

**Notes on the Book of Genesis**  
(three of three)

**Chapter Twenty-Eight**

Vs. 1: Isaac bids Jacob not to marry a Canaanite (Hittite) woman just like Rebekah's admonition at the conclusion of the last chapter, again, reminiscent of 24.4 concerning Abraham and his son, Isaac.

Vs. 2: Isaac tells Jacob to go to Paddan-aram, to the house of Bethuel (cf. 22.22), his mother's father, and take a wife from a daughter of Laban who is his mother's brother. I.e., another parallel to Abraham sending his servant to "take a wife for my son Isaac" [24.5] from "my country" [vs. 4]. In both cases this awareness of being a sojourner in a foreign land, Canaan, was tantamount; it is contrasted by this vision backward to the ancestral homeland, so to speak, despite the displacement in Canaan.

Vs. 3: *God Almighty* (El Shaddai): first used in 17.1: "I am *God Almighty*; walk before me, and be blameless." Here Isaac invokes a divine blessing after he blesses Jacob in vs. 1 along with being fruitful, multiplying and becoming a "*company* (qahal) of people." This important noun (and verb) in Hebrew connotes gathering together, often with a religious sense. "Then I will thank you in the great *congregation*; in the mighty throng I will praise you" [Ps 35.18].

Vs. 4: The divine blessing continues into this verse and has its roots in Abraham's blessing first mentioned in 12.2: "And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great so that you will be a blessing." The blessing at hand Isaac imparts is given both to Jacob ('to you') and his descendants ('with you'); almost as though both Jacob and they are contemporaneous.

-*descendants* (zerah): alternately as "seed" or "planting." "Your revenue was the *grain* of Shihor" [Is 23.3].

-The land Jacob is to possess is that of his *sojournings* or magor as in 17.8 (with respect to Abraham). I.e., there has been and will be a constant contrast or tension between such magor and the land of Canaan as well as later on with respect to Israel going into Egypt.

Vss. 6-9: Esau witnesses the blessing of Jacob by Isaac and takes a wife (in addition to the two he already had) from Ishmael which can be traced to 16.11, the son of Hagar whom Abraham drove out into the wilderness... "a wild ass of a man" [vs. 12], keeping with the character of Esau. Contrast with Jacob who "obeyed his father and his mother" [vs. 7].

Vs. 11: En route to Haran Jacob "*came* to a certain *place* (maqom)." The verb pagah implies "striking upon" or "rushing;" i.e., a sudden arrival. "But the servants of the king would not put forth their hand to *fall upon* the priests of the Lord" [1 Sam 22.17]. As for maqom, cf. 12.6: "Abram passed through the land to the *place* at Shechem."

-"*Stayed* (lun) there" or lodged for the night. "My lords, turn aside, I pray you, to your servant's house and *spend the night*" [12.2].

-"*Taking one of the stones:*" in the Hebrew text, "from the stones." Note that it was of the *place* (maqom); mentioned again: "and lay down in that *place*" as if to emphasize the importance of the dream Jacob was about to have.

-*To sleep* (shakav): also can apply to death as in 1Kg 2.10: "So David *slept* with his fathers."

Vs. 12: *Dreamed* (chalom): The second mention of a dream in Genesis, the first being with respect to Abimelech, 20.3 & 6. Chalom fundamentally means "to be fat;" the idea seems to be that physical fatness disposes one to dream. Jacob's dream can foreshadow that of his son, Joseph (37.5, etc.) which may be why he preferred him over his other eleven sons ('Now Israel...Jacob...loved Joseph more than any other of his children,' vs. 3).

-"*That there was a ladder:*" the Hebrew text has hineh or *behold* which may related to Jacob *having come* (pagah, the suddenness of his arrival in vs. 11) to that "certain place."

-*Ladder* (sulam): the only occurrence of this word in the Bible; from the verbal root salal, *to lift up, exalt*. It is reminiscent of Jn 1.51: "You will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the

Son of man.” Note that this ladder is “set up.” No mention of a person(s) putting it in place which adds the mysterious character of Jacob’s dream.

-*Top* (ro’sh), that is, the ladder. This word is used with respect to the mountaintops visible as the flood was receding: “the *tops* of the mountains were seen” [8.5]; also means “head.”

-The top of this ladder *reached* (nagah) heaven. Cf. 3.3 where it alternately means to touch: “Neither shall you *touch* it, lest you die.” Note that the ladder does not reach heaven but “to heaven.”

-*Behold* (hineh): cf. the beginning of this verse, to introduce the second half as well as to complement the first half.

-*Angels* (mala’k): reminiscent of 24.7, “he will send his *angel* before you” with respect to Abraham’s servant to fetch a wife for Isaac, Jacob’s father. In the verse at hand, we have a generic mention of such angels (‘of God’) engaged in the process of ascending and descending. Note that the former comes first which may parallel with the (passive) setting up of the ladder.

-“*On* it:” i.e., the ladder. The preposition *b-* is used, literally, “in.”

Vs. 13: This verse begins with *hineh*, *behold*.

-“The Lord *stood* (natsav) *above* (hal) it.” The verb intimates a firm, unmoving position; for another use, cf. Ps 39.6: “Surely man goes about as a shadow!” The Hebrew literally reads, “firmly *standing* as vanity.” The preposition *hal* means both *on* as well as *beside*.

-From this “firm” position—on top of the ladder or beside it/Jacob—the Lord addresses Jacob saying that he is the “God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac.” Note that technically Abraham is Jacob’s grandfather; perhaps the Lord wishes to show the superiority of Abraham not just for him but for future generations. “Was not Abraham our father justified by works” [Jms 2.21]? Also cf. 26.24 which posits Abraham as “your father”...right so according to physical lineage with respect to Isaac.

-*Land* (‘ertz): not just the soil but land as a kind of expanded maqom noted in vs. 11 (‘he came to a certain *place*’), freighted with religious significance. Jacob is *laying* (shakav) on this land: cf. vs. 11 where this verb means “to sleep.”

-The Lord does not give the ‘ertz only to Jacob but to his *descendants* (zerah, as in vs. 4).

Vs. 14: Jacob’s future descendants are to be as *dust* (haphar) not as from physical soil but again, as of the ‘ertz. As for the significance of this dust, cf. 13.15 in relationship to Abraham. Also note under 18.27 which gives other references to this term.

-*Spread abroad* (parats): basically as “to break,” “to destroy.” For a parallel use: “But the more they were oppressed, multiplied and *spread abroad*” [Ex 1.12].

-This spreading (‘breaking’) of ‘ertz-dust goes to the four cardinal points of north, south, east, west...as if to say that this special material expands outwards to cover the entire earth.

-“Bless themselves:” the Hebrew text reads, “be blessed” as opposed to God blessing them. Perhaps the ‘ertz-dust acted as a kind of incense or holy material which imparted this divine blessing.

Vs. 15: This verse begins with yet another *hineh* (*behold*) which seems to indicate the special importance of what God is saying. Note the sequence of this verse with different tenses and the movement into and from different places:

-“With you:” present tense concerning Jacob as an individual person.

-“*Will keep* (shamar) you” or future tense with respect to wherever Jacob goes. Cf. 18.19: “to *keep* the way of the Lord by doing righteousness and justice.”

-“Will bring you back” or future tense with respect to Jacob as an individual person concerning “this *land*” or ‘adamah, that is, not the ‘ertz, which signifies the land of sojourning in which he finds himself.

-“*Will not leave* (hazav) you.” This verb in the future tense can apply to a sense of abandonment.

-“Until I have done:” past tense intended with respect to a future action. It seems that once the Lord accomplishes this through that “of which I have spoken (past tense),” he will “leave” Jacob.

Vs. 16: *awoke* (from sleep) or yaqats as concerning Noah (9.24) and Pharaoh (41.4), which brings to and end Jacob’s dream and begins his response to it through the end of this chapter.

-*Place* (maqom): with respect to the Lord being there without Jacob realizing...*knowing* (yadah) it.

Vs. 17: *Afraid/awesome*: from the same verb *yare'*. The former is with respect to Jacob and the latter with respect to "this *place*" or *maqom*.

-*House* (*beyth*) of God" and "*gate* (*shahar*) of heaven." The two seem to be different yet have the same *maqom*.

Vs. 18: *Rose early in the morning* (*shakam*): as in 20.8, 21.14, 22.3. "Let us *go out early* to the vineyards" [Sg 7.13].

-The *stone* ('oven) becomes a *pillar* (*matsevah*), signifying the transformation of this inanimate object into a divine symbol. Note that *matsevah* is derived from the verbal root *natsav* mentioned in vs. 13 (*stand above*) or the Lord's position concerning the ladder of Jacob's dream. It is as though such divine standing becomes incarnate in this pillar. "And he (Moses) built an altar...and twelve *pillars* according to the twelve tribes of Israel" [Ex 24.14].

-*Poured* (*yatsaq*): compared with 31.13 where in another dream God reminds Jacob that he had "anointed" this pillar.

-*Head* (*ro'sh*): as used in vs. 12, "top of the ladder" and Jacob's own head. Pouring oil upon it may indicate that the pillar was no higher than Jacob.

Vs. 19: Jacob calls this *maqom* Bethel or House of God, apparently preferring the "house" over the "gate," both of which were just noted in vs. 17.

-*Luz*: the former name of "that *place*" (*maqom*); from the verbal root *luts*, *to stammer, deride*, and may have an echo with the tower of Babel where the one language of the world became divided.

Vs. 20: Jacob now *makes* a *vow* (*nadar*; both verb and noun), the first one recorded in the Bible. This verb fundamentally means "to drop down" as grain from a winnowing instrument. Cf. 31.13 which refers to this verse in another dream of Jacob: "I am the God of Bethel, where you anointed a pillar and *made a vow* to me."

-Jacob spells out his vow which seems to have a condition based on the following: "If God will be with me" (etc.) and "then the Lord shall be my God" [vs. 21].

-Another element of this vow which appears tentative upon God protecting Jacob is *keeping* (*shamar*) him. It is as though Jacob reminds God of his words in vs. 15: "I am with you and will *keep* you wherever you go."

Vs. 21: "Return in *peace* (*shalom*):" that is, to the house of his father Isaac. Only upon completion of the elements laid out in the previous and current verses will Jacob allow the Lord to "be my God."

Vs. 22: Jacob then will allow (so to speak) God to have his house as that pillar noted in vs. 18. That is, the divine *beyth* will equal the *matsevah*.

-*Tenth* (*heser*): the noun and verb (from which the noun is derived) are used together. "And Abram gave him (Melchizedek) a *tenth* of everything" [14.20].

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## Chapter Twenty-Nine

Vs. 1: "Jacob went on his journey." The Hebrew text literally reads, "raised his feet and went."

-*People of the east* or the Arameans. "And as men migrated from the east, they found a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there" [11.2], that is, after the flood and before the story of the tower of Babel when "the whole earth had one language and few words" [11.1].

Vs. 2: *Saw* (*hineh*): in the sense of "behold" and coupled with "as he looked" to stress the suddenness of the well's appearance. It is used a second time (*lo*) when Jacob saw the flocks of sheep there. This incident of the well is suggestive of his father Isaac's experience in chapter 26.

-*Lying* (*ravats*): the sheep by the well. Cf. 4.7 for another use of this verb: "Sin is *couching* at the door."

Vs. 4: In vs. 2 Jacob sees three flocks of sheep, not their shepherds, whom he addresses here as "my brothers."

Vs. 5: “Is it *well* (shalom) with him (Laban)?”

Vs. 6: “*High* (gadol) day:” literally, “great” or when the sun is at its peak. The shepherds were gathered at this hottest time of day waiting for all the flocks to be gathered so that there might be enough men present to roll back the stone over the well. Although the context is different, these idle shepherds are reminiscent of the laborers in the vineyard: “About the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing; and he said to them, ‘Why do you stand here idle all day [Mt 20.6]?’”

Vs. 9: “She (Rachel) *kept* (raha) them:” that is to say, she shepherded the flocks.

Vs. 10: Jacob first sees Rachel and then the sheep in her charge, that is, those of Laban. Next Jacob rolls away the stone over well as though beholding Rachel’s beauty gave him sufficient strength for a task requiring many shepherds.

Vs. 11: Jacob *kissed* (nashaq) Rachel as in 27.26, “Come near and *kiss* me, my son.” In the verse at hand, nashaq is used with the preposition l- (*to, towards*) to signify a direct response.

-*Wept* (baka’): “The child lifted up his voice and *wept*” [21.16]. In both instances this lifting of one’s voice emphasizes the emotion. The English of verse at hand has for this lifting of voice, “wept aloud.”

Vs. 13: The previous verse has Rachel running to her father, Laban, followed in this verse by Laban running to meet Jacob.

-*Heard/tidings*: shamah/shemah.

-*Embraced* (chavaq): as in 33.4, “Esau ran to meet him, to *embrace* him.” For another use, cf. Eccl 4.5: “The fool *folds* his hands and eats his own flesh.”

Vs. 14: Compare Laban’s words, “Surely you are my bone and my flesh!” with Adam’s words, “This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh” [2.23].

Vss. 15 through 35 or the end of this chapter relate Jacob’s long service with Laban in order to marry his daughter Rachel whom he first encountered at the well.

-*Serve* (havad): as in 27.28; can mean both servile work or done willingly as in the two following verses from Exodus: 1) “You shall *serve* God upon this mountain” [3.12]. 2) “Go now and *work*; for no straw shall be given you” [5.18].

-*Wages* (maskoreth): from the verbal root sakar, *to hire* as well as *to bribe*. For another sense, “...and a full *reward* be given you by the Lord, the God of Israel” [Rt 2.12].

Vs. 17: Leah’s eyes were *weak* or rakoth (rak). It also can apply to having an infirmity: “And I am this day *weak*, though anointed king” [2 Sam 3.39]. For another sense, “The most *tender* and delicately bred woman among you” [Dt 28.56].

-Rachel was both “*beautiful* and *lovely*.” The Hebrew text reads, “beautiful form and beautiful appearance” with the same adjective applied, yaphah. “When Abram entered Egypt the Egyptians saw that the woman was very *beautiful*” [12.14]. Also, “God made all things *beautiful*” [Eccl 3.11].

-As for *form* in the Hebrew text: to’ar, from a verbal root meaning “to delineate.” “He had no *form* or comeliness that we should look at him” [Is 53.2].

-As for *sight* in the Hebrew text: mar’eh, from the common verbal root “to see.” For another sense, “And I, Daniel, alone saw the *vision*” [Dan 10.7].

Vs. 18: “*For* your younger daughter Rachel.” The Hebrew text has the preposition b- (*in*) prefixed to Rachel.

Vs. 19: “*Stay* with me.” Shavah is the verb; compare with *seven* (shevah) in the previous verse, a play on words.

Vs. 20: “Seemed:” in the Hebrew text, “were in his eyes.”

-“A *few* (‘echad) days:” from the verbal root meaning “to unite” from which is derived “one.” Reason: because Jacob loved Rachel which tends “to unite” two people.

Vs. 21: At the end of seven years (i.e., those “few days”) Jacob approaches Laban and calls Rachel his wife. Note that his “time is complete,” “time” being “days” which in the last verse were seen as few.” Jacob wishes “to go into her” or the common verb *bo’*.

Vs. 22: “Men of the *place* (maqom):” possibly referring to “the land of the people of the east” [vs. 1].  
-*Feast* (mishtah): intimates something akin to a drinking bout. “And on the second day as they were *drinking* (noun) wine” [Est 7.2].

Vs. 23: “He *went into* her (Leah):” *bo’* as with Jacob’s request concerning Rachel, vs. 21.

Vs. 24: *Maid* (shiphchah): i.e., Zilpah, who belonged to Leah; also mentioned in 30.9. “She (Sarai, Abraham’s wife) had an Egyptian *maid* whose name was Hagar” [16.1].

Vs. 25: *Deceive* (ramah): a verb whose fundamental meaning is “to throw,” “to cast.” “...but if to *betray* me to my adversaries” [1 Chron 12.17]. Compare with Jacob’s deception of his father Isaac through Rebekah’s instigation, although Isaac does not seem to claim that deceit was involved.

Vs. 26: *Country* (maqom): “place” as noted several times earlier.

Vs. 27: *Complete* (mala’): the same verb used in vs. 21, “for my time is *completed*.”  
-Note the play on words: *week* (shavuah) and *seven* (shevah), from the same verbal root.

Vs. 30: After Laban relented and gave Rachel to Jacob as a wife, Jacob served him for another seven years. No mention of this time being “but a few days” [vs. 20] or the years in anticipation of this marriage.

Vs. 31: An “active” verb (‘The Lord saw’) used with respect to a “passive” one (‘that Leah was hated’) which sets the stage for divine intervention.

-A play on words: *racham/Rachel* or *womb/Rachel*. Again, parallel with Sarai and Hagar.

-*Barren* (haqar): “Now Sarai was *barren*; she had no child” [11.30].

Vss. 32-35 or to the end of this chapter we have a list of the four sons borne by Leah to Jacob, each of whom have a play on the Hebrew names:

-Reuben or “See, a Son:” “the Lord has *looked* (yare’) upon my *affliction* (hony).” Compare with 16.11: “Because the Lord has given heed to your *affliction*.”

-Simeon or “The Lord has *heard* (shamah) that I am hated.”

-Levi or “my husband will be *joined* (lawah) to me.” “...for this will *go with* him in his toil through the days of life which God gives him under the sun” [Eccl 8.15].

-Judah or “this time I will *praise* (yadah) the Lord.” This verb fundamentally means “to profess, “to cast.” I will *give* to the Lord the *thanks* due to his righteousness” [Ps 7.18].

-This chapter concludes with Leah who “*ceased* (hamad) bearing.” The verb implies a stopping, a standing still.

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## Chapter Thirty

Vs. 1: Because Leah was fruitful and her sister Rachel bore no children, she *envied* (qana’) her. Cf. 26.14: “...so that the Philistines *envied* him.” Compare with Hagar looking at Sarai with contempt when she became pregnant with Ishmael, 16.4.

-Rachel’s demand to her husband Jacob for children shows that a lack of them is equivalent to death (‘Give me children or I shall die!’). Compare with Hannah: “...but will give to your maid servant a son, then I will give him to the Lord all the days of his life” [1 Sam 1.11].

Vs. 2: *Kindled* (charah): that is, Jacob’s response to Rachel in the previous verse. “And my wrath will *burn*, and

I will kill you with the sword" [Ex 22.24].

–“In the place of God.” In the Hebrew text it literally reads, “under (or beneath) God.”

Vs. 3: Rachel gives Jacob her *maid* (‘amah) Bilah to have sons, Dan and Naphtali. ‘Amah is infrequently used and applies to a female slave. Cf. 1 Sam 1.11 cited in vs. 1, that is, Hannah.

–“That she may bear upon my knees.” Compare with 16.2: “Go in to my maid; it may be that I shall obtain children by her.” The verse at hand signifies transference of Leah’s child to Rachel while Rachel imitates the birth.

Vs. 4: *Maid* (shiphchatah): referring to Bilah and applying to Hagar (16.1) and applying more to someone who has become part of a household. Note that in the previous verse Bilah is called an ‘amah.

–“as a wife:” referring again to Bilah. This “as” may be paralleled with Bilah to bear upon the knees of Rachel in vs. 3.

–“Through her:” in Hebrew the preposition m- (min) is used, “from her.”

Vs. 6: Although Bilah bore Dan (“He judged”), Rachel claims him as her own son. That is, Rachel says that God *judged* (dyn) her. Note the play on words, 49.16: “Dan shall *judge* his people as one of the tribes of Israel.” Presumably Dan as well as Naphtali were borne through Bilah upon Rachel’s knees (vs. 3).

Vs. 8: Naphtali: from the verbal root *patal*. “With mighty *wrestlings* I have *wrestled* with my sister.” The fundamental meaning of *patal* is “to twist” and connotes deceit. “He takes the wise in their own craftiness; and the schemes of the *wily* are brought to a quick end” [Job 5.13]. Compare with 25.26: “so his name was called Jacob” or “he takes by the heel” or “he supplants.”

Vs. 9: In this verse attention is shifted from Bilah back to Leah who “ceased bearing children.” Following the pattern of Rachel, Leah offered her *maid* (shiphchatah, vs. 4) Zilpah two sons, Gad and Asher.

Vs. 11: Gad or “Fortune” named not by Zilpah but by Leah. “But you who forsake the Lord, who forget my holy mountain, who set a table for *Fortune*” [Is 65.11].

Vs. 13: Asher or “Happy” again named by Leah, not Zilpah; from the verbal root ‘asar, *to be happy*: “Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked” [Ps 1.1].

Vs. 14: Reuben, the first-born of Leah (29.32) found *mandrakes* and gave them to his mother, Leah: duday, supposedly endowed with aphrodisiac properties. “The *mandrakes* give forth fragrance, and over our doors are all choice fruits” [Sg 7.13].

–Rachel beseeches Leah for these mandrakes in an attempt to become pregnant. Her desperation parallels that of Jacob’s mother, Rebekah in Chapter 27.

Vs. 18: The fifth son born (i.e., through Leah) Jacob is Issachar or “God has given me my *hire*” or *sakar* as in 15.1: “Fear not, Abram, I am your shield; your *reward* shall be very great.” Leah says that she gave her maid to her husband, implying Zilpah.

Vs. 20: *Endowed/dowry*: *zavad/zeved*, the only use of these two terms in the Bible. It shows the origin of sixth son, Zebulun.

–“Now my husband will *honor* (*zaval*) me.” The Hebrew verb fundamentally means “to inhabit,” the only use of this term in the Bible.

Vs. 21: Dinah or the only daughter born by Leah to Jacob whom Shechem violates as recounted in 34.1-34.

Vs. 22: “God *remembered* (*zakar*) Rachel.” As noted under 8.1 (‘But God *remembered* Noah and all the beasts’), this verb suggests remembering in the sense of making a male heir, “male” being derived from it. This takes on special importance within the context of Leah’s fertility and Rachel’s barrenness. Such divine remembering implies that God had her in mind from the beginning and is now about to effect a change. Also,

parallel this with Hannah: “And Elkanah *knew* Hannah his wife, and the Lord remembered her” [1 Sam 1.19].  
-After remembering Rachel, God then *hears* (shamah) her just like he *hearkened* to Leah in vs. 17.

Vs. 23: “God has taken away my *reproach* (cherpah).” This noun can also mean “scorn,” “contempt” in the sense of a stigma: “This day I have rolled away the *reproach* of Egypt from you” [Jos 5.9].

Vs. 24: The name of Rachel’s only-begotten son—compared with those by Leah, Bilah and Zilpah—is Joseph who will figure significantly. The meaning of this name is given as “May the Lord *add* (yasaph) to me another son!”  
-The sequence of the previous and current verses may be outlined as follows: remembered, hearkened, opened womb, conceived, bore, taken away reproach.

Vs. 25: Both here and the next verse Jacob bids Laban to take leave of him, that is, after a period of fourteen years and after Rachel bore Joseph.  
-“To my own *home* and *country*,” maqom and ‘ertz, where the two are synonymous and pertain to Beer-sheba (28.10), just prior to his dream of the ladder.

Vs. 26: Jacob asks Laban to have his two wives (Rachel and Leah) as well as his children.

Vs. 27: Laban learns through *divinization* that the Lord has blessed him because of Jacob. Nachash is the term used here; cf. notes under 3.1 where the term also means “serpent.” Given Laban’s behavior towards Jacob, he is not unlike a serpent in tricking him to work for him for so many years.

-“*Because of you*,” biglal, which intimates a cause or circumstance.

Vs. 28: *Name* (naqav): fundamentally, “to bore,” “to hollow out.” It implies making a distinction, specification: “And you shall be called by a new name which the mouth of the Lord *will give*” [Is 62.2] or has specified. In the verse at hand, this verb concerns Jacob’s *wages* or sakar (cf. 29.15).

Vs. 29: *Cattle* (miqneh): more specifically, “wealth,” “possessions” and later in 34.23. “...to Abraham as a *possession* (referring to a field) in the presence of the Hittites” [23.18].

Vs. 30: “*Increased* (parats) abundantly.” As in 28.14 with reference to Jacob’s dream: “...and you shall *spread abroad* to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south.”

-“Wherever I turned.” In the Hebrew text, literally as “to my feet” or most likely to wherever Jacob had set foot which corresponds to the Lord’s blessing of Laban.

Vs. 31: Here “flock” (of sheep) is mentioned, that is, belong to Laban, which Jacob offers to both feed and *keep* (shamar). Compare with Jacob’s words to Laban concerning cattle. As for the verb, cf. 28.20: “If God will be with me, and *will keep* me in this way that I go.”

Vs. 32: Jacob *passes through* (havar) Laban’s flock “today.” Compare with the Lord *passing over* (pasach) the Hebrews in Ex 12.13. Jacob does this passing through to obtain sheep which are *speckled* (noqed: marked with points or spots) and *spotted* (tala’: “You took some of your garments and made for yourself *gaily decked* shrines,” Ezk 16.16) as well as *black* (chum, the only use of this word in the Bible) lambs. The same applies to Laban’s goats, minus those which are black or not mentioned.

Vs. 33: *Honesty* or tsedaqah in the sense of righteousness. “And he believed the Lord; and he reckoned it to him as *righteousness*” [15.6].

-“When you come to look into my wages with you” or in Hebrew, “when you will come on my wages before you.”

-“Stolen:” Jacob’ way of saying that the livestock in his possession will be thus reckoned which may be paralleled with the deception of his father Isaac to get Esau’s birthright. In vss. 34–6 Laban agrees to this arrangement yet in vs. 35 back-tracks; nevertheless, Jacob continues to feed the rest of Laban’s flocks.

Vss. 37-40 recount the manner by which Jacob obtained “stronger flock” as opposed to a “weaker flock” (Laban). The **RSV** has a footnote which sums this up: “Ancient cattle-breeders believed that the female, at the

time of conception, was influenced by visual impressions which affect the color of the offspring. Jacob produced striped animals by putting striped sticks before the females' eyes while they were breeding." Note that the text deals with "flocks" (of sheep) as opposed to cattle.

Vs. 42: *Stronger* (qashar): this verb fundamentally means "to bind" and can also mean "to conspire." This deception of Laban may be paralleled with Jacob's the deception of his father Isaac, that is, with the help of his mother Rebekah to get the birthright over Esau.

-*Weaker* (hataph): this verb fundamentally means "to cover." For a parallel use to the verse at hand but a different form of the verb, cf. Ps 77.4: "I think of God, and I moan; I meditate, and my spirit *faints*."

Vs. 43: "Man" is unspecified, most likely referring to Jacob who "*grew exceedingly rich*" or parats as in vs. 30 and 28.14, the latter referring to Jacob's descendants.

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### Chapter Thirty-One

Vs. 1: Here Jacob hears the sons of Laban saying that he had stolen the flocks of the their father. I.e., it is the sons who are speaking, not Laban himself. This verse reads in Hebrew, "Jacob heard the words..."

-*Wealth* (kavod): from the verbal root fundamentally meaning "to be heavy." The noun can also apply to "splendor" and more commonly, "glory." "To whom will you flee for help, and where will you leave your *wealth*" [Is 10.3]? For reference to this wealth, cf. the last verse of the last chapter: large flocks, maid servants, men servants, camels and asses.

Vs. 2: Jacob observes that Laban (who apparently received word of Jacob's deception through his sons, vs. 1) "did not regard him with favor as before" or literally, "behold, there was not with him as before."

Vs. 3: Despite the apparent deception of Laban, God is allied with Jacob and bids him to return to "the *land* ('erts) of your fathers and your *kindred* (moledeth)." For this land, cf. 28.10, "Jacob left Beer-sheba and went toward Haran." The latter was noted in 12.1 which through Abraham set in motion the departure to a land appointed by God: "Go from your country and your *kindred* and your father's house to the *land* that I will show you." In this verse, 'erts is used with respect to one not yet possessed. In this land God says that he will be with Jacob as opposed to "not being with him" at present.

Vs. 4: Jacob invites Rachel and Leah to the field where his deceptively gained flock is located in order to inform him of his plan to flee Laban.

Vs. 5: In contrast to vs. 3 where God says that he will be with Jacob in the land of his fathers and kindred, Jacob says that God had been with him or in the land where Laban dwelt or "the land of the people of the east" [29.1].

Vs. 6: *Strength* (koach): referring to Jacob's devoted duty to Laban. Compare with another use in 4.12: "When you till the ground, it shall no longer yield to you its *strength*."

Vs. 7: *Cheated* (hatal): can also connote mocking as in Judg 16.10: "And Delilah said to Samson, 'Behold, you have *mocked* me.'"

-The second half of this verse literally reads in the Hebrew text, "and God did not give to evil with me."

Vs. 9: Jacob claims that God had *taken away* (natsal) Laban's cattle and gave them to him. Cf. 30.29 where these cattle "fared well with me." Again, despite mention of cattle, Jacob is more involved with sheep. The Hebrew word is miqneh which can apply to "possession." The verb natsal can also mean "to deliver:" "You did *deliver* me from men of violence" [Ps 18.49].

Vs. 10: "*Mating* (yacham) season" or literally, "in the time of heat" as in 30.41 where it applies to breeding.

-*Dream* (chalom), which continues through vs. 13. The last mention of a dream with respect to Jacob is 28.12,



the ladder reaching to heaven upon which angels were ascending and descending. There is no previous mention of the *he-goats* (hatud) mating with the flock (striped, spotted, mottled: cf. 30.39). This verse and vs. 12 contain the only mention of hatud in the Book of Genesis. Compare Jacob's dream with that of Pharaoh which Joseph interpreted in Chapter Forty, i.e., sleek and gaunt cattle.

Vs. 11: In this dream God does not speak but the "angel of God" to whom Jacob responds Here I am!, a response not mentioned in the one at Bethel.

Vs. 12: The angel bids Jacob, "Lift up your eyes" which corresponds to "I lifted up my eyes" of vs. 10 which is in reference to the same dream.

-*See* (ra'ah). This verb is mentioned twice: "Lift up your eyes and *see*" and "I (the angel) have *seen* all that Laban is doing to you."

Vs. 13: "I am the God of Bethel." That is, there is a switch to God speaking here compared with the angel in vs. 11. There does not seem to be a clear-cut distinction between the two; reference is of course to Jacob's dream. It is as though the two dreams—Bethel and the current one in which Jacob is experiencing—are one and the same.

-*Anointed* (mashach): first use of this term in the Bible. Compare with Jacob having "*poured* (yatsaq) oil on top of it" or the pillar in 28.18. Use of yatsaq can signify a more solemn dedication, this verb often being used with respect to the installation of a king. "The Lord sent me to *anoint* you king over his people Israel" [1 Sam 15.1].

-God/the angel now bids Jacob to do three things: 1) *arise* (qum), 2) "*go forth* (yatsa') from this *land* ('erets)," 3) "*return* (shuv) to the *land* ('erets) of your *birth* (moledeth: cf. vs. 3 as *kindred*)."

Vs. 14: After Jacob's second dream both Rachel and Leah speak to Jacob. Note the contrast from this verse through vs. 16, that is, between the content of dream and the two women who speak of themselves as having been alienated from their father, Laban.

- *Portion* (cheleq): also as "smoothness" as Is 57.6 with two uses: "Among the *smooth stones* of the valley is your *portion*."

-*Inheritance* (nachalah): as in Num 18.20 which also mentions "portion:" "I am your portion and your *inheritance* among the people of Israel."

Vs. 15: *Foreigners* (nakry): as opposed to a lawful heir. "Yet God does not give him power to enjoy them, but a *stranger* enjoys them" [Eccl 6.2].

-*Using up* ('akal): basically, as "to eat," "to devour." Here with respect to the money belonging to Rachel and Leah.

Vs. 16: *Property* (hoshar): alternately as "riches." "Wealth and *riches* are in his house" [Ps 112.3]. Here the two women say that God himself has *taken* it *away* (natsal) from Laban. Cf. 31.9 for another use of this verb.

-Rachel and Leah ask Jacob, "whatever God has said to you, *do* (hasah)." Note the play on words, hoshar/hasah.

17: "Jacob *arose* (qum):" cf. vs. 13 when God/the angel bade him to return to the land of his birth which is recounted in vs. 19, "the land of Canaan to his father Isaac."

Vs. 19: Rachel stole the *household gods* of her father Laban, symbolic of leadership over one's property and family. Teraphym is the word used as in Zech 10.2: "For the *teraphym* utter nonsense, and the diviners see lies." Also, 1 Sam 19.13: "Michal took an *image* and laid it on the bed and put a pillow of goats' hair at its head and covered it with the clothes."

Vs. 20: *Outwitted* (ganav): alternately, "to steal" and used in the previous verse where Rachel *stole* Laban's household gods. Thus women both played a dirty trick on Laban. The verse at hand calls Laban an Aramean, almost as an insult and to re-enforce the double ganav. "Rebekah, the daughter of Bethuel the Aramean of Paddan-aram, the sister of Laban the Aramean" [25.20].

Vs. 21: “Jacob *arose* (qum):” yet another mention of this verb as already noted in vss. 13 & 17, this time when he flees Laban.

-“Set his face:” to show determination resulting from this qum and to reach “the hill country of Gilead,” the place from which a caravan of Ishmaelites came (cf. 37.25) and to which Jacob’s brothers sold Joseph.

Vs. 25: *Overtook* (nasag): by Laban which was possibly easy to do because Jacob was “exceedingly rich and had large flocks” [30.43]. “...(Pharaoh) *overtook* them encamped at the sea” [Ex 14.9].

-Two types of “hill country:” one where Jacob pitched his tent and the other of Gilead in reference to Laban.

Vs. 26: “Have *cheated* (ganav; cf. vs. 20 as ‘outwitted’) me:” literally in the Hebrew text, “have cheated my heart.” In the previous verse Jacob and Laban were situated in two different areas. This verse immediately follows where both speak with each other; perhaps they were not distant or came together in a neutral spot for this purpose.

Vs. 27: “Flee *secretly*” (chava’): literally, “hide yourself to flee.” “I heard your sound in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I *hid myself*” [3.10].

-Another use of ganav: “that you have *cheated* me.”

Vs. 28: “You have done *foolishly* (sakal).” “O Lord, I pray, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into *foolishness*” [2 Sam 15.31].

Vs. 29: “God of your father:” that is, Isaac. Compare with Jacob’s dream at Bethel: “I am the Lord, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac” [28.13]. There Abraham is mentioned as Jacob’s father over Isaac, his biological father.

-*Yesterday* (‘emesh): in the sense of the latter part of the previous day. “Behold, I lay *last night* with my father” [19.34].

- *Take heed* (shamar) as in 28.15; in this verse with respect to speaking “neither good nor bad” to Jacob which sets the tone of the ensuing dialogue between Laban and Jacob.

Vs. 30: *Longed greatly* (kasaph): double use of this verb to show the intensity of Jacob’s sentiment. The fundamental meaning of kasaph is “to become pale” and from which is derived the noun “silver” by reason of its pale color. “You would *long* for the work of your hands” [Job 14.15].

-*Gods* (‘elohey): in reference to the teraphym (*household gods*) of vs. 19 which Rachel, not Jacob, had stolen.

Vs. 31: *Would take* (gagal): connotes a sense of violence and fundamentally means “to pluck away.” “Benaiah...*snatched* the spear out of the Egyptian’s hand” [2 Sam 23.21].

Vs. 32: “Our kinsmen” or those who accompanied both Jacob and Laban. Compare their corporate witness with that in Rt 4.4: “Buy it in the presence of those sitting here and in the presence of the elders of my people.”

-Ganav (*stole*): yet another mention of this verb, here with respect to Jacob not realizing that Rachel had stolen the gods.

Vs. 33: Laban searches the tents of Jacob, Leah, the maid servants and finally Rachel’s, as if the first three were primary suspects. This sense is conveyed by the words, “And he went out of Leah’s tent and entered Rachel’s.”

Vs. 34: Teraphym as opposed to Laban calling them ‘elohey (cf. vs. 30).

-*Felt* (mush): as in 27.21, “Come near that I may *feel* you.” Use of this verb suggests that the tent was either dark or so full with object that the only way to identify the teraphym (presumably with a distinct shape) was to feel their presence.

Vs. 35: “Way of women.” Compare with supposed uncleanness noted in Lev 15.19: “When a woman has a discharge of blood which is her regular discharge from her body, she shall be in her impurity for seven days, and whoever touches her shall be unclean until the evening.” Also compare the sense of this “touching” with that of Laban’s “feeling” in the previous verse.

-*Searched* (chaphas): a shift from the mush within Rachel's tent of vs. 34 to presumably outside it. "And he (Joseph) *searched*, beginning with the eldest and ending with the youngest" [44.12].

Vs. 36: "Jacob became angry...upbraided Laban." Note the use of two prepositions in the Hebrew text: "to (l-) Jacob" and "in (b-) Laban" which reveals the intensity of the situation.

-*Offense* (peshah): in the sense of a fault or trespass. "Say to Joseph, 'Forgive, I pray you, the *transgression* of your brothers and their sin'" [50.16].

-*Hotly pursued* (dalaq): compare with "Jacob *became angry* or charah." For the latter, cf. Sg 1.6: "Do not gaze at me because I am swarthy, because the sun has *scorched* me."

Vs. 37: *Goods*, "household *goods* (kely):" essentially meaning a tool or utensil. In 27.3 it means *weapon*: "Now then, take your *weapons*, your quiver and your bow."

-Jacob continues to address Laban through vs. 42, that is, proclaiming his appropriate behavior while serving him. This is reminiscent of David when he and his troop of men guarded the possessions of Nabal as recounted in 1 Sam 25.14.17.

Vs. 42: "*Fear* (pachad) of Isaac:" from a verbal root meaning "to tremble." Note that this fear belongs to Jacob's father. Compare with Isaac who said in his dream concerning the ladder, "How *awesome* is this place" [28.17]; it is derived from the verb yare'. In this verse Jacob also mentions the "God of my father, the God of Abraham." Obviously "my father" refers to Isaac as well.

-*"On my side:"* the preposition l- is used, "to me."

-*Rebuked* (yakach): as 20.16 as a noun, "It is your *vindication* in the eyes of all who are with you." Reference is to Laban by God in his dream 'emesh or *last night*. "But the God of your father spoke to me *last night*."

Vs. 44: *Covenant* (beryth): or literally, "let us *cut* (karath)." The last mention of such an agreement was between Abraham and Abimelech: "and the two men made a *covenant*" [21.27]; the verb karath is also used here.

-Two "betweens:" with respect to "you" or Jacob and "me" or Laban.

-*Witness* (hed): as in 1 Sam 12.5, "The Lord is *witness* against you, and his anointed is *witness* this day." In the verse at hand, such a hed/beryth assumes an identity independent of Jacob and Laban.

Vs. 45: *Stone* ('oven): cf. 28.18, "So Jacob rose early in the morning, and he took the *stone* which he had put under his head and set it up for a pillar." Jacob also removed a very large stone from the well (cf. 29.10).

-As in the ladder dream, he sets this stone as a *pillar* or matsevah as in 28.18.

Vs. 46: As distinct from the stone/pillar of the previous verse, Jacob bids his kinsmen to "gather stones" in order to make a *heap* or gal. "And they raised over him a great *heap* of stones that remains to this day" [Jos 7.26]. Jacob, Laban and the rest ate there, a kind of covenant meal as in vs. 54.

Vs. 47: Two names for this heap (as opposed to the pillar): 1) Jegar-sahadutha or Aramaic for The Heap of Witness, a name given by Laban. 2) Galeed or Hebrew for The Heap of Witness. Then Laban names this heap Galeed which concurs with the one Jacob gave it.

Vs. 48: *Pillar* (gal): Laban applies this term to the matsevah of vs. 45 which is a hed (*witness*) he speaks about in vs. 44.

-As in vs. 44, the one at hand has two "betweens:" with respect to "you" or Jacob and "me" or Laban.

-Laban also calls this gal Galeed as noted in the previous verse or the name bestowed by Jacob.

Vs. 49: In line with the previous verses, Laban now calls the pillar (missing in the Hebrew text) Mizpah or Watchpost. "So they assembled and went to Mizpah, opposite Jerusalem, because Israel formerly had a place of prayer in Mizpah" [1 Mac 3.46].

-*Watch* (tsaphah): related to Mizpah. This verb fundamentally means "to shine" and can apply to a prophet as watchman, "I set *watchmen* over you saying, 'Give heed to the sound of the trumpet'" [Jer 6.17]!

-Such watching is in line with the earlier two "betweens."

-This watching which assumes the form of Mizpah is only when Laban and Jacob are “*absent* one from the other” or *satar* which was used in another sense in 4.14: “and from your face I shall be *hidden*.”

Vs. 50: *Remember* (ra’ah): literally, “to see” or God sees as a witness with respect to two additional “betweens.”

Vs. 51: “Which I have *set* (yarah):” in conjunction with two “betweens.” This verb applies to the laying of a foundation and has the notion of casting. “On what were its bases sunk, or who *laid* its cornerstone” [Job 38.6]? Another variation of this verbal root applies to sprinkling: “He has *poured down* for you abundant rain, the early and the latter rain, as before” [Jl 2.23]. Compare yarah with yasam in 28.18: “He took the stone...and *set* it *up* for a pillar.” The latter suggests a placing compared with the establishment connoted by yarah.

Vs. 52: *Witness* (hed): as first noted in vs. 44 and again in vs. 47 with respect to the heap of stones. In the verse at hand, hed applies not only to this heap but to the pillar.

-*Pass over* (havar): in the sense of committing a trespass. Here such a passing over can mean going by it. Still, there is a sense that one can literally pass over the heap. Note that Laban does apply havar or over the heap of stones to Jacob. Laban also says that Jacob will not pass over both the heap and pillar to him. The pillar is singled out as one of *harm* or rahah.

Vs. 53: Laban invokes the “God of Abraham and the God of Nahor, the God of their father.” Nahor is first mentioned in 11.22 as part of the generations after the fall of the tower of Babel, i.e., the descendants of Shem. “Their father” refer to the common ancestry of Abraham and Nahor: “And Abram and Nahor took wives” [11.29]. Compare this reference to a singular God mentioned by Laban with his attachment to household gods in vs. 19.

-*Fear* (pachad): an oath made by Jacob with respect to his father Isaac, vs. 42.

Vs. 54: “On the mountain:” a place where Jacob offered a sacrifice. It is not clearly determined but cf. vs. 25, the “hill country of Gilead.”

-On this mountains Jacob summons his kinsmen to “eat bread.” In vs. 46 Jacob and his kinsmen “ate there by the heap.” The former takes place after both Jacob and Laban agree not to pass over the heap of stones and after Jacob’s sacrifice.

-“*Tarried* (lun) all night:” i.e., upon the mountain in the hill country of Gilead. “My lords, turn aside, I pray you, to your servant’s house and *spend the night*” [19.2].

Vs. 55 (32.1 in the Hebrew text): The last mention of Laban before his departure from Jacob. Apparently both men maintained that separation noted in vs. 52, not to pass over the heap and pillar.

-The sequence of Laban’s departure: arose, kissed (grandchildren and daughters), blessed them, departed, returned home.

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## Chapter Thirty-Two

Vs. 1. As noted in 31.55, the Hebrew text of this chapter is one verse ahead of the English translation.

-“*Met* him (pagah):” as in 28.11, “And he *came* to a certain place” which is in reference to where Jacob had his dream; “*came*” in the sense of suddenly having hit upon that maqom (*place*). For another sense of this verb, cf. Rt 1.16: “*Entreat* me not to leave you or to return from following you.”

-The “angels of God” can be the same ones in 28.12 or those ascending and descending the ladder of Jacob’s dream.

Vs. 2: “God’s *army* (machaneh).” This term can alternately mean *camp* whether of soldiers or people who are wandering: “In the evening quails came up and covered the *camp*.” Ps 27.3 shows the relationship between this noun and the verb (chanah) from which it is derived: “Though a *host encamp* against me, my heart shall not fear.”

-Jacob calls the *place* (maqom) Mahanaim or Two Armies. For other references, cf. 2 Sam 2.8-9; 17.24-9; 1 Kg

4.14. One army is obviously God's and the other is not so clear, possibly referring to Jacob's retinue or later to Esau with his "four hundred men" [vs. 6].

Vs. 3: *Messengers* (mal'ak, singular): the same word for "angels" in the previous verse. Then again, perhaps Jacob took some of the "angels of God" and send them as messengers to Esau. "Therefore Saul sent *messengers* to Jesse" [1 Sam 16.19].

-Note the play on words, Esau (hairy), Seir (also Hairy) and Edom (red), all which were connected with his birth, 25.25.

Vs. 4: Note the contrast: "My *lord* ('adony) Esau" and "your *servant* (heved) Jacob." Such words were put into the mouths of Jacob's messengers to Esau.

-*Sojourned* (gur): Jacob with respect to Laban and as Abraham: "and he *sojourned* in Gerar" [20.1].

Vs. 5: Jacob tells his messengers—speaking in the first person singular to Esau—about his possessions and wishes to find *favor* (chen) with him. "But Noah found *favor* in the eyes of the Lord" [6.8].

Vs. 6: As soon as Jacob puts his words into the mouths of his messengers, this verse has them respond immediately upon their return from Esau, namely, that Esau is en route to Jacob. Presumably Esau is coming to Mahanaim (Two Armies, vs. 2).

Vs. 7: *Divided* (chatsah): especially into two parts as is the case here. "...and no longer *divided* into two kingdoms" [Ezk 37.22].

-*Companies* (machaneh): as in 32.2, "army" and hence, Mahanaim. Thus the encounter which is about to take place between Jacob and Esau can be seen as these "two armies."

Vs. 9: "And Jacob said." Compare with Jacob "thinking" in vs. 8, that is, *thinking* ('amar, *to speak*) to himself. In the verse at hand, Jacob addresses the God of Abraham and Isaac and calls both "my father."

-*Land* ('erets): that is, of Jacob's birth and kindred in reference to 31.3, "Return to the land of your fathers and to your kindred, and I will be with you." In that verse there is no mention that God will "do good" to Jacob.

Vs. 10: *Not worthy* (qatan): literally, "to make small." "...that we may *make* the ephah *small* and the shekel great and deal deceitfully with false balances" [Am 8.5].

-Such qatan is in reference to divine *steadfast love* chesed (here in the plural) and *faithfulness* ('emeth). These qualities are shown to Jacob as heved or *servant* (compare with vs. 4 in relation to Esau).

-*Shown* (hasah): literally, "made."

-The first mention that Jacob had crossed the Jordan River; he does it with a *staff* or maqel which refers to sprout or twig. "I see a *rod* of almond" [Jer 1.11]. Compare with Moses' *rod* (match: can mean a branch, twig) as in Ex 4.2: "What is that in your hand? He said, 'A *rod*.'"

-Jacob says that only upon having crossed the Jordan has he become "two companies." Again, compare with vss. 2 & 7.

Vs. 11: "*Deliver* (natsal) me." For an alternate use, cf. 31.9 & 16, "to take away." For a use in conjunction with the verse at hand (as noted under 31.9), "You *delivered* me from men of violence" [Ps 18.48].

-"From the hand of my brother" and "from the hand of Esau:" such phraseology shows the fear of Jacob.

Vs. 12: Jacob's statement of remembrance here hearkens back to 28.14 when God said in a dream that "your descendants shall be like the dust of the earth." Also cf. 22.17 for similar words in conjunction with Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac or Jacob's father. In the former verse God says that Jacob and his descendants will spread out to the four cardinal points of the earth or perhaps better, to the cardinal points of the land Israel will later inherit. Also compare this verse's use of "dust" with the verse at hand, "sand of the sea."

Vs. 13: *Lodged* (lun): as in 28.11 where Jacob "*stayed* there that night." I.e., lun is a preparation for Jacob's two dreams, the second being in vss. 24-30. Also cf. 31.54, "...and *tarry* all night on the mountain."

-*Present* (minchah): alternately as "offering, "Cain brought to the Lord an *offering* of the fruit of the ground"

[4.3]. As “tribute:” “May the kings of Tarshish and of the isles render him *tribute*” [Ps 72.10]. The present Jacob prepares for Esau is described in vs. 14.

Vs. 16: *Space* (reuach) in reference to the two droves. The only other use of this noun is Est 4.14, “For if you keep silence at such a time as this, *relief* and deliverance will rise for the Jews from another quarter.” Reuach is related to the verb ruach from which derives “spirit,” “wind.”

Vs. 17: “*Meets* (pagash) you” or the “foremost” servant sent to Esau. This verb implies making an attack as in Ex 4.24, “At a lodging place on the way the Lord *met* him and sought to kill him.”

Vs. 20: *Appease* (kaphar): in conjunction with that minchah or *present*. This verb fundamentally means “to cover” and intimates pardon, asking forgiveness. “A king’s wrath is a messenger of death, and a wise man will *appease* it” [Prov 16.14].

-“Will accept me:” literally, “will raise my face.”

Vs. 21: Note that the minchah *passes on* (havar) before Jacob as if to receive his approval or blessing. This is followed by Jacob *lodging* (lun again) in the camp or machinah noted in vs. 1. Also consider the play on words, minchah/machinah.

-“That night” or the same night when Jacob lodged as noted in vss. 13 as well as vs. 22. There it reads simply “that night” compared with “he himself” in the verse at hand, the latter signifying Jacob’s preparation for the dream about to occur.

Vs. 22: “The same night he arose:” literally, “he arose in that night” which accentuates this time of total darkness. Jacob takes his immediate family—apparently leaving his servants, etc, behind—and *crossed* (havar; cf. its use with regard to the gift for Esau, the previous verse) the *ford* (mahavar: derived from the verbal root havar) of the Jabbok. The next mention of this place is Num 21.24, “And Israel slew him with the edge of the sword and took possession of his land from the Arnon to the Jabbok.”

Vs. 23: Two *crossings* (havar): Jacob’s two wives, maids and eleven children plus “what was to him” as the Hebrew text literally reads. This crossing is with regards to a *stream* or nachal; this noun can apply to a river as well as a valley: “I went down to the nut orchard, to look at the blossoms of the *valley*” [Sg 6.11].

Vs. 24: Jacob was “*left* (yatar) alone.” “Not a green thing *remained*” [Ex 10.15]. The simplicity of this short sentence—after Jacob’s immediate relatives crossed the stream—sets the stage for the second half of this verse. -*Wrestled* (‘avaq): with an unidentified “man,” the common Hebrew word being used. This and a few other verses later in the same context are the only occasions when ‘avaq is used which fundamentally means “to pound,” “to make small” and therefore implies a violent activity. Such wrestling lasted until the “breaking of the day,” so Jacob was unable to clearly identify the “man.”

Vs. 25: *Prevail* (yachal): as in 30.38, “With mighty wrestlings I have wrestled with my sister and have *prevailed*.” Compare the verbal root patal (as noted above with respect to that verse) with ‘avaq of vs. 24. Jacob was winning this contest owing to his exceptional strength:” Jacob went up and rolled the stone from the well’s mouth” [29.10].

-*Touched* (nagah): often in the sense of causing affliction or striking a blow: “But the Lord *afflicted* Pharaoh and his house with great plagues” [12.17]. Also 3.3 with another sense, “Neither shall you *touch* it” [3.3].

-“*Hollow* (kaph) of his *thigh* (yarek):” the former can apply to the hollow of one’s hand. For a reference to the latter, cf. 24.2: “Put your hand under my *thigh*.”

-*Put out of joint* (yaqah): that is, dislocated. “Let seven of his sons be given to us so that we may *hang* them up before the Lord at Gibeon on the mountain of the Lord” [2 Sam 21.6]. For another sense, cf. Jer 6.8: “Be warned, O Jerusalem, lest I *be alienated* from you.”

Vs. 26: *Bless* (barak): which here is in the context of a new name for Jacob. Note that the person giving this blessing is the unidentified “man,” vs. 29. There seems no reason for Jacob to ask for a blessing, although the words of vss. 22-4 (or when Jacob sent his immediate family away and was left alone) intimate that something

unusual was about to happen that night.

Vs. 27: The unidentified “man” does not seem certain with whom he is wrestling and thus asks his name. Then again, he may have known Jacob’s name but wanted to elicit a response so as to change it to Israel.

Vs. 28: The unidentified “man” changes Jacob’s name to Israel which can mean either “He who strives with God,” “God strives” or “God rules.” Also cf. 35.10.

-*Striven* (sarah). “He *strove* with the angel and prevailed, he wept and sought his favor” [Hos 12.4]. From this verbal root is derived the noun “princess” as well as the proper name “Sarah.” Such striving is not only with God but with “men,” the same word in the plural used to refer to the unidentified “man.”

-Not only has Jacob engaged in this sarah, he has *prevailed* or *yachal* as in vs. 25.

Vs. 29: Here Jacob asks the “man” his name who does not give it. Nevertheless, he *blesses* (barak) Jacob; cf. vs. 26.

Vs. 30: *Place* (maqom) as often noted, here identified with Peniel or “The face of God.” This is the only reference in the Bible. Compare this seeing of God’s face (keeping in mind that Jacob had wrestled with that unidentified “man”) with vs. 20: “afterwards I shall see his (Esau’s) face.” I.e., the verse at hand is a kind of preparation for Jacob to encounter his brother in the next chapter. Also, cf. 33.10: “for truly to see your face is like seeing the face of God.”

-The encounter at Peniel is a kind of prelude to Moses who does not see God’s face but only his back: “But you cannot see my face; for man shall not see me and live” [Ex 33.20].

-“My *life* (nephesh, also as ‘soul’).” “Let my father arise and eat of his son’s game that you may bless *me* [27.31].”

-*Preserved* (natsal). “I sought the Lord, and he answered me, and *delivered* me from all my fears” [Ps 34.4]. For another use of this verb cf, 31.9: “Thus God has *taken away* the cattle of your father and given them to me.”

Vs. 31: “The sun rose upon him:” compare with “so he lodged that night in the camp” [vs. 21].

-Penuel: note the different spelling compared with Peniel in vs. 30.

-*Limping* (tsalah). “And I will save the *lame* and gather the outcast” [Zeph 3.19]. From this verbal root the noun “rib” is derived as in 2.21. In the verse at hand, the rising sun, Jacob’s passing by Penuel and limping contribute to a vivid image of his departing from that place.

-There is no biblical injunction recorded prohibiting the Israelites to heat the “sinew of the hip.”

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### Chapter Thirty-Three

Vs. 1: “And Jacob lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold.” Words not unlike those by Abraham in 22.4 and Rebekah in 24.64 when she encountered Isaac for the first time. Such lifting up can imply pre-occupation and a sudden intervention. The verse at hand is made all the more dramatic by the addition of *hineh* (*behold*) with respect to the approach of Esau along with four hundred men.

-*Divided* (chatsah): as in 32.7 when Jacob first received word of Esau’s approach. In the verse at hand, such dividing is with respect to children among Leah, Rachel and the two maids compared with people, flocks (etc.) in 32.7. Reference to “children” can indicate a more immediate threat with respect to Esau.

Vs. 2: *Maids* (shiphchah): applied to a woman considered a member of the family; cf. 29.24. “Behold, your *handmaid* is a servant to wash the feet of the servants of my lord” [1 Sam 25.41].

Vs. 3: “*Went* (havar) before them:” in the sense of passing by as this verb suggests.

-*Bowing himself* (shachach): reflective in the sense of “causing himself to bow down.” This verb is related to *shachah* as in 27.5. For another use of the verb at hand: “When they *crouch* in their dens or lie in wait in their

covert" [Job 38.40]. Jacob does this "seven times," the number seven being considered sacred as used with respect to the fall of Jericho (Jos 6).

-*Came near* (nagash): as in 18.23, "Then Abraham *drew near*." Note the combination of Jacob's nagash with his seven-fold bowing, as though he alternated between the two actions.

Vs. 4: *Ran* (ruts): compare with Laban in 29.13 with respect to Jacob. In the verse at hand, such hastening is to be compared with Jacob's diffidence in the previous verse, "bowing himself." It is followed by four further gestures:

-*Embraced* (chavaq): as with Laban and Jacob, 29.13.

-*"fell on his neck:"* cf. 45.19 with respect to Joseph and Benjamin.

-*Kissed* (nashaq): again, Laban and Jacob in 29.13.

-*Wept* (baka'): as with Jacob and Rachel, 29.11.

Vs. 5: "Raised his eyes:" compare with Jacob in vs. 1. In the verse at hand, it is in the context of an emotional meeting where Esau sees Jacob's "women and children."

-*Graciously* (chanan): used as a verb in the Hebrew text. "*Grant them graciously to us*" [Jud 21.22].

-Jacob calls himself a *servant* (heved, cf. 32.10) concerning God. He states to Esau that he is in a sense passive with respect to the women and children given to him by God.

Vs. 6: Both the maids (cf. vs. 2) and children (in their charge) bow down in imitation of Jacob in vs. 3 though not necessarily seven times as in that verse.

Vs. 7: This same act of obeisance to Esau applies to Leah and her children as well as to Joseph and Rachel. Note that Joseph is singled out from among Rachel's sons (cf. 30.24) as if to prepare for his role beginning in Chapter 37.

Vs. 8: "What do you mean:" in the Hebrew text literally as "what to you."

-*Company* (machaneh): as in 32.2 with reference to God (Mahanim) and 32.7 with reference to Jacob dividing his entourage.

-*Met* (pagash): as in 32.17 with respect to Jacob's servant encountering Esau.

-*Favor* (chen): as in 32.5 when Jacob conveys a message to Esau through his servant; again, "in your eyes."

Vs. 9: *Enough* (rav): also implies abundance. "You visit the earth and water it, you *greatly* enrich it" [Ps 65.9].

-*"Keep what you have for yourself:"* literally in the Hebrew text, "be to you which to you."

Vs. 10: *Present* (minchah): as in 32.13 & 20. Note the mention of this word just prior to Jacob's dream which must have had an equal effect upon Esau.

-Esau's face is equivalent to beholding God's face which has its precedent in 32.30...Peniel...after Jacob wrestled with the unidentified man.

-*"With such favor you have received me"* is contained in the verb ratsah: "*Will he be pleased with you or show you favor*" [Mal 1.8]?

Vs. 11: *Gift* (berakah): literally, "blessing," the only use of this word.

-*Dealt graciously* (chanan): as in vs. 5 and the verbal root of chen (vs. 8) which is equivalent to Jacob having *enough* or kol which can alternately mean "all." Compare Jacob's kol with Esau's rav, vs. 9.

-*Urged* (patsar): as in 19.3, "But he *urged* them strongly."

Vs. 12: Esau urges Jacob to travel with him; the destination is not stated here but cf. vs. 16 (Seir) and vs. 18 (Shechem).

Vs. 13: *My lord* ('adony): addressed to Esau as to show Jacob's submission and/or fear of him; cf. vs. 8.

-For Jacob the flocks are a care for Jacob, apparently more so than the "frail" children. The preposition hal (*on*) is used instead of a noun, i.e., "on me."

-*"If they are over driven"* (daphaq): alternately "to knock" as in Sg 5.2, "Hark! My beloved *is knocking*."



Vs. 14: Here Jacob urges Esau to *pass on* before him (*havar*); compare with a “passing” in 32.21 with respect to the present for Esau.

-*Slowly* (*l’at*): also connotes a gentle way of acting. “Deal *gently* for my sake with the young man Absalom” [2 Sam 18.5].

-*Pace* (*regel*): literally, “foot,” the only use of this word with respect to both cattle and children.

Vs. 15: Last recorded exchange of words between Jacob and Esau which concludes with Jacob again wishing to find *favor* (*chen*).

Vs. 16: Seir or the land to which Esau returns as in 32.3, “the country of Edom” or the “red” country, Esau’s proper domain.

Vs. 17: Succoth or Booths. “With exultation I will divide up Shechem and portion out the Vale of Succoth” [Ps 60.6]. The same word is used for “booths for his cattle.” Compare with Jacob having built a house; emphasis is more upon the livestock than Jacob.

Vs. 18: Jacob “camped before the city” or Paddan-aram, that is, he seems not to have entered it. This is the residence of Laban as noted in 28.5 to where Isaac had sent Jacob.

Vs. 19: “A hundred pieces of *money*” or *qesyta* which literally means “something weighed out.” “The bones of Joseph which the people of Israel brought up from Egypt were buried at Shechem, in the portion of ground which Jacob bought from the sons of Hamor, the father of Shechem for a hundred pieces of *money*” [Jos 24.32].

Vs. 20: *Erected* (*yatsav*): a verb suggestive of setting in place. The only use of the word with respect to an altar. Compare with 26.25, “So he built an altar there and called upon the name of the Lord, and pitched his tent there.”

-*El-Elohe-Israel*: the name of the altar which combines “God” followed by “God” ...with respect to Israel, Israel being the named given him by the unidentified man with whom Jacob wrestled, 32.28.

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## Chapter Thirty-Four

Vs. 1: Dinah was mentioned previously in 30.21 after the birth of Zebulun.

-*Visit* (*ra’ah*): literally, “to see.” “And Ahaziah, king of Judah, had come down to *visit* Joram” [2 Kg 9.16]. The “women of the land” are those of Canaan.

Vs. 2: Shechem: cf. 33.19, “And Jacob came safely to the city of Shechem.”

-*Saw* (*ra’ah*): same verb as in the previous verse.

-*Humbled* (*hanah*): as in 16.6 with respect to Sarai’s treatment of Hagar, “Then Sarai *dealt harshly* with her, and she fled from her.”

Vs. 3: *Soul* (*nephesh*). Cf. 32.30, “and yet my *life* is preserved.” In the verse at hand, *nephesh* can represent one’s in-most self.

-*Was drawn* (*davaq*). The same verb as in 2.24, “Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and *cleaves* to his wife, and they become one flesh.” In the verse at hand, Shechem experiences the same attraction towards Dinah but the verb reveals a different attitude.

-“Spoke tenderly to her.” The Hebrew text literally reads, “and he spoke on the heart of the *maiden* (*nahar*).” This noun can apply to a boy as well. For a parallel use, cf. Rt 2.21: “You shall keep close by my *servants* till they have finished all my harvest.” In this verse *davaq* is used for *keep close*.

Vs. 4: *Maiden* (*yaldah*): compare with *nahar* in the previous verse. “And have cast lots for my people, and have given a *boy* (*yeled*) for a harlot, and have sold a *girl* for wine and have drunk it” [Jl 3(4).3].

Vs. 5: *Defiled* (tame'). "If he...does not *defile* his neighbor's wife or approach a woman in her time of impurity" [Ezk 18.6]. For another use of this verb, "When the priest has examined him, he shall pronounce him *unclean*" [Lev 13.3], that is, with regards to leprosy.

-*Held peace* (charash). Cf. 24.21, "The man gazed at her *in silence* to learn whether the Lord had prospered his journey or not."

Vs. 7: *Indignant* (hatsav). Cf. 6.6, "And the Lord was sorry that he had made man on the earth, and it *grieved* him to his heart."

-*Angry* (charah): as in 30.2, "Jacob's anger *was kindled* against Rachel."

-*Wrought folly* (navel): as in Prov 30.32, "If you *have been foolish*, exalting yourself." For a fuller explanation, cf. 1 Sam 25.25, "For as his name is, so is he; Nabal is his name, and folly is with him."

-Israel: the first use of this term with respect to a people. Perhaps it could also apply to the person of Jacob (i.e., Israel) whose daughter Dinah had been defiled.

Vs. 8: *Soul* (nephesh): as in vs. 3. Since nephesh involves the deepest part of a human being, the verse at hand intimates that Shechem's nephesh became so intense that his father Hamor noticed it.

-*Longs* (chashaq): fundamentally connotes a joining together. "...that the Lord has *set his love* upon you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples" [Dt 7.7].

Vs. 10: "The land shall be open to you" literally reads in the Hebrew text, "The land shall be before your faces."

-*Trade* (sachar): "And I will deliver to you your brother, and you shall *trade* in the land" [42.34]. The first mention of this type of commerce in the Bible. This verb implies traveling about. "The Midianite traders...took Joseph to Egypt" [37.28].

-*Get property* ('achaz): literally, "to seize." "Afterward his brother came forth, and his hand *had taken hold of* Esau's heel" [25.26].

Vs. 11: "Find *favor*" or chen as in 32.5; vs. 8 also has "in your eyes."

Vs. 12: *Marriage present* (mohar): from a verb meaning "to purchase." The Hebrew text literally reads, "multiply (ravah) *very much* (me'od) marriage present and gift." For a reference to mohar, "If a man seduces a virgin who is not betrothed and lies with her, he shall give the *marriage present* for her and make her his wife" [Ex 22.16].

-*Maiden* (nahar): as in vss. 2 & 4. In the verse at hand, note the play on words: mohar/nahar.

Vs. 13: *Deceitfully* or literally, "in *deceit*" (mirmah). "Your brother came with *guile*, and he has taken away your blessing" [27.35]. Reference is to Jacob whose sons in the verse at hand responded in kind to Shechem and Hamor.

Vs. 14: *Circumcised* (harleh): literally, "one who has a foreskin." "You shall be circumcised in the flesh of your *foreskins*, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and you" [17.11].

-*Disgrace* (cherpah). Cf. 30.23, "God has taken away my *reproach*."

Vs. 15: *Condition* ('oth): "to consent," "to agree." The niphil form of the verb is used here, "We will consent." I.e., hearkening to the covenant noted under vs. 14, that is, as in 17.9-14.

-*One* ('echad) people: the condition of circumcision being the condition for the oneness which implies more than one effected by simply "dwelling."

-*Listen:* implies that the Canaanites become receptive to circumcision or more importantly, that they imitate Abraham's obedience noted in Chapter 17.

Vs. 18: "Their words pleased:" literally in the Hebrew text as "Their words were good in their eyes," i.e., referring to Hamor and Shechem.

Vs. 19: *Had delight* (chaphets): implies inclining, bending in the sense of being favorable. "That you stir not up

nor awaken love until it *please*" [Sg 2.7].

Vs. 20: *Gate* (shahar). "And Boaz went up to the *gate* and sate down there."

Vs. 21: *Friendly* (shalem): the only use of this word in the Bible and related to shalom.

-*Large* (rachav): a verb is used here, large in the sense of being broad. "And to bring them up out of that land to a good and *broad* land" [Ex 3.8].

Vss. 22 & 23: two uses of 'oth as in vs. 15, *agree*.

Vs. 25: *Were sore* (ka'av): in reference to the men of the city having been circumcised. This verb can also apply to being in pain or sorrow. "But I am afflicted and *in pain*; let your salvation, O God, set me on high" [Ps 69.29]!

-*Unawares* (betach): from the verbal root meaning "to trust."

Vs. 27: The words "slain" and "plundered" reflect Dinah having been *defiled* or 'tame' as in vs. 5.

Vs. 30: *Odious* (hakar): in the sense of being troublesome. "My distress *grew worse*" [Ps 39.2]. Note that "distress" here is from the same verbal root (ka'av) as "were sore" in vs. 25.

Vs. 31: *Harlot* (zonah). "When Judah saw her (Tamar), he thought her to be a *harlot*, for she had covered her face" [38.15].

-For reference to the violence of Simeon and Levi (vs. 25), cf. 49.5-7.

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### Chapter Thirty-Five

Vs. 1: *Arise* (qum): as in 31.13, "I am the God of Bethel, where you anointed a pillar and made a vow to me. Now arise, go forth from this land, and return to the land of your birth." As noted elsewhere, qum can pertain to a sudden break with preoccupations and obedience to God. The verse just cited mentions Bethel as well as the one at hand and the place to which God summons Jacob to return.

-*"The God who appeared to you."* It is God speaking in this verse as well as speaking of himself almost as a person independent of himself.

-First God bids Jacob to "dwell there" or in Bethel after which he is to erect an altar. It seems that such dwelling is a prerequisite for the altar or the necessity of becoming familiar with one's environment before proceeding to the altar's construction.

Vs. 2: After the rather terse command in the previous verse Jacob immediately addresses his household as well as those "who were with him" which can signify slaves or servants, those not proper to his family. This address consists of three elements:

1) "*Foreign* (nekar) gods." The Lord alone did lead him, and there was no *foreign* god with him" [Dt 32.12]. Such gods are to be *put away* or sur. In the Hebrew text such gods were "in your houses" which parallels "household" in this same verse. Cf. 31.15 for a related term from the same verbal root. "*Put away* the gods which your fathers served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the Lord" [Jos 24.14].

2) "*Purify* (tahar) yourselves." This is the first mention of such an act later associated with ritual as in Ex 19.10, "God to the people and consecrate them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their garments." For a use with the verb at hand, "And the priests and the Levites *purified* themselves; and they *purified* the people and the gates and the wall" [Neh 12.30].

-*"Change* (chalaph) garments." "Then David arose from the earth, and washed, and anointed himself, and *changed* his clothes" [2 Sam 12.20].

-The *garments* (simlah) are large outer ones as in 9.23. Also cf. Dt 22.17: "And they shall spread the *garment* before the elders of the city."

Vs. 3: Jacob communicates to his household and those with him the same *arise* or *qum* as in vs. 1. The purpose for the journey to Bethel is to erect an altar there, for earlier Jacob had set up a pillar [28.22] as "God's house." Thus Jacob's household and God's house will be one and the same.

-*Distress* (tsar): in reference to 33.7, "Then Jacob was greatly afraid and *distressed* (tsarar, the verbal root for tsar)." In this verse, Jacob is fearful of his brother Esau.

-“Wherever I have gone” in Hebrew literally reads, “in the way which I have gone.”

Vs. 4: *Rings* (nezem): in the verse at hand, such rings are in the people's ears, but this term can also apply to the nose. Also cf. 24.22 & 30. Compare the verse at hand with Ex 32.2, “Take off the *rings* of gold which are in the ears of your wives,” that is, for Aaron to make a golden calf.

-Unlike Aaron, Jacob hides them under the *oak* ('elah) near Shechem which harkens back to 12.6, “Abram passed through the land to the place at Shechem, to the *oak* of Moreh.” For another verse with 'elah, cf. Jdg 6.11: “Now the angel of the Lord came and sat under the *oak* at Ophrah.”

Vs. 5: “*Terror* (chitath) of God:” from a verbal root which fundamentally means “to break.” This is the only specific form in the Bible but is closely related to chatath as in Job 6.21, “Such you have now become to me; you see my *calamity* and are afraid.” A similar sentiment is found in Ex 12.33 when the Egyptians said concerning the Israelites, “We are all dead men.”

-*Pursue* (radaph): compare with Ex 14.8, “And the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt and he *pursued* the people of Israel as they went forth defiantly.”

Vs. 7: Jacob and those with him came to Luz/Bethel (vs. 6) where he built an altar and called the *place* (maqom; cf. frequent earlier references) El-bethel (God of Bethel).

-*Revealed* (galah): the first use of this notion in the Bible which harkens back to 28.19. This verb suggests becoming naked or the removal of a veil. “And to whom has the arm of the Lord been *revealed*” [Is 53.1]?

Vs. 8: Deborah or Rebekah's nurse who died at El-bethel and buried under an *oak* or 'elah as in vs. 4. Because of this, the place was called Allon-bacuth or Oak of Weeping. Although this is the first and only mention of Deborah, she must have been important as the name of the place shows.

Vs. 9: *Appeared* (ra'ah) or the common verb “to see.” Compare with galah of vs. 7; there seems to be a difference between the two, ra'ah being more commonly used which suggests clarity of what was seen.

Vs. 10: Here Jacob receives the name Israel from God compared with the unidentified man with whom he wrestled, 32.28. Note that in the verse at hand God acknowledges that “Your name is Jacob” before changing it.

Vs. 11: “I am God Almighty” or “I am El Shaddai.” Compare with the “appearing” or ra'ah to Abram in 17.1, “I am God Almighty.”

-“Be fruitful and multiply:” an echo of this is in 1.28 addressed to the first man and woman.

-In addition to a *nation* (goy), a “*company* (qahal) of nations” will come from Jacob/Israel.

-Kings *shall spring* from Jacob or chalats, this verb suggesting being equipped or arrayed for war. “*Gird up your loins like a man, I will question you, and you shall declare to me*” [Job 38.3].

Vs. 12: Two mentions of the *land* ('erets): to Abraham and Isaac (past tense) and to Jacob and his descendants (future tense).

Vs. 13: “Then God went up from him,” that is, after having *appeared* (ra'ah) to Jacob in vs. 9 which does not mention a “descent” to Jacob. Note the specific nature of this encounter, *place* (maqom).

Vs. 14: *Pillar* (matsevah): compare with 28.18 which Jacob *set up* or *sum* which suggests a putting in place. The verse at hand has the verb yatsav (connotes construction) as used in 33.20, “There he *erected* an altar and called it El-Elohe-Israel.”

-This pillar is intimately associated with the *place* or maqom.

-*Drink offering* (nesek): which Jacob *poured out* (nasak). For another use of this noun, cf. Is 48.5: "Lest you should say, 'My idol did them, my graven image and my *molten image* commanded them.'" As for nasak, cf. 1 Chron 11.18: "He *poured it out* to the Lord."  
-"*Poured* (yatsaq) oil:" as in 28.18 with respect to the pillar there.

Vs. 15: Note the close connection between a *place* (maqom) and God speaking. Again, cf. 28.13-15.

Vs. 16: Ephrath: the first mention of this place in the Bible. Note that Jacob and his retinue journey *from* Bethel; compare with God's words to Jacob in vs. 1, "and dwell there."

-*Travailed* (yalad): literally, "to give birth;" a noun from this verbal is used again in the same verse: "when she was in her hard *labor*." "Will not pangs take hold of you, like those of a woman in *travail*" [Jer 13.21]?

Vs. 17: *Midwife* (meyaledeth): from the verbal root yalad, previous verse. "The *midwives* feared God" [Ex 1.17].

Vs. 18: *Soul* (nephesh): as in 34.3, etc. Here Rachel's nephesh is departing or yatsa' (cf. 27.3), that is, from her body.

-Benoni (Son of My Sorrow), the name Rachel bestowed upon her son. Note that Rachel gave this name while her nephesh was departing.

-Benjamin (Son of the Right Hand or Son of the South), the name Jacob bestowed upon his son. Jacob's name is more favorable compared with Rachel's which is probably behind him favoring Benjamin later as in 42.4.

Vs. 19: Rachel dies although her nephesh had departed. As in 48.7, Rt 4.11 and Mic 5.2, Ephrath is identified with Bethlehem.

Vs. 20: *Pillar* (matsevah): compare with vs. 14 & 28.18.

Vs. 21: From this point on, Israel is used to identify Jacob.

-Eder: associated with Reuben who laid with Bilhah, his father's concubine (cf. next verse) and noted in 49.3-4, part of which reads, "because you went up to your father's bed." Bilhah is Laban's daughter and is referred to in 30.3.

Vs. 29: *Breathed his last* (gawah): with respect to Isaac. For another reference to this verb, cf. 6.17, "everything that is on the earth *shall die*."

-"*Gathered* ('asaph) to his people:" as in 26.8 with respect to Abraham. Compare this gathering with Rachel's soul which had departed.

-Both Jacob and Esau bury their father, Isaac; this is the last mention of Esau in connection with his brother. Chapter 36 gives lists of Esau's descendants after which begins the lengthy narrative of Joseph.

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## Chapter Thirty-Seven

Vs. 1: "His father's *sojournings*" (magur): with reference to Isaac. "May he give the blessing of Abraham to you and to your descendants with you, that you may take possession of the land of your *sojournings* which God gave to Abraham" [28.4]! Note that this *land* or 'erets of sojournings is mentioned first followed by Canaan.

Vs. 2: "History" is absent in the Hebrew text.

-*Family* (toldoth): as first mentioned in 2.4 or in reference to non-human elements: "These are the *generations* of the heavens and the earth when they were created."

-This chapter commences right away with the mention of Joseph and his sense of righteousness because he brought an "*ill* report" to his father. Rahah is the adjective here which means more of evil.

Vs. 3: "Israel loved Joseph more than any other of his children." The Hebrew text literally reads, "from all his sons" which emphasizes his love.

-*Long robe* (kutoneth): first mentioned in 3.21, “And the Lord God made for Adam and for his wife *garments* of skins and clothed them.” It is almost as though Israel foresaw Joseph’s banishment into Egypt which parallels the banishment of Adam and Eve from the garden.

-*Sleeves* (pas): the kutoneth made by God does not mention this addition. “Now she was wearing a *long robe* with *sleeves*” [2 Sam 13.18].

Vs. 4: Joseph’s brothers “could not speak *peaceably* (shalom) to him.” The Hebrew text literally reads, “could not speak to peace.”

Vs. 5: *Dream* (chalom): the first of two by Joseph, the first one recorded in the Bible being by Abimelech, 20.3. Also compare this ability with Joseph’s father, Jacob (31.11).

-*Joseph* (Yoseph) and “hated him *all the more* (yasaph):” the proper name is derived from this verb which is interesting to see in this context of hatred by his brothers. It is as though both worked hand-in-hand.

Vs. 7: “Binding sheaves:” both terms are from the same verbal root, ‘alam. From it is derived the noun “silence” in that one’s tongue is bound. For example, the literal reading of Ps 58.2 reads, “Indeed, do you speak out of the *silence* of justice?”

-“In the field:” literally, “in the *middle* (betok) of the field.”

-*Bowed down* (shachah): as in 27. 5 & 7; also applies to worshipping God, “I and the lad will go yonder and *worship*” [22.5].

Vs. 8: Joseph’s brothers pose two questions: *reign* (malak) and *have dominion* (mashal). The former implies kingship (the noun is derived from this verbal root) whereas the latter is more general as in 24.2: “the oldest of his house, who *had charge* of all that he had.”

-“They hated him *all the more*:” another use of the verb yasaph as in vs. 5 from which the proper name Joseph is derived.

Vs. 9: Joseph’s second dream where the sun, moon and eleven stars (his eleven brothers) *were bowing* (shachah) down to him; cf. vs. 7.

Vs. 10: *Rebuked* (gahar): “You have *rebuked* the nations, you have destroyed the wicked” [Ps 9.6]. Such chastisement was done by Joseph’s father and his brothers; note that they rebuked Joseph after having hated him on two occasions.

Vs. 11: Despite the jealousy shown by Joseph’s brothers, Israel “*kept* (shamar) the saying in mind.” This verb is often used in reference to the Torah; the first occasion of this word is in 2.15: “The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and *keep* it.” Parallel the sense of the verse at hand with the Virgin Mary, “and his mother kept all these things in her heart” [Lk 2.51].

-*Saying* (davar): literally, “word.”

Vs. 13: Israel sends Joseph to his brothers pasturing in the field, and he readily obeys which parallels the parable of the son who obeyed his father to work in the vineyard and was subsequently killed (cf. Mt 21.37+).

Vs. 14: Israel sends Joseph to see if “it is *well* (shalom) with your brothers.”

Vs. 15: An anonymous man finds Joseph *wandering* (tahah) in the fields, a verb which can also imply going astray. “And she (Hagar) departed and *wandered* in the wilderness of Beer-sheba” [21.14]. Note the importance of this anonymous man, not unlike the anonymous man who wrestled with Jacob in that he sets in motion a whole series of events. Because of him Joseph is sold into Egypt, delivers that country, has his family dwell there and later the Israelites leave for the Promised Land.

-The anonymous man asks Joseph what he is seeking. Note the combination of wandering and seeking: on one hand Joseph knows what he is doing and on the other, does not.

Vs. 17: The anonymous man hears Joseph’s brothers say there were headed for Dothan. Parallel this man with Elisha: “Behold, he (Elisha) is in Dothan” [2 Kg 6.13].

Vs. 18: *Afar off* (merachok): “On the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw the place *afar off* [22.4]. -*Conspired against* (nakal). The only other use of this verb with the same meaning is Sir 45.18: “Outsiders *conspired against* him.” For another use, “He turned their hearts to hate his people, *to deal craftily* with his servants” [Ps 105.25].

Vs. 19: “This dreamer.” The Hebrew text literally reads, “*master* (bahal) of dreams.”

Vs. 20: *Pits* (bor): “He drew me up from the desolate *pit* (literally, ‘pit of tumult’) out of the miry bog, and set my feet upon a rock, making my steps secure” [Ps 40.2].  
-“*Wild* (raha) beast.” This adjective also means “evil;” from the verbal root meaning “to pasture” as in earlier verses regarding Joseph’s brothers pasturing flocks.

Vs. 21: Reuben intervenes and *delivers* (natsal) Joseph from his brothers. “*Deliver* me, I pray you, from the hand of my brother” [32.11]. For another use of this verb, “All the property which God *has taken away* from our father belongs to us and to our children” [31.16]. In the verse at hand this natsal seems to have been accomplished.  
-“His *life*” (nephesh): alternately, “soul.”

Vs. 22: Another use of the verb natsal with respect to Reuben. Here he intends to effect a rescue of Joseph compared with the previous verse which has this verb in the present tense.

Vs. 23: *Stripped* (pashat): with respect to Joseph’s garment or kutoneth, vs. 3. “I had *put off* my garment, how could I put it on” [Sg 5.3]? This verb fundamentally means “to expand,” “to spread out.” “When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his garment and made four parts, one for each soldier” [Jn 19.23].

Vs. 24: Another use of bor or *pit*. “They flung me alive into the *pit* and cast stones on me” [Lam 3.53].

Vs. 25: “They sat down to eat” bears a certain parallel to the soldiers who cast lots for Jesus’ robe as noted in the previous verse.

-“Looking up” parallels 22.4, 24.63 & 4 as well as other verses in that it can indicate pre-occupation with the task at hand which is suddenly interrupted.

-*Caravan* (‘orchah): the only use of this noun which implies a band of travelers.

-Gum, balm and myrrh: can be symbolic of death or preservation against death, as if to show that Joseph will be preserved.

Vs. 26: *Profit* (betsah): from a verbal root meaning “to cut into pieces.” The noun implies unjust gain as in Ps 30.9: “What *profit* is there in my death, if I go down to the pit?”

-Compare the “concealing” of Joseph’s blood (if his brothers slew him) with “The voice of your brother’s blood is crying to me from the ground” [4.10] which is not concealed.

Vs. 27: “For he is our brother, our own flesh” parallels “This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh” of 2.23. These words by Judah intimate a certain alliance with Reuben in an attempt to rescue Joseph.

Vs. 28: “Midianite traders:” the verbal root sachar is used, *to travel about, go around*. “...according to the weights current among the *merchants*” [23.16].

-It is the Ishmaelites who actually brought Joseph to Egypt. Keep in mind the anonymous man of vs. 15 who set this whole process in motion.

Vs. 29: Reuben *rent* (qarah) his clothes. Compare “clothes” with Joseph’s robe in vs. 31 which his brothers did not rend. For another use of this verb, “Cripples whom I knew not *slandered* me without ceasing” [Ps 35.15].

Vs. 30: Upon not seeing Joseph in the pit, Reuben asks, “and I, where shall I go?” I.e., it is as though he were taken away like his brother. His other brothers give no response to this rhetorical question.

Vs. 31: *Dipped* (taval): in the sense of immersing, of a thorough soaking. “He went down and *dipped* himself in the Jordan seven times” [2 Kg 5.14]. Note that Joseph’s brothers did this with regard to his robe; in the next verse they send this robe “with sleeves” to their father.

Vs. 33: Israel *recognized* (nakar) the robe. Cf. 27.23, “And he (Isaac) did not *recognize* him because his hands were hairy like his brother Esau’s hands.”

-*Torn to pieces*: double use of the verb taraph to emphasize the violence. For another use, “And lo, in her mouth a freshly *plucked* olive leaf.”

Vs. 34: Jacob (this name is used compared with Israel) then *rent* (qarah) his garments which parallels Reuben in vs. 29 and Joseph’s robe which had been taraph.

-*Sackcloth* (sak): “And the people of Nineveh...put on *sackcloth* from the greatest of them to the lest of them” [Jon 3.5].

Vs. 35: Jacob’s sons and daughters *rose up* (qum) in order to comfort him. Such rising as noted elsewhere in Genesis can intimate sudden break with one’s activities.

-*Comfort* (nacham): cf. 27.42, “Behold, your brother Esau *comforts* himself by planning to kill you.”

-Sheol: first mention of this subterranean place or abode of the dead. “For in death there is no remembrance of you; in Sheol who can give you praise” [Ps 6.5]? Note the mention of “remembrance” which seems to be a key element with regards to Sheol as a land of forgetfulness.

Vs. 36: Chapter 37 concludes with the Midianites selling Joseph in Egypt which sets the stage for Chapter 39 and the intervening Chapter 38.

-“Captain of the *guard* (tabach):” from the verbal root “to kill.” “Nebuzaradan, the captain of the *guard*” [Jer 39.13]. This noun can also mean a *cook*: “And Samuel said to the *cook*, ‘Bring the portion I gave you’” [1 Sam 9.23].

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## Chapter Thirty-Eight

Vs. 1: “At that time:” a way of inserting the story of Judah and Tamar as an interlude, that is, after Joseph was sold into slavery and what he later accomplished in Egypt.

-“Went down:” i.e., Judah who *turned in* (natah) to Hirah, a resident of Adullam near Bethlehem. This verb suggests a stretching out, extending. For another use, “But the Lord was with Joseph and *showed* him steadfast love” [39.14]. That is, the Lord extended steadfast love.

Vs. 2: *Married* (laqach), with reference to Judah and Shua. This verb literally means “to take” as in 19.14: “So Lot went out and said to his sons-in-law who were to *marry* his daughters.”

Vs. 3: Er or the son whom Shua bore to Judah is mentioned in Jesus’ genealogy, “The son of Melchi, the son of Addi, the son of Cosam, the son of Elmadam, the son of Er” [Lk 3.28].

Vs. 7: Er was “*wicked* (rah) in the sight of the Lord.” Cf. 6.5, “that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only *evil* continually.” “In the sight” literally reads in the Hebrew text, “in the eyes of.”

Vs. 8: “Raise up offspring for your brother” literally reads in the Hebrew text, “rise up seed to your brother.”

Vs. 9: “(Onan) spilled the semen on the ground” literally reads in the Hebrew text, “corrupted on the ground for nothing” or something similar. The verb for *spilled* in shachat, which here implies “to act wickedly.”

Vs. 10: “What he did was displeasing in the sight of the Lord” or in Hebrew, “he did evil” (raha). Compare with the adjective rah in vs. 7 from which it is derived.



Vs. 11: Judah bids Tamar to return to her father's house. Cf. Lev 22.13: "But if a priest's daughter is a widow or divorced and has no child and returns to her father's house as in her youth, she may eat of her father's food." Note that this injunction pertains to the daughter of a priest.

Vs. 12: "In the course of time" literally reads in the Hebrew text, "increased days."

Vs. 14: *Veil* (tsahyph): the only other uses of this term are in vs. 19 and 24.65, "So she (Rebekah) took her *veil* and covered herself."

-*Wrapping herself up* (halaph). "His body is ivory work *encrusted* with sapphires" [Sg 5.14].

Vs. 15: "Come, let me come in to you:" compare with vs. 2, "and went in to her."

Vs. 17: *Pledge* (heravon): this form is only found here and in vss. 18 & 20, and is a word peculiar to traders.

Vs. 18: Shelah makes three demands of Judah: 1) *Signet* or chotam. "An inscription like the engraving of a *signet*, 'Holy to the Lord'" [Ex 39.30]. 2) *Cord* or patyl. "But he (Samson) snapped the bowstrings as a *string* of tow snaps when it touches the fire" [Judg 16.9]. 3) *Staff* or mateh. "So he (Jonathan) put forth the tip of the *staff* that was in his hand and dipped it in the honeycomb" [1 Sam 14.27].

Vs. 21: *Harlot* (qedeshah): or something equivalent to a cult prostitute. From the verbal root qadash, *to be holy*. This noun is only used in three other places: vs. 22, Dt 23.18 & Hos 4.14 ("and sacrifice with *cult prostitutes*").

Vs. 24: "*Let her be burned*" (saraph): as in 11.3 with regard to construction of the tower of Babel, "Come, let us make bricks and *burn* them thoroughly."

Vs. 27: *Twins* (ta'om): "When her (Rebekah) days to be delivered were fulfilled, behold, there were *twins* in her womb" [25.24]. The only other reference of this term is Sg 4.5, "Your two breasts are like two fawns, *twins* of a gazelle, that feed among the lilies."

Vs. 28: *Scarlet thread* (shany): this and vs. 30 are the only uses of this term.

Vs. 29: *Breech* (parats) which is the verbal root for Perez. "And you shall *spread abroad* to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south" [28.14].

Vs. 30: After the birth of Perez, his twin brother was born who was named Zerah; from the verbal root meaning "to rise" as light; also applies to the breaking out of leprosy and a growing plant. Both twins are noted in Matthew's genealogy of Jesus Christ: "and Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, and Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Ram" [1.3].

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### Chapter Thirty-Nine

Vs. 1: "Joseph was taken down to Egypt:" in the passive, which can serve to stress his innocence, and harkens back to the conclusion of Chapter 37.

-*Officer* (serys): in the sense of someone who is a minister of the court. It also means *eunuch*: "Let not the *eunuch* say, 'Behold, I am a dry tree'" [Is 56.3].

-Potiphar: the text says he was an Egyptian which is interesting because the scene now takes place in Egypt. Perhaps he was not an Egyptian.

-*"Down there:"* the Hebrew text simply reads "there" or "to there."

Vs. 2: *Successful* (tsalach): as in 24.21, "The man gazed at her in silence to learn whether the Lord *had prospered* his journey or not."

Vs. 3: *Prosper* (tsalach): as in the previous verse. Both this verb and the proper name Joseph as noted earlier from the verbal root yasaph (*to increase*) noted in 37.7 seem to work hand-in-hand.

Vs. 4: *Attended* (sharath): connotes both a minister and servant. “The Lord said to Joshua, the son of Nun, Moses’ *minister* (noun)” [Jos 1.1].

-“*Made him overseer*” (paqad): a verb with many meanings, one of which is 21.1: “The Lord *visited* Sarah as he had said.” For another use, “*See how your brother fare*” [1 Sam 17.18]. Thus paqad connotes a sense of visiting with the intent of abiding.

-In the Hebrew text, this and the previous verse end with “in his hand.”

Vs. 5: Two mentions of *blessing* (barak): the Egyptian’s house and “all that he had.” I.e., another parallel between barak and Joseph-as-yasaph.

Vs. 6: *Left* (hazav): in reference to Potiphar giving full charge of his affairs. This verb suggests abandonment. “You *abandoned* me, so I have *abandoned* you to the hand of Shishak” [2 Chron 12.5].

-“*Had no concern:*” literally in the Hebrew text, “he knew not anything whatever.” The only concern on Potiphar’s part was the “*food he ate*” which intimates that Joseph did everything for him except put food in his mouth.

-*Handsome* (yepheh-to’ar): or “handsome form.” Cf. 29.17, “Leah’s eyes were weak but Rachel was *beautiful* and lovely.”

-*Good-looking* (yepheh mar’eh): again, as in 29.17 (“lovely”).

Vs. 7: “*After a time.*” The Hebrew text literally reads, “after these things.”

-“*Cast* (nasa’) an eye:” literally, “to raise.”

-“*Lie* (shakav) with me.” In the sense of going to sleep but here suggests sexual intercourse. “One of the people might easily *have lain* with your wife” [26.10].

Vs. 9: *Kept back* (chasak). For another use of this verb, “For now I know that you fear God, seeing you have not *withheld* your son, your only son, from me” [22.12].

-“*Sin against:*” the Hebrew text has the preposition l- (*to*) prefixed to “God” signifying direct action or violation.

Vs. 11: *Work* (mela’kah): in the sense of service. “Six days you shall labor and do all your *work*” [Ex 20.9].

Vs. 12: *Garment* (begeg): the common word for an outer garment; compare with the kuttoneth of 37.3.

“Pharaoh...arrayed him in *garments* of fine linen” [41.42].

-“*Left* (hazav) the garment.” Compare the use of this verb in vs. 6.

Vs. 14: *Insult* (tsachaq): literally, “to laugh.” “But he (Lot) seemed to his sons-in-law to be *jesting*” [19.14].

Vs. 16: Potiphar’s wife laid Joseph’s garment by her until her husband returned home. Contrast this with several earlier references to Joseph having fled and the duration between that incident and the return of Potiphar.

Vs. 20: *Prison*: literally, “house of *tower*” (sohar). Used only here and in several subsequent verses.

Vs. 21: “The Lord was with Joseph” as in vss. 2 & 3, 23.

-*Steadfast love* (chesed). “Show *steadfast love* to my master Abraham” [24.12].

Vs. 23: *Prosper* (tsalach): as in vss. 2 & 3.

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## Chapter Forty

Vs. 1: “Some time after this” in the Hebrew text literally reads, “after these things.”

-*Butler* (mashqeh): from a verbal root meaning “to drink.” This and other reference within the same chapter are the only uses of this noun.

-*Baker* (‘ophah). Cf. Jer 37.21, “And a loaf of bread was given him daily from the *bakers’ street*.”

Vs. 2: *Officers* (serys), as in 39.1.

Vs. 3: *Confined* (‘asar): more along the lines of being bound. “And he took Simeon from them and *bound* him before their eyes” [42.24].

Vs. 4: *Charged* (paqad): as in 39.4 with regard to Potiphar, another indication of Joseph’s fortune in Egypt.

Vs. 5: *Meaning* (pitron): with reference to the dreams by the chief butler and baker. This and related verses in the same chapter as well as 41.8 are the only uses of the noun. It derives from patar (*to interpret*) as in 40.8.

Vs. 6: *Troubled* (zahaph): this verb connotes being angry as well as sad. “When a man’s folly brings his way to ruin, his heart *rages* against the Lord” [Prov 19.3].

Vs. 7: *Downcast* (rah): fundamentally implies being evil. For another use of this verb in the same context, “Why is your face *sad*, seeing you are not sick” [Neh 2.2]?

Vs. 8: Another use of the verb patar (cf. vs. 5). It is used with another verb, saphar (*tell*) and suggests the connection between interpretation and giving an account of them.

Vs. 10: *Branches* (sarygym, used in plural): “It has stripped off their bark and thrown it down; their *branches* are made white” [Jl 1.7].

-*Budded* (bashal): alternately, “to cook.” This verb connotes ripening as in Jl 4 (3).13, “Put in the sickle, for the harvest is *ripe*.”

-*Clusters* (‘eshkol): “Oh, may your breasts be like *clusters* of the vine” [Sg 7.8].

Vs. 11: *Cup* (kus): “I will lift up the *cup* of salvation and call on the name of the Lord” [Ps 116.13].

-*Pressed* (sachat): the only use of this verb in the Bible.

Vs. 13: *Office* (ken): for an alternate use, cf. Dan 11.20: “Then shall arise in his *place* one who shall send an exactor of tribute through the glory of the kingdom.”

Vs. 14: *Kindness* (chesed). Often used with reference to divine mercy. “Blessed be the Lord, the God of my master Abraham, who has not forsaken his *steadfast love* and his faithfulness toward my master” [24.27].

- *Make mention* (zakar): the same verb with a different form is used here as “to remember.”

Vs. 15: *Dungeon* (bor). Compare with 37.20, “Come now, let us kill him and throw him into one of the *pits*.”

Vs. 16: *Cake* (chory): only use of this noun in the Bible.

-*Baskets* (sal): with reference to the cakes. “And the priest shall take...one unleavened cake out of the *basket*” [Num 6.19].

Vs. 19: *Hang* (talah): “And the king said, ‘*Hang* him on that’” [Est 7.10].

Vs. 23: The concluding verse of this chapter (“did not remember,” “forgot”) shows the continued plight of Joseph and serves to introduce the next chapter, “after two whole years.”

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## Chapter Forty-One

Vs. 2: *Sleek* (yaphah): fundamentally, “beautiful.” Cf. 12.14, “When Abram entered Egypt the Egyptians saw that the woman was very beautiful.” This adjective is used to modify mare’eh (*sight*) which is not used in the English text.

-*Reed grass* (‘achu): an Egyptian word. “Can *reeds* flourish where there is no water” [Job 8.11]?

Vs. 3: *Gaunt* (rah): cf. 40.7; this adjective connotes “evil.” It is also used with mare’eh (*sight*).

-*Thin* (daq): connotes something small or fine. “But the multitude of your foes shall be like *small* dust” [Is 29.5].

Vs. 5: *Ears of grain* (shiboleth): only two other references, Rt 2.2 and Is 17.5.

-*Stock* (qaneh): also, “cane,” “reed.” “A bruised *reed* he will not break” [Is 42.3].

Vs. 8: *Spirit* (ruach). “And there was no longer any *spirit* in them” [Jos 5.1].

-*Troubled* (paham): alternately as “to urge, “be disturbed.” “I had a dream, and my *spirit* (ruach) is *troubled* to know the dream” [Dan 2.3].

-*Magicians* (chartom, only in plural) or sacred scribes referring to those skilled in sacred writing; from the verb charat, *to engrave*. “And they also, the *magicians* of Egypt, did the same by their secret arts” [Ex 7.11].

-*Wise men* (chakam): also as in Ex 7.11 just cited. “Where then are your *wise men*” [Is 19.12]?

-*Interpret* (patar): cf. vss. 5 & 8 of last chapter. The Hebrew text has “them” in reference to Pharaoh’s (singular) dream.

Vs. 9: *Faults* (chete’): from the verbal root chatah which often translates as “to sin.” “You shall not hate your brother in your heart, but you shall reason with your neighbor, lest you bear *sin* because of him” [Lev 19.17].

Vs. 11: *Meaning* (pitron): cf. 40.5, from patar as noted there.

Vs. 14: *Brought hastily* (ruts): in the sense of running. “But Esau *ran* to meet him” [33.4].

-*Clothes* (simlah) or large outer garments; cf. 35.2, “and change your *garments*.”

-“In before Pharaoh” in the Hebrew reads “to Pharaoh.”

Vs. 16: “*Favorable* (shalom) answer:” the noun shalom is used here, commonly as “peace.”

Vs. 25: “Revealed:” in the Hebrew text literally as “made to declare.”

Vs. 29: “*Seven* (shevah) years:” compare with *plenty* (savah); i.e., the same verbal root. “Then your barns will be filled with *plenty*” [Prov 3.10].

Vs. 30: *Famine* (rahav). Cf. 26.1, “Now there was a *famine* in the land.”

Vs. 31: *Grievous* (kaved): in the sense of “heavy.” “This is a *grievous* mourning to the Egyptians” [50.11].

Vs. 32: *Doubling* (shanoth): from the verb shanah, *to repeat*; it also means “to be changed” as in Prov 24.21: “My son, fear the Lord and the king, and do not disobey either of them.” The Hebrew text reads, “do not associate with those who *change*.”

-*Thing* (davar): from the verbal root “to speak.” “But his father kept the *saying* in mind” [37.11].

-*Fixed* (kun): connotes preparation, establishment, direction. For another sense, cf. 43.16: “And slaughter an animal and *make ready*.”

-“Bring to pass” literally reads in the Hebrew text, “will be quick to do it.”

Vs. 33: *Select* (ra’ah): literally, “to see.”

-*Discreet* (navon): from the verbal root byn, *to discern, to understand*.

-*Wise* (chakom): from the same verbal root as “wise men” in vs. 8.

Vs. 34: *Appoint/overseers*: from the same verb *paqad* as in 39.4 which refers to Joseph himself.

Vs. 35: “Authority” in the Hebrew text literally reads, “under the hand” (of Pharaoh).

Vs. 36: *Reserve* (*piqadon*): from *paqad* as in vs. 34. “If anyone sins and commits a breach of faith against the Lord by deceiving his neighbor in a matter of *deposit*” [Lev 6.2].

Vs. 37: *Proposal* (*davar*): as in vs. 32, “thing.”

Vs. 38: “*Spirit* (*ruach*) of God:” last mentioned in vs. 8, “his *spirit* was troubled.”

Vs. 39: *Has shown* (*yadah*): literally in the Hebrew text, “has made known.”

Vs. 40: “All my people shall order themselves:” in the Hebrew, “on your mouth all my people shall *dispose*” (*nashaq*). This verb also means “to kiss, “to arm oneself.”

Vs. 42: *Signet ring* (*tabhat*): from a verbal root meaning “to sink.” “All who were of a willing heart brought...*signet rings*” [Ex 35.22].

-“Garments of *fine linen*” (*shesh*): an important component of the tabernacle complex, “On the south side the court shall have hangings of *fine* twined *linen* a hundred cubits long for one side” [Ex 27.9].

-“*Gold chain* (*revid*): from a verbal root meaning “to spread.” The only other biblical reference to this word is Ezk 16.11, “And I decked you with ornaments and put bracelets on your arms and a *chain* on your neck.”

Vs. 46: Here Joseph “went through all the land of Egypt.” Compare with vs. 45 where he “went out over the land of Egypt.”

Vs. 49: *Stored up* (*tsavar*). This verb can also apply to treasures, “Though he *heap up* silver like dust” [Job 27.13]. The English of the previous verse uses this verb which is not in the Hebrew text.

-*Measure* (*saphar*): alternately means “to tell” as in 40.8 with the basic meaning of “to write,” “to inscribe.”

V.51: Manasseh: the first-born son of Joseph in Egypt which is explained as “Making to forget” from the verbal root *nasha’*.

Vs. 52: Ephraim: the second son of Joseph meaning “to be fruitful” from the verbal root *parah*. “*Be fruitful* and multiply and fill the waters” [1.22].

Vs. 54: Compare “famine in all the lands” with “bread in all the land of Egypt.”

Vs. 56: The English text has “all the storehouses” whereas the Hebrew text has “all that was in them.”

Vs. 57: “All the *earth* (‘erts):” use of this word implies not only the inhabited world but everyone and everything in it which came to Egypt to purchase grain during the famine.

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## Chapter Forty-Two

Vs. 1: *Learned* (*ra’ah*): the Hebrew verb “to see.” Compare the other use of this verb in the same verse, “Why do you *look at* one another?”

Vs. 2: Compare this verse with the previous one, “I have heard,” that is, about grain in Egypt.

Vs. 4: *Harm* (‘ason): the only other uses of this verb being Ex 21.22 & 23, the latter being, “If any *harm* follows, then you shall give life for life.”

Vs. 6: *Governor* (shalyt): an adjective as in Dan 2.10, "For no great and *powerful* king has asked such a thing of any magician."

-*Bowed themselves* (shachah): i.e., Joseph's brothers in search of grain. Compare with 37.9, "And behold, the sun, the moon, and eleven stars *were bowing down* to me."

Vs. 7: *Knew* (nakar): as in 27.23, "And he (Isaac) did not *recognize* him (Jacob)." This same verb is used in vs. 7, *treated like strangers*. Also cf. vs. 8.

Vs. 9: *Spies* (ragal): literally, "to walk," "to tread." "And Joshua said to the two men who had *spied out* the land" [Jos 6.22].

-*Weakness* (heroah): from a verbal root meaning "to be naked." "And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the *nakedness* of his father" [9.22].

Vs. 17: "He *put* them all *together* in prison" ('asaph). It is Joseph speaking here; note the use of this verbal root to his name.

Vs. 19: *Honest* (ken): as used in vs. 11 by Joseph's brothers. This noun can also mean "so," "thus:" "It is not customary to be *so* done among us" [29.26].

-*Your prison:* Joseph is addressing his brothers; however, Simeon is the brother chosen to remain in Egypt.

Vs. 20: *Verified* ('aman), from which is derived "amen." For another use of this verb, "The testimony of the Lord is *sure*, making wise the simple" [Ps 19.7].

Vs. 21: *Distress* (tsarah): used twice; Joseph's *soul* or nephesh and that which befell his brothers. "That I may make there an altar to the God who answered me in the day of my *distress*" [35.3].

Vs. 22: *Sin* (chata'): "How then can I do this great wickedness and *sin* against God" [39.9]?

-*Reckoning* (darash, verb) or "to seek" and similar to 9.5, "For your lifeblood I will surely require a *reckoning*."

Vs. 23: *Interpreter* (lyts): connotes speaking indirectly, scorning. "He stretched out his hand with *mockers*" [Hos 7.5].

Vs. 25: *Provisions* (tsayd): from a verbal root meaning "to hunt." "Isaac loved Esau because he ate of his *game*" [25.8].

Vs. 26: "And departed:" the Hebrew text adds "from there."

Vs. 27: *Sack* (saq): alternately, "dress of mourners:" "The Jacob rent his garments and put *sackcloth* upon his loins" [37.34].

-*Sack* ('amtachat): from a verbal root meaning "to spread out." This and the next few verses contain the only references to this term. Compare with saq.

Vs. 28: "Their hearts failed them:" in the Hebrew text, "their hearts went out."

Vs. 34: *Trade* (sachar): "Dwell in the land and *trade* in it and get property in it" [34.10].

Vs. 35: *Dismayed* (yare'): alternately, "to fear."

Vs. 36: *Bereaved* (shakal): "Why should I *be bereft* of you both in one day" [37.45]?

Vs. 38: Chapter 42 ends with two *bring downs* (yarad): one in reference to Jacob's son and the other concerning Jacob to Sheol. Earlier Jacob says, "No, I shall go down to Sheol to my son, mourning" [37.35].

## Chapter Forty-Three

Vs. 3: Judah quotes Joseph's words, "You shall not see my face unless your brother is with you." This beholding of one's face can intimate awe in the presence of an important person. Cf. Ex 33.23 where this sentiment is applied to God, "But my face shall not be seen."

Vs. 6: Israel is used here, not Jacob, as in the previous chapter.

Vs. 7: "*Questioned* (sha'al) carefully:" this verb is used twice for emphasis. The same is used with respect to the verb yadah, "could we in any way *know*?"

Vs. 8: *Little ones* (taph): as opposed to young men and women. "All their wealth, their *little ones* and their wives" [34.29].

Vs. 8: *Surety* (harav, verb): "Lay down a *pledge* for me with yourself" [Job 17.3].

-*Require* (baqash): alternately, "to seek." "Shall I not now *require* his blood at your hand" [2 Sam 4.11]?

Vs. 9: *Bear blame* (chata'): alternately, "to sin" as noted in 42.22.

-*Forever*:" in the Hebrew text, "all days."

Vs. 11: *Choice fruits* (zimrah): from a verbal root meaning "to pluck." Note the alternate of this noun: "Raise a *song*, sound the timbrel, the sweet lyre with the harp" [Ps 81.2].

-*Present* (minchah). "So he lodged there that night, and took from what he had with him a *present* for his brother Esau" [32.13].

Vs. 13: *Oversight* (mishgeh): the only use of this noun in the Bible; from shagah, *to err*.

Vs. 14: God Almighty: El Shaddai. First used in 17.1, "I am God Almighty."

-*Mercy* (rachamym, plural): suggests the bowels, considered as seat of the emotions. "Be mindful of your *mercy*, O Lord, and of your steadfast love" [Ps 25.6].

Vs. 16: "Steward of the house:" in Hebrew, "who is on the house."

-*Slaughter* (tavach). The noun "animal" is derived from this verbal root.

Vs. 23: "Rest assured." In Hebrew, "*peace* (shalom) to you."

Vs. 25: *Present* (minchah): the one referred to in vs. 11, "choice fruits of the land." Given the fact that the famine was grave not only in Egypt but in surrounding lands, these "choice fruits" must have been procured with considerable effort.

Vs. 27: Shalom: used twice. "Their *welcome*" and *well*; also the latter in the next verse.

Vs. 28: *Bowed their heads* (qadad): this verb contains the three words expressed in English. "The man *bowed his head* and worshiped the Lord" [24.26].

Vs. 30: *Heart* (rachamym): as in vs. 14, "May God Almighty grant you *mercy* before the man."

-*Yearned* (kamar): the only other use of this verb with the same meaning is 1Kg 3.26, "for her heart *yearned* for her son." The verb fundamentally means "to be burned," "to be sad."

-*Chamber* (cheder): especially an inner room or area. "The king has brought me into his *chambers*" [Sg 1.4].

Vs. 31: *Controlling himself* ('aphaq): "The yearning of your heart and your compassion are *withheld* from me" [Is 63.15].

Vs. 32: *Abomination* (tohevah): “They did according to all the *abominations* of the nations which the Lord drove out before the people of Isarel” [1Kg 14.24].

Vs. 34: *Were merry* (shakar). The Hebrew is stronger as in 9.21, “And he drank of the wine and *became drunk*.”

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### Chapter Forty-Four

Vs. 2: *Cup* (gavyah): a large object distinguished from kus, *small cups* as in 40.11. For another meaning, cf. Ex 25.31: “Its (lampstand) cups, its capitals, and its *flowers* shall be of one piece with it.”

Vs. 4: *Overtake* (nasag): “And Laban *overtook* Jacob” [31.25].

-*Returned* (shalam): the verbal root of shalom. For a similar use of this verb, cf. Jer 50.29: “*Requite* her according to all that she has done.”

Vs. 5: *Divines* (nachash): as in 30.27, “If you will allow me to say so, I have learned by *divinization* that the Lord has blessed me because of you.” From this verbal root is derived the noun “serpent” as in 3.1.

Vs. 10: *Blameless* (naqy): “Then you will be *free* from my oath when you come to my kindred” [24.41].

Vs. 12: *Searched* (chaphas). For another sense, “We have *thought out* a cunningly conceived plot” [Ps 64.6].

Vs. 13: *Rent* (qarah): “Then Jacob *rent* his garments and put sackcloth upon his loins” [37.34].

Vs. 16: *Clear ourselves* (tsadaq): a form of this verb which fundamentally means “to be right,” “to be just.”  
-*Guilt* (hawon). “But if there is *guilt* in me, slay me yourself” [1Sam 20.8].

Vs. 29: *Harm* (‘ason): “But Jacob did not send Benjamin, Joseph’s brother, with his brothers, for he feared that *harm* might befall him” [42.4].

-Sheol: “If *harm* (‘ason) should befall him on the journey that you are to make, you would bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to Sheol” [42.38].

Vs. 30: *Life* (nephesh): fundamentally, “soul.” “Let us not take his *life*” [37.21].

Vs. 32: *Surety* (harav, verb): “I will be surety for him” [43.8]. “*Be surety* for your servant for good” [Ps 119.122].

-*Bear the blame* (chata’): from the verbal root which fundamentally means “to sin.” “Then let me *bear the blame* forever” [43.9].

Vs. 34: Note the play on words, *see* (ra’ah) and *evil* (rah; here, varah or “in evil”).

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### Chapter Forty-Five

1) *Comfort himself* (‘aphaq): as in 43.31, “And *controlling himself* he said, ‘Let food be served.’”

-“Before all those who stood *by* (hal) him:” compare with “everyone go out from me” or literally, “from *on* (me).” Two uses of this preposition can intimate the close attendance of persons upon Joseph as one in authority.

Vs. 2: “And he wept aloud” literally reads, “And he gave his voice in weeping.” Note the echo, as it were, of this weeping: first the Egyptians heard it and then Pharaoh’s household.

Vs. 3: *Dismayed* (bahal): a verb which connotes being terrified or confounded. “As soon as they saw it, they



were astounded, they were in panic, they took to flight" [Ps 48.5].  
-"At his presence" literally reads, "before his face."

Vs. 4: *Come near* (nagash): as in 18.23, "Then Abraham *drew near*." This scene is reminiscent of several post-Resurrection encounters with the disciples who did not know Jesus.

Vs. 5: *Distressed* (hatsav): for another use, cf. 34.7: "And the men were *indignant* and very angry."  
-*Preserve life* (chayah): the simple verb *to live* is used here yet indicates the whole meaning of the Joseph story as well as beyond into the Book of Exodus.

Vs. 7: *To preserve* (sum): alternately as "to put," "to place," "to constitute." Compare with chayah in vs. 5. Here the verb sum is used with respect to the future descendants of Joseph and his brothers. This assumes two forms:

1) a *remnant* (sh'eryth). "The seacoast shall become the possession of the *remnant* of the house of Judah on which they shall pasture" [Zeph 2.7].

2) "many *survivors*:" (peleytah): or what had escaped as in war, "Arise and let us flee; or else there will be no *escape* for us from Absalom" [2 Sam 15.14].

Vs. 8: Three roles of Joseph as having been sent by God to Egypt: father of Pharaoh, *lord* ('adon; related to 'adony as often applied to The Lord) of his house and ruler over Egypt.

Vs. 9: "Go up," that is, to Joseph's father. Throughout the whole Joseph story there is an alternation between "going down" to Egypt and this "going up" to Israel.

Vs. 10: Goshen: first mention of this part of Egypt where Israel is to dwell and later mentioned as being protected by God during one of the seven plagues: "But on that day I will set apart the land of Goshen, where my people dwell, so that no swarms of flies shall be there" [Ex 8.22].

Vs. 11: *Provide* (kul): in the sense of sustaining and later in 47.12, "And Joseph *provided* his father, his brothers and all his father's household with food."

-*Come to poverty* (yarash). The piel form of this verb also as in Prov 20.13, "Love not sleep, lest you *come to poverty*." This verb fundamentally means "to take, "to take possession." "I am the Lord...to give you this land *to possess*" [15.4].

Vs. 12: *Splendor* (kavod): alternately, "glory." For another use of this noun, "And from what was our father's he has gained all this *wealth*" [31.1].

-Here as in other verses emphasis is not so much upon Joseph's brothers but upon his desire to have his father brought (down) to Egypt.

Vs. 15: *Kissed* (nashaq). "Come near and *kiss* me, my son" [27.26].

Vs. 16: "Report:" literally, "voice."

-"It pleased:" the Hebrew text has, "in the eyes of Pharaoh" and "in the eyes of his servants."

Vs. 18: *Fat* (chelev): in the sense of that which is most excellent. "I would feed you with the *finest* of the wheat" [Ps 81.16].

Vs. 19: "Command them also:" the Hebrew text has, "you are commanded."

-*Wagons* (hagalah). This term can apply to a military vehicle, "He burns the *chariots* with fire" [Ps 46.9]!

Vs. 20: "Give no thought:" The Hebrew text has, "Let your eyes not grieve." The verb used here is chus and can alternately mean "to spare." "And some bade me to kill you, but I *spared* you" [1Sam 24.11]. Pharaoh's offering of the land of Egypt to the family of Joseph is a kind of inverse Exodus.

Vs. 21: "According to the command of Pharaoh:" the Hebrew literally reads, "on the mouth of Pharaoh."  
-*Provisions* (tsedah): "food" in the sense of that which is taken from hunting. "Isaac loved Esau because he ate of his *game*" [25.28].

Vs. 22: *Festal garments* (chaliphoth semaloth): the first word derives from a verbal root meaning "to change."  
"So he went, taking with him...ten festal *garments*" [2Kg 5.5]. The second word (simlah, singular) is used in 35.2, "And change your *garments*." These two terms are used twice in this verse: with respect to Joseph's brothers and to Benjamin.

Vs. 23: *Provisions* (mazon): the only use of this word in the Bible.

Vs. 24: *Quarrel* (ragaz): in the sense of being moved to anger; also, "to tremble." "He will be *wroth* as in the valley of Gibeon" [Is 28.21].

Vs. 26: *Fainted* (pug): literally, "to become cold." "I *groan* because of the tumult of my heart" [Ps 38.8].

Vs. 27: *Spirit* (ruach): compare with "heart" in vs. 26.

Vs. 28 concludes with Israel saying, "I will go," that is, to Joseph, which continues the theme of the constant descent and ascent connected with the story of Joseph.

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## Chapter Forty-Six

Vs. 1: En route to Egypt, Israel offers sacrifices to "the God of his father Isaac" in Beer-sheba which hearkens back to 26.23-5.

Vs. 2: *Visions* (mar'ah, singular). Here they are associated with "night;" note the contrast between seeing and darkness. "The heavens were opened, and I saw *visions* of God" [Ezk 1.1]. Compare with Israel's (Jacob) earlier dreams as in 28.11+ and 31.11. "Vision" seems to be a clearer appearance of the Lord compared with a dream as intimated by the Ezekiel quote. Note that God addresses Israel as "Jacob."

Vs. 3: "God of your father:" "I am the Lord, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac" [28.15]. Also note reference to Abraham as "your father" compared with Jacob's biological father, Isaac.

Vs. 4: The dialectic between going down (to Egypt) and going up (to Canaan) continues here and assumes greater significance because God himself "will go down with you to Egypt, and I will bring you up again."  
-"Close your eyes:" the Hebrew text literally reads, "will place his hand on your eyes."

Vs. 5: "Jacob set out from Beer-sheba." The Hebrew verb here is qum which literally means *to arise* and is more suggestive of what he is doing not so much now but for future generations. It is also interesting to contrast the wagons which Pharaoh sent to bring Jacob and his family into Egypt with the chariots of a later Pharaoh which got stuck in the Red Sea.

Vss. 8-27 list the descendants of Jacob which is based on the number of seventy persons (cf. vs. 27 & Ex 1.5).

Vs. 28: *To appear* (yarah): the Hebrew verb means "to cast." For another use, cf. 31.51: "See this heap and the pillar which I have *set* between you and me."

Vs. 29: *Made ready* ('asar): with respect to a chariot. This verb fundamentally means to "bind:" "And he took Simeon from them and *bound* him before their eyes" [42.24].

-*Presented himself* (yare'): the verb "to see;" here as "caused himself to be seen (reflexive)."

Vs. 34: *Abomination* (tohevah): “For that is an *abomination* to the Egyptians” [43.32]. Here the reference is to Joseph’s brothers being shepherds, possibly because this occupation is associated with wandering tribes as opposed to the Egyptians being settled in cities and towns.

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## Chapter Forty-Seven









































































































