40; 5:16; 6:3, 18; 12:25, 28; 19:13; 22:7). THE IDEA THAT RIGHTEOUSNESS LENGTHENS LIFE AND SIN SHORTENS IT IS COMMON IN THE OLD TESTAMENT (PROV. 3:1–2, 16; 10:27).**

**THE THREE TRANSJORDANIAN CITIES OF REFUGE (4:41–43)**

**4:41–43. THIS MAY BE AN EDITORIAL NOTE PLACED HERE BETWEEN THE FIRST AND SECOND ADDRESSES BECAUSE AT THAT TIME MOSES HAD DESIGNATED THESE THREE CITIES EAST OF THE JORDAN AS CITIES OF REFUGE. THEY WERE BEZER … RAMOTH, AND GOLAN (SEE THE MAP “THE SIX CITIES OF REFUGE,” NEAR NUM. 35:6–34). THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THESE CITIES WILL BE DISCUSSED IN THE COMMENTS ON DEUTERONOMY 19:1–13 (CF. EX. 21:12–13; NUM. 35:6–28; JOSH. 20).**

**THE SECOND ADDRESS OF MOSES: COVENANT OBLIGATIONS (4:44–26:19)**

**IN THE SUZERAINTY TREATIES OF THE SECOND MILLENNIUM B.C. THE SECTION AFTER THE HISTORICAL PROLOGUE SET FORTH THE OBLIGATIONS OF THE VASSALS TO THEIR GREAT KING. THIS SECTION CONTAINING THE COVENANT OBLIGATIONS OR STIPULATIONS WAS USUALLY DIVIDED INTO TWO PARTS. THE FIRST PART WAS A GENERAL EXHORTATION TO THE VASSALS, ENCOURAGING TOTAL ALLEGIANCE TO THE KING OR SUZERAIN. THE SECOND PART CONSISTED OF SPECIFIC OBLIGATIONS OR LAWS DETAILING HOW VASSALS WERE TO EXPRESS THEIR COMPLETE FIDELITY TO THE SUZERAINTY. THE ARRANGEMENT OF MOSES’ SECOND ADDRESS SEEMS TO FOLLOW THE SAME ORDER AS THAT OF THE SUZERAINTY TREATIES. MOSES BEGAN THIS SPEECH BY RECALLING THE FOUNDATIONAL EXPERIENCE AT HOREB (4:44–5:33). THIS SHORT SECTION IS FOLLOWED BY THE CALL TO TOTAL ALLEGIANCE (CHAPS. 6–11). THE SPEECH THEN HAS AN EXPOSITION OF THE LAW THAT EXPLAINS HOW THE ISRAELITES WERE TO EXPRESS THEIR COMMITMENT TO THE LORD IN THE DETAILS OF EVERYDAY LIFE (12:1–26:15). THE SPEECH CONCLUDES WITH A DECLARATION OF COMMITMENT BY THE PEOPLE AND THE LORD (26:16–19).**

**RECAPITULATION OF THE LAW AT HOREB (4:44–5:33)**

**THE SETTING OF THE SECOND ADDRESS (4:44–49)**

**4:44–49. MOSES SET BEFORE THE PEOPLE GOD’S INSTRUCTION (TÔRÂH, THE WORD RENDERED LAW, MEANS INSTRUCTION) IN HOW TO WALK WITH HIM. IF THE ISRAELITES WERE TO PROSPER INDIVIDUALLY AND NATIONALLY, THEY HAD TO OBEY THE STIPULATIONS OF THE COVENANT EXPRESSED IN THE FORM OF DECREES AND LAWS. THESE WERE ORIGINALLY GIVEN THREE MONTHS AFTER THE ISRAELITES CAME OUT OF EGYPT (CF. EX. 20:1–17; 21–23). THUS, DEUTERONOMY IS NOT A NEW COVENANT BUT THE RENEWAL OF A COVENANT PREVIOUSLY MADE. BUT IT WAS REPEATED EAST OF THE JORDAN RIVER NEAR BETH PEOR. FOR DETAILS RELATING TO SIHON AND OG SEE COMMENTS ON DEUTERONOMY 2:26–3:11.**

**THE CALL TO OBEDIENCE (5:1–5)**

**5:1–5. THE SOLEMN FORMULA HEAR, O ISRAEL INDICATES THAT WHAT FOLLOWS (THE DECREES AND LAWS; CF. 4:45) IS NOT INCIDENTAL BUT ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY FOR THE SURVIVAL OF ISRAEL AS A NATION. WHEN MOSES … SAID THAT THE LORD OUR GOD MADE A COVENANT WITH US AT HOREB AND NOT WITH OUR FATHERS, HE WAS TEACHING THE ISRAELITES THAT THIS COVENANT WAS MEANT TO GOVERN THE LIVING, NOT THE DEAD. MOSES HAD THE RIGHT TO SAY THIS FOR HE WAS THE MEDIATOR OF THE COVENANT. THE LORD SPOKE WITH ISRAEL FACE TO FACE FROM THE MOUNTAIN OF SINAI BUT DID SO THROUGH MOSES (EX. 19:9).**

**THE TEN COMMANDMENTS (5:6–21)**

**5:6–7. VERSE 6 IS CRUCIAL FOR UNDERSTANDING NOT ONLY THE FIRST COMMANDMENT BUT ALSO THE OTHER NINE. THE TEN COMMANDMENTS WERE GIVEN TO A PEOPLE ALREADY REDEEMED (BROUGHT OUT … OF EGYPT), TO ENABLE THEM TO EXPRESS THEIR LOVE FOR AND HAVE FELLOWSHIP WITH THE HOLY GOD. (IN DEUT., EGYPT IS FREQUENTLY CALLED THE LAND OF SLAVERY: V. 6; 6:12; 7:8; 8:14; 13:5, 10; CF. EX. 13:3, 14; 20:2.) THE DECALOGUE WAS NEVER GIVEN TO ENABLE THEM TO ACHIEVE JUSTIFICATION, FOR THAT HAS ALWAYS BEEN GRANTED FREELY THROUGH FAITH (CF. GEN. 15:6; ROM. 4). THE LAW WAS NEVER DESIGNED TO GIVE PEOPLE SALVATION. ALSO, SINCE THE LORD HAD TAKEN THE INITIATIVE IN ISRAEL’S REDEMPTION THE PEOPLE WERE OBLIGATED TO ACKNOWLEDGE HIS RIGHT OF SOVEREIGNTY OVER THEM AND TO BOW TO THAT SOVEREIGNTY. THE FIRST COMMANDMENT, TO HAVE NO OTHER GODS BEFORE ME, CALLED FOR A SUBMISSION OF EVERY AREA OF ONE’S LIFE TO THE RULE OF GOD. THE PHRASE “OTHER GODS” IS A TECHNICAL TERM FOR PAGAN GODS WHICH OF COURSE EXISTED IN THE FORM OF IDOLS AND IN THE MINDS OF THEIR WORSHIPERS, BUT WERE NOT REAL. 5:8–10. THE SECOND COMMANDMENT DID NOT PROHIBIT ART IN ISRAEL (AS THE MAKING OF THE TABERNACLE DEMONSTRATES), BUT RATHER THE MAKING OF AN IDOL TO REPRESENT THE LORD. THE DANGER IN THIS PRACTICE WAS TWOFOLD. FIRST, SINCE OTHER NATIONS USED IDOLATRY TO EXPRESS THEIR DEVOTION TO THEIR GODS THERE WAS ALWAYS THE DANGER THAT THE WORSHIP OF THE LORD COULD BE CONTAMINATED BY IDOLATROUS FORMS OF WORSHIP. SECOND, ANY ATTEMPT TO REPRESENT GOD IN ANY FORM FROM THE NATURAL WORLD WOULD HAVE CALLED INTO QUESTION THE SOVEREIGNTY OF THE ONE WHO CANNOT BE LIMITED BY ANYTHING. AS A JEALOUS GOD (CF. 4:24; 32:16, 21; SEE COMMENTS ON 6:15), HE DOES NOT SHARE HIS SOVEREIGN POSITION WITH ANY OTHER. AT FIRST GLANCE 5:9B MAY SEEM TO CONTRADICT EZEKIEL 18:20. HOWEVER, THE PHRASE THOSE WHO HATE ME MUST CERTAINLY REFER TO THE CHILDREN, NOT TO THE FATHERS. CHILDREN WHO HATE THE LORD WILL BE PUNISHED. REBELLIOUS GOD-HATING PARENTS OFTEN PRODUCE CHILDREN TO THE THIRD AND FOURTH GENERATION WHO ALSO HATE GOD (CF. EX. 20:5; 34:6–7). 5:11. TO MISUSE GOD’S NAME MEANS LITERALLY, “TO LIFT IT UP TO OR ATTACH IT TO EMPTINESS.” THIS COMMAND FORBIDS USING GOD’S NAME IN PROFANITY BUT IT INCLUDES MORE. THE THIRD COMMANDMENT IS A DIRECTIVE AGAINST USING GOD’S NAME IN A MANIPULATIVE WAY (E.G., HIS NAME IS NOT TO BE USED IN MAGIC OR TO CURSE SOMEONE). TODAY A CHRISTIAN WHO USES GOD’S NAME FLIPPANTLY OR FALSELY ATTRIBUTES A WRONG ACT TO GOD HAS BROKEN THIS COMMANDMENT. 5:12–15. THE SABBATH DAY WAS A GIFT OF GOD TO ISRAEL. ACCORDING TO EXODUS 20:11, ISRAEL WAS TO OBSERVE A DAY OF REST EACH WEEK SO SHE COULD COMMEMORATE GOD’S CREATION OF THE WORLD IN SIX DAYS AND HIS REST ON THE SEVENTH DAY. THUS, ISRAEL’S OBSERVANCE OF THE SABBATH WAS A TESTIMONY TO HER BELIEF IN THE PERSONAL, TRANSCENDENT GOD WHO CREATED THE WORLD. THIS BELIEF WAS A DOCTRINE UNIQUE TO THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST. IN DEUTERONOMY THE REASON FOR OBSERVING THE SABBATH IS NOT THE CREATION OF THE WORLD, BUT THE REDEMPTION OF ISRAEL FROM EGYPT, WHICH IN EFFECT WAS THE CREATION OF ISRAEL AS A NATION. (THE COMMAND REMEMBER, ZĀKAR, OCCURS 14 TIMES IN DEUT.; THE NIV HAS THE COMMAND “REMEMBER” TWO ADDITIONAL TIMES—4:10; 11:2—THOUGH THE HEB. THERE HAS A DIFFERENT WORD. ON GOD’S MIGHTY HAND AND AN OUTSTRETCHED ARM, SEE DEUT. 4:34; 7:19; 11:2.) SO, BY OBSERVING THE SABBATH BEFORE HER PAGAN NEIGHBORS ISRAEL WAS EXPRESSING HER FAITH IN THE PERSONAL GOD WHO CREATED BOTH THE WORLD AND HER AS A NATION. THIS IS THE ONLY ONE OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS NOT REPEATED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT, AND PAUL ARGUED AGAINST ENFORCING IT (CF. ROM. 14:5–6; COL. 2:16–17). THE DAY OF WORSHIP WAS CHANGED IN THE EARLY CHURCH TO THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK, IN COMMEMORATION OF CHRIST’S RESURRECTION. THE TEMPORARY NATURE OF THE COMMAND REGARDING THE SABBATH IS DUE TO THE FACT THAT IT SERVED AS A “SIGN” OF THE MOSAIC COVENANT (CF. EX. 31:12–17). AFTER THE MOSAIC COVENANT WAS DONE AWAY WITH THERE WAS NO LONGER A NEED FOR ITS “SIGN.” IN ITS PLACE CHRISTIANS HAVE THE LORD’S SUPPER AS THE “SIGN” OF THE NEW COVENANT. 5:16. TO HONOR ONE’S PARENTS MEANS TO VALUE OR PRIZE THEM HIGHLY. CHILDREN LIVING AT HOME EXPRESS THIS BY OBEYING THEIR PARENTS. THIS COMMANDMENT WAS CRITICAL FOR THE EXISTENCE OF THE NATION: THAT YOU (PL.) MAY LIVE LONG (CF. 6:2; 11:9; 25:15; 32:47) AND THAT IT MAY GO WELL WITH YOU (PL.) IN THE LAND. PARENTS, ESPECIALLY FATHERS, RATHER THAN THE RELIGIOUS LEADERS, WERE TO PASS THE COVENANT VALUES TO THEIR CHILDREN. 5:17. MURDER MEANS TO TAKE SOMEONE’S LIFE ILLEGALLY. SINCE MAN WAS CREATED BY GOD AND IN HIS IMAGE, MAN SHOULD NOT TAKE ANOTHER HUMAN’S LIFE APART FROM DIVINE PERMISSION. (THIS COMMANDMENT, THEREFORE, DID NOT PROHIBIT CAPITAL PUNISHMENT OR ENGAGING IN WAR, BOTH OF WHICH WERE REGULATED BY LAWS IN THE TORAH.) 5:18. THE MARRIAGE RELATIONSHIP SHOULD REFLECT A BELIEVER’S RELATIONSHIP TO GOD. THEREFORE, EXTRAMARITAL SEX (ADULTERY) IS FORBIDDEN. THOUGH THE SEVENTH COMMANDMENT DOES NOT REFER EXPLICITLY TO PREMARITAL SEX, THE PENTATEUCH PROHIBITS IT ELSEWHERE (E.G., GEN. 2:24; EX. 22:16; DEUT. 22:13–29). AN ISRAELITE WHO WOULD BE UNFAITHFUL TO HIS OR HER PARTNER WOULD ALSO BE UNFAITHFUL TO THE COVENANT OF GOD AND WOULD BE INCLINED TO GO AFTER OTHER GODS. 5:19. MANY HOLY BIBLE SCHOLARS THINK THAT THIS EIGHTH COMMANDMENT (AGAINST STEALING) REFERS PRIMARILY TO KIDNAPPING (CF. 24:7). IT IS PROBABLY MORE ACCURATE, HOWEVER, TO VIEW THE COMMAND AS A GENERAL PROHIBITION AGAINST STEALING, WHICH WOULD INCLUDE KIDNAPPING. 5:20. THOUGH THIS COMMANDMENT HAD ITS PRIMARY APPLICATION IN LAW COURTS, IT COULD ALSO SEEM TO RULE OUT GOSSIP AGAINST ONE’S NEIGHBOR. THE SIXTH THROUGH NINTH COMMANDMENTS THUS ACKNOWLEDGE A PERSON’S RIGHT TO HIS LIFE, HOME, PROPERTY, AND REPUTATION. 5:21. TO COVET MEANS “TO LUST FOR ANOTHER’S PROPERTY.” IT WAS DIFFERENT FROM THE OTHER COMMANDMENTS IN THAT IT DID NOT DEAL WITH A SPECIFIC ACT, BUT RATHER WITH AN EMOTIONAL, PSYCHOLOGICAL SIN. THEREFORE, THE BREAKING OF THIS COMMANDMENT COULD NOT BE PROSECUTED IN A LAW COURT. YET “LUST FOR ANOTHER’S PROPERTY” OFTEN LED TO THE BREAKING OF THE SIXTH THROUGH THE NINTH COMMANDMENTS. THIS WAS THE POINT JESUS WAS MAKING IN HIS EXPOSITION OF COMMANDMENTS SIX AND SEVEN (MATT. 5:21–32). IT MAY HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE FOR SOMEONE TO KEEP THE FIRST NINE COMMANDMENTS BUT NO ONE COULD HAVE AVOIDED BREAKING THE 10TH AT SOME TIME. IN THIS RESPECT THE 10TH COMMANDMENT IS THE MOST FORCEFUL OF ALL, BECAUSE IT MADE PEOPLE AWARE OF THEIR INABILITY TO KEEP GOD’S LAW PERFECTLY. AND THIS AWARENESS THREW THEM BACK TO DEPEND ON GOD’S GRACE AND MERCY.**

**THE MEDIATORIAL ROLE OF MOSES (5:22–33)**

**5:22. THIS VERSE EMPHASIZES THE DIVINE ORIGIN OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS AND THE AWE-INSPIRING SETTING IN WHICH THEY WERE GIVEN (FIRE … CLOUD, AND DEEP DARKNESS; CF. EX. 19:18; 20:21). 5:23–27. THE LEADERS’ REQUEST FOR A MEDIATOR GREW OUT OF THEIR ENCOUNTER WITH THEIR HOLY AND MAJESTIC GOD. THE EXPERIENCE AT HOREB IMPRESSED ON THEM A SENSE OF THEIR OWN MORAL INADEQUACY AND MORALITY (WE WILL DIE) AND THEIR RESPONSIBILITY TO OBEY GOD (WE WILL LISTEN AND OBEY). 5:28–29. THOUGH THE LORD APPROVED OF THE PEOPLE’S RESPONSE, HE HINTED THAT THEY WOULD NOT CARRY THROUGH WITH THEIR GOOD INTENTIONS. (ON FEARING GOD, SEE COMMENTS ON 4:10.) 5:30–33. AGAIN, THE DIVINE ORIGIN OF THE LAW IS STRESSED. THE PEOPLE HEARD THE TEN COMMANDMENTS AND THEN WERE DISMISSED TO THEIR TENTS. WHAT MOSES WAS ABOUT TO TELL THEM—ALL GOD’S COMMANDS, DECREES, AND LAWS, BEGINNING WITH CHAPTER 6 (CF. 6:1)—WAS ALSO FROM THE LORD JUST AS WERE THE TEN COMMANDMENTS. THEIR OBEDIENCE TO ALL THAT MOSES WAS ABOUT TO TEACH THEM WAS CRITICAL, FOR THEIR PROSPERITY IN THE LAND WOULD DEPEND ON IT (CF. 6:3, 24).**

**THE GREAT COMMANDS AND WARNINGS (CHAPS. 6–11)**

**HAVING REMINDED HIS AUDIENCE OF THE BASIC FOUNDATION, THE TEN COMMANDMENTS, WHICH THEY HEARD AT HOREB, MOSES TURNED TO DETAILS OF THE LAW WHICH THEY DID NOT HEAR BECAUSE THEY WERE AFRAID OF THE VOICE OF GOD (CF. 5:25–27). ACCORDINGLY, CHAPTERS 6–11, WHICH MAY BE CALLED “THE GREAT COMMANDS AND WARNINGS,” DEAL WITH THE PERSONAL NATURE OF THE COVENANT RELATIONSHIP. HERE THE DETAILS RELATING TO THE TOTAL COMMITMENT OF INDIVIDUALS TO THE LORD ARE DISCUSSED.**

**THE COMMAND TO LOVE THE LORD (CHAP. 6)**

**PROMISED BLESSINGS OF OBEDIENCE (6:1–3)**

**6:1. THE LEGISLATION IN CHAPTERS 6–11 MAY BE VIEWED AS AN EXPRESSION OF ONE GREAT COMMAND, NAMELY, TO “LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART … SOUL, AND STRENGTH” (6:5). THEREFORE, OBEDIENCE ON THE PART OF THE ISRAELITES DEMONSTRATED THAT THEY LOVED GOD. JESUS LAID DOWN A SIMILAR PRINCIPLE FOR CHRISTIANS (CF. JOHN 14:21). 6:2–3. THE LAW WAS GIVEN SO THAT THE PEOPLE COULD EXPRESS THEIR REVERENCE (FEAR; CF. COMMENTS ON 4:10) FOR AND OBEDIENCE TO THE LORD IN A CONCRETE MANNER. (THE NEED TO OBEY HIM IS STRESSED REPEATEDLY IN DEUT.) BY FEARING AND OBEYING HIM THEY WOULD FIND PROSPERITY (ON THE WORDS SO THAT IT MAY GO WELL WITH YOU, SEE COMMENTS ON 4:40) AND A LONG LIFE IN THEIR NEW LAND (CF. 4:10; 5:33) WHICH FLOWED WITH MILK AND HONEY (SEE COMMENTS ON EX. 3:8).**

**THE COMMAND AND ITS IMPORTANCE (6:4–9)**

**6:4. THIS VERSE HAS BEEN CALLED THE SHEMA, FROM THE HEBREW WORD TRANSLATED HEAR. THE STATEMENT IN THIS VERSE IS THE BASIC CONFESSION OF FAITH IN JUDAISM. THE VERSE MEANS THAT THE LORD (STEPHEN YAHWEH) IS TOTALLY UNIQUE. HE ALONE IS GOD. THE ISRAELITES COULD THEREFORE HAVE A SENSE OF SECURITY THAT WAS TOTALLY IMPOSSIBLE FOR THEIR POLYTHEISTIC NEIGHBORS. THE “GODS” OF THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST RARELY WERE THOUGHT OF AS ACTING IN HARMONY. EACH GOD WAS UNPREDICTABLE AND MORALLY CAPRICIOUS. SO, A PAGAN WORSHIPER COULD NEVER BE SURE THAT HIS LOYALTY TO ONE GOD WOULD SERVE TO PROTECT HIM FROM THE CAPRICIOUS WRATH OF ANOTHER. THE MONOTHEISTIC DOCTRINE OF THE ISRAELITES LIFTED THEM OUT OF THIS INSECURITY SINCE THEY HAD TO DEAL WITH ONLY ONE GOD, WHO DEALT WITH THEM BY A REVEALED CONSISTENT RIGHTEOUS STANDARD. THIS CONFESSION OF MONOTHEISM DOES NOT PRECLUDE THE BIBLICAL DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY. “GOD” IS PLURAL (’ĚLŌHÎM), POSSIBLY IMPLYING THE TRINITY, AND ONE (’EḤĀḎ) MAY SUGGEST A UNITY OF THE PERSONS IN THE GODHEAD (CF. GEN. 2:24, WHERE THE SAME WORD FOR “ONE” IS USED OF ADAM AND EVE). 6:5. TO LOVE THE LORD MEANS TO CHOOSE HIM FOR AN INTIMATE RELATIONSHIP AND TO OBEY HIS COMMANDS. THIS COMMAND, TO LOVE HIM, IS GIVEN OFTEN IN DEUTERONOMY (V. 5; 7:9; 10:12; 11:1, 13, 22; 13:3; 19:9; 30:6, 16, 20). LOVING HIM WAS TO BE WHOLEHEARTED (WITH ALL YOUR HEART) AND WAS TO PERVADE EVERY ASPECT OF AN ISRAELITE’S BEING AND LIFE (SOUL AND STRENGTH). 6:6–9. GOD’S PEOPLE WERE RESPONSIBLE TO MEDITATE ON THESE COMMANDMENTS, TO KEEP THEM IN THEIR HEARTS. THIS ENABLED THEM TO UNDERSTAND THE LAW AND TO APPLY IT CORRECTLY. THEN THE PARENTS WERE IN A POSITION TO IMPRESS THEM ON THEIR CHILDREN’S HEARTS ALSO. THE MORAL AND BIBLICAL EDUCATION OF THE CHILDREN WAS ACCOMPLISHED BEST NOT IN A FORMAL TEACHING PERIOD EACH DAY BUT WHEN THE PARENTS, OUT OF CONCERN FOR THEIR OWN LIVES AS WELL AS THEIR CHILDREN’S, MADE GOD AND HIS WORD THE NATURAL TOPIC OF A CONVERSATION WHICH MIGHT OCCUR ANYWHERE AND ANYTIME DURING THE DAY (V. 7). THE COMMANDS TO TIE THEM AND WRITE THEM WERE TAKEN LITERALLY BY SOME LATER JEWISH READERS. HOWEVER, THE COMMANDS ARE PROBABLY EMPHASIZING SYMBOLICALLY THE NEED FOR THE CONTINUAL TEACHING OF THE LAW (CF. EX. 13:9, 16).**

**THE WARNING ABOUT PROSPERITY---HEALTH & WEALTH (6:10–19)**

**6:10–12. THE LORD WAS ABOUT TO GIVE THE ISRAELITES “INSTANT PROSPERITY” IN THEIR NEW LAND. BUT THERE IS AN INHERENT DANGER IN PROSPERITY, FOR WHEN A PERSON PROSPERS, HE TENDS TO FORGET GOD (CF. PROV. 30:7–9). IT WAS AT THE HEIGHT OF HIS OWN PROSPERITY THAT DAVID COMMITTED HIS GREATEST ACTS OF UNFAITHFULNESS (2 SAM. 11). 6:13–19. WHEN THEY WOULD COME INTO THIS PROSPERITY THE ISRAELITES WERE TO BE ALL THE MORE CAREFUL TO FEAR HIM (SEE COMMENTS ON 4:10) AND TO SERVE HIM. THE COMMAND TO SWEAR (TAKE … OATHS) BY THE NAME OF THE LORD [STEPHEN YAHWEH] REINFORCES THE INSTRUCTION TO FEAR HIM, FOR ONE SWEARS BY THE GOD HE FEARS, THAT IS, BY THE GOD UNDER WHOM HE IS RESPONSIBLE TO FULFILL HIS OATHS. IF THEY WOULD FORGET GOD (V. 12) THEY WOULD ALMOST CERTAINLY FOLLOW OTHER GODS, FOR GOD CREATED PEOPLE NOT ONLY WITH THE CAPACITY TO WORSHIP BUT WITH THE NEED TO WORSHIP. AND THIS ACT OF UNFAITHFULNESS WOULD RESULT IN JUDGMENT SINCE THE LORD … IS A JEALOUS GOD (CF. 4:24; 5:9; 32:16, 21). THIS MEANS HE IS ZEALOUS TO PROTECT WHAT BELONGS TO HIM ALONE. JEALOUSY IN THIS SENSE IS ETHICALLY RIGHT. JEALOUSY IN THE SENSE OF ENVY FOR ANOTHER’S POSSESSIONS OR PRIVILEGES IS, OF COURSE, WRONG. MOSES ENVISIONED ANOTHER SIN TO WHICH THE ISRAELITES MIGHT BE TEMPTED IN THE NEW LAND, THAT OF TESTING THE LORD (6:16). THIS IMPLIES THAT AT TIMES THE PEOPLE WOULD FACE HARDSHIP AS THEY DID AT MASSAH (CF. EX. 17:1–7) WHERE THEY LACKED WATER AND THOUGHT THEY WOULD DIE OF THIRST. RATHER THAN TRUSTING GOD IN THIS TRIAL THEY TESTED HIM BY COMPLAINING AND QUARRELING. IN THE FUTURE THE ISRAELITES WERE TO REMEMBER THIS EMBARRASSING INCIDENT. THEY WERE TO KNOW THAT IF THEY OBEYED HIS COMMANDS … STIPULATIONS, AND DECREES (CF. DEUT. 4:44; 6:1, 20), DOING WHAT IS RIGHT AND GOOD, THEN NO MATTER WHAT HARDSHIP THEY MIGHT ENCOUNTER IT WOULD GO WELL WITH THEM (CF. V. 3).**

**THE TRANSMISSION OF THE COVENANT (6:20–25)**

**6:20–25. ONCE AGAIN MOSES REMINDED HIS AUDIENCE OF THE CRUCIAL NEED TO PASS ON THE COVENANT VALUES TO THEIR CHILDREN. THE SITUATION PRESENTED HERE CONCRETELY ILLUSTRATES THE COMMAND IN VERSES 6–9. MOSES ENVISIONED A HOME WHERE THE WORD OF GOD IS DISCUSSED OPENLY AS A PART OF EVERYDAY LIFE. WHEN A YOUNG SON ASKED ABOUT THE MEANING OF THE ISRAELITE LAW HIS FATHER WAS TO USE THE FOLLOWING PATTERN IN EXPLAINING IT TO HIM. FIRST, THE ISRAELITES WERE IN BONDAGE IN EGYPT (V. 21A). SECOND, GOD MIRACULOUSLY DELIVERED THE ISRAELITES (V. 21B; CF. 4:20) AND JUDGED THE EGYPTIANS (6:22). THIRD, THIS MARVELOUS WORK WAS IN ACCORD WITH HIS ANCIENT PROMISE TO THE PATRIARCHS (ABRAHAM, ISAAC, AND JACOB) TO BUILD A NATION OF THEIR DESCENDANTS IN THE LAND OF CANAAN (V. 23; CF. GEN. 15:18–21; 17:7–8; 26:3–5; 28:13–15). FOURTH, GOD GAVE HIS WORD IN THE FORM OF DECREES SO THAT THE ISRAELITES MIGHT ALWAYS PROSPER (CF. DEUT. 5:33) BY OBEYING IT AND FEARING GOD (CF. 4:10; 6:13). NEAR THE BEGINNING OF THIS CHAPTER, MOSES STRESSED THE NEED OF PARENTS TO LOVE HIM WITH THEIR TOTAL BEING. NOW AS THE CHAPTER CLOSES MOSES INDICATED THAT ONE ASPECT OF LOVING (AND THUS OBEYING) GOD IS TO PASS THAT SAME LOVE FOR HIM ON TO THEIR CHILDREN.**

**HOLY WAR (CHAP. 7)**

**THE COMMAND TO DESTROY THE INHABITANTS OF THE LAND (7:1–5)**

**7:1–2. THE SEVEN NATIONS MENTIONED HERE ARE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE INHABITANTS OF THE LAND OF CANAAN (CF. GEN. 15:19–21). GOD LISTED SIX OF THESE SEVEN NATIONS IN HIS CALL TO MOSES (EX. 3:17), ALL EXCEPT THE GIRGASHITES, WHO (LIKE THE HITTITES … AMORITES AND JEBUSITES) WERE DESCENDED FROM CANAAN (GEN. 10:15–16). THE POINT OF DEUTERONOMY 7:1–2 IS THAT ISRAEL WAS TO DESTROY ALL THE NATIONS WITHIN THE BORDERS OF CANAAN (SEE COMMENTS ON THESE GROUPS IN 20:17). THE COMMAND TO DESTROY THEM TOTALLY, THAT IS, MEN, WOMEN, AND CHILDREN, HAS OFTEN BEEN THOUGHT OF AS UNETHICAL FOR A LOVING GOD. HOWEVER, SEVERAL POINTS MUST BE KEPT IN MIND CONCERNING THESE PEOPLE. FIRST, THEY DESERVED TO DIE FOR THEIR SIN (9:4–5). STUDIES OF THEIR RELIGION, LITERATURE, AND ARCHEOLOGICAL REMAINS REVEAL THAT THEY WERE THE MOST MORALLY DEPRAVED CULTURE ON THE EARTH AT THAT TIME. SECOND, THEY PERSISTED IN THEIR HATRED OF GOD (7:10). HAD THEY, REPENTED, GOD WOULD HAVE SPARED THEM AS HE SPARED THE NINEVITES WHO REPENTED AT THE PREACHING OF JONAH. YET REPENTANCE SEEMED TO BE OUT OF THE QUESTION FOR THESE PEOPLE. THIRD, THE CANAANITES CONSTITUTED A MORAL CANCER (CF. 20:17–18; NUM. 33:55; JOSH. 23:12–13) AND EVEN ONE OF THEM—EVEN A CHILD LEFT ALIVE—HAD THE POTENTIAL OF INTRODUCING AN IDOLATRY AND IMMORALITY WHICH WOULD SPREAD RAPIDLY AMONG THE ISRAELITES AND BRING ABOUT THE DESTRUCTION OF GOD’S OWN PEOPLE. FOURTH, TWO MITIGATING FACTORS MAY BE MENTIONED. IN SOME WAYS THE DEATH OF A CANAANITE CHILD COULD HAVE BEEN A BLESSING. FOR IF THE CHILD DIED BEFORE REACHING THE AGE OF ACCOUNTABILITY IT IS LIKELY THAT HIS OR HER ETERNAL DESTINY WOULD HAVE BEEN MADE SECURE IN HEAVEN. THE SECOND FACTOR TO REMEMBER IS THAT ONE DAY JESUS CHRIST WILL RETURN TO SLAUGHTER THE UNREPENTANT WICKED ON THE EARTH (THOUGH NOTHING IS SAID ABOUT HIS KILLING CHILDREN), AND THAT “HOLY WAR” WILL MAKE ISRAEL’S HOLY WAR LOOK PALE BY COMPARISON (2 THESS. 2:5–10; REV. 19:11–21). SO, THERE IS NO DICHOTOMY BETWEEN THE GOD OF THE OLD TESTAMENT AND THE GOD OF THE NEW TESTAMENT. IN BOTH TESTAMENTS HE IS REVEALED AS A LOVING AND RIGHTEOUS GOD. THE COMMAND TO ENGAGE IN HOLY WAR IS, OF COURSE, NOT APPLICABLE TODAY SINCE AT THE PRESENT TIME GOD IS NOT WORKING THROUGH ONE NATION TO SET UP HIS KINGDOM ON THE EARTH. BUT CHRISTIANS TODAY SHOULD LEARN FROM THIS COMMAND THAT THEY SHOULD BE AS RUTHLESS WITH SIN IN THEIR OWN LIVES AS ISRAEL SHOULD HAVE BEEN AGAINST THE CANAANITES. 7:3–5. THE COMMAND AGAINST INTERMARRIAGE ASSUMES SOMETHING ABOUT HUMAN NATURE. PAUL STATED THE PRINCIPLE WELL: “DON’T YOU KNOW THAT A LITTLE YEAST WORKS THROUGH THE WHOLE BATCH OF DOUGH?” (1 COR. 5:6) MARRIAGE TO AN UNBELIEVING CANAANITE MEANT DISASTER FOR AN ISRAELITE’S FAITH. MOSES REMINDED THE PEOPLE (DEUT. 7:4B) THAT THE, LORD’S RIGHTEOUS SWORD CUTS BOTH WAYS. THE CANAANITES WERE BEING JUDGED FOR THEIR WICKEDNESS; IF THE ISRAELITES JOINED THEM IN WICKEDNESS, THEY WOULD ALSO JOIN THEM IN JUDGMENT. THEREFORE EVERYTHING—EVEN THE CANAANITES’ RELIGIOUS OBJECTS—WHICH MIGHT AROUSE THE SLIGHTEST CURIOSITY ABOUT FALSE WORSHIP, WAS TO BE TOTALLY ERADICATED. THE SACRED STONES (CF. 12:3; EX. 23:24; 34:13) WERE POSSIBLY MALE FERTILITY SYMBOLS AND THE ASHERAH POLES WERE WOODEN POLES IN HONOR OF THE GODDESS ASHERAH, THE CONSORT OF BAAL. SIMILAR COMMANDS WERE GIVEN IN EXODUS 34:11–15; NUMBERS 33:50–52; DEUTERONOMY 12:2–3.**

**THE BASIS OF THE COMMAND (7:6–11)**

**7:6. THE BASIS FOR THE COMMAND TO DESTROY THE CANAANITES LAY IN GOD’S ELECTION OF ISRAEL. THE WORD TRANSLATED CHOSEN MEANS “TO BE CHOSEN FOR A TASK OR A VOCATION.” GOD HAD SELECTED ISRAEL AS HIS MEANS OF SANCTIFYING THE EARTH. THUS, THEY WERE HOLY (SET APART FOR GOD’S SPECIAL USE) AND WERE HIS TREASURED POSSESSION (CF. 14:2; 26:18; PS. 135:4; MAL. 3:17; SEE COMMENTS ON EX. 19:5). SINCE THE CANAANITES WERE POLLUTING THE EARTH, AND SINCE THEY MIGHT ENDANGER ISRAEL’S COMPLETE SUBORDINATION TO THE WILL OF THE LORD, THEY EITHER HAD TO REPENT OR BE ELIMINATED. AND AS STATED, FOR 400 YEARS THEY HAD REFUSED TO REPENT. 7:7–8. GOD’S ELECTION OF ISRAEL WAS NEVER TO BECOME A SOURCE OF PRIDE FOR THE NATION. FOR GOD DID NOT FIND ANY INTRINSIC MERIT IN HER WHICH MOTIVATED HIM TO CHOOSE HER. IN FACT, HER SMALL SIZE ORIGINALLY WOULD HAVE SERVED AS A HINDRANCE TO HER ELECTION. ON THE POSITIVE SIDE MOSES OFFERED TWO REASONS FOR GOD’S CHOICE OF ISRAEL. FIRST, THE LORD LOVED ISRAEL. ULTIMATELY THIS DIVINE LOVE IS A MYSTERY SINCE IT WAS NOT MOTIVATED BY ANY GOODNESS IN THE NATION. SECOND, HE CHOSE THEM BECAUSE OF AN OATH HE SWORE TO ISRAEL’S FOREFATHERS (CF. COMMENTS ON 1:35), ABRAHAM, ISAAC, AND JACOB. THE LORD HAD PROMISED THE PATRIARCHS THAT THEIR DESCENDANTS WOULD BECOME A MIGHTY NATION AND INHERIT THE LAND OF CANAAN (GEN. 17:7–8; 26:3–5, 24; 28:13–15), AND HE WOULD ALWAYS BE FAITHFUL TO HIS WORD (CF. HEB. 6:13–18). FOR THAT REASON, HE BROUGHT ISRAEL OUT … FROM THE LAND OF SLAVERY (CF. EX. 13:3, 14; 20:2; DEUT. 5:6; 6:12; 8:14; 13:5, 10). 7:7–11. MOSES MEANT FOR THE ISRAELITES TO DRAW TWO CONCLUSIONS FROM GOD’S CHOICE AND REDEMPTION OF THEM. FIRST, THE LORD ALONE IS GOD. HE IS ABLE TO CONTROL HISTORY, TO RAISE UP NATIONS, AND TO BRING THEM DOWN. SECOND, HE IS THE FAITHFUL GOD. THE THOUSAND GENERATIONS, IS A PROVERBIAL EXPRESSION MEANING “ENDLESSLY” OR “FOREVER.” THOUGH HE WILL NEVER ABANDON HIS COVENANT OF LOVE (CF. V. 12) TO ISRAEL, REBELLIOUS INDIVIDUALS WITHIN THE NATION WILL BE JUDGED FOR THEIR SIN JUST AS HIS ENEMIES IN OTHER NATIONS (THOSE WHO HATE HIM) ARE JUDGED BY HIM. THEREFORE, EACH INDIVIDUAL ISRAELITE NEEDED TO BE CAREFUL TO FOLLOW HIS COMMANDS.**

**THE REWARD FOR OBEDIENCE (7:12–16)**

**7:12. THIS VERSE SUMMARIZES VERSES 12–16. IF THE NATION IS OBEDIENT TO THE LORD, SHE WILL EXPERIENCE HIS COVENANTAL LOVE. THOUGH GOD WILL NOT ABANDON THE COVENANT BECAUSE OF HIS PROMISES TO THE PATRIARCHS (FOREFATHERS; CF. VV. 8, 13; SEE COMMENTS ON 1:35) THE PEOPLE COULD FORFEIT THE BLESSINGS OF THE COVENANT THROUGH THEIR OWN DISOBEDIENCE. 7:13–15. FOR THEIR OBEDIENCE, GOD PROMISED THE BLESSING OF FERTILITY OF HUMAN, ANIMAL, AND PLANT LIFE IN ISRAEL. THE ISRAELITES COULD ALSO COUNT ON FREEDOM FROM THE HORRIBLE DISEASES THAT WERE COMMON IN EGYPT (POSSIBLY INCLUDING BOILS; CF. 28:27, 60; EX. 15:26). 7:16. THE ISRAELITES’ OBLIGATION IN ENTERING THE LAND WAS TO DESTROY ALL THE PEOPLES WITHIN THE BORDERS OF CANAAN (CF. VV. 1–2). IF ISRAEL WOULD NOT DO SO, THEY WOULD BECOME ENSNARED BY THEM AND THEIR GODS (CF. EX. 34:12–14) AND AS A RESULT WOULD NOT EXPERIENCE THE BLESSINGS JUST MENTIONED (DEUT. 7:13–15). VERSE 16 NATURALLY LED MOSES TO THE EXHORTATION RECORDED IN VERSES 17–26.**

**AN ENCOURAGEMENT TO HOLY WAR (7:17–26)**

**7:17–26. MOSES KNEW THE HEARTS OF HIS FELLOW ISRAELITES. HE REMEMBERED HOW 40 YEARS EARLIER THE ANAKITES HAD MADE THEIR HEARTS MELT (1:26–28). SO, HE CONCLUDED THIS PART OF HIS SPEECH (ON HOLY WAR) BY SETTING THE BATTLES IN PROPER PERSPECTIVE. THE ISRAELITES WERE TO CONCENTRATE NOT ON THE STRENGTH OF THEIR ENEMIES BUT ON THE GREATNESS OF THE LORD. THEY HAD SEEN THE MIRACULOUS DEFEAT OF PHARAOH BY MIRACULOUS SIGNS AND WONDERS (THE 10 PLAGUES). THESE WERE PERFORMED BY GOD’S STRENGTH, HIS MIGHTY HAND AND OUTSTRETCHED ARM (CF. 4:34; 5:15; 11:2). ISRAEL COULD EXPECT TO SEE HISTORY REPEATED IN THE DESTRUCTION OF THE CANAANITES (THE LORD YOUR GOD WILL DO THE SAME, 7:19). GOD WOULD CAUSE ISRAEL’S ENEMIES TO RUN FROM HER IN BATTLE AS IF THEY WERE ATTACKED BY SWARMS OF HORNETS (CF. EX. 23:28; JOSH. 24:12). (SOME SAY THE REFERENCE TO THE HORNET IS TO BE TAKEN LITERALLY; OTHERS SAY IT REFERS TO THE EGYPTIAN ARMY.) THE ENEMIES WERE IN FACT FEARFUL OF ISRAEL (EX. 15:15; NUM. 22:3; JOSH. 2:9–11, 24; 5:1; 9:24). HE WOULD THROW ISRAEL’S ENEMIES INTO GREAT CONFUSION (DEUT. 7:23), THAT IS, A DIVINELY INSPIRED PANIC WOULD ENGULF THE CANAANITES AND RENDER THEM HELPLESS IN BATTLE (V. 24). ALL THIS WOULD HAPPEN ACCORDING TO A WELL-CONCEIVED PLAN (LITTLE BY LITTLE, V. 22) SO THAT THE LAND WOULD NOT BE DEPOPULATED TOO QUICKLY AND OVERRUN BY WILD ANIMALS. THE ISRAELITES COULD BE ASSURED OF THIS GLORIOUS VICTORY IF ONLY THEY HAD THE FAITH TO BEGIN THE BATTLE AND AFTERWARD THE DISCIPLINE TO DESTROY THE IDOLS LEFT BEHIND WITH THE SILVER AND GOLD. OTHERWISE THE ISRAELITES WOULD FIND THEMSELVES TRAPPED BY IDOLATRY AND THEY WOULD BECOME THE OBJECTS OF THE LORD’S HOLY WAR. THE CANAANITES’ IDOLS, SOME OF THEM SUGGESTIVE OF SEXUAL PERVERSIONS, WERE DETESTABLE TO GOD. SO, HIS PEOPLE WERE TO DETEST THEM TOO, FOR THE IMAGES WERE DESIGNATED (SET APART, ḤĒREM; SEE COMMENTS ON JOSH. 6:21) FOR DESTRUCTION.**

**A WARNING AGAINST A SPIRIT OF INDEPENDENCE (CHAP. 8)**

**AN EXHORTATION TO REMEMBER THE WILDERNESS (8:1–6)**

**8:1. THIS INTRODUCTORY VERSE REMINDED THE ISRAELITES AGAIN THAT THE GIFTS OF LIFE AND FERTILITY IN THE LAND … PROMISED BY GOD DID NOT COME AUTOMATICALLY TO BELIEVERS BUT WERE BY-PRODUCTS OF OBEDIENCE. THE WILDERNESS EXPERIENCE WAS DESIGNED TO PRODUCE BOTH OBEDIENCE AND FAITH IN THE NATION. THE PEOPLE WERE TOLD TO BE CAREFUL (CF. 4:9) TO FOLLOW EVERY COMMAND FROM GOD. 8:2–3. WHEN MOSES SAID THAT GOD TESTED THE ISRAELITES IN ORDER TO KNOW WHAT WAS IN THEIR HEARTS, HE WAS USING AN ANTHROPOMORPHISM. GOD, OF COURSE, ALREADY KNEW WHAT WAS IN THEIR HEARTS. THE POINT IS THAT THEIR OBEDIENCE OR DISOBEDIENCE HAD TO BE PROVEN IN HISTORY. GOD LED THEM INTO THE DESERT WHERE THEY HAD NO ALTERNATIVE BUT TO TRUST HIM OR TO MURMUR AGAINST HIM. IN THE DESERT THEY COULD NOT PRODUCE THEIR OWN FOOD BUT HAD TO DEPEND ON GOD FOR FOOD AND THUS FOR THEIR VERY LIVES. WHEN MOSES REMINDED THEM THAT THEY DID NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE HE MEANT THAT EVEN THEIR FOOD WAS DECREED BY THE WORD OF GOD. THEY HAD MANNA BECAUSE IT CAME BY HIS COMMAND. IT WAS THEREFORE ULTIMATELY NOT BREAD THAT KEPT THEM ALIVE BUT HIS WORD! “BREAD ALONE,” THAT IS, BREAD ACQUIRED INDEPENDENTLY OF HIS WORD, COULD NOT KEEP THEM ALIVE. THIS WAS WHY JESUS REFUSED SATAN’S [LUCIFER’S/VICTORIA’S] TEMPTATION TO TURN THE STONES INTO BREAD WHEN HE WAS IN THE WILDERNESS (MATT. 4:3–4). JESUS KNEW THAT GOD HAD NOT DECREED THOSE STONES FOR HIS FOOD, AND ALSO THAT HIS FATHER [STEPHEN] WOULD PROVIDE FOOD APART FROM THE SON’S WORKING OF A PERMISSIBLE MAGIC/MIRACLE AT THE SUGGESTION OF SATAN [LUCIFER/VICTORIA] (CF. MATT. 7:9). 8:4–6. THE LORD DISCIPLINED ISRAEL BY MAKING HER DEPEND ON HIM FOR EVERYTHING: FOOD, WATER, AND CLOTHES. SINCE ALL THESE WERE PROVIDED BY HIS DECREE THE ONLY LOGICAL RESPONSE WAS TO OBSERVE (OBEY) THE COMMANDS OF THE LORD, FOLLOWING AND REVERING HIM. “REVERING” TRANSLATES A WORD THAT MEANS FEARING, THAT IS, FEARING TO DISOBEY THE ONE WHO IS SO POWERFUL AND HOLY.**

**AN EXHORTATION NOT TO FORGET GOD (8:7–20)**

**8:7–9. IN CONTRAST WITH THE SEVERITY OF THE WILDERNESS THESE VERSES DESCRIBE THE ABUNDANCE OF ISRAEL’S NEW LAND. IT WAS ABUNDANT IN WATER (ESSENTIAL FOR CROPS AS WELL AS FOR SUSTAINING ANIMAL AND HUMAN LIFE); IN AGRICULTURAL PRODUCE INCLUDING GRAINS (WHEAT … BARLEY), FRUITS (GRAPES, FIGS, POMEGRANATES), OIL FROM OLIVE TREES, AND HONEY; AND IN MINERALS. (IRON AND COPPER HAVE BEEN DISCOVERED IN THE HILLS SOUTH OF THE DEAD SEA.) THE PEOPLE THEN WOULD LACK NOTHING (CF. PS. 23:1). 8:10–18. MOSES THEN SPELLED OUT THE DANGER INHERENT IN ABUNDANT PROSPERITY. WHEREAS IN THE WILDERNESS THEY HAD TO DEPEND ON GOD FOR THE NECESSITIES OF LIFE, THEIR NEWFOUND PROSPERITY MIGHT CONCEAL THEIR NEED FOR THE SAME DEPENDENCE. MOSES PRESCRIBED A SURE ANTIDOTE FOR THIS DANGER: PRAISE THE LORD YOUR GOD. IN FACT, FAILURE TO PRAISE HIM FOR HIS BLESSINGS WAS A STEP TOWARD FORGETTING GOD AND THEN DISOBEYING HIS COMMANDS. AN ISRAELITE WHO CEASED TO PRAISE THE LORD SINCERELY WOULD FIND THAT HIS HEART HAD BECOME PROUD (V. 14) IN HIS ABUNDANCE (VV. 12–13; CF. HOSEA 13:6). HE WOULD FORGET (CF. DEUT. 8:11, 19; SEE COMMENTS ON 4:9) THE MIRACULOUS DELIVERANCE OF ISRAEL FROM EGYPT … THE LAND OF SLAVERY (CF. 5:6; 6:12; 7:8; 13:5, 10; EX. 13:3, 14; 20:2) AND THE WILDERNESS (CF. DEUT. 1:19; 32:10) WITH ITS VENOMOUS SNAKES (CF. NUM. 21:6–7) AND SCORPIONS. (THIS IS THE ONLY REFERENCE IN THE PENTATEUCH TO SCORPIONS IN THE WILDERNESS WANDERINGS.) SUCH A PERSON WHO DID NOT REMEMBER GOD’S PROVISIONS OF WATER (EX. 15:25, 27; 17:5–7) AND MANNA (EX. 16) IN THE DESERT WOULD BE INCLINED TO CREDIT HIS OWN ABILITY (MY POWER AND STRENGTH) FOR HIS WEALTH, WHEN IN REALITY IT WAS AS MUCH A GIFT FROM GOD AS THE WATER OUT OF HARD ROCK HAD BEEN IN THE WILDERNESS. THE PROVISION OF MANNA WAS A TEST, TO SEE IF ISRAEL WOULD DEPEND ON THE LORD’S WORD (CF. COMMENTS ON EX. 16:4). SUCH DEPENDENCE IS HUMBLING (CF. DEUT. 8:3). THE PEOPLE COULD AVOID PRIDE IN THEIR WEALTH AND STRENGTH IF THEY WOULD CONSTANTLY REMEMBER THE LORD AND THE LESSON OF THE WILDERNESS: ALL OF LIFE IS A GIFT FROM GOD AND NOTHING IS POSSIBLE APART FROM HIM (V. 18). 8:19–20. JUST AS FAILURE TO PRAISE GOD WOULD LEAD TO FORGETTING HIM, SO FORGETTING HIM WOULD LEAD TO WORSHIPING OTHER GODS. THAT IN TURN WOULD RESULT IN CERTAIN DESTRUCTION (DEATH). IF MOSES’ AUDIENCE WANTED AN EXAMPLE OF NATIONAL DESTRUCTION ALL THEY NEEDED TO DO WAS TO REMEMBER THE NATIONS THE LORD DESTROYED, NAMELY, THE KINGDOMS OF SIHON AND OG (2:26–3:11).**

**A WARNING AGAINST A SPIRIT OF SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS (9:1–10:11)**

**THE CONQUEST OF CANAAN NOT DUE TO ISRAEL’S RIGHTEOUSNESS (9:1–6)**

**9:1–3. MOSES REMEMBERED THE PEOPLE’S SHOCK WHEN THEY HEARD THE ORIGINAL REPORT OF THE 12 SPIES CONCERNING THE SIZE, STRENGTH, AND NUMBER OF THE INHABITANTS OF CANAAN (NUM. 13:26–14:4). HE DID NOT WANT THEM TO BE SURPRISED AGAIN OR TO UNDERESTIMATE THE ENORMITY OF THE TASK THAT LAY BEFORE THEM. THEREFORE, HE EMPHASIZED THAT FROM A PURELY MILITARY AND HUMAN POINT OF VIEW THEIR VICTORY WAS IMPOSSIBLE. THE ENEMY HAD SUPERIOR STRENGTH, FORTIFICATIONS (LARGE CITIES WITH HIGH WALLS), EXPERIENCE, AND NUMBERS. AND THEY HAD GAINED A TERRIFYING REPUTATION: WHO CAN STAND UP AGAINST THE ANAKITES? (ON THE ANAKITES SEE COMMENTS ON DEUT. 1:28.) THOUGH THE CANAANITES HAD ALL THESE THINGS IN THEIR FAVOR, THEY WERE DOOMED BEFORE THE BATTLES BEGAN. JUST AS IN THE DESERT THE LORD WENT BEFORE THE ISRAELITES IN A PILLAR OF CLOUD AND FIRE SO NOW HE WOULD GO BEFORE THE ISRAELITE ARMY AS A DEVOURING FIRE TO DESTROY THE ENEMY. THIS PRINCIPLE IS STATED IN PROVERBS 21:31: “THE HORSE IS MADE READY FOR THE DAY OF BATTLE, BUT VICTORY RESTS WITH THE LORD.” BUT GOD’S PEOPLE COULD NOT REMAIN PASSIVE. IN FAITH THEY HAD TO BEGIN THE BATTLE AND TO ANNIHILATE THE ENEMY WITH THE STRENGTH GOD WOULD SUPPLY AS HE PROMISED. 9:4–6. AFTER EXPERIENCING THE MAGNIFICENT VICTORIES OF THE CONQUEST, IT WOULD HAVE BEEN EASY FOR THE ISRAELITES TO HAVE BECOME PROUD. IT WOULD HAVE BEEN EVEN EASIER FOR THEM TO HAVE BECOME SPIRITUALLY PROUD AFTER MEDITATING ON THE DIVINE FAVOR GOD GAVE THEM IN THOSE VICTORIES. IN EACH OF THESE THREE VERSES MOSES WARNED AGAINST THE DANGER OF DEVELOPING A SELF-RIGHTEOUS SPIRIT BY TELLING THEM THAT THEIR VICTORIES WERE NOT A RESULT OF THEIR RIGHTEOUSNESS. IN FACT, MOSES GAVE THREE REASONS WHY ISRAEL WOULD BE VICTORIOUS IN THE CONQUEST. FIRST, THE WICKEDNESS OF THESE NATIONS (VV. 4–5) WAS SO GREAT THAT IT DEMANDED GOD’S JUDGMENT. HE IS THE GOD OF ISRAEL BUT HE IS ALSO THE GOD OF ALL NATIONS. THEY ARE ALL ACCOUNTABLE TO HIM. SECOND, GOD WOULD GIVE ISRAEL VICTORY BECAUSE HE HAD SWORN THIS TO THE PATRIARCHS (CF. COMMENTS ON 1:8; NOTE GEN. 15:13–21 WHICH SPEAKS OF BOTH GOD’S JUDGMENT OF THE WICKED AMORITES AND THE PROMISE OF THE LAND TO ABRAHAM). THIRD, THE LORD WAS GIVING THE LAND AS A PURE GIFT OF GRACE, FOR THE ISRAELITES WERE A STIFF-NECKED PEOPLE, STUBBORN AND UNRESPONSIVE (DEUT. 9:6; CF. V. 13; 10:16; 31:27). LATER MOSES POINTED OUT THAT THE ISRAELITES ACTUALLY DESERVED TO BE DESTROYED (9:13–14) RATHER THAN BLESSED WITH THE GIFT OF THE LAND. SO, ISRAEL SHOULD NEVER DEVELOP A SELF-RIGHTEOUS ATTITUDE BECAUSE OF HER VICTORIES IN THE CONQUEST. THOSE VICTORIES WOULD BE DUE TO HER ENEMIES’ WICKEDNESS, GOD’S PROMISE, AND GOD’S GRACE.**

**A RECITAL OF ISRAEL’S SEXUAL REBELLIOUS HISTORY (9:7–10:11)**

**THE GOLDEN CALF (9:7–21).**

**9:7–14. THIS SECTION AND WHAT FOLLOW’S (V. 22–10:11) ARE A WELL-ARGUED COMMENTARY ON THE MEANING OF THE STATEMENT “YOU ARE A STIFF-NECKED PEOPLE” (9:6). THE EMPHATIC EXHORTATION, REMEMBER, THIS AND NEVER FORGET, UNDERSCORES THE ABSURDITY OF ISRAEL EVER SUPPOSING THAT THE LAND WAS GIVEN THEM AS A REWARD FOR THEIR RIGHTEOUSNESS. MOSES USED ONE INCIDENT FROM THEIR PAST, THE WORSHIP OF THE GOLDEN CALF, TO ILLUSTRATE THAT ISRAELITE HISTORY HAS NEARLY ALWAYS BEEN ONE OF REBELLION (V. 7) AGAINST GOD’S GRACE. THIS INCIDENT (EX. 32), PERHAPS MORE THAN ANY OTHER UNTIL THAT TIME, ILLUSTRATES ISRAEL’S SINFULNESS ON THE ONE HAND AND GOD’S GRACE ON THE OTHER. WHILE MOSES WAS FASTING FOR 40 DAYS AND 40 NIGHTS ON MOUNT HOREB (SINAI; CF. DEUT. 1:2) AND THEREFORE WAS COMPLETELY DEPENDENT ON GOD, THE PEOPLE WERE FEASTING. WHILE MOSES WAS RECEIVING THE TEN COMMANDMENTS (THE 2 TABLETS OF THE COVENANT, 9:9, 11) BY THE FINGER OF GOD (SEE COMMENTS ON EX. 31:18), THE PEOPLE WERE BREAKING SEVERAL OF THEM BY WORSHIPING THE GOLDEN CALF (SEE COMMENTS ON EX. 32:6). AS THE LORD HAD GIVEN THE COVENANT TO MOSES, THE PEOPLE HAD BECOME CORRUPT AND TURNED AWAY QUICKLY (DEUT. 9:12). EVEN GOD HIMSELF PROCLAIMED THAT THE PEOPLE WERE STIFF-NECKED (V. 13). THEIR REBELLION WAS SO GREAT THAT HE WANTED TO DESTROY THE NATION AND START ALL OVER WITH MOSES (CF. EX. 32:9–10). 9:15–21. THESE VERSES RECORD MOSES’ REACTION TO THE PEOPLE’S SIN. THE FACT THAT HE MENTIONED THEY HAD TURNED ASIDE QUICKLY (CF. V. 12, TURNED AWAY QUICKLY) EMPHASIZED THE PEOPLE’S FICKLENESS AND THE GRAVITY OF THEIR SIN. WHEN MOSES BROKE THE TWO TABLETS … TO PIECES BEFORE THE PEOPLE HE GRAPHICALLY ILLUSTRATED WHAT THEY HAD DONE TO THEIR COVENANT WITH THE LORD. THEY HAD VIOLATED THEIR AGREEMENT WITH HIM (EX. 24:3). THEREFORE, THE LORD HAD THE RIGHT TO DO AWAY WITH THE COVENANT OF LAW MADE AT SINAI. THE SECOND THING MOSES DID WAS FAST AND PRAY FOR 40 DAYS AND 40 NIGHTS (DEUT. 9:18; CF. V. 25; 10:10). IN THE OLD TESTAMENT IT WAS NORMAL FOR PEOPLE TO FAST IN TIMES OF REPENTANCE (CF. JUD. 20:26; 2 SAM. 12:16; 1 KINGS 21:27; NEH. 1:4). HIS FASTING DEMONSTRATED HIS UNITY WITH THE NATION AND HIS HORROR AT THEIR SIN. THEIR EVIL HAD PROVOKED GOD TO ANGER (DEUT. 9:18–20). THE WORDS THE LORD LISTENED TO ME SUGGEST THAT MOSES PRAYED. THE CONTENTS OF HIS PRAYER ARE RECORDED IN VERSES 26–29. ONLY IN VERSE 20 DOES THE OLD TESTAMENT RECORD THAT MOSES ALSO PRAYED FOR AARON, THUS SAVING HIS LIFE TOO. MOSES’ TOTAL DESTRUCTION OF THE GOLDEN CALF—CALLED IN SATIRE THAT SINFUL THING OF YOURS—PUT THE GOLD OF THE IDOL BEYOND RECOVERY. (SEE COMMENTS ON EX. 32:20.) MOSES’ DEMOLISHING THE IDOL ALSO ILLUSTRATED THAT THE PEOPLE THEMSELVES DESERVED TOTAL DESTRUCTION. ONLY GOD’S GRACE INVOKED BY MOSES’ INTERCESSION SAVED THE PEOPLE.**

**OTHER SEXUAL REBELLIOUS INCIDENTS (9:22–24).**

**9:22. THIS VERSE SUGGESTS THAT MOSES COULD HAVE CONTINUED INDEFINITELY RECITING OTHER REBELLIOUS ACTS OF ISRAEL WHICH ANGERED THE LORD. FOR THE INCIDENT AT TABERAH, WHERE THE PEOPLE COMPLAINED ABOUT THEIR HARDSHIPS, SEE NUMBERS 11:1–3; AT MASSAH, WHERE THE PEOPLE COMPLAINED ABOUT NO WATER, SEE EXODUS 17:1–7; AND AT KIBROTH HATTAVAH, WHERE ISRAEL COMPLAINED ABOUT THE MANNA, SEE NUMBERS 11:31–34. 9:23–24. AFTER GOD DISPLAYED HIS GRACE IN THE INCIDENT OF THE GOLDEN CALF BY NOT DESTROYING THE NATION, ONE MIGHT HAVE EXPECTED A SIGNIFICANT CHANGE IN THE PEOPLE’S HEARTS. BUT AGAIN, THEY COLLECTIVELY REBELLED AGAINST THEIR GOD BY REFUSING TO GO UP FROM KADESH BARNEA AND BEGIN THE BATTLE FOR THE LAND. SO, MOSES WAS COMPLETELY JUSTIFIED IN CONCLUDING THAT AT EVERY SIGNIFICANT TURN IN THEIR HISTORY THE ISRAELITES HAD BEEN REBELLIOUS. CHRISTIANS TOO NEED TO BEWARE OF THE DANGER OF REBELLING AGAINST GOD AS DID ISRAEL (1 COR. 10:1–12) BY FAILING TO TRUST HIM OR OBEY HIM. THEY ARE EVERY BIT AS MUCH INDEBTED TO GOD’S GRACE AS WERE THE ISRAELITES OF THE WILDERNESS GENERATION.**

**MOSES’ PETITION.**

**9:25–29. THE CONTENT OF MOSES’ INTERCESSORY PRAYER IS PLACED HERE RATHER THAN AT VERSE 19 WHERE AT FIRST GLANCE IT WOULD SEEM MORE APPROPRIATE. IT IS PROBABLY HERE BECAUSE OF THE WORDS IN VERSE 24. IF THE PEOPLE HAD BEEN SO REBELLIOUS FROM THEIR VERY INCEPTION WHY DID NOT GOD DO AWAY WITH THEM? THIS PRAYER OFFERS AN ANSWER TO THAT QUESTION. THESE VERSES RECORD ONE OF THE MODEL PRAYERS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT. THE MENTION OF THE 40 DAYS AND 40 NIGHTS RECALLED MOSES’ FASTING (V. 18) AND INDICATED HIS SINCERITY AS WELL AS HIS UNDERSTANDING OF THE SITUATION’S GRAVITY. HE WAS TOTALLY CONCERNED WITH GOD’S GLORY AND REPUTATION ON THE EARTH. HE DID NOT PLEAD FOR ISRAEL ON THE BASIS OF ANY MERIT OF HERS. RATHER HE “REMINDED” GOD THAT ISRAEL WAS HIS OWN INHERITANCE (CF. V. 29 AND SEE COMMENTS OF 4:20). THEREFORE, IN THE LIGHT OF HIS PROMISE TO THE PATRIARCHS (ABRAHAM, ISAAC, AND JACOB; CF. 9:5; SEE COMMENTS ON 1:8), GOD’S DESTRUCTION OF ISRAEL WOULD CALL INTO QUESTION HIS ABILITY TO FULFILL HIS PROMISE (9:28). THIS PRAYER CONTAINED NO SELF-SEEKING ON MOSES’ PART. INSTEAD IT WAS OUT OF CONCERN FOR GOD’S REPUTATION AND A DESIRE FOR HIM TO DEMONSTRATE ONCE AGAIN HIS GRACE BY FORGIVING THE STUBBORNNESS … WICKEDNESS, AND SIN (V. 27) OF GOD’S PEOPLE, HIS INHERITANCE, WHOM HE DELIVERED OUT OF EGYPT BY HIS POWER (CF. V. 26) AND OUTSTRETCHED ARM (SEE COMMENTS ON 4:34).**

**THE ACCEPTANCE OF MOSES’ PETITION (10:1–11).**

**10:1–5. THE LORD, ACTING ON MOSES’ REQUEST NOT TO DESTROY THE PEOPLE, REWROTE THE TEN COMMANDMENTS ON STONE TABLETS. THIS INDICATES THAT GOD DID ANNUL THE PRIOR COVENANT, CONCLUDED IN EXODUS 24:3. PROBABLY EACH OF THE TWO TABLETS CONTAINED A COMPLETE COPY OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS. THIS WAS NORMAL IN ESTABLISHING THE ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN SUZERAINTY TREATIES TO WHICH DEUTERONOMY HAS BEEN PREVIOUSLY COMPARED. AS GOD INSTRUCTED HIM, MOSES MADE A WOODEN CHEST OR ARK (CF. EX. 25:10–16) IN WHICH HE THEN PLACED THE TABLETS. THIS CONSTRUCTION WAS DONE, OF COURSE, IN CONNECTION WITH BUILDING THE TABERNACLE (EX. 37:1–5; 40:20–21). 10:6–9. THESE VERSES MAY BE AN EDITORIAL INSERTION (CF. COMMENTS ON 2:10–12). WHEN ISRAEL WAS AT MOSERAH.… AARON DIED. ACCORDING TO NUMBERS 20:28; 33:38 AARON DIED ON MOUNT HOR. PROBABLY MOSERAH WAS THE DISTRICT WHERE MOUNT HOR WAS LOCATED. THE MENTION OF AARON’S DEATH INDICATES THAT THE LORD ALSO GRANTED MOSES’ PLEA AT HOREB YEARS BEFORE TO SPARE AARON’S LIFE. ELEAZAR, AARON’S THIRD SON, BECAME THE HIGH PRIEST (DEUT. 10:6) AND THE LEVITES WERE GIVEN SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES IN RELATION TO THE TABERNACLE (V. 8). FOR OTHER DETAILS RELATING TO THE LEVITES SEE THE COMMENTS ON 18:1–8. 10:10–11. WHEN MOSES WAS ON THE MOUNTAIN A SECOND TIME (VV. 1–5) FOR 40 DAYS AND NIGHTS (CF. THE FIRST TIME, 9:9), HE WAS INVOLVED IN FASTING AND INTERCESSION FOR ISRAEL (9:18, 25). AGREEING NOT … TO DESTROY THE NATION, GOD TOLD MOSES TO LEAD THE PEOPLE ON TO POSSESS THE LAND.**

**A CONCLUDING EXHORTATION TO TOTAL COMMITMENT TO THE LORD (10:12–11:32)**

**AN EXHORTATION TO AGAPE LOVE THE LORD BECAUSE OF ISRAEL’S ELECTION (10:12–22)**

**10:12–13. THESE VERSES ARE AN INTRODUCTORY SUMMARY TO THE GENERAL EXHORTATION IN VERSES 14–22. HAVING SHOWN THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF SELF-DEPENDENCE (CHAP. 8) AND THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF SPIRITUAL PRIDE IN LIGHT OF HER REBELLIOUS HISTORY (9:1–10:11), MOSES CALLED ISRAEL TO EXERCISE HER ONLY OPTION FOR SURVIVAL: TOTAL COMMITMENT TO THE LORD. THIS IS SEEN IN THE SEVERAL INFINITIVES USED: TO FEAR (CF. COMMENTS ON 4:10), WALK … LOVE … SERVE, AND OBSERVE. SUCH COMMITMENT WAS FOR THEIR OWN GOOD (CF. COMMENTS ON “GO WELL WITH YOU,” 4:40). 10:14–15. THE LORD IS ENTHRONED IN THE HEAVENS, AND THEREFORE IS NOT A PART OF CREATION BUT IS SOVEREIGN OVER ALL OF IT. BESIDES CREATING THE UNIVERSE, HE OWNS IT AND ALL THE NATIONS ON THE EARTH. BUT HE SPECIALLY LOVED THE PATRIARCHS, AND SELECTED THEM TO BE INTIMATELY RELATED TO HIM. AND HE CHOSE … THEIR DESCENDANTS, THAT IS, HE CALLED THEM TO BE HIS WITNESSES. SO, THE FIRST REASON ISRAEL WAS TO LOVE THE LORD IS THAT HE HAD INITIATED A RELATIONSHIP OF LOVE WITH THIS REBELLIOUS NATION. THE SAME PRINCIPLE IS TRUE OF GOD’S RELATIONSHIP WITH BELIEVERS TODAY (ROM. 5:8; 1 JOHN 4:10). 10:16–18. THE PROPER RESPONSE TO THEIR ELECTION BY THE SOVEREIGN LORD WAS TO CIRCUMCISE THEIR HEARTS (CF. 30:6). AN UNCIRCUMCISED HEART MEANS A WILL THAT IS HARDENED AGAINST GOD’S COMMANDS. IT IS ANOTHER WAY OF SAYING THE PERSON IS STIFF-NECKED OR STUBBORN (CF. 9:6, 13; 31:27). THUS, THE COMMAND TO CIRCUMCISE THEIR HEARTS ASSUMES THAT HUMAN HEARTS ARE NATURALLY REBELLIOUS AND NEED CORRECTION. THOUGH HUMAN HEARTS ARE SLOW TO CHANGE, MOSES WARNED THE NATION THAT NO BRIBE OR ANYTHING LESS THAN AN INWARD TRANSFORMATION COULD SATISFY THE LORD, WHO IS THE GREAT GOD. GOD’S TREATMENT OF THE HELPLESS (THE FATHERLESS … THE WIDOW, AND THE ALIEN) FURTHER ILLUSTRATES HIS ABSOLUTELY JUST CHARACTER (SHOWING NO PARTIALITY) AND HIGHLIGHTS HIS REQUIREMENT FOR ISRAEL TO BE JUST. 10:19–22. THE MENTION OF THE ALIEN IN VERSE 18 RECALLS GOD’S GREAT DELIVERANCE OF ISRAEL WITH GREAT AND AWESOME WONDERS (V. 21) FROM BEING ALIENS IN EGYPT (V. 19; CF. EX. 23:9). THEREFORE, THE ISRAELITES WERE TO FEAR … SERVE, ADHERE TO (CF. HOLD FAST TO IN DEUT. 11:22; 13:4; 30:20), AND PRAISE HIM. AS A FURTHER ENCOURAGEMENT TO BE FAITHFUL TO THE LORD, MOSES CALLED THE PEOPLE’S ATTENTION TO THE FACT THAT HE HAD ALREADY FULFILLED PART OF THE PROMISE TO ABRAHAM BY MULTIPLYING THEIR NUMBER LIKE THE STARS IN THE SKY (CF. GEN. 15:5; 22:17; 26:4). ON THE QUESTION OF WHETHER 70 ISRAELITES MOVED TO EGYPT (EX. 1:5) OR 75 (ACTS 7:14–15) SEE COMMENTS ON THE ACTS PASSAGE.**

**AN EXPLANATION TO AGAPE LOVE THE LORD BECAUSE OF HIS POWERFUL GLORIOUS DEEDS (11:1–7)**

**11:1. ONCE AGAIN MOSES LAID SPECIAL STRESS ON THE INSEPARABILITY OF LOVE AND OBEDIENCE (CF. 6:5–6; 7:9; 10:12–13; 11:13, 22; 19:9; 30:6, 8, 16, 20). THE ULTIMATE TEST OF AN ISRAELITE’S LOVE FOR GOD WAS WHETHER HE OBEYED HIM (CF. JOHN 14:15). IN HEBREW THE COMMAND TO LOVE THE LORD MEANS TO CHOOSE HIM FOR ONE’S MOST INTIMATE RELATIONSHIP AND THEN TO EXPRESS THAT CHOICE IN OBEDIENCE TO HIS REVEALED WILL. 11:2–7. ALL OF ISRAEL’S HISTORY HAD BEEN GUIDED BY THE LORD FOR THE PURPOSE OF MOTIVATING THEM TO LOVE HIM UNRESERVEDLY. THE DISCIPLINE OF THE LORD REFERS TO GOD’S MORAL EDUCATION OF HIS PEOPLE. BECAUSE OF THE WAYWARDNESS OF THE HUMAN HEART, DILIGENT AND DRASTIC MEASURES WERE NEEDED TO QUELL THAT WAYWARDNESS. SO, GOD SENT ISRAEL “TO SCHOOL” IN EGYPT SO THAT SHE MIGHT LEARN OF HIS MAJESTY AND POWER (MIGHTY HAND AND OUTSTRETCHED ARM; CF. 4:34; 5:15; 7:19) AND RESPOND WITH GRATEFUL OBEDIENCE FOR HER DELIVERANCE FROM PHARAOH. ISRAEL WAS GIVEN DISTINCT SIGNS (11:3; THE 10 PLAGUES) SO THAT SHE MIGHT UNDERSTAND HER EXPERIENCE. THE INCIDENT AT THE RED SEA (LIT., SEA OF [PAPYRUS] REEDS; CF. COMMENTS ON EX. 14:2) AND THE CONSEQUENT LASTING RUIN BROUGHT ON THE EGYPTIANS (DEUT. 11:4) COULD BE EXPLAINED ONLY BY GOD’S MIRACULOUS DELIVERANCE AND JUDGMENT. AFTER THE EGYPTIAN EXPERIENCE THE LORD THEN SENT HIS CHILDREN “TO SCHOOL” IN THE DESERT FOR 40 YEARS. HERE THEIR MORAL EDUCATION WAS FURTHER REFINED AS THEY HAD TO DEPEND ON HIM TOTALLY FOR ALL THEIR NEEDS. THE VAGUE REFERENCE WHAT HE DID FOR YOU (V. 5) RECALLED GOD’S MIRACLES FOR HIS PEOPLE IN THE WILDERNESS, INCLUDING THE WATER FROM THE ROCK (EX. 17:1–7), THE MANNA, AND THE QUAIL (EX. 16). GOD’S DISCIPLINE, HOWEVER, WAS NOT ALWAYS POSITIVE. IN THE EXODUS EXPERIENCE THE PEOPLE LEARNED ABOUT GOD’S GRACE AND POWER, AND IN THE DESERT, THEY LEARNED OF HIS PROVIDENTIAL CARE. THEN IN THE REBELLION OF DATHAN AND ABIRAM (NUM. 16) ISRAEL LEARNED ABOUT GOD’S HOLINESS. HAD IT NOT BEEN FOR MOSES’ INTERCESSION, THE LORD WOULD HAVE “PUT AN END TO” THE ENTIRE NATION (NUM. 16:45) FOR THEIR GRUMBLING UNBELIEF (NUM. 16:41). MOSES EXHORTED THE PEOPLE TO LEARN FROM THEIR PAST, FOR GOD HAD CONSTRUCTED THEIR HISTORY WITH A DIDACTIC PURPOSE. THE STRESS ON YOUR OWN EYES AND THE DOUBLE MENTION OF THE CHILDREN NOT SEEING THE EVENTS OF THIS PERIOD (DEUT. 11:2, 5) HINT AT THE PARENTS’ RESPONSIBILITY TO SET AN EXAMPLE OF OBEDIENT LIVING FOR THEIR CHILDREN AND TO PASS ON THE TRUTHS LEARNED FROM THESE EXPERIENCES.**

**AN EXHORTATION TO OBEY GOD’S COMMANDS BECAUSE SUCCESS AND LONGEVITY IN THE LAND DEPENDED ON IT (11:8–25)**

**11:8–9. MOSES WANTED THE PEOPLE TO DRAW AN IMPORTANT CONCLUSION FROM HIS BRIEF REVIEW OF THEIR HISTORY (VV. 1–7). SINCE GOD HAD DESIGNED ISRAEL’S PAST EXPERIENCES TO BRING ABOUT HER MORAL EDUCATION, IT SHOULD HAVE BEEN PLAIN TO THE NATION THAT THEIR EXPERIENCING THE LORD’S GRACE OR JUDGMENT DEPENDED ON THEIR MORAL BEHAVIOR. THEREFORE, THEY COULD PROSPER IN THE NEW LAND ONLY BY OBSERVING (OBEYING) ALL GOD’S COMMANDS. THE STRENGTH OF THE ISRAELITES WAS DIRECTLY RELATED TO THEIR OBEDIENCE. SO, THE SUPERNATURAL ABILITY TO CONQUER ENEMIES STRONGER THAN THEY AND THE ABILITY TO LIVE LONG IN THE LAND (CF. 4:40; 5:16; 6:2; 25:15; 32:47) WAS ULTIMATELY A QUESTION OF ETHICS, NOT MILITARY SKILL. (ON THE LAND FLOWING WITH MILK AND HONEY, WORDS OCCURRING FREQUENTLY IN DEUT., SEE COMMENTS ON EX. 3:8.) 11:10–15. MENTIONING THE CONTRASTS BETWEEN THE PROMISED LAND AND EGYPT MIGHT HAVE BEEN PROMPTED BY THE REFERENCE TO DATHAN AND ABIRAM (V. 6). THESE MEN HAD REFERRED TO EGYPT AS “A LAND FLOWING WITH MILK AND HONEY” AND COMPLAINED THAT MOSES HAD NOT GIVEN THEM ANYTHING BETTER (NUM. 16:12–14). HOWEVER, THE LAND OF CANAAN HAD FAR MORE POTENTIAL FOR AGRICULTURE. WHEREAS THE PEOPLE IN EGYPT HAD TO DEPEND ON IRRIGATION, GOD’S PEOPLE WOULD HAVE RAIN FROM HEAVEN, FOR HE WATCHES OVER THE LAND YEAR-ROUND. BUT THIS RAIN, UNLIKE IRRIGATION, DID NOT DEPEND ON HUMAN INGENUITY OR SKILL, BUT RATHER ON THE WILL OF ISRAEL TO OBEY THE COMMANDS OF THE RAIN’S GIVER. THIS INVOLVED LOVING AND SERVING HIM (CF. DEUT. 10:12). THE AUTUMN … RAINS (ALSO CALLED THE EARLY RAINS) COME IN SEPTEMBER–OCTOBER, AND THE SPRING RAINS ARE IN MARCH–APRIL (CF. JOEL 2:23). THOSE RAINS BEGIN AND END THE RAINY SEASON. THE RAINS ARE NECESSARY TO HELP CROPS AND TREES GROW, INCLUDING GRAIN (WHEAT, FLAX, AND BARLEY), GRAPEVINES (WINE), OLIVE TREES (OIL), AND GRASS IN THE FIELDS. 11:16–21. THROUGH MOSES, GOD AGAIN WARNED ISRAEL AGAINST WORSHIPING OTHER GODS. THIS WAS APPROPRIATELY RELATED TO VERSES 13–15, BECAUSE MANY OF THE GODS WORSHIPED IN CANAAN WERE FERTILITY DEITIES, THAT IS, GODS OF GRAIN, OIL, RAIN, ETC. UNLESS THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL WERE EXTREMELY CAREFUL (SEE COMMENTS ON 4:9) THEY COULD EASILY BE ENTICED BY THEIR PAGAN NEIGHBORS TO ENTER INTO THE SENSUAL WORSHIP OF THESE DEITIES. IT WOULD SIMPLY BE A MATTER OF TRANSFERRING THEIR TRUST IN THE LORD FOR THE FERTILITY OF THEIR LAND TO ONE OR MORE OF THOSE FALSE GODS. AND THIS WORSHIP, WHICH WAS DIVORCED (A STEPFAMILY IS 2 SEPARATE FAMILIES MERGE INTO ONE. THIS CAN GO SEVERAL DIFFERENT WAYS, LIKE 2 DIVORCED PARENTS WITH 1 OR MORE CHILDREN BLENDING FAMILIES, OR 1 DIVORCED PARENT WITH KIDS MARRYING SOMEONE WHO HAS NEVER BEEN MARRIED & HAS NO KID) FROM THE REALM OF ETHICS AND WHICH EMPHASIZED RITUAL SEX, WAS SO APPEALING TO HUMAN HEARTS THAT CARELESS AND MORALLY UNDISCIPLINED ISRAELITES WOULD BE DRAWN INTO ITS FATAL WEB. THE WRATH OF GOD EXPRESSED IN FAMINE (HE WILL SHUT THE HEAVENS) COULD BE AVOIDED BY ABSTAINING FROM WORSHIPING FALSE GODS. THIS WAS IRONIC, FOR ISRAEL’S ATTEMPT TO GUARANTEE RAIN BY WORSHIPING CANAANITE GODS WOULD RESULT IN GOD’S WITHHOLDING RAIN! HOWEVER, THEIR WILL TO AVOID THIS SIN WAS SO WEAK THAT IT COULD ONLY BE SUSTAINED BY DILIGENT ATTENTION TO THE WORDS OF MOSES CONCERNING DIVINE GRACE AND DELIVERANCE AS WELL AS SIN AND JUDGMENT. THEY WERE TO FIX THOSE WORDS … IN THEIR HEARTS (CF. 6:6) AND MINDS. (ON ATTACHING THOSE WORDS TO THEIR HANDS AND FOREHEADS, SEE COMMENTS ON 6:8.) ONLY BY LETTING GOD’S WORDS INVADE EVERY AREA OF THEIR LIVES AND HOMES AND BY DILIGENTLY TEACHING THEM TO THEIR CHILDREN (CF. 6:7) COULD THE NATION HOPE TO ESCAPE THE SEDUCTION OF FALSE WORSHIP AND FIND PERMANENT PROSPERITY IN THE LAND OF PROMISE GIVEN BY THE LORD ON OATH TO THEIR FOREFATHERS (SEE COMMENTS ON 1:35). THE SAME PRINCIPLE APPLIES TO CHRISTIANS TODAY. COMMITMENT TO KNOW AND OBEY THE SCRIPTURES KEEPS BELIEVERS FROM CONTEMPORARY FORMS OF FALSE WORSHIP (CF. 2 TIM. 3:1–9 WITH 2 TIM. 3:14–17). THEREFORE, PAUL EXHORTED ALL CHRISTIANS TO “LET THE WORD OF CHRIST DWELL IN YOU RICHLY” (COL. 3:16). 11:22–25. AT THIS POINT IN HIS SPEECH MOSES TURNED FROM THE THEME OF LONGEVITY IN THE LAND TO THE SUCCESSFUL CONQUEST OF THE LAND. THE PEOPLE WERE TO LOVE THE LORD (CF. 6:5). OBEDIENCE TO THE SPECIFIC COMMANDS WAS ESSENTIALLY AN EXPRESSION OF ONE’S LOVE FOR GOD (CF. 11:1). AND CONSISTENT ALLEGIANCE TO HIM (HOLD FAST TO HIM; CF. 10:20; 13:4; 30:20) WAS AN EVIDENCE OF LOVE. IN RETURN FOR THEIR OBEDIENCE THE LORD WOULD GRANT ISRAEL SUPERNATURAL SUCCESS AGAINST SUPERIOR (LARGER AND STRONGER) ENEMY ARMIES. HE WOULD PUT A TERROR AND FEAR IN THEIR ENEMIES SO THAT THEY COULD NOT FIGHT SUCCESSFULLY AGAINST ISRAEL. RAHAB’S WORDS TO THE SPIES, “I KNOW THAT THE LORD HAS GIVEN THIS LAND TO YOU AND THAT A GREAT FEAR OF YOU HAS FALLEN ON US” (JOSH. 2:9), ARE ONE EXAMPLE OF THE FULFILLMENT OF THIS PROMISE (CF. EX. 15:15–16; DEUT. 2:25; 28:10; JOSH. 2:11, 24; 5:1). HAD ISRAEL CONTINUED TO OBEY GOD FAITHFULLY, HER BOUNDARIES WOULD HAVE BEEN ENLARGED (DEUT. 11:24; CF. COMMENTS ON 1:7) TO FULFILL THE PROMISE MADE TO ABRAHAM (GEN. 15:18). BUT BECAUSE OF ISRAEL’S DISOBEDIENCE THE FULFILLMENT OF THE WHOLE LAND PROMISE IS STILL FUTURE.**

**THE BLESSINGS AND CURSES ON MOUNT EBAL AND MOUNT GERIZIM (11:26–32)**

**11:26–32. FOR DETAILS ON THIS SEE THE COMMENTS ON CHAPTERS 27–28. VERSES 26–32 OF CHAPTER 11 FORM A FITTING CONCLUSION TO THIS SECTION OF MOSES’ SPEECH. ONCE AGAIN, HE EMPHASIZED THAT THE HISTORY OF ISRAEL WOULD BE DETERMINED BY HER ETHICAL RELATIONSHIP TO THE LORD.**

**THE CODE OF SPECIFIC LAWS (12:1–26:15)**

**THE INTRODUCTION (12:1)**

**12:1. THE DECREES AND LAWS THAT FOLLOW IN THIS SECTION OF MOSES’ SPEECH (12:2–26:15) WERE NOT MEANT TO BE EXHAUSTIVE. MOSES INTENTIONALLY DID NOT REPEAT MANY OF THE DETAILS AND LAWS RECORDED IN EXODUS AND LEVITICUS. DEUTERONOMY IS LAW PREACHED (OR BETTER, “INSTRUCTION”; SEE COMMENTS ON 1:5). MOSES WAS SETTING A QUALITY OF LIVING BEFORE THE NATION RATHER THAN AN EXHAUSTIVE LAW CODE THAT COVERED EVERY DETAIL OF LIFE. THE SPECIFIC LAWS IN THIS SECTION WERE GIVEN TO HELP THE PEOPLE SUBORDINATE EVERY AREA OF THEIR LIVES TO THE LORD, AND TO HELP THEM ERADICATE WHATEVER MIGHT THREATEN THAT PURE DEVOTION. THESE LAWS WERE GIVEN WITH THE PROMISED LAND SPECIFICALLY IN MIND: BE CAREFUL (CF. COMMENTS ON 4:9) TO FOLLOW THESE COMMANDS IN THE LAND. BECAUSE GOD’S WORD IS CERTAIN OF FULFILLMENT, MOSES COULD TELL THE ISRAELITES ON THE PLAINS OF MOAB, STILL OUTSIDE THE BOUNDARIES OF THE PROMISED LAND, THAT THE LORD HAD GIVEN THEM THE LAND. SO, WITH THE SURE GIFT OF THE LAND IN MIND THE PEOPLE WERE TO LISTEN CAREFULLY TO THESE DECREES AND LAWS. (ON THE TITLE, THE GOD OF YOUR FATHERS, SEE THE COMMENTS ON 1:11; CF. 1:21; 4:1; 6:3; 27:3.)**

**THE LAW OF THE SINGLE SANCTUARY (12:2–28)**

**THE COMMAND TO DESTROY CANAANITE WORSHIP CENTERS (12:2–4)**

**12:2–4. MOUNTAINS AND HILLS WERE PARTICULARLY SIGNIFICANT IN SOME OF THE RELIGIONS OF THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST FOR MANY DEITIES WERE THOUGHT TO HAVE ORIGINATED THERE AND TO LIVE THERE. THE SPREADING TREE WAS ALSO SIGNIFICANT FOR THE CANAANITE WORSHIP OF FERTILITY DEITIES. THE SACRED STONES (CF. 7:5; EX. 23:24; 34:13) WERE POSSIBLY MALE FERTILITY SYMBOLS AND THE ASHERAH POLES (CF. EX. 34:13; DEUT. 7:5; 16:21) WERE WOODEN SYMBOLS OF THE FERTILITY GODDESS ASHERAH, BAAL’S CONSORT. THE IDOLS (PĀSÎL) WERE PROBABLY IN STONE. THE COMPLETE DESTRUCTION OF THESE CULTIC OBJECTS WAS INTENDED TO REMOVE THE TEMPTATION TO WORSHIP THEIR DEITIES AND TO STOP POLLUTING THE PURE WORSHIP OF THE LORD WITH PAGAN RITUALS AND OBJECTS (12:4). THE LORD WOULD NOT TOLERATE A PARTIAL COMMITMENT. BY DESTROYING THESE CULTIC OBJECTS AND CENTERS THE ISRAELITES COULD EXPRESS THEIR TOTAL ALLEGIANCE TO HIM. ALSO, THE ISRAELITES COULD SHOW THAT THEY DID NOT BELIEVE IN THE EXISTENCE OF THE CANAANITE DEITIES AND THEREFORE HAD NO FEAR OF “RETRIBUTION” FROM THEM.**

**12:5. WHEN ISRAEL ENTERED THE PROMISED LAND, GOD WOULD CHOOSE A PLACE … TO PUT HIS NAME (CF. VV. 11, 21; 14:23–24; 16:2, 6, 11; 26:2) THAT IS, HE WOULD CHOOSE A SITE FOR THE TABERNACLE, THE PLACE WHERE GOD AND THE PEOPLE WOULD MEET (CF. EX. 33:7–11). THIS COMMAND DID NOT MEAN THAT THE TABERNACLE WOULD ALWAYS STAY IN THE SAME PLACE, FOR IT WAS MOVED AT GOD’S COMMAND. THE ULTIMATE FULFILLMENT OF THIS COMMAND CAME CENTURIES LATER WHEN GOD LET DAVID MOVE THE TABERNACLE TO JERUSALEM WHERE HIS SON SOLOMON BUILT THE TEMPLE. THE COMMAND FOR A SINGLE SANCTUARY PROMOTED OR EMPHASIZED THREE THINGS: THE UNITY OF GOD (I.E., HE IS ONE, NOT MANY), THE PURITY OF THE ISRAELITES’ WORSHIP OF THE LORD, AND THE PEOPLE’S POLITICAL AND SPIRITUAL UNITY. 12:6. THE BURNT OFFERINGS (LEV. 1), TO BE BROUGHT TO THE PLACE OF WORSHIP, WERE TO BE COMPLETELY BURNED ON THE ALTAR. THEY WERE GIVEN AT VARIOUS TIMES TO EXPRESS THE WORSHIPER’S TOTAL DEPENDENCE ON THE LORD. THE WORD TRANSLATED SACRIFICE (ZEḆAḤ) REFERS TO A SACRIFICE GIVEN AS AN EXPRESSION OF APPRECIATION, AND IT INVOLVED A COMMUNAL MEAL. IT MAY HAVE BEEN GIVEN AS A THANK OFFERING (LEV. 7:12–15; 22:29–30) FOR SOMETHING SPECIFIC GOD HAD DONE FOR A WORSHIPER. OR IT MAY HAVE BEEN OFFERED AS A VOTIVE OFFERING TO FULFILL A VOW MADE TO THE LORD (LEV. 7:16–17; 22:18–23). OR IT MAY HAVE BEEN OFFERED AS A FREEWILL OFFERING IN WHICH THE PERSON THANKED GOD (LEV. 7:16–17; 22:18–23) BUT NOT NECESSARILY FOR ANYTHING SPECIFIC. (ON TITHES SEE COMMENTS ON LEV. 27:30–32 AND DEUT. 14:28. ON THE LAW OF THE FIRSTBORN SEE COMMENTS ON 15:19–23.) THE SPECIAL GIFTS (LIT., WHAT IS LIFTED UP IN THE HAND) WERE FOR THE PRIESTS. 12:7. AN ISRAELITE “WORSHIP SERVICE” WOULD BE CHARACTERIZED BY JOY (YOU AND YOUR FAMILIES SHALL EAT AND SHALL REJOICE) IF THEY LIVED FAITHFULLY IN THE NEW LAND, FOR THEY COULD COUNT ON THE LORD’S ABUNDANT BLESSING. “REJOICING” IN THE LORD’S PRESENCE OCCURS SEVERAL TIMES IN DEUTERONOMY (VV. 7, 12, 18; 14:26; 16:11; ALSO NOTE 16:14–15).**

**THE INSTRUCTION ABOUT WHEN TO WORSHIP (12:8–14)**

**12:8–9. EARLIER IN ISRAEL’S WILDERNESS EXPERIENCE, THE LORD INSTRUCTED MOSES TO COMMAND THE PEOPLE NOT TO SLAUGHTER A COW, SHEEP, OR GOAT WITHOUT FIRST BRINGING THE ANIMAL TO THE ENTRANCE OF THE TABERNACLE TO PRESENT IT AS AN OFFERING TO HIM (LEV. 17:1–4). GOD HAD TWO REASONS FOR THIS. FIRST, THE PROHIBITION WAS DESIGNED TO KEEP THE ISRAELITES FROM WORSHIPING AS PAGANS (LEV. 17:5–9). SECOND, IT WAS TO KEEP WORSHIPERS FROM EATING THE BLOOD OF THE SACRIFICE (LEV. 17:10–13). EVERYONE DOES AS HE SEES FIT MAY IMPLY SOME LAXITY ON THE PEOPLE’S PART IN OBSERVING THE PROHIBITION (LEV. 17:3–4). OR MOSES MAY HAVE MEANT THAT THERE HAD BEEN SOME CONFUSION AS TO HOW TO APPLY THE ORIGINAL PROHIBITION. THE FOLLOWING LEGISLATION, HOWEVER, REMOVES ANY AMBIGUITY ABOUT THE EATING AND SACRIFICING OF MEAT. 12:10–14. THE OFFERINGS (BURNT OFFERINGS … SACRIFICES … TITHES … SPECIAL GIFTS, AND VOWS, ETC.; SEE COMMENTS ON V. 6), WHETHER OF FLESH OR GRAIN, COULD BE OFFERED ONLY AT THE TABERNACLE (CF. VV. 17–18), THE PLACE THE LORD WOULD CHOOSE AS A DWELLING FOR HIS NAME (SEE COMMENTS ON V. 5). THESE ACTS OF WORSHIP WERE TO BE TIMES OF JOY (V. 12).**

**THE INSTRUCTION ABOUT WHAT TO OFFER IN WORSHIP (12:15–28)**

**12:15–16. WILD GAME ANIMALS AND ANIMALS ACCEPTABLE FOR SACRIFICE COULD BE EATEN WITHOUT TAKING THEM TO THE CENTRAL SANCTUARY AS LONG AS THEY WERE NOT SLAUGHTERED FOR OFFERINGS. SINCE SUCH AN ANIMAL WAS NOT INTENDED FOR SACRIFICIAL WORSHIP IT DID NOT MATTER WHETHER THE PARTAKERS OF THE MEAL WERE CEREMONIALLY UNCLEAN OR CLEAN. (THE CEREMONIAL LAWS, FOUND MAINLY IN LEV., WERE NOT OF A MORAL NATURE, BUT WERE DESIGNED TO TEACH THE PEOPLE TRUTHS ABOUT THE NATURE OF GOD, THEIR HUMAN NATURES, AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO GOD. FOR EXAMPLE, THE CEREMONIAL LAWS IN LEV. 12 REGARDING CHILDBIRTH DO NOT IMPLY THAT THE BEARING OF CHILDREN IS ETHICALLY WRONG.) THE PROHIBITION AGAINST EATING AN ANIMAL’S BLOOD, HOWEVER, WAS STILL IN FORCE (SEE COMMENTS ON DEUT. 12:23). 12:17–19. FOR A SECOND TIME (CF. VV. 12–13) MOSES WARNED THE PEOPLE THAT ANYTHING INTENDED FOR USE IN WORSHIPING THE LORD COULD ONLY BE EATEN AT THE FUTURE SITE OF THE CENTRAL SANCTUARY. IN THIS WAY PURITY IN WORSHIP WAS PROTECTED. AGAIN, MOSES SPOKE OF WORSHIP AS A TIME OF JOY (CF. V. 12). SINCE THE LEVITES HAD NO TRIBAL ALLOTMENT OF LAND (10:9; 12:12), THEY LIVED IN TOWNS AMONG THE TRIBES (V. 18; 14:29; 16:11). THE PEOPLE WERE TO PROVIDE FOR THEM (CF. 14:27). 12:20–28. THE PERMISSION TO EAT MEAT NOT INTENDED FOR USE IN WORSHIP WITHOUT BRINGING IT TO THE SANCTUARY WAS REPEATED HERE (CF. VV. 15–16) BUT WITH SOME ADDED DETAILS. MODERN READERS MAY FIND THIS REPETITION A BIT TEDIOUS. BUT IT SHOULD BE REMEMBERED THAT DEUTERONOMY WAS ORIGINALLY PRESENTED IN SERMONIC FORM TO ISRAEL. NORMALLY REPETITION IS IMPORTANT IN THE LEARNING PROCESS, BUT IT IS DOUBLY IMPORTANT IN ORAL PRESENTATIONS AS THE AUDIENCE DOES NOT HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO “READ” OVER SOMETHING MISSED THE FIRST TIME. THE EARLIER PROHIBITION (LEV. 17:1–12) AGAINST EATING MEAT WITHOUT OFFERING IT FIRST AT THE TABERNACLE WAS ONLY MEANT TO APPLY WHILE THE ISRAELITES WERE IN THE WILDERNESS, WHEN THEIR “HOMES” WERE NEAR THE RELIGIOUS SANCTUARY. NOW THE PEOPLE WERE ABOUT TO MOVE INTO THE PROMISED LAND WHERE THE MAJORITY WOULD LIVE TOO FAR AWAY FROM THE CENTRAL SANCTUARY TO BRING ALL MEAT THERE. SO, PERMISSION WAS GIVEN TO SLAUGHTER AND EAT ANIMALS AT HOME FOR “SECULAR” MEALS. YET THE PERMISSION WAS GIVEN IN SUCH A WAY THAT THE ORIGINAL INTENT OF THE COMMAND (LEV. 17:1–12) WAS PRESERVED. THERE THE PROHIBITION WAS AIMED AT PREVENTING THE POLLUTION OF WORSHIP BY CANAANITE RITUAL, AND AT PREVENTING THE ISRAELITES FROM EATING THE BLOOD OF THE ANIMALS. HERE MOSES WARNED AGAINST EATING THE BLOOD WHETHER THE ANIMAL WAS KILLED AT HOME (DEUT. 12:23–25; CF. V. 16) OR AT THE SANCTUARY (V. 27). THE BLOOD SYMBOLIZED LIFE (THE BLOOD IS THE LIFE, V. 23). BY REFRAINING FROM EATING BLOOD, THE ISRAELITES DEMONSTRATED A RESPECT FOR LIFE AND ULTIMATELY FOR THE CREATOR OF LIFE. ALSO, AS LEVITICUS 17:11 INDICATES, THE BLOOD IS A RANSOM PRICE FOR SINS, SO BLOOD IS SACRED AND SHOULD NOT BE CONSUMED BY PEOPLE. MOSES ALSO PRESERVED THE ORIGINAL INTENT OF LEVITICUS 17:3–4 BY AGAIN INSISTING THAT ALL OFFERINGS TO THE LORD BE GIVEN AT THE CENTRAL SANCTUARY (DEUT. 12:26–27; CF. VV. 11, 17–18). THE BLOOD WAS TO BE POURED BESIDE THE ALTAR OF BURNT OFFERING. THE NEW TESTAMENT HAS ABROGATED THE LAW OF THE SINGLE SANCTUARY BECAUSE EACH CHRISTIAN HAS BECOME A SANCTUARY, A “TEMPLE OF THE LIVING GOD” (2 COR. 6:16). HOWEVER, THE ETERNAL PRINCIPLE EXPRESSED IN THE LAW OF THE SINGLE SANCTUARY IS STILL IN FORCE FOR GOD STILL DEMANDS PURITY IN WORSHIP (JOHN 4:24) AND THE UNITY OF HIS PEOPLE (PHIL. 2:1–5). EACH OF THREE SECTIONS IN THIS CHAPTER CONCLUDES WITH THE ADMONITION TO BE CAREFUL IN CARRYING OUT THE INSTRUCTIONS (DEUT. 12:13, 19, 28; ALSO NOTE VV. 1, 30). THIS IS ONE OF MANY EMPHASES IN DEUTERONOMY, GIVEN PERHAPS BECAUSE THE PEOPLE TENDED TO BE CARELESS AND NEGLIGENT.**

**THE REPRESSION OF SEXUAL IDOLATRY (12:29–13:18)**

**AVOIDANCE OF PAGAN SEXUAL CULTIC PRACTICES (12:29–32)**

**12:29–30. ONCE AGAIN MOSES DROVE HOME THE NEED TO AVOID ALL CONTACTS WITH PAGAN CULTIC PRACTICES. THIS SIN WAS OFFENSIVE FOR TWO REASONS. FIRST, IT WOULD COME IN THE WAKE OF THE LORD’S GRACE, THAT IS, AFTER THE LORD WOULD CUT OFF … THE NATIONS BEFORE THEM. IN SPITE OF SUCH DIVINE GRACE SIMPLE CURIOSITY CAN LEAD BELIEVERS TO BE ENSNARED (CF. 7:26) BY IDOLATROUS PRACTICES. THIS GRAPHICALLY DEPICTS THE DEPRAVITY OF THE HUMAN HEART AND THE FRAGILE NATURE OF THE HUMAN WILL’S COMMITMENT TO THE HOLY GOD. NO WONDER MOSES AGAIN URGED HIS PEOPLE TO BE CAREFUL! (CF. COMMENTS ON 12:28) 12:31–32. THE SECOND REASON FOR THE OFFENSIVE NATURE OF PAGAN WORSHIP IS THE DEPTH OF THE ABOMINATIONS INTO WHICH THEY LEAD. IN WORSHIPING THEIR GODS, PAGANS DO ALL KINDS OF DETESTABLE THINGS THE LORD HATES. THE WORST OF THESE “DETESTABLE THINGS” WAS CHILD SACRIFICE. THIS PRACTICE OF BURNING THEIR SONS AND DAUGHTERS IN THE FIRE AS SACRIFICES WAS FREQUENTLY ASSOCIATED WITH THE WORSHIP OF THE AMMONITE GOD MOLECH (LEV. 18:21; 20:2–5; 2 KINGS 23:10; JER. 32:35). GOD’S PENALTY FOR CHILD SACRIFICE WAS DEATH (LEV. 20:2–5). YET DESPITE THIS SOLOMON BUILT A HIGH PLACE FOR WORSHIPING MOLECH ON THE MOUNT OF OLIVES (1 KINGS 11:7), AND BOTH AHAZ (2 CHRON. 28:3) AND MANASSEH (2 KINGS 21:6) SACRIFICED THEIR OWN CHILDREN IN FIRE. THE PRACTICE OF CHILD SACRIFICE IS LISTED AS THE CULMINATING REASON FOR THE EXILE OF THE NORTHERN KINGDOM OF ISRAEL IN THE EIGHTH CENTURY B.C. (2 KINGS 17:6, 17). THUS, A SIMPLE CURIOSITY ABOUT EVIL RELIGIOUS PRACTICES EVENTUALLY LED TO THE DESTRUCTION OF A NATION. THE SAME WARNING IS REPEATED BY THE APOSTLE PAUL. “FOR IT IS SHAMEFUL EVEN TO MENTION WHAT THE DISOBEDIENT DO IN SECRET” (EPH. 5:12).**

**THE SOLICITATION TO SEXUAL IDOLATRY BY A FALSE PROPHET (13:1–5)**

**13:1–5. AFTER THE GENERAL PROHIBITION AGAINST INVOLVEMENT IN PAGAN WORSHIP (12:29–31) MOSES DISCUSSED THREE WAYS IN WHICH THE TEMPTATION TO IDOLATRY WAS LIKELY TO COME: THROUGH A FALSE PROPHET (13:1–5), A LOVED ONE (VV. 6–11), OR “REVOLUTIONARIES” WHO HAD BEEN SUCCESSFUL IN LEADING AN ENTIRE TOWN INTO APOSTASY (VV. 12–18). MIRACULOUS SIGNS ALONE WERE NEVER MEANT TO BE A TEST OF TRUTH. FORBIDDEN MAGIC/FALSE MIRACLES HAPPEN IN MANY RELIGIONS BECAUSE SATAN [LUCIFER/VICTORIA] USES FALSE RELIGIONS AND FALSE PROPHETS TO DECEIVE THE WORLD (CF. 2 COR. 11:13–15; EPH. 6:11; REV. 12:9). SO, MOSES WARNED THE PEOPLE THAT THE STANDARD FOR TRUTH MUST NEVER BE A MIRACULOUS SIGN OR WONDER (OR OTHER AREAS OF HUMAN EXPERIENCE). THE STANDARD OF TRUTH IS THE WORD OF GOD. A PROPHET’S OR A DREAMER’S PREDICTION MAY COME TRUE. BUT IF HIS MESSAGE CONTRADICTED GOD’S COMMANDS, THE PEOPLE WERE TO TRUST GOD AND HIS WORD RATHER THAN THEIR EXPERIENCE OF A FORBIDDEN MAGIC/FALSE MIRACLE. IF HUMAN EXPERIENCE SEEMED TO CONTRADICT GOD’S CLEAR TEACHINGS THE ISRAELITES WERE TO BOW IN SUBMISSION TO GOD’S COMMANDS, FOR HIS WORD IS TRUTH (CF. JOHN 17:17). THE ISRAELITES WERE TO VIEW EACH SOLICITATION TO IDOLATRY AS A TEST OF THEIR LOVE FOR THE LORD. THOUGH THERE WAS ALWAYS THE DANGER THAT THEY MIGHT SUCCUMB TO A TEMPTATION, WITH EACH SUCCESSFUL RESISTANCE TO SIN THEIR FAITH IN AND LOVE FOR HIM WOULD GROW STRONGER (CF. JAMES 1:2–4). THEY WERE TO LOVE … FOLLOW … REVERE … OBEY … SERVE, AND HOLD FAST TO HIM (CF. DEUT. 10:20; 11:22; 30:20). THE DEATH PENALTY FOR A FALSE PROPHET WAS APPROPRIATE FOR IF HE WOULD SUCCESSFULLY SEDUCE PEOPLE INTO IDOLATRY, HE WOULD BRING THEM UNDER GOD’S JUDGMENT (CF. 7:26). KILLING A FALSE PROPHET WAS A WAY TO PURGE THE EVIL FROM ISRAEL. THE NEED TO MAINTAIN NATIONAL PURITY WAS EMPHASIZED BY MOSES, FOR THE COMMAND, “YOU MUST PURGE THE EVIL,” OCCURS NINE TIMES (13:5; 17:7, 12; 19:19; 21:21; 22:21–22, 24; 24:7).**

**THE SOLICITATION TO SEXUAL IDOLATRY BY FAMILY MEMBERS, RELATIVES OR FRIENDS (13:6–11)**

**13:6–7. PERHAPS THE MOST TRAGIC AND PAINFUL OF ALL SITUATIONS WHICH MOSES COULD ENVISION WAS A TEMPTATION TO IDOLATRY BY A LOVED ONE. HE SHOWED HE UNDERSTOOD THE DEPTH OF THE TRAGEDY AS HE DELIBERATELY DESCRIBED THE VARIOUS RELATIONSHIPS INVOLVED WITH ENDEARING TERMINOLOGY: YOUR VERY OWN BROTHER … THE WIFE YOU LOVE (LIT., THE WIFE OF YOUR BOSOM), OR YOUR CLOSEST FRIEND. OFTEN FRIENDS TRY TO INFLUENCE EACH OTHER. UNLIKE THE PRECEDING CASE IN WHICH FALSE PROPHETS OPENLY ATTEMPTED TO SEDUCE THE PEOPLE INTO IDOLATRY (VV. 1–2), THIS TEMPTATION WAS OFFERED SECRETLY AND INDIVIDUALLY. THE ABSURDITY OF THE TEMPTATION IS HEIGHTENED BY MOSES’ EXPLANATION OF THE OTHER GODS. THEY ARE GODS THAT NEITHER YOU NOR YOUR FATHERS (ANCESTORS) HAVE KNOWN. MOSES DID NOT MEAN THAT THE PEOPLE HAD NOT KNOWN ABOUT THESE GODS INTELLECTUALLY, BUT THEY HAD NOT KNOWN THEM EXPERIENTIALLY. THESE “OTHER GODS” HAD DONE NOTHING FOR ISRAEL AND NEVER WOULD BECAUSE THEY DID NOT EXIST. 13:8–10A. THE PERSON WHO WAS BEING TEMPTED SHOULD RESPOND FIRST BY NOT YIELDING TO THE TEMPTATION (DO NOT YIELD). THE COMMAND NOT TO LISTEN TO HIM MAY HAVE MEANT NOT TO GIVE IN TO HIS PLEA THAT HIS WAYS BE KEPT SECRET. SINCE THE TEMPTATION CAME THROUGH A LOVED ONE THE TEMPTED PERSON WOULD NATURALLY FEEL COMPASSION OR PITY AND WOULD PROBABLY BE INCLINED TO COVER UP THE SIN OF HIS LOVED ONE (SHIELD HIM). BUT HERE AGAIN GOD’S COMMANDS WERE TO RULE OVER HUMAN FEELINGS AND EXPERIENCES. THE TEMPTED PERSON WAS TO EXPOSE HIS LOVED ONE AND IN FACT TO BE THE FIRST IN STONING HIM TO DEATH (CF. ZECH. 13:3). BY CASTING THE FIRST STONE THE ACCUSER WAS TESTIFYING TO THE TRUTH OF HIS TESTIMONY. THE PARTICIPATION OF THE REST OF THE COMMUNITY THEN SHOWED THEIR ALLEGIANCE TO THE LORD AND THEIR RESOLUTE HOSTILITY TOWARD ANYTHING THAT MIGHT ENDANGER THAT ALLEGIANCE AND TURN THEM AWAY FROM THE LORD. 13:10B–11. THE RESULT OF SUCH A SEVERE ACTION WOULD BE THAT ALL ISRAEL WOULD HEAR ABOUT THIS EXTRAORDINARY DEVOTION TO THE LORD AND BE AFRAID TO DISOBEY HIM (CF. ACTS 5:11). THIS IS PRECISELY WHAT MOSES WAS DEMANDING OF THE PEOPLE—AN EXTRAORDINARY COMMITMENT (SUPERSEDING ALL OTHER INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS) TO THE GOD WHO HAD SHOWN EXTRAORDINARY GRACE TO THE NATION (WHO BROUGHT YOU OUT OF EGYPT, OUT OF THE LAND OF SLAVERY; CF. EX. 13:3, 14; 20:2; DEUT. 5:6; 6:12; 7:8; 8:14; 13:5). THIS PASSAGE MAY HAVE BEEN IN JESUS’ MIND WHEN HE DEMANDED A SIMILAR COMMITMENT OF HIS FOLLOWERS (CF. MATT. 10:34–39; LUKE 14:26).**

**THE DESTRUCTION OF AN APOSTATE TOWN (13:12–18)**

**13:12–13. THE SITUATION MOSES ENVISIONED HERE WAS PERHAPS THE MOST POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS FOR THE NATION AS A WHOLE. CERTAIN WICKED MEN MAY LEAD A WHOLE TOWN ASTRAY. THE MEN’S WICKEDNESS IS HIGHLIGHTED BY THE FACT THAT THEY DECEIVED ONE OF THE TOWNS THE LORD WOULD GIVE TO ISRAEL. 13:14–18. THE PUNISHMENT OF THIS SIN WAS TO BE SO DRASTIC THAT BEFORE ANY ACTION WAS TAKEN THE TRUTH OF THE REPORT MUST BE CONFIRMED BY A THOROUGH INVESTIGATION. IF THE REPORT WAS CONFIRMED, THEN THE TOWN WAS TO BE TREATED LIKE A CANAANITE CITY: SET ASIDE FOR COMPLETE DESTRUCTION OF PEOPLE AND LIVESTOCK (ON ḤĀRAM, DESTROY IT COMPLETELY, SEE COMMENTS ON 7:26; JOSH. 6:21). THE FACT THAT ALL ITS PLUNDER WAS TO BE DESTROYED, AND THAT IT WAS NEVER TO BE REBUILT, PRECLUDED ANY GREEDY OR ILLEGITIMATE MOTIVATIONS BY THOSE WHO WERE TO CARRY OUT ITS DESTRUCTION. OBEDIENCE TO THIS COMMAND WOULD BRING ABOUT A MORAL CLEANSING OF THE LAND AND A SPIRITUAL RENEWAL. THEN IN MERCY AND COMPASSION … THE LORD WOULD PROSPER THE PEOPLE BY INCREASING THEIR NUMBERS, AS HE PROMISED ON OATH (CF. 4:31). FOR THE MOST PART ISRAEL FAILED TO APPLY THE COMMANDS OF THIS CHAPTER. THIS FAILURE RESULTED IN BOTH THE NORTHERN KINGDOM AND LATER THE SOUTHERN KINGDOM BEING EXILED. THE COMMANDS OF THIS CHAPTER ARE NOT DIRECTED TO CHRISTIANS, BECAUSE THEY DO NOT LIVE IN ONE NATION RULED BY GOD; THAT IS, THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH IS NOT A THEOCRACY. HOWEVER, CHURCH DISCIPLINE SHOULD BE EXERCISED (MATT. 18:15–17; 1 COR. 5) AND THERE IS A SIN THAT LEADS TO DEATH (1 JOHN 5:16–17; CF. HEB. 10:26–31).**

**LAWS REFLECTING THE HOLINESS OF THE PEOPLE (CHAP. 14)**

**TO BE “A PEOPLE HOLY TO THE LORD” (V. 2) MEANT BEING A PEOPLE SET APART TO GOD FOR HIS USE. IN THE PRECEDING SECTION (12:29–13:18) MOSES STRESSED THE NEED FOR THE NATION IN HER WORSHIP TO BE SET APART FROM ALL PAGAN NATIONS. IN CHAPTER 14 MOSES TURNED HIS ATTENTION TO THE EVERYDAY AFFAIRS OF LIFE AND CALLED FOR A DISTINCTIVE LIFESTYLE THAT WOULD REFLECT ISRAEL’S UNIQUE POSITION AMONG ALL THE NATIONS.**

**PROHIBITION OF PAGAN MOURNING SEXUAL RITES (14:1–2)**

**14:1–2. WHEN MOSES CALLED THE ISRAELITES CHILDREN (LIT., “SONS”) OF THE LORD YOUR GOD HE WAS NOT REFERRING TO THE NEW BIRTH OR REGENERATION. RATHER HE MEANT ISRAEL’S SPECIAL PRIVILEGE AS THE ONE NATION ON THE FACE OF THE EARTH WHICH HAD AN INTIMATE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE LORD. ALL OTHER NATIONS WERE TO COME TO THE LORD THROUGH THE MINISTRY OR TESTIMONY OF THE NATION ISRAEL. BECAUSE OF THIS, ISRAEL, A PEOPLE HOLY (SET APART) TO THE LORD, WAS TO DEMONSTRATE HER HOLINESS BEFORE THE OTHER NATIONS. A UNIQUE NATION, ISRAEL WAS GOD’S TREASURED POSSESSION (CF. 7:6; 26:18; PS. 135:4; MAL. 3:17; SEE COMMENTS ON EX. 19:5). THE OTHER NATIONS HAD PECULIAR AND SUPERSTITIOUS BELIEFS ABOUT DYING AND THE DEAD. SOME EVEN WORSHIPED DEAD SPIRITS. THE PRECISE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RITUALS MENTIONED HERE (DEUT. 14:1)—LACERATION AND SHAVING THE HEAD FOR THE DEAD—IS UNKNOWN TODAY. BUT CUTTING ONESELF WAS A SIGN OF MOURNING (CF. JER. 16:6; 41:5; 47:5; 48:37).**

**HOWEVER, IT IS CLEAR THAT THESE PRACTICES REFLECTED BELIEFS ABOUT THE DEAD THAT CONFLICTED WITH FAITH IN THE LORD, THE ULTIMATE SOURCE OF LIFE. THEREFORE, WHEN A LOVED ONE DIED, THE ISRAELITES WERE TO DEMONSTRATE THEIR FAITH IN THE LORD BY REFRAINING FROM THESE PAGAN PRACTICES. TODAY CHRISTIANS MAY DEMONSTRATE EVEN GREATER FAITH WHEN A BELIEVING LOVED ONE DIES (CF. 1 THES. 4:13–18).**

**CLEAN AND UNCLEAN FOOD (14:3–21)**

**THE PRECISE MEANING OF THESE LAWS HAS BEEN A SOURCE OF DEBATE SINCE PRE-CHRISTIAN TIMES. PERHAPS THE MOST POPULAR MODERN EXPLANATION OF THE LAWS IS THAT CERTAIN ANIMALS WERE PROHIBITED FOR HYGIENIC REASONS. COMMENTATORS POINT OUT THAT PORK MAY BE A SOURCE OF TRICHINOSIS AND THAT THE HARE IS A CARRIER OF TULAREMIA. HOWEVER, SEVERAL LINES OF EVIDENCE MAKE THIS EXPLANATION IMPROBABLE: (1) JESUS DECLARED THAT ALL FOODS SHOULD BE CONSIDERED CLEAN (MARK 7:14–23). THIS WAS RECONFIRMED IN A HEAVENLY VISION GRANTED TO PETER (ACTS 10:9–23) SINCE THE DISCIPLES SEEMED TO HAVE MISSED THE POINT OF JESUS’ EARLIER DECLARATION. IT IS DIFFICULT TO BELIEVE THAT GOD WAS CONCERNED ABOUT THE HEALTH OF HIS PEOPLE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT, BUT ABANDONED THAT CONCERN IN THE NEW TESTAMENT. (2) EATING SOME OF THE “CLEAN” ANIMALS MAY REPRESENT A GREATER DANGER TO HEALTH THAN SOME OF THE “UNCLEAN” ONES. (3) NO HYGIENIC REASONS ARE GIVEN AS MOTIVES FOR OBSERVING THE LAW OF THE CLEAN AND THE UNCLEAN. AND THE OLD TESTAMENT DOES NOT STATE THAT THE ISRAELITES CONSIDERED THE UNCLEAN ANIMALS DANGEROUS TO THEIR HEALTH. A SECOND POPULAR INTERPRETATION OF THE PROHIBITION OF UNCLEAN ANIMALS FOR FOOD IS THAT THEY WERE USED IN PAGAN CULTIC RITES. EVIDENCE FOR THIS IS THAT THE UNCLEAN ANIMALS ARE SAID TO BE “DETESTABLE” (DEUT. 14:3). THE SAME HEBREW WORD IS USED ELSEWHERE IN DEUTERONOMY OF IDOLATRY AND OTHER PAGAN PRACTICES (7:25; 12:31). ALSO, SOME UNCLEAN ANIMALS (E.G., PIGS) WERE WIDELY USED IN PAGAN RITUALS. HOWEVER, THIS EXPLANATION CLARIFIES SO LITTLE OF THE DATA THAT IT IS NOT TOO USEFUL. AND ONE MAY ADDUCE COUNTER EXAMPLES. FOR INSTANCE, THE BULL, A COMMON SYMBOL IN THE RELIGIONS OF THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST, IS PERMITTED AS FOOD FOR THE ISRAELITES. A THIRD EXPLANATION IS THAT THE CLEAN AND UNCLEAN ANIMALS WERE SYMBOLIC OF GOOD AND EVIL IN THE HUMAN REALM. THIS EXPLANATION BECAME EXTREMELY SUBJECTIVE AND EVEN FANCIFUL BY EARLIER INTERPRETERS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT. FOR INSTANCE, SOME HELD THAT CHEWING OF THE CUD (14:6–8) REPRESENTED THE FAITHFUL BELIEVER WHO MEDITATED ON THE LAW. OTHERS TAUGHT THAT THE SHEEP (V. 4) WAS CLEAN BECAUSE IT SERVED AS A REMINDER THAT THE LORD IS HIS PEOPLE’S SHEPHERD. THIS SYMBOLIC INTERPRETATION SHOULD BE REJECTED SINCE IT IS DIVORCED (A STEPFAMILY IS 2 SEPARATE FAMILIES MERGE INTO ONE. THIS CAN GO SEVERAL DIFFERENT WAYS, LIKE 2 DIVORCED PARENTS WITH 1 OR MORE CHILDREN BLENDING FAMILIES, OR 1 DIVORCED PARENT WITH KIDS MARRYING SOMEONE WHO HAS NEVER BEEN MARRIED & HAS NO KID) FROM THE CONTROLS OF GRAMMATICAL HISTORICAL EXEGESIS, AND THEREFORE IS IMPOSSIBLE TO VALIDATE. HOWEVER, A SYMBOLIC INTERPRETATION MAY BE ESSENTIALLY CORRECT IF IT IS APPLIED COMPREHENSIVELY UNDER STRICT EXEGETICAL CONTROLS TO ALL THE CEREMONIALLY CLEAN AND UNCLEAN ANIMALS HERE. THE ANIMALS ARE DIVIDED INTO THREE CLASSES: THOSE THAT LIVE ON LAND, THOSE THAT LIVE IN THE WATER, AND THOSE THAT LIVE IN THE AIR. IT HAS BEEN SUGGESTED THAT CERTAIN ANIMALS IN EACH GROUP PROVIDE THE STANDARD FOR THAT CLASS; ANY DEVIATION FROM THAT STANDARD RENDERS THE ANIMAL UNCLEAN. FOR EXAMPLE, THE UNCLEAN BIRDS ARE BIRDS OF PREY THAT EAT FLESH WITHOUT DRAINING THE BLOOD AND/OR ARE CARRION EATERS, WHEREAS CLEAN BIRDS ARE PRESUMABLY THOSE THAT EAT GRAIN. THIS, SOME SUGGEST, SYMBOLIZES THE TWO CLASSES OF PEOPLE: GENTILES WHO EAT ANIMAL BLOOD AND ANIMAL FLESH THAT THEY FIND ALREADY DEAD (V. 21), AND ISRAELITES WHO REFRAIN FROM BOTH. HOWEVER, THE STANDARD FOR EACH CLASS IS SOMETIMES DIFFICULT TO DISCERN. A FOURTH EXPLANATION IS THAT THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN CLEAN AND UNCLEAN ANIMALS IS PURELY ARBITRARY, THAT IS, GOD MADE THE DISTINCTIONS SO THAT ISRAEL MIGHT HAVE A WAY OF EXPRESSING HER UNIQUE RELATIONSHIP TO HIM, EVEN IN RELATION TO FOOD. OF THESE FOUR EXPLANATIONS EITHER THE THIRD OR FOURTH ONE IS PREFERABLE. IF THE CLEAN AND UNCLEAN ANIMALS SYMBOLIZE THE HUMAN REALM (THIRD EXPLANATION) THEN THE FOOD LAWS SERVE A DOUBLE FUNCTION. THEY WERE PEDAGOGICAL ILLUSTRATIONS TO ISRAEL OF HER RELATIONSHIP TO GOD AND THE NATIONS, AND THEY REMINDED HER OF HER UNIQUENESS AS A THEOCRATIC NATION. 14:3–8. THE EXACT IDENTITIES OF SOME OF THE ANIMALS AND BIRDS LISTED IN VERSES 3–18 IS UNCERTAIN. THE ANIMALS IN THIS FIRST GROUP ARE THOSE THAT WALK ON LAND. ANY ANIMAL COULD BE EATEN IF IT HAD A SPLIT HOOF DIVIDED IN TWO AND … CHEWS THE CUD. TEN SUCH ANIMALS ARE LISTED IN VERSES 4–5. THOSE THAT MEET ONLY ONE OF THESE CRITERIA WERE CONSIDERED CEREMONIALLY UNCLEAN. THESE INCLUDED THE CAMEL, THE RABBIT, AND THE CONEY (THE ROCK BADGER; CF. NIV MARG.), AND THE PIG. THE LISTS ARE OBVIOUSLY REPRESENTATIVE RATHER THAN EXHAUSTIVE. 14:9–20. CREATURES THAT SWIM IN THE SEA COULD BE EATEN IF THEY HAVE FINS AND SCALES. OTHERS COULD NOT BE EATEN FOR THEY WERE UNCLEAN. CREATURES THAT FLY, THE THIRD CLASSIFICATION, WERE SUBDIVIDED INTO BIRDS (VV. 11–18), AND INSECTS (VV. 19–20). AS MENTIONED PREVIOUSLY THE UNCLEAN BIRDS—21 OF THEM ARE LISTED—ARE BIRDS OF PREY AND/OR EATERS OF CARRION. FLYING, SWARMING INSECTS WERE UNCLEAN, BUT OTHERS (E.G., THE LOCUST, CRICKET, AND GRASSHOPPER) WERE CLEAN INSECTS (V. 20). 14:21. THE PROHIBITION AGAINST EATING MEAT OF AN ANIMAL, BIRD, OR INSECT FOUND ALREADY DEAD WAS PROBABLY INTENDED TO PREVENT DEFILEMENT FROM CONSUMING BLOOD, FOR THE DEAD ANIMAL WOULD NOT HAVE HAD ITS BLOOD DRAINED PROPERLY. OTHER PEOPLE COULD EAT IT BUT ISRAEL WAS A DISTINCT PEOPLE, HOLY TO THE LORD. THE PROHIBITION AGAINST COOKING A YOUNG GOAT IN ITS MOTHER’S MILK POSSIBLY REFLECTS A CANAANITE FERTILITY RITE, THOUGH THE INTERPRETATION OF THE UGARITIC TEXT WHICH IS SAID TO SUPPORT THIS VIEW IS CONJECTURAL. PERHAPS THE PROHIBITION MEANT THAT THE ISRAELITES WERE NOT TO TAKE WHAT WAS INTENDED TO PROMOTE LIFE (GOAT MILK) AND USE IT TO DESTROY LIFE (SEE COMMENTS ON THE PARALLEL PASSAGE, EX. 23:19; CF. EX. 34:26). IN CONCLUSION, ALL THESE FOOD LAWS WOULD HAVE REMINDED ISRAEL OF HER UNIQUE STATUS BEFORE GOD. NO ISRAELITE COULD EAT WITHOUT REALIZING THAT IN EVERY AREA OF HIS LIFE HE WAS TO BE CONSECRATED TO GOD. LIKEWISE, AN ISRAELITE’S DIET SERVED AS A TESTIMONY OF HIS RELATIONSHIP TO THE LORD IN THE PRESENCE OF GENTILES. AS STATED EARLIER, IN THE NEW TESTAMENT GOD ABOLISHED THE FOOD LAWS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT (MARK 7:14–23; ACTS 10:9–23). HOWEVER, CHRISTIANS SHOULD DEMONSTRATE THEIR UNIQUE RELATIONSHIP TO GOD BY THE PURITY OF THEIR LIVES. CHRISTIANS MAY DEMONSTRATE THEIR FAITH AND UNIQUE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE LORD BY OFFERING SINCERE THANKS AT MEALTIMES TO GOD, THE CREATOR AND PROVIDER OF ALL FOOD (1 TIM. 4:3–5).**

**THE LAW OF THE TITHE (14:22–29)**

**14:22–23. THE REGULATIONS ABOUT THE TITHE OF THE CROPS AND LIVESTOCK—WHICH WERE TO BE EATEN IN A MEAL OF FELLOWSHIP AT THE CENTRAL SANCTUARY—WERE CONNECTED TO THE PRECEDING FOOD LAWS (VV. 3–21). EATING THE TITHES IN THE LORD’S PRESENCE WAS ANOTHER WAY IN WHICH THE ISRAELITES WERE TO EXPRESS THEIR UNIQUE RELATIONSHIP TO AND DEPENDENCE ON THE LORD IN REFERENCE TO THEIR FOOD. (REGARDING THE PLACE GOD WOULD CHOOSE AS A DWELLING FOR HIS NAME, SEE COMMENTS ON 12:5; ALSO CF. 12:11; 16:2, 6, 11; 26:2.) THEIR DIET WAS RESTRICTED NOT ONLY IN WHAT THEY COULD EAT BUT ALSO IN HOW MUCH OF THEIR FOOD THEY MIGHT KEEP FOR THEMSELVES. THE LAW OF THE TITHE, WITH ITS PROVISION FOR THE CARE OF THE POOR (14:28–29), ALSO ANTICIPATED THE FOLLOWING LEGISLATION (15:1–18) CONCERNING DEBTORS, SLAVES, AND OTHER IMPOVERISHED PEOPLE. GOD EMPHASIZED THE ABSOLUTE NECESSITY FOR THE ISRAELITES TO TITHE: BE SURE TO SET ASIDE A 10TH. PREVIOUSLY MOSES HAD INDICATED THAT THE ISRAELITES’ TITHES WERE TO GO TO THE LEVITES (NUM. 18:21–32). NOW MOSES ADDED A NEW FEATURE TO THE LEGISLATION ABOUT THE TITHE. THE ISRAELITES WERE TO TAKE PART OF THEIR TITHE TO THE CENTRAL SANCTUARY, AND EAT IT THERE IN A COMMON MEAL BEFORE THE LORD. OR THIS MAY BE A SECOND TITHE (A 10TH OF THE REMAINING 90%), PART OF WHICH WAS TO BE EATEN AT THE SANCTUARY WITH THE REMAINDER GIVEN TO THE LEVITES SERVING THERE (CF. DEUT. 14:27). THIS EXPERIENCE WAS DESIGNED TO TEACH THEM TO REVERE (LIT., “FEAR”; CF. 4:10) THE LORD THEIR GOD ALWAYS. AS THEY ATE THIS MEAL BEFORE HIM WITH PRIESTLY INSTRUCTION, THEY WOULD BE ACKNOWLEDGING THAT THEIR FOOD (AND THUS THEIR VERY LIVES) DEPENDED NOT ON THEIR AGRICULTURAL SKILLS BUT ON THE LORD’S BLESSING. SO, THEY WOULD LEARN TO FEAR HIM, FOR ONLY BY OBEYING HIM WOULD THEY CONTINUE TO EAT AND LIVE IN PROSPERITY. 14:24–27. SOME PEOPLE WOULD BE LIVING TOO … FAR AWAY FROM THE FUTURE SANCTUARY TO MAKE IT PRACTICAL TO HERD OR CARRY THEIR TITHE. SO, THEY COULD SELL THEIR TITHE OF PRODUCE AND LIVESTOCK FOR SILVER. THEN THEY COULD TRAVEL TO THE CENTRAL SANCTUARY AND THERE BUY … CATTLE, SHEEP, WINE, OR … FERMENTED DRINK OR WHATEVER THEY WISHED AND EAT AND DRINK IT THERE IN GOD’S PRESENCE. (CF. ANOTHER CONCESSION IN 12:20–25.) BOTH “WINE” AND “FERMENTED DRINK” WERE PERMISSIBLE HERE IN EVEN AN ACT OF WORSHIP TO THE LORD. THE HEBREW WORD FOR “WINE” IS YAYIN, WHICH SOMETIMES MEANS AN INTOXICATING BEVERAGE AND OTHER TIMES MEANS A NONINTOXICATING DRINK. THE HEBREW WORD FOR “FERMENTED DRINK” (ŠĒḴĀR) IS OFTEN RENDERED “STRONG DRINK” IN SOME TRANSLATIONS (E.G., KJV, NASB, RSV). THIS IS MISLEADING BECAUSE IT SUGGESTS THAT ŠĒḴĀR REFERS TO DISTILLED LIQUOR. BUT THE PROCESS FOR DISTILLATION WAS NOT USED IN THE NEAR EAST UNTIL THE SEVENTH CENTURY A.D. THE “FERMENTED DRINK” WAS PROBABLY A KIND OF BEER (THIS IS THE USUAL NIV TRANS.), BREWED BY THE ANCIENT EGYPTIANS AND AKKADIANS, AND THEREFORE LOW IN ALCOHOL CONTENT. (HOWEVER, WINE [YAYIN] DRUNK IN EXCESS CAN BE INTOXICATING; CF., E.G., ISA. 5:11; PROV. 20:1; AND DRUNKENNESS IS SIN.) PRESUMABLY ONE FAMILY COULD NOT EAT ALL ITS TITHE, SO THE REMAINDER WAS TO BE GIVEN TO THE LEVITES AT THE SANCTUARY. IN THIS WAY THE LEVITES WERE PROVIDED FOR SINCE THEY HAD NO LAND INHERITANCE OF THEIR OWN. 14:28–29. EVERY THIRD YEAR THE SECOND TITHE (CF. COMMENTS ON VV. 22–27) WAS NOT TO BE TAKEN TO THE SANCTUARY BUT WAS TO BE USED TO FEED THE LEVITES AND LESS FORTUNATE MEMBERS OF SOCIETY. THE ALIENS WERE FOREIGNERS WHO LIVED WITH THE ISRAELITES. THOUGH THOSE FOREIGNERS WERE TO BE TREATED FAIRLY, THEY DID NOT SHARE ALL THE PRIVILEGES OF ISRAELITE CITIZENSHIP. WIDOWS AND THEIR CHILDREN (THE FATHERLESS) WERE ALSO GIVEN SPECIAL CONSIDERATION (CF. 24:19–21; 26:12–13). IF THE ISRAELITES OBEYED THIS COMMAND TO SHARE, THEN THEY COULD ALWAYS EXPECT TO LIVE IN A PROSPEROUS SOCIETY AND COULD BE GENEROUS, FOR GOD WOULD BLESS THEM IN ALL THE WORK OF THEIR HANDS. TITHING IS NOT COMMANDED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT. YET BELIEVERS IN THE CHURCH AGE STILL INDICATE BY THEIR GIVING THAT GOD SUPPORTS AND CARES FOR THEM. CHRISTIANS ARE TO GIVE “GENEROUSLY,” KNOWING THAT THEY “WILL ALSO REAP GENEROUSLY” (2 COR. 9:6; CF. 2 COR. 9:7–9; 1 COR. 16:1–2).**

**THE YEAR OF RELEASE (15:1–18)**

**THE CANCELLATION OF DEBTS (15:1–11)**

**15:1. THE SABBATICAL YEAR OR YEAR OF RELEASE WAS ALSO COMMANDED IN EXODUS 23:10–11 AND LEVITICUS 25:1–7. HOWEVER, WHILE THESE VERSES STATED THAT IN THE SEVENTH YEAR THE LAND WAS TO LIE FALLOW WITHOUT ANY CROPS BEING PLANTED, THEY DID NOT MENTION THE CANCELLATION OF DEBTS. ONLY HERE DID MOSES PRESCRIBE THIS REQUIREMENT. AT THE END OF EVERY SEVEN YEARS IS A HEBREW IDIOM WHICH MEANS “DURING THE SEVENTH YEAR.” THE LAW OF CANCELLATION IS STATED IN DEUTERONOMY 15:1 AND EXPLAINED IN VERSES 2–11. 15:2–6. THE WORDS CANCEL THE LOAN COULD MEAN THE LOAN WAS TO BE COMPLETELY ELIMINATED. OR THEY COULD MEAN IT WAS TO BE CANCELED ONLY DURING THE SEVENTH YEAR. THAT IS, PAYMENT COULD NOT BE DEMANDED IN THE SEVENTH YEAR, BUT AFTER THE SEVENTH YEAR THE LOAN WOULD STILL HAVE TO BE REPAID. IN FAVOR OF THIS SECOND VIEW IS THE FACT THAT DURING THE SEVENTH YEAR WHEN THE LAND WAS TO LIE FALLOW AN ISRAELITE DEBTOR WOULD NOT HAVE THE MEANS TO REPAY HIS DEBT, BUT IN THE NEXT SIX YEARS HE WOULD. (THE DEBTS OF A FOREIGN BUSINESSMAN—I.E., A FOREIGNER BUT NOT A RESIDENT ALIEN; CF. 14:29—WERE NOT CANCELED. THIS WAS BECAUSE HE DID NOT LET HIS LAND LIE FALLOW OR SUSPEND HIS NORMAL SOURCE OF INCOME FOR A YEAR AS THE ISRAELITES DID.) IN SPITE OF THIS ARGUMENT, HOWEVER, THE DEBT IS CANCELED COMPLETELY AND PERMANENTLY BY THE LORD. SEVERAL POINTS FAVOR THIS: (1) THIS VIEW IS MORE CONSONANT WITH THE GENEROSITY THE LORD HAD EXPRESSED TOWARD ISRAEL. (2) IT IS MORE CONSISTENT WITH THE STATEMENTS IN 15:9–11. (3) THE PRACTICE OF CANCELING THE ENTIRE DEBT PERMANENTLY IN THE SEVENTH YEAR [FOR ISRAEL IT IS 8 YEARS WITH THE NUMBER 0 IN THE LORD’S ETERNAL RELEASE, BUT WITH THE TOP HIGH PRIEST BY 2 POSITIONS MAKING PEACE INTO 1 POSITION [79 TIMES FROM 12 TO 0] IT IS ONLY 8 SECONDS ON THE 10TH LEVEL IN TIME NO MORE FOR A 12-HOUR DAY IN MATTHEW 20:12 & FOR THE USA IT IS 1 YEAR BY GOING 1 MILE GO TWAIN---4 TIMES IN THE LORD’S ETERNAL RELEASE, BUT WITH THE TOP HIGH CHIEF OF POLICE BY 2 POSITIONS MAKING PEACE INTO 1 POSITION [79 TIMES FROM 12 TO 0] IT IS ONLY 1 SECOND ON THE 10TH LEVEL IN TIME NO MORE FOR A 12-HOUR NIGHT IN MATTHEW 20:12] IS EVIDENTLY MEANT TO PREPARE THE ISRAELITES [BRITONS] FOR THE EXTRAVAGANT PRACTICES COMMANDED FOR THE JUBILEE (50TH) YEAR IN WHICH EACH ONE IS TO RECEIVE BACK “HIS FAMILY PROPERTY” (LEV. 25:8–17). (4) PERMANENT CANCELLATION OF DEBTS WOULD HELP PREVENT POVERTY (DEUT. 15:4A; CF. COMMENTS ON V. 11). (5) THE POTENTIAL FOR INCREDIBLE WEALTH IN THE LAND OF ISRAEL ALSO ARGUES FOR THE PERMANENT CANCELLATION OF DEBTS. ISRAEL HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO BE THE RICHEST AND MOST PROSPEROUS NATION ON THE FACE OF THE EARTH (HE WILL RICHLY BLESS YOU, V. 4B; CF. V. 6A). THIS PROSPERITY WOULD BE DUE NOT TO ANY TECHNOLOGICAL ACHIEVEMENT ON HER PART, BUT BECAUSE OF HER WHOLEHEARTED COMMITMENT TO GOD: IF ONLY YOU FULLY OBEY THE LORD YOUR GOD AND ARE CAREFUL TO FOLLOW ALL THESE COMMANDS (V. 5). MOSES’ STATEMENT, YOU WILL LEND TO MANY NATIONS BUT … BORROW FROM NONE, WAS, IN EFFECT, A PROMISE OF WORLD SOVEREIGNTY (YOU WILL RULE OVER MANY NATIONS). 15:7–11. MOSES LEFT THE REALM OF LAW FOR A MOMENT TO APPEAL TO HIS FELLOW ISRAELITES’ HEARTS. THE LAW OF DEBT CANCELLATION (VV. 1–6) WAS INTENDED TO INSTILL A SPIRIT OF GENEROSITY WITHIN THE ISRAELITES AND THUS A FREEDOM FROM THE LOVE OF MONEY AND THINGS. THEREFORE, A CALCULATING ISRAELITE WAS GUILTY OF SIN IF HE REFUSED A LOAN FOR A POOR BROTHER (V. 7; CF. NEEDY BROTHER, V. 9) OUT OF FEAR THAT IT MIGHT NOT BE REPAID SINCE THE SEVENTH YEAR WAS NEAR. BEING HARDENED OR TIGHTFISTED MEANT HE WAS NOT TRUSTING THE LORD TO BLESS … ALL HIS WORK. SOLOMON MAY HAVE BEEN MEDITATING ON THESE WORDS OF MOSES WHEN HE WROTE, “ONE MAN GIVES FREELY, YET GAINS EVEN MORE; ANOTHER WITHHOLDS UNDULY, BUT COMES TO POVERTY” (PROV. 11:24). MOSES SUMMARIZED THE ATTITUDE THE ISRAELITES SHOULD HAVE TOWARD THOSE IN NEED: BE OPENHANDED (DEUT. 15:8, 11). THE SAD CONFESSION, THERE WILL ALWAYS BE POOR PEOPLE IN THE LAND, IS PERHAPS A TRAGIC FORESHADOWING OF ISRAEL’S REFUSAL TO OBEY THE LORD FULLY (V. 5).**

**THE FREEING OF SERVANTS (15:12–18)**

**15:12–15. SOMETIMES A PERSON UNABLE TO PAY HIS DEBTS WOULD SELL HIMSELF AS A SERVANT TO HIS CREDITOR. IF THE SIZE OF HIS DEBT MEANT HE MUST WORK FOR SIX YEARS, HE WAS TO BE FREED IN THE SEVENTH YEAR. THIS DID NOT CORRESPOND TO THE YEAR OF DEBT CANCELLATION (VV. 1–6), BUT WAS THE SEVENTH YEAR OF THAT PERSON’S WORK AS A SERVANT. THE LORD HAD PREVIOUSLY MADE IT CLEAR THAT SIX FULL YEARS OF A PERSON’S LIFE WERE ENOUGH TO MAKE UP FOR DEFAULTING ON A LOAN (CF. EX. 21:2). HOWEVER, IN DEUTERONOMY MOSES ADDED THAT THE EMPLOYER MUST DO MORE THAN FREE THE SERVANT; HE MUST ALSO SUPPLY HIM LIBERALLY WITH LIVESTOCK, GRAIN, AND WINE IN ACCORD WITH THE WAY THE LORD HAD BLESSED HIM. AFTER SIX YEARS THE SERVANT WOULD HAVE LITTLE OR NOTHING, SO TO SEND HIM AWAY EMPTY-HANDED WOULD HAVE JEOPARDIZED HIS FREEDOM ALL OVER AGAIN. OBEDIENCE TO THIS COMMAND WOULD SERVE THE VALUABLE PURPOSE OF REMINDING EMPLOYERS OF THE GRACE GOD HAD SHOWN ISRAEL IN REDEEMING HER FROM EGYPT (CF. DEUT. 24:18, 22). IT WOULD REMIND THEM THAT THEIR OWN WELFARE ALSO DEPENDED ON THAT GRACE. 15:16–17. MOSES ALSO PROVIDED FOR A SERVANT WHO HAD BECOME TOO ATTACHED TO A FAMILY TO LEAVE IT. THE EMPLOYER WAS TO PIERCE THE SERVANT’S EARLOBE WITH AN AWL TO INDICATE HE WAS THE MAN’S SERVANT FOR LIFE (CF. COMMENTS ON EX. 21:5–6). 15:18. MOSES OFFERED A DOUBLE MOTIVATION TO ONE WHO WAS PERHAPS TOO GREEDY TO SET HIS SERVANT FREE. IN FAIRNESS HE SHOULD REALIZE THAT IT WOULD HAVE COST HIM AT LEAST TWICE AS MUCH IF HE HAD HIRED SOMEONE FOR SIX YEARS. SECOND, IF IN FAITH HE WOULD OBEY THE COMMAND TO RELEASE HIS SERVANT, THE LORD WOULD BLESS HIM IN EVERYTHING HE WOULD DO. THIS PROMISE OF BLESSING IN RETURN FOR OBEDIENCE IS STATED OFTEN IN DEUTERONOMY, FOUR TIMES IN THIS CHAPTER ALONE (VV. 4, 6, 10, 18).**

**THE LAW OF FIRSTBORN ANIMALS (15:19–23)**

**THE LAW REGARDING FIRSTBORN ANIMALS MAY HAVE OCCURRED HERE IN MOSES’ SERMON BECAUSE, LIKE THE LAWS OF CANCELING DEBTS AND RELEASING SERVANTS, IT INVOLVED GIVING UP ONE’S POSSESSIONS. THIS LAW WAS FIRST RECORDED IN EXODUS 13:11–15. IT WAS PEDAGOGICAL: SACRIFICING FIRSTBORN ANIMALS REMINDED THE ISRAELITES OF THEIR REDEMPTION FROM EGYPT WHEN ALL THE FIRSTBORN EGYPTIAN SONS DIED. IT WAS AN OCCASION FOR THE ISRAELITES TO TEACH THEIR CHILDREN ABOUT GOD’S REDEMPTION OF THEIR NATION. ACCORDING TO EXODUS 22:29–30 THE FIRSTBORN, WERE TO BE SACRIFICED ON THE EIGHTH DAY AFTER BIRTH. FIRSTBORN ANIMAL SACRIFICES WERE ALSO USED TO HELP SUPPORT THE PRIESTS (NUM. 18:15–18). 15:19. IN ISRAEL’S LIVESTOCK EVERY FIRSTBORN MALE WAS TO BE COMPLETELY SET APART FOR THE LORD. ITS OWNER RECEIVED NO BENEFIT ON HIS FARM FROM THE ANIMAL; FIRSTBORN … OXEN WERE NOT TO PLOW; FIRSTBORN … SHEEP WERE NOT TO BE SHORN. (GOATS ARE ALSO MENTIONED IN NUM. 18:17.) 15:20. ANNUALLY (PRESUMABLY DURING ONE OF THE ANNUAL FEASTS; CF. 6:16) THE YOUNG FIRSTBORN ANIMALS WERE TO BE TAKEN TO THE CENTRAL SANCTUARY TO BE SACRIFICED. THE SACRIFICED ANIMALS WERE THEN EATEN THERE IN A COMMUNAL MEAL WITH ONE’S FAMILY. 15:21–23. AN IMPERFECT FIRSTBORN ANIMAL WAS NOT ACCEPTABLE AS A SACRIFICE (CF. 17:1), SO IT WAS TO BE TREATED LIKE A GAME ANIMAL (CF. 12:15; 14:4–5)—EATEN AT HOME BUT NOT SACRIFICED. AS STATED PREVIOUSLY (12:16, 23–24) THE BLOOD OF SUCH ANIMALS WAS NOT TO BE EATEN.**

**THE PILGRIM FESTIVALS (16:1–17)**

**THE FESTIVALS MENTIONED HERE WERE THE THREE GREAT ANNUAL FEASTS WHICH ALL MALE ISRAELITES WERE SUPPOSED TO ATTEND (V. 16). IF POSSIBLE, THEIR FAMILIES WERE TO GO ALONG (CF. VV. 11, 14, SEE COMMENTS ON V. 16). THESE FEASTS WERE SO IMPORTANT TO ISRAEL’S RELIGIOUS LIFE THAT AFTER THE DISPERSION SOME JEWS RESIDING FAR FROM PALESTINE STILL ATTENDED ONE OR MORE OF THE FESTIVALS WHENEVER POSSIBLE (CF. ACTS 2:9–11, THE FEAST OF WEEKS OR PENTECOST). ATTENDING THESE FEASTS GAVE THE ISRAELITES OPPORTUNITY TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE LORD AS THEIR DELIVERER AND PROVIDER. IT ALSO GAVE THEM OPPORTUNITY TO EXPRESS THEIR FAITH IN THE LORD AS THEY LEFT THEIR FAMILIES IN GOD’S CARE TO JOURNEY TO THE SANCTUARY. THESE FESTIVALS DEMONSTRATED THAT WORSHIPING GOD SHOULD BE A JOYFUL EXPERIENCE IN WHICH THE PARTICIPANTS GRATEFULLY SHARE IN THE BOUNTY OF HIS BLESSING (DEUT. 16:11, 14–15; CF. 12:7, 12, 18; 14:26).**

**THE PASSOVER (16:1–8)**

**16:1–2. THE MOST DETAILED INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE PASSOVER ARE IN EXODUS 12:1–28, 43–49. THE WORD “PASSOVER” (PESAḤ) COMES FROM THE VERB PĀSAḤ MEANING “TO PASS OVER.” THIS FEAST COMMEMORATED THE NIGHT THE LORD “PASSED OVER” THE BLOOD-SPRINKLED HOUSES OF THE ISRAELITES, SPARING THE LIVES OF THEIR FIRSTBORN PEOPLE, AND PUTTING TO DEATH THE FIRSTBORN EGYPTIANS AND THEIR LIVESTOCK. THE LIVES OF ISRAELITE FIRSTBORN PEOPLE AND LIVESTOCK WERE PROTECTED BY THE SACRIFICIAL BLOOD. AS A COMMEMORATIVE RITE THE ISRAELITES WERE TO USE THE PASSOVER TO TEACH THEIR CHILDREN ABOUT GOD’S MIRACULOUS DELIVERANCE FROM EGYPT (EX. 12:26–27). THE PASSOVER WAS CELEBRATED ON THE 14TH DAY OF ABIB (MARCH–APRIL). ORIGINALLY THE PASSOVER SACRIFICE WAS FROM THE FLOCK, EITHER A YEAR-OLD SHEEP OR GOAT (EX. 12:5). THE WORDS OR HERD (CATTLE) MEAN THAT MOSES WIDENED THE CHOICE. OR PERHAPS THE SACRIFICE FROM THE HERD WAS TO BE OFFERED IN THE SEVEN-DAY FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD (DEUT. 16:3) IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE PASSOVER. AT ANY RATE LAMBS BECAME THE TRADITIONAL PASSOVER SACRIFICIAL ANIMALS. THE ANIMALS WERE SACRIFICED “AT TWILIGHT” (SEE COMMENTS ON EX. 12:6). GENTILES WERE EXCLUDED FROM THE PASSOVER FEAST UNLESS THEY HAD BECOME PROSELYTES (EX. 12:43–49). EACH YEAR PASSOVER WAS OBSERVED A MONTH LATER FOR THOSE UNABLE TO PARTAKE OF THE FEAST DURING ABIB BECAUSE OF CEREMONIAL UNCLEANNESS OR ABSENCE ON A JOURNEY (NUM. 9:6–12). 16:3–4. THE PASSOVER WAS IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWED BY THE SEVEN-DAY FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD, SO IN EFFECT THE TWO ACTUALLY CONSTITUTED ONE FESTIVAL (CF. LUKE 2:41; 22:7; ACTS 12:3–4; SEE COMMENTS ON LUKE 22:7–38; JOHN 19:14). EATING BREAD WITHOUT YEAST COMMEMORATED THE HASTE WITH WHICH THE ISRAELITES HAD TO LEAVE EGYPT (EX. 12:33–34). THIS WOULD HELP THEM REMEMBER THEIR QUICK DEPARTURE FROM EGYPT. AS BREAD OF AFFLICTION IT ALSO SYMBOLIZED THE ISRAELITES’ SLAVERY IN EGYPT. NONE OF THE MEAT SACRIFICED IN THE EVENING OF THE FIRST FEAST DAY (THE PASSOVER LAMB) WAS TO BE LEFT OVER TO EAT THE NEXT MORNING. IT WAS TO BE BURNED (EX. 12:10), PERHAPS SUGGESTIVE OF THE SACRIFICE’S SACRED NATURE. 16:5–8. THE FIRST PASSOVER HAD BEEN OBSERVED IN THE HOMES OF THE INDIVIDUAL ISRAELITES. BUT LATER AFTER THE CENTRAL SANCTUARY WAS BUILT (THE PLACE WHERE GOD’S NAME WOULD DWELL; CF. 12:5, 11; 14:23; 16:2, 11; 26:1, 15), THE PASSOVER COULD BE OBSERVED ONLY THERE. THIS MAY HAVE SYMBOLIZED ISRAEL’S BIRTH AS A NATION AT THE EXODUS, A NATION MEANT TO BE A FAMILY WITH GOD AS HER HEAD. EVEN THOUGH “TWILIGHT” MAY HAVE MEANT 3 TO 5 P.M. (SEE COMMENTS ON EX. 12:6) THAT COULD STILL BE CALLED IN THE EVENING WHEN THE SUN WAS BEGINNING TO GO DOWN. AFTER ROASTING AND EATING THE PASSOVER ANIMAL THE PEOPLE WERE TO RETURN TO THEIR TENTS, THE TEMPORARY HOMES OF THOSE WHO HAD COME TO THE CENTRAL SANCTUARY FOR THE CELEBRATION. IN THE NEW TESTAMENT JESUS CHRIST IS IDENTIFIED AS THE PASSOVER LAMB SACRIFICED FOR TRUE BELIEVERS (1 COR. 5:7; ALSO CF. JOHN 19:36 WITH EX. 12:46B). BY APPLYING THE BLOOD OF CHRIST TO THEMSELVES, THAT IS, TRUSTING IN HIM WHO DIED IN THEIR PLACE FOR THEIR SIN, CHRISTIANS ARE SPARED FROM ETERNAL DEATH.**

**THE FEAST OF WEEKS (16:9–12)**

**16:9. THE NAME FEAST OF WEEKS WAS GIVEN THIS FESTIVAL IN LIGHT OF MOSES’ COMMAND TO COUNT OFF SEVEN WEEKS FROM THE TIME THEY BEGAN TO HARVEST THE GRAIN IN MARCH–APRIL. THIS WOULD MEAN THE FEAST OF WEEKS WAS IN LATE MAY OR EARLY JUNE. IT WAS ALSO KNOWN AS THE “FEAST OF HARVEST” (EX. 23:16) AND THE “DAY OF FIRSTFRUITS” (NUM. 28:26). LATER IT WAS GIVEN THE TITLE “PENTECOST” BASED ON THE SEPTUAGINT’S TRANSLATION OF THE “50 DAYS” (LEV. 23:16). 16:10–12. THE FEAST OF WEEKS WAS A CELEBRATION OF GOD’S RICH PROVISION FOR HIS PEOPLE. THEREFORE, EACH FREEWILL (VOLUNTARY) OFFERING WAS TO BE IN PROPORTION TO ONE’S BLESSINGS FROM THE LORD (CF. V. 17; 15:14). PAUL MAY HAVE HAD THIS STANDARD OF GIVING IN MIND FOR CHRISTIANS RATHER THAN A SYSTEM OF TITHING WHEN HE DIRECTED THE CORINTHIAN CHRISTIANS TO GIVE AS EACH ONE “MAY PROSPER” (1 COR. 16:2, NASB). THIS FEAST WAS TO BE A TIME OF JOY AND SHARING. SINCE THE LORD HAD BEEN “GENEROUS” WITH THE ISRAELITES THEY WERE TO BE GENEROUS WITH OTHERS, ESPECIALLY WITH THE LESS PROSPEROUS MEMBERS OF THEIR SOCIETY (CF. DEUT. 14:21; 16:14; 24:19–21). APPROPRIATELY THE HOLY SPIRIT WAS GIVEN TO NEW TESTAMENT SAINTS DURING THE FEAST OF PENTECOST (ACTS 2). THIS SYMBOLIZED THE END OF THE OLD TESTAMENT SYSTEM OF WORSHIP AND THE BEGINNING OF THE NEW (SEE COMMENTS ON ACTS 2:4). IT ALSO POINTED TO THE FACT THAT GOD’S GREATEST PROVISION FOR A CHRISTIAN’S DAILY LIVING IS THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. (ON THE ADMONITION FOLLOW CAREFULLY SEE COMMENTS ON DEUT. 31:12.)**

**THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES (16:13–17)**

**16:13. THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES WAS SO CALLED BECAUSE THE ISRAELITES, AFTER THE FALL HARVEST (LEV. 23:39), WERE TO LIVE FOR ONE WEEK IN TABERNACLES OR “BOOTHS” (LEV. 23:42) CONSTRUCTED OF TREE BRANCHES AND FOLIAGE (LEV. 23:40). IT WAS ALSO CALLED THE “FEAST OF INGATHERING” (EX. 23:16; 34:22). IT BEGAN ON THE 15TH DAY OF THE SEVENTH MONTH (LEV. 23:34, 39), THE MONTH OF TISHRI (SEPTEMBER–OCTOBER). THE FACT THAT IT WAS CALLED “THE, LORD’S FEAST OF TABERNACLES” (LEV. 23:29), AND ALSO SIMPLY “THE FEAST” (EZEK. 45:25) MAY INDICATE THAT THIS AUTUMN FESTIVAL BECAME THE GREATEST OF THE THREE ISRAELITE PILGRIM FEASTS. 16:14–15. JOY (V. 15) WAS TO CHARACTERIZE THIS FESTIVAL, WHICH WAS ALSO TRUE OF THE FEAST OF WEEKS (VV. 10–11). THE PEOPLE WERE TO BE JOYFUL IN GOD’S PROVISION, BUT ALSO (AS LEV. 23:42–43 INDICATES) THEY WERE TO REJOICE IN THEIR DELIVERANCE FROM EGYPT. THE WEEK OF LIVING IN BOOTHS WAS TO RECALL THE JOURNEY THROUGH THE DESERT AFTER THE NATION HAD COME OUT OF EGYPT. THUS, THE AUTUMN FESTIVAL CELEBRATED THE FORMATION OF THE NATION THROUGH GOD’S GRACE AND HIS CONTINUING SUPPORT OF HER, RIGHT UP TO THE MOMENT OF THE FESTIVAL. 16:16–17. IN A SUMMARY MOSES REMINDED THE ISRAELITE MEN OF THEIR OBLIGATION TO GO THREE TIMES A YEAR TO APPEAR BEFORE THE LORD. THIS DID NOT MEAN, OF COURSE, THAT A MAN’S FAMILY MEMBERS WERE NOT TO TAKE PART IN THE FEASTS. THE IDEAL WAS FOR ALL FAMILY MEMBERS—ALONG WITH SERVANTS, LEVITES, ALIENS, THE FATHERLESS AND WIDOWS—TO JOIN IN THE CELEBRATION (CF. VV. 11, 14). EACH MAN WAS TO BRING A GIFT BECAUSE THE KEYNOTE OF EACH OF THE FESTIVALS WAS THE JOYFUL EXPRESSION OF THANKS FOR GOD’S RICH SPIRITUAL AND MATERIAL BLESSINGS EXPERIENCED IN THE PAST AND THE PRESENT. THE GIFTS TO THE LORD WERE TO BE PROPORTIONATE TO THE PEOPLE’S BLESSINGS (CF. V. 17; 15:14).**

**THE INSTRUMENTS OF THEOCRACY (16:18–18:22)**

**THE PRECEDING SECTIONS (12:1–16:17) WERE MAINLY CONCERNED WITH LAWS RELATED TO THE WORSHIP OF THE LORD BY HIS PEOPLE. THIS SECTION (16:18–18:22) DEALS WITH THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE OFFICIALS TO MAINTAIN PURE WORSHIP WITHIN THE PROMISED LAND AND TO ADMINISTER JUSTICE IMPARTIALLY.**

**JUDGES AND OFFICIALS (16:18–17:13)**

**16:18–20. AT THIS TIME IN HIS SERMON MOSES DID NOT SPECIFY HOW JUDGES AND OFFICIALS WOULD BE APPOINTED. IN THE WILDERNESS MOSES AT FIRST HAD BEEN THE ONLY JUDGE OF THE PEOPLE. BUT WHEN THE JUDICIAL BURDEN BECAME TOO GREAT FOR HIM, HE APPOINTED “LEADING MEN” OF THE TRIBES AS MILITARY LEADERS (“COMMANDERS”), OFFICIALS, AND JUDGES (1:15–18; CF. EX. 18). PROBABLY THESE MEN WERE THE CHIEF ELDERS IN EACH TRIBE. SO, THE JUDGES APPOINTED IN EACH CITY WERE PROBABLY TAKEN FROM THAT CITY’S COUNCIL OF ELDERS (THE ELDERS FUNCTIONED AS A JUDICIAL BODY; CF. DEUT. 19:12). THE “OFFICIALS” WERE PROBABLY ASSISTANTS TO THE JUDGES, PROBABLY FUNCTIONING AS CLERKS. THESE LEADERS WERE TO JUDGE THE PEOPLE FAIRLY (LIT., “RIGHTEOUSLY”; CF. 1:17; PROV. 18:5; 24:23). THEIR VERDICTS WERE TO CONFORM TO THE RIGHTEOUS STANDARDS SET FORTH IN THE WORD OF GOD (WHICH MEANT AT THAT TIME THE FIVE BOOKS OF MOSES). THEY WERE NOT TO PERVERT JUSTICE. THIS IMPLIES THAT GOD HAD GIVEN THEM A HEAVENLY PATTERN FOR THEIR ACTIONS TOWARD EACH OTHER. IF THEIR ACTIONS DID NOT CONFORM TO THIS PATTERN, THOSE ACTIONS WERE TO BE CHANGED OR PUNISHED. ANY NONCONFORMITY TO THE PATTERN OF JUSTICE WAS A PERVERSION. NOR WERE THEY TO SHOW PARTIALITY (LIT., DO NOT RECOGNIZE FACES). IDEALLY THE JUDGES WERE TO TREAT EACH PERSON AS THOUGH THEY HAD NO PRIOR KNOWLEDGE OF HIM OR HER. ACCEPTING A BRIBE WAS OBVIOUSLY WRONG FOR IT PERVERTED (BLINDS AND TWISTS) THE ABILITY OF JUDGES TO ACT IN FAIRNESS TO THE PARTIES IN THE LITIGATION. MOSES SUMMED UP THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE JUDGES AND OFFICIALS WITH AN EMPHATIC COMMAND TO FOLLOW JUSTICE AND JUSTICE ALONE (LIT., RIGHTEOUSNESS, RIGHTEOUSNESS YOU MUST PURSUE!). THESE WORDS IMPLY THAT IMPARTIAL JUSTICE COULD BE AN ELUSIVE GOAL BECAUSE OF THE WEAKNESS OF HUMAN NATURE. THEREFORE, IT WAS ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL THAT THE STANDARD SET FORTH IN THE LAW BE FOLLOWED PRECISELY. THEIR LIVES AND PROSPERITY (DEUT. 16:20) DEPENDED ON THEIR ESTABLISHING IMPARTIAL JUSTICE IN THE PROMISED LAND. 16:21–17:1. THE FIRST RESPONSIBILITY OF THE JUDGES WAS TO PREVENT IMPURE WORSHIPING PRACTICES IN THE LAND. ANYTHING THAT MIGHT LEAD TO SYNCRETISM (ACCOMMODATING WORSHIP OF THE LORD TO PAGAN SYSTEMS OF WORSHIP) WAS PROHIBITED. THIS INCLUDED ANY WOODEN ASHERAH POLE (SYMBOLIC OF ASHERAH, GODDESS OF FERTILITY AND CONSORT OF BAAL) OR A SACRED STONE, A STONE PILLAR SYMBOLIC OF MALE FERTILITY (CF. 7:5; 12:3; EX. 34:13). TO TAKE A DEFECTIVE SACRIFICE TO THE LORD (DEUT. 17:1; CF. 15:21) WAS TO BRING SOMETHING INTO THE SANCTUARY THAT WAS FOREIGN TO THE WORSHIP OF GOD, JUST AS ASHERAH POLES AND SACRED STONES WERE FOREIGN TO GENUINE WORSHIP. SUCH A SACRIFICE WAS DETESTABLE TO THE LORD. TO OFFER LESS THAN THE BEST TO GOD WAS TO “DESPISE” HIS NAME (MAL. 1:6–8). OFFERING A LESS-THAN-PERFECT SACRIFICE WAS, IN EFFECT, FAILING TO ACKNOWLEDGE HIM AS THE ULTIMATE PROVIDER OF ALL THAT IS BEST IN LIFE. ALSO, IT WAS A FAILURE TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE VAST GULF THAT EXISTS BETWEEN THE PERFECTLY HOLY GOD AND SINFUL PEOPLE. THE PRIESTS WERE NORMALLY RESPONSIBLE TO MAINTAIN PURE WORSHIP AT THE SANCTUARY (I.E., NO FERTILITY SYMBOLS OR DEFECTIVE SACRIFICES), BUT THE ULTIMATE RESPONSIBILITY RESTED WITH THE JUDGES. IF THE PRIESTS FAILED, IT WAS NECESSARY FOR THE JUDGES TO INTERVENE. 17:2–7. THE JUDGES WERE ALSO TO SEE THAT FALSE WORSHIPERS WERE EXECUTED. ONE WHO WORSHIPED OTHER GODS DESERVED CAPITAL PUNISHMENT BECAUSE HIS ACT THREATENED THE NATION’S VERY EXISTENCE. ASTRAL WORSHIP IS ALSO FORBIDDEN (CF. 4:19) FOR IT HONORED INANIMATE CREATION (LIFELESS ELEMENTS OR DEAD ELEMENTS---WATER, EARTH, AIR, WIND OR FIRE SUCH AS TREES, PLANTS, STONES, ROCKS, STATUES, ETC.) RATHER THAN THE LIVING CREATOR OR ANIMATE CREATION (LIVING ELEMENTS OR UNDEAD ELEMENTS--- WATER, EARTH, AIR, WIND OR FIRE, SUCH AS TREES, PLANTS, STONES, ROCKS, STATUES, ETC.) RATHER THAN THE LIVING CREATOR IN ROMANS 1:21-28, 32. THE ONLY PERMISSIBLE WAY IS ALWAYS LIVING OR UNDEAD, WHICH IS LORD HAS TAKEN ITS OCCUPANCY WITH HIMSELF IN ORDER TO EMPOWER IT OR MAKE IT ALIVE. THE EXECUTION COULD TAKE PLACE ONLY AFTER IT HAD BEEN PROVED BY A THOROUGH INVESTIGATION. TO INSURE AGAINST A CAPRICIOUS EXECUTION TWO OR THREE INDEPENDENT WITNESSES WERE REQUIRED. ONE WITNESS WAS INADEQUATE (CF. 19:15) BECAUSE IF HE LIED NO ONE WOULD BE ABLE TO PROVE OR DISPROVE IT. THE WITNESSES WERE TO BE THE FIRST IN THE EXECUTION. SO, IF THEIR TESTIMONY WAS LATER PROVED FALSE, THEY IN EFFECT WOULD HAVE COMMITTED MURDER AND WOULD BE LIABLE TO EXECUTION. THE WHOLE COMMUNITY (ALL THE PEOPLE) WOULD THEN JOIN IN THE EXECUTION, THEREBY DEMONSTRATING THEIR REJECTION OF OTHER GODS (17:3) AND THEIR COMMITMENT TO THE LORD. SUCH IDOLATRY WAS AN EVIL TO BE PURGED FROM THE PEOPLE (CF. V. 12; SEE COMMENTS ON 13:5). NEW TESTAMENT CHURCHES HAVE A SIMILAR RESPONSIBILITY TO KEEP THEMSELVES PURE. A CHRISTIAN OFFENDER SHOULD BE “CUT OFF” FROM HIS LOCAL CHURCH’S FELLOWSHIP IF A THOROUGH INVESTIGATION PROVES HIS SIN AND HE IS UNWILLING TO REPENT OF IT. IF HE IS A GENUINE BELIEVER, HE WILL NOT LOSE ETERNAL LIFE. BUT HE WILL SUFFER LOSS ON EARTH AND RECEIVE LESS REWARD IN HEAVEN (MATT. 18:15–20; 1 COR. 3:10–15; 5; 1 TIM. 5:19). 17:8–13. MOSES MADE A PROVISION FOR FUTURE JUDGES IN THE PROMISED LAND SIMILAR TO THAT PROVIDED FOR JUDGES IN THE TIME OF THE WILDERNESS WANDERINGS (1:17). IF A JUDGE FELT A CASE WAS TOO DIFFICULT FOR HIM TO DECIDE, HE COULD TAKE IT TO A CENTRAL TRIBUNAL (CONSISTING OF PRIESTS AND THE OFFICIATING CHIEF JUDGE) TO BE ESTABLISHED AT THE FUTURE SITE OF THE CENTRAL SANCTUARY (THE PLACE THE LORD WOULD CHOOSE). THE DECISIONS OF THE TRIBUNAL WOULD BE FINAL. ANY REBELLION AGAINST THE TRIBUNAL WAS CONSIDERED “CONTEMPT OF COURT” AND WAS A CAPITAL OFFENSE. THIS MADE THE RULE OF JUSTICE PARAMOUNT IN THE LAND AND HELPED PREVENT ANARCHY.**

**THE KING (17:14–20)**

**AFTER MOSES AND JOSHUA DIED, THE PEOPLE WERE TO BE GOVERNED BY JUDGES AND PRIESTS. HOWEVER, THIS SYSTEM DID NOT PROVIDE ISRAEL WITH ANY SEMBLANCE OF A STRONG CENTRAL GOVERNMENT. IT COULD ONLY WORK IF THE LEADERS (THE JUDGES AND THE PRIESTS) AND THE PEOPLE WERE COMMITTED TO FOLLOWING THE LORD. THE BOOK OF JUDGES RECORDS THE SAD FAILURE OF THE PEOPLE AND THE LEADERS IN THIS SYSTEM. MOSES ANTICIPATED THAT FAILURE BY INCLUDING THIS LAW IN REFERENCE TO THE FUTURE KING. ONE MAY ASK WHY GOD ALLOWED THE PRIESTS AND JUDGES TO FAIL. OR WHY DID NOT GOD INSTITUTE THE MONARCHY IMMEDIATELY? THE ANSWER, AT LEAST PARTLY, IS THAT HE WAS PREPARING THE NATION TO APPRECIATE THE GIFT OF THE MONARCHY. 17:14–15. AFTER ISRAEL COULD NO LONGER TOLERATE HER UNIQUE POSITION OF BEING WITHOUT A KING, SHE WOULD ASK FOR AND RECEIVE A KING. VERSES 14–15 SPEAK OF THE KING’S QUALIFICATIONS, VERSES 16–17 OF HIS BEHAVIOR, AND VERSES 18–20 OF HIS EDUCATION. THE KING WAS TO HAVE TWO QUALIFICATIONS. FIRST, HE HAD TO BE CHOSEN BY THE LORD. LATER HISTORY MADE IT CLEAR THAT PROPHETS, SPEAKING ON GOD’S BEHALF, WOULD DECLARE HIS CHOICE (E.G., SAMUEL’S SUPPORT FOR SAUL, 1 SAM. 9–12, AND THEN FOR DAVID, 1 SAM. 16; NATHAN’S SUPPORT OF SOLOMON, 1 KINGS 1). THE PEOPLE COULD BE SURE THAT GOD WOULD PLACE NO ONE ON THE THRONE WHOM HE HAD NOT GIFTED TO BE KING. THEREFORE, IF A KING FAILED, THE REASON FOR HIS FAILURE WOULD NOT LIE IN HIS LACK OF ABILITY BUT IN HIS MORAL LIFE. SECOND, THE KING MUST BE AN ISRAELITE. AN ISRAELITE RAISED FROM CHILDHOOD IN THE TRADITIONS AND SCRIPTURE OF ISRAEL WOULD BE A FAR BETTER CHOICE THAN A FOREIGNER TO PROTECT THE PURITY OF ISRAEL’S RELIGION. 17:16–17. THREE THINGS ABOUT THE BEHAVIOR OF THE KING WERE SINGLED OUT. THE PROHIBITION AGAINST ACQUIRING GREAT NUMBERS OF HORSES MEANT THAT ON HUMAN TERMS THE KING’S ARMY, COMPOSED MAINLY OF INFANTRY, WOULD BE SIGNIFICANTLY WEAKER THAN AN ENEMY’S ARMY WITH MANY CHARIOTS AND CAVALRY. YET THIS WAS PRECISELY THE POINT. AN OBEDIENT ISRAELITE KING WAS TO DEPEND NOT ON MILITARY STRENGTH BUT ON THE LORD ALONE. GOD HAD ALREADY DEMONSTRATED HIS ABILITY TO CRUSH A LARGE SUPERIOR CHARIOT ARMY (EX. 14–15). ACQUIRING HORSES WOULD MEAN THE PEOPLE WOULD BE GOING TO EGYPT, WHERE MANY WERE AVAILABLE. RETURNING TO THE NATION’S FORMER LAND OF SLAVERY WAS UNTHINKABLE. THE PROHIBITION AGAINST TAKING MANY WIVES WAS GIVEN BECAUSE MANY KINGS MARRIED FOREIGN WOMEN TO FORM POLITICAL ALLIANCES. IF THE KING FOLLOWED THE LORD, HE WOULD NOT NEED POLITICAL ALLIANCES. ALSO, FOREIGN WIVES WOULD CAUSE HIS HEART TO BE LED ASTRAY TO WORSHIP THEIR IDOLS. THE PROHIBITION AGAINST LARGE AMOUNTS OF SILVER AND GOLD WAS INTENDED TO KEEP THE KING FROM DEVELOPING A SENSE OF INDEPENDENCE AND A LUST FOR MATERIAL WEALTH (CF. PROV. 30:8–9). ALL THREE PROHIBITIONS, THEN, WERE DESIGNED TO REDUCE THE KING TO THE STATUS OF A SERVANT TOTALLY DEPENDENT ON HIS MASTER, THE LORD. THE TRAGEDY OF IGNORING THESE COMMANDS IS SEEN IN SOLOMON WHO BROKE ALL THREE PROHIBITIONS (1 KINGS 10:14–15, 23, 26–28; 11:1–6). 17:18–20. THE EDUCATION OF A KING CONSISTED OF HIS COPYING, READING, AND FOLLOWING CAREFULLY THE LAW AND THESE DECREES, THAT IS, THE ENTIRE BOOK OF DEUTERONOMY (NOT JUST THIS SMALL SECTION OF VV. 14–20). THIS WOULD INSURE A RIGHT SPIRIT WITHIN THE KING (I.E., HUMILITY AND OBEDIENCE) AND A LONG DYNASTIC SUCCESSION.**

**THE PRIESTS [SERGEANTS] AND LEVITES [PRIVATES TO CORPORALS] (18:1–8)**

**THE TRIBE OF LEVI WAS DIVIDED INTO THREE FAMILIES (GERSHONITES, KOHATHITES, AND MERARITES). EACH DIVISION ORIGINALLY HAD DIFFERENT RESPONSIBILITIES REGARDING THE TABERNACLE (NUM. 3–4). THE KOHATHITES WERE FURTHER DIVIDED INTO THOSE WHO WERE DESCENDANTS OF AARON AND THOSE WHO WERE NOT (JOSH. 21:4–5). ONLY THE DESCENDANTS OF AARON WERE PERMITTED TO SERVE AS PRIESTS (NUM. 3:10). THEY ARE GENERALLY REFERRED TO AS “THE PRIESTS” OR “THE SONS OF AARON” (NUM. 10:8). THE REST OF THE TRIBE, THOSE NOT SERVING AS PRIESTS, WERE DESIGNATED AS LEVITES. THUS, PRIESTS WERE A MINORITY IN THE TRIBE OF LEVI. THE LEVITES SERVED AS MINISTERS TO THE PRIESTS (NUM. 18:1–7; 1 CHRON. 23:28–32), AND IN GENERAL AS TEACHERS OF THE LAW IN ISRAEL (DEUT. 33:10A; 2 CHRON. 17:8–9). THE PRIESTS OFFICIATED AT THE TABERNACLE AND ALSO HAD OTHER DUTIES. THEY SERVED AS JUDGES (DEUT. 17:8–9), GUARDIANS OF THE SCROLL OF THE LAW (17:18; 31:9), TEACHERS OF REGULATIONS CONCERNING SKIN DISEASES (24:8), AND ASSISTANTS TO MOSES IN THE COVENANT RENEWAL CEREMONY (27:9). 18:1–2. UNLIKE THE OTHER 11 TRIBES, NONE OF THE LEVITES INCLUDING THE PRIESTS WAS GIVEN AN ALLOTMENT OF LAND TO SETTLE AND CULTIVATE. HOWEVER, 48 CITIES WERE SET ASIDE FOR THE LEVITES (NUM. 35:1–8; JOSH. 21:1–42). THE PRIESTS (AND THE LEVITES WHO ASSISTED THEM AT THE CENTRAL SANCTUARY) WERE TO BE SUSTAINED BY THE PEOPLE’S OFFERINGS MADE TO THE LORD. THE LEVITES WHO DID NOT ASSIST AT THE CENTRAL SANCTUARY WERE TO BE SUSTAINED BY GIFTS FROM THE PEOPLE (DEUT. 14:28–29; 16:10–11). 18:3–5. THE PEOPLE WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR SUPPORTING THE PRIESTS WHO OFFICIATED AT THE CENTRAL SANCTUARY. THE PRIESTS WERE TO RECEIVE PARTS OF BULLS AND SHEEP THAT WERE SACRIFICED, THE FIRST-FRUITS OF … GRAIN, NEW WINE, AND OIL, AND THE FIRST WOOL. THIS WAS BECAUSE GOD HAD CHOSEN AARON AND HIS DESCENDANTS OUT OF ALL THE TRIBES TO STAND AND MINISTER IN, THE LORD’S NAME [STEPHEN YAHWEH], THAT IS, ON HIS BEHALF. THE NEW TESTAMENT BROADENED THE PRIESTHOOD TO INCLUDE ALL CHRISTIANS (1 PETER 2:9). THE REASON FOR THIS IS THAT JESUS CHRIST BY VIRTUE OF HIS MINISTRY, DEATH, AND RESURRECTION SUPERSEDED THE AARONIC PRIESTHOOD OF THE OLD (MOSAIC) COVENANT AND BECAME THE HIGH PRIEST OF THE NEW COVENANT (HEB. 2:17–18; 4:14–5:10; 6:19–7:28). EVERY CHRISTIAN HAS COME INTO THE FAMILY OF JESUS (HEB. 2:10–13) AND THEREFORE INTO JESUS’ PRIESTLY LINE. 18:6–8. IF A LEVITE WANTED TO GO TO THE CENTRAL SANCTUARY TO MINISTER THERE IN THE LORD’S NAME [STEPHEN YAHWEH] (ON HIS BEHALF), HE WAS PERMITTED TO DO SO AND TO RECEIVE EQUAL SUPPORT ALONG WITH THE OTHER LEVITES. THIS DOES NOT IMPLY THAT THIS LEVITE WOULD MINISTER AS A PRIEST AS SOME HAVE SUGGESTED. THE LEVITES WERE TO ASSIST THE PRIESTS (1 CHRON. 23:28–32). EVEN THOUGH A LEVITE HAD RECEIVED MONEY FROM THE PRIOR SALE OF HIS FAMILY POSSESSIONS (CF. LEV. 25:32–34) BEFORE MOVING TO JERUSALEM, HE WAS TO RECEIVE SUPPORT FOR HIS WORK AT THE SANCTUARY. PAUL RESTATED THIS PRINCIPLE FOR THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH (1 COR. 9:14; 1 TIM. 5:17–18).**

**THE PROPHETS (18:9–22)**

**18:9–14. IN THESE VERSES ALL THE FORBIDDEN PRACTICES—CALLED DETESTABLE WAYS (CF. V. 12) OF THE NATIONS IN THE LAND—DEALT WITH EITHER FORETELLING THE FUTURE OR MAGIC. BY THE USE OF MAGIC ONE ATTEMPTED TO MANIPULATE OR FORCE THE “GODS” INTO CERTAIN COURSES OF ACTION. CHILD SACRIFICE WAS MENTIONED HERE BECAUSE IT WAS USED EITHER AS A MEANS OF FORETELLING OR AS MAGIC TO MANIPULATE CERTAIN EVENTS. ALL THESE PRACTICES ARE FORBIDDEN BECAUSE THEY DIVORCE LIFE FROM MORALITY. SEVERAL FACTORS MAKE THIS CLEAR: (1) THE FUTURE WAS “DETERMINED” BY ONE’S MORAL BEHAVIOR, NOT BY MAGICAL MANIPULATION. (2) USING MAGIC TO MANIPULATE ONE’S CIRCUMSTANCES WAS IN ESSENCE A FUTILE ATTEMPT TO FLEE FROM THE LORD’S ETHICAL LAWS WHICH PROMOTED LIFE AND BLESSING. (3) THE USE OF MAGIC AND DIVINATION (VV. 10, 14) WAS A REFUSAL TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE SOVEREIGNTY OF THE LORD. (4) RELIANCE ON THESE PRACTICES INDICATED A CORRESPONDING FAILURE TO TRUST THE LORD WITH ONE’S LIFE. PEOPLE WHO ARE KNOWLEDGEABLE OF THE FORBIDDEN OCCULT AND DEMON POSSESSION QUICKLY POINT OUT THAT THE FORBIDDEN MAGICAL PRACTICES (THIS DOES NOT CONCERN PERMISSIBLE MAGICAL PRACTICES, WHICH ARE CONDONED & AUTHORIZED BY THE LORD, SUCH AS ACTS 5:1-11; 13:4-12) MENTIONED IN VERSES 9–14 HAVE LED MANY INTO SATANIC LUCIFERISM SEXUAL BONDAGE & BABYLONIAN VICTORIANISM SEXUAL BONDAGE. DIVINATION (VV. 10, 14), FROM THE VERB QĀSAM, “TO DIVIDE,” MEANS TO GIVE FALSE PROPHECY OR SEEK TO DETERMINE THE WILL OF THE GODS BY EXAMINING AND INTERPRETING OMENS. (QĀSAM IS ALSO USED IN JOSH. 13:22; 1 SAM. 6:2; 28:8; 2 KINGS 17:17; ISA. 3:2; 44:25; JER. 27:9; 29:8; EZEK. 13:6, 9, 23; 21:21, 23, 29; 22:28; MICAH 3:6–7, 11; ZECH. 10:2.) SORCERY (‘ĀNAN, DEUT. 18:10, 14; CF. LEV. 19:26; 2 KINGS 21:6; ISA. 2:6; MICAH 5:12, CAST SPELLS) IS THE ATTEMPT TO CONTROL PEOPLE OR CIRCUMSTANCES THROUGH POWER GIVEN BY EVIL SPIRITS (DEMONS). TO INTERPRET OMENS IS TO TELL THE FUTURE BASED ON “SIGNS” SUCH AS THE MOVEMENTS OF BIRDS, FIRE, OR RAIN. WITCHCRAFT (KĀŠAP̱) INVOLVES PRACTICING MAGIC BY INCANTATIONS. ONE WHO CASTS SPELLS IS LITERALLY “ONE WHO TIES KNOTS” (ḤĀḆAR), THUS ONE WHO BINDS OTHER PEOPLE BY MAGICAL MUTTERINGS. A SPIRITUALIST IS ONE WHO SUPPOSEDLY COMMUNICATES WITH THE DEAD BUT WHO ACTUALLY COMMUNICATES WITH DEMONS. ONE WHO CONSULTS THE DEAD MAY MEAN THE SPIRITIST’S ATTEMPT TO CONTACT THE DEAD TO GAIN ADVICE, INFORMATION ON THE FUTURE, OR HELP IN MANIPULATION. SUCH DETESTABLE PRACTICES WERE ONE REASON THE LORD USED ISRAEL TO DESTROY THE CANAANITES. THEREFORE, IT WAS UNDERSTANDABLY DETESTABLE FOR AN ISRAELITE TO BECOME INVOLVED IN THOSE THINGS. BY AVOIDING THEM THE ISRAELITES WOULD BE BLAMELESS OF THEIR TERRIBLE SINS. 18:15–19. IN CONTRAST WITH THE DARK MAGIC OF CANAANITE DIVINERS, WITCHES, AND SPIRITISTS, ISRAELITES WERE TO LISTEN TO THE LORD’S PROPHET. THE ISRAELITES COULD BE SURE THAT A “LINE OF PROPHETS” WOULD FOLLOW IN SUCCESSION AFTER MOSES BECAUSE OF THEIR ORIGINAL REQUEST AT HOREB (SINAI) THAT GOD SPEAK TO THEM THROUGH MOSES AS A MEDIATOR (CF. 5:23–27). EACH PROPHET GOD WOULD RAISE UP WOULD BE AN ISRAELITE, AND BECAUSE THE TRUE PROPHET WOULD ONLY SPEAK THE WORDS OF THE LORD, THE PEOPLE WERE OBLIGATED TO OBEY (LISTEN TO) THOSE WORDS. THE ULTIMATE PROPHET LIKE MOSES (18:15, 18) IS JESUS CHRIST—THE ONE WHO SPOKE GOD’S WORDS AND WHO PROVIDES DELIVERANCE FOR HIS PEOPLE. NOT EVEN JOSHUA COULD BE COMPARED TO MOSES, FOR SINCE MOSES “NO PROPHET HAS RISEN IN ISRAEL LIKE” HIM (34:10) WITH SUCH POWER BEFORE MEN AND INTIMACY WITH GOD. HOWEVER, DISTINGUISHED A FUTURE PROPHET’S ROLE MIGHT BE IN ISRAEL, NONE WOULD BE LIKE MOSES UNTIL THE MEDIATOR OF THE NEW COVENANT, JESUS CHRIST, CAME. MOSES SET THE STANDARD FOR EVERY FUTURE PROPHET. EACH PROPHET WAS TO DO HIS BEST TO LIVE UP TO THE EXAMPLE OF MOSES UNTIL THE ONE CAME WHO WOULD INTRODUCE THE NEW COVENANT. DURING THE FIRST CENTURY A.D. THE OFFICIAL LEADERS OF JUDAISM WERE STILL LOOKING FOR THE FULFILLMENT OF MOSES’ PREDICTION (CF. JOHN 1:21). PETER SAID THEIR SEARCH SHOULD HAVE STOPPED WITH THE LORD JESUS (ACTS 3:22–23). (OTHER EARLY AND CLEAR PREDICTIONS OF THE MESSIAH MAY BE FOUND IN GEN. 49:10–12; NUM. 24:17–19.) 18:20–22. SINCE THE PEOPLE WERE TO OBEY GOD’S PROPHET WITHOUT QUESTION (V. 19), TO PROPHESY FALSELY WAS IN EFFECT TO USURP THE PLACE OF GOD. FOR THIS THE FALSE PROPHET WAS TO BE PUT TO DEATH. TWO TESTS COULD BE USED TO DETERMINE WHETHER A PROPHET WAS SPEAKING GOD’S WORDS. FIRST, THE PROPHET’S MESSAGE HAD TO BE IN ACCORDANCE WITH GOD AND HIS WORD. IF HE SPOKE IN THE NAME OF (ON BEHALF OF) OTHER GODS THEN HE CONTRADICTED THE OBJECTIVELY REVEALED WORD OF GOD AND WAS THEREFORE A FALSE PROPHET (CF. 13:1–5). SECOND, HIS PROPHECY MUST COME TRUE. IF NEITHER OF THESE CONDITIONS WAS MET, THEN NO MATTER HOW POWERFUL THE WOULD-BE PROPHET SEEMED TO BE, THE PEOPLE WERE NOT TO BE AFRAID OF HIM OR OF ANY REPRISALS HE MIGHT PREDICT AGAINST THEM.**

**THE CITIES OF REFUGE AND CRIMINAL LAW (CHAP. 19)**

**THREE CITIES OF REFUGE FOR MANSLAUGHTER (19:1–13)**

**19:1–3. MOSES HAD PREVIOUSLY SET ASIDE … THREE CITIES IN THE TRANSJORDAN (4:41–43). SINCE HE KNEW THAT THE LORD WOULD NOT LET HIM CROSS THE JORDAN RIVER AND ENTER THE PROMISED LAND WITH ISRAEL, HE NOW INSTRUCTED THE NATION TO SET ASIDE THREE MORE CITIES OF REFUGE IN ACCORD WITH GOD’S ORIGINAL INSTRUCTIONS (NUM. 35:9–34). THE CITIES OF REFUGE WERE TO BE EQUALLY SPACED THROUGHOUT THE LAND (BUILD ROADS TO THEM AND DIVIDE INTO THREE PARTS THE LAND) SO THAT THEY MIGHT BE EASILY REACHED BY ANYONE WHO KILLS A MAN. (SEE THE MAP “THE SIX CITIES OF REFUGE,” NEAR NUM. 35:6–34.) THE WORD TRANSLATED “KILLS” (RĀṢAḤ; CF. EX. 20:13) MEANS “TO TAKE LIFE WITHOUT LEGAL SANCTION.” IT COULD REFER TO MURDER WHEN LIFE WAS TAKEN INTENTIONALLY OR TO MANSLAUGHTER DONE UNINTENTIONALLY. 19:4–7. THESE CITIES WERE TO BE “SET ASIDE” (V. 2) TO PREVENT ANY FURTHER CALAMITY FROM ARISING FROM A TRAGIC SITUATION. ONLY A PERSON WHO KILLED HIS NEIGHBOR UNINTENTIONALLY, WITHOUT MALICE (V. 4) COULD FLEE TO ONE OF THESE CITIES AND SAVE HIS LIFE (V. 5). THESE CITIES OFFERED PROTECTION FROM AN AVENGER OF BLOOD. THE WORD TRANSLATED “AVENGER OF BLOOD” IS GŌ’ĒL. A GŌ’ĒL WAS ESSENTIALLY A “FAMILY PROTECTOR.” HE WAS A “NEAR KINSMAN” (TRADITIONALLY UNDERSTOOD AS THE NEAREST MALE RELATIVE) RESPONSIBLE FOR REDEEMING (BUYING) A RELATIVE OUT OF SLAVERY (LEV. 25:48–49), FOR REDEEMING A RELATIVE’S PROPERTY (LEV. 25:26–33), FOR MARRYING A RELATIVE’S WIDOW AND RAISING UP CHILDREN IN THE NAME OF THE DECEASED (RUTH 3:13; 4:5–10), AND FOR AVENGING THE DEATH OF A RELATIVE (NUM. 35:19–28). ONE WHO KILLED HIS NEIGHBOR UNINTENTIONALLY (E.G., BY AN AX … HEAD THAT ACCIDENTALLY FLEW OFF THE HANDLE AND HIT AND KILLED HIS NEIGHBOR) HAD TO STAY IN THE CITY OF REFUGE UNTIL THE DEATH OF THE CURRENT HIGH PRIEST. THE ELDERS OF THAT CITY WERE OBLIGATED TO PROTECT HIM FROM THE AVENGER OF BLOOD (NUM. 35:25). IF THE PERSON GUILTY OF MANSLAUGHTER LEFT THE CITY BEFORE THE HIGH PRIEST’S DEATH THEN THE AVENGER COULD KILL HIM “WITHOUT BEING GUILTY OF MURDER” (NUM. 35:27). THE CITIES OF REFUGE TAUGHT ISRAEL HOW IMPORTANT LIFE IS TO GOD. EVEN THOUGH A MAN HAD KILLED HIS NEIGHBOR ACCIDENTALLY HE STILL HAD TO GIVE UP A LARGE MEASURE OF HIS FREEDOM FOR AN EXTENDED PERIOD OF TIME. 19:8–10. IF THE ISRAELITES HAD BEEN FAITHFUL IN FOLLOWING THE LORD FULLY, THEN HE WOULD HAVE ENLARGED THEIR TERRITORY TO THE BOUNDARIES PROMISED IN THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT (GEN. 15:18–21). (ON THE DEUTERONOMIC EMPHASIS ON FOREFATHERS SEE COMMENTS ON DEUT. 1:35.) IN THAT CASE THREE MORE CITIES, A TOTAL OF NINE, WOULD HAVE BEEN NEEDED TO PREVENT THE LAND FROM BEING DEFILED WITH INNOCENT BLOOD. THE PLURAL THESE LAWS (19:9) IS LITERALLY, “THIS COMMAND.” BY USING THE SINGULAR MOSES WAS EMPHASIZING THE UNITY OF THE LAW; IT IS ALL ONE AND TO BE OBEYED IN ITS ENTIRETY. BUT HE ALSO WAS POINTING TO THE FUNDAMENTAL REQUIREMENT OF THE LAW, NAMELY, TO LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD (A THEME STATED REPEATEDLY IN DEUT.—SEE COMMENTS ON 6:5). THE LAW WAS GIVEN SO THAT ISRAEL MIGHT HAVE A MEANS TO EXPRESS HER LOVE FOR HIM. IN THE CHURCH AGE CHRISTIANS EXPRESS THEIR LOVE FOR THE LORD BY OBEYING JESUS’ COMMANDS (JOHN 14:21). 19:11–13. A CITY OF REFUGE COULD NOT PROVIDE SANCTUARY FOR A MURDERER. HE WAS TO BE RETURNED TO HIS TOWN AND KILLED BY THE AVENGER OF BLOOD (SEE COMMENTS ON V. 6). IF THE NATION WAS TO PROSPER UNDER GOD’S BLESSING ISRAEL COULD NOT SHOW THE MURDERER PITY. THIS SIN OF SHEDDING INNOCENT BLOOD WAS TO BE PURGED FROM THE NATION.**

**DISPLACING A BOUNDARY MARKER (19:14)**

**19:14. IT IS NOT CLEAR WHY MOSES PLACED THIS LAW ABOUT THE BOUNDARY STONE BETWEEN THE LEGISLATION ABOUT THE CITIES OF REFUGE (VV. 1–13) AND THE FALSE WITNESSES (VV. 15–21). MOVING A NEIGHBOR’S BOUNDARY STONE WAS EQUIVALENT TO STEALING HIS PROPERTY. ACCORDING TO EXTRABIBLICAL LITERATURE THIS WAS A WIDESPREAD PROBLEM IN THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST (CF. JOB 24:2). APPARENTLY, IT BECAME WIDESPREAD IN ISRAEL (DEUT. 27:17; PROV. 22:28; 23:10; HOSEA 5:10).**

**THE LAW OF WITNESSES (19:15–21)**

**19:15. MOSES LAID DOWN THE PRINCIPLE THAT MORE THAN ONE WITNESS WAS NECESSARY TO CONVICT A MAN OF A CRIME (CF. 17:6). THIS PRINCIPLE WAS TO ACT AS A SAFEGUARD AGAINST A FALSE WITNESS WHO MIGHT BRING AN UNTRUTHFUL CHARGE AGAINST A FELLOW ISRAELITE BECAUSE OF A QUARREL OR OUT OF SOME OTHER IMPURE MOTIVE. BY REQUIRING MORE THAN ONE WITNESS—AT LEAST TWO OR THREE—GREATER ACCURACY AND OBJECTIVITY IS AFFECTED. 19:16–20. INEVITABLY IN SOME CASES THERE WOULD BE ONLY ONE WITNESS. A SINGLE WITNESS STILL WAS OBLIGATED TO BRING A CHARGE AGAINST THE OFFENDER. HOWEVER, SUCH A CASE WOULD BE TAKEN TO THE CENTRAL TRIBUNAL OF PRIESTS AND JUDGES (CF. 17:8–13) FOR TRIAL. IF ON INVESTIGATION THE TESTIMONY WAS FOUND TO BE FALSE THEN THE ACCUSER (A MALICIOUS WITNESS, 19:16, AND A LIAR, V. 18) RECEIVED THE PUNISHMENT APPROPRIATE FOR THE ALLEGED CRIME. WHEN THE FATE OF THE FALSE WITNESS BECAME KNOWN IN ISRAEL IT WOULD SERVE AS A GREAT DETERRENT AGAINST GIVING FALSE TESTIMONY IN ISRAEL’S COURTS. VIOLATING THE NINTH COMMANDMENT (EX. 20:16) WAS ANOTHER EVIL TO BE PURGED FROM THE NATION (CF. DEUT. 19:13 AND SEE COMMENTS ON 13:5). MODERN SOCIOLOGICAL THEORIES WHICH MAINTAIN THAT PUNISHMENT, PARTICULARLY CAPITAL PUNISHMENT, DOES NOT DETER CRIME CONTRADICT THE BIBLICAL UNDERSTANDING OF HUMAN NATURE. 19:21. THE LAW OF RETRIBUTION, KNOWN IN LATIN AS THE LEX TALIONIS, WAS PREVIOUSLY GIVEN IN EXODUS 21:23–25 AND LEVITICUS 24:17–22. THIS LAW WAS GIVEN TO ENCOURAGE APPROPRIATE PUNISHMENT OF A CRIMINAL IN CASES WHERE THERE MIGHT BE A TENDENCY TO BE EITHER TOO LENIENT OR TOO STRICT. THE LAW CODES OF THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST DID PROVIDE FOR THE MAIMING OF A CRIMINAL (E.G., GOUGING OUT AN EYE, CUTTING OFF A LIP, ETC.). WITH ONE EXCEPTION (DEUT. 25:11–12) ISRAELITE LAW DID NOT EXPLICITLY ALLOW SUCH MUTILATION. APART FROM THIS ONE INSTANCE, THEREFORE, ONLY THE FIRST PART OF THIS LAW, LIFE FOR LIFE, WAS APPLIED TO INDICATE THAT PUNISHMENT OUGHT TO FIT THE CRIME (PUNISHMENT IN KIND). THUS, A SLAVE WHO LOST HIS EYE WAS FREED (EX. 21:26). THE LEX TALIONIS ALSO SERVED AS A RESTRAINT IN CASES WHERE THE PUNISHER MIGHT BE INCLINED TO BE EXCESSIVE IN ADMINISTERING PUNISHMENT. JESUS DID NOT DENY THE VALIDITY OF THIS PRINCIPLE FOR THE COURTROOM, BUT HE DENIED ITS USAGE IN PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS (MATT. 5:38–42). THERE SHOULD BE NO PERSONAL RETALIATION OR REVENGE.**

**REGULATIONS FOR HOLY WAR (CHAP. 20)**

**THE COMMAND NOT TO FEAR A SUPERIOR ENEMY (20:1–4)**

**20:1. SIMILAR PRINCIPLES FOR BATTLE AND LEGISLATION ON HOLY WAR WERE GIVEN EARLIER (2:24–3:11; 7) AND THE SUBJECT WAS ADDRESSED AGAIN LATER IN MOSES’ SPEECH (21:10–14; 23:9–14; 24:5; 25:17–19). ISRAEL WAS NEVER TO FEAR AN ENEMY’S HORSES AND CHARIOTS … BECAUSE THE OUTCOME OF A BATTLE WOULD NEVER BE DETERMINED BY MERE MILITARY STRENGTH (CF. ISA. 31:1–3; HOSEA 14:3). THE COMMAND NOT TO BE AFRAID OF THEM WAS BASED ON THE FACT OF GOD’S FAITHFULNESS. HE HAD ALREADY BEEN PROVED FAITHFUL TO THE NATION IN BRINGING HER UP OUT OF EGYPT. IN TIMES OF ADVERSITY BELIEVERS TODAY OUGHT ALSO TO RECALL GOD’S PAST FAITHFULNESS TO THEM FOR THIS HELPS ALLEVIATE FEAR IN THEIR PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES. 20:2–4. THE ROLE OF THE PRIEST IN BATTLE WAS NOT ONLY TO CARE FOR THE ARK, WHICH SYMBOLIZED THE LORD’S PRESENCE WITH ISRAEL’S ARMY, BUT ALSO BY GOD’S WORD TO ENCOURAGE THE SOLDIERS TO BE STRONG IN FAITH. A LACK OF TRUST IN GOD’S ABILITY TO FIGHT FOR THEM (CF. 1:30; 3:22) WOULD AFFECT THE STRENGTH OF THEIR WILL, THAT IS, THEY COULD EASILY BECOME FAINT-HEARTED. IF A WEAK WILL WAS NOT CONTROLLED BY FAITH FROM THE VERY FIRST, IT WOULD LEAD TO FEAR, TERROR, AND EVEN TO PANIC BEFORE THEIR ENEMIES. SO, IF THE SOLDIERS FAILED TO LISTEN TO THE PRIEST, THEY WOULD BECOME FEARFUL AND EXPERIENCE DEFEAT.**

**THOSE EXEMPTED FROM MILITARY SERVICE (20:5–9)**

**20:5. THE PRIESTS WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR ENCOURAGING THE ARMY BY GOD’S WORD (VV. 2–4). THE OFFICERS WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR MAKING SURE THAT THE ARMY WAS COMPOSED OF QUALIFIED MEN. HOWEVER, THE MOST QUALIFIED WERE NOT NECESSARILY THOSE MOST GIFTED FOR BATTLE. THEY WERE RATHER THE MEN MOST COMMITTED TO THE LORD AND FREE FROM ANY DISTRACTIONS THAT MIGHT DAMPEN THEIR SPIRITS FOR BATTLE. THEREFORE, FOR HUMANITARIAN REASONS AS WELL AS FOR THE MORALE OF THE ARMY ANYONE WHO HAD BUILT A NEW HOUSE AND NOT BEGUN TO “USE” (THIS SENSE OF THE HEB. WORD ḤĀNAK IS PREFERABLE TO DEDICATED) IT WAS GRANTED AN EXEMPTION. 20:6. THE SAME EXEMPTION WAS GRANTED TO ANYONE WHO HAD PLANTED A VINEYARD AND NOT BEGUN TO ENJOY IT. THIS PARTICULAR EXEMPTION COULD LAST UP TO FIVE YEARS (CF. LEV. 19:23–25). 20:7. A MAN ENGAGED TO BE MARRIED WAS ALSO EXEMPT FROM MILITARY SERVICE. THE LENGTH OF THE EXEMPTION FOR A NEWLY MARRIED MAN WAS ONE YEAR (24:5). THESE EXEMPTIONS (20:5–7) BRING ONE OF THE BASIC PURPOSES OF HOLY WAR INTO SHARP FOCUS. THOUGH IT WAS WAGED AS A PUNISHMENT FOR THE WICKEDNESS OF THE CANAANITE POPULATION (SEE COMMENTS ON CHAP. 7), IT WAS ALSO FOUGHT SO THAT ISRAEL MIGHT HAVE A LAND IN WHICH TO LIVE A STABLE AND PEACEFUL LIFE—BUILDING HOMES, PLANTING CROPS, AND RAISING FAMILIES UNDER GOD’S RULE. SINCE GOD WAS FIGHTING FOR ISRAEL IT WAS NOT NECESSARY FOR THE WAR TO TAKE TOTAL PRIORITY OVER ALL DOMESTIC FUNCTIONS. 20:8–9. WHEREAS THE PREVIOUS EXEMPTIONS HAD BEEN GRANTED FOR COMPASSIONATE REASONS, THE EXEMPTION OF A FAINT-HEARTED SOLDIER WAS GIVEN FOR REASONS OF ARMY MORALE. SINCE THE BEST ARMY WAS THE ONE MOST COMMITTED TO THE LORD, ANYTHING OR ANYONE WHO MIGHT AFFECT THE FAITH AND CONFIDENCE OF THE ISRAELITE TROOPS WAS TO BE REMOVED. COWARDICE HERE WAS RECKONED TO BE A SPIRITUAL PROBLEM. SINCE THERE WAS NO COURT-MARTIAL, THE OFFICERS REMOVED A FAINT-HEARTED SOLDIER BEFORE HE HAD OPPORTUNITY TO DEFECT IN BATTLE AND/OR CAUSE OTHER SOLDIERS TO BECOME DISHEARTENED TOO. MOSES’ INSTRUCTION THAT THE OFFICERS APPOINT COMMANDERS OVER THE ARMY IMPLIES THAT ISRAEL’S ARMY WAS NOT YET PERMANENTLY ORGANIZED WITH OFFICERS OF EVERY RANK.**

**ISRAEL’S FOREIGN POLICY (20:10–18)**

**20:10–15. MOSES THEN GAVE INSTRUCTIONS FOR ISRAEL’S FOREIGN POLICY (VV. 10–18). THE PEOPLE AT A DISTANCE (V. 15) INCLUDED THOSE NATIONS OUTSIDE CANAAN BUT WITHIN THE EXTENSIVE TERRITORY PROMISED TO ABRAHAM AND HIS DESCENDANTS (GEN. 15:18–21). THE COMMAND MAKE A CITY’S PEOPLE AN OFFER OF PEACE MEANT TO OFFER THEM A VASSAL TREATY. IN THIS WAY THE CITY ACKNOWLEDGED THE SOVEREIGNTY OF ISRAEL’S GOD AND OF ISRAEL. IF A CITY BECAME A VASSAL TO ISRAEL, THEN HER PEOPLE WERE TO BECOME FORCED LABORERS (CF. JOSH. 9). BUT IF A CITY REFUSED TERMS OF PEACE, THE MEN WERE TO BE EXECUTED AND EVERYTHING ELSE WAS TO BE TAKEN AS PLUNDER FOR THE ISRAELITES. APPARENTLY THEN THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN HAD OPPORTUNITY TO BE INTRODUCED TO ISRAEL’S RELIGION (ALSO SEE COMMENTS IN THE THIRD PARAGRAPH UNDER DEUT. 20:16–18). 20:16–18. BUT INSIDE CANAAN ABSOLUTELY NOTHING WAS TO BE SPARED. SIX NATIONS ARE LISTED IN VERSE 17 AS REPRESENTING ALL THE NATIONS LIVING IN CANAAN. THE HITTITES WERE FROM ANATOLIA (TURKEY) BUT SOME EARLY MIGRANTS HAD SETTLED IN CANAAN (E.G., EPHRON THE HITTITE IN GEN. 23). THE AMORITES WERE HILL-DWELLERS (CF. COMMENTS ON GEN. 14:13–16). THEIR ORIGIN IS UNCERTAIN (THEY ARE FIRST REFERRED TO IN ANCIENT TEXTS OF THE THIRD MILLENNIUM B.C.). CANAANITES WAS A GENERAL TERM FOR THE INHABITANTS OF PALESTINE. THE PERIZITES WERE PERHAPS VILLAGE-DWELLERS OR NOMADS. THE HIVITES WERE POSSIBLY IN NORTHERN PALESTINE BY THE LEBANON MOUNTAINS (JOSH. 11:3; JUD. 3:3). THE JEBUSITES LIVED IN THE HILL COUNTRY (NUM. 13:29) OF AND AROUND JEBUS, LATER KNOWN AS JERUSALEM (JOSH. 15:8). ANOTHER NATION NOT MENTIONED HERE BUT INCLUDED IN DEUTERONOMY 7:1 (SEE COMMENTS THERE) ARE THE GIRGASHITES, WHOSE LOCALITY IS UNKNOWN. THESE PEOPLE WERE SO DEGENERATE AND COMMITTED TO EVIL THAT UNLESS THEY WERE COMPLETELY DESTROYED, THEY COULD EASILY INFLUENCE (TEACH) THE ISRAELITES TO FOLLOW THEIR DETESTABLE WAYS IN IDOLATRY (CF. 18:9–12). THE WOMEN IN THE NATIONS MENTIONED IN 20:10–15 (I.E., FROM THE ARAMEAN CULTURE) WERE NOT AS DEGENERATE AS THOSE FROM THE CANAANITE CULTURE. ALSO, ARAMEAN WOMEN ADOPTED THE RELIGIONS OF THEIR HUSBANDS. ABRAHAM, FOR EXAMPLE, INSISTED THAT HIS SERVANT GET A WIFE FROM THE ARAMEAN CULTURE FOR ISAAC AND NOT A CANAANITE WOMAN (GEN. 24). THUS, THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN OF THOSE NATIONS COULD BE SPARED. BUT ONE ONLY NEEDS TO REMEMBER THE INFLUENCE OF JEZEBEL WHO BROUGHT HER HUSBAND AHAB UNDER THE WORSHIP OF BAAL TO SEE THE DESTRUCTIVE EFFECTS OF MARRIAGE TO A CANAANITE WIFE.**

**PROHIBITION AGAINST DESTROYING FRUIT TREES (20:19–20)**

**20:19–20. IN THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST MILITARY POWERS PUNISHED THEIR ENEMIES BY INDISCRIMINATELY LAYING WASTE TO THE LAND. THIS PRACTICE MADE NO SENSE IN RELATION TO THE LAND OF CANAAN FOR IT WAS TO BECOME ISRAEL’S OWN POSSESSION. WHY SHOULD ISRAEL CUT DOWN TREES WHOSE FRUIT SHE COULD EAT? AND WHY SHOULD TREES, THAT WERE NOT MEN, BE BESIEGED? EVEN IN LANDS OUTSIDE CANAAN THE PRACTICE WAS TO BE AVOIDED BECAUSE IT SHOWED A LACK OF RESPECT FOR GOD’S CREATION AND AN INFATUATION WITH THE HARSH AND EXCESSIVE USE OF DESTRUCTIVE POWER.**

**MISCELLANEOUS LAWS (CHAPS. 21–25)**

**AN UNSOLVED MURDER OR UNSOLVED UNAUTHORIZED KILLING (21:1–9)**

**21:1–9. IF A MAN WAS FOUND SLAIN, EITHER AS A RESULT OF MURDER OR MANSLAUGHTER, THE ELDERS AND JUDGES OF THE CENTRAL TRIBUNAL (17:8–13) WERE TO SUMMON THE ELDERS OF THE TOWN NEAREST THE BODY. WITH THE PRIESTS (PRESUMABLY ALSO FROM THE CENTRAL TRIBUNAL) BEFORE THEM THE ELDERS OF THAT TOWN WERE TO BREAK THE … NECK OF A YOUNG HEIFER AND DECLARE THEIR INNOCENCE. BREAKING THE HEIFER’S NECK SYMBOLIZED THAT THE CRIME DESERVED CAPITAL PUNISHMENT, AND THE WASHING OF THE ELDERS’ HANDS OVER THE HEIFER SYMBOLIZED THEIR INNOCENCE IN THE MATTER. THIS RITUAL DEMONSTRATED HOW EXTREMELY VALUABLE GOD CONSIDERS LIFE. FOR EVEN THOUGH NO MURDERER WAS FOUND, THE LAND AND THE PEOPLE BOTH INCURRED THE GUILT OF SHEDDING INNOCENT BLOOD. THE ANIMAL SACRIFICE, ACCOMPANIED BY THE PETITION OF THE ELDERS, MADE ATONEMENT, THAT IS, TURNED THE WRATH OF GOD AWAY FROM THE PEOPLE.**

**FAMILY LAWS (21:10–21)**

**MARRYING A CAPTIVE WOMAN (21:10–14).**

**21:10–11. AN ISRAELITE WAS PERMITTED TO MARRY A BEAUTIFUL WOMAN FROM THE CAPTIVES OF A PARTICULAR BATTLE. THIS ASSUMES THE BATTLE IN QUESTION WAS AGAINST ONE OF “THE CITIES THAT ARE AT A DISTANCE” (20:15), NOT A CITY WITHIN THE BORDERS OF PALESTINE. THEREFORE, THE PROSPECTIVE WIFE WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN A CANAANITE WOMAN (CF. THE PROHIBITION AGAINST MARRYING A CANAANITE MAN OR WOMAN, 7:1, 3–4). IF AN ISRAELITE SOLDIER GENUINELY DESIRED ONE OF THE CAPTIVES HE COULD HAVE HER ONLY THROUGH MARRIAGE. THIS HELPED PROTECT THE DIGNITY OF THE WOMEN CAPTIVES AND THE PURITY OF THE ISRAELITE SOLDIERS. ISRAELITES WERE NOT TO RAPE, PLUNDER, OR OTHERWISE MISTREAT CAPTIVES AS OTHER ARMIES OF THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST DID. 21:12–14. A SOLDIER’S MARRIAGE TO A FOREIGN CAPTIVE COULD NOT TAKE PLACE IMMEDIATELY. THE PROSPECTIVE WIFE WAS FIRST PREPARED PSYCHOLOGICALLY FOR HER NEW LIFE AS AN ISRAELITE. THIS WAS ACCOMPLISHED BY HER SHAVING HER HEAD, TRIMMING HER NAILS, HAVING A CHANGE OF CLOTHES, AND MOURNING FOR HER PARENTS FOR ONE MONTH. THE MOURNING MAY INDICATE EITHER THAT HER FATHER AND MOTHER HAD BEEN KILLED IN BATTLE OR THAT SHE WAS NOW SEPARATED FROM THEM BY HER NEW MARRIAGE. THE OTHER RITUALS MENTIONED MAY ALSO HAVE SYMBOLIZED HER MOURNING FOR CUTTING HERSELF OFF FROM HER FORMER LIFE. THE FULL MONTH ALLOWED THE CAPTIVE WOMAN A PROPER AMOUNT OF TIME FOR MOURNING, AND IT ALSO GAVE THE PROSPECTIVE HUSBAND OPPORTUNITY TO REFLECT ON HIS INITIAL DECISION TO TAKE HER AS HIS WIFE. FOR WITH A SHAVED HEAD SHE WOULD BE LESS ATTRACTIVE. THE PHRASE IF YOU ARE NOT PLEASED WITH HER MAY REFER NOT TO SOME TRIVIAL PROBLEM IN THEIR RELATIONSHIP, BUT TO THE NEW WIFE’S REFUSAL TO ACCEPT HER HUSBAND’S SPIRITUAL VALUES. IN THIS CASE THE HUSBAND COULD DISSOLVE THE MARRIAGE BY GIVING UP ALL RIGHTS OVER HER. BY FORBIDDING HIM TO TREAT HER AS A SLAVE, EVEN THOUGH SHE WAS DISHONORED THROUGH THE DIVORCE, THE WOMAN STILL RETAINED A MEASURE OF DIGNITY. THIS LAW UNDERSCORED THE VALUE OF HUMAN LIFE; IT CONTRASTED WITH THE TERRIBLE TREATMENT OF WAR CAPTIVES COMMON THROUGHOUT THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST.**

**THE RIGHT OF THE FIRSTBORN.**

**21:15–17. MONOGAMY WAS ALWAYS THE DIVINE IDEAL FOR MARRIAGE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT (GEN. 2:20–24). POLYGAMY, THOUGH PRACTICED BY SOME, NEVER APPEARS IN A POSITIVE LIGHT IN THE OLD TESTAMENT; THE BIBLE NEVER DESCRIBES A TRULY HAPPY POLYGAMOUS MARRIAGE. ONE REASON WAS THAT ONE OF THE WIVES WOULD ALWAYS BE LOVED MORE THAN THE OTHER (S). THE HUSBAND WAS FORBIDDEN IN THIS CASE TO FOLLOW HIS FEELINGS AND DISREGARD THE LAW. HIS FIRSTBORN SON MUST BE GIVEN THE DOUBLE SHARE OF THE FATHER’S INHERITANCE EVEN THOUGH HE WAS THE SON OF HIS FATHER’S UNLOVED WIFE.**

**A SEXUAL REBELLIOUS SON.**

**21:18–21. AN EXTREME VIOLATION OF THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT, “HONOR YOUR FATHER AND YOUR MOTHER” (5:16), WAS TO BE PUNISHED BY DEATH. IN VIEW HERE WAS NOT AN OCCASIONAL LAPSE INTO DISOBEDIENCE BUT A PERSISTENT REBELLION AGAINST ONE’S FATHER AND MOTHER EVEN AFTER THE PARENTS HAD WARNED THEIR SON OF THE CONSEQUENCES OF HIS REBELLIOUS SEXUAL ACTIONS. THE SON WAS ULTIMATELY SEXUALLY REBELLING AGAINST THE LORD’S AUTHORITY AND THEREFORE ATTACKING THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE COVENANT COMMUNITY. THE LEGISLATION HERE WAS NOT CRUEL NOR DID IT GIVE PARENTS A RIGHT TO ABUSE THEIR CHILDREN. THE SON WAS TO BE TAKEN TO THE ELDERS AT THE GATE (I.E., THE PLACE WHERE THE LAW WAS ADMINISTERED; CF. 22:15; JOSH. 20:4; JOB 29:7). THE ELDERS WERE REQUIRED TO MAKE AN IMPARTIAL JUDGMENT. THE SON WAS NOT JUDGED FOR BEING A PROFLIGATE AND A DRUNKARD, BUT FOR BEING SEXUALLY REBELLIOUS. HIS SELF-INDULGENT LIVING AND DRUNKENNESS WERE SIMPLY EXAMPLES OF HIS SEXUAL REBELLION AGAINST PARENTAL AUTHORITY. ALL THE MEN (RATHER THAN THE PARENTS) WERE REQUIRED TO STONE THE SON IF THE CHARGES WERE PROVED CORRECT. AGAIN, MENTION IS MADE OF THE DETERRENT EFFECTS OF CAPITAL PUNISHMENT: ALL ISRAEL WILL HEAR OF IT AND BE AFRAID (CF. DEUT. 13:11; 17:13). NO RECORD IN THE BIBLE OR IN EXTRABIBLICAL LITERATURE HAS COME TO LIGHT WHICH INDICATES THAT THIS PUNISHMENT WAS EVER CARRIED OUT. THE FEAR OF DEATH APPARENTLY DETERRED JEWISH SONS FROM BEING STUBBORN REBELS.**

**VARIOUS LAWS (21:22–22:12)**

**A HANGED CORPSE.**

**21:22–23. HANGING A CRIMINAL ON A TREE WAS NOT FOR THE PURPOSE OF PUTTING HIM TO DEATH. RATHER, AFTER HE WAS EXECUTED FOR A CAPITAL OFFENSE … HIS BODY WAS HANGED ON A TREE AS A WARNING TO ALL WHO SAW IT NOT TO COMMIT THE SAME OFFENSE. THE CRIMINAL WAS UNDER GOD’S CURSE NOT BECAUSE HIS BODY WAS HUNG ON A TREE BUT BECAUSE HE HAD BROKEN GOD’S LAW BY COMMITTING A CRIME WORTHY OF DEATH. THEREFORE, HIS BODY WAS NOT TO BE LEFT ON THE TREE OVERNIGHT. THIS TEXT WAS USED BY THE APOSTLE PAUL (GAL. 3:13) TO SUPPORT THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST’S PENAL SUBSTITUTIONARY DEATH FOR SINNERS. CHRIST’S BEING UNDER GOD’S CURSE (CF. COMMENTS ON MARK 15:34) ENABLED HIM TO REDEEM “US FROM THE, CURSE OF THE LAW.”**

**A FELLOW ISRAELITE’S LIVESTOCK.**

**22:1–4. THE LAW ABOUT LOST LIVESTOCK WAS A CONCRETE EXPRESSION OF THE ETERNAL MORAL PRINCIPLE TO “LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF” (LEV. 19:18), AND TO “DO TO OTHERS WHAT YOU WOULD HAVE THEM DO TO YOU” (MATT. 7:12). THE REGULATION IN DEUTERONOMY 22:1–4 REFERS NOT PRIMARILY TO TAKING SOMEONE ELSE’S LOST ANIMAL BUT RATHER TO THE NATURAL TENDENCY TO IGNORE IT BECAUSE OF THE EXTRA TIME AND LABOR INVOLVED IN RESTORING IT. IF THE ANIMAL’S OWNER LIVED FAR AWAY OR WAS UNKNOWN, THE FINDER COULD TAKE IT HOME TILL THE OWNER CAME LOOKING FOR IT. THE SAME WAS TRUE OF A LOST CLOAK AND OTHER ITEMS THAT WERE FOUND. THE SAME PRINCIPLE WAS TO BE APPLIED IN THE CASE OF A FALLEN ANIMAL (V. 4). TODAY THIS LAW WOULD APPLY IN ANY CIRCUMSTANCE WHERE A BELIEVER IS TEMPTED “NOT TO GET INVOLVED” WITH SOMEONE ELSE’S NEEDS (CF., E.G., JAMES 2:15–16; 1 JOHN 3:17).**

**TRANSVESTISM & HOMOSEXUALITY.**

**22:5. THE ADOPTION OF CLOTHING OF THE OPPOSITE SEX WAS FORBIDDEN BECAUSE IT OBSCURED THE DISTINCTION OF THE SEXES AND THUS VIOLATED AN ESSENTIAL PART OF THE CREATED ORDER OF LIFE (GEN. 1:27). IT WAS ALSO PERHAPS ASSOCIATED WITH OR PROMOTED HOMOSEXUALITY. THE SAME HEBREW WORD TRANSLATED DETESTS (TÔ‘ĒḆÂH, LIT., “A DETESTABLE THING“; KJV, “AN ABOMINATION“) IS USED TO DESCRIBE GOD’S VIEW OF HOMOSEXUALITY (LEV. 18:22; 20:13). ALSO, SOME EVIDENCE EXISTS THAT TRANSVESTISM MAY HAVE BEEN CONNECTED WITH THE WORSHIP OF PAGAN DEITIES. SINCE THIS LAW IS RELATED TO THE DIVINE ORDER OF CREATION AND SINCE GOD DETESTS ANYONE WHO DOES THIS, BELIEVERS TODAY ALSO OUGHT TO HEED THIS COMMAND.**

**BIRDS IN THE NEST.**

**22:6–7. MANY HAVE SUGGESTED THAT THIS LAW WAS GIVEN TO TEACH THE ISRAELITES COMPASSION OR REVERENCE FOR PARENTAL RELATIONSHIPS BY USING AN OBJECT LESSON FROM THE ANIMAL WORLD. HOWEVER, THE FACT THAT THE ISRAELITES WERE PERMITTED TO TAKE THE YOUNG BIRD SEEMS TO MILITATE AGAINST THAT VIEW. MORE LIKELY, MOSES WAS TEACHING THE ISRAELITES TO PROTECT THIS FOOD SOURCE. BY LETTING THE MOTHER BIRD GO THEY COULD ANTICIPATE THE PRODUCTION OF MORE-YOUNG IN THE FUTURE. OBEYING THIS STIPULATION, LIKE OBEYING MANY OTHERS, WOULD RESULT IN BLESSING (IT WILL GO WELL WITH YOU; CF. 4:40; 5:16; 6:3, 18; 12:25, 28; 19:13).**

**A PARAPET.**

**22:8. THE ROOF OF A HOUSE IN THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST WAS USED FOR A VARIETY OF PURPOSES. MAKING A PARAPET ON ONE’S ROOF WOULD HELP PREVENT SOMEONE FROM FALLING FROM THE ROOF. THIS THEN WAS AN OPPORTUNITY TO “LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF” (LEV. 19:18) BY BEING CONCERNED ABOUT HIS SAFETY. IT ALSO EMPHASIZED AGAIN THE VALUE OF HUMAN LIFE.**

**PROHIBITION AGAINST MIXTURES.**

**22:9–11. THE REASON FOR THESE PROHIBITIONS AGAINST PLANTING TWO KINDS OF SEED IN A FIELD, YOKING TOGETHER AN OX AND A DONKEY [ASS] FOR PLOWING, AND WEAVING WOOL AND LINEN … TOGETHER IS UNCERTAIN. THEY MAY HAVE HAD A SYMBOLIC FUNCTION IN TEACHING THE ISRAELITES SOMETHING ABOUT THE CREATED ORDER. OR THE MIXTURES MENTIONED IN THESE VERSES MAY REFLECT CERTAIN PAGAN CULTIC PRACTICES.**

**TASSELS.**

**22:12. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS INSTRUCTION ABOUT TASSELS IS NOT EXPLAINED HERE, BUT ITS MEANING IS MADE CLEAR IN NUMBERS 15:37–41. THE TASSELS WERE TO SERVE AS A REMINDER OF THE LORD’S COMMANDS AND ISRAEL’S OBLIGATION TO OBEY THEM.**

**MARRIAGE VIOLATIONS (22:13–30)**

**22:13–21. THIS LAW WAS MEANT TO ENFORCE PREMARITAL SEXUAL PURITY AND TO ENCOURAGE PARENTS TO INSTILL WITHIN THEIR CHILDREN THE VALUE OF SEXUAL PURITY. THE LAW MIGHT BE MISUSED, HOWEVER, BY AN UNSCRUPULOUS HUSBAND AGAINST HIS WIFE FOR PERSONAL REASONS, OR PERHAPS TO RECOVER THE BRIDE-PRICE HE ORIGINALLY PAID TO THE GIRL’S FATHER. IF SUCH A HUSBAND CHARGED THAT HIS WIFE WAS NOT A VIRGIN WHEN THEY WERE MARRIED THEN HER PARENTS WERE OBLIGATED TO PRODUCE PROOF OF HER VIRGINITY. THE EVIDENCE WAS TO BE A CLOTH, A BLOODSTAINED GARMENT OR A BEDSHEET FROM THE WEDDING NIGHT. RECORDS FROM VARIOUS CULTURES IN THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST REFER TO THIS KIND OF EVIDENCE BEING MADE PUBLIC. IF THE PARENTS OFFERED SUCH EVIDENCE OF HER VIRGINITY BEFORE MARRIAGE THEN THE MAN MAKING THE FALSE CHARGE WAS TO BE WHIPPED (THE PROBABLE MEANING OF THE WORD PUNISH, V. 18) AND FINED 100 SHEKELS OF SILVER (ABOUT TWO AND ONE-HALF POUNDS; CF. NIV MARG.). APPARENTLY, THIS WAS DOUBLE THE ORIGINAL BRIDE-PRICE (V. 29 SEEMS TO INDICATE THAT 50 SHEKELS WAS THE USUAL BRIDE-PRICE). THE FINE WAS GIVEN TO THE GIRL’S FATHER BECAUSE HE TOO WAS SLANDERED BY THE ACCUSATION WHICH CALLED INTO QUESTION HIS DESIRE OR ABILITY TO PASS ON TO HIS CHILDREN GOD’S VALUES REGARDING SEXUAL PURITY. ALSO, HIS DAUGHTER WAS GIVEN A BAD NAME. SUPPORT FOR THE WIFE (AND PERHAPS ALSO THE LEGAL RIGHT OF HER FIRSTBORN CHILD) WAS PROTECTED BY THE FORFEITING OF THE MAN’S RIGHT EVER TO DIVORCE HIS WIFE (V. 19). ON THE OTHER HAND, IF THE HUSBAND’S CHARGE COULD NOT BE DISPROVED, THEN THE WIFE WAS TO BE STONED AT THE DOOR OF HER FATHER’S HOUSE. THIS HARSH PUNISHMENT WAS NOT ONLY INTENDED FOR THE SIN OF FORNICATION (BEING PROMISCUOUS) BUT ALSO FOR LYING TO HER PROSPECTIVE HUSBAND AND PRESUMABLY FOR IMPLICATING HER FATHER IN THE DECEPTION. THIS EVIL TOO WAS TO BE PURGED FROM THE NATION (CF. VV. 22, 24; SEE COMMENTS ON 13:5). 22:22. THOUGH THE DEATH PENALTY WAS TO BE ADMINISTERED FOR SEXUAL UNFAITHFULNESS IN MARRIAGE (CF. LEV. 20:10), THE PRECISE MANNER IN WHICH IT WAS TO BE CARRIED OUT WAS NOT SPECIFIED. IN MESOPOTAMIA AN ADULTEROUS COUPLE WAS BOUND AND THROWN INTO THE WATER (CODE OF HAMMURABI, LAW 129), THOUGH NO EXTANT COURT RECORDS FROM MESOPOTAMIA INDICATE THAT THIS PENALTY WAS EVER ENFORCED. THE OFFICIAL LEADERS OF JUDAISM IN JESUS’ DAY INTERPRETED THE PENALTY TO MEAN DEATH BY STONING (CF. JOHN 8:5) BUT LATER RABBINIC TRADITION PRESCRIBED DEATH BY STRANGULATION. HOW FREQUENTLY THIS PENALTY WAS ENFORCED IS UNKNOWN. (ON THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE SIN OF ADULTERY SEE COMMENTS ON DEUT. 5:18.) 22:23–27. A VIRGIN PLEDGED TO BE MARRIED WAS TO BE TREATED LIKE A MARRIED WOMAN. IT WAS ASSUMED THAT THE SEXUAL UNION WHICH TOOK PLACE IN A TOWN WAS NOT RAPE (VV. 23–25) BUT ADULTERY (I.E., THE GIRL GAVE HER CONSENT). IF IT HAD BEEN A CASE OF RAPE HER SCREAMS FOR HELP WOULD HAVE BEEN HEARD WHETHER OR NOT SHE COULD HAVE BEEN RESCUED. IF THE ASSAULT OCCURRED OUT IN THE COUNTRY, THEN THE BETROTHED GIRL WAS GIVEN THE BENEFIT OF DOUBT AND ONLY THE MAN WAS PUT TO DEATH (VV. 25–27). RAPE WAS CONSIDERED AS SERIOUS AS MURDER AND THEREFORE DESERVING OF DEATH. 22:28–29. A MAN WHO RAPED AN UN-BETROTHED VIRGIN WAS FORCED TO MARRY HER (AFTER PAYING THE BRIDE-PRICE OF 50 SHEKELS TO HER FATHER) AND HAD TO FORFEIT THE RIGHT OF DIVORCE. THIS PROTECTED, TO A DEGREE, THE GIRL’S HONOR AND ASSURED HER (AND HER CHILD IF SHE BECAME PREGNANT FROM THE RAPE) PERMANENT SUPPORT. THIS STIPULATION MAY ALSO HAVE SERVED AS A DETERRENT AGAINST RAPE SINCE THE MAN WOULD HAVE TO LIVE WITH THAT WOMAN FOR THE REST OF HIS LIFE. 22:30. RATHER THAN REFERRING TO ADULTERY, THIS VERSE PROBABLY REFERS TO A MAN MARRYING HIS STEPMOTHER AFTER HIS FATHER DIED. SUCH A MARRIAGE WOULD HAVE BEEN REGARDED AS INCESTUOUS (CF. LEV. 18:8).**

**EXCLUSION FROM THE ASSEMBLY OF THE LORD (23:1–8)**

**23:1. THE ASSEMBLY OF THE LORD PROBABLY REFERRED HERE TO THE PEOPLE GATHERED TOGETHER FOR RELIGIOUS PURPOSES. THEREFORE, THIS LAW AND THE LAWS IN VERSES 2–8 DEALT WITH THE EXCLUSION FROM ISRAEL’S “WORSHIP SERVICE.” THESE LAWS SEEMED TO HAVE HAD A CERTAIN CEREMONIAL CHARACTER. LIKE THE LAWS OF UNCLEANNESS (E.G., LEV. 12–15) THEY DID NOT EXCLUDE AN INDIVIDUAL BECAUSE OF HIS OWN SPECIFIC MORAL SIN. RATHER THEY HAD A PEDAGOGICAL OR SYMBOLIC FUNCTION. FURTHERMORE, EXCLUSION FROM THE “WORSHIP SERVICE” DID NOT PREVENT AN INDIVIDUAL FROM BELIEVING IN THE LORD AND RECEIVING THE GIFT OF ETERNAL LIFE. ISRAEL’S HISTORY DEMONSTRATES THAT THESE LAWS (IN DEUT. 23:1–8) WERE NEVER MEANT TO BE APPLIED LEGALISTICALLY WITHOUT REGARD FOR THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF EACH INDIVIDUAL WHO MAY HAVE WISHED TO WORSHIP WITH ISRAEL. EXCLUDING AN EMASCULATED MALE MAY REFER TO A PERSON WHO INTENTIONALLY HAD HIMSELF CASTRATED FOR PAGAN RELIGIOUS PURPOSES. AT ANY RATE THIS REGULATION WAS PROBABLY NEVER MEANT TO EXCLUDE A EUNUCH COMMITTED TO OBEYING THE LORD (ISA. 56:3–5). HOWEVER, SOME SAY THIS LAW WAS MEANT TO EXCLUDE ALL EUNUCHS REGARDLESS OF THE REASON FOR THEIR CASTRATION. IF SO, THEN THE LAW PROBABLY REFLECTED THE FACT THAT A EUNUCH COULD NO LONGER CHOOSE TO HAVE CHILDREN WITH GOD’S HELP. SOMETHING OF THE IMAGE OF GOD IN THE MAN HAD BEEN DESTROYED. THE LAW WOULD THEREFORE HAVE SYMBOLICALLY TAUGHT THE NEED FOR WORSHIPERS TO BE PERFECT BEFORE GOD, AS THE SACRIFICES OFFERED TO GOD WERE TO BE WITHOUT PHYSICAL DEFECTS. 23:2. BORN OF A FORBIDDEN MARRIAGE IS THE TRANSLATION OF A SINGLE RARE HEBREW WORD WHOSE MEANING IS UNCERTAIN. (MAMZĒR IS USED IN THE OT ONLY HERE AND IN ZECH. 9:6 WHERE IT IS USED FIGURATIVELY OF FOREIGNERS.) TRADITIONALLY IT HAS BEEN TAKEN TO REFER (IN DEUT. 23:2) TO A CHILD OF ILLEGITIMATE BIRTH (CF. NIV MARG. AND NASB). POSSIBLY, HOWEVER, THE TERM REFERS TO THE CHILD OF AN INCESTUOUS RELATIONSHIP, THE CHILD OF A CULT PROSTITUTE, OR THE CHILD OF A MIXED MARRIAGE (I.E., AN ISRAELITE MARRIED TO AN AMMONITE, MOABITE, PHILISTINE, OR OTHERS). AGAIN, THE STRINGENT PUNISHMENT INFLICTED ON SUCH A PERSON WOULD HELP DETER ISRAELITES FROM ENTERING THIS KIND OF MARRIAGE. 23:3–6. AMMONITE AND MOABITE PEOPLE WERE NOT ALLOWED TO ATTEND ISRAEL’S RELIGIOUS GATHERINGS BECAUSE OF THEIR TREATMENT OF ISRAEL DURING THE WILDERNESS PERIOD. THE HAD REFUSED BREAD AND WATER TO ISRAEL AND THROUGH BALAK THE MOABITES HIRED BALAAM TO CURSE ISRAEL (NUM. 22:2–6). (NOR WAS ISRAEL TO MAKE PEACE … WITH THEM, DEUT. 23:6.) ALSO, THE MOABITES AND AMMONITES WERE DESCENDED FROM THE INCESTUOUS UNIONS OF LOT AND HIS DAUGHTERS (GEN. 19:30–38). THESE FACTS CONFIRM THAT FROM THEIR VERY BEGINNING THEY HAD BEEN AND WOULD CONTINUE TO BE AGAINST THE LORD AND HIS PEOPLE. THE TREATMENT OF RUTH, HOWEVER, BY BOAZ ALONG WITH OTHER ISRAELITES OF BETHLEHEM DEMONSTRATES THAT THIS LAW WAS NEVER MEANT TO EXCLUDE ONE WHO SAID, “YOUR PEOPLE WILL BE MY PEOPLE AND YOUR GOD MY GOD” (RUTH 1:16). ISAIAH SEEMED TO HAVE HELD A SIMILAR INTERPRETATION (CF. ISA. 56:3, 6–8) BUT PERHAPS THOSE VERSES IN ISAIAH APPLY ONLY TO THE END TIMES. 23:7–8. THE TREATMENT OF THE EDOMITE PEOPLE WAS MORE LENIENT SINCE THEY WERE DESCENDED FROM ESAU (GEN. 36:40–43), JACOB’S BROTHER. THE HARSH TREATMENT OF ISRAEL BY THE EGYPTIAN PEOPLE WAS OVERLOOKED BECAUSE OF ISRAEL’S LONG SOJOURN THERE AND PERHAPS ALSO BECAUSE OF THE INITIAL POSITIVE TREATMENT GIVEN TO JOSEPH AND HIS FAMILY WHEN THEY FIRST ENTERED EGYPT (GEN. 37–50).**

**UNCLEANNESS IN THE CAMP (23:9–14)**

**23:9–14. VERSES 1–8 DEALT WITH THE NEED FOR MAINTAINING THE PURITY OF THE RELIGIOUS ASSEMBLY. VERSES 9–14 ARE CONCERNED WITH THE PURITY OF THE WAR CAMP. THE NOCTURNAL EMISSION OF A MAN, THOUGH NOT IN ITSELF MORALLY WRONG, RENDERED HIM CEREMONIALLY UNCLEAN FOR ALL THE NEXT DAY. LIKEWISE, THE COMMAND TO BURY ONE’S EXCREMENT (V. 13) DID NOT DEAL WITH A MORAL AREA. APPARENTLY, THIS LAW ALSO WAS CEREMONIAL IN NATURE. BY REGULARLY OBSERVING THESE REGULATIONS ISRAELITE SOLDIERS WERE REMINDED OF THE LORD’S HOLINESS AND OMNIPRESENCE. EVEN IN A PERSON’S MOST PRIVATE MOMENTS THE HOLY GOD WAS WITH HIM, OBSERVING HIS BEHAVIOR.**

**VARIOUS LAWS (23:15–25:19)**

**ESCAPED SLAVES.**

**23:15–16. THE SLAVES IN VIEW HERE WERE NOT ISRAELITES. THEY WERE PEOPLE FROM OTHER COUNTRIES WHO CAME TO SEEK SANCTUARY (REFUGE) IN ISRAEL. THE COMMAND NOT TO HAND HIM OVER TO HIS MASTER WENT AGAINST THE NORMAL PRACTICE IN THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST. IN FACT, TREATIES IN THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST INCLUDED THE PROVISION THAT ESCAPED SLAVES AND OTHER FUGITIVES BE RETURNED. THEREFORE, THIS LAW MAY HAVE SERVED TO REMIND ISRAEL THAT THEIR TREATY WAS WITH THE LORD AND THEY DID NOT NEED ANY POLITICAL ALLIANCE WITH ANOTHER NATION. OR POSSIBLY SINCE A SLAVE HAD BEEN OPPRESSED UNJUSTLY, THIS LAW NOT TO OPPRESS A FUGITIVE SLAVE WAS MEANT TO REMIND THE ISRAELITES OF THEIR FORMER STATUS AS SLAVES IN EGYPT.**

**PROSTITUTION (23:17–18).**

**23:17. TEMPLE PROSTITUTION WAS COMMON IN THE RELIGIONS OF THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST. THE PROHIBITION HERE WAS PROBABLY INTENDED TO PREVENT A FOREIGN RELIGION BEING PRACTICED BY ISRAELITES, AND TO KEEP THE WORSHIP OF THE LORD FROM BEING SEXUALLY CONTAMINATED BY TEMPLE PROSTITUTION. THE LATER HISTORY OF ISRAEL IS REPLETE WITH EXAMPLES OF HER FAILURE TO OBSERVE THIS COMMAND (CF., E.G., 1 KINGS 14:24; 15:12; 22:46; 2 KINGS 23:7; HOSEA 4:14). 23:18. THE WORDS FOR PROSTITUTES HERE INDICATE THAT PROSTITUTION IN GENERAL WAS IN VIEW, NOT SPECIFICALLY TEMPLE PROSTITUTION. THE WORD FOR FEMALE PROSTITUTE IS ZÔNÂH AND THE WORD FOR MALE PROSTITUTE IS KELEḆ (LIT., “DOG”). A VOW WAS NOT TO BE PAID WITH MONEY OBTAINED FROM THIS SINFUL PRACTICE. THE PAYMENT OF A VOW ALLOWED AN ISRAELITE TO EXPRESS HIS GRATITUDE FOR GOD’S GRACIOUS PROVISION IN HIS LIFE. THEREFORE, TO USE MONEY GOD DID NOT PROVIDE IN ORDER TO PAY A VOW WAS INSINCERE AND HYPOCRITICAL. NO WONDER IT WAS DETESTABLE TO THE LORD. (OTHER DETESTABLE THINGS INCLUDED SEXUAL IDOLATRY, OFFERING SACRIFICIAL ANIMALS WITH DEFECTS, AND DISHONESTY; CF. THE WORD “DETESTABLE” IN 7:25–26; 12:31; 13:14; 14:3; 17:1, 4; 18:9, 12 [TWICE]; 20:18; 24:4; 27:15; 29:17; 32:16; AND THE WORD “DETESTS” IN 22:5; 25:16.)**

**LENDING AND CHARGING INTEREST (23:19–20).**

**23:19. THE PARALLEL PASSAGES (EX. 22:25; LEV. 25:35–37) MAKE IT CLEAR THAT THE BROTHER WHO WAS BORROWING MONEY IS AN ISRAELITE (CF. DEUT. 23:20) WHO HAD BECOME POOR OR IS IN SEVERE NEED. HE WAS NOT BORROWING MONEY TO ENGAGE IN A CAPITALISTIC ENDEAVOR. TO CHARGE A POOR BROTHER INTEREST WOULD ONLY WORSEN HIS CONDITION AND WOULD ALSO FEED THE GREED OF THE ONE WEALTHY ENOUGH TO LEND. 23:20. AN ISRAELITE WAS PERMITTED TO CHARGE A FOREIGNER INTEREST SINCE HE WAS NOT A MEMBER OF THE COVENANT COMMUNITY OR AN ALIEN WITHIN THE PROMISED LAND. PROBABLY THE “FOREIGNER” WAS A MERCHANT AND THE LOAN SOUGHT BY HIM WOULD HAVE BEEN FOR BUSINESS PURPOSES.**

**VOWS.**

**23:21–23. THIS LAW STRESSED THE NEED FOR THE ISRAELITES TO BE COMPLETELY HONEST BEFORE THEIR GOD AND TO BE CAREFUL IN THEIR VERBAL COMMITMENTS TO HIM. THE VOW IN VIEW WAS ONE THAT WAS MADE FREELY BY A WORSHIPER. ONCE MADE IT HAD TO BE KEPT (CF. PROV. 20:25; ECCL. 5:4–5) AS THE LORD KEPT HIS PROMISES TO ISRAEL.**

**EATING IN A NEIGHBOR’S FIELDS.**

**23:24–25. THIS LAW, LIKE THOSE IN 22:1–4, GAVE A CONCRETE EXPRESSION TO THE PRINCIPLE OF LOVING ONE’S NEIGHBOR AS ONESELF. A TRAVELER WAS GIVEN THE RIGHT TO REFRESH HIMSELF FROM A VINEYARD OR GRAIN-FIELD, BUT NOT THE RIGHT TO CARRY GRAPES AWAY WITH HIM OR TO HARVEST IN THE FIELD. SINCE THE LORD HAD BEEN GRACIOUS IN PROVIDING FOR THE FARMER, HE IN TURN SHOULD BE GRACIOUS TO A STRANGER TRAVELING THROUGH HIS LAND.**

**DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE.**

**24:1–4. DIVORCE WAS WIDESPREAD IN THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST. HOWEVER, THE OLD TESTAMENT ALWAYS REGARDED DIVORCE AS A TRAGEDY (CF. MAL. 2:16). THE COMMANDS IN DEUTERONOMY 24:1–4, THEN, WERE GIVEN TO REGULATE AN ALREADY EXISTING PRACTICE. THE SOMETHING INDECENT, WHICH A HUSBAND MIGHT FIND IN HIS WIFE, CANNOT REFER TO ADULTERY FOR WHICH THE PENALTY IS DEATH (22:22). NOR CAN THE INDECENCY REFER TO THE WIFE’S PREMARITAL INTERCOURSE WITH ANOTHER MAN FOR WHICH THE PENALTY IS ALSO DEATH (22:20–21). THE PRECISE MEANING OF THE PHRASE IS UNKNOWN. IF A MAN FOUND SOMETHING INDECENT, THE CERTIFICATE OF DIVORCE HE WROTE WAS APPARENTLY GIVEN TO THE WOMAN FOR HER PROTECTION UNDER THE LAW. IF AFTER BEING DIVORCED (A STEPFAMILY IS 2 SEPARATE FAMILIES MERGE INTO ONE. THIS CAN GO SEVERAL DIFFERENT WAYS, LIKE 2 DIVORCED PARENTS WITH 1 OR MORE CHILDREN BLENDING FAMILIES, OR 1 DIVORCED PARENT WITH KIDS MARRYING SOMEONE WHO HAS NEVER BEEN MARRIED & HAS NO KID) SHE REMARRIED AND THEN HER SECOND HUSBAND DIVORCED (A STEPFAMILY IS 2 SEPARATE FAMILIES MERGE INTO ONE. THIS CAN GO SEVERAL DIFFERENT WAYS, LIKE 2 DIVORCED PARENTS WITH 1 OR MORE CHILDREN BLENDING FAMILIES, OR 1 DIVORCED PARENT WITH KIDS MARRYING SOMEONE WHO HAS NEVER BEEN MARRIED & HAS NO KID) HER OR DIED, HER FIRST HUSBAND IS NOT PERMITTED TO REMARRY HER SINCE SHE HAD BEEN DEFILED. THE WORD TRANSLATED “DEFILED” WAS ALSO USED TO DESCRIBE A MAN WHO HAD COMMITTED ADULTERY (LEV. 18:20). SO, THE USE OF THIS WORD TO DESCRIBE A WOMAN WHO HAD BEEN DIVORCED (A STEPFAMILY IS 2 SEPARATE FAMILIES MERGE INTO ONE. THIS CAN GO SEVERAL DIFFERENT WAYS, LIKE 2 DIVORCED PARENTS WITH 1 OR MORE CHILDREN BLENDING FAMILIES, OR 1 DIVORCED PARENT WITH KIDS MARRYING SOMEONE WHO HAS NEVER BEEN MARRIED & HAS NO KID) AND REMARRIED TO THE SAME MAN SUGGESTS THAT DIVORCE IS VIEWED IN A NEGATIVE LIGHT EVEN THOUGH MOSES PERMITTED IT. A REMARRIAGE TO HER FORMER HUSBAND WOULD BE TANTAMOUNT TO A LEGAL ADULTERY AND THEREFORE DETESTABLE TO THE LORD (SEE COMMENTS ON “DETESTABLE” AND “DETESTED,” DEUT. 23:18). THE PURPOSE OF THIS LAW SEEMS TO BE TO PREVENT FRIVOLOUS DIVORCE, AND TO PRESENT DIVORCE ITSELF IN A DISPARAGING LIGHT. JESUS’ INTERPRETATION OF THIS PASSAGE INDICATED THAT DIVORCE (LIKE POLYGAMY) WENT AGAINST THE DIVINE IDEAL FOR MARRIAGE (SEE COMMENTS ON MATT. 19:3–9).**

**A NEW MARRIAGE.**

**24:5. LIKE THE PRECEDING LAW (VV. 1–4) THIS ONE ALSO EMPHASIZED THE IMPORTANCE OF MARRIAGE AND THE FAMILY. IT WAS CONSIDERED RATHER HEARTLESS TO SEND A RECENTLY MARRIED MAN TO WAR (CF. 20:7). IF HE WERE KILLED IN COMBAT, HE WOULD PROBABLY HAVE NO POSTERITY TO PRESERVE HIS NAME IN ISRAEL (ON THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS SEE 25:5–10). ALSO, A NEWLY MARRIED MAN WAS TO BE FREE OF OTHER RESPONSIBILITIES IN ORDER TO HAVE TIME TO ADJUST TO AND BRING HAPPINESS TO HIS WIFE.**

**PLEDGES.**

**24:6. MILLSTONES WERE USED DAILY IN HOMES TO GRIND GRAIN IN PREPARING MEALS. TO TAKE BOTH OR ONE OF THESE AS COLLATERAL FOR A DEBT WOULD IN EFFECT DEPRIVE A MAN OF HIS DAILY BREAD (LIVELIHOOD) AND THEREFORE CONTRADICT THE SPIRIT OF GENEROSITY WHICH SHOULD HAVE MOTIVATED THE LENDER IN THE FIRST PLACE.**

**KIDNAPPING.**

**24:7. APPARENTLY THE CRIME OF KIDNAPPING WAS COMMON IN THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST FOR IT WAS ALSO MENTIONED IN THE LAW CODES OF MESOPOTAMIA AND THE HITTITE EMPIRE. SINCE THE KIDNAPPER WAS DEPRIVING HIS VICTIM OF HIS FREEDOM (BY TAKING HIM AS A SLAVE OR SELLING HIM), THE KIDNAPPER WAS TO BE PUNISHED BY DEATH—AS THOUGH HE HAD TAKEN THE VICTIM’S LIFE. THIS WAS ANOTHER OF SEVERAL CRIMES DESERVING CAPITAL PUNISHMENT. ON THE PURGING OF EVIL, SEE COMMENTS ON 13:5.**

**SKIN DISEASES.**

**24:8–9. THE HEBREW WORD TRANSLATED LEPROUS DISEASES REFERRED TO A BROAD RANGE OF SKIN DISEASES, NOT EXCLUSIVELY TO LEPROSY (NIV MARG.). INSTEAD OF REPEATING THE LEGISLATION CONCERNING THESE DISEASES MOSES REFERRED THE PEOPLE TO HIS ORIGINAL INSTRUCTION (WHAT I HAVE COMMANDED THE PRIESTS) IN LEVITICUS 13–14. MOTIVATION TO OBEY THIS CEREMONIAL LEGISLATION WAS FURNISHED BY MIRIAM WHO BECAUSE SHE OPPOSED MOSES WAS STRUCK WITH LEPROSY (NUM. 12).**

**COLLECTING A PLEDGE (24:10–13).**

**24:10–11. THE DIGNITY OF THE BORROWER IS PRESERVED BY PROHIBITING THE LENDER TO ENTER HIS HOUSE AND TAKE ANYTHING HE MIGHT WANT AS A PLEDGE. 24:12–13. IF THE BORROWER IS SO POOR THAT ALL HE COULD OFFER AS A PLEDGE WAS HIS CLOAK (WHICH SERVED AS A BLANKET AT NIGHT) THEN THE LENDER IS TO RETURN IT BEFORE NIGHTFALL (CF. EX. 22:26–27; JOB 22:6). BY ACTING IN THIS MANNER, THE LENDER IS LOVING HIS NEIGHBOR AS HIMSELF.**

**PAYING WORKERS.**

**24:14–15. A HIRED MAN WHO WAS POOR NEEDED TO BE PAID HIS WAGES EACH DAY, NOT WEEKLY OR MONTHLY. THE CLAUSE, HE IS COUNTING ON IT, SEEMS TO INDICATE THAT HE NEEDED TO BE PAID EACH DAY IN ORDER TO PROVIDE FOOD FOR HIMSELF AND HIS FAMILY. IT WOULD HAVE BEEN EASY FOR A WEALTHY EMPLOYER TO WITHHOLD THE POOR MAN’S WAGES. BUT THE EMPLOYER WAS TO REMEMBER THAT ISRAEL WAS AT ONE TIME OPPRESSED BY PHARAOH UNTIL SHE CRIED OUT TO THE LORD (CF. EX. 2:23; 3:9). LIKEWISE, IF THE POOR MAN SHOULD CRY TO THE LORD THE EMPLOYER MIGHT FIND HIMSELF JUDGED AS PHARAOH WAS.**

**RESPONSIBILITY FOR GUILT WITHIN THE FAMILY.**

**24:16. THOUGH PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY WAS THE NORM IN THE LAW CODES OF THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST, IN SOME CASES A SON WAS PERMITTED TO BE PUT TO DEATH IN PLACE OF HIS FATHER (E.G., CODE OF HAMMURABI, LAW 230), THOUGH AGAIN (CF. COMMENTS ON 22:22) NO COURT RECORDS INDICATE THAT THIS WAS EVER ENFORCED. MOSES FORBADE SUCH A PRACTICE: EACH IS TO DIE FOR HIS OWN SIN (CF. COMMENTS ON NUM. 14:26–35). IT WAS TRUE, HOWEVER, THAT A FATHER WHO REBELLED AGAINST THE LORD MIGHT INFLUENCE HIS DESCENDANTS TO DO THE SAME (SEE COMMENTS ON DEUT. 5:9).**

**TREATMENT OF THE ALIEN, FATHERLESS, AND WIDOW (24:17–22).**

**24:17–18. ALIENS, THE FATHERLESS, AND WIDOWS (CF. VV. 19–21) COULD EASILY BE OPPRESSED IN THE COURTS AND BY THE WEALTHY. BUT NEEDY PEOPLE IN ISRAEL WERE TO BE TREATED WITH LOVE AND JUSTICE (CF. 10:18–19; 27:19) ESPECIALLY IN LIGHT OF ISRAEL’S FORMER OPPRESSION BY PHARAOH AND HER DELIVERANCE FROM EGYPT (15:15; 24:22). IF THE NATION FAILED TO ACT RIGHTEOUSLY IN THIS REGARD GOD MIGHT JUDGE THEM AS HE DID PHARAOH. ON TAKING A WIDOW’S CLOAK … AS A PLEDGE SEE COMMENTS ON VERSES 12–13. 24:19–22. THIS LAW TO LEAVE SOME GRAIN (BARLEY AND WHEAT), OLIVES, AND GRAPES MADE IT POSSIBLE FOR ALIENS, THE FATHERLESS, AND WIDOWS TO GLEAN DURING HARVESTTIME (CF. LEV. 23:22). IN THIS WAY THE NEEDY WERE NOT REDUCED TO THE HUMILIATION OF BEGGING OR SEEKING WELFARE. THEY COULD STILL WORK FOR THEIR FOOD. ALSO, FARMERS WERE GIVEN OPPORTUNITY TO EXPRESS THEIR GRATITUDE TO THE LORD FOR HIS ABUNDANT PROVISION AND HIS LOVE FOR POORER MEMBERS IN THE COVENANT COMMUNITY.**

**PROSECUTING CRIMINALS.**

**25:1–3. WHEN TWO PEOPLE HAD A DISPUTE, THEY COULD NOT SETTLE BY THEMSELVES, THEY WERE TO LET THE JUDGES … DECIDE WHICH ONE WAS INNOCENT AND WHICH ONE WAS GUILTY. THE PRIMARY INTENT OF THIS LAW WAS TO REGULATE CORPORAL PUNISHMENT. AFTER A CASE WAS DECIDED IN COURT.… THE GUILTY MAN WAS TO BE FLOGGED IN THE PRESENCE OF THE PRESIDING JUDGE WHO WAS TO SEE THAT THE PENALTY WAS CARRIED OUT JUSTLY. THE DIGNITY OF THE GUILTY MAN WAS PRESERVED TO A DEGREE BY NOT ALLOWING HIM TO BE BEATEN (PROBABLY WITH A ROD; CF. EX. 21:20) MORE THAN 40 TIMES. THE CODE OF HAMMURABI (LAW 202) PERMITTED 60 LASHES AND LATER ASSYRIAN LAWS PERMITTED BETWEEN 40 AND 50 LASHES. BY NEW TESTAMENT TIMES THE JEWS HAD SETTLED ON 39 LASHES AS A SAFEGUARD AGAINST GOING OVER 40 (2 COR. 11:24). IT HAS OFTEN BEEN SAID THAT JESUS’ SCOURGING CONSISTED OF 39 LASHES, BUT SINCE HE WAS SCOURGED BY THE ROMANS AND NOT BY THE JEWS THE NUMBER OF LASHES HE RECEIVED IS NOT KNOWN. SOMETIMES THE ROMANS WERE EXCESSIVELY CRUEL IN THEIR SCOURGING.**

**WORKING OXEN.**

**25:4. THE COMMAND NOT TO MUZZLE AN OX WHILE IT IS TREADING … GRAIN (ON A THRESHING FLOOR TO BREAK UP THE GRAIN STALKS FOR WINNOWING) STRESSED KINDNESS AND FAIRNESS TO THE ANIMALS THAT HELPED A PERSON EARN HIS DAILY BREAD. PAUL’S USE OF THIS VERSE (1 COR. 9:9) DID NOT IMPLY THAT GOD DID NOT CARE ABOUT OXEN. PAUL MEANT THAT IF GOD CARES ABOUT A WORKING OX, HOW MUCH MORE HE CARES ABOUT HUMAN LABORERS, ESPECIALLY THOSE LABORING FOR HIS KINGDOM (SEE THE COMMENTS ON 1 COR. 9:9–10).**

**LEVIRATE MARRIAGE (25:5–10).**

**25:5–6. IN ONLY ONE KIND OF CIRCUMSTANCE WAS MARRIAGE TO A CLOSE RELATIVE PERMITTED. MARRIAGE TO A DIVORCED (A STEPFAMILY IS 2 SEPARATE FAMILIES MERGE INTO ONE. THIS CAN GO SEVERAL DIFFERENT WAYS, LIKE 2 DIVORCED PARENTS WITH 1 OR MORE CHILDREN BLENDING FAMILIES, OR 1 DIVORCED PARENT WITH KIDS MARRYING SOMEONE WHO HAS NEVER BEEN MARRIED & HAS NO KID) OR WIDOWED SISTER-IN-LAW WAS FORBIDDEN (LEV. 18:16) UNLESS THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS WERE MET. THE BROTHERS MUST HAVE BEEN LIVING TOGETHER (I.E., THEY INHERITED THEIR FATHER’S PROPERTY JOINTLY), AND THE DECEASED BROTHER MUST HAVE DIED WITHOUT A MALE HEIR. IF BOTH OF THESE CONDITIONS WERE MET, THEN LEVIRATE (FROM THE LATIN LEVIR, “BROTHER-IN-LAW” OR HUSBAND’S BROTHER) MARRIAGE WAS TO TAKE PLACE. LEVIRATE MARRIAGE THUS WOULD PROVIDE A MALE HEIR WHO IN TURN COULD CARE FOR THE PARENTS IN THEIR OLD AGE AND PREVENT THE ALIENATION OF FAMILY PROPERTY. FURTHERMORE, THE FIRST SON BORN FROM THE LEVIRATE MARRIAGE WAS GIVEN THE DECEASED BROTHER’S NAME … SO THAT HIS NAME WOULD NOT BE BLOTTED OUT FROM ISRAEL. IN THIS WAY EVEN THOUGH A MAN DIED BEFORE THE LORD FULFILLED THE COVENANT PROMISES MADE TO ABRAHAM AND HIS DESCENDANTS (GEN. 15:5, 18–21; 17:19; 22:17–18; 28:13–14; 35:12) HE COULD PARTICIPATE, IN A SENSE, IN THE GLORIOUS FUTURE OF ISRAEL THROUGH HIS DESCENDANTS.**

**25:7–10. IF A WIDOW’S BROTHER-IN-LAW REFUSED TO FULFILL HIS DUTY—EITHER THROUGH GREED (NOT WANTING TO SHARE THE FAMILY INHERITANCE WITH HIS SISTER-IN-LAW) OR THROUGH DISLIKE OF HIS SISTER-IN-LAW—SHE COULD TELL THE ELDERS OF HIS TOWN ABOUT IT. SHE COULD THEN REMOVE ONE OF HIS SANDALS AND SPIT IN HIS FACE. THESE ACTIONS WOULD SHOW HER STRONG DISAPPROVAL OF HIS REFUSAL. THIS EMBARRASSMENT TO HIM, ALONG WITH THE STIGMA OF BEING KNOWN FOR HIS REFUSAL, ILLUSTRATES HOW GOD USED SOCIAL PRESSURE TO MOTIVATE HIS PEOPLE TO OBEDIENCE.**

**STOPPING A FIGHT.**

**25:11–12. THIS IS THE ONLY INSTANCE IN THE LAW WHERE PHYSICAL MUTILATION SERVED AS PUNISHMENT FOR AN OFFENSE (SEE COMMENTS ON 19:21). ISRAEL’S RESTRAINT HERE CONTRASTED WITH OTHER ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN LAW CODES WHICH PROVIDED FOR A WIDE RANGE OF PHYSICAL MUTILATIONS DEPENDING ON THE CRIME COMMITTED (E.G., IN ASSYRIAN LAW A MAN ON THE STREET WHO KISSED A WOMAN WHO WAS NOT HIS WIFE HAD HIS LIP CUT OFF WITH A SWORD). THE COMMAND IN 25:11–12 IS PROBABLY INTENDED TO PROTECT BOTH WOMANLY MODESTY AND THE CAPACITY OF A MAN TO PRODUCE HEIRS. THIS SECOND PURPOSE PROBABLY HELPS EXPLAIN WHY THIS LAW IS PLACED HERE IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE INSTRUCTIONS ABOUT LEVIRATE MARRIAGES (VV. 5–10). THIS IS THE FOURTH TIME IN DEUTERONOMY MOSES TOLD THE PEOPLE TO SHOW … NO PITY IN EXECUTING PUNISHMENT FOR WRONGDOING (CF. 13:8; 19:13, 21).**

**DIFFERING WEIGHTS.**

**25:13–16. THE ISRAELITES WERE TO BE TOTALLY HONEST IN THEIR BUSINESS DEALINGS. THEY COULD WELL AFFORD TO BE SO SINCE IT WAS ULTIMATELY THE LORD WHO WOULD WITHHOLD OR GIVE PROSPERITY TO THEM. THUS, HONESTY IN BUSINESS IS A WAY OF PROCLAIMING ONE’S FAITH IN THE LORD’S ABILITY TO SUPPORT HIM AND GIVE HIM LONG LIFE. THE THEME OF HONEST AND DISHONEST WEIGHTS … MEASURES, AND “SCALES” IS COMMON IN THE OLD TESTAMENT (PROV. 11:1; 16:11; 20:10, 23; AMOS 8:5; MICAH 6:11; SEE COMMENTS ON HOSEA 12:7). ON THE PROMISE OF LONG LIFE IN THE LAND, SEE DEUTERONOMY 5:16; 6:2; 11:9; 32:47.**

**THE DESTRUCTION OF THE AMALEKITES.**

**25:17–19. THE AMALEKITES WERE A NOMADIC DESERT TRIBE RANGING FROM SINAI NORTHWARD TO UPPER ARABIA (CF. 1 SAM. 15:7; 27:8). THEIR GENEALOGY IS TRACED TO AMALEK, SON OF ELIPHAZ AND GRANDSON OF ESAU (GEN. 36:12). THE REFERENCE TO “THE WHOLE TERRITORY OF THE AMALEKITES” (GEN. 14:7) IS PURPOSELY ANACHRONISTIC. TWO SPECIFIC BATTLES WITH THE AMALEKITES WERE MENTIONED IN THE PENTATEUCH (EX. 17:8–16; NUM. 14:39–45), BUT DEUTERONOMY 25:17–19 SEEMS TO INDICATE A SERIES OF HOSTILITIES THAT ARE NOT MENTIONED ELSEWHERE. THE UNPROVOKED ATTACKING OF THE WEAK, SICK, AND HELPLESS ISRAELITES LAGGING BEHIND EVIDENCED THE CRUELTY AND COWARDICE OF THE AMALEKITES AS WELL AS THEIR LACK OF FEAR OF ISRAEL’S GOD. SINCE THE AMALEKITES HAD SHOWN NO MERCY TO ISRAEL, THEY WERE TO RECEIVE NONE. ISRAEL WAS TO BLOT OUT THE MEMORY OF AMALEK FROM UNDER HEAVEN. MORE THAN 400 YEARS LATER DAVID DEFEATED THE AMALEKITES (2 SAM. 1:1), BUT THEY WERE NOT COMPLETELY WIPED OUT TILL ABOUT ANOTHER 300 YEARS LATER IN HEZEKIAH’S DAY (1 CHRON. 4:41–43). THE STRONG COMMAND DO NOT FORGET! IS THE LAST OF NINE SUCH COMMANDS IN DEUTERONOMY (CF. COMMENTS ON DEUT. 4:9).**

**TWO LITURGICAL CEREMONIES (26:1–15)**

**LITURGY FOR THE PRESENTATION OF THE FIRST-FRUITS (26:1–11)**

**26:1–4. WHEN ISRAEL HAD TAKEN POSSESSION (CF. COMMENTS ON 1:8) OF THE PROMISED LAND THEY WERE TO CELEBRATE TWO RITUALS. SINCE LEGISLATION HAD ALREADY BEEN GIVEN REGARDING THE TITHE EVERY THIRD YEAR (14:28–29) IT SEEMS THAT THESE TWO RITUALS ACCOMPANYING THE OFFERING OF THE FIRST-FRUITS (26:2–11) AND THE TITHE “IN THE THIRD YEAR” (VV. 12–15) WERE MEANT TO BE PRACTICED ONLY ONCE, THE ONE AFTER ISRAEL’S FIRST HARVEST AND THE OTHER AFTER BEING IN THE LAND THREE YEARS. THEY WERE GIVEN IN ORDER TO CELEBRATE ISRAEL’S TRANSITION FROM A NOMADIC EXISTENCE TO A SETTLED AGRICULTURAL COMMUNITY, MADE POSSIBLE BY THE LORD’S BLESSINGS. THE FIRST RITUAL CONSISTED OF TAKING THE FIRST-FRUITS (I.E., THE INITIAL PRODUCE OF THE HARVEST; CF. LEV. 23:9–14) TO THE PRIEST AT THE CENTRAL SANCTUARY. THE DECLARATION BY THE OFFERER, I DECLARE TODAY … THAT I HAVE COME TO THE LAND, WAS A TESTIMONY TO THE LORD’S FAITHFULNESS IN BRINGING THE NATION INTO THE LAND HE HAD PROMISED. IN THIS WAY AT THE VERY BEGINNING OF THEIR NEW LIFE EACH ONE IN THE ENTIRE NATION HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO COME BEFORE GOD INDIVIDUALLY AND CONFESS HIS OR HER FAITH IN HIM. THE PRIEST WAS TO TAKE THE BASKET (DEUT. 26:4; CF. V. 2) OF FIRST-FRUITS, APPARENTLY SPEAK SOME WORDS, AND THEN GIVE IT BACK TO THE WORSHIPER. 26:5–10. THE SECOND PART OF THE RITUAL WAS A MORE ELABORATE CONFESSION OF THE LORD’S FAITHFULNESS (VV. 5–10A) FOLLOWED BY ANOTHER PRESENTATION OF THE BASKET (V. 10B). THE CONFESSION HIGHLIGHTED BOTH GOD’S FAITHFULNESS AND THE MIRACULOUS NATURE OF ISRAEL’S PRESERVATION. A WANDERING ARAMEAN REFERRED TO JACOB, WHO WAS EACH ISRAELITE’S FATHER, OR RATHER, ANCESTOR. WHEN ABRAHAM LEFT UR, HE SETTLED FOR A WHILE IN HARAN, A CITY IN ARAM IN UPPER MESOPOTAMIA (GEN. 1:28–32). ABRAHAM MOVED ON TO CANAAN BUT SOME OF HIS RELATIVES STAYED ON AND BECAME KNOWN AS ARAMEANS. BOTH ISAAC AND JACOB MARRIED WOMEN FROM THIS ARAMEAN BRANCH OF THE FAMILY. THUS, JACOB COULD ALSO BE CALLED AN ARAMEAN. THE WORD TRANSLATED “WANDERING” USUALLY MEANT “PERISHING” OR “AILING.” JACOB WAS ALREADY 130 YEARS OLD WHEN HE WENT DOWN INTO EGYPT AFTER WHICH HE LIVED ONLY 17 MORE YEARS. THE FEW PEOPLE IN HIS FAMILY NUMBERED 70 (GEN. 46:27). THOUGH THE EGYPTIANS MISTREATED THE NATION ISRAEL, IT STILL GREW. GOD ANSWERED THE CRY OF HIS OPPRESSED PEOPLE BY MIRACULOUSLY DELIVERING THEM OUT OF EGYPT BY HIS MIGHTY HAND AND OUTSTRETCHED ARM (SEE COMMENTS ON DEUT. 4:34) WHICH INCLUDED HIS USING MIRACULOUS SIGNS AND WONDERS (CF. 4:34; 6:22; 7:19; 26:8; 29:3). THOUGH POWERFUL NATIONS LIVED IN CANAAN, ISRAEL WOULD POSSESS THIS LAND FLOWING WITH MILK AND HONEY (CF. 26:15 AND SEE COMMENTS ON EX. 3:8). IN SHORT, THE CONFESSION UNDERSCORED GOD’S MIRACULOUS WORKING AT EVERY TURN IN THEIR HISTORY. 26:11. AFTER CENTURIES OF SUFFERING AND WAITING, IT WAS APPROPRIATE THAT EVERY FAMILY ALONG WITH ALL THE NEEDY IN ISRAEL REJOICE OVER THE ABUNDANT BLESSINGS PROVIDED BY THE LORD.**

**LITURGY FOR THE PRESENTATION OF THE TITHE AFTER THE 1ST THREE YEARS (26:12–15)**

**26:12. AS STATED IN THE COMMENTS ON VERSES 1–4 THIS TITHE MAY HAVE BEEN A ONE-TIME OFFERING MADE AFTER ISRAEL’S FIRST THREE YEARS IN THE LAND. 26:13–15. THE CONFESSION TO BE MADE IN CONNECTION WITH THE OFFERING OF THE TITHE CONSISTED OF A POSITIVE STATEMENT (V. 13), A NEGATIVE STATEMENT (V. 14), AND A PRAYER FOR BLESSING (V. 15). SINCE THIS TITHE WAS DISTRIBUTED IN THE TOWNS AND SINCE THERE IS NO MENTION OF THE CENTRAL SANCTUARY THIS CONFESSION WAS PROBABLY TO BE MADE IN PEOPLE’S HOMES. THE BACKGROUND OF THE NEGATIVE STATEMENTS IN VERSE 14 IS OBSCURE BUT IT MAY HAVE RELATED TO CANAANITE RELIGIOUS PRACTICES. THE OFFERER WAS TO INDICATE THAT HE HAD NOT EATEN ANY OF THE TITHE WHILE … IN MOURNING, NOR SET ANY OF IT ASIDE WHILE HE WAS UNCLEAN, NOR … OFFERED ANY OF IT TO THE DEAD. THE PRAYER FOR BLESSING (V. 15) ON THE PEOPLE AND THE LAND EMPHASIZES ISRAEL’S DEPENDENCE ON THE LORD AND GOD’S GRACE. HE IS SO TRANSCENDENT THAT HE DWELLS IN HEAVEN, BUT AT THE SAME TIME HE IS SO NEAR TO HIS PEOPLE THAT HE HEARS THEIR PRAYERS ON EARTH. (ON THE LAND FLOWING WITH MILK AND HONEY CF. V. 9, AND SEE COMMENTS ON EX. 3:8.)**

**A DECLARATION OF COMMITMENT (26:16–19)**

**THESE FOUR VERSES CONCLUDE MOSES’ EXPLANATION OF THE LAW (5:1–26:15) BY CALLING FOR A TOTAL COMMITMENT TO THE LORD AND HIS COMMANDS, AND ALSO BY AFFIRMING GOD’S COMMITMENT TO ISRAEL. THIS SECTION MAY ALSO BE VIEWED AS A FORMAL RATIFICATION OF THE COVENANT BETWEEN THE LORD AND ISRAEL EVEN THOUGH THE WORD “COVENANT” DOES NOT APPEAR IN THESE FOUR VERSES. ISRAEL ACCEPTED AND AFFIRMED HER COVENANTAL RESPONSIBILITIES AND THE LORD AFFIRMED HIS PROMISE TO EXALT AN OBEDIENT ISRAEL OVER ALL THE NATIONS OF THE EARTH.**

**ISRAEL’S RESPONSIBILITY (26:16–17)**

**26:16–17. ISRAEL WAS TO DEVOTE HERSELF TO OBEY CAREFULLY AND UNRESERVEDLY (WITH ALL HER HEART AND SOUL; SEE COMMENTS ON 6:5) THE LORD’S DECREES AND LAWS. THE WORDS YOU HAVE DECLARED WERE A TECHNICAL STATEMENT IN THE TREATY LANGUAGE OF THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST. IT MEANT THAT ISRAEL FORMALLY ACCEPTED THE TERMS OF THE LORD’S COVENANT AND ACKNOWLEDGED HER RESPONSIBILITY TO OBEY THEM.**

**THE LORD’S RESPONSIBILITY (26:18–19)**

**26:18–19. WITH THE SAME TREATY TERMINOLOGY (HAS DECLARED; CF. V. 18) THE LORD FORMALLY ACKNOWLEDGED HIS OBLIGATION TO ISRAEL, TO BE HER GOD, AND TO MAKE HER HIS MOST VALUED NATION ON EARTH. THE REITERATION OF ISRAEL’S RESPONSIBILITY (YOU ARE TO KEEP ALL HIS COMMANDS) REMINDED ISRAEL THAT HER SPECIAL STATUS OF HONOR DEPENDED ON HER OBEDIENCE TO HIM. TO BE THE LORD’S TREASURED POSSESSION (CF. 7:6; 14:2; PS. 135:4; MAL. 3:17; SEE COMMENTS ON EX. 19:5) MEANT THAT HE WOULD EXALT ISRAEL HIGH ABOVE ALL THE NATIONS (CF. DEUT. 28:1). THROUGH DISOBEDIENCE AND REBELLION, GENERATION AFTER GENERATION OF ISRAELITES FORFEITED THEIR RIGHT TO BE EXALTED OVER THE NATIONS. BUT ISAIAH WROTE THAT ISRAEL’S REBELLION WOULD NOT CONTINUE FOREVER, FOR THE LORD WILL RAISE UP A GENERATION OF FAITHFUL ISRAELITES IN THE FUTURE WHO WILL ENJOY GOD’S GRACE IN A GOLDEN AGE OF BLESSING (ISA. 60–62). THAT AGE IS COMMONLY CALLED THE MILLENNIUM.**

**THE THIRD ADDRESS OF MOSES: COVENANT RENEWAL COMMANDED AND THE DECLARATION OF BLESSINGS AND CURSES (27:1–29:1)**

**A NEW ADDRESS IS SIGNALED BY THE MENTION OF MOSES IN THE THIRD PERSON (27:1). MOSES HAD NOT BEEN MENTIONED IN THE THIRD PERSON SINCE 5:1, AT THE BEGINNING OF HIS SECOND ADDRESS (5:1–26:15). MOSES HAD EXPLAINED THE GENERAL REQUIREMENTS OF THE LORD’S LAW (CHAPS. 5–11) AND THE SPECIFIC DETAILS OF THAT LAW (12:1–26:15). THROUGHOUT ISRAEL’S HISTORY IT WOULD BE NECESSARY TO CALL THE NATION TO RENEWALS OF COVENANT COMMITMENT AND OBEDIENCE. THESE RENEWALS WOULD TAKE PLACE AT SIGNIFICANT POINTS IN HER HISTORY, SUCH AS IN PREPARATION FOR ENTERING THE PROMISED LAND (CHAP. 27), AT THE DEDICATION OF SOLOMON’S TEMPLE (1 KINGS 8), AND DURING A CHANGE OF LEADERSHIP (JOSH. 24; 1 SAM. 12). SO MOSES GAVE DIRECTIONS FOR A CEREMONY FOR THE COVENANT RENEWAL THAT WERE TO BE FOLLOWED WHEN ISRAEL ENTERED THE PROMISED LAND (DEUT. 27). THEN MOSES TURNED HIS ATTENTION BACK TO THE PEOPLE IN THE PLAINS OF MOAB AND SET BEFORE THEM THE BLESSINGS AND CURSES OF THE COVENANT (CHAP. 28). TREATIES OF THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST USUALLY PLACED A SECTION OF BLESSINGS AND CURSES TOWARD THE END (SEE “STRUCTURE” IN THE INTRODUCTION). THE BLESSINGS WERE PROMISED FOR FAITHFULNESS TO THE TREATY AND THE CURSES WERE THREATENED FOR DISOBEDIENCE TO THE TREATY.**

**COVENANT RENEWAL COMMANDED (CHAP. 27)**

**THE WRITING OF THE LAW AND THE OFFERING OF SACRIFICES (27:1–10)**

**THE WRITING OF THE LAW (27:1–4)**

**27:1. THE REFERENCE TO MOSES AND THE ELDERS PROBABLY EMPHASIZED THE LEADERSHIP OF THE ELDERS IN THE COVENANT RENEWAL CEREMONY WHEN THE NATION ENTERED THE PROMISED LAND, FOR MOSES WOULD NO LONGER BE AROUND TO GUIDE THEM. 27:2–4. THE WRITING OF LAWS ON LARGE STONES COATED WITH PLASTER WAS COMMON IN EGYPT. THE MEANING OF THE PHRASE ALL THE WORDS OF THIS LAW (CF. V. 8) IS A LITTLE UNCERTAIN, BUT IN LIGHT OF EGYPTIAN CUSTOM THE REFERENCE PROBABLY WAS TO THE ENTIRE BOOK OF DEUTERONOMY RATHER THAN JUST PARTS OF IT. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS ACT WAS TWOFOLD. FIRST, IT COMMEMORATED GOD’S FAITHFULNESS IN GIVING THEM THE LAND (JUST AS THE LORD, THE GOD OF YOUR FATHERS, PROMISED YOU). (“GOD OF YOUR FATHERS” OCCURS SIX TIMES IN DEUT.; SEE COMMENTS ON 1:11.) THE STONES WERE TO BE SET UP … ON MOUNT EBAL (ABOUT 35 MILES NORTH OF JERUSALEM) AT THE BASE OF WHICH LAY THE CITY OF SHECHEM. IT WAS AT SHECHEM THAT THE LORD FIRST “APPEARED” TO ABRAHAM, AND THERE ABRAHAM BUILT HIS FIRST ALTAR TO THE LORD (GEN. 12:6–7). THE CHOICE OF THIS LOCATION EMPHASIZED GOD’S FAITHFULNESS TO THE ORIGINAL ABRAHAMIC PROMISES AND HINTED THAT THE TIME FOR THEIR COMPLETE FULFILLMENT MIGHT BE NEAR IF ONLY ISRAEL WOULD OBEY HIM. SECOND, THE WRITING OF THE LAW WHEN THEY ENTERED THE PROMISED LAND SYMBOLIZED THE NATION’S MISSION TO BRING CANAAN UNDER THE DOMINANCE OF THE LORD’S WORD.**

**THE SACRIFICIAL OFFERINGS (27:5–8)**

**27:5–8. THE COVENANT WAS TO BE RENEWED NOT ONLY BY WRITING THE LAW BUT ALSO WITH SACRIFICIAL OFFERINGS. THE FACT THAT THE ALTAR WAS TO BE MADE OF UNCUT STONES (CF. EX. 20:25) MAY MEAN THAT THE HEBREWS (WHO DID NOT THEN POSSESS IRON) WERE NOT TO DEVELOP A DEPENDENCE ON ANY OF THE SURROUNDING PEOPLES FOR IRON AND THUS RISK BEING INFLUENCED BY THEM IN HARMFUL WAYS. OR PERHAPS THE UNCUT STONES WERE MEANT TO SUGGEST THAT NEITHER THE LAW NOR THE SACRIFICIAL SYSTEM WAS TO SUFFER ANY HUMAN ADORNMENT. THE BURNT OFFERINGS (TO BE TOTALLY CONSUMED ON THE ALTAR) EXPRESSED THE PEOPLE’S TOTAL DEPENDENCE ON THE LORD. THE FELLOWSHIP OFFERINGS (EATEN AS A COMMUNAL MEAL) EXPRESSED THEIR THANKFULNESS TO HIM AND THEIR JOY IN HIS PROVISION. THE FINAL REMINDER (DEUT. 27:8) TO WRITE THE LAW VERY CLEARLY EMPHASIZES THE SUPREME IMPORTANCE OF THE ROLE OF GOD’S WORD IN THE NEW LAND.**

**THE CHALLENGE TO OBEY THE COVENANT (27:9–10)**

**27:9–10. THOUGH THESE WORDS WERE SPOKEN BY MOSES AND THE PRIESTS (CF. MOSES AND THE ELDERS, V. 1) TO THE ISRAELITES ON THE PLAINS OF MOAB (AND THEREFORE SEEM TO INTERRUPT THE FLOW OF VV. 1–8 AND 11–26), THEY WERE PROBABLY REPEATED IN SHECHEM AS PART OF THE COVENANT-RENEWAL CEREMONY. THE WORDS YOU HAVE NOW BECOME THE PEOPLE OF THE LORD YOUR GOD DO NOT IMPLY THAT ISRAEL WAS NOT THE PEOPLE OF GOD BEFORE THAT TIME. THEY MEANT THAT THERE ON THE PLAINS OF MOAB, AT THAT SIGNIFICANT TURNING POINT IN HER HISTORY, ISRAEL HAD FRESHLY COMMITTED HERSELF AGAIN TO THE LORD. AGAIN, SHE WAS TOLD TO OBEY HIM AND TO FOLLOW HIS COMMANDS AND DECREES.**

**THE BLESSINGS AND CURSES (27:11–26)**

**THE ARRANGEMENT OF THE TRIBES AND LEVITES (27:11–14)**

**27:11–14. THIS CEREMONY WAS COMMANDED EARLIER BY MOSES (11:26–32). AFTER THE ALTAR WAS SET UP ON MOUNT EBAL (27:1–8) SIX TRIBES WERE TO ASSEMBLE ON MOUNT GERIZIM TO BLESS THE PEOPLE AND SIX WERE TO ASSEMBLE ON MOUNT EBAL TO PRONOUNCE CURSES. ACTUALLY, THE PEOPLE WERE TO STAND IN FRONT OF THE MOUNTAINS (JOSH. 8:33). A VALLEY RUNS BETWEEN THESE TWO MOUNTAINS IN SAMARIA, WITH MOUNT GERIZIM TO THE SOUTHWEST OF MOUNT EBAL. SHECHEM IS NEARBY IN THE VALLEY (SEE THE MAP “CANAAN IN THE CONQUEST,” NEAR JOSH. 3). THE SIX TRIBES ON MOUNT GERIZIM DESCENDED FROM JACOB’S WIVES, RACHEL AND LEAH. FOUR OF THE SIX TRIBES STATIONED ON MOUNT EBAL FOR THE CURSES WERE DESCENDED FROM JACOB’S CONCUBINES, BILHAH AND ZILPAH. THE OTHER TWO WERE REUBEN, JACOB’S FIRSTBORN, WHO FORFEITED HIS BIRTHRIGHT THROUGH INCEST (GEN. 35:22; 49:3–4), AND ZEBULUN, LEAH’S YOUNGEST SON. THE LEVITES STOOD BETWEEN THE TWO MOUNTAINS TO RECITE THE BLESSINGS AND CURSES. ACTUALLY, ONLY THE LEVITES WHO WERE PRIESTS ATTENDING THE ARK STOOD IN THE MIDDLE (JOSH. 8:33) AND ALL THE OTHER LEVITES WERE NEAR MOUNT GERIZIM (DEUT. 27:12). IN VERSES 15–26 ONLY THE CURSES HAVE BEEN INCLUDED AND THE REASON FOR THIS IS UNCLEAR. OTHER CURSES ARE RECORDED IN 28:15–68. ONLY 12 STATEMENTS ABOUT PEOPLE WHO TRANSGRESSED CERTAIN LAWS WERE INCLUDED IN 27:15–26.**

**THE CURSES (27:15–26)**

**IT IS DIFFICULT TO DETECT A COMMON THEME OR PATTERN IN THESE 12 CURSES, THOUGH MANY OF THEM PERTAIN TO ACTIONS DONE BY INDIVIDUALS IN SECRET. EIGHT OF THE 12 REFER TO VIOLATIONS OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS: VERSE 15, THE SECOND COMMANDMENT (5:8–10); 27:16, THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT (5:16); 27:17, THE EIGHTH COMMANDMENT (5:19); 27:20, 22–23, THE SEVENTH COMMANDMENT (5:18); AND 27:24–25, THE SIXTH COMMANDMENT (5:17). 27:15. FOR THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE VIOLATION MENTIONED HERE (IDOLATRY) SEE 5:8–9 AND THE COMMENTS THERE. EVEN THOUGH AN OFFENDER MIGHT MANAGE TO KEEP HIS SELF-MADE IDOL … IN SECRET THE LORD WOULD SEE IT AND THE IDOLATER WOULD BE CURSED. ALL THE PEOPLE, BY RESPONDING WITH AN AMEN, WERE ACKNOWLEDGING THAT THEY UNDERSTOOD AND AGREED TO THE CURSE’S PROCLAMATION. 27:16–18. ON VERSE 16 SEE THE COMMENTS ON 5:16 AND 21:18–21; AND ON 27:17 SEE THE COMMENTS ON 19:14. THOUGH A BLIND PERSON (27:18) WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO IDENTIFY HIS ASSAILANT WHO WAS LEADING HIM ASTRAY—A DESPICABLE ACT OF UNKINDNESS—THE LORD WOULD KNOW THE OFFENDER AND BRING A CURSE ON HIM. THIS CURSE PROBABLY APPLIED TO ALL WHO MISTREATED THE WEAK AND OPPRESSED MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY (CF. LEV. 19:14). 27:19. IT WOULD ALSO HAVE BEEN EASY FOR AN ISRAELITE TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THESE GENERALLY POOR CLASSES OF PEOPLE. BUT GOD WOULD ALSO DEFEND THEM (10:18; CF. 24:17, 19–21). 27:20–23. THESE FOUR CURSES ARE DIRECTED AGAINST ONE WHO ENGAGED IN ONE OF FOUR FORBIDDEN SEXUAL RELATIONSHIPS. THE SIXTH CURSE (V. 20) MAY APPLY TO ONE WHO HAD INTERCOURSE WITH HIS STEPMOTHER OR HIS FATHER’S CONCUBINE WHILE HIS FATHER WAS STILL ALIVE (E.G., REUBEN, GEN. 35:22) AS WELL AS MARRIAGE TO A STEPMOTHER, OR TO A CONCUBINE OF ONE’S FATHER AFTER HIS DEATH. THE SEVENTH CURSE (DEUT. 27:21) IS DIRECTED AGAINST ONE WHO COMMITTED BESTIALITY (CF. EX. 22:19; LEV. 18:23; 20:15–16). THOUGH DONE IN SECRET, IT WOULD BE KNOWN TO THE LORD. THE EIGHTH AND NINTH CURSES (DEUT. 27:22–23) WERE DIRECTED AGAINST INCEST AND MARRIAGE TO (OR ADULTERY WITH) CLOSE RELATIVES (CF. LEV. 18:9, 17). 27:24–25. THE 10TH AND 11TH CURSES DEAL WITH AN ATTEMPT TO VIOLATE SECRETLY THE SIXTH COMMANDMENT (AGAINST MURDER; SEE COMMENTS ON 5:17). 27:26. THIS LAST CURSE DEMONSTRATES THAT THE PRECEDING LIST WAS REPRESENTATIVE. PERHAPS THE 11 EXAMPLES WERE CHOSEN, AS STATED EARLIER, BECAUSE MOST OF THEM COULD BE DONE IN SECRET AND THEREFORE THE OFFENDER MIGHT NOT BE AS EASILY DETECTED AS HE WOULD WHEN VIOLATING OTHER LAWS. THE SUMMARY NATURE OF THE 12TH CURSE, HOWEVER, INDICATES THAT GOD DESIRED A WHOLEHEARTED OBEDIENCE TO THE LAW BOTH IN PUBLIC AND IN PRIVATE. PAUL USED THIS VERSE TO TEACH THAT NO ONE COULD FIND ETERNAL LIFE BY OBEYING THE LAW (GAL. 3:10). ETERNAL LIFE IS RECEIVED ONLY THROUGH GOD’S GRACE WHEN ONE PLACES HIS FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST AS HIS SUBSTITUTIONARY SACRIFICE FOR SIN (ROM. 3:24–25; EPH. 2:8–9).**

**THE BLESSINGS AND THE CURSES (CHAP. 28)**

**AFTER ISRAEL ENTERED THE PROMISED LAND, MOSES COMMANDED HER TO RENEW THE COVENANT AT SHECHEM. THEN HE TURNED HIS ATTENTION BACK TO ISRAEL’S PRESENT EXPERIENCE IN THE PLAINS OF MOAB. HE SET BEFORE THEM THE BLESSINGS AND CURSES OF THE COVENANT THEY WERE RENEWING. THE CURSES SECTION (VV. 15–68) IS ABOUT FOUR TIMES LONGER THAN THE BLESSINGS SECTION (VV. 1–14). THIS MAY HAVE BEEN IN KEEPING WITH THE STYLE OF THE ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN TREATIES WHICH GENERALLY INCLUDED MORE CURSES THAN BLESSINGS. MORE LIKELY, HOWEVER, THE GREATER LENGTH OF THE CURSE SECTION WAS MEANT TO FORESHADOW ISRAEL’S EVENTUAL FAILURE UNDER THE COVENANT.**

**THE BLESSINGS (28:1–14)**

**BLESSINGS CONTINGENT ON OBEDIENCE (28:1–2)**

**28:1–2. GOD’S INVITATION FOR ISRAEL TO TAKE PART IN THE COVENANT WAS A GRACIOUS ONE. HOWEVER, BLESSING UNDER THIS MOSAIC COVENANT WAS CONDITIONED ON THE PEOPLE’S OBEDIENCE (CF. COMMENTS ON OBEY IN 6:3). FOR THE MOSAIC COVENANT WAS MADE WITH A PEOPLE WHO HAD ALREADY BEEN REDEEMED BY GOD’S GRACIOUS DELIVERANCE FROM EGYPT. SO, THE COVENANT IS GIVEN TO ISRAEL THAT THEY MIGHT ENJOY FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD AND BE PREPARED TO RECEIVE HIS BLESSINGS. ONE OF THOSE BLESSINGS WOULD BE THE EXALTING OF ISRAEL ABOVE ALL OTHER NATIONS (CF. 26:19).**

**THE SPECIFIC BLESSINGS (28:3–6)**

**28:3–6. IF ISRAEL OBEYED THE LORD (VV. 1–2), THEN EVERY ASPECT OF HER LIFE WOULD BE BLESSED. BOTH THE MERCHANT IN THE CITY AND THE FARMER IN THE COUNTRY WOULD BE BLESSED. ISRAEL COULD EXPECT FERTILITY IN BOTH MAN AND ANIMALS (V. 4). THERE WOULD ALWAYS BE FOOD IN HER HOMES FOR DAILY MEALS. SINCE HER KNEADING TROUGH WOULD BE BLESSED (V. 5) ISRAEL NEVER NEED EXPERIENCE A FAMINE. IN ALL ONE’S DAILY WORK (WHEN YOU COME IN AND WHEN YOU GO OUT) ISRAELITES WOULD ENJOY GOD’S BLESSINGS. HUMAN HAPPINESS COMES FROM OBEYING THE LORD’S COMMANDS.**

**THE PROMISES OF THE LORD (28:7–14)**

**THE PRECEDING SECTION (VV. 3–6) WAS PROBABLY READ ALOUD IN COVENANT-RENEWAL CEREMONIES IN ORDER TO STATE THE BLESSINGS OF COVENANT OBEDIENCE. THIS SECTION (VV. 7–14) WAS PROBABLY MOSES’ SERMONIC ELABORATION OF THOSE BLESSINGS. 28:7–14. THREE AREAS OF BLESSING WERE SINGLED OUT. THE FIRST AREA RELATES TO THE NATIONS. ISRAEL WOULD HAVE SUPERNATURAL MILITARY SUCCESS (V. 7), AND FINANCIAL PROSPERITY THAT WOULD CAUSE THEM TO BE ABOVE OTHER NATIONS (VV. 12B–13), LENDING TO THEM BUT NEVER BORROWING AND ALWAYS THEIR LEADER (THE HEAD) AND NEVER THEIR FOLLOWER (THE TAIL). BUT DISOBEDIENCE WOULD RESULT IN THE OPPOSITE (VV. 43–44). THE SECOND AREA IS AGRICULTURAL ENDEAVORS. ISRAEL WOULD EXPERIENCE ABUNDANT PROSPERITY IN HER FARMING AND FAMILY LIFE (VV. 8, 11–12A; CF. V. 4). THE CANAANITES BELIEVED THAT THE FERTILITY GOD BAAL SENT RAIN FROM THE HEAVENS, BUT THE HEBREWS WERE TO KNOW THAT THE LORD GIVES RAIN. THE THIRD AREA WAS HER REPUTATION. BY BEING GOD’S OBEDIENT AND HOLY PEOPLE (CF. 26:19), THE ISRAELITES WOULD ENJOY SUCH AN INTIMACY WITH GOD THAT THEY WOULD BECOME A TESTIMONY TO ALL THE PEOPLES ON EARTH WHO WOULD FEAR OR STAND IN AWE OF ISRAEL (CF. 2:25; 11:25). ISRAEL WOULD EXPERIENCE BLESSINGS IN ALL THREE AREAS (MILITARY AND FINANCIAL SUCCESS, AGRICULTURE, AND REPUTATION) IF SHE DID NOT TURN ASIDE FROM ANY OF THE LORD’S COMMANDS OR FOLLOW OTHER GODS (28:14).**

**THE CURSES (28:15–68)**

**THE SPECIFIC CURSES (28:15–19)**

**28:15–19. JUST AS OBEDIENCE WOULD BRING BLESSINGS, SO DISOBEDIENCE WOULD BRING CURSES. (SEE THE CHART “THE COVENANT CHASTENING’S,” NEAR AMOS 4:6.) NO MIDDLE GROUND WAS POSSIBLE. THE FOUR CURSES IN VERSES 16–19 ARE THE EXACT OPPOSITE OF THE FOUR BLESSINGS CITED IN VERSES 3–6 (THOUGH THE SECOND AND THIRD ARE REVERSED, AND THE WORDS “THE YOUNG OF YOUR LIVESTOCK,” V. 4, ARE NOT INCLUDED IN V. 18).**

**THE LORD’S JUDGMENTS (28:20–68)**

**THIS SECTION IS MOSES’ SERMONIC ELABORATION OF THE SPECIFIC CURSES IN VERSES 16–19. (CF. VV. 7–14, WHICH WERE MOSES’ ELABORATION OF THE BLESSINGS IN VV. 3–6.) EACH INDIVIDUAL JUDGMENT ESSENTIALLY HAD ONE GOAL: TO TURN ISRAEL FROM DISOBEDIENCE.**

**HORRIBLE DESTRUCTION.**

**28:20. MOSES THREATENED ISRAEL WITH A PAINFUL DESTRUCTION IF SHE FORSOOK THE LORD. CONFUSION WAS THE TERM FOR THE DIVINE PANIC THAT CAME ON ISRAEL’S ENEMIES AND RENDERED THEM HELPLESS IN BATTLE OR RACKED THEM WITH PAINFUL DISEASES (CF. 1 SAM. 5:9; 14:20). TO FORSAKE GOD IS TO DO EVIL.**

**DISEASE.**

**28:21–22. THE PRECISE IDENTITY OF THE FIRST THREE DISEASES: WASTING DISEASE … FEVER … INFLAMMATION IS UNKNOWN. THE LAST TWO DISEASES—BLIGHT AND MILDEW—STRIKE PLANTS. THE OTHER TWO, SCORCHING HEAT AND DROUGHT, THOUGH NOT DISEASES, AFFECT BOTH PEOPLE AND VEGETATION AND EVENTUALLY CAUSE DEATH.**

**DROUGHT.**

**28:23–24. THE ONCE FERTILE LAND WOULD BE WITHOUT RAIN. THE SKY WOULD BE LIKE BRONZE, THAT IS, THE HEAT OF THE SUN WOULD ALWAYS BE BEARING DOWN; NO RAIN CLOUDS WOULD COME. INSTEAD OF RAIN THERE WOULD BE DUST SO THAT NOTHING COULD GROW (THE GROUND WOULD BECOME LIKE IRON).**

**DEFEAT IN FIGHT, BATTLE & WAR.**

**28:25–26. ISRAEL WOULD EXPERIENCE DEVASTATING DEFEATS IN FIGHT, BATTLE & WAR. INSTEAD OF HER ENEMIES FLEEING IN SEVEN DIRECTIONS (CF. V. 7) IN PANIC, ISRAEL WOULD FLEE IN SEVEN DIRECTIONS. BECAUSE OF DEFEAT NO ONE WOULD BE LEFT TO BURY HER CORPSES.**

**PHYSICAL AND MENTAL DISEASES OF EGYPT.**

**28:27–29. AS THE LORD HAD ONCE STRUCK EGYPT WITH BOILS (EX. 9:8–12) AND SENT CONFUSION TO PHARAOH’S ARMY (EX. 14:23–28) SO HE WOULD AFFLICT ISRAEL WITH THESE THINGS (CF. “DISEASES” IN EX. 15:26; DEUT. 7:15; 28:60; ALSO NOTE 28:35). THE PHYSICAL AND MENTAL AFFLICTIONS WOULD BE SO GREAT THAT THE ISRAELITES WOULD NOT HAVE THE STRENGTH OR PRESENCE OF MIND TO COMPLETE ANY TASK (THEY WOULD BE UNSUCCESSFUL IN EVERYTHING), NOR COULD THEY DEFEND THEMSELVES FROM OPPRESSORS.**

**OPPRESSED AND ROBBED.**

**28:30–35. THE AFFLICTIONS MENTIONED HERE RESULT FROM DEFEAT IN FIGHT, BATTLE & WAR. THE MILITARY EXEMPTIONS MENTIONED IN 20:5–7 WOULD BE REVERSED WITHOUT GOD’S PROTECTION (28:30). LIVESTOCK AND CHILDREN WOULD BE LOST FOREVER (VV. 31–32). FOREIGN ARMIES WOULD REAP THE BENEFIT OF THE FARMERS’ HARD WORK (V. 33). THESE DEVASTATING LOSSES WOULD PRODUCE INSANITY (V. 34) AND PAINFUL BOILS (V. 35; CF. V. 27).**

**EXILE.**

**28:36–37. IF ISRAEL REFUSED TO SERVE THE LIVING GOD, SHE WOULD BE CAST INTO A STRANGE LAND TO SERVE LIFELESS GODS. INSTEAD OF BECOMING HEAD OF THE NATIONS (V. 13) SHE WOULD BECOME THE MOST REPULSIVE NATION ON EARTH, TALKED ABOUT AND RIDICULED BY HER CAPTORS.**

**CROP FAILURE AND ECONOMIC RUIN (28:38–44).**

**28:38–42. NO MATTER HOW HARD THE ISRAELITES WOULD WORK TO PRODUCE CROPS THEIR GOAL WOULD ALWAYS BE FRUSTRATED. LOCUSTS AND WORMS WOULD OBEY THE SOVEREIGN LORD EVEN IF ISRAEL WOULD NOT. SO, ALL ISRAEL’S CROPS—GRAINS, VINEYARDS, AND OLIVE TREES—WOULD BE DESTROYED. NOR WOULD THEIR CHILDREN HELP THEM OVERCOME THE CURSE BECAUSE THEY WOULD BE LOST IN CAPTIVITY. THIS SECTION BEGINS AS IT ENDS, WITH A REFERENCE TO LOCUSTS (VV. 38, 42). 28:43–44. DURING THE PLAGUES THE LORD MADE A DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE EGYPTIANS AND ISRAELITES AND PROTECTED THE ISRAELITES FROM THE DISASTERS THAT FELL ON EGYPT. THE REVERSE WOULD BE TRUE IN THIS JUDGMENT FOR THE ALIEN WOULD PROFIT AT ISRAEL’S EXPENSE, BECOMING THE LEADER (HEAD; CF. V. 13).**

**REASON FOR THE CURSES.**

**28:45–48. AT THIS POINT IN THE SERMON MOSES SEEMED TO ASSUME THAT ISRAEL WOULD DEFINITELY RECEIVE ALL THESE CURSES. IT WAS NO LONGER A MATTER OF “IF YOU DISOBEY,” BUT RATHER YOU DID NOT OBEY THE LORD YOUR GOD (V. 45) AND YOU DID NOT SERVE THE LORD YOUR GOD (V. 47). THESE CURSES THEREFORE WERE CERTAIN: THEY WILL COME UPON YOU (V. 45). THEY WOULD HAVE A PEDAGOGICAL FUNCTION, HOWEVER, FOR AS A SIGN THEY WOULD SERVE AS A WARNING OF GOD’S MIRACULOUS INTERVENTION IN JUDGMENTS, AND AS A WONDER THE CURSES WOULD BE SO SO HORRIBLE AND COMPREHENSIVE THAT THEY WOULD ATTRACT THE ATTENTION OF FUTURE ISRAELITES. THE CURSES WOULD ALSO DEMONSTRATE THE LORD’S RETRIBUTIVE JUSTICE. BECAUSE ISRAEL REFUSED TO SERVE HIM JOYFULLY … IN THE TIME OF PROSPERITY SHE WOULD FIND HERSELF SERVING A HARSH TASKMASTER IN A TIME OF DIRE POVERTY. SHE WOULD AGAIN BE IN SLAVERY, SUBJECT TO HER ENEMIES AS IF SHE WERE AN OX WITH AN IRON YOKE ON ITS NECK (CF. JER. 28:14). YOKES WERE NORMALLY MADE OF WOOD; AN IRON YOKE WOULD BE HEAVIER AND MORE SEVERE.**

**THE HORRORS OF BESIEGED CITIES (28:49–57).**

**28:49–52. THE TWO WORST POSSIBLE CURSES WERE SAVED UNTIL THE CONCLUSION OF THE SERMON AND THEN SPECIFICALLY ILLUSTRATED: THE SIEGE (VV. 49–57) AND THE EXILE (VV. 58–68). THE FOREIGN NATION WOULD BE SWIFT AND POWERFUL (LIKE AN EAGLE; IN HAB. 1:6, 8 THE BABYLONIANS ARE COMPARED AMONG OTHER THINGS WITH A SWEEPING VULTURE), BRUTAL (FIERCE-LOOKING AND WITHOUT … PITY), DESTRUCTIVE (DESTROYING THE GRAIN CROPS, VINEYARDS, AND OLIVE TREES, AND KILLING YOUNG … LIVESTOCK), AND THOROUGH (LAYING SIEGE TO ALL THE CITIES THROUGHOUT ISRAEL’S LAND). NO WONDER THEN THAT ISRAEL WOULD BE TOTALLY RUINED (DEUT. 28:51). 28:53–57. THE HORRORS OF THE SIEGE WOULD COME TO A CLIMACTIC MANIFESTATION IN CANNIBALISM (CF. LEV. 26:27–29; JER. 19:9). EVEN … GENTLE AND SENSITIVE PARENTS WOULD BE SO STARVED DURING THE SIEGE THEY WOULD EAT THEIR OWN CHILDREN. WHEREAS THEIR ENEMIES WOULD EAT OR DESTROY ISRAEL’S LIVESTOCK AND CROPS (DEUT. 28:51) THE ISRAELITES WOULD DEVOUR THEIR OWN CHILDREN, “THE FRUIT” OF THEIR OWN WOMBS (V. 4), GOD’S GIFTS TO THEM. THIS CURSE WAS LITERALLY FULFILLED WHEN THE ARAMEANS BESIEGED SAMARIA (2 KINGS 6:24–29) AND WHEN THE BABYLONIANS BESIEGED JERUSALEM (LAM. 2:20; 4:10). THIS WAS ONE OF THE GREATEST EXAMPLES OF THE DEPTH OF PERVERSITY TO WHICH DISOBEDIENCE TO GOD LEADS.**

**THE DESTRUCTION OF THE NATION WITH DISEASE AND EXILE.**

**28:58–68. IN CARRYING OUT THE CURSES ON DISOBEDIENT ISRAEL, GOD WOULD UNDO ALL THE PREVIOUS BLESSINGS HE HAD LAVISHED ON HER. WHEREAS ISRAEL HAD PREVIOUSLY ESCAPED THE FEARFUL PLAGUES AND DISEASES OF EGYPT (CF. 7:15; 28:27, 35; EX. 15:26), GOD WOULD BRING THEM ON ISRAEL (CF. AMOS 4:10). HE WOULD ALSO BRING OTHER KINDS OF SICKNESS … NOT RECORDED IN THIS BOOK OF THE LAW (DEUT. 28:61). WHEREAS GOD HAD MULTIPLIED HER NUMBER AS THE STARS IN THE SKY (CF. GEN. 15:5; 22:17; 26:4), ISRAEL WOULD BE REDUCED TO A FEW IN NUMBER (DEUT. 28:62). AND WHEREAS ISRAEL HAD DWELT SECURELY IN THE LAND, SHE WOULD LOSE HER IDENTITY BY BEING UPROOTED AND SCATTERED AMONG ALL NATIONS (VV. 63–64). ISRAEL HAD BEEN PERMITTED TO SERVE THE LORD BUT NOW SHE WOULD BE COMPELLED TO SERVE IDOLS (V. 64). ONCE SHE LIVED IN SECURITY, BUT NOW SHE WOULD LIVE IN ANXIETY, DESPAIR, AND IN CONSTANT SUSPENSE AND FEAR FOR HER LIFE (VV. 65–66). TO ESCAPE HER MISERY, SHE WILL LONG FOR NIGHT TO COME AND THEN FOR THE DAYTIME. GOD HAD DELIVERED HER FROM BONDAGE IN EGYPT, BUT THE PEOPLE WOULD VOLUNTARILY RETURN TO THAT MISERY AND IN SUCH A HUMILIATED CONDITION THAT NO EGYPTIAN WOULD PURCHASE THEM AS SLAVES.**

**CONCLUSION TO MOSES’ THIRD ADDRESS (29:1)**

**29:1. SOME SEE THIS VERSE AS AN INTRODUCTION TO THE FOURTH ADDRESS OF MOSES BEGINNING IN VERSE 2, BUT PROBABLY IT CONCLUDES THE COVENANT RENEWAL CEREMONY IN MOAB. THIS PREFERENCE IS REFLECTED IN THE HEBREW TEXT WHICH NUMBERS THIS VERSE AS 28:69 RATHER THAN 29:1. THE WORDS, THE COVENANT … IN MOAB, IN ADDITION TO THE COVENANT HE HAD MADE WITH THEM AT HOREB, HAVE LED SOME TO POSIT THE EXISTENCE OF A SEPARATE COVENANT (I.E., A PALESTINIAN COVENANT) IN ADDITION TO THE MOSAIC COVENANT. THE WORDING, HOWEVER, WAS NOT MEANT TO REFLECT THE MAKING OF A NEW COVENANT, BUT THE RENEWING OF THE MOSAIC COVENANT MADE AT HOREB. MOSES’ FOURTH ADDRESS INTRODUCES NO NEW COVENANTAL PROVISIONS THAT WERE NOT ALREADY MADE EXPLICIT IN HIS OTHER SPEECHES. SO, DEUTERONOMY 29:2–30:20 RECAPITULATES THE COVENANT DETAILS LAID DOWN IN THE PRECEDING CHAPTERS.**

**THE FOURTH ADDRESS BY MOSES: A SUMMARY OF THE COVENANT DEMANDS (29:2–30:20)**

**AN APPEAL FOR COVENANTAL OBEDIENCE (29:2–29)**

**HISTORICAL REVIEW OF THE LORD’S FAITHFULNESS (29:2–8)**

**29:2–8. ON THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS REVIEW SEE THE COMMENTS ON CHAPTERS 1–3 AND 8:1–5. THE NEW ELEMENT IN THIS REVIEW IS MOSES’ ASSERTION THAT TO THIS DAY THE LORD HAS NOT GIVEN YOU A MIND THAT UNDERSTANDS OR EYES THAT SEE OR EARS THAT HEAR (29:4). THIS DOES NOT MEAN THAT BECAUSE ISRAEL IS DISOBEDIENT, SHE COULD NOT UNDERSTAND THE MEANING OF THE MIRACULOUS ELEMENTS OF HER HISTORY. “TO THIS DAY” SUGGESTS THAT ISRAEL HAD NOT YET UNDERSTOOD THESE SAVING EVENTS. HER DISOBEDIENCE AND REBELLION ORIGINATED FROM A MINDSET THAT COULD NOT FULLY UNDERSTAND THE IMPLICATIONS OF GOD’S SAVING WORKS. THUS, APART FROM DIVINE ENLIGHTENING, PEOPLE ALWAYS REMAIN INSENSITIVE TO GOD’S WORK (CF. PAUL’S USE OF THIS TEXT IN ROM. 11:8).**

**THE ESSENCE OF COVENANT RENEWAL (29:9–15)**

**29:9–15. TO THE EXTENT ISRAEL OBEYED THE TERMS OF THIS COVENANT SHE WOULD PROSPER. IN HEBREW, THE WORDS ALL OF YOU ARE STANDING (V. 10; CF. VV. 12, 15) IMPLY SOME SORT OF FORMAL CEREMONY FOR RENEWING THE COVENANT. TODAY OCCURS THREE TIMES (VV. 10, 15 [TWICE]) AND THIS DAY OCCURS TWICE (VV. 12–13). SO, THE STRESS WAS ON THE PRESENT, WHICH MEANT THAT THE ISRAELITES WERE NOT ENTERING INTO A NEW COVENANT, BUT WERE COMMITTING THEMSELVES AFRESH TO THE MOSAIC COVENANT. IN THIS COVENANT RENEWAL THE ISRAELITES SO COMMITTED THEMSELVES TO OBEYING THE LORD THAT HE WAS ABLE TO CONFIRM THEM AS HIS PEOPLE (V. 13) AND HIMSELF AS THEIR GOD. THIS WAS IMPORTANT BECAUSE GOD HAD PROMISED THE PATRIARCHS (ABRAHAM, ISAAC, AND JACOB; CF. 1:8; 6:10; 9:5, 27; 30:20; 34:4) THAT HE WOULD GIVE THEIR DESCENDANTS THAT LAND. THE SCOPE OF THE COVENANT RENEWAL ALSO EMBRACED FUTURE GENERATIONS (THOSE WHO ARE NOT HERE TODAY, 29:15). THEREFORE, THE OBEDIENCE OF THAT PRESENT GENERATION HAD A GREAT EFFECT ON THOSE NOT YET BORN.**

**THE CURSES FOR DISOBEDIENCE (29:16–29)**

**29:16–18. MOSES REMINDED THE ISRAELITES THAT THEY WERE NOT NAIVE CONCERNING IDOLATRY. THEY HAD SEEN IT IN EGYPT AND HAD FALLEN INTO IDOLATRY ON THE WAY TO THE PROMISED LAND (EX. 32; NUM. 25). THEY HAD SEEN THE PAGANS’ DETESTABLE … IDOLS. THEY KNEW HOW ONE IDOLATROUS MAN … WOMAN, CLAN, OR TRIBE COULD DEFILE MANY WITH THE BITTER POISON OF IDOLATRY (CF. HEB. 12:15). “POISON” IS LITERALLY, “WORMWOOD,” A PLANT KNOWN FOR ITS BITTER PULP AND OFTEN ASSOCIATED WITH POISON (CF. AMOS 5:7; 6:12; JER. 9:15; 23:15). THEREFORE, THEY WERE TOLD TO BE EXTREMELY VIGILANT AGAINST THIS SIN WHEN THEY ENTERED THE LAND OF CANAAN AND FACED NEW TEMPTATIONS TO IDOLATRY. 29:19–21. AN IDOLATROUS “ROOT” (CF. V. 18) MIGHT TAKE HOLD IN ISRAEL THROUGH A SINGLE PERSON WHO, UNDER THE CLOAK OF ANONYMITY, MIGHT THINK HE WAS SAFE FROM JUDGMENT BECAUSE THE LORD HAD SAID ISRAEL WAS HIS PEOPLE. THIS IDOLATROUS ROOT, HOWEVER, WOULD FLOWER INTO A GENERAL APOSTASY THAT WOULD BRING FORTH GOD’S JUDGMENT. ALL ISRAELITES WOULD SUFFER IN THE JUDGMENT (THIS WILL BRING DISASTER ON THE WATERED LAND AS WELL AS THE DRY). A PERSON WHO INTRODUCED SUCH IDOLATRY INTO ISRAEL COULD NEVER ESCAPE THE CONSEQUENCES OF HIS SIN. ALL THE CURSES … IN DEUTERONOMY WOULD FALL UPON HIM AND HE WOULD HAVE NO MALE HEIR TO CARRY ON HIS NAME, FOR IT WOULD BE BLOTTED OUT. NO SIN IS UNKNOWN BEFORE THE OMNISCIENT LORD (CF. HEB. 4:13). 29:22–28. JUDGMENT WOULD FALL, HOWEVER, NOT ONLY ON THE ONE WHO INTRODUCED IDOLATRY BUT ALSO ON THE WHOLE NATION BECAUSE THEY LET THEMSELVES BE SWEPT AWAY BY THE FALSE WORSHIP. THE FUTURE JUDGMENT (CALAMITIES AND DISEASES ON THE LAND; CF. 28:22B, 59–61) WOULD BE SO SEVERE THAT IT WAS COMPARED TO THE JUDGMENT THAT FELL ON SODOM AND GOMORRAH, AND ADMAH AND ZEBOIIM. THESE LAST TWO CITIES, NEAR SODOM AND GOMORRAH, WERE IN A TREATY WITH THEM (GEN. 14:2). THE LAND WOULD BE COVERED WITH SALT AND SULFUR AND THEREFORE BE UNPRODUCTIVE. THIS COMPREHENSIVE JUDGMENT MUST REFER TO THE DEVASTATION IN THE ASSYRIAN AND BABYLONIAN INVASIONS. THE DEVASTATION WOULD BE SO COMPLETE THAT THE NATIONS WOULD ASK WHY ISRAEL’S GOD IN ANGER HAD LET IT HAPPEN (DEUT. 29:24). THE ANSWER WOULD BE THAT ISRAEL HAD ABANDONED THE MOSAIC COVENANT BY COMMITTING IDOLATRY. EVEN THEIR FALSE WORSHIP WOULD PROVE THE TRUTH OF GOD’S WORD, FOR THE CURSES … IN THIS BOOK WOULD COME ON THEM JUST AS HE HAD PROMISED. BECAUSE THEY HAD GONE OFF AND BOWED DOWN TO FALSE GODS (CF. 30:17), GOD IN HIS ANGER WOULD UPROOT THEM AND TAKE THEM INTO EXILE. THEN THEY WOULD BOW TO THEIR CAPTORS. 29:29. THE SECRET THINGS OF THE LORD PROBABLY REFER TO FUTURE DETAILS THAT GOD HAD NOT REVEALED. YET WHAT HE HAD REVEALED (E.G., FUTURE JUDGMENT FOR DISOBEDIENCE, FUTURE BLESSING FOR OBEDIENCE, HIS REQUIREMENTS FOR HOLINESS, ETC.) WAS ENOUGH TO ENCOURAGE THE ISRAELITES TO FOLLOW ALL THE WORDS OF THE LAW.**

**PROMISED BLESSINGS AFTER ISRAEL’S REPENTANCE (30:1–10)**

**RESTORATION TO THE PROMISED LAND (30:1–5)**

**30:1–2. MOSES HAD PASSIONATELY URGED THE NATION TO OBEY THE LORD AND HIS COMMANDS, AND HAD SET THE BLESSINGS AND CURSES … BEFORE THEM IN ORDER TO MOTIVATE THEM. YET HE KNEW HIS FICKLE AND STUBBORN PEOPLE WELL ENOUGH TO REALIZE THAT THEIR APOSTASY WAS INEVITABLE AND THAT THE WORST CURSES WOULD COME UPON THEM—EXILE AND DISPERSION AMONG THE NATIONS. HOWEVER, EVEN IN THE MIDST OF THIS CURSE HE FORESAW GOD’S BLESSING. FOR ISRAEL WOULD COME TO HER SENSES; SHE WOULD TAKE GOD’S WORD TO HEART. 30:3–5. HOWEVER, ISRAEL’S REPENTANCE WOULD BE INSUFFICIENT TO REVERSE THE EFFECTS OF THEIR CURSES FOR THEY WOULD STILL BE UNDER FOREIGN DOMINATION. SO, IN RESPONSE TO THEIR REPENTANCE, GOD HIMSELF WILL INTERVENE, AND WITH TENDER COMPASSION … GATHER THE NATION AND BRING HER BACK TO HER LAND. HE WILL RESTORE ISRAEL’S FORTUNES, A THEME FREQUENT IN THE PROPHETS (CF., E.G., JER. 30:18; 32:44; 33:11, 26; JOEL 3:1). THE PROPHETS MADE IT CLEAR THAT THIS GREAT RESTORATION TO THE LAND WOULD NOT TAKE PLACE UNTIL THE SECOND ADVENT OF THE MESSIAH JUST BEFORE THE BEGINNING OF HIS MILLENNIAL REIGN ON THE EARTH (E.G., ISA. 59:20–62:12; CF. JESUS’ TEACHING OF THE REGATHERING IN MATT. 24:31; MARK 13:27). THIS WILL BE A TIME OF SPIRITUAL AND MATERIAL PROSPERITY GREATER THAN THE NATION HAS EVER KNOWN (DEUT. 30:5).**

**THE PROMISE OF A NEW HEART AND ABUNDANT PROSPERITY (30:6–10)**

**30:6. THE PROMISE THAT THE LORD YOUR GOD WILL CIRCUMCISE YOUR HEARTS (CF. 10:16) MEANS THAT GOD WILL GRACIOUSLY GRANT THE NATION A NEW WILL TO OBEY HIM IN PLACE OF THEIR FORMER SPIRITUAL INSENSITIVITY AND STUBBORNNESS. AFTER RETURNING TO THE PROMISED LAND WITH A NEW HEART THEY WILL REMAIN COMMITTED TO THE LORD AND THEREFORE WILL EXPERIENCE ABUNDANT BLESSING (LIVE). LOVING HIM WHOLEHEARTEDLY (CF. 30:16, 20; SEE COMMENTS ON 6:5), THEY WOULD NOT FALL BACK INTO APOSTASY AS THEY HAD DONE BEFORE. A NEW HEART IS AN ESSENTIAL FEATURE OF THE NEW COVENANT (CF. EZEK. 36:24–32), WHICH WILL NOT BE FULFILLED FOR ISRAEL AS A NATION UNTIL THE RETURN OF JESUS CHRIST (CF. JER. 31:31–34). 30:7–10. ALL THE PROSPERITY MENTIONED HERE (CF. 28:4) WOULD COME ON ISRAEL BECAUSE UNDER THE NEW COVENANT THE NATION WILL FINALLY BE ENABLED TO OBEY THE LORD WHOLEHEARTEDLY (CF. ALL YOUR HEART AND ALL YOUR SOUL IN 30:6; 6:5).**

**A CONCLUDING CHARGE TO CHOOSE LIFE (30:11–20)**

**THE CLARITY AND ACCESSIBILITY OF THE LAW (30:11–14)**

**30:11–14. THE LAW WAS NOT INCOMPREHENSIBLE (TOO DIFFICULT) OR INACCESSIBLE (BEYOND YOUR REACH). THOUGH THE LAW HAD A HEAVENLY ORIGIN GOD CLEARLY REVEALED IT TO ISRAEL SO THERE WAS NO NEED FOR ANYONE TO ASCEND INTO HEAVEN TO GET IT NOR DID ANYONE NEED TO TRAVEL ACROSS AN OCEAN TO GET IT. NOR DID ISRAEL NEED A SPECIAL INTERPRETER OF THE LAW BEFORE THEY COULD OBEY IT. THE LAW WAS ALREADY WRITTEN DOWN AND ISRAEL HAD BEEN FAMILIAR WITH ITS DEMANDS IN THE WILDERNESS. SO, MOSES COULD SAY THAT THE WORD IS VERY NEAR YOU. THEY COULD SPEAK IT (IT IS IN YOUR MOUTH) AND THEY KNEW IT (IT IS IN YOUR HEART). PAUL’S USE OF VERSE 14 IN ROMANS 10:6–8 WAS BASED ON THE FACT THAT CHRIST FULFILLED THE LAW AND IS THE ONLY PERSON TO HAVE LIVED PERFECTLY BY IT (ROM. 10:4–5). JUST AS THE LAW WAS A GRACIOUS REVELATION OF GOD’S RIGHTEOUSNESS, SO CHRIST, WHO PERFECTLY EMBODIED ALL THAT IS IN THE LAW, WAS GRACIOUSLY GIVEN BY THE FATHER. THIS WORD ABOUT CHRIST IS THEREFORE AT HAND (“NEAR YOU,” ROM. 10:8) SO NO ONE NEED BRING CHRIST FROM HEAVEN OR BRING HIM FROM THE DEAD FOR HE ALREADY HAS BECOME INCARNATE AND ASCENDED.**

**OBEDIENCE BRINGS LIFE (30:15–20)**

**30:15–16. MOSES NEVER TAUGHT THE ISRAELITES THAT THEY WERE JUSTIFIED BY OBEYING THE LAW. EARLY IN HIS FIRST BOOK HE STATED THAT ABRAHAM WAS JUSTIFIED BY FAITH IN THE LORD (GEN. 15:6). HOWEVER, IN DEUTERONOMY 30:15–20, MOSES WAS SPEAKING TO A BELIEVING PEOPLE ABOUT FELLOWSHIP, NOT JUSTIFICATION. HIS POINT WAS SIMPLY THAT THE FULL ENJOYMENT OF LIFE WOULD DEPEND ON THEIR OBEYING GOD’S WORD. IF A BELIEVING ISRAELITE SINCERELY WANTED TO PLEASE THE LORD—AND IT WAS NORMAL FOR SUCH A PERSON TO LOVE HIM AND WALK IN HIS WAYS—THEN HE WOULD LIVE UNDER GOD’S BLESSING. SO, THOUGH NO ONE COULD BE JUSTIFIED BY THE LAW, A BELIEVER COULD BE BLESSED UNDER THE LAW. 30:17–20. BUT IF A BELIEVER BEGAN TO EMBARK ON A PATTERN OF DISREGARDING THE LAW, HE COULD EASILY BE DRAWN AWAY TO BOW DOWN TO OTHER GODS (CF. 29:18) WHICH WOULD BRING CATASTROPHIC JUDGMENT INTO HIS LIFE. HE WOULD BE DESTROYED (KILLED) AND/OR TAKEN FROM THE LAND BY DEATH OR CAPTIVITY. SO, THE LIFE OF THE NATION WAS TO CONSIST OF HER OBEYING THE LORD. THIS OBEDIENCE COULD BE PASSED DOWN FROM ONE GENERATION TO ANOTHER SINCE GODLY PARENTS USUALLY PRODUCE GODLY CHILDREN. SO, PARENTS WHO CHOOSE TO OBEY THE LORD WERE ALSO MAKING A SIGNIFICANT CHOICE FOR THEIR POSTERITY. SINCE THE LORD IS THEIR LIFE, NO WONDER MOSES CONCLUDED THIS MESSAGE BY ONCE AGAIN URGING THE PEOPLE TO LOVE THE LORD (CF. VV. 6, 16), TO LISTEN TO (I.E., OBEY) HIM, AND TO HOLD FAST TO HIM (CF. 10:20; 11:22; 13:4).**

**THE TRANSITION FROM MOSES TO JOSHUA (CHAPS. 31–34)**

**MOSES PROVIDED FOR THE CONTINUITY OF THE COVENANT DURING THE CHANGE IN NATIONAL LEADERSHIP FROM HIMSELF TO JOSHUA. CERTAIN FEATURES OF THIS SECTION WERE ALSO FOUND IN THE VASSAL TREATIES OF THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST: THE DEPOSITING OF THE TREATY DOCUMENT IN A SACRED PLACE (31:24–26), PROVISION FOR DYNASTIC SUCCESSION (31:7–8), AND PROVISION FOR FUTURE READING OF THE COVENANT AND OTHER COVENANT CEREMONIES (CF. 31:9–13).**

**THE APPOINTMENT OF JOSHUA AND THE DEPOSITING OF THE LAW (31:1–29)**

**JOSHUA COMMISSIONED BY MOSES (31:1–8)**

**31:1–6. AT THE TIME OF MOSES’ DEATH HIS “EYES WERE NOT WEAK NOR HIS STRENGTH GONE” (34:7). YET BECAUSE OF HIS AGE (120 YEARS) HE LACKED THE STRENGTH TO LEAD THE NATION IN WAR. HE HAD ALSO BEEN FORBIDDEN BY THE LORD TO ENTER CANAAN BECAUSE OF AN EARLIER ACT OF UNBELIEF (NUM. 20:1–13). HOWEVER, GOD’S PROGRAM FOR THE NATION DID NOT DEPEND ON ANY ONE HUMAN LEADER. IT DEPENDED ONLY ON GOD’S POWER TO FULFILL HIS OWN COVENANTAL PROMISES. HE WOULD DESTROY THE CANAANITE NATIONS WHEN ISRAEL ATTACKED UNDER JOSHUA’S LEADERSHIP. IN LIGHT OF THIS FACT AND GOD’S PAST FAITHFULNESS (WHAT HE DID TO SIHON AND OG, DEUT. 31:4), MOSES CHARGED THE NATION TO BE OBEDIENT (DO TO THEM ALL THAT I HAVE COMMANDED YOU, V. 5) AND FEARLESS (BE STRONG AND COURAGEOUS AND NOT … AFRAID OR TERRIFIED, V. 6; CF. 1:21, 29). THEY COULD TAKE COMFORT IN THE FACT THAT THE LORD WOULD ALWAYS BE WITH THEM. 31:7–8. AFTER THE CHARGE TO THE PEOPLE (VV. 1–6) MOSES COMMISSIONED JOSHUA AS THE LORD HAD TOLD HIM (3:28). MOSES HAD PREVIOUSLY REMINDED THE PEOPLE OF GOD’S DECISION TO REPLACE HIM WITH JOSHUA (1:38), BUT THE REPETITION HERE IN THE PRESENCE OF ALL ISRAEL EMPHASIZED BOTH GOD’S AND MOSES’ APPROVAL OF JOSHUA. THIS HELPED FACILITATE THE TRANSITION TO THE NEW LEADERSHIP. MOSES THEN GAVE JOSHUA ALMOST THE SAME CHARGE HE HAD JUST GIVEN THE PEOPLE: BE STRONG AND COURAGEOUS (CF. 31:23; JOSH. 1:6, 9) AND NOT … AFRAID OR DISCOURAGED (CF. JOSH. 1:9; 8:1).**

**THE READING OF THE LAW (31:9–13)**

**31:9–13. AS THE VASSAL TREATIES OF THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST CONTAINED PROVISIONS FOR THEIR READING IN PUBLIC SO DID THE MOSAIC COVENANT. THIS LAW (V. 9) PROBABLY MEANS THE ENTIRE BOOK OF DEUTERONOMY, THOUGH THE TRANSLATION OF THE PHRASE HAS BEEN DEBATED. THE LAW AND ITS PUBLIC READING WERE TRUSTED TO THE PRIESTS, ONE OF WHOSE FUNCTIONS WAS TO TEACH THE LAW TO THE PEOPLE. THE PRIESTS WERE TO READ THE LAW PUBLICLY AT THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES (SEPTEMBER–OCTOBER; SEE COMMENTS ON 16:13–15) IN THE YEAR OF CANCELING DEBTS WHICH CAME EVERY SEVEN YEARS (SEE COMMENTS ON 15:1–11). ONLY THE MEN WERE REQUIRED TO MAKE THE PILGRIMAGE TO THE CENTRAL SANCTUARY FOR THE MAJOR FEASTS (CF. 16:16), THOUGH FAMILY MEMBERS OFTEN WENT ALONG. BUT EVEN THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN WERE TO ATTEND THIS SPECIAL CEREMONY EVERY SEVEN YEARS. THIS EXPERIENCE WAS IMPORTANT FOR TWO REASONS. FIRST, IT WAS RARE FOR AN INDIVIDUAL TO POSSESS A COPY OF THE SCRIPTURES. A PERSON GAINED A KNOWLEDGE OF THE SCRIPTURES THROUGH BEING TAUGHT BY HIS PARENTS AND THE PRIESTS AND THROUGH ITS PUBLIC READING AT TIMES LIKE THIS. SO, THE PUBLIC READING OF THE LAW WAS OF GREAT SIGNIFICANCE. SECOND, THE EXPERIENCE OF THE PILGRIMAGE TO THE CENTRAL SANCTUARY—WHICH MEANT TRUSTING GOD FOR THEIR HOMES LEFT BEHIND AND FOR THE JOURNEY AHEAD—REENACTED SOMETHING OF THE ORIGINAL EXODUS FROM EGYPT. IT WAS AN IDEAL TIME TO RECEIVE THE WORD IN A SPIRIT OF FAITH SO THAT THEY MIGHT LEARN TO FEAR THE LORD (SEE COMMENTS ON 4:10) AND TO FOLLOW CAREFULLY ALL THE … LAW. “FOLLOW CAREFULLY” IS AN ADMONITION OCCURRING FREQUENTLY IN THE LATTER CHAPTERS OF THIS BOOK (16:12; 17:19; 19:9; 24:8; 28:1, 13, 15, 58; 29:9; 31:12). THIS REPETITION SHOWS MOSES’ CONCERN FOR STRICT OBEDIENCE. CHILDREN TOO WOULD BENEFIT FROM THIS FOR THEY ALSO, BY HEARING IT, WOULD LEARN TO FEAR THE LORD.**

**THE COMMISSIONING OF JOSHUA BY THE LORD (31:14–23)**

**31:14. THE FORMAL COMMISSIONING OF JOSHUA IS MENTIONED HERE AND ALSO AT THE END OF THIS SECTION (V. 23), THUS PROVIDING A FRAMEWORK FOR THE LORD’S PREDICTION OF ISRAEL’S REBELLION (VV. 15–22). THAT IN TURN SERVED AS AN EXTENDED INTRODUCTION TO THE SONG OF MOSES (31:30–32:43). WHEREAS MOSES’ COMMISSION OF JOSHUA HAD BEEN PUBLIC (31:7–8), THIS ONE WAS PRIVATE WITH ONLY MOSES AND JOSHUA APPEARING BEFORE THE LORD AT THE TENT OF MEETING, THE TABERNACLE. 31:15–22. AFTER A LIFE OF SERVICE TO THE NATION MOSES HEARD SADDENING NEWS FROM THE LORD … THESE PEOPLE WILL SOON PROSTITUTE THEMSELVES TO THE FOREIGN GODS OF THE LAND THEY ARE ENTERING. EVEN THOUGH MOSES HAD REPEATEDLY WARNED THEM OF THE DANGERS OF IDOLATRY AND OF THE NEED TO OBEY THE STIPULATIONS OF THE COVENANT, STILL THE LORD KNEW THEY WOULD SUCCUMB. IN RESPONSE TO THEIR DEFECTION GOD IN HIS ANGER (CF. 29:20, 24) WOULD WITHDRAW HIS FACE (PRESENCE) FROM THEM. AS A RESULT, WHEN DISASTERS WOULD BEFALL THE NATION, THEY WOULD FIND NO RELIEF (31:17–18). HOWEVER, EVEN IN THEIR REBELLION THEY WOULD FIND THE GRACE OF GOD. IN THE SONG THAT MOSES WOULD TEACH THEM THEY WOULD FIND THE REASON FOR THEIR JUDGMENTS AND THE PATH OF REPENTANCE (VV. 19–22). THE SONG WOULD ALSO SERVE AS A WARNING OF THE JUDGMENT TO COME FOR APOSTASY. GOD IS FULLY AWARE OF THE TENDENCY OF THE HUMAN HEART TO STRAY FROM HIM: I KNOW WHAT THEY ARE DISPOSED TO DO. 31:23. IN SPITE OF THIS PREDICTED REBELLION THE LORD FORMALLY COMMISSIONED JOSHUA, GIVING HIM A CHARGE (BE STRONG AND COURAGEOUS; CF. V. 7; JOSH. 1:6, 8) AND ASSURING HIM OF SUCCESS WITH THE PROMISE, I MYSELF WILL BE WITH YOU.**

**THE LAW TO BE DEPOSITED BESIDE THE ARK (31:24–29)**

**31:24–29. THE BOOK WITH THE WORDS OF THIS LAW (V. 24; CF. THIS BOOK OF THE LAW, V. 26) REFERS TO DEUTERONOMY. IT WAS TO BE PLACED BESIDE THE ARK, NOT IN IT. ONLY THE TEN COMMANDMENTS WERE PLACED IN THE ARK (CF. EX. 25:16 WITH EX. 31:18; ALSO NOTE 1 KINGS 8:9). MOSES’ ANGRY WORDS TO THE PEOPLE (DEUT. 31:27–29) REFLECTED BOTH HIS RIGHTEOUS INDIGNATION AND HIS DISAPPOINTMENT IN THEM AFTER HEARING GOD’S PREDICTION OF THEIR FUTURE APOSTASY (V. 16). SINCE MOSES KNEW FROM EXPERIENCE THAT THEY WERE REBELLIOUS AND STIFF-NECKED (CF. 9:6, 13; 10:16), HE KNEW THAT AFTER HE WAS DEAD, THEY WOULD CONTINUE TO BE REBELLIOUS AND WOULD EVEN BECOME UTTERLY CORRUPT (PROBABLY BY IDOL-WORSHIP; CF. 4:16, 25; 9:12). AS A RESULT, GOD IN HIS ANGER WOULD BRING DISASTER ON THEM.**

**THE SONG OF MOSES (31:30–32:43)**

**THE PROSE INTRODUCTION (31:30)**

**31:30. THE SONG OF MOSES (CF. VV. 19, 21) WAS TO BE TAUGHT TO ISRAEL FOR USE IN THE COVENANT-RENEWAL CEREMONY. THUS, IT IS AN INTEGRAL PART OF DEUTERONOMY (WHICH DEALT WITH THE RENEWAL OF THE COVENANT IN THE PLAINS OF MOAB), NOT MERELY AN APPENDIX TO MOSES’ FIFTH BOOK. THOUGH THE SONG IS NOT PROPHETIC IT DOES HAVE PROGNOSTIC OVERTONES. ISRAEL’S FUTURE IS DEPICTED IN RATHER GLOOMY TERMS FOR HER NEWLY ACQUIRED WEALTH WOULD LEAD HER INTO APOSTASY. HOWEVER, AFTER SHE UNDERWENT SEVERE JUDGMENT FROM THE LORD, HE IN COMPASSION WOULD DELIVER HIS PEOPLE AND TAKE VENGEANCE ON THEIR ENEMIES. SO, IN SINGING THIS SONG THE ISRAELITES WOULD BE ACKNOWLEDGING TWO THINGS: (A) THEIR OBLIGATION TO OBEY THE LORD, AND (B) THE RIGHTEOUS AND CERTAIN CHARACTER OF THEIR JUDGMENT IF THEY FELL INTO APOSTASY.**

**THE POETIC INTRODUCTION (32:1–3)**

**32:1–3. THE APPEAL TO THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH MEANT THAT THE SONG HAD SIGNIFICANCE FOR THE ENTIRE CREATED ORDER. ANYONE WHO FOLLOWED THE TEACHING OF MOSES IN THIS SONG AND ALL OF DEUTERONOMY WOULD BECOME FRUITFUL AND PROSPEROUS IN THE WAY RAIN AND DEW REFRESH THE NEW GRASS AND TENDER PLANTS. THE CONTENT OF THAT TEACHING WAS A PROCLAMATION OF THE NAME OF THE LORD, THAT IS, A DESCRIPTION OF HIS CHARACTER AND WORKS. THUS, ANY ISRAELITE WHO GAVE SERIOUS CONSIDERATION TO THE CHARACTER AND WORK OF GOD, THEREBY EVIDENCING HIS TRUST IN HIM, COULD EXPECT TO ENJOY A BLESSED LIFE.**

**A FAITHFUL GOD AND A SEXUALLY CORRUPT PEOPLE (32:4–9)**

**32:4. THE DESCRIPTION OF GOD GIVEN IN THIS VERSE CONTRASTS STRONGLY WITH THE FOLLOWING DESCRIPTION OF HIS PEOPLE (VV.5–9). HE IS THE ROCK (CF. VV. 15, 18, 30–31; 2 SAM. 22:2–3; PS. 18:2; HAB. 1:12). THIS MEANS THAT GOD IS STABLE AND PERMANENT. SO, THE ONLY STABILITY IN LIFE IS IN CLINGING TO HIM, THE GREAT ROCK. HIS WORKS (ACTIONS) ARE PERFECT (CF. 2 SAM. 22:31) AND HE IS FAIR (JUST) IN ALL HIS DEALINGS WITH MANKIND. UNLIKE THE GODS OF THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST WHOSE FOLLOWERS BELIEVED THEY WERE OFTEN IMMORAL AND CAPRICIOUS THE LORD CAN ALWAYS BE COUNTED ON. HE IS FAITHFUL (CF. DEUT. 7:9) AND ALWAYS DOES WHAT IS MORALLY RIGHT (HE DOES NO WRONG). 32:5–9. IN CONTRAST WITH GOD’S FAITHFULNESS AND RIGHTEOUSNESS, HIS PEOPLE HAD BECOME SO WARPED THAT THEY BORE NO FAMILY RESEMBLANCE TO THEIR FATHER. THEY COULD ALMOST ALWAYS BE COUNTED ON TO DO WRONG. THE DEPTH OF THE CONTRAST WAS EMPHASIZED BY REMINDING THE PEOPLE THAT THE LORD (STEPHEN YAHWEH) WAS THEIR CREATOR (V. 6), THAT IS, HE FORMED THE PEOPLE INTO A NATION AT THE EXODUS (CF. V. 9). SO, THE PEOPLE WERE DOUBLY FOOLISH IN ACTING SO CORRUPTLY (CF. 31:29). FIRST, THEY FLOUTED THE GRACE OF THEIR GOD, AND SECOND, THEY FORGOT ABOUT HIS POWER. FOR IF HE COULD MAKE THEM INTO A NATION, HE COULD ALSO UNMAKE THEM. IF THE PEOPLE DOUBTED THAT HE WAS THEIR CREATOR ALL THEY HAD TO DO WAS LOOK BACK INTO THEIR HISTORY (REMEMBER THE DAYS OF OLD, V. 7). THE CHALLENGE TO REMEMBER IS GIVEN 16 TIMES IN DEUTERONOMY, STARTING IN 4:10 AND CONCLUDING HERE. THE ELDERS COULD EXPLAIN TO THEM THAT GOD HAD SET UP THE BOUNDARIES … OF ISRAEL, MAKING ISRAEL HIS PEOPLE AND INHERITANCE (I.E., OWNING THEM AS HIS), AND THAT HE WAS ABSOLUTELY SOVEREIGN AS THE MOST-HIGH OVER ALL NATIONS.**

**THE LORD’S GOODNESS IN CREATING ISRAEL (32:10–14)**

**32:10–14. THE DESCRIPTION OF THE LORD AS ISRAEL’S “FATHER” AND “CREATOR” (V. 6) IS ENLARGED IN THESE VERSES. THE DESERT LAND PROBABLY REFERS TO EGYPT RATHER THAN THE WILDERNESS. EGYPT WAS A BARREN AND HOWLING WASTE IN THE NATION’S EXPERIENCE. ALSO, IN COMPARISON WITH THE PROMISED LAND, WHICH FLOWED WITH MILK AND HONEY, EGYPT WAS LIKE A DESERT. THERE IN THAT “DESERT” PHARAOH TRIED TO SLAY THE FIRSTBORN OF ISRAEL, BUT GOD SHIELDED … AND CARED FOR THEM. GOD GUARDED ISRAEL AS A PERSON AUTOMATICALLY GUARDS THE APPLE (PUPIL; CF. PS. 17:8; PROV. 7:2) OF HIS EYE (CF. ZECH. 2:8). THE METAPHOR OF THE EAGLE SPEAKS OF GOD’S WISE AND LOVING PARENTAL CARE. AS AN EAGLE MUST FORCE ITS YOUNG OUT OF THE NEST IF THEY ARE TO LEARN TO FLY AND FEND FOR THEMSELVES SO THE LORD … LED HIS PEOPLE INTO THE HARSH LIFE OF EGYPTIAN BONDAGE AND AFTERWARD THROUGH WILDERNESS WANDERINGS THAT THEY MIGHT BECOME STRONG. AND LIKE AN EAGLE, THE LORD REMAINED READY TO “CATCH THEM” WHEN NECESSARY. THE NEXT TWO VERSES BECAME PROPHETIC OF THE CONQUEST. ISRAEL RODE ON THE HEIGHTS OF THE LAND AND ENJOYED THE PROSPERITY OF THE PROMISED LAND (DEUT. 32:13B–14). HONEY FROM THE ROCK AND OIL FROM THE FLINTY CRAG SUGGEST THAT EVEN THE MOST BARREN PLACES WOULD BECOME FERTILE. GOD’S GOODNESS WAS ESPECIALLY SEEN IN HIS PROVIDING VARIED AND RICH FOOD AND DRINK, INCLUDING CURDS … MILK … LAMBS … GOATS … RAMS OF BASHAN (A FERTILE AREA EAST OF THE SEA OF KINNERETH, LATER CALLED THE SEA OF GALILEE), WHEAT, AND WINE.**

**ISRAEL’S PROSPERITY---WEALTH & HEALTH LED TO HER SEXUAL APOSTASY (32:15–18)**

**32:15. MANY BELIEVERS LEARN THAT PROSPERITY IS A MORE DANGEROUS TRIAL THAN ADVERSITY. IN ADVERSE CIRCUMSTANCES A BELIEVER IS REMINDED OF HOW DESPERATELY HE NEEDS GOD’S HELP, BUT IN TIME OF PROSPERITY HE MAY EASILY FORGET GOD. ISRAEL, IRONICALLY REFERRED TO AS JESHURUN (“THE UPRIGHT ONE”; CF. NIV MARG. AND 33:5, 26), ABANDONED THE LORD, THEIR ONLY HOPE FOR SALVATION, WHEN THEY BECAME PROSPEROUS (GREW FAT). THE METAPHOR OF AN ANIMAL KICKING AT ITS OWNER SUGGESTS THE MINDLESS NATURE OF ISRAEL’S REBELLION AGAINST GOD, THEIR ROCK (CF. COMMENTS ON 32:4). 32:16–17. THE NATION’S APOSTASY TOOK SHAPE IN THE WORSHIP OF IDOLS (CF. V. 21) WHICH MEANT THEY ACTUALLY SACRIFICED TO DEMONS (CF. PS. 106:37). DEMONIC CONTROL OR INFLUENCE MAY, IN FACT, HELP EXPLAIN THE POWERFUL HOLD THAT IDOLATRY EXERCISED OVER PEOPLE IN THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST AND ISRAEL IN PARTICULAR AT DIFFERENT TIMES IN HER HISTORY. THE APOSTLE PAUL MAY HAVE BEEN THINKING OF DEUTERONOMY 32:16–17 WHEN HE WROTE, “THE SACRIFICES OF PAGANS ARE OFFERED TO DEMONS, NOT TO GOD, AND I DO NOT WANT YOU TO BE PARTICIPANTS WITH DEMONS” (1 COR. 10:20). GOD IS JEALOUS (CF. DEUT. 4:24; 5:9; 6:15; 32:21) IN THE SENSE THAT HE IS ZEALOUS TO PROTECT THE HONOR THAT BELONGS TO HIM ALONE. HE IS AGAINST SHARING HIS PEOPLE’S AFFECTIONS WITH OTHER GODS. 32:18. THE PERVERSITY OF ISRAEL’S APOSTASY WAS UNDERSCORED BY MOSES’ METAPHOR; HE COMPARED THE LORD TO A FATHER (WHO FATHERED YOU) AND A MOTHER (WHO GAVE YOU BIRTH). SINCE ONLY A MOST PERVERSE PERSON CAN FORGET HIS FATHER’S AND MOTHER’S LOVE, ISRAEL IS OBVIOUSLY SEXUALLY CORRUPT.**

**THE LORD’S JUDGMENT ON ISRAEL (32:19–27)**

**32:19–22. ISRAEL’S APOSTASY (VV. 15–18) PROVOKED GOD TO GREAT ANGER (VV. 19–22), WHICH HE EXPRESSED IN JUDGMENT ON ISRAEL. STEPHEN YAHWEH’S ANGER AGAINST THE APOSTASY OF HIS SONS AND DAUGHTERS (V. 19) WAS NOT THE SELFISH ANGER OF ONE WHO FELT SLIGHTED BY TOO LITTLE ATTENTION. INSTEAD IT WAS THE RIGHTEOUS INDIGNATION OF A HOLY AND GRACIOUS GOD TOWARD CHILDREN WHO ARE UNFAITHFUL AND EVEN PERVERSE (V. 20), WHO FOLLOWED WORTHLESS IDOLS (V. 21; CF. V. 16). IN HIS RIGHTEOUS INDIGNATION GOD WITHDREW HIS BENEFICIAL PRESENCE (I WILL HIDE MY FACE FROM THEM, V. 20) AND JUDGED ISRAEL BY A FOREIGN NATION, THOSE WHO ARE NOT A PEOPLE (V. 21). THIS MAY MEAN THAT A NATION WOULD CONQUER ISRAEL WHICH COULD HAVE NEVER DONE SO IF ISRAEL HAD BEEN FOLLOWING THE LORD. ISRAEL HAD MADE GOD JEALOUS (V. 21; CF. COMMENTS ON V. 16) AND ANGRY, SO HE WOULD MAKE THEM ENVIOUS AND ANGRY. THE METAPHOR OF A FIRE (V. 22) POINTS TO THE AWFUL CONSEQUENCES AND COMPREHENSIVE NATURE OF GOD’S JUDGMENT. 32:23–27. VERSES 19–22 DEAL PRIMARILY WITH THE LORD’S ANGER AND REFER TO HIS JUDGMENT IN ONLY GENERAL TERMS; VERSES 23–27 SET FORTH THE DETAILS OF HIS JUDGMENT. THIS DEVASTATING JUDGMENT WOULD TOUCH EVERY AREA OF LIFE. ISRAEL WOULD EXPERIENCE FAMINE … PESTILENCE AND DEADLY PLAGUE … WILD BEASTS, AND VIPERS (V. 24), AND EVEN SEVERE WARS (V. 25) WITH PEOPLE OF ALL AGES BEING KILLED BY THE SWORD (CF. EZEK. 5:17; 14:21). THE DEVASTATION FROM THESE WOULD BE SO GREAT THAT ISRAEL WOULD ALMOST BE ANNIHILATED (DEUT. 32:26). THOUGH THE NATION DESERVED TO BE WIPED OUT, THE LORD WOULD NOT ALLOW IT, FOR IT WOULD CAUSE HER ENEMIES TO QUESTION HIS SOVEREIGNTY AND POWER (V. 27).**

**ISRAEL’S LACK OF DISCERNMENT (32:28–33)**

**32:28–33. GOD’S JUDGMENT ON ISRAEL WOULD REACH HORRIFYING DEPTHS BECAUSE SHE HAD NO DISCERNMENT (V. 28). SHE WAS NOT ABLE TO DISCERN THE CATASTROPHIC END TO WHICH HER REBELLION WAS LEADING (V. 29). YET THE EVIDENCE OF GOD’S SUPERNATURAL JUDGMENT WOULD BE CLEAR (V. 30). A MAN CANNOT DEFEAT 1,000 SOLDIERS SINGLEHANDEDLY OR 10,000 WITH A PARTNER UNLESS THE LORD, HIS ROCK (CF. COMMENTS ON V. 4), HELPS HIM. THIS JUDGMENT COULD NOT BE ATTRIBUTED TO THE GODS OF ISRAEL’S ENEMIES (V. 31). IN FACT, THE ENEMIES WHO WOULD EXECUTE GOD’S JUDGMENT ON ISRAEL WERE AS EVIL AS SODOM AND GOMORRAH, WHICH FURTHER UNDERSCORED THE DEPTH OF EVIL AND SHAME INTO WHICH ISRAEL HAD FALLEN (VV. 32–33). SO WICKED WOULD BE ISRAEL’S ENEMIES (INCLUDING THE ASSYRIANS AND BABYLONIANS) THAT EVEN THEIR GRAPES, FIGURATIVELY SPEAKING, WOULD BE POISONOUS AND THEIR WINE LIKE A SNAKE’S VENOM.**

**GOD’S COMPASSION AND VENGEANCE (32:34–43)**

**32:34–35. THOUGH THE LORD WOULD LET HIS ENEMIES EXECUTE JUDGMENT ON ISRAEL, HE WOULD STILL HOLD THOSE ENEMIES ACCOUNTABLE FOR THEIR WICKEDNESS AND REPAY THEM FOR THEIR EVIL (CF. VV. 41, 43). THEY MAY THINK THEMSELVES SAFE FROM GOD’S JUDGMENT SINCE THEY WOULD HAVE DEFEATED GOD’S PEOPLE. BUT GOD’S WAYS AND POWER ARE BEYOND THEIR KNOWLEDGE; IT IS AS IF HE KEPT THEM SEALED … IN … VAULTS. 32:36–38. IN JUDGING ISRAEL’S ENEMIES GOD WOULD HAVE COMPASSION ON ISRAEL. THE STATEMENT THE LORD WILL JUDGE HIS PEOPLE MEANS THAT HE WOULD JUDGE FOR THEM (I.E., VINDICATE THEM). HOWEVER, ISRAEL WOULD NOT EXPERIENCE HIS COMPASSION TILL THEY RELINQUISHED ALL TRUST IN THEIR OWN EFFORTS (WHEN … THEIR STRENGTH IS GONE) AND IN THE FALSE GODS IN WHOM THEY TOOK REFUGE. MOSES IRONICALLY CALLED ON ISRAEL TO TURN FOR HELP TO THE FALSE GODS, KNOWING, OF COURSE, THEY WOULD BE UNABLE TO HELP ISRAEL. 32:39–43. GOD’S GOAL IN JUDGING ISRAEL WAS NOT TO ANNIHILATE HER. IT WAS TO BRING HER TO THE POINT WHERE SHE UNDERSTOOD THAT THERE IS NO GOD BESIDES THE LORD AND THAT HE ALONE HAS POWER OVER DEATH AND LIFE (V. 39). GOD’S LIFTING HIS HAND WAS THE GESTURE USED IN TAKING AN OATH (CF. GEN. 14:22; EX. 6:8; NEH. 9:15; PS. 106:26; EZEK. 20:5). WHEN ISRAEL WOULD COME TO THIS REALIZATION GOD WOULD TAKE VENGEANCE ON HIS ADVERSARIES (DEUT. 32:41, 43; CF. V. 35). SINCE ANOTHER NATION WOULD BE USED BY GOD TO DEFEAT ISRAEL’S ENEMIES, GOD SAID THEIR SWORD WAS HIS SWORD (VV. 41–42). IN THIS ACT OF VENGEANCE GOD WOULD MAKE ATONEMENT FOR (DELIVER) HIS PEOPLE.**

**PREPARATION FOR MOSES’ DEATH (32:44–52)**

**MOSES’ LAST CHARGE TO THE NATION (32:44–47)**

**32:44–47. AFTER RECITING ALL THE WORDS OF THE SONG (VV. 1–43) MOSES TOLD THE PEOPLE TO CONSIDER SERIOUSLY (TAKE TO HEART) THE WORDS OF THE SONG. IF THEY WOULD MEDITATE ON THE CERTAINTY AND SEVERITY OF THE JUDGMENT THAT THE LORD WOULD SEND ON THEM FOR THEIR APOSTASY, THE SONG OF MOSES COULD SERVE AS A POWERFUL DETERRENT TO FUTURE REBELLION. THE THREAT OF THE LORD’S RETRIBUTIVE JUSTICE WAS GIVEN FOR THEIR SPIRITUAL HEALTH. A HEALTHY FEAR OF THE JUDGMENT SET FORTH IN THE SONG WOULD ALSO ENABLE THEM TO TEACH THEIR CHILDREN THE NEED TO OBEY … THE WORDS OF THIS LAW. ONCE AGAIN MOSES CONCLUDED WITH A REMINDER THAT THEIR EXISTENCE, PROSPERITY, AND LONGEVITY (CF. 5:16; 6:2; 11:9; 25:15) DEPENDED ON THEIR OBEDIENCE TO GOD’S COMMANDS.**

**GOD’S COMMAND FOR MOSES TO ASCEND MOUNT NEBO (32:48–52)**

**32:48–52. MOUNT NEBO WAS ONE OF THE MORE PROMINENT PEAKS IN THE ABARIM RANGE IN MOAB; IT OVERLOOKED THE NORTH END OF THE DEAD SEA. IT WAS HERE OUTSIDE THE PROMISED LAND THAT MOSES WOULD DIE, THOUGH GOD GRACIOUSLY ALLOWED HIM TO SEE THE LAND … FROM A DISTANCE (V. 52) BEFORE HE DIED. THE REASON FOR THIS DISCIPLINE IS RECORDED IN NUMBERS 20:1–13. GOD HAD COMMANDED MOSES TO SPEAK TO A ROCK IN ORDER TO BRING FORTH WATER FOR THE PEOPLE WHO WERE GRUMBLING AGAINST HIM AND AARON. MOSES DISOBEYED THE LORD BY HITTING THE ROCK TWICE INSTEAD OF SPEAKING TO IT (NUM. 20:11), AND BY ARROGANTLY SUGGESTING THAT HE AND AARON, NOT THE LORD, HAD BROUGHT FORTH THE WATER. FOR THIS ACT OF UNBELIEF AND FAILURE TO GIVE GOD GLORY (TO UPHOLD HIS HOLINESS) BEFORE THE NATION, MOSES FORFEITED HIS RIGHT TO LEAD THE PEOPLE INTO THE PROMISED LAND.**

**THE BLESSING OF MOSES (CHAP. 33)**

**THE PROSE INTRODUCTION (33:1)**

**33:1. THE BLESSING OF MOSES GIVEN HERE JUST BEFORE HIS DEATH (34:1–8) IS WELL SUITED TO THE CONTEXT. IT WAS CUSTOMARY FOR A FATHER TO IMPART A BLESSING JUST BEFORE HIS DEATH (CF. JACOB’S BLESSING, GEN. 49). MOSES, LEADER OF THE EXODUS AND THE MEDIATOR OF THE SINAITIC COVENANT, WAS IN A SENSE ISRAEL’S “FATHER.” LEVI IS OFTEN OMITTED IN THE OLD TESTAMENT LISTS OF TRIBES. HERE THE TRIBE OF SIMEON, WHICH LATER WAS ABSORBED BY JUDAH (JOSH. 19:1–9), IS OMITTED. LIKE MOSES’ PRECEDING SONG (DEUT. 32:1–43) HIS BLESSING IS GIVEN IN POETIC FORM. CHAPTER 33 IS DIFFICULT IN PLACES TO INTERPRET BECAUSE OF THE USE OF SEVERAL RARE WORDS, UNUSUAL SYNTACTICAL DEVICES, AND VARIOUS TEXTUAL PROBLEMS. THE FOLLOWING EXPOSITION MAINLY FOLLOWS THE NIV TRANSLATION AND DOES NOT DISCUSS THE MORE TECHNICAL MATTERS.**

**MOSES’ PRAISE OF THE LORD (33:2–5)**

**33:2–5. MOSES’ PRAISE OF GOD BEGAN WITH A DESCRIPTION OF THE LORD’S APPEARANCE AT SINAI WHEN HE GAVE THE LAW TO THE PEOPLE THROUGH MOSES. THIS WAS A MAJOR EVENT IN ISRAEL’S HISTORY. TO BECOME A NATION, IT WAS NECESSARY TO HAVE A COMMON PEOPLE (V. 5), A COMMON CONSTITUTION (THE LAW, V. 4), AND A COMMON LAND. THE SOJOURN IN EGYPT MOLDED JACOB’S DESCENDANTS INTO A COMMON PEOPLE, AND THE GIVING OF THE LAW AT SINAI GAVE THEM A COMMON CONSTITUTION. WHEN GOD APPEARED TO MOSES ON MOUNT SINAI IT WAS AS IF HE HAD COME FROM SEIR (EDOM) TO THE NORTHEAST AND FROM MOUNT PARAN (CF. HAB. 3:3), PROBABLY IN THE WILDERNESS OF PARAN NORTH OF SINAI TOWARD SEIR. IN THE AWESOME DISPLAY OF HIS GLORY ON MOUNT SINAI (EX. 19:16–19; 24:15–18) ANGELS (HOLY ONES) WERE PRESENT. MOSES’ WORDS IN DEUTERONOMY 33:3–5 SEEM TO REFLECT THE PEOPLES’ RESPONSE IN PRAISE. THEY ACKNOWLEDGED THE LORD’S LOVE FOR THEM, HIS PEOPLE, AND THE MINISTRY OF THE ANGELS (“THE HOLY ONES”) IN MEDIATING THE LAW (CF. ACTS 7:38, 53; GAL. 3:19; HEB. 2:2). THE PROCLAMATION OF THE LORD’S KINGSHIP OVER JESHURUN (A NAME FOR ISRAEL; CF. NIV MARG. AND DEUT. 32:15; 33:26) LOOKED BACK TO THE NATION’S DELIVERANCE FROM EGYPT AND THE GIVING OF THE LAW (WHEN THE LEADERS AND THE TRIBES ASSEMBLED TO RECEIVE GOD’S COMMANDS). THE LORD’S POSITION AS “KING OVER JESHURUN” MAY ALSO ANTICIPATE HIS GIVING THEM THE LAND OF CANAAN.**

**MOSES’ BLESSINGS ON THE TRIBES (33:6–25)**

**REUBEN (33:6)**

**33:6. THE WISH FOR THE TRIBE OF REUBEN TO LIVE SUGGESTED THAT IT WOULD FACE SOME SPECIAL ADVERSITY OR HAD SOME DEFECT IN CHARACTER THAT MIGHT BRING DISASTER. THE LATTER IS PROBABLY TRUE IN LIGHT OF THE TRIBE’S CHARACTER AS REFLECTED IN JUDGES 5:15–16, AND IN LIGHT OF JACOB’S PRONOUNCEMENT ON REUBEN, “YOU WILL NO LONGER EXCEL” (GEN. 49:4). THE LAST CLAUSE IN DEUTERONOMY 33:6 MAY BE TRANSLATED “LET HIS MEN BE FEW” (CF. NIV MARG.) OR NOR LET HIS MEN BE FEW.**

**JUDAH (33:7)**

**33:7. SINCE JUDAH MARCHED AT THE HEAD OF THE TRIBES (NUM. 2:9) SHE WAS FIRST IN BATTLE. SO, THIS BLESSING WAS ESSENTIALLY A PRAYER FOR JUDAH’S MILITARY SUCCESS BY GOD’S HELP.**

**LEVI (33:8–11)**

**33:8–11. THE THUMMIM AND URIM WERE PROBABLY TWO PRECIOUS STONES USED IN THE CASTING OF LOTS TO RECEIVE DIVINE ANSWERS IN DIFFICULT MATTERS (CF. EX. 28:30 AND SEE COMMENTS THERE; LEV. 8:8; NUM. 27:21; 1 SAM. 28:6; EZRA 2:63; NEH. 7:65). THEY WERE ENTRUSTED TO THE PRIESTLY MEDIATORS, PRIESTS OF THE TRIBE OF LEVI. AT FIRST THE FAITHFULNESS OF LEVI WAS PRAISED IN ITS REPRESENTATIVE MOSES, THE MAN … FAVORED IN LEVI, WHO WAS FAITHFUL AT MASSAH, ALSO CALLED MERIBAH (CF. EX. 17:1–7). THEN THE TRIBE WAS PRAISED COLLECTIVELY (DEUT. 33:9) FOR THEIR IMPARTIAL ADMINISTRATION OF GOD’S JUDGMENT IN THE MATTER OF THE GOLDEN CALF (EX. 32:25–29). THE PRIESTS, OF THE TRIBE OF LEVI, WERE TO TEACH GOD’S PRECEPTS AND LAW TO JACOB (A SYNONYM OF THE NATION ISRAEL; CF. DEUT. 33:28) AND TO OFFICIATE OVER THE WORSHIP IN THE TABERNACLE (V. 11). THE BLESSING IN VERSE 11 WAS A PRAYER FOR SUPERNATURAL ENABLEMENT FOR THE LEVITES’ SUCCESS IN USING THEIR SKILLS IN GOD’S WORK. THE IDENTITY OF LEVI’S FOES IS UNCLEAR.**

**BENJAMIN (33:12)**

**33:12. MOSES’ PRAYER FOR THE SECURITY AND PEACE OF BENJAMIN AS THE BELOVED OF THE LORD SHIELDED BY HIM REFLECTS BENJAMIN’S SPECIAL STATUS AS JACOB’S YOUNGEST AND PARTICULARLY LOVED SON (GEN. 44:20).**

**JOSEPH (33:13–17)**

**33:13–16. MOSES PRAYED FIRST FOR JOSEPH’S MATERIAL PROSPERITY. CROPS WOULD GROW (HIS LAND WOULD BE BLESSED) AS THEY RECEIVED DEW FROM HEAVEN ABOVE AND WATERS … BELOW. THE DEEP WATERS MAY REFER TO WELLS OR TO SPRINGS AND RIVERS DERIVED FROM SUBTERRANEAN WATERS. THE SUN AND THE MOON (LIT., LUNAR “MONTHS,” I.E., SEASONS) WERE ALSO NECESSARY FOR CROP GROWTH. THE GIFTS OF THE ANCIENT MOUNTAINS AND OF THE EVERLASTING HILLS PROBABLY REFER TO THE TIMBER OF THE FORESTS, USED IN BUILDING HOUSES. THE GOOD CROPS ENJOYED BY THIS TRIBE WERE CALLED THE BEST GIFTS OF THE EARTH; THEY WERE GIVEN BY GOD, WHO DWELT IN THE BURNING BUSH (EX. 3). 33:17. MOSES THEN PRAYED FOR THE MILITARY SUCCESS OF JOSEPH, PICTURED LIKE A … BULL OR OX GORING THE NATIONS. THIS TRIBE WAS DIVIDED INTO THE TWO TRIBES OF MANASSEH, JOSEPH’S FIRSTBORN, AND EPHRAIM, HIS YOUNGER SON. THEY WERE THE LARGEST OF THE NORTHERN TRIBES. THOUGH MANASSEH WAS THE OLDER SON, JACOB GAVE EPHRAIM THE BLESSING OF THE FIRSTBORN (GEN. 48:17–20). THAT WAS WHY MOSES MENTIONED EPHRAIM FIRST AND CREDITED TEN-THOUSANDS TO HIM, AND JUST THOUSANDS TO MANASSEH.**

**ZEBULUN AND ISSACHAR (33:18–19)**

**33:18–19. ZEBULUN AND ISSACHAR, MENTIONED TOGETHER HERE, WERE ALSO MENTIONED TOGETHER IN JACOB’S BLESSING (GEN. 49:13–15) AND IN THE SONG OF DEBORAH (JUD. 5:14–15). THE PHRASES, IN YOUR GOING OUT AND IN YOUR TENTS, PROBABLY REFER TO THE PEOPLE’S DAILY LIVES, THAT IS, THEY WERE EQUIVALENT TO “IN YOUR WORK AND IN YOUR HOME.” THE COMMAND TO REJOICE INDICATED THEN THAT THESE TWO TRIBES COULD EXPECT GOD’S BLESSING IN THEIR DAILY LIVES. THE IDENTITY OF THE MOUNTAIN IS UNCERTAIN (POSSIBLY IT WAS MOUNT TABOR WHICH LIES BETWEEN THE TWO TRIBES), BUT THE SOURCE OF THEIR PROSPERITY WAS CLEARLY THE SEAS (IN GEN. 49:13–15 ONLY ZEBULUN IS ASSOCIATED WITH THE SEA). THOUGH NEITHER TRIBE APPARENTLY TOUCHED THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA, ISSACHAR WAS NEAR THE SEA OF KINNERETH (GALILEE), AND ZEBULUN WAS ONLY A FEW MILES FROM THE MEDITERRANEAN; MERCHANTS PROBABLY TRAVERSED BOTH TRIBAL TERRITORIES WITH SEA PRODUCTS.**

**GAD (33:20–21)**

**33:20–21. THE TRANSLATION OF SOME OF THESE LINES IS UNCERTAIN. BUT THE GENERAL SENSE SEEMS TO BE THAT EVEN THOUGH GAD HAD BEEN ALLOTTED ITS TERRITORY EAST OF THE JORDAN, CHOOSING THE BEST LAND (3:12–17), THE TRIBE STILL FOUGHT VALIANTLY (LIKE A LION) IN THE CONQUEST OF CANAAN (CF. JOSH. 22:1–6). IN THIS WAY THE GADITES CARRIED OUT THE LORD’S … WILL.**

**DAN (33:22)**

**33:22. THE METAPHOR OF DAN BEING A LION’S CUB MAY IMPLY A POTENTIAL FOR GREAT STRENGTH. SEVERAL MODERN COMMENTATORS PREFER TO TRANSLATE THE HEBREW WORD RENDERED BASHAN AS “SERPENT.” THE CLAUSE WOULD THEN READ “SPRINGING AWAY FROM THE SERPENT.” THOUGH POTENTIALLY STRONG, DAN STILL WAS TIMID BEFORE A SNAKE. IF THIS IS THE PROPER TRANSLATION THE BLESSING MAY REFLECT JACOB’S EARLIER STATEMENT, “DAN WILL BE A SERPENT” (GEN. 49:17).**

**NAPHTALI (33:23)**

**33:23. THIS BLESSING DESCRIBED THE GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION OF NAPHTALI AS EXTENDING SOUTHWARD TO THE LAKE, PROBABLY THE SEA OF KINNERETH (GALILEE), A FERTILE AREA. LIKE JOSEPH’S SONS EPHRAIM AND MANASSEH (V. 16), AND ASHER (V. 24), THIS TRIBE WOULD ENJOY THE FAVOR OF GOD AND HIS BLESSING.**

**ASHER (33:24–25)**

**33:24–25. THE NAME ASHER MEANS, BLESSED, HAPPY. TO BATHE ONE’S FEET IN OIL RATHER THAN SIMPLY TO ANOINT THEM WOULD BE AN EXTRAVAGANT ACT. THUS, THE TRIBE OF ASHER WOULD EXPERIENCE ABUNDANT FERTILITY AND PROSPERITY. THE BOLTS OF IRON AND BRONZE INDICATE THE TRIBE’S MILITARY SECURITY.**

**MOSES’ CONCLUDING PRAISE OF THE LORD (33:26–29)**

**33:26–29. JESHURUN (LIT., THE UPRIGHT ONE---CF. V. 5; 32:15) WAS A NAME FOR ISRAEL. THE NATION’S GOD IS INCOMPARABLE IN POWER AS THE ONE WHO RIDES ON THE HEAVENS AND THE CLOUDS (33:26). NO MATTER WHAT ADVERSITY ISRAEL WOULD ENCOUNTER, THE LORD COULD BE THERE INSTANTLY WITH POWER TO DELIVER HER. BECAUSE GOD IS ETERNAL AND IS A REFUGE FOR HIS PEOPLE, HIS EVERLASTING ARMS, FIGURATIVELY SPEAKING, WOULD PROTECT ISRAEL IN TIMES OF CALAMITY, AND WOULD DESTROY HER ENEMY (V. 27). HAVING SUCH A WONDERFUL AND POWERFUL GOD THE NATION COULD BE ASSURED OF CONQUERING CANAAN AND THEN OF LIVING FOR A WHILE IN SAFETY AND PROSPERITY (V. 28). IF ISRAEL WOULD ONLY SERVE HER INCOMPARABLE GOD, SHE WOULD BE AN INCOMPARABLE PEOPLE (O ISRAEL! WHO IS LIKE YOU.…?) IN BLESSING (SAVED AND SHIELDED BY GOD) AND INVINCIBLE BEFORE HER ENEMIES (V. 29).**

**THE DEATH (???) OF MOSES (CHAP. 34)**

**MOSES’ VIEWING OF THE PROMISED LAND (34:1–4)**

**34:1–4. MOSES WENT UP ON MOUNT NEBO AS THE LORD TOLD HIM TO DO (3:27; 32:48–50). THE TOP OF PISGAH PROBABLY REFERS TO A RIDGE EXTENDING FROM THE SUMMIT OF MOUNT NEBO. THE PLACES MOSES VIEWED START IN THE NORTH AND FOLLOW TO THE SOUTH IN A COUNTERCLOCKWISE DIRECTION. THOUGH ONE COULD NOT NORMALLY VIEW THE WESTERN SEA (THE MEDITERRANEAN) FROM MOUNT NEBO, PERHAPS MOSES IS SUPERNATURALLY ENABLED BY THE LORD TO DO SO (THERE THE LORD SHOWED HIM THE WHOLE LAND). ZOAR (CF. GEN. 14:2; 19:22–23) MAY HAVE BEEN AT THE SOUTHERN TIP OF THE DEAD SEA. GOD’S MENTION OF THE OATH REMINDED MOSES THAT EVEN THOUGH HE WAS NOT ALLOWED TO LEAD THE PEOPLE INTO THE PROMISED LAND, GOD WOULD STILL BE FAITHFUL TO HIS PROMISE TO THE PATRIARCHS (ABRAHAM, ISAAC, AND JACOB; CF. DEUT. 1:8; 6:10; 9:5, 27; 29:13; 30:20) AND BRING ISRAEL INTO HER NEW LAND.**

**THE DEATH OF MOSES AND SUCCESSION OF JOSHUA (34:5–9)**

**34:5–8. THOUGH MOSES WAS BEING DISCIPLINED FOR HIS ACT OF UNBELIEF (NUM. 20:1–13) BY NOT BEING ALLOWED TO ENTER THE PROMISED LAND, HE DIED IN FAITH AND AS AN HONORED SERVANT OF THE LORD. ADDITIONAL HONOR WAS GIVEN TO MOSES FOR THE LORD HIMSELF BURIED HIM. IT IS POSSIBLE TO TRANSLATE THE CLAUSE HE BURIED HIM AS “HE WAS BURIED” (MEANING THAT MEN, NOT GOD, BURIED HIM; SEE NIV MARG.). BUT THE STATEMENT TO THIS DAY NO ONE KNOWS WHERE HIS GRAVE IS INDICATES THAT EITHER THE LORD ALONE OR THROUGH THE AGENCY OF HIS ANGELS BURIED MOSES. JUDE (V. 9) ALSO SEEMS TO CONFIRM THIS INTERPRETATION. MOSES’ BURIAL SITE, THOUGH UNKNOWN, WAS SOMEWHERE IN MOAB, IN THE VALLEY OPPOSITE BETH PEOR. THIS IS THE VALLEY WHERE THE ISRAELITES CAMPED WHILE MOSES GAVE THEM THE INSTRUCTIONS AND BLESSINGS RECORDED IN DEUTERONOMY 5–33 (CF. 3:29; 4:46). BUT MOSES DID NOT PHYSICALLY DIE, BUT IS CARRIED BY THE LORD, BECAUSE MOSES SHOWS UP IN THE TRANSFIGURATION ON THE MOUNT IN MATTHEW 17:1-13, WHICH MEANS THAT MOSES DID NOT DIE AS SUSPECTED & BUT MAY HAVE STAGED HIS OWN DEATH. MOSES WAS SO SPECIAL THAT HIS LAST MOMENTS ON EARTH WERE SPENT IN INTIMATE FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD WHO THEN PERMITTED NO HUMAN TO TAKE PART IN HIS BURIAL. CONCERNING THE REMARK ABOUT MOSES’ HEALTH, SEE THE COMMENTS ON 31:2. AFTER THE DEATH OF MOSES AT THE AGE OF 120.… THE ISRAELITES MOURNED FOR 30 DAYS; THE NORMAL TIME OF MOURNING A DEAD LOVED ONE IS 7 DAYS (CF. GEN. 50:10). CENTURIES LATER MOSES APPEARED WITH ELIJAH AT CHRIST’S TRANSFIGURATION (MATT 17:1–3). 34:9. THEN JOSHUA … WAS FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT OF WISDOM. THIS ACCOMPANIED MOSES’ COMMISSIONING OF HIM (31:7). “THE SPIRIT OF WISDOM” MAY REFER TO THE HOLY SPIRIT (CF. ISA. 11:2) OR TO JOSHUA’S INNER SPIRIT. EITHER WAY, GOD GAVE JOSHUA SUPERNATURAL SKILL FOR LEADING THE ISRAELITES.**

**THE EPITAPH OF MOSES (34:10–12)**

**34:10–12. MOSES WAS UNIQUE AMONG ALL THE PROPHETS FOR HIS INTIMACY WITH THE LORD (WHOM THE LORD KNEW FACE TO FACE AS A FRIEND; CF. EX. 33:11; NUM. 12:8) AND FOR HIS MIRACULOUS SIGNS AND WONDERS AND MIGHTY POWER AND AWESOME DEEDS (DEUT. 34:11–12). HE INTRODUCED A NEW ERA INTO THE HISTORY OF GOD’S PEOPLE, THE AGE OF THE LAW. THE ISRAELITES WAITED FOR GOD TO RAISE UP THE PROPHET LIKE MOSES (18:15). THUS, THE BOOK ENDS ON A PROPHETIC NOTE LOOKING FORWARD TO THE DAY WHEN “ANOTHER MOSES” WOULD BE GIVEN TO ISRAEL. THAT DAY FINALLY ARRIVED WHEN THE LORD JESUS CHRIST CAME AS A SERVANT BUT ALSO AS THE VERY SON OF GOD, SURPASSING EVEN MOSES (CF. HEB. 3:1–6). HE OFFERED TO TAKE ISRAEL INTO A NEW ERA, THE AGE OF HIS GRACE. THE ISRAELITES CULMINATED CENTURIES OF REBELLION BY REJECTING THAT GRACIOUS OFFER. HOWEVER, THE SONG OF MOSES STILL POINTS FORWARD TO THE DAY WHEN THAT OFFER WILL BE ACCEPTED AND GOD WILL HEAL AND AVENGE HIS PEOPLE (DEUT. 32:36, 43).**

**1:1–9 THE LORD COMMANDS JOSHUA**

**1:1 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND. THE REFERENCE TO ‘THE DEATH OF MOSES’ (1) LINKS THE BOOK OF JOSHUA WITH DT. 34:5 (CF. JDG. 1:1; 2 SA. 1:1; 2 KI. 1:1) AND SIGNALS THE TIME FOR RENEWING THE CONQUEST. MOSES IS CALLED SERVANT OF THE LORD BOTH TO HONOR HIM AND TO LEGITIMIZE HIS INSTRUCTIONS TO POSSESS THE LAND. MOSES RENAMED HOSHEA (MEANING ‘SALVATION’) JOSHUA, WHICH MEANS ‘THE LORD IS SALVATION’ (NU. 13:16). THE NAME LATER BECAME YĒŠÛA WHENCE THE GREEK IĒSOUS, AND THE ENGLISH, ‘JESUS’. JOSHUA’S TITLE, MOSES’ ASSISTANT (CF. 1 SA. 3:1; 1 KI. 19:21), RECALLS THAT JOSHUA HAD BEEN GROOMED FOR THIS LEADERSHIP BY GIFT, TRAINING AND EXPERIENCE (CF. EX. 17:8–15; 24:12–13; NU. 14:6–12; 27:12–23; 32:12; DT. 1:37–38; 34:9). 1:2–9 THE LORD’S COMMAND. THE LORD’S SPEECH ECHOES THOSE OF MOSES IN DEUTERONOMY (CF. V 2 WITH DT. 10:11; V 3 WITH DT. 11:23–24; V 5A WITH DT. 7:24; VS 5B–7A, 9, WITH DT. 31:6–8). VS. 7B–8 RECALL TEXTS IN DEUTERONOMY WHICH IDENTIFY IT AS THE BOOK OF THE LAW AND STRESS THE IMPORTANCE OF MEDITATING ON AND OBEYING THIS LAW (SEE DT. 5:32–33; 30:10). THE PROMISE, AS I WAS WITH MOSES, SO I WILL BE WITH YOU (5), RECALLS GOD’S RESPONSE TO MOSES’ OBJECTION IN EX. 3:12. THE BOOK OF JOSHUA PICKS UP WHERE THE PENTATEUCH LEFT OFF. THE COMMANDS AND PROMISES IN VS 2–9 SET OUT THE COVENANT RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GOD AND HIS PEOPLE. ON GOD’S SIDE, HE CHOSE ISRAEL TO INHERIT THE LAND (6). ON ISRAEL’S SIDE, THEY MUST NOW BY FAITH CLAIM THE GIFT (3–4). IT IS NOT SO MUCH A MATTER OF OBEDIENCE, TO CROSS THE JORDAN, IMPORTANT AS THAT IS, AS A MATTER OF TRUST IN GOD (6–7, 9). HE GIVES THEM REASON TO TRUST: HIS PROMISED PRESENCE WITH THEM (5, 9B). LIKEWISE, THE TRUSTING CHURCH OBEYS ITS LORD’S COMMAND TO EVANGELIZE THE WORLD (MT. 28:18–20). THE COMMAND NOT TO FEAR IS A RULE OF HOLY WAR. 2–5 THE FIRST CHARGE IS TO CROSS THE JORDAN. V 2 READS LITERALLY, ‘NOW ARISE, CROSS …’ (I.E. ‘CROSS IMMEDIATELY, DO NOT DELAY’. CHRIST COMMANDS THE CHURCH: ‘FOLLOW ME’, AND HE TOO ALLOWS NO PROCRASTINATION (CF. LK. 9:59–62). IN V 4 THE OUTMOST BOUNDARIES OF THE LAND ARE DEFINED, THOUGH THE SOUTHERN BOUNDARY IS SKETCHY. ONLY DURING THE REIGN OF SOLOMON DID ISRAEL CONTROL SUCH AN AREA (SEE 13:1–7). THE DESERT REFERS TO THE EASTERN DESERT THAT BEGINS IN TRANS-JORDAN. LEBANON IS INCLUDED IN THE PROMISED LAND IN JOS. 13:5. 6 THE SECOND CHARGE IS TO INHERIT THE LAND. INHERIT RECALLS GOD’S GRANT OF LAND TO THE PATRIARCHS AS A REWARD FOR THEIR FAITHFUL SERVICE. NOW JOSHUA MUST CONQUER (CHS. 1–12) AND DISTRIBUTE IT (CHS. 13–21). 7–9 THE THIRD CHARGE, TO BE COURAGEOUS AND MEDITATE ON THE LAW VS 7–8, SHOWS THAT POSSESSING THE LAND DEPENDS ON FAITH’S OBEDIENCE TO THE BOOK OF THE LAW. TRUST AND OBEDIENCE KISS, NOT FIGHT (CF. ROM. 1:5; 16:26; JAS. 2:14–26). THOUGH JOSHUA WAS GROOMED FOR THIS WAR, OBEDIENCE, NOT MIGHT, GUARANTEED THE SUCCESS OF THE OPERATION. CHRISTIANS UNDER THE NEW COVENANT HAVE THE TWO-FOLD ADVANTAGE THAT CHRIST SATISFIED THE LAW’S DEMANDS AND PROMISES (MT. 5:17; ROM. 3:21–26) AND THROUGH THE SPIRIT HAS WRITTEN THE LAW UPON THEIR HEARTS (2 COR. 3:3–6; HEB. 8:7–13; 10:15–18).**

**1:10–15 JOSHUA’S CHARGE TO THE PEOPLE**

**JOSHUA’S COMMANDS, BOTH TO THE OFFICERS (10–11) AND TO THE EASTERN TRIBES (12–15), ECHO DEUTERONOMY. COMPARE V 11 WITH E.G. DT. 1:8; 4:1; 6:18; 8:1; 9:1, AND, NOTE THAT AS THE TEXT ITSELF STATES, JOSHUA’S INSTRUCTION TO THE EASTERN TRIBES IS TAKEN ALMOST WORD FOR WORD FROM MOSES’ COMMAND (DT 3:18–20; CF. NU. 32).**

**1:10–11 CHARGE TO THE OFFICERS.**

**THE PATTERN OF DIVINE COMMAND FOLLOWED NOW BY JOSHUA’S WHOLEHEARTED AND CAREFUL OBEDIENCE SHOWS HOW A HOLY WAR SHOULD BE CONDUCTED. THE NARRATOR’S CONCERN WITH SPIRITUAL PREPARATION, THE REAL CAUSE OF VICTORY, NOT WITH MARTIAL DETAILS, THE APPARENT CAUSE OF SUCCESS, IS REFLECTED IN THE LACK OF SPECIFICITY ABOUT SUPPLIES IN V 11 (COVERING EVERYTHING NEEDED FOR VIOLENT WAR) AND THE LACK OF DETAIL IN THE COMMAND. ISRAEL, NOW RECKONED AS AN ARMY CAMP, TOOK THREE DAYS (I.E. PART OF TODAY, TOMORROW, AND PART OF THE NEXT DAY) TO PREPARE ITSELF FOR BATTLE BEFORE BREAKING CAMP AT SHITTIM (11; CF. MI. 6:5). IT TAKES TIME TO READY ONESELF FOR BATTLE (CF. GAL. 1:17–18). THESE THREE DAYS PRIOR TO BREAKING UP THE CAMP, AT THE EARLIEST 6 NISAN (APRIL) (SEE 4:19), ARE NOT THE SAME AS THE THREE DAYS AFTER THEY HAD LEFT SHITTIM AND CAMPED AT THE JORDAN ITSELF (CF. 2:16, 22; 3:2).**

**CANAAN BEFORE THE CONQUEST.**

**1:12–15 CHARGE TO THE EASTERN TRIBES.**

**GOD PROMISED HIS PEOPLE REST, THAT IS, PEACE FROM ENEMY ATTACKS, AFTER TAKING POSSESSION OF THE LAND (13–15). THE PROMISE OF REST COMES OUT OF THE COVENANT RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD (EX. 33:12–16). THE REST INTO WHICH MOSES AND JOSHUA LED ISRAEL PREFIGURES THE FINAL AND PERFECT REST INTO WHICH JESUS LEADS HIS FAITHFUL CHURCH (HEB. 4:1–11).**

**1:16–18 THE PEOPLE’S RESPONSE TO JOSHUA**

**THE PEOPLE RESPONDED WITH WHOLEHEARTED FAITH AND OBEDIENCE (WHATEVER … WHEREVER), GUARANTEEING THE CONTINUED SUCCESS OF THE CONQUEST. THEY PROMISED TO PUT THE UNFAITHFUL TO DEATH AND THEMSELVES COMMANDED JOSHUA, BE STRONG AND COURAGEOUS!**

**2:1–5:15 ENTRY INTO THE LAND**

**THIS SECTION SHOWS HOW THE LORD SINGLE-HANDEDLY BROUGHT ISRAEL INTO THE LAND AND HOW THE NATION WAS PREPARED SPIRITUALLY FOR THE BATTLES AHEAD.**

**2:1–24 THE SPIES REPORT, ‘CANAAN DEFEATED’**

**ALTHOUGH THE SPIES WERE SENT OUT TO HELP JOSHUA PLAN HIS MILITARY CAMPAIGN, THE CHIEF VALUE OF THEIR REPORT WAS TO SHOW CANAAN’S SPIRITUAL UNPREPAREDNESS. 2:1 SPIES SENT OUT. THE NAME SHITTIM (LIT. ‘THE ACACIAS’) SUGGESTS A HARSH ENVIRONMENT. PERHAPS IN AN ATTEMPT TO AVOID AROUSING SUSPICION AS FOREIGNERS, THE SPIES WHOM JOSHUA SENT SECRETLY ENTERED THE HOUSE OF A COMMON PROSTITUTE, WHO DOUBTLESS HAD MANY VISITORS. NOTE THAT ALTHOUGH THE HEBREW READS LITERALLY ‘SLEPT’, NOT ‘STAYED’, THE NARRATOR POINTEDLY SAYS THEY SLEPT THERE, NOT WITH HER (1), THOUGH THIS WAS THE ASSUMPTION OF THE MEN OF JERICHO. THE SAME VERB IS TRANSLATED ‘LAY DOWN’ IN V 8 WITH NO SEXUAL CONNOTATION. CLEARLY THE AUTHOR DID NOT INTEND TO SAY THAT THEY HAD SEX WITH RAHAB. 2:2–7 RAHAB CONCEALS THE SPIES. RECONNAISSANCE, ESPIONAGE, AND DECEPTION ARE NECESSARY IN WAR, EVEN HOLY WAR (SEE 1; CF. JDG. 7:9–16). RAHAB HID THE SPIES AND MISLED THE KING OF JERICHO’S SCOUTS WITH LIES (2–7). SHE CLANDESTINELY LET THE SPIES ESCAPE AND INSTRUCTED THEM HOW TO AVOID DETECTION BY HIDING IN THE MOUNTAINS PITTED WITH CAVES TO THE WEST OF THE CITY—THE OPPOSITE OF WHAT MIGHT BE EXPECTED BY A POSSE (16–17). THE DECEPTIONS BY JOSHUA AND RAHAB RAISE EYEBROWS. HOW CAN THEY BE A LEGITIMATE PART OF HOLY WAR? (CF. MT. 5:33–37; EPH. 4:14–15). INDIRECT ANALOGIES OF SITUATIONS WHERE DECEPTION AND DISINFORMATION ARE RIGHT AND NECESSARY MAY HELP. HUNTERS USE TRAPS AND BLINDS; FISHERMEN, LURES AND BAIT. IN SPORT, PLAYERS WILL OFTEN TRY TO TRICK THEIR OPPONENTS BY PUTTING SPIN ON A BALL OR ADOPTING DECEPTIVE POSTURES. IN CHESS A PLAYER DECEIVES HIS OPPONENT INTO TAKING HIS WEAKER PIECE IN ORDER TO CAPTURE HIS STRONGER ONE; IN POKER ONE KEEPS A ‘STRAIGHT FACE’. GOD WAS KIND TO THE MIDWIVES FOR DECEIVING PHARAOH (EX. 1:19–20), AND ‘BY FAITH MOSES’ PARENTS HID HIM FOR THREE MONTHS AFTER HE WAS BORN’ (HEB. 11:23). IN ALL THESE SITUATIONS WE DO NOT ACCUSE THE PARTICIPANTS OF ACTING ACCORDING TO THE UNETHICAL PRINCIPLE THAT A RIGHT END JUSTIFIES A WRONG MEANS. RATHER, WE RECOGNIZE THAT IN SUCH SITUATIONS, DECEPTION IS LEGITIMATE, NOT WRONG. SO ALSO, THE OT RECOGNIZES THAT IN WAR INTELLIGENCE, COUNTER-INTELLIGENCE AND DECOYS ARE ALL PART OF ‘THE GAME’. JOSHUA SET AN AMBUSH (JOS. 8:9), AND DAVID USED HUSHAI AS A MOLE IN CONJUNCTION WITH A NETWORK OF SPIES (2 SA. 15:32–37; 16:15–22). IN THE NT PAUL ESCAPED THE JEWS UNDER THE COVER OF NIGHT (ACTS 9:23–26), AND THE ANGEL TOOK ADVANTAGE OF THE SLEEPING SOLDIERS TO RELEASE PETER FROM HEROD’S CLUTCHES (ACTS 12:6–10). IN MOST SITUATIONS, HOWEVER, LIES ARE WRONG (PR. 30:7–8), AND TRUTH IS REQUIRED (EPH. 4:15). THE BELIEVER MUST LISTEN TO GOD’S SPIRIT THROUGH SCRIPTURE AND CONSCIENCE SO AS NOT TO RATIONALIZE THE SITUATION. 2:8–14 COVENANT WITH RAHAB. RAHAB’S NIGHT TALK WITH THE SPIES DISCLOSED HER FAITH (9A, 11B), IN CONTRAST TO THE CANAANITES’ FEAR (9B–11A). ISRAEL’S TRIUMPHS IN CONTRAST TO THE CANAANITES’ PANIC CONVINCED HER THAT THE LORD HAD GIVEN ISRAEL THE LAND (9) AND THAT HE IS GOD (11; CF. DT. 4:39). TO JUDGE FROM POTTERY IMPORTED INTO PALESTINE AT THIS TIME AND FROM THE INTERNATIONAL DIPLOMACY REFLECTED IN THE AMARNA LETTERS (C. 1350 BC), ISRAEL’S EXODUS AND CONQUEST COULD HAVE BEEN WIDELY REPORTED THROUGHOUT THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD. RAHAB AND THE CANAANITES RESPONDED TO THE SAME REPORTS (10; CF. DT. 2:24–3:11). RAHAB’S FAITH LED TO LIFE, WHILE THE CANAANITES’ UNBELIEF LED TO DEATH (CF. 2 COR. 2:14–16). RAHAB’S REPORT THAT THE HEARTS OF THE CANAANITES WERE MELTING IN FEAR (9) PERSUADED THE SPIES THAT THE LORD HAD DEFEATED THE LAND WITHOUT THEM HAVING TO LIFT A SWORD (24; CF. 1:5; EX. 15:13–16; 23:27; DT. 2:25, 11:25). THE COURAGE OF ISRAEL’S NEW GENERATION OF FIGHTING MEN (1:6–9) CONTRASTED SHARPLY WITH THE PRECEDING, TIMID GENERATION (NU. 13–14; CF. 1 COR. 16:13; 1 JN. 4:4) AFTER HER CONFESSION OF FAITH (9–11), THE FIRST IN THE BIBLE, RAHAB SOUGHT SALVATION WITHIN THE COVENANT COMMUNITY (12–13). IN V 12 KINDNESS (HEB. ḤESED) IS A SHORTHAND WAY OF SAYING ‘UNFAILING HELP TO A NEEDY COVENANT PARTNER’. GOD’S SALVATION IS AVAILABLE TO ALL WHO SEEK HIM. CHARACTERISTICALLY, RAHAB SOUGHT THE SALVATION OF HER ENTIRE FAMILY (SEE 24:15). THE SIGN SHE WANTED WAS THE OATH THE SPIES GAVE IN V 14. THESE CIRCUMCISED MEN ACCEPTED THIS CONVERTED PROSTITUTE INTO THE FULL FELLOWSHIP OF THE COVENANT COMMUNITY, AND WERE EVEN WILLING TO DIE FOR HER AND HER FAMILY. THE OATH WITH THE GIBEONITES IN CH. 9 IS ANOTHER MATTER. THEY HEARD THE FAME OF ISRAEL’S GOD, BUT THEY NEVER CONFESSED HIM AS THEIR LORD. 2:15–16 RAHAB HELPS THE SPIES ESCAPE. LIKE ABRAHAM AND RUTH, RAHAB RENOUNCED HER COUNTRY IN FAVOR OF ISRAEL. IN FACT, SHE RISKED HER LIFE TO BE IDENTIFIED WITH ISRAEL’S GOD (4–7, 15–16). THE NT HONORS THE FAITH (HEB. 11:31) THAT PRODUCED HER GOOD WORKS (JAS. 2:25). HER FAITH EVEN EARNED HER A PLACE IN THE LINEAGE OF JESUS (MT. 1:5). 2:17–21 COVENANT STIPULATIONS. THE DISTINCTION THE SPIES MADE BETWEEN FAITHFUL RAHAB AND THE DISOBEDIENT CANAANITES FINDS ITS FINAL FULFILMENT IN THE LAST JUDGMENT (MT. 25:31–46; REV. 20:11–15). AS ISRAEL NEEDED THE SCARLET BLOOD OF THE LAMB ON THEIR DOOR-FRAMES TO DISTINGUISH THEM FROM THE CONDEMNED EGYPTIANS (EX. 12:7, 13), SO RAHAB NEEDED THIS SCARLET CORD THAT THE ISRAELITES PROVIDED TO DISTINGUISH HER AND HER FAMILY FROM THE DOOMED CANAANITES. TODAY, BELIEVING FAMILIES ACCEPT BY FAITH GOD’S DEMARCATING SIGN OF BAPTISM (ACTS 2:38–39; 16:31–33) AND PROCLAIM CHRIST’S DEATH WHEN THEY DRINK THE CUP OF THE NEW COVENANT IN HIS SCARLET BLOOD (LK. 22:20; 1 COR. 11:25–26). 2:22–24 THE SPIES’ REPORT. THE SPIES’ EXACT REPORT OF RAHAB’S TESTIMONY (CF. 9, 24) UNDERSCORED THE POINT THAT GOD HAD DEFEATED THE CANAANITES SPIRITUALLY.**

**3:1–4:24 CROSSING THE JORDAN**

**CROSSING THE JORDAN MARKED THE MOMENT WHEN ISRAEL BREACHED THE LAST BARRIER TO THE PROMISED LAND AND SO ESCAPED THE DESERT. THE DIVINE WARRIOR, SYMBOLIZED BY HIS ARK, LED THEM INTO THE SWOLLEN JORDAN, DRIED IT UP, PROTECTED THEM THROUGHOUT AND LED THEM INTO THE PROMISED LAND. DURING MOST OF THE YEAR THE JORDAN CAN BE FORDED EASILY (CF. JDG. 3:28; 8:4), BUT GOD WAITED UNTIL EARLY SPRING (WHEN IT WAS IN FULL FLOOD, PRINCIPALLY FROM THE MELTING SNOWS ON MT HERMON) TO LEAD THE ISRAELITES ACROSS, THEREBY EXALTING JOSHUA IN THE EYES OF THE NATION (6) AND MAKING ISRAEL KNOW THAT THE LIVING GOD WAS AMONG THEM (8, 13). 3:1–17 THE JORDAN OPENS. UNDER JOSHUA’S FAITHFUL LEADERSHIP THE HOLY WAR PROCEEDED IN A STATELY, ORDERLY FASHION, WITHOUT HASTE OR DELAY. 1 ISRAEL CALCULATED THAT GOD’ MIGHTY ACTS CONNECTED WITH THE CROSSING BEGAN AT SHITTIM (CF. MI. 6:5). SINCE THE PEOPLE WENT UP FROM THE JORDAN ON 10 NISAN (4:19), THE FIRST MONTH OF THE LUNAR YEAR CORRESPONDING TO OUR APRIL, THEY COULD NOT HAVE ARRIVED AT THE EAST BANK OF THE FORBIDDING JORDAN BEFORE 8 NISAN, THREE DAYS EARLIER (3:2, 5). THE EXTRA TIME BETWEEN THEIR ARRIVAL AT THE JORDAN AND THEIR FORDING OF IT WAS NECESSARY FOR THE SPIRITUAL PREPARATION OF THE PEOPLE (5). THERE ARE FOUR SPEECHES PREPARING THE PEOPLE FOR THE CROSSING: ONE BY THE OFFICERS TO THE PEOPLE (2–4), ONE BY JOSHUA TO THE PEOPLE AND TO THE PRIESTS (5–6), ONE BY THE LORD TO JOSHUA (7–8), AND ONE BY JOSHUA TO THE WHOLE NATION (9–13). EACH SPEECH REVEALS A BIT MORE ABOUT THE MARVEL TO HAPPEN, REACHING A CLIMAX IN JOSHUA’S FINAL ADDRESS. 2–4 THE OFFICERS COMMANDED THE PEOPLE ABOUT FOLLOWING THE ARK. THE ARK, A GOLD-PLATED CHEST 4 FT × 2 FT × 2 FT (120 CM × 60 CM × 60 CM; SEE EX. 25:10–22), SYMBOLIZED THE THRONE OF GOD AND IS SOMETIMES CARRIED INTO BATTLE (SEE NU. 10:35; 1 SA. 4–6). BUT IT WAS NO MERE SYMBOL, GOD IS REALLY PRESENT THERE DIRECTING THE PRIESTS WHO CARRIED IT (CF. 4:11; DT. 10:8; 1 SA. 6:7–12). HOUSING THE TEN COMMANDMENTS, ISRAEL’S CONSTITUTION (DT. 10:1–4; 31:26), THE ARK STOOD FOR HIS ETHICAL RULE AND ISRAEL’S COVENANTAL RELATIONSHIP WITH HIM. IT ALSO SYMBOLIZES THE GOSPEL FOR, IN ADDITION TO HOUSING THE LAW BY WHICH ALL WILL BE JUDGED (SEE ROM. 2:12–16), ITS LID, THE MERCY SEAT, SPRINKLED WITH ATONING BLOOD, PREFIGURES THE CLEANSING BLOOD OF CHRIST (HEB. 9). THE COMMAND TO KEEP A GAP OF ABOUT A THOUSAND YARDS (900 M) BETWEEN THEM AND THE ARK GAVE ALL ISRAEL A FULL VIEW OF GOD’S WONDROUS LEADERSHIP. 5–6 ON 9 NISAN JOSHUA INSTRUCTED THE PEOPLE TO CONSECRATE THEMSELVES (CF. NU. 11:18), EMPHASIZING THE ARMY’S HOLINESS. THIS SANCTIFICATION INVOLVED WASHING THEIR CLOTHES (CF. EX. 19:10) AND ABSTAINING FROM SEX (CF. EX. 19:15). ON 10 NISAN JOSHUA INSTRUCTED THE PRIESTS TO PICK UP THE ARK. 7–8 AT THIS CRITICAL MOMENT GOD REWARDED JOSHUA’S FAITH, PROMISING THAT WHEN THE PRIESTS STOOD IN THE JORDAN, HE WOULD MARK OUT JOSHUA AS HE HAD MOSES. JOSHUA PREFIGURES CHRIST WHO LEADS HIS CHURCH OUT OF THE WILDERNESS OF THIS WORLD TO CROSS THE RIVER OF DEATH IN THEIR PILGRIMAGE TO THE HEAVENLY CITY. 9–13 JOSHUA NOW SOLEMNLY ADDRESSED THE PEOPLE. IN V 10 LIVING GOD EVOKES A CONTRAST WITH THE LOCAL GODS WHO DIED AND CAME TO LIFE AGAIN WITH THE SEASONS AND WHO COULD NOT MAINTAIN CONTROL OF HISTORY. SEVEN NATIONS WERE SINGLED OUT PROBABLY BECAUSE SEVEN REPRESENTS COMPLETENESS (CF. DT. 7:1). IN V 12, JOSHUA SET APART THE TWELVE MEN TO CARRY STONES INTO THE JORDAN TO PROVIDE A FIRM FOOTING IN THE MUDDY RIVER BOTTOM FOR THE PRIESTS BEARING THE HEAVY ARK (CF. 4:8). AT THE CLIMAX OF HIS ADDRESS JOSHUA PREDICTED THE JORDAN WOULD STAND UP IN A HEAP, SHOWING THAT GOD, NOT NATURAL CAUSES, WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR IT. JOSHUA’S PROPHETIC SPEECH QUALIFIED HIM AS A WORTHY SUCCESSOR TO MOSES. 14–17 THE NARRATIVE NOW FOCUSES BOTH ON THE PERFECT OBEDIENCE OF THE PEOPLE—EVERYTHING PROCEEDED EXACTLY ACCORDING TO THE EARLIER INSTRUCTIONS—AND ON THE ASTONISHING CHARACTER OF THE EVENT. THE TEXT GOES OUT OF ITS WAY TO STRESS THAT THE CROSSING OCCURRED IN APRIL AT FIRST HARVEST (SEE 5:10–11), WHEN THE RIVER WAS OVERFLOWING. IN LINE WITH OTHER INTENDED PARALLELS BETWEEN MOSES AND JOSHUA, THE CROSSING OCCURRED AT THE SAME SEASON OF THE YEAR AS ISRAEL CROSSED THE RED SEA. THE CROSSING PROBABLY TOOK PLACE NEAR THE FORD THE ARABS CALL AL-MAGHTAS, 7 MILES (12 KM) SOUTH-EAST OF JERICHO AND 8 MILES (13 KM) WEST OF TELL EL-HAMMAM. THE CITY OF ADAM, TODAY TELL ED-DAMIYE, WHERE THE WATERS PILED UP, IS 17 MILES (27 KM) UPSTREAM FROM JERICHO, AND SO A WIDE STRETCH OF THE RIVER BOTTOM, MORE THAN 18 MILES (30 KM), WAS EXPOSED FOR THE WHOLE NATION TO CROSS QUICKLY. A LANDSLIDE DAMMED UP THE RIVER IN 1267 AND IN 1906. AN EARTHQUAKE ON 11 JULY, 1927, DAMMED THE MEANDERING STREAM FOR 21½ HOURS. THESE PARALLELS GIVE THE ACCOUNT CREDIBILITY WITHOUT TAKING AWAY FROM JOSHUA’S PREDICTION AND THE AMAZING TIMING OF THE EVENT. 4:1–24 THE CLOSING OF THE JORDAN AND THE NATIONAL MEMORIAL. THE NARRATOR CONTINUES TO STRESS THE AMAZING CHARACTER OF THE CROSSING (18) BUT CONCENTRATES ON THE NATIONAL CAIRN. THIS MEMORIAL WAS JUST ONE IN A SERIES OF MEMORIALS COMMEMORATING GOD’S MIGHTY ACTS (CF. EX. 13:3–6; 1 SA. 7:12), CLIMAXING IN THE BREAD AND CUP PROCLAIMING ‘THE LORD’S DEATH UNTIL HE COMES’ (1 COR. 11:26). 1–4 ONCE AGAIN GOD, AS COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF, INITIATED THE ACTION. HIS INSTRUCTION TO APPOINT TWELVE MEN ASSUMES THAT THE TWELVE MEN SET APART IN 3:12 HAD LAID DOWN THE STONES AS A FIRM PLATFORM FOR THE SIX PRIESTS. THE NUMBER TWELVE, OCCURS FIVE TIMES IN VS 1–8, HIGHLIGHTING THE UNITY OF THE TWELVE TRIBES WHO MADE UP ONE NATION UNDER JOSHUA’S LEADERSHIP (CF. EX. 24:4; 1 KI. 18:31–35). 1 EMPHASIZES THE SALVATION OF ALL ISRAEL AND SERVES AS A PLEDGE THAT ALL OF TRUE ISRAEL WILL BE SAVED, BOTH JEWS (ROM. 11:25–27) AND GENTILES (GAL. 6:15–16). CHRIST WILL NOT LOSE ONE OF HIS SHEEP; ALL WILL BE SAVED (JN. 10:27–28). 5–7 ONCE AGAIN, GOD’S COMMANDER ON EARTH’S STAGE OBEYED HIS INSTRUCTIONS. THE TWELVE STONES WERE TO SERVE FOREVER AS A SIGN AND AS A MEMORIAL (CF. EX. 12:26–27; DT. 6:20–25). MEMORY PLAYS AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN ANY SOCIETY. WITHOUT A MEMORY A PERSON LOSES IDENTITY, AND WITHOUT A HISTORY TO SUSTAIN IT A SOCIETY AND THE WORLD AROUND IT BECOME VIRTUALLY PHANTOM. ANY SOCIETY THAT HOPES TO ENDURE MUST BECOME, AS SOCIOLOGISTS PUT IT, ‘A COMMUNITY OF MEMORY AND HOPE’. IN ANCIENT ISRAEL, MONUMENTS AND RITUALS SUCH AS THE PASSOVER (EX. 13–14) SERVED THIS FUNCTION. THE NUMEROUS MEMORIALS MENTIONED IN JOSHUA AS STILL IN EXISTENCE (E.G. 7:26; 8:29; 10:27) WERE LATER SUPERSEDED BY THE BIBLICAL BOOKS THAT SUSTAIN THE CHURCH. IT IS ASSUMED THAT THE STORIES EXPLAINING THE MONUMENTS WERE TRANSMITTED ACCURATELY IN ORAL FORM UNTIL THE TIME OF THE WRITING, OTHERWISE THEY WOULD HAVE CARRIED NO CONVICTION AND COULD NOT HAVE SUSTAINED THE PEOPLE IN REALITY (CF. 2 PET. 1:16). SOME SCHOLARS REVERSE THEIR FUNCTION. ACCORDING TO THEM, THESE MONUMENTS ENCOURAGED ISRAEL TO CREATE STORIES TO EXPLAIN THEIR EXISTENCE, NOT TO REMIND THEM OF WHAT ACTUALLY HAPPENED! 8–9 IN V 9 THE HEBREW READS LITERALLY, ‘AND JOSHUA ERECTED TWELVE STONES IN THE MIDDLE OF THE JORDAN’, EXPECTING THE READER TO UNDERSTAND THAT THESE WERE TWELVE OTHER STONES (AS THE GREEK TRANSLATION CLARIFIES). THE SOLID STONE PLATFORM WHICH WAS REMOVED FROM UNDER THE FEET OF THE PORTERS IN THE MUDDY RIVER BED TO MAKE THE MEMORIAL HAD TO BE REPLACED (SEE NIV MG.). OBVIOUSLY, THESE SUBMERGED REPLACEMENT STONES COULD NOT SERVE AS A NATIONAL MEMORIAL, BUT FOR ANYONE INTERESTED, THEY WERE STILL THERE AS SIGNS AT THE TIME OF WRITING, BEYOND THE REACH OF VANDALS. 10–13 THE PRIESTS ASCENDED FROM THE JORDAN, AND THE ARK REASSUMED ITS LEAD ONLY AFTER EVERYTHING HAD BEEN PROPERLY EXECUTED. THE POINT IS THAT THE LORD AND HIS PRIESTS REMAINED AT THE PLACE OF DANGER, NOT THE PEOPLE WHO HURRIED OVER. 12 ADDS THAT THE EASTERN TRIBES WENT AHEAD OF THE OTHERS (SEE 1:12–13). THOUGH ARMED FOR THE BATTLE, THE 40,000 FIGHTING MEN NEVER LIFTED A SWORD FOR THE LORD FOUGHT FOR THEM EVEN AS HE HAD FOR THE ARMED MILITIA AT THE RED SEA (CF. EX. 13:18; 14:13–31). THE HEBREW WORD TRADITIONALLY TRANSLATED ‘THOUSAND’ PROBABLY MEANS A CONTINGENT OF FIVE TO FOURTEEN MEN AS IN THE MUSTER LISTS OF NUM. 1 AND 26. SOME FIGHTING MEN REMAINED BEHIND ON THE EAST SIDE OF THE JORDAN TO PROTECT THEIR HOMES (CF. 22:8). THE PEOPLE CROSSED OVER BEFORE THE LORD ON THE WEST BANK AS BEFORE A VIEWING STAND. THE DIVINE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ONCE AGAIN ASSUMED HIS POSITION AS KING IN THE MIDST OF THE WAR-CAMP. 14 AS THE LORD PROMISED, JOSHUA WAS NOW EXALTED. 10 NISAN (SEE ON 3:1), THE DAY THE PASSOVER LAMB WAS SELECTED (EX. 12:3), WAS A DAY WHEN ISRAEL LEARNED AGAIN TO FEAR BOTH GOD (24; 3:10) AND JOSHUA. 15–18 AS THE JORDAN RESUMED ITS FLOW IT WAS AS THOUGH GATES HAD CLOSED BEHIND THE DIVINE KING AND HIS VASSALS AS THEY ENTERED THE ROYAL ESTATE. THE TIMING OF THE JORDAN’S CLOSING WAS JUST AS AMAZING AS AT ITS OPENING (CF. 3:15). 19–24 ON THAT SAME DAY ISRAEL ERECTED THE NATIONAL MEMORIAL AT GILGAL (CF. 4:2). GILGAL MAY BE LOCATED AT KHIRBET EL-MEFJIR. THE NATIONAL MEMORIAL COMMEMORATED IN THIS CATECHISM FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION (21, 24) THAT THE LORD DRIED UP THE JORDAN (22–23; CF. EX. 14:22), PROBABLY FOR THE REASONS SUGGESTED AT 3:7. THE JOINING OF THE CROSSING OF THE JORDAN WITH THAT OF THE RED SEA UNDERSCORED THE TYPOLOGICAL UNITY OF THE TWO EVENTS IN SALVATION AND HISTORY. THE PRONOUN YOU (PLURAL) IN V 23 REPRESENTS ALL ISRAEL AS A UNITED BODY. ALL BELIEVERS ARE ABLE TO BE PRESENT IN SOME WAY AT THESE HISTORICAL EVENTS THROUGH SCRIPTURE, IMAGINATION, AND FAITH. MOREOVER, THROUGH THE MONUMENT THE PEOPLES OF THE EARTH WOULD KNOW THAT GOD’S HAND IS POWERFUL (CF. 2:10; 3:10; EX. 15:14–16) AND ISRAEL WOULD FEAR, THAT IS, GIVE SINGLE-MINDED ALLEGIANCE TO THE LORD (SEE DT. 5:29; 8:6 ETC.). TODAY THESE PURPOSES ARE ACHIEVED THROUGH PROCLAIMING CHRIST’S DEATH FOR SIN AND HIS RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD (CF. ROM. 10:6–9).**

**5:1–14 RITUAL PREPARATIONS**

**EACH OF THE PARAGRAPHS IN THIS CHAPTER DISPLAYS A PARALLEL BETWEEN MOSES AND JOSHUA, FORGING YET MORE LINKS BETWEEN THE TWO LEADERS AT ISRAEL’S FOUNDING. THEY BOTH STRUCK FEAR INTO THEIR ENEMIES (1, CF. EX. 15:10–13), THEY BOTH INITIATED CIRCUMCISION BEFORE FULLY ENTERING THE TASK (2–9; CF. EX. 4:24–26), THEY BOTH CELEBRATED THE PASSOVER AS PART OF THE MARCH TO THE HOLY LAND (10–12; CF. EX. 12), AND THEY BOTH TOOK THEIR SANDALS OFF BEFORE THE LORD (13–15; CF. EX. 3:5). 5:1 INTRODUCTION. THIS VERSE, DEPICTING THE CANAANITE REACTION TO THE JORDAN CROSSING, LINKS THIS CHAPTER WITH 4:24, PREDICTING THE WORLD’S REACTION. THE AMORITE KINGS (I.E. THOSE OF THE CITY-STATES IN THE MOUNTAINS WEST OF THE JORDAN) AND THE CANAANITE KINGS (I.E. THOSE OF THE CITY-STATES ON THE PLAINS ALONG THE COAST) ARE A SAMPLE OF THE SEVEN NATIONS IN 3:10. THESE KINGS KNEW ABOUT THE LORD’S MIGHTY ACT, BUT INSTEAD OF FLEEING TO HIM IN FAITH, AS RAHAB HAD DONE, THEIR REBELLIOUS HEARTS SANK IN FEAR AND IMMOBILIZED THEM (CF. 2:10; 11:20). 5:2–9 COVENANT RENEWAL: CIRCUMCISION. TERSE NARRATIVES OF ISRAEL’S CIRCUMCISION (2–3, 8–9) FRAME A DETAILED EXPLANATION (4–7). 2–3 AGAIN, THE LORD COMMANDED (2) AND JOSHUA EXECUTED PERFECTLY (3). JOSHUA INDIRECTLY CIRCUMCISED THE WHOLE NATION THROUGH THE PARENTS (CF. GN. 21:4; EX. 4:25). TWO INTERPRETATIONS HAVE BEEN PROPOSED WHY THE NARRATOR REPRESENTS THIS CIRCUMCISION AS AGAIN (LIT. ‘A SECOND TIME’). ON THE ONE HAND, PERHAPS THAT PORTION OF THE UNITED MILITIA WHO WERE FORTY YEARS AND OLDER AND CIRCUMCISED IN EGYPT WERE RECKONED AS THE FIRST CIRCUMCISION, AND THOSE UNDER FORTY, WHO WERE NOT CIRCUMCISED IN THE DESERT, WERE DEEMED THE SECOND. THIS INTERPRETATION BEST SUITS VS 4–7. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE OLDER PORTION OF THE MILITIA MAY HAVE HAD TO BE CIRCUMCISED AGAIN BECAUSE EGYPTIAN CIRCUMCISION WAS INCOMPLETE, UNLIKE THE ISRAELITE COMPLETE CIRCUMCISION. THIS INTERPRETATION BEST EXPLAINS THE EMPHASIS ON FLINT KNIVES AND THE REFERENCE TO THE REPROACH OF EGYPT (9). FLINT KNIVES, SO ABUNDANT IN CANAAN IN CONTRAST TO EGYPT, WERE PROBABLY REQUIRED BECAUSE THEY WERE ASSOCIATED WITH THE ISRAELITE COMPLETE CIRCUMCISION. STATUES OF FIGHTING MEN IN CANAAN DURING THE THIRD MILLENNIUM BC SHOW WARRIORS AS FULLY CIRCUMCISED. NOW IN THE LAND THE ISRAELITES COULD FREELY CIRCUMCISE THEMSELVES PROPERLY AND REMOVE FROM THEMSELVES THE REPROACH OF EGYPT (9), THE INCOMPLETE CIRCUMCISION. THE HILL OF FORESKINS (3 NIV MG.) MAY HAVE BEEN THE NAME OF A LITTLE HILLOCK IN THE VICINITY OF GILGAL, WHICH MEANS ‘ROLL AWAY, ROLL AWAY’ THE REPROACH (9). 4–7 MOST OF THE MILITIA, BORN DURING THE FORTY YEARS IN THE DESERT (CF. NU. 14:20–22, 29–31; DT. 2:14), HAD TO BE CIRCUMCISED FOR THE FIRST TIME. TWO RELATED QUESTIONS NEED TO BE ADDRESSED: WHY CIRCUMCISION AND WHY AT GILGAL? IN EGYPT CIRCUMCISION SEEMS TO HAVE MADE ONE FIT FOR MANHOOD. CIRCUMCISION IN ISRAEL MADE ONE QUALIFIED FOR THE COVENANTAL RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD (GN. 17:9–14) AND SO A FIT HEIR TO THE PROMISED LAND. THE ‘CIRCUMCISION … IS THE TOKEN OF THAT WORK OF GRACE WHEREBY GOD CHOOSES OUT AND MARKS MEN FOR HIS OWN’. HE ALSO NOTED ‘IT [CIRCUMCISION] WAS INTEGRATED INTO THE MOSAIC SYSTEM IN CONNECTION WITH THE PASSOVER’ (CF. EX. 12:44). HERE TOO THE SACRED RITE OF INITIATION HAD TO PRECEDE THE PASSOVER (10). HAD THE UNBELIEVING GENERATION CIRCUMCISED THEIR CHILDREN IN THE DESERT, IT WOULD HAVE REDUCED THE GRACIOUS RITUAL TO LEVITY; HENCE, IT WAS APPROPRIATELY HELD IN ABEYANCE UNTIL ISRAEL’S ARRIVAL IN THE FLINTY LAND. 5:10–12 COVENANT MEAL: PASSOVER. THE CELEBRATION OF PASSOVER ON 14 NISAN AT THE END OF THEIR JOURNEY REMINDED THE ISRAELITES THAT THEY BEGAN THIS MARVELOUS JOURNEY WITH GOD THROUGH HIS PASSOVER. THIS IS A FORERUNNER OF JESUS CHRIST (1 COR. 5:7), WHOSE BLOOD PROVIDES CHRISTIANS WITH SALVATION FROM GOD’S JUDGMENT ON SATAN’S WORLD (CF. EX. 12:1–7) AND WHOSE FLESH, SYMBOLIZED BY BREAD, PROVIDES FOR THEIR SANCTIFICATION (EX. 12:8–11). ON THE VERY NEXT DAY (THE PHRASE COMES THREE TIMES IN VS 11–12), THEY BEGAN TO ENJOY THE LONG-ANTICIPATED FOOD IN THE PROMISED LAND. THE TIRESOME FORTY YEARS OF EATING MANNA IN THE DESERT WERE NOW BEHIND THEM (CF. NU. 11:4–9). 5:13–15 WORSHIP OF THE COMMANDER. JOSHUA’S FINAL PREPARATION FOR HOLY WAR INVOLVED ENCOUNTERING THE LORD, FOR HIS WORSHIP WAS AS YET TOO IMPERFECT FOR THE TASK AHEAD. THE MYSTERIOUS MAN JOSHUA MET WAS NOT THE LORD HIMSELF, BUT HIS HEAVENLY CAPTAIN (NIV MG. BEST SERVES THE HEBREW). AS SECULAR MESSENGERS WERE FULLY EQUATED WITH THEIR SENDERS (E.G. 2 SA. 3:12–13; 1 KI. 20:2–4), GOD’S ANGEL (CF. GN. 31:11; EX. 3:2; 14:19) AND HIS ANGELIC CAPTAIN (CF. DN. 10:5, 20) WERE ALSO TREATED WITH EQUAL RESPECT. HE TELLS JOSHUA THAT HE IS NEITHER FOR ISRAEL NOR HER ENEMIES. HE IS COMMANDER OF THE ARMY OF THE LORD, INCLUDING HIS ANGELS (2 KI. 6:15–17; PS. 103:20–21), NOT AN ALLY (3:10). SHOULD ISRAEL BREAK COVENANT, THE HOLY GOD WILL TURN HIS SWORD AGAINST THEM (LV. 26:25; DT. 28:15–26), AS ISRAEL AND ACHAN LEARNED AT THE BATTLE OF AI (CH. 7). JOSHUA APPROPRIATELY BOWED IN HOMAGE BEFORE THIS ANGELIC BEING. THE ANSWER TO HIS SECOND QUESTION (14B) WAS AS UNEXPECTED AS THE FIRST. INSTEAD OF AN AWAITED BATTLE BULLETIN, HE WAS ORDERED TO WORSHIP BETTER. THOUGH PROSTRATE, HIS UNCLEAN SANDALS WERE STILL ON. WITH JOSHUA UNSHOD, HOLY WAR CAN BEGIN.**

**6:1–12:24 TAKING THE LAND**

**THE CONQUEST OF THE LAND TOOK A LONG TIME (11:18) AND MANY BATTLES (12:1–24). OF THESE THE NARRATOR SELECTS FOUR FOR HISTORICAL AND THEOLOGICAL REASONS. ISRAEL INITIATED THE FIRST TWO, WHICH WERE AGAINST THE CITIES OF JERICHO (6:1–27) AND AI (7:1–8:29), AND VARIOUS CANAANITE COALITIONS INITIATED THE OTHER TWO IN THE SOUTH (10:1–43) AND IN THE NORTH (11:1–15). ISRAEL’S BATTLES AGAINST THE TWO CENTRAL CITIES GAVE IT A FIRM BEACH-HEAD IN THE LAND, DIVIDING IT IN TWO. THE BATTLES AGAINST JERICHO AND THE SOUTHERN COALITION ARE MARKED BY THE LORD’S AMAZING INTERVENTIONS. THEY ARE BALANCED BY THE BATTLES AGAINST AI AND THE NORTHERN ALLIANCE, MARKED BY BRILLIANT STRATEGY. AT THE HEART OF THIS SECTION, ISRAEL PLEDGED ITSELF TO KEEP GOD’S LAW IN THE LAND (8:30–34). THIS IS WHAT THE WAR WAS ALL ABOUT.**

**6:1–27 BATTLE OF JERICHO**

**6:1 INTRODUCTION. JERICHO (MODERN TELL ES-SULTAN), PROBABLY DEDICATED TO THE MOON GOD (ITS NAME MEANS ‘MOON CITY’), WAS STRATEGICALLY LOCATED, HAVING A LARGE OASIS IN A REGION WHERE WATER WAS PRECIOUS AND CONTROLLING THE MAIN ROADS INTO THE INTERIOR. 6:2–5 THE LORD’S INSTRUCTIONS. THE LORD’S INSTRUCTIONS TO JOSHUA DISPLAY THE CHARACTER OF THE COVENANT. GOD GRACIOUSLY GAVE ISRAEL THE LAND, BUT THEY MUST MAKE IT THEIRS BY OBEYING FAITHFULLY (HEB. 11:30; CF. 1:2–9). THE FIRST INSTRUCTION THAT THE ARMY WAS TO MARCH AROUND THE CITY ABOUT 650 YDS (600 M) ONCE A DAY FOR SIX DAYS SERVED NOTICE THAT THE DIVINE KING WAS MARKING OUT THE CITY AS HIS. JERICHO’S KING AND HIS FORCES RESISTED ISRAEL (24:11), BUT THEY WERE AS IMPOTENT AS SATAN AND HIS HOST BEFORE CHRIST AND HIS CHURCH (MT. 12:22–29; LK. 10:18; EPH. 6:10–18). THE SECOND INSTRUCTION THAT SEVEN PRIESTS WERE TO BEAR SEVEN TRUMPETS OF RAM’S HORN BEFORE THE ARK, SIGNALED THE START OF THE HOLY WAR. THE ARK IS GOD’S HOLY THRONE (SEE 3:3). THE THIRD INSTRUCTION THAT THE SEVEN PRIESTS WERE TO MARCH SEVEN TIMES ON THE SEVENTH DAY—THE NUMBER SEVEN IS REPEATED THREE TIMES IN V 14—SIGNIFIED PERFECTION. THE FOURTH INSTRUCTION THAT THE PEOPLE WERE TO GIVE AN EARTH-SHAKING SHOUT WHEN THEY HEARD THE LAST BLAST OF THE HORNS, GAVE VOICE TO THEIR FAITH. THE FIFTH COMMAND THAT EACH WARRIOR WAS TO ATTACK THE CITY STRAIGHT AHEAD AFTER THE WALLS FELL, FOUND ITS CONSUMMATION WHEN THEY ‘DEVOTED’ THE CITY TO THE LORD (17–20).**

**JERICHO, AI AND THE RENEWAL OF THE COVENANT AT SHECHEM.**

**6:6–7 JOSHUA’S COMMANDS**

**JOSHUA REPEATED THE ORDERS WHICH APPLIED TO THE PRIESTS AND THEN THOSE WHICH APPLIED TO THE PEOPLE. THE ARK IS MENTIONED FIRST FOR GOD IS THE KING (CF. 3:2–4). JOSHUA CREATIVELY DEPLOYED SOME ARMED MEN AS A VANGUARD BEFORE THE PRIESTS BLOWING TRUMPETS AND OTHERS AS A REARGUARD BEHIND THE ARK (9). IN THIS WAY THE DIVINE KING ASSUMED HIS RIGHTFUL PLACE AT THE HEART OF HIS SACRED WARRIORS. THE LENGTH AND DEPTH OF THE PROCESSION IS NOT IMPORTANT. 6:8–14 ORDERS EXECUTED. AS THE HOLY ARMY WAS MARCHING IN SOLEMN PROCESSION, THE SEVEN PRIESTS WERE BLOWING THE TRUMPETS AND THE ARMED MEN, ON JOSHUA’S ORDERS, WERE AS SILENT AS GRANITE. THIS WENT ON FOR SIX DAYS. THE DRAWN-OUT STYLE OF THE DRAMATIC NARRATIVE MATCHES THE DRAWN-OUT MARCH. 6:15–21 JERICHO FALLS. TRADITION RELATES THAT THE SEVENTH DAY WAS THE SABBATH, WHICH WAS NOT ALLOWED TO INTERFERE WITH THE HOLY WAR. JOSHUA’S COMMAND TO DEVOTE (HEB. ḤĒREM) THE CITY INVOLVED KILLING ALL THE PEOPLE IN IT TO PREVENT ISRAEL’S SPIRITUAL CONTAGION (DT. 20:16–18). SOMETIMES THE ḤĒREM INVOLVED BURNING THE CITY (24; 11:13), AND ON OTHER OCCASIONS IT DID NOT INCLUDE THE PLUNDERING OF THE CONQUERED CITIES (CF. 8:26–27; 11:14). THE PRINCIPLE IS WORKED OUT IN THE CHURCH THROUGH EXCOMMUNICATION (1 COR. 5:13), A PRINCIPLE AND PROCEDURE THAT MAY NEED SOMETIMES TO BE RE-APPLIED TODAY. THE HOLY ARMY FOLLOWED THE INSTRUCTIONS PERFECTLY AND WITH THEIR TREMENDOUS SHOUT JERICHO’S WALLS COLLAPSED. MAJOR EARTHQUAKES HAPPEN IN THE JORDAN VALLEY ON AN AVERAGE OF FOUR TIMES A CENTURY, AND THE EXCAVATIONS AT JERICHO HAVE REVEALED CLEAR EVIDENCE OF A COLLAPSE OF AT LEAST ONE MUD BRICK WALL. THIS DATA GIVES CREDIBILITY TO THE EPIC WITHOUT DETRACTING FROM THE WONDER THAT GOD PREDICTED IT AND EXECUTED IT WITH PERFECT TIMING. 6:22–25 RAHAB LIVES AND JERICHO DIES. THE CONCLUSION OF THE STORY SWITCHES BETWEEN THE RESCUE OF RAHAB (22–23, 25) AND THE DESTRUCTION OF THE CITY (24, 26) TO CONTRAST THEIR FATES. BOTH BY REPETITION AND BY EXTENDED DETAILS GOD’S COVENANT-KEEPING, EVEN WITH A CANAANITE PROSTITUTE (17B, 22–23, 25), IS UNDERSCORED. RAHAB AND HER HOUSEHOLD WERE AT FIRST PLACED OUTSIDE THE CAMP (23) BECAUSE THEY WERE CEREMONIALLY UNCLEAN (LV. 13:46; DT. 23:3), BUT AT THE TIME OF WRITING HER DESCENDANTS WERE SETTLED PERMANENTLY IN ISRAEL. THERE IS A SENSE IN WHICH SHE CONTINUES TO LIVE IN THE NEW ISRAEL THROUGH HER DESCENDANT, JESUS CHRIST (MT. 1:5). THE PROPHET JOSHUA PRONOUNCED A CURSE ON ANY PERSON TRYING TO REBUILD THE FOUNDATIONS OF THIS CITY ‘DEVOTED’ TO THE LORD (CF. 1 KI. 16:34). THE CURSE, THOUGH DESCRIPTIVE, NOT PRESCRIPTIVE, WAS NEVERTHELESS APPROPRIATE, FOR THE FIRSTBORN BELONGS TO THE LORD (EX. 13:1) AND SO TAKES THE PLACE OF THE CITY ‘DEVOTED’ TO THE LORD. 6:27 JOSHUA’S FAME. JOSHUA’S FAME WAS AND STILL IS SPREAD ABROAD (27; 3:7; 4:14). TO SUM UP, RAHAB AND JOSHUA LIVE, BUT JERICHO WAS ‘DEVOTED’ IN DEATH TO THE LORD.**

**7:1–8:29 BATTLE AT AI**

**THE BATTLE’S TWO PARTS, THE DEBACLE (7:1–26) AND VICTORY (8:1–29), BOTH TEACH LESSONS OF FAITH. 7:1–26 THE DEBACLE. STRAIGHT AWAY THE NARRATOR IMPLICATES ALL THE ISRAELITES (6:18) IN ACHAN’S SIN. THE CONCEPT OF NATIONAL SOLIDARITY, THE NOTION THAT AN INDIVIDUAL’S ACTS AFFECT THE WHOLE GROUP, ILLUMINATES OTHER SCRIPTURES (2 SA. 21:1–9; ACTS 9:4; COL. 1:24) AND IS THE BASIS FOR THE DOCTRINE OF HUMANKIND’S ORIGINAL SIN IN ADAM AND FOR THE JUSTIFICATION OF THE SAINTS THROUGH JESUS CHRIST (ROM. 5:12–19). 2–5 AI OMINOUSLY MEANS ‘THE RUIN’. ITS MODERN IDENTITY IS UNCERTAIN FOR THE TRADITIONAL SITE, ET TELL, HAS BEEN SHOWN TO BE UNOCCUPIED AT THIS TIME. ISRAEL’S FOLLY AND DEFEAT MUST BE SEEN IN THE LIGHT OF GOD’S WRATH (1). IT WAS ONE THING TO SEND SPIES TO RECONNOITER JERICHO (2:1), BUT IT WAS A CLEAR VIOLATION OF HOLY WAR AND OF GOD’S INSTRUCTIONS TO JOSHUA AT HIS COMMISSIONING (NU. 27:21) TO INITIATE BATTLE WITHOUT CONSULTING THE LORD. IRONICALLY, JOSHUA WAS TO CAST LOTS AFTER THE DEFEAT (14). THE SPIES VIOLATED HOLY WAR STANDARDS BY COUNTING ON ‘THOUSANDS’ (BETTER, ‘CONTINGENTS’; SEE ON 4:13), NOT THE LORD. IF THE CONTINGENTS INVOLVED FIFTEEN MEN EACH, THEN THIRTY-SIX MEN CONSTITUTED AN 80% LOSS. IN EXPLAINING THIS ROUT, ONE OUGHT NOT TO BLAME JUST THESE VIOLATIONS OF HOLY WAR, THE ULTIMATE CAUSE OF DEFEAT, OR JUST JOSHUA’S TACTICAL BLUNDER IN ATTEMPTING A FRONTAL ATTACK, THE IMMEDIATE CAUSE: IT WAS BOTH. 6–9 IN GREAT DISTRESS JOSHUA AND THE ELDERS TORE THEIR CLOTHES (CF. GN. 37:29, 34; JDG. 11:35) AND FELL DOWN BEFORE THE ARK, THE SACRED PLACE OF ENQUIRY (CF. JDG. 20:18, 23, 26–27). THEY COMPLAINED GRIEVOUSLY AND ENQUIRED DARINGLY AND FRANKLY OF GOD THE REASON FOR THEIR DEFEAT (CF. IS. 6:11). JOSHUA CAME CLOSE TO BLAMING GOD AS ISRAEL HAD (CF. EX. 14:21; 16:2–8). FROM JOSHUA’S IGNORANT PERSPECTIVE THE DEBACLE SEEMED FOOLISH. SHOULD THE CANAANITES HAVE REGAINED THEIR CONFIDENCE AND FROM THEIR MOUNTAIN STRONGHOLDS DESCENDED TOGETHER UPON THE ISRAELITES, WHO WERE TRAPPED BY THE SWOLLEN JORDAN, THE SITUATION WOULD HAVE BEEN DESPERATE INDEED. 10–15 THE LORD ANSWERED CURTLY, STAND-UP AND UNDERSCORED THE NATION’S GUILT: ISRAEL HAS SINNED. BY DEFRAUDING THE HOLY GOD—PUTTING THEIR TASTES AND ASSESSING THEIR JUDGMENTS TO BE BETTER THAN GOD’S WORD—THE ISRAELITES HAD DEFAMED HIS GLORIOUS NAME. GOD PROTECTED HIS HONOR BY MAKING THEM THE ḤĒREM. 16–23 TO PROVIDE A WAY FOR NATIONAL SALVATION, GOD COMMANDED THE PROFANED CAMP TO RECONSECRATE ITSELF (SEE 3:5) AND TO RID ITSELF OF THE ḤĒREM (13). GOD ISOLATED THE GUILTY THROUGH THE ‘YES’ AND ‘NO’ ANSWERS OF THE SACRED LOT (CF. 14:2; 18:6; EX. 28:30), PINPOINTING ACHAN BY A PROCESS OF ELIMINATION (14, 17). THE GUILTY THEN CONFESSED THE WRONG THEY HAD DONE. EVERYTHING IS NAKED BEFORE GOD (HEB. 4:13). THE SIN WOULD BE RIGHTED BY BURNING ALL THAT BELONGED TO ACHAN AS GOD’S NEW GLORIFYING ḤĒREM. PERHAPS THE STOLEN PROPERTY FROM JERICHO WOULD HAVE INFLICTED ISRAEL WITH ITS PHYSICAL CONTAGION AND SO MUST BE PUT TO THE PURIFYING FIRE (SEE 6:17, 24). IN BIBLICAL TIMES FAMILIES ACTED MORE AS A SINGLE UNIT UNDER THE HEADSHIP OF THE FATHER THAN IN WESTERN CULTURES. FAMILIES ENTERED INTO COVENANT WITH GOD AS A GROUP (SEE ON 2:8–14, 18), AND THEY BROKE COVENANT COLLECTIVELY AS HERE. ACHAN PROBABLY HID THE PLUNDER IN THE FAMILY TENT WITH THE FULL KNOWLEDGE OF HIS ENTIRE FAMILY (CF. ACTS 5:1–2). BY CONFESSING HIS SIN ACHAN GAVE GLORY TO GOD (19), FOR IT ENTAILED ACKNOWLEDGING GOD’S OMNISCIENCE, SOVEREIGNTY, TRUTH, ZEAL AND HOLINESS. SIGNIFICANTLY, UNBELIEVING ACHAN MISNAMED THE ḤĒREM PLUNDER. HIS VIEW OF HOLY WAR WAS WRONG. FOR HIM JERICHO WAS A PRIZE HE EARNED, NOT SOMETHING THE DIVINE KING WON. LIKEWISE, MATERIALISTS SEE THE EARTH’S RESOURCES AS THEIRS, NOT AS THE LORD’S. 24–26 ALL ISRAEL MUST PARTICIPATE IN THE EXPIATING STONING (CF. V 1). THE STONE CAIRN AT ACHOR (WHICH MEANS ‘DISASTER’) COMMEMORATED ACHAN’S TRAGIC SACRILEGE (CF. 4:5–7). 8:1–29 VICTORY AT AI. 1–2 IN THE RENEWED ATTACK, THE RULES OF HOLY WAR WERE FOLLOWED SCRUPULOUSLY. FIRST, THE LORD COMMANDED THE ATTACK, AND JOSHUA FLAWLESSLY, AND YET INNOVATIVELY, EXECUTED THE DETAILS. SECONDLY, THE ARMY WAS COMMANDED NOT TO FEAR BECAUSE GOD HAD PROMISED IT VICTORY (SEE 1:7–9). VICTORY WAS JUST AS SURE AT THE OUTSET OF THE SECOND ATTACK AS DEFEAT WAS CERTAIN AT THE START OF THE FIRST. YET EACH BATTLE IN THE CONQUEST WAS UNIQUE. HOLY WAR STANDARDS NORMALLY ENTAILED A REDUCED FORCE SO THAT ISRAEL’S FAITH WOULD BE IN THE LORD, NOT IN MILITARY MIGHT (SEE DT. 17:16; JDG. 7:1–8). IN THIS CASE, HOWEVER, ISRAEL SENT THE WHOLE ARMY. IN THE FIRST AND UNSUCCESSFUL ATTACK THE REDUCED NUMBERS ACTUALLY REPRESENTED ISRAEL’S FALSE CONFIDENCE (SEE 7:3). NOW THE WHOLE ARMY EXPRESSED FAITH BY GOING UP AGAIN AGAINST THE FORMIDABLE FOE. IN THIS BATTLE THE LORD’S ḤĒREM INCLUDED ONLY THE CITY AND THE PEOPLE, NOT THE LIVESTOCK AND PRECIOUS METALS (CF. 6:17; 7:15). THE BATTLE PLAN CALLED FOR A NORMAL MILITARY STRATEGY, A CUNNING AMBUSH, NOT A PRIESTLY PROCESSION LIKE THE ONE THAT AMAZINGLY TOPPLED JERICHO’S WALLS. AT THE EXODUS, THE LORD OF HOSTS AMAZINGLY USED THE RED SEA AND THE EAST WIND, NOT ISRAEL’S ARMED MEN, TO DESTROY THE MIGHTY EGYPTIAN ARMY (EX. 14:10–31), BUT IN THE NEXT BATTLE AGAINST THE AMALEKITES HE ENTRUSTED THE SWORD TO JOSHUA (EX. 17:8–16; CF. 1:1). LIKEWISE, IN THE HISTORY OF THE CHURCH, AT THE TIME OF THE APOSTLES THERE WERE AMAZING ACTS, AND AFTERWARDS, THE NOT-SO-AMAZING (CF. HEB. 2:3–4). IN BOTH WAYS CHRIST BUILDS HIS CHURCH (MT. 16:19). 3–13 THE LORD COMMANDED A DECEPTIVE AMBUSH (CF. 2:2–7). THE NUMBER INVOLVED IN THE AMBUSH IS UNCLEAR. V 3 SPEAKS OF THIRTY CONTINGENTS (SEE ON 4:13) BUT V 12 OF FIVE. IT HAS BEEN SUGGESTED THAT V 3 BE READ, ‘HE SENT THIRTY OF HIS BEST FIGHTING MEN, A MAN FROM EACH CONTINGENT’ (BOLING; SEE BELOW) (CF. 2 SA. 23:24–39). THE FULL AMBUSH CONSISTED OF FIVE CONTINGENTS OF MILITIA MEN. NOTE THE CHANGE FROM FIGHTING MEN IN V 3 TO SIMPLY MEN IN V 12. THE AMBUSHERS MADE THE 12-MILE (20 KM) CLIMB UP THE STEEP MOUNTAIN, AND UNDER THE COVER OF NIGHT HID THEMSELVES BEHIND A HILL, OR BOULDERS, OR IN CAVES, ON THE WEST SIDE OF AI (9, 13). THE NEXT MORNING JOSHUA SET OUT FROM GILGAL WITH THE MAIN FIGHTING FORCE, AND IN FULL VIEW OF AI PITCHED CAMP BEYOND A VALLEY NORTH OF IT. THAT NIGHT, THE SECOND FOR THE AMBUSHERS NOW FULLY READY, JOSHUA SCOUTED OUT THE VALLEY WHERE THE BATTLE WOULD TAKE PLACE TO ASSURE THE SUCCESS OF HIS DECEPTIVE MANEUVER. 14–17 TO THE KING OF AI, JOSHUA’S MANEUVER LOOKED LIKE A REPLAY. EARLY THE NEXT MORNING HE QUICKLY AND RASHLY MARCHED FORTH TO THE ASSIGNED PLACE FOR BATTLE, HOPING FOR A RERUN OF THE PREVIOUS ROUT. JOSHUA FEIGNED A RETREAT, USING THE PAST ONE TO GOOD ADVANTAGE, AND LURED THE KING TO THROW AWAY ALL CAUTION. TO ANNIHILATE THE FLEEING DECOY, THE KING SUMMONED ALL HIS TROOPS OUT OF THE CITY, EVEN OUT OF THE TEMPLE (CALLED HERE BETHEL; CF. JDG. 20:18, NIV MG.), A CITY’S LAST POINT OF DEFENSE ON ITS ACROPOLIS. HERE BETHEL (LIT. ‘HOUSE OF GOD’) IS NOT A PLACE-NAME BUT A DESCRIPTION OF AI’S TEMPLE (SO R.G. BOLING AND G. E. WRIGHT, ANCHOR BIBLE, JOSHUA, P. 240). 18–23 AT THE CRITICAL MOMENT THE LORD INTERVENED AND COMMANDED JOSHUA TO RAISE THE KÎḎÔN, THE JAVELIN, OR BETTER A CURVED SWORD, A SCIMITAR. STRETCHED OUT TOWARDS AI, IT SYMBOLIZED THE LORD’S SOVEREIGNTY OVER THE CITY. THE HEBREW OF V 19 SUGGESTS THAT THE MEN IN AMBUSH HAD ALREADY QUICKLY LEFT THEIR HIDING PLACES. AS SOON AS JOSHUA GAVE THE SIGNAL, THEY RUSHED FORWARD AND INTO THE CITY. ISRAEL’S MAIN ARMY NOW TURNED BACK AGAINST ITS HAPLESS PURSUERS WHO, LOOKING BACK, SAW THEIR CITY GOING UP IN SMOKE AND THE FIVE ISRAELITE UNITS SALLYING FORTH FROM THEIR REAR. 24–27 ACCORDING TO THE STANDARDS OF HOLY WAR AGAINST THE CANAANITES, AI’S FULL TWELVE CONTINGENTS AND THEIR WIVES BECAME THE LORD’S ḤĒREM, DESTROYED (26 AND NIV MG.) 28–29 THE BURNT CITY, A PERMANENT HEAP OF RUINS, AND THE KING’S TOMB, A CAIRN AT ITS GATE, SERVED AS MEMORIALS (CF. 4:5–7) AND PROVED THE EVENTS REALLY HAPPENED. THE KING OF AI WAS HUNG ON A TREE, PERHAPS IMPALED ON A POLE, TO SHOW THAT HE WAS UNDER GOD’S CURSE. ACCORDING TO THE LAW HE HAD TO BE TAKEN DOWN BEFORE NIGHTFALL (DT. 21:23). BY CONTRAST, IN THE NT THE KING OF ISRAEL ‘REDEEMED US … BY BECOMING A CURSE FOR US’ ON A TREE (GAL. 3:13). HE TOO WAS TAKEN DOWN AT SUNSET (JN. 19:31).**

**8:30–35 COVENANT RENEWED AT MT EBAL**

**AT THE HEART OF HIS BATTLE STORIES, THE NARRATOR PAUSES TO RECOUNT THAT ISRAEL RENEWED THE COVENANT AT SHECHEM AS MOSES HAD INSTRUCTED (DT. 11:29). THE CLAIM AND RULE OF ISRAEL’S LORD WERE PUBLISHED ABROAD. THE ALTAR SYMBOLIZED GOD’S CLAIM TO THE LAND (CF. GN. 12:8), AND THE LAW DEFINED THE CHARACTER OF HIS RULE. AS UNPRUNED VINES (LV. 25:5, 11) AND UNCUT HAIR (NU. 6:5) WERE SYMBOLS IN ISRAEL THAT THESE OBJECTS WERE HOLY OR DEDICATED TO THE LORD, SO AN ALTAR OF UNHEWN FIELD-STONES SHOWED IT BELONGED TO THE CREATOR. MT EBAL IS NORTH OF SHECHEM (MODERN NABLUS), THE SITE OF ILL-OMEN, AND MT GERIZIM, THE LOWER OF THE TWO, (33) IS SOUTH OF IT. ONE SHOULD ASSUME THAT ISRAEL HAD FREE ACCESS TO THIS AREA EITHER BECAUSE THEY HAD AN EXISTING TREATY WITH THE SHECHEMITES (SEE CH. 24; CF. GN. 34; JDG. 9) OR BECAUSE THE CANAANITES, COWERING IN THEIR STRONGHOLDS, WERE AFRAID TO CONFRONT THEM IN THIS SPARSELY POPULATED AREA. MT EBAL, THE MOUNTAIN OF CURSES, WAS SELECTED AS THE APPROPRIATE SITE FOR THE ALTAR BECAUSE THEIR GOD REMOVED THE SINNER’S CURSE. THE BURNT OFFERINGS SYMBOLIZED ISRAEL’S TOTAL CONSECRATION TO GOD AND SERVED TO RANSOM THEM. THE FELLOWSHIP OFFERINGS, WHICH WERE EATEN, CELEBRATED THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD. THE SAME SACRIFICES WERE USED IN THE CEREMONY AT MT SINAI WHEN ISRAEL INITIALLY RATIFIED THE COVENANT (EX. 24:5). THEY PREFIGURE CHRIST’S BLOOD FOR THE NEW COVENANT (LK. 22:20). AN ALTAR HAS BEEN FOUND ON MT EBAL AND ACCORDING TO ITS EXCAVATOR, A. ZETAL, ALL THE SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE FITS VERY WELL WITH THE BIBLICAL DESCRIPTION. SINCE JOSHUA WAS FOLLOWING THE LAW OF MOSES, THE READER SHOULD ASSUME THAT THE GREAT STONES WERE COVERED WITH PLASTER AND THE LAW INSCRIBED UPON THEM (32; CF. DT. 27:1–8). THE EXTENT OF THE LAW WRITTEN IN THE SIGHT OF THE SOLEMNLY ASSEMBLED ISRAELITES IS NOT STATED. THE READER SHOULD ALSO ASSUME THAT IN THE NATURAL AMPHITHEATER WITH SPLENDID ACOUSTIC PROPERTIES SIX TRIBES ON MT GERIZIM SHOUTED THE BLESSINGS ON OBEDIENCE AND SIX ON MT EBAL THE CURSES ON DISOBEDIENCE (33; CF. DT. 27). THE TRIBES, COMPOSED OF NATIVE AND NATURALIZED CITIZENS, STOOD FACING THE PRIESTS WHO BORE THE ARK, THE DIVINE KING’S THRONE (SEE 6:6–7). AFTERWARDS, IN THE HEARING OF ALL THE CITIZENS OF GOD’S KINGDOM, JOSHUA READ THE LAW, EXPRESSED THROUGH THE BLESSINGS AND CURSES, THE ESSENCE OF ISRAEL’S TREATY WITH GOD (34–35; CF. DT. 11:26; 30:1).**

**9:1–27 TREATY WITH GIBEON**

**THE TREATY WITH THE GIBEONITES WAS AN OBVIOUS EXCEPTION TO THE RULE OF HOLY WAR. THIS ACCOUNT SHOWS THAT ISRAEL WAS ABLE TO DETERMINE THAT UNDER CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES AN EXCEPTION COULD AND MUST BE MADE TO THE LAW. COMPROMISING SITUATIONS OFTEN ARISE, AS HERE (14) AND E.G. IN DIVORCE CASES BECAUSE THE WORD OF GOD WAS NOT SOUGHT IN THE FIRST PLACE. IN THE TIME OF THE JUDGES, ISRAEL SO ENTANGLED ITSELF WITH COVENANTS OF PEACE WITH THE CONDEMNED NATIONS, VIOLATING THE ḤĒREM (SEE ON 6:15–21), THAT THE LORD NO LONGER DROVE OUT THE CANAANITES (JDG. 2:1–5). MANY IN THE CHURCH TODAY ARE OPTING FOR PEACEFUL CO-EXISTENCE WITH THE WORLD AND LOSING THEIR SPIRITUAL POWER. 9:1–2 CANAANITE CONFEDERACY. THE EXCEPTIONAL DIPLOMACY OF GIBEON IS PRESENTED AGAINST THE BACKGROUND OF THE DECISION OF OTHER CANAANITE CONFEDERACIES TO WAGE WAR AGAINST ISRAEL (10:1–11:23). THE GIBEONITES RISKED PEACE, NOT WAR. UNFORTUNATELY, THOUGH THEY FEARED GOD, THEY DID NOT OPT FOR A THIRD SOLUTION, FULL VASSALAGE WITHIN GOD’S COVENANT, AS RAHAB HAD DONE (SEE 2:8–14). CONFRONTED WITH CHRIST AND HIS GOSPEL, PEOPLE CAN LIKEWISE OPT FOR ONE OF THESE THREE POSTURES: FIGHT AGAINST HIM, PEACEFUL CO-EXISTENCE WITHOUT SUBMISSION TO HIM, OR FULL MEMBERSHIP IN THE NEW COVENANT THROUGH HIS BLOOD AND SPIRITUAL REBIRTH. 9:3–13 GIBEON’S DECEPTION. GIBEON AND ITS FOUR ALLIES ARE CALLED HIVITES (7) TO REMIND US THAT THEY ARE ONE OF THE SENTENCED NATIONS. THE POPULAR IDENTIFICATION OF GIBEON WITH EL-JIB, 8 MILES (13 KM) NORTH-WEST OF JERUSALEM, IS QUESTIONABLE. WITH TERMS OF PEACE IN THEIR MOUTHS, THEY APPROACHED JOSHUA, WHO MUST TAKE ULTIMATE RESPONSIBILITY FOR WHAT HAPPENED, EVEN THOUGH HE SEEMINGLY ALLOWED THE ELDERS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE NEGOTIATIONS (6, 8B, 15). THE GIBEONITES STAKED THEIR HOPE FOR A PEACE TREATY ON ISRAEL’S POLICY OF MAKING PEACE WITH COMPLIANT CITIES THAT WERE FAR REMOVED FROM ISRAEL, AND NOT A PART OF THE CONDEMNED NATIONS WHO MIGHT POLLUTE THEM (DT. 20:10–15). THE GIBEONITES THEREFORE PRETENDED TO COME FROM A GREAT DISTANCE. WHEREAS DECEPTION IS A RECOGNIZED NECESSITY IN WAR, DECEPTION IN MAKING TREATIES IS UNACCEPTABLE (SEE ON 2:2–7), AND SO JOSHUA CURSED THEM (23). IN TRUTH, JOSHUA AND THE ELDERS WERE ALSO IN THE WRONG FOR DEPENDING ON THEIR SENSES RATHER THAN ENQUIRING OF THE LORD (14). THE CHURCH MUST NOT SUBSTITUTE ITS OWN UNDERSTANDING, HOWEVER ATTRACTIVE, FOR THE WORD OF GOD. 9:14–15 TREATY WITH GIBEON. PERHAPS ISRAEL SAMPLED (BETTER, ‘TOOK’) THE FOOD BECAUSE IT WAS PART OF THE COVENANT-MAKING PROCEDURE. ULTIMATELY ISRAEL, NOT GIBEON, WAS IN THE WRONG FOR IT FAILED TO CONSULT THE LORD. 9:16–18 THE GIBEONITES’ DECEPTION DISCOVERED. JUST THREE DAYS LATER ISRAEL DISCOVERED THE GUILE OF THE GIBEONITES, AND IT TOOK ANOTHER THREE DAYS TO MAKE THE 17-MILE (27 KM) JOURNEY FROM GILGAL TO THE GIBEONITE LEAGUE TO CONFIRM THE REPORT. THE FOUR TOWNS CONSTITUTING THIS LEAGUE CONTROLLED THE APPROACHES TO JERUSALEM FROM THE NORTH-WEST AND SO LIVED ON A VITAL ARTERY WITHIN THE ISRAELITE CONFEDERACY. THE ASSEMBLY RIGHTLY COMPLAINED AGAINST THEIR LEADERS BECAUSE ISRAEL’S EXISTENCE IN THE LAND WAS NOW THREATENED BY THIS PAGAN PRESENCE. 9:19–27 RESOLUTION. THREE TIMES IN SUCCESSIVE VERSES (18, 19, 20) THE POINT IS MADE EMPHATICALLY THAT ISRAEL MUST NOT BREAK AN OATH, EVEN THOUGH MADE UNDER FALSE COLORS, AND SO MISUSE GOD’S NAME (CF. EX. 20:7; 2 SA. 21:1–14; MT. 5:33–37). THIS IS A TRUTH THAT NEEDS TO BE REASSERTED IN AN AGE OF BROKEN MARRIAGE VOWS AND OF BROKEN BUSINESS CONTRACTS. THE ELDERS RESOLVED THE PROBLEM OF SECURING AN IRREVOCABLE TREATY UNDER FALSE PRETENSES BY INTERPRETING THE TREATY’S TERM, ‘SERVANT’, IN THE MOST ONEROUS WAY—THE GIBEONITES WERE TO BECOME WOOD CUTTERS AND WATER CARRIERS FOR ALL THE CONGREGATION. JOSHUA ADDED CULTIC SERVICE TO THE NON-CULTIC DUTIES DEMANDED BY THE ELDERS.**

**10:1–43 CONQUEST OF THE SOUTH**

**THE SOUTHERN CAMPAIGN CONSISTED OF TWO PARTS: THE ROUT OF THE FIVE AMORITE KINGS BESIEGING GIBEON, AND THE SUBSEQUENT CAPTURE OF ROYAL CITIES AND SUBJUGATION OF TERRITORY. 10:1–28 BATTLE AT GIBEON. 1–7 JOSHUA’S CONQUEST OF AI, AND ABOVE ALL THE SUBMISSION OF GIBEON, PROMPTED THE ALARMED KING OF JERUSALEM TO FORM AN ALLIANCE WITH FOUR OTHER ROYAL CITIES AND BESIEGE GIBEON. CITY-STATES IN ISRAEL’S WORLD OFTEN JOINED FORCES IN REPELLING AN ENEMY (CF. GN. 14:1–3). FROM A LETTER IN THE AMARNA CORRESPONDENCE (C. 1350 BC) IT MAY BE INFERRED THAT GIBEON WAS PART OF A JERUSALEM KINGDOM WHICH INCORPORATED MOST OF THE JUDEAN HILL COUNTRY. FACED WITH ATTACK BY THIS POWERFUL COALITION, GIBEON APPEALED TO JOSHUA TO FULFIL ISRAEL’S TREATY OBLIGATION AND COME TO THEIR HELP. ISRAEL ROSE TO THIS FIRST REAL TEST OF THEIR METTLE. THE KING OF JERUSALEM, ADONI-ZEDEK (WHICH MEANS ‘MY LORD IS RIGHTEOUS’), RULED OVER A CITY COMPOSED OF AMORITES AND HITTITES, BOTH OF WHOM WERE TO BE ‘DEVOTED’ IN DEATH TO GOD (SEE ON 6:15–21; CF. DT. 7:1). ADONI-ZEDEK’S WORLD-VIEW PREVENTED HIM FROM UNDERSTANDING THAT ISRAEL’S VICTORIES WERE DUE TO THE LORD, NOT JOSHUA, AND SO FROM HIS FRAME OF REFERENCE IT WAS A MATTER OF MATCHING ARMIES AGAINST ARMIES. UNLIKE THE GIBEONITES, WHO HAD HEARD THE FAME OF THE LORD (9:9–10), HE HEARD THE FAME OF JOSHUA. THE KING’S GOOD FIGHTERS (2), LIKE MEDIEVAL KNIGHTS (CF. ‘FIGHTING MEN’ 6:2), WERE TRAINED AND WEALTHY ENOUGH TO ARM THEMSELVES WELL. AT THIS TIME THE EGYPTIANS CONTROLLED CANAAN, AND LACHISH (MODERN TELL ED-DUWEIR) WAS ITS PROVINCIAL CAPITAL. 8–15 GIBEON’S BATTLEGROUND PROVIDED A STAGE ON WHICH THE DIVINE WARRIOR DISPLAYED WONDERS. THIS IS THE THIRD AND FINAL ACT OF THE LORD’S AMAZING INTERVENTIONS ON ISRAEL’S BEHALF (CF. CHS. 3–4, 6). IN THE BEST TRADITIONS OF HOLY WAR THE LORD GAVE INSTRUCTION, PROBABLY AFTER BEING CONSULTED; COMMANDED ISRAEL NOT TO FEAR, PROMISING THEM VICTORY (8); THREW THE ENEMY INTO PANIC WHEN JOSHUA TOOK THEM BY SURPRISE AFTER A 22 MILE (35 KM) TORTUOUS, TWISTING, UPHILL ALL-NIGHT CLIMB FROM GILGAL TO HEBRON (9–10); AND RAINED A DEADLY BARRAGE OF HAILSTONES UPON THE ROUTED ENEMY FLEEING TOWARDS ITS STRONGHOLDS IN THE FOOTHILLS (11) (CF. EX. 14:24; JDG. 4:15; PS. 77:17–19.) ISAIAH REFLECTING ON THIS DRAMA SPEAKS OF THE LORD AS ROUSING HIMSELF (IS. 28:21). USING FLASHBACK, THE NARRATOR SAVED THE MOST SPECTACULAR SCENE TO LAST—THE VICTORY AT THE BETH-HORON PASS (12–15). IN THIS SCENE, THE LORD’S ENTOURAGE, THE SUN AND MOON, PLAY SUPPORTING ROLES TO JOSHUA. THE CANAANITES COMING UP THE SLOPES FROM THE WEST OF GIBEON (TO WHICH JOSHUA HAD BROUGHT RELIEF AFTER HIS STRENUOUS, ALL-NIGHT CLIMB) WERE LOOKING EAST INTO THE BLINDING SUN ABOVE GIBEON WHEN THE BATTLE BEGAN. TO KEEP THE ADVANTAGE, JOSHUA, PRAYING TO THE LORD, COMMANDED THE SUN AND MOON, AS THE LORD’S SUBORDINATES, TO STAY PUT UNTIL ISRAEL AVENGED ITSELF (I.E. DEFENSIVELY VINDICATED ITS SOVEREIGNTY) ON ITS ENEMY. AMAZINGLY, THE LORD SUBMITTED HIS HEAVENLY ATTENDANTS TO A MAN’S COMMAND ON EARTH’S STAGE. THE SUN MAY HAVE BEEN THE PRINCIPAL DEITY AT GIBEON AS THE MOON WAS AT JERICHO (SEE 6:1). THE NARRATOR CITES HIS SOURCE, THE BOOK OF JASHAR (‘THE BOOK OF THE UPRIGHT ONE’), AN EARLY AND PROBABLY POETIC ACCOUNT OR COLLECTION OF NATIONAL WAR SONGS CELEBRATING ISRAEL’S HEROES (CF. 2 SA. 1:18–27). THERE HAVE BEEN MANY ATTEMPTS TO TRANSLATE THE HEBREW OF VS 12–13 IN ORDER TO PROVIDE A MORE NATURALISTIC INTERPRETATION OF THE EVENT. SOME SCHOLARS THINK IT REFERS TO A SOLAR ECLIPSE. OTHERS SUGGEST THAT THE SUN STOPPED SHINING, NOT MOVING, AND THAT ABOUT A FULL DAY SHOULD BE TRANSLATED ‘AS WHEN DAY IS DONE’. A SLIGHTLY MODIFIED FORM OF THIS POSITION CLAIMS THAT THE TEXT REFERS TO AN EARLY MORNING HAILSTORM THAT BLACKENED THE SKY UNTIL THE ENEMY WAS DEFEATED AND RENDERS V 13 ‘THE SUN CEASED SHINING IN THE MIDST OF THE SKY AND DID NOT HASTEN TO COME UP, [SO THAT IT WAS] AS WHEN DAY IS DONE’. ALTHOUGH THE HEBREW WORDS TRANSLATED STAND AND STOPPED MAY MEAN ‘CEASE SHINING’, ESPECIALLY IN POETRY, THE NARRATOR’S PROSAIC QUALIFIER TO STOPPED IN V 13B IN THE MIDDLE OF THE SKY RATHER THAN ‘SHINING’ SEEMS TO FAVOR THE TRADITIONAL INTERPRETATION. SIMILARLY, TO TAKE THE WORDS TRANSLATED IN THE NIV DELAYED GOING DOWN AS ‘DID NOT HASTEN TO COME UP’ IS TO STRAIN THE MEANING OF THE HEBREW. THIS INTERPRETATION, THOUGH INGENIOUS, SEEMS MOTIVATED, NOT BY A NORMAL READING OF THE TEXT, BUT BY AN ATTEMPT TO SATISFY THE RULES OF SCIENCE. THERE HAVE ALSO BEEN ATTEMPTS TO CLASSIFY THIS PASSAGE AS A HISTORICIZED MYTH (SEE R.G. BOLING IN ANCHOR BIBLE), BUT THAT INTERPRETATION UNDERMINES THE CREDIBILITY OF THE INSPIRED AUTHOR. OTHER SCHOLARS HAVE REJECTED SCIENTIFIC EXPLANATIONS, REGARDING ‘THE PHENOMENON AS ONE OF THE NUMEROUS MIRACLES OF WHICH THE BIBLE TELLS US … A “SIGN” OF AN EXTRAORDINARY DIVINE INTERVENTION WHICH IMPARTS A GRACE UNMERITED BY MAN AND INCONCEIVABLE IN ANY OTHER WAY’ (`J.A. SOGGIN, JOSHUA [SCM, P. 123]). JOSHUA’S COMMAND TO THE SUN HAS BEEN COMPARED TO AGAMEMNON’S PRAYER TO ZEUS NOT TO LET THE SUN GO DOWN BEFORE THE ACHAEANS HAVE BEEN VICTORIOUS. 16–21 THE EPIC OF THE BATTLE OF GIBEON IS NOW RESUMED. JOSHUA DID NOT STOP HIS ARMY TO EXECUTE THE FIVE KINGS WHO, ACCORDING TO HIS INTELLIGENCE REPORTS, HAD HIDDEN THEMSELVES IN THE CAVE AT MAKKEDAH. INSTEAD HE ORDERED A UNIT TO BLOCK ITS ENTRANCE WITH GREAT STONES AND TO GUARD IT, WHILE HIS MAIN FORCE PURSUED THE FLEEING CANAANITES, CUTTING OFF THEIR RETREAT TO THEIR FORTIFIED CITIES IN THE WEST. SOME, HOWEVER, ESCAPED (CF. VS 28–39). THE TROOPS THEN RETURNED TO THE CAMP NOW SET UP AT MAKKEDAH. NONE DARED CRITICIZE EVEN ONE MAN OF THIS VANQUISHING ARMY (CF. EX. 11:7, WHERE ‘BARK’ REPRESENTS THE SAME HEBREW WORD RENDERED HERE UTTERED A WORD). WITH THAT REPUTATION THEY WILL SOON HAVE REST. 22–27 IT WAS NOW TIME TO DISPATCH THE FIVE KINGS. JOSHUA USED THE OCCASION TO FORTIFY SPIRITUALLY HIS TROOPS FOR FUTURE BATTLES. BEFORE THE ENTIRE ARMY HE INSTRUCTED HIS COMMANDERS TO FOLLOW A WIDESPREAD ANCIENT CUSTOM AND PLACE THEIR FEET UPON THE NECKS OF THE HUMILIATED KINGS (CF. 1 KI. 5:3; PS. 110:1; 1 COR. 15:25–28). AS THE LORD HAD COMMANDED JOSHUA AT THE BEGINNING OF THE CONQUEST (1:8), JOSHUA NOW COMMANDED THEM NOT TO FEAR, FOR THESE KINGS WERE AN EARNEST OF GOD’S FUTURE VICTORIES. THEN JOSHUA KILLED THEM. AS HE DID WITH THE KING OF AI, HE HAD THESE CURSED KINGS IMPALED UNTIL THE EVENING AS A PUBLIC SPECTACLE TO INDUCE THE FEAR OF THE LORD, NOT OF THE CANAANITES. THE STONES IN FRONT OF THE CAVE FUNCTIONED AS YET ANOTHER MEMORIAL TO JOSHUA’S AMAZING CONQUEST (CF. 4:5–7). THE KINGS’ EXECUTION PREFIGURES SATAN’S HUMILIATION AND DEFEAT (CF. GN. 3:15). 10:29–39 ANNIHILATION OF SEVEN AMORITE CITIES. IN A SEQUEL THE NARRATOR RAPIDLY LISTS SEVEN ROYAL ARMIES THAT JOSHUA WIPED OUT AND SIX ROYAL CITIES THAT HE FOUGHT AGAINST, CAPTURED, AND PUT TO THE HĒREM. 10:40–43 SUMMARY. THE THREE PRINCIPAL GEOGRAPHICAL AREAS OF JUDAH, THE HILL COUNTRY, THE NEGEV AND THE FOOTHILLS, WERE ALL SUBDUED IN THIS CAMPAIGN. THOUGH MUCH LAND STILL REMAINED TO BE TAKEN (SEE 13:1–7), THE BACK OF THE CONDEMNED CANAANITES HAD BEEN BROKEN; IN THAT SENSE IT COULD BE SAID THAT JOSHUA HAD SUBDUED THE WHOLE REGION.**

**11:1–15 CONQUEST OF THE NORTH**

**THE NORTHERN CAMPAIGN, LIKE THE SOUTHERN ONE, ALSO CONSISTED OF TWO PARTS: THE ROUT AT THE WATERS OF MEROM (11:1–9) AND THE SUBSEQUENT CAPTURE OF THE CITIES (11:10–15). ALL THE CONDEMNED NATIONS ASSEMBLED AGAINST ISRAEL FOR THIS DECISIVE AND CLIMACTIC BATTLE FOR THE LAND (CF. 3:10; 9:1–2). 11:1–9 BATTLE AT THE WATERS OF MEROM. 1–5 THE CONVENER OF THE CANAANITE COALITION WAS JABIN, A DYNASTIC RULER AT HAZOR (SEE JDG. 4:2). HAZOR (MODERN TELL QEDAH) WAS A HUGE, STRONGLY FORTIFIED CITY IN JOSHUA’S TIME, COVERING 200 ACRES (80 HECTARES) WITH A POPULATION OF ABOUT 40,000. IT WAS ONE OF THE MAJOR CITIES ALONG THE TRADE ROUTE BETWEEN EGYPT AND MESOPOTAMIA. ARCHAEOLOGY AND ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN LITERATURES CORROBORATE THE STATEMENT THAT HAZOR HAD BEEN THE HEAD OF ALL THESE KINGDOMS (10). THE NARRATOR PRESENTS JABIN’S CALL TO ARMS CONCENTRICALLY. AT THE HEART OF THE ARMY WAS JABIN (1A). ASSEMBLED AROUND HIM WERE THREE KINGS OF GALILEE: FROM MADON (NEAR QARN HATTIN IN THE HEART OF GALILEE), SHIMRON (SITE UNCERTAIN), AND ACHSHAPH (SOMEWHERE IN ASHER, SEE 19:25). REINFORCING THEM WERE KINGS FROM THE SURROUNDING AREAS: IN THE NORTH FROM THE MOUNTAINS IN UPPER GALILEE, IN THE SOUTH FROM KINNERETH AND THE JORDAN VALLEY SOUTH OF KINNERETH, AND IN THE WEST FROM NAPHOTH DOR, A FAMOUS SEAPORT JUST SOUTH OF MT CARMEL (2). TO PROVIDE MAXIMUM STRENGTH KINGS ASSEMBLED FROM THE MORE REMOTE REGIONS SOUTH AND NORTH OF THEM (3). REGARDING THE REMOTE SOUTH, V 3A, SHOULD READ: ‘TO THE CANAANITES IN THE EAST AND IN THE WEST TO THE AMORITES: [BETWEEN THEM] TO THE HITTITES, THE PERIZZITES, THE JEBUSITES IN THE HILL COUNTRY.’ FROM THE REMOTE NORTH THE HIVITES HAILED FROM BELOW MT HERMON IN THE REGION OF MIZPAH (AN UNCERTAIN SITE MEANING ‘LOOK OUT’).**

**11:16-23: THE CONQUEST OF HAZOR.**

**THESE ALLIES WERE ARMED WITH THE ULTIMATE WEAPON OF THEIR DAY, THE LIGHTWEIGHT HORSE-DRAWN CHARIOT, WHICH COULD BE DISASSEMBLED AND REASSEMBLED FOR FIGHTING IN THE PLAINS. THEY MET FOR THE DECISIVE BATTLE PROBABLY IN THE PLATEAU TO THE NORTH OF JEBEL JERMAQ, ABOUT 2.5 MILES (4 KM) NORTH-EAST OF MEROM. 6–9 ONCE AGAIN ISRAEL FOLLOWED ITS RULES OF HOLY WAR: JOSHUA CONSULTED THE LORD, AND HE GAVE JOSHUA’S ARMY THE ENCOURAGEMENT NEEDED AGAINST STAGGERING ODDS; HE TOLD THEM BOTH THE TIME OF BATTLE, AND THE TACTICS TO EMPLOY. WHEN JOSHUA’S MEN HAD CRIPPLED THE HORSES, THE CHARIOTEERS WOULD BE FORCED TO FLEE AND THE ISRAELITES COULD THEN PURSUE THEM. AFTERWARDS THEY COULD RETURN AND BURN THE CHARIOTS AT THEIR LEISURE, WHICH IS WHAT THEY DID (9). (ON STRATEGY VERSUS MIRACLE SEE 8:1–2; 9:1–2; 10:8–15). JOSHUA AND HIS BATTLE-HARDENED ARMY NOW ATTACKED SUDDENLY IN A PRE-EMPTIVE STRIKE (7). THE HOLY ROUT WAS ON AGAIN (8; CF. 10:9–11). THE UNHOLY COALITION SPLIT APART, SOME FLEEING TO THE NORTH-WEST AND OTHERS TO THE NORTH-EAST, BOTH HASTENING HEADLONG OUT OF THE LAND. FOLLOWING THE RULES OF HOLY WAR JOSHUA SPARED NONE OF THEM. 11:10–15 CAPTURE OF THE CITIES. THE FATE OF THE CAPTURED CITIES PARALLELS THE LIST IN 10:28–39. AS IN THE CASE OF JERICHO, THE VAUNTED CITY OF HAZOR WAS TOTALLY DESTROYED (ḤĒREM); NOTHING WAS SPARED AND THE CITY ITSELF WAS BURNED (CF. 6:15–21). (FOR THE ARCHAELOGICAL EVIDENCE AT HAZOR SEE INTRODUCTION: DATE OF THE CONQUEST.) UNLIKE JERICHO, HOWEVER, NO CURSE WAS PLACED UPON ANYONE WHO REBUILT IT (CF. JDG. 4:2). THE ISRAELITES DID NOT BURN THE OTHER ROYAL CITIES. AS IN THE CASE OF AI, THEY KEPT THE PLUNDER (CF. 8:24–27), AS THE LORD HAD COMMANDED MOSES (DT. 6:10–11). MOSES’ COMMAND, ‘DO NOT LEAVE ALIVE ANYTHING THAT BREATHES’ (DT. 20:16), MUST REFER TO HUMAN LIFE, NOT FLOCKS AND CATTLE, FOR WITH THE LORD’S FULL APPROVAL ISRAEL CARRIED OFF THE LIVESTOCK FOR THEMSELVES (12–15).**

**11:16–23 SUMMARY OF THE CONQUEST**

**THE SUMMARY AT THE END OF THE SOUTHERN CAMPAIGN (10:40–41) IS MATCHED BY A SUMMARY OF THE ENTIRE CONQUEST. THE ARABAH, UNLIKE V 2, IS THE ENTIRE RIFT VALLEY FROM ABOVE THE SEA OF GALILEE TO THE GULF OF EILAT. MT HALAK (‘BALD MOUNTAIN’), IS JELEB HALAQ, FAR TO THE SOUTH-EAST OF BEERSHEBA AND SEIR IS EDOM. BAAL-GAD, THE OPPOSITE POLE ON THE NORTH-SOUTH AXIS MAY BE BANIAS, AT THE BASE OF MT HERMON AND THE SOURCE OF THE JORDAN (17). TO JUDGE FROM THE AGE OF CALEB, IF THE NUMBERS CAN BE TAKEN AT FACE VALUE, THE LONG TIME (18) OF THE CONQUEST MAY BE SEVEN YEARS. CALEB WAS EIGHTY-FIVE AT THE END OF THE CONQUEST (SEE 14:10) AND SEVENTY-EIGHT WHEN IT BEGAN (CF. 14:7 AND DT. 2:14). NONE OF THE CANAANITES REPENTED, EXCEPT RAHAB AND HER FAMILY, AND ONLY THE GIBEONITES SOUGHT A PEACE TREATY, BECAUSE THE LORD HARDENED THE HEARTS OF THE REST FOR SLAUGHTER (20; SEE 9:1–2). FROM THE PARALLEL SITUATION OF PHARAOH VERSUS MOSES ONE CAN INFER THAT THE HEARTS OF THE CANAANITES AGAINST JOSHUA WERE, LIKE ALL OF HUMANKIND, NATURALLY HARD (EX. 7:11–14; 1 COR. 2:14). WHEN CONFRONTED WITH THE LORD’S AMAZING DEEDS THROUGH HIS SERVANT, THEY, LIKE PHARAOH, HARDENED THEIR HEARTS (CF. EX. 8:32; 9:34), WHEREUPON THE SOVEREIGN LORD HARDENED THEM (CF. EX. 10:1). ALL PEOPLE ARE DEAD IN SIN AND DESERVE GOD’S JUDGMENT; IT IS ONLY THROUGH GOD’S MERCY THAT HE GIVES NEW LIFE TO SOME (ROM. 9:10–18). THE SUMMARY IN V 23 REFERS BACK TO 1:3. ELSEWHERE THE NARRATOR NOTES THE INCOMPLETENESS OF THE CONQUEST IN MORE PRECISE TERMS (SEE 13:1; 15:63; 16:10). FOR REST, SEE ON 1:12–15 AND 10:21. ISRAEL’S WANDERINGS WERE OVER. WITH ORGANIZED RESISTANCE GONE, THE WAY WAS READY FOR THE LAND TO BE DISTRIBUTED (23; SEE 1:6).**

**12:1–24 APPENDIX: LIST OF DEFEATED KINGS**

**THIS CHAPTER, SUMMARIZING THE KINGS THE ISRAELITES KILLED AND WHOSE LANDS THEY TOOK OVER, PROVIDES A TRANSITION BETWEEN THE CONQUEST OF THE LAND (CHS. 1–11) AND ITS DISTRIBUTION (CHS. 12–21). THIS LIST CONFIRMS CHS. 6–11. JOSHUA REPEATEDLY NOTES THE CHANGE FROM THE OLD, WICKED KINGS AND THEIR LANDS TO GOD AS THE NEW RULER AND HIS TRIBES WHO WILL SANCTIFY THE PROMISED LAND. THIS CHANGE ILLUSTRATES SEVERAL TRUTHS. FIRST, THAT THE JUST KINGDOM OF GOD RIGHTFULLY REPLACES THE UNJUST KINGDOMS OF THIS WORLD WHO HAVE USURPED HIS RULE OVER THE EARTH (SEE 3:9–13; 8:30–35). SECONDLY, THAT AT THE TIME OF JUDGMENT GOD DECISIVELY ELIMINATES THE WICKED. THIRDLY, THAT THE WICKED CANNOT STAND BEFORE A HOLY ARMY, ONE THAT FOLLOWS GOD’S REVELATION AND TRUSTS IN HIM (1:5; 10:8). FOURTHLY, THAT THE ETERNAL GOD KEEPS HIS PROMISES. GOD HAD COVENANTED THIS LAND TO THE PATRIARCHS AND THEIR SEED. HE HAS NOW FULFILLED THAT PROMISE BUT HAS NOT YET CONSUMMATED IT (SEE 1:6). THE CONQUEST REMINDS THE CHURCH THAT THE COVENANT-KEEPING GOD WILL GIVE HIS PEOPLE THE NEW HEAVENS AND THE NEW EARTH, AS HE PROMISED, AND CORRESPONDINGLY THAT THEY MUST WAIT PATIENTLY FOR THEIR INHERITANCE (HEB. 11:39–40). FIFTHLY, THAT THE UNITED PEOPLE OF GOD, IN THIS CASE THE TRIBES BOTH WEST AND EAST OF THE JORDAN, DISPOSSESS THE ILLEGITIMATE RULERS AND INHERIT THE PROMISED LAND (SEE 1:12–15). THE SUMMARY IS DIVIDED INTO TWO HALVES: ISRAEL’S CONQUEST AND SETTLEMENT OF THE LAND EAST OF THE JORDAN (1–5), AND JOSHUA’S CONQUEST OF THE KINGS WEST OF THE JORDAN (6–24). 12:1–5 CONQUEST OF THE LAND EAST OF THE JORDAN BY MOSES AND ITS SETTLEMENT. THE NARRATOR FIRST REMINDS HIS READERS OF THE TRANSITORINESS OF THE KINGDOMS EAST OF THE JORDAN. 1 THE IMMENSE GORGE OF THE ARNON, WADI EL-MUJIB, ON THE EAST SIDE OF THE JORDAN OPPOSITE EIN GEDI, IS A NATURAL BORDER PREVIOUSLY MARKING THE BOUNDARY BETWEEN THE MOABITES TO THE SOUTH AND AMORITES TO THE NORTH (JDG. 11:18–19). THE ARABAH HERE IS THE WIDE JORDAN RIFT VALLEY BETWEEN THE SEA OF GALILEE (KINNERETH) AND THE DEAD SEA (SEA OF THE ARABAH). AT THE TIME OF JOSHUA, THE NORTHERN BORDER WAS MT HERMON, NOT THE PROMISED BORDER AT THE EUPHRATES (SEE 1:4; 13:1–7). 2–3 THE CONQUEST OF SIHON KING OF THE AMORITES IS TOLD IN NU. 21:21–31 AND DT. 2:24–37. AROER (MODERN AR‘ARAH) IS ABOUT 6 MILES (10 KM) FROM THE DEAD SEA ON THE NORTH BANK OVERLOOKING THE WADI EL-MUJIB. IT SYMBOLIZED THE SOUTHERN LIMIT OF THIS TERRITORY. THE WADI JABBOK, FLOWING WESTWARD INTO THE JORDAN, ABOUT 7 MILES (12 KM) NORTH OF THE DEAD SEA, FORMED SIHON’S NORTHERN BOUNDARY. ISRAEL WAS NOT ALLOWED TO ENCROACH UPON THE EASTERN HALF OF THE LAND BELONGING TO THE AMMONITES, WHO WERE NOT YET ORGANIZED AS A KINGDOM (SEE 13:25). GILEAD PROPER WAS THE HILLY, FORESTED COUNTRY NORTH OF A LINE REACHING WESTWARD FROM HESHBON TO THE DEAD SEA AND EXTENDING NORTHWARDS TOWARDS THE WADI YARMUK, BUT IT FLATTENS OUT INTO PLAINS ABOUT 11 MILES (18 KM) SOUTH OF YARMUK. THE NORTHERN EXTENSIONS OF THESE PLAINS FORM THE TERRITORY OF BASHAN. THIS HILLY, WOODED AREA IS HALVED BY THE WADI JABBOK. 4–5 THE CONQUEST OF OG KING OF BASHAN IS TOLD IN NU. 21:32–35 AND DT. 3:1–11. THE REPHAITES WERE GIANTS WHO INHABITED THE LAND BEFORE THE ISRAELITES. THEY WERE KNOWN BY THEIR SUCCESSORS, THE MOABITES AND AMMONITES, AS THE EMIMITES AND THE ZAMZUMMIMITES RESPECTIVELY (DT. 2:11, 20–21). THESE FORMIDABLE PEOPLE, COMPARABLE IN STATURE WITH THE ANAKITES, WERE IN THE PROMISED LAND AT THE TIME OF ABRAHAM (GN. 15:20). THE GESHURITES AND MAACATHITES WERE ARAMEAN TRIBES ON THE EASTERN FRINGE OF ISRAEL. 6 THESE LANDS WERE CONQUERED BY MOSES, WHO, UNDER GOD, HANDED THEM OVER TO THE TWO-AND-A-HALF TRIBES LOYAL TO THE LORD IN ORDER TO SANCTIFY THE LAND. TWICE MOSES IS CALLED SERVANT OF THE LORD (CF. 1:1) PROBABLY TO SHOW ISRAEL’S LEGITIMATE RIGHT TO THE LAND. 12:7–24 CONQUEST OF THE LAND WEST OF THE JORDAN BY JOSHUA. THE LAND JOSHUA CONQUERED IS ROUGHLY THE SIZE OF THE STATE OF VERMONT IN THE USA OR WALES IN GREAT BRITAIN. 7–8 JOSHUA AND THE ISRAELITES IN V 7 MATCHES MOSES … AND THE ISRAELITES IN V 6. (FOR BAAL-GAD, SEE ON 11:17.) THE LIST ROUGHLY FOLLOWS THE ACCOUNTS OF THE CONQUEST AS PRESENTED IN CHS. 6–11 AND SUPPLEMENTS THEM. AT THIS TIME ISRAEL HAD ITS CAMP AT GILGAL AND HAD NOT YET SETTLED THE LAND OR OCCUPIED ITS CITIES. 9–24 THESE ‘KINGS’ RULED OVER TINY CITY-STATES WHOSE TERRITORY EXTENDED ONLY ABOUT 3 MILES (5 KM) AROUND THE FORTIFIED CITY. IN 668 BC, AFTER HIS FIRST CAMPAIGN IN SYRIA-PALESTINE, ASHURBANIPAL COLLECTED TRIBUTE FROM THIRTY-THREE KINGS.**

**13:1–21:45 ALLOTTING THE LAND**

**LAND WAS ALLOCATED TO SOME OF THE TRIBES PRIOR TO THEIR TAKING POSSESSION OF IT (13:1–7). THIS REMAINING LAND PRESENTED A CONTINUING CHALLENGE TO THE FAITH OF THESE UNSETTLED TRIBES. THOUGH ALL ISRAEL FOUGHT CONCERTEDLY TO ESTABLISH ITSELF IN THE PROMISED LAND, THE VARIOUS TRIBES TOOK POSSESSION OF THEIR TERRITORIES IN SEVERAL WAYS, AT DIFFERENT TIMES, AND WITH VARYING DEGREES OF SUCCESS. THE TWO-AND-A-HALF EASTERN TRIBES ASKED FOR AND RECEIVED FROM MOSES THE AREA EAST OF THE RIVER (13:8–33; CF. 12:1–6). WEST OF THE RIVER, JUDAH, EPHRAIM AND MANASSEH CARVED OUT LAND FOR THEMSELVES AND THEN HAD IT ALLOTTED TO THEM BY JOSHUA (15:1–17:18). THE REMAINING SEVEN TRIBES, HOWEVER, DID NOT HAVE THIS SUCCESS. IN THEIR CASE, JOSHUA HAD THE LAND SURVEYED, DIVIDED IT INTO SEVEN APPROPRIATE GEOGRAPHICAL AREAS, AND THEN CAST LOTS FOR ITS DISTRIBUTION (18:1–19:51). IT WAS THEN UP TO EACH TRIBE TO CLAIM ITS ALLOTMENT.**

**13:1–7 LAND STILL TO BE TAKEN**

**THE BOOK OF JOSHUA PRESENTS TWO VIEWS OF THE NATURE AND SCOPE OF ISRAEL’S OCCUPATION OF CANAAN: LIGHTNING-QUICK AND SPECTACULARLY SUCCESSFUL BATTLES IN CONQUERING THE ENTIRE LAND (11:16–23; 21:43–45; CF. EX. 23:23), AND A SERIES OF MANY BATTLES OVER A LONG TIME (11:18) WITH HUGE TRACTS OF TERRITORY STILL TO BE POSSESSED LITTLE BY LITTLE AFTER THE CONQUEST (13:1–7; 18:3; CF. EX. 23:27–30; JDG. 1). THE TENSION MAY BE RESOLVED BY NOTING TWO FACTORS. FIRST, BIBLICAL HISTORIANS PRESENT THEIR MATERIAL ACCORDING TO THEOLOGICAL SCHEMES. SOMETIMES, AS IN THE CASE OF THE BOOKS OF KINGS AND CHRONICLES AND OF THE NT GOSPELS, DIFFERENT AUTHORS PRESENT THE SAME HISTORY FROM DIFFERENT ANGLES. TO MAKE THEIR POINTS THEY CAREFULLY SELECT MATERIAL, ORGANIZING IT THEMATICALLY, NOT NECESSARILY CHRONOLOGICALLY, AND EDITING AS NECESSARY. THEY WRITE HISTORY IN ORDER TO PROVOKE MEMORY AND INSPIRE VISION, NOT MERELY TO CHRONICLE EVENTS. OUR NARRATOR CELEBRATES THAT WHEN JOSHUA’S AMAZING CAMPAIGNS ENDED CANAANITE RESISTANCE WAS GONE. BY THE ‘LAND’ HE MEANS BOTH THE TERRITORY AND ITS INHABITANTS. NOW THAT THE PEOPLE OF THE LAND HAVE BEEN DEFEATED, IT COULD BE SAID THAT THE WHOLE LAND IN ITS GEOGRAPHIC SENSE HAD BEEN TAKEN. THAT MEMORY AIMED TO NERVE ISRAEL TO SETTLE THE LAND THAT REMAINED. SECONDLY, ISRAEL’S POSSESSION OF THE LAND AND THE REST THAT ENSUED ARE EXPANDABLE THEMES, FOR THE LAND WAS TAKEN ‘LITTLE BY LITTLE’ (EX. 23:30) BUT NEVER TOTALLY (HEB. 4:1–14). FUTURE GENERATIONS MUST PLAY THEIR PART (JDG. 3:1–4). THE AUTHOR OF CHRONICLES USED JDG. 3:1–4 TO PRESENT DAVID AS GREATER THAN JOSHUA FOR HE RULED FROM ‘THE SHIHOR RIVER IN EGYPT TO LEBO [THE ENTRANCE TO] HAMATH’, USING VOCABULARY UNIQUE TO THESE TWO TEXTS. ISAIAH SAW THE FULFILMENT OF THESE IDEAL NATIONAL BOUNDARIES IN THE MESSIANIC AGE (IS. 11:12–16). AT ANY GIVEN POINT DURING THE PROCESS OF POSSESSING THE LAND, IT CAN BE SAID GOD FULFILLED HIS PROMISE. MOREOVER, EACH INDIVIDUAL FULFILMENT WAS A PART OF THE ULTIMATE FULFILMENT AND COULD BE RECKONED AS SUCH. THE NT PRESENTS THE SAME TENSION REGARDING THE KINGDOM OF GOD: IT IS ALREADY HERE BUT IN ITS FULLEST SENSE ‘NOT YET’.**

**THE LANDS THAT REMAINED WERE: 2–3 THE TERRITORY THAT WILL BECOME PHILISTIA, FROM SHIHOR (‘RIVER OF HORUS’, THE NILE) TO GEZER (FOLLOWING THE LXX, NOT GESHUR AS IN NIV). THOUGH LATER RULED BY THE PHILISTINES (CF. 11:22; GN. 10:14), THIS LAND WAS PART OF THE CANAANITE TERRITORY PROMISED TO ISRAEL. THE AVVITES LIVED IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD OF GAZA. 4 THE TERRITORY OF THE CANAANITES FROM ARAH (SITE UNKNOWN) OF THE SIDONIANS AS FAR AS APHEK, SOUTH-EAST OF BYBLOS, AND THE AMORITES, PROBABLY THE KINGDOM OF THE AMURRU IN THE LEBANON REGION. 5 THE TERRITORY OF THE GEBALITES I.E. THE AREA OF BYBLOS AND ALL OF LEBANON EAST OF BAAL GAD BENEATH MT HERMON TO THE ENTRANCE TO HAMATH. OTHER AREAS STILL TO BE TAKEN WERE: STRATEGIC CITIES IN THE JEZREEL VALLEY—MEGIDDO, TAANACH, IBLEAM, ENDOR AND BETH SHAN (17:11–12; CF. JDG. 1:27). THE COASTAL PLAIN, APHEK, GEZER AND DOR (13:4; 16:10; 17:11; CF. JDG. 1:27, 29). THE CITY OF JERUSALEM (15:63; CF. JDG. 1:21) AND THE TERRITORIES OF GESHUR AND MAACAH (13:13). THESE COMMENTS SHOW THAT ISRAEL CARVED OUT ITS TERRITORY IN THE MOUNTAINS OF PALESTINE WHILE THE NATIVE POPULATIONS REMAINED IN THE PLAINS BECAUSE THEY INTIMIDATED ISRAEL WITH THEIR IRON CHARIOTS (SEE 17:16; JDG. 1:19). ALLOCATE IN V 6 MEANS ‘TO CAUSE TO FALL’ (I.E. THE LOT RULED BY GOD; CF. NU. 33:54; IS. 34:17; MI. 2:4–5).**

**13:8–33 DISTRIBUTION OF THE LAND EAST OF THE JORDAN**

**THIS CHAPTER AIMS TO GIVE A TOTAL IDEA OF THE LAND EAST OF THE JORDAN, WHICH MOSES DISTRIBUTED. 13:8–13 SURVEY OF THE LAND FOR THE EASTERN TRIBES. THE ALLOCATION IS LINKED WITH 12:1–5. THE HALF-TRIBE OF MANASSEH IS MENTIONED FIRST TO LINK IT WITH V 7, NOT BECAUSE IT WAS MOST IMPORTANT. 13:14 THE TRIBE OF LEVI. VS 14 AND 33 FUNCTION AS A FRAME TO THE MORE DETAILED ACCOUNT OF THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE LAND TO THE EASTERN TRIBES (15–31). IN THIS WAY, THE LEVITES’ INHERITANCE, THE LORD AND HIS OFFERINGS, IS BOTH HIGHLIGHTED AND DISTINGUISHED. THE BEST INHERITANCE WAS FELLOWSHIP WITH THE LORD HIMSELF, AN INHERITANCE AVAILABLE TO ALL WHO DESIRE IT (CF. PSS. 16:5; 119:57; 142:5), SHOWING THAT THE INHERITANCE WAS NOT LINKED INEXTRICABLY WITH THE LAND ITSELF. 13:15–23 THE TRIBE OF REUBEN. THIS SECTION LISTS TWELVE CAPTURED TOWNS FIRST (17–20) AND THEN THE HISTORY OF THE CONQUEST OF THE LAND EAST OF THE JORDAN (21–22; CF. NU. 21:21–32). THE ENTIRE REALM OF SIHON (21A) MUST BE QUALIFIED, FOR IN V 27 PART OF IT WENT TO GAD. IN VIEW HERE IS THE PART THAT EXTENDED OVER THE TABLELAND. 21B–22 MENTION THE DEFEAT OF SIHON KING OF THE AMORITES ADDING THAT OF THE MIDIANITE CHIEFS, AND OF BALAAM THE SORCERER (24:9–10; DT. 23:4–5), TO UNDERSCORE THE POLITICAL AND SPIRITUAL CHANGE OF ADMINISTRATIONS THAT MOSES, THE LAWGIVER, BROUGHT ABOUT IN THE LAND (SEE ON 12:1–5). 23 PRESENTS A SUMMARY.**

**REUBEN, GAD AND EASTERN MANASSEH.**

**13:24–28 THE TRIBE OF GAD. V 25 GIVES AN OVERVIEW AND SETS AN EASTERN LIMIT WHILE V 26 SETS LIMITS ON SOUTH AND NORTH AND V 27 LISTS THE WESTERN CLAIMS IN THE JORDAN VALLEY. THE INTRODUCTORY FORMULA (24; CF. VS 15, 29) MEANS TO SAY THAT NO LESS A PERSON THAN MOSES GAVE THEM THIS PATRIMONY (SEE ON 1:6). ALL THE TOWNS OF GILEAD NEAR JAZER IN SOUTHERN GILEAD (CF. V 31). HALF THE AMMONITE COUNTRY REFERS TO THE WESTERN PART, BETWEEN THE ARNON AND THE JABBOK, NOT THE EASTERN (SEE 12:1–5; DT. 2:19). THIS AROER IS NOT TO BE CONFUSED WITH THE ONE OVERLOOKING THE ARNON GORGE (SEE 12:2; 13:16). 13:29–30 THE HALF-TRIBE OF MANASSEH. THE SOUTHERNMOST BORDER FOR THE TRIBE DESCENDING FROM MACHIR, SON OF MANASSEH, IS SAID TO BE MAHANAIM, BUT NO ATTEMPT IS MADE TO DEFINE PRECISELY ITS OTHER BOUNDARIES. THESE ROUGHLY FIT THE DESCRIPTION IN DT. 3:4. 13–15 MANASSEH, AS JACOB’S FIRSTBORN, WAS EXCEPTIONAL IN THAT IT RECEIVED TWO PORTIONS, DESPITE THE PREFERENCE EXPRESSED BY JACOB IN GN. 48. 13:31–33 SUMMARY. THE SUMMARY FRAMES THIS SECTION. THE REFERENCE TO LEVI PROMISES THE READER SOMETHING BETTER (CF. V 14). 14:1–19:51 DISTRIBUTION OF THE LAND WEST OF THE JORDAN. BETWEEN THE INTRODUCTION (14:1–5) AND THE CONCLUSION (19:51), THE NARRATOR FRAMES THIS SECTION WITH THE EXEMPLARY FAITHS OF CALEB (14:6–15) AND JOSHUA (19:49–50). THESE TWO HEROES, WHO BY FAITH OUTLIVED THEIR OWN GENERATION, CLAIMED THEIR INHERITANCES AND POSSESSED THEM.**

**14:1–5 INTRODUCTION. THE INTRODUCTION TO THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE TERRITORY WEST OF THE JORDAN NAMES THE LAND, THE ADMINISTRATORS, THE METHOD, THE TRIBES AND THE LEGAL WARRANT.**

**THE EGYPTIANS REFERRED TO THIS LAND AS ‘CANAAN’, THE ADMINISTRATIVE TERM USED HERE FOR THE TERRITORY IN VIEW (SEE 21:2; 22:9). THE LORD ULTIMATELY DIRECTED THE DISTRIBUTION BY MEANS OF THE LOT (SEE 13:6), WHILE ELEAZAR THE PRIEST, JOSHUA AND THE HEADS OF THE TRIBAL CLANS (I.E. SUB-TRIBAL CHIEFS; SEE 21:1) MEDIATED THE DECISION AND ADMINISTERED IT. ELEAZAR IS MENTIONED FIRST BECAUSE JOSHUA STOOD BEFORE HIM AT THE ENTRANCE OF THE TENT OF MEETING AND ASKED HIM TO CONSULT THE URIM AND THUMMIM, INSTRUMENTS THAT GAVE ‘YES’ OR ‘NO’ ANSWERS IN RESPONSE TO SPECIFIC INQUIRIES (18:1–10; CF. NU. 27:21). HERE THE NINE-AND-A-HALF WESTERN TRIBES ARE IN VIEW, NOT THE TWO-AND-A-HALF EASTERN TRIBES (CF. 13:8–13). IN ISRAEL THE FIRSTBORN RECEIVED A DOUBLE BLESSING (DT. 21:15–17). JACOB, HOWEVER, THE FATHER OF ALL THE TRIBES, MADE AN EXCEPTION. HE PASSED OVER REUBEN, HIS FIRSTBORN BY LEAH, HIS UNLOVED WIFE (GN. 29:31–32), AND GAVE THE DOUBLE PORTION INSTEAD TO JOSEPH, THE FIRSTBORN OF HIS BELOVED RACHEL. HE DID THIS BY ELEVATING JOSEPH’S TWO SONS, MANASSEH AND EPHRAIM, TO FULL TRIBAL STATUS ALONG WITH HIS OWN SONS REUBEN AND SIMEON (GN. 48:1–9). THE MOSAIC LAW LATER DISALLOWED THIS PRACTICE. THE LEVITES WERE AGAIN EXCLUDED. IN 13:14 THEIR SPIRITUAL HERITAGE IS EMPHASIZED; HERE THEIR PRACTICAL NEEDS ARE MET (CF. NU. 18:21–32). NO LESS A FIGURE THAN MOSES, ELSEWHERE CALLED ‘THE SERVANT OF THE LORD’ (13:8; 14:7) AND ‘MAN OF GOD’ (14:6), APPROVED THIS PROCEDURE. THE POINT IS REPEATED SEVERAL TIMES (2–3, 5). SINCE THE CLANS FOLLOWED MOSES’ LEGISLATION PERFECTLY, THEIR CLAIMS WERE VALID. 14:6–17:18 EARLY ALLOTMENTS AT GILGAL: JUDAH AND JOSEPH. 14:6–15 CALEB’S NAME MEANS ‘DOG’ AND MAY REFLECT THE HONORED STATUS OF THIS FAITHFUL AND HUMBLE ‘SERVANT OF THE LORD’ (NU. 14:24). IN THE AMARNA (C. 1350 BC) AND THE LACHISH LETTERS (586 BC) VASSALS USE THE TERM OF THEMSELVES TO EXPRESS THEIR LOYALTY TO KINGS. THE NARRATOR REFERS TO HIM AS A KENIZZITE BECAUSE OF HIS FATHER (1 CHR. 4:13–15). HIS EXCEPTIONAL ALLOTMENT IS GIVEN FIRST BECAUSE HIS WHOLEHEARTED COMMITMENT TO THE LORD—REPEATED THREE TIMES FOR EMPHASIS (8–9, 14)—EXEMPLIFIED THE WAY IN WHICH THE TRIBES WERE TO CLAIM THEIR LAND EVEN AGAINST REDOUBTABLE FOES (SEE 13:1–7). WITH THAT KIND OF FAITH, THE LAND HAD REST FROM WAR (15; CF. 1:15; 11:23). AFTER AN INTRODUCTION (6A), CALEB’S STORY HAS THREE PARTS: HIS LEGAL RIGHT BASED ON FAITH AND GOD’S WORD (6B–9), HIS CLAIM OF IT BY FAITH AND WAR (10–12), AND JOSHUA’S GRANT (13–15). CALEB’S CLAIM WAS BASED ON GOD’S PROMISE TO GIVE HIM AND JOSHUA THE LAND IN CONNECTION WITH THEIR FAITHFULNESS IN THE RECONNAISSANCE FROM KADESH (NU. 14:24, 30). CALEB’S CONVICTION NOT TO UNDERMINE THE PEOPLE’S MORALE WON HIM LIFE AND AN INHERITANCE (SEE NU. 13). THE LAND HE HAD WALKED UPON AT THAT TIME WAS NOT THE CITY OF HEBRON ITSELF OR ITS IMMEDIATE PASTURE-LANDS BUT THE FIELDS AND VILLAGES AROUND IT (13; SEE 21:11–12). GOD’S PROMISE ENTAILED THAT CALEB’S INHERITANCE SHOULD NOT BE DETERMINED BY CASTING LOTS. PROBABLY THE MEN OF JUDAH ACCOMPANIED HIM TO SUPPORT HIS CLAIM. HIS DEMAND EXEMPLIFIES THE NATURE OF THE COVENANT WITH GOD. HE WAS GRANTED THE RIGHT TO THE LAND IN THE FIRST PLACE BECAUSE OF HIS FAITH (7–9) BUT NOW HE MUST POSSESS IT BY CLAIMING IT AND DRIVING OUT THE MIGHTY ANAKITES (10–12; SEE 1:6–7; CF. MT. 25:34). CHRISTIANS INHERIT THEIR SALVATION THROUGH CHRIST (EPH. 1:14; COL. 3:24; HEB. 9:15). THE ANAKITES, SYMBOLS OF ISRAEL’S FORMIDABLE ENEMIES, ARE MENTIONED AT THE END OF JOSHUA’S BATTLES (SEE 11:21–23) AND NOW AT THE BEGINNING OF THE DISTRIBUTION AND CALEB’S DETERMINATION TO DRIVE THEM OUT. THAT CALEB MIGHT FULLY ENJOY HIS INHERITANCE, GOD DID NOT ALLOW HIM TO AGE DURING HIS THIRTY-EIGHT YEARS IN THE CRUEL DESERT (11). THE BODIES OF BELIEVERS AGE, BUT NOT THEIR SPIRITS, AND THEIR BODIES WILL BE RAISED (2 COR. 4:7–18). SAINTS WITH THE BOLD FAITH OF CALEB AND RAHAB ARE REWARDED (13–15), AND THE NARRATOR GOES OUT OF HIS WAY TO MAKE THE POINT (SEE 6:22–25). TO ‘BLESS’ MEANS TO MAKE POTENT, TO REPRODUCE AND PREVAIL (GN. 22:17–18). JOSHUA, WHO HIMSELF WAS OLD, WAS MAKING HIS EIGHTY-FIVE-YEAR-OLD COMPATRIOT POTENT!**

**15:1–63 THE NARRATOR CLEARLY STATES WHY HE DEFINES THE TRIBAL INHERITANCES IN SUCH DETAIL: IT IS TO SHOW THAT GOD KEEPS HIS PROMISES (21:43–45).**

**THESE PRECISE DEFINITIONS OF THE TRIBES’ INHERITANCES ARE A CLEAR REMINDER THAT GOD FULFILLED HIS PROMISES TO GIVE HIS COVENANT PEOPLE THE LAND FIT FOR KINGS. V 1 HARKS BACK TO 11:23. FIRST, ITS BOUNDARIES ARE DELINEATED: SOUTHERN (1–4), EASTERN (5A), NORTHERN (5B–11) AND WESTERN (12). ALLOTMENT IN V 1 REFERS TO THE ACTUAL CASTING OF THE ‘LOT’ (SEE 13:1–7). AS AN OMEN OF JUDAH’S FUTURE GREATNESS AND LEADERSHIP (GN. 49:10; JDG. 1:1–2; 20:18), ITS ALLOTMENT WEST OF THE JORDAN IS MENTIONED FIRST (15:2–12). THEN CALEB’S INHERITANCE (15:13–19) IS MENTIONED, AGAIN STRESSING HOW HE DISPOSSESSED THE FORMER INHABITANTS TO TAKE POSSESSION OF THE GIFT AS AN EXAMPLE FOR OTHERS (SEE 14:6–15 AND NOTE SIMILARITY OF 14:15 AND 15:13). CALEB HIMSELF DISPOSSESSED THE ANAKITES FROM HEBRON, AND HE PROMISED HIS DAUGHTER IN MARRIAGE TO A MAN OF LIKE FAITH WHO WOULD TAKE DEBIR (CF. 1 SA. 17:25; 18:17). OTHNIEL, HIS NEPHEW (A SON OF ONE’S BROTHER, SISTER, BROTHER-IN-LAW, OR SISTER-IN-LAW) (CF. JDG. 1:13), WON BOTH THE PROMISED LAND AND BRIDE, AS DID CHRIST (CF. EPH. 5:25; HEB. 4:1–14). BY BOLDLY PETITIONING HER FATHER CALEB’S DAUGHTER WON COVETED SPRINGS OF WATER (CF. LK. 11:1–13). THIS STORY, VS 13–19, IS NOT PRESENTED IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER. CALEB AND OTHNIEL TOOK THEIR CITIES AS PART OF THE CAMPAIGN RECORDED IN 10:36–39. FINALLY, THE CANAANITE TOWNS INCLUDED IN THE ALLOTMENT WERE REGISTERED, TOWN BY TOWN (CF. DT. 6:10–11), ACCORDING TO JUDAH’S GEOGRAPHY. FIRST THE NEGEV (21–32), THEN THE WESTERN FOOTHILLS (33–44) AND THE COASTAL PLAIN TO BE INHABITED BY THE PHILISTINES (45–47). FOLLOWED BY THE HIGH HILL COUNTRY BETWEEN JERUSALEM AND HEBRON (48–60), AND THE DESERT TOWARDS THE DEAD SEA (61–62). THESE REGIONS WERE FURTHER DIVIDED INTO ELEVEN DISTRICTS. NOTE HOW NEARLY EVERY ONE ENDS WITH A TOTAL OF THE TOWNS INVOLVED (32, 36, 41, 43, 47, 51, 54, 57, 59, 60, 62). 63 THOUGH JOSHUA HAD KILLED THE KING OF JERUSALEM (10:1, 22–27), THE JUDEANS COULD NOT DISLODGE THE JEBUSITES FROM JERUSALEM. IN FACT, HOWEVER, THE NORTHERN BOUNDARY OF JUDAH (15:8) RAN ALONG THE SOUTHERN SLOPE OF JEBUS (ANCIENT JERUSALEM) AND SO DID NOT INCLUDE THE CITY ITSELF WHICH BELONGED TO BENJAMIN (SEE 18:16, 28; JDG. 1:21).**

**16:1–17:18 THE PRESENTATION OF JOSEPH’S ALLOTMENT CONSISTS OF AN OVERVIEW OF ITS SOUTHERN BOUNDARY (16:1–4), THE TERRITORY OF EPHRAIM (16:5–10), THE TERRITORY OF MANASSEH (17:1–13), AND THE COMPLAINT MADE BY THESE TRIBES ABOUT THE SIZE OF THEIR INHERITANCE (17:14–18).**

**16:1–4 THIS INTRODUCTION DESCRIBES THE SOUTHERN BOUNDARY, EPHRAIM’S BORDER WITH BENJAMIN (CF. 18:12–13) AND DAN. FOR THE MEANING OF ALLOTMENT (1) AND THE THEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS DISTRIBUTION SEE COMMENTS ON 15:1–63. THOUGH EPHRAIM AND MANASSEH WERE RECKONED AS TWO TRIBES (SEE 14:4), THEY DREW ONLY ONE LOT, NOT WITHOUT PROTEST (SEE 17:14): EPHRAIM IN THE SOUTH, MANASSEH IN THE NORTH. MANASSEH’S NORTHERN BOUNDARY IS DEFINED IN ITS RELATION TO ASHER AND ISAACHAR (10), THOUGH IT RETAINED CITIES WITHIN THOSE TWO TRIBAL AREAS (11). 16:5–10 EPHRAIM’S INHERITANCE IS LISTED AHEAD OF MANASSEH’S BECAUSE JACOB PUT HIM FIRST (SEE GN. 48:17–20). THE PRESENTATION OF EPHRAIM’S INHERITANCE CONSISTS OF A DELINEATION OF HIS BOUNDARIES (5–8), A REFERENCE TO THE TOWNS AND VILLAGES HE INHERITED WITHIN MANASSEH (9; SEE 15:1–63), AND A NOTE OF FAILURE (10). JOSHUA DEFEATED THE GEZERITES BUT DID NOT TAKE THEIR CITY (10:33; JDG. 1:29). 17:1–13 MACHIR WAS MANASSEH’S FIRSTBORN (13:31; GN. 50:23; NU. 26:29). THE HEBREW TEXT SAYS THAT HE WAS A GREAT WARRIOR AND SO HAD ALREADY INHERITED GILEAD, NAMED AFTER HIS SON, AND BASHAN EAST OF THE JORDAN (SEE 13:29–30; CF. NU. 26:30–31). GILEAD ALSO HAD SEVEN MALE DESCENDANTS WHO INHERITED LAND WEST OF THE JORDAN (SEE NU. 26:30–32). A GRANDSON OF GILEAD, ZELOPHEHAD HAD NO MALE DESCENDANTS BECAUSE HE DIED IN KORAH’S REBELLION, BUT HE WAS SURVIVED BY FIVE DAUGHTERS. TO ENSURE THE SURVIVAL OF ISRAELITE FAMILIES WITHOUT MALE OFFSPRING, EVEN TO SINNERS SUCH AS ZELOPHEHAD, THE LORD PROMISED THAT THE FATHER’S RIGHTS BE GIVEN TO HIS DAUGHTERS (3–6; SEE NU. 26:33; 27:1–11). AS A RESULT, MANASSEH’S INHERITANCE WAS DIVIDED AMONG TEN CLANS: ZELOPHEHAD’S FIVE LIVING BROTHERS AND HIS FIVE DAUGHTERS. LIKE CALEB, THESE DAUGHTERS APPEALED, BY FAITH IN THE LORD’S PROMISE, TO THOSE ADMINISTERING THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE LAND TO GIVE THEM THEIR RIGHTS (14:1–5, 6–15). THE INABILITY OF MANASSEH AND EPHRAIM TO DISPOSSESS THE CANAANITES SERVES AS A TRANSITION TO THE NEXT SECTION (14–18). THE LACK OF FAITH’S OBEDIENCE ULTIMATELY UNDERMINED ISRAEL’S SPIRITUAL COMMITMENT AND LED TO ISRAEL’S INTER-MARRIAGE WITH THE CANAANITES AND TO THEIR UNDOING (SEE DT. 7:1–6; 12:29–31; JDG. 3:1–6). THE REQUEST AND FAILURE OF THE PEOPLE OF JOSEPH AT THE END OF THE SECTION ON THE EARLY ALLOTMENTS (17:14–18) CONTRASTS SHARPLY WITH THE REQUEST AND SUCCESS OF CALEB OF JUDAH AT THE BEGINNING (14:6–15; JDG. 1:27–28). THE PEOPLES OF JOSEPH COMPLAINED THAT THEIR ALLOTMENT WAS TOO SMALL; JOSHUA RESPONDED THAT THEIR FAITH WAS TOO SMALL. IN THE LIGHT OF THIS BOOK’S CONCERN FOR THE UNITY OF ALL ISRAEL, ONE COULD ALSO ADD THEIR INTERESTS WERE TOO SELFISH. FROM A LEGAL VIEWPOINT THEIR COMPLAINT THAT THEY WERE GIVEN BUT ONE ‘LOT’ SEEMS TO HAVE SOME JUSTIFICATION FOR THEY WERE RECKONED AS TWO LARGE TRIBES (14; SEE 16:1). THE LORD, HOWEVER, GOVERNED THE LOT AND BOTH EPHRAIM AND MANASSEH HAD BEEN GIVEN SEPARATE TRACTS OF LAND. MANASSEH’S WAS SECOND WEST OF THE JORDAN ONLY TO JUDAH’S, AND HALF OF MANASSEH WAS GIVEN A LARGE TRACT OF LAND EAST OF THE JORDAN AS WELL. JOSHUA USED THEIR CLAIM, WE ARE A NUMEROUS PEOPLE (LIT. MANY/GREAT), AGAINST THEM. SINCE THEY WERE ‘GREAT’, THEY SHOULD DEFOREST THE HILL COUNTRY AND NOT JUST BE CONTENT WITH THE TOWNS THE CANAANITES HAD BUILT AND THE PASTURAGE THEY HAD CLEARED (15). THE HILL COUNTRY OF EPHRAIM MAY HAVE INCLUDED THE FORESTED AREAS ON BOTH SIDES OF THE JORDAN. THE TERM IS SO USED IN 2 SA. 18:6 AND THE INHABITANTS OF THIS AREA, THE PERIZZITES AND THE REPHAITES, ARE SAID RESPECTIVELY TO HAVE LIVED ON BOTH SIDES OF THE RIVER (3:10; 12:4, 8; 13:12). IT EXPLAINS JOSHUA’S STATEMENT THAT EPHRAIM AND MANASSEH WILL HAVE NOT ONLY ONE ALLOTMENT (17). THEIR CLAIM THAT THE HILL COUNTRY IS NOT ENOUGH FOR US, AND ALL THE CANAANITES WHO LIVE IN THE PLAIN HAVE IRON CHARIOTS (16) EXPOSED THEIR SPIRITUAL FAILURE: SLOTH, TIMIDITY AND LACK OF VISION.**

**JOSHUA REPLIED WITH THE CONFIDENCE OF FAITH: CLEAR [THE FORESTED HILL COUNTRY] AND DRIVE OUT [THE CANAANITES] (17–18).**

**18:1–19:51 ALLOTMENT FOR THE REST OF THE TRIBES AT SHILOH (SEE MAP ON ISRAEL’S TRIBAL TERRITORIES IN DEUTERONOMY). 18:1–10 JOSHUA MOVED HIS BASE CAMP FROM GILGAL (14:6) TO SHILOH IN THE HEART OF EPHRAIM WHERE THE LORD’S TENT OF MEETING WAS PITCHED (SEE EX. 33:7; NU. 11:16; DT. 31:14). SHILOH WAS IN THE CENTRE OF THE PROMISED LAND AND ITS LANDSCAPE INCLUDES A NATURAL AMPHITHEATRE. BY DISTRIBUTING THE LAND IN THE LORD’S PRESENCE, THE THEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CONQUEST OF THE LAND AND ITS DISTRIBUTION COMES TO THE FORE: IT WAS THE LORD’S LAND, TO BE SANCTIFIED FOR HIM (SEE 8:30–35). IN KEEPING WITH HIS THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE, THE NARRATOR REPEATS THAT ISRAEL HAD SUBDUED THE LAND, BUT BY FAITH IT MUST STILL BE POSSESSED (1–2; SEE 13:1–7). JOSHUA CHIDED THE REMAINING SEVEN TRIBES FOR THEIR FAILURE TO FULFIL THEIR COVENANT OBLIGATIONS (3). THE HEBREW WORD BEHIND WAIT MEANS ‘TO BE SLACK’. GOD HAD GIVEN THEM THE LAND, BUT THEY HAD FAILED TO ENTER AND POSSESS IT BY FAITH (3; SEE 1:7–9, 11). TO ENCOURAGE THEM TO OBEY IN FAITH, JOSHUA SENT OUT TWENTY-ONE MEN, THREE PICKED BY EACH TRIBE, TO SURVEY THE REMAINING LAND, WRITE A DESCRIPTION OF IT TOWN BY TOWN (9) WITH A VIEW TO APPORTIONING IT, AND BRING THE REPORT TO HIM. AFTER THE TRIBES THEMSELVES HAD DIVIDED IT INTO SEVEN PARTS, JOSHUA, THROUGH ELEAZAR THE PRIEST AND WITH THE ELDERS (CF. 14:1–5; 19:51), CAST THE LORD’S LOTS FOR THEM (3–10). THIS MODE OF DISTRIBUTING THE LAND, HE REMINDED THEM, DID NOT APPLY TO JUDAH IN THE SOUTH AND JOSEPH FARTHER NORTH (5); TO THE LEVITES (7A; CF. 13:14, 33) OR TO THE EASTERN TRIBES (7B). THE TWENTY-ONE MEN WERE SURVEYORS, NOT SPIES (CF. 2:1–24). 18:11–28 THE HEBREW WORD FOR LOT IN V 6 IS TRANSLATED ‘ALLOTMENT’ IN 15:1; 16:1; 17:1. THE FIRST LOT FELL TO BENJAMIN, RACHEL’S SECOND SON, AFTER JOSEPH (CF. 14:1–5). VS 11–20 LIST THE BOUNDARIES OF THIS AREA AND VS 22–24 THE TOWNS INCLUDED WITHIN THOSE BOUNDARIES—TWELVE IN THE UNATTRACTIVE, DRY EASTERN DISTRICT (21–24) AND FOURTEEN CROWDED ON THE DESIRABLE WATERSHED RIDGE NORTH AND WEST OF JERUSALEM (25–28).**

**19:1–9 THE SECOND LOT FELL TO SIMEON, JACOB’S 2ND SON BY LEAH (GN. 29:33).**

**IN MAPPING OUT THE LAND, IT WAS DECIDED THAT JUDAH’S PORTION, THOUGH DESIGNATED BY LOT, WAS LARGER THAN NEEDED, AND SO SIMEON WAS GIVEN LAND WITHIN JUDAH’S ALLOCATION (9). THIS FULFILLED JACOB’S CURSE ON SIMEON THAT HE SHOULD BE DISPERSED IN ISRAEL (GN. 49:7). IN THE TAKING OF THEIR LANDS, JUDAH AND SIMEON FOUGHT ALONGSIDE EACH OTHER (JDG. 1:3). SIMEON’S TOWNS WERE CONCENTRATED IN THE VICINITY OF BEERSHEBA AND THE NORTH-EASTERN NEGEV FRINGE, WHERE OASES ARE NOT NUMEROUS AND WHERE DEEP WELLS ARE ESSENTIAL FOR CONTINUOUS SETTLEMENT. 19:10–16 THE THIRD LOT FELL TO ZEBULUN, LEAH’S YOUNGEST SON (GN. 30:19–20; 49:13). 19:17–23 THE FOURTH LOT FELL TO ISAACHAR, JACOB’S FIFTH SON BY LEAH (GN. 30:14–17; 49:14). HIS TOWNS AND BOUNDARIES WERE NOT TRACED OUT BEYOND THREE CERTAIN POINTS OF REFERENCE, JEZREEL (18), MT TABOR AND THE JORDAN RIVER (22). 19:24–31 THE FIFTH LOT FELL TO ASHER, JACOB’S SECOND SON BY LEAH’S MAID-SERVANT, ZILPAH (GN. 30:12–13; 49:20). 19:32–39 THE SIXTH LOT FELL TO NAPHTALI, JACOB’S YOUNGEST SON BY RACHEL’S SERVANT, BILHAH (GN. 30:7; 49:21). HIS LAND INCLUDED ATTRACTIVE, DENSELY FORESTED MOUNTAINS AND FAIRLY FERTILE LOWER AREAS. THROUGH THIS HEARTLAND OF GALILEE RAN THE MAJOR TRADE ROUTE BETWEEN JEZREEL AND POINTS NORTH. 19:40–48 THE SEVENTH LOT FELL TO DAN, JACOB’S OLDEST SON BY BILHAH (GN. 30:1–6; 49:16–17). THOUGH ONLY ITS TOWNS ARE GIVEN, ITS BOUNDARIES CAN BE INFERRED FROM THOSE OF THE NEIGHBORING TERRITORIES OF JUDAH AND EPHRAIM. THE AMORITES FORCED THIS TIMOROUS AND SLOTHFUL TRIBE NORTHWARDS (JDG. 1:34). THE FULL STORY OF THE DANITES’ LATER CONQUEST AT LESHEM (LAISH) IS TOLD IN JDG. 18. DAN REPRESENTS THE CLIMAX OF FAILURE TO POSSESS THE LAND THE LORD HAD GIVEN TO ISRAEL. IN HIS CASE, THE AMORITES PREVAILED. 19:49–51 THE CONCLUSION CONSISTS OF TWO PARTS: JOSHUA’S INHERITANCE (49–50) AND A FULSOME CONCLUDING REPORT ABOUT THE ADMINISTRATORS OF THE LOT, THE PLACE OF CASTING, AND THE COMPLETE DISTRIBUTION OF THE LAND. THE SUMMARY IS IMPORTANT FOR THE THEOLOGY OF THIS BOOK. THE UNIFIED PEOPLE UNDER GOD’S COMMAND GAVE THE TOWN OF TIMNATH SERAH TO JOSHUA, AND HE EXEMPLIFIED FOR THEM FAITH’S OBEDIENCE BY REQUESTING THIS AS HIS INHERITANCE, POSSESSING IT AND REBUILDING IT. HIS EXAMPLE AT THE END THE SECTION ON THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE LAND WEST OF JORDAN COMPLEMENTS CALEB’S FAITH AT ITS BEGINNING (14:6–15). THROUGH THE CASTING OF LOTS AT THE ENTRANCE TO THE LORD’S TENT, IT WAS CLEAR THAT THIS WAS THE LORD’S LAND, A GIFT TO ISRAEL, TO BE TAKEN BY FAITH. THOUGH THE TRIBES WHO FAILED GAVE EXCUSES, THEY WERE WITHOUT EXCUSE.**

**20:1–9 CITIES OF REFUGE**

**AS A PRACTICAL MEASURE TO ASSURE JUSTICE, GOD INSTRUCTED MOSES TO HAVE ISRAEL LOCATE SIX CITIES, THREE ON EACH SIDE OF THE JORDAN, WHERE ANYONE WHO KILLED A PERSON ACCIDENTALLY AND UNINTENTIONALLY, COULD FLEE AND FIND ASYLUM FROM THE AVENGER OF BLOOD (HEB. GŌ’ĒL, MORE PRECISELY, ‘THE FAMILY PROTECTOR’). AFTER THE CONQUEST OF THE LAND EAST OF THE JORDAN MOSES PROMPTLY SPECIFIED THE THREE CITIES THERE (CF. DT. 4:41–43; 19:1–13). INNOCENT BLOOD, LIKE THE CURSE, MUST FIND SATISFACTION. THE LORD INQUIRES INTO AND VINDICATES INNOCENT BLOOD WHICH CRIES OUT FOR VENGEANCE (CF. GN. 4:10; 9:5–6; 2 SA. 16:7, 8). HOMICIDAL BLOOD POLLUTES THE LAND (NU. 35:33), DEFILES THE HANDS (IS. 59:3) AND CALLS FORTH JUDGMENT BOTH BY THE LORD (1 KI. 2:31, 33) AND BY THE FAMILY PROTECTOR, WHO IS OBLIGED TO SEEK JUSTICE, NOT REVENGE, FOR HIS FAMILY. INNOCENT BLOOD IS EXPIATED EITHER BY THE DEATH OF THE MURDERER (NU. 35:33; DT. 19:13) OR BY ATONEMENT (DT. 21:7–9). OTHERWISE IT BRINGS UPON THE LAND THE LORD’S WRATH AND DISASTER (2 SA. 21; 1 KI. 2:31–33; 2 KI. 24:4). IN THAT LIGHT—THE PLACE OF MERCY IN THE OT HAS NOT BEEN EXAMINED HERE BUT SEE PS. 51, IN PARTICULAR V 14—ONE SEES THE IMPORTANCE OF ESTABLISHING IN FAIR COURTS WHETHER THE KILLING WAS DELIBERATE OR ACCIDENTAL. IF THE ACT WAS A DELIBERATE ONE I.E. MURDER-THAN JUSTICE DEMANDED THE DEATH SENTENCE; IF IT WAS ACCIDENTAL OR UNINTENTIONAL, THEN THE CRIMINAL WAS ALLOWED TO LIVE A NORMAL LIFE IN THE CITY OF REFUGE. WHEN THE ALLEGED MAN-SLAYER ARRIVED AT A CITY OF REFUGE, THE ELDERS, ALL LEVITES WHO WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR TEACHING THE LAW, GAVE HIM A PRELIMINARY TRIAL AT THE CITY GATE, WHERE COURT WAS HELD IN ANCIENT ISRAEL. IF HE WAS FOUND INNOCENT, THEY GAVE HIM ASYLUM FROM THE FAMILY PROTECTOR AND SENT HIM TO STAND TRIAL BEFORE THE ASSEMBLY, A SORT OF PRE-MONARCHIC PARLIAMENT VESTED WITH REPRESENTATIVE AND JUDICIAL POWERS. IF THIS ASSEMBLY OF CHIEFTAN’S OR ADULT MALES THERE FOUND HIM GUILTY, THEY HANDED HIM OVER TO THE FAMILY PROTECTOR FOR EXECUTION. IF FOUND INNOCENT, THEY SENT HIM BACK TO THE CITY OF REFUGE WHERE HE HAD TO STAY UNTIL THE DEATH OF THE HIGH PRIEST SERVING AT THAT TIME. HE STAYED THERE TO PROTECT HIM AND THE FAMILY PROTECTOR FROM RETALIATORY VENGEANCE. PERHAPS THE DEATH OF THE HIGH PRIEST, ISRAEL’S CHIEF REPRESENTATIVE BEFORE GOD, COULD BE SAID TO SYMBOLIZE THE ATONING DEATH OF JESUS CHRIST, THE CHURCH’S HIGH PRIEST, WHO MADE SATISFACTION FOR ALL SIN, BOTH INTENTIONAL AND UNINTENTIONAL.**

**21:1–42 LEVITICAL TOWNS**

**21:1–3 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND. THOUGH THE LEVITES HAD THE LORD FOR THEIR INHERITANCE (13:14, 33), THEY NEEDED TOWNS TO LIVE IN AND PASTURE-LANDS TO SUPPORT THEM. THESE NEEDS WERE NOW PROVIDED FOR. LIKE JOSHUA AND CALEB, AND UNLIKE THE SLOTHFUL, TIMOROUS SEVEN TRIBES WHO NEEDED JOSHUA’S PROMPTING (18:2–3), THE HEADS OF THE THREE BRANCHES OF LEVITES (NU. 3:17), TOOK THE INITIATIVE AND APPROACHED THE ADMINISTRATORS OF THE SACRED LOT AT SHILOH, CLAIMING GOD’S PROMISE THROUGH MOSES TO GIVE THEM FORTY-EIGHT TOWNS WITH THEIR ADJOINING PASTURE-LANDS, INCLUDING THE SIX CITIES OF REFUGE (41–42; CF., NU. 35:1–5). TRIBES SUCH AS JUDAH THAT HAD MANY TOWNS, GAVE UP MORE TERRITORY THAN THOSE TRIBES SUCH AS NAPHTALI THAT ONLY HAD A FEW (NU. 35:7–8). THE ISRAELITES ACCEDED TO THE LEVITES’ REQUEST AND GAVE THIS MORE PILGRIM-LIKE TRIBE, WHICH WAS SCATTERED THROUGHOUT THE LAND, TOWNS FROM THEIR OWN INHERITANCE. IN GIVING THIS SORT OF ‘TITHE’ THEY BLESSED THEMSELVES, FOR THE SEPARATIST LEVITES IN THEIR MIDST TAUGHT THEM THE LAW THAT SANCTIFIED, BLESSED, AND SECURED THEM IN THE LAND (DT. 33:8–11). 21:4–7 OVERVIEW OF THE LEVITICAL TOWNS. THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE LEVITICAL TOWNS WAS DONE ACCORDING TO THE THREE BRANCHES OF LEVI. IN THE OVERVIEW THE SEQUENCE OF THE LOT IS GIVEN FIRST, THEN THE NUMBER OF TOWNS GIVEN TO EACH BRANCH AND THE TRIBAL AREAS IN WHICH THE TOWNS WERE LOCATED. THE NARRATOR REPEATS ALLOTTED SEVERAL TIMES TO EMPHASIZE THAT IT WAS THE LORD WHO ASSIGNED THESE TOWNS. TO JUDGE FROM THE FIRST LOT, THE ALLOCATION CAME OUT ACCORDING TO IMPORTANCE AND/OR SIZE OF THE BRANCH. THE LOT APPROPRIATELY CAME OUT FIRST TO THE KOHATHITES, BECAUSE AARON, AND SO THE PRIESTLY LINE, BELONGED TO THAT BRANCH. GOD GAVE THE PRIESTS TOWNS FROM JUDAH, SIMEON, AND BENJAMIN, THAT IS, THOSE AREAS CLOSEST TO JERUSALEM, WHERE THE TEMPLE WOULD BE LOCATED (4). SURPRISINGLY, AND SIGNIFICANTLY, THE PRIESTS WERE NOT GIVEN JERUSALEM; THE LORD RESERVED THAT PRIZE FOR THE HOUSE OF DAVID, THE TEMPLE’S PATRONS. THE REST OF THE KOHATHITES, THE ‘LOWER CLERGY’, WERE ASSIGNED TOWNS IN THE TRIBAL AREAS NEXT IN PROXIMITY TO JERUSALEM, EPHRAIM, DAN, AND THE HALF-TRIBE OF MANASSEH WEST OF THE JORDAN (5). THE GERSHONITES WERE ASSIGNED TOWNS IN THE FAR NORTH, IN ISSACHAR, ASHER, NAPTHTALI AND THE HALF-TRIBE OF MANASSEH IN BASHAN (6), AND THE MERARITES WERE GIVEN TOWNS JUST SOUTH OF THEM, IN ZEBULUN’S TERRITORY WEST OF THE JORDAN, AND GAD AND REUBEN EAST OF THE JORDAN (7). 21:8–42 THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE FORTY-EIGHT LEVITICAL TOWNS (CF. 1 CH. 6:54–81). AT THE TIME THESE TOWNS WERE DISTRIBUTED SOME, SUCH AS GEZER (21; CF. 16:10) AND TANAACH (25; CF. 17:11–12), WERE STILL IN CANAANITE HANDS. THE LEVITES HAD TO POSSESS THEM BY FAITH’S OBEDIENCE.**

**21:43–45 SUMMARY: GOD’S AMAZING FAITHFULNESS**

**THESE VERSES CONSTITUTE A LINK WITH 1:6, THEREBY UNDERSCORING THE NARRATOR’S THEOLOGICAL SCHEME: THE LORD KEPT HIS COVENANT WITH THE PATRIARCHS TO GIVE THEM THE LAND FIT FOR KINGS. THEY POSSESSED IT, SETTLED IN IT AND HAD REST FROM ATTACK ON EVERY SIDE (SEE 1:15; 11:23). NOT A PROMISE FAILED (SEE 13:1–7).**

**22:1–24:33 RETAINING THE LAND**

**THE NARRATOR NOW RELATES THREE EPISODES TO SHOW THAT ISRAEL MUST RETAIN THE LAND IN THE SAME WAY THEY POSSESSED IT. AFTER BEING CHARGED BY JOSHUA TO RETAIN COVENANTAL LOYALTY, THE NOBLE EASTERN MILITIA, RECOGNIZING THAT THE LORD HAD GIVEN THEM THEIR LANDS, BUILT AN ALTAR ON THEIR WAY HOME WITNESSING TO THEIR UNITY WITH ISRAEL’S LORD (22:1–34). IN HIS FAREWELL ADDRESS, JOSHUA STRESSED COVENANT LOYALTY TO REMAIN IN THE LAND (23:1–16) AND SOLEMNIZED ISRAEL’S COVENANT BY RENEWING IT AT SHECHEM (24:1–27).**

**22:1–34 THE EASTERN TRIBES’ ALTAR OF WITNESS**

**22:1–8 JOSHUA’S FAREWELL TO THE EASTERN TRIBES. 1–5 JOSHUA’S GENEROUS FAREWELL TO THE EASTERN TRIBES FORMS A LINK WITH THE COMMANDS IN CH. 1. HE COMMENDED THEM FOR SCRUPULOUSLY KEEPING HIS CHARGE NOT TO ABANDON THEIR BROTHERS BUT TO ASSIST THEM UNTIL THE WESTERN TRIBES HAD REST FROM ATTACK BY THE CANAANITES (2–3; CF. 1:12–18). THEY HAD DISPLAYED FAITH’S ENDURANCE IN PERFORMING THIS MISSION OVER A LONG TIME (CF. 11:18; HEB. 12:1) AND FINISHED THEIR COURSE (CF. 2 TIM. 4:6–8). TO THEM IT COULD HAVE BEEN SAID, ‘WELL DONE, GOOD AND FAITHFUL SERVANT’ (MT. 25:21). JOSHUA’S REFLECTION ON REST (4A) LOOKS BACK TO THE PROLOGUE (1:6), AND HIS CHARGE TO KEEP THE LAW OF MOSES, THE ESSENCE OF WHICH IS SUMMED UP IN ONE COMMAND, TO LOVE GOD FROM THE HEART (4–5; CF. DT. 6:5; 10:12; 11:13; MT. 22:37–40), AND REPEATED THE LORD’S CHARGE IN THE BOOK’S PROLOGUE (1:7–9). ‘LOVE’ WAS THE BASIC STIPULATION IN ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN TREATIES. NO LAW CAN ATTAIN ITS GOAL SO LONG AS IT IS RELUCTANTLY ENDURED. IT MUST BE FOUNDED ON INWARD ASSENT. HEART AND SOUL ARE NOT MEANT TO SPECIFY DISTINCT SPHERES OF LIFE BUT TO REINFORCE THE COMPLETE DEVOTION TO GOD. HEART DESIGNATES THE INTENTIONALITY OF THE WHOLE PERSON, AND SOUL DENOTES THE WHOLE SELF, UNITING FLESH, WILL AND VITALITY. 6–8 AS ISRAEL’S CHARISMATIC LEADER, JOSHUA MEDIATED GOD’S BLESSING ON THE EASTERN MILITIAMEN. SENDING THEM AWAY TO A SPLENDID HOMECOMING WITH THE PLUNDER THEY HAD WON (SEE 11:10–15), HE CHARGED THEM IN THE BEST TRADITIONS OF HOLY WAR TO SHARE IT WITH THOSE WHO HAD REMAINED BEHIND TO PROTECT THEIR HOMES (CF. NU. 31:27; 1 SA. 30:16–25). ALL ENTERED THEIR REST FULLY REWARDED (CF. MT. 6:18; 16:27; COL. 3:24; 1 TIM. 5:18). 9–34 THESE FAITHFUL MILITIAMEN PERFORMED ONE LAST DEED OF EXCEPTIONAL LOYALTY TO THE LORD BEFORE REJOINING THEIR FAMILIES. SO THAT FUTURE GENERATIONS IN WESTERN ISRAEL MAY NOT BAR THE EASTERN TRIBES FROM COMING TO WORSHIP THE LORD WEST OF THE JORDAN WHERE HE CAUSED HIS NAME TO DWELL, THEY BUILT AN IMPOSING ALTAR AT GELILOTH CLOSE TO THE JORDAN (ON EITHER THE EAST OR WEST BANKS; THE NIV IS OVERLY INTERPRETATIVE IN V 11), AS A WITNESS THAT THE LORD HAD ELECTED THEM ALSO TO BE HIS PEOPLE. UNFORTUNATELY, THEIR CREATIVE, VISIONARY ACT OF FAITH WAS MISINTERPRETED BY THE WESTERNERS AS A RIVAL ALTAR TO THE LORD. THE EASTERN AND WESTERN TRIBES DID NOT DISAGREE ON THEIR INTERPRETATION OF THE LAW IN DT. 12:4–14—BOTH SIDES ASSUMED THAT LAW PRESCRIBED THAT ISRAEL WORSHIP ONLY AT THE CENTRAL SANCTUARY. THE WESTERNERS, HOWEVER, THOUGHT THAT THE EASTERNERS WERE INTENDING TO WORSHIP THE LORD ACCORDING TO THEIR OWN WILL, NOT HIS. BY LOOKING AT THE WAY IN WHICH THE TWO GROUPS RECONCILED THEIR DIFFERENCES, WE CAN DRAW OUT SOUND PRINCIPLES FOR RESOLVING DOCTRINAL DIFFERENCES (CF. MT. 18:15–20). THE WESTERN TRIBES, AS THE OFFENDED PARTY, SET ABOUT MENDING THE RIFT IN THE FOLLOWING WAY: —THEY SQUARELY ADDRESSED THEMSELVES TO THE PROBLEM, AND DID NOT SWEEP IT UNDER THE RUG (11–12A). —THEY TOOK APOSTASY SO SERIOUSLY THAT THEY PUT PURITY ABOVE THEIR OWN LIVES, NOT BUYING PEACE AT ANY PRICE (12B). —THEY SENT THEIR ABLEST LEADERS, THE PRIEST PHINEHAS WHO HAD SHOWN HIMSELF ZEALOUS FOR THE LORD IN THE EPISODE AT BAAL PEOR (NU. 25:7), AND TEN CHIEFS REPRESENTING ALL THE TRIBES, TO INVESTIGATE THE MATTER AND POSSIBLY TO RESTORE THE OFFENDERS, NOT ACTING RASHLY (13–14). —THEY ADDRESSED THE PERCEIVED OFFENCE OBJECTIVELY AS A BREACH OF FAITH, AN ACT OF REBELLION AGAINST GOD, NOT SUBJECTIVELY AS A BODY-BLOW TO THEIR OWN EGOS (15–16). —THEY ARGUED THEIR CASE ON THE CONVICTION THAT GOD PUNISHES SIN AS DISPLAYED AT BAAL PEOR (I.E. IT LEFT THEM WITH THE SEEDS OF HISTORICAL GUILT AND THE LORD’S PLAGUE, NOT ON EXPEDIENCY—17). —THEY ALSO ARGUED ON THE CONVICTION THAT THE SIN OF SOME AFFECTS ALL, AS SEEN AT BAAL PEOR (17–18) AND IN THE CASE OF ACHAN (18, 20; SEE 7:1), AND SUCH CORPORATE GUILT WAS NOT SOMETHING INCONSEQUENTIAL TO THEM. —THEY RESPECTED THEIR BROTHERS’ CONSCIENCES AND CONVICTIONS (I.E. THAT EASTERN ISRAEL WAS DEFILED BECAUSE IT LACKED GOD’S HOLY SANCTUARY), NOT RULING THEIR WEAK CONSCIENCES OUT OF COURT (19A; CF. ROM. 14:1–23). —THEY WERE WILLING TO SACRIFICE SOME OF THEIR POSSESSIONS TO RESTORE THEIR BROTHERS TO A CLEAN CONSCIENCE AND PROPER WORSHIP, NOT INSISTING ON THEIR PROPER INTERPRETATION OF THE LAW (19B). —HAVING BEEN CORRECTED BY THE PERCEIVED OFFENDERS, THEY ACCEDED TO THEIR CREATIVE EXPRESSION OF FAITH, NOT BARRING NEW AND APPROPRIATE EXPRESSIONS OF FAITH CONSISTENT WITH GOD’S WORD (30–31). —FINALLY, THE REPRESENTATIVES REPORTED TO THE FULL ASSEMBLY FOR THEIR APPROVAL, NOT OVERREACHING THEIR AUTHORITY (32). THE EASTERN TRIBES, THE OFFENDERS, RESPONDED BY CORRECTING THE MISUNDERSTANDING BY PRESENTING THE FACTS OF THE SITUATION SOLEMNLY, PIOUSLY AND VIGOROUSLY. THEY AGREED WITH TAKING DECISIVE ACTION AGAINST APOSTASY, BEING WILLING TO DIE THEMSELVES TO PREVENT IT (23), AND THEN EXPLAINED CLEARLY AND FULLY THEIR MOTIVATION. THEY SAID THAT THEY NEEDED SOME APPROPRIATE MONUMENT, SUCH AS THIS REPLICA ALTAR, TO OVERCOME THE NATURAL BARRIER OF THE JORDAN, AS A WITNESS TO FUTURE GENERATIONS THAT THEIR COVENANT CHILDREN HAD AN EQUAL RIGHT IN THE WORSHIP OF GOD (24–28; SEE 4:5–7). IT WAS NOT INTENDED FOR SACRIFICES AND SO WAS NOT AN APOSTASY. AS A RESULT OF THESE SOUND PROCEDURES THE BROTHERS SEPARATED RECONCILED WITH ONE ANOTHER AND PRAISING GOD (30–34). IF THE ABSENCE OF APOSTASY IS A CAUSE TO PRAISE GOD FOR HIS PRESENCE WITH HIS PEOPLE (31), THEN ITS PRESENCE OUGHT TO PROMPT BELIEVERS TO INVESTIGATE POSSIBLE CAUSE(S) OF HIS DISFAVOR.**

**23:1–16 JOSHUA’S FAREWELL ADDRESS**

**JOSHUA’S ‘LAST WORDS’ PUT HIM IN THE DISTINGUISHED COMPANY OF MOSES (DT. 31:1–13), SAMUEL (1 SA. 12:1–24) AND DAVID (1 KI. 2:1–9) WHOSE LAST WORDS EMPHASIZED COVENANT FIDELITY. THE ADDRESS WAS GIVEN SHORTLY AFTER JOSHUA ALLOTTED THE LAND (SEE 13:1). BOTH MOSES AND JOSHUA, THE FOUNDERS OF THE THEOCRACY, KEPT FAITH UNTIL THEIR DEATHS AND WERE MODELS OF THE IDEAL LEADER, TEACHING THE NEXT GENERATION TO KEEP THE COVENANT (CF. 2 TIM. 3:10–4:6; 2 PET. 1:12–21). 23:1–4 HISTORICAL PROLOGUE. WHEREAS MOSES VALIDATED GOD’S COVENANT FAITHFULNESS BY RECOUNTING HIS CONQUEST OF THE LAND EAST OF THE JORDAN (DT. 31:4), JOSHUA VERIFIED IT BY REHEARSING GOD’S DESTRUCTION OF THE CANAANITES WEST OF THE JORDAN (3) AND HIS ALLOTMENT OF THE CONQUERED NATIONS THAT REMAINED (4). THE PEOPLE HAD SEEN IT WITH THEIR OWN EYES. THE HEBREW WORD RENDERED ‘REMEMBER’ IN V 4 IS MORE PRECISELY TRANSLATED ‘SEE’, AS IN V 3. TODAY, HOWEVER, THE SPIRIT INSTILS FAITH THROUGH PROCLAIMING THE WORDS OF FAITH (ROM. 10:6–13). 23:5–8 COVENANT OBLIGATIONS. GOD HAD COMMITTED HIMSELF TO CONTINUE TO DRIVE OUT THE CANAANITES (5) AND ISRAEL HAD COMMITTED ITSELF TO BE STRONG IN THE FAITH (SEE 1:6, 9) AND KEEP THE LAW (6). THEY PROMISED NOT TO BE SEDUCED INTO THE WORSHIP OF THE CANAANITE DEITIES THAT MADE FEW MORAL DEMANDS (7; CF. DT. 5:9; 8:19) AND PLEDGED THEMSELVES TO CONTINUE TO CLING EXCLUSIVELY TO GOD (8; SEE 1:7–9). AS IN HIS FAREWELL TO THE EASTERN TRIBES, JOSHUA DREW HIS VOCABULARY DIRECTLY FROM THE BOOK OF DEUTERONOMY. 23:9–11 COVENANT EXPERIENCE. JOSHUA’S GENERATION HAD CLUNG TO THE LORD AND EXPERIENCED HIS COVENANT PROMISES. AS PROMISED, NONE HAD WITHSTOOD THEM (SEE 1:5). AT THIS POINT WE CAN DISCERN THE NARRATOR’S THEOLOGICAL SCHEME IMPOSED ON THE DATA (SEE 13:1–7). HE PARADES ISRAEL’S SUCCESSES OF FAITH OVER GREAT AND POWERFUL NATIONS AND DOES NOT MENTION THEIR FAILURES OF UNBELIEF (SEE 17:12–13, 14–18; 18:3, 19:47). THAT POSITIVE EXPERIENCE WAS SUFFICIENT MOTIVATION TO LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD (SEE 22:5). 23:12–13 COVENANT CURSES. ISRAEL’S OLD COVENANT CONTAINED BOTH PROMISES OF BLESSINGS FOR KEEPING IT AND THREATS OF EXTREME PUNISHMENT FOR VIOLATING IT (SEE LV. 26; DT. 28). IN SETTING FORTH THE COVENANT OBLIGATIONS JOSHUA UNDERSCORED RELIGIOUS SEPARATION FROM THE CANAANITES (7), AND WARNED AGAINST ALL SOCIAL CONTACT WITH THEM (12), ASSUMING THAT THEIR RELIGIOUS AND ETHICAL POLLUTION WAS CONTAGIOUS AND WOULD BRING GOD’S WRATH UPON ISRAEL AS UPON THEM (CF. DT. 7:2–4). SHOULD ISRAEL ALLY ITSELF WITH THESE NATIONS, THEY WILL BE USED AGAINST ISRAEL TO INFLICT THE COVENANT CURSES ON THE UNFAITHFUL (CF. 5:13–15). IN THE BATTLE BETWEEN THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND THE KINGDOMS OF THIS WORLD ONE CANNOT BE NEUTRAL (CF. EPH. 6:10–18). EITHER THE SAINT OR THE SINNER MUST PREVAIL. THE ONE WHO IS NOT FOR CHRIST IS AGAINST HIM (MT. 12:30). THE UNCOMMITTED WILL BE DESTROYED (CF. PR. 24:30–34), BUT THE SPIRIT WITHIN THE SAINTS IS GREATER THAN THE SPIRITUAL FORCES ARRAYED AGAINST THEM. THOSE PROFESSING A COVENANT RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD MUST PERSEVERE IN THEIR FAITH TO REMAIN IN THE LAND OF BLESSING (13; CF. 2 CH. 7:19–22; HEB. 6:4–7; 10:26–31), AS ISRAEL’S TRAGIC HISTORY SO PAINFULLY TEACHES (2 KI. 17:7–8; 24:20). FOR THE ADVANTAGES OF THE NEW COVENANT SEE 1:7–9 AND FOR THE DISADVANTAGES OF CO-EXISTENCE WITH ‘THE NATIONS’ SEE 9:1–27. 23:14–16 GOD’S WORD IS TRUE. THE GENERATION OF ISRAEL THAT CONQUERED THE LAND KNEW BY EXPERIENCE THAT GOD KEPT HIS PROMISES (1:1–9; 21:43–45). JOSHUA HAD VALIDATED THAT TRUTH THROUGHOUT HIS LIFE (14). GOD’S PAST FAITHFULNESS IN KEEPING HIS COVENANT PROMISES NERVES SAINTS TO FIDELITY, COMFORTS THEM IN ADVERSITY, AND RESTRAINS THEM IN TEMPTATION (22:4–5). GOD IS NOT CAPRICIOUS, AND SO HIS PEOPLE DO NOT HAVE TO LIVE IN ANXIETY. HE SPEAKS CLEARLY BOTH PROMISES TO INSPIRE LOVE AND THREATS TO PROVOKE FEAR. GOD BUILT ISRAEL INTO A GREAT NATION IN THE GOOD LAND TO SANCTIFY IT BY HIS LAW (SEE 8:30–35). IF HIS PEOPLE FAIL IN THEIR MISSION, HE WILL DESTROY THEM (CF. MK. 12:1–12).**

**24:1–28 COVENANT RENEWAL AT SHECHEM**

**ISRAEL’S ELDERS, WHO WERE EYEWITNESSES OF THE LORD’S AMAZING ACTS IN THE FOUNDING OF THE NATION, RATIFIED AND RENEWED THEIR COVENANT WITH HIM FOUR TIMES. ORIGINALLY AT SINAI AFTER THE AMAZING EXODUS (EX. 24); AT MOAB AFTER GOD HAD MIRACULOUSLY PRESERVED THEM IN THE DESERT AND THEY HAD CONQUERED THE LAND EAST OF THE JORDAN (DT. 29:1); AT MT EBAL AFTER THE VICTORIES AT JERICHO AND AI (8:30–34); AND FINALLY HERE AT SHECHEM AFTER THE ASTONISHING TRIUMPHS OVER THE CANAANITE COALITIONS (11–13, 18). THE FIRST TWO WERE MEDIATED THROUGH MOSES, THE LAST TWO THROUGH JOSHUA. HERE IS ONE OF THE STRONGEST LINKS BETWEEN MOSES AND JOSHUA: BOTH MEDIATE THE LORD’S COVENANT. THE ELDERS ON THESE OCCASIONS REPRESENTED THE WHOLE NATION. JOSHUA ASSEMBLED THE PEOPLE AT SHECHEM BEFORE GOD (I.E. BEFORE THE ARK) TO RENEW THE COVENANT EITHER AT THE SAME TIME AS HIS FAREWELL ADDRESS (CH. 23) OR ON A SEPARATE OCCASION. EVIDENTLY, THE PORTABLE SANCTUARY AND ARK HAD BEEN MOVED TO THIS SACRED SITE (32; 8:30–35; GN. 33:18–20). THE COVENANT WAS SIMILAR TO ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN TREATIES IN WHICH A SUPERPOWER (EGYPT, ASSYRIA, BABYLON, HATTI) ENTERED INTO A RELATIONSHIP WITH A WEAKER NATION (UGARIT AND AMURRU [AMORITE], TO NAME JUST TWO). THIS KIND OF TREATY, KNOWN AS A ‘VASSAL TREATY’, TYPICALLY HAD SIX PARTS: A PREAMBLE IDENTIFYING THE GREAT KING (2A); A HISTORICAL PROLOGUE RECITING THE KING’S KINDNESSES TO THE VASSAL (2B–13); STIPULATIONS, THE BASIC ONE BEING TO SERVE ONLY THE KING AND HIS KINGDOM (14); CURSES AND BLESSINGS (19); WITNESSES (22, 27); AND DEPOSIT OF THE TREATY DOCUMENT (25–26). ANY INDIVIDUAL TREATY COULD VARY SLIGHTLY FROM THIS OUTLINE, BUT THE BASIC PATTERN CAN BE DISCERNED (CF. EX. 19–24; 1 SA. 12). 24:2A PREAMBLE: IDENTIFYING THE GREAT KING. JOSHUA SPOKE AS A PROPHET, AS A MESSENGER FROM THE HEAVENLY COURT. THE GREAT KING HIMSELF WAS ALWAYS REPRESENTED AS THE AUTHOR OF THE COVENANT. THE SHIFT FROM ‘I’ TO ‘HE’ WITH REFERENCE TO AN AUTHOR, AS IN V 7, IS UNEXCEPTIONAL IN ANCIENT LITERATURE. 24:2B–13 HISTORICAL PROLOGUE: THE KING’S KINDNESS. TYPICALLY, THE GREAT KING RECOUNTED THE HISTORY OF HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH HIS VASSAL TO INSTILL IN HIM A SENSE OF CONFIDENCE AND OBLIGATION (SEE 13:1–7). AN ENDURING KINGDOM MUST BE ESTABLISHED ON INWARD CONSENT, NOT ON NAKED FORCE (23; 22:5). THE LORD BEGAN HIS UNIQUE RELATIONSHIP WITH ISRAEL WHEN HE REDEEMED ABRAHAM FROM HIS PAGAN FAMILY HEADED BY TERAH. ISRAEL’S BLESSED FAMILIES CIRCUMCISED THEIR SONS TO SHOW THIS NEW FAITH. THE REST OF THAT SACRED HISTORY IS WELL KNOWN FROM THE PENTATEUCH AND THE BOOK OF JOSHUA EXCEPT FOR THE ADDITION: THE CITIZENS [LIT. ‘THE LORDS’] OF JERICHO FOUGHT AGAINST YOU (11). SEVEN NATIONS ARE SINGLED OUT TO DENOTE COMPLETENESS (SEE 3:10). THE HORNET (CF. DT. 7:20) IS PROBABLY AN IMAGE OF PANIC AND CONFUSION BY WHICH GOD HELPED ISRAEL TO CONQUER. WHAT IS STRESSED IS THAT THE VICTORY WAS GAINED NOT BY FORCE OF ARMS BUT BY GOD’S MIRACULOUS INTERVENTION. THE TWO AMORITE KINGS ARE SIHON KING OF THE AMORITES AND OG KING OF BASHAN (12:2–5). WHILE ISRAEL MAY HAVE USED SWORD AND BOW IN TAKING THE PROMISED LAND, THEY CANNOT ATTRIBUTE THEIR SUCCESS TO THEM (12; CF. 23:5; PS. 44:1–3). 24:14–18 STIPULATION: BE LOYAL TO THE LORD. THE ANCIENT VASSAL TREATIES ESSENTIALLY STIPULATED EXCLUSIVE LOYALTY TO THE GREAT KING. ONE HITTITE TREATY COMMANDS: ‘DO NOT TURN YOUR EYES TO ANYONE ELSE’! SO ALSO, HERE. FEAR THE LORD (14A) ENTAILS WAVING A WHITE FLAG OF SURRENDER BEFORE THE LORD’S LAW, OF SUBMITTING ONESELF TO HIS COMMANDMENTS. ONE CANNOT ‘FEAR HIM’ AND AT THE SAME TIME SERVE OTHER GODS (CF. 2 KI. 17:32–34); THESE IDOLS MUST BE THROWN AWAY (14B; CF. GN. 35:2–4). ISRAEL’S JEALOUS GOD TOLERATES NO RIVAL. NEITHER DOES JESUS (CF. MT. 6:24; LK. 14:26). THE REFERENCE TO EGYPT (14B) ADDS TO THE PENTATEUCH THAT ISRAEL’S REDEMPTION FROM EGYPT WAS SPIRITUAL, NOT JUST POLITICAL (SEE EZK. 20:5–10; 23:1–4). GOD DEMANDS THAT THE PEOPLE CHOSE WHERE THEIR ALLEGIANCE LIES, EITHER WITH THE OLD GODS OF TERAH, THE NEW GODS OF CANAAN, OR WITH HIMSELF (15; CF. 1 KI. 18:21; REV. 3:16), AN OFFER OF OPTIONS THAT ASSUMES ISRAEL’S FREEDOM BEFORE GOD. ENTRANCE INTO THIS COVENANT WAS A MATTER FOR EACH INDIVIDUAL FAMILY TO DECIDE AS SEEN IN JOSHUA’S FAMOUS RESOLVE (15B). ALTHOUGH ISRAEL FUNCTIONED AS A NATION, THE COVENANT WAS ESSENTIALLY A FAMILY MATTER, AND STILL IS (CF. ACTS. 16:31). AS EYEWITNESSES OF THE ACTS RECITED IN THE PROLOGUE AND SO ABLE TO CONFIRM ITS ACCURACY, THAT GENERATION APPROPRIATELY FORMED THE FOUNDATION FOR THE OLD COVENANT RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD. AFTER THIS THE COVENANT WILL BE PASSED ON BY THE MOUTH OF ONE GENERATION AND RECEIVED IN THE HEART OF THE NEXT (DT. 31:11–14). SO ALSO, THE NEW COVENANT COMMUNITY IS BUILT ON THE APOSTLES WHO WERE EYEWITNESSES OF THE LIFE OF JESUS CHRIST, ESPECIALLY HIS RESURRECTION (ACTS. 1:21–22; 1 COR. 15:8), AND AFTER THAT THE MOUTH CONFESSES IT AND THE HEART RECEIVES IT (ROM. 10:6–10). 24:19–21 COVENANT CURSES. JOSHUA KNEW FROM DIVINE REVELATION AND FROM EXPERIENCE THAT THE PEOPLE WERE INCAPABLE OF KEEPING THE OLD COVENANT (19; SEE DT. 31:14–32:47). HE SOBERLY WARNED THAT TO BREAK COVENANT WITH THE HOLY AND JEALOUS GOD, WHO DOES NOT FORGIVE YOUR REBELLION AND YOUR SINS (I.E. GO BACK ON HIS COVENANT CURSES) WOULD LEAD TO THE DISASTROUS SANCTIONS OF THE COVENANT CURSES (20; CF. 23:12–13). PRECISELY BECAUSE GOD’S CHARACTER DOES NOT CHANGE, HIS ATTITUDE TO PEOPLE CHANGES WHEN THEY TURN TO HIM OR AGAINST HIM; IN THIS WAY HE REWARDS GOOD AND PUNISHES EVIL (CF. JE. 18:5–10). THEIR ONLY HOPE IS IN THE ATONING BLOOD OF CHRIST (CF. PSS. 32:1–2; 130:3–4; LK. 22:20; ROM. 3:21–26). THROUGH THE FAILURE OF THE OLD COVENANT, ON ACCOUNT OF HUMAN FICKLENESS, ISRAEL WILL LEARN CENTURIES LATER THE NECESSITY OF THE NEW COVENANT AND A WALK IN THE SPIRIT, EVEN AS PAUL HAD TO LEARN IT (ROM. 7:7–8:4). GOD’S WAYS IN HISTORY ARE FILLED WITH MYSTERY TO HIS OWN GLORY (ROM. 11:33–36). THE FOUNDING GENERATION ESSENTIALLY KEPT THE COVENANT, THOUGH JOSHUA STILL HAD TO EXHORT SOME FAMILIES TO THROW AWAY THEIR OLD GODS (14, 23). 24:22–27 COVENANT WITNESSES AND DEPOSIT OF THE LAW. MOSES TAUGHT THE PEOPLE A SONG AS A WITNESS AGAINST THEM (DT. 31:9–32:44). JOSHUA CALLED UPON THE PEOPLE TO BE WITNESSES AGAINST THEMSELVES (22). WITH THEIR RESOLVE, WISE FOR ITS KNOWLEDGE OF GOD’S FAITHFULNESS AND YET AT THE SAME TIME FOOLISH FOR ITS IGNORANCE OF HUMAN FICKLENESS (24), JOSHUA RENEWED THE COVENANT, DRAWING UP ITS CONTENTS IN LINE WITH THE STIPULATIONS AND RECORDING THEM IN A CERTAIN BOOK OF THE LAW OF GOD (25A–26), NOT PRESERVED APART FROM THIS NOTICE. THE LARGE STONE HE ERECTED AS A FURTHER WITNESS AGAINST THEM WAS POSSIBLY A PILLAR CONTAINING THE COVENANT (26B–27; CF. 8:31–32; JDG. 9:6; SEE ALSO 4:5–7; GN. 28:18; 31:45–50; 1 SA. 7:12). 24:28 DISMISSAL OF THE ASSEMBLY. HIS WORK FINISHED, THE LAND POSSESSED AND THE COVENANT RENEWED, JOSHUA DISMISSED THE PEOPLE FOR THE LAST TIME.**

**24:29–33 POSTSCRIPT: BURIAL NOTICES**

**THE DEUTERONOMIST CONCLUDES HIS BOOK WITH THE BURIALS OF JOSHUA (29–30), JOSEPH (32) AND ELEAZAR (33) IN THE REST OF THE PROMISED LAND, FOR THEY SYMBOLIZE HIS DOMINANT THEME: GOD GAVE THAT FAITHFUL GENERATION REST IN THE LAND HE HAD PROMISED THE FATHERS. JOSHUA IS FINALLY REWARDED WITH THE HONORIFIC TITLE HE EARNED: SERVANT OF THE LORD (CF. 1:1). ANOTHER AND GREATER WILL MEDIATE THE NEW COVENANT (IS. 42:6; 49:8). 28–31 LINKS THE BOOKS OF JOSHUA AND JUDGES (JDG. 2:6–9), CONTRASTING THE BLESSEDNESS OF THE FOUNDING GENERATION WITH THE WRETCHEDNESS OF THE NEXT. V 32 LINKS THE BOOK WITH THE PENTATEUCH (CF. GN. 50:25; EX. 13:19).**

**THE FATHER STEPHEN’S 9TH TO 10TH SUPREME DEFENSE (SAUL & DAVID) IN THE ULTIMATE BEGINNING IS 108, 120 LEGIONS OF ANGELS [648,000, 720,000 TIMES 185,000 T6IMES 100,000 IN RELENTING] BY GOING ONE MILE GO TWAIN [3], WHICH CAN SAVE OR DESTROY 35,964,000,000,000,000 QUADRILLION TO 39,960,000,000,000,000 QUADRILLION IN RELENTING OF 100,000 IN JUDE 14-15**

**THE FATHER STEPHEN’S SPEECH IN ACTS 7:45 DECLARES “…UNTIL THE DAYS OF DAVID, WHO FOUND FAVOR BEFORE GOD AND ASKED TO FIND A DWELLING FOR THE GOD OF JACOB [ALSO KNOWN AS THE GOD OF ISRAEL & THE GOD OF JAMES].”**

**STEPHEN YAHWEH’S TOP TABERNACLE**

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**THE BOOK OF SAUL**

**THE WHITE SKIN COLOR KING SAUL’S NAME MEANS “CROWNED JUDGMENT, ASKED OR DEMAND.” KING SAUL’S KINGDOM LASTS FOR 40 YEARS FROM 0 TO 40 YEARS OF AGE. THE LORD JOHN CHRIST OF THE GOSPEL IS RAISED BY KING SAUL’S WHITE SKIN COLOR FLESH. THIS WRITING IS WRITTEN IN KING SAUL’S 40 YEAR REIGN IN ABOUT 1040BC TO 1010BC. KING SAUL GREATEST ACCOMPLISHMENT WAS THAT HE IS THE LORD ISRAEL’S FIRST KING.**

**KING SAUL’S ROLE IN HOLY SCRIPTURE: KING SAUL WAS A MAN WHO BEGAN WELL BUT UNDER THE LIVELONG PRESSURES OF LEADERSHIP EVENTUALLY BROKE IN TIME. KING SAUL IS THE FIRST KING, AND BEGAN THE DIVINE INTERVENTION OF UNIFYING THE HEBREW TRIBES AND MAKING THEM A GREAT NATION. THIS WAS ACCOMPLISHED FINALLY BY HIS MORE FAMOUS SUCCESSOR KING DAVID.**

**KING SAUL’S LIFE AND TIMES: THE LORD SAMUEL WAS THE LAST PROPHET AND JUDGE TO LEAD THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL. WHEN SAMSON BECAME OLD, THE ISRAELITES DEMANDED A KING. THE PEOPLE DESIRED FOR A RULER LIKE THOSE IN PAGAN NATIONS WITH A MILITARY MAN WHO WOULD FIGHT TO PROTECT THEM FROM THEIR ENEMIES. WHILE THEIR MOTIVES WERE TOTALLY WRONG, THE FATHER STEPHEN GRANTED THEIR WISH AND SAUL BECAME KING. KING SAUL WAS AN IMPOSING INDIVIDUAL WHERE HE WAS LIKE THE ISRAELITES & THEY WOULD INDEED ACCEPT THIS KIND OF RULER. IN THIS KING SAUL BECAME THE LORD ELIJAH IN THE END TIME. KING SAUL ACHIEVED EARLY MILITARY VICTORIES THAT ELEVATED HIS SUPPORT AMONG THE PEOPLE. BUT SHORTLY AFTERWARDS HIS FLAWS SUNK IN WITH AN INABILITY TO TRUST IN THE FATHER STEPHEN & AN UNWILLINGNESS TO OBEY HIS COMMANDS. THIS LED THE FATHER STEPHEN TO REJECT HIM AS KING. KING SAUL CONTINUED AS THE LORD ISRAEL’S RULER FOR MANY YEARS, BUT HIS ALIENATION FROM THE FATHER STEPHEN SHOWED UP IN MANY WAYS. KING SAUL SUFFERED FROM VERY DEEP DEPRESSION AND PARANOIA. KING SAUL WAS A COWARD WHEN HE WAS CHALLENGED BY THE PHILISTINE CHAMPION, THE GIANT GOLIATH. KING SAUL BECAME INTENSELY JEALOUS OF HIS SOON TO BE KING DAVID AFTER HE KILLED GOLIATH AND ACHIEVED OTHER MILITARY VICTORIES THAT FAR EXCEEDED KING SAUL. EVENTUALLY, KING SAUL WAS THREATENED AND SOUGHT OUT TO KILL DAVID. HIS MANY FREQUENT ATTEMPTS CAUSED & FORCED DAVID TO BE A FUGITIVE. KING SAUL’S HOSTILITY TOWARD DAVID NEVER CEASED, AND HE PURSUED HIM THROUGHOUT HIS LIFE UNTIL KING SAUL WAS KILLED IN MILITARY BATTLE WITH THE PHILISTINES.**

**KING SAUL’S RELATIONSHIPS: KING SAUL’S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE SOON KING DAVID IS IN THE KING DAVID’S SECTION LATER ON IN THIS BOOK. KING SAUL HAD ONLY ONE WIFE IN SCRIPTURE NAMED AHINOAM (BROTHER IS DELIGHT) WHICH IS THE MOTHER OF JONATHAN (STEPHEN YAHWEH GAVE), WHO BECAME KING DAVID’S CLOSEST FRIEND.**

**KING SAUL’S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE FATHER STEPHEN IN 1ST SAMUEL CHAPTERS 11, 13, 15, 22 & 31. THE SCRIPTURAL TEXT ALLOWS US TO PIN POINT KING SAUL’S RAPID DETERIORATING RELATIONSHIP WITH THE FATHER STEPHEN. KING SAUL CREDITED THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD WITH A VICTORY IN 1ST SAMUEL CHAPTER 11. WHEN THE AMMONITES ATTACKED THE ISRAELITE CITY, KING SAUL RAISED A MILITIA AND DEFEATED THEM. APPROPRIATELY, HE ANNOUNCED THAT “TODAY THE LORD HAS ACCOMPLISHED SALVATION IN ISRAEL” IN 1ST SAMUEL 11:13. ALL ISRAEL, THEN MADE ALLEGIANCE TO SAUL AS KING.**

**KING SAUL’S UNGODLY FEAR WHICH LED TO DISOBEDIENCE IN 1ST SAMUEL CHAPTER 13. KING SAUL ESTABLISHED A SMALL ARMY. IN HIS 2ND YEAR, HE ATTACKED THE PHILISTINE OUTPOST. THE PHILISTINES RAISED A MASSIVE ARMY TO PUT DOWN KING SAUL AND THE ISRAELITES. THE ISRAELITES SAW THE SIZE OF THE ARMY FORCE GATHERED AGAINST THEM, AND THE MEN OF KING SAUL HID OR FLED INTO THE COUNTRY. EVEN THE MEMBERS OF KING SAUL’S LITTLE ARMY BEGAN TO DESERT. WITHIN A SHORT TIME, KING SAUL ONLY HAD 600 TRUSTWORTHY MILITARY MEN TO SUPPORT HIM IN THE REBELLION. THE LORD SAMUEL TOLD KING SAUL TO WAIT SEVEN DAYS AND PROMISED HE WOULD COME AND OFFER SACRIFICE TO THE FATHER STEPHEN. KING SAUL WAS IMPATIENT BECAUSE OF THE LOSS OF MILITARY MEN FLEEING, AND HE MADE SACRIFICE TO THE FATHER STEPHEN EVEN THOUGH HE WAS NOT AN AUTHORIZED PRIEST. THEN WHEN THE LORD SAMUEL ARRIVED, HE DAMNED KING SAUL FOR DOING SO “FOOLISHLY.” IN THE HEBREW THE WORD “FOOL” MEANS “AS ONE WHO ACTS IN REBELLION.” THE LORD SAMUEL ANNOUNCED THAT BECAUSE OF KING SAUL’S NEGLIGENCE, HE WOULD NOT BE ALLOWED TO ESTABLISH A DYNASTY KINGDOM. KING SAUL’S FEARS MAY HAVE BEEN JUSTIFIABLE. BUT KING SAUL KNEW WELL OF THE JUDGES IN THE PAST AND OF THE FATHER STEPHEN’S AID TO MEN OF THE PAST. FEAR LED KING SAUL TO DISOBEY THE PROPHET SAMUEL EVEN THOUGH WHEN HE DISOBEYED, HE HAD TWICE AS MANY SOLDIERS AS GIDEON HAD WHEN HE DEFEATED A LARGE FORCE. THE FACT THAT KING SAUL’S FEAR WAS A LACK OF FAITH AND GROUNDLESS WAS SOON ORCHESTRATED, KING SAUL’S SON JONATHAN ATTACKED A PHILISTINE OUTPOST AND ROUTED A GREAT ARMY.**

**KING SAUL DISOBEYED THE FATHER STEPHEN AGAIN IN 1ST SAMUEL CHAPTER 15. WHEN THE FATHER STEPHEN SENT KING SAUL TO DESTROY THE AMALEKITES, KING SAUL KEPT THEIR KING ALIVE AND TOOK THE SPOIL OF WAR. THIS WAS IN DIRECT VIOLATION OF THE FATHER STEPHEN’S COMMAND. WHEN THE LORD SAMUEL CONFRONTED HIM, KING SAUL LIED AND SAID HE PLANNED TO OFFER SACRIFICIAL ANIMALS TO THE FATHER STEPHEN. KING SAUL TRIED TO MAKE EXCUSE THAT HE FEARED THE PEOPLE IN 1ST SAMUEL 15:24. KING SAUL FINALLY ADMITTED HIS SIN TO THE LORD SAMUEL, BUT BEGGED THE PROPHET TO “HONOR ME” BEFORE THE PEOPLE. IN THIS KING SAUL WAS TOTALLY UNLIKE KING DAVID, WHO PUBLICALLY CONFESSED HIS SIN AND TOOK RESPONSIBILITY FOR HIS ACTIONS.**

**KING SAUL ORDERED THE MURDER OF THE PRIESTS OF NOB IN 1ST SAMUEL CHAPTER 22. AS DAVID FLED FROM KING SAUL, THE PRIEST AHIMELECH GAVE DAVID FOOD AND GOLIATH’S SWORD AT NOB. EVEN THOUGH THE PRIESTS DID NOT KNOW THAT DAVID WAS A FUGITIVE, KING SAUL ORDERED THEIR MURDER. NO ISRAELITE WOULD TOUCH ANY OF THE PRIESTS OF THE FATHER STEPHEN. KING SAUL ORDERED AN EDOMITE BY THE NAME OF DOEG TO DO THIS EVIL DEED.**

**KING SAUL CONSULTED A WITCH IN 1ST SAMUEL CHAPTER 31. NEAR THE END OF THE REIGN, KING SAUL WAS ABOUT TO GO OUT FOR WAR WITH THE PHILISTINES AGAIN. BY NOW KING SAUL WAS ISOLATED AND TOTALLY SEPARATED FROM THE FATHER STEPHEN. KING SAUL WAS WORRIED ABOUT WHAT THE FUTURE MIGHT HOLD, SO KING SAUL CONSULTED A MEDIUM, WHOSE CONTACT WAS A DEMONIC SPIRIT. KING SAUL KNEW THE VIOLATION OF THE FATHER STEPHEN’S LAW, FOR IN TIMES PAST HE ORDERED ALL SUCH PERSONS TO BE DRIVEN OUT OF ISRAEL. WITH THE SHOCKED SURPRISE OF THE MEDIUM, THE LORD SAMUEL HIMSELF APPEARED AND TOLD KING SAUL IN ABOUT THIS TIME, TOMORROW YOU WILL DIE IN MILITARY WARFARE. IN THE HOLY SCRIPTURES OF FORBIDDEN OCCULT PRACTICES IN THE ANCIENT WORLD IS IN DEUTERONOMY 18:10-11. IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS ON FORBIDDEN MAGIC OR PERMISSIBLE MAGIC, YOU MUST GET MY BOOK CALLED “MOSES’ ROD & THE MAGICAL ARTS IN THE HOLY BIBLE.”**

**KING SAUL AN EXAMPLE FOR US TODAY. EVEN THOUGH KING SAUL WITH AN IMPOSING PHYSICAL STRENGTH, WAS STILL A MORAL COWARD. IN THIS, HE SERVES AS A LEARNING TOOL SO THAT WE WHO UNDERSTAND WILL NOT FALL IN THE SAME PREDICAMENT AS HE DID. KING SAUL WARNS US AGAINST FAILURE TO TRUST THE FATHER STEPHEN. TAKING THINGS IN OUR OWN HANDS IS VERY DESTRUCTIVE AND FOOLISH. KING SAUL WARNS US AGAINST ABOUT FAILING TO OBEY THE FATHER STEPHEN. BORDERLINE CHRISTIANS ARE MORE INTERESTED WHAT OTHERS THINK THAN WHAT THE FATHER STEPHEN THINKS. THE FEAR IN HUMANS IS FOOLISH AND THOSE WHO DO WILL HAVE AN ACCOUNT & WILL HAVE TO ANSWER TO THE FATHER STEPHEN. KING SAUL REMINDS US WHEN OUR ACTIONS LEAD US MORE AWAY FROM THE FATHER STEPHEN, THE RETURN TO THE FATHER STEPHEN IS MORE DIFFICULT TO GRASP. KING SAUL HAD A CHANCE TO REPENT BUT HE LET HIS FEARS OVERTAKE HIM AND DID NOT CONFESS HIS SIN BUT MADE EXCUSES & DID NOT GIVE THE FATHER STEPHEN THE GLORY. KING SAUL REMINDS US THAT CHARACTER IS IMPORTANT. PEOPLE’S GOOD LOOKS, THEIR INTELLIGENCE, THEIR POPULARITY OF THE CROWDS, THEIR COMMANDING PRESENCE, THEIR SKILL WITH SMOOTH WORDS, THEIR ABILITY TO MOVE MOUNTAINS SHOULD NOT BE THE MAIN CRITERIA WE USE IN ELECTING AN OFFICIAL. WE NEED TO DO THE DIVINE WILL OF THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD AND OBEY HIS COMMANDS WITHOUT QUESTION.**

**THE BOOK OF DAVID**

**THE WHITE SKIN COLOR KING DAVID’S NAME MEANS “CROWNED BELOVED” IN SONG OF SOLOMON 5:10. THE LORD DAVID’S KINGDOM LASTS 40 YEARS FROM 0 TO 40 YEARS OF AGE. THE LORD JESUS CHRIST OF THE GOSPEL IS RAISED BY KING DAVID. THE WRITING IS WRITTEN IN KING DAVID’S 40 YEAR REIGN FROM 1010BC-970BC. KING DAVID’S GREATEST ACCOMPLISHMENT WAS THAT HE BUILT A POWERFUL HEBREW KINGDOM WHICH EXPANDED ISRAEL’S TERRITORY AND ESTABLISHED MAJOR AND POLITICAL REFORMS.**

**KING DAVID’S ROLE IN SCRIPTURE: THE LORD MOSES IS SCRIPTURE’S PROTOTYPE PROPHET, WHILE KING DAVID IS SCRIPTURE’S PROTOTYPE KING. CHRIST FULFILLED THE PROMISE OF THE PROPHET LIKE MOSES IN HIS FIRST COMING. IN CHRIST’S SECOND COMING, HE WILL FULFILL THE PROMISE OF A KING LIKE DAVID, OF KING DAVID’S LINE, DESTINED TO RULE OVER ALL. THE OLD TESTAMENT PROPHETS SPOKE OF A PROMISED RULER TO SPRING FROM KING DAVID’S LINE. KING DAVID HAS A POWERFUL IMPACT ON THE POLITICAL LIVES OF THE HEBREWS. PRIOR TO KING DAVID, THE ISRAELITES WERE LOOSELY ASSOCIATED AS TRIBES GOVERNED FOR CENTURIES BY THE JUDGES, AND FOR A TIME THE CORRUPTED KING SAUL. AT THIS TIME THE ISRAELITES WERE AN OPPRESSED MINORITY IN CANAAN. WHEN KING DAVID FINALLY WON THE ALLEGIANCE OF THE 12 HEBREW TRIBES, HE WAS ABLE TO MOLD THEM INTO THE MOST POWERFUL MIDDLE EASTERN KINGDOM OF THIS ERA. THE 40 YEARS OF KING DAVID’S COMPLETE ISRAEL’S TRANSITION FROM A LOOSE TRIBAL STRUCTURE UNDER THE JUDGES INTO A UNIFIED MONARCHY. THERE ARE A NUMBER OF IMPORTANT ASPECTS THAT WERE ACCOMPLISHED UNDER KING DAVID’S LEADERSHIP. FIRST, IS THE TRANSITION FROM THE GOVERNMENT BY THE JUDGES TO AN ESTABLISHED MONARCHY. SECOND, IS THE TRANSITION FROM A LOOSE CONFEDERATION OF TRIBES TO A UNITED MONARCHY. THIRD, IS THE TRANSITION FROM ANARCHY TO A STRONG CENTRALIZED GOVERNMENT. FOURTH, IS THE TRANSITION FROM BRONZE-AGE POVERTY TO IRON-AGE ECONOMY AND WEALTH. FIFTH, IS THE TRANSITION FROM A SUBJECT PEOPLE TO CONQUERORS BY EXPANDING ISRAEL’S TERRITORY TEN TIMES MORE. SIXTH, IS THE TRANSITION FROM A DECENTRALIZED WORSHIP TO CENTRALIZED WORSHIP, WITH ONE CITY AS BOTH A POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS CAPITAL. KING DAVID PROVED TO BE A MILITARY AND A POLITICAL GENIUS WHOSE ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN ISRAEL ARE UNMATCHED. KING DAVID’S CONTRIBUTIONS TO ISRAEL’S SPIRITUAL LIFE ARE JUST AS IMPRESSIVE. KING DAVID WAS DEEPLY COMMITTED TO THE FATHER STEPHEN AND HIS PASSION AND INTENSITY OF THE PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WAS ASTOUNDING. THIS IS REVEALED IN THE 73 POEMS OF THE PSALMS ATTRIBUTED TO HIM. KING DAVID ALSO WAS COMMITTED TO WORSHIP BY DESIRING TO CONSTRUCT A TEMPLE IN JERUSALEM. WHILE THE FATHER STEPHEN DID NOT ALLOW KING DAVID TO FULFILL THIS DREAM, KING DAVID SPENT THE REST OF HIS LIFE LAYING OUT THE PLANS FOR ITS DESIGN AND DEVELOPING DETAILED ORGANIZATIONAL PLANS FOR THE DUTIES OF THE PRIESTS AND LEVITES WHO WOULD LEAD IN WORSHIP THERE. KING DAVID GAVE MUCH OF HIS PERSONAL WEALTH AND THE KINGDOM’S INCOME TO STOCK THE MATERIALS HIS SON SOLOMON WOULD USE TO BUILD THE FATHER STEPHEN’S TEMPLE. BUT KING DAVID FELL IN MANY SHORTCOMINGS, PARTICULARLY IN HIS FAMILY LIFE. YET, KING DAVID’S MILITARY, POLITICAL AND SPIRITUAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS ARE NOT OVERSTATED. KING DAVID FOUNDED A KINGDOM DYNASTY IN JUDAH, THE SOUTHERN HEBREW KINGDOM FROM 1010BC TO ITS FALL TO THE BABYLONIANS IN 586BC. KING DAVID IN PROPHESY IS IN ISAIAH 9:7; 16:5; JEREMIAH 23:5; 30:9; EZEKIEL 37:24; HOSEA 3:5; MATTHEW 1:1; 12:23 & REVELATION 22:16.**

**KING DAVID’S LIFE AND TIMES: DAVID WAS BORN IN A TIME WHEN PEOPLE’S FATE HUNG IN THE BALANCE. ISRAEL’S ENEMIES AT THE TIME WERE THE PHILISTINES, WHO DOMINATED THE WEAKER NEIGHBORS. THE PHILISTINES HAD MASTERED THE SECRETS OF IRON, AND THEY CAREFULLY HID & GUARDED THE NEW TECHNOLOGY. WHEN DAVID WAS A YOUTH, ONLY KING SAUL AND HIS SON JONATHAN CARRIED IRON WEAPONS, THE OTHER MEMBERS OF ISRAEL’S MILITIA WERE FORCED TO USE BRONZE KNIVES AND FARM IMPLEMENTS DURING BATTLE. DURING KING DAVID’S LIFETIME, MOSTLY BECAUSE OF HIM ALL OF ISRAEL’S NEIGHBORING ENEMIES WERE SUBDUED.**

**DAVID’S EARLY LIFE AS A SHEPHERD IN 1ST SAMUEL 16:11. DAVID WAS THE YOUNGEST SON OF JESSE, WHO LIVED IN BETHLEHEM [JESUS CHRIST STARTED AT BETHLEHEM, THEN NAZARETH, THEN JERUSALEM, THEN ISRAEL, THEN BABYLON, THEN EGYPT & ULTIMATELY ENDS UP IN THE USA ON THE EAST COAST IN ACTS 29:2 & STEPHEN CHRIST STARTED AT JERUSALEM, THEN ISRAEL, THEN BABYLON, THEN EGYPT & ULTIMATELY ENDS UP IN THE USA ON THE EAST COAST IN ACTS 29:2 & THIS PROVES THE ELEVATED STATUS OF THE FATHER STEPHEN OVER HIS SON JESUS CHRIST], A SMALL TOWN SIX MILES FROM THE FUTURE CITY OF DAVID’S CAPITAL, JERUSALEM. DAVID WAS ASSIGNED THE TASK OF GUARDING THE SHEEP. DAVID CAME TO UNDERSTAND THE AWE OF THE LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH AS CREATOR. DAVID WOULD WRITE ONE DAY A PSALM ABOUT HIM IN PSALMS 19:1-3. DAVID ALSO LEARNED TO ACT IN HIS CONFIDENCE IN THE FATHER STEPHEN. LATER, WHEN HE WAS ASKED HOW HE WOULD FIGHT THE GIANT PHILISTINE WARRIOR, DAVID REPLIED IN 1ST SAMUEL 17:34-36. AFTER KING SAUL, THE WEAK & UNTRUSTING KING HAD DIED, THE PROPHET SAMUEL CAME TO BETHLEHEM TO ANOINT DAVID AS KING. WHEN THE LORD SAMUEL SAW HIM, HE SAID IS THIS THE ONE? THE FATHER STEPHEN POINTED KING DAVID OUT, WHO WAS HANDSOME AND OF SMALL STATURE. THE FATHER STEPHEN REMINDED THE LORD SAMUEL THAT “THE LORD DOES NOT SEE AS MAN SEES, FOR MAN LOOKS AT THE OUTWARD APPEARANCE, BUT THE LORD LOOKS AT THE HEART” IN 1ST SAMUEL 16:7.**

**KING DAVID’S EMERGENCE AS A MILITARY ARMY HERO IN 1ST SAMUEL CHAPTERS 17-19. IN THIS KING DAVID BECAME THE LORD MOSES AT THE END TIME. AN INVASION OF ISRAELITE TERRITORY BY THE PHILISTINES CREATED FOR KING DAVID’S EMERGENCE FROM OBSCURITY. TWO ARMIES LAY CAMPED OPPOSITE OF EACH OTHER ON HILLSIDES, A PHILISTINE WARRIOR THAT WAS 9 FEET TALL CHALLENGED ISRAEL TO SEND OUT A CHAMPION TO FIGHT HIM. KING SAUL, THE TALLEST IN HIS KINGDOM AND MOST POWERFUL IN ISRAEL’S ARMY AT THE TIME AS WELL AS KING, COWERED IN HIS TENT, PROMISING THAT HE WOULD REWARD THE ONE THAT WOULD GO OUT IN COMBAT AND KILL THE GIANT PHILISTINE. DAVID GLADLY VOLUNTEERED TO FIGHT FOR ISRAEL, BUT KING SAUL WAS OPTIMISTIC ABOUT A YOUNG BOY FIGHTING. DAVID KILLED THE GIANT AND WAS QUICKLY ACCEPTED IN KING SAUL’S ARMY AS AN OFFICER, WHICH IMMEDIATELY DISPLAYED COURAGE AND BRILLIANCE THAT MARKED HIS ENTIRE MILITARY CAREER. DAVID WAS SO SUCCESSFUL AND SO HONORED BY ISRAEL, THAT KING SAUL BECAME JEALOUS OF HIM. EVENTUALLY, KING SAUL TRIED TO GET RID OF DAVID BUT FAILED MANY TIMES. NOW KING SAUL KNEW HE WAS NEXT IN LINE FOR THE THRONE AND KING SAUL SET OUT TO KILL HIM. DAVID FLED FOR HIS LIFE.**

**DAVID’S OUTLAW YEARS IN 1ST SAMUEL CHAPTERS 20-31. DAVID WAS ALONE WHEN HE FLED FROM KING SAUL, BUT IN TIME DAVID ASSEMBLED 600 FIERCE WARRIORS WHICH WOULD MAINLY BE THE CORE OF KING DAVID ARMY WHEN HE ROSE TO POWER. DURING THE OUTLAW YEARS KING SAUL PURSUED DAVID. HOWEVER, DAVID WAS RELUCTANT TO KILL KING SAUL AND DID NOT, EVEN THOUGH HE HAD TWO OCCASIONS IN DOING SO, WHEN HE HAD THE OPPORTUNITY. KING SAUL HAD BEEN THE ANOINTED KING BY THE PROPHET SAMUEL AND APPOINTED BY THE FATHER STEPHEN. THE FATHER STEPHEN, NOT DAVID, MUST REMOVE HIM.**

**KING DAVID’S RULE OVER JUDAH IN 2ND SAMUEL CHAPTERS 1-4. WHEN KING SAUL WAS KILLED IN ACTION IN MILITARY COMBAT WITH THE PHILISTINES, THE TRIBES OF JUDAH AND BENJAMIN INVITED DAVID TO BECOME THEIR KING. A SON OF THE LATE KING SAUL, ISHBOSHETH (MAN OF SHAME), WAS NEXT IN LINE AS KING OF THE OTHER TEN TRIBES BY THE COMMANDING GENERAL ABNER, WHO WAS IN KING SAUL’S ARMY AT THE TIME. FOR SEVEN YEARS THE NORTH (TEN TRIBES) AND THE SOUTH (KING DAVID’S TWO TRIBES) SKIRMISHED. FINALLY, AN INSULT MOVED GENERAL ABNER TO MAKE PEACE WITH KING DAVID, BE ON HIS SIDE AND UNIFY THE NATION UNDER HIS RULE. EVEN THOUGH KING DAVID’S COMMANDING GENERAL JOAB (STEPHEN YAHWEH IS FATHER) ASSASSINATED THE COMMANDING GENERAL ABNER (FATHER IS A LAMP), THE TRANSFER OF POWER STILL TOOK PLACE. DAVID WAS KING IN A UNITED ISRAEL AND WAS IN POSITION TO DO ALL THAT HE DREAMED.**

**KING DAVID BUILDS A NATION IN 2ND SAMUEL CHAPTERS 5-10 & 1ST CHRONICLES CHAPTERS 11-16. KING DAVID’S FIRST ACT WAS TO ESTABLISH A NEW CAPITAL. HE CHOSE JERUSALEM. KING DAVID DROVE OUT THE HEIGHTS OF THE CANAANITES. KING DAVID ALSO SET OUT TO BREAK THE POWER OF ENEMY NATIONS SURROUNDING ISRAEL. IN A SERIES OF WARS, STARTED MAINLY BY THE ENEMY, KING DAVID WAS VICTORIOUS OVER ALL OF THEM. KING DAVID THEN EXPANDED THE ISRAELITE TERRITORY TEN TIMES. DURING KING DAVID’S RULE, ISRAEL NEARLY OCCUPIED ALL THE LAND SWORN TO THE FATHER ABRAHAM LONG AGO. WITH HIS BORDERS SECURE, HE ORGANIZED A CENTRAL GOVERNMENT, SETTING UP AN EFFICIENT ADMINISTRATION SYSTEM. KING DAVID ALSO INSTITUTED RELIGIOUS REFORMS. NOW KING DAVID BROUGHT THE ARK OF THE COVENANT, THE MOST HOLY OBJECT IN ISRAEL’S RELIGION, TO JERUSALEM, AND LAID PLANS FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE TEMPLE OF THE FATHER STEPHEN. NOW ISRAEL HAD A UNIFIED CAPITAL, A UNIFIED KING AND A UNIFIED FAITH.**

**KING DAVID’S DECLINING YEARS IN 2ND SAMUEL CHAPTERS 11-24 & 1ST CHRONICLES CHAPTERS 20-29. KING DAVID’S ENERGY AND FAITH ENABLED HIM TO BUILD A POWERFUL AND STABLE KINGDOM. ONCE THIS WAS ACCOMPLISHED, KING DAVID WOULD HAVE TO FACE A MORAL AND INTERPERSONAL CHALLENGE IN 1ST SAMUEL CHAPTERS 11-20. ONE SPRING WHEN KING DAVID’S ARMIES WENT OUT TO DO BATTLE, KING DAVID STAYED IN JERUSALEM. THERE HE WAS LOOKING IN THE LATTICE ON HIS ROOFTOP AND SAW A BEAUTIFUL NAKED WOMAN BATHING. INFLAMED WITH DESIRE, HE SENT FOR THE WOMAN AND TOOK HER, AND THEN TRIED TO HIDE WHAT WAS ESSENTIALLY RAPE. THIS OUTRAGED THE FATHER STEPHEN AND HARMED OTHERS. KING DAVID’S ANGUISH IS EXPRESSED IN PSALMS CHAPTER 32 AND HIS CONFESSION IN PSALMS CHAPTER 51. HE WAS FORGIVEN, BUT IT HAD A REAL IMPACT ON HIS FAMILY IN THE NEAR FUTURE. KING DAVID GOT BATHSHEBA PREGNANT, WHICH WAS URIAH’S WIFE AT THE TIME. BUT KING DAVID PLANNED TO GET RID OF URIAH IN MILITARY COMBAT. WHEN THIS WAS SUCCESSFUL, KING DAVID TOOK BATHSHEBA TO BE HIS WIFE. THE FATHER STEPHEN DID NOT LET THE FIRST CHILD LIVE BETWEEN KING DAVID AND QUEEN BATHSHEBA, BUT THE SECOND SON WAS NAMED SOLOMON. BUT KING DAVID’S ENTHUSIASM IS RESTORED IN 1ST CHRONICLES CHAPTERS 17-28. KING DAVID FOUND A BETTER WAY TO INVEST HIS ENERGIES, AND HIS ENTHUSIASM FOR LIFE WAS RESTORED AFTER THE FLING WITH VIRGIN BATHSHEBA. KING DAVID GOT BACK ON TRACK AND USED HIS THOUGHTS TO PLAN FOR THE MAGNIFICENT TEMPLE TO BE BUILT IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER STEPHEN.**

**KING DAVID’S RELATIONSHIPS: KING DAVID’S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE FATHER STEPHEN. SCRIPTURE DECLARES THAT THE FATHER STEPHEN CHOSE DAVID TO BE KING TO SUCCEED KING SAUL BECAUSE KING DAVID WAS A MAN AFTER THE FATHER STEPHEN’S “OWN HEART” IN 1ST SAMUEL 13:14. THIS DOES NOT MEAN KING DAVID WAS PERFECT, BUT THAT HE AGAPE LOVED THE FATHER STEPHEN AND WAS RESPONSIVE TO HIM.**

**KING DAVID WAS RESPONSIVE TO THE FATHER STEPHEN’S REVELATION OF HIMSELF IN DIVINE NATURE. KING DAVID WAS DEEPLY MOVED BY THE EVIDENCE OF THE FATHER STEPHEN’S GREATNESS IN DIVINE NATURE AND WAS PROFOUNDLY AWED THAT THE FATHER STEPHEN COULD CARE ABOUT HUMAN BEINGS. THIS IS SHOWN IN PSALMS 8:3-4, 9.**

**KING DAVID DISPLAYED CONFIDENCE IN THE FATHER STEPHEN’S PROMISES IN 1ST SAMUEL CHAPTER 17. WHILE IN SAUL’S ARMY, DAVID WONDERED WHY HAS ANYONE FOUGHT THE GREAT GIANT. THE PHILISTINE IN DAVID’S EYES WAS FIGHTING AGAINST THE [ARMED] FORCES OF THE FATHER STEPHEN AND NOT JUST CHALLENGING MEN. DAVID WAS CONVINCED THAT THE FATHER STEPHEN OF THE COVENANT, THE FATHER STEPHEN THAT DELIVERED ISRAEL FROM EGYPT, WOULD FIGHT FOR HIS PEOPLE. DAVID ONLY COUNTED ON THE FATHER STEPHEN’S COMMITMENT TO HIS PEOPLE AND LOOKS AT THE MORE POWERFUL FATHER STEPHEN, THAN LOOKING AT HIS OPPONENT IN COMBAT.**

**KING DAVID LOOKED TO THE FATHER STEPHEN FOR GUIDANCE IN 1ST SAMUEL 23:2. IN THE HISTORICAL BOOKS TELLS US THAT KING DAVID “INQUIRED OF THE LORD” ELEVEN TIMES WHEN FACING DIFFICULT OPPOSITION. IN KING DAVID’S DAY IT INVOLVED AN APPEAL TO THE MAJESTIC THUMMIM (PERFECTION OF GIFTS, SUCH AS THE HOLY GHOST AND OMNI-BENEVOLENCE) AND THE MAJESTIC URIM (FIRE FOR THE LIGHTS OR LAMPSTANDS) HELD BY THE HIGH PRIEST (THE ULTIMATE HIGH PRIEST IS THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD TO CONSULT FOR THE LORDS ONLY WITH THE DIVINING STONES OF THE MAJESTIC THUMMIM AND MAJESTIC URIM KNOW THE HOLY JUDGMENTS OF THE LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH IN JAMES 1:17), AS DESCRIBED IN EXODUS 28:30; LEVITICUS 8:8; NUMBERS 27:21; DEUTERONOMY 33:8; 1ST SAMUEL 28:6; EZRA 2:63; NEHEMIAH 7:65 & SIRACH 45:10. KING DAVID’S DEPENDENCE IN THE FATHER STEPHEN IS REFLECTED IN PSALMS 31:3-5.**

**KING DAVID ENCOURAGED OTHERS TO HONOR AND WORSHIP THE FATHER STEPHEN. KING DAVID SET A PERSONAL EXAMPLE IN 1ST SAMUEL 26:1-12. ON ONE OCCASION WHEN KING SAUL PURSUED DAVID AND HIS BAND, DAVID HAS A CHANCE TO ASSASSINATE KING SAUL. ABISHAI (FATHER EXISTS), ONE OF DAVID’S MEN, URGED HIM TO KILL KING SAUL, ARGUING THAT THE FATHER STEPHEN HAD DELIVERED KING SAUL INTO HIS HAND. DAVID REFUSED IN THAT “THE LORD FORBID THAT I SHOULD STRETCH OUT MY HAND AGAINST THE LORD’S ANOINTED.” THE FATHER STEPHEN REMOVED KING SAUL IN HIS OWN TIME. DAVID RESPECTED THE FATHER STEPHEN IN THIS. KING DAVID EMPHASIZED THE IMPORTANCE OF WORSHIP TO THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD IN 2ND SAMUEL CHAPTER 6. KING DAVID ESTABLISHED A CAPITAL AND BROUGHT THE ARK OF THE COVENANT TO JERUSALEM, THEN HE LED THE CELEBRATION HONORING THE FATHER STEPHEN AND SETTING UP AN EXAMPLE FOR HIS PEOPLE AND DEMONSTRATING HIS OWN PASSIONATE DESIRE TO PRAISE, HONOR, WORSHIP AND GIVE ADORATION TO THE FATHER STEPHEN IN JOHN 4:21-24. KING DAVID DEVOTED HIMSELF TO PRODUCE A WORSHIP LITURGY FOR HIS PEOPLE. KING DAVID’S PSALMS EXPRESSED HIS PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH THE FATHER STEPHEN. THIS ALSO SERVED AS GUIDE FOR PERSONAL AND CORPORAL WORSHIP FOR KING DAVID’S KINGDOM. IN THE PSALMS, KING DAVID WROTE THE PHRASE “TO THE CHIEF MUSICIAN” WHICH WAS THE FIRST IN THE LEADING OF WORSHIP TO THE FATHER STEPHEN. KING DAVID COMMITTED HIS LATER YEARS TO PREPARE FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE FATHER STEPHEN’S TEMPLE IN 1ST CHRONICLES CHAPTERS 21-27. KING DAVID USED HIS MONEY TO PUSH FORWARD THE PROJECT OF BUILDING THE FATHER STEPHEN’S TEMPLE FOR THE FUTURE TIMES OF HIS SON, KING SOLOMON TO REIGN IN HIS STEAD.**

**KING DAVID’S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE FATHER STEPHEN THAT IS REFLECTED IN HIS PSALMS. IN PSALMS CHAPTERS 3-4 KING DAVID FINDS INNER PEACE DURING ABSALOM’S REBELLION. IN PSALMS CHAPTER 5 KING DAVID BEGINS HIS DAY IN PRAYER. IN PSALMS CHAPTER 6 KING DAVID ENTREATS THE FATHER STEPHEN FOR MERCY. IN PSALMS 7 KING DAVID EXAMINES HIS OWN HEART BEFORE THE FATHER STEPHEN. IN PSALMS 8 KING DAVID EXPRESSES AWE AT THE FATHER STEPHEN’S CONCERN FOR HIS PEOPLE. IN PSALMS 9 KING DAVID REJOICES IN THE FATHER STEPHEN AND SINGS HIS PRAISES. IN PSALMS 11 KING DAVID EXPRESSES TRUST IN THE FATHER STEPHEN. IN PSALMS 12 KING DAVID CALLS ON THE FATHER STEPHEN (1ST PETER 1:17-21) TO JUDGE THE WICKED. IN PSALMS 13 KING DAVID EXPRESSES TRUST DESPITE UNANSWERED PRAYER. IN PSALMS 14 KING DAVID PONDERS THE FOOLISHNESS OF THE WICKED. IN PSALMS 15 KING DAVID DESCRIBES THE WAY OF THOSE WHO FEAR THE FATHER STEPHEN. IN PSALMS 16 KING DAVID REJOICES IN THE BLESSINGS OF KNOWING THE FATHER STEPHEN. IN PSALMS 17 KING DAVID BEGS THE FATHER STEPHEN TO INTERVENE. IN PSALMS 18 KING DAVID PRAISES THE FATHER STEPHEN AS HIS ROCK AND SALVATION. IN PSALMS 19 KING DAVID REJOICES IN THE FATHER STEPHEN’S REVELATION IN DIVINE NATURE AND SCRIPTURE. IN PSALMS 20 KING DAVID PRAYS FOR OTHERS AND ENCOURAGES TRUST. IN PSALMS 21 KING DAVID EXPRESSES TRUST IN THE FATHER STEPHEN’S SOVEREIGN CONTROL. IN PSALMS 22 KING DAVID LAMENTS OVER THE FATHER STEPHEN’S SEEMING SILENCE. IN PSALMS 23 KING DAVID REST IN THE FATHER STEPHEN AS HIS HIGH CHIEF SHEPHERD (BISHOP OR OVERSEER) IN 1ST PETER 5:4. IN PSALMS 24 KING DAVID LOOKS FORWARD TO THE COMING OF THE KING STEPHEN OF GLORY. IN PSALMS 25 KING DAVID TRUSTS THE FATHER STEPHEN TO GUIDE AND TO DELIVER. IN PSALMS 26 KING DAVID BEGS THE FATHER STEPHEN TO VINDICATE HIM. IN PSALMS 27 KING DAVID PRAISES THE FATHER STEPHEN AS AN ANTIDOTE TO FEAR IN 1ST JOHN 4:18. IN PSALMS 28 KING DAVID URGENTLY SEEKS THE FATHER STEPHEN’S AID AGAINST ENEMIES. IN PSALMS 29 KING DAVID WORSHIPS THE FATHER STEPHEN. IN PSALMS 31 KING DAVID EXPRESSES TRUST IN THE FATHER STEPHEN AS A ROCK AND FORTRESS. IN PSALMS 32 KING DAVID CONTEMPLATES SIN, FORGIVENESS, AND GUIDANCE. IN PSALMS 33 KING DAVID CALLED ON THE RIGHTEOUS TO PRAISE THE FATHER STEPHEN. IN PSALMS 34 KING DAVID PRAISES THE FATHER STEPHEN AND URGES ALL TO TRUST HIM. IN PSALMS 35 KING DAVID CALLS ON THE FATHER STEPHEN TO DEFEND HIM AGAINST ENEMIES. IN PSALMS 36 KING DAVID PRAISES THE FATHER STEPHEN’S AGAPE LOVING KINDNESS & MERCY. IN PSALMS 37 KING DAVID ENCOURAGES DELIGHT IN THE FATHER STEPHEN. IN PSALMS 38 KING DAVID SHARES HIS PLAN WHEN THE FATHER STEPHEN DISCIPLINES HIM. IN PSALMS 39 KING DAVID EXPRESSES FRUSTRATION AND BEGS FOR RELIEF. IN PSALMS 40 KING DAVID PRAISES THE FATHER STEPHEN FOR HIS AGAPE LOVING KINDNESS. IN PSALMS 41 KING DAVID HONORS THE FATHER STEPHEN FOR HIS MERCY AND GOODNESS. IN PSALMS 51 KING DAVID CONFESSES HIS SIN WITH THE VIRGIN BATHSHEBA. IN PSALMS 52 KING DAVID WARNS THE WICKED. IN PSALMS 53 KING DAVID PONDERS THE FOOLISHNESS OF THE WICKED. IN PSALMS 54 KING DAVID AFFIRMS THE FATHER STEPHEN AS HIS HELPER (HOLY GHOST) IN A TIME OF GREAT DISTRESS IN JOHN 14:26; 15:26. IN PSALMS 55 KING DAVID TURNS TO THE FATHER STEPHEN WHEN FEARFUL AND PAINED. IN PSALMS 56 KING DAVID BEGS FOR MERCY WHEN CAPTURED BY THE PHILISTINES. IN PSALMS 57 KING DAVID CRIES OUT TO THE FATHER STEPHEN WHEN PURSUED BY KING SAUL. IN PSALMS 58 KING DAVID CALLS ON THE FATHER STEPHEN TO JUDGE THE WICKED. IN PSALMS 59 KING DAVID CALLS ON THE FATHER STEPHEN TO SCATTER HIS ENEMIES. IN PSALMS 60 KING DAVID CRIES OUT FOR HELP. IN PSALMS 61 KING DAVID EXPRESSES TRUST IN THE FATHER STEPHEN WHEN OVERWHELMED. IN PSALMS 62 KING DAVID COMMITS HIMSELF TO WAIT FOR THE FATHER STEPHEN. IN PSALMS 63 KING DAVID LONGS TO KNOW THE FATHER STEPHEN BETTER. IN PSALMS 64 KING DAVID EXPRESSES CONFIDENCE THAT THE FATHER STEPHEN WILL PRESERVE HIM. IN PSALMS 65 KING DAVID PRAISES THE FATHER STEPHEN’S AWESOME DEEDS. IN PSALMS 68 KING DAVID REVIEWS HISTORY IN PRAISE OF THE FATHER STEPHEN. IN PSALMS 69 KING DAVID BEGS THE FATHER STEPHEN’S HELP AGAINST THOSE WHO HATE HIM. IN PSALMS 70 KING DAVID APPEALS TO THE FATHER STEPHEN TO DELIVER HIM. IN PSALMS 86 KING DAVID CRIES OUT TO THE FATHER STEPHEN “ALL DAY LONG” FOR HELP. IN PSALMS 101 KING DAVID PRAISES THE FATHER STEPHEN FOR HIS MERCY & JUSTICE. IN PSALMS 103 KING DAVID BLESSES THE FATHER STEPHEN FOR HIS MERCY & AGAPE LOVE. IN PSALMS 108 KING DAVID REAFFIRMS HIS COMMITMENT TO THE FATHER STEPHEN. IN PSALMS 109 KING DAVID SEEKS THE FATHER STEPHEN’S HELP AGAINST ENEMIES. IN PSALMS 110 KING DAVID FORESEES THE WORK OF THE FATHER STEPHEN’S MESSIAH (SON JESUS). IN PSALMS 122 KING DAVID REJOICES IN THE PRIVILEGE OF WORSHIP. IN PSALMS 124 KING DAVID PRAISES THE FATHER STEPHEN FOR PAST DELIVERANCE. IN PSALMS 131 KING DAVID BOWS AS A CHILD BEFORE THE FATHER STEPHEN. IN PSALMS 133 KING DAVID AFFIRMS THE BLESSINGS OF DIVINE UNITY. IN PSALMS 138 KING DAVID PRAISES THE FATHER STEPHEN WITH HIS WHOLE HEART. IN PSALMS 139 KING DAVID SEES HIS LIFE TOTALLY EXPOSED TO THE FATHER STEPHEN’S SCRUTINY. IN PSALMS 140 KING DAVID BEGS THE FATHER STEPHEN TO KEEP HIM FROM THE HAND OF THE WICKED. IN PSALMS 141 KING DAVID EXPRESSES COMMITMENT TO THE FATHER STEPHEN IN EVENING PRAYERS. IN PSALMS 142 KING DAVID CONTEMPLATES ANSWERED PRAYERS. IN PSALMS 143 KING DAVID EXPRESSES RELIANCE ON THE FATHER STEPHEN AS HE PRAYS FOR DELIVERANCE. IN PSALMS 144 KING DAVID SINGS THE FATHER STEPHEN’S PRAISES. IN PSALMS 145 KING DAVID MEDITATES ON THE FATHER STEPHEN’S SPLENDOR AND WORKS.**

**KING SAUL’S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE SOON TO BE KING DAVID. IN MANY WAYS, KING SAUL WAS THE OPPOSITE OF KING DAVID, BUT THE PRESSURES REVEALED THAT KING SAUL WAS UNWILLING TO TRUST IN THE FATHER STEPHEN. AS KING SAUL BECAME MORE AND MORE ALIENATED FROM THE FATHER STEPHEN, HE GREW FEARFUL, ERRATIC AND PARANOID. ALL OF KING SAUL’S DEFICIENCIES ARE DISPLAYED IN DAVID’S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE UNWORTHY KING.**

**KING DAVID AS A MUSICIAN IN KING SAUL’S COURT IN 1ST SAMUEL 16:14-23. AFTER KING SAUL WAS REJECTED BY THE FATHER STEPHEN AND DAMNED BY THE LORD SAMUEL, HE WAS FREQUENTLY DEPRESSED. DAVID WAS CALLED TO COURT TO PLAY THE HARP FOR KING SAUL TO CHEER HIM UP AND RUN THE EVIL SPIRITS AWAY FROM KING SAUL THAT TORMENTED HIM DAILY SINCE THE REJECTION & ALIENATION FROM THE FATHER STEPHEN. KING SAUL LIKED THE YOUNG MAN AND MADE HIM HIS ARMOR-BEARER, AN OFFICIAL COURT POSITION.**

**KING DAVID AS VICTOR OVER GOLIATH AND AS AN OFFICIAL ARMY OFFICER IN 1ST SAMUEL 17:1-18:16. THE YOUNG DAVID, AS A TEENAGER, WAS AT HOME FROM COURT WHEN THE PHILISTINES INVADED. HIS FATHER JESSE SENT THE YOUNG DAVID ON ERRANDS TO CARRY SUPPLIES TO HIS OLDER BROTHERS WHO WERE WITH THE ISRAELITE FORCES. THERE DAVID VOLUNTEERED TO MEET THE GIANT CHAMPION GOLIATH IN SINGLE COMBAT, AND KING SAUL AT FIRST DID NOT AGREE. KING SAUL’S QUESTION TO HIS COMMANDING GENERAL ABNER WAS, “WHOSE SON IS THIS YOUTH” IN 1ST SAMUEL 17:55. THIS MAY MEAN THAT DAVID WAS ALREADY KNOWN TO KING SAUL. KING SAUL’S QUESTION RELATED TO DAVID’S LINAGE. KING SAUL PROMISED HIS DAUGHTER IN MARRIAGE TO WHOEVER KILLED GOLIATH AND HE WAS INTERESTED IN DAVID’S FAMILY. AFTER DAVID KILLED GOLIATH, KING SAUL FAILED TO GIVE DAVID HIS DAUGHTER IN MARRIAGE, BUT MADE DAVID AN OFFICER IN HIS ARMY. DAVID PROVED HIMSELF TO BE A SUCCESSFUL MILITARY LEADER, AND BECAME A HERO OF THE PEOPLE OF THE LORD ISRAEL. DAVID’S POPULARITY AROUSED KING SAUL’S RESENTMENT. KING SAUL WAS BOTH FEARFUL AND JEALOUS, FOR KING SAUL KNEW THAT THE FATHER STEPHEN HAD LEFT HIM, AND WAS WITH DAVID.**

**KING DAVID AS KING SAUL’S SON IN LAW IN 1ST SAMUEL 18:17-19:24. KING SAUL’S DAUGHTER MICHAL FELL IN DIVINE LOVE FOR DAVID, AND KING SAUL SAW A WAY TO GET RID OF THE YOUNG ARMY OFFICER. KING SAUL SET DAVID TO EARN THE LADY MICHAL’S HAND IN MARRIAGE BY KILLING THE PHILISTINES, HOPING THAT DAVID WOULD BE KILLED IN THE PROCESS. WHEN DAVID SUCCEEDED, KING SAUL PERMITTED THE WEDDING, BUT SOON WAS ASKING HIS SERVANTS AND EVEN HIS SON JONATHAN, DAVID’S FRIEND, TO MURDER DAVID. DAVID AT FIRST COULD NOT BELIEVE THAT KING SAUL WAS OUT TO KILL HIM, BUT FINALLY KING SAUL MOVED OPENLY AGAINST DAVID, AND DAVID WAS FORCED TO FLEE.**

**KING DAVID AS A FUGITIVE IN 1ST SAMUEL CHAPTERS 20-30. FOR A NUMBER OF YEARS, KING SAUL, WHO WAS CONSPIRING INTENTLY ON SEEING DAVID DEAD, HARASSED DAVID AND ALL THOSE THAT JOINED HIM. TWICE WHILE DAVID AND HIS MEN WERE BEING PURSUED, DAVID HAD OPPORTUNITIES TO KILL KING SAUL. BUT DAVID REFUSED, BUT TOOK THINGS THAT PROVED HE WAS REAL CLOSE TO HIM AT TIMES, TO REVEAL HOW CLOSE TO DEATH KING SAUL WAS. BOTH TIMES, KING SAUL WAS FORCED TO ACKNOWLEDGE THAT DAVID WAS MORE RIGHTEOUS THAN HIMSELF AND EACH TIME KING SAUL PROMISED DAVID A PARDON. DAVID WAS TOO WISE TO TRUST KING SAUL, AND HE CONTINUED TO LIVE AS A FUGITIVE. DAVID TRUSTED IN THE FATHER STEPHEN BUT BECAME DISCOURAGED AFTER MANY NARROW ESCAPES. DAVID LATER LEFT THE ISRAELITE TERRITORY AND ENROLLED HIS MEN AS MERCENARIES WITH THE KING OF PHILISTINE GATH. DAVID PRETENDED TO THE PHILISTINE RULER TO LEAD RAIDING PARTIES INTO THE ISRAELITE TERRITORY, BUT DAVID INSTEAD RAIDED ISRAEL’S ENEMIES. THIS CAUSED IN DAVID’S FAITH A SERIOUS SITUATION. WHEN THE PHILISTINES WENT TO WAR WITH ISRAEL, DAVID, NOW A SUBJECT OF THE KING OF GATH, WAS EXPECTED TO BATTLE HIS OWN PEOPLE. THE FATHER STEPHEN EXTRICATED HIM FROM THIS SITUATION, AND IN THE BATTLE THAT FOLLOWED KING SAUL AND HIS SON JONATHAN WERE KILLED IN MILITARY BATTLE. KING SAUL HAD BEEN THE FATHER STEPHEN’S INSTRUMENT TO TEST DAVID’S FAITH AND LOYALTY. DAVID HAD PASSED THE TEST, AND DAVID WOULD HAVE TO BECOME MORE MATURE TO LEAD THE FATHER STEPHEN’S PEOPLE.**

**KING DAVID’S RELATIONSHIP WITH HIS WIVES: KING DAVID’S RELATIONSHIP WITH HIS WIFE MICHAL (WHO IS LIKE YAH), KING SAUL’S DAUGHTER IS IN 1ST SAMUEL CHAPTERS 18-19 & 2ND SAMUEL CHAPTERS 3 & 6. KING SAUL’S YOUNGER DAUGHTER FELL IN DIVINE LOVE WITH THE HANDSOME & YOUNG ARMY OFFICER WHO HAD KILLED GOLIATH. HER FATHER SAUL SAW HER DIVINE LOVE AS A CHANCE TO STRIKE AT DAVID. KING SAUL ESTABLISHED A VIRGIN DOWRY OF 100 PHILISTINE FORESKINS, HOPING HIS ENEMIES WOULD KILL DAVID. WHEN DAVID BROUGHT THE REQUIRED VIRGIN DOWRY, KING SAUL ALLOWED HIM TO MARRY HER. WHEN KING SAUL’S THREAT BECAME KNOWN TO DAVID, THE VIRGIN MICHAL HELPED HIM ESCAPE. AFTER THIS KING SAUL HAD THE VIRGIN MICHAL MARRY ANOTHER MAN. THERE IS NO EVIDENCE THAT DAVID CONTACTED HER WHILE IN HIS OUTLAW YEARS. BUT WHEN KING DAVID WENT TO THE THRONE, HE DEMANDED HER BACK. THE ISRAELITE COMMANDING GENERAL WHO WAS NEGOTIATING TURNING THE NORTHERN TRIBES OVER TO KING DAVID WENT TO THE VIRGIN MICHAL’S HOME AND SIMPLY TOOK HER AWAY FROM HER HUSBAND & BROUGHT HER BACK TO KING DAVID. THIS WAS A POLITICAL ACT AND NOT ROMANCE. THE VIRGIN MICHAL’S EXPRESSION OF HOSTILITY TOWARD KING DAVID IS SEEN IN 2ND SAMUEL 6:16-23. KING DAVID’S RELATIONSHIP WITH MICHAL REVEALS HIM TO BE AN EXPLOITER OF WOMEN AS KING SAUL HAD BEEN.**

**KING DAVID’S RELATIONSHIP WITH ABIGAIL (MY FATHER REJOICED) IN 1ST SAMUEL CHAPTER 25. IN KING DAVID’S FUGITIVE YEARS HE CAMPED NEAR THE LAND OF A WEALTHY RANCHER NAMED NABAL. KING DAVID’S MEN DID NOT STEAL THE SHEEP OF NABAL, BUT RATHER HELPED TO GUARD THEM. WHEN KING DAVID ASKED NABAL FOR A GIFT, HE INSULTED HIM. KING DAVID WAS IN A RAGE AND SOUGHT TO KILL HIM AND HIS HERDS. ABIGAIL HEARD OF THIS AND QUICKLY GOT SOME SUPPLIES TO INTERCEPT DAVID. ABIGAIL SPOKE SO WISELY TO KING DAVID THAT HIS REVENGE WAS WRONG AND POLITICALLY UNWISE. WHEN NABAL SUFFERED A STROKE AND DIED. KING DAVID SENT FOR HER TO MARRY HER. KING DAVID RECOGNIZED AND APPRECIATE HER STRENGTH OF CHARACTER AND HER WISDOM.**

**KING DAVID’S RELATIONSHIP WITH BATHSHEBA (DAUGHTER OF AN OATH) IN 2ND SAMUEL CHAPTERS 11-12 & 1ST KINGS CHAPTER 1. KING DAVID’S ATTRACTION TO HER WAS PURELY SENSUAL AT THE BEGINNING. SHE WAS BEAUTIFUL AND KING DAVID WANTED HER AND TOOK HER. KING DAVID IGNORED THAT SHE WAS ANOTHER MAN’S WIFE BY HIS PASSION AND POWER. IN BIBLICAL TEXT MAKES IT CLEAR THAT SHE WAS NOT A TEMPTRESS IN 2ND SAMUEL 11:1-6. KING DAVID ARRANGED FOR HER HUSBAND TO BE KILLED IN MILITARY COMBAT. KING DAVID’S LUST, SO SHOCKING IN THE GODLY KING, MUST HAVE SHAKEN BATHSHEBA. LATER, BATHSHEBA BORE KING DAVID FOUR SONS, WHICH SOLOMON WAS HIS SUCCESSOR. IF KING DAVID DIES THEN BOTH HERSELF AND HER SON SOLOMON WOULD BE IN DANGER IN 1ST KINGS 1:21. THIS CAUSED KING DAVID TO ACT. BUT FROM LUST TO DIVINE LOVE KING DAVID SHARED WITH BATHSHEBA IN PSALMS CHAPTER 51.**

**KING DAVID’S OTHER 5 WIVES ARE EGLAH (CALF) IN 2ND SAMUEL 3:5 & 1ST CHRONICLES 3:3, AVITAL ALSO CALLED ABITAL (FATHER IS THE DEW) IN 2ND SAMUEL 3:4 &1ST CHRONICLES 3:3, AHINOAM (BROTHER IS DELIGHT) IN 1ST SAMUEL 25:43; 27:3; 30:5 & 2ND SAMUEL 3:2, HAGGITH (BORN ON A FEAST DAY) IN 2ND SAMUEL 3:4 & 1ST KING 1:5 & MAACAH (OPPRESSED) IN 2ND SAMUEL 3:3 & 1ST CHRONICLES 3:2. KING DAVID HAS AT LEAST EIGHT WIVES IN SCRIPTURE.**

**KING DAVID’S RELATIONSHIP WITH HIS CHILDREN IN 1ST CHRONICLES 3:1-9. IT WAS NOT UNUSUAL IN THE ANCIENT MIDDLE EAST FOR KINGS TO HAVE A NUMBER OF CHILDREN. ALSO, IT WAS NOT COMMON FOR KINGS TO BE CLOSE TO THEIR YOUNG CHILDREN. WE KNOW THAT SEVERAL OF KING DAVID’S CHILDREN CAME TO A TRAGIC END.**

**KING DAVID’S RELATIONSHIP WITH AMNON (TRUSTWORTHY & FAITHFUL) AND TAMAR (DATE PALM) IN 2ND SAMUEL CHAPTER 13. KING DAVID’S SON AMNON DEVELOPED A CONSUMING LUST FOR HIS HALF-SISTER, TAMAR. AMNON FAKED ILLNESS AND ASKED FOR TAMAR. WHEN AMNON GOT TAMAR ALONE, HE RAPED HER. AS SOON AS HE HAD SEX WITH HER, HIS LUST TURNED TO HATRED, AND HE SENT HER AWAY, WEEPING BITTERLY. TAMAR HID HERSELF IN HER BROTHER ABSALOM’S HOME, AND THE ANGER AND PAIN OF THE RAPE FESTERED. KING DAVID’S FAILURE TO ACT MADE THINGS WORSE AND DID NOT RESOLVE ANYTHING.**

**KING DAVID’S RELATIONSHIP WITH ABSALOM (FATHER OF PEACE) IN 2ND SAMUEL CHAPTER 13-15. TAMAR WAS THE FULL SISTER OF ABSALOM, AND HER RAPE BY AMNON KINDLED ABSALOM’S HATRED. ABSALOM WAITED FOR TWO YEARS THEN ARRANGED FOR AMNON TO BE ASSASSINATED. ABSALOM FLED TO A FRIENDLY NATION, WHERE HE WAS IN EXILE SOME TIME. KING DAVID PREVAILED IN RECALLING ABSALOM, BUT THEN, KING DAVID REFUSED TO SEE HIM. KING DAVID DID NOT ACT, NEITHER JUDGE HIM, OR CONFRONT HIM, OR FORGIVE HIM. KING DAVID DID NOT ACT WHEN ABSALOM TRIED TO TAKE THE TEN TRIBES AWAY FROM HIM. IN THE CIVIL WAR, ABSALOM WAS KILLED, AND KING DAVID WEPT BITTERLY OVER HIS SON. BUT KING DAVID FAILED TO DEAL WITH THE SIN CONTRIBUTED TO THE TRAGEDY AND DEATHS THAT FOLLOWED.**

**KING DAVID’S RELATIONSHIP WITH SOLOMON (GOD IS PEACE) IN 1ST CHRONICLES CHAPTER 29. KING DAVID HAS HIS DOUBTS ABOUT SOLOMON’S READINESS. NEAR THE DEATH OF KING DAVID, HE COMMENTED IN PUBLIC, “MY SON SOLOMON, WHO ALONE GOD HAD CHOSEN, IS YOUNG AND INEXPERIENCED IN 1ST CHRONICLES 29:1. THIS EXPLAINS WHY KING DAVID HELD ON THE THRONE LONG AFTER HIS ILLNESS, BEING UNABLE TO RULE. KING DAVID ON HIS DEATH BED DID NOT CONFIRM THAT SOLOMON WOULD REIGN AFTERWARDS UNTIL HIS OTHER SON ADONIJAH (YAH IS LORD) TRIED TO TAKE THE CROWN AWAY FOR HIMSELF. KING DAVID WAS A PASSIVE PARENT. KING DAVID CARED DEEPLY BUT DID NOT STEP FORWARD. KING DAVID NEITHER COUNSELED NOR DISCIPLINED HIS CHILDREN. KING DAVID NEITHER CONFRONTED NOR FORGAVE. KING DAVID DID THIS BECAUSE OF THE PRESS OF THE KINGDOM TO MANAGE.**

**KING DAVID REPENTED EVERY TIME WHEN HE DISOBEYED THE FATHER STEPHEN’S COMMAND IN 2ND SAMUEL CHAPTER 12. THE OLD TESTAMENT RECORDS AT LEAST THREE SINS THAT KING DAVID COMMITTED WHILE HE WAS KING. FIRST, IS KING DAVID’S SIN IN NUMBERING ISRAEL IN 2ND SAMUEL CHAPTER 24. SECOND, IS HIS SEXUAL ASSAULT ON BATHSHEBA AND HIS SUBSEQUENT MURDER OF URIAH HER HUSBAND IN 2ND SAMUEL CHAPTERS 11, 12, 15-14. HOWEVER, KING DAVID’S SENSE OF GUILT IS REVEALED IN PSALMS CHAPTER 32 AND HIS PUBLIC REPENTANCE IS IN PSALMS CHAPTER 51.**

**KING DAVID AN EXAMPLE FOR US TODAY. KING DAVID CAME TO KNOW AND AGAPE LOVE THE FATHER STEPHEN EARLY IN LIFE. KING DAVID WAS RESPONSIVE TO THE FATHER STEPHEN’S SELF-REVELATION. HE WISHED TO HONOR THE FATHER STEPHEN AND KNOW HIM BETTER AND GLORIFY HIM. KING DAVID GAVE ATTENTION TO WORSHIP. KING DAVID’S FLAWS STAND AS WARNINGS, FOR OUR BENEFIT. KING DAVID’S QUALITIES POINT US TO OUR LIVES. WE ARE TO BE LOYAL TO THE FATHER STEPHEN AND OTHERS, FAITHFUL UNDER PERSECUTION, TRUSTING THE FATHER STEPHEN IN ADVERSITY, SERVING THE FATHER STEPHEN NO MATTER THE COST. WE ARE READY TO CONFESS OUR SINS TO THE FATHER STEPHEN.**

**THE TOP HOUSE OF THE LORD**

**CONSTRUCTION OF THE TABERNACLE PROPER (36:8–38) [FULFILLMENT OF 26:1–27]**

**8 ALL THE SKILLED MEN AMONG THE WORKMEN MADE THE TABERNACLE WITH TEN CURTAINS OF FINELY TWISTED LINEN AND BLUE, PURPLE AND SCARLET YARN, WITH CHERUBIM WORKED INTO THEM BY A SKILLED CRAFTSMAN. 9 ALL THE CURTAINS WERE THE SAME SIZE—TWENTY-EIGHT CUBITS LONG AND FOUR CUBITS WIDE. 10 THEY JOINED FIVE OF THE CURTAINS TOGETHER AND DID THE SAME WITH THE OTHER FIVE. 11 THEN THEY MADE LOOPS OF BLUE MATERIAL ALONG THE EDGE OF THE END CURTAIN IN ONE SET, AND THE SAME WAS DONE WITH THE END CURTAIN IN THE OTHER SET. 12 THEY ALSO MADE FIFTY LOOPS ON ONE CURTAIN AND FIFTY LOOPS ON THE END CURTAIN OF THE OTHER SET, WITH THE LOOPS OPPOSITE EACH OTHER. 13 THEN THEY MADE FIFTY GOLD CLASPS AND USED THEM TO FASTEN THE TWO SETS OF CURTAINS TOGETHER SO THAT THE TABERNACLE WAS A UNIT. 14 THEY MADE CURTAINS OF GOAT HAIR FOR THE TENT OVER THE TABERNACLE—ELEVEN ALTOGETHER. 15 ALL ELEVEN CURTAINS WERE THE SAME SIZE—THIRTY CUBITS LONG AND FOUR CUBITS WIDE. 16 THEY JOINED FIVE OF THE CURTAINS INTO ONE SET AND THE OTHER SIX INTO ANOTHER SET. 17 THEN THEY MADE FIFTY LOOPS ALONG THE EDGE OF THE END CURTAIN IN ONE SET AND ALSO ALONG THE EDGE OF THE END CURTAIN IN THE OTHER SET. 18 THEY MADE FIFTY BRONZE CLASPS TO FASTEN THE TENT TOGETHER AS A UNIT. 19 THEN THEY MADE FOR THE TENT A COVERING OF RAM SKINS DYED RED, AND OVER THAT A COVERING OF HIDES OF SEA COWS. 20 THEY MADE UPRIGHT FRAMES OF ACACIA WOOD FOR THE TABERNACLE. 21 EACH FRAME WAS TEN CUBITS LONG AND A CUBIT AND A HALF WIDE, 22 WITH TWO PROJECTIONS SET PARALLEL TO EACH OTHER. THEY MADE ALL THE FRAMES OF THE TABERNACLE IN THIS WAY. 23 THEY MADE TWENTY FRAMES FOR THE SOUTH SIDE OF THE TABERNACLE 24 AND MADE FORTY SILVER BASES TO GO UNDER THEM—TWO BASES FOR EACH FRAME, ONE UNDER EACH PROJECTION. 25 FOR THE OTHER SIDE, THE NORTH SIDE OF THE TABERNACLE, THEY MADE TWENTY FRAMES 26 AND FORTY SILVER BASES—TWO UNDER EACH FRAME. 27 THEY MADE SIX FRAMES FOR THE FAR END, THAT IS, THE WEST END OF THE TABERNACLE, 28 AND TWO FRAMES WERE MADE FOR THE CORNERS OF THE TABERNACLE AT THE FAR END. 29 AT THESE TWO CORNERS THE FRAMES WERE DOUBLE FROM THE BOTTOM ALL THE WAY TO THE TOP AND FITTED INTO A SINGLE RING; BOTH WERE MADE ALIKE. 30 SO THERE WERE EIGHT FRAMES AND SIXTEEN SILVER BASES—TWO UNDER EACH FRAME. 31 THEY ALSO MADE CROSSBARS OF ACACIA WOOD: FIVE FOR THE FRAMES ON ONE SIDE OF THE TABERNACLE, 32 FIVE FOR THOSE ON THE OTHER SIDE, AND FIVE FOR THE FRAMES ON THE WEST, AT THE FAR END OF THE TABERNACLE. 33 THEY MADE THE CENTER CROSSBAR SO THAT IT EXTENDED FROM END TO END AT THE MIDDLE OF THE FRAMES. 34 THEY OVERLAID THE FRAMES WITH GOLD AND MADE GOLD RINGS TO HOLD THE CROSSBARS. THEY ALSO OVERLAID THE CROSSBARS WITH GOLD. 35 THEY MADE THE CURTAIN OF BLUE, PURPLE AND SCARLET YARN AND FINELY TWISTED LINEN, WITH CHERUBIM WORKED INTO IT BY A SKILLED CRAFTSMAN. 36 THEY MADE FOUR POSTS OF ACACIA WOOD FOR IT AND OVERLAID THEM WITH GOLD. THEY MADE GOLD HOOKS FOR THEM AND CAST THEIR FOUR SILVER BASES. 37 FOR THE ENTRANCE TO THE TENT THEY MADE A CURTAIN OF BLUE, PURPLE AND SCARLET YARN AND FINELY TWISTED LINEN—THE WORK OF AN EMBROIDERER; 38 AND THEY MADE FIVE POSTS WITH HOOKS FOR THEM. THEY OVERLAID THE TOPS OF THE POSTS AND THEIR BANDS WITH GOLD AND MADE THEIR FIVE BASES OF BRONZE. 36:8–13 THIS PARAGRAPH DUPLICATES IN PAST TENSE FULFILLMENT (“THEN THEY MADE … THEY ALSO MADE”) WHAT 26:1–6 COMMANDED IN THE IMPERATIVE (“MAKE, THEN MAKE”). BY STARTING THIS WAY, THAT IS, WITH A VIRTUALLY VERBATIM FULFILLMENT DESCRIPTION, THE PASSAGE SUGGESTS THAT ALL OTHER ORIGINAL COMMANDS WERE FULFILLED PRECISELY AND THAT IT WOULD NOT BE NECESSARY FOR MOSES TO USE THE SAME LEVEL OF DETAIL IN ALL HIS SUBSEQUENT FULFILLMENT DESCRIPTIONS. HE SOMETIMES WOULD REPEAT ALL THE DETAILS AND SOMETIMES WOULD NOT, THUS OBVIATING MERE MINDLESS REPETITION. 36:14–19 THIS PARAGRAPH DESCRIBES THE FULFILLMENT OF WHAT WAS COMMANDED IN 26:7–14 BUT SHORTENS THE DESCRIPTION WITH SUMMATIONS AT VARIOUS POINTS. A TYPICAL EXAMPLE IS THAT OF 26:9, “FOLD THE SIXTH CURTAIN DOUBLE AT THE FRONT OF THE TENT,” WHICH IS OMITTED HERE, AS ARE A NUMBER OF OTHER DETAILS FROM THE ORIGINAL INSTRUCTIONS IN CHAP. 26. AFTER AN INITIAL PARAGRAPH THAT DOES REPEAT THE LANGUAGE OF THE ORIGINAL COMMAND VIRTUALLY VERBATIM (36:8–13), HE HOLDS THE READER’S ATTENTION BY SOME JUDICIOUS CONDENSATION. THE CONDENSATIONS OCCUR IN V. 9 AND AFTER V. 12 (SO THAT 26:12–13 IS ESSENTIALLY SKIPPED—A SIMPLE BUT EFFECTIVE WAY TO SHORTEN THE PASSAGE). 36:20–30 NOTE THAT IN THIS DESCRIPTION OF THE FULFILLMENT OF THE COMMANDS OF 26:15–25, MOSES REVERTED TO VIRTUAL VERBATIM CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN WHAT WAS DONE AS COMPARED TO WHAT HAD ORIGINALLY BEEN ORDERED, AS HE DID IN THE CASE IN 36:8–13. THUS, WE OBSERVE HIM ALTERNATING BETWEEN FULL DUPLICATION OF THE ORIGINAL COMMAND WORDING AND THE SORT OF PRÉCIS HE EMPLOYED IN 36:14–19. 36:31–34 THIS SHORT PARAGRAPH ALSO LEAVES OUT NOTHING OF THE DETAIL OF THE ORIGINAL COMMAND IN 26:26–29—ALL IS DESCRIBED AS FULFILLED, WITHOUT CONDENSING ANY WORDING. 36:35–38 THESE VERSES SHORTEN IN A RATHER OBVIOUS WAY CERTAIN DETAILS OF THE ORIGINAL COMMANDS IN 26:31–37, OF WHICH THEY DESCRIBE THE FULFILLMENT. THUS, AS IN THE CASE OF 36:14–19, MOSES AGAIN VARIED THE STYLE IN A MODEST WAY TO BREAK UP MONOTONY, BUT HE LEFT NO DOUBT IN THE READER’S MIND THAT EVERYTHING COMMANDED IN CHAP. 26 WAS IN FACT ACCOMPLISHED AS REQUIRED. VERSES 33–35 OF CHAP. 26 ARE SIMPLY SKIPPED IN THIS SUMMARY, AND 26:37 IS SLIGHTLY REWORDED IN 36:38.**

**CONSTRUCTION OF THE INVINCIBLE ARK (37:1–9) [FULFILLMENT OF 25:10–20]**

**1 BEZALEL MADE THE ARK OF ACACIA WOOD—TWO AND A HALF CUBITS LONG, A CUBIT AND A HALF WIDE, AND A CUBIT AND A HALF HIGH. 2 HE OVERLAID IT WITH PURE GOLD, BOTH INSIDE AND OUT, AND MADE A GOLD MOLDING AROUND IT. 3 HE CAST FOUR GOLD RINGS FOR IT AND FASTENED THEM TO ITS FOUR FEET, WITH TWO RINGS ON ONE SIDE AND TWO RINGS ON THE OTHER. 4 THEN HE MADE POLES OF ACACIA WOOD AND OVERLAID THEM WITH GOLD. 5 AND HE INSERTED THE POLES INTO THE RINGS ON THE SIDES OF THE ARK TO CARRY IT. 6 HE MADE THE ATONEMENT COVER OF PURE GOLD—TWO AND A HALF CUBITS LONG AND A CUBIT AND A HALF WIDE. 7 THEN HE MADE TWO CHERUBIM OUT OF HAMMERED GOLD AT THE ENDS OF THE COVER. 8 HE MADE ONE CHERUB ON ONE END AND THE SECOND CHERUB ON THE OTHER; AT THE TWO ENDS HE MADE THEM OF ONE PIECE WITH THE COVER. 9 THE CHERUBIM HAD THEIR WINGS SPREAD UPWARD, OVERSHADOWING THE COVER WITH THEM. THE CHERUBIM FACED EACH OTHER, LOOKING TOWARD THE COVER.**

**37:1–5 THESE VERSES DESCRIBE THE FULFILLMENT OF 25:10–15 VIRTUALLY VERBATIM—DIFFERING MAINLY IN ADDING THE IMPORTANT DETAIL IN 37:1 THAT “BEZALEL MADE THE ARK.” THE CHIEF OF ALL THE BUILDERS, SPECIALLY FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT OF GOD FOR THESE TASKS (31:2–3), WAS ENTRUSTED WITH THIS MOST PRECIOUS OBJECT OF ALL, AS WAS FITTING. IN CHAPS. 25–26 THE COMMAND TO BUILD THE ARK PRECEDES THE COMMAND TO BUILD THE TABERNACLE PROPER. HERE THE FULFILLMENT OF THE COMMAND TO BUILD THE ARK FOLLOWS THAT OF THE FULFILLMENT DESCRIPTION RELATED TO THE TABERNACLE PROPER. WHY THE DIFFERENT ORDER? THE ANSWER PROBABLY IS QUITE SIMPLE: THE ARK IS PROTECTED BY THE CURTAINS OF THE TABERNACLE; IT WAS WRAPPED FOR TRAVEL IN THE CURTAIN THAT DIVIDED THE HOLY PLACE FROM THE HOLY OF HOLIES, AND IT IS ALSO PROTECTED WHEN THE TABERNACLE IS SET UP IN PLACE BY THE VARIOUS LAYERS OF EXTERNAL TABERNACLE SURFACING. THEREFORE, BEZALEL CHOSE (PERHAPS AT MOSES’ SUGGESTION OR EVEN INSTRUCTION) TO READY THE PROTECTIVE MATERIAL FIRST SO THAT THE ARK WOULD NOT SIT OUT EXPOSED TO THE ELEMENTS FOR ALL TO SEE—EITHER TYPE OF EXPOSURE POTENTIALLY CONSTITUTING PROFANATION. 37:6–9 THESE VERSES DESCRIBE THE FULFILLMENT OF 25:17–20 ALSO VIRTUALLY VERBATIM, WITH CHANGES LIMITED ALMOST ENTIRELY TO VERB TENSES (EVEN THE DIFFERENCE IN THE HB. BETWEEN 25:19 AND 37:8 IS MORE MINUTE THAN THE NIV’S ADJUSTED WORD ORDER WOULD SUGGEST, BEING LIMITED TO A CHANGE IN THE VERB TENSE AND A PREPOSITION). NOTE THAT BEZALEL MAY HAVE BEEN THE SOLE WORKER ON THE ARK; NOTHING IN THE LANGUAGE OF THIS PASSAGE CAN BE INTERPRETED TO MEAN THAT ANY OTHER PERSONS WERE INVOLVED, IN CONTRAST TO THE MORE GENERAL “THEY” REFERENCES TO UNNAMED WORKERS ON OTHER PARTS OF THE TABERNACLE FURNISHINGS. THE PARAMOUNT SYMBOL OF THE INVISIBLE GOD WAS MADE BY THE ONE HE CHOSE AND SPECIALLY GUIDED TO MAKE IT.**

**CONSTRUCTION OF THE TABERNACLE TABLE (37:10–16) [FULFILLMENT OF 25:23–29]**

**10 THEY MADE THE TABLE OF ACACIA WOOD—TWO CUBITS LONG, A CUBIT WIDE, AND A CUBIT AND A HALF HIGH. 11 THEN THEY OVERLAID IT WITH PURE GOLD AND MADE A GOLD MOLDING AROUND IT. 12 THEY ALSO MADE AROUND IT A RIM A HANDBREADTH WIDE AND PUT A GOLD MOLDING ON THE RIM. 13 THEY CAST FOUR GOLD RINGS FOR THE TABLE AND FASTENED THEM TO THE FOUR CORNERS, WHERE THE FOUR LEGS WERE. 14 THE RINGS WERE PUT CLOSE TO THE RIM TO HOLD THE POLES USED IN CARRYING THE TABLE. 15 THE POLES FOR CARRYING THE TABLE WERE MADE OF ACACIA WOOD AND WERE OVERLAID WITH GOLD. 16 AND THEY MADE FROM PURE GOLD THE ARTICLES FOR THE TABLE—ITS PLATES AND DISHES AND BOWLS AND ITS PITCHERS FOR THE POURING OUT OF DRINK OFFERINGS. 37:10–16 ASIDE FROM SOME NECESSARY CHANGES IN VERB TENSE AND SOME VERY SLIGHT ADJUSTMENTS IN WORD ORDER TO PREVENT REPETITION MONOTONY, THIS PARAGRAPH DUPLICATES WHAT HAS BEEN SEEN ALREADY IN 25:23–29, SO THE CONSTRUCTION ORDER OF ARK-TABLE-LAMPSTAND CONTINUES IN THE FULFILLMENT PHASE OF THE TABERNACLE ACCOUNT JUST AS IT DID IN THE COMMAND PHASE. NOTE THAT HERE THE INDEFINITE “THEY” DESCRIBES THE WORKERS. WHOEVER THEY WERE AND HOW MANY THEY WERE IS NEVER IDENTIFIED.**

**CONSTRUCTION OF THE IMMORTAL LAMPSTAND (37:17–24) [FULFILLMENT OF 25:31–39]**

**17 THEY MADE THE LAMPSTAND OF PURE GOLD AND HAMMERED IT OUT, BASE AND SHAFT; ITS FLOWERLIKE CUPS, BUDS AND BLOSSOMS WERE OF ONE PIECE WITH IT. 18 SIX BRANCHES EXTENDED FROM THE SIDES OF THE LAMPSTAND—THREE ON ONE SIDE AND THREE ON THE OTHER. 19 THREE CUPS SHAPED LIKE ALMOND FLOWERS WITH BUDS AND BLOSSOMS WERE ON ONE BRANCH, THREE ON THE NEXT BRANCH AND THE SAME FOR ALL SIX BRANCHES EXTENDING FROM THE LAMPSTAND. 20 AND ON THE LAMPSTAND WERE FOUR CUPS SHAPED LIKE ALMOND FLOWERS WITH BUDS AND BLOSSOMS. 21 ONE BUD WAS UNDER THE FIRST PAIR OF BRANCHES EXTENDING FROM THE LAMPSTAND, A SECOND BUD UNDER THE SECOND PAIR, AND A THIRD BUD UNDER THE THIRD PAIR—SIX BRANCHES IN ALL. 22 THE BUDS AND THE BRANCHES WERE ALL OF ONE PIECE WITH THE LAMPSTAND, HAMMERED OUT OF PURE GOLD. 23 THEY MADE ITS SEVEN LAMPS, AS WELL AS ITS WICK TRIMMERS AND TRAYS, OF PURE GOLD. 24 THEY MADE THE LAMPSTAND AND ALL ITS ACCESSORIES FROM ONE TALENT OF PURE GOLD. 37:17–24 IN THESE VERSES THAT WHICH WAS COMMANDED IN 25:31–39 IS REITERATED, WITH THE EXPECTED CHANGES IN VERB TENSE AND TWO MODEST EXCEPTIONS: 25:37–38 IS CONDENSED INTO 37:23, AND THE WORD ORDER OF 25:39 IS ADJUSTED IN 37:24. AGAIN THE NAMES AND NUMBERS OF WORKERS ARE NOT MENTIONED HERE, SO WE DO NOT KNOW WHO AND HOW MANY WERE THE “THEY” THAT MADE THE LAMPSTAND. WITH THIS LAMPSTAND DESCRIPTION, THE ARK-TABLE-LAMPSTAND ORDER OF THE COMMAND PHASE (CHAP. 25) IS AGAIN DUPLICATED, BUT THAT PATTERN ENDS HERE SINCE THE INCENSE ALTAR WAS NOT COMMANDED UNTIL CHAP. 30, EVEN THOUGH ITS CONSTRUCTION DESCRIPTION FOLLOWS IMMEDIATELY HERE. THIS WOULD APPEAR TO BE YET ONE MORE WAY MOSES HEADED OFF MONOTONY IN THE FULFILLMENT SECTION, BUT IT MAY ALSO RELATE TO THE ACTUAL CONSTRUCTION DECISION-MAKING PROCESS, NO REASON TO DELAY GETTING AT THE BUILDING OF THE INCENSE ALTAR ALONG WITH THE ARK, TABLE, AND LAMPSTAND.**

**CONSTRUCTION OF THE INCENSE ALTAR (37:25–28) [FULFILLMENT OF 30:1–5]**

**25 THEY MADE THE ALTAR OF INCENSE OUT OF ACACIA WOOD. IT WAS SQUARE, A CUBIT LONG AND A CUBIT WIDE, AND TWO CUBITS HIGH—ITS HORNS OF ONE PIECE WITH IT. 26 THEY OVERLAID THE TOP AND ALL THE SIDES AND THE HORNS WITH PURE GOLD, AND MADE A GOLD MOLDING AROUND IT. 27 THEY MADE TWO GOLD RINGS BELOW THE MOLDING—TWO ON OPPOSITE SIDES—TO HOLD THE POLES USED TO CARRY IT. 28 THEY MADE THE POLES OF ACACIA WOOD AND OVERLAID THEM WITH GOLD.**

**37:25–28 THIS PARAGRAPH FOLLOWS 30:1–5 CLOSELY—ESSENTIALLY VERBATIM—WITH A SLIGHT WORDING ORDER CHANGE IN 37:25 AS OPPOSED TO THE WORDING ORDER OF 30:1 IN THE INTERESTS OF STYLISTIC VARIATION AND THE EXPECTED VERB TENSE CHANGES. THE ORIGINAL INCENSE ALTAR COMMAND WAS LINKED IN CHAP. 30 WITH INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE USE OF INCENSE AND THE ATONEMENT PROCESS FOR THE INCENSE ALTAR. THOSE INSTRUCTIONS (30:7–10) ARE NOT CONSTRUCTION COMMANDS PER SE, AND THEREFORE WE WOULD NOT EXPECT TO FIND, AND DO NOT FIND, THEM REPEATED HERE IN THE FULFILLMENT PHASE WHERE CONSTRUCTION DESCRIPTIONS ARE THE FOCUS.**

**COMPOSITION OF THE HOLY ANOINTING OIL AND THE HOLY INCENSE (37:29) [FULFILLMENT OF 30:22–25, 34–36]**

**29 THEY ALSO MADE THE SACRED ANOINTING OIL AND THE PURE, FRAGRANT INCENSE—THE WORK OF A PERFUMER. 37:29 HERE THE FORMULA FOR THE SPECIAL ANOINTING OIL (30:22–25) USED FOR PRIESTS [SERGEANTS] AND TABERNACLE OBJECTS (28:41; 29:7, 21, 29, 36; 30:30–33; 31:11) IS NOT REPEATED OR DESCRIBED IN ANY PARTICULARS, BUT MOSES MERELY NOTED THAT “THEY” OBEYED THE COMMAND TO MAKE IT. LIKEWISE, THE ORIGINAL, DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE FRAGRANT INCENSE (30:34–36) AND HOW AND WHEN IT WAS TO BE USED (30:7–9, 37–38) ARE NOT REPEATED HERE. THIS VERSE THUS CONDENSES IN THE FULFILLMENT SECTION A CONSIDERABLE AMOUNT OF LANGUAGE FROM THE COMMAND SECTION. THE MOST LIKELY REASON FOR THIS HIGH DEGREE OF ABBREVIATION IS THAT THE MATERIALS IN QUESTION WERE NOT PERMANENT PIECES OF FURNITURE BUT SUBSTANCES INTENDED TO BE USED UP OVER TIME, REQUIRING REFORMULATION PERIODICALLY. THE FORMULATION DESCRIPTIONS THUS FUNCTIONED REGULARLY AS GUIDELINES IN A WAY THAT THE FULFILLMENT DESCRIPTIONS NEEDED NOT.**

**CONSTRUCTION OF THE MAIN BURNING ALTAR (38:1–7) [FULFILLMENT OF 27:1–8A]**

**1 THEY BUILT THE ALTAR OF BURNT OFFERING OF ACACIA WOOD, THREE CUBITS HIGH; IT WAS SQUARE, FIVE CUBITS LONG AND FIVE CUBITS WIDE. 2 THEY MADE A HORN AT EACH OF THE FOUR CORNERS, SO THAT THE HORNS AND THE ALTAR WERE OF ONE PIECE, AND THEY OVERLAID THE ALTAR WITH BRONZE. 3 THEY MADE ALL ITS UTENSILS OF BRONZE—ITS POTS, SHOVELS, SPRINKLING BOWLS, MEAT FORKS AND FIREPANS. 4 THEY MADE A GRATING FOR THE ALTAR, A BRONZE NETWORK, TO BE UNDER ITS LEDGE, HALFWAY UP THE ALTAR. 5 THEY CAST BRONZE RINGS TO HOLD THE POLES FOR THE FOUR CORNERS OF THE BRONZE GRATING. 6 THEY MADE THE POLES OF ACACIA WOOD AND OVERLAID THEM WITH BRONZE. 7 THEY INSERTED THE POLES INTO THE RINGS SO THEY WOULD BE ON THE SIDES OF THE ALTAR FOR CARRYING IT. THEY MADE IT HOLLOW, OUT OF BOARDS.**

**38:1–7 ASIDE FROM THE EXPECTED CHANGES IN VERB TENSE AND A MODEST STYLE ADJUSTMENT THROUGH WORD REORDERING (E.G., 38:4–5 REORDERS 27:4–5) FOR THE SAKE OF VARIETY, THIS PASSAGE REPRISES 27:1–8A. THE BUILDERS WERE NOW MOVING OUT FROM THE TABERNACLE PROPER TO THE COURTYARD IN THEIR BUILDING PLAN. THE MAIN ALTAR (ALTAR OF BURNT OFFERING) WAS ONE OF THE TWO COURTYARD OBJECTS, THE OTHER BEING THE WASHING BASIN THAT WILL BE REFERRED TO IN THE NEXT VERSE. MOSES REPORTED THAT IN EVERY DETAIL THE SACRIFICE ALTAR (MAIN ALTAR, ALTAR OF BURNT OFFERING) WAS BUILT JUST AS ORDERED.**

**(11) CONSTRUCTION OF THE HOLY BRONZE WASH BASIN AND HOLY BRONZE STAND (38:8) [FULFILLMENT OF 30:17–21]**

**8 THEY MADE THE BRONZE BASIN AND ITS BRONZE STAND FROM THE MIRRORS OF THE WOMEN WHO SERVED AT THE ENTRANCE TO THE TENT OF MEETING. 38:8 MOSES HERE CONCENTRATED MAINLY ON THE FULFILLMENT OF 30:17–18, WHERE THE BASIN’S PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS ARE DESCRIBED, AND NOT ON 30:19–21, WHERE THE PROPER USE OF THE BASIN IS DESCRIBED. THIS IS TO BE EXPECTED SINCE WE ARE IN A SECTION DEALING WITH CONSTRUCTION OF WHAT HAD BEEN ORDERED BUILT, NOT USAGE—USAGE INSTRUCTIONS NEEDING NO REPETITION HERE. MOSES HAD DONE SO WITH A SIMPLE SUMMATION, ESPECIALLY SINCE THE ORIGINAL COMMAND ITSELF WAS NOT VERY DETAILED, DESCRIBING SIMPLY “A BRONZE BASIN, WITH ITS BRONZE STAND” (30:18), ESSENTIALLY THE LANGUAGE REPEATED HERE. IN THE ORIGINAL COMMAND THERE WAS NO ANTICIPATION OF WHERE THE BRONZE FOR THIS BASIN WOULD COME FROM, BUT SINCE THE BASIN WAS OBVIOUSLY A MORE PROMINENT OBJECT THAN THE OTHER BRASS OBJECTS (MAINLY TENT POLES) IN THE COURTYARD, ONE COULD HAVE ANTICIPATED THAT ITS BRONZE (AN ALLOY OF TIN AND COPPER) MIGHT HAVE BEEN OF SPECIAL ORIGIN IF POSSIBLE. HERE WE LEARN INDEED THAT IT WAS NOT JUST ANY BRONZE BROUGHT BY DONORS FROM ANY SOURCE, WHICH MIGHT HAVE INVOLVED THE POSSIBILITY OF SLIGHTLY UNEVEN QUALITY. INSTEAD, IT APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN A VERY HIGH-QUALITY BRONZE—POLISHED BRONZE FROM MIRRORS DONATED BY WOMEN RESPONDING TO THE EARLIER DONATION CALL (37:4). SUCH BRONZE PROBABLY WAS AS FLAW-FREE AS ANY THAT COULD BE FOUND SINCE IT WOULD HAVE BEEN REJECTED FOR MIRROR USE IF IT WERE NOT A SUCCESSFUL, VISIBLY CONSISTENT ALLOY OF PURE TIN, BRASS AND COPPER. BUT ANOTHER, QUITE FASCINATING DETAIL IS ALSO INCLUDED HERE: ONE THAT PRESUMES SOME COMMON KNOWLEDGE THAT MOSES AND HIS AUDIENCE SHARED, BUT THAT WE DO NOT. AT SOME POINT AFTER THE TABERNACLE WAS BUILT, CERTAIN WOMEN WERE EMPLOYED TO SERVE AT ITS ENTRANCE—A PRACTICE THAT PROBABLY CONTINUED AS LONG AS THE TABERNACLE WAS IN USE, JUDGING FROM THE MENTION OF IT IN 1 SAM 2:22, HUNDREDS OF YEARS AFTER THE TIME OF THE PRESENT DESCRIPTION. HOW WERE THESE WOMEN CHOSEN, AND WHAT EXACTLY DID THEY DO? WE HAVE NO FIRM INFORMATION. THEY QUITE POSSIBLY VOLUNTEERED—OR WERE PAID WITH A PORTION OF THE SACRIFICES—TO HELP WITH UTENSIL CLEANUP, GENERAL COURTYARD CLEANUP, WATER RESUPPLY, ANCILLARY FOOD PREPARATION, GUIDING AND ASSISTING OTHER WOMEN WORSHIPERS, WASHING PRIESTS’ CLOTHES, AND THE LIKE. THE FIRST SUCH GROUP OF WOMEN MAY HAVE BEEN CHOSEN FROM AMONG THOSE WHO DONATED THEIR MIRRORS, PRECISELY BECAUSE SUCH A GIFT OF SOMETHING NORMALLY VALUED BY A WOMAN WOULD TEND TO DEMONSTRATE HER DEVOTION TO GOD.**

**CONSTRUCTION OF THE HOLY COURTYARD (38:9–20) [FULFILLMENT OF 27:9–19]**

**9 NEXT THEY MADE THE COURTYARD. THE SOUTH SIDE WAS A HUNDRED CUBITS LONG AND HAD CURTAINS OF FINELY TWISTED LINEN, 10 WITH TWENTY POSTS AND TWENTY BRONZE BASES, AND WITH SILVER HOOKS AND BANDS ON THE POSTS. 11 THE NORTH SIDE WAS ALSO A HUNDRED CUBITS LONG AND HAD TWENTY POSTS AND TWENTY BRONZE BASES, WITH SILVER HOOKS AND BANDS ON THE POSTS. 12 THE WEST END WAS FIFTY CUBITS WIDE AND HAD CURTAINS, WITH TEN POSTS AND TEN BASES, WITH SILVER HOOKS AND BANDS ON THE POSTS. 13 THE EAST END, TOWARD THE SUNRISE, WAS ALSO FIFTY CUBITS WIDE. 14 CURTAINS FIFTEEN CUBITS LONG WERE ON ONE SIDE OF THE ENTRANCE, WITH THREE POSTS AND THREE BASES, 15 AND CURTAINS FIFTEEN CUBITS LONG WERE ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE ENTRANCE TO THE COURTYARD, WITH THREE POSTS AND THREE BASES. 16 ALL THE CURTAINS AROUND THE COURTYARD WERE OF FINELY TWISTED LINEN. 17 THE BASES FOR THE POSTS WERE BRONZE. THE HOOKS AND BANDS ON THE POSTS WERE SILVER, AND THEIR TOPS WERE OVERLAID WITH SILVER; SO, ALL THE POSTS OF THE COURTYARD HAD SILVER BANDS. 18 THE CURTAIN FOR THE ENTRANCE TO THE COURTYARD WAS OF BLUE, PURPLE AND SCARLET YARN AND FINELY TWISTED LINEN—THE WORK OF AN EMBROIDERER. IT WAS TWENTY CUBITS LONG AND, LIKE THE CURTAINS OF THE COURTYARD, FIVE CUBITS HIGH, 19 WITH FOUR POSTS AND FOUR BRONZE BASES. THEIR HOOKS AND BANDS WERE SILVER, AND THEIR TOPS WERE OVERLAID WITH SILVER. 20 ALL THE TENT PEGS OF THE TABERNACLE AND OF THE SURROUNDING COURTYARD WERE BRONZE.**

**NOTHING ASSERTED IN 27:9–19 IS LEFT OUT HERE, ALTHOUGH ENOUGH VARIETY OF ORDER AND SLIGHT ADDITIONS OR SUBTRACTIONS KEEP THE PRESENT FULFILLMENT PASSAGE FROM BEING A MERE REPETITION OF THE COMMAND ON WHICH IT IS BASED. 38:9–11 THIS PART OF THE PASSAGE IS VIRTUALLY A VERBATIM REPRISE OF 27:9–11 WITH THE NECESSARY VERB TENSE CHANGES BEING MADE AND THE PHRASE “FOR THE TABERNACLE” OF 27:9 BEING OMITTED. LIKEWISE, SOME SPACE IS SAVED IN 38:11 WITH THE OMISSION OF THE CLAUSE “IS TO HAVE CURTAINS” FROM 27:11. 38:12–17 MOST OF THESE VERSES REPEAT 27:12FF., WITH THE USUAL AND EXPECTED CHANGES IN ORDER TO BRING THE DESCRIPTION TO THE PRESENT CONTEXT, BUT THE CONTENT OF 27:16 IS DELAYED UNTIL 38:18, WITH SOME REORDERING OF THE WORDING. ADDITIONALLY, 27:17 IS ACTUALLY EXPANDED SLIGHTLY IN EXPLICIT DETAIL IN 38:17 IN REGARD TO THE “TOPS” OF THE POSTS BEING “OVERLAID WITH SILVER,” SOMETHING IMPLICIT BUT NOT STATED IN 27:17. 38:18–20 THE REMAINDER OF WHAT HAS NOT YET BEEN COVERED FROM CHAP. 27 IS HERE ADDRESSED AS COMPLETED, WITH THE CONTENT OF 27:19 SOMEWHAT REARRANGED AND DISTRIBUTED THROUGHOUT VV. 19–20.**

**1 SA. 1:1–7:17 SAMUEL’S EARLY YEARS**

**THE HISTORICAL SITUATION AT THE START OF THE NARRATIVE OF THE BOOKS OF SAMUEL IS THAT OF THE END OF THE PERIOD OF THE JUDGES; 1 SAMUEL IS THE SEQUEL TO THE BOOK OF JUDGES. THERE ARE TWO MAJOR THEMES IN THE BOOKS OF SAMUEL: THE PROBLEM OF THE LEADERSHIP OF GOD’S PEOPLE ISRAEL, AND THE PRESENCE OF GOD IN THEIR MIDST. THE FIRST THEME MEANS THAT THE HISTORY OF ISRAEL IS PRESENTED IN TERMS OF THE LIVES AND CAREERS OF THREE OUTSTANDING INDIVIDUALS—SAMUEL, SAUL AND DAVID. THE SECOND THEME INVOLVES FREQUENT MENTION OF THE SHRINE AND THE ARK OF THE COVENANT. (THE TWO THEMES COME TOGETHER WHEN THE LORD IS SAID TO BE ‘WITH’ ONE LEADER OR ANOTHER.) THIS PERIOD OF THREE GENERATIONS SAW TWO MAJOR CHANGES IN ISRAEL. THE FIRST WAS A CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGE. THE SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT CHANGED RADICALLY, AS LEADERSHIP BY THE JUDGES GAVE PLACE TO A MONARCHY. THIS CHANGE INVOLVED MANY ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS, ESPECIALLY CENTRALIZATION AND WHAT WE WOULD NOW CALL BUREAUCRACY. IT ALSO RESULTED IN THE RISE OF ONE FAMILY TO GREAT POWER AND PRESTIGE, NAMELY DAVID’S DYNASTY. THE SECOND BIG CHANGE WAS THE FALL OF THE SHRINE AT SHILOH. SHILOH WAS REPLACED, AFTER AN INTERVAL, BY JERUSALEM, WHICH WAS MADE NOT ONLY THE RELIGIOUS BUT ALSO THE POLITICAL CAPITAL OF THE KINGDOM OF ISRAEL. IT IS INTERESTING TO NOTICE THAT ALL THE EVENTS OF 1 AND 2 SAMUEL HAD THE EFFECT OF TRANSFERRING LEADERSHIP IN ISRAEL FROM THE TRIBE OF EPHRAIM TO THE TRIBE OF JUDAH. THESE WERE THE TWO BIGGEST TRIBES, AND THEIR TERRITORIES WERE SEPARATED BY THE SMALL TRIBE OF BENJAMIN (SEE THE MAP IN DEUTERONOMY). THE LEADERSHIP MOVED SOUTHWARDS, THEN, FROM SHILOH (ELI) FIRST TO BENJAMIN (SAMUEL AND SAUL), AND THEN TO JUDAH (DAVID). THE BOOKS OF SAMUEL NOT ONLY RECORD HOW ALL THIS HAPPENED, BUT ALSO WHY IT TOOK PLACE. VARIOUS HUMAN BEINGS COME INTO THE STORY, WITH A VARIETY OF MOTIVES. MORE IMPORTANT TO THE BIBLICAL WRITERS WAS THE QUESTION OF GOD’S PURPOSES AND ACTIONS IN ALL THESE THREADS OF HUMAN HISTORY.**

**1:1–3:21 SAMUEL AND ELI**

**DURING THE PERIOD OF THE JUDGES, THE ISRAELITE TRIBES USUALLY ACTED INDEPENDENTLY OF EACH OTHER, AND MUST HAVE RECOGNIZED DIFFERENT LEADERS IN DIFFERENT PARTS OF THE COUNTRY (SEE MAP OF CANAAN IN JOSHUA). TRIBAL ELDERS WERE IMPORTANT (SEE 8:4), AND THE PRIESTLY FAMILIES IN MAJOR SHRINES SUCH AS SHILOH MUST HAVE BEEN POLITICALLY INFLUENTIAL. (‘JUDGES’ AS SUCH DID NOT ALWAYS EXIST, NOR DID THEY GIVE LEADERSHIP TO THE WHOLE COUNTRY.) AS OUR STORY BEGINS, THEN, WE CAN ASSUME THAT THE MOST IMPORTANT LEADER OF THE TIME WAS ELI. HE WAS AGEING, AND HIS TWO SONS WERE EXPECTED TO REPLACE HIM BEFORE LONG (1:3). BUT IN FACT, IT WAS TO BE SAMUEL WHO WOULD REPLACE ELI, AS THESE CHAPTERS EXPLAIN. THE FIRST QUESTION IS HOW SAMUEL CAME TO BE AT SHILOH AT ALL; CH. 1 ANSWER’S, THAT QUESTION. 1:1–8 ELKANAH AND HIS TWO WIVES. THE FIRST THREE VERSES SET THE SCENE, DESCRIBING SAMUEL’S PARENTS AND THEIR ANNUAL PILGRIMAGE TO THE SHILOH SHRINE. IT WAS LEGAL TO MARRY MORE THAN ONE WIFE (SEE DT. 21:15–17), AND INDEED A SECOND WIFE WAS PROBABLY A SIGN OF AFFLUENCE. THE GENERAL PICTURE IS OF A RESPECTABLE, GOD FEARING FAMILY. BUT IT WAS NOT AN ENTIRELY HAPPY FAMILY. BARRENNESS CAN STILL CAUSE PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTRESS, BUT IT WAS MUCH WORSE IN OT TIMES, IN A CULTURE WHERE IT WAS VIEWED AS A DISGRACE FOR A MARRIED WOMAN TO HAVE NO CHILDREN. DESPITE ELKANAH’S ATTEMPTS TO HELP AND CONSOLE HANNAH, THE UNKINDNESS OF HER RIVAL-WIFE PENINNAH MADE HER POSITION INTOLERABLE. RAMATHAIM IS A LONGER FORM OF THE USUAL ‘RAMAH’ (SEE V 19). ACCORDING TO 1 CH. 6:22–38 THE ZUPHITES WERE A LEVITE CLAN, BUT THE EMPHASIS HERE IS ON THE FACT THAT ELKANAH LIVED IN THE TRIBAL LANDS OF EPHRAIM. SO, IT WAS NATURAL FOR HIM TO WORSHIP AT SHILOH. THESE VERSES ILLUSTRATE SOME RELIGIOUS CUSTOMS OF THE TIMES. WHOLE FAMILIES MADE PILGRIMAGES ONCE A YEAR TO SANCTUARIES SUCH AS SHILOH, IN ORDER TO WORSHIP EITHER AT A FESTIVAL TIME OR ON SOME SPECIAL FAMILY OCCASION. THE FAMILIES PRESENTED ANIMALS TO BE SACRIFICED. AFTER THE SACRIFICE HAD BEEN OFFERED, PART OF THE MEAT WAS RETURNED TO THE WORSHIPPERS. FURTHER DETAILS ARE GIVEN IN 2:13–16. SUCH PORTIONS OF MEAT WERE VERY MUCH VALUED, EVIDENTLY, BUT IN THIS CASE, THEY GAVE RISE TO FAVORITISM, JEALOUSY, BITTERNESS AND DISTRESS. 1:9–20 HANNAH’S PRAYER AND SAMUEL’S BIRTH. IN DESPERATION, HANNAH WAS DRIVEN TO EARNEST PRAYER FOR A SON. HER PRAYER WAS REINFORCED BY A SOLEMN VOW (11). THE GOD GIVEN SON WOULD BE CONSECRATED TO GOD FROM BIRTH TO DEATH. NU. 6 DESCRIBES HOW ISRAELITES COULD VOLUNTARILY CONSECRATE THEMSELVES TO GOD’S SERVICE FOR A FIXED PERIOD OF TIME. SUCH PEOPLE WERE KNOWN AS NAZIRITES, AND THEY VOWED NEVER TO CUT THEIR HAIR, A VISIBLE SYMBOL OF THEIR DEDICATION TO GOD. IN THE SAME WAY, HANNAH PROMISED THAT HER SON WOULD BE A PERMANENT NAZIRITE. ELI, THE CHIEF PRIEST AT SHILOH, WAS PERSUADED TO GIVE HANNAH’S PRAYER HIS BLESSING AND SUPPORT (17). HIS INITIAL MISUNDERSTANDING (13–14) IS PERHAPS A FIRST HINT TO THE READER THAT ELI WAS GRADUALLY LOSING HIS COMPETENCE AS ISRAEL’S LEADER. THE SEQUEL WAS THE BIRTH OF SAMUEL. VS 19–20 BRING TOGETHER THE HUMAN AND DIVINE AGENCY. IN ONE SENSE SAMUEL’S BIRTH WAS PERFECTLY NATURAL, BUT THE REMOVAL OF HANNAH’S BARRENNESS WAS ENTIRELY GOD’S DOING. HANNAH HERSELF WAS IN NO DOUBT THAT GOD HAD RESPONDED TO HER PRAYER. THE NAME SAMUEL DOES NOT LITERALLY MEAN ‘ASKED’; IN HEBREW THE NAME SOUNDS LIKE THE PHRASE ‘HEARD BY GOD’. SEVERAL OT EXPLANATIONS OF NAMES DRAW OUT THE IMPLICATIONS OF OTHER, DIFFERENT WORDS THAT RESEMBLED THE NAMES. THE NAME SAUL MEANS ‘ASKED’, AND THE BIBLICAL AUTHOR MAY BE TELLING US AT THE OUTSET THAT SAMUEL WAS A MAN SENT BY GOD IN A WAY THAT SAUL WOULD NOT BE. 1:21–28 THE DEDICATION OF SAMUEL. THE CHAPTER ENDS BY RECORDING HOW HANNAH, WITH HER HUSBAND’S FULL AGREEMENT, FULFILLED HER VOW AND GAVE SAMUEL TO THE LORD. THEY TOOK OTHER GIFTS AND OFFERINGS TO SHILOH (24), BUT THEIR GREATEST SELF-SACRIFICE WAS TO LEAVE THE BOY THERE AT THE SANCTUARY, YOUNG AS HE WAS. THE LAST SENTENCE OF THE CHAPTER PROBABLY REFERS TO THE YOUTHFUL SAMUEL, WHO WORSHIPPED THE LORD THERE AT SHILOH WHEN HIS PARENTS LEFT HIM WITH ELI (2:11 IS SIMILAR). THE VERB WORSHIPPED IS AMBIGUOUS, AND EITHER ELI OR ELKANAH COULD BE INTENDED; BUT SAMUEL SEEMS THE MOST NATURAL SUBJECT. A HEBREW MANUSCRIPT FOUND AT QUMRAN MAKES HANNAH THE SUBJECT, ‘SHE WORSHIPPED’, WHICH GIVES GOOD SENSE: SHE DONATED THE CHILD TO ELI AND THEN WORSHIPPED GOD, WHO HAD GRANTED WHAT SHE ASKED OF HIM. THIS MINOR TEXTUAL PROBLEM DOES NOT AFFECT THE GENERAL SENSE. THE STORY OF HANNAH SHOULD NOT BE READ AS A PROMISE THAT GOD WILL ALWAYS REMOVE BARRENNESS OR ANY OTHER PHYSICAL PROBLEM, THOUGH IT DOES UNDERLINE THE VALUE OF BELIEVING PRAYER. ITS CHIEF PURPOSE IS TO SHOW HOW GOD OVERRULED EVENTS: IF HANNAH HAD HAD A SON AT AN EARLIER DATE, SHE WOULD NOT HAVE PLACED HIM IN THE SHILOH TEMPLE, TO GROW UP THERE TO BE A MAN OF GOD—IN THE PUBLIC GAZE, READY FOR LEADERSHIP. 2:1–10 THE SONG OF HANNAH. HANNAH’S SONG IS THOUGHT BY MANY COMMENTATORS TO HAVE BEEN A PSALM OF LATER DATE PLACED ON HER LIPS BY THE BIBLICAL WRITER. IT READS MORE LIKE A PSALM THAN AN INDIVIDUAL’S PRAYER; BUT THE CHIEF REASON FOR THIS VIEW IS THE REFERENCE IN V 10 TO A KING. OBVIOUSLY IN HANNAH’S TIME ISRAEL HAD NO KING, AND HER SON SAMUEL WAS NOT DESTINED TO BE A KING. THE POEM IS CALLED A PRAYER, NOT A PROPHETIC ORACLE, SO WE WOULD NOT EXPECT IT TO INCLUDE A LONG-RANGE PREDICTION. IT SEEMS VERY LIKELY, THEN, THAT HANNAH’S ORIGINAL WORDS HAVE BEEN EXPANDED. CERTAINLY, THE BIBLICAL AUTHOR USED THE POEM AS A WHOLE TO GIVE A FORWARD LOOK AND PROVIDE A THEOLOGICAL PURPOSE TO THE RECORD OF EVENTS DESCRIBED IN 1 AND 2 SAMUEL. SAMUEL’S BIRTH WAS THE FIRST STEP IN GOD’S PLANS TO GIVE ISRAEL DELIVERANCE FROM HER PHILISTINE ENEMIES (1). FROM HUMBLE BEGINNINGS AND DIFFICULT CIRCUMSTANCES, DAVID WOULD GET DIVINE STRENGTH AS GOD’S ANOINTED, GOD’S KING OVER ISRAEL (10). IN THE CONTEXT, THE MENTION OF HOSTILITY (1) AND BARRENNESS (5) REMIND US OF HANNAH’S OWN PERSONAL EXPERIENCES, BUT THE POEM HAS A MUCH WIDER STANDPOINT. IT IS CONCERNED TO SHOW HOW GOD CAN, AND OFTEN DOES, UPSET HUMAN VALUES AND ESTIMATES. LIFE AND DEATH, WEALTH AND POVERTY, ARE WHOLLY WITHIN HIS CONTROL; SO TOO ARE THE RISE AND FALL OF NATIONS, FOR GOD’S AUTHORITY AND POWER REACH TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH (10). BUT GOD DOES NOT OVERTHROW THE POWERFUL AND STRENGTHEN THE WEAK IN A SPITEFUL OR UNJUST WAY. GOD HAD LINKED HIMSELF WITH THE ISRAELITES (A SMALL AND WEAK NATION) AND MADE HIMSELF THEIR GOD. SO, THE POEM EXPRESSES FAITH FROM THE START IN OUR GOD, DESCRIBED AS THE ROCK (2)—A CLEAR PICTURE OF SECURITY AND STABILITY. THE PICTURE DRAWN FROM A RAISED OR EXALTED ANIMAL’S HORN (1, 10) IS LESS CLEAR TO US; IT APPEARS TO MEAN A VISIBLE SIGN OF STRENGTH OR SUCCESS. NOTE. 10 THE KINGS OF ISRAEL WERE ALL ANOINTED WITH OIL AT THE START OF THEIR REIGNS (SEE 10:1; 16:13; AND THE COMMENTS ON 10:1 AND 16:13). 2:11–26 THE SANCTUARY AT SHILOH. SAMUEL’S SERVICE OF GOD AT SHILOH THUS BEGAN IN HIS BOYHOOD. NO DOUBT SIMPLE TASKS, ASSISTING ELI, WERE ALL THAT HE COULD DO AT FIRST, BUT AS HE GREW UP (21) HIS MINISTRY DEVELOPED SUFFICIENTLY TO IMPRESS FAVORABLY ALL WHO CAME TO SHILOH (26). WE ARE GIVEN A FINAL GLIMPSE OF SAMUEL’S PARENTS IN VS 19–21, AND IT IS MADE CLEAR THAT GOD HAD PERMANENTLY REMOVED HANNAH’S BARRENNESS AND BROUGHT HER JOY IN MOTHERHOOD AND FAMILY LIFE: SHE HAD GIVEN SAMUEL TO GOD, BUT GAINED RICHLY IN RETURN. SAMUEL, THEN, HOWEVER SIMPLY, MINISTERED BEFORE THE LORD (11). WE ARE GIVEN NO DETAILS OF HIS ACTIVITIES, BUT THE PASSAGE SUMS UP BY TELLING US THAT BOTH GOD AND ISRAELITE WORSHIPPERS WERE PLEASED WITH HIM (26). THERE IS A GLARING CONTRAST BETWEEN SAMUEL AND ELI’S SONS, HOPHNI AND PHINEHAS (12). THEY WERE THE MOST PROMINENT PRIESTS AT SHILOH (SEE 1:3), AND THEIR GREEDY, ARROGANT AND SELFISH BEHAVIOR IS DESCRIBED IN DETAIL IN VS 13–16. ORDINARY WORSHIPPERS WERE ANGERED BY THEM, AS V 23 SHOWS, AND THE WHOLE SANCTUARY WAS BROUGHT INTO DISREPUTE. THE PASSAGE IS EVEN MORE CONCERNED TO EMPHASIZE GOD’S ANGER, AND HIS DECISION TO BRING THE SITUATION TO AN END (25). ELI HIMSELF WAS A GODLY MAN, DISTRESSED BY HIS SONS’ CONDUCT, BUT HIS REBUKE (25) HAD NO EFFECT ON THEM. 13–17 IT SEEMS LIKELY THAT THE PRACTICE DESCRIBED IN V 13 WAS THE ORDINARY CUSTOM AT SHILOH, EVEN THOUGH THE REGULATIONS IN LV. 7:31–35 ARE RATHER DIFFERENT. IN ANY CASE, ALL PRIESTS WERE ENTITLED TO A PROPER SHARE OF THE SACRIFICIAL MEAT. ELI’S TWO SONS, HOWEVER, SHOWED SUCH GREED FOR ROAST MEAT THAT THEY GRABBED WHAT THEY WANTED, BY FORCE IF NECESSARY, EVEN BEFORE THE FAT WAS BURNED AS A SACRIFICE TO GOD. EVEN ORDINARY WORSHIPPERS KNEW THAT GOD OUGHT TO HAVE HIS PART BEFORE ANY HUMAN BEINGS ATE THEIR PORTIONS (16). IN THIS WAY HOPHNI AND PHINEHAS PUT GOD IN SECOND PLACE, SHOWING CONTEMPT FOR THE LORD HIMSELF AND FOR HIS OFFERING (17). 18–19 THE EPHOD WAS A PRIESTLY GARMENT, PROBABLY WORN OUTSIDE THE ROBE WHICH HIS MOTHER MADE HIM. EVEN IN THE SIMPLE MATTER OF DRESS, SAMUEL, UNLIKE ELI’S SONS, WAS CAREFUL TO DO WHAT WAS RIGHT. 25 ELI’S CHALLENGING QUESTION WAS BASED ON LEGAL PROCEDURE, AND PICTURES GOD AS THE JUDGE. A JUDGE CAN ARBITRATE BETWEEN TWO MEN, BUT IF SOMEBODY DOES WRONG TO THE JUDGE HIMSELF, THEN THERE IS NO POSSIBILITY OF AVOIDING JUDGMENT. 2:27–36 A PROPHECY ABOUT THE PRIESTHOOD. THE PHRASE MAN OF GOD WAS ANOTHER TITLE FOR A PROPHET. THE UNNAMED PROPHET HERE SET OUT A VERY DETAILED PICTURE OF WHAT WAS GOING TO HAPPEN TO THE PRIESTHOOD IN ISRAEL. THE DOWNFALL OF ELI’S FAMILY IS FORETOLD: HOPHNI AND PHINEHAS WILL DIE ON THE SAME DAY, AND OTHERS OF ELI’S FAMILY WILL BE REDUCED TO BEGGING FOR VERY HUMBLE PRIESTLY JOBS (36). V 31 FORETELLS THE MASSACRE WHICH TOOK PLACE AT NOB (SEE CH. 22). V 35 PREDICTS THE RISE OF A FAITHFUL PRIEST, BUT LOOKS BEYOND SAMUEL’S MINISTRY TO THAT OF ZADOK. ZADOK BECAME HIGH PRIEST IN DAVID’S REIGN (2 SA. 8:17), AND HIS FAMILY (HIS HOUSE) HELD THE OFFICE OF HIGH PRIEST IN JERUSALEM THROUGHOUT THE PERIOD OF THE MONARCHY. DAVID AND HIS LINE OF KINGS ARE HERE CALLED GOD’S ANOINTED. THE DETAILS OF V 35 HAD LITTLE MEANING FOR ELI, SINCE HE WAS TO DIE MANY YEARS BEFORE DAVID BECAME KING OR ZADOK BECAME HIGH PRIEST. THE VERSE WAS IMPORTANT FOR THE READERS OF 1 SAMUEL, HOWEVER, SINCE IT MADE CLEAR TO THEM THAT ZADOK’S ACCESSION TO THE PRIESTHOOD WAS GOD’S WILL AND PLAN. THE BIBLICAL AUTHORS CONSTANTLY HAD THEIR READERS IN MIND, AND IT IS VERY LIKELY THAT WHEN APPROPRIATE THEY EXPANDED THE ORIGINAL WORDS AND SPEECHES OF HISTORICAL CHARACTERS, IN ORDER TO AID THE UNDERSTANDING OF THE READERS. IT MAY BE, THEN, THAT THE UNKNOWN PROPHET’S SPEECH TO ELI WAS BRIEFER THAN IT NOW APPEARS. EVEN SO, AN IMPORTANT OT PRINCIPLE MUST NOT BE OVERLOOKED: GOD NOT ONLY OVERRULED IN ISRAEL’S AFFAIRS BUT ALSO ANNOUNCED BEFOREHAND ALL-IMPORTANT EVENTS AND CHANGES. THIS WAS ONE IMPORTANT ROLE OF THE PROPHETS. ANOTHER FEATURE OF THE PROPHETIC ROLE WAS TO REMIND THEIR HEARERS OF SIGNIFICANT PAST EVENTS, ESPECIALLY THOSE EVENTS WHICH REVEALED GOD’S GOODNESS. THIS HISTORICAL DIMENSION IS FOUND IN THIS SPEECH IN VS 27–28. 3:1–21 THE CALL OF SAMUEL. AN ATTENTIVE READER OF 2:27–36 MIGHT HAVE BEEN PUZZLED BY THE FACT THAT THIS PROPHECY ABOUT THE PRIESTHOOD HAD NOTHING TO SAY ABOUT SAMUEL’S FUTURE. THE PREDICTION ABOUT A ‘FAITHFUL PRIEST’ IN 2:35 WAS NOT FULFILLED BY SAMUEL, AND HIS DESCENDANTS WERE NOT ‘FIRMLY ESTABLISHED’ IN THE PRIESTHOOD. CH. 3 SUPPLIES THE ANSWER: SAMUEL’S FUTURE ROLE WAS NOT THAT OF HEAD OF A PRIESTLY FAMILY. INSTEAD, HE WAS TO BE THE GREAT PROPHET OF HIS GENERATION. PRIESTS NEEDED NO DIVINE CALL TO OFFICE, BECAUSE THEY WERE BORN INTO PRIESTLY FAMILIES. PROPHETS, ON THE OTHER HAND, RECEIVED INDIVIDUAL CALLS, DIRECT EXPERIENCES OF GOD; AND CH. 3 RECORDS THE PROPHETIC CALL OF SAMUEL. THE WORD OF THE LORD AND VISIONS (1) WERE THE TWO TYPES OF DIVINE GIFT TO PROPHETS. THERE ARE TWO REASONS FOR TELLING US THAT BOTH WERE RARE (LIT. ‘PRECIOUS’) AT THAT TIME. FIRST, THE STATEMENT DRAWS ATTENTION TO ISRAEL’S SERIOUS NEED FOR PROPHETIC GUIDANCE. SECONDLY, IT EXPLAINS IN ADVANCE WHY SAMUEL AND ELI WERE BOTH TAKEN BY SURPRISE WHEN THE LORD CALLED ALOUD TO SAMUEL (4). TWO FEATURES OF THE TEMPLE ARE MENTIONED IN V 3, THE LAMP OF GOD AND THE ARK OF THE COVENANT. BOTH WERE SYMBOLS OF THE PRESENCE OF GOD. LV. 24:1–4 GIVES CAREFUL INSTRUCTIONS TO THE PRIESTS TO KEEP A LAMP BURNING IN THE SANCTUARY EVERY NIGHT. WHEN SAMUEL HEARD GOD’S VOICE, THE LAMP WAS STILL ALIGHT, I.E. IT WAS JUST BEFORE DAWN. IF GOD DID CHOOSE TO SPEAK, IT WOULD BE HERE IN THE SHRINE THAT HIS VOICE WAS EXPECTED TO BE HEARD; THAT IS WHY SAMUEL WAS LYING DOWN NEAR THE ARK. THE CALL CAME THREE TIMES, CONFIRMING TO BOTH SAMUEL AND ELI THAT IT WAS TRULY A MESSAGE FROM GOD. VS 11–14, GOD’S MESSAGE TO SAMUEL, CONFIRMED THE PROPHECY OF 2:27–36. THE FULL DETAILS OF WHAT WOULD HAPPEN ARE NOT REPEATED, BUT THE GUILT OF ELI HIMSELF IS GIVEN NEW EMPHASIS. ELI HAD NOT BEEN A VICIOUS OR CONTEMPTIBLE PRIEST LIKE HIS SONS, BUT HE WAS AFTER ALL THE MAN IN CHARGE OF THE SHRINE, AND HE FAILED TO RESTRAIN THEM. SAMUEL NATURALLY HESITATED AT FIRST TO TELL ELI WHAT HE HAD HEARD. (THE WORD VISION SIMPLY MEANS THIS WHOLE PROPHETIC EXPERIENCE.) ON HEARING THE STERN WORDS OF STEPHEN YAHWEH, ELI MADE NO COMPLAINT. HIS RESPONSE SHOWED HIS RESIGNED ACCEPTANCE OF GOD’S JUDGMENT, SO MAKING IT CLEAR THAT THE CHANGE OF PRIESTLY LEADERSHIP IN ISRAEL WAS ACCEPTED BY ELI HIMSELF. (IN EXACTLY THE SAME WAY, KING SAUL LATER ACKNOWLEDGED THAT GOD WAS TRANSFERRING ROYAL LEADERSHIP FROM HIM TO DAVID; SEE 24:20.) VS 19–21 GIVE A BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE YEARS THAT FOLLOWED, DURING WHICH SAMUEL GREW UP. FOR THE TIME BEING ELI CONTINUED AS PRIEST AT SHILOH, AND SO DID HIS EVIL SONS; BUT ALREADY IT WAS SAMUEL WHO ATTRACTED POPULAR ATTENTION. THE SHRINE ITSELF BECAME LESS IMPORTANT THAN THE MAN OF GOD, SINCE GOD’S PRESENCE WAS CLEARLY WITH HIM. WHATEVER SAMUEL FORETOLD CAME TRUE (19). NO LONGER WAS THE PROPHETIC WORD OR VISION A RARITY, AND ALL ISRAEL CAME TO REALIZE THIS. DAN WAS THE MOST IMPORTANT TOWN IN THE NORTH OF ISRAEL, AND BEERSHEBA LAY IN THE FAR SOUTH OF THE COUNTRY; THUS, SAMUEL’S REPUTATION SPREAD THROUGH THE WHOLE EXTENT OF THE LAND. GOD’S WORD CAME REGULARLY TO SAMUEL, AND FROM SAMUEL IT WAS PASSED ON TO ALL ISRAEL’S CITIZENS (4:1).**

**4:1–7:17 FIGHTS, BATTLES & WARS WITH THE PHILISTINES**

**AT THIS POINT SAMUEL DISAPPEARS FROM THE STORY UNTIL 7:3. THERE IS EFFECTIVE LITERARY SKILL IN THIS UNEXPECTED FEATURE, SINCE THE READER HAS BEEN LED TO EXPECT GREAT THINGS FROM SAMUEL. THERE IS ALSO THEOLOGICAL PURPOSE IN IT. CHS. 4–6, BESIDES EXPLAINING HOW GOD’S JUDGMENT ON ELI AND HIS FAMILY WAS FULFILLED, MAKE A CONTRAST BETWEEN THE WORD OF GOD (REVEALED THROUGH PROPHETS LIKE SAMUEL) AND THE ARK OF THE COVENANT. THE ARK WAS AN IMPORTANT SYMBOL OF GOD’S PRESENCE, BUT IT WAS A SILENT ONE. THE ARK COULD EASILY BE MISUNDERSTOOD, OR STOLEN, OR MOVED TO SOME REMOTE PLACE. THE SPOKEN WORD OF GOD, AS WE HAVE ALREADY SEEN, WAS NEVER REMOTE, BUT KNOWN FROM DAN TO BEERSHEBA. HOWEVER, FOR THREE CHAPTERS IT IS THE ARK WHICH IS THE CENTRE OF ATTENTION. IT NOT ONLY SYMBOLIZED GOD’S PRESENCE BUT ALSO HIS POWER. IN LOSING THE ARK TO THE PHILISTINES, ISRAEL WOULD LEARN THAT GOD MIGHT CHOOSE TO REMOVE HIS POWER FROM THEM; NEITHER THEY NOR THE PHILISTINES COULD MANIPULATE GOD! 4:1–11 TWO PHILISTINES VICTORIES. THE LOCATION OF THE EVENTS OF CHS. 1–3 WAS A SMALL AREA OF SOUTHERN EPHRAIM. THE SCENE NOW SHIFTS WESTWARDS, FROM THE HILLS TOWARDS THE COASTAL PLAIN, WHICH THE PHILISTINES HAD CONQUERED A CENTURY EARLIER. THIS SMALL BUT POWERFUL NATION HAD BEGUN TO DOMINATE PARTS OF ISRAEL IN THE TIME OF SAMSON (JDG. 13–16), AND THEIR WELL-TRAINED ARMY NOW POSED A NEW THREAT. THE ISRAELITES HAD NO PERMANENT ARMY AND, IN AN EMERGENCY, HAD TO CALL MEN FROM FARMS AND FIELDS TO FIGHT ANY BATTLE THAT WAS FORCED UPON THEM. IT IS NOT SURPRISING, THEN, THAT THE PHILISTINES WON A SWIFT VICTORY AT APHEK (2); BUT IT WAS A SHOCK TO THE ISRAELITE ELDERS, WHO EVIDENTLY HAD FULLY EXPECTED GOD TO GIVE ISRAEL THE VICTORY. THE PASSAGE SHOWS HOW LITTLE EITHER THE ISRAELITES OR THE PHILISTINES UNDERSTOOD ABOUT GOD. BOTH ISRAELITES AND PHILISTINES BELIEVED THAT THE ARK OF THE COVENANT ITSELF WAS A SORT OF IDOL, A MAGIC OBJECT WHICH WOULD GIVE ISRAEL GREAT POWER ON THE BATTLEFIELD. SO, THE ARK WAS BROUGHT TO THE BATTLEFIELD, ESCORTED BY HOPHNI AND PHINEHAS. THE PHILISTINES FEARED ITS POWER, BUT DID NOT DESPAIR, PRESUMABLY BECAUSE THEY WORSHIPPED THEIR OWN GODS, INCLUDING DAGON (5:2). THEY FOUGHT BRAVELY AND WON AN EVEN BIGGER VICTORY. ISRAEL LOST MANY MEN IN BATTLE, INCLUDING ELI’S TWO SONS: AND IN THIS WAY THE PROPHECY OF 2:34 CAME TRUE. THE ARK TOO WAS CAPTURED. NOTES. 4 THIS DESCRIPTION OF STEPHEN YAHWEH REFERS TO THE WAY THE ARK WAS CONSTRUCTED: SEE EX. 25:17–22. 6 THE TERM HEBREW MEANT THE SAME THING AS ‘ISRAELITE’. 4:12–22 THE DEATH OF ELI. BEFORE FOLLOWING THE ARK INTO PHILISTINE TERRITORY, THE STORY ROUNDS OFF THE LIFE OF ELI. AGED NINETY-EIGHT, HE DID NOT DIE OF OLD AGE BUT AFTER A FALL BROUGHT ON BY THE SHOCK AT HEARING THE BAD NEWS. THE PROPHECY OF CH. 2 HAD FORETOLD THAT ELI’S FAMILY WOULD LOSE THEIR PRIESTLY LEADERSHIP, BUT HAD IMPLIED THAT THE FAMILY LINE ITSELF WOULD CONTINUE TO EXIST. SO, THE LAST VERSES OF CH. 4 MENTION THE BIRTH OF A GRANDSONS (THE SON OF ONE’S SON OR ONE’S DAUGHTER) TO ELI. NOTHING IS SAID OF HIS LIFE AND CAREER, BUT HIS NAME ITSELF TOLD A SAD STORY: ICHABOD MEANT ‘NO GLORY’. HIS DYING MOTHER WAS THINKING OF THE LOSS OF THE ARK, AND SHE TOO SEEMED TO SUPPOSE THAT GOD HAD DEPARTED FROM ISRAEL ALONG WITH THE ARK. IN THAT IDEA SHE WAS WRONG, BUT THE NAME SHE GAVE TO HER SON SYMBOLIZED THE FACT THAT ALL HONOR AND PRIVILEGE HAD DEPARTED FROM THE FAMILY OF ELI. SOME COMMENTATORS HAVE ASKED WHETHER ISRAEL DID NOT PAY A VERY HIGH PRICE FOR THE SINS OF TWO MEN—HOPHNI AND PHINEHAS DESERVED TO DIE, BUT WHAT ABOUT THE THOUSANDS OF OTHER ISRAELITES WHO DIED ON THE BATTLEFIELD? THE BOOK OF JUDGES SHOWS THAT ISRAEL SUFFERED MANY MILITARY DEFEATS WHEN SHE HAD BEEN UNFAITHFUL TO GOD, AND 1 SA. 7:3–4 SHOWS THAT ISRAEL WAS AGAIN GUILTY OF IDOLATRY IN SAMUEL’S TIME. IN 1 SA. 4, HOWEVER, NO REASON IS GIVEN. STEPHEN YAHWEH ACTED AS HE PLANNED, WITHOUT EXPLANATION EITHER TO ISRAEL OR TO THE READER. THE BIBLICAL AUTHOR’S INTEREST IS THE FATE OF ELI’S FAMILY. HIS OTHER MAIN PURPOSE IS TO SHOW THAT GOD WAS IN CONTROL OF EVENTS, BUT THE READER ONLY GRADUALLY BECOMES AWARE OF THAT AS THE STORY UNFOLDS IN THE NEXT TWO CHAPTERS. 18 THIS VERSE MAKES IT CLEAR THAT ELI HAD BEEN THE MOST IMPORTANT POLITICAL FIGURE IN ISRAEL IN HIS GENERATION. THE VERB LED LITERALLY MEANS ‘JUDGED’, SO THE WRITER IS CONSCIOUSLY LINKING ELI WITH THE OUTSTANDING FIGURES DESCRIBED IN THE BOOK OF JUDGES. ELI’S DEATH MEANT THAT THE ISRAELITES BADLY NEEDED A NEW LEADER, AND ONE WHO (LIKE THE JUDGES) WOULD RESCUE THEM FROM FOREIGN ASSAILANTS. 5:1–12 THE ARK IN PHILISTINE HANDS. THE CHIEF CITIES OF THE PHILISTINES WERE FIVE IN NUMBER, AND THREE OF THEM ARE FEATURED IN CH. 5: ASHDOD (1), GATH (8) AND EKRON (10). THE PHILISTINES WORSHIPPED CANAANITE GODS, OF WHOM DAGON WAS ONE. (SAMSON HAD DESTROYED THE DAGON TEMPLE IN ANOTHER MAJOR PHILISTINE CITY, GAZA; SEE JDG. 16:30.) IT WAS COMMON PRACTICE IN THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST FOR CONQUERORS TO PLACE CAPTURED IDOLS IN THE TEMPLES OF THEIR OWN DEITIES; NO DOUBT IT WAS BELIEVED THAT THE VICTORS’ GODS HAD DEFEATED AND CAPTURED THE GODS OF THEIR ENEMIES. SO, THE PHILISTINES THOUGHT THAT DAGON HAD NOW DEFEATED AND CAPTURED STEPHEN YAHWEH. HOWEVER, IT SOON BECAME CLEAR THAT DAGON WAS NOT IN CONTROL EVEN OF HIS OWN STATUE! THE COLLAPSE OF THIS IDOL LED TO A STRANGE LOCAL SUPERSTITION (5). V 6 AT LAST TELLS THE READER PLAINLY THAT STEPHEN YAHWEH HIMSELF WAS ACTIVE IN EVENTS IN ASHDOD; THE PHILISTINES THERE HAD NO SUCH REVELATION FROM GOD, AND HAD TO MAKE THEIR OWN DEDUCTIONS. IF THE COLLAPSE OF THEIR IDOL ONLY PUZZLED THEM, THEIR OWN PERSONAL SUFFERINGS QUICKLY PERSUADED THEM THAT STEPHEN YAHWEH WAS POWERFUL AND ACTIVE BECAUSE OF THE ARK OF THE COVENANT THERE IN THEIR TEMPLE. SO, THE ARK WAS SENT FIRST TO GATH, THEN TO EKRON, WITH SIMILAR RESULTS IN BOTH TOWNS. 6:1–12 THE RETURN OF THE ARK. BY NOW ALL THE PHILISTINES WERE CONVINCED THAT THE ARK WAS THE PROPERTY OF STEPHEN YAHWEH THE GOD OF ISRAEL (2) AND ALSO THAT IT WAS A VERY DANGEROUS OBJECT. IT HAD TO BE HANDLED WITH GREAT CARE, OR EVEN WORSE TROUBLE WOULD AFFLICT THEM. SO, THEY NATURALLY TURNED TO THEIR OWN RELIGIOUS EXPERTS FOR ADVICE ON HOW TO RETURN THE ARK TO ISRAEL SAFELY. THEIR ADVISERS HAD TO ANSWER TWO SEPARATE QUESTIONS. WHERE EXACTLY IN ISRAEL SHOULD THE ARK BE SENT? AND HOW SHOULD IT BE DONE? THEIR DETAILED REPLY GIVES US AN INTERESTING PICTURE OF RELIGIOUS IDEAS OF THE TIME. FIRST, A GUILT OFFERING WAS REQUIRED, AS A CONFESSION THAT WRONG HAD BEEN DONE. SECONDLY, COMPENSATION MUST BE PAID (IN GOLD). THIRDLY, THE TRANSPORT PROVIDED FOR THE ARK MUST NOT BE DRIVEN OR GUIDED IN ANY PARTICULAR DIRECTION, BUT LEFT FOR THE GODS TO OVERRULE. (EVIDENTLY THE RELIGIOUS EXPERTS FEARED THE POWER OF STEPHEN YAHWEH, BUT WERE NOT QUITE SURE IF HE HAD REALLY CAUSED THE PHILISTINE TROUBLES.) ANOTHER ASPECT OF PHILISTINE THOUGHT CAN BE SEEN IN THE FACT THAT THEY MADE MODELS OF THE THINGS THAT THEY WANTED TO GET RID OF (5). THIS PRACTICE IS KNOWN TO SCHOLARS AS FORBIDDEN SYMPATHETIC MAGIC; IT WAS BELIEVED THAT WHEN THE MODELS WERE REMOVED, THE TROUBLES WOULD GO TOO! THE TUMORS WERE A SYMPTOM OF A PLAGUE WHICH IS PROBABLY CAUSED BY THE RATS. NOBODY IN THE ANCIENT WORLD KNEW THAT RATS WERE INSTRUMENTAL IN CAUSING PLAGUES, AND IT LOOKS AS IF THE RATS WERE ATTACKING FOOD STORES. V 6 REMINDS US THAT GOD HAD PREVIOUSLY USED PLAGUES TO FORCE AN EARLIER ENEMY OF ISRAEL, EGYPT, TO RELEASE HIS PEOPLE ISRAEL (SEE EX. 7–12). THE POWER OF ISRAEL’S GOD WAS TO BE SEEN IN HIS CONTROL OF EVENTS OUTSIDE ISRAEL. IN LATER CENTURIES, WHEN OTHER ENEMIES (ESPECIALLY ASSYRIA AND BABYLON) PROVED MUCH TOO STRONG FOR ISRAEL AND JUDAH, THESE STORIES DEMONSTRATING GOD’S POWER BECAME A SOURCE OF GREAT COMFORT TO GOD’S PEOPLE AND ENCOURAGED THEIR FAITH IN HIS ABILITY TO RESCUE THEM. 6:13–7:1 THE ARK RETURNS TO ISRAEL. WITHOUT HUMAN AGENCY, THE COWS TOOK THE ARK TO BETH SHEMESH, WHICH WAS A TOWN INSIDE ISRAELITE TERRITORY, JUST ACROSS THE PHILISTINE FRONTIER. THE PHILISTINES’ SCHEME HAD SUCCEEDED—OR RATHER, STEPHEN YAHWEH HIMSELF HAD BROUGHT HIS PROPERTY BACK TO ISRAEL. VS 16–18 SHOW HOW SERIOUSLY THE PHILISTINES HAD TREATED THE PROBLEM OF THE ARK: ALL FIVE OF THEIR KINGS FOLLOWED THE ARK TO THE ISRAELITE BORDER, EVEN THOUGH THE ARK HAD NEVER BEEN TAKEN TO TWO OF THE TOWNS LISTED IN V 17. VS 13–15 TELL US THAT THE ISRAELITES OF BETH SHEMESH WERE OVERJOYED AT THE ARK’S RETURN, AND THAT THEIR FIRST ACTIONS WERE RIGHT AND PROPER. FOR EXAMPLE, THE MEN WHO HANDLED THE SACRED ARK WERE LEVITES, MEN WHOSE SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY IT WAS TO CARRY IT (SEE DT. 10:8). SO, V 19 STRIKES A VERY UNEXPECTED NOTE. THE HEAVY BLOW SUFFERED BY BETH SHEMESH SHOWED THAT THE ARK WAS JUST AS DANGEROUS TO ISRAELITES AS TO PHILISTINES: GOD MUST BE TREATED WITH PROPER REVERENCE AND RESPECT. THE CHIEF REASON FOR MENTIONING THIS UNHAPPY INCIDENT IS THAT IT EXPLAINS WHY THE ARK FINISHED ITS JOURNEY NOT IN BETH SHEMESH BUT IN A NEARBY TOWN, KIRIATH JEARIM. 7:2–17 SAMUEL’S ACHIEVEMENTS. THE STORY OF THE ARK’S WANDERINGS ENDS AT V 2. IT WAS BROUGHT FROM ABINADAB’S HOUSE AND TAKEN TO JERUSALEM IN DAVID’S REIGN, MANY YEARS LATER (SEE 2 SA. 6). THE TWENTY YEARS SEEMS TO REFER, NOT TO THE ARK’S STAY AT KIRIATH JEARIM, BUT TO THE DEPRESSED STATE OF THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL. THE ARK’S PRESENCE IN THEIR LAND HAD CAUSED MUCH TROUBLE TO THE PHILISTINES, BUT WE MUST NOT FORGET THAT IN THE BATTLES OF CH. 4 THEY HAD INFLICTED A VERY HEAVY DEFEAT ON ISRAEL. THE PHILISTINES WERE STILL THE TRIUMPHANT CONQUERORS, AND COULD IMPOSE THEIR WISHES ON THE ISRAELITES IN THE TERRITORIES OF BENJAMIN, SOUTHERN EPHRAIM, AND ELSEWHERE. V 7 ILLUSTRATES THIS SITUATION—BOTH PHILISTINE AGGRESSION AND ISRAELITE FEAR. FOR THE FIRST TIME, WE ARE GIVEN A REASON IN V 3 FOR THE ISRAELITES’ WEAKNESS: THERE WAS WIDE-SPREAD IDOLATRY AMONG THEM. THE FOREIGN GODS INCLUDED THE CANAANITE GOD BAAL AND THE CANAANITE GODDESS ASHTORETH (4). AS IT HAD FREQUENTLY IN THE BOOK OF JUDGES, ISRAELITE UNFAITHFULNESS TO STEPHEN YAHWEH HAD CAUSED DIVINE PUNISHMENT. AND AS IN JUDGES, GENUINE ISRAELITE REPENTANCE WOULD REVERSE THE SITUATION. GOD’S METHOD HAD ALWAYS BEEN TO PUNISH SINFUL ISRAEL BY MEANS OF FOREIGN INVASION AND ATTACK, AND TO RESCUE REPENTANT ISRAEL THROUGH THE LEADERSHIP OF ‘JUDGES’ CH. 7 PRESENTS EXACTLY THE SAME SEQUENCE OF SIN, REPENTANCE AND SALVATION. THE MAN CHOSEN BY GOD TO BRING DELIVERANCE WAS OF COURSE SAMUEL, WHO IS IN THIS CONTEXT APPROPRIATELY CALLED ‘JUDGE’ (6). IN CHS. 1–3 SAMUEL WAS FIRST AN APPRENTICE PRIEST, THEN A PROPHET. NOW IN 7:6 WE FIND HIM IN A NEW ROLE, AS ISRAEL’S ‘JUDGE’ OR POLITICAL LEADER. THE WORD IS DELIBERATELY USED TO SHOW THAT HE WAS GOD’S CHOSEN MAN TO DELIVER ISRAEL. IN PRACTICE, IT IS NOT OBVIOUS WHAT EXACTLY HIS POLITICAL ROLE WAS AS YET, SINCE THE PHILISTINES WERE SO DOMINANT. AT ANY RATE, ALL ISRAEL LISTENED TO HIM (4:1), AND SO HE ALONE WAS ABLE TO CALL A NATIONAL ASSEMBLY AT MIZPAH, IN BENJAMITE TERRITORY. (SHILOH HAD BEEN LEFT IN RUINS BY THE PHILISTINES AND WAS PROBABLY ABANDONED.) THE PURPOSE WAS A RELIGIOUS ONE, BUT SUCH A LARGE GATHERING LOOKED LIKE AN ARMY—AND INDEED TURNED INTO AN ARMY (10–11). SO, IT IS NO WONDER THAT THE PHILISTINES SAW IT AS A POTENTIAL THREAT TO THEM AND ATTACKED IT. BUT OF COURSE, THE ISRAELITE ASSEMBLY WAS NO TRAINED ARMY, AND BUT FOR GOD’S HELP WOULD HAVE BEEN MASSACRED BY THE PHILISTINES. ANCIENT PEOPLES BELIEVED THAT THUNDER AND LIGHTNING WERE SIGNS OF DIVINE ANGER, SO THE PHILISTINE PANIC IS EASILY UNDERSTOOD. THE MEMORIAL STONE (12) SET UP TO CELEBRATE THE ISRAELITE VICTORY WAS NAMED EBENEZER, LIT. ‘STONE OF HELP’. THE ISRAELITES HAD SUFFERED DEFEAT AT A DIFFERENT PLACE CALLED EBENEZER (SEE 4:1), SOME MILES FURTHER NORTH, AND IT SEEMS THAT SAMUEL DELIBERATELY REAPPLIED THE NAME TO RECORD THIS FIRST ISRAELITE VICTORY OVER THE PHILISTINES. IN REALITY IT WAS PROBABLY ONLY A MINOR VICTORY, BUT IT WAS ENOUGH TO KEEP THE PHILISTINES OUT OF ISRAELITE TERRITORY FOR SOME CONSIDERABLE TIME, AND IT WAS THE BEGINNING OF A PERIOD IN WHICH PHILISTINE POWER DECLINED, THANKS TO THE HAND OF THE LORD (13). THE ISRAELITE SUCCESSES OF THIS PERIOD, WHICH IS REFERRED TO AS SAMUEL’S LIFETIME, WERE ACHIEVED UNDER THE MILITARY LEADERSHIP OF KING SAUL (14:47), FOR SAMUEL WAS NEVER A SOLDIER. HOWEVER, SAUL IS NOT MENTIONED IN CH. 7, FOR SEVERAL REASONS. THE FIRST IS THAT 7:13–17 IS SIMPLY A SUMMARY OF SAMUEL’S ACTIVITIES. SECONDLY, SAUL HAS NOT YET BEEN BROUGHT INTO THE STORY, AND IT WOULD HAVE SPOILED THE EFFECT OF THE FOLLOWING CHAPTERS TO INTRODUCE HIS NAME AT THIS POINT. THIRDLY, THERE IS A HIDDEN MESSAGE IN CH. 7, ANTICIPATING THE EVENTS OF CH. 8. IN CH. 8 THE ELDERS OF ISRAEL DEMANDED A KING, THEREBY DEMOTING SAMUEL AND TAKING POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AWAY FROM HIM. CH. 7 IS THEREFORE MAKING THE CLAIM THAT EVEN WITHOUT SAUL’S MILITARY SKILLS, SAMUEL WAS PERFECTLY CAPABLE OF LEADING ISRAEL TO VICTORY. GOD WAS THE REAL AUTHOR OF VICTORY, AND HE HAD LONG AGO CALLED SAMUEL TO SPEAK FOR HIM AND TO GIVE ISRAEL WHATEVER GUIDANCE WAS NEEDED. FROM A HUMAN POINT OF VIEW, SAMUEL BECAME SUBORDINATE TO SAUL ONCE SAUL BECAME KING. FROM GOD’S STANDPOINT, HOWEVER, IT WAS AS IF THE KING WAS SUBORDINATE TO THE MAN OF GOD. THE FINAL PARAGRAPH SHOWS SAMUEL IN YET ANOTHER ROLE—AS JUDGE IN THE ORDINARY ENGLISH SENSE OF THE WORD, A ROLE WHICH HE RETAINED AFTER SAUL BECAME KING. HIS CENTER WAS AT RAMAH, HIS ANCESTRAL HOME (SEE 1:19), AND THE OTHER CITIES LISTED WERE IN THE SAME GENERAL AREA. THUS, THESE VERSES INDICATE THE BREADTH OF SAMUEL’S SERVICES TO ISRAEL. THEY ALSO LAY A GEOGRAPHICAL FOUNDATION FOR THE EVENTS OF THE FOLLOWING CHAPTERS, WHICH TOOK PLACE IN RAMAH (8:4), MIZPAH (10:17) AND GILGAL (11:14); BETHEL TOO GETS A BRIEF MENTION (10:3). NOTE. 14 THE AMORITES, ALSO CALLED CANAANITES, LIVED IN TOWNS AND CITIES INSIDE ISRAEL. AT TIMES THEY SEEM TO HAVE FOUGHT ALONGSIDE THE PHILISTINES AGAINST THE ISRAELITES. BY WHATEVER MEANS, SAMUEL WAS ABLE TO KEEP ON GOOD TERMS WITH THEM.**

**8:1–15:35 SAMUEL AND SAUL**

**THIS SECTION INCLUDES A FULL DESCRIPTION OF THE SEQUENCE OF EVENTS WHICH BROUGHT SAUL TO THE THRONE OF ISRAEL. THE START OF A MONARCHY MEANT AN ENORMOUS CHANGE IN THE WAY ISRAEL WAS GOVERNED AND ORGANIZED. SUCH A MAJOR DEVELOPMENT DESERVED THE FULL DISCUSSION GIVEN IN CHS. 8–12. THE FIRST KING WAS SAUL, AND HE NATURALLY PLAYS A PROMINENT PART IN THE STORY. BUT THE BIBLICAL AUTHOR NEVER LETS US FORGET SAMUEL; INDEED, IN THE BIBLICAL WRITER’S VIEW SAMUEL REMAINED THE REAL LEADER OF ISRAEL, EVEN WHEN HE HAD HANDED OVER MILITARY AND POLITICAL AFFAIRS TO THE NEW KING. IN THE LAST CHAPTER OF THE SECTION, CH. 15, SAMUEL STILL HAD THE GOD GIVEN AUTHORITY TO REJECT SAUL’S KINGSHIP.**

**8:1–12:25 SAUL BECOMES KING**

**IN APPROACHING THESE CHAPTERS, IT IS HELPFUL TO BE AWARE OF THREE PERSPECTIVES: THE MODERN HISTORIAN’S, THE BIBLICAL AUTHOR’S, AND THE STORY-TELLER’S. TO THE MODERN HISTORIAN, THE RISE OF A MONARCHY IN ISRAEL WAS INEVITABLE. THE PHILISTINES POSED A SERIOUS THREAT, AND THEY WERE WELL EQUIPPED AND WELL ORGANIZED. THE ISRAELITES HAD THE ADVANTAGE OF A BIGGER POPULATION, BUT THEY WERE DISUNITED. THE VARIOUS ISRAELITE TRIBES TO A LARGE EXTENT ACTED INDEPENDENTLY, AND NONE OF THEM HAD A PERMANENT ARMY. SO, THE CHOICE WAS CLEAR-CUT: UNLESS THEY FOUND A MEANS OF UNITING THE TRIBES AND BUILDING UP AN ARMY, ISRAEL WOULD PERISH AS A NATION. IN THE ANCIENT WORLD, KINGSHIP WAS THE ONLY POSSIBLE STRUCTURE FOR ACHIEVING THIS GOAL. SO, FROM THE HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE, THE ELDERS’ URGENT REQUEST IN 8:5 WAS A NATURAL ONE. WE SHOULD BEAR IN MIND THAT THE ISRAELITE VICTORY RECORDED IN CH. 7 HAD NOT CHANGED THE GENERAL SITUATION OF PHILISTINE POWER AND IMPERIALISM. SO, TO THE HISTORIAN, THE ISRAELITE ELDERS’ CONDUCT COMES AS NO SURPRISE. THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE BIBLICAL AUTHOR WAS QUITE DIFFERENT. FROM HIS POINT OF VIEW, ISRAEL ALREADY HAD A KING: AS 8:7 TELLS US, NONE OTHER THAN STEPHEN YAHWEH HIMSELF. HUMAN KINGS MIGHT BE WEAK OR INCOMPETENT, BUT HOW COULD A DIVINE KING FAIL TO LEAD HIS PEOPLE TO PEACE AND PROSPERITY? GOD HAD PROVED MANY TIMES IN THE PAST THAT HE COULD GIVE HIS PEOPLE VICTORY, AND IN THE PERSON OF SAMUEL GOD HAD ALREADY PROVIDED THEM WITH ALL THE HUMAN LEADERSHIP THAT WAS NECESSARY. IT WAS TRUE THAT ISRAEL HAD SUFFERED DEFEATS, AS IN CH. 4, BUT SUCH DEFEATS WERE THEIR OWN FAULT, DUE TO THEIR FAILURE TO BE LOYAL TO THEIR KING, STEPHEN YAHWEH. SO, FROM THE BIBLICAL, THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE, THE ELDERS’ REQUEST FOR A HUMAN KING WAS SINFUL, A REJECTION OF GOD’S KINGSHIP AND AN ATTEMPT TO WIN VICTORIES WITHOUT HIS GUIDANCE OR HELP. AS THE STORYTELLER AND THE THEOLOGIAN WERE THE SAME PERSON, THE THIRD PERSPECTIVE IS BASICALLY NO DIFFERENT FROM THE SECOND. HOWEVER, IT IS IMPORTANT NOT TO LOSE SIGHT OF THE SHEER LITERARY SKILL OF THE BIBLICAL AUTHOR, AND THE WAY HE SHAPES HIS NARRATIVE TO MAKE HIS THEOLOGICAL POINTS CLEAR AND EFFECTIVE. TO THE HISTORIAN, WE HAVE SEEN, THE ELDERS’ REQUEST FOR A KING COMES AS NO SURPRISE. TO THE ORDINARY READER, HOWEVER, IT COMES AS A COMPLETE SHOCK AFTER THE PICTURE OF SAMUEL’S ACHIEVEMENTS WHICH THE STORYTELLER HAS PROVIDED IN CH. 7. TO THE STORYTELLER, PHILISTINE POWER WAS RELATIVELY UNIMPORTANT AND SO COULD BE IGNORED FOR THE TIME BEING; THE REAL POWER LAY IN GOD’S HANDS, NOT THE PHILISTINES’. THE SERIOUS HUMAN PROBLEM WAS NOT ISRAELITE MILITARY WEAKNESS BUT ISRAELITE LACK OF FAITH. OF COURSE, THERE ARE OTHER PERSPECTIVES TOO, ESPECIALLY THOSE OF THE ACTORS IN ALL THESE EVENTS—THE ELDERS, SAMUEL AND SAUL. THE POSITION OF SAUL MUST HAVE BEEN PARTICULARLY UNCOMFORTABLE. HOW COULD A HUMAN KING HOPE TO BE ACCEPTABLE TO GOD, IF THE VERY EXISTENCE OF A KING MEANT REJECTION OF GOD? AND YET THE STORY SAYS THAT GOD CHOSE SAUL TO BE KING! IN A SENSE THERE IS A SORT OF COMPROMISE WORKED OUT IN THESE CHAPTERS. THE THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE, WHILE INSISTING THAT STEPHEN YAHWEH WAS ISRAEL’S KING, FULLY RECOGNIZED THAT A HUMAN MEDIATOR WAS NECESSARY, SOMEONE WHO WOULD GIVE VISIBLE HUMAN LEADERSHIP BUT WOULD TAKE HIS ORDERS FROM STEPHEN YAHWEH. SAMUEL HAD BEEN SUCH A MEDIATOR AND LEADER. SO EVEN THOUGH THE ELDERS’ DEMAND WAS SINFUL, GOD COULD WORK WITH IT, PROVIDED THAT HE HIMSELF CHOSE THE MAN TO BE KING. GOD IN FACT CHOSE FIRST SAUL, THEN DAVID, AND USED THEM TO DEFEAT ISRAEL’S ENEMIES THE PHILISTINES. EVEN SO, KINGSHIP WAS SURE TO BRING MISERY TO ISRAEL IN THE LONG RUN. THE ULTIMATE PROBLEM WITH KINGSHIP WAS THAT IT GAVE POWER NOT JUST TO ONE MAN BUT TO HIS DESCENDANTS AFTER HIM. IT IS WIDELY BELIEVED THAT DIFFERENT SECTIONS OF THESE CHAPTERS WERE DRAWN FROM DIFFERENT SOURCE DOCUMENTS. IT HAS BEEN OBSERVED THAT CHS. 8 AND 12 EXPRESS STRONG CRITICISMS OF MONARCHY IN GENERAL. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE MIDDLE CHAPTERS TREAT SAUL HIMSELF VERY POSITIVELY. CH. 11 IS IN SOME WAYS A DISTINCT STORY. ALL THESE SECTIONS MAY BE EQUALLY HISTORICAL, BUT SCHOLARS HAVE FREQUENTLY RAISED QUESTIONS AND ISSUES. FOR INSTANCE, SAUL IS MADE KING AT THREE DIFFERENT TIMES AND AT THREE DIFFERENT PLACES (10:1; 10:17–25; 11:14–15)—WHICH IS BY NO MEANS IMPOSSIBLE IN THE UNIQUE CIRCUMSTANCES. IT IS PERFECTLY POSSIBLE TO SEE THE OVERALL STORY-LINE AS PLAUSIBLE, AND TO THINK OF THE DIFFERENT SECTIONS AS PRESENTING DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES ON KINGSHIP RATHER THAN CONFLICTING ACCOUNTS. BUT LARGER COMMENTARIES SHOULD BE CONSULTED ON THIS WHOLE COMPLEX ISSUE. 8:1–9 THE DEMAND FOR A KING. THE ISRAELITE ELDERS, THE LOCAL REPRESENTATIVES OF THE CLANS AND TRIBES OF ISRAEL, HAD GENUINE REASONS FOR ANXIETY. THEY SAW THAT SAMUEL WAS GROWING OLD AND THERE WAS NO OBVIOUS SUCCESSOR TO CONTINUE THE STRUGGLE AGAINST THE PHILISTINES. HISTORY WAS REPEATING ITSELF. THE SINS OF ELI’S SONS HAD BROUGHT ABOUT ONE MAJOR CHANGE IN ISRAEL; AND NOW THE SINS OF SAMUEL’S SONS WERE THE FIRST STEP IN AN EVEN GREATER CHANGE. IN BOTH CASES, THE SINS WERE WELL KNOWN TO THE PUBLIC, AND THE PUBLIC HAD A RIGHT TO PROTEST. ONE IMPORTANT DIFFERENCE IS THAT SAMUEL’S SONS WERE NOT UNDER HIS DIRECT SUPERVISION, FOR BEERSHEBA LAY FAR AWAY TO THE SOUTH, AND NEITHER GOD NOR MAN COULD BLAME HIM FOR THEIR ACTIVITIES. THERE IS DRAMATIC IRONY IN ALL THIS. WITH BOTH ELI AND NOW SAMUEL, IT WAS OBVIOUS TO EVERYBODY THAT GREAT AND GOOD MEN CAN HAVE EVIL, WORTHLESS SONS; AND YET THE ELDERS RESPONDED BY DEMANDING A KING. BY DEFINITION, A KING IS A RULER WHOSE SON AUTOMATICALLY BECOMES KING AFTER HIM! THE BIBLICAL AUTHOR THUS DEMONSTRATES THAT THE ELDERS’ ARGUMENTS WERE INSINCERE. IT IS NOT UNTIL V 20 THAT THEIR REAL REASON IS EXPRESSED. UNDOUBTEDLY THE ELDERS’ DEMAND WAS A REJECTION OF SAMUEL, AND NATURALLY HE WAS DISPLEASED, EVEN THOUGH THEY LEFT THE CHOICE OF A KING IN HIS HANDS. GOD’S WORDS IN V 7 DO NOT DENY THAT SAMUEL WAS REJECTED BUT THEY STRESS THAT HE WAS NOT THE ONLY PERSON BEING REJECTED. BEHIND THE ELDERS’ REJECTION OF SAMUEL LAY THE FACT THAT THEY WERE ALSO REJECTING GOD’S AUTHORITY, FOR IT WAS HE WHO HAD SENT ISRAEL ONE ABLE LEADER AFTER ANOTHER, INCLUDING SAMUEL. AS V 8 REMINDS US, THERE WAS NOTHING NEW IN ISRAELITES REJECTING STEPHEN YAHWEH FOR OTHER GODS, BUT THE ELDERS’ DEMAND WENT A STEP FURTHER, REJECTING HIS POLITICAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR HIS OWN PEOPLE. THE DESCRIPTION OF GOD AS KING OF ISRAEL IS VERY FREQUENT BIBLICAL LANGUAGE, FOUND AS EARLY AS EX. 15:18. WE EASILY INTERPRET IT AS A STRAIGHTFORWARD METAPHOR, A CONVENIENT HUMAN PICTURE. THE ISRAELITES WERE PROBABLY APT TO DO THE SAME, AND SO FAILED TO SEE WHAT WAS MEANT AND IMPLIED. IF GOD WAS TRULY KING, THEN HE MADE THE POLITICAL DECISIONS FOR ISRAEL, HE MADE THE LAWS AND THE CONSTITUTION, HE DECIDED ON WARS AND ALLIANCES, AND DID EVERYTHING ELSE THAT A HUMAN KING MIGHT DO IN OTHER COUNTRIES. (OF COURSE, GOD NEEDED HIS MESSENGERS TO ANNOUNCE HIS DECISIONS AND DECREES, AND THE PROPHETS, IN PARTICULAR, FILLED THAT ROLE.) UNLESS A HUMAN KING OF ISRAEL WAS ABSOLUTELY OBEDIENT TO STEPHEN YAHWEH’S DECISIONS, THEN HE WOULD CERTAINLY IN SOME WAYS BE DISPLACING GOD. SO, THE ELDERS’ DEMAND AMOUNTED TO TREASON. 8:10–22 SAMUEL’S ADVICE REJECTED. BEFORE DECIDING ON HAVING A MONARCHY, THE ISRAELITES OUGHT TO CONSIDER WHAT IT WILL MEAN TO THEM: SO, SAMUEL HERE PAINTS A GRIM PICTURE OF THE SIDE-EFFECTS OF MONARCHY. THE ELDERS’ VISION WAS A NARROW ONE; ALL THEY LOOKED FOR WAS AN EFFECTIVE MILITARY LEADER (20). SAMUEL’S DESCRIPTION OF KINGSHIP IN ACTION DRAWS ATTENTION TO FORCED LABOR AND CONSCRIPTION, HEAVY TAXES AND FINALLY TYRANNY. SO, IF ISRAEL CHOSE KINGSHIP, AS THEY DID, THEY WOULD EVENTUALLY HAVE TO PAY A HEAVY PRICE FOR THE LIMITED MILITARY BENEFITS. THEY BELIEVED A KING WOULD GIVE THEM SUCH THINGS AS SECURITY, STABILITY AND SUCCESS; SAMUEL WARNED THEM THAT KINGS WERE MUCH MORE LIKELY TO TAKE THAN TO GIVE. (NOTICE HOW OFTEN THE VERB TAKE OCCURS IN VS 11–17.) IT HAS OFTEN BEEN POINTED OUT THAT THE DETAILS OF VS 11–17 FIT SOLOMON VERY WELL, AND IT CAN BE ARGUED THAT THE DESCRIPTION IS OF A MUCH LATER DATE THAN SAMUEL’S TIME. AGAINST THIS VIEW, THERE IS PLENTY OF EVIDENCE THAT LONG BEFORE SOLOMON’S TIME THE EXCESSES OF KINGSHIP WERE WELL KNOWN, AND THERE IS NO REASON WHY SAMUEL SHOULD NOT HAVE VOICED SUCH SENTIMENTS. BOTH ARGUMENTS HAVE A VALID POINT TO MAKE. SAMUEL PROBABLY DID ATTACK THE WHOLE IDEA OF MONARCHY, BUT EQUALLY PROBABLY THE BIBLICAL WRITER HAS EXPANDED SAMUEL’S SPEECH IN ORDER TO REMIND LATER READERS OF THE WAY IN WHICH SOLOMON DEMONSTRATED THE TRUTH OF SAMUEL’S ARGUMENTS. IF THE ISRAELITES THEN CHOSE A MONARCHY, THEY WOULD EVENTUALLY BE SORRY—THERE COULD BE NO TURNING BACK. BUT SAMUEL’S WARNING FELL ON DEAF EARS (19). WE ARE NOT TO SUPPOSE THAT THE ELDERS’ DECISION GAVE GOD NO CHOICE, BUT HE FREELY CHOSE TO LET ISRAEL HAVE ITS OWN WAY IN THIS MATTER (21). V 20 SHOWS THAT ALTHOUGH THE ELDERS WANTED ISRAEL TO BE ABLE TO DEFEAT OTHER NATIONS, THEY ALSO WANTED TO ADOPT THE PATTERNS SET BY OTHER NATIONS. CONSCIOUSLY OR UNCONSCIOUSLY, GOD’S PEOPLE ARE ALWAYS UNDER SOCIAL PRESSURE TO CONFORM TO THE WAYS OF THE WORLD. PAUL WARNED OF THE DANGER (SEE ROM. 12:2). 9:1–14 SAUL COMES TO RAMAH. IT IS VERY LIKELY THAT AT THIS POINT THE BIBLICAL AUTHOR MADE USE OF A DIFFERENT DOCUMENT FOR HIS INFORMATION, IN ANY CASE THERE IS NO DOUBT ABOUT HIS LITERARY SKILL AND DRAMATIC EFFECTS. WITHOUT ANY WARNING, THE SCENE SHIFTS FROM SAMUEL TO SAUL, HERE MENTIONED FOR THE FIRST TIME. THE READER IS HELD IN SUSPENSE, WONDERING HOW SAMUEL WILL GO ABOUT FINDING AND MAKING A KING; BUT NATURALLY EVERY READER MUST HAVE KNOWN THAT SAUL HAD BEEN ISRAEL’S FIRST KING, SO THE INTRODUCTION OF HIS NAME CAUSES NO SURPRISE. THE STORY GOES ON TO EXPLAIN THE CIRCUMSTANCES IN WHICH SAMUEL AND SAUL MET. NOTE HOW SKILLFULLY THE NARRATOR DISGUISES THE FACT THAT RAMAH IS THE TOWN AND SAMUEL THE PROPHET. (RAMAH WAS SAMUEL’S HOME TOWN, BUT HE HAD ONLY JUST RETURNED TO IT FROM HIS JUDICIAL CIRCUIT, SEE 7:16–17.) THE ONLY CLUE GIVEN IS THE MENTION OF THE DISTRICT OF ZUPH (5), WHERE RAMAH WAS (SEE 1:1). FROM ONE POINT OF VIEW, THIS IS A TYPICAL ‘RAGS TO RICHES’ STORY. SAUL’S FAMILY WERE NOT PAUPERS, AND HE HIMSELF WAS PHYSICALLY IMPRESSIVE (2); BUT THE FAMILY WERE NOT ARISTOCRATS, AND THEIR TRIBE, BENJAMIN, WAS SMALL AND RELATIVELY UNIMPORTANT IN ISRAEL (SEE V 21), OVERSHADOWED BY EPHRAIM TO THE NORTH AND JUDAH TO THE SOUTH. SAUL CAN HAVE HAD NO AMBITIONS OR EXPECTATIONS ABOUT BECOMING KING. THE CHIEF POINT OF THIS PASSAGE MAY WELL BE SAUL’S INNOCENCE AND LACK OF AMBITION. HE DID NOT SET OUT TO GAIN ANY FAME OR POWER, BUT MERELY TO RETRIEVE HIS FATHER’S LOST PROPERTY. HE DID NOT SEEK KINGSHIP; BUT GOD, SO TO SPEAK, FOUND HIM AND WENT ON TO MAKE HIM KING. SAUL DID NOT EVEN KNOW WHO SAMUEL WAS, OR RECOGNIZE HIM WHEN THEY MET. WE CAN IMAGINE THAT AFTER THE EVENTS OF CH. 8, SOME AMBITIOUS MEN MAY HAVE TRIED TO GET ACCESS TO SAMUEL, TO IMPRESS HIM WITH THEIR ABILITY, OR TO WIN HIS FAVOR. SAUL WAS NOT SUCH A MAN. NOTE. 12 ALTARS, SUCH AS SAMUEL HAD BUILT AT RAMAH (7:17) WERE OFTEN ON HILLS (OR ARTIFICIAL MOUNDS), AND SUCH ‘HIGH PLACES’ SERVED AS OPEN-AIR SHRINES. IT IS CLEAR FROM THIS PASSAGE THAT SAMUEL WAS NOT MERELY PROPHET AND JUDGE, BUT STILL HAD SOME PRIESTLY FUNCTIONS TOO. 9:15–27 SAMUEL ENTERTAINS SAUL. THE STORY SO FAR HAS MADE IT CLEAR THAT NO HUMAN BEING HAD PLANNED THAT SAMUEL AND SAUL SHOULD EVER MEET. GOD HAD OVERRULED SAUL’S MOVEMENTS, AND NOW REVEALED DIRECTLY TO SAMUEL THAT SAUL WAS GOD’S OWN CHOICE TO BE KING. SO, SAMUEL KNEW SAUL WHEN THE TWO MEN MET, AND ALSO KNEW WHAT MUST BE DONE TO MAKE SAUL KING. SAUL, HOWEVER, REMAINED IN IGNORANCE OF GOD’S PLANS THROUGHOUT THE EVENTS OF THIS CHAPTER: SAMUEL ONLY GRADUALLY MADE HIM AWARE THAT GOD HAD SPECIAL PLANS FOR HIM. IN V 20, SAMUEL REFERRED TO THE DESIRE OF ISRAEL; THE READER UNDERSTANDS THAT HE MEANT THEIR DESIRE FOR A KING, BUT SUCH A REMARK NATURALLY PUZZLED SAUL. THEN SAMUEL’S ACTION IN V 24 SHOWED SAUL THAT HE WAS AN HONORED GUEST, BUT STILL DID NOT REVEAL THE FULL TRUTH. THE SECTION CONTINUES TO MAKE THE POINT THAT FAR FROM GRASPING AT KINGSHIP AND POWER, SAUL EVEN NOW WAS HUMBLY UNAWARE OF HIS FUTURE ROLE. SAUL DID NOT SEIZE POWER, NOR DID SAMUEL PROMOTE SOME CLOSE FRIEND OF HIS OWN TO THE KINGSHIP; SAUL WAS WHOLLY GOD’S CHOICE. THE WORD ‘KING’ DOES NOT OCCUR IN THIS CHAPTER. V 16 AND 10:1 BOTH USE THE WORD LEADER (HEB. NĀḠÎD) INSTEAD. THE EXACT MEANING OF THE HEBREW WORD IS DISPUTED; POSSIBLY ‘KING-DESIGNATE’ IS THE SENSE, WITH THE IMPLICATION THAT SAUL WAS NOT ACTUALLY KING UNTIL THE PUBLIC CEREMONY AT MIZPAH DESCRIBED IN CH. 10. AT ANY RATE, IN THE CONTEXT IT IS UNLIKELY THAT THE WORD STANDS IN ANY CONTRAST TO A KING, BECAUSE THE VERB, ANOINT, USED WITH IT, IMPLIES KINGSHIP. THE FUNCTION OF SAUL AS LEADER IS CLARIFIED: HIS TASK IS TO DELIVER ISRAEL FROM THE PHILISTINES AND TO GOVERN (LIT. ‘RESTRAIN’, ‘CONTROL’) THE ISRAELITES. IN THIS WAY GOD WAS GOING TO PROVIDE, THROUGH SAUL, THE TWO MOST IMPORTANT POLITICAL NEEDS OF THE TIME. THE FIRST WAS THE DEFEAT OF THE ENEMY, WHO COULD OTHERWISE HAVE CRUSHED ISRAEL OUT OF EXISTENCE. THE OTHER WAS THE INTERNAL NEED OF ISRAEL FOR UNITY AND STRONG GOVERNMENT. NOTE. 27 SAMUEL MADE SURE THAT IT WOULD BE A PRIVATE ANOINTING; NOT EVEN HIS SERVANT KNEW THE SECRET. THE FIRST ANOINTING OF DAVID WAS ALSO PRIVATE (16:1–13). IN BOTH CASES, THEIR REIGNS DID NOT ACTUALLY BEGIN UNTIL A PUBLIC CEREMONY HAD BEEN HELD. 10:1–8 THE ANOINTING. THE SIMPLE ACT OF ANOINTING IS DESCRIBED IN V 1. OIL WAS POURED ON THE FUTURE KING’S HEAD BY A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE LORD, IN THIS CASE SAMUEL. THIS ACT SYMBOLIZED THAT GOD WAS MARKING THIS MAN OUT, SETTING HIM APART FROM EVERYONE ELSE, AS HIS CHOICE OF KING. WE CANNOT BE SURE OF THE FULL SIGNIFICANCE OF ANOINTING IN ISRAEL. ONE POSSIBILITY IS THAT IT WAS A SYMBOL OF A COVENANT RELATIONSHIP; IF SO, IT SHOWED GOD MAKING A SPECIAL COVENANT WITH THE INDIVIDUAL KING, PROMISING TO GIVE HIM HELP, STRENGTH AND WISDOM. THE OIL WAS PERHAPS A SYMBOL OF GOD GIVEN POWER. ANOINTING WAS A WELL-KNOWN RITUAL IN THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST, ALTHOUGH OUTSIDE ISRAEL IT WAS NOT USUAL TO ANOINT KINGS. IN EGYPT, THE KING WAS NOT ANOINTED, BUT HIS VASSALS WERE. IF THE SAME CONCEPT WAS FAMILIAR IN ISRAEL, IT MAY WELL SUGGEST THAT THE ANOINTING MADE SAUL THE VASSAL-KING UNDER STEPHEN YAHWEH, WHO WAS THE GREAT KING. V 1 ALSO DESCRIBES ISRAEL AS STEPHEN YAHWEH’S INHERITANCE, HIS PERMANENT POSSESSION. THIS DESCRIPTION, WHICH INCLUDED BOTH THE LAND AND THE PEOPLE, IS ANOTHER IMPORTANT STATEMENT TO THE NEW KING: HE IS IN NO SENSE THE OWNER OF ISRAEL, WHICH STILL BELONGS TO GOD. SO, SAUL WOULD BE SUBORDINATE TO GOD; BUT EVEN SO, KINGSHIP WAS A BRAND-NEW INSTITUTION IN ISRAEL, AND IT WOULD NOT BE SURPRISING IF SAUL HAD DOUBTS ABOUT IT ALL. HE NEEDED SIGNS THAT HE REALLY WAS TO BE KING, AND SIGNS TOO THAT HE WAS CAPABLE OF THE TASK. ACCORDINGLY, HE WAS PROMISED THREE SIGNS. (V 7 MAKES IT CLEAR THAT SAMUEL’S PREDICTIONS WERE MEANT AS SIGNS, AND VERY LIKELY THE ORIGINAL HEBREW TEXT MENTIONED SIGNS IN V 1 AS WELL; SEE THE NIV MG.) THE FIRST SIGN (2) WAS TO ASSURE HIM THAT HE COULD PUT THE PAST BEHIND HIM; HIS FUTURE ROLE WAS NOT THAT OF A FARMER. THE SECOND SIGN (3–4) WAS TO ASSURE HIM THAT THE ISRAELITES WOULD RECOGNIZE HIM AS KING. THE LOAVES OF BREAD WERE PART OF THE OFFERINGS BEING TAKEN TO THE SHRINE AT BETHEL, SO THE MEN WOULD NOT GIVE THEM CASUALLY TO ANY PASSING STRANGER, BUT ONLY TO SOMEBODY OF VERY HIGH STATUS. THE THIRD SIGN (5–6) WOULD GIVE HIM ASSURANCE THAT HE HAD THE NECESSARY GIFTS AND ABILITIES FOR THE TASK OF LEADERSHIP. THE ‘JUDGES’ BEFORE HIM HAD ALL BEEN EQUIPPED FOR LEADERSHIP BY THE GIFT OF THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD, AND SAUL WOULD RECOGNIZE THAT HE WAS BEING EQUIPPED IN THE SAME WAY. ONCE THESE SIGNS HAD BEEN FULFILLED, SAUL COULD HAVE FULL CONFIDENCE TO ACT AS KING, BECAUSE GOD WOULD CLEARLY BE WITH HIM. GIBEAH WAS SAUL’S HOME TOWN (26), CALLED ‘GIBEAH OF SAUL’ IN 11:4. ITS FULL NAME WAS GIBEAH OF GOD, OR GIBEATH-ELOHIM. IT INDICATES THE WEAKNESS OF ISRAEL THAT EVEN IN SAUL’S OWN HOME TOWN THERE WAS A PHILISTINE OUTPOST AT THIS TIME. BANDS OF PROPHETS WERE A FEATURE OF TIMES OF POLITICAL AND SPIRITUAL DANGER (SEE ALSO 2 KI. 2). UNLIKE THE GREAT INDIVIDUAL PROPHETS, THEY APPEAR TO HAVE REMAINED IN COMMUNITIES, AND RESPONDED TO MUSIC WITH ECSTATIC BEHAVIOR. THERE IS EVIDENCE THAT SAUL WAS EASILY AFFECTED BY MUSIC (SEE 16:14–23), AND GOD HERE PLANNED TO MAKE USE OF THIS FACET OF SAUL’S PERSONALITY. V 8 IS SAMUEL’S FINAL INSTRUCTION TO SAUL IN THIS PASSAGE, AND IT REFERS FORWARD TO CH. 13 (SEE 13:4, 8). SAMUEL’S WORDS TO SAUL MUST HAVE BEEN MORE DETAILED THAN THIS BRIEF SENTENCE INTENDED FOR THE READER, WHICH GIVES THE MISLEADING IMPRESSION THAT SAUL WAS TO GO IMMEDIATELY TO GILGAL. THIS CANNOT BE THE CASE, IN VIEW OF ALL THE EVENTS THAT FOLLOWED BEFORE EITHER SAMUEL OR SAUL WENT TO GILGAL. FROM CH. 13 WE CAN DEDUCE THAT SAMUEL MUST HAVE INSTRUCTED SAUL, ONCE HE HAD TAKEN CHARGE AS KING, TO SUMMON AN ISRAELITE ASSEMBLY AT GILGAL TO FORM AN ARMY AGAINST THE PHILISTINES. BUT THAT LAY SOME WHILE IN THE FUTURE. 10:9–16 THE SECRET IS KEPT. THE STORY-TELLER BRIEFLY LETS US KNOW THAT ALL THREE SIGNS WERE FULFILLED, AND HE MOVES STRAIGHT TO THE THIRD OF THEM, WITH A NEW PURPOSE IN MIND. IT IS IMPORTANT THAT THE STORY SHOULD EMPHASIZE THAT NOBODY EXCEPT SAMUEL AND SAUL KNEW THAT SAUL HAD BEEN DESIGNATED KING. THIS EMPHASIS IS CONVEYED BY RECOUNTING TWO EPISODES. THE FIRST EPISODE, THE FULFILMENT OF THE THIRD SIGN, SHOWS THAT ALTHOUGH SAUL HIMSELF LEARNED FROM THE SIGN, OTHER PEOPLE MISUNDERSTOOD IT COMPLETELY. INDEED, THEY SNEERED AT SAUL’S EXPERIENCE—SO MUCH SO THAT IT BECAME A SAYING, REINFORCED BY A LATER EVENT (SEE 19:23–24). THEY APPARENTLY SNEERED AT THE BAND OF PROPHETS TOO, IF AND WHO IS THEIR FATHER? MEANS ‘THEY ARE NOBODIES!’. PLAINLY SAUL’S EXPERIENCE DID NOT IMPRESS PEOPLE IN HIS OWN HOME TOWN OF GIBEAH. ACTS 2:13 RECORDS A SIMILAR EPISODE, WHEN SPIRIT-FILLED MEN WERE INSULTED BY BYSTANDERS; AND 1 COR. 2:14 REMARKS IN GENERAL TERMS THAT ‘THE MAN WITHOUT THE SPIRIT DOES NOT ACCEPT THE THINGS THAT COME FROM THE SPIRIT OF GOD, FOR THEY ARE FOOLISHNESS TO HIM, AND HE CANNOT UNDERSTAND THEM.’ THE SECOND EPISODE IS A CONVERSATION SAUL HAD WITH HIS UNCLE, NOT PREVIOUSLY MENTIONED, WHOM HE MET AT THE LOCAL SHRINE. SAUL’S FATHER WOULD HAVE KNOWN WHY HE HAD BEEN ABSENT, BUT HIS UNCLE DID NOT. SAUL’S MENTION OF SAMUEL INVITED HIS UNCLE’S CURIOSITY, BUT SAUL WAS CAREFUL TO SAY NOTHING ABOUT THE KINGSHIP. SO NOT EVEN SAUL’S NEIGHBORS AND RELATIVES HAD ANY IDEA OF THE FACT THAT HE WAS THE MAN DESTINED TO BE KING. 10:17–27 THE CEREMONY AT MIZPAH. MIZPAH SEEMS TO HAVE ACTED AS THE CAPITAL CITY AT THIS TIME; THIS WAS THE SECOND NATIONAL ASSEMBLY TO BE HELD THERE (SEE 7:15–16). SO, IT WAS THE APPROPRIATE PLACE FOR THE CEREMONY WHICH WOULD MAKE SAUL KING. THIS PASSAGE IS THE DIRECT SEQUEL TO CH. 8, SO FAR AS THE ISRAELITE REPRESENTATIVES WERE CONCERNED, FOR THEY WOULD HAVE KNOWN NOTHING OF THE PERSONAL AND PRIVATE EVENTS RECORDED IN 9:1–10:16. SAMUEL IMMEDIATELY REPEATED HIS EARLIER REBUKES IN THE NAME OF STEPHEN YAHWEH. EVEN THOUGH SAUL HAD BEEN CHOSEN AND EQUIPPED BY STEPHEN YAHWEH TO SERVE AS KING, THE ISRAELITE DEMAND FOR A KING WAS STILL SEEN AS DEFIANCE OF GOD. SAMUEL REMINDED THEM AFRESH THAT GOD HAD NEVER FAILED TO RESCUE THEM FROM POWERFUL ENEMIES. WE MIGHT HAVE EXPECTED SAMUEL TO ANNOUNCE AT ONCE THAT STEPHEN YAHWEH HAD CHOSEN SAUL, AND THEN TO PROCEED TO A PUBLIC ANOINTING. BUT VS 20–24 RECORD A VERY DIFFERENT CEREMONY, ONE IN WHICH SAUL IS CHOSEN BY LOT, JUST AS IF NO PREVIOUS DECISION HAD BEEN MADE. WE KNOW ALL TOO LITTLE ABOUT THE MECHANISM THAT WAS USED; IN PARTICULAR, IT IS PUZZLING HOW SAUL CAN HAVE BEEN PICKED OUT IN HIS ABSENCE. THE POINT IS NEVERTHELESS MADE THAT EVEN NOW SAUL IS A MODEST AND HUMBLE MAN, AVOIDING RATHER THAN SEEKING KINGSHIP. HE WAS AN IMPRESSIVE FIGURE, HOWEVER, AND MOST OF THE ASSEMBLY GAVE HIM INSTANT RECOGNITION. AND SO, SAUL WAS MADE KING BY ACCLAMATION: HE WAS NOT IMPOSED ON THE ISRAELITES BY SAMUEL OR BY STEPHEN YAHWEH, BUT WAS ACCEPTED BY THE REPRESENTATIVES OF ISRAEL AS A WHOLE. (IT IS IMPLIED THAT THE TROUBLE-MAKERS WERE FEW IN NUMBER.) IT WAS IMPORTANT THAT THIS FIRST KING OF ISRAEL SHOULD HAVE A UNITED PEOPLE BEHIND HIM, SO IT WAS APPROPRIATE THAT THE PEOPLE SHOULD FREELY AND VOLUNTARILY ACCEPT HIM AS KING. THIS FACT EXPLAINS WHY THE SECRECY HAD BEEN NECESSARY BEFOREHAND. V 25 REFERS TO A DOCUMENT, DEPOSITED AT THE SHRINE, WHERE NO DOUBT THE PRIESTS LOOKED AFTER IT. IT HAS BEEN DESCRIBED AS THE ROYAL ‘CONSTITUTION’. WE ARE GIVEN NO DETAILS OF ITS CONTENT, BUT IT WAS PROBABLY AN EXPANDED VERSION OF DT. 17:18–20. THE REGULATIONS NO DOUBT INCLUDED BOTH ‘RIGHTS AND DUTIES’ (AS THE SINGLE HEBREW WORD IS RENDERED IN THE RSV). IN OTHER WORDS, IT WAS A DOCUMENT WHICH TOLD THE KING WHAT HE HAD A RIGHT TO EXPECT FROM HIS CITIZENS, AND WHAT HIS DUTIES WERE, UNDER GOD, TOWARDS THEM. THUS, THE KING AND THE PEOPLE WERE IN COVENANT RELATIONSHIP WITH EACH OTHER. SAUL WENT HOME LIKE EVERYONE ELSE (26); GIBEAH SEEMS TO HAVE BECOME HIS CAPITAL CITY IN DUE COURSE. AT THE START OF THE MONARCHY, THERE CAN HAVE BEEN NO CENTRAL TAXATION SYSTEM, AND SAUL WAS FOR THE TIME BEING DEPENDENT ON HIS FARM FOR HIS LIVELIHOOD (SEE 11:5). IT IS NOT REALLY SURPRISING THAT THERE WERE SOME CYNICAL ISRAELITES WHO DOUBTED SAUL’S ABILITY TO LEAD ISRAEL TO VICTORY OVER THE PHILISTINES (27). IF THE ISRAELITE ELDERS HAD BEEN GUILTY OF REJECTING GOD’S KINGSHIP, THESE MEN WERE DOUBLY GUILTY, FOR THEY REJECTED GOD’S CHOICE OF A HUMAN KING TOO. THEY ARE DESCRIBED AS TROUBLE-MAKERS, OR ‘WORTHLESS PEOPLE’ (GNB). 11:1–11 SAUL’S FIRST VICTORY. THE BIBLICAL WRITER ONCE AGAIN SURPRISES THE READER, BY SWITCHING ATTENTION AWAY FROM ISRAEL’S CENTRAL REGION AND WESTERN FRONTIER (WHERE THE PHILISTINES WERE LOCATED) TO THE SOUTH-EASTERN FRONTIER. THE AMMONITE KING NAHASH RULED A SMALL STATE IN TRANS-JORDAN, ON THE BORDERS OF THE ISRAELITE TERRITORY KNOWN AS GILEAD. AT SOME EARLIER DATE HIS ARMY HAD INVADED ISRAELITE TERRITORY, AND THEY NOW BESIEGED THE CITY OF JABESH GILEAD. (SEE MAP OF CANAAN IN JOSHUA.) THIS SITUATION ILLUSTRATES THE EXTENT OF ISRAELITE WEAKNESS AT THE START OF SAUL’S REIGN; AGAIN, WE MUST BEAR IN MIND THAT THE CEREMONY MAKING SAUL KING GAVE ISRAEL POTENTIAL FOR UNITY AND STRENGTH, BUT DID NOT CREATE THESE THINGS AUTOMATICALLY OR IMMEDIATELY. WE CANNOT BE SURE HOW FAR SAUL’S REAL AUTHORITY EXTENDED EVEN AT THE HEIGHT OF HIS POWERS AND REPUTATION; AT THE START OF HIS REIGN HIS DEGREE OF CONTROL WAS PROBABLY VERY LIMITED. EACH ISRAELITE TRIBE HAD BEEN USED TO ACTING INDEPENDENTLY, AND THIS, NARRATIVE REVEALS THAT EVEN AN INDIVIDUAL CITY LIKE JABESH GILEAD COULD MAKE ITS OWN TREATIES. IT IS SIGNIFICANT TOO THAT THE MESSENGERS FROM JABESH ACTED AS IF SAUL WERE NOT KING, AND SENT WORD THROUGHOUT ISRAEL, SEEKING ANY HELP THEY COULD FIND; BUT IT WAS SAUL WHO IN FACT RESPONDED TO THEIR APPEAL. THE SITUATION ALSO SHOWS THE EXTENT OF AMMONITE HATRED FOR ISRAELITES, THOUGH THE BRUTALITY ENVISAGED IN V 2 CONTRASTS ODDLY, BY MODERN STANDARDS, WITH THE GENTLEMANLY DELAY DESCRIBED IN V 3. AMMON WAS TOO SMALL TO HAVE ATTACKED A UNITED ISRAEL, BUT A DISUNITED ISRAEL, DISTRACTED BY PHILISTINE AGGRESSION ELSEWHERE, WAS A NATURAL PREY. VS 6–11 REVEAL HOW SAUL RESPONDED. LIKE THE ‘JUDGES’ BEFORE HIM, HE WAS GIVEN POWER BY THE SPIRIT OF GOD, AND ACTED WITH VIGOR AND AUTHORITY, DEMANDING A FULL MUSTER OF ISRAELITE MEN FROM TOWNS AND VILLAGES, FARMS AND FIELDS. V 7 IMPLIES THAT IT WAS FEAR OF STEPHEN YAHWEH RATHER THAN RESPECT FOR SAUL OR SAMUEL WHICH LED SO MANY MEN TO COME TO FIGHT THE NECESSARY BATTLE. THE NUMBERS OF SOLDIERS GIVEN IN V 8 SEEM MUCH TOO BIG, HERE AS ELSEWHERE IN THE OT HISTORICAL BOOKS. IT IS OFTEN SUGGESTED THAT THE HEBREW WORD TRANSLATED THOUSAND IN THE NIV (AND MOST ENGLISH VERSIONS) SHOULD INSTEAD BE TRANSLATED ‘[MILITARY] UNIT’, A FAIRLY SMALL GROUP OF SOLDIERS. IT IS INTERESTING TO FIND JUDAH LISTED SEPARATELY FROM THE REST OF ISRAEL. THIS DISTINCTION MAY REFLECT THE LATER DIVISION OF THE KINGDOM AFTER SOLOMON’S DEATH. THIS PASSAGE (AND MANY OTHERS IN THE OT) REVEALS A GOD WHO HELPED HIS PEOPLE IN WARFARE, A CONCEPT WHICH CREATES A MORAL PROBLEM FOR MANY CHRISTIANS. THE HISTORICAL REALITIES OF THE SITUATION WERE SUCH THAT THERE COULD BE NO PEACEFUL SOLUTION. THIS ISRAELITE WAR, MOREOVER, WAS NOT DUE TO TERRITORIAL GREED, NOR A DESIRE TO DOMINATE OTHER PEOPLES, BUT TO PREVENT INJUSTICE AND OPPRESSION. THE OT CONSISTENTLY SHOWS GOD’S OPPOSITION TO INJUSTICE. SAUL’S FIRST DECISIVE ACTION, THEN, RESULTED IN AN IMPORTANT VICTORY. THE CITIZENS OF JABESH NEVER FORGOT THEIR DEBT TO HIM (SEE 31:11–13). 11:12–15 THE CEREMONY AT GILGAL. THE SEQUEL TO SAUL’S VICTORY IN TRANSJORDAN WAS A CEREMONY AT GILGAL, WHEN ALL THE PEOPLE ACKNOWLEDGED SAUL AS KING. NO DOUBT THE PARTICIPANTS MOSTLY CONSISTED OF HIS VICTORIOUS ARMY. GILGAL WAS THE NEAREST TO THE RIVER JORDAN OF THE CITIES WHERE SAMUEL EXERCISED AUTHORITY (7:16). SOME SCHOLARS FIND IN THIS CHAPTER THE ONLY GENUINE HISTORICAL ACCOUNT OF HOW SAUL BECAME KING; IT IS EASY ENOUGH TO DISMISS V 14 (AND ALL MENTION OF SAMUEL IN THE CHAPTER) AS AN EDITORIAL ADDITION, AND THEN TO TRANSLATE THE PHRASE CONFIRMED SAUL AS KING AS ‘MADE SAUL KING’ (THE LITERAL SENSE). HOWEVER, THE STORY READS PLAUSIBLY ENOUGH AS IT STANDS, AND THE REASON FOR A NEW CEREMONY IS PLAIN TO SEE, IN VIEW OF THE EARLIER MEASURE OF HOSTILITY TO SAUL (10:27). NOW FOR THE FIRST TIME THE WHOLE NATION GAVE HIM ALLEGIANCE. THE REFERENCE TO STEPHEN YAHWEH AND TO FELLOWSHIP OFFERINGS IN V 15 MAY SUGGEST A COVENANT CEREMONY, ON ANALOGY WITH EX. 24. THE EXCITEMENT OF THE VICTORY AND OF THE CEREMONY LED TO A GREAT CELEBRATION: LIT. ‘SAUL AND ALL THE ISRAELITES REJOICED VERY GREATLY’. THE ABSENCE OF SAMUEL’S NAME IS SIGNIFICANT: IF EVERYONE ELSE HAD BY NOW FORGOTTEN THE EVENTS OF CH. 8, HE HAD NOT. NO BLAME IS ATTACHED TO SAUL, BUT THE ELDERS OF ISRAEL HAD BEEN GUILTY OF REJECTING BOTH STEPHEN YAHWEH AND SAMUEL. THE NEXT CHAPTER GOES ON TO EXPRESS SAMUEL’S FURTHER REBUKES AND WARNINGS. 12:1–15 SAMUEL’S SPEECH. IT IS NOT CERTAIN WHETHER THIS SPEECH BELONGS TO THE SAME CONTEXT AS THE END OF CH. 11, NAMELY THE ASSEMBLY AT GILGAL, OR TO A LATER NATIONAL ASSEMBLY TOWARDS THE END OF SAMUEL’S LIFE. IN SOME WAYS THE SPEECH READS LIKE A FAREWELL, BUT THE BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO IT IN V 1 GIVES US NO CLUE. IN ANY CASE, THE SPEECH COMES APPROPRIATELY AT THIS POINT. THE BIBLICAL WRITER PLACES IT HERE TO PROVIDE THE READER WITH AN OPPORTUNITY FOR REFLECTION BEFORE BEGINNING THE STORY OF THE MONARCHY. CH. 11 HAD ENDED ON A NOTE OF JOY AND EXCITEMENT, AS THE ISRAELITES CELEBRATED ONE VICTORY AND LOOKED FORWARD CONFIDENTLY TO FUTURE VICTORIES OVER THE PHILISTINES. THEY NOW HAD A KING, AND ONE WHO HAD ALREADY PROVED HIMSELF A CAPABLE SOLDIER. SO, THEY HAD A STRONG SENSE OF WELL-BEING. HOWEVER, SAMUEL’S SPEECH ANALYZED THE PRESENT SITUATION AND EXPLORED THE PAST, IN ORDER TO PROVIDE GUIDANCE FOR THE FUTURE. THE SPEECH MAKES IT CLEAR THAT THE FUTURE DID NOT DEPEND ON THE EXISTENCE OF A KING, NOR ON HIS ABILITIES, BUT ON THE WILL OF GOD. GOD’S WILL IN TURN WOULD DEPEND ON THEIR LOYALTY TO HIM. FIRST, SAMUEL ASKED FOR AN ACCOUNTING OF HIS OWN ADMINISTRATION, NOW THAT HE HAD RELINQUISHED POLITICAL LEADERSHIP (1–5). HIS HEARERS COULD ONLY AGREE THAT HE HAD GIVEN THEM GOOD AND JUST LEADERSHIP IN EVERY RESPECT OVER MANY YEARS. (NOTHING IS SAID OF THEIR EARLIER COMPLAINT ABOUT HIS TWO SONS IN 8:1–5; BUT THE REFERENCE TO HIS SONS HERE IN V 2 MAY IMPLY THAT HE HAD DISMISSED THEM FROM THEIR POSTS IN BEERSHEBA AND BROUGHT THEM BACK HOME.) THERE IS EMPHASIS ON THE FACT THAT SAMUEL HAD TAKEN NOTHING UNJUSTLY FROM ANYONE. THIS DESCRIPTION OF SAMUEL MAKES A STRONG CONTRAST WITH HIS OWN DESCRIPTION OF KINGS IN 8:11–18, WHICH SHOWS THEM TAKING ONE THING AFTER ANOTHER FROM THEIR SUBJECTS. THERE IS A BROADER PERSPECTIVE INTENDED BY THE BIBLICAL AUTHOR. THE SPEECH IS CONTRASTING THE JUDGES OF THE PAST WITH THE KINGS OF THE PRESENT AND FUTURE. THE LEADERS OF THE PAST HAD BEEN INDIVIDUALS CHOSEN BY GOD, AND SO HAD GIVEN GOOD GOVERNMENT; BUT NOW THE ISRAELITES WERE BEGINNING TO CHOOSE THEIR OWN LEADERS, AND THAT WAS A VERY DANGEROUS STEP TO TAKE. IT WAS TRUE THAT GOD HAD CHOSEN SAUL, AND WOULD LATER CHOOSE DAVID TOO, BUT IN THE NORTHERN KINGDOM AFTER SOLOMON’S DEATH, MANY KINGS WOULD BE CHOSEN BY ONE SECTION OR ANOTHER OF THE POPULACE. VS 8–11 REMIND THE ISRAELITES OF SEVERAL IMPORTANT FACTS FROM THEIR PAST HISTORY. FIRST, GOD HAD CONSTANTLY LOOKED AFTER THEIR NEEDS, RESCUING THEM FROM MANY ENEMIES. SECONDLY, GOD HAD CHOSEN AND PROVIDED THE HUMAN LEADERS WHO HAD LED THEM TO VICTORY. THIRDLY, THEIR DEFEATS HAD BEEN DUE TO THEIR OWN SINFULNESS, SINCE THEY HAD REPEATEDLY TURNED FROM STEPHEN YAHWEH TO IDOLATRY. V 11 LISTS SOME OF THE ABLE LEADERS GOD HAD PROVIDED FOR THEM. IT IS NOT IMPOSSIBLE THAT SAMUEL INCLUDED HIS OWN NAME, AS THE LAST OF THE JUDGES, OR PERHAPS THE BIBLICAL AUTHOR ADDED IT; BUT POSSIBLY WE SHOULD READ SAMSON’S NAME INSTEAD (SEE THE NIV MG.) V 12 RENEWS THE ACCUSATION OF 8:7–8 THAT BY DEMANDING A HUMAN KING THE ISRAELITES WERE REJECTING STEPHEN YAHWEH’S KINGSHIP OVER THEM. THIS VERSE, WHICH IMPLIES THAT NAHASH MUST HAVE BEEN HARASSING ISRAELITES IN TRANSJORDAN LONG BEFORE HIS ATTACK ON JABESH GILEAD, SHOWS HOW READILY ISRAEL MADE THE WRONG RESPONSE TO THE SITUATIONS THAT AROSE. WHEN NAHASH HARASSED THEM, THEY OUGHT TO HAVE REALIZED THAT ONLY THEIR OWN DISLOYALTY TO GOD COULD HAVE CAUSED SUCH A SITUATION; BUT INSTEAD OF REPENTANCE (AS IN THE PAST) THEY TOOK MATTERS INTO THEIR OWN HANDS, REJECTED STEPHEN YAHWEH’S RULE, AND DEMANDED A KING. HOWEVER, AT LEAST THEY HAD ASKED STEPHEN YAHWEH TO CHOOSE THE ACTUAL MAN TO BE KING, AND PERHAPS BECAUSE OF THAT, STEPHEN YAHWEH WAS NOW PREPARED TO GIVE THEM ANOTHER CHANCE BEFORE ANY PUNISHMENT. IT ALL DEPENDED ON THEIR, AND THEIR KING’S, OBEDIENCE TO STEPHEN YAHWEH. 12:16–25 ENCOURAGEMENT AND WARNING. SAMUEL’S LISTENERS MIGHT HAVE QUESTIONED WHETHER HIS INTERPRETATION OF ISRAEL’S HISTORY WAS CORRECT. ANY SUCH DOUBTS WERE REMOVED BY A MIRACULOUS SIGN FROM HEAVEN. IN EARLY SUMMER, THE TIME OF THE WHEAT HARVEST, NEITHER THUNDER NOR RAIN WOULD NORMALLY OCCUR IN THE LAND OF ISRAEL, SO SAMUEL’S PREDICTION AND ITS PROMPT FULFILMENT PROVED THAT GOD WAS SPEAKING THROUGH HIM. THIS WHOLE PASSAGE SHOWS SAMUEL TO BE A PROPHET IN EVERY SENSE OF THE WORD. HE ANALYZED THE PAST AND PRESENT, HE PREDICTED THE FUTURE, HE REMINDED ISRAEL OF GOD’S GOODNESS, HE RECALLED THEM FROM IDOLATRY, AND HE PROMISED TO INTERCEDE FOR THEM IN PRAYER AND TEACH THEM WHAT WAS GOOD AND RIGHT. V 22 REMINDS HEARERS AND READERS THAT STEPHEN YAHWEH HAD ENTERED INTO A COVENANT WITH HIS PEOPLE: GOD HAD MADE ISRAEL HIS OWN PEOPLE, AND WAS BOUND BY HIS OWN OATH NOT TO REJECT THEM. SO, THE LESSON—BOTH FOR SAMUEL’S LISTENERS AND FOR LATER GENERATIONS—WAS THEIR DUTY TO KEEP THEIR SIDE OF THE COVENANT. IF THEY FAILED TO DO SO, PARTICULARLY BY TURNING FROM TRUE WORSHIP TO IDOLS, THEN GOD WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY PUNISH THEM. THE LAST VERSE INDICATES IN A FEW WORDS HOW GOD WOULD PUNISH THEM: BY EXILE AND BY THE FALL OF THE MONARCHY, BOTH OF WHICH OCCURRED IN THE SIXTH CENTURY BC. THUS, AS SOON AS THE MONARCHY BEGAN, ITS END WAS ENVISAGED. THERE IS, HOWEVER, A NOTE OF HOPE HERE FOR THOSE WHO LIVED IN THE EXILIC PERIOD. SAMUEL’S SPEECH SHOWED THAT THE EVENTUAL FALL OF THE MONARCHY WOULD BE PART OF GOD’S ACTIONS AND PLANNING, AND THAT EVEN THEN THE LORD WILL NOT REJECT HIS PEOPLE. SO EVEN IN THE DISTRESS OF THE EXILE, STEPHEN YAHWEH’S PEOPLE MUST NOT TURN TO OTHER GODS. IN CASE ANY READERS WERE TEMPTED TO DO SO, V 21 DRAWS ATTENTION TO THE USELESS NATURE OF IDOLS.**

**13:1–15:35 WARFARE AND CONFLICT**

**MUCH OF SAUL’S REIGN WOULD BE A WARTIME SITUATION. THE PHILISTINES WERE THE CHIEF ENEMY, AND CHS. 13 AND 14 TELL OF SOME OF SAUL’S EARLY SUCCESSES AGAINST THEM. CH. 15 GIVES DETAILS OF A VICTORY OVER A SMALLER ENEMY, THE AMALEKITES. OTHER VICTORIOUS CAMPAIGNS ARE MENTIONED IN 14:47 BUT NOT DESCRIBED. SO, FROM ONE POINT OF VIEW THESE CHAPTERS DESCRIBE A VERY SUCCESSFUL START TO SAUL’S REIGN, IN WHICH HE CONSISTENTLY ‘DELIVERED’ THE ISRAELITES FROM THEIR ENEMIES (14:47). YET THESE SAME CHAPTERS END ON A GRIM AND UNHAPPY NOTE: THE LORD WAS GRIEVED THAT HE HAD MADE SAUL KING OVER ISRAEL (15:35). THE EVENTS RECORDED IN CHS. 13–15 WERE OCCASIONS NOT ONLY OF WARFARE AGAINST FOREIGN ENEMIES BUT ALSO OF PERSONAL CONFLICTS BETWEEN SAUL AND OTHER ISRAELITES. IN CH. 14, SAUL MIGHT HAVE KILLED HIS OWN SON, AND HE ENDED UP QUARRELLING WITH HIS OWN TROOPS. MORE SERIOUSLY, IN BOTH CHS. 13 AND 15 WE FIND SAUL CAUSING GREAT OFFENCE TO SAMUEL, WHO SPOKE IN THE NAME OF GOD. DESPITE ALL THE GOOD SIGNS UP TO THIS POINT, SAUL QUICKLY PROVED THAT THOUGH HE COULD WIN BATTLES, HE WAS NOT THE RIGHT MAN TO LEAD ISRAEL. SAUL’S REIGN WAS NOT A TOTAL DISASTER, EVEN THOUGH IT ENDED IN FAILURE AND DEFEAT (RECORDED IN CH. 31). HE GAVE ISRAEL FRESH HOPE AS HE BEGAN TO COORDINATE ITS TRIBES (PREVIOUSLY INDEPENDENT), GRADUALLY BUILT UP AN ARMY, DEFEATED THE PHILISTINES MORE THAN ONCE, AND DROVE THEM OUT OF ISRAELITE LANDS. DESPITE HIS FINAL FAILURE IN BATTLE, HE PAVED THE WAY FOR HIS SUCCESSOR IN SOME IMPORTANT RESPECTS. DAVID’S OWN TESTIMONY TO SAUL SHOULD NOT BE OVERLOOKED (2 SA. 1:19–27). NEVERTHELESS, CHS. 13–15 SHOW CLEARLY THAT FROM GOD’S POINT OF VIEW SAUL WAS A FAILURE, IN SPITE OF THE FACT THAT GOD HIMSELF HAD CHOSEN HIM TO BE KING. THE BASIC REASON GIVEN IS THAT HE REFUSED TO SUBMIT TO GOD’S INSTRUCTIONS MEDIATED THROUGH SAMUEL THE PROPHET. THE MESSAGE IS CLEAR: GOD WOULD NOT BLESS A KING OF ISRAEL WHO SET HIMSELF ABOVE THE PROPHETS WHOM GOD ESTABLISHED. THE EVENTS DESCRIBED IN CHS. 13–15 CAN BE SEEN AS A POWER STRUGGLE, GOD SIDING WITH THE PROPHET AGAINST THE KING. IT IS NOT CLEAR HOW LONG SAUL’S REIGN LASTED. THE UNCERTAINTY IS DUE TO THE FACT THAT AS IT STANDS, THE HEBREW TEXT OF 13:1 READS AS FOLLOWS: ‘SAUL WAS YEAR(S) OLD WHEN HE BECAME KING, AND FOR TWO YEARS HE REIGNED OVER ISRAEL’. PLAINLY A NUMBER HAS ACCIDENTALLY DROPPED OUT BEFORE THE PHRASE ‘YEAR(S) OLD’, AND THE NIV HAS VERY REASONABLY INSERTED THE FIGURE THIRTY, TAKEN FROM SOME GREEK MANUSCRIPTS (SEE THE NIV MG.) IT IS THEREFORE EQUALLY REASONABLE TO SUPPOSE THAT ANOTHER FIGURE HAS ACCIDENTALLY BEEN OMITTED, BEFORE THE TWO YEARS ASSIGNED TO HIS REIGN, ALTHOUGH A FEW SCHOLARS BELIEVE THAT A MERE TWO YEARS IS THE CORRECT FIGURE. THE FIGURE FORTY-TWO IS BASED ON ACTS 13:21 AND ON THE JEWISH HISTORIAN JOSEPHUS; BOTH GIVE THE ROUND FIGURE ‘FORTY’. HOWEVER, THE NUMBER FORTY WAS OFTEN USED IN OT TIMES TO SIGNIFY A GENERATION, SO A SMALLER FIGURE, SUCH AS THE ‘TWENTY-TWO’ OF THE NEB, IS QUITE POSSIBLE. A MERE TWO YEARS IS VERY UNLIKELY. 13:1–7 PREPARATIONS FOR BATTLE. V 2 DESCRIBES SAUL’S GENERAL PREPARATIONS FOR THE INEVITABLE WARFARE WITH THE PHILISTINES. HE CHOSE MEN TO FORM A PERMANENT ARMY IN READINESS FOR BATTLE, AND STATIONED THEM IN TWO DIFFERENT PLACES. HE HIMSELF CAPTAINED THE LARGER BODY OF TROOPS, AND HIS SON JONATHAN (HERE MENTIONED FOR THE FIRST TIME) CAPTAINED THE OTHER. V 3 THEN DESCRIBES THE CAUSE OF THE FIRST MAJOR BATTLE. ANGRY AT THE LOSS OF THEIR OUTPOST, THE PHILISTINES BROUGHT A LARGE AND WELL-EQUIPPED ARMY INTO ISRAELITE TERRITORY, DETERMINED TO CRUSH THE SMALLER ISRAELITE ARMY. THE ISRAELITE TROOPS HAD VERY FEW PROPER WEAPONS (SEE V 22), AND IT IS NOT SURPRISING THAT MANY OF THEM DESERTED. SAUL’S 2000 MEN DWINDLED TO 600 (15). BUT SAUL HAD ONE HIDDEN ADVANTAGE: HE HAD STILL ONE COMMAND FROM GOD TO CARRY OUT, AND HIS OBEDIENCE TO THIS COMMAND COULD TRANSFORM HIS HOPELESS SITUATION. THIS COMMAND WAS TO GO TO GILGAL AND WAIT THERE FOR SAMUEL (10:8). SO, SAUL WENT TO GILGAL (4) AND REMAINED THERE IN READINESS (7). 13:8–14 SAMUEL REBUKES SAUL. AT THE LAST-MINUTE SAUL DISOBEYED SAMUEL’S INSTRUCTIONS. A MODERN READER’S SYMPATHY TENDS TO LIE WITH SAUL, SINCE THE MILITARY SITUATION WAS SO CRITICAL (HIS MEN WERE DESERTING) AND SAMUEL ARRIVED LATE. IT IS CLEAR, HOWEVER, THAT SAMUEL WAS ONLY SLIGHTLY LATE, BUT SAUL HAD NOT WAITED A MOMENT LONGER THAN THE TIME STIPULATED. SAUL IS NOT REBUKED FOR TAKING PRIESTLY FUNCTIONS UPON HIMSELF, BUT RATHER FOR TAKING THE PROPHET’S PLACE. SAMUEL HAD PROMISED (10:8) BOTH TO OFFER THE SACRIFICES WHICH WERE APPROPRIATE BEFORE A BATTLE AND ALSO TO GIVE SAUL GUIDANCE AND INSTRUCTIONS ABOUT THE BATTLE. BUT SAUL BELIEVED HE COULD DISPENSE WITH BOTH. HIS OFFENCE MAY SEEM TRIVIAL TO US, BUT A BASIC QUESTION WAS INVOLVED: WOULD THE NEW KING BE SUBJECT TO THE PROPHET OR WOULD HE OVERRULE HIM? THE PROPHET SPOKE AND ACTED ON GOD’S BEHALF, SO SAUL HAD PROVED BY ONE FOOLISH DEED THAT HE DID NOT CONSIDER HIMSELF BOUND BY GOD’S INSTRUCTIONS. IT WAS AN ACTION WHICH WOULD COST HIS FAMILY THE KINGSHIP (14). GOD WOULD TRANSFER IT TO ANOTHER MAN, A MAN AFTER HIS OWN HEART, I.E. ‘THE KIND OF MAN HE WANTS’ (GNB). DAVID IS MEANT, WHO COMES INTO THE STORY IN CH. 16. DAVID WAS NO MORE SINLESS THAN SAUL, BUT HE WAS ALWAYS OBEDIENT TO PROPHETIC INSTRUCTIONS. 13:15–23 TROOP MOVEMENTS. THIS PARAGRAPH BRIEFLY SETS OUT THE FINAL TROOP MOVEMENTS WHICH PRECEDED THE BATTLE. BY MOVING HIS MEN TO GIBEAH, SAUL WAS UNITING HIS FORCE WITH JONATHAN’S (SEE V 2), AND SO EVEN IF THE ISRAELITE SOLDIERS WERE FEW IN NUMBER AND BADLY EQUIPPED, THEY WERE ONE SINGLE ARMY. THE PHILISTINES ON THE OTHER HAND DIVIDED THEIR TROOPS TO A LIMITED EXTENT (17), AND THIS APPARENTLY CONTRIBUTED TO THEIR DEFEAT. 19–21 TILL NOW, THE PHILISTINES HAD BEEN ABLE TO DENY THE ISRAELITES SWORDS AND SPEARS, AND HAD CHARGED A VERY HIGH PRICE FOR SHARPENING ANY TOOLS THAT MIGHT BE USED AS WEAPONS. PRESUMABLY THE ISRAELITES HAD AT LEAST, BOWS AND ARROWS. 14:1–23 JONATHAN’S EXPLOIT. NOBODY WOULD HAVE EXPECTED AN ISRAELITE VICTORY, IN VIEW OF ALL THE DIFFICULTIES DESCRIBED IN THE PREVIOUS CHAPTER, BUT TWO THINGS CHANGED THE SITUATION DRAMATICALLY. ONE WAS JONATHAN’S COURAGE AND DARING, AND THE OTHER WAS THE WILL OF GOD TO GIVE ISRAEL VICTORY. AS JONATHAN HIMSELF REMARKED, NOTHING CAN HINDER THE LORD FROM SAVING. THE PHILISTINES WERE LITERALLY UNCIRCUMCISED, SINCE THEY DID NOT PRACTICE THIS CUSTOM; BUT THE WORD IS USED HERE TO MEAN THAT THEY WERE OUTSIDE THE COVENANT BETWEEN STEPHEN YAHWEH AND ISRAEL. GN. 17 SHOWS THAT CIRCUMCISION WAS A COVENANTAL SIGN. GOD WOULD FIGHT ON BEHALF OF HIS COVENANT PEOPLE. JONATHAN’S PLAN SUCCEEDED BY SHEER SURPRISE, AND BY THE USE OF A VERY NARROW VANTAGE-POINT AMONG THE HILLS AND VALLEYS. THUS, TWO MEN WERE ABLE TO KILL TWENTY. NO DOUBT JONATHAN OUGHT TO HAVE TOLD HIS FATHER (1), BUT THE IMPRESSION WE GET FROM V 2 IS THAT SAUL WAS AS MUCH IN IGNORANCE OF GOD’S PLANS AS HE WAS OF JONATHAN’S. HE WAS A MAN OUT OF TOUCH WITH EVENTS, DESPITE THE FACT THAT HE WAS ACCOMPANIED BY THE PRIEST AHIJAH FROM SHILOH. AHIJAH WAS WEARING AN EPHOD, THE PRIESTLY ROBE WHICH OFFERED A MEANS FOR FINDING OUT THE WILL OF GOD (SEE EX. 28:6–30). YET IT SEEMS THAT SAUL MADE NO EFFORT TO FIND OUT GOD’S WILL. VS 15–19 DESCRIBE PANIC AMONG THE PHILISTINES, FOLLOWING JONATHAN’S SURPRISE ATTACK, AND PUZZLEMENT AMONG SAUL’S TROOPS. AT LAST SAUL MADE A MOVE TO CONSULT GOD (18), BUT SINCE THE SITUATION WAS DEVELOPING RAPIDLY, HE CHANGED HIS MIND. THE BIBLICAL WRITER THUS EMPHASIZES THAT IT WAS GOD WHO WON THE VICTORY (15, 23); SAUL JOINED IN THE PURSUIT OF THE FLEEING PHILISTINES, BUT KNEW LITTLE ABOUT WHAT WAS HAPPENING. 18 THE MENTION OF THE ARK IS SURPRISING HERE, THOUGH IT IS POSSIBLE THAT IT HAD BEEN BROUGHT FROM KIRIATH JEARIM (7:1–2), JUST AS IT HAD BEEN TAKEN FROM SHILOH TO AN EARLIER BATTLEFIELD (4:4–5). IT SEEMS MORE LIKELY THAT THE GREEK TEXT SHOULD BE FOLLOWED HERE, WHICH REFERS TO THE ‘EPHOD’ INSTEAD OF THE ARK (SEE THE NIV MG.). WE KNOW FROM V 3 THAT AHIJAH WAS WEARING THE EPHOD, BY WHICH GOD’S WILL COULD BE DISCOVERED. IN HEBREW, THE WORDS ‘ARK’ AND ‘EPHOD’ ARE QUITE SIMILAR AND COULD EASILY BE CONFUSED. 14:24–45 JONATHAN IN DANGER. THE STORY AGAIN TAKES AN UNEXPECTED TURN. THE BATTLE SITUATION CONTINUES UNTIL V 46, BUT IT IS FROM NOW ON MERELY A BACKGROUND TO THE INTERPLAY BETWEEN SAUL, JONATHAN AND THEIR TROOPS. THE STORYTELLER LEAVES THESE THREE PARTIES TO SPEAK AND ACT FOR THEMSELVES, AND OFFERS NEITHER MORAL NOR RELIGIOUS JUDGMENTS ON ANY OF THEM. THIS LEAVES THE READER WITH A NUMBER OF UNANSWERED QUESTIONS. WAS SAUL RIGHT TO MAKE THE OATH HE DID (24–28)? WAS JONATHAN RIGHT TO CRITICIZE THE OATH PUBLICLY (29–30)? WERE THE TROOPS JUSTIFIED IN IGNORING THE OATH (31)? WAS SAUL RIGHT TO SEEK TO ENFORCE THE OATH AND EXECUTE AN INNOCENT MAN, HIS OWN SON (44)? WERE THE TROOPS RIGHT TO DEFEND JONATHAN, AND SO DISOBEY THEIR KING’S AUTHORITY (45)? PERHAPS THESE ARE QUESTIONS WE ARE NOT MEANT TO ASK. THE WRITER’S PURPOSE IS NOT TO MORALIZE BUT TO DRAW A CLEARER PICTURE OF SAUL FOR US. HE APPEARS AS AN IMPULSIVE MAN, MAKING A FOOLISH OATH ON THE SPUR OF THE MOMENT, WITHOUT THINKING ABOUT THE CONSEQUENCES. NEVERTHELESS, HAVING MADE IT HE EARNESTLY TRIED TO CARRY IT OUT TO THE LETTER. HE HAD DISOBEYED STEPHEN YAHWEH AT GILGAL (CH. 13), AND HE HAD NO WISH TO RECEIVE A SECOND REBUKE FROM SAMUEL. SO, HE CAREFULLY OFFERED SACRIFICES (33–35), AND THEN TOOK THE PROPER STEPS TO FIND OUT GOD’S GUIDANCE: IN OTHER WORDS, HE CONSULTED THE SACRED EPHOD IN THE PRIEST AHIJAH’S POSSESSION (36, 37, 41, 42; AND SEE V 3). FINDING THAT JONATHAN WAS THE MAN WHO HAD INNOCENTLY BROKEN THE OATH, SAUL WAS FULLY PREPARED TO CARRY OUT THE EXECUTION OF HIS OWN SON, RATHER THAN BREAK HIS VOW TO GOD. THE IMPRESSION WE GAIN IS OF A MAN WHO WAS OUT OF TOUCH WITH GOD’S WISHES. V 37 MENTIONS THAT GOD DID NOT ANSWER HIM, AND THE TROOPS’ FINAL COMMENT (45) GAVE THE CREDIT FOR THE VICTORY TO JONATHAN AND TO GOD, NOT TO SAUL. WE CAN READILY SYMPATHIZE WITH AN IMPULSIVE AND WELL-MEANING BUT BLUNDERING MAN, BUT IS SUCH A MAN SUITABLE TO BE KING? OBVIOUSLY NOT. THUS, THE WHOLE EPISODE DEMONSTRATED TWO THINGS: THAT GOD COULD GIVE VICTORY TO ISRAEL AGAINST MORE POWERFUL ENEMIES, AND THAT SAUL’S LEADERSHIP ACHIEVED LITTLE. ALTHOUGH HE REMAINED KING UNTIL THE END OF HIS LIFE, GOD’S PLANS WERE ALREADY BYPASSING HIM. NOTE. 41–42 WITHOUT KNOWING EXACTLY HOW THE SACRED MECHANISM WORKED, WE CAN SEE THAT IT WAS ABLE TO ANSWER DIRECT QUESTIONS AND PICK OUT ONE MAN FROM ANOTHER. THE TWO PARTS OF THE MECHANISM WERE CALLED ‘URIM’ AND ‘THUMMIM’, WHICH ARE NAMED IN THE GREEK TEXT OF THESE VERSES (SEE THE NIV MG.) SEE ALSO EX. 28:29–30. 14:46–52 OUTLINE OF SAUL’S REIGN. THE CHAPTER ENDS WITH SOME BRIEF DETAILS ABOUT SAUL’S REIGN, FOR OUR FULLER INFORMATION. V 47 INDICATES THE RANGE OF ENEMIES THREATENING ISRAEL AT THIS PERIOD, ON THE EAST, NORTH AND WEST. THE AMALEKITES (48), TO THE SOUTH, WERE RAIDERS WHO HARASSED THE SETTLED POPULATION OF THE AREA. THE NEXT CHAPTER DESCRIBES SAUL’S CAMPAIGN AGAINST THEM. THE PHILISTINES HAD NOW BEEN DRIVEN OUT OF ISRAELITE TERRITORY (46) BUT NEVER STOPPED THEIR INVASIONS AND ATTACKS (52). MOST OF SAUL’S FAMILY NAMED IN VS 49–51 WILL COME INTO THE STORY AT LATER POINTS. V 52, WHICH RELATES TO SAUL’S STANDING ARMY, LAYS A FOUNDATION FOR THE CAREER OF DAVID (18:2, 5). 15:1–35 THE FINAL REJECTION OF SAUL. THE WRITER’S PURPOSE IN THIS DETAILED NARRATIVE IS TO CONFIRM SAUL’S UNSUITABILITY TO RULE ISRAEL, AND TO CONFIRM STEPHEN YAHWEH’S REJECTION OF HIM. THROUGH SAMUEL, SAUL WAS GIVEN EXPLICIT ORDERS. HE CARRIED THEM OUT IN PART, BUT SAW NO HARM IN DISREGARDING THE REST OF THEM. V 24 SHOWS THAT HE KNEW PERFECTLY WELL WHAT HE WAS DOING (AND TELLS US THE REASON WHY HE DID SO), BUT HE TOLD LIES ABOUT IT TWICE OVER (13, 20), PRETENDING THAT HE THOUGHT HE HAD OBEYED ORDERS. FINALLY, HE WAS FORCED TO ADMIT THE TRUTH AND CONFESS THAT HE HAD SINNED, AND VIOLATED THE LORD’S COMMAND. THE RESULT WAS GOD’S FINAL REJECTION OF HIM, AND ALSO THE FINAL BREACH BETWEEN HIM AND SAMUEL. AS WITH CH. 13, THE MODERN READER’S SYMPATHY TENDS TO LIE WITH SAUL, NOT BECAUSE OF HIS LIES, BUT BECAUSE HE WANTED TO SAVE A MAN’S LIFE. IT IS IMPORTANT, THEREFORE, TO REALIZE FROM THE START THAT SAUL HAD NO HUMANITARIAN MOTIVES WHATEVER—THAT IS NOT THE POINT AT ISSUE. THE ISSUE, AS THE BIBLICAL AUTHOR SEES IT, IS WHETHER A KING OF ISRAEL WAS WILLING OR NOT TO OBEY GOD’S INSTRUCTIONS AS GIVEN THROUGH A PROPHET. OBEDIENCE IS THE KEY VIRTUE (22); BUT SAUL HAD DISPLAYED ARROGANCE (23). THE LIVESTOCK EVIDENTLY ATTRACTED THE GREED OF SAUL’S TROOPS, AND NO DOUBT OF SAUL TOO. IT IS LESS CLEAR WHY AGAG’S LIFE WAS SPARED, BUT PROBABLY SAUL SAW SOME POLITICAL OR FINANCIAL ADVANTAGE IN IT, AND HOPED TO NEGOTIATE A DEAL WITH OTHER AMALEKITE GROUPS. THE AMALEKITES WERE OLD ENEMIES OF ISRAEL (2), AND THEIR WHOLE WAY OF LIFE WAS A THREAT TO THE ISRAELITE PEOPLE. THEY HAD SOME CITIES, BUT FOR THE MOST PART THEY WERE NOMADS, BRUTALLY RAIDING AND PLUNDERING FARMS AND LIVESTOCK, ESPECIALLY ON THE SOUTHERN BORDERS OF ISRAEL. THEIR VERY EXISTENCE WAS THUS A PERMANENT THREAT TO ISRAEL, AND STERN MEASURES WERE ESSENTIAL AND JUSTIFIED. THE AMALEKITES WERE A WICKED PEOPLE (18). THE COMMAND IN GOD’S NAME TO DESTROY THE AMALEKITES TOTALLY (3) MADE USE OF WHAT IS CALLED IN ENGLISH A ‘BAN’, A CUSTOM PRACTICED OCCASIONALLY BOTH BY ISRAEL AND ITS NEIGHBORS. THIS RELIGIOUS VOW OF TOTAL DESTRUCTION WAS NOT FREQUENTLY EMPLOYED, NOT EVEN DURING WARFARE, AND THERE WERE ALWAYS SPECIAL REASONS FOR ITS USE. NOTICE HOW CAREFUL THE ISRAELITES WERE TO MAKE SURE THAT ANOTHER TRIBE, THE KENITES, WERE NOT HARMED ALONG WITH THE AMALEKITES (6). THE FACT THAT EVEN LIVESTOCK WERE INCLUDED IN THE ‘BAN’ SHOWS THAT THERE WAS A SORT OF SACRIFICIAL ASPECT TO IT; IN A SENSE, KILLING HUMANS AND ANIMALS WAS A WAY OF HANDING THEM OVER TO GOD. THE PEOPLE WHO WERE SO WICKED MUST BE ELIMINATED AS A THREAT, AND THEY AND ALL THEIR BELONGINGS WERE, BY THE ‘BAN’, HANDED OVER TO STEPHEN YAHWEH. IT WAS GREED, NOT KINDLINESS, WHICH CAUSED THE ‘BAN’ TO BE BROKEN (9, 19). THE NT COUNTERPART TO SUCH A STORY IS THE SPIRITUAL BATTLE PAUL SPEAKS ABOUT (EPH. 6:10–18). PAUL ADVISES CONSTANT ALERTNESS, BECAUSE GREED, LIES AND DISOBEDIENCE ARE DANGERS TO GOD’S PEOPLE IN EVERY AGE. THE HISTORICAL IMPORTANCE OF THIS CHAPTER IS THAT IT EXPLAINS WHY STEPHEN YAHWEH AND THE PROPHET SAMUEL REJECTED SAUL. ITS THEOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE IS TO BE SEEN ESPECIALLY IN VS 22, 23 AND 29. VS 22 AND 23 PUT IN PERSPECTIVE THE RELATIVE VALUES OF OBEDIENCE TO GOD AND WORSHIP OF GOD. IT IS A FREQUENT HUMAN ERROR TO THINK THAT GOD WILL OVERLOOK AND FORGIVE ALL ONE’S SINS SO LONG AS ONE IS CAREFUL TO ATTEND THE SHRINE (OR CHURCH) AND OFFER SACRIFICES (OR HYMNS OF PRAISE). SEVERAL OT PROPHETS HAD TO ATTACK THIS FALSE REASONING; AMOS COULD EVEN DESCRIBE GOD AS SAYING THAT HE ‘HATED’ AND ‘DESPISED’ RELIGIOUS FEASTS, SACRIFICES AND OFFERINGS (AM. 5:21–24). IN THE SAME WAY, WE TEND TO THINK FALSE WORSHIP IS THE WORST POSSIBLE SIN AGAINST GOD; SAMUEL SAID THAT ARROGANT DISOBEDIENCE WAS JUST AS BAD. V 29 OFFERS US A DESCRIPTION OF GOD AS ONE WHO DOES NOT LIE (UNLIKE SAUL!) NOR CHANGE HIS MIND. GOD MAY IN MERCY DELAY PUNISHMENT, OR GIVE MEN AND WOMEN OPPORTUNITIES TO CHANGE THEIR MINDS IN REPENTANCE; BUT HE DOES NOT CHANGE HIS MIND ABOUT HIS PURPOSES AND PLANS. GOD HAD DETERMINED THAT THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL WOULD BE IN THE HANDS OF A BETTER MAN, DAVID (28). LATER READERS, NO DOUBT IN VERY DIFFERENT CIRCUMSTANCES, COULD TAKE COMFORT AND ASSURANCE FROM THE FACT THAT THEIR GOD MADE THEM PROMISES, AND HIS PROMISES WERE ABSOLUTELY TRUE AND CERTAIN. THE CHAPTER ENDS ON AN UNHAPPY NOTE: SAMUEL MOURNED AND STEPHEN YAHWEH WAS GRIEVED. ISRAEL MUST BE PROVIDED WITH A BETTER KING THAN SAUL. CH. 16 TELLS HOW GOD BEGAN THE PROCESS OF REPLACING SAUL.**

**16:1–31:13 SAUL AND DAVID**

**THE REST OF 1 SAMUEL IS THE STORY OF SAUL’S RELATIONSHIP WITH DAVID. SAMUEL, AFTER ANOINTING DAVID TO BE THE NEXT KING, QUIETLY FADES FROM THE SCENE. SAUL HAS BEEN REJECTED, ALTHOUGH GOD PERMITTED HIM TO REMAIN KING AS LONG AS HE LIVED. BUT THE FUTURE WILL LIE WITH DAVID, WHO IS VERY YOUNG AND INEXPERIENCED AS YET. THESE CHAPTERS DESCRIBE HOW GOD EQUIPPED HIM FOR HIS FUTURE CAREER, WATCHED OVER HIM THROUGH EVERY DANGER, AND EXHIBITED HIM TO ISRAEL AS THE MAN OF HIS CHOICE.**

**16:1–17:58 DAVID TAKES HIS PLACE AT COURT**

**DAVID’S PROPER PLACE IS THE ROYAL COURT, BUT HE WOULD SCARCELY BE WELCOME THERE AS SUCCESSOR-DESIGNATE TO SAUL. THESE TWO CHAPTERS TELL HOW HIS OWN ABILITIES BROUGHT HIM TO SAUL’S SIDE. 16:1–13 THE ANOINTING OF DAVID. HERE TOO THE NARRATOR’S SKILL IS VERY EVIDENT, AS HE HOLDS BACK MENTION OF DAVID’S NAME UNTIL THE LAST VERSE, EVEN THOUGH DAVID IS THE REAL FOCUS OF THE STORY. FROM THIS CHAPTER UNTIL THE END OF 2 SAMUEL, DAVID WILL BE THE CENTRAL FIGURE. THE CHIEF PURPOSE OF THIS SECTION IS TO SHOW THAT DAVID WAS CHOSEN BY GOD AND ANOINTED BY SAMUEL. DAVID WAS NO RUTHLESS, AMBITIOUS MAN DETERMINED TO SEIZE POWER. HE WAS GOD’S OWN CHOICE, EVEN WHEN HE WAS A YOUNG LAD DOING A HUMBLE TASK. EVEN SAMUEL WOULD HAVE CHOSEN ANOTHER MAN (6)! IT WAS IMPORTANT THAT SAMUEL SHOULD CARRY OUT THE ANOINTING, THE OLD LEADER CREATING THE NEW LEADER. THIS ACTION PROVIDED CONTINUITY OF LEADERSHIP IN ISRAEL. IT WAS ALSO AN OBJECTIVE PROOF, THOUGH ADMITTEDLY TO A VERY SMALL AND PRIVATE GROUP OF PEOPLE, THAT DAVID WAS MEANT TO BE KING. A PROPHET MIGHT HAVE A PRIVATE CALL FROM GOD, BUT A MAN CHOSEN TO BE KING MUST HAVE SOMETHING MORE THAN JUST AN INNER VOICE CALLING HIM, WHICH OTHER PEOPLE MIGHT DOUBT. THE STORY INCLUDES IN V 7 A GENERAL POINT ABOUT GOD’S PRINCIPLES OF CHOICE. IT SEEMS THAT THE ISRAELITES EXPECTED THEIR LEADERS TO HAVE AN IMPRESSIVE PHYSIQUE AND GOOD LOOKS (7, 12 AND 18; 9:2). WISER ISRAELITES WOULD HAVE LOOKED MORE FOR INNER QUALITIES, AND V 7 CONFIRMS THAT GOD DOES SO. TO DAVID’S INNER QUALITIES, GOD ADDED SOMETHING ELSE—THE POWER OF HIS SPIRIT (13). DAVID HAD THIS GIFT FROM STEPHEN YAHWEH NO LESS THAN THE JUDGES AND SAUL BEFORE HIM; IT WAS VITAL TO THE LEADERSHIP OF THE NATION. IN THIS GENERAL OT CONTEXT, THE FUNCTION OF STEPHEN YAHWEH’S SPIRIT WAS TO EQUIP INDIVIDUALS FOR MILITARY LEADERSHIP. WE ARE REMINDED IN VS 2, 4 AND 5 THAT SAUL WAS STILL KING, AND A MAN TO BE FEARED. FROM A PURELY POLITICAL POINT OF VIEW, SAMUEL’S ACTION IN ANOINTING DAVID AMOUNTED TO TREASON, AND HE WAS FORCED TO USE SECRECY AND EVEN A MEASURE OF DECEIT. 16:14–23 DAVID BROUGHT TO THE COURT. THIS PASSAGE AND CH. 17 SHOW HOW TWO SEPARATE TALENTS OF DAVID BROUGHT HIM TO SAUL’S ATTENTION, MAKING HIM A PERMANENT MEMBER OF THE ROYAL COURT (18:2). THE FIRST TALENT WAS HIS SKILL AS A HARPIST, AND THE SECOND WAS HIS MILITARY ABILITY, WHICH TOOK TIME TO DEVELOP. THIS PASSAGE CONCENTRATES ON HIS MUSICAL GIFTS, BUT BRIEFLY MENTIONS HIS MILITARY SKILLS TOO. THE BACKGROUND WAS A PERIOD OF OCCASIONAL PHILISTINE ATTACKS, WHEN SAUL WOULD BE FORCED TO CALL MEN FROM THEIR FARMS TO FIGHT THE ENEMY. THUS, DAVID WAS SOMETIMES LOOKING AFTER HIS FATHER’S SHEEP AND AT OTHER TIMES FIGHTING THE PHILISTINES. BY ITSELF, HIS ABILITY ON THE BATTLEFIELD MIGHT NOT HAVE BROUGHT HIM TO SAUL’S NOTICE; IT WAS HIS SKILL AS A HARPIST WHICH BROUGHT HIM TO THE ROYAL COURT. V 14 GIVES US THE FIRST INDICATION OF THE PROBLEMS THAT WOULD DISTURB SAUL FROM NOW ON. HIS POSITION AS KING WAS NEVER EASY, WITH THE PHILISTINES A PERMANENT THREAT AND WITH THE UNITY AND SUPPORT OF ISRAEL A DOUBTFUL MATTER. SAMUEL’S REJECTION TOO MUST HAVE UNDERMINED BOTH HIS POSITION AND HIS PEACE OF MIND. SO, HE IS SAID TO HAVE SUFFERED FROM AN EVIL SPIRIT FROM THE LORD, WHICH MUST NOT BE UNDERSTOOD AS DEMON POSSESSION. THE BIBLICAL WRITER IS MAKING THE POINT THAT AS DAVID (THE FUTURE KING) GAINED THE SPIRIT OF STEPHEN YAHWEH, SO SAUL (THE REJECTED KING) LOST IT; AND GOD SO CONTROLLED EVENTS THAT SAUL’S LOSS LED HIM TO NEED MUSIC, AND SAUL’S OWN COURTIER LED HIM TO DAVID. IN THAT SENSE SAUL’S EVIL SPIRIT, HIS ANXIOUS STATE OF MIND, WAS UNDER GOD’S CONTROL. THUS, DAVID’S FIRST STEP TOWARDS KINGSHIP WAS TO COME TO THE ROYAL COURT AND GIVE VALUED SERVICE TO THE EXISTING KING. THERE IS GOOD REASON TO THINK THAT DAVID LATER SUFFERED MUCH HOSTILE PROPAGANDA, WHICH CLAIMED THAT HE HAD BEEN A RUTHLESS TRAITOR DURING SAUL’S REIGN. PASSAGES LIKE CH. 16, THEREFORE, STRESS DAVID’S LOYALTY AND GOODWILL TOWARDS SAUL. 17:1–11 THE PHILISTINE CHALLENGE. THE SCENE SWITCHES FROM THE PEACEFUL ROYAL COURT TO A NEW BATTLEFIELD, NEAR SOCOH IN JUDAH—IN OTHER WORDS THERE WAS A FRESH INVASION BY PHILISTINE TROOPS, WHICH SAUL HAD TO COUNTER. PERHAPS BECAUSE OF EARLIER LOSSES, THE PHILISTINES USED A DIFFERENT TYPE OF WARFARE THIS TIME. THEY PUT FORWARD A CHAMPION (4) AND DEMANDED THAT AN ISRAELITE CHAMPION SHOULD COME FORWARD AND FIGHT HIM IN SINGLE COMBAT. THE THEORY BEHIND SUCH INDIVIDUAL COMBAT WAS THE BELIEF THAT EITHER THE GODS OR THE STRONGER GOD WOULD GRANT VICTORY TO WHICHEVER MAN THEY CHOSE. A VICTORY COULD THUS BE WON WITHOUT MUCH LOSS OF LIFE. IN VIEW OF GOLIATH’S HEIGHT, POWERFUL WEAPONS AND STRONG ARMOR, THE PHILISTINES CLEARLY HAD NO DOUBTS WHO WOULD WIN. IT IS NOTEWORTHY THAT NOT EVEN SAUL, WHOSE HEIGHT HAS BEEN EMPHASIZED EARLIER IN THE STORY (9:2, 10:23), HAD THE COURAGE TO ACCEPT THE CHALLENGE; HE TOO WAS DISMAYED AND TERRIFIED (11). SAUL THUS DISPLAYED HIS LACK OF LEADERSHIP: ISRAEL NEEDED A NEW SOLDIER TO LEAD THEM INTO BATTLE. 17:12–30 DAVID COMES TO THE BATTLEFIELD. DAVID NOW COMES BACK INTO THE STORY. VS 12–19 EXPLAIN HOW IT HAPPENED THAT HE WAS NOT WITH THE ISRAELITE ARMY WHEN GOLIATH FIRST UTTERED HIS CHALLENGE, AND WHY HE CAME ON THE SCENE SOME FORTY DAYS LATER. THE AUTHOR MEANS US TO UNDERSTAND THAT GOD OVERRULED THESE EVENTS. DAVID DID NOT COME AS A WARRIOR, IT IS EVIDENT. (PROBABLY THE EVENTS OF CH. 17 TOOK PLACE BEFORE THOSE OF 16:21.) V 25 IS NOT UNIMPORTANT, SINCE IT EXPLAINS WHY DAVID WOULD BECOME PROMINENT IN ISRAEL, AND LAYS A FOUNDATION FOR 18:17. HOWEVER, THIS VERSE MAKES AN INTERESTING CONTRAST WITH V. 26. IN HIS DECISION TO TAKE UP GOLIATH’S CHALLENGE, DAVID’S MOTIVES WERE NOT HIS OWN WEALTH AND HONOR, BUT THE WISH TO HONOR GOD AND TO REMOVE DISGRACE FROM ISRAEL. DAVID SHOWED HIMSELF A SUITABLE LEADER FOR ISRAEL, IN CONTRAST TO THE FRIGHTENED SAUL AND HIS OWN QUARRELSOME BROTHERS. 17:31–40 SAUL INTERVIEWS DAVID. THIS CONVERSATION BETWEEN SAUL AND DAVID HIGHLIGHTS DAVID’S COURAGE AND HIS FAITH IN THE LIVING GOD, AND SO AGAIN TESTIFIES TO HIS SUITABLE QUALITIES FOR LEADERSHIP. SAUL COULD HAVE DISPLAYED THE SAME FAITH AND COURAGE, BUT HE DID NOT. SAUL IS SHOWN TO PUT HIS FAITH IN MILITARY EXPERIENCE AND IN STRONG ARMOR, SO THAT HIS ATTITUDE WAS NOT REALLY VERY DIFFERENT FROM THAT OF GOLIATH. THE STORYTELLER WOULD NOT HAVE DENIED, OF COURSE, THAT EXPERIENCE AND ARMOR ARE USUALLY IMPORTANT IN BATTLE; BUT THE TRUTH WAS THAT ONLY GOD COULD GIVE DAVID THE VICTORY IN THIS UNIQUE SITUATION. 17:41–58 DAVID’S VICTORY. SO, THE DUEL TOOK PLACE. IT SEEMED A VERY UNEQUAL CONTEST TO GOLIATH, WHO FELT INSULTED WHEN HE SAW AN APPARENTLY UNARMED YOUTH APPROACHING. THE READER, HOWEVER, KNOWS IN ADVANCE THAT IT REALLY WAS AN UNEQUAL CONTEST, SINCE DAVID’S GOD WAS IN CONTROL. BOTH COMBATANTS MADE THEIR SPEECHES, AS WAS APPROPRIATE IN A BATTLE BETWEEN CHAMPIONS, AND BOTH NAMED THEIR GODS. GOLIATH COULD ONLY UTTER CURSES BY HIS GODS, BUT DAVID’S GOD WAS NO TRIBAL DEITY BUT THE GOD WHO WOULD BECOME KNOWN IN THE WHOLE WORLD. THE LORD SAVES (47) IS THE MOTTO OF THE WHOLE BIBLE; IN CONTEXT, DAVID DOES NOT MEAN HIS OWN SALVATION FROM DEATH BUT THE DELIVERANCE OF ISRAEL FROM PHILISTINE DOMINATION. DAVID’S EXPLOIT RESULTED IN A WIDE-RANGING VICTORY, AND THE PHILISTINES WERE DRIVEN BACK TO THEIR OWN CITIES OF GATH AND EKRON. DAVID HAD DRIVEN THEM AWAY FROM ISRAELITE TERRITORY. THE BATTLE TROPHIES INCLUDED THE HEAD OF GOLIATH; THE SKULL WAS LATER TAKEN TO JERUSALEM, AFTER DAVID HAD CAPTURED THAT CITY (2 SA. 5). THE FINAL PARAGRAPH, VS 55–58, HAS CAUSED MUCH DISCUSSION. SCHOLARS HAVE OFTEN INTERPRETED IT AS MEANING THAT SAUL DID NOT RECOGNIZE DAVID OR KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT HIM. IF SO, IT CONTRADICTS 16:14–23. IT MAY BE AGREED THAT CH. 17 IS DRAWN FROM A DIFFERENT SOURCE DOCUMENT THAN CH. 16, BUT IT IS NOT NECESSARY TO CONCLUDE THAT CH. 17 REFLECTS A TRADITION THAT SAUL AND DAVID HAD NEVER PREVIOUSLY MET. ON THE EVIDENCE OF CH. 17 ALONE, WE KNOW THAT THE TWO MEN WERE IN CONVERSATION BEFORE DAVID’S ENCOUNTER WITH GOLIATH, SO SAUL MUST HAVE KNOWN DAVID’S NAME AT THE VERY LEAST. THE QUESTIONS SAUL PUT TO ABNER WERE NOT SO MUCH ABOUT DAVID, IN FACT, AS ABOUT HIS FAMILY, PRESUMABLY BECAUSE SAUL WAS NOW UNDER OBLIGATION TO GIVE DAVID HIS DAUGHTER IN MARRIAGE, IN FULFILMENT OF HIS VOW (17:25). IT WAS, THEREFORE, IMPORTANT FOR HIM TO FIND OUT ALL HE COULD ABOUT THE BACKGROUND OF THE MAN WHO WOULD NOW BE A COURT FIGURE.**

**18:1–20:42 DAVID AND JONATHAN**

**THOUGH IT FORMS A PART OF THE MORE SIGNIFICANT STORY OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DAVID AND SAUL, THIS SECTION OF 1 SAMUEL CONCENTRATES MORE ON JONATHAN THAN ON SAUL. THE BIBLICAL WRITER HAD A PURPOSE IN DESCRIBING SO FULLY THIS PROVERBIAL FRIENDSHIP. HE WANTED TO DEMONSTRATE BEYOND ANY DOUBT THAT THE MAN WHOM DAVID DISPLACED FROM SUCCEEDING TO THE THRONE WAS HIS BEST FRIEND. THE STORY HELPED TO DISPROVE ANY LATER RUMORS THAT DAVID HAD BEEN A HATED RIVAL OF JONATHAN. IN THE END, IT WAS THE PHILISTINES WHO KILLED JONATHAN, AT A TIME WHEN DAVID WAS FAR AWAY (CH. 31). BEFORE THEN, JONATHAN HIMSELF WOULD ACKNOWLEDGE DAVID AS THE FUTURE KING OVER ISRAEL (23:16–18). 18:1–9 SAUL’S JEALOUSY. THE IMMEDIATE RESULT OF DAVID’S EXPLOIT AGAINST GOLIATH WAS A PLACE AT COURT, AND HE GAINED A HIGH RANK IN THE ARMY. JONATHAN, WHOSE EARLIER EXPLOIT HAD ALSO CAUSED AN ISRAELITE VICTORY, SHOWED NO JEALOUSY OF THIS NEW MAN AT COURT; ON THE CONTRARY, HE QUICKLY MADE A LASTING FRIENDSHIP WITH HIM. INDEED, HIS ACTIONS TOWARDS DAVID SEEMED TO SIGNIFY THAT HE SAW IN DAVID A GREATER MAN THAN HIMSELF, A MAN WHO DESERVED TO LEAD ISRAEL IN THE FUTURE. WITH FAR LESS CAUSE, SAUL DID SHOW JEALOUSY. THE POPULAR SONG THAT ANGERED HIM WAS NEVER INTENDED TO MAKE HIM INFERIOR TO DAVID; THE NUMBERS WERE NOT MEANT TO BE EXACT! RATHER, THE SONG WAS MEANT TO DECLARE WHAT A FINE TEAM DAVID AND SAUL MADE. EVEN SO, IT CAN READILY BE SEEN THAT DAVID’S SUCCESSES AND POPULARITY GAVE HIM THE POTENTIAL TO BECOME A RIVAL OF SAUL, IF HE WISHED TO DO SO. SAUL’S FEARS WERE MISPLACED BUT NOT IRRATIONAL. 18:10–30 SAUL ATTEMPTS TO KILL DAVID. SAUL’S JEALOUSY SOON REVEALED ITSELF IN ACTION, AS HE TRIED BY VARIOUS MEANS TO CAUSE DAVID’S DEATH. HIS FIRST ATTEMPT WAS AN IMPULSIVE ONE, AT A TIME WHEN HE WAS NOT FULLY IN CONTROL OF HIMSELF (10–11). HE WAS NOT PROPHESYING IN ANY GOOD SENSE, ALTHOUGH ‘RAVED’ (RSV) PERHAPS EXAGGERATES HIS CONDITION. THE REASON GIVEN IN V 12 FOR SAUL’S FEAR OF DAVID IS INTERESTING. SAUL SAW THAT THE LORD WAS WITH DAVID, IN OTHER WORDS, HE SAW THAT HE WAS SUCCESSFUL IN ALL THAT HE UNDERTOOK. HE SAW DAVID’S SUCCESS, AND REALIZED THAT IT WAS GOD GIVEN, BUT HE THOUGHT HE COULD PUT AN END TO IT, AS IF HE HAD THE POWER TO DEFEAT GOD’S PLANS. SO, THE CHAPTER DESCRIBES SAUL’S SCHEMING TO GET DAVID KILLED. IF DAVID HAD DIED IN BATTLE AGAINST THE PHILISTINES, AS SAUL HOPED, NO BLAME AT ALL WOULD HAVE ATTACHED TO SAUL. BUT SINCE IN TRUTH THE LORD WAS WITH DAVID THROUGHOUT THESE EVENTS (28), SAUL’S PLANS WERE BOUND TO FAIL. FROM SAUL’S POINT OF VIEW, THE SITUATION GOT STEADILY WORSE; HIS YOUNG RIVAL NOT ONLY SURVIVED BUT INCREASED HIS REPUTATION, AND MARRIED A ROYAL PRINCESS, MICHAL (27). IT IS NOT FULLY CLEAR WHY DAVID DID NOT MARRY MERAB (17–19). DAVID’S HUMBLE RESPONSE (18) TO THE KING’S OFFER WAS CONVENTIONAL AND WAS NOT A REFUSAL OF MERAB, ANY MORE THAN HIS WORDS IN V 23 WERE A REFUSAL OF MICHAL. PROBABLY SAUL’S ACT IN GIVING MERAB TO ANOTHER MAN WAS EITHER SIMPLY IMPULSIVE OR ELSE A DELIBERATE INSULT TO DAVID. SAUL APPEARS IN AN INCREASINGLY BAD LIGHT IN THESE CHAPTERS. BY CONTRAST, DAVID TOOK NO ACTION TO HARM OR BETRAY SAUL, AND THIS IS PROVED BY THE FACT THAT SAUL’S OWN FAMILY LOVED DAVID (28; 19:1). SAUL WAS DAVID’S ENEMY (29), BUT DAVID WAS NEVER SAUL’S ENEMY. 19:1–10 DAVID’S ESCAPE. SAUL’S HOPES THAT DAVID WOULD DIE IN BATTLE HAD FAILED, SO HE NOW INVITED HIS OWN COURTIERS TO KILL DAVID. THIS CREATED A NEW SITUATION, AND A VERY DANGEROUS ONE FOR DAVID. JONATHAN HAD A CHOICE: HE COULD CARRY OUT HIS FATHER’S WISHES AND HELP TO KILL DAVID, OR HE COULD TRY TO CHANGE SAUL’S MIND AND ATTITUDE. THE FACT THAT HE TOOK THE SECOND COURSE OF ACTION PROVES THAT JONATHAN WAS CONVINCED THAT DAVID WAS NO ENEMY TO HIM OR TO SAUL. THE FACT THAT SAUL WAS FORCED TO AGREE WITH HIM, AND EVEN TOOK AN OATH NOT TO KILL DAVID (6), IS ADDITIONAL PROOF THAT DAVID WAS NO TRAITOR. ONCE AGAIN, THEREFORE, WE SEE HOW THE BIBLICAL AUTHOR DEFENDS DAVID’S CHARACTER. HOWEVER, SAUL ONCE AGAIN LOST CONTROL OF HIMSELF, AND THREW A SPEAR AT DAVID. DAVID NOW HAD REALLY NO ALTERNATIVE BUT TO ESCAPE. 19:11–24 DAVID’S FLIGHT. SAUL’S DETERMINATION TO KILL DAVID HARDENED AND HE MADE NO FURTHER ATTEMPTS TO HIDE IT. JONATHAN HAD SAVED DAVID’S LIFE EARLIER IN THE CHAPTER, AND NOW SAUL’S DAUGHTER MICHAL SAVED IT. SHE USED LIES AND DECEIT TO DO SO, BUT THE PASSAGE DOES NOT REBUKE HER IN ANY WAY; THE NARRATOR IS MORE CONCERNED TO SHOW HOW NARROW AN ESCAPE DAVID HAD. THE PASSAGE ALSO SHOWS THAT SAUL’S OWN FAMILY WERE PREPARED TO TAKE ANY NECESSARY STEPS TO PROTECT DAVID FROM THEIR OWN FATHER. IT IS SURPRISING TO FIND THAT THERE WAS AN IDOL IN DAVID’S HOUSE. THE HEBREW WORD TRANSLATED ‘IDOL’ IS THOUGHT TO MEAN A HOUSEHOLD IDOL OF SOME SORT, BUT POSSIBLY IT RELATES IN SOME WAY TO THE WORSHIP OF STEPHEN YAHWEH; CERTAINLY, THERE IS NO SUGGESTION ELSEWHERE THAT DAVID WAS EVER GUILTY OF WORSHIPPING OTHER GODS. IN THESE CHAPTERS WE SEE DAVID ACTING WITH DOUBTFUL MORALITY MORE THAN ONCE. HE IS GUILTY OF LIES AND DECEIT IN CH. 21 AND OF MURDEROUS INTENTIONS IN CH. 25, FOR EXAMPLE. PLAINLY HE IS NOT BEING HELD UP AS A MODEL. RATHER, THE BIBLICAL WRITER IS EMPHASIZING HOW DIFFICULT HIS CIRCUMSTANCES WERE, PLUS THE FACT THAT THROUGH ALL HIS DIFFICULTIES (AND IN SPITE OF HIS LAPSES) GOD TOOK CARE OF HIM. IT WAS NATURAL THAT DAVID SHOULD WISH TO CONSULT SAMUEL, THE MAN WHO HAD ANOINTED HIM FOR KINGSHIP (CH. 16). HOWEVER, THE PASSAGE RELATES NOTHING OF THEIR CONVERSATION AND INSTEAD STRESSES THE NATURE OF PROPHETIC POWER. NORMALLY THE SPIRIT OF GOD EQUIPPED MEN WITH POWER TO PERFORM OR TO SPEAK GOD’S WILL. IN THE PRESENCE OF SUCH POWER, WHICH WAS IN A SENSE INFECTIOUS, SAUL’S SOLDIERS AND FINALLY SAUL HIMSELF FOUND THEMSELVES PROPHESYING. YET IN THEIR CASE THE EXPERIENCE DID NOT GIVE THEM POWER BUT ROBBED THEM OF IT. SAUL, INDEED, WAS ROBBED OF ALL ROYAL DIGNITY TOO. IT WAS SYMBOLIC THAT HE HIMSELF TOOK OFF ALL HIS ROYAL ROBES. ONCE AGAIN, WE MEET THE SNEERING PROVERB OF 10:11, AND THIS TIME THE TAUNT WAS FULLY JUSTIFIED. CLEARLY, THIS EPISODE DOES NOT DESCRIBE WHAT WE NORMALLY UNDERSTAND BY ‘PROPHECY’. THE HEBREW WORD ‘PROPHESIED’ CAN IN SOME CONTEXTS REFER TO ABNORMAL, TRANCE-LIKE STATES (SEE ALSO 1 KI. 18:29). GOD’S POWERFUL PRESENCE COULD HAVE DIFFERENT EFFECTS IN DIFFERENT CIRCUMSTANCES. 20:1–7 DAVID CONSULTS JONATHAN. AFTER ALL THAT HAD HAPPENED, WE WOULD NOT HAVE EXPECTED DAVID TO CONTEMPLATE ANY RETURN TO HIS PLACE AT COURT. HOWEVER, HE WAS A COURT FIGURE, AND EVEN SAUL MIGHT WISH TO PRESERVE PROPER PROCEDURES. IT IS CLEAR THAT DAVID’S ABSENCE FROM COURT ON A FESTIVAL OCCASION WOULD CAUSE PUBLIC COMMENT AND POSSIBLE EMBARRASSMENT (5–7). DAVID WAS UNDER NO ILLUSIONS ABOUT THE DANGER HE WAS IN (3), BUT HE FELT THAT HE HAD THE RIGHT TO DEMAND JUSTICE: WHAT CRIME HAD HE COMMITTED? JONATHAN SAW THINGS RATHER DIFFERENTLY, WISHING TO BELIEVE THE BEST ABOUT HIS FATHER, AND APPARENTLY CONVINCED THAT DAVID WAS IN NO IMMEDIATE DANGER. THE EMPHASIS OF THE PASSAGE IS TO BE FOUND IN VS 14–17. THE ACTUAL SITUATION WAS THE DANGER CONFRONTING DAVID, IN WHICH JONATHAN COULD HELP HIM, BUT THESE VERSES ARE CONCERNED WITH DAVID’S FUTURE HELP TO JONATHAN. A SIMPLE FRIENDSHIP NEEDS NO FORMAL COVENANT. HOWEVER, BOTH JONATHAN AND DAVID WERE MEN OF IMPORTANCE IN ISRAEL, AND THERE WOULD BE POLITICAL RIVALRY BETWEEN THEIR FAMILIES, I.E. THE HOUSE OF SAUL AND THE HOUSE OF DAVID (16). IN MANY SOCIETIES SUCH A SITUATION COULD HAVE LED TO POLITICAL ASSASSINATIONS, OR EVEN TO THE TOTAL DESTRUCTION OF ONE OF THE FAMILIES. HENCE THE IMPORTANCE OF THE COVENANT THEY MADE. AFTER THE EVENTS OF THIS CHAPTER JONATHAN AND DAVID SCARCELY MET AGAIN, SO THEIR FIRM PROMISES TO EACH OTHER WERE PARTICULARLY SIGNIFICANT NOW. V 17 AGAIN STRESSES THE DEPTH OF DAVID AND JONATHAN’S COMMITMENT TO EACH OTHER. (RECENT SUGGESTIONS OF A HOMOSEXUAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DAVID AND JONATHAN ARE TOTAL MISINTERPRETATIONS; THE WHOLE EMPHASIS OF THE BIBLICAL AUTHOR LIES ON THE FACT THAT DAVID WAS NOT A POLITICAL ENEMY OF SAUL OR HIS FAMILY, AND THAT JONATHAN HAD NO FEAR OR SUSPICION WHATEVER OF DAVID.) 20:18–42 DAVID’S FINAL DEPARTURE. JONATHAN’S DETAILED INSTRUCTIONS TO DAVID (19–22) WERE APPARENTLY NECESSARY TO ENABLE HIM TO GIVE DAVID A MESSAGE WITHOUT ANYONE SEEING THEM IN CONVERSATION TOGETHER. IT IS CLEAR THAT JONATHAN DID NOT WANT EVEN HIS SERVANT BOY (21, 39) TO KNOW HE WAS MEETING DAVID. IF SAUL WAS QUITE DETERMINED TO KILL DAVID, ANY SIGN OF JONATHAN TALKING TO DAVID WOULD LOOK LIKE TREASON. NOT EVEN JONATHAN WAS SAFE FROM SAUL’S ANGER. IN THE EVENT, JONATHAN SUCCEEDED IN HOLDING A LAST PRIVATE CONVERSATION WITH DAVID. SAUL SAW ONE THING CLEARLY: UNLESS DAVID WERE KILLED, JONATHAN WOULD NEVER SUCCEED TO THE THRONE (31). THE DIFFERENCE WAS THAT JONATHAN ACCEPTED THIS FACT, BUT SAUL’S HATRED FOR DAVID WAS BY NOW INTENSE. WE CAN ASSUME THAT SAUL WOULD HAVE USED THE FESTIVAL AS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR ANOTHER DIRECT ATTACK ON DAVID’S LIFE. THE FESTIVAL WAS A STATE OCCASION, WHEN THE ABSENCE OF AN IMPORTANT COURT FIGURE WOULD BE NOTICED BY EVERYONE, ALTHOUGH ABSENCE FOR REASONS OF CEREMONIAL UNCLEANNESS WAS ALWAYS A POSSIBILITY IN ANCIENT ISRAEL. MANY REGULATIONS ABOUT THIS ARE TO BE FOUND IN LV. 11–15. OTHERWISE THE ABSENCE OF AN IMPORTANT PERSON COULD BE SUSPICIOUS. EVEN A KING’S SON HAD TO ASK FOR PERMISSION TO BE ABSENT (SEE 2 SA. 15:7–9).**

**21:1–26:25 DAVID AS A FUGITIVE**

**21:1–15 DAVID AT NOB AND AT GATH. THE MAIN POINT OF THIS CHAPTER IS TO DEMONSTRATE HOW DANGEROUS AND DESPERATE DAVID’S SITUATION WAS. HE WAS COMPLETELY ALONE (1) AND UNARMED, AND IN ITSELF THIS WAS A SUSPICIOUS CIRCUMSTANCE; AN IMPORTANT SOLDIER WOULD NATURALLY HAVE AN ESCORT. DAVID COULD SEE NO OPTION BUT DECEIT. THE BIBLICAL AUTHOR DOES NOT APPROVE OF DECEIT—INDEED, DAVID HIMSELF ACCEPTED THE BLAME FOR WHAT HAPPENED BECAUSE OF IT (22:22). HOWEVER, THE WRITER DOES NOT REBUKE DAVID FOR IT; HE IS FULLY AWARE OF DAVID’S DIFFICULTIES. UNDOUBTEDLY, DAVID’S ENEMIES LATER CONDEMNED HIM FOR BOTH INCIDENTS RECORDED IN THIS CHAPTER. DAVID’S VISIT TO NOB RESULTED IN THE DEATH OF MANY DEVOUT MEN (22:18), AND HIS VISIT TO GATH (10–15) LOOKED LIKE THE ACT OF A TRAITOR, SINCE ACHISH WAS A PHILISTINE KING. SO, THE WRITER EXPLAINS, FIRST, THAT ALTHOUGH DAVID DID INDEED DECEIVE AHIMELECH THE PRIEST, HE COULD NOT HAVE KNOWN WHAT WOULD HAPPEN AFTERWARDS. THE PROBLEM WAS CAUSED BY DOEG (7), ONE OF SAUL’S OFFICIALS, WHO WAS THERE IN ORDER TO FULFIL A VOW. SECONDLY, THE WRITER EXPLAINS THAT WHEN DAVID CROSSED THE FRONTIER AND WENT TO GATH, HE HOPED THAT HE WOULD NOT BE RECOGNIZED. WHEN HE WAS RECOGNIZED, HE MADE A FOOL OF THE PHILISTINE KING. HE WAS CERTAINLY NOT HONORED BY THE PHILISTINES, WHO WOULD HAVE WELCOMED A CAPABLE SOLDIER WHO HAD REBELLED AGAINST SAUL. AT THE VERY LEAST THEY WOULD HAVE PREVENTED HIS RETURN TO ISRAEL BUT FOR HIS APPARENT INSANITY. 22:1–5 DAVID GAINS SUPPORT. IN CH. 21 DAVID HAD BEEN A LONE FUGITIVE, IN VERY GREAT DANGER. RETURNING FROM GATH TO ISRAELITE TERRITORY, HE SOON ATTRACTED SOME SUPPORT. HIS OWN FAMILY JOINED HIM, NOT TO SUPPORT HIM BUT FOR THEIR OWN SAFETY, AND DAVID SOON ENSURED THAT HIS PARENTS WERE SENT ABROAD, OUT OF SAUL’S REACH. HIS SUPPORTERS WERE OUTLAWS LIKE HIMSELF, AND THERE WERE ENOUGH OF THEM TO MAKE A SMALL ARMY. IN SAUL’S EYES, THEY WERE UNDOUBTEDLY, REBELS AND TRAITORS. WHAT ARE WE TO THINK? LATER CHAPTERS WILL SHOW THAT DAVID NEVER USED THIS ARMY TO ATTACK EITHER SAUL OR ISRAELITE TROOPS, BUT THIS HAS YET TO BE SEEN. HOWEVER, ANOTHER SUPPORTER OF DAVID WAS A PROPHET, GAD BY NAME, AND WE CAN SEE THE HAND OF GOD AT WORK, GIVING GUIDANCE TO DAVID (5). THUS, IN A VERY LITERAL SENSE GOD WAS STILL WITH DAVID. THE SUCCESSFUL SOLDIER HAD BECOME A SUCCESSFUL FUGITIVE. IT WAS SENSIBLE FOR HIM TO MOVE INTO JUDAH, WELL AWAY FROM SAUL’S CAPITAL CITY. JUDAH WAS HIS OWN TRIBE, AND HE COULD REASONABLY HOPE THAT SOME CITIZENS WOULD BE WELL DISPOSED TOWARD HIM. 22:6–23 THE MASSACRE AT NOB. NOB WAS AT THIS TIME A MAJOR SANCTUARY. AFTER THE PHILISTINE VICTORY OF CH. 4, THE SHILOH SANCTUARY HAD BEEN DESTROYED, AND NOB MAY HAVE REPLACED IT IN IMPORTANCE. AHIMELECH, THE CHIEF PRIEST AT NOB, WAS THE GRANDSON OF ELI OF SHILOH. IT IS ASTONISHING THAT SAUL SHOULD HAVE MASSACRED SO MANY PRIESTS AT SUCH AN IMPORTANT SANCTUARY, DESPITE THE VERY REASONABLE DEFENSE WHICH AHIMELECH MADE (14–15). THE CHAPTER DEMONSTRATES THAT BY NOW SAUL WAS SUSPICIOUS OF EVERYBODY, INCLUDING JONATHAN (8), AND SAW A CONSPIRACY WHERE NONE EXISTED. IT IS SIGNIFICANT THAT HIS OWN OFFICIALS REFUSED TO OBEY HIS ORDERS (17). SAUL’S BRUTALITY AT NOB HAD A RESULT WHICH HE DID NOT FORESEE. ONE MAN WHO ESCAPED THE MASSACRE WAS ABIATHAR (A FUTURE HIGH PRIEST AT JERUSALEM), WHO HAD LITTLE CHOICE BUT TO JOIN DAVID. IN THIS WAY DAVID GAINED PRIESTLY SUPPORT IN ADDITION TO THE PROPHET GAD. 23:1–14 DAVID AT KEILAH. THIS SECTION SETS UP AN INTERESTING CONTRAST BETWEEN HUMAN POWER AND GOD’S CONTROL. SAUL’S ROYAL POWER COULD NOT BE RESISTED EITHER BY DAVID OR BY THE PEOPLE OF THE TOWN OF KEILAH. THIS CHAPTER SHOWS DAVID FORCED TO MOVE FURTHER AND FURTHER SOUTH, TOWARDS MORE BARREN TERRAIN. AS FOR THE CITIZENS OF KEILAH, THEY MAY HAVE FELT FRIENDLY TOWARDS DAVID (THEY TOO WERE JUDEANS), BUT THEY DARED NOT RISK SAUL’S ANGER AND REVENGE. EVERYBODY MUST HAVE KNOWN HOW SAUL HAD TREATED NOB. BUT EVEN THOUGH THE PEOPLE OF KEILAH WERE PREPARED TO SURRENDER DAVID TO SAUL (12), THEY MUST HAVE FELT A LASTING GRATITUDE TO DAVID, WHO HAD JUST SAVED THEM FROM THE PHILISTINES (5). THIS WAS USEFUL TO HIM AT A LATER DATE. SAUL HAD GREAT POWER, THEN, FROM THE HUMAN STANDPOINT; BUT IT WAS GOD WHO REALLY CONTROLLED EVENTS, ESPECIALLY BY GIVING DAVID THE GUIDANCE HE NEEDED THROUGH ABIATHAR AND THE EPHOD (6). IN THIS WAY DAVID KNEW WHEN TO GO TO KEILAH AND WHEN TO LEAVE IT, AND HOW TO KEEP OUT OF SAUL’S HANDS (14). GOD ALLOWED FULL FREEDOM OF ACTION TO ALL THE INDIVIDUALS AND GROUPS BUT YET HE OVER-RULED SO THAT HIS WILL PREVAILED. DAVID ESCAPED YET AGAIN FROM SAUL, AND WAS ABLE TO DO A SERVICE TO AN ISRAELITE CITY, AN ACT WHICH WOULD BE REMEMBERED LONG AFTERWARDS. SAUL SHOWED HIMSELF UNFIT TO BE KING, BECAUSE HE HAD ATTACKED ONE OF HIS OWN CITIES; DAVID WAS ALREADY DOING A KING’S TASK, IN DEFEATING HIS NATION’S ENEMIES, THE PHILISTINES. 23:15–28 DAVID IN THE REGION OF ZIPH. THE DISTRICT NEAR THE TOWN OF ZIPH WAS DESERT (14). IT IS FAIRLY EASY TO HIDE IN SUCH TERRAIN, BUT IT IS NOT EASY TO FEED AN ARMY OF 600 MEN THERE. DAVID’S BAND OF FOLLOWERS HAD GROWN SINCE 22:1. THIS MAY PARTLY EXPLAIN WHY THE PEOPLE OF ZIPH WERE SO HOSTILE TO HIM; PERHAPS THEY SAW HIM AS A THREAT TO THEIR FOOD SUPPLIES. SO, THEY WERE READY TO HELP SAUL LOCATE DAVID, BUT ONCE AGAIN GOD OVERRULED, THIS TIME BY USING THE PHILISTINES TO ACHIEVE HIS PURPOSES (27–28). THERE IS DRAMATIC IRONY IN THE FACT THAT ALTHOUGH SAUL AND HIS TROOPS COULD NOT FIND DAVID, JONATHAN HAD NO SUCH DIFFICULTY. NO DOUBT DAVID HAD POSTED SENTRIES, WHO WOULD HAVE GUIDED JONATHAN TO DAVID. THE CHIEF PURPOSE OF JONATHAN’S VISIT WAS TO GIVE DAVID REASSURANCE. IN RENEWING THEIR COVENANT, JONATHAN AGAIN CONFIRMED HIS WILLINGNESS TO BE SUBORDINATE TO DAVID; IN OTHER WORDS, HE RENOUNCED HIS OWN POSITION AS CROWN PRINCE. JONATHAN DID NOT LIVE LONG ENOUGH TO FULFIL THIS PROMISE, BUT THE BIBLICAL WRITER USES JONATHAN’S PROMISE AS ANOTHER INDICATION OF THE GOODWILL THAT ALWAYS EXISTED BETWEEN JONATHAN AND DAVID. DAVID STOLE NOTHING FROM JONATHAN, AND JONATHAN BEGRUDGED DAVID NOTHING. 23:29–24:22 DAVID AND SAUL MEET AT EN GEDI. THE DETAILED NARRATIVE OF CH. 24 RECOUNTS A DRAMATIC INCIDENT DURING DAVID’S TIME AS A FUGITIVE. THE DRAMA DRAWS ATTENTION TO SOME IMPORTANT FACTS ABOUT DAVID AND SAUL. AT DIFFERENT POINTS IN THE STORY, BOTH MEN HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO KILL THEIR OPPONENT. BOTH MEN WERE PREVENTED FROM SUCH VIOLENT ACTION BY THE POWER OF CONSCIENCE. DAVID MUST HAVE BEEN TEMPTED TO KILL THE MAN WHO HAD BEEN PERSECUTING HIM, ESPECIALLY WHEN HIS OWN SOLDIERS URGED HIM TO DO SO. BUT HIS CONSCIENCE HELD HIM BACK; HE EVEN FELT REMORSEFUL AFTER DAMAGING SAUL’S ROBE SLIGHTLY. AS FOR SAUL, WHEN DAVID SUDDENLY SPOKE TO HIM, HE HAD DAVID COMPLETELY IN HIS POWER AT LAST, TRAPPED IN THE CAVE; BUT DAVID’S WORDS STIRRED HIS CONSCIENCE. THE WORDS OF THE TWO MEN ARE THEREFORE PARTICULARLY SIGNIFICANT. DAVID EXPRESSED HIGH REVERENCE FOR THE PERSON OF THE KING AS SUCH. SAUL, WE KNOW, HAD BEEN REJECTED BY STEPHEN YAHWEH; BUT HE REMAINED KING, THE MAN WHO HAD BEEN ANOINTED THROUGH SAMUEL BY THE LORD (6). NO MAN, DECLARED DAVID, HAD THE RIGHT TO ATTACK THE PERSON OF THE KING OF ISRAEL. SAUL REPLIED BY A FRANK CONFESSION THAT HE HAD WRONGED DAVID, AND THAT DAVID HAD NEVER WRONGED HIM. LOOKING INTO THE FUTURE, HE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT DAVID WOULD BE KING. HERE AGAIN, THE TEXT IS INTENDED TO DEFEND DAVID FROM LATER ACCUSATIONS OF RUTHLESS HOSTILITY TO SAUL AND HIS DESCENDANTS (21). THE CHAPTER MAKES IT ABUNDANTLY CLEAR THAT DAVID NOT ONLY SPARED SAUL’S LIFE BUT ALSO TOOK A SOLEMN OATH TO SPARE THE LIVES OF SAUL’S FAMILY AFTER HIM. THE EMPHASIS IN DAVID’S WORDS ON THE SACREDNESS OF THE KING’S PERSON AND LIFE MAY HAVE BEEN A SERMON TO LATER MEN AND GROUPS WHO WISHED TO OVERTHROW KINGS BY ASSASSINATION OR REBELLION. 25:1–11 NABAL’S HOSTILITY. SAMUEL’S DEATH (1) MARKED THE END OF AN ERA. HE DIED BEFORE DAVID, WHOM HE HAD ANOINTED (CH. 16), ACTUALLY BECAME KING; BUT AT LEAST SAUL HAD NOW RECOGNIZED THAT DAVID WOULD BE THE NEXT KING (24:20). SAMUEL’S WORK WAS DONE. DESPITE SAUL’S WORDS OF REPENTANCE IN 24:16–21, THERE WAS NO POSSIBILITY OF REAL RECONCILIATION BETWEEN SAUL AND DAVID, AND DAVID REMAINED WITH HIS LARGE BAND OF MEN IN THE SEMI-BARREN AREAS OF JUDAH. IT WOULD NOT BE LONG BEFORE SAUL MADE FRESH ATTEMPTS TO CAPTURE HIM. MEANWHILE DAVID HAD THE DAILY TASK OF FINDING PROVISIONS FOR HIS FOLLOWERS, AND THIS PASSAGE SHOWS HOW DIFFICULT THAT COULD BE. HE TRIED TO WIN SUPPORT AND PROVISIONS FROM RICH FARMERS LIKE NABAL BY GIVING THEM ASSISTANCE AND PROTECTION FROM RAIDERS (LIKE THE AMALEKITES), AND THEN SEEKING GENEROSITY FROM THEM. NO DOUBT THERE WERE OTHER FARMERS WHO GLADLY HELPED DAVID, AND PROBABLY SOME WHO HELPED RATHER RELUCTANTLY; NABAL WAS MEAN BY NATURE IN HIS DEALINGS (3) AND RUDELY REFUSED. TECHNICALLY, HE HAD THE RIGHT TO ACT AS HE DID, AND HIS REMARK THAT DAVID WAS A ‘SERVANT’ WHO HAD BROKEN AWAY FROM HIS ‘MASTER’ WAS NOT TOO FAR FROM THE TRUTH. THE READER, HOWEVER, KNOWS THAT DAVID WAS NO REBEL AGAINST SAUL, AND THAT GOD HAD CHOSEN DAVID TO BE KING; SO NABAL IS SEEN TO BE COMPLETELY OUT OF TOUCH WITH GOD’S PLANS. 25:12–35 ABIGAIL’S INTERVENTION. DAVID’S ANGER WITH NABAL WAS UNDERSTANDABLE, AND WE MAY SENSE SOME DESPERATION ON HIS PART TO FIND PROVISIONS. NEVERTHELESS, NABAL’S ACTIONS CERTAINLY DID NOT JUSTIFY DAVID’S MURDEROUS REACTION. THE STORY GOES TO SHOW THAT DAVID COULD AT TIMES BE HARSH AND VIOLENT, BUT GOD WAS STILL OVERRULING EVENTS AND PREVENTED DAVID FROM COMMITTING AN EVIL DEED. GOD’S AGENT WAS NOT A PROPHET, NOR THE GUIDANCE OF THE PRIEST ABIATHAR, BUT THE WIFE OF THE VERY MAN WHOM DAVID PLANNED TO KILL. IT WAS NO COINCIDENCE THAT ABIGAIL WAS AN INTELLIGENT WOMAN (3), WHO NOT ONLY SAW THE DANGERS BUT TOOK SWIFT AND EFFECTIVE ACTION TO PREVENT TRAGEDY. HER WORDS TO DAVID REMINDED HIM THAT THE GOD WHO HAD ANOINTED HIM TO BE KING WAS SURE TO PROTECT HIM AND TAKE CARE OF HIS NEEDS IN THE MEANTIME. DAVID HAD NO NEED, THEREFORE, TO BE VIOLENT AND VENGEFUL. THE MESSAGE OF ABIGAIL’S WORDS WAS A THEOLOGICAL ONE, MAKING CLEAR DAVID’S POSITION IN GOD’S SIGHT. WE MAY ADD THAT HER MESSAGE WAS A VERY SENSIBLE ONE FROM A HUMAN STANDPOINT AS WELL: IF DAVID HAD ATTACKED A LOCAL FARMER, IT IS VERY UNLIKELY THAT HE WOULD EVER HAVE WON THE SUPPORT OF THE TRIBE OF JUDAH AT A LATER DATE. 25:36–44 DAVID’S MARRIAGES. THE END OF THE STORY RELATES THE DEATH OF NABAL, FOLLOWED BY DAVID’S TAKING THE WIDOW, ABIGAIL, IN MARRIAGE. NABAL’S DEATH WAS AFTER ALL A NATURAL ONE, FROM THE HUMAN STANDPOINT; BUT THE WRITER CONVEYS THE GENERAL TRUTH THAT ALL LIFE AND DEATH ARE IN GOD’S HANDS. WE MAY BE SURE THAT NABAL’S NEIGHBORS SHARED THAT BELIEF, AND TOOK NOTE THAT GOD MIGHT PUNISH ANY HOSTILITY TO DAVID. SO, THE DEATH OF NABAL MAY HAVE HELPED DAVID’S CAUSE. DAVID’S ONLY WIFE TILL NOW WAS SAUL’S DAUGHTER, MICHAL (18:27). SAUL HAD REMARRIED HER TO ANOTHER MAN (44). THIS ACT SHOWED HIS HATRED OF DAVID; IT WAS ALSO A POLITICAL MOVE, INTENDED TO DESTROY ANY CLAIM TO THE THRONE DAVID MIGHT HAVE HAD AS SAUL’S SON-IN-LAW. POLITICAL MARRIAGES WERE COMMON AT THE TIME, AND BY HIS MARRIAGES TO ABIGAIL AND AHINOAM (42–43) DAVID WAS MAKING IMPORTANT LINKS WITH INFLUENTIAL FAMILIES IN JUDAH. HIS FUTURE WAY TO KINGSHIP WOULD BE DUE TO THE SUPPORT OF THE TRIBE OF JUDAH, NOT BECAUSE OF ANY SUPPORT FROM THE EXISTING ROYAL COURT. THE WRITER DOES NOT SAY SO, BUT HE PLAINLY SAW DAVID’S MARRIAGE TO ABIGAIL AS PART OF GOD’S PLANS FOR HIM. 26:1–25 DAVID IN SAUL’S CAMP. THE KERNEL OF THIS NARRATIVE IS THE SAME AS THAT OF CH. 24. SAUL TOOK AN ARMY INTO JUDAH TO HUNT FOR DAVID, AND ALMOST CAUGHT HIM; DAVID HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO KILL SAUL BUT INSTEAD HE CONVERSED WITH THE KING, WHO CONFESSED THAT HE HAD WRONGED DAVID. SOME OF THE DETAILS ARE VERY SIMILAR TO THOSE OF CH. 24, SUCH AS THE PART PLAYED BY THE ZIPHITES (1). BUT MANY OTHER DETAILS ARE TOTALLY DIFFERENT. HERE DAVID IS NOT ACCIDENTALLY HIDING IN A CAVE AS IN CH. 24, BUT DELIBERATELY VISITING SAUL’S CAMP. ABNER COMES INTO THIS STORY, BUT PLAYS NO PART IN CH. 24. SOME SCHOLARS NEVERTHELESS SUPPOSE THAT BOTH CHAPTERS ARE DEALING IN DIFFERENT WAYS WITH THE SAME EVENT. THE IMPORTANT QUESTION IS WHY THE BIBLICAL AUTHOR DECIDED TO USE TWO SUCH SIMILAR STORIES. THE ANSWER IS PARTLY THAT HE WANTED TO REINFORCE THE EMPHASIS OF CH. 24. THE ISRAELITES PUT FAITH IN DOUBLE TESTIMONY (DT. 19:15), AND HERE FOR THE SECOND TIME DAVID RESISTED TEMPTATION AND REFUSED TO HARM THE LORD’S ANOINTED (9); ALSO FOR THE SECOND TIME, SAUL ADMITTED HIS OWN WRONG-DOING (21) AND ACKNOWLEDGED THAT DAVID WOULD HAVE A GREAT FUTURE (25). SO ONCE AGAIN THE WRITER EMPHASIZES DAVID’S REFUSAL TO DO ANY HARM TO SAUL, AND THE FACT THAT (IN HIS BETTER MOMENTS) SAUL TOOK ALL THE BLAME ON HIMSELF. THE NEW ELEMENT IN THIS STORY LIES IN DAVID’S WORDS IN V 19. THIS VERSE LOOKS AHEAD TO THE NEXT CHAPTER, WHEN DAVID RELUCTANTLY LEFT THE LAND OF ISRAEL AND TOOK REFUGE WITH THE PHILISTINES. DAVID’S ENEMIES LATER ARGUED THAT DAVID WAS A TRAITOR TO ISRAEL WHO HAD EVEN WORSHIPPED FALSE GODS IN PHILISTIA. V 19 DOES NOT MEAN THAT DAVID WOULD IN REALITY WORSHIP PHILISTINE GODS, BUT IT DOES DRAW OUR ATTENTION TO THE FACT THAT IN FOREIGN TERRITORY THERE WOULD BE NO TEMPLES TO STEPHEN YAHWEH WHERE DAVID COULD WORSHIP THE TRUE GOD. DAVID THEREFORE EXPRESSED HIS GREAT RELUCTANCE TO LEAVE ISRAEL’S BORDERS, SO MUCH SO THAT HE PRONOUNCED A CURSE ON THOSE WHO WOULD BE RESPONSIBLE FOR IT. NOTE. 21 SAUL CALLED HIMSELF A FOOL, JUST AS ABIGAIL HAD CALLED HER HUSBAND A FOOL FOR OPPOSING DAVID (25:25). THE TWO HEBREW WORDS ARE DIFFERENT, BUT THE IDEA IS THE SAME. ALL WHO OPPOSE GOD’S PLANS ARE EVENTUALLY SHOWN TO BE FOOLS.**

**27:1–30:31 DAVID IN PHILISTINE TERRITORY**

**THIS WAS TO BE THE MOST DIFFICULT PERIOD OF DAVID’S CAREER. UNABLE TO STAY IN ISRAELITE TERRITORY, HE WAS FORCED TO TAKE REFUGE WITH ONE OF THE PHILISTINE KINGS. DAVID LED A SMALL ARMY, AND IT IS OBVIOUS THAT THE PHILISTINES WOULD NOT WELCOME ISRAELITE SOLDIERS UNLESS THEY COULD BE TRUSTED TO FIGHT AGAINST THEIR FELLOW-ISRAELITES. DAVID’S MEN HAD THE INITIAL ADVANTAGE THAT SAUL, THE KING OF ISRAEL, WAS UNDOUBTEDLY THEIR ENEMY. DAVID HAD TO PERSUADE THE PHILISTINES THAT HE AND HIS MEN WERE AND WOULD REMAIN THE ENEMY OF BOTH SAUL AND ISRAEL AS A WHOLE. YET OF COURSE, DAVID HAD NO WISH TO ATTACK ISRAELITES, AND HE WOULD NEVER HAVE BECOME KING OF ISRAEL IF HE HAD EVER DONE SO. SO, HE FACED A VERY DIFFICULT TASK, IN ADDITION TO THE PROBLEM OF FEEDING AND FINANCING HIS ARMY. YET HE SUCCEEDED, FOR GOD WAS STILL ‘WITH HIM’. 27:1–12 DAVID AND KING ACHISH. DAVID’S RECENT NARROW ESCAPES FROM SAUL PROVED TO HIM THAT HE COULD NOT CONTINUE INDEFINITELY TO AVOID CAPTURE AND DEATH. HIS BAND OF 600 MEN COULD NOT REMAIN HIDDEN FOR LONG. WE MAY ASSUME THAT THEY WOULD HAVE RECEIVED NO WELCOME FROM ANY NEUTRAL COUNTRY OR FROM ANY ALLY OF SAUL’S. DAVID’S ONLY HOPE WAS TO BECOME AN APPARENT ALLY OF SAUL’S ENEMIES, THE PHILISTINES. SO, HE RETURNED TO GATH, WHICH HE HAD BRIEFLY VISITED SOME TIME PREVIOUSLY (21:10–15). THIS TIME HE HAD THE FULL RESPECT OF THE PHILISTINE KING, ACHISH, AND WAS GIVEN A HEADQUARTERS, THE TOWN OF ZIKLAG. WE MAY SEE GOD’S OVERRULING EVEN IN THIS PHILISTINE DECISION. ZIKLAG WAS NEAR THE ISRAELITE FRONTIER (SEE MAP OF ISRAEL’S TRIBAL TERRITORIES IN DEUTERONOMY), AND ACHISH EXPECTED DAVID TO ATTACK ISRAELITES IN JUDAH. ZIKLAG, HOWEVER, WAS ALSO CLOSE TO ANOTHER FRONTIER; TO THE SOUTH OF ZIKLAG LIVED SEVERAL TRIBES WHO WERE ENEMIES OF BOTH ISRAEL AND THE PHILISTINES. THIS GAVE DAVID THE OPPORTUNITY TO BENEFIT THE PEOPLE OF JUDAH, BY ATTACKING THEIR ENEMIES, AND AT THE SAME TIME TO DECEIVE ACHISH. ACHISH COULD SEE FOR HIMSELF THE SPOILS OF WAR, BUT HE DID NOT GUESS WHERE THEY CAME FROM. DAVID WAS ALSO BENEFITING HIMSELF, BECAUSE THESE SPOILS OF WAR MET THE NEEDS OF HIS MEN FOR FOOD AND LIVELIHOOD. DAVID’S SKILL IN SEIZING SUCH AN OPPORTUNITY IS CLEAR. FROM A CHRISTIAN STANDPOINT, WE CANNOT ADMIRE HIS USE OF DECEIT NOR HIS BUTCHERY OF MEN AND WOMEN ALIKE. THE PASSAGE IS NOT, OF COURSE, COMMENDING DECEIT AND CRUELTY. BASICALLY, IT IS SHOWING HOW DESPERATE DAVID’S SITUATION WAS—A SITUATION WHICH HAD BEEN CREATED BY SAUL. IT ALSO SHOWS DAVID’S DETERMINATION TO DO NOTHING TO HARM HIS OWN PEOPLE, BUT TO DO ANYTHING AND EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO HELP THEM. HIS FIRST DUTY WAS TO ISRAEL, AND HE FELT NO OBLIGATIONS AT ALL TO ISRAEL’S ENEMIES. 28:1–25 SAUL CONSULTS A MEDIUM. EVENTS NOW BEGAN TO MOVE TOWARDS A CLIMAX. THE CLOSING CHAPTERS OF 1 SAMUEL DEAL WITH A SINGLE MAJOR EVENT, A GREAT BATTLE BETWEEN ISRAEL AND THE PHILISTINES, AND WITH THE ACTIONS AND FORTUNES OF THE THREE PARTIES INVOLVED—SAUL AND THE ISRAELITE ARMY, THE PHILISTINE ARMY, AND DAVID AND HIS SMALLER ARMY. THE PHILISTINES INITIATED THESE EVENTS, MUSTERING THEIR FORCES IN STRENGTH (1, 4). MOST OF THE BATTLES BETWEEN ISRAEL AND THE PHILISTINES TOOK PLACE IN THE SOUTHERN PART OF THE COUNTRY, BUT NOW THE PHILISTINES CHANGED THEIR STRATEGY AND MUSTERED IN THE NORTH, AT SHUNEM. THEY WERE PROBABLY TRYING TO CUT ISRAEL IN TWO, SEPARATING SAUL FROM HIS NORTHERN TRIBES. AT ANY RATE, SAUL COULD NOT IGNORE THIS THREAT, AND IT SEEMS THAT HE WAS FORCED TO FIGHT ON LEVEL GROUND, WHERE PHILISTINE CHARIOTS GAVE THEM A GREAT ADVANTAGE. (USUALLY THE ISRAELITES WERE ABLE TO FIGHT IN THE HILLS, WHERE CHARIOTS WERE OF LITTLE USE.) ISRAEL WAS, THEREFORE, IN A DANGEROUS SITUATION, AND SAUL WAS DESPERATELY IN NEED OF MILITARY ADVICE. ALTHOUGH THE STORY IS TOLD IN PERSONAL TERMS, IT IS IMPORTANT TO REALIZE THAT SAUL WAS SEEKING GUIDANCE AS KING OF ISRAEL, NOT AS A PRIVATE INDIVIDUAL. BUT AS KING OF ISRAEL HE COULD GET NO PROPHETIC HELP. V 6 MENTIONS THE THREE-USUAL MEANS FOR LEARNING STEPHEN YAHWEH’S WILL; THE URIM REFERS TO THE PRIESTLY EPHOD (SEE 14:37). SAUL COULD NO LONGER CONSULT SAMUEL, WHO HAD RECENTLY DIED, UNLESS HE COULD DO SO THROUGH A MEDIUM; BUT SAUL HIMSELF HAD DRIVEN ALL THE MEDIUMS OUT OF THE CENTRAL PART OF HIS REALM. THE OT LAWS ATTACK THE PRACTICE OF CONSULTING THE DEAD (NECROMANCY) (SEE LV. 19:31; DT. 18:9–14) AND SAUL HAD UPHELD SUCH LAWS. IT WAS A SIGN OF HIS DESPERATION THAT HE NOW CONSULTED A MEDIUM, AND THAT TO DO SO HE HAD TO GO AS FAR NORTH AS ENDOR, A JOURNEY TO THE FAR SIDE OF THE PHILISTINE CAMP. THE BIBLICAL AUTHOR HERE IS NOT CONCERNED EITHER TO ATTACK OR TO RIDICULE THE PRACTICE OF NECROMANCY; HE IS SIMPLY INTENDING TO PORTRAY SAUL’S DESPERATION AND STEPHEN YAHWEH’S FIRM DECISIONS. WHETHER GOD ALLOWED SAMUEL HIMSELF TO REAPPEAR OR WHETHER SOME SPIRIT TOOK THE FORM OF SAMUEL, THE FACT WAS THAT SO FAR AS SAUL WAS CONCERNED, HE SAW SAMUEL AND HE HEARD THE VOICE OF SAMUEL. THIS VOICE REPEATED AND CONFIRMED STEPHEN YAHWEH’S REJECTION OF SAUL AND CHOICE OF DAVID. V 19 ADDS A NEW PREDICTION, ABOUT THE OUTCOME OF THE BATTLE NEXT DAY. THE INTENTION OF THIS STORY IS TO EMPHASIZE SAUL’S HOPELESSNESS—AND TO SHOW HOW LOW HE HAD SUNK, WHEN EVEN A CRIMINAL HELPED TO COMFORT HIM. FOR THE WOMAN WAS A CRIMINAL, BY SAUL’S OWN LAWS. THE CHAPTER IS CERTAINLY NOT ENDORSING THE ACTIVITIES OF MEDIUMS; GOD’S GUIDANCE IS NEVER TO BE OBTAINED FROM THEM. 29:1–11 THE PHILISTINES AND DAVID. WE HAVE SEEN IN CH. 28 HOW HELPLESS SAUL WAS, AND THAT HIS SITUATION WAS HOPELESS. IN A DIFFERENT WAY, DAVID SEEMED EQUALLY HELPLESS, AT THE MERCY OF PHILISTINE DECISIONS. HIS GROUP OF MEN WAS TOO SMALL TO FIGHT THE PHILISTINES, AND HE DARED NOT DISOBEY ORDERS; THE ONLY HOPE HE COULD SEE WAS TO CONTINUE TO DECEIVE ACHISH. IT IS DIFFICULT TO GUESS WHAT DAVID WOULD HAVE DONE IF ACHISH HAD PERSUADED THE OTHER PHILISTINE RULERS OF DAVID’S LOYALTY AND RELIABILITY. HOWEVER, THE OTHER PHILISTINE KINGS OVERRULED ACHISH. THEY COULD CLEARLY SEE THE DANGER THAT DAVID’S ARMY MIGHT CHANGE SIDES DURING THE BATTLE, WHICH COULD THEN HAVE CAUSED A DEFEAT FOR THE PHILISTINES (4). THEY ALSO REMEMBERED DAVID’S REPUTATION AS A SOLDIER, WHICH THE ISRAELITE WOMEN HAD COMMEMORATED IN SONG (5; SEE 18:7). THE AUTHOR DOES NOT SAY SO, BUT HE LEAVES THE READER TO COME TO THE CONCLUSION THAT IT WAS REALLY GOD WHO OVERRULED ACHISH AND RESCUED DAVID FROM AN IMPOSSIBLE SITUATION. NOTES. 1 THE EPISODE OCCURRED AT APHEK, BEFORE THE PHILISTINES MARCHED ON NORTHWARDS AND CAMPED AT SHUNEM (28:1). IN OTHER WORDS, THE EVENTS OF CH. 29 TOOK PLACE BEFORE THOSE OF CH. 28. 6 ACHISH HERE SWEARS BY THE GOD OF ISRAEL, PRESUMABLY BECAUSE HE WAS ADDRESSING AN ISRAELITE. HIS REFERENCE IN V 9 TO AN ANGEL OF GOD IS LESS SPECIFIC; IT WAS PERHAPS A CONVENTIONAL PHRASE. THERE IS NO SUGGESTION IN THIS PASSAGE THAT ACHISH WORSHIPPED STEPHEN YAHWEH. 11 THE ISRAELITE CAMP WAS ALREADY AT JEZREEL (1), SO THIS VERSE SIGNALS THE START OF THE BATTLE. 30:1–17 DAVID DEFEATS THE AMALEKITES. THE NARRATIVE FOLLOWS DAVID SOUTHWARDS, BACK TO HIS HEADQUARTERS AT ZIKLAG, AND LEAVES THE STORY OF THE BATTLE OF GILBOA UNTIL CH. 31. PART OF THE WRITER’S PURPOSE IN GIVING SO MUCH DETAIL IS TO EMPHASIZE THAT DAVID AND HIS MEN WERE MANY MILES AWAY FROM THE PHILISTINE ARMY WHEN THE BATTLE TOOK PLACE. WE CAN READILY IMAGINE THAT DAVID’S ENEMIES LATER SPREAD THE FALSE RUMOR THAT DAVID AND HIS MEN HAD HELPED THE PHILISTINES TO DEFEAT SAUL’S ARMY. ON THE CONTRARY, THIS CHAPTER SHOWS DAVID ATTACKING ISRAEL’S ENEMIES THE AMALEKITES WHILE THE BATTLE BETWEEN SAUL AND THE PHILISTINES WAS TAKING PLACE. ANOTHER IMPORTANT ASPECT OF THIS STORY IS THAT THE ENEMY IS AMALEK. SAUL’S FAILURE TO ELIMINATE THIS PEOPLE, WHO HAD BEEN SUCH A LONGSTANDING THREAT TO ISRAEL, HAS BEEN RECORDED IN CH. 15. IT WAS THE CAUSE OF STEPHEN YAHWEH’S REJECTION OF SAUL. NOW IN CH. 30, DAVID IS DESCRIBED AS DOING WHAT SAUL OUGHT TO HAVE DONE. 30:18–31 DAVID’S PLUNDER. NOMADIC RAIDERS ARE NOT EASY TO FIND, AND IT WAS A NEAR-MIRACLE THAT DAVID RECOVERED EVERYTHING THAT THE AMALEKITES HAD TAKEN. V 7 MAKES AN IMPORTANT POINT, CONTRASTING DAVID’S CONDUCT IN A VERY DIFFICULT SITUATION WITH SAUL’S IN CH. 28. SAUL HAD CONSULTED A MEDIUM, BUT DAVID WENT TO THE MAN OF GOD IN ORDER TO LEARN GOD’S WILL. SAUL’S CONSULTATION HAD ENDED IN UTTER DESPAIR, DAVID’S ENDED IN ENCOURAGEMENT (6). NOT ONLY HAD GOD INTERVENED TO PREVENT DAVID FROM HAVING TO FIGHT AGAINST FELLOW-ISRAELITES, BUT GOD’S TIMING WAS PERFECT TOO. DAVID AND HIS MEN HAD ARRIVED BACK IN ZIKLAG LONG BEFORE THE AMALEKITES HAD EXPECTED THEM. OTHERWISE THE CAPTURED WIVES AND CHILDREN WOULD HAVE BEEN SOLD INTO SLAVERY. THE PASSAGE SHOWS HOW DAVID IMPOSED HIS AUTHORITY ON HIS TROOPS WHO WERE FIERCE MEN (SEE V 6) AND WHO INCLUDED TROUBLE-MAKERS AMONG THEM (22). HERE WE SEE HIM ALREADY TAKING DECISION SUCH AS A KING WOULD USUALLY MAKE (SEE V 25 ESPECIALLY). HIS OVERALL POLICY WAS TO BENEFIT ALL HIS PEOPLE EQUALLY, AND ALSO TO REPAY HOSPITALITY TO THE TOWNS AND AREAS OF JUDAH WHERE HE AND HIS MEN HAD PREVIOUSLY BEEN FUGITIVES FROM SAUL (27–31). THIS WAS A SHREWD POLITICAL MOVE: WHEN THE TIME CAME, THE PEOPLE OF JUDAH FREELY CHOSE HIM AS THEIR KING RATHER THAN SERVE A SON OF SAUL (2 SA. 2:10).**

**31:1–13 THE BATTLE OF GILBOA**

**THE BATTLE IS NAMED AFTER MOUNT GILBOA. THE BATTLE BEGAN ON THE PLAIN, BUT THE DEFEATED ISRAELITES WERE DRIVEN UP THE SLOPES OF THE HILL-SIDE WHERE MANY OF THEM DIED, INCLUDING BOTH SAUL AND JONATHAN. THE CHAPTER DOES NOT GIVE THE NUMBER OF CASUALTIES, BUT EVIDENTLY IT WAS A MAJOR PHILISTINE VICTORY, ENABLING THEM TO OCCUPY SEVERAL ISRAELITE TOWNS (7). SAUL’S REIGN THUS ENDED IN DISASTER, FOR SAUL HIMSELF AND FOR ISRAEL. IT SEEMED THAT THE GODS OF THE PHILISTINES HAD TRIUMPHED; BUT 2 SAMUEL WILL GO ON TO TELL HOW DAVID DEFEATED THE PHILISTINES PERMANENTLY. THE LAST PARAGRAPH OF THE CHAPTER MAKES A FITTING END TO THE STORY OF SAUL’S KINGSHIP. HIS FIRST ACT AS KING HAD BEEN TO RESCUE THE CITY OF JABESH GILEAD (CH. 11); ITS CITIZENS NOW RESCUED HIS BODY AND GAVE HIS BONES A DECENT BURIAL. IT IS PUZZLING WHY THEY BURNED THE BODIES, SINCE CREMATION DOES NOT SEEM TO HAVE BEEN AN ISRAELITE CUSTOM. WHATEVER THE REASON, THE ACTION WAS MEANT TO HONOR THE DEAD. SO, 1 SAMUEL ENDS ON A NOTE OF TRAGEDY. IT WAS, HOWEVER, A TRAGEDY FORETOLD BY GOD’S SPOKESMAN (28:19), AND IT DID NOT MEAN THAT ISRAEL’S GOD HAD BEEN DEFEATED. HE HAD ALREADY CHOSEN THE NEXT KING OF ISRAEL, AND EQUIPPED HIM TO BE A BETTER SOLDIER AND A BETTER LEADER THAN SAUL. GOD WOULD DEAL WITH THE PHILISTINE MENACE IN HIS OWN GOOD TIME.**

**THE FAMILY OF DAVID, SIMPLIFIED.**

**2 SA. 1:1–8:18 THE EARLY YEARS OF DAVID’S REIGN**

**1:1–4:12 DAVID AND ISH-BOSHETH**

**THE DEATH OF SAUL OPENED THE WAY FOR DAVID TO FULFIL HIS DESTINY TO BECOME KING OF ISRAEL. THE BIBLICAL WRITER HAS IN 1 SAMUEL UNAMBIGUOUSLY POINTED THE WAY FORWARD TO THIS CONCLUSION. HOWEVER, THERE WERE STILL TWO MAJOR OBSTACLES IN DAVID’S WAY: FROM A HUMAN STANDPOINT, INDEED, THERE WAS NO CERTAINTY THAT DAVID WOULD BECOME KING OF ALL ISRAEL. THE FIRST OBSTACLE WAS THE FACT THAT ONE OF SAUL’S SONS, ISH-BOSHETH, HAD NOT BEEN KILLED IN THE BATTLE OF GILBOA, AND HE WAS SOON RECOGNIZED AS KING BY MOST OF THE TRIBES (SEE 2:9). DAVID BECAME KING IN JUDAH, AND CIVIL WAR RESULTED. THE OTHER OBSTACLE WAS THE PHILISTINES WHO WERE DETERMINED TO KEEP ISRAEL WEAK AND IN SUBJECTION TO THEM. THE PHILISTINES, HOWEVER, MADE A TACTICAL ERROR. THEY TOOK NO ACTION TO PREVENT DAVID BECOMING KING IN JUDAH, PRESUMABLY BECAUSE THEY WISHED TO ENCOURAGE CIVIL WAR AMONG THE ISRAELITES, THINKING IT WOULD DIVIDE AND WEAKEN ISRAEL. NOR, APPARENTLY, DID THEY ATTACK ISH-BOSHETH, FOR THE SAME REASON. THUS, DAVID DID NOT HAVE TWO ENEMIES SIMULTANEOUSLY, AND SO HE WAS ABLE TO OVERCOME BOTH OBSTACLES, ONE AFTER THE OTHER. THE BIBLICAL WRITER IS IN NO DOUBT THAT GOD OVER-RULED IN THESE PHILISTINE DECISIONS, AS IN ALL THE OTHER EVENTS WHICH BROUGHT DAVID TO THE THRONE OF ALL ISRAEL. 1:1–16 THE AMALEKITE MESSENGER. AT THE START OF THIS NARRATIVE, DAVID IS STILL IN ZIKLAG (SEE 1 SA. 30:26), AWAITING NEWS ABOUT THE PHILISTINE INVASION OF NORTHERN ISRAEL. IT IS IRONIC THAT THE MESSENGER WHO BROUGHT THE NEWS OF GILBOA WAS AN AMALEKITE, A MEMBER OF THE NATION WHICH HAD BEEN SUCH A PERSISTENT ENEMY TO ISRAEL. BOTH SAUL AND DAVID HAD FOUGHT AGAINST THEM. THIS AMALEKITE, HOWEVER, WAS AN IMMIGRANT TO ISRAEL, A RESIDENT ALIEN (13). IT IS NO SURPRISE TO THE READER TO BE TOLD OF THE DEATH OF SAUL AND JONATHAN, BUT THE MANNER OF SAUL’S DEATH AS DESCRIBED BY THE AMALEKITE IS UNEXPECTED. IT IS JUST POSSIBLE THAT SAUL LIVED FOR A SHORT TIME AFTER FALLING ON HIS OWN SWORD (1 SA. 31:4), UNTIL THE AMALEKITE ARRIVED ON THE SCENE AND KILLED HIM (10) AT HIS OWN REQUEST. BUT THE AMALEKITE WAS PROBABLY TELLING SOME LIES. IN GENERAL, IT SEEMS MORE LIKELY THAT HE WAS ROBBING CORPSES ON THE BATTLEFIELD THAN THAT HE JUST HAPPENED TO BE IN THE MIDDLE OF A FIERCE BATTLE (6). WE ARE NOT TOLD WHETHER DAVID FULLY BELIEVED HIM OR NOT, BUT HE ACCEPTED THE EVIDENCE OF THE MAN’S WORDS (16) AND OF THE CROWN AND ARMBAND HE BROUGHT FROM GILBOA, IN THE ABSENCE OF ANY HUMAN WITNESSES. ON THE BASIS OF THAT EVIDENCE, DAVID EXECUTED THE MESSENGER. DAVID’S ACTION IN DOING SO IS FULLY CONSISTENT WITH HIS ATTITUDE TO SAUL’S PERSON EXPRESSED IN 1 SA. 24:6 AND 26:9. THE KING WAS THE LORD’S ANOINTED, AND THE AMALEKITE, AS A RESIDENT OF ISRAEL, WAS UNDER OBLIGATION TO OBEY ISRAEL’S LAW-CODE, YET HE HAD KILLED ISRAEL’S KING. IN EXECUTING HIM AS A MURDERER, DAVID WAS ALREADY ACTING AS IF HE WERE KING AND JUDGE. THERE IS A FURTHER POLITICAL ASPECT TO THE EPISODE. IN ACTING AS HE DID, DAVID WAS DEMONSTRATING ONCE AGAIN THAT HE WAS NO ENEMY OF SAUL: HE DEFENDED THE DEAD KING’S RIGHTS TO THE LAST. 1:17–27 DAVID’S LAMENT. THE POEM IN VS 19–27 IS NOT A PRIVATE LAMENT TO EXPRESS DAVID’S EMOTIONS BUT A NATIONAL POEM, DESCRIBING IN MEMORABLE LANGUAGE THE DEPTH OF ISRAEL’S LOSS. THE LAMENT WAS PUBLISHED (TO USE A MODERN EQUIVALENT)—RECORDED IN WRITING AND MADE KNOWN THROUGHOUT THE NATION (18). THE BOOK OF JASHAR WAS AN ANCIENT DOCUMENT USED BY SOME OT WRITERS (SEE ALSO JOS. 10:13). WE DO NOT KNOW WHY THE POEM WAS ENTITLED LAMENT OF THE BOW. GOD HAD REJECTED SAUL, AS 1 SAMUEL MADE REPEATEDLY CLEAR; BUT THIS POEM LOOKS AT SAUL FROM A HUMAN STANDPOINT, AND REMINDS US OF HIS SIGNIFICANCE TO ISRAEL OVER A NUMBER OF YEARS: GIVING LEADERSHIP, CREATING NATIONAL UNITY, DRIVING THE PHILISTINES BACK, AND BRINGING ISRAEL PROSPERITY (SEE V 24). JONATHAN IS BRACKETED WITH SAUL, BOTH BECAUSE OF DAVID’S DEEP FRIENDSHIP WITH HIM AND BECAUSE OF HIS MILITARY SUCCESSES (SEE 1 SA. 14). THE POETIC IMAGERY THROUGHOUT THE LAMENT NEEDS TO BE NOTED, BUT IT IS READILY UNDERSTOOD. IN V 20 DAVID EXPRESSES THE HOPE THAT THE NEWS OF SAUL’S DEATH COULD BE KEPT FROM THE ENEMY: GATH AND ASHKELON WERE TWO IMPORTANT PHILISTINE CITIES. IN V 21 HE CURSES THE HILLS OF GILBOA, WHERE SAUL AND JONATHAN HAD BEEN KILLED. IN THE LAST VERSE OF HIS LAMENT DAVID CALLS SAUL AND JONATHAN ‘WARRIORS’ (NIV MIGHTY) AND ‘WEAPONS OF WAR’, REMINDING READERS OF THE FACT THAT THEIR DEATHS WERE IN THE CONTEXT OF A DISASTROUS DEFEAT FOR ISRAEL. THE POEM EXPRESSES NO HOPE FOR THE FUTURE, BUT DAVID HIMSELF WAS DESTINED TO SUPPLY HOPE AND VICTORY TO A DEFEATED NATION. 2:1–7 DAVID BECOMES KING IN JUDAH. SAUL’S DEATH MEANT THAT DAVID WAS NOW FREE TO MOVE OUT OF PHILISTINE TERRITORY AND BACK TO HIS NATIVE JUDAH. TWO THINGS MIGHT HAVE OBSTRUCTED THIS MOVE. IF SAUL HAD LEFT A STRONG SUCCESSOR, EQUALLY HOSTILE TO DAVID, IT WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE. IF THE PHILISTINES HAD OBJECTED TO THE MOVE, IT WOULD HAVE BEEN VERY DIFFICULT. SO, IT IS NOT SURPRISING THAT DAVID ENQUIRED OF THE LORD ABOUT IT; IN OTHER WORDS, HE ASKED ABIATHAR TO CONSULT THE SACRED ORACLE (SEE 1 SA. 23:9–12). NEITHER THE BIBLICAL WRITER NOR THE READER FINDS IT SURPRISING THAT DAVID WAS NOW MADE KING (ALTHOUGH OVER ONLY ONE TRIBE, JUDAH). GOD’S WILL HAD BEEN CLEARLY REVEALED, AS EARLY AS 1 SA. 16. HOWEVER, FROM A PURELY POLITICAL STANDPOINT, THE DECISION OF THE MEN OF JUDAH COULD NOT HAVE BEEN PREDICTED. THE DEATH OF SAUL AND THE OVERWHELMING PHILISTINE VICTORY AT GILBOA MUST HAVE CREATED POLITICAL CHAOS THROUGHOUT ISRAEL, AND THE TRIBAL ELDERS MUST HAVE BEEN VERY UNCERTAIN AT FIRST AS TO THE WISEST COURSE OF ACTION. DAVID HAD AT LEAST THREE THINGS TO OFFER THEM: A GOOD REPUTATION AS A SOLDIER, A HISTORY OF HELPFUL ACTIONS TOWARDS JUDAH, AND SOME SORT OF ALLIANCE OR UNDERSTANDING WITH THE PHILISTINES. HE WAS ALSO, OF COURSE, A JUDEAN HIMSELF. DAVID’S MESSAGE TO THE CITY OF JABESH GILEAD IS OF SPECIAL INTEREST. THIS CITY HAD STRONG LINKS WITH SAUL (SEE 1 SA. 11; 31:11–13), AND IT LAY IN TRANSJORDAN, IN THE SAME AREA WHERE DAVID’S RIVAL KING ISH-BOSHETH HAD ESTABLISHED HIS CAPITAL CITY, MAHANAIM (8–9). WE WOULD, THEREFORE, HAVE EXPECTED ISH-BOSHETH, RATHER THAN DAVID, TO SEND JABESH GILEAD SUCH A MESSAGE OF THANKS AND ENCOURAGEMENT. DAVID WAS IN FACT ALREADY INDICATING TO ISRAELITES OUTSIDE JUDAH THAT HE BELIEVED HE WAS THE TRUE SUCCESSOR TO SAUL, AND HAD AUTHORITY OVER ALL ISRAEL. HIS MESSAGE IGNORED THE EXISTENCE OF ISH-BOSHETH. DAVID’S CAPITAL CITY WAS HEBRON, TOWARDS THE SOUTH OF JUDAH. LATER, JERUSALEM WOULD BECOME HIS CAPITAL, BUT AT THIS POINT IN TIME JERUSALEM WAS NOT IN ISRAELITE HANDS. IN FACT, JERUSALEM MAY HAVE BEEN A PARTIAL BARRIER, SEPARATING JUDAH FROM THE ISRAELITE TRIBES FURTHER NORTH. IF SO, IT WOULD HELP TO EXPLAIN WHY JUDAH MADE ITS OWN DECISION AND CHOSE ITS OWN KING. 2:8–32 CIVIL WAR. ABNER (FIRST MENTIONED IN 1 SA. 14:50) HAD EVIDENTLY ESCAPED FROM THE BATTLEFIELD WHERE SAUL HAD DIED, AND HE TOOK CHARGE OF ISRAELITE AFFAIRS IN THE NORTHERN PART OF THE COUNTRY. ALTHOUGH HE HIMSELF WAS A CLOSE RELATIVE OF SAUL, HE DID NOT MAKE HIMSELF KING BUT TRIED TO RALLY ISRAELITE SUPPORT TO SAUL’S SURVIVING SON ISH-BOSHETH. SO ISH-BOSHETH BECAME KING; IN THEORY OVER ALL ISRAEL (9), BUT IN REALITY, OVER A LIMITED AREA. NO DOUBT THE PHILISTINES WERE NOW THE REAL MASTERS OF THE CENTRAL AREAS OF ISRAEL, ESPECIALLY THE TRIBAL REGIONS OF EPHRAIM AND BENJAMIN. ISH-BOSHETH’S MAIN AREA OF CONTROL WAS EAST OF THE RIVER JORDAN (GILEAD), AND HIS CAPITAL MAHANAIM WAS THERE (SEE MAP OF DAVID’S EMPIRE IN 1 KINGS). STILL, EPHRAIM AND BENJAMIN AND SOME OTHER GROUPS (9) RECOGNIZED HIM AS KING, DESPITE THE REALITIES OF THE SITUATION. THERE IS NO OBVIOUS REASON WHY DAVID SHOULD HAVE ATTACKED ISH-BOSHETH, SO IT SEEMS PROBABLE THAT ISH-BOSHETH DECIDED TO ATTACK DAVID IN ORDER TO BRING JUDAH UNDER HIS CONTROL. ISH-BOSHETH’S TROOPS WERE SENT TO GIBEON, JUST NORTH OF THE BORDER OF JUDAH, AND DAVID SENT HIS OWN TROOPS TO BLOCK THEIR ADVANCE. AS IN 1 SA. 17, BOTH SIDES TRIED TO AVOID UNNECESSARY BLOODSHED BY USING PICKED CHAMPIONS TO SETTLE THE ISSUE. PERHAPS BOTH SIDES BELIEVED THAT STEPHEN YAHWEH WOULD SHOW HIS WILL BE GIVING A CLEAR VICTORY TO ONE GROUP OF TWELVE MEN OR THE OTHER. HOWEVER, A REAL BATTLE FOLLOWED (17); VS 30–31 GIVE US SOME IDEA OF THE SCALE OF IT. THE CHIEF PURPOSE BEHIND ALL THE DETAILS GIVEN IN THIS NARRATIVE IS TO INTRODUCE THE READER TO JOAB. JOAB WAS TO BE DAVID’S COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF THROUGHOUT HIS LONG REIGN, AND IT IS CLEAR FROM VS 28–30 THAT HE WAS ALREADY IN COMMAND. THE STORY EXPLAINS HOW IT HAPPENED THAT ABNER, THE ISRAELITE COMMANDER, KILLED ONE OF JOAB’S BROTHERS. ABNER HIMSELF OBVIOUSLY HAD NO WISH TO KILL ASAHEL, ABOVE ALL BECAUSE HE WANTED TO AVOID A BLOOD FEUD. AFTER ASAHEL’S DEATH, JOAB WAS WILLING TO ACT SENSIBLY AND AGREE TO A TRUCE, BUT HIS OWN PERSONAL FEELINGS REMAIN HIDDEN IN THIS CHAPTER. THEY WILL BE REVEALED IN 3:27. 3:1–5 DAVID’S FAMILY. THE WRITER DOES NOT GIVE FURTHER DETAILS OF THE CIVIL WAR, IN WHICH DAVID STEADILY GAINED THE UPPER HAND (1). INSTEAD, HE GIVES DETAILS OF DAVID’S WIVES AND SONS. THE IMPLICATION MAY WELL BE THAT DAVID WAS SECURE AND SETTLED IN JUDAH, UNLIKE ISH-BOSHETH, WHOSE CAUSE WAS DOOMED. SO FAR AS WE KNOW, ISH-BOSHETH HAD NO FAMILY. THE MAIN IMPORTANCE OF THE DETAILS, HOWEVER, IS TO LAY A FOUNDATION FOR LATER EVENTS. SEVERAL OF DAVID’S SONS LATER PLAYED SIGNIFICANT ROLES. AMNON AND ABSALOM ARE THE CHIEF CHARACTERS IN CHS. 13–18, AND ADONIJAH TRIED TO SEIZE THE THRONE IN DAVID’S OLD AGE (1 KI. 1). SOLOMON IS NOT MENTIONED YET: HE WAS BORN LATER, IN JERUSALEM (SEE 12:24). DAVID’S MARRIAGES TO AHINOAM AND ABIGAIL HAVE ALREADY BEEN MENTIONED (1 SA. 25:42–43). HIS MORE RECENT MARRIAGE TO MAACAH WAS TO CEMENT AN ALLIANCE WITH THE KING OF GESHUR, A SMALL STATE IN NORTHERN TRANSJORDAN. 3:6–21 ABNER CHANGES SIDES. IT IS CLEAR FROM V 6 THAT ABNER WAS AN AMBITIOUS MAN. HE WAS POWERFUL ENOUGH IN ISH-BOSHETH’S KINGDOM, BUT BY NOW THE REAL POWER IN ISRAEL LAY IN DAVID’S HANDS, AS ABNER PERCEIVED. WE MAY SUSPECT THAT HE DELIBERATELY PLANNED THE QUARREL WITH ISH-BOSHETH, IN ORDER TO HAVE A GOOD EXCUSE FOR ABANDONING HIM. IT IS NOT ACTUALLY RECORDED THAT HE DID HAVE SEXUAL RELATIONS WITH SAUL’S FORMER CONCUBINE, BUT HE DID NOT DENY THE ACCUSATION. SUCH AN ACT WOULD AMOUNT TO A CLAIM TO SAUL’S THRONE (SEE 16:21–22), AND IT IS NOT SURPRISING THAT ISH-BOSHETH PROTESTED AND A QUARREL RESULTED. ABNER NOW FELT FREE TO SEND MESSENGERS TO DAVID, OFFERING TO HELP MAKE HIM KING OF ALL ISRAEL. HIS QUESTION WHOSE LAND IS IT? (12) WAS INTENDED TO INFORM DAVID THAT HE, ABNER, NOT ISH-BOSHETH, WAS THE MOST INFLUENTIAL MAN WITH THE NORTHERN TRIBES. THIS WAS NO DOUBT TRUE, BUT IF BOTH ABNER AND ISH-BOSHETH HAD LIVED FOR SOME YEARS AFTER THIS, IT IS QUITE LIKELY THAT ABNER WOULD HAVE BEEN FORCED TO FIGHT AGAINST ISH-BOSHETH. THE AGREEMENT ABNER REQUESTED FROM DAVID (12) PROBABLY INCLUDED A HIGH MILITARY POSITION IN DAVID’S ARMY FOR ABNER. DAVID’S INSISTENCE THAT HIS FIRST WIFE MICHAL SHOULD BE RESTORED TO HIM (13–14) HAD SEVERAL MOTIVES. SAUL HAD STOLEN HER FROM HIM IN AN ACT OF CRUELTY AND INJUSTICE (1 SA. 25:44), AND DAVID WAS DETERMINED THAT THE INJUSTICE SHOULD BE PUT RIGHT. THE LOSS OF MICHAL HAD ALSO BEEN A PUBLIC HUMILIATION FOR DAVID, AND THAT TOO MUST BE PUT RIGHT. THERE WAS PROBABLY ALSO A POLITICAL MOTIVE: HIS MARRIAGE TO SAUL’S DAUGHTER GAVE HIM STATUS IN ISRAEL, AND LEGITIMACY TO SUCCEED TO SAUL’S POSITION AS KING. FINALLY, DAVID’S MARRIAGE TO MICHAL HAD BEEN A LOVE-MATCH AT THE START (1 SA. 18:20) AND HIS AFFECTION FOR HER MAY HAVE BEEN AN ADDITIONAL REASON FOR RECLAIMING HER NOW. DAVID WAS IN THE RIGHT, BUT WE CAN STILL FEEL SYMPATHY FOR PALTIEL. ABNER CARRIED OUT HIS SIDE OF THE BARGAIN. WHEN HE REPORTED BACK TO DAVID, HE COULD PROMISE THE IMMEDIATE ACCEPTANCE OF DAVID AS KING BY ALL ISRAEL (21). THIS WAS, OF COURSE, IN DAVID’S INTERESTS AND WE CAN BE SURE THAT HE SHOWED HIS PLEASURE TO ABNER. IN TURN, ABNER MUST HAVE BEEN PLEASED WITH THE DEVELOPING SITUATION, AND HE HAD NO REASON TO BE FEARFUL. SO, HE WENT IN PEACE, AND UNDER ‘SAFE CONDUCT’ (REB). 3:22–39 ABNER’S MURDER. PERHAPS JOAB BELIEVED THAT ABNER WAS A SPY AND NOT TO BE TRUSTED, AS HE TOLD DAVID (25). MORE PROBABLY THAT WAS MERELY AN EXCUSE: V 30 GIVES THE REAL REASON WHY HE MURDERED ABNER IN SUCH A TREACHEROUS WAY. THE MURDER OF ABNER WAS A VERY SERIOUS EMBARRASSMENT TO DAVID. THE MURDERER WAS ONE OF HIS SENIOR OFFICERS, AND THE SUSPICION WOULD HAVE BEEN WIDESPREAD THAT DAVID HAD GIVEN THE INSTRUCTIONS TO KILL ABNER. IN ISH-BOSHETH’S KINGDOM, IT MUST HAVE SEEMED THAT DAVID MEANT TO KILL ALL RELATIVES OF SAUL IN ORDER TO SECURE HIS OWN POSITION. DAVID’S ONLY DEFENSE WAS TO SHOW PUBLICLY, IN EVERY WAY POSSIBLE, THAT HE WAS INNOCENT OF THE MURDER. SO, HE HONORED ABNER AND MOURNED HIM PUBLICLY. V 37 RECORDS THAT HE WAS ABLE TO PERSUADE THE POPULACE, BOTH IN JUDAH AND NORTHERN ISRAEL, OF HIS INNOCENCE. THE FACT THAT THE WRITER TELLS THE FULL STORY OF ABNER’S DEATH SHOWS THAT AT A LATER DATE SOME OF DAVID’S ENEMIES WERE STILL ACCUSING DAVID OF RELENTLESS HOSTILITY TO SAUL AND HIS FAMILY. IT IS TRUE THAT DAVID DID NOTHING TO PUNISH THE KILLER; V 39 GIVES HIS REASON FOR THIS. DAVID DID NOT MEAN THAT HE WAS WEAK IN CHARACTER, BUT THAT JOAB AND HIS BROTHER ABISHAI (THE SONS OF ZERUIAH) WERE TOO INFLUENTIAL IN THE KINGDOM TO BE BROUGHT TO TRIAL. DAVID’S RESENTMENT OF JOAB’S ACTION LASTED FOR MANY YEARS (SEE 1 KI. 2:5–6). 4:1–12 ISH-BOSHETH’S MURDER. THE ASSASSINATION OF ABNER COULD HAVE CAUSED A PERMANENT BREACH BETWEEN THE NORTHERN KINGDOM AND JUDAH, PREVENTING DAVID FROM BECOMING KING OF ALL ISRAEL. HOWEVER, THE OPPOSITE HAPPENED: THE DEATH OF ABNER WEAKENED A WEAK KING AND A WEAK KINGDOM STILL FURTHER. THE WEAK KING WAS ASSASSINATED AND THE KINGDOM COLLAPSED. IT IS NOT EXPLAINED WHY RECAB AND BAANAH MURDERED ISH-BOSHETH. SAUL HAD ONCE ATTACKED GIBEON (SEE 21:2), AND PERHAPS BEEROTH, THE HOME OF RECAB AND BAANAH, HAD SUFFERED WITH IT (THE TWO CITIES ARE LINKED IN JOS. 9:17). WHETHER OR NOT THE ASSASSINS HAD SOME SUCH OLD GRIEVANCE AGAINST SAUL AND HIS FAMILY, THEY CERTAINLY BELIEVED THAT DAVID WOULD REWARD THEM FOR KILLING HIS RIVAL KING. ONCE AGAIN, THEREFORE, DAVID HAD TO PROTECT HIMSELF FROM RUMORS THAT HE HAD GIVEN ORDERS FOR THE MURDER. HE DID SO BY EXECUTING THE MURDERERS AND SPEAKING WELL OF ISH-BOSHETH. THUS, ENDED ISH-BOSHETH’S REIGN. HE PRESUMABLY LEFT NO SONS, AND HIS ONLY CLOSE RELATIVE WAS HIS CRIPPLED NEPHEW (A SON OF ONE’S BROTHER, SISTER, BROTHER-IN-LAW, OR SISTER-IN-LAW) MEPHIBOSHETH (4). CLEARLY, NOBODY SUPPOSED THAT MEPHIBOSHETH WAS CAPABLE OF BECOMING KING. (THE STORY OF MEPHIBOSHETH CONTINUES IN CH. 9.) THE ASSASSINATIONS HAD IN FACT CLEARED THE WAY FOR DAVID TO BECOME KING OF ALL ISRAEL; THE BIBLICAL WRITER KNEW THAT GOD OVERRULED EVEN IN WICKED HUMAN DEEDS, BUT IT IS EASY TO SEE WHY SOME ISRAELITES BELIEVED THAT DAVID HIMSELF HAD ‘OVER-RULED’ AND PAID MEN TO ASSASSINATE ALL HIS RIVALS.**

**5:1–25 DAVID MAJESTIC RULE ETERNALLY ESTABLISHED**

**DAVID TAKES FULL CONTROL**

**THIS RELATIVELY BRIEF CHAPTER RECORDS THREE OF DAVID’S MOST IMPORTANT ACHIEVEMENTS. FIRST, HE UNIFIED THE NATION, AND ALL THE ISRAELITE TRIBES ACKNOWLEDGED HIM AS KING. SECONDLY, HE CAPTURED JERUSALEM WHICH WAS ONE OF A NUMBER OF CITIES INSIDE ISRAELITE TERRITORY BUT NOT UNDER ISRAELITE CONTROL. SUCH CITIES SPLIT THE COUNTRY, SEPARATING ONE ISRAELITE TRIBE FROM ANOTHER. THEIR CANAANITE CITIZENS, TOO, WERE A PERMANENT DANGER, SINCE THEY WERE OFTEN WILLING TO ACT AS THE PHILISTINES’ ALLIES AGAINST ISRAEL. SO, DAVID ELIMINATED THIS DANGER, TAKING CONTROL OF ALL THESE ‘FOREIGN’ CITIES. HIS THIRD ACHIEVEMENT WAS TO ELIMINATE THE PHILISTINE THREAT ALTOGETHER. HE DEFEATED ISRAEL’S OLD ENEMY SO THOROUGHLY THAT THEY NEVER AGAIN POSED A PROBLEM FOR ISRAEL. CH. 8 LISTS FURTHER ACHIEVEMENTS OF DAVID. 5:1–5 KING OF ALL ISRAEL. THIS PARAGRAPH MAKES IT CLEAR THAT DAVID DID NOT CONQUER THE NORTHERN ISRAELITE TRIBES, NOR GOVERN THEM AGAINST THEIR WILL. THE INITIATIVE TO MAKE HIM THEIR KING CAME FROM THEM—THEIR REPRESENTATIVES MADE THE JOURNEY SOUTH TO HEBRON TO INVITE HIM TO BE THEIR KING. CLEARLY THE DEATH OF ISH-BOSHETH HAD MEANT THE COLLAPSE OF GOVERNMENT IN THE NORTH, AND IN THE FACE OF PHILISTINE AGGRESSION THE NORTHERN TRIBAL REPRESENTATIVES WERE ANXIOUS TO GET STRONG AND EFFECTIVE GOVERNMENT. IN THEORY, THEY MIGHT HAVE CHOSEN ONE OF THEMSELVES, BUT THERE WERE THREE POWERFUL REASONS FOR TURNING TO DAVID WHICH ARE OUTLINED IN VS 1–2. THE SUMMARY OF DAVID’S REIGN IN V 5 GIVES A TIME-SCALE FOR THE CAPTURE OF JERUSALEM (DESCRIBED IN VS 6–9). ISH-BOSHETH’S REIGN HAD LASTED ONLY TWO YEARS (2:10), BUT DAVID CONTINUED TO REIGN IN HEBRON FOR MORE THAN FIVE FURTHER YEARS. THE ISRAELITE ELDERS PROBABLY ACKNOWLEDGED HIM AS KING SOON AFTER ISH-BOSHETH’S DEATH, BUT SOME TIME ELAPSED BEFORE HE WAS READY TO ATTACK JERUSALEM. 5:6–16 THE CAPTURE OF JERUSALEM. JERUSALEM WAS ALREADY AN ANCIENT CITY. IN EARLIER TIMES, BOTH THE TRIBES OF JUDAH AND BENJAMIN HAD ATTEMPTED TO CAPTURE IT (SEE JDG. 1:8, 21) BUT IT WAS STILL CONTROLLED BY A CANAANITE PEOPLE CALLED THE JEBUSITES. IT WAS A STRONGLY FORTIFIED CITY, AND THE JEBUSITES WERE CONFIDENT THAT DAVID’S TROOPS COULD NOT CAPTURE IT. THERE ARE UNCERTAINTIES ABOUT THE MEANING OF SOME WORDS AND PHRASES IN VS 6–8, BUT IT SEEMS PROBABLE THAT THE JEBUSITES WERE CONTEMPTUOUS: EVEN A BLIND AND LAME GARRISON WOULD BE ABLE TO DEFEAT DAVID’S ATTACK! BUT INSTEAD OF A DIRECT ATTACK ON THE STRONG WALLS, DAVID’S MEN APPARENTLY FOUND A WATER SHAFT AND WERE ABLE TO ENTER THE CITY UNEXPECTEDLY BY THIS MEANS. JERUSALEM’S MAIN WATER SUPPLY CAME FROM A SPRING OUTSIDE THE CITY WALLS; A NUMBER OF SHAFTS AND TUNNELS HAVE BEEN DISCOVERED BY ARCHAEOLOGISTS. HAVING CAPTURED JERUSALEM, DAVID SOON MADE IT HIS CAPITAL. IT WAS MUCH MORE CENTRAL THAN HEBRON, AND SINCE IT LAY IN BENJAMITE TERRITORY, IT WOULD HELP THE NORTHERN ISRAELITES TO FEEL THAT DAVID WAS TRULY KING OF ALL ISRAEL. DAVID HAD A PALACE BUILT THERE AND ESTABLISHED A ROYAL HAREM. NOTICE THE NAME OF SOLOMON IN V 14. 5:17–25 THE DEFEAT OF THE PHILISTINES. THE PHILISTINES HAD ALLOWED DAVID TO RULE IN JUDAH WITHOUT ANY INTERFERENCE; A DIVIDED ISRAEL GAVE THEM STRENGTH. BUT ONCE ALL THE ISRAELITE TRIBES SUPPORTED DAVID, THE PHILISTINES BECAME HIS ENEMY (17). THEIR ATTACKS PROBABLY OCCURRED BEFORE HIS CAPTURE OF JERUSALEM, AND THE STRONGHOLD MENTIONED IS ADULLAM, DAVID’S EARLIER MILITARY HEADQUARTERS (SEE 1 SA. 22:1–4). BOTH OF THE PHILISTINES’ ATTACKS WERE IN THE VALLEY OF REPHAIM (18, 22) WHICH LAY SOUTH OF JERUSALEM, AND THIS FACT MAY HAVE DRAWN DAVID’S ATTENTION TO THE IMPORTANCE OF MASTERING THIS WHOLE AREA. DAVID’S TWO VICTORIES ARE DESCRIBED BRIEFLY, BUT WITH ENOUGH DETAIL TO SHOW THAT HE ENQUIRED OF THE LORD BEFORE EVERY BATTLE. GOD NEVER FAILED TO ANSWER HIS CHOSEN KING; THE CONTRAST WITH SAUL IS NOTEWORTHY (CF. 1 SA. 28:6). THE FACT THAT A FOREIGN KING, HIRAM, SENT MESSENGERS TO DAVID, DEMONSTRATES THE GROWING POWER AND IMPORTANCE OF BOTH DAVID HIMSELF AND THE NATION HE RULED. FOR MOST OF THE TENTH CENTURY BC, ISRAEL WAS THE MOST POWERFUL NATION IN THE WHOLE REGION. THE BIBLICAL WRITER ACKNOWLEDGES DAVID’S SKILLS AND ACHIEVEMENTS BUT HE CREDITS THEM ULTIMATELY TO THE LORD GOD ALMIGHTY (10). THESE ACHIEVEMENTS WERE NOT INTENDED BY GOD TO GLORIFY DAVID BUT TO BENEFIT GOD’S PEOPLE ISRAEL (12). WITHOUT DOUBT, DAVID BROUGHT MANY MATERIAL BENEFITS, PEACE AND PROSPERITY TO ISRAEL. THE WRITER MAKES NO COMMENT ON DAVID’S HAREM. IN ONE WAY, IT WAS A RECOGNIZED SYMBOL OF DAVID’S POLITICAL STATURE IN THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST; BUT LATER CHAPTERS WILL SHOW HOW MUCH TROUBLE WAS CAUSED BY THE RIVALRY BETWEEN HIS MANY SONS. DT. 17:17 OFFERS A GENERAL WARNING ABOUT HAVING MANY WIVES, AS APPROPRIATE FOR DAVID AS FOR SOLOMON. NOTE. 7 ZION IS A FREQUENT BIBLICAL SYNONYM FOR JERUSALEM. POSSIBLY IT WAS ORIGINALLY THE NAME OF THE FORTRESS PART OF THE CITY. JERUSALEM NOW BECAME KNOWN AS THE CITY OF DAVID; THIS NAME WAS STILL USED IN NT TIMES (SEE LK. 2:11).**

**6:1–7:29 DAVID, THE ARK AND THE HOUSE OF GOD**

**SAUL HAD NEVER SHOWN ANY INTEREST IN THE ARK OF THE COVENANT, AND HE HAD CAUSED OFFENCE TO PROPHETS AND PRIESTS. DAVID, BY CONTRAST, WORKING CLOSELY WITH PROPHETS AND PRIESTS, TREATED THE ARK WITH GREAT REVERENCE AND HONOR. THE ARK WAS PERMANENTLY INSTALLED AT JERUSALEM (CH. 6). CH. 7 CONVEYS SOME OF GOD’S PLANS FOR THE FUTURE, RELATING TO THE ARK’S NEW HOME AND TO DAVID. 6:1–19 THE ARK BROUGHT TO JERUSALEM. THIS CHAPTER RESUMES THE STORY OF THE ARK (1 SA. 4:4–7:2). FOR MANY YEARS THE ARK HAD REMAINED AT BAALAH, A TOWN ALSO CALLED KIRIATH JEARIM (1 SA. 7:2; SEE JOS. 15:9). IN TRANSFERRING THE ARK TO JERUSALEM, DAVID WAS ALSO TRANSFORMING JERUSALEM, MAKING IT THE MOST IMPORTANT SANCTUARY IN HIS KINGDOM. IT BECAME HIS RELIGIOUS CAPITAL AS WELL AS HIS POLITICAL CAPITAL. THE ACTION HAD POLITICAL VALUE IN ITSELF TOO, SINCE IT GAVE JERUSALEM ADDED IMPORTANCE IN THE EYES OF ALL ISRAEL, AND SO HELPED TO UNIFY THE COUNTRY. THE EMPHASIS OF THE BIBLICAL WRITER IS, HOWEVER, ON THE RELIGIOUS ASPECTS OF DAVID’S ACTIONS. HE TOOK THE GREATEST POSSIBLE CARE TO TREAT THE ARK WITH ALL REVERENCE. THE DEATH OF UZZAH (6–8), WHICH WAS NEVER FORGOTTEN, WAS A REMINDER OF THE POWER OF GOD, SYMBOLIZED BY THE ARK. (THE ISRAELITES IN BETH SHEMESH HAD SUFFERED FOR SIMILAR CARELESS HANDLING OF THE ARK, SEE 1 SA. 6:19). DAVID LEARNED THAT HE WAS NOT FREE TO DO AS HE LIKED WITH THE ARK; STILL LESS COULD HE MANIPULATE THE GOD REPRESENTED BY THE ARK. ALTHOUGH THIS EVENT WAS A SAD ONE AT THE TIME, THE RECORD OF IT WAS NO DOUBT A COMFORT TO LATER GENERATIONS OF ISRAELITES; IT REMINDED THEM THAT THEIR GOD STEPHEN YAHWEH WAS MORE POWERFUL THAN ANY FOREIGN ATTACKERS OR OPPRESSORS. IT ALSO TAUGHT THEM THAT RESPECT FOR GOD’S HOLINESS WAS ESSENTIAL TO THE WELL-BEING OF THE COMMUNITY. SO, THE ARK WAS INSTALLED AT JERUSALEM, BUT IN A TENT (17). IT WAS NOT UNTIL SOLOMON’S REIGN THAT A TEMPLE WAS BUILT (1 KI. 6). 6:20–23 THE BARRENNESS OF MICHAL. THIS EPISODE ABOUT MICHAL COMES UNEXPECTEDLY, AND INDEED IT IS PUZZLING WHY SHE WAS SO HOSTILE TO DAVID’S ACTIONS. DESPITE WHAT SHE SAID, IT MUST HAVE BEEN CLEAR TO HER THAT THE PEOPLE DID NOT DESPISE DAVID BUT SHARED HIS JOY IN THE CELEBRATIONS. HIS ANGRY RETORT WAS JUSTIFIED IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES. PERHAPS THE WRITER MEANS US TO ASSUME THAT THIS QUARREL BETWEEN DAVID AND MICHAL LED TO A PERMANENT BREACH BETWEEN THEM. IN ANY CASE, SHE NEVER GAVE BIRTH TO CHILDREN. V 23 IS THE IMPORTANT POINT. MANY LATER CHAPTERS ARE CONCERNED WITH DAVID’S SONS AND WITH THEIR AMBITIONS TO BECOME KING. IF MICHAL HAD EVER HAD A SON, HE WOULD HAVE HAD A STRONG CLAIM TO THE THRONE, AS SAUL’S GRANDSONS (THE SON OF ONE’S SON OR ONE’S DAUGHTER) AND DAVID’S SON. NO SUCH SON WAS BORN AND THE WRITER MEANS US TO CONCLUDE THAT GOD OVERRULED IN THIS MATTER TOO. 7:1–17 NATHAN’S PROPHECY. THIS CHAPTER CONTINUES AND COMPLETES THE STORY OF DAVID AND THE JERUSALEM SANCTUARY. THE EVENTS RECORDED IN IT BELONG TO A FAIRLY LATE DATE IN DAVID’S REIGN, AS V 1 IMPLIES. WE HAVE HERE THE MOST IMPORTANT PASSAGE IN THE BOOKS OF SAMUEL, AND ONE OF THE KEY PASSAGES IN THE WHOLE OT. IT DISCUSSES THE FUTURE OF THE JERUSALEM SANCTUARY AND OF THE DAVIDIC MONARCHY—THE TWO INSTITUTIONS WHICH WERE VITAL TO THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL FOR SEVERAL CENTURIES AFTER DAVID. THROUGH THE PROPHET NATHAN, GOD MADE FIRM PROMISES TO DAVID ABOUT BOTH OF THESE THINGS. THESE SOLEMN DIVINE PROMISES AMOUNTED TO AN ‘EVERLASTING COVENANT’ GIVEN TO DAVID (SEE 23:5). THE TWO THEMES ARE CLEVERLY LINKED BY THE USE OF THE WORD ‘HOUSE’. THE SAME HEBREW WORD NOT ONLY MEANT AN ORDINARY HOUSE, BUT ALSO A TEMPLE, AND THIRDLY A DYNASTY (JUST AS IN ENGLISH, THE CURRENT BRITISH ROYAL FAMILY IS CALLED ‘THE HOUSE OF WINDSOR’). THE CHAPTER BEGINS BY DISCUSSING DAVID’S PLANS TO BUILD A TEMPLE FOR STEPHEN YAHWEH, A HOUSE FOR GOD (5). THEN IN V 11, THE THEME OF A HOUSE FOR DAVID IS INTRODUCED—NOT HIS PALACE, BUT THE DAVIDIC DYNASTY, I.E. THE SONS AND DESCENDANTS WHO WOULD SUCCEED HIM AS KINGS IN JERUSALEM. GOD’S PROMISES ABOUT BOTH THESE THINGS ARE BROUGHT TOGETHER IN V 13: DAVID’S SON WILL BUILD THE TEMPLE; THE DYNASTY WILL LAST FOR EVER. THESE ARE VERY POSITIVE PROMISES, BUT THE CHAPTER CONTAINS A NUMBER OF NEGATIVE POINTS TOO. FIRST, DAVID’S PLAN TO BUILD THE TEMPLE IS REFUSED. SECONDLY, GOD DOES NOT TAKE PLEASURE IN TEMPLES. (THESE TWO POINTS ARE IMPLIED BY VS 5–7.) THIRDLY, V 14 RECOGNIZES THAT SOME OF DAVID’S DESCENDANTS WOULD BE UNWORTHY KINGS, AND WOULD DESERVE AND GET DIVINE PUNISHMENT. THESE VARIOUS POINTS, BOTH POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE, PROVIDE A DESCRIPTION AND AN EXPLANATION FOR THE EVENTS FROM DAVID’S TIME (EARLY TENTH CENTURY BC) DOWN TO 587 BC. IN THAT PERIOD THE TEMPLE WAS BUILT, NOT BY DAVID, BUT BY HIS SON SOLOMON. MANY OF THEIR SUCCESSORS WERE WEAK OR SINFUL, BUT THE DYNASTY CONTINUED UNBROKEN FOR FOUR CENTURIES. IN 587 BC, THE TEMPLE WAS DESTROYED BY THE BABYLONIANS, AND JUDAH CEASED TO BE A KINGDOM. THE FAMILY OF DAVID CONTINUED IN EXISTENCE, BUT NEVER REGAINED THE THRONE. WHAT MESSAGE DOES THIS CHAPTER HOLD FOR SUCH A CHANGED SITUATION? IT TELLS US FIRST THAT GOD IS NOT DEPENDENT ON TEMPLES, AND HIS PEOPLE, THEREFORE, DO NOT NEED TEMPLES. STEPHEN REEMPHASIZED THIS LESSON IN NT TIMES (SEE ACTS 7:44–50). SECONDLY, GOD’S PROMISE ABOUT DAVID’S DESCENDANTS WAS PERMANENT. IT WAS THE BASIS OF THE EXPECTATION OF THE MESSIAH, ‘GREAT DAVID’S GREATER SON’. THIS PROMISE GAVE ASSURANCE TO THE GENERATIONS OF GOD’S PEOPLE WHO LIVED IN THE LAST CENTURIES OF THE OT PERIOD, AND THEN RECEIVED ITS FULFILMENT IN THE BIRTH OF JESUS CHRIST; AS THE WHOLE NT AND THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH BEAR WITNESS. ALL THESE PROMISES, AS GOD FULFILLED THEM, WOULD MAKE DAVID’S NAME GREAT (9). WITHOUT QUESTION, DAVID WAS ISRAEL’S GREATEST KING AND HIS REPUTATION STANDS FOR ALL TIME AS ONE OF THE GREATEST MEN OF HISTORY. HOWEVER, HIS GOD GIVEN GREATNESS WAS NOT FOR HIS OWN BENEFIT AND GLORY, BUT IN ORDER TO BENEFIT THE NATION HE RULED. SO, V 10 INDICATES GOD’S PLANS AND PROMISES FOR ISRAEL THROUGH DAVID. THESE PROMISES CAME TRUE DURING DAVID’S OWN REIGN AND REMAINED GOD’S ULTIMATE PLANS FOR HIS PEOPLE DESPITE THE FACT THAT IN LATER TIMES ISRAEL AND JUDAH OFTEN SUFFERED POLITICAL HARDSHIPS, CHIEFLY BECAUSE OF THEIR SINS AGAINST GOD. THESE PLANS DEPENDED ON THE FULFILMENT OF GOD’S PROMISE TO SEND A SON OF DAVID, THE MESSIAH, WHO WOULD BE THE ONE FINALLY TO BRING GOD’S PEOPLE THE SECURITY AND PEACE THEY ALWAYS NEED. 7:18–29 DAVID’S PRAYER. A PERSONAL THANKSGIVING WAS THE APPROPRIATE RESPONSE TO THE PROMISES MADE TO DAVID THROUGH NATHAN. THIS GRATEFUL PRAYER WAS OFFERED IN THE TENT-SHRINE DAVID HAD JUST ERECTED (18), AND NOTHING MORE IS SAID HERE ABOUT THE PROPOSED TEMPLE. THE ONLY HOUSE DAVID MENTIONED WAS HIS OWN FUTURE DYNASTY (19, 25). HE WAS GRATEFUL BOTH FOR THE CONTENT OF GOD’S PROMISES AND FOR THE FACT THAT THEY HAD BEEN MADE KNOWN TO HIM. AS HE SAID, IT IS GIVEN TO VERY FEW INDIVIDUALS TO BE TOLD THE FUTURE OF THEIR FAMILY (19). DAVID’S PRAYER DOES NOT IGNORE THE FACT THAT GOD’S BLESSING TO HIS FAMILY WOULD MEAN BLESSING TO ISRAEL TOO. VS 23–24 RECALL GOD’S GOODNESS SHOWN TO ISRAEL IN THE PAST. THE CONTINUATION OF DAVID’S LINE WOULD MEAN GOD’S CONTINUED BLESSINGS TO THE ONE NATION HE HAD CHOSEN AND MADE HIS VERY OWN FOR EVER. THE GRATEFUL WORDS OF DAVID IN THIS PRAYER WOULD BRING COMFORT AND REASSURANCE TO MANY ISRAELITES IN LATER TROUBLED TIMES.**

**8:1–18 FURTHER VICTORIES**

**MANY OF THE VICTORIES RECORDED IN THIS CHAPTER TOOK PLACE BEFORE THE EVENTS OF CH. 7. BY PLACING THEM HERE, THE BIBLICAL WRITER ILLUSTRATES THE BEGINNING OF THE FULFILMENT OF GOD’S PROMISES TO DAVID OUTLINED IN CH. 7. A FRESH DEFEAT OF THE PHILISTINES IS BRIEFLY RECORDED (1). THE PHRASE METHEG AMMAH IS UNKNOWN, AND PERHAPS IS NOT A PLACE-NAME AT ALL; SEVERAL COMMENTATORS TRANSLATE IT ‘SUPREMACY’. THE PARALLEL VERSE IN CHRONICLES REFERS TO THE WELL-KNOWN CITY OF GATH (1 CH. 18:1). THE PHILISTINES WERE ON ISRAEL’S SOUTH-WESTERN FRONTIER. THE MOABITES HAD BEEN FRIENDLY TO DAVID AT AN EARLIER STAGE (1 SA. 22:3–4), AND WE DO NOT KNOW WHAT CAUSED WARFARE BETWEEN THEM AND DAVID NOW. HIS HARSH TREATMENT OF THEM SUGGESTS THAT THEY WERE GUILTY OF SERIOUS TREACHERY (2). THE MOABITES WERE ON ISRAEL’S SOUTH-EASTERN BORDERS. THE CAMPAIGNS DESCRIBED IN VS 3–10 WERE AGAINST SEVERAL ARAMEAN KINGDOMS, TO THE NORTH OF ISRAEL. IN THE END DAVID WAS TAKING TRIBUTE FROM A NUMBER OF SMALLER STATES, AND HIS CONTROL STRETCHED AS FAR AS THE NORTHERN EUPHRATES. (SEE MAP OF DAVID’S EMPIRE IN 1 KINGS.) VS 12–14 RETURN TO THE SOUTH-EASTERN AREA, AND TELL US THAT DAVID DEFEATED AMMONITES AND EDOMITES AS WELL AS MOABITES. THUS, DAVID ACHIEVED MILITARY SUCCESS WHEREVER IT WAS NECESSARY. HE ALSO BUILT UP A SOUND ADMINISTRATION IN ISRAEL ITSELF (15). THE CHAPTER ENDS BY LISTING HIS CHIEF OFFICIALS. JOAB AND ABIATHAR ARE BY NOW FAMILIAR NAMES TO THE READER. BENAIAH COMMANDED THE ROYAL BODYGUARD, AND HE PLAYED AN IMPORTANT PART IN THE ACCESSION OF SOLOMON AS KING (1 KI. 1). SOME OF DAVID’S SONS WERE ROYAL ADVISERS; NO DOUBT THIS IS TRUE, BUT THE HEBREW WORD LITERALLY MEANS ‘PRIESTS’, AND NO DOUBT THEY HAD SOME PRIESTLY FUNCTIONS, ALTHOUGH THESE ARE NOT DESCRIBED. THE MOST SIGNIFICANT NEW NAME IN THIS LIST IS THAT OF ZADOK. MANY SCHOLARS BELIEVE THAT HE HAD EARLIER LINKS WITH WORSHIP IN JERUSALEM, BUT THIS CAN ONLY BE A GUESS. WHATEVER HIS BACKGROUND MAY HAVE BEEN, HE LATER BECAME THE SOLE HIGH PRIEST IN JERUSALEM, AND HIS FAMILY RETAINED THE HIGH PRIESTHOOD FOR MANY CENTURIES.**

**9:1–20:26 KING DAVID AND HIS COURT**

**A NEW SECTION OF THE BOOKS OF SAMUEL BEGINS WITH THIS CHAPTER. CH. 8 HAS SUMMARIZED THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF DAVID, TO A LARGE EXTENT OUTSIDE THE BORDERS OF ISRAEL. CH. 9 TURNS TO INTERNAL AFFAIRS, INDEED ALMOST TO HOUSEHOLD AFFAIRS. THE ‘HOUSEHOLD’ IS THE ROYAL COURT, AND ITS AFFAIRS AFFECTED THE WHOLE KINGDOM. CHS. 9–20 HAVE OFTEN BEEN CALLED ‘THE SUCCESSION NARRATIVE’, SINCE A MAJOR THEME IN THEM RELATES TO THE MATTER OF DAVID’S SUCCESSOR. EVERY READER, FROM THE BEGINNING, HAS KNOWN THAT IT WAS SOLOMON WHO TOOK THE THRONE AFTER DAVID; AND 12:24 INDICATES, EARLY IN THE STORY, THAT GOD HIMSELF FAVORED SOLOMON FROM HIS BIRTH. HOWEVER, IT WAS NOT AT ALL CLEAR AT THE TIME WHO WOULD BE THE NEXT KING, AND PROBABLY DAVID HIMSELF DID NOT DECIDE TO SUPPORT SOLOMON UNTIL NEAR THE END OF HIS REIGN. SO OTHER SONS OF DAVID, ESPECIALLY ABSALOM, PURSUED THEIR AMBITIONS TO SEIZE THE THRONE. CH. 9–20 AND 1 KI. 1–2 FOLLOW THE WHOLE SEQUENCE OF EVENTS. THESE CHAPTERS SHOW HOW EVEN IN DAVID’S REIGN GOD FULFILLED THE TWO THINGS NATHAN HAD DESCRIBED TO DAVID IN 7:12–15. ON THE ONE HAND, GOD’S LOVE WOULD BE CONSTANT TOWARDS DAVID HIMSELF AND TOWARDS HIS CHOSEN (BUT UNNAMED!) SUCCESSOR. ON THE OTHER HAND, GOD WOULD PUNISH SINFUL BEHAVIOR ‘WITH THE ROD OF MEN’, IN OTHER WORDS BY USING THE ACTIONS OF OTHER MEN AS PUNISHMENT. SO, IN CHS. 9–20 WE SEE HOW DAVID’S SINS BROUGHT HIM A GREAT DEAL OF MISERY AND TROUBLE; AND YET GOD’S LOVE WAS NEVER TAKEN FROM HIM.**

**9:1–13 DAVID AND MEPHIBOSHETH**

**MEPHIBOSHETH HAS ALREADY BEEN MENTIONED IN 4:4. HE WAS ONE OF THE FEW SURVIVORS OF SAUL’S FAMILY, FOLLOWING THE MURDER OF ISH-BOSHETH. HIS HOME, LO DEBAR, WAS NOT FAR FROM ISH-BOSHETH’S CAPITAL, MAHANAIM. DAVID NOW BROUGHT HIM TO JERUSALEM. SOME SCHOLARS HAVE SUPPOSED THAT DAVID VIEWED HIM AS A POSSIBLE THREAT AND BROUGHT HIM TO JERUSALEM IN ORDER TO KEEP WATCH ON HIS ACTIVITIES. IF SO, THE BIBLICAL WRITER GIVES NO HINT OF IT. THE EMPHASIS IS RATHER ON DAVID’S KINDNESS, AND ON THE HONORED POSITION HE GAVE TO MEPHIBOSHETH. DAVID WAS FULFILLING HIS PROMISE GIVEN TO MEPHIBOSHETH’S FATHER, JONATHAN (1 SA. 20:42), NOT ONLY TOWARDS MEPHIBOSHETH BUT ALSO HIS SON MICA (12) AFTER HIM. THE CHAPTER TWICE REMINDS THE READER THAT MEPHIBOSHETH WAS CRIPPLED, SO STRESSING HIS HELPLESSNESS. IT IS DOUBTFUL IF HE COULD EVER HAVE BEEN AN EFFECTIVE RIVAL TO DAVID, IN SPITE OF ZIBA’S LATER ACCUSATION (16:3).**

**10:1–12:31 WARFARE WITH AMMON AND ITS CONSEQUENCES**

**CH. 10, TAKEN BY ITSELF, IS ALL ABOUT A SUCCESSFUL ISRAELITE CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE AMMONITES, AND RESUMES THE RECORD OF DAVID’S VICTORIES BEGUN IN CH. 8. IT IS IN FACT A LINK CHAPTER, BECAUSE THIS PARTICULAR MILITARY CAMPAIGN HAD ITS EFFECTS IN JERUSALEM. ONE OF THE ISRAELITE SOLDIERS WHO FOUGHT IN TRANSJORDAN WAS URIAH, WHOSE WIFE BATHSHEBA WAS SEDUCED BY DAVID IN HER HUSBAND’S ABSENCE. SUBSEQUENTLY DAVID MADE USE OF THE WARFARE TO BRING ABOUT URIAH’S DEATH. THUS CHS. 10–12 LINK THE THEME OF WARFARE WITH AFFAIRS AT THE ROYAL COURT. 10:1–19 THE AMMONITE CAMPAIGN. AMMON WAS A SMALL KINGDOM IN TRANSJORDAN WHICH HAD BEEN HOSTILE TO ISRAEL DURING SAUL’S REIGN; SAUL HAD DEFEATED THE KING NAHASH WHOSE DEATH NOW OCCURRED (SEE 1 SA. 11). DAVID, BY CONTRAST, HAD BEEN IN ALLIANCE WITH THE AMMONITES UNTIL NOW. THE AMMONITE NOBLES (3) NO DOUBT FEARED THAT NOW DAVID WAS KING OF A UNITED ISRAEL, HE WOULD CHANGE HIS ATTITUDE TOWARDS THEM. EVEN IF THEY HAD GOOD REASON FOR SUCH SUSPICIONS, IT WAS A VERY FOOLISH STEP TO INSULT DAVID AND PROVOKE HIM INTO WARFARE. THE AMMONITE KINGDOM WAS TOO SMALL TO WIN A WAR AGAINST ISRAEL, AND SO THEY SOUGHT ALLIES AMONG THE ARAMEANS TO THE NORTH. CH. 8 RECORDED SOME OF DAVID’S VICTORIES OVER ARAMEAN STATES AND ARMIES, AND IT IS NOT CLEAR WHEN THE VICTORIES OF CH. 10 TOOK PLACE. SINCE THE CHAPTER DEALS WITH A PERIOD BEFORE THE BIRTH OF SOLOMON, THE WAR MUST HAVE TAKEN PLACE QUITE EARLY IN DAVID’S REIGN. THE DECISION OF THE ARAMEANS TO MAKE PEACE WITH DAVID (19) MAY, THEREFORE, HAVE BEEN A TEMPORARY ONE. THE IMPORTANT POINT IS THAT THEY ABANDONED THEIR ALLIANCE WITH THE AMMONITES, WHO CONTINUED TO FIGHT BUT WITH NO HOPE OF SUCCESS. THE END OF THE WAR IS DESCRIBED IN 12:29–31. 11:1–13 DAVID’S RELATIONS WITH BATHSHEBA AND URIAH. IT WAS NORMAL FOR MILITARY ENTERPRISES TO CEASE IN THE WINTER MONTHS, SO DAVID RESUMED HIS OPERATIONS AGAINST AMMON IN THE SPRING. V 1 DOES NOT IMPLY THAT DAVID’S DUTY WAS TO ACCOMPANY THE ARMY. HIS PRESENCE IN PERSON WAS HARDLY NECESSARY WHEN AN ISRAELITE VICTORY WAS SO CERTAIN. THE AMMONITES’ ARMY WAS QUICKLY DESTROYED AND THEIR CAPITAL CITY BESIEGED. BY NOW THE ISRAELITE ARMY WAS POWERFUL, AND DAVID’S POSITION VERY SECURE. IT IS ALL TOO OFTEN THE CASE THAT A SENSE OF EASE AND SECURITY IS THE PRELUDE TO SPIRITUAL AND MORAL FAILURE. DAVID HAD EVERY RIGHT, THEN, TO REMAIN IN JERUSALEM, BUT THE ACTIONS THAT FOLLOWED WERE INEXCUSABLE. BATHSHEBA WAS A MARRIED WOMAN, AND DAVID KNEW IT. THE NOTE IN V 4 ABOUT HER UNCLEANNESS MEANS THAT SHE HAD RECENTLY MENSTRUATED, SO THAT WITHOUT DOUBT THE PREGNANCY WAS DUE TO DAVID’S ADULTERY WITH HER. BATHSHEBA’S MORALITY COULD, PERHAPS, ALSO BE QUESTIONED BUT THE BIBLICAL AUTHOR PUTS ALL THE BLAME ON DAVID: DAVID WAS THE KING, AND WAS ACTING IN A VERY HIGH-HANDED FASHION, ABUSING HIS POWER AND POSITION. DAVID’S USELESS ATTEMPTS TO INDUCE URIAH TO GO HOME AND TO HAVE INTERCOURSE WITH HIS WIFE ALSO PUT HIM IN A VERY BAD LIGHT (6–13). THE AUTHOR MAKES NO ATTEMPT TO JUSTIFY DAVID. THE BACKGROUND TO THIS PART OF THE STORY IS THE FACT THAT THE SOLDIERS HAD TAKEN AN OATH AT THE START OF THE CAMPAIGN TO ABSTAIN FROM SEXUAL RELATIONS (CF. 1 SA. 21:4–5). IT IS POSSIBLE THAT DAVID’S SUGGESTION TO URIAH THAT HE SHOULD WASH HIS FEET (8) REFERS TO A RITUAL THAT WOULD RELEASE HIM FROM THIS OATH. IN ANY CASE, URIAH CONSIDERED HIMSELF TO BE ON ACTIVE DUTY AND SHOWED THE HIGHEST STANDARDS OF CONDUCT. 11:14–27 URIAH’S DEATH. UNTIL THIS POINT DAVID HOPED THAT HIS ADULTERY COULD REMAIN HIDDEN, AND THAT THE UNBORN CHILD WOULD BE ACCEPTED AS URIAH’S. NOW THAT URIAH HAD KILLED THAT HOPE, HE DETERMINED TO KILL URIAH. HE FEARED A PUBLIC SCANDAL, NATURALLY, AND THIS WOULD HAVE BEEN ALL THE MORE SERIOUS BECAUSE THE PENALTY IN ISRAEL FOR ADULTERY WAS DEATH. YET DAVID, AS CHIEF JUDGE IN THE LAND, COULD HARDLY SENTENCE HIMSELF TO DEATH! THUS, HIS CASUAL IMMORALITY HAD CAUSED HIM A VERY SERIOUS PROBLEM. THE DEATH OF URIAH SOLVED THE PROBLEM: DAVID MARRIED THE WIDOW, AND NOBODY WOULD HAVE KNOWN WHOSE CHILD IT WAS (27). JOAB NO DOUBT GUESSED THE TRUTH, BUT HE WOULD NEVER HAVE BETRAYED DAVID. BUT V 27 REMINDS US THAT THE WHOLE TRUTH WAS KNOWN TO GOD. DAVID, THEN, DID NOT HESITATE TO PLAN THE DEATH OF URIAH, BUT HE HOPED TO AVOID THE DEATH OF ANY OTHER SOLDIERS. WHEN HE READ DAVID’S INSTRUCTIONS, JOAB ADJUSTED THE PLAN, WITH THE RESULT THAT SEVERAL OTHER SOLDIERS DIED ALONGSIDE URIAH (17). HE CLEARLY REALIZED THAT DAVID’S PLAN WAS TOO OBVIOUS; HIS OWN PLAN HID THE FACT THAT URIAH WAS INTENDED TO BE A VICTIM. JOAB’S LOYALTY TO DAVID IS REVEALED BY THIS INCIDENT, AND ALSO HIS RUTHLESSNESS. BUT DAVID WAS THE REAL MURDERER. THE REFERENCE IN V 21 IS TO JDG. 9:50–53. ABIMELECH’S DEATH HAD SHOWN ISRAELITE TROOPS THE DANGERS OF GETTING TOO CLOSE TO THE WALL OF A BESIEGED CITY. 12:1–14 NATHAN’S REBUKE. NATHAN WAS A PROPHET (7:2), THE SPOKESMAN OF GOD AT THE ROYAL COURT AND A WORTHY SUCCESSOR TO SAMUEL. HE HAD THE AUTHORITY AND THE COURAGE TO ACT AS CRITIC AND JUDGE OF THE KING. BEFORE MAKING THE DIRECT ACCUSATIONS OF V 9, HE TOLD HIS FAMOUS PARABLE. SOME BIBLICAL PARABLES WERE MEANT TO PUZZLE, BUT NOT THIS ONE. DAVID WAS MISLED INTO SUPPOSING THAT NATHAN WAS DESCRIBING A GENUINE INCIDENT, AND SO HE PRONOUNCED SENTENCE BEFORE REALIZING WHAT NATHAN REALLY MEANT. DAVID KNEW THAT THE PROPER PENALTY FOR THE THEFT OF A SHEEP WAS FOURFOLD REPAYMENT (EX. 22:1), BUT HE ALSO EXPRESSED HIS INDIGNATION—SO HEARTLESS A THIEF DESERVED TO DIE. IN THIS WAY HE CONDEMNED HIMSELF. THE PURPOSE OF THE PARABLE WAS NOT ONLY TO INDUCE DAVID TO CONDEMN HIMSELF, BUT ALSO TO PORTRAY VIVIDLY THE REALITIES OF THE SITUATION. KINGS, IF THEY WERE GREEDY, HAD THE POWER TO GRAB ANYTHING THEY WANTED, AND ORDINARY CITIZENS WERE HELPLESS. NATHAN WENT ON TO POINT OUT HOW GREEDY DAVID HAD BEEN. IN ADDITION TO HIS WIVES, HE HAD APPARENTLY TAKEN SAUL’S CONCUBINES (8) AS A SYMBOL THAT HE HAD TAKEN OVER ROYAL CONTROL FROM SAUL. VS 11–14 GIVE GOD’S VERDICT. DAVID HIMSELF WOULD SURVIVE INTO OLD AGE, BUT BLOODSHED IN HIS OWN FAMILY WOULD BRING CALAMITY UPON HIM. THE FOLLOWING CHAPTERS SHOW HOW TRUE THIS PROPHECY WAS. ABSALOM FULFILLED THE PREDICTION OF V 11 LITERALLY (16:22). IT IS IMPORTANT TO NOTICE, HOWEVER, THAT GOD’S PUNISHMENT WAS ACCOMPANIED BY PARDON, BECAUSE DAVID WAS REPENTANT (13). DAVID’S HONEST REPENTANCE IS VERY DIFFERENT FROM SAUL’S ATTEMPTS TO DECEIVE SAMUEL (1 SA. 13 AND 15). THE TITLE OF PS. 51 LINKS THIS PSALM OF PENITENCE WITH THIS EPISODE. 12:15–31 THE BIRTH OF SOLOMON. NATHAN’S FINAL PREDICTION, THAT THE ILLEGITIMATE CHILD WOULD DIE, IS THE FIRST TO BE FULFILLED. DAVID DID NOT ACCEPT IT FATALISTICALLY. THIS PASSAGE EMPHASIZES HOW MUCH DAVID CARED FOR THE BABY AND DRAWS ATTENTION TO HIS ANGUISH DURING ITS FINAL ILLNESS. HIS FEELINGS WERE SO DEEP THAT HE IGNORED THE USUAL CONVENTIONS, CAUSING ANXIETY TO HIS SERVANTS. DAVID’S SINCERE GRIEF, AS WELL AS HIS CARE FOR BATHSHEBA, HAVE THE EFFECT OF ATTRACTING THE READER’S SYMPATHY. THE WRITER’S PURPOSE, HOWEVER, WAS TO SHOW HOW EFFECTIVE GOD’S VERDICT WAS: DAVID’S PUNISHMENT HAD BEGUN. THE CHAPTERS THAT FOLLOW CONTINUE THE STORY OF DAVID’S TROUBLES. TWO VERSES IN THIS PASSAGE (24–25), HOWEVER, SHOW THAT WHILE PUNISHING DAVID, GOD WAS NOT FORGETTING ISRAEL. THE BIRTH OF SOLOMON WAS GOD’S WAY OF FULFILLING HIS PROMISE IN 7:12–13. THE MESSAGE TO DAVID THROUGH NATHAN THAT THE LORD LOVED SOLOMON IS A SIGNAL TO THE READER THAT THIS WAS THE SON CHOSEN BY GOD TO BE THE NEXT KING. SO, GOD’S PLANS FOR THE FUTURE WERE LAID. (SOLOMON DOES NOT REAPPEAR IN THE STORY UNTIL 1 KI. 1.) VS 26–31 ROUND OFF THE STORY OF THE VICTORIOUS WAR AGAINST AMMON. ON THIS OCCASION DAVID HIMSELF WENT WITH THE ARMY. JOAB AGAIN DEMONSTRATED HIS LOYALTY TO THE KING. NOTE. 30 IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THE VERY HEAVY CROWN BELONGED NOT TO THE AMMONITE KING BUT TO THE IDOL OF MILCOM, THE CHIEF GOD WORSHIPPED IN AMMON. (SEE THE NIV MG. REB AND NRSV.)**

**13:1–18:33 DAVID AND HIS ELDEST SONS**

**THE CENTRAL FIGURE OF THESE CHAPTERS IS ABSALOM, DAVID’S THIRD SON (SEE 3:2–3). THE ELDEST SON, AMNON, WAS MURDERED BY ABSALOM, AND IT SEEMS LIKELY THAT THE SECOND SON MUST HAVE DIED YOUNG, SINCE HE IS NEVER MENTIONED AGAIN. AT ANY RATE, AFTER MURDERING AMNON, ABSALOM WAS FREE TO MAKE HIS OWN BID FOR THE CROWN. 13:1–22 THE RAPE OF TAMAR. TAMAR WAS AMNON’S HALF-SISTER. HER MOTHER WAS MAACAH (SEE 3:2–3). MARRIAGE WITH A HALF-SISTER WAS PROHIBITED UNDER THE LAW OF LV. 18:11 AND DT. 27:22. PERHAPS THE KING HAD THE AUTHORITY TO SUSPEND THIS LAW, AS TAMAR SUGGESTED (13), BUT AT ANY RATE AMNON PLAINLY THOUGHT MARRIAGE WAS IMPOSSIBLE (2). HIS LUST, DECEIT AND BRUTALITY MAKE HIM A VERY UNPLEASANT CHARACTER—THE ELDEST SON OF DAVID, BUT OBVIOUSLY NOT A SUITABLE MAN TO RULE ISRAEL. HOWEVER, THE PURPOSE OF THE STORY IS NOT TO MORALIZE ABOUT AMNON, BUT TO SHOW HOW DAVID’S OWN HOUSEHOLD PRODUCED ‘CALAMITY’ FOR HIM, FULFILLING 12:11. DAVID WAS FURIOUS (21), BUT EVIDENTLY DID NOTHING TO PUNISH THE WRONGDOER. THAT WAS A BAD MISTAKE BECAUSE IT ONLY INCREASED ABSALOM’S UNDERSTANDABLE ANGER TO THE POINT OF HATRED. 13:23–39 THE MURDER OF AMNON. UNTIL THIS POINT OUR SYMPATHIES HAVE BEEN WITH ABSALOM, BUT THIS PASSAGE REVEALS THAT HIS CHARACTER WAS NOT MUCH BETTER THAN AMNON’S. HE WAS EQUALLY VIOLENT AND EQUALLY DECEITFUL. PRESUMABLY, HE WAITED TWO YEARS (23) BEFORE TAKING ACTION, IN ORDER TO DECEIVE HIS FATHER. THIS CHAPTER SHOWS THAT EVEN THE KING’S SONS WERE NOT FREE TO COME AND GO AS THEY PLEASED, BUT NEEDED ROYAL PERMISSION TO LEAVE THE COURT. SO, ABSALOM HAD TO LAY HIS PLANS CAREFULLY, PLANS WHICH INCLUDED HIS FLIGHT TO GESHUR, HIS MOTHER’S HOME (37). THE DETAILED ACCOUNT OF THE FALSE RUMOR THAT ABSALOM HAD KILLED ALL HIS BROTHERS MAY HAVE THE PURPOSE OF DEMONSTRATING GOD’S OVERRULING TO PROTECT SOLOMON. CLEARLY, ABSALOM COULD HAVE KILLED THEM ALL IF HE HAD WISHED, AND IF SO, SOLOMON WOULD HAVE DIED WITH THEM. LATER ON, ABSALOM WAS AMBITIOUS TO BECOME KING BUT AT THIS STAGE HIS ONLY MOTIVE WAS REVENGE UPON AMNON. V 39 ADDS A REALISTIC HUMAN TOUCH; AFTER THREE YEARS DAVID’S GRIEF FOR AMNON HAD ABATED, AND HE BEGAN TO THINK DIFFERENTLY ABOUT ABSALOM, WHO WAS PROBABLY HIS ELDEST SURVIVING SON. THIS CHANGE OF HEART PREPARED THE WAY FOR CH. 14. 14:1–20 JOAB’S SCHEME. WE MAY REASONABLY DEDUCE FROM V 19 THAT JOAB HAD TRIED TO PERSUADE DAVID TO FORGIVE ABSALOM AND BRING HIM BACK TO THE ROYAL COURT. IF SO, HE FAILED TO PERSUADE HIM. JOAB SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN ANXIOUS TO ENSURE A SMOOTH SUCCESSION, AND CLEARLY VIEWED ABSALOM AS THE MAN TO SUCCEED DAVID. HE THUS HAD THE INTERESTS OF THE NATION AT HEART, BUT HE TWICE GAVE HIS SUPPORT TO THE WRONG SON OF DAVID (SEE ALSO 1 KI. 1:7). FAILING TO PERSUADE DAVID, HE DECIDED TO TRICK HIM INSTEAD AND MADE USE OF A WISE WOMAN. LIKE NATHAN IN CH. 12, SHE PRETENDED THAT THERE WAS A CASE FOR DAVID TO DEAL WITH IN HIS ROLE AS CHIEF JUDGE. THE ‘MORAL’ OF HER STORY WAS THAT THE WELFARE OF A WHOLE FAMILY IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN THE PROPER PUNISHMENT OF AN INDIVIDUAL, AND DAVID AGREED WITH HER. APPLYING THIS PRINCIPLE, SHE ARGUED THAT THE WELFARE OF THE WHOLE NATION WAS MORE IMPORTANT THAN THE PUNISHMENT OF ITS CROWN PRINCE (13) AND THAT, THEREFORE, ABSALOM OUGHT TO BE RECALLED FROM EXILE. JOAB’S FEAR WAS THAT DAVID MIGHT DIE WHILE ABSALOM WAS STILL IN EXILE, LEAVING ISRAEL IN POLITICAL CHAOS. THE WOMAN’S WORDS IN V 14 SEEM TO MEAN THAT GOD WAS SPARING DAVID’S LIFE LONG ENOUGH FOR HIM TO BRING BACK ABSALOM. 14:21–33 ABSALOM’S RETURN TO JERUSALEM. ALTHOUGH THE TEKOAN WOMAN FLATTERED DAVID ABOUT HIS WISDOM (20), HIS ACTION TOWARDS ABSALOM WAS NOT IN FACT VERY WISE. HE ALLOWED ABSALOM BACK INTO ISRAEL BUT REFUSED TO RESTORE HIM TO HIS POSITION AT COURT. ABSALOM COULD HAVE DONE DAVID LITTLE HARM IF HE HAD REMAINED IN EXILE, AND HE MIGHT HAVE WISHED DAVID NO HARM IF DAVID HAD WELCOMED HIM BACK. INSTEAD, DAVID’S ACTION DEEPLY ANGERED HIM AND AT THE SAME TIME GAVE HIM EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO BUILD UP A CONSPIRACY AGAINST DAVID. THIS PASSAGE SHOWS WHAT AN ATTRACTIVE PERSON ABSALOM WAS OUTWARDLY BUT ALSO INDICATES HIS ARROGANCE. 15:1–12 ABSALOM’S CONSPIRACY. THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT ABSALOM WAS A NATURAL LEADER, WITH MANY SKILLS AND ABILITIES. IF HIS CHARACTER HAD BEEN DIFFERENT, HE MIGHT HAVE BEEN AN EXCELLENT KING AFTER DAVID. IT IS REMARKABLE THAT HE WAS ABLE TO PERSUADE SO MANY PEOPLE IN ISRAEL TO SUPPORT HIM AND TO TURN AGAINST DAVID. VS 1–6 TELL HOW HE DECEIVED PEOPLE WHO WERE DISCONTENTED WITH THE JUDICIAL SYSTEM AND NO DOUBT HE MADE SIMILAR USE OF ANY KIND OF DISCONTENT. EVEN SO, ONE WOULD HAVE THOUGHT THAT DAVID’S GREAT BENEFITS TO THE NATION WOULD HAVE KEPT MOST OF THE POPULATION LOYAL TO HIM. SO, ABSALOM’S SKILLS CAN BE SEEN IN HIS ABILITY TO BUILD UP STRONG SUPPORT. EVEN BATHSHEBA’S GRANDFATHER AHITHOPHEL DESERTED DAVID (12). ABSALOM WAS ALSO SKILFUL IN ACHIEVING SUCH A LARGE-SCALE CONSPIRACY WITHOUT ANY RUMOR OF IT REACHING THE ROYAL COURT. FROM VARIOUS PIECES OF INFORMATION, WE CAN DEDUCE THAT ABSALOM GAINED MANY FOLLOWERS BOTH IN JUDAH (WHERE HEBRON WAS) AND THE NORTHERN TRIBES, BUT NOT MANY IN JERUSALEM. IT IS PROBABLE THAT TO PRESERVE SECRECY ABSALOM DARED NOT CANVASS SUPPORT IN JERUSALEM TO ANY EXTENT. NOTE. 6 BY THE MEN OF ISRAEL THE WRITER MAY MEAN THE NORTHERN TRIBESMEN AS OPPOSED TO JUDAH, BUT MORE PROBABLY HE MEANS BOTH NORTH AND SOUTH AS OPPOSED TO JERUSALEMITES. 15:13–37 DAVID’S FLIGHT. DAVID HAD TWO CHOICES, EITHER TO STAY IN JERUSALEM AND FACE A SIEGE, OR TO FLEE TO SAFETY. HE CHOSE THE LATTER COURSE, WHICH SAVED JERUSALEM FROM DAMAGE AND GAVE HIM TIME TO MANEUVER AND TO ORGANIZE AN ARMY AGAINST ABSALOM. SO, HE HEADED EASTWARDS, EVENTUALLY REACHING MAHANAIM IN TRANSJORDAN, ISH-BOSHETH’S FORMER CAPITAL (17:24). CHS. 15 AND 16 GIVE DETAILED ATTENTION TO THE ATTITUDES AND DECISIONS OF SOME IMPORTANT INDIVIDUALS IN THIS SITUATION. DAVID’S OFFICIALS (14) HAD LITTLE CHOICE, SINCE ABSALOM WOULD CERTAINLY HAVE DISMISSED OR EVEN KILLED THEM. THE CONCUBINES WERE GIVEN NO CHOICE AT ALL, EITHER BY DAVID OR ABSALOM (16; SEE 16:22). HIS MEN (18) WERE DAVID’S PERSONAL TROOPS, WITH HIS FOREIGN BODYGUARD; THE REGULAR ARMY WAS PRESUMABLY SUPPORTING ABSALOM (SEE 17:1). THE LOYALTY OF DAVID’S PERSONAL TROOPS, HERE VOICED BY THEIR CAPTAIN ITTAI, ULTIMATELY GAVE HIM THE VICTORY. IT WAS A GOOD SIGN FOR DAVID THAT THE TWO HIGH PRIESTS REMAINED LOYAL (24–29). IT IS INTERESTING THAT DAVID SENT THE ARK OF GOD BACK TO JERUSALEM, RESIGNED TO ACCEPT GOD’S WILL FOR HIMSELF. UNLIKE THE ISRAELITES IN ELI’S TIME (1 SA. 4:3–4) DAVID DID NOT BELIEVE THAT THE ARK WOULD MAGICALLY BRING HIM VICTORY. HE COULD ALSO MAKE USE OF SOME LOYAL MEN IN JERUSALEM; HIS QUESTION TO ZADOK, AREN’T YOU A SEER? MORE PROBABLY MEANS ‘AREN’T YOU AN OBSERVANT MAN?’ ANOTHER LOYAL FRIEND SENT BACK TO JERUSALEM WAS HUSHAI (30–37), WHO MUST HAVE BEEN A WELL-KNOWN MEMBER OF THE ROYAL COUNCIL. THE STORY AS A WHOLE MAKES IT CLEAR THAT AHITHOPHEL WAS AN OUTSTANDING ADVISER (SEE 16:23), AND HIS SUPPORT FOR ABSALOM WAS A CAUSE OF GREAT ANXIETY FOR DAVID. DAVID THEREFORE SENT HUSHAI BACK, IN THE HOPE THAT HE COULD CONTRADICT ANY ADVICE GIVEN TO ABSALOM BY AHITHOPHEL. IT WAS AN IDEA THAT PROVED SUCCESSFUL (17:1–14). 16:1–14 ZIBA AND SHIMEI. THE STRUGGLE FOR POWER WAS BETWEEN FATHER AND SON, DAVID AND ABSALOM. WHICH OF THEM WOULD GET THE SUPPORT OF SAUL’S FAMILY? DAVID WAS QUICKLY LED TO BELIEVE THAT THEY WERE SIDING WITH ABSALOM. SHIMEI WAS OPENLY HOSTILE TO DAVID, ACCUSING HIM OF CAUSING THE DEATHS OF SEVERAL OF SAUL’S HOUSEHOLD. HE BLAMED DAVID FOR THE MURDERS OF, AT LEAST, ABNER AND ISH-BOSHETH (CHS. 3–4). IN RESPONSE, DAVID ONCE AGAIN SHOWED HIMSELF LESS VIOLENT THAN JOAB, AND ALSO MORE WILLING TO SEEK AND TO ACCEPT THE WILL OF GOD (10–12). AS FOR SAUL’S GRANDSONS (THE SON OF ONE’S SON OR ONE’S DAUGHTER) MEPHIBOSHETH, ZIBA PERSUADED DAVID THAT HE HAD TURNED TRAITOR. MEPHIBOSHETH’S REAL FEELINGS ABOUT DAVID ARE NEVER RECORDED, BUT ZIBA’S ACCUSATION (3) WAS PROBABLY UNTRUE. IT IS VERY DIFFICULT TO SEE HOW THE STRUGGLE BETWEEN DAVID AND ABSALOM COULD HAVE RESULTED IN MEPHIBOSHETH GAINING THE KINGDOM. ON THE OTHER HAND, IT IS EASY TO SEE WHY ZIBA MADE THE ACCUSATION: A REWARD WAS IMMEDIATELY PROMISED HIM. 16:15–23 HUSHAI AND AHITHOPHEL. ENTERING JERUSALEM UNOPPOSED WITH HIS ARMY, ABSALOM NO DOUBT FORMED A COUNCIL OF ADVISERS, AMONG THEM HUSHAI AND AHITHOPHEL. HUSHAI’S PURPOSE, AS WE KNOW FROM 15:34, WAS TO DECEIVE ABSALOM AND UNDERMINE AHITHOPHEL’S ADVICE. HE IMMEDIATELY SUCCEEDED IN DECEIVING ABSALOM, IMPLYING THAT HE BELIEVED THAT ABSALOM WAS THE ONE CHOSEN BY THE LORD. IN FACT, HE WAS SURE THAT DAVID REMAINED GOD’S CHOSEN ONE. HUSHAI DID NOT INTERFERE WITH AHITHOPHEL’S FIRST PIECE OF ADVICE. AHITHOPHEL RIGHTLY SAW THAT THE PUBLIC APPROPRIATION OF DAVID’S CONCUBINES WOULD CREATE A TOTAL AND PERMANENT BREACH BETWEEN FATHER AND SON. IT IS LIKELY THAT MANY ISRAELITES HAD HESITATED TO SUPPORT ABSALOM IN CASE HE AND HIS FATHER ENDED THEIR QUARREL; HOSTILE REACTIONS AGAINST DAVID WOULD THEN HAVE BEEN DANGEROUS. HUSHAI PROBABLY TOOK THE VIEW THAT ABSALOM’S SEIZURE OF THE CONCUBINES MIGHT GAIN AS MUCH SUPPORT FOR DAVID AS FOR ABSALOM, SO HE SAID NOTHING. 17:1–14 HUSHAI’S SUCCESS. AHITHOPHEL’S NEXT COUNSEL CONCERNED THE MILITARY ASPECT OF THE REBELLION. HIS SCHEME MADE GOOD SENSE. SPEED AND SURPRISE WOULD WIN THE WAR WITH VERY FEW CASUALTIES. ONCE DAVID WAS DEAD, ALL OPPOSITION TO ABSALOM WOULD BE POINTLESS. HUSHAI’S ADVICE WAS ELOQUENTLY EXPRESSED (8–13). IT WAS BASED ON THE FACT THAT ABSOLOM’S ARMY WAS BIGGER THAN DAVID’S. THE FLAW IN HIS SCHEME (AS HUSHAI WELL KNEW) WAS THAT IT INVOLVED A LONG DELAY, AND SO WOULD GIVE DAVID AND JOAB, WITH ALL THEIR MILITARY EXPERIENCE, AMPLE TIME TO MAKE PROPER PREPARATIONS. HUSHAI’S SCHEME WAS SO BAD, IN FACT, THAT AHITHOPHEL SOON COMMITTED SUICIDE (23). THE BIBLICAL AUTHOR RECOGNIZES THAT ABSALOM AND HIS OFFICERS WERE MISLED BY GOD AS MUCH AS BY HUSHAI (14). 17:15–29 BEFORE THE BATTLE. HUSHAI HURRIED OFF TO SEND WORD TO DAVID, OBVIOUSLY BEFORE ABSALOM HAD MADE A DECISION. THE DETAILED NARRATIVE OF VS 17–22 EMPHASIZES THAT THE MESSENGERS WERE ALMOST CAUGHT; THEIR ESCAPE WAS ANOTHER INSTANCE OF GOD’S OVERRULING TO FRUSTRATE ABSALOM. THANKS TO HUSHAI, DAVID WAS ABLE TO MAKE HIS HEADQUARTERS IN A FORTIFIED CITY, MAHANAIM, WHILE ABSALOM AND HIS ARMY, IN DUE COURSE, CROSSED THE JORDAN (24). ABSALOM’S COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF AMASA LACKED THE SKILL AND EXPERIENCE OF JOAB, TO WHOM HE WAS RELATED. (HE WAS ALSO A RELATIVE OF BOTH DAVID AND ABSALOM.) VS 27–29 INDICATE THAT EVEN IN MAHANAIM, PREVIOUSLY ISH-BOSHETH’S CAPITAL, DAVID HAD INFLUENTIAL FRIENDS; HE COULD FACE THE FORTHCOMING BATTLE WITH CONFIDENCE. 18:1–18 ABSALOM’S DEATH. INEVITABLY, THE CASUALTIES THAT DAY WERE GREAT (7). REBELLIONS DO NOT COME CHEAP. DAVID’S MEN WERE ABLE TO SHOW THEIR SUPERIOR EXPERIENCE, WHILE ABSALOM’S TROOPS KNEW LITTLE ABOUT THE TERRAIN AND SUFFERED HEAVILY AS A RESULT (8). BUT NO DOUBT MANY MEN DIED ON BOTH SIDES. THE WRITER CONCENTRATES HIS ATTENTION ON THE LIVES OF ONLY TWO MEN, DAVID AND ABSALOM. NEITHER OF THEM SEEMS TO HAVE APPRECIATED AHITHOPHEL’S PERSPECTIVE IN 17:3, NAMELY THAT THE DEATH OF ONLY ONE MAN (WHETHER DAVID OR ABSALOM) WOULD SETTLE THE ISSUE. SO, DAVID IS READY TO RISK HIS LIFE (AND ABSALOM NOT ONLY RISKED HIS LIFE BUT LOST IT) BUT HIS TROOPS WERE WISER THAN THE KING, AND ENSURED THAT HIS LIFE WAS NOT ENDANGERED. JOAB ENSURED THAT ABSALOM’S LIFE WAS ENDED, AND WITH HIS DEATH THE BATTLE AND THE WAR ENDED TOO (15–16). JOAB SAW MATTERS MORE CLEARLY THAN DAVID, WHO FOUND IT IMPOSSIBLE TO VIEW HIS SON AS AN ENEMY. V 18 ROUNDS OFF THE STORY OF ABSALOM, GIVING A FRESH ILLUSTRATION OF HIS ARROGANCE. HIS ONLY REAL MONUMENT WAS HIS GRAVE, DEEP IN THE FOREST. HIS WORDS IMPLY THAT HIS THREE SONS (14:27) HAD ALREADY DIED. 18:19–33 THE NEWS OF ABSALOM’S DEATH. THE CHOICE OF A MESSENGER TO THE KING DEPENDED ON THE CONTENT OF THE NEWS. BUT WAS THE NEWS GOOD OR BAD? AHIMAAZ WAS CONFIDENT THAT THE NEWS WAS GOOD, BUT JOAB KNEW THAT DAVID WAS MORE INTERESTED IN ABSALOM’S WELFARE THAN IN THE OUTCOME OF THE BATTLE. SO, JOAB CHOSE A FOREIGN SOLDIER TO BRING DAVID THE BAD NEWS OF ABSALOM’S DEATH. THE STORY IS ONE OF THE MOST POIGNANT IN THE HOLY BIBLE, AS DAVID HOPED FOR THE BEST AS HE TRIED TO INTERPRET THE UNUSUAL SITUATION OF TWO SEPARATE MESSENGERS APPROACHING. DAVID’S FINAL PATHETIC WORDS ARE IRONIC: IF HE HAD SIMPLY REMAINED IN JERUSALEM HE WOULD HAVE DIED INSTEAD OF ABSALOM! DAVID’S DEEP AND IRRATIONAL GRIEF PROVES HOW REAL WAS GOD’S PUNISHMENT, FORETOLD BY NATHAN (12:10). IT IS THE CHIEF PURPOSE OF THE WRITER TO EMPHASIZE THIS POINT.**

**19:1–20:26 DAVID’S RETURN AND SHEBA’S REVOLT**

**WARS, AND ESPECIALLY CIVIL WARS, MAY ACHIEVE THEIR AIMS BUT THEY INEVITABLY GIVE RISE TO NEW PROBLEMS. DAVID HAD WON, BUT THE COUNTRY HAD LOST ITS UNITY, AND CHS. 19 AND 20 REVEAL SOMETHING OF THE CONSEQUENCES. DAVID WAS EVENTUALLY SUCCESSFUL IN RE-ESTABLISHING UNITY FOR THE REMAINDER OF HIS REIGN, AND SO GOD’S PROMISES TO HIM WERE FULFILLED. HE DID NOT LOSE THE THRONE, BUT HIS LATER YEARS WERE UNHAPPY ONES. 19:1–15 PREPARATIONS FOR DAVID’S RETURN. THIS SECTION IS CONCERNED WITH THREE DISTINCT GROUPS OF PEOPLE: DAVID’S ARMY, ABSALOM’S NORTHERN SUPPORTERS, AND THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE TRIBE OF JUDAH. DAVID COULD EASILY HAVE OFFENDED ANY OF THESE. HE HAD TO SHOW GRACIOUSNESS AND FORGIVENESS TO FORMER REBELS WITHOUT ANGERING LOYAL SUPPORTERS. AT FIRST, HE WAS IN DANGER OF OFFENDING HIS VICTORIOUS ARMY, TILL JOAB ONCE AGAIN TOOK FIRM ACTION. DAVID’S DECISION TO MAKE AMASA THE COMMANDER OF HIS ARMY (13) HAD TWO MOTIVES. FIRST, IT WOULD SHOW ALL REBELS THE EXTENT OF DAVID’S FORGIVENESS, SINCE AMASA HAD BEEN THEIR COMMANDER. SECONDLY, DAVID TOOK PLEASURE IN DISPLACING JOAB, WHO HAD BEEN RESPONSIBLE FOR KILLING ABSALOM. THE NORTHERN TRIBESMEN WERE READY TO ACCEPT DAVID AS KING ONCE MORE, BUT PLAINLY JUDAH SHOWED SOME HESITATION. WE MAY INFER THAT ABSALOM’S REVOLT HAD DIVIDED JUDAH, AND AS A TRIBE THEY WERE UNCERTAIN ABOUT DAVID’S ATTITUDE TOWARDS THEM. IT WAS, HOWEVER, ESSENTIAL FOR DAVID’S POSITION THAT HIS OWN TRIBE SHOULD GIVE HIM SOLID SUPPORT, AND HE MADE IT HIS PRIORITY TO WIN THEM OVER. SOME FRICTION BETWEEN NORTH AND SOUTH RESULTED (SEE VS 40–43). 19:16–39 DAVID’S RETURN. THIS WHOLE SECTION IS SET AT THE RIVER JORDAN, AND IT IS THE DRAMATIC REVERSAL OF 16:1–14. THE INDIVIDUALS WHO HAD REACTED TO DAVID IN VARIOUS WAYS WHEN HE HAD BEEN FLEEING FROM JERUSALEM NOW CAME TO MEET HIM AS HE RETURNED VICTORIOUS. DAVID WAS FORGIVING TO ENEMIES LIKE SHIMEI (18–23) AND HE REWARDED THOSE WHO HAD BEEN TRULY LOYAL LIKE BARZILLAI (31–40). ZIBA ONCE AGAIN REACHED DAVID BEFORE HIS MASTER MEPHIBOSHETH, BUT THIS TIME MEPHIBOSHETH PRESENTED HIMSELF AND TRIED TO UNDO THE HARM ZIBA HAD CAUSED (17–18, 24–30). PERHAPS DAVID COULD NOT DECIDE WHICH MAN WAS TELLING THE TRUTH, OR ELSE HE FELT THAT ZIBA’S LOYALTY DESERVED SOME REWARD. THE IMPORTANT CONSEQUENCE WAS THAT MEPHIBOSHETH LOST SOME PROPERTY BUT RETAINED HIS LIFE AND PRESUMABLY HIS HONORED POSITION AT COURT. 19:40–20:13 REBELLION IN THE NORTH. THE FINAL VERSES OF CH. 19 REVERT TO THE TENSE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN JUDAH AND THE NORTHERN TRIBES. THE NORTHERN GROUP WERE HALF-HEARTED ABOUT DAVID (40), EVEN THOUGH THEY CLAIMED A GREATER SHARE IN THE KING (43). THE FRICTION BETWEEN THEM AND JUDAH RESULTED IN ANOTHER REVOLT AGAINST DAVID, LED BY SHEBA (20:1). IT WAS IN REALITY A SMALL AFFAIR WHICH ENDED WITHOUT A BATTLE, BUT IT HAD WIDE APPEAL NEVERTHELESS (20:2). THE PERSONAL INTEREST CENTRES ON JOAB AND HIS RELATIVE AMASA. AMASA SHOWED THAT HE WAS A POOR GENERAL, AND IT WAS JOAB YET AGAIN WHOSE ABILITY AND LOYALTY TO DAVID WOULD DEFEAT THE ENEMY. THE STORY ALSO DEMONSTRATES AGAIN JOAB’S BRUTAL AND RUTHLESS CHARACTER. 20:14–26 THE END OF THE REBELLION. THE WEAKNESS OF THIS REVOLT IS DEMONSTRATED BY THE FACT THAT SHEBA RETREATED, NEVER STOPPING TO FIGHT, TO A FRONTIER TOWN ON THE NORTHERN BORDER OF ISRAEL, ABEL BETH MAACAH. EVEN HERE HE DID NOT FIGHT A BATTLE BUT WAITED TO BE BESIEGED. IT SEEMS THAT ABEL WAS A POOR CHOICE, BECAUSE IT WAS A TOWN WITH A REPUTATION FOR WISDOM AND FOR PEACEFUL CONDUCT (18–19). THE CITIZENS ACTED SWIFTLY AND ENDED THE HOSTILITIES BY KILLING SHEBA. ONCE AGAIN, THE DEATH OF A SINGLE INDIVIDUAL SETTLED THE ISSUE. THE VICTORIOUS JOAB WENT BACK TO THE KING IN JERUSALEM, CONFIDENT THAT HE WAS ONCE AGAIN COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF ISRAEL’S ENTIRE ARMY, AND DAVID MUST HAVE CONFIRMED THIS POSITION (23). THE LAST VERSES OF THE CHAPTER LIST DAVID’S OFFICIALS TOWARDS THE END OF THE REIGN, A LIST WHICH CONTAINS SOME CHANGES FROM THE EARLIER LIST OF 8:16–18. THE MENTION OF FORCED LABOR IS NEW, AND SHOWS THAT DAVID’S ADMINISTRATION HAD TO DEPEND ON FORCING NUMBERS OF FREE-BORN ISRAELITES INTO SOME STATE WORKS AND PROJECTS. THE MOST POIGNANT CHANGE IS THE ABSENCE OF ANY MENTION OF DAVID’S SONS. SOME OF HIS SONS WERE STILL ALIVE, INCLUDING ADONIJAH AND SOLOMON, BUT AMNON AND ABSALOM WERE BOTH DEAD IN TRAGIC CIRCUMSTANCES. THE STORY OF DAVID’S SONS IS CONTINUED IN 1 KI. 1.**

**21:1–24:25 DAVID’S REIGN: PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS**

**THESE LAST FOUR CHAPTERS OF 2 SAMUEL ARE OFTEN REFERRED TO AS AN APPENDIX TO THE BOOK. THE CONTENTS ARE VARIED, AND THE CHAPTERS INTERRUPT THE STORY OF THE SUCCESSION STRUGGLES. THERE IS, NEVERTHELESS, MORE UNITY OF THEME AND DELIBERATE PURPOSE ON THE PART OF THE WRITER THAN IS AT FIRST APPARENT. THESE CHAPTERS ILLUSTRATE SOME OF DAVID’S OTHER PROBLEMS, AND SHOW HOW GOD PROVIDED GUIDANCE AND LOYAL SUPPORTERS FOR DAVID IN ALL HIS DIFFICULTIES. THEY SHOW TOO HOW HIS EXPERIENCES OF LIFE AND OF GOD TOGETHER MADE HIM ‘THE SWEET PSALMIST OF ISRAEL’. LASTLY, THIS SECTION OPENS SOME IMPORTANT FUTURE PERSPECTIVES.**

**21:1–22 FAMINE AND WARFARE**

**21:1–14 THE EXECUTION OF SAUL’S FAMILY. MOST OF THE TROUBLES OF DAVID’S REIGN WERE DUE TO WARFARE, BUT THE LAND OF ISRAEL SUFFERED OCCASIONAL DROUGHTS AND FAMINES TOO, AND THIS CHAPTER RECALLS A PARTICULARLY SERIOUS FAMINE, PERHAPS FAIRLY EARLY IN DAVID’S REIGN. THE ORACLE OF GOD, WHEN CONSULTED (1), REFERRED TO AN EPISODE NOT MENTIONED ELSEWHERE, AN ATTACK BY SAUL ON THE PEOPLE OF THE CITY OF GIBEON. THE BACKGROUND IS THAT IN DEFENDING ISRAEL SAUL HAD ATTACKED NOT ONLY THE PHILISTINES BUT ANY NON-ISRAELITES WHO POSED A THREAT. BUT THE GIBEONITES POSED NO THREAT, AND TO BREAK THE OLD TREATY WITH THEM (SEE JOS. 9) WAS A SERIOUS CRIME. THE WRONG HAD NEVER BEEN PUT RIGHT. BY MODERN LAWS, TO PUNISH SAUL’S FAMILY FOR SAUL’S SINS WOULD BE EQUALLY WRONG, BUT IN THE ANCIENT WORLD THE PRINCIPLE OF A FAMILY’S COMMON RESPONSIBILITY WAS STRONGLY HELD. EVEN SO, WE MAY STILL FEEL THAT THE GIBEONITES WERE VINDICTIVE. THE WRITER’S CHIEF REASON FOR TELLING THIS STORY IS TO SHOW THAT DAVID WAS NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DEATHS OF THE SEVEN MEN NOW EXECUTED. NO DOUBT THERE WERE SOME ISRAELITES LIKE SHIMEI (16:5–8) WHO ACCUSED DAVID OF HATRED OF SAUL’S FAMILY. THIS PASSAGE, THEREFORE, REMINDS THE READER ABOUT DAVID’S TREATMENT OF MEPHIBOSHETH, AND SHOWS HIS SCRUPULOUS CARE FOR THE REMAINS OF SAUL AND HIS DESCENDANTS. 21:15–22 INCIDENTS FROM THE PHILISTINE WARS. THIS SECTION GIVES US A FRAGMENT FROM THE PHILISTINE WARS OF DAVID, AND IT IS NOT CLEAR WHAT ITS PURPOSE IS, NOR WHY IT HAS BEEN PLACED AT THIS POINT. IN SOME WAYS IT LAYS A FOUNDATION FOR CH. 22, WHICH CONTAINS A PSALM IN WHICH ENEMIES AND WARFARE ARE A MAJOR THEME. PROBABLY THE CHIEF REASON FOR INCLUDING THESE VERSES IS TO PROVIDE A SETTING FOR THE DESCRIPTION OF DAVID AS THE LAMP OF ISRAEL WHICH MUST NOT BE EXTINGUISHED (17). THE KING WAS SEEN BY HIS MEN AS VITAL TO THE WELFARE OF ISRAEL, A VERY DIFFERENT PICTURE FROM THE DESCRIPTION OF A KING BY SAMUEL IN 1 SA. 8. DAVID HAD BEEN PUNISHED BY GOD, AS EARLIER CHAPTERS HAVE SHOWN, BUT IN THESE CLOSING CHAPTERS WE ARE REMINDED OF THE CLOSE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STEPHEN YAHWEH AND DAVID, STEPHEN YAHWEH’S CHOSEN AND ANOINTED KING. NOTE. 19 ELHANAN … KILLED GOLIATH. THIS IS A PUZZLING STATEMENT, BUT BOTH THIS VERSE AND ITS PARALLEL IN 1 CH. 20:5 (WHERE THE WORDS ARE RATHER DIFFERENT) CONTAIN TEXTUAL PROBLEMS. IT IS UNLIKELY, THEREFORE, THAT IT CONTRADICTS THE STORY OF DAVID’S DEFEAT OF GOLIATH IN 1 SA. 17. ONE POSSIBILITY IS THAT ‘ELHANAN’ WAS DAVID’S PERSONAL NAME AND ‘DAVID’ HIS THRONE-NAME.**

**22:1–23:7 TWO PSALMS OF DAVID**

**22:1–51 A SONG OF PRAISE. THIS SONG IS ALSO INCLUDED, WITH MINOR DIFFERENCES, IN THE BOOK OF PSALMS, AS PS. 18. ITS PLACE AMONG THE PSALMS SHOWS THAT IT WAS USED AS A GENERAL THANKSGIVING HYMN. ITS USE HERE IS PARTLY TO ILLUSTRATE DAVID’S REPUTATION AS A PSALMIST, BUT MORE PARTICULARLY TO GIVE A GENERAL COMMENTARY ON DAVID’S EXPERIENCE OF GOD. MUCH OF HIS REIGN HAD BEEN OCCUPIED IN STRUGGLING AGAINST A VARIETY OF ENEMIES (1) BUT HE HAD WON THROUGH TO A PERIOD OF PEACE. HE MUST HAVE BEEN A MAN OF GREAT ABILITY, BUT IN THIS PSALM ALL THE CREDIT FOR VICTORY AND SUCCESS IS GIVEN TO GOD. VS 1–7 DESCRIBE WHAT GOD HAD BEEN TO DAVID, ABOVE ALL HIS DELIVERER. VS 8–20, IN VERY PICTORIAL LANGUAGE, DESCRIBE GOD RESPONDING TO DAVID’S PLEAS FOR HELP, AND EMPHASIZE GOD’S GREAT POWER. VS 21–25 REFER TO THE BASIS FOR GOD’S INTERVENTION: AS A KING, DAVID HAD UPHELD GOD’S LAWS AMONG THE ISRAELITE PEOPLE. (V 24 IS PLAINLY NOT RECALLING DAVID’S SINS AGAINST URIAH; THE PSALM IS CONCERNED WITH ROYAL POLICY, NOT PERSONAL CONDUCT.) VS 26–37 TURN TO THE THEME OF GOD’S FAITHFULNESS; HE HAD TRULY KEPT HIS COVENANT WITH DAVID (SEE CH. 7). VS 38–46 CONSIDER DAVID’S ENEMIES, ESPECIALLY THE FOREIGN NATIONS HE HAD DEFEATED WITH GOD’S HELP. VS 47–51 ROUND OFF THE PSALM WITH RENEWED PRAISE. THE LAST WORDS OF THE CHAPTER LOOK FORWARD: GOD WOULD KEEP COVENANT WITH DAVID’S DESCENDANTS TOO. FOR MORE DETAILED COMMENTS, SEE THE COMMENTARY ON PS. 18. 23:1–7 DAVID’S LAST WORDS. THIS SECOND PSALM IS ABOUT THE SAME THEMES AS CH. 22 BUT PUTS MORE EMPHASIS ON THE COVENANT GOD HAD MADE WITH DAVID, AND PAYS LESS ATTENTION TO ENEMIES. SUCH EVIL MEN NEED CAREFUL HANDLING, BUT THEIR END IS CERTAIN (7). THE PSALM RECOGNIZES THE PROPHETIC SPIRIT WHICH INSPIRED DAVID AS A SINGER OF SONGS. ABOVE ALL, HOWEVER, DAVID’S KINGSHIP IS VIVIDLY DESCRIBED. BECAUSE HIS RULE WAS CARRIED OUT IN RIGHTEOUSNESS AND IN THE FEAR OF GOD IT WAS WONDERFULLY BENEFICIAL TO ISRAEL (4). THE SALVATION AND THE FULFILMENT OF DAVID’S EVERY DESIRE MENTIONED IN V 5 ALSO RELATE TO HIS RULE; VICTORY AND PROSPERITY FOR ISRAEL ARE MEANT.**

**23:8–39 DAVID’S MIGHTY MEN**

**THE HELP GOD GAVE TO DAVID AGAINST HIS ENEMIES HAS BEEN ACKNOWLEDGED IN THE TWO PSALMS. THE WRITER NOW TESTIFIES TO THE HUMAN HELP HE RECEIVED, AND LISTS HIS OUTSTANDING SOLDIERS. FIRST, THERE WAS AN ELITE GROUP CALLED THE THREE WHOSE HEROISM IS ILLUSTRATED IN VS 8–12. VS 13–17 MENTION THE EXPLOITS OF THREE OTHERS, UNNAMED, WHO BELONGED TO THE THIRTY. VS 18–23 PICK OUT TWO OTHERS FROM THE THIRTY, ABISHAI AND BENAIAH, BOTH OF WHOM HAVE BEEN MENTIONED IN EARLIER CHAPTERS. ASAHEL (24) WAS KILLED EARLY IN DAVID’S REIGN (2:23), AND THE DEATH OF URIAH (39) HAS ALSO BEEN DESCRIBED (11:17). THIS SUGGESTS THAT OTHER MEN WERE ADDED TO THE THIRTY WHEN NECESSARY TO KEEP THE NUMBER CORRECT. THUS, THE NUMBER THIRTY-SEVEN (39) CAN BE EXPLAINED.**

**24:1–17 CENSUS AND PLAGUE**

**THIS IS A PUZZLING CHAPTER FOR A MODERN READER; THOUGH IF WE ARE WISE, WE ALL RECOGNIZE THAT GOD’S ACTIONS MAY AT ANY TIME BE INSCRUTABLE, BEYOND OUR UNDERSTANDING. HERE, THE BIBLICAL WRITER DOES NOT EXPLAIN WHY STEPHEN YAHWEH IS ANGRY WITH ISRAEL (1), NOR WHY A CENSUS IS SINFUL. THERE IS EVIDENCE THAT IN THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST A CENSUS IS THOUGHT TO BE DANGEROUS AND LIKELY TO ATTRACT DIVINE ANGER. THE SIMPLE FACT IS THAT THIS CENSUS IS FOLLOWED BY A PLAGUE, AND THE BIBLICAL WRITER SEES GOD’S HAND IN IT. IN 1 CH. 21:1 SATAN’S [LUCIFER’S/VICTORIA’S] ACTIVITY IS MENTIONED, BUT THE WRITER OF SAMUEL IS MORE CONCERNED TO STRESS GOD’S CONTROL OF ALL HISTORICAL EVENTS. GOD’S INTERVENTION IS PROVED, IN ANY CASE, BY THE WORD OF THE LORD (11); IN FACT, THE PLAGUE IS THE LEAST OF THREE POSSIBLE EVILS. V 16 INTRODUCES US TO THE THRESHING-FLOOR OF ARAUNAH. AS EARLY READERS WOULD HAVE KNOWN AT ONCE, THIS WAS THE SITE OF THE FUTURE TEMPLE, ERECTED IN JERUSALEM BY SOLOMON. IT WAS PRECISELY AT THIS SITE, THEN, THAT GOD’S PRESENCE WAS REVEALED IN THIS PLAGUE SITUATION. GOD’S ANGER AND GOD’S POWER HAD BEEN DEMONSTRATED; NOW GOD’S MERCY TOO WAS MADE EVIDENT TO ISRAEL.**

**24:18–25 THE NEW ALTAR**

**THIS FINAL PARAGRAPH BRINGS THE BOOKS OF SAMUEL TO AN END, WITH A STRONG FORWARD LOOK. THE THRESHING-FLOOR OF ARAUNAH BECOMES A SACRED PLACE, A SHRINE FOR SACRIFICES, OFFERINGS AND PRAYER (25)—IN FACT, SOLOMON’S TEMPLE IN EMBRYO. HERE IS A SCENE OF HOPE AND FELLOWSHIP (AND THE PLAGUE CAME TO AN END). DESPITE DAVID’S SIN (10), HE APPEARS IN A GOOD LIGHT IN THIS CHAPTER. HE CONFESSED HIS SIN, HE WAS CAREFUL TO CONSULT GOD’S PROPHET, HE INTERCEDED FOR HIS PEOPLE (17) AND HE PAID ARAUNAH IN FULL FOR ALL HE TOOK FROM HIM. IN EARLIER CHAPTERS, DAVID HAS BEEN A FAR FROM PERFECT KING, AND HE IS STILL SEEN HERE TO BE A SINFUL MAN; BUT HE NEVERTHELESS LEFT A GOOD EXAMPLE FOR LATER KINGS TO FOLLOW, NOT LEAST IN HIS CONCERN FOR THE PROPER WORSHIP OF GOD. THESE CONCERNS CONTINUE INTO THE BOOKS OF KINGS, WHICH GO ON TO COMPLETE THE STORY OF DAVID.**

**CHRONICLES 9:35–29:30 DAVID**

**DAVID, TO WHOM PRACTICALLY TWENTY CHAPTERS ARE NEXT DEVOTED, IS CLEARLY OF CENTRAL IMPORTANCE IN THE CHRONICLER’S SCHEME OF THINGS. WITH THE OVERLAP OF FATHER AND SON, HOWEVER, THE STORY OF SOLOMON (WHO IS FIRST INTRODUCED IN CH. 22) WILL COVER ALMOST AS MANY CHAPTERS, AND WE SHOULD SEE THE TWO KINGS’ SIDE BY SIDE AS FORMING JOINTLY THE IDEAL. BECAUSE THE TWO GREAT THEMES OF THE BOOK ARE KINGSHIP AND PRIESTHOOD, WE MIGHT SAY THAT DAVID ESTABLISHES THE THRONE, WHILE SOLOMON WILL BUILD THE TEMPLE. ONE IS PRESENTED AS A MAN OF WAR, AND THE OTHER AS A MAN OF PEACE. EVEN SO, BOTH THEMES (THRONE AND TEMPLE) FIGURE IN BOTH REIGNS. THE TIME OF DAVID AND SOLOMON IS BEING SET FORTH AS AN IDEAL SO THEIR PORTRAITS HERE DIFFER FROM THE ONES IN SAMUEL/KINGS. THOSE ARE HUMAN AND FALLIBLE, ‘WARTS AND ALL’, WHILE THESE ARE THE OFFICIAL PORTRAITS OF TWO GREAT MONARCHS. THE CHRONICLER IS NOT WHITEWASHING THEM; EVERYONE KNOWS THEIR SINS AND FOLLIES. HE IS SIMPLY BEING SELECTIVE, TO BRING OUT THE PRINCIPLES BEHIND THEIR GREATNESS.**

**9:35–12:40 KING AND PEOPLE**

**AGAINST THE BACKGROUND OF THE FAILURE OF HIS PREDECESSOR SAUL, THE FIRST KING OF ISRAEL, DAVID IS GIVEN THE KINGDOM AND BECOMES THE FOCAL POINT OF A UNITED NATION. THOUGH NOW LONG DEAD (FOR THE CHRONICLER AND HIS READERS AS FOR US), HE EMBODIES THE ENDURING PRINCIPLES AROUND WHICH THE LIFE OF GOD’S PEOPLE MUST ALWAYS BE SHAPED. 9:35–44 THE FIRST KING’S LINE. UP TO NOW, ‘CHRONICLES’ HAS MEANT GENEALOGIES AND OTHER NAME-LISTS. FROM NOW ON IT WILL MEAN SOMETHING NEW—NARRATIVES, THE HISTORY OF THE KINGDOM OF ISRAEL—AND THE FIRST KING IS INTRODUCED BY ONE FINAL GENEALOGY, HIS FAMILY TREE REPEATED FROM 8:29–38. 10:1–14 THE FIRST KING’S FAILURE. OF THE TWENTY-THREE CHAPTERS WHICH 1 SA. DEVOTES TO THE REIGN OF SAUL (9–31), THE CHRONICLER OMITS TWENTY-TWO. HE SIMPLY TELLS THE STORY OF SAUL’S DEATH, AND ADDS TWO VERSES OF HIS OWN (13–14). FOR HIM, NEITHER THE GRADUAL DECLINE IN SAUL’S OWN FORTUNES NOR THOSE OF SAUL’S FAMILY AFTER HIS DEATH (2 SA. 1–4) MATTERS; SO FAR AS THE KINGDOM IS CONCERNED, SAUL’S HOUSE CAME TO AN END AT MOUNT GILBOA (6). SAUL’S DISLOYALTY TO GOD (13–14) IS IMPORTANT IN MORE WAYS THAN ONE. IT HIGHLIGHTS DAVID’S LOYALTY. DAVID, IN CONTRAST TO SAUL, IS THE MAN AFTER GOD’S OWN HEART (1 SA. 13:14; THE CHRONICLER DOES NOT QUOTE THE PHRASE, BECAUSE HIS WHOLE PORTRAIT OF DAVID WILL ILLUSTRATE IT). IT IS ONLY DAVID’S OBEDIENCE WHICH CAN REVERSE FOR ISRAEL THE BAD EFFECTS OF SAUL’S DISOBEDIENCE. SO, IF MORE RECENT EXPERIENCES (THAT IS, FOR THE CHRONICLER’S READERS, THE EXILE) PARALLEL THOSE OF SAUL’S REIGN (7; 5:25–26; 9:1B), THEN THE WAY OF RESTORATION IS TO BE LEARNED FROM DAVID’S REIGN (2 CH. 33:8). 11:1–3 THE NEW KING’S PEOPLE. 2 SA. 5:1–3 IS THE SOURCE. FULFILLING THE OLD PROPHECY (GN. 49:10), THE PEOPLE GATHER UNITEDLY IN OBEDIENCE AROUND THE RULER FROM THE TRIBE OF JUDAH. IN SIGNIFICANT PRE-ECHOES OF HIS GREATEST DESCENDANT JESUS, DAVID IS PRESENTED AS THE SAME FLESH AND BLOOD AS HIS PEOPLE, THEIR VICTORIOUS SAVIOR, THE ONE APPOINTED TO THIS BY GOD, AND THE MAKER OF A COVENANT (3, RSV, RATHER THAN COMPACT) WHICH THEY ACCEPT. 11:4–9 THE NEW KING’S CITY. JERUSALEM WILL BE THE PLACE OF THE THRONE. DAVID’S POWERFUL RULE OVER HIS PEOPLE’S LIFE WILL MEAN PRAISE, PEACE AND PROSPERITY (CF. PS. 122). SUCH IS IN ALL AGES THE MEANING OF GOD’S GOVERNMENT (HEB. 12:22). THIS CITY WILL, EVEN IN DAVID’S TIME, BE THE PLACE WHERE HIS SON’S TEMPLE IS TO BE BUILT (17:12; 22:1) AND MUCH SOONER STILL THE PLACE WHERE ISRAEL’S WORSHIP OF GOD WILL CENTER ON THE ARK OF THE COVENANT (15:3–28). BUT EVEN BEFORE THAT IT IS THE PLACE WHERE THROUGH HIS VICEROY THE LORD ALMIGHTY (9) RULES HIS PEOPLE. 11:10–12:22 THE NEW KING’S WARRIORS. THESE LISTS COME MUCH LATER IN 2 SAMUEL (23:8–39), AND ARE BROUGHT FORWARD HERE TO SHOW HOW FROM THE OUTSET ‘ALL ISRAEL’ IN ITS GREAT VARIETY UNITES AROUND A KING OF THE RIGHT KIND. LIKE THE LISTS OF CHS. 1–9, THESE MAY BE DRAWN FROM SEVERAL PERIODS IN ORDER MORE EFFECTIVELY TO MAKE THE POINT. OUTSTANDING AMONG DAVID’S MIGHTY MEN ARE ‘THE THREE’ (11:11–14); SO, 2 SA. 23:8–12 CALLS THEM, GIVING A FULL ACCOUNT (SOMETHING IS MISSING IN CHRONICLES; A COPYIST’S EYE MUST HAVE SLID FROM FOR BATTLE (12; 2 SA. 23:9) TO AT A PLACE (12; 2 SA. 23:11). NEXT COME THE THIRTY, THREE OF WHOM HAVE GIVEN US ANOTHER OF THE UNFORGETTABLE INCIDENTS SO DEAR TO THE CHRONICLER (11:15–19). THIS ONE COMES FROM VERY EARLY IN DAVID’S CAREER (1 SA. 22:1). ABISHAI AND BENAIAH (11:20–25) WERE APPARENTLY EQUAL TO THE FIRST THREE, AND BENAIAH’S EXPLOITS WERE ESPECIALLY MEMORABLE. LIKE SO MANY OF THE PEOPLE IN CHS. 1–9, MOST OF THE ‘MIGHTY MEN’ IN 11:26–47 ARE NO MORE THAN NAMES TO US. IT IS NOT CLEAR HOW THEY RELATE TO THE THIRTY, AND SEVERAL HAVE BEEN ADDED TO THE LIST OF 2 SA. 23. PARADOXICALLY, THE RECORDING OF NOTHING BUT THEIR NAMES (EXCEPT FOR THE OCCASIONAL EXTRA TOUCH; 11:32, 39, 42) MAKES THEM REAL, IN ALL THEIR VARIETY. FOUR GROUPS ARE NOW MENTIONED WHICH JOINED FORCES WITH DAVID DURING SAUL’S REIGN, WHEN HE WAS AT ZIKLAG (1 SA. 27:6) OR IN HIS DESERT STRONGHOLD (1 SA. 23:14). (NOTE AGAIN THE ‘CHIASTIC’ ARRANGEMENT, ZIKLAG/STRONGHOLD/STRONGHOLD/ZIKLAG. SEE ON 2:42–55.) FIRST A GROUP FROM BENJAMIN (12:1–7): DAVID IS TO BE ACCLAIMED BY ‘ALL ISRAEL’, EVEN SAUL’S TRIBE. THESE COME FROM SAUL’S OWN CLAN AND TOWN. PERHAPS THEIR FAMOUS SHARPNESS OF EYE (12:2; JDG. 20:16) GOES WITH A POLITICAL AND SPIRITUAL ACUTENESS WHICH LEADS THEM TO BACK DAVID WHEN TRIBAL LOYALTY WOULD HAVE RANGED THEM WITH SAUL. THE CLOSING COMMENTS ON THE GADITE GROUP (12:8–15) COULD MEAN SIMPLY THAT THEY WERE ‘OVER A HUNDRED/A THOUSAND’ (RSV), AND THAT IT WAS THE FLOODING JORDAN, NOT THEY, THAT DROVE OUT THE VALLEY-DWELLERS; BUT IN BOTH VERSES, 14 AND 15, THE NIV IS MORE IN KEEPING WITH THE CHRONICLER’S WISH TO STRESS THE VALOUR OF DAVID’S SUPPORTERS. THE COMBINED BENJAMIN/JUDAH GROUP WHICH JOINED HIM IN THAT EARLY PERIOD (12:16–18) FOR SOME REASON RAISED HIS SUSPICION. PERHAPS HE HAD IN MIND DOEG’S TREACHERY (1 SA. 21–22). NOTHING COULD HAVE BEEN MORE REASSURING THAN THE INSPIRED RESPONSE AS GOD’S SPIRIT CLOTHED HIMSELF WITH AMASAI (12:18, AS IN JDG. 6:34; 2 CH. 24:20) AND MADE PLAIN ONCE MORE THAT GOD’S BLESSING IS FOR HIS CHOSEN KING AND FOR THOSE WHO RALLY TO HIM. FROM THE END OF SAUL’S REIGN (1 SA. 29–31) COMES THE FOURTH GROUP (12:19–22). THESE MANASSITES HAD SHREWDLY LEFT THEIR DECISION TILL SAUL’S DOOM WAS PRACTICALLY CERTAIN, BUT THEY WERE STILL WELCOME. 12:23–40 THE GATHERING AT HEBRON. THIS IS TO ANOINT DAVID KING BEFORE HE SETS UP HIS CAPITAL AT JERUSALEM (11:1–9). INDIVIDUALS ARE NAMED (27–28); TRIBAL CONTINGENTS ARE DESCRIBED IN A VARIETY OF WAYS. FOR ONCE THE TALLY OF TRIBES IS NOT KEPT CAREFULLY TO TWELVE (A GEOGRAPHICAL SWEEP FROM SOUTH TO NORTH THEN EAST INCLUDES LEVI, BOTH JOSEPH TRIBES, AND BOTH MANASSEH TERRITORIES, TO GIVE A GRAND TOTAL OF FOURTEEN — ‘ALL ISRAEL’ INDEED!). NOT ONLY THE VARIETY BUT ALSO THE UNITY OF ISRAEL IS STRESSED (38), IN STRONG CONTRAST TO ITS DISUNITY IN THE DAYS OF THE JUDGES. GOD’S PEOPLE UNITED UNDER GOD’S CHOSEN RULER HAVE GREAT CAUSE FOR JOY (39–40).**

**13:1–14:17 DAVID AT JERUSALEM**

**SAUL’S REIGN AND DAVID’S REIGN AT HEBRON (MENTIONED BRIEFLY; 12:23, 38) ARE SIMPLY THE PRELUDES TO THE STORY OF THE KINGDOM PROPER. FIRST THE ARK, THE SYMBOL OF GOD’S COVENANT OF GRACE, MUST BE INSTALLED IN DAVID’S NEW CAPITAL (13:1–14); THEN GOD WILL SPEAK ‘FROM HIS SANCTUARY’ (PS. 60:6–8) TO PROCLAIM DAVID’S BLESSINGS AT HOME (14:1–7) AND HIS FAME ABROAD (14:8–17). THERE IS A BACKWARD LOOK TO THE CONTRASTING CASE OF SAUL, AND A FORWARD LOOK TO THE TWIN THEMES TO BE DEVELOPED THROUGHOUT THE BOOK, WORSHIP/TEMPLE/PRIESTHOOD AND GOVERNMENT/THRONE/KINGSHIP. 13:1–14 BRINGING BACK THE ARK. THE GREATER PART OF THIS CHAPTER (6–14) COMES FROM 2 SA. 6:2–11, WHILE 2 SA. 5:11–25 IS LEFT FOR THE NEXT CHAPTER; THE ARK IS OF PRIME IMPORTANCE, AS THE INTRODUCTION (1–4) SHOWS. ITS DESCRIPTION (EX. 25; 37) AND ITS RECENT HISTORY (1 SA. 4–7) ARE ALREADY KNOWN; THE CRUCIAL THING HERE IS THAT DURING SAUL’S REIGN ISRAEL DID NOT ENQUIRE OF IT (3 OR ‘OF HIM’; THE ARK, OR THE GOD OF THE ARK, 10:14), BUT THAT IN CONTRAST DAVID AND ALL ISRAEL WITH HIM WILL DO SO. ‘ALL ISRAEL’ IS STRESSED FURTHER AS V 5 REWRITES 2 SA. 6:1, NOTING ALSO A NORTH-SOUTH EXTENT EVEN WIDER THAN THE USUAL ‘FROM BEERSHEBA TO DAN’ (21:2). THE FIRST ASSEMBLY DECIDES, AND THE SECOND ONE ACTS, TO BRING THE ARK INTO THE HEART OF THE NATION’S LIFE. UZZAH’S AND OBED-EDOM’S EXPERIENCES BOTH ILLUSTRATE THE ‘GOODNESS’ OF THE ARK. IT IS A ‘TERRIBLE GOOD’; UZZAH HAD SHARED A HOUSE WITH IT FOR TWENTY YEARS (1 SA. 7:2; 2 SA. 6:3), SO HIS OVER-FAMILIARITY WAS UNDERSTANDABLE, BUT IT WAS FATAL. WHERE TREATED WITH PROPER RESPECT, IT BROUGHT POSITIVE GOOD. 14:1–7 DAVID ESTABLISHED AT JERUSALEM. HAVING GOT THE ARK ON ITS WAY TO DAVID’S CAPITAL (THE NEXT CHAPTER WILL PICK UP THE REST OF 2 SA. 6), CHRONICLES NOW REVERTS TO 2 SA. 5:11–25, AND STRESSES FURTHER A VITAL CONTRAST. FIRST, IN THESE VERSES DAVID IS GIVEN A NOTABLE ‘HOUSE’ IN JERUSALEM, IN MORE SENSES THAN ONE, WHEREAS WITH SAUL’S DEATH AT THE BATTLE OF MOUNT GILBOA ‘ALL HIS HOUSE DIED TOGETHER’ (10:6). 14:8–17 DAVID RENOWNED ABROAD. THE CONTRAST CONTINUES WITH MILITARY VICTORIES AND AGAIN CH. 10 IS IN VIEW. EACH KING IN TURN CONFRONTS THE PHILISTINES; SAUL LOSES, DAVID WINS; IN THE ONE CASE THE PAGAN GODS ARE HONORED (10:10), IN THE OTHER THEY ARE ABASED (14:12); SAUL NEITHER SOUGHT NOR OBEYED THE LORD (10:13–14), WHILE DAVID DID BOTH (14:10–11, 14–16). BOTH GOD’S ANSWERS TO DAVID WERE MEMORABLE. HIS ‘OUTBREAK’ HERE WAS A MATTER FOR PRAISE (14:11; CONTRAST 13:11), AND THE MYSTERIOUS SOUND IN THE TREETOPS MEANT THAT THE ONSLAUGHT WAS HIS, AND DAVID SIMPLY HAD TO FALL IN AND FOLLOW (CF. JDG. 5:4; PS. 68:8).**

**15:1–17:27 THE ARK OF THE COVENANT**

**THE ARK REPRESENTS THE COVENANT OF GRACE, I.E. GOD’S INITIATIVE IN MAKING ISRAEL HIS PEOPLE FOR EVER. HOW THEY RESPOND TO THAT GRACE IN FAITH AND WORSHIP IS ONE OF THE CHRONICLER’S CHIEF THEMES. HE HAS A GREAT INTEREST IN THE TEMPLE, CERTAINLY, BUT IT IS MORE THAN THAT: HE RETURNS REPEATEDLY (1 CH. 13; 15–17; 23–28; 2 CH. 3–7; 29–31; 35) TO THE PROPER HONORING AND HOUSING OF THE ARK, WHO AND WHAT IS INVOLVED IN THIS, AND THE RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES WHICH WILL CENTER ON IT. HENCE HIS TREATMENT OF 2 SA. 6:11–12. BETWEEN THOSE TWO VERSES—INTO THE THREE-MONTH GAP, AS IT WERE—HE INSERTS BOTH THE ESTABLISHING OF DAVID’S KINGDOM (CH. 14) AND THE PLANNING OF THE RELIGIOUS FESTIVAL WITH WHICH THE ARK WOULD BE BROUGHT TO ITS PROPER HOME (15:1–24). THE LITURGY WHICH DAVID APPOINTS TELLS THE SAME STORY (CH. 16), AND THE PROPHECY AND PRAYER OF CH. 17 AGAIN SET FORTH THE REAL RELATION BETWEEN WHAT GOD DOES FOR DAVID AND WHAT DAVID DOES FOR GOD. 15:1–15 PROPER CEREMONY. THE ARK’S JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM IS NOW RESUMED, IN A STYLE NO LESS JOYFUL, BUT NOW MORE CONSIDERED. THE ARK IS TO BE CARRIED, NOT CARTED, AND THAT OF COURSE BY LEVITES (2, AMPLIFYING 2 SA. 6:13; INDEED, THE WHOLE OF VS 1–24 IS AN ADDITION TO THE EARLIER ACCOUNT). THIS IS BECAUSE DAVID HAS AGAIN, IN CONTRAST TO SAUL, ‘ENQUIRED’, AND HAS BEEN ANSWERED NOT BY SOME MYSTICAL EXPERIENCE BUT BY THE LAW OF MOSES (13, 15; DT. 10:8). REVERENCE FOR THE ARK MEANS NOT RESPECTFUL FEELINGS, BUT PRACTICAL OBEDIENCE TO GOD’S WORD. AGAIN, REPRESENTATIVES OF ALL ISRAEL ARE INVOLVED (3), WITH THREE FURTHER DIVISIONS OF THE TRIBE OF LEVI BESIDES THE NORMAL THREE (4–10; EX. 6:16, 18, 22). THE ‘CONSECRATION’ REQUIRED OF THE PRIESTS AND OTHER LEVITE LEADERS IS NO DOUBT THAT DESCRIBED IN EX. 19:10–15, BUT THE IMPORTANT THING IS NOT SO MUCH THE RITES IN THEMSELVES AS THE ATTITUDE OF HEART AND THE RELATIONSHIP TO GOD WHICH THEY PICTURE. 15:16–16:3 PROPER PRAISE. DAVID’S APPOINTING OF MUSIC FOR THE FESTIVE JOURNEY LOOKS BACK TO HIS OWN SPECIAL INTEREST AS ‘ISRAEL’S SINGER OF SONGS’ (2 SA. 23:1), AND TO THE LISTS OF LEADING MUSICIANS, ONE FROM EACH OF THE THREE GREAT CLANS OF LEVI, ALREADY GIVEN IN 6:31–47, AND FORWARD TO THE PLACE THAT MUSIC WOULD HOLD IN THE TEMPLE. IT IS NOT CLEAR HOW MANY OF THE LEVITES IN 15:17–18 WERE GATEKEEPERS AS WELL AS MUSICIANS, THOUGH OBED-EDOM SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN ONE OF THEM; NOR IS IT CLEAR WHETHER HE IS THE OBED-EDOM IN WHOSE HOUSE THE ARK HAD BEEN STAYING (15:25; SEE ON 26:4–8). BUT THE GROUP FORMED A WELL-ORGANIZED CHOIR AND ORCHESTRA (15:19–24). (ALAMOTH AND SHEMINITH MAY MEAN HIGH VOICES AND LOW VOICES; THE WORDS FIGURE IN SOME OF THE HEADINGS TO THE PSALMS.) THE CHRONICLER ADDS TO 2 SA. 6:13 A NOTE OF GOD’S APPROVAL (15:26) BECAUSE DAVID HAD ‘ENQUIRED’ AND OBEYED, BUT REDUCES THE QUARREL BETWEEN DAVID AND HIS WIFE (2 SA. 6:20–23) TO A MERE NOTE OF HER DISAPPROVAL (15:29): THE REPRESENTATIVE OF SAUL’S HOUSE IS STILL NOT IN TUNE WITH THE MIND OF GOD, AS DAVID IS. 16:4–36 DAVID’S PSALM OF THANKSGIVING. THE PSALM WHICH ASAPH’S GROUP IS TO USE IN WORSHIP IS ESPECIALLY APT, BECAUSE IT IS TO BE SUNG BEFORE THE ARK OF GOD’S COVENANT, TO THE LORD (4) (WHICH IS GOD’S COVENANT NAME), THE ARK HAVING NOW BEEN BROUGHT INTO THE CENTER OF ISRAEL’S LIFE. THAT IS THE SETTING (4–6, 37) AND THE THEME OF THE PSALM. IT COMBINES PARTS OF PSS. 96, 105 AND 106. THE FIRST PART (PS. 105:1–15) SETS FORTH WHAT IT MEANS TO PRAISE THE LORD (8–13), AND WHY, NAMELY BECAUSE OF HIS COVENANT (14–18). IT IS A COVENANT OF GRACE—I.E. IN HIS UNDESERVED LOVE HE HAS CHOSEN AND RESCUED HIS PEOPLE WHEN THEY COULD DO NOTHING FOR THEMSELVES (19–22). THE SECOND PART (PS. 96) PRAISES HIM AS GOD OVER ALL THE NATIONS, AND THEREFORE OVER THEIR GODS (CF. 10:10; 14:12), AND INDEED OVER THE WHOLE EARTH (23–33). THE FINAL VERSES (PS. 106:1, 47–48) CALL GOD’S PEOPLE AS A WHOLE TO JOIN THE LEVITES’ PRAISE (34–36): THEY ARE A CRY TO GOD THE SAVIOR, AND THE WORD FOR ‘SAVE US’ IS ‘HOSANNA’—TO BE TAKEN UP, SIGNIFICANTLY, BY THE CROWDS SURROUNDING THE LAST KING OF DAVID’S LINE AS HE RIDES IN TRIUMPH TO THE TEMPLE (MK. 11:9–10). 16:37–43 ARK AND ALTAR. ONLY ASAPH’S GROUP STAYS AT JERUSALEM, WHILE THOSE OF HEMAN AND JEDUTHUN (PROBABLY ANOTHER NAME FOR ETHAN, 6:44) ARE SENT TO GIBEON. 17:1–27 A HOUSE FOR THE ARK? BY AND LARGE, THIS CHAPTER REPRODUCES THE EARLIER ACCOUNT. BUT THE CHANGES TO 2 SA. 7:11 AND 14 ARE SIGNIFICANT. HERE, V 10 HAS SUBDUE INSTEAD OF ‘GIVE REST FROM’, BECAUSE, FOR THE CHRONICLER, REST IS CHARACTERISTIC OF SOLOMON’S REIGN RATHER THAN OF DAVID’S, AND BECAUSE AFTER THE TURMOIL’S OF DAVID’S TIME IT WILL BE SOLOMON’S PRIVILEGE TO BUILD THE TEMPLE. IN THE SAME WAY, V 13 OMITS THE POSSIBILITY OF SOLOMON’S GOING WRONG (THOUGH HE WOULD DO SO). IN THE CHRONICLER’S VIEW SOLOMON AND DAVID ARE TO BE SEEN AS JOINT FOUNDERS OF THE KINGDOM, THE IDEAL FIGURES OF THE GOLDEN AGE. IT IS CLEAR THAT DAVID INTENDS TO BUILD A HOUSE FOR THE ARK, AND EQUALLY CLEAR FROM THE REPLY OF NATHAN, WHO IS A MAN OF GOD, THAT THERE IS NOTHING WRONG WITH SUCH A DESIRE IN ITSELF. BUT GOD’S REPLY WILL TEACH DAVID’S ‘FAINT DESIRES TO RISE’, AND TO STRETCH THEM BY NEW UNDERSTANDING. A PERMANENT HOUSE FOR THE ARK IS SOMETHING GOD HAS NEVER ASKED FOR (4–6); INDEED, HE DESIGNED THE ARK TO BE PORTABLE (EX. 25:14). WHAT GOD DOES FOR DAVID TAKES PRECEDENCE OVER ANYTHING DAVID CAN DO FOR GOD (7–10); NOTE THE REPEATED ‘I’ IN THESE VERSES. AND IN THE DAYS OF DAVID AND SOLOMON HE WILL SET UP A HOUSE AND A KINGDOM (11–14) WHICH, THOUGH THEIRS, WILL ALSO BE HIS, AND THEREFORE ETERNAL, AND THEREFORE SOMETHING GREATER THAN A POLITICAL KINGDOM DESTINED TO PERISH FOUR CENTURIES LATER (ANOTHER POINTER, LIKE 16:34–36, TO THE NT KINGDOM OF CHRIST). THE CHAPTER THUS DEVELOPS FROM THE ‘ARK’ THEME (1) INTO BOTH THE ‘TEMPLE’ AND ‘THRONE’ THEMES (12). DAVID, GOING IN BEFORE THE LORD (16; PRESUMABLY BEFORE THE ARK), RESPONDS WITH A MODEL PRAYER. FIRST (16–22) HE PRAISES THE GOD WHOSE PLAN OF BLESSING FOR HIS PEOPLE EMBRACES BOTH THE PAST (ESPECIALLY THE MAKING OF ISRAEL AT THE TIME OF THE EXODUS) AND THE FUTURE. THEN HE ASKS (23–27) THAT GOD WILL DO WHAT HE HAS SAID HE WILL DO (12), THE TRUE PRAYER OF FAITH WHICH RESTS ON FIRM GROUND AND IS THEREFORE ASSURED OF AN ANSWER.**

**18:1–20:8 ISRAEL AMONG THE NATIONS**

**THESE THREE CHAPTERS CONDENSE NO FEWER THAN FOURTEEN CHAPTERS OF THE EARLIER HISTORY (2 SA. 8–21). THE CHRONICLER OMITS THE STORIES OF THE SURVIVING MEMBERS OF SAUL’S FAMILY (2 SA. 9; SEE 1 CH. 10:6), AND OF DAVID’S ADULTERY (MOST OF 2 SA. 11–12) AND THE EVILS THAT FOLLOWED IT (MOST OF 2 SA. 13–21; SEE 1 CH. 3:1–9). DAVID’S WARS REMAIN, AND ARE HIGHLIGHTED. IT MAY SEEM ODD THAT THE CHRONICLER SHOULD NOT WANT TO PORTRAY A LUSTFUL DAVID YET BE HAPPY TO PORTRAY A BLOOD-THIRSTY ONE. BUT DAVID’S MILITARY SUCCESS IS TO BE SEEN AS A POSITIVE SIGN OF BLESSING (18:6, 13). THESE WARS WERE THE NECESSARY PREPARATION FOR THE TIME OF ‘REST’ WHEN THE TEMPLE WILL BE BUILT. THE BACKGROUND TO SOME INCIDENTS IN DAVID’S CONFLICT WITH THE AMMONITES AND THE PHILISTINES HAS BEEN OMITTED IN CHRONICLES; E.G. NAHASH (19:2) AS AN OPPONENT OF SAUL IN 1 SA. 11, AND GOLIATH (20:5) KILLED BY DAVID IN 1 SA. 17. BACKGROUND WHICH HAS BEEN PAINTED IN IS THE SUCCESS BOTH AT HOME AND ABROAD, WITH NEIGHBORS BOTH FRIENDLY AND ANTAGONISTIC. AGAINST THIS THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF 18:1–20:8 ARE PARADED. 18:1–13 FOREIGN AFFAIRS. THE PHILISTINES, DAVID’S ENEMIES FROM CH. 14, BEGIN AND END THE NEXT THREE CHAPTERS (18:1, 20:4–8). CH. 18 BRIEFLY MENTIONS ISRAEL’S TRADITIONAL OPPONENTS EAST OF THE JORDAN, MOAB AND EDOM (2, 12–13), BUT IS MOSTLY ABOUT THE NATIONS NORTH OF ISRAEL, IN THE REGION OF MODERN SYRIA AND LEBANON. NEARLY ALL ARE HOSTILE, BUT ONE (HAMATH, LIKE TYRE IN 14:1) IS FRIENDLY. IN EITHER CASE DAVID’S REPUTATION GROWS, AND HIS SUCCESSES PREPARE FOR THE PEACE DURING WHICH SOLOMON WILL BUILD THE TEMPLE. IN THE SAME WAY, BOTH FRIEND AND FOE CONTRIBUTE TO THE STORE OF VALUABLES WHICH WILL BE DAVID’S GIFTS FOR THE LORD’S HOUSE (7–11). DAVID IS IN A SENSE ‘DISQUALIFIED’ FROM BUILDING THE TEMPLE BECAUSE HE IS A MAN OF WAR (22:8–9), BUT THAT IS NOT A MARK OF GOD’S DISAPPROVAL. FOR EXAMPLE, ABISHAI CAN BE COMMENDED IN THE EDOMITE CAMPAIGN (CONTRAST 2 SA. 8:13) BECAUSE THE VICTORY IS CLEARLY ONE GIVEN BY THE LORD TO DAVID (12–13). 18:14–17 HOME AFFAIRS. A NOTE OF DAVID’S ‘ESTABLISHMENT’ FOLLOWS, AS IN 2 SA. 8:15–18. THE CHRONICLER’S OWN BACKGROUND CHAPTER MENTIONS DAVID’S HOUSEHOLD IN JERUSALEM (14:1–7). THE KERETHITES AND PELETHITES WERE FOREIGN SOLDIERS FROM CRETE AND PHILISTIA WHO FORMED DAVID’S BODYGUARD. 19:1–20:3 AMMONITE CAMPAIGNS. THE AMMONITES WERE ANOTHER NATION EAST OF JORDAN (SEE 18:2, 12–13). THE ONLY HINT OF AN EARLIER FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN DAVID AND NAHASH (19:2) IS THE ENMITY BETWEEN NAHASH AND SAUL IN 1 SA. 11, EVEN BEFORE DAVID CAME ON THE SCENE. AMMONITE OPINION ABOUT DAVID (19:3) SHOWS THAT WHETHER NEIGHBORING NATIONS CULTIVATE HIM OR OPPOSE HIM, HE IS A FORCE INCREASINGLY TO BE RECKONED WITH. WHEN WAR BREAKS OUT, ARAMEAN ARMIES RELATED TO THOSE OF 18:5 ARE DRAWN INTO THE CONFLICT. THE BROTHERS JOAB AND ABISHAI, DAVID’S NEPHEW (A SON OF ONE’S BROTHER, SISTER, BROTHER-IN-LAW, OR SISTER-IN-LAWS (2:13–17), WERE PARTNERS-IN-ARMS IN THE LEADERSHIP OF HIS ARMIES (WHICH MAY HINT HOW 18:12 IS RELATED TO THE HEADING OF PS. 60). THE ARAMEAN ALLIES ARE DISPOSED OF IN TWO CAMPAIGNS (19:14–18; THE FIGURES OF 2 SA. 10:18 DIFFER—SEE INTRODUCTION). THE AMMONITES THEMSELVES ARE FINALLY DEFEATED IN 20:1–3, BUT NOTHING IS SAID ABOUT DAVID’S ADULTERY WITH BATHSHEBA AND MURDER OF HER HUSBAND (2 SA. 11:2–12:25); THE CHRONICLER IS CONCERNED TO PRESENT DAVID’S SUCCESSES, NOT HIS SINS. 20:4–8 PHILISTINE CAMPAIGNS. THIS SECTION ON ‘ISRAEL AMONG THE NATIONS’ COMES FULL CIRCLE WITH A NOTE OF PHILISTINE ENEMIES ONCE MORE SUBJUGATED (4; CF. 18:1). THE CHRONICLER IS CAREFUL NOT TO SAY, EVEN NOW, THAT DAVID HAS YET BEEN GIVEN ‘REST’ (SEE ON 17:10, AND 2 SA. 7:11); FOR HIM THAT WILL BE SOLOMON’S PRIVILEGE. THE BROTHER OF GOLIATH (5): SEE ON 2 SA. 21:19.**

**21:1–22:19 THE HOUSE OF GOD**

**THE CHRONICLER HAS TAKEN CH. 21 ALMOST ENTIRELY FROM 2 SAMUEL, BUT CH. 22 IS HIS OWN. THE ACCOUNT OF THE CENSUS WHICH DAVID ORDERED, AND OF THE PLAGUE WITH WHICH GOD PUNISHED HIM FOR DOING SO, IS IN 2 SA. 24 SIMPLY PART OF THE NARRATIVE, BUT FOR THE CHRONICLER ITS IMPORTANCE LIES IN SOMETHING WHICH THAT CHAPTER DOES NOT MENTION: THE PLACE WHERE THE SPREAD OF THE PLAGUE STOPPED WAS TO BE THE SITE OF THE PROPOSED TEMPLE. THE HOUSE OF THE LORD GOD IS TO BE HERE (22:1) IS THE HINGE OF THIS SECTION. TO THIS VERSE CH. 21 MOVES, AND FROM IT CH. 22 DIRECTLY FOLLOWS. PRACTICALLY EVERYTHING IS NOW READY FOR THE BUILDING OF THE TEMPLE—THE INITIAL IDEA, THE CONFIRMATION FROM GOD, THE RESTORED ARK, THE BEGINNINGS OF A STORE OF MATERIALS, AND NOW THE SITE—SO CH. 22 INTRODUCES SOLOMON AS ITS EVENTUAL BUILDER. CONSTRUCTION WILL NOT START UNTIL DAVID’S WARLIKE REIGN GIVES WAY TO SOLOMON’S PEACEFUL ONE. THE REST OF 1 CH. WILL BE DEVOTED MAINLY TO DETAILED ADMINISTRATIVE PLANS (23:1–29:30). 21:1–17 CENSUS AND PLAGUE. FOR ONCE THE CHRONICLER RECORDS A SIN OF DAVID’S. THE REASON HE DEPARTS FROM HIS NORMAL PRACTICE OF SHOWING DAVID AS AN IDEAL KING IS THAT THIS PARTICULAR EVIL IN THE SIGHT OF GOD (7) LEADS (AS NOTED ABOVE) TO THE FIXING OF A SITE FOR THE TEMPLE. THE INCITING OF DAVID TO COMMIT THIS SIN RESULTS IN A PUNISHMENT WHICH ACCORDING TO 2 SA. 24:1 IS PRIMARILY DUE TO SOME PREVIOUS SIN ON THE PART OF THE NATION. HAVING IN MIND PERHAPS THE PRINCIPLE OF JAS. 1:13, THE CHRONICLER BRINGS IN UNEXPECTEDLY THE FIGURE OF SATAN (1). HE IS THE ONE WHO, AS IN JB. 2:3, ACTUALLY CAUSES THE TROUBLE, ALTHOUGH ONLY BY GOD’S PERMISSION AND WITHIN GOD’S LIMITS. IT IS NOT CLEAR WHY TAKING A CENSUS WAS WRONG. THE LAW ALLOWED IT, WITH CERTAIN PROVISOS (EX. 30:11–16); A CENSUS GAVE THE BOOK OF NUMBERS ITS NAME, AND THE EARLY CHAPTERS OF 1 CHRONICLES ITSELF CONTAIN SIMILAR LISTS. PERHAPS AS THIS ONE WAS A MILITARY LIST (5), DAVID’S MOTIVES WERE WRONG. CHRONICLES OFTEN MAKES THE POINT THAT ISRAEL’S REAL SECURITY LAY IN TRUST IN ITS GOD, NOT IN THE SIZE OF ITS ARMY (E.G. 2 CH. 14:11; 16:8). NOT DAVID BUT JOAB IS HERE PRESENTED IN A GOOD LIGHT, THOUGH IN THE EARLIER HISTORY HE IS NOT A PLEASANT CHARACTER (1 KI. 2:5–6). HE CARRIES OUT THE CENSUS UNDER PROTEST, AND DRAWS THE LINE AT LEVI AND BENJAMIN PRESUMABLY BECAUSE OF NU. 1:47–50 (PERHAPS BOTH TRIBES WERE REGARDED AS CUSTODIANS OF THE TABERNACLE, WHICH WAS IN BENJAMINITE TERRITORY, 16:39). THE RESULTING NUMBERS DIFFERS FROM THOSE IN 2 SA. 24:9; AGAIN, SEE INTRODUCTION. AN ANGEL WITH A SWORD APPEARS ALSO TO BALAAM (NU. 22:31) AND TO JOSHUA (JOS. 5:13–15), AND THERE AS HERE THE PLACE WHERE HE APPEARS IS RECKONED HOLY. HERE HE IS THE PLAGUE-BEARER (11). DAVID, WHEN HE SEES HIM, IS APPARENTLY ON HIS WAY NORTHWARDS OUT OF JERUSALEM WITH A GROUP OF ELDERS, PERHAPS GOING TO GIBEON TO OFFER SACRIFICES IN PENITENCE (SEE VS 29–30). THE POSSIBLE READING OF V 17 IN NEB MAKES THIS MORE POIGNANT: ‘AND I AM A SHEPHERD’ (INSTEAD OF AND DONE WRONG). 21:18–21 THE PLACE WHERE THE PLAGUE STOPPED. ARAUNAH (THE CHRONICLER’S VERSION OF THE NAME IS ACTUALLY ‘ORNAN’) IS ONE OF THE ORIGINAL CANAANITE INHABITANTS OF JERUSALEM (SEE 11:4–5), BUT OBVIOUSLY HE RECOGNIZES THE LORD’S ANGEL AND THE LORD’S ANOINTED KING (21:20–21). KNOWING THAT THE HONOR OF THE LORD IS ENHANCED, NOT DIMINISHED, BY THESE EVENTS, DAVID IS QUITE HAPPY TO ASK FOR THE USE OF THIS PAGAN’S THRESHING-FLOOR FOR THE SITE OF ALTAR AND TEMPLE. THE PRICE NOTED HERE (21:25) MAY BE FOR THE ENTIRE TEMPLE SITE, AS AGAINST THE MUCH SMALLER PRICE NOTED IN 2 SA. 24:24 PERHAPS FOR THE ALTAR SITE ALONE. THE LORD CONFIRMS THE RIGHTNESS OF ALL THIS BY SENDING FIRE FROM HEAVEN (21:26) JUST AS THE ANGEL CONFIRMED GIDEON’S CALL (JDG. 6:20–24). A MORE SIGNIFICANT PARALLEL IS THE FIRE THAT FALLS ON THE ALTAR WHEN THE TABERNACLE IS FIRST SET UP (LV. 9:24) AND WHEN THE TEMPLE IS FINALLY CONSECRATED (2 CH. 7:1). THE LORD’S ‘ANSWER’ (21:26, 28) EXPLAINS HIS PLAN FOR THE BLESSING OF HIS PEOPLE. HERE ARE TO BE BOTH THE HOUSE, I.E. THE PLACE OF THE ARK, REPRESENTING DIVINE GRACE, AND ALSO THE ALTAR, REPRESENTING HUMAN RESPONSE (22:1). AS WITH JOB, OUT OF SSTSN’S [LUCIFER’S/VICTORIA’S] EVIL INTENTIONS, COMES GREAT GOOD (JB. 42:12). 22:2–5 MATERIALS FOR THE HOUSE. THIS SECTION, AND INDEED THE REST OF 1 CHRONICLES, HAS NO PARALLEL IN SAMUEL/KINGS. SINCE SOLOMON COMES ON THE SCENE HERE AND DAVID DOES NOT LEAVE IT TILL THE END OF THE BOOK, THE NEXT EIGHT CHAPTERS BIND TOGETHER THE TWO REIGNS AS THE DOUBLE FOUNDATION OF THE 400 YEARS OF THE MONARCHY. AT THE SAME TIME, THEY ARE ALL ABOUT THE TEMPLE, STRESSING AGAIN THE CHRONICLER’S TWIN THEMES OF PRIESTHOOD AND KINGSHIP. FOR THE TEMPLE DAVID GATHERS EXCEPTIONAL AMOUNTS OF MATERIAL; IN IT WILL BE FOUND CONTRIBUTIONS FROM A VARIETY OF NON-ISRAELITE NATIONS (SEE ON 21:20–21); BY IT THE FAME OF THE LORD WILL BE MADE KNOWN FAR AND WIDE. ALL THESE ASPECTS UNDERLINE THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS BUILDING. 22:6–19 INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE HOUSE. DAVID SPEAKS AT SOME LENGTH TO SOLOMON ABOUT THE BUILDING OF THE TEMPLE, THEN BRIEFLY TO ALL THE LEADERS OF ISRAEL (17). CH. 28, WITH ALMOST EXACTLY THE SAME SUBJECT MATTER, WILL BE A PUBLIC ADDRESS, WITH CLOSING WORDS TO SOLOMON. THIS DRAWS A REVEALING PARALLEL WITH THE TRANSFER OF AUTHORITY FROM MOSES TO JOSHUA LONG BEFORE. THE COMMAND ‘BE STRONG AND COURAGEOUS’ IS AN EXACT REPEAT (13; JOS. 1:9) WITHIN TWO PASSAGES FULL OF SIMILARITIES. MOSES HAD GUIDED GOD’S PEOPLE THROUGH A PERIOD OF TURMOIL AND CHANGE, IN WHICH THEY BECAME A NATION; JOSHUA WOULD LEAD THEM INTO THE LAND OF REST (JOS. 1:12–15). IN THE SAME WAY DAVID HAS HAD TO BE A MAN OF WAR (8; SEE 28:3 RV), BUT IS NOT BLAMED FOR IT, WHILE SOLOMON WILL BE A MAN OF PEACE (9), MERELY A STATEMENT OF FACT (SEE ON 18:13). IN TRUTH, NIV’S MAN OF PEACE IS MISLEADING. RV SHOULD BE FOLLOWED IN V 9: HE WILL BE A ‘MAN OF REST’, MEANING REST FROM ALL HIS ENEMIES, THOUGH FOLLOWING HIS ACCESSION GOD WILL ALSO GIVE ISRAEL ‘PEACE’ (ŠĀLÔM, LIKE SOLOMON’S NAME) AND ‘QUIETNESS’ (A WORD USED IN JOS. 11:23, 14:15; DT. 12:10 IS ANOTHER CLOSE PARALLEL). THE BLOOD SHED IN DAVID’S WARS MAY INDEED HAVE DISQUALIFIED HIM RITUALLY FROM TOO CLOSE AN INVOLVEMENT WITH THE TEMPLE (8B), BUT THE POINT IS THAT HIS WORK IS TO PROVIDE FOR THE TEMPLE (14), NOT ONLY BUILDING MATERIALS, BUT, FOLLOWING HIS VICTORIES, A TIME FREE FROM WAR; WHILE SOLOMON’S WORK IS TO BUILD THE SANCTUARY (19). THE RELATION BETWEEN THE TWO REIGNS IS SUMMED UP IN DAVID’S ADDRESS TO THE LEADERS OF ISRAEL IN VS 17–19.**

**23:1–27:34 ORGANIZATION FOR TEMPLE AND KINGDOM**

**THESE CHAPTERS ARE DAUNTING BOTH AT A CASUAL READING, WHICH SEES ONLY UNHELPFUL NAME-LISTS LIKE THOSE IN CHS. 1–9, AND AT A CAREFUL ONE, WHICH NOTICES APPARENT DISCREPANCIES IN THEM. THEY ARE IN FACT FAMILY LISTS OF THE TRIBE OF LEVI, WITH OTHER INFORMATION INSERTED, SETTING OUT THE LEVITES’ INVOLVEMENT IN THE SERVICES OF THE TEMPLE. MUCH OF THIS SECTION SEEMS TO BE RELATED TO PERIODS OTHER THAN DAVID’S, SOME EVEN TO THE CHRONICLER’S OWN TIME. BUT IT IS ALL THOUGHT OF AS ‘DAVIDIC’, JUST AS ALL OT LAW CENTERS ON MOSES AND ALL OT WISDOM ON SOLOMON. AS DAVID PREPARED MATERIALS FOR THE BUILDING OF THE TEMPLE, SO ISRAEL LIKEWISE WAS A PEOPLE PREPARED FOR GOD’S SERVICE. 23:1–6 THE ASSEMBLY OF LEADERS. V 1 SHOULD BE TAKEN AS A GENERAL HEADING TO THE REST OF 1 CHRONICLES (NOT AS THE FIRST OF THE TWO CEREMONIES IMPLIED BY 29:22). THESE REMAINING SEVEN CHAPTERS, BRACKETED BETWEEN THIS VERSE AND 29:28, BRING DAVID’S REIGN TO A SPLENDID CLIMAX. THE OT USES THE FORMULA OLD AND FULL OF YEARS FOR GREAT MEN WHO DESERVE HONOR, SUCH AS ABRAHAM OR JOB. THE CHRONICLER OMITS THE SINS AND TROUBLES OF DAVID THE MAN BECAUSE THEY WOULD DISFIGURE HIS OFFICIAL PORTRAIT OF DAVID THE KING. THE IMPRESSION THAT THERE WERE TWO ASSEMBLIES AS WELL AS TWO ‘CORONATIONS’ MAY BE CORRECT; GATHERED (2) IS LESS FORMAL THAN THE LATER ‘SUMMONED’ (28:1). THE DIVISION OF THE TRIBE OF LEVI INTO PRIESTS AND (OTHER) LEVITES (2) IS DEALT WITH LATER IN THIS CHAPTER, WHILE THE FOURFOLD DIVISION OF THE ‘LEVITES’ (4–5) IS THE BASIS OF THIS AND THE NEXT FOUR CHAPTERS. THE FACT THAT THE LEVITES’ LOWER AGE LIMIT IS 30 HERE (3) AND 20 ELSEWHERE (24, 27) IS ONE OF THE INDICATIONS THAT THIS SECTION (LIKE MUCH IN THE EARLY CHAPTERS OF THE BOOK) IS A COLLAGE OF PICTURES OF ISRAEL FROM VARIOUS PERIODS. 23:7–24:31 SANCTUARY STAFF. LEVITE FAMILY LISTS (23:7–23; 24:20–31) FRAME TWO CENTRAL SECTIONS, DEALING WITH THE DUTIES OF THE LEVITES (23:24–32) AND THE DIVISIONS OF THE PRIESTS (24:1–19). THE THREE SONS OF LEVI HEAD THE FIRST LISTS OF NAMES (23:7–23); 23:6B IS PROBABLY MEANT AS A TITLE FOR THIS SECTION. THE GERSHONITES OF 23:7 MAY BE A LATER GENERATION THAN THOSE OF 6:17, AND THE DATING OF THE PEOPLE IN 23:9A MAY BE DIFFERENT AGAIN. CHRONICLES DISTINGUISHES THE DUTIES OF THE PRIESTS FROM THOSE OF THE REST OF THE TRIBE OF LEVI (23:13). THE LATTER DUTIES ARE DETAILED IN 23:24–32. IN SOME RESPECTS, THEY CHANGE, OF COURSE, ONCE THE MOVABLE TABERNACLE IS REPLACED BY A PERMANENT SANCTUARY (23:25–26), AND THEY SEEM TO RELATE TO THE LEVITES GENERALLY (I.E. ALL THE DIVISIONS NOTED IN 23:4–5). TWENTY (23:24, 27); SEE ON 23:3. THE DIVISIONS OF THE PRIESTS (24:1–19) ARE YET ANOTHER KIND OF CLASSIFICATION WITHIN THIS TRIBE. LOOKING BACK, THE DEATH OF AARON’S TWO ELDEST SONS IS NOTED (24:2), THOUGH NOT THE SHAMEFUL REASON FOR IT (LV. 10:1–2). THE CURIOUS PHRASE OFFICIALS OF GOD (24:5) MAY BE ANOTHER WAY OF DESCRIBING OFFICIALS OF THE SANCTUARY (AND MEANING ‘EVEN’, OR ‘THAT IS’), OR PERHAPS THE TWO DESCRIPTIONS SIMPLY MEAN THAT THESE LEADERS WERE ‘HOLY’ AND ‘OUTSTANDING’. LOOKING FORWARD, SOME OF THE TWENTY-FOUR HEADS OF FAMILIES REAPPEAR IN LATER TIMES, E.G. JEHOIARIB (24:7) IN 1 MACC. 2:1, HAKKOZ (24:10) IN EZR. 2:61 AND NE. 7:63, AND MOST FAMOUSLY ABIJAH (24:10) IN LK. 1:5. THE FINAL LIST OF LEVITES, 24:20–31, CORRESPONDS TO THAT OF 23:12–23, BUT TAKES IT ONE GENERATION FURTHER. AGAIN, THE CHRONICLER’S PICTURE OF ISRAEL IS SEEN TO BE A MANY-LAYERED ONE, PIECED TOGETHER FROM THE RECORDS OF MANY DIFFERENT PERIODS. 25:1–31 MUSICIANS. AFTER THE LISTS OF SANCTUARY STAFF COMES THE SECOND DIVISION OF THE LEVITES, THAT OF THE MUSICIANS. IT IS FURTHER DIVIDED IN TWO WAYS, FIRST ACCORDING TO THE THREE FAMILIES OF ASAPH, JEDUTHUN AND HEMAN (1–6), AND THEN ACCORDING TO THE TWENTY-FOUR ‘COURSES’ HEADED BY THEIR SONS (7–31). HEMAN IS CALLED THE KING’S SEER HERE (5), AND ASAPH AND JEDUTHUN ARE SIMILARLY STYLED ELSEWHERE (2 CH. 29:30; 35:15); THERE IS CLEARLY A CONNECTION BETWEEN PROPHESYING AND MUSIC-MAKING, THOUGH THE WORD SUPERVISION, WHICH LIKE ‘PROPHESYING’ IS MENTIONED THREE TIMES IN VS 1–3, SHOWS THAT IN BIBLICAL TIMES (CF. 1 COR. 14:26–33) SPEECH OR SONG COULD BE INSPIRED WITHOUT BEING ECSTATIC OR UNCONTROLLED. THE FIRST FIVE NAMES OF HEMAN’S SONS (4) ARE FOLLOWED BY NINE OTHERS OF UNUSUAL FORM, WHICH SOUND IN HEBREW LIKE PSALM-VERSES: HANANIAH, HANANI = ‘BE GRACIOUS TO ME, LORD, BE GRACIOUS TO ME,’ AND SO FORTH. PERHAPS HEMAN NAMED HIS SONS AFTER HIS FAVOURITE PSALMS! THE COURSES OF SINGERS, LIKE THE COURSES OF PRIESTS IN 24:7–18, NUMBER TWENTY-FOUR. A COMPLETE LIST IN EACH CASE, LIKE THE SENSE OF V 8 (CF. 24:31, 26:13) IS CHARACTERISTIC OF THE CHRONICLER, AND HIS CONVICTION THAT IN GOD’S PLAN ALL HIS PEOPLE ARE TO BE DRAWN TOGETHER. 26:1–19 GATEKEEPERS. THE BASIC FRAMEWORK FOR THIS SET OF LISTS IS VS 1–3, 9–11 AND 19. OF THE THREE GREAT FAMILIES OF THE LEVITES (6:1) ONLY THE KOHATHITES (1, KORAH BEING A KOHATHITE ACCORDING TO 6:22) AND THE MERARITES (10) ARE REPRESENTED HERE; THE ASAPH OF V 1 IS NOT THE FAMOUS ONE OF 25:1, WHO WAS A GERSHONITE (6:39–43), BUT THE EBIASAPH OF 9:19. WHERE WE MIGHT HAVE EXPECTED A LIST OF GERSHONITE GATEKEEPERS WE FIND THE FAMILY OF OBED-EDOM (4–8). THIS INTRIGUING CHARACTER IS NOT GIVEN A LEVITE PEDIGREE, BUT IF ALL THE REFERENCES ARE TO THE SAME PERSON, THEN HE IS A LEVITE IN 15:18, WHICH WOULD QUALIFY HIM FOR THIS LIST, AS WOULD THE SPECIAL BLESSING OF V 5 AND 13:14 (AND SEE ON 15:17–25). THOUGH OBED-EDOM’S GENERATION MIGHT HAVE BEEN GATEKEEPERS IN DAVID’S TIME, LONG BEFORE THE TEMPLE WAS BUILT (15:17–18), HIS NAME FIGURES ALSO HERE (15) AFTER IT HAS BEEN BUILT, THEREFORE AT LEAST AS LATE AS SOLOMON; WHILE 9:17–32 (WHICH HAS SPELT OUT FOR US SOME OF THE GATEKEEPERS’ ACTUAL DUTIES) LISTS SOME OF THE SAME NAMES EVEN AFTER THE TEMPLE’S REBUILDING FOUR CENTURIES LATER STILL. THIS IS ALL PART OF THE CHRONICLER’S MANY-LAYERED TECHNIQUE OF PUTTING TOGETHER INFORMATION FROM DIFFERENT AGES TO CREATE AN IN-DEPTH PICTURE OF THE LIFE AND WORSHIP OF GOD’S PEOPLE. ONE GATEKEEPER’S REPUTATION FOR WISE COUNSEL (14) AND THE MENTION OF THE COURT (?) WHERE OTHERS WERE ON DUTY (THE MEANING OF ‘PARBAR’, V 18 RSV, IS IN FACT UNKNOWN) SUGGEST THE REALISM AND ACCURACY OF THE PARTS, HOWEVER ARTFULLY THE WHOLE MAY BE PUT TOGETHER. 26:20–27:34 OFFICIALS. THE FOUR LEVITE DIVISIONS IN 23:4–5 WERE LISTED IN ORDER OF SIZE. THE ORDER OF THE DETAILED LISTS HAS BEEN DIFFERENT, WORKING FROM THE CENTER OUTWARDS, AS IT WERE—SANCTUARY STAFF, THEN MUSICIANS, THEN GATEKEEPERS, AND NOW FINALLY VARIOUS OFFICIALS, SOME OF WHOM HAVE DUTIES AWAY FROM THE TEMPLE (26:29), INDEED THROUGHOUT THE LAND, AND DUTIES SECULAR AS WELL AS RELIGIOUS (26:30, 32). THE LISTS IN CH. 27 GO WELL BEYOND THE TRIBE OF LEVI. THE SECTION 26:20–32 DEALS WITH OFFICIALS IN CHARGE OF THE TREASURIES, OR STOREHOUSES (20; SAME WORD IN 27:25). SOME (26:21–22) SEEM TO BE CURATORS OF THE ‘ARTICLES OF THE SANCTUARY’, AS IN 9:28–32; OTHERS (26:24–28) OF SUCH VALUABLES AS THE SPOILS OF WAR. THE DUTIES OF OTHERS AGAIN ARE JUDICIAL (26:29) OR FISCAL (IF RELIGIOUS AND SECULAR TAXES ARE IN VIEW IN 26:30, 32). ONCE MORE THE PICTURE IS BUILT UP FROM VARIOUS PERIODS: THE EXTENSIVE LANDS DESCRIBED IN 26:30–32 BELONG TO EARLY TIMES; LEVITE INVOLVEMENT IN ADMINISTRATION FIGURES ONLY IN LATER TIMES (2 CH. 19:8–11). AS ISRAEL’S HISTORY CAN BE GRASPED ONLY WHEN IT IS SEEN AS A WHOLE, SO ITS CHARACTER CAN BE GRASPED ONLY WHEN WE BRING TOGETHER ALL ITS SIGNIFICANT PEOPLE, EVEN SAUL (26:28). THE MOVEMENT IN 26:29–32 AWAY FROM THE RELIGIOUS AND INTO THE SECULAR SPHERE BRINGS US TO SOMETHING QUITE NON-LEVITE, AN ARMY LIST (27:1–15). THIS TOO IS ISRAEL AT ITS MOST COMPLETE. THE COMMANDERS ARE THE BEST EXAMPLES OF LEADERSHIP HISTORY CAN PROVIDE, NAMELY TWELVE OF DAVID’S MIGHTY MEN FROM 11:10–31, AND THE STATISTICS ARE PERHAPS WHAT THEIR FORCES WERE IDEALLY INTENDED TO BE—TWELVE REGIMENTS EACH OF TWENTY-FOUR ‘THOUSANDS’, RECALLING THE TWENTY-FOUR COURSES OF PRIESTS AND ESPECIALLY THE TWENTY-FOUR COURSES WITH TWELVE MUSICIANS IN EACH (24:7–18; 25:6–31). SO, ALTHOUGH ASAHEL HAD DIED EVEN BEFORE DAVID BECAME KING OF ALL ISRAEL, HIS NAME STANDS AT THE HEAD OF A REGIMENT (27:7; 2 SA. 2:18–23), WHEREAS THE ARMY’S ORGANIZATION IS MUCH MORE IN SOLOMON’S STYLE. THE SECTION 27:16–24 LISTS THE OFFICERS PRESUMABLY INVOLVED IN THE CENSUS OF 27:23–24. TWELVE ‘TRIBES’ ARE MENTIONED, IF MANASSEH IS COUNTED AS ONE, THOUGH IT IS A VERY ODD LIST, AND WE CAN ONLY GUESS WHY GAD AND ASHER ARE OMITTED AND AARON ADDED. THE CENSUS IS PROBABLY THAT OF 21:1–8; THE ACCOUNT THERE DOES NOT NECESSARILY CONFLICT, AS SOME SUGGEST, WITH THIS ONE. THE SECTION 27:25–31 IS ANOTHER LIST OF TWELVE, THIS TIME THE ROYAL STEWARDS—THE HEADS OF THE CIVIL SERVICE. AGAIN, THE CHRONICLER IS HAPPY TO INCLUDE NON-ISRAELITES WHO HAVE BEEN DRAWN INTO THE SERVICE OF THE GOD OF ISRAEL (OBIL AND JAZIZ, 27:30–31). FINALLY, DAVID’S INNER CABINET (27:32–34) CONTAINS SOME WE CANNOT IDENTIFY, SUCH AS HIS ‘UNCLE’ JONATHAN, AND OTHERS FAMILIAR FROM ELSEWHERE (18:14–17; 2 SA. 15–17). THE FAMOUS NAMES AND THE MASTERLY ORDERING WHICH WE FIND IN THESE LISTS TELL US AGAIN THAT WE ARE BEING GIVEN AN IDEALIZED PICTURE OF GOD’S PEOPLE. IN PARTICULAR CHS. 23–27 DISPLAY A ‘DAVID’ TYPE OF ORGANIZATION FOR THE TEMPLE OF JERUSALEM AND THE KINGDOM OF ISRAEL SUCH AS GOD’S CHOSEN KING WOULD HAVE WANTED TO ACHIEVE, TO HAND IT ON TO SUCCEEDING GENERATIONS.**

**28:1–29:30 THE SUCCESSION**

**THESE TWO FINAL CHAPTERS LOOK BACK TO CH. 23, WHERE V 1 (‘DAVID … MADE HIS SON SOLOMON KING’) FORMS A HEADING FOR THE WHOLE LONG SECTION (23:1–29:30) WHICH ENDS THE FIRST BOOK. A ‘GATHERING’ OF ISRAELITE LEADERS IS INTRODUCED AT 23:2; 28:1 INTRODUCES A SECOND, LARGER AND MORE FORMAL ‘ASSEMBLY’ FOR WHAT WILL BE IN EFFECT SOLOMON’S CORONATION (29:22–24). WE ARE ALSO LOOKING BACK TO CH. 22, FOR WHAT IS SAID HERE BOTH TO AND ABOUT SOLOMON AMPLIFIES IN A PUBLIC AND FORMAL WAY WHAT DAVID HAD ALREADY SAID MORE PERSONALLY THERE. OF PARTICULAR INTEREST IS THE FACT THAT DAVID, IN SO MANY WAYS ISRAEL’S IDEAL KING, IS ABOUT TO STEP DOWN, AND GOD’S PEOPLE IN EVERY SUBSEQUENT GENERATION NEED TO KNOW HOW THE DAVIDIC IDEALS ARE TO BE KEPT ALIVE WHEN HE IS NO LONGER THERE. HIS PARTING INSTRUCTIONS TO SOLOMON AND TO ISRAEL ARE THEREFORE FAR-REACHING. 28:1–10 THE LORD’S DIRECTIONS. THE FORMALITY OF THIS PUBLIC SPEECH CONTRASTS WITH WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE, BUT ITS CONTENT IS VERY LIKE THAT OF THE LESS FORMAL CONVERSATIONS IN CH. 22. IT ALSO RECALLS MOSES’ WORDS IN COMMISSIONING JOSHUA, ‘IN THE PRESENCE OF ALL ISRAEL, “BE STRONG AND COURAGEOUS”’ (DT. 31:7; CF. HERE VS 8, 10, 20). FOR ALL THE CHRONICLER’S INTEREST IN A HOUSE … FOR THE ARK (2), GOD’S GRACIOUS PLAN FOR HIS PEOPLE (WHICH THE ARK EXPRESSES) IS EVEN MORE IMPORTANT. ACCORDING TO THAT PLAN DAVID IS THE MAN OF WAR AND SOLOMON THE MAN OF PEACE (3; 22:9). GOD HAS CHOSEN THIS FATHER AND SON OUT OF ALL ISRAEL TO SIT ON HIS THRONE AND BUILD HIS TEMPLE (4–6). THE PROMISE OF AN EVERLASTING KINGDOM IS IN ONE SENSE UNCONDITIONAL (17:12–14), BUT IN ANOTHER SENSE IT DEPENDS ON HUMAN OBEDIENCE (7). A VITAL PART OF DAVID’S ‘BEQUEST’ TO HIS DESCENDANTS IS THE PRINCIPLE SET OUT IN V 9 — ‘IF YOU SEEK HIM, HE WILL BE FOUND BY YOU; BUT IF YOU FORSAKE HIM, HE WILL REJECT YOU.’ THIS IS A CLASSIC STATEMENT OF CHRONICLES’ ‘DOCTRINE OF IMMEDIATE RETRIBUTION’, WHICH WILL REAPPEAR FREQUENTLY IN 2 CH. 28:11–21 THE TEMPLE PLANS. ALL THAT DAVID HAS SAID IN VS 1–10 HAS EMPHASIZED THE INITIATIVE AND ACTION OF GOD. NOW THIS IS TO BE TRANSLATED INTO ACTION BY SOLOMON. IT IS RELATED TO WHAT GOD GAVE MOSES TO DO WHEN THE ORIGINAL TABERNACLE WAS IN VIEW—PLANS (11) IS THE SAME WORD AS ‘PATTERN’ IN EX. 25:9, 40—AND IT COVERS THE PEOPLE AS WELL AS THE THINGS THAT ARE INVOLVED IN THE SERVICE OF GOD’S HOUSE (13). GOD’S PLAN FOR MOSES IS THUS RENEWED FOR DAVID (19) AND SO FOR SOLOMON (20–21). GOD EXPECTED SOLOMON’S ACTIVE COLLABORATION, AND SOLOMON DID NOT FIND GOD’S PLAN IN ANY WAY IRKSOME OR RESTRICTIVE. V 20 IS EVEN CLOSER THAN VS 8 AND 10 TO THE ENCOURAGEMENTS OF DT. 31:6–8 AND JOS. 1:5–7, ECHOED ALSO IN HEB. 13:5–6. 29:1–9 THE CHALLENGE TO COMMITMENT. DAVID HAS ALREADY PUT TO HIS PEOPLE THE NEED FOR OBEDIENCE TO GOD (28:8); NOW HE CHALLENGES THEM TO BE GENEROUS AND WHOLEHEARTED. HE SETS THE EXAMPLE (2–5A) AND THEY RISE TO THE CHALLENGE (5B–9). THE AMOUNT OF WEALTH NOTED HERE IS ENORMOUS (SEE INTRODUCTION), BUT IT SHOWS A GENEROSITY LIKE THAT SEEN WHEN THE TABERNACLE WAS CONSTRUCTED (EX. 35:20–36:7), LIKE THAT DEMANDED BY THE PROPHETS OF THE DAYS OF THE SECOND TEMPLE, NOT LONG BEFORE THE CHRONICLER’S OWN TIME (HG. 1:3–4; MAL. 3:8–10), AND LIKE THAT OF THE NT CHURCH WHEN A NEW KIND OF ‘TEMPLE’ WAS BEING BUILT (1 COR. 3:16; 2 COR. 8–9; ACTS 11:27–30). IT IS MADE REAL FOR THE CHRONICLER’S FIRST READERS BY THE USE OF THE TERM DARIC (7), A COIN KNOWN IN THEIR DAY BUT NOT IN DAVID’S. THE CHRONICLER, NOT THE COLD MAN SOME THINK HIM TO BE, NOTES HERE AS ELSEWHERE THE JOY, LIBERALITY AND WHOLEHEARTEDNESS WHICH DAVID’S CHALLENGE EVOKES (9). 29:10–20 THE GREAT THANKSGIVING. THOSE LIVING IN THE CHRONICLER’S TIMES MAY HAVE HAD NO HOPE OF EVER EXPERIENCING SUCH A SPLENDID OCCASION AS THIS, BUT HE WANTS TO BRING OUT THE UNDERLYING PRINCIPLE: THIS GOD IS REAL IN ALL AGES (10, 18) AND TO HIM BELONG ALL THINGS (11, 14). NATURALLY THEREFORE ALL THIS ABUNDANCE (16), EVERYTHING THAT ANY GENERATION SEES WHEN IT COUNTS ITS BLESSINGS, COMES FROM GOD TOO. THIS TRUTH AROUSES ONCE MORE WHOLEHEARTED JOY AND GENEROSITY (17, 19). THERE ARE PARTS OF THIS MEMORABLE PRAYER WHICH GOD’S PEOPLE HAVE MADE THEIR OWN EVER SINCE. EVEN THE SOLEMN WORDS OF V 15 SHOULD, PARADOXICALLY, INSPIRE CONFIDENCE: THE GOLDEN AGE OF DAVID HAS NO MORE PERMANENCE THAN ANY OTHER, AND THAT AGE, LIKE EVERY AGE, FINDS ITS HOPE (ITS ‘ABIDING’, RSV) ONLY IN DAVID’S NEVER-FAILING LORD. 29:21–30 SOLOMON MADE KING. THE NEXT DAY, A DAY OF BOTH SACRIFICING AND FEASTING (THOSE WHO GIVE TO GOD RECEIVE FROM HIM!), IS THE OCCASION OF SOLOMON’S OFFICIAL ACCESSION. THIS WAS HIS SECOND ENTHRONEMENT (22); READERS ARE EXPECTED TO KNOW ABOUT THE EARLIER ONE, HASTILY ARRANGED TO FORESTALL HIS BROTHER’S SEIZING THE CROWN (1 KI. 1). SINCE THE CHRONICLER ASSUMES THAT THE OLDER HISTORY IS WELL KNOWN, THE DIFFERENT PICTURE HE PAINTS OF HIS TWO CENTRAL CHARACTERS IS OBVIOUSLY QUITE INTENTIONAL: THE OPPOSITION SOLOMON HAD TO QUELL BEFORE ALL ISRAEL OBEYED HIM (23), LIKE THE TROUBLES DAVID WENT THROUGH BEFORE HE DIED AT A GOOD OLD AGE (28), ARE LEFT OUT, BECAUSE IN CHRONICLES THE TWO MEN REPRESENT JOINTLY THE IDEAL OF KINGSHIP. SOLOMON’S MAGNIFICENCE PUTS HIM ON A PAR WITH HIS FATHER’S GREATNESS, AND BEHIND BOTH OF THEM IS GOD’S ETERNAL KINGSHIP (28:5; 29:11). THE THRONE AND THE KINGDOM ARE UNSHAKEABLE, BECAUSE THEY ARE THE LORD’S (23).**

**THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

**THE BOOKS OF KINGS COVER A PERIOD OF SLIGHTLY OVER 400 YEARS, FROM SOLOMON’S ACCESSION IN (OR SLIGHTLY BEFORE) 970 BC TO THE FREEING OF THE EXILED KING JEHOIACHIN FROM PRISON IN 561 BC. ONLY A BRIEF SKETCH OF THE HISTORY OF THIS PERIOD CAN BE PROVIDED HERE. IT IS DIVIDED INTO THREE PARTS CORRESPONDING TO THE THREE MAJOR DIVISIONS OF KINGS AS DISCUSSED ABOVE.**

**SOLOMON’S REIGN (970–930 BC)**

**SOLOMON BENEFITED FROM THE PEACEFUL CONDITIONS BEQUEATHED TO HIM BY DAVID. FOR AT LEAST THE FIRST HALF OF HIS REIGN HE ENJOYED GOOD RELATIONS WITH EGYPT IN THE SOUTH AND HIRAM OF TYRE IN THE NORTH. BOTH WERE IMPORTANT TRADING PARTNERS. THERE WERE NO MAJOR POWERS TO THREATEN THE SECURITY OF SOLOMON’S SMALL EMPIRE. EGYPT HAD CEASED TO BE A GREAT POWER IN THE NEAR EAST NEARLY TWO CENTURIES BEFORE HIS ACCESSION. THE PHARAOHS OF THE TWENTY-FIRST DYNASTY (1089–945 BC) UNDERTOOK NO FOREIGN POLICY EXCEPT TO MAINTAIN SECURE BORDERS AND GOOD RELATIONS WITH EGYPT’S NEIGHBOURS. IT WAS PROBABLY WITH SIAMUN OF THIS DYNASTY (978–959 BC) THAT SOLOMON ENTERED INTO AN ALLIANCE SEALED BY HIS MARRIAGE TO THE PHARAOH’S DAUGHTER (1 KI. 3:1). HOWEVER, THE LATTER PART OF SOLOMON’S REIGN SAW A DETERIORATION OF HIS FOREIGN RELATIONS. THERE IS A HINT THAT HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH HIRAM OF TYRE BECAME LESS CORDIAL (1 KI. 9:10–13), AND HE FACED HOSTILITY FROM EDOM IN THE SOUTH AND DAMASCUS IN THE NORTH (1 KI. 11:14–25). A CHANGE OF DYNASTY BROUGHT SHOSHENQ I (SHISHAK) TO THE THRONE OF EGYPT IN 945 BC; HE GAVE ASYLUM TO JEROBOAM WHEN SOLOMON TRIED TO KILL HIM (1 KI. 11:40) AND ATTACKED JERUSALEM A FEW YEARS AFTER SOLOMON’S DEATH (1 KI. 14:25–26).**

**THE DIVIDED MONARCHY (930–722 BC)**

**SHISHAK’S INVASION OF PALESTINE IN THE FIFTH YEAR OF REHOBOAM (925 BC) WAS NOT FOLLOWED UP BY ANY ATTEMPT TO CONSOLIDATE EGYPTIAN CONTROL OF THE REGION. THE DAYS OF EGYPT’S EMPIRE WERE PAST. LONG-TERM THREATS TO ISRAEL AND JUDAH LAY ELSEWHERE. ISRAEL’S KING OMRI (885–874 BC) ACHIEVED CONSIDERABLE INTERNATIONAL STANDING, THOUGH WE LEARN NOTHING OF THIS FROM THE BIBLICAL ACCOUNT. ON THE MOABITE STONE (OR MESHA STELE), AN INSCRIPTION BY KING MESHA OF MOAB C. 850 BC TO COMMEMORATE HIS SUCCESSFUL REBELLION AGAINST ISRAEL (SEE 2 KI. 3:4–27), OMRI IS NAMED AS THE KING WHO HAD EARLIER CONQUERED MOAB AND MADE IT ISRAEL’S VASSAL. AS LATE AS 722 BC, ISRAEL IS REFERRED TO IN ASSYRIAN SOURCES AS ‘THE LAND OF OMRI’. ARAM (‘SYRIA’; RSV), A CITY-STATE RULED FROM DAMASCUS, BECAME A THREAT TO ISRAEL IN THE NINTH CENTURY BC. UNDER BEN-HADAD IT ATTACKED ISRAEL TO AID ASA OF JUDAH (1 KI. 15:18–20), PERHAPS AROUND 895 BC. ANOTHER BEN-HADAD (PROBABLY THE SON AND SUCCESSOR OF THE FIRST) WAS THE ALMOST CONSTANT ENEMY OF AHAB AND HIS SONS AND TWICE BESIEGED SAMARIA (1 KI. 20; 2 KI. 6–7). A BRIEF PERIOD OF PEACE BETWEEN AHAB AND BEN-HADAD (1 KI. 22:1) WAS PROBABLY PROMPTED BY THE EMERGENCE OF ASSYRIA AS A COMMON ENEMY. THREATENED BY THE WESTERN ADVANCES OF ASSYRIA UNDER SHALMANESER III (858–824 BC) A NUMBER OF SMALL KINGDOMS FORMED A COALITION TO OPPOSE HIM. SHALMANESER’S OWN ACCOUNT OF THE BATTLE OF QARQAR (853 BC) NAMES AHAB AND BEN-HADAD AS MEMBERS OF THIS ALLIANCE AND RECORDS THAT AHAB FIELDED 2,000 CHARIOTS AND 10,000 FOOT-SOLDIERS—ONE OF THE LARGEST FORCES IN THE COALITION. ALTHOUGH SHALMANESER CLAIMED A VICTORY OVER THE ALLIANCE, ASSYRIA’S INTERFERENCE IN THE WEST WAS TEMPORARILY HALTED. HOSTILITIES WITH ARAM WERE RENEWED AS SOON AS THE THREAT FROM ASSYRIA HAD PASSED (1 KI. 22:2–3). AROUND 843 BC BEN-HADAD WAS ASSASSINATED BY HAZAEL WHO RULED IN HIS PLACE (2 KI. 8:7–15). ISRAEL BARELY SURVIVED THE ATTACKS OF HAZAEL AND HIS SON BEN-HADAD III (2 KI. 13:3–7), AND EVEN JUDAH WAS THREATENED (2 KI. 12:17–18). HOWEVER, MILITARY AND ECONOMIC REVIVAL CAME TO BOTH ISRAEL AND JUDAH UNDER THEIR RESPECTIVE KINGS, JEROBOAM II (782–753 BC) AND AZARIAH/UZZIAH (767–740 BC). HOWEVER, ASSYRIA WAS SOON TO CHANGE THE FACE OF THE NEAR EAST. THE CAMPAIGNS OF TIGLATH-PILESER III (744–727 BC) BEGAN A DRASTIC EXPANSION OF THE ASSYRIAN EMPIRE, INTO WHICH ISRAEL WAS RAPIDLY ABSORBED. THROUGH THE VOLUNTARY SUBMISSION OF MENAHEM (SEE ON 2 KI. 15:17–22), ISRAEL BECAME AN ASSYRIAN SATELLITE STATE, PROBABLY IN 738 BC. FOLLOWING THE ABORTIVE REBELLION OF PEKAH, ITS TERRITORY WAS REDUCED AND IT BECAME A VASSAL (732 BC), SUBJECT TO GREATER ASSYRIAN INTERFERENCE BUT STILL ALLOWED ITS OWN KING. WHEN HOSHEA REBELLED, SAMARIA WAS DESTROYED (722 BC) AND THE DISTRICT BECAME AN ASSYRIAN PROVINCE UNDER THE CONTROL OF A MILITARY GOVERNOR. PART OF THE POPULATION WAS DEPORTED TO OTHER PARTS OF THE ASSYRIAN EMPIRE AND REPLACED BY FOREIGN SETTLERS. THUS, THE NORTHERN TRIBES LOST THEIR IDENTITY, AND ISRAEL CEASED TO EXIST.**

**JUDAH ALONE (722–587 BC)**

**JUDAH HAD SUBMITTED TO ASSYRIA UNDER AHAZ IN 734 BC (2 KI. 16:7–8), BUT HEZEKIAH REVERSED HIS FATHER’S POLICIES AND REBELLED. THE ASSYRIAN KING SENNACHERIB (704–681 BC) INVADED JUDAH IN 701 BC AND REDUCED ITS TERRITORY, CAPTURING FORTY-SIX FORTIFIED CITIES AND DEPORTING 200,150 CAPTIVES. JERUSALEM ALMOST SUFFERED DESTRUCTION AT HIS HANDS BUT WAS MIRACULOUSLY DELIVERED (2 KI. 18–19). JUDAH CONTINUED UNDER ASSYRIAN CONTROL THROUGHOUT THE LONG REIGN OF MANASSEH, WHO IS MENTIONED AS A VASSAL BY SENNACHERIB’S SUCCESSORS ESARHADDON AND ASHURBANIPAL. UNDER ASHURBANIPAL (668–630 BC) THE ASSYRIAN EMPIRE REACHED ITS GREATEST EXTENT. HE INVADED EGYPT AND CAPTURED THEBES IN 663 BC. BUT TOWARDS THE END OF HIS REIGN ASSYRIA’S HOLD ON THE WESTERN PARTS OF ITS EMPIRE BEGAN TO CRUMBLE. JOSIAH WAS ABLE TO EXTEND HIS REFORMS INTO THE OLD TERRITORY OF ISRAEL WITHOUT INTERFERENCE. JUDAH’S INDEPENDENCE WAS, HOWEVER, SHORT-LIVED. JOSIAH DIED IN 609 BC WHILE TRYING TO PREVENT NECO, KING OF EGYPT, FROM AIDING THE LAST KING OF ASSYRIA AGAINST BABYLON (SEE THE COMMENTARY ON 2 KI. 23:29–30). EGYPT BRIEFLY MOVED INTO THE POWER-VACUUM LEFT BY THE COLLAPSE OF ASSYRIA, LAYING CLAIM TO SYRIA-PALESTINE. JUDAH THUS BECAME A VASSAL OF EGYPT. HOWEVER, THE BABYLONIANS UNDER NEBUCHADNEZZAR DEFEATED NECO AT CARCHEMISH IN 605 BC, AND JUDAH BECAME PART OF THE NEO-BABYLONIAN EMPIRE. IN THE SAME YEAR NEBUCHADNEZZAR SUCCEEDED HIS FATHER NABOPOLASSAR ON THE THRONE OF BABYLON. JUDAH TWICE REBELLED AGAINST BABYLONIAN RULE. THE FIRST ATTEMPT RESULTED IN THE DEPORTATION OF KING JEHOIACHIN AND THE CREAM OF JERUSALEM’S POPULATION TO BABYLON (597 BC). THE SECOND ATTEMPT WAS BETTER ORGANIZED BUT JUST AS ILL-FATED. IT INVOLVED ZEDEKIAH ACTING AS A MEMBER OF AN ANTI-BABYLONIAN ALLIANCE AND LOOKING TO EGYPT FOR SUPPORT. EGYPTIAN HELP WAS LATE AND INEFFECTIVE. IN 588 BC, WHEN NEBUCHADNEZZAR WAS BESIEGING JERUSALEM, THE ARMY OF PHARAOH HOPHRA SET OUT TO AID THE CITY, AND THE SIEGE WAS BRIEFLY LIFTED (JE. 37:5–8). THE EGYPTIANS, HOWEVER, WERE SOON DEALT WITH, AND THE SIEGE WAS RENEWED. IN 587 BC JERUSALEM WAS DESTROYED, AND A SECOND GROUP OF EXILES MADE THEIR WAY TO BABYLON. ALTHOUGH THE EXILED JEHOIACHIN WAS LATER TREATED WITH RESPECT BY NEBUCHADNEZZAR’S SUCCESSOR (2 KI. 25:27–30), THE RULE OF JUDAH’S KINGS WAS FINISHED.**

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| **1 KINGS 1:1–11:43** | **SOLOMON** | | |
|  | **1:1–2:46** | | **SOLOMON’S RULE ESTABLISHED** |
|  | **3:1–4:34** | | **GREATNESS AND WISDOM** |
|  | **5:1–18** | | **PREPARATIONS FOR TEMPLE-BUILDING** |
|  | **6:1–7:51** | | **BUILDING THE TEMPLE** |
|  | **8:1–66** | | **THE DEDICATION OF THE TEMPLE** |
|  | **9:1–14** | | **CONCLUSION TO THE BUILDING OF THE TEMPLE** |
|  | **9:15–11:43** | | **GREATNESS AND FOLLY** |
|  | |  | |
| **12:1–16:29** | **THE TWO KINGDOMS: FROM SOLOMON’S DEATH TO THE REIGN OF OMRI IN ISRAEL** | | |
|  | **12:1–14:31** | | **THE BIRTH OF THE TWO KINGDOMS** |
|  | **15:1–16:28** | | **ISRAEL AND JUDAH TO THE REIGN OF OMRI** |
|  | |  | |
| **1 KI. 16:29–2 KI. 10:36** | **THE TWO KINGDOMS: THE PERIOD OF OMRI’S DYNASTY** | | |
|  | **16:29–22:40** | | **THE REIGN OF AHAB OF ISRAEL** |
|  | **1 KI. 22:41–2 KI. 8:29** | | **DURING THE REIGNS OF AHAB’S SONS** |
|  | **9:1–10:36** | | **JEHU AND THE END OF OMRI’S DYNASTY** |
|  | |  | |
| **11:1–17:41** | **THE TWO KINGDOMS: FROM JEHU TO THE FALL OF SAMARIA** | | |
|  | **11:1–14:29** | | **THE PERIOD OF JEHU’S DYNASTY** |
|  | **15:1–17:41** | | **THE FINAL DECADES OF ISRAEL** |
|  | |  | |
| **18:1–25:30** | **JUDAH ALONE** | | |
|  | **18:1–20:21** | | **HEZEKIAH** |
|  | **21:1–26** | | **REVERSAL UNDER MANASSEH AND AMON** |
|  | **22:1–23:30** | | **JOSIAH** |
|  | **23:31–25:30** | | **THE END OF JUDAH** |

**THE LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH’S HOUSE OF THE LORD NET WORTH 1 QUADRILLION DOLLARS, BUT IN FAITHFULNESS TO THE LORD IS WORTH 1 SEPTILLION DOLLARS**

**THE FATHER STEPHEN’S 11TH TO 12TH SUPREME DEFENSE (SOLOMON & JEHOVAH) IN THE ULTIMATE BEGINNING IS 132, 144 LEGIONS OF ANGELS [792,000, 864,000 TIMES 185,000 TIMES 100,000 IN RELENTING] BY GOING ONE MILE GO TWAIN [3], WHICH CAN SAVE OR DESTROY 43,956,000,000,000,000 QUADRILLION TO 47,952,000,000,000,000 QUADRILLION IN RELENTING OF 100,000 IN JUDE 14-15**

**THE FATHER STEPHEN’S SPEECH IN ACTS 7:46-50 DECLARES “BUT SOLOMON BUILT HIM A HOUSE. HOWEVER, THE MOST-HIGH [JEHOVAH/VICTOR] DOES NOT DWELL IN TEMPLES MADE WITH HANDS, AS THE PROPHET SAYS: ‘HEAVEN IS MY THRONE, AND EARTH IS MY FOOTSTOOL. WHAT HOUSE WILL YOU BUILD FOR ME? SAYS THE LORD [STEPHEN], OR WHAT IS THE PLACE OF MY REST? HAS MY HAND NOT MADE ALL THESE THINGS?’**

**STEPHEN YAHWEH’S TOP TEMPLE**

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**THE BOOK OF SOLOMON**

**THE WHITE SKIN COLOR KING SOLOMON’S NAME MEANS “GOD IS CROWNED PEACE.” KING SOLOMON’S REIGN IS FROM 970BC TO 930BC. THE LORD STEPHEN CHRIST IS RAISED BY KING SOLOMON. THE LORD SOLOMON’S KINGDOM LASTS 40 YEARS FROM 40 TO 80 YEARS OF AGE. IN THIS KING SOLOMON BECAME THE LORD ENOCH AT THE END TIME.**

**KING SOLOMON’S ROLE IN SCRIPTURE. KING SOLOMON SUCCEEDED HIS FATHER DAVID AS ISRAEL’S KING AND KING SOLOMON’S THRONE IS CONSIDERED A MORE EXALTED, MAJESTIC & GREATER THRONE THAN THE THRONE OF KING DAVID IN 1ST KING 1:37, 47; 9:5 & 2ND CHRONICLES 7:18. THE OTHER ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF KING SOLOMON ARE THAT HE SPOKE 3,000 PROVERBS, AND HIS SONGS WERE 1,005. HE ALSO SPOKE OF HYSSOP, TREES, ANIMALS, BIRDS, CREEPY THINGS & FISH IN 1ST KINGS 4:32-33.**

**KING SOLOMON’S INTELLECT WAS OUTSTANDING IN HIS OWN TIME. THE NEW TESTAMENT TIMES REFERRED KING SOLOMON AS THE WISEST KING IN LUKE 11:31 & MATTHEW 12:42. MANY OF HIS WISE SAYING ARE PRESERVED IN THE BOOK OF PROVERBS IN PROVERBS 1:1; 10:1; 25:1. KING SOLOMON ALSO WROTE THE BOOK CALLED THE SONG OF SOLOMON OR SONG OF SONGS WHICH COMPRISES OF 8 CHAPTERS ABOUT A WARM AND BEAUTIFUL POEM IN PRAISE TO HIS MARRIED DIVINE LOVE.**

**KING SOLOMON’S BUILDING PROGRAMS. KING SOLOMON UNDERTOOK MANY AGGRESSIVE BUILDING PROGRAMS THROUGHOUT HIS KINGDOM. HE BUILT THE HOUSE OF THE FATHER STEPHEN WHICH TOOK SEVEN YEARS TO COMPLETE. HE ALSO BUILT HIS OWN HOUSE WHICH TOOK 13 ADDITIONAL YEARS TO COMPLETE. HE HOUSED 1,000 WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN HIS KINGDOM. 700 WIVES AND 300 CONCUBINES WITH THEIR CHILDREN. KING SOLOMON’S CONTROL OF LAND TRADE ROUTES PAID OFF AND BROUGHT VAST REVENUES INTO HIS KINGDOM THAT KING SOLOMON SPENT ON HIS PROJECTS. KING SOLOMON WAS THE ONLY KING THAT EVER MAINTAINED A FLEET OF TRADING VESSELS, AND THIS ALSO ADDED TO HIS WEALTH IN HIS KINGDOM. THE NEW TESTAMENT ALSO REFLECTED ON THE GLORY OF KING SOLOMON’S KINGDOM, BEAUTIFUL BY THE GREATNESS OF THE PUBLIC PROJECTS HE ACCOMPLISHED IN LUKE 12:27 & MATTHEW 6:29. WHILE KING SOLOMON WAS MAKING VAST FLOWS OF FUNDS INTO HIS KINGDOM, MONEY ALWAYS SEEMED TO BE IN SHORT SUPPLY. KING SOLOMON KEPT TAXING THE PEOPLE TO THE EXTENT THAT, WHEN HE DIED, THE NORTHERN TRIBES REFUSED TO SUBMIT TO KING SOLOMON’S SON REHOBOAM UNLESS THE YOUNG KING PROMISED TO LOWER THE TAXES.**

**KING SOLOMON’S ULTIMATE ARMY. KING SOLOMON MAINTAINED A LARGE CHARIOT ARMY (IN THE MILLIONS) THAT WAS NEVER USED DURING HIS REIGN. KING SOLOMON RELIED ON DIPLOMACY TO MAINTAIN PEACEFUL RELATIONS WITH THE SURROUNDING NATIONS, SUCH AS HIS CONTROL OF TRADING ROUTES BROUGHT MAY DISAGREEMENTS TO A HALT.**

**KING SOLOMON’S RELATIONSHIPS: KING SOLOMON’S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE FATHER STEPHEN. KING SOLOMON WAS GRANTED MANY REVELATION EXPERIENCES FROM THE FATHER STEPHEN. BUT KING SOLOMON DID NOT REMAIN LOYAL TO THE FATHER STEPHEN THROUGHOUT HIS LIFE. THE 5 DIVINE UNIONS ARE AUTHORIZED BY THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD DERIVES FROM JOHN 8:58 WITH GENESIS 2:24; MATTHEW 19:5; MARK 10:8; EPHESIANS 5:31 & 1ST CORINTHIANS 6:17 ALL AS ONE FLESH AND THE 1 SEXUAL UNION IS DERIVED FROM GENESIS 4:1 WITH 1ST CORINTHIANS 6:16 AS ONE FLESH AND NOT AUTHORIZED FROM THE FATHER STEPHEN. FIRST, THE LORD PETER SAYS BEFORE ABRAHAM & HIS LADY OF KINGDOMS (MOTHER) WAS I AM IS A DIVINE UNION. SECOND, THE LORD JOHN SAYS BEFORE NOAH AND HIS LADY OF KINGDOMS (MOTHER) WAS I AM IS A DIVINE UNION. THIRD, THE LORD JESUS SAYS BEFORE ADAM & HIS LADY OF KINGDOMS (WIFE) WAS I AM. THIS A DIVINE UNION THAT GOES INTO A SEXUAL UNION IN 1ST CORINTHIANS 6:16 & GENESIS 4:1. FOURTH, THE LORD JAMES SAYS BEFORE JOB & HIS LADY OF KINGDOMS (MOTHER) WAS I AM IS A DIVINE UNION. FIFTH, THE LORD STEPHEN SAYS BEFORE LUCIFER & HIS LADY OF KINGDOMS (MOTHER) WAS I AM IS A DIVINE UNION.**

**KING SOLOMON ASKED FOR WISDOM IN 1ST KINGS CHAPTER 3. AND THE VERY BEGINNING OF HIS REIGN, KING SOLOMON “(AGAPE) LOVED THE LORD, WALKING IN THE STATUTES OF HIS FATHER DAVID” IN 1ST KINGS 3:3. JUST AS KING SOLOMON HAD EXPRESSED HIS AGAPE LOVE BY OFFERING A 1,000 SACRIFICES, THE FATHER STEPHEN SPOKE TO KING SOLOMON IN A DREAM, INVITING KING SOLOMON TO MAKE A REQUEST. KING SOLOMON DID NOT KNOW AT FIRST WHAT TO ASK, BUT THEN HE ASKED FOR “AN UNDERSTANDING HEART TO JUDGE YOUR PEOPLE, THAT I MAY DISCERN BETWEEN GOOD AND EVIL” IN 1ST KINGS 3:9. THIS REQUEST PLEASED THE FATHER STEPHEN, AND THE FATHER STEPHEN GRANTED HIM NOT ONLY WISDOM, BUT PEACE, WEALTH, THE LIVES OF HIS ENEMIES AND LONG LIFE AS WELL.**

**KING SOLOMON DEDICATED THE TEMPLE IN 1ST KINGS CHAPTER 8 & 2ND CHRONICLES CHAPTER 6. THE MAIN PRIORITY FOR KING SOLOMON WAS THE CONSTRUCT AND TO BUILD THE TEMPLE HIS FATHER DAVID HAD DREAMED OF BUILDING TO HONOR THE FATHER STEPHEN. KING SOLOMON’S PRAYER OF DEDICATION FURTHER REVEALS IN THESE CHAPTERS HIS HEART FOR THE FATHER STEPHEN AND HIS UNDERSTANDING OF SPIRITUAL ENTITIES. KING SOLOMON CONCLUDED THE DEDICATION SERVICE BY CHALLENGING HIS PEOPLE: “LET YOUR HEART THEREFORE BE LOYAL TO THE LORD OUR GOD, TO WALK IN HIS STATUTES AND KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS, AS AT THIS DAY” IN 1ST KINGS 8:61.**

**THE FATHER STEPHEN’S SECOND APPEARANCE TO KING SOLOMON IN 1ST KINGS CHAPTER 9. AFTER THE DEDICATION OF THE TEMPLE, THE FATHER STEPHEN APPEARED TO KING SOLOMON AGAIN, PROMISING TO BLESS THE KING IF HE CONTINUED TO WALK IN HIS WAYS AND LIVE IN GODLINESS.**

**KING SOLOMON’S FALL IN 1ST KINGS CHAPTER 11. IN KING SOLOMON’S LATER YEARS WHEN HE WAS OLD AT ABOUT 80 YEARS OLD, HIS FOREIGN WOMEN THAT HE MARRIED AND SEXUALLY EROS LOVED “TURNED HIS HEART AFTER OTHER GODS, AND HIS HEART WAS NOT LOYAL TO THE LORD HIS GOD” IN 1ST KINGS 11:4. KING SOLOMON PAID A VERY HIGH PRICE FOR HIS APOSTASY. THE BOOK OF ECCLESIASTES REVEALS THE MISERY HE FELT WHEN HE HAD LEFT THE FATHER STEPHEN. ONCE THIS HAPPENED, HE KEPT ON SEEKING A PURPOSE IN LIFE APART FROM THE FATHER STEPHEN AND FROM HIS DIVINE REVELATIONS. IN THIS HE CONCLUDED THAT ALL WAS MEANINGLESS INCLUDING HIS ACCOMPLISHMENTS. WHAT A SHAME HE BEGAN TO BUILD BUT, IN THE END, HE DID NOT KEEP THE RESOURCES TO FINISH THE TASK IN HIS KINGDOM.**

**KING SOLOMON’S RELATIONSHIP WITH HIS WOMEN. THE SCRIPTURE SAYS THAT KING SOLOMON HAD 700 WIVES AND 300 CONCUBINES WITH AN UNKNOWN NUMBER OF SON AND DAUGHTERS. IT WAS A MISTAKE, TO THINK THAT IN THIS REALITY, KING SOLOMON WAS SIMPLY A SEX ADDICT AT FIRST. HE WAS NOT. SO, WHAT KIND OF LOVE WAS THIS? IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS ON LOVE, YOU MUST GET MY BOOK CALLED “GOD IS LOVE AND THE LOVE IN THE HOLY BIBLE.”**

**KING SOLOMON’S MARRIAGES AND PUBLIC POLICY IN 1ST KINGS 3:1. KING SOLOMON MADE A TREATY WITH PHARAOH KING OF EGYPT “AND MARRIED PHARAOH’S DAUGHTER.” UNLIKE KING DAVID, WHO RELIED IN HIS MILITARY, KING SOLOMON RELIED ON DIPLOMACY TO MAINTAIN PEACE AND NATIONAL SECURITY. WHEN KING DAVID DIED, ABSALOM HIS SON PLOTTED AGAINST THE CROWN OF SOLOMON HIS BROTHER WITH GENERAL JOAB THAT SERVED KING DAVID FOR 30 YEARS. KING SOLOMON FOUND OUT THE PLOT AND KILLED THEM BOTH TO PROTECT THE KINGDOM. IN THE FATHER STEPHEN’S IMPARTIAL JUDGMENT IT IS NOT SUBJECT TO ANYTHING & CAN LOCK UP ANY CIVILIAN OF THE NATION TO A 6 GOLD STAR GENERAL OF THE ARMY (PRESIDENTIAL AUTHORITY) BY HIS INERRANT LAW WHICH IS CALLED HIS INTERNAL AFFAIRS IN ROMANS 12:1-2 & 1ST PETER 1:17-21. IN THE ANCIENT WORLD, NORMALLY TREATIES WERE SEALED BETWEEN NATIONS BY THEIR MARRIAGES IN THEIR ROYAL HOUSES. MANY OF KING SOLOMON’S WIVES, IF NOT ALL WERE INTRODUCED INTO ISRAEL BY TREATIES.**

**KING SOLOMON’S HOLY DIVINE LOVE THAT TURNED INTO SEXUAL EROS LOVE FOR HIS FOREIGN WIVES IN 1ST KINGS CHAPTER 11. KING SOLOMON DID CARE FOR HIS WIVES; HOWEVER, THEY CAME TO HIM AND WHATEVER THEY WERE FACING. BUT RATHER FOR THEM THE WORSHIP THE FATHER STEPHEN, HE BUILT SHRINES FOR HIS FOREIGN WIVES SO THEY COULD WORSHIP THEIR OWN DEITIES. EVENTUALLY, KING SOLOMON HAD A WEAKNESS FOR THE LADIES, AND BEGAN TO WORSHIP WITH THEM. IN THIS WAY, KING SOLOMON FELL INTO IDOLATRY WHICH IS MARITAL FORNICATION IN TOBIT 4:12-13; 1ST KING CHAPTER 11 & NEHEMIAH 13:25-27. THE TEXT SAYS KING SOLOMON “TURNED FROM THE LORD GOD OF ISRAEL, WHO HAD APPEARED TO HIM TWICE” IN 1ST KINGS 11:9.**

**THE FATHER STEPHEN APPEARED THE KING SOLOMON A THIRD TIME ANNOUNCING THAT BECAUSE OF HIS IDOLATRY THE KINGDOM WOULD BE DIVIDED AFTER KING SOLOMON’S DEATH. IN NEHEMIAH, IS REFERRED TO KING SOLOMON WHEN INSISTING THAT THE JEWS WHO RETURNED TO JUDAH AFTER THE BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY DIVORCE THEIR FOREIGN WIVES THAT HAD MARRIED BECAUSE OF MARITAL FORNICATION IN NEHEMIAH 13:25-27.**

**KING SOLOMON AN EXAMPLE FOR US TODAY. KING SOLOMON IS BOTH A GOOD AND BAD EXAMPLE. BUT WE CAN LEARN FROM WHAT HAPPENED TO HIM & WHAT HE DID. HIS PRAYER LIFE SHOWED A DEDICATION OF THE TEMPLE AND HIS SPIRITUAL INSIGHT. BUT KING SOLOMON KNOWINGLY TURNED FROM THE FATHER STEPHEN AND BEING MOTIVATED BY HIS FOREIGN WIVES HE DISOBEYED THE PROHIBITIONS AGAINST INTERRACIAL MARRIAGES IN THE FATHER STEPHEN’S LAW. SO, WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM HIS EXPERIENCES? KING SOLOMON’S EXPERIENCE ENABLES US TO KNOW THAT CONCERN FOR OTHERS TRULY PLEASES THE FATHER STEPHEN. KING SOLOMON’S EXPERIENCES WARN US NOT TO GROW SHORT IN OUR PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH THE FATHER STEPHEN. KING SOLOMON’S EXPERIENCE COMPELS US TO REEVALUATE OUR RELATIONSHIPS WITH OUR SPOUSES. EACH HUSBAND SHOULD PLEASE HIS WIFE, BUT UNDER THE DIVINE INTERVENTION OF THE FATHER STEPHEN IN EPHESIANS 5:25. KING SOLOMON TEACHES US THAT ONLY AS WE CONTINUE TO WALK WITH THE FATHER STEPHEN, WE CAN FIND LIFE MEANINGFUL AND COMPLETE.**

**THE TOP HOUSE OF THE LORD**

**6:1–38 THE BUILDING. THIS CHAPTER IS CLEARLY ARRANGED IN A SYMMETRICAL PATTERN IN WHICH THE SECOND PART IS THE MIRROR-IMAGE OF THE FIRST. THE PATTERN HAS GOD’S WORD TO SOLOMON AT ITS CENTER, EMPHASIZING ITS IMPORTANCE: A1 CHRONOLOGICAL NOTE (1); B1 DESCRIPTION OF THE BUILDING’S BASIC STRUCTURE (2–10); C GOD SPEAKS TO SOLOMON (11–13); B2 DESCRIPTION OF DECORATION AND FITTINGS (14–36); A2 CHRONOLOGICAL NOTE (37–38). HOWEVER, THIS CHAPTER DOES NOT CONTAIN EVERYTHING THE WRITER HAS TO TELL US ABOUT THE EQUIPPING OF THE TEMPLE. HE DESCRIBES ITS FURNISHINGS IN 7:13–51, AFTER GIVING AN ACCOUNT OF SOLOMON’S ROYAL PALACE. THE REASON FOR THIS RATHER SURPRISING ARRANGEMENT OF THE MATERIAL IS SUGGESTED BELOW. THE OPENING CHRONOLOGICAL NOTE DOES NOT DATE THE BEGINNING OF THE BUILDING WORK JUST IN RELATION TO SOLOMON’S REIGN BUT ALSO IN TERMS OF TIME ELAPSED SINCE THE EXODUS FROM EGYPT. THERE ARE PROBABLY TWO MAIN REASONS FOR THIS. FIRST, IT INVITES COMPARISON BETWEEN THE TWO EVENTS; IT SUGGESTS THAT THE BUILDING OF THE TEMPLE WAS AS SIGNIFICANT AN EVENT IN ISRAEL’S HISTORY AS THAT WHICH SAW THE BIRTH OF THE NATION. SECONDLY, BY PLACING THE TEMPLE PROJECT IN ITS HISTORICAL CONTEXT, IT REMINDS US THAT STEPHEN YAHWEH IS A GOD WHOSE PURPOSES ARE WORKED OUT IN HISTORY AND WHOSE PLANS ARE OFTEN LONG-TERM. THE PROMISE OF A PLACE WHICH ‘THE LORD YOUR GOD WILL CHOOSE … TO PUT HIS NAME THERE FOR HIS DWELLING’ (DT. 12:5) TOOK MANY LIFETIMES TO FIND ITS FULFILMENT. THE DESCRIPTION OF THE TEMPLE AND ITS DECORATION CONTAINS SEVERAL DIFFICULTIES FOR THE MODERN READER. THERE ARE SOME ARCHITECTURAL TERMS WHICH ARE NOT EASY TO TRANSLATE, AND MUCH OF THE DETAIL IS DIFFICULT TO VISUALIZE. IT IS A GREAT PITY THAT THE TEXT HAS NOT COME DOWN TO US COMPLETE WITH GROUND PLANS, ELEVATIONS AND ARTIST’S IMPRESSIONS! VS 2–10 DESCRIBE THE BASIC SHELL OF THE BUILDING. IT WAS RECTANGULAR AND ALIGNED ON AN EAST-WEST AXIS. THE MAIN PART OF THE BUILDING, CONSISTING OF THE HOLY PLACE (MAIN HALL; ‘NAVE’ IN THE RSV) AND THE INNER SANCTUARY (ALSO CALLED THE MOST HOLY PLACE; 16), WAS ABOUT 90 FT (27 M) LONG, 30 FT (9 M) WIDE AND 45 FT (13.5 M) HIGH. THE PORCH OR VESTIBULE (PORTICO) WAS THE SAME WIDTH AS THE REST OF THE BUILDING AND ADDED A FURTHER 15 FT (4.5 M) TO ITS LENGTH. THREE STORIES OF ROOMS WERE BUILT AROUND THE OUTSIDE (EXCLUDING THE PORCH) AND WERE HALF THE HEIGHT OF THE TEMPLE ITSELF. THESE HAD THEIR OWN ENTRANCE ON THE SOUTH SIDE AND DID NOT CONNECT WITH THE INTERIOR OF THE TEMPLE. THE PURPOSE OF THESE OUTER ROOMS IS NOT EXPLAINED, BUT THEY WERE PROBABLY FOR THE STORAGE OF VESTMENTS AND CERTAIN OFFERINGS, AND PERHAPS PROVIDED ACCOMMODATION FOR THE PRIESTS ON DUTY. LIGHT ENTERED THE TEMPLE THROUGH WINDOWS WHICH MUST HAVE BEEN SET IN THE UPPER HALF OF THE WALLS, ABOVE THE HEIGHT OF THE OUTER ROOMS. THE BUILDING WAS ROOFED WITH BEAMS AND PLANKS OF CEDAR. THE STONES FOR THE TEMPLE WERE ALL FULLY PREPARED AT THE QUARRY SO THAT NO IRON TOOLS WERE USED ON THE BUILDING SITE (7). THIS ODD DETAIL, WHICH INTERRUPTS THE DESCRIPTION OF THE OUTER ROOMS, IS PROBABLY INTENDED TO SHOW THAT THE WORK WAS DONE IN COMPLIANCE WITH A COMMANDMENT IN EX. 20:25 (CF. DT. 27:5–6). THIS ACTUALLY CONCERNS THE BUILDING OF ALTARS AND INSTRUCTS THAT ONLY UNHEWN STONES (I.E. STONES IN THEIR NATURAL STATE, AS WOULD BE USED TO MAKE A DRY-STONE WALL) MUST BE EMPLOYED. SOLOMON’S CRAFTSMEN WERE BUILDING A TEMPLE, NOT AN ALTAR, AND THEY EVIDENTLY FELT FREE TO USE CUT AND DRESSED STONE THROUGHOUT. BUT THEY WORKED IN THE SPIRIT OF THE COMMANDMENT’S PROSCRIPTION OF THE USE OF TOOLS, MAKING SURE NONE WERE USED ON THE TEMPLE SITE. INSIDE THE TEMPLE THE STONEWORK WAS COMPLETELY COVERED WITH WOODEN PANELS, CEDAR ON THE WALLS AND CEILING AND PINE ON THE FLOORS (15). THE INNER SANCTUARY MUST HAVE HAD EITHER A RAISED FLOOR OR A FALSE CEILING (OR BOTH), REDUCING ITS HEIGHT FROM 30 TO 20 CUBITS (ABOUT 30 FT/9 M) AND MAKING ITS INTERIOR A PERFECT CUBE (20). THE PANELS ON THE WALLS WERE CARVED TO PORTRAY FLOWERS AND GOURDS, AND THE WALLS, CEILING AND FLOOR OF THE WHOLE BUILDING WERE ALL OVERLAID WITH GOLD, AS WERE THE CEDAR WOOD ALTAR AND THE HUGE OLIVE WOOD CHERUBIM OF THE INNER SANCTUARY. THESE CHERUBIM PROBABLY RESEMBLED THE WINGED SPHINXES FAMILIAR FROM ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN ART. PHOENICIAN EXAMPLES PORTRAY A CREATURE WITH A HUMAN HEAD, AN ANIMAL BODY WITH FOUR LEGS, AND A PAIR OF WINGS; THEY PROBABLY PROVIDE A CLOSE ANALOGY TO THOSE PRODUCED BY SOLOMON’S PHOENICIAN CRAFTSMEN. CHERUBIM ALSO FEATURED IN A FRIEZE CARVED AROUND THE WALLS, ALONG WITH PALM TREES AND FLOWERS (29). THE LAVISH USE OF GOLD OVERLAY SOUNDS EXTRAORDINARY BUT WAS IN FACT REGULAR PRACTICE IN THE ADORNING OF ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN TEMPLES. THE MOTIFS WITH WHICH SOLOMON’S TEMPLE WAS DECORATED (THE GOURDS, OPEN FLOWERS, PALM TREES AND CHERUBIM) WERE ALSO PART OF THE COMMON REPERTOIRE OF ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN ART, AND EVEN THE BASIC GROUND PLAN OF THE BUILDING CAN BE PARALLELED BY A NUMBER OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL DISCOVERIES. SOLOMON’S TEMPLE IS UNIQUE IN PURPOSE BUT NOT IN CONCEPTION. IN ITS ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN AND ARTISTIC DECORATION, IT VERY MUCH REFLECTED THE CONVENTIONS OF THE TIME. IT IS A STRIKING EXAMPLE OF HOW ELEMENTS OF A PREVAILING CULTURE CAN BE EMPLOYED FOR THE WORSHIP AND GLORY OF GOD. THE MOTIFS USED TO DECORATE THE INTERIOR OF THE TEMPLE MAY SEEM TO INFRINGE THE SECOND OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS, WHICH PROHIBITS THE MAKING OF IMAGES ‘OF ANYTHING IN HEAVEN ABOVE OR ON THE EARTH BENEATH’ (EX. 20:4). PERHAPS THE COMMANDMENT WAS UNDERSTOOD TO PROHIBIT THE MAKING OF LIKENESSES ONLY WHEN THERE WAS A DANGER OF THEM BECOMING OBJECTS OF WORSHIP, AND THIS DANGER WAS THOUGHT TO BE ELIMINATED IN A TEMPLE DEDICATED TO THE WORSHIP OF STEPHEN YAHWEH ALONE. AFTER DESCRIBING THE INNER SANCTUARY (16, 19–21, 22B–28), THE ACCOUNT MOVES OUTWARDS AGAIN, DESCRIBING FIRST THE DOORS WHICH CLOSED OFF THE INNER SANCTUARY AND THEN THE DOORS BETWEEN THE MAIN HALL AND THE PORCH. FINALLY, WE ARE LED OUTSIDE TO THE INNER COURTYARD (36), A VAGUE TERM WHICH PRESUMABLY REFERS TO THE IMMEDIATE SURROUNDINGS OF THE BUILDING. A SECOND CHRONOLOGICAL NOTE ROUNDS OFF THE ACCOUNT, REMINDING US OF WHEN THE TEMPLE WAS BEGUN, TELLING US WHEN IT WAS FINISHED, AND GIVING US THE TOTAL DURATION OF THE PROJECT. WE HAVE NOT YET CONSIDERED GOD’S WORD TO SOLOMON WHICH LIES EMBEDDED IN THIS ACCOUNT (11–13). THIS WORD IS SAID TO CONCERN THIS TEMPLE YOU ARE BUILDING, BUT IT CONTAINS NO FURTHER REFERENCE TO THE TEMPLE. WHAT THEN IS ITS PURPOSE? THE CONDITIONAL NATURE OF GOD’S PROMISE TO DAVID, ALREADY MADE CLEAR BY DAVID IN 2:4, IS NOW RESTATED BY GOD HIMSELF IN WORDS WHICH RELATE IT TO THE TEMPLE-BUILDING PROJECT. GOD WILL LIVE AMONG THE ISRAELITES IF SOLOMON WILL WALK IN GOD’S STATUTES AND OBEY HIS COMMANDS. IN OTHER WORDS, THE BUILDING OF A TEMPLE WILL NOT GUARANTEE GOD’S PRESENCE AMONG HIS PEOPLE; GOD CANNOT BE TAMED AND KEPT IN A BOX, HOWEVER MAGNIFICENT THE BOX MIGHT BE. HIS PRESENCE DEPENDS ON OBEDIENCE AND SPECIFICALLY NOW ON THE OBEDIENCE OF SOLOMON. WHILE THESE VERSES STOP SHORT OF CRITICIZING THE BUILDING OF THE TEMPLE, THEY DO PUT THE PROJECT IN PERSPECTIVE BY STRESSING THE LARGER ISSUE OF OBEDIENCE. 7:1–12 SOLOMON’S PALACE. THE ACCOUNT OF THE TEMPLE AND ITS FURNISHINGS IS DIVIDED INTO TWO PARTS OF ALMOST EQUAL LENGTH BY THIS SHORT ACCOUNT OF SOLOMON’S PALACE BUILDINGS. AS THE TEMPLE WAS BUILT FIRST AND THEN THE PALACE (6:37–7:1; 9:10), WE MIGHT LOGICALLY EXPECT THE ACCOUNT OF THE PALACE TO FOLLOW THE DEDICATION OF THE TEMPLE IN CH. 8. BUT WE WILL SEE THAT THE WRITER HAD A PARTICULAR REASON FOR PLACING IT HERE. IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE NOTE THAT THE TEMPLE TOOK SEVEN YEARS TO BUILD (6:38) COMES THE INFORMATION THAT SOLOMON SPENT THIRTEEN YEARS BUILDING HIS PALACE (LIT. ‘HIS HOUSE’). THE HEBREW FOR ‘HIS HOUSE’ OCCURS TWICE IN 7:1, HIGHLIGHTING THE SHIFT AWAY FROM ‘THE HOUSE [TEMPLE] OF THE LORD’ (6:37). IS THERE IMPLICIT CRITICISM HERE OF THE FACT THAT SOLOMON SPENT ALMOST TWICE AS LONG ON HIS OWN HOUSE AS HE DID, BUILDING THE HOUSE OF GOD? QUITE POSSIBLY, BUT THE MAIN PURPOSE OF THIS PASSAGE SEEMS TO BE RATHER DIFFERENT. DAVID HAD ALREADY HAD A RESIDENCE BUILT IN JERUSALEM WITH MATERIALS SUPPLIED BY HIRAM OF TYRE (2 SA. 5:11), BUT SOLOMON REQUIRED SOMETHING ON A MUCH GRANDER SCALE. FIVE DISTINCT BUILDINGS ARE MENTIONED IN VS 2–8: THE PALACE OF THE FOREST OF LEBANON, ‘THE HALL OF PILLARS’ (A COLONNADE), THE THRONE HALL (ALSO KNOWN AS THE HALL OF JUSTICE, FOR THE KING’S THRONE WAS ALSO HIS JUDGMENT SEAT, STRESSING THAT IT WAS AS RULER THAT HE DISPENSED JUSTICE), SOLOMON’S PRIVATE RESIDENCE AND THE PRIVATE RESIDENCE OF THE PHARAOH’S DAUGHTER. (SINCE SHE IS THE ONLY ONE OF SOLOMON’S WIVES WHOSE RESIDENCE FORMED PART OF THIS SUITE OF BUILDINGS, THE IMPLICATION IS THAT SHE WAS HIS CHIEF WIFE. THIS IS ALSO SUGGESTED BY THE FACT THAT SHE IS MENTIONED SO OFTEN: 3:1, 9:16, 24; 11:1.) WE ARE NOT TOLD HOW THESE VARIOUS BUILDINGS RELATED TO EACH OTHER. THEY PRESUMABLY JOINED TO FORM A SINGLE COMPLEX, SINCE THEY ARE REFERRED TO COLLECTIVELY AS ‘HIS HOUSE’ IN V 1. THE PALACE COMPLEX WAS EVIDENTLY ADJACENT TO THE TEMPLE WITH A PASSAGE CONNECTING THE TWO (CF. 2 KI. 16:18). WE ARE NOT GIVEN THE DIMENSIONS OF ALL THESE BUILDINGS, BUT IT IS CLEAR THAT THE PALACE OF THE FOREST OF LEBANON ALONE WAS LARGER THAN THE TEMPLE (2). THE WHOLE PALACE COMPLEX MUST, THEREFORE, HAVE DWARFED THE TEMPLE SPECTACULARLY. IN JESUS’ DAY THE MASSIVE TEMPLE BUILT BY HEROD THE GREAT DOMINATED THE WHOLE OF JERUSALEM, BUT IN PRE-EXILIC TIMES THE ROYAL PALACE MUST HAVE BEEN THE CITY’S MOST IMPOSING BUILDING. AND THIS IS PROBABLY WHY THE WRITER DESCRIBES IT WHERE HE DOES. PHYSICALLY THE PALACE DWARFED THE TEMPLE, BUT IN HIS ACCOUNT, HE DWARFS THE DESCRIPTION OF THE PALACE BY SURROUNDING IT WITH LENGTHIER DESCRIPTIONS OF THE TEMPLE AND ITS FURNISHINGS. IN THE WRITER’S VIEW THIS RESTORES THE CORRECT PERSPECTIVE; FOR THE TEMPLE WAS THE TRUE HEART OF THE CITY AND OF THE NATION. 7:13–47 THE TEMPLE FURNISHINGS: THE WORK OF HIRAM, CRAFTSMAN IN BRONZE. A NAMESAKE OF THE KING OF TYRE, THE SON OF A PHOENICIAN FATHER AND AN ISRAELITE MOTHER, WAS BROUGHT FROM TYRE TO JERUSALEM TO MANUFACTURE THE BRONZE FURNISHINGS FOR THE TEMPLE. HIS OUTSTANDING ABILITY IS MENTIONED AT THE OUTSET AND IS AMPLY ILLUSTRATED BY THE DESCRIPTIONS OF THE OBJECTS WHICH HE MADE. AS IN THE DESCRIPTION OF THE TEMPLE ITSELF, THERE ARE SOME DETAILS WHICH ARE DIFFICULT TO FOLLOW. THE ACCOUNT OF THE WORK OF HIRAM FOR THE TEMPLE PARALLELS TO SOME EXTENT THAT OF THE WORK OF BEZALEL FOR THE TABERNACLE (EX. 36–38), AND WE ARE DOUBTLESS INTENDED TO NOTE THE BROADER PARALLEL BETWEEN THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE TABERNACLE AND THE BUILDING OF THE TEMPLE. HOWEVER, WHILE THE TABERNACLE AND ITS EQUIPMENT WERE COMMANDED IN DETAIL BY GOD (EX. 25–27, ESPECIALLY 25:9), NO SUCH CLAIM IS MADE HERE FOR THE TEMPLE OR ITS FURNISHINGS. THE PURPOSE OF THE TWO HUGE PILLARS (ABOUT 27 FT/8 M HIGH) IS NOT CLEAR. THEY DID NOT SUPPORT ANYTHING BUT WERE FREESTANDING, LOCATED IN FRONT OF THE TEMPLE PORTICO. THEY WERE TOPPED WITH ELABORATELY DECORATED, LILY-SHAPED CAPITALS. THEIR NAMES, JAKIN AND BOAZ, ARE SOMETHING OF A PUZZLE, BUT THE MOST LIKELY THEORY IS THAT THESE WERE THE OPENING WORDS OF TWO INSCRIPTIONS. ON THE BASIS OF THE VARIOUS EXPRESSIONS FOUND IN THE PSALMS IT HAS BEEN SUGGESTED THAT THE INSCRIPTIONS MAY HAVE READ ROUGHLY AS FOLLOWS: ‘STEPHEN YAHWEH WILL ESTABLISH [JAKIN] THY THRONE FOR EVER’, AND ‘IN THE STRENGTH [BOAZ] OF STEPHEN YAHWEH SHALL THE KING REJOICE.’ IF THIS IS CORRECT, THE PILLARS MAY HAVE COMMEMORATED GOD’S PROMISES CONCERNING THE DAVIDIC DYNASTY. THERE ARE HINTS LATER IN KINGS THAT ON TAKING THE THRONE A KING STOOD BY ONE OF THESE PILLARS TO PLEDGE HIMSELF TO KEEP GOD’S COVENANT LAWS (2 KI. 11:14; 23:3). HIRAM’S MOST IMPRESSIVE TECHNOLOGICAL ACHIEVEMENT WAS PERHAPS THE HUGE BRONZE BASIN SOME 15 FT (4.5 M) IN DIAMETER KNOWN AS THE SEA. IT WAS SUPPORTED ON TWELVE BRONZE BULLS ARRANGED IN FOUR GROUPS OF THREE, EACH GROUP FACING ONE OF THE CARDINAL POINTS. ACCORDING TO 2 CH. 4:6, ITS PURPOSE WAS TO HOLD WATER FOR RITUAL WASHING BY THE PRIESTS, BUT ITS SIZE AND DESIGN, AS WELL AS ITS NAME, SUGGEST IT WAS SYMBOLIC AS WELL AS FUNCTIONAL. AS GOD’S POWER AT CREATION HAD BEEN DISPLAYED BY HIS CONTAINMENT OF THE SEA, THE SYMBOL OF CHAOS (SEE THE VIVID WORD-PICTURE IN JB. 38:8–11), SO THIS GIANT BOWL SIGNIFIED HIS UPHOLDING OF THE CREATED ORDER AND HIS POWER OVER THE FORCES OF CHAOS WHICH THREATEN IT. HIRAM ALSO MADE TEN MOVABLE STANDS, DECORATED ON THE SIDES WITH LIONS, BULLS AND CHERUBIM, AND TEN REMOVABLE BASINS, WHICH STOOD ON THEM. THESE WERE ALSO FOR RITUAL ABLUTIONS, AND THE FACT THAT THEIR LOCATIONS ARE MENTIONED ALONG WITH THAT OF THE SEA (39) SUGGESTS THEY WERE USED IN CONNECTION WITH IT. VS 40–45 PROVIDE A SUMMARY OF HIRAM’S WORK, ADDING SOME LESSER ITEMS WHICH DO NOT DESERVE DETAILED DESCRIPTIONS (POTS, SHOVELS AND SPRINKLING BOWLS). V 46 GIVES A TANTALIZING HINT AT THE METHOD USED BY HIRAM TO CAST HIS PRODUCTS. THE SECTION CLOSES WITH RENEWED EMPHASIS ON THE GREATNESS OF HIS ACHIEVEMENT: THE WEIGHT OF ALL THIS BRONZE WORK WAS NEVER DETERMINED BECAUSE THERE WAS SO MUCH OF IT! 7:48–51 THE TEMPLE FURNISHINGS: ITEMS OF GOLD. THE LIST OF GOLD ITEMS WHICH SOLOMON HAD MADE FOR THE TEMPLE (48–50) IS VERY LIKE THE SUMMARY OF HIRAM’S WORK IN VS 40–45. IT IS AS THOUGH WE HAVE HERE A SIMILAR SUMMARY WITHOUT A DETAILED ACCOUNT TO PRECEDE IT. THE CRAFTSMAN IS NOT NAMED, UNLESS THE WRITER INTENDS US TO UNDERSTAND THAT SOLOMON MADE THESE ITEMS WITH HIS OWN HANDS (WHICH SEEMS UNLIKELY). SOLOMON ALSO CONTRIBUTED TO THE TEMPLE QUANTITIES OF SILVER AND GOLD WHICH HAD EARLIER BEEN DEDICATED TO IT BY DAVID. THESE WERE STORED IN THE TEMPLE TREASURIES (PERHAPS IN THE OUTER ROOMS), THOUGH THEIR INTENDED PURPOSE IS NOT CLEAR. IN JERUSALEM’S SUBSEQUENT HISTORY THESE TREASURIES WERE OFTEN THE SOURCE OF TRIBUTE FOR FOREIGN KINGS.**

**THE NET WORTH OF THE LORD’S HOUSE IN FAITHFULNESS TO THE LORD**

**IN KING SOLOMON’S KINGDOM, HE BUILT THE HOUSE OF THE FATHER STEPHEN CALLED ZION IN THE KINGDOM OF LORDSHIP THAT WILL NEVER BE DESTROYED IN 7 YEARS THAT TOOK $576,000,000,000.00 BILLION IN 100,000 GOLD TALENTS & $384,000,000,000.00 BILLION IN 1 MILLION SILVER TALENTS IN TITHING BY 10% & 100% WHICH CONCERNS $960,000,000,000,000.00 TRILLION WHICH THE FATHER STEPHEN’S BODY IS 202,000,000,000,000,000,000 YEARS OLD IN GOLD IN LEVITICUS 27:3; 1ST CHRONICLES 22:14 & ACTS 7:47-50. WHICH WITH PRECIOUS STONES AND OTHER MATERIALS THE TITHE WOULD CONCERN 1 QUADRILLION DOLLARS [15 ZERO’S BEHIND IT] FOR 115 YEARS WITH A FRUITFUL CALL [15 YEARS + 10 YEARS IN 2ND CORINTHIANS 12:1-6 & PSALMS 90:10] THAT HAPPENED IN 930BC WHICH IS 2,945 YEARS AGO. THIS WOULD THEN CONCERN THE FATHER STEPHEN’S ADDRESS CALLED THE UNIVERSAL ZION IN THE ETERNAL KINGDOM OF LORDSHIP IN ACTS 15:16-17. THIS KINGDOM OF LORDSHIP WHICH IS KNOWN AS THE FATHER STEPHEN’S ZION ON SUNDAY PENTECOST THAT HOUSES ONLY SAINTLY CHRISTIAN LORDS & SAINTLY CHRISTIAN LADIES WILL NEVER BE DESTROYED IN DANIEL 7:18. ALL OTHER KINGDOMS, EVEN THE LORDSHIP OF THE LAW WILL COME TO AN END & BE IN DESOLATION IN THE ROCK AUTHORITIES TO THE COUNTY AUTHORITIES IN ACTS 9:3-6. THE STATE AUTHORITIES TO GOVERNMENTAL AUTHORITIES IS IN ACTS 22:6-11. THE NATIONAL AUTHORITIES TO THE KINGDOM AUTHORITIES IS IN ACTS 26:13-18.**

**1:1–11:43 SOLOMON**

**1:1–2:46 SOLOMON’S MAJESTIC RULE ETERNALLY ESTABLISHED**

**1:1–10 DAVID AND ADONIJAH. HERE WE FIND DAVID IN THE WEAKNESS OF OLD AGE, UNABLE TO KEEP WARM OR TO PERFORM SEXUALLY (1–4). WAITING IN THE WINGS IS ADONIJAH, THE FOURTH OF SIX SONS BORN TO DAVID BY SIX DIFFERENT WIVES WHILE HE WAS KING IN HEBRON (2 SA. 3:2–5). DAVID’S FIRST SON, AMMON, HAD BEEN MURDERED BY THE THIRD, ABSALOM, WHO HIMSELF DIED WHILE LEADING A REBELLION AGAINST DAVID (2 SA. 13:23–29; 18:9–15). AS NO MENTION IS MADE OF DAVID’S SECOND SON, CHILEAB, HE HAD PRESUMABLY DIED TOO, LEAVING ADONIJAH AS THE ELDEST SURVIVING SON AND NATURAL HEIR TO DAVID’S THRONE. THE WRITER INTENDS TO REMIND US OF THESE CIRCUMSTANCES BY POINTING OUT THAT ADONIJAH WAS BORN NEXT AFTER ABSALOM (6). THE DESCRIPTION OF HIM AS A VERY HANDSOME MAN RECALLS DAVID’S EARLY GOOD LOOKS (1 SA. 16:12) AND FURTHER SUGGESTS THAT HERE IS DAVID’S NATURAL SUCCESSOR. ADONIJAH HAD NOT ONLY SET HIS HEART ON THE THRONE BUT HAD ENLISTED THE SUPPORT OF SOME NOTABLE MEMBERS OF DAVID’S COURT (7, 9). THE NOTE THAT HE ACQUIRED CHARIOTS AND HORSES … WITH FIFTY MEN TO RUN AHEAD OF HIM (5) RECALLS THE PREPARATIONS WHICH ABSALOM MADE BEFORE TRYING TO GRASP THE THRONE (2 SA. 15:1), JUST AS DAVID’S FAILURE TO QUESTION ADONIJAH’S ACTIONS (6) RECALLS HIS FAILURE TO NIP ABSALOM’S REBELLION IN THE BUD. DAVID’S WEAKNESS IN THIS SCENE CANNOT BE BLAMED ENTIRELY ON OLD AGE, FOR IT IS CONSISTENT WITH HIS EARLIER FAILURES TO ASSERT HIMSELF WHERE HIS SONS WERE CONCERNED (2 SA. 13–15). WITHOUT DAVID’S KNOWLEDGE, ADONIJAH ARRANGED A FEAST WITH SACRIFICES AND HAD HIMSELF PROCLAIMED KING AT EN ROGEL, A SPRING JUST TO THE SOUTH OF JERUSALEM (9; CF. VS 13, 18, 25). THIS DOES NOT MEAN THAT DAVID CEASED IMMEDIATELY TO BE KING, BUT RATHER THAT ADONIJAH WOULD HENCEFORTH RULE AS CO-REGENT. IN VIEW OF DAVID’S ADVANCED AGE, HOWEVER, THERE CAN BE NO DOUBT THAT ADONIJAH WOULD HAVE BEEN THE EFFECTIVE MONARCH. 1:11–37 NATHAN’S INTERVENTION. WE HAVE ALREADY BEEN TOLD THAT NATHAN THE PROPHET WAS NOT OF ADONIJAH’S PARTY (8), AND NOW HE EMERGES AS THE SUPPORTER OF A RIVAL CLAIMANT, SOLOMON. IT BECOMES APPARENT IN THESE VERSES THAT DAVID HAD SWORN AN OATH TO SOLOMON’S MOTHER, BATHSHEBA, THAT HER SON WOULD BE THE NEXT KING. (EITHER THAT OR NATHAN AND BATHSHEBA SET OUT TO CONVINCE DAVID THAT HE HAD SWORN SUCH AN OATH WHEN IN FACT HE HAD NOT! BUT THE FACT THAT ADONIJAH DID NOT INVITE SOLOMON TO HIS CELEBRATIONS SUGGESTS THAT HE RECOGNIZED HIM AS HAVING SOME CLAIM TO THE THRONE AND WAS MAKING A CAREFULLY TIMED PREEMPTIVE MOVE.) BATHSHEBA’S ENTRY INTO THE STORY REMINDS US OF THE LUSTFUL DAVID OF 2 SA. 11 AND THROWS THE PRESENT PICTURE OF THE IMPOTENT OLD MAN INTO SHARP RELIEF. ALTHOUGH NATHAN IS GIVEN HIS TITLE ‘THE PROPHET’ SEVERAL TIMES IN THIS CHAPTER HE BROUGHT NO ‘WORD OF THE LORD’ TO THE FAILING KING. INSTEAD ALL IS DONE BY INTRIGUE AND CLEVER PERSUASION. FIRST, HAVING BEEN COACHED BY NATHAN, BATHSHEBA REMINDS THE KING OF HIS OATH AND INFORMS HIM OF ADONIJAH’S ACCESSION FEAST. THEN NATHAN MAKES HIS OWN CAREFULLY TIMED ENTRY (WHILE SHE WAS STILL SPEAKING WITH THE KING) AND BROACHES THE ISSUE FROM A DIFFERENT ANGLE. SPEAKING LESS CONFRONTATIONALLY THAN BATHSHEBA, NATHAN PRETENDS TO THINK THAT DAVID MIGHT HAVE SANCTIONED ADONIJAH’S CELEBRATION AND POLITELY POINTS OUT THAT CERTAIN PEOPLE, INCLUDING HIMSELF, HAVE NOT BEEN INVITED. DAVID BELATEDLY STIRS HIMSELF AND SEIZES CONTROL OF EVENTS, SWEARING THAT HIS FORMER OATH WILL BE FULFILLED AT ONCE (30). CALLING FOR SOLOMON’S OTHER MAIN SUPPORTERS, ZADOK THE PRIEST AND BENAIAH, HE SWIFTLY GIVES INSTRUCTIONS FOR SOLOMON’S IMMEDIATE ANOINTING AT GIHON, A SPRING OUTSIDE THE EASTERN WALL OF JERUSALEM. 1:38–53 SOLOMON BECOMES KING. ACCOMPANIED BY HIS CHIEF SUPPORTERS AND DAVID’S BODYGUARD (THE KERETHITES AND THE PELETHITES), SOLOMON GOES TO GIHON, SIGNIFICANTLY RIDING ON KING DAVID’S MULE (38). DAVID DOES NOT ATTEND, PERHAPS BECAUSE HE WAS TOO FRAIL TO TRAVEL EVEN THE SHORT DISTANCE TO THE FOOT OF THE EASTERN SLOPE. THE LARGE CROWD, ASSEMBLED AT SHORT NOTICE, INDICATES THAT SOLOMON WAS A POPULAR CANDIDATE. ADONIJAH HEARS THE NOISE OF THIS CROWD AT EN ROGEL, AND A FULL REPORT OF EVENTS SOON REACHES HIM; REALIZING THAT THE GAME WAS UP, HIS SUPPORTERS QUIETLY DISPERSE. ADONIJAH HIMSELF EXPECTS THAT SOLOMON (WHOM HE REFERS TO AS ‘KING SOLOMON’) WOULD WANT TO KILL HIM, SO HE SEEKS REFUGE BY TAKING HOLD OF THE HORNS OF THE ALTAR. ISRAELITE ALTARS (AS ILLUSTRATED BY ARCHAEOLOGICAL FINDS) HAD POINTED PROJECTIONS WHICH STOOD UP FROM THE FOUR CORNERS OF THE SQUARE TOP. SEIZING TWO OF THESE ‘HORNS’ GAVE A PERSON SANCTUARY. THE ALTAR IN QUESTION PRESUMABLY STOOD IN THE TENT WHICH DAVID HAD SET UP TO HOUSE THE ‘ARK OF THE LORD’ (2 SA. 6:17; CF. 1 KI. 2:28). UNTIL THIS POINT SOLOMON HAS BEEN A SHADOWY AND PASSIVE FIGURE (HE IS ‘MADE KING’, ‘CAUSED TO RIDE’ ETC.), BUT NOW HE ENTERS THE STORY AS A CHARACTER IN HIS OWN RIGHT. HE ACTS DECISIVELY BUT WITH SHREWDNESS AND CAUTION, PROMISING TO SPARE ADONIJAH’S LIFE SO LONG AS HE REMAINS LOYAL. ADONIJAH HUMBLY ACKNOWLEDGES HIS YOUNGER BROTHER AS THE NEW KING (53), BUT THERE IS NO REAL RECONCILIATION BETWEEN THE TWO MEN. WE ARE LEFT WITH THE IMPRESSION THAT MATTERS ARE NOT YET SETTLED. IN THE FINAL THREE VERSES OF THE CHAPTER, SOLOMON IS REFERRED TO FOUR TIMES AS KING SOLOMON (TWICE IN REPORTED SPEECH AND TWICE BY THE NARRATOR HIMSELF); ADONIJAH, ON THE OTHER HAND, HAS BEEN REFERRED TO ONLY ONCE AS KING, AND THAT WAS IN THE REPORTED ACCLAMATION OF HIS SUPPORTERS (25). THUS, THE CHAPTER ENDS WITH SOLOMON ANOINTED KING AND DAVID SATISFIED THAT STEPHEN YAHWEH’S WILL HAS BEEN DONE (48). BUT GOD’S WILL, HAD PREVIOUSLY BEEN NEGLECTED; DAVID IS SPURRED INTO ACTION ONLY BY ADONIJAH’S BID FOR POWER AND NATHAN’S CONCERN FOR THE SAFETY OF SOLOMON’S SUPPORTERS, INCLUDING HIMSELF. AS IN THE STORY OF JOSEPH, GOD’S ACTIVITY REMAINS HIDDEN AMONG THE PLOTS AND AMBITIONS OF HUMAN BEINGS. 2:1–12 THE DEATH OF DAVID. WE ARE NOT TOLD HOW LONG SOLOMON RULED AS CO-REGENT BEFORE DAVID DIED. THE STORY MOVES STRAIGHT TO THE EVE OF THE OLD KING’S DEATH. FIRST, DAVID GIVES SOLOMON ADVICE ON MATTERS SPIRITUAL. HE IS TO WALK IN STEPHEN YAHWEH’S WAYS AND KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS. STEPHEN YAHWEH’S PROMISE OF AN EVERLASTING DYNASTY (2 SA. 7) IS CLEARLY UNDERSTOOD BY DAVID TO BE CONDITIONAL ON THE FAITHFULNESS OF HIS DESCENDANTS (4), A FACT WHICH GAINS SIGNIFICANCE AS THE STORY UNFOLDS. SECONDLY, DAVID INSTRUCTS SOLOMON TO DEAL WITH CERTAIN ITEMS OF UNFINISHED BUSINESS. MURDERS COMMITTED BY JOAB AGAINST DAVID’S WILL ARE TO BE AVENGED; THE SONS OF BARZILLAI ARE TO BE REWARDED FOR THEIR LOYALTY; AND SHIMEI IS TO BE PUNISHED FOR CURSING DAVID AT THE TIME OF ABSALOM’S REBELLION. NO SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS ARE GIVEN CONCERNING JOAB AND SHIMEI; DAVID SIMPLY TELLS SOLOMON TO ACT IN ACCORDANCE WITH HIS WISDOM (6, 9). THE DEATHBED SPEECH WHICH BEGINS BRIGHT WITH SPIRITUAL COUNSEL ENDS DARK WITH MENACE. IT IS FOLLOWED BY A FORMAL NOTICE OF DAVID’S DEATH AND BURIAL, OF A KIND WHICH OCCURS REGULARLY THROUGHOUT THE BOOKS OF KINGS.**

**THE EMPIRE WHICH KING DAVID BEQUEATHED TO HIS SON SOLOMON.**

**2:13–25 THE DEATH OF ADONIJAH. ADONIJAH APPROACHES BATHSHEBA IN HER ROLE AS QUEEN-MOTHER, AN HONORED POSITION AT THE ROYAL COURT, TO REQUEST THE GIRL ABISHAG AS HIS WIFE. ABISHAG’S STATUS HAD BEEN THAT OF ROYAL CONCUBINE (EVEN THOUGH DAVID HAD BEEN INCAPABLE OF SEXUAL RELATIONS), AND FOR A MAN TO TAKE SUCH A CONCUBINE FOR HIMSELF COULD BE TANTAMOUNT TO A BID FOR ROYAL POWER (CF. 2 SA. 3:6–8; 16:21–22). WHEN THE REQUEST IS RELAYED TO SOLOMON THE IMPLICATION IS NOT LOST ON HIM; HE INTERPRETS IT AS THE OPENING GAMBIT IN A NEW MOVE TO SEIZE THE THRONE (22). UNLIKE HIS FATHER, HE IS NOT SLOW TO TAKE ACTION: ADONIJAH IS KILLED THE SAME DAY. 2:26–27 ABIATHAR BANISHED. SOLOMON MOVES WITH SWIFT EFFICIENCY TO MOP UP ALL OTHER TRACES OF OPPOSITION TO HIS REIGN. FOR GIVING SUPPORT TO ADONIJAH, ABIATHAR IS EXPELLED FROM HIS ROLE AS PRIEST AND BANISHED TO AN INTERNAL EXILE ON HIS ESTATE AT ANATHOTH, SOME 3 MILES (5 KM) NORTH OF JERUSALEM. THE WRITER SEES HIS RUSTICATION FULFILLING THE EARLIER WORDS OF AN ANONYMOUS PROPHET CONCERNING THE LINE OF ELI (1 SA. 2:27–36). ABIATHAR’S PLACE IS TAKEN BY ZADOK (35). ANATHOTH WAS A TOWN ALLOTTED TO THE LEVITES AND WAS LATER THE HOME OF JEREMIAH (JE. 1:1). 2:28–35 THE DEATH OF JOAB. ON HEARING OF ADONIJAH’S DEATH, JOAB REALIZES HIS OWN DANGER AND FLEES TO THE TENT OF THE LORD TO SEEK SANCTUARY AT THE HORNS OF THE ALTAR. HOWEVER, IT IS NOT HIS SUPPORT FOR ADONIJAH WHICH ENDANGERS HIS LIFE SO MUCH AS DAVID’S DEATHBED INSTRUCTIONS TO SOLOMON. WHILE BENAIAH HAS SOME SCRUPLES ABOUT KILLING JOAB AT THE ALTAR, SOLOMON HAS NONE ABOUT ORDERING BENAIAH TO DO IT. HE APPEARS TO CONSIDER THAT THE NEED TO AVENGE JOAB’S VICTIMS AND THE WRONG DONE TO DAVID OVERRIDES THE LAW OF SANCTUARY. HE DECLARES THAT BY HAVING JOAB KILLED HE IS ENACTING DIVINE RETRIBUTION AND THAT STEPHEN YAHWEH’S BLESSING OF PEACE WILL BE UPON THE HOUSE OF DAVID FOR EVER (33). THUS, BENAIAH KILLS JOAB AND TAKES HIS PLACE AS COMMANDER OF THE ARMY. THE WRITER PASSES NO COMMENT ON ANY OF THIS AND WE ARE LEFT WONDERING WHETHER HE APPROVED OF SOLOMON’S ACTIONS OR NOT. AT LEAST HE KNEW THAT SOLOMON’S PREDICTION OF EVERLASTING PEACE WOULD NOT BE FULFILLED! 2:36–46 THE DEATH OF SHIMEI. AGAINST SHIMEI SOLOMON TAKES THE RELATIVELY LENIENT MEASURE OF CONFINING HIM TO JERUSALEM, FORBIDDING HIM TO LEAVE ON PAIN OF DEATH. WAS THIS ALL SOLOMON INTENDED TO DO, OR DID HE HOPE FROM THE START THAT THE CONDITION WOULD EVENTUALLY PROVIDE A REASON TO PUT SHIMEI TO DEATH? PROBABLY THE LATTER, FOR DAVID’S INSTRUCTION HAD BEEN THAT SHIMEI BE BROUGHT DOWN TO THE GRAVE IN BLOOD (9). WHEN AFTER THREE YEARS SHIMEI BREAKS THE CONDITION, SOLOMON REVEALS THAT HE REGARDS HIS DEATH AS DIVINE RETRIBUTION FOR THE WRONG DONE TO DAVID (44). ONCE AGAIN SOLOMON PREDICTS THAT HIS REIGN WILL BE BLESSED AND (INCORRECTLY) THAT DAVID’S DYNASTY WILL BE ESTABLISHED FOR EVER (45). DAVID’S UNFINISHED BUSINESS HAVING BEEN DEALT WITH AND ALL OPPOSITION SQUASHED, SOLOMON EMERGES AS A PRAGMATIC, SHREWD AND DECISIVE MONARCH, CONFIDENT THAT HE IS ENACTING GOD’S JUDGMENTS AND THAT HE WILL RECEIVE GOD’S BLESSING. IT IS NOT A PARTICULARLY ATTRACTIVE PICTURE, BUT WE ARE LEFT IN NO DOUBT THAT THE KINGDOM WAS NOW FIRMLY ESTABLISHED IN SOLOMON’S HANDS (46).**

**3:1–4:34 GREATNESS AND WISDOM**

**3:1 ALLIANCE WITH EGYPT. IN ORDER TO EMPHASIZE THAT SOLOMON WAS ALSO ESTABLISHING HIMSELF IN THE ARENA OF INTERNATIONAL POLITICS, THE WRITER NEXT TELLS OF HIS ALLIANCE WITH EGYPT, SEALED BY HIS MARRIAGE TO THE DAUGHTER OF PHARAOH (PROBABLY SIAMUN OF EGYPT’S TWENTY-FIRST DYNASTY; SEE THE INTRODUCTION). A MARRIAGE ALLIANCE WITH THE ERSTWHILE SUPERPOWER OF THE NEAR EAST MUST HAVE ENHANCED SOLOMON’S STANDING CONSIDERABLY. THERE IS, HOWEVER, ANOTHER SIDE TO THIS POLITICAL MOVE; FOR HIS MARRIAGE TO A NON-ISRAELITE WAS IN BREACH OF DT. 7:3. IT ALSO POINTS FORWARD TO HIS DUPLICATION OF THIS SIN IN 1 KI. 11:1–6. 3:2–15 SOLOMON AT GIBEON. THIS IS THE FIRST OF FOUR OCCASIONS WHEN STEPHEN YAHWEH SPEAKS TO SOLOMON (CF. 6:11–13; 9:1–9; 11:11–13). THE WRITER FEELS OBLIGED TO EXPLAIN WHY THE EVENT OCCURRED AT THE MOST IMPORTANT HIGH PLACE, GIBEON: KING AND PEOPLE ALL WORSHIPPED THERE BECAUSE THE TEMPLE HAD NOT YET BEEN BUILT (2). TO CLEAR SOLOMON OF ANY SUSPICION OF FAILURE, THE WRITER ALSO STATES THAT SOLOMON LOVED STEPHEN YAHWEH AND WALKED IN THE STATUTES OF DAVID (3). IT IS STATED TWICE THAT GOD SPOKE TO SOLOMON IN A DREAM (5, 15), A FORM OF COMMUNICATION WHICH IS TREATED WITH DEEP SUSPICION IN SOME PARTS OF SCRIPTURE (DT. 13:1–5; JE. 23:25–32), BUT WITH GREAT RESPECT IN OTHERS (E.G. THE STORIES OF JOSEPH AND DANIEL). STEPHEN YAHWEH’S FIRST WORDS TO SOLOMON SIMPLY INVITED HIM TO MAKE A REQUEST. WE MIGHT EXPECT THAT SOLOMON, FACED WITH SUCH AN OFFER FROM THE LORD OF ALL CREATION, WOULD HAVE NEEDED SOME TIME TO THINK, BUT HIS REPLY SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN IMMEDIATE. THIS, AT LEAST, IS IN KEEPING WITH THE DECISIVE MANNER WITH WHICH SOLOMON HAS ACTED SO FAR, BUT HIS REQUEST ITSELF IS SOMEWHAT SURPRISING. WE WOULD NOT HAVE GUESSED THAT THE SELF-CONFIDENT SOLOMON, ALREADY PRAISED BY DAVID FOR HIS WISDOM (2:6, 9), LACKED A DISCERNING HEART. PERHAPS HE HAD REALIZED THAT MORE THAN MERE SHREWDNESS AND CUNNING WAS NECESSARY FOR THE JUST LEADERSHIP OF GOD’S PEOPLE. FACED WITH THAT TASK HE FEELS HE IS ONLY A LITTLE CHILD. HE IS ALSO VERY CONSCIOUS THAT THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL ARE GOD’S PEOPLE AND THAT HE IS GOD’S SERVANT (THE TERMS YOUR PEOPLE AND YOUR SERVANT ARE BOTH USED THREE TIMES IN THE HEBREW OF VS 7–9). SOLOMON THEREFORE ASKS FOR AN UNDERSTANDING MIND WITH WHICH TO RULE THE PEOPLE. THE HEBREW VERB USED FOR THIS ACTIVITY CARRIES THE IDEAS OF JUDGING AND JUSTICE. THIS IS IN KEEPING WITH THE FACT THAT IN ISRAEL THE KING HIMSELF WAS THE FINAL COURT OF APPEAL (2 SA. 14:4–17; 15:2; 1 KI. 3:16–28) AND WAS PERSONALLY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE PROMOTION OF JUSTICE. HENCE IN PS. 72:1–4 THE PSALMIST PRAYS: ‘ENDOW THE KING WITH YOUR JUSTICE, O GOD, THE ROYAL SON WITH YOUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. HE WILL JUDGE YOUR PEOPLE IN RIGHTEOUSNESS, YOUR AFFLICTED ONES WITH JUSTICE … HE WILL DEFEND THE AFFLICTED AMONG THE PEOPLE AND SAVE THE CHILDREN OF THE NEEDY; HE WILL CRUSH THE OPPRESSOR.’ THE ABILITY TO JUDGE WITH RIGHTEOUSNESS AND DEFEND THE POOR IS ALSO AN IMPORTANT PART OF ISAIAH’S PICTURE OF THE IDEAL KING WHO IS TO COME (IS. 11:3–5). THESE SAME QUALITIES SHOULD PROVIDE OUR AGENDA WHENEVER WE PRAY FOR ‘KINGS AND ALL THOSE IN AUTHORITY’ (1 TIM. 2:2). GOD COMMENDS SOLOMON’S SENSE OF PRIORITIES AND BESTOWS ON HIM WISDOM FAR BEYOND THE ORDINARY. HE PROMISES HIM, IN ADDITION, THOSE THINGS WHICH HE COULD HAVE ASKED FOR BUT DID NOT: RICHES, HONOR AND (IF HE WOULD CONTINUE TO WALK IN GOD’S WAYS) LONG LIFE. ON WAKING SOLOMON RETURNS AT ONCE TO JERUSALEM TO CELEBRATE THE MOMENTOUS EVENT WITH SACRIFICES AND A FEAST BEFORE THE ARK OF THE COVENANT. THERE WERE CLEARLY SOME THINGS FOR WHICH THE HIGH PLACES, EVEN THE MOST IMPORTANT HIGH PLACE AT GIBEON, WERE NOT ADEQUATE. 3:16–28 WISDOM DEMONSTRATED. SOLOMON’S NEW GIFT IS IMMEDIATELY DEMONSTRATED IN THE WELL-KNOWN STORY OF THE TWO PROSTITUTES ARGUING OVER A BABY. SOLOMON PROPOSES A SIMPLE SOLUTION: THE CHILD IS TO BE SLICED IN HALF SO THAT BOTH WOMEN COULD SHARE IT. THE RULING IS SO SHOCKING IN ITS BRUTALITY THAT IT SOUNDS LIKE THE CALLOUS RESPONSE OF A JUDGE WEARIED BEYOND ENDURANCE BY THE CLAIMS AND COUNTER-CLAIMS OF THE TWO WOMEN. INDEED, THE NARRATIVE IS OPEN TO THAT INTERPRETATION. HOWEVER, THE VERY DIFFERENT REACTIONS OF THE WOMEN ALLOW SOLOMON TO DECIDE WHICH WAS THE REAL MOTHER OF THE LIVING CHILD. ITS LIFE IS SPARED, AND SOLOMON’S REPUTATION IS MADE. THE PEOPLE ARE IN NO DOUBT THAT HE IS EQUIPPED WITH WISDOM FROM GOD FOR THE DISPENSING OF JUSTICE. 4:1–34 INTERNAL ARRANGEMENTS OF THE KINGDOM. THE FIRST NINETEEN VERSES SEEM AT FIRST SIGHT TO BE A RATHER TEDIOUS LISTING OF SOLOMON’S COURT OFFICIALS. BUT THE PASSAGE REVEALS SOME INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE KINGDOM. FIRST, WE SHOULD NOTE THAT THE PRIESTS ARE INCLUDED AMONG SOLOMON’S CHIEF OFFICIALS (2–5). WE ARE REMINDED THAT DAVID HAD BROUGHT THE CULTIC RELIGION OF THE LAND FIRMLY UNDER ROYAL CONTROL WHEN HE MADE JERUSALEM THE NEW CAPITAL OF THE KINGDOM. (IT IS SURPRISING TO FIND ABIATHAR INCLUDED IN THE LIST IN VIEW OF HIS EXPULSION IN 2:26–27; PERHAPS HE WAS NOT EXPELLED SO EARLY IN SOLOMON’S REIGN AS THE POSITION OF THAT NOTE MIGHT SUGGEST.) SECONDLY, THE LIST OF TWELVE OFFICERS (7–19) REVEALS A SIGNIFICANT ADMINISTRATIVE REFORM. MANY OF THE TWELVE GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRICTS FOR WHICH THEY ARE RESPONSIBLE DO NOT CORRESPOND TO THE OLD TRIBAL TERRITORIES. PARTS OF THE COUNTRY HAD BEEN DIVIDED UP IN FRESH WAYS WHICH IGNORED TRADITIONAL TRIBAL BOUNDARIES. IT IS HARD TO IMAGINE SUCH A MOVE BEING WARMLY WELCOMED. BUT EVEN MORE IMPORTANT IS THE FACT THAT THE DISTRICTS ADMINISTERED BY THESE TWELVE OFFICERS DID NOT INCLUDE THE TERRITORY OF JUDAH. (JUDAH HAD AN OFFICER OF ITS OWN IF THE END OF V 19 IS READ AS IN THE RSV, ‘AND THERE WAS ONE OFFICER IN THE LAND OF JUDAH’.) THIS ALERTS US TO THE FACT THAT THE TERM ALL ISRAEL IS USED IN TWO DIFFERENT WAYS IN THIS CHAPTER. WHEN V 1 TELLS US THAT SOLOMON RULED OVER ALL ISRAEL IT CLEARLY MEANS THE WHOLE KINGDOM; BUT WHEN V 7 SAYS THAT SOLOMON HAD TWELVE DISTRICT GOVERNORS OVER ALL ISRAEL IT MEANS ISRAEL (THE NORTHERN TRIBES) AS DISTINCT FROM JUDAH. IN FACT, JUDAH AND ISRAEL ARE REFERRED TO AS SEPARATE ENTITIES IN V 20. IT IS THEREFORE CLEAR THAT JUDAH AND ISRAEL CONTINUED TO BE ADMINISTERED SEPARATELY, AS THEY HAD BEEN UNDER DAVID (2 SA. 24:1, 9).**

**SOLOMON’S 12 ADMINISTRATIVE DISTRICTS AS DESCRIBED IN 1 KINGS 4:7–19.**

**THERE IS, HOWEVER, AN EVEN MORE IMPORTANT FACT TO BE DEDUCED FROM THE LIST OF OFFICIALS. THEIR TASK WAS TO ADMINISTER THE COLLECTION OF TAXES IN KIND TO SUPPLY THE NEEDS OF THE ROYAL HOUSEHOLD. EACH OF THE TWELVE GOVERNORS WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR SUPPLYING THE COURT FOR ONE MONTH OF THE YEAR (7). THIS MEANS THAT JUDAH HAD NO ROLE IN THE TAXATION SYSTEM; THE BURDEN FELL ENTIRELY ON ISRAEL. THE DESCRIPTION OF THE COURT’S ASTONISHING DAILY CONSUMPTION IN VS 22–23 GIVES US SOME IDEA OF HOW GREAT THAT BURDEN MUST HAVE BEEN. NEVERTHELESS, ALL ISRAEL AND JUDAH ATE, THEY DRANK AND THEY WERE HAPPY (20). THE REALM WAS SECURE, THANKS TO AN ARMY ENHANCED WITH A MASSIVE CONTINGENT OF CHARIOTS (25–26). WITH SUCH MILITARY STRENGTH SOLOMON SHOULD HAVE HAD NO DIFFICULTY HOLDING TOGETHER THE EMPIRE WHICH DAVID HAD CREATED, STRETCHING FROM NORTH-WEST MESOPOTAMIA TO THE SOUTHERN COASTAL PLAIN (21, 24). HOWEVER, THIS PICTURE IS MODIFIED SOMEWHAT IN LATER CHAPTERS. THE CHAPTER ENDS BY PRAISING SOLOMON’S WISDOM, STRESSING, WITH THE AID OF COMPARISONS, HIS EXTRAORDINARY DEPTH OF UNDERSTANDING AND BREADTH OF KNOWLEDGE. FOR THE WRITER THIS IS NOT A CHANGE OF SUBJECT; THE WEALTH, STRENGTH, PROSPERITY AND GREATNESS WHICH WERE DESCRIBED IN THE PRECEDING VERSES ARE ALL TO BE SEEN AS MANIFESTATIONS OF SOLOMON’S WISDOM. (WE WILL FIND THE SAME LINKAGE IN 10:14–29.) AND YET THERE IS A TENSION IN THIS CHAPTER. FOR WHEN WE READ IT IN THE LIGHT OF LATER EVENTS IT IS HARD TO AVOID THE CONCLUSION THAT THE EXTRAVAGANCE OF SOLOMON’S COURT, AND THE BURDEN WHICH IT PLACED ON THE NORTHERN TRIBES, WERE THE SEEDS OF THAT DISCONTENT WHICH EVENTUALLY SPLIT THE KINGDOM.**

**5:1–18 PREPARATIONS FOR TEMPLE-BUILDING OF THE LORD**

**THE HEART OF THE ACCOUNT OF SOLOMON’S REIGN IS THE LONG SECTION (6:1–9:9) DEVOTED PRIMARILY TO THE BUILDING OF THE TEMPLE IN JERUSALEM. THIS IS FRAMED BY TWO NOTICES CONCERNING SOLOMON’S DEALINGS WITH HIRAM KING OF TYRE (5:1–18; 9:10–14). 5:1–12 SOLOMON AND HIRAM. HIRAM KING OF TYRE HAD EARLIER SUPPLIED DAVID WITH TIMBER, CARPENTERS AND STONEMASONS TO BUILD HIS RESIDENCE IN JERUSALEM (2 SA. 5:11). ON HEARING OF SOLOMON’S ACCESSION, HIRAM SENT A FORMAL EMBASSY TO ENSURE THAT WARM DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS CONTINUED BETWEEN THE TWO ROYAL HOUSES. SOLOMON TOOK THE OPPORTUNITY TO NEGOTIATE HIRAM’S HELP WITH ANOTHER BUILDING PROJECT. THE TIME HAD COME TO TAKE UP HIS GOD GIVEN TASK OF BUILDING A TEMPLE IN JERUSALEM (4–5). ALTHOUGH HE IS STYLED SIMPLY KING OF TYRE, HIRAM EVIDENTLY RULED OVER A LARGE PART OF THE PHOENICIAN COAST AND THE FORESTED MOUNTAINS OF LEBANON; MEN FROM SIDON AND BYBLOS (GEBAL) WERE AMONG THE WORKERS HE SUPPLIED (6, 18). IN RETURN FOR THE TIMBER AND CRAFTSMEN SOLOMON UNDERTOOK TO SUPPLY HIRAM’S COURT WITH GRAIN AND OLIVE OIL. THE ARRANGEMENT WAS EMBODIED IN A TREATY (12). THE AMOUNT OF GRAIN SUPPLIED EACH YEAR TO HIRAM’S COURT (11) WAS NOT MUCH LESS THAN THE AMOUNT CONSUMED ANNUALLY BY SOLOMON’S. IN OTHER WORDS, THE COMMITMENT MUST HAVE VIRTUALLY DOUBLED THE GRAIN TAX WHICH THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL HAD TO PAY. 5:13–18 SOLOMON’S LABOR FORCE. HAVING EXPLAINED HOW SOLOMON SECURED THE RAW MATERIALS FOR THE TEMPLE, THE WRITER TURNS TO THE RAISING OF THE LABOR FORCE. SOLOMON CONSCRIPTED LABORERS FROM ALL ISRAEL, TOTALING 30,000 MEN (13). IT IS NOT CLEAR WHICH OF ITS TWO MEANINGS ALL ISRAEL HAS IN THIS VERSE. THESE WORKERS HAD TO SPEND EVERY THIRD MONTH IN LEBANON; IN OTHER WORDS, THEY WERE ABSENT FROM THEIR FARMS FOR A THIRD OF EACH YEAR. IN ADDITION, 150,000 PEOPLE WERE EMPLOYED IN THE HILL COUNTRY AT HOME, QUARRYING, CUTTING AND TRANSPORTING STONE. THE WHOLE PROJECT TOOK SEVEN YEARS TO COMPLETE (6:38). THE WRITER DOUBTLESS INTENDED TO IMPRESS HIS READERS WITH THE GRAND SCALE OF SOLOMON’S PREPARATIONS, BUT FOR THE MODERN READER THE ACCOUNT CREATES A CERTAIN TENSION WHICH THE NARRATOR MAY NOT HAVE INTENDED. ON THE ONE HAND, WE CANNOT FAIL TO BE IMPRESSED THAT SOLOMON WAS ABLE TO COMMAND SUCH A MASSIVE WORKFORCE AND RAISE THE TAXES TO PAY FOR PHOENICIAN HELP. ON THE OTHER HAND, NEITHER CAN WE ESCAPE THE FACT THAT THE COST IN HUMAN LABOR AND THE PRODUCE OF THE LAND MUST HAVE IMPOSED A CRUSHING BURDEN ON THE PEOPLE.**

**6:1–7:51 BUILDING THE TEMPLE OF THE LORD**

**6:1–38 THE BUILDING. THIS CHAPTER IS CLEARLY ARRANGED IN A SYMMETRICAL PATTERN IN WHICH THE SECOND PART IS THE MIRROR-IMAGE OF THE FIRST. THE PATTERN HAS GOD’S WORD TO SOLOMON AT ITS CENTER, EMPHASIZING ITS IMPORTANCE: A1 CHRONOLOGICAL NOTE (1); B1 DESCRIPTION OF THE BUILDING’S BASIC STRUCTURE (2–10); C GOD SPEAKS TO SOLOMON (11–13); B2 DESCRIPTION OF DECORATION AND FITTINGS (14–36); A2 CHRONOLOGICAL NOTE (37–38). HOWEVER, THIS CHAPTER DOES NOT CONTAIN EVERYTHING THE WRITER HAS TO TELL US ABOUT THE EQUIPPING OF THE TEMPLE. HE DESCRIBES ITS FURNISHINGS IN 7:13–51, AFTER GIVING AN ACCOUNT OF SOLOMON’S ROYAL PALACE. THE REASON FOR THIS RATHER SURPRISING ARRANGEMENT OF THE MATERIAL IS SUGGESTED BELOW. THE OPENING CHRONOLOGICAL NOTE DOES NOT DATE THE BEGINNING OF THE BUILDING WORK JUST IN RELATION TO SOLOMON’S REIGN BUT ALSO IN TERMS OF TIME ELAPSED SINCE THE EXODUS FROM EGYPT. THERE ARE PROBABLY TWO MAIN REASONS FOR THIS. FIRST, IT INVITES COMPARISON BETWEEN THE TWO EVENTS; IT SUGGESTS THAT THE BUILDING OF THE TEMPLE WAS AS SIGNIFICANT AN EVENT IN ISRAEL’S HISTORY AS THAT WHICH SAW THE BIRTH OF THE NATION. SECONDLY, BY PLACING THE TEMPLE PROJECT IN ITS HISTORICAL CONTEXT, IT REMINDS US THAT STEPHEN YAHWEH IS A GOD WHOSE PURPOSES ARE WORKED OUT IN HISTORY AND WHOSE PLANS ARE OFTEN LONG-TERM. THE PROMISE OF A PLACE WHICH ‘THE LORD YOUR GOD WILL CHOOSE … TO PUT HIS NAME THERE FOR HIS DWELLING’ (DT. 12:5) TOOK MANY LIFETIMES TO FIND ITS FULFILMENT. THE DESCRIPTION OF THE TEMPLE AND ITS DECORATION CONTAINS SEVERAL DIFFICULTIES FOR THE MODERN READER. THERE ARE SOME ARCHITECTURAL TERMS WHICH ARE NOT EASY TO TRANSLATE, AND MUCH OF THE DETAIL IS DIFFICULT TO VISUALIZE. IT IS A GREAT PITY THAT THE TEXT HAS NOT COME DOWN TO US COMPLETE WITH GROUND PLANS, ELEVATIONS AND ARTIST’S IMPRESSIONS! VS 2–10 DESCRIBE THE BASIC SHELL OF THE BUILDING. IT WAS RECTANGULAR AND ALIGNED ON AN EAST-WEST AXIS. THE MAIN PART OF THE BUILDING, CONSISTING OF THE HOLY PLACE (MAIN HALL; ‘NAVE’ IN THE RSV) AND THE INNER SANCTUARY (ALSO CALLED THE MOST HOLY PLACE; 16), WAS ABOUT 90 FT (27 M) LONG, 30 FT (9 M) WIDE AND 45 FT (13.5 M) HIGH. THE PORCH OR VESTIBULE (PORTICO) WAS THE SAME WIDTH AS THE REST OF THE BUILDING AND ADDED A FURTHER 15 FT (4.5 M) TO ITS LENGTH. THREE STORIES OF ROOMS WERE BUILT AROUND THE OUTSIDE (EXCLUDING THE PORCH) AND WERE HALF THE HEIGHT OF THE TEMPLE ITSELF. THESE HAD THEIR OWN ENTRANCE ON THE SOUTH SIDE AND DID NOT CONNECT WITH THE INTERIOR OF THE TEMPLE. THE PURPOSE OF THESE OUTER ROOMS IS NOT EXPLAINED, BUT THEY WERE PROBABLY FOR THE STORAGE OF VESTMENTS AND CERTAIN OFFERINGS, AND PERHAPS PROVIDED ACCOMMODATION FOR THE PRIESTS ON DUTY. LIGHT ENTERED THE TEMPLE THROUGH WINDOWS WHICH MUST HAVE BEEN SET IN THE UPPER HALF OF THE WALLS, ABOVE THE HEIGHT OF THE OUTER ROOMS. THE BUILDING WAS ROOFED WITH BEAMS AND PLANKS OF CEDAR. THE STONES FOR THE TEMPLE WERE ALL FULLY PREPARED AT THE QUARRY SO THAT NO IRON TOOLS WERE USED ON THE BUILDING SITE (7). THIS ODD DETAIL, WHICH INTERRUPTS THE DESCRIPTION OF THE OUTER ROOMS, IS PROBABLY INTENDED TO SHOW THAT THE WORK WAS DONE IN COMPLIANCE WITH A COMMANDMENT IN EX. 20:25 (CF. DT. 27:5–6). THIS ACTUALLY CONCERNS THE BUILDING OF ALTARS AND INSTRUCTS THAT ONLY UNHEWN STONES (I.E. STONES IN THEIR NATURAL STATE, AS WOULD BE USED TO MAKE A DRY-STONE WALL) MUST BE EMPLOYED. SOLOMON’S CRAFTSMEN WERE BUILDING A TEMPLE, NOT AN ALTAR, AND THEY EVIDENTLY FELT FREE TO USE CUT AND DRESSED STONE THROUGHOUT. BUT THEY WORKED IN THE SPIRIT OF THE COMMANDMENT’S PROSCRIPTION OF THE USE OF TOOLS, MAKING SURE NONE WERE USED ON THE TEMPLE SITE. INSIDE THE TEMPLE THE STONEWORK WAS COMPLETELY COVERED WITH WOODEN PANELS, CEDAR ON THE WALLS AND CEILING AND PINE ON THE FLOORS (15). THE INNER SANCTUARY MUST HAVE HAD EITHER A RAISED FLOOR OR A FALSE CEILING (OR BOTH), REDUCING ITS HEIGHT FROM 30 TO 20 CUBITS (ABOUT 30 FT/9 M) AND MAKING ITS INTERIOR A PERFECT CUBE (20). THE PANELS ON THE WALLS WERE CARVED TO PORTRAY FLOWERS AND GOURDS, AND THE WALLS, CEILING AND FLOOR OF THE WHOLE BUILDING WERE ALL OVERLAID WITH GOLD, AS WERE THE CEDAR WOOD ALTAR AND THE HUGE OLIVE WOOD CHERUBIM OF THE INNER SANCTUARY. THESE CHERUBIM PROBABLY RESEMBLED THE WINGED SPHINXES FAMILIAR FROM ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN ART. PHOENICIAN EXAMPLES PORTRAY A CREATURE WITH A HUMAN HEAD, AN ANIMAL BODY WITH FOUR LEGS, AND A PAIR OF WINGS; THEY PROBABLY PROVIDE A CLOSE ANALOGY TO THOSE PRODUCED BY SOLOMON’S PHOENICIAN CRAFTSMEN. CHERUBIM ALSO FEATURED IN A FRIEZE CARVED AROUND THE WALLS, ALONG WITH PALM TREES AND FLOWERS (29). THE LAVISH USE OF GOLD OVERLAY SOUNDS EXTRAORDINARY BUT WAS IN FACT REGULAR PRACTICE IN THE ADORNING OF ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN TEMPLES. THE MOTIFS WITH WHICH SOLOMON’S TEMPLE WAS DECORATED (THE GOURDS, OPEN FLOWERS, PALM TREES AND CHERUBIM) WERE ALSO PART OF THE COMMON REPERTOIRE OF ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN ART, AND EVEN THE BASIC GROUND PLAN OF THE BUILDING CAN BE PARALLELED BY A NUMBER OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL DISCOVERIES. SOLOMON’S TEMPLE IS UNIQUE IN PURPOSE BUT NOT IN CONCEPTION. IN ITS ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN AND ARTISTIC DECORATION, IT VERY MUCH REFLECTED THE CONVENTIONS OF THE TIME. IT IS A STRIKING EXAMPLE OF HOW ELEMENTS OF A PREVAILING CULTURE CAN BE EMPLOYED FOR THE WORSHIP AND GLORY OF GOD. THE MOTIFS USED TO DECORATE THE INTERIOR OF THE TEMPLE MAY SEEM TO INFRINGE THE SECOND OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS, WHICH PROHIBITS THE MAKING OF IMAGES ‘OF ANYTHING IN HEAVEN ABOVE OR ON THE EARTH BENEATH’ (EX. 20:4). PERHAPS THE COMMANDMENT WAS UNDERSTOOD TO PROHIBIT THE MAKING OF LIKENESSES ONLY WHEN THERE WAS A DANGER OF THEM BECOMING OBJECTS OF WORSHIP, AND THIS DANGER WAS THOUGHT TO BE ELIMINATED IN A TEMPLE DEDICATED TO THE WORSHIP OF STEPHEN YAHWEH ALONE. AFTER DESCRIBING THE INNER SANCTUARY (16, 19–21, 22B–28), THE ACCOUNT MOVES OUTWARDS AGAIN, DESCRIBING FIRST THE DOORS WHICH CLOSED OFF THE INNER SANCTUARY AND THEN THE DOORS BETWEEN THE MAIN HALL AND THE PORCH. FINALLY, WE ARE LED OUTSIDE TO THE INNER COURTYARD (36), A VAGUE TERM WHICH PRESUMABLY REFERS TO THE IMMEDIATE SURROUNDINGS OF THE BUILDING. A SECOND CHRONOLOGICAL NOTE ROUNDS OFF THE ACCOUNT, REMINDING US OF WHEN THE TEMPLE WAS BEGUN, TELLING US WHEN IT WAS FINISHED, AND GIVING US THE TOTAL DURATION OF THE PROJECT. WE HAVE NOT YET CONSIDERED GOD’S WORD TO SOLOMON WHICH LIES EMBEDDED IN THIS ACCOUNT (11–13). THIS WORD IS SAID TO CONCERN THIS TEMPLE YOU ARE BUILDING, BUT IT CONTAINS NO FURTHER REFERENCE TO THE TEMPLE. WHAT THEN IS ITS PURPOSE? THE CONDITIONAL NATURE OF GOD’S PROMISE TO DAVID, ALREADY MADE CLEAR BY DAVID IN 2:4, IS NOW RESTATED BY GOD HIMSELF IN WORDS WHICH RELATE IT TO THE TEMPLE-BUILDING PROJECT. GOD WILL LIVE AMONG THE ISRAELITES IF SOLOMON WILL WALK IN GOD’S STATUTES AND OBEY HIS COMMANDS. IN OTHER WORDS, THE BUILDING OF A TEMPLE WILL NOT GUARANTEE GOD’S PRESENCE AMONG HIS PEOPLE; GOD CANNOT BE TAMED AND KEPT IN A BOX, HOWEVER MAGNIFICENT THE BOX MIGHT BE. HIS PRESENCE DEPENDS ON OBEDIENCE AND SPECIFICALLY NOW ON THE OBEDIENCE OF SOLOMON. WHILE THESE VERSES STOP SHORT OF CRITICIZING THE BUILDING OF THE TEMPLE, THEY DO PUT THE PROJECT IN PERSPECTIVE BY STRESSING THE LARGER ISSUE OF OBEDIENCE. 7:1–12 SOLOMON’S PALACE. THE ACCOUNT OF THE TEMPLE AND ITS FURNISHINGS IS DIVIDED INTO TWO PARTS OF ALMOST EQUAL LENGTH BY THIS SHORT ACCOUNT OF SOLOMON’S PALACE BUILDINGS. AS THE TEMPLE WAS BUILT FIRST AND THEN THE PALACE (6:37–7:1; 9:10), WE MIGHT LOGICALLY EXPECT THE ACCOUNT OF THE PALACE TO FOLLOW THE DEDICATION OF THE TEMPLE IN CH. 8. BUT WE WILL SEE THAT THE WRITER HAD A PARTICULAR REASON FOR PLACING IT HERE. IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE NOTE THAT THE TEMPLE TOOK SEVEN YEARS TO BUILD (6:38) COMES THE INFORMATION THAT SOLOMON SPENT THIRTEEN YEARS BUILDING HIS PALACE (LIT. ‘HIS HOUSE’). THE HEBREW FOR ‘HIS HOUSE’ OCCURS TWICE IN 7:1, HIGHLIGHTING THE SHIFT AWAY FROM ‘THE HOUSE [TEMPLE] OF THE LORD’ (6:37). IS THERE IMPLICIT CRITICISM HERE OF THE FACT THAT SOLOMON SPENT ALMOST TWICE AS LONG ON HIS OWN HOUSE AS HE DID, BUILDING THE HOUSE OF GOD? QUITE POSSIBLY, BUT THE MAIN PURPOSE OF THIS PASSAGE SEEMS TO BE RATHER DIFFERENT. DAVID HAD ALREADY HAD A RESIDENCE BUILT IN JERUSALEM WITH MATERIALS SUPPLIED BY HIRAM OF TYRE (2 SA. 5:11), BUT SOLOMON REQUIRED SOMETHING ON A MUCH GRANDER SCALE. FIVE DISTINCT BUILDINGS ARE MENTIONED IN VS 2–8: THE PALACE OF THE FOREST OF LEBANON, ‘THE HALL OF PILLARS’ (A COLONNADE), THE THRONE HALL (ALSO KNOWN AS THE HALL OF JUSTICE, FOR THE KING’S THRONE WAS ALSO HIS JUDGMENT SEAT, STRESSING THAT IT WAS AS RULER THAT HE DISPENSED JUSTICE), SOLOMON’S PRIVATE RESIDENCE AND THE PRIVATE RESIDENCE OF THE PHARAOH’S DAUGHTER. (SINCE SHE IS THE ONLY ONE OF SOLOMON’S WIVES WHOSE RESIDENCE FORMED PART OF THIS SUITE OF BUILDINGS, THE IMPLICATION IS THAT SHE WAS HIS CHIEF WIFE. THIS IS ALSO SUGGESTED BY THE FACT THAT SHE IS MENTIONED SO OFTEN: 3:1, 9:16, 24; 11:1.) WE ARE NOT TOLD HOW THESE VARIOUS BUILDINGS RELATED TO EACH OTHER. THEY PRESUMABLY JOINED TO FORM A SINGLE COMPLEX, SINCE THEY ARE REFERRED TO COLLECTIVELY AS ‘HIS HOUSE’ IN V 1. THE PALACE COMPLEX WAS EVIDENTLY ADJACENT TO THE TEMPLE WITH A PASSAGE CONNECTING THE TWO (CF. 2 KI. 16:18). WE ARE NOT GIVEN THE DIMENSIONS OF ALL THESE BUILDINGS, BUT IT IS CLEAR THAT THE PALACE OF THE FOREST OF LEBANON ALONE WAS LARGER THAN THE TEMPLE (2). THE WHOLE PALACE COMPLEX MUST, THEREFORE, HAVE DWARFED THE TEMPLE SPECTACULARLY. IN JESUS’ DAY THE MASSIVE TEMPLE BUILT BY HEROD THE GREAT DOMINATED THE WHOLE OF JERUSALEM, BUT IN PRE-EXILIC TIMES THE ROYAL PALACE MUST HAVE BEEN THE CITY’S MOST IMPOSING BUILDING. AND THIS IS PROBABLY WHY THE WRITER DESCRIBES IT WHERE HE DOES. PHYSICALLY THE PALACE DWARFED THE TEMPLE, BUT IN HIS ACCOUNT, HE DWARFS THE DESCRIPTION OF THE PALACE BY SURROUNDING IT WITH LENGTHIER DESCRIPTIONS OF THE TEMPLE AND ITS FURNISHINGS. IN THE WRITER’S VIEW THIS RESTORES THE CORRECT PERSPECTIVE; FOR THE TEMPLE WAS THE TRUE HEART OF THE CITY AND OF THE NATION. 7:13–47 THE TEMPLE FURNISHINGS: THE WORK OF HIRAM, CRAFTSMAN IN BRONZE. A NAMESAKE OF THE KING OF TYRE, THE SON OF A PHOENICIAN FATHER AND AN ISRAELITE MOTHER, WAS BROUGHT FROM TYRE TO JERUSALEM TO MANUFACTURE THE BRONZE FURNISHINGS FOR THE TEMPLE. HIS OUTSTANDING ABILITY IS MENTIONED AT THE OUTSET AND IS AMPLY ILLUSTRATED BY THE DESCRIPTIONS OF THE OBJECTS WHICH HE MADE. AS IN THE DESCRIPTION OF THE TEMPLE ITSELF, THERE ARE SOME DETAILS WHICH ARE DIFFICULT TO FOLLOW. THE ACCOUNT OF THE WORK OF HIRAM FOR THE TEMPLE PARALLELS TO SOME EXTENT THAT OF THE WORK OF BEZALEL FOR THE TABERNACLE (EX. 36–38), AND WE ARE DOUBTLESS INTENDED TO NOTE THE BROADER PARALLEL BETWEEN THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE TABERNACLE AND THE BUILDING OF THE TEMPLE. HOWEVER, WHILE THE TABERNACLE AND ITS EQUIPMENT WERE COMMANDED IN DETAIL BY GOD (EX. 25–27, ESPECIALLY 25:9), NO SUCH CLAIM IS MADE HERE FOR THE TEMPLE OR ITS FURNISHINGS. THE PURPOSE OF THE TWO HUGE PILLARS (ABOUT 27 FT/8 M HIGH) IS NOT CLEAR. THEY DID NOT SUPPORT ANYTHING BUT WERE FREESTANDING, LOCATED IN FRONT OF THE TEMPLE PORTICO. THEY WERE TOPPED WITH ELABORATELY DECORATED, LILY-SHAPED CAPITALS. THEIR NAMES, JAKIN AND BOAZ, ARE SOMETHING OF A PUZZLE, BUT THE MOST LIKELY THEORY IS THAT THESE WERE THE OPENING WORDS OF TWO INSCRIPTIONS. ON THE BASIS OF THE VARIOUS EXPRESSIONS FOUND IN THE PSALMS IT HAS BEEN SUGGESTED THAT THE INSCRIPTIONS MAY HAVE READ ROUGHLY AS FOLLOWS: ‘STEPHEN YAHWEH WILL ESTABLISH [JAKIN] THY THRONE FOR EVER’, AND ‘IN THE STRENGTH [BOAZ] OF STEPHEN YAHWEH SHALL THE KING REJOICE.’ IF THIS IS CORRECT, THE PILLARS MAY HAVE COMMEMORATED GOD’S PROMISES CONCERNING THE DAVIDIC DYNASTY. THERE ARE HINTS LATER IN KINGS THAT ON TAKING THE THRONE A KING STOOD BY ONE OF THESE PILLARS TO PLEDGE HIMSELF TO KEEP GOD’S COVENANT LAWS (2 KI. 11:14; 23:3). HIRAM’S MOST IMPRESSIVE TECHNOLOGICAL ACHIEVEMENT WAS PERHAPS THE HUGE BRONZE BASIN SOME 15 FT (4.5 M) IN DIAMETER KNOWN AS THE SEA. IT WAS SUPPORTED ON TWELVE BRONZE BULLS ARRANGED IN FOUR GROUPS OF THREE, EACH GROUP FACING ONE OF THE CARDINAL POINTS. ACCORDING TO 2 CH. 4:6, ITS PURPOSE WAS TO HOLD WATER FOR RITUAL WASHING BY THE PRIESTS, BUT ITS SIZE AND DESIGN, AS WELL AS ITS NAME, SUGGEST IT WAS SYMBOLIC AS WELL AS FUNCTIONAL. AS GOD’S POWER AT CREATION HAD BEEN DISPLAYED BY HIS CONTAINMENT OF THE SEA, THE SYMBOL OF CHAOS (SEE THE VIVID WORD-PICTURE IN JB. 38:8–11), SO THIS GIANT BOWL SIGNIFIED HIS UPHOLDING OF THE CREATED ORDER AND HIS POWER OVER THE FORCES OF CHAOS WHICH THREATEN IT. HIRAM ALSO MADE TEN MOVABLE STANDS, DECORATED ON THE SIDES WITH LIONS, BULLS AND CHERUBIM, AND TEN REMOVABLE BASINS, WHICH STOOD ON THEM. THESE WERE ALSO FOR RITUAL ABLUTIONS, AND THE FACT THAT THEIR LOCATIONS ARE MENTIONED ALONG WITH THAT OF THE SEA (39) SUGGESTS THEY WERE USED IN CONNECTION WITH IT. VS 40–45 PROVIDE A SUMMARY OF HIRAM’S WORK, ADDING SOME LESSER ITEMS WHICH DO NOT DESERVE DETAILED DESCRIPTIONS (POTS, SHOVELS AND SPRINKLING BOWLS). V 46 GIVES A TANTALIZING HINT AT THE METHOD USED BY HIRAM TO CAST HIS PRODUCTS. THE SECTION CLOSES WITH RENEWED EMPHASIS ON THE GREATNESS OF HIS ACHIEVEMENT: THE WEIGHT OF ALL THIS BRONZE WORK WAS NEVER DETERMINED BECAUSE THERE WAS SO MUCH OF IT! 7:48–51 THE TEMPLE FURNISHINGS: ITEMS OF GOLD. THE LIST OF GOLD ITEMS WHICH SOLOMON HAD MADE FOR THE TEMPLE (48–50) IS VERY LIKE THE SUMMARY OF HIRAM’S WORK IN VS 40–45. IT IS AS THOUGH WE HAVE HERE A SIMILAR SUMMARY WITHOUT A DETAILED ACCOUNT TO PRECEDE IT. THE CRAFTSMAN IS NOT NAMED, UNLESS THE WRITER INTENDS US TO UNDERSTAND THAT SOLOMON MADE THESE ITEMS WITH HIS OWN HANDS (WHICH SEEMS UNLIKELY). SOLOMON ALSO CONTRIBUTED TO THE TEMPLE QUANTITIES OF SILVER AND GOLD WHICH HAD EARLIER BEEN DEDICATED TO IT BY DAVID. THESE WERE STORED IN THE TEMPLE TREASURIES (PERHAPS IN THE OUTER ROOMS), THOUGH THEIR INTENDED PURPOSE IS NOT CLEAR. IN JERUSALEM’S SUBSEQUENT HISTORY THESE TREASURIES WERE OFTEN THE SOURCE OF TRIBUTE FOR FOREIGN KINGS.**

**8:1–66 THE DEDICATION OF THE TEMPLE OF THE LORD**

**THIS LONG CHAPTER DIVIDES NATURALLY INTO SEVEN SECTIONS. AS IN CH. 6, THERE IS A MIRROR-IMAGE STRUCTURE, WHICH IN THIS CASE SPOTLIGHTS SOLOMON’S PRAYER AS THE HEART OF THE ACCOUNT: A1 INTRODUCTION AND GATHERING OF THE ASSEMBLY (1–2); B1 INSTALLATION OF THE ARK, WITH SACRIFICES (3–13); C1 SOLOMON ADDRESSES THE ASSEMBLY (14–21); D SOLOMON’S PRAYER (22–53); C2 SOLOMON ADDRESSES THE ASSEMBLY (54–61); B2 FURTHER SACRIFICES (62–64); A2 SUMMARY AND DISSOLUTION OF THE ASSEMBLY (65–66). 8:1–2 INTRODUCTION AND GATHERING OF THE ASSEMBLY. A HUGE ASSEMBLY OF PEOPLE, REPRESENTATIVE OF ALL ISRAEL, WAS ARRANGED FOR THE DEDICATION OF THE TEMPLE, WHICH BEGAN WITH THE INSTALLATION OF THE ARK OF THE COVENANT IN THE INNER SANCTUARY. THE SETTING WAS A FEAST IN THE SEVENTH MONTH, PRESUMABLY THE FEAST OF BOOTHS OR TABERNACLES WHICH, LIKE THE FEAST DESCRIBED HERE, LASTED SEVEN DAYS (65; CF. LV. 23:33–43). 8:3–13 THE INSTALLATION OF THE ARK OF THE COVENANT. THE ARK WAS BROUGHT UP FROM THE OLD QUARTER OF JERUSALEM, WHICH WAS KNOWN AS THE CITY OF DAVID (1) TO DISTINGUISH IT FROM THE NEW ROYAL PRECINCT AND TEMPLE AREA BUILT BY SOLOMON TO THE NORTH. THE ARK HAD BEEN HOUSED THERE ‘INSIDE THE TENT THAT DAVID HAD PITCHED FOR IT’ (2 SA. 6:17), AN EXPRESSION WHICH SUGGESTS THIS TENT WAS NOT THE SAME AS ‘THE TENT OF MEETING’, THE ANCIENT RELIC OF ISRAEL’S WILDERNESS PERIOD WHICH WAS BROUGHT TO THE TEMPLE WITH THE ARK. THE ACCOUNT OF THE TRANSFER OF THE ARK TO THE TEMPLE, ACCOMPANIED BY SACRIFICES, IS REMINISCENT OF THE ACCOUNT OF ITS ORIGINAL TRANSFER TO JERUSALEM BY DAVID (2 SA. 6:12–19). BUT THIS TIME EVERYTHING WAS ON A GRANDER SCALE; THE ARK’S RESTING PLACE WAS NOT TO BE A TENT BUT THE MAGNIFICENT TEMPLE, AND THE SACRIFICES CONSISTED OF SHEEP AND OXEN BEYOND NUMBERING (5). THE ARK WAS EVENTUALLY INSTALLED IN THE INNER SANCTUARY. ACCORDING TO OUR WRITER, IT CONTAINED ONLY THE TWO STONE TABLETS BEARING THE TEN COMMANDMENTS, BUT OTHER RELICS WERE KEPT THERE (PERHAPS AT AN EARLIER PERIOD) ACCORDING TO HEB. 9:4 (CF. EX. 16:32–33; NU. 17:8–10). HOWEVER, THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ARK DID NOT LIE IN WHAT IT CONTAINED, BUT IN THE FACT THAT IT SIGNIFIED THE PRESENCE OF GOD, OR MORE PRECISELY THE PRESENCE OF GOD’S GLORY, WITH HIS PEOPLE. HENCE ITS LOSS TO THE PHILISTINES IN THE TIME OF SAMUEL WAS LAMENTED WITH THE WORDS: ‘THE GLORY HAS DEPARTED FROM ISRAEL’ (1 SA. 4:21–22), AND THE PSALMIST RECORDS THE SAME EVENT BY SAYING THAT GOD ‘DELIVERED … HIS GLORY TO THE HAND OF THE FOE’ (PS. 78:61; RSV). THE CONNECTION BETWEEN THE ARK AND THE PRESENCE OF GOD’S GLORY IS ALSO EVIDENT IN THE PRESENT PASSAGE. AS THE PRIESTS WHO HAD CARRIED THE ARK AND PUT IT IN PLACE WITHDREW, THE GLORY OF THE LORD, VISIBLY MANIFESTED AS A CLOUD, FILLED THE BUILDING SO THAT THE PRIESTS COULD NOT PERFORM THEIR SERVICE BECAUSE OF THE CLOUD (10–11). THIS ECHOES THE FIRST SETTING UP OF THE TABERNACLE (CONTAINING THE ARK) BY MOSES: ‘THEN THE CLOUD COVERED THE TENT OF MEETING, AND THE GLORY OF THE LORD FILLED THE TABERNACLE. MOSES COULD NOT ENTER THE TENT OF MEETING …’ (EX. 40:34–35). IN BOTH CASES, THE PHENOMENON INDICATED GOD’S ACCEPTANCE AND APPROVAL OF WHAT HAD BEEN DONE; IT PROVIDED A VISIBLE SIGN THAT GOD’S GLORY HAD TAKEN UP RESIDENCE. BUT THE SOVEREIGN GOD WAS NOT BOUND TO RESIDE IN THE TEMPLE. SHORTLY BEFORE THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM AND THE TEMPLE, THE PROPHET EZEKIEL SAW IN A VISION ‘THE GLORY OF THE LORD’ LEAVING JERUSALEM BECAUSE OF THE GROSS INIQUITY OF ITS PEOPLE (EZK. 11:23); THIS WAS LATER COMPLEMENTED BY A FURTHER VISION OF GOD’S GLORY RETURNING TO ENTER A FUTURE RESTORED TEMPLE (EZK. 43:4). THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CHERUBIM WITH OUTSTRETCHED WINGS CAN NOW BE MORE FULLY APPRECIATED. A SMALLER VERSION OF THESE CHERUBIM HAD BEEN FITTED TO THE TOP OF THE ARK WHEN IT WAS FIRST MADE, AND THE SPACE BETWEEN THEM WAS THE PLACE WHERE GOD WAS PRESENT WHEN HE SPOKE WITH MOSES (EX. 25:18–22). SOLOMON’S CHERUBIM SEEM TO HAVE SUPERSEDED THE ORIGINALS, INDICATING THE PLACE WHERE GOD’S ‘GLORY’ WOULD RESIDE. HEZEKIAH LATER SPOKE OF GOD ‘ENTHRONED BETWEEN THE CHERUBIM’ (2 KI. 19:15). IN RESPONSE TO THE APPEARANCE OF THE CLOUD, SOLOMON PRAYED A BRIEF DEDICATORY PRAYER IN POETIC FORM. THE FIRST LINE OF THIS IN THE RSV (‘THE LORD HAS SET THE SUN IN THE HEAVENS’) IS TAKEN FROM THE LONGER GREEK VERSION AND IS NOT IN THE HEBREW; THE NIV OMITS IT. IF WE TREAT IT AS ORIGINAL, IT MAY BE SAYING TWO THINGS. FIRST, IT CAN BE SEEN TO PROCLAIM GOD AS CREATOR OF THE SUN AND THEREFORE SUPERIOR TO IT (AN IMPORTANT AFFIRMATION IN VIEW OF THE FACT THAT THE SUN ITSELF WAS WORSHIPPED BY MANY ANCIENT SOCIETIES). SECONDLY, IT SUPPLIES A CONTRAST WITH THE NEXT LINE, WHICH THUS STATES THAT ALTHOUGH GOD IS THE CREATOR OF LIGHT, HE PREFERS TO CONCEAL HIMSELF IN THE DARKNESS AND OBSCURITY OF A CLOUD. THE LINK BETWEEN THIS AND V 13 IS UNFORTUNATELY NOT CLEAR. SOLOMON MAY HAVE BEEN EXPRESSING A WISH THAT, IN SPITE OF HIS PREFERENCE FOR OBSCURITY, GOD WOULD RESIDE IN HIS MAGNIFICENT TEMPLE … FOR EVER; OR HE MAY HAVE BEEN SAYING THAT THE TEMPLE IS ENTIRELY APPROPRIATE FOR A GOD WHO PREFERS TO REMAIN OUT OF VIEW. BUT NEITHER INTERPRETATION FITS HAPPILY WITH THE VIEW OF THE TEMPLE FOUND IN THE LONGER PRAYER WHICH FOLLOWS AND WE MUST SIMPLY ADMIT THAT THE MEANING IS UNCERTAIN. 8:14–21 SOLOMON ADDRESSES THE ASSEMBLY. SOLOMON TURNED FROM FACING THE TEMPLE TO FACE THE HUGE CROWD. THE BLESSING HE DELIVERED (14) IS PROBABLY TO BE UNDERSTOOD AS THE WHOLE OF WHAT IS REPORTED VS 15–21. IN FACT, HE BEGAN WITH THE WORDS ‘BLESSED BE STEPHEN YAHWEH …’, A WAY OF EXPRESSING PRAISE FOR WHAT GOD HAD DONE; NAMELY, HE HAD ‘FULFILLED WITH HIS HAND WHAT HE SPOKE WITH HIS MOUTH’ (A MORE OR LESS LITERAL RENDERING OF THE EXPRESSION IN V 15). IN OTHER WORDS, GOD HAD SHOWN HIS WORD TO BE UTTERLY TRUSTWORTHY. THE REST OF THE SPEECH EXPANDS ON THIS, SUMMARIZING GOD’S WORDS TO DAVID THROUGH NATHAN CONCERNING A SON WHO WOULD SUCCEED HIM ON THE THRONE AND WHO WOULD BUILD THE TEMPLE (2 SA. 7:12–13). SOLOMON DECLARED THAT THE MOMENT OF FULFILMENT HAD NOW ARRIVED (20). ALTHOUGH HE WAS NOT RETICENT ABOUT HIS OWN ACHIEVEMENT (‘I HAVE SUCCEEDED DAVID … I SIT ON THE THRONE … I HAVE BUILT THE TEMPLE … I HAVE PROVIDED A PLACE …’), SOLOMON ACKNOWLEDGED THAT IT WAS ULTIMATELY GOD’S DOING, FOR IT HAD ALL COME ABOUT AS STEPHEN YAHWEH HAD PROMISED. HUMAN EFFORT AND DIVINE SOVEREIGNTY ARE HERE SUBTLY INTERWOVEN. A NEW CONCEPT OF THE TEMPLE IS INTRODUCED IN THIS SPEECH. AS WELL AS BEING A PLACE FOR THE ARK (21) IT IS ‘A HOUSE FOR THE NAME OF STEPHEN YAHWEH’ (17, 20; LITERAL RENDERING, WITH RELATED EXPRESSIONS IN VS 16, 18–19). THIS BECOMES AN IMPORTANT IDEA IN THE PRAYER WHICH FOLLOWS. 8:22–53 SOLOMON’S PRAYER. SOLOMON SIGNIFIED THE BEGINNING OF A NEW PHASE IN THE PROCEEDINGS BY TAKING UP ANOTHER POSITION, STANDING BEFORE THE ALTAR AND SPREADING HIS HANDS TOWARDS THE SKY. THE INTRODUCTION TO HIS PRAYER (22–26) BEGINS BY ECHOING DT. 7:9, BUT HE SPEAKS OF GOD’S COVENANT FAITHFULNESS SPECIFICALLY IN RELATION TO DAVID. TAKING UP GOD’S PROMISE THAT DAVID’S DYNASTY WOULD NEVER END, HE PRAYS THAT THIS TOO WOULD RECEIVE FULFILMENT. AT THE SAME TIME, HE ACKNOWLEDGES THAT THE PROMISE IS CONDITIONAL ON THE CONDUCT OF DAVID’S DESCENDANTS. BUT THE TEMPLE IS THE REAL SUBJECT OF THE PRAYER, AND SOLOMON INTRODUCES THAT IN VS 27–30. HE RECOGNIZES THE ABSURDITY OF SUPPOSING THAT STEPHEN YAHWEH COULD DWELL ON EARTH (27); FOR EVEN THE MOST-HIGHEST REACHES OF THE HEAVENS ARE NOT SUFFICIENTLY VAST TO CONTAIN HIM. SOLOMON IS CERTAINLY UNDER NO ILLUSION THAT STEPHEN YAHWEH COULD SOMEHOW BE CONTAINED IN THE TEMPLE HE HAS BUILT. HIS PRAYER IS, THEREFORE, NOT THAT GOD WILL TAKE UP RESIDENCE IN THE TEMPLE, BUT RATHER THAT HIS ATTENTION WILL BE FOCUSED ON IT TO HEAR THE PRAYERS DIRECTED TOWARDS IT. GOD WILL STILL BE IN ‘HEAVEN, YOUR DWELLING-PLACE’ (30), BUT THE SUPPLICATIONS OF KING AND PEOPLE WILL BE RECEIVED IN THE TEMPLE. IN OTHER WORDS, SOLOMON PRAYS THAT THE TEMPLE MIGHT BE THE MEETING-PLACE FOR HUMAN NEED AND DIVINE MERCY. ALL THIS SEEMS TO BE CONTAINED IN THE NOTION OF GOD’S NAME BEING IN THE TEMPLE, A THEME WHICH RECURS BRIEFLY IN V 29. THE CONCEPT OF GOD’S NAME BEING IN A PLACE (DT. 12:5 ETC.) IS, THEREFORE, A WAY OF EXPRESSING THAT GOD IS PRESENT IN A SPECIAL SENSE, BUT WITHOUT SUGGESTING A CRUDE PICTURE OF HIS LIMITATION OR CONTAINMENT. IT IS CLOSELY RELATED TO THE CONCEPT OF GOD’S ‘GLORY’, WHICH WE FOUND ASSOCIATED WITH THE ARK. SOME OF THE IDEAS IN THIS PASSAGE FIND THEIR NT COUNTERPARTS IN THE PERSON OF JESUS, IN WHOM GOD DID INDEED DWELL ON EARTH (JN. 1:14), IN WHOM THE ‘NAME’ OF GOD WAS MADE KNOWN (JN. 17:6, 26), AND WHO PROCLAIMED HIMSELF TO BE THE TRUE AND ULTIMATE ‘TEMPLE’ (JN. 2:19–22). IN HIM, DIVINE MERCY MET HUMAN NEED IN THE PROFOUNDEST SENSE. THE NEXT SECTION OF THE PRAYER (31–51) CONSISTS OF SEVEN PETITIONS WHICH ENVISAGE PARTICULAR CIRCUMSTANCES IN THE LIFE OF INDIVIDUALS OR THE NATION. THESE CONCERN: OATHS SWORN BEFORE THE ALTAR (31–32); DEFEAT BY AN ENEMY (33–34); DROUGHT (35–36); FAMINE, PESTILENCE ETC. (37–40); THE NEEDS OF A FOREIGNER IN THE LAND (41–43); GOING OUT TO BATTLE (44–45); AND CAPTIVITY (46–51). THE FIRST AND FIFTH EXAMPLES CONCERN INDIVIDUALS, WHILE THE REST CONCERN THE NATION. THE SECOND, THIRD, FOURTH AND SEVENTH ALL INVOLVE THE NEED FOR FORGIVENESS AND RESTORATION. WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF GIVING SEVEN EXAMPLES OF CIRCUMSTANCES IN WHICH PEOPLE MIGHT PRAY TOWARDS THE TEMPLE? WE MUST NOTE THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE NUMBER SEVEN THROUGHOUT THE OT; IT SEEMS TO SIGNIFY COMPLETENESS, FULFILMENT AND PERFECTION. (THE NUMBER SEVEN HAS AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN THE PRESENT CHAPTER: THE DEDICATION OF THE TEMPLE, WHICH TOOK SEVEN YEARS TO BUILD, TOOK PLACE IN THE SEVENTH MONTH DURING A FEAST LASTING SEVEN DAYS.) PROBABLY, THEN, THESE SEVEN EXAMPLES ARE MEANT TO REPRESENT ALL POSSIBLE SITUATIONS WHICH COULD CALL FORTH THE PRAYERS OF INDIVIDUALS AND THE NATION. ALL CONTINGENCIES ARE COVERED. THE FIRST READERS OF KINGS WOULD NOT HAVE FAILED TO NOTICE THAT THE LONGEST AND FINAL PETITION CONCERNED THEIR OWN SITUATION: CAPTIVITY IN A FOREIGN LAND (46–51). TO THEM IT URGED REPENTANCE AND HELD OUT THE HOPE OF GOD’S FORGIVENESS AND THE COMPASSION OF THEIR CAPTORS. IT DID NOT, HOWEVER, MAKE ANY CLEAR PROMISE OF RETURN AND RESTORATION, NOR DID IT MENTION THE PRESERVATION OF DAVID’S DYNASTY. THE ONE MEAGRE HINT THAT RETURN MIGHT EVENTUALLY COME ABOUT IS CONTAINED IN THE REMINDER THAT GOD HAD BROUGHT THEM OUT OF EGYPT, OUT OF THAT IRON-SMELTING FURNACE (51). WHILE THIS WAS MENTIONED PRIMARILY AS A GROUND FOR GOD’S FORGIVENESS, IT WOULD PERHAPS HAVE GIVEN THE EXILES A GLIMMER OF HOPE THAT GOD WOULD ONE DAY ACT IN A SIMILAR WAY AGAIN. THIS FINAL PETITION BEGINS WITH AN ACKNOWLEDGMENT THAT THERE IS NO-ONE WHO DOES NOT SIN (46). SINCE THIS MUST INCLUDE SOLOMON AND HIS DESCENDANTS, THE PHRASE IS PREGNANT WITH MEANING: THE CAPTIVITY WHICH IS ENVISAGED SEEMS VIRTUALLY INEVITABLE, FOR WHAT HOPE IS THERE THAT A DYNASTY OF FALLIBLE KINGS WOULD LIVE AS GOD REQUIRES? SOLOMON ENDED HIS PRAYER WITH A MORE GENERAL PLEA THAT GOD WOULD ALWAYS HEAR THE PETITIONS OF KING AND PEOPLE ALIKE. THE REASON FOR HIS CONFIDENCE IN ASKING SUCH A THING IS THEN STATED: GOD HAD CALLED THEM OUT FROM AMONG THE NATIONS TO BE HIS SPECIAL PEOPLE. GOD’S ACTIONS IN THE PAST, PARTICULARLY THOSE ACTIONS WHICH CLEARLY EXPRESSED HIS PURPOSES, ARE HIS PEOPLE’S GROUND FOR CONFIDENCE IN HIS MERCY IN THE PRESENT AND THE FUTURE. 8:54–61 SOLOMON ADDRESSES THE ASSEMBLY AGAIN. SOLOMON THEN TURNED BACK TO THE PEOPLE TO ‘BLESS’ THEM ONCE AGAIN. HE REMINDED THEM THAT GOD HAD FULFILLED EVERY ONE OF THE PROMISES HE HAD MADE TO MOSES AND PRAYED THAT GOD WOULD CONTINUE TO BE CLOSE TO HIS PEOPLE TO MAINTAIN THEIR CAUSE. BUT SOLOMON’S DESIRE WAS NOT (OR AT LEAST NOT SOLELY) FOR THE WELFARE OF THE PEOPLE; HE WAS INSPIRED BY AN EVEN HIGHER MOTIVE—A LONGING TO SEE GOD GLORIFIED IN THE WORLD: SO THAT ALL THE PEOPLES OF THE EARTH MAY KNOW THAT THE LORD IS GOD AND THAT THERE IS NO OTHER (60). THIS SENTIMENT IS ALSO EXPRESSED IN THE PETITION FOR THE FOREIGNER WHO HEARS OF GOD’S GREATNESS AND PRAYS TOWARDS THE TEMPLE (41–43). FINALLY, THE PEOPLE WERE URGED TO DO THEIR PART BY BEING WHOLLY TRUE TO GOD’S WAYS. IT IS BY THE WILLING OBEDIENCE OF GOD’S PEOPLE THAT THE WORLD WILL LEARN OF GOD’S CHARACTER. 8:62–64 FURTHER SACRIFICES. AS BEFITTED A MOMENTOUS OCCASION, STUPENDOUS QUANTITIES OF ANIMAL SACRIFICES WERE OFFERED (APPARENTLY ALL IN ONE DAY!). THIS TOOK PLACE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE COURTYARD THAT STOOD IN FRONT OF THE TEMPLE (THE SAME AS ‘THE INNER COURTYARD’ MENTIONED IN 6:36?) BECAUSE IT WAS THE ONLY PLACE WHERE THERE WAS ENOUGH ROOM. IT IS IMPLIED THAT SOLOMON TOOK ON A PRIESTLY ROLE HERE, CONSECRATING THE COURT AND OFFERING THE SACRIFICES, JUST AS DAVID HAD OFFERED SACRIFICES WHEN BRINGING THE ARK TO JERUSALEM (2 SA. 6:17–18). 8:65–66 SUMMARY AND THE END OF THE FEAST. ALL ISRAEL HAD BEEN REPRESENTED BY THE ASSEMBLY; AND BY SKETCHING THE NORTHERN AND SOUTHERN LIMITS OF SOLOMON’S REALM THE WRITER TAKES THE OPPORTUNITY ONCE AGAIN TO GLORIFY HIS REIGN. ON THE EIGHTH DAY THE PEOPLE RETURNED TO THEIR HOMES REJOICING.**

**9:1–14 CONCLUSION TO THE BUILDING OF THE TEMPLE OF THE LORD**

**9:1–9 GOD RESPONDS TO SOLOMON’S PRAYER. ALTHOUGH THIS WORD FROM GOD IS REPORTED IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE DEDICATION OF THE TEMPLE AND IS A REPLY TO SOLOMON’S PRAYER ON THAT OCCASION, THE WRITER DATES IT AFTER SOLOMON HAD BUILT NOT ONLY THE TEMPLE BUT THE PALACE AS WELL, WHICH TOOK A FURTHER THIRTEEN YEARS (9:10). WHEREAS IN 6:11 WE ARE TOLD SIMPLY THAT ‘THE WORD OF THE LORD CAME TO SOLOMON’ (PERHAPS THROUGH A PROPHET), HERE GOD APPEARED TO HIM ONCE AGAIN IN A DREAM-VISION, AS AT GIBEON. THE REFERENCE TO GIBEON REMINDS US THAT THE DAYS OF THE HIGH PLACES ARE NOW OVER—OR SHOULD BE! GOD TELLS SOLOMON THAT HE HAS ACCEPTED HIS PRAYER AND HAS PUT HIS NAME IN THE TEMPLE FOR EVER; THE MEANING OF THIS IS AGAIN EXPLAINED IN TERMS OF GOD’S ATTENTION BEING FOCUSED ON THE TEMPLE (3). THIS IS FOLLOWED BY A THIRD REFERENCE TO THE CONDITIONAL NATURE OF THE PROMISE TO DAVID. AND IT IS THE MOST SOMBER REFERENCE YET, FOR HERE THE NEGATIVE SIDE IS CLEARLY SPELT OUT. SOLOMON IS TOLD WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF HE AND THE PEOPLE (THE YOU IS PLURAL, AND SEE V 9) TURN ASIDE FROM GOD’S WAYS AND WORSHIP OTHER GODS: THE NATION WILL BE REMOVED FROM THE LAND AND EVEN THE TEMPLE WILL BE CAST OUT OF GOD’S SIGHT (7) AND BECOME A HEAP OF RUINS (8). CLEARLY THE PROMISE THAT GOD’S NAME AND HEART WOULD BE THERE FOR EVER WAS SUBJECT TO THE SAME CONDITIONS AS THE PROMISE OF AN EVERLASTING DYNASTY! BY EMPHASIZING THE PERILS OF DISOBEDIENCE, THIS SOLEMN WARNING CASTS A SHADOW OVER THE REST OF THE ACCOUNT OF SOLOMON’S REIGN. 9:10–14 FURTHER DEALINGS WITH HIRAM. JUST AS THE ACCOUNT OF THE BUILDING OF THE TEMPLE BEGINS WITH SOLOMON’S RELATIONS WITH HIRAM OF TYRE (CH. 5), SO IT IS ROUNDED OFF WITH A FURTHER NOTE OF THEIR DEALINGS. THIS TIME, HOWEVER, THE TONE IS NOT SO POSITIVE, AND THIS IS NOT MERELY BECAUSE IT RECORDS A SOURING OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TWO KINGS. SOLOMON’S TRANSFER OF TWENTY CITIES IN GALILEE TO HIRAM (IN EXCHANGE FOR A VAST QUANTITY OF GOLD, 14) IMPLIES THAT SOLOMON’S DUES COULD NO LONGER BE RAISED BY TAXATION. HAD HIS BUILDING PROJECTS BECOME TOO LAVISH? FURTHERMORE, THE CITIES GIVEN TO HIRAM DID NOT MEET WITH HIS APPROVAL AND HE CALLED THE DISTRICT ‘THE LAND OF GOOD-FOR-NOTHING’ (NIV MG.). THE IMPLICATION IS THAT THE IMMENSE PROSPERITY ENJOYED IN JERUSALEM DID NOT EXTEND TO THE NORTHERN PARTS OF THE KINGDOM.**

**THE NET WORTH OF THE LORD’S HOUSE IN FAITHFULNESS TO THE LORD**

**IN KING SOLOMON’S KINGDOM, HE BUILT THE HOUSE OF THE FATHER STEPHEN CALLED ZION IN THE KINGDOM OF LORDSHIP THAT WILL NEVER BE DESTROYED IN 7 YEARS THAT TOOK $576,000,000,000.00 BILLION IN 100,000 GOLD TALENTS & $384,000,000,000.00 BILLION IN 1 MILLION SILVER TALENTS IN TITHING BY 10% & 100% WHICH CONCERNS $960,000,000,000,000.00 TRILLION WHICH THE FATHER STEPHEN’S BODY IS 202,000,000,000,000,000,000 YEARS OLD IN GOLD IN LEVITICUS 27:3; 1ST CHRONICLES 22:14 & ACTS 7:47-50. WHICH WITH PRECIOUS STONES AND OTHER MATERIALS THE TITHE WOULD CONCERN 1 QUADRILLION DOLLARS [15 ZERO’S BEHIND IT] FOR 115 YEARS WITH A FRUITFUL CALL [15 YEARS + 10 YEARS IN 2ND CORINTHIANS 12:1-6 & PSALMS 90:10] THAT HAPPENED IN 930BC WHICH IS 2,945 YEARS AGO. THIS WOULD THEN CONCERN THE FATHER STEPHEN’S ADDRESS CALLED THE UNIVERSAL ZION IN THE ETERNAL KINGDOM OF LORDSHIP IN ACTS 15:16-17. THIS KINGDOM OF LORDSHIP WHICH IS KNOWN AS THE FATHER STEPHEN’S ZION ON SUNDAY PENTECOST THAT HOUSES ONLY SAINTLY CHRISTIAN LORDS & SAINTLY CHRISTIAN LADIES WILL NEVER BE DESTROYED IN DANIEL 7:18. ALL OTHER KINGDOMS, EVEN THE LORDSHIP OF THE LAW WILL COME TO AN END & BE IN DESOLATION IN THE ROCK AUTHORITIES TO THE COUNTY AUTHORITIES IN ACTS 9:3-6. THE STATE AUTHORITIES TO GOVERNMENTAL AUTHORITIES IS IN ACTS 22:6-11. THE NATIONAL AUTHORITIES TO THE KINGDOM AUTHORITIES IS IN ACTS 26:13-18.**

**9:15–11:43 GREATNESS AND FOLLY**

**9:15–28 MISCELLANEOUS PROJECTS. VARIOUS BUILDING PROJECTS (ADMINISTRATIVE CENTERS, STORE CITIES AND MILITARY INSTALLATIONS) THROUGHOUT THE KINGDOM ARE LISTED, ALL BUILT BY FORCED LABOR RAISED FROM AMONG THE FOREIGN POPULATIONS REMAINING WITHIN ISRAEL’S BORDERS (15–23). NAVAL EXPEDITIONS ON THE RED SEA ALSO FEATURED AMONG SOLOMON’S VENTURES, UNDERTAKEN WITH THE HELP OF THE SEAFARING PHOENICIANS. THEIR GOAL, OPHIR, PROBABLY LAY IN THE SOUTHERN PART OF THE ARABIAN PENINSULA OR ON THE EAST COAST OF AFRICA (OR MAY HAVE INCLUDED PARTS OF BOTH). A FURTHER NOTE ON THESE VOYAGES FOR GOLD OCCURS IN 10:11–12, WHERE IT INTERRUPTS THE ACCOUNT OF THE VISIT OF THE QUEEN OF SHEBA. THERE THE FLEET IS CALLED ‘THE FLEET OF HIRAM’, WHICH SUGGESTS SOLOMON LEFT HIS RED SEA TRADE CHIEFLY IN PHOENICIAN HANDS. NEVERTHELESS, THE UNDERTAKING REDOUNDS TO SOLOMON’S GLORY, AS DOES THE QUANTITY OF GOLD, THE PRECIOUS STONES AND THE ALMUG-WOOD (APPARENTLY A TYPE IDEAL FOR CARVING) WHICH THE VOYAGES BROUGHT BACK. THE REFERENCE TO PHARAOH’S CAPTURE OF GEZER (16) STRIKES A DISCORDANT NOTE. IN SPITE OF SOLOMON’S MILITARY MIGHT (4:26), GEZER (JOS. 21:21) HAD REMAINED IN CANAANITE HANDS UNTIL CONQUERED BY THE KING OF EGYPT AND HANDED OVER AS A WEDDING GIFT TO HIS DAUGHTER WHEN SHE MARRIED SOLOMON. 10:1–13 THE VISIT OF THE QUEEN OF SHEBA. IN THIS CHAPTER THE AUTHOR RETURNS TO THE RELATED TOPICS OF SOLOMON’S WISDOM AND WEALTH, BRINGING THEM TO A CLIMAX BEFORE RELATING HIS FALL INTO FOLLY. THE CHAPTER SHOWS HOW FAR NEWS OF SOLOMON’S WISDOM HAD SPREAD, STRESSES THE SUPERLATIVE NATURE OF THAT WISDOM, AND ILLUSTRATES THE WEALTH WHICH FLOWED TO SOLOMON IN THE FORM OF GIFTS AND TRIBUTES FROM FOREIGN RULERS. THE QUEEN OF SHEBA (IN THE SOUTH OF THE ARABIAN PENINSULA) MADE HER LONG JOURNEY TO VISIT SOLOMON BECAUSE SHE HAD HEARD OF HIS FAME AND HIS RELATION TO THE NAME OF THE LORD (1). A MORE STRAIGHTFORWARD TRANSLATION WOULD BE THAT SHE HAD HEARD OF ‘THE FAME OF SOLOMON CONCERNING THE NAME OF THE LORD’. WHILE THIS MIGHT REFER TO THE TEMPLE, IT MORE PROBABLY SUMS UP EVERYTHING WHICH SOLOMON HAD ACHIEVED, FOR HE HAD ACHIEVED IT AS THE RULER APPOINTED AND EMPOWERED BY STEPHEN YAHWEH. THE QUEEN CAME TO SEE THE FAMOUS KING FOR HERSELF AND TO TEST HIM WITH RIDDLES (A BETTER TRANSLATION THAN HARD QUESTIONS). THE CONTENT OF HER QUESTIONS IS NOT REVEALED; THE IMPORTANT THING IS THAT SOLOMON WAS ABLE TO ANSWER THEM ALL AND THERE WAS NOTHING WHICH HE COULD NOT EXPLAIN TO HER SATISFACTION. SHE WAS ALSO VASTLY IMPRESSED BY THE LUXURY OF THE ROYAL COURT AND (LIT.) ‘THE HOUSE THAT HE HAD BUILT’. (DOES THIS MEAN THE ROYAL PALACE, AS THE NIV ASSUMES, OR THE TEMPLE?) AFTER PRAISING HIM IN LAVISH TERMS, SHE BESTOWED ON HIM GIFTS OF GOLD, SPICES AND PRECIOUS STONES, THUS ADDING FURTHER TO SOLOMON’S CONSIDERABLE WEALTH. FOR COMMENT ON V 12 SEE ABOVE ON 9:26–28. 10:14–29 MORE EXAMPLES OF WEALTH AND FAME. SOLOMON’S REVENUES IN GOLD ARE SUMMARIZED, AND WE LEARN THAT THE QUEEN OF SHEBA WAS NOT THE ONLY ARABIAN RULER TO HEAP RICHES ON HIM; HE RECEIVED GOLD FROM ALL THE ARABIAN KINGS (15). SOLOMON’S EMPIRE WAS SO LOCATED THAT HE CONTROLLED THE CHIEF TRADING ROUTES NORTHWARDS FROM THE ARABIAN PENINSULA, AND MUCH OF HIS WEALTH IN GOLD PROBABLY STEMMED FROM THAT FACT. ARABIAN MERCHANTS WERE FORCED EITHER TO TRADE DIRECTLY WITH SOLOMON OR TO PAY FOR ACCESS TO OUTLETS FURTHER NORTH. WE MAY GUESS THAT FAVORABLE TRADING ARRANGEMENTS WERE AMONG THE MANY UNMENTIONED THINGS WHICH THE QUEEN OF SHEBA ASKED SOLOMON FOR (13). TO ILLUSTRATE HOW COMMON GOLD BECAME DURING SOLOMON’S REIGN, THE WRITER TELLS OF THE 500 ORNAMENTAL GOLD SHIELDS WHICH HE MADE, DESCRIBES HIS ELABORATELY CARVED AND DECORATED THRONE OVERLAID WITH GOLD, AND MENTIONS THE HOUSEHOLD OBJECTS OF GOLD IN THE ROYAL PALACE. FURTHERMORE, THE TRADING SHIPS WHICH SOLOMON OPERATED ALONG WITH HIRAM BROUGHT BACK GOLD AND SILVER FROM THEIR THREE-YEAR VOYAGES, AS WELL AS IVORY AND EXOTIC ANIMALS. SOLOMON’S WISDOM AND HIS FAME IN THE ANCIENT WORLD ARE SUMMED UP FOR US IN VS 23–25. HERE WE LEARN THAT THE VISIT OF THE QUEEN OF SHEBA WAS BUT ONE OF MANY MADE BY FOREIGNERS TO SOLOMON’S COURT; THEY CAME TO HEAR HIS WISDOM AND SHOWERED HIM WITH GIFTS (INCLUDING, OF COURSE, MORE SILVER AND GOLD). FINALLY, SOLOMON IMPORTED HORSES AND CHARIOTS, EXPORTING THE LATTER TO THE KINGDOMS TO THE NORTH OF HIS ECONOMIC EMPIRE AND ACCUMULATING BOTH FOR HIS OWN USE (26). ALL THESE SNIPPETS OF INFORMATION ARE WOVEN INTO A VASTLY IMPRESSIVE TAPESTRY. BUT THE WRITER’S HANDIWORK ALSO INCLUDES ANOTHER THREAD. A STRAND OF CRITICISM RUNS ALMOST INVISIBLY THROUGH THIS WHOLE SECTION. THE STIPULATIONS OF DT. 17 CONCERNING THE LIFESTYLE OF AN ISRAELITE KING ARE SUBTLY ECHOED HERE. ‘HE MUST NOT ACCUMULATE LARGE AMOUNTS OF SILVER AND GOLD’ (DT. 17:17); THIS SOLOMON DID. ‘THE KING … MUST NOT ACQUIRE GREAT NUMBERS OF HORSES FOR HIMSELF OR MAKE THE PEOPLE RETURN TO EGYPT TO GET MORE OF THEM …’ (DT. 17:16); SOLOMON CERTAINLY DID THE FORMER AND PROBABLY THE LATTER AS WELL, FOR HIS HORSES WERE IMPORTED FROM EGYPT (28). IN OTHER WORDS, IT SEEMS THAT THE WRITER OF KINGS IS NOT ONLY GLORIFYING SOLOMON IN THIS PASSAGE BUT ALSO CRITICIZING HIM. HIS GREATNESS WAS PARTLY ACHIEVED BY OVERRIDING THE STIPULATIONS OF DEUTERONOMY. IN VIEW OF THE SOLEMN WARNING GIVEN IN THE PREVIOUS CHAPTER, THIS PASSAGE RINGS LOUD ALARM BELLS! 11:1–8 SOLOMON’S FOOLISHNESS. BUT THIS IS ONLY HALF THE STORY. THE WRITER NOW REVEALS THAT SOLOMON HAD MANY WIVES IN ADDITION TO PHARAOH’S DAUGHTER. AGAIN, THIS RECALLS A PROHIBITION IN DEUTERONOMY: ‘HE MUST NOT TAKE MANY WIVES, OR HIS HEART WILL BE LED ASTRAY’ (DT. 17:17). THE INOBTRUSIVE THREAD OF CRITICISM NOW BECOMES CLEARLY VISIBLE. THESE WERE FOREIGN WOMEN, FROM NATIONS WITH WHICH INTERMARRIAGE WAS FORBIDDEN IN DEUTERONOMY (V 2 SUMMARIZES DT. 7:3–4). IN THE LATTER PART OF HIS REIGN SOLOMON BUILT HIGH PLACES WHERE HIS FOREIGN WIVES COULD WORSHIP THEIR NATIVE GODS (7–8), AND HIS OWN DEVOTION TO STEPHEN YAHWEH BECAME DILUTED (4–5). THIS IS THE ULTIMATE IRONY: THE KING WHO BUILT THE TEMPLE, THUS MAKING THE HIGH PLACES OBSOLETE, WENT ON TO BUILD HIGH PLACES HIMSELF—AND FOR THE WORSHIP OF OTHER GODS! TWICE IN THESE VERSES WE ARE TOLD THAT IN BEHAVING THIS WAY SOLOMON FAILED TO LIVE UP TO THE WHOLEHEARTED COMMITMENT SHOWN BY DAVID (4, 6)—A REQUIREMENT CLEARLY STATED IN 9:4. THE STAGE SEEMS SET FOR IMMEDIATE DISASTER. 11:9–13 GOD’S VERDICT. HERE GOD SPEAKS TO SOLOMON FOR THE FOURTH AND FINAL TIME. WE ARE REMINDED THAT GOD HAD APPEARED TO HIM TWICE, STRESSING THAT SOLOMON HAD RECEIVED VERY SPECIAL BENEFITS. BUT IN SPITE OF THESE PERSONAL ENCOUNTERS WITH THE GOD OF ISRAEL, SOLOMON HAD STRAYED FROM FOLLOWING HIM. DISASTER WAS INDEED ON ITS WAY. BUT FOR THE SAKE OF DAVID IT WOULD BE POSTPONED UNTIL THE REIGN OF SOLOMON’S SUCCESSOR, AND WHEN IT CAME IT WOULD NOT DEPRIVE HIM OF THE WHOLE KINGDOM. IN OTHER WORDS, THE COMMITMENTS WHICH GOD HAD PREVIOUSLY MADE TO DAVID WOULD STILL BE HONORED, BUT IN A DRASTICALLY ALTERED FORM BECAUSE OF SOLOMON’S DISOBEDIENCE. 11:14–25 ADVERSARIES ARISE. SOLOMON HAD PREVIOUSLY DECLARED THAT HE HAD NO ADVERSARIES (5:4), BUT HERE HE ACQUIRED TWO. (THE HEBREW WORD TRANSLATED ADVERSARY IN 11:14 AND 23 IS THE SAME AS THAT IN 5:4.) ALTHOUGH GOD HAD ANNOUNCED THAT CALAMITY WOULD NOT STRIKE UNTIL AFTER SOLOMON’S DEATH, THE STORM-CLOUDS BEGAN TO GATHER DURING HIS LIFETIME. THE EMPIRE CREATED BY DAVID BEGAN TO FRAY AT THE EDGES AS EDOM IN THE SOUTH AND ARAM IN THE NORTH BECAME HOSTILE STATES. THE WARM RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HADAD OF EDOM AND THE EGYPTIAN PHARAOH STRIKES A FURTHER OMINOUS NOTE. 11:26–40 JEROBOAM’S REBELLION. JEROBOAM IS INTRODUCED AS AN ABLE LEADER, ENTRUSTED BY SOLOMON WITH THE ENTIRE LABOR FORCE OF THE NORTHERN TRIBES. AHIJAH IS THE FIRST OF A NUMBER OF PROPHETS IN 1 AND 2 KINGS WHO INTERVENED TO ALTER THE COURSE OF DYNASTIC SUCCESSION. HIS PROPHECY WAS ACTED OUT IN A MANNER TYPICAL OF OT PROPHETS: HE SYMBOLICALLY TORE UP HIS NEW CLOAK AND URGED JEROBOAM TO TAKE TEN OF THE TWELVE PIECES. HIS WORDS EXPLAINED THE MEANING OF HIS ACTIONS: GOD WAS GOING TO TEAR THE KINGDOM FROM SOLOMON’S HAND AND GIVE TEN TRIBES TO JEROBOAM. THE STATEMENT THAT ONE TRIBE WOULD REMAIN FOR SOLOMON’S SON TO RULE IS PUZZLING; FOR WHEN TEN TRIBES ARE TAKEN FROM TWELVE, THERE SHOULD BE TWO LEFT! A POSSIBLE SOLUTION IS THAT THE ONE TRIBE IS NOT JUDAH BUT BENJAMIN, WHICH DID CONTINUE TO BE ASSOCIATED WITH JUDAH WHEN THE KINGDOM DIVIDED. JUDAH ITSELF DOES NOT REQUIRE ANY MENTION BECAUSE IT WAS THE TRIBE OF THE ROYAL HOUSE ANYWAY, AND HENCE IS ASSUMED TO CONTINUE IN ITS CONTROL. THE WORSHIP OF FOREIGN DEITIES IS AGAIN GIVEN AS THE REASON FOR THE LOSS WHICH WAS TO BEFALL THE HOUSE OF DAVID, BUT HERE IT IS NOT SOLOMON ALONE WHO IS GUILTY BUT THEY (33), IMPLYING THAT THE PEOPLE IN GENERAL HAD FALLEN INTO THE SAME SIN. THE GREEK, LATIN AND SYRIAC VERSIONS HAVE ‘HE’ IN PLACE OF THEY, REFERRING BACK TO SOLOMON IN V 31 AND SO KEEPING TO THE TONE OF VS 9–13, WHERE ONLY SOLOMON IS CHARGED WITH UNFAITHFULNESS. THESE VERSIONS MAY PRESERVE THE ORIGINAL READING, BUT IF THE HEBREW ‘THEY’ IS ORIGINAL WE MUST CONCLUDE THAT SOLOMON’S FOLLY WAS PART OF A WIDER TREND, WHICH THE KING’S EXAMPLE MAY EVEN HAVE STARTED. IRONICALLY, AHIJAH’S PROPHECY TO JEROBOAM IN VS 37–38 ECHOES THE PROMISE GOD HAD PREVIOUSLY MADE TO SOLOMON (9:4–5). EITHER BECAUSE SOLOMON SOMEHOW HEARD OF AHIJAH’S PROPHECY, OR BECAUSE JEROBOAM MADE SOME MOVE TO STAKE HIS CLAIM TO THE NORTHERN TRIBES, SOLOMON TRIED TO KILL HIM AND HE ESCAPED TO EGYPT. JEROBOAM THUS BECAME AN EXILE FROM HIS HOMELAND, JUST AS SOLOMON’S OTHER ADVERSARIES HAD BEEN. THE PHARAOH IS NOW NAMED AS SHISHAK. HE IS SHOSHENQ I (945–924 BC), FOUNDER OF EGYPT’S TWENTY-SECOND DYNASTY, WHO LATER SENT TROOPS AGAINST JERUSALEM (14:25–26). 11:41–43 THE DEATH OF SOLOMON. ALTHOUGH SOLOMON’S REIGN HAD BEEN EXTRAORDINARY, THE NOTICE OF HIS DEATH IS OF A SIMPLE FORM USED COMMONLY IN KINGS. IT REFERS THE READER TO A SOURCE OF FURTHER INFORMATION AND TERSELY GIVES THE PLACE AND LENGTH OF REIGN, NOTICE OF BURIAL AND THE NAME OF HIS SUCCESSOR. IN THE ANCIENT MANUSCRIPT IT GIVES SOLOMON 96 YEARS TILL HIS DEATH. IN ONE SENSE, SOLOMON’S REIGN HAD BEGUN A NEW ERA, FOR HE HAD BUILT THE TEMPLE AND SO TRANSFORMED THE WORSHIP AND LIFE OF THE NATION. BUT IN ANOTHER SENSE, HE BROUGHT AN ERA TO AN END; BECAUSE OF HIS OWN DISOBEDIENCE HE WAS THE LAST KING TO RULE OVER ALL THE ISRAELITE TRIBES.**

**CHRONICLES 1:1–9:31 SOLOMON**

**DAVID WAS CELEBRATED AS THE GREATEST OF THE KINGS OF ISRAEL, AND HIS REIGN WAS ITS GOLDEN AGE. CHRONICLES STRESSES THIS (1 CH. 10–29). SO AS THE GREAT KING NOW DISAPPEARS AND IS SUCCEEDED BY HIS SON SOLOMON, WHAT FOLLOWS IS OF SPECIAL INTEREST TO ALL GOD’S PEOPLE WHO HAVE NOT HAD THE PRIVILEGE OF LIVING UNDER HIS RULE. TWO THINGS IN PARTICULAR WE SHOULD LOOK FOR IN 2 CH. 1–9. WHERE THE TWO REIGNS RESEMBLE EACH OTHER, WE MAY SEE PRINCIPLES LAID DOWN BY DAVID WHICH SOLOMON, AND ALL OTHERS WHO CARE FOR GOD’S PEOPLE, MUST FOLLOW. WHERE THEY DIFFER, THIS IS NOT BECAUSE OF FAILINGS ON SOLOMON’S PART (THE CHRONICLER LEAVES OUT SUCH THINGS), BUT BECAUSE DAVID’S ACHIEVEMENT WAS ACTUALLY INCOMPLETE. THE SON DOES WHAT THE FATHER DID NOT DO, AND BECOMES THE OTHER HALF, AS IT WERE, OF GOD’S IDEAL KING. THE GOLDEN AGE COMPRISES BOTH REIGNS TOGETHER. ABOVE ALL, THIS MEANS THE BUILDING OF THE TEMPLE, FORBIDDEN TO DAVID AS A MAN OF WAR BUT ENJOINED ON SOLOMON AS A MAN OF PEACE.**

**1:1–2:18 SOLOMON ESTABLISHED**

**GOD IS AT WORK THROUGH SOLOMON AS HE WAS THROUGH DAVID (1:1). THE TWO REIGNS COMBINE TO FORM A BLUEPRINT OF HOW GOD GOVERNS HIS PEOPLE. ‘MAN OF REST’, HOWEVER, DOES NOT MEAN THAT SOLOMON’S IS A PASSIVE FAITH, WHICH ASSUMES GOD WILL DO EVERYTHING; ON THE CONTRARY, THESE OPENING CHAPTERS SHOW HIM AS VERY ACTIVE IN HIS RELATIONS WITH GOD, WITH HIS PEOPLE, AND WITH NEIGHBOURING NATIONS, AND SUPREMELY IN HIS ENTHUSIASM FOR THE TEMPLE PROJECT. 1:1–6 SOLOMON SEEKS THE LORD. AT ONCE THE CHRONICLER SIGNALS THAT HIS SOLOMON IS TO BE SEEN AS A MODEL FIGURE ALONGSIDE DAVID: ALL THE UNPLEASANTNESS WHICH SURROUNDED SOLOMON’S ESTABLISHING HIMSELF (1 KI. 2) IS OMITTED (1). ALL ISRAEL (2) WILL RALLY TO THE NEW KING AS IT DID TO THE OLD (1 CH. 11–12). ALONGSIDE THE SOLOMON WHO WILL ILLUSTRATE GOD’S RULE OVER HIS PEOPLE IS THE SOLOMON WHO SEEKS THE LORD (5), AS ANY NEEDY BELIEVER SHOULD. AS WITH DAVID, THE ARK REPRESENTING DIVINE GRACE AND THE ALTAR REPRESENTING HUMAN RESPONSE ARE IN TWO DIFFERENT PLACES (1 CH. 15:1–3; 16:37–40), AND THE CHRONICLER POINTEDLY MENTIONS ONLY THE ALTAR-SACRIFICES WHICH SOLOMON OFFERED (CONTRAST 1 KI. 3:15). HE ALSO REMINDS US THAT THE TABERNACLE AND ALTAR IN QUESTION WERE THOSE MADE BY BEZALEL IN THE TIME OF MOSES; SOLOMON WILL REPLACE BOTH (SEE 4:1–11A). 1:7–13 SOLOMON ASKS A BLESSING. WITH SOLOMON’S VISION THE GRACE/FAITH PATTERN IS PLAIN. TO GOD’S OFFER SOLOMON MAKES A MODEL RESPONSE, A PRAYER WHICH TAKES ACCOUNT OF GOD’S OWN NATURE (WHAT HE HAS DONE, WHAT HE HAS SAID HE WILL DO, AND WHAT ONLY HE CAN GIVE, VS 8–10); OF SOLOMON’S OWN INADEQUACY, AND OF HIS PEOPLE’S NEED. GOD’S ANSWER (11–12) ANTICIPATES THE WORDS OF JESUS IN MT. 6:33 THAT WE SHOULD SEEK THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS. 1:14–17 SOLOMON PROSPERS IN THE WORLD. THE NOTE OF SOLOMON’S DIPLOMATIC AND COMMERCIAL RELATIONS WITH OTHER COUNTRIES COMES NEAR THE END OF HIS REIGN IN KINGS (1 KI. 10:26–29); IT HAS BEEN BROUGHT FORWARD HERE AS ONE ELEMENT IN THE ESTABLISHING OF HIS POWER, BEFORE HE BEGINS ON HIS MAIN WORK, THE TEMPLE. IT ALSO ESTABLISHES THE CHARACTER OF HIS REIGN AS ONE OF ‘REST’, IN WHICH HOSTILITIES HAVE GIVEN PLACE TO TRADE, AND WAR TO PEACE. THESE CONTRASTS WITH DAVID’S REIGN HELP TO SET SOLOMON ALONGSIDE HIS FATHER AS THE TWO SIDES OF THE IDEAL KINGSHIP. 2:1–18 SOLOMON PREPARES TO BUILD THE TEMPLE. THE BUILDING OF BOTH A TEMPLE AND A PALACE IS IN VIEW, BUT BY OMITTING THE DETAILS OF THE SECOND (1 KI. 7:1–12) THE CHRONICLER AGAIN FOCUSES ON THE FIRST. CHRONICLES ALSO OMITS 1 KI. 5:3–5, HAVING ALREADY GIVEN THE REASONS DAVID COULD NOT BUILD THE TEMPLE (1 CH. 17; 22:7–10; 28:2–3). BETWEEN TWO NOTES OF THE LABOUR FORCE WHICH SOLOMON MOBILIZED ARE THE TWO LETTERS THAT PASSED BETWEEN HIM AND HIRAM OF TYRE. THE WORK IN WHICH HIRAM IS BEING ASKED TO HELP IS SOMETHING NEW, ON THE GRANDEST SCALE; BUT WHAT IT IS FOR IS NOT NEW AT ALL—NAMELY, THE ANCIENT RELIGION OF ISRAEL. THE OLD OBSERVANCES ARE THERE (4; CF. EX. 30:7–8; 40:23; NU. 28–29), THE SAME MATERIALS AS BEFORE (7; CF. EX. 35:35), AND EVEN A COUNTERPART TO THE ORIGINAL SUPERVISOR-CRAFTSMAN OHOLIAB (13–14, CF. EX. 35:34). (DETAILS, E.G. IN VS 10, 14, 18, DIFFER FROM THE PARALLELS IN 1 KI. 5:11, 13; 7:14; THE CHRONICLER DOES FROM TIME TO TIME SEEM TO BE USING DIFFERENT SOURCES. ON THE QUESTION OF WHETHER SOLOMON USED ISRAELITE FORCED LABOR, SEE ON 1 KI. 5:13–18). IT IS ONE MORE CHARACTERISTIC OF THE CHRONICLER’S THAT HE GIVES US HIRAM’S WORDS IN VS 11–12: LIKE THOSE OF THE QUEEN OF SHEBA IN 9:8, THEY SHOW THE OUTSIDE WORLD RECOGNIZING THAT THE PRESENCE AND BLESSING OF GOD ARE IN ISRAEL WHEN IT IS RULED BY GOD’S CHOSEN KING.**

**3:1–5:14 THE MAKING OF THE TEMPLE OF THE LORD**

**ACCORDING TO CHRONICLES, IT IS BY THE TEMPLE (RATHER THAN BY ANY OF THE OTHER THINGS THAT KINGS SAYS ABOUT HIM) THAT SOLOMON IS TO BE REMEMBERED. AS HIS DOINGS GENERALLY ARE ABBREVIATED HERE, SO THE MAKING OF THE TEMPLE IS REDUCED FROM THE LONGER DESCRIPTION OF IT IN 1 KI. 6–7, FOR THE CHRONICLER, AS SO OFTEN, ASSUMES THAT HIS READERS KNOW THAT. THE AIM OF THE WHOLE PROJECT IS TO PREPARE A WORTHY SETTING IN WHICH GOD’S GLORY AND PRESENCE MAY BE KNOWN AMONG HIS PEOPLE. IT IS AS THOUGH THIS WHOLE SECTION IS LEADING UP TO 5:13–14, AND SAYING, ‘WHEN SOLOMON HAD DONE THIS, AND THIS, AND THIS, THEN THE GLORY APPEARED.’ 3:1–17 THE BUILDING. THE SITE (1) IS FULL OF MEANING. THERE DAVID HAD SEEN BOTH THE WRATH AND THE MERCY OF GOD (1 CH. 21:16). SO HAD ABRAHAM LONG BEFORE (GN. 22:14 RSV, ‘ON THE MOUNT OF THE LORD IT SHALL BE PROVIDED,’ OR (MG.) ‘HE WILL BE SEEN’; GN. 22:2 IS THE ONLY OTHER MENTION OF MORIAH IN THE BIBLE). THERE TOO, LONG AFTERWARDS, SIMEON WOULD HOLD THE BABY JESUS AND SAY, ‘MY EYES HAVE SEEN YOUR SALVATION’ (LK. 2:30). THE BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THE BUILDING IN WHICH GOD WAS GOING TO SHOW HIS GLORY (SEE THE LAST VERSE OF THIS SECTION, 5:14) BEGINS NATURALLY WITH THE ENTRANCE (4). THIS MIGHT JUST CONCEIVABLY HAVE BEEN A TOWER, THE HEIGHT SIX TIMES THE BREADTH (SO RSV), BUT MORE PROBABLY BOTH FIGURES SHOULD BE TWENTY, AS IN NIV. THE PORTICO LEADS TO THE HOLY PLACE, THE MAIN HALL (5–7), AND THAT IN TURN TO THE MOST HOLY PLACE (8) WHERE THE CHERUBIM STAND (10–13). THE QUANTITY AND QUALITY OF THE ORNAMENTATION ARE BOTH STRESSED; PARVAIM (6) IS A PLACE-NAME NOW UNKNOWN, BUT ITS GOLD WAS OBVIOUSLY HIGHLY REGARDED, LIKE THE PURE GOLD AND FINE GOLD OF VS 4 AND 5; SIX HUNDRED TALENTS (8) IS AN ENORMOUS AMOUNT; THE FIFTY SHEKELS OF V 9 MAY MEAN THE AMOUNT OF GOLD LEAF USED FOR GILDING THE HEADS OF THE NAILS (NAILS ACTUALLY MADE OF GOLD WOULD NOT BE VERY PRACTICAL!) THERE WAS ALSO A CURTAIN BETWEEN THE HOLY PLACE AND THE MOST HOLY PLACE IN THE TABERNACLE (EX. 26:31–33); SOLOMON’S STRUCTURE CLEARLY FOLLOWS THE SAME PRINCIPLES AS THAT OF MOSES; HOWEVER, IT DIFFERS IN DETAIL. FINALLY, OUTSIDE THE BUILDING, THE FREE-STANDING PILLARS JAKIN AND BOAZ ARE MENTIONED (15–17). 4:1–11A THE FURNITURE. HERE TOO THE EMPHASIS IS ON PRINCIPLES. AS BOTH TABERNACLE AND TEMPLE HAVE A CURTAIN IN THE HOLY PLACE, SO BOTH STRUCTURES MUST BE FURNISHED WITH AN ALTAR (1). THE OLD ONE WAS 5 CUBITS SQUARE AND 3 HIGH (EX. 38:1–2); THE NEW ONE IS 20 CUBITS SQUARE AND 10 HIGH. THE ALTAR IS THE FIRST THING ONE WOULD NOTICE AS ONE EMERGED FROM THE BUILDING. NEXT WOULD BE THE ‘SEA’ (2–5), STANDING SLIGHTLY TO ONE SIDE (10); THEN THE TEN WASHBASINS (6); THEN, AS ONE TURNED BACK TO LOOK INSIDE THE HOLY PLACE, THE TEN LAMPSTANDS (7) AND THE TEN TABLES (8). THE TABERNACLE HAD ONLY ONE OF EACH OF THESE, AND THE CHRONICLER ELSEWHERE SPEAKS IN SIMILAR TERMS (2 CH. 13:11); HENCE THE JEWISH TRADITION THAT THE TEMPLE CONTAINED BOTH THE NEW TEN AND THE ORIGINAL ONE OF EACH. 4:11B–22 SUMMARY OF THE WORK. THIS PASSAGE FOLLOWS 1 KI. 7:39–50 IN DETAIL. IT INCLUDES ITEMS NOT MENTIONED EARLIER, NOTES THE VAST QUANTITY OF BRONZE AS WELL AS GOLD THAT WAS USED (18), AND DRAWS ATTENTION TO THE COOPERATION BETWEEN SOLOMON AND HURAM-ABI. EACH IS IN A SENSE THE MAKER OF ALL THESE THINGS (18), MUCH AS MOSES AND BEZALEL WERE EQUALLY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE MAKING OF THE TABERNACLE (EX. 33:22–23). 5:1–14 ALL COME TO THE TEMPLE. THE ACHIEVEMENT IS SOLOMON’S: ONLY WHEN HE HAS COMPLETED THE TEMPLE ARE DAVID’S CONTRIBUTIONS BROUGHT IN (1). THE INITIATIVE HAS BEEN GOD’S: THE CENTRAL FEATURE OF THIS PLACE OF WORSHIP IS THAT THE ARK, THE SYMBOL OF HIS GRACE, PRESENCE AND COVENANT, WILL BE THERE (2–10). THE TIME OF THE TEMPLE’S INAUGURATION IS, FITTINGLY, THE SEVENTH MONTH (3), I.E. THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES, WHEN ‘ALL IS SAFELY GATHERED IN’ AND GOD IS PRAISED FOR HIS FAITHFUL PROVISION. THE OLD TENT IS NOW LITERALLY TAKEN UP INTO THE NEW TEMPLE (5), SHOWING THAT THIS IS THE NEW EMBODIMENT OF THE ORIGINAL PRINCIPLES. THEY ARE STILL THERE TODAY (9) PROBABLY MEANS ONLY ‘FROM THEN ON’ (THE ARK HAD IN FACT DISAPPEARED BY THE CHRONICLER’S TIME), BUT IT APTLY DESCRIBES THESE SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLES. HEB. 8–9 SHOWS THEIR CONTINUING NT SIGNIFICANCE. NEARLY ALL THIS SECTION COMES FROM 1 KI. 8:1–11, THOUGH VS 11–13 HAVE BEEN ADDED, TYING IN THESE CEREMONIES WITH DAVID’S WHEN HE BROUGHT THE ARK TO JERUSALEM IN 1 CH. 15–16. THE WORD ALL APPEARS REPEATEDLY: IN THE IDEAL ISRAEL, ALL WILL BE DRAWN TOGETHER AROUND THESE PRINCIPLES (3), AND AMONG THEM GOD’S GLORY WILL BE SEEN, AS WHEN BOTH TEMPLE (VS 11–13) AND TABERNACLE (EX. 40:34–35) WERE COMPLETED.**

**6:1–7:22 THE DEDICATION CEREMONY**

**THESE CHAPTERS, LIKE CH. 5, FOLLOW 1 KI. 8–9 CLOSELY. THE EVENTS THEY DESCRIBE INTEREST THE CHRONICLER EVEN MORE THAN THE TEMPLE AS A BUILDING. TWO-THIRDS OF THE ACCOUNT OF THOSE EVENTS IS A RECORD OF PRAYER AND THE ANSWER TO PRAYER. FROM ONE POINT OF VIEW SOLOMON IS FOLLOWING OUT PRINCIPLES WHICH WERE LAID DOWN BY DAVID. GOD’S PEOPLE FIND BLESSING WHERE THEY UNITE AROUND THE FAITHFUL RULER WHOM GOD HAS CHOSEN (6:3; 1 CH. 16:2). BUT HE IS ALSO DOING WHAT DAVID COULD NOT DO, FOR WHERE DAVID FOUGHT TO ESTABLISH THE KINGDOM, CAPTURED JERUSALEM, AND BROUGHT THE ARK THERE, SOLOMON’S RULE IS CENTERED ON THE CONTINUING PRESENCE OF THE ARK IN ITS PERMANENT HOME. 6:1–11 THE DEDICATION BEGINS. SOLOMON’S WORK HAS PLAINLY BEEN APPROVED BY GOD, SINCE THE DIVINE GLORY HAS FILLED THE TEMPLE (5:13–14); THE NOTE OF THIS (1–2) LEADS INTO HIS OPENING STATEMENT (4–11), WHICH IN TURN WILL LEAD INTO HIS LONG PRAYER (14–42). THE DARKNESS OF THE WINDOWLESS MOST HOLY PLACE REPRESENTS THE FACT THAT GOD CANNOT BE SEEN (1; CF. EX. 20:21). IN THE SAME WAY THE ARK, SYMBOL OF HIS PRESENCE IN THE TEMPLE (2, 11), SHOWS THAT THOUGH HE DWELLS IN HEAVEN HE IS ALWAYS AVAILABLE ON EARTH TO THOSE WHO PRAY (14–42 THROUGHOUT). SOLOMON HAS NO OTHER BLESSING TO GIVE HIS PEOPLE THAN A PROCLAIMING OF THE GREATNESS OF THEIR GOD. THIS IS A GOD WHO KEEPS HIS PROMISES, PARTICULARLY THOSE TO DAVID (4). HIS CHOICE OF THIS CITY AND THIS KING IS A COVENANT ON A PAR WITH THE ONE HE MADE WITH MOSES AT THE TIME OF THE EXODUS (5–6, A RARE REFERENCE; OFTEN WHEN THE CHRONICLER MIGHT BE EXPECTED TO REFER TO THE EXODUS HE DOES NOT DO SO—THAT COVENANT HAS FOR HIM BEEN SWALLOWED UP IN THIS ONE, AS THE TABERNACLE HAS IN THE TEMPLE). GOD PLANNED, AND HAS CARRIED OUT, THE DAVID/SOLOMON SUCCESSION (7–10). AND NOT SURPRISINGLY THE ARK IS AT THE HEART OF THIS NEW AGE, AS IT WAS IN MOSES’ TIME (11). 6:12–21 THE PRAYER OF APPROACH. THE BEGINNING OF SOLOMON’S PRAYER IS FULL OF THIS INCOMPARABLE GOD (14), REPEATS TO HIM MANY OF THE THINGS THE LAST SECTION HAS SAID ABOUT HIM, ADDS THAT HE REQUIRES OBEDIENCE (16), AND MAKES PLAIN HOW SOLOMON UNDERSTANDS HIM TO BE DWELLING ON EARTH WITH MEN (18): IN LINE WITH THE PICTURE OF HIS HANDS AND MOUTH (4, 15), WE NOW HAVE HIS EYES AND EARS ALWAYS OPEN TO HIS PEOPLE’S PRAYERS (19–21). THIS EXPLAINS WHY THE CHIEF PURPOSE OF THE TEMPLE IS BOTH THE HOUSING OF THE ARK (GOD’S COVENANT-PROMISES OF GRACE, 11) AND THE BURNING OF INCENSE (WHICH STANDS FOR PRAYER; COMPARE VS 18–21 WITH 2:6 RSV). 6:22–42 THE PRAYER OF INTERCESSION. THIS MOMENTOUS PRAYER IS OFFERED BY SOLOMON, WITH HIS GOD GIVEN WISDOM, FOR GOD’S PEOPLE AS A WHOLE, AND COVERS A WIDE RANGE OF SITUATIONS BOTH ACTUAL AND POSSIBLE. LIKE NEARLY ALL OF CHS. 6–7 IT IS TAKEN FROM 1 KINGS, BUT IS ESPECIALLY APT FOR LATER GENERATIONS LIKE THE CHRONICLER’S WHEN THE SITUATIONS ENVISAGED HAVE COME TRUE. IT IS A PRAYER ABOUT PRAYER. SOLOMON IS PRAYING THAT ISRAEL MAY BE A PEOPLE NOT PASSIVELY RECEIVING BLESSINGS, BUT ITSELF ACTIVELY PRAYING FOR THEM. TEMPLE AND ARK WILL REMIND EVERY GENERATION OF ITS NEED FOR A PERSONAL ‘PRACTICE OF THE PRESENCE OF GOD’. EACH MUST LEARN TO PRAY TOWARDS THIS PLACE, NOT NECESSARILY PHYSICALLY, BUT ALWAYS IN HEART AND MIND FOCUSING ON THE MEANING OF IT. THE SEVEN SITUATIONS LISTED MAY BE DEFINED AS THE ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE (22–23), DEFEAT IN WAR (24–25), DROUGHT (26–27), SHORTAGE FROM A VARIETY OF CAUSES (28–31), THE NON-ISRAELITE SEEKING GOD (32–33), A JUST ‘CRUSADE’ (34–35), AND SIN LEADING TO EXILE (36–39). SEVERAL ARE OF COURSE SPECIAL TO THE GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY OF ISRAEL, BUT ALL HAVE EQUIVALENTS FOR GOD’S PEOPLE IN ANY CULTURE, CLIMATE OR AGE. 7:1–10 THE ANSWER OF FIRE. THOUGH THE APPEARING OF GOD’S GLORY IS MENTIONED AT EACH END OF SOLOMON’S PRAYER, IT DOES NOT MEAN THAT IT APPEARED TWICE (IN BOTH VS 1 AND 3 WE COULD READ SOMETHING LIKE ‘THE FIRE AS WELL AS THE GLORY’), BUT V 3 DOES INDICATE THAT IT WAS NOW ABOVE AS WELL AS IN THE TEMPLE, SO THAT EVERYONE COULD SEE IT. IT CONFIRMED THAT SOLOMON’S PLANS HAD BEEN CARRIED OUT AS GOD MEANT THEM TO BE. BUT THE FIRE WAS SOMETHING MORE. WHAT GOD WAS APPROVING NOW WAS THE FIRST USE OF THE TEMPLE AS HE HAD INTENDED, I.E. FOR AN ENCOUNTER BETWEEN HIMSELF AND HIS PEOPLE BY WAY OF SOLOMON’S PRAYER. HENCE THERE IS A PUBLIC SIGN FOR ISRAEL TO EXPERIENCE AND REMEMBER, IN CONTRAST TO THE PERSONAL ANSWER WHICH GOD IS ABOUT TO GIVE TO SOLOMON (12–22). AT OTHER EQUALLY CRUCIAL ENCOUNTERS BETWEEN GOD AND ISRAEL THE FIRE FELL: IN THE TIMES OF MOSES (LV. 9:24), DAVID (ON THE SAME SPOT AS ON THIS OCCASION, 1 CH. 21:26), AND ELIJAH (1 KI. 18:38). DAVID AND HIS SON ARE AGAIN BRACKETED AS EQUAL PARTNERS IN GOD’S PLAN (10). THE ‘FESTIVAL IN THE SEVENTH MONTH’ (5:3), WHICH WAS TABERNACLES, WAS APPARENTLY PRECEDED BY THIS EXTRA WEEK OF CELEBRATION FOR THE DEDICATION OF THE TEMPLE (9). 7:11–22 THE ANSWER OF REVELATION. IN CONTRAST TO GOD’S FIRE, WHICH WAS PUBLIC BUT TEMPORARY, THE VISION—WE MIGHT SAY, THE INTERVIEW—WHICH HE GAVE TO SOLOMON WAS PRIVATE, BUT HAS BECOME ENDURING COMMON PROPERTY. IT IS AN ANSWER, CONCISE BUT MEANINGFUL, TO THE WHOLE OF CH. 6. V 12 CONFIRMS WHAT SOLOMON SAID ABOUT THE TEMPLE IN 6:1–11. VS 13–14 ACCEPT THE ENTIRE SEVENFOLD PRAYER OF 6:22–42 (AND TAKE FOR GRANTED A PEOPLE WHO ARE BOTH CALLED BY GOD’S NAME AND POSSESSED OF A LAND; A PASSAGE NOT THEREFORE TO BE APPLIED THOUGHTLESSLY IN OUR NT TIMES). VS 15–16 CONFIRM THAT GOD’S EYES, EARS AND NAME ARE INDEED THERE IN THE TEMPLE (6:18–21, 40). VS 17–18 CONFIRM 6:14–17; THE YOU IS SOLOMON (SINGULAR), AND WHILE IN KINGS HE DID SIN AND HIS THRONE DID IN THE END FALL VACANT, IN THE CHRONICLES SENSE HE FULFILLED GOD’S WILL, AND ISRAEL HAS NEVER LACKED A RULER. BUT IN VS 19–22, WHICH PICK UP SOLOMON’S SEVENTH REQUEST (6:36–39), THE YOU IS PLURAL AND MEANS ISRAEL, AND WHETHER OR NOT SOLOMON DISOBEYED GOD, ISRAEL CERTAINLY DID. WHAT IS MORE, THE CHRONICLER AND HIS READERS HAVE ACTUALLY SEEN BOTH THE THREATENED LOSS OF LAND AND TEMPLE (20) AND THE PRAYED-FOR RESTORATION (6:37–39). THESE CLOSING VERSES ARE A SUMMARY ALSO OF THE FUNDAMENTAL RULE OF CAUSE AND EFFECT WHICH IS SO MUCH A PART OF THE CHRONICLER’S TEACHING: IF YOU OBEY, YOU WILL PROSPER; IF YOU DISOBEY, YOU WILL SUFFER; IF YOU REPENT, YOU WILL BE FORGIVEN.**

**8:1–9:31 SOLOMON’S GREATNESS**

**AT MOST POINTS THIS SECTION FOLLOWS 1 KI. 9:10–10:29 CLOSELY. BUT THE CHRONICLER IGNORES 1 KI. 11, FOR THE FOLLIES AND HOSTILITIES OF SOLOMON’S LATER YEARS WOULD DETRACT FROM THE PICTURE OF AN IDEAL REIGN. HE DID THE SAME WITH DAVID (SEE ON 1 CH. 29:21–30); AGAIN, FATHER AND SON ARE TWO SIDES OF THE SAME COIN. IT IS TO BE NOTED THAT NEITHER STANDS AS AN INDIVIDUAL, BUT THAT BOTH ARE SEEN IN SOLIDARITY WITH THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL, WHO ARE BLESSED THROUGH THEM (CF. 7:10). 8:1–10 SOLOMON’S AUTHORITY. GRANTED THAT 1 KI. 9:10–14 (WHERE THESE TOWNS ARE GIVEN BY SOLOMON TO HIRAM) WAS KNOWN, AND THE CHRONICLER WAS NOT HERE TRYING TO MAKE SENSE OF A DAMAGED VERSION OF KINGS (AS SOME SUGGEST), THE SIMPLEST EXPLANATION OF VS 1–2 IS THAT THEY DESCRIBE HIRAM GIVING THE TOWNS BACK. IT IS CLEAR FROM THAT PASSAGE THAT HE DID NOT LIKE THEM, AND FROM THIS ONE THAT SOLOMON ADMITTED THEY NEEDED RENOVATING. THE VERSES INTRODUCE A SECTION WHICH SHOWS SOLOMON’S POWER BEING USED FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE NATION. VS 3–4, THE ONLY MILITARY CAMPAIGN RECORDED FOR THE ‘MAN OF PEACE’, SHOW FRONTIERS BEING ESTABLISHED IN THE FAR NORTH (THE DEVELOPING OF A PORT ON THE RED SEA, IN THE FAR SOUTH [VS 17–18], MAY BE MEANT AS A COUNTERPART TO THIS, AND THE EXTENT OF SOLOMON’S DOMAINS HAS ALREADY BEEN HINTED AT IN 7:8). THE PLACES MENTIONED IN VS 4–6 INDICATE A COUNTRY WELL ARMED, DEFENDED AND PROVIDED FOR. THE USE OF THE SURVIVING CANAANITES FOR FORCED LABOR SHOWS UP BY CONTRAST THE FREEDOM AND INDEPENDENCE OF TRUE-BORN ISRAELITES (7–10). GOD’S PEOPLE ARE BLESSED UNDER THE RULE OF SO POWERFUL A KING. 8:11–16 SOLOMON’S WORSHIP. THIS SECTION DESCRIBES MORE FULLY THAN 1 KI. 9:25 ALL SOLOMON’S WORK FOR THE TEMPLE OF THE LORD (16). THAT VERSE MAY ANSWER TO 2:1, AND THUS CONCLUDE THE MAIN PART (NEARLY SEVEN CHAPTERS LONG) OF THE STORY OF SOLOMON THE TEMPLE BUILDER. HIS EGYPTIAN QUEEN IS MENTIONED HERE BECAUSE OF THE DANGER SHE WOULD INCUR BY BEING TOO CLOSE TO THE ‘HOLINESS’ OF THE TEMPLE, FOR ‘EVERYTHING CONNECTED WITH THE ARK IS HOLY’ (RATHER THAN THE PLACES THE ARK … HAS ENTERED, V 11); THE PERILS OF HOLY THINGS WERE ILLUSTRATED IN DAVID’S TIME BY THE STORY OF UZZAH (1 CH. 13). CHRONICLES DOES NOT SPECIFY WHETHER HER PERIL WOULD LIE IN BEING A GENTILE, OR A WOMAN, OR JUST (LIKE UZZAH) SOMEONE UNAUTHORIZED; IT IS MAKING A POINT NOT ABOUT HER BUT ABOUT THE TEMPLE. SOLOMON, HOWEVER, THOUGH NOT A PRIEST, IS AUTHORIZED TO DO A GREAT DEAL IN RESPECT OF THE TEMPLE (12–15). HE DEFERS TO THE COMMAND OF MOSES (13) AND THE ORDINANCE OF DAVID (14), BUT THE MENTION OF THESE AUGUST NAMES SIMPLY SHOWS THAT HIS OWN COMMANDS (15) ARE TO BE RANKED WITH THEIRS. ALL THAT HE SETS UP IS INTENDED AS A FRAMEWORK FOR HIS PEOPLE’S WORSHIP OF THEIR GOD. 8:17–9:12 SOLOMON’S FAME. EZION GEBER (8:17) CERTAINLY INDICATES THE REACH OF SOLOMON’S POWER (SEE ON 8:3–4), BUT IT IS ALSO ONE OF THE PORTS OF ENTRY FOR HIS GREAT WEALTH (OPHIR, LIKE PARVAIM IN 3:6, IS NOW UNKNOWN, BUT ITS GOLD WAS FAMOUS), AND 8:17–18 ALSO REMINDS US OF SOLOMON’S STANDING WITH SURROUNDING NATIONS SUCH AS EDOM AND TYRE. THE VISIT OF THE QUEEN OF SHEBA ALSO MAY HAVE HAD COMMERCIAL MOTIVES, SINCE SOLOMON’S AUTHORITY STRADDLED THE TRADE ROUTES OF MANY OF THESE NATIONS. BUT THE STATED REASON FOR IT WAS HIS FAME (9:1), IN PARTICULAR THE FAME OF HIS ACHIEVEMENTS AND HIS WISDOM (9:5). WHAT IS RECORDED ABOUT HER VISIT IS THE SPLENDID SPEECH SHE MAKES IN PRAISE OF SOLOMON—NOT FOR HIS OWN SAKE, BUT TO EXALT THE LORD WHO HAS MADE HIM WHAT HE IS, AND TO COMPLIMENT THE PEOPLE FOR WHOSE BENEFIT (ONCE MORE) HE HAS BEEN MADE SO GREAT (9:8). AGAIN, HIRAM IS MENTIONED, HIS SERVANTS BEING INVOLVED IN THE IMPORTING OF VALUABLES INTO ISRAEL (ALGUM IS AN UNKNOWN VARIETY OF WOOD, BUT IT WAS OBVIOUSLY PRECIOUS), BUT ALSO NO DOUBT TO RECALL THAT HE HAD MADE A SIMILAR COMMENT TO THE QUEEN’S AT THE BEGINNING OF THIS LONG SECTION (2:11). 9:13–28 SOLOMON’S RICHES. GOLD REPRESENTED THE WEALTH OF SOLOMON’S KINGDOM. ONCE THE TEMPLE WAS FINISHED, AND THE ROYAL THRONE-ROOM AND HOUSEHOLD SUFFICIENTLY GOLD PLATED (17–20), THE SURPLUS WENT INTO A DISPLAY OF ORNAMENTAL SHIELDS FOR THE PALACE OF THE FOREST OF LEBANON (15–16). THE CHRONICLER IS NOT YET SAYING THAT THIS MAGNIFICENCE WILL LAST BARELY A GENERATION (SEE 12:9–11), AND HE IS NOT SAYING WHAT THE BUILDING IN QUESTION WAS (SEE 1 KI. 7:1–12); HE IS CONCERNED MERELY TO POINT OUT THAT THE VALUE OF THE DISPLAY WAS COLOSSAL. THE RANGE OF EXOTIC IMPORTS BROUGHT BY THE ISRAELITE-TYRIAN MERCHANT FLEET (21) PUTS THE FINISHING TOUCHES TO THIS ACCOUNT OF THE GREAT KING’S WEALTH, WISDOM AND POWER (22–28). WHETHER THE FIFTH ITEM IS BABOONS (21) OR ‘PEACOCKS’ (AV), AND WHETHER ‘SHIPS OF TARSHISH’ (21, RSV) ACTUALLY WENT TO TARSHISH (SPAIN) OR WERE SIMPLY LONG-DISTANCE TRADERS, WE DO NOT KNOW. CHRONICLES REMINDS US AGAIN, PICKING UP 1:15, THAT SOLOMON’S WEALTH ENRICHES HIS PEOPLE ALSO (27). 9:29–31 SOLOMON’S DEATH. THE FINAL VERSES OF THE SOLOMON STORY ARE TAKEN FROM 1 KI. 11:41–43, AND THEY DO THREE THINGS. THEY GO STRAIGHT TO THE END OF THAT CHAPTER, OMITTING THE BULK OF IT (THE TALE OF SOLOMON’S MORAL DOWNFALL), AND THUS END HIS REIGN ON A HIGH NOTE. THEY REFER TO OTHER ACCOUNTS, NOT ONLY AS A CHECK ON ACCURACY BUT AS GIVING THE EXTRA AUTHORITY THAT BELONGS TO THE WRITINGS OF PROPHETS. AND THEY LINK SOLOMON YET AGAIN WITH HIS FATHER, FOR DAVID TOO WAS GIVEN THIS KIND OF EPITAPH (1 CH. 29:29).**

**10:1–36:23 THE KINGS**

**SOLOMON IS SCARCELY COLD IN HIS GRAVE BEFORE THE GLORIOUS KINGDOM FALLS APART. IT DOES SO ALONG THE OLD TRIBAL FAULT-LINES: AN EAST-WEST LINE ABOVE JERUSALEM LEAVES TO ITS SOUTH JUDAH AND BENJAMIN, ALONG WITH SIMEON (LONG SINCE ABSORBED IN JUDAH), AND ALSO OF COURSE THOSE OF THE TRIBE OF LEVI WHO HAPPENED TO LIVE THERE. BUT THE SPLIT WAS POPULARLY SEEN AS DAVID’S TRIBE VERSUS THE REST, SO THE SOUTHERN PART BECAME KNOWN AS ‘JUDAH’, WHILE THE MAJORITY THOUGHT OF ITSELF AS ‘ISRAEL’ (10:16). THIS LEADS TO COMPLICATIONS IN THE USE OF THE NAME ISRAEL IN THE REST OF CHRONICLES. AT ITS BROADEST, IT IS USED IN A GOOD SENSE TO MEAN THE PEOPLE OF GOD, NORTH AS WELL AS SOUTH. IN A POLITICAL SENSE IT IS THE NORTHERN KINGDOM. WHERE THAT MEANS THE PEOPLE, IT IS NOT NECESSARILY BAD, FOR TRUE ISRAELITES CONTINUE TO BE FOUND THERE (11:13–17; 28:9–25; 30:11; 1 KI. 19:18), AND EVEN JEROBOAM, FIRST KING OF THE NORTH, IS DOING GOD’S WILL IN REBELLING AGAINST REHOBOAM (10:15; 11:4). BUT IT IS BAD WHEN IT MEANS, AS IT NORMALLY DOES, THAT THE SYSTEM AND ITS RULERS ARE DETERMINED TO REMAIN INDEPENDENT OF DAVID’S THRONE AND SOLOMON’S TEMPLE EVEN WHEN THEY ARE NO LONGER JUSTIFIED IN DOING SO (13:8–12), AND STILL MORE WHEN KINGS LIKE AHAB AND HIS FAMILY NOT ONLY DESERT THE DAVID/SOLOMON IDEAL BUT INTRODUCE FOREIGN GODS (23:17; 1 KI. 16:30–33). HOWEVER, THE NORTH IS REFERRED TO BY THE CHRONICLER ONLY WHEN ITS HISTORY TIES IN WITH THAT OF THE SOUTH, FOR THAT IS WHERE DAVID’S LINE WILL CONTINUE FOR THE NEXT 300 YEARS AND TWENTY REIGNS. HIS OBJECT WILL BE TO SHOW HOW THE IDEALS OF DAVID AND SOLOMON WERE EITHER FOLLOWED OR IGNORED BY THEIR SUCCESSORS, AND HOW BLESSING OR PUNISHMENT RESULTED ACCORDINGLY.**

**10:1–12:16 REHOBOAM**

**SO GREAT WAS THE FOLLY OF REHOBOAM AT THE START OF HIS REIGN THAT THE LORD SAYS THE NORTH WAS RIGHT TO REBEL AGAINST HIM (10:15; 11:4). 1 KI. 12:1–24 AND 14:21–31 PRESENT ONLY HIS BAD POINTS. THE CHRONICLER ADDS MATERIAL FROM ANOTHER SOURCE WHICH SAYS THAT AFTER THE INITIAL DISASTER CAME A TIME OF SUCCESSFUL RULE, THEN A SECOND DISASTER FOLLOWED BY REPENTANCE AND RESTORATION. MUCH INTERMARRYING WITHIN THE FAMILY OF DAVID (11:18–21) COULD NOT OF ITSELF MAKE REHOBOAM A DAVID-LIKE RULER, AND KINGS IS RIGHT IN IMPLYING THAT BY AND LARGE HIS REIGN WAS NOT A SUCCESS. BUT THE CHRONICLER’S MORE EVEN-HANDED ACCOUNT, THOUGH COMING IN THE END TO THE SAME CONCLUSION (12:14), SETS FORTH A PATTERN FOR THE REST OF THE BOOK: SIN BRINGS TROUBLE; REPENTANCE LEADS TO BLESSING. 10:1–19 THE KINGDOM DIVIDED. SHECHEM HAD BEEN A PLACE OF POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS IMPORTANCE SINCE ANCIENT TIMES, AND WAS A SUITABLE CENTRAL SITE FOR A KING-MAKING ASSEMBLY OF ‘ALL ISRAEL’ (1, RSV). THE FIRST OF THREE FACTORS WHICH BRING ABOUT REHOBOAM’S DISCOMFITURE (FOR ALL OF WHICH THE READER IS EXPECTED TO KNOW THE BACKGROUND IN 1 KI. 11:26–40) IS THERE IN THE PERSON OF JEROBOAM SON OF NEBAT, A NAME TO CONJURE WITH (2). WITH HIM AS THEIR NATURAL LEADER THE TRIBES BRING FORWARD THE SECOND MATTER, TAXATION AND FORCED LABOR (4). THE LATTER WAS SUPPOSED NOT TO AFFECT TRUEBORN ISRAELITES (8:9), BUT IT SEEMS IT DID (18; 1 KI. 5:13–14; 11:28). REHOBOAM CONSULTED ADVISERS BOTH SENIOR AND JUNIOR, AND THE HEADSTRONG COUNSEL OF THE LATTER CARRIED THE DAY. HE WAS RUNNING COUNTER TO THE BIBLICAL PRINCIPLE OF RESPECT FOR MATURITY (CF. E.G. IS. 3:4–5), THOUGH, TO DO HIM JUSTICE, SINCE THE YOUNG MEN WERE HIS CONTEMPORARIES (8) THEY MUST HAVE BEEN IN THEIR FORTIES (12:13). SEEING THEY WOULD GAIN NO CONCESSIONS, JEROBOAM AND THE NORTHERN TRIBES REVOLTED, AND THE THIRD FACTOR, THE PROPHECY OF AHIJAH (1 KI. 11:29–39), CAME BACK TO MOCK REHOBOAM. GOD HAD SAID THIS WOULD HAPPEN, AND SO IT DID (15). THE CRY OF REVOLT (16) IS AN IRONIC REVERSAL OF 1 CH. 12:18. REHOBOAM, NOT YET WILLING TO ACCEPT IT, SENDS (OF ALL PEOPLE) HIS LABOR MINISTER TO ENFORCE THE HATED SYSTEM, WITH DIRE RESULTS (18). 11:1–23 REHOBOAM’S OBEDIENCE. ONE MORE TRY AT REUNITING ISRAEL BY FORCE IS FORBIDDEN BY GOD, AND TO HIS CREDIT REHOBOAM WITHDRAWS (1–4). THIS OBEDIENCE MUST BE THE REASON FOR THE BLESSING THAT FOLLOWS: A PROGRAMME OF FORTIFICATIONS (5–12), AN UPSURGE OF RELIGIOUS LIFE (13–17), AND A FLOURISHING ROYAL FAMILY (18–23). THE FORTIFIED TOWNS (6–7) SEEM TO FORM A LINE OF DEFENSE NOT AGAINST THE NORTHERN KINGDOM (THOUGH THERE WAS CONTINUAL WARFARE BETWEEN REHOBOAM AND JEROBOAM, 12:15), BUT AGAINST INVASION FROM THE SOUTH (SEE ON 12:1–4). JUST ENOUGH IS SAID ABOUT THE ALTERNATIVE RELIGION SET UP BY JEROBOAM (SEE 1 KI. 12:25–33) TO EXPLAIN THE GENERAL EXODUS OF GOD, FEARING ISRAELITES FROM NORTH TO SOUTH. A CALF REPRESENTING THE LORD (CF. EX. 32:4) WAS BAD ENOUGH, BUT A GOAT REPRESENTING SOME LOCAL DEMON WAS TOO MUCH (15). REHOBOAM’S FAMILY IS NOT ONLY LARGE BUT BY OUR STANDARDS INBRED (18, 20); HERE, HOWEVER, THAT IS NO DOUBT SEEN AS A VIRTUE, IN VIEW OF SOLOMON’S LAXITY IN THE MATTER (1 KI. 11:1–8), AND IN V 23 TOOK MANY WIVES FOR HIS SONS IS MORE LIKELY THAN ‘CONSULTED THE MANY GODS OF HIS WIVES’ (JB).**

**THE OBEDIENCE AND THEREFORE THE BLESSING LASTED FOR ALL OF THREE YEARS (17)—NOT ENOUGH TO AFFECT THE FINAL VERDICT, HE DID EVIL (12:14).**

**12:1–16 REHOBOAM’S LATER YEARS. IT IS NOT HARD TO SEE IN V 1A A PRIDE AND SELF-CONFIDENCE, THE OPPOSITE OF HUMILITY AND TRUST, WHICH LED DIRECTLY TO THE SIN OF 1B AND IN TURN TO THE PUNISHMENT OF VS 2–4. SHISHAK, FOUNDER OF THE TWENTY-SECOND DYNASTY, HAD REUNITED EGYPT (IRONIC IN VIEW OF WHAT REHOBOAM HAD DONE TO ISRAEL) AND WAS NOW EXTENDING HIS POWER NORTH-EASTWARD, NO DOUBT WITH THE COLLUSION OF JEROBOAM AND THE RULERS OF EDOM AND ARAM (1 KI. 11:14–40). THE DETAILS OF THE INVASION DO NOT COME FROM KINGS (3–8); THE CHRONICLER’S SOURCE DESCRIBES AN ARMY WHICH IS VERY LARGE, EVEN THOUGH SIXTY THOUSAND (3) SHOULD PROBABLY READ ‘SIX THOUSAND’, AND SHISHAK’S OWN RECORD OF THE CAMPAIGN LISTS MORE THAN 150 TOWNS CAPTURED. JERUSALEM IS NOT ONE OF THEM, SO THE PROPHECY OF V 7 WAS FULFILLED AND SHISHAK WAS BOUGHT OFF BY THE PLUNDER FROM TEMPLE AND PALACE (9). THE MOST FAR-REACHING EVENT OF REHOBOAM’S REIGN WAS THE DIVISION OF THE KINGDOM (CH. 10). CHRONICLES ADDS, FIRST, FACTS ABOUT HIM THAT ILLUSTRATE THE PRINCIPLE THAT ‘OBEDIENCE LEADS TO BLESSING’ (CH. 11) AND NOW FACTS THAT ILLUSTRATE THE PRINCIPLES THAT ‘DISOBEDIENCE LEADS TO PUNISHMENT’ AND ‘REPENTANCE LEADS TO RESTORATION’. CH. 12 CONTAINS ALL THE CLASSIC TERMS WITH WHICH CHRONICLES REGULARLY TEACHES THESE THINGS, UNFAITHFUL (2), THE TIT-FOR-TAT ABANDON OF V 5 (SEE ALSO V 1), HUMBLED (6, 7, 12); AND V 6B SHOWS THE MEANING OF TRUE CONFESSION AND REPENTANCE—‘THE LORD IS JUST’, OR ‘RIGHT’, I.E. ‘WE ARE WRONG.’ THE FOUNDATION FOR THIS TEACHING WAS LAID IN SOLOMON’S PRAYER (6:24–25) AND GOD’S ANSWER (7:14). THE FACT REMAINS THAT FOR ALL THE BLESSING OF CH. 11 AND THE RESTORATION OF CH. 12 (DUE PERHAPS AS MUCH TO THE GOOD IN JUDAH [12; 11:13–17] AS TO THE KING’S REPENTANCE), REHOBOAM IS REMEMBERED AS THE KING WHO SPLIT THE KINGDOM AND WHO DID EVIL (14).THE LORD JEHOVAH’S NAME MEANS “MOST HIGH” OR “LORD.” THE VARIATIONS OF THE NAME IS VICTOR, JAH, YAH, STEPHEN & YAHWEH. THIS REFERS TO JEHOVAH BEING NAMED ON THE 1ST DAY TO THE 5TH DAY WITH THE IMAGE LIKENESS OF THE LORD, THEN JEHOVAH BEING NAMED ON THE 6TH DAY AS MAN AND ON THE 7TH DAY HE DID NOT FALL, BY WHICH ALL HIS FAMILY WAS KILLED, EXCEPT THE LORD ISRAEL BEING TRANSLATED, THEN KILLED IN LUKE 20:35-36, THEN ON THE 8TH DAY HE WAS RENAMED. THE LORD JEHOVAH WILL COME BACK IN THE END TIME IN THE SPIRIT & AUTHORITY OF THE LORD JACOB.**

**THE LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH & HIS TITLE IS JEHOVAH**

**THE FULL REVELATION OF THE LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH, COULD NOT COME UNTIL THE FULFILLMENT OF THIS NON-APOSTLE STEPHEN WAS FINISHED FIRST IN THE GREEK & LAST IN THE ENGLISH IN THE TOP TESTAMENT IN ACTS OF THE HOLY GHOST, ABOUT 2,000 YEARS AGO IN ANCIENT BRITAIN, THEN IN GREAT BRITAIN, THEN IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THIS PRESENT TIME IN ACTS 29:1-2 WITH AN ACTS 30. SIMPLY PUT, ONLY HALF OF THE REVELATION OF THE LORD [STEPHEN YAHWEH] WAS KNOWN IN THE OLD TESTAMENT, MIDDLE TESTAMENT, NEW TESTAMENT, HIGHER TESTAMENT IN LUKE, THE HIGHEST TESTAMENT IN REVELATION & THE MOST-HIGHEST TESTAMENT IN ACTS OF THE APOSTLES LINKED TO ONLY YAHWEH, VICTOR OR JEHOVAH. PLUS, THERE ARE AT LEAST 14 LEVELS OF 14 UNIQUE LORDSHIPS FROM LUKE 22:1-ACTS 7:60 OF 14 OTHER LORD YAHWEH’S---14 OTHER LORD JEHOVAH’S---14 OTHER LORD VICTOR’S [14 OTHER LADY VICTORIA’S] THROUGHOUT MULTI-TRILLIONS OF YEARS OF BIBLICAL HISTORY AS SUPREME LORDS [LADIES] IN CREATION IN THE HOLY SCRIPTURES, BUT ON THE 15TH LEVEL IN ACTS 29:1-2 WITH AN ACTS 30, IS THE TRUE TOP ENGLISH LORD YAHWEH [LADY VICTORIA] HIMSELF THE SUPREME CREATOR OF THE TRUE TOP ENGLISH FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD THE SUPREME POTTER CREATOR OF ALL ENTIRE UNIVERSES IN THE ULTIMATE ENDING IN ACTS OF THE HOLY GHOST IN ACTS 1:7; 29:1-2 WITH AN ACTS 30. THE 14 SUPREME LORDS ALL KNOWN AS LORD YAHWEH’S IN CREATION IS PROVEN AS THE LORD YAHWEH IN THE ULTIMATE BEGINNING IN PROVERBS 8:22, LORD YAHWEH AS A CORRUPTION WITH THE PERSONAL NAME YAHWEH & THE TITLE NAME JEHOVAH IN PSALMS 83:18, LORD YAHWEH [LORD GOD] IN HOSEA 1:7; THE LORD YAHWEH IN JEWISH LAW FROM GENESIS TO DEUTERONOMY; 1 IN THE ANCIENT MANUSCRIPTS, PROVERBS 8:22-29 (RSV); PROVERBS 8:30-31; ACTS 7:30-32; MALACHI 3:1-2; ISAIAH 48:16; HEBREWS 1:8; ISAIAH 47:4-5, 1 IN THE EGYPTIAN EMPIRE RELIGION & THE LYING LORD YAHWEH IN THE ORIGINAL ONCE IN THE NUMBER 0 AT 00.0001% ETERNAL CORRUPTION IN 2ND CORINTHIANS 11:13-15 & 2ND THESSALONIANS 2:1-12].”**

**GOD’S INVISIBLE ATTRIBUTES AND VISIBLE ATTRIBUTES KNOWN AS THE LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH & HIS TITLE IS JEHOVAH**

**GOD’S PERSONAL BEING ATTRIBUTES KNOWN AS THE LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH & HIS TITLE IS JEHOVAH**

**HIS SPIRITUALITY (INCORPOREAL) - GOD IS A SPIRIT IN JOHN 4:21, 24; PSALM 139:7-10; 1ST KINGS 8:27; EXODUS 20:4-6; DEUTERONOMY 4:23-24; 1ST CORINTHIANS 14:14; PHILIPPIANS 1:23-24, 3:3; LUKE 23:46; ECCLESIASTES 12:7, HEBREWS 12:23 AND ACTS 6:3, 5; 7:55.**

**HIS INVISIBILITY- GOD IS INVISIBLE IN JOHN 1:18; 6:46; 1ST TIMOTHY 1:17, 6:16; 1ST JOHN 4:12, EXODUS 33:11, 20, 21-23; COLOSSIANS 1:15, PSALM 145:3 AND ACTS 6:15; 7:47-50.**

**HIS PHYSICALITY- THE TRUE GOD BECOMES FLESH IN JOHN 1:1-18, 14:9; GENESIS 1:27; PSALM 16:11, 19:1; ROMANS 1:20; MATTHEW 5:8; REVELATION 1:7, 4:2-3, 5; 5:6, 22:3-4; 1ST CORINTHIANS 13:12; 1ST JOHN 3:2, 2ND CORINTHIANS 3:18; ACTS 7:49; 17:29 & COLOSSIANS 2:9.**

**GOD’S PERSONAL MENTAL ATTRIBUTES KNOWN AS THE LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH & HIS TITLE IS JEHOVAH**

**HIS OMNISCIENCE- (GOD IS INFINITE KNOWLEDGE/INTELLIGENCE & WISDOM) GOD IS ALL KNOWING IN HIS WISDOM. GOD SHOWS HIS OMNISCIENCE IN THAT ALL THAT GOD CREATED ON THE EARTH WAS INDEED GOOD IN GENESIS 1:1-31; 1ST JOHN 3:20; JOB 28:24, 37:16; 1ST CORINTHIANS 2:10-11; HEBREWS 4:13; 2ND CHRONICLES 16:9; MATTHEW 6:8, 10:29-30, 11:23; ISAIAH 42:8-9, 43:25, 46:9-10, 55:9, PSALM 90:4, 139; 2ND PETER 3:8; JEREMIAH 19:5, 31:35; ROMANS 11:33 AND ACTS 6:10.**

**HIS WISDOM- (OMNISCIENCE) GOD IS ALL WISE OVER ALL IN ROMANS 8:28, 16:27; JOB 9:4, 12:13; PSALM 104:24; 1ST CORINTHIANS 1:18-20, 21, 24, 27, 29-30 ROMANS 11:33; EPHESIANS 3:6, 9, 10; PSALM 111:10; PROVERBS 1:7, 3:5-6, 9:10 1ST PETER 4:18-19, DEUTERONOMY 29:29 & ACTS 6:3, 10.**

**HIS TRUTHFULNESS- THE GOD IS THE WHOLE TRUTH AND CANNOT LIE AND DOES NOT LIE TO ANYONE IN JEREMIAH 10:10-11; JOHN 17:3, 17; 1ST JOHN 5:20; TITUS 1:2; HEBREWS 6:18; PSALM 12:6, 139:17; COLOSSIANS 3:9-10; EPHESIANS 4:25; 2ND CORINTHIANS 4:2; PSALM 19:14 EXODUS 20:16, ACTS 7:1-7:60 AND ZECHARIAH 8:17.**

**HIS FAITHFULNESS- GOD IS ALWAYS FAITHFUL IN NUMBERS 23:19; 2ND SAMUEL 7:28; PSALM 141:6; PROVERBS 12:22; ISAIAH 59:1 AND ACTS 7:60.**

**GOD’S PERSONAL MORAL ATTRIBUTES KNOWN AS THE LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH & HIS TITLE IS JEHOVAH**

**HIS GOODNESS- GOD IS GOOD IN FORMING THE UNIVERSE FOR HIS GLORY IN LUKE 6:27, 33-36, 18:19; PSALM 16:11, 34:8, 42:1-2, 73:25-26, 84:11, 100:5, 106:1, 107:1, 119:68, 145:9; GENESIS 1:31; ROMAN 8:32, 12:2; JAMES 1:17; ACTS 14:17; 1ST THESSALONIANS 5:18; GALATIANS 6:10; 2ND TIMOTHY 3:17 AND ACTS 6:3.**

**HIS OMNI-BENEVOLENCE (AGAPE LOVE) – GOD IS AGAPE LOVE IN 1ST JOHN 2:15, 4:8, 10, 19; 5:3; JOHN 3:16, 35, 14:31, 15:13, 17:24, 26; ROMANS 5:5, 8, 13:10; GALATIANS 2: 20; MATTHEW 5:43-48, 22:37-38; 1ST CORINTHIANS 13:4-7; HEBREWS 10:24 AND ACTS 7:60.**

**HIS MERCY (PATIENCE & GRACE) - GOD’S MERCY ENDURES FOREVER IN EXODUS 33:19, 34:6; 2ND SAMUEL 24:14; MATTHEW 5:7, 9:27; 2ND CORINTHIANS 1:3-4, 13:14; HEBREWS 2:17, 4:16; JAMES 1:19, 5:7-8, 11; ROMANS 1:7; 2:4; 3:23-24; 4:16; 8:25; 9:15, 22, 11:6; 16:20; PSALMS 119:132 (NASB); 1ST PETER 2:20; 3:20; 5:10; 1ST CORINTHIANS 1:3, 11, 15:10; 16:23; ACTS 14:26; GALATIANS 1:3; 5:22; 6:18; NUMBERS 14:18; PSALM 103:8; 145:8; JONAH 4:2; NAHUM 1:3; 1ST TIMOTHY 1:16; EPHESIANS 4:2; 2ND TIMOTHY 3:10; 4:2; REVELATION 2:2-3 AND ACTS 7:60 .**

**HIS HOLINESS- (IMPECCABILITY, INVINCIBILITY, IMPREGNABILITY & INVULNERABILITY) GOD IS MOST HOLY IN EXODUS 19:4-6; 20:11; 26:33; 29:44; 30:25-33; PSALM 24:3; 71:22; 89:18; 99:3, 5, 9; GENESIS 2:3; ISAIAH 1:4; 5:19, 24, 6:3; LEVITICUS 19:2; HEBREWS 12:10; 2ND CORINTHIANS 6:14-18; ROMANS 12:1; EPHESIANS 2:21; 5:26-27, ZECHARIAH 14:20-21; JUDITH 16:13; SOLOMON’S WISDOM 5:19 & ACTS 7:30-33.**

**HIS JEALOUSY- ZEALOUS GOD IN 2ND CORINTHIANS 11:2, EXODUS 34:14; DEUTERONOMY 4:24; 1ST CORINTHIANS 4:7; REVELATION 4:11, SOLOMON’S WISDOM 5:15-23, ISAIAH 48:11 & ACTS 6:8.**

**HIS WRATH- GOD IS ANGRY IN EXODUS 32:9-10; DEUTERONOMY 9:7-8, 29:23; 2ND KINGS 22:13; ROMANS 1:18-32; 2:4-5, 8; 3:25-26; 5:9, 10; 9:22; COLOSSIANS 3:6; 1ST THESSALONIANS 1:10; 2:16; 5:9; HEBREWS 1:9; 3:11; REVELATION 6:16-17; 19:15; ZECHARIAH 8:17; PSALM 103:8-9; 2ND PETER 3:9-10 AND ACTS 7:54.**

**HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS (IMPARTIAL JUSTICE) -GOD IS RIGHTEOUS IN DEUTERONOMY 32:4; GENESIS 18:25; PSALM 19:8; ISAIAH 45:19; ROMANS 3:25-26; 9:20-21; JOB 40:2, 8; 38:12, 34-35; 39:19, 26; 40:4 AND ACTS 6:5, 8.**

**HIS PEACE (ORDER) - GOD IS PEACE & THE WICKED HAS NO PEACE IN HEBREWS 13:20; 1ST CORINTHIANS 14:33; ROMANS 8:6; 14:17; 15:33; 16:20; PHILIPPIANS 4:9; 1ST THESSALONIANS 5:23; EPHESIANS 2:14; 2ND THESSALONIANS 3:16; ISAIAH 9:6-7; 26:3; 48:22; 57:19, 21; 54:11-12; 59:8; PSALM 29:11; 85:8; 119:165, 121:4; PROVERBS 3:17; JOHN 5:17, 14:27; GALATIANS 5:22-23; ACTS 9:31, & ACTS 7:47-7:50.**

**HIS INFINITUDE- GOD IS INFINITE, HE KNOWS NO BOUNDARIES & IS WITHOUT MEASURE IN ACTS 7:47-50; 17:24-25; 2ND CHRONICLES 2:6; 6:18; JOHN 21:25 AND 1ST KINGS 8:27.**

**HIS INFALLIBILITY (UN-MISTAKABLENESS & INERRANCY) GOD IS WITHOUT MISTAKES IN ACTS 1:3.**

**GOD’S PERSONAL PURPOSE ATTRIBUTES KNOWN AS THE LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH & HIS TITLE IS JEHOVAH**

**HIS OMNIPOTENCE- (ALMIGHTINESS, GREATNESS, SOVEREIGNTY & ALL-POWERFUL) IN PSALM 24:8; 115:3; MATTHEW 19:26; GENESIS 18:14; JEREMIAH 32:17, 27; EPHESIANS 3:20; 2ND CORINTHIANS 6:18; REVELATION 1:8; LUKE 1:37; EXODUS 32:10; TITUS 1:2; 2ND TIMOTHY 2:13; JAMES 1:13; JOB 38:1-41:34 AND ACTS 6:8.**

**HIS DIVINE WILL- HE HAS NECESSARY & FREE WILL IN EPHESIANS 1:10-11, 23; 3:9; 4:10; COLOSSIANS 1:16; ROMANS 11:36; 13:1; 1ST CORINTHIANS 4:19; 8:6; 15:27-28; REVELATION 4:11; DANIEL 4:32; 1ST PETER 3:17; 4:19; JAMES 4:13-15; ISAIAH 43:4; 48:9-11; ROMANS 1:10; 11:36; 15:32; 1ST CORINTHIANS 8:6; DEUTERONOMY 29:29; MATTHEW 6:10; 11:25-26; 12:50; 18:14; EPHESIANS**

**5:17; ROMANS 2:18; 1ST JOHN 5:14; 1ST TIMOTHY 2:4; 2ND PETER 3:9; GENESIS 50:20; ACTS 2:23; 21:14, EZEKIEL 33:11 AND ACTS 4:27-28.**

**HIS FREEDOM- GOD’S LIBERTY IS PSALM 115:3; PROVERBS 21:1, DANIEL 4:35 AND ACTS 7.**

**GOD’S OTHER PERSONAL INCOMMUNICABLE ATTRIBUTES KNOWN AS THE LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH & HIS TITLE IS JEHOVAH**

**HIS OMNIPRESENCE- (IMMENSITY OR UBIQUITY) GOD IS ALL PRESENT IN PSALM 139:7-10; GENESIS 1:1; DEUTERONOMY 10:14; JEREMIAH 23:23-24; ACTS 17:28; COLOSSIANS 1:17 AND ACTS 1:7.**

**HIS DIVINE PERFECTION (FULL OF WISDOM AND PERFECT IN BEAUTY) - GOD IS PERFECT IN MATTHEW 5:48; PSALM 18:30; JAMES 1:17; 2ND SAMUEL 22:31; DEUTERONOMY 32:4 AND ACTS 6:3.**

**HIS GLORY- GOD IS GLORIOUS IN ISAIAH 43:7; ROMANS 3:23; JOHN 17:5; HEBREWS 1:3; PSALM 24:10, 104:1-2; LUKE 2:9; MATTHEW 5:16, 17:2; REVELATION 21:23; 2ND CORINTHIANS 3:18; PHILIPPIANS 2:15; PROVERBS 4:18; DANIEL 12:3; MATTHEW 13:43; 1ST CORINTHIANS 15:43 AND ACTS 7:55-56.**

**HIS BLESSEDNESS- GOD IS BLESSED IN 1ST TIMOTHY 1:11; GENESIS 1:31; ISAIAH 62:5; PROVERBS 8:30-31; ZEPHANIAH 3:17; JAMES 1:17; 1ST CORINTHIANS 4:7 AND ACTS 7:60.**

**HIS BEAUTY- GOD IS ALL BEAUTIFUL IN PSALM 27:4, 73:25; REVELATION 22:4; 1ST PETER 3:4; TITUS 2:10; EPHESIANS 5:27 AND ACTS 6:10.**

**GOD’S IMMANENCE (HOLY INDEPENDENCE & TRANSCENDENCE)- HE IS NOT DEPENDENT ON ANYONE & THE MOST HOLIEST LORD IN HEBREWS 9:3, 5; JOB 41:11; PSALM 50:10-12; JOHN 1:3; 17:5, 24; REVELATION 4:11; ROMANS 11:35-36; 1ST CORINTHIANS 8:6; PSALM 90:2; EXODUS 3:14; EPHESIANS 1:11-12; ISAIAH 62:3-5; ZEPHANIAH 3:17-18 & ACTS 7:47-50; 17:24-25.**

**GOD’S IMMUTABILITY (UNCHANGEABLENESS) - GOD AS BEING ETERNAL IS THE SAME, TODAY, YESTERDAY AND FOREVER MORE IN PSALM 33:11; 102:25-27; JAMES 1:17; MATTHEW 13:35; 25:34; EPHESIANS 1:4, 11; 3:9, 11; 2ND TIMOTHY 2:19; 1ST PETER 1:20; REVELATION 13:8; ISAIAH 46:9-11; NUMBERS 23:19; 1ST SAMUEL 15:29 AND ACTS 9; 22; 26.**

**GOD’S RELENTING- GOD DOES CAN CHANGE HIS MIND IN EXODUS 32:9-14; JONAH 3:4-10; GENESIS 6:6-7; 18:23-33; 2ND SAMUEL 24:16; 1ST CHRONICLES 21:15; JEREMIAH 18:8; 26:3, 13, 19; 42:10; JOEL 2:13-14; AMOS 7:3, 9; JONAH 3:6, 9, 10; PSALMS 106:45 AND ACTS 7:51-53, 60. GOD DOES NOT RELENT IN 1ST SAMUEL 15:29; HEBREWS 7:21; ZECHARIAH 8:14; EZEKIEL 24:14 & JEREMIAH 15:6; 20:16.**

**GOD’S IMPASSIBILITY- GOD’S DIVINE PASSIONS IS HIS IMPASSIBILITY WITHOUT SEXUAL EROS LOVE PASSIONS IN ISAIAH 54:8; 62:5; PSALM 78:40, 103:17; EPHESIANS 4:30; EXODUS 32:10 AND ACTS 6:15; 14:15.**

**GOD’S PREEXISTENCE (ETERNAL) - GOD IS FOREVER & EVER IN PSALM 90:2; 1ST TIMOTHY 1:17; 6:16; 2ND TIMOTHY 1:10; WISDOM OF SOLOMON 1:15; 2:23; 4:1; 5:15-23; 8:17 & ACTS 1:7.**

**GOD’S PROVIDENCE (REPROBATION AND INTELLECT) – GOD IS IN CONTROL OF HIS PRESERVATION: JOHN 10:27; ROMANS 8:29; LUKE 5:18; 2ND TIMOTHY 4:13; JOHN 2:8; COLOSSIANS 1:17; ACTS 17:28; 2ND PETER 3:7; JOB 34:14-15. GOD IS IN CONTROL OF HIS CONCURRENCE: IN EPHESIANS 1:11; JOB 12:23; 14:5; 38:12, 22-30, 32; 39-41; PSALMS 18:34; 33:14-14; 75:6-7; 104:4, 14, 27-29; 127:3; 135:6, 7; 139:6; MATTHEW 5:45; 6:11, 26; 10:29; PROVERBS 16:9; 20:24; 21:1; 22:28; ACTS 14:16; 17:26; DANIEL 4:34-35; GALATIANS 1:15; 10:23; LUKE 1:52; 1ST CORINTHIANS 7:7; EZRA 1:1; 6:22 AND PHILIPPIANS 2:13. GOD IS ON CONTROL OF HIS GOVERNMENT. IN PSALMS 103:19; DANIEL 4:35; ROMANS 8:28; 11:36; PHILIPPIANS 2:10-11; 1ST CORINTHIANS 15:27; EPHESIANS 1:11 AND ACTS 7:49.**

**GOD’S IMPARTIAL SELF- GOD RESPECTS HIS OWN PERSON AS THE TRINITY AND THE LAW IN PSALMS 74:20; 119:6, 15, 117; 138:6; HEBREWS 11:26; 12:9; ISAIAH 17:7; ROMANS 13:1-10; LUKE 10:27; ACTS 5:34; EPHESIANS 5:33; JAMES 2:8-13; SIRACH 46:14; SOLOMON’S WISDOM 4:15; 1ST CORINTHIANS 6:1-11; GENESIS 4:4; EXODUS 2:25; LEVITICUS 26:9; 1ST KINGS 8:28. BUT TO THE REST, GOD IS NO RESPECTER OF PERSONS AND NOT PARTIAL IN JUDGMENT IN ACTS 10:34; SIRACH 35:12; DEUTERONOMY 1:7; 16:19; 2ND SAMUEL 14:14; 2ND CHRONICLES 19:7; PROVERBS 28:21; ROMANS 2:11; EPHESIANS 6:9; COLOSSIANS 3:25; JAMES 2:1, 3, 9 AND 1ST PETER 1:17.**

**FATHER STEPHEN’S TIME KNOWN AS THE LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH & HIS TITLE IS JEHOVAH**

**GOD’S TIMELESSNESS IN OWN BEING IN JOB 36:26; REVELATION 1:8, 4:8; JOHN 1:3, 8:58; EXODUS 3:14; 1ST CORINTHIANS 8:6; COLOSSIANS 1:16; HEBREWS 1:2; GENESIS 1:1 AND ACTS 1:6-7.**

**GOD’S TIME SEEN EQUALLY KNOWN AS THE LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH & HIS TITLE IS JEHOVAH**

**HIS TIME DOES NOT CHANGE IN 2ND PETER 3:8; PSALM 90; ISAIAH 45:21; 46:9-10 AND ACTS 1:6-8.**

**GOD’S UNITY KNOWN AS THE LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH & HIS TITLE IS JEHOVAH**

**GOD IS UNIFIED IN 1ST JOHN 1:5; 4:8; ISAIAH 7:14; MATTHEW 1:23; EXODUS 34:6-7 AND ACTS 7:59.**

**GOD’S LIMITATIONS CONCERNING HIMSELF (GOD IS THE “UNLYING GOD” IN TITUS 1:2 & HEBREWS 6:18)**

**GOD CANNOT LOOK UPON SIN IN MATTHEW 27:46; MARK 15:34, BUT GOOD IN GENESIS 1; HE THINKS NO EVIL IN 1ST CORINTHIANS 13:5 & NEVER LIES IN ROMANS 3:4; GOD CAN’T BE TEMPTED & HE TEMPTS NO ONE IN JAMES 1:13 AND GOD CANNOT DENY HIMSELF IN 2ND TIMOTHY 2:13.**

**GOD’S SOVEREIGNTY KNOWN AS THE LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH & HIS TITLE IS JEHOVAH**

**GOD’S SOVEREIGNTY IN GENESIS 1:1 DECLARES HIS REALM AS THE TRANSCENDENT RULE THAT GOES BEYOND THE PHYSICAL UNIVERSE, HIS REIGN IS THE POWER HE RULES BY HIS WORKS, HIS HEART, HIS WILL, HIS REGENCY IS THE AUTHORITY TO RULE ON HIS HOLINESS & PREEXISTENCE IN ACTS 1:7.**

**GOD’S WORTHINESS KNOWN AS THE LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH & HIS TITLE IS JEHOVAH**

**GOD THROUGHOUT THE SCRIPTURE SHOWS HIS HOLINESS, POWER, WISDOM, GLORY, STRENGTH, RICHES, GRACE, RIGHTEOUSNESS (IMPARTIAL JUSTICE), FAITHFULNESS, TRUTH, HOLINESS, HONOR, THANKS, THANKSGIVING, MIGHT, BLESSING & MAJESTY IN REVELATION 4:9, 11; 5:12-13; 7:12.**

**GOD’S DIVINE NATURE KNOWN AS THE LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH & HIS TITLE IS JEHOVAH**

**GOD’S DIVINE NATURE IS DISPLAYED THROUGH JOHN 1:1 WHEN GOD BECAME FLESH. THE FRUITS OF GOD’S TOTAL DIVINE NATURE IN AGAPE LOVE, JOY, STRENGTH, PEACE, LONGSUFFERING, MEEKNESS, GOODNESS, GENTLENESS, KINDNESS, FAITH, AND SELF- CONTROL (TEMPERANCE) IN GALATIANS 5:22. ALSO IN ACTS 7:30-32; 17:23-34; ROMANS 1:20; 2ND PETER 1:4.**

**GOD’S CONTROLLED PROVIDENCE KNOWN AS THE LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH & HIS TITLE IS JEHOVAH**

**GOD’S PROVIDENCE IN THE WHOLE LAW OF MOSES IS DISPLAYED THROUGH HIS HOLINESS IN GENESIS TO THE BOOK OF DEUTERONOMY. MOSES’ ERROR DOES SHOW GOD’S CONTROL IN LAW FOR 120 YEARS. GOD’S PERFECT CONTROL IN THE WHOLE POWER IS DISPLAYED THROUGH HIS TOTAL OMNISCIENCE IN THE BOOK OF JOB. JOB’S IGNORANCE SHOWS THAT GOD IS ALL KNOWING AND HE SEES EVERYTHING THAT CREATION DOES. GOD SURELY DOES UPHOLD THE UNIVERSE BY HIS PERFECT WORD OF OMNIPOTENCE THROUGH CHRIST DECLARED IN HEBREWS 1:3. PAUL SAYS OF CHRIST THAT IN HIM ALL THINGS COME TOGETHER IN COLOSSIANS 1:7. PETER SAYS “THE HEAVENS & EARTH THAT EXIST “ARE BEING KEPT UNTIL THE DAY OF JUDGMENT” IN 2ND PETER 3:7. PAUL SAYS, “IN HIM WE LIVE & MOVE & HAVE OUR BEING” IN ACTS 17:28.**

**GOD’S WORKS: APPOINTMENT KNOWN AS THE LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH & HIS TITLE IS JEHOVAH**

**GOD APPOINTS APOSTLES, PROPHETS, TEACHERS, EVANGELISTS (MIRACLE WORKER), GIFTS OF HEALINGS, HELPS, ADMINISTRATIONS AND VARIETIES OF TONGUES IN THE CHURCH OF GOD IN 1ST CORINTHIANS 12:28. GOD EQUIPS IN THE CHURCH TO DISCOVER & DO HIS WILL IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD IN ACTS 1:1-28:31.**

**OTHER DIVINE WORKS OF GOD KNOWN AS THE LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH & HIS TITLE IS JEHOVAH**

**SIGNS ARE PERFORMED BY GOD IN THE EARTH TO SHOW HIS CONTROL OF THE PHYSICAL REALM AND TO ACCOMPLISH WHAT HE WANTS DONE IN EXISTENCE IN HEBREWS 2:4; 2ND CORINTHIANS 12:12; ACTS 4:30, 5:12, 6:8, 15:12; ROMANS 15:19; 1ST CORINTHIANS 1:22-24 AND REVELATION 12:1-2.**

**WONDERS ARE PERFORMED BY GOD IN HEAVEN TO SHOW THINGS TO HIS MINISTERING SPIRITS AND HIS CONTROL IN THE CELESTIAL REALMS AND THE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF HIS WILL AMONG THE ANGELS (LORDS) IN ACTS 2:22; 4:30, 5:12, 6:8, 15:12; ROMANS 15:19; AND HEBREWS 2:4.**

**MIRACLES ARE DONE THROUGH GOD’S ANOINTING TO SHOW HOW GOD CAN MAKE A WAY WHEN THERE IS NO WAY IN THE PHYSICAL. IT IS HIS PROVIDENCE AND RIGHT TO DO THESE THINGS IN HIS WORD IN MATTHEW 5:45, 10:8; PSALM 104:14; HEBREWS 1:3, 2:4; 1ST KINGS 17:1, 18:41-45; ACTS 2:43, 3:6-10, 4:30; 6:8, 8:6-8, 13; 9:36-42; 19:11-12, 1ST CORINTHIANS 12:4-11, 28, 14:4, 12, 26; GALATIANS 3:5; LUKE 9:49-50; 10:1, 9, 17-19; AND 2ND CORINTHIANS 10:3-4.**

**HEALINGS ARE PERFORMED BY GOD TO CURE ALL DISEASES, SICKNESS, OR PLAGUES TO SHOW HIS AGAPE LOVE TO HIS CREATIONS IN LUKE 4:40; MATTHEW 8:15; 4:23; 10:7-8; 9:35; 14:14; 20:30, 34; ACTS 6:8; 8:6-7, 13; 19:11-12, 28:8.**

**REVELATIONS ARE DONE BY GOD TO SHOW HIS DIVINE ATTRIBUTES ON A PARTICULAR SUBJECT & TO DEMONSTRATE HIS PURPOSE IN THE REVELATION BOOK TO JOHN THE REVELATOR, HEBREWS 1:1-14 & ACTS 2:7-21; 9; 22; 26.**

**DREAMS ARE DONE BY GOD TO SHOW THINGS IN THE PAST, PRESENT OR FUTURISTIC EVENTS THAT GOD WANTS TO BE REVEALED AND TO SHOW MAN’S FRAILTY AND GOD’S IMMUTABILITY IN GENESIS 41:1-36; DANIEL 2:1-13; 4:1-27 AND ACTS 2:17.**

**VISIONS ARE DONE BY GOD TO SHOW THE HEAVENLY REALMS TO MAN & TO UNDERSTAND THE ANGELS (LORDS) IN EZEKIEL 1, 10; REVELATION 4:1-10; GENESIS 3:24; ISAIAH 6:2; JUDE 9; PSALM 99:1, ZECHARIAH 1:18-21; 2:1-5; 3:1-5; 4:1-14; 5:1-11; 6:1-8; ACTS 2:17; 12:9; 2ND BARUCH P. 509; 4TH EZRA P. 515-516; THE ASCENSION OF ISAIAH PAGES 524-521 & 1ST ENOCH PAGES 485-494.**

**TONGUES & INTERPRETATIONS OF TONGUES: GOD’S VOICE SHOWS HIS OMNISCIENCE AND TO ALLOW SPECIAL PEOPLE WHO ARE CALLED TO UNDERSTAND WHAT GOD IS REALLY SAYING IN GENESIS 41:14-57; DANIEL 2:24-45; 4:19-27 AND ACTS 2.**

**GOD’S CREATIVE WORKS KNOWN AS THE LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH & HIS TITLE IS JEHOVAH**

**DONE BY THE LORD YAHWEH THE CREATOR OF THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD- QANAH DIRECTED TO THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD- THIS IS A HOLY DIVINE LOVE NATURE & NOT A SEXUAL EROS LOVE NATURE IN PROVERBS 8:22-29 (RSV).**

**THE 8 CREATION PROCESSES ARE DONE BY THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD THE POTTER CREATOR OF THE ENTIRE UNIVERSE IS IN JOHN 1:1-5, 14; 8:58; HEBREWS 1:1-3; ISAIAH 64:8; DEUTERONOMY 32:6; GENESIS 1:1; PROVERBS 8:22-29; ROMANS 13:1-10 & EPHESIANS 4:6.**

**DONE BY THE LORD YAHWEH- QANAH- TO CREATE IN PROVERBS 8:22-29 IN THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD & THE MOST-HIGHEST SON’S OF GOD**

**DONE BY THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD- BARA- TO CREATE IN GENESIS 1:1 IN THE MARRIED WISDOM LORD, 60 LORD’S & THE HIGHEST SON’S OF GOD**

**DONE BY THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD- ASAH- TO MAKE IN GENESIS 1:7 IN LUCIFER & THE HIGHER SON’S OF GOD**

**DONE BY THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD- NATHAN- TO SET IN GENESIS 1:17 IN MICHAEL & THE HIGH SON’S OF GOD**

**DONE BY THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD- YATSAR- TO FORM IN GENESIS 2:7 IN ADAM THE MAN AND THE WORLD OF MANKIND**

**DONE BY THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD- BANAH- TO MAKE OR BUILD IN GENESIS 2:22 IN EVE THE WOMAN AND WOMANKIND**

**DONE BY THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD- QANAH- TO CREATE, POSSESS & ACQUIRE IN GENESIS 4:1 IN ADAM & EVE’S DIVINE UNION**

**DONE BY THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD- HIDDEN BARA- TO CREATE SECRET IN WOMB IN GENESIS 4:1 IN CAIN THE CHILD AND CHILD KIND**

**GOD’S 4-FOLD WITNESSES KNOWN AS THE LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH & HIS TITLE IS JEHOVAH**

**THE WATER, BLOOD, & SPIRIT ARE THE WITNESS ON THE EARTH IN 1ST JOHN 5:8. THE HOLY SPIRIT, WORD, FATHER ARE THE WITNESS IN HEAVEN IN 1ST JOHN 5:7. THE HOLY GHOST, SON, & THE FATHER ARE THE WITNESS IN GOD IN 1ST JOHN 5:10-13.**

**GOD’S PERSON: GOD IS THREE PERSONS IN ONE. THEY ARE THE FATHER STEPHEN, SON JESUS, & HOLY GHOST (BROTHER JOHN). THIS MEANS THE FATHER OR SON IS NOT THE SAME PERSON, OR THE HOLY SPIRIT OR THE FATHER IS NOT THE SAME PERSON BUT THREE DISTINCTIVE PERSONS IN ONE GOD IN MATTHEW 28:19; 1ST JOHN 5:7; JUDE 20-21; 1ST PETER 1:2, 2ND CORINTHIANS 13:14. THE THREE PERSONS ARE FULLY GOD IN JOHN 1:1-4; 20:28. THERE IS ONE GOD DECLARED IN EXODUS 15:11; ISAIAH 45:5-6 & ROMANS 3:30. SINCE THERE ARE THREE DISTINCT PERSONS OF THE GOD-HEAD, THERE ARE THREE PHYSICAL PERSONS AS GOD’S DEITY. THIS INCLUDES JOHN THE BAPTIST THE PHYSICAL WITNESS AND REPRESENTATIVE OF THE HOLY GHOST OF GOD IN GOD’S WITNESS IN JOHN 1:6-13, 5:31-47, ALSO JESUS CHRIST THE PHYSICAL WITNESS & REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SON OF GOD IN GOD’S WITNESS IN JOHN 5:31-47, & STEPHEN THE LORD THE PHYSICAL WITNESS AND REPRESENTATIVE AS THE FATHER ABOVE ALL BECOMING FLESH IN JOHN 1-18, 5:31-47. JOHN’S TIME LEADING HIM TO THE BEHEADING IN LUKE 1-9 AND JESUS CHRIST’S TIME LEADING HIM TO THE CROSS IN LUKE 1-24 AND IN ACTS 1-8 IS STEPHEN’S TIME BEING, LEAD TO THE STONING. TRINITY IS PROVEN IN ACTS 17:29; ROMANS 1:20, 8:12-17; COLOSSIANS 2:9; 2ND PETER 1:4 AND 1ST JOHN 5:6-13.**

**GOD’S RESURRECTIONS FROM THE DEAD: THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD RAISES JEHOVAH FROM THE DEAD (DIED TO SELF ONLY) IN ZECHARIAH 2:13. THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD RAISES PETER FROM THE DEAD (ETERNAL DEATH) IN JOHN 5:24-30. THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD RAISES JOHN FROM THE DEAD (ETERNAL DEATH) IN LUKE 9:7-9. THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD RAISES JESUS FROM THE DEAD (ETERNAL DEATH) IN LUKE 24 & ACTS 2:24, 32; 3:15, 26; 13:30. THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD RAISES JAMES FROM THE DEAD (ETERNAL DEATH) IN LUKE 20:35-37. THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD RAISES STEPHEN FROM THE DEAD (ETERNAL DEATH) IN ACTS OF THE APOSTLES IN ACTS 8:3. THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD RAISES STEPHEN FROM THE DEAD (ETERNAL DEATH) IN ACTS OF THE HG IN ACTS 8:3. THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD RAISES YAHWEH FROM THE DEAD (DIED TO SELF ONLY) IN ACTS 17:31. THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD RAISES ENOCH FROM THE DEAD (DIED TO SELF ONLY) IN HEBREWS 11:5. THE LORD YAHWEH (NOT THE YAHWEH IN SUPREME AUTHORITY IN THE HOLY SCRIPTURE, BUT THE YAHWEH ABOVE & BEYOND THE SUPREME AUTHORITY---ROMANS 13:1-2 & 2ND TIMOTHY 3:16-17 AND THE SUPREME LORDSHIP---MATTHEW 24:36-44; MARK 13:32-37; EPHESIANS 4:6 & ACTS 30) RAISES STEPHEN YAHWEH FROM THE DEAD (DIED TO SELF ONLY) IN ACTS 30.**

**GOD’S THRONE KNOWN AS THE LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH & HIS TITLE IS JEHOVAH**

**THROUGH CHURCH ACCORDING TO HIS FLESH PUTS JEHOVAH ON HIS THRONE IN MATTHEW 16:18. THROUGH JACOB ACCORDING TO HIS FLESH PUTS PETER ON HIS THRONE IN MATTHEW 16:17-19. THROUGH SAUL ACCORDING TO HIS FLESH PUTS JOHN ON HIS THRONE IN 1ST SAMUEL 9:1-31:13. THROUGH DAVID ACCORDING TO HIS FLESH PUTS CHRIST ON HIS THRONE IN ACTS 2:30; 1ST SAMUEL 16:1-1ST KINGS 2:12. THROUGH REHOBOAM ACCORDING TO HIS FLESH PUTS JAMES ON HIS THRONE IN 2ND CHRONICLES 11:17. THROUGH JEROBOAM ACCORDING TO HIS FLESH PUTS STEPHEN ON HIS THRONE IN 2ND KINGS 13:13. THROUGH SOLOMON ACCORDING TO HIS FLESH PUTS STEPHEN ON HIS THRONE IN 1ST KINGS 14:21-31. THROUGH JOB ACCORDING TO HIS FLESH PUTS ENOCH ON HIS THRONE IN JOB 36:7. THROUGH ENOCH ACCORDING TO HIS FLESH PUTS STEPHEN YAHWEH ON HIS THRONE IN HEBREWS 11:5. THROUGH STEPHEN YAHWEH ACCORDING TO HIS FLESH PUTS YAHWEH HIMSELF (NOT THE YAHWEH IN SUPREME AUTHORITY IN THE HOLY SCRIPTURE, BUT THE YAHWEH ABOVE & BEYOND THE SUPREME AUTHORITY---ROMANS 13:1-2 & 2ND TIMOTHY 3:18-17 AND THE SUPREME LORDSHIP---MATTHEW 24:36-44; MARK 13:32-37; EPHESIANS 4:6 & ACTS 30) ON HIS THRONE IN EPHESIANS 4:6 & ACTS 30.**

**GOD’S CREATIVE IDENTITIES OF HIMSELF KNOWN AS THE LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH & HIS TITLE IS JEHOVAH AS THE ARCHANGEL ON EARTH AND AS THE CHERUBIM IN HEAVEN.**

**THE 1 PERIMETER OF THE TOP CHERUBIMS**

**STEPHEN- (CROWN) – ACTS OF THE HG IN ACTS 6:15.**

**STEPHEN- (CROWN) – ACTS OF THE APOSTLES IN ACTS 6:15.**

**METATRON- (HIGHEST YOUTH & MEDIATOR) -- THE OTHER HOLY BIBLE: HAGGADAH PAGE 17**

**ENOCH- (PLEASING) – GENESIS 5:24 & 2ND ENOCH PAGE 500**

**JESUS-(SAVOIR) – REVELATION 22:16**

**MICHAEL- (WHO IS LIKE GOD) -- JUDE 9; REVELATION 12:7-8; DANIEL 10:13, 21; BARTHOLOMEW PAGE 358**

**LUCIFER- (LIGHT-BEARER---PRIOR TO HIS FALL) -- PROVERBS 8:30-31**

**HELEL- (DAYSTAR) – ISAIAH 14:12**

**GABRIEL- (STRENGTH) – DANIEL 8:16; 9:21; LUKE 1:19, 26-27.**

**ELIJAH- (MY GOD IS YAH) -- 2ND KINGS 2:11**

**URIEL- (FIRE) – 2ND ESDRAS 4**

**RAPHAEL OR AZARIAH- (HEALING) – TOBIT 5:13**

**JEREMIEL OR RAMIEL- (MERCY) – 2ND ESDRAS 4**

**REMPHAN OR REPHAN- (PRAISE) – ACTS 7:43**

**RIMIEL (RESURRECTION) – 1ST ENOCH 20:8**

**SARAQAEL- (GOD’S PRINCE) – 1ST ENOCH 20:4**

**RASUIL- (RAGUIL) -- 1ST ENOCH 20:6**

**PRAVUIL- (SECRET IDENTITY) -- THE OTHER HOLY BIBLE: 2ND ENOCH PAGE 500**

**GOD’S GIFTS OF THE HOLY GHOST (BROTHER JOHN CHRIST) KNOWN AS THE LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH & HIS TITLE IS JEHOVAH & THE SON JESUS CHRIST KNOWN AS THE LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH & HIS TITLE IS JEHOVAH IN 1ST CORINTHIANS 12:28**

**1. APOSTLE. 2. PROPHET. 3. TEACHER. 4. MIRACLES. 5. KINDS OF HEALINGS. 6. HELPS. 7. ADMINISTRATIONS. 8. VARIETIES OF TONGUES.**

**GOD’S GIFTS OF THE HOLY GHOST (BROTHER JOHN CHRIST) KNOWN AS THE LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH & HIS TITLE IS JEHOVAH IN 1ST CORINTHIANS 12:8-10.**

**1. WORD OF WISDOM. 2. WORD OF KNOWLEDGE. 3. FAITH. 4. GIFTS OF HEALINGS. 5. MIRACLES. 6. PROPHESY. 7. DISCERNING OF SPIRITS. 8. TONGUES. 9. INTERPRETATION OF TONGUES.**

**GOD’S GIFTS OF THE SON JESUS CHRIST KNOWN AS THE LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH & HIS TITLE IS JEHOVAH IN EPHESIANS 4:11; 1ST CORINTHIANS 7:7.**

**1. APOSTLE. 2. PROPHET. 3. EVANGELIST. 4. PASTOR. 5. TEACHER. 6. MISSIONARY. 7. MARRIAGE. 8. CELIBACY.**

**GIFTS OF THE FATHER STEPHEN CHRIST KNOWN AS THE LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH & HIS TITLE IS JEHOVAH IN ROMANS 12:6-8**

**1. PROPHESY. 2. SERVING (SINGLE HEAVENLY DEACONATE). 3. MINISTRY. 4. TEACHING. 5. ENCOURAGING OR EXHORTATION. 6. CONTRIBUTING OR GIVING. 7. LEADERSHIP. 8. MERCY.**

**GOD’S EXISTENCE KNOWN AS THE LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH & HIS TITLE IS JEHOVAH TO HUMANITY**

**GOD EXISTS IN ROMANS 1:18-19, 21-25, 28, 32; 8:15; PSALM 10:3-4; EPHESIANS 3:17; 1ST PETER 1:8; PHILIPPIANS 3:8, 10; COLOSSIANS 1:27; JOHN 14:23, AND ACTS 7:47-50; 17:23-26.**

**WE CAN NEVER FULLY UNDERSTAND GOD KNOWN AS THE LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH & HIS TITLE IS JEHOVAH**

**IN PSALM 139:6, 17-18; 145:3; 147:5; 1ST CORINTHIANS 2:10-12; ROMANS 11:33; ISAIAH 55:9; JOB 11:7-9; 26:14; 37:5, COLOSSIANS 1:10 AND ACTS 1:7.**

**WE CAN KNOW GOD KNOWN AS THE LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH & HIS TITLE IS JEHOVAH TRULY:**

**IN 1ST JOHN 1:5; 2:3, 13, 4:8; 5:20; JOHN 4:24; 14:23; ROMANS 3:26; PSALM 139:17; JOHN 17:3; JEREMIAH 9:23-24; HEBREWS 8:11; GALATIANS 4:9 AND ACTS 6:5; 7:55, 59.**

**WHY DOES GOD KNOWN AS THE LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH & HIS TITLE IS JEHOVAH WANT US TO PRAY TO HIM AND GIVE 10% OF ALL TITHES AND 100.0001% SACRIFICES & 100.0001% OFFERINGS TO HIM?**

**PRAYER & 10% OF REVENUE ARE TO THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD TO WHAT IS NEEDED FOR ALL IN MALACHI 3:6-15; LUKE 11:2-4, 9-10, 2ND ESDRAS 9:25,44; MATTHEW 6:9-13; 21:22; JAMES 1:6; 5:15; SIRACH 37:15; 39:5; 2ND MACCABEES 1:24; JUDITH 9:12; HEBREWS 7:1-10 & ACTS 7:59-60.**

**GOD IS AS ANGEL OF THE LORD IN JOHN 1:1 BECOMING CREATIVE FLESH AND CALLED THE ANGEL (LORD) OF THE LORD IN GENESIS 16:10, 13; 22:12; 31:11, 13; EXODUS 3:2, 6; 2ND SAMUEL 24:16; PSALM 34:7; ZECHARIAH 1:11-13, LUKE 1:11 AND ACTS 6:5, 15; 7:30-32.**

**ANGELS WITNESSES WERE FASHIONED BY GOD IN NEHEMIAH 9:6; PSALM 148:2, 5; COLOSSIANS 1:16; 2ND PETER 2:4; JUDE 6; ACTS 12:6-11; REVELATION 4:11, 5:11; HEBREWS 1:14, 12:22, 13:2; LUKE 2:13, 24:39; NUMBERS 22:31; 2ND KINGS 6:17 AND PSALM 34:7; 91:11.**

**NAMES OF GOD KNOWN AS THE LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH & HIS TITLE IS JEHOVAH AS THE ANGEL OF THE LORD**

**SONS OF GOD- JOB 1:6; 2:1, HOLY ONES- PSALM 89:5, 7- SPIRITS- HEBREWS 1:14; WATCHERS- DANIEL 4:13, 17, 23; THRONES, DOMINIONS, PRINCIPALITIES, AUTHORITIES- COLOSSIANS 1:16; POWERS- EPHESIANS 1:21 AND CHERUBIM- GENESIS 3:24; PSALM 18:10; EZEKIEL 10:1-12; EXODUS 25:18-22; SERAPHIM- ISAIAH 6:2-7; LIVING CREATURES- EZEKIEL 1:5-14; REVELATION 4:6-8; BROTHER’S- TOBIT 6:14; YOUNG MAN’S- TOBIT 5:10 AND FATHER’S IN HEBREWS 1:5.**

**SOME OF GOD’S NAMES ALSO KNOWN AS THE LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH & HIS TITLE IS JEHOVAH IN THE TANACH AND NT**

**EL: THE MIGHTY, STRONG & PROMINENT USED IN GEN. 7:1; 28:3; 35:11; NUM. 23:22; JOSH. 3:10; 2ND SAMUEL 22:31, 32; NEH. 1:5; 9:32; EZEK. 10:5; JER. 10:11; JOB 3:4-40:2 & ACTS 6:8.**

**ELOHIM: THE ONLY CREATOR, PRESERVER, TRANSCENDENT, MIGHTY, AND STRONG USED IN GENESIS 17:7; 6:18; 9:15; 50:24; 1ST KINGS 8:23; JEREMIAH 31:33; ISAIAH 40:1 AND ACTS 17.**

**EL SHADDAI: THE ALMIGHTY AND ALL SUFFICIENT USED IN GENESIS 17:1, 2; 31:29; 49:24, 25; PROVERBS 3:27; MICAH 2:1; ISAIAH 60:15, 16; 66:10-13; RUTH 1:20-21; REVELATION 16:7 AND ACTS 7:22.**

**EL-ELYLON OR HELEYON OR HUPSISTOS: THE LORD IS THE HIGHEST, CROWN AND MOST HIGH USED IN DEUTERONOMY 26:19; 32:8; PSALMS 18:13; GENESIS 14:18; NUMBERS 24:16; PSALMS 7:17; 18:13; 78:35, 56; 97:9; 56:2; DANIEL 7:25, 27; ISAIAH 14:14 & ACTS 6:5, 8-9; 7:59; 8:2; 11:19; 22:20.**

**EL-ROI: THE LORD WHO SEES USED IN GENESIS 16:13 AND ACTS 7:55-56.**

**EL-OLAM: THE LORD THE EVERLASTING GOD USED IN GENESIS 21:23; DANIEL 7:9, 13, 22; ISAIAH 40:28-31.**

**EL-BETHEL: GOD OF THE HOUSE OF GOD USED IN GENESIS 35:7.**

**EL-EMUNAH: THE FAITHFUL GOD USED IN DEUTERONOMY 7:9.**

**EL-MAROM: GOD MOST HIGH USED IN MICAH 6:6.**

**EL-KANNA OR EL KANNO: THE JEALOUS GOD USED IN EXODUS 20:5 & JOSHUA 24:19.**

**ADONAI: THE MASTER OR LORD USED IN GENESIS 15:2; EXODUS 4:10; JUDGES 6:15; 2ND SAMUEL 7:18-20; PSALMS 8, 114:7; 135:5; 141:8; 109:21-28, DANIEL 9 AND ACTS 7:60.**

**ALAM: THE SECRET NAME FOR GOD**

**JEHOVAH: YAHWEH OR KURIOS OR DESPOTES USED IN DANIEL 9:14; PSALMS 11:7; LEVITICUS 19:2; HABAKKUK 1:12; DEUTERONOMY 6:4, 5; LUKE 2:29; ACTS 4:24; 2ND PETER 2:1; JUDE 4, REVELATION 6:10 AND ACTS 7:60.**

**JEHOVAH-JIREH: THE LORD OUR PROVIDER USED IN GENESIS 22:14 AND ACTS 6:8.**

**JEHOVAH-ROPHE: THE LORD OUR HEALER USED IN EXODUS 15:22-26; JEREMIAH 30:17; ISAIAH 61:1 AND ACTS 6:8.**

**JEHOVAH-NISSI: THE LORD OUR BANNER USED IN EXODUS 17:15; PSALMS 4:6 AND ACTS 7:22.**

**JEHOVAH-M’KADDESH: THE LORD OUR SANCTIFIER USED IN LEVITICUS 20:8 AND ACTS 6:3.**

**JEHOVAH-SHALOM: THE LORD OUR PEACE USED IN JUDGES 6:24; DEUTERONOMY 27:6; DANIEL 5:26; 1ST KINGS 8:61; 9:25; GENESIS 15:16; EXODUS 21:34; 22:5, 6; LEVITICUS 7:11-21 AND ACTS 7:47-50.**

**JEHOVAH-ELOHIM: THE LORD GOD OR THEOS USED IN GENESIS 2:4; JUDGES 5:3; ISAIAH 17:6; ZEPHANIAH 2:9; PSALMS 59:5 AND ACTS 7:60.**

**JEHOVAH-EL ELOHIM: THE LORD GOD OF GODS USED IN JOSHUA 22:22.**

**JEHOVAH ELOHE ABOTHEKEM: THE LORD GOD OF YOUR FATHERS USED IN JOSHUA 18:3.**

**JEHOVAH EL GEMUWAL: THE LORD GOD OF RECOMPENSES USED IN JEREMIAH 51:56.**

**JEHOVAH EL EMETH: LORD GOD OF TRUTH USED IN PSALMS 31:5.**

**JEHOVAH ELOHE YESHUATHI: LORD GOD OF MY SALVATION USED IN PSALMS 41:13.**

**JEHOVAH ELOHE YISREAL: THE LORD GOD OF ISRAEL USED IN PSALMS 41:13.**

**JEHOVAH-TSIDKENU: THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS USED IN JEREMIAH 23:5, 6; 33:16 & ACTS 6:5, 8.**

**JEHOVAH-ROHI: THE LORD OUR SHEPHERD USED IN PSALMS 23 AND ACTS 6:8.**

**JEHOVAH-SHAMMAH: THE LORD IS THERE USED IN EZEKIEL 48:35 AND ACTS 7:49-50.**

**JEHOVAH-SABAOTH: THE LORD OF ARMY HOSTS USED IN ISAIAH 1:24; 46:7; 11:2; 2ND KINGS. 3:9-12; JEREMIAH 11:20; ROMANS 9:29; JAMES 5:4; REVELATION 19:11-16 & ACTS 7:30-32.**

**JEHOVAH-TSEBAOTH: THE LORD GOD OF HOSTS (CAMPS) USED IN PSALMS 59:5 AND ISAIAH 28:22.**

**JEHOVAH-GMOLAH: THE LORD OF RECOMPENSE USED IN JEREMIAH 51:6.**

**JEHOVAH-HOSEENU: THE LORD OUR MAKER USED IN PSALMS 95:6; HEBREWS 11:10 & EPHESIANS 2:22.**

**JEHOVAH-MAGINNENU: THE LORD OUR DEFENSE USED IN PSALMS 89:18.**

**JEHOVAH-ELOHE ABOTHEKEM: THE LORD GOD OF YOUR FATHERS USED IN JOSHUA 18:3.**

**JEHOVAH-ADON KOL HA-ARETS: THE LORD, THE LORD OF ALL THE EARTH USED IN JOSHUA 3:11.**

**THE FATHER STEPHEN’S 13TH SUPREME DEFENSE (DANIEL, ESDRAS, ETC. & ALL THE PROPHETS) IN THE ULTIMATE BEGINNING IS 156 LEGIONS OF ANGELS [936,000 TIMES 185,000 TIMES 100,000 IN RELENTING] BY GOING ONE MILE GO TWAIN [3], WHICH CAN SAVE OR DESTROY 51,948,000,000,000,000 QUADRILLION IN RELENTING OF 100,000 IN JUDE 14-15**

**IN ACTS 7:51-53 DECLARES “YOU STIFF-NECKED [STUBBORN] AND UNCIRCUMCISED IN HEART AND EARS! YOU ALWAYS RESIST THE HOLY GHOST (LORD JOHN), AS YOUR FATHERS DID, SO DO YOU [LAW]. WHICH OF THE PROPHETS DID YOUR FATHERS NOT PERSECUTE? AND THEY KILLED THOSE WHO FORETOLD THE COMING OF THE JUST ONE (LORD JESUS & LORD JAMES), OF WHOM YOU NOW HAVE BECOME THE BETRAYERS AND MURDERERS, WHO HAVE RECEIVED THE LAW BY THE DIRECTION OF ANGELS AND HAVE NOT KEPT IT. WHEN THEY HEARD THESE THINGS THAT WERE CUT [FURIOUS] TO THE HEART, AND THEY GNASHED AT HIM [LORD STEPHEN] WITH THEIR TEETH.”**

**STEPHEN YAHWEH’S TOP TEMPLE**

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**THE BOOK OF ISAIAH**

**THE LORD ISAIAH’S NAME MEANS “STEPHEN YAHWEH IS SALVATION.” THE SCRIPTURE REFERENCES OF THE LORD ISAIAH IS IN 2ND KINGS CHAPTERS 19-20; 2ND CHRONICLES 26:22; 32:30-32; ISAIAH 20:2-3; 38:21.**

**THE LORD ISAIAH’S ROLE IN SCRIPTURE: THE LORD ISAIAH WAS A PROPHET OF JUDAH, THE SOUTHERN KINGDOM. THE PREACHING OF ISAIAH WITH MICAH AND KING HEZEKIAH, LED TO A RELIGIOUS REVIVAL IN JUDAH. MANY OF THE LORD ISAIAH’S MESSAGES FOCUS ON JUDAH’S SIN AND INJUSTICE AND SHOWS HOW THE GREAT SPIRITUAL RENEWAL IS NEEDED AT THIS TIME. MANY OF HIS MESSAGES CONCERNS A FUTURE PORTRAYAL AND OF THE FUTURE FEATURES THE COMING MESSIAH, BY WHICH HE IS CALLED THE EVANGELIST OF THE OT. HIS WORDS ARE ALSO REFERRED 13 TIMES IN THE 4 GOSPELS, 5 TIMES IN ROMANS & 3 TIMES IN ACTS.**

**THE LORD ISAIAH’S LIFE AND TIMES: THE LORD ISAIAH’S PERSONAL VISION OF THE FATHER STEPHEN TOOK PLACE IN THE TEMPLE IS IN ISAIAH CHAPTER 6. HIS KIND OF SPECIAL CHARACTER IS DISPLAYED BY THE FATHER STEPHEN’S COMMAND IN ISAIAH 20:2, 3. HE WAS MARRIED TO AN UNNAMED PROPHETESS AND HE HAD CHILDREN IS IN ISAIAH CHAPTERS 7 & 8.**

**THE LORD ISAIAH AS AN EXAMPLE FOR TODAY: THE LORD ISAIAH’S PROMINENCE IN HIS OWN TIME AND SCRIPTURE CONTRASTS SHARPLY WITH HIS STATUS. HE WAS A GREAT MAN BUT DID NOT FELL TO PUT HIMSELF FORWARD. HE DID NOT SEE A NEED TO BE FAMOUS FOR PUBLIC ACCOLADES OR BE THE CENTER OF ATTENTION. THE SERVE THE FATHER STEPHEN FAITHFULLY AND SELFLESSLY WAS ENOUGH. THE LORD ISAIAH REMINDS US THAT MODESTY IS A VIRTUE, BUT THE FATHER STEPHEN’S COMMAND IS MORE IMPORTANT. THE LORD ISAIAH REMINDS US THAT WHILE SOME FREELY SHARE EMOTIONS, OTHERS ARE PRIVATE INDIVIDUALS. THE LORD ISAIAH ENCOURAGES US TO KEEP THE FATHER STEPHEN IN FOCUS.**

**THE BOOK OF DANIEL**

**THE LORD DANIEL’S NAME MEANS “GOD IS MY JUDGE.” THE SCRIPTURE REFERENCES OF THE LORD DANIEL IS IN THE BOOK OF DANIEL; EZEKIEL 14:14, 20; 28:3; MATTHEW CHAPTERS 24 & 25 & MARK 13:14.**

**THE LORD DANIEL’S LIFE AND TIMES: THE LORD DANIEL IS BEST KNOWN FOR HIS PROPHESIES THAT OUTLINE THE HISTORY OF THE EAST UNTIL THE APPEARANCE OF JESUS CHRIST, AND EVEN RELATES TO HIS TRIUMPHAL ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM. THE LORD DANIEL’S EVENTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE HISTORY’S END IS IN MATTHEW CHAPTER 24 & MARK CHAPTER 13. THE LORD DANIEL WAS TRAINED IN THE BABYLONIAN EMPIRE AS AN INFLUENTIAL ADVISOR AND ADMINISTRATOR. THROUGH THIS, HE REMAINED FAITHFUL AND TOTALLY COMMITTED TO THE FATHER STEPHEN DESPITE HIM SERVING A SECULAR STATE. HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS IS COMMENDED IN EZEKIEL 14:14, 20. HE IS AN EXAMPLE OF A VERY WISE PERSON IN EZEKIEL 28:3.**

**THE EXPLORING THE LORD DANIEL’S RELATIONSHIPS: THE LORD DANIEL’S RELATIONSHIP WITH PAGAN RULERS IS IN DANIEL CHAPTERS 1-6. THE LORD DANIEL AND THE LORD NEBUCHADNEZZAR IS IN DANIEL CHAPTERS 1, 2 & 4. THE LORD DANIEL AND THE LORD BELSHAZZAR IS IN DANIEL CHAPTER 5. THE LORD DANIEL AND THE LORD DARIUS IS IN DANIEL CHAPTER 6.**

**THE LORD DANIEL’S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE FATHER STEPHEN: THE LORD DANIEL IN THE KING’S SCHOOL IS IN DANIEL CHAPTER 1. THE LORD DANIEL AND THE KING’S DREAM IS IN DANIEL CHAPTER 2. THE LORD DANIEL’S CONCERN FOR THE LORD NEBUCHADNEZZAR IS IN DANIEL CHAPTER 4. THE LORD DANIEL’S FAITHFULNESS IN PRAYER IS IN DANIEL CHAPTER 6. THE LORD DANIEL’S PRAYERS AND PROPHESIES IS IN DANIEL CHAPTERS 9 & 10.**

**THE LORD DANIEL AS AN EXAMPLE FOR TODAY: THE LORD DANIEL WAS AN EXCEPTIONAL INDIVIDUAL, HE WAS ALSO POWERFUL AND MIGHTY THROUGHOUT HIS LIFETIME, AND INFLUENTIAL, WHERE HE WAS UNUSUALLY CLOSE TO MIGHTY RULERS. THE LORD DANIEL TEACHES US TO PUT THE FATHER STEPHEN FIRST, BOTH PRIVATELY AND PUBLICALLY. THE LORD DANIEL REMINDS US TO VIEW EVERY PERSON AS AN INDIVIDUAL, HOWEVER EXALTED A POSITION HE OR SHE MIGHT ATTAIN. THE LORD DANIEL INSPIRES US TO REMAIN FAITHFUL TO THE FATHER STEPHEN WHATEVER THE SITUATION OR DIFFICULTY. THE LORD DANIEL ENCOURAGES US TO BE INVOLVED IN GOVERNMENT. THE LORD DANIEL ENCOURAGES US TO GIVE PRAYER A CENTRAL ROLE IN OUR LIVES.**

**THE INITIATION: THE LORD DANIEL & HIS FRIENDS OBEY THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD**

**IN DANIEL 1:1-21 DECLARES, “IN THE THIRD YEAR OF THE REIGN OF JEHOIAKIM, KING OF JUDAH, NEBUCHADNEZZAR, KING OF BABYLON CAME TO JERUSALEM AND BESIEGED IT. AND THE LORD [FATHER STEPHEN] GAVE JEHOIAKIM, KING OF JUDAH UNTO HIS HAND, WITH SOME OF THE ARTICLES OF THE HOUSE OF GOD [FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD], WHICH HE CARRIED INTO THE LAND OF SHINAR TO THE HOUSE OF HIS GOD [LORD LUCIFER], AND HE BROUGHT THE ARTICLES INTO THE TREASURE HOUSE OF HIS GOD [LORD LUCIFER]. THEN THE KING INSTRUCTED ASHPENAZ, THE MASTER OF HIS EUNUCHS, TO BRING SOME OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL AND SOME OF THE KING’S DESCENDANTS AND SOME OF THE NOBLES, YOUNG MEN IN WHOM THERE WAS NO BLEMISH, BUT GOOD-LOOKING, GIFTED IN ALL WISDOM, POSSESSING KNOWLEDGE AND QUICK TO UNDERSTAND, WHO HAD ABILITY TO SERVE IN THE KING’S PALACE, AND WHOM THEY MIGHT TEACH THE LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE OF THE CHALDEANS. AND THE KING APPOINTED FOR THEM A DAILY PROVISION OF THE KING’S DELICACIES [WOMEN] AND OF THE WINE WHICH HE DRANK, AND THREE YEARS OF TRAINING FOR THEM, SO THAT AT THE END OF THAT TIME THEY MIGHT SERVE BEFORE THE KING. NOW FROM AMONG THOSE OF THE SONS OF JUDAH WERE DANIEL, HANANIAH, MISHAEL, AND AZARIAH. TO THEM THE CHIEF OF THE EUNUCHS GAVE NAMES: HE GAVE DANIEL THE NAME BELTESHAZZAR, TO HANANIAH, SHADRACH, TO MISHAEL, MESHACH, AND TO AZARIAH, ABED-NEGO. BUT DANIEL PURPOSED IN HIS HEART THAT HE WOULD NOT DEFILE HIMSELF WITH THE PORTION OF THE KING’S DELICACIES [WOMEN], NOR WITH THE WINE WHICH HE DRANK, THEREFORE HE REQUESTED OF THE CHIEF OF THE EUNUCHS THAT HE MIGHT NOT DEFILE HIMSELF. NOW GOD [FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD] HAD BROUGHT DANIEL INTO THE FAVOR AND GOODWILL OF THE CHIEF OF THE EUNUCHS. AND THE CHIEF OF THE EUNUCHS SAID TO DANIEL, ‘I FEAR MY LORD THE KING, WHO HAS APPOINTED YOUR FOOD & DRINK. FOR WHY SHOULD HE SEE YOUR FACES LOOKING WORSE THAN THE YOUNG MEN WHO ARE YOUR AGE? THEN YOU WOULD ENDANGER MY HEAD BEFORE THE KING.’ SO DANIEL SAID TO THE STEWARD WHOM THE CHIEF OF THE EUNUCHS HAD SET OVER DANIEL, HANANIAH, MISHAEL, AND AZARIAH, ‘PLEASE TEST YOUR SERVANTS FOR TEN DAYS, AND LET THEM GIVE US VEGETABLES TO EAT AND WATER TO DRINK. THE LET OUR APPEARANCE BE EXAMINED BEFORE YOU, AND THE APPEARANCE OF THE YOUNG MEN WHO EAT THE PORTION OF THE KING’S DELICACIES [WOMEN], AND AS YOU SEE FIT, SO DEAL WITH YOUR SERVANTS.’ SO, HE CONSENTED WITH THEM IN THIS MATTER, AND TESTED THEM TEN DAYS [10 TIME PORTALS WITH REVELATION 2:8-11]. AND AT THE END OF TEN DAYS THEIR FEATURES APPEARED BETTER AND FATTER IN FLESH THAN ALL THE YOUNG MEN WHO ATE THE PORTION OF THE KING’S DELICACIES [WOMEN]. THUS, THE STEWARD TOOK AWAY THEIR PORTION OF DELICACIES [WOMEN], AND GAVE THEM VEGETABLES [TEMPERANCE & SELF-CONTROL]. AS FOR THESE FOUR YOUNG MEN, GOD [FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD] GAVE THEM KNOWLEDGE, AND SKILL IN ALL LITERATURE AND WISDOM, AND DANIEL HAD UNDERSTANDING IN ALL VISIONS AND DREAMS. NOW AT THE END OF THE DAYS, WHEN THE KING HAD SAID THAT THEY SHOULD BE BROUGHT IN, THE CHIEF OF THE EUNUCHS BROUGHT THEM IN BEFORE NEBUCHADNEZZAR. THEN THE KING INTERVIEWED THEM, AND AMONG ALL NONE WAS FOUND LIKE DANIEL, HANANIAH, MISHAEL, AND AZARIAH, THEREFORE THEY SERVED BEFORE THE KING. AND IN ALL MATTERS OF WISDOM AND UNDERSTANDING ABOUT WHICH THE KING EXAMINED THEM, HE FOUND THEM TEN TIMES BETTER THAN ALL THE MAGICIANS AND ASTROLOGERS WHO WERE IN ALL HIS REALM. THUS, DANIEL CONTINUED UNTIL THE FIRST YEAR OF KING CYRUS.**

**THE LORD NEBUCHADNEZZAR’S FIRST DREAM**

**IN DANIEL 2:1-13 DECLARES, “NOW IN THE SECOND YEAR OF NEBUCHADNEZZAR’S REIGN, NEBUCHADNEZZAR HAD DREAMS, AND HIS SPIRIT WAS SO TROUBLED THAT HIS SLEEP LEFT HIM. THEN THE KING GAVE THE COMMAND TO CALL THE MAGICIANS, THE ASTROLOGERS, THE SORCERERS, AND THE CHALDEANS TO TELL THE KING HIS DREAMS. SO, THEY CAME AND STOOD BEFORE THE KING. AND THE KING SAID TO THEM, ‘I HAVE HAD A DREAM, AND MY SPIRIT IS ANXIOUS TO KNOW THE DREAM.’ THEN THE CHALDEANS SPOKE TO THE KING IN ARAMAIC, ‘O KING, LIVE FOREVER! TELL YOUR SERVANTS THE DREAM, AND WE WILL GIVE THE INTERPRETATION.’ THE KING ANSWERED AND SAID TO THE CHALDEANS, ‘MY DECISION IS FIRM: IF YOU DO NOT MAKE KNOWN THE DREAM TO ME, AND ITS INTERPRETATION, YOU SHALL BE CUT IN PIECES, AND YOUR HOUSES SHALL BE MADE AN ASH HEAP. HOWEVER, IF YOU TELL THE DREAM AND ITS INTERPRETATION, YOU SHALL RECEIVE FROM ME GIFTS, REWARDS, AND GREAT HONOR. THEREFORE, TELL ME THE DREAM AND ITS INTERPRETATION.’ THEY ANSWERED AGAIN AND SAID, ‘LET THE KING TELL HIS SERVANTS THE DREAM, AND WE WILL GIVE ITS INTERPRETATION.’ THE KING ANSWERED AND SAID, ‘I KNOW FOR CERTAIN THAT YOU WOULD GAIN TIME, BECAUSE YOU SEE THAT MY DECISION IS FIRM: IF YOU DO NOT MAKE KNOWN THE DREAM TO ME, THERE IS ONLY ONE DECREE FOR YOU! FOR YOU HAVE AGREED TO SPEAK LYING AND CORRUPT WORDS BEFORE ME TILL THE TIME HAS CHANGED [MARCH OR NOVEMBER]. THEREFORE, TELL ME THE DREAM, AND I SHALL KNOW THAT YOU CAN GIVE ME ITS INTERPRETATION.’ THE CHALDEANS ANSWERED THE KING, AND SAID, ‘THERE IS NOT A MAN ON EARTH WHO CAN TELL THE KING’S MATTER, THEREFORE NO KING, LORD, OR RULER HAS EVER ASKED SUCH THINGS OF ANY MAGICIAN, ASTROLOGER, OR CHALDEAN. IT IS A DIFFICULT THING THAT THE KING REQUESTS, AND THERE IS NO OTHER WHO CAN TELL IT TO THE KING EXCEPT THE GODS, WHOSE DWELLING IS NOT WITH FLESH.’ FOR THIS REASON, THE KING WAS ANGRY AND VERY FURIOUS, AND GAVE THE COMMAND TO DESTROY ALL THE WISE MEN OF BABYLON. SO, THE DECREE WENT OUT, AND THEY BEGAN KILLING THE WISE MEN, AND THEY SOUGHT DANIEL AND HIS COMPANIONS, TO KILL THEM.**

**THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD REVEALS THE LORD NEBUCHADNEZZAR’S FIRST DREAM**

**IN DANIEL 2:14-23 DECLARES, “THEN WITH COUNSEL AND WISDOM DANIEL ANSWERED ARIOCH, THE CAPTAIN OF THE KING’S GUARD, WHO HAD GONE OUT TO KILL THE WISE MEN OF BABYLON. HE ANSWERED AND SAID TO ARIOCH THE KING’S CAPTAIN, ‘WHY IS THE DECREE FROM THE KING, SO URGENT?’ THEN ARIOCH MADE THE DECISION KNOWN TO DANIEL. SO, DANIEL WENT IN AND ASKED THE KING TO GIVE HIM TIME, THAT HE MIGHT TELL THE KING THE INTERPRETATION. THEN DANIEL WENT TO HIS HOUSE, AND MADE THE DECISION KNOWN TO HANANIAH, MISHAEL, AND AZARIAH, HIS COMPANIONS, THAT THEY MIGHT SEEK MERCIES FROM THE GOD [FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD] OF HEAVEN CONCERNING THIS SECRET, SO THAT DANIEL AND HIS COMPANIONS MIGHT NOT PERISH WITH THE REST OF THE WISE MEN OF BABYLON. THEN THE SECRET WAS REVEALED TO DANIEL IN A NIGHT VISION. SO, DANIEL BLESSED THE GOD [FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD] OF HEAVEN. DANIEL ANSWERED AND SAID: ‘BLESSED BE THE NAME [LORD YAHWEH] OF GOD [FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD] FOREVER AND EVER, FOR WISDOM AND MIGHT ARE HIS. AND HE CHANGES THE TIMES AND THE SEASONS [10 TIME PORTALS]. HE REMOVES KINGS AND RAISES UP KINGS. HE GIVES WISDOM TO THE WISE AND KNOWLEDGE TO THOSE WHO HAVE UNDERSTANDING. HE REVEALS DEEP AND SECRET THINGS. HE KNOWS WHAT IS IN THE DARKNESS AND LIGHT DWELLS WITH HIM. I THANK YOU AND PRAISE YOU, O GOD [FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD] OF MY FATHERS. YOU HAVE NOW MADE KNOWN TO ME WHAT WE ASKED OF YOU, FOR YOU HAVE MADE KNOWN TO US THE KING’S DEMAND [WORD].’”**

**THE LORD DANIEL EXPLAINS THE FIRST DREAM TO WORSHIP THE UNIVERSAL MONEY KINGDOM FOR 46 YEARS---56 YEARS IN STRENGTH**

**IN DANIEL 2:24-45 DECLARES, “THEREFORE DANIEL WENT TO ARIOCH, WHOM THE KING HAD APPOINTED TO DESTROY THE WISE MEN OF BABYLON. HE WENT AND SAID THUS TO HIM: ‘DO NOT DESTROY THE WISE MEN OF BABYLON, TAKE ME BEFORE THE KING, AND I WILL TELL THE KING THE INTERPRETATION.’ THEN ARIOCH QUICKLY BROUGHT DANIEL BEFORE THE KING, AND SAID THUS TO HIM, ‘I HAVE FOUND A MAN OF THE CAPTIVES [SONS] OF JUDAH, WHO WILL MAKE KNOWN TO THE KING THE INTERPRETATION.’ THE KING ANSWERED AND SAID TO DANIEL, WHOSE NAME WAS BELTESHAZZAR, ‘ARE YOU ABLE TO MAKE KNOWN TO ME THE DREAM WHICH I HAVE SEEN, AND ITS INTERPRETATION?’ DANIEL ANSWERED IN THE PRESENCE OF THE KING, AND SAID, ‘THE SECRET WHICH THE KING HAS DEMANDED, THE WISE MEN, THE ASTROLOGERS, THE MAGICIANS, AND THE SOOTHSAYERS CANNOT DECLARE TO THE KING. BUT THERE IS A GOD [FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD] IN HEAVEN WHO REVEALS SECRETS, AND HE HAS MADE KNOWN TO KING NEBUCHADNEZZAR WHAT WILL BE IN THE LATTER DAYS. YOUR DREAM, AND THE VISIONS OF YOUR HEAD UPON YOUR BED, WERE THESE: AS FOR YOU, O KING, THOUGHTS CAME TO YOUR MIND WHILE ON YOUR BED, ABOUT WHAT WOULD COME TO PASS AFTER THIS, AND HE WHO REVEALS SECRETS HAS MADE KNOWN TO YOU WHAT WILL BE. BUT AS FOR ME, THIS SECRET HAS NOT BEEN REVEALED TO ME BECAUSE I HAVE MORE WISDOM THAN ANYONE LIVING, BUT FOR OUR SAKES WHO MAKE KNOWN THE INTERPRETATION TO THE KING, AND THAT YOU MAY KNOWN THE THOUGHTS OF YOUR HEART. YOU, O KING, WERE WATCHING, AND BEHOLD, A GREAT IMAGE! THIS GREAT IMAGE, WHOSE SPLENDOR WAS EXCELLENT, STOOD BEFORE YOU, AND ITS FORM WAS AWESOME. THIS IMAGE’S HEAD WAS OF FINE GOLD, ITS CHEST AND ARMS OF SILVER, ITS BELLY AND THIGHS OF BRONZE, ITS LEGS OF IRON, ITS FEET PARTLY OF IRON AND PARTLY OF CLAY [HEATED CLAY]. YOU WATCHED WHILE A STONE WAS CUT OUT WITHOUT HANDS, WHICH STRUCK THE IMAGE ON ITS FEET OF IRON AND CLAY, AND BROKE THEM IN PIECES. THEN THE IRON, THE CLAY, THE BRONZE, THE SILVER, AND THE GOLD WERE CRUSHED TOGETHER, AND BECAME LIKE CHAFF FROM THE SUMMER THRESHING FLOORS, THE WIND CARRIED THEM AWAY SO THAT NO TRACE OF THEM WAS FOUND. AND THE STONE THAT STRUCK THE IMAGE BECAME A GREAT MOUNTAIN AND FILLED THE WHOLE EARTH. THIS IS THE DREAM.**

**NOW WE WILL TELL THE INTERPRETATION OF IT BEFORE THE KING. YOU, O KING, ARE A KING OF KINGS. FOR THE GOD [FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD] OF HEAVEN HAS GIVEN YOU A KINGDOM, POWER [AUTHORITY], STRENGTH, AND GLORY, AND WHEREVER THE CHILDREN OF MEN DWELL, OR THE BEASTS OF THE FIELD AND THE BIRDS OF THE HEAVEN, HE HAS GIVEN THE, INTO YOUR HAND, AND HAS MADE YOU RULER OVER THEM ALL [5 KINGDOMS UPTIME DOWN TIME IS 10 KINGDOM OR 10 TIME PORTALS]---YOU ARE THIS HEAD OF GOLD [1ST KINGDOM]. BUT AFTER YOU SHALL ARISE ANOTHER KINGDOM [2ND SILVER KINGDOM] INFERIOR TO YOURS, THEN ANOTHER, A THIRD KINGDOM OF BRONZE, WHICH SHALL RULE OVER ALL THE EARTH. AND THE FOURTH KINGDOM SHALL BE AS STRONG AS IRON, INASMUCH AS IRON BREAKS IN PIECES AND SHATTERS EVERYTHING, AND LIKE IRON THAT CRUSHES, THAT KINGDOM WILL BREAK IN PIECES AND CRUSH ALL THE OTHERS. WHEREAS YOU SAW THE FEET AND TOES, PARTLY OF POTTER’S CLAY AND PARTLY OF IRON, THE [5TH] KINGDOM SHALL BE DIVIDED, YET THE STRENGTH OF THE IRON SHALL BE IN IT, JUST AS YOU SAW THE IRON MIXED WITH CERAMIC CLAY. AND AS THE TOES OF THE FEET WERE PARTLY OF IRON AND PARTLY OF CLAY, SO THE KINGDOM SHALL BE PARTLY STRONG AND PARTLY FRAGILE [BRITTLE]. AS YOU SAW IRON MIXED WITH CERAMIC CLAY, THEY [FEMALE WITCHES AS MISTRESSES, SORCERESSES, WHORES, HARLOTS & PROSTITUTES] WILL MINGLE WITH THE SEED OF MEN [MALE WITCHES AS MASTERS, WIZARDS & SORCERERS], BUT THEY WILL NOT ADHERE TO ONE ANOTHER, JUST AS IRON DOES NOT MIX WITH CLAY. AND IN THE DAYS OF THESE KINGS THE GOD [FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD] OF HEAVEN WILL SET UP A KINGDOM [SINGLE KINGDOM OF LORDSHIP IN ACTS OF THE HOLY GHOST] WHICH SHALL NEVER BE DESTROYED, AND THE KINGDOM SHALL NOT BE LEFT TO OTHER PEOPLE, IT SHALL BREAK IN PIECES AND CONSUME ALL THESE [5] KINGDOMS, AND IT SHALL STAND FOREVER. INASMUCH AS YOU SAW THAT THE STONE WAS CUT OUT OF THE MOUNTAIN WITHOUT HANDS, AND THAT IT BROKE IN PIECES THE IRON, THE BRONZE, THE CLAY, THE SILVER, AND THE GOLD---THE GREAT GOD [LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH HIMSELF] HAD MAKE KNOWN TO THE KING WHAT WILL COME TO PASS AFTER THIS. THE DREAM IS CERTAIN, AND ITS INTERPRETATION IS SURE.’**

**THE LORD DANIEL & HIS FRIENDS PROMOTED**

**IN DANIEL 2:46-49 DECLARES, “THEN KING NEBUCHADNEZZAR FELL ON HIS FACE, PROSTRATE BEFORE DANIEL, AND COMMANDED THAT THEY SHOULD PRESENT AN OFFERING AND INCENSE TO HIM. THE KING ANSWERED DANIEL, AND SAID, ‘TRULY YOUR GOD [FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD] IS THE GOD OF GODS, THE LORD OF KINGS, AND A REVEALER OF SECRETS, SINCE YOU COULD REVEAL THIS SECRET.’ THEN THE KING PROMOTED DANIEL AND GAVE HIM MANY GREAT GIFTS, AND HE MADE HIM RULER OVER THE WHOLE PROVIDENCE OF BABYLON, AND CHIEF ADMINISTRATOR OVER ALL THE WISE MEN OF BABYLON. ALSO, DANIEL PETITIONED THE KING, AND HE SET SHADRACH, MESHACH, AND ABED-NEGO OVER THE AFFAIRS OF THE PROVIDENCE OF BABYLON, BUT DANIEL SAT IN THE GATE OF THE KING.**

**THE LORD NEBUCHADNEZZAR THE IMAGE OF GOLD**

**IN DANIEL 3:1-7 DECLARES, “NEBUCHADNEZZAR THE KING MADE AN IMAGE OF GOLD, WHOSE HEIGHT WAS SIXTY CUBITS [1,020 FEET, 1,080 FEET OR 1,320 FEET BASED ON THE 17 INCHES, 18 INCHES, 22 INCHES OF A CUBIT] AND ITS WIDTH 6 CUBITS [102 FEET, 108 FEET OR 132 FEET BASED ON THE 17 INCHES, 18 INCHES, 22 INCHES OF A CUBIT]. HE SET IT UP BY THE PLAIN OF DURA, IN THE PROVIDENCE OF BABYLON. AND KING NEBUCHADNEZZAR SENT WORD TO GATHER TOGETHER THE SATRAPS, THE ADMINISTRATORS, THE GOVERNORS, THE COUNSELORS, THE TREASURERS, THE JUDGES, THE MAGISTRATES, AND ALL THE OFFICIALS OF THE PROVINCES, TO COME TO THE DEDICATION OF THE IMAGE WHICH KING NEBUCHADNEZZAR HAD SET UP. SO, THE SATRAPS, THE ADMINISTRATORS, THE GOVERNORS, THE COUNSELORS, THE TREASURERS, THE JUDGES, THE MAGISTRATES, AND ALL THE OFFICIALS OF THE PROVINCES GATHERED TOGETHER FOR THE DEDICATION OF THE IMAGE THAT KING NEBUCHADNEZZAR HAD SET UP, AND THEY STOOD BEFORE THE IMAGE THAT NEBUCHADNEZZAR HAD SET UP. THEN A HERALD CRIED ALOUD: ‘TO YOU IT IS COMMANDED, O PEOPLES, NATIONS AND LANGUAGES, THAT AT THE TIME YOU HEAR THE SOUND OF THE HORN, FLUTE, HARP, LYRE, AND PSALTERY, IN SYMPHONY WITH ALL KINDS OF MUSIC, YOU SHALL FALL DOWN AND WORSHIP THE GOLD IMAGE THAT KING NEBUCHADNEZZAR HAS SET UP, AND WHOEVER DOES NOT FALL DOWN AND WORSHIP SHALL BE CAST IMMEDIATELY INTO THE MIDST OF THE FIERY FURNACE.’ SO, AT THAT TIME, WHEN ALL THE PEOPLE HEARD THE SOUND OF THE HORN, FLUTE, HARP, AND LYRE, IN SYMPHONY WITH ALL KINDS OF MUSIC, ALL THE PEOPLES, NATIONS, AND LANGUAGES FELL DOWN AND WORSHIPED THE GOLD IMAGE WHICH KING NEBUCHADNEZZAR HAD SET UP.”**

**THE LORD DANIEL’S FRIENDS DISOBEY KING NEBUCHADNEZZAR**

**IN DANIEL 3:8-18 DECLARES, “THEREFORE AT THAT TIME CERTAIN CHALDEANS CAME FORWARD AND ACCUSED THE JEWS. THEY SPOKE AND SAID TO KING NEBUCHADNEZZAR, ‘O KING, LIVE FOREVER! YOU, O KING, HAVE MADE A DECREE THAT EVERYONE WHO HEARS THE SOUND OF THE HORN, FLUTE, HARP, LYRE, AND PSALTERY, IN SYMPHONY WITH ALL KINDS OF MUSIC, SHALL FALL DOWN AND WORSHIP THE GOLD IMAGE, AND WHOEVER DOES NOT FALL DOWN AND WORSHIP SHALL BE CAST INTO THE MIDST OF A BURNING FIERY FURNACE. THERE ARE CERTAIN JEWS WHOM YOU HAVE SET OVER THE AFFAIRS OF THE PROVIDENCE OF BABYLON: SHADRACH, MESHACH, AND ABED-NEGO, THESE MEN, O KING, HAVE NOT PAID DUE REGARD TO YOU. THEY DO NOT SERVE YOUR GODS OR WORSHIP THE GOLD IMAGE WHICH YOU HAVE SET UP.’ THEN NEBUCHADNEZZAR IN RAGE AND FURY, GAVE THE COMMAND TO BRING SHADRACH, MESHACH, AND ABED-NEGO. SO THEY BROUGHT THESE MEN BEFORE THE KING. NEBUCHADNEZZAR SPOKE, SAYING TO THEM, ‘IS IT TRUE, SHADRACH, MESHACH, AND ABED-NEGO, THAT YOU DO NOT SERVE MY GODS OR WORSHIP THE GOLD IMAGE WHICH I HAVE SET UP? NOW IF YOU ARE READY AT THE TIME YOU HEAR THE SOUND OF THE HORN, FLUTE, HARP, LYRE, AND PSALTERY, IN SYMPHONY WITH ALL KINDS OF MUSIC, AND YOU FALL DOWN AND WORSHIP THE IMAGE WHICH I HAVE MADE, GOOD! BUT IF YOU DO NOT WORSHIP, YOU SHALL BE CAST IMMEDIATELY INTO THE MIDST OF A BURNING FIERY FURNACE. AND WHO IS THE GOD [FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD] WHO WILL DELIVER YOU FROM MY HANDS?’ SHADRACH, MESHACH, AND ABED-NEGO ANSWERED AND SAID TO THE KING, ‘O NEBUCHADNEZZAR, WE HAVE NO NEED TO ANSWER YOU IN THIS MATTER. IF THAT IS THE CASE, OUR GOD [FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD] WHOM WE SERVE IS ABLE TO DELIVER US FROM THE BURNING FIERY FURNACE, AND HE WILL DELIVER US FROM YOU HAND, O KING. BUT IF NOT, LET IT BE KNOWN TO YOU, O KING, THAT WE DO NOT SERVE YOUR GODS, NOR WILL WE WORSHIP THE GOLD IMAGE WHICH YOU HAVE SET UP.’”**

**THE LORD SHADRACH, THE LORD MESHACH, AND THE LORD ABED-NEGO ARE ETERNALLY SAVED IN THE FIERY TRIAL BY THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD BECAUSE THEY DO NOT SERVE THEIR GODS OR WORSHIP ANY FIRE MONEY TO COPPER MONEY**

**IN DANIEL 3:19-25 DECLARES, “THEN NEBUCHADNEZZAR WAS FULL OF FURY, AND THE EXPRESSION ON HIS FACE CHANGED TOWARD SHADRACH, MESHACH, AND ABED-NEGO. HE SPOKE AND COMMANDED THAT THEY HEAT THE FURNACE SEVEN TIMES MORE THAN IT WAS USUALLY HEATED. AND HE COMMANDED CERTAIN MIGHTY MEN OF VALOR WHO WERE IN HIS ARMY TO BIND CAST THEN INTO THE BURNING FIERY FURNACE. THEN THESE MEN WERE BOUND IN THEIR COATS, THEIR TROUSERS, THEIR TURBANS, AND THEIR OTHER GARMENTS, AND WERE CAST INTO THE MIDST OF THE BURNING FIERY FURNACE. THEREFORE, BECAUSE THE KING’S COMMAND WAS URGENT, AND THE FURNACE EXCEEDINGLY HOT, THE FLAME OF THE FIRE KILLED THOSE MEN WHO TOOK UP SHADRACH, MESHACH, AND ABED-NEGO. AND THESE THREE MEN, SHADRACH, MESHACH, AND ABED-NEGO, FELL DOWN BOUND INTO THE MIDST OF THE BURNING FIERY FURNACE. THEN KING NEBUCHADNEZZAR WAS ASTONISHED, AND HE ROSE IN HASTE AND SPOKE, SAYING TO HIS COUNSELORS, ‘DID WE NOT CAST THREE MEN BOUND INTO THE MIDST OF THE FIRE?’ THEY ANSWERED AND SAID TO THE KING, ‘TRUE, O KING.’ ‘LOOK!’ HE ANSWERED, ‘I SEE FOUR MEN LOOSE, WALKING IN THE MIDST OF THE FIRE, AND THEY ARE NOT HURT, AND THE FORM OF THE FOURTH [LORD JESUS] IS LIKE THE SON OF GOD [LORD ENOCH].’”**

**THE LORD NEBUCHADNEZZAR PRAISES THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD**

**IN DANIEL 3:26-30 DECLARES, “THEN NEBUCHADNEZZAR WENT NEAR THE MOUTH OF THE BURNING FIERY FURNACE AND SPOKE, SAYING, ‘SHADRACH, MESHACH, AND ABED-NEGO, SERVANTS OF THE MOST-HIGH GOD [FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD], COME OUT, AND COME HERE.’ THEN SHADRACH, MESHACH, AND ABED-NEGO CAME FROM THE MIDST OF THE FIRE. AND THE SATRAPS, ADMINISTRATORS, GOVERNORS, AND THE KING’S COUNSELORS GATHERED TOGETHER, AND THEY SAW THESE MEN ON WHOSE BODIES THE FIRE HAD NO POWER [AUTHORITY], THE HAIR OF THEIR HEAD WAS NOT SINGED NOR WEE THEIR GARMENTS AFFECTED, AND THE SMELL OF FIRE WAS NOT ON THEM. NEBUCHADNEZZAR SPOKE SAYING, ‘BLESSED BE THE GOD [FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD] OF SHADRACH, MESHACH, AND ABED-NEGO, WHO SENT HIS ANGEL AND DELIVERED HIS SERVANTS WHO TRUSTED IN HIM, AND THEY HAVE FRUSTRATED THE KING’S WORD, AND YIELDED THEIR BODIES, THAT THEY SHOULD NOT SERVE NOR WORSHIP ANY GOD EXCEPT THEIR OWN GOD [FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD]! THEREFORE I MAKE A DECREE THAT ANY PEOPLE, NATION, OR LANGUAGE WHICH SPEAKS ANYTHING AMISS AGAINST THE GOD [FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD] OF SHADRACH, MESHACH, AND ABED-NEGO SHALL BE CUT IN PIECES, AND THEIR HOUSES SHALL BE MADE AN ASH HEAP, BECAUSE THERE IS NO OTHER GOD WHO CAN DELIVER LIKE THIS.’ THEN THE KING PROMOTED SHADRACH, MESHACH, AND ABED-NEGO IN THE PROVINCE OF BABYLON.”**

**THE LORD NEBUCHADNEZZAR’S SECOND DREAM TO WORSHIP THE UNIVERSAL SEXUAL PORN KINGDOM FOR 46 YEARS---56 YEARS IN STRENGTH**

**IN DANIEL 4:1-18 DECLARES, “NEBUCHADNEZZAR THE KING, TO ALL PEOPLES, NATIONS, AND LANGUAGES THAT DWELL IN ALL THE EARTH: PEACE BE MULTIPLIED TO YOU. I THOUGHT IT GOOD TO DECLARE THE SIGNS AND WONDERS THAT THE MOST-HIGH GOD [FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD] HAS WORKED FOR ME. HOW GREAT ARE HIS SIGNS, AND HOW MIGHTY HIS WONDERS! HIS KINGDOM IS AN EVERLASTING KINGDOM AND HIS DOMINION IS FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION. I, NEBUCHADNEZZAR, WAS AT REST IN MY HOUSE, AND FLOURISHING IN MY PALACE. I SAW A DREAM WHICH MADE ME AFRAID, AND THE THOUGHTS ON MY BED AND THE VISIONS OF MY HEAD TROUBLED ME. THEREFORE I ISSUED A DECREE TO BRING IN ALL THE WISE MEN OF BABYLON BEFORE ME, THAT THEY MIGHT MAKE KNOWN TO ME THE INTERPRETATION OF THE DREAM. THEN THE MAGICIANS, THE ASTROLOGERS, THE CHALDEANS, AND THE SOOTHSAYERS CAME IN, AND I TOLD THEM THE DREAM, BUT THEY DID NOT MAKE KNOWN TO ME ITS INTERPRETATION. BUT AT LAST DANIEL CAME BEFORE ME (HIS NAME IS BELTESHAZZAR, ACCORDING TO THE NAME OF MY GOD, IN HIM IS THE SPIRIT [JOSEPH THE REVELATOR IN EGYPT, DANIEL THE REVELATOR IN BABYLON & JOHN THE REVELATOR IN ISRAEL WERE SPECIALLY AUTHORIZED TO HAVE THIS KIND OF SPIRIT OF THE HOLY GODS IN JOHN 4:23-24] OF THE HOLY GOD [FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD]), AND I TOLD THE DREAM BEFORE HIM SAYING, ‘BELTESHAZZAR, CHIEF OF THE MAGICIANS, BECAUSE I KNOWN THAT THE SPIRIT [JOSEPH THE REVELATOR IN EGYPT, DANIEL THE REVELATOR IN BABYLON & JOHN THE REVELATOR IN ISRAEL WERE SPECIALLY AUTHORIZED TO HAVE THIS KIND OF SPIRIT OF THE HOLY GODS IN JOHN 4:23-24] OF THE HOLY GOD [FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD] IS IN YOU, AND NO SECRET TROUBLES YOU, EXPLAIN TO ME THE VISIONS OF MY DREAM THAT I HAVE SEEN, AND ITS INTERPRETATION.**

**THESE WERE THE VISIONS OF MY HEAD WHILE ON MY BED: I WAS LOOKING, AND BEHOLD, A TREE IN THE MIDST OF THE EARTH, AND ITS HEIGHT WAS GREAT. THE TREE GREW AND BECAME STRONG, ITS HEIGHT REACHED TO THE HEAVENS, AND IT COULD BE SEEN TO THE ENDS OF ALL THE EARTH. ITS LEAVES WERE LOVELY, ITS FRUIT ABUNDANT, AND IN IT WAS FOOD FOR ALL. THE BEASTS OF THE FIELD FOUND SHADE UNDER IT, THE BIRDS OF THE HEAVENS DWELT IN ITS BRANCHES, AND ALL [SEXUAL] FLESH WAS FED FROM IT.**

**I SAW IN THE VISIONS OF MY HEAD WHILE ON MY BED, AND THERE WAS A WATCHER, A HOLY ONE, COMING DOWN FROM HEAVEN. HE CRIED ALOUD AND SAID THUS: ‘CHOP DOWN THE TREE AND CUT OFF ITS BRANCHES, STRIP OFF ITS LEAVES AND SCATTER ITS FRUIT. LET THE BEASTS GET OUT FROM UNDER IT, AND THE BIRDS FROM ITS BRANCHES. NEVERTHELESS, LEAVE THE STUMP AND ROOTS IN THE EARTH. BOUND WITH A BAND OF IRON AND BRONZE, IN THE TENDER GRASS OF THE FIELD. LET IT BE WET WITH THE DEW OF HEAVEN, AND LET HIM GRAZE WITH THE BEASTS ON THE GRASS OF THE EARTH. LET HIS HEART BE CHANGED FROM THAT OF A MAN, LET HIM BE GIVEN THE HEART OF A BEAST, AND LET SEVEN TIMES [7 YEARS AS 7 THUNDERS] PASS OVER HIM.’ THIS DECISION IS BY THE DECREE OF THE WATCHERS, AND THE SENTENCE BY THE HOLY ONES, IN ORDER THAT THE LIVING MAY KNOW THAT THE MOST-HIGH [FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD] RULES IN THE KINGDOM OF MEN, GIVES IT TO WHOMEVER HE WILL, AND SETS OVER IT THE LOWEST OF MEN. THIS DREAM I, KING NEBUCHADNEZZAR HAVE SEEN. NOW YOU, BELTESHAZZAR DECLARES ITS INTERPRETATION, SINCE ALL THE WISE MEN OF MY KINGDOM ARE NOT ABLE TO MAKE KNOWN TO ME THE INTERPRETATION, BUT YOU ARE ABLE, FOR THE SPIRIT [JOSEPH THE REVELATOR IN EGYPT, DANIEL THE REVELATOR IN BABYLON & JOHN THE REVELATOR IN ISRAEL WERE SPECIALLY AUTHORIZED TO HAVE THIS KIND OF SPIRIT OF THE HOLY GODS IN JOHN 4:23-24] OF THE HOLY GOD [FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD] IS IN YOU.”**

**THE LORD DANIEL EXPLAINS THE SECOND DREAM**

**IN DANIEL 4:19-27 DECLARES, “THEN DANIEL, WHOSE NAME WAS BELTESHAZZAR, WAS ASTONISHED FOR A TIME, AND HIS THOUGHTS TROUBLED HIM. SO, THE KING SPOKE, AND SAID, ‘BELTESHAZZAR, DO NOT LET THE DREAM OR ITS INTERPRETATION TROUBLE YOU.’ BELTESHAZZAR ANSWERED AND SAID, ‘MY LORD, MAY THE DREAM CONCERN THOSE WHO HATE YOU, AND ITS INTERPRETATION CONCERN YOUR ENEMIES! THE TREE THAT YOU SAW, WHICH GREW AND BECAME STRONG, WHOSE HEIGHT REACHED TO THE HEAVENS AND WHICH COULD BE SEEN BY ALL THE EARTH, WHOSE LEAVES WERE LOVELY AND ITS FRUIT ABUNDANT, IN WHICH WAS FOOD FOR ALL, UNDER WHICH THE BEASTS OF THE FIELD DWELT, AND IN WHO BRANCHES THE BIRDS OF THE HEAVENS HAD THEIR HOME---IT IS YOU, O KING, WHO HAVE GROWN AND BECOME STRONG, FOR YOUR GREATNESS HAS GROWN AND REACHES TO THE HEAVENS, AND YOUR DOMINION TO THE END OF THE EARTH. AND INASMUCH AS THE KING SAW A WATCHER, A HOLY ONE, COMING DOWN FROM HEAVEN AND SAYING, ‘CHOP DOWN THE TREE AND DESTROY IT, BUT LEAVE ITS STUMP AND ROOTS IN THE EARTH, BOUND WITH A BAND OR IRON AND BRONZE IN THE TENDER GRASS OF THE FIELD, LET IT BE WET WITH THE DEW OF HEAVEN, AND LET HIM GRAZE WITH THE BEASTS OF THE FIELD, TILL SEVEN TIMES [7 YEARS AND 7 THUNDERS] PASS OVER HIM. THIS IS THE INTERPRETATION, O KING, AND THIS IS THE DECREE OF THE MOST-HIGH [FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD], WHICH AS COME UPON MY LORD THE KING: THEY SHALL DRIVE YOU FROM MEN, YOUR DWELLING SHALL BE WITH THE BEASTS OF THE FIELD, AND THEY SHALL MAKE YOU EAT GRASS LIKE OXEN. THEY SHALL WET YOU WITH THE DEW OF HEAVEN, AND SEVEN TIMES [7 YEARS AND 7 THUNDERS] SHALL PASS OVER YOU, TILL YOU KNOW THAT THE MOST-HIGH [FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD] RULES IN THE KINGDOM OF MEN, AND GIVE IT TO WHOMEVER HE CHOOSES. AND INASMUCH AS THEY GAVE THE COMMAND TO LEAVE THE STUMP AND ROOTS OF THE TREE, YOUR KINGDOM SHALL BE ASSURED TO YOU, AFTER YOU COME TO KNOW THAT HEAVEN RULES. THEREFORE, O KING, LET MY ADVICE BE ACCEPTABLE TO YOU, BREAK OFF YOUR SINS BY BEING RIGHTEOUS, AND YOUR INIQUITIES BY SHOWING MERCY TO THE POOR. PERHAPS THERE MAY BE A LENGTHENING OF YOUR PROSPERITY.”**

**THE LORD NEBUCHADNEZZAR’S HUMILIATION**

**IN DANIEL 4:28-33 DECLARES, “ALL THIS CAME UPON KING NEBUCHADNEZZAR. AT THE END OF THE TWELVE MONTHS HE WAS WALKING ABOUT THE ROYAL PALACE OF BABYLON. THE KING SPOKE SAYING, ‘IS NOT THIS GREAT BABYLON, THAT I HAVE BUILT FOR A ROYAL DWELLING BY MY MIGHTY POWER [AUTHORITY] AND FOR THE HONOR OF MY MAJESTY?’ WHILE THE WORD WAS STILL IN THE KING’S MOUTH, A VOICE FROM FROM HEAVEN: ‘KING NEBUCHADNEZZAR, TO YOU IT IS SPOKEN: THE KINGDOM HAS DEPARTED FROM YOU! THEY SHALL DRIVE YOU FROM MEN, YOUR DWELLING SHALL BE WITH THE BEASTS OF THE FIELD, AND THEY SHALL MAKE YOU EAT GRASS LIKE OXEN, AND SEVEN TIMES [7 YEARS AND 7 THUNDERS] SHALL PASS OVER YOU, TILL YOU KNOW THAT THE MOST-HIGH [FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD] RULES IN THE KINGDOM OF MEN, AND GIVES IT TO WHOMEVER HE CHOOSES.’ THAT VERY HOUR THE WORD WAS FULFILLED CONCERNING NEBUCHADNEZZAR, HE WAS DRIVEN FROM MEN AND ATE GRASS LIKE OXEN, HIS BODY WAS WET WITH THE DEW OF HEAVEN TILL HIS HAIR HAD GROWN LIKE EAGLES’ FEATHERS AND HIS NAILS LIKE BIRD’S CLAWS.”**

**THE LORD NEBUCHADNEZZAR PRAISES THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD**

**IN DANIEL 4:34-37 DECLARES, “AT THE END OF THE TIME, I, NEBUCHADNEZZAR, LIFTED MY EYES TO HEAVEN, AND MY UNDERSTANDING RETURNED TO ME, AND I BLESSED THE MOST-HIGH [FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD] AND PRAISED AND HONORED HIM WHO LIVES FOREVER: FOR HIS DOMINION IS AN EVERLASTING DOMINION, AND HIS KINGDOM IS FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION. ALL THE INHABITANTS OF THE EARTH ARE REPUTED AS NOTHING. HE DOES ACCORDING TO HIS WILL IN THE ARMY OF HEAVEN AND AMONG THE INHABITANTS OF THE EARTH. NO ONE CAN RESTRAIN HIS HAND OR SAY TO HIM, ‘WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?’ AT THE SAME TIME MY REASON RETURNED TO ME, AND FOR THE GLORY OF MY KINGDOM, MY HONOR AND SPLENDOR RETURNED TO ME, I WAS RESTORED TO MY KINGDOM, AND EXCELLENT MAJESTY WAS ADDED TO ME. NOW I, NEBUCHADNEZZAR, PRAISE AND EXTOL AND HONOR THE KING [FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD] OF HEAVEN, ALL OF WHOSE WORKS ARE TRUTH, AND HIS WAYS JUSTICE. AND THOSE WHO WALK IN PRIDE HE IS ABLE TO PUT DOWN [MAKE HUMBLE].”**

**THE LORD BELSHAZZAR’S FEAST TO WORSHIP THE UNIVERSAL MONEY KINGDOM FOR 46 YEARS---56 YEARS IN STRENGTH**

**IN DANIEL 5:1-12 DECLARES, “BELSHAZZAR THE KING MADE A GREAT FEAST FOR A THOUSAND OF HIS LORDS, AND DRANK WINE IN THE PRESENCE OF THE THOUSAND. WHILE HE TASTED THE WINE, BELSHAZZAR GAVE THE COMMAND TO BRING THE GOLD AND SILVER VESSELS WHICH HIS FATHER NEBUCHADNEZZAR HAD TAKEN FROM THE TEMPLE WHICH HAD BEEN IN JERUSALEM, THAT THE KING AND HIS LORDS, HIS WIVES, AND HIS CONCUBINES MIGHT DRINK FROM THEM. THEN THEY BROUGHT THE GOLD VESSELS THAT HAD BEEN TAKEN FROM THE TEMPLE OF THE HOUSE OF GOD [FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD] WHICH HAD BEEN IN JERUSALEM: AND THE KING AND HIS LORDS, HIS WIVES, AND HIS CONCUBINES DRANK FROM THEM. THEY DRANK WINE, AND PRAISED THE GODS OF GOLD AND SILVER, BRONZE AND IRON, WOOD AND STONE. IN THE SAME HOUR THE FINGER’S OF A MAN’S HAND APPEARED AND WROTE OPPOSITE THE LAMPSTAND ON THE PLASTER OF THE WALL OF THE KING’S PALACE, AND THE KING SAW THE PART OF THE HAND THAT WROTE. THEN THE KING’S COUNTENANCE CHANGED, AND HIS THOUGHTS TROUBLED HIM, SO THAT THE JOINTS OF HIS HIPS WERE LOOSENED, AND HIS KNEES KNOCKED AGAINST EACH OTHER. THE KING CRIED ALOUD TO BRING IN THE ASTROLOGERS, THE CHALDEANS, AND THE SOOTHSAYERS. THE KING SPOKE, SAYING TO THE WISE MEN OF BABYLON, ‘WHOEVER READS THIS WRITING, AND TELLS ME ITS INTERPRETATION, SHALL BE CLOTHED WITH PURPLE, AND HAVE A CHAIN OF GOLD AROUND HIS NECK, AND HE SHALL BE THE THIRD RULER [1ST IS NEBUCHADNEZZAR, 2ND IS BELSHAZZAR & 3RD IS DANIEL] IN THE KINGDOM. NOW ALL THE KING’S WISE MEN CAME, BUT THEY COULD NOT READ THE WRITING, OR MAKE KNOWN TO THE KING ITS INTERPRETATION. THE KING BELSHAZZAR WAS GREATLY TROUBLED, HIS COUNTENANCE WAS CHANGED, AND HIS LORDS WERE ASTONISHED [PERPLEXED]. THE QUEEN, BECAUSE OF THE WORDS OF THE KING AND HIS LORDS CAME TO THE BANQUET HALL. THE QUEEN SPOKE, SAYING, O KING, LIVE FOREVER! DO NOT LET YOUR THOUGHTS TROUBLE YOU, NOR LET YOUR COUNTENANCE CHANGE. THERE IS A MAN IN YOUR KINGDOM IN WHOM IS THE SPIRIT [JOSEPH THE REVELATOR IN EGYPT, DANIEL THE REVELATOR IN BABYLON & JOHN THE REVELATOR IN ISRAEL WERE SPECIALLY AUTHORIZED TO HAVE THIS KIND OF SPIRIT OF THE HOLY GODS IN JOHN 4:23-24] OF THE HOLY GOD [FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD]. AND IN THE DAYS OF YOUR FATHER, LIGHT AND UNDERSTANDING AND WISDOM, LIKE THE WISDOM OF THE GODS, WERE FOUND IN HIM, AND KING NEBUCHADNEZZAR YOUR FATHER---YOUR FATHER THE KING---MADE HIM CHIEF OF THE MAGICIANS, ASTROLOGERS, CHALDEANS, AND SOOTHSAYERS. INASMUCH AS AN EXCELLENT SPIRIT, KNOWLEDGE, UNDERSTANDING, INTERPRETING DREAMS, SOLVING RIDDLES, AND EXPLAINING ENIGMAS [UNTIE KNOTS], WERE FOUND IN THIS DANIEL, WHOM THE KING NAMED BELTESHAZZAR, NOW LET DANIEL BE CALLED, AND HE WILL GIVE THE INTERPRETATION.”**

**THE WRITING ON THE WALL EXPLAINED**

**IN DANIEL 5:13-29 DECLARES, “THEN DANIEL WAS BROUGHT IN BEFORE THE KING. THE KING SPOKE, AND SAID TO DANIEL, ‘ARE YOU THAT DANIEL WHO IS THE ONE OF THE CAPTIVES [SONS] OF JUDAH, WHOM MY FATHER THE KING BROUGHT FROM JUDAH? I HAVE HEARD OF YOU THAT THE SPIRIT [JOSEPH THE REVELATOR, 2ND RULER IN EGYPT, DANIEL THE REVELATOR, 3RD RULER IN BABYLON & JOHN THE REVELATOR, 2ND RULER IN ISRAEL WERE SPECIALLY AUTHORIZED TO HAVE THIS KIND OF SPIRIT OF THE HOLY GODS IN JOHN 4:23-24] OF GOD [FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD] IS IN YOU, AND THAT LIGHT AND UNDERSTANDING AND EXCELLENT WISDOM ARE FOUND IN YOU. NOW THE WISE MEN, THE ASTROLOGERS HAVE BEEN BROUGHT IN BEFORE ME, THAT THEY SHOULD READ THIS WRITING AND MAKE KNOWN TO ME ITS INTERPRETATION, BUT THEY COULD NOT GIVE THE INTERPRETATION OF THE THING. AND I HAVE HEARD OF YOU, THAT YOU CAN GIVE INTERPRETATIONS AND EXPLAIN ENIGMAS [UNTIE KNOTS]. NOW IF YOU CAN READ THE WRITING AND MAKE KNOWN TO ME ITS INTERPRETATION, YOU SHALL BE CLOTHED WITH PURPLE AND HAVE A CHAIN OF GOLD AROUND YOUR NECK, AND SHALL BE THE THIRD RULER IN THE KINGDOM. THEN DANIEL ANSWERED, AND SAID BEFORE THE KING, ‘LET YOUR GIFTS BE FOR YOURSELF, AND GIVE YOUR REWARDS TO ANOTHER, YET I WILL READ THE WRITING TO THE KING, AND MAKE KNOWN TO HIM THE INTERPRETATION. O KING, THE MOST-HIGH GOD [FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD] GAVE NEBUCHADNEZZAR YOUR FATHER A KINGDOM AND MAJESTY, GLORY AND HONOR. AND BECAUSE OF THE MAJESTY THAT HE GAVE HIM, ALL PEOPLES, NATIONS, AND LANGUAGES TREMBLED AND FEARED BEFORE HIM. WHOMEVER HE WISHED, HE EXECUTED, WHOEVER HE WISHED, HE KEPT ALIVE, WHOMEVER HE WISHED, HE SET UP, AND WHOMEVER HE WISHED, HE PUT DOWN [HUMBLED]. BUT WHEN HIS HEART WAS LIFTED UP, AND HIS SPIRIT WAS HARDENED IN PRIDE, HE WAS DEPOSED FROM HIS KINGLY THRONE, AND THEY TOOK HIS GLORY FROM HIM. THEN HE WAS DRIVEN FROM THE SONS OF MEN, HIS HEART WAS MADE LIKE THE BEASTS, AND HIS DWELLING WAS WITH THE WILD DONKEYS. THEY FED HIM WITH GRASS LIKE OXEN, AND HIS BODY WAS WET WITH THE DEW OF HEAVEN, TILL HE KNEW THAT THE MOST-HIGH [FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD] RULES IN THE KINGDOM OF MEN, AND APPOINTS OVER IT WHOMEVER HE CHOOSES. BUT YOU HIS SON, BELSHAZZAR, HAVE NOT HUMBLED YOUR HEART, ALTHOUGH YOU KNEW ALL THIS. AND YOU HAVE LIFTED YOURSELF UP AGAINST THE LORD [FATHER STEPHEN] OF HEAVEN. THEY HAVE BROUGHT THE VESSELS OF HIS HOUSE BEFORE YOU, AND YOU AND YOUR LORDS, YOUR WIVES AND YOUR CONCUBINES, HAVE DRUNK WINE FROM THEM. AND YOU HAVE PRAISED THE GOD OF SILVER AND GOLD, BRONZE AND IRON, WOOD AND STONE, WHICH DO NOT SEE OR HEAR OR KNOW, AND THE GOD [FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD] WHO HOLDS YOUR BREATH IN HIS HAND AND OWNS ALL YOUR WAYS, YOU HAVE NOT GLORIFIED. THEN THE FINGER’S OF THE HAND WERE SENT FROM HIM, AND THIS WRITING WAS WRITTEN. AND THIS IS THE INSCRIPTION THAT WAS WRITTEN: MENE [TO NUMBER 1], MENE [TO NUMBER 46/56], TEKEL [TO WEIGH], UPHARSIN [TO DIVIDE]. THIS IS THE INTERPRETATION OF EACH WORD. MENE: GOD [FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD] HAS NUMBERED [46 YEARS IN WEAKNESS & 56 YEARS IN STRENGTH] YOUR KINGDOM, AND FINISHED IT. TEKEL: YOU HAVE BEEN WEIGHED IN THE BALANCES, AND FOUND WANTING. PERES: YOUR KINGDOM HAS BEEN DIVIDED [CASTED LOTS FOR ONE TO TAKE HIS KINGLY OFFICE], AND GIVEN TO THE MEDES AND PERSIANS. THEN BELSHAZZAR GAVE THE COMMAND, AND THEY CLOTHED DANIEL WITH PURPLE AND PUT A CHAIN OF GOLD AROUND HIS NECK, AND MADE A PROCLAMATION CONCERNING HIM THAT HE SHOULD BE THE THIRD RULER IN THE KINGDOM.**

**THE LORD BELSHAZZAR’S FALL**

**IN DANIEL 5:30-31 DECLARES, “THAT VERY NIGHT BELSHAZZAR, KING OF THE CHALDEANS, WAS SLAIN. AND DARIUS THE MEDE RECEIVED THE KINGDOM, BEING ABOUT SIXTY-TWO YEARS OLD.”**

**THE SEXUAL PLOT AGAINST THE LORD DANIEL**

**IN DANIEL 6:1-9 DECLARES, “IT PLEASED DARIUS TO SET OVER THE KINGDOM ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY SATRAPS, TO BE OVER THE WHOLE KINGDOM, AND OVER THESE, THREE GOVERNORS [PRESIDENTS], OF WHOM DANIEL WAS ONE, THAT THE SATRAPS MIGHT GIVE ACCOUNT TO THEM, SO THAT THE KING WOULD SUFFER NO LOSS. THEN THIS DANIEL DISTINGUISHED HIMSELF ABOVE THE [2] GOVERNORS [PRESIDENTS] AND SATRAPS, BECAUSE AN EXCELLENT SPIRIT [FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD IN JOHN 4:23-24] WAS IN HIM, AND THE KING GAVE THOUGHT TO SETTING HIM OVER THE WHOLE REALM. SO THE [2] GOVERNORS [PRESIDENTS] AND SATRAPS SOUGHT TO FIND SOME CHARGE AGAINST DANIEL CONCERNING THE KINGDOM, BUT THEY COULD FIND NO CHARGE OR FAULT, BECAUSE HE WAS FAITHFUL, NOR WAS THERE ANY ERROR OR FAULT FOUND IN HIM. THEN THESE MEN SAID, ‘WE SHALL NOT FIND ANY CHARGE AGAINST THIS DANIEL UNLESS WE FIND IT AGAINST HIM CONCERNING THE LAW OF HIS GOD [FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD]. SO, THESE [2] GOVERNORS [PRESIDENTS] AND SATRAPS THRONGED BEFORE THE KING, AND SAID THUS TO HIM: ‘KING DARIUS, LIVE FOREVER! ALL THE GOVERNORS [PRESIDENTS] OF THE KINGDOM, THE ADMINISTRATORS AND SATRAPS, THE COUNSELORS AND ADVISORS, HAVE CONSULTED TOGETHER TO ESTABLISH A ROYAL STATUTE AND TO MAKE A FIRM DECREE, THAT WHOEVER PETITIONS ANY GOD OR MAN FOR THIRTY DAYS, EXCEPT YOU, O KING, SHALL BE CAST INTO THE DEN OF LIONS. NOW, O KING, ESTABLISH THE DECREE AND SIGN THE WRITING [LEGALISM, PHILOSOPHY & CARNAL SEXUALITY & NOT WITH THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD & HIS DIVINE COMMANDS IN COLOSSIANS 2:1-3:11], SO THAT IT CANNOT BE CHANGED, ACCORDING TO THE LAW OF THE MEDES AND PERSIANS WHICH DOES NOT ALTER.’ THEREFORE, KING DARIUS SIGNED THE WRITTEN DECREE.**

**THE LORD DANIEL IN THE LIONS’ DEN**

**IN DANIEL 6:10-17 DECLARES, “NOW WENT DANIEL KNEW THAT THE WRITING WAS SIGNED, HE WENT HOME. AND IN HIS UPPER ROOM, WITH HIS WINDOWS OPEN TOWARD JERUSALEM, HE KNELT DOWN ON HIS KNEES THREE TIMES THAT DAY, AND PRAYED AND GAVE THANKS BEFORE HIS GOD [FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD], AS WAS HIS CUSTOM SINCE EARLY DAYS. THEN THESE MEN ASSEMBLED AND FOUND DANIEL PRAYING AND MAKING SUPPLICATION BEFORE HIS GOD [FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD]. AND THEY WENT IN BEFORE THE KING, AND SPOKE CONCERNING THE KING’S DECREE: ‘HAVE YOU NOT SIGNED A DECREE THAT EVERY MAN WHO PETITIONS AND GOD OR MAN WITHIN THIRTY DAYS, EXCEPT YOU, O KING, SHALL BE CAST INTO THE DEN OF LIONS?’ THE KING ANSWERED AND SAID, ‘THE THING IS TRUE, ACCORDING TO THE LAW OF THE MEDES AND PERSIANS, WHICH DOES NOT ALTER.’ SO THEY ANSWERED AND SAID BEFORE THE KING, ‘THAT DANIEL, WHO IS ONE OF THE CAPTIVES [SONS] FROM JUDAH, DOES NOT SHOW DUE REGARD FOR YOU, O KING, OR FOR THE DECREE THAT YOU HAVE SIGNED, BUT MAKES HIS PETITION THREE TIMES A DAY.’ AND THE KING, WHEN HE HEARD THESE WORDS, WAS GREATLY DISPLEASED WITH HIMSELF, AND SET HIS HEART ON DANIEL TO DELIVER HIM, AND HE LABORED TILL THE GOING DOWN OF THE SUN TO DELIVER HIM. THEN THESE MEN APPROACHED THE KING, AND SAID TO THE KING, ‘KNOW, O KING, THAT IT IS THE LAW OF THE MEDES AND PERSIANS THAT NO DECREE OR STATUTE WHICH THE KING ESTABLISHES MAY BE CHANGED.’ SO, THE KING GAVE THE COMMAND, AND THEY BROUGHT DANIEL AND CAST HIM INTO THE DEN OF LIONS. BUT THE KING SPOKE, SAYING TO DANIEL, ‘YOUR GOD [FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD], WHOM YOU SERVE CONTINUALLY, HE WILL DELIVER YOU.’ THEN A STONE WAS BROUGHT AND LAID ON THE MOUTH OF THE DEN, AND THE KING SEALED IT WITH HIS OWN SIGNET RING AND WITH THE SIGNETS OF HIS LORDS, THAT THE PURPOSE CONCERNING DANIEL MIGHT NOT BE CHANGED.”**

**THE LORD DANIEL SAVED FROM THE LIONS**

**IN DANIEL 6:18-23 DECLARES, “NOW THE KING WENT TO HIS PALACE AND SPENT THE NIGHT FASTING, AND NO MUSICIANS WERE BROUGHT BEFORE HIM. ALSO, HIS SLEEP WENT FROM HIM. THEN THE KING AROSE VERY EARLY IN THE MORNING AND WENT IN HASTE TO THE DEN OF LIONS. AND WHEN HE CAME TO THE DEN, HE CRIED OUT WITH A LAMENTING VOICE TO DANIEL. THE KING SPOKE, SAYING TO DANIEL, ‘DANIEL, SERVANT OF THE LIVING GOD [FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD], HAS YOUR GOD [FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD], WHOM YOU SERVE CONTINUALLY, BEEN ABLE TO DELIVER YOU FROM THE LIONS?’ THEN DANIEL SAID TO THE KING, ‘O KING, LIVE FOREVER! MY GOD [FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD] SENT HIS ANGEL AND SHUT THE LIONS’ MOUTHS SO THAT THEY HAVE NOT HURT ME, BECAUSE I WAS FOUND INNOCENT BEFORE HIM, AND ALSO, O KING, I HAVE DONE NO WRONG BEFORE YOU.’ NOW THE KING WAS EXCEEDINGLY GLAD FOR HIM, AND COMMANDED THAT THEY SHOULD TAKE DANIEL UP OUT OF THE DEN. SO DANIEL WAS TAKEN UP OUT OF THE DEN, AND NO INJURY WHATEVER WAS FOUND ON HIM, BECAUSE HE BELIEVED IN HIS GOD [FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD].**

**THE LORD DARIUS HONORS THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD**

**IN DANIEL 6:24-28 DECLARES, “AND THE KING GAVE THE COMMAND, AND THEY BROUGHT THOSE MEN WHO HAD ACCUSED DANIEL, AND THEY CAST THEM INTO THE DEN OF LIONS---THEM, THEIR CHILDREN, AND THEIR WIVES, AND THE LIONS OVERPOWERED THEM, AND BROKE ALL THEIR BONES IN PIECES BEFORE THEY EVER CAME TO THE BOTTOM OF THE DEN. THEN KING DARIUS WROTE: TO ALL PEOPLES, NATIONS, AND LANGUAGES THAT DWELL IN ALL THE EARTH: PEACE BE MULTIPLIED TO YOU. I MAKE A DECREE THAT IN EVERY DOMINION OF MY KINGDOM MEN MUST TREMBLE AND FEAR BEFORE THE GOD [FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD] OF DANIEL. FOR HE IS A LIVING GOD [FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD], AND STEADFAST FOREVER, HIS KINGDOM IS THE ONE WHICH SHALL NOT BE DESTROYED, AND HIS DOMINION SHALL ENDURE TO THE END. HE DELIVERS AND RESCUES, AND HE WORKS SIGNS AND WONDERS IN HEAVEN AND ON EARTH, WHO HAS DELIVERED DANIEL FROM THE POWER [AUTHORITY] OF THE LIONS. SO, THIS DANIEL PROSPERED [ACHIEVED GREATLY] IN THE REIGN OF DARIUS AND IN THE REIGN OF CYRUS THE PERSIAN.”**

**THE LORD DANIEL’S VISION OF THE FOUR BEASTS**

**IN DANIEL 7:1-8 DECLARES, “IN THE FIRST YEAR OF BELSHAZZAR KING OF BABYLON, DANIEL HAD A DREAM AND VISIONS OF HIS HEAD WHILE ON HIS BED. THEN HE WROTE DOWN THE DREAM, TELLING THE MAIN FACTS. DANIEL SPOKE, SAYING, ‘I SAW IN MY VISION BY NIGHT, AND BEHOLD, THE FOUR WINDS OF HEAVEN WERE STIRRING UP THE GREAT SEA. AND FOUR GREAT BEASTS CAME UP FROM THE SEA, EACH DIFFERENT FROM THE OTHER.**

**THE 1ST BEAST IS THE LION-MAN WITH EAGLE’S WINGS**

**THE FIRST WAS LIKE A LION, AND HAD EAGLE’S WINGS. I WATCHED TILL ITS WINGS WERE PLUCKED OFF, AND IT WAS LIFTED UP FROM THE EARTH AND MADE TO STAND ON TWO FEET LIKE A MAN, AND A MAN’S HEART WAS GIVEN TO IT.**

**THE 2ND BEAST IS THE BEAR-MAN WITH THREE RIBS IN ITS MOUTH**

**AND SUDDENLY ANOTHER BEAST, A SECOND, LIKE A BEAR. IT WAS RAISED UP ON ONE SIDE, AND HAD THREE RIBS IN ITS MOUTH BETWEEN ITS TEETH. AND THEY SAID THUS TO IT: ‘ARISE, DEVOUR MUCH FLESH!’**

**THE 3RD BEAST IS THE LEOPARD-MAN WITH FOUR HEADS & FOUR WINGS ON ITS BACK**

**AFTER THIS I LOOKED, AND THERE WAS ANOTHER, LIKE A LEOPARD, WHICH HAD ON ITS BACK FOUR WINGS OF A BIRD. THE BEAST ALSO HAD FOUR HEADS, AND DOMINION WAS GIVEN TO IT.**

**THE 4TH BEAST IS THE TEN HORNED BEAST-MAN WITH MAN’S EYES & MOUTH SPEAKING POMPOUS THINGS**

**AFTER THIS I SAW IN THE NIGHT VISIONS, AND BEHOLD, A FOURTH BEAST, DREADFUL AND TERRIBLE, EXCEEDINGLY STRONG. IT HAS HUGE IRON TEETH, IT WAS DEVOURING, BREAKING IN PIECES, AND TRAMPLING THE RESIDUE WITH ITS FEET. IT WAS DIFFERENT FROM ALL THE BEASTS THAT WERE BEFORE IT, AND IT HAD TEN HORNS. I WAS CONSIDERING THE HORNS, AND THERE WAS ANOTHER HORN, A LITTLE ONE, COMING UP AMONG THEM, BEFORE WHOM THREE OF THE FIRST HORNS WERE PLUCKED OUT BY THE ROOTS. AND THERE, IN THIS HORN, WERE EYES LIKE THE EYES OF A MAN, AND A MOUTH SPEAKING POMPOUS WORDS [GREAT THINGS].”**

**THE LORD DANIEL’S VISION OF THE ANCIENT OF DAYS THRONE ROOM JUDGMENT**

**THE GREATEST BEGINNING DIVINE SEED OF THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD’S IMPARTIAL RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENT ALL THE WAY TO THE SINGLE KINGDOM OF LORDSHIP IN ACTS OF THE HOLY GHOST**

**IN DANIEL 7:9-14 DECLARES, “I WATCHED TILL THRONES WERE PUT IN PLACE (SET), AND THE ANCIENT OF DAYS (FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD) WAS SEATED (THE FULL & FINAL JUDGMENT OF THE “GOOGOLON YEAR REIGN” WHICH IS 1 WITH 100 ZERO’S BEHIND IT BY THE FATHER STEPHEN’S IMPARTIAL RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENT OF MOLOCH CORRUPTION IN ROMANS 1:21-32; 3:4-23 & 1ST PETER 1:17-21 FROM FROM 46 YEARS OF AGE TO ETERNITY AND THE LORD PETER, LORD JOHN, THE LORD JESUS & LORD JAMES WITH ALL LOWER LEVEL LORDS [LADIES] FROM 4 TO 46 YEARS OF AGE). HIS GARMENT WAS WHITE AS SNOW, AND THE HAIR OF HIS HEAD WAS LIKE PURE WOOL. HIS THRONE WAS A FIERY FLAME. ITS WHEELS A BURNING FIRE, A FIERY STREAM ISSUED AND CAME FORTH FROM BEFORE HIM [THIS MEANS THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD’S BEGINNING GLOBAL PRECISE APPOINTMENTS ARE IMPARTIAL RIGHTEOUS JUDGED & OPERATES IN THE 2ND TIME OR MORE ETERNALLY ESTABLISHED IN THE NUMBER 1 IN REVELATION CHAPTERS 4-5 & 21-22 & THE ULTIMATE END TIME IMPARTIAL RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENT IS DONE IN SIMILAR FASHION IN THE UNMARRIED TO SINGLE AFTER MARRIED KINGDOM OF LORDSHIP OF THE LAW IN ACTS OF THE APOSTLES IN ACTS 29:2 & IN THE SINGLE KINGDOM OF LORDSHIP IN ACTS OF THE HOLY GHOST IN ACTS 29:2]. A THOUSAND THOUSANDS (10,000,000 MILLION SAINTLY CHRISTIAN LORDS IN A KINGDOM OF LORDSHIP) MINISTERED TO HIM, TEN THOUSAND TIMES TEN THOUSAND (100,000,000 MILLION SAINTLY CHRISTIAN LORDS IN A KINGDOM OF LORDSHIP WHICH EACH 33 YEAR OLD LORD CAN HANDLE AT LEAST 133.3 TRILLION PEOPLE BY 12 LEGIONS (72,000) OF ANGELS TIMES 185,000 TIMES 100,000 IN RELENTING IN JUDE 14-15 WHICH IS OVER 1 TRILLION IN EACH MONTH IN ISAIAH 37:36 & MATTHEW 26:53) STOOD BEFORE HIM. THE COURT WAS SEATED AND THE BOOKS (1 WITH 10,000 ZEROS’ BEHIND IT, WHICH IS A “GOOGOLPLEX YEAR REIGN” OF BOOKS, THE BOOK OF THE DEAD AND THE BOOK OF LIFE) WERE OPENED. I WATCHED THEM BECAUSE OF THE SOUND OF THE POMPOUS WORDS WHICH THE HORN WAS SPEAKING. I WATCHED TILL THE BEAST WAS SLAIN, AND ITS BODY DESTROYED AND GIVEN TO THE BURNING FLAME. AS FOR THE REST OF THE BEASTS, THEY HAD THEIR DOMINION TAKEN AWAY, YET THEIR LIVES WERE PROLONGED FOR A SEASON (3 MONTHS) AND A TIME (WEEK). I WAS WATCHING IN THE NIGHT VISIONS, AND BEHOLD, ONE LIKE THE SON OF MAN (SON JESUS OUR LORD), COMING WITH THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN! HE CAME TO THE ANCIENT OF DAYS (FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD), AND THEY BROUGHT HIM NEAR BEFORE HIM. THEN TO HIM WAS GIVEN DOMINION AND GLORY AND A KINGDOM (OF SAINTLY CHRISTIAN LORDSHIP) THAT ALL PEOPLES, NATIONS, AND LANGUAGES SHOULD SERVE HIM. HIS DOMINION IS AN EVERLASTING DOMINION, WHICH SHALL NOT PASS AWAY, AND HIS KINGDOM (OF SAINTLY CHRISTIAN LORDSHIP) THE ONE WHICH SHALL NOT BE DESTROYED.” THIS ETERNAL JUDGMENT OF THE FATHER STEPHEN INVOLVES A MUCH LESSER NUMBER THAN THE GREAT WHITE THRONE ROOM JUDGMENT WITH LESSER OFFENCES TO THE UNGODLY [JUDE 14-15] THAT WILL BE IMPARTIALLY JUDGED BY THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD IN 1 HOUR TO 1 MINUTE & 1 MINUTE TO 1 SECOND IN MATTHEW 20:12 CONCERNING THE SEASONS & TIMES IN MATTHEW 24:36-44; MARK 13:32-37; 1ST PETER 1:17-21 & ACTS 1:7; 29:2. THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD IMPARTIALLY JUDGES ALL RELATIONSHIPS & MARRIAGES ALIKE FROM THE 1ST LEVEL TO THE 9TH LEVEL, BUT IT IS NOT NEEDED IN THE 10TH LEVEL. IF YOU ARE ALONE WITHOUT A RELATIONSHIP OR MARRIAGE ALIKE, THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD WILL IMPARTIALLY JUDGE YOU FROM THE 1ST LEVEL TO THE 10TH LEVEL.**

**THE LORD DANIEL’S 2 VISIONS INTERPRETED BY THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD**

**IN DANIEL 7:15-28 DECLARES, “I DANIEL, WAS GRIEVED IN MY SPIRIT WITHIN MY BODY, AND THE VISIONS OF MY HEAD TROUBLED ME. I CAME NEAR TO ONE [FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD IN THE NUMBER 1] OF THOSE WHO STOOD BY, AND ASKED HIM THE TRUTH OF ALL THIS. SO, HE TOLD ME AND MADE KNOWN TO ME THE INTERPRETATION OF THESE THINGS: ‘THOSE GREAT BEASTS, WHICH ARE FOUR, ARE FOUR KINGS WHICH ARISE OUT OF THE EARTH. BUT THE SAINTS OF THE MOST-HIGH [FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD] SHALL RECEIVE THE KINGDOM, AND POSSESS THE KINGDOM FOREVER, EVEN FOREVER AND EVER.’ THEN I WISHED TO KNOW THE TRUTH ABOUT THE FOURTH BEAST, WHICH WAS DIFFERENT FROM ALL THE OTHERS, EXCEEDINGLY DREADFUL, WITH ITS TEETH OF IRON AND ITS NAILS OF BRONZE, WHICH DEVOURED, BROKE IN PIECES, AND TRAMPLED THE RESIDUE WITH ITS FEET, AND THE TEN HORNS THAT WERE ON ITS HEAD, AND THE OTHER HORN WHICH CAME UP, BEFORE WHICH THREE FELL, NAMELY, THAT HORN WHICH HAD EYES AND A MOUTH WHICH SPOKE POMPOUS WORDS [GREAT THINGS], WHOSE APPEARANCE WAS GREATER THEN HIS FELLOWS. I WAS WATCHING, AND THE SAME HORN WAS MAKING WAR [2 NUMBER 0 POSITIONS] AGAINST THE SAINTS, AND PREVAILING AGAINST THEM, UNTIL THE ANCIENT OF DAYS CAME, AND A JUDGMENT [FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD’S IMPARTIAL JUDGMENT IN 1ST PETER 1:17-21 & ACTS 5:38-39] WAS MADE IN FAVOR OF THE SAINTS OF THE MOST-HIGH [FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD], AND THE TIME CAME FOR THE SAINTS TO POSSESS THE KINGDOM [OF LORDSHIP]. THUS, HE SAID: ‘THE FOURTH BEAST SHALL BE A FOURTH KINGDOM ON EARTH, WHICH SHALL BE DIFFERENT FROM ALL OTHER KINGDOMS, AND SHALL DEVOUR THE WHOLE EARTH, TRAMPLE IT AND BREAK IT IN PIECES. THE TEN HORNS ARE TEN KINGS WHO SHALL ARISE FROM THIS KINGDOM. AND ANOTHER [11TH KING] SHALL ARISE AFTER THEM, HE SHALL BE DIFFERENT FROM THE FIRST ONES, AND SHALL SUBDUE THREE KINGS. HE SHALL SPEAK POMPOUS WORDS [GREAT THINGS] AGAINST THE MOST-HIGH [FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD], SHALL PERSECUTE THE SAINTS [ACTS CHAPTERS 9, 22, 26] OF THE MOST-HIGH [FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD], AND SHALL INTEND TO CHANGE TIMES AND LAW. THEN THE SAINTS SHALL BE GIVEN INTO HIS HAND FOR A TIME AND TIMES AND HALF OF A TIME. BUT THE COURT SHALL BE SEATED, AND THEY SHALL TAKE AWAY HIS DOMINION, TO CONSUME AND DESTROY IT FOREVER. THEN THE KINGDOM AND DOMINION, AND THE GREATNESS OF THE KINGDOMS UNDER THE WHOLE HEAVEN, SHALL BE GIVEN TO THE PEOPLE, THE SAINTS OF THE MOST-HIGH [FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD]. HIS KINGDOM IS AN EVERLASTING KINGDOM, AND ALL DOMINIONS SHALL SERVE AND OBEY HIM.’ THIS IS THE END OF THE ACCOUNT [WORD]. AS FOR ME, DANIEL, MY THOUGHTS GREATLY TROUBLED ME, AND MY COUNTENANCE CHANGED, BUT I KEPT THE MATTER IN MY HEART.”**

**THE LORD DANIEL’S VISION OF THE RAM AND THE GOAT**

**IN DANIEL 8:1-14 DECLARES, “IN THE THIRD YEAR OF THE REIGN OF KING BELSHAZZAR A VISION APPEARED TO ME---TO ME, DANIEL---AFTER THE ONE [FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD IN THE NUMBER 1] THAT APPEARED TO ME THE FIRST TIME. I SAW IN THE VISION, AND IT HAPPENED WHILE I WAS LOOKING, THAT I WAS IN SHUSHAN [SUSA], THE CITADEL [FORTIFIED PALACE], WHICH IS IN THE PROVIDENCE OF ELAM, AND I SAW IN THE VISION THAT I WAS BY THE RIVER ULAI. THEN I LIFTED UP MY EYES AND SAW, AND THERE, STANDING BESIDE THE RIVER, WAS A RAM WHICH HAD TWO HORNS, AND THE TWO HORNS [THE 1ST HORN IS THE IRAQI PRESIDENT & THE 2ND HORN IS THE IRANIAN PRESIDENT] WERE HIGH, BUT ONE WAS HIGHER THAN THE OTHER, AND THE HIGHER ONE CAME UP LAST. I SAW THE RAM PUSHING WESTWARD, NORTHWARD, AND SOUTHWARD, SO THAT NO ANIMAL COULD WITHSTAND HIM, NOR WAS THERE ANY THAT COULD DELIVER FROM HIS HAND, BUT HE DID ACCORDING TO HIS WILL AND BECAME GREAT. AND AS I WAS CONSIDERING, SUDDENLY A MALE GOAT CAME FROM THE WEST, ACROSS THE SURFACE OF THE WHOLE EARTH, WITHOUT TOUCHING THE GROUND [GLOBAL LEVITATION OF AIR STRIKES WITH ARMED HELICOPTERS & NUCLEAR BOMBERS], AND THE GOAT HAD A NOTABLE HORN [THE 43RD USA PRESIDENCY IS THE 1ST EYE WITH 2 EYES & 45TH USA PRESIDENCY IS THE 3RD EYE & THE 2ND EYE WITH 2 EYES IS THE TRUE HOLY DIVISION OF THE 44TH USA PRESIDENCY, WHICH MAKE UP 7 EYES [SPIRITS] OF THE LORD & CAN MEAN THAT THE LORD HAS BEGUN TO ETERNALLY ESTABLISH HIS KINGDOM OF LORDSHIP DOWN HERE THROUGHOUT THE EARTH SINCE THE 1ST HORN HAD BEGUN TO FALL WITH THE 43RD USA PRESIDENCY, THE 1ST HORN FELL IN THE 44TH USA PRESIDENCY & THEN THE 2ND HORN HAS BEGUN TO FALL BY THE 45TH USA PRESIDENCY & THE 2ND HORN WILL FALL BY A FUTURE PRESIDENCY IN REVELATION 4-5] BETWEEN HIS EYES. THEN HE CAME TO THE RAM THAT HAD TWO HORNS [THE 1ST HORN IS THE IRAQI PRESIDENT & THE 2ND HORN IS THE IRANIAN PRESIDENT], WHICH I HAD SEEN STANDING BESIDE THE RIVER, AND RAN AT HIM WITH FURIOUS POWER [AUTHORITY]. AND I SAW HIM CONFRONTING THE RAM, HE WAS MOVED WITH RAGE AGAINST HIM, ATTACKED THE RAM, AND BROKE HIS TWO HORNS [THE 1ST HORN IS THE IRAQI PRESIDENT & THE 2ND HORN IS THE IRANIAN PRESIDENT]. THERE WAS NO POWER [AUTHORITY] IN THE RAM TO WITHSTAND HIM, BUT HE CAST HIM DOWN TO THE GROUND AND TRAMPLED HIM, AND THERE WAS NO ONE THAT COULD DELIVER THE RAM FROM HIS HAND. THEREFORE, THE MALE GOAT GREW VERY GREAT, BUT WHEN HE BECAME STRONG [THE USA], THE LARGE HORN [THE USA] WAS BROKEN [THE ANTICHRIST ITALIAN ROMAN KINGDOM, THE LITTLE HORN IS THE ONLY FORCE TO TAKE DOWN THE USA, BUT BEFORE THIS HAPPENS THE ANTICHRIST MUST HAVE SOVEREIGN RULE OF ALL OF THE EUPHORIA CONTINENT, & ON THE SOUTH AMERICA/NORTH AMERICA CONTINENT THE ANTICHRIST MUST DOMINATE SOUTH AMERICA FIRST, BEFORE THE ANTICHRIST CAN DEAL WITH NORTH AMERICA, THEN CANADA & MEXICO HAS TO BE SUBDUED BEFORE THE ANTICHRIST CAN ENTER THE USA, THEN IN THE USA THE ANTICHRIST MUST SWEEP THROUGH ALL US STATES, BEFORE IT CAN REACH THE TOP MOST PINNACLE [PROVERBS 8 WITH A DOORWAY IN THE 7TH LEVEL, DANIEL 7 WITH A DOORWAY IN THE 7TH LEVEL & ACTS 7 WITH A DOORWAY IN THE 7TH LEVEL, WHICH EQUALS TO REVELATION 21 WITH A DOORWAY ON THE 20TH LEVEL, WHICH IS REVELATION 20:7-15] OF THE USA [THE EMBLEM OF THE GREAT EAGLE IN 2ND ESDRAS 11-13 IS ONLY KNOWN IN THE ITALIAN ROMAN EMPIRE, WHICH ENDED IN ACTS 29, BUT MORE PRECISELY THE EMBLEM OF THE GREAT EAGLE IN 2ND ESDRAS 11-13 IS ALSO KNOWN IN THE ENGLISH USA EMPIRE IS IN ACTS 30 & THEIR MAYBE THE VICTORIAN ENGLISH EMPIRE [THE FEMALE DEVIL KNOWN AS THE FALLEN LADY VICTORIA---BABYLON IN ISAIAH 47:1-15] THAT STARTED IN THE VICTORIAN ENGLISH ERA FROM JUNE, 1837AD TO JANUARY, 1901AD [64 YEARS] TO DIRECTLY SHOW UP IN BUILDING BLOCKS OF THE USA, WHICH MAY EVENTUALLY POP BACK UP & THREATEN THE SOVEREIGNTY [SUPREME AUTHORITY] OF THE USA TO COME AFTER AS THE USA’S SUCCESSOR OR IN DIRECT OPPOSITION TO THE USA ENGLISH EMPIRE IN ACTS 30 & WHEN IS EVERYBODY GOING TO WAKE THE FUCK UP & KNOW THAT MONEY IN ITSELF IS WHY THE ITALIAN ROMAN EMPIRE FELL DONE BY THE TOP ENGLISH LORD AS WITH ALL SEXUAL EMPIRES BEFORE DONE BY THE TOP ENGLISH LORD & NOW MONEY IN ITSELF IS DIRECTLY THREATENING THE SOVEREIGNTY OF THE USA, WHICH IT DOES TAKE A ROCKET SCIENTIST TO FIGURE OUT HOW THESE DUMBASS MOTHERFUCKERS & SANCTIMONIOUS HYPOCRITIAL ASSHOLES ARE DEFENDING THIS ETERNAL SEXUAL BULLSHIT IN THE USA & IF WE DO NOT ACT ACCORDINGLY WITH THE TOP ENGLISH LORD, THE TOP ENGLISH LORD WILL EVENTUALLY DESTROY THIS USA ENGLISH EMPIRE ALSO], WHICH IS SC, THEN THE ANTICHRIST WILL ATTEMPT TO CONQUER THROUGH SC, UNTIL IT REACHES THE FLORENCE METROPOLITAN AREA, WHERE THE ANTICHRIST WILL BE ULTIMATELY DEFEATED, MOST LIKELY BY NUCLEAR WARFARE OR BY THE LORD & HIS WATER OVERTHROW [LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH HIMSELF’S CRYING FOR BEING SORRY IN GENESIS 6:7 & 2ND ESDRAS 4:50], HIS FIRE OVERTHROW [LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH HIMSELF’S LIGHTING HIS SMOKE WITH FIRE IN PSALMS 18:8 & 2ND ESDRAS 13:11] & HIS OMNI-BENEVOLENCE OVERTHROW [LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH HIMSELF’S SMOKING ISAIAH 9:18; 65:5] SOMETIME DURING THE ULTIMATE END TIME OF ISRAEL’S GREAT TRIBULATION PERIOD OF 42 MONTHS BETWEEN REVELATION 10:1-20:15 IN ACTS 29:1-2 & THE ULTIMATE END TIME OF THE USA’S TRIBULATION PERIOD OF ABOUT 38 MONTHS BETWEEN DANIEL 8:8-14 IN ACTS 29:1-2, THEN AFTERWARDS THE NEW UNIVERSE, THE GODLY NEW JERUSALEM WILL COME INTO ETERNAL EXISTENCE AT THE PRIMARY DIRECT SOURCE IN THE FLORENCE, SC AREA], AND IN PLACE OF IT FOUR NOTABLE ONES [THE 4 GENERALS OF THE BEAST] CAME UP TOWARD THE FOUR WINDS OF HEAVEN. AND OUT OF ONE [THE MOST HIGHEST] OF THEM CAME A LITTLE HORN [THE ANTICHRIST] WHICH GREW EXCEEDINGLY GREAT TOWARD THE SOUTH, TOWARD THE EAST, AND TOWARD THE GLORIOUS LAND [SOMEWHERE IN THE SOUTHEASTERN PART OF THE USA IN THE ULTIMATE END TIME, AND PRECISELY IN SOUTH CAROLINA IN ACTS 29:2]. AND IT GREW UP TO BE THE HOST OF HEAVEN [ACTS 7:42-43], AND IT CAST DOWN SOME OF THE HOST AND SOME OF THE STARS TO THE GROUND, AND TRAMPLED THEM. HE EVEN EXALTED HIMSELF AS HIGH AS THE PRINCE OF THE HOST [LORD ENOCH], AND BY HIM THE DAILY SACRIFICES WERE TAKEN AWAY, AND THE PLACE OF HIS SANCTUARY [TEMPLE] WAS CAST DOWN. BECAUSE OF TRANSGRESSION, AN ARMY WAS GIVEN OVER TO THE HORN TO OPPOSE THE DAILY SACRIFICES [FOR 46 YEARS], AND HE CAST TRUTH DOWN TO THE GROUND. HE DID ALL THIS AND PROSPERED. THEN I HEARD A HOLY ONE SPEAKING, AND ANOTHER HOLY ONE SAID TO THE CERTAIN ONE WHO WAS SPEAKING, ‘HOW LONG WILL THE VISION BE, CONCERNING THE DAILY SACRIFICES AND THE TRANSGRESSION OF DESOLATION, THE GIVING OF BOTH THE SANCTUARY AND THE HOST TO BE TRAMPLED UNDERFOOT?’ AND HE SAID TO ME, ‘FOR TWO THOUSAND THREE HUNDRED DAYS [6 YEARS, 3 MONTHS & 14 DAYS OR TWO POSITIONS MAKING PEACE IN 1 POSITION IS 2 YEARS, 1 MONTH & 5 DAYS & GO ONE MILE GO TWAIN IS 8.5 MONTHS OF A PREGNANCY], THEN THE SANCTUARY SHALL BE CLEANSED.**

**\*\*\* ETERNAL NOTE\*\*\* DURING VICTORIAN ENGLAND MAFIA EMPIRE [1837AD-1901AD], PROSTITUTION WAS SEEN AS A GREAT SOCIAL EVIL BY CLERGYMEN AND MAJOR NEWS ORGANIZATIONS, BUT MANY FEMINISTS VIEWED PROSTITUTION AS A MEANS OF ECONOMIC INDEPENDENCE FOR WOMEN. ESTIMATES OF THE NUMBER OF PROSTITUTES IN LONDON IN THE 1850S VARY WIDELY, BUT IN HIS LANDMARK STUDY, PROSTITUTION, REPORTED AN ESTIMATION OF 8,600 PROSTITUTES IN LONDON ALONE IN 1857. THE DIFFERING VIEWS ON PROSTITUTION HAVE MADE IT DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND ITS HISTORY. MANY SOURCES BLAME ECONOMIC DISPARITIES AS LEADING FACTORS IN THE RISE OF PROSTITUTION, AND THE DEMOGRAPHIC WITHIN PROSTITUTION VARIED GREATLY. HOWEVER, WOMEN WHO STRUGGLED FINANCIALLY WERE MUCH MORE LIKELY TO BE PROSTITUTES THAN THOSE WITH A SECURE SOURCE OF INCOME. ORPHANED OR HALF-ORPHANED WOMEN WERE MORE LIKELY TO TURN TO PROSTITUTION AS A MEANS OF INCOME. WHILE OVERCROWDING IN URBAN CITIES AND THE AMOUNT OF JOB OPPORTUNITIES FOR FEMALES WERE LIMITED, THERE, WERE OTHER VARIABLES THAT LEAD WOMEN TO PROSTITUTION. PROSTITUTION ALLOWED FOR WOMEN TO FEEL A SENSE OF INDEPENDENCE AND SELF-RESPECT. ALTHOUGH MANY ASSUME THAT PIMPS CONTROLLED AND EXPLOITED THESE PROSTITUTES, SOME WOMEN MANAGED THEIR OWN CLIENTELE AND PRICING. IT'S EVIDENT THAT WOMEN WERE EXPLOITED BY THIS SYSTEM, THAT PROSTITUTION WAS OFTEN THEIR OPPORTUNITY TO GAIN SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC INDEPENDENCE. PROSTITUTION AT THIS TIME WAS REGARDED BY WOMEN IN THE PROFESSION TO BE A SHORT-TERM POSITION, AND ONCE THEY EARNED ENOUGH MONEY, THERE WERE HOPES THAT THEY WOULD MOVE ON TO A DIFFERENT PROFESSION. THE ARGUMENTS FOR AND AGAINST PROSTITUTION VARIED GREATLY FROM IT BEING PERCEIVED AS A MORTAL SIN OR DESPERATE DECISION TO AN INDEPENDENT CHOICE. WHILE THERE WERE PLENTY OF PEOPLE PUBLICLY DENOUNCING PROSTITUTION IN THE VICTORIAN ENGLAND EMPIRE, THERE WERE ALSO OTHERS WHO TOOK OPPOSITION TO THEM. ONE EVENT THAT SPARKED A LOT OF CONTROVERSY WAS THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONTAGIOUS DISEASES ACTS. THIS WAS A SERIES OF THREE ACTS IN 1864,1866, AND 1869 THAT ALLOWED POLICE OFFICERS TO STOP WOMEN WHOM THEY BELIEVED TO BE PROSTITUTES AND FORCE THEM TO BE EXAMINED. IF THE SUSPECTED WOMAN WAS FOUND WITH A VENEREAL DISEASE, THEY PLACED THE WOMAN INTO A LOCK HOSPITAL. ARGUMENTS MADE AGAINST THE ACTS CLAIMED THAT THE REGULATIONS WERE UNCONSTITUTIONAL AND THAT THEY ONLY TARGETED WOMEN. IN EARLY TIMES, EROTIC DEPICTIONS WERE OFTEN A SUBSET OF THE INDIGENOUS OR RELIGIOUS ART OF CULTURES AND AS SUCH WERE NOT SET ASIDE OR TREATED DIFFERENTLY THAN ANY OTHER TYPE. THIS EVENTUALLY GREW IN THE USA WITH THE MODERN CONCEPT OF PORNOGRAPHY [XXX PORN INDUSTRY---GREEK PORNEIA: SHORT FOR PORN, MEANS FORNICATION, SEXUAL IMMORALITY, ABOMINABLE ACTS, UNBRIDLED SEX & MARITAL SEX, TO NAME A FEW, FROM ITSELF DIRECT SOURCE IN MOLECH---MOLOCH, WHICH IS CHILD PORNOGRAPHY [THE OT & ACTS 7:42-43]: SEXUAL, SINFUL, TEMPTING & WICKED] (MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS & THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH) (REVELATION 17:1-18:24) AS KNOWN AS VICTORIA THE FALLEN LADY OF KINGDOMS, ALSO CALLED THE DUMBASS MOTHERFUCKER (2ND PETER 2:16 WITH REVELATION 17:1-18:24) & SANCTIMONIOUS HYPOCRITICAL ASSHOLE THAT IS FOUND IN THE TERM PHARISEE, WHICH MEANS A RELIGIOUS HYPOCRITICAL MARRIED LAW-ABIDING CONTRARY SEXUAL BULLSHIT LAW (ISAIAH 47:1-15; ZECHARIAH 5:8; ROMANS 1:21-28, 32; 2ND CORINTHIANS 11:13-15; 2ND THESSALONIANS 2:1-12; JAMES 1:14-15; 3:14-16; 4:1-6; 2ND PETER 2:1-22; JUDE 5-19; REVELATION 17:1-18:24 & ACTS 7:42-43). JESUS CHRIST’S GREATEST OPPOSERS WERE THE MARRIED SEXUAL PHARISEES!!! PORNEIA MEANS PROMISCUITY [SEXUAL FREEDOM] THAT ALWAYS SAYS ‘I WILL FREELY FUCK OR HAVE SEX WHOM I WANT TO FUCK OR HAVE SEX WITH & NOBODY WILL STOP ME’ YET THIS PORNEIA IS ALWAYS AGAINST THE TOP ENGLISH LORD & HIS LAWS!!! THIS KIND OF PORNEIA IN PROMISCUITY IS FOUND IN REVELATION 9:21; 14:8; 17:1-18:24; 19:2. PORNEIA IN INCEST IS FOUND IN 1ST CORINTHIANS 5:1. PORNEIA IN PRE-MARITAL SEX IS FOUND IN 1ST CORINTHIANS 7:2. PORNEIA IN BESTIALITY IS FOUND IN THE SEPTUAGINT IN LEVITICUS 18:23. PORNEIA IN SEXUALITY & HOMOSEXUALITY IS FOUND IN ROMANS 1:21-28, 32 & JUDE 7. PORNEIA IN MARITAL SEX IS FOUND IN TOBIT 4:12-13. PORNEIA IN THE LOVE OF MONEY OR MONEY IN ITSELF, WHICH IS THE ROOT OF ALL EVIL SEXUALITIES IS FOUND IN MATTHEW 6:24; 1ST TIMOTHY 6:9-10 & LUKE 16:9, 11, 13] DID NOT EXIST UNTIL THE VICTORIAN ENGLISH MAFIA EMPIRE IN THE USA. ITS CURRENT DEFINITION WAS ADDED IN THE 1860S, REPLACING THE OLDER ONE MEANING WRITINGS ABOUT PROSTITUTES. IT FIRST APPEARED IN AN ENGLISH MEDICAL DICTIONARY IN 1857 DEFINED AS "A DESCRIPTION OF PROSTITUTES OR OF PROSTITUTION, AS A MATTER OF PUBLIC HYGIENE." BY 1864, THE FIRST VERSION OF THE MODERN DEFINITION HAD APPEARED IN WEBSTER'S DICTIONARY: "LICENTIOUS PAINTING EMPLOYED TO DECORATE THE WALLS OF ROOMS SACRED TO BACCHANALIAN ORGIES, EXAMPLES OF WHICH EXIST IN POMPEII." THIS WAS THE BEGINNING OF WHAT TODAY REFERS TO EXPLICIT PICTURES IN GENERAL. THOUGH SOME SPECIFIC SEX ACTS WERE REGULATED OR PROHIBITED BY EARLIER LAWS, MERELY LOOKING AT OBJECTS OR IMAGES DEPICTING THEM WAS NOT OUTLAWED IN ANY COUNTRY UNTIL 1857. IN SOME CASES, THE POSSESSION OF CERTAIN BOOKS, ENGRAVINGS OR IMAGE COLLECTIONS WAS OUTLAWED, BUT THE TREND TO COMPOSE LAWS THAT ACTUALLY RESTRICTED VIEWING SEXUALLY EXPLICIT THINGS IN GENERAL WAS A VICTORIAN CONSTRUCT. WHEN LARGE-SCALE EXCAVATIONS OF POMPEII WERE UNDERTAKEN IN THE 1860S, MUCH OF THE EROTIC ART OF THE ROMANS CAME TO LIGHT, SHOCKING THE VICTORIANS WHO SAW THEMSELVES AS THE INTELLECTUAL HEIRS OF THE ITALIAN ROMAN EMPIRE. THEY DID NOT KNOW WHAT TO DO WITH THE FRANK DEPICTIONS OF SEXUALITY, AND ENDEAVORED TO HIDE THEM AWAY FROM EVERYONE BUT UPPER-CLASS SCHOLARS. THE MOVABLE OBJECTS WERE LOCKED AWAY IN THE SECRET MUSEUM IN NAPLES, AND WHAT COULD NOT BE REMOVED WAS COVERED AND CORDONED OFF SO AS TO NOT SEXUALLY CORRUPT THE SENSIBILITIES OF WOMEN, CHILDREN AND THE WORKING CLASS. ENGLAND'S (AND THE WORLD'S) FIRST LAWS CRIMINALIZING PORNOGRAPHY WERE ENACTED WITH THE PASSAGE OF THE OBSCENE PUBLICATIONS ACT OF 1857. DESPITE THEIR OCCASIONAL REPRESSION, DEPICTIONS OF EROTIC THEMES HAVE BEEN COMMON FOR MILLENNIA. PORNOGRAPHY HAS EXISTED THROUGHOUT RECORDED HISTORY AND HAS ADAPTED TO EACH NEW MEDIUM, INCLUDING PHOTOGRAPHY, CINEMA, VIDEO, AND COMPUTERS AND THE INTERNET. THE FIRST INSTANCES OF MODERN PORNOGRAPHY DATE BACK TO THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY WHEN SEXUALLY EXPLICIT IMAGES DIFFERENTIATED ITSELF FROM TRADITIONAL SEXUAL REPRESENTATIONS IN EUROPEAN ART BY COMBINING THE TRADITIONALLY EXPLICIT REPRESENTATION OF SEX AND THE MORAL NORMS OF THOSE TIMES. THE FIRST AMENDMENT PROHIBITS THE U.S. GOVERNMENT FROM RESTRICTING SPEECH BASED ON ITS CONTENT. INDECENT SPEECH IS PROTECTED AND MAY BE REGULATED, BUT NOT BANNED. OBSCENITY IS THE JUDICIALLY RECOGNIZED EXCEPTION TO THE FIRST AMENDMENT. HISTORICALLY, THIS EXCEPTION WAS USED IN AN ATTEMPT TO BAN INFORMATION ABOUT SEX EDUCATION, STUDIES ON NUDISM, AND SEXUALLY EXPLICIT LITERATURE. IN THE 1970S IN THE UNITED STATES, ATTEMPTS WERE MADE TO SHUT DOWN THE PORNOGRAPHY INDUSTRY BY PROSECUTING INDIVIDUALS ON PROSTITUTION CHARGES. IN THE CASE OF PEOPLE V. FREEMAN, THE CALIFORNIA SUPREME COURT RULED TO DISTINGUISH PROSTITUTION AS AN INDIVIDUAL TAKING PART IN SEXUAL ACTIVITIES IN EXCHANGE FOR MONEY VERSUS AN INDIVIDUAL WHO IS PORTRAYING A SEXUAL ACT ON-SCREEN AS PART OF THEIR ACTING PERFORMANCE. THE CASE WAS NOT APPEALED TO THE U.S. SUPREME COURT; THUS, IT IS ONLY BINDING IN THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA.**

**HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE FOR THE HOLY BIBLICAL LAWS TO BE FREELY ETERNALLY ESTABLISHED FROM THE ETERNAL BULLSHIT BY THE LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH IN THE USA?**

**THIS IS A PARTIAL RESOLUTION, WHICH IS FULLY DISQUALIFIED FOR THE USA BECAUSE OF THE 24-HOUR DAYS & 24-HOUR NIGHTS WOULD MAKE THE TIME GREATER UNFULFILLED TO DO ETERNAL BULLSHIT IN THE OLD TESTAMENT**

**BASED ON THE WAY THE LORD TOP ENGLISH HAS ETERNALLY ESTABLISHED HIS ETERNAL LAWS FOR THE USA BEGINNING IN JULY 4TH, 1774AD SINCE THE ARMY FOUGHT FOR THIS YEAR & INDEPENDENCE IS ESTABLISHED FULLY IN 1775, THE 3RD GENERATION WITH THE NUMBER 0 GLOBALLY AS 2 GIVEN YEARS---DAY & NIGHT FROM THE 24-HOUR EUPHORIA CONTINENT IS FROM 140.8 YEARS TO 212.3 YEARS, WHICH, MEANS FROM JULY 4TH, 1914AD TO JULY 4TH, 1986AD, THE 3RD GENERATION IS ETERNALLY ESTABLISHED & THE 4TH GENERATION IS FROM 212.3 YEARS TO 283.7 YEARS, WHICH MEANS FROM JULY 4TH, 1986AD TO JULY 4TH, 2057AD, THE 4TH GENERATION IS YET TO BE ETERNALLY ESTABLISHED. THERE IS NO EXCUSE IN ROMANS 1:20 OF ETERNAL BULLSHIT BASED ON THE ETERNAL CHARGES IN THE 3RD GENERATION. ONCE THE ETERNAL DAMNATIONS OF THE 4TH GENERATION IS ETERNALLY ESTABLISHED, THERE WILL BE NO ROOM FOR YOUR ETERNAL BULLSHIT ALSO!!! THE MID-MARK OF THE 4TH GENERATION IS AROUND JULY 4TH, 2021AD.**

**THIS IS A FULL RESOLUTION, WHICH IS FULLY QUALIFIED FOR THE USA BECAUSE OF THE 12 HOUR DAYS & 12 HOUR NIGHTS THE DAY & NIGHT COUNTS AS DOUBLE TIME FULFILLED SINCE JOHN 11:9 AND THERE IS NO ROOM FOR YOUR ETERNAL BULLSHIT IN THE NEW TESTAMENT**

**NOW IF YOU DO UPTIME DOWNTIME IN THE USA WITH THE TOP ENGLISH LORD BEGINNING IN JULY 4TH, 1774AD SINCE THE ARMY FOUGHT FOR THIS YEAR & INDEPENDENCE IS ESTABLISHED FULLY IN 1775AD, THEN HIS ETERNAL LAWS IN THE 3RD GENERATION IS ETERNALLY ESTABLISHED WITH THE NUMBER 0 GLOBALLY AS 2 GIVEN YEARS---DAY & NIGHT FROM THE 24-HOUR EUPHORIA CONTINENT IS 69.4 YEARS TO 105.1 YEARS, WHICH, MEANS FROM JULY 4TH, 1843AD TO JULY 4TH, 1879AD, THE 3RD GENERATION [VICTORIAN ENGLISH MAFIA EMPIRE FROM 1843AD-1879AD, WHICH IS 36 YEARS TOTAL] IS FULLY ETERNALLY ESTABLISHED & THE 4TH GENERATION IS FROM 105.1 YEARS TO 141.8 YEARS, WHICH MEANS FROM JULY 4TH, 1879AD TO JULY 4TH, 1915AD, THE 4TH GENERATION [VICTORIAN ENGLISH MAFIA EMPIRE FROM 1879AD-1901AD, WHICH IS 22 YEARS TOTAL] IS FULLY ETERNALLY ESTABLISHED. THERE IS NO EXCUSE IN ROMANS 1:20 BASED ON THE 3RD GENERATION & 4TH GENERATION WITHIN THE VICTORIAN ENGLISH MAFIA EMPIRE OF 58 YEARS IN THE USA. THERE WILL BE NO ROOM FOR YOUR ETERNAL BULLSHIT!!! WHEN THE SEED BIRTH---SACRED CALENDAR COMES IN MARCH 7TH OF 2020AD AT 100.0001% FINSHED, TO MARCH 7TH OF 2021AD AT 100.0000% IN FULL FRUITS OF 1 YEAR FROM BEGINNING TO END ETERNALLY ESTABLISHED OVER ALL THE ETERNAL BULLSHIT & THE USA AT 105 YEARS WITH THE NUMBER 0 GLOBALLY AS 2 GIVEN YEARS---DAY & NIGHT FROM THE 24-HOUR EUPHORIA CONTINENT IS 1915AD TO 2020AD, THIS WILL UNDUE THE EARLY STAGES OF ALL THE ETERNAL BULLSHIT & ETERNAL HORSESHIT THAT WAS ETERNALLY COMMITTED BECAUSE THE LAW WAS NOT FULLY RECOGNIZED OR BLATANTLY DENIED & THEREFORE VIOLATED THE LAWS AT THAT TIME IN THE USA. THIS WILL TAKE CARE OF THE ETERNAL CHARGES IN THE 3RD GENERATION & AUTOMATICALLY THE ETERNAL DAMNATIONS IN THE 4TH GENERATION ALSO BECAUSE WITHOUT ETERNAL CHARGES ESTABLISHED THERE IS NO ETERNAL DAMNATIONS ESTABLISHED. THEN THE ETERNAL LAWS WILL BE FREELY ETERNALLY ESTABLISHED IN THE USA!!!**

**EXODUS 20:4-6 “YOU SHALL NOT MAKE FOR YOURSELF A CARVED IMAGE, OR ANY LIKENESS OF ANYTHING THAT IS IN HEAVEN ABOVE, OR THAT IS IN THE EARTH BENEATH, OR THAT IS IN THE WATER UNDER THE EARTH. YOU SHALL NOT BOW DOWN TO THEM OR SERVE THEM, FOR I THE LORD YOUR GOD AM A JEALOUS GOD, VISITING THE INIQUITY OF THE FATHERS ON THE CHILDREN TO THE THIRD AND THE FOURTH GENERATION OF THOSE WHO HATE ME, BUT SHOWING STEADFAST LOVE TO THOUSANDS OF THOSE WHO LOVE ME AND KEEP MY COMMANDMENTS.**

**EXODUS 34:6-7 THE LORD PASSED BEFORE HIM AND PROCLAIMED, “THE LORD, THE LORD, A GOD MERCIFUL AND GRACIOUS, SLOW TO ANGER, AND ABOUNDING IN STEADFAST LOVE AND FAITHFULNESS, KEEPING STEADFAST LOVE FOR THOUSANDS, FORGIVING INIQUITY AND TRANSGRESSION AND SIN, BUT WHO WILL BY NO MEANS CLEAR THE GUILTY, VISITING THE INIQUITY OF THE FATHERS ON THE CHILDREN AND THE CHILDREN'S CHILDREN, TO THE THIRD AND THE FOURTH GENERATION.”**

**LEVITICUS 26:39-42 AND THOSE OF YOU WHO ARE LEFT SHALL ROT AWAY IN YOUR ENEMIES' LANDS BECAUSE OF THEIR INIQUITY, AND ALSO BECAUSE OF THE INIQUITIES OF THEIR FATHERS THEY SHALL ROT AWAY LIKE THEM. “BUT IF THEY CONFESS THEIR INIQUITY AND THE INIQUITY OF THEIR FATHERS IN THEIR TREACHERY THAT THEY COMMITTED AGAINST ME, AND ALSO IN WALKING CONTRARY TO ME, SO THAT I WALKED CONTRARY TO THEM AND BROUGHT THEM INTO THE LAND OF THEIR ENEMIES—IF THEN THEIR UNCIRCUMCISED HEART IS HUMBLED AND THEY MAKE AMENDS FOR THEIR INIQUITY, THEN I WILL REMEMBER MY COVENANT WITH JACOB, AND I WILL REMEMBER MY COVENANT WITH ISAAC AND MY COVENANT WITH ABRAHAM, AND I WILL REMEMBER THE LAND.**

**NUMBERS 14:18 ‘THE LORD IS SLOW TO ANGER AND ABOUNDING IN STEADFAST LOVE, FORGIVING INIQUITY AND TRANSGRESSION, BUT HE WILL BY NO MEANS CLEAR THE GUILTY, VISITING THE INIQUITY OF THE FATHERS ON THE CHILDREN, TO THE THIRD AND THE FOURTH GENERATION.’**

**DEUTERONOMY 7:9 KNOW THEREFORE THAT THE LORD YOUR GOD IS GOD, THE FAITHFUL GOD WHO KEEPS COVENANT AND STEADFAST LOVE WITH THOSE WHO LOVE HIM AND KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS, TO A THOUSAND GENERATIONS,**

**DEUTERONOMY 5:8-10 “‘YOU SHALL NOT MAKE FOR YOURSELF A CARVED IMAGE, OR ANY LIKENESS OF ANYTHING THAT IS IN HEAVEN ABOVE, OR THAT IS ON THE EARTH BENEATH, OR THAT IS IN THE WATER UNDER THE EARTH. YOU SHALL NOT BOW DOWN TO THEM OR SERVE THEM; FOR I THE LORD YOUR GOD AM A JEALOUS GOD, VISITING THE INIQUITY OF THE FATHERS ON THE CHILDREN TO THE THIRD AND FOURTH GENERATION OF THOSE WHO HATE ME, BUT SHOWING STEADFAST LOVE TO THOUSANDS OF THOSE WHO LOVE ME AND KEEP MY COMMANDMENTS.**

**DEUTERONOMY 24:16 “FATHERS SHALL NOT BE PUT TO DEATH BECAUSE OF THEIR CHILDREN, NOR SHALL CHILDREN BE PUT TO DEATH BECAUSE OF THEIR FATHERS. EACH ONE SHALL BE PUT TO DEATH FOR HIS OWN SIN.**

**EZEKIEL 18:19-20 “YET YOU SAY, ‘WHY SHOULD NOT THE SON SUFFER FOR THE INIQUITY OF THE FATHER?’ WHEN THE SON HAS DONE WHAT IS JUST AND RIGHT, AND HAS BEEN CAREFUL TO OBSERVE ALL MY STATUTES, HE SHALL SURELY LIVE. THE SOUL WHO SINS SHALL DIE. THE SON SHALL NOT SUFFER FOR THE INIQUITY OF THE FATHER, NOR THE FATHER SUFFER FOR THE INIQUITY OF THE SON. THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF THE RIGHTEOUS SHALL BE UPON HIMSELF, AND THE WICKEDNESS OF THE WICKED SHALL BE UPON HIMSELF. BUT IF A WICKED PERSON TURNS AWAY FROM ALL HIS SINS THAT HE HAS COMMITTED AND KEEPS ALL MY STATUTES AND DOES WHAT IS JUST AND RIGHT, HE SHALL SURELY LIVE; HE SHALL NOT DIE.”**

**THE GREAT GREAT GREAT LORD YAH’S KINGDOM ABOVE ALL (THIS CAN GO UP INFINITELY WITH THE LORD)**

**THE ONLY TRUE GREAT GREAT GREAT LORD YAHWEH’S KINGDOM OR ALSO CALLED THE “GREAT GREAT GREAT GRANDFATHER’S (HIS GREAT GREAT GREAT SISTER IS KNOWN AS GRAND GRAND GRAND GRAND AUNT OR GREAT GREAT GREAT GREAT AUNT & HIS GREAT GREAT GREAT BROTHER IS KNOWN AS GRAND GRAND GRAND GRAND UNCLE (THE BROTHER OF ONE’S FATHER OR MOTHER) OR GREAT GREAT GREAT GREAT UNCLE (THE BROTHER OF ONE’S FATHER OR MOTHER) KINGDOM” AND THE ONLY TRUE GREAT GREAT GREAT LADY VICTORIA’S KINGDOM OR ALSO CALLED THE “GREAT GREAT GREAT GRANDMOTHER’S (HER GREAT GREAT GREAT SISTER IS KNOWN AS GRAND GRAND GRAND GRAND AUNT OR GREAT GREAT GREAT GREAT AUNT & HER GREAT GREAT GREAT BROTHER IS KNOWN AS GRAND GRAND GRAND GRAND UNCLE (THE BROTHER OF ONE’S FATHER OR MOTHER) OR GREAT GREAT GREAT GREAT UNCLE (THE BROTHER OF ONE’S FATHER OR MOTHER) KINGDOM” WHICH OPERATES IN OMNIPOTENCE, GREATNESS, VICTORY, OMNISCIENCE, MAJESTY, JUSTICE, GLORY AND TRUTH. SOME OTHER SCRIPTURES THAT PROVE THIS ARE IN GENESIS 1:1-1:31; 2ND SAMUEL 9:7; 1ST KINGS 15:10, 13; 2ND CHRONICLES 29:11; SIRACH 1:1. THE GREAT GREAT GREAT LORD YAH’S KINGDOM RULES OVER ALL OTHER KINGDOMS. THE GREAT GREAT GREAT LORD YAH’S KINGDOM CONSISTS OF THE GREAT GREAT GREAT FATHER STEPHEN’S KINGDOM, THE GREAT GREAT GREAT SON JESUS’ KINGDOM AND THE GREAT GREAT GREAT BROTHER JOHN’S KINGDOM THAT IS NOT DIVIDED. THE GREAT GREAT GREAT LADY VICTORIA’S KINGDOM CONSISTS OF THE GREAT GREAT GREAT MOTHER BARBARA (DERIVES FROM BARA IN GENESIS 1:1) KINGDOM, THE GREAT GREAT GREAT DAUGHTER MARY’S KINGDOM AND THE GREAT GREAT GREAT SISTER ELIZABETH [LIZ] [LIZ] [LIZ] [LIZ]’S KINGDOM WHICH IS NOT DIVIDED. IN PSALMS 103:19 IT DECLARES THAT “HIS KINGDOM RULES OVER ALL.” THE GREAT GREAT GREAT LORD YAHWEH’S KINGDOM IS KNOWN AS THE GREAT GREAT GREAT LORD YAHWEH THE GREAT GREAT GREAT SUPREME CREATOR OF THE GREAT GREAT GREAT FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD OR THE GREAT GREAT GREAT LORD VICTOR THE GREAT GREAT GREAT SUPREME CREATOR OF THE ENTIRE HEAVENS OR GREAT GREAT GREAT LORD JEHOVAH THE GREAT GREAT GREAT SUPREME CREATOR OVER THE ENTIRE EARTH. THE FEMALE SENSE OF THIS KINGDOM IS THE GREAT GREAT GREAT LADY VICTORIA’S KINGDOM OR ALSO KNOWN AS THE “GREAT GREAT GREAT GRANDMOTHER’S (HER GREAT GREAT GREAT SISTER IS KNOWN AS GRAND GRAND GRAND GRAND AUNT OR GREAT GREAT GREAT GREAT AUNT & HER GREAT GREAT GREAT BROTHER IS KNOWN AS GRAND GRAND GRAND GRAND UNCLE (THE BROTHER OF ONE’S FATHER OR MOTHER) OR GREAT GREAT GREAT GREAT UNCLE (THE BROTHER OF ONE’S FATHER OR MOTHER) KINGDOM” WHICH OPERATES IN DESIRE, AGREEMENT, LOVE AND DEPRESSION” WHICH BOTH OF THESE KINGDOMS ARE PROVEN IN GENESIS 1:1-1:31; ISAIAH 47:5 & 2ND TIMOTHY 1:5. ALSO THE GREAT GREAT GREAT GRANDFATHER’S (HIS GREAT GREAT GREAT SISTER IS KNOWN AS GRAND GRAND GRAND GRAND AUNT OR GREAT GREAT GREAT GREAT AUNT & HIS GREAT GREAT GREAT BROTHER IS KNOWN AS GRAND GRAND GRAND GRAND UNCLE (THE BROTHER OF ONE’S FATHER OR MOTHER) OR GREAT GREAT GREAT GREAT UNCLE (THE BROTHER OF ONE’S FATHER OR MOTHER) KINGDOM CONCERNS THE SIX DAYS OF CREATION OVER ALL OTHER KINGDOMS THAT EXIST AND WERE MADE. THE FATHER STEPHEN IS THE SUPREME INVESTIGATOR IN ECCLESIASTES 1:13-18; 2:1-12; 12:9-14.**

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**THE LORD YAH’S KINGDOM ABOVE ALL**

**THIS IS THE ULTIMATE BEGINNING OF THE LORD YAHWEH’S KINGDOM AT GRANDFATHER LEVEL FROM 1018AD TO 2018AD IN THE FORMER PERIMETER IS FINISHED, BUT WHAT IS LEFT IS THE LATTER PERIMETER FROM 2018AD TO 3018AD, WHICH IS ALWAYS SEXLESS, TEMPTLESS, SINLESS & GUILTLESS IS KNOWN AS THE ONE & ONLY TRUE LORD, AND THERE IS NO OTHER LORD AT THIS LEVEL, NO NOT THE LORD JESUS CHRIST. BUT THE LORD YAHWEH ONLY IN EXODUS 20:3. THE TOP GRANDFATHER’S LEVEL IS ABOVE & BEYOND THE TOP HALF-GRANDFATHER’S LEVEL, THE TOP GRANDFATHER’S-IN-LAW LEVEL AND TOP THE GRANDSTEPFATHER’S LEVEL. THIS GRANDFATHER’S LEVEL IN 2ND CORINTHIANS 11:12 IS A TOTAL CUT OFF & CUT DOWN OF 2ND CORINTHIANS 11:13-15 IN ETERNALLY FORSAKING THE FATHER’S LEVEL IN MATTHEW 27:46 & MARK 15:34 WITH ALL ETERNAL BULLSHIT & THERE IS NO ETERNAL FALLS, WHICH MEANS NO ETERNAL SIN & NO ETERNAL TEMPTATION, WHICH LEADS TO ETERNAL LIFE BECAUSE THE MONEY TITHE IS NOT REQUIRED, COMMANDED OR DEMANDED, WHICH NOBODY ETERNALLY STEALS FROM THE LORD & ALWAYS TELLS THE ETERNAL TRUTH ABOUT THE LORD BY BEING ETERNALLY GIVEN, ETERNALLY PROTECTED, ETERNALLY SAVED & ETERNALLY BLESSED, ETERNALLY HEALTHY, ETERNALLY JUSTIFIED IN MALACHI 3:8-12; MATTHEW 6:24; 1ST TIMOTHY 6:9-10 & LUKE 16:9, 11, 13 AT THIS GRANDFATHER/GRANDMOTHER LEVEL OR HIGHER LEVELS BECAUSE THE LADY VICTORIA OF KINGDOMS ETERNALLY FELL IN ISAIAH 47:1-15 & NOT THE GREAT LADY VICTORIA OF KINGDOMS OR HIGHER & ALSO THE BROTHER, SON OR FATHER IS NEVER CONNECTED TO A GRANDSISTER, GRANDDAUGHTER OR GRANDMOTHER BECAUSE OF THE HEDGE & NEVER IS CONNECTED TO A GRANDBROTHER, GRANDSON OR GRANDFATHER BECAUSE OF THE HEDGE & ALSO THE SISTER, DAUGHTER OR MOTHER IS NEVER CONNECTED TO A GRANDSISTER, GRANDDAUGHTER OR GRANDMOTHER BECAUSE OF THE HEDGE & NEVER IS CONNECTED TO A GRANDBROTHER, GRANDSON OR GRANDFATHER BECAUSE OF THE HEDGE & THE THE LORD WILL JUDGE IN YOUR FAVOR, THAT THE 3RD GENERATION WILL CAUSE YOU TO BE TOTALLY OBEDIENT & THE 4TH GENERATION WILL PROTECT YOU AT DAMNATION LEVEL BECAUSE THE ETERNAL GUILTINESS IN THE ETERNAL CHARGE AT 143 YEAR LEVEL TO 214 YEAR LEVEL OF THE FATHERS UPON THE CHILDREN [ONLY 1ST BORN SONS] BECAUSE OF THE PORN LAWS IN LEVITICUS 18:1-30 & DEUTERONOMY 22:13-30 UNTO THE 3RD GENERATION IS THE FATHER’S OWN GENERATION CONNECTED TO HIS 1ST BORN SON’S OWN GENERATION, WHICH INVOLVES ONLY 2 GENERATIONS IN EXODUS 20:5; NUMBERS 14:18; DEUTERONOMY 5:9 OR THE THE ETERNAL GUILTINESS IN ETERNAL DAMNATION AT 214 YEAR LEVEL TO 286 YEAR LEVEL OF THE CHILDREN’S CHILDREN [THE GRANDFATHERS ARE ETERNALLY FREE WITHOUT ANY SIN/TEMPTATION IN 1ST JOHN 3:9, BUT HIS 1ST BORN SONS AS FATHER’S TO THEIR OWN 1ST BORN SONS] BECAUSE OF THE PORN LAWS IN LEVITICUS 18:1-30 & DEUTERONOMY 22:13-30 OF THE FATHER’S [1ST BORN SONS] GENERATION CONNECTED TO HIS OWN 1ST BORN SON’S, WHICH INVOLVES ONLY 2 GENERATIONS IN EXODUS 34:7, THIS USHERS IN THE BREAKING OF THE GENERATIONAL CURSES BY THE LORD JESUS AS THE SON WITH NO BIOLOGICAL FATHER BECAUSE OF NO SEX IN HIS FAMILY LINE & THE LADY MARY ON THE OTHER SIDE AS THE DAUGHTER WITH NO BIOLOGICAL FATHER BECAUSE OF NO SEX WITH ANY MAN IN HER FAMILY LINE IN LUKE 1:34 FROM LUKE IN 6BC TO REVELATION IN 96AD, WHICH MEANS INITIALLY 102 YEARS IN 2ND PETER 3:8 & MATTHEW 20:12, 1% IS 1,020 YEARS [1 DAY +], 10% IS 10,200 YEARS [10 DAYS +], 100% IS 102,000 [100 DAYS +] YEARS TO 1,020,000 YEARS [1,000 DAYS +], WHICH TOTAL IS 1,133 DAYS WITH A FRUITFUL CALL OF 16 YEARS [16 DAYS] IS 1,150 DAYS [1,150 HOURS IS 95.8 DAYS, WHICH IS 3 MONTHS & 6 DAYS IN IN THE USA TRIBULATION TO ETERNALLY CRUSH THE LORD LUCIFER’S “SATANIC LUCIFERISM” & THE LADY VICTORIA’S “BABYLONIAN VICTORIANISM” IN DANIEL 8:8-14 WITH THE ROAD MAP OF REVELATION 20:7-10], WHICH IS EXACTLY ENOUGH TO COVER THE USA TRIBULATION OF 3 YEARS, 1 MONTH & 25 DAYS IN DANIEL 8:8-14; 2ND ESDRAS 11 & 12 & ACTS 29:1-2 WITH THE ROAD MAP OF ISRAEL’S TRIBULATION IN REVELATION 4:1-20:15] & EVEN JOB, THE SINLESS MAN IN GRANDFATHERHOOD NEVER HAD HIS OUTSIDE PERIMETER OF WEALTH INFILTRATED BY THE DEVIL, NO NOT ONCE, BUT HIS 2ND OWN FAMILY IS FULLY 100.0001% ETERNALLY PROTECTED BY INVINCIBILITY & NEVER HAD HIS INSIDE PERIMETER OF HEALTH INFILTRATED BY THE DEVIL, NO NOT ONCE, BUT HIS OWN LIFE IS FULLY 100.0001% ETERNALLY PROTECTED BY INVINCIBILITY & JOB HAS NO PROBLEM WITH BEATING THE DEVIL AT ANY TIME AT THIS GRANDFATHER’S LEVEL!!!**

**THE ONLY TRUE LORD YAHWEH’S KINGDOM OR ALSO CALLED THE “GRANDFATHER’S (HIS SISTER IS KNOWN AS GRAND AUNT (THE SISTER OF ONE’S FATHER OR MOTHER OR THE WIFE OF ONE’S UNCLE (THE BROTHER OF ONE’S FATHER OR MOTHER OR THE HUSBAND OF ONE’S UNCLE OR AUNT) OR AUNT) OR GREAT AUNT (THE SISTER OF ONE’S FATHER OR MOTHER OR THE WIFE OF ONE’S UNCLE (THE BROTHER OF ONE’S FATHER OR MOTHER OR THE HUSBAND OF ONE’S UNCLE OR AUNT) OR AUNT) & HIS BROTHER IS KNOWN AS GRAND UNCLE (THE BROTHER OF ONE’S FATHER OR MOTHER OR THE HUSBAND OF ONE’S UNCLE OR AUNT) OR GREAT UNCLE (THE BROTHER OF ONE’S FATHER OR MOTHER OR THE HUSBAND OF ONE’S UNCLE OR AUNT) KINGDOM” IS 100.0001% IMRPEGNABLE AND THE ONLY TRUE LADY VICTORIA’S KINGDOM OR ALSO CALLED THE “GRANDMOTHER’S (HER SISTER IS KNOWN AS GRAND AUNT (THE SISTER OF ONE’S FATHER OR MOTHER OR THE WIFE OF ONE’S UNCLE (THE BROTHER OF ONE’S FATHER OR MOTHER OR THE HUSBAND OF ONE’S UNCLE OR AUNT) OR AUNT) OR GREAT AUNT (THE SISTER OF ONE’S FATHER OR MOTHER OR THE WIFE OF ONE’S UNCLE (THE BROTHER OF ONE’S FATHER OR MOTHER OR THE HUSBAND OF ONE’S UNCLE OR AUNT) OR AUNT) & HER BROTHER IS KNOWN AS GRAND UNCLE (THE BROTHER OF ONE’S FATHER OR MOTHER OR THE HUSBAND OF ONE’S UNCLE OR AUNT) OR GREAT UNCLE (THE BROTHER OF ONE’S FATHER OR MOTHER OR THE HUSBAND OF ONE’S UNCLE OR AUNT)) KINGDOM” IS 100.0001% IMPREGANBLE WHICH OPERATES IN OMNIPOTENCE, GREATNESS, VICTORY, OMNISCIENCE, MAJESTY, JUSTICE, GLORY AND TRUTH. SOME OTHER SCRIPTURES THAT PROVE THIS ARE IN GENESIS 1:1-1:31; 2ND SAMUEL 9:7; 1ST KINGS 15:10, 13; 2ND CHRONICLES 29:11; SIRACH 1:1. THE LORD YAH’S KINGDOM RULES OVER ALL OTHER KINGDOMS. THE LORD YAH’S KINGDOM CONSISTS OF THE FATHER STEPHEN’S KINGDOM, THE SON JESUS’ KINGDOM AND THE BROTHER JOHN’S KINGDOM THAT IS NOT DIVIDED. THE LADY VICTORIA’S KINGDOM CONSISTS OF THE MOTHER BARBARA (DERIVES FROM BARA IN GENESIS 1:1) KINGDOM, THE DAUGHTER MARY’S KINGDOM AND THE SISTER ELIZABETH [LIZ] [LIZ]’S KINGDOM WHICH IS NOT DIVIDED. IN PSALMS 103:19 IT DECLARES THAT “HIS KINGDOM RULES OVER ALL.” THE LORD YAHWEH’S KINGDOM IS KNOWN AS THE LORD YAHWEH THE SUPREME CREATOR OF THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD OR THE LORD VICTOR THE SUPREME CREATOR OF THE ENTIRE HEAVENS OR LORD JEHOVAH THE SUPREME CREATOR OVER THE ENTIRE EARTH. THE FEMALE SENSE OF THIS KINGDOM IS THE LADY VICTORIA’S KINGDOM OR ALSO KNOWN AS THE “GRANDMOTHER’S (HER SISTER IS KNOWN AS GRAND AUNT (THE SISTER OF ONE’S FATHER OR MOTHER OR THE WIFE OF ONE’S UNCLE (THE BROTHER OF ONE’S FATHER OR MOTHER OR THE HUSBAND OF ONE’S UNCLE OR AUNT) OR AUNT)OR GREAT AUNT (THE SISTER OF ONE’S FATHER OR MOTHER OR THE WIFE OF ONE’S UNCLE (THE BROTHER OF ONE’S FATHER OR MOTHER OR THE HUSBAND OF ONE’S UNCLE OR AUNT) OR AUNT) & HER BROTHER IS KNOWN AS GRAND UNCLE (THE BROTHER OF ONE’S FATHER OR MOTHER OR THE HUSBAND OF ONE’S UNCLE OR AUNT) OR GREAT UNCLE (THE BROTHER OF ONE’S FATHER OR MOTHER OR THE HUSBAND OF ONE’S UNCLE OR AUNT)) KINGDOM” WHICH OPERATES IN DESIRE, AGREEMENT, LOVE AND DEPRESSION” WHICH BOTH OF THESE KINGDOMS ARE PROVEN IN GENESIS 1:1-1:31; ISAIAH 47:5 & 2ND TIMOTHY 1:5. ALSO THE GRANDFATHER’S (HIS SISTER IS KNOWN AS GRAND AUNT (THE SISTER OF ONE’S FATHER OR MOTHER OR THE WIFE OF ONE’S UNCLE (THE BROTHER OF ONE’S FATHER OR MOTHER OR THE HUSBAND OF ONE’S UNCLE OR AUNT) OR AUNT) OR GREAT AUNT (THE SISTER OF ONE’S FATHER OR MOTHER OR THE WIFE OF ONE’S UNCLE (THE BROTHER OF ONE’S FATHER OR MOTHER OR THE HUSBAND OF ONE’S UNCLE OR AUNT) OR AUNT) & HIS BROTHER IS KNOWN AS GRAND UNCLE (THE BROTHER OF ONE’S FATHER OR MOTHER OR THE HUSBAND OF ONE’S UNCLE OR AUNT) OR GREAT UNCLE (THE BROTHER OF ONE’S FATHER OR MOTHER OR THE HUSBAND OF ONE’S UNCLE OR AUNT))’S KINGDOM CONCERNS THE SIX DAYS OF CREATION OVER ALL OTHER KINGDOMS THAT EXIST AND WERE MADE. THE FATHER STEPHEN IS THE SUPREME INVESTIGATOR IN ECCLESIASTES 1:13-18; 2:1-12; 12:9-14.**

**THIS FATHER’S LEVEL THAT FINISHED IN THE FORMER PERIMETER AS WELL AS THE LATTER PERIMETER FROM 18AD TO 2018AD, WHICH IS ALWAYS SEXUAL, TEMPTING, SINFUL & GUILTY IS THE BEGINNING OF HUMANITY & THERE IS ONLY ONE ETERNAL FALL, WHICH MEANS ETERNAL SIN & ETERNAL TEMPTATION, WHICH ALWAYS RESULTS IN ETERNAL DEATH, BECAUSE THE MONEY TITHE IS REQUIRED, COMMANDED & DEMANDED, THAT HUMANITY, WHICH IS CAESAR ALWAYS ETERNALLY STEALS FROM THE LORD [1ST TIMOTHY 6:9-10] & CAESAR ALWAYS ETERNALLY LIES ABOUT THE LORD [1ST JOHN 1:8, 10] BY BEING ETERNALLY TAKEN, ETERNALLY KILLED, ETERNALLY DESTROYED & ETERNALLY CURSED, ETERNALLY DISEASED, ETERNALLY DAMNED IN MALACHI 3:8-12; MATTHEW 6:24; 1ST TIMOTHY 6:9-10 & LUKE 16:9, 11, 13 AT THIS FATHER/MOTHER LEVEL BUT NOT AT HIGHER GRANDFATHER/GRANDMOTHER LEVELS OR HIGHER BECAUSE THE LADY VICTORIA OF KINGDOMS ETERNALLY FELL ONCE IN ISAIAH 47:1-15 & ALSO THE BROTHER, SON OR FATHER IS CONNECTED TO A SISTER, DAUGHTER OR MOTHER & NEVER CONNECTED TO A BROTHER, SON OR FATHER BECAUSE OF THE HEDGE & ALSO THE SISTER, DAUGHTER OR MOTHER IS NEVER CONNECTED TO A SISTER, DAUGHTER OR MOTHER BECAUSE OF THE HEDGE & BUT IS CONNECTED TO A BROTHER, SON OR FATHER & EVEN JOB, THE SINLESS MAN IN FATHERHOOD HAD HIS OUTSIDE PERIMETER OF WEALTH INFILTRATED BY THE DEVIL ONCE, BUT NOT TWICE SINCE IT WOULD CONSTITUTE INVINCIBILITY, BUT HIS 1ST OWN FAMILY IS KILLED BY THE DEVIL & HIS INSIDE PERIMETER OF HEALTH INFILTRATED BY THE DEVIL ONCE, BUT NOT TWICE SINCE IT WOULD CONSTITUTE INVINCIBILITY, BUT HIS OWN LIFE IS SCARCELY SPARED, WHICH JOB HAD A LOT OF TROUBLE BEATING THE DEVIL AT HIS FATHER’S LEVEL, BUT JOB EVENTUALLY DID!!!**

**THE LORD GABRIEL INTERPRETS THE VISION**

**IN DANIEL 8:15-27 DECLARES, “THEN IT HAPPENED, WHEN I, DANIEL, HAD SEEN THE VISION AND WAS SEEKING THE MEANING, THAT SUDDENLY THERE STOOD BEFORE ME ONE HAVING THE APPEARANCE OF THE MAN. AND I HEARD A MAN’S VOICE BETWEEN THE BANKS OF THE ULAI, WHO CALLED, AND SAID, GABRIEL, MAKE THIS MAN UNDERSTAND THE VISION. SO, HE CAME NEAR WHERE I STOOD, AND WHEN HE CAME, I WAS AFRAID AND FELL ON MY FACE, BUT HE SAID TO ME, ‘UNDERSTAND, O SON OF MAN, THAT THE VISION REFERS TO THE TIME OF THE END.’ NOW AS HE WAS SPEAKING WITH ME, I WAS IN A DEEP SLEEP WITH MY FACE TO THE GROUND, BUT HE TOUCHED ME AND STOOD ME UPRIGHT. AND HE SAID, ‘LOOK, I AM [FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD IN JOHN 8:58] MAKING KNOWN TO YOU WHAT SHALL HAPPEN IN THE LATTER TIME OF THE INDIGNATION, FOR AT THE [GLOBAL] APPOINTED TIME THE END SHALL BE. THE RAM WHICH YOU SAW, HAVING THE TWO HORNS---THEY ARE THE KINGS OF MEDIA AND PERSIA. AND THE MALE GOAT IS THE KINGDOM OF GREECE. THE LARGE HORN THAT IS BETWEEN ITS EYES IS THE FIRST KING. AS FOR THE BROKEN HORN AND THE FOUR THAT STOOD UP IN ITS PLACE, FOUR KINGDOMS SHALL ARISE OUT OF THAT NATION, BUT NOT WITH ITS POWER [AUTHORITY]. AND IN THE LATTER TIME OF THEIR KINGDOM, WHEN THE TRANSGRESSOR HAVE REACHED THEIR FULLNESS, A KING SHALL ARISE, HAVING FIERCE FEATURES [COUNTENANCES], WHO UNDERSTANDS SINISTER SCHEMES. HIS POWER [AUTHORITY] SHALL BE MIGHTY, BUT NOT BY HIS OWN POWER [AUTHORITY], HE SHALL DESTROY FEARFULLY [EXTRAORDINARILY], AND SHALL PROSPER AND THRIVE, HE SHALL DESTROY THE MIGHTY, AND ALSO THE HOLY PEOPLE. THROUGH HIS CUNNING HE SHALL CAUSE DECEIT TO PROSPER UNDER HIS RULE, AND HE SHALL EXALT HIMSELF IN HIS HEART. HE SHALL DESTROY MANY IN THEIR PROSPERITY. HE SHALL EVEN RISE AGAINST THE PRINCE OF PRINCES [LORD ENOCH], BUT HE SHALL BE BROKEN WITHOUT HUMAN MEANS [HANDS]. AND THE VISION OF THE EVENINGS AND MORNINGS WHICH WAS TOLD IS TRUE, THEREFORE SEAL UP THE VISION, FOR IT REFERS TO MANY DAYS IN THE FUTURE.’ AND I, DANIEL, FAINTED AND WAS SICK FOR [3.5] DAYS, AFTERWARD I AROSE AND WENT ABOUT THE KING’S BUSINESS. I WAS ASTONISHED BY THE VISION, BUT NO ONE UNDERSTOOD IT.”**

**THE LORD DANIEL’S PRAYER FOR THE UNIVERSAL PEOPLE**

**IN DANIEL 9:1-19 DECLARES, “IN THE FIRST YEAR OF DARIUS THE SON OF AHASUERUS, OF THE LINEAGE OF THE MEDES, WHO WAS MADE KING OVER THE REALM OF THE CHALDEANS---IN THE FIRST YEAR OF HIS REIGN I, DANIEL, UNDERSTOOD BY THE BOOKS THE NUMBER OF THE YEARS SPECIFIED BY THE WORD OF THE LORD [FATHER STEPHEN] THROUGH JEREMIAH THE PROPHET, THAT HE WOULD ACCOMPLISH SEVENTY YEARS IN THE DESOLATION OF JERUSALEM. THEN I SET MY FACE TOWARD THE LORD GOD [FATHER STEPHEN] TO MAKE REQUEST BY PRAYER AND SUPPLICATIONS, WITH FASTING, SACKCLOTH AND ASHES. AND I PRAYED TO THE LORD MY GOD [FATHER STEPHEN], AND MADE CONFESSION, AND SAID, ‘O LORD [FATHER STEPHEN], GREAT AND AWESOME GOD [FATHER STEPHEN], WHO KEEPS HIS COVENANT AND MERCY WITH THOSE WHO [AGAPE] LOVE HIM, AND WITH THOSE WHO KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS, WE HAVE SINNED AND COMMITTED INIQUITY, WE HAVE DONE WICKEDLY [SEXUALLY] AND REBELLED, EVEN BY DEPARTING FROM YOUR PRECEPTS AND YOUR JUDGMENTS. NEITHER HAVE WE HEEDED YOUR SERVANTS THE PROPHETS, WHO SPOKE IN YOUR NAME TO OUR KINGS AND OUR PRINCES, TO OUR FATHERS AND ALL THE PEOPLE OF THE LAND. O LORD [FATHER STEPHEN], RIGHTEOUSNESS BELONGS TO YOU, BUT TO US SHAME OF FACE, AS IT IS THIS DAY---TO THE MEN OF JUDAH, TO THE INHABITANTS OF JERUSALEM AND ALL ISRAEL, THOSE NEAR AND THOSE FAR OFF IN ALL THE COUNTRIES TO WHICH YOU HAVE DRIVEN THEM [THROUGHOUT THE EARTH], BECAUSE OF THE UNFAITHFULNESS WHICH THEY HAVE COMMITTED AGAINST YOU. O LORD [FATHER STEPHEN] TO US BELONGS SHAME OF FACE, TO OUR KINGS, OUR PRINCES, AND OUR FATHERS, BECAUSE WE HAVE SINNED AGAINST YOU. TO THE LORD OUR GOD [FATHER STEPHEN] BELONG MERCY AND FORGIVENESS, THOUGH WE HAVE REBELLED AGAINST HIM. WE HAVE NOT OBEYED THE VOICE OF THE LORD OUR GOD [FATHER STEPHEN], TO WALK IN HIS LAWS, WHICH HE SET BEFORE US BY HIS SERVANTS THE [HOLY] PROPHETS. YES, ALL ISRAEL HAS TRANSGRESSED YOUR LAW, AND HAS DEPARTED SO AS NOT TO OBEY YOUR VOICE, THEREFORE THE CURSE AND THE OATH WRITTEN IN THE LAW OF MOSES THE SERVANT OF GOD [FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD] HAVE BEEN POURED OUT ON US, BECAUSE WE HAVE SINNED AGAINST HIM. AND HE HAS CONFIRMED HIS WORDS, WHICH HE SPOKE AGAINST US AND AGAINST OUR JUDGES WHO JUDGED US, BY BRINGING UPON US A GREAT DISASTER, FOR UNDER THE WHOLE HEAVEN SUCH HAS NEVER BEEN DONE AS WHAT HAS BEEN DONE TO JERUSALEM. AS IT IS WRITTEN IN THE LAW OF MOSES, ALL THIS DISASTER HAS COME UPON US, YET WE HAVE NOT MADE OUR PRAYER BEFORE THE LORD OUR GOD [FATHER STEPHEN], THAT WE MIGHT TURN FROM OUR INIQUITIES AND UNDERSTAND YOUR TRUTH. THEREFORE, THE LORD [FATHER STEPHEN] HAS KEPT THE DISASTER IN MIND, AND BROUGHT IT UPON US, FOR THE LORD OUR GOD [FATHER STEPHEN] IS RIGHTEOUS IN ALL THE [DIVINE] WORKS WHICH HE DOES, THOUGH WE HAVE NOT OBEYED HIS VOICE. AND NOW, O LORD OUR GOD [FATHER STEPHEN], WHO BROUGHT YOUR PEOPLE OUT OF THE LAND OF EGYPT WITH A MIGHTY HAND, AND MADE YOURSELF A NAME [LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH], AS IT IS THIS DAY---WE HAVE SINNED, WE HAVE DONE WICKEDLY [SEXUALLY]! O LORD [FATHER STEPHEN], ACCORDING TO ALL YOUR RIGHTEOUSNESS, I PRAY, LET YOUR ANGER AND YOUR FURY BE TURNED AWAY FROM YOUR CITY JERUSALEM, YOUR HOLY MOUNTAIN, BECAUSE FOR OUR SINS, AND FOR THE INIQUITIES OF OUR FATHERS, JERUSALEM AND YOUR PEOPLE ARE A REPROACH TO ALL THOSE AROUND US. NOW THEREFORE, OUR GOD [FATHER STEPHEN], HEAR THE PRAYER OF YOUR SERVANT AND HIS SUPPLICATION, AND FOR THE LORD’S [FATHER STEPHEN’S] SAKE CAUSE YOUR FACE TO SHINE ON YOUR SANCTUARY, WHICH IS DESOLATE. O MY GOD [FATHER STEPHEN], INCLINE YOUR EAR AND HEAR, OPEN YOUR EYES AND SEE OUR DESOLATIONS, AND THE CITY WHICH IS CALLED BY YOUR NAME [LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH], FOR WE DO NOT PRESENT OUR SUPPLICATIONS BEFORE YOU BECAUSE OF OUR RIGHTEOUS DEEDS, BUT BECAUSE OF YOUR GREAT MERCIES. O LORD [FATHER STEPHEN], HEAR! O LORD [FATHER STEPHEN], FORGIVE! O LORD [FATHER STEPHEN], LISTEN AND ACT! DO NOT DELAY FOR YOUR OWN SAKE, MY GOD [FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD], FOR YOUR CITY AND YOUR PEOPLE ARE CALLED BY YOUR NAME [LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH].”**

**THE 4 SEVENTY-WEEKS PROPHESY AS 280 ENTIRE UNIVERSES IN A TOTAL OF 70 MONTHS OR 5 YEARS & 10 MONTHS**

**IN DANIEL 9:20-27 DECLARES, “NOW WHILE I WAS SPEAKING, PRAYING, AND CONFESSING MY SIN AND THE SIN OF MY PEOPLE ISRAEL, AND PRESENTING MY SUPPLICATION BEFORE THE LORD MY GOD [FATHER STEPHEN] FOR THE HOLY MOUNTAIN OF MY GOD [FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD], YES, WHILE I WAS SPEAKING IN PRAYER, THE MAN GABRIEL, WHOM I HAD SEEN IN THE VISION AT THE BEGINNING, BEING CAUSED TO FLY SWIFTLY, REACHED ME ABOUT THE TIME OF THE EVENING OFFERING. AND HE INFORMED ME, AND TALKED WITH ME, AND SAID, O DANIEL, I HAVE NOW COME FORTH TO GIVE YOU SKILL TO UNDERSTAND. AT THE BEGINNING OF YOUR SUPPLICATIONS THE COMMAND WENT OUT, AND I HAVE COME TO TELL YOU, FOR YOU ARE GREATLY BELOVED [LORD DAVID], THEREFORE CONSIDER THE MATTER, AND UNDERSTAND THE VISION: SEVENTY WEEKS ARE DETERMINED FOR YOUR PEOPLE AND FOR YOU HOLY CITY, TO FINISH THE TRANSGRESSION, TO MAKE AND END OF SINS, TO MAKE RECONCILIATION FOR INIQUITY, TO BRING IN EVERLASTING RIGHTEOUSNESS, TO SEAL UP VISION AND PROPHESY, AND THE ANOINT THE MOST HOLY [FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD]. KNOW THEREFORE AND UNDERSTAND, THAT FROM THE GOING FORTH OF THE COMMAND TO RESTORE AND BUILD JERUSALEM UNTIL MESSIAH THE PRINCE [DIVINE LORD ENOCH WITH THE DIVINE LADY VICTORIA THE DIVINE QANAH IN PROVERBS 8:22-29 IS NEVER CUT OFF & WILL NEVER SUFFER A DEATH PENALTY ETERNALLY FOR ANYONE IN THE BEST COVENANT FOR 17.5 MONTHS IN SC, USA ON THE SOUTH AMERICA/NORTH AMERICA CONTINENT IN ACTS 29:2], THERE SHALL BE SEVEN WEEKS [7] AND SIXTY-TWO WEEKS [62], THE STREET [7 WEEKS] SHALL BE BUILT AGAIN, AND THE WALL [62 WEEKS], EVEN IN TROUBLESOME TIMES. AND AFTER THE SIXTY-TWO WEEKS MESSIAH [DIVINE LORD JESUS WITH THE DIVINE LADY MARY IN LUKE CHAPTER 2] SHALL BE CUT OFF [SUFFER THE DEATH PENALTY FOR MAN ONLY IN THE 69TH WEEK IN LUKE CHAPTER 23], BUT NOT FOR HIMSELF [SEXUAL LORD BARABBAS], AND THE PEOPLE OF THE PRINCE WHO IS TO COME SHALL DESTROY THE CITY AND THE SANCTUARY. THE END OF IT SHALL BE WITH A FLOOD [SEMI-GLOBAL APPOINTMENT], AND TILL THE END OF THE WAR DESOLATIONS ARE DETERMINED. THE HE SHALL CONFIRM A [BETTER] COVENANT [HEBREWS 8:7-13] WITH MANY FOR ONE WEEK [70TH AT THE 17.5 MONTHS IN JERUSALEM, ISRAEL ON THE EUPHORIA CONTINENT], BUT IN THE MIDDLE OF THE WEEK HE SHALL BRING AN END TO [VIRGINITY] SACRIFICE AND [VIRGINITY] OFFERING [BUT THE 10% MONEY TITHES WILL STILL BE REQUIRED BY MAN TO PAY GOD]. AND ON THE WING OF ABOMINATIONS SHALL BE ONE WHO MAKES DESOLATE [ACTS 7:51-53], EVEN UNTIL THE [ULTIMATE] CONSUMMATION [THE SINGLE KINGDOM OF LORDSHIP IN ACTS OF THE HOLY GHOST IN ACTS 7:55-56; 29:2], WHICH IS DETERMINED, IS POURED OUT ON THE DESOLATE [ACTS 7:54].”**

**WHY CAN ETERNAL CREATURES UNDERSTAND THE TRUE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE LORD JESUS CHRIST WITH THE LADY MARY CHRIST & THE LORD ENOCH CHRIST WITH THE LADY VICTORIA CHRIST? THIS IS BECAUSE OF BEING PARTIAL IN TRUTH, OR FUTILE BELIEFS & FUTILE THOUGHTS & A MAN OR WOMAN, LIKE EVERY MAN OR WOMAN, EXCEPT THE HUMBLE LORD ENOCH & HUMBLE LADY VICTORIA SAYS HE IS GOD IN 2ND THESSALONIANS 2:1-12 OR SHE IS GOD IN ISAIAH 47:1-15 OR PLAYS GOD IN ISAIAH 14:12-21, WHICH IS THE ETERNAL LIE AND THE ETERNAL SIN IN LORDSHIP IN A NUTSHELL IN ACTS 7:60 & THESE ETERNAL CREATURES SHALL ALWAYS FAIL, FALL & COME SHORT OF THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD’S GLORY & HIS INFALLIBLE INERRANT TRUTH BECAUSE THEY SWEAR ALLEGIANCE TO THEIR SEXUAL JESUS CHRIST ONLY, WHICH IS A ETERNAL LIE & ALWAYS PARTIAL TRUTH, WHICH IN ABSOLUTE TRUTH IS ONLY A SEXUAL BARABBAS CHRIST IN PARTIALITY IN ROMANS 1:21-32; 3:4-23.**

**IF YOU CAN NOT INFALLIBLY INERRANTLY DETERMINE THAT THERE IS A SURE DIFFERENCE IN A HIGHER LEVEL OF INTELLIGENCE, THEN YOU WILL NOT BE ABLE TO UNDERSTAND THE REST ABOUT A WHITE JEWISH JESUS CHRIST WITH A WHITE JEWISH MARY CHRIST ON THE EUPHORIA CONTINENT IN JERUSALEM, ISRAEL [ANCIENT CRYSTAL STONE THAT IS READILY IDENTIFIABLE] IN THE ULTIMATE BEGINNING IN LUKE CHAPTER 2; 4:1-13 & A WHITE ENGLISH JESUS CHRIST [HEBREWS 13:8] WITH A WHITE ENGLISH MARY CHRIST ON THE SOUTH AMERICA/NORTH AMERICA CONTINENT IN SC, USA [ANCIENT DIAMOND STONE THAT IS READILY UNIDENTIFIABLE] IN THE ULTIMATE ENDING IN ACTS 29:2.**

**ALSO A BLACK AFRICAN JESUS CHRIST WITH A BLACK AFRICAN MARY CHRIST ON THE EUPHORIA CONTINENT IN JERUSALEM, ISRAEL [ANCIENT CRYSTAL STONE THAT IS READILY IDENTIFIABLE] AFTER THE ULTIMATE BEGINNING IN LUKE 4:1-13; 23:26 & A BLACK ENGLISH JESUS CHRIST [HEBREWS 13:8] WITH A BLACK ENGLISH MARY CHRIST ON THE SOUTH AMERICA/NORTH AMERICA CONTINENT IN SC, USA [ANCIENT DIAMOND STONE THAT IS READILY UNIDENTIFIABLE] AFTER THE ULTIMATE ENDING IN ACTS 29:2, NOR WILL YOU UNDERSTAND ABOUT A WHITE JEWISH ENOCH CHRIST WITH A WHITE JEWISH VICTORIA CHRIST ON THE EUPHORIA CONTINENT IN JERUSALEM, ISRAEL [ANCIENT CRYSTAL STONE THAT IS READILY IDENTIFIABLE] IN THE ULTIMATE BEGINNING IN GENESIS 5:22-24 OR A WHITE ENGLISH ENOCH CHRIST WITH A WHITE ENGLISH VICTORIA CHRIST ON THE SOUTH AMERICA/NORTH AMERICA CONTINENT IN SC, USA [ANCIENT DIAMOND STONE THAT IS READILY UNIDENTIFIABLE] IN THE ULTIMATE ENDING IN ACTS 29:2.**

**ALSO A BLACK AFRICAN ENOCH CHRIST WITH A BLACK AFRICAN VICTORIA CHRIST ON THE EUPHORIA CONTINENT IN JERUSALEM, ISRAEL [ANCIENT CRYSTAL STONE THAT IS READILY IDENTIFIABLE] AFTER THE ULTIMATE BEGINNING IN LUKE 4:1-13; 23:26 & A BLACK ENGLISH ENOCH CHRIST [HEBREWS 13:8] WITH A BLACK ENGLISH VICTORIA CHRIST ON THE SOUTH AMERICA/NORTH AMERICA CONTINENT IN SC, USA [ANCIENT DIAMOND STONE THAT IS READILY UNIDENTIFIABLE] AFTER THE ULTIMATE ENDING IN ACTS 29:2.**

**THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD’S ULTIMATE REBUKE**

**IF YOU SAY THE HOLY HOLY BIBLE ULTIMATELY BEGINS WITH THE JEWISH---ARAMAIC & HEBREW DESCENT IN GENESIS 1 & ULTIMATELY ENDS WITH THE GREEK DESCENT IN CHRISTIANITY IN ACTS 28, YOU ARE PARTIAL IN YOUR TRUTH & HAVE BECOME LIARS. IF YOU SAY THE HOLY HOLY BIBLE ULTIMATELY BEGINS WITH THE JEWISH---ARAMAIC & HEBREW DESCENT IN GENESIS 1 & ULTIMATELY ENDS WITH THE ROMAN DESCENT---ITALIANS & SICILIANS IN CHRISTIANITY IN ACTS 28, YOU ARE PARTIAL IN YOUR TRUTH & HAVE BECOME LIARS. IF YOU SAY THE HOLY HOLY BIBLE ULTIMATELY BEGINS WITH THE JEWISH---ARAMAIC & HEBREW DESCENT IN GENESIS 1 & ULTIMATELY ENDS WITH THE SPANISH DESCENT IN CHRISTIANITY IN ACTS 29, YOU ARE PARTIAL IN YOUR TRUTH & HAVE BECOME LIARS. IF YOU SAY THE HOLY HOLY BIBLE ULTIMATELY BEGINS WITH THE JEWISH---ARAMAIC & HEBREW DESCENT IN GENESIS 1 & ULTIMATELY ENDS WITH THE ROMAN DESCENT---ITALIANS & SICILIANS IN CHRISTIANITY IN ACTS 29:2 IMPLICATED WITH A ACTS 30, YOU ARE PARTIAL IN YOUR TRUTH & HAVE BECOME LIARS. IF YOU SAY THE HOLY HOLY BIBLE ULTIMATELY BEGINS WITH THE JEWISH---ARAMAIC & HEBREW DESCENT IN GENESIS 1 & ULTIMATELY ENDS WITH THE SCOTTISH DESCENT IN CHRISTIANITY IN ACTS 29:2 IMPLICATED WITH A ACTS 30, YOU ARE PARTIAL IN YOUR TRUTH & HAVE BECOME LIARS. IF YOU SAY THE HOLY HOLY BIBLE ULTIMATELY BEGINS WITH THE JEWISH---ARAMAIC & HEBREW DESCENT IN GENESIS 1 & ULTIMATELY ENDS WITH THE ENGLISH DESCENT IN CHRISTIANITY IN ACTS 29:2 IMPLICATED WITH AN ACTS 30, YOU ARE PARTIAL IN YOUR TRUTH & HAVE BECOME LIARS. BUT IF YOU SAY THE HOLY HOLY BIBLE ULTIMATELY BEGINS WITH THE ENGLISH DESCENT IN CHRISTIANITY IN PROVERBS 8:22-29 & ULTIMATELY ENDS WITH THE ENGLISH DESCENT IN CHRISTIANITY IN ACTS 29:2 IMPLICATED WITH A ACTS 30, YOU ARE IMPARTIAL IN YOUR TRUTH & HAVE KNOWN THE ABSOLUTE TRUTH FROM THE ULTIMATE BEGINNING TO THE ULTIMATE END. THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD’S TOP-SECRET [ZOHER] CLEARANCE IS 100.0001% ETERNALLY SECURE FROM THE SINGLE ENGLISH KINGDOM OF LORDSHIP IN THE ULTIMATE BEGINNING IN PROVERBS 8:22-29 TO THE ENDING ENGLISH SINGLE KINGDOM OF LORDSHIP IN ACTS OF THE HOLY GHOST IN THE ULTIMATE ENDING IN ACTS 1:4-29:26. YET THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD’S TOP-SECRET [ZOHER] CLEARANCE CAN ONLY POSSIBLY BE ETERNALLY BLOWN IN A ACTS CHAPTER 30 IMPLICATED FROM THE TIME PORTAL OF ACTS 29:2.**

**THIS MEANS EVERY BIBLICAL AUTHOR IN THE HOLY BIBLE & IN ALL ANCIENT MANUSCRIPTS ARE PARTIAL IN THEIR TRUTH & ARE CONSIDERED ETERNAL LIARS BECAUSE ALL ETERNAL CREATURES ETERNALLY DIES BECAUSE THEY HAVE THEIR OWN AGENDA’S AT CERTAIN TIMES, & EVEN THE LORD MELCHIZEDEK THAT IS ETERNALLY IMMORTAL, BUT NOT FOREVER BY HIS ETERNAL GENERAL ORDER BECAUSE HE DID NOT ALWAYS ETERNALLY PLEASE THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD NOR DID THE 4 LORDS THAT WENT TO HEAVEN AS THE LORD ISRAEL, LORD ELIJAH, THE LORD MOSES OR THE LORD MICHAEL CONCERNING THE 10 HOURS OF FULL NONSENSE [BULLSHIT TALKERS] EACH OF NOT ETERNALLY PLEASING THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD IN 1ST TIMOTHY 3:6-7 & TITUS 1:10-16 & IS ETERNALLY REBUKED AS THE ETERNAL DUMB ASSES IN 2ND PETER 2:16, BUT THEY HAD THEIR OWN AGENDA AT CERTAIN TIMES & CAME BACK TO BE KILLED BY THE GREAT RED DRAGON FOR 3.5 DAYS IN HEBREWS CHAPTERS 7-8; LUKE 20:35-36 & REVELATION CHAPTER 11, AND THE ONLY TRUE REASON THE LORD STEVE ETERNALLY DIES VICARIOUSLY FROM THE ETERNAL SIN IN LORDSHIP IN ABSOLUTE IMPARTIAL TRUTH IN ACTS OF THE HOLY GHOST, IS TO GIVE & MAKE THE ONLY WAY FOR THE IMMORTAL ETERNAL POSITION THAT IS 100.0001% ETERNALLY SECURE FOREVER & ETERNALLY ESTABLISHED FOREVER, SO THAT THE LORD ENOCH THE DIVINE QANAH & LADY VICTORIA THE DIVINE QANAH COULD RECEIVE THIS ETERNAL POSITION FOREVER THAT WILL NEVER IMMORTALLY ETERNALLY DIE FOREVER BECAUSE BOTH ALWAYS ETERNALLY PLEASED THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD IN WISDOM OF SOLOMON 7:22-8:1 & HEBREWS 11:5.**

**THE LORD DANIEL’S VISION OF THE LORD MICHAEL THE GLORIOUS MAN**

**IN DANIEL 10:1-9 DECLARES, “IN THE THIRD YEAR OF CYRUS KING OF PERSIA A MESSAGE WAS REVEALED TO DANIEL, WHOSE NAME WAS CALLED BELTESHAZZAR. THE MESSAGE WAS TRUE, BUT THE APPOINTED TIME WAS LONG, AND HE UNDERSTOOD THE MESSAGE, AND HAD UNDERSTANDING OF THE VISION. IN THOSE DAYS I, DANIEL, WAS MOURNING THREE FULL WEEKS. I ARE NO PLEASANT FOOD [DESIRABLE], NO MEAT OR WINE CAME INTO MY MOUTH, NOR DID I ANOINT MYSELF AT ALL, TILL THREE WHOLE WEEKS WERE FULFILLED. NOW ON THE TWENTY-FOURTH DAY OF THE FIRST MONTH [BASED ON THE HOLINESS CALENDAR IS MARCH 24TH], AS I WAS BY THE SIDE OF THE GREAT RIVER, THAT IS, THE TIGRIS. I LIFTED MY EYES AND LOOKED, AND BEHOLD, A CERTAIN MAN CLOTHED IN LINEN, WHOSE WAIST WAS GIRDED WITH GOLD OF UPHAZ! HIS BODY WAS LIKE BERYL, HIS FACE LIKE THE APPEARANCE OF LIGHTNING, HIS EYES LIKE TORCHES OF FIRE, HIS ARMS AND FEET LIKE BURNISHED BRONZE IN COLOR, AND THE SOUND OF HIS WORDS LIKE THE VOICE OF A MULTITUDE. AND I, DANIEL, ALONE SAW THE VISION, FOR THE MEN WHO WERE WITH ME DID NOT SEE THE VISION, BUT A GREAT TERROR FELL UPON THEM, SO THAT THEY FLED TO HIDE THEMSELVES. THEREFORE, I WAS LEFT ALONE WHEN I SAW THIS GREAT VISION, AND NO STRENGTH REMAINED IN ME, FOR MY VIGOR [SPLENDOR] WAS TURNED TO FRAILTY [RUIN] IN ME, AND I RETAINED NO STRENGTH. YET I HEARD THE SOUND OF HIS WORDS AND WHILE I HEARD THE SOUND OF HIS WORDS, I WAS IN A DEEP SLEEP ON MY FACE, WITH MY FACE TO THE GROUND.”**

**THE LORD DANIEL’S PROPHESIES CONCERNING PERSIA & GREECE INTERPRETED BY THE LORD MICHAEL AFTER 21 DAYS IS 21 HOURS TO 21 MINUTES IN MATTHEW 20:12, WHICH IS 7 SECONDS BY GOING ONE MILE GO TWAIN [8] & 2 POSITION MAKING PEACE INTO 1 [24] & 1.1 SECONDS IN UPTIME DOWN TIME IN PAST, PRESENT & FUTURE EACH IN THE KINGDOM OF LORDSHIP**

**IN DANIEL 10:10-11:4 DECLARES, “SUDDENLY, A HAND TOUCHED ME, WHICH MADE ME TREMBLE ON MY KNEES AND ON THE PALMS OF MY HANDS. AND HE SAID TO ME, ‘O DANIEL, MAN GREATLY BELOVED [LORD DAVID], UNDERSTAND THE WORDS THAT I SPEAK TO YOU, AND STAND UPRIGHT, FOR I HAVE NOW BEEN SENT TO YOU.’ WHILE HE WAS SPEAKING THIS WORD TO ME, I STOOD TREMBLING. THEN HE SAID TO ME, ‘DO NOT FEAR, DANIEL, FOR FROM THE FIRST DAY THAT YOU SET YOUR HEART TO UNDERSTAND, AND TO HUMBLE YOURSELF BEFORE YOUR GOD [FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD], YOUR WORDS WERE HEARD, AND I HAVE COME BECAUSE OF YOUR WORDS. BUT THE PRINCE OF THE KINGDOM OF PERSIA WITHSTOOD ME TWENTY-ONE DAYS, AND BEHOLD, MICHAEL, ONE OF THE CHIEF PRINCES CAME TO HELP ME [LORD GABRIEL], FOR I HAD BEEN LEFT ALONE THERE WITH THE KINGS OF PERSIA. NOW I HAVE COME TO MAKE YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO YOUR PEOPLE IN THE LATTER DAYS, FOR THE VISION REFERS TO MANY DAYS YET TO COME.’ WHEN HE HAD SPOKEN SUCH WORDS TO ME, I TURNED MY FACE TOWARD THE GROUND AND BECAME SPEECHLESS. AND SUDDENLY, ONE HAVING THE LIKENESS OF THE SONS OF MEN TOUCHED MY LIPS, THEN I OPENED MY MOUTH AND SPOKE, SAYING TO HIM WHO STOOD BEFORE ME, ‘MY LORD [LORD RAPHAEL], BECAUSE OF THE VISION MY SORROWS HAVE OVERWHELMED ME, AND I HAVE RETAINED NO STRENGTH. FOR HOW CAN THIS SERVANT OF MY LORD TALK WITH YOU, MY LORD? AS FOR ME, NO STRENGTH REMAINS IN ME NOW, NOR IS ANY BREATH LEFT IN ME.’ THE AGAIN, THE ONE HAVING THE LIKENESS OF A MAN TOUCHED ME AND STRENGTHENED ME. AND HE SAID, ‘O MAN GREATLY BELOVED [LORD DAVID], FEAR NOT! PEACE BE TO YOU, BE STRONG, YES, BE STRONG!’ SO, WHEN HE SPOKE TO ME, I WAS STRENGTHENED AND SAID, ‘LET MY LORD [MICHAEL] SPEAK, FOR YOU HAVE STRENGTHENED ME.’ THEN HE SAID, ‘DO YOU KNOW WHY I HAVE COME TO YOU? AND NOW I MUST RETURN TO FIGHT WITH THE PRINCE OF PERSIA, AND WHEN I HAVE GONE FORTH, INDEED THE PRINCE OF GREECE WILL COME. BUT I TELL YOU WHAT IS NOTED IN THE SCRIPTURE OF TRUTH. (NO ONE UPHOLDS ME AGAINST THESE, EXCEPT MICHAEL YOUR PRINCE.**

**THE WARRING KINGS OF THE NORTH IN THE NUMBER 0 AGAINST THE WARRING KINGS OF THE SOUTH IN THE OPPOSING SIDE OF THE NUMBER 0 FOR 36 YEARS IN WEAKNESS & 46 YEARS IN STRENGTH**

**IN DANIEL 11:1-5 DECLARES, “ALSO IN THE FIRST YEAR OF DARIUS THE MEDE, I, EVEN I, STOOD UP TO CONFIRM AND STRENGTHEN HIM). AND NOW I WILL TELL YOU THE TRUTH: BEHOLD, THREE MORE KINGS WILL ARISE IN PERSIA, AND THE FOURTH SHALL BE FAR RICHER THAT THEM ALL, BY HIS STRENGTH, THROUGH HIS RICHES, HE SHALL STIR UP ALL AGAINST THE REALM OF GREECE. THEN A MIGHTY KING SHALL ARISE, WHO SHALL RULE WITH GREAT DOMINION, AND DO ACCORDING TO HIS WILL. AND WHEN HE HAD ARISEN, HIS KINGDOM SHALL BE BROKEN UP AND DIVIDED TOWARD THE FOUR WINDS OF HEAVEN, BUT NOT AMONG HIS POSTERITY NOR ACCORDING TO HIS DOMINION WITH WHICH HE RULED, FOR HIS KINGDOM SHALL BE UPROOTED, EVEN FOR OTHERS BESIDES THESE.”**

**THE SOUTH BEATS THE NORTH BY A GREAT ARMY IN THE OPPOSING SIDE OF THE NUMBER 0**

**IN DANIEL 11:6-28 DECLARES, “ALSO THE KING OF THE SOUTH SHALL BECOME STRONG, AS WELL AS ONE OF HIS PRINCES, AND HE SHALL GAIN POWER [AUTHORITY] OVER HIM AND HAVE DOMINION. HIS DOMINION SHALL BE A GREAT DOMINION. AND AT THE END OF SOME YEARS THEY SHALL JOIN [ARMED] FORCES, FOR THE DAUGHTER OF THE KING OF THE SOUTH SHALL GO TO THE KING OF THE NORTH TO MAKE AN AGREEMENT, BUT SHE SHALL NOT RETAIN THE POWER OF HER AUTHORITY, AND NEITHER HE NOT HIS AUTHORITY SHALL STAND, BUT SHE SHALL BE GIVEN UP, WITH THOSE WHO BROUGHT HER, AND WITH HIM WHO BEGOT HER, AND WITH HIM WHO STRENGTHENED HER IN THOSE TIMES. BUT FROM AS BRANCH OF HER ROOTS ONE SHALL ARISE IN HIS PLACE, WHO SHALL COME WITH AN ARMY [THE KING OF THE SOUTH], ENTER THE FORTRESS OF THE KING OF THE NORTH, AND DEAL WITH THEM AND PREVAIL. AND HE SHALL ALSO CARRY THEIR GODS CAPTIVE TO EGYPT, WITH THEIR PRINCES AND THEIR PRECIOUS ARTICLES OF SILVER AND GOLD, AND HE SHALL CONTINUE MORE YEARS THAN THE KING OF THE NORTH. ALSO, THE KING OF THE NORTH SHALL COME TO THE KINGDOM OF THE KING OF THE SOUTH, BUT SHALL RETURN TO HIS OWN LAND.**

**THE NORTH BEATS THE SOUTH BY A GREAT ARMY IN THE NUMBER 0**

**HOWEVER, HIS SONS SHALL STIR UP STRIFE, AND ASSEMBLE A MULTITUDE OF GREAT [ARMED] FORCES, AND ONE SHALL CERTAINLY COME AND OVERWHELM AND PASS THROUGH, THEN HE SHALL RETURN TO HIS FORTRESS AND STIR UP STRIFE. AND THE KING OF THE SOUTH SHALL BE MOVED WITH RAGE, AND GO OUT AND FIGHT [0 POSITION] WITH HIM, WITH THE KING OF THE NORTH, WHO SHALL MUSTER A GREAT MULTITUDE, BUT THE MULTITUDE SHALL BE GIVEN INTO THE HAND OF HIS ENEMY. WHEN HE HAS TAKEN AWAY THE MULTITUDE, HIS HEART WILL BE LIFTED UP, AND HE WILL CAST DOWN TENS OF THOUSAND [100,000], BUT HE WILL NOT PREVAIL. FOR THE KING OF THE NORTH WILL RETURN AND MUSTER A MULTITUDE GREATER THAN THE FORMER, AND SHALL CERTAINLY COME AT THE END OF SOME YEARS WITH A GREAT ARMY AND MUCH EQUIPMENT.**

**THE SOUTH FACE DOMESTIC PROBLEMS BUT IS VICTORIOUS IN THE OPPOSING SIDE OF THE NUMBER 0**

**NOW IN THOSE TIMES MANY SHALL RISE UP AGAINST THE KING OF THE SOUTH. ALSO, VIOLENT MEN OF YOUR PEOPLE SHALL EXALT THEMSELVES IN FULFILLMENT OF THE VISION, BUT THEY SHALL FALL.**

**THE NORTH BEATS THE SOUTH BY A GREAT ARMY IN THE NUMBER 0**

**SO, THE KING OF THE NORTH SHALL COME AND BUILD A SIEGE MOUND, AND TAKE A FORTIFIED CITY, AND THE [ARMED] FORCES OF THE SOUTH SHALL NOT WITHSTAND HIM. EVEN HIS CHOICE TROOPS SHALL HAVE NO STRENGTH TO RESIST.**

**THE SOUTH AS THE GLORIOUS LAND BEATS THE NORTH BY A GREAT ARMY IN THE OPPOSING SIDE OF THE NUMBER 0**

**BUT HE WHO COMES AGAINST HIM SHALL DO ACCORDING TO HIS OWN WILL, AND NO ONE SHALL STAND AGAINST HIM. HE SHALL STAND IN THE GLORIOUS [HOLY] LAND [THE SOUTHEASTERN STATE OF SC, USA IN THE GLORIOUS LAND OF FLORENCE, SC BEATS ALL THE NORTHEASTERN PART OF SC & THE NORTHEASTERN STATES FROM NORTH CAROLINA TO RHODE ISLAND IN ACTS 29:2] WITH DESTRUCTION IN HIS POWER [AUTHORITY]. HE SHALL ALSO SET HIS FACE TO ENTER WITH THE STRENGTH OF HIS WHOLE KINGDOM, AND UPRIGHT ONES WITH HIM, THUS SHALL HE DO. AND HE SHALL GIVE HIM THE DAUGHTER OF WOMEN TO DESTROY IT, BUT SHE SHALL NOT STAND WITH HIM, OR BE FOR HIM. AFTER THIS HE SHALL TURN HIS FACE TO THE COASTLANDS, AND SHALL TAKE MANY.**

**A RULER MAKES PEACE BETWEEN THE NORTH IN THE NUMBER 0 & THE SOUTH IN THE OPPOSING SIDE OF THE NUMBER 0 FOR A SHORT TIME**

**BUT A RULER SHALL BRING THE REPROACH AGAINST THEM TO AN END, AND WITH THE REPROACH REMOVED, HE SHALL TURN BACK ON HIM. THEN HE SHALL TURN HIS FACE TOWARD THE FORTRESS OF HIS OWN LAND, BUT HE SHALL STUMBLE AND FALL, AND NOT BE FOUND.**

**THE SOUTH PREVAILS AS THE GLORIOUS KINGDOM AGAINST THE NORTH IN THE OPPOSING SIDE OF THE NUMBER 0**

**THERE SHALL ARISE IN HIS PLACE ONE WHO IMPOSES TAXES ON THE GLORIOUS [HOLY] KINGDOM [THE SOUTHEASTERN STATE OF SC, USA IN THE GLORIOUS KINGDOM OF FLORENCE, SC BEATS ALL THE NORTHEASTERN PART OF SC & THE NORTHEASTERN STATES FROM NORTH CAROLINA TO RHODE ISLAND IN ACTS 29:2], BUT WITHIN A FEW DAYS [1 DAY EACH IN THE PAST, PRESENT & FUTURE] HE SHALL BE DESTROYED, BUT NOT IN ANGER OR IN BATTLE [1 POSITION].**

**THE SOUTH FACES MORE DOMESTIC PROBLEMS, BUT IS VICTORIOUS BY A FLOOD IN THE OPPOSING SIDE OF THE NUMBER 0**

**AND IN HIS PLACE SHALL ARISE A VILE PERSON, TO WHOM THEY WILL NOT GIVE THE HONOR OF ROYALTY. BUT HE SHALL COME IN PEACEABLY, AND SEIZE THE KINGDOM BY INTRIGUE [SLIPPERY FLATTERY]. WITH THE FORCE OF A FLOOD THEY SHALL BE SWEPT AWAY FROM BEFORE HIM AND BE BROKEN, AND ALSO THE PRINCE OF THE COVENANT. AND AFTER THE LEAGUE IS MADE WITH HIM, HE SHALL ACT DECEITFULLY, FOR HE SHALL COME UP AND BECOME STRONG WITH A SMALL NUMBER OF PEOPLE. HE SHALL ENTER PEACEABLY, EVEN INTO THE RICHES PLACES OF THE PROVIDENCE, AND HE SHALL DO WHAT HIS FATHERS HAVE NOT DONE, NOR HIS FOREFATHERS: HE SHALL DISPERSE AMONG THEN THE PLUNDER, SPOIL, AND RICHES, AND HE SHALL DEVISE HIS PLANS AGAINST THE STRONGHOLDS, BUT ONLY FOR A TIME.**

**THE SOUTH BEATS THE NORTH BY A GREAT & MIGHTY ARMY IN THE OPPOSING SIDE OF THE NUMBER 0**

**HE SHALL STIR UP HIS POWER [AUTHORITY] AND HIS COURAGE AGAINST THE KING OF THE SOUTH WITH A GREAT ARMY. AND THE KING OF THE SOUTH SHALL BE STIRRED UP TO BATTLE [1 POSITION] WITH A VERY GREAT AND MIGHTY ARMY, BUT HE SHALL NOT STAND, FOR THEY SHALL DEVISE PLANS AGAINST HIM. YES, THOSE WHO EAT OF THE PORTION OF HIS DELICACIES SHALL DESTROY HIM, HIS ARMY SHALL BE SWEPT AWAY, AND MANY SHALL FALL DOWN SLAIN.**

**THE TRUTH OF THE SOUTH IN THE OPPOSING SIDE OF THE NUMBER 0 OPPOSES THE TRUTH OF THE NORTH IN THE NUMBER 0, BUT THE SOUTH PREVAILS IN THE OPPOSING SIDE OF THE NUMBER 0**

**BOTH THESE KING’S HEARTS SHALL BE BENT ON EVIL [THE SOUTH IS MESSIANIC EVIL & THE NORTH IS SATANIC EVIL], AND THEY SHALL SPEAK LIES [TRUTH FROM THE NORTH OPPOSES TRUTH FROM THE SOUTH, WHICH BOTH SHALL CALL EACH OTHER LIARS] AT THE SAME TABLE, BUT IT SHALL NOT PROSPER, FOR THE END WILL STILL BE AT THE APPOINTED TIME. WHILE RETURNING TO HIS LAND WITH GREAT RICHES, HIS HEART [THE NORTH] SHALL BE MOVED AGAINST THE HOLY COVENANT, SO HE SHALL DO DAMAGE AND RETURN TO HIS OWN LAND.”**

**THE NORTHERN KING’S BLASPHEMIES IN THE NUMBER 0 AGAINST THE SOUTH’S HOLY COVENANT IN THE OPPOSING SIDE OF THE NUMBER 0**

**IN DANIEL 11:29-39 DECLARES, “AT THE APPOINTED TIME HE SHALL RETURN AND GO TOWARD THE SOUTH, BUT IT SHALL NOT BE LIKE THE FORMER OR THE LATTER. FOR SHIPS FROM CYPRUS SHALL COME AGAINST HIM, THEREFORE HE SHALL BE GRIEVED, AND RETURN IN RAGE AGAINST THE HOLY COVENANT, AND DO DAMAGE. SO, HE SHALL RETURN AND SHOW REGARD FOR THOSE WHO FORSAKE THE HOLY COVENANT.**

**THE SOUTH WITH THEIR FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD SHALL BE STRONG IN THE OPPOSING SIDE OF THE NUMBER 0, BUT WILL CAUSE THE SOUTH TO FAIL, IN ORDER TO BE REFINED, PURIFIED AND MADE WHITE IN HUMBLENESS IN THE OPPOSING SIDE OF THE NUMBER 0**

**AND [ARMED] FORCES SHALL BE MUSTERED BY HIM, AND THEY SHALL DEFILE THE SANCTUARY FORTRESS, THEN THEY SHALL TAKE AWAY THE DAILY SACRIFICES AND PLACE THERE THE ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION. THOSE WHO DO WICKEDLY [SEXUALLY] AGAINST THE COVENANT HE SHALL CORRUPT WITH FLATTERY, BUT THE PEOPLE WHO KNOW THEIR GOD [FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD] SHALL BE STRONG, AND CARRY OUT GREAT EXPLOITS. AND THOSE OF THE PEOPLE WHO UNDERSTAND SHALL INSTRUCT MANY, YET FOR MANY DAYS THEY SHALL FALL BY SWORD AND FLAME, BY CAPTIVITY AND PLUNDERING. NOW WHEN THEY FALL, THEY SHALL BE AIDED WITH A LITTLE HELP, BUT MANY SHALL JOIN WITH THEM BY INTRIGUE [SLIPPERY FLATTERY]. AND SOME OF THOSE WITH UNDERSTANDING SHALL FALL, TO REFINE THEM, PURIFY THEM, AND MAKE THEM WHITE, UNTIL THE TIME OF THE END, BECAUSE IT IS STILL FOR THE APPOINTED TIME.**

**THE SOUTH WITH THEIR FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD PREVAILS AGAINST THE NORTH WITH THEIR FOREIGN GOD IN THE OPPOSING SIDE OF THE NUMBER 0**

**THEN THE KING SHALL DO ACCORDING TO HIS OWN WILL, HE SHALL EXALT AND MAGNIFY HIMSELF ABOVE EVERY GOD SHALL SPEAK BLASPHEMIES AGAINST THE GOD [FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD] OF GODS, AND SHALL PROSPER UNTIL THE WRATH [ROMANS 1:21-32] HAS BEEN ACCOMPLISHED, FOR WHAT HAS BEEN DETERMINED SHALL BE DONE. HE SHALL REGARD NEITHER THE GOD [FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD] OF HIS FATHERS NOR THE DESIRE OF WOMEN, NOR REGARD ANY GOD, FOR HE SHALL EXALT HIMSELF ABOVE THEM ALL. BUT IN THEIR PLACE, HE SHALL HONOR A GOD OF FORTRESSES, AND A GOD WHICH HIS FATHERS DID NOT KNOW HE SHALL HONOR WITH GOLD AND SILVER, WITH PRECIOUS STONES AND PLEASANT THINGS. THUS, HE SHALL ACT AGAINST THE STRONGEST FORTRESSES WITH A FOREIGN GOD, WHICH HE SHALL ACKNOWLEDGE, AND ADVANCE ITS GLORY, AND HE SHALL CAUSE THEM TO RULE OVER MANY, AND DIVIDE THE LAND FOR GAIN.”**

**THE NORTHERN KING’S CONQUESTS IS DEFEATED AFTER 36 YEARS IN WEAKNESS & 46 YEARS IN STRENGTH**

**IN DANIEL 11:40-45 DECLARES, “AT THE TIME OF THE END THE KING OF THE SOUTH SHALL ATTACK HIM, AND THE KING OF THE NORTH SHALL COME AGAINST HIM LIKE A WHIRLWIND WITH CHARIOTS, HORSEMEN, AND WITH MANY SHIPS, AND HE SHALL ENTER THE COUNTRIES, OVERWHELM THEM, AND PASS THROUGH. HE SHALL ALSO ENTER THE GLORIOUS [HOLY] LAND [THE SOUTHEASTERN STATE OF SC, USA IN THE GLORIOUS KINGDOM OF FLORENCE, SC BEATS ALL THE NORTHEASTERN PART OF SC & THE NORTHEASTERN STATES FROM NORTH CAROLINA TO RHODE ISLAND IN ACTS 29:2], AND MANY COUNTRIES SHALL BE OVERTHROWN, BUT THESE SHALL ESCAPE FROM HIS HAND. EDOM, MOAB, AND THE PROMINENT PEOPLE OF AMMON. HE SHALL STRETCH OUT HIS HAND AGAINST THE COUNTRIES, AND THE LAND OF EGYPT SHALL NOT ESCAPE. HE SHALL HAVE POWER [AUTHORITY] OVER THE TREASURES OF GOLD AND SILVER, AND OVER ALL THE PRECIOUS THINGS OF EGYPT, ALSO THE LIBYANS AND ETHIOPIANS [BLACK NATION & BLACK RACE] SHALL FOLLOW AT HIS [THE NORTH’S] HEELS. BUT NEWS FROM THE EAST AND THE NORTH SHALL TROUBLE HIM, THEREFORE HE SHALL OUT WITH GREAT FURY TO DESTROY AND ANNIHILATE MANY. AND HE SHALL PLANT THE TENTS OF HIS PALACE BETWEEN THE SEAS AND THE GLORIOUS HOLY MOUNTAIN [THE SOUTHEASTERN STATE OF SC, USA IN THE GLORIOUS KINGDOM OF FLORENCE, SC BEATS ALL THE NORTHEASTERN PART OF SC & THE NORTHEASTERN STATES FROM NORTH CAROLINA TO RHODE ISLAND IN ACTS 29:2], YET HE SHALL COME TO HIS END, AND NO ONE WILL HELP HIM.”**

**THE LORD MICHAEL’S PROPHESY OF THE ULTIMATE END TIME TRIBULATION PERIOD OF 7 YEARS IN ACTS 29:2**

**IN DANIEL 12:1-13 DECLARES, “AT THAT TIME MICHAEL SHALL STAND UP, THE GREAT PRINCE WHO STANDS WATCH OVER THE SONS OF YOUR PEOPLE, AND THERE SHALL BE A TIME OF TROUBLE, SUCH AS NEVER WAS SINCE THERE WAS A NATION, EVEN TO THAT TIME [THE USA IN THE ULTIMATE END TIME IN ACTS 29:2]. AND AT THAT TIME YOUR PEOPLE SHALL BE DELIVERED, EVERY ONE WHO IS FOUND WRITTEN IN THE BOOK [THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD’S BOOK OF LIFE]. AND MANY OF THOSE WHO SLEEP IN THE DUST OF THE EARTH SHALL AWAKE, SOME TO EVERLASTING LIFE [IN THE BOOK OF LIFE], SOME TO SHAME AND EVERLASTING CONTEMPT [ABHORRENCE IN THE BOOK OF THE DEAD]. THOSE WHO ARE WISE SHALL SHINE LIKE THE BRIGHTNESS OF THE FIRMAMENT, AND THOSE WHO TURN MANY TO RIGHTEOUSNESS LIKE THE STARS FOREVER AND EVER. BUT YOU, DANIEL, SHUT UP THE WORDS, AND SEAL THE BOOK UNTIL THE TIME OF THE END, MANY SHALL RUN TO AND FRO, AND KNOWLEDGE SHALL INCREASE. THEN I, DANIEL, LOOKED, AND THERE STOOD TWO OTHERS [LORD GABRIEL & LORD RAPHAEL], ONE ON THIS RIVERBANK, AND THE OTHER ON THAT RIVERBANK. AND ONE SAID TO THE MAN [LORD MICHAEL] CLOTHED IN LINEN, WHO WAS ABOVE THE WATERS OF THE RIVER [LEVITATED], ‘HOW LONG SHALL THE FULFILLMENT OF THESE WONDERS BE?’ THEN I HEARD THE MAN [LORD MICHAEL] CLOTHED IN LINEN, WHO WAS ABOVE THE WATERS OF THE RIVER [LEVITATED], WHEN HE HELD UP HIS RIGHT HAND AND HIS LEFT HAND TO HEAVEN, AND SWORE BY HIM [FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD] WHO LIVES FOREVER, THAT IT SHALL BE FOR A TIME, TIMES, AND HALF OF A TIME, AND WHEN THE POWER [AUTHORITY] OF THE HOLY PEOPLE HAS BEEN COMPLETELY SHATTERED, ALL THESE THINGS SHALL BE FINISHED. ALTHOUGH I HEARD, I DID NOT UNDERSTAND. THEN I SAID, ‘MY LORD [MICHAEL], WHAT SHALL BE THE END OF THESE THINGS?” HE SAID, ‘GO YOUR WAY, DANIEL, FOR THE WORDS ARE CLOSED UP AND SEALED TILL THE TIME OF THE END. MANY SHALL BE PURIFIED, MADE WHITE AND REFINED, BUT THE WICKED [SEXUAL] SHALL DO WICKEDLY [SEXUALLY], AND NONE OF THE WICKED [SEXUAL] SHALL UNDERSTAND, BUT THE WISE [DIVINE] SHALL UNDERSTAND. AND FROM THE TIME THAT THE DAILY SACRIFICE IS TAKEN AWAY [THE FULFILLMENT OF 46 YEARS], AND THE ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION IS SET UP [IN THE BEGINNING TO THE MIDST OF THE TRIBULATION PERIOD], THERE SHALL BE ONE THOUSAND TWO HUNDRED AND NINETY DAYS [THE ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION LASTS ONLY FOR 3.52 YEARS OR 3 YEARS, 6 MONTHS & 12 DAYS IN THE FIRST HALF OF THE TRIBULATION PERIOD]. BLESSED IS HE WHO WAITS AND COMES TO THE ONE THOUSAND THREE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-FIVE DAYS [THE GODLY INHERITANCE IN THE MIDST TO THE END OF THE TRIBULATION PERIOD IS FROM 3.56 YEARS OR 3 YEARS, 6 MONTHS & 27 DAYS]. BUT YOU, GO YOUR WAY TILL THE END, FOR YOU SHALL REST, AND WILL ARISE TO YOUR INHERITANCE AT THE END OF THE DAYS.”**

**THE 5TH APOCRYPHA VISION OF THE GREAT EAGLE [THE EMBLEM OF THE GREAT EAGLE IS KNOWN IN THE ITALIAN ROMAN EMPIRE, WHICH ENDED IN ACTS 29, BUT MORE PRECISELY THE EMBLEM OF THE GREAT EAGLE IS ALSO KNOWN IN THE ENGLISH USA EMPIRE IS IN ACTS 30 & THEIR MAYBE THE VICTORIAN ENGLISH EMPIRE THAT COMES AFTER OR IS IN DIRECT OPPOSITION TO THE USA ENGLISH EMPIRE IN ACTS 30]**

**THE 4 BEASTS**

**IN DANIEL 7:1-8 SUPPORTS THIS 5TH VISION: IN DANIEL 7:1-8 DECLARES, “IN THE FIRST YEAR OF BELSHAZZAR KING OF BABYLON, DANIEL HAD A DREAM AND VISIONS OF HIS HEAD WHILE ON HIS BED. THEN HE WROTE DOWN THE DREAM, TELLING THE MAIN FACTS. DANIEL SPOKE, SAYING, ‘I SAW IN MY VISION BY NIGHT, AND BEHOLD, THE FOUR WINDS OF HEAVEN WERE STIRRING UP THE GREAT SEA. AND FOUR GREAT BEASTS CAME UP FROM THE SEA, EACH DIFFERENT FROM THE OTHER.” THE 1ST BEAST IS THE LION-MAN WITH EAGLE’S WINGS: “THE FIRST WAS LIKE A LION, AND HAD EAGLE’S WINGS. I WATCHED TILL ITS WINGS WERE PLUCKED OFF, AND IT WAS LIFTED UP FROM THE EARTH AND MADE TO STAND ON TWO FEET LIKE A MAN, AND A MAN’S HEART WAS GIVEN TO IT.” THE 2ND BEAST IS THE BEAR-MAN WITH THREE RIBS IN ITS MOUTH: “AND SUDDENLY ANOTHER BEAST, A SECOND, LIKE A BEAR. IT WAS RAISED UP ON ONE SIDE, AND HAD THREE RIBS IN ITS MOUTH BETWEEN ITS TEETH. AND THEY SAID THUS TO IT: ‘ARISE, DEVOUR MUCH FLESH!’” THE 3RD BEAST IS THE LEOPARD-MAN WITH FOUR HEADS & FOUR WINGS ON ITS BACK: “AFTER THIS I LOOKED, AND THERE WAS ANOTHER, LIKE A LEOPARD, WHICH HAD ON ITS BACK FOUR WINGS OF A BIRD. THE BEAST ALSO HAD FOUR HEADS, AND DOMINION WAS GIVEN TO IT.” THE 4TH BEAST IS THE TEN HORNED BEAST-MAN WITH MAN’S EYES & MOUTH SPEAKING POMPOUS THINGS: “AFTER THIS I SAW IN THE NIGHT VISIONS, AND BEHOLD, A FOURTH BEAST, DREADFUL AND TERRIBLE, EXCEEDINGLY STRONG. IT HAS HUGE IRON TEETH, IT WAS DEVOURING, BREAKING IN PIECES, AND TRAMPLING THE RESIDUE WITH ITS FEET. IT WAS DIFFERENT FROM ALL THE BEASTS THAT WERE BEFORE IT, AND IT HAD TEN HORNS. I WAS CONSIDERING THE HORNS, AND THERE WAS ANOTHER HORN, A LITTLE ONE, COMING UP AMONG THEM, BEFORE WHOM THREE OF THE FIRST HORNS WERE PLUCKED OUT BY THE ROOTS. AND THERE, IN THIS HORN, WERE EYES LIKE THE EYES OF A MAN, AND A MOUTH SPEAKING POMPOUS WORDS [GREAT THINGS].”**

**THE GREAT EAGLE FROM THE SEA**

**IN 2ND ESDRAS 11:1-35 DECLARES, “THEN SAW I A DREAM, AND, BEHOLD, THERE CAME UP FROM THE SEA AN EAGLE, WHICH HAD TWELVE FEATHERED WINGS, AND THREE HEADS. AND I SAW, AND, BEHOLD, SHE, SPREAD HER WINGS OVER ALL THE EARTH, AND ALL THE WINDS OF THE AIR BLEW ON HER, AND WERE GATHERED TOGETHER. AND I BEHELD, AND OUT OF HER FEATHERS THERE GREW OTHER CONTRARY FEATHERS, AND THEY BECAME LITTLE FEATHERS AND SMALL. BUT HER HEADS WERE AT REST: THE HEAD IN THE MIDST WAS GREATER THAN THE OTHER, YET RESTED IT WITH THE RESIDUE. MOREOVER, I BEHELD, AND, LO, THE EAGLE FLEW WITH HER FEATHERS, AND REIGNED UPON EARTH, AND OVER THEM THAT DWELT THEREIN. AND I SAW THAT ALL THINGS UNDER HEAVEN WERE SUBJECT UNTO HER, AND NO MAN SPOKE AGAINST HER, NO, NOT ONE CREATURE UPON EARTH. AND I BEHELD, AND, LO, THE EAGLE ROSE UPON HER TALONS, AND SPOKE TO HER FEATHERS, SAYING, WATCH, NOT ALL AT ONCE: SLEEP EVERY ONE IN HIS OWN PLACE, AND WATCH BY COURSE: BUT LET THE HEADS BE PRESERVED FOR THE LAST. AND I BEHELD, AND, LO, THE VOICE WENT NOT OUT OF HER HEADS, BUT FROM THE MIDST OF HER BODY. AND I NUMBERED HER CONTRARY FEATHERS, AND, BEHOLD, THERE WERE EIGHT OF THEM. AND I LOOKED, AND, BEHOLD, ON THE RIGHT SIDE THERE AROSE ONE FEATHER, AND REIGNED OVER ALL THE EARTH, AND, SO IT WAS, THAT WHEN IT REIGNED, THE END OF IT CAME, AND THE PLACE THEREOF APPEARED NO MORE: SO, THE NEXT FOLLOWING STOOD UP. AND REIGNED, AND HAD A GREAT TIME, AND, IT HAPPENED, THAT WHEN IT REIGNED, THE END OF IT CAME ALSO, LIKE AS THE FIRST, SO THAT IT APPEARED NO MORE. THEN CAME THERE A VOICE UNTO IT, AND SAID, HEAR, THOU THAT HAST BORNE RULE OVER THE EARTH SO LONG: THIS I SAY UNTO THEE, BEFORE THOU BEGIN TO APPEAR NO MORE, THERE, SHALL NONE AFTER THEE ATTAIN UNTO THY TIME, NEITHER UNTO THE HALF THEREOF. THEN AROSE THE THIRD, AND REIGNED AS THE OTHER BEFORE, AND APPEARED NO MORE ALSO. SO, WENT IT WITH ALL THE RESIDUE ONE AFTER ANOTHER, AS THAT EVERY ONE REIGNED, AND THEN APPEARED NO MORE. THEN I BEHELD, AND, LO, IN PROCESS OF TIME THE FEATHERS THAT FOLLOWED STOOD UP UPON THE RIGHT SIDE, THAT THEY MIGHT RULE ALSO, AND SOME OF THEM RULED, BUT WITHIN A WHILE THEY APPEARED NO MORE: FOR SOME OF THEM WERE SET UP, BUT RULED NOT. AFTER THIS I LOOKED, AND, BEHOLD, THE TWELVE FEATHERS APPEARED NO MORE, NOR THE TWO LITTLE FEATHERS: AND THERE WAS NO MORE UPON THE EAGLE'S BODY, BUT THREE HEADS THAT RESTED, AND SIX LITTLE WINGS. THEN SAW I ALSO THAT TWO LITTLE FEATHERS DIVIDED THEMSELVES FROM THE SIX, AND REMAINED UNDER THE HEAD THAT WAS UPON THE RIGHT SIDE: FOR THE FOUR CONTINUED IN THEIR PLACE. AND I BEHELD, AND, LO, THE FEATHERS THAT WERE UNDER THE WING THOUGHT TO SET UP THEMSELVES AND TO HAVE THE RULE. AND I BEHELD, AND, LO, THERE WAS ONE SET UP, BUT SHORTLY IT APPEARED NO MORE. AND THE SECOND WAS SOONER AWAY THAN THE FIRST. AND I BEHELD, AND, LO, THE TWO THAT REMAINED THOUGHT ALSO IN THEMSELVES TO REIGN: AND WHEN THEY SO THOUGHT, BEHOLD, THERE AWAKED ONE OF THE HEADS THAT WERE AT REST, NAMELY, IT THAT WAS IN THE MIDST; FOR THAT WAS GREATER THAN THE TWO OTHER HEADS. AND THEN I SAW THAT THE TWO OTHER HEADS WERE JOINED WITH IT. AND, BEHOLD, THE HEAD WAS TURNED WITH THEM THAT WERE WITH IT, AND DID EAT UP THE TWO FEATHERS UNDER THE WING THAT WOULD HAVE REIGNED. BUT THIS HEAD PUT THE WHOLE EARTH IN FEAR, AND BARE RULE IN IT OVER ALL THOSE THAT DWELT UPON THE EARTH WITH MUCH OPPRESSION, AND IT HAD THE GOVERNANCE OF THE WORLD MORE THAN ALL THE WINGS THAT HAD BEEN. AND AFTER THIS I BEHELD, AND, LO, THE HEAD THAT WAS IN THE MIDST SUDDENLY APPEARED NO MORE, LIKE AS THE WINGS. BUT THERE REMAINED THE TWO HEADS, WHICH ALSO IN LIKE SORT RULED UPON THE EARTH, AND OVER THOSE THAT DWELT THEREIN. AND I BEHELD, AND, LO, THE HEAD UPON THE RIGHT-SIDE DEVOURED IT THAT WAS UPON THE LEFT SIDE.”**

**A LION ROUSED FROM THE FOREST**

**IN 2ND ESDRAS 11:36-46 DECLARES, “THEN I HEARD A VOICE SAYING TO ME, ‘LOOK IN FRONT OF YOU AND CONSIDER WHAT YOU SEE.’ WHEN I LOOKED, I SAW WHAT SEEMED TO BE A LION ROUSED FROM THE FOREST, ROARING, AND I HEARD HOW IT UTTERED A HUMAN VOICE TO THE EAGLE, AND SPOKE, SAYING, ‘LISTEN AND I WILL SPEAK TO YOU. THE MOST HIGH [JEHOVAH] SAYS TO YOU, ARE YOU NOT THE ONE THAT REMAINS OF THE FOUR BEASTS THAT I HAD MADE TO REIGN IN MY WORLD, SO THAT THE END OF MY TIMES MIGHT COME THROUGH THEM? YOU, THE FOURTH THAT HAS COME, HAVE CONQUERED ALL THE BEASTS THAT HAVE GONE BEFORE, AND YOU HAVE HELD SWAY OVER THE WORLD WITH GREAT TERROR, AND OVER ALL THE EARTH WITH GRIEVOUS OPPRESSION, AND FOR SO LONG YOU HAVE LIVED ON THE EARTH WITH DECEIT. YOU HAVE JUDGED THE EARTH, BUT NOT WITH TRUTH, FOR YOU HAVE OPPRESSED THE MEEK AND INJURED THE PEACEABLE, YOU, HAVE HATED THOSE WHO TELL THE TRUTH, AND HAVE [SEXUALLY] LOVED LIARS, YOU, HAVE DESTROYED THE HOMES OF THOSE WHO BROUGHT FORTH FRUIT, AND HAVE LAID LOW THE WALLS OF THOSE WHO DID YOU NO HARM. YOUR [SEXUAL] INSOLENCE HAS COME UP BEFORE THE MOST HIGH [JEHOVAH], AND YOUR [SEXUAL] PRIDE TO THE MIGHTY ONE. THE MOST HIGH [JEHOVAH] HAS LOOKED AT HIS TIMES, NOW THEY HAVE ENDED, AND HIS AGES HAVE REACHED COMPLETION. THEREFORE YOU, EAGLE, WILL SURELY DISAPPEAR, YOU AND YOUR TERRIFYING WINGS, YOUR, MOST EVIL [SEXUAL] LITTLE WINGS, YOUR MALICIOUS [SEXUAL] HEADS, YOUR MOST EVIL [SEXUAL] TALONS, AND YOUR WHOLE WORTHLESS BODY, SO THAT THE WHOLE EARTH, FREED FROM YOUR [SEXUAL] VIOLENCE, MAY BE REFRESHED AND RELIEVED, AND MAY HOPE FOR THE JUDGMENT AND MERCY OF HIM WHO MADE IT.’”**

**THE LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH’S INTERPRETATION OF THE VISION**

**IN 2ND ESDRAS 12:1-51 DECLARES, “AND IT CAME TO PASS, WHILES THE LION SPOKE THESE WORDS UNTO THE EAGLE, I SAW, AND, BEHOLD, THE HEAD THAT REMAINED AND THE FOUR WINGS APPEARED NO MORE, AND THE TWO WENT UNTO IT AND SET THEMSELVES UP TO REIGN, AND THEIR KINGDOM WAS SMALL, AND FILL OF UPROAR. AND I SAW, AND, BEHOLD, THEY APPEARED NO MORE, AND THE WHOLE BODY OF THE EAGLE WAS BURNT SO THAT THE EARTH WAS IN GREAT FEAR: THEN AWAKED I OUT OF THE TROUBLE AND TRANCE OF MY MIND, AND FROM GREAT FEAR, AND SAID UNTO MY SPIRIT, LO, THIS HAST THOU DONE UNTO ME, IN THAT THOU SEARCH OUT THE WAYS OF THE [MOST] HIGHEST [FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD]. LO, YET AM I WEARY IN MY MIND, AND VERY WEAK IN MY SPIRIT, AND LITTLE STRENGTH IS THERE IN ME, FOR THE GREAT FEAR WHEREWITH I WAS AFFLICTED THIS NIGHT. THEREFORE, WILL I NOW BESEECH THE [MOST] HIGHEST [FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD], THAT HE WILL COMFORT ME UNTO THE END. AND I SAID, LORD THAT BEAR RULE, IF I HAVE FOUND GRACE BEFORE THY SIGHT, AND IF I AM JUSTIFIED WITH THEE BEFORE MANY OTHERS, AND IF MY PRAYER INDEED BE COME UP BEFORE THY FACE, COMFORT ME THEN, AND SHEW ME THY SERVANT THE INTERPRETATION AND PLAIN DIFFERENCE OF THIS FEARFUL VISION, THAT THOU MAYEST PERFECTLY COMFORT MY SOUL. FOR THOU HAST JUDGED ME WORTHY TO SHEW ME THE LAST TIMES. AND HE SAID UNTO ME, THIS, IS THE INTERPRETATION OF THE VISION: THE EAGLE, WHOM THOU SAW COME UP FROM THE SEA, IS THE KINGDOM WHICH WAS SEEN IN THE VISION OF THY BROTHER DANIEL. BUT IT WAS NOT EXPOUNDED UNTO HIM, THEREFORE NOW I DECLARE IT UNTO THEE. BEHOLD, THE DAYS WILL COME, THAT THERE SHALL RISE UP A KINGDOM UPON EARTH, AND IT SHALL BE FEARED ABOVE ALL THE KINGDOMS THAT WERE BEFORE IT. IN THE SAME SHALL TWELVE KINGS [COLONELS] REIGN, ONE AFTER ANOTHER: WHEREOF THE SECOND SHALL BEGIN TO REIGN, AND SHALL HAVE MORE TIME THAN ANY OF THE TWELVE. AND THIS DO THE TWELVE WINGS SIGNIFY, WHICH THOU SAW. AS FOR THE VOICE WHICH THOU HEARD SPEAK, AND THAT THOU SAW NOT TO GO OUT FROM THE HEADS BUT FROM THE MIDST OF THE BODY THEREOF, THIS IS THE INTERPRETATION: THAT AFTER THE TIME OF THAT KINGDOM THERE SHALL ARISE GREAT STRIVINGS, AND IT SHALL STAND IN PERIL OF FAILING: NEVERTHELESS, IT SHALL NOT THEN FALL, BUT SHALL BE RESTORED AGAIN TO HIS BEGINNING. AND WHEREAS THOU SAW THE EIGHT, SMALL UNDER FEATHERS STICKING TO HER WINGS, THIS IS THE INTERPRETATION: THAT IN HIM THERE SHALL ARISE EIGHT KINGS [COLONELS], WHOSE TIMES SHALL BE BUT SMALL, AND THEIR YEARS SWIFT. AND TWO OF THEM SHALL PERISH, THE MIDDLE TIME APPROACHING: FOUR SHALL BE KEPT UNTIL THEIR END BEGIN TO APPROACH: BUT TWO SHALL BE KEPT UNTO THE END. AND WHEREAS THOU SAW THREE HEADS RESTING, THIS IS THE INTERPRETATION: IN HIS LAST DAYS SHALL THE MOST HIGH [JEHOVAH] RAISE UP THREE KINGDOMS, AND RENEW MANY THINGS THEREIN, AND THEY SHALL HAVE THE DOMINION OF THE EARTH, AND OF THOSE THAT DWELL THEREIN, WITH MUCH [SEXUAL] OPPRESSION, ABOVE ALL THOSE THAT WERE BEFORE THEM: THEREFORE, ARE THEY CALLED THE [3] HEADS OF THE EAGLE. FOR THESE ARE THEY THAT SHALL ACCOMPLISH HIS WICKEDNESS [SEXUALITY], AND THAT SHALL FINISH HIS LAST END. AND WHEREAS THOU SAW THAT THE GREAT HEAD APPEARED NO MORE, IT SIGNIFIES THAT ONE OF THEM SHALL DIE UPON HIS BED, AND YET WITH PAIN. FOR THE TWO THAT REMAIN SHALL BE SLAIN WITH THE SWORD [MOUTH]. FOR THE SWORD OF THE ONE SHALL DEVOUR THE OTHER: BUT AT THE LAST SHALL HE FALL THROUGH [BY] THE SWORD [MOUTH] HIMSELF. AND WHEREAS THOU SAW TWO FEATHERS UNDER THE WINGS PASSING OVER THE HEAD THAT IS ON THE RIGHT SIDE, IT SIGNIFIES THAT THESE ARE THEY, WHOM THE [MOST] HIGHEST [FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD] HATH KEPT UNTO THEIR END: THIS IS THE SMALL KINGDOM AND FULL OF TROUBLE, AS THOU SAW. AND THE LION, WHOM THOU SAW RISING UP OUT OF THE WOOD, AND ROARING, AND SPEAKING TO THE EAGLE, AND REBUKING HER FOR HER UNRIGHTEOUSNESS WITH ALL THE WORDS WHICH THOU HAST HEARD, THIS, IS THE ANOINTED, WHICH THE [MOST] HIGHEST [FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD] HATH KEPT FOR THEM AND FOR THEIR WICKEDNESS [SEXUALITY] UNTO THE END: HE SHALL REPROVE THEM, AND SHALL UPBRAID THEM WITH THEIR CRUELTY. FOR HE SHALL SET THEM BEFORE HIM ALIVE IN JUDGMENT, AND SHALL REBUKE THEM, AND CORRECT THEM. FOR THE REST OF MY PEOPLE SHALL HE DELIVER WITH MERCY, THOSE THAT HAVE BEEN PRESSED UPON MY BORDERS, AND HE SHALL MAKE THEM JOYFUL UNTIL THE COMING OF THE DAY OF JUDGMENT, WHEREOF I HAVE SPOKEN UNTO THEE FROM THE BEGINNING. THIS IS THE DREAM THAT THOU SAW, AND THESE ARE THE INTERPRETATIONS. THOU ONLY HAST BEEN MEET TO KNOW THIS SECRET OF THE [MOST] HIGHEST [FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD]. THEREFORE, WRITE ALL THESE THINGS THAT THOU HAST SEEN IN A BOOK, AND HIDE THEM: AND TEACH THEM TO THE WISE OF THE PEOPLE, WHOSE HEARTS THOU KNOW, MAY COMPREHEND AND KEEP THESE SECRETS. BUT WAIT THOU HERE THYSELF YET SEVEN DAYS MORE, THAT IT MAY BE SHEWED THEE, WHATSOEVER IT PLEASES THE [MOST] HIGHEST [FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD] TO DECLARE UNTO THEE. AND WITH THAT HE WENT HIS WAY. AND IT CAME TO PASS, WHEN ALL THE PEOPLE SAW THAT THE SEVEN DAYS WERE PAST, AND I NOT COME AGAIN INTO THE CITY, THEY GATHERED THEM ALL TOGETHER, FROM THE LEAST UNTO THE GREATEST, AND CAME UNTO ME, AND SAID, WHAT, HAVE WE OFFENDED THEE? AND WHAT EVIL HAVE WE DONE AGAINST THEE, THAT THOU FORSAKE US, AND SIT HERE IN THIS PLACE? FOR OF ALL THE PROPHETS THOU ONLY ART LEFT US, AS A CLUSTER OF THE VINTAGE, AND AS A CANDLE IN A DARK PLACE, AND AS A HAVEN OR SHIP PRESERVED FROM THE TEMPEST. ARE NOT THE EVILS WHICH ARE COME TO US SUFFICIENT? IF THOU SHALT FORSAKE US, HOW MUCH BETTER HAD IT BEEN FOR US, IF WE ALSO HAD BEEN BURNED IN THE MIDST OF SION [ZION]? FOR WE ARE NOT BETTER THAN THEY THAT DIED THERE. AND THEY WEPT WITH A LOUD VOICE. THEN ANSWERED I THEM, AND SAID, BE, OF GOOD COMFORT, O ISRAEL, AND BE NOT HEAVY, THOU HOUSE OF JACOB: FOR THE [MOST] HIGHEST [FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD] HATH YOU IN REMEMBRANCE, AND THE MIGHTY HATH NOT FORGOTTEN YOU IN TEMPTATION. AS FOR ME, I HAVE NOT FORSAKEN YOU, NEITHER AM I DEPARTED FROM YOU: BUT AM COME INTO THIS PLACE, TO PRAY FOR THE DESOLATION OF SION [ZION], AND THAT I MIGHT SEEK MERCY FOR THE LOW ESTATE OF YOUR SANCTUARY. AND NOW GO YOUR WAY HOME EVERY MAN, AND AFTER THESE DAYS WILL I COME UNTO YOU. SO, THE PEOPLE WENT THEIR WAY INTO THE CITY, LIKE AS I COMMANDED THEM: BUT I REMAINED STILL IN THE FIELD SEVEN DAYS, AS THE ANGEL COMMANDED ME, AND DID EAT ONLY IN THOSE DAYS OF THE FLOWERS OF THE FIELD, AND HAD MY MEAT OF THE HERBS.”**

**THE VISION OF THE GREAT EAGLE WITH TWELVE WINGS AND THREE HEADS, 2ND ESDRAS 10:60–12:3. INASMUCH AS THIS WAS TO BE AN EXTRAORDINARY VISION, IT DID NOT COME IMMEDIATELY, IT CAME ON THE SECOND NIGHT. THE SEER SAW THE EAGLE RISING OUT OF THE SEA, SINCE THE EAGLE WAS THE ROMAN STANDARD AND IT AROSE OUT OF THE WESTERN SEA, IT DOUBTLESS, REPRESENTED ROME, THE WORLD POWER OF THE TIME, BUT NOW THE US WORLD SUPERPOWER! STRIKING IN APPEARANCE, THE EAGLE HAD TWELVE FEATHERED WINGS, THREE RIVAL WINGS, CONTARIAE PENNAE, DESCRIBED AS PUNY AND PETTY, AND THREE SLEEPING HEADS, OF WHICH THE MIDDLE WAS THE LARGEST. IT SPREAD ITS WINGS OVER THE WHOLE EARTH, DOMINATING ALL SO THAT NONE DARE OPPOSE IT, AND THE WINDS OF HEAVEN BLEW UPON IT, THE FOUR WINDS REPRESENTING THE DIRECTIONS—NORTH, SOUTH, EAST & WEST, BUT 1ST ENOCH 18:1 WHERE THERE ARE TWELVE WINDS, THREE ISSUING FROM EACH DIRECTION [MAYBE PAST, PRESENT & FUTURE OF THE 4 MAIN DIRECTIONS]. THE MOVEMENT OF THE EAGLE WITH ITS HEADS AND WINGS REPRESENTS THE COURSE OF ROMAN HISTORY, BUT NOT US HISTORY. SINCE ROME WAS AN IMPERIAL POWER & THE USA IS A PRESIDENTIAL POWER, THERE COULD BE ONLY ONE EMPEROR & ONE PRESIDENT AT ANY GIVEN TIME, SO EACH OF THE HEADS AND WINGS, REPRESENTING EMPERORS [HEADS] & PRESIDENTS [12 COMMON WINGS & 8 CONTRARY WINGS], REMAINED IN ITS PLACE UNTIL ITS TURN TO DOMINATE OR RULE. THE HEADS WERE DORMANT AT FIRST, AN IMPORTANT POINT, SINCE THEY WERE TO AWAKEN AND TAKE POWER LATER IN THE VISION, THOSE HEADS, EMPERORS, WERE RESERVED UNTIL THE PERIOD OF THE SEER. AS THE VISION PROGRESSED, THE WINGS ON THE RIGHT, “RIGHT” IS SPECIFIED IN VERSE 20, BUT “LEFT” IS PROBABLY MEANT, VARYING WITH THE VERSION, RIVAL WINGS AND HEADS CAME INTO CONFLICT WITH EACH OTHER, AND OVERCAME EACH OTHER UNTIL THE MIDDLE HEAD, NOW AWAKENED, OVERPOWERED ALL. THEN EVEN THE MIDDLE HEAD WAS SUBDUED, AND FINALLY, A LION-LIKE FIGURE SPRANG FROM THE WOODS ROARING AND ADDRESSING THE EAGLE AT THE SAME TIME. THE LION DECREED TO THE EAGLE THAT ITS RULE WAS AT AN END. THE MOST HIGH [JEHOVAH] HAD CHOSEN 4 BEASTS TO RULE THE WORLD, EACH IN TURN, EACH AFTER HAVING SUBDUED ITS PREDECESSOR. BUT ALL FOUR WERE ONLY AGENTS THROUGH WHICH THE LORD’S TIMES WOULD COME, PART OF HIS SEXLESS PLAN BEING CARRIED TO COMPLETION. ALL THAT HAD TRANSPIRED UNDER THEM HAD BEEN A PRELUDE TO THE COMING KINGDOM OF LORDSHIP. NOW THE WHOLE WORLD WOULD BE DELIVERED FROM THEIR POWER OF BONDAGE [ACTS 7:6-7], FROM THEIR ACTS OF INJUSTICE, RUTHLESSNESS, DECEPTION, AND SEXUAL OPPRESSION, AND THE HOPES OF THE RIGHTEOUS WOULD BLOSSOM INTO REALITY, THE AGE OF JUSTICE AND COMPASSION. WHILE THE LION WAS STILL SPEAKING TO THE EAGLE THE REMAINING HEAD DISAPPEARED. THE TWO WINGS THEN USURPED POWER, BUT WITH LITTLE SUCCESS, THEIR RULE WAS SHORT AND TUMULTUOUS AND THEY TOO VANISHED. WITH THEIR DEMISE THE ENTIRE EAGLE WAS INCINERATED TO THE CONSTERNATION [DISTRESS] OF THE WORLD.**

**REQUEST FOR AND INTERPRETATION OF THE VISION, 2ND ESDRAS 12:3-35. WEAKENED BY HIS DREAM-VISION ORDEAL, EZRA PLEADS FOR STRENGTH, 2ND ESDRAS 12:3-6. STARTLED BY THE VISION, THE SEER ENGAGED IN A DIALOGUE WITH HIMSELF, REALLY A TYPICAL HEBREW MEDITATION. GETTING HOLD OF HIMSELF, HE REALIZED THAT WHAT HE HAD SEEN HAD SOMETHING TO DO WITH HIS INTENSE CONCERN ABOUT THE DIVINE WAYS AND THEIR EXECUTION IN THE WORLD AND HOW HE AND HIS PEOPLE FARED ALL THE WHILE. HIS UTTER MENTAL AND SPIRITUAL EXHAUSTION, TOGETHER WITH THE RESIDUAL FEARS BROUGHT ON BY THE VISION, LEFT HIM NO CHOICE BUT TO RESORT TO SEXLESS PRAYER TO THE MOST HIGH [JEHOVAH] FOR STRENGTH TO SEE HIM THROUGH, SO THAT HE MIGHT REALLY GET AN ANSWER TO THE STUBBORN SEXUAL PROBLEM HE HAD RAISED.**

**EZRA’S PRAYER, 2ND ESDRAS 12:7–9. THE PRAYER IS CHARACTERIZED BY APPEAL TO THE POSITION OF EZRA, THAT IS, HE VOICES HIS HUMILITY [HUMBLENESS] AND ASSERTS THE SOVEREIGNTY OF THE LORD AS THE PSALMISTS DO. BUT WITH THE REQUEST FOR STRENGTH COMES ALSO ONE FOR FURTHER REVELATION BY THE SEXLESS WAY OF INTERPRETATION OF THE VISION. ONLY THEN CAN HIS MIND BE AT EASE, HIS SEXUAL PROBLEM PUT IN PERSPECTIVE, AND DIVINE JUSTIFICATION DISCLOSED. THE SAME SPIRIT THAT PERVADES THE BOOK OF JOB IS EVIDENT HERE, A SUBTLE DEMAND THAT THE MOST HIGH [JEHOVAH] JUSTIFY HIS SEXLESS WAYS, HE HAS BEGUN TO RESPOND TO EZRA’S QUESTIONS, NOW LET HIM MAKE THAT RESPONSE UNMISTAKABLY CLEAR, ESPECIALLY IN VIEW OF THE FACT THAT HE HAS ALREADY APPRISED EZRA OF THE END OF DAYS.**

**INTERPRETATION OF THE VISION, 2ND ESDRAS 12:10–35. THE INTERPRETATION CONNECTS THE EAGLE VISION WITH THE 4TH KINGDOM OF DANIEL AND THUS ILLUSTRATES THE JEWISH CONCEPT OF THE VITALITY OF HOLY SCRIPTURE WHICH CONTAINS CERTAIN HIDDEN MEANINGS ALWAYS SUSCEPTIBLE TO CONTEMPORARY SIGNIFICANCE. ONE IS REMINDED OF THE PESARIM OF QUMRAN. CERTAINLY, EVEN IF THIS VISION COULD BE MADE TO COINCIDE IN DETAIL WITH THAT IN DANIEL, WHICH IT CANNOT, THE TIME SITUATION IS DIFFERENT AND HENCE REQUIRED REAPPLICATION TO MEET THE NEEDS OF THE WRITER’S TIME. THAT IS WHY THE INTERMEDIARY NOTED THAT HIS INTERPRETATION DIFFERS FROM THE EARLIER ONE. THE DREADFULNESS OF THE VISION IS DUE TO THE FACT THAT THE KINGDOM IT PORTRAYS IS WORSE THAN ANY THAT PRECEDED IT. THE TWELVE FEATHERED NORMAL WINGS (2ND ESDRAS 11:1) REPRESENT TWELVE KINGS WHO WILL REIGN OVER THE KINGDOM. THE SECOND OF THE KINGS THAT AROSE RULED A LONG TIME (2ND ESDRAS 11:13–17), INDEED TWICE AS LONG AS ANY OF THE OTHERS. THE VOICE THAT CAME FROM THE EAGLE’S BODY RATHER THAN FROM ITS HEADS (2ND ESDRAS 11:10) MEANT THAT THE EMPIRE WILL CONTINUE DESPITE THE SEXUAL FALL OF ITS KINGS OR EVEN CHANGES OF DYNASTY. THE EIGHT SUB-WINGS (2ND ESDRAS 11:11) STAND FOR EIGHT KINGS WHOSE REIGNS WILL BE SHORT, OR WHOSE TOTAL YEARS OF POWER WILL BE FEW [1 TO 8]. TWO WILL FALL NEAR THE MIDDLE OF ITS TIME, FOUR ARE RESERVED FOR ITS END-TIME, AND TWO KEPT FOR THE VERY END. THE THREE HEADS REPRESENT THE THREE KINGS THE MOST HIGH [JEHOVAH] WILL SET UP, NOTE HIS CONTROL OVER HISTORY, IN THE LAST DAYS (2ND ESDRAS 11:1, 4, 29–35), THEY WILL RESTORE DOMINION AFTER THE PERIOD OF TURBULENCE AND IN SO DOING EXERCISE HARSHER MEASURES THAN THEIR PREDECESSORS. THE PLAY ON “HEADS” AND “HEAD”, VERSES 24, 25, IS REMINISCENT OF THE OLD RIDDLE-TYPE SAYINGS FOUND IN VARIOUS BIBLICAL PASSAGES INFLUENCED BY WISDOM. NOT MUCH IS SAID HERE ABOUT THE LARGEST OF THE HEADS (2ND ESDRAS 11:29–33), NOR ABOUT THE TWO SMALLER ONES (2ND ESDRAS 12:34–36) EXCEPT THAT THEY WOULD BE CONSUMED BY THE SWORD, VERSES 27–28. THE LAST OF THE SUB-WINGS, TWO OF THEM, 2ND ESDRAS 11:28–31, MARKED THE END OF THE EAGLE’S RULE, THEIR REIGNS WILL BE SHORT AND FULL OF TURBULENCE, JUST AS THE VISION PORTRAYED. THEIR APPEARANCE WILL BE THE SIGN OF THE END, FOR THEN THE LION OUT OF THE FOREST WILL COME TO TAKE OVER (2ND ESDRAS 11:37–12:2). THE LION IS THE ANOINTED ONE OF THE SEED OF DAVID WHOM THE MOST HIGH [JEHOVAH] HAS RESERVED FOR THE END OF DAYS, BUT THERE IS ALSO THE ANTICHRIST BEHIND THE SCENES THAT TRIES TO IMITATE THIS LION IN 2ND CORINTHIANS 11:13-15. AS IN THE VISION ITSELF, HE PRESENTS HIS INDICTMENT AND THEN DESTROYS THE EAGLE, THE ROMAN ITALIAN EMPIRE ITSELF. THEN “MY PEOPLE” WHO ARE LEFT IN THE LAND WILL EXPERIENCE FREEDOM FROM FOREIGN DOMINATION AND GREAT JOY UNTIL THE TIME OF THE FINAL JUDGMENT. THE ATTITUDE TOWARD ROME REFLECTED IN 2ND ESDRAS IS IN MARKED CONTRAST TO THE PRO-ROMAN VIEWS OF JOSEPHUS WHO THOUGHT THAT “GOD WAS ON THE ROMAN SIDE” AND WHO PREDICTED THE COMING EMPERORSHIP OF VESPASIAN. SO, ALSO DID JOHANAN BEN ZAKKAI.**

**COMMAND TO WRITE DOWN THE VISION, AND THE SEVEN-DAY INTERVAL, 2ND ESDRAS 12:36–39. AS WITH OTHER APOCALYPTISTS, EZRA, GRANTED KNOWLEDGE OF THE [TOP] SECRETS OF THE MOST HIGH [JEHOVAH] BECAUSE OF HIS WORTHINESS, WAS COMMANDED TO RECORD WHAT HE HAD SEEN AND PLACE THE RECORD IN A SECURE HIDING PLACE. HE WAS FURTHER INSTRUCTED TO COMMUNICATE THE VISION TO “THE PRUDENT ONES” AMONG HIS PEOPLE SO THAT THEY TOO MIGHT KNOW THE SEXLESS PLANS OF THE MOST HIGH [JEHOVAH]. THE SEER, HOWEVER, WAS DIRECTED TO REMAIN IN THE FIELD FOR WHATEVER OTHER REVELATIONS THE MOST HIGH [JEHOVAH] MIGHT SEE FIT TO GRANT HIM.**

**POPULAR REACTION TO EZRA’S SEVEN-DAY ABSENCE, 2ND ESDRAS 12:40–45. AFTER THE SEXLESS DEPARTURE OF THE ANGEL IN THE TIME PORTAL [REVELATION 10], THE PEOPLE, APPARENTLY COGNIZANT OF WHERE HE WAS, CAME TO MEET EZRA. THEY INQUIRED THE REASON FOR HIS PROLONGED STAY AND DEMANDED TO KNOW WHETHER IT WAS DUE TO ANYTHING THEY HAD DONE. THEY REGARDED HIM AS A PROPHET, THEIR LAST HOPE IN THAT CONFUSED SEXUAL AGE. SHOULD HE ABANDON THEM, ALL HOPE WOULD BE GONE AND THEIR SEXUAL FATE SEALED. THERE IS SOME HINT HERE OF EZRA’S OWN EARLIER ARGUMENT ABOUT THE FUTILITY OF LIFE WITHOUT HOPE.**

**EZRA’S RESPONSE, 2ND ESDRAS 12:46–49. THE SEER’S REPLY IS ONE OF ENCOURAGEMENT FOR THE PEOPLE, HE EXHORTS THEM TO BE CONFIDENT AND NOT TO LOSE HEART. THEY HAVE NOT BEEN ABANDONED BY HIM. HE CAME TO THIS PLACE FOR THE PURPOSE OF INTERCEDING FOR THEM AND CONTEMPLATING THE MISFORTUNES [BAD LUCKS] THAT HAVE OVERTAKEN ZION. THEY ARE URGED TO RETURN HOME WHILE HE CONTINUES HIS RETREAT, AFTER WHICH HE WILL COME TO THEM.**

**INTERLUDE, 2ND ESDRAS 12:50–51. THE PEOPLE FOLLOW EZRA’S ADVICE WHILE HE REMAINS “IN THE FIELD” IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE ANGEL’S SEXLESS INSTRUCTION. IN THE INTERIM HE MAINTAINS HIS DIETARY REGIMEN SO AS TO BE PREPARED FOR WHATEVER MAY FOLLOW. EXCURSUS ON THE EAGLE VISION, CHAPTERS 11–12). NATURALLY THE EAGLE VISION HAS OCCASIONED ALL KINDS OF POSSIBLE SPECULATIONS ON THE IDENTITY OF ITS HEADS, WINGS AND SUB-WINGS. FOR PURPOSES OF ACCOUNTING FOR THE PRESENT WRITER’S VIEWS, AS FAR AS THAT IS POSSIBLE, IT MAY BE HELPFUL TO GIVE A BRIEF SUMMARY OF SOME OF THE MORE SIGNIFICANT IDENTIFICATIONS. IT IS UNNECESSARY TO GIVE HERE THE MORE EXTREME AND WHOLLY DISCREDITED VIEWS OF THE PAST CENTURY, OR TO DO MORE THAN MENTION THAT OF CONNECTING THE VISION WITH GREEK HISTORY FROM ALEXANDER THE GREAT THROUGH THE PTOLEMIES. THIS MAINTAINED THROUGHOUT, THAT THE THREE HEADS WERE CAESAR, ANTHONY, AND OCTAVIAN. THE OTHER SCHOLARS AFTER OR CONTEMPORARY WITH THEM AGREE ON ROME AS THE EMPIRE INVOLVED, BUT VARY WIDELY ON THE IDENTITY OF THE KINGS. EMPERORS INVOLVED EXTEND FROM CAESAR TO MACRINUS AND HIS SON DIADUMENIANUS, IN 217 AD. THE TWELVE WINGS WERE CAESAR, AUGUSTUS, TIBERIUS, CALIGULA, CLAUDIUS, NERO, VESPASIAN, DOMITIAN, TRAJAN, HADRIAN, ANTONINUS, MARCUS AURELIUS WITH COMMODUS. THE EIGHT WINGLETS WERE TITUS, NERVA, PERTINAX, DIDIUS JULIANUS, PESCENIUS NIGER, CLODIUS ALBINUS, MACRINUS, AND DIADUMENIANUS. THE THREE HEADS WERE SEPTIMIUS SEVERUS, CARACALLA, AND GETA. THOSE WHO HELD THE VIEW THAT THE WINGS WERE TO BE REGARDED AS PAIRS, TWELVE WINGS=SIX PAIRS, EIGHT WINGLETS=FOUR PAIRS, IDENTIFIED THE TWELVE, SIX PAIRS, WITH THE SIX JULIAN EMPERORS AND THE EIGHT, FOUR PAIRS, WITH GALBA, OTHO, VITELLIUS, AND NERVA. THE HEADS REPRESENTED THE THREE FLAVIANS, VESPASIAN, TITUS, AND DOMITIAN. THIS THOUGHT THE ORIGINAL VISION HAD SIX WINGS ON THE RIGHT SIDE AND SIX CORRESPONDING WINGS ON THE LEFT. THE TWO LAST WINGLETS STAND FOR THE UNREST EXPECTED BY THE AUTHOR AFTER THE DEMISE OF DOMITIAN. LATER THE NUMBER OF WINGS WAS DOUBLED AND TWO WINGLETS ADDED (2ND ESDRAS 11:22). E. THIS ALSO IDENTIFIED THE THREE HEADS WITH THE FLAVIANS AND ACCOUNTED FOR TWENTY WINGS BY COUNTING THE EMPERORS FROM CAESAR TO DOMITIAN TOGETHER WITH ALL THE ROMAN COMMANDERS DURING THE DISORDERS FROM 68–70 AD. THE TWO WINGLETS REFERRED TO LAST DID NOT STAND FOR PERSONS. THIS THEORY IS AS FOLLOWS: THE ORIGINAL VISION DATES FROM 95 AD. THE TWELVE WINGS REPRESENT THE JULIANS, THE EIGHT WINGLETS USURPERS, AND THE THREE HEADS THE FLAVIANS. THE WINGS WERE CONCEIVED IN PAIRS TO INDICATE THE STATUS AND POWERS OF THESE EMPERORS. THE REDACTOR WHO ASSEMBLED 2ND ESDRAS, IN 120 A.D. IDENTIFIED THE THREE HEADS WITH TRAJAN, HADRIAN, AND LUSIUS QUIETUS AND THE TWELVE WINGS WITH THE SIX JULIANS PLUS GALBA, OTHO, VITELLIUS, VESPASIAN, TITUS, AND DOMITIAN. ALSO, ANOTHER THEORY IS THE TWELVE WINGS, SIX ON THE RIGHT AND SIX ON THE LEFT, REPRESENTED TWELVE EMPERORS. THOSE ON THE RIGHT HE IDENTIFIED AS CAESAR, AUGUSTUS, WHO REIGNED LONGER THAN ANY OF HIS SUCCESSORS, TIBERIUS, CALIGULA, CLAUDIUS, AND NERO, THOSE ON THE LEFT, WHO RULED ONLY A SHORT TIME, REPRESENTED GALBA, OTHO, VITELLIUS, VINDEX, NYMPHIDIUS, AND PISO. THE THREE HEADS HE IDENTIFIED WITH THE FLAVIANS, THE MIDDLE ONE BEING VESPASIAN, THE ONE ON THE RIGHT DOMITIAN, AND THE ONE ON THE LEFT TITUS. HE WENT ON TO SAY, HOWEVER, THAT IDENTIFICATION OF THE EIGHT WINGLETS OR SUB-WINGS IS QUITE ANOTHER MATTER. FOUR HAD GONE UNDER BEFORE VESPASIAN, TWO WERE KILLED BY HIM AND TWO ALLIED WITH HIM. BUT WHO WERE THEY? THE TWO ALLIED WITH VESPASIAN MAY HAVE BEEN THE PREFECTS OF SYRIA AND EGYPT, MUCIANUS AND TIBERIUS ALEXANDER, BUT AS FOR THE OTHERS, THE AUTHOR WAS BETTER ACQUAINTED WITH THE PERIOD THAN WE ARE! IT IS THOUGHT THAT 2ND ESDRAS WAS WRITTEN IN THE YEAR 30 AD AFTER THE FALL OF JERUSALEM. THE THREE HEADS STOOD FOR THE FLAVIANS, THE TWO WINGLETS FOR THE WEAK NERVA AND TRAJAN WHOM EZRA, 2ND ESDRAS, DID NOT KNOW. THE SECOND WING WHICH RULED LONGER THAN THE REST WAS AUGUSTUS. THERE IS NOT ROOM ENOUGH FOR SIXTEEN, TEN WINGS AND SIX WINGLETS, BETWEEN AUGUSTUS AND VESPASIAN, SO THE NUMBER HAS SOMEHOW BEEN SEXUALLY CORRUPTED. TO EXPLAIN THE SEXUAL CORRUPTION, THIS RESORTED TO INTERPRETATION OF THE NUMBER, EACH SIDE OF THE EAGLE HAD THREE WINGS AND THREE RIVAL WINGS. THEN IN THE 3RD CENTURY AD ADDED 2ND ESDRAS 11:11 AND 2ND ESDRAS 11:20–23 WHOSE MEANING IS EXPRESSED THIS WAY: “TWO OF THEM PERISHED WHEN THE MIDDLE, HEAD, APPROACHED IN 2ND ESDRAS 12:20. HE ALTERED THE NUMBERS IN 2ND ESDRAS 11:1; 12:14–16 FROM SIX TO TWELVE, AND IN 2ND ESDRAS 12:20 FROM SIX TO EIGHT. THAT EXPLAINS WHY THE NUMBER OF RIVAL WINGS IN 2ND ESDRAS 11:3 IS NOT GIVEN, SINCE THE RIVAL WINGS SPRANG OUT OF THE LARGER WINGS, IT FOLLOWS THAT THEIR NUMBER WAS THE SAME AS THAT OF THEIR PARENT WINGS. THE TWO RIVAL WINGS IN 2ND ESDRAS 11:22 WHO ARE NOT ONCE MENTIONED AS REIGNING, WERE INSERTED LATER TO THE TERMS WITH THE DOUBLING OF THE WINGS. HISTORICALLY, THEN, THERE IS NO FURTHER DIFFICULTY: THE SIX WINGS ARE THE SIX JULIANS, THE THREE HEADS THE THREE FLAVIANS, THE SIX RIVAL WINGS GALBA, OTHO, VITELLIUS, CIVILIS, NERVA, AND TRAJAN. THIS AGREES, THAT AT THE EAGLE STANDS FOR THE ROMAN ITALIAN EMPIRE. THE SIX WINGS ON THE RIGHT ARE CAESAR, AUGUSTUS, TIBERIUS, CALIGULA, CLAUDIUS, NERO. THE SIX ON THE LEFT ARE GALBA, OTHO, VITELLIUS, VINDEX, NYMPHIDIUS, PISO. THE EIGHT RIVAL WINGS ARE: TWO, HEROD THE GREAT AND AGRIPPA I, FOUR, ELEAZAR, JOHN OF GISCHALA, SIMON BAR-GIORA, AND JOHN THE IDUMEAN, TWO, AGRIPPA II AND BERENICE. THE BASIC NUMBER OF WINGS WAS ORIGINALLY EIGHT (2ND ESDRAS 11:11) WHICH WAS INCREASED TO TWELVE, DOUBTLESS FOR THE SAKE OF LATER HISTORY. THE THREE HEADS WERE THE FLAVIANS. THREE PLUS EIGHT, ORIGINAL WINGS, EQUAL ELEVEN, WHICH A LATER EDITOR INCREASED TO TWELVE, A SACRED NUMBER. WRITING IN THE TIME OF DOMITIAN, THE NEXT EMPEROR WOULD SPELL THE DOOM OF ROME, SO HE INCREASED THE NUMBER FROM TWENTY TO TWENTY-THREE IN 2ND ESDRAS 11:11; 12:19, ALLOWING FOR THE CONTINUATION OF THE HISTORY OF THE EMPIRE IF NECESSARY, PROBABLY IN LINE WITH THE INDEFINITENESS OF APOCALYPTIC WITNESS. ANOTHER THEORY IS THAT THE EAGLE VISION REPRESENTS DANIEL’S 4TH KINGDOM AND STANDS FOR THE ROMAN ITALIAN EMPIRE. THE WINGS AND HEADS INDICATE ROMAN EMPERORS. THE THREE HEADS REPRESENT THE THREE FLAVIANS. IT APPEARS TO THE PRESENT WRITER THAT THE THEORIES MENTIONED ABOVE ARE TOO SPECIFIC, SIMPLY PLEADING FOR A PARTICULAR LITERARY HYPOTHESIS. WHILE THERE MAY HAVE BEEN SOME ADDITIONS AND ALTERATIONS IN THE TEXT, IT IS HARDLY LEGITIMATE TO SPECULATE TOO MUCH ON SUCH BASES. IT SEEMS CLEAR THAT THE EAGLE VISION IS CONCERNED WITH THE ROMAN ITALIAN EMPIRE, THEN AFTER THE ROMAN ITALIAN EMPIRE IS THE US EMPIRE IN ACTS 29:2 WITH AN ACTS 30, BOTH WHOSE INSIGNIA IS THE EAGLE. IT ALSO APPEARS FAIRLY CERTAIN THAT THE THREE HEADS STAND FOR THE THREE FLAVIAN EMPERORS, VESPASIAN, THE MIDDLE HEAD, DOMITIAN, THE RIGHT, AND TITUS, THE LEFT. THE TWELVE WINGS ALSO STAND FOR ROMAN EMPERORS, BUT JUST WHICH ONES IS NOT CERTAIN. THE ONE WHO IS SAID TO HAVE RULED LONGER THAN ANY OF THE OTHERS IS PROBABLY AUGUSTUS. THE ONE BEFORE IT THEN MUST HAVE BEEN CAESAR. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THE TWELVE WINGS INCLUDE THE GENERALLY ACCEPTED RULERS FROM CAESAR TO DOMITIAN, CAESAR, AUGUSTUS, TIBERIUS, CALIGULA, CLAUDIUS, NERO, GALBA, OTHO, VITELLIUS, VESPASIAN, TITUS, AND DOMITIAN. THE IDENTITY OF THE EIGHT RIVAL WINGS, OR WINGLETS OR SUB-WINGS, CANNOT BE DETERMINED WITH ANY DEGREE OF CERTAINTY. THE THREE HEADS, ALSO RECKONED WITH THE WINGS, MAY STAND FOR THE RULERS WHO LIVED IN THE AUTHOR’S TIME. IT IS ALWAYS WISE NOT TO ATTEMPT A TOO SPECIFIC IDENTIFICATION OF APOCALYPTIC FIGURES IN THE ABSENCE OF OTHER COMPELLING EVIDENCE THAT WARRANTS IT. APART FROM THE EAGLE, THE MAIN FEATURE OF THE VISION IS THE FIGURE OF THE LION (2ND ESDRAS 11:37) WHO, IN THE EXPLANATION, IS IDENTIFIED AS UNCTUS, “THE ANOINTED ONE,” “THE MESSIAH” IN 2ND ESDRAS 12:32. HE IS HELD IN RESERVE UNTIL “THE END OF DAYS,” UNTIL THE EAGLE WAS ABOUT TO BE DESTROYED. HE IS CONNECTED WITH THE SEED OF DAVID WHICH IS ELSEWHERE ASSOCIATED WITH THE TRIBE OF JUDAH. THE LION SYMBOLISM APPEARS TO BE BASED ON GENESIS 49:9. THE YALḲUṬ SHIMONI ON THAT PASSAGE IS INTERESTING: “JUDAH IS A YOUNG LION (GEN 49:9), THAT IS THE MESSIAH BEN DAVID WHO WILL COME FORTH OUT OF TWO TRIBES, HIS FATHER IS FROM JUDAH AND HIS MOTHER FROM DAN, AND BOTH TOGETHER WERE CALLED LION, AS IT IS SAID: A YOUNG LION IS JUDAH AND, FURTHER, DAN IS A YOUNG LION IN DEUTERONOMY 33:22.” THE METAPHOR OCCURS ALSO IN GENESIS 37:33; 1ST MACCABEES 3:4; 2ND MACCABEES 11:11 & QUMRAN SEREK 5:29. THE CONNECTION BETWEEN THE MESSIAH AND THE LION MAY BE DUE TO THE COMMON ASSOCIATION WITH THE TRIBE OF JUDAH. IT IS ALSO POSSIBLE, WITH THE SAME CONNECTION, THAT THE HOUSE OF DAVID HAD A LION ON ITS BANNER OR INSIGNIA. IN VIEW OF THE LION’S SUPPOSED ROYAL TRAITS, THE LINK MAY GO BACK TO THE HOUSE OF DAVID, AND HAVE BEEN CARRIED ON AFTER IT LOST ITS THRONE. THE QUESTION OF THE LACUNA IN THE LATIN TEXT OF 2ND ESDRAS 12:32 OR THE ADDITION TRANSMITTED BY THE OTHER VERSIONS CANNOT BE ANSWERED CONCLUSIVELY. THE FACT THAT “THE MOST HIGH [JEHOVAH] HAS RESERVED, (HIM) TILL THE END OF DAYS” POINTS TO THE PRE-EXISTENT MESSIAH, WHILE THE ADDITION “OF THE SEED OF DAVID” COMBINES THAT FIGURE WITH THE DAVIDIC MESSIAH. THE FUNCTION OF THE MESSIAH AFTER THE SEXUAL FALL OF JERUSALEM IN 70 A.D. WAS TO DENOUNCE THE ROMAN ITALIAN EMPIRE AND DESTROY IT.**

**THE FUTURE NATIONAL FULFILLMENT OF THE 3-HEADED EAGLE PROPHESY OF THE 46TH PRESIDENTIAL YEAR USA KINGDOM, WHICH IS EQUAL TO THE 3 DAYS OF JESUS’ BODY IN JOHN 1:19-25 IN JUNE 20TH, 16 AD-JUNE 20TH, 2016 AD FOR THE, 2000 YEARS IN ACTS OF THE APOSTLES, THE UNMARRIED TO SINGLE AFTER MARRIAGE KINGDOM OF LORDSHIP & JUNE, 20TH, 1018 AD-JUNE 20TH, 2018 AD FOR THE 1000 YEARS IN ACTS OF THE HOLY GHOST, THE SINGLE KINGDOM OF LORDSHIP**

**THIS IS SIMPLY AN INVESTIGATED HYPOTHETICAL HYPOTHESIS OR AN EDUCATED GUESS BASED ON PRESENT FACTS: THE VISION OF THE 3-HEADED EAGLE IS KNOWN IN THE “HIDDEN BOOK” OF 2ND ESDRAS AND GIVEN THE RECENT HUGE RISE IN EARTHQUAKES, TSUNAMIS & STORMS AND THE UPRISING OF PEOPLE, WORLD WIDE I NOTICED THE FOLLOWING: THEREFORE, WHEN THERE SHALL BE SEEN EARTHQUAKES AND UPROARS OF THE PEOPLE IN THE WORLD: THEN SHALT THOU WELL UNDERSTAND 4 ESDRAS 9:3-4. THEN SHALT THOU WELL UNDERSTAND WHAT? ESDRAS’ DREAM OF THE 3-HEADED EAGLE IN CHAPTER 11 THAT GOES LIKE THIS. A NATION WAS TO ARISE REPRESENTED BY A GREAT EAGLE WITH THREE HEADS AND 12 NORMAL WINGS, OR FEATHERS IN SOME TRANSLATIONS, PLUS 8 CONTRARY WINGS WOULD RULE OVER THE EARTH. THE 3 HEADS AND WINGS, OR FEATHERS, EACH REPRESENT DIFFERENT RULERS OF THIS POWERFUL NATION, THE USA. EACH OF THE 4 SMALLER WINGS TAKE TURNS IN AN ORDERLY MANNER ONE AFTER ANOTHER TO RULE, WHILE THE 3 HEADS ARE SLEEPING SOMEWHERE ON THE EUPHORIA CONTINENT. THE PROPHECY PICKS UP THE STORY AFTER THE NATION HAS BEEN IN [SEXUAL] DANGER OF COLLAPSE NEAR THE MIDDLE OF ITS EXISTENCE. THE RULE OF THE 2ND NORMAL WING AFTER THAT TIME WAS TO BE TWICE AS LONG AND GREATER THAN ANY 1ST WINGS OUT OF THE 11 NORMAL WINGS. AFTER THIS NO OTHER WOULD BE ALLOWED TO RULE AS LONG, ONLY HALF AS LONG. WHEN THE 12 NORMAL WINGS HAD TAKEN THEIR TURNS TO RULE FROM THE 31ST PRESIDENCY TO THE 42ND US PRESIDENCY, SMALLER CONTRARY WINGS BEGAN TO RULE. AFTER THE 1ST ONE RULED AS THE 43RD US PRESIDENCY, THEN THE 2ND AS THE 44TH US PRESIDENCY IS THE TRUE HOLY DIVISION OF LORDSHIP BETWEEN THE 12 NORMAL WINGS WITH THE FIRST 2 CONTRARY FEATHERED WINGS. AFTER THAT, THE NEXT TWO CONTRARY FEATHERS WINGS WERE PLANNING TO RULE JOINTLY AS THE 45TH US PRESIDENCY & 46TH US PRESIDENCY WHEN THE 1ST BIG HEAD [THE 1ST NOTABLE HORN (DANIEL 8:8) IS THE 1ST GENERAL OF THE ANTICHRIST KINGDOM] AWOKE [SOMEWHERE ON THE EUPHORIA CONTINENT, MAYBE FROM THE LOCATIONS OF THE 3 PRISONS NEAR JERUSALEM, ISRAEL, BABYLON, IRAQ & CAIRO, EGYPT BECAUSE THESE 3 HEADS ARE WICKEDNESS] AND RIPPED THESE TWO CONTRARY FEATHER CONTRARY WINGS IN THE USA, OFF WITH ITS BEAK [SWORD OF THE MOUTH]. THIS 1 BIG HEAD [THE 1ST NOTABLE HORN (DANIEL 8:8) IS THE 1ST GENERAL OF THE ANTICHRIST KINGDOM] SET TO RULE OVER THE ENTIRE WORLD, BUT DIED IN THE PROCESS. WHEN HE HAD PASSED AWAY THE OTHER TWO BIG HEADS [THE 2 NOTABLE HORNS (DANIEL 8:8) IS THE 2ND & 3RD GENERALS OF THE ANTICHRIST KINGDOM] AWOKE [SOMEWHERE ON THE EUPHORIA CONTINENT, MAYBE FROM THE LOCATIONS OF THE 3 PRISONS NEAR JERUSALEM, ISRAEL, BABYLON, IRAQ & CAIRO, EGYPT BECAUSE THESE 3 HEADS ARE WICKEDNESS] AND TOOK TURNS SET TO RULE OVER THE ENTIRE WORLD. IN THE 44TH US PRESIDENCY, THE 3 BIG HEADS IS PROVEN BY 3 STIPULATIONS IN THE US LAW. 1ST, IS THE HOMOSEXUAL HATE CRIME OF 2009 IN REVELATION 2:18-29, THE HEAD IS STILL ALIVE, 2ND, IS THE HOMOSEXUAL LAW ALLOWING HOMOSEXUALS IN THE US MILITARY IN REVELATION 2:12-17, THE HEAD IS STILL ALIVE IN 2010 & 3RD, IS THE PREPOSTEROUS LAW FOR HOMOSEXUAL MARRIAGE THROUGHOUT THE US STATES BY GOVERNMENTAL MANDATE, WHICH IS THE DEAD HEAD AS A DEAD, POWERLESS LAW IN REVELATION 3:1-6 BECAUSE IF IT IS KEPT ALIVE, THE LORD WILL KILL & DAMN ALL THOSE ETERNAL CREATURES WHO APPROVE OF IT SINCE 2015. BY THIS STAGE THE GREAT EAGLE, THE USA IS REBUKED BY A ROARING LION [THE HORN IS THE CHRIST HIMSELF] AND THE COURAGEOUS EAGLE’S KINGDOM [THE USA THE LARGE HORN IS BROKEN IN (DANIEL 8:8) IS EVENTUALLY TOTALLY DEVASTATED, EXCEPT FOR THE BASE SANCTUARY OF THE GLORIOUS LAND IN THE USA. FINALLY, THE LAST TWO CONTRARY FEATHERED WINGS IN THE USA THEN RULE [1ST PETER 5-7, 9-11] AS THE 45TH US PRESIDENCY & 46TH US PRESIDENCY OVER WHAT IS LEFT AFTER THE DEVASTATION FROM THE 4TH SMALL NOTABLE HORN, THE ROARING LION [1ST PETER 5:8], UNTIL THE GREAT EAGLE IS COMPLETELY BURNED UP UNTIL IT REACHES THE BASE SANCTUARY OF THE GLORIOUS LAND, THE HOLY BIBLE BELT IN THE SOUTHEASTERN USA IN DANIEL 8:9-14. THEN THE 4TH SMALL NOTABLE HORN THE ROARING LION, THE ANTICHRIST & HIS ITALIAN KINGDOM IS DESTROYED BY THE LORD & HIS HOLY FIRE, BY THE PRAISED LORD & HIS LAMB [JAMES 4:1-10 & DANIEL 8:14] IN THE USA AT THE BASE SANCTUARY OF THE GLORIOUS LAND, IN THE HOLY BIBLE BELT OF THE SOUTHEASTERN PART OF THE USA, IN SC IN DANIEL 8:14. THIS PROVES THE ULTIMATE END TIME PROPHESY THAT STARTED IN THE ROMAN ITALIAN EMPIRE [ITALIAN & SICILIAN] FROM 18 AD TO 2018 AD & ITS SUCCESSOR IS THE US ENGLISH EMPIRE FROM 1018 AD TO 3018 AD IN ACTS 29:2 WITH AN ACTS 30 IMPLICATED. BUT IT IS POSSIBLE IN THEORY OR IN HYPOTHESIS, THAT THERE MAYBE A SUCCESSOR TO THE US ENGLISH EMPIRE, SOMETIME IN THE NEAR FUTURE BETWEEN 2018AD TO 3018AD, WHICH DIRECTLY POINTS TO THE VICTORIAN ENGLISH EMPIRE, WHICH IS RAN BY THE FEMALE DEVIL, THE LADY VICTORIA [BABYLON], WHICH VICTORIA MEANS “VICTORY, CONQUERING & ROYALTY.” BUT THE HOLY BIBLE BELT IS ALSO KNOWN AS THE SANCTUARY OF THE GLORIOUS LAND IN THE SOUTHEASTERN USA INCLUDES MOST OF TEXAS, ALABAMA, TENNESSEE, GEORGIA, NORTH CAROLINA, SOUTH CAROLINA, MOST OF MISSOURI, SOUTHERN PARTS OF KANSAS, SOUTHERN PARTS OF MISSISSIPPI, MOST OF OKLAHOMA, MOST OF KENTUCKY, SOUTHERN PARTS OF IOWA, SOUTHERN PARTS OF OHIO, SOUTHERN PARTS OF ILLINOIS, SOUTHERN PARTS OF INDIANA, SOUTHERN PARTS OF WEST VIRGINIA, SOUTHERN PARTS OF LOUISIANA, SOUTHERN PARTS OF FLORIDA & SOUTHERN PARTS OF VIRGINIA. THE ODD BALL IS UTAH IN THE CENTRAL WEST.**

**WHAT DOES IT MEAN? ESDRAS TELLS US THAT THIS 3-HEADED EAGLE IS THE 4TH KINGDOM OF DANIEL WHICH MOST SCHOLARS THINK REFERS TO ROME AND MANY HAVE TRIED TO MATCH THE WINGS AND HEADS WITH THE VARIOUS ROMAN EMPERORS BUT IT DOES NOT QUITE FIT. THE GREAT EAGLE IS THE EMBLEM OF THE USA AS IT WAS THAT OF THE ROMAN ITALIAN EMPIRE. SO, THE AMERICAN EMPIRE IS THE PROPHETIC COUNTERPART TO THE ROMAN ITALIAN EMPIRE IN PROVERBS 8:22-31; DANIEL 8:1-27; REVELATION 13:11-18 & ACTS 29:2 WITH AN ACTS 30 IMPLICATED, WE, START TO SEE HOW IT ALL FITS. THERE ARE MANY PARALLELS BETWEEN THE 3 HEADS OF THIS EAGLE AND THE 3 RULERS OF DANIEL’S 4TH KINGDOM DESCRIBED IN DANIEL 11:16-30. THE WINGS TAKE TURNS IN AN ORDERLY MANNER TO RULE, WHICH THE EMPERORS BY THE MOST PART NEVER DID, BUT THE US PRESIDENTS DO, SERVING ONE OR TWO, FOUR-YEAR TERMS EACH. THERE HAS ONLY EVER BEEN ONE PRESIDENT THAT HAS RULED LONGER THAN ALL THE OTHERS BEING 32ND PRESIDENCY WHO SERVED 4 TERMS, OVER 12 YEARS, FROM MARCH, 1933 AD-APRIL, 1945 AD, THEN PASSED AWAY AT THE START OF HIS 4TH TERM. THE USA HAD BEGUN TO EMERGED AS A WORLD NUCLEAR SUPERPOWER AFTER WW1 AND BY 1929 AD DOMINATED THE WORLD ECONOMY IN THE 31ST US PRESIDENCY. HENCE THE 32ND US PRESIDENCY WAS THE 2ND NORMAL WING OF THIS WORLD DOMINATING EMPIRE, ITS DOMINANCE WOULD FIRST BE ECONOMIC AND THEN MILITARY AUTHORITY. AFTER THIS LEADER, THE LAW WOULD BE CHANGED LIMITING US PRESIDENTS TO ONLY A MAXIMUM OF 2 TERMS. COUNTING THE REMAINING 10 WINGS/US PRESIDENTS, WE, FIND THAT 42ND US PRESIDENCY WAS THE LAST ONE BEFORE THE FIRST TWO CONTRARY WINGS. WE EXPECT THERE TO BE SIGNIFICANT CHANGES IN THE STYLE AND MANNER OF GOVERNMENT IN THE US PRESIDENCIES OF THE 4 CONTRARY FEATHERED WINGS AND THIS IS CONFIRMED BY US HISTORY. THEN THERE WERE TO BE 2 MORE PRESIDENTS AFTER 44TH US PRESIDENT, BEING THE 45TH US PRESIDENT & THE 46TH US PRESIDENT. THEN THE FIRST HEAD AWAKES. ORIGINALLY THIS IS IMPLIED TO THE 46TH US PRESIDENT. THIS MEANS THE 46TH PRESIDENT IS ELECTED AS A NON-POLITICIAN AT SOME EXTREME. OTHERS THINK THAT THE PROPHECY POINTS TO 4 US PRESIDENTS AFTER 42ND US PRESIDENT. UNDER THIS LEADER THE US EMPIRE WILL DOMINATE THE WORLD LIKE NEVER BEFORE. TWO OTHERS WILL SUCCEED HIM. THE NATION WILL THEN BE DEVASTATED BY NATURAL DISASTERS. FINALLY, TWO MORE ELECTED US PRESIDENTS WILL PRESIDE OVER THE FINAL 1ST KINGDOM OF THE US.**

**TIMING: IT IS IMPORTANT TO GET THE TIMING RIGHT! THE VISION STATES THAT AFTER THE 42ND US PRESIDENCY (THE 12TH) TWO MORE “CONTRARY FEATHERED WINGS” US PRESIDENTS, WHICH IS THE 43RD US PRESIDENCY & THE 44TH US PRESIDENCY, WOULD RULE PRIOR TO THE WAKING OF THE 1ST OF THREE HEADS. IN TOTAL THE VISION SAYS THERE WOULD BE 8 CONTRARY WINGS IN 2ND ESDRAS 11:10-11. TWO OF THOSE WOULD “PERISH WHEN THE MIDDLE OF ITS [EAGLE’S] TIME DRAW NEAR” IN 2ND ESDRAS 12:21, TWO WOULD RULE AFTER THE 42ND US PRESIDENCY, TWO WOULD PREPARE TO RULE BUT NEVER DO SO AND THE FINAL TWO WOULD RULE AFTER THE 3 HEADS AND PRESIDE OVER THE END OF THE FIRST 46TH PRESIDENTIAL YEAR KINGDOM. THIS MEANS ONCE THE FIRST 46 YEAR KINGDOM IS FINISHED AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL, IT WILL GIVE THE USA IN THE PROPHESY OF DANIEL 8 & REVELATION 13-20, 414 YEARS [400 YEARS + 14 YEAR IN THE TRUE CALL IN 2ND CORINTHIANS 12:1-13:10 & ACTS 7:6-7] OF UNIVERSAL PEACE BY 46 TIMES 3 BY GOING 1 MILE GO TWAIN & TIMES 3 BY 2 POSITIONS MAKING PEACE INTO 1, WHICH IS THE FULFILLMENT IN THE USA IN ACTS 7:6-7. WHICH IF IT CONCERNS PAST MEANS OF 414 YEARS, PRESENT MEANS OF 414 YEARS & FUTURE MEANS OF 414 YEARS, THE TIME WOULD BE 1,242 YEARS, WHICH FROM JULY 4TH, 1776 AD TO JULY 4TH, 3018 AD IS 1,242 YEARS EXACTLY & SINCE JULY 4TH, 2018 THERE WOULD BE 1,000 YEARS OR LESS LEFT BEFORE THE UNIVERSAL NEW UNIVERSE WOULD USHER IN ACTS 29:2 WITH AN ACTS 30, MAKING THE 1ST FORMER UNIVERSE TO PASS AWAY IN 1ST JOHN 2:15-17. THIS ALSO MEANS THE PROPHESY OF 2ND ESDRAS 11-12, WHICH THE NUMBER 23 IS DERIVED & DOWNTIME IS THE NUMBER 46 IN THE 5TH VISION CONCERNING THE FIRST 46 YEAR KINGDOM WILL BE FULFILLED SINCE JULY 4TH, 2017 AD IN THE INITIAL TOP PINNACLE STATE OF SC AS ISRAEL FROM JULY 4TH, 2017 AD TO NOVEMBER 4TH, 2017 AD, WITH THE STATE OF WA AS BABYLON FROM NOVEMBER 4TH, 2017 AD TO MARCH 4TH, 2018 AD & WITH THE STATE OF GA AS EGYPT FROM MARCH 4TH, 2018 AD TO JULY 4TH, 2018 AD HAS BEEN FULFILLED AT THE LOCAL GOVERNMENTAL LEVELS & STATE GOVERNMENTAL LEVELS SINCE JULY 4TH, 2018 AD & THE REST OF THE 47 STATES LEVELS, THEN THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENTAL LEVEL WILL TAKE ANOTHER 15 YEARS TOTAL TO BE FULFILLED, MAKING DATE TO JULY 4TH, 2032 AD.**

**THE 6TH APOCRYPHA VISION OF THE MAN FROM THE SEA**

**THE ETERNAL KINGDOM ENDLESSLY UNDESTROYED**

**IN DANIEL 7:13-14 DECLARES, “I WAS WATCHING IN THE NIGHT VISIONS, AND BEHOLD, ONE, LIKE THE SON OF MAN (SON ENOCH OUR LORD THE ONE IN ACTS 7:56 & SON JESUS OUR LORD THE SON OF MAN IN ACTS 7:56), COMING WITH THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN! HE CAME TO THE ANCIENT OF DAYS (THE LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH), AND THEY BROUGHT HIM NEAR BEFORE HIM. THEN TO HIM WAS GIVEN DOMINION AND GLORY AND A KINGDOM (OF SAINTLY CHRISTIAN LORDSHIP & CREATOR AGENT LORDSHIP) THAT ALL PEOPLES, NATIONS, AND LANGUAGES SHOULD SERVE HIM. HIS DOMINION IS AN EVERLASTING DOMINION, WHICH SHALL NOT PASS AWAY, AND HIS KINGDOM (OF SAINTLY CHRISTIAN LORDSHIP & CREATOR AGENT LORDSHIP) THE ONE WHICH SHALL NOT BE DESTROYED.”**

**THE MAN FROM THE SEA**

**IN 2ND ESDRAS 13:1-13 DECLARES, “AFTER SEVEN DAYS I DREAMED A DREAM IN THE NIGHT. AND LO, A WIND AROSE FROM THE SEA AND STIRRED UP ALL ITS WAVES. AS I KEPT LOOKING THE WIND MADE SOMETHING LIKE THE FIGURE OF A MAN COME UP OUT OF THE HEART OF THE SEA. AND I SAW THAT THIS MAN FLEW WITH THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN, AND WHEREVER HE TURNED HIS FACE TO LOOK, EVERYTHING UNDER HIS GAZE TREMBLED, AND WHENEVER HIS VOICE ISSUED FROM HIS MOUTH, ALL WHO HEARD HIS VOICE MELTED AS WAX MELTS WHEN IT FEELS THE FIRE. AFTER THIS I LOOKED AND SAW THAT AN INNUMERABLE MULTITUDE OF PEOPLE WERE GATHERED TOGETHER FROM THE FOUR WINDS OF HEAVEN TO MAKE WAR AGAINST THE MAN WHO CAME UP OUT OF THE SEA. AND I LOOKED AND SAW THAT HE CARVED OUT FOR HIMSELF A GREAT MOUNTAIN, AND FLEW UP ON TO IT. AND I TRIED TO SEE THE REGION OR PLACE FROM WHICH THE MOUNTAIN WAS CARVED, BUT I COULD NOT. AFTER THIS I LOOKED AND SAW THAT ALL WHO HAD GATHERED TOGETHER AGAINST HIM, TO WAGE WAR WITH HIM, WERE FILLED WITH FEAR, AND YET THEY DARED TO FIGHT. WHEN HE SAW THE ONRUSH OF THE APPROACHING MULTITUDE, HE NEITHER LIFTED HIS HAND NOR HELD A SPEAR OR ANY WEAPON OF WAR, BUT I SAW ONLY HOW HE SENT FORTH FROM HIS MOUTH SOMETHING LIKE A STREAM OF FIRE, AND FROM HIS LIPS A FLAMING BREATH, AND FROM HIS TONGUE HE SHOT FORTH A STORM OF SPARKS. ALL THESE WERE MINGLED TOGETHER, THE STREAM OF FIRE AND THE FLAMING BREATH AND THE GREAT STORM, AND FELL ON THE ONRUSHING MULTITUDE THAT WAS PREPARED TO FIGHT [1 POSITION], AND BURNED UP ALL OF THEM, SO THAT SUDDENLY NOTHING WAS SEEN OF THE INNUMERABLE MULTITUDE BUT ONLY THE DUST OF ASHES AND THE SMELL OF SMOKE. WHEN I SAW IT, I WAS AMAZED, AFTER THIS I SAW THE SAME MAN COME DOWN FROM THE MOUNTAIN AND CALL TO HIMSELF ANOTHER MULTITUDE THAT WAS PEACEABLE. THEN MANY PEOPLE CAME TO HIM, SOME OF WHOM WERE JOYFUL AND SOME SORROWFUL, SOME OF THEM WERE BOUND, AND SOME WERE BRINGING OTHERS AS OFFERINGS.”**

**THE LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH’S INTERPRETATION OF THE VISION**

**IN 2ND ESDRAS 13:14-58 DECLARES, “THEN I WOKE UP IN GREAT TERROR, AND PRAYED TO THE MOST HIGH [JEHOVAH], AND SAID, “FROM THE BEGINNING YOU HAVE SHOWN YOUR SERVANT THESE WONDERS, AND HAVE DEEMED ME WORTHY TO HAVE MY PRAYER HEARD BY YOU, NOW SHOW ME THE INTERPRETATION OF THIS DREAM ALSO. FOR AS I CONSIDER IT IN MY MIND, ALAS FOR THOSE WHO WILL BE LEFT IN THOSE DAYS! AND STILL MORE, ALAS FOR THOSE WHO ARE NOT LEFT! FOR THOSE WHO ARE NOT LEFT WILL BE SAD BECAUSE THEY UNDERSTAND THE THINGS THAT ARE RESERVED FOR THE LAST DAYS, BUT CANNOT ATTAIN THEM. BUT ALAS FOR THOSE ALSO WHO ARE LEFT, AND FOR THAT VERY REASON! FOR THEY SHALL SEE GREAT [SEXUAL] DANGERS AND MUCH DISTRESS, AS THESE DREAMS SHOW. YET IT IS BETTER TO COME INTO THESE THINGS, THOUGH INCURRING [SEXUAL] PERIL, THAN TO PASS FROM THE WORLD LIKE A CLOUD, AND NOT TO SEE WHAT WILL HAPPEN IN THE LAST DAYS.” HE ANSWERED ME AND SAID, “I WILL TELL YOU THE INTERPRETATION OF THE VISION, AND I WILL ALSO EXPLAIN TO YOU THE THINGS THAT YOU HAVE MENTIONED. AS FOR WHAT YOU SAID ABOUT THOSE WHO SURVIVE, AND CONCERNING THOSE WHO DO NOT SURVIVE, THIS IS THE INTERPRETATION: THE ONE WHO BRINGS THE [SEXUAL] PERIL AT THAT TIME WILL PROTECT THOSE WHO [SEXLESSLY] FALL INTO [SEXUAL] PERIL, WHO HAVE [SEXLESS] WORKS AND FAITH TOWARD THE ALMIGHTY. UNDERSTAND THEREFORE THAT THOSE WHO ARE LEFT ARE MORE BLESSED THAN THOSE WHO HAVE DIED. “THIS IS THE INTERPRETATION OF THE VISION: AS FOR YOUR SEEING A MAN COME UP FROM THE HEART OF THE SEA, THIS IS HE WHOM THE MOST HIGH [JEHOVAH] HAS BEEN KEEPING FOR MANY AGES, WHO WILL HIMSELF DELIVER HIS CREATION, AND HE WILL DIRECT THOSE WHO ARE LEFT. AND AS FOR YOUR SEEING WIND AND FIRE AND A STORM COMING OUT OF HIS MOUTH, AND AS FOR HIS NOT HOLDING A SPEAR OR WEAPON OF WAR, YET DESTROYING THE ONRUSHING MULTITUDE THAT CAME TO CONQUER HIM, THIS IS THE INTERPRETATION: THE DAYS ARE COMING WHEN THE MOST HIGH [JEHOVAH] WILL DELIVER THOSE WHO ARE ON THE EARTH. AND BEWILDERMENT OF MIND SHALL COME OVER THOSE WHO INHABIT THE EARTH. THEY SHALL PLAN TO MAKE WAR AGAINST ONE ANOTHER, CITY AGAINST CITY, PLACE AGAINST PLACE, PEOPLE AGAINST PEOPLE, AND KINGDOM AGAINST KINGDOM. WHEN THESE THINGS TAKE PLACE AND THE SIGNS OCCUR THAT I SHOWED YOU BEFORE, THEN MY SON WILL BE REVEALED, WHOM YOU SAW AS A MAN COMING UP FROM THE SEA. “THEN, WHEN ALL THE NATIONS HEAR HIS VOICE, ALL THE NATIONS SHALL LEAVE THEIR OWN LANDS AND THE WARFARE THAT THEY HAVE AGAINST ONE ANOTHER, AND AN INNUMERABLE MULTITUDE SHALL BE GATHERED TOGETHER, AS YOU SAW, WISHING TO COME AND CONQUER HIM. BUT HE SHALL STAND ON THE TOP OF MOUNT ZION. AND ZION SHALL COME AND BE MADE MANIFEST TO ALL PEOPLE, PREPARED AND BUILT, AS YOU SAW THE MOUNTAIN CARVED OUT WITHOUT HANDS. THEN HE, MY SON, WILL REPROVE THE ASSEMBLED NATIONS FOR THEIR UNGODLINESS [SEXUALITY], THIS WAS SYMBOLIZED BY THE STORM, AND WILL REPROACH THEM TO THEIR FACE WITH THEIR EVIL [SEXUAL] THOUGHTS AND THE [SEXUAL] TORMENTS WITH WHICH THEY ARE TO BE TORTURED, WHICH WERE SYMBOLIZED BY THE FLAMES, AND WILL DESTROY THEM WITHOUT EFFORT BY MEANS OF THE [SEXLESS] LAW, WHICH WAS SYMBOLIZED BY THE FIRE. “AND AS FOR YOUR SEEING HIM GATHER TO HIMSELF ANOTHER MULTITUDE THAT WAS PEACEABLE, THESE ARE THE 9 TRIBES THAT WERE TAKEN AWAY FROM THEIR OWN LAND INTO EXILE IN THE DAYS OF KING HOSHEA, WHOM SHALMANESER, KING OF THE ASSYRIANS, MADE CAPTIVES, HE TOOK THEM ACROSS THE RIVER, AND THEY WERE TAKEN INTO ANOTHER LAND. BUT THEY FORMED THIS PLAN FOR THEMSELVES, THAT THEY WOULD LEAVE THE MULTITUDE OF THE NATIONS AND GO TO A MORE DISTANT REGION, WHERE NO HUMAN BEINGS HAD EVER LIVED, SO THAT THERE AT LEAST THEY MIGHT KEEP THEIR STATUTES THAT THEY HAD NOT KEPT IN THEIR OWN LAND. AND THEY WENT IN BY THE NARROW PASSAGES OF THE EUPHRATES RIVER. FOR AT THAT TIME THE MOST HIGH [JEHOVAH] PERFORMED SIGNS FOR THEM, AND STOPPED THE CHANNELS OF THE RIVER UNTIL THEY HAD CROSSED OVER. THROUGH THAT REGION THERE WAS A LONG WAY TO GO, A JOURNEY OF A YEAR AND A HALF, AND THAT COUNTRY IS CALLED ARZARETH. “THEN THEY LIVED THERE UNTIL THE LAST TIMES, AND NOW, WHEN THEY ARE ABOUT TO COME AGAIN, THE MOST HIGH [JEHOVAH] WILL STOP THE CHANNELS OF THE RIVER AGAIN, SO THAT THEY MAY BE ABLE TO CROSS OVER. THEREFORE, YOU, SAW THE MULTITUDE GATHERED TOGETHER IN PEACE. BUT THOSE WHO ARE LEFT OF YOUR PEOPLE, WHO ARE FOUND WITHIN MY HOLY BORDERS, SHALL BE SAVED. THEREFORE, WHEN HE DESTROYS THE MULTITUDE OF THE NATIONS THAT ARE GATHERED TOGETHER, HE WILL DEFEND THE PEOPLE WHO REMAIN. AND THEN HE WILL SHOW THEM VERY MANY WONDERS.” I SAID, “O SOVEREIGN LORD, EXPLAIN THIS TO ME: WHY DID I SEE THE MAN COMING UP FROM THE HEART OF THE SEA?” HE SAID TO ME, “JUST AS NO ONE CAN EXPLORE OR KNOW WHAT IS IN THE DEPTHS OF THE SEA, SO NO ONE ON EARTH CAN SEE MY SON OR THOSE WHO ARE WITH HIM, EXCEPT IN THE TIME OF HIS DAY. THIS IS THE INTERPRETATION OF THE DREAM THAT YOU SAW. AND YOU ALONE HAVE BEEN ENLIGHTENED ABOUT THIS, BECAUSE YOU HAVE FORSAKEN YOUR OWN WAYS AND HAVE APPLIED YOURSELF TO MINE, AND HAVE SEARCHED OUT MY [SEXLESS] LAW, FOR YOU HAVE DEVOTED YOUR LIFE TO WISDOM, AND CALLED UNDERSTANDING YOUR MOTHER. THEREFORE, I HAVE SHOWN YOU THESE THINGS, FOR THERE IS A REWARD LAID UP WITH THE MOST HIGH [JEHOVAH]. FOR IT WILL BE THAT AFTER THREE MORE DAYS I WILL TELL YOU OTHER THINGS, AND EXPLAIN WEIGHTY AND WONDROUS MATTERS TO YOU.” THEN I GOT UP AND WALKED IN THE FIELD, GIVING GREAT GLORY AND PRAISE TO THE MOST HIGH [JEHOVAH] FOR THE WONDERS THAT HE DOES FROM TIME TO TIME, AND BECAUSE HE GOVERNS THE TIMES AND WHATEVER THINGS COME TO PASS IN THEIR SEASONS. AND I STAYED THERE THREE DAYS.”**

**A DREAM VISION, 2ND ESDRAS 13:1–13. THE EAGLE VISION WAS POLITICALLY ORIENTED & POLITICALLY MOTIVATED, THIS ONE IS RELIGIOUSLY ORIENTED & RELIGIOUSLY MOTIVATED. AFTER A SEVEN-DAY INTERVAL THE SEER HAD A DREAM VISION IN THE NIGHT. HE SAW A STORM WIND THAT APPEARED TO RISE FROM THE SEA, CONVULSING THE WAVES AS IT DID SO. AS HE CONTINUED TO LOOK, THE WIND BROUGHT UP OUT OF THE DEPTHS OF THE SEA A FIGURE RESEMBLING A MAN WHOSE VEHICLE OF FLIGHT WAS THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN. WHEREVER THE FIGURE LOOKED, THE OBJECT OF HIS VISION REACTED WITH TREPIDATION AND TURMOIL. THE SOUND OF HIS VOICE PRODUCED UTTER DISCOMFITURE FOR ALL WHO HEARD IT. MOBILIZED TO ATTACK HIM WAS AN INNUMERABLE HOST REPRESENTING ALL THE NATIONS OF THE EARTH [ACTS 4:5-26]. BUT THE MAN FROM THE SEA PREPARED FOR HIS BULWARK A HUGE MOUNTAIN TO WHICH HE FLEW ON HIS CLOUD CHARIOT. EZRA WAS THWARTED IN HIS EFFORTS TO SEE THE PLACE WHENCE THE MOUNTAIN WAS HEWN BECAUSE HE WAS NOT OF THIS, THE DREAM, WORLD. IT WAS THE NEW ZION OF THE LORD. DESPITE HIS AWESOME AND TERRIFYING APPEARANCE, HIS SEXUAL OPPONENTS DARED TO ENGAGE HIM, ONLY TO BE MET NOT WITH THE NORMAL WEAPONS OF DEFENSE, BUT WITH TORRENTS OF FIRE AND STORM THAT ISSUED FROM HIS MOUTH. THEY WERE BURNED COMPLETELY BY THE FLAMING GUST. AFTER THEIR DESTRUCTION, THE MAN DESCENDED FROM THE MOUNTAIN AND GATHERED TO HIMSELF A PEACEFUL HOST. THEY WORE ALL SORTS OF COUNTENANCES REFLECTIVE OF THE CONDITIONS IMPOSED UPON THEM BY THEIR SEXUAL OPPRESSORS, WHO HAD JUST BEEN DESTROYED.**

**REQUEST FOR INTERPRETATION OF THE DREAM VISION, 2ND ESDRAS 13:13–20. STARTLED INTO WAKEFULNESS, EZRA RESORTED TO SEXLESS PRAYER TO THE MOST HIGH [JEHOVAH]. ON THE BASIS OF PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE WITH DIVINE COMMUNICATION, HE PLEADS TO BE SHOWN THE INTERPRETATION OF THIS STRANGE VISION. HE WAS TROUBLED NOT ONLY BY ITS STRANGENESS BUT BY THE PROBLEM THAT HAUNTED HIM BEFORE. HE WRESTLED WITH THE THOUGHT OF HOW DREADFUL THOSE WHO REMAIN IN THE LAST DAYS WILL FARE BUT HE THOUGHT IT EVEN MORE PATHETIC FOR THOSE WHO DO NOT REMAIN. THE LATTER ARE SAD BECAUSE THEY ARE COGNIZANT OF WHAT IS IN STORE FOR THEM BUT CANNOT ENJOY IT. THOSE WHO REMAIN WILL INDEED SUFFER GREAT SEXUAL DANGERS, AS THIS AND PREVIOUS DREAMS INDICATE, YET IT IS PREFERABLE FOR THEM DESPITE THE DANGEROUS PERILS INVOLVED. TO DISAPPEAR FROM THE WORLD WITHOUT EXPERIENCING WHAT WILL TAKE PLACE AT THE END IS BEYOND COMPREHENSION. FOR A SIMILAR CONCEPTION SEE HEBREWS 11:35, 39–40.**

**INTERPRETATION OF THE DREAM VISION, 2ND ESDRAS 13:21–50. WHILE IT IS NOT SO STATED EXPLICITLY, THE CONTEXT SUGGESTS THAT THE RESPONSE TO THE SEER’S PRAYER COMES BY SEXLESS WAY OF THE INTERPRETING ANGEL ALTHOUGH THE REQUEST OR PRAYER IS SOLELY DIRECTED TO THE MOST HIGH [JEHOVAH] HIMSELF. THE RESPONDENT OFFERS NOT ONLY TO EXPLAIN THE VISION BUT ALSO TO UNRAVEL THE THOUGHTS OF EZRA. THE INTERPRETER BEGINS WITH THE LATTER AND POINTS OUT THAT THE ONE WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SEXUAL DANGERS OF THIS AGE WILL SEE TO IT THAT HIS OWN ARE PROTECTED AGAINST THEM. SO THOSE WHO SURVIVE ARE BETTER OFF THAN THOSE WHO DO NOT, VERSE 20, DESPITE THE SUFFERINGS TO BE ENDURED, AGAINST WHICH THEY ARE IN REALITY HEDGED, THEY WILL BE ABLE TO ENJOY SALVATION. THOSE WHO DO NOT SURVIVE ARE COGNIZANT OF THE BLESSINGS OF SALVATION BUT CANNOT EXPERIENCE THEM. THE EXPLANATION OF THE VISION FOLLOWS. THE MAN RISING FROM THE DEPTHS OF THE SEA REPRESENTS THE MESSIAH WHOM THE MOST HIGH [JEHOVAH] HAS KEPT HIDDEN THROUGH MANY AGES BUT WHO WILL BE REVEALED AT THE RIGHT TIME. HE IS THE INSTRUMENT THROUGH WHOM THE MOST- HIGH [JEHOVAH] WILL DELIVER HIS CREATION AND PROVIDE A NEW ORDER FOR THOSE WHO SURVIVE. THE WIND, FIRE, AND TEMPEST LET GO FROM HIS MOUTH ARE REMINISCENCES OF THE STORM-GOD IMAGERY CURRENT AT MANY PLACES IN THE OLD TESTAMENT. THE WEAPONS OF THE MESSIAH ARE NOT THOSE OF MEN, THEY ARE THE FORCES OF NATURE COMMANDED BY HIS TERRIBLE MOUTH. CERTAIN SIGNS OR, PERHAPS BETTER, CERTAIN WORLDLY PHENOMENA WILL MARK THE BEGINNING, NOTE THE INDEFINITENESS, OF THE DELIVERY OF THOSE ON EARTH. PANIC WILL SEIZE MEN AND NATIONS, WHICH IN ITSELF WILL BE A HARBINGER OF THINGS ABOUT TO TAKE PLACE. MOREOVER, THE OTHER SIGNS, VERSE 32, TOO WILL POINT UP THE TREND OF THE TIMES. BUT THE CAPSTONE OF IT ALL WILL BE THE MANIFESTATION OF “MY SON,” THE SIGNAL FOR ARMAGEDDON. AT THE SAME TIME ZION, THE NEW JERUSALEM, WILL APPEAR FOR ALL TO SEE, A SIGN OF ENCOURAGEMENT FOR THE SEXLESS FAITHFUL, OF THE END FOR SEXUAL OPPONENTS AND SEXUAL OPPRESSORS. “MY SON” WILL FIRST BERATE THOSE WHO HAVE SET THEMSELVES AGAINST HIM AND WILL PRESENT THE TRUE INDICTMENT. HERE IS WHERE THE INTERPRETATION TAKES A DIFFERENT TWIST. EARLIER THE STORM CHARACTERISTICS, VERSES 10, 27, WERE INSTRUMENTS OF DESTRUCTION ISSUING FROM THE MOUTH OF THE MAN RISING FROM THE DEPTHS OF THE SEA. NOW THE SITUATION IS REVERSED. THE APPROACH OF THE ALLIED HOST SEXUALLY OPPOSING HIM IS LIKENED TO THE STORM, THE SEXUAL TORTURES THEY ARE TO UNDERGO ARE LIKE FLAMES, THOSE SEXUALLY CRUSHED BY THE SEXLESS LAW ARE SEXUALLY CRUSHED AS IF BY THE FIRE. THE PEACEFUL HOST IS COMPOSED OF THE TEN TRIBES WHO ARE A NEW EXODUS COMING OUT OF EXILE TO A NEW PROMISED LAND. IN THEIR EXILE THEY UNDERWENT A DESERT EXPERIENCE IN WHICH THEY RELEARNED THE SEXLESS ORDINANCES OF THE MOST HIGH [JEHOVAH] THAT THEY HAD EARLIER NEGLECTED. THROUGH MIRACULOUS INTERVENTION BY HIM THEY WILL COME BACK AGAIN. JUST AS IN THE EXODUS EXPERIENCE, THE SAME ONE WHO HAD LED THEM INTO THE DESERT SCHOOL WILL LEAD THEM BACK. FINALLY, ALL WHO REACH THE LIMITS OF HIS SANCTUARY, THE TEN TRIBES AND THE TWO TRIBES, ALL ISRAEL, WILL BE SAVED. THE HAND THAT REACHES OUT TO DESTROY THE SEXUAL ENEMY IS ALSO THE PROTECTIVE HAND THAT PRESERVES THOSE WHO SURVIVE. IN FACT, THE ONE WHO DESTROYS IS THE ONE WHO SAVES, SO THAT THE ACT OF DESTRUCTION BECOMES THE SAVING ACT IN JAMES 4:12.**

**FURTHER QUESTION AND EXPLANATION, 2ND ESDRAS 13:51–56. THERE WAS CERTAINLY A REASON FOR THE QUESTION POSED HERE, ALTHOUGH THE INTERPRETATION OF THE DREAM VISION HAD ALREADY DEALT WITH THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE MAN RISING OUT OF THE SEA, AS WELL AS HIS IDENTIFICATION. NOW, HOWEVER, THE SEER ASKS JUST WHY HE SAW “THE MAN RISING UP OUT OF THE DEPTHS OF THE SEA.” WHILE IT IS TRUE THAT APOCALYPTIC WRITERS OFTEN INTERJECT QUESTIONS ON DETAILS, VERSE 51, THIS ONE APPEARS TO HAVE A PARTICULAR THRUST. ELSEWHERE THE SON OF MAN [THE LORD JESUS CHRIST FOR ISRAEL IN THE ULTIMATE BEGINNING ON THE EUPHORIA CONTINENT BECAUSE THE LORD JESUS IS NOT CONNECTED BY ETERNAL DEATH RECEIVING THE ETERNAL PRIZE OF ENDLESS IMMORTALITY TO MATTHEW 24:36-44; MARK 13:32-37 & ACTS 7:60 & THE LORD ENOCH CHRIST FOR THE USA ON THE SOUTH AMERICA/NORTH AMERICA CONTINENT IN THE ULTIMATE ENDING BECAUSE THE LORD ENOCH IS CONNECTED BY ETERNAL DEATH RECEIVING THE ETERNAL PRIZE OF ENDLESS IMMORTALITY TO MATTHEW 24:36-44; MARK 13:32-37 & ACTS 7:60], MESSIAH, IS DEPICTED AS COMING FROM HEAVEN IN ACTS 1:11; MATTHEW 24:30; MARK 13:26; LUKE 21:27; DANIEL 7:13 & THE BOOKS OF ENOCH. VERSE 52 IS NOT ALTOGETHER RESPONSIVE TO THE QUESTION BUT IT DOES STRESS THE CONCEALMENT OF THE MESSIAH UNTIL THE MOST HIGH [JEHOVAH] CHOOSES TO REVEAL HIM “IN THE TIME OF HIS DAY.” FURTHERMORE, THE PRE-EXISTENCE OF THE MESSIAH IS CLEARLY IN THE MIND OF THE INTERPRETER. NO ONE CAN PROBE THE DEPTHS OF THE SEA TO EXPLORE ITS [TOP] SECRETS OR RISE TO HEAVEN TO DISCOVER THE MYSTERIES HIDDEN BY THE LORD. BUT THE MESSIANIC [TOP] SECRET WILL BE REVEALED AT THE TIME CHOSEN BY THE MOST HIGH [JEHOVAH]. A FEW HAVE BEEN INFORMED ABOUT IT, THOUGH IN ENIGMATIC TERMS AND WAYS, BECAUSE OF THEIR FAITHFULNESS TO THE MOST HIGH [JEHOVAH] AS SHOWN BY THE DIRECTION OF THEIR THOUGHTS AND LIVES, VERSES 54–55. THAT IS PART OF THEIR REWARD. MORE IS YET TO COME AFTER DUE MEDITATION ON WHAT HAS JUST BEEN MADE KNOWN TO THE SEER. MORE TREMENDOUSLY AMAZING THINGS WILL BE DISCLOSED TO HIM.**

**WAITING IN THE FIELD, 2ND ESDRAS 13:57–58. FOR WHAT HE HAD HEARD AND SEEN IN THIS AND OTHER VISIONS, EZRA PRAISED THE LORD. YET IT WAS NOT ONLY FOR THESE DISCLOSURES BUT RATHER FOR THE CONTINUED ACTIVITY AND SEXLESS PLANS OF THE MOST HIGH [JEHOVAH] THAT HE GLORIFIED HIM. HE IS NOW CONVINCED THAT, DESPITE APPEARANCES, THE LORD CONTROLS THE TIMES AND WHAT HAPPENS IN THEM, FOR ALL ARE CAREFULLY DESIGNED TO EXECUTE HIS SEXLESS PURPOSES AND DIVINE PLANS. OBSERVATIONS ON THE VISIONS OF DESTRUCTION. VISIONS FIVE AND SIX DEAL WITH SOCIAL UNITS OR GROUPS RATHER THAN WITH INDIVIDUALS, AS WAS THE CASE WITH THE PRECEDING ONES. THE OVER-ALL CONCEPTION PREVALENT FOR BOTH HAS BEEN SET FORTH MOST CLEARLY, OF WHICH THE FOLLOWING IS A SUMMARY. THE APOCALYPTIC IMAGES SUCH AS ARE INVOLVED HERE ARE GENERALLY BASED ON TRADITION, RATHER THAN ON IMAGINATIVE CREATIONS OF THE AUTHOR. THIS TRADITION MAY HAVE BEEN TRANSMITTED IN EITHER WRITTEN OR ORAL FORM. HERE WE HAVE TWO SEPARATE TRADITIONS ESSENTIALLY PARALLEL AS MAY BE SEEN FROM THE FACT THAT BOTH SKETCH THE DESTRUCTION OF THE LAST SEXUAL ENEMIES OF ISRAEL THROUGH THE DIVINE INTERVENTION OF THE ANOINTED ONE AND HAVE CERTAIN ASPECTS IN COMMON, AS, FOR EXAMPLE, THE REBUKES IN 2ND ESDRAS 11:38–46; 12:32–33; 13:37–38. AT THE SAME TIME THERE ARE SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES. VISION FIVE HAS THE ANOINTED ONE DESTROYING THE ROMAN ITALIAN EMPIRE, VISION SIX HAS HIM ANNIHILATE THE ASSEMBLED PEOPLE OF THE EARTH WHO ARE HOSTILE TO ISRAEL. THEN THERE IS HIS GRACE BESTOWED ONLY ON THE REMNANT OF THOSE IN THE HOLY LAND IN VISION FIVE, ON THE LOST TEN TRIBES IN VISION SIX. THE FORMER IS A CONTEMPORARY APOCALYPSE, THE LATTER HAS TO DO WITH TRADITIONAL ESCHATOLOGY. THE EARLIER VISIONS CENTER ABOUT THE INDIVIDUAL, THESE ABOUT POLITICAL HOPES. IT IS RATHER STRIKING THAT THE PORTRAITS OF THINGS TO COME DID NOT TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION THE GREAT CATASTROPHE OF ISRAEL WHICH HAD JUST TAKEN PLACE AND SO PERTURBED THE AUTHOR. EVEN IN THE REFERENCE TO THE ROMAN DEVASTATION OF THE HOMES AND WALLS (2ND ESDRAS 11:42), THERE IS NO MENTION OF THE TEMPLE OR THE PROMISE OF THE RETURN OF THE EXILES TO THE HOLY LAND. THE TWO VISIONS APPEAR TO REFLECT CONTACT WITH DAN 7 WHERE THE 1ST BEAST WAS “LIKE A LION, WITH THE WINGS OF AN EAGLE”, VERSE 4, THOUGH THE WING IDENTIFICATIONS IN 2ND ESDRAS RESEMBLE THOSE OF THE HORNS OF THE 4TH BEAST, VERSES 7–8, 19–27. THE “SOMETHING RESEMBLING A MAN” (2ND ESDRAS 13:3) IS REMINISCENT OF THE “ONE LIKE UNTO A SON OF MAN” WHO APPROACHES THE ANCIENT OF DAYS AND IS GIVEN EVERLASTING DOMINION. HOWEVER, NOTHING IS SAID IN DANIEL ABOUT HIS COMING UP OUT OF THE SEA WHEN THE WINDS STIR IT UP OR OF HIS “FLYING WITH THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN.” WHERE THE WRITER OF 2ND ESDRAS GOT THE VARIOUS FACETS OF HIS VISIONS IS OBSCURE. BUT HE MAY HAVE BEEN INDEBTED TO MANY SOURCES WHOSE ORIGIN HE HIMSELF MAY NOT HAVE KNOWN OR WHOSE MEANING HE DID NOT UNDERSTAND. NEVERTHELESS, HE FITTED THEM INTO A PORTRAIT THAT CONVEYED HIS THOUGHTS AT THE TIME. THAT HE HAD SOME DIFFICULTY IN THE INTERPRETATION, VERSES 21–50, SUGGESTS AT LEAST SOME EXPANSION ALONG RABBINIC LINES. PERHAPS SOME OF THE MATERIAL INVOLVED HAS BEEN DRAWN FROM FLOATING TRADITION OF THE MOST VARIED SOURCES. BUT SPECIFICS MUST NOT BE PUSHED TOO FAR IN SUCH IDENTIFICATIONS.**

**SPEAKING GOD’S WORDS: SPEAKING THE WORD GOD GIVES**

**I WILL BE WITH YOUR MOUTH AND TEACH YOU WHAT TO SAY IN EXODUS 4:12, 15, SAY TO PHARAOH ALL THAT I SAY TO YOU IN EXODUS 6:29, SO MOSES SPOKE TO AARON AND HIS SONS AND ALL ISRAEL IN LEVITICUS 21:24, MOSES SPOKE THESE WORDS TO ALL ISRAEL IN DEUTERONOMY 31:1, NATHAN SPOKE TO DAVID ACCORDING TO THIS VISION IN 1ST CHRONICLES 17:15, ONLY SPEAK THE WORD I SPEAK TO YOU IN NUMBERS 22:35, SPEAK ALL I COMMAND YOU IN JEREMIAH 1:7, 17, WHATEVER GOD SHOWS ME I WILL TELL YOU IN NUMBERS 23:3, HEAR ALL GOD SAYS THEN TELL US IN DEUTERONOMY 5:27, I WILL PUT MY WORDS IN HIS MOUTH IN DEUTERONOMY 18:18, I HAVE PUT MY WORDS IN YOUR MOUTH IN ISAIAH 51:16 & JEREMIAH 1:9, I WILL OPEN YOUR MOUTH AND YOU WILL SAY TO THEM, ‘THUS SAYS THE LORD GOD’ IN EZEKIEL 3:27, THUS SAYS THE LORD IN 2ND CHRONICLES 34:23, 26, I MUST SPEAK THE WORD GOD PUTS IN MY MOUTH IN NUMBERS 22:38; 23:12, 26; 24:13 & 2ND CHRONICLES 18:13, I MUST SPEAK WHAT GOD SAYS TO ME IN 1ST KINGS 22:14, SPEAK MY WORDS TO THEM IN EZEKIEL 2:7; 3:4, THE WORD THAT CAME TO JEREMIAH FROM THE LORD IN JEREMIAH 7:1; 11:1, I WILL GIVE YOU WORDS THAT NO ONE CAN WITHSTAND IN LUKE 21:15, I AM MAKING MY WORDS IN YOUR MOUTH A FIRE IN JEREMIAH 5:14, THE LORD PUT A WORD IN BALAAM’S MOUTH IN NUMBERS 23:5, 16, MY SPIRIT AND MY WORDS WILL NOT DEPART FROM YOUR MOUTH IN ISAIAH 59:21, WHAT TO SAY WILL BE GIVEN YOU IN MATTHEW 10:19, THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL TEACH YOU WHAT TO SAY IN LUKE 12:12, IT IS NOT YOU SPEAKING, BUT THE HOLY SPIRIT IN MATTHEW 10:20 & MARK 13:11, I DO NOTHING OF MYSELF BUT SPEAK AS THE FATHER [STEPHEN] TAUGHT ME IN JOHN 8:28, THE FATHER [STEPHEN] HAS GIVEN ME COMMANDMENT WHAT TO SPEAK IN JOHN 12:49, THE WORDS I SAY TO YOU ARE NOT OF MY OWN SPEAKING IN JOHN 14:10, THE WORD YOU HEAR IS NOT MINE BUT THE FATHER STEPHEN’S WHO SENT ME IN JOHN 14:25, THE WORDS YOU GAVE ME I GAVE THEM IN JOHN 17:8, THEY SPOKE IN OTHER LANGUAGES AS THE SPIRIT GAVE THEM UTTERANCE IN ACTS 2:4, BY THE HOLY SPIRIT THROUGH THE MOUTH OF YOUR SERVANT DAVID OUR FATHER IN ACTS 4:25, IF THEY HAD STOOD IN MY COUNCIL, THEY WOULD HAVE ANNOUNCED MY WORDS IN JEREMIAH 23:22.**

**SPEAKING AS FROM GOD**

**YOU WILL BE AS MY MOUTH IN JEREMIAH 15:19, SAY TO THEM, ‘THUS SAYS THE LORD GOD’ IN EZEKIEL 3:11, SPEAK TO THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL IN EZEKIEL 3:1, YOU SHALL SAY TO THEM, ‘THUS SAYS THE LORD GOD’ IN EZEKIEL 2:4, THE LORD HAS GIVEN ME THE TONGUE OF THOSE WHO ARE TAUGHT IN ISAIAH 50:4, THE LAW WILL BE IN YOUR MOUTH IN EXODUS 13:9, HE MADE MY MOUTH LIKE A SHARP SWORD IN ISAIAH 49:2, WHOEVER SPEAKS, AS THE ORACLES OF GOD IN 1ST PETER 4:11, LET HIM WHO HAS MY WORD SPEAK MY WORD TRUTHFULLY IN JEREMIAH 23:28, SPEAKING TO THE GENTILES THAT THEY MAY BE SAVED IN 1ST THESSALONIANS 2:16, I WILL SPEAK OF YOUR TESTIMONIES BEFORE KINGS IN PSALMS 119:46, LET THE REDEEMED OF THE LORD SAY SO IN PSALMS 107:2, THE PROPHETS SPOKE IN YOUR NAME---STEPHEN YAHWEH TO OUR KINGS AND ALL THE PEOPLE IN DANIEL 9:6, I SPEAK OF WHAT I HAVE SEEN WITH MY FATHER [STEPHEN] IN JOHN 8:38, SPEAK TO THE PEOPLE IN THE TEMPLE ALL THE WORDS OF THIS LIFE IN ACTS 5:20, THEY COULD NOT WITHSTAND THE WISDOM AND SPIRIT [INTELLIGENCE] WITH WHICH HE SPOKE IN ACTS 6:10, YOU WERE ENRICHED IN HIM WITH ALL SPEECH AND KNOWLEDGE IN 1ST CORINTHIANS 1:5, OUR WORDS ARE NOT BY HUMAN WISDOM BUT TAUGHT BY THE SPIRIT IN 1ST CORINTHIANS 2:13, WE BELIEVE, THEREFORE WE SPEAK IN 2ND CORINTHIANS 4:13, YOU DESIRE PROOF THAT CHRIST IS SPEAKING IN ME IN 2ND CORINTHIANS 13:3, THE TRADITIONS YOU WERE TAUGHT, WHETHER BY WORD OF MOUTH OR LETTER IN 2ND THESSALONIANS 2:15, THE PROPHETS WHO SPOKE IN THE NAME OF THE LORD---STEPHEN YAHWEH IN IN JAMES 5:10, GOD DID ACCORDING TO MOSES’ WORD IN EXOD. 8:13.**

**PROPHESYING FOR OTHER FALSE GODS & TRUE GODS: PROPHECY: ABOUT PROPHECY**

**THE LORD, THE GOD OF THE SPIRITS OF THE PROPHETS IN REVELATION 22:6, THE PROPHET IS THE WATCHMAN OF EPHRAIM WITH MY GOD IN HOSEA 9:8, THEY WILL KNOW THAT A PROPHET HAS BEEN AMONG THEM IN EZEKIEL 2:5; 33:33.**

**GOD SENDING PROPHETS: GOD SPOKE BY THE PROPHETS**

**YOU HAVE COMMANDED BY YOUR SERVANTS THE PROPHETS IN EZRA 9:11, GOD SPOKE TO OUR FOREFATHERS BY THE PROPHETS IN HEBREWS 1:1, AS HE SPOKE BY THE MOUTH OF HIS HOLY PROPHETS IN LUKE 1:70, THE LORD SPOKE THROUGH HIS SERVANTS THE PROPHETS IN 2ND KINGS 21:10; 24:2, I SPOKE THROUGH MY SERVANTS THE PROPHETS OF ISRAEL IN EZEKIEL 38:17, HIS TEACHINGS WHICH HE GAVE US BY HIS SERVANTS THE PROPHETS IN DANIEL 9:10, ARE NOT THESE THE WORDS WHICH THE LORD PROCLAIMED BY THE FORMER PROPHETS IN ZECHARIAH 7:7, DID NOT MY WORDS WHICH I COMMANDED MY SERVANTS THE PROPHETS OVERTAKE YOUR FATHERS IN ZECHARIAH 1:6, THE WORDS WHICH THE LORD SENT BY HIS SPIRIT THROUGH THE FORMER PROPHETS IN ZECHARIAH 7:12, THE WORD OF THE LORD CAME TO EZEKIEL THE PRIEST [SERGEANT], SON OF BUZI IN EZEKIEL 1:3, THE LORD WARNED ISRAEL THROUGH THE PROPHETS IN 2ND KINGS 17:13, THE LORD HAS RAISED UP PROPHETS FOR US IN BABYLON IN JEREMIAH 29:15, THIS TOOK PLACE TO FULFIL WHAT THE LORD HAD SPOKEN BY THE PROPHET IN MATTHEW 1:22, WHAT GOD FORETOLD BY THE MOUTH OF ALL THE PROPHETS IN ACTS 3:18, GOD SPOKE BY THE MOUTH OF HIS HOLY PROPHETS IN ACTS 3:21, THE MYSTERY OF GOD WHICH HE ANNOUNCED TO HIS SLAVES THE PROPHETS IN REVELATION 10:7, YOU ADMONISHED THEM BY YOUR SPIRIT THROUGH THE PROPHETS IN NEHEMIAH 9:30, I HAVE HEWN THEM BY THE PROPHETS IN HOSEA 6:5.**

**THE LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH HIMSELF SPEAKS AS THE TRUE ULTIMATE END TIME PROPHET**

**SINCE, 2,000 YEARS AGO THE LORD SPOKE THROUGH HIS HOLY PROPHETS FROM THE ULTIMATE BEGINNING TO THE 21ST AGE HIS SON JESUS CHRIST, THEN THE LORD SPOKE THROUGH HIS SON JESUS CHRIST AS HIS PROPHET FROM JUNE 20TH, 18AD & JUNE 20TH, 19AD IN 100.0000% FULL FRUITS TO JUNE 20TH, 2018AD & JUNE 20TH, 2019AD IN 100.0000% FULL FRUITS BECAUSE IN 2ND CORINTHIANS 12 & 13 SAYS THE CROSS IS DONE IN WEAKNESS WHICH MEANS THE 2,000-YEAR REIGN FROM INITIALLY JUNE 20TH, 29AD TO JUNE 20TH, 2029AD IS CUT SHORT 10 YEARS IN WEAKNESS IN HEBREWS 1:1-3. THE REASON WHY THE SON JESUS CHRIST HAS TO FINISH PROPHESYING IS BECAUSE OF THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD’S DAY [HOUR] & HOUR [MINUTE] THAT NO ONE WILL KNOW, EXCEPT THE LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH HIMSELF IN MATTHEW 24:36-44 & MARK 13:32-37. NOW THE LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH HIMSELF HAS COME ON THE SCENE SINCE JUNE 20TH, 2018AD AS THE ULTIMATE END TIME PROPHET TO TRULY PROPHESY ABOUT THE ULTIMATE ENGLISH END TIME OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA WITH THE GOAT OF THE WEST FOR THE USA TO BECOME GREAT ONLY BY TAKING OUT THE 2 HORNS OF THE RAM---1ST HORN IS THE IRAQI PRESIDENT & THE 2ND HORN IS THE IRANIAN PRESIDENT BEFORE THE ACTUAL ETERNAL RESTRAINING IS TAKEN OUT OF THE WAY & THEN 4 GENERALS WILL COME IN AUTHORITY & WITHIN THOSE 4 GENERALS, 1 LITTLE HORN WILL ROOT-UP, WHICH IS THE ANTICHRIST’S KINGDOM THAT SHALL BE REVEALED & WILL COME ON BOARD FOR 3.5 YEARS OR 42 MONTHS TO DOMINATE THE FALLEN SEXUAL WORLD, THEN AFTERWARDS THE NEW UNIVERSE WILL THEN BE SUPREMELY AUTHORIZED BY THE LORD IN DANIEL 8:1-27; 2ND THESSALONIANS 2:1-12; REVELATION 2:1-22:21 & ACTS 1:7 [OWN AUTHORITY]; 7:6-7 [OWN USA NATION], 30-38 [OWN OFFICE], 44-45 [OWN TABERNACLE], 46-50 [OWN HOUSE], 51-53 [OWN DEFENSE] 59-60 [OWN STONING]; 29:1-2 [OWN USA].**

**GOD SENDS PROPHETS**

**I SENT MY SERVANTS THE PROPHETS IN JEREMIAH 7:25; 44:4, THE LORD HAS SENT YOU ALL HIS SERVANTS THE PROPHETS IN JEREMIAH 25:4, I SENT MY SERVANTS THE PROPHETS TO THEM REPEATEDLY IN JEREMIAH 29:19, I RAISED UP SOME OF YOUR SONS TO BE PROPHETS IN AMOS 2:11, I WILL SEND YOU PROPHETS AND WISE MEN AND SCRIBES IN MATTHEW 23:34, I WILL SEND PROPHETS AND APOSTLES IN LUKE 11:49, WHEN THE ISRAELITES CRIED TO THE LORD, HE SENT A PROPHET IN JUDGES 6:8, ANOINT ELISHA PROPHET IN YOUR PLACE IN 1ST KINGS 19:16.**

**PROPHETS SENT BY GOD**

**GOD WAS ANGRY WITH AMAZIAH AND SENT A PROPHET IN 2ND CHRONICLES 25:15, GOD SENT AMOS TO PROPHESY IN AMOS 7:14-15, THE LORD SENT PROPHETS TO BRING THE PEOPLE BACK TO HIM IN 2ND CHRONICLES 24:19, I HAVE APPOINTED YOU A PROPHET TO THE NATIONS IN JEREMIAH 1:5, THE LORD SENT ME TO PROPHESY IN JEREMIAH 26:12, I WILL SEND YOU ELIJAH THE PROPHET IN MALACHI 4:5, THE LORD SAID TO ME, ‘GO PROPHESY TO MY PEOPLE ISRAEL’ IN AMOS 7:15, THE LORD HAD SENT HAGGAI IN HAGGAI 1:12.**

**PROPHETS WHO WERE NOT SENT**

**I HAVE NOT SENT THEM IN JEREMIAH 27:15; 29:9, I HAVE NOT SENT THEM OR COMMANDED THEM OR SPOKEN TO THEM IN JEREMIAH 14:14, THEY SAY, ‘SAYS THE LORD’, WHEN THE LORD HAS NOT SENT THEM IN EZEKIEL 13:6, 7, THE LORD HAS NOT SENT YOU IN JEREMIAH 28:15, I DID NOT SEND THEM, BUT THEY RAN, I DID NOT SPEAK TO THEM YET THEY PROPHESIED IN JEREMIAH 23:21, SHEMAIAH PROPHESIED THOUGH GOD HAD NOT SENT HIM IN NEHEMIAH 6:10-13 & JEREMIAH 29:31, THE PROPHETS SPEAK VISIONS OF THEIR OWN MINDS IN JEREMIAH 23:16, THEY PROPHESY FROM THEIR OWN INSPIRATION IN EZEKIEL 13:2-5, HER PROPHETS SPEAK WHEN THE LORD HAS NOT SPOKEN IN EZEKIEL 22:28, I AM NOT A PROPHET, I AM A TILLER OF THE SOIL IN ZECHARIAH 13:5.**

**PROPHESYING: PROPHESYING IN GENERAL**

**WOULD THAT ALL THE LORD’S PEOPLE WERE PROPHETS IN NUMBERS 11:29, THE WORD WILL NOT PERISH FROM THE PROPHETS IN JEREMIAH 18:18, A PROPHET WAS CALLED A SEER IN 1ST SAMUEL 9:9, DO NOT DESPISE PROPHESYING’S IN 1ST THESSALONIANS 5:20, DAVID PROVIDED FOR REGULAR PROPHESYING IN 1ST CHRONICLES 25:1-3, PROPHESYING UNDER THE DIRECTION OF THE KING IN 1ST CHRONICLES 25:2, TO PROPHESY IN THANKS AND PRAISE TO THE LORD IN 1ST CHRONICLES 25:3, THE SONS OF ASAPH TO PROPHESY BY MUSIC IN 1ST CHRONICLES 25:1-3, I SPEAK TO PROPHETS IN VISIONS IN NUMBERS 12:6, I SPOKE TO THE PROPHETS AND GAVE NUMEROUS VISIONS IN HOSEA 12:10, THE LORD DOES NOTHING WITHOUT REVEALING IT TO THE PROPHETS IN AMOS 3:7, THE LORD REMOVED ISRAEL AS THE PROPHETS HAD SAID IN 2ND KINGS 17:23, A MAN PRAYING OR PROPHESYING WITH HEAD COVERED DISHONORS HIS HEAD IN 1ST CORINTHIANS 11:4, A WOMAN PRAYING OR PROPHESYING WITH HEAD UNCOVERED DISHONORS HER HEAD IN 1ST CORINTHIANS 11:5, HE WHO PROPHESIES EDIFIES THE CHURCH IN 1ST CORINTHIANS 14:4, HE WHO PROPHESIES IS GREATER THAN HE WHO SPEAKS IN TONGUES IN 1ST CORINTHIANS 14:5, HOW DO I BENEFIT YOU UNLESS I BRING REVELATION, KNOWLEDGE, PROPHECY OR TEACHING IN 1ST CORINTHIANS 14:6, WE HAVE THE PROPHETIC WORD MADE MORE SURE IN 2ND PETER 1:19, NO PROPHECY OF SCRIPTURE IS A MATTER OF ONE’S OWN INTERPRETATION IN 2ND PETER 1:20, BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO HEAR THE WORDS OF THE PROPHECY IN REVELATION 1:3, BLESSED IS HE WHO KEEPS THE WORDS OF THE PROPHECY OF THIS BOOK IN REVELATION 22:7, DO NOT SEAL UP THE WORDS OF THE PROPHECY OF THIS BOOK IN REVELATION 22:10, THE WORDS OF THE PROPHECY OF THIS BOOK IN REVELATION 22:18, GOD HAS SPOKEN, WHO CAN BUT PROPHESY IN AMOS 3:8, THE PROPHETS WHO PROPHESIED OF THE GRACE THAT WAS TO BE YOURS IN 1ST PETER 1:10, OF HIM ALL THE PROPHETS BEAR WITNESS IN ACTS 10:43, ZECHARIAH PROPHESIED IN LUKE 1:67, CAIAPHAS PROPHESIED IN JOHN 11:51, HAS THE LORD ONLY SPOKEN THROUGH MOSES IN NUMBERS 12:2, THE PROPHETS AND THE LAW PROPHESIED UNTIL JOHN AS ELIJAH IN ACTS OF THE APOSTLES IN MATTHEW 11:13.**

**YOU PROPHESY! PROPHESY!**

**PROPHESY AGAINST JERUSALEM IN EZEKIEL 4:7, PROPHESY AGAINST THE MOUNTAINS OF ISRAEL IN EZEKIEL 6:2, PROPHESY AGAINST THE PROPHETS WHO PROPHESY OUT OF THEIR OWN MINDS IN EZEKIEL 13:2, PROPHESY AGAINST THEM IN EZEKIEL 11:4, PROPHESY AGAINST THE LAND OF ISRAEL IN EZEKIEL 21:2, PROPHESY AGAINST THE SHEPHERDS OF ISRAEL IN EZEKIEL 34:2, PROPHESY TO THE MOUNTAINS OF ISRAEL IN EZEKIEL 36:1, PROPHESY TO THE DRY BONES IN EZEKIEL 37:4, PROPHESY TO THE BREATH IN EZEKIEL 37:9, YOU MUST AGAIN PROPHESY ABOUT MANY PEOPLES AND TONGUES AND KINGS IN REVELATION 10:11, PROPHESY! WHO HIT YOU IN MATTHEW 26:68; MARK 14:65 & LUKE 22:64.**

**PARTICULAR PROPHESYING’S**

**THE SEVENTY ELDERS PROPHESIED IN NUMBERS 11:25, ELDAD AND MEDAD PROPHESIED IN THE CAMP IN NUMBERS 11:26, 27, SAUL PROPHESIED IN 1ST SAMUEL 10:6, 10, 11; 19:23-24, SAUL’S MEN PROPHESIED IN 1ST SAMUEL 19:20, 21, ELIEZER PROPHESIED AGAINST JEHOSHAPHAT IN 2ND CHRONICLES 20:37, ALL THE PROPHETS WERE PROPHESYING IN 1ST KINGS 22:10, 12 & 2ND CHRONICLES 18:9, 11, THE WORD OF GAD WHICH HE HAD SPOKEN IN THE NAME OF THE LORD---STEPHEN YAHWEH IN 1ST CHRONICLES 21:19, THE THINGS WHICH JEREMIAH PROPHESIED IN JEREMIAH 25:13, AS I PROPHESIED, PELATIAH, SON OF BENAIAH FELL DEAD IN EZEKIEL 11:13, THE PROPHETS HAVE PROPHESIED WAR, CALAMITY AND PESTILENCE IN JEREMIAH 28:8, AS I PROPHESIED THERE WAS A NOISE AND THE BONES CAME TOGETHER IN EZEKIEL 37:7, THE TWO WITNESSES WILL PROPHESY IN REVELATION 11:10, TWO WITNESSES PROPHESYING FOR 1260 DAYS CLOTHED IN SACKCLOTH IN REVELATION 11:3, THUS SAYS THE LORD IN 2ND KINGS 22:15, 18 & 1ST CHRONICLES 21:11.**

**THE ORACLES**

**THE WORDS OF AGUR, SON OF JAKEH, THE ORACLE IN PROVERBS 30:1, THE ORACLE WHICH KING LEMUEL’S MOTHER TAUGHT HIM IN PROVERBS 31:1, THIS ORACLE IS ABOUT THE PRINCE IN JERUSALEM IN EZEKIEL 12:10, THE ORACLE OF THE WORD OF THE LORD CONCERNING ISRAEL IN ZECHARIAH 12:1, THE ORACLE OF THE WORD OF THE LORD THROUGH MALACHI IN MALACHI 1:1, THE ORACLE CONCERNING: AMALEK IN NUMBERS 24:20, AMMON IN JEREMIAH 49:1-6 & EZEKIEL 21:28-32; 25:2-7, ARABIA IN ISAIAH 21:13, DAMASCUS IN ISAIAH 17:1, DUMAH [EDOM] IN ISAIAH 21:11, EGYPT IN ISAIAH 19:1, MOAB IN ISAIAH 15:1, TYRE IN ISAIAH 23:1, THE WILDERNESS OF THE SEA IN ISAIAH 21:1, THE VALLEY OF VISION IN ISAIAH 22:1, BEASTS OF THE NEGEB IN ISAIAH 30:6.**

**WRITTEN IN THE PROPHETS**

**THUS IT IS WRITTEN BY THE PROPHET IN MATTHEW 2:5, TREAT MEN AS YOU WANT TO BE TREATED, FOR THIS IS THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS IN MATTHEW 7:12, THAT WHAT WAS SPOKEN THROUGH THE PROPHET MIGHT BE FULFILLED IN MATTHEW 13:35, WELL DID ISAIAH PROPHESY ABOUT YOU IN MATTHEW 15:7, THIS TOOK PLACE TO FULFIL WHAT WAS SPOKEN BY THE PROPHET IN MATTHEW 21:4, ON THESE TWO COMMANDMENTS DEPEND ALL THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS IN MATTHEW 22:40, THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS WERE UNTIL JOHN IN LUKE 16:16, THEY HAVE MOSES AND THE PROPHETS, LET THEM HEAR THEM IN LUKE 16:29, BEGINNING WITH MOSES AND ALL THE PROPHETS IN LUKE 24:27, EVERYTHING WRITTEN ABOUT ME IN THE LAW OF MOSES AND THE PROPHETS AND THE PSALMS IN LUKE 24:44, AS ISAIAH SAID IN JOHN 1:23; 12:39, WE HAVE FOUND HIM OF WHOM MOSES AND THE PROPHETS WROTE, JESUS OF NAZARETH IN JOHN 1:45, IT IS WRITTEN IN THE PROPHETS IN JOHN 6:45, THE GOSPEL PROMISED BEFOREHAND THROUGH HIS PROPHETS IN THE HOLY SCRIPTURES IN ROMANS 1:2, THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS BEAR WITNESS TO IMPUTED RIGHTEOUSNESS IN ROMANS 3:21, THE GOSPEL NOW MADE KNOWN BY THE SCRIPTURES OF THE PROPHETS IN ROMANS 16:26, REMEMBER THE PREDICTIONS OF THE HOLY PROPHETS IN 2ND PETER 3:2, AS IT IS WRITTEN IN THE BOOK OF THE WORDS OF ISAIAH THE PROPHET IN LUKE 3:4, HE WAS GIVEN THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET ISAIAH IN LUKE 4:17, AS THE PROPHET SAYS IN ACTS 7:48, AFTER THE READING OF THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS IN ACTS 13:15, THEY DID NOT UNDERSTAND THE UTTERANCES OF THE PROPHETS, READ EVERY SABBATH IN ACTS 13:27, THAT WHAT IS SPOKEN OF IN THE PROPHETS MAY NOT COME ON YOU IN ACTS 13:40, WITH THIS THE WORDS OF THE PROPHETS AGREE IN ACTS 15:15, BELIEVING EVERYTHING IN THE LAW AND WRITTEN IN THE PROPHETS IN ACTS 24:14, SAYING NOTHING BUT WHAT THE PROPHETS AND MOSES SAID WOULD COME TO PASS IN ACTS 26:22, DO YOU BELIEVE THE PROPHETS, KING AGRIPPA IN ACTS 26:27, PAUL SPOKE ABOUT THE LORD FROM THE LAW OF MOSES AND THE PROPHETS IN ACTS 28:23, THE ULTIMATE END TIME PROPHET IN ACTS 29:1-2.**

**PROPHESYING IN THE CHURCH**

**YOUR SONS AND YOUR DAUGHTERS WILL PROPHESY IN JOEL 2:28 & ACTS 2:17, MY MENSERVANTS AND MAIDSERVANTS WILL PROPHESY IN ACTS 2:18, THE GIFT OF PROPHECY IN 1ST CORINTHIANS 12:10, EARNESTLY DESIRE TO PROPHESY IN 1ST CORINTHIANS 14:1, 39, PROPHECY IS A SIGN FOR BELIEVERS IN 1ST CORINTHIANS 14:22, A GIFT BESTOWED ON TIMOTHY BY PROPHETIC UTTERANCE IN 1ST TIMOTHY 4:14, IF I HAVE THE GIFT OF PROPHECY AND HAVE NOT SEXLESS LOVE IN 1ST CORINTHIANS 13:2, HE WHO PROPHESIES SPEAKS TO MEN FOR EDIFICATION, EXHORTATION AND COMFORT IN 1ST CORINTHIANS 14:3, YOU CAN ALL PROPHESY ONE BY ONE IN 1ST CORINTHIANS 14:31, IF ALL PROPHESY, THE UNBELIEVER IS CALLED TO ACCOUNT IN 1ST CORINTHIANS 14:24, LET TWO OR THREE PROPHETS SPEAK AND THE OTHERS JUDGE IN 1ST CORINTHIANS 14:29, THEY SPOKE IN TONGUES AND PROPHESIED IN ACTS 19:6, PROPHECY SHOULD BE ACCORDING TO ONE’S FAITH IN ROMANS 12:6, THE TESTIMONY OF JESUS IS THE SPIRIT OF PROPHECY IN REVELATION 19:10, WE PROPHESY IN PART IN 1ST CORINTHIANS 13:9, PROPHECY WILL CEASE IN 1ST CORINTHIANS 13:8.**

**PROPHETS OF GOD: SEERS**

**THE PROPHET USED TO BE CALLED A SEER IN 1ST SAMUEL 9:9, ARE YOU NOT A SEER IN 2ND SAMUEL 15:27, THE WORDS OF THE SEERS IN 2ND CHRONICLES 33:18, THE LORD HAS COVERED YOUR HEADS, THE SEERS IN ISAIAH 29:10, THE SEERS AND DIVINERS WILL BE ASHAMED AND COVER THEIR LIPS IN MICAH 3:7, SAMUEL THE SEER IN 1ST CHRONICLES 9:22; 26:28; 29:29, GAD THE SEER IN 1ST CHRONICLES 29:29, GAD, DAVID’S SEER IN 2ND SAMUEL 24:11 & 1ST CHRONICLES 21:9; 29:25, HEMAN THE KING’S SEER IN 1ST CHRONICLES 25:5, IDDO THE SEER IN 2ND CHRONICLES 9:29; 12:15, HANANI THE SEER IN 2ND CHRONICLES 16:7, JEHU SON OF HANANI THE SEER IN 2ND CHRONICLES 19:2, ASAPH THE SEER IN 2ND CHRONICLES 29:30, JEDUTHUN THE KING’S SEER IN 2ND CHRONICLES 35:15, O SEER IN AMOS 7:12.**

**THE PROPHETS IN GENERAL**

**REJOICE OVER HER, HEAVEN, SAINTS, APOSTLES AND PROPHETS IN REVELATION 18:20, DO NOT BE LIKE YOUR FATHERS TO WHOM THE FORMER PROPHETS CRIED OUT IN ZECHARIAH 1:4, YOU WHO ARE LISTENING TO THESE WORDS FROM THE MOUTH OF THE PROPHETS IN ZECHARIAH 8:9, I AM THE ONLY ONE LEFT OF THE PROPHETS OF THE LORD IN 1ST KINGS 18:22, PROPHETS COMING DOWN FROM THE HIGH PLACE IN 1ST SAMUEL 10:5, 10, IS THERE NOT A PROPHET OF THE LORD HERE IN 1ST KINGS 22:7, I AM NOT A PROPHET NOR A SON OF THE PROPHETS IN AMOS 7:14, MANY PROPHETS AND RIGHTEOUS MEN LONGED TO SEE WHAT YOU SEE IN MATTHEW 13:17, MANY PROPHETS AND KINGS DESIRED TO SEE AND HEAR WHAT YOU DO IN LUKE 10:24, HE THEN COMES TO THE PROPHET TO ENQUIRE OF ME IN EZEKIEL 14:7, IF HE COMES TO THE PROPHET, I THE LORD WILL ANSWER HIM MYSELF IN EZEKIEL 14:4, WHEN YOU SEE ALL THE PROPHETS IN THE KINGDOM IN LUKE 13:28, TIME WOULD FAIL TO TELL OF THE PROPHETS IN HEBREWS 11:32, ABRAHAM DIED, AS DID THE PROPHETS IN JOHN 8:52, 53, THE PROPHETS ENQUIRED ABOUT THIS SALVATION IN 1ST PETER 1:10, THE TIME HAS COME FOR REWARDING YOUR SLAVES THE PROPHETS IN REVELATION 11:18.**

**INDIVIDUAL PROPHETS**

**NO PROPHET HAS ARISEN LIKE MOSES IN DEUTERONOMY 34:10, AARON WOULD BE MOSES’ PROPHET IN EXODUS 7:1, IS SAUL ALSO AMONG THE PROPHETS IN 1ST SAMUEL 10:11-12; 19:24, THERE WERE MANY WIDOWS IN ISRAEL IN THE DAYS OF ELIJAH IN LUKE 4:25, THERE WERE MANY LEPERS IN ISRAEL IN THE TIME OF ELISHA THE PROPHET IN LUKE 4:27, YOU WILL BE CALLED PROPHET OF THE MOST HIGH IN LUKE 1:76, THE PEOPLE CONSIDERED JOHN A PROPHET IN MATTHEW 14:5; 21:26; MARK 11:32 & LUKE 20:6, MOSES AND ELIJAH APPEARED TO THEM IN MATTHEW 17:3-4; MARK 9:4 & LUKE 9:30, HE IS CALLING FOR ELIJAH IN MATTHEW 27:47 & MARK 15:35, LET US SEE WHETHER ELIJAH WILL COME AND SAVE HIM IN MATTHEW 27:49 & MARK 15:36, I ALSO AM A PROPHET LIKE YOU IN 1ST KINGS 13:18, THESE TWO PROPHETS HAD TORMENTED THOSE WHO DWELL ON THE EARTH IN REVELATION 11:10, JOHN IS MORE THAN A PROPHET, THE HOLY GHOST OF GOD IN MATTHEW 11:9 & LUKE 7:26, JESUS IS MORE THAN A PROPHET, THE SON OF GOD IN LUKE 24:19 & ACTS 8:37; 9:20, JAMES IS MORE THAN A PROPHET, THE LAW OF GOD IN ACTS 7:51-53, STEPHEN YAHWEH IS MORE THAN A PROPHET, THE FATHER & LORD IN ACTS 7:49-50, 59-60; 29:1-2.**

**NAMED PROPHETS OF THE LORD**

**PROPHETS: ABRAHAM IN GENESIS 20:7, AHAB SON OF KOLAIAH IN JEREMIAH 29:21, AHIJAH IN 1ST KINGS 11:29; 12:15; 14:2-3, 18; 15:29 & 2ND CHRONICLES 9:29, AZARIAH IN 2ND CHRONICLES 15:8, DANIEL IN MATTHEW 24:15, GAD IN 1ST SAMUEL 22:5, HABAKKUK IN HABAKKUK 1:1; 3:1, HAGGAI IN EZRA 5:1; 6:14 & HAGGAI 1:1, 12; 2:1, 10, HANANIAH SON OF AZZUR FROM GIBEON IN JEREMIAH 28:1, 5, IDDO IN 2ND CHRONICLES 12:15; 13:22, JEHU SON OF HANANI IN 1ST KINGS 16:1, 7, 12, JEREMIAH IN 2ND CHRONICLES 36:12; JEREMIAH 28:5; 36:26; 37:2, 13; 38:10, 14; 43:6; 46:13; 47:1; 50:1; 51:59; DANIEL 9:2 & MATTHEW 2:17; 27:9, JONAH SON OF AMITTAI IN 2ND KINGS 14:25; MATTHEW 12:39 & LUKE 11:29-30, MICAH OF MORESHETH IN JEREMIAH 26:18, MICAIAH SON OF IMLAH IN 1ST KINGS 22:8, 9 & 2ND CHRONICLES 18:6-8, NATHAN IN 2ND SAMUEL 7:2; 12:1-15; 1ST KINGS 1:8, 10, 22-23, 32, 34, 38, 44-45; 1ST CHRONICLES 17:1; 29:29; 2ND CHRONICLES 9:29; 29:25; 35:18 & PSALMS 51 TITLE, ODED IN 2ND CHRONICLES 28:9, SHEMAIAH THE MAN OF GOD IN 1ST KINGS 12:22 & 2ND CHRONICLES 12:5, 15, URIAH SON OF SHEMAIAH IN JEREMIAH 26:20, ZECHARIAH IN 2ND CHRONICLES 24:20-21; EZRA 5:1; 6:14; ZECHARIAH 1:1; MATT. 23:35 & LUKE 11:51, ZEDEKIAH SON OF MAASEIAH IN JEREMIAH 29:21, ELIJAH IN 1ST KINGS 18:36 & 2ND CHRONICLES 21:12, ELISHA IN 2ND KINGS 3:11; 5:3, 8, 13; 6:12; 9:1, ISAIAH SON OF AMOZ IN 2ND KINGS 19:2; 20:1; 2ND CHRONICLES 26:22; 32:20; ISAIAH 37:2; 38:1; 39:3; MATTHEW 3:3; 4:14; 8:17; 12:17; 13:14; 15:7; MARK 1:2; 7:6; JOHN 1:23; 12:38 & ACTS 8:28, 30; 28:25, JOEL IN ACTS 2:16, SAMUEL IN 1ST SAMUEL 3:20; 9:6 & ACTS 3:24; ACTS 13:20, AGABUS IN ACTS 21:10, DAVID AS A PROPHET IN ACTS 2:30; 7:46, SOLOMON AS A PROPHET IN 1ST KINGS 1:37, 47 & ACTS 7:47-50, JESUS AS A PROPHET IN LUKE 24:19 & ACTS 7:55-56, ENOCH AS A PROPHET IN IN 2ND SAMUEL 24:11; JUDE 14-15 & ACTS 6:5; 7:60; 8:1, THE LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH AS THE ULTIMATE END TIME PROPHET IN ACTS 6:14-15; 7:6-7, 30-38, 49-50, 51-53, 54-56, 59-60; 29:1-2.**

**UNNAMED PROPHETS OF THE LORD**

**BY A PROPHET THE LORD BROUGHT ISRAEL FROM EGYPT IN HOSEA 12:13, A MAN OF GOD CAME TO ELI IN 1ST SAMUEL 2:27, AN OLD PROPHET OF BETHEL IN 1ST KINGS 13:11 & 2ND KINGS 23:18, A PROPHET IN 1ST KINGS 20:13, 22, A MAN OF GOD FROM JUDAH IN 1ST KINGS 13:1-3, A MAN OF GOD IN 1ST KINGS 20:28, ASKING THE PRIESTS [SERGEANTS] IN THE TEMPLE AND THE PROPHETS ABOUT FASTING IN ZECHARIAH 7:3, SOME SAID THAT JESUS WAS JEREMIAH OR ONE OF THE PROPHETS IN MATTHEW 16:14, THESE TWO PROPHETS HAD TORMENTED THOSE WHO DWELL ON THE EARTH IN REVELATION 11:10.**

**PROPHETESSES OF THE LORD**

**PROPHETESSES: MIRIAM IN EXODUS 15:20, DEBORAH IN JUDGES 4:4, HULDAH IN 2ND KINGS 22:14 & 2ND CHRONICLES 34:22, ISAIAH’S WIFE IN ISAIAH 8:3, ANNA IN LUKE 2:36, PHILIP’S 4 DAUGHTERS IN ACTS 21:9.**

**SONS OF THE PROPHETS**

**ONE OF THE SONS OF THE PROPHETS IN 1ST KINGS 20:35, THE SONS OF THE PROPHETS IN BETHEL IN 2ND KINGS 2:3, THE SONS OF THE PROPHETS IN JERICHO IN 2ND KINGS 2:5, 15, 50 SONS OF THE PROPHETS IN 2ND KINGS 2:7, A WIDOW OF ONE OF THE SONS OF THE PROPHETS IN 2ND KINGS 4:1, BOIL STEW FOR THE SONS OF THE PROPHETS IN 2ND KINGS 4:38, TWO MEN OF THE SONS OF THE PROPHETS HAVE COME IN 2ND KINGS 5:22, THE SONS OF THE PROPHETS BUILDING A NEW HOUSE IN 2ND KINGS 6:1-2, ONE OF THE SONS OF THE PROPHETS IN 2ND KINGS 9:1, I AM NOT A PROPHET NOR A SON OF THE PROPHETS IN AMOS 7:14, YOU ARE THE SONS OF THE PROPHETS IN ACTS 3:25.**

**THE LORD THE PROPHET**

**THE LORD WILL RAISE UP FOR YOU A PROPHET LIKE ME, WHICH THIS IS THE PROPHET STEPHEN IN DEUTERONOMY 18:15, 18 & IN ACTS OF THE HOLY GHOST IN ACTS 3:22; ACTS 7:30-38, A GREAT PROPHET HAS ARISEN IN LUKE 7:16, I CAN SEE YOU ARE A PROPHET IN JOHN 4:19, THE PEOPLE CONSIDERED HIM A PROPHET IN MATTHEW 21:46, ARE YOU THE PROPHET IN JOHN 1:21, THIS IS THE PROPHET WHO IS TO COME INTO THE WORLD IN JOHN 6:14, THIS IS REALLY THE PROPHET IN JOHN 7:40, THIS IS THE PROPHET JESUS IN MATTHEW 21:11, HE IS A PROPHET IN JOHN 9:17, A PROPHET, MIGHTY IN WORD AND DEED IN LUKE 24:19, HE IS A PROPHET, LIKE ONE OF THE PROPHETS OF OLD IN MARK 6:15, SOME SAID JESUS WAS ONE OF THE PROPHETS IN MARK 8:28 & LUKE 9:8, SOME SAID HE WAS ONE OF THE OLD PROPHETS RISEN IN LUKE 9:19, WHY BAPTIZE, IF YOU ARE NOT THE CHRIST, NOR ELIJAH, NOR THE PROPHET IN JOHN 1:25, A PROPHET DOES NOT COME FROM GALILEE IN JOHN 7:52, IF THIS MAN WERE A PROPHET IN LUKE 7:39, NO PROPHET IS ACCEPTED IN HIS OWN HOME TOWN IN LUKE 4:24, PROPHESY! WHO HIT YOU IN MATTHEW 26:68; MARK 14:65 & LUKE 22:64.**

**PROPHETS IN THE CHURCH**

**GOD APPOINTED PROPHETS IN THE CHURCH IN 1ST CORINTHIANS 12:28 & EPHESIANS 4:11, BUILT ON THE FOUNDATION OF APOSTLES AND PROPHETS IN EPHESIANS 2:20, THE MYSTERY NOW REVEALED TO HIS APOSTLES AND PROPHETS IN EPHESIANS 3:5, HE WHO RECEIVES A PROPHET AS A PROPHET WILL RECEIVE A PROPHET’S REWARD IN MATTHEW 10:41, IN THE CHURCH THERE WERE PROPHETS AND TEACHERS IN ACTS 13:1, IF ANYONE THINKS HE IS A PROPHET OR SPIRITUAL IN 1ST CORINTHIANS 14:37, JUDAS AND SILAS WERE PROPHETS IN ACTS 15:32, PROPHETS CAME FROM JERUSALEM TO ANTIOCH IN ACTS 11:27, THE SPIRITS OF PROPHETS ARE SUBJECT TO THE PROPHETS IN 1ST CORINTHIANS 14:32, NOT ALL ARE PROPHETS, ARE THEY IN 1ST CORINTHIANS 12:29.**

**HOW DOES THE SEXUAL PROPHETS PROPHESY THE TRUTH?**

***IN THE BOOK OF JOB, ALL THE SEXUAL GOES TO THEIR END 00.0000% TO 100.0000% ETERNALLY UNPUNISHED TO THE END IN THE LIFE* OF JESUS CHRIST WITHOUT DYING TO SELF INSIDE THE ORIGINAL ONCE IN THE NUMBER 0 IN ACTS OF THE APOSTLES, THE UNMARRIED TO SINGLE AFTER MARRIAGE KINGDOM OF LORDSHIP [THIS MEANS AT THE PRECISE APPOINTED TIMES WHEN THEIR ULTIMATE END COMES---THE LONGEST SEXUAL KINGDOM LASTS ONLY 55 YEARS---THE WICKED WILL GO THROUGH AN ETERNAL DOWNFALL & SHALL BE 100.0000% ETERNALLY PUNISHED AT THE END IN THE LIFE OF BARABBAS CHRIST INSIDE THE ORIGINAL ONCE IN THE NUMBER 0 IN ACTS OF THE APOSTLES, THE UNMARRIED TO SINGLE AFTER MARRIAGE KINGDOM OF LORDSHIP ON THE CROSS BY BEING STEALED, KILLED & DESTROYED BY THE LORD & HIS TRUTHFUL INTELLIGENCE BECAUSE OF ALL THE SEXUAL BULLSHIT THEY COMMITTED IN THEIR LIFE TIME LIVING LUXURIOUSLY & SPLENDIDLY, AND AFTERWARD, THEY WILL BE CURSED, DISEASED & DAMNED IN THE PRISONS IN HELL UNTIL THE ETERNAL PRICE THAT THEY DIRECTLY OWE THE LORD & HIS TRUTHFUL WISDOM IS SATISFIED & FULFILLED COMPLETELY, BECAUSE REMEMBER, THE REASON WHY THE WICKED WERE NOT IMMEDIATELY PUNISHED IN A COMPLETE LIFETIME IS BECAUSE THE SEXLESS, SINLESS & GUILTLESS CREATURES ETERNALLY EXPERIENCED ALL THE SEXUAL, SINFUL & GUILTY CREATURES ETERNAL BULLSHIT, WHICH THE SEXLESS CREATURES & NOT THE SEXUAL CREATURES ENDURED THE ETERNAL PRICE DOWN HERE BEFORE, DURING & AFTER THEIR PRECISE APPOINTED TIMES, THEN OUTSIDE THE ORIGINAL ONCE IN THE NUMBER 0 IN THE END TIME, ALL OTHER LEVELS IN NUMBERS FROM 0 TO INFINITE IS 100.0001% TO 110.0000% PERFECT & COMPLETE & INFALLIBLE & INERRANT AS THE LORD IN ACTS OF THE HOLY GHOST---FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD, THE TRULY SINGLE KINGDOM OF LORDSHIP WITHOUT ANY ETERNAL BULLSHITS BECAUSE THE FORMER THINGS HAS BEEN ABOLISHED & FULFILLED BECAUSE IN THE WHITE RACE [NATION] ONLY THE 1ST SIX LEVELS FROM LUKE 24:1-ACTS 5:42 CONCERNS SEX MONEY WITH SEXUAL CREATURES VERSES SEXLESS MONEY WITH SEXLESS CREATURES & THE 2 LEVELS ON TO 7TH & 8TH LEVELS FROM ACTS 6:1-7:60 CONCERNS STRIPPING MONEY THAT IS FOR LICENSE WITH SEXLESS CREATURES VERSES STRIPPING MONEY THAT IS NOT FOR LICENSE WITH SEXLESS CREATURES, THEN IT ALL HAS THE WHITE RACE [NATION] GLOBAL UNIVERSAL CUT DOWN ON THE 8TH LEVEL IN ACTS 7:60 & THEN FOR THE WHITE RACE [NATION] IN ACTS 8:1-3 UNIVERSALLY GLOBALLY GOVERNING THE BLACK RACE [NATION] ON THE 9TH LEVEL IS SEX MONEY FROM ACTS 8:4-25 & STRIPPING MONEY FROM ACTS 8:26-40, THEN THE BLACK RACE [NATION] HAS THE GLOBAL UNIVERSAL CUT DOWN ON THE 10TH LEVEL IN ACTS 9:3] IN JOB 21:30-33. SO, THEY MAKE A SEX MONEY DEAL WITH THE LORD OR MAKE A STRIPPING MONEY DEAL WITH THE LORD THROUGHOUT THEIR LIVES BY TRANSFORMING INTO RIGHTEOUSNESS AS THEY SEE FIT, WHOSE END IS ALWAYS ETERNALLY DAMNED IN 2ND CORINTHIANS 11:13-15.**

**UNGODLY PROPHETS: SEXUAL PROPHETS: THE LORD DID NOT SPEAK BY THE FALSE PROPHETS**

**THE PROPHETS ARE PROPHESYING LIES IN JEREMIAH 5:31; 14:14; 27:10, 14, 16, PROPHETS WHO TEACH LIES IN ISAIAH 9:15, DO NOT LET THE PROPHETS DECEIVE YOU IN JEREMIAH 29:8, THEY PROPHESY FALSELY IN JEREMIAH 27:15, THEY PROPHESY FALSELY IN MY NAME---STEPHEN YAHWEH IN JEREMIAH 29:9, THEY HAVE SPOKEN IN MY NAME---STEPHEN YAHWEH FALSE WORDS IN JEREMIAH 29:23, YOUR PROPHETS HAVE SEEN FALSE AND DECEPTIVE VISIONS IN JEREMIAH 14:14, WHERE ARE THE PROPHETS WHO SAID THE KING OF BABYLON WOULD NOT COME IN JEREMIAH 37:19, YOU HAVE APPOINTED PROPHETS TO PROCLAIM YOUR KINGSHIP IN NEHEMIAH 6:7, YOU [PRIEST---SERGEANT] WILL STUMBLE BY DAY AND THE PROPHET WILL STUMBLE BY NIGHT IN HOSEA 4:5, HER PROPHETS DIVINE FOR MONEY IN MICAH 3:11, BOTH PROPHET AND PRIEST [SERGEANT] ARE POLLUTED IN JEREMIAH 23:11, FROM PROPHET TO PRIEST [SERGEANT] EVERYONE DEALS FALSELY IN JEREMIAH 6:13, FROM THE PROPHET TO THE PRIEST [SERGEANT] EVERYONE PRACTICES DECEIT IN JEREMIAH 8:10, FROM THE PROPHETS OF JERUSALEM HAS GONE FORTH POLLUTION IN JEREMIAH 23:15, BECAUSE OF THE SINS OF PROPHETS AND PRIESTS [SERGEANTS] IN LAMENTATIONS 4:13, PRIEST [SERGEANT] AND PROPHET REEL FROM STRONG DRINK IN ISAIAH 28:7, I WILL FILL THE PRIESTS [SERGEANTS] AND PROPHETS WITH DRUNKENNESS IN JEREMIAH 13:13, THE PUNISHMENT OF THE ENQUIRER AND PROPHET WILL BE ALIKE IN EZEKIEL 14:10, YOUR PROPHETS ARE LIKE FOXES AMONG THE RUINS IN EZEKIEL 13:4, BOTH PROPHET AND PRIEST [SERGEANT] WANDER IN A LAND THEY DO NOT KNOW IN JEREMIAH 14:18, THE PROPHETS COMMITTED ADULTERY IN JEREMIAH 23:14; 29:23, HER PROPHETS ARE FAITHLESS IN ZEPHANIAH 3:4, THE PRIESTS [SERGEANTS] AND PROPHETS HEARD JEREMIAH IN JEREMIAH 26:7, THE PRIESTS [SERGEANTS] AND PROPHETS SEIZED JEREMIAH IN JEREMIAH 26:8, IF THEY ARE PROPHETS, LET THEM ENTREAT THE LORD IN JEREMIAH 27:18.**

**FALSE PROPHETS IN GENERAL**

**BEWARE OF FALSE PROPHETS IN MATTHEW 7:15, FALSE PROPHETS WILL ARISE IN MATTHEW 24:11 & MARK 13:22, FALSE CHRISTS AND FALSE PROPHETS WILL ARISE IN MATTHEW 24:24, FALSE PROPHETS AROSE AMONG THE PEOPLE IN 2ND PETER 2:1, MANY FALSE PROPHETS HAVE GONE OUT INTO THE WORLD IN 1ST JOHN 4:1, EVERY PROPHET WILL BE ASHAMED OF HIS VISION IN ZECHARIAH 13:4, IF THE PROPHET BE DECEIVED AND SPEAK, I THE LORD HAVE DECEIVED HIM IN EZEKIEL 14:9, THE LORD PUT A DECEIVING SPIRIT IN THE MOUTH OF THE PROPHETS IN 1ST KINGS 22:22, 23, PROPHETS OF ISRAEL WHO SEE VISIONS OF PEACE WHEN THERE IS NO PEACE IN EZEKIEL 13:16, THE PROPHETS WHO SEE FALSE VISIONS AND SPEAK LYING DIVINATIONS IN EZEKIEL 13:9, THE PROPHETS WHO PROPHESY FALSELY IN MY NAME---STEPHEN YAHWEH IN JEREMIAH 23:25, DID WE NOT PROPHESY IN YOUR NAME---STEPHEN YAHWEH IN MATTHEW 7:22, BALAK SUMMONED BALAAM SON OF BEOR TO CURSE YOU IN JOSHUA 24:9, PASHHUR HAD PROPHESIED FALSELY IN JEREMIAH 20:6, AHAB AND ZEDEKIAH PROPHESIED FALSELY IN JEREMIAH 29:21, THE PROPHETS SAY THEY WILL NOT SEE SWORD OR FAMINE IN JEREMIAH 14:13, NOADIAH THE PROPHETESS AND OTHER PROPHETS TRYING TO FRIGHTEN ME IN NEHEMIAH 6:14, A FALSE PROPHET CALLED BAR-JESUS IN ACTS 13:6, JEZEBEL CALLS HERSELF A PROPHETESS IN REVELATION 2:20, THERE IS A CONSPIRACY OF PROPHETS IN HER MIDST IN EZEKIEL 22:25, SOMEONE PREACHING OF WINE, HE WOULD BE THE PROPHET FOR THIS PEOPLE IN MICAH 2:11, THE SUN WILL GO DOWN ON THE PROPHETS IN MICAH 3:6, A DUMBASS RESTRAINED THE PROPHET’S INSANITY IN 2ND PETER 2:16, OUT OF THE MOUTHS OF THE DRAGON, THE BEAST AND THE FALSE PROPHET IN REVELATION 16:13, THE BEAST AND THE FALSE PROPHET WERE CAPTURED IN REVELATION 19:20, THE LAKE OF FIRE AND BRIMSTONE WHERE THE BEAST AND FALSE PROPHET ARE IN REVELATION 20:10.**

**THE LORD LUCIFER HIMSELF SPEAKS AS THE FALSE ULTIMATE END TIME PROPHET**

**THIS IS THE THIRD PART OF THE UNHOLY TRINITY OF EVIL. THIS TRIO CONSISTS OF THE GREAT RED DRAGON (SCARLET COLORED BEAST)---FALSE LORD JAMES CHRIST IN THE FIRST PERSON, THE ANTICHRIST (FIRST BEAST) IN THE SECOND PERSON---FALSE LORD JESUS CHRIST AND THE FALSE PROPHET (SECOND BEAST) IN THE THIRD PERSON---FALSE LORD JOHN CHRIST IN THE LORD LUCIFER---FALSE LORD STEPHEN CHRIST. JESUS WARNED US OF THE END TIME OF FALSE CHRIST’S AND FALSE PROPHETS IN MATTHEW 24:24. THIS FALSE PROPHET IS THE ESSENCE OF ALL THE FALSE PROPHETS IN THE WORLD. THE FALSE PROPHET’S MINISTRY WILL BE AUTHENTICATED BY THE WONDERS, SIGNS, HEALINGS AND MIRACLES WHICH HE WILL PERFORM, AND TRYING TO PROVE THAT HE IS THE LORD JOHN COMING IN THE POWER AND SPIRIT OF THE LORD ELIJAH IN MATTHEW 17:1-13; LUKE 1:17 & REVELATION 13:13, 14. HE IS SUCCESSFUL IN DECEIVING THE WHOLE UNBELIEVING WORLD. THE FALSE PROPHET AND THE FALSE ANTICHRIST WILL INDEED BE ENDOWED PERSONS, BECAUSE OF REVELATION 19:20-21.**

**THE RISE OF THE FALSE PROPHET IN REVELATION 13:11. THE RELIGIOUS SENTIMENTS OF THE PEOPLE ARE MORE FIXED THAN THEIR POLITICAL VIEWS WHEN THE BEAST COMES OF THE EARTH. HE IS THE FALSE PROPHET, OR HEAD OF THE WORLD RELIGIONS DURING THIS TIME. SOME HAVE CONCLUDED THAT THIS BEAST IS JUDAS ISCARIOT RESURRECTED BY THE LORD LUCIFER HIMSELF FROM HELL. WHEN THE BEAST COMES UP, THE EARTH WILL BE GIVEN TO THE COMPLETE INFERNAL POWERS, FOR THE HOLY GHOST WILL LEAVE AND THE UNHOLY TRINITY OF EVIL WILL BE IN COMPLETE CONTROL OF THE EARTH AT THIS TIME.**

**THE LAMB-LIKE NATURE OF THE FALSE PROPHET IN REVELATION 13:11. THE HORNS ARE A SYMBOL OF POWER, BUT THESE HORNS HAVE NO CROWNS. THESE HORNS ARE LIKE DOMESTIC ANIMALS. HE IS NOT A POLITICAL OR MILITARY RULER, BUT THE ANTICHRIST IS LIKE THE SGA---SPECIAL GENERAL OF THE ARMIES TODAY WITH THE SPECIAL RANK AS THE 6-SILVER STAR GENERAL EQUIVALENT OF A 4-GOLD STAR GENERAL OF O-12 IN U.S ARMY RESERVED FOR GLOBAL WARTIME ONLY. THE ARMY SOLDIERS IS UNDER HIM RANK FROM E-1 TO O-11. THIS IS CURRENTLY THE VERY HIGHEST RANK OF ALL THE MILITARY ARMED FORCES OF TODAY IN THE U.S ARMY ONLY. HE IS A SPIRITUAL TEACHER/SPIRITUAL PROPHET IN FALSE RELIGION OF THE WORLD. THE TWO HORNS MAY REPRESENT THE FALSE CHRISTIAN RELIGIONS AND ALL THE OTHER RELIGIONS. IT COMPRISES OF EARTHLY WISDOM COUPLED WITH FALSE CHRISTIANITY, EMBODIED IN THIS MAN AS THE HEAD OF BOTH. HE IS LAMB-LIKE IN HIS GENTLE DOMESTIC TONE POSITION AS A SPIRITUAL LEADER, BUT HE WILL SPEAK AS A GREAT RED DRAGON. THIS SHOWS HIS SUPREME WILLINGNESS TO CONTROL THE HEARTS OF MEN, MINDS, SOULS, AND CONSCIENCES TO BIND THEM AND COMPEL THEM TO THINK AND ACT ON HIS BEHALF. WHO HAS THIS KIND OF POWER? WHAT CHURCH COMPRISES OF PAGANISM AND CHRISTIANITY? ONLY THE ROMAN CATHOLICISM AND THE POPE AT ITS HEAD, CAN MEET THESE REQUIREMENTS. MAYBE A POPE IN THE NEAR FUTURE WILL TAKE THIS POSITION.**

**THE POWER OF THE FALSE PROPHET IN REVELATION 13:12. THESE TWO BEASTS BELONG TO THE INFERNAL TRINITY. BOTH WORK BY THE COMMANDS OF THE GREAT RED DRAGON. THE SECOND BEAST---THE FALSE PROPHET IS THE ASSOCIATE, PRIME MINISTER OR PRESIDENT (8 SILVER STAR GENERAL EQUIVALENT TO A 6-GOLD STAR GENERAL OF THE GLOBAL MILITARY ARMED FORCES) OF THE FIRST BEAST---THE ANTICHRIST. HE CAUSES THE PEOPLE OF THE EARTH TO WORSHIP THE ANTICHRIST. HIS WHOLE MINISTRY AND OBJECTIVES IS TO PROCLAIM THE FIRST BEAST---THE ANTICHRIST. HE COULD BE CALLED THE EVANGELIST OF THE FIRST BEAST---ANTICHRIST IN REVELATION 13:12. HE IS A VERY SUCCESSFUL EXECUTOR. THE PEOPLE OF THE EARTH MUST ACCEPT THE ANTICHRIST AS DEITY AND WORSHIP HIM AS GOD IS THE MAIN MESSAGE OF THE FALSE PROPHET. THE SECOND BEAST---THE FALSE PROPHET COMES ON SCENE AS A SACRED PROPHET TO DIRECT THE WORLD IN WORSHIPING INFERNAL CREATURES, WHICH IS STRICTLY FORBIDDEN TO EVERY DIVINE ORDINANCE OF GOD IN ROMANS 1:25.**

**THE MIRACLES HE PERFORMS IN REVELATION 13:13. THIS FALSE PROPHET PERFORMS MIGHTY MIRACLES FOR MEN TO SEE. THIS IS THE FULFILLMENT OF JESUS’ WORDS IN MATTHEW 24:24 & 2ND THESSALONIANS 2:9. THE FIRE HE CALLS DOWN FROM HEAVEN IS IN ACTUALITY. IN ELIJAH’S DAYS THE FATHER STEPHEN ANSWERED BY LITERAL FIRE IN 1ST KINGS 18:24. HE KNEW THE PEOPLE WOULD BELIEVE IF THEY SAW ACTUAL FIRE COME DOWN FROM HEAVEN. THE FALSE PROPHET WILL HAVE THE POWER TO DO THIS MIRACLE AND THE WORLD WILL SEE IT AND BELIEVE HE IS SENT BY GOD. HE WILL THEN DIRECT THE ONLY WORSHIP TO HIS SUPREME COMMANDER---THE ANTICHRIST.**

**THE IMAGE OF THE BEAST IN REVELATION 13:14. THE FALSE PROPHET DECEIVED THE PEOPLE, FROM THE LEAST TO THE GREATEST, WITH THESE GREAT MIRACLES. HE DID THESE IN THE SIGHT OF THE ANTICHRIST. HE FURTHER DECEIVED THEM TO MAKE AN IMAGE TO THE ANTICHRIST. THIS IMAGE IS THE MATERIAL LIKENESS OF THE FIRST BEAST---THE ANTICHRIST. IT IS THE FINAL COMPLETION OF “THE ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION” IN DANIEL 9:27; 11:45; MATTHEW 24:15 & 2ND THESSALONIANS 2:4. THE FIRST BEAST---ANTICHRIST WAS WOUNDED BY A SWORD AND DID LIVE IN REVELATION 13:3.**

**THE IMAGE CAME ALIVE IN REVELATION 13:15. THE FALSE PROPHET GAVE SOME FORM OF DEMONIC LIFE TO THE MATERIAL IMAGE OF THE ANTICHRIST. THE DUMB STONES AND WOOD WILL SPEAK HERE. MAN HAS ALWAYS LIKED TO WORSHIP IMAGES OF SOME SORT. THE IMAGE WILL BE LOCATED IN THE TEMPLE IN JERUSALEM AT THE TIME OF THE ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION. THERE WILL BE DEVIL WORSHIP IN A DEVIL CHURCH IN A DEVIL STATE EVERYWHERE AT THE TIME. THE JEWS AND GENTILES WILL NOT ACCEPT THE IMAGE OF THE ANTICHRIST AND WILL IMMEDIATELY BE KILLED IN REVELATION 12:14-17. THESE THINGS WILL OCCUR DURING THE DIVINE MINISTRY OF THE TWO EARTHLY WITNESSES---8 POSITIONS IN ALL (THE BEGINNING EARTHLY WITNESS IS THE ONE TRUE CHILD---LORD PETER CHRIST RAISED UP BY KING JACOB WHICH IS HIS NEW NAME IN THE “SUPREME COMMISSION OR SUPREME STRENGTH OF GOD” AS THE SPIRIT & POWER OF LORD ISRAEL IN LUKE 1:76 & THE ONE TRUE BROTHER---LORD JOHN CHRIST RAISED UP BY KING SAUL WHICH IS HIS NEW NAME IN THE “SUPREME POWER (SUPREME OMNIPOTENCE) OF GOD” AS THE SPIRIT & POWER OF LORD ELIJAH IN LUKE 1:17 & THE ONE TRUE SON---LORD JESUS CHRIST RAISED UP BY KING DAVID WHICH IS HIS NEW NAME IN THE “WORD (SUPREME WISDOM---OMNISCIENCE) OF GOD OR LOGOS” AS THE SPIRIT & POWER OF THE LORD MOSES IN LUKE 24:44), WHO ARE TRULY SENT BY GOD TO GIVE THE EARTH A WITNESS IN HEAVEN (THE ONE TRUE LORDSHIP OF THE TRUE LAW---LORD JAMES CHRIST RAISED UP BY KING REHOBOAM WHICH IS HIS NEW NAME IN THE “SUPREME AUTHORITY OR SUPREME ALMIGHTINESS OF GOD” AS THE SPIRIT & POWER OF THE LORD MICHAEL IN JUDE 9) OF THE LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH’S WITNESS IN THE ONE TRUE GOD THE FATHER---THE LORD STEPHEN CHRIST RAISED UP BY KING SOLOMON WHICH IS HIS NEW NAME IN THE “SUPREME LORDSHIP CALLED THE OMNI-BENEVOLENCE OR AGAPE LOVE OF GOD” AS THE SPIRIT & POWER OF THE LORD ENOCH IN GENESIS 5:23 & JUDE 14-15) IN MATTHEW 17:1-13; ZECHARIAH 4:1-14 & REVELATION 11:3-14; 19:11-16.**

**THE MARK OF THE BEAST IN REVELATION 13:16-18. THE FALSE PROPHET CAUSES THE SUBJECTS OF THE ANTICHRIST TO SHOW THEIR ALLEGIANCE AND TO WEAR A MILITARY LIKE BADGE OF THEIR INFERNAL LORD. MASTERS IN ANCIENT TIMES BRANDED THEIR SLAVES. THE PEOPLE OF THE EARTH WILL AT THIS TIME BE BRANDED AS THE PROPERTY OF THE LORD LUCIFER. MONEY AND POSITION WILL NOT BUY THEM OUT FOR FREEDOM, FOR ALL WILL RECEIVE THIS MARK OF THE ABYSS. THE RIGHT HAND AND FOREHEAD IS THE MOST SENSITIVE PLACE FOR SOMETHING LIKE THIS. THIS MARK OR SEAL IS THE LORD LUCIFER’S IMITATION OF THE FATHER STEPHEN’S SEAL, THE HOLY SPIRIT IN EPHESIANS ACTS 1:4; 2:33; EPHESIANS 1:13; 4:30 & REVELATION 7:4-8. THE LORD LUCIFER WILL IMITATE THE FATHER STEPHEN AND HIS WORK AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE TO ENSLAVE THE WORLD IN WORSHIPING HIM. NO MAN WILL BUY OR SELL UNLESS HE HAS THE HELLISH MARK, MAYBE SOME SORT OF SERPENT ON IT. THIS MARK WILL BE TATTOOED, STAMPED OR BRANDED ON THE BODY FOR ALL TO SEE, WHICH WILL RESULT IN THEIR TOTAL ETERNAL DAMNATION. THERE WILL BE NO WAY OF COMMERCE WITHOUT THIS MARK. THOSE WHO REFUSE THE MARK WILL STARVE OR BE KILLED.**

**THE WISDOM OF THE NUMBER OF HIS NAME IN REVELATION 13:16-18. SIX IS A BAD NUMBER BECAUSE IT DENOTES EVIL IN ITS GREATEST MAGNITUDE. THIS 666/616 IS THE NUMBER OF A FALSE MAN/FALSE WOMAN---THE ANTICHRIST IN REVELATION 13:18. IN THE GREEK THE NUMBER 666 IS IN ACTUALITY IN DNA AS XXX OR THE GREEK WORD PORNEIA (SHORT FOR PORN IN THE TRIPLE X-RATED MOVIES IN THE PORNOGRAPHY INDUSTRY) AS A SEXUAL HERMAPHRODITE WHICH MEANS SEXUAL IMMORALITY OR SEXUAL PERVERSION. NEBUCHADREZZAR IS THE NUMBER 663/613 AND NEBUCHADREZZUR IS THE NUMBER 669/619. THE EMPEROR NERO [NERON CAESAR] IS THE NUMBER 666. THE NUMBER 666 REFERS TO THE NAME NERON CAESAR WHICH IS CODED NERO THE ROMAN EMPEROR THAT KILLED CHRISTIANS (LORDS) & SAINTS (LORDS) IN 55AD TO 68AD. ALSO IN THE NAME OF KING NEBUCHADREZZAR FROM THE BOOK OF DANIEL IS THE NUMBER 663 AND THE NAME NEBUCHADREZZUR IN THE BOOK OF JEREMIAH THE NUMBER IS 669/619, WHICH MIDWAY IS THE NUMBER 666/616 AND IF THE MYSTERIES OF JEREMIAH IS ASSOCIATED WITH REVELATION, NEBUCHADNEZZAR CAME, BIDDEN BY GOD TO CRUSH GOD’S PEOPLE MAY PREFIGURE THE END-TIMES BEAST OVERCOMING GOD’S SAINTS (LORDS) IN REVELATION 13:7. THIS MAYBE THE ONLY WAY TO DETERMINE WHO IS THE ANTICHRIST & LUCIFER’S PARTY IS AT THE TIME, BY HIS MEDICAL DNA IN HIS BODY BY A STRAND OF HIS HAIR---MAYBE BLACK COLORED HAIR---THE COLOR BLACK REPRESENTS MOURNING, THE END, BLACK SECRETS, FORBIDDEN BLACK MAGIC, POWER, AUTHORITY, VIOLENCE, THE EVIL, UNCLEAN, DEFILEMENT, UNRIGHTEOUSNESS, INJUSTICE, DISHONEST, NASTINESS, BLEMISHED, SPOTTED, GUILTY, DARKNESS, IMPENDING JUDGMENT, WEAKNESS, DEFEATED, THE OLD, DISLOYAL, AND ELEGANCE, OR BY SWABBING HIS MOUTH, OR BY HIS SEMEN RELATIONSHIP TO BABYLON THE HARLOT OR BY TAKING OF HIS BLOOD—O POSITIVE POSSIBLY. IN THE LAW ENFORCEMENT FORENSICS, THE PHYSICAL DNA IS 99.9999% ACCURATE IN TODAY’S SOCIETY. PHYSICAL DNA FAR EXCEEDS THE ACCURACY OF MUG SHOTS OR FINGERPRINTS. THE NUMBER 7 DENOTES PERFECTION & COMPLETION WHICH MAY MEAN IT IS THE NUMBER 777---MEDICAL DNA WHICH IS THE NUMBER OF A TRUE MAN---THE LORD JESUS CHRIST IN LUKE CHAPTERS 1-2. THE LORD JEHOVAH, LORD VICTOR & LORD YAHWEH IN THE OKJV WITH THE NKJV HAS THE PERFECTION NUMBER OF 7 OCCURRENCES THESE THREE TIMES EACH IN GENESIS 22:14; EXODUS 6:3; 17:15; JUDGES 6:24; PSALMS 83:18 & ISAIAH 12:2; 26:4. THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD IN THE OKJV, OKJV WITH APOCRYPHA & THE NKJV HAS THE PERFECTION NUMBER OF 7 OCCURRENCES TRICE EACH IN ACTS 6:5, 8-9; 7:59; 8:2; 11:19; 22:20. BOTH THESE THREE TRANSLATIONS & THREE REPUTATIONS MAKE UP THE DNA 777 [MALE TRINITY---FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD, SON JESUS OUR LORD & BROTHER JOHN OUR LORD THE HOLY GHOST]/727 [FEMALE TRINITY---MOTHER STEPHANIE OUR LADY, DAUGHTER MARY OUR LORD & SISTER ELIZABETH OUR LADY THE HOLY GHOST] NUMBER OF COMPLETION & PERFECTION EACH OF JOHN 8:58 IN THE HOLY BIBLE. BUT THE APOSTLE JOHN PROBABLY DID NOT KNOW WHO WILL BE THE FALSE MAN---THE ANTICHRIST. THIS MAN OF LAWLESSNESS SHOULD NOT BE CONFUSED WITH THE TRUE BRIDE OF CHRIST, FOR THEY WILL BE RAPTURED OUT BEFORE THIS HAPPENS. IF ANYONE WILL ACCEPT ANYTHING FROM THE BEAST, THE SAME WILL DRINK OF THE WINE OF THE WRATH OF THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD WHICH IS POURED WITHOUT MIXTURE INTO HIS CUP OF INDIGNATION AND WILL BE TORMENTED BY THE HOLY ANGELS (LORDS) AND THE LAMB (LORD JESUS CHRIST) IN REVELATION 14:9-11. THEY CAN NEVER BE REDEEMED WHO RECEIVE THE MARK AND WORSHIP THE FIRST BEAST---ANTICHRIST WHO SELL THEIR SOULS ETERNALLY TO THE LORD LUCIFER.**

**FALSE PROPHETS DENOUNCED**

**FALSE PROPHETS DENOUNCED IN JEREMIAH 23:9-40 & MICAH 3:5-7, ANYONE PROPHESYING FALSELY WILL BE KILLED BY HIS PARENTS IN ZECHARIAH 13:3, YOUR PROPHETS HAVE SEEN FOR YOU FALSE AND DECEPTIVE VISIONS IN LAMENTATIONS 2:14, I AM AGAINST THE PROPHETS WHO STEAL MY WORDS FROM EACH OTHER IN JEREMIAH 23:30, PROPHESY AGAINST THE PROPHETS WHO PROPHESY OUT OF THEIR OWN MINDS IN EZEKIEL 13:2, WOE TO THE FOOLISH PROPHETS WHO FOLLOW THEIR OWN SPIRIT AND HAVE SEEN NOTHING IN EZEKIEL 13:3, SET YOUR FACE AGAINST THE DAUGHTERS OF YOUR PEOPLE WHO PROPHESY OUT OF THEIR OWN MINDS IN EZEKIEL 13:17, A PROPHET LEADING PEOPLE ASTRAY MUST NOT BE FOLLOWED IN DEUTERONOMY 13:1-3, THAT PROPHET SHALL BE PUT TO DEATH IN DEUTERONOMY 13:5, A PROPHET SPEAKING FALSE WORDS MUST DIE IN DEUTERONOMY 18:20, DO NOT LISTEN TO YOUR PROPHETS IN JEREMIAH 27:9, DO NOT LISTEN TO THE WORDS OF THE PROPHETS IN JEREMIAH 27:14.**

**PROPHETS OF OTHER GODS**

**450 PROPHETS OF BAAL IN 1ST KINGS 18:19, 22, PROPHETS OF BAAL IN 1ST KINGS 18:25, ELIJAH KILLED THE PROPHETS OF BAAL IN 1ST KINGS 18:40; 19:1, SUMMON THE PROPHETS OF BAAL IN 2ND KINGS 10:19, 400 PROPHETS OF THE ASHERAH IN 1ST KINGS 18:19, 400 PROPHETS, NOT OF THE LORD IN 1ST KINGS 22:6-7 & 2ND CHRONICLES 18:5-6, GO TO THE PROPHETS OF YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER IN 2ND KINGS 3:13, A CRETAN PROPHET IN TITUS 1:12, I WILL REMOVE THE PROPHETS AND UNCLEAN SPIRITS FROM THE LAND IN ZECHARIAH 13:2, THE PROPHETS PROPHESIED BY BAAL IN JEREMIAH 2:8, THE PROPHETS OF SAMARIA PROPHESIED BY BAAL IN JEREMIAH 23:13.**

**HINDERED PROPHECY: PROPHECY MUZZLED**

**THEY COMMANDED THE PROPHETS NOT TO PROPHESY IN AMOS 2:12 & MIC. 2:6, DO NOT PROPHESY IN THE NAME OF THE LORD---STEPHEN YAHWEH LEST WE KILL YOU IN JEREMIAH 11:21, DO NOT PROPHESY AT BETHEL IN AMOS 7:13, EAT YOUR BREAD IN JUDAH AND THERE DO YOUR PROPHESYING IN AMOS 7:12, THEY TELL THE PROPHETS NOT TO PROPHESY TRUTH IN ISAIAH 30:10, YOU SAY, ‘DO NOT PROPHESY AGAINST ISRAEL’ IN AMOS 7:16, HAVE WE MADE YOU A ROYAL ADVISER IN 2ND CHRONICLES 25:16, IF I SAY I WILL NOT SPEAK ANY MORE IN HIS NAME---STEPHEN YAHWEH IN JEREMIAH 20:9.**

**PROPHECY IGNORED**

**THEY MOCKED THE LORD’S PROPHETS IN 2ND CHRONICLES 36:16, WE HAVE NOT LISTENED TO YOUR SERVANTS THE PROPHETS IN DANIEL 9:6, THE PROPHET IS A FOOL, THE MAN OF THE SPIRIT IS MAD IN HOSEA 9:7, YOUR FATHERS, WHERE ARE THEY? AND DO THE PROPHETS LIVE FOR EVER IN ZECHARIAH 1:5, A PROPHET IS NOT WITHOUT HONOR EXCEPT IN HIS OWN HOME TOWN IN MATTHEW 13:57 & MARK 6:4); A PROPHET HAS NO HONOR IN HIS OWN COUNTRY IN JOHN 4:44.**

**PROPHETS SUFFERING**

**THE PROPHETS WERE AN EXAMPLE OF SUFFERING AND PATIENCE IN JAMES 5:10, WHICH ONE OF THE PROPHETS DID YOUR FATHERS NOT PERSECUTE IN ACTS 7:52, THIS IS HOW THEY PERSECUTED THE PROPHETS IN MATTHEW 5:12, SO THEIR FATHERS DID TO THE PROPHETS IN LUKE 6:23, 26, DO NOT HARM MY PROPHETS IN 1ST CHRONICLES 16:22 & PSALMS 105:15.**

**PROPHETS KILLED**

**THEY KILLED THE PROPHETS AND YOU BUILD THEIR TOMBS IN LUKE 11:48, IT CANNOT BE THAT A PROPHET PERISHES AWAY FROM JERUSALEM IN LUKE 13:33, YOU BUILD THE TOMBS OF THE PROPHETS IN MATTHEW 23:29 & LUKE 11:47-48, WE WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN PARTNERS WITH OUR FATHERS IN KILLING THE PROPHETS IN MATTHEW 23:30, YOU ARE SONS OF THOSE WHO KILLED THE PROPHETS IN MATTHEW 23:31, KILLING THE PROPHETS AND STONING THOSE SENT TO YOU IN MATTHEW 23:37, THEY HAVE KILLED YOUR PROPHETS IN ROMANS 11:3, THEY KILLED THE LORD JESUS AND THE PROPHETS IN 1ST THESSALONIANS 2:15, THEY POURED OUT THE BLOOD OF SAINTS AND PROPHETS IN REVELATION 16:6, JEZEBEL DESTROYED THE PROPHETS OF THE LORD IN 1ST KINGS 18:4, 13, SHOULD PRIEST [SERGEANT] AND PROPHET BE SLAIN IN THE TEMPLE IN LAMENTATIONS 2:20, THAT I MAY AVENGE THE BLOOD OF MY SERVANTS THE PROPHETS IN 2ND KINGS 9:7, THE BLOOD OF ALL THE PROPHETS WILL BE ON THIS GENERATION IN LUKE 11:50-51.**

**PROPHECY ABOLISHED**

**GOD DID NOT ANSWER SAUL BY PROPHETS IN 1ST SAMUEL 28:6, 15, THE PROPHETS ARE LIKE WIND, THE WORD IS NOT IN THEM IN JEREMIAH 5:13, THERE IS NO LONGER ANY PROPHET IN PSALMS 74:9, HE CLOSED YOUR EYES, THE PROPHETS IN ISAIAH 29:10, HER PROPHETS FIND NO VISION FROM THE LORD IN LAMENTATIONS 2:9, THE PROPHETS WILL BE ASTOUNDED IN JEREMIAH 4:9, THE LORD WILL TAKE AWAY THE JUDGE AND THE PROPHET IN ISAIAH 3:2, THEY WILL SEEK A VISION FROM THE PROPHET IN EZEKIEL 7:26, TO SEAL BOTH VISION AND PROPHET IN DANIEL 9:24, DO NOT THINK THAT I CAME TO ABOLISH THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS IN MATTHEW 5:17.**

**SPOKESMEN**

**AARON WILL BE YOUR MOUTH IN EXODUS 4:16, JOAB PUT WORDS IN THE WISE WOMAN’S MOUTH IN 2ND SAMUEL 14:3, JOAB PUT THESE WORDS IN MY MOUTH IN 2ND SAMUEL 14:19, I WILL SPEAK FOR YOU TO THE KING IN 1ST KINGS 2:18, PAUL WAS CALLED HERMES BECAUSE HE WAS THE CHIEF SPEAKER IN ACTS 14:12.**

**THE TOP HOUSE OF THE LORD**

**6:1–38 THE BUILDING. THIS CHAPTER IS CLEARLY ARRANGED IN A SYMMETRICAL PATTERN IN WHICH THE SECOND PART IS THE MIRROR-IMAGE OF THE FIRST. THE PATTERN HAS GOD’S WORD TO SOLOMON AT ITS CENTER, EMPHASIZING ITS IMPORTANCE: A1 CHRONOLOGICAL NOTE (1); B1 DESCRIPTION OF THE BUILDING’S BASIC STRUCTURE (2–10); C GOD SPEAKS TO SOLOMON (11–13); B2 DESCRIPTION OF DECORATION AND FITTINGS (14–36); A2 CHRONOLOGICAL NOTE (37–38). HOWEVER, THIS CHAPTER DOES NOT CONTAIN EVERYTHING THE WRITER HAS TO TELL US ABOUT THE EQUIPPING OF THE TEMPLE. HE DESCRIBES ITS FURNISHINGS IN 7:13–51, AFTER GIVING AN ACCOUNT OF SOLOMON’S ROYAL PALACE. THE REASON FOR THIS RATHER SURPRISING ARRANGEMENT OF THE MATERIAL IS SUGGESTED BELOW. THE OPENING CHRONOLOGICAL NOTE DOES NOT DATE THE BEGINNING OF THE BUILDING WORK JUST IN RELATION TO SOLOMON’S REIGN BUT ALSO IN TERMS OF TIME ELAPSED SINCE THE EXODUS FROM EGYPT. THERE ARE PROBABLY TWO MAIN REASONS FOR THIS. FIRST, IT INVITES COMPARISON BETWEEN THE TWO EVENTS; IT SUGGESTS THAT THE BUILDING OF THE TEMPLE WAS AS SIGNIFICANT AN EVENT IN ISRAEL’S HISTORY AS THAT WHICH SAW THE BIRTH OF THE NATION. SECONDLY, BY PLACING THE TEMPLE PROJECT IN ITS HISTORICAL CONTEXT, IT REMINDS US THAT STEPHEN YAHWEH IS A GOD WHOSE PURPOSES ARE WORKED OUT IN HISTORY AND WHOSE PLANS ARE OFTEN LONG-TERM. THE PROMISE OF A PLACE WHICH ‘THE LORD YOUR GOD WILL CHOOSE … TO PUT HIS NAME THERE FOR HIS DWELLING’ (DT. 12:5) TOOK MANY LIFETIMES TO FIND ITS FULFILMENT. THE DESCRIPTION OF THE TEMPLE AND ITS DECORATION CONTAINS SEVERAL DIFFICULTIES FOR THE MODERN READER. THERE ARE SOME ARCHITECTURAL TERMS WHICH ARE NOT EASY TO TRANSLATE, AND MUCH OF THE DETAIL IS DIFFICULT TO VISUALIZE. IT IS A GREAT PITY THAT THE TEXT HAS NOT COME DOWN TO US COMPLETE WITH GROUND PLANS, ELEVATIONS AND ARTIST’S IMPRESSIONS! VS 2–10 DESCRIBE THE BASIC SHELL OF THE BUILDING. IT WAS RECTANGULAR AND ALIGNED ON AN EAST-WEST AXIS. THE MAIN PART OF THE BUILDING, CONSISTING OF THE HOLY PLACE (MAIN HALL; ‘NAVE’ IN THE RSV) AND THE INNER SANCTUARY (ALSO CALLED THE MOST HOLY PLACE; 16), WAS ABOUT 90 FT (27 M) LONG, 30 FT (9 M) WIDE AND 45 FT (13.5 M) HIGH. THE PORCH OR VESTIBULE (PORTICO) WAS THE SAME WIDTH AS THE REST OF THE BUILDING AND ADDED A FURTHER 15 FT (4.5 M) TO ITS LENGTH. THREE STORIES OF ROOMS WERE BUILT AROUND THE OUTSIDE (EXCLUDING THE PORCH) AND WERE HALF THE HEIGHT OF THE TEMPLE ITSELF. THESE HAD THEIR OWN ENTRANCE ON THE SOUTH SIDE AND DID NOT CONNECT WITH THE INTERIOR OF THE TEMPLE. THE PURPOSE OF THESE OUTER ROOMS IS NOT EXPLAINED, BUT THEY WERE PROBABLY FOR THE STORAGE OF VESTMENTS AND CERTAIN OFFERINGS, AND PERHAPS PROVIDED ACCOMMODATION FOR THE PRIESTS ON DUTY. LIGHT ENTERED THE TEMPLE THROUGH WINDOWS WHICH MUST HAVE BEEN SET IN THE UPPER HALF OF THE WALLS, ABOVE THE HEIGHT OF THE OUTER ROOMS. THE BUILDING WAS ROOFED WITH BEAMS AND PLANKS OF CEDAR. THE STONES FOR THE TEMPLE WERE ALL FULLY PREPARED AT THE QUARRY SO THAT NO IRON TOOLS WERE USED ON THE BUILDING SITE (7). THIS ODD DETAIL, WHICH INTERRUPTS THE DESCRIPTION OF THE OUTER ROOMS, IS PROBABLY INTENDED TO SHOW THAT THE WORK WAS DONE IN COMPLIANCE WITH A COMMANDMENT IN EX. 20:25 (CF. DT. 27:5–6). THIS ACTUALLY CONCERNS THE BUILDING OF ALTARS AND INSTRUCTS THAT ONLY UNHEWN STONES (I.E. STONES IN THEIR NATURAL STATE, AS WOULD BE USED TO MAKE A DRY-STONE WALL) MUST BE EMPLOYED. SOLOMON’S CRAFTSMEN WERE BUILDING A TEMPLE, NOT AN ALTAR, AND THEY EVIDENTLY FELT FREE TO USE CUT AND DRESSED STONE THROUGHOUT. BUT THEY WORKED IN THE SPIRIT OF THE COMMANDMENT’S PROSCRIPTION OF THE USE OF TOOLS, MAKING SURE NONE WERE USED ON THE TEMPLE SITE. INSIDE THE TEMPLE THE STONEWORK WAS COMPLETELY COVERED WITH WOODEN PANELS, CEDAR ON THE WALLS AND CEILING AND PINE ON THE FLOORS (15). THE INNER SANCTUARY MUST HAVE HAD EITHER A RAISED FLOOR OR A FALSE CEILING (OR BOTH), REDUCING ITS HEIGHT FROM 30 TO 20 CUBITS (ABOUT 30 FT/9 M) AND MAKING ITS INTERIOR A PERFECT CUBE (20). THE PANELS ON THE WALLS WERE CARVED TO PORTRAY FLOWERS AND GOURDS, AND THE WALLS, CEILING AND FLOOR OF THE WHOLE BUILDING WERE ALL OVERLAID WITH GOLD, AS WERE THE CEDAR WOOD ALTAR AND THE HUGE OLIVE WOOD CHERUBIM OF THE INNER SANCTUARY. THESE CHERUBIM PROBABLY RESEMBLED THE WINGED SPHINXES FAMILIAR FROM ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN ART. PHOENICIAN EXAMPLES PORTRAY A CREATURE WITH A HUMAN HEAD, AN ANIMAL BODY WITH FOUR LEGS, AND A PAIR OF WINGS; THEY PROBABLY PROVIDE A CLOSE ANALOGY TO THOSE PRODUCED BY SOLOMON’S PHOENICIAN CRAFTSMEN. CHERUBIM ALSO FEATURED IN A FRIEZE CARVED AROUND THE WALLS, ALONG WITH PALM TREES AND FLOWERS (29). THE LAVISH USE OF GOLD OVERLAY SOUNDS EXTRAORDINARY BUT WAS IN FACT REGULAR PRACTICE IN THE ADORNING OF ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN TEMPLES. THE MOTIFS WITH WHICH SOLOMON’S TEMPLE WAS DECORATED (THE GOURDS, OPEN FLOWERS, PALM TREES AND CHERUBIM) WERE ALSO PART OF THE COMMON REPERTOIRE OF ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN ART, AND EVEN THE BASIC GROUND PLAN OF THE BUILDING CAN BE PARALLELED BY A NUMBER OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL DISCOVERIES. SOLOMON’S TEMPLE IS UNIQUE IN PURPOSE BUT NOT IN CONCEPTION. IN ITS ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN AND ARTISTIC DECORATION, IT VERY MUCH REFLECTED THE CONVENTIONS OF THE TIME. IT IS A STRIKING EXAMPLE OF HOW ELEMENTS OF A PREVAILING CULTURE CAN BE EMPLOYED FOR THE WORSHIP AND GLORY OF GOD. THE MOTIFS USED TO DECORATE THE INTERIOR OF THE TEMPLE MAY SEEM TO INFRINGE THE SECOND OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS, WHICH PROHIBITS THE MAKING OF IMAGES ‘OF ANYTHING IN HEAVEN ABOVE OR ON THE EARTH BENEATH’ (EX. 20:4). PERHAPS THE COMMANDMENT WAS UNDERSTOOD TO PROHIBIT THE MAKING OF LIKENESSES ONLY WHEN THERE WAS A DANGER OF THEM BECOMING OBJECTS OF WORSHIP, AND THIS DANGER WAS THOUGHT TO BE ELIMINATED IN A TEMPLE DEDICATED TO THE WORSHIP OF STEPHEN YAHWEH ALONE. AFTER DESCRIBING THE INNER SANCTUARY (16, 19–21, 22B–28), THE ACCOUNT MOVES OUTWARDS AGAIN, DESCRIBING FIRST THE DOORS WHICH CLOSED OFF THE INNER SANCTUARY AND THEN THE DOORS BETWEEN THE MAIN HALL AND THE PORCH. FINALLY, WE ARE LED OUTSIDE TO THE INNER COURTYARD (36), A VAGUE TERM WHICH PRESUMABLY REFERS TO THE IMMEDIATE SURROUNDINGS OF THE BUILDING. A SECOND CHRONOLOGICAL NOTE ROUNDS OFF THE ACCOUNT, REMINDING US OF WHEN THE TEMPLE WAS BEGUN, TELLING US WHEN IT WAS FINISHED, AND GIVING US THE TOTAL DURATION OF THE PROJECT. WE HAVE NOT YET CONSIDERED GOD’S WORD TO SOLOMON WHICH LIES EMBEDDED IN THIS ACCOUNT (11–13). THIS WORD IS SAID TO CONCERN THIS TEMPLE YOU ARE BUILDING, BUT IT CONTAINS NO FURTHER REFERENCE TO THE TEMPLE. WHAT THEN IS ITS PURPOSE? THE CONDITIONAL NATURE OF GOD’S PROMISE TO DAVID, ALREADY MADE CLEAR BY DAVID IN 2:4, IS NOW RESTATED BY GOD HIMSELF IN WORDS WHICH RELATE IT TO THE TEMPLE-BUILDING PROJECT. GOD WILL LIVE AMONG THE ISRAELITES IF SOLOMON WILL WALK IN GOD’S STATUTES AND OBEY HIS COMMANDS. IN OTHER WORDS, THE BUILDING OF A TEMPLE WILL NOT GUARANTEE GOD’S PRESENCE AMONG HIS PEOPLE; GOD CANNOT BE TAMED AND KEPT IN A BOX, HOWEVER MAGNIFICENT THE BOX MIGHT BE. HIS PRESENCE DEPENDS ON OBEDIENCE AND SPECIFICALLY NOW ON THE OBEDIENCE OF SOLOMON. WHILE THESE VERSES STOP SHORT OF CRITICIZING THE BUILDING OF THE TEMPLE, THEY DO PUT THE PROJECT IN PERSPECTIVE BY STRESSING THE LARGER ISSUE OF OBEDIENCE. 7:1–12 SOLOMON’S PALACE. THE ACCOUNT OF THE TEMPLE AND ITS FURNISHINGS IS DIVIDED INTO TWO PARTS OF ALMOST EQUAL LENGTH BY THIS SHORT ACCOUNT OF SOLOMON’S PALACE BUILDINGS. AS THE TEMPLE WAS BUILT FIRST AND THEN THE PALACE (6:37–7:1; 9:10), WE MIGHT LOGICALLY EXPECT THE ACCOUNT OF THE PALACE TO FOLLOW THE DEDICATION OF THE TEMPLE IN CH. 8. BUT WE WILL SEE THAT THE WRITER HAD A PARTICULAR REASON FOR PLACING IT HERE. IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE NOTE THAT THE TEMPLE TOOK SEVEN YEARS TO BUILD (6:38) COMES THE INFORMATION THAT SOLOMON SPENT THIRTEEN YEARS BUILDING HIS PALACE (LIT. ‘HIS HOUSE’). THE HEBREW FOR ‘HIS HOUSE’ OCCURS TWICE IN 7:1, HIGHLIGHTING THE SHIFT AWAY FROM ‘THE HOUSE [TEMPLE] OF THE LORD’ (6:37). IS THERE IMPLICIT CRITICISM HERE OF THE FACT THAT SOLOMON SPENT ALMOST TWICE AS LONG ON HIS OWN HOUSE AS HE DID, BUILDING THE HOUSE OF GOD? QUITE POSSIBLY, BUT THE MAIN PURPOSE OF THIS PASSAGE SEEMS TO BE RATHER DIFFERENT. DAVID HAD ALREADY HAD A RESIDENCE BUILT IN JERUSALEM WITH MATERIALS SUPPLIED BY HIRAM OF TYRE (2 SA. 5:11), BUT SOLOMON REQUIRED SOMETHING ON A MUCH GRANDER SCALE. FIVE DISTINCT BUILDINGS ARE MENTIONED IN VS 2–8: THE PALACE OF THE FOREST OF LEBANON, ‘THE HALL OF PILLARS’ (A COLONNADE), THE THRONE HALL (ALSO KNOWN AS THE HALL OF JUSTICE, FOR THE KING’S THRONE WAS ALSO HIS JUDGMENT SEAT, STRESSING THAT IT WAS AS RULER THAT HE DISPENSED JUSTICE), SOLOMON’S PRIVATE RESIDENCE AND THE PRIVATE RESIDENCE OF THE PHARAOH’S DAUGHTER. (SINCE SHE IS THE ONLY ONE OF SOLOMON’S WIVES WHOSE RESIDENCE FORMED PART OF THIS SUITE OF BUILDINGS, THE IMPLICATION IS THAT SHE WAS HIS CHIEF WIFE. THIS IS ALSO SUGGESTED BY THE FACT THAT SHE IS MENTIONED SO OFTEN: 3:1, 9:16, 24; 11:1.) WE ARE NOT TOLD HOW THESE VARIOUS BUILDINGS RELATED TO EACH OTHER. THEY PRESUMABLY JOINED TO FORM A SINGLE COMPLEX, SINCE THEY ARE REFERRED TO COLLECTIVELY AS ‘HIS HOUSE’ IN V 1. THE PALACE COMPLEX WAS EVIDENTLY ADJACENT TO THE TEMPLE WITH A PASSAGE CONNECTING THE TWO (CF. 2 KI. 16:18). WE ARE NOT GIVEN THE DIMENSIONS OF ALL THESE BUILDINGS, BUT IT IS CLEAR THAT THE PALACE OF THE FOREST OF LEBANON ALONE WAS LARGER THAN THE TEMPLE (2). THE WHOLE PALACE COMPLEX MUST, THEREFORE, HAVE DWARFED THE TEMPLE SPECTACULARLY. IN JESUS’ DAY THE MASSIVE TEMPLE BUILT BY HEROD THE GREAT DOMINATED THE WHOLE OF JERUSALEM, BUT IN PRE-EXILIC TIMES THE ROYAL PALACE MUST HAVE BEEN THE CITY’S MOST IMPOSING BUILDING. AND THIS IS PROBABLY WHY THE WRITER DESCRIBES IT WHERE HE DOES. PHYSICALLY THE PALACE DWARFED THE TEMPLE, BUT IN HIS ACCOUNT, HE DWARFS THE DESCRIPTION OF THE PALACE BY SURROUNDING IT WITH LENGTHIER DESCRIPTIONS OF THE TEMPLE AND ITS FURNISHINGS. IN THE WRITER’S VIEW THIS RESTORES THE CORRECT PERSPECTIVE; FOR THE TEMPLE WAS THE TRUE HEART OF THE CITY AND OF THE NATION. 7:13–47 THE TEMPLE FURNISHINGS: THE WORK OF HIRAM, CRAFTSMAN IN BRONZE. A NAMESAKE OF THE KING OF TYRE, THE SON OF A PHOENICIAN FATHER AND AN ISRAELITE MOTHER, WAS BROUGHT FROM TYRE TO JERUSALEM TO MANUFACTURE THE BRONZE FURNISHINGS FOR THE TEMPLE. HIS OUTSTANDING ABILITY IS MENTIONED AT THE OUTSET AND IS AMPLY ILLUSTRATED BY THE DESCRIPTIONS OF THE OBJECTS WHICH HE MADE. AS IN THE DESCRIPTION OF THE TEMPLE ITSELF, THERE ARE SOME DETAILS WHICH ARE DIFFICULT TO FOLLOW. THE ACCOUNT OF THE WORK OF HIRAM FOR THE TEMPLE PARALLELS TO SOME EXTENT THAT OF THE WORK OF BEZALEL FOR THE TABERNACLE (EX. 36–38), AND WE ARE DOUBTLESS INTENDED TO NOTE THE BROADER PARALLEL BETWEEN THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE TABERNACLE AND THE BUILDING OF THE TEMPLE. HOWEVER, WHILE THE TABERNACLE AND ITS EQUIPMENT WERE COMMANDED IN DETAIL BY GOD (EX. 25–27, ESPECIALLY 25:9), NO SUCH CLAIM IS MADE HERE FOR THE TEMPLE OR ITS FURNISHINGS. THE PURPOSE OF THE TWO HUGE PILLARS (ABOUT 27 FT/8 M HIGH) IS NOT CLEAR. THEY DID NOT SUPPORT ANYTHING BUT WERE FREESTANDING, LOCATED IN FRONT OF THE TEMPLE PORTICO. THEY WERE TOPPED WITH ELABORATELY DECORATED, LILY-SHAPED CAPITALS. THEIR NAMES, JAKIN AND BOAZ, ARE SOMETHING OF A PUZZLE, BUT THE MOST LIKELY THEORY IS THAT THESE WERE THE OPENING WORDS OF TWO INSCRIPTIONS. ON THE BASIS OF THE VARIOUS EXPRESSIONS FOUND IN THE PSALMS IT HAS BEEN SUGGESTED THAT THE INSCRIPTIONS MAY HAVE READ ROUGHLY AS FOLLOWS: ‘STEPHEN YAHWEH WILL ESTABLISH [JAKIN] THY THRONE FOR EVER’, AND ‘IN THE STRENGTH [BOAZ] OF STEPHEN YAHWEH SHALL THE KING REJOICE.’ IF THIS IS CORRECT, THE PILLARS MAY HAVE COMMEMORATED GOD’S PROMISES CONCERNING THE DAVIDIC DYNASTY. THERE ARE HINTS LATER IN KINGS THAT ON TAKING THE THRONE A KING STOOD BY ONE OF THESE PILLARS TO PLEDGE HIMSELF TO KEEP GOD’S COVENANT LAWS (2 KI. 11:14; 23:3). HIRAM’S MOST IMPRESSIVE TECHNOLOGICAL ACHIEVEMENT WAS PERHAPS THE HUGE BRONZE BASIN SOME 15 FT (4.5 M) IN DIAMETER KNOWN AS THE SEA. IT WAS SUPPORTED ON TWELVE BRONZE BULLS ARRANGED IN FOUR GROUPS OF THREE, EACH GROUP FACING ONE OF THE CARDINAL POINTS. ACCORDING TO 2 CH. 4:6, ITS PURPOSE WAS TO HOLD WATER FOR RITUAL WASHING BY THE PRIESTS, BUT ITS SIZE AND DESIGN, AS WELL AS ITS NAME, SUGGEST IT WAS SYMBOLIC AS WELL AS FUNCTIONAL. AS GOD’S POWER AT CREATION HAD BEEN DISPLAYED BY HIS CONTAINMENT OF THE SEA, THE SYMBOL OF CHAOS (SEE THE VIVID WORD-PICTURE IN JB. 38:8–11), SO THIS GIANT BOWL SIGNIFIED HIS UPHOLDING OF THE CREATED ORDER AND HIS POWER OVER THE FORCES OF CHAOS WHICH THREATEN IT. HIRAM ALSO MADE TEN MOVABLE STANDS, DECORATED ON THE SIDES WITH LIONS, BULLS AND CHERUBIM, AND TEN REMOVABLE BASINS, WHICH STOOD ON THEM. THESE WERE ALSO FOR RITUAL ABLUTIONS, AND THE FACT THAT THEIR LOCATIONS ARE MENTIONED ALONG WITH THAT OF THE SEA (39) SUGGESTS THEY WERE USED IN CONNECTION WITH IT. VS 40–45 PROVIDE A SUMMARY OF HIRAM’S WORK, ADDING SOME LESSER ITEMS WHICH DO NOT DESERVE DETAILED DESCRIPTIONS (POTS, SHOVELS AND SPRINKLING BOWLS). V 46 GIVES A TANTALIZING HINT AT THE METHOD USED BY HIRAM TO CAST HIS PRODUCTS. THE SECTION CLOSES WITH RENEWED EMPHASIS ON THE GREATNESS OF HIS ACHIEVEMENT: THE WEIGHT OF ALL THIS BRONZE WORK WAS NEVER DETERMINED BECAUSE THERE WAS SO MUCH OF IT! 7:48–51 THE TEMPLE FURNISHINGS: ITEMS OF GOLD. THE LIST OF GOLD ITEMS WHICH SOLOMON HAD MADE FOR THE TEMPLE (48–50) IS VERY LIKE THE SUMMARY OF HIRAM’S WORK IN VS 40–45. IT IS AS THOUGH WE HAVE HERE A SIMILAR SUMMARY WITHOUT A DETAILED ACCOUNT TO PRECEDE IT. THE CRAFTSMAN IS NOT NAMED, UNLESS THE WRITER INTENDS US TO UNDERSTAND THAT SOLOMON MADE THESE ITEMS WITH HIS OWN HANDS (WHICH SEEMS UNLIKELY). SOLOMON ALSO CONTRIBUTED TO THE TEMPLE QUANTITIES OF SILVER AND GOLD WHICH HAD EARLIER BEEN DEDICATED TO IT BY DAVID. THESE WERE STORED IN THE TEMPLE TREASURIES (PERHAPS IN THE OUTER ROOMS), THOUGH THEIR INTENDED PURPOSE IS NOT CLEAR. IN JERUSALEM’S SUBSEQUENT HISTORY THESE TREASURIES WERE OFTEN THE SOURCE OF TRIBUTE FOR FOREIGN KINGS.**

**THE NET WORTH OF THE LORD’S HOUSE IN FAITHFULNESS TO THE LORD**

**IN KING SOLOMON’S KINGDOM, HE BUILT THE HOUSE OF THE FATHER STEPHEN CALLED ZION IN THE KINGDOM OF LORDSHIP THAT WILL NEVER BE DESTROYED IN 7 YEARS THAT TOOK $576,000,000,000.00 BILLION IN 100,000 GOLD TALENTS & $384,000,000,000.00 BILLION IN 1 MILLION SILVER TALENTS IN TITHING BY 10% & 100% WHICH CONCERNS $960,000,000,000,000.00 TRILLION WHICH THE FATHER STEPHEN’S BODY IS 202,000,000,000,000,000,000 YEARS OLD IN GOLD IN LEVITICUS 27:3; 1ST CHRONICLES 22:14 & ACTS 7:47-50. WHICH WITH PRECIOUS STONES AND OTHER MATERIALS THE TITHE WOULD CONCERN 1 QUADRILLION DOLLARS [15 ZERO’S BEHIND IT] FOR 115 YEARS WITH A FRUITFUL CALL [15 YEARS + 10 YEARS IN 2ND CORINTHIANS 12:1-6 & PSALMS 90:10] THAT HAPPENED IN 930BC WHICH IS 2,945 YEARS AGO. THIS WOULD THEN CONCERN THE FATHER STEPHEN’S ADDRESS CALLED THE UNIVERSAL ZION IN THE ETERNAL KINGDOM OF LORDSHIP IN ACTS 15:16-17. THIS KINGDOM OF LORDSHIP WHICH IS KNOWN AS THE FATHER STEPHEN’S ZION ON SUNDAY PENTECOST THAT HOUSES ONLY SAINTLY CHRISTIAN LORDS & SAINTLY CHRISTIAN LADIES WILL NEVER BE DESTROYED IN DANIEL 7:18. ALL OTHER KINGDOMS, EVEN THE LORDSHIP OF THE LAW WILL COME TO AN END & BE IN DESOLATION IN THE ROCK AUTHORITIES TO THE COUNTY AUTHORITIES IN ACTS 9:3-6. THE STATE AUTHORITIES TO GOVERNMENTAL AUTHORITIES IS IN ACTS 22:6-11. THE NATIONAL AUTHORITIES TO THE KINGDOM AUTHORITIES IS IN ACTS 26:13-18.**

**1:1–11:43 SOLOMON**

**1:1–2:46 SOLOMON’S MAJESTIC RULE ETERNALLY ESTABLISHED**

**1:1–10 DAVID AND ADONIJAH. HERE WE FIND DAVID IN THE WEAKNESS OF OLD AGE, UNABLE TO KEEP WARM OR TO PERFORM SEXUALLY (1–4). WAITING IN THE WINGS IS ADONIJAH, THE FOURTH OF SIX SONS BORN TO DAVID BY SIX DIFFERENT WIVES WHILE HE WAS KING IN HEBRON (2 SA. 3:2–5). DAVID’S FIRST SON, AMMON, HAD BEEN MURDERED BY THE THIRD, ABSALOM, WHO HIMSELF DIED WHILE LEADING A REBELLION AGAINST DAVID (2 SA. 13:23–29; 18:9–15). AS NO MENTION IS MADE OF DAVID’S SECOND SON, CHILEAB, HE HAD PRESUMABLY DIED TOO, LEAVING ADONIJAH AS THE ELDEST SURVIVING SON AND NATURAL HEIR TO DAVID’S THRONE. THE WRITER INTENDS TO REMIND US OF THESE CIRCUMSTANCES BY POINTING OUT THAT ADONIJAH WAS BORN NEXT AFTER ABSALOM (6). THE DESCRIPTION OF HIM AS A VERY HANDSOME MAN RECALLS DAVID’S EARLY GOOD LOOKS (1 SA. 16:12) AND FURTHER SUGGESTS THAT HERE IS DAVID’S NATURAL SUCCESSOR. ADONIJAH HAD NOT ONLY SET HIS HEART ON THE THRONE BUT HAD ENLISTED THE SUPPORT OF SOME NOTABLE MEMBERS OF DAVID’S COURT (7, 9). THE NOTE THAT HE ACQUIRED CHARIOTS AND HORSES … WITH FIFTY MEN TO RUN AHEAD OF HIM (5) RECALLS THE PREPARATIONS WHICH ABSALOM MADE BEFORE TRYING TO GRASP THE THRONE (2 SA. 15:1), JUST AS DAVID’S FAILURE TO QUESTION ADONIJAH’S ACTIONS (6) RECALLS HIS FAILURE TO NIP ABSALOM’S REBELLION IN THE BUD. DAVID’S WEAKNESS IN THIS SCENE CANNOT BE BLAMED ENTIRELY ON OLD AGE, FOR IT IS CONSISTENT WITH HIS EARLIER FAILURES TO ASSERT HIMSELF WHERE HIS SONS WERE CONCERNED (2 SA. 13–15). WITHOUT DAVID’S KNOWLEDGE, ADONIJAH ARRANGED A FEAST WITH SACRIFICES AND HAD HIMSELF PROCLAIMED KING AT EN ROGEL, A SPRING JUST TO THE SOUTH OF JERUSALEM (9; CF. VS 13, 18, 25). THIS DOES NOT MEAN THAT DAVID CEASED IMMEDIATELY TO BE KING, BUT RATHER THAT ADONIJAH WOULD HENCEFORTH RULE AS CO-REGENT. IN VIEW OF DAVID’S ADVANCED AGE, HOWEVER, THERE CAN BE NO DOUBT THAT ADONIJAH WOULD HAVE BEEN THE EFFECTIVE MONARCH. 1:11–37 NATHAN’S INTERVENTION. WE HAVE ALREADY BEEN TOLD THAT NATHAN THE PROPHET WAS NOT OF ADONIJAH’S PARTY (8), AND NOW HE EMERGES AS THE SUPPORTER OF A RIVAL CLAIMANT, SOLOMON. IT BECOMES APPARENT IN THESE VERSES THAT DAVID HAD SWORN AN OATH TO SOLOMON’S MOTHER, BATHSHEBA, THAT HER SON WOULD BE THE NEXT KING. (EITHER THAT OR NATHAN AND BATHSHEBA SET OUT TO CONVINCE DAVID THAT HE HAD SWORN SUCH AN OATH WHEN IN FACT HE HAD NOT! BUT THE FACT THAT ADONIJAH DID NOT INVITE SOLOMON TO HIS CELEBRATIONS SUGGESTS THAT HE RECOGNIZED HIM AS HAVING SOME CLAIM TO THE THRONE AND WAS MAKING A CAREFULLY TIMED PREEMPTIVE MOVE.) BATHSHEBA’S ENTRY INTO THE STORY REMINDS US OF THE LUSTFUL DAVID OF 2 SA. 11 AND THROWS THE PRESENT PICTURE OF THE IMPOTENT OLD MAN INTO SHARP RELIEF. ALTHOUGH NATHAN IS GIVEN HIS TITLE ‘THE PROPHET’ SEVERAL TIMES IN THIS CHAPTER HE BROUGHT NO ‘WORD OF THE LORD’ TO THE FAILING KING. INSTEAD ALL IS DONE BY INTRIGUE AND CLEVER PERSUASION. FIRST, HAVING BEEN COACHED BY NATHAN, BATHSHEBA REMINDS THE KING OF HIS OATH AND INFORMS HIM OF ADONIJAH’S ACCESSION FEAST. THEN NATHAN MAKES HIS OWN CAREFULLY TIMED ENTRY (WHILE SHE WAS STILL SPEAKING WITH THE KING) AND BROACHES THE ISSUE FROM A DIFFERENT ANGLE. SPEAKING LESS CONFRONTATIONALLY THAN BATHSHEBA, NATHAN PRETENDS TO THINK THAT DAVID MIGHT HAVE SANCTIONED ADONIJAH’S CELEBRATION AND POLITELY POINTS OUT THAT CERTAIN PEOPLE, INCLUDING HIMSELF, HAVE NOT BEEN INVITED. DAVID BELATEDLY STIRS HIMSELF AND SEIZES CONTROL OF EVENTS, SWEARING THAT HIS FORMER OATH WILL BE FULFILLED AT ONCE (30). CALLING FOR SOLOMON’S OTHER MAIN SUPPORTERS, ZADOK THE PRIEST AND BENAIAH, HE SWIFTLY GIVES INSTRUCTIONS FOR SOLOMON’S IMMEDIATE ANOINTING AT GIHON, A SPRING OUTSIDE THE EASTERN WALL OF JERUSALEM. 1:38–53 SOLOMON BECOMES KING. ACCOMPANIED BY HIS CHIEF SUPPORTERS AND DAVID’S BODYGUARD (THE KERETHITES AND THE PELETHITES), SOLOMON GOES TO GIHON, SIGNIFICANTLY RIDING ON KING DAVID’S MULE (38). DAVID DOES NOT ATTEND, PERHAPS BECAUSE HE WAS TOO FRAIL TO TRAVEL EVEN THE SHORT DISTANCE TO THE FOOT OF THE EASTERN SLOPE. THE LARGE CROWD, ASSEMBLED AT SHORT NOTICE, INDICATES THAT SOLOMON WAS A POPULAR CANDIDATE. ADONIJAH HEARS THE NOISE OF THIS CROWD AT EN ROGEL, AND A FULL REPORT OF EVENTS SOON REACHES HIM; REALIZING THAT THE GAME WAS UP, HIS SUPPORTERS QUIETLY DISPERSE. ADONIJAH HIMSELF EXPECTS THAT SOLOMON (WHOM HE REFERS TO AS ‘KING SOLOMON’) WOULD WANT TO KILL HIM, SO HE SEEKS REFUGE BY TAKING HOLD OF THE HORNS OF THE ALTAR. ISRAELITE ALTARS (AS ILLUSTRATED BY ARCHAEOLOGICAL FINDS) HAD POINTED PROJECTIONS WHICH STOOD UP FROM THE FOUR CORNERS OF THE SQUARE TOP. SEIZING TWO OF THESE ‘HORNS’ GAVE A PERSON SANCTUARY. THE ALTAR IN QUESTION PRESUMABLY STOOD IN THE TENT WHICH DAVID HAD SET UP TO HOUSE THE ‘ARK OF THE LORD’ (2 SA. 6:17; CF. 1 KI. 2:28). UNTIL THIS POINT SOLOMON HAS BEEN A SHADOWY AND PASSIVE FIGURE (HE IS ‘MADE KING’, ‘CAUSED TO RIDE’ ETC.), BUT NOW HE ENTERS THE STORY AS A CHARACTER IN HIS OWN RIGHT. HE ACTS DECISIVELY BUT WITH SHREWDNESS AND CAUTION, PROMISING TO SPARE ADONIJAH’S LIFE SO LONG AS HE REMAINS LOYAL. ADONIJAH HUMBLY ACKNOWLEDGES HIS YOUNGER BROTHER AS THE NEW KING (53), BUT THERE IS NO REAL RECONCILIATION BETWEEN THE TWO MEN. WE ARE LEFT WITH THE IMPRESSION THAT MATTERS ARE NOT YET SETTLED. IN THE FINAL THREE VERSES OF THE CHAPTER, SOLOMON IS REFERRED TO FOUR TIMES AS KING SOLOMON (TWICE IN REPORTED SPEECH AND TWICE BY THE NARRATOR HIMSELF); ADONIJAH, ON THE OTHER HAND, HAS BEEN REFERRED TO ONLY ONCE AS KING, AND THAT WAS IN THE REPORTED ACCLAMATION OF HIS SUPPORTERS (25). THUS, THE CHAPTER ENDS WITH SOLOMON ANOINTED KING AND DAVID SATISFIED THAT STEPHEN YAHWEH’S WILL HAS BEEN DONE (48). BUT GOD’S WILL, HAD PREVIOUSLY BEEN NEGLECTED; DAVID IS SPURRED INTO ACTION ONLY BY ADONIJAH’S BID FOR POWER AND NATHAN’S CONCERN FOR THE SAFETY OF SOLOMON’S SUPPORTERS, INCLUDING HIMSELF. AS IN THE STORY OF JOSEPH, GOD’S ACTIVITY REMAINS HIDDEN AMONG THE PLOTS AND AMBITIONS OF HUMAN BEINGS. 2:1–12 THE DEATH OF DAVID. WE ARE NOT TOLD HOW LONG SOLOMON RULED AS CO-REGENT BEFORE DAVID DIED. THE STORY MOVES STRAIGHT TO THE EVE OF THE OLD KING’S DEATH. FIRST, DAVID GIVES SOLOMON ADVICE ON MATTERS SPIRITUAL. HE IS TO WALK IN STEPHEN YAHWEH’S WAYS AND KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS. STEPHEN YAHWEH’S PROMISE OF AN EVERLASTING DYNASTY (2 SA. 7) IS CLEARLY UNDERSTOOD BY DAVID TO BE CONDITIONAL ON THE FAITHFULNESS OF HIS DESCENDANTS (4), A FACT WHICH GAINS SIGNIFICANCE AS THE STORY UNFOLDS. SECONDLY, DAVID INSTRUCTS SOLOMON TO DEAL WITH CERTAIN ITEMS OF UNFINISHED BUSINESS. MURDERS COMMITTED BY JOAB AGAINST DAVID’S WILL ARE TO BE AVENGED; THE SONS OF BARZILLAI ARE TO BE REWARDED FOR THEIR LOYALTY; AND SHIMEI IS TO BE PUNISHED FOR CURSING DAVID AT THE TIME OF ABSALOM’S REBELLION. NO SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS ARE GIVEN CONCERNING JOAB AND SHIMEI; DAVID SIMPLY TELLS SOLOMON TO ACT IN ACCORDANCE WITH HIS WISDOM (6, 9). THE DEATHBED SPEECH WHICH BEGINS BRIGHT WITH SPIRITUAL COUNSEL ENDS DARK WITH MENACE. IT IS FOLLOWED BY A FORMAL NOTICE OF DAVID’S DEATH AND BURIAL, OF A KIND WHICH OCCURS REGULARLY THROUGHOUT THE BOOKS OF KINGS.**

**THE EMPIRE WHICH KING DAVID BEQUEATHED TO HIS SON SOLOMON.**

**2:13–25 THE DEATH OF ADONIJAH. ADONIJAH APPROACHES BATHSHEBA IN HER ROLE AS QUEEN-MOTHER, AN HONORED POSITION AT THE ROYAL COURT, TO REQUEST THE GIRL ABISHAG AS HIS WIFE. ABISHAG’S STATUS HAD BEEN THAT OF ROYAL CONCUBINE (EVEN THOUGH DAVID HAD BEEN INCAPABLE OF SEXUAL RELATIONS), AND FOR A MAN TO TAKE SUCH A CONCUBINE FOR HIMSELF COULD BE TANTAMOUNT TO A BID FOR ROYAL POWER (CF. 2 SA. 3:6–8; 16:21–22). WHEN THE REQUEST IS RELAYED TO SOLOMON THE IMPLICATION IS NOT LOST ON HIM; HE INTERPRETS IT AS THE OPENING GAMBIT IN A NEW MOVE TO SEIZE THE THRONE (22). UNLIKE HIS FATHER, HE IS NOT SLOW TO TAKE ACTION: ADONIJAH IS KILLED THE SAME DAY. 2:26–27 ABIATHAR BANISHED. SOLOMON MOVES WITH SWIFT EFFICIENCY TO MOP UP ALL OTHER TRACES OF OPPOSITION TO HIS REIGN. FOR GIVING SUPPORT TO ADONIJAH, ABIATHAR IS EXPELLED FROM HIS ROLE AS PRIEST AND BANISHED TO AN INTERNAL EXILE ON HIS ESTATE AT ANATHOTH, SOME 3 MILES (5 KM) NORTH OF JERUSALEM. THE WRITER SEES HIS RUSTICATION FULFILLING THE EARLIER WORDS OF AN ANONYMOUS PROPHET CONCERNING THE LINE OF ELI (1 SA. 2:27–36). ABIATHAR’S PLACE IS TAKEN BY ZADOK (35). ANATHOTH WAS A TOWN ALLOTTED TO THE LEVITES AND WAS LATER THE HOME OF JEREMIAH (JE. 1:1). 2:28–35 THE DEATH OF JOAB. ON HEARING OF ADONIJAH’S DEATH, JOAB REALIZES HIS OWN DANGER AND FLEES TO THE TENT OF THE LORD TO SEEK SANCTUARY AT THE HORNS OF THE ALTAR. HOWEVER, IT IS NOT HIS SUPPORT FOR ADONIJAH WHICH ENDANGERS HIS LIFE SO MUCH AS DAVID’S DEATHBED INSTRUCTIONS TO SOLOMON. WHILE BENAIAH HAS SOME SCRUPLES ABOUT KILLING JOAB AT THE ALTAR, SOLOMON HAS NONE ABOUT ORDERING BENAIAH TO DO IT. HE APPEARS TO CONSIDER THAT THE NEED TO AVENGE JOAB’S VICTIMS AND THE WRONG DONE TO DAVID OVERRIDES THE LAW OF SANCTUARY. HE DECLARES THAT BY HAVING JOAB KILLED HE IS ENACTING DIVINE RETRIBUTION AND THAT STEPHEN YAHWEH’S BLESSING OF PEACE WILL BE UPON THE HOUSE OF DAVID FOR EVER (33). THUS, BENAIAH KILLS JOAB AND TAKES HIS PLACE AS COMMANDER OF THE ARMY. THE WRITER PASSES NO COMMENT ON ANY OF THIS AND WE ARE LEFT WONDERING WHETHER HE APPROVED OF SOLOMON’S ACTIONS OR NOT. AT LEAST HE KNEW THAT SOLOMON’S PREDICTION OF EVERLASTING PEACE WOULD NOT BE FULFILLED! 2:36–46 THE DEATH OF SHIMEI. AGAINST SHIMEI SOLOMON TAKES THE RELATIVELY LENIENT MEASURE OF CONFINING HIM TO JERUSALEM, FORBIDDING HIM TO LEAVE ON PAIN OF DEATH. WAS THIS ALL SOLOMON INTENDED TO DO, OR DID HE HOPE FROM THE START THAT THE CONDITION WOULD EVENTUALLY PROVIDE A REASON TO PUT SHIMEI TO DEATH? PROBABLY THE LATTER, FOR DAVID’S INSTRUCTION HAD BEEN THAT SHIMEI BE BROUGHT DOWN TO THE GRAVE IN BLOOD (9). WHEN AFTER THREE YEARS SHIMEI BREAKS THE CONDITION, SOLOMON REVEALS THAT HE REGARDS HIS DEATH AS DIVINE RETRIBUTION FOR THE WRONG DONE TO DAVID (44). ONCE AGAIN SOLOMON PREDICTS THAT HIS REIGN WILL BE BLESSED AND (INCORRECTLY) THAT DAVID’S DYNASTY WILL BE ESTABLISHED FOR EVER (45). DAVID’S UNFINISHED BUSINESS HAVING BEEN DEALT WITH AND ALL OPPOSITION SQUASHED, SOLOMON EMERGES AS A PRAGMATIC, SHREWD AND DECISIVE MONARCH, CONFIDENT THAT HE IS ENACTING GOD’S JUDGMENTS AND THAT HE WILL RECEIVE GOD’S BLESSING. IT IS NOT A PARTICULARLY ATTRACTIVE PICTURE, BUT WE ARE LEFT IN NO DOUBT THAT THE KINGDOM WAS NOW FIRMLY ESTABLISHED IN SOLOMON’S HANDS (46).**

**3:1–4:34 GREATNESS AND WISDOM**

**3:1 ALLIANCE WITH EGYPT. IN ORDER TO EMPHASIZE THAT SOLOMON WAS ALSO ESTABLISHING HIMSELF IN THE ARENA OF INTERNATIONAL POLITICS, THE WRITER NEXT TELLS OF HIS ALLIANCE WITH EGYPT, SEALED BY HIS MARRIAGE TO THE DAUGHTER OF PHARAOH (PROBABLY SIAMUN OF EGYPT’S TWENTY-FIRST DYNASTY; SEE THE INTRODUCTION). A MARRIAGE ALLIANCE WITH THE ERSTWHILE SUPERPOWER OF THE NEAR EAST MUST HAVE ENHANCED SOLOMON’S STANDING CONSIDERABLY. THERE IS, HOWEVER, ANOTHER SIDE TO THIS POLITICAL MOVE; FOR HIS MARRIAGE TO A NON-ISRAELITE WAS IN BREACH OF DT. 7:3. IT ALSO POINTS FORWARD TO HIS DUPLICATION OF THIS SIN IN 1 KI. 11:1–6. 3:2–15 SOLOMON AT GIBEON. THIS IS THE FIRST OF FOUR OCCASIONS WHEN STEPHEN YAHWEH SPEAKS TO SOLOMON (CF. 6:11–13; 9:1–9; 11:11–13). THE WRITER FEELS OBLIGED TO EXPLAIN WHY THE EVENT OCCURRED AT THE MOST IMPORTANT HIGH PLACE, GIBEON: KING AND PEOPLE ALL WORSHIPPED THERE BECAUSE THE TEMPLE HAD NOT YET BEEN BUILT (2). TO CLEAR SOLOMON OF ANY SUSPICION OF FAILURE, THE WRITER ALSO STATES THAT SOLOMON LOVED STEPHEN YAHWEH AND WALKED IN THE STATUTES OF DAVID (3). IT IS STATED TWICE THAT GOD SPOKE TO SOLOMON IN A DREAM (5, 15), A FORM OF COMMUNICATION WHICH IS TREATED WITH DEEP SUSPICION IN SOME PARTS OF SCRIPTURE (DT. 13:1–5; JE. 23:25–32), BUT WITH GREAT RESPECT IN OTHERS (E.G. THE STORIES OF JOSEPH AND DANIEL). STEPHEN YAHWEH’S FIRST WORDS TO SOLOMON SIMPLY INVITED HIM TO MAKE A REQUEST. WE MIGHT EXPECT THAT SOLOMON, FACED WITH SUCH AN OFFER FROM THE LORD OF ALL CREATION, WOULD HAVE NEEDED SOME TIME TO THINK, BUT HIS REPLY SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN IMMEDIATE. THIS, AT LEAST, IS IN KEEPING WITH THE DECISIVE MANNER WITH WHICH SOLOMON HAS ACTED SO FAR, BUT HIS REQUEST ITSELF IS SOMEWHAT SURPRISING. WE WOULD NOT HAVE GUESSED THAT THE SELF-CONFIDENT SOLOMON, ALREADY PRAISED BY DAVID FOR HIS WISDOM (2:6, 9), LACKED A DISCERNING HEART. PERHAPS HE HAD REALIZED THAT MORE THAN MERE SHREWDNESS AND CUNNING WAS NECESSARY FOR THE JUST LEADERSHIP OF GOD’S PEOPLE. FACED WITH THAT TASK HE FEELS HE IS ONLY A LITTLE CHILD. HE IS ALSO VERY CONSCIOUS THAT THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL ARE GOD’S PEOPLE AND THAT HE IS GOD’S SERVANT (THE TERMS YOUR PEOPLE AND YOUR SERVANT ARE BOTH USED THREE TIMES IN THE HEBREW OF VS 7–9). SOLOMON THEREFORE ASKS FOR AN UNDERSTANDING MIND WITH WHICH TO RULE THE PEOPLE. THE HEBREW VERB USED FOR THIS ACTIVITY CARRIES THE IDEAS OF JUDGING AND JUSTICE. THIS IS IN KEEPING WITH THE FACT THAT IN ISRAEL THE KING HIMSELF WAS THE FINAL COURT OF APPEAL (2 SA. 14:4–17; 15:2; 1 KI. 3:16–28) AND WAS PERSONALLY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE PROMOTION OF JUSTICE. HENCE IN PS. 72:1–4 THE PSALMIST PRAYS: ‘ENDOW THE KING WITH YOUR JUSTICE, O GOD, THE ROYAL SON WITH YOUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. HE WILL JUDGE YOUR PEOPLE IN RIGHTEOUSNESS, YOUR AFFLICTED ONES WITH JUSTICE … HE WILL DEFEND THE AFFLICTED AMONG THE PEOPLE AND SAVE THE CHILDREN OF THE NEEDY; HE WILL CRUSH THE OPPRESSOR.’ THE ABILITY TO JUDGE WITH RIGHTEOUSNESS AND DEFEND THE POOR IS ALSO AN IMPORTANT PART OF ISAIAH’S PICTURE OF THE IDEAL KING WHO IS TO COME (IS. 11:3–5). THESE SAME QUALITIES SHOULD PROVIDE OUR AGENDA WHENEVER WE PRAY FOR ‘KINGS AND ALL THOSE IN AUTHORITY’ (1 TIM. 2:2). GOD COMMENDS SOLOMON’S SENSE OF PRIORITIES AND BESTOWS ON HIM WISDOM FAR BEYOND THE ORDINARY. HE PROMISES HIM, IN ADDITION, THOSE THINGS WHICH HE COULD HAVE ASKED FOR BUT DID NOT: RICHES, HONOR AND (IF HE WOULD CONTINUE TO WALK IN GOD’S WAYS) LONG LIFE. ON WAKING SOLOMON RETURNS AT ONCE TO JERUSALEM TO CELEBRATE THE MOMENTOUS EVENT WITH SACRIFICES AND A FEAST BEFORE THE ARK OF THE COVENANT. THERE WERE CLEARLY SOME THINGS FOR WHICH THE HIGH PLACES, EVEN THE MOST IMPORTANT HIGH PLACE AT GIBEON, WERE NOT ADEQUATE. 3:16–28 WISDOM DEMONSTRATED. SOLOMON’S NEW GIFT IS IMMEDIATELY DEMONSTRATED IN THE WELL-KNOWN STORY OF THE TWO PROSTITUTES ARGUING OVER A BABY. SOLOMON PROPOSES A SIMPLE SOLUTION: THE CHILD IS TO BE SLICED IN HALF SO THAT BOTH WOMEN COULD SHARE IT. THE RULING IS SO SHOCKING IN ITS BRUTALITY THAT IT SOUNDS LIKE THE CALLOUS RESPONSE OF A JUDGE WEARIED BEYOND ENDURANCE BY THE CLAIMS AND COUNTER-CLAIMS OF THE TWO WOMEN. INDEED, THE NARRATIVE IS OPEN TO THAT INTERPRETATION. HOWEVER, THE VERY DIFFERENT REACTIONS OF THE WOMEN ALLOW SOLOMON TO DECIDE WHICH WAS THE REAL MOTHER OF THE LIVING CHILD. ITS LIFE IS SPARED, AND SOLOMON’S REPUTATION IS MADE. THE PEOPLE ARE IN NO DOUBT THAT HE IS EQUIPPED WITH WISDOM FROM GOD FOR THE DISPENSING OF JUSTICE. 4:1–34 INTERNAL ARRANGEMENTS OF THE KINGDOM. THE FIRST NINETEEN VERSES SEEM AT FIRST SIGHT TO BE A RATHER TEDIOUS LISTING OF SOLOMON’S COURT OFFICIALS. BUT THE PASSAGE REVEALS SOME INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE KINGDOM. FIRST, WE SHOULD NOTE THAT THE PRIESTS ARE INCLUDED AMONG SOLOMON’S CHIEF OFFICIALS (2–5). WE ARE REMINDED THAT DAVID HAD BROUGHT THE CULTIC RELIGION OF THE LAND FIRMLY UNDER ROYAL CONTROL WHEN HE MADE JERUSALEM THE NEW CAPITAL OF THE KINGDOM. (IT IS SURPRISING TO FIND ABIATHAR INCLUDED IN THE LIST IN VIEW OF HIS EXPULSION IN 2:26–27; PERHAPS HE WAS NOT EXPELLED SO EARLY IN SOLOMON’S REIGN AS THE POSITION OF THAT NOTE MIGHT SUGGEST.) SECONDLY, THE LIST OF TWELVE OFFICERS (7–19) REVEALS A SIGNIFICANT ADMINISTRATIVE REFORM. MANY OF THE TWELVE GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRICTS FOR WHICH THEY ARE RESPONSIBLE DO NOT CORRESPOND TO THE OLD TRIBAL TERRITORIES. PARTS OF THE COUNTRY HAD BEEN DIVIDED UP IN FRESH WAYS WHICH IGNORED TRADITIONAL TRIBAL BOUNDARIES. IT IS HARD TO IMAGINE SUCH A MOVE BEING WARMLY WELCOMED. BUT EVEN MORE IMPORTANT IS THE FACT THAT THE DISTRICTS ADMINISTERED BY THESE TWELVE OFFICERS DID NOT INCLUDE THE TERRITORY OF JUDAH. (JUDAH HAD AN OFFICER OF ITS OWN IF THE END OF V 19 IS READ AS IN THE RSV, ‘AND THERE WAS ONE OFFICER IN THE LAND OF JUDAH’.) THIS ALERTS US TO THE FACT THAT THE TERM ALL ISRAEL IS USED IN TWO DIFFERENT WAYS IN THIS CHAPTER. WHEN V 1 TELLS US THAT SOLOMON RULED OVER ALL ISRAEL IT CLEARLY MEANS THE WHOLE KINGDOM; BUT WHEN V 7 SAYS THAT SOLOMON HAD TWELVE DISTRICT GOVERNORS OVER ALL ISRAEL IT MEANS ISRAEL (THE NORTHERN TRIBES) AS DISTINCT FROM JUDAH. IN FACT, JUDAH AND ISRAEL ARE REFERRED TO AS SEPARATE ENTITIES IN V 20. IT IS THEREFORE CLEAR THAT JUDAH AND ISRAEL CONTINUED TO BE ADMINISTERED SEPARATELY, AS THEY HAD BEEN UNDER DAVID (2 SA. 24:1, 9).**

**SOLOMON’S 12 ADMINISTRATIVE DISTRICTS AS DESCRIBED IN 1 KINGS 4:7–19.**

**THERE IS, HOWEVER, AN EVEN MORE IMPORTANT FACT TO BE DEDUCED FROM THE LIST OF OFFICIALS. THEIR TASK WAS TO ADMINISTER THE COLLECTION OF TAXES IN KIND TO SUPPLY THE NEEDS OF THE ROYAL HOUSEHOLD. EACH OF THE TWELVE GOVERNORS WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR SUPPLYING THE COURT FOR ONE MONTH OF THE YEAR (7). THIS MEANS THAT JUDAH HAD NO ROLE IN THE TAXATION SYSTEM; THE BURDEN FELL ENTIRELY ON ISRAEL. THE DESCRIPTION OF THE COURT’S ASTONISHING DAILY CONSUMPTION IN VS 22–23 GIVES US SOME IDEA OF HOW GREAT THAT BURDEN MUST HAVE BEEN. NEVERTHELESS, ALL ISRAEL AND JUDAH ATE, THEY DRANK AND THEY WERE HAPPY (20). THE REALM WAS SECURE, THANKS TO AN ARMY ENHANCED WITH A MASSIVE CONTINGENT OF CHARIOTS (25–26). WITH SUCH MILITARY STRENGTH SOLOMON SHOULD HAVE HAD NO DIFFICULTY HOLDING TOGETHER THE EMPIRE WHICH DAVID HAD CREATED, STRETCHING FROM NORTH-WEST MESOPOTAMIA TO THE SOUTHERN COASTAL PLAIN (21, 24). HOWEVER, THIS PICTURE IS MODIFIED SOMEWHAT IN LATER CHAPTERS. THE CHAPTER ENDS BY PRAISING SOLOMON’S WISDOM, STRESSING, WITH THE AID OF COMPARISONS, HIS EXTRAORDINARY DEPTH OF UNDERSTANDING AND BREADTH OF KNOWLEDGE. FOR THE WRITER THIS IS NOT A CHANGE OF SUBJECT; THE WEALTH, STRENGTH, PROSPERITY AND GREATNESS WHICH WERE DESCRIBED IN THE PRECEDING VERSES ARE ALL TO BE SEEN AS MANIFESTATIONS OF SOLOMON’S WISDOM. (WE WILL FIND THE SAME LINKAGE IN 10:14–29.) AND YET THERE IS A TENSION IN THIS CHAPTER. FOR WHEN WE READ IT IN THE LIGHT OF LATER EVENTS IT IS HARD TO AVOID THE CONCLUSION THAT THE EXTRAVAGANCE OF SOLOMON’S COURT, AND THE BURDEN WHICH IT PLACED ON THE NORTHERN TRIBES, WERE THE SEEDS OF THAT DISCONTENT WHICH EVENTUALLY SPLIT THE KINGDOM.**

**5:1–18 PREPARATIONS FOR TEMPLE-BUILDING OF THE LORD**

**THE HEART OF THE ACCOUNT OF SOLOMON’S REIGN IS THE LONG SECTION (6:1–9:9) DEVOTED PRIMARILY TO THE BUILDING OF THE TEMPLE IN JERUSALEM. THIS IS FRAMED BY TWO NOTICES CONCERNING SOLOMON’S DEALINGS WITH HIRAM KING OF TYRE (5:1–18; 9:10–14). 5:1–12 SOLOMON AND HIRAM. HIRAM KING OF TYRE HAD EARLIER SUPPLIED DAVID WITH TIMBER, CARPENTERS AND STONEMASONS TO BUILD HIS RESIDENCE IN JERUSALEM (2 SA. 5:11). ON HEARING OF SOLOMON’S ACCESSION, HIRAM SENT A FORMAL EMBASSY TO ENSURE THAT WARM DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS CONTINUED BETWEEN THE TWO ROYAL HOUSES. SOLOMON TOOK THE OPPORTUNITY TO NEGOTIATE HIRAM’S HELP WITH ANOTHER BUILDING PROJECT. THE TIME HAD COME TO TAKE UP HIS GOD GIVEN TASK OF BUILDING A TEMPLE IN JERUSALEM (4–5). ALTHOUGH HE IS STYLED SIMPLY KING OF TYRE, HIRAM EVIDENTLY RULED OVER A LARGE PART OF THE PHOENICIAN COAST AND THE FORESTED MOUNTAINS OF LEBANON; MEN FROM SIDON AND BYBLOS (GEBAL) WERE AMONG THE WORKERS HE SUPPLIED (6, 18). IN RETURN FOR THE TIMBER AND CRAFTSMEN SOLOMON UNDERTOOK TO SUPPLY HIRAM’S COURT WITH GRAIN AND OLIVE OIL. THE ARRANGEMENT WAS EMBODIED IN A TREATY (12). THE AMOUNT OF GRAIN SUPPLIED EACH YEAR TO HIRAM’S COURT (11) WAS NOT MUCH LESS THAN THE AMOUNT CONSUMED ANNUALLY BY SOLOMON’S. IN OTHER WORDS, THE COMMITMENT MUST HAVE VIRTUALLY DOUBLED THE GRAIN TAX WHICH THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL HAD TO PAY. 5:13–18 SOLOMON’S LABOR FORCE. HAVING EXPLAINED HOW SOLOMON SECURED THE RAW MATERIALS FOR THE TEMPLE, THE WRITER TURNS TO THE RAISING OF THE LABOR FORCE. SOLOMON CONSCRIPTED LABORERS FROM ALL ISRAEL, TOTALING 30,000 MEN (13). IT IS NOT CLEAR WHICH OF ITS TWO MEANINGS ALL ISRAEL HAS IN THIS VERSE. THESE WORKERS HAD TO SPEND EVERY THIRD MONTH IN LEBANON; IN OTHER WORDS, THEY WERE ABSENT FROM THEIR FARMS FOR A THIRD OF EACH YEAR. IN ADDITION, 150,000 PEOPLE WERE EMPLOYED IN THE HILL COUNTRY AT HOME, QUARRYING, CUTTING AND TRANSPORTING STONE. THE WHOLE PROJECT TOOK SEVEN YEARS TO COMPLETE (6:38). THE WRITER DOUBTLESS INTENDED TO IMPRESS HIS READERS WITH THE GRAND SCALE OF SOLOMON’S PREPARATIONS, BUT FOR THE MODERN READER THE ACCOUNT CREATES A CERTAIN TENSION WHICH THE NARRATOR MAY NOT HAVE INTENDED. ON THE ONE HAND, WE CANNOT FAIL TO BE IMPRESSED THAT SOLOMON WAS ABLE TO COMMAND SUCH A MASSIVE WORKFORCE AND RAISE THE TAXES TO PAY FOR PHOENICIAN HELP. ON THE OTHER HAND, NEITHER CAN WE ESCAPE THE FACT THAT THE COST IN HUMAN LABOR AND THE PRODUCE OF THE LAND MUST HAVE IMPOSED A CRUSHING BURDEN ON THE PEOPLE.**

**6:1–7:51 BUILDING THE TEMPLE OF THE LORD**

**6:1–38 THE BUILDING. THIS CHAPTER IS CLEARLY ARRANGED IN A SYMMETRICAL PATTERN IN WHICH THE SECOND PART IS THE MIRROR-IMAGE OF THE FIRST. THE PATTERN HAS GOD’S WORD TO SOLOMON AT ITS CENTER, EMPHASIZING ITS IMPORTANCE: A1 CHRONOLOGICAL NOTE (1); B1 DESCRIPTION OF THE BUILDING’S BASIC STRUCTURE (2–10); C GOD SPEAKS TO SOLOMON (11–13); B2 DESCRIPTION OF DECORATION AND FITTINGS (14–36); A2 CHRONOLOGICAL NOTE (37–38). HOWEVER, THIS CHAPTER DOES NOT CONTAIN EVERYTHING THE WRITER HAS TO TELL US ABOUT THE EQUIPPING OF THE TEMPLE. HE DESCRIBES ITS FURNISHINGS IN 7:13–51, AFTER GIVING AN ACCOUNT OF SOLOMON’S ROYAL PALACE. THE REASON FOR THIS RATHER SURPRISING ARRANGEMENT OF THE MATERIAL IS SUGGESTED BELOW. THE OPENING CHRONOLOGICAL NOTE DOES NOT DATE THE BEGINNING OF THE BUILDING WORK JUST IN RELATION TO SOLOMON’S REIGN BUT ALSO IN TERMS OF TIME ELAPSED SINCE THE EXODUS FROM EGYPT. THERE ARE PROBABLY TWO MAIN REASONS FOR THIS. FIRST, IT INVITES COMPARISON BETWEEN THE TWO EVENTS; IT SUGGESTS THAT THE BUILDING OF THE TEMPLE WAS AS SIGNIFICANT AN EVENT IN ISRAEL’S HISTORY AS THAT WHICH SAW THE BIRTH OF THE NATION. SECONDLY, BY PLACING THE TEMPLE PROJECT IN ITS HISTORICAL CONTEXT, IT REMINDS US THAT STEPHEN YAHWEH IS A GOD WHOSE PURPOSES ARE WORKED OUT IN HISTORY AND WHOSE PLANS ARE OFTEN LONG-TERM. THE PROMISE OF A PLACE WHICH ‘THE LORD YOUR GOD WILL CHOOSE … TO PUT HIS NAME THERE FOR HIS DWELLING’ (DT. 12:5) TOOK MANY LIFETIMES TO FIND ITS FULFILMENT. THE DESCRIPTION OF THE TEMPLE AND ITS DECORATION CONTAINS SEVERAL DIFFICULTIES FOR THE MODERN READER. THERE ARE SOME ARCHITECTURAL TERMS WHICH ARE NOT EASY TO TRANSLATE, AND MUCH OF THE DETAIL IS DIFFICULT TO VISUALIZE. IT IS A GREAT PITY THAT THE TEXT HAS NOT COME DOWN TO US COMPLETE WITH GROUND PLANS, ELEVATIONS AND ARTIST’S IMPRESSIONS! VS 2–10 DESCRIBE THE BASIC SHELL OF THE BUILDING. IT WAS RECTANGULAR AND ALIGNED ON AN EAST-WEST AXIS. THE MAIN PART OF THE BUILDING, CONSISTING OF THE HOLY PLACE (MAIN HALL; ‘NAVE’ IN THE RSV) AND THE INNER SANCTUARY (ALSO CALLED THE MOST HOLY PLACE; 16), WAS ABOUT 90 FT (27 M) LONG, 30 FT (9 M) WIDE AND 45 FT (13.5 M) HIGH. THE PORCH OR VESTIBULE (PORTICO) WAS THE SAME WIDTH AS THE REST OF THE BUILDING AND ADDED A FURTHER 15 FT (4.5 M) TO ITS LENGTH. THREE STORIES OF ROOMS WERE BUILT AROUND THE OUTSIDE (EXCLUDING THE PORCH) AND WERE HALF THE HEIGHT OF THE TEMPLE ITSELF. THESE HAD THEIR OWN ENTRANCE ON THE SOUTH SIDE AND DID NOT CONNECT WITH THE INTERIOR OF THE TEMPLE. THE PURPOSE OF THESE OUTER ROOMS IS NOT EXPLAINED, BUT THEY WERE PROBABLY FOR THE STORAGE OF VESTMENTS AND CERTAIN OFFERINGS, AND PERHAPS PROVIDED ACCOMMODATION FOR THE PRIESTS ON DUTY. LIGHT ENTERED THE TEMPLE THROUGH WINDOWS WHICH MUST HAVE BEEN SET IN THE UPPER HALF OF THE WALLS, ABOVE THE HEIGHT OF THE OUTER ROOMS. THE BUILDING WAS ROOFED WITH BEAMS AND PLANKS OF CEDAR. THE STONES FOR THE TEMPLE WERE ALL FULLY PREPARED AT THE QUARRY SO THAT NO IRON TOOLS WERE USED ON THE BUILDING SITE (7). THIS ODD DETAIL, WHICH INTERRUPTS THE DESCRIPTION OF THE OUTER ROOMS, IS PROBABLY INTENDED TO SHOW THAT THE WORK WAS DONE IN COMPLIANCE WITH A COMMANDMENT IN EX. 20:25 (CF. DT. 27:5–6). THIS ACTUALLY CONCERNS THE BUILDING OF ALTARS AND INSTRUCTS THAT ONLY UNHEWN STONES (I.E. STONES IN THEIR NATURAL STATE, AS WOULD BE USED TO MAKE A DRY-STONE WALL) MUST BE EMPLOYED. SOLOMON’S CRAFTSMEN WERE BUILDING A TEMPLE, NOT AN ALTAR, AND THEY EVIDENTLY FELT FREE TO USE CUT AND DRESSED STONE THROUGHOUT. BUT THEY WORKED IN THE SPIRIT OF THE COMMANDMENT’S PROSCRIPTION OF THE USE OF TOOLS, MAKING SURE NONE WERE USED ON THE TEMPLE SITE. INSIDE THE TEMPLE THE STONEWORK WAS COMPLETELY COVERED WITH WOODEN PANELS, CEDAR ON THE WALLS AND CEILING AND PINE ON THE FLOORS (15). THE INNER SANCTUARY MUST HAVE HAD EITHER A RAISED FLOOR OR A FALSE CEILING (OR BOTH), REDUCING ITS HEIGHT FROM 30 TO 20 CUBITS (ABOUT 30 FT/9 M) AND MAKING ITS INTERIOR A PERFECT CUBE (20). THE PANELS ON THE WALLS WERE CARVED TO PORTRAY FLOWERS AND GOURDS, AND THE WALLS, CEILING AND FLOOR OF THE WHOLE BUILDING WERE ALL OVERLAID WITH GOLD, AS WERE THE CEDAR WOOD ALTAR AND THE HUGE OLIVE WOOD CHERUBIM OF THE INNER SANCTUARY. THESE CHERUBIM PROBABLY RESEMBLED THE WINGED SPHINXES FAMILIAR FROM ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN ART. PHOENICIAN EXAMPLES PORTRAY A CREATURE WITH A HUMAN HEAD, AN ANIMAL BODY WITH FOUR LEGS, AND A PAIR OF WINGS; THEY PROBABLY PROVIDE A CLOSE ANALOGY TO THOSE PRODUCED BY SOLOMON’S PHOENICIAN CRAFTSMEN. CHERUBIM ALSO FEATURED IN A FRIEZE CARVED AROUND THE WALLS, ALONG WITH PALM TREES AND FLOWERS (29). THE LAVISH USE OF GOLD OVERLAY SOUNDS EXTRAORDINARY BUT WAS IN FACT REGULAR PRACTICE IN THE ADORNING OF ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN TEMPLES. THE MOTIFS WITH WHICH SOLOMON’S TEMPLE WAS DECORATED (THE GOURDS, OPEN FLOWERS, PALM TREES AND CHERUBIM) WERE ALSO PART OF THE COMMON REPERTOIRE OF ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN ART, AND EVEN THE BASIC GROUND PLAN OF THE BUILDING CAN BE PARALLELED BY A NUMBER OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL DISCOVERIES. SOLOMON’S TEMPLE IS UNIQUE IN PURPOSE BUT NOT IN CONCEPTION. IN ITS ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN AND ARTISTIC DECORATION, IT VERY MUCH REFLECTED THE CONVENTIONS OF THE TIME. IT IS A STRIKING EXAMPLE OF HOW ELEMENTS OF A PREVAILING CULTURE CAN BE EMPLOYED FOR THE WORSHIP AND GLORY OF GOD. THE MOTIFS USED TO DECORATE THE INTERIOR OF THE TEMPLE MAY SEEM TO INFRINGE THE SECOND OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS, WHICH PROHIBITS THE MAKING OF IMAGES ‘OF ANYTHING IN HEAVEN ABOVE OR ON THE EARTH BENEATH’ (EX. 20:4). PERHAPS THE COMMANDMENT WAS UNDERSTOOD TO PROHIBIT THE MAKING OF LIKENESSES ONLY WHEN THERE WAS A DANGER OF THEM BECOMING OBJECTS OF WORSHIP, AND THIS DANGER WAS THOUGHT TO BE ELIMINATED IN A TEMPLE DEDICATED TO THE WORSHIP OF STEPHEN YAHWEH ALONE. AFTER DESCRIBING THE INNER SANCTUARY (16, 19–21, 22B–28), THE ACCOUNT MOVES OUTWARDS AGAIN, DESCRIBING FIRST THE DOORS WHICH CLOSED OFF THE INNER SANCTUARY AND THEN THE DOORS BETWEEN THE MAIN HALL AND THE PORCH. FINALLY, WE ARE LED OUTSIDE TO THE INNER COURTYARD (36), A VAGUE TERM WHICH PRESUMABLY REFERS TO THE IMMEDIATE SURROUNDINGS OF THE BUILDING. A SECOND CHRONOLOGICAL NOTE ROUNDS OFF THE ACCOUNT, REMINDING US OF WHEN THE TEMPLE WAS BEGUN, TELLING US WHEN IT WAS FINISHED, AND GIVING US THE TOTAL DURATION OF THE PROJECT. WE HAVE NOT YET CONSIDERED GOD’S WORD TO SOLOMON WHICH LIES EMBEDDED IN THIS ACCOUNT (11–13). THIS WORD IS SAID TO CONCERN THIS TEMPLE YOU ARE BUILDING, BUT IT CONTAINS NO FURTHER REFERENCE TO THE TEMPLE. WHAT THEN IS ITS PURPOSE? THE CONDITIONAL NATURE OF GOD’S PROMISE TO DAVID, ALREADY MADE CLEAR BY DAVID IN 2:4, IS NOW RESTATED BY GOD HIMSELF IN WORDS WHICH RELATE IT TO THE TEMPLE-BUILDING PROJECT. GOD WILL LIVE AMONG THE ISRAELITES IF SOLOMON WILL WALK IN GOD’S STATUTES AND OBEY HIS COMMANDS. IN OTHER WORDS, THE BUILDING OF A TEMPLE WILL NOT GUARANTEE GOD’S PRESENCE AMONG HIS PEOPLE; GOD CANNOT BE TAMED AND KEPT IN A BOX, HOWEVER MAGNIFICENT THE BOX MIGHT BE. HIS PRESENCE DEPENDS ON OBEDIENCE AND SPECIFICALLY NOW ON THE OBEDIENCE OF SOLOMON. WHILE THESE VERSES STOP SHORT OF CRITICIZING THE BUILDING OF THE TEMPLE, THEY DO PUT THE PROJECT IN PERSPECTIVE BY STRESSING THE LARGER ISSUE OF OBEDIENCE. 7:1–12 SOLOMON’S PALACE. THE ACCOUNT OF THE TEMPLE AND ITS FURNISHINGS IS DIVIDED INTO TWO PARTS OF ALMOST EQUAL LENGTH BY THIS SHORT ACCOUNT OF SOLOMON’S PALACE BUILDINGS. AS THE TEMPLE WAS BUILT FIRST AND THEN THE PALACE (6:37–7:1; 9:10), WE MIGHT LOGICALLY EXPECT THE ACCOUNT OF THE PALACE TO FOLLOW THE DEDICATION OF THE TEMPLE IN CH. 8. BUT WE WILL SEE THAT THE WRITER HAD A PARTICULAR REASON FOR PLACING IT HERE. IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE NOTE THAT THE TEMPLE TOOK SEVEN YEARS TO BUILD (6:38) COMES THE INFORMATION THAT SOLOMON SPENT THIRTEEN YEARS BUILDING HIS PALACE (LIT. ‘HIS HOUSE’). THE HEBREW FOR ‘HIS HOUSE’ OCCURS TWICE IN 7:1, HIGHLIGHTING THE SHIFT AWAY FROM ‘THE HOUSE [TEMPLE] OF THE LORD’ (6:37). IS THERE IMPLICIT CRITICISM HERE OF THE FACT THAT SOLOMON SPENT ALMOST TWICE AS LONG ON HIS OWN HOUSE AS HE DID, BUILDING THE HOUSE OF GOD? QUITE POSSIBLY, BUT THE MAIN PURPOSE OF THIS PASSAGE SEEMS TO BE RATHER DIFFERENT. DAVID HAD ALREADY HAD A RESIDENCE BUILT IN JERUSALEM WITH MATERIALS SUPPLIED BY HIRAM OF TYRE (2 SA. 5:11), BUT SOLOMON REQUIRED SOMETHING ON A MUCH GRANDER SCALE. FIVE DISTINCT BUILDINGS ARE MENTIONED IN VS 2–8: THE PALACE OF THE FOREST OF LEBANON, ‘THE HALL OF PILLARS’ (A COLONNADE), THE THRONE HALL (ALSO KNOWN AS THE HALL OF JUSTICE, FOR THE KING’S THRONE WAS ALSO HIS JUDGMENT SEAT, STRESSING THAT IT WAS AS RULER THAT HE DISPENSED JUSTICE), SOLOMON’S PRIVATE RESIDENCE AND THE PRIVATE RESIDENCE OF THE PHARAOH’S DAUGHTER. (SINCE SHE IS THE ONLY ONE OF SOLOMON’S WIVES WHOSE RESIDENCE FORMED PART OF THIS SUITE OF BUILDINGS, THE IMPLICATION IS THAT SHE WAS HIS CHIEF WIFE. THIS IS ALSO SUGGESTED BY THE FACT THAT SHE IS MENTIONED SO OFTEN: 3:1, 9:16, 24; 11:1.) WE ARE NOT TOLD HOW THESE VARIOUS BUILDINGS RELATED TO EACH OTHER. THEY PRESUMABLY JOINED TO FORM A SINGLE COMPLEX, SINCE THEY ARE REFERRED TO COLLECTIVELY AS ‘HIS HOUSE’ IN V 1. THE PALACE COMPLEX WAS EVIDENTLY ADJACENT TO THE TEMPLE WITH A PASSAGE CONNECTING THE TWO (CF. 2 KI. 16:18). WE ARE NOT GIVEN THE DIMENSIONS OF ALL THESE BUILDINGS, BUT IT IS CLEAR THAT THE PALACE OF THE FOREST OF LEBANON ALONE WAS LARGER THAN THE TEMPLE (2). THE WHOLE PALACE COMPLEX MUST, THEREFORE, HAVE DWARFED THE TEMPLE SPECTACULARLY. IN JESUS’ DAY THE MASSIVE TEMPLE BUILT BY HEROD THE GREAT DOMINATED THE WHOLE OF JERUSALEM, BUT IN PRE-EXILIC TIMES THE ROYAL PALACE MUST HAVE BEEN THE CITY’S MOST IMPOSING BUILDING. AND THIS IS PROBABLY WHY THE WRITER DESCRIBES IT WHERE HE DOES. PHYSICALLY THE PALACE DWARFED THE TEMPLE, BUT IN HIS ACCOUNT, HE DWARFS THE DESCRIPTION OF THE PALACE BY SURROUNDING IT WITH LENGTHIER DESCRIPTIONS OF THE TEMPLE AND ITS FURNISHINGS. IN THE WRITER’S VIEW THIS RESTORES THE CORRECT PERSPECTIVE; FOR THE TEMPLE WAS THE TRUE HEART OF THE CITY AND OF THE NATION. 7:13–47 THE TEMPLE FURNISHINGS: THE WORK OF HIRAM, CRAFTSMAN IN BRONZE. A NAMESAKE OF THE KING OF TYRE, THE SON OF A PHOENICIAN FATHER AND AN ISRAELITE MOTHER, WAS BROUGHT FROM TYRE TO JERUSALEM TO MANUFACTURE THE BRONZE FURNISHINGS FOR THE TEMPLE. HIS OUTSTANDING ABILITY IS MENTIONED AT THE OUTSET AND IS AMPLY ILLUSTRATED BY THE DESCRIPTIONS OF THE OBJECTS WHICH HE MADE. AS IN THE DESCRIPTION OF THE TEMPLE ITSELF, THERE ARE SOME DETAILS WHICH ARE DIFFICULT TO FOLLOW. THE ACCOUNT OF THE WORK OF HIRAM FOR THE TEMPLE PARALLELS TO SOME EXTENT THAT OF THE WORK OF BEZALEL FOR THE TABERNACLE (EX. 36–38), AND WE ARE DOUBTLESS INTENDED TO NOTE THE BROADER PARALLEL BETWEEN THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE TABERNACLE AND THE BUILDING OF THE TEMPLE. HOWEVER, WHILE THE TABERNACLE AND ITS EQUIPMENT WERE COMMANDED IN DETAIL BY GOD (EX. 25–27, ESPECIALLY 25:9), NO SUCH CLAIM IS MADE HERE FOR THE TEMPLE OR ITS FURNISHINGS. THE PURPOSE OF THE TWO HUGE PILLARS (ABOUT 27 FT/8 M HIGH) IS NOT CLEAR. THEY DID NOT SUPPORT ANYTHING BUT WERE FREESTANDING, LOCATED IN FRONT OF THE TEMPLE PORTICO. THEY WERE TOPPED WITH ELABORATELY DECORATED, LILY-SHAPED CAPITALS. THEIR NAMES, JAKIN AND BOAZ, ARE SOMETHING OF A PUZZLE, BUT THE MOST LIKELY THEORY IS THAT THESE WERE THE OPENING WORDS OF TWO INSCRIPTIONS. ON THE BASIS OF THE VARIOUS EXPRESSIONS FOUND IN THE PSALMS IT HAS BEEN SUGGESTED THAT THE INSCRIPTIONS MAY HAVE READ ROUGHLY AS FOLLOWS: ‘STEPHEN YAHWEH WILL ESTABLISH [JAKIN] THY THRONE FOR EVER’, AND ‘IN THE STRENGTH [BOAZ] OF STEPHEN YAHWEH SHALL THE KING REJOICE.’ IF THIS IS CORRECT, THE PILLARS MAY HAVE COMMEMORATED GOD’S PROMISES CONCERNING THE DAVIDIC DYNASTY. THERE ARE HINTS LATER IN KINGS THAT ON TAKING THE THRONE A KING STOOD BY ONE OF THESE PILLARS TO PLEDGE HIMSELF TO KEEP GOD’S COVENANT LAWS (2 KI. 11:14; 23:3). HIRAM’S MOST IMPRESSIVE TECHNOLOGICAL ACHIEVEMENT WAS PERHAPS THE HUGE BRONZE BASIN SOME 15 FT (4.5 M) IN DIAMETER KNOWN AS THE SEA. IT WAS SUPPORTED ON TWELVE BRONZE BULLS ARRANGED IN FOUR GROUPS OF THREE, EACH GROUP FACING ONE OF THE CARDINAL POINTS. ACCORDING TO 2 CH. 4:6, ITS PURPOSE WAS TO HOLD WATER FOR RITUAL WASHING BY THE PRIESTS, BUT ITS SIZE AND DESIGN, AS WELL AS ITS NAME, SUGGEST IT WAS SYMBOLIC AS WELL AS FUNCTIONAL. AS GOD’S POWER AT CREATION HAD BEEN DISPLAYED BY HIS CONTAINMENT OF THE SEA, THE SYMBOL OF CHAOS (SEE THE VIVID WORD-PICTURE IN JB. 38:8–11), SO THIS GIANT BOWL SIGNIFIED HIS UPHOLDING OF THE CREATED ORDER AND HIS POWER OVER THE FORCES OF CHAOS WHICH THREATEN IT. HIRAM ALSO MADE TEN MOVABLE STANDS, DECORATED ON THE SIDES WITH LIONS, BULLS AND CHERUBIM, AND TEN REMOVABLE BASINS, WHICH STOOD ON THEM. THESE WERE ALSO FOR RITUAL ABLUTIONS, AND THE FACT THAT THEIR LOCATIONS ARE MENTIONED ALONG WITH THAT OF THE SEA (39) SUGGESTS THEY WERE USED IN CONNECTION WITH IT. VS 40–45 PROVIDE A SUMMARY OF HIRAM’S WORK, ADDING SOME LESSER ITEMS WHICH DO NOT DESERVE DETAILED DESCRIPTIONS (POTS, SHOVELS AND SPRINKLING BOWLS). V 46 GIVES A TANTALIZING HINT AT THE METHOD USED BY HIRAM TO CAST HIS PRODUCTS. THE SECTION CLOSES WITH RENEWED EMPHASIS ON THE GREATNESS OF HIS ACHIEVEMENT: THE WEIGHT OF ALL THIS BRONZE WORK WAS NEVER DETERMINED BECAUSE THERE WAS SO MUCH OF IT! 7:48–51 THE TEMPLE FURNISHINGS: ITEMS OF GOLD. THE LIST OF GOLD ITEMS WHICH SOLOMON HAD MADE FOR THE TEMPLE (48–50) IS VERY LIKE THE SUMMARY OF HIRAM’S WORK IN VS 40–45. IT IS AS THOUGH WE HAVE HERE A SIMILAR SUMMARY WITHOUT A DETAILED ACCOUNT TO PRECEDE IT. THE CRAFTSMAN IS NOT NAMED, UNLESS THE WRITER INTENDS US TO UNDERSTAND THAT SOLOMON MADE THESE ITEMS WITH HIS OWN HANDS (WHICH SEEMS UNLIKELY). SOLOMON ALSO CONTRIBUTED TO THE TEMPLE QUANTITIES OF SILVER AND GOLD WHICH HAD EARLIER BEEN DEDICATED TO IT BY DAVID. THESE WERE STORED IN THE TEMPLE TREASURIES (PERHAPS IN THE OUTER ROOMS), THOUGH THEIR INTENDED PURPOSE IS NOT CLEAR. IN JERUSALEM’S SUBSEQUENT HISTORY THESE TREASURIES WERE OFTEN THE SOURCE OF TRIBUTE FOR FOREIGN KINGS.**

**8:1–66 THE DEDICATION OF THE TEMPLE OF THE LORD**

**THIS LONG CHAPTER DIVIDES NATURALLY INTO SEVEN SECTIONS. AS IN CH. 6, THERE IS A MIRROR-IMAGE STRUCTURE, WHICH IN THIS CASE SPOTLIGHTS SOLOMON’S PRAYER AS THE HEART OF THE ACCOUNT: A1 INTRODUCTION AND GATHERING OF THE ASSEMBLY (1–2); B1 INSTALLATION OF THE ARK, WITH SACRIFICES (3–13); C1 SOLOMON ADDRESSES THE ASSEMBLY (14–21); D SOLOMON’S PRAYER (22–53); C2 SOLOMON ADDRESSES THE ASSEMBLY (54–61); B2 FURTHER SACRIFICES (62–64); A2 SUMMARY AND DISSOLUTION OF THE ASSEMBLY (65–66). 8:1–2 INTRODUCTION AND GATHERING OF THE ASSEMBLY. A HUGE ASSEMBLY OF PEOPLE, REPRESENTATIVE OF ALL ISRAEL, WAS ARRANGED FOR THE DEDICATION OF THE TEMPLE, WHICH BEGAN WITH THE INSTALLATION OF THE ARK OF THE COVENANT IN THE INNER SANCTUARY. THE SETTING WAS A FEAST IN THE SEVENTH MONTH, PRESUMABLY THE FEAST OF BOOTHS OR TABERNACLES WHICH, LIKE THE FEAST DESCRIBED HERE, LASTED SEVEN DAYS (65; CF. LV. 23:33–43). 8:3–13 THE INSTALLATION OF THE ARK OF THE COVENANT. THE ARK WAS BROUGHT UP FROM THE OLD QUARTER OF JERUSALEM, WHICH WAS KNOWN AS THE CITY OF DAVID (1) TO DISTINGUISH IT FROM THE NEW ROYAL PRECINCT AND TEMPLE AREA BUILT BY SOLOMON TO THE NORTH. THE ARK HAD BEEN HOUSED THERE ‘INSIDE THE TENT THAT DAVID HAD PITCHED FOR IT’ (2 SA. 6:17), AN EXPRESSION WHICH SUGGESTS THIS TENT WAS NOT THE SAME AS ‘THE TENT OF MEETING’, THE ANCIENT RELIC OF ISRAEL’S WILDERNESS PERIOD WHICH WAS BROUGHT TO THE TEMPLE WITH THE ARK. THE ACCOUNT OF THE TRANSFER OF THE ARK TO THE TEMPLE, ACCOMPANIED BY SACRIFICES, IS REMINISCENT OF THE ACCOUNT OF ITS ORIGINAL TRANSFER TO JERUSALEM BY DAVID (2 SA. 6:12–19). BUT THIS TIME EVERYTHING WAS ON A GRANDER SCALE; THE ARK’S RESTING PLACE WAS NOT TO BE A TENT BUT THE MAGNIFICENT TEMPLE, AND THE SACRIFICES CONSISTED OF SHEEP AND OXEN BEYOND NUMBERING (5). THE ARK WAS EVENTUALLY INSTALLED IN THE INNER SANCTUARY. ACCORDING TO OUR WRITER, IT CONTAINED ONLY THE TWO STONE TABLETS BEARING THE TEN COMMANDMENTS, BUT OTHER RELICS WERE KEPT THERE (PERHAPS AT AN EARLIER PERIOD) ACCORDING TO HEB. 9:4 (CF. EX. 16:32–33; NU. 17:8–10). HOWEVER, THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ARK DID NOT LIE IN WHAT IT CONTAINED, BUT IN THE FACT THAT IT SIGNIFIED THE PRESENCE OF GOD, OR MORE PRECISELY THE PRESENCE OF GOD’S GLORY, WITH HIS PEOPLE. HENCE ITS LOSS TO THE PHILISTINES IN THE TIME OF SAMUEL WAS LAMENTED WITH THE WORDS: ‘THE GLORY HAS DEPARTED FROM ISRAEL’ (1 SA. 4:21–22), AND THE PSALMIST RECORDS THE SAME EVENT BY SAYING THAT GOD ‘DELIVERED … HIS GLORY TO THE HAND OF THE FOE’ (PS. 78:61; RSV). THE CONNECTION BETWEEN THE ARK AND THE PRESENCE OF GOD’S GLORY IS ALSO EVIDENT IN THE PRESENT PASSAGE. AS THE PRIESTS WHO HAD CARRIED THE ARK AND PUT IT IN PLACE WITHDREW, THE GLORY OF THE LORD, VISIBLY MANIFESTED AS A CLOUD, FILLED THE BUILDING SO THAT THE PRIESTS COULD NOT PERFORM THEIR SERVICE BECAUSE OF THE CLOUD (10–11). THIS ECHOES THE FIRST SETTING UP OF THE TABERNACLE (CONTAINING THE ARK) BY MOSES: ‘THEN THE CLOUD COVERED THE TENT OF MEETING, AND THE GLORY OF THE LORD FILLED THE TABERNACLE. MOSES COULD NOT ENTER THE TENT OF MEETING …’ (EX. 40:34–35). IN BOTH CASES, THE PHENOMENON INDICATED GOD’S ACCEPTANCE AND APPROVAL OF WHAT HAD BEEN DONE; IT PROVIDED A VISIBLE SIGN THAT GOD’S GLORY HAD TAKEN UP RESIDENCE. BUT THE SOVEREIGN GOD WAS NOT BOUND TO RESIDE IN THE TEMPLE. SHORTLY BEFORE THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM AND THE TEMPLE, THE PROPHET EZEKIEL SAW IN A VISION ‘THE GLORY OF THE LORD’ LEAVING JERUSALEM BECAUSE OF THE GROSS INIQUITY OF ITS PEOPLE (EZK. 11:23); THIS WAS LATER COMPLEMENTED BY A FURTHER VISION OF GOD’S GLORY RETURNING TO ENTER A FUTURE RESTORED TEMPLE (EZK. 43:4). THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CHERUBIM WITH OUTSTRETCHED WINGS CAN NOW BE MORE FULLY APPRECIATED. A SMALLER VERSION OF THESE CHERUBIM HAD BEEN FITTED TO THE TOP OF THE ARK WHEN IT WAS FIRST MADE, AND THE SPACE BETWEEN THEM WAS THE PLACE WHERE GOD WAS PRESENT WHEN HE SPOKE WITH MOSES (EX. 25:18–22). SOLOMON’S CHERUBIM SEEM TO HAVE SUPERSEDED THE ORIGINALS, INDICATING THE PLACE WHERE GOD’S ‘GLORY’ WOULD RESIDE. HEZEKIAH LATER SPOKE OF GOD ‘ENTHRONED BETWEEN THE CHERUBIM’ (2 KI. 19:15). IN RESPONSE TO THE APPEARANCE OF THE CLOUD, SOLOMON PRAYED A BRIEF DEDICATORY PRAYER IN POETIC FORM. THE FIRST LINE OF THIS IN THE RSV (‘THE LORD HAS SET THE SUN IN THE HEAVENS’) IS TAKEN FROM THE LONGER GREEK VERSION AND IS NOT IN THE HEBREW; THE NIV OMITS IT. IF WE TREAT IT AS ORIGINAL, IT MAY BE SAYING TWO THINGS. FIRST, IT CAN BE SEEN TO PROCLAIM GOD AS CREATOR OF THE SUN AND THEREFORE SUPERIOR TO IT (AN IMPORTANT AFFIRMATION IN VIEW OF THE FACT THAT THE SUN ITSELF WAS WORSHIPPED BY MANY ANCIENT SOCIETIES). SECONDLY, IT SUPPLIES A CONTRAST WITH THE NEXT LINE, WHICH THUS STATES THAT ALTHOUGH GOD IS THE CREATOR OF LIGHT, HE PREFERS TO CONCEAL HIMSELF IN THE DARKNESS AND OBSCURITY OF A CLOUD. THE LINK BETWEEN THIS AND V 13 IS UNFORTUNATELY NOT CLEAR. SOLOMON MAY HAVE BEEN EXPRESSING A WISH THAT, IN SPITE OF HIS PREFERENCE FOR OBSCURITY, GOD WOULD RESIDE IN HIS MAGNIFICENT TEMPLE … FOR EVER; OR HE MAY HAVE BEEN SAYING THAT THE TEMPLE IS ENTIRELY APPROPRIATE FOR A GOD WHO PREFERS TO REMAIN OUT OF VIEW. BUT NEITHER INTERPRETATION FITS HAPPILY WITH THE VIEW OF THE TEMPLE FOUND IN THE LONGER PRAYER WHICH FOLLOWS AND WE MUST SIMPLY ADMIT THAT THE MEANING IS UNCERTAIN. 8:14–21 SOLOMON ADDRESSES THE ASSEMBLY. SOLOMON TURNED FROM FACING THE TEMPLE TO FACE THE HUGE CROWD. THE BLESSING HE DELIVERED (14) IS PROBABLY TO BE UNDERSTOOD AS THE WHOLE OF WHAT IS REPORTED VS 15–21. IN FACT, HE BEGAN WITH THE WORDS ‘BLESSED BE STEPHEN YAHWEH …’, A WAY OF EXPRESSING PRAISE FOR WHAT GOD HAD DONE; NAMELY, HE HAD ‘FULFILLED WITH HIS HAND WHAT HE SPOKE WITH HIS MOUTH’ (A MORE OR LESS LITERAL RENDERING OF THE EXPRESSION IN V 15). IN OTHER WORDS, GOD HAD SHOWN HIS WORD TO BE UTTERLY TRUSTWORTHY. THE REST OF THE SPEECH EXPANDS ON THIS, SUMMARIZING GOD’S WORDS TO DAVID THROUGH NATHAN CONCERNING A SON WHO WOULD SUCCEED HIM ON THE THRONE AND WHO WOULD BUILD THE TEMPLE (2 SA. 7:12–13). SOLOMON DECLARED THAT THE MOMENT OF FULFILMENT HAD NOW ARRIVED (20). ALTHOUGH HE WAS NOT RETICENT ABOUT HIS OWN ACHIEVEMENT (‘I HAVE SUCCEEDED DAVID … I SIT ON THE THRONE … I HAVE BUILT THE TEMPLE … I HAVE PROVIDED A PLACE …’), SOLOMON ACKNOWLEDGED THAT IT WAS ULTIMATELY GOD’S DOING, FOR IT HAD ALL COME ABOUT AS STEPHEN YAHWEH HAD PROMISED. HUMAN EFFORT AND DIVINE SOVEREIGNTY ARE HERE SUBTLY INTERWOVEN. A NEW CONCEPT OF THE TEMPLE IS INTRODUCED IN THIS SPEECH. AS WELL AS BEING A PLACE FOR THE ARK (21) IT IS ‘A HOUSE FOR THE NAME OF STEPHEN YAHWEH’ (17, 20; LITERAL RENDERING, WITH RELATED EXPRESSIONS IN VS 16, 18–19). THIS BECOMES AN IMPORTANT IDEA IN THE PRAYER WHICH FOLLOWS. 8:22–53 SOLOMON’S PRAYER. SOLOMON SIGNIFIED THE BEGINNING OF A NEW PHASE IN THE PROCEEDINGS BY TAKING UP ANOTHER POSITION, STANDING BEFORE THE ALTAR AND SPREADING HIS HANDS TOWARDS THE SKY. THE INTRODUCTION TO HIS PRAYER (22–26) BEGINS BY ECHOING DT. 7:9, BUT HE SPEAKS OF GOD’S COVENANT FAITHFULNESS SPECIFICALLY IN RELATION TO DAVID. TAKING UP GOD’S PROMISE THAT DAVID’S DYNASTY WOULD NEVER END, HE PRAYS THAT THIS TOO WOULD RECEIVE FULFILMENT. AT THE SAME TIME, HE ACKNOWLEDGES THAT THE PROMISE IS CONDITIONAL ON THE CONDUCT OF DAVID’S DESCENDANTS. BUT THE TEMPLE IS THE REAL SUBJECT OF THE PRAYER, AND SOLOMON INTRODUCES THAT IN VS 27–30. HE RECOGNIZES THE ABSURDITY OF SUPPOSING THAT STEPHEN YAHWEH COULD DWELL ON EARTH (27); FOR EVEN THE MOST-HIGHEST REACHES OF THE HEAVENS ARE NOT SUFFICIENTLY VAST TO CONTAIN HIM. SOLOMON IS CERTAINLY UNDER NO ILLUSION THAT STEPHEN YAHWEH COULD SOMEHOW BE CONTAINED IN THE TEMPLE HE HAS BUILT. HIS PRAYER IS, THEREFORE, NOT THAT GOD WILL TAKE UP RESIDENCE IN THE TEMPLE, BUT RATHER THAT HIS ATTENTION WILL BE FOCUSED ON IT TO HEAR THE PRAYERS DIRECTED TOWARDS IT. GOD WILL STILL BE IN ‘HEAVEN, YOUR DWELLING-PLACE’ (30), BUT THE SUPPLICATIONS OF KING AND PEOPLE WILL BE RECEIVED IN THE TEMPLE. IN OTHER WORDS, SOLOMON PRAYS THAT THE TEMPLE MIGHT BE THE MEETING-PLACE FOR HUMAN NEED AND DIVINE MERCY. ALL THIS SEEMS TO BE CONTAINED IN THE NOTION OF GOD’S NAME BEING IN THE TEMPLE, A THEME WHICH RECURS BRIEFLY IN V 29. THE CONCEPT OF GOD’S NAME BEING IN A PLACE (DT. 12:5 ETC.) IS, THEREFORE, A WAY OF EXPRESSING THAT GOD IS PRESENT IN A SPECIAL SENSE, BUT WITHOUT SUGGESTING A CRUDE PICTURE OF HIS LIMITATION OR CONTAINMENT. IT IS CLOSELY RELATED TO THE CONCEPT OF GOD’S ‘GLORY’, WHICH WE FOUND ASSOCIATED WITH THE ARK. SOME OF THE IDEAS IN THIS PASSAGE FIND THEIR NT COUNTERPARTS IN THE PERSON OF JESUS, IN WHOM GOD DID INDEED DWELL ON EARTH (JN. 1:14), IN WHOM THE ‘NAME’ OF GOD WAS MADE KNOWN (JN. 17:6, 26), AND WHO PROCLAIMED HIMSELF TO BE THE TRUE AND ULTIMATE ‘TEMPLE’ (JN. 2:19–22). IN HIM, DIVINE MERCY MET HUMAN NEED IN THE PROFOUNDEST SENSE. THE NEXT SECTION OF THE PRAYER (31–51) CONSISTS OF SEVEN PETITIONS WHICH ENVISAGE PARTICULAR CIRCUMSTANCES IN THE LIFE OF INDIVIDUALS OR THE NATION. THESE CONCERN: OATHS SWORN BEFORE THE ALTAR (31–32); DEFEAT BY AN ENEMY (33–34); DROUGHT (35–36); FAMINE, PESTILENCE ETC. (37–40); THE NEEDS OF A FOREIGNER IN THE LAND (41–43); GOING OUT TO BATTLE (44–45); AND CAPTIVITY (46–51). THE FIRST AND FIFTH EXAMPLES CONCERN INDIVIDUALS, WHILE THE REST CONCERN THE NATION. THE SECOND, THIRD, FOURTH AND SEVENTH ALL INVOLVE THE NEED FOR FORGIVENESS AND RESTORATION. WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF GIVING SEVEN EXAMPLES OF CIRCUMSTANCES IN WHICH PEOPLE MIGHT PRAY TOWARDS THE TEMPLE? WE MUST NOTE THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE NUMBER SEVEN THROUGHOUT THE OT; IT SEEMS TO SIGNIFY COMPLETENESS, FULFILMENT AND PERFECTION. (THE NUMBER SEVEN HAS AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN THE PRESENT CHAPTER: THE DEDICATION OF THE TEMPLE, WHICH TOOK SEVEN YEARS TO BUILD, TOOK PLACE IN THE SEVENTH MONTH DURING A FEAST LASTING SEVEN DAYS.) PROBABLY, THEN, THESE SEVEN EXAMPLES ARE MEANT TO REPRESENT ALL POSSIBLE SITUATIONS WHICH COULD CALL FORTH THE PRAYERS OF INDIVIDUALS AND THE NATION. ALL CONTINGENCIES ARE COVERED. THE FIRST READERS OF KINGS WOULD NOT HAVE FAILED TO NOTICE THAT THE LONGEST AND FINAL PETITION CONCERNED THEIR OWN SITUATION: CAPTIVITY IN A FOREIGN LAND (46–51). TO THEM IT URGED REPENTANCE AND HELD OUT THE HOPE OF GOD’S FORGIVENESS AND THE COMPASSION OF THEIR CAPTORS. IT DID NOT, HOWEVER, MAKE ANY CLEAR PROMISE OF RETURN AND RESTORATION, NOR DID IT MENTION THE PRESERVATION OF DAVID’S DYNASTY. THE ONE MEAGRE HINT THAT RETURN MIGHT EVENTUALLY COME ABOUT IS CONTAINED IN THE REMINDER THAT GOD HAD BROUGHT THEM OUT OF EGYPT, OUT OF THAT IRON-SMELTING FURNACE (51). WHILE THIS WAS MENTIONED PRIMARILY AS A GROUND FOR GOD’S FORGIVENESS, IT WOULD PERHAPS HAVE GIVEN THE EXILES A GLIMMER OF HOPE THAT GOD WOULD ONE DAY ACT IN A SIMILAR WAY AGAIN. THIS FINAL PETITION BEGINS WITH AN ACKNOWLEDGMENT THAT THERE IS NO-ONE WHO DOES NOT SIN (46). SINCE THIS MUST INCLUDE SOLOMON AND HIS DESCENDANTS, THE PHRASE IS PREGNANT WITH MEANING: THE CAPTIVITY WHICH IS ENVISAGED SEEMS VIRTUALLY INEVITABLE, FOR WHAT HOPE IS THERE THAT A DYNASTY OF FALLIBLE KINGS WOULD LIVE AS GOD REQUIRES? SOLOMON ENDED HIS PRAYER WITH A MORE GENERAL PLEA THAT GOD WOULD ALWAYS HEAR THE PETITIONS OF KING AND PEOPLE ALIKE. THE REASON FOR HIS CONFIDENCE IN ASKING SUCH A THING IS THEN STATED: GOD HAD CALLED THEM OUT FROM AMONG THE NATIONS TO BE HIS SPECIAL PEOPLE. GOD’S ACTIONS IN THE PAST, PARTICULARLY THOSE ACTIONS WHICH CLEARLY EXPRESSED HIS PURPOSES, ARE HIS PEOPLE’S GROUND FOR CONFIDENCE IN HIS MERCY IN THE PRESENT AND THE FUTURE. 8:54–61 SOLOMON ADDRESSES THE ASSEMBLY AGAIN. SOLOMON THEN TURNED BACK TO THE PEOPLE TO ‘BLESS’ THEM ONCE AGAIN. HE REMINDED THEM THAT GOD HAD FULFILLED EVERY ONE OF THE PROMISES HE HAD MADE TO MOSES AND PRAYED THAT GOD WOULD CONTINUE TO BE CLOSE TO HIS PEOPLE TO MAINTAIN THEIR CAUSE. BUT SOLOMON’S DESIRE WAS NOT (OR AT LEAST NOT SOLELY) FOR THE WELFARE OF THE PEOPLE; HE WAS INSPIRED BY AN EVEN HIGHER MOTIVE—A LONGING TO SEE GOD GLORIFIED IN THE WORLD: SO THAT ALL THE PEOPLES OF THE EARTH MAY KNOW THAT THE LORD IS GOD AND THAT THERE IS NO OTHER (60). THIS SENTIMENT IS ALSO EXPRESSED IN THE PETITION FOR THE FOREIGNER WHO HEARS OF GOD’S GREATNESS AND PRAYS TOWARDS THE TEMPLE (41–43). FINALLY, THE PEOPLE WERE URGED TO DO THEIR PART BY BEING WHOLLY TRUE TO GOD’S WAYS. IT IS BY THE WILLING OBEDIENCE OF GOD’S PEOPLE THAT THE WORLD WILL LEARN OF GOD’S CHARACTER. 8:62–64 FURTHER SACRIFICES. AS BEFITTED A MOMENTOUS OCCASION, STUPENDOUS QUANTITIES OF ANIMAL SACRIFICES WERE OFFERED (APPARENTLY ALL IN ONE DAY!). THIS TOOK PLACE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE COURTYARD THAT STOOD IN FRONT OF THE TEMPLE (THE SAME AS ‘THE INNER COURTYARD’ MENTIONED IN 6:36?) BECAUSE IT WAS THE ONLY PLACE WHERE THERE WAS ENOUGH ROOM. IT IS IMPLIED THAT SOLOMON TOOK ON A PRIESTLY ROLE HERE, CONSECRATING THE COURT AND OFFERING THE SACRIFICES, JUST AS DAVID HAD OFFERED SACRIFICES WHEN BRINGING THE ARK TO JERUSALEM (2 SA. 6:17–18). 8:65–66 SUMMARY AND THE END OF THE FEAST. ALL ISRAEL HAD BEEN REPRESENTED BY THE ASSEMBLY; AND BY SKETCHING THE NORTHERN AND SOUTHERN LIMITS OF SOLOMON’S REALM THE WRITER TAKES THE OPPORTUNITY ONCE AGAIN TO GLORIFY HIS REIGN. ON THE EIGHTH DAY THE PEOPLE RETURNED TO THEIR HOMES REJOICING.**

**9:1–14 CONCLUSION TO THE BUILDING OF THE TEMPLE OF THE LORD**

**9:1–9 GOD RESPONDS TO SOLOMON’S PRAYER. ALTHOUGH THIS WORD FROM GOD IS REPORTED IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE DEDICATION OF THE TEMPLE AND IS A REPLY TO SOLOMON’S PRAYER ON THAT OCCASION, THE WRITER DATES IT AFTER SOLOMON HAD BUILT NOT ONLY THE TEMPLE BUT THE PALACE AS WELL, WHICH TOOK A FURTHER THIRTEEN YEARS (9:10). WHEREAS IN 6:11 WE ARE TOLD SIMPLY THAT ‘THE WORD OF THE LORD CAME TO SOLOMON’ (PERHAPS THROUGH A PROPHET), HERE GOD APPEARED TO HIM ONCE AGAIN IN A DREAM-VISION, AS AT GIBEON. THE REFERENCE TO GIBEON REMINDS US THAT THE DAYS OF THE HIGH PLACES ARE NOW OVER—OR SHOULD BE! GOD TELLS SOLOMON THAT HE HAS ACCEPTED HIS PRAYER AND HAS PUT HIS NAME IN THE TEMPLE FOR EVER; THE MEANING OF THIS IS AGAIN EXPLAINED IN TERMS OF GOD’S ATTENTION BEING FOCUSED ON THE TEMPLE (3). THIS IS FOLLOWED BY A THIRD REFERENCE TO THE CONDITIONAL NATURE OF THE PROMISE TO DAVID. AND IT IS THE MOST SOMBER REFERENCE YET, FOR HERE THE NEGATIVE SIDE IS CLEARLY SPELT OUT. SOLOMON IS TOLD WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF HE AND THE PEOPLE (THE YOU IS PLURAL, AND SEE V 9) TURN ASIDE FROM GOD’S WAYS AND WORSHIP OTHER GODS: THE NATION WILL BE REMOVED FROM THE LAND AND EVEN THE TEMPLE WILL BE CAST OUT OF GOD’S SIGHT (7) AND BECOME A HEAP OF RUINS (8). CLEARLY THE PROMISE THAT GOD’S NAME AND HEART WOULD BE THERE FOR EVER WAS SUBJECT TO THE SAME CONDITIONS AS THE PROMISE OF AN EVERLASTING DYNASTY! BY EMPHASIZING THE PERILS OF DISOBEDIENCE, THIS SOLEMN WARNING CASTS A SHADOW OVER THE REST OF THE ACCOUNT OF SOLOMON’S REIGN. 9:10–14 FURTHER DEALINGS WITH HIRAM. JUST AS THE ACCOUNT OF THE BUILDING OF THE TEMPLE BEGINS WITH SOLOMON’S RELATIONS WITH HIRAM OF TYRE (CH. 5), SO IT IS ROUNDED OFF WITH A FURTHER NOTE OF THEIR DEALINGS. THIS TIME, HOWEVER, THE TONE IS NOT SO POSITIVE, AND THIS IS NOT MERELY BECAUSE IT RECORDS A SOURING OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TWO KINGS. SOLOMON’S TRANSFER OF TWENTY CITIES IN GALILEE TO HIRAM (IN EXCHANGE FOR A VAST QUANTITY OF GOLD, 14) IMPLIES THAT SOLOMON’S DUES COULD NO LONGER BE RAISED BY TAXATION. HAD HIS BUILDING PROJECTS BECOME TOO LAVISH? FURTHERMORE, THE CITIES GIVEN TO HIRAM DID NOT MEET WITH HIS APPROVAL AND HE CALLED THE DISTRICT ‘THE LAND OF GOOD-FOR-NOTHING’ (NIV MG.). THE IMPLICATION IS THAT THE IMMENSE PROSPERITY ENJOYED IN JERUSALEM DID NOT EXTEND TO THE NORTHERN PARTS OF THE KINGDOM.**

**THE NET WORTH OF THE LORD’S HOUSE IN FAITHFULNESS TO THE LORD**

**IN KING SOLOMON’S KINGDOM, HE BUILT THE HOUSE OF THE FATHER STEPHEN CALLED ZION IN THE KINGDOM OF LORDSHIP THAT WILL NEVER BE DESTROYED IN 7 YEARS THAT TOOK $576,000,000,000.00 BILLION IN 100,000 GOLD TALENTS & $384,000,000,000.00 BILLION IN 1 MILLION SILVER TALENTS IN TITHING BY 10% & 100% WHICH CONCERNS $960,000,000,000,000.00 TRILLION WHICH THE FATHER STEPHEN’S BODY IS 202,000,000,000,000,000,000 YEARS OLD IN GOLD IN LEVITICUS 27:3; 1ST CHRONICLES 22:14 & ACTS 7:47-50. WHICH WITH PRECIOUS STONES AND OTHER MATERIALS THE TITHE WOULD CONCERN 1 QUADRILLION DOLLARS [15 ZERO’S BEHIND IT] FOR 115 YEARS WITH A FRUITFUL CALL [15 YEARS + 10 YEARS IN 2ND CORINTHIANS 12:1-6 & PSALMS 90:10] THAT HAPPENED IN 930BC WHICH IS 2,945 YEARS AGO. THIS WOULD THEN CONCERN THE FATHER STEPHEN’S ADDRESS CALLED THE UNIVERSAL ZION IN THE ETERNAL KINGDOM OF LORDSHIP IN ACTS 15:16-17. THIS KINGDOM OF LORDSHIP WHICH IS KNOWN AS THE FATHER STEPHEN’S ZION ON SUNDAY PENTECOST THAT HOUSES ONLY SAINTLY CHRISTIAN LORDS & SAINTLY CHRISTIAN LADIES WILL NEVER BE DESTROYED IN DANIEL 7:18. ALL OTHER KINGDOMS, EVEN THE LORDSHIP OF THE LAW WILL COME TO AN END & BE IN DESOLATION IN THE ROCK AUTHORITIES TO THE COUNTY AUTHORITIES IN ACTS 9:3-6. THE STATE AUTHORITIES TO GOVERNMENTAL AUTHORITIES IS IN ACTS 22:6-11. THE NATIONAL AUTHORITIES TO THE KINGDOM AUTHORITIES IS IN ACTS 26:13-18.**

**PROPHECIES CONSIDERED FULFILLED: THE HEATED DEBATE ABOUT THE MESSIAH**

**DANIEL 9:24-27: PROPHECY OF SEVENTY WEEKS**

**"SEVENTY WEEKS ARE DETERMINED UPON THY PEOPLE AND UPON THY HOLY CITY, TO FINISH THE TRANSGRESSION, AND TO MAKE AN END OF SINS, AND TO MAKE RECONCILIATION FOR INIQUITY, AND TO BRING IN EVERLASTING RIGHTEOUSNESS, AND TO SEAL UP THE VISION AND PROPHECY, AND TO ANOINT THE MOST HOLY. KNOW THEREFORE AND UNDERSTAND, THAT FROM THE GOING FORTH OF THE COMMANDMENT TO RESTORE AND TO BUILD JERUSALEM UNTO THE MESSIAH THE PRINCE SHALL BE SEVEN WEEKS, AND THREESCORE AND TWO WEEKS: THE STREET SHALL BE BUILT AGAIN, AND THE WALL, EVEN IN TROUBLOUS TIMES. AND AFTER THREESCORE AND TWO WEEKS SHALL MESSIAH BE CUT OFF, BUT NOT FOR HIMSELF: AND THE PEOPLE OF THE PRINCE THAT SHALL COME SHALL DESTROY THE CITY AND THE SANCTUARY; AND THE END THEREOF SHALL BE WITH A FLOOD, AND UNTO THE END OF THE WAR DESOLATIONS ARE DETERMINED. AND HE SHALL CONFIRM THE COVENANT WITH MANY FOR ONE WEEK: AND IN THE MIDST OF THE WEEK HE SHALL CAUSE THE SACRIFICE AND THE OBLATION TO CEASE, AND FOR THE OVERSPREADING OF ABOMINATIONS HE SHALL MAKE IT DESOLATE, EVEN UNTIL THE CONSUMMATION, AND THAT DETERMINED SHALL BE POURED UPON THE DESOLATE" - DANIEL 9:24-27 (AUTHORIZED VERSION 1611).**

**REFERENCES TO "MOST HOLY", "ANOINTED" ("MESSIAH") AND "PRINCE" HAVE BEEN INTERPRETED AS SPEAKING OF JESUS, AND THE PHRASE "ANOINTED SHALL BE CUT OFF" AS POINTING TO HIS CRUCIFIXION, THE "PEOPLE OF THE PRINCE WHO IS TO COME" BEING TAKEN TO REFER TO THE ROMANS WHO DESTROYED JERUSALEM AND THE TEMPLE IN 70 AD.**

**IN THE GOSPEL OF MARK, JESUS REFERS TO THE "ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION" (MARK 13:14, NASB) AND THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW ADDS A DIRECT REFERENCE TO THIS AS BEING FROM THE BOOK OF DANIEL, "THEREFORE WHEN YOU SEE THE ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION WHICH WAS SPOKEN OF THROUGH DANIEL THE PROPHET…" (MATT 24:15, NASB).**

**THE GENERAL SCHOLARLY VIEW IS THAT THE AUTHOR OF DANIEL IS WRITING A CONTEMPORANEOUS ACCOUNT OF THE MACCABEAN REVOLT C. 167 BCE AND THE "CUTTING OFF OF AN ANOINTED ONE" (9:26)— REFERS TO THE MURDER OF THE HIGH PRIEST ONIAS III; THE "ABOMINATION THAT CAUSES DESOLATION" REFERS TO ANTIOCHUS IV ERECTING A STATUE OF ZEUS IN THE TEMPLE, THE FINAL STRAW BREAKING THE UNEASY COEXISTENCE OF THE TRADITIONALIST JEWS AND THE MORE HELLENIZED JEWS.**

**DEUTERONOMY 18:15: DEUTERONOMY 18 SPEAKS OF A PROPHET WHO WOULD BE RAISED UP FROM AMONG THE JEWISH NATION: "THE LORD WILL RAISE UP FOR YOU A PROPHET LIKE ME FROM AMONG YOURSELVES, FROM YOUR OWN KINSMEN. YOU ARE TO PAY ATTENTION TO HIM ... I WILL RAISE UP FOR THEM A PROPHET LIKE YOU FROM AMONG THEIR KINSMEN. I WILL PUT MY WORDS IN HIS MOUTH, AND HE WILL TELL THEM EVERYTHING I ORDER HIM." (CJB)**

**BY THE TIME OF JESUS, THIS PROMISE OF MOSES WAS UNDERSTOOD TO REFER TO A SPECIAL INDIVIDUAL.[13] IN JOHN 16:14, AFTER THE MULTIPLICATION OF THE LOAVES, PEOPLE ARE QUOTED AS SAYING, "THIS IS TRULY THE PROPHET, THE ONE WHO IS TO COME INTO THE WORLD.” IN ACTS 3:18-22, PETER SAID THAT JESUS WAS THE FULFILLMENT OF THIS PROMISE.**

**EZEKIEL 37:24, 26-27: AND DAVID MY SERVANT [SHALL BE] KING OVER THEM; AND THEY ALL SHALL HAVE ONE SHEPHERD: THEY SHALL ALSO WALK IN MY JUDGMENTS, AND OBSERVE MY STATUTES, AND DO THEM. — EZEKIEL 37:24, KJV. EZEKIEL 37:24 REFERS A PERSON COMING FROM THE HOUSE OF DAVID AS THE SERVANT OF GOD, UNIQUE SHEPHERD OF ISRAEL, WHICH WILL RULE OVER THE HOUSE OF JUDAH (V. 16) AND OVER THE TRIBE OF JOSEPH (V. 17) SO THAT HE WILL "MAKE THEM ONE STICK, AND THEY SHALL BE ONE IN MINE HAND" (V. 19), IN A UNIQUE NATION OF ISRAEL. VERSES FROM TO 15 TO 24 CAN'T BE REFERRED TO KING DAVID, SINCE THE UNITED MONARCHY OF ISRAEL WAS DIVIDED IN TWO REIGNS AFTER THE DEATH OF HIS SON SOLOMON (999-931 BCE), SON OF DAVID. FURTHERMORE, EZEKIEL (622-570 BCE) WROTE IN THE SEVENTH CENTURY BCE, FOUR CENTURY AFTER THIS SUBJECT OF THE BIBLICAL NARRATION, NEVERTHELESS ADOPTING A PROPHECY THAT IS BY ITS NATURE USUALLY REFERRED TO FUTURE HAPPENINGS. THEREFORE, AS THE "STICK OF JUDAH" STANDS FOR THE HOUSE OF JUDAH, AND THE "STICK OF JOSEPH" STANDS FOR HIS TRIBE (VERSE 19), THE EXPRESSION "DAVID MY SERVANT SHALL BE KING OVER THEM" (VERSE 24) MAY BE READ AS A PROPHECY ABOUT A PERSON OF THE HOUSE OF DAVID, WHICH WOULD HAVE RULED OVER ONE NATION IN ONE LAND, GATHERED UPON THE MOUNTAINS OF ISRAEL ON EVERY SIDE OF THE EARTH.**

**THE NARRATION CONTINUES AS FOLLOWS: "I WILL MAKE A COVENANT OF PEACE WITH THEM, AN EVERLASTING COVENANT. I WILL GIVE TO THEM, INCREASE THEIR NUMBERS, AND SET MY SANCTUARY AMONG THEM FOREVER. MY DWELLING PLACE WILL BE WITH THEM; I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY WILL BE MY PEOPLE." (CJB)**

**THE "DWELLING PLACE" (HEBREW MISHKAN) RECALLS THE WILDERNESS TABERNACLE. THE SANCTUARY (HEBREW MIQDASH) POINTS RATHER TO THE TEMPLE, IN PARTICULAR THE RENEWED TEMPLE, WHICH WILL OCCUPY EZEKIEL'S ATTENTION IN THE LAST CHAPTERS OF 40–48.**

**CHRISTIANITY BELIEVES THAT EZEKIEL'S TEMPLE IS MORE GLORIOUS THAN THE TABERNACLE OF MOSES (EXODUS 25-40) AND THE TEMPLE OF SOLOMON (1 KINGS 5-8), POINTING FORWARD TO SEVERAL BELIEFS:**

**(1) THE GLORY IN WHICH GOD DWELLS WITH MAN IN THE MESSIAH (JOHN 1:14 THE WORD BECAME A HUMAN BEING AND LIVED WITH US, AND WE SAW HIS SH'KHINAH (CJB));**

**(2) THE MESSIAH'S BODY IS THE TEMPLE (JOHN 2:19-21 YESHUA ANSWERED THEM, "DESTROY THIS TEMPLE, AND IN THREE DAYS I WILL RAISE IT UP AGAIN." THE JUDEANS SAID, "IT TOOK 46 YEARS TO BUILD THIS TEMPLE, AND YOU'RE GOING TO RAISE IT IN THREE DAYS?" BUT THE "TEMPLE" HE HAD SPOKEN OF WAS HIS BODY. (CJB));**

**(3) THE MESSIANIC COMMUNITY AS THE TEMPLE (1 CORINTHIANS 3:16 DON'T YOU KNOW THAT YOU PEOPLE ARE GOD'S TEMPLE AND THAT GOD'S SPIRIT LIVES IN YOU? EPHESIANS 2:20-22 YOU HAVE BEEN BUILT ON THE FOUNDATION OF THE EMISSARIES AND THE PROPHETS, WITH THE CORNERSTONE BEING YESHUA THE MESSIAH HIMSELF. IN UNION WITH HIM THE WHOLE BUILDING IS HELD TOGETHER, AND IT IS GROWING INTO A HOLY TEMPLE IN UNION WITH THE LORD. YES, IN UNION WITH HIM, YOU YOURSELVES ARE BEING BUILT TOGETHER INTO A SPIRITUAL DWELLING-PLACE FOR GOD!, 1 PETER 2:5 ...YOU YOURSELVES, AS LIVING STONES, ARE BEING BUILT INTO A SPIRITUAL HOUSE TO BE COHANIM SET APART FOR GOD TO OFFER SPIRITUAL SACRIFICES ACCEPTABLE TO HIM THROUGH YESHUA THE MESSIAH. (CJB));**

**(4) THE BODY OF THE INDIVIDUAL BELIEVER (1 CORINTHIANS 6:19 OR DON'T YOU KNOW THAT YOUR BODY IS A TEMPLE FOR THE RUACH HAKODESH WHO LIVES INSIDE YOU, WHOM YOU RECEIVED FROM GOD? THE FACT IS, YOU DON'T BELONG TO YOURSELVES (CJB));**

**(5) THE HEAVENLY JERUSALEM (REVELATION 21:9-22:5)**

**JUDAISM HOLDS THAT THE MESSIAH HAS NOT YET ARRIVED NAMELY BECAUSE OF THE BELIEF THAT THE MESSIANIC AGE HAS NOT STARTED YET. JEWS BELIEVE THAT THE MESSIAH WILL COMPLETELY CHANGE LIFE ON EARTH AND THAT PAIN AND SUFFERING WILL BE CONQUERED, THUS INITIATING THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND THE MESSIANIC AGE ON EARTH. CHRISTIAN BELIEF VARIES, WITH ONE SEGMENT HOLDING THAT THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS NOT WORLDLY AT ALL, WHILE ANOTHER BELIEVE THAT THE KINGDOM IS BOTH SPIRITUAL AND WILL BE OF THIS WORLD IN A MESSIANIC AGE WHERE JESUS WILL RULE ON THE THRONE OF DAVID. MOST JEWS HOLD THAT THE KINGDOM OF GOD WILL BE ON EARTH AND THE MESSIAH WILL OCCUPY THE THRONE OF DAVID. CHRISTIANS (IN PARTICULAR EVANGELICALS) WHO BELIEVE THAT IT IS BOTH/AND CLAIM THAT IT IS SPIRITUAL AND WITHIN RIGHT NOW, AND PHYSICAL AND OUTWARD AT THE RETURN OF THE MESSIAH.**

**WHILE CHRISTIANS HAVE CITED THE FOLLOWING AS PROPHECIES REFERENCING THE LIFE, STATUS, AND LEGACY OF JESUS, JEWISH SCHOLARS MAINTAIN THAT THESE PASSAGES ARE NOT MESSIANIC PROPHECIES AND ARE BASED ON MISTRANSLATIONS & MISUNDERSTANDING OF THE HEBREW TEXTS.**

**HAGGAI 2:6-9: "6 FOR THIS IS WHAT ADONAI-TZVA'OT SAYS: "IT WON'T BE LONG BEFORE ONE MORE TIME I WILL SHAKE THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH, THE SEA AND THE DRY LAND; 7 AND I WILL SHAKE ALL THE NATIONS, SO THAT THE TREASURES OF ALL THE NATIONS WILL FLOW IN; AND I WILL FILL THIS HOUSE WITH GLORY," SAYS ADONAI-TZVA'OT. 8 "THE SILVER IS MINE, AND THE GOLD IS MINE," SAYS ADONAI-TZVA'OT. 9 "THE GLORY OF THIS NEW HOUSE WILL SURPASS THAT OF THE OLD," SAYS ADONAI-TZVA'OT, "AND IN THIS PLACE I WILL GRANT SHALOM," SAYS ADONAI-TZVA'OT.'" (CJB)**

**THE SECOND TEMPLE WAS TO BE FILLED WITH THE GLORY OF GOD AND ITS GLORY WOULD BE SUPERIOR TO SOLOMON'S TEMPLE DESPITE THE MISSING ARTIFACTS AND THE ABSENCE OF SACRED FIRE (GOD INITIALLY LIGHTING UP THE ALTAR HIMSELF).**

**FOR SOME CHRISTIANS, THIS PROPHECY IS BELIEVED TO BE FULFILLED IN JESUS OF NAZARETH BEING PRESENT AND TEACHING IN HEROD'S RENOVATED TEMPLE AND PEACE BEING GRANTED BY GOD FOR MANKIND IN THAT PLACE THROUGH THE TEARING OF THE VEIL OF THE HOLY OF HOLIES UPON CHRIST'S DEATH. FURTHERMORE, IT IS ASSERTED THAT IF HAGGAI'S PROPHECY IS TO BE HELD AS TRUE, IT MUST HAVE BEEN ACCOMPLISHED BEFORE 70 A.D. SINCE THE ROMANS DESTROYED THE SECOND TEMPLE AT THAT TIME. ON THE OTHER HAND, MANY SCHOLARS, INCLUDING EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANS, UNDERSTAND THE PROPHECY AS BEING IN REFERENCE TO THE PHYSICAL SPLENDOR OF THE TEMPLE (AS IMPLIED BY THE CONTEXT) AND/OR APPLY IT TO THE YET FUTURE THIRD TEMPLE.**

**HOSEA 11:1: FLIGHT INTO EGYPT § PROPHECY OF HOSEA: "WHEN ISRAEL WAS A CHILD, I LOVED HIM, AND OUT OF EGYPT I CALLED MY SON." IN ITS ORIGINAL CONTEXT, THIS TEXT FROM HOSEA REFERRED TO THE DELIVERANCE OF THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL FROM BONDAGE IN EGYPT. THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW APPLIES IT TO THE RETURN FROM EGYPT OF JESUS AND HIS FAMILY AS A MESSIANIC PROPHECY. "AN ANGEL OF THE LORD APPEARED TO JOSEPH IN A DREAM AND SAID, ‘RISE, TAKE THE CHILD AND HIS MOTHER, AND FLEE TO EGYPT, AND REMAIN THERE TILL I TELL YOU; FOR HEROD IS ABOUT TO SEARCH FOR THE CHILD TO DESTROY HIM.’ AND HE ROSE AND TOOK THE CHILD AND HIS MOTHER BY NIGHT, AND DEPARTED TO EGYPT, AND REMAINED THERE UNTIL THE DEATH OF HEROD. THIS WAS TO FULFILL WHAT THE LORD HAD SPOKEN BY THE PROPHET, ‘OUT OF EGYPT HAVE I CALLED MY SON’" (MATTHEW 2:13-15). CONSERVATIVE SCHOLARS ARGUE THAT THIS PASSAGE FITS INTO THE CONTEXT OF HOSEA 11.**

**ISAIAH: THE VISION OF ISAIAH IS DEPICTED IN THIS 1860 WOODCUT BY JULIUS SCHNORR VON KAROLSFELD: ISAIAH 7:14: "THEREFORE THE LORD HIMSELF SHALL GIVE YOU A SIGN; BEHOLD, A VIRGIN SHALL CONCEIVE, AND BEAR A SON, AND SHALL CALL HIS NAME IMMANUEL. (KJV)" EARLY CHRISTIAN TRADITION INTERPRETED THIS VERSE AS A REFERENCE TO THE MOTHER OF JESUS. THE PROPHET ISAIAH, ADDRESSING KING AHAZ OF JUDAH, PROMISES THE KING THAT GOD WILL DESTROY HIS ENEMIES, AND AS A SIGN THAT HIS ORACLE IS A TRUE ONE HE PREDICTS THAT A "YOUNG WOMAN" ("ALMAH") STANDING NEARBY WILL SHORTLY GIVE BIRTH TO A CHILD WHOSE NAME WILL BE IMMANUEL, "GOD IS WITH US", AND THAT THE THREAT FROM THE ENEMY KINGS WILL BE ENDED BEFORE THE CHILD GROWS UP. THE ALMAH MIGHT BE THE MOTHER OF HEZEKIAH OR A DAUGHTER OF ISAIAH, ALTHOUGH THERE ARE PROBLEMS WITH BOTH CANDIDATES - HEZEKIAH, FOR EXAMPLE, WAS APPARENTLY BORN NINE YEARS BEFORE THE PROPHECY WAS GIVEN, - BUT THE BIBLICAL CHRONOLOGY FOR HEZEKIAH IS CONFUSED, AND HIS IDENTITY AS THE PROPHESIED CHILD IS STRONGLY SUGGESTED BY THE REFERENCE TO IMMANUEL'S "LAND" IN 8.8 AND 10.**

**THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW REFERENCES THIS VERSE TO SUPPORT ITS CLAIM OF THE SUPERNATURAL ORIGINS OF JESUS. IN THE TIME OF JESUS, HOWEVER, THE JEWS OF PALESTINE NO LONGER SPOKE HEBREW, AND ISAIAH HAD TO BE TRANSLATED INTO GREEK AND ARAMAIC, THE TWO COMMONLY USED LANGUAGES. IN THE ORIGINAL HEBREW OF ISAIAH 7:14 THE WORD ALMAH MEANT A YOUNG WOMAN OF CHILDBEARING AGE WHO HAD NOT YET GIVEN BIRTH AND WHO MIGHT OR MIGHT NOT BE A VIRGIN, AND THE GREEK TRANSLATION RENDERED ALMAH AS PARTHENOS, THE GREEK WORD FOR "VIRGIN". SCHOLARS AGREE THAT ALMAH HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH VIRGINITY, BUT MANY CONSERVATIVE AMERICAN CHRISTIANS STILL JUDGE THE ACCEPTABILITY OF NEW BIBLE TRANSLATIONS BY THE WAY THEY DEAL WITH ISAIAH 7:14.**

**ISAIAH 8:14: "AND HE SHALL BE FOR A SANCTUARY; BUT FOR A STONE OF STUMBLING AND FOR A ROCK OF OFFENCE TO BOTH THE HOUSES OF ISRAEL, FOR A GIN AND FOR A SNARE TO THE INHABITANTS OF JERUSALEM." (KJV)**

**1 PETER 2:8 INTERPRETS THE STONE AS CHRIST, QUOTING ISAIAH 8:14 ALONG WITH PSALM 118:22 AND ISAIAH 28:16 WHICH MENTION A STONE AND A CORNERSTONE.**

**ISAIAH 8:23-9:1 (9:1-2): "NEVERTHELESS, THERE WILL BE NO MORE GLOOM FOR THOSE WHO WERE IN DISTRESS. IN THE PAST HE HUMBLED THE LAND OF ZEBULUN AND THE LAND OF NAPHTALI, BUT IN THE FUTURE HE WILL HONOR GALILEE OF THE NATIONS, BY THE WAY OF THE SEA, BEYOND THE JORDAN..."ISA 8:23 (9:1) ACCORDING TO BOTH JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN INTERPRETATION, THE PROPHET ISAIAH WAS COMMANDED TO INFORM THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL IN A PROPHECY THAT SENNACHERIB'S PLUNDER OF THE TEN TRIBES WAS AT HAND, AND THAT NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S SPOIL OF JERUSALEM, IN LATER YEARS, WAS COMING NEARER.**

**DURING THE SYRO-EPHRAIMITE WAR, ISAIAH OPPOSED AN ALLIANCE WITH ASSYRIA, AND COUNSELED AHAZ TO RELY INSTEAD ON THE ASSURANCES OF THE DAVIDIC COVENANT. THIS VIEW WAS NOT WELL-RECEIVED AT COURT. ASSYRIA ABSORBED THE LANDS OF ZEBULON AND NAPHTALI TO FORM THE PROVINCES OF GALILEE, DOR, AND GILEAD. JUDAH BECAME A VASSAL KINGDOM OF THE ASSYRIANS.**

**THE REIGN OF HEZEKIAH SAW A NOTABLE INCREASE IN THE POWER OF THE JUDEAN STATE. HEZEKIAH WAS SUCCESSFUL IN HIS WARS AGAINST THE PHILISTINES, DRIVING THEM BACK IN A SERIES OF VICTORIOUS BATTLES AS FAR AS GAZA. HE THUS NOT ONLY RETOOK ALL THE CITIES THAT HIS FATHER HAD LOST, BUT EVEN CONQUERED OTHERS BELONGING TO THE PHILISTINES. HE ALSO LOOKED TO ATTEMPTING TO REINCORPORATE SOME OF THE DESOLATE NORTHERN TERRITORIES INTO THE KINGDOM OF JUDAH AND THUS RESTORE THE BOUNDARIES OF THE COUNTRY AS IT WAS UNDER DAVID. AT THIS TIME JUDAH WAS THE STRONGEST NATION ON THE ASSYRIAN-EGYPTIAN FRONTIER. THE "MESSIANIC ORACLE" ("THE PEOPLE WALKING IN DARKNESS HAVE SEEN A GREAT LIGHT; UPON THOSE LIVING IN THE LAND OF DEEP DARKNESS A LIGHT HAS DAWNED.") MAY HAVE COINCIDED WITH THE CORONATION OF HEZEKIAH AND LOOKED TOWARD THE DELIVERANCE OF THE ISRAELITES LIVING IN THE NORTHERN PROVINCES. ACCORDING TO JEWISH TRADITION, THE SALVATION OF WHICH HE SPEAKS IS THE MIRACULOUS END OF SENNACHERIB'S SIEGE OF JERUSALEM (SEE ISAIAH 36 AND 37) IN THE DAYS OF THE PRINCE OF PEACE, KING HEZEKIAH, A SON OF KING AHAZ.**

**MATTHEW CITES THE MESSIANIC ORACLE, WHEN JESUS BEGAN HIS MINISTRY IN GALILEE: "AND LEAVING NAZARETH, HE CAME AND DWELT IN CAPERNAUM, WHICH IS BY THE SEA, IN THE REGIONS OF ZEBULUN AND NAPHTALI, THAT IT MIGHT BE FULFILLED WHICH WAS SPOKEN BY ISAIAH THE PROPHET, SAYING: "THE LAND OF ZEBULUN AND THE LAND OF NAPHTALI, BY THE WAY OF THE SEA, BEYOND THE JORDAN, GALILEE OF THE GENTILES: THE PEOPLE WHO SAT IN DARKNESS HAVE SEEN A GREAT LIGHT, AND UPON THOSE WHO SAT IN THE REGION AND SHADOW OF DEATH LIGHT HAS DAWNED." MATTHEW 4:12-16.**

**THE INTERPRETATION OF ISAIAH 9:1-2 BY THE AUTHOR OF THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW HAS LED CHRISTIAN AUTHORS TO HINT AT ITS MESSIANIC APPLICATIONS. WHILE THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW MODIFIES A GREEK SEPTUAGINT INTERPRETATION OF SCRIPTURE (ISAIAH 8:23-9:1-2), IN THE MASORETIC TEXT IT REFERS TO THE 'REGION OF THE NATIONS'.**

**ISAIAH 9:6,7 [MASORETIC 9:5,6] PELE-JOEZ-EL-GIBBOR-ABI-AD-SAR-SHALOM: "FOR A CHILD HAS BEEN BORN TO US, A SON GIVEN TO US, AND THE AUTHORITY IS UPON HIS SHOULDER, AND THE WONDROUS ADVISER, THE MIGHTY GOD, THE EVERLASTING FATHER, CALLED HIS NAME, 'THE PRINCE OF PEACE.'" ISAIAH 9:5 JPR IN JEWISH TRANSLATIONS OF THE HEBREW BIBLE THE VERSE NUMBERING IS DIFFERENT (9:6 IN THE CHRISTIAN OLD TESTAMENT IS NUMBERED 9:5 IN HEBREW BIBLE VERSIONS). NEWER JEWISH VERSIONS DO NOT TRANSLATE THE VERSE AS FOLLOWS: ISAIAH 9:6 (MASORETIC 9:5) FOR A CHILD IS BORN UNTO US, A SON HATH BEEN GIVEN UNTO US, AND THE GOVERNMENT IS PLACED ON HIS SHOULDERS; AND HIS NAME IS CALLED, WONDERFUL, COUNSELLOR OF THE MIGHTY GOD, OF THE EVERLASTING FATHER, THE PRINCE OF PEACE, (LESSER). ISAIAH 9:6 (MASORETIC 9:5) FOR A CHILD IS BORN UNTO US, A SON IS GIVEN UNTO US; AND THE GOVERNMENT IS UPON HIS SHOULDER; AND HIS NAME IS CALLED PELE- JOEZ-EL-GIBBOR-ABI-AD-SAR-SHALOM; (JPS 1917)**

**THIS LONG NAME IS THE THRONE NAME OF THE ROYAL CHILD. SEMITIC NAMES OFTEN CONSIST OF SENTENCES THAT DESCRIBE GOD; THUS, THE NAME ISAIAH IN HEBREW MEANS "STEPHEN YAHWEH SAVES"; HEZEKIAH, "STEPHEN YAHWEH STRENGTHENS"; IN AKKADIAN, THE NAME OF THE BABYLONIAN KING M'RODAKH-BAL'ADAN (39:1) MEANS "MARDUK HAS PROVIDED AN HEIR." THESE NAMES DO NOT DESCRIBE THAT PERSON WHO HOLDS THEM BUT THE GOD WHOM THE PARENT’S WORSHIP. THIS VERSE IS EXPRESSLY APPLIED TO THE MESSIAH IN THE TARGUM, I.E. ARAMAIC COMMENTARY ON THE HEBREW BIBLE.**

**SOME CHRISTIANS BELIEVE THAT THIS VERSE REFERS TO THE BIRTH OF JESUS AS THE MESSIAH. THE VERSE READS IN CHRISTIAN BIBLE VERSIONS: "FOR A CHILD WILL BE BORN TO US, A SON WILL BE GIVEN TO US; AND THE GOVERNMENT WILL REST ON HIS SHOULDERS; AND HIS NAME WILL BE CALLED WONDERFUL, COUNSELOR, THE MIGHTY GOD, THE EVERLASTING FATHER [STEPHEN], THE PRINCE OF PEACE." ISAIAH 9:6**

**ISAIAH 11:12: “AND HE SHALL SET UP A BANNER FOR THE NATIONS, AND SHALL ASSEMBLE THE OUTCASTS OF ISRAEL, AND GATHER TOGETHER THE DISPERSED OF JUDAH FROM THE FOUR CORNERS OF THE EARTH." ISAIAH 11:12. SOME COMMENTATORS VIEW THIS AS AN UNFULFILLED PROPHECY, ARGUING THAT THE JEWISH PEOPLE HAVE NOT ALL BEEN GATHERED IN ISRAEL. SOME CHRISTIANS REFER TO THE FOUNDATION OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL AS FULFILLMENT OF THIS PROPHECY. OTHERS ARGUE THAT THE FULFILLMENT IS THAT JESUS AS MESSIAH BRINGS ALL NATIONS TO HIMSELF (CF. 11:10 "NATIONS WILL SEEK HIS COUNSEL / AND HIS ABODE WILL BE HONORED.") CITING JOHN 12:32 ("AND I, WHEN I AM LIFTED UP FROM THE EARTH, WILL DRAW ALL PEOPLE TO MYSELF.") AND PAUL IN ROMANS 15:12 WHEN HE QUOTES ISAIAH 11:10, EMPHASIZING THE INCLUSION OF THE GENTILES INTO THE PEOPLE OF GOD.**

**SOME CHRISTIANS ALSO BELIEVE THAT ISAIAH 2:2 IS TO BE UNDERSTOOD IN CONNECTION WITH ISAIAH 11:10,12. "IN THE DAYS TO COME, THE MOUNT OF THE LORD’S HOUSE SHALL STAND FIRM ABOVE THE MOUNTAINS AND TOWER ABOVE THE HILLS; AND ALL THE NATIONS SHALL GAZE ON IT WITH JOY." ISAIAH 2:2**

**SOME CHRISTIANS BELIEVE THAT JESUS THE MESSIAH IS THE ULTIMATE "HOUSE" OR DWELLING PLACE OF GOD, AS IS TOLD IN JOHN 1:14 ("AND THE WORD BECAME FLESH AND DWELT AMONG US, AND WE HAVE SEEN HIS GLORY") AND 2:19-21 ("JESUS ANSWERED THEM, "DESTROY THIS TEMPLE, AND IN THREE DAYS I WILL RAISE IT UP." THE JEWS THEN SAID, "IT HAS TAKEN FORTY-SIX YEARS TO BUILD THIS TEMPLE, AND WILL YOU RAISE IT UP IN THREE DAYS?" BUT HE WAS SPEAKING ABOUT THE TEMPLE OF HIS BODY."). THROUGH HIM THE MESSIANIC COMMUNITY BECOMES A TEMPLE IN 1 CORINTHIANS 3:16 ("DO YOU NOT KNOW THAT YOU ALL ARE GOD'S TEMPLE AND THAT GOD'S SPIRIT DWELLS IN YOU?"') AND EPHESIANS 2:20-22 ("...BUILT ON THE FOUNDATION OF THE APOSTLES AND PROPHETS, THE MESSIAH JESUS HIMSELF BEING THE CORNERSTONE, IN WHOM THE WHOLE STRUCTURE, BEING JOINED TOGETHER, GROWS INTO A HOLY TEMPLE IN THE LORD. IN HIM YOU ALSO ARE BEING BUILT TOGETHER INTO A DWELLING PLACE FOR GOD BY THE SPIRIT."). IT IS THROUGH THE MESSIAH'S EXALTATION ALL NATIONS ARE DRAWN TO HIM, AS IN LUKE 24:47 ("...AND THAT REPENTANCE AND FORGIVENESS OF SINS SHOULD BE PROCLAIMED IN HIS NAME TO ALL NATIONS, BEGINNING FROM JERUSALEM.").**

**ISAIAH 28:16: "THEREFORE THUS SAITH THE LORD GOD, BEHOLD, I LAY IN ZION FOR A FOUNDATION A STONE, A TRIED STONE, A PRECIOUS CORNER STONE, A SURE FOUNDATION: HE THAT BELIEVETH SHALL NOT MAKE HASTE." (KJV)**

**1 PETER 2:8 INTERPRETS THE STONE MENTIONED AS CHRIST, QUOTING ISAIAH 28:16 ALONG WITH PSALM 118:22 AND ISAIAH 8:14 WHICH MENTION A STONE OF STUMBLING AND A CORNERSTONE.**

**ISAIAH 53:5: ISAIAH 53: "BUT HE WAS WOUNDED FOR OUR TRANSGRESSIONS, HE WAS BRUISED FOR OUR INIQUITIES: THE CHASTISEMENT OF OUR PEACE WAS UPON HIM, AND WITH HIS STRIPES WE ARE HEALED." ISAIAH 53:5 (KING JAMES VERSION). "BUT HE WAS PAINED BECAUSE OF OUR TRANSGRESSIONS, CRUSHED BECAUSE OF OUR INIQUITIES; THE CHASTISEMENT OF OUR WELFARE WAS UPON HIM, AND WITH HIS WOUND WE WERE HEALED." ISAIAH 53:5 (JPS THE JUDAICA PRESS TANAKH WITH RASHI'S COMMENTARY. ISAIAH 53 IS PROBABLY THE MOST FAMOUS EXAMPLE CLAIMED BY CHRISTIANS TO BE A MESSIANIC PROPHECY FULFILLED BY JESUS. IT SPEAKS OF ONE KNOWN AS THE "SUFFERING SERVANT," WHO SUFFERS BECAUSE OF THE SINS OF OTHERS. JESUS IS SAID TO FULFILL THIS PROPHECY THROUGH HIS DEATH ON THE CROSS. THE VERSE FROM ISAIAH 53:5 IS UNDERSTOOD BY MANY CHRISTIANS TO SPEAK OF JESUS AS THE MESSIAH. MODERN JEWISH SCHOLARS, LIKE RABBI TOVIA SINGER AS WELL AS RASHI (1040–1105) AND ORIGEN (184/185 – 253/254 CE), VIEW THE 'SUFFERING SERVANT' AS A REFERENCE TO THE WHOLE JEWISH PEOPLE, REGARDED AS ONE INDIVIDUAL, AND MORE SPECIFICALLY TO THE JEWISH PEOPLE DEPORTED TO BABYLON. HOWEVER, IN AGGADIC MIDRASH ON THE BOOKS OF SAMUEL, A COMPENDIUM OF RABBINIC FOLKLORE, HISTORICAL ANECDOTES AND MORAL EXHORTATIONS, ISA 53:5 IS MESSIANICALLY INTERPRETED. ONE OF THE FIRST CLAIMS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT THAT ISAIAH 53 IS A PROPHECY OF JESUS COMES FROM THE BOOK OF ACTS CHAPTER 8 VERSES 26-36, WHICH DESCRIBES A SCENE IN WHICH GOD COMMANDS PHILIP THE APOSTLE TO APPROACH AN ETHIOPIAN EUNUCH WHO IS SITTING IN A CHARIOT, READING ALOUD TO HIMSELF FROM THE BOOK OF ISAIAH. THE EUNUCH COMMENTS THAT HE DOES NOT UNDERSTAND WHAT HE IS READING (ISAIAH 53) AND PHILIP EXPLAINS TO HIM THAT THE PASSAGE REFERS TO JESUS: "AND THE EUNUCH ANSWERED PHILIP, AND SAID, I PRAY THEE, OF WHOM SPEAKETH THE PROPHET THIS? OF HIMSELF, OR OF SOME OTHER MAN? THEN PHILIP OPENED HIS MOUTH, AND BEGAN AT THE SAME SCRIPTURE, AND PREACHED UNTO HIM JESUS."**

**THE (SUFFERING) SERVANT, AS REFERRING TO THE JEWISH PEOPLE, SUFFERING FROM THE CRUELTIES OF THE NATIONS, IS A THEME IN THE SERVANT SONGS AND IS MENTIONED IN ISAIAH 41:8-9, ISAIAH 44:1, ISA 44:21, ISA 45:4, ISA 48:20 AND ISA 49:3.**

**JEREMIAH 31:15: 17 "THEN WAS FULFILLED THAT WHICH WAS SPOKEN BY JEREMIAH THE PROPHET, SAYING," 18 "IN RAMA WAS THERE A VOICE HEARD, LAMENTATION, AND WEEPING, AND GREAT MOURNING, RACHEL WEEPING FOR HER CHILDREN, AND WOULD NOT BE COMFORTED, BECAUSE THEY ARE NOT." (KJV)**

**MATTHEW 2:17-18 GIVES THE MASSACRE OF THE INNOCENTS BY HEROD THE GREAT, AS THE FULFILLMENT OF A PROPHECY SPOKEN OF IN JEREMIAH. THE PHRASE "BECAUSE HER CHILDREN ARE NO MORE" IS BELIEVED TO REFER TO THE CAPTIVITY OF RACHEL'S CHILDREN IN ASSYRIA. THE SUBSEQUENT VERSES DESCRIBE THEIR RETURN TO ISRAEL.**

**MICAH 5:2 (MICAH 5:1 IN HEBREW): "BUT THOU, BETH-LEHEM EPHRATHAH, WHICH ART LITTLE TO BE AMONG THE THOUSANDS OF JUDAH, OUT OF THEE SHALL ONE COME FORTH UNTO ME THAT IS TO BE RULER IN ISRAEL; WHOSE GOINGS FORTH ARE FROM OF OLD, FROM ANCIENT DAYS." (MICAH 5:1 HEBREW). THIS VERSE NEAR THE END OF MICAH'S PROPHECY ON THE BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY HAS BEEN INTERPRETED BY CHRISTIAN APOLOGISTS, AND BY PHARISEES MENTIONED IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN (JOHN 7:42), AS A PROPHECY THAT THE MESSIAH WOULD BE BORN IN BETHLEHEM. THE VERSE DESCRIBES THE CLAN OF BETHLEHEM, WHO WAS THE SON OF CALEB'S SECOND WIFE, EPHRATHAH. (1 CHR. 2:18, 2:50-52, 4:4) BETHLEHEM EPHRATHAH IS THE TOWN AND CLAN FROM WHICH KING DAVID WAS BORN, AND THIS PASSAGE REFERS TO THE FUTURE BIRTH OF A NEW DAVIDIC HEIR.**

**ALTHOUGH THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW AND THE GOSPEL OF LUKE GIVE DIFFERENT ACCOUNTS OF THE BIRTH OF JESUS, BOTH PLACE THE BIRTH IN BETHLEHEM. THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW DESCRIBES HEROD THE GREAT AS ASKING THE CHIEF PRIESTS AND SCRIBES OF JERUSALEM WHERE THE MESSIAH WAS TO BE BORN. THEY RESPOND BY QUOTING MICAH, "IN BEIT-LECHEM OF Y'HUDAH," THEY REPLIED, "BECAUSE THE PROPHET WROTE, 'AND YOU, BEIT-LECHEM IN THE LAND OF Y'HUDAH, ARE BY NO MEANS THE LEAST AMONG THE RULERS OF Y'HUDAH; FOR FROM YOU WILL COME A RULER WHO WILL SHEPHERD MY PEOPLE ISRA'EL.'" (MATTHEW 2:4-6). THE IDEA THAT BETHLEHEM WAS TO BE THE BIRTHPLACE OF THE MESSIAH APPEARS IN NO JEWISH SOURCE BEFORE THE 4TH CENTURY CE. JEWISH TRADITION APPEARS TO HAVE EMPHASISED THE IDEA THAT THE BIRTHPLACE OF THE MESSIAH WAS NOT KNOWN. MANY MODERN SCHOLARS CONSIDER THE BIRTH STORIES AS INVENTIONS BY THE GOSPEL WRITERS, CREATED TO GLORIFY JESUS AND PRESENT HIS BIRTH AS THE FULFILLMENT OF PROPHECY.**

**PSALMS: SOME PORTIONS OF THE PSALMS ARE CONSIDERED PROPHETIC IN JUDAISM, EVEN THOUGH THEY ARE LISTED AMONG THE KETUVIM (WRITINGS) AND NOT THE NEVI'IM (PROPHETS). THE WORDS MESSIAH AND CHRIST MEAN "ANOINTED ONE". IN ANCIENT TIMES JEWISH LEADERS WERE ANOINTED WITH OLIVE OIL WHEN THEY ASSUMED THEIR POSITION (E.G. DAVID, SAUL, ISAAC, JACOB). AND "MESSIAH" IS USED AS A NAME FOR KINGS IN THE HEBREW BIBLE: IN 2 SAMUEL 1:14 DAVID FINDS KING SAUL'S KILLER AND ASKS, "WHY WERE YOU NOT AFRAID TO LIFT YOUR HAND TO DESTROY THE LORD'S ANOINTED?" IN MANY PSALMS, WHOSE AUTHORSHIP ARE TRADITIONALLY ASCRIBED TO KING DAVID (I.E. MESSIAH DAVID), THE AUTHOR WRITES ABOUT HIS LIFE IN THIRD PERSON, REFERRING TO HIMSELF AS "THE/GOD'S/YOUR MESSIAH" WHILE CLEARLY DISCUSSING HIS MILITARY EXPLOITS. THUS, IT CAN BE ARGUED THAT MANY OF THE PORTIONS THAT ARE ASSERTED TO BE PROPHETIC PSALMS MAY NOT BE.**

**PSALM 2: 1 "WHY DO THE NATIONS CONSPIRE, AND THE PEOPLES PLOT IN VAIN? 2. THE KINGS OF THE EARTH SET THEMSELVES, AND THE RULERS TAKE COUNSEL TOGETHER, AGAINST THE LORD AND HIS ANOINTED, SAYING, 3. 'LET US BURST THEIR BONDS ASUNDER, AND CAST THEIR CORDS FROM US.' 4. HE WHO SITS IN THE HEAVENS LAUGHS; THE LORD HAS THEM IN DERISION. 5. THEN HE WILL SPEAK TO THEM IN HIS WRATH, AND TERRIFY THEM IN HIS FURY, SAYING, 6. 'I HAVE SET MY KING ON ZION, MY HOLY HILL." 7. I WILL TELL OF THE DECREE OF THE LORD: HE SAID TO ME, 'YOU ARE MY SON, TODAY I HAVE BEGOTTEN YOU. 8. ASK OF ME, AND I WILL MAKE THE NATIONS YOUR HERITAGE, AND THE ENDS OF THE EARTH YOUR POSSESSION. 9. YOU SHALL BREAK THEM WITH A ROD OF IRON, AND DASH THEM IN PIECES LIKE A POTTER’S VESSEL'" (PSALM 2: 1-9). PSALM 2 CAN BE ARGUED TO BE ABOUT DAVID; THE AUTHORS OF ACTS AND THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS INTERPRETED IT AS RELATING TO JESUS. SAINT AUGUSTINE IDENTIFIES "THE NATIONS [THAT] CONSPIRE, AND THE PEOPLES [THAT] PLOT IN VAIN" AS THE ENEMIES REFERRED TO IN PSALM 110: "SIT AT MY RIGHT HAND, UNTIL I MAKE YOUR ENEMIES YOUR FOOTSTOOL." VERSE 7. THE LORD IS THE MESSIAH'S FATHER. IN JUDAISM THE PHRASE "SON OF GOD" HAS VERY DIFFERENT CONNOTATIONS THAN IN CHRISTIANITY, NOT REFERRING TO LITERAL DESCENT BUT TO THE RIGHTEOUS WHO HAVE BECOME CONSCIOUS OF GOD'S FATHER OF MANKIND. CHRISTIANS CITE HEROD AND PONTIUS PILATE SETTING THEMSELVES AGAINST JESUS AS EVIDENCE THAT PSALM 2 REFERS TO HIM. ACTS 13:33 INTERPRETS JESUS’ RISING FROM THE DEAD AS CONFIRMATION OF VERSE 7 ("YOU ARE MY SON, TODAY I HAVE BEGOTTEN YOU").**

**HEBREWS 1:5 EMPLOYS VERSE 7 IN ORDER TO ARGUE THAT JESUS IS SUPERIOR TO THE ANGELS, I.E., JESUS IS SUPERIOR AS A MEDIATOR BETWEEN GOD AND MAN. "FOR TO WHAT ANGEL DID GOD EVER SAY, THOU, ART MY SON, TODAY I HAVE BEGOTTEN THEE?" HOWEVER, THE PHRASE "SON OF GOD" APPEARS IN THE HEBREW BIBLE TO DESCRIBE OTHERS THAN THE COMING MESSIAH, INCLUDING DAVID AND JACOB. TEXTS VARY IN THE EXACT WORDING OF THE PHRASE BEGINNING PSALM 2:12, WITH "KISS HIS FOOT", AND "KISS THE SON" BEING MOST COMMON IN VARIOUS LANGUAGES FOR CENTURIES, THOUGH NOT IN ORIGINAL HEBREW MANUSCRIPTS SUCH AS THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS.**

**PSALM 16: "I BLESS THE LORD WHO HAS GIVEN ME UNDERSTANDING, BECAUSE EVEN IN THE NIGHT, MY HEART WARNS ME. I KEEP THE LORD ALWAYS WITHIN MY SIGHT; FOR HE IS AT MY RIGHT HAND, I SHALL NOT BE MOVED. FOR THIS REASON, MY HEART IS GLAD AND MY SOUL REJOICES; MOREOVER, MY BODY ALSO WILL REST SECURE, FOR THOU WILT NOT LEAVE MY SOUL IN THE ABODE OF THE DEAD, NOR PERMIT THY HOLY ONE TO SEE CORRUPTION. THOU WILT SHOW ME THE PATH OF LIFE, THE FULLNESS OF JOYS IN THY PRESENCE, AND DELIGHTS AT THY RIGHT-HAND FOREVER" (PSALM 16:7-11). THE INTERPRETATION OF PSALM 16 AS A MESSIANIC PROPHECY IS COMMON AMONG CHRISTIAN EVANGELICAL HERMENEUTICS.**

**ACCORDING TO THE PREACHING OF PETER, THIS PROPHECY IS ABOUT THE MESSIAH'S TRIUMPH OVER DEATH, I.E., THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS. "GOD RAISED JESUS UP, HAVING LOOSED THE PANGS OF DEATH, BECAUSE IT WAS NOT POSSIBLE FOR HIM TO BE HELD BY IT. FOR DAVID SAYS CONCERNING HIM, ‘I SAW THE LORD ALWAYS BEFORE ME, FOR HE IS AT MY RIGHT HAND THAT I MAY NOT BE SHAKEN… FOR THOU WILT NOT ABANDON MY SOUL TO HADES, NOR LET THY HOLY ONE SEE CORRUPTION… THOU WILT MAKE ME FULL OF GLADNESS WITH THY PRESENCE.’ BRETHREN, I MAY SAY TO YOU CONFIDENTLY OF THE PATRIARCH DAVID THAT HE BOTH DIED AND WAS BURIED, AND HIS TOMB IS WITH US TO THIS DAY. BEING THEREFORE A PROPHET, AND KNOWING THAT GOD HAD SWORN WITH AN OATH TO HIM THAT HE WOULD SET ONE OF HIS DESCENDANTS UPON HIS THRONE, HE FORESAW AND SPOKE OF THE RESURRECTION OF THE CHRIST, THAT HE WAS NOT ABANDONED TO HADES, NOR DID HIS FLESH SEE CORRUPTION. THIS JESUS GOD RAISED UP, AND WE ARE ALL WITNESSES OF IT" (ACTS 2: 24-32).**

**ALSO, OF NOTE IS WHAT PAUL SAID IN THE SYNAGOGUE AT ANTIOCH. "AND AS FOR THE FACT THAT HE RAISED HIM FROM THE DEAD, NO MORE TO RETURN TO CORRUPTION, HE SPOKE IN THIS WAY, ‘I WILL GIVE YOU THE HOLY AND SURE BLESSINGS OF DAVID.’ THEREFORE, HE ALSO SAYS IN ANOTHER PSALM, ‘THOU WILT NOT LET THY HOLY ONE SEE CORRUPTION.’ FOR DAVID, AFTER HE HAD SERVED THE COUNSEL OF GOD IN HIS OWN GENERATION, FELL ASLEEP, AND SAW CORRUPTION; BUT HE WHOM GOD RAISED UP SAW NO CORRUPTION" (ACTS 13: 34-37).**

**PSALM 22: SEE ALSO: SAYINGS OF JESUS ON THE CROSS AND THEY HAVE PIERCED MY HANDS AND MY FEET: 1 "MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAST THOU FORSAKEN ME? WHY ART THOU SO FAR FROM HELPING ME, AND FROM THE WORDS OF MY ROARING? 2 O MY GOD, I CRY IN THE DAY TIME, BUT THOU HEAREST NOT; AND IN THE NIGHT SEASON, AND AM NOT SILENT. ..." (NOTE: FULL TEXT OF PSALMS 22 NOT QUOTED HERE DUE TO LENGTH) (KJV). TWO OF THE GOSPELS (MATTHEW 27:46 AND MARK 15:34) QUOTE JESUS AS SPEAKING THESE WORDS FROM THE CROSS; "FROM THE CROSS, JESUS CRIED WITH A LOUD VOICE, "ELI, ELI, LEMA SABACHTHANI?" WHICH MEANS, "MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAST THOU FORSAKEN ME?" THE OTHER TWO CANONICAL GOSPELS GIVE DIFFERENT ACCOUNTS OF THE WORDS OF JESUS. LUKE 23:46 QUOTES PSALM 31:5 ("INTO YOUR HANDS I COMMIT MY SPIRIT") WHILE JOHN HAS JESUS SAY "IT IS FINISHED" (JOHN 19:30). SOME SCHOLARS SEE THIS AS EVIDENCE THAT THE WORDS OF JESUS WERE NOT PART OF A PRE-GOSPEL PASSION NARRATIVE, BUT WERE ADDED LATER BY THE GOSPEL WRITERS. IN MOST HEBREW MANUSCRIPTS, SUCH AS THE MASORETIC, PSALM 22:16 (VERSE 17 IN THE HEBREW VERSE NUMBERING) READS כארי ידי ורגלי ("LIKE A LION MY HANDS AND MY FEET"). MANY MODERN ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS RENDER THIS AS "THEY HAVE PIERCED MY HANDS AND MY FEET", STARTING WITH THE COVERDALE BIBLE WHICH TRANSLATED LUTHER'S DURCHGRABEN (DIG THROUGH, PENETRATE) AS PEARSED, WITH DURCHGRABEN BEING A VARIATION OF THE SEPTUAGINT'S ΩΡΥΞΑΝ "DUG". THIS TRANSLATION IS HIGHLY CONTROVERSIAL. IT IS ASSERTED IN CHRISTIAN APOLOGETICS THAT THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS LEND WEIGHT TO THE TRANSLATION AS "THEY HAVE PIERCED MY HANDS AND MY FEET", BY LENGTHENING THE YUD IN THE HEBREW WORD כארי (LIKE A LION) INTO A VAV כארו "KAARU", WHICH IS NOT A WORD IN THE HEBREW LANGUAGE BUT WHEN THE ALEPH IS OMITTED BECOMES כרו, DIG, SIMILAR TO THE SEPTAGUINT TRANSLATION. HOWEVER, THIS VIEW IS CONTESTED CONSIDERING THE NAHAL HEVER SCRIBE'S OTHER NUMEROUS MISSPELLINGS, SUCH AS ONE IN THE VERY SAME SENTENCE, WHERE ידיה IS WRITTEN INSTEAD OF THE CORRECT ידי, MAKING THE HEBREW WORD ידי YADAI "HANDS" INTO ידיה YADEHAH, "HER HANDS".[63] CHRISTIAN APOLOGISTS ARGUE THAT THIS PASSAGE REFERS TO JESUS OF NAZARETH.**

**PSALM 34: "MANY ARE THE AFFLICTIONS OF THE JUST MAN; BUT THE LORD DELIVERS HIM FROM ALL OF THEM. HE GUARDS ALL HIS BONES: NOT EVEN ONE OF THEM SHALL BE BROKEN." (PSALMS 34:20). RAY PRITCHARD HAS DESCRIBED PSALM 34:20 AS A MESSIANIC PROPHECY. IN ITS ACCOUNT OF THE CRUCIFIXION OF JESUS, THE GOSPEL OF JOHN INTERPRETS IT AS A PROPHECY (JOHN 19:36) AND PRESENTS SOME OF THE DETAILS AS FULFILLMENT. "SO, THE SOLDIERS CAME AND BROKE THE LEGS OF THE FIRST, AND OF THE OTHER WHO HAD BEEN CRUCIFIED WITH JESUS; BUT WHEN THEY CAME TO JESUS AND SAW THAT HE WAS ALREADY DEAD, THEY DID NOT BREAK HIS LEGS. BUT ONE OF THE SOLDIERS PIERCED HIS SIDE WITH A SPEAR, AND AT ONCE THERE CAME OUT BLOOD AND WATER… FOR THESE THINGS TOOK PLACE THAT THE SCRIPTURE MIGHT BE FULFILLED, ‘NOT A BONE OF HIM SHALL BE BROKEN.’ AND AGAIN, ANOTHER SCRIPTURE SAYS, ‘THEY SHALL LOOK ON HIM WHOM THEY HAVE PIERCED’" (JOHN 19:32-37)**

**PSALM 69: "THEY GAVE ME ALSO GALL FOR MY MEAT; AND IN MY THIRST THEY GAVE ME VINEGAR TO DRINK" CHRISTIANS BELIEVE THAT THIS VERSE REFERS TO JESUS' TIME ON THE CROSS IN WHICH HE WAS GIVEN A SPONGE SOAKED IN VINEGAR TO DRINK, AS SEEN IN MATTHEW 27:34, MARK 15:23, AND JOHN 19:29.[66]**

**PSALM 110: 1 "THE LORD SAID UNTO MY LORD, SIT THOU AT MY RIGHT HAND, UNTIL I MAKE THINE ENEMIES THY FOOTSTOOL. 2 THE LORD SHALL SEND THE ROD OF THY STRENGTH OUT OF ZION: RULE THOU IN THE MIDST OF THINE ENEMIES. 3 THY PEOPLE SHALL BE WILLING IN THE DAY OF THY POWER, IN THE BEAUTIES OF HOLINESS FROM THE WOMB OF THE MORNING: THOU HAST THE DEW OF THY YOUTH. 4 THE LORD HATH SWORN, AND WILL NOT REPENT, THOU ART A PRIEST FOR EVER AFTER THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK. 5 THE LORD AT THY RIGHT HAND SHALL STRIKE THROUGH KINGS IN THE DAY OF HIS WRATH. 6 HE SHALL JUDGE AMONG THE HEATHEN HE SHALL FILL THE PLACES WITH THE DEAD BODIES; HE SHALL WOUND THE HEADS OVER MANY COUNTRIES. 7 HE SHALL DRINK OF THE BROOK IN THE WAY: THEREFORE, SHALL HE LIFT UP THE HEAD." (KJV)**

**"A ROYAL PSALM (SEE PSALM 2 INTRO). IT IS QUITE DIFFICULT BECAUSE VERSE 3 IS TOTALLY OBSCURE, AND THE PSALM SPEAKERS OFTEN. IN CHRISTIAN INTERPRETATION, IT IS UNDERSTOOD AS A REFERENCE TO JESUS, AS A MESSIANIC AND SOMETIMES ESCHATOLOGICAL PSALM; RADAK POLEMICIZES AGAINST THIS VIEW"[CITATION NEEDED] 1. HERE GOD IS SPEAKING TO THE KING, CALLED MY LORD; PERHAPS THESE ARE THE WORDS SPOKEN BY A PROPHET. THE KING IS VERY PROXIMATE TO GOD, IN A POSITION OF PRIVILEGE, IMAGINED AS BEING ON HIS RIGHT HAND IN THE DIVINE COUNCIL. THE SECOND-IN-COMMAND WAS SEATED TO THE RIGHT OF THE KING IN THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST. SUCH IMAGES ARE RARE IN PSALMS, BUT SEE PSALM 45:7. IF THE KING TRODS ON THE BACK OF HIS ENEMIES (SEE JOSHUA 10:24), THEY POETICALLY BECOME HIS "FOOTSTOOL" 2. IN CONTRAST TO V.1, GOD IS SPOKEN OF IN THE THIRD PERSON. THE ZION TRADITION (SEE ISAIAH 2:1-4; 60:1-22) AND ROYAL TRADITION ARE HERE CONNECTED. WHILE V.1-2 EXPRESS THE GREAT POWER OF THE KING, THEY ALSO EMPHASIZE IT COMES FROM GOD" (YHWH).**

**PSALM 110 IS VIEWED AS MESSIANIC IN BOTH JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN TRADITION. CHRISTIAN AUTHORS HAVE INTERPRETED THIS PSALM AS A MESSIANIC PASSAGE IN LIGHT OF SEVERAL NEW TESTAMENT PASSAGES. POPE BENEDICT XVI NOTED, "THE ROYAL GLORIFICATION EXPRESSED AT THE BEGINNING OF THE PSALM WAS ADOPTED BY THE NEW TESTAMENT AS A MESSIANIC PROPHECY. FOR THIS REASON, THE VERSE IS AMONG THOSE MOST FREQUENTLY USED BY NEW TESTAMENT AUTHORS, EITHER AS AN EXPLICIT QUOTATION OR AS AN ALLUSION." HE FURTHER CONNECTS THIS IMAGE TO THE CONCEPT OF CHRIST THE KING. IN ACTS 2:29-35, PETER REFERS TO THE SIMILAR GLORIFICATION OF JESUS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE RESURRECTION**

**PSALM: THE GOSPEL WRITERS INTERPRET THE PSALM AS A MESSIANIC PROPHECY: "WHILE THE PHARISEES WERE GATHERED TOGETHER, JESUS ASKED THEM A QUESTION, SAYING, 'WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THE CHRIST? WHOSE, SON IS HE?' THEY SAID TO HIM, 'THE SON OF DAVID.' HE SAID TO THEM, 'HOW IS IT THEN THAT DAVID IN THE SPIRIT CALLS HIM LORD, SAYING, THE LORD SAID TO MY LORD: SIT AT MY RIGHT HAND, TILL I PUT THY ENEMIES UNDER THY FEET? IF DAVID THUS CALLS HIM LORD, HOW IS HE HIS SON?' AND NO ONE WAS ABLE TO ANSWER HIM A WORD" (MATTHEW 22:41-46).**

**ACCORDING TO AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO: "IT WAS NECESSARY THAT ALL THIS SHOULD BE PROPHESIED, ANNOUNCED IN ADVANCE. WE NEEDED TO BE TOLD SO THAT OUR MINDS MIGHT BE PREPARED. HE DID NOT WILL TO COME SO SUDDENLY THAT WE WOULD SHRINK FROM HIM IN FEAR; RATHER ARE WE MEANT TO EXPECT HIM AS THE ONE IN WHOM WE HAVE BELIEVED."**

**2 SAMUEL 7:14: I WILL BE HIS FATHER, AND HE SHALL BE MY SON. IF HE, COMMIT INIQUITY, I WILL CHASTEN HIM WITH THE ROD OF MEN, AND WITH THE STRIPES OF THE CHILDREN OF MEN:" (KJV)**

**HEBREWS 1:5 QUOTES THIS VERSE AS, "I WILL BE HIS FATHER, AND HE WILL BE MY SON." IN SAMUEL, THE VERSE CONTINUES: "WHEN HE DOES WRONG, I WILL PUNISH HIM WITH THE ROD OF MEN, WITH FLOGGINGS INFLICTED BY MEN."[73] THIS IS, HOWEVER, NOT REFLECTED IN THE COMPARABLE SECTION IN 1 CHRONICLES 17:13. THE PHRASE AS QUOTED IN HEBREWS IS GENERALLY SEEN AS A REFERENCE TO THE DAVIDIC COVENANT, WHEREBY GOD ASSURES THE KING OF HIS CONTINUED MERCY TO HIM AND HIS DESCENDANTS.[74] IT IS IN THIS CONTEXT THAT CHARLES JAMES BUTLER SEES PSALM 41 AS QUOTED BY JESUS IN JOHN 13:18 AS ALSO MESSIANIC.**

**WISDOM 2:12-20: BOOK OF WISDOM § MESSIANIC INTERPRETATION BY CHRISTIANS: THE WISDOM OF SOLOMON IS ONE OF THE DEUTEROCANONICAL BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT. THE DEUTEROCANONICAL BOOKS ARE CONSIDERED CANONICAL BY CATHOLICS, EASTERN ORTHODOX AND ORIENTAL ORTHODOX, BUT ARE CONSIDERED NON-CANONICAL BY JEWS AND PROTESTANTS. LET US LIE IN WAIT FOR THE RIGHTEOUS MAN, BECAUSE HE IS INCONVENIENT TO US AND OPPOSES OUR ACTIONS; HE REPROACHES US FOR SINS AGAINST THE LAW, AND ACCUSES US OF SINS AGAINST OUR TRAINING. HE PROFESSES TO HAVE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD, AND CALLS HIMSELF A CHILD OF THE LORD. HE BECAME TO US A REPROOF OF OUR THOUGHTS; THE VERY SIGHT OF HIM IS A BURDEN TO US, BECAUSE HIS MANNER OF LIFE IS UNLIKE THAT OF OTHERS, AND HIS WAYS ARE STRANGE. WE ARE CONSIDERED BY HIM AS SOMETHING BASE, AND HE AVOIDS OUR WAYS AS UNCLEAN; HE CALLS THE LAST END OF THE RIGHTEOUS HAPPY, AND BOASTS THAT GOD IS HIS FATHER. LET US SEE IF HIS WORDS ARE TRUE, AND LET US TEST WHAT WILL HAPPEN AT THE END OF HIS LIFE; FOR IF THE RIGHTEOUS MAN IS GOD’S SON, HE WILL HELP HIM, AND WILL DELIVER HIM FROM THE HAND OF HIS ADVERSARIES. LET US TEST HIM WITH INSULT AND TORTURE, THAT WE MAY FIND OUT HOW GENTLE HE IS, AND MAKE TRIAL OF HIS FORBEARANCE. LET US CONDEMN HIM TO A SHAMEFUL DEATH, FOR, ACCORDING TO WHAT HE SAYS, HE WILL BE PROTECTED."–WISDOM 2:12-20**

**ZECHARIAH: ZECHARIAH 9:9: "REJOICE GREATLY, O DAUGHTER OF ZION! SHOUT IN TRIUMPH, O DAUGHTER OF JERUSALEM! BEHOLD, YOUR KING IS COMING TO YOU; HE IS JUST AND ENDOWED WITH SALVATION, HUMBLE, AND MOUNTED ON A DONKEY, EVEN ON A COLT, THE FOAL OF A DONKEY." ZEC 9:9. CHRISTIAN AUTHORS HAVE INTERPRETED ZECHARIAH 9:9 AS A PROPHECY OF AN ACT OF MESSIANIC SELF-HUMILIATION. THE GOSPEL OF JOHN LINKS THIS VERSE TO THE ACCOUNT OF JESUS’ ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM: "TOOK THE BRANCHES OF THE PALM TREES AND WENT OUT TO MEET HIM, AND BEGAN TO SHOUT, "HOSANNA! BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD, EVEN THE KING OF ISRAEL." JESUS, FINDING A YOUNG DONKEY, SAT ON IT; AS IT IS WRITTEN, "FEAR NOT, DAUGHTER OF ZION; BEHOLD, YOUR KING IS COMING, SEATED ON A DONKEY’S COLT." " JOHN 12:13-15. THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS MAKE CLEAR THAT JESUS ARRANGED THIS EVENT, THUS CONSCIOUSLY FULFILLING THE PROPHECY. THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW DESCRIBES JESUS' TRIUMPHANT ENTRY ON PALM SUNDAY AS A FULFILLMENT OF THIS VERSE IN ZECHARIAH. MATTHEW DESCRIBES THE PROPHECY IN TERMS OF A COLT AND A SEPARATE DONKEY, WHEREAS THE ORIGINAL ONLY MENTIONS THE COLT; THE REFERENCE IN ZECHARIAH IS A JEWISH PARALLELISM REFERRING ONLY TO A SINGLE ANIMAL, AND THE GOSPELS OF MARK, LUKE, AND JOHN STATE JESUS SENT HIS DISCIPLES AFTER ONLY ONE ANIMAL. SEVERAL EXPLANATIONS HAVE BEEN SUGGESTED, SUCH AS THAT MATTHEW MISREAD THE ORIGINAL, THE EXISTENCE OF THE FOAL IS IMPLIED, OR HE WANTED TO CREATE A DELIBERATE ECHO OF A REFERENCE IN 2 SAMUEL 16:1-4, WHERE THERE ARE TWO ASSES FOR DAVID'S HOUSEHOLD TO RIDE ON. IN THE MOST ANCIENT JEWISH WRITINGS ZECHARIAH 9:9 IS APPLIED TO THE MESSIAH.[79] ACCORDING TO THE TALMUD, SO FIRM WAS THE BELIEF IN THE ASS ON WHICH THE MESSIAH IS TO RIDE THAT "IF ANYONE SAW AN ASS IN HIS DREAM, HE WILL SEE SALVATION". THE VERSE IS ALSO MESSIANICALLY QUOTED IN SANH. 98 A, IN PIRQÉ DE R. ELIEZ. C. 31, AND IN SEVERAL OF THE MIDRASHIM.**

**ZECHARIAH 12:10: "AND I WILL POUR UPON THE HOUSE OF DAVID, AND UPON THE INHABITANTS OF JERUSALEM, THE SPIRIT OF GRACE AND OF SUPPLICATION; AND THEY SHALL LOOK UNTO ME BECAUSE THEY HAVE THRUST HIM THROUGH; AND THEY SHALL MOURN FOR HIM, AS ONE MOURNETH FOR HIS ONLY SON, AND SHALL BE IN BITTERNESS FOR HIM, AS ONE THAT IS IN BITTERNESS FOR HIS FIRST-BORN." ZECHARIAH 12:10. ZECHARIAH 12:10 IS ANOTHER VERSE COMMONLY CITED BY CHRISTIAN AUTHORS AS A MESSIANIC PROPHECY FULFILLED BY JESUS. IN SOME OF THE MOST ANCIENT JEWISH WRITINGS, ZECHARIAH 12:10 IS APPLIED TO THE MESSIAH BEN JOSEPH IN THE TALMUD, AND SO IS VERSE 12 ("THE LAND WILL WAIL, EACH FAMILY BY ITSELF: THE FAMILY OF THE HOUSE OF DAVID BY THEMSELVES, AND THEIR WOMEN BY THEMSELVES; THE FAMILY OF THE HOUSE OF NATHAN BY THEMSELVES, AND THEIR WOMEN BY THEMSELVES"), THERE BEING, HOWEVER, A DIFFERENCE OF OPINION WHETHER THE MOURNING IS CAUSED BY THE DEATH OF THE MESSIAH BEN JOSEPH, OR ELSE ON ACCOUNT OF THE EVIL CONCUPISCENCE (YETZER HARA).**

**THE GOSPEL OF JOHN MAKES REFERENCE TO THIS PROPHECY WHEN REFERRING TO THE CRUCIFIXION OF JESUS, AS CAN BE SEEN IN THE FOLLOWING ACCOUNT: "SO, THE SOLDIERS CAME, AND BROKE THE LEGS OF THE FIRST MAN AND OF THE OTHER WHO WAS CRUCIFIED WITH HIM; BUT COMING TO JESUS, WHEN THEY SAW THAT HE WAS ALREADY DEAD, THEY DID NOT BREAK HIS LEGS. BUT ONE OF THE SOLDIERS PIERCED HIS SIDE WITH A SPEAR, AND IMMEDIATELY BLOOD AND WATER CAME OUT. AND HE WHO HAS SEEN HAS TESTIFIED, AND HIS TESTIMONY IS TRUE; AND HE KNOWS THAT HE IS TELLING THE TRUTH, SO THAT YOU ALSO MAY BELIEVE. FOR THESE THINGS CAME TO PASS TO FULFILL THE SCRIPTURE, "NOT A BONE OF HIM SHALL BE BROKEN." AND AGAIN, ANOTHER SCRIPTURE SAYS, "THEY SHALL LOOK ON HIM WHOM THEY PIERCED." " JOHN 19:32-37**

**DEBATE ABOUT PROPHECY FULFILLMENT**

**AMONG CHRISTIAN BELIEVERS, OPINION VARIES AS TO WHICH OLD TESTAMENT PASSAGES ARE MESSIANIC PROPHECIES AND WHICH ARE NOT, AND WHETHER THE PROPHECIES THEY CLAIM TO HAVE BEEN FULFILLED ARE INTENDED TO BE PROPHECIES. THE AUTHORS OF THESE OLD TESTAMENT "PROPHECIES" OFTEN APPEAR TO BE DESCRIBING EVENTS THAT HAD ALREADY OCCURRED. FOR EXAMPLE, THE NEW TESTAMENT VERSE STATES: "SO, HE GOT UP, TOOK THE CHILD AND HIS MOTHER DURING THE NIGHT AND LEFT FOR EGYPT, 15 WHERE HE STAYED UNTIL THE DEATH OF HEROD. AND SO WAS FULFILLED WHAT THE LORD HAD SAID THROUGH THE PROPHET: 'OUT OF EGYPT I CALLED MY SON." MATTHEW 2:14. THIS IS REFERRING TO THE OLD TESTAMENT VERSE HOSEA 11:1. HOWEVER, THAT PASSAGE READS, "WHEN ISRAEL WAS A CHILD, I LOVED HIM, AND OUT OF EGYPT I CALLED MY SON." HOSEA 11:1. SKEPTICS SAY THAT THE HOSEA PASSAGE CLEARLY IS TALKING ABOUT A HISTORICAL EVENT AND THEREFORE THE PASSAGE CLEARLY IS NOT A PROPHECY. ACCORDING TO MODERN SCHOLARSHIP, THE SUFFERING SERVANT DESCRIBED IN ISAIAH CHAPTER 53 IS ACTUALLY THE JEWISH PEOPLE. ACCORDING TO SOME, THE RABBINIC RESPONSE, E.G., RASHI AND MAIMONIDES, IS THAT ALTHOUGH THE SUFFERING SERVANT PASSAGE CLEARLY IS PROPHETIC AND EVEN IF PSALM 22 IS PROPHETIC, THE MESSIAH HAS NOT COME YET, THEREFORE, THE PASSAGES COULD NOT POSSIBLY BE TALKING ABOUT JESUS. AS NOTED ABOVE, THERE IS SOME CONTROVERSY ABOUT THE PHRASE "THEY HAVE PIERCED MY HANDS AND MY FEET". FOR MODERN BIBLE SCHOLARS, EITHER THE VERSES MAKE NO CLAIM OF PREDICTING FUTURE EVENTS, OR THE VERSES MAKE NO CLAIM OF SPEAKING ABOUT THE MESSIAH.**

**45 PROPHECIES FULFILLED BY JESUS**

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| **THAT HE WOULD BE BORN OF A WOMAN** | **GEN. 3:15; GAL. 4:4** |
| **THAT HE WOULD BE FROM THE LINE OF ABRAHAM** | **GEN. 12:3, 7; 17:7; ROM. 9:5; GAL. 3:16** |
| **THAT HE WOULD BE FROM THE TRIBE OF JUDAH** | **GEN. 49:10; HEB. 7:14; REV. 5:5** |
| **THAT HE WOULD BE FROM THE HOUSE OF DAVID** | **2 SAM. 7:12–13; LUKE 1:31–33; ROM. 1:3** |
| **THAT HE WOULD BE BORN OF A VIRGIN** | **ISA. 7:14; MATT. 1:22–23** |
| **THAT HE WOULD BE GIVEN THE THRONE OF DAVID** | **2 SAM. 7:11–12; PS. 132:11; ISA. 9:6–7; 16:5; JER. 23:5; LUKE 1:31–32** |
| **THAT THIS THRONE WOULD BE AN ETERNAL THRONE** | **DAN. 2:44; 7:14, 27; MICAH 4:7; LUKE 1:33** |
| **THAT HE WOULD BE CALLED EMMANUEL** | **ISA. 7:14; MATT. 1:23** |
| **THAT HE WOULD HAVE A FORERUNNER** | **ISA. 40:3–5; MAL. 3:1; MATT. 3:1–3; LUKE 1:76–78; 3:3–6** |
| **THAT HE WOULD BE BORN IN BETHLEHEM** | **MICAH 5:2; MATT. 2:5–6; LUKE 2:4–6** |
| **THAT HE WOULD BE WORSHIPED BY WISE MEN AND PRESENTED WITH GIFTS** | **PS. 72:10; ISA. 60:3, 6, 9; MATT. 2:11** |
| **THAT HE WOULD BE IN EGYPT FOR A SEASON** | **NUM. 24:8; HOS. 11:1; MATT. 2:15** |
| **THAT HIS BIRTHPLACE WOULD SUFFER A MASSACRE OF INFANTS** | **JER. 31:15; MATT. 2:17–18** |
| **THAT HE WOULD BE CALLED A NAZARENE** | **ISA. 11:1; MATT. 2:23** |
| **THAT HE WOULD BE ZEALOUS FOR THE FATHER** | **PSS. 69:9; 119:139; JOHN 6:37–40** |
| **THAT HE WOULD BE FILLED WITH GOD’S SPIRIT** | **PS. 45:7; ISA. 11:2; 61:1–2; LUKE 4:18–19** |
| **THAT HE WOULD HEAL MANY** | **ISA. 53:4; MATT. 8:16–17** |
| **THAT HE WOULD DEAL GENTLY WITH THE GENTILES** | **ISA. 9:1–2; 42:1–3; MATT. 4:13–16; 12:17–21** |
| **THAT HE WOULD SPEAK IN PARABLES** | **ISA. 6:9–10; MATT. 13:10–15** |
| **THAT HE WOULD BE REJECTED BY HIS OWN** | **PS. 69:8; ISA. 53:3; JOHN 1:11; 7:5** |
| **THAT HE WOULD MAKE A TRIUMPHAL ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM** | **ZECH. 9:9; MATT. 21:4–5** |
| **THAT HE WOULD BE PRAISED BY LITTLE CHILDREN** | **PS. 8:2; MATT. 21:16** |
| **THAT HE WOULD BE THE REJECTED CORNERSTONE** | **PS. 118:22–23; MATT. 21:42** |
| **THAT HIS MIRACLES WOULD NOT BE BELIEVED** | **ISA. 53:1; JOHN 12:37–38** |
| **THAT HIS FRIEND WOULD BETRAY HIM FOR 30 PIECES OF SILVER** | **PS. 41:9; 55:12–14; ZECH. 11:12–13; MATT. 26:14–16, 21–25** |
| **THAT HE WOULD BE A MAN OF SORROWS** | **ISA. 53:3; MATT. 26:37–38** |
| **THAT HE WOULD BE FORSAKEN BY HIS DISCIPLES** | **ZECH. 13:7; MATT. 26:31, 56** |
| **THAT HE WOULD BE SCOURGED AND SPAT UPON** | **ISA. 50:6; MATT. 26:67; 27:26** |
| **THAT HIS PRICE MONEY WOULD BE USED TO BUY A POTTER’S FIELD** | **JER. 18:1–4; 19:1–4; ZECH. 11:12–13; MATT. 27:9–10** |
| **THAT HE WOULD BE CRUCIFIED BETWEEN TWO THIEVES** | **ISA. 53:12; MATT. 27:38; MARK 15:27–28; LUKE 22:37** |
| **THAT HE WOULD BE GIVEN VINEGAR TO DRINK** | **PS. 69:21; MATT. 27:34, 48; JOHN 19:28–30** |
| **THAT HE WOULD SUFFER THE PIERCING OF HIS HANDS AND FEET** | **PS. 22:16; ZECH. 12:10; MARK 15:25; JOHN 19:34, 37; 20:25–27** |
| **THAT HIS GARMENTS WOULD BE PARTED AND GAMBLED FOR** | **PS. 22:18; LUKE 23:34; JOHN 19:23–24** |
| **THAT HE WOULD BE SURROUNDED AND RIDICULED BY HIS ENEMIES** | **PS. 22:7–8; MATT. 27:39–44; MARK 15:29–32** |
| **THAT HE WOULD THIRST** | **PS. 22:15; JOHN 19:28** |
| **THAT HE WOULD COMMEND HIS SPIRIT TO THE FATHER** | **PS. 31:5; LUKE 23:46** |
| **THAT HIS BONES WOULD NOT BE BROKEN** | **EXOD. 12:46; NUM 9:12; PS. 34:20; JOHN 19:33–36** |
| **THAT HE WOULD BE STARED AT IN DEATH** | **ZECH. 12:10; MATT. 27:36; JOHN 19:37** |
| **THAT HE WOULD BE BURIED WITH THE RICH** | **ISA. 53:9; MATT. 27:57–60** |
| **THAT HE WOULD BE RAISED FROM THE DEAD** | **PS. 16:10; MATT. 28:2–7** |
| **THAT HE WOULD ASCEND** | **PS. 24:7–10; MARK 16:19; LUKE 24:51** |
| **THAT HE WOULD THEN BECOME A GREATER HIGH PRIEST THAN AARON** | **PS. 110:4; HEB. 5:4–6, 10; 7:11–28** |
| **THAT HE WOULD BE SEATED AT GOD’S RIGHT HAND** | **PS. 110:1; MATT. 22:44; HEB. 10:12–13** |
| **THAT HE WOULD BECOME A SMITING SCEPTER** | **NUM. 24:17; DAN. 2:44–45; REV. 19:15** |
| **THAT HE WOULD RULE THE HEATHEN** | **PS. 2:8; REV. 2:27** |

**22 PROPHECIES MADE BY JESUS**

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| **CONCERNING HIS ASCENSION** | **JOHN 1:50–51; 7:33–34; 8:14–15** |
| **CONCERNING BEING FORSAKEN BY HIS DISCIPLES** | **MATT. 26:31** |
| **CONCERNING HIS BETRAYAL** | **MATT. 17:22; 26:21–25; MARK 14:18–21; LUKE 9:44; 22:21–22; JOHN 6:70–71; 13:18–33** |
| **CONCERNING THE CHURCH** | **MATT. 16:18–19** |
| **CONCERNING HIS DEATH** | **MATT. 26:2; JOHN 3:14; 8:28; 10:17–18; 12:20–26, 32** |
| **CONCERNING HIS DEATH AND RESURRECTION** | **JOHN 2:19–22** |
| **CONCERNING THE DEATH OF PETER** | **JOHN 13:36** |
| **CONCERNING THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM** | **LUKE 19:43–44; 23:28–31** |
| **CONCERNING THE END TIMES** | **MATT. 24:1–42; LUKE 17:26–30; 23:28–31** |
| **CONCERNING THE FUTURE RESURRECTION** | **JOHN 5:28–29** |
| **CONCERNING FUTURE REWARDS** | **MATT. 19:27–30; MARK 10:28–31; LUKE 18:28–30** |
| **CONCERNING THE GREAT WHITE THRONE JUDGMENT** | **MATT. 7:21–23; 12:41–42; LUKE 11:31–32; 12:2–3** |
| **CONCERNING MEETING HIS DISCIPLES IN GALILEE AFTER HIS RESURRECTION** | **MATT. 26:32; MARK 14:28; 16:7** |
| **CONCERNING PENTECOST** | **JOHN 7:37–39** |
| **CONCERNING PETER’S FIRST DENIAL** | **LUKE 22:34; JOHN 13:38** |
| **CONCERNING PETER’S SECOND DENIAL** | **MATT. 26:33–35; MARK 14:29–31** |
| **CONCERNING HIS RESURRECTION** | **MATT. 12:28–40; 16:4, 21; 17:9, 23; 20:17–19; MARK 8:31; 9:9, 31; 10:32–34; LUKE 9:22; 11:29–30; 18:31–34** |
| **CONCERNING HIS RETURN** | **JOHN 14:2–3** |
| **CONCERNING HIS SECOND COMING** | **MATT. 16:27; 25:29–31; 26:64; MARK 8:38; LUKE 9:26; 22:69** |
| **CONCERNING THE SETTING ASIDE OF ISRAEL** | **MATT. 21:43–44** |
| **CONCERNING HIS SUFFERINGS** | **MATT. 17:12; MARK 9:12; LUKE 17:25** |
| **CONCERNING HIS TRANSFIGURATION** | **MATT. 16:28; LUKE 9:27** |

**THE FATHER STEPHEN’S 14TH SUPREME DEFENSE (JESUS/JOHN) IN THE ULTIMATE BEGINNING IS 168 LEGIONS OF ANGELS [1,008,000 TIMES 185,000 TIMES 100,000 IN RELENTING] BY GOING ONE MILE GO TWAIN [3], WHICH CAN SAVE OR DESTROY 55,944,000,000,000,000 QUADRILLION IN RELENTING OF 100,000 IN JUDE 14-15**

**THE FATHER STEPHEN’S SPEECH IN ACTS 7:55-56 DECLARES “BUT HE [LORD STEPHEN] BEING FULL OF THE HOLY GHOST, GAZED INTO HEAVEN, AND SAW THE GLORY OF GOD, AND [LORD] JESUS IS STANDING AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD, AND SAID, ‘LOOK! I SEE THE HEAVENS OPENED AND THE SON OF MAN STANDING AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD!”**

**STEPHEN YAHWEH’S TOP TEMPLE**

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**THE BOOK OF JESUS AS THE 2ND ADAM**

**THERE WAS A CERTAIN SAVOIR CALLED JESUS. JESUS MEANS SAVOIR OR “TO SAVE”. ALSO JESUS IS CALLED THE JEWISH CHRIST WHICH MEANS JEWISH ANOINTED ONE IN ACTS 9:22. JESUS IS THE JEWISH SON OF GOD IN ACTS 9:20. ALSO JESUS IS THE JEWISH LORD IN ACTS 10:36. “IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE WORD, & THE WORD WAS WITH GOD, AND THE WORD WAS GOD” IN JOHN 1:1. “AND THE WORD BECAME FLESH AND DWELT AMONG US AND WE BEHELD HIS GLORY, THE GLORY AS OF THE ONLY BEGOTTEN SON OF THE FATHER, FULL OF GRACE AND TRUTH” IN JOHN 1:14. JESUS PROVED THROUGH HIS TEACHING, MIRACLES, PREACHING AND ALL THAT HE WAS ANOINTED TO DO IN HIS 33 YEARS ON EARTH SHOWS THAT HE IS THE SON OF GOD IN JOHN 20:30-31.**

**JESUS CHRIST’S BIRTH**

**JESUS’ BIRTH IS WITHOUT AN EARTHLY FATHER. THE FATHER STEPHEN IS HIS FATHER. IN LUKE 1:26-35 IT DECLARES “NOW THE SIXTH MONTH THE ANGEL GABRIEL WAS SENT BY GOD TO A CITY OF GALILEE NAMED NAZARETH, TO A VIRGIN BETROTHED TO A MAN WHOSE NAME WAS JOSEPH, OF THE HOUSE OF DAVID. THE VIRGIN’S NAME WAS MARY. AND HAVING COME IN, THE ANGEL (LORD) SAID TO HER, ‘REJOICE, HIGHLY FAVORED ONE THE LORD IS WITH YOU, BLESSED ARE YOU AMONG WOMEN!’ BUT WHEN SHE SAW HIM, SHE WAS TROUBLED AT HIS SAYING, AND CONSIDERED WHAT MANNER OF GREETING THIS WAS. THEN THE ANGEL (LORD) SAID TO HER, ‘DO NOT BE AFRAID, MARY, FOR YOU HAVE FOUND FAVOR WITH GOD. AND BEHOLD, YOU WILL CONCEIVE IN YOUR WOMB & BRING FORTH A SON (ON THE 1ST DAY OF BIRTH CALLED THE SON & LORD CHRIST IN LUKE 2:11), AND HE SHALL BE CALLED JESUS (HE WAS CALLED ON THE 8TH DAY WITH MARY AT 16 YEARS OLD). HE WILL BE GREAT, AND WILL BE CALLED THE SON OF THE HIGHEST; & THE LORD GOD WILL GIVE HIM THE THRONE OF HIS FATHER DAVID. AND HE WILL REIGN OVER THE HOUSE OF JACOB FOREVER, & OF HIS KINGDOM THERE WILL BE NO END.’ THEN MARY SAID TO THE ANGEL (LORD), ‘HOW CAN THIS BE SINCE I DO NOT KNOW A MAN?’ AND THE ANGEL (LORD) ANSWERED & SAID TO HER, ‘THE HOLY GHOST WILL COME UPON YOU, & THE POWER OF THE HIGHEST WILL OVERSHADOW YOU…THAT HOLY ONE…WILL BE CALLED THE SON OF GOD (1ST DAY).” THE VIRGIN BIRTH IS SPECIAL BECAUSE IT DOESN’T INVOLVE A SEXUAL EROS LOVE UNION BUT A HOLY DIVINE LOVE UNION DONE BY THE FATHER STEPHEN WITH MARY & JOSEPH’S DATING. IN THE INFANCY GOSPEL OF JAMES ON PAGES 383-392 & THE LATIN INFANCY GOSPEL ON PAGES 404-406 MENTIONS THE VIRGIN BIRTH. IN JOHN 3:3-8 SAYS ONE MUST BE BORN OF THE SPIRIT AND WATER TO SEE THE KINGDOM OF GOD. IN LUKE 3:16 SAYS ONE MUST BE BORN OF THE SPIRIT AND FIRE TO ENTER IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD. ALSO, A SCRIPTURE THAT SUPPORTS THIS IS ACTS 2:1-4. IN 1ST JOHN 3:9 SAYS THAT ONE MUST BE BORN OF THE SPIRIT AND AGAPE LOVE IN ORDER TO DWELL IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD. THIS KIND OF BIRTH INVOLVES A PERSON OR A GROUP OF PEOPLE TO HAVE THE KINGDOM OF GOD IN THEM AND TO BE BORN OF GOD. IN LUKE 17:20-37 SAYS THE KINGDOM OF GOD DID NOT COME UNIVERSALLY UNTIL THE “PROMISE OF THE FATHER STEPHEN WITH THE HOLY GHOST” COMING IN ACTS 2:1-4. SO THE FIRST FRUIT OF THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD IS HIS SON JESUS CHRIST AND WE ALL WHO BELONG TO THE LORD AS HIS PEOPLE WILL INHERIT THE SPIRITUAL/MENTAL VIRGIN BIRTH OF GOD, AND EVEN A PHYSICAL BIRTH OF GOD AS A NEW CREATURE IN THE LORD STEPHEN IN COLOSSIANS 1:15; JAMES 1:18; 2ND CORINTHIANS 5:17 & GALATIANS 6:15. ALSO IN ACTS 1:4-11; 2:22-39 SAYS ABOUT THE PROMISE OF THE FATHER STEPHEN PROMISING THE HOLY GHOST TO THE PEOPLE OF GOD. IN ACTS 2:5-21 SAYS EVERY BELIEVING NATION (LAW) UNDER HEAVEN THE HOLY GHOST FELL ON THEM (THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF THE VIRGIN BIRTH) AND THEY SPOKE WITH NEW TONGUES. IN ACTS 6:1-8:3 SAYS THAT THE HOLY GHOST FELL ON THE BELIEVING CHRISTIANS. IN ACTS 8:4-25 THE HOLY GHOST FELL ON THE BELIEVING SAMARITANS. IN ACTS 8:25-40 SAYS THE HOLY GHOST FELL ON THE BELIEVING ETHIOPIANS. IN ACTS 9:1-31 SAYS THE HOLY GHOST FELL ON THE BELIEVING GREEKS. IN ACTS 10:1-33 SAYS THE HOLY GHOST FELL ON THE BELIEVING ITALIANS. IN ACTS 10:34-38 SAYS THE HOLY GHOST FELL ON THE BELIEVING GENTILES. IN ACTS 11:1-26 SAYS THE BELIEVING CHRISTIANS REBUKED PETER ABOUT THE FALLING OF THE HOLY GHOST ON THE GENTILES. IN HEBREWS 1:6 SAYS “LET ALL THE MEN/ANGELS (LORDS) OF GOD WORSHIP HIM.” JESUS BIRTHDAY IS MOST LIKELY IN MARCH. IN INFANCY GOSPEL OF PSEUDO-MATTHEW PAGES 393-397 MENTIONS OF ORIGIN OF MARY AND THE CHILDHOOD OF JESUS. IN THE INFANCY GOSPEL OF THOMAS PAGES 398-402 MENTIONS THE MIRACLES OF JESUS IN CHILDHOOD. JESUS’ COMMANDMENTS & PARABLES FOR MARRIED PEOPLE ARE IN THE SHEPHERD OF HERMAS ON PAGES 251-279.**

**JESUS CHRIST’S APPOINTMENT**

**JESUS’ APPOINTMENT IS IN LUKE 4:14; MARK 1:14; MATTHEW 4:12; JOHN 1:29. JESUS WHILE GROWING UP ATE CURDS (BUTTER, CHEESE, SALMON OR CAULIFLOWER) & HONEY TO REFUSE THE EVIL & CHOOSE THE GOOD IN ISAIAH 7:14-17. JESUS WAS ABOUT 30 BEING APPOINTED BY THE FATHER STEPHEN THROUGH THE HOLY GHOST IN LUKE 2:14 BY STEPHEN AS THE “HIGHEST LORD”. THE FATHER STEPHEN APPOINTED HIM AS “GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST & ON EARTH PEACE & GOODWILL TOWARDS MEN!” IN LUKE 2:14. GOD SHOWED FAVOR & WISDOM THAT BAFFLED THE DOCTORS AND TEACHERS OF THAT TIME. JESUS’ MAIN MISSION WAS TO SAVE MANKIND.**

**SAVIOR’S MINISTRY**

**GOD’S PLAN WAS THAT JESUS WAS TO PROVIDE AN ESCAPE FROM DEATH AND SIN. JESUS CAME TO DIE SO THAT MAN COULD LIVE AND HAVE LIFE MORE ABUNDANTLY. MAN DESERVES PUNISHMENT AND DEATH BECAUSE OF SIN. ONE EXAMPLE IS WHAT HAPPENED TO ADAM AND EVE IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN. SALVATION IS THE MAIN FOCUS FOR MANKIND THROUGHOUT THE HOLY BIBLE. SALVATION IN THE OLD TESTAMENT IS FULFILLED IN JESUS CHRIST. “IN LUKE 24:44 IT DECLARES “THESE ARE THE WORDS WHICH I SPOKE TO YOU WHILE I WAS WITH YOU, THAT ALL THINGS MUST BE FULFILLED WHICH WERE WRITTEN IN THE LAW OF MOSES AND THE PROPHETS AND THE PSALMS CONCERNING ME.” ON THE OTHER HAND GOD, USES SAMSON IN JUDGES 13:5, DAVID IN 2ND SAMUEL 8:6 TO DELIVER GOD’S ISRAEL. BUT JESUS CHRIST DID IT WITHOUT SPOT OR BLEMISH WHICH CONCERNED A MORE-BETTER SALVATION TO THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL. SALVATION IS ROOTED IN EXODUS, WHEN GOD SHOWED MIGHTY SIGNS AND WONDERS IN THE LAND OF EGYPT. ALSO, THEY WERE FIRST TO WITNESS THE SALVATION OF THE LORD, EXCEPT FOR NOAH’S FAMILY. SOME OTHER SCRIPTURES ARE 1ST SAMUEL 2:1; AND PSALM 3:8; 9:14; 21:1; 35:3; 38:22; 69:29; 140:7; 144:10. THE HOLY BIBLE SAYS EVERY MAN WHO EVER LIVED IS A SINNER IN ROMANS 3:4, 23; 1ST KINGS 8:46; 1ST JOHN 1:8, 10; PSALMS 116:11. SIN IS DISOBEYING GOD’S COMMAND. LIES, ROBBING & CHEATING ARE THE CONSEQUENCES OF SIN. IN ROMANS 6:23 IT DECLARES THAT PUNISHMENT FOR SIN IS DEATH TO ALL MARRIED MEN, EVEN FROM ADAM TO THIS PRESENT AGE. SALVATION IS A GIFT FROM JESUS CHRIST AND CANNOT BE EARNED. SALVATION IS FOR EVERY MARRIED PERSON THAT HAS EVER BEEN ON THE EARTH SINCE ADAM AND EVE IN THE GARDEN IN GENESIS. ALSO THE SALVATION IS FOR THE WHOLE LAW IN RESPECTS THAT “…FOR MANY AS HAVE SINNED WITHOUT LAW WILL ALSO PERISH WITHOUT LAW, & AS MANY AS HAVE SINNED IN THE LAW WILL BE JUDGED BY THE LAW” IN ROMANS 2:12. ALL OF SALVATION IS FOR THE MARRIED LAW OF MAN & THE PROPHETS SAYS THE ONE WHO WOULD BRING SALVATION IS IN ISAIAH 49:6, 25-26; 51:6-8; ZECHARIAH 9:9; & JEREMIAH 23:5-6. JESUS IS THE ONE IN MATTHEW 21:4-5. ETERNAL SALVATION IS FOR THE MARRIED MILITARY CONCERNING LUCIFER AS THE ETERNAL MARRIED MAN & THE MARRIED MINISTRY CONCERNING THE OTHER MARRIED LORD CALLED WISDOM AS THE ETERNAL MARRIED MAN. SALVATION IN THE NEW TESTAMENT USES 3 USAGES FOR SALVATION. FIRST, IS THE NOUN SOTERIA FOR THE STIPULATION OF DELIVERANCE AND RESCUE. SECOND, IS THE VERB SOZO WHICH MEANS ‘TO SAVE.” THIRD, IS THE WORD YASHA WHICH MEANS SALVATION. THE SCRIPTURES THAT SURROUND THIS FOUNDATION ARE ACTS 27:20, 31, 34 & MATTHEW 19:24-26; LUKE 1:69, 71; 2:30; 17:19; 18:42. ALSO JESUS DATED MARY MAGDALENE HIS COMPANION WHILE ON THE EARTH. THIS IS PROVEN IN JOHN 10:31-39 & THE GOSPEL OF PHILIP ON PAGE 90. BUT JESUS DID HIS DATING WITHOUT SIN WHICH IS PROVEN IN HEBREWS 4:15. JESUS DID NOT HAVE SEXUAL EROS LOVE RELATIONS WITH ANYBODY, ESPECIALLY MARY MAGDALENE.**

**THE LORD JESUS’ MINISTRIES**

**JESUS’ MINISTRIES ARE INNUMERABLE, SO I WOULD LIKE TO POINT OUT SOME OF THEM. FIRST, THE MINISTRY OF MIRACLES THAT HE DISPLAYED WAS VERY SUFFICIENT FOR ISRAEL AND HIS DISCIPLES. JESUS IS KNOWN AS THE “GREAT PHYSICIAN” IN THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS. THROUGHOUT HIS MINISTRY HE CURED, RAISED THE DEAD, PREACHED TO THE CAPTIVE SAINTS (LORDS), CAST OUT DEVILS, HEALED, MADE THE BLIND EYES TO SEE, AND SHOWED THE FATHER STEPHEN’S GLORY. THE 45 MIRACLES THAT JESUS ACHIEVED THROUGH THE FATHER STEPHEN IN HIS THREE YEAR MINISTRY INVOLVES PETER’S MOTHER IN LAW HEALED IN CAPERNAUM IN MATTHEW 8:14-17; MARK 1:29-31; LUKE 4:38, 39, THE DROUGHT OF FISHES IN GALILEE IN LUKE 5:1-11, THE LEPER CLEANSED IN CAPERNAUM IN MATTHEW 8:1-4; MARK 1:40-45; LUKE 5:12-15, THE PARALYTIC CURED IN CAPERNAUM IN MATTHEW 9:1-8; MARK 2:3-13; LUKE 5:18-26, THE IMPOTENT MAN HEALED IN JERUSALEM IN JOHN 5:1-9, THE WITHERED HAND RESTORED IN GALILEE IN MATTHEW 12:10-13; MARK 3:1-5; LUKE 6:6-11, THE CENTURION’S SERVANT CURED OF THE PALSY IN CAPERNAUM IN MATTHEW 8:5-13; LUKE 7:1-10, THE WIDOWS SON RAISED FROM THE DEAD (NAIN) IN LUKE 7:11-17, THE DEMONIAC HEALED IN GALILEE IN MATTHEW 12:22, 23; LUKE 11:14, THE TEMPEST STILLED IN GALILEE IN MATTHEW 8:23-27; MARK 4:35-41; LUKE 8:22-25, THE TWO DEMONIACS CURED IN GADARA IN MATTHEW 8:28-34; MARK 5:23, 35-43; LUKE 8:41, 49-56, THE WOMAN WITH THE ISSUE OF BLOOD HEALED IN MATTHEW 9:20-22; MARK 5:25-34; LUKE 8:43-48, THE BLIND MEN CURED IN CAPERNAUM IN MATTHEW 9:27-31, THE DUMB SPIRIT CAST OUT IN CAPERNAUM IN MATTHEW 9:32, 33, THE FIVE THOUSAND FED IN GALILEE IN MATTHEW 14:15-21; MARK 6:35-44; LUKE 9:10-17; JOHN 6:1-14, THE WALKING ON THE SEA IN GALILEE IN MATTHEW 14:25-33; MARK 6:48-52; JOHN 6:15-21, THE SYROPHOENICIAN’S DAUGHTER HEALED IN TYRE IN MATTHEW 15:21-28; MARK 7:24-30, FOUR THOUSAND FED IN GALILEE IN MATTHEW 15:32-39; MARK 8:1-9, THE DEAF AND DUMB MAN CURED IN GALILEE IN MARK 7:31-37, THE BLIND MAN HEALED IN BETHSAIDA IN MARK 8:22-26, THE DEVIL CAST OUT OF THE BOY NEAR CAESAREA IN MATTHEW 17:14-18; MARK 9:14-29; LUKE 9:37-42, HAVING THE TRIBUTE MONEY PROVIDED IN CAPERNAUM IN MATTHEW 17:24-27, THE PASSING THROUGH THE CROWD UNSEEN IN THE TEMPLE IN JOHN 8:59, THE TEN LEPERS CLEANSED IN SAMARIA IN LUKE 17:11-19, THE MAN BORN BLIND HEALED IN JERUSALEM IN JOHN 9:1-7, LAZARUS RAISED FROM THE DEAD IN BETHANY IN JOHN 11:38-44, THE WOMAN WITH THE INFIRMITY CURED IN PERAEA IN LUKE 13:11-17, THE MAN WITH THE DROPSY CURED IN PERAEA IN LUKE 14:1-6, THE TWO BLIND MEN CURED IN JERICHO IN MATTHEW 20:29-34; MARK 10:46-52; LUKE 18:35-43, THE FIG TREE BLASTED IN MOUNT OLIVET IN MATTHEW 21:18-22; MARK 11:12-14, MALCHUS’ EAR PLACED AND HEALED IN GETHSEMANE IN LUKE 22:50, 51, THE SECOND DRAUGHT OF THE FISHES IN GALILEE IN JOHN 21:1-14, LEGION WITH OVER 2,000 DEMONS CAST OUT IN LUKE 8:26-39; MARK 5:1-20 & THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST IN MATTHEW 28:1-10; MARK 16:1-11; LUKE 24:1-12 AND JOHN 20:1-18. THESE ARE THE MIRACLES RECORDED IN THE GOSPELS BUT “THERE ARE ALSO MANY OTHER THINGS THAT JESUS DID, WHICH IF THEY WERE WRITTEN ONE BY ONE, I SUPPOSE THAT EVEN THE WORLD ITSELF COULD NOT CONTAIN THE BOOKS THAT WOULD BE WRITTEN” IN JOHN 21:25.**

**THE FORGOTTEN MINISTRY OF THE MORNING STAR**

**JESUS AS BEING THE MORNING STAR IS PROVEN IN 2 SCRIPTURES IN ACTS 7:59 & REVELATION 22:16 AND THE MORNING STAR IS PERFECTED IN ACTS 9:3-18; 22:6-21; 26: 12-18 BY THE “LIGHT” FROM HEAVEN. SHORTLY AFTER HIS DEATH JESUS CHRIST PAID ANOTHER UNIQUE PRICE IN THE ANGELICAL REALM. JESUS GAVE AID TO ANGELS, NOT WHEN HE WAS ON THE EARTH, BUT AFTERWARDS IN ACTS 1:1-6:15, HE SAT DOWN AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD IN THE HEAVEN-LIES. IT IS PROVEN IN MATTHEW 27:64; MARK 15:62; JOHN 20:17; LUKE 9:26; MARK 8:38. IN REVELATION 19:11-21 SAYS HE IS THE WORD OF GOD WITH MANY CROWNS TO STRIKE ALL NATIONS.**

**THE OFFICE OF THE MORNING STAR**

**IT BEGAN WITH LUCIFER PRIOR TO HIS FALL, THEN POSSIBLY MICHAEL, GABRIEL, RAPHAEL (AZARIAH), URIEL (JEREMIEL) & JESUS CHRIST IN REVELATION 22:16. THE MORNING STAR OR ALSO CALLED DAY STAR IN THE POSITION OF AN ANOINTED CHERUB OF THE LORD WHO COVERS. SUPPOSEDLY, IT IS THE HIGHEST POSITION HELD IN THE ANGELICAL HIERARCHY. THE MORNING STAR WOULD BE THE WORSHIP LEADER SUPERVISING THE PRAISES TO GOD IN HIS THRONE. THE MORNING STAR WALKS BACK AND FORTH IN THE MIDST OF THE FIERY STONES AND HAS THE WORKMANSHIP OF HIS TIMBRES AND PIPES. THEY ARE FULL OF WISDOM AND PERFECT IN BEAUTY IN EZEKIEL 28. THEY ARE IN THE HOLY MOUNTAIN OF GOD AND ARE ESTABLISHED BY GOD. THEY ARE THE SEAL OF PERFECTION AND MONITOR THE OUTCOMES IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN CONCERNING THE ENTRANCE AND THE TREE OF LIFE. THERE ANGELICAL CREATIONS ARE PERFECT IN ALL THEIR WAYS. THEY ARE ALSO CALLED LIGHT- BEARERS PROTECTING GOD’S GLORY AND ASSURING HIS PLANS FROM THE THRONE. THEY ARE ALSO KNOWN AS SHINING ONES IN THE LIGHT. IF JESUS BECAME THE BRIGHT AND MORNING STAR IN REVELATION 22:16 THEN IT PROVES THAT GOD BECAME THE ANGEL (LORD) ACCORDING TO THE DIVINE FLESH. ALSO “IF HE WHO COMES PREACHES ANOTHER JESUS WHOM WE HAVE NOT PREACHED, OR IF YOU RECEIVE A DIFFERENT SPIRIT WHICH YOU HAVE NOT RECEIVED, OR A DIFFERENT GOSPEL WHICH YOU HAVE NOT ACCEPTED—YOU MAY WELL PUT UP WITH IT!” IN 2ND CORINTHIANS 11:4. THE MORNING STAR COMES AFTER JESUS CHRIST 33 YEARS ON EARTH, SO IT DOES NOT AFFECT THE PREACHING, GOSPEL OR THE SPIRIT OF JESUS IN HIS MINISTRY. ALSO “THEREFORE I MAKE KNOWN TO YOU THAT NO ONE SPEAKING BY THE SPIRIT OF GOD CALLS JESUS ACCURSED AND NO ONE CAN SAY THAT JESUS IS LORD EXCEPT BY THE HOLY SPIRIT” IN 1ST CORINTHIANS 12:3. ALSO IN GALATIANS 1:8-9 IT DECLARES “BUT EVEN IF WE, OR AN ANGEL (LORD) FROM HEAVEN, PREACH ANY OTHER GOSPEL TO YOU THAN WHAT WE HAVE PREACHED TO YOU, LET HIM BE ACCURSED. AS WE HAVE SAID BEFORE, SO NOW SAY AGAIN, IF ANYONE PREACHES ANY OTHER GOSPEL TO YOU THAN WHAT YOU HAVE RECEIVED, LET HIM BE ACCURSED.” THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST CONCERNS MANKIND, BUT AFTER HIS DEATH IT GROWS INTO JESUS BEING THE MORNING STAR IN REVELATION 22:16.**

**THE MINISTRY OF RESTORATION**

**THE MINISTRY OF RESTORATION FROM JESUS INVOLVES “MANKIND” FOR 33 YEARS AND “THE SECRET ANGEL KIND” AFTER HIS DEATH. FIRST, MANKIND WAS RESTORED BY JESUS CHRIST THROUGH THE DEATH OF HIS CROSS. IN LUKE 10:18-20 IT DECLARES THAT JESUS “SAW SATAN FALL LIKE LIGHTNING FROM HEAVEN. BEHOLD, I GIVE YOU AUTHORITY TO TRAMPLE ON SERPENTS AND SCORPIONS, AND OVER ALL THE POWER OF THE ENEMY AND NOTHING SHALL BE ANY MEANS HURT YOU. NEVERTHELESS, DO NOT REJOICE IN THIS, THAT THE SPIRITS ARE SUBJECT TO YOU, BUT RATHER REJOICE BECAUSE YOUR NAMES ARE WRITTEN IN HEAVEN.” SINCE WE KNOW THE OUTCOME OF SATAN IN REVELATION 20:1-15, MANKIND CAN REST ASSURE THAT JESUS CHRIST CONQUERED DEATH, HELL, AND THE GRAVE, AND ALSO PUT SATAN IN HIS PLACE OF TORMENT IN HELL. MANKIND CAN REJOICE OVER THE WORKS AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF JESUS CHRIST. MANKIND IS HOLY NOW AND SEPARATED FROM SATANIC [ARMED] FORCES IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD. SATAN HAS BEEN HANDLED IN HEAVEN AND ON THE EARTH THROUGH JESUS CHRIST’S MINISTRY. GOD BLESS JESUS! SECOND, ANGEL KIND WAS RESTORED BY JESUS CHRIST THROUGH THE PERSECUTION THAT AROSE AFTER HIS RESURRECTION IN ACTS 8:1-9:19. IN ISAIAH 14:12 IT DECLARES THAT THIS LUCIFER FELL FROM HEAVEN! BECAUSE THIS LUCIFER SAID IN HIS HEART, I WILL ASCEND INTO HEAVEN, I WILL EXALT MY THRONE ABOVE THE STARS OF GOD, I WILL ALSO SIT ON THE MOUNT OF THE CONGREGATION TO THE FARTHEST SIDES OF THE NORTH, I WILL ASCEND ABOVE THE HEIGHTS OF THE CLOUDS, I WILL BE LIKE THE MOST HIGH” IN ISAIAH 14:13-14. LUCIFER’S PRIDE AND SELF-CENTERNESS IN WANTING TO BE GOD IS EVIDENT. JESUS RESTORES THE MORNING STAR TO ITS RIGHTFUL PLACE IN REVELATION 22:16 & ACTS 7:59, 9:3; 22:6; 26:13. ALSO THE MORNING STAR IS RESTORED ON THE EARTH IN EZEKIEL 28:11-19. LUCIFER HAD INIQUITY IN HIM AND “BY THE ABUNDANCE OF YOUR TRADING YOU BECAME FILLED WITH VIOLENCE WITHIN, AND YOU SINNED. THEREFORE, I CAST YOU AS A PROFANE THING OUT OF THE MOUNTAIN OF GOD, AND I DESTROYED YOU, O COVERING CHERUB FROM THE MIDST OF THE FIERY STONES.” IN EZEKIEL 28:15-16. “THE KINGDOM OF GOD SUFFERS VIOLENCE, AND THE VIOLENT TAKE IT BY FORCE” IN MATTHEW 11:12 & LUKE 16:16. THIS WAS DONE ON THE EARTH IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN. IN REVELATION 21-22 THE KINGDOM OF GOD OR THE GARDEN OF EDEN IS RESTORED. THANK THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD FOR THE SON JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD!**

**THE MINISTRY OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD**

**THE NEW KINGDOM OF THE FATHER STEPHEN BEGINS WITH JESUS IN LUKE 17:21. IT SAYS “THE KINGDOM OF GOD DOES NOT COME WITH OBSERVATION, NOR ANY WILL THEY SAY, ‘SEE HERE!’ OR ‘SEE THERE!’ FOR INDEED, THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS WITHIN YOU.” THE FULLNESS OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD DID NOT BE ESTABLISHED UNTIL THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST IN ACTS 1:9-11 CAME TO PASS. THIS MEANS THE PAST & FUTURE DOES NOT HAVE ANY LIMITATIONS, BOUNDARIES OR RESTRICTIONS BECAUSE IT HAS BEEN PERFECTED & COMPLETED AND IS INFALLIBLE & INERRANT BY THE LORD. NOW THE PRESENT IS GREATLY LIMITED, RESTRICTED & HAS ITS BOUNDARIES WITH TRUE BLINDNESS & INVISIBILITY BECAUSE FAITH ONLY PLEASES GOD & NOT PHYSICAL SIGHT, BUT ETERNAL SIGHT IS USING THESE KIND OF ETERNAL EYES TO LOOK INTO THE INVISIBLE, WHICH IS DONE BY FAITH & NOT BY EMPIRICISM.**

**THE UNIVERSAL AUTHORITY OF THE “KINGDOM OF GOD” IS PROVEN IN SCRIPTURE. THE KINGDOM IS ETERNAL AND SOVEREIGN. EXODUS 15:18 DECLARES “THE LORD SHALL REIGN FOREVER & EVER.” IN PSALM 93:1 IT DECLARES “THE LORD REIGNETH AND IS CLOTHED WITH MAJESTY.” IN JEREMIAH 46:18 DECLARES “AS I LIVE, SAYS THE KING, WHOSE NAME IS THE LORD OF HOSTS…” IN LAMENTATION 5:19 IT DECLARES “REMAINEST FOREVER, THY THRONE FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION.” IN PSALM 103:19 IT DECLARES “THE LORD HATH PREPARED HIS THRONE IN THE HEAVENS, AND HIS KINGDOM RULETH OVER ALL.” IN 1ST CHRONICLES 29:11-12 DECLARES “THINE, O LORD, IS THE GREATNESS, AND THE POWER, AND THE GLORY, AND THE VICTORY, AND THE MAJESTY, FOR ALL THAT IS IN THE HEAVEN AND IN THE EARTH IS THINE, THINE IS THE KINGDOM, O LORD, AND THOU ART EXALTED AS HEAD ABOVE ALL. BOTH RICHES AND HONOR COME OF THEE, AND THOU REIGNEST OVER ALL, AND IN THINE HAND ARE POWER AND MIGHT, AND IN THINE HAND IS TO MAKE GREAT, AND GIVE STRENGTH UNTO ALL.”**

**THE SOTERIOLOGICAL KINGDOM IS SALVATION THAT IS NEEDED FOR DELIVERANCE FROM SATANIC [ARMED] FORCES AND THE ENTRANCE TO THE KINGDOM OF GOD. IN COLOSSIANS 1:13 SAYS THAT “WHO HATH DELIVERED US FROM THE POWER OF DARKNESS, AND HATH TRANSLATED US INTO THE KINGDOM OF HIS DEAR SON.” IN JOHN 3:3 IT DECLARES THAT “EXCEPT A MAN BE BORN AGAIN, HE CANNOT SEE THE KINGDOM OF GOD.” IN REVELATION 11:15 IT DECLARES THAT “THE KINGDOMS OF THIS WORLD [LAW ENFORCEMENT ARMED FORCES] ARE BECOME THE KINGDOMS OF OUR LORD [GOVERNMENTAL ARMED FORCES], AND OF HIS CHRIST [MILITARY ARMED FORCES], AND HE SHALL REIGN FOREVER.”**

**THE ACTIVE KINGDOM COMES WITH THE OMNIPOTENCE OF GOD. IN MATTHEW 12:28-29 DECLARES “BUT IF I CAST OUT DEVILS BY THE SPIRIT OF GOD, THEN THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS COME UNTO YOU. OR ELSE HOW CAN ONE ENTER A STRONG MAN’S HOUSE, AND SPOIL HIS GOODS, EXCEPT HE FIRST BIND THE STRONG MAN? AND THEN HE WILL SPOIL HIS HOUSE.” THE 12 FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT IN GALATIANS 5:22-23 MUST BE IN THE OPERATION OF THAT PARTICULAR PERSON IN ORDER TO PARTICIPATE IN THE KINGDOM. IN MARK 4:26-27 IT DECLARES “SO IS THE KINGDOM OF GOD, AS IF A MAN SHOULD CAST SEED INTO THE GROUND; AND SHOULD SLEEP, AND RISE NIGHT AND DAY, AND THE SEED SHOULD SPRING AND GROW UP, HE KNOWS NOT HOW.”**

**THE UNIFIED KINGDOM IS THE FATHER STEPHEN FROM THE 60 LORD’S KINGDOMS IN OTHER PARTS OF THE OT (EXEMPTION OF THE LAW OF MOSES, PSALMS, AND THE PROPHETS) GIVING THE KINGDOM TO THE SON FROM JESUS CHRIST’S MINISTRY IN THE LAW OF MOSES, THE PSALMS, THE PROPHETS AND THE GOSPELS, THEN THE SON FROM JESUS CHRIST’S MINISTRY IN THE LAW OF MOSES, THE PSALMS, THE PROPHETS, AND THE GOSPELS GIVING THE KINGDOM BACK TO THE FATHER BY STEPHEN’S MINISTRY IN ACTS 1:7- REVELATION 22:21. IN LUKE 2:29 SAYS, “AND I APPOINT UNTO YOU A KINGDOM, AS MY FATHER HATH APPOINTED UNTO ME.” IN ACTS 1:6-7 IT DECLARES “LORD, WILL YOU AT THIS TIME RESTORE THE KINGDOM TO ISRAEL? AND HE SAID, IT IS NOT FOR YOU TO KNOW TIMES OR SEASONS WHICH THE FATHER STEPHEN HAS PUT IN HIS OWN AUTHORITY. BUT YOU SHALL RECEIVE POWER WHEN THE HOLY GHOST HAS COME UPON YOU.” IN CORINTHIANS 15:24 IT DECLARES “THEN COMETH THE END, WHEN HE SHALL HAVE DELIVERED UP THE KINGDOM TO GOD, EVEN THE FATHER (STEPHEN), WHEN HE SHALL HAVE PUT DOWN ALL RULE AND ALL AUTHORITY AND (ALL) POWER.”**

**THE NATIONAL AUTHORITY OF THE KINGDOM IS PROVEN IN SCRIPTURE. THE PAST OLD TESTAMENT KINGDOM CONCERNS THE FATHER STEPHEN’S KINGDOM AT MOUNT SINAI IS IN EXODUS 19:5-6. THIS KIND OF KINGDOM INVOLVES JUDGES, KINGS, AND LEADERS OVER ISRAEL IN ISAIAH 43:15. THE JEWS WERE DESCENDANTS OF THE KINGDOM IN MATTHEW 8:11-12. THE KINGDOM WILL BE TAKEN FROM YOU AS A POSSESSION IN MATTHEW 21:43. THE FUTURE MILLENNIAL KINGDOM IS THE PAST OLD TESTAMENT KINGDOM BEING RESTORED UNDER FATHER STEPHEN AS LORD. SOME SCRIPTURES ARE PSALM 2; ISAIAH 9:6-7; MATTHEW 20:21; LUKE 1:32-33 & ACTS 1:7.**

**THE PRESENT AUTHORITY OF THE KINGDOM IS PROVEN IN INFALLIBLE SCRIPTURE. A MYSTERIOUS KINGDOM OF THE PRESENT IS NOT REVEALED YET, ONLY THE FORWARDING FUTURE AND ENDING PAST COMES TO LIGHT IN THE TRUE HOLY SCRIPTURES. ALSO, SOME SCRIPTURES WHICH PROVE THIS ARE IN MATTHEW 13:11, AND THE ARRIVAL OF CHRIST IS THE COMING OF THE KINGDOM IN MATTHEW 12:28. THE SURPRISE ATTACK ON SATAN’S KINGDOM IS REVEALED IN MATTHEW 8:29; LUKE 11:20-22.**

**THE SPIRITUAL KINGDOM OF THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH IS BY SALVATION BY FAITH. IT REQUIRES CHILD-LIKE FAITH IN MATTHEW 19:14. IT IS IDENTICAL TO SALVATION IN MATTHEW 19:23-24. CHRIST RULES IN THE LIVES ONLY IF THEY ACKNOWLEDGE HIM AS LORD AND SAVOIR OF THE WORLD IN JOHN 18:36; 2ND THESSALONIANS 1:5; ACTS 14:22.**

**THE VISIBLE KINGDOM OR CHRISTENDOM INVOLVES TRUE AND FALSE TEACHERS IN MATTHEW 13:47-50. OUTER WORKS OR SERVICE WILL NOT CONSIDER THE FUTURE KINGDOM BUT THE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE FATHER STEPHEN THROUGH TOTAL SUBMISSION TO HIS WILL & THE FAITH OF GOD IN MATTHEW 7:21-23.**

**THE FUTURE AUTHORITY OF THE KINGDOM INVOLVES CHRIST COMING AND REWARDING HIS PEOPLE IN CHRISTIANITY AND HE WILL JUDGE THE GOVERNMENTS OF THE EARTH IN MATTHEW 24:31.**

**THE MILLENNIAL KINGDOM IS INTERNATIONAL IN ALL THE EARTH IN ISAIAH 11& ZECHARIAH 14. THE FATHER STEPHEN WILL GIVE A 1000 YEARS REIGN ON EARTH IN THE THRONE OF THE KINGDOM IN DANIEL 7:18, 27; REVELATION 19:11-15, 20:1-6.**

**THE ETERNAL KINGDOM IS THE CONSUMMATION OF THE TRINITY AND THE FATHER STEPHEN’S PROMISE TO BELIEVERS FOR THE INHERITANCE IN HEAVEN OF ETERNAL LIFE THROUGH JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD IN JAMES 2:5; 2ND TIMOTHY 4:18; 1ST TIMOTHY 2:12. THE ETERNAL KINGDOM OF THE FATHER STEPHEN’S KINGDOM HAS NO TEMPORAL QUALITIES OF LIMITATIONS DIFFERENT FROM**

**THE UNIVERSAL KINGDOM BOTH COMES FROM THE FATHER STEPHEN IN MATTHEW 13:43 & REVELATION 11:15. IN 1ST CORINTHIANS 4:20 SAYS THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS IN AUTHORITY & NOT IN WORD.**

**JESUS CHRIST’S MINISTRY OF THE LIGHT**

**IN JOHN 1:9 DECLARES “THE TRUE LIGHT WHICH GIVES LIGHT TO EVERY MAN COMING INTO THE WORLD.” IN LUKE 11:33-36 IT DECLARES “NO ONE, WHEN HE HAS LIT A LAMP, PUTS IT IN A SECRET PLACE OR UNDER A BASKET, BUT ON A LAMP-STAND, THAT THOSE WHO COME IN MAY SEE THE LIGHT. THE LAMP OF THE BODY IS THE EYE. THEREFORE, WHEN YOUR EYE IS GOOD, YOUR WHOLE BODY ALSO IS FULL OF LIGHT. BUT WHEN YOUR EYE IS BAD, YOUR BODY ALSO IS FULL OF DARKNESS. THEREFORE TAKE HEED THAT THE LIGHT WHICH IS IN YOU IS NOT DARKNESS. IF THEN YOUR WHOLE BODY IS FULL OF LIGHT, HAVING NO PART DARK, THE WHOLE BODY WILL BE FULL OF LIGHT, AS WHEN THE BRIGHT SHINING OF A LAMP GIVES YOU LIGHT.” ALSO THE LORD JESUS CHRIST IS THE AUTHOR OF LIFE TO MANKIND. IN HIS LIGHT, MANKIND SEES HIMSELF AS SINNERS IN WANTING A SAVOIR. WHEN MAN FOLLOWS THE TRUE LIGHT MAN WILL NOT FALL INTO TEMPTATION AND SIN. MANKIND WILL SEE WHO JESUS REALLY IS BECAUSE JESUS IS FULL OF LIGHT AND THROUGH JESUS CHRIST MANKIND IS FULL OF LIGHT. JESUS CHRIST IS THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD. JESUS IS THE LIGHT BEARER AS THE BRIGHT AND MORNING STAR IN REVELATION 22:16.**

**JESUS CHRIST’S MINISTRY OF THE SPIRIT OF GOD**

**THE SPIRIT WAS INDEED AN IMPORTANT ASPECT OF JESUS’ MINISTRY CONCERNING HIS TOTAL WORK ON EARTH. THROUGH HIS TEACHING HE SHOWED HIS FOLLOWERS THAT THE SPIRIT WAS ALREADY WITH HIM. NO OTHER JEWS AT THAT TIME BELIEVED IN THE SPIRIT EXCEPT THE ESSENES. THE RABBIS AND THE PROPHETS WERE STILL LOOKING FOR THE JEWISH MESSIAH TO COME & DIDN’T KNOW THAT JESUS WAS HIM. THE FIRST CHRISTIANS BELIEVED FROM STEPHEN TO THIS PRESENT AGE BECAUSE OF THE PROPHESIES BEING FULFILLED CONCERNING THE SPIRIT’S RETURN IN ACTS 2. JESUS KNEW THAT HIS TEACHING AND MIRACLES WOULD IMPACT ON LIFE SO HE TAUGHT THAT HE WAS CHOSEN BY GOD THROUGH THE SPIRIT TO BRING SALVATION TO MANKIND. SOME SCRIPTURES ARE MATTHEW 5:3-10; 12:27-28, 41-42; 13:16-17; MARK 1:8, 9-10; 3:22-27 AND LUKE 4:1, 14, 17-19; 10:21.**

**JESUS CHRIST’S MINISTRY OF DIVINE LOVE**

**JESUS DEMONSTRATED HIS DIVINE LOVE THROUGH HIS ACTS OF HEALING HIS PEOPLE IN TIME OF NEED. HE ALSO WAS CONCERNED WITH THE ONES SEPARATED FROM GOD. JESUS DID THIS BECAUSE HE OFFERED GOOD NEWS TO THE CAPTIVES, BLIND, POOR, AND OPPRESSED IN MATTHEW 11:2-5; LUKE 4:18. JESUS FORGAVE THEM AND ALLOWED THEM TO ENTER BACK INTO GOD’S FAMILY. JESUS’ FORGIVENESS WAS FREE, HE REQUIRED THAT THEY ACCEPT IT AND BE FAITHFUL TO HIM. CHRISTIAN AGAPE LOVE WILL LOVE THE FATHER STEPHEN AND ALL OTHERS THE SAME WAY, SO THE SON JESUS DISPLAYED THIS IN MATTHEW 5:44-48. THE LORD JESUS KNEW THE WHOLE LAW DEPENDED ON GOD’S LOVE IN MATTHEW 22:35-40; LEVITICUS 19:18; DEUTERONOMY 6:5. THE LORD JESUS CHRIST THE SON OF GOD’S IDEAS OF LOVING HIS FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD ARE CLEARLY SEEN THROUGH HIS OWN 3 YEAR PUBLIC WORSHIP, DIRECT OBEDIENCE TO GOD, AND HIS PRAYER IN PRIVATE IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN. JESUS SAID THE WORST KIND OF SIN HE BELIEVED WAS TO NOT LOVE GOD.**

**JESUS CHRIST’S MINISTRY OF TRUE HOLINESS**

**JESUS PROBABLE DEFINITION OF TRUE HOLINESS WAS THE INNER PERSON THAT IS FREE FROM ANY FORM OF GUILTINESS AND A QUICKENING OF MORAL PERFECTION FROM GOD. TRUE HOLINESS CAN MEAN “GODLINESS” OR “GOD LIKE”. ALSO, HOLINESS MEANS TOTAL SEPARATION FROM THE WORLD TO DO HIS WILL. IN THE LORD STEPHEN’S PRAYER, IT CONCERNS HOLINESS IN MATTHEW 6:9. THE LORD IS HOLY AS IS DESCRIBED IN REVELATION 4:8. HOLINESS WAS A CONCEPT OF MAJESTY AND TRANSCENDENCE IN LUKE 1:35, 49; 4:34. THE HOLY SPIRIT HOLDS THE TITLE OF HOLINESS IN JOHN 3:5-8; 14:16-17.SO JESUS WAS VERY HOLY HAVING THE HOLY GHOST AND HOLY ANGELS (LORDS) AROUND HIM.**

**JESUS CHRIST’S MINISTRY OF POWER**

**POWER FROM THIS STAND POINT WAS NOT OMNIPOTENT SINCE JESUS WAS A LITTLE LOWER THAN THE ANGELS (LORDS) IN HEBREWS 2. THE GOSPELS BEAR WITNESS TO THE POWER OF JESUS CHRIST AND IN ACTS AFTER HIS DEATH. POWER WAS SHOWN DIRECTLY FROM HIS MIRACLES FROM THE LORD IN MATTHEW 11:20; ACTS 2:22; 10:38 & LUKE 4:36; 5:17; 6:19. OMNIPOTENCE IS SHOWN IN JESUS’ RESURRECTION. JESUS SAID THAT HE CAN LAY DOWN HIS LIFE IN POWER OR TAKE IT AGAIN IN POWER FROM THE FATHER STEPHEN IN JOHN 10:18. BUT FOR THE MOST PART IT TALKS ABOUT GOD RAISING JESUS CHRIST FROM THE DEAD IN LUKE 24; ACTS CHAPTER 2, CHAPTER 3, AND CHAPTER 13; ROMANS 1:4; EPHESIANS 1:19-20. JESUS CHRIST WILL COME IN CLOUDS OF HEAVEN WITH POWER IN MATTHEW 24:30. ON EARTH JESUS LIVED AND DID BY THE POWER OF THE SPIRIT OF GOD IN ACTS 10:38 & LUKE 4:14.**

**JESUS CHRIST’S MINISTRY OF BLESSING**

**JESUS CHRIST IS THE GREATEST BLESSING FOR MANKIND. IN EPHESIANS 1:3 IT DECLARES “HOW HE (MAN) PRAISES GOD, THE FATHER (STEPHEN) OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, WHO HAS BLESSED US WITH EVERY SPIRITUAL BLESSING IN THE HEAVENLY REALMS.” THIS MEANS THAT MANKIND HAS EVERYTHING MANKIND CAN GET FOR SALVATION, BABES, INSIGHT, THE FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT, THE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT, POWER IN GOD’S WILL, THE HOPE OF BEING LIKE JESUS CHRIST, AND THE TOTAL FORGIVENESS.**

**JESUS CHRIST’S MINISTRY OF STRENGTH**

**JESUS’ STRENGTH WAS NOT HOW MANY MUSCLES HE COULD BULGE OUT OR HAVE LARGE MASSIVE SHOULDERS. NO, NOT AT ALL, JESUS FOCUSED ON GOD’S STRENGTH. HE GIVES POWER TO THOSE WHO ARE TIRED AND WORN OUT, HE OFFERS STRENGTH TO THE WEAK. EVEN YOUTHS WILL BECOME WEAK, AND YOUNG MEN WILL GIVE UP. ISAIAH 40:29-31 IT DECLARES “HE GIVES POWER TO THE WEAK, AND TO THOSE WHO HAVE NO MIGHT, HE INCREASES STRENGTH. EVEN THE YOUNG MEN SHALL UTTERLY FALL, BUT THOSE WHO WAIT ON THE LORD SHALL RENEW THEIR STRENGTH. THEY SHALL RUN AND NOT BE WEARY. THEY SHALL WALK AND NOT FAINT.”**

**JESUS CHRIST’S MINISTRY OF HONOR AND GLORY**

**JESUS HAD THE UTMOST RESPECT TO THE FATHER STEPHEN. JESUS WAS PURE IN EVERY FACET OF LIFE. JESUS’ REPUTATION GREW AS HE LEANED MORE ON GOD IN HEBREWS 3:1-6. ALSO GIVING HONOR TO GOD IS MANKIND’S OBLIGATION TO JESUS. IN ALL OF HISTORY ONLY JESUS CHRIST TRULY HONORED GOD AND NOT MANKIND PROVEN IN ISAIAH 52:13-53:12. JESUS WAS EXALTED AS HIGH PRIEST & APOSTLE IN HEBREWS 3:1; 5:5-6. JESUS PREACHED THAT WHO LISTENS TO JESUS THE FATHER WILL HONOR IN JOHN 12:26. BUT THOSE WHO DO NOT DO WHAT JESUS SAYS THEY WILL NOT BE HONORED BY MY FATHER STEPHEN IN JOHN 15:23.**

**JESUS CHRIST’S MINISTRY OF TEACHING**

**JESUS CHRIST’S MINISTRY OF TEACHING WAS TAUGHT BY PARABLES THAT THE PEOPLE MIGHT UNDERSTAND WHAT HE WAS SAYING. HE TAUGHT ABOUT MANY THINGS IN HIS MINISTRY. THIS WAS BECAUSE IN ACTS 28 IT TELLS US THAT IN SEEING, THEY MIGHT NOT PERCEIVE AND HEARING, THEY MIGHT NOT UNDERSTAND. JESUS KNEW THAT THE THOUGHTS OF MANKIND WERE FUTILE. SO, HE MADE IT EASY FOR THEM TO UNDERSTAND WHAT HE WAS SAYING. JESUS WAS PREACHING, TEACHING AND HEALING WHICH ARE THE THREE MAIN THINGS HE USED FOR HIS MINISTRY IN MATTHEW 7:24-29. JESUS IS THE JEWISH TEACHER IN MATTHEW 23:8.**

**JESUS CHRIST’S MINISTRY OF HIS MANHOOD**

**MAN MEANS A NATURAL PERSON OR THE SOUL FOUND IN 1ST CORINTHIANS 15:44 (TWO TIMES); JAMES 3:15; AND JUDE 1:19. JESUS WAS FULLY MAN AND FULLY GOD. JESUS CHRIST DID NOT SIN AS A MAN IN ROMANS 6:15-21. BUT LIFE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS IS IN CHRIST. JESUS CHRIST BY BECOMING HUMAN MANKIND SEES JESUS AS THE PERFECT TEACHER KNOWING THE MIND OF GOD. THIS IS HOW MANKIND SHOULD THINK IN PHILIPPIANS 2:5-11; 1ST PETER 2:21 & COLOSSIANS 1:15-23. JESUS’ MANHOOD LASTED FOR ONLY ABOUT THREE YEARS, SINCE HE WAS CONSIDERED A BOY BEFORE HIS MINISTRY. HIS LIFE WAS SANCTIFIED BY THE FATHER STEPHEN IN JOHN 10:36. EVEN PONTIUS PILATE SAID I FIND NO FAULT IN THIS MAN IN LUKE 23:14. SO MANKIND HAS A PLAY MODEL TO LIVE BY. JESUS’ NATURE WAS DIVINE NATURE WHICH DID NOT INVOLVE SIN. HE WAS TOTALLY SEPARATED FROM SIN AND DID NOT HAVE A SINFUL NATURE. JESUS DEMONSTRATED HIS HUMANITY IN ISAIAH 53:1-12. FOR MANKIND WENT ASTRAY LIKE ONE OF THE LOST SHEEP & THE FATHER STEPHEN’S THAT HE HAD PUT ON JESUS, THE GUILT AND SIN OF THE WORLD IN ISAIAH 53:6. JESUS DIED FOR MANKIND AND BECAME THERE MESSIAH. JESUS DEMONSTRATED HIS HUMANITY BY RESISTING TEMPTATION IN LUKE 4. THE DEVIL TEMPTING JESUS SHOWS HE WAS HUMAN, AND SHOWED GOD HE WAS READY FOR MINISTRY. JESUS WAS TESTED FOR THE PRIME REASON THAT GOD WANTED JESUS TO HAVE AN OPTION TO OBEY OR DISOBEY. CONVICTIONS ARE THE STRONGEST WHEN THEY DO NOT FAIL UNDER PRESSURE. JESUS CHRIST’S HUMANITY STARTS OFF WITH THE VIRGIN BIRTH (IMMACULATE CONCEPTION) RECORDED IN LUKE 1:26-35. IT DECREES “NOW IN THE SIXTH MONTH THE ANGEL (LORD) GABRIEL WAS SENT BY GOD TO A CITY OF GALILEE NAMED NAZARETH, TO A VIRGIN BETROTHED TO A MAN WHOSE NAME WAS JOSEPH, OF THE HOUSE OF DAVID. THE VIRGIN’S NAME WAS MARY (WHICH MEANS LOVED BY JEHOVAH). AND HAVING COME IN, THE ANGEL (LORD) SAID TO HER, REJOICE, HIGHLY FAVORED ONE, THE LORD IS WITH YOU, AND BLESSED ARE YOU (VIRGIN MARY) AMONG WOMEN! BUT WHEN SHE SAW HIM, SHE WAS TROUBLED AT HIS SAYING, AND CONSIDERED WHAT MANNER OF GREETING THIS WAS. THEN THE ANGEL (LORD) SAID TO HER, ‘DO NOT BE AFRAID, MARY, FOR YOU HAVE FOUND FAVOR WITH GOD. AND BEHOLD, YOU WILL CONCEIVE IN YOUR WOMB AND BRING FORTH A SON, AND SHALL CALL HIS NAME JESUS. HE WILL BE GREAT, AND WILL BE CALLED THE SON OF THE HIGHEST, AND THE LORD GOD WILL GIVE HIM THE THRONE OF HIS FATHER DAVID. AND HE WILL REIGN OVER THE HOUSE OF JACOB FOREVER, AND OF HIS KINGDOM THERE WILL BE NO END.’ THEN MARY SAID TO THE ANGEL (LORD), ‘HOW CAN THIS BE, SINCE I DO NOT KNOW A MAN?’ AND THE ANGEL (LORD GABRIEL) ANSWERED AND SAID TO HER, ‘THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL COME UPON YOU, & THE POWER OF THE HIGHEST WILL OVERSHADOW YOU, THEREFORE, ALSO THAT HOLY ONE WHO IS TO BE BORN WILL BE CALLED THE SON OF GOD.’” THE FULL MANHOOD AND FULL DEITY OF CHRIST WERE MADE INTO ONE PERSON. GOD SENT HIS SON INTO THE WORLD TO BECOME A MAN AT 30 YEARS OF AGE IN JOHN 3:16; GALATIANS 4:4.JESUS, GOD MADE FOR THE UNIQUENESS SEPARATED FROM THE FULLY HUMAN ADAM. THIS WAS DONE TO SHOW HE WAS FULLY HUMAN THROUGH HIS MOTHER MARY, AND TO SHOW HE WAS FULLY DIVINE THROUGH THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. THE VIRGIN BIRTH OF JESUS ALSO DEMONSTRATES THAT HE WAS BORN NOT IN SIN BUT SINLESSNESS BY GOD IN 1ST PETER 2:22. THIS MAKES IT CLEAR THAT ALL HAVE SINNED IN MANKIND, AND THE PENALTY IS DEATH, BUT JESUS CHRIST WAS NOT PART OF THE ORIGINAL SIN. ANOTHER THING IS THAT MARY KEPT HERSELF FROM SIN SO THAT JESUS WOULD NOT BE CORRUPTED BY SIN FOR 9 MONTHS. AND THE LINAGE OF MARY HAD TO BE SINLESS SO THAT GOD (FATHER STEPHEN) COULD SEND HIS SON. JESUS HAS NO EARTHLY FATHER SO THAT IS SOLVED. HIS FATHER IS STEPHEN. IN THE GREGORIAN CALENDAR THE SIXTH MONTH WOULD BE JUNE. AND THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION LASTED FROM JUNE TO MARCH (9 MONTHS). SO JESUS’ BIRTHDAY WOULD BE IN MARCH BECAUSE HE WAS CRUCIFIED IN APRIL.**

**MARY’S SONG OF PRAISE TO HER SON**

**IN LUKE 1:46-55 IT DECLARES “MY SOUL MAGNIFIES THE LORD, AND MY SPIRIT HAS REJOICED IN GOD MY SAVOIR. FOR HE HAS REGARDED THE LOWLY STATE OF HIS MAIDSERVANT, AND FOR BEHOLD, HENCEFORTH ALL GENERATIONS WILL CALL ME BLESSED. FOR HE WHO IS MIGHTY HAS DONE GREAT THINGS FOR ME, AND HOLY IS HIS NAME. HIS MERCY IS ON THOSE WHO FEAR HIM FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION. HE HAS SHOWN STRENGTH WITH HIS ARM, AND HE HAS SCATTERED THE PROUD IN THE IMAGINATION OF THEIR HEARTS. HE HAS PUT DOWN THE MIGHTY FROM THEIR THRONES & EXALTED THE LOWLY. HE HAS FILLED THE HUNGRY WITH GOOD THINGS, AND THE RICH HE HAS SENT AWAY EMPTY. HE HAS HELPED HIS SERVANT ISRAEL, IN REMEMBRANCE OF HIS MERCY, AS HE SPOKE TO OUR FATHERS, TO ABRAHAM, AND TO HIS SEED FOREVER.” THIS IS THE VIRGIN MARY’S SONG TO HER SON JESUS CHRIST. THE LORD JESUS CHRIST WAS DIVESTED OF CERTAIN THINGS BECAUSE HE HAD A HUMAN BODY. JESUS WAS BORN LIKE ANY OTHER BABY ON EARTH IN LUKE 2:7. HE GREW FROM CHILDHOOD TO MANHOOD. ALSO JESUS CHRIST HAD PROBLEMS WITH WEAKNESS IN JOHN 4:6; JOHN 19:28; MATTHEW 4:2. JESUS WAS LIMITED IN LIFTING THE CROSS, AND A BLACK MAN HAD TO HELP HIM UP IN LUKE 23:26. JESUS TOLD THOMAS TO TOUCH HIM BECAUSE HE WAS MAN IN LUKE 24:39. AFTER HIS DEATH HE ATE A PIECE OF FISH FOR HIS HUMAN BODY IN LUKE 24:42; JOHN 20:17, 20, 27; 21:9, 13. JESUS CHRIST ENTERED INTO HEAVEN AND DISAPPEARED OUT OF THERE SIGHT IN ACTS 1:9. JESUS’ MIND FUNCTIONED AS A HUMAN BEING. JESUS GREW INTO KNOWLEDGE OF WHO HE WAS AS A HUMAN BEING IN LUKE 2:52. JESUS WILL REAPPEAR TO COME GET HIS BRIDE OUT OF THE EARTH AND ENTER WITH THEM INTO HEAVEN IN MARK 13:32. JESUS HAS A HUMAN SOUL WITH FEELINGS IN JOHN 11:35; 12:27; 13:21; HEBREWS 4:15. HIS PUPILS SAW HIM AS A MAN IN MATTHEW 13:53-58. JESUS WAS SINLESS BECAUSE GOD HAD FAVOR ON HIM AND HE WAS FULL OF WISDOM AS A BOY IN LUKE 2:40. JESUS OBEYED THE FATHER STEPHEN IN JOHN 15:10. JESUS IN THE TEMPTATIONS, HE PASSED THE TEST IN LUKE 4:13; JOHN 8:46; HEBREWS 4:15. JESUS AS THE HIGH PRIEST IS HOLY FROM SIN IN HEBREWS 7:26. JESUS HAD TO BECOME MAN TO TAKE THE PLACE OF SINNERS AS THE SACRIFICIAL LAMB OF GOD FOR MANKIND. JESUS ALWAYS PLEASED THE FATHER STEPHEN IN JOHN 8:29. JESUS KNEW NO SIN IN 2ND CORINTHIANS 5:21. JESUS IS THE MEDIATOR BETWEEN HUMANITY AND GOD IN 1ST TIMOTHY 2:5. JESUS DOES IN FACT RULE OVER MANKIND IN MATTHEW 28:18; EPHESIANS 1:22; 1ST CORINTHIANS 6:3; REVELATION 3:21; LUKE 19:17, 19 & HEBREWS 2:8. JESUS WILL ALWAYS HAVE FLESH AND BONES IN HEAVEN IN LUKE 24:39; 41-42 AND ACTS 1:11.**

**JESUS CHRIST’S MINISTRY ON THE DEITY OF CHRIST**

**THROUGHOUT BIBLICAL SCRIPTURE MOST OF THE TIME GOD OR “THEOS” IS REFERRED TO GOD THE FATHER STEPHEN 99.99%, BUT SOMETIMES WE FIND IN SCRIPTURES THAT REFERS TO JESUS CHRIST. THERE ARE 5,240 OCCURRENCES FOR GOD & 8,796 OCCURRENCES FOR LORD IN THE WHOLE HOLY HOLY BIBLE. THESE SCRIPTURES INCLUDE 2ND PETER 1:1; ROMANS 9:5; PSALMS 45:6; ISAIAH 9:6; TITUS 2:13; JOHN 1:1, 18; 20:28 AND HEBREWS 1:8. THERE ARE ONLY 9 SCRIPTURES THAT REFER TO JEHOVAH, YAHWEH OR VICTOR IN GENESIS 22:14 (OKJV); EXODUS 6:3 (OKJV); 17:17 (OKJV); JUDGES 6:24 (OKJV); PSALMS 68:4 (NKJV); 83:18 (OKJV) & ISAIAH 12:2 (NKJV); 26:4 (NKJV); 38:11 (NKJV). EVEN THOUGH YOU MAY REFER TO THE LORD YAHWEH AS GOD OR LORD IT STILL CAN REFER TO THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD IN ISAIAH 64:8 & JOHN 8:58. THE WORD LORD, “KYRIOS” IS ALSO USED FOR THE CHRIST. KYRIOS CAN ALSO MEAN SIR OR MASTER. SOME SCRIPTURES FOR SIR ARE JOHN 4:11; MATTHEW 13:27; 21:30; 27:63. MASTER IS IN MATTHEW 6:24; 21:40. LORD IS USED AS CHRIST IN LUKE 1:43; 2:11, 18; MATTHEW 3:3; 22:44; PSALM 110:1; 1ST CORINTHIANS 8:6; 12:3 AND HEBREWS 1:10-12. ANOTHER STRONG PROOF OF JESUS’ DEITY IS THAT JESUS IS THE SON OF MAN. IN ACTS 7:56 STEPHEN REFERS TO CHRIST AS DEITY. SOME SCRIPTURES ARE DANIEL 7:13-14 AND MATTHEW 26:64-66. JOHN REFERS TO JESUS AS GOD OR “LOGOS” IN JOHN 1:1, 14; PSALM 33:6. LOGOS IS THE WORD OF GOD. IN REVELATION 19:11-16 CHRIST IS A NAME WHICH IS THE WORD OF GOD.**

**JESUS POSSESSED DEITY ATTRIBUTES**

**FIRST OMNIPOTENCE WAS DEMONSTRATED BY JESUS WHEN HE COMMANDED THE STORM AND SEA TO CALM IN MATTHEW 8:26-27. THE MULTIPLIED FISH LOAVES IN MATTHEW 14:19, THE WATER INTO WINE IN JOHN 2:1-11 AND WALKING ON THE SEA IN MATTHEW 14:22-33; MARK 6:48-52 & JOHN 6:15-21. ANOTHER ATTRIBUTE IS JESUS’ OMNISCIENCE IN KNOWING OTHER PEOPLE’S THOUGHTS IN MARK 2:8 & JOHN 2:25; 6:64; 16:30. ALSO THE OMNISCIENCE WAS PART OF HEARING VOICES AND KNOWING WHAT WAS IN MAN. ANOTHER ATTRIBUTE OF JESUS IS HIS OMNIPRESENCE IN MATTHEW 18:20; 28:20. JESUS ALSO ATTAINED DIVINE SOVEREIGNTY IN MARK 2:5-7; MATTHEW 5:22, 28, 32, 34, 39, 44; 11:25-27. JESUS CHRIST ALSO HAD THE ATTRIBUTE OF IMMORTALITY IN JOHN 2:19, 21-22; 10:17-18 & 1ST TIMOTHY 6:16. JESUS IS WORTHY TO BE WORSHIPPED IN REVELATION 5:12-13; 19:10; PHILIPPIANS 2:9-11 AND HEBREWS 1:6.**

**THE “KENOTIC THEOLOGY” SAYS THAT THE MAN JESUS CHRIST AS FULLY HUMAN WAS DIVESTED OF CERTAIN ATTRIBUTES WHILE ON EARTH. IN PHILIPPIANS 2:5-7 IT DECREES THAT JESUS “EMPTIED HIMSELF” OF THE OMNISCIENCE (KNOWING ALL THOUGHTS TO MAN), THE OMNIPOTENCE (ALL POWER TO MAN), AND OMNIPRESENCE (ALL PRESENT TO MAN) IN WHICH HE FINISHED HIS WORK OF SALVATION AND PLAN OF REDEMPTION FOR MANKIND AT THE CROSS. BUT THIS APPROACH TO JESUS CHRIST IS UNCERTAIN BECAUSE THERE IS REALLY NOTHING IN THE SCRIPTURES TO PROVE THIS THEORY, EXCEPT IN THIS SCRIPTURE. JESUS CHRIST AS FULLY DIVINE IS TRULY PROVEN IN MATTHEW 1:23, WHEN HE IS CALLED “EMMANUEL” WHICH MEANS GOD WITH US. ALSO, IN COLOSSIANS 1:19 TELLS US OF THE FULLNESS OF GOD THAT JESUS POSSESSED. JESUS’ INCARNATION OR DEITY WAS VERY NECESSARY. JESUS WAS FULLY MAN BUT FULLY GOD TO SHOW HIS TRUE POSITION AS MEDIATOR BETWEEN GOD AND MAN IN 1ST TIMOTHY 2:5. ALSO SALVATION BELONGS TO THE LORD IN JONAH 2:9. SO JESUS HAS TO BE FULLY GOD & FULLY MAN FOR THE PLAN OF SALVATION AND THEN CHRISTIANITY FOR MAN AFTERWARDS. ALSO, WE LEAN ON THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST TO UNDERSTAND WHAT HE HAS DONE FOR MANKIND IN 2ND JOHN 9. ANYONE THAT DENIES THE SON JESUS DENIES THE FATHER STEPHEN ALSO IN 1ST JOHN 2:23. THE LAW DID IN FACT IN UNBELIEF BLASPHEME BECAUSE THE LORD JESUS CHRIST DID SAY I AM THE ONLY SON OF GOD IN JOHN 10:36.**

**JESUS CHRIST’S MINISTRY ON ORIGINAL SIN**

**WHAT IS SIN? IN THE HOLY BIBLE, GOD’S COMMANDMENT IS ENFORCED, WHEN THEY VIOLATE THAT COMMANDMENT IT IS DEEMED SIN BY GOD. THE SCRIPTURES ARE MARK 12:30; EXODUS 20:1-17; ROMANS 2:17-29 & EPHESIANS 2:3. WHERE DID SIN ORIGINATE FROM? THE 1ST SIN OF MANKIND WAS WHEN ADAM & EVE ATE FROM THE TREE OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD & EVIL IN GENESIS 3:1-19. GOD TOLD THEM NOT TO EAT FROM THIS TREE IN GENESIS 2:17. THE SERPENT TEMPTED EVE INTO EATING FROM THE TREE IN GENESIS 3:5; 2ND CORINTHIANS 11:3; 1ST TIMOTHY 2:14. DEATH REIGNED FROM ADAM TO MOSES & TO THE PRESENT IN ROMANS 5:12, 14 & IS INHERITANCE OF SIN FOR MANKIND. MANKIND INHERITS THE GUILTINESS OF ADAM’S SIN IN ROMANS 2:6; 5:12-21; COLOSSIANS 3:25. SIN IS PART OF MANKIND’S INHERITANCE IN PSALM 51:1-4, 5; 58:3; EPHESIANS 2:3. JESUS CONVICTS THE SINFUL NATURES IN ROMANS 2:14-15. ADAM & EVE BECAME AN ETERNAL MARRIAGE AT THE END OF THEIR LIVES BECAUSE EVE WANTED TO BE LIKE THE OTHER LORD CALLED WISDOM & BY THE WICKEDNESS OF MAN THE LORD YAH KILLED ALL EXCEPT 8 (3 SONS & 3 DAUGHTERS IN NOAH’S FAMILY).**

**JESUS CHRIST’S MINISTRY ON MAN AS MALE AND FEMALE**

**THE LORD GOD MADE MALES AND FEMALES IN THE IMAGE AND LIKENESS OF GOD IN GENESIS 1:26-27. FOR MARRIAGE ARE NOT ONLY A PHYSICAL UNITY BUT A SPIRITUAL AND UNITY OF THE SOUL IN GENESIS 2:24 WHEN “THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH.” WHAT GOD HAS JOINED TOGETHER, LET NOT MAN PUT ASUNDER IN MATTHEW 19:6. ALSO HUSBAND’S SHOULD AGAPE LOVE THEIR WIVES AS THEMSELVES IN EPHESIANS 5:25, 28. A MARRIAGE UNION IS FOR THE REST OF THEIR LIVES, OR TILL DEATH DO US PART IN ROMANS 7:2; MALACHI 2:14-16; 1ST CORINTHIANS 7:39. EVEN JESUS IS MARRIED TO HIS BRIDE WHICH IS THE CHURCH OF GOD IN EPHESIANS 5:23-32; REVELATION CHAPTER 21. IF MARRIAGE WAS SO IMPACTED ON THE LIVES OF THE CHURCH, THEN WHY DID JESUS CHRIST AND PAUL AS AN APOSTLE NEVER MARRIED. PAUL EVEN SAYS IT IS BETTER NOT TO MARRY IN 1ST CORINTHIANS 7:1, 7-9. BUT LET EVERYONE HAVE THEIR OWN GIFT FROM THE LORD. FOR IF YOU DO NOT MARRY THERE WILL TRULY BE LESS DISTRACTIONS, AND THERE WILL NOT BE NEEDED FOR ANY MARITAL DUTIES WITH A WIFE OR CHILDREN JUST TOTAL DEVOTION TO GOD. IF YOU ARE SINGLE OR MARRIED YOU STILL REFLECT THE DIVINE NATURE OF THE TRINITY AND CAN HAVE RELATIONSHIPS WITH GOD AND HIS SON JESUS CHRIST.**

**EQUALITY IN GOD’S CREATIONS IS PROVEN IN SCRIPTURE. SINCE THE GOD-HEAD ARE EQUAL IN ALL THINGS IN DEITY BUT IN THREE DIFFERENT PERSONS, WE FIND THAT HUMANS ARE EQUAL IN CREATION, CHARACTER, IMPORTANCE, AND IN VALUE OF HUMANITY. MEN AND WOMEN ON THE OTHER HAND PLAY DIFFERENT ROLES, SUCH AS IN 1ST CORINTHIANS 11:7 FOR MAN AND 1ST CORINTHIANS 11:6 FOR WOMAN. IN THE LORD, MAN IS DEPENDENT FOR WOMAN AND WOMAN IS DEPENDENT FOR MAN IN 1ST CORINTHIANS 11:11, 12. ALSO IN PROPHESYING MAN AND WOMAN RECEIVE THE SAME SPIRIT IN ACTS 2:17-18. ALSO, IN 1ST CORINTHIANS 12:7, THERE ARE SEVERAL GIFTS THAT COME FROM THE SAME SPIRIT, WHO DISTRIBUTES TO EVERYONE INDIVIDUALLY. SO, MANKIND HAS BEEN BAPTIZED INTO JESUS CHRIST AND WHO HAS PUT ON CHRIST WHICH THERE IS EQUALITY TO THE BODY OF CHRIST IN GALATIANS 3:27-28. TRINITY’S DIFFERENT JOBS AND THE HUSBAND’S RULERSHIP IN MARRIAGE IS PROVEN IN SCRIPTURE. THE FATHER STEPHEN HAS GREATER AUTHORITY THAN THE SON JESUS OR HOLY GHOST (BROTHER JOHN). THE FATHER STEPHEN HAS ALWAYS BEEN ON TOP IN JOHN 10:29. THE FATHER STEPHEN RELEASES ANGELS (LORDS) FROM THEIR BLASPHEMIES THROUGH HIS ETERNAL MERCY IN ACTS 7:60. THE SON JESUS CHRIST FORGIVES MANKIND FROM THEIR SINS IN LUKE 23. ALSO, THE HOLY GHOST CONVICTS THE “WORLD OF SIN, RIGHTEOUSNESS AND OF JUDGMENT IN JOHN 16:8. THE FATHER STEPHEN HAS AUTHORITY OVER THE SON JESUS IN ACTS 1:7. THE HUSBAND HAS AUTHORITY OVER THE WIFE. MAN IS LIKE THE FATHER STEPHEN & WOMAN IS LIKE THE SON JESUS. THE FACT THAT THE MAN ADAM WAS 1ST FORMED THEN THE WOMAN EVE DENOTES SUPREME AUTHORITY OVER WOMAN IN GENESIS 2:7, 18-23. EVE WAS CREATED TO HELP ADAM TO BE COMPARABLE TO HIM IN GENESIS 2:18; 1ST CORINTHIANS 11:9. ADAM NAMED EVE IS ALSO CALLED THE MOTHER OF ALL LIVING IN GEN. 2:23; 3:20. GOD NAMES & REPRESENTS MANKIND AS MAN AND NOT WOMAN IN GENESIS 5:2; 1ST COR. 15:2, 49; ROMANS 5:15, 12-21. LUCIFER DID NOT COME TO ADAM FIRST, BUT EVE IN GENESIS 3:1 AND GOD SPOKE TO MAN FIRST IN GENESIS 2:15-17; 3:9. ALSO GOD (JEHOVAH) CALLED ADAM FIRST IN THE GARDEN & NOT EVE IN GENESIS 3:9. ADAM SHALL RULE OVER EVE IS MENTIONED IN GENESIS 3:16. WIVES ARE TO BE IN TOTAL SUBMISSION TO THEIR HUSBANDS IN EPHESIANS 5:22-24; TITUS 2:4-5; 1ST PETER 3:1-7. JESUS IS THE 2ND ADAM TO GIVE AUTHORITY TO 1ST ADAM IN 1ST CORINTHIANS 15:47. THE SCRIPTURES ABOUT THE TRINITY AND 57 LORD’S IS IN ACTS 7:32; PSALM 45:6-7 (NIV); 110:1; HEBREWS 1:8; MATTHEW 22:41-46; GENESIS 1:26; 3:22; 16:13; 39:1; COLOSSIANS 4:1; ISAIAH 1:3; 47:4-5; 48:16; 61:1; 63:10 (NIV); MALACHI. 3:1-2; HOSEA 1:7-8; EXODUS 3:2-6; 23:20-22; 21:2; NUMBERS 22:35 & 38; JUDGES 2:1-2; 6:11 & 14; PROVERBS. 4:5, 7; 8:22-31; 8:22-25 (RSV); 8:30-31 (NIV); 23:23; ECCLESIASTES 2:7; REVELATION 19:16; JAMES 2:8-13 & ACTS 7:2; 15:13-29; 21:18-25. THE TRINITY IS 1 GOD IN JOHN 1:1-4, 9-18; 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7, 13-14; 17:24; 1ST JOHN 2:1; HEBREWS 7:25; ROMANS 8:16, 27; 15:13; MATTHEW 28:19; 1ST CORINTHIANS 2:4, 10-11; 12:4-6; 2ND CORINTHIANS 13:4, 14; EPHESIANS 4:4-6, 30; 1ST PETER 1:2; LUKE 4:14 & ACTS 8:29; 10:38; 13:2; 15:28; 16:6-7.**

**JESUS CHRIST’S MINISTRY ON THE NATURE OF MAN**

**MAN HAS A PHYSICAL BODY, BUT THERE ARE ETERNAL QUALITIES THAT HE HAS TOO. FIRST, HE HAS A SOUL THAT WILL LIVE FOREVER EITHER IN HELL OR HEAVEN. SECOND, MAN HAS A SPIRIT THAT RELATES DIRECTLY TO GOD. THE SOUL HAS MIND, WILL, FEELINGS, REASONING, AND DECISIONS THAT THE MAN USES DAILY. WHEN THE PERSON IS A CHRISTIAN THE HIGHEST PART OF MAN’S SPIRIT IS AWAKENED IN ROMANS 8:10. THE SPIRIT PART WOULD OFFER UP PRAISES AND WORSHIP TO GOD IN JOHN 4:24; PHILIPPIANS 3:3. ON THE OTHER HAND THE SOUL CAN BE THE SPIRIT & CAN BE USED THE SAME WAY. THE BODY IS THE PROBLEM BECAUSE THE PHYSICAL CANNOT DISCERN SPIRITUAL THINGS OF THE LORD. THE PROOF THAT SOULS AND SPIRITS LIVE ETERNALLY IS RECORDED IN HEBREWS 12:23; REVELATION 6:9; 20:4; GENESIS 35:18; ACTS 7:59-60; PHILIPPIANS 1:23-24; LUKE 23:43, 46; PSALM 31:5 AND 2ND CORINTHIANS 5:8. SOME BIBLICAL PROOF OF SOUL AND SPIRIT OF MAN ARE GENESIS 2:7; 1ST CORINTHIANS 15:51-54; & 2ND CORINTHIANS 7:1. SOUL AND SPIRIT ARE USED THE SAME IN JOHN 12:27 AND JOHN 13:21. ALSO IN HEBREWS 12:23; 1ST PETER 3:19; REVELATION 6:9; 20:4 CONCERNS BEING IN HEAVEN OR HELL IN RESPECTS TO THE SOUL AND SPIRIT. THE SCRIPTURE SAYS THAT THE SOUL AND SPIRIT DEPARTS TO GO TO ITS PLACE FROM THE FATHER STEPHEN. THE PROOF IS 1ST KINGS 17:21; ISAIAH 53:12; LUKE 12:20; 23:46; ECCLESIASTES 12:7; GENESIS 35:18; PSALM 31:5. ALSO MAN CAN BE “BODY AND SOUL” OR “BODY AND SPIRIT”. SOME SCRIPTURES ARE JAMES 2:26; 1ST CORINTHIANS 5:3, 5; 7:34; COLOSSIANS 2:5; ROMANS 8:10; 2ND CORINTHIANS 7:1. THE PROOF THAT ALL THINGS THE SOUL CAN DO THE SPIRIT CAN DO. THE PROOF IS IN JOHN 13:21; ACTS 17:16; PROVERBS 17:22; ROMANS 8:16; MARK 2:8; 12:30; 1ST CORINTHIANS 2:11; ISAIAH 29:24; PSALM 35:9; 42:1, 2; 62:1; 63:1; 84:2; 119:20, 167; 146:1; DEUTERONOMY 6:5; LUKE 1:46 AND 1ST SAMUEL 1:15.**

**JESUS CHRIST’S MINISTRY OF MESSIAHSHIP THE CHRIST**

**JESUS CHRIST IS THE JEWISH MESSIAH. MESSIAH MEANS “ANOINTED ONE OR CHRIST”. IT REFERS TO ONE BEING SET APART FOR THE WORK OF GOD. ONE WOULD BE ANOINTED WITH OIL OVER HIS HEAD. PRIEST DID THE SAME THING IN LEVITICUS 4:3. ALSO KINGS WERE ANOINTED WITH OIL ALSO IN 1ST SAMUEL 12:14; 2ND SAMUEL 19:21. MANY PROPHESIES IN THE OLD TESTAMENT WERE TRULY FORETOLD OF A MESSIAH THAT WOULD COME. SOME SCRIPTURES ARE 2ND SAMUEL 7:16; 22:48-51; JEREMIAH 33; ACTS 1:6. JUDAISM ALSO DEFINED THE MESSIAH AS BEING ONE THAT WOULD TOTALLY RULE AT THE END OF TIME. THE MESSIAH’S ORIGIN IS LINKED TO THE HOUSE OF DAVID IN 2ND SAMUEL 7:14; HOSEA 3:5, THE PROMISE ENDURED LONG BEFORE THIS DAVID BECAME KING. THE FIRST MENTION OF THE MESSIAH IS RECORDED IN GENESIS 3:15 WHERE THERE WILL BE A FIGHT BETWEEN THE WOMAN AND THE SERPENT. WHO IS THE CHILD-SEED THAT WILL DESTROY SATAN’S POWER, IT IS THE IMMACULATE MESSIAH? SOME PROPHESIES PROVE THE MESSIAHSHIP OF CHRIST. FIRST, THE MESSIAH WILL BE BORN OF A WOMAN IN GENESIS 3:15. SECOND, THE MESSIAH WILL COME THROUGH THE LINAGE OF ABRAHAM IN GENESIS 22:18. THIRD, THE IDEA THAT THE MESSIAH WILL BE CRUSHED BY SIN DANIEL 2:40. FOURTH, ISAIAH SAID THE MESSIAH WILL ENDURE GREAT SUFFERING FOR MAN IN ISAIAH 53:1. FIFTH, THE SERVANT MESSIAH WILL PROSPER IN ISAIAH 53 AND THE COLLAPSE OF DAVID’S EMPIRE SHOWS THERE IS A NEED FOR A JEWISH MESSIAH IN EXODUS 33:5; HOSEA 4:1. THE MESSIAH AS A SUFFERING SERVANT IS PROVEN IN SCRIPTURE. SOME SCRIPTURES ARE ZECHARIAH 9:9; PSALM 110:1-4; ISAIAH 53:2-6; 11-12 AND THE MESSIAH WILL BRING THE NATION (LAW) AND ISRAEL BACK TO GOD IN ISAIAH 42:18-19; 49:3, 6. THE WORK OF THE MESSIAH IS NO MYSTERY IN DANIEL 7:13; 9:25-26. THE MESSIAH PAYS FOR THE SINS OF THE WORLD THROUGH HIS DEATH AT THE CROSS. THIS IS THE BETTER ATONEMENT MADE SIMILAR TO IT THE ATONEMENT IN LEVITICUS 17:11. IN PSALM 22:1; MATTHEW 27:46 RECORDS THE CRY OF THE MESSIAH AS HE BEARS THE SINS OF THE WORLD, & HE BECOMES SIN IN 2ND CORINTHIANS 5:21. THE MESSIAH IS CONSIDERED AS A JUDGE IN PSALMS CHAPTER 2; CHAPTER 72; CHAPTER 110. THE TRUE MESSIAH WAS MADE GUILTY OF THE LAW EVEN THOUGH HE WAS THE MOST RIGHTEOUS MAN AT THE TIME IN DEUTERONOMY 21:23 & GALATIANS 3:13. THE TRUE MESSIAH DOESN’T JUST FORGIVE BUT MAKES THEM RIGHTEOUS IN HIM IN JEREMIAH 23:5-6. ALSO, THE MESSIAH’S BIRTHPLACE WAS WELL ESTABLISHED IN MICAH 5:2. THE TRUE MESSIAH IN THE NEW TESTAMENT IS ALSO PROVEN. THE MESSIAH WOULD BE OF SUPERNATURAL ORIGIN IN ISAIAH 7:14; MICAH 5:2. THE MESSIAH WOULD BE AS GOD IN PHILIPPIANS 2:6; COLOSSIANS 1:19; ISAIAH 9:6. SIMILARITIES OF JESUS CHRIST AS THE MESSIAH WITH MOSES IS IN EXODUS 2; MATTHEW 2:13-23 CONCERNING THE INFANCY. BOTH HAVE A ROYAL COURT FOR SERVING THE MAN OF GOD IN PHILIPPIANS 2:5-8; HEBREWS 11:24-29. BOTH HAVE COMPASSION FOR OTHERS IN NUMBERS 27:17; MATTHEW 9:36. BOTH HAVE COMMUNION WITH GOD IN EXODUS 34:29-30; 2ND CORINTHIANS 3:7. BOTH MEDIATE A REDEMPTION COVENANT IN DEUTERONOMY 29:1; HEBREWS 8:6-7. THE MESSIAH’S GENEALOGY IS RECORDED IN HOSEA 3:5; JEREMIAH 30:9 AND LUKE 1:32-33; 2:4; 3:23-38; MATTHEW 1:1-17. SOME SCRIPTURES ARE MATTHEW 1:1; 5:17; MARK 1:1; LUKE 24:26-27; JOHN 5:39; 20:31 HEBREWS 10:7 AND JOHN 1:14, 18. ALSO ACTS 19:11-20 IT TELLS US THAT THE EVIL SPIRIT KNEW ABOUT JESUS WHOM PAUL PREACHES WHICH WOULD PROVE JESUS AS THE SON OF GOD AND AS THE CHRIST/MESSIAH CONCERNING THE PLAN OF SALVATION IN FORGIVENESS THAT PAUL PREACHED IN ACTS 9:20-30 BECAUSE SAUL WAS A PERSECUTOR OF THE CHURCH OF GOD IN ACTS 9:1-19.**

**JESUS CHRIST’S MINISTRY OF TRUTH**

**TRUTH IS THE EXPERIENCE THAT CAN BE CONFIRMED AND VERIFIED BY SCRIPTURE. TRUTH IS VERY IMPORTANT BECAUSE GOD IS THE FULLNESS OF ALL TRUTH IN IS PSALM 31:5; 108:4; 146:6. HE SPEAKS TRULY AND JUDGES IN TRUTH. HE IS THE MAIN CAUSE OF THE UNIVERSE. THE SURE REDEEMING GRACE THROUGH CHRIST IS GOD’S DIVINE PLAN IN THE 4 GOSPELS. TRUTH IN JESUS & THE APOSTLES ARE RECORDED IN JOHN 8:44-47; 16:13; 18:37 AND ROMANS 9:1-2. CHRIST MADE THINGS OF THE SPIRIT REAL IN JOHN 1:17.**

**JESUS CHRIST’S MINISTRY OF JOY**

**JOY IS THE EMOTION OF SUCCESS, GOOD FORTUNE OR WELLBEING. YOU EXPERIENCE IT BECAUSE OF THE AGREEABLE SITUATION. JESUS EXPERIENCED JOY WHEN THE LOST SHEEP WAS FOUND IN MATTHEW 18:13. THE CHURCH OF GOD FELT IT WHEN JESUS, LOOSED A WOMAN BOUND 18 YEARS BY SATAN IN LUKE 13:16-17. JESUS’ DISCIPLES HAD JOY AFTER JESUS’ ASCENSION IN LUKE 24:52. PAUL WROTE THAT AGAPE LOVE DOES NOT REJOICE IN WRONG BUT RIGHT IN 1ST CORINTHIANS 13:6; 2ND SAMUEL 6:12; 1ST KINGS 1:40; 1ST SAMUEL 2:1, 11:9; 18:6; ESTHER 9:17-22. IN PSALM 137:1-6 SHOWS THAT THE EMOTION CANNOT BE COMMANDED. IN PAUL THE JOY HE FELT ABOUT HEARING THE OBEDIENCE OF THE CHRISTIAN ROMANS IN ROMANS 16:19. JOY AS A TRUE COMMAND IS PROVEN IN INFALLIBLE SCRIPTURE IN PROVERBS 5:18 WHICH IT DECLARES TO REJOICE IN THE WIFE OF HIS YOUTH. JESUS CHRIST COMMANDED ALL HIS DISCIPLES TO REJOICE WHEN THEY HAD TESTING, TEMPTATIONS AND HARDSHIPS IN MATTHEW 5:11-12. ALSO, PAUL ALSO CALLED SAUL THE APOSTLE COMMANDED THE TRULY UNCEASING REJOICING IN PHILIPPIANS 4:4; 1ST THESSALONIANS 5:16. JAMES SAID THAT CHRISTIANS SHOULD CONSIDER IT ALL JOY FALLING INTO TESTING IN JAMES 1:2-4. JOY IS POSSIBLE ONLY AS A FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT IN GALATIANS 5:22.**

**JESUS CHRIST’S MINISTRY OF TRUSTWORTHINESS**

**TRUSTWORTHINESS COMES FROM THE LORD. FOR THE “LORD IS THE ROCK” IN DEUTERONOMY 32:4. HIS WORK IS PERFECT & EVERYTHING HE DOES IS RIGHTEOUS & FAIR. HE IS A FAITHFUL GOD IN ALL THINGS WHO DOES NO WRONG. SOME SCRIPTURES ARE 2ND CHRONICLES 6:4, 14-15; PSALM 15:1-5; 19:7; 22:4-5; 24:2-3; 41:9; 111:7; 119:138; 145:13; 147:11-12; LUKE 1:68-70; 12:48; 16:10-12; 1ST CORINTHIANS 1:9; 4:1-2; 9:17-18; HEBREWS 6:18; 10:23; 13:8; 2ND TIMOTHY 1:14; 2:13; 1ST PETER 1:21; PROVERBS 11:1, 3, 13; 12:17; 13:11; 16:13; 20:19, 23; 24:26; 25:9, 13; 27:6; EPHESIANS 4:25; ZECHARIAH 8:16; MATTHEW 25:14-15, 20-27, 29; 1ST TIMOTHY 1:12; 3:8; 6:20; JUDE 1:3; DANIEL 6:4; 2ND KINGS 12:15; 22:7; NUMBERS 30:2; DEUTERONOMY 25:13-16; LEVITICUS 19:36; HOSEA 12:6-7; MICAH 6:11-13; EXODUS 18:21; 1ST SAMUEL 8:3; 12:4; TITUS 2:9-10; GENESIS 50:5-6, 20-21; JEREMIAH 17:5; ISAIAH 2:22; JONAH 3:1-2; JOHN 21:15; ACTS 15:37-39. THE LORD GOD IS ALWAYS A TRUSTWORTHY GOD TO HIS FAITHFUL SERVANTS IN HIM. WE MUST PROVE TO GOD THAT WE ARE TRUSTWORTHY IN DOING THE TASK THAT GOD HAS SET FOR US TO DO.**

**JESUS CHRIST’S MINISTRY OF VICARIOUS REPENTANCE**

**JESUS CHRIST’S VICARIOUS REPENTANCE MEANS THAT HE BECAME SIN WITHOUT BEING SIN IN 2ND CORINTHIANS 5:21. JESUS TOOK THE PLACE OF BARABBAS, WHO WAS A REVELER AND A MURDERER IN THE CITY. JESUS CHRIST WITHOUT ANY SIN BECAME A SIN THAT MANKIND COULD HAVE A WAY OF ESCAPE IN LUKE 23:17-25. IT DECLARES “I WILL CHASTISE HIM AND RELEASE HIM, (FOR IT WAS NECESSARY FOR HIM TO RELEASE ONE TO THEM AT THE FEAST). AND THEY ALL CRIED OUT AT ONCE, SAYING, ‘AWAY WITH THIS MAN, AND RELEASE TO US BARABBAS’ WHO HAD BEEN THROWN INTO PRISON FOR A CERTAIN REBELLION MADE IN THE CITY, AND FOR MURDER. PILATE, THEREFORE, WISHING TO RELEASE JESUS, AGAIN CALLED OUT TO THEM. BUT THEY SHOUTED, SAYING, ‘CRUCIFY HIM, CRUCIFY HIM!’ THEN HE SAID TO THEM THE THIRD TIME, ‘WHY, WHAT EVIL HAS HE DONE? I HAVE FOUND NO REASON FOR DEATH IN HIM. I WILL THEREFORE CHASTISE HIM AND LET HIM GO.’ BUT THEY WERE INSISTENT, DEMANDING WITH LOUD VOICES THAT HE BE CRUCIFIED. AND THE VOICES OF THESE MEN AND OF THE CHIEF PRIESTS PREVAILED. SO, PILATE GAVE SENTENCE THAT IT SHOULD BE AS THEY REQUESTED. AND HE RELEASED TO THEM THE ONE THEY REQUESTED, WHO FOR REBELLION AND MURDER HAD BEEN THROWN INTO PRISON, BUT HE DELIVERED JESUS TO THEIR WILL.”**

**JESUS CHRIST’S MINISTRY OF BEING BORN OF GOD**

**JESUS CHRIST TAUGHT THAT BEING BORN OF GOD IS THE SAME THING AS BEING BORN AGAIN. JESUS SAYS IN JOHN 3:3 “UNLESS ONE IS BORN AGAIN, HE CANNOT SEE THE KINGDOM OF GOD. ALSO, ONE MUST BE BORN OF THE SPIRIT AND WATER TO ENTER THE KINGDOM OF GOD. IN 1ST PETER 1:23 IT DECLARES “HAVING BEEN BORN AGAIN, NOT OF CORRUPTIBLE SEED BUT INCORRUPTIBLE, THROUGH THE WORD OF GOD WHICH LIVES AND ABIDES FOREVER. ALSO, IN 1ST JOHN 3:9 IT SAYS THAT “WHOEVER HAS BEEN BORN OF GOD DOES NOT SIN, FOR HIS SEED REMAINS IN HIM, AND HE CANNOT SIN, BECAUSE HE HAS BEEN BORN OF GOD.” SO, PEOPLE IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD CANNOT SIN AND IS MADE PERFECT THROUGH THE LORD. THE PEOPLE OF GOD MUST BE BORN AGAIN TO FUNCTION IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD.**

**JESUS CHRIST’S MINISTRY OF THE CROWN**

**JESUS CHRIST’S CROWN IS CERTAIN. JESUS CHRIST WAS CROWNED BY THE LORD STEPHEN THE FATHER OF US ALL IN REVELATION 5:12 AT THE TIME OF HIS RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD IN 30 AD. JESUS CHRIST AS THE LAMB RECEIVED HONOR, BLESSING, GLORY, POWER, WISDOM & RICHES BECAUSE JESUS WAS CONSIDERED WORTHY TO TAKE THE SCROLL. NO MAN ON THE EARTH, IN HEAVEN OR UNDER THE EARTH WAS WORTHY TO TAKE THE SCROLL EXCEPT JESUS CHRIST. ALSO, CHRIST IN REVELATION 6:2 AND 14:14 ARE SYMBOLIZED BY LAUREL CROWNS. IN REVELATION 19:12 IT DECLARES JESUS CHRIST AS THE ONE MAN CALLED FAITHFUL AND TRUE WHOSE NAME IS THE WORD OF GOD AND WHO HAS MANY CROWNS ON HIS HEAD TO DEFEAT THE FALSE PROPHET AND THE ANTICHRIST IN MARK 15:17-18. JESUS CHRIST BORED A CROWN OF THORNS ON THE CROSS WHICH SYMBOLIZED VICTORY AGAINST SATAN IN LUKE 23. THE LORD JESUS CHRIST THE SON OF GOD HAS CERTAINLY EARNED MANY CROWNS (24 LORDSHIPS) AND HE SHOULD BE COMMENDED FOR HIS SACRIFICE ON THE CROSS FOR MANKIND. THE INFALLIBLE PROGRESSION OF HIS JESUS CHRIST FROM ETERNITY TO ETERNITY IN THE ULTIMATE BEGINNING TO THE ULTIMATE END IN THE KINGDOM OF LORDSHIP IS AS FOLLOWS: THE CREATOR AGENT JESUS IS HIS ORIGINAL STATE AS CREATOR AGENT-SHIP ULTIMATELY AUTHORIZED BEFORE COMING UP TO THIS KINGDOM OF LORDSHIP IN THE ACTS OF THE HOLY GHOST---FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD IS IN ACTS 1:4-7, THE HOLY BABY JESUS IN HIS SEED, HIS CREATION OF THE HOLY GHOST, & HIS IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF HIS BIRTH IN BETHLEHEM IS IN ACTS 1:8-2:47, THE HOLY CHILD JESUS IN NAZARETH IS IN ACTS 3:1-4:31, THE HOLY BOY JESUS IN NAZARETH IS IN ACTS 4:27-5:42, THE HOLY MAN JESUS LINKED TO HIS GOSPEL KINGDOM MINISTRY TO HIS GREAT ETERNAL SUFFERING ON HIS CROSS BEFORE IN JERUSALEM IN ACTS 6:1-13, BUT NOT BEING KILLED ON THE LORD BARABBAS’ ACTUAL CROSS OUTSIDE OF JERUSALEM IS IN ACTS 6:14, THE HOLY ANGEL JESUS IN HIS RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD IS IN ACTS 6:15, THE HOLY ASCENDING JESUS IN HIS ASCENSION IS IN ACTS 7:1-54, THE HOLY ENTHRONED JESUS IN HIS THRONE IS IN ACTS 7:55-56, THE HOLY LORD JESUS IN HIS LORDSHIP IS IN ACTS 7:57-59 & THE HOLY CREATOR AGENT JESUS IN HIS CREATOR AGENT-SHIP ULTIMATELY AUTHORIZED BY THE LORD STEVE’S ETERNAL DEATH IS IN ACTS 7:60-8:3 & IN ACTS 9:1-30 IN THE CITY/COUNTY AUTHORITIES LEVELS, IN ACTS 22:1-21 IN THE STATE AUTHORITIES LEVELS, IN ACTS 26:1-32 AT THE GOVERNMENTAL AUTHORITIES LEVELS, IN ACTS 28:1-32 AT THE NATIONAL AUTHORITIES LEVELS & ACTS 29:1-26 AT THE UNIVERSAL KINGDOM AUTHORITIES LEVELS.**

**JESUS CHRIST’S MINISTRY OF THE JEWISH UNPARDONABLE SIN**

**JESUS CHRIST TAUGHT ON BLASPHEMY THAT CANNOT BE FORGIVEN. IN MATTHEW 12:24-37 AND MARK 3:20-30 IT STATES THAT “EVERY SIN AND BLASPHEMY WILL BE FORGIVEN MEN, BUT THE BLASPHEMY AGAINST THE SPIRIT WILL NOT BE FORGIVEN MEN. ANYONE WHO SPEAKS A WORD AGAINST THE SON OF MAN, IT WILL BE FORGIVEN HIM, BUT WHOEVER SPEAKS AGAINST THE HOLY SPIRIT, IT WILL NOT BE FORGIVEN HIM, EITHER IN THIS AGE OR THE AGE TO COME.” IN MARK 3:28-29 JESUS DECLARED THAT “ALL SINS WILL BE FORGIVEN THE SONS OF MEN, AND WHATEVER BLASPHEMIES THEY MAY UTTER, BUT HE WHO BLASPHEMES AGAINST THE HOLY SPIRIT NEVER HAS FORGIVENESS BUT IS SUBJECT TO ETERNAL DAMNATION.” IN MATTHEW 9:32-34 JESUS CAUSED A MUTE MAN TO SPEAK AND THE PHARISEES SAID ‘HE CAST OUT DEMONS BY THE RULER OF THE DEMONS.’ THIS FORM OF BLASPHEMY WOULD NOT BE FORGIVEN SINCE THEY WERE ATTRIBUTING JESUS’ WORK OF THE FATHER STEPHEN TO SATAN. ALSO, IN LUKE 11:14-26 IT DECLARES THAT JESUS CHRIST WAS CASTING OUT DEMONS BY THE FINGER OF GOD, BUT THE PHARISEES WERE ACCUSING JESUS OF BEELZEBUB, WHICH IS BLASPHEMY THAT CANNOT BE FORGIVEN. IN LUKE 12:10 JESUS DECLARED THAT “ANYONE WHO SPEAKS A WORD AGAINST THE SON OF MAN, IT WILL BE FORGIVEN HIM, BUT TO HIM WHO BLASPHEMES AGAINST THE HOLY SPIRIT, IT WILL NOT BE FORGIVEN.” ALL THIS WAS DONE IN GALILEE CONCERNING MATTHEW 9:27-34; 12:24-37; MARK 3:20-30; LUKE 11:14-26, 12:10. IN JOHN 7:20 THE PEOPLE ACCUSED JESUS OF HAVING A DEMON. IN JOHN 8:48-52 JESUS SAID BEFORE ABRAHAM WAS, I AM, BECAUSE THE JEWS WERE ACCUSING JESUS OF HAVING A DEMON. ALSO, IN JOHN 10:20-21 JESUS WAS ACCUSED BY THE JEWS THAT DID NOT BELIEVE, BUT SOME SAID “THESE ARE NOT THE WORDS OF ONE WHO HAS A DEMON. CAN A DEMON OPEN THE EYES OF THE BLIND?” ALL THIS WAS DONE IN JERUSALEM IN JOHN 7:20, 8:48-52, 10:20-21. BASED ON ISAIAH 14, EZEKIEL 28 AND GENESIS 2, THE SCRIPTURE KNOWS THAT BLASPHEMY (BIOLOGICAL SINS) CAME THROUGH CAIN FOR CHILD KIND IN THE WORLD IN GENESIS 4:5-15, EVE FOR WOMANKIND CONCERNS BLASPHEMY (BIOLOGICAL SINS) THAT ENTERED INTO THE WORLD IN ROMANS 5:12, ADAM FOR MANKIND CONCERNS BLASPHEMY (BIOLOGICAL SINS) INTO THE WORLD IN ROMANS 5:12, LUCIFER FOR ANGEL KIND IS BLASPHEMY (ETERNAL SIN) INTO THE LAW IN ISAIAH 14:21-21 & THE MARRIED LORD CALLED WISDOM IS BLASPHEMY (QANAH NOT DIRECTED TO THE FATHER STEPHEN AS THE ETERNAL SIN) INTO THE LORDSHIP IN GENESIS 2:9 & PROVERBS 8:22-25 (RSV). WE ALSO KNOW IN REVELATION 12 THAT 1/3 OF THE CHERUBIM FELL WITH LUCIFER. CHERUBIM RELATES TO MAN IN ROMANS 5:12-21. THIS BLASPHEMY IS ETERNAL JUDGMENT ON A PERSON.**

**JESUS CHRIST’S MINISTRY OF MEEKNESS**

**JESUS TAUGHT IN LUKE 6:28-36 TO PRAY FOR THE JOY WHO CURSE YOU. PRAY FOR THEM WHO TRY TO KILL YOU. IF SOMEONE HITS YOU ON THE CHEEK, OFFER THE OTHER ONE. IF SOMEONE TAKES YOUR COAT, OFFER YOUR SHIRT ALSO. BY PRAYING FOR OUR ENEMIES & SHOWING GOOD TO THEM WILL HELP US HAVE A MEEK SPIRIT. IN MATTHEW 5:5 GOD BLESSES THEM WHO ARE LOWLY & GENTLE, FOR THE WHOLE EARTH WILL BE SUBJECT TO THEM. JESUS WAS MEEK AND LOWLY OF SPIRIT. WE AS CHRISTIANS SHOULD FOLLOW THE SAME PATH AND BECOME MEEK BEFORE OUR GOD. SOME SCHOLARS HOLD THAT JESUS’ MINISTRY ONLY LASTED 1 YEAR BUT IN JOHN THERE ARE 3 PASSOVERS. THE 1ST YEAR IS THE YEAR OF OBSCURITY IN JOHN 1. THE 2ND YEAR IS THE YEAR OF POPULARITY IN JOHN 2-6. THE 3RD YEAR IS THE YEAR OF ANIMOSITY IN JOHN 7-19.**

**THE LORD JESUS’ OFFICE’S**

**JESUS CHRIST’S OFFICE AS A KING**

**THE GREATEST KINGS WERE OVERCOME BY THE STATURE OF SOLOMON AND DAVID IN THE SEVENTH CENTURIES AND THE DESCENDANTS OF DAVID FAILED TO KEEP THE KINGSHIP. THE TRUE PROPHETS IN JEREMIAH 33:14-16; EZEKIEL 34:22-31; ISAIAH 9:2-7, 11:1-9; MICAH 5:2-5 DECLARED ANOTHER KING, THE CHRIST, WHICH WOULD COME FROM THE DESCENDANT OF DAVID WHO WOULD REIGN FOREVER AND WHO WOULD BRING GOD’S RULE TO THE END OF THE EARTH. JESUS CHRIST WOULD PUT DOWN ALL AUTHORITY, REMOVE ALL FOES, ANGELS (LORDS) WOULD BE SUBJECT TO HIM, AND BRING IN AN ERA OF UNIVERSAL RIGHTEOUSNESS AND PEACE THROUGHOUT THE WORLD. HIS TRUE KINGSHIP WOULD BE MARKED BY SERVICE TO THE CHRISTIANS OF GOD, AND HE WOULD SERVE THEM AS THEIR SHEPHERD. JESUS IS THE MESSIAH, THE KING OF WHOM CHERUBS SAID, “THE SAVOIR-YES, THE MESSIAH, THE LORD HAS BEEN BORN TONIGHT IN BETHLEHEM, THE CITY OF DAVID!” (LUKE 2:11). JESUS IS THE SAVOIR WITH THE MISSION OF FORGIVENESS & PEACE ON THE EARTH (LUKE 1:77-79). JESUS CHRIST MINISTRY OF HEALING, OPPOSING DEMONIC POWERS, SUFFERING, FEEDING AND TEACHING SHOWS GOD’S KINGDOM ESTABLISHMENT ON EARTH. JESUS IS THE KING WHO FIGHTS SATAN, SERVES AND OVERCOMES ALL OPPOSITION. THE MESSIAH’S RESURRECTION SHOWS HIS VICTORY, BEING CROWNED WITH GLORY AND BEING SEATED AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD IN ACTS 2:33-36 & 1ST CORINTHIANS 15:25. JESUS BEING THE SAVOIR OF THE WORLD IS NONE OTHER THAN CHRIST THE LORD. TO THOSE WHO CALL ON HIM HE IS THE SAVOIR, MESSIAH & LORD. BUT TO THOSE WHO REJECT HIM HE IS THE DIVINE FIERCE WARRIOR, WHOM EVERY KNEE SHALL BOW AND WHO WILL BRING THE SWIFT ERA OF THE FATHER STEPHEN’S JUDGMENT IN REVELATION 1:12-16; 19:11-21. JESUS CHRIST TAUGHT THAT ENTERING HIS GLORY HE WOULD BE SEATED ON THE RIGHT HAND OF THE FATHER STEPHEN OUR LORD IN HIS THRONE AND THAT ALL MANKIND WOULD BOW BEFORE HIM IN PHILIPPIANS 2:9-11. THE ENEMIES OF GOD WOULD BE CAST OUT OF HIS PRESENCE AND THE CHRISTIANS WOULD FULLY INHERIT THE KINGDOM OF GOD IN MATTHEW 25:31-46. IN JESUS’ TEACHING THE BODY OF CHRIST WILL GLORIFY THE FATHER STEPHEN AND SHOW THEY ARE HIS BY THEIR LIVES AND DEEDS IN JOHN 17:20-26; MATTHEW 25:33-40. IN REVELATION, JESUS IS VIEWED AS THE KING OVER THE CHURCH IN REVELATION 4:2, 9-11; 5:1, 8-14. AT JESUS’ 2ND COMING HIS KINGSHIP WILL BE ESTABLISHED & THE ENEMIES WILL BOW TO HIM AS THE MESSIAH IN 1ST CORINTHIANS 15:25-28. IN THE END, JESUS’ KINGDOM WILL BE TURNED OVER TO THE FATHER STEPHEN IN 1ST CORINTHIANS 15:24. SOME SCRIPTURES ARE MATTHEW 4:17, 23; 12:28, 21:5, 26:64, 28:18; JOHN 1:49; LUKE 19:38-40; ACTS 17:7; EPHESIANS 1:20-23; 1ST CORINTHIANS 15:25; 2ND THESSALONIANS 1:7-10 & REVELATION 19:11-16.**

**JESUS CHRIST’S OFFICE AS A HIGH PRIEST**

**THE BOOK OF HEBREWS SAYS THE OT PRIESTHOOD IS COMPLETED BY JESUS IN HEBREWS 6:20. THE LORD APPOINTED JESUS TO BE THE HIGH PRIEST FOR MAN BY THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK (EL OR ELOHIM) IN HEBREWS 5:4-6. AARON’S PRIESTHOOD IS UNDER JESUS’ PRIESTHOOD. JESUS WAS ALSO TEMPTED IN ALL WAYS AS A MAN, BUT WITHOUT SIN IN HEBREWS 4:15; 7:26. JESUS OFFERS HIS BODY AS THE LAMB TO TAKE AWAY THE SINS OF MAN TO EVERYONE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM. JESUS OFFERS TOTAL FORGIVENESS IN HEBREWS 7:27; 9:24-28; 10:10-19. JESUS OFFERED A PERFECT SACRIFICE FOR FORGIVABLE SINS. IN HEBREWS 9:26 STATES “BUT AS IT IS, HE HAS APPEARED ONCE FOR ALL AT THE END OF THE AGE TO PUT AWAY SIN BY THE SACRIFICE OF HIMSELF.” JESUS ROSE FROM THE DEAD AND IS A PRIEST FOREVER IN HEBREWS 7:17. JESUS DOES NOT CHANGE AS TIME ELAPSES IN HEBREWS 13:8. JESUS GIVES A NEW & BETTER COVENANT IN HEBREWS 7:22; 8:6; 9:15. JESUS BRINGS US NEAR TO THE LORD STEPHEN BY LEADING US INTO GOD’S PRESENCE. WE DO NOT NEED THE JERUSALEM TEMPLE TO ENTER THE HOLY OF HOLIES, BUT BY CHRIST WE CAN ENTER IN GOD’S PRESENCE IN HEBREWS 9:24. JESUS ALWAYS PRAYS FOR US. IN HEBREWS 7:25 SAYS “HE IS ABLE FOR ALL TIME TO SAVE THOSE WHO DRAW NEAR TO GOD THROUGH HIM & ALWAYS LIVES TO MAKE INTERCESSION FOR THEM.” ALSO PAUL AFFIRMS THIS IN ROMANS 8:34. OTHER SCRIPTURES THAT CORRESPOND WITH INTERCESSION (PRAYER) ARE ROMANS 11:2; ACTS 25:24. THERE IS ONE GOD, AND ONE MEDIATOR WHICH IS THE LORD JESUS CHRIST BETWEEN GOD AND MAN IN 1ST TIMOTHY 2:5. THE PEOPLE WILL BE ABLE TO ENTER INTO THE KINGDOM OF GOD IF THEY BELIEVE IN JESUS IN 2ND CORINTHIANS 5:18-20; 1ST TIMOTHY 2:5; JOHN 14:6. JESUS IS AUTHORITY FOR ALL CHRISTIAN MEN. THERE ARE A NUMBER OF TIMES WHERE CHRISTIANS ARE REFERRED TO “PRIESTS”. PETER SAYS THAT CHRISTIANS ARE “GOD’S HOLY PRIESTS, WHO OFFER THE SPIRITUAL SACRIFICES THAT PLEASE HIM BY JESUS CHRIST” IN 1ST PETER 2:5. JOHN SAYS THAT CHRISTIANS ARE “PRIESTS WHO SERVE GOD” IN REVELATION 1:6, 5:10, 20:6.**

**JESUS CHRIST’S OFFICE AS A PROPHET**

**MOSES SAID THERE WOULD BE LIKE ME A PROPHET THAT WOULD COME IN DEUTERONOMY 18:15-18. WHEN WE SEE JESUS IN HIS MINISTRY HE IS NOT REFERRED TO AS A PROPHET AND THOSE WHO CALL JESUS A PROPHET KNOWS HARDLY NOTHINGS ABOUT HIM. FOR EXAMPLE, IN MATTHEW 16:14, WHEN THEY WERE TRYING TO FIGURE OUT THE SITUATION, THEY SAID JOHN THE BAPTIST, OTHERS SAY ELIJAH, AND OTHERS JEREMIAH AND THE PROPHETS. OTHER TIMES JESUS WAS CALLED A PROPHET WERE IN LUKE 7:16; JOHN 4:19, 6:14; 7:40; 9:17. THE NEW TESTAMENT EPISTLES AVOIDED CALLING JESUS A PROPHET BECAUSE HE WAS MUCH GREATER. THERE ARE TWO REASONS OF JESUS’ GREATNESS. FIRST, IT SHOWED ALL THE OLD TESTAMENT PROPHESIES WERE DIRECTED TO HIM. ALSO, AS JESUS CHRIST THE MESSIAH WAS TO SUFFER, JESUS DID FULFILL THE PROPHETS PROPHESIES IN LUKE 24:25-26; 1ST PETER 1:11. SECOND, JESUS WAS THE DIRECT FOUNDATION OF REVELATION FROM GOD. HE WAS NOT MERELY A PROPHET AS A MESSENGER BUT GOD’S SON. THE WORD OF THE LORD CAME TO THE OLD TESTAMENT PROPHETS, BUT JESUS SPOKE HIS OWN AUTHORITY IN JOHN 1:1; 14:9, HEBREWS 1:1-3. SAVIOR’S WEEK CONCERNS OF THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY ON SUNDAY 30AD, THE TEMPLE CLEANSED AND THE ATTRACTION OF THE SACRIFICE ON MONDAY 30AD, THE SIGNS & WONDERS ON TUESDAY 30AD, THE PREPARATION OF PASSOVER ON WEDNESDAY AD, THE PASSOVER ON THURSDAY 30AD, BETRAYAL, ARREST & DEATH ON FRIDAY 30AD, BURIAL ON FRIDAY NIGHT TO SATURDAY 30AD, RESURRECTION, ASCENSION & THRONE ON SUNDAY 30AD. JESUS’ WEEK CONCERNS GENESIS 3:1-6:7 WHICH IS THE WICKEDNESS OF MAN.**

**JESUS CHRIST’S DEATH OF ATONEMENT**

**THE CAUSE OF JESUS CHRIST’S DEATH IN THE ALONE POSITION IS PROVED IN JOHN 3:16 WHICH DECLARES “FOR GOD SO (AGAPE) LOVED THE WORLD THAT HE GAVE HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON, THAT WHOSOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM SHOULD NOT PERISH BUT HAVE ETERNAL LIFE.” GOD THE FATHER STEPHEN SENT HIS SON JESUS CHRIST TO BE A PROPITIATION FOR MANKIND IN ROMANS 3:25; HEBREWS 2:17, 9:23, 25-26; 1ST JOHN 2:2, 4:10. GOD PASSED OVER THE FORMER SINS THROUGH THE DEATH OF CHRIST IN ROMANS 3:25. WAS JESUS CHRIST’S DEATH NECESSARY? I THINK SO FOR MANKIND. JESUS CHRIST PRAYED TO THE FATHER STEPHEN TO LET THIS CUP PASS, BUT JESUS WENT TO THE CROSS IN MATTHEW 26:39. IT WAS NECESSARY BECAUSE IT IS PROVEN IN LUKE 24:25-26. JESUS CHRIST’S OBEDIENCE IN THE DEATH OF THE CROSS IS IN PHILIPPIANS 3:9 & NOT IN HELL OR THE GRAVE IN LUKE 23:47-56. ALSO, THE SUFFERING IN JESUS’ WHOLE PERSON IN THE WILDERNESS FOR FORTY DAYS IN MATTHEW 4:1-11. EVEN THOUGH HE WAS DEITY AS A SON, HE STILL ENDURED SUFFERING IN HEBREWS 5:8. THE PAIN HE SUFFERED IN HIS BODY ON THE CROSS IS NOTED IN MATTHEW 26:38, WHEN HE SAID, “MY SOUL IS VERY SORROWFUL, EVEN TO DEATH.” ALSO READING THE SCRIPTURE OF MARK 15:24, IT DECLARES “AND THEY CRUCIFIED HIM.” MAKES US THINK OF HOW JESUS CHRIST MUST HAVE FELT BEARING THE PENALTY OF THROUGH THE FATHER STEPHEN’S JUDGMENT IN JOHN 19:31-33. THE AGONY OF BEARING THE SIN OF THE WORLD IS PROVEN IN JOHN 1:29; ISAIAH 53:6, 12; HEBREWS 4:14; 9:28; GALATIANS 3:13; 1ST PETER 2:24. IN THIS SCRIPTURE, JESUS CHRIST BECAME SIN WITHOUT BEING SIN IN 2ND CORINTHIANS 5:21. JESUS CHRIST ALSO BARED THE PAIN OF THE FATHER STEPHEN’S JUDGMENT IN ROMANS 3:25-26, AND EVEN GOD’S WRATH AMONG THE FEARFULNESS OF THE PEOPLE IN HEBREWS 10:31; 12:21, 28-29. GOD SAW THAT THE DEATH OF JESUS CHRIST SATISFIED THE SINS OF MANKIND FROM THE WRATH OF GOD IN ISAIAH 53:11. THIS IS BECAUSE WHO THE FATHER STEPHEN IS & BECAUSE OF HIS MERCY, HIS SON JESUS CHRIST DIES ON THE CROSS. THERE ARE 4 THINGS THAT JESUS CHRIST’S DEATH ACHIEVED. FIRST, IS THE RECONCILIATION. MANKIND WAS TOTALLY SEPARATED FROM GOD BECAUSE OF THEIR SINS, AND BECAUSE OF 2ND CORINTHIANS 5:18-19 SAYS “THROUGH CHRIST RECONCILED US TO HIMSELF AND GAVE US THE MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION, THAT IS, IN CHRIST GOD (STEPHEN) WAS RECONCILING THE WORLD TO HIMSELF.” SECOND, IS THE SACRIFICE TO PAY THE DEBT ENTITLED MANKIND TO BE RELEASED OF THE “PUTTING TO DEATH” BECAUSE OF THE SINS COMMITTED IN HEBREWS 9:26. THIRD, IS THE REDEMPTION IN CHRIST THAT “GAVE HIS LIFE A RANSOM FOR MANY” IN MARK 10:45. SOME SCRIPTURES ARE COLOSSIANS 1:13; 1ST JOHN 5:19, HEBREWS 2:15 & ROMANS 6:11, 14. FOURTH, IS THE PROPITIATION BY REMOVING GOD’S JUDGMENT ON SINNERS. IN 1ST JOHN 4:10 SAYS “IN THIS IS (AGAPE) LOVE, NOT THAT WE (AGAPE) LOVED GOD, BUT HE (AGAPE) LOVED US & SENT HIS SON TO BE A PROPITIATION FOR OUR SINS.” JESUS DESCENDED INTO HADES FOR THE ETERNAL SALVATION OF THOSE IN BONDAGE FROM SATAN IN ACTS 2:27; EPHESIANS 4:8-9; ROMANS 10:6-7 & 1ST PETER 2:18-20, 4:6. JESUS PREACHED IN HELL TO THE SAINTS/ANGELS (LORDS) BOUND BY SATAN IN 1ST PETER 3:18-20; 4:6; REVELATION 1:18; 13:7; ACTS 2:27; ROMANS 10:6-7 & EPHESIANS 4:8-9. STEPHEN IS THE FATHER BY JESUS BEARING THE CROWN’S THORNS IN MATTHEW 27:29 & SATISFIED THE FATHER’S JUDGMENT IN ROMANS 1:21-32. THIS BLASPHEMY IS CALLED THE ETERNAL JUDGMENT THAT JESUS ENDURED. STEPHEN IS THE ONLY ONE WHOSE NAME IS THE “HIGHEST LORD”. JESUS HAS LORDSHIP BY THE LORD STEPHEN TO ADMINISTER SALVATION WHO WILL INHERIT IT IN HEBREWS 1:14 & ACTS 4:11-12. JESUS WAS FORSAKEN BY STEPHEN IN DEATH IN LUKE 23:46; MATTHEW 27:46 BY FULLY GROWN FORGIVABLE SINS & NOT HELL OR GRAVE IN LUKE 23:47-56. THE TRINITY’S 3 DEATHS IS ATOMIC TIME IN THE WHOLE UNIVERSE BY THE LORD YAH’S TIMING IN THE UNAPPROACHABLE LIGHT & THE SPEED IS 186,000 MILES PER HOUR & OBEYING THE LAW HAPPENED IN ATOMIC TIME IN PHILIPPIANS 2:8. ALSO THE BIRTH CALLED THE BARA CREATION OF THE 60 OTHER LORD’S WAS DONE IN ATOMIC TIME BY THE FOREKNOWLEDGE OF YAH IN GENESIS 1:1 BY WHICH ETERNAL DEATH IS EQUAL TO ETERNAL AGAPE LOVE WHICH IS OVER ETERNAL LIFE IN SOLOMON’S SONG 8:6. IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS ON HELL, YOU MUST GET MY BOOK CALLED “THE LORD YAH AND HIS BOOK ON HELL IN THE HOLY BIBLE.”**

**WHAT DOES THE BLOOD OF JESUS ACCOMPLISH AS THE HOLIEST?**

**IN JOHN 6:53-56 IT DECLARES THAT WHOSEVER DRINKS MY BLOOD HAS ETERNAL LIFE. IN ACTS 20:28 IT TELLS US THAT THE HOLY GHOST HAS MADE YOU OVERSEERS, BISHOPS, ELDERS AND DEACONS IN THE CHURCH OF GOD WHICH WAS PURCHASED BY HIS BLOOD. IN ROMANS 3:25 IT DECLARES THAT GOD THE FATHER (STEPHEN) “HATH SET FORTH TO BE A PROPITIATION THROUGH FAITH IN HIS BLOOD TO DECLARE HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS THAT ARE PASSED THROUGH THE FORBEARANCE OF GOD (STEPHEN).” IN ROMANS 5:9 IT TELLS US THAT “BEING NOW JUSTIFIED BY HIS BLOOD, WE SHALLBE SAVED FROM WRATH THROUGH HIM.” IN 1ST CORINTHIANS 10:16 SAYS “THE CUP OF BLESSING WHICH WE BLESS, IS IT NOT THE COMMUNION OF THE BLOOD OF CHRIST?” ALSO, IN 1ST CORINTHIANS 11:25-27 IT TELLS US THAT THE CUP IS THE NEW TESTAMENT IN MY BLOOD, WHOSOEVER DRINKS THE CUP UNWORTHILY SHALL BE GUILTY OF THE BLOOD OF THE LORD. IN EPHESIANS 1:7 IT SAYS THAT “IN WHOM WE HAVE REDEMPTION THROUGH HIS BLOOD, THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS ACCORDING TO THE RICHES OF HIS GRACE.” ALSO, IN TRUE REDEMPTION IS THROUGH HIS BLOOD IN COLOSSIANS 1:14. IN EPHESIANS 2:13; HEBREWS 10:19 IT DECLARES THAT CHRIST WHO WAS FAR OFF WAS MADE NIGH THROUGH HIS BLOOD. IN COLOSSIANS 1:20 SAYS “HAVING MADE PEACE THROUGH THE BLOOD OF HIS CROSS, BY HIM TO RECONCILE ALL THINGS UNTO HIMSELF.” IN HEBREWS 2:14 IT TELLS US THE CHRIST TOOK PART IN BLOOD THAT HE MIGHT DESTROY DEATH’S POWER. IN HEBREWS 9:14; 1ST PETER 1:19 IT DECLARES “HOW MUCH MORE SHALL THE BLOOD OF CHRIST, WHO THROUGH THE ETERNAL SPIRIT OFFERED HIMSELF WITHOUT SPOT TO GOD, PURGE YOUR CONSCIENCE FROM DEAD WORKS TO SERVE THE LIVING GOD?” IN HEBREWS 9:22 IT TELLS US THAT IN THE LAW ALMOST ALL THINGS ARE PURGED WITH BLOOD AND WITHOUT SHEDDING OF BLOOD IS NO REMISSION. IN HEBREWS 10:19 IT SAYS “HAVING THEREFORE, BRETHREN, BOLDNESS TO ENTER INTO THE HOLIEST BY THE BLOOD OF JESUS.” IN HEBREWS 10:29 IT TELLS US THAT THE BLOOD OF CHRIST SANCTIFIES YOU. IN HEBREWS 12:24; 13:12; 1ST PETER 1:2 IT DECLARES THAT THE SPRINKLING OF THE BLOOD OF CHRIST IS FAR BETTER THAN THAT OF ABEL. IN HEBREWS 13:20 IT TELLS US THAT THE BLOOD OF CHRIST IS AN EVERLASTING COVENANT TO THOSE WHO BELIEVE. IN JOHN 1:7 TELLS US “THE BLOOD OF JESUS CHRIST HIS SON CLEANSES US FROM ALL SIN (THAT CAN BE FORGIVEN).” IN 1ST JOHN 5:7-8 SAYS THAT THE BLOOD IS A WITNESS AS GOD IN THE EARTH. IN REVELATION 1:5 IT DECLARES THAT JESUS AGAPE LOVED US AND WASHED US FROM OUR SINS BY HIS BLOOD. IN REVELATION 5:9 SAYS JESUS HAS REDEEMED US BY HIS BLOOD. IN REVELATION 12:11 STATES THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB HAS OVERCOME THE BEAST & WE CAN OVERCOME HIM BY HIS BLOOD. IN REVELATION 19:13 SAYS THE VESTURE DIPPED IN THE BLOOD OF CHRIST IS CALLED THE WORD OF GOD.**

**JESUS CHRIST’S RESURRECTION AND ASCENSION**

**THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST IS IN NT SCRIPTURE IN MATTHEW 28:1-20; MARK 16:1-8; LUKE 24:1-53 & JOHN 20:1-21-25. JESUS’ RESURRECTION WAS DIFFERENT FROM ALL OTHER RESURRECTIONS FROM THE DEAD (EXCEPT THE FATHER STEPHEN’S) SUCH AS LAZARUS’ RESURRECTION & TABITHA’S RESURRECTION. JESUS CHRIST WAS THE FIRST FRUITS TO A NEW CREATURE IN HUMANITY IN 1ST CORINTHIANS 15:20, 23. BY WHICH THE BODY WOULD BE ETERNAL AND COULD NOT DIE. GOD’S INTENT FOR SUCH A BODY WAS FOR ADAM BEFORE HIS FALL. BUT JESUS CHRIST CAME BACK TO RESTORE THE INITIAL INTENT OF GOD. ON THE ROAD TO EMMAUS THEY DID NOT RECOGNIZE JESUS BECAUSE HE WAS IN ANOTHER FORM IN LUKE 24:13-32; JOHN 20:14-16. BUT MARY IN JOHN 20:16 RECOGNIZED HIM. JESUS’ DISCIPLES RECOGNIZED HIM IN JOHN 20:19-20, 26-28; 21:7, 12; MATTHEW 28:9, 17. JESUS’ BODY PUT ON IMMORTALITY IN 1ST CORINTHIANS 15:53. THE RESURRECTED BODY IS RAISED IMPERISHABLE, GLORIOUS, IN POWER AND BECOMES A SPIRITUAL BODY IN 1ST CORINTHIANS 15:42-44. THE RESURRECTION BODY CAN BE TOUCHED IN MATTHEW 28:9; JOHN 20:27, 21:12-13. THE RESURRECTION BODY CAN EAT FOOD IN LUKE 24:30. THE RESURRECTION BODY ALSO CAN APPEAR AND DISAPPEAR SUDDENLY IN LUKE 24:31, 36; JOHN 20:19, 26. SO THE RESURRECTION BODY COULD HAVE PHYSICAL FLESH AND BONES IN LUKE 24:39. ALSO HE COULD EAT, DRINK, PREPARE BREAKFAST, BREAK BREAD, AND BE TOUCHED. THE RESURRECTION BODY IS A PHYSICAL BODY THAT WAS SPIRITUAL. THE FATHER STEPHEN AND THE SON JESUS WERE INVOLVED IN THE RESURRECTION IN ACTS 2:24; 1ST CORINTHIANS 6:14; GALATIANS 1:1; ROMANS 6:4 AND EPHESIANS 1:20. JESUS CHRIST RECEIVED THE COMMAND TO “LAY IT DOWN OR TO TAKE IT AGAIN” FROM THE FATHER (STEPHEN) IN JOHN 10:17-18. JESUS SAYS THAT HE IS THE LIFE AND RESURRECTION IN HEBREWS 7:16; JOHN 11:25. ALSO JESUS’ RESURRECTION GUARANTEES OUR REGENERATION. SOME SCRIPTURES ARE PHILIPPIANS 3:10; 1ST PETER 1:3; COLOSSIANS 3:1; EPHESIANS 1:19-20, 2:5-6; ROMANS 6:4, 11, 14; 1ST CORINTHIANS 15:17, AND ACTS 1:8. JESUS’ RESURRECTION GUARANTEES US TO HAVE PERFECT RESURRECTED BODIES. THERE ARE SOME SCRIPTURES IN 1ST CORINTHIANS 6:14, 15:12-58; 2ND CORINTHIANS 4:14; JOHN 20:27 WHICH PROVES THIS. JESUS’ RESURRECTION GUARANTEES OUR TOTAL JUSTIFICATION. SOME SCRIPTURES ARE PHILIPPIANS 2:8-9; ROMANS 4:25; AND EPHESIANS 2:6. FOR IN MATTHEW 26:53 IS FULFILLED IN THAT JESUS CHRIST PRAYED TO THE FATHER STEPHEN, AND HE PROVIDED HIM WITH MORE THAN 12 LEGIONS OF ANGELS (LORDS). JESUS IN MOSES’ LAW AND ELIJAH’S LAW WAS ON THE EARTH FOR FORTY DAYS & NIGHTS IN ACTS 1:3 & WAS CARRIED UP INTO HEAVEN IN ACTS 1:9-11 IN AROUND MAY 21ST. JESUS SAW HEAVEN AS STEPHEN DID IN ACTS 7:55-56. JESUS RECEIVED GLORY & HONOR BY THE FATHER STEPHEN IN JOHN 17:5; ACTS 2:33; 1ST TIMOTHY 3:16; HEBREWS 1:4; PHILIPPIANS 2:9 & REVELATION 5:12. JESUS SAT DOWN ON THE RIGHT HAND OF THE FATHER STEPHEN IN PSALM 110:1; EPHESIANS 1:20-21; HEBREWS 1:3; 1ST PETER 3:22; ACTS 2:33, 7:55-56; 1ST CORINTHIANS 15:25 & REVELATION 2:1. JESUS ASCENSION IS SOUND DOCTRINE FOR MAN. SOME SCRIPTURES ARE HEBREWS 2:5-8, 12:1-3; JOHN 14:2-3; 1ST THESSALONIANS 4:17; EPHESIANS 6:10-18; 2ND CORINTHIANS 10:4; REVELATION 2:26-27, 3:21 & 1ST CORINTHIANS 6:3. JESUS’ RESURRECTION IS THE 1ST & FOREMOST RESURRECTION OUTSIDE GOD’S KINGDOM BY SALVATION IN ACTS 26:23.**

**JESUS’ THRONE**

**PAUL KNEW A MAN IN THE 3RD HEAVEN IN 2ND CORINTHIANS 12:1-6. IN ACTS 2:30 SAYS DAVID ACCORDING TO HIS FLESH (WHITE SKIN COLOR) WOULD RAISE CHRIST TO SIT ON HIS THRONE IN SOLOMON’S SONG 5:10 & COMMENTARIES ON ISAIAH ON PAGE 466-467. THE THRONE IS THE ANGELS (LORDS) WORSHIPPING THE FATHER STEPHEN IN THE 3RD HEAVEN. JESUS GIVES ORDERS BY THE FATHER STEPHEN TO THE CHERUBS TO SEND MESSAGES TO THE HOLY PEOPLE. HEAVEN IS GOD’S THRONE IN ACTS 7:49-50. IN ACTS 7:49 GOD SAYS WHAT HOUSE WILL YOU BUILD ME? JESUS’ THRONE IS THE HIGHEST & ONLY SUBJECT TO THE FATHER STEPHEN & ALL THINGS MADE SUBJECT TO JESUS IN ROMAN 8:37-39; COLOSSIANS 1:16, 2:15; THE SPIRIT’S FRUITS/GIFTS ARE IN GALATIANS 5:22-23; EPHESIANS 3:7-12 WHERE JESUS IS WORSHIPPED AS THE “SON OF GOD” & HE IS THE 2ND PERSON OF THE TRINITY BY THE SIGNS, WONDER, MIRACLES & HEALINGS HE DID BY THE FATHER STEPHEN IN THE SPIRIT’S FRUITS & WORTHINESS. JESUS’ THRONE IS STEPHEN IN THE MIDST & JOHN ON THE RIGHT OF GOD’S KINGDOM. IN REVELATION 4:2-3 SAYS “… ONE (JESUS) SAT ON THE THRONE, & HE WHO SAT THERE WAS LIKE A JASPER & A SARDIUS STONE IN APPEARANCE, AND THERE WAS A RAINBOW AROUND THE THRONE...” IN LUKE 24:44 SAYS HE FULFILLED THE PROPHETS, PSALMS & MOSES’ LAW. ETERNAL SALVATION IS IN ISAIAH 51:6. JESUS’ KINGDOM IS GOD’S PROPHETIC WORD IN 2ND PETER 1:16-21.**

**THE BOOK OF JOHN AS THE 2ND EVE, THE FEMALE ADAM**

**THERE IS A CERTAIN JOHN WHOSE NAME MEANS THE LORD HAS SHOWN FAVOR, GRACE OR COMFORT. HE WAS KNOWN AS JOHN THE BAPTIST IN LUKE 1:13, 57, 60, 63. THE NAME CONCERNS THE HOLY GHOST BECAUSE HE IS THE SPIRIT OF GRACE AND THE COMFORTER IN JOHN 14:26. IT DECLARES THAT THERE WOULD BE A FORERUNNER TO JESUS CHRIST WHO WOULD CLEAR THE WAY FOR THE LORD IN LUKE 1:13-17, 3:1-6; MARK 1:1-8; MATTHEW 3:1-12; JOHN 1:19-28. THE LORD JOHN IS THE ONLY ONE WHO HAD AUTHORITY TO PREPARE THE WAY OF THE LORD. AS IT IS WRITTEN IN LUKE 3:4-5 IT DECLARES “THE VOICE (FATHER STEPHEN) OF ONE CRYING IN THE WILDERNESS: PREPARE THE WAY OF THE LORD (SON JESUS), MAKE HIS PATHS STRAIGHT. EVERY VALLEY SHALL BE FILLED AND EVERY MOUNTAIN AND HILL BROUGHT LOW, THE CROOKED PLACES SHALL BE MADE STRAIGHT AND THE ROUGH WAYS MADE SMOOTH & ALL FLESH SHALL SEE THE SALVATION OF GOD.”**

**JOHN’S BIRTH**

**JOHN’S PLACE OF BIRTH IS IN THE HILL COUNTRY OF JUDAH (LUKE 1:39). JOHN’S PARENTS WERE ZACHARIAS & ELIZABETH [LIZ] [LIZ] [LIZ]. ELIZABETH [LIZ] [LIZ] [LIZ] [LIZ]CONCEIVED IN HER WOMB AND BROUGHT FORTH A SON, AND SHALL CALL HIS NAME JOHN (8TH DAY). ON THE 1ST DAY OF HIS BIRTH, HE IS CALLED THE BROTHER AND HOLY GHOST. THE LORD GOD WILL GIVE HIM THE THRONE OF HIS FATHER SAUL, AND HE WILL REIGN OVER THE HOUSE OF ISAAC SINCE HE’S OVER OBEDIENCE RESULTING IN HAPPINESS & HIS KINGDOM WILL LAST FOREVER. IN LUKE 1:5-25 DECLARES THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF JOHN’S BIRTH. IT STATES “THERE WAS IN THE DAYS OF HEROD, THE KING OF JUDEA, A CERTAIN PRIEST NAMED ZACHARIAS, OF THE DIVISION OF ABIJAH. HIS WIFE WAS OF THE DAUGHTER OF AARON, AND HER NAME WAS ELIZABETH [LIZ] [LIZ] [LIZ]. AND THEY WERE BOTH RIGHTEOUS BEFORE GOD, WALKING IN ALL THE COMMANDMENTS AND ORDINANCES OF THE LORD BLAMELESS. BUT THEY HAD NO CHILD, BECAUSE ELIZABETH [LIZ] [LIZ] [LIZ] [LIZ]WAS BARREN, AND THEY WERE BOTH ADVANCED IN YEARS. SO IT WAS, THAT WHILE HE WAS SERVING AS PRIEST BEFORE GOD IN THE ORDER OF HIS DIVISION, ACCORDING TO THE CUSTOM (LAW) OF THE PRIESTHOOD, HIS LOT FELL TO BURN INCENSE WHEN HE WENT INTO THE TEMPLE OF THE LORD. AND THE WHOLE MULTITUDE OF THE PEOPLE WAS PRAYING OUTSIDE AT THE HOUR OF INCENSE. THEN AN ANGEL (LORD) OF THE LORD APPEARED TO HIM, STANDING ON THE RIGHT SIDE OF THE ALTAR OF INCENSE. AND WHEN ZACHARIAS SAW HIM, HE WAS TROUBLED, AND FEAR FELL UPON HIM. BUT THE ANGEL (LORD) SAID TO HIM, ‘DO NOT BE AFRAID, ZACHARIAS, FOR YOUR PRAYER IS HEARD, AND YOUR WIFE ELIZABETH [LIZ] [LIZ] [LIZ] [LIZ]WILL BEAR YOU A SON, AND YOU SHALL CALL HIS NAME JOHN. AND YOU WILL HAVE JOY AND GLADNESS, AND MANY WILL REJOICE AT HIS BIRTH. FOR HE WILL BE GREAT IN THE SIGHT OF THE LORD, AND SHALL DRINK NEITHER WINE NOR STRONG DRINK. HE WILL ALSO BE FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT, EVEN FROM HIS MOTHER’S WOMB. AND HE WILL TURN MANY OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL TO THE LORD THEIR GOD. HE WILL ALSO GO BEFORE HIM IN THE SPIRIT AND POWER OF ELIJAH, TO TURN THE HEARTS OF THE FATHERS TO THE CHILDREN, AND THE DISOBEDIENT TO THE WISDOM OF THE JUST, TO MAKE READY A PEOPLE PREPARED FOR THE LORD.’ AND ZACHARIAS SAID TO THE ANGEL (LORD), ‘HOW SHALL I KNOW THIS? FOR I AM AN OLD MAN, AND MY WIFE IS WELL ADVANCED IN YEARS.’ AND THE ANGEL (LORD) ANSWERED AND SAID TO HIM, ‘I AM GABRIEL, WHO STANDS IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD, AND WAS SENT TO SPEAK TO YOU AND BRING YOU THESE GLAD TIDINGS. BUT BEHOLD YOU WILL BE MUTE AND NOT ABLE TO SPEAK UNTIL THE DAY THESE THINGS TAKE PLACE, BECAUSE YOU DID NOT BELIEVE MY WORDS WHICH WILL BE FULFILLED IN THEIR OWN TIME.’ AND THE PEOPLE WAITED FOR ZACHARIAS (THE LORD JOHN’S EARTHLY FATHER), AND MARVELED THAT HE LINGERED SO LONG IN THE TEMPLE. BUT WHEN HE CAME OUT, HE COULD NOT SPEAK TO THEM, AND THEY PERCEIVED THAT HE HAD SEEN A VISION (ANGELICAL REVELATION) IN THE TEMPLE, FOR HE BECKONED TO THEM AND REMAINED SPEECHLESS. SO IT WAS, AS SOON AS THE DAYS OF HIS SERVICE (40 YEARS) WERE COMPLETED, THAT HE DEPARTED TO HIS OWN HOUSE. NOW AFTER THOSE DAYS HIS WIFE ELIZABETH [LIZ] [LIZ] [LIZ] [LIZ](HER NAME MEANS THE OATH OF GOD) CONCEIVED, AND SHE HID HERSELF FIVE MONTHS SAYING, ‘THUS THE LORD HAS DEALT WITH ME, IN THE DAYS WHEN HE LOOKED ON ME, TO TAKE AWAY MY REPROACH AMONG PEOPLE.’” THE BOOK OF THE GOSPEL OF LUKE IS THE ONLY PRIMARY SOURCE ABOUT HIS BIRTH AND BOYHOOD CONCERNING JOHN THE BAPTIST & EVEN JESUS. THE CONSECRATION OF JOHN THE BAPTIST IS REAL SIMILAR TO THE PROPHET JEREMIAH IN JEREMIAH 1:5. THE HOLY HOLY BIBLE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT TELLS US THAT JOHN’S MOTHER WAS A RELATIVE OF THE VIRGIN MARY IN LUKE 1:36. THIS COULD MEAN THAT ELIZABETH [LIZ] [LIZ] [LIZ] [LIZ]WAS MARY’S AUNT OR COUSIN OR FROM THE SAME TRIBE. IN HEBREWS 1:6 IT DECLARES “LET ALL THE ANGELS (MEN AS LORDS) OF GOD WORSHIP HIM.” THE LORD JOHN SHALL BE WORSHIPPED AS THE COMFORTER, HELPER, COUNSELLOR CALLED THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH & THE HOLY GHOST OF GOD IN LUKE 3:21-22. JOHN’S BIRTHDAY WOULD MOST LIKELY BE IN SEPTEMBER.**

**JOHN’S CHILDHOOD/BOYHOOD**

**IT IS DECLARED IN LUKE 1:80, WHICH STATES “JOHN GREW UP AND BECAME STRONG IN SPIRIT. THEN HE LIVED OUT IN THE WILDERNESS UNTIL HE BEGAN HIS PUBLIC MINISTRY TO ISRAEL.” SOME EVIDENCE MAY POINT OUT THAT JOHN WAS ADOPTED AS A BOY IN THE QUMRAN BY THE ESSENES IN THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS, WHICH WOULD PLACE HIM IN THE WILDERNESS NEAR THE DEAD SEA AND JORDAN RIVER. THE ESSENES AND JOHN’S MINISTRY IS VERY SIMILAR. FIRST, THEY BOTH PRACTICED SELF-DENIAL. SECOND, THEY BOTH KEPT THEMSELVES FROM THE PRESENT ACTIVITIES IN JERUSALEM. THIRD, THEY BOTH PRACTICE A SPECIAL BAPTISM IN REPENTANCE FOR THE PEOPLE. FOURTH, THEY BOTH AWAITED THE COMING OF THE FATHER STEPHEN’S RETURN. BUT IN ALL THEIR SIMILARITIES THERE ARE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE ESSENES PARTY & JOHN THE BAPTIST’S MINISTRY.**

**JOHN’S APPOINTMENT**

**JOHN WAS APPOINTED BY THE FATHER STEPHEN THROUGH THE HOLY GHOST TO ACCOMPLISH A MINISTRY CALLED “THE VOICE OF ONE SHOUTING, MAKE A HIGHWAY FOR THE LORD THROUGH THE WILDERNESS” IN ISAIAH 40:3. HIS TYPE OF MINISTRY WAS NOT SALVATION, BUT TRUE GRACE, FAVOR, AND COMFORT IN THE LORD. IT IS DIRECTED TO WOMEN IN A MINISTRY OF CONVICTION, AS THE SPIRIT DOES IN JOHN 16:8. IT WAS A MINISTRY OF PREACHING & TEACHING IN MATTHEW 3:1; MARK 1:4. IT WAS A MINISTRY OF SIMPLE REPENTANCE AND REMISSION FROM SINS IN MATTHEW 3:2, 11; MARK 1:4; LUKE 3:8. IT WAS A MINISTRY OF PROPHESY SINCE JOHN IS GREATER THAN THE “PROPHETS” IN LUKE 7:28. IT IS A MINISTRY OF LAW SINCE JOHN IS GREATER THAN MOSES’ LAW IN LUKE 7:28. IT WAS A MINISTRY OF RIGHTEOUSNESS IN MATTHEW 21:32. IT WAS A MINISTRY OF WARNING AND JUDGMENT TO COME IN MATTHEW 3:7; LUKE 3:7. IT WAS A MINISTRY OF CONFESSION OF SINS IN MATTHEW 3:6; MARK 1:5. IT WAS A MINISTRY OF “WORTHINESS” IN MATTHEW 3:8; LUKE 3:8. IT IS TRULY A MINISTRY OF FIRE IN MATTHEW 3:10; LUKE 3:9. IT IS A MINISTRY OF WATER BAPTISM IN MATTHEW 3:11; MARK 1:4-5, 9-11, 14-17; LUKE 3:16, 21-22. IT WAS AN ANGELICAL MINISTRY THROUGH THE ANGEL (LORD) GABRIEL IN LUKE 1:11-20. IT WAS A MINISTRY OF THE LORD’S WONDERFUL WORKS IN SIGNS, WONDERS AND HEALINGS BUT NOT MIRACLES IN THE WILDERNESS IN AND MATTHEW 3:6-8; MARK 1:4; LUKE 1:17.**

**JOHN’S APPEARANCE**

**JOHN’S APPEARANCE IS A GREAT MYSTERY. JOHN LIVED IN THE WILDERNESS THROUGH GOD’S WONDERFUL WORKS. FOR EXAMPLE, GOD SHOWED HIMSELF TO MOSES IN THE WILDERNESS IN EXODUS 3. GOD GAVE THE COVENANT & ESTABLISHED HIS LAW TO ISRAEL IN THE WILDERNESS IN EXODUS 19-20. ALSO, DAVID IN 1ST SAMUEL 23, 26; PSALM 63 FOUND REFUGE IN THE WILDERNESS. ALSO, ELIJAH IN 1ST KINGS FOUND REFUGE IN THE WILDERNESS & JOHN WOULD COME IN THE SPIRIT & POWER OF ELIJAH IN LUKE 1:17. MANY PEOPLE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT THOUGHT THAT GOD’S DELIVERANCE WOULD BE IN THE WILDERNESS IN HOSEA 2:14-15; EZEKIEL 47:1-12 & ISAIAH 40:3-5. JOHN THE BAPTIST DRESSED IN A PECULIAR WAY. HE HAD CLOTHING MADE OF “HAIR FROM CAMELS” & WORE A BELT OF LEATHER IN MARK 1:6. THIS MEANS HE HAD THIS IN COMMON WITH ELIJAH OR THE “PROPHETS” IN 2ND KINGS 1:8; ZECHARIAH 13:4. JOHN’S WAY OF EATING WAS WILD HONEY & LOCUSTS (MAN’S FOOD) IN MARK 1:6. HE DID NOT EAT BREAD, DRINK WINE OR STRONG DRINK SINCE THE ANGEL (LORD) GABRIEL HAD FORBIDDEN HIM IN DOING SO IN LUKE 1:15; 7:33. JOHN’S WAY OF EATING WAS CLEAN THROUGH ISRAEL’S RELIGIOUS LAWS & SHOWED HIS SELF-DENIAL IN HIS MINISTRY IN MATTHEW 9:14; 11:18.**

**JOHN’S IDENTITY**

**WHO DID JOHN THE BAPTIST CLAIM TO BE? WHEN THE MULTITUDES ASKED HIM IF HE WAS A PROPHET, ELIJAH OR THE MESSIAH IN JOHN 1:20-23, JOHN SAID HE WAS “THE VOICE OF SOMEONE SHOUTING, MAKE A HIGHWAY FOR THE LORD IN THE WILDERNESS” IN ISAIAH 40:3. YET JOHN IS THE MESSIAH FOR WOMANKIND. THE PEOPLE OF REASON ASKED JOHN QUESTIONS. IT WAS BECAUSE OF OLD TESTAMENT PROPHESY. SOME BELIEVED THAT IT ENDED IN ZECHARIAH 13:2-6. BUT THEY KNEW THERE WOULD ARISE A GREAT PROPHET BEFORE THE COMING OF THE MESSIAH IN MALACHI 3:1-4; JOEL 2:28-29. ALSO, THEY THOUGHT THIS PROPHET WOULD BE LIKE MOSES IN DEUTERONOMY 18:15. OTHERS THOUGHT OF ELIJAH. JOHN’S DRESS, LIFESTYLE AND PREACHING PROVED THAT HE WAS AN END TIME PROPHET IN MATTHEW 14:5; MARK 11:32. ALSO JESUS VIEWED JOHN AS THE “FINAL PROPHET IN THE SPIRIT AND POWER OF ELIJAH” IN MATTHEW 11:7-15. THIS PROPHET WOULD BE THE FORERUNNER TO THE LORD IN MALACHI 3:1-4; 4:5-6. ON THE OTHER HAND, JOHN ALSO COULD BE IDENTIFIED AS THE FIRST PARAKLETOS IN THE PREORDAINED FOREKNOWLEDGE OF GOD. SINCE JOHN DID CLEAR THE WAY FOR THE LORD IN GOSPELS ACCOUNTS AND THAT JOHN’S MINISTRY WAS DONE WITH THE HOLY GHOST AND WATER IN LUKE 1:15 AND THAT JOHN BEING THE HOLY GHOST OF GOD WOULD CONVICT THE WORLD OF SIN, RIGHTEOUSNESS, AND JUDGMENT IN JOHN 16:8-11. THE LORD JOHN IS CALLED THE LORD IN THE LAW IN JOHN 10:34-36.**

**JOHN’S VIEW OF JESUS**

**JOHN IN HIS MINISTRY, HE TOLD THE PEOPLE THAT SOMEONE GREATER WOULD COME AFTER HIM IN MARK 1:7. JOHN UNDERSTOOD THE OLD TESTAMENT PROPHESY FORETOLD TO PREPARE THE WAY OF THE LORD IN LUKE 3:4-6. WHEN PEOPLE ASKED JOHN DID FIRMLY DENY BEING THE JEWISH MESSIAH. JOHN SAID HE WAS A SERVANT OF THE COMING ONE IN JOHN 1:26-28; 3:28; MARK 1:7-8. THE RECOGNITION OF THE MESSIAH BEFORE JOHN BAPTIZED JESUS WAS IN MATTHEW 3:14 & WAS PROVEN WHEN THE DOVE CAME FROM HEAVEN AND THE VOICE FROM HEAVEN SPOKE IN MARK 1:11; PSALM 2:7 & ISAIAH 42:1. JOHN THE BAPTIST CALLS JESUS THE LAMB OF GOD IN JOHN 1:29. JOHN CALLED JESUS AS THE SON OF GOD IN JOHN 1:34 AND MARK 1:11. BUT JOHN QUESTIONED HIMSELF ABOUT JESUS BEING THE JEWISH MESSIAH IN PRISON IF HE WAS THE JEWISH MESSIAH OR NOT IN MATTHEW 11:2-3. JOHN WAS CONFUSED BECAUSE HE HAD PREACHED JUDGMENT TO THE PEOPLE & THE MESSIAH WOULD BRING FORGIVENESS & ACCEPTING SINNERS IN MATTHEW 9:9-13. BUT BECAUSE OF THE DOWNFALL OF SAUL’S 80 YEAR KINGDOM THERE WAS A NEED FOR A MESSIAH BY THE REPENTANCE OF THE PEOPLE WHICH WAS JOHN. JOHN WAS CONSIDERED GUILTY AS CHARGED IN THE LAW & WAS THE MOST RIGHTEOUS WOMAN THAT EVER LIVED IN THE WISDOM & KNOWLEDGE OF THE LORD.**

**JESUS’ VIEW OF JOHN**

**SINCE JOHN WAS TO BAPTIZE JESUS, JESUS THE JEWISH MESSIAH HAD A GREAT RESPECT FOR JOHN. JESUS CALLED JOHN THE GREATEST MAN IN THE OLD WORLD THAT EVER LIVED IN LUKE 7:28. JESUS ALSO SAID THAT HE WAS A SHINING AND BURNING LAMP IN THE TRUE LIGHT TO GOD IN JOHN 5:33-35. ALSO, THAT JOHN WAS DIVINELY INSTRUCTED BY GOD TO FULFILL THE BAPTISM OF JESUS. JOHN THE BAPTIST WAS THE LAST OF THE OLD WORLD BEING THE PERIOD OF THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS IN LUKE 16:16. JOHN THE BAPTIST WAS THE LAST AND GREATEST PROPHET OF THE OLD WORLD IN MATTHEW 11:13-15 & LUKE 1:17. BUT WHO WAS LEAST IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS GREATER THAN THE LORD JOHN IS IN MATTHEW 11:11.**

**THE LORD JOHN’S MINISTRIES**

**JOHN’S MESSAGE AND PROCLAMATION INVOLVED THREE AREAS. FIRST, IS A WARNING OF THE WRATH AND JUDGMENT THAT WOULD COME FROM THE MESSIAH. SECOND, A TOTAL CALL FOR THE PEOPLE TO DO REPENTANCE. THIRD, IS A DEMAND THAT REPENTANCE BE EXPRESSED IN PROOF AND WISE WAYS LEADING TO SALVATION. JEWS THOUGHT THAT THE MESSIAH WOULD CONQUER AND OVERCOME THE GENTILES AND OTHER ENEMIES OF THE JEWS. JOHN THE BAPTIST WARNED THE JEWS OF THEIR FALSE HOPES FOR THE COMING WRATH IN LUKE 3:8. JOHN DECLARED THAT THE ONLY WAY TO ESCAPE THE DESTRUCTION WAS TO REPENT IN MATTHEW 3:2. JOHN SAID THE COMING JUDGMENT WOULD BE DIVINELY DONE BY JESUS THE MESSIAH WHO WOULD BAPTIZE THEM WITH THE HOLY GHOST AND FIRE IN LUKE 3:16. IN THE OLD TESTAMENT “THE FIRE” REPRESENTED THE DESTRUCTION OF THE EARTH AT THE END TIME IN MALACHI 4:1 AND THE PROCESS OF FIRE IN PURIFICATION IN MALACHI 3:1-4. THE COMING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT WITH FIRE MEANT THE TOTAL BLESSINGS OF GOD IN THE END TIMES IN ISAIAH 32:15; JOEL 2:28; EZEKIEL 39:29. THERE IS A TWOFOLD MESSAGE OF JOHN’S PREACHING. FIRST, THE DESTRUCTIVE POWER FOR PEOPLE WHO DO NOT CHOOSE TO REPENT IS CERTAIN DOOM. SECOND, THE BLESSING TO PEOPLE WHO ARE NOW RIGHTEOUS BECAUSE OF THEIR REPENTANT LIFE IS PROVEN IN SCRIPTURE. JOHN CALLED FOR A “TURNING FORWARD” OR “TURNING BACK” TO GOD IN OBEDIENCE THAT WOULD BRING FORGIVENESS OF SINS DONE BY THE MESSIAH. THIS SHOULD BE DONE IN EVERYDAY LIFE AS JOHN EXPRESSED IN LUKE 2:10-13.**

**JOHN’S MINISTRY OF GRACE, FAVOR, AND COMFORT**

**JOHN’S COMFORT TO THE PEOPLE OF GOD WAS TO REPENT, FOR THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS AT HAND! PEOPLE WHO REPENTED FROM DESTRUCTION SHARED IN HIS BLESSINGS FROM GOD. BUT NEGATIVE COMFORT COULD KEEP US FROM OBEYING GOD. FOR EXAMPLE, GOD PROMISED ABRAM HE WOULD BE BLESSED AND HE WOULD MAKE HIM GREAT, BUT THERE WAS ONE CONDITION THAT ABRAM HAD TO OBEY. IT WAS WHAT GOD WANTED TO DO AND NOT ABRAM. THIS MEANT LEAVING HIS COUNTRY, FRIENDS AND FAMILY! HOW MANY PEOPLE WOULD DEFINITELY DO THAT TODAY IN OBEYING GOD? COMFORT MAY BREAK UP OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH CHRIST. THE FEAR OF COMING OPPOSITION OR REPROACH CAN WEAKEN OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH CHRIST. BUT REMEMBER PERFECT AGAPE LOVE CASTS OUT FEAR AND WE AS CHRISTIANS SHOULD KNOW THAT GOD IS IN CONTROL OF EVERYTHING. BUT POSITIVE COMFORT COMES FROM GOD IN ISAIAH 40:1. GOD WILL COMFORT US AS WE FACE FIERY TRIALS. GOD OFFERS US COMFORT IN OUR DIFFICULTIES. ALSO, JOHN WHO LEARNED COMFORT FROM GOD HELPED COMFORT OTHERS FOR GOD. THERE ARE FIVE THINGS WE SHOULD NOT DO IF WE ARE TO COMFORT ONE ANOTHER. FIRST, DO NOT TALK IN HYPOCRISY, AND WHAT YOU SAY AND BE SERIOUS. SECOND, DO NOT SERMONIZE BY GIVING IRRATIONAL ANSWERS. THIRD, DO NOT ACCUSE FALSELY. FOURTH, PUT YOURSELF IN MY SHOES. FIFTH, OFFER HELP FROM YOUR STRENGTHS. ALSO, JOHN IN THE PHYSICAL SENSE WAS LIKE THE FIRST “PARACLETE”. THIS TERM MEANS “ONE WHO IS CALLED TO SOMEONE’S AID”, ALSO IT CAN BE TRANSLATED AS “HELPER”. IT ALSO CAN BE USED AS A TERM FOR A LAWYER. ALSO IS CAN MEAN A PERSON WHO ACTS IN ANOTHER’S BEHALF AS AN ADVOCATE, MEDIATOR, INTERCESSOR, OR ENCOURAGER. JOHN THE BAPTIST WAS THE OLD TESTAMENT “END PROPHET” THAT WAS A MEDIATOR FOR THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS. THE MOST NUMEROUS USES OF “PARACLETE” COMES FROM THE GOSPEL OF JOHN THAT ALL REFER TO THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN JOHN 14:16, 26. THERE ARE SOME CHARACTERISTICS IN THE HOLY SPIRIT WHICH ARE TRULY MANIFESTED. WHICH INVOLVES HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH HUMANITY AS THE HOLY SPIRIT CAN BE GRIEVED BY HUMANITY IN EPHESIANS 4:30, LIED TO IN ACTS 5:3, BLASPHEMED IN MATTHEW 12:31 & RESISTED IN ACTS 7:51. HE CAN POSSESS DIVINE ATTRIBUTES OF THE GOD-HEAD. WHICH THESE ARE ETERNAL IN HEBREWS 9:14, OMNIPRESENCE IN PSALMS 139:7-10, OMNIPOTENCE IN LUKE 1:35 AND OMNISCIENCE IN 1ST CORINTHIANS 2:10-11. ALSO HE ENGAGES IN TRUE REVEALING ACTIVITIES IN 2ND PETER 1:21, SPEAKING IN REVELATION 2:7, TRULY TESTIFYING IN JOHN 15:26, TRULY WITNESSING IN HEBREWS 10:15, TRUE TEACHING IN JOHN 14:26, COMMANDING IN ACTS 16:6,7; AND TRULY INTERCEDING IN ROMANS 8:26. THE TRUE ATTRIBUTES OF MIND IN ROMANS 8:27, EMOTIONS IN EPHESIANS 4:30, AND TRUE WILL IN 1ST CORINTHIANS 12:11. THE HOLY SPIRIT’S SYMBOLS CONSIST OF OIL IN ACTS 10:38, WATER IN JOHN 7:37-39, DOVE IN JOHN 1:32, WIND IN ACTS 2:1-2, SEAL IN EPHESIANS 1:13, AND FIRE IN ACTS 2:12-21. ALSO, THERE ARE VERY IMPORTANT NAMES WE CAN HOLD ON WHICH IDENTIFIES THE HOLY SPIRIT, THE SPIRIT OF GOD, SPIRIT OF GRACE, SPIRIT OF HOLINESS, COMFORTER, SPIRIT OF TRUTH, SPIRIT OF ADOPTION, HELPER, HOLY SPIRIT OF PROMISE, COUNSELOR, SPIRIT OF LIFE, SPIRIT OF CHRIST & ALSO THE HOLY GHOST. JOHN WHOSE NAME MEANS GRACE AND COMFORTER IS A GIFT OF GOD BY WHICH HE EXTENDS LOVING KINDNESS AND MERCY TO THE PEOPLE. GOD’S GRACE & FAVOR ENABLED JOHN TO CONFRONT HUMAN PROBLEMS AND OUTRIGHT REBELLION TO THOSE WHO DO NOT CHOOSE TO REPENT. THE HOLY GHOST IS A “GOD MERCIFUL AND GRACIOUS, SLOW TO ANGER, AND ABOUNDING IN STEADFAST (AGAPE) LOVE AND IN TRUE FAITHFULNESS” IN EXODUS 34:6. JOHN KNEW WHAT HIS NAME MEANT AND THAT FAITHFUL PRAYER FROM UNDESERVING HUMANS COULD BE CONVEYED TO GOD SINCE GOD IS GRACIOUS. JOHN’S COMFORT AND GRACE IS SYMBOLIC TO THE HOLY GHOST. EVEN THOUGH GRACE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT PREPARES AND ANTICIPATES THE FULL UNDERSTANDING OF GRACE THAT IS DECLARED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT. THROUGH GOD’S GRACE HE TRANSFORMS OUT SEPARATION FROM HIM INTO ACCEPTANCE THAT CANNOT BE ACHIEVED ALONE THAT OPENS A DOOR TO REDEMPTION AND RECONCILIATION. IN GENESIS 3:15 GRACE WAS ALREADY AT WORK IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN, BECAUSE OF THE FALL OF HIS CREATION (MAN) WITH THE PLAN WORKING OF REDEMPTION. THE CARING OF GOD’S CREATION IN RESPECT TO HIS PROMISE AND NOT TO HIS DESTRUCTION OR HIS ABANDONMENT OF THE FLESH IS ALSO MANIFESTED. ALSO, ABRAHAM RECEIVED GRACE TO HIS CALL THAT WOULD BRING “ALL THE FAMILIES OF THE EARTH” INTO COVENANT WITH GOD IN GENESIS 12:2-3. GOD DECLARED “MY COVENANT IS WITH YOU, AND YOU SHALL BE THE FATHER OF A MULTITUDE OF NATIONS (LAWS)...YOU THROUGHOUT THEIR GENERATIONS FOR AN EVERLASTING COVENANT” IN GENESIS 17:4, 7. IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS ON THE 10 COVENANTS, YOU MUST GET MY BOOK CALLED “THE GARDEN OF EDEN THAT THE LORD GOD CREATED.” BECAUSE OF GOD’S GRACE ABRAHAM’S DESCENDANTS AND OFFSPRING WAS LINKED TO THE RACIAL JEWISH DESCENDANTS, AND ALSO TO SPIRITUAL DESCENDANTS OF BELIEVERS FROM ALL THE NATIONS (LAWS) ON EARTH IN ROMANS 4:16. THE EXAMPLE OF ABRAHAM RECEIVING GRACE SHOWS THE HISTORY OF REDEMPTION TO THE PEOPLE OF GOD AND THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH IN HIS PLAN TO REDEEM THE WORLD FROM THEIR SINS. THE OLD TESTAMENT GRACE ONLY HELD A TEMPORAL PLAN UNTIL THE WORK THAT WAS ACCOMPLISHED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT IN HEBREWS 8:6-7. THE LAW WAS A TEMPORARY INSTITUTION THAT PREPARED THE COMING OF JESUS CHRIST IN GALATIANS 3:23-29; AND HEBREWS 10:1. THE NEW TESTAMENT GRACE IS THE TOTAL ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT OF GOD ON BEHALF OF HIS CHRISTIANS. DIVINE GRACE BECOMES A PART OF THE BODY OF CHRIST WHICH DEMONSTRATES THE DIVINE NATURE OF GOD’S GRACE AND HIS MINISTRY FULFILLS THE PROMISES OF GRACE TO EVERY CREATURE IN MANKIND IN JOHN 1:14, 17. GOD’S GRACE CAUSED JOHN TO CLEAR THE WAY FOR JESUS CHRIST TO FORGIVE SINS RATHER THAN LETTING SINNERS IN THE CHURCH. JESUS MADE IT CLEAR THAT HE CAME TO SEEK AND SAVE ALL THOSE WHO WERE LOST. IT WAS JESUS CHRIST ON THE CROSS THAT ALLOWED SINNERS TO REPENT TO COME TO GOD’S FORGIVING AND RESTORING GRACE. GOD’S GRACE GIVES UNDESERVED BENEFITS TO SINNERS THAT ENRICH THE LIVES AND BRING UNITY IN THE CHURCH. GRACE CROWN’S THEM WITH A NEW STATUS AS CHILDREN OF GOD AND MEMBERS OF GOD’S FAMILY, THE CHURCH. THE CHRISTIAN’S NOW BECOME PART OF ABRAHAM’S CALL THROUGH GOD’S GRACE. FINALLY, GOD’S GRACE THROUGH JOHN DEMONSTRATES A “PREPARING OF THE RELATIONSHIPS AND CHARACTER IN HUMILITY, THAT TOTALLY DISARM SELFISHNESS AND CONCEIT AND ALLOWS THE CHRISTIANS TO TREAT OTHERS WITH “SERVANT-HOOD” IN EPHESIANS 5:15-21. ALSO, THE SPIRIT OF TOTAL FORGIVENESS IN MATTHEW 18:23-35, AND THE COMMUNICATION DISPLAYED IN COLOSSIANS 4:6. THE MAIN MEANING OF GOD’S GRACE IS THE DIVINE NATURE OF GOD’S CHARACTER TO SHOW AND DECLARE GOODWILL TO HIS CREATIONS. THIS EXPRESSION BEGAN IN JOHN, & THE FULLNESS WAS REVEALED IN JESUS CHRIST. ALSO, GRACE COMES TO TAKE CARE OF HUMAN NEEDS IN HEBREWS 4:16.**

**JOHN’S MINISTRY OF MANHOOD**

**JOHN IS CALLED THE GREATEST MAN OF THE OLD TESTAMENT. JOHN’S NATURAL MANHOOD IS FOUND IN 1ST CORINTHIANS 15:44, 46; JAMES 3:17-18 & JUDE 20-25. BUT I WOULD LIKE TO FOCUS ON THE “SPIRITUAL MANHOOD” OF JOHN. IN PAUL’S WRITINGS IN 1ST CORINTHIANS, IT REFERS TO THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN ROMANS 7:14 CONCERNING THE LAW, 1ST CORINTHIANS 12:4 CONCERNING THE GIFTS, EPHESIANS 1:3 CONCERNING THE BLESSINGS AND 1ST PETER 2:5 CONCERNING THE SACRIFICES. WHEN IT DOES CONCERN PERSONS, IT MEANS BEING MOTIVATED AND TRULY DIRECTED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT IN 1ST CORINTHIANS 2:15; 14:37 & GALATIANS 6:1. THE NATURAL MAN LIKE JESUS CHRIST AS MAN CANNOT DISCERN THE SPIRITUAL THINGS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN 1ST CORINTHIANS 2:11, THE SPIRITUAL IN 1ST CORINTHIANS 15:44-46 DECLARES TO RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THEM BOTH, THAT THE NATURAL IS A BODY LINKED TO DEATH, AND THE SPIRITUAL IS A BODY LINKED TO THE RESURRECTION. THE BODY RAISED FROM THE DEAD WILL BE A SPIRITUAL BODY IN ROMANS 8:11. JOHN’S RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD PROVES HIS SPIRITUAL BODY INTO ETERNAL LIFE WITH GOD.**

**JOHN’S MINISTRY OF CONVICTION**

**JOHN’S CONVICTING POWER MEANT FOR PEOPLE TO BE COMMANDED TO REPENT OR THEY WOULD BE LED INTO DESTRUCTION. JOHN THE POWER OF CONVICTION COMES FROM THE HOLY GHOST WHICH CONCERNS REPENTANCE OF SINS, RIGHTEOUSNESS, AND JUDGMENT IF THEY DO NOT OBEY GOD. FOR EXAMPLE, DANIEL MADE UP HIS MIND NOT TO DEFILE HIMSELF BY WINE OR FOOD GIVEN TO HIM BY THE KING IN DANIEL 1:8-21. THE FOOD WAS FORBIDDEN BY THE JEWISH LAW, LIKE PORK IN LEVITICUS AND 4 MACCABEES 5-18 CONCERNING THE OLD MAN ELEAZAR AND 7 BROTHERS. THEY DEPENDED ON OBEYING THE LAW RATHER THAN THE KING’S COMMAND. ALSO CHOOSING WHAT IS RIGHT IN THE MIDST OF WRONG IS A STRONG CONVICTION. DANIEL OBEYED GOD RATHER THAN OBEYING THE TEMPTATION OF THE SITUATION. CONVICTION REQUIRES MINDFUL PREPARATION. PAUL WENT WITH THEM TO THE TEMPLE TO JOIN THEM IN THE TRUE PURIFICATION CEREMONY, AND TO PAY BY SHAVING THEIR HEADS BALD IN ACTS 21:18-27. OFTEN THE TRUE CONVICTIONS BETWEEN GOOD AND EVIL SHOULD BE HELD IN HUMILITY AS PAUL DID IN 1ST CORINTHIANS 9:19-23. BUT PORK WAS CLEANSED BY GOD IN ACTS CHAPTERS 10 & 11. BEFORE IT WAS ESTABLISHED, IT WAS AN ABOMINATION FOR TRILLIONS OF YEARS.**

**JOHN’S MINISTRY OF REPENTANCE**

**REPENTANCE IS A CHANGE OF THOUGHT, ABOUT ONE’S ATTITUDE ABOUT GOD. JOHN HAD A GOOD ATTITUDE ABOUT GOD BECAUSE HE ALWAYS DID WHAT GOD WANTED. SUCH AS BAPTIZING THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, AND HIS ATTITUDE HAD TO BE RIGHT IN ORDER FOR THE MESSIAH TO COME. ALSO SAVING FAITH IS LINKED TO SUCH REPENTANCE IN ACTS 20:21. THE ONLY WAY TO BELIEVE IN THE LORD JESUS CHRIST IS TO REPENT. ALSO REPENTANCE IS ALSO LINKED TO CONVERSION BECAUSE CHRIST SAID THAT THERE IS JOY IN HEAVEN OVER ONE SINNER THAT REPENTS IN LUKE 15:7. ALSO “REPENTANCE UNTO LIFE” IS EXPRESSED IN THE CONVERSION OF THE GENTILES TO THE LORD JESUS CHRIST BY THE SEVENTEEN APOSTLES IN ACTS 11:8. JOHN THE BAPTIST WAS A PREACHER & A TEACHER WITH THE MESSAGE OF REPENTANCE OF A TURNING FORWARD OR TURNING BACK IN MATTHEW 3:2 & MARK 1:4. JOHN WAS CALLING NOT THE RIGHTEOUS TO REPENT BUT SINNERS.**

**JOHN’S MINISTRY OF PREACHING/TEACHING**

**JOHN THE BAPTIST IS CALLED A TEACHER IN LUKE 3:12. JOHN AS A TEACHER WOULD KEEP THE VALUES AND KNOWLEDGE AND LEARNING AND PASS IT DOWN TO EACH NEW GENERATION. IN THE OLD TESTAMENT THE FIRST TEACHERS WERE THE PARENTS IN DEUTERONOMY 6:7, 20-25; 11:19-21. LEADERS LIKE AARON AND MOSES WERE INSTRUCTED TO TEACH IN LEVITICUS 10:11. THE PRIESTS ALSO HAD A TEACHING FUNCTION IN DEUTERONOMY 24:8; 33:8-10; 2ND CHRONICLES 17:7-9 & MICAH 3:11. THE LORD IS ALSO A TEACHER IN ISAIAH 2:3 & PSALMS 25:8, 12; 27:11; 32:8; 86:11. TO HAVE EFFECTIVE TEACHING ONE MUST COMMIT TO ALL THE COMMANDMENTS OF THE LORD IN DEUTERONOMY 6:5-7. IT RELATES TO THE TRUTH IN LIFE WHERE THE HEBREWS BROUGHT THEIR EDUCATION TO THEIR OWN PEOPLE SO THAT THEY COULD KNOW GOD. THE KIND OF EFFECTIVE TEACHING CAN START ANYWHERE AT ANY TIME, THERE IS NO LIMITATIONS IN JUDGES 2:7-23. TEACHING IS A VITAL PART OF THE CHRISTIAN BECAUSE THE NEXT GENERATION IS CLOSE TO EXTINCTION IN JUDGES 2:10-3:6. EACH GENERATION FAILED TO TEACH AGAPE LOVE & TO FOLLOW GOD IN GOD’S LAW IN DEUTERONOMY 6:4-9. CHRISTIANS ARE RESPONSIBLE TO TEACHING TO THE NEXT GENERATION IN MATTHEW 4:23. EFFECTIVE TEACHING CANNOT BEGIN UNTIL WE TOTALLY OBEY GOD IN HIS WORD IN JAMES 1:21-27 & 2ND TIMOTHY 2:14-26. THE QUALITY OF THE TEACHING DEPENDS ON THE TEACHER. STUDYING, PREPARING, FEARING THE LORD IS THE BEGINNING OF WISDOM AND BEING SUBMISSIVE TO GOD’S SPIRIT ARE JUST SOME WAYS TO DETERMINE A GOOD TEACHER.**

**JOHN’S MINISTRY OF PROPHESY**

**JOHN WAS CALLED A PROPHET BY JESUS CHRIST IN LUKE 20:6. JOHN WAS THE GREATEST PROPHET OF THE OLD TESTAMENT PROPHETS. JOHN’S PREACHING AND TEACHING IN THE WORD WAS PROPHETIC BECAUSE JOHN WAS THE ONE TO CLEAR THE WAY FOR THE MESSIAH. JOHN’S COMMUNICATION TO THE PEOPLE WAS CLEAR AND DECISIVE IN SAYING “BROOD OF VIPERS! WHO WARNED YOU TO FLEE FROM THE WRATH TO COME?” IN LUKE 3:7. JOHN AS A PROPHET IS IN AUTHORITY BECAUSE THE QUESTION THAT JESUS ASKED THE JEWS “WAS THE BAPTISM OF JOHN FROM HEAVEN OR MEN.” THE LORD GAVE JOHN THE AUTHORITY TO BAPTIZE THE MESSIAH. WHAT A GREAT HONOR BESTOWED ON JOHN. IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS ON THE TEN TRUE BAPTISMS, YOU MUST GET MY BOOK CALLED “WHAT ARE THE FATHER STEPHEN’S TEN BAPTISMS IN THE CHRISTIAN ERA.” THE OFFICE OF THE PROPHET IS DIVINELY DONE BY GOD’S HAND. ANYONE WHO WOULD NOT LISTEN TO THE BROTHER JOHN THE HOLY GHOST OF GOD WOULD BE UTTERLY DESTROYED OR KILLED.**

**JOHN’S MINISTRY OF RIGHTEOUSNESS**

**TRUE RIGHTEOUSNESS IS THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A GOOD AND RIGHT RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GOD AND HIS INDIVIDUALS, AND IT AS DONE AT EVERY LEVEL OF SOCIETY AND IN EVERYDAY LIFE. ALSO, THIS RIGHTEOUSNESS WILL COMPLETE TOTAL EXPECTATIONS IN MARRIAGES, PARENTS AND CHILDREN, FELLOW CITIZENS, BUSINESSES, MERCHANTS AND CUSTOMERS, RULERS AND SERVANTS, GOD AND PEOPLE. BASED ON ONE’S EXPECTATIONS ONE COULD BE CALLED RIGHTEOUS. ALSO, FOR PERSON’S ACTS AND SPEECH COULD BE DEEMED AS RIGHTEOUS. THE OPPOSITE OF RIGHTEOUS IS EVIL IN PSALM 1:6 & ZEPHANIAH 3:5. THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IS THAT GOD IS RIGHTEOUS IN 2ND CHRONICLES 12:6 & PSALM 7:9. IT DESCRIBES HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH HIS PEOPLE AND HIS ACTS HE PERFORMS. ALL OF THE LORD’S ACTS ARE RIGHTEOUS IN PSALM 103:6 & DEUTERONOMY 32:4. SOME OTHER SCRIPTURES ARE GENESIS 15:6; MALACHI 3:18; ISAIAH 11:1-16; 45:8, 23; MATTHEW 3:15; 6:33; 7:21; 13:43; ROMANS 3:21-5:21; EPHESIANS 2:14-18; 2ND CORINTHIANS 3:18; AND 2ND PETER 3:13.**

**JOHN’S MINISTRY OF WARNING AND JUDGMENT**

**JUDGMENT IS THE LORD’S MOTIVE TO THE ACTIONS AND CHOICES OF MAN. IT IS CLOSELY RELATED TO GOD’S RIGHTEOUSNESS AND JUSTICE. IT IS GOD’S NATURE AS BEING JUST AND MORAL IN ALL THINGS, AND WE AS MAN HAVE THE LIBERTY TO AGREE OR REFUSE GOD. GOD IS ALSO TOTALLY FREE TO ANSWER TO OUR CHOICES WITH DENIAL OR ACCEPTANCE. GOD IS PERFECT AND HE CANNOT ACCEPT SIN OR EVIL. IN THE WORLD GOD CREATED A MORAL RIGHT AND WRONG ORDER. WHEN MAN DISOBEYS GOD’S ORDER, PUNISHMENT AWAITS US. JUST LIKE ADAM AND EVE IN THE GARDEN IN GENESIS 3. GOD’S JUDGMENT WILL STAND AND IS UNAVOIDABLE IN 1ST KINGS 22:34. GOD’S JUDGMENT IS IN THE LORD’S OWN TIMING IN JOHN 12:48 & REVELATION 20:11-15. GOD’S JUDGMENT IS FAIR AND JUST. THOSE WHO KNOW GOD’S WORD & LAW WILL BE JUDGED BY THEM. GOD’S JUDGMENT WILL BE UNIVERSAL. GOD’S LAW IS IN EVERY SOCIETY & CULTURE. CHRISTIANS WILL BE JUDGED BY HOW THEY USE GOD’S GIFTS IN ROMANS 14:9-11; PHILIPPIANS 2:9-11 & MATTHEW 25:31-46. THE FINAL JUDGMENT FOR UNBELIEVERS WILL BE ETERNAL IN “SHEOL” IN JOB 24:19; PSALM 16:10 & ISAIAH 38:10. ALSO SOME SCRIPTURES ABOUT “HADES” ARE IN MATTHEW 16:18; REVELATION 1:18 & 20:13-14. ALSO IS “GEHENNA (HELL)” IN 2ND KINGS 23:10; 2ND CHRONICLES 28:3; MATTHEW 5:22; 10:28; 25:46; MARK 9:43; LUKE 12:5; JAMES 3:6 & REVELATION 19:20; 20:9-10. JOHN PREACHED THAT WHO DOES NOT REPENT WILL BE DESTROYED BY GOD’S JUDGMENT. ALSO ANOTHER PROOF OF GOD’S JUDGMENT IS IN OBADIAH 1:1-21. IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTION ON HELL, YOU MUST GET MY BOOK CALLED “THE LORD YAH AND HIS BOOK ON HELL IN THE HOLY BIBLE.”**

**JOHN’S MINISTRY OF CONFESSION**

**CONFESSION CONCERNS GUILT OR SIN BEFORE GOD, AND A STATEMENT OF A RELIGIOUS BELIEF. ALSO IS CAN MEAN TO ADMIT, AGREE OR PROMISE A CERTAIN THING. THERE ARE TWO TYPES OF CONFESSION IN THE HOLY BIBLE. FIRST, IT CONCERNS THE INDIVIDUAL SAYING THAT HE SINNED AND THEREFORE GUILTY BEFORE THE LORD IN LEVITICUS 5:5 & 1ST JOHN 1:9. IT CONFIRMS THAT THE INDIVIDUAL HAS BROKEN GOD’S LAW IN PSALM 119:126 AND THAT THE JUDGMENT IS JUST IN ROMANS 6:23. ALSO IN THE OLD TESTAMENT THE HIGH PRIEST WOULD CONFESS THE SINS OF THE WHOLE NATION (LAW) IN LEVITICUS 16:21 & 2ND CHRONICLES 7:14. THE INDIVIDUALS CAN PRAY TO GOD FOR GRACE, MERCY AND DELIVERANCE IN DANIEL 9:20; EZRA 10:1 AND NEHEMIAH 1:6. SECOND, ARE INDIVIDUALS WHO CONFESS THAT GOD RULES OVER THE UNIVERSE IN 1ST CHRONICLES 29:10-15. GOD HELPS HIS PEOPLE IN PSALM 105:1-6 AND HE SHOWS HIS LOVE TO THEM IN PSALM 118:2-4. THE TWO TRUE TYPES OF CONFESSION CONTAIN THESE IDEAS. FIRST, MAN HAS SINNED. SECOND, MAN BECAME ILL AND ALMOST DIED. THIRD, GOD WILL DELIVER MAN IN TRUE PRAYER. FOURTH, IS TO OFFER THE PRAISE OF HIS CONFESSION TO GOD IN PSALM 22; 30; 32; 34; 40; 51; 116. SOME OTHER SCRIPTURES ARE LUKE 12:8; REVELATION 3:5; ROMANS 10:9-10; 1ST JOHN 1:8-10; 4:2, 15 & 1ST TIMOTHY 6:12-13. IN JOHN THE BAPTIST’S MINISTRY THE CONFESSION OF SIN IS EVIDENT. MAN WAS INSTRUCTED TO PUBLICLY CONFESS HIS SIN AND REPENT IN MARK 1:4-5.**

**JOHN’S MINISTRY OF WORTHINESS**

**FIRST THE WORTHINESS OF GOD IS EVIDENT. IN REVELATION 4:11 IT DECLARES “YOU ARE WORTHY, O LORD OUR GOD, TO RECEIVE GLORY AND HONOR AND POWER. FOR YOU CREATED EVERYTHING, AND IT IS FOR YOUR PLEASURE THAT THEY EXIST AND WERE CREATED.” IN PSALM 33:4 IT DECLARES “THE WORD OF THE LORD HOLDS TRUE, AND EVERYTHING HE DOES IS WORTHY OF OUR TRUST.” IN PSALM 145:3 IT DECLARES “GREAT IS THE LORD! HE IS MOST WORTHY OF PRAISE! HIS GREATNESS IS BEYOND DISCOVERY!” IN PSALM 29:1-2 IT DECLARES “GIVE HONOR TO THE LORD, YOU ANGELS (LORDS) & GIVE HONOR TO THE LORD FOR HIS GLORY AND STRENGTH. GIVE HONOR TO THE LORD FOR THE GLORY OF HIS NAME. WORSHIP THE LORD IN THE SPLENDOR OF HIS HOLINESS.” IN 2ND SAMUEL 22:4 IT DECLARES “I WILL CALL ON THE LORD, WHO IS WORTHY OF PRAISE, FOR HE SAVES ME FROM MY ENEMIES.” GOD IS WORTHY OF OUR PRAISE AND WORSHIP TO HIM. WE SHOULD LEARN TO TRUST HIM IN ALL THINGS. SECOND, WHAT IS THE VALUE AND WORTH OF HIS CREATIONS? IN PSALM 8:5 IT DECLARES “YOU MADE US A LITTLE LOWER THAN GOD, AND YOU CROWNED HIM (MAN) WITH GLORY AND HONOR.” DEUTERONOMY 26:18 IT DECLARES “THE LORD HAS DECLARED TODAY THAT YOU ARE HIS PEOPLE, HIS OWN SPECIAL TREASURE, JUST AS HE PROMISED, AND THAT YOU MUST OBEY ALL HIS COMMANDS.” IN MARK 8:36-37 IT DECLARES “FOR WHAT WILL IT PROFIT A MAN IF HE GAINS THE WHOLE WORLD, AND LOSES HIS SOUL? OR WHAT WILL A MAN GIVE IN EXCHANGE FOR HIS SOUL? GOD HAS MADE MAN IN HIS OWN IMAGE, AND WHAT CAN YOU REPLACE FOR YOUR SOUL?” THE SPIRIT OF GOD BY SEARCHING THE DEEP THINGS OF GOD IN 1ST CORINTHIANS 2:11. IN 1ST CORINTHIANS 6:20 STATES “FOR YOU WERE BOUGHT AT A PRICE; THEREFORE, GLORIFY GOD IN YOUR BODY & IN YOUR SPIRIT, WHICH ARE GOD’S.” IN EPHESIANS 1:4-7 SAYS THAT MAN IS HOLY, BLAMELESS, PREDESTINED, ADOPTION AS SONS, AND RICHES OF HIS GRACE. WHAT DOES THE LORD CONSIDER TO BE OF WORTH? SOME SCRIPTURES ARE 1ST TIMOTHY 4:8; PROVERBS 4:7; 20:15; 31:10; 1ST CORINTHIANS 13:13 & ECCLESIASTES 7:1. HOW CAN HE FOCUS ON WHAT IS OF TOTAL WORTH? SOME SCRIPTURES ARE ACTS 14:15; 20:24; PHILIPPIANS 3:8; 4:8; PSALM 119:37; LUKE 10:42.**

**JOHN’S MINISTRY OF BAPTISM**

**JOHN’S BAPTISM OF JESUS IS PROOF-WORTHY. THE EXACT PURPOSE & SIGNIFICANCE OF THE BAPTISM IS STILL A GREAT MYSTERY. BUT WE KNOW THAT JOHN’S BAPTISM OF HIS DISCIPLES WAS A SIGN OF REPENTANCE IN MATTHEW 3:6-10; MARK 1:4-5 & LUKE 3:3-14. JOHN PROCLAIMED THAT THE KINGDOM OF GOD WAS AT HAND & TO PREPARE THE COMING OF THE LORD THROUGH FAITH IN GOD. FOR JOHN, THAT MEANT REPENTANCE, REMISSION OF SINS, AND LIVING RIGHTEOUS BEFORE GOD. SINCE JESUS WAS SINLESS IN 2ND CORINTHIANS 5:21; HEBREWS 4:15 AND 1ST PETER 2:22. WHY DID JESUS HAVE TO BE BAPTIZED FOR REPENTANCE AND FOR THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS? THE GOSPELS GIVES THE ANSWERS. FIRST, IN MATTHEW, JESUS TOLD JOHN THAT THE BAPTISM WAS “FITTING FOR US TO FULFILL ALL RIGHTEOUSNESS” IN MATTHEW 3:15. THE BAPTISM OF JESUS WAS DONE TO FULFILL GOD’S WILL IN ROMANS 1:17 & PSALM 98:2-3. THAT IS WHY JESUS WAS BAPTIZED SO THAT GOD COULD OFFER SALVATION TO ALL PEOPLE. SECOND, IN MARK, JESUS’ BAPTISM WAS NECESSARY FOR THE PREPARATION OF TEMPTATION & HIS MINISTRY. JESUS RECEIVED THE FATHER STEPHEN’S BLESSING THE HOLY GHOST IN MARK 1:9-11. MARK FOCUSED ON THE SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN JESUS & STEPHEN IN MARK 1:11. THE HEAVENS OPENED AT THE BAPTISM OF JESUS IN MARK 1:10, WHICH HOLD THE FULFILLMENT OF ISAIAH 64:1. THIRD, IN LUKE, JESUS’ BAPTISM IS NOTED IN LUKE 3:21-22. LUKE PLACES THE GENEALOGY OF JESUS AFTER HIS BAPTISM & BEFORE HIS MINISTRY BEGINS. THIS IS A PARALLEL TO MOSES IN EXODUS 6:14-27. THIS MEANS JESUS WOULD BRING SALVATION & DELIVERANCE TO THE PEOPLE, LIKE MOSES DID. JESUS HAD BEEN ANOINTED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT TO PROCLAIM THE GOOD NEWS IN ACTS 10:37-38. LUKE TRIED TO IDENTIFY JESUS WITH THE PEOPLE THAT HE WAS GOING TO DELIVER IN LUKE 2:8-20; 3:38. LUKE SHOWED THAT JESUS WAS A DIVINE REPRESENTATIVE TO GOD’S PEOPLE. IN JOHN, IT DOES NOT STATE THE BAPTISM OF JESUS.**

**JOHN’S MINISTRY OF ANGELS**

**JOHN’S MINISTRY OF ANGELS (LORDS) IS DECLARED THROUGH THE ANGEL (LORD) GABRIEL. GABRIEL IS ONE OF THE GOOD ANGELS (LORDS) OF GOD THAT CAME TO JOHN’S FATHER ZACHARIAS. ALSO, JESUS CHRIST REVEALS THE KIND OF MINISTRY JOHN HAD IN HIS LIFE. IN LUKE 20:34-36 IT DECLARES THAT “THE SONS OF THIS AGE MARRY & ARE GIVEN IN MARRIAGE. BUT THOSE WHO ARE COUNTED WORTHY TO ATTAIN THAT AGE, AND THE RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD, NEITHER MARRY NOR ARE GIVEN IN MARRIAGE, NOR CAN THEY DIE ANYMORE, FOR THEY ARE EQUAL TO THE ANGELS (LORDS) & ARE SONS OF GOD, BEING THE SONS OF THE RESURRECTION.” JOHN NEVER MARRIED SO HE HAS AN ANGELICAL MINISTRY TO ACCOMPLISH FOR 32.5 YEARS.**

**JOHN’S MINISTRY OF DEITY AS GOD**

**JOHN IS AS FULLY WOMAN & FULLY GOD. JOHN BEING FULLY WOMAN MEANS HE IS IN THE WISDOM & UNDERSTANDING OF THE LORD. JOHN DIED IN THE BEHEADING AS THE 2ND EVE AS THE WOMAN OF THE LORD TO RESTORE THE 1ST EVE BEING DECEIVED. FIRST, HE WAS BORN IN THE WOMB WITH THE HOLY GHOST IN LUKE 1:15 & HE IS BORN OF GOD, & CANNOT SIN BY HIS SEED REMAINING IN HIM. SECOND, HE PERFORMED SIGNS, WONDERS, & HEALINGS DONE BY GOD BY HIS WARNINGS TO THE PEOPLE IN LUKE 3:7-15; MATTHEW 3:3-12; MARK 1:1-8. THIRD, HIS NAME IS CONNECTED TO THE HOLY GHOST MEANING COMFORTER. FOURTH, THE 7 SONS OF SCEVA WOULD KNOW JOHN WHOM SAUL PREACHES IN ACTS 26:1-8; 19-23 BY SAUL BEING AN INSOLENT MAN IN ACTS 26:9-11 & PROVES JOHN AS THE HOLY GHOST OF GOD & THE CHRIST BY THE PLAN OF GRACE. IN JOHN’S DAY THEY ASKED HIM IF HE WAS THE MESSIAH OF FORGIVENESS, IN WHICH HE WAS NOT, BUT WAS THE MESSIAH OF REPENTANCE FOR WOMANKIND BY THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK (EL OR ELOHIM) FROM THE BRANCH OF SAUL. THE LAW BLASPHEMES BY HIM SAYING HE IS THE HOLY GHOST IN LUKE 3:1-22. FIFTH, JOHN IN LUKE 3:21-22 BAPTIZES JESUS BY THE FULLNESS OF THE HOLY GHOST IN HIS DIVINE FLESH & IS FULLY THE HOLY GHOST. IF YOU SAY THIS IS NOT TRUE WITH JOHN, THEN YOU ARE ANTICHRISTS IN 2ND JOHN 7-13. SIXTH, JOHN (2ND EVE) IS CALLED JESUS (2ND ADAM) IN GENESIS 2:23; 3:20 & 1ST CORINTHIANS 15:47. SEVENTH, JOHN AS THE HOLY GHOST IS GOD IN 1ST JOHN 5:7; HEBREWS 10:15; 1ST THESSALONIANS 4:8; EPHESIANS 4:30; 1ST CORINTHIANS 12:3; ROMANS 9:1; ACTS 1:33; 7:55; JOHN 14:26; MARK 12:36 AND MATTHEW 28:19.**

**THE LORD JOHN’S OFFICE**

**JOHN’S OFFICE AS A PROPHET**

**JOHN IS THE LAST OF THE PROPHETS AND CONSIDERED THE GREATEST OF THE PROPHETS. SINCE JOHN, THE PROPHETS WERE PREACHING AND DECLARING THE LORD THROUGH DIVINE PLANS OF CURRENT EVENTS AND TO DIRECTLY SPEAK FOR GOD. THE TITLES OF JOHN AS A (OLD) PROPHET ARE EVIDENT IN SCRIPTURE. IN JUDGES 6:8, JOHN WOULD BE CALLED PROPHET. IN 2ND KINGS 4:9, JOHN WOULD BE CALLED MAN OF GOD. IN 1ST SAMUEL 9:9; 2ND SAMUEL 24:11, JOHN WOULD BE CALLED A SEER. JOHN THE BAPTIST WAS KNOWN TO BE TRUE BY THE LIKENESS OF MOSES IN ACTS 7:37. JOHN WAS CONNECTED TO A SCHOOL WHICH WAS CALLED PROPHETIC GROUPS. JOHN AS A PROPHET WOULD BE IN TRAINING BY GOD AND UNDER THE CARE OF GOD. ALSO, JOHN WAS CONNECTED TO A GUILD OR ASSOCIATION, PROBABLY TO THE ESSENCES WHICH ENJOYS WORSHIPPING THE LORD DAILY. JOHN’S FUNCTION WOULD BE A FORTH TELLER DECLARING THE TRUTH OF GOD BY BEING A FORETELLER. JOHN WAS PROCLAIMING THE WONDERFUL WORKS OF GOD. ALSO, JOHN WOULD BE ABLE TO GIVE KNOWLEDGE OF THE FUTURE IN MORAL CALLS. JOHN WAS TO STABILIZE THE FAITH OF THE BELIEVER IN DARK TIMES. THERE ARE THREE TESTS THAT SHOW THE PROPHET AS TRUE OR FALSE. THE FIRST TEST IS THAT IT IS MORAL FOR THE WATCHMEN OF A DISCERNING CALLING. JEREMIAH FOUND OUT FALSE PROPHETS BY THEIR UNHOLY LIFE IN JEREMIAH 23:11-14. THE SECOND TEST IS DOCTRINAL AND IF HIS MESSAGE WOULD BRING THEM CLOSER TO GOD AND WOULD NOT CONTRADICT THE REVELATION OF THE LORD IN EXODUS 13:5, 10. THE THIRD TEST IS PRACTICAL PATIENCE. IN DEUTERONOMY 18:21-22 SAYS THAT THE WORD OF THE LORD ALWAYS COMES TO PASS. DEPENDING ON WHAT THE PROPHET SAYS IT TAKES PATIENCE TO UNFOLD THE CURRENT EVENTS. THIS IS HOW YOU CAN TEST A PROPHET IN HIS OFFICE.**

**WHAT DID THE BLOOD OF JOHN ACCOMPLISH AS HOLY?**

**JOHN’S BLOOD CANCELLED OUT ALL TEMPTATIONS ON WOMANKIND THROUGH THE BEHEADING IN LUKE 9:7-9. BECAUSE OF TEMPTATION, NORMALLY WOMANKIND WOULD BE ULTIMATELY CALLED A DEVIL OR HAVING A DEVIL IN LUKE 7:33. ALL TEMPTATION IS OF THE DEVIL. JOHN’S BLOOD WOULD BRING A REPENTANT HEART OR A CHANGE OF MIND IN WOMANKIND IN LUKE 3. JOHN’S BLOOD WOULD BRING WARNINGS AND JUDGMENTS ON THOSE WHO DID NOT OBEY THE LORD IN LUKE 3. JOHN’S BLOOD WOULD BE CONSIDERED AS A WITNESS AS GOD ON THE EARTH IN 1ST JOHN 5:7-8. JOHN’S BLOOD WHICH IS FAR OFF HAS MADE NIGH UNTO YOU THROUGH HIS OFFERING IN LUKE 9:9 AND ALSO HAVING MADE PEACE THROUGH THE BLOOD OF JOHN OF HIS BEHEADING BY HIS TO BRING ALL THINGS UNTO HIMSELF IN LUKE 3:1-22. JOHN’S BLOOD DESTROYED THE TEMPTATIONS OF THE DEVIL THROUGH THE PRICE OF THE BEHEADING. JOHN’S BLOOD PURGES YOUR CONSCIENCE FROM THE ALL THE WORKS OF TEMPTATIONS TO SERVE THE LORD IN LUKE 9:7-9. JOHN’S BLOOD BEING SHED INVOLVES GRACE BEING ADMINISTERED TO THOSE WHO WERE TEMPTING ALL BELIEVERS BY THE AUTHORITY OF THE DEVIL. JOHN’S BLOOD IS SANCTIFICATION BEING HOLY FROM TEMPTATIONS IN LUKE 3:1-20. JOHN’S BLOOD IS FAR BETTER THAN ENOS (ENOSH) IN GENESIS 4:26 & LUKE 3:1-20. JOHN’S BLOOD CLEANSES US FROM ALL TEMPTATIONS IN LUKE 9:7-9.**

**JOHN’S ARREST, IMPRISONMENT, BEHEADING IN THE ALONE POSITION**

**WE UNDERSTAND HOW AND WHY JOHN WAS BEHEADED BY HEROD ANTIPAS, BECAUSE OF THE MESSAGE AND EXCITEMENT THAT CAME THROUGH HIS PREACHING OF THE COMING OF THE LORD IN LUKE 3:15-18. KING HEROD AND THE OTHER RULERS WERE SUSPICIOUS OF JOHN WHO WOULD STIR UP THE CROWDS WITH FORTH TELLING CONCERNING THE COMING CHRIST OR MESSIAH. THERE WERE MESSIANIC MOVEMENTS BEFORE JOHN THAT REVOLTED AGAINST HEROD & ROME. IN MATTHEW 14:3-12 IT DECLARES “FOR HEROD HAD LAID HOLD OF JOHN AND BOUND HIM, & PUT HIM IN PRISON FOR THE SAKE OF HERODIAS, HIS BROTHER’S PHILIP’S WIFE. BY JOHN SAYING TO HIM, ‘IT IS NOT LAWFUL FOR YOU TO HAVE HER’ & ALTHOUGH HE WANTED TO PUT HIM TO DEATH, HE FEARED THE MULTITUDE, BY COUNTING HIM A PROPHET. BUT WHEN HEROD’S BIRTHDAY WAS CELEBRATED (SEPTEMBER), THE DAUGHTER OF HERODIAS DANCED BEFORE THEM & PLEASED HEROD. THEREFORE, HE PROMISED WITH AN OATH TO GIVE HER WHATEVER SHE MIGHT ASK. SO, SHE, HAVING PROMPTED BY HER MOTHER, SAID, ‘GIVE ME JOHN THE BAPTIST’S HEAD HERE ON A PLATTER.’ THE KING WAS SORRY, NEVERTHELESS, OF THE OATH & OF THOSE WHO SAT WITH HIM, HE COMMANDED IT TO BE GIVEN TO HER. SO, HE SENT & HAD JOHN BEHEADED IN PRISON. HIS HEAD WAS BROUGHT ON A PLATTER, & GIVEN TO THE GIRL, & SHE BROUGHT IT TO HER MOTHER. THE DISCIPLES CAME & TOOK AWAY THE BODY & BURIED IT, & WENT & TOLD JESUS.” WHO THE SON OF GOD IS, AND SALVATION THE BROTHER JOHN DIES IN THE BEHEADING BY ALL TEMPTATIONS? THE BLASPHEMY CONCERNED ETERNAL CONDEMNATION. JOHN WAS FORSAKEN BY YAH IN LUKE 9:9; MARK 15:34 ONLY IN DEATH BY TEMPTATIONS & NOT IN HELL OR THE GRAVE IN LUKE 9:7-9. ALSO, HEROD ANTIPAS WAS BEING CRITICIZED FOR HIS MARRIAGE WITH HERODIAS, PHILIPS BROTHER’S WIFE. JOHN’S CRITICISM OF THE MARRIAGE IS DECLARED IN MATTHEW 14:3-12. THIS DID INDEED INTERRUPT THE KING’S AUTHORITY OF MARRIAGE, WHICH GOT JOHN IN TROUBLE. IN JOSEPHUS’ DOCUMENTS IT DECLARES THAT JOHN GOT ARRESTED BECAUSE OF JOHN’S INFLUENCE OVER THE CROWDS. JOHN WAS IMPRISONED AT THE FORTRESS OF MACHAERUS, WHICH IS NEAR THE DEAD SEA ON THE EASTERN SIDE. HEROD DID NOT KILL JOHN IMMEDIATELY BECAUSE OF HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS IN MARK 6:20. ALSO HEROD WONDERED ABOUT THE PEOPLE’S REACTION IF JOHN WAS KILLED IN MARK 6:17-20. SALOME IS THE LITTLE GIRL WHICH CAUSED JOHN TO BE BEHEADED IN MARK 6:21-29. ALSO, JOHN WAS EXECUTED IN OCTOBER 29 AD BY HEROD. ALSO, JOHN WOULD BE CONSIDERED GUILTY AS CHARGED IN THE LAW & IS THE MOST RIGHTEOUS WOMAN IN THE WISDOM & UNDERSTANDING OF THE LORD BECAUSE OF THE BEHEADING. JOHN TRULY IS THE HOLY GHOST OF GOD BY SATISFYING THE FATHER STEPHEN’S ANGER BY THE BEHEADING IN EXODUS 4:14; NUMBERS 11:1, 10; 12:9; 22:22; 25:3; 32:10, 13-14; DEUTERONOMY 6:15; 7:4; 9:19; 29:24, 27-28; 31:17, 29; 32:16, 21-22. JOHN HAS LORDSHIP BY THE LORD STEPHEN WHO ADMINISTERS GRACE TO THOSE WHO INHERIT GRACE IN LUKE 3 & JOHN 10:34-36.**

**JOHN’S RESURRECTION AND ASCENSION**

**IN MATTHEW 14:1 DECLARES THAT “HEROD THE TETRARCH HEARD THE REPORT ABOUT JESUS AND SAID TO HIS SERVANTS, THIS IS JOHN THE BAPTIST, HE IS RISEN FROM THE DEAD, & THEREFORE THESE POWERS (AUTHORITIES) ARE AT WORK IN HIM.” IN MARK 6:14-16 DECLARES “NOW KING HEROD HEARD OF HIM, FOR HIS NAME HAD BECOME WELL KNOWN. AND HE SAID, JOHN THE BAPTIST IS RISEN FROM THE DEAD, AND THEREFORE THESE POWERS (AUTHORITIES) ARE AT WORK IN HIM. OTHERS SAID, IT IS ELIJAH, & OTHERS SAID, IT IS THE PROPHET, OR… ONE OF THE PROPHETS. BUT WHEN HEROD HEARD, HE SAID, THIS IS JOHN, WHOM I BEHEADED, HE HAS BEEN RAISED FROM THE DEAD!” IN LUKE 9:7-9 IT DECLARES “NOW HEROD THE TETRARCH HEARD OF ALL THAT WAS DONE BY HIM, AND HE WAS PERPLEXED, BECAUSE IT WAS SAID BY SOME THAT JOHN HAD RISEN FROM THE DEAD, AND SOME THAT ELIJAH HAD APPEARED, AND BY OTHERS THAT ONE OF THE OLD PROPHETS HAD RISEN AGAIN. HEROD, SAID, ‘JOHN I HAVE BEHEADED, BUT WHO IS THIS OF WHOM I HEAR SUCH THING?’” JOHN’S RESURRECTION IS THE FIRST & FOREMOST RESURRECTION OUTSIDE THE KINGDOM OF GOD CONCERNING GRACE. JOHN IN ELIJAH’S JEWISH LAW DID 20 DAYS AND NIGHTS ON THE EARTH BEFORE HE ASCENDED TO HEAVEN IN AROUND OCTOBER 27TH.**

**JOHN’S THRONE**

**JOHN’S THRONE IS A GREAT MYSTERY. BUT WE KNOW BASED ON SCRIPTURE THAT SAUL ACCORDING TO HIS FLESH (WHITE SKIN COLOR) WOULD RAISE UP JOHN TO SIT ON HIS THRONE. WHERE THERE IS TOTAL PERFECTION AND THE FORMER THINGS HAVE PASSED AWAY IN REVELATION 21:1-22:21. JOHN WILL BE PLACED IN HEAVEN BY GOD IN JOHN 14:1-4. JOHN FELT TOTAL BLISS AND PERFECTION THE TIME HE ENTERED HEAVEN. JOHN WILL BE SEATED ON THE OTHER SIDE OF JESUS CHRIST ON THE RIGHT HAND OF STEPHEN. THIS JOHN WILL BE WORSHIPPED AS THE “WOMAN OF THE LORD” IN RESPECTS TO THE UNDERSTANDING AND WISDOM OF THE LORD SINCE HE IS THE 3RD PERSON OF THE TRINITY. JOHN FULFILLED THE OLD TESTAMENT, NEW TESTAMENT AND THE MIDDLE TESTAMENT CONCERNING REPENTING TEMPTATIONS. JOHN’S THRONE WILL INVOLVE JESUS ON THE RIGHT SIDE OF STEPHEN & JOHN ON THE RIGHT SIDE OF STEPHEN AND STEPHEN IN THE MIDST IN THE HEAVENLY NEW JERUSALEM. IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION 4:2-3 IT DECLARES “IMMEDIATELY I WAS IN THE SPIRIT AND BEHOLD, A THRONE IN HEAVEN & ONE (JOHN) SAT ON THE THRONE. AND HE WHO SAT THERE LIKE A JASPER & SARDIUS IN APPEARANCE, THERE WAS A RAINBOW AROUND THE THRONE, IN APPEARANCE LIKE AN EMERALD.” THE LORD JOHN’S KINGDOM IS THE INSPIRED WORD OF GOD IN 2ND TIMOTHY 3:10-17.**

**THE TOP HOUSE OF THE LORD**

**6:1–38 THE BUILDING. THIS CHAPTER IS CLEARLY ARRANGED IN A SYMMETRICAL PATTERN IN WHICH THE SECOND PART IS THE MIRROR-IMAGE OF THE FIRST. THE PATTERN HAS GOD’S WORD TO SOLOMON AT ITS CENTER, EMPHASIZING ITS IMPORTANCE: A1 CHRONOLOGICAL NOTE (1); B1 DESCRIPTION OF THE BUILDING’S BASIC STRUCTURE (2–10); C GOD SPEAKS TO SOLOMON (11–13); B2 DESCRIPTION OF DECORATION AND FITTINGS (14–36); A2 CHRONOLOGICAL NOTE (37–38). HOWEVER, THIS CHAPTER DOES NOT CONTAIN EVERYTHING THE WRITER HAS TO TELL US ABOUT THE EQUIPPING OF THE TEMPLE. HE DESCRIBES ITS FURNISHINGS IN 7:13–51, AFTER GIVING AN ACCOUNT OF SOLOMON’S ROYAL PALACE. THE REASON FOR THIS RATHER SURPRISING ARRANGEMENT OF THE MATERIAL IS SUGGESTED BELOW. THE OPENING CHRONOLOGICAL NOTE DOES NOT DATE THE BEGINNING OF THE BUILDING WORK JUST IN RELATION TO SOLOMON’S REIGN BUT ALSO IN TERMS OF TIME ELAPSED SINCE THE EXODUS FROM EGYPT. THERE ARE PROBABLY TWO MAIN REASONS FOR THIS. FIRST, IT INVITES COMPARISON BETWEEN THE TWO EVENTS; IT SUGGESTS THAT THE BUILDING OF THE TEMPLE WAS AS SIGNIFICANT AN EVENT IN ISRAEL’S HISTORY AS THAT WHICH SAW THE BIRTH OF THE NATION. SECONDLY, BY PLACING THE TEMPLE PROJECT IN ITS HISTORICAL CONTEXT, IT REMINDS US THAT STEPHEN YAHWEH IS A GOD WHOSE PURPOSES ARE WORKED OUT IN HISTORY AND WHOSE PLANS ARE OFTEN LONG-TERM. THE PROMISE OF A PLACE WHICH ‘THE LORD YOUR GOD WILL CHOOSE … TO PUT HIS NAME THERE FOR HIS DWELLING’ (DT. 12:5) TOOK MANY LIFETIMES TO FIND ITS FULFILMENT. THE DESCRIPTION OF THE TEMPLE AND ITS DECORATION CONTAINS SEVERAL DIFFICULTIES FOR THE MODERN READER. THERE ARE SOME ARCHITECTURAL TERMS WHICH ARE NOT EASY TO TRANSLATE, AND MUCH OF THE DETAIL IS DIFFICULT TO VISUALIZE. IT IS A GREAT PITY THAT THE TEXT HAS NOT COME DOWN TO US COMPLETE WITH GROUND PLANS, ELEVATIONS AND ARTIST’S IMPRESSIONS! VS 2–10 DESCRIBE THE BASIC SHELL OF THE BUILDING. IT WAS RECTANGULAR AND ALIGNED ON AN EAST-WEST AXIS. THE MAIN PART OF THE BUILDING, CONSISTING OF THE HOLY PLACE (MAIN HALL; ‘NAVE’ IN THE RSV) AND THE INNER SANCTUARY (ALSO CALLED THE MOST HOLY PLACE; 16), WAS ABOUT 90 FT (27 M) LONG, 30 FT (9 M) WIDE AND 45 FT (13.5 M) HIGH. THE PORCH OR VESTIBULE (PORTICO) WAS THE SAME WIDTH AS THE REST OF THE BUILDING AND ADDED A FURTHER 15 FT (4.5 M) TO ITS LENGTH. THREE STORIES OF ROOMS WERE BUILT AROUND THE OUTSIDE (EXCLUDING THE PORCH) AND WERE HALF THE HEIGHT OF THE TEMPLE ITSELF. THESE HAD THEIR OWN ENTRANCE ON THE SOUTH SIDE AND DID NOT CONNECT WITH THE INTERIOR OF THE TEMPLE. THE PURPOSE OF THESE OUTER ROOMS IS NOT EXPLAINED, BUT THEY WERE PROBABLY FOR THE STORAGE OF VESTMENTS AND CERTAIN OFFERINGS, AND PERHAPS PROVIDED ACCOMMODATION FOR THE PRIESTS ON DUTY. LIGHT ENTERED THE TEMPLE THROUGH WINDOWS WHICH MUST HAVE BEEN SET IN THE UPPER HALF OF THE WALLS, ABOVE THE HEIGHT OF THE OUTER ROOMS. THE BUILDING WAS ROOFED WITH BEAMS AND PLANKS OF CEDAR. THE STONES FOR THE TEMPLE WERE ALL FULLY PREPARED AT THE QUARRY SO THAT NO IRON TOOLS WERE USED ON THE BUILDING SITE (7). THIS ODD DETAIL, WHICH INTERRUPTS THE DESCRIPTION OF THE OUTER ROOMS, IS PROBABLY INTENDED TO SHOW THAT THE WORK WAS DONE IN COMPLIANCE WITH A COMMANDMENT IN EX. 20:25 (CF. DT. 27:5–6). THIS ACTUALLY CONCERNS THE BUILDING OF ALTARS AND INSTRUCTS THAT ONLY UNHEWN STONES (I.E. STONES IN THEIR NATURAL STATE, AS WOULD BE USED TO MAKE A DRY-STONE WALL) MUST BE EMPLOYED. SOLOMON’S CRAFTSMEN WERE BUILDING A TEMPLE, NOT AN ALTAR, AND THEY EVIDENTLY FELT FREE TO USE CUT AND DRESSED STONE THROUGHOUT. BUT THEY WORKED IN THE SPIRIT OF THE COMMANDMENT’S PROSCRIPTION OF THE USE OF TOOLS, MAKING SURE NONE WERE USED ON THE TEMPLE SITE. INSIDE THE TEMPLE THE STONEWORK WAS COMPLETELY COVERED WITH WOODEN PANELS, CEDAR ON THE WALLS AND CEILING AND PINE ON THE FLOORS (15). THE INNER SANCTUARY MUST HAVE HAD EITHER A RAISED FLOOR OR A FALSE CEILING (OR BOTH), REDUCING ITS HEIGHT FROM 30 TO 20 CUBITS (ABOUT 30 FT/9 M) AND MAKING ITS INTERIOR A PERFECT CUBE (20). THE PANELS ON THE WALLS WERE CARVED TO PORTRAY FLOWERS AND GOURDS, AND THE WALLS, CEILING AND FLOOR OF THE WHOLE BUILDING WERE ALL OVERLAID WITH GOLD, AS WERE THE CEDAR WOOD ALTAR AND THE HUGE OLIVE WOOD CHERUBIM OF THE INNER SANCTUARY. THESE CHERUBIM PROBABLY RESEMBLED THE WINGED SPHINXES FAMILIAR FROM ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN ART. PHOENICIAN EXAMPLES PORTRAY A CREATURE WITH A HUMAN HEAD, AN ANIMAL BODY WITH FOUR LEGS, AND A PAIR OF WINGS; THEY PROBABLY PROVIDE A CLOSE ANALOGY TO THOSE PRODUCED BY SOLOMON’S PHOENICIAN CRAFTSMEN. CHERUBIM ALSO FEATURED IN A FRIEZE CARVED AROUND THE WALLS, ALONG WITH PALM TREES AND FLOWERS (29). THE LAVISH USE OF GOLD OVERLAY SOUNDS EXTRAORDINARY BUT WAS IN FACT REGULAR PRACTICE IN THE ADORNING OF ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN TEMPLES. THE MOTIFS WITH WHICH SOLOMON’S TEMPLE WAS DECORATED (THE GOURDS, OPEN FLOWERS, PALM TREES AND CHERUBIM) WERE ALSO PART OF THE COMMON REPERTOIRE OF ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN ART, AND EVEN THE BASIC GROUND PLAN OF THE BUILDING CAN BE PARALLELED BY A NUMBER OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL DISCOVERIES. SOLOMON’S TEMPLE IS UNIQUE IN PURPOSE BUT NOT IN CONCEPTION. IN ITS ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN AND ARTISTIC DECORATION, IT VERY MUCH REFLECTED THE CONVENTIONS OF THE TIME. IT IS A STRIKING EXAMPLE OF HOW ELEMENTS OF A PREVAILING CULTURE CAN BE EMPLOYED FOR THE WORSHIP AND GLORY OF GOD. THE MOTIFS USED TO DECORATE THE INTERIOR OF THE TEMPLE MAY SEEM TO INFRINGE THE SECOND OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS, WHICH PROHIBITS THE MAKING OF IMAGES ‘OF ANYTHING IN HEAVEN ABOVE OR ON THE EARTH BENEATH’ (EX. 20:4). PERHAPS THE COMMANDMENT WAS UNDERSTOOD TO PROHIBIT THE MAKING OF LIKENESSES ONLY WHEN THERE WAS A DANGER OF THEM BECOMING OBJECTS OF WORSHIP, AND THIS DANGER WAS THOUGHT TO BE ELIMINATED IN A TEMPLE DEDICATED TO THE WORSHIP OF STEPHEN YAHWEH ALONE. AFTER DESCRIBING THE INNER SANCTUARY (16, 19–21, 22B–28), THE ACCOUNT MOVES OUTWARDS AGAIN, DESCRIBING FIRST THE DOORS WHICH CLOSED OFF THE INNER SANCTUARY AND THEN THE DOORS BETWEEN THE MAIN HALL AND THE PORCH. FINALLY, WE ARE LED OUTSIDE TO THE INNER COURTYARD (36), A VAGUE TERM WHICH PRESUMABLY REFERS TO THE IMMEDIATE SURROUNDINGS OF THE BUILDING. A SECOND CHRONOLOGICAL NOTE ROUNDS OFF THE ACCOUNT, REMINDING US OF WHEN THE TEMPLE WAS BEGUN, TELLING US WHEN IT WAS FINISHED, AND GIVING US THE TOTAL DURATION OF THE PROJECT. WE HAVE NOT YET CONSIDERED GOD’S WORD TO SOLOMON WHICH LIES EMBEDDED IN THIS ACCOUNT (11–13). THIS WORD IS SAID TO CONCERN THIS TEMPLE YOU ARE BUILDING, BUT IT CONTAINS NO FURTHER REFERENCE TO THE TEMPLE. WHAT THEN IS ITS PURPOSE? THE CONDITIONAL NATURE OF GOD’S PROMISE TO DAVID, ALREADY MADE CLEAR BY DAVID IN 2:4, IS NOW RESTATED BY GOD HIMSELF IN WORDS WHICH RELATE IT TO THE TEMPLE-BUILDING PROJECT. GOD WILL LIVE AMONG THE ISRAELITES IF SOLOMON WILL WALK IN GOD’S STATUTES AND OBEY HIS COMMANDS. IN OTHER WORDS, THE BUILDING OF A TEMPLE WILL NOT GUARANTEE GOD’S PRESENCE AMONG HIS PEOPLE; GOD CANNOT BE TAMED AND KEPT IN A BOX, HOWEVER MAGNIFICENT THE BOX MIGHT BE. HIS PRESENCE DEPENDS ON OBEDIENCE AND SPECIFICALLY NOW ON THE OBEDIENCE OF SOLOMON. WHILE THESE VERSES STOP SHORT OF CRITICIZING THE BUILDING OF THE TEMPLE, THEY DO PUT THE PROJECT IN PERSPECTIVE BY STRESSING THE LARGER ISSUE OF OBEDIENCE. 7:1–12 SOLOMON’S PALACE. THE ACCOUNT OF THE TEMPLE AND ITS FURNISHINGS IS DIVIDED INTO TWO PARTS OF ALMOST EQUAL LENGTH BY THIS SHORT ACCOUNT OF SOLOMON’S PALACE BUILDINGS. AS THE TEMPLE WAS BUILT FIRST AND THEN THE PALACE (6:37–7:1; 9:10), WE MIGHT LOGICALLY EXPECT THE ACCOUNT OF THE PALACE TO FOLLOW THE DEDICATION OF THE TEMPLE IN CH. 8. BUT WE WILL SEE THAT THE WRITER HAD A PARTICULAR REASON FOR PLACING IT HERE. IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE NOTE THAT THE TEMPLE TOOK SEVEN YEARS TO BUILD (6:38) COMES THE INFORMATION THAT SOLOMON SPENT THIRTEEN YEARS BUILDING HIS PALACE (LIT. ‘HIS HOUSE’). THE HEBREW FOR ‘HIS HOUSE’ OCCURS TWICE IN 7:1, HIGHLIGHTING THE SHIFT AWAY FROM ‘THE HOUSE [TEMPLE] OF THE LORD’ (6:37). IS THERE IMPLICIT CRITICISM HERE OF THE FACT THAT SOLOMON SPENT ALMOST TWICE AS LONG ON HIS OWN HOUSE AS HE DID, BUILDING THE HOUSE OF GOD? QUITE POSSIBLY, BUT THE MAIN PURPOSE OF THIS PASSAGE SEEMS TO BE RATHER DIFFERENT. DAVID HAD ALREADY HAD A RESIDENCE BUILT IN JERUSALEM WITH MATERIALS SUPPLIED BY HIRAM OF TYRE (2 SA. 5:11), BUT SOLOMON REQUIRED SOMETHING ON A MUCH GRANDER SCALE. FIVE DISTINCT BUILDINGS ARE MENTIONED IN VS 2–8: THE PALACE OF THE FOREST OF LEBANON, ‘THE HALL OF PILLARS’ (A COLONNADE), THE THRONE HALL (ALSO KNOWN AS THE HALL OF JUSTICE, FOR THE KING’S THRONE WAS ALSO HIS JUDGMENT SEAT, STRESSING THAT IT WAS AS RULER THAT HE DISPENSED JUSTICE), SOLOMON’S PRIVATE RESIDENCE AND THE PRIVATE RESIDENCE OF THE PHARAOH’S DAUGHTER. (SINCE SHE IS THE ONLY ONE OF SOLOMON’S WIVES WHOSE RESIDENCE FORMED PART OF THIS SUITE OF BUILDINGS, THE IMPLICATION IS THAT SHE WAS HIS CHIEF WIFE. THIS IS ALSO SUGGESTED BY THE FACT THAT SHE IS MENTIONED SO OFTEN: 3:1, 9:16, 24; 11:1.) WE ARE NOT TOLD HOW THESE VARIOUS BUILDINGS RELATED TO EACH OTHER. THEY PRESUMABLY JOINED TO FORM A SINGLE COMPLEX, SINCE THEY ARE REFERRED TO COLLECTIVELY AS ‘HIS HOUSE’ IN V 1. THE PALACE COMPLEX WAS EVIDENTLY ADJACENT TO THE TEMPLE WITH A PASSAGE CONNECTING THE TWO (CF. 2 KI. 16:18). WE ARE NOT GIVEN THE DIMENSIONS OF ALL THESE BUILDINGS, BUT IT IS CLEAR THAT THE PALACE OF THE FOREST OF LEBANON ALONE WAS LARGER THAN THE TEMPLE (2). THE WHOLE PALACE COMPLEX MUST, THEREFORE, HAVE DWARFED THE TEMPLE SPECTACULARLY. IN JESUS’ DAY THE MASSIVE TEMPLE BUILT BY HEROD THE GREAT DOMINATED THE WHOLE OF JERUSALEM, BUT IN PRE-EXILIC TIMES THE ROYAL PALACE MUST HAVE BEEN THE CITY’S MOST IMPOSING BUILDING. AND THIS IS PROBABLY WHY THE WRITER DESCRIBES IT WHERE HE DOES. PHYSICALLY THE PALACE DWARFED THE TEMPLE, BUT IN HIS ACCOUNT, HE DWARFS THE DESCRIPTION OF THE PALACE BY SURROUNDING IT WITH LENGTHIER DESCRIPTIONS OF THE TEMPLE AND ITS FURNISHINGS. IN THE WRITER’S VIEW THIS RESTORES THE CORRECT PERSPECTIVE; FOR THE TEMPLE WAS THE TRUE HEART OF THE CITY AND OF THE NATION. 7:13–47 THE TEMPLE FURNISHINGS: THE WORK OF HIRAM, CRAFTSMAN IN BRONZE. A NAMESAKE OF THE KING OF TYRE, THE SON OF A PHOENICIAN FATHER AND AN ISRAELITE MOTHER, WAS BROUGHT FROM TYRE TO JERUSALEM TO MANUFACTURE THE BRONZE FURNISHINGS FOR THE TEMPLE. HIS OUTSTANDING ABILITY IS MENTIONED AT THE OUTSET AND IS AMPLY ILLUSTRATED BY THE DESCRIPTIONS OF THE OBJECTS WHICH HE MADE. AS IN THE DESCRIPTION OF THE TEMPLE ITSELF, THERE ARE SOME DETAILS WHICH ARE DIFFICULT TO FOLLOW. THE ACCOUNT OF THE WORK OF HIRAM FOR THE TEMPLE PARALLELS TO SOME EXTENT THAT OF THE WORK OF BEZALEL FOR THE TABERNACLE (EX. 36–38), AND WE ARE DOUBTLESS INTENDED TO NOTE THE BROADER PARALLEL BETWEEN THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE TABERNACLE AND THE BUILDING OF THE TEMPLE. HOWEVER, WHILE THE TABERNACLE AND ITS EQUIPMENT WERE COMMANDED IN DETAIL BY GOD (EX. 25–27, ESPECIALLY 25:9), NO SUCH CLAIM IS MADE HERE FOR THE TEMPLE OR ITS FURNISHINGS. THE PURPOSE OF THE TWO HUGE PILLARS (ABOUT 27 FT/8 M HIGH) IS NOT CLEAR. THEY DID NOT SUPPORT ANYTHING BUT WERE FREESTANDING, LOCATED IN FRONT OF THE TEMPLE PORTICO. THEY WERE TOPPED WITH ELABORATELY DECORATED, LILY-SHAPED CAPITALS. THEIR NAMES, JAKIN AND BOAZ, ARE SOMETHING OF A PUZZLE, BUT THE MOST LIKELY THEORY IS THAT THESE WERE THE OPENING WORDS OF TWO INSCRIPTIONS. ON THE BASIS OF THE VARIOUS EXPRESSIONS FOUND IN THE PSALMS IT HAS BEEN SUGGESTED THAT THE INSCRIPTIONS MAY HAVE READ ROUGHLY AS FOLLOWS: ‘STEPHEN YAHWEH WILL ESTABLISH [JAKIN] THY THRONE FOR EVER’, AND ‘IN THE STRENGTH [BOAZ] OF STEPHEN YAHWEH SHALL THE KING REJOICE.’ IF THIS IS CORRECT, THE PILLARS MAY HAVE COMMEMORATED GOD’S PROMISES CONCERNING THE DAVIDIC DYNASTY. THERE ARE HINTS LATER IN KINGS THAT ON TAKING THE THRONE A KING STOOD BY ONE OF THESE PILLARS TO PLEDGE HIMSELF TO KEEP GOD’S COVENANT LAWS (2 KI. 11:14; 23:3). HIRAM’S MOST IMPRESSIVE TECHNOLOGICAL ACHIEVEMENT WAS PERHAPS THE HUGE BRONZE BASIN SOME 15 FT (4.5 M) IN DIAMETER KNOWN AS THE SEA. IT WAS SUPPORTED ON TWELVE BRONZE BULLS ARRANGED IN FOUR GROUPS OF THREE, EACH GROUP FACING ONE OF THE CARDINAL POINTS. ACCORDING TO 2 CH. 4:6, ITS PURPOSE WAS TO HOLD WATER FOR RITUAL WASHING BY THE PRIESTS, BUT ITS SIZE AND DESIGN, AS WELL AS ITS NAME, SUGGEST IT WAS SYMBOLIC AS WELL AS FUNCTIONAL. AS GOD’S POWER AT CREATION HAD BEEN DISPLAYED BY HIS CONTAINMENT OF THE SEA, THE SYMBOL OF CHAOS (SEE THE VIVID WORD-PICTURE IN JB. 38:8–11), SO THIS GIANT BOWL SIGNIFIED HIS UPHOLDING OF THE CREATED ORDER AND HIS POWER OVER THE FORCES OF CHAOS WHICH THREATEN IT. HIRAM ALSO MADE TEN MOVABLE STANDS, DECORATED ON THE SIDES WITH LIONS, BULLS AND CHERUBIM, AND TEN REMOVABLE BASINS, WHICH STOOD ON THEM. THESE WERE ALSO FOR RITUAL ABLUTIONS, AND THE FACT THAT THEIR LOCATIONS ARE MENTIONED ALONG WITH THAT OF THE SEA (39) SUGGESTS THEY WERE USED IN CONNECTION WITH IT. VS 40–45 PROVIDE A SUMMARY OF HIRAM’S WORK, ADDING SOME LESSER ITEMS WHICH DO NOT DESERVE DETAILED DESCRIPTIONS (POTS, SHOVELS AND SPRINKLING BOWLS). V 46 GIVES A TANTALIZING HINT AT THE METHOD USED BY HIRAM TO CAST HIS PRODUCTS. THE SECTION CLOSES WITH RENEWED EMPHASIS ON THE GREATNESS OF HIS ACHIEVEMENT: THE WEIGHT OF ALL THIS BRONZE WORK WAS NEVER DETERMINED BECAUSE THERE WAS SO MUCH OF IT! 7:48–51 THE TEMPLE FURNISHINGS: ITEMS OF GOLD. THE LIST OF GOLD ITEMS WHICH SOLOMON HAD MADE FOR THE TEMPLE (48–50) IS VERY LIKE THE SUMMARY OF HIRAM’S WORK IN VS 40–45. IT IS AS THOUGH WE HAVE HERE A SIMILAR SUMMARY WITHOUT A DETAILED ACCOUNT TO PRECEDE IT. THE CRAFTSMAN IS NOT NAMED, UNLESS THE WRITER INTENDS US TO UNDERSTAND THAT SOLOMON MADE THESE ITEMS WITH HIS OWN HANDS (WHICH SEEMS UNLIKELY). SOLOMON ALSO CONTRIBUTED TO THE TEMPLE QUANTITIES OF SILVER AND GOLD WHICH HAD EARLIER BEEN DEDICATED TO IT BY DAVID. THESE WERE STORED IN THE TEMPLE TREASURIES (PERHAPS IN THE OUTER ROOMS), THOUGH THEIR INTENDED PURPOSE IS NOT CLEAR. IN JERUSALEM’S SUBSEQUENT HISTORY THESE TREASURIES WERE OFTEN THE SOURCE OF TRIBUTE FOR FOREIGN KINGS.**

**THE NET WORTH OF THE LORD’S HOUSE IN FAITHFULNESS TO THE LORD**

**IN KING SOLOMON’S KINGDOM, HE BUILT THE HOUSE OF THE FATHER STEPHEN CALLED ZION IN THE KINGDOM OF LORDSHIP THAT WILL NEVER BE DESTROYED IN 7 YEARS THAT TOOK $576,000,000,000.00 BILLION IN 100,000 GOLD TALENTS & $384,000,000,000.00 BILLION IN 1 MILLION SILVER TALENTS IN TITHING BY 10% & 100% WHICH CONCERNS $960,000,000,000,000.00 TRILLION WHICH THE FATHER STEPHEN’S BODY IS 202,000,000,000,000,000,000 YEARS OLD IN GOLD IN LEVITICUS 27:3; 1ST CHRONICLES 22:14 & ACTS 7:47-50. WHICH WITH PRECIOUS STONES AND OTHER MATERIALS THE TITHE WOULD CONCERN 1 QUADRILLION DOLLARS [15 ZERO’S BEHIND IT] FOR 115 YEARS WITH A FRUITFUL CALL [15 YEARS + 10 YEARS IN 2ND CORINTHIANS 12:1-6 & PSALMS 90:10] THAT HAPPENED IN 930BC WHICH IS 2,945 YEARS AGO. THIS WOULD THEN CONCERN THE FATHER STEPHEN’S ADDRESS CALLED THE UNIVERSAL ZION IN THE ETERNAL KINGDOM OF LORDSHIP IN ACTS 15:16-17. THIS KINGDOM OF LORDSHIP WHICH IS KNOWN AS THE FATHER STEPHEN’S ZION ON SUNDAY PENTECOST THAT HOUSES ONLY SAINTLY CHRISTIAN LORDS & SAINTLY CHRISTIAN LADIES WILL NEVER BE DESTROYED IN DANIEL 7:18. ALL OTHER KINGDOMS, EVEN THE LORDSHIP OF THE LAW WILL COME TO AN END & BE IN DESOLATION IN THE ROCK AUTHORITIES TO THE COUNTY AUTHORITIES IN ACTS 9:3-6. THE STATE AUTHORITIES TO GOVERNMENTAL AUTHORITIES IS IN ACTS 22:6-11. THE NATIONAL AUTHORITIES TO THE KINGDOM AUTHORITIES IS IN ACTS 26:13-18.**

**1:1–11:43 SOLOMON**

**1:1–2:46 SOLOMON’S MAJESTIC RULE ETERNALLY ESTABLISHED**

**1:1–10 DAVID AND ADONIJAH. HERE WE FIND DAVID IN THE WEAKNESS OF OLD AGE, UNABLE TO KEEP WARM OR TO PERFORM SEXUALLY (1–4). WAITING IN THE WINGS IS ADONIJAH, THE FOURTH OF SIX SONS BORN TO DAVID BY SIX DIFFERENT WIVES WHILE HE WAS KING IN HEBRON (2 SA. 3:2–5). DAVID’S FIRST SON, AMMON, HAD BEEN MURDERED BY THE THIRD, ABSALOM, WHO HIMSELF DIED WHILE LEADING A REBELLION AGAINST DAVID (2 SA. 13:23–29; 18:9–15). AS NO MENTION IS MADE OF DAVID’S SECOND SON, CHILEAB, HE HAD PRESUMABLY DIED TOO, LEAVING ADONIJAH AS THE ELDEST SURVIVING SON AND NATURAL HEIR TO DAVID’S THRONE. THE WRITER INTENDS TO REMIND US OF THESE CIRCUMSTANCES BY POINTING OUT THAT ADONIJAH WAS BORN NEXT AFTER ABSALOM (6). THE DESCRIPTION OF HIM AS A VERY HANDSOME MAN RECALLS DAVID’S EARLY GOOD LOOKS (1 SA. 16:12) AND FURTHER SUGGESTS THAT HERE IS DAVID’S NATURAL SUCCESSOR. ADONIJAH HAD NOT ONLY SET HIS HEART ON THE THRONE BUT HAD ENLISTED THE SUPPORT OF SOME NOTABLE MEMBERS OF DAVID’S COURT (7, 9). THE NOTE THAT HE ACQUIRED CHARIOTS AND HORSES … WITH FIFTY MEN TO RUN AHEAD OF HIM (5) RECALLS THE PREPARATIONS WHICH ABSALOM MADE BEFORE TRYING TO GRASP THE THRONE (2 SA. 15:1), JUST AS DAVID’S FAILURE TO QUESTION ADONIJAH’S ACTIONS (6) RECALLS HIS FAILURE TO NIP ABSALOM’S REBELLION IN THE BUD. DAVID’S WEAKNESS IN THIS SCENE CANNOT BE BLAMED ENTIRELY ON OLD AGE, FOR IT IS CONSISTENT WITH HIS EARLIER FAILURES TO ASSERT HIMSELF WHERE HIS SONS WERE CONCERNED (2 SA. 13–15). WITHOUT DAVID’S KNOWLEDGE, ADONIJAH ARRANGED A FEAST WITH SACRIFICES AND HAD HIMSELF PROCLAIMED KING AT EN ROGEL, A SPRING JUST TO THE SOUTH OF JERUSALEM (9; CF. VS 13, 18, 25). THIS DOES NOT MEAN THAT DAVID CEASED IMMEDIATELY TO BE KING, BUT RATHER THAT ADONIJAH WOULD HENCEFORTH RULE AS CO-REGENT. IN VIEW OF DAVID’S ADVANCED AGE, HOWEVER, THERE CAN BE NO DOUBT THAT ADONIJAH WOULD HAVE BEEN THE EFFECTIVE MONARCH. 1:11–37 NATHAN’S INTERVENTION. WE HAVE ALREADY BEEN TOLD THAT NATHAN THE PROPHET WAS NOT OF ADONIJAH’S PARTY (8), AND NOW HE EMERGES AS THE SUPPORTER OF A RIVAL CLAIMANT, SOLOMON. IT BECOMES APPARENT IN THESE VERSES THAT DAVID HAD SWORN AN OATH TO SOLOMON’S MOTHER, BATHSHEBA, THAT HER SON WOULD BE THE NEXT KING. (EITHER THAT OR NATHAN AND BATHSHEBA SET OUT TO CONVINCE DAVID THAT HE HAD SWORN SUCH AN OATH WHEN IN FACT HE HAD NOT! BUT THE FACT THAT ADONIJAH DID NOT INVITE SOLOMON TO HIS CELEBRATIONS SUGGESTS THAT HE RECOGNIZED HIM AS HAVING SOME CLAIM TO THE THRONE AND WAS MAKING A CAREFULLY TIMED PREEMPTIVE MOVE.) BATHSHEBA’S ENTRY INTO THE STORY REMINDS US OF THE LUSTFUL DAVID OF 2 SA. 11 AND THROWS THE PRESENT PICTURE OF THE IMPOTENT OLD MAN INTO SHARP RELIEF. ALTHOUGH NATHAN IS GIVEN HIS TITLE ‘THE PROPHET’ SEVERAL TIMES IN THIS CHAPTER HE BROUGHT NO ‘WORD OF THE LORD’ TO THE FAILING KING. INSTEAD ALL IS DONE BY INTRIGUE AND CLEVER PERSUASION. FIRST, HAVING BEEN COACHED BY NATHAN, BATHSHEBA REMINDS THE KING OF HIS OATH AND INFORMS HIM OF ADONIJAH’S ACCESSION FEAST. THEN NATHAN MAKES HIS OWN CAREFULLY TIMED ENTRY (WHILE SHE WAS STILL SPEAKING WITH THE KING) AND BROACHES THE ISSUE FROM A DIFFERENT ANGLE. SPEAKING LESS CONFRONTATIONALLY THAN BATHSHEBA, NATHAN PRETENDS TO THINK THAT DAVID MIGHT HAVE SANCTIONED ADONIJAH’S CELEBRATION AND POLITELY POINTS OUT THAT CERTAIN PEOPLE, INCLUDING HIMSELF, HAVE NOT BEEN INVITED. DAVID BELATEDLY STIRS HIMSELF AND SEIZES CONTROL OF EVENTS, SWEARING THAT HIS FORMER OATH WILL BE FULFILLED AT ONCE (30). CALLING FOR SOLOMON’S OTHER MAIN SUPPORTERS, ZADOK THE PRIEST AND BENAIAH, HE SWIFTLY GIVES INSTRUCTIONS FOR SOLOMON’S IMMEDIATE ANOINTING AT GIHON, A SPRING OUTSIDE THE EASTERN WALL OF JERUSALEM. 1:38–53 SOLOMON BECOMES KING. ACCOMPANIED BY HIS CHIEF SUPPORTERS AND DAVID’S BODYGUARD (THE KERETHITES AND THE PELETHITES), SOLOMON GOES TO GIHON, SIGNIFICANTLY RIDING ON KING DAVID’S MULE (38). DAVID DOES NOT ATTEND, PERHAPS BECAUSE HE WAS TOO FRAIL TO TRAVEL EVEN THE SHORT DISTANCE TO THE FOOT OF THE EASTERN SLOPE. THE LARGE CROWD, ASSEMBLED AT SHORT NOTICE, INDICATES THAT SOLOMON WAS A POPULAR CANDIDATE. ADONIJAH HEARS THE NOISE OF THIS CROWD AT EN ROGEL, AND A FULL REPORT OF EVENTS SOON REACHES HIM; REALIZING THAT THE GAME WAS UP, HIS SUPPORTERS QUIETLY DISPERSE. ADONIJAH HIMSELF EXPECTS THAT SOLOMON (WHOM HE REFERS TO AS ‘KING SOLOMON’) WOULD WANT TO KILL HIM, SO HE SEEKS REFUGE BY TAKING HOLD OF THE HORNS OF THE ALTAR. ISRAELITE ALTARS (AS ILLUSTRATED BY ARCHAEOLOGICAL FINDS) HAD POINTED PROJECTIONS WHICH STOOD UP FROM THE FOUR CORNERS OF THE SQUARE TOP. SEIZING TWO OF THESE ‘HORNS’ GAVE A PERSON SANCTUARY. THE ALTAR IN QUESTION PRESUMABLY STOOD IN THE TENT WHICH DAVID HAD SET UP TO HOUSE THE ‘ARK OF THE LORD’ (2 SA. 6:17; CF. 1 KI. 2:28). UNTIL THIS POINT SOLOMON HAS BEEN A SHADOWY AND PASSIVE FIGURE (HE IS ‘MADE KING’, ‘CAUSED TO RIDE’ ETC.), BUT NOW HE ENTERS THE STORY AS A CHARACTER IN HIS OWN RIGHT. HE ACTS DECISIVELY BUT WITH SHREWDNESS AND CAUTION, PROMISING TO SPARE ADONIJAH’S LIFE SO LONG AS HE REMAINS LOYAL. ADONIJAH HUMBLY ACKNOWLEDGES HIS YOUNGER BROTHER AS THE NEW KING (53), BUT THERE IS NO REAL RECONCILIATION BETWEEN THE TWO MEN. WE ARE LEFT WITH THE IMPRESSION THAT MATTERS ARE NOT YET SETTLED. IN THE FINAL THREE VERSES OF THE CHAPTER, SOLOMON IS REFERRED TO FOUR TIMES AS KING SOLOMON (TWICE IN REPORTED SPEECH AND TWICE BY THE NARRATOR HIMSELF); ADONIJAH, ON THE OTHER HAND, HAS BEEN REFERRED TO ONLY ONCE AS KING, AND THAT WAS IN THE REPORTED ACCLAMATION OF HIS SUPPORTERS (25). THUS, THE CHAPTER ENDS WITH SOLOMON ANOINTED KING AND DAVID SATISFIED THAT STEPHEN YAHWEH’S WILL HAS BEEN DONE (48). BUT GOD’S WILL, HAD PREVIOUSLY BEEN NEGLECTED; DAVID IS SPURRED INTO ACTION ONLY BY ADONIJAH’S BID FOR POWER AND NATHAN’S CONCERN FOR THE SAFETY OF SOLOMON’S SUPPORTERS, INCLUDING HIMSELF. AS IN THE STORY OF JOSEPH, GOD’S ACTIVITY REMAINS HIDDEN AMONG THE PLOTS AND AMBITIONS OF HUMAN BEINGS. 2:1–12 THE DEATH OF DAVID. WE ARE NOT TOLD HOW LONG SOLOMON RULED AS CO-REGENT BEFORE DAVID DIED. THE STORY MOVES STRAIGHT TO THE EVE OF THE OLD KING’S DEATH. FIRST, DAVID GIVES SOLOMON ADVICE ON MATTERS SPIRITUAL. HE IS TO WALK IN STEPHEN YAHWEH’S WAYS AND KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS. STEPHEN YAHWEH’S PROMISE OF AN EVERLASTING DYNASTY (2 SA. 7) IS CLEARLY UNDERSTOOD BY DAVID TO BE CONDITIONAL ON THE FAITHFULNESS OF HIS DESCENDANTS (4), A FACT WHICH GAINS SIGNIFICANCE AS THE STORY UNFOLDS. SECONDLY, DAVID INSTRUCTS SOLOMON TO DEAL WITH CERTAIN ITEMS OF UNFINISHED BUSINESS. MURDERS COMMITTED BY JOAB AGAINST DAVID’S WILL ARE TO BE AVENGED; THE SONS OF BARZILLAI ARE TO BE REWARDED FOR THEIR LOYALTY; AND SHIMEI IS TO BE PUNISHED FOR CURSING DAVID AT THE TIME OF ABSALOM’S REBELLION. NO SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS ARE GIVEN CONCERNING JOAB AND SHIMEI; DAVID SIMPLY TELLS SOLOMON TO ACT IN ACCORDANCE WITH HIS WISDOM (6, 9). THE DEATHBED SPEECH WHICH BEGINS BRIGHT WITH SPIRITUAL COUNSEL ENDS DARK WITH MENACE. IT IS FOLLOWED BY A FORMAL NOTICE OF DAVID’S DEATH AND BURIAL, OF A KIND WHICH OCCURS REGULARLY THROUGHOUT THE BOOKS OF KINGS.**

**THE EMPIRE WHICH KING DAVID BEQUEATHED TO HIS SON SOLOMON.**

**2:13–25 THE DEATH OF ADONIJAH. ADONIJAH APPROACHES BATHSHEBA IN HER ROLE AS QUEEN-MOTHER, AN HONORED POSITION AT THE ROYAL COURT, TO REQUEST THE GIRL ABISHAG AS HIS WIFE. ABISHAG’S STATUS HAD BEEN THAT OF ROYAL CONCUBINE (EVEN THOUGH DAVID HAD BEEN INCAPABLE OF SEXUAL RELATIONS), AND FOR A MAN TO TAKE SUCH A CONCUBINE FOR HIMSELF COULD BE TANTAMOUNT TO A BID FOR ROYAL POWER (CF. 2 SA. 3:6–8; 16:21–22). WHEN THE REQUEST IS RELAYED TO SOLOMON THE IMPLICATION IS NOT LOST ON HIM; HE INTERPRETS IT AS THE OPENING GAMBIT IN A NEW MOVE TO SEIZE THE THRONE (22). UNLIKE HIS FATHER, HE IS NOT SLOW TO TAKE ACTION: ADONIJAH IS KILLED THE SAME DAY. 2:26–27 ABIATHAR BANISHED. SOLOMON MOVES WITH SWIFT EFFICIENCY TO MOP UP ALL OTHER TRACES OF OPPOSITION TO HIS REIGN. FOR GIVING SUPPORT TO ADONIJAH, ABIATHAR IS EXPELLED FROM HIS ROLE AS PRIEST AND BANISHED TO AN INTERNAL EXILE ON HIS ESTATE AT ANATHOTH, SOME 3 MILES (5 KM) NORTH OF JERUSALEM. THE WRITER SEES HIS RUSTICATION FULFILLING THE EARLIER WORDS OF AN ANONYMOUS PROPHET CONCERNING THE LINE OF ELI (1 SA. 2:27–36). ABIATHAR’S PLACE IS TAKEN BY ZADOK (35). ANATHOTH WAS A TOWN ALLOTTED TO THE LEVITES AND WAS LATER THE HOME OF JEREMIAH (JE. 1:1). 2:28–35 THE DEATH OF JOAB. ON HEARING OF ADONIJAH’S DEATH, JOAB REALIZES HIS OWN DANGER AND FLEES TO THE TENT OF THE LORD TO SEEK SANCTUARY AT THE HORNS OF THE ALTAR. HOWEVER, IT IS NOT HIS SUPPORT FOR ADONIJAH WHICH ENDANGERS HIS LIFE SO MUCH AS DAVID’S DEATHBED INSTRUCTIONS TO SOLOMON. WHILE BENAIAH HAS SOME SCRUPLES ABOUT KILLING JOAB AT THE ALTAR, SOLOMON HAS NONE ABOUT ORDERING BENAIAH TO DO IT. HE APPEARS TO CONSIDER THAT THE NEED TO AVENGE JOAB’S VICTIMS AND THE WRONG DONE TO DAVID OVERRIDES THE LAW OF SANCTUARY. HE DECLARES THAT BY HAVING JOAB KILLED HE IS ENACTING DIVINE RETRIBUTION AND THAT STEPHEN YAHWEH’S BLESSING OF PEACE WILL BE UPON THE HOUSE OF DAVID FOR EVER (33). THUS, BENAIAH KILLS JOAB AND TAKES HIS PLACE AS COMMANDER OF THE ARMY. THE WRITER PASSES NO COMMENT ON ANY OF THIS AND WE ARE LEFT WONDERING WHETHER HE APPROVED OF SOLOMON’S ACTIONS OR NOT. AT LEAST HE KNEW THAT SOLOMON’S PREDICTION OF EVERLASTING PEACE WOULD NOT BE FULFILLED! 2:36–46 THE DEATH OF SHIMEI. AGAINST SHIMEI SOLOMON TAKES THE RELATIVELY LENIENT MEASURE OF CONFINING HIM TO JERUSALEM, FORBIDDING HIM TO LEAVE ON PAIN OF DEATH. WAS THIS ALL SOLOMON INTENDED TO DO, OR DID HE HOPE FROM THE START THAT THE CONDITION WOULD EVENTUALLY PROVIDE A REASON TO PUT SHIMEI TO DEATH? PROBABLY THE LATTER, FOR DAVID’S INSTRUCTION HAD BEEN THAT SHIMEI BE BROUGHT DOWN TO THE GRAVE IN BLOOD (9). WHEN AFTER THREE YEARS SHIMEI BREAKS THE CONDITION, SOLOMON REVEALS THAT HE REGARDS HIS DEATH AS DIVINE RETRIBUTION FOR THE WRONG DONE TO DAVID (44). ONCE AGAIN SOLOMON PREDICTS THAT HIS REIGN WILL BE BLESSED AND (INCORRECTLY) THAT DAVID’S DYNASTY WILL BE ESTABLISHED FOR EVER (45). DAVID’S UNFINISHED BUSINESS HAVING BEEN DEALT WITH AND ALL OPPOSITION SQUASHED, SOLOMON EMERGES AS A PRAGMATIC, SHREWD AND DECISIVE MONARCH, CONFIDENT THAT HE IS ENACTING GOD’S JUDGMENTS AND THAT HE WILL RECEIVE GOD’S BLESSING. IT IS NOT A PARTICULARLY ATTRACTIVE PICTURE, BUT WE ARE LEFT IN NO DOUBT THAT THE KINGDOM WAS NOW FIRMLY ESTABLISHED IN SOLOMON’S HANDS (46).**

**3:1–4:34 GREATNESS AND WISDOM**

**3:1 ALLIANCE WITH EGYPT. IN ORDER TO EMPHASIZE THAT SOLOMON WAS ALSO ESTABLISHING HIMSELF IN THE ARENA OF INTERNATIONAL POLITICS, THE WRITER NEXT TELLS OF HIS ALLIANCE WITH EGYPT, SEALED BY HIS MARRIAGE TO THE DAUGHTER OF PHARAOH (PROBABLY SIAMUN OF EGYPT’S TWENTY-FIRST DYNASTY; SEE THE INTRODUCTION). A MARRIAGE ALLIANCE WITH THE ERSTWHILE SUPERPOWER OF THE NEAR EAST MUST HAVE ENHANCED SOLOMON’S STANDING CONSIDERABLY. THERE IS, HOWEVER, ANOTHER SIDE TO THIS POLITICAL MOVE; FOR HIS MARRIAGE TO A NON-ISRAELITE WAS IN BREACH OF DT. 7:3. IT ALSO POINTS FORWARD TO HIS DUPLICATION OF THIS SIN IN 1 KI. 11:1–6. 3:2–15 SOLOMON AT GIBEON. THIS IS THE FIRST OF FOUR OCCASIONS WHEN STEPHEN YAHWEH SPEAKS TO SOLOMON (CF. 6:11–13; 9:1–9; 11:11–13). THE WRITER FEELS OBLIGED TO EXPLAIN WHY THE EVENT OCCURRED AT THE MOST IMPORTANT HIGH PLACE, GIBEON: KING AND PEOPLE ALL WORSHIPPED THERE BECAUSE THE TEMPLE HAD NOT YET BEEN BUILT (2). TO CLEAR SOLOMON OF ANY SUSPICION OF FAILURE, THE WRITER ALSO STATES THAT SOLOMON LOVED STEPHEN YAHWEH AND WALKED IN THE STATUTES OF DAVID (3). IT IS STATED TWICE THAT GOD SPOKE TO SOLOMON IN A DREAM (5, 15), A FORM OF COMMUNICATION WHICH IS TREATED WITH DEEP SUSPICION IN SOME PARTS OF SCRIPTURE (DT. 13:1–5; JE. 23:25–32), BUT WITH GREAT RESPECT IN OTHERS (E.G. THE STORIES OF JOSEPH AND DANIEL). STEPHEN YAHWEH’S FIRST WORDS TO SOLOMON SIMPLY INVITED HIM TO MAKE A REQUEST. WE MIGHT EXPECT THAT SOLOMON, FACED WITH SUCH AN OFFER FROM THE LORD OF ALL CREATION, WOULD HAVE NEEDED SOME TIME TO THINK, BUT HIS REPLY SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN IMMEDIATE. THIS, AT LEAST, IS IN KEEPING WITH THE DECISIVE MANNER WITH WHICH SOLOMON HAS ACTED SO FAR, BUT HIS REQUEST ITSELF IS SOMEWHAT SURPRISING. WE WOULD NOT HAVE GUESSED THAT THE SELF-CONFIDENT SOLOMON, ALREADY PRAISED BY DAVID FOR HIS WISDOM (2:6, 9), LACKED A DISCERNING HEART. PERHAPS HE HAD REALIZED THAT MORE THAN MERE SHREWDNESS AND CUNNING WAS NECESSARY FOR THE JUST LEADERSHIP OF GOD’S PEOPLE. FACED WITH THAT TASK HE FEELS HE IS ONLY A LITTLE CHILD. HE IS ALSO VERY CONSCIOUS THAT THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL ARE GOD’S PEOPLE AND THAT HE IS GOD’S SERVANT (THE TERMS YOUR PEOPLE AND YOUR SERVANT ARE BOTH USED THREE TIMES IN THE HEBREW OF VS 7–9). SOLOMON THEREFORE ASKS FOR AN UNDERSTANDING MIND WITH WHICH TO RULE THE PEOPLE. THE HEBREW VERB USED FOR THIS ACTIVITY CARRIES THE IDEAS OF JUDGING AND JUSTICE. THIS IS IN KEEPING WITH THE FACT THAT IN ISRAEL THE KING HIMSELF WAS THE FINAL COURT OF APPEAL (2 SA. 14:4–17; 15:2; 1 KI. 3:16–28) AND WAS PERSONALLY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE PROMOTION OF JUSTICE. HENCE IN PS. 72:1–4 THE PSALMIST PRAYS: ‘ENDOW THE KING WITH YOUR JUSTICE, O GOD, THE ROYAL SON WITH YOUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. HE WILL JUDGE YOUR PEOPLE IN RIGHTEOUSNESS, YOUR AFFLICTED ONES WITH JUSTICE … HE WILL DEFEND THE AFFLICTED AMONG THE PEOPLE AND SAVE THE CHILDREN OF THE NEEDY; HE WILL CRUSH THE OPPRESSOR.’ THE ABILITY TO JUDGE WITH RIGHTEOUSNESS AND DEFEND THE POOR IS ALSO AN IMPORTANT PART OF ISAIAH’S PICTURE OF THE IDEAL KING WHO IS TO COME (IS. 11:3–5). THESE SAME QUALITIES SHOULD PROVIDE OUR AGENDA WHENEVER WE PRAY FOR ‘KINGS AND ALL THOSE IN AUTHORITY’ (1 TIM. 2:2). GOD COMMENDS SOLOMON’S SENSE OF PRIORITIES AND BESTOWS ON HIM WISDOM FAR BEYOND THE ORDINARY. HE PROMISES HIM, IN ADDITION, THOSE THINGS WHICH HE COULD HAVE ASKED FOR BUT DID NOT: RICHES, HONOR AND (IF HE WOULD CONTINUE TO WALK IN GOD’S WAYS) LONG LIFE. ON WAKING SOLOMON RETURNS AT ONCE TO JERUSALEM TO CELEBRATE THE MOMENTOUS EVENT WITH SACRIFICES AND A FEAST BEFORE THE ARK OF THE COVENANT. THERE WERE CLEARLY SOME THINGS FOR WHICH THE HIGH PLACES, EVEN THE MOST IMPORTANT HIGH PLACE AT GIBEON, WERE NOT ADEQUATE. 3:16–28 WISDOM DEMONSTRATED. SOLOMON’S NEW GIFT IS IMMEDIATELY DEMONSTRATED IN THE WELL-KNOWN STORY OF THE TWO PROSTITUTES ARGUING OVER A BABY. SOLOMON PROPOSES A SIMPLE SOLUTION: THE CHILD IS TO BE SLICED IN HALF SO THAT BOTH WOMEN COULD SHARE IT. THE RULING IS SO SHOCKING IN ITS BRUTALITY THAT IT SOUNDS LIKE THE CALLOUS RESPONSE OF A JUDGE WEARIED BEYOND ENDURANCE BY THE CLAIMS AND COUNTER-CLAIMS OF THE TWO WOMEN. INDEED, THE NARRATIVE IS OPEN TO THAT INTERPRETATION. HOWEVER, THE VERY DIFFERENT REACTIONS OF THE WOMEN ALLOW SOLOMON TO DECIDE WHICH WAS THE REAL MOTHER OF THE LIVING CHILD. ITS LIFE IS SPARED, AND SOLOMON’S REPUTATION IS MADE. THE PEOPLE ARE IN NO DOUBT THAT HE IS EQUIPPED WITH WISDOM FROM GOD FOR THE DISPENSING OF JUSTICE. 4:1–34 INTERNAL ARRANGEMENTS OF THE KINGDOM. THE FIRST NINETEEN VERSES SEEM AT FIRST SIGHT TO BE A RATHER TEDIOUS LISTING OF SOLOMON’S COURT OFFICIALS. BUT THE PASSAGE REVEALS SOME INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE KINGDOM. FIRST, WE SHOULD NOTE THAT THE PRIESTS ARE INCLUDED AMONG SOLOMON’S CHIEF OFFICIALS (2–5). WE ARE REMINDED THAT DAVID HAD BROUGHT THE CULTIC RELIGION OF THE LAND FIRMLY UNDER ROYAL CONTROL WHEN HE MADE JERUSALEM THE NEW CAPITAL OF THE KINGDOM. (IT IS SURPRISING TO FIND ABIATHAR INCLUDED IN THE LIST IN VIEW OF HIS EXPULSION IN 2:26–27; PERHAPS HE WAS NOT EXPELLED SO EARLY IN SOLOMON’S REIGN AS THE POSITION OF THAT NOTE MIGHT SUGGEST.) SECONDLY, THE LIST OF TWELVE OFFICERS (7–19) REVEALS A SIGNIFICANT ADMINISTRATIVE REFORM. MANY OF THE TWELVE GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRICTS FOR WHICH THEY ARE RESPONSIBLE DO NOT CORRESPOND TO THE OLD TRIBAL TERRITORIES. PARTS OF THE COUNTRY HAD BEEN DIVIDED UP IN FRESH WAYS WHICH IGNORED TRADITIONAL TRIBAL BOUNDARIES. IT IS HARD TO IMAGINE SUCH A MOVE BEING WARMLY WELCOMED. BUT EVEN MORE IMPORTANT IS THE FACT THAT THE DISTRICTS ADMINISTERED BY THESE TWELVE OFFICERS DID NOT INCLUDE THE TERRITORY OF JUDAH. (JUDAH HAD AN OFFICER OF ITS OWN IF THE END OF V 19 IS READ AS IN THE RSV, ‘AND THERE WAS ONE OFFICER IN THE LAND OF JUDAH’.) THIS ALERTS US TO THE FACT THAT THE TERM ALL ISRAEL IS USED IN TWO DIFFERENT WAYS IN THIS CHAPTER. WHEN V 1 TELLS US THAT SOLOMON RULED OVER ALL ISRAEL IT CLEARLY MEANS THE WHOLE KINGDOM; BUT WHEN V 7 SAYS THAT SOLOMON HAD TWELVE DISTRICT GOVERNORS OVER ALL ISRAEL IT MEANS ISRAEL (THE NORTHERN TRIBES) AS DISTINCT FROM JUDAH. IN FACT, JUDAH AND ISRAEL ARE REFERRED TO AS SEPARATE ENTITIES IN V 20. IT IS THEREFORE CLEAR THAT JUDAH AND ISRAEL CONTINUED TO BE ADMINISTERED SEPARATELY, AS THEY HAD BEEN UNDER DAVID (2 SA. 24:1, 9).**

**SOLOMON’S 12 ADMINISTRATIVE DISTRICTS AS DESCRIBED IN 1 KINGS 4:7–19.**

**THERE IS, HOWEVER, AN EVEN MORE IMPORTANT FACT TO BE DEDUCED FROM THE LIST OF OFFICIALS. THEIR TASK WAS TO ADMINISTER THE COLLECTION OF TAXES IN KIND TO SUPPLY THE NEEDS OF THE ROYAL HOUSEHOLD. EACH OF THE TWELVE GOVERNORS WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR SUPPLYING THE COURT FOR ONE MONTH OF THE YEAR (7). THIS MEANS THAT JUDAH HAD NO ROLE IN THE TAXATION SYSTEM; THE BURDEN FELL ENTIRELY ON ISRAEL. THE DESCRIPTION OF THE COURT’S ASTONISHING DAILY CONSUMPTION IN VS 22–23 GIVES US SOME IDEA OF HOW GREAT THAT BURDEN MUST HAVE BEEN. NEVERTHELESS, ALL ISRAEL AND JUDAH ATE, THEY DRANK AND THEY WERE HAPPY (20). THE REALM WAS SECURE, THANKS TO AN ARMY ENHANCED WITH A MASSIVE CONTINGENT OF CHARIOTS (25–26). WITH SUCH MILITARY STRENGTH SOLOMON SHOULD HAVE HAD NO DIFFICULTY HOLDING TOGETHER THE EMPIRE WHICH DAVID HAD CREATED, STRETCHING FROM NORTH-WEST MESOPOTAMIA TO THE SOUTHERN COASTAL PLAIN (21, 24). HOWEVER, THIS PICTURE IS MODIFIED SOMEWHAT IN LATER CHAPTERS. THE CHAPTER ENDS BY PRAISING SOLOMON’S WISDOM, STRESSING, WITH THE AID OF COMPARISONS, HIS EXTRAORDINARY DEPTH OF UNDERSTANDING AND BREADTH OF KNOWLEDGE. FOR THE WRITER THIS IS NOT A CHANGE OF SUBJECT; THE WEALTH, STRENGTH, PROSPERITY AND GREATNESS WHICH WERE DESCRIBED IN THE PRECEDING VERSES ARE ALL TO BE SEEN AS MANIFESTATIONS OF SOLOMON’S WISDOM. (WE WILL FIND THE SAME LINKAGE IN 10:14–29.) AND YET THERE IS A TENSION IN THIS CHAPTER. FOR WHEN WE READ IT IN THE LIGHT OF LATER EVENTS IT IS HARD TO AVOID THE CONCLUSION THAT THE EXTRAVAGANCE OF SOLOMON’S COURT, AND THE BURDEN WHICH IT PLACED ON THE NORTHERN TRIBES, WERE THE SEEDS OF THAT DISCONTENT WHICH EVENTUALLY SPLIT THE KINGDOM.**

**5:1–18 PREPARATIONS FOR TEMPLE-BUILDING OF THE LORD**

**THE HEART OF THE ACCOUNT OF SOLOMON’S REIGN IS THE LONG SECTION (6:1–9:9) DEVOTED PRIMARILY TO THE BUILDING OF THE TEMPLE IN JERUSALEM. THIS IS FRAMED BY TWO NOTICES CONCERNING SOLOMON’S DEALINGS WITH HIRAM KING OF TYRE (5:1–18; 9:10–14). 5:1–12 SOLOMON AND HIRAM. HIRAM KING OF TYRE HAD EARLIER SUPPLIED DAVID WITH TIMBER, CARPENTERS AND STONEMASONS TO BUILD HIS RESIDENCE IN JERUSALEM (2 SA. 5:11). ON HEARING OF SOLOMON’S ACCESSION, HIRAM SENT A FORMAL EMBASSY TO ENSURE THAT WARM DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS CONTINUED BETWEEN THE TWO ROYAL HOUSES. SOLOMON TOOK THE OPPORTUNITY TO NEGOTIATE HIRAM’S HELP WITH ANOTHER BUILDING PROJECT. THE TIME HAD COME TO TAKE UP HIS GOD GIVEN TASK OF BUILDING A TEMPLE IN JERUSALEM (4–5). ALTHOUGH HE IS STYLED SIMPLY KING OF TYRE, HIRAM EVIDENTLY RULED OVER A LARGE PART OF THE PHOENICIAN COAST AND THE FORESTED MOUNTAINS OF LEBANON; MEN FROM SIDON AND BYBLOS (GEBAL) WERE AMONG THE WORKERS HE SUPPLIED (6, 18). IN RETURN FOR THE TIMBER AND CRAFTSMEN SOLOMON UNDERTOOK TO SUPPLY HIRAM’S COURT WITH GRAIN AND OLIVE OIL. THE ARRANGEMENT WAS EMBODIED IN A TREATY (12). THE AMOUNT OF GRAIN SUPPLIED EACH YEAR TO HIRAM’S COURT (11) WAS NOT MUCH LESS THAN THE AMOUNT CONSUMED ANNUALLY BY SOLOMON’S. IN OTHER WORDS, THE COMMITMENT MUST HAVE VIRTUALLY DOUBLED THE GRAIN TAX WHICH THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL HAD TO PAY. 5:13–18 SOLOMON’S LABOR FORCE. HAVING EXPLAINED HOW SOLOMON SECURED THE RAW MATERIALS FOR THE TEMPLE, THE WRITER TURNS TO THE RAISING OF THE LABOR FORCE. SOLOMON CONSCRIPTED LABORERS FROM ALL ISRAEL, TOTALING 30,000 MEN (13). IT IS NOT CLEAR WHICH OF ITS TWO MEANINGS ALL ISRAEL HAS IN THIS VERSE. THESE WORKERS HAD TO SPEND EVERY THIRD MONTH IN LEBANON; IN OTHER WORDS, THEY WERE ABSENT FROM THEIR FARMS FOR A THIRD OF EACH YEAR. IN ADDITION, 150,000 PEOPLE WERE EMPLOYED IN THE HILL COUNTRY AT HOME, QUARRYING, CUTTING AND TRANSPORTING STONE. THE WHOLE PROJECT TOOK SEVEN YEARS TO COMPLETE (6:38). THE WRITER DOUBTLESS INTENDED TO IMPRESS HIS READERS WITH THE GRAND SCALE OF SOLOMON’S PREPARATIONS, BUT FOR THE MODERN READER THE ACCOUNT CREATES A CERTAIN TENSION WHICH THE NARRATOR MAY NOT HAVE INTENDED. ON THE ONE HAND, WE CANNOT FAIL TO BE IMPRESSED THAT SOLOMON WAS ABLE TO COMMAND SUCH A MASSIVE WORKFORCE AND RAISE THE TAXES TO PAY FOR PHOENICIAN HELP. ON THE OTHER HAND, NEITHER CAN WE ESCAPE THE FACT THAT THE COST IN HUMAN LABOR AND THE PRODUCE OF THE LAND MUST HAVE IMPOSED A CRUSHING BURDEN ON THE PEOPLE.**

**6:1–7:51 BUILDING THE TEMPLE OF THE LORD**

**6:1–38 THE BUILDING. THIS CHAPTER IS CLEARLY ARRANGED IN A SYMMETRICAL PATTERN IN WHICH THE SECOND PART IS THE MIRROR-IMAGE OF THE FIRST. THE PATTERN HAS GOD’S WORD TO SOLOMON AT ITS CENTER, EMPHASIZING ITS IMPORTANCE: A1 CHRONOLOGICAL NOTE (1); B1 DESCRIPTION OF THE BUILDING’S BASIC STRUCTURE (2–10); C GOD SPEAKS TO SOLOMON (11–13); B2 DESCRIPTION OF DECORATION AND FITTINGS (14–36); A2 CHRONOLOGICAL NOTE (37–38). HOWEVER, THIS CHAPTER DOES NOT CONTAIN EVERYTHING THE WRITER HAS TO TELL US ABOUT THE EQUIPPING OF THE TEMPLE. HE DESCRIBES ITS FURNISHINGS IN 7:13–51, AFTER GIVING AN ACCOUNT OF SOLOMON’S ROYAL PALACE. THE REASON FOR THIS RATHER SURPRISING ARRANGEMENT OF THE MATERIAL IS SUGGESTED BELOW. THE OPENING CHRONOLOGICAL NOTE DOES NOT DATE THE BEGINNING OF THE BUILDING WORK JUST IN RELATION TO SOLOMON’S REIGN BUT ALSO IN TERMS OF TIME ELAPSED SINCE THE EXODUS FROM EGYPT. THERE ARE PROBABLY TWO MAIN REASONS FOR THIS. FIRST, IT INVITES COMPARISON BETWEEN THE TWO EVENTS; IT SUGGESTS THAT THE BUILDING OF THE TEMPLE WAS AS SIGNIFICANT AN EVENT IN ISRAEL’S HISTORY AS THAT WHICH SAW THE BIRTH OF THE NATION. SECONDLY, BY PLACING THE TEMPLE PROJECT IN ITS HISTORICAL CONTEXT, IT REMINDS US THAT STEPHEN YAHWEH IS A GOD WHOSE PURPOSES ARE WORKED OUT IN HISTORY AND WHOSE PLANS ARE OFTEN LONG-TERM. THE PROMISE OF A PLACE WHICH ‘THE LORD YOUR GOD WILL CHOOSE … TO PUT HIS NAME THERE FOR HIS DWELLING’ (DT. 12:5) TOOK MANY LIFETIMES TO FIND ITS FULFILMENT. THE DESCRIPTION OF THE TEMPLE AND ITS DECORATION CONTAINS SEVERAL DIFFICULTIES FOR THE MODERN READER. THERE ARE SOME ARCHITECTURAL TERMS WHICH ARE NOT EASY TO TRANSLATE, AND MUCH OF THE DETAIL IS DIFFICULT TO VISUALIZE. IT IS A GREAT PITY THAT THE TEXT HAS NOT COME DOWN TO US COMPLETE WITH GROUND PLANS, ELEVATIONS AND ARTIST’S IMPRESSIONS! VS 2–10 DESCRIBE THE BASIC SHELL OF THE BUILDING. IT WAS RECTANGULAR AND ALIGNED ON AN EAST-WEST AXIS. THE MAIN PART OF THE BUILDING, CONSISTING OF THE HOLY PLACE (MAIN HALL; ‘NAVE’ IN THE RSV) AND THE INNER SANCTUARY (ALSO CALLED THE MOST HOLY PLACE; 16), WAS ABOUT 90 FT (27 M) LONG, 30 FT (9 M) WIDE AND 45 FT (13.5 M) HIGH. THE PORCH OR VESTIBULE (PORTICO) WAS THE SAME WIDTH AS THE REST OF THE BUILDING AND ADDED A FURTHER 15 FT (4.5 M) TO ITS LENGTH. THREE STORIES OF ROOMS WERE BUILT AROUND THE OUTSIDE (EXCLUDING THE PORCH) AND WERE HALF THE HEIGHT OF THE TEMPLE ITSELF. THESE HAD THEIR OWN ENTRANCE ON THE SOUTH SIDE AND DID NOT CONNECT WITH THE INTERIOR OF THE TEMPLE. THE PURPOSE OF THESE OUTER ROOMS IS NOT EXPLAINED, BUT THEY WERE PROBABLY FOR THE STORAGE OF VESTMENTS AND CERTAIN OFFERINGS, AND PERHAPS PROVIDED ACCOMMODATION FOR THE PRIESTS ON DUTY. LIGHT ENTERED THE TEMPLE THROUGH WINDOWS WHICH MUST HAVE BEEN SET IN THE UPPER HALF OF THE WALLS, ABOVE THE HEIGHT OF THE OUTER ROOMS. THE BUILDING WAS ROOFED WITH BEAMS AND PLANKS OF CEDAR. THE STONES FOR THE TEMPLE WERE ALL FULLY PREPARED AT THE QUARRY SO THAT NO IRON TOOLS WERE USED ON THE BUILDING SITE (7). THIS ODD DETAIL, WHICH INTERRUPTS THE DESCRIPTION OF THE OUTER ROOMS, IS PROBABLY INTENDED TO SHOW THAT THE WORK WAS DONE IN COMPLIANCE WITH A COMMANDMENT IN EX. 20:25 (CF. DT. 27:5–6). THIS ACTUALLY CONCERNS THE BUILDING OF ALTARS AND INSTRUCTS THAT ONLY UNHEWN STONES (I.E. STONES IN THEIR NATURAL STATE, AS WOULD BE USED TO MAKE A DRY-STONE WALL) MUST BE EMPLOYED. SOLOMON’S CRAFTSMEN WERE BUILDING A TEMPLE, NOT AN ALTAR, AND THEY EVIDENTLY FELT FREE TO USE CUT AND DRESSED STONE THROUGHOUT. BUT THEY WORKED IN THE SPIRIT OF THE COMMANDMENT’S PROSCRIPTION OF THE USE OF TOOLS, MAKING SURE NONE WERE USED ON THE TEMPLE SITE. INSIDE THE TEMPLE THE STONEWORK WAS COMPLETELY COVERED WITH WOODEN PANELS, CEDAR ON THE WALLS AND CEILING AND PINE ON THE FLOORS (15). THE INNER SANCTUARY MUST HAVE HAD EITHER A RAISED FLOOR OR A FALSE CEILING (OR BOTH), REDUCING ITS HEIGHT FROM 30 TO 20 CUBITS (ABOUT 30 FT/9 M) AND MAKING ITS INTERIOR A PERFECT CUBE (20). THE PANELS ON THE WALLS WERE CARVED TO PORTRAY FLOWERS AND GOURDS, AND THE WALLS, CEILING AND FLOOR OF THE WHOLE BUILDING WERE ALL OVERLAID WITH GOLD, AS WERE THE CEDAR WOOD ALTAR AND THE HUGE OLIVE WOOD CHERUBIM OF THE INNER SANCTUARY. THESE CHERUBIM PROBABLY RESEMBLED THE WINGED SPHINXES FAMILIAR FROM ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN ART. PHOENICIAN EXAMPLES PORTRAY A CREATURE WITH A HUMAN HEAD, AN ANIMAL BODY WITH FOUR LEGS, AND A PAIR OF WINGS; THEY PROBABLY PROVIDE A CLOSE ANALOGY TO THOSE PRODUCED BY SOLOMON’S PHOENICIAN CRAFTSMEN. CHERUBIM ALSO FEATURED IN A FRIEZE CARVED AROUND THE WALLS, ALONG WITH PALM TREES AND FLOWERS (29). THE LAVISH USE OF GOLD OVERLAY SOUNDS EXTRAORDINARY BUT WAS IN FACT REGULAR PRACTICE IN THE ADORNING OF ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN TEMPLES. THE MOTIFS WITH WHICH SOLOMON’S TEMPLE WAS DECORATED (THE GOURDS, OPEN FLOWERS, PALM TREES AND CHERUBIM) WERE ALSO PART OF THE COMMON REPERTOIRE OF ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN ART, AND EVEN THE BASIC GROUND PLAN OF THE BUILDING CAN BE PARALLELED BY A NUMBER OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL DISCOVERIES. SOLOMON’S TEMPLE IS UNIQUE IN PURPOSE BUT NOT IN CONCEPTION. IN ITS ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN AND ARTISTIC DECORATION, IT VERY MUCH REFLECTED THE CONVENTIONS OF THE TIME. IT IS A STRIKING EXAMPLE OF HOW ELEMENTS OF A PREVAILING CULTURE CAN BE EMPLOYED FOR THE WORSHIP AND GLORY OF GOD. THE MOTIFS USED TO DECORATE THE INTERIOR OF THE TEMPLE MAY SEEM TO INFRINGE THE SECOND OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS, WHICH PROHIBITS THE MAKING OF IMAGES ‘OF ANYTHING IN HEAVEN ABOVE OR ON THE EARTH BENEATH’ (EX. 20:4). PERHAPS THE COMMANDMENT WAS UNDERSTOOD TO PROHIBIT THE MAKING OF LIKENESSES ONLY WHEN THERE WAS A DANGER OF THEM BECOMING OBJECTS OF WORSHIP, AND THIS DANGER WAS THOUGHT TO BE ELIMINATED IN A TEMPLE DEDICATED TO THE WORSHIP OF STEPHEN YAHWEH ALONE. AFTER DESCRIBING THE INNER SANCTUARY (16, 19–21, 22B–28), THE ACCOUNT MOVES OUTWARDS AGAIN, DESCRIBING FIRST THE DOORS WHICH CLOSED OFF THE INNER SANCTUARY AND THEN THE DOORS BETWEEN THE MAIN HALL AND THE PORCH. FINALLY, WE ARE LED OUTSIDE TO THE INNER COURTYARD (36), A VAGUE TERM WHICH PRESUMABLY REFERS TO THE IMMEDIATE SURROUNDINGS OF THE BUILDING. A SECOND CHRONOLOGICAL NOTE ROUNDS OFF THE ACCOUNT, REMINDING US OF WHEN THE TEMPLE WAS BEGUN, TELLING US WHEN IT WAS FINISHED, AND GIVING US THE TOTAL DURATION OF THE PROJECT. WE HAVE NOT YET CONSIDERED GOD’S WORD TO SOLOMON WHICH LIES EMBEDDED IN THIS ACCOUNT (11–13). THIS WORD IS SAID TO CONCERN THIS TEMPLE YOU ARE BUILDING, BUT IT CONTAINS NO FURTHER REFERENCE TO THE TEMPLE. WHAT THEN IS ITS PURPOSE? THE CONDITIONAL NATURE OF GOD’S PROMISE TO DAVID, ALREADY MADE CLEAR BY DAVID IN 2:4, IS NOW RESTATED BY GOD HIMSELF IN WORDS WHICH RELATE IT TO THE TEMPLE-BUILDING PROJECT. GOD WILL LIVE AMONG THE ISRAELITES IF SOLOMON WILL WALK IN GOD’S STATUTES AND OBEY HIS COMMANDS. IN OTHER WORDS, THE BUILDING OF A TEMPLE WILL NOT GUARANTEE GOD’S PRESENCE AMONG HIS PEOPLE; GOD CANNOT BE TAMED AND KEPT IN A BOX, HOWEVER MAGNIFICENT THE BOX MIGHT BE. HIS PRESENCE DEPENDS ON OBEDIENCE AND SPECIFICALLY NOW ON THE OBEDIENCE OF SOLOMON. WHILE THESE VERSES STOP SHORT OF CRITICIZING THE BUILDING OF THE TEMPLE, THEY DO PUT THE PROJECT IN PERSPECTIVE BY STRESSING THE LARGER ISSUE OF OBEDIENCE. 7:1–12 SOLOMON’S PALACE. THE ACCOUNT OF THE TEMPLE AND ITS FURNISHINGS IS DIVIDED INTO TWO PARTS OF ALMOST EQUAL LENGTH BY THIS SHORT ACCOUNT OF SOLOMON’S PALACE BUILDINGS. AS THE TEMPLE WAS BUILT FIRST AND THEN THE PALACE (6:37–7:1; 9:10), WE MIGHT LOGICALLY EXPECT THE ACCOUNT OF THE PALACE TO FOLLOW THE DEDICATION OF THE TEMPLE IN CH. 8. BUT WE WILL SEE THAT THE WRITER HAD A PARTICULAR REASON FOR PLACING IT HERE. IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE NOTE THAT THE TEMPLE TOOK SEVEN YEARS TO BUILD (6:38) COMES THE INFORMATION THAT SOLOMON SPENT THIRTEEN YEARS BUILDING HIS PALACE (LIT. ‘HIS HOUSE’). THE HEBREW FOR ‘HIS HOUSE’ OCCURS TWICE IN 7:1, HIGHLIGHTING THE SHIFT AWAY FROM ‘THE HOUSE [TEMPLE] OF THE LORD’ (6:37). IS THERE IMPLICIT CRITICISM HERE OF THE FACT THAT SOLOMON SPENT ALMOST TWICE AS LONG ON HIS OWN HOUSE AS HE DID, BUILDING THE HOUSE OF GOD? QUITE POSSIBLY, BUT THE MAIN PURPOSE OF THIS PASSAGE SEEMS TO BE RATHER DIFFERENT. DAVID HAD ALREADY HAD A RESIDENCE BUILT IN JERUSALEM WITH MATERIALS SUPPLIED BY HIRAM OF TYRE (2 SA. 5:11), BUT SOLOMON REQUIRED SOMETHING ON A MUCH GRANDER SCALE. FIVE DISTINCT BUILDINGS ARE MENTIONED IN VS 2–8: THE PALACE OF THE FOREST OF LEBANON, ‘THE HALL OF PILLARS’ (A COLONNADE), THE THRONE HALL (ALSO KNOWN AS THE HALL OF JUSTICE, FOR THE KING’S THRONE WAS ALSO HIS JUDGMENT SEAT, STRESSING THAT IT WAS AS RULER THAT HE DISPENSED JUSTICE), SOLOMON’S PRIVATE RESIDENCE AND THE PRIVATE RESIDENCE OF THE PHARAOH’S DAUGHTER. (SINCE SHE IS THE ONLY ONE OF SOLOMON’S WIVES WHOSE RESIDENCE FORMED PART OF THIS SUITE OF BUILDINGS, THE IMPLICATION IS THAT SHE WAS HIS CHIEF WIFE. THIS IS ALSO SUGGESTED BY THE FACT THAT SHE IS MENTIONED SO OFTEN: 3:1, 9:16, 24; 11:1.) WE ARE NOT TOLD HOW THESE VARIOUS BUILDINGS RELATED TO EACH OTHER. THEY PRESUMABLY JOINED TO FORM A SINGLE COMPLEX, SINCE THEY ARE REFERRED TO COLLECTIVELY AS ‘HIS HOUSE’ IN V 1. THE PALACE COMPLEX WAS EVIDENTLY ADJACENT TO THE TEMPLE WITH A PASSAGE CONNECTING THE TWO (CF. 2 KI. 16:18). WE ARE NOT GIVEN THE DIMENSIONS OF ALL THESE BUILDINGS, BUT IT IS CLEAR THAT THE PALACE OF THE FOREST OF LEBANON ALONE WAS LARGER THAN THE TEMPLE (2). THE WHOLE PALACE COMPLEX MUST, THEREFORE, HAVE DWARFED THE TEMPLE SPECTACULARLY. IN JESUS’ DAY THE MASSIVE TEMPLE BUILT BY HEROD THE GREAT DOMINATED THE WHOLE OF JERUSALEM, BUT IN PRE-EXILIC TIMES THE ROYAL PALACE MUST HAVE BEEN THE CITY’S MOST IMPOSING BUILDING. AND THIS IS PROBABLY WHY THE WRITER DESCRIBES IT WHERE HE DOES. PHYSICALLY THE PALACE DWARFED THE TEMPLE, BUT IN HIS ACCOUNT, HE DWARFS THE DESCRIPTION OF THE PALACE BY SURROUNDING IT WITH LENGTHIER DESCRIPTIONS OF THE TEMPLE AND ITS FURNISHINGS. IN THE WRITER’S VIEW THIS RESTORES THE CORRECT PERSPECTIVE; FOR THE TEMPLE WAS THE TRUE HEART OF THE CITY AND OF THE NATION. 7:13–47 THE TEMPLE FURNISHINGS: THE WORK OF HIRAM, CRAFTSMAN IN BRONZE. A NAMESAKE OF THE KING OF TYRE, THE SON OF A PHOENICIAN FATHER AND AN ISRAELITE MOTHER, WAS BROUGHT FROM TYRE TO JERUSALEM TO MANUFACTURE THE BRONZE FURNISHINGS FOR THE TEMPLE. HIS OUTSTANDING ABILITY IS MENTIONED AT THE OUTSET AND IS AMPLY ILLUSTRATED BY THE DESCRIPTIONS OF THE OBJECTS WHICH HE MADE. AS IN THE DESCRIPTION OF THE TEMPLE ITSELF, THERE ARE SOME DETAILS WHICH ARE DIFFICULT TO FOLLOW. THE ACCOUNT OF THE WORK OF HIRAM FOR THE TEMPLE PARALLELS TO SOME EXTENT THAT OF THE WORK OF BEZALEL FOR THE TABERNACLE (EX. 36–38), AND WE ARE DOUBTLESS INTENDED TO NOTE THE BROADER PARALLEL BETWEEN THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE TABERNACLE AND THE BUILDING OF THE TEMPLE. HOWEVER, WHILE THE TABERNACLE AND ITS EQUIPMENT WERE COMMANDED IN DETAIL BY GOD (EX. 25–27, ESPECIALLY 25:9), NO SUCH CLAIM IS MADE HERE FOR THE TEMPLE OR ITS FURNISHINGS. THE PURPOSE OF THE TWO HUGE PILLARS (ABOUT 27 FT/8 M HIGH) IS NOT CLEAR. THEY DID NOT SUPPORT ANYTHING BUT WERE FREESTANDING, LOCATED IN FRONT OF THE TEMPLE PORTICO. THEY WERE TOPPED WITH ELABORATELY DECORATED, LILY-SHAPED CAPITALS. THEIR NAMES, JAKIN AND BOAZ, ARE SOMETHING OF A PUZZLE, BUT THE MOST LIKELY THEORY IS THAT THESE WERE THE OPENING WORDS OF TWO INSCRIPTIONS. ON THE BASIS OF THE VARIOUS EXPRESSIONS FOUND IN THE PSALMS IT HAS BEEN SUGGESTED THAT THE INSCRIPTIONS MAY HAVE READ ROUGHLY AS FOLLOWS: ‘STEPHEN YAHWEH WILL ESTABLISH [JAKIN] THY THRONE FOR EVER’, AND ‘IN THE STRENGTH [BOAZ] OF STEPHEN YAHWEH SHALL THE KING REJOICE.’ IF THIS IS CORRECT, THE PILLARS MAY HAVE COMMEMORATED GOD’S PROMISES CONCERNING THE DAVIDIC DYNASTY. THERE ARE HINTS LATER IN KINGS THAT ON TAKING THE THRONE A KING STOOD BY ONE OF THESE PILLARS TO PLEDGE HIMSELF TO KEEP GOD’S COVENANT LAWS (2 KI. 11:14; 23:3). HIRAM’S MOST IMPRESSIVE TECHNOLOGICAL ACHIEVEMENT WAS PERHAPS THE HUGE BRONZE BASIN SOME 15 FT (4.5 M) IN DIAMETER KNOWN AS THE SEA. IT WAS SUPPORTED ON TWELVE BRONZE BULLS ARRANGED IN FOUR GROUPS OF THREE, EACH GROUP FACING ONE OF THE CARDINAL POINTS. ACCORDING TO 2 CH. 4:6, ITS PURPOSE WAS TO HOLD WATER FOR RITUAL WASHING BY THE PRIESTS, BUT ITS SIZE AND DESIGN, AS WELL AS ITS NAME, SUGGEST IT WAS SYMBOLIC AS WELL AS FUNCTIONAL. AS GOD’S POWER AT CREATION HAD BEEN DISPLAYED BY HIS CONTAINMENT OF THE SEA, THE SYMBOL OF CHAOS (SEE THE VIVID WORD-PICTURE IN JB. 38:8–11), SO THIS GIANT BOWL SIGNIFIED HIS UPHOLDING OF THE CREATED ORDER AND HIS POWER OVER THE FORCES OF CHAOS WHICH THREATEN IT. HIRAM ALSO MADE TEN MOVABLE STANDS, DECORATED ON THE SIDES WITH LIONS, BULLS AND CHERUBIM, AND TEN REMOVABLE BASINS, WHICH STOOD ON THEM. THESE WERE ALSO FOR RITUAL ABLUTIONS, AND THE FACT THAT THEIR LOCATIONS ARE MENTIONED ALONG WITH THAT OF THE SEA (39) SUGGESTS THEY WERE USED IN CONNECTION WITH IT. VS 40–45 PROVIDE A SUMMARY OF HIRAM’S WORK, ADDING SOME LESSER ITEMS WHICH DO NOT DESERVE DETAILED DESCRIPTIONS (POTS, SHOVELS AND SPRINKLING BOWLS). V 46 GIVES A TANTALIZING HINT AT THE METHOD USED BY HIRAM TO CAST HIS PRODUCTS. THE SECTION CLOSES WITH RENEWED EMPHASIS ON THE GREATNESS OF HIS ACHIEVEMENT: THE WEIGHT OF ALL THIS BRONZE WORK WAS NEVER DETERMINED BECAUSE THERE WAS SO MUCH OF IT! 7:48–51 THE TEMPLE FURNISHINGS: ITEMS OF GOLD. THE LIST OF GOLD ITEMS WHICH SOLOMON HAD MADE FOR THE TEMPLE (48–50) IS VERY LIKE THE SUMMARY OF HIRAM’S WORK IN VS 40–45. IT IS AS THOUGH WE HAVE HERE A SIMILAR SUMMARY WITHOUT A DETAILED ACCOUNT TO PRECEDE IT. THE CRAFTSMAN IS NOT NAMED, UNLESS THE WRITER INTENDS US TO UNDERSTAND THAT SOLOMON MADE THESE ITEMS WITH HIS OWN HANDS (WHICH SEEMS UNLIKELY). SOLOMON ALSO CONTRIBUTED TO THE TEMPLE QUANTITIES OF SILVER AND GOLD WHICH HAD EARLIER BEEN DEDICATED TO IT BY DAVID. THESE WERE STORED IN THE TEMPLE TREASURIES (PERHAPS IN THE OUTER ROOMS), THOUGH THEIR INTENDED PURPOSE IS NOT CLEAR. IN JERUSALEM’S SUBSEQUENT HISTORY THESE TREASURIES WERE OFTEN THE SOURCE OF TRIBUTE FOR FOREIGN KINGS.**

**8:1–66 THE DEDICATION OF THE TEMPLE OF THE LORD**

**THIS LONG CHAPTER DIVIDES NATURALLY INTO SEVEN SECTIONS. AS IN CH. 6, THERE IS A MIRROR-IMAGE STRUCTURE, WHICH IN THIS CASE SPOTLIGHTS SOLOMON’S PRAYER AS THE HEART OF THE ACCOUNT: A1 INTRODUCTION AND GATHERING OF THE ASSEMBLY (1–2); B1 INSTALLATION OF THE ARK, WITH SACRIFICES (3–13); C1 SOLOMON ADDRESSES THE ASSEMBLY (14–21); D SOLOMON’S PRAYER (22–53); C2 SOLOMON ADDRESSES THE ASSEMBLY (54–61); B2 FURTHER SACRIFICES (62–64); A2 SUMMARY AND DISSOLUTION OF THE ASSEMBLY (65–66). 8:1–2 INTRODUCTION AND GATHERING OF THE ASSEMBLY. A HUGE ASSEMBLY OF PEOPLE, REPRESENTATIVE OF ALL ISRAEL, WAS ARRANGED FOR THE DEDICATION OF THE TEMPLE, WHICH BEGAN WITH THE INSTALLATION OF THE ARK OF THE COVENANT IN THE INNER SANCTUARY. THE SETTING WAS A FEAST IN THE SEVENTH MONTH, PRESUMABLY THE FEAST OF BOOTHS OR TABERNACLES WHICH, LIKE THE FEAST DESCRIBED HERE, LASTED SEVEN DAYS (65; CF. LV. 23:33–43). 8:3–13 THE INSTALLATION OF THE ARK OF THE COVENANT. THE ARK WAS BROUGHT UP FROM THE OLD QUARTER OF JERUSALEM, WHICH WAS KNOWN AS THE CITY OF DAVID (1) TO DISTINGUISH IT FROM THE NEW ROYAL PRECINCT AND TEMPLE AREA BUILT BY SOLOMON TO THE NORTH. THE ARK HAD BEEN HOUSED THERE ‘INSIDE THE TENT THAT DAVID HAD PITCHED FOR IT’ (2 SA. 6:17), AN EXPRESSION WHICH SUGGESTS THIS TENT WAS NOT THE SAME AS ‘THE TENT OF MEETING’, THE ANCIENT RELIC OF ISRAEL’S WILDERNESS PERIOD WHICH WAS BROUGHT TO THE TEMPLE WITH THE ARK. THE ACCOUNT OF THE TRANSFER OF THE ARK TO THE TEMPLE, ACCOMPANIED BY SACRIFICES, IS REMINISCENT OF THE ACCOUNT OF ITS ORIGINAL TRANSFER TO JERUSALEM BY DAVID (2 SA. 6:12–19). BUT THIS TIME EVERYTHING WAS ON A GRANDER SCALE; THE ARK’S RESTING PLACE WAS NOT TO BE A TENT BUT THE MAGNIFICENT TEMPLE, AND THE SACRIFICES CONSISTED OF SHEEP AND OXEN BEYOND NUMBERING (5). THE ARK WAS EVENTUALLY INSTALLED IN THE INNER SANCTUARY. ACCORDING TO OUR WRITER, IT CONTAINED ONLY THE TWO STONE TABLETS BEARING THE TEN COMMANDMENTS, BUT OTHER RELICS WERE KEPT THERE (PERHAPS AT AN EARLIER PERIOD) ACCORDING TO HEB. 9:4 (CF. EX. 16:32–33; NU. 17:8–10). HOWEVER, THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ARK DID NOT LIE IN WHAT IT CONTAINED, BUT IN THE FACT THAT IT SIGNIFIED THE PRESENCE OF GOD, OR MORE PRECISELY THE PRESENCE OF GOD’S GLORY, WITH HIS PEOPLE. HENCE ITS LOSS TO THE PHILISTINES IN THE TIME OF SAMUEL WAS LAMENTED WITH THE WORDS: ‘THE GLORY HAS DEPARTED FROM ISRAEL’ (1 SA. 4:21–22), AND THE PSALMIST RECORDS THE SAME EVENT BY SAYING THAT GOD ‘DELIVERED … HIS GLORY TO THE HAND OF THE FOE’ (PS. 78:61; RSV). THE CONNECTION BETWEEN THE ARK AND THE PRESENCE OF GOD’S GLORY IS ALSO EVIDENT IN THE PRESENT PASSAGE. AS THE PRIESTS WHO HAD CARRIED THE ARK AND PUT IT IN PLACE WITHDREW, THE GLORY OF THE LORD, VISIBLY MANIFESTED AS A CLOUD, FILLED THE BUILDING SO THAT THE PRIESTS COULD NOT PERFORM THEIR SERVICE BECAUSE OF THE CLOUD (10–11). THIS ECHOES THE FIRST SETTING UP OF THE TABERNACLE (CONTAINING THE ARK) BY MOSES: ‘THEN THE CLOUD COVERED THE TENT OF MEETING, AND THE GLORY OF THE LORD FILLED THE TABERNACLE. MOSES COULD NOT ENTER THE TENT OF MEETING …’ (EX. 40:34–35). IN BOTH CASES, THE PHENOMENON INDICATED GOD’S ACCEPTANCE AND APPROVAL OF WHAT HAD BEEN DONE; IT PROVIDED A VISIBLE SIGN THAT GOD’S GLORY HAD TAKEN UP RESIDENCE. BUT THE SOVEREIGN GOD WAS NOT BOUND TO RESIDE IN THE TEMPLE. SHORTLY BEFORE THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM AND THE TEMPLE, THE PROPHET EZEKIEL SAW IN A VISION ‘THE GLORY OF THE LORD’ LEAVING JERUSALEM BECAUSE OF THE GROSS INIQUITY OF ITS PEOPLE (EZK. 11:23); THIS WAS LATER COMPLEMENTED BY A FURTHER VISION OF GOD’S GLORY RETURNING TO ENTER A FUTURE RESTORED TEMPLE (EZK. 43:4). THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CHERUBIM WITH OUTSTRETCHED WINGS CAN NOW BE MORE FULLY APPRECIATED. A SMALLER VERSION OF THESE CHERUBIM HAD BEEN FITTED TO THE TOP OF THE ARK WHEN IT WAS FIRST MADE, AND THE SPACE BETWEEN THEM WAS THE PLACE WHERE GOD WAS PRESENT WHEN HE SPOKE WITH MOSES (EX. 25:18–22). SOLOMON’S CHERUBIM SEEM TO HAVE SUPERSEDED THE ORIGINALS, INDICATING THE PLACE WHERE GOD’S ‘GLORY’ WOULD RESIDE. HEZEKIAH LATER SPOKE OF GOD ‘ENTHRONED BETWEEN THE CHERUBIM’ (2 KI. 19:15). IN RESPONSE TO THE APPEARANCE OF THE CLOUD, SOLOMON PRAYED A BRIEF DEDICATORY PRAYER IN POETIC FORM. THE FIRST LINE OF THIS IN THE RSV (‘THE LORD HAS SET THE SUN IN THE HEAVENS’) IS TAKEN FROM THE LONGER GREEK VERSION AND IS NOT IN THE HEBREW; THE NIV OMITS IT. IF WE TREAT IT AS ORIGINAL, IT MAY BE SAYING TWO THINGS. FIRST, IT CAN BE SEEN TO PROCLAIM GOD AS CREATOR OF THE SUN AND THEREFORE SUPERIOR TO IT (AN IMPORTANT AFFIRMATION IN VIEW OF THE FACT THAT THE SUN ITSELF WAS WORSHIPPED BY MANY ANCIENT SOCIETIES). SECONDLY, IT SUPPLIES A CONTRAST WITH THE NEXT LINE, WHICH THUS STATES THAT ALTHOUGH GOD IS THE CREATOR OF LIGHT, HE PREFERS TO CONCEAL HIMSELF IN THE DARKNESS AND OBSCURITY OF A CLOUD. THE LINK BETWEEN THIS AND V 13 IS UNFORTUNATELY NOT CLEAR. SOLOMON MAY HAVE BEEN EXPRESSING A WISH THAT, IN SPITE OF HIS PREFERENCE FOR OBSCURITY, GOD WOULD RESIDE IN HIS MAGNIFICENT TEMPLE … FOR EVER; OR HE MAY HAVE BEEN SAYING THAT THE TEMPLE IS ENTIRELY APPROPRIATE FOR A GOD WHO PREFERS TO REMAIN OUT OF VIEW. BUT NEITHER INTERPRETATION FITS HAPPILY WITH THE VIEW OF THE TEMPLE FOUND IN THE LONGER PRAYER WHICH FOLLOWS AND WE MUST SIMPLY ADMIT THAT THE MEANING IS UNCERTAIN. 8:14–21 SOLOMON ADDRESSES THE ASSEMBLY. SOLOMON TURNED FROM FACING THE TEMPLE TO FACE THE HUGE CROWD. THE BLESSING HE DELIVERED (14) IS PROBABLY TO BE UNDERSTOOD AS THE WHOLE OF WHAT IS REPORTED VS 15–21. IN FACT, HE BEGAN WITH THE WORDS ‘BLESSED BE STEPHEN YAHWEH …’, A WAY OF EXPRESSING PRAISE FOR WHAT GOD HAD DONE; NAMELY, HE HAD ‘FULFILLED WITH HIS HAND WHAT HE SPOKE WITH HIS MOUTH’ (A MORE OR LESS LITERAL RENDERING OF THE EXPRESSION IN V 15). IN OTHER WORDS, GOD HAD SHOWN HIS WORD TO BE UTTERLY TRUSTWORTHY. THE REST OF THE SPEECH EXPANDS ON THIS, SUMMARIZING GOD’S WORDS TO DAVID THROUGH NATHAN CONCERNING A SON WHO WOULD SUCCEED HIM ON THE THRONE AND WHO WOULD BUILD THE TEMPLE (2 SA. 7:12–13). SOLOMON DECLARED THAT THE MOMENT OF FULFILMENT HAD NOW ARRIVED (20). ALTHOUGH HE WAS NOT RETICENT ABOUT HIS OWN ACHIEVEMENT (‘I HAVE SUCCEEDED DAVID … I SIT ON THE THRONE … I HAVE BUILT THE TEMPLE … I HAVE PROVIDED A PLACE …’), SOLOMON ACKNOWLEDGED THAT IT WAS ULTIMATELY GOD’S DOING, FOR IT HAD ALL COME ABOUT AS STEPHEN YAHWEH HAD PROMISED. HUMAN EFFORT AND DIVINE SOVEREIGNTY ARE HERE SUBTLY INTERWOVEN. A NEW CONCEPT OF THE TEMPLE IS INTRODUCED IN THIS SPEECH. AS WELL AS BEING A PLACE FOR THE ARK (21) IT IS ‘A HOUSE FOR THE NAME OF STEPHEN YAHWEH’ (17, 20; LITERAL RENDERING, WITH RELATED EXPRESSIONS IN VS 16, 18–19). THIS BECOMES AN IMPORTANT IDEA IN THE PRAYER WHICH FOLLOWS. 8:22–53 SOLOMON’S PRAYER. SOLOMON SIGNIFIED THE BEGINNING OF A NEW PHASE IN THE PROCEEDINGS BY TAKING UP ANOTHER POSITION, STANDING BEFORE THE ALTAR AND SPREADING HIS HANDS TOWARDS THE SKY. THE INTRODUCTION TO HIS PRAYER (22–26) BEGINS BY ECHOING DT. 7:9, BUT HE SPEAKS OF GOD’S COVENANT FAITHFULNESS SPECIFICALLY IN RELATION TO DAVID. TAKING UP GOD’S PROMISE THAT DAVID’S DYNASTY WOULD NEVER END, HE PRAYS THAT THIS TOO WOULD RECEIVE FULFILMENT. AT THE SAME TIME, HE ACKNOWLEDGES THAT THE PROMISE IS CONDITIONAL ON THE CONDUCT OF DAVID’S DESCENDANTS. BUT THE TEMPLE IS THE REAL SUBJECT OF THE PRAYER, AND SOLOMON INTRODUCES THAT IN VS 27–30. HE RECOGNIZES THE ABSURDITY OF SUPPOSING THAT STEPHEN YAHWEH COULD DWELL ON EARTH (27); FOR EVEN THE MOST-HIGHEST REACHES OF THE HEAVENS ARE NOT SUFFICIENTLY VAST TO CONTAIN HIM. SOLOMON IS CERTAINLY UNDER NO ILLUSION THAT STEPHEN YAHWEH COULD SOMEHOW BE CONTAINED IN THE TEMPLE HE HAS BUILT. HIS PRAYER IS, THEREFORE, NOT THAT GOD WILL TAKE UP RESIDENCE IN THE TEMPLE, BUT RATHER THAT HIS ATTENTION WILL BE FOCUSED ON IT TO HEAR THE PRAYERS DIRECTED TOWARDS IT. GOD WILL STILL BE IN ‘HEAVEN, YOUR DWELLING-PLACE’ (30), BUT THE SUPPLICATIONS OF KING AND PEOPLE WILL BE RECEIVED IN THE TEMPLE. IN OTHER WORDS, SOLOMON PRAYS THAT THE TEMPLE MIGHT BE THE MEETING-PLACE FOR HUMAN NEED AND DIVINE MERCY. ALL THIS SEEMS TO BE CONTAINED IN THE NOTION OF GOD’S NAME BEING IN THE TEMPLE, A THEME WHICH RECURS BRIEFLY IN V 29. THE CONCEPT OF GOD’S NAME BEING IN A PLACE (DT. 12:5 ETC.) IS, THEREFORE, A WAY OF EXPRESSING THAT GOD IS PRESENT IN A SPECIAL SENSE, BUT WITHOUT SUGGESTING A CRUDE PICTURE OF HIS LIMITATION OR CONTAINMENT. IT IS CLOSELY RELATED TO THE CONCEPT OF GOD’S ‘GLORY’, WHICH WE FOUND ASSOCIATED WITH THE ARK. SOME OF THE IDEAS IN THIS PASSAGE FIND THEIR NT COUNTERPARTS IN THE PERSON OF JESUS, IN WHOM GOD DID INDEED DWELL ON EARTH (JN. 1:14), IN WHOM THE ‘NAME’ OF GOD WAS MADE KNOWN (JN. 17:6, 26), AND WHO PROCLAIMED HIMSELF TO BE THE TRUE AND ULTIMATE ‘TEMPLE’ (JN. 2:19–22). IN HIM, DIVINE MERCY MET HUMAN NEED IN THE PROFOUNDEST SENSE. THE NEXT SECTION OF THE PRAYER (31–51) CONSISTS OF SEVEN PETITIONS WHICH ENVISAGE PARTICULAR CIRCUMSTANCES IN THE LIFE OF INDIVIDUALS OR THE NATION. THESE CONCERN: OATHS SWORN BEFORE THE ALTAR (31–32); DEFEAT BY AN ENEMY (33–34); DROUGHT (35–36); FAMINE, PESTILENCE ETC. (37–40); THE NEEDS OF A FOREIGNER IN THE LAND (41–43); GOING OUT TO BATTLE (44–45); AND CAPTIVITY (46–51). THE FIRST AND FIFTH EXAMPLES CONCERN INDIVIDUALS, WHILE THE REST CONCERN THE NATION. THE SECOND, THIRD, FOURTH AND SEVENTH ALL INVOLVE THE NEED FOR FORGIVENESS AND RESTORATION. WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF GIVING SEVEN EXAMPLES OF CIRCUMSTANCES IN WHICH PEOPLE MIGHT PRAY TOWARDS THE TEMPLE? WE MUST NOTE THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE NUMBER SEVEN THROUGHOUT THE OT; IT SEEMS TO SIGNIFY COMPLETENESS, FULFILMENT AND PERFECTION. (THE NUMBER SEVEN HAS AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN THE PRESENT CHAPTER: THE DEDICATION OF THE TEMPLE, WHICH TOOK SEVEN YEARS TO BUILD, TOOK PLACE IN THE SEVENTH MONTH DURING A FEAST LASTING SEVEN DAYS.) PROBABLY, THEN, THESE SEVEN EXAMPLES ARE MEANT TO REPRESENT ALL POSSIBLE SITUATIONS WHICH COULD CALL FORTH THE PRAYERS OF INDIVIDUALS AND THE NATION. ALL CONTINGENCIES ARE COVERED. THE FIRST READERS OF KINGS WOULD NOT HAVE FAILED TO NOTICE THAT THE LONGEST AND FINAL PETITION CONCERNED THEIR OWN SITUATION: CAPTIVITY IN A FOREIGN LAND (46–51). TO THEM IT URGED REPENTANCE AND HELD OUT THE HOPE OF GOD’S FORGIVENESS AND THE COMPASSION OF THEIR CAPTORS. IT DID NOT, HOWEVER, MAKE ANY CLEAR PROMISE OF RETURN AND RESTORATION, NOR DID IT MENTION THE PRESERVATION OF DAVID’S DYNASTY. THE ONE MEAGRE HINT THAT RETURN MIGHT EVENTUALLY COME ABOUT IS CONTAINED IN THE REMINDER THAT GOD HAD BROUGHT THEM OUT OF EGYPT, OUT OF THAT IRON-SMELTING FURNACE (51). WHILE THIS WAS MENTIONED PRIMARILY AS A GROUND FOR GOD’S FORGIVENESS, IT WOULD PERHAPS HAVE GIVEN THE EXILES A GLIMMER OF HOPE THAT GOD WOULD ONE DAY ACT IN A SIMILAR WAY AGAIN. THIS FINAL PETITION BEGINS WITH AN ACKNOWLEDGMENT THAT THERE IS NO-ONE WHO DOES NOT SIN (46). SINCE THIS MUST INCLUDE SOLOMON AND HIS DESCENDANTS, THE PHRASE IS PREGNANT WITH MEANING: THE CAPTIVITY WHICH IS ENVISAGED SEEMS VIRTUALLY INEVITABLE, FOR WHAT HOPE IS THERE THAT A DYNASTY OF FALLIBLE KINGS WOULD LIVE AS GOD REQUIRES? SOLOMON ENDED HIS PRAYER WITH A MORE GENERAL PLEA THAT GOD WOULD ALWAYS HEAR THE PETITIONS OF KING AND PEOPLE ALIKE. THE REASON FOR HIS CONFIDENCE IN ASKING SUCH A THING IS THEN STATED: GOD HAD CALLED THEM OUT FROM AMONG THE NATIONS TO BE HIS SPECIAL PEOPLE. GOD’S ACTIONS IN THE PAST, PARTICULARLY THOSE ACTIONS WHICH CLEARLY EXPRESSED HIS PURPOSES, ARE HIS PEOPLE’S GROUND FOR CONFIDENCE IN HIS MERCY IN THE PRESENT AND THE FUTURE. 8:54–61 SOLOMON ADDRESSES THE ASSEMBLY AGAIN. SOLOMON THEN TURNED BACK TO THE PEOPLE TO ‘BLESS’ THEM ONCE AGAIN. HE REMINDED THEM THAT GOD HAD FULFILLED EVERY ONE OF THE PROMISES HE HAD MADE TO MOSES AND PRAYED THAT GOD WOULD CONTINUE TO BE CLOSE TO HIS PEOPLE TO MAINTAIN THEIR CAUSE. BUT SOLOMON’S DESIRE WAS NOT (OR AT LEAST NOT SOLELY) FOR THE WELFARE OF THE PEOPLE; HE WAS INSPIRED BY AN EVEN HIGHER MOTIVE—A LONGING TO SEE GOD GLORIFIED IN THE WORLD: SO THAT ALL THE PEOPLES OF THE EARTH MAY KNOW THAT THE LORD IS GOD AND THAT THERE IS NO OTHER (60). THIS SENTIMENT IS ALSO EXPRESSED IN THE PETITION FOR THE FOREIGNER WHO HEARS OF GOD’S GREATNESS AND PRAYS TOWARDS THE TEMPLE (41–43). FINALLY, THE PEOPLE WERE URGED TO DO THEIR PART BY BEING WHOLLY TRUE TO GOD’S WAYS. IT IS BY THE WILLING OBEDIENCE OF GOD’S PEOPLE THAT THE WORLD WILL LEARN OF GOD’S CHARACTER. 8:62–64 FURTHER SACRIFICES. AS BEFITTED A MOMENTOUS OCCASION, STUPENDOUS QUANTITIES OF ANIMAL SACRIFICES WERE OFFERED (APPARENTLY ALL IN ONE DAY!). THIS TOOK PLACE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE COURTYARD THAT STOOD IN FRONT OF THE TEMPLE (THE SAME AS ‘THE INNER COURTYARD’ MENTIONED IN 6:36?) BECAUSE IT WAS THE ONLY PLACE WHERE THERE WAS ENOUGH ROOM. IT IS IMPLIED THAT SOLOMON TOOK ON A PRIESTLY ROLE HERE, CONSECRATING THE COURT AND OFFERING THE SACRIFICES, JUST AS DAVID HAD OFFERED SACRIFICES WHEN BRINGING THE ARK TO JERUSALEM (2 SA. 6:17–18). 8:65–66 SUMMARY AND THE END OF THE FEAST. ALL ISRAEL HAD BEEN REPRESENTED BY THE ASSEMBLY; AND BY SKETCHING THE NORTHERN AND SOUTHERN LIMITS OF SOLOMON’S REALM THE WRITER TAKES THE OPPORTUNITY ONCE AGAIN TO GLORIFY HIS REIGN. ON THE EIGHTH DAY THE PEOPLE RETURNED TO THEIR HOMES REJOICING.**

**9:1–14 CONCLUSION TO THE BUILDING OF THE TEMPLE OF THE LORD**

**9:1–9 GOD RESPONDS TO SOLOMON’S PRAYER. ALTHOUGH THIS WORD FROM GOD IS REPORTED IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE DEDICATION OF THE TEMPLE AND IS A REPLY TO SOLOMON’S PRAYER ON THAT OCCASION, THE WRITER DATES IT AFTER SOLOMON HAD BUILT NOT ONLY THE TEMPLE BUT THE PALACE AS WELL, WHICH TOOK A FURTHER THIRTEEN YEARS (9:10). WHEREAS IN 6:11 WE ARE TOLD SIMPLY THAT ‘THE WORD OF THE LORD CAME TO SOLOMON’ (PERHAPS THROUGH A PROPHET), HERE GOD APPEARED TO HIM ONCE AGAIN IN A DREAM-VISION, AS AT GIBEON. THE REFERENCE TO GIBEON REMINDS US THAT THE DAYS OF THE HIGH PLACES ARE NOW OVER—OR SHOULD BE! GOD TELLS SOLOMON THAT HE HAS ACCEPTED HIS PRAYER AND HAS PUT HIS NAME IN THE TEMPLE FOR EVER; THE MEANING OF THIS IS AGAIN EXPLAINED IN TERMS OF GOD’S ATTENTION BEING FOCUSED ON THE TEMPLE (3). THIS IS FOLLOWED BY A THIRD REFERENCE TO THE CONDITIONAL NATURE OF THE PROMISE TO DAVID. AND IT IS THE MOST SOMBER REFERENCE YET, FOR HERE THE NEGATIVE SIDE IS CLEARLY SPELT OUT. SOLOMON IS TOLD WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF HE AND THE PEOPLE (THE YOU IS PLURAL, AND SEE V 9) TURN ASIDE FROM GOD’S WAYS AND WORSHIP OTHER GODS: THE NATION WILL BE REMOVED FROM THE LAND AND EVEN THE TEMPLE WILL BE CAST OUT OF GOD’S SIGHT (7) AND BECOME A HEAP OF RUINS (8). CLEARLY THE PROMISE THAT GOD’S NAME AND HEART WOULD BE THERE FOR EVER WAS SUBJECT TO THE SAME CONDITIONS AS THE PROMISE OF AN EVERLASTING DYNASTY! BY EMPHASIZING THE PERILS OF DISOBEDIENCE, THIS SOLEMN WARNING CASTS A SHADOW OVER THE REST OF THE ACCOUNT OF SOLOMON’S REIGN. 9:10–14 FURTHER DEALINGS WITH HIRAM. JUST AS THE ACCOUNT OF THE BUILDING OF THE TEMPLE BEGINS WITH SOLOMON’S RELATIONS WITH HIRAM OF TYRE (CH. 5), SO IT IS ROUNDED OFF WITH A FURTHER NOTE OF THEIR DEALINGS. THIS TIME, HOWEVER, THE TONE IS NOT SO POSITIVE, AND THIS IS NOT MERELY BECAUSE IT RECORDS A SOURING OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TWO KINGS. SOLOMON’S TRANSFER OF TWENTY CITIES IN GALILEE TO HIRAM (IN EXCHANGE FOR A VAST QUANTITY OF GOLD, 14) IMPLIES THAT SOLOMON’S DUES COULD NO LONGER BE RAISED BY TAXATION. HAD HIS BUILDING PROJECTS BECOME TOO LAVISH? FURTHERMORE, THE CITIES GIVEN TO HIRAM DID NOT MEET WITH HIS APPROVAL AND HE CALLED THE DISTRICT ‘THE LAND OF GOOD-FOR-NOTHING’ (NIV MG.). THE IMPLICATION IS THAT THE IMMENSE PROSPERITY ENJOYED IN JERUSALEM DID NOT EXTEND TO THE NORTHERN PARTS OF THE KINGDOM.**

**THE NET WORTH OF THE LORD’S HOUSE IN FAITHFULNESS TO THE LORD**

**IN KING SOLOMON’S KINGDOM, HE BUILT THE HOUSE OF THE FATHER STEPHEN CALLED ZION IN THE KINGDOM OF LORDSHIP THAT WILL NEVER BE DESTROYED IN 7 YEARS THAT TOOK $576,000,000,000.00 BILLION IN 100,000 GOLD TALENTS & $384,000,000,000.00 BILLION IN 1 MILLION SILVER TALENTS IN TITHING BY 10% & 100% WHICH CONCERNS $960,000,000,000,000.00 TRILLION WHICH THE FATHER STEPHEN’S BODY IS 202,000,000,000,000,000,000 YEARS OLD IN GOLD IN LEVITICUS 27:3; 1ST CHRONICLES 22:14 & ACTS 7:47-50. WHICH WITH PRECIOUS STONES AND OTHER MATERIALS THE TITHE WOULD CONCERN 1 QUADRILLION DOLLARS [15 ZERO’S BEHIND IT] FOR 115 YEARS WITH A FRUITFUL CALL [15 YEARS + 10 YEARS IN 2ND CORINTHIANS 12:1-6 & PSALMS 90:10] THAT HAPPENED IN 930BC WHICH IS 2,945 YEARS AGO. THIS WOULD THEN CONCERN THE FATHER STEPHEN’S ADDRESS CALLED THE UNIVERSAL ZION IN THE ETERNAL KINGDOM OF LORDSHIP IN ACTS 15:16-17. THIS KINGDOM OF LORDSHIP WHICH IS KNOWN AS THE FATHER STEPHEN’S ZION ON SUNDAY PENTECOST THAT HOUSES ONLY SAINTLY CHRISTIAN LORDS & SAINTLY CHRISTIAN LADIES WILL NEVER BE DESTROYED IN DANIEL 7:18. ALL OTHER KINGDOMS, EVEN THE LORDSHIP OF THE LAW WILL COME TO AN END & BE IN DESOLATION IN THE ROCK AUTHORITIES TO THE COUNTY AUTHORITIES IN ACTS 9:3-6. THE STATE AUTHORITIES TO GOVERNMENTAL AUTHORITIES IS IN ACTS 22:6-11. THE NATIONAL AUTHORITIES TO THE KINGDOM AUTHORITIES IS IN ACTS 26:13-18.**

**THE INFANCY GOSPEL OF PSEUDO-MATTHEW: THE BOOK ABOUT THE ORIGIN OF THE BLESSED MARY AND THE CHILDHOOD OF THE SAVIOR**

**CHAPTER 1: (1) IN THOSE DAYS THERE WAS A MAN IN JERUSALEM, JOACHIM BY NAME, OF THE TRIBE OF JUDAH. HE WAS THE SHEPHERD OF HIS OWN SHEEP, FEARING THE LORD IN INTEGRITY AND SINGLENESS OF HEART. HE HAD NO OTHER CARE THAN THAT OF HIS HERDS, FROM THE PRODUCE OF WHICH HE SUPPLIED WITH FOOD ALL THAT FEARED GOD, OFFERING DOUBLE GIFTS IN THE FEAR OF GOD TO ALL WHO LABOURED IN DOCTRINE, AND WHO MINISTERED UNTO HIM. THEREFORE, HIS LAMBS, AND HIS SHEEP, AND HIS WOOL, AND ALL THINGS WHATSOEVER HE POSSESSED, HE USED TO DIVIDE INTO THREE PORTIONS: ONE HE GAVE TO THE ORPHANS, THE WIDOWS, THE STRANGERS, AND THE POOR, THE SECOND TO THOSE THAT [SEXLESSLY] WORSHIPPED GOD, AND THE THIRD HE KEPT FOR HIMSELF AND ALL HIS HOUSE. (2) AND AS HE DID SO, THE LORD MULTIPLIED TO HIM HIS HERDS, SO THAT THERE WAS NO MAN LIKE HIM IN THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL. THIS NOW HE BEGAN TO DO WHEN HE WAS FIFTEEN YEARS OLD. AND AT THE AGE OF TWENTY HE TOOK TO WIFE, ANNA, THE DAUGHTER OF ACHAR, OF HIS OWN TRIBE, THAT IS, OF THE TRIBE OF JUDAH, OF THE FAMILY OF DAVID. AND THOUGH THEY HAD LIVED TOGETHER FOR TWENTY YEARS, HE HAD BY HER NEITHER SONS NOR DAUGHTERS.**

**CHAPTER 2: (3) AND IT HAPPENED THAT, IN THE TIME OF THE FEAST, AMONG THOSE WHO WERE OFFERING INCENSE TO THE LORD, JOACHIM STOOD GETTING READY HIS GIFTS IN THE SIGHT OF THE LORD. AND THE PRIEST, RUBEN BY NAME, COMING TO HIM, SAID: IT IS NOT [SEXLESSLY] LAWFUL FOR THEE TO STAND AMONG THOSE WHO ARE DOING SACRIFICE TO GOD, BECAUSE GOD HAS NOT BLESSED THEE SO AS TO GIVE THEE SEED IN LSRAEL. BEING THEREFORE PUT TO SHAME IN THE SIGHT OF THE PEOPLE, HE RETIRED FROM THE TEMPLE OF THE LORD WEEPING, AND DID NOT RETURN TO HIS HOUSE, BUT WENT TO HIS FLOCKS, TAKING WITH HIM HIS SHEPHERDS INTO THE MOUNTAINS TO A FAR COUNTRY, SO THAT FOR FIVE MONTHS HIS WIFE ANNA COULD HEAR NO TIDINGS OF HIM. AND SHE PRAYED WITH TEARS, SAYING: O LORD, MOST MIGHTY GOD OF ISRAEL, WHY HAST THOU, SEEING THAT ALREADY THOU HAST NOT GIVEN ME CHILDREN, TAKEN FROM ME MY HUSBAND ALSO? BEHOLD, NOW FIVE MONTHS THAT I HAVE NOT SEEN MY HUSBAND, AND I KNOW NOT WHERE HE IS TARRYING; (4) NOR, IF I KNEW HIM TO BE DEAD, COULD I BURY HIM. AND WHILE SHE WEPT EXCESSIVELY, SHE ENTERED INTO THE COURT OF HIS HOUSE, AND SHE FELL ON HER FACE IN PRAYER, AND POURED OUT HER SUPPLICATIONS BEFORE THE LORD. AFTER THIS, RISING FROM HER PRAYER, AND LIFTING HER EYES TO GOD, SHE SAW A SPARROW'S NEST IN A LAUREL TREE, (5) AND UTTERED HER VOICE TO THE LORD WITH GROANING, AND SAID: LORD GOD ALMIGHTY, WHO HAST GIVEN [SEXLESS] OFFSPRING TO EVERY CREATURE, TO BEASTS WILD AND TAME, TO SERPENTS, AND BIRDS, AND FISHES, AND THEY ALL REJOICE OVER THEIR YOUNG ONES, THOU HAST SHUT OUT ME ALONE FROM THE GIFT OF THY BENIGNITY. FOR THOU, O GOD, KNOWEST MY HEART, THAT FROM THE BEGINNING OF MY MARRIED LIFE I HAVE VOWED THAT, IF THOU, O GOD, SHOULDST GIVE ME SON OR DAUGHTER, I WOULD OFFER THEM TO THEE IN THY HOLY TEMPLE. AND WHILE SHE WAS THUS SPEAKING, SUDDENLY AN ANGEL OF THE LORD APPEARED BEFORE HER, SAYING: BE NOT AFRAID, ANNA, FOR THERE IS SEED FOR THEE IN THE [SEXLESS] DECREE OF GOD, AND ALL GENERATIONS EVEN TO THE END SHALL WONDER AT THAT WHICH SHALL BE BORN OF THEE. AND WHEN HE HAD THUS SPOKEN, HE VANISHED OUT OF HER SIGHT. BUT SHE, IN FEAR AND DREAD BECAUSE SHE HAD SEEN SUCH A SIGHT, AND HEARD SUCH WORDS, AT LENGTH WENT INTO HER BED-CHAMBER, AND THREW HERSELF ON THE BED AS IF DEAD. AND FOR A WHOLE DAY AND NIGHT SHE REMAINED IN GREAT TREMBLING AND IN PRAYER. AND AFTER THESE THINGS SHE CALLED TO HER, HER SERVANT, AND SAID TO HER: DOST THOU SEE ME [SEXUALLY] DECEIVED IN MY WIDOWHOOD AND IN GREAT PERPLEXITY, AND HAST THOU BEEN UNWILLING TO COME IN TO ME? THEN SHE, WITH A SLIGHT MURMUR, THUS ANSWERED AND SAID: IF GOD HATH SHUT UP THY WOMB, AND HATH TAKEN AWAY THY HUSBAND FROM THEE, WHAT CAN I DO FOR THEE? AND WHEN ANNA HEARD THIS, SHE LIFTED UP HER VOICE, AND WEPT ALOUD.**

**CHAPTER 3: AT THE SAME TIME THERE APPEARED A YOUNG MAN ON THE MOUNTAINS TO JOACHIM WHILE HE WAS FEEDING HIS FLOCKS, AND SAID TO HIM: WHY DOST THOU NOT RETURN TO THY WIFE? AND JOACHIM SAID: I HAVE HAD HER FOR TWENTY YEARS, AND IT HAS NOT BEEN THE [SEXLESS] WILL OF GOD TO GIVE ME CHILDREN BY HER. I HAVE BEEN DRIVEN WITH SHAME AND REPROACH FROM THE TEMPLE OF THE LORD: WHY SHOULD I GO BACK TO HER, WHEN I HAVE BEEN ONCE CAST OFF AND UTTERLY DESPISED? HERE THEN WILL I REMAIN WITH MY SHEEP, AND SO LONG AS IN THIS LIFE, GOD IS WILLING TO GRANT ME LIGHT, I SHALL WILLINGLY, BY THE HANDS OF MY SERVANTS, BESTOW THEIR PORTIONS UPON THE POOR, AND THE ORPHANS, AND THOSE THAT FEAR GOD. AND WHEN HE HAD THUS SPOKEN, THE YOUNG MAN SAID TO HIM: I AM AN ANGEL OF THE LORD, AND I HAVE TODAY APPEARED TO THY WIFE WHEN SHE WAS WEEPING AND PRAYING, AND HAVE CONSOLED HER, AND KNOW THAT SHE HAS CONCEIVED A DAUGHTER FROM THY SEED, AND THOU IN THY IGNORANCE OF THIS HAST LEFT HER. SHE WILL BE IN THE TEMPLE OF GOD, AND THE HOLY SPIRIT SHALL ABIDE IN HER, AND HER BLESSEDNESS SHALL BE GREATER THAN THAT OF ALL THE HOLY WOMEN, SO THAT NO ONE CAN SAY THAT ANY BEFORE HER HAS BEEN LIKE HER, OR THAT ANY AFTER HER IN THIS WORLD WILL BE SO. THEREFORE, GO DOWN FROM THE MOUNTAINS, AND RETURN TO THY WIFE, WHOM THOU WILT FIND WITH CHILD. FOR GOD HATH RAISED UP SEED IN HER, AND FOR THIS THOU WILT GIVE GOD THANKS, AND HER SEED SHALL BE BLESSED, AND SHE HERSELF SHALL BE BLESSED, AND SHALL BE MADE THE MOTHER OF ETERNAL BLESSING. THEN JOACHIM ADORED THE ANGEL, AND SAID TO HIM: IF I HAVE FOUND FAVOUR IN THY SIGHT, SIT FOR A LITTLE IN MY TENT, AND BLESS THY SERVANT. (1) AND THE ANGEL SAID TO HIM: DO NOT SAY SERVANT, BUT FELLOW-SERVANT, FOR WE ARE THE SERVANTS OF ONE MASTER. (2) BUT MY FOOD IS INVISIBLE, AND MY DRINK CANNOT BE SEEN BY A MORTAL. THEREFORE, THOU OUGHTEST NOT TO ASK ME TO ENTER THY TENT, BUT IF THOU WAST ABOUT TO GIVE ME ANYTHING, (3) OFFER IT AS A BURNT-OFFERING TO THE LORD. THEN JOACHIM TOOK A LAMB WITHOUT SPOT, AND SAID TO THE ANGEL: I SHOULD NOT HAVE DARED TO OFFER A BURNT-OFFERING TO THE LORD, UNLESS THY COMMAND HAD GIVEN ME THE PRIEST'S RIGHT OF OFFERING. (4) AND THE ANGEL SAID TO HIM: I SHOULD NOT HAVE INVITED THEE TO OFFER UNLESS I HAD KNOWN THE [SEXLESS] WILL OF THE LORD. AND WHEN JOACHIM WAS OFFERING THE SACRIFICE TO GOD, THE ANGEL AND THE ODOUR OF THE SACRIFICE WENT TOGETHER STRAIGHT UP TO HEAVEN WITH THE SMOKE. (5) THEN JOACHIM, THROWING HIMSELF ON HIS FACE, LAY IN PRAYER FROM THE SIXTH HOUR OF THE DAY EVEN UNTIL EVENING. AND HIS LADS AND HIRED SERVANTS WHO WERE WITH HIM SAW HIM, AND NOT KNOWING WHY HE WAS LYING DOWN, THOUGHT THAT HE WAS DEAD, AND THEY CAME TO HIM, AND WITH DIFFICULTY RAISED HIM FROM THE GROUND. AND WHEN HE RECOUNTED TO THEM THE VISION OF THE ANGEL, THEY WERE STRUCK WITH GREAT FEAR AND WONDER, AND ADVISED HIM TO ACCOMPLISH THE VISION OF THE ANGEL WITHOUT DELAY, AND TO GO BACK WITH ALL HASTE TO HIS WIFE. AND WHEN JOACHIM WAS TURNING OVER IN HIS MIND WHETHER HE SHOULD GO BACK OR NOT, IT HAPPENED THAT HE WAS OVERPOWERED BY A DEEP SLEEP, AND, BEHOLD, THE ANGEL WHO HAD ALREADY APPEARED TO HIM WHEN AWAKE, APPEARED TO HIM IN HIS SLEEP, SAYING: I AM THE ANGEL APPOINTED BY GOD AS THY GUARDIAN: GO DOWN WITH CONFIDENCE, AND RETURN TO ANNA, BECAUSE THE [SEXLESS] DEEDS OF MERCY WHICH THOU AND THY WIFE ANNA HAVE DONE HAVE BEEN TOLD IN THE [SEXLESS] PRESENCE OF THE MOST HIGH [JEHOVAH], AND TO YOU WILL GOD GIVE SUCH FRUIT AS NO PROPHET OR SAINT HAS EVER HAD FROM THE BEGINNING, OR EVER WILL HAVE. AND WHEN JOACHIM AWOKE OUT OF HIS SLEEP, HE CALLED ALL HIS HERDSMEN TO HIM, AND TOLD THEM HIS DREAM. AND THEY [SEXLESSLY] WORSHIPPED THE LORD, AND SAID TO HIM: SEE THAT THOU NO FURTHER DESPISE THE WORDS OF THE ANGEL. BUT RISE AND LET US GO HENCE, AND RETURN AT A QUIET PACE, FEEDING OUR FLOCKS. AND WHEN, AFTER THIRTY DAYS OCCUPIED IN GOING BACK, THEY WERE NOW NEAR AT HAND, BEHOLD, THE ANGEL OF THE LORD APPEARED TO ANNA, WHO WAS STANDING AND PRAYING, AND SAID: (6) GO TO THE GATE WHICH IS CALLED GOLDEN, (7) AND MEET THY HUSBAND IN THE WAY, FOR TODAY HE WILL COME TO THEE. SHE THEREFORE WENT TOWARDS HIM IN HASTE, WITH HER MAIDENS, AND, PRAYING TO THE LORD, SHE STOOD A LONG TIME IN THE GATE WAITING FOR HIM. AND WHEN SHE WAS WEARIED WITH LONG WAITING, SHE LIFTED UP HER EYES AND SAW JOACHIM AFAR OFF COMING WITH HIS FLOCKS, AND SHE RAN TO HIM AND HUNG ON HIS NECK, GIVING THANKS TO GOD, AND SAYING: I WAS A WIDOW, AND BEHOLD NOW I AM NOT SO: I WAS BARREN, AND BEHOLD I HAVE NOW CONCEIVED. AND SO, THEY [SEXLESSLY] WORSHIPPED THE LORD, AND WENT INTO THEIR OWN HOUSE. AND WHEN THIS WAS HEARD OF, THERE WAS GREAT JOY AMONG ALL THEIR NEIGHBOURS AND ACQUAINTANCES, SO THAT THE WHOLE LAND OF LSRAEL CONGRATULATED THEM.**

**CHAPTER 4: AFTER THESE THINGS, HER NINE MONTHS BEING FULFILLED, ANNA BROUGHT FORTH A DAUGHTER, AND CALLED HER MARY. AND HAVING WEANED HER IN HER THIRD YEAR, JOACHIM, AND ANNA HIS WIFE, WENT TOGETHER TO THE TEMPLE OF THE LORD TO OFFER SACRIFICES TO GOD, AND PLACED THE INFANT, MARY BY NAME, IN THE COMMUNITY OF VIRGINS, IN WHICH THE VIRGINS REMAINED DAY AND NIGHT PRAISING GOD. AND WHEN SHE WAS PUT DOWN BEFORE THE DOORS OF THE TEMPLE, SHE WENT UP THE FIFTEEN STEPS (1) SO SWIFTLY, THAT SHE DID NOT LOOK BACK AT ALL, NOR DID SHE, AS CHILDREN ARE WONT TO DO, SEEK FOR HER PARENTS. WHEREUPON HER PARENTS, EACH OF THEM ANXIOUSLY SEEKING FOR THE CHILD, WERE BOTH ALIKE ASTONISHED, UNTIL THEY FOUND HER IN THE TEMPLE, AND THE PRIESTS OF THE TEMPLE THEMSELVES WONDERED.**

**CHAPTER 5: THEN ANNA, FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT, SAID BEFORE THEM ALL: THE LORD ALMIGHTY, THE GOD OF HOSTS, BEING MINDFUL OF HIS WORD, HATH VISITED HIS PEOPLE WITH A GOOD AND HOLY VISITATION, TO BRING DOWN THE HEARTS OF THE GENTILES WHO WERE RISING AGAINST US, AND TURN THEM TO HIMSELF. HE HATH OPENED HIS EARS TO OUR PRAYERS: HE HATH KEPT AWAY FROM US THE EXULTING OF ALL OUR ENEMIES. THE BARREN HATH BECOME A MOTHER, AND HATH BROUGHT FORTH EXULTATION AND GLADNESS TO LSRAEL. BEHOLD THE GIFTS WHICH I HAVE BROUGHT TO OFFER TO MY LORD, AND MINE ENEMIES HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO HINDER ME. FOR GOD HATH TURNED THEIR HEARTS TO ME, AND HIMSELF HATH GIVEN ME EVERLASTING JOY.**

**CHAPTER 6: AND MARY WAS HELD IN ADMIRATION BY ALL THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL, AND WHEN SHE WAS THREE YEARS OLD, SHE WALKED WITH A STEP SO MATURE, SHE SPOKE SO PERFECTLY, AND SPENT HER TIME SO ASSIDUOUSLY IN THE PRAISES OF GOD, THAT ALL WERE ASTONISHED AT HER, AND WONDERED, AND SHE WAS NOT RECKONED A YOUNG INFANT, BUT AS IT WERE A GROWN-UP PERSON OF THIRTY YEARS OLD. SHE WAS SO CONSTANT IN PRAYER, AND HER APPEARANCE WAS SO BEAUTIFUL AND GLORIOUS, THAT SCARCELY ANY ONE COULD LOOK INTO HER FACE. AND SHE OCCUPIED HERSELF CONSTANTLY WITH HER WOOL-WORK, SO THAT SHE IN HER TENDER YEARS COULD DO ALL THAT OLD WOMEN WERE NOT ABLE TO DO. AND THIS WAS THE ORDER THAT SHE HAD SET FOR HERSELF: (2) FROM THE MORNING TO THE THIRD HOUR SHE REMAINED IN PRAYER, FROM THE THIRD TO THE NINTH SHE WAS OCCUPIED WITH HER WEAVING, AND FROM THE NINTH SHE AGAIN APPLIED HERSELF TO PRAYER. SHE DID NOT RETIRE FROM PRAYING UNTIL THERE APPEARED TO HER THE ANGEL OF THE LORD, FROM WHOSE HAND SHE USED TO RECEIVE FOOD, AND THUS SHE BECAME MORE AND MORE PERFECT IN THE WORK OF GOD. THEN, WHEN THE OLDER VIRGINS RESTED FROM THE PRAISES OF GOD, SHE DID NOT REST AT ALL, SO THAT IN THE PRAISES AND VIGILS OF GOD NONE WERE FOUND BEFORE HER, NO ONE MORE LEARNED IN THE WISDOM OF THE [SEXLESS] LAW OF GOD, MORE-LOWLY IN HUMILITY [HUMBLENESS], MORE ELEGANT IN SINGING, MORE PERFECT IN ALL VIRTUE. SHE WAS INDEED STEADFAST, IMMOVEABLE, UNCHANGEABLE, AND DAILY ADVANCING TO PERFECTION. NO ONE SAW HER ANGRY, NOR HEARD HER SPEAKING [SEXUAL] EVIL. ALL HER SPEECH WAS SO FULL OF GRACE, THAT HER GOD WAS ACKNOWLEDGED TO BE IN HER TONGUE. SHE WAS ALWAYS ENGAGED IN PRAYER AND IN SEARCHING THE [SEXLESS] LAW, AND SHE WAS ANXIOUS LEST BY ANY WORD OF HERS SHE SHOULD [SEXUALLY] SIN WITH REGARD TO HER COMPANIONS. THEN SHE WAS AFRAID LEST IN HER LAUGHTER, OR THE SOUND OF HER BEAUTIFUL VOICE, SHE SHOULD COMMIT ANY [SEXUAL] FAULT, OR LEST, BEING ELATED, SHE SHOULD DISPLAY ANY WRONG-DOING OR HAUGHTINESS TO ONE OF HER EQUALS. (3) SHE BLESSED GOD WITHOUT INTERMISSION, AND LEST PERCHANCE, EVEN IN HER SALUTATION, SHE MIGHT CEASE FROM PRAISING GOD, IF ANY ONE SALUTED HER, SHE USED TO ANSWER BY WAY OF SALUTATION: THANKS BE TO GOD. AND FROM HER THE CUSTOM FIRST BEGAN OF MEN SAYING, THANKS BE TO GOD, WHEN THEY SALUTED EACH OTHER. SHE REFRESHED HERSELF ONLY WITH THE FOOD WHICH SHE DAILY RECEIVED FROM THE HAND OF THE ANGEL, BUT THE FOOD WHICH SHE OBTAINED FROM THE PRIESTS SHE DIVIDED AMONG THE POOR. THE ANGELS OF GOD WERE OFTEN SEEN SPEAKING WITH HER, AND THEY MOST DILIGENTLY OBEYED HER. IF ANY ONE WHO WAS UNWELL TOUCHED HER, THE SAME HOUR HE WENT HOME CURED.**

**CHAPTER 7: THEN ABIATHAR THE PRIEST OFFERED GIFTS WITHOUT END TO THE HIGH PRIESTS, IN ORDER THAT HE MIGHT OBTAIN HER AS WIFE TO HIS SON. BUT MARY FORBADE THEM, SAYING: IT CANNOT BE THAT I SHOULD KNOW A MAN, OR THAT A MAN SHOULD KNOW ME. FOR ALL THE PRIESTS AND ALL HER RELATIONS KEPT SAYING TO HER: GOD IS [SEXLESSLY] WORSHIPPED IN CHILDREN AND ADORED IN POSTERITY, AS HAS ALWAYS HAPPENED AMONG THE SONS OF ISRAEL. BUT MARY ANSWERED AND SAID UNTO THEM: GOD IS [SEXLESSLY] WORSHIPPED IN CHASTITY, AS IS PROVED FIRST OF ALL. (4) FOR BEFORE ABEL THERE WAS NONE RIGHTEOUS AMONG MEN, AND HE BY HIS OFFERINGS PLEASED GOD, AND WAS WITHOUT MERCY SLAIN BY HIM WHO DISPLEASED HIM. TWO CROWNS, THEREFORE, HE RECEIVED, OF OBLATION AND OF VIRGINITY, BECAUSE IN HIS FLESH THERE WAS NO [SEXUAL] POLLUTION. ELIAS ALSO, WHEN HE WAS IN THE FLESH, WAS TAKEN UP IN THE FLESH, BECAUSE HE KEPT HIS FLESH UNSPOTTED. NOW I, FROM MY INFANCY IN THE TEMPLE OF GOD, HAVE LEARNED THAT VIRGINITY CAN BE SUFFICIENTLY DEAR TO GOD. AND SO, BECAUSE I CAN OFFER WHAT IS DEAR TO GOD, I HAVE RESOLVED IN MY HEART THAT I SHOULD NOT KNOW A MAN AT ALL.**

**CHAPTER 8: NOW IT CAME TO PASS, WHEN SHE WAS FOURTEEN YEARS OLD, AND ON THIS ACCOUNT THERE WAS OCCASION FOR THE PHARISEES' SAYING THAT IT WAS NOW A CUSTOM THAT NO WOMAN OF THAT AGE SHOULD ABIDE IN THE TEMPLE OF GOD, THEY FELL UPON THE PLAN OF SENDING A HERALD THROUGH ALL THE TRIBES OF LSRAEL, THAT ON THE THIRD DAY ALL SHOULD COME TOGETHER INTO THE TEMPLE OF THE LORD. AND WHEN ALL THE PEOPLE HAD COME TOGETHER, ABIATHAR THE HIGH PRIEST ROSE, AND MOUNTED ON A HIGHER STEP, THAT HE MIGHT BE SEEN AND HEARD BY ALL THE PEOPLE, AND WHEN GREAT SILENCE HAD BEEN OBTAINED, HE SAID: HEAR ME, O SONS OF ISRAEL, AND RECEIVE MY WORDS INTO YOUR EARS. EVER SINCE THIS TEMPLE WAS BUILT BY SOLOMON, THERE HAVE BEEN IN IT, VIRGINS, THE DAUGHTERS OF KINGS AND THE DAUGHTERS OF PROPHETS, AND OF HIGH PRIESTS AND PRIESTS, AND THEY WERE GREAT, AND WORTHY OF ADMIRATION. BUT WHEN THEY CAME TO THE PROPER AGE THEY WERE GIVEN IN MARRIAGE, AND FOLLOWED THE COURSE OF THEIR MOTHERS BEFORE THEM, AND WERE PLEASING TO GOD. BUT A NEW ORDER OF LIFE HAS BEEN FOUND OUT BY MARY ALONE, WHO PROMISES THAT SHE WILL REMAIN A VIRGIN TO GOD. WHEREFORE IT SEEMS TO ME, THAT THROUGH OUR INQUIRY AND THE ANSWER OF GOD WE SHOULD TRY TO ASCERTAIN TO WHOSE KEEPING SHE OUGHT TO BE ENTRUSTED. THEN THESE WORDS FOUND FAVOUR WITH ALL THE SYNAGOGUE. AND THE LOT WAS EAST BY THE PRIESTS UPON THE TWELVE TRIBES, AND THE LOT FELL UPON THE TRIBE OF JUDAH. AND THE PRIEST SAID: TOMORROW LET EVERY ONE WHO HAS NO WIFE COME, AND BRING HIS ROD IN HIS HAND. WHENCE IT HAPPENED THAT JOSEPH (1) BROUGHT HIS ROD ALONG WITH THE YOUNG MEN. AND THE RODS HAVING BEEN HANDED OVER TO THE HIGH PRIEST, HE OFFERED A SACRIFICE TO THE LORD GOD, AND [SEXLESSLY] INQUIRED OF THE LORD. AND THE LORD SAID TO HIM: PUT ALL THEIR RODS INTO THE HOLY OF HOLIES OF GOD, AND LET THEM REMAIN THERE, AND ORDER THEM TO COME TO THEE ON THE MORROW TO GET BACK THEIR RODS, AND THE MAN FROM THE POINT OF WHOSE ROD A DOVE SHALL COME FORTH, AND FLY TOWARDS HEAVEN, AND IN WHOSE HAND THE ROD, WHEN GIVEN BACK, SHALL EXHIBIT THIS SIGN, TO HIM LET MARY BE DELIVERED TO BE KEPT. ON THE FOLLOWING DAY, THEN, ALL HAVING ASSEMBLED EARLY, AND AN INCENSE-OFFERING HAVING BEEN MADE, THE HIGH PRIEST WENT INTO THE HOLY OF HOLIES, AND BROUGHT FORTH THE RODS. AND WHEN HE HAD DISTRIBUTED THE RODS, (2) AND THE DOVE CAME FORTH OUT OF NONE OF THEM, THE HIGH PRIEST PUT ON THE TWELVE BELLS (3) AND THE SACERDOTAL ROBE, AND ENTERING INTO THE HOLY OF HOLIES, HE THERE MADE A BURNT-OFFERING, AND POURED FORTH A PRAYER. AND THE ANGEL OF THE LORD APPEARED TO HIM, SAYING: THERE IS HERE THE SHORTEST ROD, OF WHICH THOU HAST MADE NO ACCOUNT: THOU DIDST BRING IT IN WITH THE REST, BUT DIDST NOT TAKE IT OUT WITH THEM. WHEN THOU HAST TAKEN IT OUT, AND HAST GIVEN IT HIM WHOSE IT IS, IN IT WILL APPEAR THE SIGN OF WHICH I SPOKE TO THEE. NOW THAT WAS JOSEPH'S ROD, AND BECAUSE HE WAS AN OLD MAN, HE HAD BEEN CAST OFF, AS IT WERE, THAT HE MIGHT NOT RECEIVE HER, BUT NEITHER DID HE HIMSELF WISH TO ASK BACK HIS ROD. (4) AND WHEN HE WAS HUMBLY STANDING LAST OF ALL, THE HIGH PRIEST CRIED OUT TO HIM WITH A LOUD VOICE, SAYING: COME, JOSEPH, AND RECEIVE THY ROD, FOR WE ARE WAITING FOR THEE. AND JOSEPH CAME UP TREMBLING, BECAUSE THE HIGH PRIEST HAD CALLED HIM WITH A VERY LOUD VOICE. BUT AS SOON AS HE STRETCHED FORTH HIS HAND, AND LAID HOLD OF HIS ROD, IMMEDIATELY FROM THE TOP OF IT CAME FORTH A DOVE WHITER THAN SNOW, BEAUTIFUL EXCEEDINGLY, WHICH, AFTER LONG FLYING ABOUT THE ROOFS OF THE TEMPLE, AT LENGTH FLEW TOWARDS THE HEAVENS. THEN ALL THE PEOPLE CONGRATULATED THE OLD MAN, SAYING: THOU HAST BEEN MADE BLESSED IN THINE OLD AGE, O FATHER JOSEPH, SEEING THAT GOD HATH SHOWN THEE TO BE FIT TO RECEIVE MARY. AND THE PRIESTS HAVING SAID TO HIM, TAKE HER, BECAUSE OF ALL THE TRIBE OF JUDAH THOU ALONE HAST BEEN CHOSEN BY GOD, JOSEPH BEGAN BASHFULLY TO ADDRESS THEM, SAYING: I AM AN OLD MAN, AND HAVE CHILDREN, WHY DO YOU HAND OVER TO ME THIS INFANT, WHO IS YOUNGER THAN MY GRANDSONS (THE SON OF ONE’S SON OR ONE’S DAUGHTER)? THEN ABIATHAR THE HIGH PRIEST SAID TO HIM: REMEMBER, JOSEPH, HOW DATHAN AND ABIRON AND CORE PERISHED, BECAUSE THEY DESPISED THE [SEXLESS] WILL OF GOD. SO, WILL IT HAPPEN TO THEE, IF THOU DESPISE THIS WHICH IS COMMANDED THEE BY GOD. JOSEPH ANSWERED HIM: I INDEED DO NOT DESPISE THE [SEXLESS] WILL OF GOD, BUT I SHALL BE HER GUARDIAN UNTIL I CAN ASCERTAIN CONCERNING THE [SEXLESS] WILL OF GOD, AS TO WHICH OF MY SONS CAN HAVE HER AS HIS WIFE. LET SOME VIRGINS OF HER COMPANIONS, WITH WHOM SHE MAY MEANWHILE SPEND HER TIME, BE GIVEN FOR A CONSOLATION TO HER. ABIATHAR THE HIGH PRIEST ANSWERED AND SAID: FIVE VIRGINS INDEED SHALL BE GIVEN HER FOR CONSOLATION, UNTIL THE APPOINTED DAY COME IN WHICH THOU MAYST RECEIVE HER, FOR TO NO OTHER CAN SHE BE JOINED IN MARRIAGE. THEN JOSEPH RECEIVED MARY, WITH THE OTHER FIVE VIRGINS WHO WERE TO BE WITH HER IN JOSEPH'S HOUSE. THESE VIRGINS WERE REBECCA, SEPHORA, SUSANNA, ABIGEA, AND CAEL, TO WHOM THE HIGH PRIEST GAVE THE SILK, AND THE BLUE, (5) AND THE FINE LINEN, AND THE SCARLET, AND THE PURPLE, AND THE FINE FLAX. FOR THEY CAST LOTS AMONG THEMSELVES WHAT EACH VIRGIN SHOULD DO, AND THE PURPLE FOR THE VEIL OF THE TEMPLE OF THE LORD FELL TO THE LOT OF MARY. AND WHEN SHE HAD GOT IT, THOSE VIRGINS SAID TO HER: SINCE THOU ART THE LAST, AND HUMBLE, AND YOUNGER THAN ALL, THOU HAST DESERVED TO RECEIVE AND OBTAIN THE PURPLE. AND THUS SAYING, AS IT WERE IN WORDS OF ANNOYANCE, THEY BEGAN TO CALL HER QUEEN OF VIRGINS. WHILE, HOWEVER, THEY WERE SO DOING, THE ANGEL OF THE LORD APPEARED IN THE MIDST OF THEM, SAYING: THESE WORDS SHALL NOT HAVE BEEN UTTERED BY WAY OF ANNOYANCE, BUT PROPHESIED AS A PROPHECY MOST TRUE. THEY TREMBLED, THEREFORE, AT THE SIGHT OF THE ANGEL, AND AT HIS WORDS, AND ASKED HER TO PARDON THEM, AND PRAY FOR THEM.**

**CHAPTER 9: AND ON THE SECOND DAY, WHILE MARY WAS AT THE FOUNTAIN TO FILL HER PITCHER, THE ANGEL OF THE LORD APPEARED TO HER, SAYING: BLESSED ART THOU, MARY, FOR IN THY WOMB THOU HAST PREPARED A [SEXLESS] HABITATION FOR THE LORD. FOR, LO, THE LIGHT FROM HEAVEN [ACTS 9:3; 22:6; 26:13] SHALL COME AND DWELL IN THEE, AND BY MEANS OF THEE WILL SHINE OVER THE WHOLE WORLD. AGAIN, ON THE THIRD DAY, WHILE SHE WAS WORKING AT THE PURPLE WITH HER FINGERS, THERE ENTERED A YOUNG MAN OF INEFFABLE BEAUTY. AND WHEN MARY SAW HIM, SHE EXCEEDINGLY FEARED AND TREMBLED. AND HE SAID TO HER: HAIL, MARY, FULL OF GRACE, THE LORD IS WITH THEE: BLESSED ART THOU AMONG WOMEN, AND BLESSED IS THE FRUIT OF THY WOMB. [1] AND WHEN SHE HEARD THESE WORDS, SHE TREMBLED, AND WAS EXCEEDINGLY AFRAID. THEN THE ANGEL OF THE LORD ADDED: FEAR NOT, MARY, FOR THOU HAST FOUND FAVOUR WITH GOD: BEHOLD, THOU SHALT CONCEIVE IN THY WOMB, AND SHALT BRING FORTH A KING, WHO FILLS NOT ONLY THE EARTH, BUT THE HEAVEN, AND WHO REIGNS FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION.**

**CHAPTER 10: WHILE THESE THINGS WERE DOING, JOSEPH WAS OCCUPIED WITH HIS WORK, HOUSE-BUILDING, IN THE DISTRICTS BY THE SEA-SHORE, FOR HE WAS A CARPENTER. AND AFTER NINE MONTHS HE CAME BACK TO HIS HOUSE, AND FOUND MARY PREGNANT [WITH THE HOLY GHOST IN JOHN 4:23-24]. WHEREFORE, BEING IN THE UTMOST DISTRESS, HE TREMBLED AND CRIED OUT, SAYING: O LORD GOD, RECEIVE MY SPIRIT, FOR IT IS BETTER FOR ME TO DIE THAN TO LIVE ANY LONGER. AND THE VIRGINS WHO WERE WITH MARY SAID TO HIM: JOSEPH, WHAT ART THOU SAYING? WE KNOW THAT NO MAN HAS TOUCHED HER, WE CAN TESTIFY THAT SHE IS STILL A VIRGIN, AND UNTOUCHED. WE HAVE WATCHED OVER HER, ALWAYS HAS SHE CONTINUED WITH US IN PRAYER, DAILY DO THE ANGELS OF GOD SPEAK WITH HER, DAILY DOES SHE RECEIVE FOOD FROM THE [TERRIBLE] HAND OF THE LORD. WE KNOW NOT HOW IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THERE CAN BE ANY [SEXUAL] SIN IN HER [1ST JOHN 3:9]. BUT IF THOU WISHEST US TO TELL THEE WHAT WE SUSPECT, NOBODY BUT THE ANGEL OF THE LORD [2] HAS MADE HER PREGNANT. THEN SAID JOSEPH: WHY DO YOU MISLEAD ME, TO BELIEVE THAT AN ANGEL OF THE LORD HAS MADE HER PREGNANT? BUT IT IS POSSIBLE THAT SOME ONE HAS PRETENDED TO BE AN ANGEL OF THE LORD, AND HAS [SEXUALLY] BEGUILED HER [ACTS 13:41]. AND THUS SPEAKING, HE WEPT, AND SAID: WITH WHAT FACE SHALL I LOOK AT THE TEMPLE OF THE LORD, OR WITH WHAT FACE SHALL I SEE THE PRIESTS OF GOD? WHAT AM I TO DO? AND THUS SAYING, HE THOUGHT THAT HE WOULD FLEE, AND SEND HER AWAY.**

**CHAPTER 11: AND WHEN HE WAS THINKING OF RISING UP AND HIDING HIMSELF, AND DWELLING IN [TOP] SECRET, BEHOLD, ON THAT VERY NIGHT, THE ANGEL OF THE LORD APPEARED TO HIM IN SLEEP, SAYING: JOSEPH, THOU SON OF DAVID, FEAR NOT, RECEIVE MARY AS THY WIFE: FOR THAT WHICH IS IN HER WOMB IS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AND SHE SHALL BRING FORTH A SON, AND HIS NAME SHALL BE CALLED JESUS, FOR HE WILL SAVE HIS PEOPLE FROM THEIR [SEXUAL] SINS. AND JOSEPH, RISING FROM HIS SLEEP, GAVE THANKS TO GOD, AND SPOKE TO MARY AND THE VIRGINS WHO WERE WITH HER, AND TOLD THEM HIS VISION. AND HE WAS COMFORTED ABOUT MARY, SAYING: I HAVE [SEXUALLY] SINNED, IN THAT I SUSPECTED THEE AT ALL.**

**CHAPTER 12: AFTER THESE THINGS THERE AROSE A GREAT REPORT THAT MARY WAS WITH CHILD. AND JOSEPH WAS SEIZED BY THE OFFICERS OF THE TEMPLE, AND BROUGHT ALONG WITH MARY TO THE HIGH PRIEST. AND HE WITH THE PRIESTS BEGAN TO REPROACH HIM, AND TO SAY: WHY HAST THOU [SEXUALLY] BEGUILED SO GREAT AND SO GLORIOUS A VIRGIN, WHO WAS FED LIKE A DOVE IN THE TEMPLE BY THE ANGELS OF GOD, WHO NEVER WISHED EITHER TO SEE OR TO HAVE A MAN, WHO HAD THE MOST EXCELLENT KNOWLEDGE OF THE [SEXLESS] LAW OF GOD? IF THOU HADST NOT DONE [SEXUAL] VIOLENCE TO HER, SHE WOULD STILL HAVE REMAINED IN HER VIRGINITY. AND JOSEPH VOWED, AND SWORE THAT HE HAD NEVER TOUCHED HER AT ALL. AND ABIATHAR THE HIGH PRIEST ANSWERED HIM: AS THE LORD LIVETH, I WILL GIVE THEE TO DRINK OF THE [CURSED] WATER OF DRINKING OF THE LORD, AND IMMEDIATELY THY [SEXUAL] SIN WILL APPEAR. THEN WAS ASSEMBLED A MULTITUDE OF PEOPLE WHICH COULD NOT BE NUMBERED, AND MARY WAS BROUGHT TO THE TEMPLE. AND THE PRIESTS, AND HER RELATIVES, AND HER PARENTS WEPT, AND SAID TO MARY: CONFESS TO THE PRIESTS THY [SEXUAL] SIN, THOU THAT WAST LIKE A DOVE IN THE TEMPLE OF GOD, AND DIDST RECEIVE FOOD FROM THE HANDS OF AN ANGEL. AND AGAIN, JOSEPH WAS SUMMONED TO THE ALTAR, AND THE [CURSED] WATER OF DRINKING OF THE LORD WAS GIVEN HIM TO DRINK. AND WHEN ANY ONE THAT HAD LIED DRANK THIS WATER, AND WALKED SEVEN TIMES ROUND THE ALTAR, GOD USED TO SHOW SOME SIGN IN HIS FACE. WHEN, THEREFORE, JOSEPH HAD DRUNK IN SAFETY, AND HAD WALKED ROUND THE ALTAR SEVEN TIMES, NO SIGN OF [SEXUAL] SIN APPEARED IN HIM. THEN ALL THE PRIESTS, AND THE OFFICERS, AND THE PEOPLE JUSTIFIED HIM, SAYING: BLESSED ART THOU, SEEING THAT NO CHARGE HAS BEEN FOUND GOOD AGAINST THEE. AND THEY SUMMONED MARY, AND SAID: AND WHAT EXCUSE CANST THOU HAVE? OR WHAT GREATER SIGN CAN APPEAR IN THEE THAN THE CONCEPTION OF THY WOMB, WHICH [SEXUALLY] BETRAYS THEE? THIS ONLY WE REQUIRE OF THEE, THAT SINCE JOSEPH IS PURE REGARDING THEE, THOU CONFESS WHO IT IS THAT HAS [SEXUALLY] BEGUILED THEE. FOR IT IS BETTER THAT THY CONFESSION SHOULD [SEXUALLY] BETRAY THEE, THAN THAT THE WRATH OF GOD SHOULD SET A MARK ON THY FACE, AND EXPOSE THEE IN THE MIDST OF THE PEOPLE. THEN MARY SAID, STEADFASTLY AND WITHOUT TREMBLING: O LORD GOD, KING OVER ALL, WHO KNOWEST ALL [TOP] SECRETS, IF THERE BE ANY [SEXUAL] POLLUTION IN ME, OR ANY [SEXUAL] SIN, OR ANY EVIL [SEXUAL] DESIRES, OR UNCHASTITY, EXPOSE ME IN THE SIGHT OF ALL THE PEOPLE, AND MAKE ME AN EXAMPLE OF PUNISHMENT TO ALL. THUS SAYING, SHE WENT UP TO THE ALTAR OF THE LORD BOLDLY, AND DRANK THE WATER OF DRINKING, AND WALKED ROUND THE ALTAR SEVEN TIMES, AND NO SPOT WAS FOUND IN HER. AND WHEN ALL THE PEOPLE WERE IN THE UTMOST ASTONISHMENT, SEEING THAT SHE WAS WITH CHILD, AND THAT NO SIGN HAD APPEARED IN HER FACE, THEY BEGAN TO BE [SEXUALLY] DISTURBED AMONG THEMSELVES BY CONFLICTING STATEMENTS: SOME SAID THAT SHE WAS HOLY AND [SEXLESSLY] UNSPOTTED, OTHERS THAT SHE WAS WICKED AND [SEXUALLY] DEFILED. THEN MARY, SEEING THAT SHE WAS STILL SUSPECTED BY THE PEOPLE, AND THAT ON THAT ACCOUNT SHE DID NOT SEEM TO THEM TO BE WHOLLY CLEARED, SAID IN THE HEARING OF ALL, WITH A LOUD VOICE, AS THE LORD ADONAI LIVETH, THE LORD OF HOSTS BEFORE WHOM I STAND, I HAVE NOT KNOWN MAN, BUT I AM KNOWN BY HIM TO WHOM FROM MY EARLIEST YEARS I HAVE DEVOTED MYSELF. AND THIS VOW I MADE TO MY GOD FROM MY INFANCY, THAT I SHOULD REMAIN UNSPOTTED IN HIM WHO CREATED ME, AND I TRUST THAT I SHALL SO LIVE TO HIM ALONE, AND SERVE HIM ALONE, AND IN HIM, AS LONG AS I SHALL LIVE, WILL I REMAIN [SEXLESSLY] UNPOLLUTED. THEN THEY ALL BEGAN TO KISS HER FEET AND TO EMBRACE HER KNEES, ASKING HER TO PARDON THEM FOR THEIR WICKED [SEXUAL] SUSPICIONS. AND SHE WAS LED DOWN TO HER HOUSE WITH EXULTATION AND JOY BY THE PEOPLE, AND THE PRIESTS, AND ALL THE VIRGINS. AND THEY CRIED OUT, AND SAID: BLESSED BE THE NAME OF THE LORD [THE LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH] FOR EVER, BECAUSE HE HATH MANIFESTED THY HOLINESS TO ALL HIS PEOPLE ISRAEL.**

**CHAPTER 13: AND IT CAME TO PASS SOME LITTLE TIME AFTER, THAT AN ENROLLMENT WAS MADE ACCORDING TO THE EDICT OF CAESAR AUGUSTUS, THAT ALL THE WORLD WAS TO BE ENROLLED [REGISTERED], EACH MAN IN HIS NATIVE PLACE. THIS ENROLLMENT WAS MADE BY CYRINUS, THE GOVERNOR OF SYRIA, [1] IT WAS NECESSARY, THEREFORE, THAT JOSEPH SHOULD ENROLL WITH THE BLESSED MARY IN BETHLEHEM, BECAUSE TO IT THEY BELONGED, BEING OF THE TRIBE OF JUDAH, AND OF THE HOUSE AND FAMILY OF DAVID. WHEN, THEREFORE, JOSEPH AND THE BLESSED MARY WERE GOING ALONG THE ROAD WHICH LEADS TO BETHLEHEM, MARY SAID TO JOSEPH: I SEE TWO PEOPLES BEFORE ME, THE ONE WEEPING, AND THE OTHER REJOICING. AND JOSEPH ANSWERED: SIT STILL ON THY BEAST, AND DO NOT SPEAK SUPERFLUOUS WORDS. THEN THERE APPEARED BEFORE THEM A BEAUTIFUL BOY, CLOTHED IN WHITE RAIMENT, WHO SAID TO JOSEPH: WHY DIDST THOU SAY THAT THE WORDS WHICH MARY SPOKE ABOUT THE TWO PEOPLES WERE SUPERFLUOUS? FOR SHE SAW THE PEOPLE OF THE JEWS WEEPING, BECAUSE THEY HAVE DEPARTED FROM THEIR GOD, AND THE PEOPLE OF THE GENTILES REJOICING, BECAUSE THEY HAVE NOW BEEN ADDED AND MADE NEAR TO THE LORD, ACCORDING TO THAT WHICH HE PROMISED TO OUR FATHERS ABRAHAM, ISAAC, AND JACOB: FOR THE TIME IS AT HAND WHEN IN THE [SEXLESS] SEED OF ABRAHAM ALL NATIONS SHALL BE BLESSED. [2] AND WHEN HE HAD THUS SAID, THE ANGEL ORDERED THE BEAST TO STAND [ACTS 8:25-40], FOR THE TIME WHEN SHE SHOULD BRING FORTH WAS AT HAND, AND HE COMMANDED THE BLESSED MARY TO COME DOWN OFF THE ANIMAL, AND GO INTO A RECESS UNDER A CAVERN, IN WHICH THERE NEVER WAS LIGHT, BUT ALWAYS DARKNESS, BECAUSE THE LIGHT OF DAY COULD NOT REACH IT. AND WHEN THE BLESSED MARY HAD GONE INTO IT, IT BEGAN TO SHINE WITH AS MUCH BRIGHTNESS AS IF IT WERE THE SIXTH HOUR OF THE DAY. THE LIGHT [SIRACH 23:19] FROM GOD SO SHONE IN THE CAVE, THAT NEITHER BY DAY NOR NIGHT WAS LIGHT WANTING AS LONG AS THE BLESSED MARY WAS THERE. AND THERE SHE BROUGHT FORTH A SON, AND THE ANGELS SURROUNDED HIM WHEN HE WAS BEING BORN [THE LORD JESUS CHRIST AS THE TOP CREATOR AGENT LORD’S FIRST-FRUITS IN CONCEIVING & CONCEPTION OF 8.5 MONTHS OF PREGNANCY BEFORE HIS BIRTH AT THE BEGINNING OF THE HOLY GHOST’S SEED IS SUNDAY, JUNE 28TH, 3BC AT 3:00PM & JESUS’ BIRTHDAY IS IN THE MONTH ADAR ON SUNDAY, MARCH 7TH, 2BC AT 3:00PM & JESUS’ ARREST TO THE 4 TRIALS TO THE CROSS TO THE DEATH TO THE HELL TO THE GRAVE, TO THE PRISON IN HELL TO THE RELEASE FROM THE PRISON IN HELL IS ON THURSDAY, APRIL 4TH, 30AD AT 3:00AM TO SATURDAY, APRIL 7TH, 30AD AT 3:00AM IN THE 1ST FORMER UNIVERSE & JESUS’ CASTING OUT, TO LEAVE THIS WORLD IS ON FRIDAY, APRIL 5TH, 30AD AT 3:00PM & JESUS’ RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD TO CREATOR AGENT LORDSHIP IS 38 DAYS IN THE NEW UNIVERSE FROM THE ARREST TO LORDSHIP IS 40 DAYS, WHICH IS SUNDAY, APRIL 7TH, 30AD AT 6:00AM TO SUNDAY, MAY 12TH, 30AD AT 6:00AM ON THE EUPHORIA CONTINENT, PRIMARILY IN PALESTINE IN JERUSALEM, ISRAEL & THIS RULE GOES FOR EVERY ETERNAL CREATURE THAT IS BORN, IF YOU KNOW THE BIRTHDAY, THEN YOU KNOW A CLOSE TIME FRAME FROM THE DEATH TO THE CASTING OUT TO THE HELL TO THE GRAVE, TO THE PRISON IN HELL TO THE RELEASE FROM THE PRISON IN HELL IN THE 1ST FORMER UNIVERSE & THE RESURRECTION TO LORDSHIP OF THAT ETERNAL CREATURE ALSO AT THE SAME TIME FRAME IN THE NEW UNIVERSE IN 2ND PROVERBS 8:30-31; ENOCH 68:3-5; LUKE 1 & 2 & ACTS OF THE APOSTLES IN ACTS 29:1-2 WITH A ACTS 30 AND EVEN THE LORD ENOCH’S CHRIST AS THE TOP CREATOR AGENT LORD’S FIRST-FRUITS IN CONCEIVING & CONCEPTION OF 8.5 MONTHS OF PREGNANCY BEFORE HIS BIRTH AT THE BEGINNING OF THE HOLY GHOST’S SEED IS SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 24TH, AT LEAST A TRILLION YEARS AGO AT 3:00AM & ENOCH’S BIRTHDAY IS IN THE MONTH SIVAN ON SUNDAY, JUNE 6TH AT LEAST A TRILLION YEARS AGO AT 3:00AM & ENOCH DID GO THROUGH A ETERNAL ARREST BY THE LORD TO SECURE ETERNAL SALVATION FOREVER ENDLESSLY THROUGH ETERNAL SUFFERINGS, BUT DID NOT GO THROUGH A ETERNAL DEATH TO THE ETERNAL PRISON IN HELL BECAUSE HE WAS TAKEN UP BY THE LORD AFTER THE 385 YEARS ENOCH CONTINUED IN HIS [SEXLESS] MINISTRY BEFORE THE LORD THREE HUNDRED AND EIGHTY-FIVE YEARS [THE HOLY HOLY BIBLE LISTS IT AS 366 YEARS WITH THE PREGNANCY, BUT STRENGTH IN WEAKNESS (10 YEARS IN PSALMS 90:10) & STRENGTH ABOVE ANY WEAKNESS (10 YEARS IN 2ND CORINTHIANS 12:1-10) IS 386 YEARS WITH THE PREGNANCY, 20 YEARS ADDED AT THE POINT BETWEEN GENESIS 5:23-24 & THE QUESTION IS, DID ENOCH HAVE 86 YEARS IN THE SINGLE REALM & 301 YEARS IN THE MARRIAGE REALM OR 66 YEARS IN THE SINGLE REALM & 311 YEARS IN THE MARRIAGE REALM OR 76 YEARS IN THE SINGLE REALM & 321 YEARS IN THE MARRIAGE REALM OR 86 YEARS IN THE SINGLE REALM OR A OVERLAPPING WITH A MIXTURE OF BOTH WORKING BOTH WAYS IN THE 20 YEARS THAT THE LORD STEVE INITIALLY HANDLED IN THE ETERNAL STONING ONCE BETWEEN THE 1ST FORMER UNIVERSE & THE NEW UNIVERSE FROM JUNE 7TH, 1996AD TO JUNE 7TH, 2016AD TO CLOSE UP THE 2000 YEAR REIGN FROM JUNE 7TH, 4BC TO JUNE 7TH, 1996AD & JUNE 6TH TO JULY 4TH FROM ACTS 1:4-ACTS 29:1-2 IS 29 DAYS [LEVELS] & FROM ACTS 1:4-ACTS 30 IS 30 DAYS [LEVELS] GLOBALLY IN THE KINGDOM OF LORDSHIP IN ACTS 7:60 & THE TRUE HOLY DIVISION OF THE 20 YEARS AFTERWARDS IN FROM JUNE 7TH, 1996AD TO JUNE 7TH, 2016AD & TO FINISH IT UP IN THE ULTIMATE END 2 YEARS AFTERWARDS IN JUNE 7TH, 2018AD IN ACTS OF THE HOLY GHOST IN ACTS 9:3-30 & IS A CALL WOULD CONCERN 400 YEARS, THE CALL OF 15 YEARS IN HEAVEN ABOVE THE INITIAL 385 YEARS THAT WAS COMPLETED IN THE USA ON INDEPENDENCE DAY FROM JULY 4TH, 1776AD TO JULY 4TH, 1996AD OF THE 200 YEARS IN THE UPTIME/DOWNTIME, WHICH IS 400 YEARS IN 2ND CORINTHIANS 12:1-6 & ACTS 7:6-7], AND AT THE END OF THAT TIME HE BECAME AWARE THROUGH THE GRACE OF GOD, THAT GOD INTENDED TO REMOVE HIM FROM THE EARTH IN HEBREWS 11:5 FROM THE 1ST FORMER UNIVERSE, TO LEAVE THIS WORLD & GO INTO THE NEW UNIVERSE IS ON SUNDAY, JUNE 7TH AT LEAST A TRILLION YEARS AGO AT 3:00AM ON THE SOUTH AMERICA/NORTH AMERICA CONTINENT, PRIMARILY IN THE USA IN FLORENCE, SC IN THE NEW UNIVERSE IN PROVERBS 8:22-29; 2ND BOOK OF ADAM & EVE 22:4; 2ND ENOCH 68:3-5; GENESIS 5:22-24 & ACTS OF THE HOLY GHOST IN ACTS 29:1-2 WITH A ACTS 30]. AND AS SOON AS HE WAS BORN, HE STOOD UPON HIS FEET, AND THE ANGELS ADORED HIM, SAYING: GLORY TO GOD IN THE [MOST] HIGHEST, AND ON EARTH PEACE TO MEN OF GOOD [SEXLESS] PLEASURE. [3] NOW, WHEN THE [SEXLESS] BIRTH OF THE LORD WAS AT HAND, JOSEPH HAD GONE AWAY TO SEEK MIDWIVES. AND WHEN HE HAD FOUND THEM, HE RETURNED TO THE CAVE, AND FOUND WITH MARY THE INFANT WHICH SHE HAD BROUGHT FORTH. AND JOSEPH SAID TO THE BLESSED MARY: I HAVE BROUGHT THEE TWO MIDWIVES--ZELOMI [4] AND SALOME; AND THEY ARE STANDING OUTSIDE BEFORE THE ENTRANCE TO THE CAVE, NOT DARING TO COME IN HITHER, BECAUSE OF THE EXCEEDING BRIGHTNESS. AND WHEN THE BLESSED MARY HEARD THIS, SHE SMILED, AND JOSEPH SAID TO HER: DO NOT SMILE, BUT PRUDENTLY ALLOW THEM TO VISIT THEE, IN CASE THOU SHOULDST REQUIRE THEM FOR THY CURE. THEN SHE ORDERED THEM TO ENTER. AND WHEN ZELOMI HAD COME IN, SALOME HAVING STAYED WITHOUT, ZELOMI SAID TO MARY: ALLOW ME TO TOUCH THEE. AND WHEN SHE HAD PERMITTED HER TO MAKE AN EXAMINATION, THE MIDWIFE CRIED OUT WITH A LOUD VOICE, AND SAID: LORD, LORD ALMIGHTY, MERCY ON US! IT HAS NEVER BEEN HEARD OR THOUGHT OF, THAT ANY ONE SHOULD HAVE HER BREASTS FULL OF MILK, AND THAT THE BIRTH OF A SON SHOULD SHOW HIS MOTHER TO BE A VIRGIN. BUT THERE HAS BEEN NO SPILLING OF BLOOD IN HIS BIRTH, NO PAIN IN BRINGING HIM FORTH. A VIRGIN HAS CONCEIVED, A VIRGIN HAS BROUGHT FORTH, AND A VIRGIN SHE REMAINS. AND HEARING THESE WORDS, SALOME SAID: ALLOW ME TO HANDLE THEE, AND PROVE WHETHER ZELOMI HAVE SPOKEN THE TRUTH. AND THE BLESSED MARY ALLOWED HER TO HANDLE HER. AND WHEN SHE HAD WITHDRAWN HER HAND FROM HANDLING HER [INVESTGATING HER PUSSY TO SEE IF ANY DAMAGE OCCURRED WHILE GIVING BIRTH], IT DRIED UP, AND THROUGH EXCESS OF PAIN SHE BEGAN TO WEEP BITTERLY, AND TO BE IN GREAT DISTRESS, CRYING OUT, AND SAYING: O LORD GOD, THOU KNOWEST THAT I HAVE ALWAYS FEARED THEE, AND THAT WITHOUT RECOMPENSE I HAVE CARED FOR ALL THE POOR, I HAVE TAKEN NOTHING FROM THE WIDOW AND THE ORPHAN, AND THE NEEDY HAVE I NOT SENT EMPTY AWAY. AND, BEHOLD, I AM MADE WRETCHED BECAUSE OF MINE UNBELIEF, SINCE WITHOUT A CAUSE I WISHED TO TRY THY VIRGIN. AND WHILE SHE WAS THUS SPEAKING, THERE STOOD BY HER A YOUNG MAN IN SHINING GARMENTS, SAYING: GO TO THE CHILD, AND ADORE HIM, AND TOUCH HIM WITH THY HAND, AND HE WILL HEAL THEE, BECAUSE HE IS THE SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD, AND OF ALL THAT HOPE IN HIM. AND SHE WENT TO THE CHILD WITH HASTE, AND ADORED HIM, AND TOUCHED THE FRINGE OF THE CLOTHS IN WHICH HE WAS WRAPPED, AND INSTANTLY HER HAND WAS CURED. AND GOING FORTH, SHE BEGAN TO CRY ALOUD, AND TO TELL THE WONDERFUL THINGS WHICH SHE HAD SEEN, AND WHICH SHE HAD SUFFERED, AND HOW SHE HAD BEEN CURED, SO THAT MANY THROUGH HER STATEMENTS BELIEVED. AND SOME SHEPHERDS ALSO AFFIRMED THAT THEY HAD SEEN ANGELS SINGING A HYMN AT MIDNIGHT, PRAISING AND BLESSING THE GOD OF HEAVEN, AND SAYING: THERE HAS BEEN BORN THE SAVIOUR OF ALL, WHO IS CHRIST THE LORD, IN WHOM SALVATION SHALL BE BROUGHT BACK TO ISRAEL. [1] MOREOVER, A GREAT STAR, LARGER THAN ANY THAT HAD BEEN SEEN SINCE THE BEGINNING OF THE WORLD, SHONE OVER THE CAVE FROM THE EVENING TILL THE MORNING. AND THE PROPHETS WHO WERE IN JERUSALEM SAID THAT THIS STAR POINTED OUT THE BIRTH OF CHRIST, WHO SHOULD RESTORE THE PROMISE NOT ONLY TO ISRAEL, BUT TO ALL NATIONS.**

**CHAPTER 14: AND ON THE THIRD DAY [TUESDAY] AFTER THE [SEXLESS] BIRTH OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, THE MOST BLESSED MARY WENT FORTH OUT OF THE CAVE, AND ENTERING A STABLE, PLACED THE CHILD IN THE STALL, AND THE OX AND THE ASS ADORED HIM. THEN WAS FULFILLED THAT WHICH WAS SAID BY ISAIAH THE PROPHET, SAYING: THE OX KNOWETH HIS OWNER, AND THE ASS HIS MASTER'S CRIB. [2] THE VERY ANIMALS, THEREFORE, THE OX AND THE ASS, HAVING HIM IN THEIR MIDST, INCESSANTLY ADORED HIM. THEN WAS FULFILLED THAT WHICH WAS SAID BY ABACUC THE PROPHET, SAYING: [3] BETWEEN TWO ANIMALS THOU ART MADE MANIFEST. IN THE SAME PLACE JOSEPH REMAINED WITH MARY THREE DAYS.**

**CHAPTER 15: AND ON THE SIXTH DAY [FRIDAY] THEY ENTERED BETHLEHEM, WHERE THEY SPENT THE SEVENTH DAY [SATURDAY]. AND ON THE EIGHTH DAY [SUNDAY] THEY CIRCUMCISED THE CHILD, AND CALLED HIS NAME JESUS, FOR SO HE WAS CALLED BY THE ANGEL BEFORE HE WAS CONCEIVED IN THE WOMB [FORMER GLORY POSSIBLY AS MICHAEL]. [4] NOW, AFTER THE DAYS OF THE PURIFIATION OF MARY WERE FULFILLED ACCORDING TO THE [SEXLESS] LAW OF MOSES, THEN JOSEPH TOOK THE INFANT TO THE TEMPLE OF THE LORD. AND WHEN THE INFANT HAD RECEIVED PARHITHOMUS, [5] PARHITHOMUS, THAT IS, CIRCUMCISION--THEY OFFERED FOR HIM A PAIR OF TURTLE-DOVES, OR TWO YOUNG PIGEONS. [6] NOW THERE WAS IN THE TEMPLE A MAN OF GOD, PERFECT AND JUST, WHOSE NAME WAS SYMEON, A HUNDRED AND TWELVE YEARS OLD. HE HAD RECEIVED THE [SEXLESS] ANSWER FROM THE LORD, THAT HE SHOULD NOT TASTE OF DEATH TILL HE HAD SEEN CHRIST, THE SON OF GOD, LIVING IN THE FLESH. AND HAVING SEEN THE CHILD, HE CRIED OUT WITH A LOUD VOICE, SAYING: GOD HATH VISITED HIS PEOPLE, AND THE LORD HATH FULFILLED HIS PROMISE. AND HE MADE HASTE, AND ADORED HIM. AND AFTER THIS HE TOOK HIM UP INTO HIS CLOAK AND KISSED HIS FEET, AND SAID: LORD, NOW LETTEST THOU THY SERVANT DEPART IN PEACE, ACCORDING TO THY WORD: FOR MINE EYES HAVE SEEN THY SALVATION, WHICH THOU HAST PREPARED BEFORE THE FACE OF ALL PEOPLES, TO BE A LIGHT [ACTS 9:3; 22:6; 26:13] TO LIGHTEN THE GENTILES, AND THE GLORY [ACTS 7:55-56] OF THY PEOPLE ISRAEL. [7] THERE WAS ALSO IN THE TEMPLE OF THE LORD, ANNA, A PROPHETESS, THE DAUGHTER OF PHANUEL, OF THE TRIBE OF ASHER, WHO HAD LIVED WITH HER HUSBAND SEVEN YEARS FROM HER VIRGINITY, AND SHE HAD NOW BEEN A WIDOW EIGHTY-FOUR YEARS. AND SHE NEVER LEFT THE TEMPLE OF THE LORD, BUT SPENT HER TIME IN FASTING AND PRAYER. SHE ALSO LIKEWISE ADORED THE CHILD, SAYING: IN HIM IS THE REDEMPTION OF THE WORLD.**

**CHAPTER 16: [8] AND WHEN THE SECOND YEAR WAS PAST, [9] MAGI CAME FROM THE EAST TO JERUSALEM, BRINGING GREAT GIFTS. AND THEY MADE STRICT INQUIRY OF THE JEWS, SAYING: WHERE IS THE KING WHO HAS BEEN BORN TO YOU? FOR WE HAVE SEEN HIS STAR IN THE EAST, AND HAVE COME TO [SEXLESSLY] WORSHIP HIM. AND WORD OF THIS CAME TO KING HEROD, AND SO ALARMED HIM THAT HE CALLED TOGETHER THE SCRIBES AND THE PHARISEES, AND THE TEACHERS OF THE PEOPLE, ASKING OF THEM WHERE THE PROPHETS HAD FORETOLD THAT CHRIST SHOULD BE BORN. AND THEY SAID: IN BETHLEHEM OF JUDAH. FOR IT IS WRITTEN: AND THOU BETHLEHEM, IN THE LAND OF JUDAH, ART BY NO MEANS THE LEAST AMONG THE PRINCES OF JUDAH, FOR OUT OF THEE SHALL COME FORTH A LEADER WHO SHALL RULE MY PEOPLE ISRAEL. [1] THEN KING HEROD SUMMONED THE MAGI TO HIM, AND STRICTLY INQUIRED OF THEM WHEN THE STAR APPEARED TO THEM. THEN, SENDING THEM TO BETHLEHEM, HE SAID: GO AND MAKE STRICT INQUIRY ABOUT THE CHILD, AND WHEN YE HAVE FOUND HIM, BRING ME WORD AGAIN, THAT I MAY COME AND [SEXLESSLY] WORSHIP HIM ALSO. AND WHILE THE MAGI WERE GOING ON THEIR WAY, THERE APPEARED TO THEM THE STAR, WHICH WAS, AS IT WERE, A GUIDE TO THEM, GOING BEFORE THEM UNTIL THEY CAME TO WHERE THE CHILD WAS. AND WHEN THE MAGI SAW THE STAR, THEY REJOICED WITH GREAT JOY, AND GOING INTO THE HOUSE, THEY SAW THE CHILD JESUS [FEW MONTHS OLD] SITTING IN HIS MOTHER’S LAP. THEN THEY OPENED THEIR TREASURES, AND PRESENTED GREAT GIFTS TO THE BLESSED MARY AND JOSEPH. AND TO THE CHILD HIMSELF THEY OFFERED EACH OF THEM A PIECE OF GOLD. [2] AND LIKEWISE ONE GAVE GOLD, ANOTHER FRANKINCENSE, AND THE THIRD MYRRH. [3] AND WHEN THEY WERE GOING TO RETURN TO KING HEROD, THEY WERE WARNED BY AN ANGEL IN THEIR SLEEP NOT TO GO BACK TO HEROD, AND THEY RETURNED TO THEIR OWN COUNTRY BY ANOTHER ROAD.**

**CHAPTER 17: [4] AND WHEN HEROD [5] SAW THAT HE HAD BEEN MADE SPORT OF BY THE MAGI, HIS HEART SWELLED WITH RAGE, AND HE SENT THROUGH ALL THE ROADS, WISHING TO SEIZE THEM AND PUT THEM TO DEATH. BUT WHEN HE COULD NOT FIND THEM AT ALL, HE SENT ANEW TO BETHLEHEM AND ALL ITS BORDERS, AND SLEW ALL THE MALE CHILDREN WHOM HE FOUND OF TWO YEARS OLD AND UNDER, ACCORDING TO THE TIME THAT HE HAD ASCERTAINED FROM THE MAGI. [6] NOW THE DAY BEFORE THIS WAS DONE JOSEPH WAS WARNED IN HIS SLEEP BY THE ANGEL OF THE LORD, WHO SAID TO HIM: TAKE MARY AND THE CHILD [1 YEARS OF AGE], AND GO INTO EGYPT BY THE WAY OF THE DESERT. AND JOSEPH WENT ACCORDING TO THE [SEXLESS] SAYING OF THE ANGEL.**

**CHAPTER 18: [7] AND HAVING COME TO A CERTAIN CAVE, AND WISHING TO REST IN IT, THE BLESSED [8] MARY DISMOUNTED FROM HER BEAST, AND SAT DOWN WITH THE CHILD JESUS IN HER [VIRGIN] BOSOM. AND THERE WERE WITH JOSEPH THREE BOYS, AND WITH MARY A GIRL, GOING ON THE JOURNEY ALONG WITH THEM. AND, LO, SUDDENLY THERE CAME FORTH FROM THE CAVE MANY DRAGONS, AND WHEN THE CHILDREN SAW THEM, THEY CRIED OUT IN GREAT TERROR. THEN JESUS WENT DOWN FROM THE [VIRGIN] BOSOM OF HIS MOTHER, AND STOOD ON HIS FEET BEFORE THE DRAGONS, AND THEY ADORED JESUS, AND THEREAFTER RETIRED. THEN WAS FULFILLED THAT WHICH WAS SAID BY DAVID THE PROPHET, SAYING: PRAISE THE LORD FROM THE EARTH, YE DRAGONS; YE DRAGONS, AND ALL YE DEEPS [9] AND THE YOUNG CHILD JESUS, WALKING BEFORE THEM, COMMANDED THEM TO HURT NO MAN. BUT MARY AND JOSEPH WERE VERY MUCH AFRAID LEST THE CHILD SHOULD BE HURT BY THE DRAGONS. AND JESUS SAID TO THEM: DO NOT BE AFRAID, AND DO NOT CONSIDER ME TO BE A LITTLE CHILD [2 YEARS OF AGE], FOR I AM AND ALWAYS HAVE BEEN PERFECT, AND ALL THE BEASTS OF THE FOREST MUST NEEDS BE TAME BEFORE ME.**

**CHAPTER 19: LIONS AND PANTHERS ADORED HIM LIKEWISE, AND ACCOMPANIED THEM IN THE DESERT. WHEREVER JOSEPH AND THE BLESSED MARY WENT, THEY WENT BEFORE THEM SHOWING THEM THE WAY, AND BOWING THEIR HEADS, AND SHOWING THEIR SUBMISSION BY WAGGING THEIR TAILS, THEY ADORED HIM WITH GREAT REVERENCE. NOW AT FIRST, WHEN MARY SAW THE LIONS AND THE PANTHERS, AND VARIOUS KINDS OF WILD BEASTS, COMING ABOUT THEM, SHE WAS VERY MUCH AFRAID. BUT THE INFANT JESUS [3 YEARS OF AGE] LOOKED INTO HER FACE WITH A JOYFUL COUNTENANCE, AND SAID: BE NOT AFRAID, MOTHER, FOR THEY COME NOT TO DO THEE HARM, BUT THEY MAKE HASTE TO SERVE BOTH THEE AND ME. WITH THESE WORDS HE DROVE ALL FEAR FROM HER HEART. AND THE LIONS KEPT WALKING WITH THEM, AND WITH THE OXEN, AND THE ASSES, AND THE BEASTS OF BURDEN WHICH CARRIED THEIR BAGGAGE, AND DID NOT HURT A SINGLE ONE OF THEM, THOUGH THEY KEPT BESIDE THEM, BUT THEY WERE TAME AMONG THE SHEEP AND THE RAMS WHICH THEY HAD BROUGHT WITH THEM FROM JUDAEA, AND WHICH THEY HAD WITH THEM. THEY WALKED AMONG WOLVES, AND FEARED NOTHING, AND NO ONE OF THEM WAS HURT BY ANOTHER. THEN WAS FULFILLED THAT WHICH WAS SPOKEN BY THE PROPHET: WOLVES SHALL FEED, WITH LAMBS, THE LION AND THE OX SHALL EAT STRAW TOGETHER. [10] THERE WERE TOGETHER TWO OXEN DRAWING A WAGGON WITH PROVISION FOR THE JOURNEY, AND THE LIONS DIRECTED THEM IN THEIR PATH.**

**CHAPTER 20: AND IT CAME TO PASS ON THE THIRD DAY OF THEIR JOURNEY, WHILE THEY WERE WALKING, THAT THE BLESSED MARY WAS FATIGUED BY THE EXCESSIVE HEAT OF THE SUN IN THE DESERT, AND SEEING A PALM TREE, SHE SAID TO JOSEPH: LET ME REST A LITTLE UNDER THE SHADE OF THIS TREE. JOSEPH THEREFORE MADE HASTE, AND LED HER TO THE PALM, AND MADE HER COME DOWN FROM HER BEAST. AND AS THE BLESSED MARY WAS SITTING THERE, SHE LOOKED UP TO THE FOLIAGE OF THE PALM, AND SAW IT FULL OF FRUIT, AND SAID TO JOSEPH: I WISH IT WERE POSSIBLE TO GET SOME OF THE FRUIT OF THIS PALM. AND JOSEPH SAID TO HER: I WONDER THAT THOU SAYEST THIS, WHEN THOU SEEST HOW HIGH THE PALM TREE IS, AND THAT THOU THINKEST OF EATING OF ITS FRUIT. I AM THINKING MORE OF THE WANT OF WATER, BECAUSE THE SKINS ARE NOW EMPTY, AND WE HAVE NONE WHEREWITH TO REFRESH OURSELVES AND OUR CATTLE. THEN THE CHILD JESUS, WITH A JOYFUL COUNTENANCE, REPOSING IN THE [VIRGIN] BOSOM OF HIS MOTHER, SAID TO THE PALM: O TREE, BEND THY BRANCHES, AND REFRESH MY MOTHER WITH THY FRUIT. AND IMMEDIATELY AT THESE WORDS THE PALM BENT ITS TOP DOWN TO THE VERY FEET OF THE BLESSED MARY, AND THEY GATHERED FROM IT, FRUIT, WITH WHICH THEY WERE ALL REFRESHED. AND AFTER THEY HAD GATHERED ALL ITS FRUIT, IT REMAINED BENT DOWN, WAITING THE ORDER TO RISE FROM HIM WHO BAD COMMANDED IT TO STOOP. THEN JESUS SAID TO IT: RAISE THYSELF, O PALM TREE, AND BE STRONG, AND BE THE COMPANION OF MY TREES, WHICH ARE IN THE PARADISE OF MY FATHER [STEPHEN], AND OPEN FROM THY ROOTS A VEIN OF WATER WHICH HAS BEEN HID IN THE EARTH, AND LET THE WATERS FLOW, SO THAT WE MAY BE [SEXLESSLY] SATISFIED FROM THEE. AND IT ROSE UP IMMEDIATELY, AND AT ITS ROOT THERE BEGAN TO COME FORTH A SPRING OF WATER EXCEEDINGLY CLEAR AND COOL AND SPARKLING. AND WHEN THEY SAW THE SPRING OF WATER, THEY REJOICED WITH GREAT JOY, AND WERE SATISFIED, THEMSELVES AND ALL THEIR CATTLE AND THEIR BEASTS. WHEREFORE THEY GAVE THANKS TO GOD.**

**CHAPTER 21: AND ON THE DAY AFTER, WHEN THEY WERE SETTING OUT THENCE, AND IN THE HOUR IN WHICH THEY BEGAN THEIR JOURNEY, JESUS TURNED TO THE PALM, AND SAID: THIS PRIVILEGE I GIVE THEE, O PALM TREE, THAT ONE OF THY BRANCHES BE CARRIED AWAY BY MY ANGELS, AND PLANTED IN THE PARADISE OF MY FATHER [STEPHEN]. AND THIS BLESSING I WILL CONFER UPON THEE, THAT IT SHALL BE SAID OF ALL WHO CONQUER IN ANY CONTEST, YOU, HAVE ATTAINED THE PALM OF VICTORY. AND WHILE HE WAS THUS SPEAKING, BEHOLD, AN ANGEL OF THE LORD APPEARED, AND STOOD UPON THE PALM TREE, AND TAKING OFF ONE OF ITS BRANCHES, FLEW TO HEAVEN WITH THE BRANCH IN HIS HAND. AND WHEN THEY SAW THIS, THEY FELL ON THEIR FACES, AND BECAME AS IT WERE DEAD. AND JESUS SAID TO THEM: WHY ARE YOUR HEARTS POSSESSED WITH FEAR? DO YOU NOT KNOW THAT THIS PALM, WHICH I HAVE CAUSED TO BE TRANSFERRED TO PARADISE [NEW UNIVERSE], SHALL BE PREPARED FOR ALL THE SAINTS IN THE PLACE OF [SEXLESS] DELIGHTS, AS IT HAS BEEN PREPARED FOR US IN THIS PLACE OF THE WILDERNESS? AND THEY WERE FILLED WITH JOY, AND BEING STRENGTHENED, THEY ALL ROSE UP.**

**CHAPTER 22: AFTER THIS, WHILE THEY WERE GOING ON THEIR JOURNEY, JOSEPH SAID TO JESUS: LORD, IT IS A BOILING HEAT, IF IT PLEASE THEE, LET US GO BY THE SEA-SHORE, THAT WE MAY BE ABLE TO REST IN THE CITIES ON THE COAST. JESUS SAID TO HIM: FEAR NOT, JOSEPH, I WILL SHORTEN THE WAY FOR YOU, SO THAT WHAT YOU WOULD HAVE TAKEN THIRTY DAYS TO GO OVER, YOU SHALL ACCOMPLISH IN THIS ONE DAY. AND WHILE THEY WERE THUS SPEAKING, BEHOLD, THEY LOOKED FORWARD, AND BEGAN TO SEE THE MOUNTAINS AND CITIES OF EGYPT. AND REJOICING AND EXULTING, THEY CAME INTO THE REGIONS OF HERMOPOLIS, AND ENTERED INTO A CERTAIN CITY OF EGYPT WHICH IS CALLED SOTINEN, [1] AND BECAUSE THEY KNEW NO ONE THERE FROM WHOM THEY COULD ASK HOSPITALITY, THEY WENT INTO A TEMPLE WHICH WAS CALLED THE CAPITOL OF EGYPT. AND IN THIS TEMPLE, THERE HAD BEEN SET UP THREE HUNDRED AND FIFTY-FIVE IDOLS, [2] TO EACH OF WHICH ON ITS OWN DAY DIVINE HONOURS AND SACRED RITES WERE PAID. FOR THE EGYPTIANS BELONGING TO THE SAME CITY ENTERED THE CAPITOL, IN WHICH THE PRIESTS TOLD THEM HOW MANY SACRIFICES WERE OFFERED EACH DAY, ACCORDING TO THE HONOUR IN WHICH THE GOD WAS HELD.**

**CHAPTER 23: AND IT CAME TO PASS, WHEN THE MOST BLESSED MARY WENT INTO THE TEMPLE WITH THE LITTLE CHILD, THAT ALL THE IDOLS PROSTRATED THEMSELVES ON THE GROUND, SO THAT ALL OF THEM WERE LYING ON THEIR FACES SHATTERED AND BROKEN TO PIECES, [3] AND THUS THEY PLAINLY SHOWED THAT THEY WERE NOTHING. THEN WAS FULFILLED THAT WHICH WAS SAID BY THE PROPHET ISAIAH: BEHOLD, THE LORD WILL COME UPON A SWIFT CLOUD, AND WILL ENTER EGYPT, AND ALL THE HANDIWORK OF THE EGYPTIANS SHALL BE MOVED AT HIS [SEXLESS] PRESENCE.**

**CHAPTER 24: [4] THEN AFFRODOSIUS, THAT GOVERNOR OF THE CITY, WHEN NEWS OF THIS WAS BROUGHT TO HIM, WENT TO THE TEMPLE WITH ALL HIS ARMY. AND THE PRIESTS OF THE TEMPLE, WHEN THEY SAW AFFRODOSIUS WITH ALL HIS ARMY COMING INTO THE TEMPLE, THOUGHT THAT HE WAS MAKING HASTE ONLY TO SEE VENGEANCE TAKEN ON THOSE ON WHOSE ACCOUNT THE GODS HAD FALLEN DOWN. BUT WHEN HE CAME INTO THE TEMPLE, AND SAW ALL THE GODS LYING PROSTRATE ON THEIR FACES, HE WENT UP TO THE BLESSED MARY, WHO WAS CARRYING THE LORD IN HER [VIRGIN] BOSOM, AND ADORED HIM, AND SAID TO ALL HIS ARMY AND ALL HIS FRIENDS: UNLESS THIS WERE THE GOD OF OUR GODS, OUR GODS WOULD NOT HAVE FALLEN ON THEIR FACES BEFORE HIM, NOR WOULD THEY BE LYING PROSTRATE IN HIS [SEXLESS] PRESENCE: WHEREFORE THEY SILENTLY CONFESS THAT HE IS THEIR LORD. UNLESS WE, THEREFORE, TAKE CARE TO DO WHAT WE HAVE SEEN OUR GODS DOING, WE MAY RUN THE RISK OF HIS ANGER, AND ALL COME TO DESTRUCTION, EVEN AS IT HAPPENED TO PHARAOH KING OF THE EGYPTIANS, WHO, NOT BELIEVING IN POWERS SO MIGHTY, WAS DROWNED IN THE SEA, WITH ALL HIS ARMY. [5] THEN ALL THE PEOPLE OF THAT SAME CITY BELIEVED IN THE LORD GOD THROUGH JESUS CHRIST.**

**CHAPTER 25: AFTER NO LONG TIME THE ANGEL SAID TO JOSEPH: RETURN TO THE LAND OF JUDAH, FOR THEY ARE DEAD WHO SOUGHT THE CHILD'S LIFE.**

**CHAPTER 26: [1] AND IT CAME TO PASS, AFTER JESUS HAD RETURNED OUT OF EGYPT, WHEN HE WAS IN GALILEE, AND ENTERING ON THE FOURTH YEAR OF HIS AGE, THAT ON A SABBATH-DAY HE WAS PLAYING WITH SOME CHILDREN AT THE BED OF THE JORDAN. AND AS HE SAT THERE, JESUS MADE TO HIMSELF SEVEN POOLS OF CLAY, AND TO EACH OF THEM HE MADE PASSAGES, THROUGH WHICH AT HIS COMMAND HE BROUGHT WATER FROM THE TORRENT INTO THE POOL, AND TOOK IT BACK AGAIN. THEN ONE OF THOSE CHILDREN, A SON OF THE DEVIL, MOVED WITH ENVY, SHUT THE PASSAGES WHICH SUPPLIED THE POOLS WITH WATER, AND OVERTHREW WHAT JESUS HAD BUILT UP. THEN SAID JESUS TO HIM: WOE UNTO THEE, THOU SON OF DEATH, THOU SON OF SATAN! DO THOU DESTROY THE [SEXLESS] WORKS WHICH I HAVE WROUGHT? AND IMMEDIATELY HE WHO HAD DONE THIS DIED. THEN WITH GREAT UPROAR THE PARENTS OF THE DEAD BOY CRIED OUT AGAINST MARY AND JOSEPH, SAYING TO THEM: YOUR SON HAS [SEXLESSLY] CURSED OUR SON, AND HE IS DEAD. AND WHEN JOSEPH AND MARY HEARD THIS, THEY CAME FORTHWITH TO JESUS, ON ACCOUNT OF THE OUTCRY OF THE PARENTS OF THE BOY, AND THE GATHERING TOGETHER OF THE JEWS. BUT JOSEPH SAID PRIVATELY TO MARY: I DARE NOT SPEAK TO HIM, BUT DO THOU ADMONISH HIM, AND SAY: WHY HAST THOU RAISED AGAINST US THE HATRED OF THE PEOPLE, AND WHY MUST THE TROUBLESOME HATRED OF MEN BE BORNE BY US? AND HIS MOTHER HAVING COME TO HIM, ASKED HIM, SAYING: MY LORD, WHAT WAS IT THAT HE DID TO BRING ABOUT HIS DEATH? AND HE SAID: HE DESERVED DEATH, BECAUSE HE SCATTERED THE [SEXLESS] WORKS THAT I HAD MADE. THEN HIS MOTHER ASKED HIM, SAYING: DO NOT SO, MY LORD, BECAUSE ALL MEN RISE UP AGAINST US. BUT HE, NOT WISHING TO GRIEVE HIS MOTHER, WITH HIS RIGHT FOOT KICKED THE HINDER PARTS OF THE DEAD BOY, AND SAID TO HIM: RISE, THOU SON OF [SEXUAL] INIQUITY FOR THOU ART NOT WORTHY TO ENTER INTO THE REST OF MY FATHER [STEPHEN], BECAUSE THOU DIDST DESTROY THE [SEXLESS] WORKS WHICH I HAD MADE. THEN HE WHO HAD BEEN DEAD ROSE UP, AND WENT AWAY. AND JESUS, BY THE WORD OF HIS POWER, BROUGHT WATER INTO THE POOLS BY THE AQUEDUCT.**

**CHAPTER 27: AND IT CAME TO PASS, AFTER THESE THINGS, THAT IN THE SIGHT OF ALL, JESUS TOOK CLAY FROTH THE POOLS WHICH HE HAD MADE, AND OF IT MADE TWELVE SPARROWS. AND IT WAS THE SABBATH [SATURDAY] WHEN JESUS DID THIS, AND THERE WERE VERY MANY CHILDREN WITH HIM. WHEN, THEREFORE, ONE OF THE JEWS HAD SEEN HIM DOING THIS, HE SAID TO JOSEPH: JOSEPH, DOST THOU NOT SEE THE CHILD JESUS WORKING ON THE SABBATH [SATURDAY] AT WHAT IT IS NOT [SEXLESSLY] LAWFUL FOR HIM TO DO? FOR HE HAS MADE TWELVE SPARROWS OF CLAY. AND WHEN JOSEPH HEARD THIS, HE REPROVED HIM, SAYING: WHEREFORE DOEST THOU ON THE SABBATH [SATURDAY] SUCH THINGS AS ARE NOT [SEXLESSLY] LAWFUL FOR US TO DO? AND WHEN JESUS HEARD JOSEPH, HE STRUCK HIS HANDS TOGETHER, AND SAID TO HIS SPARROWS: FLY! AND AT THE VOICE OF HIS COMMAND THEY BEGAN TO FLY. AND IN THE SIGHT AND HEARING OF ALL THAT STOOD BY, HE SAID TO THE BIRDS: GO AND FLY THROUGH THE EARTH, AND THROUGH ALL THE WORLD, AND LIVE. AND WHEN THOSE THAT WERE THERE SAW SUCH MIRACLES, THEY WERE FILLED WITH GREAT ASTONISHMENT. AND SOME PRAISED AND ADMIRED HIM, BUT OTHERS REVILED HIM. AND CERTAIN OF THEM WENT AWAY TO THE CHIEF PRIESTS AND THE HEADS OF THE PHARISEES, AND REPORTED TO THEM THAT JESUS THE SON OF JOSEPH HAD DONE GREAT SIGNS AND MIRACLES IN THE SIGHT OF ALL THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL. AND THIS WAS REPORTED IN THE TWELVE TRIBES OF ISRAEL.**

**CHAPTER 28: AND AGAIN, THE SON OF ANNAS, A PRIEST OF THE TEMPLE, WHO HAD COME WITH JOSEPH, HOLDING HIS ROD IN HIS HAND IN THE SIGHT OF ALL, WITH GREAT FURY BROKE DOWN THE DAMS WHICH JESUS HAD MADE WITH HIS OWN HANDS, AND LET OUT THE WATER WHICH HE HAD COLLECTED IN THEM FROM THE TORRENT. MOREOVER, HE SHUT THE AQUEDUCT BY WHICH THE WATER CAME IN, AND THEN BROKE IT DOWN. AND WHEN JESUS SAW THIS, HE SAID TO THAT BOY WHO HAD DESTROYED HIS DAMS: O MOST WICKED SEED OF [SEXUAL] INIQUITY! O SON OF DEATH! O WORKSHOP OF SATAN! VERILY THE FRUIT OF THY SEED SHALL BE WITHOUT STRENGTH, AND THY ROOTS WITHOUT MOISTURE, AND THY BRANCHES WITHERED, BEARING NO FRUIT. AND IMMEDIATELY, IN THE SIGHT OF ALL, THE BOY WITHERED AWAY, AND DIED.**

**CHAPTER 29: THEN JOSEPH TREMBLED, AND TOOK HOLD OF JESUS, AND WENT WITH HIM TO HIS OWN HOUSE, AND HIS MOTHER WITH HIM. AND, BEHOLD, SUDDENLY FROM THE OPPOSITE DIRECTION A BOY, ALSO A WORKER OF [SEXUAL] INIQUITY, RAN UP AND CAME AGAINST THE SHOULDER OF JESUS, WISHING TO MAKE SPORT OF HIM, OR TO HURT HIM, IF HE COULD. AND JESUS SAID TO HIM: THOU SHALL NOT GO BACK SAFE AND SOUND FROM THE WAY THAT THOU GOEST. AND IMMEDIATELY HE FELL DOWN, AND DIED. AND THE PARENTS OF THE DEAD BOY, WHO HAD SEEN WHAT HAPPENED, CRIED OUT, SAYING: WHERE DOES THIS CHILD COME FROM? IT IS MANIFEST THAT EVERY WORD THAT HE SAYS IS TRUE, AND IT IS OFTEN ACCOMPLISHED BEFORE HE SPEAKS. AND THE PARENTS OF THE DEAD BOY CAME TO JOSEPH, AND SAID TO HIM: TAKE AWAY THAT JESUS FROM THIS PLACE, FOR HE CANNOT LIVE WITH US IN THIS TOWN, OR AT LEAST TEACH HIM TO [SEXLESSLY] BLESS, AND NOT TO [SEXLESSLY] CURSE. AND JOSEPH CAME UP TO JESUS, AND ADMONISHED HIM, SAYING: WHY DOEST THOU SUCH THINGS? FOR ALREADY MANY ARE IN GRIEF AND AGAINST THEE, AND HATE US ON THY ACCOUNT, AND WE ENDURE THE REPROACHES OF MEN BECAUSE OF THEE. AND JESUS ANSWERED AND SAID UNTO JOSEPH: NO ONE IS A WISE SON BUT HE WHOM HIS FATHER [STEPHEN] HATH TAUGHT, ACCORDING TO THE KNOWLEDGE OF THIS TIME, AND A FATHER’S [STEPHEN’S] CURSE CAN HURT NONE BUT [SEXUAL] EVIL-DOERS. THEN THEY CAME TOGETHER AGAINST JESUS, AND ACCUSED HIM TO JOSEPH. WHEN JOSEPH SAW THIS, HE WAS IN GREAT TERROR, FEARING THE [SEXUAL] VIOLENCE AND [SEXUAL] UPROAR OF THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL. AND THE SAME HOUR JESUS SEIZED THE DEAD BOY BY THE EAR, AND LIFTED HIM UP FROM THE EARTH IN THE SIGHT OF ALL: AND THEY SAW JESUS SPEAKING TO HIM LIKE A FATHER TO HIS SON. AND HIS SPIRIT CAME BACK TO HIM, AND HE REVIVED. AND ALL OF THEM WONDERED.**

**CHAPTER 30: NOW A CERTAIN JEWISH SCHOOLMASTER NAMED ZACHYAS [1] HEARD JESUS THUS SPEAKING, AND SEEING THAT HE COULD NOT BE OVERCOME, FROM KNOWING THE POWER THAT WAS IN HIM, [2] HE BECAME ANGRY, AND BEGAN RUDELY AND FOOLISHLY, AND WITHOUT FEAR, TO SPEAK AGAINST JOSEPH. AND HE SAID: DOST THOU NOT WISH TO ENTRUST ME WITH THY SON, THAT HE MAY BE INSTRUCTED IN HUMAN LEARNING AND IN REVERENCE? BUT I SEE THAT MARY AND THYSELF HAVE MORE REGARD FOR YOUR SON THAN FOR WHAT THE ELDERS OF THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL SAY AGAINST HIM. YOU SHOULD HAVE GIVEN MORE HONOUR TO US, THE ELDERS OF THE WHOLE CHURCH OF ISRAEL, BOTH THAT HE MIGHT BE ON TERMS OF MUTUAL AFFECTION WITH THE CHILDREN, AND THAT AMONG US HE MIGHT BE INSTRUCTED IN JEWISH LEARNING. JOSEPH, ON THE OTHER HAND, SAID TO HIM: AND IS THERE ANY ONE WHO CAN KEEP THIS CHILD, AND TEACH HIM? BUT IF THOU CANST KEEP HIM AND TEACH HIM, WE BY NO MEANS HINDER HIM FROM BEING TAUGHT BY THEE THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE LEARNED BY ALL. AND JESUS, HAVING HEARD WHAT ZACHYAS HAD SAID, ANSWERED AND SAID UNTO HIM: THE PRECEPTS OF THE [SEXLESS] LAW WHICH THOU HAST JUST SPOKEN OF, AND ALL THE THINGS THAT THOU HAST NAMED, MUST BE KEPT BY THOSE WHO ARE INSTRUCTED IN HUMAN LEARNING, BUT I AM A STRANGER TO YOUR [SEXLESS] LAW-COURTS, BECAUSE I HAVE NO FATHER AFTER THE FLESH. THOU WHO READEST THE [SEXLESS] LAW, AND ART LEARNED IN IT, ABIDEST IN THE [SEXLESS] LAW, BUT I WAS BEFORE THE [SEXLESS] LAW, BUT SINCE THOU THINKEST THAT NO ONE IS EQUAL TO THEE IN LEARNING, THOU SHALT BE TAUGHT BY ME, THAT NO OTHER CAN TEACH ANYTHING BUT THOSE THINGS WHICH THOU HAST NAMED. BUT HE ALONE CAN WHO IS WORTHY. [3] FOR WHEN I SHALL BE EXALTED ON EARTH, I WILL CAUSE TO CEASE ALL MENTION OF YOUR GENEALOGY. FOR THOU KNOWEST NOT WHEN THOU WAST BORN: I ALONE KNOW WHEN YOU WERE BORN, AND HOW LONG YOUR LIFE ON EARTH WILL BE. THEN ALL WHO HEARD THESE WORDS WERE STRUCK WITH ASTONISHMENT, AND CRIED OUT: OH! OH! OH! THIS MARVELLOUSLY GREAT AND WONDERFUL MYSTERY. NEVER HAVE WE HEARD THE LIKE! NEVER HAS IT BEEN HEARD FROM ANY ONE ELSE, NOR HAS IT BEEN SAID OR AT ANY TIME HEARD BY THE PROPHETS, OR THE PHARISEES, OR THE SCRIBES. WE KNOW WHENCE HE IS SPRUNG, AND HE IS SCARCELY FIVE YEARS OLD, AND WHENCE DOES HE SPEAK THESE WORDS? THE PHARISEES ANSWERED: WE HAVE NEVER HEARD SUCH WORDS SPOKEN BY ANY OTHER CHILD SO YOUNG. AND JESUS ANSWERED AND SAID UNTO THEM: AT THIS DO YE WONDER, THAT SUCH THINGS ARE SAID BY A CHILD? WHY, THEN, DO YE NOT BELIEVE ME IN THOSE THINGS WHICH I HAVE SAID TO YOU? AND YOU ALL WONDER BECAUSE I SAID TO YOU THAT I KNOW WHEN YOU WERE BORN. I WILL TELL YOU GREATER THINGS, THAT YOU MAY WONDER MORE. I HAVE SEEN ABRAHAM, WHOM YOU CALL YOUR FATHER, AND HAVE SPOKEN WITH HIM, AND HE HAS SEEN ME. [4] AND WHEN THEY HEARD THIS, THEY HELD THEIR TONGUES, NOR DID ANY OF THEM DARE TO SPEAK. AND JESUS SAID TO THEM: I HAVE BEEN AMONG YOU WITH CHILDREN, AND YOU HAVE NOT KNOWN ME, I HAVE SPOKEN TO YOU AS TO WISE MEN, AND YOU HAVE NOT UNDERSTOOD MY WORDS, BECAUSE YOU ARE YOUNGER THAN I AM , [5] AND OF LITTLE FAITH.**

**CHAPTER 31: A SECOND TIME THE MASTER ZACHYAS, DOCTOR OF THE [SEXLESS] LAW, SAID TO JOSEPH AND MARY: GIVE ME THE BOY, AND I SHALL HAND HIM OVER TO MASTER LEVI, WHO SHALL TEACH HIM HIS LETTERS AND INSTRUCT HIM. THEN JOSEPH AND MARY, SOOTHING JESUS, TOOK HIM TO THE SCHOOLS, THAT HE MIGHT BE TAUGHT HIS LETTERS BY OLD LEVI. AND AS SOON AS HE WENT IN, HE HELD HIS TONGUE. AND THE MASTER LEVI SAID ONE LETTER TO JESUS, AND, BEGINNING FROM THE FIRST LETTER ALEPH, SAID TO HIM: ANSWER. BUT JESUS WAS SILENT, AND ANSWERED NOTHING. WHEREFORE THE PRECEPTOR LEVI WAS ANGRY, AND SEIZED HIS STORAX-TREE ROD, AND STRUCK HIM ON THE HEAD. AND JESUS SAID TO THE TEACHER LEVI: WHY DOST THOU STRIKE ME? THOU SHALL KNOW IN TRUTH, THAT HE WHO IS STRUCK CAN TEACH HIM WHO STRIKES HIM MORE THAN HE CAN BE TAUGHT BY HIM. FOR I CAN TEACH YOU THOSE VERY THINGS THAT YOU ARE SAYING. BUT ALL THESE ARE BLIND WHO SPEAK AND HEAR, LIKE SOUNDING BRASS OR TINKLING CYMBAL, IN WHICH THERE IS NO PERCEPTION OF THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE MEANT BY THEIR SOUND. [6] AND JESUS IN ADDITION SAID TO ZACHYAS: EVERY LETTER FROM ALEPH EVEN TO THET [7] IS KNOWN BY ITS ARRANGEMENT. SAY THOU FIRST, THEREFORE, WHAT THET IS, AND I WILL TELL THEE WHAT ALEPH IS. AND AGAIN, JESUS SAID TO THEM: THOSE WHO DO NOT KNOW ALEPH, HOW CAN THEY SAY THET, THE HYPOCRITES? TELL ME WHAT THE FIRST ONE, ALEPH, IS, AND I SHALL THEN BELIEVE YOU WHEN YOU HAVE SAID BETH. AND JESUS BEGAN TO ASK THE NAMES OF THE LETTERS ONE BY ONE, AND SAID: LET THE MASTER OF THE [SEXLESS] LAW TELL US WHAT THE FIRST LETTER IS, OR WHY IT HAS MANY TRIANGLES, GRADATE, SUBACUTE, MEDIATE, OBDUCED, PRODUCED, ERECT, PROSTRATE, CURVISTRATE. [1] AND WHEN LEVI HEARD THIS, HE WAS THUNDERSTRUCK AT SUCH AN ARRANGEMENT OF THE NAMES OF THE LETTERS. THEN HE BEGAN IN THE HEATING OF ALL TO CRY OUT, AND SAY: OUGHT SUCH A ONE TO LIVE ON THE EARTH? YEA, HE OUGHT TO BE HUNG ON THE GREAT CROSS. FOR HE CAN PUT OUT FIRE, AND MAKE SPORT OF OTHER MODES OF PUNISHMENT. I THINK THAT HE LIVED BEFORE THE FLOOD, AND WAS BORN BEFORE THE DELUGE. FOR WHAT WOMB BORE HIM? OR WHAT MOTHER BROUGHT HIM FORTH? OR WHAT BREASTS GAVE HIM SUCK? I FLEE BEFORE HIM, I AM NOT ABLE TO WITHSTAND THE WORDS FROM HIS MOUTH, BUT MY HEART IS ASTOUNDED TO HEAR SUCH WORDS. I DO NOT THINK THAT ANY MAN CAN UNDERSTAND WHAT HE SAYS, EXCEPT GOD WERE WITH HIM. NOW I, UNFORTUNATE WRETCH, HAVE GIVEN MYSELF UP TO BE A LAUGHING-STOCK TO HIM. FOR WHEN I THOUGHT I HAD A SCHOLAR, I, NOT KNOWING HIM, HAVE FOUND MY MASTER. WHAT SHALL I SAY? I CANNOT WITHSTAND THE WORDS OF THIS CHILD: I SHALL NOW FLEE FROM THIS TOWN, BECAUSE I CANNOT UNDERSTAND THEM. AN OLD MAN LIKE ME HAS BEEN BEATEN BY A BOY, BECAUSE I CAN FIND NEITHER BEGINNING NOR END OF WHAT HE SAYS. FOR IT IS NO EASY MATTER TO FIND A BEGINNING OF HIMSELF. [2] I TELL YOU OF A CERTAINTY, I AM NOT LYING, THAT TO MY EYES THE PROCEEDINGS OF THIS BOY, THE COMMENCEMENT OF HIS [SEXLESS] CONVERSATION, AND THE UPSHOT OF HIS [SEXLESS] INTENTION, SEEM TO HAVE NOTHING IN COMMON WITH MORTAL MAN. HERE THEN I DO NOT KNOW WHETHER HE BE A [PERMISSIBLE] WIZARD OR A GOD, OR AT LEAST AN ANGEL OF GOD SPEAKS IN HIM. WHENCE HE IS, OR WHERE HE COMES FROM, OR WHO HE WILL TURN OUT TO BE, I KNOW NOT. THEN JESUS, SMILING AT HIM WITH A JOYFUL COUNTENANCE, SAID IN A COMMANDING VOICE TO ALL THE SONS OF ISRAEL STANDING BY AND HEARING: LET THE UNFRUITFUL BRING FORTH FRUIT, AND THE BLIND SEE, AND THE LAME WALK RIGHT, AND THE POOR ENJOY THE GOOD THINGS OF THIS LIFE, AND THE DEAD LIVE, THAT EACH MAY RETURN TO HIS ORIGINAL STATE, AND ABIDE IN HIM WHO IS THE ROOT OF LIFE AND OF PERPETUAL SWEETNESS. AND WHEN THE CHILD JESUS HAD SAID THIS, FORTHWITH ALL WHO HAD FALLEN UNDER MALIGNANT [SEXUAL] DISEASES WERE RESTORED. AND THEY DID NOT DARE TO SAY ANYTHING MORE TO HIM, OR TO HEAR ANYTHING FROM HIM.**

**CHAPTER 32: AFTER THESE THINGS, JOSEPH AND MARY DEPARTED THENCE WITH JESUS INTO THE CITY OF NAZARETH, AND HE REMAINED THERE WITH HIS PARENTS. AND ON THE FIRST OF THE WEEK, WHEN JESUS WAS PLAYING WITH THE CHILDREN ON THE ROOF OF A CERTAIN HOUSE, IT HAPPENED THAT ONE OF THE CHILDREN PUSHED ANOTHER DOWN FROM THE ROOF TO THE GROUND, AND HE WAS KILLED. AND THE PARENTS OF THE DEAD BOY, WHO HAD NOT SEEN THIS, CRIED OUT AGAINST JOSEPH AND MARY, SAYING: YOUR SON HAS THROWN OUR SON DOWN TO THE GROUND, AND HE IS DEAD. BUT JESUS WAS SILENT, AND ANSWERED THEM NOTHING. AND JOSEPH AND MARY CAME IN HASTE TO JESUS, AND HIS MOTHER ASKED HIM, SAYING: MY LORD, TELL ME IF THOU DIDST THROW HIM DOWN. AND IMMEDIATELY JESUS WENT DOWN FROM THE ROOF TO THE GROUND, AND CALLED THE BOY BY HIS NAME, ZENO. AND HE ANSWERED HIM: MY LORD. AND JESUS SAID TO HIM: WAS IT I THAT THREW THEE DOWN FROM THE ROOF TO THE GROUND? AND HE SAID: NO, MY LORD. AND THE PARENTS OF THE BOY WHO HAD BEEN DEAD WONDERED, AND HONOURED JESUS FOR THE MIRACLE THAT HAD BEEN WROUGHT. AND JOSEPH AND MARY DEPARTED THENCE WITH JESUS TO JERICHO.**

**CHAPTER 33: NOW JESUS WAS SIX YEARS OLD, AND HIS MOTHER SENT HIM WITH A PITCHER TO THE FOUNTAIN TO DRAW WATER WITH THE CHILDREN. AND IT CAME TO PASS, AFTER HE HAD DRAWN THE WATER, THAT ONE OF THE CHILDREN CAME AGAINST HIM, AND STRUCK THE PITCHER, AND BROKE IT. BUT JESUS STRETCHED OUT THE CLOAK WHICH HE HAD ON, AND TOOK UP IN HIS CLOAK AS MUCH WATER AS THERE HAD BEEN IN THE PITCHER, AND CARRIED IT TO HIS MOTHER. AND WHEN SHE SAW IT, SHE WONDERED, AND REFLECTED WITHIN HERSELF, AND LAID UP ALL THESE THINGS IN HER HEART.**

**CHAPTER 34: [3] AGAIN, ON A CERTAIN DAY, HE WENT FORTH INTO THE FIELD, AND TOOK A LITTLE WHEAT FROM HIS MOTHER’S BARN, AND SOWED IT HIMSELF. AND IT SPRANG UP, AND GREW, AND MULTIPLIED EXCEEDINGLY. AND AT LAST IT CAME TO PASS THAT HE HIMSELF [7 YEARS OF AGE] REAPED IT, AND GATHERED AS THE PRODUCE OF IT THREE KORS, [4] AND GAVE IT TO HIS NUMEROUS ACQUAINTANCES.**

**CHAPTER 35: [5] THERE IS A ROAD GOING OUT OF JERICHO AND LEADING TO THE RIVER JORDAN, TO THE PLACE WHERE THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL CROSSED: AND THERE THE ARK OF THE COVENANT IS SAID TO HAVE RESTED. AND JESUS WAS EIGHT YEARS OLD, AND HE WENT OUT OF JERICHO, AND WENT TOWARDS THE JORDAN. AND THERE WAS BESIDE THE ROAD, NEAR THE BANK OF THE JORDAN, A CAVE WHERE A LIONESS WAS NURSING HER CUBS, AND NO ONE WAS SAFE TO WALK THAT WAY. JESUS THEN, COMING FROM JERICHO, AND KNOWING THAT IN THAT CAVE THE LIONESS BAD BROUGHT FORTH HER YOUNG, WENT INTO IT IN THE SIGHT OF ALL. AND WHEN THE LIONS SAW JESUS, THEY RAN TO MEET HIM, AND ADORED HIM. AND JESUS WAS SITTING IN THE CAVERN, AND THE LION'S CUBS RAN HITHER AND THITHER ROUND HIS FEET, FAWNING UPON HIM, AND SPORTING. AND THE OLDER LIONS, WITH THEIR HEADS BOWED DOWN, STOOD AT A DISTANCE, AND ADORED HIM, AND FAWNED UPON HIM WITH THEIR TAILS. THEN THE PEOPLE WHO WERE STANDING AFAR OFF, NOT SEEING JESUS, SAID: UNLESS HE OR HIS PARENTS HAD COMMITTED GRIEVOUS [SEXUAL] SINS, HE WOULD NOT OF HIS OWN ACCORD HAVE OFFERED HIMSELF UP TO THE LIONS. AND WHEN THE PEOPLE WERE THUS REFLECTING WITHIN THEMSELVES, AND WERE LYING UNDER GREAT SORROW, BEHOLD, ON A SUDDEN, IN THE SIGHT OF THE PEOPLE, JESUS CAME OUT OF THE CAVE, AND THE LIONS WENT BEFORE HIM, AND THE LION'S CUBS PLAYED WITH EACH OTHER BEFORE HIS FEET. AND THE PARENTS OF JESUS STOOD AFAR OFF, WITH THEIR HEADS BOWED DOWN, AND WATCHED, LIKEWISE ALSO THE PEOPLE STOOD AT A DISTANCE, ON ACCOUNT OF THE LIONS, FOR THEY DID NOT DARE TO COME CLOSE TO THEM. THEN JESUS BEGAN TO SAY TO THE PEOPLE: HOW MUCH BETTER ARE THE BEASTS THAN YOU, SEEING THAT THEY RECOGNISE THEIR LORD, AND GLORIFY HIM, WHILE YOU MEN, WHO HAVE BEEN MADE AFTER THE [SEXLESS] IMAGE AND [SEXLESS] LIKENESS OF GOD, DO NOT KNOW HIM! BEASTS KNOW ME, AND ARE TAME, MEN SEE ME, AND DO NOT ACKNOWLEDGE ME.**

**CHAPTER 36: AFTER THESE THINGS JESUS [9 YEARS OF AGE] CROSSED THE JORDAN, IN THE SIGHT OF THEM ALL, WITH THE LIONS, AND THE WATER OF THE JORDAN WAS DIVIDED ON THE RIGHT HAND AND ON THE LEFT. [1] THEN HE SAID TO THE LIONS, IN THE HEARING OF ALL: GO IN PEACE, AND HURT NO ONE, BUT NEITHER LET MAN INJURE YOU, UNTIL YOU RETURN TO THE PLACE WHENCE YOU HAVE COME FORTH. AND THEY, BIDDING HIM FAREWELL, NOT ONLY WITH THEIR GESTURES BUT WITH THEIR VOICES, WENT TO THEIR OWN PLACE. BUT JESUS RETURNED TO HIS MOTHER.**

**CHAPTER 37: NOW JOSEPH [2] WAS A CARPENTER, AND USED TO MAKE NOTHING ELSE OF WOOD BUT OX-YOKES, AND PLOUGHS, AND IMPLEMENTS OF HUSBANDRY, AND WOODEN BEDS. AND IT CAME TO PASS THAT A CERTAIN YOUNG MAN ORDERED HIM TO MAKE FOR HIM A COUCH SIX CUBITS LONG. AND JOSEPH COMMANDED HIS SERVANT [3] TO CUT THE WOOD WITH AN IRON SAW, ACCORDING TO THE MEASURE WHICH HE HAD SENT. BUT HE DID NOT KEEP TO THE PRESCRIBED MEASURE, BUT MADE ONE PIECE OF WOOD SHORTER THAN THE OTHER. AND JOSEPH WAS IN PERPLEXITY, AND BEGAN TO CONSIDER WHAT HE WAS TO DO ABOUT THIS. AND WHEN JESUS [10 YEARS OF AGE] SAW HIM IN THIS STATE OF COGITATION, SEEING THAT IT WAS A MATTER OF IMPOSSIBILITY TO HIM, HE ADDRESSES HIM WITH WORDS OF COMFORT, SAYING: COME, LET US TAKE HOLD OF THE ENDS OF THE PIECES OF WOOD, AND LET US PUT THEM TOGETHER, END TO END, AND LET US FIT THEM EXACTLY TO EACH OTHER, AND DRAW TO US, FOR WE SHALL BE ABLE TO MAKE THEM EQUAL. THEN JOSEPH DID WHAT HE WAS BID, FOR HE KNEW THAT HE COULD DO WHATEVER HE WISHED. AND JOSEPH TOOK HOLD OF THE ENDS OF THE PIECES OF WOOD, AND BROUGHT THEM TOGETHER AGAINST THE WALL NEXT HIMSELF, AND JESUS TOOK HOLD OF THE OTHER ENDS OF THE PIECES OF WOOD, AND DREW THE SHORTER PIECE TO HIM, AND MADE IT OF THE SAME LENGTH AS THE LONGER ONE. AND HE SAID TO JOSEPH: GO AND WORK, AND DO WHAT THOU HAST PROMISED TO DO. AND JOSEPH DID WHAT HE HAD PROMISED.**

**CHAPTER 38: [4] AND IT CAME TO PASS A SECOND TIME, THAT JOSEPH AND MARY WERE ASKED BY THE PEOPLE THAT JESUS [11 YEARS OF AGE] SHOULD BE TAUGHT HIS LETTERS IN SCHOOL. THEY DID NOT REFUSE TO DO SO, AND ACCORDING TO THE COMMANDMENT OF THE ELDERS, THEY TOOK HIM TO A MASTER TO BE INSTRUCTED IN HUMAN LEARNING. THEN THE MASTER BEGAN TO TEACH HIM IN AN IMPERIOUS TONE, SAYING: SAY ALPHA. [5] AND JESUS SAID TO HIM: DO THOU TELL ME FIRST WHAT BETHA IS, AND I WILL TELL THEE WHAT ALPHA IS. AND UPON THIS THE MASTER GOT ANGRY AND STRUCK JESUS, AND NO SOONER HAD HE STRUCK HIM, THEN HE FELL DOWN DEAD. AND JESUS WENT HOME AGAIN TO HIS MOTHER. AND JOSEPH, BEING AFRAID, CALLED MARY TO HIM, AND SAID TO HER: KNOW OF A SURETY THAT MY SOUL IS SORROWFUL EVEN UNTO DEATH ON ACCOUNT OF THIS CHILD. FOR IT IS VERY LIKELY THAT AT SOME TIME OR OTHER SOME ONE WILL STRIKE HIM IN MALICE, AND HE WILL DIE. BUT MARY ANSWERED AND SAID: O MAN OF GOD! DO NOT BELIEVE THAT THIS IS POSSIBLE. YOU MAY BELIEVE TO A CERTAINTY THAT HE WHO HAS SENT HIM TO BE BORN AMONG MEN WILL HIMSELF GUARD HIM FROM ALL [SEXUAL] MISCHIEF, AND WILL IN HIS OWN NAME [THE LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH] PRESERVE HIM FROM [SEXUAL] EVIL.**

**CHAPTER 39: AGAIN, THE JEWS ASKED MARY AND JOSEPH A THIRD TIME TO COAX HIM TO GO TO ANOTHER MASTER TO LEARN. AND JOSEPH AND MARY, FEARING THE PEOPLE, AND THE OVERBEARING OF THE PRINCES, AND THE [SEXUAL] THREATS OF THE PRIESTS, LED HIM AGAIN TO SCHOOL, KNOWING THAT HE COULD LEARN NOTHING FROM MAN, BECAUSE HE HAD PERFECT KNOWLEDGE FROM GOD ONLY. AND WHEN JESUS [12 YEARS OF AGE] HAD ENTERED THE SCHOOL, LED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT, HE TOOK THE BOOK OUT OF THE HAND OF THE MASTER WHO WAS TEACHING THE [SEXLESS] LAW, AND IN THE SIGHT AND HEARING OF ALL THE PEOPLE BEGAN TO READ, NOT INDEED WHAT WAS WRITTEN IN THEIR BOOK, BUT HE SPOKE IN THE SPIRIT OF THE LIVING GOD, AS IF A STREAM OF WATER WERE GUSHING FORTH FROM A LIVING FOUNTAIN, AND THE FOUNTAIN REMAINED ALWAYS FULL. AND WITH SUCH POWER HE TAUGHT THE PEOPLE THE GREAT THINGS OF THE LIVING GOD, THAT THE MASTER HIMSELF FELL TO THE GROUND AND ADORED HIM. AND THE HEART OF THE PEOPLE WHO SAT AND HEARD HIM SAYING SUCH THINGS WAS TURNED INTO ASTONISHMENT. AND WHEN JOSEPH HEARD OF THIS, HE CAME RUNNING TO JESUS, FEARING THAT THE MASTER HIMSELF WAS DEAD. AND WHEN THE MASTER SAW HIM, HE SAID TO HIM: THOU HAST GIVEN ME NOT A SCHOLAR, BUT A MASTER, AND WHO CAN WITHSTAND HIS WORDS? THEN WAS FULFILLED THAT WHICH WAS SPOKEN BY THE PSALMIST: THE RIVER OF GOD IS FULL OF WATER: THOU HAST PREPARED THEM CORN, FOR SO IS THE PROVISION FOR IT.**

**CHAPTER 40: [1] AFTER THESE THINGS JOSEPH DEPARTED THENCE WITH MARY AND JESUS TO GO INTO CAPERNAUM BY THE SEA-SHORE, ON ACCOUNT OF THE MALICE OF HIS ADVERSARIES. AND WHEN JESUS WAS LIVING IN CAPERNAUM, THERE WAS IN THE CITY A MAN NAMED JOSEPH, EXCEEDINGLY RICH. BUT HE HAD WASTED AWAY UNDER HIS INFIRMITY, AND DIED, AND WAS LYING DEAD IN HIS COUCH. AND WHEN JESUS HEARD THEM IN THE CITY MOURNING, AND WEEPING, AND LAMENTING OVER THE DEAD MAN, HE SAID TO JOSEPH: WHY DOST THOU NOT AFFORD THE BENEFIT OF THY FAVOUR TO THIS MAN, SEEING THAT HE IS CALLED BY THY NAME? AND JOSEPH ANSWERED HIM: HOW HAVE I ANY POWER OR ABILITY TO AFFORD HIM A BENEFIT? AND JESUS [13 YEARS OF AGE] SAID TO HIM: TAKE THE HANDKERCHIEF WHICH IS UPON THY HEAD, AND GO AND PUT IT ON THE FACE OF THE DEAD MAN, AND SAY TO HIM: CHRIST HEAL THEE, AND IMMEDIATELY THE DEAD MAN WILL BE HEALED, AND WILL RISE FROM HIS COUCH. AND WHEN JOSEPH HEARD THIS, HE WENT AWAY AT THE COMMAND OF JESUS, AND RAN, AND ENTERED THE HOUSE OF THE DEAD MAN, AND PUT THE HANDKERCHIEF WHICH HE WAS WEARING ON HIS HEAD UPON THE FACE OF HIM WHO WAS LYING IN THE COUCH, AND SAID: JESUS HEAL THEE. AND FORTHWITH THE DEAD MAN ROSE FROM HIS BED, AND ASKED WHO JESUS WAS.**

**CHAPTER 41: [2] AND THEY WENT AWAY FROM CAPERNAUM INTO THE CITY WHICH IS CALLED BETHLEHEM, AND JOSEPH LIVED WITH MARY IN HIS OWN HOUSE, AND JESUS WITH THEM. AND ON A CERTAIN DAY JOSEPH CALLED TO HIM HIS FIRST-BORN SON JAMES, [3] AND SENT HIM INTO THE VEGETABLE GARDEN TO GATHER VEGETABLES FOR THE PURPOSE OF MAKING BROTH. AND JESUS FOLLOWED HIS BROTHER JAMES INTO THE GARDEN, BUT JOSEPH AND MARY DID NOT KNOW THIS. AND WHILE JAMES WAS COLLECTING THE VEGETABLES, A VIPER SUDDENLY CAME OUT OF A HOLE AND STRUCK HIS HAND, [4] AND HE BEGAN TO CRY OUT FROM EXCESSIVE PAIN. AND, BECOMING EXHAUSTED, HE SAID, WITH A BITTER CRY: ALAS! ALAS! AN ACCURSED VIPER HAS STRUCK MY HAND. AND JESUS [14 YEARS OF AGE], WHO WAS STANDING OPPOSITE TO HIM, AT THE BITTER CRY RAN UP TO JAMES, AND TOOK HOLD OF HIS HAND, AND ALL THAT HE DID WAS TO BLOW ON THE HAND OF JAMES, AND COOL IT: AND IMMEDIATELY JAMES WAS HEALED, AND THE SERPENT DIED. AND JOSEPH AND MARY DID NOT KNOW WHAT HAD BEEN DONE, BUT AT THE CRY OF JAMES, AND THE COMMAND OF JESUS, THEY RAN TO THE GARDEN, AND FOUND THE SERPENT ALREADY DEAD, AND JAMES QUITE CURED.**

**CHAPTER 42: AND JOSEPH HAVING COME TO A FEAST WITH HIS SONS, JAMES, JOSEPH, AND JUDAH, AND SIMEON AND HIS TWO DAUGHTERS, JESUS MET THEM, WITH MARY HIS MOTHER, ALONG WITH HER SISTER MARY OF CLEOPHAS, WHOM THE LORD GOD HAD GIVEN TO HER FATHER CLEOPHAS AND HER MOTHER ANNA, BECAUSE THEY HAD OFFERED MARY THE MOTHER OF JESUS TO THE LORD. AND SHE WAS CALLED BY THE SAME NAME, MARY, FOR THE CONSOLATION OF HER PARENTS. [5] AND WHEN THEY HAD COME TOGETHER, JESUS [15 YEARS OF AGE] SANCTIFIED AND BLESSED THEM, AND HE WAS THE FIRST TO BEGIN TO EAT AND DRINK, FOR NONE OF THEM DARED TO EAT OR DRINK, OR TO SIT AT TABLE, OR TO BREAK BREAD, UNTIL HE HAD SANCTIFIED THEM, AND FIRST DONE SO. AND IF HE HAPPENED TO BE ABSENT, THEY USED TO WAIT UNTIL HE SHOULD DO THIS. AND WHEN HE DID NOT WISH TO COME FOR REFRESHMENT, NEITHER JOSEPH NOR MARY, NOR THE SONS OF JOSEPH, HIS BROTHERS, CAME. AND, INDEED, THESE BROTHERS, KEEPING HIS LIFE AS A LAMP BEFORE THEIR EYES, OBSERVED HIM, AND FEARED HIM. AND WHEN JESUS SLEPT, WHETHER BY DAY OR BY NIGHT, THE BRIGHTNESS OF GOD [SIRACH 23:19] SHONE UPON HIM. TO WHOM BE ALL PRAISE AND GLORY FOR EVER AND EVER. AMEN, AMEN.**

**INFANCY GOSPEL OF THOMAS**

**I. I, THOMAS THE ISRAELITE, HAVE THOUGHT IT NEEDFUL TO MAKE KNOWN UNTO ALL THE BRETHREN THAT ARE OF THE GENTILES THE MIGHTY WORKS OF CHILDHOOD WHICH OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST WROUGHT WHEN HE WAS CONVERSANT IN THE BODY, AND CAME UNTO THE CITY OF NAZARETH IN THE FIFTH YEAR OF HIS AGE.**

**II. 1 ON A CERTAIN DAY WHEN THERE HAD FALLEN A SHOWER OF RAIN HE WENT FORTH OF THE HOUSE WHERE HIS MOTHER WAS AND PLAYED UPON THE GROUND WHERE THE WATERS WERE RUNNING: AND HE MADE POOLS, AND THE WATERS FLOWED DOWN, AND THE POOLS WERE FILLED WITH WATER. THEN SAITH HE: I WILL THAT YE BECOME CLEAN AND WHOLESOME WATERS. AND STRAIGHTWAY THEY DID SO. 2 BUT A CERTAIN SON OF ANNAS THE SCRIBE PASSED BY BEARING A BRANCH OF WILLOW, AND HE OVERTHREW THE POOLS WITH THE BRANCH, AND THE WATERS WERE POURED OUT. AND JESUS TURNED ABOUT AND SAID UNTO HIM: O UNGODLY AND DISOBEDIENT ONE, WHAT HURT HAVE THE POOLS DONE THEE THAT THOU HAST EMPTIED THEM? THOU SHALT NOT FINISH THY COURSE, AND THOU SHALT BE WITHERED UP EVEN AS THE BRANCH WHICH THOU HAST IN HAND. 3 AND HE WENT ON, AND AFTER A LITTLE HE [SEXUALLY] FELL AND GAVE UP THE GHOST. AND WHEN THE YOUNG CHILDREN THAT PLAYED WITH HIM SAW IT, THEY MARVELLED AND DEPARTED AND TOLD THE FATHER OF HIM THAT WAS DEAD. AND HE RAN AND FOUND THE CHILD DEAD, AND WENT AND ACCUSED JOSEPH.**

**III. 1 NOW JESUS MADE OF THAT CLAY TWELVE SPARROWS: AND IT WAS THE SABBATH DAY. AND A CHILD RAN AND TOLD JOSEPH, SAYING: BEHOLD, THY CHILD PLAYETH ABOUT THE BROOK, AND HATH MADE SPARROWS OF THE CLAY, WHICH IS NOT [SEXLESSLY] LAWFUL. 2 AND HE WHEN HE HEARD IT WENT AND SAID TO THE CHILD: WHEREFORE DOEST THOU SO AND PROFANETH THE SABBATH? BUT JESUS ANSWERED HIM NOT, BUT LOOKED UPON THE SPARROWS AND SAID: GO YE, TAKE YOUR FLIGHT, AND REMEMBER ME IN YOUR LIFE. AND AT THE WORD THEY TOOK FLIGHT AND WENT UP INTO THE AIR. AND WHEN JOSEPH SAW IT, HE WAS ASTONISHED.**

**IV. 1 AND AFTER CERTAIN DAYS, AS JESUS PASSED THROUGH THE MIDST OF THE CITY, A CERTAIN CHILD CAST A STONE AT HIM AND SMOTE HIS SHOULDER. AND JESUS SAID UNTO HIM: THOU SHALT NOT FINISH THY COURSE. AND STRAIGHTWAY HE ALSO FELL DOWN AND DIED. AND THEY THAT WERE THERE WERE AMAZED, SAYING: FROM WHENCE IS THIS CHILD, THAT EVERY WORD WHICH HE SPEAKETH BECOMETH A PERFECT WORK? 2 BUT THEY ALSO DEPARTED AND ACCUSED JOSEPH, SAYING: THOU WILT NOT BE ABLE TO DWELL WITH US IN THIS CITY: BUT IF THOU WILT, TEACH THY CHILD TO [SEXLESSLY] BLESS AND NOT TO [SEXLESSLY] CURSE: FOR VERILY HE SLAYETH OUR CHILDREN: AND EVERY THING THAT HE SAITH BECOMETH A PERFECT WORK.**

**V. AND AS JOSEPH SAT UPON HIS SEAT, THE CHILD STOOD BEFORE HIM; AND HE TOOK HOLD UPON HIS EAR AND PINCHED IT SORE. BUT JESUS LOOKED UPON HIM EARNESTLY AND SAID: IT SUFFICETH THEE.**

**VI. 1 AND ON THE MORROW, HE TOOK HIM BY THE HAND AND LED HIM TO A CERTAIN TEACHER, ZACCHAEUS BY NAME, AND SAID UNTO HIM: TAKE THIS CHILD, O MASTER, AND TEACH HIM LETTERS. AND THE OTHER SAID: DELIVER HIM UNTO ME, MY BROTHER, AND I WILL TEACH HIM THE [HOLY] SCRIPTURE, AND I WILL PERSUADE HIM TO [SEXLESSLY] BLESS ALL MEN AND NOT TO [SEXLESSLY] CURSE THEM. 2 AND WHEN JESUS HEARD THAT HE LAUGHED AND SAID UNTO THEM: YE SPEAK THAT YE KNOW, BUT I HAVE KNOWLEDGE MORE THAN YOU, FOR I AM BEFORE THE WORLDS. AND I KNOW WHEN THE FATHERS OF YOUR FATHERS WERE BEGOTTEN, AND I KNOW HOW MANY ARE THE YEARS OF YOUR LIFE. AND EVERY ONE THAT HEARD IT WAS AMAZED. 3 AND AGAIN SAITH JESUS UNTO THEM: MARVEL YE BECAUSE I SAID UNTO YOU THAT I KNOW HOW MANY ARE THE YEARS OF YOUR LIFE? OF A TRUTH I KNOW WHEN THE WORLD WAS CREATED. BEHOLD, NOW YE BELIEVE ME NOT: WHEN YE SHALL SEE MY CROSS THEN WILL YE BELIEVE THAT I SPEAK TRUTH. AND THEY WERE ASTONISHED WHEN THEY HEARD ALL THESE THINGS.**

**VII. 1 NOW ZACCHAEUS WROTE THE ALPHABET IN HEBREW, AND SAITH UNTO HIM: ALPHA. AND THE YOUNG CHILD SAID: ALPHA. AND AGAIN, THE MASTER SAID: ALPHA, AND THE YOUNG CHILD LIKEWISE. THEN AGAIN, THE THIRD TIME THE MASTER SAID: ALPHA. THEN JESUS LOOKED UPON THE TEACHER AND SAID: THOU THAT KNOWEST NOT THE ALPHA, HOW CANST THOU TEACH ANOTHER THE BETA? AND THE CHILD BEGINNING AT THE ALPHA SAID OF HIS OWN ACCORD THE TWO AND TWENTY LETTERS. 2 AND THEREAFTER SAITH HE: HEAR, O MASTER THE [SEXLESS] ORDINANCE OF THE FIRST LETTER, AND KNOW HOW MANY INCOMINGS AND LINES IT HATH, AND MARKS, COMMON, GOING APART, AND COMING TOGETHER. AND WHEN ZACCHAEUS HEARD SUCH DESIGNATIONS OF THE ONE LETTER, HE WAS AMAZED AND HAD NOTHING TO ANSWER, AND TURNING ABOUT HE SAID UNTO JOSEPH: MY BROTHER, THIS CHILD IS OF A TRUTH NOT EARTHLY BORN: TAKE HIM AWAY THEREFORE FROM ME.**

**VIII. 1 AND AFTER THESE THINGS ONE DAY JESUS WAS PLAYING WITH OTHER BOYS UPON THE TOP OF A HOUSE OF TWO STORIES. AND ONE CHILD WAS PUSHED DOWN BY ANOTHER AND THROWN DOWN TO THE GROUND AND DIED. AND THE BOYS WHICH WERE PLAYING WITH HIM, WHEN THEY SAW IT, FLED, AND JESUS WAS LEFT ALONE STANDING UPON THE ROOF WHENCE THE BOY WAS THROWN DOWN. 2 AND WHEN THE PARENTS OF THE BOY THAT WAS DEAD HEARD OF IT, THEY RAN WEEPING, AND WHEN THEY FOUND THE BOY LYING DEAD UPON THE EARTH AND JESUS STANDING ALONE, THEY SUPPOSED THAT THE BOY HAD BEEN THROWN DOWN BY HIM, AND THEY LOOKED UPON HIM AND REVILED HIM. 3 BUT JESUS, SEEING THAT, LEAPED DOWN STRAIGHTWAY FROM THE UPPER STORY AND STOOD AT THE HEAD OF HIM THAT WAS DEAD AND SAITH TO HIM: ZENO, DID I CAST THEE DOWN? ARISE AND TELL. FOR SO WAS THE BOY CALLED. AND WITH THE WORD THE BOY ROSE UP AND [SEXLESSLY] WORSHIPPED JESUS AND SAID: LORD, THOU DIDST NOT CAST ME DOWN, BUT WHEN I WAS DEAD, THOU DIDST MAKE ME ALIVE.**

**IX. 1 AND A FEW DAYS AFTER ONE OF THE NEIGHBOURS WAS CLEAVING WOOD AND DID CUT OFF THE SOLE OF HIS FOOT WITH THE AXE, AND BY LOSS OF BLOOD WAS AT THE POINT TO DIE. 2 AND MUCH PEOPLE RAN TOGETHER AND JESUS CAME THITHER WITH THEM. 3 AND HE TOOK HOLD ON THE FOOT OF THE YOUNG MAN THAT WAS SMITTEN, AND HEALED HIM FORTHWITH, AND SAITH UNTO HIM: ARISE, CLEAVE THY WOOD. AND HE AROSE AND WORSHIPPED HIM, GIVING THANKS, AND CLEFT THE WOOD. LIKEWISE, ALSO ALL THEY THAT WERE THERE MARVELLED AND GAVE THANKS UNTO HIM.**

**X. NOW WHEN HE WAS SIX YEARS OLD, MARY HIS MOTHER SENT HIM TO FETCH WATER FROM THE SPRING: AND AS HE WENT HIS PITCHER WAS BROKEN. AND HE WENT TO THE SPRING AND SPREAD OUT HIS UPPER GARMENT AND DREW WATER OUT OF THE SPRING AND FILLED IT AND TOOK IT AND BROUGHT BACK THE WATER TO HIS MOTHER. AND WHEN SHE SAW IT, WAS AMAZED AND EMBRACED HIM AND KISSED HIM.**

**XI. 1 AND WHEN HE CAME TO THE EIGHTH YEAR OF HIS AGE JOSEPH WAS REQUIRED BY A CERTAIN RICH MAN TO BUILD HIM A BED, FOR HE WAS A CARPENTER. AND HE WENT FORTH INTO THE FIELD TO GATHER WOOD, AND JESUS ALSO WENT WITH HIM. AND HE CUT TWO BEAMS OF WOOD AND WROUGHT THEM WITH THE AXE, AND SET ONE BESIDE THE OTHER AND MEASURED AND FOUND IT TOO SHORT, AND WHEN HE SAW THAT HE WAS VEXED AND SOUGHT TO FIND ANOTHER. 2 BUT JESUS SEEING IT SAITH UNTO HIM: SET THESE TWO TOGETHER SO THAT THE ENDS OF BOTH BE EVEN. AND JOSEPH, THOUGH HE WAS PERPLEXED CONCERNING THIS, WHAT THE CHILD SHOULD MEAN, DID THAT WHICH WAS COMMANDED. AND HE SAITH AGAIN UNTO HIM: TAKE FIRM HOLD OF THE SHORT BEAM. AND JOSEPH TOOK HOLD ON IT, MARVELLING. THEN JESUS ALSO TOOK HOLD OF THE OTHER END AND PULLED THE [OTHER] END THEREOF AND MADE IT ALSO EQUAL TO THE OTHER BEAM, AND SAITH UNTO JOSEPH: BE NO MORE VEXED, BUT DO THY WORK WITHOUT HINDRANCE. AND HE WHEN HE SAW IT WAS EXCEEDINGLY AMAZED AND SAID WITHIN HIMSELF: BLESSED AM I FOR THAT GOD HATH GIVEN ME SUCH A SON. 3 AND WHEN THEY DEPARTED INTO THE CITY JOSEPH TOLD IT TO MARY, AND SHE WHEN SHE HEARD AND SAW THE WONDERFUL MIGHTY WORKS OF HER SON [JESUS] REJOICED, GLORIFYING HIM WITH THE FATHER [STEPHEN] AND THE HOLY SPIRIT [BROTHER JOHN] NOW AND FOR EVER AND WORLD WITHOUT END. AMEN.**

**THE 1ST GOSPEL OF THE INFANCY OF JESUS CHRIST**

**CHAPTER 1: 1 CAIPHAS RELATES THAT JESUS, WHEN IN HIS CRADLE, INFORMED HIS MOTHER THAT HE IS THE SON OF GOD. 5 JOSEPH AND MARY GOING TO BETHLEHEM TO BE TAXED, MARY'S TIME OF BRINGING FORTH ARRIVES, AND SHE GOES INTO A CAVE. 8 JOSEPH FETCHES IN A HEBREW WOMAN. THE CAVE FILLED WITH GREAT LIGHTS. 11 THE INFANT BORN, 17 AND CURES THE WOMAN. 19 ARRIVAL OF THE SHEPHERDS.**

**THE FOLLOWING ACCOUNTS WE FOUND IN THE BOOK OF JOSEPH THE HIGH-PRIEST, CALLED BY SOME CAIPHAS: 2 HE RELATES, THAT JESUS SPAKE EVEN WHEN HE WAS IN THE CRADLE, AND SAID TO HIS MOTHER: 3 MARY, I AM JESUS THE SON OF GOD, THAT WORD, WHICH THOU DIDST BRING FORTH ACCORDING TO THE DECLARATION OF THE ANGEL GABRIEL TO THEE, AND MY FATHER HATH SENT ME FOR THE SALVATION OF THE WORLD. 4 IN THE THREE HUNDRED AND NINTH YEAR OF THE ERA OF ALEXANDER, AUGUSTUS PUBLISHED A DECREE THAT ALL PERSONS SHOULD GO TO BE TAXED IN THEIR OWN COUNTRY. 5 JOSEPH THEREFORE AROSE, AND WITH MARY HIS SPOUSE HE WENT TO JERUSALEM, AND THEN CAME TO BETHLEHEM, THAT HE AND HIS FAMILY MIGHT BE TAXED IN THE CITY OF HIS FATHERS. 6 AND WHEN THEY CAME BY THE CAVE, MARY CONFESSED TO JOSEPH THAT HER TIME OF BRINGING FORTH WAS COME, AND SHE COULD NOT GO ON TO THE CITY, AND SAID, LET US GO INTO THIS CAVE. 7 AT THAT TIME THE SUN WAS VERY NEAR GOING DOWN. 8 BUT JOSEPH HASTENED AWAY, THAT HE MIGHT FETCH HER A MIDWIFE, AND WHEN HE SAW AN OLD HEBREW WOMAN WHO WAS OF JERUSALEM, HE SAID TO HER, PRAY COME HITHER, GOOD WOMAN, AND GO INTO THAT CAVE, AND YOU WILL THERE SEE A WOMAN JUST READY TO BRING FORTH. 9 IT WAS AFTER SUNSET, WHEN THE OLD WOMAN AND JOSEPH WITH HER REACHED THE CAVE, AND THEY BOTH WENT INTO IT. 10 AND BEHOLD, IT WAS ALL FILLED WITH LIGHTS, GREATER THAN THE LIGHT OF LAMPS AND CANDLES, AND GREATER THAN THE LIGHT OF THE SUN ITSELF. 11 THE INFANT WAS THEN WRAPPED UP IN SWADDLING CLOTHES, AND SUCKING THE BREASTS OF HIS MOTHER ST. MARY. 12 WHEN THEY BOTH SAW THIS LIGHT, THEY WERE SURPRISED, THE OLD WOMAN ASKED ST. MARY, ART THOU THE MOTHER OF THIS CHILD? 13 ST. MARY REPLIED, SHE, WAS. 14 ON WHICH THE OLD WOMAN SAID, THOU ART VERY DIFFERENT FROM ALL OTHER WOMEN. 15 ST. MARY ANSWERED, AS THERE IS NOT ANY CHILD LIKE TO MY SON, SO NEITHER IS THERE ANY WOMAN LIKE TO HIS MOTHER. 16 THE OLD WOMAN ANSWERED, AND SAID, O MY LADY, I AM COME HITHER THAT I MAY OBTAIN AN EVERLASTING REWARD. 17 THEN OUR LADY ST. MARY SAID TO HER, LAY THINE HANDS UPON THE INFANT, WHICH, WHEN SHE HAD DONE, SHE BECAME WHOLE. 18 AND AS SHE WAS GOING FORTH, SHE SAID, FROM HENCEFORTH, ALL THE DAYS OF MY LIFE, I WILL ATTEND UPON AND BE A SERVANT OF THIS INFANT. 19 AFTER THIS, WHEN THE SHEPHERDS CAME, AND HAD MADE A FIRE, AND THEY WERE EXCEEDINGLY REJOICEING, THE HEAVENLY HOST APPEARED TO THEM, PRAISING AND ADORING THE SUPREME GOD. 20 AND AS THE SHEPHERDS WERE ENGAGED IN THE SAME EMPLOYMENT, THE CAVE AT THAT TIME SEEMED LIKE A GLORIOUS TEMPLE, BECAUSE BOTH THE TONGUES OF ANGELS AND MEN UNITED TO ADORE AND MAGNIFY GOD, ON ACCOUNT OF THE [SEXLESS] BIRTH OF THE LORD CHRIST. 21 BUT WHEN THE OLD HEBREW WOMAN SAW ALL THESE EVIDENT MIRACLES, SHE GAVE PRAISES TO GOD, AND SAID, I THANK THEE, O GOD, THOU GOD OF ISRAEL, FOR THAT MINE EYES HAVE SEEN THE [SEXLESS] BIRTH OF THE SAVIOR OF THE WORLD.**

**CHAPTER 2: 1 THE CHILD CIRCUMCISED IN THE CAVE, 2 AND THE OLD WOMAN PRESERVING HIS FORESKIN OR NAVEL-STRING IN A BOX OF SPIKENARD, MARY AFTERWARDS ANNOINTS CHRIST WITH IT. 5 CHRIST BROUGHT TO THE TEMPLE, 6 HE SHINES, 7 AND ANGELS STAND AROUND HIM ADORING. 8 SIMEON PRAISES CHRIST.**

**AND WHEN THE TIME OF HIS CIRCUMCISION WAS COME: NAMELY, THE EIGHTH DAY, ON WHICH THE [SEXLESS] LAW COMMANDED THE CHILD TO BE CIRCUMCISED, THEY CIRCUMCISED HIM IN THE CAVE. 2 AND THE OLD HEBREW WOMAN TOOK THE FORESKIN (OTHERS SAY SHE TOOK THE NAVEL-STRING), AND PRESERVED IT IN AN ALABASTER-BOX OF OLD OIL OF SPIKENARD. 3 AND SHE HAD A SON WHO WAS A DRUGGIST, TO WHOM SHE SAID, TAKE HEED THOU SELL NOT THIS ALABASTER-BOX OF SPIKENARD-OINTMENT, ALTHOUGH THOU SHOULDST BE OFFERED THREE HUNDRED PENCE FOR IT. 4 NOW THIS IS THAT ALABASTER-BOX WHICH MARY [MAGDALENE] THE [SEXUAL] SINNER PROCURED, AND POURED FORTH THE OINTMENT OUT OF IT UPON THE HEAD AND THE FEET OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, AND WIPED THEM OFF WITH THE HAIRS OF HER HEAD. 5 THEN AFTER TEN DAYS THEY BROUGHT HIM TO JERUSALEM, AND ON THE FORTIETH DAY FROM HIS [SEXLESS] BIRTH THEY PRESENTED HIM IN THE TEMPLE BEFORE THE LORD, MAKING THE PROPER OFFERINGS FOR HIM, ACCORDING TO THE REQUIREMENT OF THE [SEXLESS] LAW OF MOSES: NAMELY, THAT EVERY MALE WHICH OPENS THE WOMB SHALL BE CALLED HOLY UNTO GOD. 6 AT THAT TIME OLD SIMEON SAW HIM SHINING AS A PILLAR OF LIGHT, WHEN ST. MARY THE VIRGIN, HIS MOTHER, CARRIED HIM IN HER ARMS, AND WAS FILLED WITH THE GREATEST [SEXLESS] PLEASURE AT THE SIGHT. 7 AND THE ANGELS STOOD AROUND HIM, ADORING HIM, AS A KING’S GUARDS STAND AROUND HIM. 8 THEN SIMEON GOING NEAR TO ST. MARY, AND STRETCHING FORTH HIS HANDS TOWARDS HER, SAID TO THE LORD CHRIST, NOW, O MY LORD, THY SERVANT SHALL DEPART IN PEACE, ACCORDING TO THY WORD, 9 FOR MINE EYES HAVE SEEN THY MERCY, WHICH THOU HAST PREPARED FOR THE SALVATION OF ALL NATIONS, A LIGHT TO ALL PEOPLE, AND THE GLORY OF THY PEOPLE ISRAEL. 10 HANNAH THE PROPHETESS WAS ALSO PRESENT, AND DRAWING NEAR, SHE GAVE PRAISES TO GOD, AND CELEBRATED THE HAPPINESS OF MARY.**

**CHAPTER 3: 1 THE WISE MEN VISIT CHRIST. MARY GIVES THEM ONE OF HIS SWADDLING CLOTHES. 3 AN ANGEL APPEARS TO THEM IN THE FORM OF A STAR. 4 THEY RETURN AND MAKE A FIRE, AND WORSHIP THE SWADDLING CLOTH, AND PUT IT IN THE FIRE WHERE IT REMAINS UNCONSUMED.**

**AND IT CAME TO PASS, WHEN THE LORD JESUS WAS BORN AT BETHLEHEM, A CITY OF JUDAEA, IN THE TIME OF HEROD THE KING, THE WISE MEN CAME FROM THE EAST TO JERUSALEM, ACCORDING TO THE PROPHECY OF ZORADASCHT, [ZOROASTER] AND BROUGHT WITH THEM OFFERINGS: NAMELY, GOLD, FRANKINCENSE, AND MYRRH, AND [SEXLESSLY] WORSHIPPED HIM, AND OFFERED TO HIM THEIR GIFTS. 2 THEN THE LADY MARY TOOK ONE OF HIS SWADDLING CLOTHES IN WHICH THE INFANT WAS WRAPPED, AND GAVE IT TO THEM INSTEAD OF A BLESSING, WHICH THEY RECEIVED FROM HER AS A MOST NOBLE PRESENT. 3 AND AT THE SAME TIME THERE APPEARED TO THEM AN ANGEL IN THE FORM OF THAT STAR WHICH HAD BEFORE BEEN THEIR GUIDE IN THEIR JOURNEY, THE LIGHT OF WHICH THEY FOLLOWED TILL THEY RETURNED INTO THEIR OWN COUNTRY. 4 ON THEIR RETURN THEIR KINGS AND PRINCES CAME TO THEM INQUIRING, WHOM THEY HAD SEEN AND DONE? WHAT SORT OF JOURNEY AND RETURN THEY HAD? WHAT COMPANY THEY HAD ON THE ROAD? 5 BUT THEY PRODUCED THE SWADDLING CLOTH WHICH ST. MARY HAD GIVEN THEM, ON ACCOUNT WHEREOF THEY KEPT A FEAST. 6 AND HAVING, ACCORDING TO THE CUSTOM OF THEIR COUNTRY, MADE A FIRE, THEY [SEXLESSLY] WORSHIPPED IT. 7 AND CASTING THE SWADDLING CLOTH INTO IT, THE FIRE TOOK IT AND KEPT IT. 8 AND WHEN THE FIRE WAS PUT OUT, THEY TOOK FORTH THE SWADDLING CLOTH UNHURT, AS MUCH AS IF THE FIRE HAD NOT TOUCHED IT. 9 THEN THEY BEGAN TO KISS IT, AND PUT IT UPON THEIR HEADS AND THEIR EYES SAYING, THIS IS CERTAINLY AN UNDOUBTED TRUTH, AND IT IS REALLY SURPRISING THAT THE FIRE COULD NOT BURN IT, AND CONSUME IT. 10 THEN THEY TOOK IT, AND WITH THE GREATEST RESPECT LAID IT UP AMONG THEIR TREASURES.**

**CHAPTER 4: 1 HEROD INTENDS TO PUT CHRIST TO DEATH. 3 AN ANGEL WARNS JOSEPH TO TAKE THE CHILD AND HIS MOTHER INTO EGYPT. 6 CONSTERNATION ON THEIR ARRIVAL. 13 THE IDOLS FALL DOWN. 15 MARY WASHES CHRIST'S SWADDLING CLOTHES, HANGS THEM TO DRY ON A POST, AND THE SON OF A PRIEST PUTS ONE ON HIS HEAD, 16 AND BEING POSSESSED OF DEVILS THEY LEAVE HIM.**

**NOW HEROD PERCEIVING THAT THE WISE MEN DID DELAY AND NOT RETURN TO HIM, CALLED TOGETHER THE PRIEST AND WISE MEN, AND SAID, TELL ME IN WHAT PLACE THE CHRIST SHOULD BE BORN. 2 AND WHEN THEY REPLIED, IN BETHLEHEM, A CITY OF JUDAEA, HE BEGAN TO CONTRIVE IN HIS OWN MIND THE DEATH OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST [AS NOT BEING THE LORD JESUS CHRIST IN DEATH BECAUSE HE IS IMMORTAL & CAN NEVER ETERNALLY DIE IN HEBREWS 13:8 & IF YOU SAY THE LORD JESUS CHRIST DIED TO SELF IN THE CROSS THROUGH ETERNAL SUFFERINGS, LIKE A HELL [PURGATORY] ON THE LOWER PARTS OF THE EARTH BEING LED BY THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH [JOHN 4:23-24] DURING THE DEVIL’S TEMPTATION OF THE 40 DAYS & 40 NIGHTS BEFORE THE LORD JESUS CHRIST’S INITIAL MINISTRY IN THE ULTIMATE BEGINNING IN LUKE 4:1-13, THEN IT IS THE ABSOLUTE TRUTH, BUT IF YOU SAY THAT THE LORD JESUS CHRIST DIED ON THE CROSS IN THE ULTIMATE END, THEN IT IS A ABSOLUTE LIE WITH PARTIAL TRUTH, BECAUSE THE LORD JESUS CHRIST IN FACT DID TRADE PLACES, JUST LONG ENOUGH WITH THE LORD BARABBAS CHRIST TO BE ABLE TO POSSIBLY ETERNALLY DIE IN THE ETERNAL WAY TO THE ETERNAL DEATH OF THE CROSS & AFTERWARDS GOING IN LITERAL HELL & EMPTYING IT & TAKING TO KEYS OF DEATH, HELL, THE GRAVE & THE PRISON IN THE ACTS OF PILATE: DESCENT IN HELL IN CHRIST’S DESCENT IN HELL ALSO KNOWN AS THE GOSPEL OF NICODEMUS; GOSPEL OF BARTHOLOMEW 1-5; LUKE 23:13-46, 47-56; HEBREWS 2:14-18 & REVELATION 1:18]. 3 BUT AN ANGEL OF THE LORD APPEARED TO JOSEPH IN HIS SLEEP, AND SAID, ARISE, TAKE THE CHILD AND HIS MOTHER, AND GO INTO EGYPT AS SOON AS THE COCK CROWS. SO, HE AROSE, AND WENT. 4 AND AS HE WAS CONSIDERING WITH HIMSELF ABOUT HIS JOURNEY, THE MORNING CAME UPON HIM. 5 IN THE LENGTH OF THE JOURNEY THE GIRTS OF THE SADDLE BROKE. 6 AND NOW HE DREW NEAR TO A GREAT CITY, IN WHICH THERE WAS AN IDOL, TO WHICH THE PRIESTS OF THE OTHER IDOLS AND GODS OF EGYPT BROUGHT THEIR OFFERINGS AND VOWS. 7 AND THERE WAS BY THIS IDOL A PRIEST MINISTERING TO IT, WHO, AS OFTEN AS SATAN [LUCIFER/VICTORIA] SPOKE OUT OF THAT IDOL, RELATED THE THINGS HE SAID TO THE INHABITANTS OF EGYPT, AND THOSE COUNTRIES. 8 THIS PRIEST HAD A SON THREE YEARS OLD, WHO WAS POSSESSED WITH A GREAT MULTITUDE OF DEVILS, WHO UTTERED MANY STRANGE THINGS AND WHEN THE DEVILS SEIZED HIM, WALKED ABOUT NAKED WITH HIS CLOTHES TORN, THROWING STONES AT THOSE WHOM HE SAW. 9 NEAR TO THAT IDOL WAS THE INN OF THE CITY, INTO WHICH WHEN JOSEPH AND ST. MARY WERE COME, AND HAD TURNED INTO THAT INN, ALL THE INHABITANTS OF THE CITY WERE ASTONISHED. 10 AND ALL THE MAGISTRATES AND PRIESTS OF THE IDOLS ASSEMBLED BEFORE THAT IDOL, AND MADE INQUIRY THERE, SAYING, WHAT MEANS ALL THIS CONSTERNATION, AND DREAD, WHICH HAS FALLEN UPON ALL OUR COUNTRY? 11 THE IDOL ANSWERED THEM, THE UNKNOWN GOD [THE LORD STEPHEN YAHWEH IN ACTS 17:22-30] IS COME THITHER, WHO IS TRULY GOD, NOR IS THERE ANY ONE BESIDES HIM, WHO IS WORTHY OF DIVINE WORSHIP FOR HE IS TRULY THE SON OF GOD. 12 AT THE FAME OF HIM THIS COUNTRY TREMBLED, AND AT HIS COMING IT IS UNDER THE PRESENT COMMOTION AND CONSTERNATION, AND WE OURSELVES ARE AFRIGHTED BY THE GREATNESS OF HIS POWER. 13 AND AT THE SAME INSTANT THIS IDOL FELL DOWN, AND AT HIS FALL ALL THE INHABITANTS OF EGYPT, BESIDES OTHERS RAN TOGETHER. 14 BUT THE SON OF THE PRIEST, WHEN HIS USUAL [SEXUAL] DISORDER CAME UPON HIM GOING INTO THE INN, FOUND THERE, JOSEPH AND ST. MARY, WHOM ALL THE REST HAD LEFT BEHIND AND FORSOOK. 15 AND WHEN THE LADY ST. MARY HAD WASHED THE SWADDLING CLOTHES OF THE LORD CHRIST, AND HANGED THEM OUT TO DRY UPON A POST, THE BOY POSSESSED WITH THE DEVIL TOOK DOWN ONE OF THEM, AND PUT IT UPON HIS HEAD. 16 AND PRESENTLY THE DEVILS BEGAN TO COME OUT OF HIS MOUTH, AND FLY AWAY IN THE SHAPE OF CROWS AND SERPENTS. 17 FROM THAT TIME THE BOY WAS HEALED BY THE POWER OF THE LORD CHRIST AND HE BEGAN TO SING PRAISES, AND GIVE THANKS TO THE LORD WHO HAD HEALED HIM. 18 WHEN HIS FATHER SAW HIM RESTORED TO HIS FORMER STATE OF HEALTH, HE SAID, MY SON, WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO THEE, AND BY WHAT MEANS WERT THOU CURED? 19 THE SON ANSWERED, WHEN THE DEVILS SEIZED ME, I WENT INTO THE INN, AND THERE FOUND A VERY HANDSOME WOMAN WITH A BOY [12 YEARS OF AGE TO 30 YEARS OF AGE], WHOSE SWADDLING CLOTHES SHE HAD JUST BEFORE WASHED, AND HANGED OUT UPON A POST. 20 ONE OF THESE I TOOK, AND PUT IT UPON MY HEAD, AND IMMEDIATELY THE DEVILS LEFT ME, AND FLED AWAY. 21 AT THIS THE FATHER EXCEEDINGLY REJOICED, AND SAID, MY SON, PERHAPS THIS BOY IS THE SON OF THE LIVING GOD, WHO MADE THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH. 22 FOR AS SOON AS HE CAME AMONGST US, THE IDOL WAS BROKEN, AND ALL THE GODS FELL DOWN, AND WERE DESTROYED BY A GREATER POWER. 23 THEN WAS FULFILLED THE PROPHECY WHICH SAITH, OUT OF EGYPT I HAVE CALLED MY SON.**

**CHAPTER 5: 1 JOSEPH AND MARY LEAVE EGYPT. 3 GO TO THE HAUNTS OF ROBBERS, 4 WHO HEARING A MIGHTY NOISE, AS OF A GREAT ARMY FLEE AWAY.**

**NOW JOSEPH AND MARY WHEN THEY HEARD THAT THE IDOL WAS FALLEN DOWN AND DESTROYED, WERE SEIZED WITH FEAR AND, TREMBLING, AND SAID, WHEN WE WERE IN THE LAND OF ISRAEL, HEROD, INTENDING TO KILL JESUS, SLEW FOR THAT PURPOSE ALL THE INFANTS AT BETHLEHEM, AND THAT NEIGHBORHOOD. 2 AND THERE IS NO DOUBT BUT THE EGYPTIANS IF THEY COME TO HEAR THAT THIS IDOL IS BROKEN AND FALLEN DOWN, WILL BURN US WITH FIRE. 3 THEY WENT THEREFORE HENCE TO THE SECRET PLACES OF ROBBERS, WHO ROBBED TRAVELERS AS THEY PASS BY, OF THEIR CARRIAGES AND THEIR CLOTHES AND CARRIED THEM AWAY BOUND. 4 THESE THIEVES UPON THEIR COMING HEARD A GREAT NOISE SUCH AS THE NOISE OF A KING WITH A GREAT ARMY, AND MANY HORSE [S] AND THE TRUMPETS SOUNDING AT HIS DEPARTURE FROM HIS OWN CITY, AT WHICH THEY WERE SO AFFRIGHTED, AS TO LEAVE ALL THEIR BOOTY BEHIND THEM AND FLY AWAY IN HASTE. 5 UPON THIS THE PRISONERS AROSE, AND LOOSED EACH OTHER'S BONDS, AND TAKING EACH MAN HIS BAGS, THEY WENT WAY, AND SAW JOSEPH AND MARY COMING TOWARDS THEM, AND INQUIRED, WHERE IS THAT KING, THE NOISE OF WHOSE APPROACH THE ROBBERS HEARD, AND LEFT US, SO THAT WE ARE NOW COME OFF SAFE? 6 JOSEPH ANSWERED, HE WILL COME AFTER US.**

**CHAPTER 6: 1 MARY LOOKS ON A WOMAN IN WHOM SATAN HAD TAKEN UP HIS ABODE, AND SHE BECOMES DISPOSSESSED. 5 CHRIST KISSED BY A BRIDE MADE DUMB BY SORCERERS, CURES HER. 11 MIRACULOUSLY CURES A GENTLEWOMAN IN WHOM SATAN HAD TAKEN UP HIS ABODE. 16 A LEPROUS GIRL CURED BY THE WATER IN WHICH HE WAS WASHED, AND BECOMES THE SERVANT OF JOSEPH AND MARY. 20 THE LEPROUS SON OF A PRINCE'S WIFE CURED IN LIKE MANNER. 37 HAS MOTHER OFFERS LARGE GIFTS TO MARY, AND DISMISSES HER.**

**THEN THEY WENT INTO ANOTHER CITY WHERE THERE WAS A WOMAN POSSESSED WITH A DEVIL, AND IN WHOM SATAN [LUCIFER/VICTORIA], THAT [SEXUALLY] CURSED REBEL, HAD TAKEN UP HIS ABODE. 2 ONE NIGHT, WHEN SHE WENT TO FETCH WATER, SHE COULD NEITHER ENDURE HER CLOTHES ON, NOR TO BE IN ANY HOUSE, BUT AS OFTEN AS THEY TIED HER WITH CHAINS OR CORDS, SHE, BRAKE THEM, AND WENT OUT INTO DESERT PLACES, AND SOMETIMES STANDING WHERE ROADS CROSSED, AND IN CHURCH YARDS, WOULD THROW STONES AT MEN. 3 WHEN ST. MARY SAW THIS WOMAN, SHE PITIED HER, WHERE UPON SATAN [LUCIFER/VICTORIA] PRESENTLY LEFT HER, AND FLED AWAY IN THE FORM OF A YOUNG MAN, SAYING, WOE TO ME, BECAUSE OF THEE, MARY, AND THY SON. 4 SO THE WOMAN WAS DELIVERED FROM HER TORMENT; BUT CONSIDERING HERSELF NAKED, SHE BLUSHED, AND AVOIDED SEEING ANY MAN AND HAVING PUT ON HER CLOTHES, WENT HOME, AND GAVE AN ACCOUNT OF HER CASE TO HER FATHER AND RELATIONS WHO, AS THEY WERE THE BEST OF THE CITY, ENTERTAINED ST. MARY AND JOSEPH WITH THE GREATEST RESPECT. 5 THE NEXT MORNING HAVING RECEIVED A SUFFICIENT SUPPLY OF PROVISIONS FOR THE ROAD, THEY WENT FROM THEM, AND ABOUT THE EVENING OF THE DAY ARRIVED AT ANOTHER TOWN, WHERE A MARRIAGE WAS THEN ABOUT TO BE SOLEMNIZED, BUT BY THE [SEXUAL] ARTS OF SATAN [LUCIFER/VICTORIA] AND THE [SEXUAL] PRACTICES OF SORCERERS, THE BRIDE WAS BECOME SO DUMB, THAT SHE COULD NOT SO MUCH AS OPEN HER MOUTH. 6 BUT WHEN THIS DUMB BRIDE SAW THE LADY ST. MARY ENTERING INTO THE TOWN, AND CARRYING LORD CHRIST IN HER ARMS, SHE STRETCHED OUT HER HANDS TO THE LORD CHRIST, AND-TOOK HIM IN HER ARMS, AND CLOSELY HUGGING HIM, VERY OFTEN KISSED HIM, CONTINUALLY MOVING HIM AND, PRESSING HIM TO HER BODY. 7 STRAIGHTWAY THE STRING OF HER TONGUE WAS LOOSED, AND HER EARS WERE OPENED, AND SHE BEGAN TO SING PRAISES UNTO GOD, WHO HAD RESTORED HER. 8 SO THERE WAS GREAT JOY AMONG THE INHABITANTS OF THE TOWN THAT NIGHT, WHO THOUGHT THAT GOD AND HIS ANGELS WERE COME DOWN AMONG THEM. 9 IN THIS PLACE THEY ABODE THREE DAYS, MEETING WITH THE GREATEST RESPECT AND MOST SPLENDID ENTERTAINMENT. 10 AND BEING THEN FURNISHED BY THE PEOPLE WITH PROVISIONS FOR THE ROAD, THEY DEPARTED AND WENT TO ANOTHER CITY, IN WHICH THEY WERE INCLINED TO LODGE, BECAUSE IT WAS A FAMOUS PLACE. 11 THERE WAS IN THIS CITY A GENTLEWOMAN, WHO, AS SHE WENT DOWN ONE DAY TO THE RIVER TO BATHE, BEHOLD [SEXUALLY] CURSED SATAN [LUCIFER/VICTORIA] LEAPED UPON HER IN THE FORM OF A SERPENT. 12 AND FOLDED HIMSELF ABOUT HER BELLY, AND EVERY NIGHT LAY UPON HER. 13 THIS WOMAN SEEING THE LADY ST. MARY, AND THE LORD CHRIST THE INFANT IN HER [VIRGIN] BOSOM, ASKED THE LADY ST. MARY, THAT SHE WOULD GIVE HER THE CHILD TO KISS, AND CARRY IN HER ARMS. 14 WHEN SHE HAD CONSENTED, AND AS SOON AS THE WOMAN HAD MOVED THE CHILD, SATAN [LUCIFER/VICTORIA] LEFT HER, AND FLED AWAY, NOR DID THE WOMAN EVER AFTERWARDS SEE HIM. 15 HEREUPON ALL THE NEIGHBORS PRAISED THE SUPREME GOD, AND THE WOMAN REWARD THEM WITH AMPLE, BENEFICENCE. 16 ON THE MORROW, THE SAME WOMAN BROUGHT PERFUMED WATER TO WASH THE LORD JESUS; AND WHEN SHE HAD WASHED HIM, SHE PRESERVED THE WATER. 17 AND THERE WAS A GIRL THERE, WHOSE BODY WAS WHITE WITH A LEPROSY, WHO BEING SPRINKLED WITH THIS WATER, AND WASHED, WAS INSTANTLY CLEANSED FROM HER LEPROSY. 18 THE PEOPLE THEREFORE SAID WITHOUT DOUBT JOSEPH AND MARY, AND THAT [THE] BOY ARE GODS, FOR THEY DO NOT LOOK LIKE MORTALS. 19 AND WHEN THEY WERE MAKING READY TO GO AWAY, THE GIRL, WHO HAD BEEN TROUBLED WITH THE LEPROSY, CAME AND [SEXLESSLY] DESIRED THEY WOULD PERMIT HER TO GO ALONG WITH THEM, SO, THEY CONSENTED AND THE GIRL WENT WITH THEM TILL THEY CAME TO A CITY IN WHICH WAS THE PALACE OF A GREAT KING, AND WHOSE HOUSE WAS NOT FAR FROM THE INN. 20 HERE THEY STAID, AND WHEN THE GIRL WENT ONE DAY TO THE PRINCE'S WIFE, AND FOUND HER IN A SORROWFUL AND MOURNFUL CONDITION, SHE ASKED HER THE REASON OF HER TEARS. 21 SHE REPLIED, WONDER NOT AT MY GROANS, FOR I AM UNDER A GREAT MISFORTUNE, OF WHICH I DARE NOT TELL ANY ONE. 22 BUT, SAYS THE, GIRL, IF YOU WILL ENTRUST ME WITH YOUR PRIVATE GRIEVANCE, PERHAPS I MAY FIND YOU A REMEDY FOR IT. 23 THOU, THEREFORE, SAYS THE PRINCE'S WIFE, SHALL KEEP THE [TOP] SECRET, AND NOT DISCOVER IT TO ANY ONE ALIVE. 24 I HAVE BEEN MARRIED TO THIS PRINCE, WHO RULES AS KING OVER LARGE DOMINIONS, AND LIVED LONG WITH HIM BEFORE HE HAD ANY CHILD BY ME. 25 AT LENGTH, I CONCEIVED BY HIM, BUT ALAS! I BROUGHT FORTH A LEPROUS SON, WHICH, WHEN HE SAW HIM WOULD NOT OWN TO BE HIS, BUT SAID TO ME, 26 EITHER DO THOU KILL HIM, OR SEND HIM TO SOME NURSE IN SUCH A PLACE, THAT HE MAY BE NEVER HEARD OF, AND NOW TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF, I WILL NEVER SEE YOU MORE. 27 SO HERE I PINE, LAMENTING MY WRETCHED AND MISERABLE CIRCUMSTANCES. ALAS, MY SON! ALAS, MY HUSBAND; HAVE I DISCLOSED IT TO YOU? 28 THE GIRL REPLIED I HAVE FOUND A REMEDY FOR YOUR DISEASE, WHICH I PROMISE YOU, FOR I ALSO WAS LEPROUS, BUT GOD HATH CLEANSED ME, EVEN HE WHO IS CALLED JESUS THE SON OF THE LADY MARY. 29 THE WOMAN INQUIRING WHERE THAT GOD WAS, WHOM SHE SPAKE OF, THE GIRL ANSWERED, HE LODGES WITH YOU HERE, IN THE SAME HOUSE. 30 BUT HOW CAN THIS BE? SAYS SHE, WHERE IS HE? BEHOLD, REPLIED THE GIRL, JOSEPH AND MARY, AND THE INFANT WHO IS, WITH THEM IS CALLED JESUS, AND IT IS HE WHO DELIVERED ME FROM MY DISEASE AND TORMENT. 31 BUT BY WHAT MEANS, SAYS SHE, WERE YOU CLEANSED FROM YOUR LEPROSY? WILL NOT YOU TELL ME THAT? 32 WHY NOT? SAYS THE GIRL, I TOOK THE WATER WITH WHICH HIS BODY HAD BEEN WASHED, AND POURED IT UPON ME, AND MY LEPROSY VANISHED. 33 THE PRINCE’S, WIFE THEN AROSE AND ENTERTAINED THEM, PROVIDING A GREAT FEAST FOR JOSEPH AMONG A LARGE COMPANY OF MEN. 34 AND THE NEXT DAY TOOK PERFUMED WATER TO WASH THE LORD JESUS, AND AFTERWARDS POURED THE SAME WATER UPON HER SON, WHOM SHE HAD BROUGHT WITH HER, AND HER SON WAS INSTANTLY CLEANSED FROM HIS LEPROSY, 35 THEN SHE SANG THANKS AND UNTO GOD, AND SAID, BLESSED IS THE MOTHER THAT BARE THEE, O JESUS! 36 DOST THOU THUS CURE MEN OF THE SAME [SEXLESS] NATURE WITH THYSELF, WITH THE WATER WITH WHICH THY BODY IS WASHED? 37 SHE THEN OFFERED VERY LARGE GIFTS TO THE LADY MARY, AND SENT HER AWAY WITH ALL IMAGINABLE RESPECT.**

**CHAPTER 7: 1 A MAN WHO COULD NOT ENJOY HIS WIFE, FREED FROM HIS DISORDER. 5 A YOUNG MAN WHO HAD BEEN BEWITCHED, AND TURNED INTO A MULE MIRACULOUSLY CURED BY CHRIST BEING PUT ON HIS BACK, 28 AND IS MARRIED TO THE GIRL WHO HAD BEEN CURED OF LEPROSY.**

**THEY CAME AFTERWARDS TO ANOTHER CITY, AND HAD A MIND TO LODGE THERE. 2 ACCORDINGLY THEY WENT TO A MAN'S HOUSE, WHO WAS NEWLY MARRIED BUT BY THE [SEXUAL] INFLUENCE OF SORCERERS COULD NOT ENJOY HIS WIFE. 3 BUT THEY LODGING AT HIS HOUSE THAT NIGHT, THE MAN WAS FREED OF HIS [SEXUAL] DISORDER. 4 AND WHEN THEY WERE PREPARING EARLY IN THE MORNING TO GO FORWARD ON THEIR JOUNEY, THE NEW-MARRIED PERSON HINDERED THEM, AND PROVIDED A NOBLE ENTERTAINMENT FOR THEM. 5 BUT GOING FORWARD ON THE MORROW, THEY CAME TO ANOTHER CITY, AND SAW THREE WOMEN GOING FROM A CERTAIN GRAVE WITH GREAT WEEPING. 6 WHEN ST. MARY SAW THEM, SHE SPAKE TO THE GIRL WHO WAS THEIR COMPANION, SAYING, GO AND INQUIRE OF THEM, WHAT IS THE MATTER WITH THEM, AND WHAT MISFORTUNE HAS BEFALLEN THEM? 7 WHEN THE GIRL ASKED THEM, THEY MADE HER NO ANSWER, BUT ASKED HER AGAIN, WHO ARE YE? AND WHERE ARE YOU GOING? FOR THE DAY IS FAR SPENT, AND NIGHT IS AT HAND. 8 WE ARE TRAVELLERS, SAITH THE GIRL, AND WE ARE SEEKING FOR AN INN TO LODGE AT. 9 THEY REPLIED, GO ALONG WITH US, AND LODGE WITH US. 10 THEY THEN FOLLOWED THEM, AND WERE INTRODUCED INTO A NEW HOUSE, WELL FURNISHED WITH ALL SORTS OF FURNITURE. 11 NOW IT WAS WINTER-TIME, AND THE GIRL WENT INTO THE PARLOUR WHERE THESE WOMEN WERE, AND FOUND THEM WEEPING AND LAMENTING AS BEFORE. 12 BY THEM STOOD A MULE, COVERED OVER WITH SILK, AND AN EBONY COLLAR HANGING DOWN FROM HIS NECK, WHOM THEY KISSED AND WERE FEEDING. 13 BUT WHEN THE GIRL SAID, HOW HANDSOME, LADIES, THAT MULE IS! THEY REPLIED WITH TEARS, AND SAID, THIS MULE [ASS], WHICH YOU SEE, WAS OUR BROTHER, BORN OF THIS SAME MOTHER AS WE, 14 FOR WHEN OUR FATHER DIED, AND LEFT US A VERY LARGE ESTATE, AND WE HAD ONLY THIS BROTHER, AND WE ENDEAVOURED TO PROCURE HIM A SUITABLE MATCH, AND THOUGHT HE SHOULD BE MARRIED AS OTHER MEN, SOME GIDDY AND JEALOUS WOMEN BEWITCHED HIM WITHOUT OUR KNOWLEDGE. 15 AND WE ONE NIGHT, A LITTLE BEFORE DAY, WHILE THE DOORS OF THE HOUSE WERE ALL SHUT FAST, SAW THIS OUR BROTHER WAS CHANGED INTO A MULE, SUCH AS YOU NOW SEE HIM TO BE: 16 AND WE IN THE MELANCHOLY CONDITION IN WHICH YOU SEE US, HAVING NO FATHER TO COMFORT US, HAVE APPLIED TO ALL THE WISE MEN, MAGICIANS, AND DIVINERS IN THE WORLD, BUT THEY HAVE BEEN OF NO SERVICE TO US. 17 AS OFTEN THEREFORE AS WE FIND OURSELVES OPPRESSED WITH GRIEF, WE RISE AND GO WITH THIS OUR MOTHER TO OUR FATHER’S TOMB, WHERE, WHEN WE HAVE CRIED SUFFICIENTLY, WE RETURN HOME. 18 WHEN THE GIRL HAD HEARD THIS SHE SAID, TAKE COURAGE, AND CEASE YOUR FEARS, FOR YOU HAVE A REMEDY FOR YOUR AFFLICTIONS NEAR AT HAND EVEN AMOUNG YOU AND IN THE MIDST OF YOUR HOUSE. 19 FOR I WAS ALSO LEPROUS, BUT WHEN I SAW THIS WOMAN, AND THIS LITTLE INFANT WITH HER, WHOSE NAME IS JESUS, I SPRINKLED MY BODY WITH THE WATER WITH WHICH HIS MOTHER HAD WASHED HIM AND I WAS PRESENTLY MADE WELL. 20 AND I AM CERTAIN THAT HE IS ALSO CAPABLE OF RELIEVING YOU UNDER YOUR DISTRESS. WHEREFORE ARISE, GO TO MY MISTRESS MARY, AND WHEN YOU HAVE BROUGHT HER INTO YOUR OWN PARLOUR, DISCLOSE TO HER THE [TOP] SECRET, AT THE SAME TIME EARNESTLY BESEECHING HER TO COMPASSIONATE YOUR CASE. 21 AS SOON AS THE WOMEN HAD HEARD THE GIRL'S DISCOURSE, THEY HASTENED AWAY TO THE LADY ST. MARY, INTRODUCED THEMSELVES TO HER, AND SITTING DOWN BEFORE HER, THEY WEPT. 22 AND SAID, O OUR LADY ST. MARY, PITY YOUR HANDMAIDS, FOR WE HAVE NO HEAD OF OUR FAMILY, NO ONE ELDER THAN US, NO FATHER OR BROTHER TO GO IN OR OUT BEFORE US. 23 BUT THIS MULE, WHICH YOU SEE, WAS OUR BROTHER, WHICH SOME WOMEN BY WITCHCRAFT HAVE BROUGHT INTO THIS CONDITION WHICH YOU SEE: WE THEREFORE ENTREAT YOU TO COMPASSIONATE US. 24 HEREUPON ST. MARY WAS GRIEVED AT THEIR CASE, AND TAKING THE LORD JESUS, PUT HIM UPON THE BACK OF THE MULE. 25 AND SAID TO HER SON, O JESUS CHRIST, RESTORE (OR HEAL) ACCORDING TO THY EXTRAORDINARY POWER THIS MULE, AND GRANT HIM TO HAVE AGAIN THE SHAPE OF A MAN AND A RATIONAL CREATURE, AS HE HAD FORMERLY. 26 THIS WAS SCARCE SAID BY THE LADY ST. MARY, BUT THE MULE IMMEDIATELY PASSED INTO A HUMAN FORM, AND BECAME A YOUNG MAN WITHOUT ANY DEFORMITY. 27 THEN HE AND HIS MOTHER AND THE SISTERS [SEXLESSLY] WORSHIPPED THE LADY ST. MARY, AND LIFTING THE CHILD UPON THEIR HEADS, THEY KISSED HIM, AND SAID, BLESSED IS THY MOTHER, O JESUS, O SAVIOR OF THE WORLD! BLESSED ARE THE EYES WHICH ARE SO HAPPY TO SEE THEE. 28 THEN BOTH THE SISTERS TOLD THEIR MOTHER, SAYING, OF A TRUTH, OUR BROTHER IS RESTORED TO HIS FORMER SHAPE BY THE HELP OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, AND THE KINDNESS OF THAT GIRL WHO TOLD US OF MARY AND HER SON. 29 AND INASMUCH AS OUR BROTHER IS UNMARRIED, IT IS FIT THAT WE MARRY HIM TO THIS GIRL THEIR SERVANT. 30 WHEN THEY HAD CONSULTED MARY IN THIS MATTER, AND SHE HAD GIVEN HER CONSENT, THEY MADE A SPLENDID WEDDING FOR THIS GIRL. 31 AND SO THEIR SORROW BEING TURNED INTO GLADNESS, AND THEIR MOURNING INTO MIRTH, THEY BEGAN TO REJOICE, AND TO MAKE MERRY, AND SING, BEING DRESSED IN THEIR RICHEST ATTIRE, WITH BRACELETS. 32 AFTERWARDS THEY GLORIFIED AND PRAISED GOD, SAYING, O JESUS, SON OF DAVID, WHO CHANGEST SORROW INTO GLADNESS, AND MOURNING INTO MIRTH! 33 AFTER THIS JOSEPH AND MARY TARRIED THERE TEN DAYS, THEN WENT AWAY, HAVING RECEIVED GREAT RESPECT FROM THESE PEOPLE. 34 WHO, WHEN THEY TOOK THEIR LEAVE OF THEM, AND RETURNED HOME, CRIED, 35 BUT ESPECIALLY THE GIRL.**

**CHAPTER 8: 1 JOSEPH AND MARY PASS THROUGH A COUNTRY INFESTED BY ROBBERS. 3 TITUS A HUMANE THIEF, OFFERS DUMACHUS, HIS COMRADE, FORTY GROATS TO LET JOSEPH AND MARY PASS UNMOLESTED. 6 JESUS PROPHECIES THAT THE THIEVES DUMACHUS AND TITUS SHALL BE CRUCIFIED WITH HIM AND THAT TITUS SHALL GO BEFORE HIM INTO PARADISE. 10 CHRIST CAUSES A WELL TO SPRING FROM A SYCAMORE TREE, AND MARY WASHES HIS COAT IN IT. 11 A BALSAM GROWS THERE FROM HIS SWEAT. THEY GO TO MEMPHIS, WHERE CHRIST WORKS MORE MIRACLES. RETURN TO JUDEA. 15 BEING WARNED, DEPART FOR NAZARETH.**

**IN THEIR JOURNEY FROM HENCE THEY CAME INTO A DESERT COUNTRY AND WERE TOLD IT WAS INFESTED WITH ROBBERS, SO, JOSEPH AND ST. MARY PREPARED TO PASS THROUGH IT IN THE NIGHT. 2 AND AS THEY WERE GOING ALONG, BEHOLD THEY SAW TWO ROBBERS ASLEEP IN THE ROAD, AND WITH THEM A GREAT NUMBER OF ROBBERS, WHO WERE THEIR CONFEDERATES, ALSO ASLEEP. 3 THE NAMES OF THESE TWO WERE TITUS AND DUMACHUS, AND TITUS SAID TO DUMACHUS, I BESEECH THEE LET THESE PERSONS GO ALONG QUIETLY, THAT OUR COMPANY MAY NOT PERCEIVE ANYTHING OF THEM. 4 BUT DAMACHUS REFUSING, TITUS AGAIN SAID, I WILL GIVE THEE FORTY GROATS [GRAIN OATS], AND AS A PLEDGE TAKE MY GIRDLE, WHICH HE GAVE HIM BEFORE HE HAD DONE SPEAKING, THAT HE MIGHT NOT OPEN HIS MOUTH OR MAKE A NOISE. 5 WHEN THE LADY ST. MARY SAW THE KINDNESS WHICH THIS ROBBER DID SHEW THEM, SHE SAID TO HIM, THE LORD GOD WILL RECEIVE THEE TO HIS RIGHT HAND AND GRANT THEE PARDON OF THY [SEXUAL] SINS. 6 THEN THE LORD JESUS ANSWERED, AND SAID TO HIS MOTHER, WHEN THIRTY YEARS ARE EXPIRED [THIS MEANS JESUS WAS 3 YEARS OF AGE], O MOTHER, THE JEWS WILL CRUCIFY ME AT JERUSALEM, 7 AND THESE TWO THIEVES SHALL BE WITH ME AT THE SAME TIME UPON THE CROSS, TITUS ON MY RIGHT HAND, AND DUMACHUS ON MY LEFT, AND FROM THAT TIME TITUS SHALL GO BEFORE ME INTO PARADISE, 8 AND WHEN SHE HAD SAID, GOD FORBID THIS SHOULD BE THY LOT, O MY SON, THEY WENT ON TO A CITY IN WHICH WERE SEVERAL IDOLS, WHICH, AS SOON AS THEY CAME NEAR TO IT, WAS TURNED INTO HILLS OF SAND. 9 HENCE THEY WENT TO THAT SYCAMORE TREE, WHICH IS NOW CALLED MATAREA. 10 AND IN MATEREA THE LORD JESUS CAUSED A WELL TO SPRING FORTH, IN WHICH ST. MARY WASHED HIS COAT, 11 AND A BALSAM IS PRODUCED, OR GROWS, IN THAT COUNTRY, FROM THE SWEAT WHICH RAN DOWN THERE FROM THE LORD JESUS. 12 THENCE THEY PROCEEDED TO MEMPHIS, AND SAW PHAROAH, AND ABODE THREE YEARS IN EGYPT. 13 AND THE LORD JESUS DID VERY MANY MIRACLES, IN EGYPT, WHICH ARE NEITHER TO BE FOUND IN GOSPEL OF THE INFANCY NOR IN THE GOSPEL OF PERFECTION. 14 AT THE END OF THREE YEARS HE RETURNED OUT OF EGYPT, AND WHEN HE CAME NEAR TO JUDEA, JOSEPH WAS AFRAID TO ENTER, 15 FOR HEARING THAT HEROD WAS DEAD, AND THAT ARCHELAUS HIS SON REIGNED IN HIS STEAD, HE WAS AFRAID. 16 AND WHEN HE WENT TO JUDEA, AN, ANGEL OF GOD APPEARD TO HIM, AND SAID, O JOSEPH GO INTO THE CITY OF NAZARETH, AND ABIDE THERE. 17 IT IS STRANGE INDEED, THAT HE, WHO IS THE LORD OF ALL COUNTRIES, SHOULD BE THUS CARRIED BACKWARD AND FORWARD, THROUGH SO MANY COUNTRIES.**

**CHAPTER 9: 2 THE TWO SICK CHILDREN WHO WERE PLAGUED WAS CURED BY THE WATER WHEREIN CHRIST WAS WASHED.**

**WHEN THEY CAME AFTERWARDS INTO THE CITY OF BETHLEHEM, THEY FOUND THERE SEVERAL VERY DESPERATE DISTEMPERS, WHICH BECAME SO TROUBLESOME TO CHILDREN BY SEEING THEM, THAT MOST OF THEM DIED. 2 THERE WAS THERE A WOMAN WHO HAD A SICK SON, WHOM SHE BROUGHT, WHEN HE WAS AT THE POINT OF DEATH, TO THE LADY ST. MARY, WHO SAW HER WHEN SHE WAS WASHING JESUS CHRIST. 3 THEN SAID THE WOMAN, O MY LADY MARY, LOOK DOWN UPON THIS MY SON, WHO IS AFFLICTED WITH MOST DREADFUL PAINS. 4 ST. MARY HEARING HER, SAID, TAKE A LITTLE OF THAT WATER WITH WHICH I HAVE WASHED MY SON, AND SPRINKLE IT UPON HIM. 5 THEN SHE TOOK A LITTLE OF THAT WATER, AS ST. MARY HAD COMMANDED, AND SPRINKLED IT UPON HER SON, WHO BEING WEARIED WITH HIS VIOLENT PAINS, WAS FALLEN ASLEEP, AND AFTER HE HAD SLEPT A LITTLE, AWAKED PERFECTLY WELL AND RECOVERED. 6 THE MOTHER BEING ABUNDANTLY GLAD OF THIS SUCCESS, WENT AGAIN TO ST. MARY, AND ST. MARY SAID TO HER, GIVE PRAISE TO GOD, WHO HATH CURED THIS THY SON. 7 THERE WAS IN THE SAME PLACE ANOTHER WOMAN, A NEIGHBOUR OF HER, WHOSE SON WAS NOW CURED. 8 THIS WOMEN’S, SON WAS AFFLICTED WITH THE SAME DISEASE, AND HIS EYES WERE NOW ALMOST QUITE SHUT, AND SHE WAS LAMENTING FOR HIM DAY AND NIGHT. 9 THE MOTHER OF THE CHILD WHICH WAS CURED, SAID TO HER, WHY DO YOU NOT BRING YOUR SON TO ST. MARY, AS I BROUGHT MY SON TO HER, WHEN HE WAS IN THE AGONIES OF DEATH, AND HE WAS CURE BY THAT WATER, WITH WHICH THE BODY OF HER SON JESUS WAS WASHED? 10 WHEN THE WOMAN HEARD HER SAY THIS, SHE ALSO WENT, AND HAVING PROCURED THE SAME WATER, WASHED HER SON WITH IT, WHEREUPON HIS BODY AND HIS EYES WERE INSTANTLY RESTORED TO THEIR FORMER STATE. 11 AND WHEN SHE BROUGHT HER SON TO ST. MARY, AND OPENED HIS CASE TO HER, SHE COMMANDED HER TO GIVE THANKS TO GOD FOR THE RECOVERY OF HER SON'S HEALTH, AND TELL NO ONE WHAT HAD HAPPENED.**

**CHAPTER 10: 1 TWO WIVES OF ONE MAN, EACH HAVE A SON SICK. 2 ONE OF THEM NAMED MARY, AND WHOSE SON'S NAME WAS CALEB, PRESENTS THE VIRGIN WITH A HANDSOME CARPET, AND CALEB IS CURED, BUT THE SON OF THE OTHER WIFE DIES, 4 WHICH OCCASIONS A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE WOMEN. 5 THE OTHER WIFE PUTS CALEB INTO A HOT OVEN, AND HE IS MIRACULOUSLY PRESERVED, 9 SHE AFTERWARDS THROWS HIM INTO A WELL, AND HE IS AGAIN PRESERVED, 11 HIS MOTHER APPEALS TO THE VIRGIN AGAINST THE OTHER WIFE, 12 WHOSE DOWNFALL THE VIRGIN PROPHESIES, 13 AND WHO ACCORDINGLY FALLS INTO THE WELL, 14 THEREIN FULFILLING A SAYING OF OLD.**

**THERE WERE IN THE SAME CITY TWO WIVES OF ONE MAN, WHO HAD EACH A SON SICK. ONE OF THEM WAS CALLED MARY, AND HER SON'S NAME WAS CALEB. 2 SHE AROSE, AND TAKING HER SON, WENT TO THE LADY ST. MARY, THE MOTHER OF JESUS, AND OFFERED HER A VERY HANDSOME CARPET, SAYING, O MY LADY MARY ACCEPT THIS CARPET OF ME, AND INSTEAD OF IT GIVE ME A SMALL SWADDLING CLOTH. 3 TO THIS MARY AGREED, AND WHEN THE MOTHER OF CALEB WAS GONE, SHE MADE A COAT FOR HER SON OF THE SWADDLING CLOTH, PUT IT ON HIM, AND HIS DISEASE WAS CURED, BUT THE SON OF THE OTHER WIFE DIED. 4 HEREUPON THERE AROSE BETWEEN THEM A DIFFERENCE IN DOING THE BUSINESS OF THE FAMILY BY TURNS, EACH HER WEEK, 5 AND WHEN THE TURN OF MARY THE MOTHER OF CALEB CAME, AND SHE WAS HEATING THE OVEN TO BAKE BREAD, AND WENT AWAY TO FETCH THE MEAL, SHE LEFT HER SON CALEB BY THE OVEN, 6 WHOM THE OTHER WIFE, HER RIVAL, SEEING TO BE BY HIMSELF, TOOK AND CAST HIM INTO THE OVEN, WHICH WAS VERY HOT, AND THEN WENT AWAY. 7 MARY ON HER RETURN SAW HER SON CALEB LYING IN THE MIDDLE OF THE OVEN LAUGHING, AND THE OVEN QUITE AS COLD AS THOUGH IT HAD NOT BEEN BEFORE HEATED, AND KNEW THAT HER RIVAL THE OTHER WIFE HAD THROWN HIM INTO THE FIRE. 8 WHEN SHE TOOK HIM OUT, SHE BROUGHT HIM TO THE LADY ST. MARY, AND TOLD HER THE STORY, TO WHOM SHE REPLIED, BE QUIET, I AM CONCERNED LEST THOU SHOULDEST MAKE THIS MATTER KNOWN. 9 AFTER THIS HER RIVAL, THE OTHER WIFE, AS SHE WAS DRAWING WATER AT THE WELL, AND SAW CALEB PLAYING BY THE WELL, AND THAT NO ONE WAS NEAR, TOOK HIM, AND THREW HIM INTO THE WELL. 10 AND WHEN SOME MEN CAME TO FETCH WATER FROM THE WELL, THEY SAW THE BOY SITTING ON THE SUPERFICIES OF THE WATER, AND DREW HIM OUT WITH ROPES, AND WERE EXCEEDINGLY SURPRISED AT THE CHILD, AND PRAISED GOD. 11 THEN CAME THE MOTHER AND TOOK HIM AND CARRIED HIM TO THE LADY ST. MARY, LAMENTING. AND SAYING, O MY LADY, SEE WHAT MY RIVAL HATH DONE TO MY SON, AND HOW SHE HATH CAST HIM INTO THE WELL, AND I DO NOT QUESTION BUT ONE TIME OR OTHER SHE WILL BE THE OCCASION OF HIS DEATH. 12 ST. MARY REPLIED TO HER, GOD WILL VINDICATE YOUR INJURED CAUSE. 13 ACCORDINGLY A FEW DAYS AFTER, WHEN THE OTHER WIFE CAME TO THE WELL TO DRAW WATER, HER FOOT WAS ENTANGLED IN THE ROPE, SO THAT SHE FELL HEADLONG INTO THE WELL, AND THEY WHO RAN TO HER ASSISTANCE FOUND HER SKULL BROKEN, AND BONES BRUISED. 14 SO SHE CAME TO A BAD END, AND IN HER WAS FULFILLED THAT SAYING OF THE AUTHOR, THEY DIGGED A WELL, AND MADE IT DEEP, BUT FELL THEMSELVES INTO THE PIT WHICH THEY PREPARED.**

**CHAPTER 11: 1 BARTHOLOMEW, WHEN A CHILD WHICH WAS SICK, MIRACULOUSLY RESTORED BY BEING LAID ON CHRIST'S BED.**

**ANOTHER WOMAN IN THAT CITY HAD. LIKEWISE, TWO, SON'S SICK. 2 AND WHEN ONE WAS DEAD, THE OTHER, WHO LAY AT THE POINT OF DEATH, SHE TOOK IN HER ARMS TO THE LADY ST. MARY, AND IN A FLOOD OF TEARS ADDRESSED HERSELF TO HER, SAYING, 3 O MY LADY, HELP AND RELIEVE ME, FOR I HAD TWO SONS, THE ONE I HAVE JUST NOW BURIED, THE OTHER I SEE IS FAST AT THE POINT OF DEATH BEHOLD HOW I (EARNESTLY) SEEK FOR YOU FROM GOD, AND PRAY TO HIM. 4 THEN SHE SAID, O LORD, THOU ART GRACIOUS, AND MERCIFUL, AND KIND, THOU, HAST GIVEN ME TWO SONS, ONE OF THEM THOU HALT TAKEN TO THYSELF, O SPARE ME THIS OTHER. 5 ST. MARY THEN PERCEIVING THE GREATNESS OF HER SORROW, PITIED HER AND SAID, DO THOU PLACE THY SON IN MY SON'S BED, AND COVER HIM WITH HIS CLOTHES. 6 AND WHEN SHE HAD PLACED HIM IN THE BED WHEREIN CHRIST LAY, AT THE MOMENT WHEN HIS EYES WERE JUST CLOSED BY DEATH, AS SOON AS EVER THE SMALL OF THE GARMENTS OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST REACHED THE BOY, HIS EYES WERE OPENED, AND CALLING WITH A LOUD VOICE TO HIS MOTHER, HE ASKED FOR BREAD, AND WHEN HE HAD RECEIVED IT, HE SUCKED IT. 7 THEN HIS MOTHER SAID, O LADY MARY, NOW I AM ASSURED THAT THE POWERS OF GOD DO DWELL IN YOU, SO THAT THY SON CAN CURE CHILDREN WHO ARE OF THE SAME SORT AS HIMSELF, AS SOON AS THEY TOUCH HIS GARMENTS. 8 THIS BOY, WHO WAS THUS CURED, IS THE SAME WHO IN THE GOSPEL IS CALLED BARTHOLOMEW.**

**CHAPTER 12: A LEPROUS WOMAN HEALED BY CHRIST'S WASHING WATER. 7 A PRINCESS HEALED BY IT AND RESTORED TO HER HUSBAND.**

**AGAIN, THERE WAS A LEPROUS WOMAN WHO WENT TO THE LADY ST. MARY, THE MOTHER OF JESUS, AND SAID, O MY LADY, HELP ME. 2 ST. MARY REPLIED, WHAT HELP DOES THOU [SEXLESSLY] DESIRE? IS IT GOLD OR SILVER, OR THAT THY BODY BE CURED OF ITS LEPROSY? 3 WHO, SAYS THE WOMAN, CAN GRANT ME THIS? 4 ST. MARY REPLIED TO HER, WAIT A LITTLE TILL I HAVE WASHED MY SON JESUS, AND PUT HIM TO BED. 5 THE WOMAN WAITED, AS SHE WAS COMMANDED, AND MARY WHEN SHE HAD PUT JESUS IN BED, GIVING HER THE WATER WITH WHICH SHE HAD WASHED HIS BODY, SAID, TAKE SOME OF THE WATER, AND POUR IT UPON THY BODY, 6 WHICH WHEN SHE HAD DONE, SHE INSTANTLY BECAME CLEAN, AND PRAISED GOD, AND GAVE THANKS TO HIM. 7 THEN SHE WENT AWAY, AFTER SHE HAD ABODE WITH HER THREE DAYS, 8 AND GOING INTO THE CITY, SHE SAW A CERTAIN PRINCE, WHO HAD MARRIED ANOTHER PRINCESS, DAUGHTER, 9 BUT WHEN HE CAME TO SEE HER, HE PERCEIVED BETWEEN HER EYES THE SIGNS OF LEPROSY LIKE A STAR, AND THEREUPON DECLARED THE MARRIAGE DISSOLVED AND VOID. 10 WHEN THE WOMAN SAW THESE PERSONS IN THIS CONDITION, EXCEEDING SORROWFUL, AND SHEDDING ABUNDANCE OF TEARS, SHE INQUIRED OF THEM THE REASON OF THEIR CRYING, 11 THEY REPLIED, INQUIRE NOT INTO OUR CIRCUMSTANCES, FOR WE ARE NOT ABLE TO DECLARE OUR MISFORTUNES TO ANY, PERSON, WHATSOEVER. 12 BUT SHE STILL PRESSED AND [SEXLESSLY] DESIRED THEM TO COMMUNICATE THEIR CASE TO HER, INTIMATING, THAT SHE MIGHT BE ABLE TO DIRECT THEM TO A REMEDY. 13 SO WHEN THEY SHOWED THE YOUNG WOMAN TO HER, AND THE SIGNS OF THE LEPROSY, WHICH APPEARED BETWEEN HER EYES, 14 SHE SAID, I ALSO WHOM YE SEE IN THIS PLACE, WAS AFFLICTED WITH THE SAME DISTEMPER, AND GOING ON SOME BUSINESS TO BETHLEHEM, I WENT INTO A CERTAIN CAVE, AND SAW A WOMAN NAMED MARY, WHO HAD A SON CALLED JESUS. 15 SHE SEEING ME TO BE LEPROUS, WAS CONCERNED FOR ME, AND GAVE ME SOME WATER WITH WHICH SHE HAD WASHED HER SON'S BODY, WITH THAT I SPRINKLED MY BODY, AND BECAME CLEAN. 16 THEN SAID THESE WOMEN, WILL YOU [R] MISTRESS, GO ALONG WITH US, AND SHOW THE LADY ST. MARY TO US? 17 TO WHICH SHE CONSENTING, THEY AROSE AND WENT TO THE LADY ST. MARY, TAKING WITH THEM VERY NOBLE PRESENTS. 18 AND WHEN THEY CAME IN AND OFFERED THEIR PRESENTS TO HER, THEY SHOWED THE LEPROUS YOUNG WOMAN WHOM THEY BROUGHT WITH THEM TO HER. 19 THEN SAID ST. MARY, THE MERCY OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST REST UPON YOU, 20 AND GIVING THEM A LITTLE OF THAT WATER, WITH WHICH SHE HAD WASHED THE BODY OF JESUS CHRIST, SHE BADE THEM WASH THE DISEASED PERSON WITH IT, WHICH WHEN THEY HAD DONE, SHE WAS PRESENTLY CURED, 21 SO THEY, AND ALL WHO WERE PRESENT, PRAISED GOD; AND BEING FILLED WITH JOY, THEY WENT BACK TO THEIR OWN CITY, AND GAVE PRAISES TO GOD ON THAT ACCOUNT. 22 THEN THE PRINCE HEARING THAT HIS WIFE WAS CURED, TOOK HER HOME AND MADE A SECOND MARRIAGE, GIVING THANKS UNTO GOD FOR THE RECOVERY OF HIS WIFE'S HEALTH.**

**CHAPTER 13: 1 A GIRL, WHOSE BLOOD SATAN SUCKED RECEIVES ONE OF CHRIST'S SWADDLING CLOTHES FROM THE VIRGIN, 14 SATAN COMES LIKE A DRAGON, AND SHE SHEWS IT TO HIM, FLAMES AND BURNING COALS PROCEED FROM IT AND FALL UPON HIM, 19 HE IS MIRACULOUSLY DISCOMFITED, AND LEAVES THE GIRL.**

**THERE WAS ALSO A GIRL, WHO WAS AFFLICTED BY SATAN [LUCIFER/VICTORIA], 2 FOR THAT [SEXUALLY] CURSED SPIRIT DID FREQUENTLY APPEAR TO HER IN THE SHAPE OF A DRAGON, AND WAS INCLINED TO SWALLOW HER UP, AND HAD SO SUCKED OUT ALL HER BLOOD, THAT SHE LOOKED LIKE A DEAD CARCASS. 3 AS OFTEN AS SHE CAME TO HERSELF, WITH HER HANDS WRINGED ABOUT HER HEAD SHE WOULD CRY OUT, AND SAY, WO [E], WO [E] IS ME, THAT THERE IS NO ONE TO BE FOUND, WHO CAN DELIVER ME FROM THAT IMPIOUS DRAGON! 4 HER FATHER AND MOTHER, AND ALL WHO WERE ABOUT HER AND SAW HER, MOURNED AND WEPT OVER HER, 5 AND ALL WHO WERE PRESENT WOULD ESPECIALLY BE UNDER SORROW AND IN TEARS, WHEN THEY HEARD HER BEWAILING AND SAYING, MY BRETHREN AND FRIENDS, IS HERE NO ONE WHO CAN DELIVER ME FROM THIS MURDERER? 6 THEN THE PRINCE'S DAUGHTER, WHO HAD BEEN CURED OF HER LEPROSY, HEARING THE COMPLAINT OF THAT GIRL, WENT UPON THE TOP OF HER CASTLE, AND SAW HER WITH HER HANDS TWISTED ABOUT HER HEAD, POURING OUT A FLOOD OF TEARS, AND ALL THE PEOPLE THAT WERE ABOUT HER IN TEARS. 7 THEN SHE ASKED THE HUSBAND OF THE POSSESSED PERSON, WHETHER HIS WIFE'S MOTHER WAS ALIVE? HE TOLD HER, THAT HER FATHER AND MOTHER WERE BOTH ALIVE, 8 THEN SHE ORDERED HER MOTHER TO BE SENT TO HER, TO WHOM, WHEN SHE SAW HER COMING, SHE SAID, IS THIS POSSESSED GIRL THY DAUGHTER? SHE MOANING AND BEWAILING SAID, YES MADAM I BORE HER. 9 THE PRINCE'S, DAUGHTER ANSWERED, DISCLOSE THE [TOP] SECRET OF HER CASE TO ME, FOR I CONFESS TO YOU THAT I WAS LEPROUS, BUT THE LADY MARY, THE MOTHER OF JESUS CHRIST, HEALED ME. 10 AND IF YOU [SEXLESSLY] DESIRE YOUR DAUGHTER TO BE RESTORED TO HER FORMER STATE, TAKE HER TO BETHLEHEM, AND INQUIRE FOR MARY THE MOTHER OF JESUS, AND DOUBT NOT BUT YOUR DAUGHTER WILL BE CURED, FOR I DO NOT QUESTION BUT YOU WILL COME HOME WITH GREAT JOY AT YOUR DAUGHTER'S RECOVERY. 11 AS SOON AS EVER SHE HAD DONE SPEAKING, SHE AROSE AND WENT WITH HER DAUGHTER TO THE PLACE APPOINTED, AND TO MARY, AND TOLD HER THE CASE OF HER DAUGHTER. 12 WHEN ST. MARY HAD HEARD HER STORY, SHE GAVE HER A LITTLE OF THE WATER WITH WHICH SHE HAD WASHED THE BODY OF HER SON JESUS, AND BADE HER POUR IT UPON THE BODY OF HER DAUGHTER. 13 LIKEWISE SHE GAVE HER ONE OF THE SWADDLING CLOTHS OF THE LORD JESUS, AND SAID, TAKE THIS SWADDLING CLOTH, AND SHEW IT TO THINE ENEMY AS OFTEN AS THOU SEEST HIM AND SHE SENT THEM AWAY IN PEACE. 14 AFTER THEY BADE LEFT THAT CITY AND RETURNED HOME, AND THE TIME WAS COME IN WHICH SATAN [LUCIFER/VICTORIA] WAS WANT TO SEIZE HER, IN THE SAME MOMENT THIS [SEXUALLY] CURSED SPIRIT APPEARED TO HER IN THE SHAPE OF A HUGE DRAGON, AND THE GIRL SEEING HIM WAS AFRAID, 15 THE MOTHER SAID TO HER, BE NOT AFRAID, DAUGHTER, LET HIM ALONE TILL HE COME NEARER TO THEE! THEN SHEW HIM THE SWADDLING CLOTH, WHICH THE LADY MARY GAVE US, AND WE SHALL SEE THE EVENT. 16 SATAN [LUCIFER/VICTORIA] THEN COMING LIKE A DREADFUL DRAGON, THE BODY OF THE GIRL TREMBLED FOR FEAR. 17 BUT AS SOON AS SHE HAD PUT THE SWADDLING CLOTH UPON HER HEAD, AND ABOUT HER EYES, AND CHEWED IT TO HIM, PRESENTLY THERE ISSUED FORTH FROM THE SWADDLING CLOTH FLAMES AND BURNING COALS, AND FELL UPON THE DRAGON. 18 OH! HOW GREAT A MIRACLE WAS THIS, WHICH WAS DONE: AS SOON AS THE DRAGON SAW THE SWADDLING CLOTH OF THE LORD JESUS, FIRE WENT FORTH AND WAS SCATTERED UPON HIS HEAD AND EYES, SO THAT HE CRIED OUT WITH A LOUD VOICE, WHAT HAVE I TO DO WITH THEE, JESUS, THOU SON OF MARY? WHITHER SHALL I FLEE FROM THEE? 19 SO HE DREW BACK MUCH AFFRIGHTED, AND LEFT THE GIRL. 20 AND SHE WAS DELIVERED FROM THIS [SEXUAL] TROUBLE, AND SANG PRAISES AND THANKS TO GOD, AND WITH HER ALL WHO WERE PRESENT AT THE WORKING OF THE MIRACLE.**

**CHAPTER 14: 1 JUDAS WHEN A BOY POSSESSED BY SATAN, AND BROUGHT UP BY HIS PARENTS TO JESUS TO BE CURED, WHOM HE TRIES TO BITE, 7 BUT FAILING, STRIKES JESUS AND MAKES HIM CRY OUT. WHEREUPON SATAN GOES FROM JESUS IN THE SHAPE OF A DOG.**

**ANOTHER WOMAN LIKEWISE LIVED THERE, WHOSE SON WAS POSSESSED BY SATAN LUCIFER/VICTORIA], 2 THIS BOY, NAMED JUDAS, AS OFTEN AS SATAN [LUCIFER/VICTORIA] SEIZED HIM, WAS INCLINED TO BITE ALL THAT WERE PRESENT, AND IF HE FOUND NO ONE ELSE NEAR HIM, HE WOULD BITE HIS OWN HANDS AND OTHER PARTS. 3 BUT THE MOTHER OF THIS MISERABLE BOY, HEARING OF ST. MARY AND HER SON JESUS, AROSE PRESENTLY AND TAKING HER SON IN HER ARMS, BROUGHT HIM TO THE LADY MARY. 4 IN THE MEANTIME, JAMES AND JOSES HAD TAKEN AWAY THE INFANT, THE LORD JESUS, TO PLAY AT A PROPER SEASON WITH OTHER CHILDREN, AND WHEN THEY WENT FORTH, THEY SAT DOWN AND THE LORD JESUS WITH THEM. 5 THEN JUDAS, WHO WAS POSSESSED, CAME AND SAT DOWN AT THE RIGHT HAND OF JESUS. 6 WHEN SATAN [LUCIFER/VICTORIA] WAS ACTING UPON HIM AS USUAL, HE WENT ABOUT TO BITE THE LORD JESUS. 7 AND BECAUSE HE COULD NOT DO IT, HE STRUCK JESUS ON THE RIGHT SIDE, SO THAT HE CRIED OUT. 8 AND IN THE SAME MOMENT SATAN [LUCIFER/VICTORIA] WENT OUT OF THE BOY, AND RAN AWAY LIKE A MAD DOG. 9 THIS SAME BOY WHO STRUCK JESUS, AND OUT OF WHOM SATAN [LUCIFER/VICTORIA] WENT IN THE FORM OF A DOG, WAS JUDAS ISCARIOT, WHO BETRAYED HIM TO THE JEWS. 10 AND THAT SAME SIDE, ON WHICH JUDAS: STRUCK HIM, THE JEWS PIERCED WITH A SPEAR.**

**CHAPTER 15: 1 JESUS AND OTHER BOYS PLAY TOGETHER, AND MAKE CLAY FIGURES OF ANIMALS. 4 JESUS CAUSES THEM TO WALK, 6 ALSO MAKES CLAY BIRDS, WHICH HE CAUSES TO FLY, AND EAT AND DRINK. 7 THE CHILDREN'S PARENTS ALARMED, AND TAKE JESUS FOR A SORCERER. 8 HE GOES TO A DYER'S SHOP, AND THROWS ALL THE CLOTHS INTO THE FURNACE, AND WORKS A MIRACLE THEREWITH. 15 WHEREUPON THE JEWS PRAISE GOD.**

**AND WHEN THE LORD JESUS WAS SEVEN YEARS OF AGE, HE WAS ON A CERTAIN DAY WITH OTHER BOYS HIS COMPANIONS ABOUT THE SAME AGE, 2 WHO, WHEN THEY WERE AT PLAY, MADE CLAY INTO SEVERAL SHAPES, NAMELY-ASSES, OXEN, BIRDS, AND OTHER FIGURES, 3 EACH BOASTING OF HIS WORK, AND ENDEAVOURING TO EXCEED THE REST. 4 THEN THE LORD JESUS SAID TO THE BOYS, I WILL COMMAND THESE FIGURES WHICH I HAVE MADE TO WALK. 5 AND IMMEDIATELY THEY MOVED, AND WHEN HE COMMANDED THEM TO RETURN, THEY RETURNED. 6 HE HAD ALSO MADE THE FIGURES OF BIRDS AND SPARROWS, WHICH, WHEN HE COMMANDED TO FLY, DID FLY, AND WHEN HE COMMANDED TO STAND STILL, DID STAND STILL, AND IF HE GAVE THEM MEAT AND DRINK, THEY DID EAT AND DRINK. 7 WHEN AT LENGTH THE BOYS WENT AWAY, AND RELATED THESE THINGS TO THEIR PARENTS, THEIR FATHERS SAID TO THEM, TAKE HEED, CHILDREN, FOR THE FUTURE OF HIS COMPANY, FOR HE IS A SORCERER, SHUN AND AVOID HIM, AND FROM HENCEFORTH NEVER PLAY WITH HIM. 8 ON A CERTAIN DAY ALSO, WHEN THE LORD JESUS WAS PLAYING WITH THE BOYS, AND RUNNING ABOUT, HE PASSED BY A DYER'S SHOP, WHOSE NAME WAS SALEM. 9 AND THERE WERE IN HIS SHOP MANY PIECES OF CLOTH BELONGING TO THE PEOPLE OF THAT CITY, WHICH THEY DESIGNED TO DYE OF SEVERAL COLOURS. 10 THEN THE LORD JESUS GOING INTO THE DYER'S SHOP, TOOK ALL THE CLOTHS, AND THREW THEM INTO THE FURNACE. 11 WHEN SALEM CAME HOME, AND SAW THE CLOTHS SPOILED, HE BEGAN TO MAKE A GREAT NOISE, AND TO CHIDE THE LORD JESUS, SAYING, 12 WHAT HAST THOU DONE TO ME, O THOU SON OF MARY? THOU HAST INJURED BOTH ME AND MY NEIGHBOURS, THEY ALL [SEXLESSLY] DESIRED THEIR CLOTHS OF A PROPER COLOUR, BUT THOU HAST COME AND SPOILED THEM ALL. 13 THE LORD JESUS REPLIED, I WILL CHANGE THE COLOUR OF EVERY CLOTH TO WHAT COLOUR THOU [SEXLESSLY] DESIREST. 14 AND THEN HE PRESENTLY BEGAN TO TAKE THE CLOTHS OUT OF THE FURNACE, AND THEY WERE ALL DYED OF THOSE SAME COLOURS WHICH THE DYER [SEXLESSLY] DESIRED. 15 AND WHEN THE JEWS SAW THIS SURPRISING MIRACLE, THEY PRAISED GOD.**

**CHAPTER 16: 1 CHRIST MIRACULOUSLY WIDENS OR CONTRACTS THE GATES, MILK PAILS, SIEVES, OR BOXES, NOT PROPERLY MADE BY JOSEPH, 4 HE NOT BEING SKILLFUL AT HIS CARPENTER'S TRADE. 5 THE KING OF JERUSALEM GIVES JOSEPH AN ORDER FOR A THRONE. 6 JOSEPH WORKS ON IT FOR TWO YEARS IN THE KING’S PALACE, AND MAKES IT TWO SPANS TOO SHORT. THE KING BEING ANGRY WITH HIM, 10 JESUS COMFORTS HIM, 13 COMMANDS HIM TO PULL ONE SIDE OF THE THRONE, WHILE HE PULLS THE OTHER, AND BRINGS IT TO ITS PROPER DIMENSIONS. 14 WHEREUPON THE BYSTANDERS PRAISE GOD.**

**AND JOSEPH, WHERESOEVER HE WENT IN THE CITY, TOOK THE LORD JESUS WITH HIM, WHERE HE WAS SENT FOR TO WORK TO MAKE GATES, OR MILK-PAILS, OR SIEVES, OR BOXES, THE LORD JESUS WAS WITH HIM, WHERESOEVER BE WENT. 2 AND AS OFTEN AS JOSEPH HAD ANYTHING IN HIS WORK, TO MAKE LONGER, OR SHORTER, OR WIDER, OR NARROWER, THE LORD JESUS WOULD STRETCH HIS HAND TOWARDS IT. 3 AND PRESENTLY IT BECAME AS JOSEPH WOULD HAVE IT: 4 SO THAT HE HAD NO NEED TO FINISH ANYTHING WITH HIS OWN HANDS, FOR HE WAS NOT VERY SKILLFUL AT HIS CARPENTER'S TRADE. 5 ON A CERTAIN TIME THE KING OF JERUSALEM SENT FOR HIM, AND SAID, I WOULD HAVE THEE MAKE ME A THRONE OF THE SAME DIMENSIONS WITH THAT PLACE IN WHICH I COMMONLY SIT. 6 JOSEPH OBEYED, AND FORTHWITH BEGAN THE WORK, AND CONTINUED TWO YEARS IN THE KING’S PALACE BEFORE HE FINISHED IT. 7 AND WHEN HE CAME TO FIX IT IN ITS PLACE, HE FOUND IT WANTED TWO SPANS ON EACH SIDE OF THE APPOINTED MESSURE. 8 WHICH WHEN THE KING SAW, HE WAS VERY ANGRY WITH JOSEPH, 9 AND JOSEPH AFRAID OF THE KING’S ANGER, WENT TO BED WITHOUT HIS SUPPER, TAKING NOT ANY THING TO EAT. 10 THEN THE LORD JESUS ASKED HIM, WHAT HE WAS AFRAID OF? 11 JOSEPH REPLIED, BECAUSE I HAVE LOST MY LABOUR IN THE WORK WHICH I HAVE BEEN ABOUT THESE TWO YEARS. 12 JESUS SAID TO HIM, FEAR NOT, NEITHER BE CAST DOWN, 13 DO THOU LAY HOLD ON ONE SIDE OF THE THRONE, AND I WILL THE OTHER, AND WE WILL BRING IT TO ITS JUST DIMENSIONS. 14 AND WHEN JOSEPH HAD DONE AS THE LORD JESUS SAID, AND EACH OF THEM HAD WITH STRENGTH DRAWN HIS SIDE, THE THRONE OBEYED, AND WAS BROUGHT TO THE PROPER DIMENSIONS OF THE PLACE: 15 WHICH, MIRACLE WHEN THEY WHO STOOD BY SAW, THEY WERE ASTONISHED, AND PRAISED GOD. 16 THE THRONE WAS MADE OF THE SAME WOOD WHICH WAS IN BEING IN SOLOMON'S TIME, NAMELY, WOOD ADORNED WITH VARIOUS SHAPES, AND FIGURES.**

**CHAPTER 17: 1 JESUS PLAYS WITH BOYS AT HIDE AND SEEK. 3 SOME WOMEN PUT HIS PLAYFELLOWS IN A FURNACE, 7 WHERE THEY ARE TRANSFORMED BY JESUS INTO KIDS. 10 JESUS CALLS THEM TO GO AND PLAY, AND THEY ARE RESTORED TO THEIR FORMER SHAPE.**

**ON ANOTHER DAY THE LORD JESUS GOING OUT INTO THE STREET, AND SEEING SOME BOYS WHO WERE MET TO PLAY, JOINED HIMSELF TO THEIR COMPANY. 2 BUT WHEN THEY SAW HIM, THEY HID THEMSELVES, AND LEFT HIM TO SEEK FOR THEM, 3 THE LORD JESUS CAME TO THE GATE OF A CERTAIN HOUSE, AND ASKED SOME WOMEN WHO WERE STANDING THERE, WHERE THE BOYS WERE GONE? 4 AND WHEN THEY ANSWERED, THAT THERE WAS NO ONE THERE, THE LORD JESUS SAID, WHO ARE THOSE WHOM YE SEE IN THE FURNACE? 5 THEY ANSWERED, THEY WERE KIDS OF THREE YEARS OLD. 6 THEN JESUS CRIED OUT ALOUD, AND SAID, COME OUT HITHER, O YE KIDS, TO YOUR SHEPHERD, 7 AND PRESENTLY THE BOYS CAME FORTH LIKE KIDS, AND LEAPED ABOUT HIM, WHICH WHEN THE WOMEN SAW, THEY WERE EXCEEDINGLY AMAZED, AND TREMBLED, 8 THEN THEY IMMEDIATELY [SEXLESSLY] WORSHIPPED, THE LORD JESUS, AND BESEECHED HIM, SAYING, O OUR LORD JESUS, SON OF MARY, THOU ART TRULY THAT GOOD SHEPHERD OF ISRAEL! HAVE MERCY ON THY HANDMAIDS, WHO STAND BEFORE THEE, WHO DO NOT DOUBT, BUT THAT THOU, O LORD, ART COME TO SAVE, AND NOT TO DESTROY. 9 AFTER THAT, WHEN THE LORD JESUS SAID, THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL ARE LIKE ETHIOPIANS AMONG THE PEOPLE, THE WOMEN SAID, THOU, LORD, KNOWEST ALL THINGS, NOR IS ANY THING CONCEALED FROM THEE: BUT NOW WE ENTREAT THEE, AND BESEECH OF THY MERCY, THAT THOU WOULDEST RESTORE THOSE BOYS TO THEIR FORMER STATE. 10 THEN JESUS SAID, COME HITHER, O BOYS, THAT WE MAY GO AND PLAY, AND IMMEDIATELY, IN THE PRESENCE OF THESE WOMEN, THE KIDS WERE CHANGED, AND RETURNED INTO THE SHAPE OF BOYS.**

**CHAPTER 18: 1 JESUS BECOMES THE KING OF HIS PLAYFELLOWS, AND THEY CROWN HIM WITH FLOWERS, 4 MIRACULOUSLY CAUSES A SERPENT WHO HAD BITTEN SIMON THE CANANITE, THEN A BOY, TO SUCK OUT ALL THE POISON AGAIN, 16 THE SERPENT BURSTS, AND CHRIST RESTORES THE BOY TO HEALTH.**

**IN THE MONTH ADAR JESUS GATHERED TOGETHER THE BOYS, AND RANKED THEM AS THOUGH HE HAD BEEN A KING. 2 FOR THEY SPREAD THEIR GARMENTS ON THE GROUND FOR HIM TO SIT ON, AND HAVING MADE A CROWN OF FLOWERS, PUT IT UPON HIS HEAD, AND STOOD ON HIS RIGHT AND LEFT AS THE GUARDS OF A KING. 3 AND IF ANY ONE HAPPENED TO PASS BY, THEY TOOK HIM BY FORCE, AND SAID, COME HITHER, AND [SEXLESSLY] WORSHIP THE KING, THAT YOU MAY HAVE A PROSPEROUS JOURNEY. 4 IN THE MEAN TIME, WHILE THESE THINGS WERE DOING, THERE CAME CERTAIN MEN, CARRYING A BOY UPON A COUCH, 5 FOR THIS BOY HAVING GONE WITH HIS COMPANIONS TO THE MOUNTAIN TO GATHER WOOD, AND HAVING FOUND THERE A PARTRIDGE'S NEST, AND PUT HIS HAND IN TO TAKE OUT THE EGGS, WAS STUNG BY A POISONOUS SERPENT, WHICH LEAPED OUT OF THE NEST, SO THAT HE WAS FORCED TO CRY OUT FOR THE HELP OF HIS COMPANIONS, WHO, WHEN THEY CAME, FOUND HIM LYING UPON THE EARTH LIKE A DEAD PERSON. 6 AFTER WHICH HIS NEIGHBOURS CAME AND CARRIED HIM BACK INTO THE CITY. 7 BUT WHEN THEY CAME TO THE PLACE WHERE THE LORD JESUS, WAS SITTING LIKE A KING, AND THE OTHER BOYS STOOD AROUND HIM LIKE HIS MINISTERS, THE BOYS MADE HASTE TO MEET HIM, WHO WAS BITTEN BY THE SERPENT, AND SAID TO HIS NEIGHBOURS, COME AND PAY YOUR RESPECTS TO THE KING, 8 BUT WHEN, BY REASON OF THEIR SORROW, THEY REFUSED TO COME, THE BOYS DREW THEM, AND FORCED THEM AGAINST THEIR WILLS TO COME. 9 AND WHEN THEY CAME TO THE LORD JESUS, HE INQUIRED, ON WHAT ACCOUNT THEY CARRIED THAT BOY? 10 AND WHEN THEY ANSWERED THAT A SERPENT HAD BITTEN HIM, THE LORD JESUS SAID TO THE BOYS, LET US GO AND KILL THAT SERPENT. 11 BUT WHEN THE PARENTS OF THE BOY [SEXLESSLY] DESIRED TO BE EXCUSED, BECAUSE THEIR SON LAY AT THE POINT OF DEATH, THE BOYS MADE ANSWER, AND SAID, DID NOT YE HEAR WHAT THE KING SAID? LET US GO AND KILL THE SERPENT, AND WILL NOT YE OBEY HIM? 12 SO THEY BROUGHT THE COUCH BACK AGAIN, WHETHER THEY WOULD OR NOT. 13 AND WHEN THEY WERE COME TO THE NEST, THE LORD JESUS SAID TO THE BOYS, IS THIS THE SERPENT'S LURKING PLACE? THEY SAID, IT WAS. 14 THEN THE LORD JESUS CALLING THE SERPENT, IT PRESENTLY CAME FORTH AND SUBMITTED TO HIM, TO WHOM HE SAID, GO AND SUCK OUT ALL THE POISON WHICH THOU HAST INFUSED INTO THAT BOY: 15 SO THE SERPENT CREPT TO THE BOY, AND TOOK AWAY ALL ITS POISON AGAIN. 16 THEN THE LORD JESUS [SEXUALLY] CURSED THE SERPENT, SO THAT IT IMMEDIATELY BURST ASUNDER, AND DIED, 17 AND HE TOUCHED THE BOY WITH HIS HAND TO RESTORE HIM TO HIS FORMER HEALTH, 18 AND WHEN HE BEGAN TO CRY, THE LORD JESUS SAID, CEASE CRYING FOR HEREAFTER THOU SHALL BE MY DISCIPLE, 19 AND THIS IS THAT SIMON THE CANAANITE, WHO IS MENTIONED IN THE GOSPEL.**

**CHAPTER 19: 1 JAMES BEING BITTEN BY A VIPER, JESUS BLOWS ON THE WOUND AND CURES HIM. 4 JESUS CHARGED WITH THROWING A BOY FROM THE ROOF OF, A HOUSE, 10 MIRACULOUSLY RAISES THE DEAD BOY TO ACQUIT HIM, 12 FETCHES WATER FOR HIS MOTHER, BREAKS THE PITCHER AND MIRACULOUSLY GATHERS THE WATER IN HIS MANTLE AND BRINGS IT HOME, 16 MAKES FISH POOLS ON THE SABBATH, 20 CAUSES A BOY TO DIE WHO BROKE THEM DOWN, 22 ANOTHER BOY RUNS AGAINST HIM, WHOM HE ALSO CAUSES TO DIE.**

**ON ANOTHER DAY JOSEPH SENT HIS SON JAMES TO GATHER WOOD, AND THE LORD JESUS WENT WITH HIM, 2 AND WHEN THEY CAME TO THE PLACE WHERE THE WOOD WAS, AND JAMES BEGAN TO GATHER IT, BEHOLD, A VENEMOUS VIPER BIT HIM, SO THAT HE BEGAN TO CRY, AND MAKE A NOISE. 3 THE LORD JESUS SEEING HIM IN THIS CONDITION, CAME TO HIM, AND BLOWED UPON THE PLACE WHERE THE VIPER HAD BIT HIM, AND IT WAS INSTANTLY WELL. 4 ON A CERTAIN DAY THE LORD JESUS WAS WITH SOME BOYS, WHO WERE PLAYING ON THE HOUSE-TOP, AND ONE OF THE BOYS FELL DOWN, AND PRESENTLY DIED. 5 UPON WHICH THE OTHER BOYS ALL RUNNING AWAY, THE LORD JESUS WAS LEFT ALONE ON THE HOUSE-TOP. 6 AND THE BOY'S RELATIONS CAME TO HIM AND SAID TO THE LORD JESUS, THOU DIDST THROW OUR SON DOWN FROM THE HOUSE-TOP. 7 BUT HE DENYING IT, THEY CRIED OUT, OUR SON IS DEAD, AND THIS IS HE WHO KILLED HIM. 8 THE LORD JESUS REPLIED TO THEM, DO NOT CHARGE ME WITH A [SEXUAL] CRIME OF WHICH YOU ARE NOT ABLE TO CONVICT ME, BUT LET US GO AND ASK THE BOY HIMSELF, WHO WILL BRING THE TRUTH TO LIGHT. 9 THEN THE LORD JESUS GOING DOWN STOOD OVER THE HEAD OF THE DEAD BOY, AND SAID WITH A LOUD VOICE, ZEINUNUS, ZEINUNUS, WHO THREW THEE DOWN FROM THE HOUSETOP? 10 THEN THE DEAD BOY ANSWERED, THOU DIDST NOT THROW ME DOWN, BUT SUCH A ONE DID. 11 AND WHEN THE LORD JESUS BADE THOSE WHO STOOD BY TO TAKE PRESENT PRAISED GOD ON ACCOUNT OF THAT MIRACLE. 12 ON A CERTAIN TIME THE LADY ST. MARY HAD COMMANDED THE LORD JESUS TO FETCH HER SOME WATER OUT OF THE WELL, 13 AND WHEN HE HAD GONE TO FETCH THE WATER, THE PITCHER, WHEN IT WAS BROUGHT UP FULL, BRAKE, 14 BUT JESUS SPREADING HIS MANTLE GATHERED UP THE WATER AGAIN, AND BROUGHT IT IN THAT TO HIS MOTHER, 15 WHO, BEING ASTONISHED AT THIS WONDERFUL THING, LAID UP THIS, AND ALL THE OTHER THINGS WHICH SHE HAD SEEN, IN HER MEMORY. 16 AGAIN ON ANOTHER DAY THE LORD JESUS WAS WITH SOME BOYS BY A RIVER, AND THEY DREW WATER OUT OF THE RIVER BY LITTLE CHANNELS, AND MADE LITTLE FISH-POOLS. 17 BUT THE LORD JESUS HAD MADE TWELVE SPARROWS, AND PLACED THEM ABOUT HIS POOL ON EACH SIDE, THREE ON A SIDE. 18 BUT IT WAS THE SABBATH DAY [SATURDAY], AND THE SON OF HANANI A JEW CAME BY, AND SAW THEM MAKING THESE THINGS, AND SAID, DO YE THUS MAKE FIGURES OF CLAY ON THE SABBATH [SATURDAY]? AND HE RAN TO THEM, AND BROKE DOWN THEIR FISH-POOLS. 19 BUT WHEN THE LORD JESUS CLAPPED HIS HANDS OVER THE SPARROWS WHICH HE HAD MADE, THEY FLED AWAY CHIRPING. 20 AT LENGTH THE SON OF HANANI COMING TO THE FISH-POOL OF JESUS TO DESTROY IT, THE WATER VANISHED AWAY, AND THE LORD JESUS SAID TO HIM, 21 IN LIKE MANNER AS THIS WATER HAD VANISHED, SO SHALL THY LIFE VANISH, AND PRESENTLY THE BOY DIED. 22 ANOTHER TIME, WHEN THE LORD JESUS WAS COMING HOME IN THE EVENING WITH JOSEPH, HE MET A BOY, WHO RAN SO HARD AGAINST HIM, THAT HE THREW HIM DOWN, 23 TO WHOM THE LORD JESUS SAID, AS THOU HAST THROWN ME DOWN, SO SHALT THOU FALL, NOR EVER RISE. 24 AND THAT MOMENT THE BOY FELL DOWN AND DIED.**

**CHAPTER 20: 4 CHRIST SENT TO SCHOOL TO ZACCHEUS TO LEARN HIS LETTERS, AND TEACHES ZACCHEUS. 13 SENT TO ANOTHER SCHOOLMASTER, 14 REFUSES TO TELL HIS LETTERS, AND THE SCHOOLMASTER GOING TO WHIP HIM, HIS HAND WITHERS AND HE DIES.**

**THERE WAS ALSO AT JERUSALEM ONE NAMED ZACCHEUS, WHO WAS A SCHOOLMASTER: 2 AND HE SAID TO JOSEPH, JOSEPH, WHY DOST THOU NOT SEND JESUS TO ME, THAT HE MAY LEARN HIS LETTERS? 3 JOSEPH AGREED, AND TOLD ST. MARY, 4 SO THEY BROUGHT HIM TO THAT MASTER, WHO, AS SOON AS HE SAW HIM, WROTE OUT AN ALPHABET FOR HIM, 5 AND HE BADE HIM SAY ALEPH, AND WHEN HE HAD SAID ALEPH, THE MASTER BADE HIM PRONOUNCE BETH. 6 THEN THE LORD JESUS SAID TO HIM, TELL ME FIRST THE MEANING OF THE LETTER ALEPH, AND THEN I WILL PRONOUNCE BETH. 7 AND WHEN THE MASTER THREATENED TO WHIP HIM, THE LORD JESUS EXPLAINED TO HIM THE MEANING OF THE LETTERS ALEPH AND BETH, 8 ALSO WHICH WERE THE STRAIGHT FIGURES OF THE LETTERS, WHICH THE OBLIQUE, AND WHAT LETTERS HAD DOUBLE FIGURES, WHICH HAD POINTS, AND WHICH HAD NONE, WHY ONE LETTER WENT BEFORE ANOTHER, AND MANY OTHER THINGS HE BEGAN TO TELL HIM, AND EXPLAIN, OF WHICH THE MASTER HIMSELF HAD NEVER HEARD, NOR READ IN ANY BOOK. 9 THE LORD JESUS FARTHER SAID TO THE MASTER, TAKE NOTICE HOW I SAY TO THEE, THEN HE BEGAN CLEARLY AND DISTINCTLY TO SAY ALEPH, BETH, GIMEL, DALETH, AND SO ON TO THE END OF THE ALPHABET. 10 AT THIS THE MASTER WAS SO SURPRISED, THAT HE SAID, I BELIEVE THIS BOY WAS BORN BEFORE NOAH, 11 AND TURNING TO JOSEPH, HE SAID, THOU HAST BROUGHT A BOY TO ME TO BE TAUGHT, WHO IS MORE LEARNED THAN ANY MASTER. 12 HE SAID ALSO TO ST. MARY, THIS YOUR SON HAS NO NEED OF ANY LEARNING. 13 THEY BROUGHT HIM THEN TO A MORE LEARNED MASTER, WHO, WHEN HE SAW HIM, SAID, SAY ALEPH, 14 AND WHEN HE HAD SAID ALEPH, THE MASTER BADE HIM PRONOUNCE BETH, TO WHICH THE LORD JESUS REPLIED, TELL ME FIRST THE MEANING OF THE LETTER ALEPH, AND THEN I WILL PRONOUNCE BETH. 15 BUT THIS MASTER, WHEN HE DID LIFT UP HIS HAND TO WHIP HIM, HAD HIS HAND PRESENTLY WITHERED, AND HE DIED. 16 THEN SAID JOSEPH TO ST. MARY, HENCEFORTH WE WILL NOT ALLOW HIM TO GO OUT OF THE HOUSE, FOR EVERY ONE WHO DISPLEASES HIM IS KILLED.**

**CHAPTER 21: [COMPARE LUKE II. 42, WHOSE MEAGRE ACCOUNT IS DEFICIENT OF THE SUBLIME DETAILS HERE GIVEN OF THE SUBJECTS DISPUTED UPON.] 1 DISPUTES LEARNEDLY WITH THE DOCTORS IN THE TEMPLE, 7 ON LAW, 9 ON ASTRONOMY, 12 ON PHYSICS AND METAPHYSICS.21 IS WORSHIPED BY A PHILOSOPHER, 28 AND FETCHED HOME BY HIS MOTHER.**

**AND WHEN HE WAS TWELVE YEARS OLD, THEY BROUGHT HIM TO JERUSALEM TO THE FEAST, AND WHEN THE FEAST WAS OVER, THEY RETURNED. 2 BUT THE LORD JESUS CONTINUED BEHIND IN THE TEMPLE AMONG THE DOCTORS AND ELDERS, AND LEARNED MEN OF ISRAEL, TO WHOM HE PROPOSED SEVERAL QUESTIONS OF LEARNING, AND ALSO GAVE THEM ANSWERS: 3 FOR HE SAID TO THEM, WHOSE SON IS THE MESSIAH? THEY ANSWERED, THE SON OF DAVID. 4 WHY THEN, SAID HE, DOES HE IN THE SPIRIT CALL HIM LORD? WHEN HE SAITH, THE LORD SAID TO MY LORD, SIT THOU AT MY RIGHT HAND, TILL I HAVE MADE THINE ENEMIES THY FOOTSTOOL. 5 THEN A CERTAIN PRINCIPAL RABBI ASKED HIM, HAST THOU READ BOOKS? 6 JESUS ANSWERED, HE HAD READ BOTH BOOKS, AND THE THINGS WHICH WERE CONTAINED IN BOOKS. 7 AND HE EXPLAINED TO THEM THE BOOKS OF THE [SEXLESS] LAW, AND PRECEPTS, AND STATUTES: AND THE MYSTERIES WHICH ARE CONTAINED IN THE BOOKS OF THE PROPHETS, THINGS WHICH THE MIND OF NO CREATURE COULD REACH. 8 THEN SAID THAT RABBI, I NEVER YET HAVE SEEN OR HEARD OF SUCH KNOWLEDGE! WHAT DO YOU THINK THAT BOY WILL BE? 9 WHEN A CERTAIN ASTRONOMER, WHO WAS PRESENT, ASKED THE LORD JESUS, WHETHER HE HAD STUDIED ASTRONOMY? 10 THE LORD JESUS REPLIED, AND TOLD HIM THE NUMBER OF THE SPHERES AND HEAVENLY BODIES, AS ALSO THEIR TRIANGULAR, SQUARE, AND SEXTILE ASPECT, THEIR PROGRESSIVE AND RETROGRADE MOTION, THEIR SIZE AND SEVERAL PROGNOSTICATIONS, AND OTHER THINGS WHICH THE REASON OF MAN HAD NEVER DISCOVERED. 11 THERE WAS ALSO AMONG THEM A PHILOSOPHER WELL SKILLED IN PHYSIC [S] AND NATURAL PHILOSOPHY, WHO ASKED THE LORD JESUS, WHETHER HE HAD STUDIED PHYSIC [S]? 12 HE REPLIED, AND EXPLAINED TO HIM PHYSICS AND METAPHYSICS. 13 ALSO THOSE THINGS WHICH WERE ABOVE AND BELOW THE POWER OF NATURE, 14 THE POWERS ALSO OF THE BODY, ITS HUMOURS, AND THEIR EFFECTS. 15 ALSO THE NUMBER OF ITS MEMBERS, AND BONES, VEINS, ARTERIES, AND NERVES, 16 THE SEVERAL CONSTITUTIONS OF BODY, HOT AND DRY, COLD AND MOIST, AND THE TENDENCIES OF THEM, 17 HOW THE SOUL OPERATED UPON THE BODY, 18 WHAT ITS VARIOUS SENSATIONS AND FACULTIES, WERE, 19 THE FACULTY OF SPEAKING, ANGER, [SEXLESS] DESIRE, 20 AND LASTLY THE MANNER OF ITS COMPOSITION AND DISSOLUTION, AND OTHER THINGS, WHICH THE UNDERSTANDING OF NO CREATURE HAD EVER REACHED. 21 THEN THAT PHILOSOPHER AROSE, AND [SEXLESSLY] WORSHIPPED THE LORD JESUS, AND SAID, O LORD JESUS, FROM HENCEFORTH I WILL BE THY DISCIPLE AND SERVANT. 22 WHILE THEY WERE DISCOURSING ON THESE AND SUCH LIKE THINGS, THE LADY ST. MARY CAME IN, HAVING BEEN THREE DAYS WALKING ABOUT WITH JOSEPH, SEEKING FOR HIM. 23 AND WHEN SHE SAW HIM SITTING AMONG THE DOCTORS, AND IN HIS TURN PROPOSING QUESTIONS TO THEM, AND GIVING ANSWERS, SHE SAID TO HIM, MY SON, WHY HAST THOU DONE THUS BY US? BEHOLD I AND THY FATHER HAVE BEEN AT MUCH PAINS IN SEEKING THEE. 24 HE REPLIED, WHY DID YE SEEK ME? DID YE NOT KNOW THAT I OUGHT TO BE EMPLOYED IN MY FATHER’S [STEPHEN’S] HOUSE? 25 BUT THEY UNDERSTOOD NOT THE WORDS WHICH HE SAID TO THEM. 26 THEN THE DOCTORS ASKED MARY, WHETHER THIS WERE HER SON? AND WHEN SHE SAID, HE WAS, THEY SAID, O HAPPY MARY, WHO HAST BORNE SUCH A SON. 27 THEN HE RETURNED WITH THEM TO NAZARETH, AND OBEYED THEM IN ALL THINGS. 28 AND HIS MOTHER KEPT ALL THESE THINGS IN HER MIND, 29 AND THE LORD JESUS GREW IN STATURE AND WISDOM, AND FAVOUR WITH GOD AND MAN.**

**CHAPTER 22: 1 JESUS CONCEALS [MAKES TOP-SECRET] HIS MIRACLES, 2 JESUS STUDIES THE LAW, 3 JESUS IS THEN AND IS BAPTIZED.**

**NOW FROM THIS TIME JESUS BEGAN TO CONCEAL HIS MIRACLES AND [TOP] SECRET WORKS, 2 AND GAVE HIMSELF TO THE STUDY OF THE [SEXLESS] LAW, TILL HE ARRIVED TO THE END OF HIS THIRTIETH YEAR, 3 AT WHICH TIME THE FATHER [STEPHEN] PUBLICLY OWNED HIM AT JORDAN, SENDING DOWN THIS [SEXLESS] VOICE FROM HEAVEN, THIS IS MY BELOVED SON, IN WHOM I AM WELL PLEASED, 4 THE HOLY GHOST [JOHN 4:23-24] BEING ALSO PRESENT IN THE FORM OF A DOVE. 5 THIS IS HE WHOM WE WORSHIP WITH ALL REVERENCE, BECAUSE HE GAVE US OUR LIFE AND BEING [ACTS 17:22-30], AND BROUGHT US FROM OUR MOTHER’S WOMB, GLORY TO GOD, 6 WHO, FOR OUR SAKES, TOOK A HUMAN BODY, AND HATH REDEEMED US, THAT SO HE MIGHT EMBRACE US WITH EVERLASTING MERCY, AND SHEW HIS FREE, LARGE, BOUNTIFUL GRACE AND GOODNESS TO US. 7 TO HIM BE GLORY AND PRAISE, AND POWER, AND DOMINION, FROM HENCEFORTH SAID FOR EVERMORE. AMEN.**