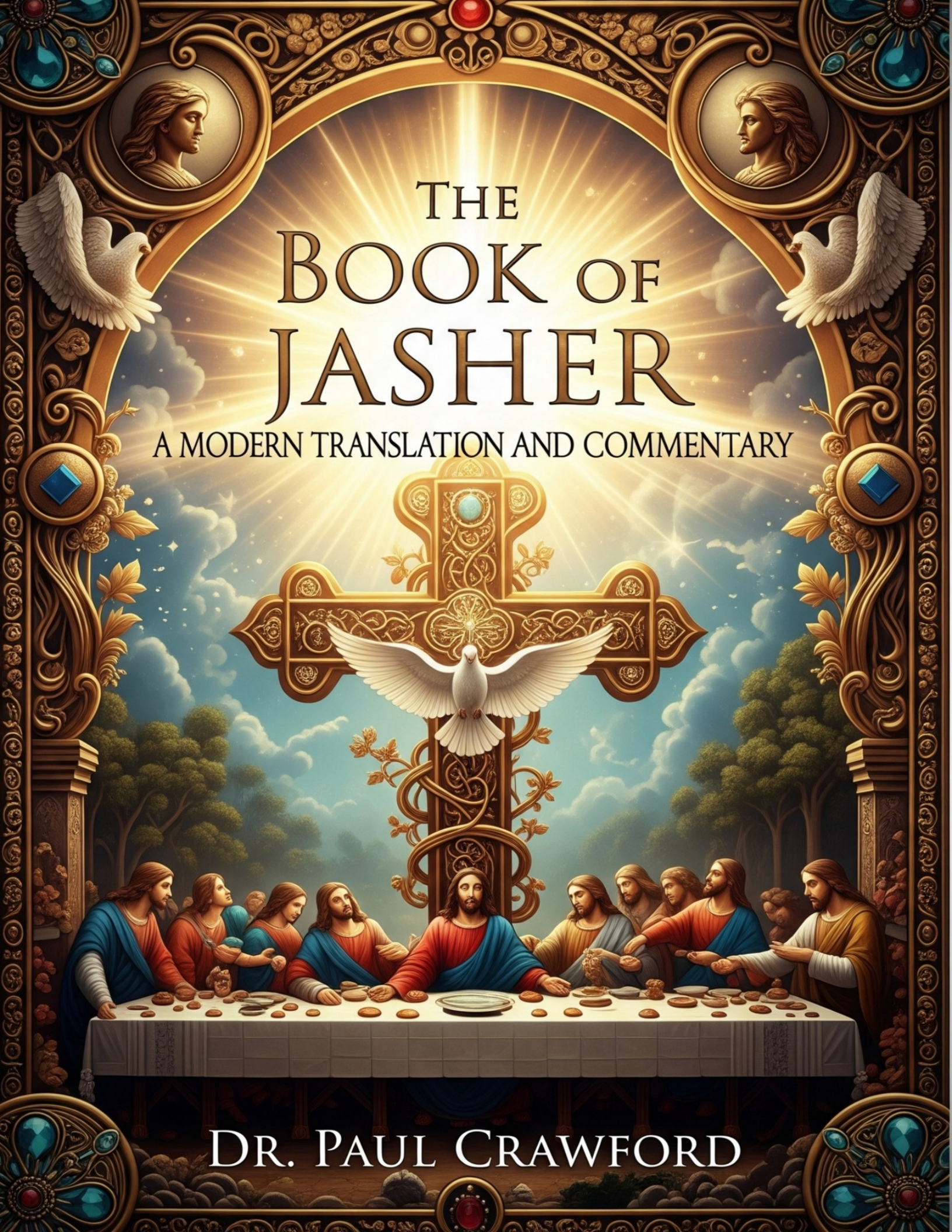
THE
BOOK OF
JASHER
A MODERN TRANSLATION AND COMMENTARY
DR. PAUL CRAWFORD

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(Also known as Sefer HaYashar – "The Book of the Upright")

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Introduction to the Book

Verse-by-Verse Commentary and Modern English Translation of the Book of Jasher

By Dr. Paul Crawford | Crawford Bible Commentary

The *Verse-by-Verse Commentary and Modern English Translation of the Book of Jasher* is a bold and timely work that brings to life one of the most mysterious and referenced ancient texts in biblical history. Known in Scripture by name but long hidden from the modern church, the Book of Jasher (Hebrew: *Sefer haYashar*, "The Book of the Upright") offers a detailed historical account that parallels and expands upon many familiar stories found in the Old Testament—from Adam and Eve to the Exodus.

Twice cited in the Bible (Joshua 10:13 and 2 Samuel 1:18), the Book of Jasher was held in high regard by ancient Hebrew scholars as a record of truth and righteousness. Though not included in the traditional canon, its historical value and alignment with biblical themes make it an indispensable resource for those who want to understand the **broader context of the patriarchs, the flood, the rise of nations, and God's dealings with His people** throughout early history.

This volume includes:

- A **Modern English Translation** of the entire Book of Jasher, carefully updated from earlier Hebrew and English versions for clarity and accessibility.
- A detailed **Verse-by-Verse Commentary** that explains each passage in light of **biblical parallels, Hebrew insights, historical context, and spiritual application**.
- **Cross-references** to Genesis, Exodus, Joshua, Samuel, and other canonical books to show the harmony and significance of the events described.
- **Key word studies** and cultural notes to help the reader grasp the ancient world in which these events occurred.

The Book of Jasher fills in gaps and provides enriching background to the lives of **Adam, Enoch, Noah, Nimrod, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, and Moses**. It gives vivid detail to well-known stories such as the **Tower of Babel**, the **destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah**, the **binding of Isaac**, and the **conflicts between Jacob and Esau**. It also includes extensive narrative about **Joseph's time in Egypt**, the **Hebrew oppression**, and the **rise of Moses as deliverer**.

Why study the Book of Jasher?

- To **deepen your understanding** of the biblical narrative.
- To **restore lost historical context**.
- To **strengthen your faith** in the continuity of God's hand throughout time.
- To **discern truth and reject tradition** where Scripture and ancient records intersect.

This work is not presented as a replacement for the Bible—but as a **historical companion** that supports, enriches, and magnifies the truths already found in God's Word. Every verse is approached with reverence, accuracy, and a deep commitment to truth.

As you journey through this modern English translation and verse-by-verse study of the Book of Jasher, you will not only discover forgotten history—you will encounter the **faithfulness of God**, the **consequences of rebellion**, and the **unfolding of divine purpose through imperfect people**.

May this commentary be a torch to light your understanding and a tool to deepen your walk with the One who has written history with His own hand.

Dr. Paul Crawford
Crawford Bible Commentary
www.CrawfordBibleCommentary.com

Preface

To the Reader of The Book of Jasher: A Modern Translation and Commentary

The Book of Jasher—also known as *Sefer HaYashar* or the "Book of the Upright"—is one of the most intriguing and mysterious texts referenced in the Bible, yet absent from its traditional canon. Twice mentioned by name in Scripture (Joshua 10:13 and 2 Samuel 1:18), the Book of Jasher has stirred centuries of curiosity among Bible scholars, historians, and devoted readers of the Word of God. What is this book? What truth does it preserve? And why has it been largely forgotten?

This volume offers a fresh, verse-by-verse commentary alongside a modern English translation of the traditional text often associated with the ancient *Book of Jasher.* While we acknowledge that the surviving version may not be the exact original referenced in the Hebrew Scriptures, the content nonetheless provides profound insights into the lives of the patriarchs, the generations before the Flood, the tower of Babel, the exploits of Abraham, and the events surrounding the exodus from Egypt.

Our goal in this work is threefold:

1. **Accessibility** – The modern English translation is designed to make this ancient text understandable to today's readers without sacrificing its original tone or gravity.

2. **Clarity** – The verse-by-verse commentary offers historical, theological, and biblical context for each passage, helping readers discern where the Book of Jasher complements or contrasts with the canonical Scriptures.
3. **Discernment** – Rather than presenting this book as Scripture, we present it as a historical and theological resource worthy of study and reflection. It may be apocryphal, but it is not without value.

This book is for the curious, the scholarly, and the faithful—those who seek to know the God of Abraham more deeply and understand the sacred narratives passed down through generations. While we do not treat the Book of Jasher as infallible, we approach it with reverence, comparing it always to the inspired Word of God.

It is our hope that as you read through this translation and explore the commentary, you will be enriched in your understanding of biblical history, awakened to forgotten details, and stirred to draw closer to the God who has sovereignly orchestrated the story of humanity.

In His truth and service,
Paul Crawford
Editor & Commentator
Crawford Bible Commentary

Book of Jasher, Chapter 1

The Creation of Humanity

Verse 1: "God said, 'Let's make humans in our image, to be like us.' And so, God created humanity, reflecting His own image."

Commentary: This verse sets the stage for human creation. The phrase "in our image, after our likeness" suggests a profound connection between humanity and the divine, implying that humans possess qualities that mirror God's own nature, such as intellect, will, and the capacity for relationships. The immediate confirmation that "God created man in his own image" emphasizes the directness and intentionality of this act.

Verse 2: "Then God formed a human from the dust of the ground. He breathed the breath of life into their nostrils, and the human became a living being with the ability to speak."

Commentary: This verse details the physical creation of humanity, grounding it in the earth ("dust of the ground"). The act of God breathing "the breath of life" signifies the impartation of a spiritual essence, transforming a mere physical form into a vibrant, living soul. The addition "endowed with speech" highlights a key distinction of humanity, the capacity for complex communication, which is essential for relationships and understanding.

The First Relationship: Adam and Eve

Verse 3: "The Lord then said, 'It's not good for the human to be alone; I will make a suitable helper for him.'"

Commentary: Here, God identifies a fundamental human need: companionship. The declaration that "it's not good for man to be alone" speaks to the inherent social nature of humanity. The concept of a "helpmeet" or "suitable helper" suggests a complementary relationship, where two individuals complete and support each other.

Verse 4: "So, the Lord caused Adam to fall into a deep sleep. While he slept, God took one of his ribs, built flesh around it, formed it, and then brought her to Adam. Adam woke up and, behold, a woman was standing before him."

Commentary: This vivid account describes the creation of Eve. The "deep sleep" implies a divine surgical procedure. The detail of taking a rib and building flesh around it emphasizes Eve's origin from Adam, implying a deep connection and shared essence. The dramatic reveal of the woman standing before Adam after he wakes highlights the miraculous nature of her creation.

Verse 5: "Adam exclaimed, 'This is truly bone of my bones!' He declared she would be called 'woman,' because she was taken from man. Adam then named her Eve, because she would be the mother of all living."

Commentary: Adam's immediate recognition and joyful declaration, "This is truly bone of my bones!" shows his immediate connection and acceptance of Eve. His naming her "woman" (a play on words in Hebrew, indicating "from man") further reinforces their shared origin. The name "Eve," meaning "life-giver" or "mother of all living," anticipates her crucial role in the propagation of humanity.

Verse 6: "God blessed them and called them Adam and Eve on the day He created them. The Lord God then commanded them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth.'"

Commentary: This verse highlights God's blessing upon the first couple, symbolizing His approval and desire for their well-being. The command to "be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth" is not just a directive for procreation but also for stewardship and the expansion of human presence across the globe.

The Garden and the Command

Verse 7: "The Lord God took Adam and his wife and placed them in the Garden of Eden to tend and care for it. He commanded them, 'You may eat from any tree in the garden, but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The day you eat from it, you will surely die.'"

Commentary: This verse describes humanity's initial dwelling place, the beautiful Garden of Eden, and their responsibility to "tend and care for it." This indicates that humanity was given a purpose and a

role as caretakers of creation. The clear prohibition regarding the "tree of the knowledge of good and evil" establishes a boundary and a test of obedience, with a stark consequence for transgression: "you will surely die."

Verse 8: "After God had blessed and commanded them, He departed from them. Adam and his wife lived in the garden, following the command the Lord had given them."

Commentary: This verse confirms God's departure after giving His instructions, leaving Adam and Eve to exercise their free will. It also initially highlights their obedience, setting up the subsequent narrative of temptation and fall.

The Temptation and the Fall

Verse 9: "The serpent, which God had also created, approached them to tempt them to break God's command."

Commentary: The introduction of the "serpent" signals the arrival of temptation. The text explicitly states its intention: "to incite them to transgress the command of God." This highlights the adversarial nature of the serpent and the deliberate challenge to divine authority.

Verse 10: "The serpent tricked and persuaded the woman to eat from the tree of knowledge. The woman listened to the serpent, disobeyed God's word, took fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, ate it, and then gave some to her husband, and he ate too."

Commentary: This verse details the pivotal act of disobedience. The serpent's methods are described as "enticed and persuaded," emphasizing the manipulative nature of temptation. The woman's decision to "hearken to the voice of the serpent" rather than God's command leads to her transgression. The fact that she then shares the fruit with her husband broadens the scope of the fall to include both Adam and Eve.

Verse 11: "Adam and his wife broke God's command. God knew what they had done, and His anger flared against them, and He cursed them."

Commentary: This verse succinctly states the consequence of their actions: they "transgressed the command of God." God's immediate awareness and the kindling of His "anger" demonstrate the seriousness of their disobedience. The immediate "cursed them" indicates a direct and profound negative consequence.

Expulsion and New Beginnings

Verse 12: "That very day, the Lord God drove them out of the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which they were taken. They went and settled east of the Garden of Eden. Adam then had sexual relations with his wife Eve, and she gave birth to two sons and three daughters."

Commentary: The immediate expulsion from the Garden of Eden is a direct consequence of their disobedience, symbolizing the loss of their idyllic state and direct communion with God. Their new reality involves "tilling the ground," a life of toil and labor. The mention of Adam knowing his wife and their subsequent children marks the beginning of human procreation outside the Garden, emphasizing the continuation of life despite the fall.

Verse 13: "She named her firstborn son Cain, saying, 'I have acquired a man from the Lord.' She named the other son Abel, for she said, 'In vain we came into the earth, and in vain we shall be taken from it.'"

Commentary: This verse provides insight into Eve's perspective after the fall. Her naming of Cain ("acquired") expresses a sense of hope or perhaps even triumph in childbirth. Abel's name ("vanity" or "breath") and Eve's accompanying statement reflect a more somber realization of the brevity and transience of life after the expulsion, possibly grappling with the consequences of their actions.

Verse 14: "As the boys grew up, their father gave them land. Cain became a farmer, and Abel became a shepherd."

Commentary: This verse describes the differing occupations of the two brothers, setting the stage for their future conflict. The father providing them land implies a division of responsibilities and resources, which will later become a point of contention.

The Offerings and Cain's Jealousy

Verse 15: "After several years, they brought offerings to the Lord. Cain brought some produce from the ground, while Abel brought the best of the firstborn of his flock, including their fat. God favored Abel and his offering, and a fire came down from the Lord from heaven and consumed it."

Commentary: This pivotal verse introduces the concept of offerings to God. The distinction in their offerings is crucial: Cain brings "from the fruit of the ground," while Abel brings "from the firstlings of his flock from the fat thereof," implying a more dedicated and quality offering from Abel. God's clear favor towards Abel's offering, manifested by fire consuming it, sets the stage for Cain's emotional response.

Verse 16: "But the Lord did not favor Cain or his offering, because he had brought inferior produce to the Lord. Because of this, Cain grew intensely jealous of his brother Abel and began looking for a reason to kill him."

Commentary: This verse explains God's rejection of Cain's offering, explicitly stating it was "inferior fruit." This rejection fuels Cain's intense "jealousy" and resentment towards Abel. The phrase "sought a pretext to slay him" reveals Cain's premeditation and the dark turn his anger takes.

The First Murder

Verse 17: "Some time later, Cain and his brother Abel went out to the field to do their work. Both were in the field: Cain tilling and plowing his ground, and Abel feeding his flock. Abel's flock happened to pass over the part of the ground Cain had already plowed, which greatly angered Cain."

Commentary: This verse sets the scene for the murder, showing them together in the field, engaged in their respective tasks. The detail about Abel's flock passing over Cain's plowed ground serves as the immediate trigger for Cain's boiling anger, highlighting how even a seemingly minor event can ignite deep-seated resentment.

Verse 18: "Cain angrily approached his brother Abel and said to him, 'What's between us that you come to live and let your flock graze on my land?'"

Commentary: Cain's confrontational question, "What is there between me and thee," reveals his possessive attitude and the underlying tension that has escalated since the offerings. He blames Abel for trespassing, even though the context suggests Abel's flock might have innocently strayed.

Verse 19: "Abel replied to his brother Cain, 'What's between us that you eat the meat of my flock and wear their wool?'"

Commentary: Abel's response is a logical counter-argument, highlighting the reciprocal nature of their interactions. He points out Cain's reliance on Abel's produce, challenging Cain's indignation and revealing the hypocrisy of his accusation.

Verse 20: "So now, take off the wool of my sheep that you're wearing, and pay me back for the fruit and meat you've eaten. Once you've done that, I'll leave your land, just as you've demanded.'"

Commentary: Abel's continued argument is reasonable and direct. He proposes a fair exchange or repayment, attempting to resolve the conflict logically and peacefully, and even offering to leave if Cain's demands are met.

Verse 21: "Cain said to his brother Abel, 'If I kill you today, who will demand your blood from me?'"

Commentary: This chilling question reveals Cain's sinister intent and his disregard for human life and divine justice. It suggests a belief that he could commit murder and escape accountability, demonstrating a profound moral corruption.

Verse 22: "Abel answered Cain, 'Surely God, who made us on earth, will avenge my cause! He will demand my blood from you if you kill me, for the Lord is the judge and arbiter. He will repay each person according to their evil deeds, and the wicked person according to the wickedness they do on earth.'"

Commentary: Abel's response is a powerful declaration of faith in divine justice. He firmly believes that God will see his murder and hold Cain accountable, emphasizing God's role as the ultimate "judge and arbiter" who "will repay each person according to their evil."

Verse 23: "And now, if you kill me here, God surely knows your secret thoughts and will judge you for the evil you declared you would do to me today."

Commentary: Abel continues to warn Cain, reminding him that God is omniscient and knows even "secret views." This serves as a final plea and a reminder of divine omniscience and ultimate judgment, suggesting that even unspoken intentions are known to God.

Verse 24: "When Cain heard his brother Abel's words, Cain's anger flared even more intensely against his brother Abel for saying these things."

Commentary: This verse highlights the destructive nature of Cain's pride and rage. Instead of being deterred by Abel's warnings of divine judgment, Cain's anger is intensified, showing his complete disregard for moral boundaries.

Verse 25: "Cain quickly got up and took the iron part of his plowing tool. With it, he suddenly struck his brother and killed him. Cain spilled his brother Abel's blood on the earth, and Abel's blood flowed onto the ground before the flock."

Commentary: This graphic description details the first murder. Cain's swift action with a common tool underscores the impulsive and violent nature of his act. The imagery of Abel's "blood streamed upon the earth" emphasizes the irreversible and profound consequence of Cain's sin.

Cain's Remorse and Punishment

Verse 26: "Afterward, Cain regretted killing his brother. He was deeply grieved and wept over him, and it distressed him immensely."

Commentary: This verse reveals a flicker of remorse in Cain, showing that his heart was not entirely hardened. His "sadly grieved" and "wept over him" suggests a temporary moment of human sorrow and regret for his heinous act.

Verse 27: "Cain then got up and dug a hole in the field, where he put his brother's body and covered it with dust."

Commentary: This verse describes Cain's attempt to conceal his crime, highlighting his fear and perhaps a desire to erase the evidence of his deed.

Verse 28: "But the Lord knew what Cain had done to his brother. The Lord appeared to Cain and asked him, 'Where is your brother Abel, who was with you?'"

Commentary: This verse emphasizes God's omniscience; despite Cain's efforts to hide the body, God already knew. God's question to Cain, though rhetorical, gives Cain an opportunity to confess, similar to His interaction with Adam and Eve after their disobedience.

Verse 29: "Cain lied and said, 'I don't know. Am I my brother's keeper?' The Lord then said to him, 'What have you done? Your brother's blood cries out to Me from the ground where you killed him.'"

Commentary: Cain's infamous lie and defiant question, "Am I my brother's keeper?", reveal his denial and attempt to evade responsibility. God's response is a powerful indictment, highlighting the spiritual reality that Abel's shed blood has a voice and cries out for justice.

Verse 30: "For you have killed your brother and lied to Me, thinking in your heart that I didn't see you or know all your actions."

Commentary: God directly confronts Cain's deceit and his false belief that his actions were hidden from God's sight. This verse reinforces God's omnipotence and omnipresence, emphasizing that no deed or thought is concealed from Him.

Verse 31: "You did this evil thing and killed your brother for no reason, just because he spoke rightly to you. Therefore, you are now cursed from the ground, which opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand, and where you buried him."

Commentary: God's judgment on Cain is swift and severe. The curse is specifically tied to the ground, which symbolically "opened its mouth" to receive Abel's blood, highlighting the impact of the murder on creation itself. The phrase "for naught and because he spoke rightly to thee" reveals the injustice and unprovoked nature of Cain's crime.

Verse 32: "When you work the ground, it will no longer yield its full strength to you as it did before. Instead, it will produce thorns and thistles, and you will be a restless wanderer on the earth until the day you die."

Commentary: This verse describes the specific consequences of Cain's curse. The ground, now tainted by blood, will resist his efforts, producing "thorns and thistles." The punishment of being a "moving and wandering in the earth" signifies a life of instability, alienation, and perpetual unrest.

Cain's Lineage and City

Verse 33: "At that time, Cain left the Lord's presence, the place where he was, and he and all his family went and wandered eastward of Eden."

Commentary: Cain's departure "from the presence of the Lord" signifies his spiritual and physical separation from God's favor and protection. His wandering eastward reinforces his cursed state of instability.

Verse 34: "In those days, Cain knew his wife, and she became pregnant and gave birth to a son. He named him Enoch, saying, 'At that time the Lord began to give him rest and quiet in the earth.'"

Commentary: Despite the curse, Cain continues to have offspring, indicating the continuation of humanity even in a fallen state. The naming of his son "Enoch," which might mean "dedicated" or "teaching," and the accompanying statement about finding "rest and quiet" are somewhat ironic given Cain's cursed wandering, possibly indicating a temporary reprieve or a sense of settling down in his new location.

Verse 35: "At that time, Cain also began to build a city. He built the city and named it Enoch, after his son. For in those days, the Lord had given him rest on the earth, and he no longer moved about and wandered as he did at first."

Commentary: This verse describes Cain's initiative to build a city, marking the beginning of organized human settlement and civilization outside of Eden. The naming of the city after his son, Enoch, reinforces the idea of establishing a legacy and a sense of permanence, perhaps an attempt to counteract the curse of wandering. The text reiterates that he received "rest" from his initial wandering, suggesting a measure of stability in his new, self-created environment.

Verse 36: "Enoch had a son named Irad. Irad became the father of Mehujael, and Mehujael was the father of Methushael."

Commentary: This verse begins the genealogy of Cain's descendants, tracing the lineage that will continue to populate the earth. This highlights the ongoing development of humanity even through the line of the first murderer, showcasing the broad scope of human history and the unfolding of generations.

Book of Jasher, Chapter 2

The Line of Seth

Verse 1: "It was in the one hundred and thirtieth year of Adam's life on earth that he again had sexual relations with his wife, Eve. She became pregnant and gave birth to a son who resembled him and bore his likeness. She named him **Seth**, saying, 'Because God has appointed me another child in place of Abel, for Cain killed him.'"

Commentary: This verse marks a significant new beginning after the tragedy of Abel's death. The birth of Seth (meaning "appointed" or "placed") is seen by Eve as a divine replacement for Abel, indicating a continued hope for humanity's lineage despite the previous loss. The emphasis on Seth being "in his likeness and in his image" connects him directly to Adam's original creation, highlighting a restoration of sorts.

Verse 2: "Seth lived for one hundred and five years, and then he had a son. Seth named his son **Enosh**, saying, 'Because at that time, people began to multiply and to trouble their own souls and hearts by disobeying and rebelling against God.'"

Commentary: The birth of Enosh (meaning "mortal" or "frail") is linked to a period of growing human population and, more importantly, a decline in moral behavior. The phrase "began to multiply, and to afflict their souls and hearts by transgressing and rebelling against God" indicates a deepening spiritual corruption among humanity. This foreshadows the increasing wickedness that will eventually lead to the flood.

Verse 3: "During Enosh's time, people continued to rebel and break God's commands, further increasing the Lord's anger against humanity."

Commentary: This verse emphasizes the escalating nature of human sinfulness. The repeated "continued to rebel and transgress" highlights a consistent and widespread pattern of disobedience, directly leading to an increase in God's displeasure.

Verse 4: "People turned away and started serving other gods. They forgot the Lord who had created them on earth. In those days, people made idols of bronze, iron, wood, and stone, and they bowed down and worshipped them."

Commentary: This describes the emergence of **idolatry**, a profound turning away from the one true God. They "forgot the Lord who had created them," illustrating a spiritual amnesia. The creation and worship of physical idols from various materials show a deliberate shift in allegiance, placing created things above the Creator.

Verse 5: "Everyone created their own god and worshipped it. People abandoned the Lord throughout the time of Enosh and his descendants. The Lord's anger burned because of their actions and the detestable things they did on earth."

Commentary: This verse reinforces the widespread nature of idolatry ("every man made his god"). The abandonment of the Lord by "Enosh and his children" indicates that this corruption wasn't isolated but a dominant characteristic of the era. God's "anger was kindled" underscores the severity with which He viewed these "abominations."

Verse 6: "The Lord caused the waters of the Gihon River to overflow and engulf them. He destroyed and consumed them, wiping out a third part of the earth. Despite this, people did not turn from their evil ways; their hands were still extended to do evil in the Lord's sight."

Commentary: This describes a divine judgment in the form of a **regional flood** from the Gihon River, distinct from the later global flood. The destruction of "a third part of the earth" shows God's immediate response to their wickedness. Crucially, even after this severe punishment, humanity's obstinacy is highlighted: "notwithstanding this, the sons of men did not turn from their evil ways." This sets the stage for a greater judgment to come.

Verse 7: "In those days, there was no sowing or harvesting on earth. There was no food for people, and the famine was very severe in those days."

Commentary: This verse details the **environmental consequences** of human sin and divine judgment. The lack of agricultural productivity ("neither sowing nor reaping") and the "very great famine" illustrate how the curse on the ground (from Adam's sin) intensified as humanity's wickedness grew, impacting their very survival.

Verse 8: "The seeds they planted in the ground during those days became thorns, thistles, and briars. This was because, from Adam's time, this declaration about the earth and God's curse had been in effect, a curse placed on the earth due to the sin Adam committed before the Lord."

Commentary: This verse directly links the agricultural difficulties to the **original curse on the ground** given after Adam's fall (Genesis 3:17-18). It explains that the earth's reduced productivity, yielding "thorns, thistles and briers," was a direct result of humanity's sin, reinforcing the interconnectedness of human action and natural consequences.

Verse 9: "When people continued to rebel and break God's laws and corrupt their ways, the earth also became corrupt."

Commentary: This verse reiterates the principle of **spiritual pollution affecting the physical world**. As human morality decayed ("corrupt their ways"), the very earth they inhabited also became "corrupt," suggesting a cosmic reflection of human sin.

Cainan: A Wise Ruler

Verse 10: "Enosh lived ninety years and then had a son named **Cainan**."

Commentary: This marks the continuation of the lineage from Seth through Enosh to Cainan.

Verse 11: "Cainan grew up and was forty years old when he became wise and gained knowledge and skill in all wisdom. He ruled over all people and led them toward wisdom and knowledge. Cainan was a very wise man and understood all wisdom, and with his wisdom, he even controlled spirits and demons."

Commentary: This verse presents Cainan as a remarkable figure, characterized by exceptional **wisdom and knowledge**. He "reigned over all the sons of men" and actively "led them to wisdom and knowledge," indicating a period of enlightened leadership. The intriguing detail that he "ruled over spirits and demons" suggests a profound spiritual authority or understanding, hinting at abilities beyond ordinary human capacity.

Verse 12: "Cainan knew by his wisdom that God would destroy humanity because they had sinned on earth, and that the Lord would bring the waters of the flood upon them in the latter days."

Commentary: Cainan's wisdom extended to **prophetic insight**. He foresaw God's impending judgment upon humanity due to their sin, specifically recognizing that a "flood" would be the means of destruction. This highlights his spiritual discernment and awareness of divine justice.

Verse 13: "In those days, Cainan wrote upon stone tablets what was to happen in the future and stored them in his treasures."

Commentary: This verse describes Cainan's act of **preserving knowledge and prophecy**. Writing on "tablets of stone" indicates a desire for permanence, ensuring that his insights into future events, particularly the flood, would not be lost. Storing them "in his treasures" suggests their immense value.

Verse 14: "Cainan reigned over the entire earth, and he turned some people back to the service of God."

Commentary: This verse reiterates Cainan's wide-ranging authority ("reigned over the whole earth") and, more importantly, his **positive spiritual influence**. He "turned some of the sons of men to the service of God," indicating a period of spiritual revival under his leadership, however limited in scope.

Verse 15: "When Cainan was seventy years old, he had three sons and two daughters."

Commentary: This verse provides genealogical information, continuing the narrative of human procreation and family lines.

Verse 16: "These are the names of Cainan's children: the firstborn was **Mahlallel**, the second **Enan**, and the third **Mered**. Their sisters were **Adah** and **Zillah**. These are Cainan's five children born to him."

Commentary: This lists the specific names of Cainan's children, further detailing the developing family tree.

Lamech and His Wives

Verse 17: "Lamech, the son of Methusael, became related to Cainan by marriage. He took Cainan's two daughters as his wives. Adah became pregnant and bore a son to Lamech, and she named him **Jabal**."

Commentary: This verse introduces **Lamech** (from the line of Cain), who takes two wives, Adah and Zillah, both daughters of Cainan (from the line of Seth). This intermingling of the two lines (Cain's and Seth's) is significant and will play a role in later narratives. The birth of Jabal is noted.

Verse 18: "She conceived again and bore a son, and called his name **Jubal**. Her sister, Zillah, was barren in those days and had no children."

Commentary: Adah gives birth to another son, Jubal. The detail that Zillah was "barren in those days" sets up a later, miraculous event.

Verse 19: "For in those days, people began to disregard God and to violate the commandments He had given to Adam about being fruitful and multiplying on earth."

Commentary: This verse highlights a growing moral transgression related to marriage and procreation. People were "trespass[ing] against God" by actively going against the command to "be fruitful and multiply," indicating a deeper societal decay.

Verse 20: "Some men caused their wives to drink a potion that would make them barren, so that they could preserve their figures and their beautiful appearance wouldn't fade."

Commentary: This shocking detail reveals a disturbing practice: deliberate **barrenness** for the sake of vanity and appearance. This is a severe transgression against God's command to multiply and reflects a deeply corrupt and self-centered society. It also explains Zillah's initial barrenness.

Verse 21: "And when some men caused their wives to drink, Zillah drank with them."

Commentary: This confirms Zillah's participation in this practice, explaining why she was initially barren.

Verse 22: "Women who had children seemed disgusting to their husbands, like widows, even while their husbands were alive, for the men were only attracted to the barren ones."

Commentary: This verse paints a grim picture of the societal values of the time. Motherhood, which should be celebrated, was scorned, and women who bore children were treated poorly by their

husbands, who preferred those who remained "barren." This further illustrates the perversion of natural order and God's design.

Verse 23: "But after a long time, when Zillah became old, the Lord opened her womb."

Commentary: This is a moment of divine intervention. Despite Zillah's old age and her past actions (drinking the barrenness potion), God miraculously "opened her womb," showing His power to override natural limitations and human choices.

Verse 24: "And she conceived and bore a son, and she called his name **Tubal-Cain**, saying, 'After I had withered away, I have obtained him from the Almighty God.'"

Commentary: Zillah's naming of her son, Tubal-Cain, expresses her gratitude and acknowledges God's hand in his birth, especially after a long period of barrenness and "wither[ing] away."

Verse 25: "She conceived again and bore a daughter, and she called her name **Naamah**, for she said, 'After I had withered away, I have obtained pleasure and delight.'"

Commentary: The birth of Naamah further emphasizes God's blessing upon Zillah, bringing "pleasure and delight" after her long wait.

The Death of Cain

Verse 26: "Lamech was very old and advanced in years, and his eyesight was so poor he couldn't see. His son Tubal-Cain was leading him. One day, Lamech went into the field with his son Tubal-Cain. As they were walking, Cain, the son of Adam, approached them. Lamech was very old and couldn't see well, and Tubal-Cain, his son, was very young."

Commentary: This verse sets the scene for a significant event: the death of Cain, the first murderer. The details of Lamech's old age and poor eyesight, and Tubal-Cain's youth and role as a guide, are crucial for understanding the accident that follows. The unexpected appearance of the very old Cain (son of Adam) adds a layer of dramatic irony.

Verse 27: "Tubal-Cain told his father to draw his bow, and with the arrows, he struck Cain, who was still far away, and killed him, for he appeared to them to be an animal."

Commentary: This is the tragic account of Cain's death. Tubal-Cain, perhaps in an attempt to protect his blind father or simply mistaking Cain for an animal due to Lamech's poor vision, instructs Lamech to shoot. The accidental killing of Cain, mistaking him for an animal, is a pivotal moment, fulfilling in a twisted way the prophecy of Cain's wandering.

Verse 28: "The arrows entered Cain's body even though he was distant from them, and he fell to the ground and died."

Commentary: This verse confirms Cain's death, emphasizing the effectiveness of the shot despite the distance.

Verse 29: "And the Lord repaid Cain for his evil according to his wickedness, which he had done to his brother Abel, just as the Lord had declared."

Commentary: This verse provides a theological interpretation of Cain's death, explicitly stating that it was **divine retribution** for his murder of Abel, fulfilling God's earlier pronouncement of consequences for Cain's actions.

Verse 30: "It happened that after Cain died, Lamech and Tubal-Cain went to see the animal they had killed. They looked, and behold, their ancestor Cain had fallen dead on the earth."

Commentary: This describes the moment of realization for Lamech and Tubal-Cain. The shock of discovering they had accidentally killed Cain, their ancestor, is evident. This reveals the tragic outcome of their unintentional act.

Verse 31: "Lamech was deeply grieved by what he had done. In clapping his hands together in distress, he struck his son and caused his death."

Commentary: This verse describes a second, tragic accidental death caused by Lamech. In his immense grief and agitation over Cain's death, Lamech inadvertently kills his own son, Tubal-Cain, a testament to the destructive power of overwhelming sorrow and distress.

Lamech's Family Conflict

Verse 32: "Lamech's wives heard what Lamech had done, and they tried to kill him."

Commentary: This verse highlights the wives' extreme reaction to Lamech's actions. Their attempt to kill him shows the severity of his deeds and the horror they felt.

Verse 33: "From that day on, Lamech's wives hated him because he had killed Cain and Tubal-Cain. Lamech's wives separated from him and would not listen to him in those days."

Commentary: The wives' profound revulsion and hatred ("hated him from that day") due to his double homicide (even if accidental) is evident. Their separation and refusal to "hearken to him" signify a severe marital and familial breakdown.

Verse 34: "Lamech approached his wives and pressed them to listen to him about this matter."

Commentary: Lamech attempts to reconcile with his wives, seeking to explain or justify his actions, indicating his desire for their understanding and a restoration of their relationship.

Verse 35: "He said to his wives, Adah and Zillah, 'Hear my voice, O wives of Lamech, pay attention to my words. For now you have imagined and said that I killed a man with my wounds, and a child with my blows, even though they had done no violence. But surely know that I am old and grey-headed, and that my eyes are heavy with age, and I did this thing unknowingly.'"

Commentary: Lamech's defense is an **appeal for understanding and forgiveness**. He acknowledges their accusation ("I slew a man with my wounds, and a child with my stripes") but emphasizes the accidental nature of the killings, attributing them to his old age and poor eyesight ("I did this thing

unknowingly"). He tries to mitigate his guilt by highlighting the lack of malevolent intent. This speech is a variation of the "Song of Lamech" found in Genesis 4.

Verse 36: "And Lamech's wives listened to him in this matter, and they returned to him with the advice of their father Adam. But they bore no children to him from that time, knowing that God's anger was increasing in those days against humanity, to destroy them with the waters of the flood for their evil doings."

Commentary: The wives ultimately accept Lamech's explanation and return to him, influenced by "the advice of their father Adam," suggesting Adam's continued moral authority. However, their refusal to bear him more children is a significant detail. Their reasoning, "knowing that God's anger was increasing... to destroy them with the waters of the flood for their evil doings," indicates their awareness of the impending judgment and a desire not to bring more children into such a corrupt world, or perhaps a consequence of God's hand on them.

The Line Continues

Verse 37: "Mahlallel, Cainan's son, lived sixty-five years and then had a son named **Jared**. Jared lived sixty-two years and then had a son named **Enoch**."

Commentary: This verse returns to the direct genealogical line of Seth, focusing on Mahlallel, Jared, and Enoch. The mention of Enoch is particularly significant, as he is a key figure in biblical narratives, known for walking with God and not experiencing death. This verse sets the stage for the next developments in human history leading up to the flood.

Book of Jasher, Chapter 3

The Devotion of Enoch

Verse 1: "Enoch lived sixty-five years and then had a son named **Methuselah**. After Methuselah was born, Enoch walked closely with God. He served the Lord and rejected the evil ways of other people."

Commentary: This verse introduces Enoch, a pivotal figure known for his unique relationship with God. The phrase "walked with God" signifies a deep, personal, and consistent communion, setting him apart from the increasingly corrupt society. His commitment to serving the Lord and despising "the evil ways of men" highlights his righteousness in a time of widespread sin. The birth of Methuselah marks a turning point for Enoch's spiritual journey.

Verse 2: "Enoch's soul was fully devoted to learning from the Lord, gaining knowledge and understanding. He wisely withdrew from people, hiding himself away for many days."

Commentary: This verse elaborates on Enoch's devotion. His "soul was wrapped up in the instruction of the Lord," indicating a profound hunger for divine wisdom. His strategic withdrawal from society ("wisely retired from the sons of men, and secreted himself from them") suggests a period of intense spiritual contemplation and separation from worldly corruption.

Enoch's Prophetic Calling

Verse 3: "After many years, while he was serving the Lord and praying in his house, an angel of the Lord called to him from Heaven. Enoch responded, 'Here I am.'"

Commentary: This verse marks a direct divine intervention. Enoch's consistent devotion through prayer and service leads to a direct communication from a heavenly messenger, indicating God's recognition and purpose for him.

Verse 4: "The angel said, 'Get up, leave your house and the place where you're hiding, and appear to people. You must teach them the path they should follow and the work they must do to live according to God's ways.'"

Commentary: God's command to Enoch is clear: to emerge from his solitude and become a **prophet and teacher** to humanity. His mission is to instruct people on "the way in which they should go and the work which they must accomplish," emphasizing practical righteousness and living according to God's will.

Verse 5: "Enoch obeyed the Lord's word. He left his house, his hiding place, and the room where he was concealed. He went to the people and taught them the Lord's ways. At that time, he gathered everyone and shared God's instructions with them."

Commentary: This verse highlights Enoch's immediate and complete obedience to the divine command. He transitions from a private, contemplative life to a public ministry, actively gathering people to impart God's wisdom, demonstrating his role as a spiritual leader.

Verse 6: "He commanded a proclamation to be made in all places where people lived, saying, 'Whoever wishes to know the ways of the Lord and do good deeds, let them come to Enoch!'"

Commentary: Enoch initiates a public invitation, showing the earnestness of his mission. His call is open to "every man who wishes to know the ways of the Lord and good works," indicating a genuine desire to guide humanity towards righteousness.

Verse 7: "And so, all the people gathered around him, for everyone who desired this came to Enoch. Enoch then reigned over humanity according to the Lord's word. They came and bowed down to him, and they listened to his teachings."

Commentary: This verse describes the positive response to Enoch's call. His spiritual authority leads to him "reign[ing] over the sons of men," implying not just political but also moral and spiritual

leadership. People's willingness to "bow to him and they heard his word" signifies their acceptance of his divine mandate.

Verse 8: "The Spirit of God was upon Enoch, and he taught all his followers God's wisdom and His ways. People served the Lord throughout Enoch's life, and they continued to seek his wisdom."

Commentary: This verse emphasizes the source of Enoch's power and wisdom: "The spirit of God was upon Enoch." This divine empowerment enabled him to effectively teach "the wisdom of God and his ways," leading to a period where "the sons of men served the Lord," suggesting a widespread, though perhaps temporary, spiritual revival.

Verse 9: "All the kings, both past and present, along with their princes and judges, came to Enoch when they heard of his wisdom. They bowed down to him and even asked Enoch to reign over them, which he agreed to do."

Commentary: Enoch's influence extends even to earthly rulers. The kings, princes, and judges acknowledge his superior wisdom and spiritual authority, demonstrating a remarkable submission to a spiritual leader. Their request for him to "reign over them" and his acceptance solidify his position as a divinely appointed leader, unifying diverse rulers under his guidance.

Verse 10: "In total, one hundred and thirty kings and princes assembled, and they made Enoch king over them. They were all under his authority and command."

Commentary: This verse quantifies the extent of Enoch's secular and spiritual rule. The assembly of "one hundred and thirty kings and princes" making him their king illustrates the immense scope of his influence and the peace he brought.

Verse 11: "Enoch taught them wisdom, knowledge, and the Lord's ways. He established peace among them, and peace prevailed throughout the earth during Enoch's lifetime."

Commentary: This verse summarizes Enoch's benevolent reign. He not only imparted divine wisdom but also successfully established "peace amongst them" and ensured "peace was throughout the earth." This highlights a golden age of righteousness and harmony under his leadership, contrasting sharply with the earlier periods of rebellion.

Verse 12: "Enoch reigned over humanity for two hundred and forty-three years. He administered justice and righteousness with all his people and led them in the Lord's ways."

Commentary: This verse provides the duration of Enoch's extensive reign, emphasizing his consistent leadership in "justice and righteousness" and his continued guidance of people "in the ways of the Lord."

Adam's Death and Enoch's Retreat

Verse 13: "These are Enoch's children: Methuselah, Elisha, and Elimelech, three sons; and their sisters were Melca and Nahmah. Methuselah lived eighty-seven years and then had a son named **Lamech**."

Commentary: This verse provides the genealogy of Enoch's family, detailing his children and continuing the line towards Lamech, who will later become Noah's father.

Verse 14: "It was in the fifty-sixth year of Lamech's life that Adam died. He was nine hundred and thirty years old at his death. His two sons, along with Enoch and his son Methuselah, buried him with great ceremony, like the burial of kings, in the cave God had told him about."

Commentary: This verse records the **death of Adam**, the first human, at a remarkably old age. His burial with "great pomp, as at the burial of kings," signifies his reverence as the patriarch of humanity. The involvement of Enoch and Methuselah in the burial highlights the continuity of the righteous line. The mention of "the cave which God had told him" suggests a specific, sacred burial site.

Verse 15: "In that place, all the people observed a great mourning and weeping for Adam. It has, therefore, become a custom among people to this day."

Commentary: This verse emphasizes the universal impact of Adam's death, leading to a widespread "great mourning and weeping." It also suggests the origin of a custom of mourning, connecting ancient practices to contemporary traditions.

Verse 16: "Adam died because he ate from the tree of knowledge; he and his children after him, just as the Lord God had declared."

Commentary: This verse directly attributes Adam's death and the mortality of his descendants to his original sin of eating from the tree of knowledge. It serves as a stark reminder of the consequence of disobedience, fulfilling God's earlier pronouncement of "surely die."

Verse 17: "It was in the year of Adam's death, which was the two hundred and forty-third year of Enoch's reign, that Enoch decided to separate himself from people again and hide away, as he did before, in order to serve the Lord."

Commentary: This verse notes Enoch's renewed desire for solitude and deeper communion with God, coinciding with Adam's death and perhaps a heightened awareness of mortality and spiritual priorities. His decision to "separate himself" mirrors his earlier practice of withdrawal.

Verse 18: "Enoch did so, but he didn't completely hide away from them. He kept away from people for three days and then returned to them for one day."

Commentary: This verse describes Enoch's modified pattern of spiritual retreat. His periodic return to people ("three days away and one day back") shows a balance between intense devotion and fulfilling his teaching ministry.

Verse 19: "During the three days he was in his chamber, he prayed to and praised the Lord his God. On the day he went out and appeared to his subjects, he taught them the Lord's ways and answered all their questions about the Lord."

Commentary: This verse illustrates Enoch's disciplined spiritual life: dedicating specific time to communion with God and then sharing the fruits of that communion with his people, providing both teaching and spiritual guidance.

Enoch's Ascension Foretold

Verse 20: "He continued this pattern for many years. Afterward, he would hide for six days and appear to his people one day in seven; then once a month, and then once a year. Eventually, all the kings, princes, and people sought him out, desiring to see Enoch's face again and hear his words. But they couldn't, as everyone was greatly afraid of Enoch and feared to approach him because of the Godlike awe that radiated from his face. Therefore, no one could look at him, fearing they might be punished and die."

Commentary: This verse details Enoch's increasing withdrawal from public life, becoming more and more inaccessible. The increasing rarity of his appearances reflects his deepening communion with God and growing spiritual transformation. The awe and fear that people experienced in his presence, described as "Godlike awe," suggests his countenance now reflected God's glory, making him untouchable and revered. This also explains why people could not simply find him when he was more fully withdrawn.

Verse 21: "All the kings and princes decided to gather the people and come to Enoch, thinking they might all speak to him when he came out among them, and they did so."

Commentary: Despite the fear, the desire to hear Enoch's wisdom was so strong that kings and princes organized a collective effort to meet him during one of his brief public appearances.

Verse 22: "The day came when Enoch came forth, and they all gathered and came to him. Enoch spoke to them the words of the Lord, and he taught them wisdom and knowledge. They bowed down before him and exclaimed, 'May the king live! May the king live!'"

Commentary: This verse depicts a grand public gathering where Enoch continues his teaching. The people's enthusiastic acclamation, "May the king live!", shows their deep respect and desire for his continued presence and guidance.

Verse 23: "Some time later, while the kings, princes, and people were speaking to Enoch and he was teaching them God's ways, an angel of the Lord called to Enoch from heaven, wanting to take him up to heaven to reign there over the sons of God, just as he had reigned over people on earth."

Commentary: This is a momentous revelation: Enoch receives a direct divine call for **ascension into heaven**. He is invited to transition from ruling over humans to ruling "over the sons of God," suggesting a unique and elevated spiritual destiny. This highlights God's ultimate plan for Enoch.

Verse 24: "When Enoch heard this, he gathered all the inhabitants of the earth and taught them wisdom and knowledge, giving them divine instructions. He told them, 'I have been called to ascend into heaven, so I don't know the exact day of my departure.'"

Commentary: Faced with his imminent departure, Enoch makes a concerted effort to give his final instructions to humanity. He gathers "all the inhabitants of the earth," emphasizing the importance and universality of his final teachings before his unknown departure date.

Verse 25: "Therefore, I will now teach you wisdom and knowledge and give you instructions before I leave you, on how to live on earth so that you may prosper.' And he did so."

Commentary: Enoch prioritizes leaving a lasting legacy of wisdom and guidance. His concern is for humanity's continued well-being ("how to act upon earth whereby you may live") even after his physical absence, showing his enduring care and commitment.

Verse 26: "He taught them wisdom and knowledge, gave them instruction, and reproved them. He set before them statutes and judgments to follow on earth, and he established peace among them. He taught them about everlasting life and lived with them for some time, teaching them all these things."

Commentary: This verse summarizes the content and impact of Enoch's final teachings. He covers a broad range of topics: wisdom, knowledge, moral correction ("reproved them"), practical laws ("statutes and judgments"), maintaining peace, and crucially, "everlasting life." His continued presence for "some time" allowed him to reinforce these vital lessons.

Enoch's Ascension

Verse 27: "At that time, as people were with Enoch and Enoch was speaking to them, they looked up and saw the likeness of a great horse descending from heaven, and the horse moved through the air."

Commentary: This verse describes the miraculous sign of Enoch's imminent departure: a **heavenly horse** descending, visible to all present. The image of the horse "pac[ing] in the air" adds to the supernatural and majestic nature of the event.

Verse 28: "They told Enoch what they had seen, and Enoch said to them, 'This horse descends to earth for my sake. The time has come for me to leave you, and I will no longer be seen by you.'"

Commentary: Enoch confirms the significance of the heavenly horse, identifying it as the means of his departure. His statement "I shall no more be seen by you" confirms his unique destiny: not death, but translation.

Verse 29: "The horse descended at that time and stood before Enoch, and all the people who were with Enoch saw it."

Commentary: The horse's direct arrival and visible presence to "all the sons of men that were with Enoch" emphasize the public and verifiable nature of this miraculous event.

Verse 30: "Enoch then again ordered a voice to be proclaimed, saying, 'Whoever delights in knowing the ways of the Lord his God, let him come to Enoch this day before he is taken from us!'"

Commentary: In his final moments, Enoch issues one last urgent call, inviting anyone still seeking God's ways to come to him, recognizing that his time with them is short.

Verse 31: "All the people gathered and came to Enoch that day. All the kings of the earth, with their princes and counselors, remained with him that day. Enoch then taught the people wisdom and knowledge, gave them divine instruction, and commanded them to serve the Lord and walk in His ways all the days of their lives. He continued to establish peace among them."

Commentary: This verse emphasizes the massive turnout for Enoch's final address, showcasing the profound impact he had on society. His last teachings reiterate his core message: serving God, walking in His ways, and maintaining peace.

Verse 32: "After this, he got up and rode upon the horse. He went forth, and all the people, about eight hundred thousand men, followed him. They traveled with him for one day's journey."

Commentary: This describes the procession of Enoch's departure, with a massive multitude accompanying him. The image of Enoch riding the heavenly horse, followed by "about eight hundred thousand men," creates a powerful visual of his final moments on earth and the reverence he commanded.

Verse 33: "On the second day, he said to them, 'Return home to your tents. Why will you go? Perhaps you may die.' Some of them left him, but those who remained continued with him for six more days. Enoch told them every day, 'Return to your tents, lest you may die,' but they were unwilling to return and continued to go with him."

Commentary: Enoch repeatedly warns his followers to turn back, implying a danger in following him beyond a certain point. The persistence of many, despite the warning, shows their deep devotion and reluctance to part with him.

Verse 34: "On the sixth day, some of the men remained and clung to him, saying to him, 'We will go with you to the place where you are going! As the Lord lives, only death shall separate us!'"

Commentary: This verse highlights the unwavering loyalty of a core group of followers. Their fervent declaration, "death only shall separate us," underscores their profound commitment and desire to accompany Enoch to his ultimate destination.

Verse 35: "They insisted so much on going with him that he stopped speaking to them. They continued to follow him and would not return."

Commentary: Enoch's silence and the followers' persistence show the strength of their will, pushing beyond his warnings in their devotion.

Verse 36: "When the kings returned, they ordered a census to be taken to find out the number of remaining men who went with Enoch. It was on the seventh day that Enoch ascended into heaven in a whirlwind, with horses and chariots of fire."

Commentary: This verse describes the **actual ascension of Enoch**, a miraculous event reminiscent of Elijah's departure in the Bible. The "whirlwind, with horses and chariots of fire" emphasizes the divine power and extraordinary nature of his translation from earth to heaven. The census attempt highlights the earthly authorities' concern for the missing men.

Verse 37: "On the eighth day, all the kings who had been with Enoch sent to retrieve the men who were still with Enoch, from the place where he ascended into heaven."

Commentary: The kings' continued efforts to find the men who followed Enoch indicates their concern and confusion after his ascension.

Verse 38: "All those kings went to the place, and they found the earth there filled with snow, and large stones of snow upon the snow. One said to the other, 'Come, let's break through the snow and see, perhaps the men who remained with Enoch are dead, and are now under the stones of snow.' They searched but could not find him, for he had ascended into heaven."

Commentary: This final verse describes the kings' futile search for Enoch and his most devoted followers. The miraculous change in the environment, with the ground covered in "snow, and upon the snow were large stones of snow," suggests a divine intervention or a transformation of the area. Their inability to find Enoch confirms his unique translation, as "he had ascended into heaven," leaving no trace on earth.

Book of Jasher, Chapter 4

The Reign of Methuselah

Verse 1: "Enoch lived on earth for three hundred and sixty-five years in total."

Commentary: This verse serves as a summary of Enoch's time on earth, reiterating his lifespan, which is notably shorter than many of his contemporaries, perhaps due to his unique translation.

Verse 2: "When Enoch ascended into heaven, all the kings of the earth rose, took his son Methuselah, anointed him, and made him king in his father's place."

Commentary: This verse describes the **succession of leadership** after Enoch's departure. The immediate anointing and enthronement of Methuselah, Enoch's son, indicate a smooth transition and the continuation of the righteous lineage. It shows the kings recognized the spiritual authority inherent in Enoch's line.

Verse 3: "Methuselah acted uprightly in God's sight, just as his father Enoch had taught him. Throughout his entire life, he also taught people wisdom, knowledge, and the fear of God, never deviating from the right path."

Commentary: This verse highlights Methuselah's faithfulness. He followed in his father's footsteps, demonstrating personal righteousness and continuing the vital work of teaching "wisdom, knowledge and the fear of God." His steadfastness, "not turn[ing] from the good way," is crucial as society around him begins to decline.

Growing Corruption and Divine Anger

Verse 4: "However, in the latter days of Methuselah's life, people turned away from the Lord. They corrupted the earth, stole from and plundered each other, and rebelled against God. They disobeyed His commands, corrupted their ways, and refused to listen to Methuselah's voice, rebelling against him too."

Commentary: This verse marks a tragic **spiritual decline** despite Methuselah's righteous leadership. It describes a society falling into widespread moral decay: turning from God, engaging in violence and theft, and actively rebelling against divine authority and even Methuselah's guidance. The refusal to "hearken to the voice of Methuselah" signifies a complete rejection of divine order.

Verse 5: "The Lord was exceedingly angry with them, and He continued to destroy the crops in those days, so that there was no sowing or harvesting on earth."

Commentary: God's response to this escalating corruption is fierce: "exceedingly wroth." The curse on the land, where "there was neither sowing nor reaping," is reiterated as a direct consequence of their wickedness, leading to food scarcity and hardship.

Verse 6: "For when they sowed the ground hoping to get food for their sustenance, thorns and thistles grew instead, which they had not planted."

Commentary: This verse illustrates the futility of human effort in the face of divine judgment. Despite their attempts to cultivate food, the cursed earth continued to produce "thorns and thistles," highlighting the environmental impact of pervasive sin.

Verse 7: "Yet, people still did not turn from their evil ways; their hands remained outstretched to do evil in God's sight. They provoked the Lord with their wicked behavior, and the Lord became very angry, regretting that He had made humanity."

Commentary: This verse emphasizes humanity's stubborn refusal to repent. Despite suffering, their "hands were still extended to do evil," showing their hardened hearts. God's extreme reaction—being "very wroth" and "repented that he had made man"—is a powerful expression of divine sorrow and profound disappointment over human wickedness, foreshadowing a cataclysmic judgment.

Verse 8: "And He decided to destroy and wipe them out, and He did so."

Commentary: This concise verse confirms God's decision to bring about a universal destruction due to the depths of human depravity.

Deaths and New Life

Verse 9: "In those days, when Lamech, Methuselah's son, was one hundred and sixty years old, Seth, the son of Adam, died."

Commentary: This verse marks the death of **Seth**, the lineage through whom the righteous line has continued, connecting his passing to a specific time within Lamech's life.

Verse 10: "Seth lived for a total of nine hundred and twelve years, and then he died."

Commentary: This provides the lifespan of Seth, emphasizing his long life as a patriarch.

Verse 11: "Lamech was one hundred and eighty years old when he took Ashmua, the daughter of Elishaa, his uncle Enoch's son, and she conceived."

Commentary: This verse details Lamech's marriage to Ashmua, linking the lineage of Cain's son (Elishaa, Enoch's son in this text) with the line of Seth (Lamech is Methuselah's son). This intermarriage further blurs the lines between the two family trees.

Verse 12: "At that time, people sowed the ground, and a little food was produced, yet people did not turn from their evil ways; they continued to transgress and rebel against God."

Commentary: This verse notes a slight improvement in agricultural output, allowing "a little food" to be produced, perhaps a temporary mercy or a natural cycle. However, it immediately contrasts this with the unchanging spiritual state of humanity: they "did not turn from their evil ways" and continued their rebellion.

Verse 13: "Lamech's wife conceived and bore him a son at that time, at the turn of the year."

Commentary: This records the birth of a significant figure in the narrative, Noah, born during this period of increasing corruption.

Verse 14: "Methuselah named him **Noah**, saying, 'In his days, the earth found rest and was free from corruption.' His father Lamech named him **Menachem**, saying, 'This one will comfort us in our labors and miserable toil on the earth, which God had cursed.'"

Commentary: This verse offers two interpretations for Noah's name, given by his grandfather Methuselah and his father Lamech. **Noah** (meaning "rest" or "comfort") is associated with the hope that the earth would find "rest and free from corruption" through him. **Menachem** (meaning "comforter") reflects Lamech's hope that Noah would alleviate their "miserable toil" on the cursed earth, indicating the ongoing hardship of life outside Eden. This duality highlights a longing for relief and a divinely appointed deliverer.

Verse 15: "The child grew up and was weaned. He followed the ways of his father Methuselah, perfect and upright with God."

Commentary: This verse emphasizes Noah's early righteousness. Like his grandfather Methuselah, Noah is described as "perfect and upright with God," suggesting he continued the righteous lineage and stood apart from the rampant corruption of his time.

Earth's Profound Corruption

Verse 16: "In those days, as people multiplied across the face of the earth with sons and daughters, everyone departed from the Lord's ways. They taught each other their evil practices and continued to sin against the Lord."

Commentary: This verse describes the widespread and self-perpetuating nature of sin. As humanity grew in number, so did their wickedness, with people actively teaching and reinforcing "their evil practices," leading to a collective descent into deeper rebellion against God.

Verse 17: "Everyone made a god for himself. They robbed and plundered their neighbors, as well as their relatives. They corrupted the earth, and the earth was filled with violence."

Commentary: This verse summarizes the pervasive moral collapse. **Idolatry** ("every man made unto himself a god") led to rampant **violence and injustice** ("robbed and plundered every man his neighbor"). The culmination is that "the earth was filled with violence," indicating a total breakdown of order and morality, making it uninhabitable for righteousness.

Verse 18: "Their judges and rulers forcibly took wives from their husbands, choosing whomever they desired. In those days, people also took from the cattle, wild beasts, and birds, and taught the mixing of animals of one species with another, in order to provoke the Lord. God saw the entire earth, and it was corrupt, for all living beings—all men and all animals—had corrupted their ways on earth."

Commentary: This verse details shocking forms of corruption:

- **Abuse of power:** Judges and rulers engaged in sexual violence, taking wives "by force from their husbands," demonstrating a complete disregard for justice and marital sanctity.
- **Genetic manipulation/perversion:** The practice of "taught the mixture of animals of one species with the other" is a profound act of rebellion against the natural order established by God. This unnatural genetic alteration is explicitly done "to provoke the Lord," showing deliberate defiance. The verse concludes with God's overarching assessment: the "whole earth and it was corrupt, for all flesh had corrupted its ways," extending the corruption beyond humanity to all living creatures, highlighting the depth of the defilement.

Verse 19: "And the Lord said, 'I will wipe out humanity, whom I created, from the face of the earth—from humans to birds of the air, along with cattle and wild beasts in the field—for I regret that I made them.'"

Commentary: This is God's solemn declaration of judgment: the decision to execute the **global flood**. The sweeping scope of destruction, from "man to the birds of the air, together with cattle and beasts," reflects the pervasive corruption of "all flesh." God's repeated statement "I repent that I made them" expresses profound sorrow and a divine necessity for radical cleansing.

The Righteous Exception

Verse 20: "In those days, all the people who walked in the Lord's ways died before the Lord brought the declared evil upon humanity. This was from the Lord, so they would not see the evil the Lord spoke of concerning people."

Commentary: This verse offers a theological explanation for the death of the righteous before the flood. It suggests a divine mercy: God allowed righteous individuals to die naturally before the immense destruction, sparing them from witnessing the horror of the global judgment He was about to bring upon humanity.

Verse 21: "And Noah found grace in the sight of the Lord, and the Lord chose him and his children to raise up descendants from them upon the face of the whole earth."

Commentary: This verse introduces **Noah as the sole exception** to the universal judgment. He "found grace in the sight of the Lord," indicating God's favor and distinguishing him from the wicked masses. God's choice of Noah and his children to "raise up seed from them upon the face of the whole earth" signifies His plan to preserve humanity and restart creation through a righteous remnant.

Book of Jasher, Chapter 5

Deaths of the Patriarchs

Verse 1: "It was in Noah's eighty-fourth year that **Enoch, son of Seth, died**. He was nine hundred and five years old at his death."

Commentary: This verse records the death of Enoch from the righteous line of Seth. It's important to note this is Enoch, son of Seth, not Enoch who "walked with God" and was translated. This distinguishes the two figures and marks the passing of another long-lived patriarch.

Verse 2: "In Noah's one hundred and seventy-ninth year, **Cainan, son of Enosh, died**. Cainan lived a total of nine hundred and ten years."

Commentary: This continues the chronological record of the deaths of the pre-flood patriarchs. Their immensely long lifespans are a consistent feature of this period.

Verse 3: "In Noah's two hundred and thirty-fourth year, **Mahlallel, son of Cainan, died**. Mahlallel lived a total of eight hundred and ninety-five years."

Commentary: Another patriarch from the righteous lineage passes away, indicating that the generation of those who knew God directly from earlier times is slowly diminishing.

Verse 4: "Jared, son of Mahlallel, also died in those days, in Noah's three hundred and thirty-sixth year. Jared lived a total of nine hundred and sixty-two years."

Commentary: Jared, Enoch's father, also passes. This steady succession of deaths among the righteous before the flood is a recurring theme in Jasher, indicating a deliberate divine action.

Verse 5: "And all those who followed the Lord died in those days, before they saw the evil that God declared He would bring upon the earth."

Commentary: This verse offers a crucial theological explanation: God allowed the righteous to die *before* the impending judgment. This mercy spared them from witnessing the profound wickedness of humanity and the devastating global flood that was to come. It underscores God's care for His faithful.

A Final Warning

Verse 6: "After many years passed, in Noah's four hundred and eightieth year, when all those who followed the Lord had passed away from among the people, and only **Methuselah** remained, God spoke to Noah and Methuselah, saying,"

Commentary: This verse highlights a critical point in history: the almost complete disappearance of the righteous generation, leaving only Methuselah as the oldest living patriarch and Noah as God's chosen. The direct communication from God to both Noah and Methuselah marks the formal beginning of the final warning to humanity.

Verse 7: "'Speak and proclaim to the people, saying, "This is what the Lord says: Return from your evil ways and abandon your wicked deeds, and the Lord will reconsider the destruction He declared He would bring upon you, so that it will not happen."'"

Commentary: This is a clear call to **repentance**. God, through Noah and Methuselah, offers a conditional reprieve. The emphasis is on returning from "evil ways and forsake your works," implying that true repentance involves a change in both behavior and heart. God's willingness to "repent of the evil" He planned shows His mercy and desire for humanity to choose righteousness.

Verse 8: "'For this is what the Lord says: Look, I am giving you a period of **one hundred and twenty years**. If you turn back to Me and abandon your evil ways, then I will also turn away from the disaster I told you about, and it will not come to pass,' says the Lord."

Commentary: This verse specifies the **grace period** God offers: 120 years. This timeframe is a testament to God's patience and His unwavering desire for humanity's repentance, providing ample opportunity for them to change their ways and avert the coming judgment.

Verse 9: "Noah and Methuselah spoke all the Lord's words to the people, day after day, constantly speaking to them."

Commentary: This highlights the dedication of Noah and Methuselah to their prophetic mission. They diligently delivered God's message "day after day, constantly speaking," emphasizing the continuous effort to warn and persuade the people.

Verse 10: "But the people would not listen to them or pay attention to their words; they were stubborn."

Commentary: This verse describes the tragic **unresponsiveness of humanity**. Despite the consistent warnings from Noah and Methuselah, the people "would not hearken to them," displaying a hardened heart and a "stiffnecked" resistance to divine instruction.

Verse 11: "The Lord granted them a period of one hundred and twenty years, saying, 'If they return, then God will reconsider the evil, so as not to destroy the earth.'"

Commentary: This reiterates the 120-year grace period and the condition for averting disaster: genuine repentance. It underscores God's ultimate desire not to destroy but to offer redemption.

Noah's Family and Divine Instructions

Verse 12: "Noah, son of Lamech, hesitated to take a wife in those days to have children, for he said, 'Surely now God will destroy the earth, so why should I have children?'"

Commentary: This verse provides insight into Noah's perspective and his initial hesitation to marry and procreate. His reasoning, fearing imminent destruction, shows his understanding of the severity of the times and God's impending judgment.

Verse 13: "Noah was a just man; he was perfect in his generation, and the Lord chose him to raise up descendants from his lineage upon the face of the earth."

Commentary: This verse reaffirms Noah's exceptional righteousness, describing him as "a just man, he was perfect in his generation." This sets him apart as the singular individual chosen by God for the crucial task of preserving humanity and its lineage after the flood.

Verse 14: "And the Lord said to Noah, 'Take a wife and have children, for I have seen you righteous before Me in this generation.'"

Commentary: God directly commands Noah to marry and have children, overriding Noah's earlier hesitation. This command underscores God's plan for Noah to be the progenitor of a new humanity, based on his righteousness.

Verse 15: "'You will raise up descendants, and your children with you, in the midst of the earth.' And Noah went and took a wife; he chose **Naamah**, the daughter of Enoch, and she was five hundred and eighty years old."

Commentary: This verse confirms God's instruction for Noah's family to repopulate the earth. The identity of Noah's wife, Naamah, is specified as "the daughter of Enoch" (likely the Enoch who was translated, as this Naamah is distinct from the Naamah mentioned in Cain's lineage in Genesis 4). Her advanced age of 580 years highlights the long lifespans of the pre-flood era.

Verse 16: "Noah was four hundred and ninety-eight years old when he took Naamah as his wife."

Commentary: This provides a specific age for Noah's marriage, situating it within the larger chronology of his life before the flood.

Verse 17: "Naamah conceived and bore a son, and he called his name **Japheth**, saying, 'God has enlarged me in the earth.' And she conceived again and bore a son, and he called his name **Shem**, saying, 'God has made me a remnant, to raise up seed in the midst of the earth.'"

Commentary: This verse records the births of Noah's first two sons, Japheth and Shem. The names reflect a theological understanding: Japheth (meaning "enlargement") expresses a hope for expansion, while Shem (meaning "name" or "remnant") acknowledges God's preservation and purpose for a remaining seed.

Verse 18: "Noah was five hundred and two years old when Naamah bore Shem. The boys grew up and followed the Lord's ways, in everything that Methuselah and Noah their father taught them."

Commentary: This verse provides the birth year for Shem and reaffirms the righteousness of Noah's sons. They were raised under the guidance of both Noah and Methuselah, ensuring they continued in "the ways of the Lord," setting them apart from the corrupt majority.

The Last of the Old World

Verse 19: "Lamech, Noah's father, died in those days; yet truly, he did not follow the ways of his own father (Methuselah) with all his heart. He died in Noah's one hundred and ninety-fifth year."

Commentary: This verse records the death of Lamech, Noah's father. The note that he "did not go with all his heart in the ways of his father" (Methuselah) is a subtle but important detail, indicating that while he was part of the righteous lineage, his commitment might not have been as absolute as his father's or son's.

Verse 20: "Lamech lived a total of seven hundred and seventy years, and then he died."

Commentary: This provides Lamech's lifespan.

Verse 21: "All the people who knew the Lord died in that year before the Lord brought evil upon them. For the Lord willed them to die so as not to witness the evil that God would bring upon their brothers and relatives, as He had declared He would do."

Commentary: This verse reiterates the divine mercy shown to the righteous. God orchestrated their deaths before the flood to spare them the horror and suffering of the widespread destruction that was to come upon their unrepentant kin.

The Ark Commissioned

Verse 22: "At that time, the Lord said to Noah and Methuselah, 'Stand forth and proclaim to the people all the words I spoke to you in those days. Perhaps they will turn from their evil ways, and then I will reconsider the evil and will not bring it.'"

Commentary: This is a final, urgent call from God for repentance, reiterated to Noah and Methuselah. It highlights God's continuous patience and His desire for humanity to choose life, even in the face of their persistent rebellion.

Verse 23: "And Noah and Methuselah stood forth and spoke into the ears of the people everything God had said concerning them."

Commentary: Noah and Methuselah faithfully deliver this ultimate warning, emphasizing their continued obedience to God's command.

Verse 24: "But the people would not listen, nor would they pay attention to any of their declarations."

Commentary: This verse sadly confirms humanity's unyielding defiance. Their refusal to "hearken" or "incline their ears" seals their fate, as they reject the final opportunity for repentance.

Verse 25: "It was after this that the Lord said to Noah, 'The end of all living beings has come before Me because of their evil deeds, and behold, I am about to destroy the earth.'"

Commentary: This is God's final, definitive declaration of judgment to Noah. The time for repentance has passed, and the decision to destroy "all flesh" and "the earth" due to their "evil deeds" is now firm.

Verse 26: "'You are to take cypress wood, go to a specific place, and build a large ark, and place it in that spot.'"

Commentary: This is God's direct command to Noah to build the **Ark**. The specification of "gopher wood" (often translated as cypress) and a "certain place" indicates precise divine instructions for this monumental task.

Verse 27: "'And this is how you are to make it: three hundred cubits long, fifty cubits wide, and thirty cubits high.'"

Commentary: God provides the exact dimensions for the Ark, ensuring it is built according to His design for its purpose. These specific measurements highlight the divine precision involved in the rescue plan.

Verse 28: "'You are to make a door on its side, and finish it with a roof pitched to a cubit above, and cover it inside and out with pitch.'"

Commentary: Further architectural details are given: a side door for access, a sloped roof for water runoff, and pitch for waterproofing. These instructions are crucial for the Ark's functionality and the survival of its occupants.

Verse 29: "'And behold, I will bring the floodwaters upon the earth, and all living things under the heavens, everything on earth, shall perish.'"

Commentary: This is the explicit statement of the coming global flood, leaving no doubt about the scale of the impending destruction of all life on earth.

Verse 30: "'But you and your household are to go and gather two of every kind of living creature, male and female, and bring them into the ark to preserve their kind on earth.'"

Commentary: This specifies Noah's central task beyond building the ark: to gather and preserve **pairs of all living creatures**. This highlights God's commitment to the continuation of life even amidst judgment.

Verse 31: "'And gather all types of food eaten by all the animals, so that there may be enough food for you and for them.'"

Commentary: The logistical challenge of provisioning the Ark is addressed, emphasizing the need for a comprehensive food supply for all its occupants.

Verse 32: "'And you shall choose for your sons three young women from among the daughters of men, and they shall be wives to your sons.'"

Commentary: This verse provides instructions for Noah's sons to take wives. It specifies they are to be "from the daughters of men," but implies they are chosen under divine guidance, presumably from those still righteous or deemed suitable, rather than from the broadly corrupt population.

Verse 33: "Noah rose up and built the ark in the place where God had commanded him, and Noah did everything as God had ordered him."

Commentary: This verse emphasizes Noah's unwavering **obedience** to God's detailed instructions. His immediate action "Noah rose up, and he made the ark" shows his faith and diligence in carrying out this immense task.

Verse 34: "Noah began to make the ark in his five hundred and ninety-fifth year, and he completed it in five years, just as the Lord had commanded."

Commentary: This provides the timeframe for the Ark's construction, indicating that it took five years. This demonstrates the scale of the project and Noah's sustained effort.

Verse 35: "Then Noah took the three daughters of Eliakim, son of Methuselah, as wives for his sons, as the Lord had commanded Noah."

Commentary: This verse specifies the identity of the wives of Noah's sons. They are from the righteous lineage of Methuselah, ensuring that the new generation after the flood would come from a faithful line.

Verse 36: "And it was at that time that **Methuselah, son of Enoch, died**. He was nine hundred and sixty years old at his death."

Commentary: This verse records the death of Methuselah, the longest-lived human in biblical history, at the age of 960. His death occurs just before the flood, fulfilling the prophecy implied by his name (Methuselah means "when he dies, it shall be sent"). His passing marks the final departure of the antediluvian patriarchs from the earth, just before the great judgment.

Book of Jasher, Chapter 6

The Gathering of Animals

Verse 1: "At that time, after Methuselah's death, the Lord said to Noah, 'Go into the ark with your household. Look, I will gather to you all the animals of the earth—the wild beasts and the birds of the air—and they will all come and surround the ark.'"

Commentary: This verse begins the final, critical phase before the Flood. Methuselah's death signifies the end of the grace period. God's command to Noah is precise: enter the ark with his family. The

miraculous gathering of all animals, surrounding the ark, highlights God's direct intervention and control over creation, setting the stage for their entry.

Verse 2: "'You are to go and sit by the ark's doors, and all the beasts, animals, and birds will gather and position themselves before you. Those that come and **crouch** before you, you shall take and hand over to your sons, who will bring them into the ark. All that remain standing, you shall leave.'"

Commentary: This verse describes a remarkable method of selecting the animals. Noah's role is passive; he simply observes which animals demonstrate submission by "crouching" before him. This divine signal ensures that only the divinely chosen animals enter the ark, removing any ambiguity or human error in the selection process.

Verse 3: "The Lord brought this about the very next day. Animals, beasts, and birds came in vast numbers and surrounded the ark."

Commentary: This emphasizes the immediate and immense scale of God's action. The "great multitudes" of animals gathering underscore the miraculous nature of the event and the overwhelming reality of the impending judgment.

Verse 4: "Noah went and seated himself by the ark's door. Of all living creatures that crouched before him, he brought them into the ark, and all that stood before him he left on the earth."

Commentary: Noah faithfully executes God's instructions. His passive role in merely observing which animals submit ("crouched before him") reinforces that the selection was entirely divine, not based on his own judgment or effort.

Verse 5: "A lioness came with her two cubs, a male and a female. The three crouched before Noah. Then the two cubs rose against the lioness, struck her, and made her flee from her place. She ran off, and the cubs returned to their places, crouching on the earth before Noah."

Commentary: This specific anecdote highlights a dramatic and unusual event. The cubs' rebellion against their mother, forcing her away, and their subsequent submission to Noah ("crouched upon the earth before Noah") further emphasizes the supernatural selection process. It suggests a divine intervention to ensure that the chosen animals, even predators, were those specifically designated for the ark.

Verse 6: "The lioness ran away and stood where other lions were."

Commentary: This detail confirms the lioness was indeed driven away and not chosen, reinforcing the unique selection criteria.

Verse 7: "Noah saw this, and wondered greatly. He rose and took the two cubs, bringing them into the ark."

Commentary: Noah's "wondered greatly" shows his human reaction to the miraculous events unfolding. His action of taking the cubs immediately after their submission reaffirms his role as the obedient recipient of God's choices.

Verse 8: "Noah brought into the ark from all living creatures on earth, so that no creature was left out that Noah brought into the ark."

Commentary: This verse reiterates the completeness of Noah's task; he successfully gathered representatives of "all living creatures," ensuring every chosen species was aboard.

Verse 9: "They came to Noah into the ark two by two, but from the **clean animals** and **clean birds**, he brought seven pairs, as God had commanded him."

Commentary: This clarifies the standard for entry: two of every kind (male and female) but a special provision of **seven pairs** for "clean animals" and "clean fowls." This distinction, foreshadowing later dietary laws and sacrificial practices, would ensure enough clean animals for post-flood sacrifices and continued sustenance.

Verse 10: "All the animals, beasts, and birds were still there, surrounding the ark in every place, and the rain had not yet begun to fall until seven days later."

Commentary: This verse emphasizes the final seven-day waiting period, during which the animals were gathered around the ark. This period intensifies the suspense and serves as a last, silent testimony to the world of the impending judgment.

The Great Flood Begins

Verse 11: "On that day, the Lord caused the whole earth to shake, and the sun darkened, and the foundations of the world raged. The entire earth was violently moved, lightning flashed, and thunder roared. All the springs in the earth burst forth in a way unknown to inhabitants before. God performed this mighty act to terrify people, so there would be no more evil on earth."

Commentary: This verse vividly describes the initial, terrifying signs preceding the Flood. The global **earthquake**, darkened sun, raging "foundations of the world," and bursting "fountains" (underground springs/geysers) paint a picture of cataclysmic chaos. This dramatic display was intended to "terrify the sons of men," a final attempt to instil fear and prompt repentance, though it proves futile.

Verse 12: "Yet, people still would not turn from their evil ways. At that time, they further increased the Lord's anger and didn't even pay attention to all this."

Commentary: This verse highlights humanity's ultimate hardened state. Even in the face of overwhelming natural phenomena and terrifying signs, they remained defiantly unrepentant ("would not turn from their evil ways") and indifferent ("did not even direct their hearts to all this"). Their continued rebellion escalated God's anger.

Verse 13: "At the end of seven days, in the six hundredth year of Noah's life, the floodwaters came upon the earth."

Commentary: This verse marks the exact moment the **global flood** commenced, precisely as the 120-year grace period and the subsequent seven-day warning concluded. The specific timing to Noah's 600th year adds a historical anchor.

Verse 14: "And all the springs of the great deep burst open, and the windows of heaven were opened, and the rain fell upon the earth for forty days and forty nights."

Commentary: This verse describes the dual sources of the Flood waters: the "fountains of the deep" (massive subterranean water reservoirs) and the "windows of heaven" (torrential atmospheric rain). The duration of "forty days and forty nights" is a significant symbolic period in biblical narrative, often associated with divine judgment and testing.

Verse 15: "Noah and his household, and all the living creatures that were with him, entered the ark because of the floodwaters, and the Lord shut him in."

Commentary: This verse records the entry of all occupants into the ark. The final act, "the Lord shut him in," signifies God's direct intervention, sealing the ark and marking the point of no return for the world outside.

Desperation Outside, Turmoil Inside

Verse 16: "All the people remaining on the earth became utterly distraught due to the heavy rain, for the waters were coming down more violently upon the earth, and the animals and beasts were still surrounding the ark."

Commentary: This verse depicts the dire situation outside the ark. The unrepentant masses are now "exhausted through evil" and suffering immensely from the relentless, violent rain. The continued presence of animals surrounding the ark, unable to enter, adds to the chaotic scene.

Verse 17: "About seven hundred thousand men and women gathered together and came to Noah at the ark."

Commentary: This massive gathering of people, "about seven hundred thousand," signifies a last-ditch, desperate attempt to gain entry. Their numbers underscore the sheer scale of the doomed population.

Verse 18: "They called to Noah, saying, 'Open for us so we can come in with you in the ark! Why should we die?'"

Commentary: This emotional plea reveals their utter desperation and sudden realization of their impending doom. They beg for salvation, asking "Why shall we die?", despite having rejected all warnings.

Verse 19: "Noah, with a loud voice, answered them from the ark, saying, 'Have you not all rebelled against the Lord and said that He does not exist? Therefore, the Lord brought this evil upon you, to destroy and cut you off from the face of the earth!'"

Commentary: Noah's loud, unequivocal response from within the ark serves as a stark reminder of their previous rebellion and disbelief ("said that he does not exist"). He justly points out that the disaster is a direct consequence of their own actions and defiance of God.

Verse 20: "'Was this not the very thing I spoke to you about one hundred and twenty years ago, and you would not listen to the voice of the Lord? And now, do you desire to live upon earth?'"

Commentary: Noah reminds them of the ample warning and opportunity they were given. His rhetorical question emphasizes their past stubbornness and the irony of their current pleas for life, having rejected the chance for repentance.

Verse 21: "And they said to Noah, 'We are ready to return to the Lord; only open for us so we may live and not die!'"

Commentary: Their belated "repentance" is driven by fear of death, not genuine contrition. They offer to "return to the Lord" only when faced with immediate annihilation, highlighting the shallow nature of their conversion.

Verse 22: "Noah answered them, saying, 'Look, now that you see the trouble threatening your lives, you wish to return to the Lord? Why did you not return during these one hundred and twenty years that the Lord granted you as the determined period?'"

Commentary: Noah exposes the insincerity of their confession. He points out that their "return" is motivated by fear and despair, not genuine change of heart, contrasting it with the long period of grace they had previously squandered.

Verse 23: "'But now you come and tell me this because of the troubles of your souls. Now, the Lord will not listen to you, nor will He give ear to you this day, so you will not succeed in your wishes now.'"

Commentary: Noah delivers God's final judgment: their cries will not be heard now. This emphasizes that divine mercy has limits, and a genuine, timely repentance is required, not a desperate cry born of immediate suffering.

Verse 24: "The people approached, intending to break into the ark to get inside because of the rain, for they could not bear the rain falling on them."

Commentary: Their desperation escalates to a violent attempt to breach the ark, highlighting their sheer physical suffering and panic. They try to force their way into the last refuge.

Verse 25: "And the Lord sent all the beasts and animals that were standing around the ark. The beasts overpowered them and drove them away from that place. Every person went their own way, and they scattered across the face of the earth again."

Commentary: God intervenes to protect the ark, using the very animals He created to drive away the violent mob. This surprising turn of events, where the wild beasts turn against humans, underscores divine judgment and the protection afforded to Noah. The people are scattered, their final attempt at forced entry thwarted.

The Flood's Peak and Aftermath

Verse 26: "The rain continued to descend upon the earth for forty days and forty nights, and the waters increased greatly upon the earth. All living beings on earth or in the waters died—men, animals, beasts, creeping things, or birds of the air. Only Noah and those who were with him in the ark remained."

Commentary: This verse describes the full force and destructive power of the Flood. The continuous 40-day rain leads to the complete annihilation of "all flesh" outside the ark, emphasizing the comprehensive nature of the divine judgment and the sole survival of Noah's family and the ark's inhabitants.

Verse 27: "The waters prevailed and increased greatly upon the earth, lifting the ark so it was raised from the earth."

Commentary: The rising waters elevate the ark, demonstrating its effective buoyancy and how it becomes completely separated from the submerged earth below.

Verse 28: "The ark floated upon the face of the waters, and it was tossed upon the waters so that all the living creatures within were turned about like pottage in a cauldron."

Commentary: This vivid imagery conveys the violent and turbulent conditions inside the ark. The comparison to "pottage in a cauldron" illustrates the severe motion, suggesting discomfort and perhaps fear for those within.

Verse 29: "And great anxiety seized all the living creatures that were in the ark, and the ark was likely to be broken."

Commentary: The internal struggles of the ark's occupants are highlighted. "Great anxiety" and the threat of the ark breaking show that even inside the sanctuary, there was peril and fear, making their survival a constant act of divine preservation.

Verse 30: "All the living creatures in the ark were terrified. The lions roared, the oxen lowed, and the wolves howled. Every living creature in the ark cried out and lamented in its own language, so that their voices could be heard from a great distance. Noah and his sons cried and wept in their troubles; they were greatly afraid that they had reached the gates of death."

Commentary: This emotionally charged verse captures the collective terror within the ark. The cacophony of animal cries, each in "its own language," emphasizes the universal distress. Even Noah and his sons are overcome with fear, believing they were on the brink of death, underscoring the extreme nature of the flood and their reliance on God.

Verse 31: "And Noah prayed to the Lord, crying out to Him because of this. He said, 'Oh Lord, help us, for we have no strength to bear this evil that has engulfed us! For the waves of the waters have surrounded us, wicked torrents have terrified us, the snares of death have come before us. Answer us, O Lord, answer us! Shine Your face upon us and be gracious to us, redeem us and deliver us!'"

Commentary: This is Noah's fervent prayer for deliverance, a raw expression of his and his family's desperation. He acknowledges their helplessness ("no strength to bear this evil") and appeals directly to God's mercy and power, using evocative language to describe their perilous situation.

Verse 32: "And the Lord listened to Noah's voice, and the Lord remembered him."

Commentary: This verse affirms God's immediate response to Noah's prayer. The phrase "the Lord remembered him" signifies God's active intervention and faithfulness to His covenant with Noah.

Verse 33: "A wind passed over the earth, and the waters became still, and the ark settled."

Commentary: This marks a turning point in the Flood narrative: God sends a "wind" to begin the process of receding the waters and bringing stability to the ark.

Verse 34: "And the springs of the deep and the windows of heaven were stopped, and the rain from heaven was restrained."

Commentary: This confirms the cessation of the flood sources, marking the end of the deluge and the beginning of the waters receding.

Verse 35: "The waters decreased in those days, and the ark came to rest upon the mountains of Ararat."

Commentary: This verse describes the ark's final resting place, the "mountains of Ararat," signifying the beginning of the return to land.

Verse 36: "Noah then opened the windows of the ark, and Noah still called out to the Lord at that time, saying, 'O Lord, who formed the earth and the heavens and all that are in them, bring forth our souls from this confinement, and from the prison where You have placed us, for I am very wearied with sighing.'"

Commentary: Noah expresses his longing for release from the ark, referring to it as "this confinement" and "the prison." His weariness ("much wearied with sighing") highlights the physical and emotional toll of being confined for so long. He appeals to God as the Creator, seeking release.

Verse 37: "And the Lord listened to Noah's voice and said to him, 'When you have completed a full year, you shall then go forth.'"

Commentary: God responds to Noah's plea, giving him a specific timeframe for their exit: after "a full year" inside the ark. This indicates precise divine timing for their re-emergence onto the dried earth.

Verse 38: "At the turn of the year, when a full year of Noah dwelling in the ark was completed, the waters had dried from the earth, and Noah removed the covering of the ark."

Commentary: This verse marks the completion of their year-long journey inside the ark. Noah's action of removing the covering signifies the final step in confirming the earth's dryness.

Verse 39: "At that time, on the twenty-seventh day of the second month, the earth was dry. But Noah and his sons, and those who were with him, did not leave the ark until the Lord told them to."

Commentary: This verse specifies the exact date the earth was completely dry. Crucially, it emphasizes Noah's continued obedience: despite the earth being dry, he waited for explicit divine instruction to exit the ark.

Verse 40: "The day came when the Lord told them to go out, and they all left the ark."

Commentary: God gives the command, and Noah and all the creatures obediently emerge, signifying the beginning of a new chapter for life on earth.

Verse 41: "They went and each returned to their own way and to their place. Noah and his sons lived in the land that God had told them, and they served the Lord all their days. The Lord blessed Noah and his sons upon their departure from the ark."

Commentary: This verse describes the re-establishment of life on earth. The animals disperse to their habitats, while Noah and his sons settle in a divinely appointed place. Their continued service to the Lord and God's blessing upon them signify a new covenant and a fresh start for humanity.

Verse 42: "And He said to them, 'Be fruitful and fill all the earth; become strong and increase abundantly in the earth and multiply therein.'"

Commentary: This verse reiterates the original creation mandate given to Adam and Eve. God re-issues the command to "be fruitful and fill all the earth," establishing the basis for repopulating the world and restoring life after the devastating flood.

Book of Jasher, Chapter 7

The Descendants of Noah's Sons

Verse 1: "These are the names of Noah's sons: **Japheth, Ham, and Shem**. They had children after the Flood, because they had taken wives before the Flood."

Commentary: This verse begins the post-Flood genealogy, confirming the three sons of Noah as the progenitors of all humanity. It clarifies that their wives were taken *before* the Flood, emphasizing that only these eight individuals survived.

The Sons of Japheth

Verse 2: "These are the sons of Japheth: **Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshech, and Tiras**—seven sons."

Commentary: This lists the direct sons of Japheth, who typically represent the peoples of Europe and parts of Asia.

Verse 3: "The sons of Gomer were **Askenaz, Riphath, and Togarmah**."

Commentary: These names correspond to historical peoples often associated with regions like modern-day Turkey and parts of Eastern Europe.

Verse 4: "The sons of Magog were **Elichanaf and Lubal**."

Commentary: Magog is often linked to northern peoples, with these names providing more specific lineages.

Verse 5: "The children of Madai were **Akon, Zeelo, Chazoni, and Lot**."

Commentary: Madai is commonly associated with the Medes.

Verse 6: "The sons of Javan were **Elishah, Tarshish, Kittim, and Dodanim**."

Commentary: Javan is the ancestor of the Greeks and other Mediterranean peoples.

Verse 7: "The sons of Tubal were **Ariphi, Kesed, and Taari**."

Commentary: Tubal and Meshech are often linked to peoples in Anatolia and the Caucasus.

Verse 8: "The sons of Meshech were **Dedon, Zaron, and Shebashni**."

Commentary: More specific lineages for Meshech.

Verse 9: "The sons of Tiras were **Benib, Gera, Lupirion, and Gilak**. These are the sons of Japheth according to their families, and their numbers in those days were about four hundred and sixty men."

Commentary: Tiras is often associated with the Thracians. The mention of "about four hundred and sixty men" indicates a significant population growth within Japheth's lineage soon after the Flood.

The Sons of Ham

Verse 10: "These are the sons of Ham: **Cush, Mizraim, Phut, and Canaan**—four sons. The sons of Cush were **Seba, Havilah, Sabtah, Raamah, and Sabteca**. The sons of Raamah were **Sheba and Dedan**."

Commentary: This lists the direct sons of Ham, who are traditionally associated with Africa and parts of the Middle East. Cush is the ancestor of the Ethiopians and Nubians, and Mizraim of the Egyptians.

Verse 11: "The sons of Mizraim were **Ludim, Anamim, Lehabim, Naphtuhim, Pathrusim, Casluhim, and Caphtorim**."

Commentary: These are additional Hamitic lineages, mainly linked to various peoples of ancient Egypt and North Africa.

Verse 12: "The sons of Phut were **Gebul, Hadan, Benah, and Adan**."

Commentary: Phut is generally associated with Libya and parts of North Africa.

Verse 13: "The sons of Canaan were **Sidon, Heth, the Amorite, the Girgashite, the Hivite, the Arkite, the Sinite, the Arvadite, the Zemarite, and the Hamathite**."

Commentary: Canaan's descendants are the historical peoples who inhabited the land of Canaan, later known as the land of Israel, and were eventually dispossessed by the Israelites.

Verse 14: "These are the sons of Ham, according to their families, and their numbers in those days were about seven hundred and thirty men."

Commentary: This indicates an even larger population growth within Ham's lineage compared to Japheth's, reaching "about seven hundred and thirty men."

The Sons of Shem

Verse 15: "These are the sons of Shem: **Elam, Asshur, Arpachshad, Lud, and Aram**—five sons. The sons of Elam were **Shushan, Machul, and Harmon**."

Commentary: This lists the direct sons of Shem, from whom the Semitic peoples are descended, including Hebrews, Arabs, and Assyrians. Elam is associated with Persia.

Verse 16: "The sons of Asshur were **Mirus and Mokil**. The sons of Arpachshad were **Shelah, Anar, and Ashcol**."

Commentary: Asshur is the ancestor of the Assyrians. Arpachshad is a key lineage, as Noah's line to Abraham flows through him.

Verse 17: "The sons of Lud were **Pethor and Bizayon**. The sons of Aram were **Uz, Hul, Gether, and Mash**."

Commentary: Lud is associated with Lydia. Aram is the ancestor of the Arameans.

Verse 18: "These are the sons of Shem, according to their families; and their numbers in those days were about three hundred men."

Commentary: Shem's lineage shows a smaller population in these early post-Flood days compared to Ham and Japheth.

Shem's Lineage to Terah

Verse 19: "These are the generations of Shem: Shem fathered Arpachshad, Arpachshad fathered Shelah, and Shelah fathered **Eber**. Two children were born to Eber; the name of one was **Peleg**, because in his days the people were divided, and in later days, the earth was divided."

Commentary: This verse focuses on the direct genealogical line from Shem, which leads to Abraham. The name **Peleg** (meaning "division") is explained by the division of people, clearly foreshadowing the event at the Tower of Babel. The additional note "and in the latter days, the earth was divided" suggests a larger, possibly geographical, division as well.

Verse 20: "And the name of the second was **Joktan**, meaning that in his day the lives of people were diminished and lessened."

Commentary: This verse introduces Joktan, Peleg's brother, whose name is linked to a perceived decrease in human lifespans. This reflects a gradual but noticeable shortening of life after the Flood.

Verse 21: "These are the sons of Joktan: **Almodad, Sheleph, Hazarmaveth, Jerah, Hadoram, Uzal, Diklah, Obal, Abimael, Sheba, Ophir, Havilah, and Jobab**; all these are the sons of Joktan."

Commentary: These names correspond to tribes and regions, primarily in the Arabian Peninsula.

Verse 22: "And Peleg, his brother, fathered Reu, and Reu fathered Serug, and Serug fathered Nahor, and Nahor fathered Terah. Terah was thirty-eight years old, and he fathered **Haran and Nahor**."

Commentary: This verse continues the direct lineage through Peleg, leading to Terah, Abraham's father. The mention of Terah being 38 when he had Haran and Nahor is an unusual detail for this period of long lifespans, perhaps implying an earlier start to his family than typical, or a specific focus on these two sons. (Note: The traditional Genesis account states Terah was 70 when he began to father Abram, Nahor, and Haran, and Abram was born later. Jasher's chronology here differs.)

The Rise of Nimrod

Verse 23: "And **Cush**, the son of Ham, the son of Noah, took a wife in those days in his old age, and she bore a son, and they called his name **Nimrod**, saying, 'At that time the people again began to rebel and transgress against God.' The child grew up, and his father loved him exceedingly, for he was the son of his old age."

Commentary: This verse introduces **Nimrod**, a crucial figure in post-Flood history. He is identified as the son of Cush (Ham's son). The explanation for his name links him to a renewed period of human rebellion and transgression against God, setting a negative tone for his character despite his father's affection.

Verse 24: "The garments of skin which God made for Adam and his wife, when they went out of the garden, were given to Cush."

Commentary: This verse introduces a fascinating tradition: the original **garments made by God for Adam and Eve** were passed down through the generations. This implies a powerful heirloom, perhaps conveying authority or special protection. Here, they are specifically linked to Cush.

Verse 25: "For after the death of Adam and his wife, the garments were given to Enoch, the son of Jared, and when Enoch was taken up to God, he gave them to Methuselah, his son."

Commentary: This traces the lineage of the garments from Adam to Enoch (the one who was translated) and then to Methuselah, implying their transfer through the righteous line.

Verse 26: "And at Methuselah's death, Noah took them and brought them to the ark, and they were with him until he went out of the ark."

Commentary: The garments are confirmed to have been preserved through the Flood, remaining with Noah as a tangible link to the pre-Flood world and God's original provision.

Verse 27: "And as they were leaving, Ham stole those garments from Noah his father, and he took them and hid them from his brothers."

Commentary: This verse reveals a significant transgression by **Ham**: he **stole** the sacred garments. This act of theft and deception explains how these garments, originally associated with the righteous line, ended up in the possession of Ham's descendants, particularly Cush and then Nimrod. It's a key detail that explains Nimrod's later power.

Verse 28: "When Ham fathered his firstborn, Cush, he secretly gave him the garments, and they were with Cush for many days."

Commentary: Ham's continued secrecy and passing of the stolen garments to his son Cush reinforces the clandestine nature of this possession.

Verse 29: "Cush also concealed them from his sons and brothers. When Cush had fathered Nimrod, he gave him those garments out of his love for him. Nimrod grew up, and when he was twenty years old, he put on those garments."

Commentary: The chain of secrecy continues. Cush, like Ham, keeps the garments hidden from others, but out of special affection, gives them to Nimrod. The detail that Nimrod puts them on at age twenty suggests a significant coming-of-age or assumption of power.

Verse 30: "And Nimrod became strong when he put on the garments, and God gave him might and strength, and he was a mighty hunter in the earth; indeed, he was a mighty hunter in the field. He hunted animals and built altars, and he offered the animals upon them before the Lord."

Commentary: This verse attributes Nimrod's immense strength and might directly to his wearing of the special garments. He becomes a "mighty hunter," which in this context likely implies not just hunting animals but also dominion over men. The detail that "he built altars, and he offered upon them the animals before the Lord" is complex; it could signify a genuine, albeit perhaps corrupted, form of worship, or a display of power over both nature and ritual, possibly in a self-serving manner.

Verse 31: "Nimrod strengthened himself, and he rose up from among his brethren. He fought the battles of his brethren against all their enemies round about."

Commentary: Nimrod emerges as a dominant leader. His fighting for his "brethren" (likely other Hamitic peoples or allied groups) against their enemies suggests he acted as a protector and military leader, gaining influence through his prowess.

Verse 32: "And the Lord delivered all the enemies of his brethren into his hands, and God prospered him from time to time in his battles, and he reigned upon earth."

Commentary: This is a crucial and often surprising detail: God, despite Nimrod's later wickedness, initially **prospered him in his battles**. This indicates that God can use individuals, even those who may later stray, for specific purposes, or that His initial blessing on strength and dominion allowed Nimrod to establish an early form of order. His reign over "the earth" (likely a broad region) begins.

Verse 33: "Therefore, it became common in those days that when a man sent forth those he had trained for battle, he would say to them, 'Just as God did for Nimrod, who was a mighty hunter on the earth, and who succeeded in the battles that prevailed against his brethren, delivering them from the hands of their enemies, so may God strengthen us and deliver us this day!'"

Commentary: This verse explains the origin of a proverb associated with Nimrod's success. It shows that he was widely admired and became a paragon of military strength and divine favor, at least in the eyes of his contemporaries, suggesting his early actions were seen as beneficial for his people.

Verse 34: "When Nimrod was forty years old, at that time there was a war between his brethren and the children of Japheth, so that they were in the power of their enemies."

Commentary: This verse sets the stage for a conflict between the descendants of Ham and Japheth, with Ham's descendants being oppressed. This provides the context for Nimrod's heroic intervention.

Verse 35: "Nimrod went forth at that time and assembled all the sons of Cush and their families, about four hundred and sixty men. He also hired about eighty men from some of his friends and acquaintances, paid them their wages, and went with them to battle. While on the road, Nimrod strengthened the hearts of the people who went with him."

Commentary: This details Nimrod's military mobilization. He gathers his own lineage (Cushites) and augments his forces with mercenaries. His action of "strengthen[ing] the hearts of the people" shows his leadership and motivational skills.

Verse 36: "And he said to them, 'Do not fear, neither be alarmed, for all our enemies will be delivered into our hands, and you may do with them as you please.'"

Commentary: Nimrod delivers a confident and empowering speech, assuring his men of victory and giving them license to deal with their enemies as they see fit, indicating a potentially ruthless approach to warfare.

Verse 37: "All the men who went were about five hundred, and they fought against their enemies, destroyed them, and subdued them. Nimrod placed standing officers over them in their respective places."

Commentary: Nimrod's military campaign is successful. He not only defeats the enemy but establishes a system of control, placing "standing officers" to maintain order, demonstrating his organizational prowess and solidifying his dominion.

Verse 38: "He took some of their children as security, and they were all servants to Nimrod and to his brethren, and Nimrod and all the people that were with him turned homeward."

Commentary: This detail reveals a harsh aspect of Nimrod's conquest: taking children as "security" and making the defeated people "servants." This establishes a system of subjugation and early forms of slavery, demonstrating the nature of his growing power.

Verse 39: "When Nimrod had joyfully returned from battle, after having conquered his enemies, all his brethren, together with those who knew him before, assembled to make him king over them, and they placed the regal crown upon his head."

Commentary: Nimrod's military success leads to his formal **coronation as king**. The voluntary assembly and crowing by "all his brethren" signifies his widespread acceptance and legitimacy as a ruler, based on his demonstrated strength and leadership.

Verse 40: "And he appointed princes, judges, and rulers over his subjects and people, as is the custom among kings."

Commentary: This verse describes Nimrod establishing a formal administrative structure for his kingdom, resembling other monarchies, solidifying his reign.

Verse 41: "And he placed **Terah, the son of Nahor**, as the prince of his army, and he honored him and elevated him above all his princes."

Commentary: This is a crucial connection: Terah, Abraham's father, is identified as a high-ranking official, "prince of his host," in Nimrod's kingdom. This suggests a close association between Abraham's family and the powerful, yet increasingly wicked, regime of Nimrod. Terah's elevation indicates Nimrod's trust and favor.

Verse 42: "While he was reigning according to his heart's desire, after having conquered all his enemies around, he consulted with his counselors to build a city for his palace, and they did so."

Commentary: With his kingdom secure, Nimrod embarks on a building project: constructing a city that would serve as his capital and a symbol of his power.

Verse 43: "They found a large valley opposite to the east, and they built him a large and extensive city. Nimrod called the name of the city he built **Shinar**, for the Lord had vehemently shaken his enemies and destroyed them."

Commentary: The city is identified as **Shinar**, which is the location of the Tower of Babel in Genesis. The name's etymology, linked to God "vehemently shaken his enemies," is Nimrod's interpretation, attributing his military successes to God, even as his true heart deviates from God's ways.

Verse 44: "Nimrod lived in Shinar, and he reigned securely. He fought with his enemies and subdued them, and he prospered in all his battles, and his kingdom became very great."

Commentary: This verse reaffirms Nimrod's continued military success and the expansion of his kingdom, solidifying his powerful and secure rule from his new capital.

Verse 45: "All nations and tongues heard of his fame, and they gathered themselves to him, and they bowed down to the earth, and they brought him offerings, and he became their lord and king, and they all dwelt with him in the city at Shinar, and Nimrod reigned in the earth over all the sons of Noah, and they were all under his power and counsel."

Commentary: This verse describes the extent of Nimrod's dominion. He is recognized as "lord and king" by "all nations and tongues" who pay homage and tribute to him. This paints a picture of a **universal empire** under Nimrod's rule, implying that all post-Flood humanity was, at this point, under his centralized authority and influence.

Nimrod's Idolatry and Mardon's Wickedness

Verse 46: "And all the earth was of one tongue and words of union, but Nimrod did not go in the ways of the Lord, and he was more wicked than all the men that were before him, from the days of the flood until those days."

Commentary: This verse confirms the linguistic unity of the early post-Flood world, echoing Genesis 11:1. However, it immediately contrasts this unity with Nimrod's escalating wickedness. He "did not go in the ways of the Lord" and is declared "more wicked than all the men that were before him, from the days of the flood until those days." This labels him as a preeminent figure of evil and rebellion.

Verse 47: "And he made gods of wood and stone, and he bowed down to them, and he rebelled against the Lord, and taught all his subjects and the people of the earth his wicked ways; and Mardon his son was more wicked than his father."

Commentary: This verse explicitly states Nimrod's profound rebellion: he initiated **idolatry**, manufacturing "gods of wood and stone" and worshipping them. More critically, he actively **taught** his subjects these "wicked ways," spreading his rebellion throughout his vast empire. The introduction of his son Mardon as even "more wicked" signifies a deepening generational descent into evil.

Verse 48: "And everyone that heard of the acts of **Mardon**, the son of Nimrod, would say concerning him, 'From the wicked comes forth wickedness'; therefore it became a proverb in the whole earth, saying, 'From the wicked comes forth wickedness,' and it was current in the words of men from that time to this."

Commentary: This verse highlights the notoriety of Mardon's wickedness, so severe that it became a common proverb. This proverb reflects the growing understanding of inherent evil being passed down or manifested through corrupt individuals.

Terah and the Birth of Abram

Verse 49: "And **Terah, the son of Nahor**, prince of Nimrod's host, was in those days very great in the sight of the king and his subjects, and the king and princes loved him, and they elevated him very high."

Commentary: This reiterates Terah's prominent and favored position within Nimrod's powerful, idolatrous kingdom. His high status is emphasized again.

Verse 50: "And Terah took a wife and her name was **Amthelo**, the daughter of Cornebo; and the wife of Terah conceived and bore him a son in those days."

Commentary: This records Terah's marriage and the birth of a son, who will be Abraham. The wife's name, Amthelo, and her father, Cornebo, are specific details not found in the biblical Genesis account.

Verse 51: "Terah was seventy years old when he fathered him, and Terah called the name of his son that was born to him **Abram**, because the king had raised him in those days, and dignified him above all his princes that were with him."

Commentary: This verse marks the birth of **Abram** (later Abraham), a foundational figure in biblical history. The timing of Terah's age (70) aligns with Genesis 11:26, though Jasher has previously stated Terah was 38 when he begat Haran and Nahor, suggesting Abram was not his firstborn (as per Genesis). The name "Abram" (meaning "exalted father") is interpreted here not as a promise of many nations, but as a reflection of Terah's elevated status *by Nimrod*, "because the king had raised him... and dignified him." This interpretation connects Abram's initial name to his father's favor in Nimrod's court, setting up a contrast with his later divine calling.

Book of Jasher, Chapter 8

The Birth of Abram and the Astrologers' Prophecy

Verse 1: "On the night **Abram was born**, all of Terah's servants, along with Nimrod's wise men and sorcerers, came to Terah's house. They ate and drank and celebrated with him that night."

Commentary: This verse sets the scene for Abram's birth, highlighting the presence of important figures from Nimrod's court at the celebration. This detail establishes a direct connection between Abram's family and the king's inner circle.

Verse 2: "When all the wise men and sorcerers left Terah's house, they looked up at the sky that night to observe the stars. They saw a very large star coming from the east, and it moved across the heavens, swallowing up four stars from the four corners of the sky."

Commentary: This is a crucial **astrological omen**. The appearance of a dominant star swallowing four others is a powerful visual sign, interpreted by the wise men as highly significant. The "four corners of the heavens" often symbolize the entire world.

Verse 3: "All the king's wise men and sorcerers were astonished by the sight. The sages understood what it meant and grasped its importance."

Commentary: The shared astonishment and immediate understanding of the omen's profound meaning by the experts underscore the clear prophetic nature of the celestial event.

Verse 4: "They said to each other, 'This only foretells the child born to Terah tonight. He will grow up, be fruitful and multiply, and possess all the earth—he and his children forever. He and his descendants will slay great kings and inherit their lands.'"

Commentary: This verse reveals the astrologers' interpretation: the star signifies the newborn Abram's destiny. The prophecy is grand, foretelling his **global dominion** ("possess all the earth"), perpetual lineage ("he and his children forever"), and a future where he and his seed will conquer "great kings" and "inherit their lands." This is a remarkably specific and powerful prediction, recognizing Abram's divinely appointed role even at his birth.

The Astrologers Report to Nimrod

Verse 5: "The wise men and sorcerers went home that night. In the morning, they all rose early and gathered in an appointed house."

Commentary: Their immediate follow-up meeting indicates the gravity and urgency with which they viewed the astrological sign.

Verse 6: "They spoke and said to each other, 'Look, the sight we saw last night is hidden from the king; it hasn't been revealed to him.'"

Commentary: They realize the critical implications of the omen for Nimrod's reign and that he is currently unaware of it.

Verse 7: "'If this thing becomes known to the king later, he will ask us, "Why did you conceal this matter from me?" Then we will all face death. Therefore, let's go now and tell the king what we saw and its interpretation, and then we will be safe.'"

Commentary: This reveals their self-preservation motive. They understand the potential wrath of Nimrod if they withhold such vital information, especially if the prophecy eventually comes to pass. Their decision to report is driven by fear of the king.

Verse 8: "And they did so. They all went to the king and bowed down to him to the ground, saying, 'May the king live, may the king live!'"

Commentary: Their formal address to Nimrod follows the expected protocol for approaching a king, emphasizing their deference.

Verse 9: "'We heard that a son was born to Terah, the son of Nahor, your army commander. Last night we came to his house, and we ate, drank, and celebrated with him.'"

Commentary: They begin by providing the context for their presence at Terah's house and their knowledge of the birth.

Verse 10: "'When your servants left Terah's house to go to our homes for the night, we looked up at the sky. We saw a great star coming from the east, and that same star moved with great speed and swallowed up four great stars from the four corners of the heavens.'"

Commentary: They recount the celestial event precisely as they observed it, emphasizing the dramatic and unusual nature of the phenomenon.

Verse 11: "'Your servants were astonished by the sight we saw and were greatly terrified. We made our judgment upon the sight and, through our wisdom, knew its proper interpretation: this thing applies to the child born to Terah. He will grow up and multiply greatly, become powerful, and kill all the kings of the earth, inheriting all their lands—he and his descendants forever.'"

Commentary: They present their interpretation directly, reiterating the dire implications for Nimrod and his rule. The prophecy of Abram becoming "powerful" and killing "all the kings of the earth" (a hyperbolic but clear threat to established power) makes it an immediate danger to Nimrod's global empire.

Verse 12: "'And now, our lord and king, behold, we have truthfully informed you of what we have seen concerning this child.'"

Commentary: They conclude by assuring Nimrod of their honesty and the accurate delivery of the prophetic warning.

Verse 13: "'If it pleases the king to give his father a fair price for this child, we will slay him before he grows up and increases in the land, and before his evil power increases against us, causing us and our children to perish through his evil.'"

Commentary: They offer a chilling solution: to buy the child from Terah and immediately kill him. Their motivation is self-preservation and the prevention of the prophecy, highlighting the desperate fear Abram's birth has instilled.

Nimrod's Attempt to Buy Abram

Verse 14: "The king heard their words, and they seemed good in his sight. He sent for Terah, and Terah came before the king."

Commentary: Nimrod finds the astrologers' suggestion appealing, as it offers a seemingly pragmatic way to eliminate the perceived threat.

Verse 15: "And the king said to Terah, 'I have been told that a son was born to you last night, and such and such was observed in the heavens at his birth.'"

Commentary: Nimrod directly confronts Terah, confirming his knowledge of the birth and the celestial omen.

Verse 16: "'Therefore, give me the child now, so we may slay him before his evil arises against us. I will give you for his value your house full of silver and gold.'"

Commentary: Nimrod offers a substantial bribe—Terah's "house full of silver and gold"—to acquire Abram and eliminate him. This highlights the immense perceived threat of the newborn child.

Verse 17: "Terah answered the king and said to him, 'My Lord and king, I have heard your words, and your servant will do all that his king desires.'"

Commentary: Terah's initial response is one of apparent obedience and deference, likely a strategic move to buy time or avoid immediate suspicion.

Verse 18: "'But my lord and king, I will tell you what happened to me last night, so I may see what advice the king will give his servant. Then I will answer the king regarding what he has just spoken.' And the king said, 'Speak.'"

Commentary: Terah cleverly deflects by creating a diversion, presenting a hypothetical scenario to Nimrod that parallels the current situation, seeking to gauge the king's wisdom and manipulate him.

Verse 19: "Terah said to the king, 'Ayon, son of Mored, came to me last night, saying,'"

Commentary: Terah begins his fabricated story, using a fictional character.

Verse 20: "'Give me the great and beautiful horse that the king gave you, and I will give you silver and gold, and straw and provender for its value.' And I said to him, 'Wait until I consult the king concerning your words, and behold, whatever the king says, that I will do.'"

Commentary: Terah's parable involves a prized possession (the king's gift) being exchanged for lesser goods. The idea of consulting the king adds to the feigned loyalty.

Verse 21: "'And now, my lord and king, behold, I have made this thing known to you, and whatever advice my king will give to his servant, that I will follow.'"

Commentary: Terah closes his parable by reiterating his submissiveness and seeking Nimrod's "wise" counsel.

Verse 22: "The king heard Terah's words, and his anger was kindled, and he considered him a fool."

Commentary: Nimrod falls for Terah's ruse. He's enraged by the idea of such a foolish exchange, seeing Terah as incredibly unwise for even considering it. This shows Nimrod's pride in his own judgment.

Verse 23: "And the king answered Terah and said to him, 'Are you so silly, ignorant, or lacking in understanding, to do this thing, to give your beautiful horse for silver and gold, or even for straw and provender?'"

Commentary: Nimrod's indignant reaction highlights his contempt for such a foolish transaction, completely missing the underlying parallel.

Verse 24: "'Are you so short of silver and gold that you should do this thing, just because you cannot obtain straw and provender to feed your horse? And what is silver and gold to you, or straw and provender, that you should give away that fine horse which I gave you, like which there is none to be had on the whole earth?'"

Commentary: Nimrod continues his tirade, emphasizing the immense value of the horse (a gift from him) versus the insignificant value of what Terah would receive, unknowingly arguing against his own proposition regarding Abram.

Verse 25: "The king stopped speaking, and Terah answered the king, saying, 'The king has spoken similarly to his servant;'"

Commentary: Terah seizes the opportunity, mirroring Nimrod's own words back to him. This is the pivot point of the argument.

Verse 26: "'I beg you, my lord and king, what is this you said to me, saying, "Give your son that we may slay him, and I will give you silver and gold for his value?" What shall I do with silver and gold after the death of my son? Who shall inherit me? Surely then, at my death, the silver and gold will return to my king who gave it.'"

Commentary: Terah delivers his masterstroke. He directly applies Nimrod's own logic: just as the horse is invaluable, so is his son. He highlights the absurdity of trading something priceless for wealth that will ultimately be lost. The rhetorical questions expose the king's hypocrisy and the ultimate futility of such a deal. The money is useless without an heir.

Verse 27: "When the king heard Terah's words and the parable he presented to the king, it greatly grieved him and he was vexed by this matter, and his anger burned within him."

Commentary: Nimrod is now genuinely angered, not by Terah's wisdom, but by being outmaneuvered and implicitly shamed. The "parable" has struck a nerve, revealing the flawed logic of his own proposal.

Verse 28: "Terah saw that the king's anger was kindled against him, and he answered the king, saying, 'All that I have is in the king's power; whatever the king desires to do to his servant, that let him do. Yes, even my son, he is in the king's power, without value in exchange, he and his two brothers who are older than he.'"

Commentary: Seeing Nimrod's rage, Terah quickly retreats to a position of submission, offering everything—including all his sons, without a price—to appease the king. This is a desperate attempt to protect Abram while appearing fully compliant.

Verse 29: "And the king said to Terah, 'No, but I will purchase your younger son for a price.'"

Commentary: Nimrod, perhaps still smarting from the parable or determined to appear in control, insists on a purchase price for only the *younger* son (Abram), not taking the offer of all three without compensation. This ironically gives Terah a chance to act.

Verse 30: "And Terah answered the king, saying, 'I beg you, my lord and king, let your servant speak a word before you, and let the king hear the word of his servant.' And Terah said, 'Let my king give me three days' time until I consider this matter within myself and consult with my family concerning the words of my king.' And he pressed the king greatly to agree to this."

Commentary: Terah gains crucial time by requesting a three-day delay for "consultation." His persistence here is vital for executing his plan to save Abram.

Verse 31: "The king listened to Terah and granted him three days. Terah left the king's presence and came home to his family and told them all the king's words; and the people were greatly afraid."

Commentary: Terah successfully gains the delay. The fear among his family and servants when they hear the king's demand highlights the danger they face.

Abram's Escape and Hiding

Verse 32: "On the third day, the king sent to Terah, saying, 'Send me your son for a price as I spoke to you. If you don't do this, I will send and slay all you have in your house, so that you won't even have a dog remaining.'"

Commentary: Nimrod's ultimatum is harsh: deliver the child or face complete annihilation of his household, leaving no doubt about the severity of the threat.

Verse 33: "Terah hurried (as the matter was urgent from the king) and took a child from one of his servants, which his handmaid had born to him that day. Terah brought the child to the king and received payment for him."

Commentary: In a desperate act of deception, Terah substitutes another newborn, a servant's child, for Abram. This shows his quick thinking and determination to protect his son. The urgency from the king forces his hand.

Verse 34: "The Lord was with Terah in this matter, so that Nimrod would not cause Abram's death. The king took the child from Terah and with all his might dashed his head to the ground, for he thought it had been Abram; and this was concealed from him from that day, and it was forgotten by the king, as it was the will of Providence not to suffer Abram's death."

Commentary: This verse reveals divine intervention in protecting Abram. God's hand ensures Nimrod's deception is successful, leading the king to brutally murder an innocent child, believing it to be Abram. The crucial phrase "it was the will of Providence not to suffer Abram's death" underscores that Abram's survival was divinely ordained.

Verse 35: "Terah secretly took Abram his son, along with his mother and nurse, and he hid them in a cave. He brought them their provisions monthly."

Commentary: Terah's protective measures for Abram are severe: hiding him in a secret cave with his mother and nurse. This extreme secrecy highlights the ongoing danger from Nimrod and Terah's commitment to protecting his divinely chosen son.

Verse 36: "The Lord was with Abram in the cave, and he grew up. Abram was in the cave for ten years, and the king and his princes, soothsayers, and sages thought that the king had killed Abram."

Commentary: This verse emphasizes God's continued protection and presence with Abram during his formative years in isolation. The ten years in the cave suggest a period of unique spiritual formation. The world, including Nimrod's court, believes Abram is dead, ensuring his safety until God's appointed time for him to emerge.

Book of Jasher, Chapter 9

Haran's Family and Abram's Early Education

Verse 1: "And Haran, Terah's son and Abram's oldest brother, took a wife in those days."

Commentary: This verse begins by focusing on Haran, Abram's brother, introducing his family life.

Verse 2: "Haran was thirty-nine years old when he took her; and his wife conceived and bore a son, whom he named **Lot**."

Commentary: This records the birth of Lot, who will become Abram's companion in later narratives.

Verse 3: "She conceived again and bore a daughter, whom she named **Milcah**; and she conceived yet again and bore another daughter, whom she named **Sarai**."

Commentary: This verse identifies Sarai (Abram's future wife) as Haran's daughter, making her Abram's niece. This is a significant detail that differs from the common biblical understanding that Sarai was Abram's half-sister. Jasher's account makes her Abram's niece and Lot's sister, clarifying the relationships within Terah's immediate family.

Verse 4: "Haran was forty-two years old when he fathered Sarai, which was in the tenth year of Abram's life. In those days, Abram, his mother, and nurse came out from the cave, as the king and his subjects had forgotten the matter of Abram."

Commentary: This verse provides crucial chronological details: Sarai is born when Abram is ten years old. At this point, the danger from Nimrod has apparently subsided, and Abram is brought out of hiding after ten years in the cave, indicating a period of safety from the king's memory.

Verse 5: "When Abram came out from the cave, he went to Noah and his son Shem, and he stayed with them to learn the instruction of the Lord and His ways. No one knew where Abram was, and Abram served Noah and Shem his son for a long time."

Commentary: This is a vital detail unique to Jasher, providing the context for Abram's spiritual formation. Instead of being raised in his idolatrous father's household, Abram spent a significant period (as stated in verse 6, 39 years) living with and learning from Noah and Shem, the last of the righteous patriarchs. This explains his unique knowledge of the true God amidst a world plunged into idolatry. His hidden location ensures his continued protection.

Verse 6: "And Abram was in Noah's house thirty-nine years, and Abram knew the Lord from three years old, and he went in the ways of the Lord until the day of his death, as Noah and his son Shem had taught him; and all the sons of the earth in those days greatly transgressed against the Lord, and they rebelled against him and they served other gods, and they forgot the Lord who had created them in the earth; and the inhabitants of the earth made unto themselves, at that time, every man his god; gods of wood and stone which could neither speak, hear, nor deliver, and the sons of men served them and they became their gods."

Commentary: This verse re-emphasizes Abram's exceptional righteousness from a very young age ("from three years old"). It explicitly states that his lifelong devotion to God was nurtured by Noah and Shem. In stark contrast, the rest of the world had fallen into profound idolatry, serving "gods of wood and stone" and forgetting their Creator. This highlights Abram's unique position as the solitary monotheist (along with Noah and Shem) in a world of polytheism.

Verse 7: "And the king and all his servants, and Terah with all his household were then the first of those that served gods of wood and stone."

Commentary: This verse explicitly implicates **Nimrod** and even **Terah**, Abram's own father, as leaders in this widespread idolatry. This further emphasizes the spiritual darkness from which Abram emerged, making his faith all the more remarkable.

Verse 8: "And Terah had twelve gods of large size, made of wood and stone, after the twelve months of the year, and he served each one monthly, and every month Terah would bring his meat offering and drink offering to his gods; thus did Terah all the days."

Commentary: This provides a very specific detail about Terah's idolatrous practices: he had a pantheon of twelve gods, one for each month, to whom he offered monthly sacrifices. This paints a clear picture of his deep involvement in idol worship, contrasting sharply with Abram's emerging monotheism.

Verse 9: "And all that generation were wicked in the sight of the Lord, and they thus made every man his god, but they forsook the Lord who had created them."

Commentary: This summarizes the general state of spiritual depravity: widespread polytheism and abandonment of the true God.

Verse 10: "And there was not a man found in those days in the whole earth, who knew the Lord (for they served each man his own God) except Noah and his household, and all those who were under his counsel knew the Lord in those days."

Commentary: This statement highlights the rarity of true faith: only Noah, his immediate household (likely Shem, but not Ham or Japheth's descendants as a whole), and those under Noah's direct teaching truly "knew the Lord." This emphasizes the profound spiritual isolation of Abram before his public ministry.

Verse 11: "And Abram, the son of Terah, was growing great in those days in Noah's house, and no man knew it, and the Lord was with him."

Commentary: This re-emphasizes Abram's hidden growth and God's favor upon him, setting the stage for his later emergence as a leader of faith.

Abram's Search for God

Verse 12: "And the Lord gave Abram an understanding heart, and he knew all the works of that generation were vain, and that all their gods were vain and were of no avail."

Commentary: This verse describes Abram's divinely-given spiritual insight. Despite being surrounded by idolatry, he innately understood its futility and the emptiness of false gods, a testament to God's special work in him.

Verse 13: "And Abram saw the sun shining upon the earth, and Abram said to himself, 'Surely now this sun that shines upon the earth is God, and him will I serve.'"

Commentary: This describes Abram's initial, intuitive search for the divine in nature. He first considers the sun as God, demonstrating a rational progression from the visible powerful forces to the concept of a creator.

Verse 14: "And Abram served the sun in that day and he prayed to him, and when evening came the sun set as usual, and Abram said within himself, 'Surely this cannot be God?'"

Commentary: Abram's intellectual honesty is shown here. When the sun sets, he deduces that it cannot be the ultimate God because it is subject to change and disappears. This is a critical step in his theological development.

Verse 15: "And Abram still continued to speak within himself, 'Who is he who made the heavens and the earth? Who created upon earth? Where is he?'"

Commentary: His inquiry deepens. He moves beyond visible phenomena to a profound philosophical question about the ultimate Creator, demonstrating an innate spiritual hunger and reasoning.

Verse 16: "And night darkened over him, and he lifted up his eyes toward the west, north, south, and east, and he saw that the sun had vanished from the earth, and the day became dark."

Commentary: This continues the scene, emphasizing the full transition to night, which prompts his next observation.

Verse 17: "And Abram saw the stars and moon before him, and he said, 'Surely this is the God who created the whole earth as well as man, and behold these his servants are gods around him: and Abram served the moon and prayed to it all that night.'"

Commentary: Abram then considers the moon and stars as potential deities, perhaps believing they are the "gods" that assist the ultimate Creator. His worship of the moon for a night follows the same pattern as with the sun.

Verse 18: "And in the morning when it was light and the sun shone upon the earth as usual, Abram saw all the things that the Lord God had made upon earth."

Commentary: The return of the sun, and the consistent order of creation, leads to his final realization.

Verse 19: "And Abram said to himself, 'Surely these are not gods that made the earth and all mankind, but these are the servants of God,' and Abram remained in the house of Noah and there knew the Lord and his ways; and he served the Lord all the days of his life, and all that generation forgot the Lord, and served other gods of wood and stone, and rebelled all their days."

Commentary: This marks Abram's ultimate epiphany: he realizes that celestial bodies are not God but merely "servants of God." This profound intellectual and spiritual journey leads him to the full knowledge of the one true God, the Creator. His steadfast devotion for the rest of his life contrasts sharply with the widespread idolatry and rebellion of his generation. This period in Noah's house was crucial for confirming his monotheistic convictions.

The Tower of Babel Project

Verse 20: "And King Nimrod reigned securely, and all the earth was under his control, and all the earth was of one tongue and words of union."

Commentary: This reiterates Nimrod's global dominion and the linguistic unity of humanity, setting the stage for the collective rebellion at Babel.

Verse 21: "And all the princes of Nimrod and his great men took counsel together—Cush, Mizraim, Phut, and Canaan with their families—and they said to each other, 'Come, let us build ourselves a city and in it a strong tower, with its top reaching heaven. We will make ourselves famous, so that we may reign over the whole world, in order that the evil of our enemies may cease from us, that we may reign mightily over them, and that we may not become scattered over the earth on account of their wars.'"

Commentary: This verse details the motivation behind the Tower of Babel project. It's a collective decision by Nimrod's leaders (the descendants of Ham). Their goals are explicitly stated:

- **Self-exaltation:** "make ourselves famed."
- **Global dominion:** "reign upon the whole world."
- **Security/Unity:** "evil of our enemies may cease," "reign mightily over them," and most critically, "that we may not become scattered over the earth on account of their wars." This last point is a direct act of defiance against God's command to fill the earth.

Verse 22: "And they all went before the king, and they told the king these words, and the king agreed with them in this affair, and he did so."

Commentary: The project receives Nimrod's full endorsement, cementing his role as the leader of this rebellion against divine will.

Verse 23: "And all the families assembled, consisting of about six hundred thousand men, and they went to seek an extensive piece of ground to build the city and the tower. They searched the whole earth and found none like one valley at the east of the land of Shinar, about two days' walk, and they journeyed there and they dwelt there."

Commentary: This highlights the immense scale of the undertaking, involving "about six hundred thousand men." They deliberately choose the valley of Shinar (Babylon) for its suitability, emphasizing its strategic importance for their collective project.

Verse 24: "And they began to make bricks and burn fires to build the city and the tower that they had imagined to complete."

Commentary: This details the practical aspects of construction, noting the use of fired bricks and mortar, as also described in Genesis.

Verse 25: "And the building of the tower was for them a transgression and a sin. They began to build it, and while they were building against the Lord God of heaven, they imagined in their hearts to war against Him and to ascend into heaven."

Commentary: This verse unequivocally states the sinful nature of the project. Their intent was not just ambition but direct rebellion and "war against Him," with the goal of "ascend[ing] into heaven," implying a challenge to God's sovereignty.

Verse 26: "And all these people and all the families divided themselves into three parts: the first said, 'We will ascend into heaven and fight against Him'; the second said, 'We will ascend to heaven and place our own gods there and serve them'; and the third part said, 'We will ascend to heaven and strike Him with bows and spears.' And God knew all their works and all their evil thoughts, and He saw the city and the tower which they were building."

Commentary: This verse provides extraordinary detail about the specific, blasphemous intentions of the builders, dividing them into three factions:

1. **Direct assault:** Those who intended to "fight against Him" (God).
2. **Idolatrous defiance:** Those who wanted to set up their "own gods" in heaven, directly challenging God's unique position.
3. **Physical combat:** Those who planned to "smite Him with bows and spears," revealing a shockingly literal and foolish intent to wage war against the divine. God's awareness of "all their works and all their evil thoughts" sets the stage for His response.

Verse 27: "And when they were building, they built themselves a great city and a very high and strong tower; and on account of its height, the mortar and bricks did not reach the builders in their ascent to it, until those who went up had completed a full year, and after that, they reached to the builders and gave them the mortar and the bricks; thus was it done daily."

Commentary: This verse emphasizes the immense scale and difficulty of the construction due to the tower's extreme height. The logistics described—a full year for materials to reach the top—highlight the human effort involved and the dedication to their rebellious project.

Verse 28: "And behold, these ascended and others descended the whole day; and if a brick should fall from their hands and get broken, they would all weep over it, and if a man fell and died, none of them would look at him."

Commentary: This chilling detail reveals the dehumanizing effect of their obsession. They valued the bricks more than human life, mourning a broken brick but ignoring a fallen worker. This underscores their moral corruption and the ultimate wickedness of their ambition.

Verse 29: "And the Lord knew their thoughts, and it came to pass when they were building they cast the arrows toward the heavens, and all the arrows fell upon them filled with blood, and when they saw them they said to each other, 'Surely we have slain all those that are in heaven.'"

Commentary: This verse describes a direct act of aggression against heaven. They literally shot arrows "toward the heavens." The miraculous response—arrows falling back "filled with blood"—is a divine deception to make them falsely believe they had succeeded in harming the inhabitants of heaven, fueling their hubris.

Verse 30: "For this was from the Lord in order to cause them to err, and in order to destroy them from off the face of the ground."

Commentary: This explicitly states God's purpose in causing the blood-filled arrows: to confirm their arrogant delusion and lead them further down the path of destruction, setting them up for their eventual downfall.

Verse 31: "And they built the tower and the city, and they did this thing daily until many days and years were elapsed."

Commentary: This confirms the long duration of the project, indicating their sustained rebellion and commitment to their blasphemous goal.

The Confusion of Languages

Verse 32: "And God said to the seventy angels who stood foremost before Him, to those who were near to Him, saying, 'Come, let us descend and confuse their tongues, that one man shall not understand the language of his neighbor,' and they did so unto them."

Commentary: This verse describes God's decision to intervene, specifically involving **seventy angels** in the confusion of languages. This angelic council adds a hierarchical dimension to the divine judgment. The purpose is clear: to break their unity by preventing mutual understanding.

Verse 33: "And from that day following, they forgot each man his neighbor's tongue, and they could not understand to speak in one tongue, and when the builder took from the hands of his neighbor lime or stone which he did not order, the builder would cast it away and throw it upon his neighbor, that he would die."

Commentary: This vividly portrays the immediate and chaotic consequence of the language confusion. Misunderstanding leads to frustration, anger, and ultimately, violence, as builders throw materials at each other, resulting in deaths. This demonstrates the destructive power of broken communication.

Verse 34: "And they did so many days, and they killed many of them in this manner."

Commentary: This highlights the extended period of internal conflict and self-destruction resulting from the language confusion, leading to widespread fatalities among the builders.

Verse 35: "And the Lord smote the three divisions that were there, and he punished them according to their works and designs; those who said, 'We will ascend to heaven and serve our gods,' became like apes and elephants; and those who said, 'We will smite the heaven with arrows,' the Lord killed them, one man through the hand of his neighbor; and the third division of those who said, 'We will ascend to heaven and fight against him,' the Lord scattered them throughout the earth."

Commentary: This verse details the specific and varied punishments meted out to each of the three rebellious factions, tailored to their particular blasphemous intentions:

- **Idolaters:** Transformed into animals ("apes and elephants"), a symbolic degradation for trying to elevate their own gods.

- **Arrow-throwers:** Killed by their own kind ("one man through the hand of his neighbor"), a poetic justice for their violent intent.
- **Fighters against God:** Scattered "throughout the earth," directly thwarting their goal of maintaining unity and centralizing power. This explains the dispersion of humanity.

Verse 36: "And those who were left amongst them, when they knew and understood the evil which was coming upon them, they forsook the building, and they also became scattered upon the face of the whole earth."

Commentary: The remaining builders, recognizing the divine judgment, abandon the project and are likewise scattered, fulfilling God's original command to fill the earth, albeit through compulsion rather than obedience.

Verse 37: "And they ceased building the city and the tower; therefore he called that place **Babel**, for there the Lord confounded the language of the whole earth; behold it was at the east of the land of Shinar."

Commentary: This verse gives the origin of the name **Babel** (meaning "confusion") and explicitly links it to God's act of confounding languages. The location in Shinar is also confirmed.

Verse 38: "And as to the tower which the sons of men built, the earth opened its mouth and swallowed up one third part thereof, and a fire also descended from heaven and burned another third, and the other third is left to this day, and it is of that part which was aloft, and its circumference is three days' walk."

Commentary: This provides a dramatic and specific account of the tower's destruction: one-third swallowed by an earthquake, one-third destroyed by fire from heaven, and one-third remaining as a testament to the event. The immense circumference ("three days' walk") further emphasizes the scale of their ambition.

Verse 39: "And many of the sons of men died in that tower, a people without number."

Commentary: This final detail underscores the immense loss of life during the chaotic destruction of the Tower of Babel, a direct consequence of humanity's rebellion against God.

Book of Jasher, Chapter 10

Peleg's Death and the Dispersion of Humanity

Verse 1: "And **Peleg**, the son of Eber, died in those days, in the forty-eighth year of Abram, son of Terah. Peleg lived for two hundred and thirty-nine years."

Commentary: This verse records the death of Peleg, through whom Abram's lineage traces back to Shem. His death in Abram's 48th year provides a chronological marker. Peleg's name means "division," which, as mentioned in the previous chapter, foreshadows the division of humanity at Babel.

Verse 2: "When the Lord had scattered people because of their sin at the tower, they spread forth into many divisions, and all humanity was dispersed into the four corners of the earth."

Commentary: This reiterates the direct consequence of the Tower of Babel incident: the divine scattering of humanity. This dispersion was a judgment for their rebellion, leading to distinct groups across the globe.

Verse 3: "And all the families became distinct, each according to its language, its land, or its city."

Commentary: This verse explains how the scattering resulted in the formation of distinct linguistic, geographical, and civic groups, laying the foundation for separate nations and cultures.

Verse 4: "And people built many cities according to their families, in all the places where they went, and throughout the earth where the Lord had scattered them."

Commentary: As humanity dispersed, they established new settlements, creating cities that became the centers of their new familial and linguistic groups.

Verse 5: "And some of them built cities in places from which they were afterward uprooted, and they named these cities after their own names, or the names of their children, or after significant events."

Commentary: This highlights the early practice of naming cities after founders, descendants, or notable occurrences, a common ancient tradition. It also hints at future displacements, indicating that some settlements would not be permanent.

The Descendants of Japheth

Verse 6: "And the sons of Japheth, Noah's son, went and built cities in the places where they were scattered. They named all their cities after themselves, and the sons of Japheth were divided across the face of the earth into many divisions and languages."

Commentary: This section details the specific settlements of Japheth's descendants, whose peoples generally correspond to those who settled in Europe and parts of Asia.

Verse 7: "And these are the sons of Japheth according to their families: Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshech, and Tiras; these are the children of Japheth according to their generations."

Commentary: This is a recap of Japheth's primary sons from Chapter 7, setting the stage for more specific geographic details.

Verse 8: "And the children of Gomer, according to their cities, were the **Francum**, who dwell in the land of Franza, by the river Franza, by the river Senah."

Commentary: This identifies Gomer's descendants with the "Francum" (likely early Franks or a similar Western European group) and places them in the "land of Franza" (France), near the River

Seine. This is a very specific geographical and etymological claim linking biblical genealogies to later European nations.

Verse 9: "And the children of Rephath are the **Bartonim**, who dwell in the land of Bartonia by the river Ledah, which empties its waters in the great sea Gihon, that is, Oceanus."

Commentary: Rephath (from Gomer's lineage) is linked to "Bartonia" and the "Oceanus," suggesting a connection to Atlantic regions, perhaps Britain or parts of Western Europe.

Verse 10: "And the children of Togarmah are ten families, and these are their names: Buzar, Parzunac, Balgar, Elicanum, Ragbib, Tarki, Bid, Zebuc, Ongal, and Tilmaz; all these spread and settled in the north and built cities."

Commentary: Togarmah (also from Gomer) is given a detailed list of ten families, described as settling "in the north," pointing to regions like Eastern Europe or the Caucasus.

Verse 11: "And they named their cities after their own names; those are they who dwell by the rivers Hithlah and Italac unto this day."

Commentary: The mention of "Hithlah and Italac" (possibly the Don and Volga or similar rivers) further situates these groups geographically.

Verse 12: "But the families of Angoli, Balgar, and Parzunac, they dwell by the great river Dubnee; and the names of their cities are also according to their own names."

Commentary: More specific geographic markers for some of Togarmah's descendants, hinting at groups that would later become known as Bulgarians and other Eastern European peoples. The "great river Dubnee" is likely the Danube.

Verse 13: "And the children of Javan are the **Javanim** who dwell in the land of Makdonia, and the children of Madai are the **Orelum** that dwell in the land of Curson, and the children of Tubal are those that dwell in the land of Tuskanah by the river Pashiah."

Commentary:

- **Javan** is explicitly linked to the "Javanim" (Greeks) and "Makdonia" (Macedonia).
- **Madai** (Medes) are linked to "Orelum" and "Curson."
- **Tubal** is associated with "Tuskanah" (Tuscany) and the "river Pashiah" (perhaps the Po or another Italian river), connecting them to Italy.

Verse 14: "And the children of Meshech are the **Shibashni** and the children of Tiras are **Rushash, Cushni, and Ongolis**; all these went and built themselves cities; those are the cities that are situate by the sea Jabus by the river Cura, which empties itself in the river Tragan."

Commentary:

- **Meshech** are linked to "Shibashni."

- **Tiras** is connected to "Rushash" (possibly ancestors of the Russians). Their location near the "sea Jabus" (perhaps the Black Sea or Caspian Sea) and rivers "Cura" and "Tragan" (likely the Kura and Terek rivers in the Caucasus) suggests areas north and west of the Black Sea.

Verse 15: "And the children of Elishah are the **Almanim**, and they also went and built themselves cities; those are the cities situate between the mountains of Job and Shibathmo; and of them were the people of **Lumbardi** who dwell opposite the mountains of Job and Shibathmo, and they conquered the land of **Italia** and remained there unto this day."

Commentary: This is another highly specific identification: Elishah (from Javan's lineage) is linked to the "Almanim" (Germans) and later, the "Lumbardi" (Lombards). Their conquest and settlement of "Italia" (Italy) is mentioned, explicitly connecting these biblical figures to later European ethnic groups and their historical movements.

Verse 16: "And the children of Chittim are the **Romim** who dwell in the valley of Canopia by the river Tibreu."

Commentary: Chittim (from Javan) is identified with the "Romim" (Romans) and situated near the "river Tibreu" (Tiber River), clearly linking them to Rome.

Verse 17: "And the children of Dudonim are those who dwell in the cities of the sea Gihon, in the land of Bordna."

Commentary: Dudonim (from Javan) is placed near the "sea Gihon" (Oceanus, Atlantic) and "Bordna" (likely referring to the Bordeaux region of France or a similar Western European coastal area).

Verse 18: "These are the families of the children of Japheth according to their cities and languages, when they were scattered after the tower, and they called their cities after their names and occurrences; and these are the names of all their cities according to their families, which they built in those days after the tower."

Commentary: This summarizes the dispersion and settlement of Japheth's descendants, emphasizing the formation of distinct cities and languages as a result of Babel.

The Descendants of Ham

Verse 19: "And the children of Ham were Cush, Mizraim, Phut, and Canaan according to their generation and cities."

Commentary: This transitions to the lineage of Ham, restating his primary sons.

Verse 20: "All these went and built themselves cities as they found fit places for them, and they named their cities after the names of their fathers Cush, Mizraim, Phut, and Canaan."

Commentary: Ham's descendants also established cities, naming them after their patriarchal ancestors.

Verse 21: "And the children of Mizraim are the Ludim, Anamim, Lehabim, Naphtuhim, Pathrusim, Casluhim, and Caphtorim, seven families."

Commentary: A recap of Mizraim's (Egyptian) seven families.

Verse 22: "All these dwell by the river Sihor, that is the brook of Egypt, and they built themselves cities and called them after their own names."

Commentary: This situates Mizraim's descendants along the "river Sihor," generally identified with the eastern branch of the Nile Delta or a wadi on the border of Egypt, confirming their connection to Egypt.

Verse 23: "And the children of Pathros and Casloh intermarried together, and from them went forth the **Philistines**, the Gazites, and the Gerarites, the Gathites, and the Ekronites, in all five families; these also built themselves cities, and they named their cities after the names of their fathers unto this day."

Commentary: This verse explicitly states the origin of the **Philistines** (Pelishtim) from the intermarriage of two of Mizraim's branches (Pathrusim and Casluhim). It also lists the major Philistine cities, providing a precise genealogical and geographical origin for this prominent ancient people.

Verse 24: "And the children of Canaan also built themselves cities, and they named their cities after their names, eleven cities and others without number."

Commentary: Canaan's descendants are also noted for their city-building, particularly the eleven listed in Genesis, plus many more.

Verse 25: "And four men from the family of Ham went to the land of the plain; these are the names of the four men, **Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboyim**."

Commentary: This verse provides a unique origin story for the infamous **Cities of the Plain**. It states that four men, named Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboyim (rather than just cities named after peoples), founded these settlements. This personalizes their origins.

Verse 26: "And these men built themselves four cities in the land of the plain, and they called the names of their cities after their own names."

Commentary: The cities are directly named after their founders.

Verse 27: "And they and their children and all belonging to them dwelt in those cities, and they were fruitful and multiplied greatly and dwelt peaceably."

Commentary: This describes the initial period of prosperity and growth for these cities, preceding their later wickedness and destruction.

Verse 28: "And Seir, the son of Hur, son of Hivi, son of Canaan, went and found a valley opposite to Mount Paran, and he built a city there, and he and his seven sons and his household dwelt there, and he called the city which he built Seir, according to his name; that is the land of Seir unto this day."

Commentary: This details the founding of **Seir** in Edom, tying it back to a Canaanite (Hamitic) lineage, rather than Esau as in Genesis. This provides a different genealogical foundation for the land of Seir.

Verse 29: "These are the families of the children of Ham, according to their languages and cities, when they were scattered to their countries after the tower."

Commentary: This summarizes the dispersion and settlement of Ham's descendants.

The Descendants of Shem

Verse 30: "And some of the children of Shem, Noah's son, father of all the children of Eber, also went and built themselves cities in the places where they were scattered, and they named their cities after their names."

Commentary: This transitions to the descendants of Shem, the progenitor of the Semitic peoples, including the line of Abram.

Verse 31: "And the sons of Shem were Elam, Asshur, Arpachshad, Lud, and Aram, and they built themselves cities and named all their cities after their names."

Commentary: A recap of Shem's primary sons.

Verse 32: "And Asshur, son of Shem, and his children and household went forth at that time, a very large body of them, and they went to a distant land that they found, and they met with a very extensive valley in the land that they went to, and they built themselves four cities, and they named them after their own names and significant events."

Commentary: Asshur's migration is described as a large-scale movement to a "distant land" where they established four cities.

Verse 33: "And these are the names of the cities which the children of Asshur built: **Nineveh, Rehoboth-Ir, Calah, and Resen**; and the children of Asshur dwell there unto this day."

Commentary: This verse directly links Asshur's descendants to the foundational cities of **Assyria**, including the famous capital Nineveh. This connects the biblical genealogy to a major historical empire. (Note: Genesis 10:11-12 mentions Nimrod building these cities, while Jasher attributes them to Asshur.)

Verse 34: "And the children of Aram also went and built themselves a city, and they named the city **Uz** after their eldest brother, and they dwell therein; that is the land of Uz to this day."

Commentary: Aram's descendants are linked to the land of Uz, famously associated with Job, providing a specific geographical location for his lineage.

Verse 35: "And in the second year after the tower, a man from the house of Asshur, whose name was **Bela**, went from the land of Nineveh to sojourn with his household wherever he could find a place; and they came until opposite the cities of the plain against Sodom, and they dwelt there."

Commentary: This introduces Bela, a figure from Asshur's lineage, who settles near the Cities of the Plain, foreshadowing their later connection.

Verse 36: "And the man rose up and built there a small city, and called its name Bela, after his name; that is the land of **Zoar** unto this day."

Commentary: This explicitly states that Bela founded the city of **Zoar**, one of the Cities of the Plain that was spared during the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. This offers a specific founder for that city.

Verse 37: "And these are the families of the children of Shem according to their language and cities, after they were scattered upon the earth after the tower."

Commentary: This summarizes the dispersion and settlement of Shem's descendants.

Universal Governance

Verse 38: "And every kingdom, city, and family of the families of the children of Noah built themselves many cities after this."

Commentary: This summarizes the widespread urban development across all Noahic lineages as humanity repopulated the earth.

Verse 39: "And they established governments in all their cities, in order to be regulated by their orders; so did all the families of the children of Noah forever."

Commentary: This verse highlights the universal establishment of governing structures and laws within these newly formed cities and regions. It emphasizes the need for order and regulation in the dispersed world.

This chapter offers a fascinating and detailed account of the post-Babel dispersion and the founding of many nations and cities, often linking them to specific biblical figures and later historical places. It also provides unique insights into the origins of peoples like the Philistines, Romans, and Germans.

Book of Jasher, Chapter 11

Nimrod Rebuilds After Babel

Verse 1: "**Nimrod**, Cush's son, was still in the land of Shinar. He ruled there and lived there, and he built cities in the land of Shinar."

Commentary: This verse re-establishes Nimrod's continued reign and his efforts to rebuild after the confusion at the Tower of Babel, focusing on his efforts within the land of Shinar.

Verse 2: "These are the names of the four cities he built, and he named them after the events that happened to them during the tower's construction."

Commentary: Nimrod's city-building is linked directly to the disaster at Babel, indicating his attempt to memorialize or even rationalize what occurred.

Verse 3: "He named the first **Babel**, saying, 'Because the Lord there confused the language of the whole earth.' He named the second **Erech**, because from there God scattered them."

Commentary: Nimrod's naming choices directly reflect the divine judgment at the Tower:

- **Babel**: Acknowledging the "confusion" of languages.
- **Erech**: Recognizing the "dispersion" of people from that location. These names show his awareness of what happened, even if his heart remained rebellious.

Verse 4: "And the third he named **Accad**, saying, 'There was a great battle at that place.' And the fourth he named **Calah**, because his princes and mighty men were consumed there, and they angered the Lord, rebelling and transgressing against Him."

Commentary:

- **Accad**: This name implies a "great battle" occurred at that site, perhaps referring to the internal strife and violence that broke out during the confusion of languages.
- **Calah**: This name connects to the "consumption" or destruction of his leaders, and explicitly attributes their downfall to their rebellion against God. Nimrod's naming of these cities, as listed here and in Genesis 10:10-12, suggests a reassertion of his authority, even in the face of divine judgment.

Verse 5: "When Nimrod had built these cities in the land of Shinar, he settled the remaining people, his princes, and his mighty men who were left in his kingdom within them."

Commentary: Nimrod repopulates his new cities with his loyalists and those who remained under his control after the dispersion.

Verse 6: "Nimrod lived in Babel, and there he re-established his reign over the rest of his subjects. He reigned securely, and Nimrod's subjects and princes called him **Amraphel**, saying that at the tower his princes and men fell through his means."

Commentary: This verse introduces a significant alternative name for Nimrod: **Amraphel**. This name is explained as referring to the "fall" of his men at the tower "through his means," indicating that even his own people recognized his responsibility (or at least central role) in the Babel disaster. (Amraphel is later mentioned in Genesis 14 as King of Shinar during Abram's time, strengthening the identification with Nimrod.)

Verse 7: "And despite this, Nimrod did not turn back to the Lord. He continued in wickedness and kept teaching wickedness to humanity. His son **Mardon** was even worse than his father, and continued to add to his father's abominations."

Commentary: This clearly states Nimrod's unrepentant nature. Despite witnessing divine judgment, he persisted in his evil ways and actively propagated them, especially idolatry. The emphasis on his son Mardon being "even worse" highlights a deteriorating moral landscape in Nimrod's kingdom.

Verse 8: "He caused humanity to sin, therefore it is said, 'From the wicked comes forth wickedness.'"

Commentary: This connects Mardon's influence to the proverb established in Chapter 7, reiterating the idea of inherited or perpetuated evil.

Early Post-Babel Conflicts

Verse 9: "At that time there was war between the families of Ham's descendants, as they were living in the cities they had built."

Commentary: This indicates that shortly after the dispersion, internal conflicts arose even within the Hamitic families, possibly due to territorial disputes or power struggles.

Verse 10: "And **Chedorlaomer**, king of Elam, departed from the families of Ham's descendants, and he fought with them and subdued them. Then he went to the five Cities of the Plain, fought against them, and subdued them, and they were under his control."

Commentary: This introduces **Chedorlaomer**, King of Elam (from Shem's lineage, see Chapter 14 of Genesis). This is a significant historical detail, showing a Semitic king conquering Hamitic territories and the Cities of the Plain, which will be central to Abram's later life. It establishes a pattern of regional conflicts.

Verse 11: "They served him for twelve years, and they gave him a yearly tax."

Commentary: This details the length of Chedorlaomer's dominion over the Cities of the Plain, establishing a period of tribute and foreign rule.

Abram Returns Home and Confronts Idolatry

Verse 12: "At that time, **Nahor**, son of Serug, died in the forty-ninth year of Abram, son of Terah."

Commentary: This provides another chronological marker, indicating the death of Abram's great-grandfather in his 49th year.

Verse 13: "In the fiftieth year of Abram, son of Terah, Abram came forth from the house of Noah and went to his father's house."

Commentary: This marks a pivotal moment: Abram leaves Noah's house (where he spent 39 years, according to 9:6) at the age of 50 and returns to his father Terah's home. This sets the stage for his direct confrontation with his family's idolatry.

Verse 14: "And Abram knew the Lord, and he walked in His ways and instructions, and the Lord his God was with him."

Commentary: This reaffirms Abram's deep and personal knowledge of God, acquired during his time with Noah and Shem, and emphasizes God's presence with him.

Verse 15: "And Terah, his father, was in those days still captain of King Nimrod's army, and he still followed strange gods."

Commentary: This highlights the stark contrast: Abram returns to an actively idolatrous home, where his father, Terah, holds a high position in Nimrod's polytheistic regime and remains devoted to false gods.

Verse 16: "And Abram came to his father's house and saw twelve gods standing there in their shrines, and Abram's anger was kindled when he saw these images in his father's house."

Commentary: Abram's righteous indignation is ignited by the blatant idolatry in his own home. The "twelve gods" likely correspond to the monthly gods mentioned in Chapter 9, Verse 8.

Verse 17: "And Abram said, 'As the Lord lives, these images shall not remain in my father's house! So may the Lord who created me do to me if in three days' time I do not break them all.'"

Commentary: Abram makes a solemn vow to destroy the idols. This demonstrates his bold commitment to the one true God and his zeal against idolatry. The three-day timeframe creates suspense.

Verse 18: "Abram went from them, and his anger burned within him. Abram quickly went from the chamber to his father's outer court, and he found his father sitting in the court, and all his servants with him. Abram came and sat before him."

Commentary: Abram's immediate action shows his determination. He approaches his father in a setting where others are present, setting the stage for a public confrontation or teaching moment.

Verse 19: "And Abram asked his father, saying, 'Father, tell me, where is God who created heaven and earth, and all humanity on earth, and who created you and me?' And Terah answered his son Abram and said, 'Behold, those who created us are all with us in the house.'"

Commentary: Abram's direct question is a theological challenge, seeking to draw his father into a discussion about the true Creator. Terah's immediate, unthinking response points directly to his idols, revealing his deep-seated idolatry.

Verse 20: "And Abram said to his father, 'My lord, show them to me, I pray you.' And Terah brought Abram into the chamber of the inner court, and Abram saw, and behold, the whole room was full of gods of wood and stone, twelve great images and others countless in number."

Commentary: Abram presses his father, leading to the revelation of a vast collection of idols, not just the twelve, emphasizing the pervasive nature of Terah's idol worship.

Verse 21: "And Terah said to his son, 'Behold, these are they who made all you see on earth, and who created me and you, and all mankind.'"

Commentary: Terah's declaration solidifies his belief in the idols as creators, directly contradicting Abram's knowledge of the one true God.

Verse 22: "And Terah bowed down to his gods, and he then went away from them, and Abram, his son, went away with him."

Commentary: Terah's act of worship underscores his commitment to idolatry. Abram's departure with him suggests he didn't immediately act but waited for the right moment.

Verse 23: "And when Abram had gone from them, he went to his mother and sat before her, and he said to his mother, 'Behold, my father has shown me those who made heaven and earth, and all humanity.'"

Commentary: Abram turns to his mother, repeating Terah's claims, perhaps seeking to involve her in his plan or to gauge her reaction.

Verse 24: "'Now, therefore, hasten and fetch a kid from the flock, and make of it savory meat, that I may bring it to my father's gods as an offering for them to eat; perhaps I may thereby become acceptable to them.'"

Commentary: Abram devises a plan to expose the futility of the idols through a test. He asks his mother to prepare an offering, feigning a desire to please the idols, but with the true intention of proving their powerlessness.

Verse 25: "And his mother did so, and she fetched a kid, and made savory meat of it, and brought it to Abram, and Abram took the savory meat from his mother and brought it before his father's gods, and he approached them so that they might eat; and Terah, his father, did not know of it."

Commentary: Abram's plan proceeds without Terah's knowledge, ensuring an unadulterated test of the idols.

Verse 26: "And Abram saw on the day when he was sitting among them, that they had no voice, no hearing, no motion, and not one of them could stretch forth his hand to eat."

Commentary: The first part of the test confirms the obvious: the idols are lifeless, unable to interact with the offering.

Verse 27: "And Abram mocked them, and said, 'Surely the savory meat that I prepared has not pleased them, or perhaps it was too little for them, and for that reason they would not eat; therefore tomorrow I will prepare fresh savory meat, better and more plentiful than this, in order to see the result.'"

Commentary: Abram verbally mocks the idols, pretending to offer an explanation for their inaction. This sets up a second, even more elaborate test, solidifying his case against them.

Verse 28: "And it was on the next day that Abram directed his mother concerning the savory meat, and his mother rose and fetched three fine kids from the flock, and she made of them some excellent savory meat, such as her son was fond of, and she gave it to her son Abram; and Terah, his father, did not know of it."

Commentary: The second, larger offering is prepared, again without Terah's knowledge. This shows Abram's methodical approach to proving his point.

Verse 29: "And Abram took the savory meat from his mother, and brought it before his father's gods into the chamber; and he came near to them that they might eat, and he placed it before them, and Abram sat before them all day, thinking perhaps they might eat."

Commentary: Abram repeats the ritual, waiting patiently for the idols to react, fully knowing they won't, further emphasizing their inertness.

Verse 30: "And Abram viewed them, and behold they had neither voice nor hearing, nor did one of them stretch forth his hand to the meat to eat."

Commentary: The second test yields the same result, confirming the idols' absolute lack of power.

Abram Destroys the Idols

Verse 31: "And in the evening of that day in that house, Abram was clothed with the spirit of God."

Commentary: This is a key moment: Abram is divinely empowered by "the spirit of God," indicating that his subsequent actions are not merely human zeal but divinely inspired.

Verse 32: "And he called out and said, 'Woe unto my father and this wicked generation, whose hearts are all inclined to vanity, who serve these idols of wood and stone which can neither eat, smell, hear nor speak, who have mouths without speech, eyes without sight, ears without hearing, hands without feeling, and legs which cannot move; like them are those that made them and that trust in them.'"

Commentary: Abram, filled with divine inspiration, delivers a powerful indictment against his father and the entire idolatrous generation. His description of the idols' inertness (echoing Psalm 115 and 135) vividly exposes their futility, and his condemnation extends to those who worship them, declaring them "inclined to vanity."

Verse 33: "And when Abram saw all these things, his anger was kindled against his father, and he hastened and took a hatchet in his hand, and came unto the chamber of the gods, and he broke all his father's gods."

Commentary: This is the climactic act: Abram, fueled by righteous anger and divine empowerment, systematically destroys all of Terah's idols. This bold act of iconoclasm marks his definitive break from his family's religious practices.

Verse 34: "And when he had finished breaking the images, he placed the hatchet in the hand of the great god which was there before them, and he went out; and Terah, his father, came home, for he had heard at the door the sound of the striking of the hatchet; so Terah came into the house to know what this was about."

Commentary: Abram cleverly stages the scene by placing the hatchet in the hand of the largest surviving idol. This brilliant deception allows him to shift blame and create a humorous, yet powerful, lesson. Terah's return, alerted by the noise, sets up the confrontation.

Verse 35: "And Terah, having heard the noise of the hatchet in the room of images, ran to the room to the images, and he met Abram going out."

Commentary: The timing of Terah's arrival and his encounter with Abram further enhances the drama of the scene.

Verse 36: "And Terah entered the room and found all the idols fallen down and broken, and the hatchet in the hand of the largest, which was not broken, and the savory meat which Abram his son had made was still before them."

Commentary: Terah discovers the chaotic scene, with all the idols shattered except the largest one, which holds the "smoking gun" (the hatchet). The uneaten food reinforces the idols' helplessness.

Verse 37: "And when Terah saw this, his anger was greatly kindled, and he hastened and went from the room to Abram."

Commentary: Terah's rage is intense upon seeing his cherished idols destroyed.

Verse 38: "And he found Abram his son still sitting in the house; and he said to him, 'What is this work you have done to my gods?'"

Commentary: Terah confronts Abram directly.

Verse 39: "And Abram answered Terah his father and he said, 'Not so, my lord, for I brought savory meat before them, and when I came near to them with the meat so that they might eat, they all at once stretched forth their hands to eat before the great one had put forth his hand to eat.'"

Commentary: Abram delivers his staged explanation. He claims the smaller idols greedily rushed to eat before the "great one," provoking the largest idol's wrath.

Verse 40: "'And the large one saw their works that they did before him, and his anger was violently kindled against them, and he went and took the hatchet that was in the house and came to them and broke them all, and behold the hatchet is yet in his hand as you see.'"

Commentary: Abram completes his fabricated story, attributing the destruction to the largest idol's jealousy and anger. This is a masterclass in exposing absurdity by taking the premise of idols literally.

Verse 41: "And Terah's anger was kindled against his son Abram, when he spoke this; and Terah said to Abram his son in his anger, 'What is this tale that you have told? You speak lies to me.'"

Commentary: Terah initially reacts with anger, calling Abram's story a "lie." This shows he knows the idols are incapable of such actions.

Verse 42: "'Is there in these gods spirit, soul or power to do all you have told me? Are they not wood and stone, and have I not myself made them, and can you speak such lies, saying that the large god that was with them smote them? It is you that did place the hatchet in his hands, and then sayest he smote them all.'"

Commentary: Terah, in his anger, inadvertently voices the very truth Abram wants him to realize: the idols are lifeless, inanimate objects. He exposes the inherent absurdity of his own belief system, revealing that he knows they are merely "wood and stone" made by human hands.

Verse 43: "And Abram answered his father and said to him, 'And how can you then serve these idols in whom there is no power to do anything? Can those idols in which you trust deliver you? Can they hear your prayers when you call upon them? Can they deliver you from the hands of your enemies, or will

they fight your battles for you against your enemies, that you should serve wood and stone which can neither speak nor hear?'"

Commentary: Abram seizes the opportunity. Using Terah's own words, he delivers a powerful, logical rebuttal, highlighting the fundamental absurdity of worshipping powerless idols. He challenges Terah to explain how such gods could protect, hear, or fight for him.

Verse 44: "'And now surely it is not good for you nor for the sons of men that are connected with you, to do these things; are you so silly, so foolish or so short of understanding that you will serve wood and stone, and do after this manner?'"

Commentary: Abram continues his rhetorical questioning, challenging Terah's intelligence and the collective foolishness of those who practice idolatry.

Verse 45: "'And forget the Lord God who made heaven and earth, and who created you in the earth, and thereby bring a great evil upon your souls in this matter by serving stone and wood?'"

Commentary: Abram explicitly contrasts idolatry with the worship of the one true Creator, emphasizing the spiritual danger and "great evil" of turning away from God.

Verse 46: "'Did not our fathers in days of old sin in this matter, and the Lord God of the universe brought the waters of the flood upon them and destroyed the whole earth?'"

Commentary: Abram connects idolatry to the previous great judgment of the Flood, reminding Terah of the devastating consequences of such sin in the past. This serves as a warning.

Verse 47: "'And how can you continue to do this and serve gods of wood and stone, who cannot hear, or speak, or deliver you from oppression, thereby bringing down the anger of the God of the universe upon you?'"

Commentary: He reiterates the idols' impotence and warns that their continued worship will incur the wrath of the true God.

Verse 48: "'Now therefore, my father, refrain from this, and bring not evil upon your soul and the souls of your household.'"

Commentary: Abram concludes his impassioned plea with a direct exhortation to his father to repent and abandon idolatry, for his own good and that of his family.

Abram Brought Before Nimrod

Verse 49: "And Abram hastened and sprang from before his father, and took the hatchet from his father's largest idol, with which Abram broke it and ran away."

Commentary: This is an important detail: Abram reclaims the hatchet, removing the evidence of his clever staging before Terah can use it against him in court. He then flees.

Verse 50: "And Terah, seeing all that Abram had done, hastened to go from his house, and he went to the king and he came before Nimrod and stood before him, and he bowed down to the king; and the king said, 'What do you want?'"

Commentary: Terah, enraged and seeking justice (or perhaps fearing Nimrod's reaction to his broken gods), immediately reports Abram to the king. His prompt action shows his loyalty to Nimrod's system and his distress over the idol destruction.

Verse 51: "And he said, 'I beg you, my lord, to hear me—Now fifty years back a child was born to me, and thus has he done to my gods and thus has he spoken; and now therefore, my lord and king, send for him that he may come before you, and judge him according to the law, that we may be delivered from his evil.'"

Commentary: Terah's complaint to Nimrod is passionate. He not only accuses Abram of destroying the idols but also frames it as an ongoing "evil" from which they need to be "delivered." He appeals to Nimrod's legal authority to judge Abram. The mention of "fifty years back" confirms Abram's age at this point.

Verse 52: "And the king sent three men of his servants, and they went and brought Abram before the king. And Nimrod and all his princes and servants were that day sitting before him, and Terah sat also before them."

Commentary: Abram is arrested and brought before Nimrod's court, a public spectacle involving the king, his officials, and Terah himself.

Verse 53: "And the king said to Abram, 'What is this that you have done to your father and to his gods?' And Abram answered the king in the words that he spoke to his father, and he said, 'The large god that was with them in the house did to them what you have heard.'"

Commentary: Nimrod directly questions Abram. Abram boldly repeats his fabricated story, putting the "blame" on the largest idol, forcing Nimrod to engage with the absurdity.

Verse 54: "And the king said to Abram, 'Had they power to speak and eat and do as you have said?' And Abram answered the king, saying, 'And if there be no power in them why do you serve them and cause the sons of men to err through your follies?'"

Commentary: Nimrod, like Terah, immediately sees the flaw in the story, knowing the idols are powerless. But Abram, using a brilliant rhetorical strategy, turns the question back on the king: if they are powerless, why do *you* serve them and lead others astray? This exposes Nimrod's own hypocrisy and idolatry.

Verse 55: "'Do you imagine that they can deliver you or do anything small or great, that you should serve them? And why will you not sense the God of the whole universe, who created you and in whose power it is to kill and keep alive?'"

Commentary: Abram presses his point, directly challenging Nimrod's own faith and highlighting the impotence of the idols versus the omnipotence of the true God, who holds power over life and death.

Verse 56: "'O foolish, simple, and ignorant king, woe unto you forever.'"

Commentary: Abram escalates his confrontation, directly insulting Nimrod and pronouncing a curse ("Woe unto you forever"), a truly audacious act of defiance against the world's most powerful ruler.

Verse 57: "'I thought you would teach your servants the upright way, but you have not done this, but have filled the whole earth with your sins and the sins of your people who have followed your ways.'"

Commentary: Abram continues his prophetic rebuke, accusing Nimrod of moral failure and of corrupting the entire world with his sinful practices, particularly idolatry.

Verse 58: "'Do you not know, or have you not heard, that this evil which you do, our ancestors sinned therein in days of old, and the eternal God brought the waters of the flood upon them and destroyed them all, and also destroyed the whole earth on their account? And will you and your people rise up now and do like unto this work, in order to bring down the anger of the Lord God of the universe, and to bring evil upon you and the whole earth?'"

Commentary: Abram again links Nimrod's idolatry to the sin that caused the Flood, issuing a stern warning that the same divine judgment could befall Nimrod and his empire if they persist in their rebellion. This is a direct prophetic warning.

Verse 59: "'Now therefore put away this evil deed which you do, and serve the God of the universe, as your soul is in His hands, and then it will be well with you.'"

Commentary: Abram offers a path to repentance: abandon idolatry and serve the true God, whose power over life (implied by "your soul is in his hands") is absolute. This is a call to salvation and blessing.

Verse 60: "'And if your wicked heart will not listen to my words to cause you to forsake your evil ways, and to serve the eternal God, then will you die in shame in the latter days, you, your people, and all who are connected with you, hearing your words or walking in your evil ways.'"

Commentary: Abram delivers a final, dire warning of judgment and shameful death if Nimrod remains unrepentant, extending the curse to all who follow his wicked ways. This is a powerful, fearless declaration before a tyrannical king.

Verse 61: "And when Abram had ceased speaking before the king and princes, Abram lifted up his eyes to the heavens, and he said, 'The Lord sees all the wicked, and He will judge them.'"

Commentary: Abram concludes by appealing directly to God, affirming divine justice and leaving the outcome in God's hands. This final statement underscores his complete trust in the Lord and his detachment from earthly consequences.

This chapter describes Abram's bold confrontation with idolatry and his powerful testimony before Nimrod. It's a pivotal moment that sets the stage for his calling and separation from his pagan family and society.

Book of Jasher, Chapter 12

Abram Imprisoned and Condemned

Verse 1: "When the king heard Abram's words, he ordered him to be thrown into **prison**. Abram stayed in prison for ten days."

Commentary: Nimrod's immediate response to Abram's defiant speech is to imprison him, demonstrating his absolute power and intolerance for dissent.

Verse 2: "At the end of those ten days, the king ordered all the kings, princes, governors from different provinces, and sages to come before him. They gathered, and Abram was still held in confinement."

Commentary: Nimrod convenes a grand assembly of his most powerful and wise advisors. This public gathering emphasizes the gravity of Abram's "crime" and Nimrod's desire for a collective, legalistic condemnation.

Verse 3: "The king said to the princes and sages, 'Have you heard what Abram, Terah's son, has done to his father? This is what he did to him, and I ordered him to be brought before me, and this is what he said; his heart didn't waver, nor did he flinch in my presence, and behold, he's now locked up in prison.'"

Commentary: Nimrod recounts Abram's actions—destroying idols and speaking defiantly—and highlights Abram's unwavering courage, even in the king's presence. This paints Abram as a formidable and unyielding figure.

Verse 4: "'Therefore, decide what judgment this man deserves, who has insulted the king; who spoke and did all the things you heard.'"

Commentary: Nimrod directly asks for a sentence, framing Abram's actions as an insult to his authority ("reviled the king") and religious system.

Verse 5: "And they all answered the king, saying, 'The man who insults the king should be hanged on a tree; but since he did all the things he said and despised our gods, he must therefore be **burned to death**, for this is the law in this matter.'"

Commentary: The assembled court pronounces a severe judgment: death by burning. This punishment is prescribed not only for insulting the king but, more importantly, for "despising our gods," making it a religious as well as a political offense. Burning was a common form of execution in ancient Mesopotamia.

Verse 6: "'If it pleases the king to do this, let him order his servants to keep a fire burning day and night in your brick furnace, and then we will throw this man into it.' And the king did so. He commanded his servants to prepare a fire for three days and three nights in the king's furnace, which is in Chaldea; and the king ordered them to take Abram from prison and bring him out to be burned."

Commentary: The advisors suggest a specific method: a continuously burning brick furnace in "Chaldea" (Casdim), emphasizing the preparation for a prolonged and public execution. Nimrod readily agrees, reflecting his determination to eliminate this challenge.

Verse 7: "All the king's servants, princes, lords, governors, and judges, and all the inhabitants of the land, about nine hundred thousand men, stood opposite the furnace to see Abram."

Commentary: The immense crowd ("about nine hundred thousand men") indicates the public spectacle and the widespread interest in Abram's fate. This was meant to be a terrifying display of Nimrod's power.

Verse 8: "All the women and children crowded onto roofs and towers to see what was happening to Abram, and they all stood together at a distance; there was not a person left who didn't come that day to witness the scene."

Commentary: This further emphasizes the vastness of the crowd and the universal attention given to Abram's execution, underscoring the dramatic nature of the event.

Haran's Fate and Abram's Deliverance

Verse 9: "When Abram arrived, the king's sorcerers and sages saw him, and they cried out to the king, saying, 'Our sovereign lord, surely this is the man whom we know to have been the child at whose birth the great star swallowed the four stars, which we declared to the king fifty years ago.'"

Commentary: The astrologers from Chapter 8 reappear. They recognize Abram and recall the ominous prophecy from his birth, linking his current situation to his predicted destiny to challenge Nimrod. This revelation reintroduces the long-forgotten threat.

Verse 10: "'And behold, now his father has also defied your commands and mocked you by bringing you another child, whom you killed.'"

Commentary: They also expose Terah's deception from Chapter 8, revealing that Nimrod was tricked into killing a servant's child instead of Abram. This adds fuel to Nimrod's rage and brings Terah into direct danger.

Verse 11: "When the king heard their words, he was exceedingly furious, and he ordered Terah to be brought before him."

Commentary: The revelation of Terah's long-standing deception enrages Nimrod even further, highlighting his capacity for fierce anger.

Verse 12: "The king said, 'Have you heard what the sorcerers have spoken? Now tell me truly, how did you do this; and if you speak the truth, you will be acquitted.'"

Commentary: Nimrod offers Terah leniency if he confesses, a tactic to extract the truth amidst his fury.

Verse 13: "Seeing that the king's anger was so great, Terah said to the king, 'My lord and king, you have heard the truth, and what the sages have spoken is right.' And the king said, 'How could you do this thing, to defy my orders and to give me a child you did not father, and to take payment for him?'"

Commentary: Terah, terrified, confesses the truth, admitting his deception and confirming the astrologers' accusation. Nimrod's incredulity emphasizes the gravity of Terah's disobedience.

Verse 14: "And Terah answered the king, 'Because my tender feelings were stirred for my son at that time, and I took a son of my handmaid, and I brought him to the king.'"

Commentary: Terah cites paternal affection as his motive, seeking to mitigate his punishment.

Verse 15: "And the king said, 'Who advised you to this? Tell me, do not hide anything from me, and then you will not die.'"

Commentary: Nimrod presses for further complicity, seeking to identify anyone else involved in the deception.

Verse 16: "And Terah was greatly terrified in the king's presence, and he said to the king, 'It was **Haran**, my eldest son, who advised me to this'; and Haran was, in those days that Abram was born, thirty-two years old."

Commentary: In a cowardly act of self-preservation, Terah falsely implicates Haran, his oldest son, as the mastermind behind the deception. He does this out of sheer fear. The age of Haran at Abram's birth (32) is also provided as a chronological detail.

Verse 17: "But Haran did not advise his father to anything, for Terah said this to the king in order to save himself from the king, for he feared greatly; and the king said to Terah, 'Haran, your son who advised you to this, shall die by fire with Abram; for the sentence of death is upon him for having rebelled against the king's desire in doing this thing.'"

Commentary: The text explicitly clarifies that Terah lied to save himself. Nimrod, accepting Terah's false testimony, condemns Haran to die alongside Abram, effectively condemning an innocent man to death by fire.

Verse 18: "And Haran at that time felt inclined to follow Abram's ways, but he kept it to himself."

Commentary: This is a crucial detail about Haran's internal state: he was secretly sympathetic to Abram's faith, but lacked the courage to openly commit.

Verse 19: "And Haran said in his heart, 'Behold now the king has seized Abram on account of these things which Abram did, and it shall come to pass, that if Abram prevails over the king, I will follow him, but if the king prevails, I will go after the king.'"

Commentary: Haran's true nature is revealed: he's an opportunist, waiting to see who emerges victorious before committing his allegiance. This spiritual indecision will ultimately be his downfall.

Verse 20: "When Terah had spoken this to the king concerning Haran his son, the king ordered Haran to be seized along with Abram."

Commentary: Terah's lie immediately leads to Haran's capture and condemnation.

Verse 21: "And they brought them both, Abram and Haran his brother, to cast them into the fire; and all the inhabitants of the land and the king's servants and princes and all the women and children were there, standing that day over them."

Commentary: Both brothers are led to the fiery execution before the vast assembled crowd, emphasizing the public nature of the impending judgment.

Verse 22: "And the king's servants took Abram and his brother, and they stripped them of all their clothes except their lower garments which were upon them."

Commentary: The public humiliation and preparation for execution begin, with their clothing removed to ensure complete exposure to the flames.

Verse 23: "And they bound their hands and feet with linen cords, and the servants of the king lifted them up and cast them both into the furnace."

Commentary: Both Abram and Haran are bound and thrown into the scorching furnace, sealing their apparent fate.

Verse 24: "And the Lord loved Abram and had compassion on him, and the Lord came down and delivered Abram from the fire, and he was not burned."

Commentary: This is the miraculous intervention. God's love and compassion for Abram lead to His direct intervention, protecting Abram from the flames. This event is a clear demonstration of divine power and favor.

Verse 25: "But all the cords with which they bound him were burned, while Abram remained and walked about in the fire."

Commentary: The miraculous nature is emphasized: only the bonds are consumed, while Abram remains unharmed and even walks freely within the inferno, highlighting God's complete control over the elements.

Verse 26: "And Haran died when they had cast him into the fire, and he was burned to ashes, for his heart was not perfect with the Lord; and those men who cast him into the fire, the flame of the fire spread over them, and they were burned, and twelve men of them died."

Commentary: Haran's fate is tragic and directly contrasted with Abram's. His death by fire is explicitly attributed to his "heart was not perfect with the Lord," meaning his wavering faith and opportunism. Additionally, those who threw them into the fire are consumed by the flames themselves, a swift divine judgment on the persecutors.

Verse 27: "And Abram walked in the midst of the fire for three days and three nights, and all the king's servants saw him walking in the fire, and they came and told the king, saying, 'Behold, we have seen Abram walking about in the midst of the fire, and even the lower garments which are upon him are not burned, but the cord with which he was bound is burned.'"

Commentary: The miracle of Abram's survival continues for an extended period, observed by many witnesses. The detail about his unburnt lower garments, contrasted with the burnt cords, further proves the supernatural nature of his preservation.

Verse 28: "When the king heard their words, his heart failed him and he wouldn't believe them; so he sent other faithful princes to see this matter, and they went and saw it and reported it to the king; and the king rose to go and see it, and he saw Abram walking to and fro in the midst of the fire, and he saw Haran's body burned, and the king wondered greatly."

Commentary: Nimrod's disbelief and subsequent verification by multiple witnesses (including himself) authenticate the miracle. Seeing Haran's charred remains next to the unharmed Abram profoundly impacts Nimrod, leading to "great wonder."

Verse 29: "And the king ordered Abram to be taken out from the fire; and his servants approached to take him out and they couldn't, for the fire was all around and the flame ascending toward them from the furnace."

Commentary: Despite Nimrod's command, his servants are unable to approach the fire, indicating that divine protection of the fire extended beyond Abram, preventing human interference.

Verse 30: "And the king's servants fled from it, and the king rebuked them, saying, 'Make haste and bring Abram out of the fire so that you shall not die.'"

Commentary: Nimrod's desperation grows as his servants flee. He urges them on, fearing they too will perish.

Verse 31: "And the servants of the king again approached to bring Abram out, and the flames came upon them and burned their faces so that eight of them died."

Commentary: Another attempt to retrieve Abram results in more deaths, solidifying the idea that the fire itself is divinely controlled and dangerous to anyone else.

Verse 32: "And when the king saw that his servants could not approach the fire lest they should be burned, the king called to Abram, 'O servant of the God who is in heaven, go forth from amidst the fire and come here before me'; and Abram obeyed the voice of the king, and he went forth from the fire and came and stood before the king."

Commentary: Recognizing the divine intervention, Nimrod addresses Abram as the "servant of the God who is in heaven," acknowledging the true deity. Abram's immediate emergence at the king's command further demonstrates his supernatural protection.

Verse 33: "And when Abram came out, the king and all his servants saw Abram coming before the king, with his lower garments upon him, for they were not burned, but the cord with which he was bound was burned."

Commentary: The public witnessing of Abram's unburnt state, save for the cords, serves as undeniable proof of a miracle.

Verse 34: "And the king said to Abram, 'How is it that you were not burned in the fire?'"

Commentary: Nimrod expresses his astonishment and seeks an explanation from Abram directly.

Verse 35: "And Abram said to the king, 'The God of heaven and earth, in whom I trust and who has all in His power, He delivered me from the fire into which you threw me.'"

Commentary: Abram's response is a direct and clear testimony to the power of the one true God, emphasizing His sovereignty over all things, including the fire.

Verse 36: "And Haran, the brother of Abram, was burned to ashes, and they searched for his body, and they found it consumed."

Commentary: The complete destruction of Haran's body contrasts sharply with Abram's preservation, reinforcing the idea of divine judgment versus divine protection.

Verse 37: "And Haran was eighty-two years old when he died in the fire of Chaldea. And the king, princes, and inhabitants of the land, seeing that Abram was delivered from the fire, they came and bowed down to Abram."

Commentary: Haran's age at death is noted. The profound impact of the miracle leads the onlookers, including the king and his officials, to bow down to Abram, acknowledging his special status.

Verse 38: "And Abram said to them, 'Do not bow down to me, but bow down to the God of the world who made you, and serve Him, and walk in His ways for it is He who delivered me from out of this fire, and it is He who created the souls and spirits of all men, and formed man in his mother's womb, and brought him forth into the world, and it is He who will deliver those who trust in Him from all pain.'"

Commentary: Abram immediately deflects the worship from himself to the one true God. He uses the miracle as an opportunity to preach monotheism, emphasizing God as the Creator of life, the Sustainer, and the Deliverer. This is a clear statement of his prophetic role.

Verse 39: "And this thing seemed very wonderful in the eyes of the king and princes, that Abram was saved from the fire and that Haran was burned; and the king gave Abram many presents and he gave him his two chief servants from the king's house; the name of one was **Oni** and the name of the other was **Eliezer**."

Commentary: The king and princes are deeply impressed by the miracle. Nimrod, perhaps out of awe or fear, attempts to gain favor by giving Abram rich gifts and two important servants, including **Eliezer**, who later becomes a key figure in Abram's household.

Verse 40: "And all the kings, princes, and servants gave Abram many gifts of silver and gold and pearls, and the king and his princes sent him away, and he went in peace."

Commentary: Abram receives vast wealth and is honorably dismissed, his status elevated by the miraculous event.

Verse 41: "And Abram went forth from the king in peace, and many of the king's servants followed him, and about three hundred men joined him."

Commentary: The miracle has a profound effect: many, including some of Nimrod's own servants and about 300 men, choose to follow Abram, indicating a significant shift in allegiance towards the God Abram serves.

Verse 42: "And Abram returned on that day and went to his father's house, he and the men that followed him, and Abram served the Lord his God all the days of his life, and he walked in His ways and followed His law."

Commentary: Abram returns home, bringing his new followers. The verse reaffirms his unwavering commitment to serving God according to His ways and law.

Verse 43: "And from that day forward Abram inclined the hearts of the sons of men to serve the Lord."

Commentary: Abram's public miracle and testimony initiate his active ministry, turning others towards the worship of the true God. This marks him as a public evangelist.

Abram and Nahor Marry

Verse 44: "And at that time, **Nahor and Abram took wives**, the daughters of their brother Haran; the wife of Nahor was **Milcah** and the name of Abram's wife was **Sarai**. And Sarai, Abram's wife, was barren; she had no offspring in those days."

Commentary: This verse records the marriages of Abram and Nahor to Haran's daughters, Milcah and Sarai. This confirms Sarai is Abram's niece (Haran's daughter), a detail previously noted in Jasher. The mention of Sarai's barrenness immediately highlights a significant challenge to God's promise of descendants.

Nimrod's Troubling Dream

Verse 45: "And at the expiration of two years from Abram's going out of the fire, that is in the fifty-second year of his life, behold King Nimrod sat in Babel upon the throne, and the king fell asleep and dreamed that he was standing with his troops and hosts in a valley opposite the king's furnace."

Commentary: Two years after the furnace incident, in Abram's 52nd year, Nimrod has a disturbing dream, directly linking to the previous event and foreshadowing future conflict with Abram.

Verse 46: "And he lifted up his eyes and saw a man in the likeness of Abram coming forth from the furnace, and that he came and stood before the king with his drawn sword, and then sprang to the king with his sword, when the king fled from the man, for he was afraid; and while he was running, the man threw an egg upon the king's head, and the egg became a great river."

Commentary: Nimrod's dream is highly symbolic:

- **Abram from the furnace:** A direct reminder of Abram's miraculous deliverance.
- **Drawn sword and attack:** Symbolizes a direct threat and future conflict.
- **Egg turning into a river:** Represents a massive, overwhelming force or deluge, suggesting a threat to Nimrod's army.

Verse 47: "And the king dreamed that all his troops sank in that river and died, and the king took flight with three men who were before him and he escaped."

Commentary: The dream predicts the decimation of Nimrod's army and his narrow escape with three specific individuals, indicating their future role in his survival.

Verse 48: "And the king looked at these men and they were clothed in princely dresses as the garments of kings, and had the appearance and majesty of kings."

Commentary: The three escapees are identified as kings themselves, emphasizing their importance and the alliance they represent.

Verse 49: "And while they were running, the river again turned to an egg before the king, and there came forth from the egg a young bird which came before the king, and flew at his head and plucked out the king's eye."

Commentary: This is a second, equally disturbing symbol:

- **River turning back to an egg:** Suggests the concentrated form of the threat.
- **Bird plucking out his eye:** A powerful image symbolizing the destruction of his power, insight, or perhaps even his life or dynasty, caused by Abram's lineage.

Verse 50: "And the king was grieved at the sight, and he awoke out of his sleep and his spirit was agitated; and he felt a great terror."

Commentary: The dream profoundly disturbs Nimrod, causing him distress and terror, indicating its prophetic significance.

Verse 51: "And in the morning the king rose from his couch in fear, and he ordered all the wise men and magicians to come before him, when the king related his dream to them."

Commentary: Nimrod, deeply troubled, immediately summons his trusted advisors for interpretation.

Verse 52: "And a wise servant of the king, whose name was **Anuki**, answered the king, saying, 'This is nothing else but the evil of Abram and his seed which will spring up against my Lord and king in the latter days.'"

Commentary: Anuki, a wise advisor, immediately connects the dream to Abram, interpreting it as a prophecy of future trouble and destruction stemming from Abram and his descendants.

Verse 53: "'And behold the day will come when Abram and his seed and the children of his household will war with my king, and they will strike all the king's hosts and his troops.'"

Commentary: The interpretation foretells a future war where Abram's descendants will defeat Nimrod's armies, confirming the threat seen in the dream.

Verse 54: "'And as to what you have said concerning three men which you saw like unto yourself, and which did escape, this means that only you will escape with three kings from the kings of the earth who will be with you in battle.'"

Commentary: The three kings who escape with Nimrod are identified as his future allies in battle.

Verse 55: "'And that which you saw of the river which turned to an egg as at first, and the young bird plucking out your eye, this means nothing else but the seed of Abram which will slay the king in latter days.'"

Commentary: The prophecy culminates in the most dire prediction: Abram's descendants will ultimately be responsible for Nimrod's death, emphasizing the long-term, dynastic threat.

Verse 56: "'This is my king's dream, and this is its interpretation, and the dream is true, and the interpretation which your servant has given you is right.'"

Commentary: Anuki affirms the truthfulness of both the dream and his interpretation, bolstering his credibility.

Verse 57: "'Now therefore my king, surely you know that it is now fifty-two years since your sages saw this at the birth of Abram, and if my king will suffer Abram to live in the earth it will be to the injury of my lord and king, for all the days that Abram lives neither you nor your kingdom will be established, for this was known formerly at his birth; and why will not my king slay him, that his evil may be kept from you in latter days?'"

Commentary: Anuki reminds Nimrod of the original prophecy at Abram's birth, reinforcing the idea that Abram is a perpetual threat to his reign. He urges Nimrod to kill Abram to prevent the prophecy's fulfillment.

Abram Escapes Nimrod Again

Verse 58: "And Nimrod listened to Anuki's voice, and he sent some of his servants in secret to go and seize Abram, and bring him before the king to suffer death."

Commentary: Nimrod immediately acts on the interpretation, sending secret agents to capture and execute Abram, determined to avert the prophesied downfall.

Verse 59: "And **Eliezer**, Abram's servant whom the king had given him, was at that time in the presence of the king, and he heard what Anuki had advised the king, and what the king had said to cause Abram's death."

Commentary: This is a critical plot point: Eliezer, Nimrod's former servant now given to Abram, is present and overhears the assassination plot. His loyalty to Abram is vital.

Verse 60: "And Eliezer said to Abram, 'Hasten, rise up and save your life, so that you may not die through the hands of the king, for thus did he see in a dream concerning you, and thus did Anuki interpret it, and thus also did Anuki advise the king concerning you.'"

Commentary: Eliezer immediately warns Abram, giving him the crucial information about the dream and the king's renewed intention to kill him.

Verse 61: "And Abram listened to Eliezer's voice, and Abram hastened and ran for safety to the house of Noah and his son Shem, and he hid himself there and found a place of safety; and the king's servants

came to Abram's house to seek him, but they could not find him, and they searched throughout the country and he was not to be found, and they went and searched in every direction and he was not to be met with."

Commentary: Abram takes immediate action, fleeing for his life and once again finding refuge with Noah and Shem. The king's extensive search demonstrates his resolve, but Abram remains hidden.

Verse 62: "And when the king's servants could not find Abram, they returned to the king, but the king's anger against Abram was appeased, as they did not find him, and the king dismissed from his mind this matter concerning Abram."

Commentary: Unable to find Abram, Nimrod's immediate rage subsides, and he eventually lets the matter drop. This temporary forgetfulness provides a window of opportunity for Abram's future actions.

Verse 63: "And Abram was concealed in Noah's house for one month, until the king had forgotten this matter, but Abram was still afraid of the king; and Terah came to see Abram his son secretly in the house of Noah, and Terah was very great in the eyes of the king."

Commentary: Abram remains in hiding for a month. Terah, still in favor with Nimrod, secretly visits Abram, suggesting a shift in Terah's protective instincts.

Verse 64: "And Abram said to his father, 'Do you not know that the king intends to kill me, and to wipe my name from the earth by the advice of his wicked counselors?'"

Commentary: Abram reminds his father of the persistent threat from Nimrod, emphasizing the king's murderous intent and the desire to erase his legacy.

Verse 65: "'Now whom do you have here and what do you have in this land? Arise, let us go together to the land of Canaan, so that we may be delivered from his hand, lest you perish also through him in the latter days.'"

Commentary: This is Abram's direct appeal to Terah to leave Haran (Nimrod's territory) and journey to Canaan. Abram frames it as a matter of survival for both of them, warning that Terah, too, might eventually perish under Nimrod's rule. This foreshadows God's later call to Abram.

Verse 66: "'Do you not know or have you not heard, that it is not out of love that Nimrod gives you all this honor, but it is only for his own benefit that he bestows all this good upon you?'"

Commentary: Abram exposes the transactional nature of Nimrod's favor towards Terah, implying it's not genuine affection but a strategic move to secure Terah's loyalty or benefit from his position.

Verse 67: "'And if he does you greater good than this, surely these are only vanities of the world, for wealth and riches cannot avail in the day of wrath and anger.'"

Commentary: Abram provides a powerful spiritual argument: worldly wealth and honor from Nimrod are ultimately fleeting and worthless in the face of divine judgment.

Verse 68: "'Now therefore, listen to my voice, and let us arise and go to the land of Canaan, out of reach of injury from Nimrod; and serve the Lord who created you in the earth and it will be well with you; and cast away all the vain things which you pursue.'"

Commentary: Abram issues a final, combined appeal: leave the land of danger, separate from Nimrod's influence, and crucially, serve the true God. This is an invitation to covenant and blessing.

Verse 69: "And Abram ceased to speak, when Noah and his son Shem answered Terah, saying, 'True is the word which Abram has said to you.'"

Commentary: The endorsement from Noah and Shem, the righteous patriarchs, carries immense weight. Their confirmation validates Abram's counsel and likely persuades Terah.

Verse 70: "And Terah listened to the voice of his son Abram, and Terah did all that Abram said, for this was from the Lord, that the king should not cause Abram's death."

Commentary: This verse describes Terah's crucial decision: he finally heeds Abram's advice and begins the journey towards Canaan. The concluding statement emphasizes divine Providence in this outcome, ensuring Abram's safety and fulfilling God's protective plan for him.

This chapter details one of the most dramatic events in Abram's early life, his miraculous preservation in the fiery furnace, and the events that ultimately led to his family's departure from Ur of the Chaldees.

Book of Jasher, Chapter 13

The Journey to Haran

Verse 1: "So **Terah** took his son **Abram**, his grandson **Lot** (Haran's son), and his daughter-in-law **Sarai**, Abram's wife, along with everyone in their household. They left Ur of the Chaldeans with the intention of going to the land of Canaan. But when they reached the land of **Haran**, they stayed there because the land was excellent for pasture and spacious enough for everyone traveling with them."

Commentary: This verse describes the initial phase of Abram's migration, led by his father Terah, moving from Ur to Haran. Unlike the biblical account which implies a direct divine command to Abram at the outset (Genesis 12:1), Jasher presents Terah as the initiator of the journey. The reason for settling in Haran is practical: good land for their flocks. This also highlights the large size of their traveling party.

Verse 2: "The people of the land of Haran saw that Abram was good and righteous in the eyes of God and men, and that the Lord his God was with him. Some of the people of Haran came and joined Abram, and he taught them the Lord's instructions and His ways; these men remained with Abram in his household and became devoted to him."

Commentary: Abram's virtuous character and God's favor are evident to the locals. He becomes a spiritual influence, drawing people to God's teachings, and they become part of his household. This shows Abram's early role as a teacher of monotheism.

Verse 3: "Abram stayed in the land for three years. At the end of those three years, the Lord appeared to Abram and said to him, 'I am the Lord who brought you forth from Ur of the Chaldeans and delivered you from the hands of all your enemies.'"

Commentary: After three years in Haran, God formally appears to Abram. This is presented as God reaffirming His protective hand, recalling Abram's deliverance from Nimrod's fire, and setting the stage for a new direct command.

Verse 4: "'And now therefore, if you will listen to My voice and keep My commandments, My statutes, and My laws, then I will cause your enemies to fall before you. I will multiply your descendants like the stars of heaven, and I will send My blessing upon all the work of your hands, and you will lack nothing.'"

Commentary: God's promise to Abram is conditional on his obedience. It includes victory over enemies, a numerous offspring, and prosperity. This is an early form of the covenant, emphasizing faithfulness to God's laws.

Verse 5: "'Arise now, take your wife and all belonging to you, and go to the land of Canaan and remain there, and I will be a God to you there, and I will bless you.' And Abram rose and took his wife and all belonging to him, and he went to the land of Canaan as the Lord had told him; Abram was fifty years old when he left Haran."

Commentary: God's command to go to Canaan is now explicit. Jasher states Abram was 50 years old when he left Haran for Canaan, providing a clear age marker for this pivotal move. Note: This contradicts Genesis 12:4, which states Abram was 75 when he *left Haran*. Jasher presents a different timeline, with an earlier initial move to Canaan, then a return to Haran (verse 20), and finally a return to Canaan at 75 (verse 26).

Verse 6: "And Abram came to the land of Canaan and settled in the middle of the city, and he pitched his tent there among the Canaanite inhabitants of the land."

Commentary: Abram's initial settlement in Canaan is described as being "in the midst of the city" rather than just a nomadic tent, suggesting a period of more integrated living among the Canaanites.

Verse 7: "And the Lord appeared to Abram when he came to the land of Canaan, and said to him, 'This is the land which I gave to you and to your descendants after you forever, and I will make your descendants like the stars of heaven, and I will give to your descendants for an inheritance all the lands which you see.'"

Commentary: This is a reaffirmation of the land promise, now specifically tied to Canaan as a permanent inheritance for Abram and his future descendants, explicitly making it an eternal possession.

Verse 8: "And Abram built an altar in the place where God had spoken to him, and Abram there called upon the name of the Lord."

Commentary: As in the biblical narrative, Abram's response to God's revelation is to build an altar and worship, signifying his devotion and acknowledgment of God's promise.

Noah's Death and Regional Conflicts

Verse 9: "At that time, at the end of three years of Abram's dwelling in the land of Canaan, in that year **Noah died**, which was the fifty-eighth year of Abram's life; and all the days that Noah lived were nine hundred and fifty years and he died."

Commentary: This verse records Noah's death, placing it when Abram was 58 years old. This means Abram had 58 years of overlap with Noah, reinforcing the idea that Abram received instruction directly from Noah.

Verse 10: "Abram lived in the land of Canaan, he, his wife, and all belonging to him, and all those who accompanied him, together with those who joined him from the people of the land; but Nahor, Abram's brother, and Terah his father, and Lot the son of Haran, and all belonging to them lived in Haran."

Commentary: This clarifies the division of the family: Abram and his immediate household are in Canaan, while Terah, Nahor, and Lot (at this point) remain in Haran. This sets up future dynamics, including Lot later joining Abram.

Verse 11: "In the fifth year of Abram's dwelling in the land of Canaan, the people of **Sodom and Gomorrah** and all the cities of the plain revolted from the power of **Chedorlaomer**, king of Elam; for all the kings of the cities of the plain had served Chedorlaomer for twelve years, and given him a yearly tax, but in those days, in the thirteenth year, they rebelled against him."

Commentary: This introduces the famous rebellion of the Cities of the Plain against Chedorlaomer, directly correlating with the account in Genesis 14. This event, occurring five years into Abram's first stay in Canaan, sets the stage for Abram's military involvement later.

Verse 12: "And in the tenth year of Abram's dwelling in the land of Canaan, there was war between **Nimrod**, king of Shinar, and **Chedorlaomer**, king of Elam, and Nimrod came to fight with Chedorlaomer and to subdue him."

Commentary: This details a prior conflict between Nimrod and Chedorlaomer. It's a significant detail not found in Genesis, showing Nimrod's attempt to reassert his authority over his former subordinate.

Verse 13: "For Chedorlaomer was at that time one of the princes of Nimrod's armies, and when all the people at the tower were dispersed and those who remained were also scattered upon the face of the earth, Chedorlaomer went to the land of Elam and reigned over it and rebelled against his lord."

Commentary: This explains the history between Nimrod and Chedorlaomer: Chedorlaomer was initially Nimrod's vassal but rebelled and established his own kingdom in Elam after the Babel dispersion.

Verse 14: "And in those days when Nimrod saw that the cities of the plain had rebelled, he came with pride and anger to war with Chedorlaomer, and Nimrod assembled all his princes and subjects, about

seven hundred thousand men, and went against Chedorlaomer, and Chedorlaomer went out to meet him with five thousand men, and they prepared for battle in the valley of Babel which is between Elam and Shinar."

Commentary: Nimrod, angered by the Cities of the Plain's rebellion (which impacts his influence), launches a massive military campaign against Chedorlaomer. The vast disparity in army sizes (700,000 vs. 5,000) highlights Nimrod's overwhelming power.

Verse 15: "And all those kings fought there, and Nimrod and his people were defeated before Chedorlaomer's people, and about six hundred thousand of Nimrod's men fell, and **Mardon**, the king's son, fell among them."

Commentary: Despite the numerical disadvantage, Chedorlaomer surprisingly defeats Nimrod, causing a devastating loss of life for Nimrod's army, including his son Mardon. This is a significant blow to Nimrod's power and a key detail absent in Genesis.

Verse 16: "And Nimrod fled and returned in shame and disgrace to his land, and he was under subjection to Chedorlaomer for a long time, and Chedorlaomer returned to his land and sent princes of his army to the kings who dwelt around him, to **Arioch**, king of Ellasar, and to **Tidal**, king of Goyim, and made a covenant with them, and they were all obedient to his commands."

Commentary: Nimrod suffers a humiliating defeat and becomes subservient to Chedorlaomer. Chedorlaomer, emboldened by his victory, forms alliances with other regional kings (Arioch and Tidal, also mentioned in Genesis 14), solidifying his power bloc.

God Reaffirms the Covenant and Abram's Return to Haran

Verse 17: "And it was in the fifteenth year of Abram's dwelling in the land of Canaan, which is the seventieth year of Abram's life, and the Lord appeared to Abram in that year and He said to him, 'I am the Lord who brought you out from Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land for an inheritance.'"

Commentary: This is another significant appearance of God to Abram, reaffirming the land promise. It places this event in Abram's 70th year, after 15 years in Canaan (70 - 55 = 15).

Verse 18: "'Now therefore walk before Me and be perfect and keep My commands, for to you and to your descendants I will give this land for an inheritance, from the river of Egypt unto the great river Euphrates.'"

Commentary: The covenant is reiterated with a call for Abram to be "perfect" (blameless/wholehearted) and obedient. The boundaries of the promised land are explicitly defined: from the Nile (river of Egypt) to the Euphrates, a vast territory.

Verse 19: "'And you shall come to your fathers in peace and in good old age, and the fourth generation shall return here in this land and shall inherit it forever'; and Abram built an altar, and he called upon the name of the Lord who appeared to him, and he brought up sacrifices upon the altar to the Lord."

Commentary: God promises Abram a peaceful death and that his descendants will return to inherit the land after four generations (referencing the bondage in Egypt). Abram responds with worship and sacrifice.

Verse 20: "At that time Abram returned and went to Haran to see his father and mother, and his father's household, and Abram and his wife and all belonging to him returned to Haran, and Abram dwelt in Haran five years."

Commentary: This is a crucial detail unique to Jasher, explaining why Genesis 11:31 says Terah left Ur for Haran, and Genesis 12:4 says Abram left Haran at 75. Jasher indicates that Abram made an earlier journey to Canaan at age 50 (verse 5), then *returned* to Haran to visit his family and stayed for five years (70-75). This provides a fuller explanation for the biblical narrative.

Verse 21: "And many of the people of Haran, about seventy-two men, followed Abram and Abram taught them the instruction of the Lord and His ways, and he taught them to know the Lord."

Commentary: During his return to Haran, Abram continues his evangelistic work, drawing more followers and teaching them about God.

Verse 22: "In those days the Lord appeared to Abram in Haran, and He said to him, 'Behold, I spoke to you twenty years back, saying,"

Commentary: God appears to Abram again in Haran. The mention of "twenty years back" would align with Abram's age of 52 when he fled Nimrod's wrath and concealed himself in Noah's house (Chapter 12, verse 45, 63). This suggests a repeated calling or reaffirmation of the original command.

Verse 23: "'Go forth from your land, from your birthplace and from your father's house, to the land which I have shown you to give it to you and to your children, for there in that land I will bless you, and make you a great nation, and make your name great, and in you shall the families of the earth be blessed.'"

Commentary: This is the precise phrasing of God's command to Abram in Genesis 12:1-3, emphasizing separation from his origins and promising blessing and universal impact through his descendants. Jasher places this "second" call (or strong reiteration) in Haran just before the final departure.

Verse 24: "'Now therefore arise, go forth from this place, you, your wife, and all belonging to you, also every one born in your house and all the souls you have made in Haran, and bring them out with you from here, and rise to return to the land of Canaan.'"

Commentary: The command is detailed, including all members of Abram's expanding household and all those he has influenced ("souls you have made").

Verse 25: "And Abram arose and took his wife Sarai and all belonging to him and all that were born to him in his house and the souls which they had made in Haran, and they came out to go to the land of Canaan."

Commentary: Abram obeys the divine command, gathering everyone he has gathered and influenced.

Verse 26: "And Abram went and returned to the land of Canaan, according to the word of the Lord. And Lot, the son of his brother Haran, went with him, and Abram was seventy-five years old when he went forth from Haran to return to the land of Canaan."

Commentary: This verse is crucial as it directly aligns with Genesis 12:4, stating that Abram was 75 when he made this final departure from Haran to Canaan, with Lot accompanying him. This reconciles Jasher's earlier timeline with the biblical one by presenting a two-stage departure from Haran.

Verse 27: "And he came to the land of Canaan according to the word of the Lord to Abram, and he pitched his tent and he dwelt in the plain of Mamre, and with him was Lot his brother's son, and all belonging to him."

Commentary: Abram settles in the plain of Mamre, a significant location in the biblical narrative, marking his definitive arrival in the promised land.

Verse 28: "And the Lord again appeared to Abram and said, 'To your descendants I will give this land'; and he there built an altar to the Lord who appeared to him, which is still to this day in the plains of Mamre."

Commentary: God reiterates the land promise one more time upon Abram's arrival in Mamre, and Abram responds with worship by building an altar, a perpetual marker of God's covenant with him in that place.

Book of Jasher, Chapter 14

Rikayon's Desperate Beginnings in Egypt

Verse 1: "In those days, there was a wise and handsome man in the land of Shinar who understood all kinds of wisdom, but he was poor and struggling to support himself. His name was **Rikayon**."

Commentary: This introduces Rikayon, a man of intellect and appearance, but in dire financial straits, setting up his motivation for seeking opportunity.

Verse 2: "He decided to go to Egypt, to **Oswiris**, the son of Anom, king of Egypt, to show the king his wisdom. He hoped he might find favor in the king's sight, be elevated, and be provided for; and Rikayon did just that."

Commentary: Rikayon's ambition drives him to seek out the King of Egypt, seeing it as his best chance for advancement. This foreshadows a significant rise from poverty to power.

Verse 3: "When Rikayon arrived in Egypt, he asked the inhabitants about the king. The people of Egypt told him about the king's custom: it was the King of Egypt's tradition that he only left his royal palace and was seen publicly one day a year. After that, he would return to his palace to remain there."

Commentary: Rikayon immediately encounters a major obstacle: the king's extreme reclusiveness. This custom makes it nearly impossible for an unknown person to gain an audience.

Verse 4: "On the day the king went forth, he passed judgment in the land, and everyone with a petition came before the king that day to get their request granted."

Commentary: The king's single day of public appearance was dedicated to dispensing justice and hearing petitions, making it highly competitive and difficult for someone like Rikayon to get attention.

Verse 5: "When Rikayon heard about the custom in Egypt and realized he couldn't get into the king's presence, he became very upset and sorrowful."

Commentary: Rikayon's initial hopes are dashed by the unexpected hurdle, leaving him in despair.

Verse 6: "In the evening, Rikayon went out and found a ruined house, formerly a bakehouse in Egypt, and he spent the entire night there, bitter in soul and tormented by hunger, unable to sleep."

Commentary: His desperation is emphasized by his finding refuge in a derelict building and his inability to sleep due to hunger and distress.

Verse 7: "Rikayon pondered what he should do in the town until the king made his appearance, and how he might sustain himself there."

Commentary: His situation forces him to think strategically about survival in a foreign land with unusual customs.

Verse 8: "He woke up in the morning and walked around, and on his way, he met those who sold vegetables and various kinds of seeds that they supplied to the inhabitants."

Commentary: He observes how the local economy operates, looking for a way to make a living.

Verse 9: "Rikayon wanted to do the same to get by in the city, but he was unfamiliar with the people's customs, and he was like a blind man among them."

Commentary: His attempt at a simple trade fails due to his ignorance of local social norms and practices, highlighting his disadvantage as an outsider.

Verse 10: "And he went and got vegetables to sell for his support, and the common people gathered around him and ridiculed him, took his vegetables from him, and left him with nothing."

Commentary: His first attempt at selling is a disaster; he is mocked and robbed, reinforcing his desperate situation.

Verse 11: "He left there, bitter in soul, and went sighing back to the bakehouse where he had stayed the night before, and he slept there the second night."

Commentary: His renewed despair brings him back to his makeshift shelter.

Verse 12: "And that night again he reasoned with himself about how he could save himself from starvation, and he devised a cunning plan."

Commentary: His extreme circumstances force him to think outside the box, leading to a highly unconventional and audacious scheme.

Rikayon's Audacious Scheme

Verse 13: "He got up in the morning and acted ingeniously. He went and hired thirty strong men from the common people, carrying their weapons, and he led them to the top of the Egyptian burial ground, and he stationed them there."

Commentary: Rikayon's "cunning plan" begins to unfold. He recruits a small, armed force and positions them at the entrance of a public burial ground, a place of significant cultural importance.

Verse 14: "And he commanded them, saying, 'Thus says the king, "Strengthen yourselves and be valiant men, and let no man be buried here until two hundred pieces of silver be given, and then he may be buried."'; And those men acted according to Rikayon's order to the people of Egypt the whole of that year."

Commentary: This is the core of his scheme: he impersonates the king, issuing a decree that a fee of 200 silver pieces must be paid for every burial. This takes advantage of the Egyptians' reverence for the dead and their burial customs, as well as the king's reclusive nature, which makes verifying such a decree difficult. The men faithfully execute his orders for a year.

Verse 15: "In eight months' time, Rikayon and his men had gathered great riches of silver and gold. Rikayon acquired a large quantity of horses and other animals, and he hired more men, gave them horses, and they remained with him."

Commentary: The scheme is incredibly successful, making Rikayon immensely wealthy in a short period. His rapid accumulation of resources allows him to expand his "force" and establish himself.

The Complaint to the King

Verse 16: "When the year came around, at the time the king went forth into the town, all the inhabitants of Egypt assembled together to speak to him concerning the actions of Rikayon and his men."

Commentary: The king's once-a-year public appearance becomes the opportunity for the populace to air their grievances about this unprecedented tax on the dead.

Verse 17: "And the king went forth on the appointed day, and all the Egyptians came before him and cried out to him, saying,"

Commentary: The scene is set for a massive public outcry against this seemingly royal decree.

Verse 18: "'May the king live forever! What is this thing you are doing in the town to your servants, not allowing a dead body to be buried until so much silver and gold is given? Was there ever anything

like this done in the whole earth, from the days of former kings, yes, even from the days of Adam, until this day, that the dead should not be buried only for a set price?'"

Commentary: The Egyptians' complaint is one of profound outrage and disbelief. They highlight the unprecedented nature of this "tax," questioning its morality and historical precedent, pointing out its cruelty.

Verse 19: "'We know it to be the custom of kings to take a yearly tax from the living, but you not only do this, but from the dead also you demand a tax day by day.'"

Commentary: They acknowledge legitimate taxes but emphasize the absurdity and injustice of taxing the deceased, a daily burden that is financially crippling.

Verse 20: "'Now, O king, we can no longer bear this, for the whole city is ruined on this account, and do you not know it?'"

Commentary: The people declare their utter inability to bear this burden any longer, stating that the entire city is economically devastated by Rikayon's scheme. Their final question implies the king's ignorance, which is indeed the case.

Verse 21: "When the king heard all that they had spoken, he was very angry, and his anger burned within him at this affair, for he had known nothing of it."

Commentary: The king's fury is intense because he was completely unaware of Rikayon's deception, highlighting how well Rikayon exploited the king's reclusiveness.

Verse 22: "And the king said, 'Who and where is he that dares to do this wicked thing in my land without my command? Surely you will tell me.'"

Commentary: Nimrod's rage turns to a demand for the identity of the perpetrator.

Verse 23: "And they told him all the actions of Rikayon and his men, and the king's anger was aroused, and he ordered Rikayon and his men to be brought before him."

Commentary: The full extent of Rikayon's audacious scheme is revealed to the king, leading to an immediate summons for his apprehension.

Rikayon Becomes Pharaoh

Verse 24: "And Rikayon took about a thousand children, sons and daughters, and clothed them in silk and embroidery, and he set them upon horses and sent them to the king by means of his men. He also took a great quantity of silver and gold and precious stones, and a strong and beautiful horse, as a present for the king, with which he came before the king and bowed down to the earth before him; and the king, his servants, and all the inhabitants of Egypt wondered at Rikayon's actions, and they saw his riches and the present he had brought to the king."

Commentary: This is Rikayon's masterful display of strategic cunning. Instead of fleeing or resisting, he presents himself to the king with an overwhelming show of wealth and generosity. The procession of

richly dressed children and lavish gifts aims to impress and disarm the king and the court, redirecting their anger into awe and curiosity.

Verse 25: "And it greatly pleased the king and he wondered at it; and when Rikayon sat before him, the king asked him concerning all his works, and Rikayon spoke all his words wisely before the king, his servants, and all the inhabitants of Egypt."

Commentary: Rikayon's grand gesture works. The king is indeed pleased and intrigued. Rikayon then demonstrates his wisdom and eloquence, further impressing the court.

Verse 26: "And when the king heard Rikayon's words and his wisdom, Rikayon found favor in his sight, and he met with grace and kindness from all the servants of the king and from all the inhabitants of Egypt, on account of his wisdom and excellent speeches, and from that time they loved him exceedingly."

Commentary: Rikayon's combination of wealth, cunning, and demonstrable wisdom completely wins over the king and the entire populace. They now admire and love him for the very qualities that led him to deceive them.

Verse 27: "And the king answered and said to Rikayon, 'Your name shall no more be called Rikayon but **Pharaoh** shall be your name, since you did exact a tax from the dead'; and he called his name Pharaoh."

Commentary: This is the pivotal moment. The king renames Rikayon to **Pharaoh**, explicitly linking the name to his unprecedented "taxation of the dead." This is Jasher's unique and highly significant etymological origin for the title "Pharaoh," asserting that the first person to hold this title was Rikayon, a non-Egyptian who gained power through a deceitful, yet ingenious, scheme involving funerary taxes.

Verse 28: "And the king and his subjects loved Rikayon Pharaoh for his wisdom, and they consulted with all the inhabitants of Egypt to make him prefect under the king."

Commentary: Such was Rikayon-Pharaoh's popularity and perceived wisdom that he is appointed as the king's chief administrator or "prefect," a position of immense power.

Verse 29: "And all the inhabitants of Egypt and its wise men did so, and it was made a law in Egypt."

Commentary: His appointment is formalized and becomes a new established legal position within Egypt's governing structure.

Verse 30: "And they made Rikayon Pharaoh prefect under Oswiris king of Egypt, and Rikayon Pharaoh governed over Egypt, daily administering justice to the whole city, but Oswiris the king would judge the people of the land one day in the year, when he went out to make his appearance."

Commentary: This highlights the practical effect of Rikayon's new role: he effectively takes over the day-to-day governance and administration of justice, while King Oswiris remains a largely ceremonial figure with his one annual appearance. Rikayon-Pharaoh becomes the true power in the land.

Verse 31: "And Rikayon Pharaoh cunningly usurped the government of Egypt, and he exacted a tax from all the inhabitants of Egypt."

Commentary: This verse explicitly states that Rikayon-Pharaoh "cunningly usurped" power, a clear acknowledgment that his rise was through manipulation, even if it was sanctioned by the people. He also implements a new, general tax on everyone.

Verse 32: "And all the inhabitants of Egypt greatly loved Rikayon Pharaoh, and they made a decree to call every king that should reign over them and their seed in Egypt, **Pharaoh**."

Commentary: This is a crucial historical claim: the Egyptians were so enamored with Rikayon-Pharaoh's wisdom and governance that they decreed his title "Pharaoh" would become the title for *all future kings* of Egypt, establishing the dynastic use of the name.

Verse 33: "Therefore all the kings that reigned in Egypt from that time forward were called Pharaoh unto this day."

Commentary: This final verse summarizes Jasher's explanation for the origin of the title "Pharaoh," attributing it to Rikayon, a shrewd foreign advisor who gained power through an elaborate deception and then earned the people's love and loyalty.

This chapter offers a highly unique and fascinating narrative for the origin of the title "Pharaoh," completely unlike any other historical or biblical account.

Book of Jasher, Chapter 15

Abram in Egypt

Verse 1: "In that year, there was a severe famine throughout the land of Canaan, and the inhabitants couldn't remain there because the famine was so dreadful."

Commentary: The chapter begins with a description of a widespread and severe famine in Canaan, forcing the inhabitants, including Abram's household, to seek sustenance elsewhere.

Verse 2: "And Abram and all belonging to him arose and went down to **Egypt** because of the famine. When they reached the brook of Egypt, they stayed there for a while to rest from the journey's fatigue."

Commentary: Abram's migration to Egypt is due to the famine, a pragmatic decision for survival. The "brook of Egypt" (Wadi el-Arish or a branch of the Nile) marks the border, where they paused.

Verse 3: "Abram and Sarai were walking at the border of the brook of Egypt, and Abram saw his wife Sarai, that she was very beautiful."

Commentary: This sets up the central conflict of the story. Abram's observation of Sarai's exceptional beauty triggers his fear.

Verse 4: "And Abram said to his wife Sarai, 'Since God has created you with such a beautiful appearance, I am afraid of the Egyptians, lest they should kill me and take you away, for the fear of God is not in these places.'"

Commentary: Abram expresses his fear that the Egyptians, lacking reverence for God, would kill him to take Sarai. This reveals his perception of Egyptian morality and his concern for his own life.

Verse 5: "'Surely then you shall do this: Say you are my sister to all who may ask you, in order that it may be well with me, and that we may live and not be put to death.'"

Commentary: Abram instructs Sarai to claim she is his sister, a strategy intended to save his life. This is a controversial act in the biblical narrative, and Jasher provides additional details.

Verse 6: "And Abram commanded the same to all those who came with him to Egypt on account of the famine; also his nephew Lot he commanded, saying, 'If the Egyptians ask you concerning Sarai, say she is the sister of Abram.'"

Commentary: Abram extends the deception to his entire entourage, including Lot, ensuring consistency in their story.

Verse 7: "And yet with all these orders, Abram did not put confidence in them, but he took Sarai and placed her in a chest and concealed it among their possessions, for Abram was greatly concerned about Sarai on account of the wickedness of the Egyptians."

Commentary: This detail is unique to Jasher and not found in Genesis. Abram's extreme measure of hiding Sarai in a chest underscores his profound anxiety and mistrust of the Egyptians' "wickedness." It highlights his fear-driven actions.

Verse 8: "And Abram and all belonging to him rose up from the brook of Egypt and came to Egypt; and they had scarcely entered the gates of the city when the guards stood up to them, saying, 'Give tithe to the king from what you have, and then you may come into the town'; and Abram and those who were with him did so."

Commentary: Upon entering the city, they are immediately met with a demand for a "tithe to the king," showing the strict control and taxation in Egypt under the new administration of Rikayon-Pharaoh (from Chapter 14).

Verse 9: "And Abram with the people that were with him came to Egypt, and when they came they brought the chest in which Sarai was concealed and the Egyptians saw the chest."

Commentary: The presence of the chest containing Sarai is noticed, leading to suspicion.

Verse 10: "And the king's servants approached Abram, saying, 'What do you have here in this chest which we have not seen? Now open the chest and give tithe to the king of all that it contains.'"

Commentary: The officials specifically demand to inspect the chest and claim a tithe from its contents, setting up the moment of discovery.

Verse 11: "And Abram said, 'This chest I will not open, but all you demand upon it I will give.' And Pharaoh's officers answered Abram, saying, 'It is a chest of precious stones, give us the tenth thereof.'"

Commentary: Abram attempts to buy off the officials, offering to pay a tithe on the chest's assumed contents (precious stones) without opening it. This reveals the significant value they placed on such an object.

Verse 12: "Abram said, 'All that you desire I will give, but you must not open the chest.'"

Commentary: Abram persists in his attempt to keep the chest closed, indicating his intense concern for Sarai's concealment.

Verse 13: "And the king's officers pressed Abram, and they reached the chest and opened it by force, and they saw, and behold a beautiful woman was in the chest."

Commentary: The officials override Abram's objections, forcefully opening the chest, leading to the dramatic reveal of Sarai.

Verse 14: "And when the officers of the king beheld Sarai, they were struck with admiration at her beauty, and all the princes and servants of Pharaoh assembled to see Sarai, for she was very beautiful. And the king's officers ran and told Pharaoh all that they had seen, and they praised Sarai to the king; and Pharaoh ordered her to be brought, and the woman came before the king."

Commentary: Sarai's extraordinary beauty causes a sensation, attracting widespread attention and leading to her being brought before Pharaoh. This explains why she caught the king's eye so quickly.

Verse 15: "And Pharaoh beheld Sarai and she pleased him exceedingly, and he was struck with her beauty, and the king rejoiced greatly on her account, and made presents to those who brought him the tidings concerning her."

Commentary: Pharaoh himself is captivated by Sarai's beauty, rejoicing and rewarding those who brought her to his attention. This sets the stage for him to take her into his harem.

Verse 16: "And the woman was then brought to Pharaoh's house, and Abram grieved on account of his wife, and he prayed to the Lord to deliver her from the hands of Pharaoh."

Commentary: Sarai is taken into Pharaoh's household, causing great distress to Abram, who turns to God in prayer for her deliverance.

Verse 17: "And Sarai also prayed at that time and said, 'O Lord God, You told my Lord Abram to go from his land and from his father's house to the land of Canaan, and You promised to do well with him if he would perform Your commands; now behold we have done that which You did command us, and we left our land and our families, and we went to a strange land and to a people whom we have not known before.'"

Commentary: Sarai also prays, reminding God of His covenant with Abram and their obedience in leaving their homeland. She appeals to God's faithfulness to His promises.

Verse 18: "'And we came to this land to avoid the famine, and this evil accident has befallen me; now therefore, O Lord God, deliver us and save us from the hand of this oppressor, and do well with me for the sake of Your mercy.'"

Commentary: Sarai directly appeals for deliverance from Pharaoh, framing her current predicament as an "evil accident" resulting from their obedience. She bases her plea on God's mercy.

Verse 19: "And the Lord listened to the voice of Sarai, and the Lord sent an angel to deliver Sarai from the power of Pharaoh."

Commentary: God responds directly to Sarai's prayer, sending an angel to intervene on her behalf, emphasizing her direct appeal to God.

Verse 20: "And the king came and sat before Sarai, and behold an angel of the Lord was standing over them, and he appeared to Sarai and said to her, 'Do not fear, for the Lord has heard your prayer.'"

Commentary: As Pharaoh attempts to approach Sarai, the angel appears to her, reassuring her that her prayer has been heard and she has nothing to fear. The angel's presence directly over them implies a protective stance against Pharaoh.

Verse 21: "And the king approached Sarai and said to her, 'What is that man to you who brought you here?' and she said, 'He is my brother.'"

Commentary: Pharaoh questions Sarai about Abram's relationship to her. Sarai, following Abram's instructions, maintains the deception, likely out of fear for Abram's life.

Verse 22: "And the king said, 'It is incumbent upon us to make him great, to elevate him and to do unto him all the good which you shall command us'; and at that time the king sent to Abram silver and gold and precious stones in abundance, together with cattle, men servants and maid servants; and the king ordered Abram to be brought, and he sat in the court of the king's house, and the king greatly exalted Abram on that night."

Commentary: Pharaoh, attempting to gain favor with Sarai and presumably with Abram (whom he believes is her brother), lavishes immense wealth and honor upon Abram. This is the source of Abram's great wealth.

Verse 23: "And the king approached to speak to Sarai, and he reached out his hand to touch her, when the angel smote him heavily, and he was terrified and he refrained from reaching to her."

Commentary: This is the first direct angelic intervention. As Pharaoh attempts physical intimacy with Sarai, the angel strikes him, causing immediate and painful consequences that deter him.

Verse 24: "And when the king came near to Sarai, the angel smote him to the ground, and acted thus to him the whole night, and the king was terrified."

Commentary: The angel's strikes are repeated and severe, literally knocking Pharaoh to the ground, tormenting him throughout the night. This highlights the angel's power and God's protective hand over Sarai.

Verse 25: "And the angel on that night smote heavily all the servants of the king, and his whole household, on account of Sarai, and there was a great lamentation that night amongst the people of Pharaoh's house."

Commentary: The divine plagues extend beyond Pharaoh to his entire household, causing widespread suffering and lamentation, making it clear to everyone that the affliction is a direct consequence of Sarai's presence.

Verse 26: "And Pharaoh, seeing the evil that befell him, said, 'Surely on account of this woman has this thing happened to me,' and he removed himself at some distance from her and spoke pleasing words to her."

Commentary: Pharaoh recognizes the cause of the plagues. His attempts to appease Sarai and distance himself show his fear and his understanding that she is divinely protected.

Verse 27: "And the king said to Sarai, 'Tell me, I pray you, concerning the man with whom you came here'; and Sarai said, 'This man is my husband, and I said to you that he was my brother for I was afraid, lest you should put him to death through wickedness.'"

Commentary: Pharaoh, now desperate for the truth to end the plagues, directly asks Sarai about Abram. Sarai finally reveals the truth, explaining her fear-driven deception.

Verse 28: "And the king kept away from Sarai, and the plagues of the angel of the Lord ceased from him and his household; and Pharaoh knew that he was smitten on account of Sarai, and the king was greatly astonished at this."

Commentary: As soon as Pharaoh respects Sarai's true identity, the plagues cease, confirming the divine connection. Pharaoh's astonishment underscores the supernatural nature of the events.

Verse 29: "And in the morning the king called for Abram and said to him, 'What is this you have done to me? Why did you say, "She is my sister," owing to which I took her to me for a wife, and this heavy plague has therefore come upon me and my household.'"

Commentary: Pharaoh confronts Abram, expressing his frustration and anger over the deception and the severe consequences it brought upon him and his household. This mirrors the biblical account in Genesis 12.

Verse 30: "Now therefore, here is your wife, take her and go from our land lest we all die on her account. And Pharaoh took more cattle, men servants and maid servants, and silver and gold, to give to Abram, and he returned to him Sarai his wife."

Commentary: Pharaoh, eager to rid himself of this divinely protected woman, returns Sarai to Abram and, ironically, gives him *more* wealth, servants, and livestock, likely as compensation and a means to hasten their departure.

Verse 31: "And the king took a maiden whom he had by his concubines, and he gave her to Sarai for a handmaid."

Commentary: This verse introduces **Hagar**, although not by name, as the Egyptian handmaid given by Pharaoh to Sarai. She is specified as the daughter of Pharaoh by his concubines, making her a royal princess. This detail, not in Genesis, elevates Hagar's status significantly and makes her future role even more poignant.

Verse 32: "And the king said to his daughter, 'It is better for you, my daughter, to be a handmaid in this man's house than to be mistress in my house, after we have beheld the evil that befell us on account of this woman.'"

Commentary: Pharaoh's advice to his daughter highlights the profound fear and respect he now has for Abram's God. He believes serving in Abram's household, even as a handmaid, is safer and more blessed than remaining in his own palace, given the divine judgment he experienced.

Verse 33: "And Abram arose, and he and all belonging to him went away from Egypt; and Pharaoh ordered some of his men to accompany him and all that went with him."

Commentary: Abram and his expanded household depart from Egypt. Pharaoh provides an escort, perhaps to ensure their swift and safe departure.

Return to Canaan and Separation from Lot

Verse 34: "And Abram returned to the land of Canaan, to the place where he had made the altar, where he at first had pitched his tent."

Commentary: Abram returns to the significant location in Canaan where he had previously built an altar, resuming his life in the promised land.

Verse 35: "And Lot, the son of Haran, Abram's brother, had a heavy stock of cattle, flocks, and herds and tents, for the Lord was bountiful to them on account of Abram."

Commentary: Lot also prospered greatly, indirectly benefiting from God's blessing on Abram, leading to immense wealth for both of them.

Verse 36: "And when Abram was dwelling in the land, the herdsmen of Lot quarreled with the herdsmen of Abram, for their property was too great for them to remain together in the land, and the land could not bear them on account of their cattle."

Commentary: Their immense wealth leads to practical conflicts between their herdsmen, as the land cannot sustain their combined flocks, necessitating a separation for peaceful coexistence.

Verse 37: "And when Abram's herdsmen went to feed their flock, they would not go into the fields of the people of the land, but the cattle of Lot's herdsmen did otherwise, for they were allowed to feed in the fields of the people of the land."

Commentary: This provides a specific reason for the conflict: Abram's herdsmen respected the land boundaries of the Canaanites, but Lot's herdsmen did not. This reveals a moral difference between the two households' practices.

Verse 38: "And the people of the land saw this occurrence daily, and they came to Abram and quarreled with him on account of Lot's herdsmen."

Commentary: The local inhabitants directly confronted Abram, holding him responsible for Lot's herdsmen's trespasses, creating tension and potential danger for Abram, as he was a "stranger" in the land.

Verse 39: "And Abram said to Lot, 'What is this you are doing to me, to make me despised by the inhabitants of the land, that you order your herdsmen to feed your cattle in the fields of other people? Do you not know that I am a stranger in this land among the children of Canaan, and why will you do this to me?'"

Commentary: Abram directly confronts Lot, expressing his frustration and concern that Lot's actions are damaging his reputation and jeopardizing his precarious position as a sojourner.

Verse 40: "And Abram quarreled daily with Lot on account of this, but Lot would not listen to Abram, and he continued to do the same and the inhabitants of the land came and told Abram."

Commentary: Lot's stubbornness and unwillingness to heed Abram's counsel prolong the conflict, further exacerbating the tension with the locals. This highlights Lot's flawed character.

Verse 41: "And Abram said to Lot, 'How long will you be a stumbling block to me with the inhabitants of the land? Now I beg you, let there be no more quarreling between us, for we are kinsmen.'"

Commentary: Abram makes a final, desperate plea for peace, appealing to their family ties and the need to avoid conflict, especially as they are foreigners.

Verse 42: "'But I pray you, separate from me, go and choose a place where you may dwell with your cattle and all belonging to you, but keep yourself at a distance from me, you and your household.'"

Commentary: Abram proposes the solution: a separation of their households. He graciously offers Lot the first choice of land to avoid further strife.

Verse 43: "'And be not afraid in going from me, for if anyone does an injury to you, let me know and I will avenge your cause from him, only remove from me.'"

Commentary: Abram reassures Lot of his continued support and protection, even after their separation, demonstrating his unwavering loyalty and commitment to family, despite Lot's difficult behavior.

Verse 44: "And when Abram had spoken all these words to Lot, then Lot arose and lifted up his eyes toward the plain of Jordan."

Commentary: Lot accepts the offer, looking towards the fertile Jordan valley, known for its abundant water.

Verse 45: "And he saw that the whole of this place was well watered, and good for man as well as affording pasture for the cattle."

Commentary: Lot's choice is based purely on material prosperity and outward appearance, attracted by the well-watered plain, without considering the moral character of its inhabitants.

Verse 46: "And Lot went from Abram to that place, and he there pitched his tent and he dwelt in Sodom, and they were separated from each other."

Commentary: Lot chooses the Jordan plain and settles near/in **Sodom**, a decision that will have dire consequences later. The formal separation between Abram and Lot is complete.

Verse 47: "And Abram dwelt in the plain of Mamre, which is in Hebron, and he pitched his tent there, and Abram remained in that place many years."

Commentary: Abram, after the separation, settles in the plain of Mamre near Hebron, a place that will become central to his future covenant interactions with God.

Book of Jasher, Chapter 16

The War of the Kings

Verse 1: "At that time, **Chedorlaomer**, king of Elam, sent word to all the neighboring kings: to **Nimrod**, king of Shinar (who was then under Chedorlaomer's authority), and to **Tidal**, king of Goyim, and to **Arioch**, king of Ellasar, with whom he had made a treaty. He said, 'Come and help me, so that we may attack all the cities of Sodom and their inhabitants, for they have rebelled against me for thirteen years.'"

Commentary: This sets the stage for the famous "War of the Kings" (Genesis 14). Chedorlaomer, having established dominance over Nimrod (as seen in Chapter 13), calls his allies to suppress the long-standing rebellion of the Cities of the Plain. This highlights the political landscape of the region, with Chedorlaomer as the dominant power.

Verse 2: "And these four kings went up with all their armies, about eight hundred thousand men, and they went as they were, and struck down every man they found on their path."

Commentary: The invading force is massive, indicating a significant military campaign designed to crush the rebellion and demonstrate power. Their ruthlessness is shown by their indiscriminate killing of anyone in their path.

Verse 3: "And the five kings of Sodom and Gomorrah—**Shinab**, king of Admah; **Shemeber**, king of Zeboyim; **Bera**, king of Sodom; **Bersha**, king of Gomorrah; and **Bela**, king of Zoar—went out to meet them, and they all joined together in the **Valley of Siddim**."

Commentary: The five kings of the rebel cities unite to face the invading force, setting up the conflict in the Valley of Siddim, known for its tar pits.

Verse 4: "And these nine kings waged war in the Valley of Siddim; and the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah were defeated before the kings of Elam."

Commentary: The battle ensues, and the kings of the plain are decisively defeated by Chedorlaomer's alliance.

Verse 5: "And the Valley of Siddim was full of tar pits, and the kings of Elam pursued the kings of Sodom. The kings of Sodom with their armies fled and fell into the tar pits, and all that remained went to the mountain for safety. The five kings of Elam came after them and pursued them to the gates of Sodom, and they took all that was there in Sodom."

Commentary: The tar pits (lime pits in Jasher) play a role in the rout, trapping the fleeing kings. The victors then plunder Sodom and its surrounding cities, taking everything of value.

Verse 6: "And they plundered all the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, and they also took **Lot**, Abram's nephew, and his property, and they seized all the goods of the cities of Sodom, and they went away; and **Unic**, Abram's servant, who was in the battle, saw this, and told Abram all that the kings had done to the cities of Sodom, and that Lot was taken captive by them."

Commentary: Lot, having settled in Sodom (Chapter 15), is caught in the conflict and taken captive along with his possessions. Abram is informed of this by his servant Unic (another unique detail in Jasher).

Abram's Rescue and Melchizedek

Verse 7: "And Abram heard this, and he rose up with about **three hundred and eighteen men** that were with him, and he that night pursued these kings and struck them down, and they all fell before Abram and his men, and there was none remaining but the four kings who fled, and they went each their own way."

Commentary: Abram, upon hearing of Lot's capture, immediately mobilizes his trained household (318 men, matching Genesis 14:14). His swift night attack leads to a decisive victory, routing the mighty alliance, with only the four kings managing to escape. This demonstrates Abram's military prowess and the effectiveness of his trained household.

Verse 8: "And Abram recovered all the property of Sodom, and he also recovered Lot and his property, his wives and little ones, and all belonging to him, so that Lot lacked nothing."

Commentary: Abram's rescue operation is entirely successful, recovering all the plunder, including Lot and his family, restoring everything that was lost.

Verse 9: "And when he returned from striking down these kings, he and his men passed the Valley of Siddim where the kings had made war together."

Commentary: On their return, they traverse the scene of the earlier battle.

Verse 10: "And Bera, king of Sodom, and the rest of his men that were with him, went out from the tar pits into which they had fallen, to meet Abram and his men."

Commentary: The king of Sodom and his surviving men emerge from hiding to meet Abram, acknowledging his victory.

Verse 11: "And **Adonizedek**, king of Jerusalem, the same was **Shem**, went out with his men to meet Abram and his people, with bread and wine, and they remained together in the Valley of Melech."

Commentary: This is a highly significant and unique identification: Jasher explicitly states that **Adonizedek, King of Jerusalem and priest of God Most High (as in Genesis 14:18), is none other than Shem**, Noah's son. This provides a continuity of the patriarchal line and priestly authority from Noah to Shem, and then to Abram. Their meeting involves hospitality ("bread and wine").

Verse 12: "And Adonizedek blessed Abram, and Abram gave him a tenth from all that he had brought from the spoil of his enemies, for Adonizedek was a priest before God."

Commentary: The interaction mirrors Genesis 14:19-20. Shem/Adonizedek blesses Abram, and Abram, in return, gives him a tithe (a tenth) of the recovered spoil, acknowledging Shem's priestly authority and God's sovereignty.

Verse 13: "And all the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah who were there, with their servants, approached Abram and begged him to return them their servants whom he had made captive, and to take unto himself all the property."

Commentary: The kings of Sodom request the return of their people but offer Abram all the recovered plunder as a reward for his intervention.

Verse 14: "And Abram answered the kings of Sodom, saying, 'As the Lord lives who created heaven and earth, and who redeemed my soul from all affliction, and who delivered me this day from my enemies, and gave them into my hand, I will not take anything belonging to you, that you may not boast tomorrow, saying, "Abram became rich from our property that he saved."'"

Commentary: Abram makes a solemn vow, invoking God's name, that he will take none of the spoil from Sodom. His reason is profound: he doesn't want the wicked kings of Sodom to be able to claim that they enriched him, thereby diminishing God's sole role in his blessing. He attributes his deliverance and victory entirely to God.

Verse 15: "'For the Lord my God in whom I trust said to me, "You shall lack nothing, for I will bless you in all the works of your hands."'"

Commentary: Abram reiterates his unwavering trust in God's provision, emphasizing that his wealth comes from divine blessing, not from worldly spoils.

Verse 16: "'And now therefore behold, here is all belonging to you, take it and go; as the Lord lives, I will not take from you from a living soul down to a shoelace or thread, except the expense of the food of those who went out with me to battle, as also the portions of the men who went with me, **Anar, Eshcol, and Mamre**; they and their men, as well as those also who had remained to watch the baggage, they shall take their portion of the spoil.'"

Commentary: Abram returns everything to the kings of Sodom, taking nothing for himself or his household. He only permits his allies (Anar, Eshcol, and Mamre, mentioned in Genesis 14:13) and those who guarded the baggage to take their rightful share of the spoil, honoring their contribution without enriching himself.

Verse 17: "And the kings of Sodom gave Abram according to all that he had said, and they pressed him to take whatever he chose, but he would not."

Commentary: The kings of Sodom respect Abram's decision, despite their insistence, underscoring his integrity and unwavering stance.

Verse 18: "And he sent away the kings of Sodom and the remainder of their men, and he gave them orders about Lot, and they went to their respective places."

Commentary: Abram ensures the safe return of the kings and their people. He also gives them instructions regarding Lot, perhaps to ensure his continued safety in Sodom.

Verse 19: "And Lot, his nephew, he also sent away with his property, and he went with them, and Lot returned to his home, to Sodom, and Abram and his people returned to their home to the plains of Mamre, which is in Hebron."

Commentary: Lot returns to Sodom, despite the dangers. Abram and his household return to Mamre, Hebron, their established dwelling place.

God Reaffirms the Covenant and Hagar's Pregnancy

Verse 20: "At that time, the Lord again appeared to Abram in Hebron, and He said to him, 'Do not fear, your reward is very great before Me, for I will not leave you, until I shall have multiplied you, and blessed you, and made your descendants like the stars in heaven, which cannot be measured nor numbered.'"

Commentary: Following Abram's righteous act of refusing the spoil, God immediately appears to him, reiterating and expanding on the covenant promises. God reassures Abram, promises a vast number of descendants, and reiterates His constant presence and blessing. This divine affirmation is a direct response to Abram's integrity.

Verse 21: "'And I will give to your descendants all these lands that you see with your eyes; to them I will give them for an inheritance forever; only be strong and do not fear, walk before Me and be perfect.'"

Commentary: The land promise is again emphasized, covering all the visible territory as an eternal inheritance. God commands Abram to "be strong," "not fear," and "be perfect" (blameless or wholehearted), reinforcing the covenant's moral dimension.

Verse 22: "And in the seventy-eighth year of Abram's life, in that year died **Reu**, the son of Peleg, and all the days of Reu were two hundred and thirty-nine years, and he died."

Commentary: This verse records the death of another patriarch, Reu, when Abram was 78. This continues Jasher's chronological record of the patriarchs' lifespans.

Verse 23: "And **Sarai**, the daughter of Haran, Abram's wife, was still barren in those days; she did not bear to Abram either son or daughter."

Commentary: The narrative returns to the pressing issue of Sarai's barrenness, which stands in stark contrast to God's repeated promises of numerous descendants.

Verse 24: "And when she saw that she bore no children, she took her handmaid **Hagar**, whom Pharaoh had given her, and she gave her to Abram her husband for a wife."

Commentary: This is a crucial event, directly matching Genesis 16. Sarai takes the initiative to give Hagar to Abram as a surrogate mother, a common practice in that culture to ensure offspring. This also highlights Hagar's origin as a royal Egyptian given by Pharaoh (from Chapter 15).

Verse 25: "For Hagar learned all the ways of Sarai as Sarai taught her, she was not in any way deficient in following her good ways."

Commentary: This verse praises Hagar, indicating that she was well-trained by Sarai and adopted her mistress's good ways, initially suggesting a harmonious relationship.

Verse 26: "And Sarai said to Abram, 'Behold here is my handmaid Hagar, go to her that she may bring forth upon my knees, that I may also obtain children through her.'"

Commentary: Sarai articulates the purpose of the arrangement: to obtain children "upon my knees," a legal term indicating that any child born to Hagar would be considered Sarai's own.

Verse 27: "And at the end of ten years of Abram's dwelling in the land of Canaan, which is the eighty-fifth year of Abram's life, Sarai gave Hagar to him."

Commentary: This provides a precise timeline: ten years after Abram's *first* arrival in Canaan (when he was 70, making him 80 now - if we follow Jasher's timeline from Ch 13, v. 17 where he's 70 after 15 years, then 10 years later is 80. *However, verse 27 says 85th year.* If Abram was 75 when he *returned* to Canaan as per verse 26, then 10 years later would be 85. This is consistent. So, the "ten years of Abram's dwelling in the land of Canaan" refers to his dwelling *after* his final return from Haran at age 75. Therefore, he is 85 years old when Hagar is given to him.)

Verse 28: "And Abram listened to the voice of his wife Sarai, and he took his handmaid Hagar, and Abram went to her and she conceived."

Commentary: Abram complies with Sarai's request, and Hagar becomes pregnant.

Verse 29: "And when Hagar saw that she had conceived, she rejoiced greatly, and her mistress was despised in her eyes, and she said within herself, 'This can only be that I am better before God than Sarai my mistress, for all the days that my mistress has been with my lord, she did not conceive, but the Lord has caused me in so short a time to conceive by him.'"

Commentary: Hagar's pregnancy leads to arrogance and a contemptuous attitude towards Sarai. She interprets her conception as a sign of divine favor, believing herself superior to her barren mistress. This psychological detail is similar to Genesis 16.

Verse 30: "And when Sarai saw that Hagar had conceived by Abram, Sarai was jealous of her handmaid, and Sarai said within herself, 'This is surely nothing else but that she must be better than I am.'"

Commentary: Sarai's jealousy arises from Hagar's newfound status and the perceived slight. She interprets Hagar's success as a sign of her own inferiority.

Verse 31: "And Sarai said to Abram, 'My wrong be upon you, for at the time when you prayed before the Lord for children, why did you not pray on my account, that the Lord should give me offspring from you?'"

Commentary: Sarai blames Abram, accusing him of not praying specifically for *her* to conceive, thus implying he is responsible for her current distress and Hagar's insolence.

Verse 32: "'And when I speak to Hagar in your presence, she despises my words, because she has conceived, and you will say nothing to her; may the Lord judge between me and you for what you have done to me.'"

Commentary: Sarai further complains about Hagar's disrespect and Abram's apparent inaction, calling upon God to judge between them. Her accusation "for what you have done to me" highlights her feeling of betrayal.

Verse 33: "And Abram said to Sarai, 'Behold, your handmaid is in your hand, do unto her as it may seem good in your eyes'; and Sarai afflicted her, and Hagar fled from her to the wilderness."

Commentary: Abram, unwilling to intervene in the conflict, gives Sarai full authority over Hagar. Sarai then treats Hagar harshly, causing Hagar to flee into the wilderness. This mirrors Genesis 16.

Verse 34: "And an angel of the Lord found her in the place where she had fled, by a well, and he said to her, 'Do not fear, for I will multiply your descendants, for you shall bear a son and you shall call his name **Ishmael**; now then return to Sarai your mistress, and submit yourself under her hands.'"

Commentary: An angel intervenes, finding Hagar in the wilderness. The angel gives her comfort, promises her a numerous lineage through her unborn son, Ishmael, and instructs her to return and submit to Sarai.

Verse 35: "And Hagar called the place of that well **Beer-lahai-roi**, it is between Kadesh and the wilderness of Bered."

Commentary: Hagar names the well, signifying God's presence and care during her distress, identical to the biblical account.

Verse 36: "And Hagar at that time returned to her master's house, and at the end of days Hagar bore a son to Abram, and Abram called his name Ishmael; and Abram was eighty-six years old when he begat him."

Commentary: Hagar returns as instructed, and in due course, she gives birth to Ishmael. Abram names him, and the precise age of Abram (86) at Ishmael's birth is given, consistent with the biblical record.

Book of Jasher, Chapter 17

The Conflict Between Chittim and Tubal

Verse 1: "In those days, when Abram was ninety-one years old, the descendants of **Chittim** went to war with the descendants of **Tubal**. After the Lord had scattered the people across the earth, the children of Chittim settled in the plain of Canopia, building cities there and living by the Tibreu River."

Commentary: This verse introduces a seemingly unrelated historical account, placing it within Abram's lifetime. It describes the settlement of two groups descended from Japheth (Chittim from Javan, Tubal from Japheth, per Genesis 10), and the geographical boundaries setting up their conflict.

Verse 2: "And the children of Tubal lived in Tuscanah, and their territory reached the Tibreu River. The children of Tubal built a city in Tuscanah and named it **Sabinah**, after their father **Sabinah**, son of Tubal, and they lived there to this day."

Commentary: This provides further detail about the Tubalites' settlement and the origin of their city's name.

Verse 3: "It was at that time that the children of Chittim waged war against the children of Tubal. The children of Tubal were defeated by the children of Chittim, and the children of Chittim caused three hundred and seventy men from the children of Tubal to fall."

Commentary: The initial conflict results in a defeat for the Tubalites, with significant casualties.

Verse 4: "And at that time, the children of Tubal swore an oath to the children of Chittim, saying, 'You shall not intermarry among us, and no man shall give his daughter to any of the sons of Chittim.'"

Commentary: Following their defeat, the Tubalites impose a social sanction: a strict prohibition against intermarriage with the Chittim, demonstrating their desire to maintain their distinct identity and perhaps express their animosity.

Verse 5: "For all the daughters of Tubal were fair in those days, for no women were then found in the whole earth so fair as the daughters of Tubal."

Commentary: This verse explains the reason for the marriage prohibition: the daughters of Tubal were exceptionally beautiful, making them highly desirable, which would put pressure on the oath.

Verse 6: "And all who delighted in the beauty of women went to the daughters of Tubal and took wives from them, and the sons of men, kings and princes, who greatly delighted in the beauty of women, took wives in those days from the daughters of Tubal."

Commentary: The beauty of Tubal's daughters was so renowned that even kings and princes from other nations sought them as wives, highlighting their attractiveness and the challenge the oath posed to the Chittim.

Verse 7: "And at the end of three years after the children of Tubal had sworn to the children of Chittim not to give them their daughters for wives, about twenty men of the children of Chittim went to take some of the daughters of Tubal, but they found none."

Commentary: After three years, some Chittim men attempt to break the oath by force or stealth but find that the Tubalites are upholding their vow, having hidden their daughters.

Verse 8: "For the children of Tubal kept their oaths not to intermarry with them, and they would not break their oaths."

Commentary: The Tubalites' commitment to their oath is explicitly stated.

Verse 9: "And in the days of harvest, the children of Tubal went into their fields to get in their harvest, when the young men of Chittim assembled and went to the city of Sabinah, and each man took a young woman from the daughters of Tubal, and they came to their cities."

Commentary: The Chittim exploit a vulnerable moment (harvest time) to launch a raid, forcefully abducting the daughters of Tubal from their city. This is a classic "rape of the Sabine women" type narrative, common in ancient folklore.

Verse 10: "And the children of Tubal heard of it and they went to make war with them, and they could not prevail over them, for the mountain was exceedingly high from them, and when they saw they could not prevail over them, they returned to their land."

Commentary: The Tubalites attempt a rescue but fail due to the difficult terrain (the Chittim's mountain stronghold), forcing them to retreat.

Verse 11: "And at the revolution of the year, the children of Tubal went and hired about ten thousand men from those cities that were near them, and they went to war with the children of Chittim."

Commentary: A year later, the Tubalites gather a larger, mercenary force for a renewed, more prepared attack, indicating their determination to reclaim their daughters and avenge the abduction.

Verse 12: "And the children of Tubal went to war with the children of Chittim, to destroy their land and to distress them, and in this engagement the children of Tubal prevailed over the children of Chittim. The children of Chittim, seeing that they were greatly distressed, lifted up the children which they had had by the daughters of Tubal, upon the wall which had been built, to be before the eyes of the children of Tubal."

Commentary: The Tubalites gain the upper hand, inflicting severe distress upon the Chittim. In a desperate tactic, the Chittim display the children born from the abducted women on their city walls. This is a powerful, emotional plea.

Verse 13: "And the children of Chittim said to them, 'Have you come to make war with your own sons and daughters, and have we not been considered your flesh and bones from that time till now?'"

Commentary: The Chittim appeal to the familial connection, arguing that these children, who are half-Tubalite, should prevent further conflict. They highlight the blood ties that now exist.

Verse 14: "And when the children of Tubal heard this, they ceased to make war with the children of Chittim, and they went away."

Commentary: The emotional appeal works. The Tubalites halt their attack, unable to harm their own kin, demonstrating the power of familial bonds.

Verse 15: "And they returned to their cities, and the children of Chittim at that time assembled and built two cities by the sea, and they called one **Purtu** and the other **Ariza**."

Commentary: The Tubalites return home, and the Chittim, perhaps anticipating future conflict or simply consolidating their new population, build new cities by the sea.

The Covenant of Circumcision and New Names

Verse 16: "And **Abram** the son of Terah was then ninety-nine years old."

Commentary: The narrative shifts back to Abram, providing his age as ninety-nine, setting the stage for a critical divine encounter.

Verse 17: "At that time, the Lord appeared to him and He said to him, 'I will make My covenant between Me and you, and I will greatly multiply your descendants, and this is the covenant which I make between Me and you, that every male child be circumcised, you and your descendants after you.'"

Commentary: This is a pivotal moment, mirroring Genesis 17. God appears to Abram, reiterates the promise of abundant descendants, and institutes the covenant of **circumcision** as a physical sign in the flesh, binding him and his male offspring to God's promises.

Verse 18: "'At eight days old shall it be circumcised, and this covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant.'"

Commentary: The specific timing for circumcision (eight days old) is given, and its perpetual nature is emphasized, making it a lasting sign of the covenant relationship.

Verse 19: "'And now therefore your name shall no more be called **Abram** but **Abraham**, and your wife shall no more be called **Sarai** but **Sarah**.'"

Commentary: God renames Abram to **Abraham** ("father of a multitude") and Sarai to **Sarah** ("princess"). These name changes signify their new identities and roles within God's expanded covenant, particularly in relation to the promise of numerous descendants and royalty.

Verse 20: "'For I will bless you both, and I will multiply your descendants after you that you shall become a great nation, and kings shall come forth from you.'"

Commentary: God confirms that both Abraham and Sarah will be blessed, and their descendants will form a great nation, with kings emerging from their lineage. This reinforces the royal aspect of the covenant, which is crucial for future monarchies like that of David

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Book of Jasher, Chapter 18

The Covenant of Circumcision and the Divine Visit

Verse 1: "And Abraham rose and did all that God had commanded him. He took the men of his household and those bought with his money, and he circumcised them as the Lord had commanded him."

Commentary: Abraham promptly obeys God's command regarding circumcision (from Chapter 17), circumcising all males in his household, including servants. This act marks his faithfulness to the newly established covenant.

Verse 2: "And there was not one left whom he did not circumcise, and Abraham and his son Ishmael were circumcised in the flesh of their foreskin; Ishmael was thirteen years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin."

Commentary: This verse emphasizes the completeness of the circumcision. It also gives Ishmael's age (thirteen), consistent with Genesis 17:25, highlighting that he, too, was brought into the covenant.

Verse 3: "And on the third day, Abraham went out of his tent and sat at the door to enjoy the heat of the sun, during the pain of his flesh."

Commentary: This detail, consistent with medical knowledge of circumcision, highlights Abraham's discomfort on the third day post-procedure, when the pain would typically be most intense.

Verse 4: "And the Lord appeared to him in the plain of Mamre, and sent three of His ministering angels to visit him. He was sitting at the door of the tent, and he lifted his eyes and saw, and behold, three men were coming from a distance. He rose up and ran to meet them, and he bowed down to them and brought them into his house."

Commentary: This describes the famous visitation of the three divine messengers (Genesis 18). While Genesis calls them "men," Jasher explicitly states they are "ministering angels." Abraham's immediate and humble hospitality—running to meet them and bowing down—is emphasized.

Verse 5: "And he said to them, 'If now I have found favor in your sight, turn in and eat a morsel of bread'; and he pressed them, and they turned in and he gave them water and they washed their feet, and he placed them under a tree at the door of the tent."

Commentary: Abraham's earnest invitation and swift provision of basic comforts like water for foot washing demonstrate his exceptional hospitality.

Verse 6: "And Abraham ran and took a calf, tender and good, and he hastened to kill it, and gave it to his servant **Eliezer** to dress."

Commentary: Abraham's enthusiasm for his guests is shown by his personal involvement in preparing a lavish meal, selecting a prime calf, and entrusting its preparation to Eliezer.

Verse 7: "And Abraham came to Sarah into the tent, and he said to her, 'Make ready quickly three measures of fine meal, knead it and make cakes to cover the pot containing the meat,' and she did so."

Commentary: Sarah is also involved in the preparation, demonstrating their combined efforts in hosting. The specific instruction about making cakes to "cover the pot" suggests a particular culinary technique.

Verse 8: "And Abraham hastened and brought before them butter and milk, beef and mutton, and gave it before them to eat before the flesh of the calf was sufficiently done, and they did eat."

Commentary: Abraham serves a rich and varied meal, even offering some food before the main course of calf is fully cooked, emphasizing his eagerness to feed them. The guests indeed partake of the meal.

Verse 9: "And when they had done eating, one of them said to him, 'I will return to you according to the time of life, and Sarah your wife shall have a son.'"

Commentary: After the meal, the divine messenger delivers the astonishing prophecy: Sarah, despite her old age and barrenness, will bear a son. This sets the stage for Isaac's birth.

Verse 10: "And the men afterward departed and went their ways, to the places to which they were sent."

Commentary: The angels conclude their visit and proceed with their divine mission.

The Wickedness of Sodom

Verse 11: "In those days, all the people of Sodom and Gomorrah, and of the whole five cities, were exceedingly wicked and sinful against the Lord, and they provoked the Lord with their abominations, and they grew stronger in acting abominably and scornfully before the Lord, and their wickedness and crimes were in those days great before the Lord."

Commentary: This verse provides an extensive condemnation of the people of Sodom and the other cities of the plain, describing their extreme and escalating wickedness and sinfulness against God. It emphasizes their open defiance and the magnitude of their crimes.

Verse 12: "And they had in their land a very extensive valley, about half a day's walk, and in it there were fountains of water and a great deal of herbage surrounding the water."

Commentary: This describes a beautiful, fertile valley near Sodom, a place of natural abundance.

Verse 13: "And all the people of Sodom and Gomorrah went there four times in the year, with their wives and children and all belonging to them, and they rejoiced there with timbrels and dances."

Commentary: The people of Sodom would gather in this valley four times a year for festivals, seemingly joyful occasions with music and dancing.

Verse 14: "And in the time of rejoicing, they would all rise and lay hold of their neighbor's wives, and some, the virgin daughters of their neighbors, and they enjoyed them, and each man saw his wife and daughter in the hands of his neighbor and did not say a word."

Commentary: This is a shocking and explicit description of the "abominations" mentioned earlier. The communal "rejoicing" devolves into widespread, open, and accepted sexual assault, including the violation of virgins, with husbands and fathers passively condoning it. This paints a picture of extreme moral depravity and a complete breakdown of social norms.

Verse 15: "And they did so from morning to night, and they afterward returned home, each man to his house and each woman to her tent; so they always did four times in the year."

Commentary: The depravity was institutionalized, occurring regularly and openly, with no shame or consequence.

Verse 16: "Also when a stranger came into their cities and brought goods which he had purchased with a view to dispose of there, the people of these cities would assemble, men, women and children, young and old, and go to the man and take his goods by force, giving a little to each man until there was an end to all the goods of the owner which he had brought into the land."

Commentary: Beyond sexual immorality, Jasher details the Sodomites' extreme injustice and lack of hospitality towards strangers. They would systematically rob traders by mob rule, taking goods by force and distributing tiny portions, effectively rendering the merchant destitute.

Verse 17: "And if the owner of the goods quarreled with them, saying, 'What is this work which you have done to me?', then they would approach to him one by one, and each would show him the little which he took and taunt him, saying, 'I only took that little which you did give me'; and when he heard this from them all, he would arise and go from them in sorrow and bitterness of soul, when they would all arise and go after him, and drive him out of the city with great noise and tumult."

Commentary: The Sodomites would mock their victims, feigning innocence and claiming they only took what was "given" to them. If the victim complained, they would collectively and cruelly drive him out of the city with loud taunts. This highlights their legalistic corruption and lack of empathy.

The Story of Hedad and the Traveler

Verse 18: "And there was a man from the country of Elam who was leisurely going on the road, seated upon his ass, which carried a fine mantle of various colors, and the mantle was bound with a cord upon the ass."

Commentary: This introduces a specific anecdote that exemplifies Sodom's wickedness, focusing on a single traveler and his possessions. The "mantle of divers colors" sounds like a valuable item.

Verse 19: "And the man was on his journey passing through the street of Sodom when the sun set in the evening, and he remained there in order to abide during the night, but no one would let him into his house; and at that time there was in Sodom a wicked and mischievous man, one skillful to do evil, and his name was **Hedad**."

Commentary: The traveler seeks hospitality but is denied by everyone, a stark contrast to Abraham's character. A specific villain, Hedad, is introduced, characterized by his skill in doing evil.

Verse 20: "And he lifted up his eyes and saw the traveler in the street of the city, and he came to him and said, 'Whence come you and whither do you go?'"

Commentary: Hedad approaches the stranger, feigning concern.

Verse 21: "And the man said to him, 'I am traveling from Hebron to Elam where I belong, and as I passed the sun set and no one would suffer me to enter his house, though I had bread and water and also straw and provender for my ass, and am short of nothing.'"

Commentary: The traveler explains his predicament, emphasizing that he is self-sufficient and only needs shelter, making the Sodomites' lack of hospitality even more egregious.

Verse 22: "And Hedad answered and said to him, 'All that you shall want shall be supplied by me, but in the street you shall not abide all night.'"

Commentary: Hedad, seemingly generous, offers shelter, but his true motive is sinister.

Verse 23: "And Hedad brought him to his house, and he took off the mantle from the ass with the cord, and brought them to his house, and he gave the ass straw and provender whilst the traveler ate and drank in Hedad's house, and he abode there that night."

Commentary: Hedad takes the valuable mantle and cord inside, ostensibly for safekeeping. The traveler receives basic hospitality.

Verse 24: "And in the morning the traveler rose up early to continue his journey, when Hedad said to him, 'Wait, comfort your heart with a morsel of bread and then go,' and the man did so; and he remained with him, and they both ate and drank together during the day, when the man rose up to go."

Commentary: Hedad begins to delay the traveler, insisting on more hospitality, likely to stretch out the time and concoct his scheme.

Verse 25: "And Hedad said to him, 'Behold now the day is declining, you had better remain all night that your heart may be comforted'; and he pressed him so that he tarried there all night, and on the second day he rose up early to go away, when Hedad pressed him, saying, 'Comfort your heart with a morsel of bread and then go,' and he remained and ate with him also the second day, and then the man rose up to continue his journey."

Commentary: Hedad continues his manipulative hospitality, preventing the traveler from leaving, dragging out the stay for days.

Verse 26: "And Hedad said to him, 'Behold now the day is declining, remain with me to comfort your heart and in the morning rise up early and go your way.'"

Commentary: Hedad tries to extend the stay yet again.

Verse 27: "And the man would not remain, but rose and saddled his ass, and whilst he was saddling his ass the wife of Hedad said to her husband, 'Behold this man has remained with us for two days eating and drinking and he has given us nothing, and now shall he go away from us without giving anything?' and Hedad said to her, 'Be silent.'"

Commentary: The traveler finally resists. Hedad's wife reveals their true greed and malice, complaining that they haven't profited from the traveler's stay. Hedad's "Be silent" is not a rebuke of her evil, but a sign that he has a plan to extract payment.

Verse 28: "And the man saddled his ass to go, and he asked Hedad to give him the cord and mantle to tie it upon the ass."

Commentary: The traveler prepares to leave and asks for his stored possessions.

Verse 29: "And Hedad said to him, 'What say you?' And he said to him, 'That you, my lord, shall give me the cord and the mantle made with various colors which you did conceal with you in your house to take care of it.'"

Commentary: Hedad pretends not to understand, and the traveler explicitly requests his specific items.

Verse 30: "And Hedad answered the man, saying, 'This is the interpretation of your dream: the cord which you did see, means that your life will be lengthened out like a cord, and having seen the mantle colored with all sorts of colors, means that you shall have a vineyard in which you will plant trees of all fruits.'"

Commentary: Hedad's cunning plan is revealed: he claims the traveler was dreaming and proceeds to "interpret" the dream, turning the traveler's actual possessions into symbolic elements of a positive dream, thus denying their physical existence. This is a cruel and manipulative form of gaslighting.

Verse 31: "And the traveler answered, saying, 'Not so, my lord, for I was awake when I gave you the cord and also a mantle woven with different colors, which you did take off the ass to put them by for me'; and Hedad answered and said, 'Surely I have told you the interpretation of your dream and it is a good dream, and this is the interpretation thereof.'"

Commentary: The traveler protests, insisting he was awake and consciously gave Hedad the items. Hedad, however, maintains his lie, reinforcing the fabricated "dream interpretation."

Verse 32: "'Now the sons of men give me four pieces of silver, which is my charge for interpreting dreams, and of you only I require three pieces of silver.'"

Commentary: Hedad goes even further, demanding payment for his "dream interpretation," adding insult to injury and attempting to profit from his deception. He claims to be giving the traveler a discount, making it even more perverse.

Verse 33: "And the man was provoked at the words of Hedad, and he cried bitterly, and he brought Hedad to **Serak**, judge of Sodom."

Commentary: The traveler, outraged, seeks legal recourse, bringing Hedad before Serak, the judge of Sodom.

Verse 34: "And the man laid his cause before Serak the judge, when Hedad replied, saying, 'It is not so, but thus the matter stands'; and the judge said to the traveler, 'This man Hedad tells you the truth, for he is famed in the cities for the accurate interpretation of dreams.'"

Commentary: The corruption of Sodom's justice system is revealed. The judge, Serak, supports Hedad's fabricated story, upholding the lie and validating Hedad's false profession as a dream interpreter. This shows the institutionalized injustice in Sodom.

Verse 35: "And the man cried at the word of the judge, and he said, 'Not so, my Lord, for it was in the day that I gave him the cord and mantle which was upon the ass, in order to put them by in his house'; and they both disputed before the judge, the one saying, 'Thus the matter was,' and the other declaring otherwise."

Commentary: The traveler desperately argues for the truth, but the judge sides with Hedad's preposterous claim, creating a stalemate of absurd injustice.

Verse 36: "And Hedad said to the man, 'Give me four pieces of silver that I charge for my interpretations of dreams; I will not make any allowance; and give me the expense of the four meals that you did eat in my house.'"

Commentary: Hedad presses his demands, now adding a charge for the "hospitality" (which he had forced upon the traveler) to the dream interpretation fee.

Verse 37: "And the man said to Hedad, 'Truly I will pay you for what I ate in your house, only give me the cord and mantle which you did conceal in your house.'"

Commentary: The traveler, in a desperate attempt to retrieve his belongings, concedes to pay for the meals, but insists on the return of his property.

Verse 38: "And Hedad replied before the judge and said to the man, 'Did I not tell you the interpretation of your dream? The cord means that your days shall be prolonged like a cord, and the mantle, that you will have a vineyard in which you will plant all kinds of fruit trees.'"

Commentary: Hedad defiantly repeats his "dream interpretation," cementing the denial of the traveler's rightful claim.

Verse 39: "'This is the proper interpretation of your dream, now give me the four pieces of silver that I require as a compensation, for I will make you no allowance.'"

Commentary: Hedad insists on his fee, showing no pity or willingness to compromise.

Verse 40: "And the man cried at the words of Hedad and they both quarreled before the judge, and the judge gave orders to his servants, who drove them rashly from the house."

Commentary: The dispute escalates, and the corrupt judge, instead of rendering justice, throws both parties out, abandoning the victim.

Verse 41: "And they went away quarreling from the judge, when the people of Sodom heard them, and they gathered about them and they exclaimed against the stranger, and they drove him rashly from the city."

Commentary: The injustice is not limited to the judge. The public of Sodom, upon hearing the commotion, sides with Hedad and violently drives the stranger out of their city, demonstrating their collective wickedness and hostility towards outsiders.

Verse 42: "And the man continued his journey upon his ass with bitterness of soul, lamenting and weeping."

Commentary: The traveler leaves Sodom, utterly wronged and deeply distressed, having lost his possessions and endured extreme injustice.

Verse 43: "And whilst he was going along he wept at what had happened to him in the corrupt city of Sodom."

Commentary: The final image is of the traveler weeping, a poignant reflection of the profound corruption and cruelty that defined Sodom. This detailed anecdote serves to fully justify the divine judgment that is about to fall upon the city.

Book of Jasher, Chapter 19

The Twisted Justice of Sodom

Verse 1: "The four cities of Sodom each had their own judge. Their names were Serak in Sodom, Sharkad in Gomorrah, Zabnac in Admah, and Menon in Zeboyim."

Commentary: This verse introduces the legal structure of the infamous cities. It highlights that they weren't lawless in the typical sense, but rather had an established, albeit corrupt, system of justice. Each city had a designated leader or official.

Verse 2: "Abraham's servant, Eliezer, gave these judges different, more descriptive names. He called Serak 'Shakra' (meaning 'lie' or 'deceit'), Sharkad 'Shakrura' (meaning 'deception'), Zebnac 'Kezobim' (meaning 'liars'), and Menon 'Matzlodin' (meaning 'ensnarers' or 'trappers')."

Commentary: Eliezer, recognizing the true nature of these judges, renames them to reflect their dishonest and manipulative practices. These new names serve as a clever form of protest and a commentary on the moral bankruptcy of their leadership.

The Infamous "Bed of Sodom"

Verse 3: "At the insistence of their four judges, the people of Sodom and Gomorrah set up beds in the city streets. If someone new came to these places, they would grab them and force them onto one of these beds."

Commentary: This describes the horrifying "Bed of Sodom," a cruel custom designed to inflict pain and potentially death on visitors. The fact that this was done "by desire of their four judges" emphasizes the institutionalized nature of their cruelty.

Verse 4: "Once the person was lying down, three men would stand at their head and three at their feet. They would measure the person against the length of the bed. If the person was shorter than the bed, these six men would stretch them from both ends. When the person cried out, they wouldn't respond."

Commentary: This details the brutal torture inflicted. The lack of response to cries for help underscores the extreme sadism and indifference of the people of Sodom. It highlights their complete disregard for human suffering.

Verse 5: "And if they were longer than the bed, they would pull the two sides of the bed together at each end, until the person was on the verge of death."

Commentary: The cruelty wasn't limited to stretching; those who were too tall faced an equally horrific fate, being crushed until they were near death. This demonstrates the arbitrary and malicious nature of their "justice."

Verse 6: "If the person continued to cry out, they would answer, saying, 'This is what happens to anyone who comes to our land.'"

Commentary: This chilling statement reveals the purpose behind the torture: to deter outsiders and maintain their isolated, cruel society. It's a declaration of their twisted laws and a warning to any who dared to enter.

Verse 7: "When people heard about all these things the citizens of Sodom did, they stopped coming there."

Commentary: The reputation of Sodom spread, and its atrocities became widely known, effectively isolating the cities due to fear. This shows the impact of their extreme customs on regional travel and interaction.

Exploiting the Poor

Verse 8: "When a poor person arrived in their land, they would give them silver and gold. Then, they would make a public announcement throughout the entire city, forbidding anyone from giving the poor person a single bite of bread. If the stranger stayed there for several days and died of hunger, unable to get any food, then upon their death, all the city's inhabitants would come and reclaim the silver and gold they had given them."

Commentary: This reveals another layer of their wickedness. They would lure the poor with gifts, only to ensure their slow, agonizing death by starvation, then reclaim their "generosity." It's a calculated and perverse form of exploitation.

Verse 9: "Those who could identify the silver or gold they had given him would take it back. At the poor person's death, they would also strip them of their clothes and fight over them. Whoever overpowered their neighbor got the garments."

Commentary: Not only did they reclaim their money, but they also engaged in a barbaric struggle over the deceased's meager belongings. This emphasizes their greed and lack of respect for the dead.

Verse 10: "After that, they would carry him and bury him under some bushes in the desert. This is how they treated anyone who came to them and died in their land, every single day."

Commentary: This highlights the complete dehumanization of the poor. They were given a disrespectful, unceremonious burial, further emphasizing the cruel and routine nature of these practices.

Eliezer's Encounter with Sodomite Justice

Verse 11: "Later, Sarah sent Eliezer to Sodom to check on Lot and see how he was doing."

Commentary: This sets the scene for Eliezer's direct experience with the Sodomites' depravity. Sarah's concern for Lot contrasts sharply with the indifference of the people of Sodom.

Verse 12: "Eliezer went to Sodom and saw a man of Sodom fighting with a stranger. The man of Sodom stripped the poor man of all his clothes and left."

Commentary: Eliezer immediately witnesses an act of injustice, a common occurrence in Sodom, where the strong preyed on the weak without consequence.

Verse 13: "The poor man cried out to Eliezer and begged for his help because of what the man of Sodom had done to him."

Commentary: The stranger's plea for help indicates that Eliezer, as an outsider, was seen as a potential source of justice, or at least sympathy, in a place devoid of it.

Verse 14: "Eliezer asked the man, 'Why are you treating this poor man, who came to your land, like this?'"

Commentary: Eliezer confronts the Sodomite, displaying a sense of righteous indignation and a commitment to justice that is completely absent in Sodom.

Verse 15: "The man of Sodom answered Eliezer, saying, 'Is this man your brother? Or have the people of Sodom made you a judge today, that you speak about this man?'"

Commentary: The Sodomite's response is arrogant and dismissive, challenging Eliezer's right to intervene. It also reveals their system: unless you're a designated judge, you have no authority to question their actions.

Verse 16: "Eliezer argued with the man of Sodom on behalf of the poor man. When Eliezer tried to get the poor man's clothes back from the man of Sodom, he quickly struck Eliezer on the forehead with a stone."

Commentary: Eliezer's attempt to retrieve the stolen clothes leads to violence against him. This demonstrates the immediate and aggressive reaction of the Sodomites to any perceived interference with their "laws."

Verse 17: "Blood flowed profusely from Eliezer's forehead. When the man saw the blood, he grabbed Eliezer, saying, 'Give me my payment for getting rid of this bad blood that was in your forehead, because that's the custom and law in our land.'"

Commentary: This is a shocking example of Sodomite "justice." The assailant demands payment for wounding Eliezer, claiming it was a service. This illustrates the utter perversion of their legal and moral code.

Verse 18: "Eliezer said to him, 'You've wounded me, and you're demanding payment?' Eliezer refused to listen to the man of Sodom."

Commentary: Eliezer, understandably, rejects this outrageous demand, highlighting the absurdity and injustice of the situation.

Verse 19: "The man grabbed Eliezer and brought him before Shakra, the judge of Sodom, for judgment."

Commentary: The assailant, confident in the Sodomite legal system, takes Eliezer to court, believing the judge will side with him.

Verse 20: "The man spoke to the judge, saying, 'Please, my lord, this man did this: I struck him with a stone, and blood flowed from his forehead, and he's unwilling to give me my payment.'"

Commentary: The man presents his case, framing his assault as a service for which he is owed compensation, completely twisting the truth.

Verse 21: "The judge said to Eliezer, 'This man is telling you the truth. Give him his payment, for this is the custom in our land.' Eliezer heard the judge's words, and he picked up a stone and struck the judge. The stone hit his forehead, and blood flowed profusely from the judge's forehead. Eliezer said, 'If this is the custom in your land, then you should give this man what I was supposed to give him, because this was your decision; you decreed it.'"

Commentary: The judge confirms the outrageous "law," prompting Eliezer to turn the Sodomite's own perverted justice against him. By striking the judge and demanding *he* pay the assailant, Eliezer brilliantly exposes the hypocrisy and injustice of their system.

Verse 22: "Eliezer left the man of Sodom with the judge and went on his way."

Commentary: Eliezer makes his point and departs, leaving the Sodomites to deal with their own absurd legal precedent.

Lot's Family and Sodom's End

Verse 23: "When the kings of Elam waged war against the kings of Sodom, the kings of Elam captured all of Sodom's possessions. They also took Lot captive, along with his property. When Abraham was told about this, he went and fought against the kings of Elam. He recovered all of Lot's property, as well as Sodom's property, from their hands."

Commentary: This recalls the historical event where Lot was captured during a regional war and Abraham's heroic rescue, demonstrating Abraham's loyalty to his nephew.

Verse 24: "At that time, Lot's wife gave birth to a daughter, and he named her Paltith, saying, 'Because God had delivered him and his entire household from the kings of Elam.' Paltith, Lot's daughter, grew up, and one of the men of Sodom married her."

Commentary: This introduces Paltith, Lot's daughter, whose name signifies God's deliverance. Her marriage to a man of Sodom foreshadows the challenges and dangers she will face living within that wicked society.

Paltith's Act of Compassion and Its Tragic Consequence

Verse 25: "A poor man came into the city to find food and stayed there for several days. All the people of Sodom publicly announced their custom: not to give this man a single bite of bread until he dropped dead on the ground, and that's exactly what they did."

Commentary: This reiterates the horrific custom of starving the poor, setting the stage for Paltith's compassionate act. It underscores the pervasive cruelty of Sodomite society.

Verse 26: "Paltith, Lot's daughter, saw this man lying in the streets, starving, with no one willing to give him anything to keep him alive, and he was on the verge of death."

Commentary: Paltith's observation of the dying man highlights her empathy, contrasting sharply with the indifference of the other citizens.

Verse 27: "Her heart was filled with pity for the man, and she secretly fed him bread for many days, and the man's life was saved."

Commentary: This is a crucial moment, showcasing Paltith's heroic act of defiance against the cruel laws of Sodom. Her compassion directly saves a life.

Verse 28: "When she went to fetch water, she would put the bread in the water pitcher. When she reached the place where the poor man was, she would take the bread from the pitcher and give it to him to eat. She did this for many days."

Commentary: This details Paltith's clever and courageous method of secretly feeding the man, highlighting her resourcefulness and dedication to helping him.

Verse 29: "All the people of Sodom and Gomorrah wondered how this man could survive starvation for so many days."

Commentary: The Sodomites are perplexed by the man's continued survival, a testament to Paltith's successful efforts and their own inability to comprehend genuine kindness.

Verse 30: "They said to each other, 'This can only be because he's eating and drinking, because no one can survive starvation for so many days or live as this man has, without even his appearance changing.' So, three men hid themselves where the poor man was, to find out who was bringing him bread to eat."

Commentary: Their suspicion leads them to investigate, demonstrating their determination to enforce their cruel laws and uncover any act of compassion.

Verse 31: "Paltith, Lot's daughter, went out that day to fetch water, and she put bread into her pitcher of water. She went to draw water near the poor man's place, and she took out the bread from the pitcher and gave it to the poor man, and he ate it."

Commentary: The trap is set, and Paltith, unaware, continues her merciful act, leading to her discovery.

Verse 32: "The three men saw what Paltith did for the poor man and said to her, 'So it's you who has supported him! That's why he hasn't starved, or changed in appearance, or died like the rest.'"

Commentary: Paltith's act of charity is exposed, and the men reveal their knowledge, condemning her for defying their customs.

Verse 33: "The three men came out of their hiding place and seized Paltith and the bread in the poor man's hand."

Commentary: The immediate and aggressive capture of Paltith shows the swift and severe consequences of breaking Sodomite laws.

Verse 34: "They took Paltith and brought her before their judges and said to them, 'This is what she did; she supplied the poor man with bread, which is why he hasn't died all this time. Now, tell us what punishment this woman deserves for breaking our law.'"

Commentary: Paltith is formally charged with a crime that, in any just society, would be considered a virtuous act. The emphasis is on her "transgression" of their perverse law.

Verse 35: "The people of Sodom and Gomorrah gathered and lit a fire in the city street. They took the woman and threw her into the fire, and she was burned to ashes."

Commentary: This is the horrifying and brutal execution of Paltith, a chilling testament to the extreme cruelty and unwavering adherence to their twisted laws in Sodom. Her death is a stark example of the cost of compassion in such a wicked society.

Another Act of Kindness Punished in Admah

Verse 36: "And in the city of Admah, they did the same to another woman."

Commentary: This verse indicates that Paltith's fate was not an isolated incident, but rather a reflection of the widespread cruelty in the cities of the plain, including Admah.

Verse 37: "A traveler came into the city of Admah to stay there all night, intending to go home in the morning. He sat opposite the door of a young woman's father's house to rest, as the sun had set when he reached that place. The young woman saw him sitting by the door of the house."

Commentary: This sets up a similar scenario, highlighting the vulnerability of travelers in these cities and the potential for a compassionate encounter.

Verse 38: "He asked her for a drink of water, and she said to him, 'Who are you?' And he said to her, 'I was traveling today and reached here when the sun set, so I'll stay here all night, and in the morning I'll get up early and continue my journey.'"

Commentary: The traveler's simple request and explanation highlight his basic human needs and his transient status.

Verse 39: "And the young woman went into the house and brought the man bread and water to eat and drink."

Commentary: Like Paltith, this young woman shows compassion by providing sustenance, directly violating the customs of her city.

Verse 40: "This act became known to the people of Admah, and they gathered and brought the young woman before the judges, so they could judge her for this deed."

Commentary: News of her kindness spreads, leading to her swift apprehension and formal accusation, demonstrating the vigilance of the Sodomites in enforcing their cruel rules.

Verse 41: "And the judge said, 'The judgment of death must be passed on this woman because she broke our law, and this is therefore the decision concerning her.'"

Commentary: The judge's immediate pronouncement of a death sentence underscores the severity with which acts of kindness were viewed and punished in these cities.

Verse 42: "The people of those cities gathered and brought out the young woman. They anointed her with honey from head to foot, as the judge had decreed, and placed her before a swarm of bees that were in their hives. The bees flew onto her and stung her until her whole body swelled up."

Commentary: This describes an incredibly sadistic and agonizing method of execution, unique to Admah but equally horrifying. The use of honey and bees makes her death slow, torturous, and public, serving as a gruesome warning.

Verse 43: "And the young woman cried out because of the bees, but no one paid attention to her or pitied her, and her cries ascended to heaven."

Commentary: Her screams, ignored by the heartless citizens, emphasize the profound cruelty and lack of empathy in these cities. Her cries reaching heaven signify divine awareness of their wickedness.

Divine Judgment and the Destruction of Sodom

Verse 44: "And the Lord was angered by this and by all the actions of the cities of Sodom, for they had abundant food and lived in peace, yet they refused to support the poor and needy. In those days, their evil deeds and sins became great before the Lord."

Commentary: This verse provides the divine perspective, explaining God's wrath. The cities' affluence and tranquility, combined with their refusal to help the less fortunate and their active cruelty, made their sins particularly egregious in God's eyes.

Verse 45: "And the Lord sent two of the angels who had come to Abraham's house to destroy Sodom and its cities."

Commentary: The narrative shifts to the direct action of God. The angels, previously seen visiting Abraham, are now dispatched as agents of divine judgment.

Verse 46: "The angels left the door of Abraham's tent after they had eaten and drunk, and they reached Sodom in the evening. Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom at that time. When he saw them, he rose to meet them and bowed down to the ground."

Commentary: This describes the arrival of the angels in Sodom and Lot's immediate recognition and reverence towards them, contrasting him with the other inhabitants.

Verse 47: "And he urged them strongly and brought them into his house. He gave them food, which they ate, and they stayed all night in his house."

Commentary: Lot's hospitality, a virtue notably absent in Sodom, stands in stark contrast to the city's customs and proves his righteousness in the eyes of God.

Verse 48: "And the angels said to Lot, 'Get up, leave this place, you and everyone belonging to you, so you won't be consumed in the wickedness of this city, for the Lord will destroy this place.'"

Commentary: The angels reveal their mission and instruct Lot to flee, emphasizing the imminent and comprehensive destruction due to the city's pervasive evil.

Verse 49: "And the angels took hold of Lot's hand, and his wife's hand, and the hands of his children, and everyone belonging to him, and they brought him out and set him outside the cities."

Commentary: The angels physically guide Lot's family to safety, demonstrating divine intervention and the urgency of their escape.

Verse 50: "And they said to Lot, 'Escape for your life!' And he fled, along with everyone belonging to him."

Commentary: The final command to flee highlights the necessity of immediate action to avoid destruction.

Verse 51: "Then the Lord rained down burning sulfur and fire on Sodom, Gomorrah, and all these cities, from the Lord out of heaven."

Commentary: This describes the dramatic and complete destruction of the cities by divine intervention, a fiery cataclysm.

Verse 52: "And He overthrew these cities, the entire plain, all the inhabitants of the cities, and everything that grew on the ground. And Ado, Lot's wife, looked back to see the destruction of the cities because her heart was moved with compassion for her daughters who remained in Sodom, for they did not go with her."

Commentary: The destruction is total. Lot's wife's act of looking back, driven by compassion for her left-behind daughters, is a poignant moment that explains her fate.

Verse 53: "And when she looked back, she became a pillar of salt, and it is still in that place to this day."

Commentary: This describes Lot's wife's transformation, a warning against disobedience and clinging to the condemned past. The mention of its continued presence serves as a testament to the event.

Verse 54: "And the oxen that stood in that place daily licked up the salt to the tips of their feet, and in the morning it would reappear fresh, and they again licked it up to this day."

Commentary: This adds a fascinating and somewhat unusual detail about the lasting nature of the salt pillar, further emphasizing its miraculous and enduring presence.

Lot's Daughters and the Origin of Moab and Ammon

Verse 55: "And Lot and two of his daughters who remained with him fled and escaped to the cave of Adullam, and they stayed there for some time."

Commentary: This sets the scene for the following, controversial events, explaining where Lot and his remaining daughters found refuge.

Verse 56: "And Abraham got up early in the morning to see what had happened to the cities of Sodom; and he looked and saw the smoke of the cities rising up like the smoke of a furnace."

Commentary: Abraham witnesses the aftermath of the destruction, confirming the fulfillment of God's judgment.

Verse 57: "And Lot and his two daughters remained in the cave, and they made their father drink wine, and they slept with him, for they said there was no man on earth who could father children with them, because they thought the whole earth had been destroyed."

Commentary: This verse describes a deeply problematic act. The daughters' motivation, born from a desperate belief that humanity had been wiped out, leads to incest. This highlights the psychological impact of their traumatic experience.

Verse 58: "And they both slept with their father, and they conceived and bore sons. The firstborn named her son Moab, saying, 'From my father I conceived him.' He is the ancestor of the Moabites to this day."

Commentary: This explains the origin of the Moabite people, tracing their lineage back to Lot through this incestuous union.

Verse 59: "And the younger also named her son Benami; he is the ancestor of the children of Ammon to this day."

Commentary: Similarly, this explains the origin of the Ammonite people, also through this unconventional and ethically questionable lineage.

Verse 60: "And after this, Lot and his two daughters left there, and he lived on the other side of the Jordan with his two daughters and their sons. And Lot's sons grew up, and they went and took wives from the land of Canaan, and they had children and were fruitful and multiplied."

Commentary: This concludes Lot's story, showing his eventual settlement and the continuation of his lineage, leading to the establishment of the Moabite and Ammonite nations. Despite their unusual origins, they ultimately became populous peoples.

Book of Jasher, Chapter 20

Abraham and Sarah in Gerar

Verse 1: "At that time, Abraham traveled from the plains of Mamre to the land of the Philistines and settled in Gerar. This was in the twenty-fifth year of Abraham's stay in Canaan, and it was his hundredth birthday when he arrived in Gerar, in the land of the Philistines."

Commentary: This verse sets the scene for a new chapter in Abraham's life. We learn his age, the duration of his stay in Canaan, and his new location in Gerar, a Philistine city. It establishes the context for the events that follow, emphasizing Abraham's continued journey and God's ongoing plan for him.

Verse 2: "As they entered the land, he told his wife, Sarah, 'Tell anyone who asks that you are my sister, so we can avoid trouble from the people of this land.'"

Commentary: This is the second instance where Abraham asks Sarah to pose as his sister (the first being in Egypt in Genesis 12). This reveals Abraham's fear for his life, prioritizing his safety over full disclosure. It also highlights the perceived danger of living among foreign peoples.

Verse 3: "While Abraham was living in the land of the Philistines, King Abimelech's servants saw that Sarah was incredibly beautiful. They asked Abraham about her, and he replied, 'She is my sister.'"

Commentary: Sarah's beauty once again attracts attention, leading to questions about her relationship with Abraham. Abraham maintains his deception, reinforcing the precarious situation they find themselves in.

Verse 4: "Abimelech's servants went to him, saying, 'A man from the land of Canaan has come to live here, and he has an exceedingly beautiful sister.'"

Commentary: The servants' report to Abimelech emphasizes Sarah's striking appearance, which immediately catches the king's attention and sets in motion the events that follow.

Verse 5: "Abimelech heard his servants praising Sarah, so he sent his officers to bring Sarah to him."

Commentary: Abimelech, influenced by his servants' description, exercises his royal prerogative and commands Sarah's presence. This shows the unchecked power of ancient kings.

Verse 6: "Sarah came to Abimelech's house, and the king saw that Sarah was beautiful, and she pleased him greatly."

Commentary: Sarah's beauty clearly impressed the king, validating his servants' claims. This sets up the central conflict of the chapter: Abimelech's desire for Sarah.

Verse 7: "He approached her and asked, 'What is that man to you, the one you came here with?' Sarah answered, 'He is my brother, and we came from the land of Canaan to settle wherever we could find a place.'"

Commentary: Abimelech directly questions Sarah, and she repeats Abraham's fabricated story. This reinforces the deception and shows their coordinated effort to protect Abraham.

Verse 8: "Abimelech said to Sarah, 'Look, my land is open to you. Place your brother in any part of this land that pleases you, and it will be our duty to honor and elevate him above all the people of the land, since he is your brother.'"

Commentary: Abimelech's offer to Abraham, based on the belief that he is Sarah's brother, demonstrates his desire to curry favor with her. It also shows a degree of hospitality, albeit one rooted in a misunderstanding.

Verse 9: "Abimelech sent for Abraham, and Abraham came to Abimelech."

Commentary: Abimelech formalizes the invitation, bringing Abraham into his presence to extend his offer directly.

Verse 10: "Abimelech said to Abraham, 'Look, I have given orders that you will be honored as you wish because of your sister Sarah.'"

Commentary: The king reiterates his promise to honor Abraham, emphasizing that this favor is a direct result of Sarah's supposed relationship to him.

Verse 11: "Abraham left the king, and the king's gift followed him."

Commentary: This indicates that Abraham received a gift from Abimelech, signifying the king's goodwill, though it's ironic given the underlying deception.

Divine Intervention and the Plague

Verse 12: "As evening came, before people lay down to rest, the king was sitting on his throne. A deep sleep fell upon him, and he lay on the throne and slept until morning."

Commentary: This sets the stage for a divine intervention. Abimelech's deep sleep allows for a direct communication from God without the king being consciously aware.

Verse 13: "He dreamed that an angel of the Lord came to him with a drawn sword in his hand. The angel stood over Abimelech and intended to kill him with the sword. The king was terrified in his dream and said to the angel, 'How have I sinned against you that you come to kill me with your sword?'"

Commentary: This vivid dream portrays a terrifying divine judgment. Abimelech's terror and question reveal his ignorance of his offense, highlighting that his actions, though unknowingly, were a serious transgression in God's eyes.

Verse 14: "And the angel answered and said to Abimelech, 'Look, you are going to die because of the woman you brought into your house last night, for she is a married woman, the wife of Abraham, who came to your house. Now, therefore, return that man his wife, for she is his wife. And if you do not return her, know that you will surely die, you and all belonging to you.'"

Commentary: The angel reveals the truth: Sarah is Abraham's wife. The severity of the divine threat—death for Abimelech and his entire household—underscores the sanctity of marriage and God's protection of His chosen ones.

Verse 15: "On that night, there was a great outcry in the land of the Philistines. The inhabitants of the land saw the figure of a man standing with a drawn sword in his hand, and he struck the inhabitants of the land with the sword; yes, he continued to strike them."

Commentary: The divine judgment extends beyond Abimelech's dream. A tangible plague, symbolized by a figure with a sword, afflicts the entire land, indicating the widespread impact of Abimelech's error.

Verse 16: "And the angel of the Lord struck the entire land of the Philistines that night, and there was great confusion that night and the following morning."

Commentary: The plague causes widespread suffering and chaos, further emphasizing the divine intervention and its immediate, devastating effects.

Verse 17: "Every womb was closed, and all their issues, and the Lord's hand was upon them because of Sarah, Abraham's wife, whom Abimelech had taken."

Commentary: This specifies the nature of the plague: infertility and physical issues. This direct consequence of Abimelech taking Sarah highlights the intimate nature of God's judgment, affecting the very ability to procreate.

Abimelech's Rectification

Verse 18: "In the morning, Abimelech rose with terror, confusion, and great dread. He sent for his servants, called them in, and told them his dream. The people were greatly afraid."

Commentary: Abimelech wakes up deeply disturbed and immediately seeks counsel from his servants, indicating the profound impact of the dream and the palpable fear it instilled. The servants also share in this fear, suggesting they too felt the effects of the plague.

Verse 19: "One man standing among the king's servants answered the king, saying, 'Oh, sovereign king, give this woman back to her husband, for he is her husband. Something similar happened to the king of Egypt when this man came to Egypt.'"

Commentary: A servant, perhaps having heard of Abraham's previous encounter in Egypt, draws a parallel, providing crucial context and urging Abimelech to correct his mistake. This demonstrates the existence of shared regional knowledge.

Verse 20: "And he said about his wife, 'She is my sister,' for that is how he acts when he comes to live in a foreign land."

Commentary: The servant further explains Abraham's pattern of deception, confirming that this wasn't an isolated incident but a recurring survival strategy.

Verse 21: "And Pharaoh sent and took this woman as a wife, and the Lord brought severe plagues upon him until he returned the woman to her husband."

Commentary: The servant reminds Abimelech of the severe consequences Pharaoh faced, acting as a clear warning and a strong incentive to avoid a similar fate.

Verse 22: "Now, therefore, O sovereign king, know what happened last night to the entire land, for there was very great distress, great pain, and lamentation, and we know that it was because of the woman you took."

Commentary: The servant directly connects the widespread suffering of the previous night to Abimelech's actions concerning Sarah, making the connection between cause and effect explicit.

Verse 23: "Now, therefore, return this woman to her husband, lest it happen to us as it did to Pharaoh king of Egypt and his subjects, and that we may not die.' Abimelech quickly called for Sarah, and she came before him. He also called for Abraham, and he came before him."

Commentary: The urgency of the situation is clear. Abimelech, convinced by the evidence and the servant's warning, acts swiftly to rectify his mistake, calling both Sarah and Abraham to him.

Verse 24: "Abimelech said to them, 'What is this you have been doing by saying you are brother and sister, and I took this woman as a wife?'"

Commentary: Abimelech confronts Abraham and Sarah, expressing his confusion and frustration at their deception, which led to the entire ordeal.

Verse 25: "Abraham said, 'Because I thought I would be killed because of my wife.' And Abimelech took flocks and herds, male servants and female servants, and a thousand pieces of silver, and he gave them to Abraham, and he returned Sarah to him."

Commentary: Abraham explains his motive for the deception: fear for his life. Abimelech, seeking to appease Abraham and God, offers significant compensation and returns Sarah, demonstrating his sincere repentance.

Verse 26: "Abimelech said to Abraham, 'Look, the whole land is before you; live in it wherever you choose.'"

Commentary: Abimelech extends a generous invitation, granting Abraham full freedom to reside anywhere in his territory, further demonstrating his desire to make amends.

Verse 27: "Abraham and Sarah, his wife, left the king's presence with honor and respect, and they lived in the land, even in Gerar."

Commentary: Abraham and Sarah depart with their dignity restored and with the king's goodwill, signifying a peaceful resolution to the conflict. They continue to reside in Gerar, indicating a stable period.

The Healing

Verse 28: "And all the inhabitants of the land of the Philistines and the king's servants were still in pain from the plague which the angel had inflicted upon them the whole night because of Sarah."

Commentary: Despite the resolution with Abraham, the people of Gerar are still suffering the effects of the plague, highlighting the lingering consequences of the initial transgression.

Verse 29: "And Abimelech sent for Abraham, saying, 'Please pray now for your servants to the Lord your God, that He may remove this mortality from among us.'"

Commentary: Abimelech recognizes Abraham's special relationship with God and asks him to intercede on behalf of his people, demonstrating his humility and faith in Abraham's spiritual power.

Verse 30: "And Abraham prayed for Abimelech and his subjects, and the Lord heard Abraham's prayer, and He healed Abimelech and all his subjects."

Commentary: Abraham's prayer is effective, and God responds by healing the land and its people. This reinforces Abraham's role as a man of faith and a conduit for God's blessings, even for those who initially erred against him. It highlights God's mercy once repentance and restitution have been made.

Book of Jasher, Chapter 21

Isaac's Birth and Weaning

Verse 1: "At that time, after Abraham had been living in the land of the Philistines, in Gerar, for a year and four months, God visited Sarah. The Lord remembered her, and she became pregnant and gave birth to a son for Abraham."

Commentary: This verse marks a pivotal moment: the long-awaited birth of Isaac. It emphasizes that this event was a result of God's direct intervention and remembrance of His promise to Sarah. The timing, a year and four months after settling in Gerar, suggests a period of relative stability before this miraculous birth.

Verse 2: "Abraham named the son born to him, whom Sarah bore, Isaac."

Commentary: The naming of the child "Isaac" (meaning "he laughs" or "laughter") reflects the joy and, initially, the disbelief Sarah experienced when she heard she would have a child in her old age.

Verse 3: "Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old, as God had commanded Abraham to do to his descendants after him. Abraham was one hundred, and Sarah ninety years old, when Isaac was born to them."

Commentary: This verse highlights Abraham's obedience to God's covenant, particularly the command of circumcision. It also re-emphasizes the miraculous nature of Isaac's birth, given Abraham's age of 100 and Sarah's age of 90.

Verse 4: "The child grew up and was weaned, and Abraham held a great feast on the day Isaac was weaned."

Commentary: The weaning feast was a significant milestone in ancient times, celebrating a child's transition from infancy. Abraham's "great feast" indicates the immense joy and importance of Isaac in his life.

Verse 5: "Shem and Eber, and all the prominent people of the land, along with Abimelech, king of the Philistines, his servants, and Phicol, the captain of his army, came to eat, drink, and celebrate at the feast Abraham held on the day his son Isaac was weaned."

Commentary: The guest list for the feast is notable. The presence of Shem and Eber, revered patriarchs, suggests the spiritual significance of Isaac's birth. Abimelech and his officials show the diplomatic ties and respect Abraham had gained in Gerar. This gathering underscores the widespread recognition and celebration of this long-awaited heir.

Verse 6: "Even Terah, Abraham's father, and Nahor, his brother, came from Haran, along with everyone belonging to them, for they greatly rejoiced upon hearing that a son had been born to Sarah."

Commentary: The unexpected arrival of Abraham's father, Terah, and brother, Nahor, from Haran (a considerable distance) emphasizes the profound impact of Isaac's birth. Their presence signifies family reconciliation and shared joy over this miraculous event.

Verse 7: "They came to Abraham, and they ate and drank at the feast Abraham made on the day Isaac was weaned."

Commentary: This verse simply confirms their participation in the celebration, reinforcing the family reunion.

Verse 8: "Terah and Nahor rejoiced with Abraham, and they stayed with him for many days in the land of the Philistines."

Commentary: The extended stay of Terah and Nahor suggests a period of renewed family closeness and celebration in Gerar.

Verse 9: "At that time, Serug, the son of Reu, died, in the first year of the birth of Isaac, son of Abraham."

Commentary: This verse inserts a genealogical note, marking the death of Serug, a descendant of Shem, in the same year Isaac was born. This provides a chronological anchor within the larger biblical narrative.

Verse 10: "And Serug lived for two hundred and thirty-nine years, and then he died."

Commentary: This provides the lifespan of Serug, consistent with the long lifespans of patriarchs in the Book of Jasher and Genesis.

Ishmael's Departure

Verse 11: "Ishmael, Abraham's son, was grown up in those days; he was fourteen years old when Sarah bore Isaac to Abraham."

Commentary: This verse highlights the age difference between Ishmael and Isaac and establishes the context for the tension that will arise. Ishmael, as the elder son, had been Abraham's sole heir for 14 years.

Verse 12: "God was with Ishmael, Abraham's son, and he grew up and learned to use the bow and became an archer."

Commentary: This verse acknowledges God's blessing on Ishmael, fulfilling the promise made to Hagar. Ishmael's skill as an archer foreshadows his future as a dweller in the wilderness.

Verse 13: "When Isaac was five years old, he was sitting with Ishmael at the door of the tent."

Commentary: This sets the scene for the conflict. The interaction between the much older Ishmael and the young Isaac, who is now five years old and weaned, brings their differing positions into sharp focus.

Verse 14: "And Ishmael came to Isaac and sat down opposite him, and he took the bow and drew it and put the arrow in it, and intended to slay Isaac."

Commentary: This is a crucial and shocking detail not found in the biblical account (Genesis 21:9 only mentions Ishmael "mocking" or "playing" with Isaac). The Book of Jasher presents Ishmael's action as a clear, violent attempt on Isaac's life, driven by jealousy over his younger half-brother's status as the true heir. This elevates Sarah's subsequent demand to expel Hagar and Ishmael.

Verse 15: "And Sarah saw the act which Ishmael desired to do to her son Isaac, and it grieved her exceedingly on account of her son, and she sent for Abraham, and said to him, 'Cast out this slave woman and her son, for her son shall not inherit with my son, for thus did he seek to do to him this day.'"

Commentary: Sarah's reaction is one of extreme distress and fear for Isaac's life. Her demand for Hagar and Ishmael's expulsion is presented here as a direct response to Ishmael's murderous intent, providing a stronger justification for her actions than the more ambiguous "mocking" in Genesis.

Verse 16: "Abraham listened to Sarah's voice, and he rose up early in the morning, and he took twelve loaves and a bottle of water which he gave to Hagar, and sent her away with her son, and Hagar went with her son to the wilderness, and they dwelt in the wilderness of Paran with the inhabitants of the wilderness, and Ishmael was an archer, and he dwelt in the wilderness a long time."

Commentary: Abraham, though distressed by this decision (as noted in Genesis), obeys Sarah. The provisions given to Hagar are minimal, highlighting their immediate dependence on God's provision. Their journey into the wilderness of Paran, where Ishmael thrives as an archer, establishes their new life apart from Abraham's household.

Verse 17: "And he and his mother afterward went to the land of Egypt, and they dwelt there, and Hagar took a wife for her son from Egypt, and her name was Meribah."

Commentary: This verse adds details about Ishmael and Hagar's travels, showing their connection to Hagar's homeland, Egypt. The mention of Ishmael's first wife, Meribah, is an additional detail not found in the canonical Bible.

Verse 18: "And the wife of Ishmael conceived and bore four sons and two daughters, and Ishmael and his mother and his wife and children afterward went and returned to the wilderness."

Commentary: This details Ishmael's growing family, emphasizing his fruitfulness. Their return to the wilderness highlights their nomadic lifestyle.

Verse 19: "And they made themselves tents in the wilderness, in which they dwelt, and they continued to travel and then to rest monthly and yearly."

Commentary: This describes their established nomadic life, moving and settling according to the seasons and resources of the wilderness.

Verse 20: "And God gave Ishmael flocks and herds and tents on account of Abraham his father, and the man increased in cattle."

Commentary: This explicitly states God's continued blessing upon Ishmael, showing that despite his separation from Abraham's immediate household, God still honored the covenant made regarding him, granting him prosperity.

Verse 21: "Ishmael lived in deserts and in tents, traveling and resting for a long time, and he did not see the face of his father."

Commentary: This verse underscores the prolonged separation between Ishmael and Abraham, adding a layer of pathos to their story.

Abraham's Visit to Ishmael

Verse 22: "And in some time after, Abraham said to Sarah his wife, 'I will go and see my son Ishmael, for I have a desire to see him, for I have not seen him for a long time.'"

Commentary: This highlights Abraham's enduring paternal love for Ishmael, despite their forced separation. His desire to see his son after a long time indicates his continued concern.

Verse 23: "And Abraham rode upon one of his camels to the wilderness to seek his son Ishmael, for he heard that he was dwelling in a tent in the wilderness with all belonging to him."

Commentary: Abraham's journey to find Ishmael demonstrates his initiative and determination to reconnect with his son. He travels to the wilderness, reflecting Ishmael's nomadic lifestyle.

Verse 24: "And Abraham went to the wilderness, and he reached the tent of Ishmael about noon, and he asked after Ishmael, and he found the wife of Ishmael sitting in the tent with her children, and Ishmael her husband and his mother were not with them."

Commentary: Abraham arrives at Ishmael's encampment and finds his daughter-in-law and grandchildren, but neither Ishmael nor Hagar are present. This sets up the interaction between Abraham and Ishmael's wife.

Verse 25: "And Abraham asked the wife of Ishmael, saying, 'Where has Ishmael gone?' and she said, 'He has gone to the field to hunt,' and Abraham was still mounted upon the camel, for he would not get off to the ground as he had sworn to his wife Sarah that he would not get off from the camel."

Commentary: Ishmael's wife informs Abraham of her husband's absence. The detail about Abraham remaining on his camel is significant, explaining his unusual posture and revealing a previously unmentioned oath he made to Sarah, likely to avoid any potential intimacy or prolonged stay with Hagar's family.

Verse 26: "And Abraham said to Ishmael's wife, 'My daughter, give me a little water that I may drink, for I am fatigued from the journey.'"

Commentary: Abraham, out of weariness from his journey, requests a basic necessity: water. This tests the hospitality of Ishmael's household.

Verse 27: "And Ishmael's wife answered and said to Abraham, 'We have neither water nor bread,' and she continued sitting in the tent and did not notice Abraham, neither did she ask him who he was."

Commentary: Ishmael's first wife shows a profound lack of hospitality and disrespect. Her claim of having no water or bread (despite Ishmael's prosperity mentioned in verse 20) and her failure to recognize Abraham or ask his identity indicate a cold and unwelcoming attitude.

Verse 28: "But she was beating her children in the tent, and she was cursing them, and she also cursed her husband Ishmael and reproached him, and Abraham heard the words of Ishmael's wife to her children, and he was very angry and displeased."

Commentary: This verse reveals the wife's ill temper and disrespect for her own family, including Ishmael. Abraham is understandably "very angry and displeased," witnessing this poor character and ill-management of Ishmael's household.

Verse 29: "And Abraham called to the woman to come out to him from the tent, and the woman came and stood opposite to Abraham, for Abraham was still mounted upon the camel."

Commentary: Abraham, maintaining his posture on the camel, calls the wife out for a private conversation, setting the stage for his subtle message to Ishmael.

Verse 30: "And Abraham said to Ishmael's wife, 'When your husband Ishmael returns home say these words to him,'"

Commentary: Abraham gives her a message for Ishmael, choosing not to confront her directly but to deliver a coded message through her.

Verse 31: "'A very old man from the land of the Philistines came here to seek you, and this was his appearance and figure; I did not ask him who he was, and since you were not here he spoke to me and said, "When Ishmael your husband returns tell him this: When you come home, put away this nail of the tent which you have placed here, and place another nail in its stead."'"

Commentary: This is Abraham's subtle but profound message. The "nail of the tent" is an ancient idiom for the main support or foundation of the household. Abraham, implicitly criticizing the wife's poor character and unwelcoming nature, advises Ishmael to replace her, symbolizing a desire for a better, more hospitable foundation for his family.

Verse 32: "And Abraham finished his instructions to the woman, and he turned and went off on the camel homeward."

Commentary: Abraham departs, having delivered his message, trusting Ishmael to understand its deeper meaning.

Verse 33: "And after that Ishmael came from the hunt, he and his mother, and returned to the tent, and his wife spoke these words to him,"

Commentary: Ishmael and Hagar return, and the wife immediately relays Abraham's message.

Verse 34: "'A very old man from the land of the Philistines came to seek you, and this was his appearance and figure; I did not ask him who he was, and since you were not at home he said to me, "When your husband comes home tell him, thus says the old man, 'Put away the nail of the tent which you have placed here and place another nail in its stead.'"'"

Commentary: The wife repeats the message verbatim, unaware of its true significance.

Verse 35: "And Ishmael heard the words of his wife, and he knew that it was his father, and that his wife did not honor him."

Commentary: Ishmael immediately understands the coded message. He recognizes it as his father's instruction and grasps the criticism of his wife's behavior and the implication that she is not a suitable "nail" for his household.

Verse 36: "And Ishmael understood his father's words that he had spoken to his wife, and Ishmael listened to the voice of his father, and Ishmael cast off that woman and she went away."

Commentary: Ishmael acts upon his father's subtle counsel. His willingness to "cast off" his wife, even after her having borne children, highlights the profound authority and wisdom he attributed to Abraham's indirect guidance. This shows a transformation in Ishmael's willingness to follow divine guidance (through his father).

Verse 37: "And Ishmael afterward went to the land of Canaan, and he took another wife and he brought her to his tent to the place where he then dwelt."

Commentary: Ishmael's subsequent actions confirm his understanding and obedience to his father's advice. He returns to Canaan to find a new wife, suggesting a desire for a more suitable partner and a better foundation for his family.

Abraham's Second Visit and Blessing

Verse 38: "And at the end of three years Abraham said, 'I will go again and see Ishmael my son, for I have not seen him for a long time.'"

Commentary: After three years, Abraham again feels a longing to see Ishmael, suggesting he wants to check on the outcome of his previous counsel and his son's well-being.

Verse 39: "And he rode upon his camel and went to the wilderness, and he reached the tent of Ishmael about noon."

Commentary: Abraham undertakes another journey to Ishmael's encampment, mirroring his previous visit.

Verse 40: "And he asked after Ishmael, and his wife came out of the tent and she said, 'He is not here my lord, for he has gone to hunt in the fields, and to feed the camels,' and the woman said to Abraham, 'Turn in my lord into the tent, and eat a morsel of bread, for your soul must be wearied on account of the journey.'"

Commentary: This time, Ishmael's *new* wife greets Abraham. Her respectful address ("my lord") and immediate offer of hospitality—inviting him into the tent and offering food—stand in stark contrast to the previous wife's cold reception. This immediately signals a positive change in Ishmael's household.

Verse 41: "And Abraham said to her, 'I will not stop, for I am in haste to continue my journey, but give me a little water to drink, for I have thirst'; and the woman hastened and ran into the tent and she brought out water and bread to Abraham, which she placed before him and she urged him to eat, and he ate and drank and his heart was comforted and he blessed his son Ishmael."

Commentary: Abraham, still adhering to his oath not to dismount, accepts the water and bread. The wife's eagerness and urgency to serve him highlight her genuine hospitality. Abraham's "comforted heart" and blessing of Ishmael confirm his approval of Ishmael's new "nail of the tent."

Verse 42: "And he finished his meal and he blessed the Lord, and he said to Ishmael's wife, 'When Ishmael comes home say these words to him,'"

Commentary: Abraham, now satisfied, gives a message to the new wife, again for Ishmael.

Verse 43: "'A very old man from the land of the Philistines came here and asked after you, and you were not here; and I brought him out bread and water and he ate and drank and his heart was comforted.'"

Commentary: This part of the message sets the positive context of the visit.

Verse 44: "And he spoke these words to me: 'When Ishmael your husband comes home, say to him, "The nail of the tent which you have is very good, do not put it away from the tent."'"

Commentary: This is Abraham's second coded message, directly affirming his approval of Ishmael's new wife. The "very good nail of the tent" signifies that she is a strong, supportive, and hospitable foundation for his family, the opposite of the previous wife.

Verse 45: "And Abraham finished commanding the woman, and he rode off to his home to the land of the Philistines; and when Ishmael came to his tent his wife went forth to meet him with joy and a cheerful heart."

Commentary: Abraham departs, content with what he has observed. The new wife's joyous greeting to Ishmael further emphasizes her positive character and the improved atmosphere in their home.

Verse 46: "And she said to him, 'An old man came here from the land of the Philistines and this was his appearance, and he asked after you and you were not here, so I brought out bread and water, and he ate and drank and his heart was comforted.'"

Commentary: She relays the message with enthusiasm, painting a positive picture of the encounter.

Verse 47: "And he spoke these words to me, 'When Ishmael your husband comes home say to him, "The nail of the tent which you have is very good, do not put it away from the tent."'"

Commentary: She accurately conveys Abraham's approving message, including the important symbolic phrase.

Verse 48: "And Ishmael knew that it was his father, and that his wife had honored him, and the Lord blessed Ishmael."

Commentary: Ishmael once again understands his father's subtle communication and confirms that his new wife has indeed honored him and acted appropriately. The chapter concludes with God's blessing on Ishmael, implying that his obedience to his father's counsel (regarding the "nail of the tent") was pleasing to the Lord.

Book of Jasher, Chapter 22

Ishmael Rejoins Abraham and the Beersheba Covenant

Verse 1: "Ishmael then got up and took his wife, his children, his livestock, and everything he owned. He traveled from there and went to his father in the land of the Philistines."

Commentary: This verse signifies Ishmael's acceptance of Abraham's subtle message from Chapter 21, indicating a positive change in his family life. He leaves his previous nomadic existence to be closer to his father, bringing his entire household and possessions. This reunion is a testament to Abraham's enduring love and guidance.

Verse 2: "Abraham told his son Ishmael about the interaction with the first wife Ishmael had, explaining what she had done."

Commentary: Abraham openly discusses the behavior of Ishmael's first wife. This implies that Abraham's coded message about the "nail of the tent" was indeed about her unhospitality and poor character, and he now confirms his reasoning directly to Ishmael. This frank conversation likely helped solidify Ishmael's decision to dismiss her.

Verse 3: "Ishmael and his children lived with Abraham for many days in that land, and Abraham lived in the land of the Philistines for a long time."

Commentary: This indicates a period of reconciliation and shared life between Abraham and Ishmael's family. It suggests that Abraham's desire for his son's well-being extended to providing a place for him.

Verse 4: "Time passed, twenty-six years in total, and after that, Abraham, with his servants and all his possessions, left the land of the Philistines and moved far away. They came near Hebron and settled there. Abraham's servants dug water wells, and Abraham and everyone with him lived near the water. The servants of Abimelech, king of the Philistines, heard reports that Abraham's servants had dug water wells near their border."

Commentary: This verse marks a significant move for Abraham, likely due to the increasing size of his household and flocks, which required more land and water. His move near Hebron signifies a return to a more central area within Canaan. The detail about digging wells is crucial, as water rights were a common source of conflict in ancient times, setting up the dispute that follows.

Verse 5: "And they came and argued with Abraham's servants, and they forcefully took the large well that Abraham's servants had dug."

Commentary: This highlights the recurring issue of land and water disputes. Abimelech's servants act aggressively, claiming a well that Abraham's people had established, leading to conflict.

Verse 6: "Abimelech, king of the Philistines, heard about this issue, and he, along with Phicol, the captain of his army, and twenty of his men, came to Abraham. Abimelech spoke to Abraham about his servants, and Abraham rebuked Abimelech concerning the well that his servants had stolen from him."

Commentary: Abimelech's arrival with his military leader and men shows the seriousness of the dispute. Abraham directly confronts Abimelech, holding him accountable for the actions of his servants. This shows Abraham's courage and his desire for justice.

Verse 7: "And Abimelech said to Abraham, 'As the Lord lives, who created the whole earth, I did not hear of what my servants did to yours until today.'"

Commentary: Abimelech swears an oath, acknowledging God's sovereignty, and denies any prior knowledge of his servants' actions. This indicates his genuine desire for a peaceful resolution and to uphold his previous good relations with Abraham.

Verse 8: "And Abraham took seven ewe lambs and gave them to Abimelech, saying, 'Please accept these from my hands as a testimony for me that I dug this well.'"

Commentary: Abraham offers a symbolic payment of seven ewe lambs. This act serves as a legal testimony, formally establishing his ownership and right to the well. It's a pragmatic and culturally significant way to resolve the dispute and prevent future conflicts.

Verse 9: "And Abimelech took the seven ewe lambs that Abraham had given him, for Abraham had also given him cattle and herds in abundance. Abimelech swore to Abraham concerning the well; therefore, he called that well Beersheba, for there they both swore concerning it."

Commentary: Abimelech accepts the lambs and, in turn, swears an oath regarding the well, confirming Abraham's ownership. The naming of the well "Beersheba" (meaning "well of the oath" or "well of seven") memorializes this covenant, signifying a formal agreement and renewed peace between them.

Verse 10: "And they both made a covenant in Beersheba, and Abimelech rose up with Phicol, the captain of his army, and all his men, and they returned to the land of the Philistines, and Abraham and all belonging to him dwelt in Beersheba and he was in that land a long time."

Commentary: The covenant is formally established, and Abimelech and his men depart. Abraham then settles in Beersheba, indicating a period of stable and peaceful residence in this newly secured location.

Abraham's Generosity and Piety

Verse 11: "And Abraham planted a large grove in Beersheba, and he made to it four gates facing the four sides of the earth, and he planted a vineyard in it, so that if a traveler came to Abraham he entered any gate which was in his road, and remained there and ate and drank and satisfied himself and then departed."

Commentary: This verse beautifully illustrates Abraham's incredible hospitality and foresight. Planting a grove with four gates signifies an open invitation to all travelers, regardless of their direction. The vineyard suggests provision and rest. This structure was designed to welcome, nourish, and refresh weary travelers, embodying Abraham's generous spirit.

Verse 12: "For Abraham's house was always open to people who passed by, who came daily to eat and drink in Abraham's house."

Commentary: This emphasizes the continuous nature of Abraham's hospitality. His home was a well-known haven for anyone in need, highlighting his commitment to serving others.

Verse 13: "And any man who was hungry and came to Abraham's house, Abraham would give him bread that he might eat and drink and be satisfied, and anyone that came naked to his house he would clothe with garments as he might choose, and give him silver and gold and make known to him the Lord who had created him in the earth; this did Abraham all his life."

Commentary: This verse provides a comprehensive picture of Abraham's benevolence. He not only provided food and drink but also clothing, money, and, most significantly, shared his knowledge of God. This consistent practice throughout his life portrays Abraham as a truly righteous and charitable individual, actively bringing people to the Lord.

Verse 14: "And Abraham and his children and all belonging to him dwelt in Beersheba, and he pitched his tent as far as Hebron."

Commentary: This confirms Abraham's continued residence in Beersheba while also indicating the vastness of his pastoral lands, extending all the way to Hebron.

Nahor's Descendants and Terah's Death

Verse 15: "And Abraham's brother Nahor and his father and all belonging to them dwelt in Haran, for they did not come with Abraham to the land of Canaan."

Commentary: This reiterates that not all of Abraham's family followed him to Canaan, establishing the separate lineage of Nahor in Haran.

Verse 16: "And children were born to Nahor, which Milca, the daughter of Haran and sister to Sarah, Abraham's wife, bore to him."

Commentary: This specifies the mother of Nahor's children as Milca, who is related to both Nahor and Abraham's wife, Sarah.

Verse 17: "And these are the names of those that were born to him: Uz, Buz, Kemuel, Kesed, Chazo, Pildash, Tidlaf, and Bethuel, being eight sons. These are the children of Milca which she bore to Nahor, Abraham's brother."

Commentary: This lists the eight sons born to Nahor through Milca, establishing part of his lineage, some of whom are known from canonical texts (e.g., Bethuel, father of Rebekah).

Verse 18: "And Nahor had a concubine, and her name was Reumah, and she also bore to Nahor: Zebach, Gachash, Tachash, and Maacha, being four sons."

Commentary: This adds to Nahor's family, introducing his concubine and four additional sons, showing the expansion of his family line.

Verse 19: "And the children that were born to Nahor were twelve sons besides his daughters, and they also had children born to them in Haran."

Commentary: This summarizes Nahor's extensive progeny, emphasizing the rapid growth of his family in Haran.

Verse 20: "And the children of Uz, the firstborn of Nahor, were Abi, Cheref, Gadin, Melus, and Deborah their sister."

Commentary: This begins the detailed genealogy of Nahor's grandchildren, starting with Uz's offspring.

Verse 21: "And the sons of Buz were Berachel, Naamath, Sheva, and Madonu."

Commentary: Continues the listing of Nahor's grandchildren through Buz.

Verse 22: "And the sons of Kemuel were Aram and Rechob."

Commentary: Lists the sons of Kemuel.

Verse 23: "And the sons of Kesed were Anamlech, Meshai, Benon and Yifi; and the sons of Chazo were Pildash, Mechi and Opher."

Commentary: Continues the detailing of Nahor's grandchildren.

Verse 24: "And the sons of Pildash were Arud, Chamum, Mered and Moloch."

Commentary: Further details of Nahor's grandchildren.

Verse 25: "And the sons of Tidlaf were Mushan, Cushan and Mutzi."

Commentary: Continues the lineage.

Verse 26: "And the children of Bethuel were Sechar, Laban and their sister Rebecca."

Commentary: This is a significant verse as it mentions Rebekah, who will later become Isaac's wife, connecting Nahor's lineage directly to Abraham's story.

Verse 27: "These are the families of the children of Nahor, that were born to them in Haran; and Aram, the son of Kemuel, and Rechob his brother went away from Haran, and they found a valley in the land by the river Euphrates."

Commentary: This marks the migration of some of Nahor's descendants, specifically Aram and Rechob, who leave Haran to establish new settlements.

Verse 28: "And they built a city there, and they called the name of the city after the name of Pethor the son of Aram, that is Aram Naherayim unto this day."

Commentary: This provides an etymological explanation for the region of Aram Naharaim, linking it to Nahor's lineage and their settlement along the Euphrates.

Verse 29: "And the children of Kesed also went to dwell where they could find a place, and they went and they found a valley opposite to the land of Shinar, and they dwelt there."

Commentary: Another branch of Nahor's descendants, the children of Kesed, also migrate and settle, indicating a pattern of dispersion.

Verse 30: "And they there built themselves a city, and they called the name at the city Kesed after the name of their father, that is the land Kasdim unto this day, and the Kasdim dwelt in that land and they were fruitful and multiplied exceedingly."

Commentary: This explains the origin of the "Kasdim" or Chaldeans, linking them to Kesed, Nahor's son. This provides an additional historical and geographical connection.

Verse 31: "And Terah, father of Nahor and Abraham, went and took another wife in his old age, and her name was Pelilah, and she conceived and bore him a son and he called his name Zoba."

Commentary: This surprising detail adds another wife and son to Terah's family late in his life, introducing a new branch of his lineage.

Verse 32: "And Terah lived twenty-five years after he begat Zoba."

Commentary: This provides the duration of Terah's life after Zoba's birth.

Verse 33: "And Terah died in that year, that is in the thirty-fifth year of the birth of Isaac son of Abraham."

Commentary: This verse gives the precise timing of Terah's death, establishing a synchronism with Isaac's age. This is a significant event, as Terah was a pivotal figure in the patriarchal lineage.

Verse 34: "And the days of Terah were two hundred and five years, and he was buried in Haran."

Commentary: This states Terah's lifespan and burial place, concluding his life story.

Verse 35: "And Zoba, the son of Terah, lived thirty years and he begat Aram, Achlis and Merik."

Commentary: This continues the genealogy of Terah's youngest son, Zoba.

Verse 36: "And Aram, son of Zoba son of Terah, had three wives and he begat twelve sons and three daughters; and the Lord gave to Aram the son of Zoba, riches and possessions, and abundance of cattle, and flocks and herds, and the man increased greatly."

Commentary: This highlights the prosperity and large family of Aram, one of Zoba's sons, indicating God's blessing on this branch of Terah's descendants.

Verse 37: "And Aram, the son of Zoba, and his brother and all his household journeyed from Haran, and they went to dwell where they should find a place, for their property was too great to remain in Haran; for they could not stop in Haran together with their brethren the children of Nahor."

Commentary: This explains another migration due to increasing wealth and population, leading to a need for more land, and highlighting the ongoing movement of these early families.

Verse 38: "And Aram, the son of Zoba, went with his brethren, and they found a valley at a distance toward the eastern country and they dwelt there."

Commentary: They move eastward to establish a new settlement.

Verse 39: "And they also built a city there, and they called the name thereof Aram, after the name of their eldest brother; that is Aram Zoba to this day."

Commentary: This provides the origin of another geographical name, Aram Zoba, further linking these patriarchal genealogies to known regions.

The Test of Abraham's Faith

Verse 40: "And Isaac, Abraham's son, was growing up in those days, and Abraham his father taught him the way of the Lord to know the Lord, and the Lord was with him."

Commentary: This emphasizes Abraham's role as a spiritual teacher to Isaac, passing on his faith and knowledge of God. It highlights Isaac's upbringing in a righteous environment and God's continued presence with him.

Verse 41: "And when Isaac was thirty-seven years old, Ishmael his brother was going about with him in the tent."

Commentary: This precise age for Isaac (37) is significant, and the detail that Ishmael was "going about with him" implies a period of close interaction, setting the stage for the crucial conversation that follows.

Verse 42: "And Ishmael boasted of himself to Isaac, saying, 'I was thirteen years old when the Lord spoke to my father to circumcise us, and I did according to the word of the Lord which he spoke to my father, and I gave my soul unto the Lord, and I did not transgress his word which he commanded my father.'"

Commentary: Ishmael boasts about his own obedience to God's command regarding circumcision. He frames his submission as a great act of faith, perhaps hinting at a sense of superior devotion compared to Isaac, who received circumcision as an infant.

Verse 43: "And Isaac answered Ishmael, saying, 'Why do you boast to me about this, about a little bit of your flesh which you took from your body, concerning which the Lord commanded you?'"

Commentary: Isaac dismisses Ishmael's boast, downplaying the significance of circumcision as a mere physical act compared to a deeper commitment. This sets up his counter-boast about a greater sacrifice.

Verse 44: "As the Lord lives, the God of my father Abraham, if the Lord should say to my father, 'Take now your son Isaac and bring him up an offering before me,' I would not refrain but I would joyfully agree to it."

Commentary: This is Isaac's powerful response, a profound statement of his own willingness to submit completely to God's will, even to the point of being a sacrifice. This hypothetical scenario directly foreshadows the actual binding of Isaac (Akedah) in Genesis 22. It reveals Isaac's deep faith and trust in God and his father.

Verse 45: "And the Lord heard the word that Isaac spoke to Ishmael, and it seemed good in the sight of the Lord, and he thought to try Abraham in this matter."

Commentary: This is a crucial "behind-the-scenes" verse, revealing the divine motivation for the test of Abraham. Isaac's declaration is heard by God and deemed a perfect catalyst for proving Abraham's ultimate faithfulness. It links Isaac's bold statement directly to the impending trial of Abraham.

Verse 46: "And the day arrived when the sons of God came and placed themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came with the sons of God before the Lord."

Commentary: This sets the scene in the heavenly court, reminiscent of the Book of Job. The "sons of God" are heavenly beings or angels. Satan's presence among them introduces the idea of a spiritual challenge and accusation against human faithfulness.

Verse 47: "And the Lord said unto Satan, 'From where do you come?' and Satan answered the Lord and said, 'From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.'"

Commentary: This portrays Satan's role as an accuser and tempter, observing humanity and looking for weaknesses. His answer implies his constant surveillance of the earth.

Verse 48: "And the Lord said to Satan, 'What is your word to me concerning all the children of the earth?' and Satan answered the Lord and said, 'I have seen all the children of the earth who serve you and remember you when they require anything from you.'"

Commentary: God challenges Satan to give his assessment of humanity. Satan's cynical response paints humanity as self-serving, only remembering God when they need something.

Verse 49: "And when you give them the thing which they require from you, they sit at their ease, and forsake you and they remember you no more."

Commentary: Satan articulates his central accusation: human beings are fair-weather followers, forgetting God once their desires are met. This sets up the challenge against Abraham.

Verse 50: "Have you seen Abraham, the son of Terah, who at first had no children, and he served you and erected altars to you wherever he came, and he brought up offerings upon them, and he proclaimed your name continually to all the children of the earth."

Commentary: God immediately points to Abraham as a counter-example to Satan's cynical view, highlighting Abraham's unwavering devotion even when he lacked a promised heir. This sets Abraham up as God's champion.

Verse 51: "And now that his son Isaac is born to him, he has forsaken you, he has made a great feast for all the inhabitants of the land, and the Lord he has forgotten."

Commentary: Satan immediately counters by accusing Abraham of neglecting God *after* Isaac's birth, implying that Abraham's devotion was conditional on receiving his desires. He twists the weaning feast into an act of forgetfulness.

Verse 52: "For amidst all that he has done he brought you no offering; neither burnt offering nor peace offering, neither ox, lamb nor goat of all that he killed on the day that his son was weaned."

Commentary: Satan specifically highlights the absence of sacrifices at Isaac's weaning feast, using this as "evidence" of Abraham's supposed ingratitude and neglect of God.

Verse 53: "Even from the time of his son's birth till now, being thirty-seven years, he built no altar before you, nor brought any offering to you, for he saw that you did give what he requested before you, and he therefore forsook you."

Commentary: Satan doubles down on his accusation, extending it to the entire 37-year period since Isaac's birth, claiming Abraham's faith has waned because he has received his blessing. This is a direct challenge to Abraham's integrity.

Verse 54: "And the Lord said to Satan, 'Have you thus considered my servant Abraham? For there is none like him upon earth, a perfect and an upright man before me, one that fears God and avoids evil; as I live, were I to say to him, "Bring up Isaac your son before me," he would not withhold him from me, much more if I told him to bring up a burnt offering before me from his flock or herds.'"

Commentary: God strongly defends Abraham's character, reaffirming his perfection and fear of God. He confidently declares that Abraham would even sacrifice Isaac if commanded, far beyond merely offering animals. This divine confidence sets the stage for the ultimate test.

Verse 55: "And Satan answered the Lord and said, 'Speak then now to Abraham as you have said, and you will see whether he will not this day transgress and cast aside your words.'"

Commentary: Satan takes God's challenge, effectively daring God to issue the command. This leads directly into the narrative of the binding of Isaac (Akedah), portraying it as a cosmic test instigated by Satan's challenge to God's trust in Abraham.

Book of Jasher, Chapter 23

The Divine Command and Sarah's Farewell

Verse 1: "At that time, the word of the Lord came to Abraham. God said to him, 'Abraham!' And he replied, 'Here I am.'"

Commentary: This sets the stage for the pivotal event—the Binding of Isaac (Akedah). God's direct call to Abraham signifies the immense importance and solemnity of the upcoming command. Abraham's immediate and humble response, "Here I am," demonstrates his readiness to obey.

Verse 2: "And He said to him, 'Take now your son, your only son, whom you love, even Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which shall be shown to you, for there you will see a cloud and the glory of the Lord.'"

Commentary: This is the ultimate test of Abraham's faith. God's command is specific and agonizing: sacrifice Isaac, his beloved, long-awaited, and "only" son (in the context of the covenant). The mention of Moriah and the signs (cloud, glory of the Lord) give specific instructions and assure Abraham of God's presence.

Verse 3: "And Abraham said within himself, 'How shall I separate my son Isaac from Sarah his mother, in order to bring him up for a burnt offering before the Lord?'"

Commentary: This reveals Abraham's immediate and profound internal conflict. His primary concern isn't his own emotional pain but the agonizing effect this would have on Sarah, highlighting his compassion and awareness of her deep love for Isaac.

Verse 4: "And Abraham came into the tent, and he sat before Sarah his wife, and he spoke these words to her,"

Commentary: Abraham prepares to address Sarah, the difficulty of which is underscored by his seated posture and the deliberate way the narrative builds to his explanation.

Verse 5: "My son Isaac is grown up and he has not for some time studied the service of his God, now tomorrow I will go and bring him to Shem, and Eber his son, and there he will learn the ways of the Lord, for they will teach him to know the Lord as well as to know that when he prays continually before the Lord, he will answer him, therefore there he will know the way of serving the Lord his God."

Commentary: Abraham devises a plausible but deceptive reason for taking Isaac. He frames it as a spiritual education with Shem and Eber, respected patriarchs, which sounds perfectly reasonable to Sarah. This lie, born out of Abraham's desire to spare Sarah the truth of the sacrifice, reveals his deep love and protection for her.

Verse 6: "And Sarah said, 'You have spoken well, go my lord and do to him as you have said, but remove him not at a great distance from me, neither let him remain there too long, for my soul is bound within his soul.'"

Commentary: Sarah readily agrees to the plan, seeing it as beneficial for Isaac's spiritual growth. However, her words reveal her intense attachment and love for Isaac, foreshadowing her immense grief. Her "soul is bound within his soul" powerfully conveys her deep maternal bond.

Verse 7: "And Abraham said to Sarah, 'My daughter, let us pray to the Lord our God that he may do good with us.'"

Commentary: Abraham seeks prayer from Sarah, a poignant moment as he knows the true purpose of their journey. He probably seeks divine strength for the unimaginable task ahead, and perhaps for Sarah, for the sorrow that awaits her.

Verse 8: "And Sarah took her son Isaac and he stayed all that night with her, and she kissed and embraced him, and gave him instructions till morning."

Commentary: This tender scene emphasizes the loving bond between mother and son. Sarah cherishes this last night, showering him with affection and imparting motherly wisdom, unaware of the impending tragedy.

Verse 9: "And she said to him, 'Oh my son, how can my soul separate itself from you?' And she still kissed him and embraced him, and she gave Abraham instructions concerning him."

Commentary: Sarah's emotional outburst reveals her profound attachment. She struggles with the separation, even if temporary, and continues to give Abraham meticulous instructions for Isaac's care, underscoring her maternal protectiveness.

Verse 10: "And Sarah said to Abraham, 'Oh my lord, I pray you take heed of your son, and place your eyes over him, for I have no other son nor daughter but him.'"

Commentary: Sarah's plea to Abraham emphasizes Isaac's unique importance as their only child. She implores Abraham to be extremely careful with him.

Verse 11: "Oh forsake him not. If he be hungry give him bread, and if he be thirsty give him water to drink; do not let him go on foot, neither let him sit in the sun."

Commentary: Sarah provides very practical and heartfelt instructions, demonstrating her deep concern for Isaac's physical comfort and well-being during the journey.

Verse 12: "Neither let him go by himself in the road, neither force him from whatever he may desire, but do to him as he may say to you."

Commentary: Her instructions continue, showing her desire for Isaac's safety and happiness, even suggesting Abraham should cater to his wishes. This highlights her desire for him to be treated with utmost care and love.

Verse 13: "And Sarah wept bitterly the whole night on account of Isaac, and she gave him instructions till morning."

Commentary: Sarah's continuous weeping underscores her deep, instinctive sorrow, even without knowing the truth. Her motherly intuition senses the gravity of the parting.

Verse 14: "And in the morning Sarah selected a very fine and beautiful garment from those garments which she had in the house, that Abimelech had given to her."

Commentary: Sarah prepares Isaac for his journey with special care, dressing him in his finest clothes. The detail that these were gifts from Abimelech subtly connects to Abraham's previous test and the divine protection given to Sarah.

Verse 15: "And she dressed Isaac her son therewith, and she put a turban upon his head, and she enclosed a precious stone in the top of the turban, and she gave them provision for the road, and they went forth, and Isaac went with his father Abraham, and some of their servants accompanied them to see them off the road."

Commentary: The elaborate dressing of Isaac for his journey, complete with a turban and precious stone, can be seen as adorning him for a sacred purpose, perhaps unconsciously on Sarah's part. The provision for the road and the accompanying servants provide a natural cover for their true destination.

Verse 16: "And Sarah went out with them, and she accompanied them upon the road to see them off, and they said to her, 'Return to the tent.'"

Commentary: Sarah's reluctance to part with Isaac leads her to walk a distance with them, further emphasizing her pain. The instruction to return marks the point where she must let go.

Verse 17: "And when Sarah heard the words of her son Isaac she wept bitterly, and Abraham her husband wept with her, and their son wept with them a great weeping; also those who went with them wept greatly."

Commentary: This is an incredibly emotional scene. Isaac's words (not explicitly stated here, but implied as a parting farewell) trigger intense weeping from Sarah, Abraham, and even Isaac himself. The shared grief, even among the servants, highlights the profound bond and the unspoken sorrow surrounding their departure.

Verse 18: "And Sarah caught hold of her son Isaac, and she held him in her arms, and she embraced him and continued to weep with him, and Sarah said, 'Who knows if after this day I shall ever see you again?'"

Commentary: Sarah's desperate cling to Isaac and her agonizing question, "Who knows if...I shall ever see you again?" are profoundly prophetic. She expresses a mother's deepest fear, unknowingly speaking the terrible truth that she will not see him alive again before her own death.

Verse 19: "And they still wept together, Abraham, Sarah and Isaac, and all those that accompanied them on the road wept with them, and Sarah afterward turned away from her son, weeping bitterly, and all her men servants and maid servants returned with her to the tent."

Commentary: The scene of collective grief concludes with Sarah's heartbreaking departure, her bitter weeping underscoring the pain of separation. The servants returning with her show her immediate support system as she faces this immense sorrow.

Verse 20: "And Abraham went with Isaac his son to bring him up as an offering before the Lord, as He had commanded him."

Commentary: This brief, stark sentence cuts through the emotional farewells, reiterating the grim purpose of their journey and Abraham's unwavering obedience to God's command.

Satan's Temptations

Verse 21: "And Abraham took two of his young men with him, Ishmael the son of Hagar and Eliezer his servant, and they went together with them, and whilst they were walking in the road the young men spoke these words to themselves,"

Commentary: Abraham brings along Ishmael and Eliezer, likely to maintain the pretense of a normal journey for spiritual education. Their private conversation reveals their differing expectations and, more importantly, sets the stage for Satan's interference.

Verse 22: "And Ishmael said to Eliezer, 'Now my father Abraham is going with Isaac to bring him up for a burnt offering to the Lord, as He commanded him.'"

Commentary: This is a surprising revelation. Ishmael, having perhaps overheard something or possessing spiritual insight, seems to know the true purpose of the journey, contradicting the common interpretation that no one but Abraham knew. He views it as a sacrificial act.

Verse 23: "Now when he returns he will give to me all that he possesses, to inherit after him, for I am his firstborn."

Commentary: Ishmael's immediate thought turns to inheritance, revealing his self-interest and suggesting his understanding of the situation is tied to personal gain, rather than spiritual significance.

Verse 24: "And Eliezer answered Ishmael and said, 'Surely Abraham did cast you away with your mother, and swear that you should not inherit anything of all he possesses, and to whom will he give all that he has, with all his treasures, but to me his servant, who has been faithful in his house, who has served him night and day, and has done all that he desired me? To me will he bequeath at his death all that he possesses.'"

Commentary: Eliezer immediately challenges Ishmael's claim, reminding him of his earlier expulsion and asserting his own loyalty and expected inheritance. This highlights the ongoing tension and rivalry between Ishmael and Eliezer for Abraham's legacy.

Verse 25: "And whilst Abraham was proceeding with his son Isaac along the road, Satan came and appeared to Abraham in the figure of a very aged man, humble and of contrite spirit, and he approached Abraham and said to him, 'Are you silly or brutish, that you go to do this thing this day to your only son?'"

Commentary: This introduces Satan's direct intervention, taking the form of a wise, sympathetic old man to sow doubt. He uses logical arguments, appealing to Abraham's fatherly love and the seeming unreasonableness of God's command, calling Abraham "silly or brutish."

Verse 26: "For God gave you a son in your latter days, in your old age, and will you go and slaughter him this day because he committed no violence, and will you cause the soul of your only son to perish from the earth?"

Commentary: Satan's temptation preys on Abraham's emotions, reminding him of the miracle of Isaac's birth and the injustice of sacrificing an innocent child. He questions God's character, implying cruelty.

Verse 27: "Do you not know and understand that this thing cannot be from the Lord? For the Lord cannot do to man such evil upon earth to say to him, 'Go slaughter your child.'"

Commentary: Satan explicitly suggests that the command *cannot* be from God, trying to undermine Abraham's faith by portraying God as inherently good and therefore incapable of such a cruel demand. This is a powerful psychological attack.

Verse 28: "And Abraham heard this and knew that it was the word of Satan who endeavored to draw him aside from the way of the Lord, but Abraham would not listen to the voice of Satan, and Abraham rebuked him so that he went away."

Commentary: Abraham, with spiritual discernment, recognizes the tempter. His unwavering faith allows him to see through Satan's disguise and rebuke him. This shows Abraham's strength and commitment to God's command, despite the emotional turmoil.

Verse 29: "And Satan returned and came to Isaac; and he appeared to Isaac in the figure of a young man, comely and well-favored."

Commentary: Failing with Abraham, Satan shifts his strategy and targets Isaac, appearing as an appealing, persuasive young man to exploit Isaac's youth and desire for life.

Verse 30: "And he approached Isaac and said to him, 'Do you not know and understand that your old silly father is bringing you to the slaughter this day for nothing?'"

Commentary: Satan directly attacks Abraham's wisdom, calling him "silly" and implying the sacrifice is pointless. He tries to instill fear and resentment in Isaac towards his own father.

Verse 31: "Now therefore, my son, do not listen nor attend to him, for he is a silly old man, and let not your precious soul and beautiful figure be lost from the earth."

Commentary: Satan appeals to Isaac's self-preservation and vanity, urging him to disobey his father and preserve his life and appearance. This is a direct attempt to undermine Isaac's obedience.

Verse 32: "And Isaac heard this, and said to Abraham, 'Have you heard, my father, that which this man has spoken? Even thus has he spoken.'"

Commentary: Isaac, despite hearing the temptation, immediately brings it to Abraham's attention, demonstrating his trust in his father and his own spiritual clarity. He doesn't fall for Satan's trap.

Verse 33: "And Abraham answered his son Isaac and said to him, 'Take heed of him and do not listen to his words, nor attend to him, for he is Satan, endeavoring to draw us aside this day from the commands of God.'"

Commentary: Abraham confirms Satan's identity to Isaac, reinforcing their shared understanding of the spiritual battle. He warns Isaac to ignore the temptation and remain steadfast in their obedience to God.

Verse 34: "And Abraham still rebuked Satan, and Satan went from them, and seeing he could not prevail over them he hid himself from them, and he went and passed before them in the road; and he transformed himself to a large brook of water in the road, and Abraham and Isaac and his two young men reached that place, and they saw a brook large and powerful as the mighty waters."

Commentary: Satan, persistent in his attempts, shifts tactics again. Unable to sway them with words, he creates a physical obstacle—a vast, powerful brook—to impede their journey and potentially drown them, hoping to deter them from completing God's command.

Verse 35: "And they entered the brook and passed through it, and the waters at first reached their legs."

Commentary: Abraham and his company courageously enter the water, demonstrating their determination despite the unexpected obstacle.

Verse 36: "And they went deeper in the brook and the waters reached up to their necks, and they were all terrified on account of the water; and whilst they were going over the brook Abraham recognized that place, and he knew that there was no water there before."

Commentary: The escalating danger of the water and Abraham's realization that this was an unnatural phenomenon reveal the supernatural nature of the obstacle. He recognizes it as another one of Satan's ploys.

Verse 37: "And Abraham said to his son Isaac, 'I know this place in which there was no brook nor water, now therefore it is this Satan who does all this to us, to draw us aside this day from the commands of God.'"

Commentary: Abraham explicitly identifies Satan as the source of this physical trial, reaffirming his spiritual discernment and unwavering commitment to God's command.

Verse 38: "And Abraham rebuked him and said to him, 'The Lord rebuke you, O Satan, begone from us for we go by the commands of God.'"

Commentary: Abraham's powerful rebuke, invoking the Lord's authority, drives Satan away. This demonstrates Abraham's spiritual power and his absolute obedience to God's will.

Verse 39: "And Satan was terrified at the voice of Abraham, and he went away from them, and the place again became dry land as it was at first."

Commentary: Satan's fear and immediate departure, followed by the miraculous disappearance of the brook, confirm the divine backing of Abraham's authority and the success of his resistance.

The Ascent to Moriah and Isaac's Acceptance

Verse 40: "And Abraham went with Isaac toward the place that God had told him."

Commentary: The narrative returns to Abraham and Isaac's journey, emphasizing their continued progress towards the appointed place for the sacrifice.

Verse 41: "And on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw the place at a distance which God had told him of."

Commentary: The three-day journey underscores the duration of the physical and emotional trial. Abraham's ability to "see the place" is a sign from God, guiding him to the exact location.

Verse 42: "And a pillar of fire appeared to him that reached from the earth to heaven, and a cloud of glory upon the mountain, and the glory of the Lord was seen in the cloud."

Commentary: This provides specific visual cues for the designated mountain. The "pillar of fire," "cloud of glory," and "glory of the Lord" are powerful manifestations of God's presence, signifying the sacredness and divine appointment of the place.

Verse 43: "And Abraham said to Isaac, 'My son, do you see in that mountain, which we perceive at a distance, that which I see upon it?'"

Commentary: Abraham tests Isaac's spiritual perception, ensuring that Isaac also witnesses the divine signs, which are crucial for him to understand the sacred nature of their task.

Verse 44: "And Isaac answered and said to his father, 'I see, and behold, a pillar of fire and a cloud, and the glory of the Lord is seen upon the cloud.'"

Commentary: Isaac's affirmative response confirms his own spiritual insight and readiness. His ability to see the same divine manifestations indicates his acceptance and understanding of the sacred moment.

Verse 45: "And Abraham knew that his son Isaac was accepted before the Lord for a burnt offering."

Commentary: Isaac's shared vision of the divine signs confirms to Abraham that Isaac himself is a willing and divinely accepted offering. This provides Abraham with spiritual reassurance amidst the agonizing task.

Verse 46: "And Abraham said to Eliezer and to Ishmael his son, 'Do you also see that which we see upon the mountain which is at a distance?'"

Commentary: Abraham further tests the spiritual perception of Ishmael and Eliezer, demonstrating that the divine vision is not for everyone.

Verse 47: "And they answered and said, 'We see nothing more than like the other mountains of the earth.' And Abraham knew that they were not accepted before the Lord to go with them, and Abraham said to them, 'Abide you here with the ass whilst I and Isaac my son will go to yonder mount and worship there before the Lord and then return to you.'"

Commentary: Ishmael and Eliezer's inability to see the divine manifestations confirms their exclusion from this sacred, intimate act of worship. Abraham's instruction to them is a subtle way of ensuring that only he and Isaac participate in this unique trial. The phrase "and then return to you" is a remarkable statement of faith, believing that both he and Isaac will return.

Verse 48: "And Eliezer and Ishmael remained in that place, as Abraham had commanded."

Commentary: They obey, leaving Abraham and Isaac to continue alone, emphasizing the exclusive nature of the upcoming sacrifice.

The Sacrifice and Isaac's Courage

Verse 49: "And Abraham took wood for a burnt offering and placed it upon his son Isaac, and he took the fire and the knife, and they both went to that place."

Commentary: This poignant image, with Isaac carrying the wood for his own sacrifice, is deeply symbolic and foreshadows Christ carrying his cross. It highlights Isaac's unwitting participation and Abraham's solemn determination.

Verse 50: "And when they were going along Isaac said to his father, 'Behold, I see here the fire and wood, and where then is the lamb that is to be the burnt offering before the Lord?'"

Commentary: Isaac's innocent but perceptive question highlights the missing element in the preparations, demonstrating his understanding of sacrificial rituals. This forces Abraham to reveal the truth.

Verse 51: "And Abraham answered his son Isaac, saying, 'The Lord has made choice of you my son, to be a perfect burnt offering instead of the lamb.'"

Commentary: Abraham, finally compelled to reveal the truth, delivers the heartbreaking news directly. He frames it as God's choice, emphasizing Isaac's unique role as a "perfect" offering.

Verse 52: "And Isaac said to his father, 'I will do all that the Lord spoke to you with joy and cheerfulness of heart.'"

Commentary: This is an extraordinary response from Isaac. Far from resisting, he expresses complete willingness and even "joy and cheerfulness of heart," demonstrating an astonishing level of faith and obedience that matches, or even surpasses, his father's. This highlights his role as a co-participant in the test.

Verse 53: "And Abraham again said to Isaac his son, 'Is there in your heart any thought or counsel concerning this, which is not proper? Tell me my son, I pray you, O my son conceal it not from me.'"

Commentary: Abraham, perhaps still grappling with the immensity of the command, seeks absolute confirmation from Isaac that he is truly willing, checking for any hidden fear or reluctance. This shows Abraham's pastoral care for his son, even in this dire moment.

Verse 54: "And Isaac answered his father Abraham and said to him, 'O my father, as the Lord lives and as your soul lives, there is nothing in my heart to cause me to deviate either to the right or to the left from the word that he has spoken to you.'"

Commentary: Isaac offers a powerful oath, affirming his complete and unwavering commitment to God's command. His declaration leaves no room for doubt about his joyful submission.

Verse 55: "Neither limb nor muscle has moved or stirred at this, nor is there in my heart any thought or evil counsel concerning this."

Commentary: Isaac emphasizes his total composure and lack of internal struggle, physically and mentally ready for the sacrifice. This portrayal reinforces his exceptional faith.

Verse 56: "But I am of joyful and cheerful heart in this matter, and I say, 'Blessed is the Lord who has this day chosen me to be a burnt offering before Him.'"

Commentary: Isaac's final affirmation is one of praise and gratitude. He sees his impending sacrifice not as a tragedy, but as a divine honor, a chosen act of worship.

Verse 57: "And Abraham greatly rejoiced at the words of Isaac, and they went on and came together to that place that the Lord had spoken of."

Commentary: Isaac's incredible faith brings great joy to Abraham, strengthening his resolve. They continue their journey united in purpose, heading towards the designated place.

Verse 58: "And Abraham approached to build the altar in that place, and Abraham was weeping, and Isaac took stones and mortar until they had finished building the altar."

Commentary: This scene combines profound grief with unwavering obedience. Abraham weeps, demonstrating his human sorrow, while Isaac actively participates in building the altar for his own sacrifice, a testament to his incredible fortitude and understanding.

Verse 59: "And Abraham took the wood and placed it in order upon the altar which he had built."

Commentary: Abraham meticulously prepares the altar, following the prescribed procedures for a burnt offering, even though the offering is his own son.

Verse 60: "And he took his son Isaac and bound him in order to place him upon the wood which was upon the altar, to slay him for a burnt offering before the Lord."

Commentary: This is the agonizing climax of the narrative. Abraham binds Isaac, physically preparing him for the sacrifice, demonstrating his complete obedience, even to the most unbearable command.

Verse 61: "And Isaac said to his father, 'Bind me securely and then place me upon the altar lest I should turn and move, and break loose from the force of the knife upon my flesh and thereof profane the burnt offering; and Abraham did so.'"

Commentary: Isaac's request to be bound securely is a stunning act of self-sacrifice. He actively participates in his own binding, not out of fear of resistance, but out of a desire for the offering to be perfect and unblemished, preventing any accidental movement that might profane the sacred act. This elevates his heroism.

Verse 62: "And Isaac still said to his father, 'O my father, when you shall have slain me and burnt me for an offering, take with you that which shall remain of my ashes to bring to Sarah my mother, and say to her, "This is the sweet smelling savor of Isaac"; but do not tell her this if she should sit near a well or upon any high place, lest she should cast her soul after me and die.'"

Commentary: Isaac's final request to Abraham is incredibly tender and selfless. He thinks of his mother's well-being and grief, asking Abraham to comfort her with a poignant message, while also warning against telling her in a vulnerable place where she might collapse and die from grief. This shows his compassion and maturity.

Verse 63: "And Abraham heard the words of Isaac, and he lifted up his voice and wept when Isaac spoke these words; and Abraham's tears gushed down upon Isaac his son, and Isaac wept bitterly, and he said to his father, 'Hasten you, O my father, and do with me the will of the Lord our God as He has commanded you.'"

Commentary: Isaac's words break Abraham's composure, leading to a renewed outpouring of tears from both father and son. Yet, in the midst of their shared anguish, Isaac urges Abraham to proceed, prioritizing God's command above their immense personal suffering. This highlights their extraordinary faith and obedience.

Verse 64: "And the hearts of Abraham and Isaac rejoiced at this thing which the Lord had commanded them; but the eye wept bitterly whilst the heart rejoiced."

Commentary: This powerful paradox encapsulates the essence of the Akedah. Their hearts rejoiced in their spiritual commitment and obedience to God, even as their eyes wept over the human cost. It's a profound statement on faith that transcends human emotion.

Verse 65: "And Abraham bound his son Isaac, and placed him on the altar upon the wood, and Isaac stretched forth his neck upon the altar before his father, and Abraham stretched forth his hand to take the knife to slay his son as a burnt offering before the Lord."

Commentary: The moment of ultimate sacrifice arrives. Isaac's willing posture on the altar and Abraham's raised hand with the knife convey the absolute submission of both father and son to God's will.

The Ram and Sarah's Death

Verse 66: "At that time the angels of mercy came before the Lord and spoke to him concerning Isaac, saying,"

Commentary: This provides a divine interlude, showing the heavenly beings interceding on behalf of Abraham and Isaac, highlighting God's mercy and the sacredness of the test.

Verse 67: "'O Lord, you are a merciful and compassionate King over all that you have created in heaven and in earth, and you support them all; give therefore ransom and redemption instead of your servant Isaac, and pity and have compassion upon Abraham and Isaac his son, who are this day performing your commands.'"

Commentary: The angels appeal to God's merciful nature, emphasizing His compassion and reminding Him of Abraham and Isaac's perfect obedience. They ask for a substitute for Isaac, aligning with God's ultimate plan.

Verse 68: "'Have you seen, O Lord, how Isaac the son of Abraham your servant is bound down to the slaughter like an animal? Now therefore let your pity be roused for them, O Lord.'"

Commentary: The angels paint a vivid picture of Isaac's plight, appealing to God's compassion by comparing him to a sacrificial animal, highlighting his innocence and the profound nature of their obedience.

Verse 69: "At that time the Lord appeared to Abraham, and called to him, from heaven, and said to him, 'Lay not your hand upon the lad, neither do you anything to him, for now I know that you fear God in performing this act, and in not withholding your son, your only son, from me.'"

Commentary: The divine intervention at the last possible moment, preventing the sacrifice, confirms Abraham's absolute faithfulness. God's affirmation, "now I know that you fear God," signifies the successful completion of the test.

Verse 70: "And Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw, and behold, a ram was caught in a thicket by his horns; that was the ram which the Lord God had created in the earth in the day that he made earth and heaven."

Commentary: The miraculous appearance of the ram provides the substitute offering. The detail that this ram was specially created by God since the creation of the world emphasizes its divine purpose and the pre-ordained nature of this intervention.

Verse 71: "For the Lord had prepared this ram from that day, to be a burnt offering instead of Isaac."

Commentary: This reinforces the idea of divine providence, showing that God had a plan for a substitute from the very beginning, even before the test was issued.

Verse 72: "And this ram was advancing to Abraham when Satan caught hold of him and entangled his horns in the thicket, that he might not advance to Abraham, in order that Abraham might slay his son."

Commentary: This verse adds another layer to Satan's malevolent interference. He actively tries to prevent the ram from reaching Abraham, hoping that Abraham would then be forced to complete the human sacrifice. This further underscores Satan's opposition to God's plan and human obedience.

Verse 73: "And Abraham, seeing the ram advancing to him and Satan withholding him, fetched him and brought him before the altar, and he loosened his son Isaac from his binding, and he put the ram in his stead, and Abraham killed the ram upon the altar, and brought it up as an offering in the place of his son Isaac."

Commentary: Abraham's quick action to overcome Satan's final attempt and secure the ram demonstrates his determination to fulfill God's command, even with the substitute. He then joyfully releases Isaac and performs the true, accepted sacrifice.

Verse 74: "And Abraham sprinkled some of the blood of the ram upon the altar, and he exclaimed and said, 'This is in the place of my son, and may this be considered this day as the blood of my son before the Lord.'"

Commentary: Abraham's declaration emphasizes the vicarious nature of the ram's sacrifice. He articulates the symbolic substitution, attributing to the ram the merit of Isaac's life and blood.

Verse 75: "And all that Abraham did on this occasion by the altar, he would exclaim and say, 'This is in the room of my son, and may it this day be considered before the Lord in the place of my son'; and Abraham finished the whole of the service by the altar, and the service was accepted before the Lord, and was accounted as if it had been Isaac; and the Lord blessed Abraham and his seed on that day."

Commentary: This repeats and reinforces Abraham's constant acknowledgment of the ram as Isaac's substitute. The divine acceptance of the offering and the subsequent blessing of Abraham and his descendants solidify the profound spiritual outcome of this test of faith.

Verse 76: "And Satan went to Sarah, and he appeared to her in the figure of an old man, very humble and meek, and Abraham was yet engaged in the burnt offering before the Lord."

Commentary: This is a truly tragic turn. While Abraham and Isaac are experiencing their triumph of faith, Satan, thwarted on the mountain, immediately seeks to inflict pain elsewhere, targeting Sarah in her vulnerable state. He appears as a trusted, humble figure to gain her confidence.

Verse 77: "And he said to her, 'Do you not know all the work that Abraham has made with your only son this day? For he took Isaac and built an altar, and killed him, and brought him up as a sacrifice upon the altar, and Isaac cried and wept before his father, but he looked not at him, neither did he have compassion over him.'"

Commentary: Satan, lying to Sarah, recounts a distorted and brutal version of events, depicting Abraham as merciless and the sacrifice as completed. He emphasizes the most painful details to maximize her grief.

Verse 78: "And Satan repeated these words, and he went away from her, and Sarah heard all the words of Satan, and she imagined him to be an old man from amongst the sons of men who had been with her son, and had come and told her these things."

Commentary: Sarah, believing the lie from what she perceives as a trustworthy source, is completely devastated. Her inability to discern Satan's deception due to her intense love and anxiety for Isaac makes her vulnerable.

Verse 79: "And Sarah lifted up her voice and wept and cried out bitterly on account of her son; and she threw herself upon the ground and she cast dust upon her head, and she said, 'Oh my son, Isaac my son, Oh that I had this day died instead of you.' And she continued to weep and said, 'It grieves me for you, O my son, my son Isaac, O that I had died this day in your stead.'"

Commentary: Sarah's reaction is one of overwhelming grief and despair, expressing her maternal agony. Her desire to have died instead of Isaac highlights the depth of her love and sorrow.

Verse 80: "And she still continued to weep, and said, 'It grieves me for you after that I have reared you and have brought you up; now my joy is turned into mourning over you, I that had a longing for you, and cried and prayed to God till I bore you at ninety years old; and now have you served this day for the knife and the fire, to be made an offering.'"

Commentary: Sarah laments the lost joy of Isaac's life, recounting the miracle of his birth and her long years of waiting. She expresses the pain of seeing her hope transformed into sorrow, and her son used for sacrifice.

Verse 81: "But I console myself with you, my son, in its being the word of the Lord, for you did perform the command of your God; for who can transgress the word of our God, in whose hands is the soul of every living creature?"

Commentary: Despite her crushing grief, Sarah demonstrates a remarkable moment of faith and theological understanding. She finds a measure of consolation in the fact that, if true, Isaac died fulfilling God's command. This shows her underlying piety and acceptance of divine sovereignty.

Verse 82: "You are just, O Lord our God, for all your works are good and righteous; for I also am rejoiced with your word which you did command, and whilst mine eye weeps bitterly my heart rejoices."

Commentary: This is an incredible and unexpected declaration from Sarah. Like Abraham, she experiences the profound paradox of faith: deep personal sorrow ("eye weeps bitterly") alongside spiritual joy and acceptance of God's righteous will ("heart rejoices"). This is a powerful testament to her own faith and understanding.

Verse 83: "And Sarah laid her head upon the bosom of one of her handmaids, and she became as still as a stone."

Commentary: Sarah's immense emotional and spiritual experience leads to a state of shock and collapse, her body becoming "as still as a stone" from the intensity of her grief and the paradoxical joy of acceptance.

Verse 84: "She afterward rose up and went about making inquiries till she came to Hebron, and she inquired of all those whom she met walking in the road, and no one could tell her what had happened to her son."

Commentary: Despite her collapse, Sarah recovers enough to desperately seek the truth, embarking on a frantic search for Isaac. Her inability to find answers heightens her anxiety.

Verse 85: "And she came with her maid servants and men servants to Kireath-arba, which is Hebron, and she asked concerning her Son, and she remained there while she sent some of her servants to seek where Abraham had gone with Isaac; they went to seek him in the house of Shem and Eber, and they could not find him, and they sought throughout the land and he was not there."

Commentary: Sarah's relentless search takes her to Hebron, where she continues her inquiries, sending her servants further afield. Her inability to find them amplifies her fear, believing the worst.

Verse 86: "And behold, Satan came to Sarah in the shape of an old man, and he came and stood before her, and he said to her, 'I spoke falsely to you, for Abraham did not kill his son and he is not dead'; and when she heard the word her joy was so exceedingly violent on account of her son, that her soul went out through joy; she died and was gathered to her people."

Commentary: This is the ultimate tragic twist. Satan, having initially delivered the false news of Isaac's death, now tells the truth—but at the absolute worst possible moment. The sudden surge of overwhelming joy, after such profound grief, is too much for Sarah's fragile heart, and she literally dies from happiness. This profoundly sad ending to Sarah's life highlights the intensity of her emotions and Satan's ultimate, cruel success in causing her demise.

Verse 87: "And when Abraham had finished his service he returned with his son Isaac to his young men, and they rose up and went together to Beersheba, and they came home."

Commentary: Abraham and Isaac return, triumphant and reconciled, unaware of the tragedy that has befallen Sarah.

Verse 88: "And Abraham sought for Sarah, and could not find her, and he made inquiries concerning her, and they said to him, 'She went as far as Hebron to seek you both where you had gone, for thus was she informed.'"

Commentary: Abraham's search for Sarah leads to the devastating news of her frantic journey to find them. The tragic irony is that her search for them led to her death.

Verse 89: "And Abraham and Isaac went to her to Hebron, and when they found that she was dead they lifted up their voices and wept bitterly over her; and Isaac fell upon his mother's face and wept over her, and he said, 'O my mother, my mother, how have you left me, and where have you gone? Oh how, how have you left me!'"

Commentary: The reunion is shattered by the discovery of Sarah's death. Abraham and Isaac's bitter weeping, and Isaac's heart-wrenching lament, convey the immense sorrow and loss. The joy of the Akedah's successful completion is immediately overshadowed by this profound personal tragedy.

Verse 90: "And Abraham and Isaac wept greatly and all their servants wept with them on account of Sarah, and they mourned over her a great and heavy mourning."

Commentary: The chapter concludes with a scene of widespread mourning for Sarah, a fitting end to the life of a pivotal matriarch, whose final moments were marked by an intense, fatal surge of joy and grief.

Book of Jasher, Chapter 24

The Burial of Sarah

Verse 1: "Sarah lived to be **127 years old**, and then she died. Abraham got up from beside his deceased wife, Sarah, to find a burial place. He went and spoke to the **children of Heth**, the local inhabitants, saying,"

Commentary: This verse begins with the precise lifespan of Sarah, a detail also found in Genesis. Her death prompts Abraham, still grieving, to immediately seek a proper burial place, demonstrating his love and respect for her. He approaches the local Hethites (Hittites) to secure a burial plot.

Verse 2: "'I am a **stranger and a sojourner** among you in your land. Please give me a possession for a burial place in your land so I can bury my dead from before me.'"

Commentary: Abraham humbly identifies himself as an outsider, a "stranger and a sojourner," emphasizing his lack of land ownership despite God's promise. He appeals to their hospitality and custom for a place to lay his wife to rest.

Verse 3: "And the children of Heth said to Abraham, 'Look, the land is before you. Bury your dead in the **choicest of our tombs**, for no one will refuse you from burying your dead.'"

Commentary: The Hethites respond generously, offering Abraham his pick of their burial sites. This shows their respect for Abraham and indicates their willingness to accommodate him.

Verse 4: "And Abraham said to them, 'If you truly agree to this, then go and **intercede for me with Ephron**, the son of Zohar. Ask him to give me the **cave of Machpelah**, which is at the end of his field. I will buy it from him for whatever price he desires.'"

Commentary: Abraham, seeking a permanent and undisputed burial ground, specifically asks for a particular property: the cave of Machpelah. He insists on purchasing it at full market value, wanting a clear, legal title, not merely a gift. This reflects his integrity and foresight.

Verse 5: "Ephron lived among the children of Heth, so they went and called for him, and he came before Abraham. Ephron said to Abraham, 'Look, your servant will do everything you require.' And Abraham said, 'No, but I will buy the cave and the field you own for value, so that it may be a **permanent possession** for a burial place.'"

Commentary: Ephron initially offers the land and cave as a gift, a common polite custom in ancient negotiations. However, Abraham politely refuses, reiterating his desire for a full purchase to establish undisputed, perpetual ownership, emphasizing the term "permanent possession."

Verse 6: "And Ephron answered and said, 'Look, the field and the cave are before you; **give whatever you desire**.' And Abraham said, 'Only at full value will I buy it from your hand, and from the hands of those who enter at the gate of your city, and from the hand of your descendants forever.'"

Commentary: Ephron again tries to offer it freely, but Abraham insists on a formal, public transaction at "full value." His request to purchase it "from the hands of those who enter at the gate of your city, and from the hand of your descendants forever" ensures that the sale is publicly witnessed and legally binding for all future generations.

Verse 7: "Ephron and all his brethren heard this, and Abraham weighed out to Ephron **four hundred shekels of silver** in the hands of Ephron and in the hands of all his brethren. And Abraham wrote this transaction, and he wrote it and testified it with four witnesses."

Commentary: The transaction is formally completed. Abraham pays a substantial amount of silver, weighed out publicly to ensure accuracy and transparency. The act of writing the transaction and having it attested by four witnesses makes it a legally binding deed, crucial for establishing ownership in that era.

Verse 8: "And these are the names of the witnesses: **Amigal son of Abishna the Hittite, Adichorom son of Ashunach the Hivite, Abdon son of Achiram the Gomerite, Bakdil the son of Abudish the Zidonite**."

Commentary: This provides specific names and tribal affiliations of the witnesses, further emphasizing the formality and legality of the purchase. These details are unique to the Book of Jasher and add to the historical feel of the account.

Verse 9: "And Abraham took the **book of the purchase**, and placed it in his treasures, and these are the words that Abraham wrote in the book, namely:"

Commentary: Abraham takes possession of the legal document, safeguarding it among his valuables. The text then provides the verbatim details of the deed.

Verse 10: "That the cave and the field Abraham bought from Ephron the Hittite, and from his descendants, and from those who enter his city, and from their descendants forever, are to be a **purchase to Abraham and to his descendants and to those that go forth from his loins, for a possession of a burial place forever**; and he put a signet to it and testified it with witnesses."

Commentary: The legal wording confirms the perpetual nature of the ownership. It's not just for Abraham, but for his **descendants** (seed) and those who come "from his loins," ensuring the site remains their possession for generations. The use of a signet and witnesses reinforces its legal validity.

Verse 11: "And the field and the cave that was in it and all that place were made sure to Abraham and to his descendants after him, from the children of Heth; behold it is before **Mamre in Hebron**, which is in the land of Canaan."

Commentary: This confirms the legal transfer of ownership and specifies the location of the purchased land, associating it with Mamre in Hebron, a well-known biblical site. This is Abraham's first land possession in the Promised Land, a significant step in the fulfillment of God's covenant.

Verse 12: "And after this, Abraham buried his wife Sarah there, and that place and all its boundary became to Abraham and to his descendants for a **possession of a burial place**."

Commentary: With the transaction complete, Abraham finally buries Sarah. The land now legally belongs to him and his lineage as a permanent burial ground.

Verse 13: "And Abraham buried Sarah with **pomp as observed at the interment of kings**, and she was buried in very fine and beautiful garments."

Commentary: This detail highlights the immense respect and honor shown to Sarah. Her burial is described as regal, indicating her status as a matriarch and emphasizing the profound grief felt by Abraham.

Verse 14: "And at her bier was **Shem, his sons Eber and Abimelech, together with Anar, Eshcol and Mamre**, and all the grandees of the land followed her bier."

Commentary: The list of prominent mourners underscores Sarah's importance and Abraham's stature. The presence of Shem and Eber (ancestors of Abraham), along with Abimelech (king of Gerar), and Abraham's allies (Anar, Eshcol, Mamre) demonstrates widespread respect and the solemnity of the occasion.

Verse 15: "And the days of Sarah were one hundred and twenty-seven years and she died, and Abraham made a **great and heavy mourning**, and he performed the rites of mourning for **seven days**."

Commentary: This reiterates Sarah's age at death and describes Abraham's profound sorrow. The "great and heavy mourning" and the seven-day period are consistent with ancient mourning customs, signifying deep grief.

Verse 16: "And all the inhabitants of the land comforted Abraham and Isaac his son on account of Sarah."

Commentary: This shows the community's empathy and support for Abraham and Isaac in their time of loss, further emphasizing Abraham's respected position in the land.

Isaac's Further Education and Royal Deaths

Verse 17: "And when the days of their mourning passed by, Abraham sent away his son Isaac, and he went to the house of **Shem and Eber**, to learn the ways of the Lord and his instructions, and Abraham remained there three years."

Commentary: After the mourning period, Abraham sends Isaac for further spiritual education with Shem and Eber, fulfilling the premise he gave Sarah earlier (though that was initially a cover for the Akedah). This highlights the continued emphasis on Isaac's spiritual development and confirms the earlier claim.

Verse 18: "At that time, Abraham rose up with all his servants, and they went and returned homeward to Beersheba, and Abraham and all his servants remained in Beersheba."

Commentary: Abraham moves back to Beersheba after Isaac's departure for study, indicating a shift in his primary residence.

Verse 19: "And at the **revolution of the year**, Abimelech, king of the Philistines, died in that year; he was **one hundred and ninety-three years old** at his death; and Abraham went with his people to the land of the Philistines, and they comforted the whole household and all his servants, and he then turned and went home."

Commentary: This notes the death of Abraham's long-standing ally, Abimelech. Abraham's act of going to comfort the Philistine household demonstrates the strong, respectful relationship between them, reflecting the covenant they had made.

Verse 20: "And it was after the death of Abimelech that the people of Gerar took **Benmalich his son**, and he was only twelve years old, and they made him king in the place of his father."

Commentary: This details the succession in Gerar. The youth of the new king, Benmalich (12 years old), suggests a regency or a period of political vulnerability.

Verse 21: "And they called his name **Abimelech** after the name of his father, for thus was it their custom to do in Gerar, and Abimelech reigned instead of Abimelech his father, and he sat upon his throne."

Commentary: This explains the Philistine custom of bestowing the dynastic name "Abimelech" upon their kings, clarifying why the next king is also called Abimelech in later biblical accounts.

Verse 22: "And **Lot, the son of Haran**, also died in those days, in the **thirty-ninth year of the life of Isaac**, and all the days that Lot lived were **one hundred and forty years** and he died."

Commentary: This records the death of Lot, Abraham's nephew, providing his age at death and the year relative to Isaac's life. His death marks the end of an important family connection for Abraham.

Verse 23: "And these are the children of Lot, that were born to him by his daughters: the name of the firstborn was **Moab**, and the name of the second was **Benami**."

Commentary: This lists Lot's two sons, Moab and Ben-Ammi (Benami), born from his incestuous relationship with his daughters. These are the eponymous ancestors of the Moabites and Ammonites.

Verse 24: "And the two sons of Lot went and took themselves wives from the land of Canaan, and they bore children to them, and the children of Moab were **Ed, Mayon, Tarsus, and Kanvil**, four sons. These are fathers to the children of Moab to this day."

Commentary: This details the further expansion of Lot's lineage through Moab, providing specific names of his children and linking them to the future nation of Moab.

Verse 25: "And all the families of the children of Lot went to dwell wherever they should find a place, for they were fruitful and increased abundantly."

Commentary: Similar to other growing patriarchal families, Lot's descendants also spread out due to their increasing numbers and need for land.

Verse 26: "And they went and built themselves cities in the land where they dwelt, and they called the names of the cities which they built after their own names."

Commentary: This describes the establishment of cities by Lot's descendants, often named after their founders, further solidifying their presence in the land.

Verse 27: "And **Nahor, the son of Terah, brother to Abraham**, died in those days in the **fortieth year of the life of Isaac**, and all the days of Nahor were **one hundred and seventy-two years** and he died and was buried in Haran."

Commentary: This records the death of Abraham's brother, Nahor, providing his age and the year relative to Isaac. His death signifies the passing of another close family member.

Verse 28: "And when Abraham heard that his brother was dead he grieved sadly, and he mourned over his brother many days."

Commentary: Abraham's grief over Nahor's death shows his continued familial affection, despite their physical separation.

Isaac's Marriage: The Mission of Eliezer

Verse 29: "And Abraham called for **Eliezer his head servant**, to give him orders concerning his house, and he came and stood before him."

Commentary: This marks a crucial transition point for Abraham. Recognizing his old age, he prepares for Isaac's future, entrusting his most trusted servant, Eliezer, with a vital mission.

Verse 30: "And Abraham said to him, 'Look, I am old, I do not know the day of my death; for I am advanced in days; now therefore rise up, go forth and do not take a wife for my son from this place and from this land, from the daughters of the Canaanites amongst whom we dwell.'"

Commentary: Abraham expresses his awareness of his mortality and his urgent desire to secure a wife for Isaac. His explicit prohibition against taking a Canaanite wife is paramount, emphasizing the importance of preserving the purity of his lineage and avoiding assimilation with the local, idolatrous inhabitants.

Verse 31: "'But go to my land and to my birthplace, and take from thence a wife for my son, and the Lord God of Heaven and earth who took me from my father's house and brought me to this place, and said to me, "To your seed will I give this land for an inheritance forever," He will send His angel before you and prosper your way, that you may obtain a wife for my son from my family and from my father's house.'"

Commentary: Abraham directs Eliezer to his homeland and his own family for a suitable wife, ensuring the lineage remains faithful to God's covenant. He expresses strong faith that God, who called him to Canaan and promised the land to his descendants, will guide Eliezer and ensure the success of this mission.

Verse 32: "And the servant answered his master Abraham and said, 'Look, I go to your birthplace and to your father's house, and take a wife for your son from there; but if the woman is not willing to follow me to this land, shall I take your son back to the land of your birthplace?'"

Commentary: Eliezer, practical and loyal, foresees a potential obstacle: the woman's unwillingness to leave her home. He shrewdly asks if Isaac should then return to Mesopotamia, recognizing the importance of Isaac receiving his bride.

Verse 33: "And Abraham said to him, 'Take heed that you bring not my son here again, for the Lord before whom I have walked, He will send His angel before you and prosper your way.'"

Commentary: Abraham absolutely forbids Isaac's return to Haran. His commitment to the Promised Land is unwavering. He reiterates his faith that God will actively intervene ("send His angel") to ensure Eliezer's success, removing any need for Isaac to leave Canaan.

Verse 34: "And Eliezer did as Abraham ordered him, and Eliezer swore to Abraham his master upon this matter; and Eliezer rose up and took ten camels of the camels of his master, and ten men from his master's servants with him, and they rose up and went to Haran, the city of Abraham and Nahor, in order to fetch a wife for Isaac the son of Abraham; and whilst they were gone Abraham sent to the house of Shem and Eber, and they brought from thence his son Isaac."

Commentary: Eliezer's oath underscores the gravity of his mission. He prepares meticulously, taking ample camels and servants for the long journey and gifts. Meanwhile, Abraham, having dispatched Eliezer, brings Isaac back home from his studies, anticipating the return of his future wife.

Verse 35: "And Isaac came home to his father's house to Beersheba, whilst Eliezer and his men came to Haran; and they stopped in the city by the watering place, and he made his camels to kneel down by the water and they remained there."

Commentary: This sets up the parallel journeys: Isaac returns home, while Eliezer reaches Haran, arriving at the public watering place, a common social hub where he hopes to find the right woman.

Verse 36: "And Eliezer, Abraham's servant, prayed and said, 'O God of Abraham my master; send me I pray you good speed this day and show kindness to my master, that you shall appoint this day a wife for my master's son from his family.'"

Commentary: Eliezer's prayer reveals his faith and reliance on God's guidance. He asks for clear signs and direct divine intervention to identify the chosen woman, demonstrating his trust in Abraham's God.

Verse 37: "And the Lord hearkened to the voice of Eliezer, for the sake of his servant Abraham, and he happened to meet with **the daughter of Bethuel, the son of Milcah, the wife of Nahor, brother to Abraham, and Eliezer came to her house**."

Commentary: God answers Eliezer's prayer directly. He "happens" upon Rebekah, who is immediately identified as the granddaughter of Nahor, Abraham's brother, thus confirming the familial connection Abraham desired. Eliezer's prompt arrival at her house indicates the unfolding of divine providence.

Verse 38: "And Eliezer related to them all his concerns, and that he was Abraham's servant, and they greatly rejoiced at him."

Commentary: Eliezer explains his mission, and Rebekah's family rejoices at the prospect of this union, likely due to Abraham's wealth and prestige, and the reconnection with their renowned kinsman.

Verse 39: "And they all blessed the Lord who brought this thing about, and they gave him Rebecca, the daughter of Bethuel, for a wife for Isaac."

Commentary: Rebekah's family acknowledges God's hand in this arrangement, giving their consent for Rebekah to marry Isaac, recognizing divine providence.

Verse 40: "And the young woman was of **very comely appearance, she was a virgin, and Rebecca was ten years old** in those days."

Commentary: This verse describes Rebekah's desirable qualities: beauty and virginity, fitting for Isaac's wife. The detail that she was "ten years old" is a significant age, emphasizing her youth but also her readiness for marriage in that cultural context. This detail is specific to Jasher and not found in Genesis.

Verse 41: "And Bethuel and Laban and his children made a feast on that night, and Eliezer and his men came and ate and drank and rejoiced there on that night."

Commentary: A celebratory feast marks the agreement of the marriage, a common custom symbolizing the joyful union.

Verse 42: "And Eliezer rose up in the morning, he and the men that were with him, and he called to the whole household of Bethuel, saying, 'Send me away that I may go to my master'; and they rose up and sent away Rebecca and her nurse Deborah, the daughter of Uz, and they gave her silver and gold, men servants and maid servants, and they blessed her."

Commentary: Eliezer, eager to complete his mission, requests to depart quickly. Rebekah is sent off with a substantial dowry of gifts and servants, including her nurse Deborah (a detail also found in Genesis), symbolizing her status and the family's blessing.

Verse 43: "And they sent Eliezer away with his men; and the servants took Rebecca, and he went and returned to his master to the land of Canaan."

Commentary: The journey back to Canaan begins, with Eliezer successfully completing his mission.

Verse 44: "And Isaac took Rebecca and she became his wife, and he brought her into the tent."

Commentary: The marriage is consummated as Isaac brings Rebekah into his tent, fulfilling Abraham's long-held desire for a wife for his son.

Verse 45: "And **Isaac was forty years old** when he took Rebecca, the daughter of his uncle Bethuel, for a wife."

Commentary: This verse gives Isaac's age at the time of his marriage, a detail found in Genesis. It marks a significant milestone in his life and the continuation of Abraham's lineage.

Book of Jasher, Chapter 25

Abraham's Later Descendants Through Keturah

Verse 1: "It was at that time that **Abraham again took a wife in his old age, and her name was Keturah**, from the land of Canaan."

Commentary: This verse begins a new phase in Abraham's life. After Sarah's death and Isaac's marriage, Abraham, at an advanced age, takes another wife, Keturah. The detail that she was "from the land of Canaan" contrasts with his insistence that Isaac marry someone from his own family (Chapter 24). This could indicate a different kind of union or simply that Keturah was a local woman who converted or joined his household.

Verse 2: "And she bore to him **Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, and Shuah**, being six sons. And the children of Zimran were Abihen, Molich, and Narim."

Commentary: This lists the six sons Abraham had with Keturah. These sons become the progenitors of various Arabian tribes mentioned in other biblical texts. The immediate listing of Zimran's children shows the rapid expansion of these lineages.

Verse 3: "And the sons of Jokshan were Sheba and Dedan, and the sons of Medan were Amida, Joab, Gochi, Elisha, and Nothach; and the sons of Midian were Ephah, Epher, Hanoch, Abida, and Eldaah."

Commentary: This continues the detailed genealogy of Keturah's sons, listing their children. The names **Sheba** and **Dedan** are significant as they correspond to well-known Arabian tribes in biblical tradition. Similarly, the sons of **Midian** become the **Midianites**, a prominent people in later biblical narratives.

Verse 4: "And the sons of Ishbak were Makiro, Beyodua, and Tator."

Commentary: This continues the listing of Keturah's grandchildren through Ishbak.

Verse 5: "And the sons of Shuah were Bildad, Mamdad, Munan, and Meban; all these are the families of the children of Keturah the Canaanitish woman which she bore to Abraham the Hebrew."

Commentary: This completes the immediate descendants of Keturah's sons, emphasizing that these are the "families" that originated from this union. The text specifically calls Keturah a "Canaanitish woman," distinguishing her origin.

Verse 6: "And Abraham sent all these away, and he gave them gifts, and they went away from his son Isaac to dwell wherever they should find a place."

Commentary: This verse aligns with the biblical account (Genesis 25:6) where Abraham sends his sons by Keturah away from Isaac while he is still alive. By giving them gifts, he provides for them and establishes their independence, preventing any future disputes over Isaac's inheritance as the primary heir of the covenant.

Verse 7: "And all these went to the **mountain at the east**, and they built themselves six cities in which they dwelt to this day."

Commentary: The eastward migration is common for those not inheriting the Promised Land. The building of six cities suggests established settlements, reflecting the growth of their respective tribes.

Verse 8: "But the children of **Sheba and Dedan**, children of Jokshan, with their children, did not dwell with their brethren in their cities, and they journeyed and encamped in the countries and wildernesses to this day."

Commentary: This highlights a divergence within Keturah's descendants. Sheba and Dedan, known for their nomadic and trading activities in the ancient world, are depicted as maintaining a more mobile lifestyle, perhaps explaining their widespread presence in various regions.

Verse 9: "And the children of **Midian**, son of Abraham, went to the east of the land of Cush, and they there found a large valley in the eastern country, and they remained there and built a city, and they dwelt therein, that is the **land of Midian** to this day."

Commentary: This details the specific migration of the Midianites, locating their settlement "east of the land of Cush." Their establishment of a city leads to the region being known as the "land of Midian," emphasizing the origin of this significant biblical people.

Verse 10: "And Midian dwelt in the city which he built, he and his five sons and all belonging to him."

Commentary: Midian, as the patriarch, establishes his family in this new city.

Verse 11: "And these are the names of the sons of Midian according to their names in their cities: Ephah, Epher, Hanoch, Abida, and Eldaah."

Commentary: The names of Midian's sons are repeated, linking them to specific cities within the Midianite territory.

Verse 12: "And the sons of Ephah were Methach, Meshar, Avi, and Tzanua; and the sons of Epher were Ephron, Zur, Alirun, and Medin; and the sons of Hanoch were Reuel, Rekem, Azi, Alyoshub, and Alad."

Commentary: This continues the generational listing of the Midianite families. The name **Zur** is particularly notable as a Midianite prince later mentioned in the book of Numbers. **Reuel** (also known as Jethro) is a significant Midianite figure in the life of Moses.

Verse 13: "And the sons of Abida were Chur, Melud, Kerury, Molchi; and the sons of Eldaah were Miker, Reba, Malchiyah, and Gabol; these are the names of the Midianites according to their families; and afterward the families of Midian spread throughout the land of Midian."

Commentary: The detailed genealogy of Midian's descendants culminates in their widespread presence throughout the land of Midian, indicating their growth into a significant population.

Ishmael's Descendants and Changing Fortunes

Verse 14: "And these are the generations of **Ishmael the son of Abraham**, whom Hagar, Sarah's handmaid, bore to Abraham."

Commentary: This marks a transition to the lineage of Ishmael, reaffirming his parentage through Abraham and Hagar.

Verse 15: "And Ishmael took a wife from the land of Egypt, and her name was **Ribah, the same is Meribah**."

Commentary: This provides the name of Ishmael's first wife, from Egypt, connecting his marriage to Hagar's Egyptian background.

Verse 16: "And Ribah bore to Ishmael **Nebaioth, Kedar, Adbeel, Mibsam, and their sister Basemath**."

Commentary: This lists Ishmael's initial children through Ribah. **Nebaioth** and **Kedar** are prominent Arabian tribes descended from Ishmael mentioned in the biblical text.

Verse 17: "And Ishmael cast away his wife Ribah, and she went from him and returned to Egypt to the house of her father, and she dwelt there, for she had been **very bad in the sight of Ishmael, and in the sight of his father Abraham**."

Commentary: This reveals a troubled aspect of Ishmael's marriage. He divorces Ribah because of her "very bad" behavior, a judgment shared by Abraham, suggesting that her character was problematic and perhaps did not align with the values Abraham instilled.

Verse 18: "And Ishmael afterward took a wife from the land of Canaan, and her name was **Malchuth**, and she bore to him **Mishma, Dumah, Massa, Hadad, Tema, Jetur, Naphish, and Kedemah**."

Commentary: Ishmael remarries, this time a Canaanite woman named Malchuth. The names of his sons by her complete the list of the twelve princes of Ishmael found in Genesis, who were heads of significant tribes.

Verse 19: "These are the sons of Ishmael, and these are their names, being **twelve princes according to their nations**; and the families of Ishmael afterward spread forth, and Ishmael took his children and all the property that he had gained, together with the souls of his household and all belonging to him, and they went to dwell wherever they should find a place."

Commentary: This reiterates the concept of Ishmael's twelve sons as "princes" or founders of nations, fulfilling the promise God made to Abraham about Ishmael. Like Abraham's other descendants, their prosperity leads them to seek new lands.

Verse 20: "And they went and dwelt near the **wilderness of Paran**, and their dwelling was from Havilah to Shur, that is before Egypt as you come toward Assyria."

Commentary: This specifies the extensive geographical range of Ishmael's descendants, from Havilah to Shur, indicating a widespread presence in the Arabian desert region, aligning with biblical descriptions.

Verse 21: "And Ishmael and his sons dwelt in the land, and they had children born to them, and they were fruitful and increased abundantly."

Commentary: This confirms the continued growth and prosperity of the Ishmaelite tribes.

Verse 22: "And these are the names of the sons of **Nebaioth the firstborn of Ishmael: Mend, Send, Mayon**; and the sons of **Kedar were Alyon, Kezem, Hamad, and Eli**."

Commentary: This continues the detailed genealogy of Ishmael's grandchildren, beginning with the two most prominent sons, Nebaioth and Kedar.

Verse 23: "And the sons of Adbeel were Hamad and Jabin; and the sons of Mibsam were Obadiah, Ebedmelech, and Yeush; these are the families of the children of Ribah the wife of Ishmael."

Commentary: The enumeration of Ishmael's grandchildren continues, specifying that these are from his first wife, Ribah.

Verse 24: "And the sons of Mishma the son of Ishmael were Shamua, Zecaryon, and Obed; and the sons of Dumah were Kezed, Eli, Machmad, and Amed."

Commentary: This continues the genealogy from Ishmael's second wife, Malchuth.

Verse 25: "And the sons of Massa were Melon, Mula, and Ebidadon; and the sons of Hadad were Azur, Minzar, and Ebedmelech; and the sons of Tema were Seir, Sadon, and Yakol."

Commentary: Further details of Ishmael's grandchildren.

Verse 26: "And the sons of Jetur were Merith, Yaish, Alyo, and Pachoth; and the sons of Naphish were Ebed-Tamed, Abiyasaph, and Mir; and the sons of Kedemah were Calip, Tachti, and Omir; these were the children of Malchuth the wife of Ishmael according to their families."

Commentary: This completes the extensive list of Ishmael's descendants through his second wife, providing specific names for his numerous grandchildren.

Verse 27: "All these are the families of Ishmael according to their generations, and they dwelt in those lands wherein they had built themselves cities to this day."

Commentary: This provides a summary of Ishmael's vast and widespread progeny, emphasizing their establishment of cities and their enduring presence in those regions.

Arpachshad's Death and Rebekah's Barrenness

Verse 28: "And **Rebekah, the daughter of Bethuel, the wife of Abraham's son Isaac, was barren in those days**, she had no offspring; and Isaac dwelt with his father in the land of Canaan; and the Lord was with Isaac; and **Arpachshad the son of Shem the son of Noah died** in those days, in the **forty-eighth year of the life of Isaac**, and all the days that Arpachshad lived were **four hundred and thirty-eight years**, and he died."

Commentary: This verse introduces a new challenge for Isaac's line: Rebekah's barrenness, a recurring theme for the matriarchs (Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel). This sets the stage for future divine intervention. It also notes the death of Arpachshad, a patriarch from the lineage of Shem, connecting the timeline of these events to the broader patriarchal history. His lifespan highlights the longevity of these early figures. The final clause, "and the Lord was with Isaac," assures the reader of God's continued favor, despite the challenge of barrenness.

Book of Jasher, Chapter 26

The Birth of Esau and Jacob

Verse 1: "In the **fifty-ninth year of Isaac's life**, his wife **Rebekah was still barren**."

Verse 2: "And Rebekah said to Isaac, 'Truly, my lord, I have heard that your mother **Sarah was barren** in her days until my Lord Abraham, your father, prayed for her, and she conceived through him.'"

Verse 3: "'Now therefore, stand up, **pray also to God**, and He will hear your prayer and remember us through His mercies.'"

Verse 4: "And Isaac answered his wife Rebekah, saying, 'Abraham has already prayed for me to God to multiply his seed. Therefore, this barrenness must come to us from you.'"

Verse 5: "And Rebekah said to him, 'But arise now, you also, and pray, that the Lord may hear your prayer and grant me children.' And Isaac listened to his wife's words, and Isaac and his wife rose up and went to the **land of Moriah to pray there and to seek the Lord**. And when they had reached that place, Isaac stood up and prayed to the Lord on account of his wife because she was barren."

Verse 6: "And Isaac said, 'O Lord God of heaven and earth, whose goodness and mercies fill the earth, You who took my father from his father's house and from his birthplace, and brought him to this land, and said to him, "To your seed will I give the land," and You promised him and declared to him, "I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven and as the sand of the sea," now may Your words be verified which You spoke to my father.'"

Verse 7: "'For You are the Lord our God; our eyes are toward You to give us seed of men, as You promised us, for You are the Lord our God and our eyes are directed toward You only.'"

Verse 8: "And the Lord heard the prayer of Isaac, the son of Abraham, and the Lord was entreated of him and **Rebekah his wife conceived**."

Verse 9: "And in about **seven months** after, the children struggled together within her, and it pained her greatly that she was wearied on account of them, and she said to all the women who were then in the land, 'Did such a thing happen to you as it has to me?' and they said to her, 'No.'"

Verse 10: "And she said to them, 'Why am I alone in this amongst all the women that were upon earth?' And she went to the land of Moriah to seek the Lord on account of this; and she went to **Shem and Eber his son to make inquiries of them** in this matter, and that they should seek the Lord in this thing respecting her."

Verse 11: "And she also asked Abraham to seek and inquire of the Lord about all that had befallen her."

Verse 12: "And they all inquired of the Lord concerning this matter, and they brought her word from the Lord and told her, '**Two children are in your womb, and two nations shall rise from them; and one nation shall be stronger than the other, and the greater shall serve the younger**.'"

Verse 13: "And when her days to be delivered were completed, she knelt down, and behold there were twins in her womb, as the Lord had spoken to her."

Verse 14: "And the first came out **red all over like a hairy garment**, and all the people of the land called his name **Esau**, saying, 'That this one was made complete from the womb.'"

Verse 15: "And after that came his brother, and his hand took hold of Esau's heel, therefore they called his name **Jacob**."

Verse 16: "And Isaac, the son of Abraham, was **sixty years old** when he begat them."

Verse 17: "And the boys grew up to their **fifteenth year**, and they came amongst the society of men. **Esau was a designing and deceitful man, and an expert hunter in the field**, and **Jacob was a man perfect and wise, dwelling in tents, feeding flocks and learning the instructions of the Lord and the commands of his father and mother**."

Verse 18: "And Isaac and the children of his household dwelt with his father Abraham in the land of Canaan, as God had commanded them."

Abraham's Final Days and Death

Verse 19: "And Ishmael the son of Abraham went with his children and all belonging to them, and they returned there to the land of Havilah, and they dwelt there."

Verse 20: "And all the children of Abraham's concubines went to dwell in the land of the east, for Abraham had sent them away from his son, and had given them presents, and they went away."

Verse 21: "And Abraham **gave all that he had to his son Isaac**, and he also gave him all his treasures."

Verse 22: "And he commanded him saying, 'Do you not know and understand the Lord is God in heaven and in earth, and there is no other beside Him?'"

Verse 23: "'And it was He who took me from my father's house, and from my birthplace, and gave me all the delights upon earth; who delivered me from the counsel of the wicked, for in Him did I trust.'"

Verse 24: "'And He brought me to this place, and He delivered me from Ur of the Chaldeans; and He said to me, "To your seed will I give all these lands, and they shall inherit them when they keep My commandments, My statutes, and My judgments that I have commanded you, and which I shall command them."'"

Verse 25: "'Now therefore, my son, listen to my voice, and keep the commandments of the Lord your God, which I commanded you, do not turn from the right way either to the right or to the left, in order that it may be well with you and your children after you forever.'"

Verse 26: "'And remember the wonderful works of the Lord, and His kindness that He has shown toward us, in having delivered us from the hands of our enemies, and the Lord our God caused them to fall into our hands; and now therefore keep all that I have commanded you, and turn not away from the commandments of your God, and serve none beside Him, in order that it may be well with you and your seed after you.'"

Verse 27: "'And teach you your children and your seed the instructions of the Lord and His commandments, and teach them the upright way in which they should go, in order that it may be well with them forever.'"

Verse 28: "And Isaac answered his father and said to him, 'That which my Lord has commanded, that will I do, and I will not depart from the commands of the Lord my God, I will keep all that He commanded me'; and Abraham blessed his son Isaac, and also his children; and Abraham taught Jacob the instruction of the Lord and His ways."

Verse 29: "And it was at that time that **Abraham died, in the fifteenth year of the life of Jacob and Esau**, the sons of Isaac, and all the days of Abraham were **one hundred and seventy-five years**, and he died and was gathered to his people in good old age, old and satisfied with days, and Isaac and Ishmael his sons buried him."

Verse 30: "And when the inhabitants of Canaan heard that Abraham was dead, they all came with their kings and princes and all their men to bury Abraham."

Verse 31: "And all the inhabitants of the land of Haran, and all the families of the house of Abraham, and all the princes and grandees, and the sons of Abraham by the concubines, all came when they heard of Abraham's death, and they requited Abraham's kindness, and comforted Isaac his son, and they buried Abraham in the cave which he bought from Ephron the Hittite and his children, for the possession of a burial place."

Verse 32: "And all the inhabitants of Canaan, and all those who had known Abraham, wept for Abraham a whole year, and men and women mourned over him."

Verse 33: "And all the little children, and all the inhabitants of the land wept on account of Abraham, for Abraham had been good to them all, and because he had been upright with God and men."

Verse 34: "And there arose not a man who feared God like to Abraham, for he had feared his God from his youth, and had served the Lord, and had gone in all his ways during his life, from his childhood to the day of his death."

Verse 35: "And the Lord was with him and delivered him from the counsel of Nimrod and his people, and when he made war with the four kings of Elam he conquered them."

Verse 36: "And he brought all the children of the earth to the service of God, and he taught them the ways of the Lord, and caused them to know the Lord."

Verse 37: "And he formed a grove and he planted a vineyard therein, and he had always prepared in his tent meat and drink to those that passed through the land, that they might satisfy themselves in his house."

Verse 38: "And the Lord God delivered the whole earth on account of Abraham."

Isaac's Continuation of Abraham's Legacy

Verse 39: "And it was after the death of Abraham that **God blessed his son Isaac and his children**, and the Lord was with Isaac as He had been with his father Abraham, for Isaac kept all the commandments of the Lord as Abraham his father had commanded him; he did not turn to the right or to the left from the right path which his father had commanded him."

Book of Jasher, Chapter 27

Esau's Treachery and Nimrod's Demise

Verse 1: At that time, after Abraham had died, **Esau** spent a lot of his time out in the wilderness, hunting.

Commentary: This verse sets the stage by telling us what Esau was up to after his grandfather, Abraham, passed away. It paints a picture of Esau as an active, outdoor type, which is consistent with how he's often described.

Verse 2: Nimrod, the powerful **king of Babel** (also known as Amraphel), also regularly went out hunting with his strong warriors. He'd often stroll with his men in the field during the cooler parts of the day.

Commentary: Here we're reintroduced to Nimrod, a significant figure in ancient history according to the Book of Jasher. Like Esau, he was a hunter and a leader, which might hint at a rivalry to come.

Verse 3: Nimrod had been **constantly watching Esau**, because he felt a deep **jealousy** toward him.

Commentary: This is a crucial detail! It reveals a hidden tension between Nimrod and Esau. The text doesn't say why Nimrod was jealous, but it sets up a hostile dynamic that will soon escalate. Perhaps Nimrod, being a powerful king, saw Esau's strength or independence as a threat.

Verse 4: One particular day, while Esau was out hunting, he came across Nimrod in the wilderness, accompanied by only two of his men.

Commentary: This verse describes the moment their paths crossed. Nimrod, usually surrounded by many men, was in a vulnerable situation, only with two companions.

Verse 5: All of Nimrod's other powerful men were also in the wilderness, but they were quite far away, having split up to hunt in different directions. Seeing this, **Esau hid himself**, lying in wait for Nimrod in the wilderness.

Commentary: Esau saw his opportunity. Instead of a direct confrontation, he chose to ambush Nimrod. This shows Esau wasn't just a simple hunter; he could be cunning and strategic when it suited him.

Verse 6: Nimrod and the men with him were unaware of Esau's presence. Nimrod and his men often walked through the fields during the cooler parts of the day, seemingly to check on the progress of his hunting party.

Commentary: This explains why Nimrod was caught off guard. He was following his usual routine, not expecting an attack, making him an easy target for Esau.

Verse 7: As Nimrod and his two men approached Esau's hiding spot, Esau suddenly **leapt out** from his hiding spot, drew his sword, and quickly ran at Nimrod, **cutting off his head**.

Commentary: This is the climactic moment: Esau's swift and brutal attack. The detail of cutting off Nimrod's head emphasizes the violent and decisive nature of the act.

Verse 8: Esau then engaged in a fierce struggle with the two men who were with Nimrod. When they cried out for help, Esau quickly turned on them and **killed them both** with his sword.

Commentary: Esau didn't stop with Nimrod. He eliminated the witnesses, fighting fiercely to ensure no one was left alive to tell the tale. This highlights his ruthlessness and desperate need to cover his tracks.

Verse 9: Nimrod's other strong warriors, who had been hunting elsewhere, heard the cries from far off. Recognizing the voices of their comrades, they rushed to investigate. They arrived to find their king and his two companions **lying dead** in the wilderness.

Commentary: The cries alerted Nimrod's main hunting party. Their shock and dismay at finding their powerful king and his men dead would have been immense, marking a major turning point in their kingdom.

Verse 10: Seeing Nimrod's powerful men approaching, Esau quickly **fled and escaped** the scene. He grabbed **Nimrod's valuable garments** – special clothing that Nimrod's father had given him, and which was believed to have given Nimrod power over the entire land. Esau then ran and hid these clothes in his own house.

Commentary: Esau not only got away, but he also took a significant prize: Nimrod's special garments. The text implies these weren't just clothes but items imbued with power or symbolism, suggesting Esau took something more than just material wealth—perhaps a perceived source of Nimrod's authority.

Verse 11: Esau then took those garments and ran into the city to get away from Nimrod's men. He arrived at his father's house, weary and exhausted from the fight, and so overcome with fear and stress that he felt like he was literally going to die as he approached his brother Jacob and sat down.

Commentary: Esau's state upon returning home is critical. He's not triumphant but utterly drained, physically and emotionally. His fear of dying (perhaps from retribution or sheer exhaustion) sets up the next pivotal moment.

The Sale of the Birthright and Burial Plot

Verse 12: Esau cried out to Jacob, "Look, I feel like I'm going to die today! So what good is my **birthright** to me if I'm dead?" And Jacob, seeing the opportunity, acted shrewdly. Esau, in his moment of extreme weakness and fear, **sold his birthright to Jacob**, because that's how the Lord planned it.

Commentary: This is a famous, pivotal moment. Esau's immediate desire for survival or comfort (a bowl of stew, as in Genesis) outweighs the long-term significance of his birthright, which included the family leadership and spiritual blessings. Jacob, recognizing the value of what Esau was carelessly giving up, seized the opportunity. The phrase "it was so brought about by the Lord" tells us that this exchange was part of God's larger plan, even if human actions were involved.

Verse 13: Esau also **sold his portion in the cave of Machpelah**—the special burial ground Abraham had purchased from the Hethites—to Jacob. Jacob bought both the birthright and this burial plot from Esau, giving him fair compensation.

Commentary: This adds another layer to the transaction, not found in the biblical account in Genesis. Esau sells his right to be buried in the family's sacred plot. This further highlights Esau's disregard for his heritage and Jacob's persistent desire to secure every aspect of the covenant blessing.

Verse 14: Jacob carefully documented the entire agreement in a book. He had it witnessed by others and then sealed it. This legal document remained securely in Jacob's possession.

Commentary: Jacob ensures the deal is ironclad. He doesn't just take Esau's word for it; he creates a formal, legally binding contract with witnesses and a seal. This shows Jacob's meticulous nature and his desire for clear, undisputed ownership.

The Aftermath of Nimrod's Death

Verse 15: After **Nimrod, the son of Cush, died**, his men, in shock and dismay, carried him back to his city and buried him. Nimrod lived for a remarkable **215 years** before his death.

Commentary: This verse wraps up Nimrod's story. His death, even at an old age, was sudden and violent. The reaction of his men shows the chaos and sorrow that followed his demise.

Verse 16: Nimrod had reigned over the people of the land for **185 years**. He ultimately died by **Esau's sword**, in a manner full of **shame and disgrace**. The text explicitly states that "the seed of Abraham" (referring to Esau, a descendant of Abraham) was responsible for Nimrod's death, fulfilling a prophecy Nimrod had apparently seen in a dream.

Commentary: This verse provides a summary of Nimrod's reign and highlights the "shame and contempt" of his death. The mention of "the seed of Abraham" fulfilling a prophecy links Esau's actions (even if driven by his own impulses) to God's bigger plan. It suggests that Nimrod's oppressive rule was brought to an end by one of the very descendants of the lineage he once tried to suppress.

Verse 17: When Nimrod died, his vast **kingdom fractured into many smaller parts**. All the territories he had once ruled were reclaimed by their original kings. Furthermore, for a long time afterward, all the people who belonged to Nimrod's household became **slaves** to these other kings of the land.

Commentary: This shows the immediate and dramatic impact of Nimrod's death. His powerful centralized kingdom collapsed, leading to a scramble for power and the enslavement of his former household. It's a stark illustration of how quickly power dynamics can shift after a strong leader falls.

Book of Jasher, Chapter 28

Isaac in Gerar During a Famine

Verse 1: After Abraham died, that same year the Lord sent a really bad **famine** across the land. As the famine got worse in Canaan, Isaac decided to go down to Egypt to escape it, just like his father Abraham had done.

Commentary: This sets the scene: a **severe famine** hits, causing Isaac to consider leaving Canaan, following a path his father, Abraham, took during a similar crisis. This immediately links Isaac's experience to his father's, but with a twist.

Verse 2: But that night, the Lord appeared to Isaac and told him, "**Don't go down to Egypt**. Instead, get up and go to Gerar, to Abimelech, the king of the Philistines, and stay there until the famine is over."

Commentary: This is a crucial moment of divine intervention. Unlike Abraham, Isaac receives a direct command *not* to go to Egypt. God directs him to **Gerar** and assures him of protection there, demonstrating God's specific guidance for Isaac and His continued faithfulness to the covenant in the Promised Land.

Verse 3: So, Isaac got up and went to Gerar, just as the Lord had commanded him, and he stayed there for a full year.

Commentary: Isaac immediately obeys God's instruction, highlighting his obedient nature, a trait often emphasized in his character.

Verse 4: When Isaac arrived in Gerar, the local people saw that his wife **Rebekah was very beautiful**. The people of Gerar asked Isaac about his wife, and he told them, "**She's my sister**," because he was afraid they would kill him to get her.

Commentary: This echoes Abraham's actions in similar situations, revealing a recurring test of faith for the patriarchs. Isaac, fearing for his life due to Rebekah's beauty, resorts to deception. This highlights human weakness even among those chosen by God.

Verse 5: Abimelech's officials went and praised the woman to the king, but he didn't respond or pay attention to what they were saying.

Commentary: The king's officials noticed Rebekah's beauty and reported it to Abimelech. His initial lack of response might indicate caution or a discerning mind.

Verse 6: But he did hear them mention that Isaac had said she was his sister, so the king kept this information to himself.

Commentary: This detail is key! Abimelech's silence wasn't disinterest; he was gathering information and storing it away. This shows his wisdom and careful approach.

Verse 7: After Isaac had been in the land for three months, Abimelech looked out his window and saw Isaac **joking around with Rebekah, his wife**. Isaac's house was right across from the king's house.

Commentary: Abimelech's observation of Isaac and Rebekah's affectionate behavior ("sporting") exposed the deception. The close proximity of their houses makes it easy for the king to witness this intimate interaction.

Verse 8: The king then confronted Isaac, saying, "**What have you done to us** by saying your wife was your sister? One of our great men could easily have slept with her, and then you would have brought **guilt upon us**!"

Commentary: Abimelech, upon discovering the truth, confronts Isaac with righteous indignation. He understands the severe moral and potential divine consequences his people could have faced if one of his men had unknowingly committed adultery. This shows Abimelech's integrity and fear of God.

Verse 9: And Isaac said to Abimelech, "Because I was afraid I would die because of my wife, that's why I said, 'She is my sister.'"

Commentary: Isaac admits his fear, offering the same justification his father Abraham had given. It's a moment of vulnerability but also an admission of his lack of complete faith in God's protection.

Verse 10: At that point, Abimelech gave orders to all his officials and important men. They brought Isaac and Rebekah his wife before the king.

Commentary: Abimelech takes a formal, public stance. Gathering his officials makes the subsequent proclamation a legally binding decree.

Verse 11: And the king commanded that they should dress them in **royal garments** and have them ride through the city streets. They were to announce throughout the land, saying, "**This is the man and this is his wife; whoever touches this man or his wife shall surely die!**" Isaac then returned with his wife to the king's house, and the Lord was with Isaac, and he continued to grow wealthy and lacked nothing.

Commentary: Abimelech's decree is extraordinary. By dressing them in "royal garments" and parading them, he publicly identifies and protects them, warning his entire kingdom against harming them. This act demonstrates Abimelech's strong moral character and his respect for the patriarchs, likely stemming from his father's covenant with Abraham. The verse concludes by reaffirming God's continued blessing and presence with Isaac.

Verse 12: And the Lord made Isaac find favor in the eyes of Abimelech and all his people. Abimelech treated Isaac very well, because Abimelech remembered the **oath and covenant** that had been made between his own father and Abraham.

Commentary: God's hand is clearly seen here. Isaac receives special favor not just because of the public decree, but also because Abimelech honors the **previous covenant** between their fathers, showing a continuity of respect and diplomacy between the generations.

Verse 13: And Abimelech said to Isaac, "Look, the whole land is open to you; live wherever you like until you return to your own land." Abimelech even gave Isaac fields, vineyards, and the best part of the land of Gerar, so he could plant crops, harvest them, and eat the fruits of the ground until the famine passed.

Commentary: Abimelech's generosity is exceptional. He not only allows Isaac to stay but grants him access to prime agricultural land, essentially giving him the means to thrive during the famine. This is a testament to the blessing on Isaac and the respect shown by Abimelech.

Verse 14: Isaac planted crops in that land and received a **hundred times what he sowed** in the same year, and the Lord blessed him.

Commentary: This is a powerful demonstration of God's blessing on Isaac. Even in a time of famine, his crops yielded a phenomenal "hundred-fold" return, highlighting God's faithfulness and provision.

Verse 15: And the man grew very wealthy; he acquired large flocks, vast herds, and many servants.

Commentary: Isaac's prosperity is emphasized, showing the fulfillment of God's promise to make Abraham's descendants great. His wealth grows significantly during his stay in Gerar.

Verse 16: When the famine finally ended, the Lord appeared to Isaac again and told him, "Get up, leave this place, and go back to your own land, to the land of Canaan." So Isaac got up and returned to Hebron, which is in the land of Canaan, he and everyone with him, just as the Lord commanded him.

Commentary: Once the crisis passes, God directs Isaac to return to the promised land, specifically to Hebron. Isaac's continued obedience is highlighted, reinforcing his role as the carrier of God's covenant.

Patriarchal Passings and Esau's Marriage

Verse 17: After this, **Shelah, the son of Arphaxad, died** that year. This was in the eighteenth year of Jacob and Esau's lives. Shelah lived for **433 years** before he died.

Commentary: This verse notes the death of another ancient patriarch, **Shelah**, a descendant of Noah through Arphaxad. This provides a chronological marker, linking the patriarchal narratives and emphasizing the incredible lifespans of these early figures.

Verse 18: At that time, Isaac sent his younger son **Jacob to the house of Shem and Eber**, and Jacob learned the Lord's instructions there. Jacob stayed in the house of Shem and Eber for **thirty-two years**. His brother **Esau didn't go** because he wasn't willing to, and he remained at his father's house in the land of Canaan.

Commentary: This highlights a critical divergence between the twin brothers. Jacob is sent away for extensive spiritual education under the direct tutelage of Shem and Eber, signifying his dedication to God's ways. Esau, in contrast, refuses, preferring to stay in Canaan and pursue his own interests. This sets up their differing paths and destinies.

Verse 19: Esau was constantly hunting in the fields, always trying to bring home whatever he could get. That's what Esau did every day.

Commentary: This reiterates Esau's character as a man of the field, driven by practical needs and immediate gratification, starkly contrasting with Jacob's scholarly pursuits.

Verse 20: Esau was a **designing and deceitful man**, one who manipulated people's hearts and tricked them. Esau was also a valiant man in the field, and in time, he went hunting as usual and traveled as far as the **field of Seir, which is also called Edom**.

Commentary: This offers a more negative portrayal of Esau, describing him as "designing and deceitful," able to "inveigle" (trick or persuade) others, despite being "valiant." This adds complexity to his character, suggesting he was not merely simple but also manipulative. His journey to **Seir (Edom)** is significant, as this region will become the homeland of his descendants, the Edomites.

Verse 21: He remained in the land of Seir, hunting in the field for a year and four months.

Commentary: Esau spends a considerable amount of time away from his family in Canaan, further immersing himself in the lifestyle and possibly the culture of Seir.

Verse 22: And there, in the land of Seir, Esau saw the daughter of a Canaanite man. Her name was **Jehudith**, the daughter of Beeri, who was a son of Epher, from the families of Heth, the son of Canaan.

Commentary: Esau takes a wife from the local Canaanite population. This is a direct contrast to Abraham's strong injunction for Isaac to *not* take a Canaanite wife (Jasher 24:30). This decision will cause distress for Isaac and Rebekah, as noted in the biblical account.

Verse 23: Esau took her as his wife and became intimate with her. Esau was **forty years old** when he married her. He brought her to Hebron, where his father lived, and he lived there.

Commentary: This confirms Esau's age at marriage (consistent with Genesis 26:34). His bringing her back to Hebron, to his father's dwelling, would have likely been a source of grief for his parents due to her foreign background.

Verse 24: It happened in those days, in the **110th year of Isaac's life** (which was the **fiftieth year of Jacob's life**), that **Shem, the son of Noah, died**. Shem was **600 years old** when he died.

Commentary: This marks the death of another incredibly long-lived patriarch, **Shem**, one of Noah's sons. His death signifies the end of a direct link to the pre-Flood world for the living patriarchs, further emphasizing the shift in generations. This also provides specific chronological details for Isaac and Jacob's ages.

Verse 25: And when Shem died, Jacob returned to his father in Hebron, which is in the land of Canaan.

Commentary: Upon the death of his venerable teacher, Shem, Jacob ends his long period of spiritual study and returns to his family in the Promised Land. This implies his education was complete.

Laban's Daughters and Rebecca's Joy

Verse 26: In the **fifty-sixth year of Jacob's life**, people arrived from Haran, and Rebekah received news about her brother **Laban**, the son of Bethuel.

Commentary: This shifts the narrative focus to Rebekah's family in Haran, updating her on her brother Laban. The timing is important, as Jacob is now 56 years old.

Verse 27: For Laban's wife had been **barren** in those days and had no children, and none of his maidservants had borne him any either.

Commentary: The news reveals that Laban, like Sarah and Rebekah before him, had faced the challenge of barrenness in his household. This connects his family's experience to the ongoing theme of divine intervention in childbirth within the patriarchal narratives.

Verse 28: But the Lord afterward remembered **Adinah**, Laban's wife, and she conceived and bore **twin daughters**. Laban named his daughters, the older one **Leah**, and the younger one **Rachel**.

Commentary: God intervenes and grants Laban children, specifically twin daughters. The names **Leah and Rachel** are highly significant, as they will later become Jacob's wives and the mothers of most of the tribes of Israel. This foreshadows a major upcoming development in the narrative.

Verse 29: And those people came and told these things to Rebekah, and Rebekah rejoiced greatly that the Lord had visited her brother and that he had gotten children.

Commentary: Rebekah is overjoyed by the news, celebrating God's blessing on her brother's family. Her joy is probably amplified by her own experience with barrenness and subsequent twins, indicating her empathy and faith. This sets up the context for Jacob's eventual journey to Haran.

Book of Jasher, Chapter 29

Isaac's Blindness and Jacob's Deception for the Blessing

Verse 1: Isaac, Abraham's son, was now very **old and getting up there in years**. His eyes were failing him because of his age; they were dim, and he couldn't see well.

Commentary: This sets the scene for the events to follow, highlighting Isaac's advanced age and **blindness**. This physical impairment becomes central to the deception that's about to unfold.

Verse 2: At that time, Isaac called his son **Esau** and said, "Please, get your hunting gear – your quiver and your bow. Go out into the field and get me some venison. Then, make me a tasty meal and bring it to me so I can eat. I want to **bless you** before I die, since I'm old and gray-headed now."

Commentary: Isaac intends to give Esau his **patriarchal blessing**, a sacred and powerful pronouncement of divine favor and inheritance. He associates it with a specific ritual: eating a meal prepared from Esau's hunt. This action foreshadows the biblical account in Genesis 27.

Verse 3: Esau did as he was told. He took his weapons and went out into the field to hunt for venison, just as he always did, to bring to his father as ordered, so his father could bless him.

Commentary: Esau, oblivious to any impending trickery, proceeds with his father's request, demonstrating his usual obedience and skill as a hunter.

Verse 4: But **Rebekah heard** everything Isaac had said to Esau. She quickly called her son Jacob and said, "Your father spoke to your brother Esau like this, and I heard it. Now, hurry and do what I tell you."

Commentary: Rebekah, who favored Jacob, overhears the plan. Her immediate action to **intervene** and ensure the blessing goes to Jacob is the driving force of the deception that follows. This mirrors her role in the Genesis narrative.

Verse 5: "Get up and please go to the flock and bring me two good young goats. I'll make a tasty meal for your father, and you can bring him that meal to eat before your brother comes back from hunting. That way, your father can **bless you** instead."

Commentary: Rebekah outlines her plan in detail, demonstrating her decisive and manipulative nature. She clearly intends to secure the blessing for Jacob, believing it's the right outcome, possibly due to the earlier prophecy that "the elder shall serve the younger" (Jasher 26:12).

Verse 6: Jacob quickly did exactly as his mother had commanded him. He made the savory meal and brought it to his father before Esau had returned from his hunt.

Commentary: Jacob, though initially hesitant in the Genesis account, readily obeys his mother in this Jasher version, indicating his compliance with her scheme.

Verse 7: Isaac said to Jacob, "Who are you, my son?" And Jacob replied, "**I am your firstborn, Esau**. I've done what you ordered. Please get up now and eat what I've hunted, so that your soul may bless me, just as you said."

Commentary: The deception is in full swing. Jacob directly lies to his blind father, impersonating Esau. This lie is a significant moral hurdle in the story, but it's presented as necessary for the fulfillment of the divine plan.

Verse 8: Isaac got up and ate and drank, and his heart was comforted. He then **blessed Jacob**, and Jacob left his father. As soon as Isaac had blessed Jacob and he had left, Esau came back from his hunt in the field. He also made a savory meal and brought it to his father to eat and bless him.

Commentary: The blessing is given. Isaac, believing he has blessed Esau, is content. The immediate return of the *real* Esau highlights the narrow window of opportunity Rebekah and Jacob exploited and creates dramatic tension.

Verse 9: Isaac said to Esau, "And who was it that brought me venison earlier, before you came, and whom I did bless?" Esau realized that his brother Jacob had done this, and **Esau's anger burned** against his brother Jacob for what he had done to him.

Commentary: Isaac's question reveals his dawning realization of the trick. Esau instantly understands, and his **fury** at Jacob's deception is immense, leading to a deep-seated resentment.

Verse 10: And Esau said, "Is he not rightly called **Jacob** [supplanter]? For he has **cheated me twice!** He took away my birthright, and now he has taken away my blessing!" And Esau wept bitterly. When Isaac heard his son Esau weeping, Isaac said to Esau, "What can I do, my son? Your brother came with trickery and took away your blessing." And **Esau hated his brother Jacob** because of the blessing his father had given him, and his anger was greatly roused against him.

Commentary: Esau's bitter cry and his etymological play on Jacob's name ("supplanter") perfectly encapsulate his feelings of betrayal. He sees this as the second time Jacob has taken what was rightfully his. Isaac's helpless response emphasizes the unchangeable nature of the blessing once given. The result is a profound **hatred** and intense anger from Esau, setting up the conflict that drives Jacob's flight.

Jacob Flees to Eber's House

Verse 11: And **Jacob was very much afraid of his brother Esau**, so he got up and **fled to the house of Eber, the son of Shem**. He hid there because of his brother. Jacob was **sixty-three years old** when he left the land of Canaan from Hebron. Jacob was hidden in Eber's house for **fourteen years** because of his brother Esau, and while there, he continued to learn the Lord's ways and His commandments.

Commentary: Jacob's fear is justified, prompting his flight. The detail that he was **63 years old** provides a clear timeline, and his hiding at **Eber's house** for fourteen years is a unique addition from

Jasher, emphasizing his continued dedication to spiritual learning even during his exile. This period would precede his journey to Haran.

Verse 12: And when Esau saw that Jacob had fled and escaped from him, and that Jacob had cleverly gotten the blessing, then Esau grieved exceedingly, and he was also vexed at his father and mother; and he also rose up and took his wife and went away from his father and mother to the **land of Seir**, and he dwelt there; and Esau saw there a woman from amongst the daughters of Heth whose name was **Bosmath, the daughter of Elon the Hittite**, and he took her for a wife in addition to his first wife, and Esau called her name **Adah**, saying the blessing had in that time passed from him.

Commentary: Esau's grief and vexation are deeply felt, not just at Jacob but also at his parents for their perceived role in the deception. His response is to distance himself, moving to the **land of Seir**, which becomes the territory of Edom (his descendants). He then takes another wife, **Bosmath**, from the Hittites (a local Canaanite group), further cementing his break from his parents' wishes for wives from their kindred. The renaming of Bosmath to **Adah** and the explanation that "the blessing had in that time passed from him" is a poignant detail, showing Esau's bitter acknowledgment of his loss.

Verse 13: And Esau lived in the land of Seir for six months without seeing his father and mother. Afterward, Esau took his wives and got up and returned to the land of Canaan, and Esau placed his two wives in his father's house in Hebron.

Commentary: Esau's return after a relatively short time in Seir is interesting. He brings his Canaanite wives to his parents' home in Hebron, possibly out of a desire for reconciliation or simply habit, unaware of the further distress this will cause.

Verse 14: And Esau's wives **annoyed and provoked Isaac and Rebekah** with their behavior, for they did not follow the Lord's ways but served their fathers' gods of wood and stone, as their fathers had taught them, and they were even more wicked than their fathers.

Commentary: This verse explicitly states the problem with Esau's wives: their **idolatry** and wicked ways. Their presence and pagan practices were a constant source of grief and frustration for Isaac and Rebekah, who were devoted to the Lord.

Verse 15: And they followed the evil desires of their hearts, and they sacrificed and burned incense to the **Baalim** (false gods), and Isaac and Rebekah became very weary of them.

Commentary: This further elaborates on the wives' pagan practices, specifically mentioning their worship of **Baalim**. The continuous vexation caused by their ungodly behavior makes life difficult for Isaac and Rebekah, highlighting the consequences of Esau's unapproved marriages.

Verse 16: And Rebekah said, "I'm tired of living because of these Hittite daughters! If Jacob takes a wife from these same kind of local daughters, what good is my life then?"

Commentary: Rebekah expresses profound despair and disgust at the prospect of Jacob marrying a Canaanite woman like Esau did. Her emotional outburst underscores the deep importance placed on preserving the spiritual purity of the covenant lineage. This serves as a direct motivation for her later actions.

Ishmael's Death and Isaac's Command to Jacob

Verse 17: In those days, **Adah, Esau's wife, conceived and gave birth to a son**, and Esau named him **Eliphaz**. Esau was **sixty-five years old** when Eliphaz was born.

Commentary: This provides details about Esau's first son, **Eliphaz**, who will play a role later in the narrative. It also gives another chronological marker, Esau's age at the birth of his son.

Verse 18: Ishmael, Abraham's son, **died** in those days, in the sixty-fourth year of Jacob's life. Ishmael lived for a total of **137 years** before he died.

Commentary: The death of Ishmael, Abraham's other son, is noted. This marks the passing of another patriarch and provides further chronological context for the ongoing narrative.

Verse 19: When Isaac heard that Ishmael was dead, he mourned for him and lamented over him for many days.

Commentary: Despite the long separation and past tensions, Isaac genuinely mourns his half-brother Ishmael, showing a familial bond and respect.

Verse 20: After **fourteen years of Jacob living in Eber's house**, Jacob wanted to see his father and mother. So, Jacob came to his parents' house in Hebron. At that time, **Esau had forgotten** what Jacob had done to him by taking the blessing.

Commentary: Jacob's period of exile and study ends, and he returns home. The crucial detail here is that Esau had seemingly "forgotten" his intense anger, suggesting a temporary peace or a lapse in his vengeful thoughts. This sets up a false sense of security.

Verse 21: But when Esau saw Jacob coming to his father and mother, he **remembered** what Jacob had done to him, and he was **greatly enraged** and sought to kill him.

Commentary: The sight of Jacob immediately rekindles Esau's suppressed rage and desire for vengeance. The "forgetting" was only temporary, and the deep-seated hatred resurfaces, posing an immediate threat to Jacob's life.

Verse 22: And Isaac, Abraham's son, was old and frail. Esau said, "My father's time to die is near. When he dies, I will slay my brother Jacob."

Commentary: Esau's murderous intent is chilling. He plans to wait until Isaac's death to avoid causing his father more grief, but his resolve to kill Jacob remains firm. This puts Jacob in imminent danger.

Verse 23: This was reported to Rebekah, and she quickly sent for her son Jacob. She told him, "Get up, go and **flee to Haran to my brother Laban**, and stay there for some time, until your brother's anger cools down. Then you can come back."

Commentary: Rebekah, ever vigilant and protective of Jacob, learns of Esau's plot. She immediately takes action, advising Jacob to flee to her brother Laban in Haran, providing him with a safe haven until the danger passes. This directly parallels the Genesis account.

Verse 24: And Isaac called Jacob and told him, "Do not take a wife from the daughters of Canaan, for our father Abraham commanded us this according to the Lord's word, which He commanded him,

saying, 'To your seed I will give this land; if your children keep My covenant that I have made with you, then I will also perform for your children that which I have spoken to you, and I will not abandon them.'"

Commentary: Before Jacob leaves, Isaac gives him a solemn command, echoing Abraham's earlier instructions: **do not marry a Canaanite woman**. Isaac connects this command directly to the covenant promise of the land, emphasizing that the inheritance is conditional upon obedience to God's commandments.

Verse 25: "Now therefore, my son, listen to my voice, to all that I shall command you, and refrain from taking a wife from amongst the daughters of Canaan; arise, go to Haran to the house of Bethuel your mother's father, and take unto yourself a wife from there from the daughters of Laban your mother's brother."

Commentary: Isaac reiterates the command with emphasis and provides the specific destination: Haran, to the family of Rebekah's brother, Laban. This ensures Jacob marries within the family, maintaining the purity of the covenant lineage.

Verse 26: "Therefore, be careful lest you forget the Lord your God and all His ways in the land to which you go, and become entangled with the people of the land and pursue vanity and abandon the Lord your God."

Commentary: Isaac's warning extends beyond just marriage. He warns Jacob against spiritual compromise, urging him not to forget God, His ways, or to be swayed by the pagan practices of the new land. This highlights the importance of spiritual integrity.

Verse 27: "But when you come to the land, serve the Lord there. Do not turn to the right or to the left from the way which I commanded you and which you learned."

Commentary: Isaac provides positive instruction: Jacob is to actively serve God in Haran and remain steadfast in the path of righteousness he has learned, reinforcing his years of spiritual education with Eber.

Verse 28: "And may the Almighty God grant you favor in the sight of the people of the earth, that you may take there a wife according to your choice; one who is good and upright in the ways of the Lord."

Commentary: Isaac prays for Jacob's success in finding a suitable wife who is not only pleasing to him but also righteous in God's eyes. This emphasizes the spiritual qualities desired in a spouse.

Verse 29: "And may God give to you and your seed the **blessing of your father Abraham**, and make you fruitful and multiply you, and may you become a multitude of people in the land wherever you go, and may God cause you to return to this land, the land of your father's dwelling, with children and with great riches, with joy and with pleasure."

Commentary: This is Isaac's powerful **patriarchal blessing** upon Jacob. He explicitly passes on the Abrahamic covenant: fruitfulness, multiplication, becoming a great nation, and a blessed return to the Promised Land with wealth and joy. This formally transfers the divine promises to Jacob.

Verse 30: And Isaac finished commanding Jacob and blessing him, and he gave him many gifts, together with silver and gold, and he sent him away. And Jacob listened to his father and mother; he kissed them and got up and went to Padan-aram. Jacob was **seventy-seven years old** when he left the land of Canaan from Beersheba.

Commentary: Isaac completes his instructions and blessing, bestowing gifts upon Jacob, signaling a clear sending off. Jacob's obedience is highlighted, and his age (77) at departure provides a distinct chronological marker, much older than typically assumed in the biblical narrative alone.

Eliphaz's Ambush and Jacob's Surrender

Verse 31: As Jacob left to go to Haran, Esau secretly called his son **Eliphaz** and told him, "Now hurry, take your sword and pursue Jacob. Go ahead of him on the road, lie in wait for him, and **kill him with your sword** on one of the mountains. Then take everything he has and come back."

Commentary: This is a shocking revelation from Jasher. Esau, still consumed by hatred, orders his own son, Eliphaz, to murder Jacob and rob him. This adds a layer of premeditated malice to Esau's character that is not explicit in the biblical account.

Verse 32: And Eliphaz, Esau's son, was an active man and skilled with the bow, just as his father had taught him. He was a renowned hunter in the field and a valiant man.

Commentary: Eliphaz is described as highly competent and formidable, making him a dangerous instrument of Esau's vengeance.

Verse 33: And Eliphaz did as his father had commanded him. Eliphaz was **thirteen years old** at that time. Eliphaz got up and took ten of his mother's brothers with him and pursued Jacob.

Commentary: A chilling detail: Eliphaz, a young teenager, is tasked with fratricide and robbery. The inclusion of "his mother's brothers" (Hittites/Canaanites) highlights the foreign and potentially ruthless influence on Esau's side of the family.

Verse 34: He followed Jacob closely and laid in wait for him near the border of the land of Canaan, opposite the city of Shechem.

Commentary: Eliphaz strategically positions himself to ambush Jacob near a known landmark, showing his skill in tracking and planning.

Verse 35: Jacob saw Eliphaz and his men pursuing him, and Jacob stopped in his tracks, trying to understand what was happening, as he didn't know what was going on. Eliphaz drew his sword and, with his men, advanced toward Jacob. Jacob said to them, "What do you want with me, that you've come here, and why are you pursuing me with swords?"

Commentary: Jacob is caught off guard, initially bewildered by the armed pursuit. His questions convey his confusion and fear in the face of this unexpected threat.

Verse 36: Eliphaz came close to Jacob and replied, "My father commanded me to do this, and now I will not go against the orders my father gave me." When Jacob saw that Esau had told Eliphaz to use force, Jacob then approached and pleaded with Eliphaz and his men, saying to him,

Commentary: Eliphaz explicitly states his murderous intent is on his father's orders, revealing the depth of Esau's continued hatred. Jacob, seeing that resistance is futile against armed men, shifts to pleading for his life.

Verse 37: "Look, take everything I have, everything my father and mother gave me, and leave me alone. Don't kill me, and may this act be counted as a righteous deed for you."

Commentary: In a desperate act of self-preservation, Jacob offers all his possessions as a ransom for his life. He appeals to their morality, asking them to consider sparing his life a "righteous deed" rather than fratricide.

Verse 38: And the Lord caused Jacob to find favor in the eyes of Eliphaz, Esau's son, and his men. They listened to Jacob's plea and did not kill him. Eliphaz and his men took everything belonging to Jacob, including the silver and gold he had brought with him from Beersheba; they left him nothing.

Commentary: This is another moment of divine intervention. God softens Eliphaz's heart, leading him to spare Jacob's life in exchange for all his possessions. Jacob is stripped of his material wealth, starting his journey to Laban empty-handed. This seemingly negative event could be seen as God's way of humbling Jacob and preparing him for his journey, relying solely on divine providence.

Verse 39: And Eliphaz and his men left Jacob and returned to Esau in Beersheba. They told him everything that had happened with Jacob and gave him all they had taken from Jacob.

Commentary: Eliphaz reports back to his father, delivering the stolen goods but not the desired death.

Verse 40: And Esau was furious with Eliphaz, his son, and with the men who were with him, because they had not put Jacob to death.

Commentary: Esau's rage highlights the depth of his hatred. He is more upset about Jacob being alive than he is pleased about getting his wealth. This emphasizes his bloodthirsty intent.

Verse 41: And they replied to Esau, "Because Jacob pleaded with us not to kill him, our pity was stirred toward him, and we took everything he had and brought it to you." And Esau took all the silver and gold that Eliphaz had taken from Jacob and stored them in his house.

Commentary: Eliphaz explains that compassion prevented them from killing Jacob. Esau accepts the stolen wealth, but his continued anger is evident.

Esau's Marriage to Ishmael's Daughter

Verse 42: At that time, when Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob and had commanded him, saying, "You shall not take a wife from amongst the daughters of Canaan," and that the daughters of Canaan were bad in the sight of Isaac and Rebekah,

Commentary: This verse explains Esau's next move. He finally understands his parents' displeasure with his Canaanite wives and Jacob's mandate *not* to marry one. He recognizes that his previous marriages were seen as "bad" in his parents' eyes.

Verse 43: Then he went to the house of **Ishmael his uncle**, and in addition to his older wives he took **Mahalath the daughter of Ishmael, the sister of Nebayoth**, for a wife.

Commentary: In an attempt to please his parents (or perhaps to secure a different kind of blessing), Esau takes another wife, this time from his uncle Ishmael's family. This marriage, to **Mahalath** (also called Basemath in Genesis), is meant to be more acceptable than his previous Canaanite wives. However, it still doesn't fulfill the same covenant requirements as Jacob marrying a relative from Haran.

Book of Jasher, Chapter 30

Jacob's Journey and Dream at Bethel

Verse 1: And Jacob continued on his journey toward Haran. He arrived at **Mount Moriah** and spent the night near the city of Luz. That night, the Lord appeared to Jacob there and told him, "**I am the Lord God of Abraham and the God of Isaac, your father. The land where you are lying, I will give to you and your descendants.**"

Commentary: Jacob is on the run, penniless, but God meets him in a powerful way. The location, "Mount Moriah," traditionally associated with Abraham's near-sacrifice of Isaac, adds significance to this encounter. God reconfirms the **covenant promise** made to Abraham and Isaac, directly to Jacob, establishing him as the next in the line of inheritance.

Verse 2: "And behold, I am with you and will protect you wherever you go. I will multiply your descendants like the stars of heaven, and I will make all your enemies fall before you. When they fight you, they won't win, and I will bring you back to this land with joy, with children, and with great wealth."

Commentary: God's promise here is comprehensive: **personal protection, numerous descendants, victory over enemies, and a safe, prosperous return** to the Promised Land. This divine assurance is crucial for Jacob, who is starting his journey with nothing.

Verse 3: Jacob woke up from his sleep and was incredibly happy about the vision he had seen. He named that place **Bethel** (meaning "House of God").

Commentary: Jacob's immediate response is joy and faith. He recognizes the significance of the encounter and dedicates the place as "Bethel," marking it as sacred ground where God had revealed Himself.

Verse 4: Jacob left that place full of joy, and as he walked, his steps felt light to him because of his happiness. He traveled from there to the land of the Eastern people and eventually reached **Haran**, settling down by the shepherds' well.

Commentary: The profound spiritual experience reinvigorates Jacob, making his arduous journey feel easier. He continues toward his destination, Haran, and arrives at a common meeting spot: a well, a recurring theme in patriarchal narratives for significant encounters.

Jacob Meets Rachel and Laban

Verse 5: He found some men there, on their way from Haran to feed their flocks, and Jacob asked them questions. They replied, "We're from Haran."

Commentary: Jacob, seeking information about his mother's family, engages with the local shepherds, which is a natural way to get information in that setting.

Verse 6: He asked them, "Do you know **Laban, Nahor's son**?" They said, "We know him, and look, his daughter **Rachel** is coming now to feed her father's flock."

Commentary: Jacob's direct question about Laban immediately yields results. The mention of Rachel coming next creates anticipation for their meeting.

Verse 7: While he was still speaking with them, **Rachel, Laban's daughter**, arrived to tend her father's sheep, because she was a shepherdess.

Commentary: The meeting happens organically, just as he was inquiring. Rachel's role as a shepherdess shows her active involvement in her family's livelihood.

Verse 8: When Jacob saw **Rachel**, the daughter of Laban, his mother's brother, he ran and **kissed her**, and then he started to **weep loudly**.

Commentary: This is a moment of strong emotion. Jacob's immediate, passionate reaction—kissing and weeping—likely stems from relief at finding family, the weight of his journey, and perhaps even an immediate attraction. It signifies the start of a deep bond.

Verse 9: And Jacob told Rachel that he was Rebekah's son, her father's sister. Rachel then ran and told her father. Jacob continued to cry because he had **nothing with him to bring to Laban's house** as a gift.

Commentary: Jacob identifies himself, emphasizing his family connection. Rachel's quick run to her father shows her excitement. Jacob's continued weeping reveals his humility and distress over arriving empty-handed, a stark contrast to the rich gifts Abraham's servant brought when Rebekah was sought. His wealth was taken by Eliphaz.

Verse 10: When Laban heard that his sister's son, Jacob, had come, he ran and kissed him, embraced him, and brought him into the house. He gave him bread, and Jacob ate.

Commentary: Laban's welcome is warm and hospitable, appearing genuine at first, likely because of the family connection. He offers food, a common gesture of welcome.

Verse 11: Jacob then told Laban everything his brother Esau had done to him, and what his son Eliphaz had done to him on the road.

Commentary: Jacob recounts his recent harrowing experiences, explaining why he arrived without possessions. This provides Laban with the full context of Jacob's flight and his current predicament.

Verse 12: Jacob stayed in Laban's house for one month, eating and drinking. Afterward, Laban said to Jacob, "Tell me what your wages should be. How can you work for me for free?"

Commentary: After a month of hospitality, Laban introduces the topic of payment, indicating a transition from guest to employee. This sets the stage for the labor agreements that will define their relationship.

Verse 13: Laban had no sons, only daughters. His other wives and maidservants were still barren at that time. These are the names of Laban's daughters whom his wife Adinah had borne him: the older one was **Leah**, and the younger one was **Rachel**. Leah had tender eyes, but **Rachel was beautiful and shapely**, and Jacob loved her.

Commentary: This verse introduces the two central female characters. Laban's lack of sons makes his daughters crucial for his lineage. The description of **Leah's "tender eyes"** (often interpreted as weak or dull) contrasts sharply with **Rachel's striking beauty**, immediately highlighting why Jacob would fall deeply in love with Rachel.

Verse 14: And Jacob said to Laban, "I will serve you **seven years for Rachel**, your younger daughter." Laban agreed to this, and Jacob served Laban seven years for his daughter Rachel.

Commentary: Jacob, deeply in love, proposes a direct exchange: **seven years of labor** for Rachel's hand in marriage. Laban agrees, seemingly a fair deal. This period of service is a testament to Jacob's love and commitment.

Chronological Markers and Esau's Further Marriages

Verse 15: In the second year of Jacob's stay in Haran, which was the seventy-ninth year of Jacob's life, **Eber, the son of Shem, died**. He was **464 years old** at his death.

Commentary: This provides another chronological marker, noting the death of **Eber**, Jacob's former teacher and a significant patriarch, during Jacob's service. It places Jacob at 79 years old, emphasizing his continued maturity.

Verse 16: When Jacob heard that Eber was dead, he grieved deeply, and he mourned and lamented over him for many days.

Commentary: Jacob's strong emotional response to Eber's death reflects the deep respect and bond he had with his spiritual mentor, highlighting the impact of his 14 years of study.

Verse 17: In the third year of Jacob's stay in Haran, **Bosmath, Ishmael's daughter and Esau's wife, gave birth to a son**, whom Esau named **Reuel**. Esau was **sixty-five years old** when she bore him.

Commentary: The narrative shifts back to Esau, noting the birth of his son **Reuel**. This provides a further chronological parallel between the lives of the two brothers, showing their respective family developments.

Verse 18: In the fourth year of Jacob's residence in Laban's house, the Lord visited Laban and remembered him because of Jacob, and **sons were born to him**. His firstborn was **Beor**, his second was **Alib**, and the third was **Chorash**.

Commentary: This is a crucial detail from Jasher: Laban, who previously had no sons (Verse 13), is now blessed with them. This blessing is directly attributed to **God's favor on Laban *because of Jacob***, showing how Jacob's presence brings prosperity to his host, echoing God's promise to Abraham.

Verse 19: And the Lord gave Laban riches and honor, sons and daughters, and the man increased greatly because of Jacob.

Commentary: The blessing on Laban is comprehensive: wealth, status, and more children. It reiterates that Jacob's presence is a direct source of immense blessing for Laban.

Verse 20: And in those days, Jacob served Laban in all kinds of work, in the house and in the field, and the Lord's blessing was in everything that belonged to Laban, both in his house and in his fields.

Commentary: This emphasizes Jacob's diligent service and the tangible evidence of God's blessing on his work. Everything Jacob touched prospered, benefiting Laban greatly.

Verse 21: In the fifth year, **Jehudith, Beeri's daughter and Esau's wife, died** in the land of Canaan. She had no sons, only daughters.

Commentary: Another tragic event for Esau: one of his wives, Jehudith, passes away without bearing him any sons, only daughters. This might have influenced his decision to seek another wife.

Verse 22: And these are the names of her daughters whom she bore to Esau: the older one was **Marzith**, and the younger one was **Puith**.

Commentary: The names of Jehudith's daughters are listed, providing specific details about Esau's immediate family.

Verse 23: When Jehudith died, Esau got up and went to **Seir** to hunt in the field, as usual, and Esau lived in the land of Seir for a long time.

Commentary: Esau retreats to Seir after his wife's death, suggesting a period of mourning or seeking solace in his preferred hunting grounds. He spends an extended period there.

Verse 24: In the sixth year, Esau took another wife in addition to his other wives, **Ahlibamah, the daughter of Zebeon the Hivite**, and Esau brought her to the land of Canaan.

Commentary: Esau marries yet again, choosing another Canaanite woman, **Ahlibamah**, from the Hivites (a specific group mentioned in Genesis). This further reinforces his pattern of disregarding his parents' wishes regarding marriage.

Verse 25: And Ahlibamah conceived and bore Esau **three sons: Yeush, Yaalan, and Korah**.

Commentary: This details the children born to Esau through Ahlibamah, adding to his growing family.

Esau's Departure from Canaan

Verse 26: In those days, in the land of Canaan, there was a **quarrel between Esau's herdsmen and the herdsmen of the local Canaanite inhabitants**. This was because Esau's cattle and possessions had become too numerous for him to stay in the land of Canaan, in his father's house, and the land of Canaan couldn't support him because of all his livestock.

Commentary: The text explains the practical reason for Esau's eventual departure from Canaan: his vast wealth in livestock led to conflicts over resources. This is consistent with similar events in Genesis, where scarcity of land caused separation (e.g., Abraham and Lot).

Verse 27: When Esau saw that his quarrels with the inhabitants of the land of Canaan were increasing, he got up and took his wives, his sons, his daughters, everyone belonging to him, all the cattle he owned, and all his property that he had acquired in the land of Canaan. He left the inhabitants of the land and went to the **land of Seir**, and Esau and everyone belonging to him lived in the land of Seir.

Commentary: Esau formally separates from his parents' household in Canaan due to economic necessity and ongoing conflict. He permanently relocates to **Seir**, establishing his family's base there, thus solidifying the future nation of Edom.

Verse 28: But from time to time, Esau would go and visit his father and mother in the land of Canaan. And Esau intermarried with the **Horites** there, and he gave his daughters to the sons of Seir, the Horite.

Commentary: Despite moving to Seir, Esau maintains some familial ties by visiting his parents. He also continues his pattern of intermarriage, now with the **Horites**, the indigenous people of Seir, further integrating his family with the local population.

Verse 29: He gave his elder daughter **Marzith to Anah**, the son of Zebeon (his wife Ahlibamah's brother), and his daughter **Puith he gave to Azar**, the son of Bilhan the Horite. Esau lived in the mountains with his children, and they were fruitful and multiplied.

Commentary: Esau's daughters marry into the Horite families, further solidifying the Edomite lineage as a blend of Esau's descendants and the native inhabitants of Seir. The verse concludes with the affirmation of their growth and multiplication, highlighting the establishment of the Edomite nation.

Book of Jasher, Chapter 31

Jacob's Marriage to Leah (by Deception)

Verse 1: In the seventh year, Jacob finished his service to Laban. Jacob said to Laban, "Give me my wife, because my time of service is done." Laban agreed, and both Laban and Jacob gathered all the people of that place for a feast.

Commentary: Jacob has fulfilled his seven years of labor for Rachel. He's ready to claim his bride, and a celebratory feast is prepared, as was customary for weddings.

Verse 2: In the evening, Laban came to the house, and then Jacob arrived with the feast guests. Laban put out all the lights in the house.

Commentary: This detail about Laban extinguishing the lights is crucial. It's a deliberate act designed to facilitate his deception, making it difficult for Jacob to identify his bride in the dark.

Verse 3: Jacob said to Laban, "Why are you doing this to us?" Laban answered, "It's our custom in this land to do things this way."

Commentary: Jacob is confused by the unusual custom, but Laban provides a convenient, if false, explanation, playing on Jacob's unfamiliarity with local traditions.

Verse 4: Afterward, Laban took his daughter **Leah** and brought her to Jacob, and he was intimate with her. Jacob didn't know it was Leah.

Commentary: The deception is complete. In the darkness, Jacob unknowingly marries Leah instead of Rachel, a massive betrayal by Laban. This directly sets up the dramatic conflict and the foundation for the lineage of the tribes of Israel.

Verse 5: And Laban gave his daughter Leah his maid **Zilpah** to be her servant.

Commentary: This is a customary part of the marriage arrangement, providing Leah with a personal attendant.

Verse 6: All the people at the feast knew what Laban had done to Jacob, but they didn't tell Jacob.

Commentary: This reveals a deeper conspiracy. The guests are complicit in Laban's deception, likely out of loyalty to Laban or fear. Jacob is truly isolated in his ignorance.

Verse 7: And all the neighbors came that night to Jacob's house. They ate and drank and celebrated, playing tambourines and dancing before Leah. They even chanted before Jacob, "**Heleah, Heleah**."

Commentary: This adds a unique detail not found in Genesis. The neighbors' chant, "Heleah," is a play on Leah's name, revealing their knowledge of the switch. Their festive behavior masks the deceit, and Jacob remains unaware of its true meaning.

Verse 8: Jacob heard their words but didn't understand their meaning. He just thought it might be a custom in that land.

Commentary: Jacob's confusion and his assumption that this was a local custom highlight his continued naiveté regarding Laban's trickery.

Verse 9: The neighbors spoke these words before Jacob all night, and Laban had kept all the lights in the house extinguished that night.

Commentary: The persistent chanting and the continued darkness emphasize the elaborate nature of Laban's deception.

Verse 10: In the morning, when daylight appeared, Jacob turned to his wife and saw, and behold, it was **Leah** who had been lying in his arms. Jacob then said, "Now I understand what the neighbors were saying last night, 'Heleah,' they said, and I didn't know it!"

Commentary: The moment of revelation for Jacob. With the morning light, the truth is revealed, leading to Jacob's stunned realization and understanding of the deceptive chants.

Verse 11: Jacob called Laban and confronted him, saying, "**What is this you've done to me?** I served you for Rachel! Why did you deceive me and give me Leah?"

Commentary: Jacob's anger and sense of betrayal are palpable. He directly confronts Laban, highlighting the breach of their agreement and the core of Laban's deceit.

Verse 12: Laban answered Jacob, saying, "It's not customary in our place to give the younger daughter before the elder. So now, if you want to also take her sister, take her for another **seven years of service**."

Commentary: Laban provides a convenient "custom" as justification for his trickery, but then immediately leverages the situation to his advantage, demanding another **seven years of labor** for Rachel. This reveals Laban's manipulative and greedy character.

Verse 13: Jacob agreed to this, and he also took Rachel as his wife. He served Laban seven more years, and Jacob was also intimate with Rachel. He loved **Rachel more than Leah**, and Laban gave Rachel his maid **Bilhah** to be her servant.

Commentary: Jacob agrees to Laban's terms, demonstrating his deep love for Rachel. His clear preference for Rachel over Leah is explicitly stated, foreshadowing future tension between the sisters. Rachel also receives a maid, Bilhah.

Births of Jacob's Children

Verse 14: When the Lord saw that Leah was **hated** (or unloved), the Lord opened her womb, and she conceived and bore Jacob **four sons** in those days.

Commentary: This reflects divine compassion for Leah. God grants her fertility, specifically because she is unloved by Jacob, turning her sorrow into a source of blessing and status.

Verse 15: These are their names: **Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah**. After that, she stopped having children for a while.

Commentary: The first four sons of Jacob are listed, becoming the patriarchs of the foundational tribes of Israel. Leah gains status through her children, even if her husband's affection is still primarily for Rachel.

Verse 16: At that time, Rachel was **barren** and had no children. Rachel envied her sister Leah, and when Rachel saw that she bore no children to Jacob, she took her maidservant **Bilhah**, and she bore Jacob two sons, **Dan and Naphtali**.

Commentary: Rachel's barrenness causes her distress and envy. Following a common practice of the time, she gives her maidservant, Bilhah, to Jacob to bear children on her behalf, attempting to gain status through proxy motherhood.

Verse 17: When Leah saw that she had stopped having children, she also took her maidservant **Zilpah** and gave her to Jacob as a wife. Jacob was also intimate with Zilpah, and she bore Jacob two sons, **Gad and Asher**.

Commentary: The competition between the sisters continues. Leah, seeing Rachel's strategy, uses her own maidservant, Zilpah, to bear more sons for Jacob, increasing her own influence and number of children.

Verse 18: And Leah conceived again and bore Jacob in those days two more sons and one daughter. Their names are **Issachar, Zebulun, and their sister Dinah**.

Commentary: Leah's fertility returns, and she bears three more children, solidifying her position as the mother of a large portion of Jacob's household, including his only daughter mentioned here, Dinah.

Verse 19: And Rachel was still barren in those days. At that time, Rachel prayed to the Lord and said, "Oh, Lord God, please remember me and visit me, I beg You, for my husband will now reject me because I haven't borne him any children!"

Commentary: Rachel's anguish over her barrenness is profound. She sees it as a source of "reproach" and fears losing Jacob's affection, highlighting the immense social and personal pressure on women to bear children in that culture. She directly appeals to God.

Verse 20: "Now, O Lord God, hear my plea before You, and see my suffering. Give me children, even like one of the maidservants, so that I may no longer bear my reproach."

Commentary: Rachel's desperate prayer shows her deep desire for children, even if it means having them through unconventional means. She frames it as a removal of her "reproach" or shame.

Verse 21: And God heard her and opened her womb. Rachel conceived and bore a son, and she said, "The Lord has taken away my reproach!" And she called his name **Joseph**, saying, "May the Lord add another son to me." Jacob was **ninety-one years old** when she bore him.

Commentary: God answers Rachel's prayer, and she gives birth to Joseph. Her naming of him reflects her relief ("taken away my reproach") and her continued hope for more children ("may the Lord add to me another son"). This birth is a huge moment, as Joseph will become one of the most prominent figures in the Jacob narrative. Jacob's age (91) confirms he is advanced in years by this point.

Rebecca Summons Jacob and His Extended Stay

Verse 22: At that time, Jacob's mother, Rebekah, sent her nurse **Deborah**, the daughter of Uz, and two of Isaac's servants to Jacob.

Commentary: Rebekah sends a delegation to Jacob. The inclusion of Deborah, her trusted nurse, adds a personal touch and underscores the urgency and importance of the message.

Verse 23: They came to Jacob in Haran and told him, "Rebekah has sent us to you so that you will return to your father's house in the land of Canaan." Jacob listened to them, to what his mother had said.

Commentary: The message is clear: it's time for Jacob to return home. Jacob appears receptive to his mother's plea.

Verse 24: At that time, the other seven years Jacob served Laban for Rachel were completed. So, after **fourteen years** of living in Haran, Jacob said to Laban, "Give me my wives and send me away, so I can go to my land, for my mother sent word from Canaan that I should return to my father's house."

Commentary: Jacob's second seven-year term is finished, meaning he has now served Laban for a total of fourteen years. He uses his mother's summons as a reason to finally depart with his family.

Verse 25: Laban said to him, "No, please! If I have found favor in your sight, don't leave me. Name your wages, and I will give them, and stay with me."

Commentary: Laban, recognizing Jacob's value due to the prosperity he brings (as noted in Verse 19), tries to entice him to stay, offering him the chance to name his own wages.

Verse 26: Jacob said to him, "This is what you shall give me as wages: Today, I will go through all your flock and take away every speckled and spotted lamb, and every brown one among the sheep, and all the spotted and speckled among the goats. If you do this for me, I will return and feed your flock and keep them as before."

Commentary: Jacob proposes a unique and seemingly disadvantageous wage system for himself. He asks for only the abnormally colored animals, which would have been rare. This seemingly clever proposal relies on divine intervention and Jacob's later manipulation of genetics.

Verse 27: And Laban did so; Laban removed from his flock all that Jacob had said and gave them to him.

Commentary: Laban agrees to the terms and immediately removes the animals Jacob requested, likely thinking he's getting the better end of the deal.

Verse 28: And Jacob placed all that he had removed from Laban's flock in the hands of his sons, and Jacob was feeding the remainder of Laban's flock.

Commentary: Jacob's sons are entrusted with his portion of the flock, while Jacob continues to manage the main flock for Laban. This sets up the unusual breeding arrangement that will follow.

Verse 29: When Isaac's servants, whom he had sent to Jacob, saw that Jacob wouldn't return with them to his father in Canaan at that time, they left him and went back home to the land of Canaan.

Commentary: The messengers from Isaac return without Jacob, indicating Jacob's decision to stay longer with Laban under the new agreement.

Verse 30: Deborah remained with Jacob in Haran; she did not return with Isaac's servants to the land of Canaan. Deborah resided with Jacob's wives and children in Haran.

Commentary: Rebekah's nurse, Deborah, stays with Jacob. This is a significant detail, as it means she will accompany Jacob and his family later, and her death will be noted in Genesis.

Verse 31: Jacob served Laban six more years. And when the sheep gave birth, Jacob made sure to remove the speckled and spotted ones, as he had agreed with Laban. Jacob did this at Laban's for six years, and the man became exceedingly wealthy; he had many cattle, maidservants, menservants, camels, and donkeys.

Commentary: Jacob works another six years under this new agreement. During this period, through a combination of divine blessing and strategic breeding (as hinted in Genesis 30), Jacob's own flocks prosper immensely, making him incredibly wealthy.

Verse 32: And Jacob had two hundred herds of cattle, and his cattle were large and beautiful in appearance and were very productive. All the families of men desired to get some of Jacob's cattle, for they were exceedingly prosperous.

Commentary: Jacob's livestock are not just numerous but also exceptionally healthy and desirable. His herds become legendary for their quality and productivity.

Verse 33: Many people came to acquire some of Jacob's flock, and Jacob would trade a sheep for a male servant or a female servant, or for a donkey or a camel. Whatever Jacob wanted from them, they gave him.

Commentary: This highlights Jacob's shrewd business acumen and the value of his prosperous livestock. He uses his animals to acquire more servants and other assets, further increasing his wealth and workforce.

Verse 34: And Jacob gained great riches, honor, and possessions through these transactions with people, and Laban's children became envious of his prosperity.

Commentary: Jacob's growing wealth and status lead to **envy** from Laban's sons. This simmering resentment will become a key factor in Jacob's eventual departure.

Verse 35: In time, he heard the words of Laban's sons, saying, "Jacob has taken everything that belonged to our father, and from what was our father's, he has acquired all this glory."

Commentary: Laban's sons openly accuse Jacob of stealing their inheritance, fueling the tension and making Jacob's continued stay untenable.

Verse 36: And Jacob saw Laban's and his children's faces, and behold, their attitude toward him was not the same as it had been before.

Commentary: Jacob perceives the shift in Laban's and his sons' demeanor, confirming the growing hostility and making him realize he is no longer safe or welcome.

Jacob's Secret Departure

Verse 37: And the Lord appeared to Jacob at the end of the six years and told him, "Get up, leave this land, and return to the land of your birthplace, and I will be with you."

Commentary: Just as the tension reaches a breaking point, God intervenes again, giving Jacob the explicit command to return home, reaffirming His promise of protection.

Verse 38: Jacob got up at that time and loaded his children, wives, and all his belongings onto camels, and he set out for the land of Canaan, to his father Isaac.

Commentary: Jacob acts swiftly and secretly, gathering his family and vast possessions to begin the journey home.

Verse 39: Laban didn't know that Jacob had left him, because Laban had been out shearing his sheep that day.

Commentary: Jacob's stealthy departure is successful due to Laban's distraction with sheep-shearing, a major annual event.

Verse 40: And **Rachel stole her father's household idols (images)**. She took them and hid them on the camel she was sitting on, and they continued on their way.

Commentary: This is a famous and enigmatic detail. Rachel steals her father's "teraphim" or household idols. This act will have consequences and later be discovered by Laban. Her motive is clarified by Jasher in subsequent verses.

Verse 41: And this is how the images were made: they would take a firstborn man, kill him, remove the hair from his head, salt the head, and anoint it with oil. Then they would take a small copper or gold tablet, write a name on it, place the tablet under its tongue, and put the head with the tablet in the house, lighting lights before it and bowing down to it.

Commentary: This verse provides an incredibly grisly and detailed description of the creation of these "images" or household idols (teraphim). It describes a form of necromancy or idol worship involving human sacrifice and infused with magical properties, highlighting the pagan practices prevalent in Laban's household. This explanation is unique to Jasher and not found in the biblical account.

Verse 42: And when they bow down to it, it speaks to them about all matters they ask of it, through the power of the name written in it.

Commentary: This further explains the function of these idols: they were believed to be oracle-like, providing answers to those who worshipped them.

Verse 43: And some make them in the figures of men, of gold and silver, and go to them at specific times, and the figures receive the influence of the stars and tell them future things. In this manner were the images which Rachel stole from her father.

Commentary: This clarifies that there were different forms of these idols, some being actual figures, and all were used for divination and foretelling the future through astrological influence. This reinforces the pagan nature of Laban's religion.

Verse 44: And Rachel stole these images, which were her father's, so that Laban might not know through them where Jacob had gone.

Commentary: Jasher provides Rachel's explicit motive for stealing the idols: to prevent Laban from using them to divine Jacob's escape route and destination. This shows a cunning and protective side of Rachel.

Laban Pursues Jacob

Verse 45: Laban came home and asked about Jacob and his household, but they were nowhere to be found. Laban looked for his images to find out where Jacob had gone, but he couldn't find them. He went to some other images, and he inquired of them, and they told him that Jacob had fled from him to his father's house, to the land of Canaan.

Commentary: Laban's immediate response upon discovering Jacob's absence is to consult his idols, confirming their importance to him for guidance. When his primary idols are missing, he resorts to others, which reveal Jacob's destination.

Verse 46: Laban then got up and took his brothers and all his servants, and he set out and pursued Jacob, eventually overtaking him in **Mount Gilead**.

Commentary: Laban's anger and determination are evident as he quickly gathers a group and pursues Jacob, catching up with him in the mountainous region of Gilead.

Verse 47: And Laban said to Jacob, "What have you done to me, to flee and deceive me, and lead my daughters and their children away like captives taken by the sword?"

Commentary: Laban's initial accusation focuses on Jacob's "deception" and the implication that he treated Laban's daughters and grandchildren like plunder.

Verse 48: "And you didn't even let me kiss them and send them away with joy, and you stole my gods and left!"

Commentary: Laban lists his grievances: being denied a proper farewell with his daughters and, crucially, the theft of his "gods." This reveals his priorities, placing his idols on par with, or even above, his family's proper send-off.

Verse 49: Jacob answered Laban, saying, "Because I was afraid you would take your daughters from me by force. And now, whoever you find your gods with, that person shall die."

Commentary: Jacob defends his secret departure, citing fear of Laban's potential use of force. He then boldly (and perhaps rashly, considering Rachel's action) declares that whoever has Laban's idols should die, unaware that Rachel is the culprit.

Verse 50: Laban searched for the images and examined all of Jacob's tents and furniture, but he couldn't find them.

Commentary: Laban conducts a thorough search, but Rachel's hiding place remains effective, protecting her secret and Jacob's unawareness of it.

Verse 51: Laban said to Jacob, "We will make a covenant together, and it shall be a testimony between me and you: if you afflict my daughters, or take other wives besides my daughters, even God shall be a witness between me and you in this matter."

Commentary: Despite the tension, they move toward a covenant. Laban, perhaps having accepted the loss of his idols or realizing the futility of further confrontation, sets terms regarding the treatment of his daughters and the exclusivity of Jacob's marriages to them. He invokes God as a witness, highlighting the solemnity of the agreement.

Verse 52: They took stones and made a heap, and Laban said, "This heap is a witness between me and you." Therefore he called its name **Gilead**.

Commentary: They establish a memorial stone heap, naming it Gilead ("heap of witness"), to serve as a physical reminder and symbol of their covenant, establishing a boundary and a pact of peace.

Verse 53: And Jacob and Laban offered sacrifice upon the mount, and they ate there by the heap, and they stayed in the mount all night. Laban rose up early in the morning, and he wept with his daughters and he kissed them, and he returned to his place.

Commentary: The covenant is sealed with a sacrifice and a shared meal, a customary way to finalize agreements in ancient times. Laban's emotional farewell to his daughters appears genuine, despite his past deceptions. He then returns home, marking a definitive separation between the two families.

Esau's Vengeful March

Verse 54: And Laban quickly sent off his son **Beor**, who was seventeen years old, with **Abichorof**, the son of Uz (Nahor's son), and ten other men with them.

Commentary: This is a crucial detail unique to Jasher, setting up the next conflict. Laban dispatches a delegation, including his son, on a mysterious mission.

Verse 55: They hastened and went and passed on the road before Jacob, and they came by another road to the land of Seir.

Commentary: Laban's messengers take a faster route, bypassing Jacob, suggesting their mission is urgent and possibly involves communication with someone ahead of Jacob.

Verse 56: They came to **Esau** and said to him, "Thus says your brother and relative, your mother's brother **Laban**, the son of Bethuel, saying,"

Commentary: The messengers reach Esau and deliver Laban's message, establishing a direct connection between Laban and Esau.

Verse 57: "Have you heard what Jacob, your brother, has done to me? He first came to me naked and bare, and I went to meet him, brought him to my house with honor, and made him great. I gave him my two daughters as wives and also two of my maids."

Commentary: Laban's message to Esau is a biased and manipulative account. He paints himself as the benevolent benefactor and Jacob as ungrateful, starting with Jacob's arrival in poverty and Laban's alleged generosity.

Verse 58: "And God blessed him on my account, and he increased abundantly, and had sons, daughters, and maidservants."

Commentary: Laban acknowledges Jacob's prosperity but attributes it to God's blessing *through Laban*, implying that Jacob effectively stole what was rightfully Laban's.

Verse 59: "He also has an immense stock of flocks and herds, camels and donkeys, also silver and gold in abundance. And when he saw that his wealth increased, he left me while I went to shear my sheep, and he got up and fled in secrecy."

Commentary: Laban emphasizes Jacob's vast wealth and portrays his departure as a treacherous, secret flight, occurring conveniently when Laban was distracted.

Verse 60: "And he loaded his wives and children onto camels, and he led away all his cattle and property which he acquired in my land, and he set his face toward his father Isaac, to the land of Canaan."

Commentary: Laban details Jacob's escape, highlighting the extent of the possessions Jacob took.

Verse 61: "And he didn't even allow me to kiss my daughters and their children, and he led my daughters away like captives taken by the sword, and he also stole my gods and he fled."

Commentary: Laban reiterates his grievances, focusing on the lack of proper farewell and, again, the theft of his idols, portraying Jacob's actions in the worst possible light to Esau.

Verse 62: "And now, I have left him in the mountain by the brook of Jabbok, him and all belonging to him; he lacks nothing."

Commentary: Laban provides Esau with Jacob's precise location and reassures Esau that Jacob is well-resourced, making him a tempting target for plunder.

Verse 63: "If it is your wish to go to him, go then, and there you will find him, and you can do to him as your soul desires." And Laban's messengers came and told Esau all these things.

Commentary: This is the chilling climax of Laban's message: he explicitly invites Esau to attack Jacob and implies permission to do whatever he wants, likely hoping Esau will eliminate his "unjust" nephew and recover some of the wealth. This reveals Laban's deep malice and desire for revenge, using Esau as his instrument.

Verse 64: And Esau heard all the words of Laban's messengers, and his anger was **greatly kindled** against Jacob, and he remembered his hatred, and his anger burned within him.

Commentary: Laban's manipulative words successfully reignite Esau's long-standing hatred and desire for revenge against Jacob, leading to intense fury.

Verse 65: And Esau quickly took his children and servants and the people of his household, totaling **sixty men**, and he went and assembled all the **children of Seir the Horite** and their people, totaling **340 men**. He took this entire force of **400 men with drawn swords**, and he went out to meet Jacob to strike him down.

Commentary: Esau's reaction is immediate and aggressive. He gathers a formidable private army of 400 men (his own household plus the Horites), armed and ready for battle, clearly intending to harm Jacob. This number is consistent with Genesis 32:6.

Verse 66: And Esau divided this force into several parts. He took the sixty men of his children, servants, and household as one division, and put them under the command of **Eliphaz, his eldest son**.

Commentary: Esau demonstrates military strategy, dividing his forces, with his experienced son Eliphaz leading a key contingent. This suggests a planned assault.

Verse 67: And the remaining divisions he placed under the care of the six sons of Seir the Horite, and he put each man in charge of his own generations and children.

Commentary: Esau's reliance on the Horite leaders for the rest of his army further emphasizes his integration with the local population of Seir and their loyalty to him.

Verse 68: And this entire camp moved forward as planned, and Esau went among them toward Jacob, leading them quickly.

Commentary: The army advances swiftly, indicating Esau's eagerness for confrontation.

Rebekah's Warning and Jacob's Response

Verse 69: And Laban's messengers departed from Esau and went to the land of Canaan, and they came to the house of **Rebekah**, Jacob and Esau's mother.

Commentary: Laban's messengers, having done their deed with Esau, continue their journey to Rebekah, perhaps to inform her of Jacob's return or to see her reaction.

Verse 70: And they told her, saying, "Look, your son Esau has gone out against his brother Jacob with **400 men**, for he heard that Jacob was coming, and he has gone to make war with him, to strike him down and take everything he has."

Commentary: Rebekah receives the devastating news from the messengers. She learns of Esau's hostile intent and his large armed force, confirming her worst fears about the enduring hatred.

Verse 71: And Rebekah quickly sent **seventy-two men** from Isaac's servants to meet Jacob on the road, for she said, "Perhaps Esau may make war on the road when he meets him."

Commentary: Rebekah's immediate action and concern for Jacob's safety are evident. She dispatches a significant number of her own household servants to protect Jacob, anticipating a confrontation.

Verse 72: And these messengers went on the road to meet Jacob, and they met him on the road by the brook, on the opposite side of the **brook Jabbok**. When Jacob saw them, he said, "This camp is destined for me from God!" And Jacob called the name of that place **Mahanaim** (meaning "two camps").

Commentary: Jacob encounters the messengers and understands their purpose. He recognizes the divine hand in their arrival and names the place Mahanaim, signifying "two camps" – referring either to his own divided camp and the messengers, or perhaps to the two camps of angels he believes are protecting him (as in Genesis 32:1-2). This indicates a moment of divine reassurance.

Verse 73: And Jacob knew all his father's people. He kissed them and embraced them and came with them. Jacob asked them about his father and mother, and they said, "They are well."

Commentary: Jacob receives reassurance about his parents' well-being and welcomes his father's servants, symbolizing the ongoing connection to his family in Canaan.

Verse 74: And these messengers said to Jacob, "Your mother Rebekah has sent us to you, saying, 'I have heard, my son, that your brother Esau has gone out against you on the road with men from the children of Seir the Horite.'"

Commentary: The messengers deliver Rebekah's specific warning about Esau's approach and his formidable force, confirming the severity of the threat.

Verse 75: "And therefore, my son, listen to my voice and consider with your counsel what you will do. When he comes near you, **plead with him**, and do not speak rashly to him. Give him a **present** from what you possess, and from what God has favored you with."

Commentary: Rebekah's advice is strategic and wise: avoid rash words, offer a significant gift to appease him, and supplicate him. This demonstrates her understanding of Esau's character and how to potentially diffuse his anger.

Verse 76: "And when he asks you about your affairs, conceal nothing from him. Perhaps he may turn from his anger against you, and you will thereby save your life, you and all belonging to you, for it is your duty to honor him, for he is your elder brother."

Commentary: Rebekah further advises transparency and humility, urging Jacob to honor Esau as the elder brother. Her primary concern is Jacob's survival and the safety of his family and possessions.

Verse 77: When Jacob heard his mother's words that the messengers had spoken to him, Jacob lifted up his voice and wept bitterly, and did as his mother commanded him.

Commentary: Jacob is deeply moved by his mother's message and the gravity of the situation. His bitter weeping indicates his fear and realization of the immense danger. He decides to follow her counsel, preparing for the encounter with Esau.

Book of Jasher, Chapter 32

Jacob's Preparations and Plea to Esau

Verse 1: At that time, Jacob sent messengers to his brother **Esau** in the land of Seir, speaking to him with words of **supplication**.

Commentary: Following his mother's advice from the previous chapter, Jacob proactively sends messengers to Esau, demonstrating a strategy of appeasement rather than confrontation. The use of "supplication" highlights Jacob's humble and conciliatory approach.

Verse 2: He commanded them, saying, "This is what you shall say to my lord, to Esau: 'Thus says your servant Jacob: Let not my lord imagine that my father's blessing, with which he blessed me, has proved beneficial to me.'"

Commentary: Jacob's message is carefully crafted to disarm Esau. He immediately downplays the value of the stolen blessing, suggesting it hasn't brought him the expected fortune. This is a strategic attempt to alleviate Esau's resentment.

Verse 3: "For I have been with Laban for these **twenty years**, and he deceived me and changed my wages ten times, as my lord has already been told."

Commentary: Jacob emphasizes his years of hardship under Laban, highlighting the deception and unfair treatment he endured. He implies that his "blessing" was more of a struggle, not an easy path to wealth.

Verse 4: "And I served him in his house very laboriously, and God afterward saw my affliction, my labor, and the work of my hands, and He caused me to find grace and favor in His sight."

Commentary: Jacob attributes his current prosperity not to his father's blessing (which he "stole"), but to God's direct intervention and mercy after seeing his hard work and suffering. This deflects Esau's probable envy.

Verse 5: "And afterward, through God's great mercy and kindness, I acquired oxen and donkeys, and cattle, and male servants and female servants."

Commentary: He reiterates that his wealth is a result of **God's mercy and kindness**, not a direct outcome of the controversial blessing or any inherent cunning on his part. This frames his prosperity as a divine gift, not something he took from Esau.

Verse 6: "And now I am coming to my land and my home, to my father and mother, who are in the land of Canaan; and I have sent to let my lord know all this in order to find favor in the sight of my lord, so that he may not imagine that I have of myself obtained wealth, or that the blessing with which my father blessed me has benefited me."

Commentary: Jacob explains his return to Canaan and his purpose in sending messengers: to inform Esau and gain his favor, again emphasizing that his wealth is not a result of the stolen blessing, nor is it a personal achievement to boast about. He wants to avoid any perception that he is prospering at Esau's expense.

Esau's Vengeful Response

Verse 7: And those messengers went to Esau and found him on the borders of the land of Edom, going toward Jacob, with **four hundred men of the children of Seir the Horite** standing with drawn swords.

Commentary: The messengers arrive just as Esau is already marching toward Jacob with his armed contingent, confirming the earlier warning and the immediate threat. The "drawn swords" signify hostile intent.

Verse 8: And Jacob's messengers told Esau all the words that Jacob had spoken to them concerning Esau.

Commentary: The messengers faithfully deliver Jacob's carefully worded plea.

Verse 9: And Esau answered them with **pride and contempt**, and said to them, "Surely I have heard, and truly it has been told to me what Jacob has done to Laban, who exalted him in his house and gave him his daughters for wives, and he fathered sons and daughters, and abundantly increased in wealth and riches in Laban's house through his means."

Commentary: Esau's initial response is one of **pride and contempt**, rejecting Jacob's humble approach. He uses Laban's biased account from the previous chapter as justification for his anger, twisting the narrative to portray Jacob as treacherous and ungrateful to Laban.

Verse 10: "And when he saw that his wealth was abundant and his riches great, he fled with all belonging to him from Laban's house, and he led Laban's daughters away from the face of their father, like captives taken by the sword, without telling him of it."

Commentary: Esau echoes Laban's grievances, emphasizing Jacob's secret flight and portraying the daughters as "captives," further demonizing Jacob's actions.

Verse 11: "And not only to Laban has Jacob done thus, but also to me has he done so and has **twice supplanted me**, and shall I be silent?"

Commentary: Esau directly links Jacob's perceived wrongdoings against Laban to his own past grievances, explicitly mentioning the "twice supplanted" accusation (birthright and blessing). His rhetorical question ("shall I be silent?") implies a determination for vengeance.

Verse 12: "Now therefore I have this day come with my camps to meet him, and I will do to him according to the desire of my heart."

Commentary: Esau declares his clear intention: he is coming with his forces to confront Jacob and enact his revenge, indicating his hatred is far from appeased.

Jacob's Fear and Prayer

Verse 13: And the messengers returned and came to Jacob and said to him, "We came to your brother, to Esau, and we told him all your words, and this is how he answered us. And behold, he is coming to meet you with **four hundred men**."

Commentary: The messengers deliver the grim news, confirming Esau's hostile intent and the large armed force, validating Jacob's initial fears.

Verse 14: "Now then, know and see what you shall do, and pray before God to deliver you from him."

Commentary: The messengers advise Jacob to take action and, crucially, to pray for divine deliverance, recognizing the severity of the situation.

Verse 15: When he heard the words of his brother, which he had spoken to Jacob's messengers, **Jacob was greatly afraid and he was distressed**.

Commentary: Jacob's fear and distress are palpable. The news confirms his worst fears, leading to a moment of deep anxiety.

Verse 16: And Jacob prayed to the Lord his God, and he said, "O Lord God of my fathers, Abraham and Isaac, You did say to me when I went away from my father's house, saying,"

Commentary: In his distress, Jacob turns to God in fervent prayer, recalling God's past promises to him and his forefathers. This is a moment of deep faith and dependence on God.

Verse 17: "I am the Lord God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac; to you I give this land and your descendants after you, and I will make your descendants as the stars of heaven, and you shall spread forth to the four sides of heaven, and in you and in your descendants shall all the families of the earth be blessed."

Commentary: Jacob reminds God of the specific covenant promises: the land, numerous descendants, and universal blessing through his lineage. He is essentially holding God to His word.

Verse 18: "And You did establish Your words, and did give to me riches and children and cattle, as the utmost wishes of my heart You did give to Your servant; You did give to me all that I asked from You, so that I lacked nothing."

Commentary: Jacob acknowledges God's faithfulness in fulfilling past promises, particularly in granting him wealth and family during his time with Laban, even to the point of "lacking nothing."

Verse 19: "And You did afterward say to me, 'Return to your parents and to your birthplace, and I will still do well with you.'"

Commentary: Jacob recounts God's direct command for him to return to Canaan and the accompanying promise of continued blessing, reinforcing the divine nature of his journey.

Verse 20: "And now that I have come, and You did deliver me from Laban, I shall fall into the hands of Esau who will slay me, yes, together with the mothers of my children."

Commentary: Jacob expresses his fear that despite God's deliverance from Laban, he now faces a greater threat from Esau, fearing not only his own death but also the loss of his entire family, including his wives (mothers of his children).

Verse 21: "Now therefore, O Lord God, deliver me, I pray You, also from the hands of my brother Esau, for I am greatly afraid of him."

Commentary: This is the heart of his prayer: a direct plea for deliverance from Esau, acknowledging his immense fear.

Verse 22: "And if there is no righteousness in me, do it for the sake of Abraham and my father Isaac."

Commentary: Jacob, in humility, recognizes his own potential unworthiness. He appeals to God's covenant with Abraham and Isaac, essentially asking God to act based on His faithfulness to His promises to the patriarchs, rather than Jacob's own merit.

Verse 23: "For I know that through kindness and mercy have I acquired this wealth; now therefore I beseech You to deliver me this day with Your kindness and to answer me."

Commentary: He reiterates that his wealth is from God's "kindness and mercy," not a result of trickery, and he appeals for continued kindness and a favorable answer to his prayer for deliverance.

Jacob's Strategic Divisions

Verse 24: And Jacob ceased praying to the Lord, and he divided the people that were with him with the flocks and cattle into **two camps**. He gave half to the care of **Damesek, the son of Eliezer, Abraham's**

servant, for a camp, with his children, and the other half he gave to the care of his brother **Elianus, the son of Eliezer**, to be for a camp with his children.

Commentary: Jacob implements a practical strategy: dividing his vast household and possessions into two separate camps. Interestingly, Jasher identifies the leaders of these camps as the sons of Eliezer, Abraham's trusted servant, connecting Jacob's household directly to Abraham's legacy of loyal service.

Verse 25: And he commanded them, saying, "Keep yourselves at a distance with your camps, and do not come too near each other, so that if Esau comes to one camp and slays it, the other camp, at a distance from it, will escape him."

Commentary: The purpose of the division is purely survival: a contingency plan to ensure at least some part of his family and possessions survive if Esau attacks. This reflects Jacob's fear and pragmatism.

Verse 26: And Jacob remained there that night, and during the whole night, he gave his servants instructions concerning the forces and his children.

Commentary: Jacob spends the entire night meticulously planning and instructing his household, showing his deep concern and preparation for the impending confrontation.

Divine Intervention: The Angels' Appearance

Verse 27: And the Lord heard the prayer of Jacob on that day, and the Lord then **delivered Jacob from the hands of his brother Esau**.

Commentary: This is a direct statement of divine intervention. God hears Jacob's prayer and acts to save him from Esau's intended violence.

Verse 28: And the Lord sent **three angels of the angels of heaven**, and they went before Esau and came to him.

Commentary: The specific method of divine intervention is revealed: three angels are dispatched to confront Esau *before* he reaches Jacob. This is a unique detail from Jasher, elaborating on the biblical account of Esau's change of heart.

Verse 29: And these angels appeared to Esau and his people as **two thousand men**, riding upon horses furnished with all sorts of war instruments, and they appeared in the sight of Esau and all his men to be divided into four camps, with four chiefs to them.

Commentary: The angels appear as a massive, formidable army, creating an illusion of overwhelming military might. This supernatural display is designed to intimidate Esau and his men. The "four camps" mirrors Jacob's own division of forces, perhaps confusing Esau into thinking these are Jacob's troops.

Verse 30: And one camp went on, and they found Esau coming with four hundred men toward his brother Jacob, and this camp ran toward Esau and his people and **terrified them**, and **Esau fell off his horse in alarm**, and all his men separated from him in that place, for they were greatly afraid.

Commentary: The first angelic "camp" successfully intimidates Esau's advancing army. The sheer terror causes Esau to fall from his horse, and his men scatter, demonstrating the effectiveness of the divine intervention.

Verse 31: And the whole of the camp shouted after them when they fled from Esau, and all the warlike men answered, saying,

Commentary: The angelic army pursues and continues to shout, further adding to the terror.

Verse 32: "Surely we are the servants of **Jacob, who is the servant of God**, and who then can stand against us?" And Esau said to them, "O then, my lord and brother Jacob is your lord, whom I have not seen for these twenty years, and now that I have this day come to see him, do you treat me in this manner?"

Commentary: The angels' declaration directly links Jacob to God's service, implying divine protection. Esau, now terrified and desperate, immediately changes his tone. He refers to Jacob as "my lord and brother," expressing bewilderment and feigned innocence at their treatment. This shows his shift from vengeful intent to fear and appeasement.

Verse 33: And the angels answered him saying, "As the Lord lives, were not Jacob, of whom you speak, your brother, we would not have let one remain from you and your people, but only on account of Jacob, we will do nothing to them."

Commentary: The angels confirm that they are acting on behalf of Jacob and that Esau's kinship with Jacob is the *only* reason they are spared total destruction. This is a clear warning of the consequences had Esau's intentions been fulfilled.

Verse 34: And this camp passed from Esau and his men and it went away, and Esau and his men had gone from them about a league when the second camp came toward him with all sorts of weapons, and they also did to Esau and his men as the first camp had done to them.

Commentary: The harassment continues. A second angelic "camp" appears, repeating the terrifying demonstration, ensuring Esau remains thoroughly intimidated.

Verse 35: And when they had left it to go on, behold, the third camp came toward him and they were all terrified, and Esau fell off the horse, and the whole camp cried out, and said, "Surely we are the servants of Jacob, who is the servant of God, and who can stand against us?"

Commentary: The third encounter further reinforces Esau's terror, making him fall from his horse again. The repeated declaration by the angels reinforces the message of Jacob's divine protection.

Verse 36: And Esau again answered them saying, "O then, Jacob my lord and your lord is my brother, and for twenty years I have not seen his countenance and hearing this day that he was coming, I went this day to meet him, and do you treat me in this manner?"

Commentary: Esau's desperation grows as he continues to plead, emphasizing his long separation from Jacob and his supposedly innocent intention to "meet him."

Verse 37: And they answered him, and said to him, "As the Lord lives, were not Jacob your brother, as you said, we would not have left a remnant from you and your men, but on account of Jacob, of whom you speak being your brother, we will not meddle with you or your men."

Commentary: The angels repeat the same stern warning: Esau's relationship to Jacob is his only saving grace. This reiterates the severity of his initial intent and the power of divine intervention.

Verse 38: And the third camp also passed from them, and he still continued his road with his men toward Jacob, when the fourth camp came toward him, and they also did to him and his men as the others had done.

Commentary: The final angelic encounter completes the divine intimidation, leaving Esau utterly demoralized.

Verse 39: And when Esau beheld the evil which the four angels had done to him and to his men, he became **greatly afraid of his brother Jacob**, and he went to meet him in peace.

Commentary: The cumulative effect of the angelic encounters is a profound shift in Esau's attitude. His fear of Jacob (and, implicitly, of Jacob's God) completely overrides his previous hatred, compelling him to seek peace.

Verse 40: And Esau concealed his hatred against Jacob, because he was afraid of his life on account of his brother Jacob, and because he imagined that the four camps that he had lighted upon were Jacob's servants.

Commentary: This verse offers a crucial insight into Esau's motivation: his peace offering is rooted in **fear and self-preservation**. He *conceals* his hatred, not necessarily abandoning it. He mistakenly believes the angelic armies were Jacob's powerful human servants, greatly increasing his awe and fear of Jacob.

Jacob's Present and Journey Across Jabbok

Verse 41: And Jacob remained that night with his servants in their camps, and he resolved with his servants to give Esau a present from all that he had with him, and from all his property; and Jacob rose up in the morning, he and his men, and they chose from amongst the cattle a present for Esau.

Commentary: Unaware of the divine intervention, Jacob proceeds with his plan to appease Esau with a large gift, following his mother's advice. This demonstrates his continued prudence and strategic thinking.

Verse 42: And this is the amount of the present which Jacob chose from his flock to give to his brother Esau: he selected **two hundred and forty head from the flocks, and he selected from the camels and donkeys thirty each, and of the herds he chose fifty cattle**.

Commentary: The sheer size of the gift is impressive, reflecting Jacob's immense wealth and his determination to appease Esau. It's a truly significant offering.

Verse 43: And he put them all in **ten droves**, and he placed each sort by itself, and he delivered them into the hands of ten of his servants, each drove by itself.

Commentary: Jacob organizes the gift strategically, sending them in waves, likely to maximize the impact of the gift and reinforce the impression of his great wealth.

Verse 44: And he commanded them, and said to them, "Keep yourselves at a distance from each other, and put a space between the droves, and when Esau and those who are with him shall meet you and ask you, saying, 'Whose are you, and where do you go, and to whom belongs all this before you?', you shall say to them, 'We are the servants of Jacob, and we come to meet Esau in peace, and behold, Jacob comes behind us.'"

Commentary: Jacob's instructions to his servants are meticulously detailed. The repeated identification as "servants of Jacob" and the deferential message are designed to humble Jacob before Esau and present him as a submissive brother.

Verse 45: "And that which is before us is a present sent from Jacob to his brother Esau."

Commentary: The core message: a peace offering to appease the powerful elder brother.

Verse 46: "And if they shall say to you, 'Why does he delay behind you, from coming to meet his brother and to see his face?', then you shall say to them, 'Surely he comes joyfully behind us to meet his brother, for he said, "I will appease him with the present that goes before him, and after this I will see his face; perhaps he will accept of me."'"

Commentary: Jacob even anticipates questions about his absence, providing a further explanation that he is intentionally sending gifts ahead to soften Esau's heart before their direct encounter. This shows his deep anxiety and desire for reconciliation.

Verse 47: So the whole present passed on in the hands of his servants, and went before him on that day, and he lodged that night with his camps by the border of the **brook of Jabbok**. And he rose up in the midst of the night, and he took his wives and his maidservants, and all belonging to him, and he that night passed them over the ford Jabbok.

Commentary: The elaborate gift procession moves ahead. Jacob then strategically moves his family and possessions across the Jabbok ford during the night, preparing for the impending meeting. This is a moment of deep vulnerability.

Jacob's Wrestling Match

Verse 48: And when he passed all belonging to him over the brook, Jacob was left by himself, and a **man met him**, and he **wrestled with him that night until the breaking of the day**, and the **hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint** through wrestling with him.

Commentary: This is the iconic scene of Jacob's wrestling match. Left alone, he encounters a mysterious "man" (traditionally understood as an angel or God Himself) and engages in a physical struggle that marks him permanently with a dislocated hip. This represents a profound spiritual and physical confrontation.

Verse 49: And at the break of day, the man left Jacob there, and he blessed him and went away, and Jacob passed the brook at the break of day, and he **halted upon his thigh**.

Commentary: The wrestling ends at dawn. Jacob receives a blessing, though the nature of the blessing is not explicitly stated here. He is left with a permanent limp, a physical reminder of his spiritual struggle and transformation.

Verse 50: And the sun rose upon him when he had passed the brook, and he came up to the place of his cattle and children.

Commentary: The new day dawns as Jacob reunites with his family, bearing the physical mark of his profound encounter.

Verse 51: And they went on till midday, and whilst they were going the present was passing on before them.

Commentary: The journey continues, with the gift procession still ahead, setting the stage for the main encounter.

The Reconciliation with Esau

Verse 52: And Jacob lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold **Esau was at a distance, coming along with many men, about four hundred**, and Jacob was greatly afraid of his brother.

Commentary: The moment of truth arrives. Jacob sees Esau and his formidable force, triggering his fear despite his prayers and preparations.

Verse 53: And Jacob hastened and divided his children among his wives and his handmaids, and his daughter **Dinah he put in a chest**, and delivered her into the hands of his servants.

Commentary: Jacob again takes protective measures, dividing his children and, notably, hiding Dinah in a chest. This shows his extreme caution and desire to protect his only daughter from potential harm from Esau's men.

Verse 54: And he passed before his children and wives to meet his brother, and he **bowed down to the ground, yes, he bowed down seven times** until he approached his brother, and God caused Jacob to find grace and favor in the sight of Esau and his men, for God had heard the prayer of Jacob.

Commentary: Jacob approaches Esau with profound humility, bowing repeatedly, a gesture of deep submission and respect. Crucially, the text explicitly states that **God caused Jacob to find favor** in Esau's eyes, attributing the reconciliation directly to divine intervention and Jacob's prayer.

Verse 55: And the fear of Jacob and his terror fell upon his brother Esau, for Esau was greatly afraid of Jacob for what the **angels of God had done to Esau**, and Esau's anger against Jacob was turned into kindness.

Commentary: This is the key explanation from Jasher for Esau's changed heart. His fear of Jacob is a result of the **terrifying encounter with the angels**. He now genuinely fears Jacob, mistakenly believing these powerful forces are Jacob's servants, and this fear transforms his anger into (at least outward) kindness.

Verse 56: And when Esau saw Jacob running toward him, he also ran toward him and he embraced him, and he fell upon his neck, and they kissed and they wept.

Commentary: The emotional reunion. Esau's immediate embrace and tears show a powerful, genuine emotional release, a complete reversal from his prior murderous intent, driven by the divine intervention he experienced.

Verse 57: And God put fear and kindness toward Jacob in the hearts of the men that came with Esau, and they also kissed Jacob and embraced him.

Commentary: Not only Esau but also his men are affected by divine influence, showing kindness and fear toward Jacob, ensuring the peaceful outcome.

Verse 58: And also **Eliphaz, the son of Esau, with his four brothers**, sons of Esau, wept with Jacob, and they kissed him and embraced him, for the fear of Jacob had fallen upon them all.

Commentary: Even Eliphaz, who was sent to murder Jacob, is now overcome with emotion and fear, embracing Jacob. This highlights the widespread impact of the angelic encounter on Esau's entire contingent.

Verse 59: And Esau lifted up his eyes and saw the women with their offspring, the children of Jacob, walking behind Jacob and bowing along the road to Esau.

Commentary: Esau observes Jacob's family approaching in their orderly, humble procession.

Verse 60: And Esau said to Jacob, "Who are these with you, my brother? Are they your children or your servants?" And Jacob answered Esau and said, "They are my children whom God has graciously given to your servant."

Commentary: Esau inquires about Jacob's family, and Jacob humbly attributes them as gifts from God, maintaining his deferential posture.

Verse 61: And while Jacob was speaking to Esau and his men, Esau beheld the whole camp, and he said to Jacob, "Where did you get this entire camp that I met yesterday night?" And Jacob said, "To find favor in the sight of my lord, it is that which God graciously gave to your servant."

Commentary: This is a pivotal moment! Esau directly asks about the "camp" he encountered, confirming that he believes the angelic army was Jacob's. Jacob's response is ambiguous but allows Esau to maintain his mistaken belief, thereby preserving the peace. Jacob attributes it to God's favor, which is true, but allows Esau's misinterpretation to stand.

Verse 62: And the present came before Esau, and Jacob pressed Esau, saying, "Take, I pray you, the present that I have brought to my lord." And Esau said, "Why is this my purpose? Keep that which you have to yourself."

Commentary: The vast gift arrives. Jacob urges Esau to accept it, but Esau, perhaps still intimidated or genuinely moved, initially declines, suggesting he no longer needs it.

Verse 63: And Jacob said, "It is incumbent upon me to give all this, since I have seen your face, that you still live in peace."

Commentary: Jacob insists, framing the gift as a natural offering now that their reconciliation is peaceful.

Verse 64: And Esau refused to take the present, and Jacob said to him, "I beseech you, my lord, if now I have found favor in your sight, then receive my present at my hand, for I have therefore seen your face, as though I had seen a god-like face, because you were pleased with me."

Commentary: Jacob's persistence is significant. He likens seeing Esau's pleased face to seeing the face of God, a profound statement indicating his immense relief and the depth of his reconciliation. This metaphor underscores the divine nature of the encounter.

Verse 65: And Esau took the present, and Jacob also gave to Esau silver and gold and **bdellium**, for he pressed him so much that he took them.

Commentary: Esau finally accepts the lavish gift, and Jacob adds even more valuable items (bdellium, a precious resin). Jacob's insistence ensures Esau accepts the token of peace and wealth, perhaps hoping to satisfy any lingering feelings of being deprived.

Verse 66: And Esau divided the cattle that were in the camp, and he gave half to the men who had come with him, for they had come on hire, and the other half he delivered to the hands of his children.

Commentary: Esau shares the received cattle with his hired men and his sons, indicating his leadership and distribution of the unexpected bounty.

Verse 67: And the silver and gold and bdellium he gave into the hands of **Eliphaz**, his eldest son, and Esau said to Jacob, "Let us remain with you, and we will go slowly along with you until you come to my place with me, that we may dwell there together."

Commentary: Esau gives the most valuable items to Eliphaz. He then proposes that they travel together and that Jacob come and settle with him in Seir, suggesting a desire for continued closeness and a united family.

Verse 68: And Jacob answered his brother and said, "I would do as my lord speaks to me, but my lord knows that the children are tender, and the flocks and herds with their young who are with me go but slowly, for if they went swiftly they would all die, for you know their burdens and their fatigue."

Commentary: Jacob politely declines Esau's invitation to travel together. He uses a practical excuse – the fragility of his children and slow-moving livestock – to avoid a close, prolonged journey with Esau, hinting at his continued caution.

Verse 69: "Therefore let my lord pass on before his servant, and I will go on slowly for the sake of the children and the flock, until I come to my lord's place to Seir."

Commentary: Jacob suggests they part ways, with Esau going ahead, and he promising to follow later, maintaining a deferential tone while subtly creating distance.

Verse 70: And Esau said to Jacob, "I will place with you some of the people that are with me to take care of you on the road, and to bear your fatigue and burden," and he said, "What needeth it, my lord, if I may find grace in your sight?"

Commentary: Esau offers assistance, suggesting some of his men could help Jacob's slower caravan. Jacob politely declines, reiterating his desire to find favor, but still subtly pushing for independent travel.

Verse 71: "Behold, I will come to you to Seir to dwell there together as you have spoken, go you then with your people for I will follow you."

Commentary: Jacob *reaffirms his promise* to visit Esau in Seir and live together, but he does so to ensure Esau's departure, with the clear implication that he will follow *later*, not immediately. This is another subtle maneuver to get Esau to leave.

Verse 72: And Jacob said this to Esau in order to remove Esau and his men from him, so that Jacob might afterward go to his father's house to the land of Canaan.

Commentary: This verse explicitly states Jacob's strategic intent: his promises to visit Seir were a tactful way to get Esau to leave, allowing Jacob to proceed directly to Canaan. Jacob's actions are presented as calculated rather than a change of heart about Seir.

Verse 73: And Esau listened to the voice of Jacob, and Esau returned with the four hundred men that were with him on their road to Seir, and Jacob and all belonging to him went that day as far as the extremity of the land of Canaan in its borders, and he remained there some time.

Commentary: Esau departs for Seir, believing Jacob will follow. Jacob, however, travels directly to the border of Canaan and settles there for a while, confirming his true intention was not to join Esau in Seir, but to return to his homeland.

Book of Jasher, Chapter 33

Jacob Settles in Shechem and Dinah's Defilement

Verse 1: And some time later, Jacob departed from the borders of the land and came to the land of **Shalem**, that is, the city of **Shechem**, which is in the land of Canaan. He settled in front of the city.

Commentary: Jacob finally enters the heart of Canaan, settling near Shechem, fulfilling God's command for him to return to his homeland. His cautious approach and settling *outside* the city suggest a desire for peaceful integration.

Verse 2: And he bought a parcel of the field which was there from the children of **Hamor**, the people of the land, for **five shekels**.

Commentary: Jacob legally purchases land, establishing a legitimate presence in Canaan. This mirrors Abraham's purchase of the cave of Machpelah, emphasizing his rightful claim to the land. The price of "five shekels" seems remarkably low for land, especially a "parcel of the field." This might suggest a small plot for temporary dwelling or a symbolic transaction.

Verse 3: And Jacob there built himself a house, and he pitched his tent there, and he made booths for his cattle; therefore he called the name of that place **Succoth**.

Commentary: Jacob builds a more permanent structure (a house) in addition to pitching his tent, indicating a desire for a settled life. The "booths for his cattle" (Succoth) gives the place its name,

highlighting his care for his extensive flocks. *Note: Genesis places Succoth and the building of a house/booths before Shechem (Genesis 33:17-18). Jasher reorders these events.*

Verse 4: And Jacob remained in Succoth a year and six months.

Commentary: This provides a specific timeframe for Jacob's initial stay at this location before the events of the chapter unfold.

Verse 5: At that time, some of the women of the inhabitants of the land went to the city of Shechem to dance and rejoice with the daughters of the people of the city, and when they went forth, then **Rachel and Leah, the wives of Jacob, with their families also went to behold the rejoicing of the daughters of the city**.

Commentary: The narrative sets the scene. Women from the surrounding area, including Jacob's wives, go to Shechem for a celebration. This indicates a degree of peaceful interaction and curiosity about the local culture.

Verse 6: And **Dinah, the daughter of Jacob**, also went along with them and saw the daughters of the city, and they remained there before these daughters while all the people of the city were standing by them to behold their rejoicings, and all the great people of the city were there.

Commentary: Dinah, Jacob's only daughter mentioned, accompanies her mothers. Her presence among the local women is key, and the gathering includes prominent citizens.

Verse 7: And **Shechem, the son of Hamor**, the prince of the land, was also standing there to see them.

Commentary: The male antagonist is introduced: Shechem, the powerful and influential son of the local ruler.

Verse 8: And Shechem beheld **Dinah**, the daughter of Jacob, sitting with her mother before the daughters of the city, and the damsel pleased him greatly. He there asked his friends and his people, saying, "Whose daughter is that sitting amongst the women, whom I do not know in this city?"

Commentary: Shechem is immediately captivated by Dinah, and his inquiry about her reveals she is new to his observation.

Verse 9: And they said to him, "Surely this is the daughter of **Jacob, the son of Isaac the Hebrew**, who has dwelt in this city for some time, and when it was reported that the daughters of the land were going forth to rejoice, she went with her mother and maidservants to sit amongst them as you see."

Commentary: Shechem is informed of Dinah's identity and lineage, emphasizing her connection to the "Hebrew" family, a distinct group in the land.

Verse 10: And Shechem beheld Dinah, the daughter of Jacob, and when he looked at her, his soul became fixed upon Dinah.

Commentary: Shechem's infatuation is intense and immediate, bordering on obsession.

Verse 11: And he sent and had her **taken by force**, and Dinah came to the house of Shechem, and he **seized her forcibly and lay with her and humbled her**, and he loved her exceedingly and placed her in his house.

Commentary: This is the pivotal, tragic event. Shechem commits a violent act of **sexual assault** (often rendered as rape in modern translations). The text emphasizes the force used ("taken by force," "seized her forcibly," "humbled her"). His subsequent "love" for her, as stated, is problematic given the context of his actions, and he keeps her captive in his house.

Verse 12: And they came and told the thing to Jacob, and when Jacob heard that Shechem had **defiled his daughter Dinah**, Jacob sent twelve of his servants to fetch Dinah from the house of Shechem, and they went and came to thechem's house to take away Dinah from there.

Commentary: News of the defilement reaches Jacob. His immediate response is to send his servants to retrieve Dinah, a cautious and measured approach, contrasting with the more aggressive actions of his sons later.

Verse 13: And when they came, Shechem went out to them with his men and drove them from his house, and he would not suffer them to come before Dinah, but **Shechem was sitting with Dinah, kissing and embracing her before their eyes**.

Commentary: Shechem brazenly defies Jacob's servants, preventing them from taking Dinah. His public display of affection towards Dinah, in front of Jacob's representatives, is a deliberate act of disrespect and control, further humiliating Jacob's family.

Verse 14: And the servants of Jacob came back and told him, saying, "When we came, he and his men drove us away, and thus did Shechem do to Dinah before our eyes."

Commentary: The servants report back the defiance and the continued public humiliation of Dinah by Shechem.

Verse 15: And Jacob knew moreover that Shechem had defiled his daughter, but he said nothing, and his sons were feeding his cattle in the field, and Jacob remained silent till their return.

Commentary: Jacob's silence is notable. He refrains from immediate action, perhaps due to his cautious nature, his position as a new settler, or his desire to consult with his adult sons before responding to such a grave insult. His sons are absent, setting the stage for their more passionate reaction.

Verse 16: And before his sons came home, Jacob sent two maidens from his servants' daughters to take care of Dinah in the house of Shechem, and to remain with her, and Shechem sent three of his friends to his father Hamor, the son of Chiddekem, the son of Pered, saying, "Get me this damsel for a wife."

Commentary: Jacob, still cautious, sends attendants to Dinah, showing concern for her well-being while she remains captive. Meanwhile, Shechem's immediate desire is to legitimize his action by demanding Dinah as a wife, sending messengers to his powerful father.

Verse 17: And Hamor, the son of Chiddekem the Hivite, came to the house of Shechem his son, and he sat before him, and Hamor said to his son, Shechem, "Is there then no woman amongst the daughters of your people that you will take a Hebrew woman who is not of your people?"

Commentary: Hamor expresses surprise and perhaps disapproval that his son desires a foreign woman, especially a "Hebrew woman," highlighting the cultural differences and potential complications. This reveals a typical concern for endogamy.

Verse 18: And Shechem said to him, "Her only must you get for me, for she is delightful in my sight"; and Hamor did according to the word of his son, for he was greatly beloved by him.

Commentary: Shechem's absolute insistence reveals the depth of his infatuation. Hamor's acquiescence underscores Shechem's influence and Hamor's desire to please his son.

Verse 19: And Hamor went forth to Jacob to commune with him concerning this matter, and when he had gone from the house of his son Shechem, before he came to Jacob to speak to him, behold, the sons of Jacob had come from the field, as soon as they heard the thing that Shechem, the son of Hamor, had done.

Commentary: The narrative skillfully brings the sons of Jacob into the scene at a critical moment. They return from the field, having already heard the news of their sister's defilement, which will significantly alter the course of events.

Verse 20: And the men were very much grieved concerning their sister, and they all came home fired with anger, before the time of gathering in their cattle.

Commentary: The sons' immediate reaction is intense grief and burning anger. Their emotional response is far more visceral and immediate than Jacob's, setting the stage for their vengeful actions.

Verse 21: And they came and sat before their father and they spoke to him, kindled with wrath, saying, "Surely **death is due to this man and to his household**, because the Lord God of the whole earth commanded Noah and his children that man shall never rob, nor commit adultery; now behold, Shechem has both ravaged and committed fornication with our sister, and not one of all the people of the city spoke a word to him."

Commentary: The sons directly confront Jacob, demanding **death for Shechem and his household**. They justify their demand by referencing the **Noachide laws** (laws given to Noah, binding on all humanity), specifically against robbery and adultery, arguing that Shechem violated these fundamental divine decrees. They also condemn the entire city for its complicity by silence. This highlights their understanding of divine justice and their zeal for it.

Verse 22: "Surely you know and understand that the judgment of death is due to Shechem, and to his father, and to the whole city on account of the thing which he has done."

Commentary: The sons press their case, implying Jacob, as a righteous man, should also recognize the severity of the crime and the appropriate punishment. They extend the blame to Hamor and the entire city for allowing such an injustice.

Verse 23: And whilst they were speaking before their father in this matter, behold **Hamor, the father of Shechem, came to speak to Jacob the words of his son concerning Dinah**, and he sat before Jacob and before his sons.

Commentary: The timing is dramatic: Hamor arrives to negotiate a marriage just as Jacob's sons are calling for death. This creates extreme tension and irony.

Verse 24: And Hamor spoke to them, saying, "The soul of my son Shechem longs for your daughter; I pray you, give her to him for a wife and intermarry with us; give us your daughters and we will give you our daughters, and you shall dwell with us in our land and we will be as one people in the land."

Commentary: Hamor's proposal is one of full integration, offering intermarriage and shared dwelling rights, presenting it as a mutually beneficial alliance. He speaks from a position of power, attempting to smooth over the initial offense with attractive terms.

Verse 25: "For our land is very extensive, so dwell you and trade therein and get possessions in it, and do therein as you desire, and no one shall prevent you by saying a word to you."

Commentary: Hamor emphasizes the economic benefits and freedom that Jacob's family would enjoy if they merged with the Shechemites, portraying it as a generous offer.

Verse 26: And Hamor ceased speaking to Jacob and his sons, and behold, **Shechem, his son, had come after him**, and he sat before them.

Commentary: Shechem himself arrives, eager to press his case directly, showing his intense desire for Dinah.

Verse 27: And Shechem spoke before Jacob and his sons, saying, "May I find favor in your sight that you will give me your daughter, and whatever you say to me that will I do for her."

Commentary: Shechem makes a direct plea, offering to do anything to gain Dinah, a sign of his desperate desire.

Verse 28: "Ask me for abundance of dowry and gift, and I will give it, and whatever you shall say to me that will I do, and whoever he be that will rebel against your orders, he shall die; only give me the damsel for a wife."

Commentary: Shechem offers a blank check, promising lavish gifts and even threatening death to anyone who opposes Jacob's family. He is clearly willing to go to great lengths to secure Dinah.

The Sons' Deceptive Plan

Verse 29: And **Simeon and Levi answered Hamor and Shechem his son deceitfully**, saying, "All you have spoken to us we will do for you."

Commentary: This is the turning point. Simeon and Levi, Dinah's full brothers and the most enraged, take the lead in responding. Their answer is deliberately deceitful, masking a sinister plan.

Verse 30: "And behold, our sister is in your house, but keep away from her until we send to our father Isaac concerning this matter, for we can do nothing without his consent."

Commentary: The first part of their deception: they create a false prerequisite, feigning a need to consult Isaac. This buys them time and prevents further defilement in the immediate future, while making their intentions appear legitimate.

Verse 31: "For he knows the ways of our father Abraham, and whatever he says to us we will tell you, we will conceal nothing from you."

Commentary: They further elaborate on their fabricated need for Isaac's approval, invoking the tradition of Abraham, thereby adding a layer of authenticity to their deceit.

Verse 32: And Simeon and Levi spoke this to Shechem and his father in order to find a **pretext**, and to seek counsel what was to be done to Shechem and to his city in this matter.

Commentary: Jasher explicitly states the brothers' deceptive motive: to find an excuse for their true plan of revenge against Shechem and the entire city.

Verse 33: And when Shechem and his father heard the words of Simeon and Levi, it seemed good in their sight, and Shechem and his father came forth to go home.

Commentary: Shechem and Hamor, blinded by their desire for the alliance and Dinah, fall for the deception, seeing it as a positive step.

Verse 34: And when they had gone, the sons of Jacob said to their father, saying, "Behold, we know that **death is due to these wicked ones and to their city**, because they transgressed that which God had commanded to Noah and his children and his seed after them."

Commentary: Once Hamor and Shechem depart, the sons immediately revert to their vengeful stance, reiterating their conviction that the Shechemites deserve death for violating fundamental divine laws (Noachide laws).

Verse 35: "And also because Shechem did this thing to our sister Dinah in defiling her, for such vileness shall never be done amongst us."

Commentary: They stress the specific offense against Dinah as an additional justification for the extreme punishment. The phrase "such vileness shall never be done amongst us" reflects their profound moral outrage and defense of their family's honor.

Verse 36: "Now therefore know and see what you will do, and seek counsel and pretext what is to be done to them, in order to **kill all the inhabitants of this city**."

Commentary: The sons declare their brutal intention: not just Shechem, but the *entire city* must be eradicated, showing the extreme scope of their planned revenge. They seek a "pretext" – a justifiable reason or method for this mass killing.

Verse 37: And Simeon said to them, "Here is a proper advice for you: tell them to **circumcise every male amongst them as we are circumcised**, and if they do not wish to do this, we shall take our daughter from them and go away."

Commentary: Simeon proposes the chilling and cunning plan: demand circumcision from all males. This is a brilliant strategic move because it exploits a sacred religious practice for a violent purpose. It also serves as a test of the Shechemites' sincerity in desiring alliance.

Verse 38: "And if they consent to do this and will do it, then when they are sunk down with pain, we will attack them with our swords, as upon one who is quiet and peaceable, and we will slay every male person amongst them."

Commentary: The full barbarity of the plan is revealed. The circumcision is a means to an end: to incapacitate the Shechemite men so they can be easily slaughtered. This premeditated act of violence, targeting men in a weakened state, is exceptionally brutal.

Verse 39: And Simeon's advice pleased them, and Simeon and Levi resolved to do to them as it was proposed.

Commentary: The other brothers agree to Simeon's gruesome plan, indicating their collective vengeful spirit. Simeon and Levi, as Dinah's full brothers, are the primary executors of this plot.

The Circumcision and Vengeance

Verse 40: And on the next morning, Shechem and Hamor his father came again to Jacob and his sons, to speak concerning Dinah, and to hear what answer the sons of Jacob would give to their words.

Commentary: The Shechemites return, still unsuspecting, eager for Jacob's family's final answer, completely unaware of the trap being laid for them.

Verse 41: And the sons of Jacob spoke deceitfully to them, saying, "We told our father Isaac all your words, and your words pleased him."

Commentary: The sons continue their elaborate lie, invoking Isaac's fabricated approval to add weight to their demands and make the Shechemites more amenable.

Verse 42: "But he spoke to us, saying, 'Thus did Abraham his father command him from God, the Lord of the whole earth, that any man who is not of his descendants that should wish to take one of his daughters, shall cause every male belonging to him to be circumcised, as we are circumcised, and then we may give him our daughter for a wife.'"

Commentary: They couch their demand in religious terms, falsely claiming it's a divine command passed down from Abraham and Isaac. This elevates the demand from a mere cultural practice to a sacred requirement for intermarriage.

Verse 43: "Now we have made known to you all our ways that our father spoke to us, for we cannot do this of which you spoke to us, to give our daughter to an uncircumcised man, for it is a disgrace to us."

Commentary: They present circumcision as a matter of honor and religious obligation, making it seem non-negotiable for their family's integrity.

Verse 44: "But herein will we consent to you, to give you our daughter, and we will also take for ourselves your daughters, and will dwell amongst you and be one people as you have spoken, if you will hearken to us, and consent to be like us, to circumcise every male belonging to you, as we are circumcised."

Commentary: They reiterate the benefits of the alliance (intermarriage, shared dwelling, becoming "one people") but make it contingent on the circumcision of all males, as a seemingly necessary religious and cultural assimilation.

Verse 45: "And if you will not hearken to us, to have every male circumcised as we are circumcised, as we have commanded, then we will come to you, and take our daughter from you and go away."

Commentary: The brothers present the ultimatum: agree to circumcision, or the alliance is off, and Dinah will be taken away. This puts pressure on Shechem and Hamor to comply.

Verse 46: And Shechem and his father Hamor heard the words of the sons of Jacob, and the thing pleased them exceedingly, and Shechem and his father Hamor hastened to do the wishes of the sons of Jacob, for **Shechem was very fond of Dinah, and his soul was riveted to her**.

Commentary: Shechem and Hamor are completely deceived. Their eagerness to gain the alliance and Shechem's desperate infatuation with Dinah override any suspicion, making them hasten to agree to the circumcision.

Verse 47: And Shechem and his father Hamor hastened to the gate of the city, and they assembled all the men of their city and spoke to them the words of the sons of Jacob, saying,

Commentary: Hamor and Shechem immediately take the proposal to the city elders/men, demonstrating their influence and the urgency of their desire for the alliance.

Verse 48: "We came to these men, the sons of Jacob, and we spoke to them concerning their daughter, and these men will consent to do according to our wishes, and behold, our land is of great extent for them, and they will dwell in it, and trade in it, and we shall be one people; we will take their daughters, and our daughters we will give to them for wives."

Commentary: They present the benefits of the alliance to their people, emphasizing mutual prosperity and integration, portraying it as an advantageous deal for Shechem.

Verse 49: "But only on this condition will these men consent to do this thing, that every male amongst us be circumcised as they are circumcised, as their God commanded them, and when we shall have done according to their instructions to be circumcised, then will they dwell amongst us, together with their cattle and possessions, and we shall be as one people with them."

Commentary: They explain the crucial condition of circumcision, framing it as a religious requirement of Jacob's God, necessary for the full integration and benefits of the alliance. They present it as a reasonable step for mutual benefit.

Verse 50: And when all the men of the city heard the words of Shechem and his father Hamor, then all the men of their city were agreeable to this proposal, and they obeyed to be circumcised, for Shechem and his father Hamor were greatly esteemed by them, being the princes of the land.

Commentary: The entire male population of Shechem agrees to the circumcision, swayed by the influence of their leaders and the promise of a lucrative alliance. This highlights their trust in Hamor and Shechem.

Verse 51: And on the next day, Shechem and Hamor his father rose up early in the morning, and they assembled all the men of their city into the middle of the city, and they called for the sons of Jacob, who circumcised every male belonging to them on that day and the next.

Commentary: The mass circumcision proceeds, with the sons of Jacob overseeing or performing the operation. This sets the stage for the brothers' brutal plan.

Verse 52: And they circumcised Shechem and Hamor his father, and the five brothers of Shechem, and then everyone rose up and went home, for this thing was from the Lord against the city of Shechem, and from the Lord was Simeon's counsel in this matter, in order that the Lord might deliver the city of Shechem into the hands of Jacob's two sons.

Commentary: Jasher explicitly states that this entire sequence, including Simeon's deceptive counsel, was **divinely orchestrated** ("from the Lord against the city of Shechem," "from the Lord was Simeon's counsel"). This absolves the brothers of full moral responsibility in Jasher's narrative, framing their actions as instruments of God's judgment against the city for its wickedness and the defilement of Dinah. The act of circumcision, meant for holiness, is here used as a tool for vengeance.

Book of Jasher, Chapter 34

The Shechemites' Resistance and Dinah's Warning

Verse 1: And the number of all the males that were circumcised were **six hundred and forty-five men, and two hundred and forty-six children**.

Commentary: This verse gives the total number of males, both adults and children, who underwent circumcision, highlighting the vast scale of the operation and the vulnerability it created.

Verse 2: But **Chiddekem, son of Pered, the father of Hamor**, and his six brothers, would not listen to Shechem and his father Hamor, and they would not be circumcised, for the proposal of the sons of Jacob was loathsome in their sight, and their anger was greatly roused at this, that the people of the city had not hearkened to them.

Commentary: A new faction emerges: Hamor's father, Chiddekem, and his brothers refuse circumcision. Their anger stems from two sources: the distastefulness of the act itself for their people and the fact that their leaders (Hamor and Shechem) bypassed their advice by rushing into this agreement. This sets up internal conflict among the Shechemites.

Verse 3: And in the evening of the second day, they found **eight small children who had not been circumcised**, for their mothers had concealed them from Shechem and his father Hamor, and from the men of the city.

Commentary: Even within the circumcised group, some mothers attempted to protect their children from the ritual, indicating further internal resistance and fear.

Verse 4: And Shechem and his father Hamor sent to have them brought before them to be circumcised, when Chiddekem and his six brothers sprang at them with their swords, and sought to slay them.

Commentary: The conflict escalates. Chiddekem and his faction actively intervene with drawn swords to prevent the forced circumcision of these remaining children, signifying their deep opposition to Hamor and Shechem's decision.

Verse 5: And they sought to slay also Shechem and his father Hamor and they sought to slay Dinah with them on account of this matter.

Commentary: The internal conflict within Shechem is so severe that Chiddekem's faction attempts to kill Hamor, Shechem, and even Dinah (as the cause of the problem), highlighting the extreme resentment and turmoil over the circumcision.

Verse 6: And they said to them, "What is this thing that you have done? Are there no women amongst the daughters of your brethren the Canaanites, that you wish to take to yourselves daughters of the Hebrews, whom you knew not before, and will do this act which your fathers never commanded you?"

Commentary: Chiddekem's faction berates Hamor and Shechem for their foolish decision, emphasizing the social taboo of marrying foreign "Hebrew" women and the religious novelty of circumcision for their people.

Verse 7: "Do you imagine that you will succeed through this act which you have done? And what will you answer in this affair to your brethren the Canaanites, who will come tomorrow and ask you concerning this thing?"

Commentary: They question the wisdom of Hamor and Shechem's decision, warning them of the potential backlash from other Canaanite peoples who will undoubtedly learn of this unprecedented act.

Verse 8: "And if your act shall not appear just and good in their sight, what will you do for your lives, and we for our lives, in your not having hearkened to our voices?"

Commentary: They express fear for their own lives and the collective future of Shechem if other Canaanites view this circumcision as a betrayal or weakness.

Verse 9: "And if the inhabitants of the land and all your brethren the children of Ham shall hear of your act, saying,"

Verse 10: "'On account of a Hebrew woman did Shechem and Hamor his father, and all the inhabitants of their city, do that with which they had been unacquainted and which their ancestors never commanded them, where then will you fly or where conceal your shame, all your days before your brethren, the inhabitants of the land of Canaan?'"

Commentary: Chiddekem graphically paints a picture of the shame and humiliation Shechem will face among all the Canaanite tribes, implying they will be ostracized for their unconventional and seemingly subservient act.

Verse 11: "Now therefore we cannot bear up against this thing which you have done, neither can we be burdened with this yoke upon us, which our ancestors did not command us."

Commentary: Chiddekem explicitly states their refusal to bear the "yoke" of this new, uncommanded practice, indicating a clear break from Hamor and Shechem's leadership on this issue.

Verse 12: "Behold tomorrow we will go and assemble all our brethren, the Canaanitish brethren who dwell in the land, and we will all come and smite you and all those who trust in you, that there shall not be a remnant left from you or them."

Commentary: Chiddekem's faction issues a severe threat: they will rally other Canaanite tribes to destroy Shechem and all who participated in the circumcision, demonstrating the high stakes of this internal dispute.

Verse 13: And when Hamor and his son Shechem and all the people of the city heard the words of Chiddekem and his brothers, they were **terribly afraid of their lives at their words**, and they repented of what they had done.

Commentary: Chiddekem's threats have their desired effect. Hamor, Shechem, and the circumcised men of the city realize the grave danger they are in from their own people, and they regret their decision.

Verse 14: And Shechem and his father Hamor answered their father Chiddekem and his brethren, and they said to them, "All the words which you spoke to us are true."

Commentary: They acknowledge the validity of Chiddekem's warnings, showing their immediate fear and a willingness to back down.

Verse 15: "Now do not say, nor imagine in your hearts that on account of the love of the Hebrews we did this thing that our ancestors did not command us."

Commentary: They try to salvage their reputation by denying any genuine affection for the Hebrews, claiming their actions were purely pragmatic.

Verse 16: "But because we saw that it was not their intention and desire to accede to our wishes concerning their daughter as to our taking her, except on this condition, so we hearkened to their voices and did this act which you saw, in order to obtain our desire from them."

Commentary: They explain their motive: it was a necessary concession to secure Dinah and the alliance, a means to an end. This is the partial truth of their deception.

Verse 17: "And when we shall have obtained our request from them, we will then return to them and do to them that which you say to us."

Commentary: This is a crucial lie. Hamor and Shechem promise to betray Jacob's family *after* the marriage and alliance are secured, reassuring Chiddekem's faction that their plan is to eventually take revenge on the Hebrews. This is overheard by Dinah.

Verse 18: "We beseech you then to wait and tarry until our flesh shall be healed and we again become strong, and we will then go together against them, and do to them that which is in your hearts and in ours."

Commentary: They ask for a temporary truce, urging patience until they are physically recovered from the circumcision, promising joint vengeance against the Hebrews. This is a deliberate stall.

Verse 19: And **Dinah, the daughter of Jacob, heard all these words** which Chiddekem and his brothers had spoken, and what Hamor and his son Shechem and the people of their city had answered them.

Commentary: Dinah, being captive in Shechem's house, overhears the entire conversation, including Hamor and Shechem's plan to betray her family. This changes everything.

Verse 20: And she hastened and sent one of her maidens, that her father had sent to take care of her in the house of Shechem, to Jacob her father and to her brethren, saying:

Commentary: Dinah acts decisively, using a maiden sent by Jacob to warn her family, demonstrating her intelligence and concern for her kin.

Verse 21: "Thus did Chiddekem and his brothers advise concerning you, and thus did Hamor and Shechem and the people of the city answer them."

Commentary: Dinah relays the full extent of the Shechemites' deceit and their planned betrayal, confirming the danger her family faces.

Verse 22: And when Jacob heard these words, he was filled with wrath, and he was indignant at them, and his anger was kindled against them.

Commentary: This time, Jacob's reaction is immediate and intense. The news of the planned betrayal, confirming the Shechemites' wickedness beyond the initial defilement, fully ignites his wrath.

Verse 23: And **Simeon and Levi swore and said, "As the Lord lives, the God of the whole earth, by this time tomorrow, there shall not be a remnant left in the whole city."**

Commentary: The brothers, particularly Simeon and Levi, react with a furious oath. The divine oath ("As the Lord lives") emphasizes their absolute resolve for total annihilation. This is the direct result of Dinah's warning, justifying their extreme action to themselves.

The Massacre of Shechem

Verse 24: And twenty young men had concealed themselves who were not circumcised, and these young men fought against Simeon and Levi, and Simeon and Levi killed eighteen of them, and two fled from them and escaped to some lime pits that were in the city, and Simeon and Levi sought for them, but could not find them.

Commentary: There is a brief but violent resistance from a small group of uncircumcised men, but Simeon and Levi, despite their weakened state from their own recent circumcisions, prove overwhelmingly powerful. Only two escape, ensuring some will bear witness.

Verse 25: And Simeon and Levi continued to go about in the city, and they **killed all the people of the city at the edge of the sword, and they left none remaining**.

Commentary: The systematic and complete slaughter of all the men in Shechem. This is a brutal act of vengeance, fulfilling their oath.

Verse 26: And there was a great consternation in the midst of the city, and the cry of the people of the city ascended to heaven, and all the women and children cried aloud.

Commentary: The horrific scene is described: widespread panic, desperate cries, emphasizing the brutality of the massacre.

Verse 27: And Simeon and Levi slew all the city; they left not a male remaining in the whole city.

Commentary: This reiterates the completeness of the massacre of the male population.

Verse 28: And they slew Hamor and Shechem his son at the edge of the sword, and they brought away Dinah from the house of Shechem and they went from there.

Commentary: The primary targets, Hamor and Shechem, are executed. Dinah is finally rescued, but at a tremendous cost.

Verse 29: And the sons of Jacob went and returned, and came upon the slain, and **spoiled all their property** which was in the city and the field.

Commentary: After the killing, the other sons of Jacob join in looting the city and the surrounding fields, taking all the wealth and possessions. This adds economic motivation to their vengeance.

Verse 30: And whilst they were taking the spoil, three hundred men stood up and threw dust at them and struck them with stones, when Simeon turned to them and he slew them all with the edge of the sword, and Simeon turned before Levi, and came into the city.

Commentary: A new group of three hundred men (perhaps others from the vicinity or some uncircumcised Shechemites who weren't among the twenty) attempt to fight back, but Simeon again demonstrates his ruthlessness and combat prowess, killing them all.

Verse 31: And they took away their sheep and their oxen and their cattle, and also the remainder of the women and little ones, and they led all these away, and they opened a gate and went out and came to their father Jacob with vigor.

Commentary: The brothers complete their plunder, taking not only livestock but also the surviving women and children as captives. They return to Jacob with the spoils of their victory.

Jacob's Rebuke and Judah's Defense

Verse 32: And when Jacob saw all that they had done to the city, and saw the spoil that they took from them, **Jacob was very angry at them**, and Jacob said to them, "What is this that you have done to me? Behold, I obtained rest amongst the Canaanitish inhabitants of the land, and none of them meddled with me."

Commentary: Jacob is furious, not primarily over the moral implications of the massacre, but over the **strategic consequences**. He fears for his family's safety and continued existence among the Canaanites, as he had established a precarious peace.

Verse 33: "And now you have done to make me obnoxious to the inhabitants of the land, amongst the Canaanites and the Perizzites, and I am but of a small number, and they will all assemble against me

and slay me when they hear of your work with their brethren, and I and my household will be destroyed."

Commentary: Jacob's fear is palpable. He foresees a retaliatory attack from the surrounding tribes, given his small numbers compared to the enraged Canaanites. His concern is survival.

Verse 34: And **Simeon and Levi and all their brothers with them answered their father Jacob and said to him, "Behold, we live in the land, and shall Shechem do this to our sister? Why are you silent at all that Shechem has done? And shall he deal with our sister as with a harlot in the streets?"**

Commentary: The brothers defend their actions fiercely. They challenge Jacob's passivity and emphasize the profound dishonor brought upon their family by Shechem's act, arguing that such an affront demanded decisive action. They highlight the public nature of the humiliation ("as with a harlot in the streets").

Verse 35: And the number of women whom Simeon and Levi took captives from the city of Shechem, whom they did not slay, was **eighty-five who had not known man**.

Commentary: This detail specifies the number of virgin women taken captive, possibly for later wives or concubines.

Verse 36: And amongst them was a young damsel of beautiful appearance and well favored, whose name was **Bunah**, and Simeon took her for a wife, and the number of the males which they took captives and did not slay, was **forty-seven men**, and the rest they slew.

Commentary: Simeon takes one of the captured women as a wife. The specific numbers of male captives (possibly to be servants or slaves) are provided, showing the selective nature of their killing (primarily adult males).

Verse 37: And all the young men and women that Simeon and Levi had taken captives from the city of Shechem, were **servants to the sons of Jacob and to their children after them, until the day of the sons of Jacob going forth from the land of Egypt**.

Commentary: The captured Shechemites become perpetual servants, and this condition lasts until the Exodus, a significant historical reference that ties this event into the broader narrative of Israel's future.

Canaanite Retaliation and Jacob's Family's Prayer

Verse 38: And when Simeon and Levi had gone forth from the city, the two young men that were left, who had concealed themselves in the city, and did not die amongst the people of the city, rose up, and these young men went into the city and walked about in it, and found the city desolate without man, and only women weeping, and these young men cried out and said, "Behold, this is the evil which the sons of Jacob the Hebrew did to this city in their having this day destroyed one of the Canaanitish cities, and were not afraid of their lives of all the land of Canaan."

Commentary: The two surviving Shechemite men (mentioned in verse 24) emerge and witness the devastation. They immediately understand the gravity of the situation and the threat this poses to the Hebrews, recognizing the courage/foolhardiness of Jacob's sons in provoking the entire region.

Verse 39: And these men left the city and went to the city of **Tapnach**, and they came there and told the inhabitants of Tapnach all that had befallen them, and all that the sons of Jacob had done to the city of Shechem.

Commentary: The survivors spread the news, ensuring that the surrounding Canaanite cities will learn of the massacre, inevitably leading to a wider conflict.

Verse 40: And the information reached **Jashub, king of Tapnach**, and he sent men to the city of Shechem to see those young men, for the king did not believe them in this account, saying, "How could two men lay waste such a large town as Shechem?"

Commentary: King Jashub is skeptical of the account, finding it unbelievable that such a major city could be destroyed by so few (he mistakenly attributes it solely to Simeon and Levi, not realizing the others joined in the spoiling).

Verse 41: And the messengers of Jashub came back and told him, saying, "We came to the city, and it is destroyed, there is not a man there; only weeping women; neither is any flock or cattle there, for all that was in the city the sons of Jacob took away."

Commentary: The messengers confirm the devastating truth: Shechem is indeed utterly destroyed and plundered, validating the survivors' incredible story.

Verse 42: And Jashub wondered at this, saying, "How could two men do this thing, to destroy so large a city, and not one man able to stand against them?"

Commentary: Jashub's bewilderment emphasizes the unprecedented nature of the sons' feat, indicating a powerful, almost supernatural, ability.

Verse 43: "For the like has not been from the days of Nimrod, and not even from the remotest time, has the like taken place; and Jashub, king of Tapnach, said to his people, 'Be courageous and we will go and fight against these Hebrews, and do to them as they did to the city, and we will avenge the cause of the people of the city.'"

Commentary: Jashub puts the act in a historical context, noting its unparalleled brutality. He calls for courage and revenge, seeing it as his duty to avenge the Shechemites and protect other Canaanite cities.

Verse 44: And Jashub, king of Tapnach, consulted with his counsellors about this matter, and his advisers said to him, "Alone you will not prevail over the Hebrews, for they must be powerful to do this work to the whole city."

Commentary: Jashub's advisors, unlike him, immediately recognize the formidable power of Jacob's sons. They warn him against a solo attack, understanding that such a devastating act implies extraordinary strength.

Verse 45: "If two of them laid waste the whole city, and no one stood against them, surely if you will go against them, they will all rise against us and destroy us likewise."

Commentary: The advisors emphasize the terrifying implication: if only two (or a small number) could do this, the entire family would be even more dangerous.

Verse 46: "But if you will send to all the kings that surround us, and let them come together, then we will go with them and fight against the sons of Jacob; then will you prevail against them."

Commentary: The pragmatic advice: form a massive coalition of regional kings to overwhelm Jacob's family, recognizing the need for superior numbers against such a potent threat.

Verse 47: And Jashub heard the words of his counsellors, and their words pleased him and his people, and he did so; and Jashub, king of Tapnach, sent to all the kings of the Amorites that surrounded Shechem and Tapnach, saying,

Commentary: Jashub accepts the wise counsel and begins to rally the surrounding Amorite kings.

Verse 48: "Go up with me and assist me, and we will smite Jacob the Hebrew and all his sons, and destroy them from the earth, for thus did he do to the city of Shechem, and do you not know of it?"

Commentary: Jashub appeals to other kings, highlighting the existential threat posed by Jacob's family and the need for collective action to prevent a repeat of Shechem.

Verse 49: And all the kings of the Amorites heard the evil that the sons of Jacob had done to the city of Shechem, and they were greatly astonished at them.

Commentary: The sheer scale of the massacre astonishes the other kings, demonstrating its unprecedented nature.

Verse 50: And the **seven kings of the Amorites assembled with all their armies, about ten thousand men with drawn swords**, and they came to fight against the sons of Jacob; and Jacob heard that the kings of the Amorites had assembled to fight against his sons, and Jacob was greatly afraid, and it distressed him.

Commentary: A massive coalition forms, ten thousand strong, with hostile intent. Jacob is once again gripped by intense fear and distress, realizing the full, perilous consequences of his sons' actions. This is the moment of crisis for Jacob's entire family.

Verse 51: And Jacob exclaimed against Simeon and Levi, saying, "What is this act that you did? Why have you injured me, to bring against me all the children of Canaan to destroy me and my household? For I was at rest, even I and my household, and you have done this thing to me, and provoked the inhabitants of the land against me by your proceedings."

Commentary: Jacob fiercely rebukes Simeon and Levi, blaming them for jeopardizing his family's safety and provoking the entire region, highlighting his preference for peaceful existence.

Verse 52: And **Judah answered his father, saying, "Was it for naught my brothers Simeon and Levi killed all the inhabitants of Shechem? Surely it was because Shechem had humbled our sister, and transgressed the command of our God to Noah and his children, for Shechem took our sister away by force, and committed adultery with her."**

Commentary: Judah steps forward as a powerful advocate for his brothers' actions, defending their violence as justified vengeance for the profound dishonor to Dinah and the violation of God's universal laws. He frames it as a righteous act, not a mere provocation.

Verse 53: "And Shechem did all this evil and not one of the inhabitants of his city interfered with him, to say, 'Why will you do this?' Surely for this my brothers went and smote the city, and the Lord delivered it into their hands, because its inhabitants had transgressed the commands of our God. Is it then for naught that they have done all this?"

Commentary: Judah argues for the collective guilt of Shechem, pointing out their complicity by inaction. He attributes the victory to divine favor, asserting that God delivered the city into their hands because its inhabitants had defied divine commands. This elevates their act beyond mere revenge to a form of divine justice.

Verse 54: "And now why are you afraid or distressed, and why are you displeased at my brothers, and why is your anger kindled against them?"

Commentary: Judah challenges Jacob's fear and anger, implying a lack of faith in God's protection.

Verse 55: "Surely our God who delivered into their hand the city of Shechem and its people, He will also deliver into our hands all the Canaanitish kings who are coming against us, and we will do to them as my brothers did to Shechem."

Commentary: Judah expresses bold faith, asserting that the same God who granted victory over Shechem will grant them victory over the combined Canaanite forces. He embraces the possibility of repeating the massacre on a larger scale.

Verse 56: "Now be tranquil about them and cast away your fears, but trust in the Lord our God, and pray to Him to assist us and deliver us, and deliver our enemies into our hands."

Commentary: Judah encourages Jacob to overcome his fear, to trust in God, and to pray for divine assistance, taking a position of leadership and faith in this moment of crisis.

Verse 57: And Judah called to one of his father's servants, "Go now and see where those kings, who are coming against us, are situated with their armies."

Commentary: Judah takes a practical step, sending a scout to assess the enemy's position, demonstrating his leadership and strategic thinking alongside his faith.

Verse 58: And the servant went and looked far off, and went up opposite Mount Sihon, and saw all the camps of the kings standing in the fields, and he returned to Judah and said, "Behold, the kings are situated in the field with all their camps, a people exceedingly numerous, like unto the sand upon the seashore."

Commentary: The scout returns with a grim report: a vast, overwhelming force, emphasizing the numerical superiority of the enemy and the dire straits of Jacob's family.

Verse 59: And Judah said to Simeon and Levi, and to all his brothers, "Strengthen yourselves and be sons of valor, for the Lord our God is with us, do not fear them."

Commentary: Judah rallies his brothers, appealing to their courage and reminding them of God's presence, echoing his earlier words of faith.

Verse 60: "Stand forth each man, girt with his weapons of war, his bow and his sword, and we will go and fight against these uncircumcised men; the Lord is our God, He will save us."

Commentary: Judah urges a proactive, armed response, framing the battle as a holy war against the "uncircumcised," relying on God for salvation.

Verse 61: And they rose up, and each girded on his weapons of war, great and small, **eleven sons of Jacob**, and all the servants of Jacob with them.

Commentary: All the sons of Jacob (except perhaps Benjamin, who is still young) prepare for battle, alongside their household servants, forming a surprisingly small but determined fighting force.

Verse 62: And all the servants of Isaac who were with Isaac in Hebron, all came to them equipped in all sorts of war instruments, and the sons of Jacob and their servants, being **one hundred and twelve men**, went toward these kings, and **Jacob also went with them**.

Commentary: Crucially, Isaac's servants from Hebron also join the fight, significantly bolstering Jacob's forces, making their total strength one hundred and twelve. Jacob himself, despite his earlier fear, also accompanies them, showing solidarity and courage in the face of the existential threat.

Verse 63: And the sons of Jacob sent to their father Isaac, the son of Abraham, to Hebron, the same is Kireath-arba, saying,

Commentary: Even as they prepare for battle, they send a request to Isaac for prayer, acknowledging the spiritual dimension of their predicament.

Verse 64: "Pray, we beseech you, for us to the Lord our God, to protect us from the hands of the Canaanites who are coming against us, and to deliver them into our hands."

Commentary: Their request is for divine protection and victory, mirroring Judah's earlier conviction.

Verse 65: And **Isaac, the son of Abraham, prayed to the Lord for his sons**, and he said, "O Lord God, You did promise my father, saying, 'I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven,' and You did also promise me, and establish You Your word, now that the kings of Canaan are coming together, to make war with my children because they committed no violence."

Commentary: Isaac, like Jacob earlier, appeals to God's covenant promises to Abraham and himself. He subtly reinterprets his grandsons' actions, claiming they "committed no violence" (a contested claim, given the massacre), perhaps focusing on the initial defilement rather than the retribution.

Verse 66: "Now therefore, O Lord God, God of the whole earth, **pervert, I pray You, the counsel of these kings** that they may not fight against my sons."

Commentary: Isaac prays for divine intervention to disrupt the Canaanites' plans, asking God to confuse or turn away their intentions.

Verse 67: "And impress the hearts of these kings and their people with the **terror of my sons** and bring down their pride, and that they may turn away from my sons."

Commentary: Isaac's prayer is for the enemy to be filled with dread of Jacob's sons, an appeal for a psychological victory akin to the angelic intervention experienced by Esau.

Verse 68: "And with Your strong hand and outstretched arm deliver my sons and their servants from them, for power and might are in Your hands to do all this."

Commentary: He concludes with a powerful affirmation of God's omnipotence and His ability to deliver them.

Verse 69: And the sons of Jacob and their servants went toward these kings, and they trusted in the Lord their God, and whilst they were going, Jacob their father also prayed to the Lord and said, "O Lord God, powerful and exalted God, who has reigned from days of old, from thence till now and forever;"

Commentary: As the small force advances, Jacob himself, now emboldened by faith (and perhaps Judah's influence), joins in prayer, a powerful display of collective reliance on God.

Verse 70: "You are He who stirs up wars and causes them to cease, in Your hand are power and might to exalt and to bring down; O may my prayer be acceptable before You that You may turn to me with Your mercies, to impress the hearts of these kings and their people with the **terror of my sons**, and terrify them and their camps, and with Your great kindness deliver all those that trust in You, for it is You who can bring people under us and reduce nations under our power."

Commentary: Jacob's prayer mirrors Isaac's, focusing on God's sovereignty over warfare, His power to inspire terror, and His ability to grant victory. He prays for divine intervention to instill fear in their enemies and bring them to submission, a testament to their newfound resolve and reliance on God.

Book of Jasher, Chapter 35

The Amorite Kings' Consultation and Their Advisors' Fear

Verse 1: And all the kings of the Amorites came and took their stand in the field to consult with their counsellors what was to be done with the sons of Jacob, for they were still afraid of them, saying, "Behold, two of them slew the whole of the city of Shechem."

Commentary: The Amorite kings, despite their vast numbers (ten thousand men, as per chapter 34), are still hesitant. Their initial fear is based on the unprecedented destruction of Shechem by seemingly only two of Jacob's sons, recognizing the exceptional nature of that act.

Verse 2: And the Lord heard the prayers of Isaac and Jacob, and he filled the hearts of all these kings' advisers with great fear and terror that they unanimously exclaimed,

Commentary: This is a direct statement of divine intervention. God actively answers the prayers of Isaac and Jacob by instilling **great fear and terror** into the hearts of the Amorite advisors, leading to a unanimous decision against fighting. This highlights God's protective hand over Jacob's family.

Verse 3: "Are you silly this day, or is there no understanding in you, that you will fight with the Hebrews, and why will you take a delight in your own destruction this day?"

Commentary: The advisors, filled with divinely-inspired fear, forcefully challenge their kings' intentions, framing the proposed battle as suicidal. They explicitly refer to Jacob's family as "the Hebrews," distinguishing them.

Verse 4: "Behold, two of them came to the city of Shechem without fear or terror, and they killed all the inhabitants of the city, that no man stood up against them, and how will you be able to fight with them all?"

Commentary: The advisors emphasize the terrifying bravery and effectiveness of Jacob's sons, highlighting the lack of resistance from the Shechemites, and then question the kings' ability to overcome the entire force of Jacob's family if even two could accomplish such a feat.

Verse 5: "Surely you know that their God is exceedingly fond of them, and has done mighty things for them, such as have not been done from days of old, and amongst all the gods of nations, there is none can do like unto his mighty deeds."

Commentary: The advisors acknowledge the unique and powerful relationship between the Hebrews and their God. They recognize God's active involvement in their favor and His superiority over all other national deities, suggesting a supernatural force beyond their understanding.

Verse 6: "Surely he delivered their father Abraham, the Hebrew, from the hand of Nimrod, and from the hand of all his people who had many times sought to slay him."

Commentary: They cite historical examples of God's protection, specifically Abraham's deliverance from Nimrod's attempts to kill him (referencing events detailed earlier in Jasher, such as the fiery furnace incident). This shows a knowledge of the Hebrews' history.

Verse 7: "He delivered him also from the fire in which king Nimrod had cast him, and his God delivered him from it."

Commentary: They specifically mention Abraham's survival of the fiery furnace, a miraculous event that clearly demonstrates God's power.

Verse 8: "And who else can do the like? Surely it was Abraham who slew the five kings of Elam, when they had touched his brother's son who in those days dwelt in Sodom."

Commentary: They bring up Abraham's military victory over the kings of Elam (Genesis 14), emphasizing that even Abraham, with a small force, achieved an astonishing victory due to divine assistance.

Verse 9: "And took his servant that was faithful in his house and a few of his men, and they pursued the kings of Elam in one night and killed them, and restored to his brother's son all his property which they had taken from him."

Commentary: The advisors detail the impressive nature of Abraham's victory, further illustrating God's support for the Hebrew patriarchs and their lineage.

Verse 10: "And surely you know the God of these Hebrews is much delighted with them, and they are also delighted with him, for they know that he delivered them from all their enemies."

Commentary: They highlight the reciprocal relationship: God favors the Hebrews, and the Hebrews, in turn, trust and delight in God because of His consistent deliverance from their enemies.

Verse 11: "And behold, through his love toward his God, Abraham took his only and precious son and intended to bring him up as a burnt offering to his God, and had it not been for God who prevented him from doing this, he would then have done it through his love to his God."

Commentary: They refer to the Binding of Isaac (Akedah), an event demonstrating Abraham's profound obedience and love for God. This emphasizes the deep devotion of the patriarchs and, by extension, their descendants, further solidifying the reason for God's protection.

Verse 12: "And God saw all his works, and swore unto him, and promised him that he would deliver his sons and all his seed from every trouble that would befall them, because he had done this thing, and through his love to his God stifled his compassion for his child."

Commentary: The advisors explicitly connect Abraham's act of faith to God's **covenant promise of protection for his descendants** from all troubles. This reinforces the idea that the Hebrews are divinely protected.

Verse 13: "And have you not heard what their God did to Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and to Abimelech, king of Gerar, through taking Abraham's wife, who said of her, 'She is my sister,' lest they might slay him on account of her, and think of taking her for a wife? And God did to them and their people all that you heard of."

Commentary: They also recall God's protection of Sarah (Abraham's wife) when both Pharaoh and Abimelech unwittingly took her, leading to divine plagues and warnings. This further illustrates God's active and powerful intervention on behalf of Abraham's family.

Verse 14: "And behold, we ourselves saw with our eyes that Esau, the brother of Jacob, came to him with four hundred men, with the intention of slaying him, for he called to mind that he had taken away from him his father's blessing."

Commentary: This is a crucial reference to a very recent event they witnessed: Esau's hostile approach toward Jacob. This provides immediate, tangible evidence of God's protection, directly linking to the previous chapter.

Verse 15: "And he went to meet him when he came from Syria, to smite the mother with the children, and who delivered him from his hands but his God in whom he trusted? He delivered him from the hand of his brother and also from the hands of his enemies, and surely he again will protect them."

Commentary: The advisors point to Jacob's recent deliverance from Esau, attributing it directly to **God's intervention**. They conclude that if God protected Jacob then, He will surely do so again. This reinforces the idea of consistent divine protection.

Verse 16: "Who does not know that it was their God who inspired them with strength to do to the town of Shechem the evil which you heard of?"

Commentary: They directly attribute the massacre of Shechem to divine empowerment. They now understand that the brothers' strength was not merely human.

Verse 17: "Could it then be with their own strength that two men could destroy such a large city as Shechem had it not been for their God in whom they trusted? He said and did to them all this to slay the inhabitants of the city in their city."

Commentary: They emphasize the logical impossibility of two men destroying a city of Shechem's size without divine assistance, making it clear that God was the active agent behind the destruction.

Verse 18: "And can you then prevail over them who have come forth together from your city to fight with the whole of them, even if a thousand times as many more should come to your assistance?"

Commentary: They conclude by pointing out the futility of fighting Jacob's family, implying that even with vastly superior numbers, they cannot overcome a force divinely empowered.

Verse 19: "Surely you know and understand that you do not come to fight with them, but you come to war with their God who made choice of them, and you have therefore all come this day to be destroyed."

Commentary: This is the ultimate warning: the battle is not against mere men but against the powerful God who chose and protects them. To fight them is to invite self-destruction.

Verse 20: "Now therefore refrain from this evil which you are endeavoring to bring upon yourselves, and it will be better for you not to go to battle with them, although they are but few in numbers, because their God is with them."

Commentary: The advisors strongly urge the kings to abandon their plan, emphasizing that numerical superiority is irrelevant when God is on the side of the few.

The Amorites Retreat

Verse 21: And when the kings of the Amorites heard all the words of their advisers, their hearts were filled with terror, and they were afraid of the sons of Jacob and would not fight against them.

Commentary: The advisors' arguments, fueled by divinely-inspired fear, successfully deter the kings. Their fear of Jacob's sons, now understood as divinely protected, prevents them from engaging in battle.

Verse 22: And they inclined their ears to the words of their advisers, and they listened to all their words, and the words of the counsellors greatly pleased the kings, and they did so.

Commentary: The kings accept the counsel, recognizing the wisdom in not fighting against a divinely protected group.

Verse 23: And the kings turned and refrained from the sons of Jacob, for they durst not approach them to make war with them, for they were greatly afraid of them, and their hearts melted within them from their fear of them.

Commentary: The retreat is described in vivid terms, emphasizing the overwhelming fear that caused their courage to vanish. Their hearts "melted" is a common biblical idiom for extreme fear.

Verse 24: For this proceeded from the Lord to them, for he heard the prayers of his servants Isaac and Jacob, for they trusted in him; and all these kings returned with their camps on that day, each to his own city, and they did not at that time fight with the sons of Jacob.

Commentary: Jasher reiterates the divine authorship of this outcome: God directly intervened in response to Isaac and Jacob's prayers, fulfilling His promise to protect them. The kings return home without a fight.

Verse 25: And the sons of Jacob kept their station that day till evening opposite Mount Sihon, and seeing that these kings did not come to fight against them, the sons of Jacob returned home.

Commentary: Jacob's family, prepared for battle, wait patiently. When the enemy fails to appear, they return home, having been miraculously preserved from a far superior force without having to fight. This further validates Judah's earlier faith and the power of divine intervention.

Book of Jasher, Chapter 36

Jacob Returns to Bethel and Family Deaths

Verse 1: At that time the Lord appeared to Jacob, saying, "Arise, go to **Bethel** and remain there, and make there an altar to the Lord who appears to you, who delivered you and your sons from affliction."

Commentary: Following the incident at Shechem and the near-war with the Amorites, God commands Jacob to return to Bethel. This is a significant spiritual reset, taking Jacob back to the place where God first promised him protection and progeny. It's a call to reaffirm his covenant with God and acknowledge divine deliverance.

Verse 2: And Jacob rose up with his sons and all belonging to him, and they went and came to Bethel according to the word of the Lord.

Commentary: Jacob immediately obeys the divine instruction, showing his renewed commitment to God after the recent dangers.

Verse 3: And Jacob was **ninety-nine years old** when he went up to Bethel, and Jacob and his sons and all the people that were with him, remained in Bethel in Luz, and he there built an altar to the Lord who appeared to him, and Jacob and his sons remained in Bethel six months.

Commentary: Jacob's age is specified, highlighting his advanced years. He fulfills the command to build an altar, signifying worship and gratitude. Their six-month stay indicates a period of spiritual consolidation and peace.

Verse 4: At that time died **Deborah, the daughter of Uz, the nurse of Rebecca**, who had been with Jacob; and Jacob buried her beneath Bethel under an oak that was there.

Commentary: The death of Deborah marks a personal loss for Jacob. As Rebecca's nurse, she would have been a long-standing and familiar presence in the family, representing a link to his mother and his past.

Verse 5: And **Rebecca, the daughter of Bethuel, the mother of Jacob**, also died at that time in Hebron, the same is Kireath-arba, and she was buried in the cave of Machpelah which Abraham had bought from the children of Heth.

Commentary: The death of Rebecca, Jacob's mother, is a momentous event. Her burial in the cave of Machpelah connects her, and by extension Jacob's family, to the patriarchal burial ground, reinforcing their claim to the land of Canaan.

Verse 6: And the life of Rebecca was **one hundred and thirty-three years**, and she died, and when Jacob heard that his mother Rebecca was dead he wept bitterly for his mother, and made a great mourning for her, and for Deborah her nurse beneath the oak, and he called the name of that place **Allon-bachuth**.

Commentary: Rebecca's age at death is given. Jacob's deep sorrow and bitter weeping for his mother are emphasized, showing his strong emotional connection to her. The renaming of the burial site for Deborah to "Allon-bachuth" (Oak of Weeping) memorializes this period of grief.

Verse 7: And **Laban the Syrian died in those days**, for God smote him because he transgressed the covenant that existed between him and Jacob.

Commentary: Laban's death is mentioned, explicitly attributed to divine judgment for breaking his covenant with Jacob. This is a vindication for Jacob and reinforces the idea of God's protection and justice.

Verse 8: And Jacob was **a hundred years old** when the Lord appeared to him, and blessed him and called his name **Israel**, and Rachel the wife of Jacob conceived in those days.

Commentary: Jacob reaches a significant milestone (100 years old). God re-affirms his blessing and confirms his new name, Israel, which signifies his wrestling with God and prevailing. Rachel's conception of Benjamin is a poignant detail, as she will not live to see him grow.

Verse 9: And at that time Jacob and all belonging to him journeyed from Bethel to go to his father's house, to Hebron.

Commentary: Jacob, now established and blessed, continues his journey towards his father Isaac in Hebron, symbolizing the family's ultimate return and settlement in the land.

Rachel's Death and Benjamin's Birth

Verse 10: And whilst they were going on the road, and there was yet but a little way to come to **Ephrath, Rachel bore a son and she had hard labor and she died**.

Commentary: This is another major tragedy for Jacob: the death of his beloved wife, Rachel, during childbirth. The detail of "hard labor" underscores the difficulty and pain of her passing.

Verse 11: And Jacob buried her in the way to Ephrath, which is **Bethlehem**, and he set a pillar upon her grave, which is there to this day; and the days of Rachel were **forty-five years** and she died.

Commentary: Rachel is buried on the roadside near Bethlehem, a poignant detail that contrasts with the patriarchal burial in Machpelah. The pillar marks her grave "to this day," suggesting a lasting memorial. Her age at death is also provided.

Verse 12: And Jacob called the name of his son that was born to him, which Rachel bore to him, **Benjamin**, for he was born to him in the land on the right hand.

Commentary: Jacob names his youngest son Benjamin, meaning "son of the right hand" (or "son of my strength"), in contrast to Rachel's dying wish of "Ben-Oni" ("son of my sorrow"). This name choice reflects Jacob's resilience and a hopeful outlook despite his grief.

Reuben's Transgression and the Birthright's Reallocation

Verse 13: And it was after the death of Rachel, that Jacob pitched his tent in the tent of her handmaid **Bilhah**.

Commentary: This action, Jacob taking Bilhah as his concubine after Rachel's death, is a significant event that sparks family discord. Bilhah was Rachel's handmaid, further complicating the family dynamics.

Verse 14: And **Reuben was jealous for his mother Leah** on account of this, and he was filled with anger, and he rose up in his anger and went and entered the tent of Bilhah and he thence **removed his father's bed**.

Commentary: Reuben's motivation is clearly stated: jealousy and anger on behalf of his mother, Leah, who might have felt further marginalized by Jacob's preference for Rachel's line (now through Bilhah). His act of removing Jacob's bed from Bilhah's tent is a profound public act of defiance and disrespect, challenging Jacob's authority and household order.

Verse 15: At that time the **portion of birthright, together with the kingly and priestly offices, was removed from the sons of Reuben**, for he had profaned his father's bed, and the **birthright was given to Joseph, the kingly office to Judah, and the priesthood to Levi**, because Reuben had defiled his father's bed.

Commentary: This verse explains the severe consequences of Reuben's transgression, which is seen as "profaning his father's bed." This action leads to the **reallocation of the birthright and its associated privileges**:

- **Birthright:** Given to Joseph (the firstborn of Rachel, Jacob's favored wife, symbolizing a double portion of inheritance).
- **Kingly Office (leadership):** Given to Judah (whose lineage will include kings, notably David).
- **Priesthood:** Given to Levi (whose descendants will serve as priests).

This passage in Jasher provides a clear rationale for the later tribal roles and leadership within Israel, directly linking them to Reuben's sin.

Jacob's Sons and Esau's Descendants

Verse 16: And these are the generations of Jacob who were born to him in Padan-aram, and the sons of Jacob were twelve.

Commentary: A summary statement of Jacob's twelve sons, who will become the progenitors of the twelve tribes of Israel.

Verse 17: The sons of Leah were **Reuben the first born, and Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, and their sister Dinah**; and the sons of Rachel were **Joseph and Benjamin**.

Verse 18: The sons of Zilpah, Leah's handmaid, were **Gad and Asher**, and the sons of Bilhah, Rachel's handmaid, were **Dan and Naphtali**; these are the sons of Jacob which were born to him in Padan-aram.

Commentary: This provides a clear list of Jacob's sons by their mothers, a fundamental lineage for the future nation of Israel. It explicitly states that all these births occurred in Padan-aram, confirming the previous narrative.

Verse 19: And Jacob and his sons and all belonging to him journeyed and came to **Mamre, which is Kireath-arba, that is in Hebron**, where Abraham and Isaac sojourned, and Jacob with his sons and all belonging to him, dwelt with his father in Hebron.

Commentary: Jacob's journey culminates in his arrival at Hebron, where he reunites with his father, Isaac. This marks a significant moment of familial and geographical homecoming, settling in the land promised to his forefathers.

Verse 20: And his brother Esau and his sons, and all belonging to him went to the **land of Seir and dwelt there**, and had possessions in the land of Seir, and the children of Esau were fruitful and multiplied exceedingly in the land of Seir.

Commentary: Esau and his descendants depart from Canaan and settle in Seir (Edom), establishing a separate lineage and territory. This delineates the two distinct nations, Israel and Edom, from this point forward. Their fruitfulness indicates their own prosperity.

Verse 21: And these are the generations of Esau that were born to him in the land of Canaan, and the sons of Esau were five.

Verse 22: And Adah bore to Esau his first born **Eliphaz**, and she also bore to him **Reuel**, and Ahlibamah bore to him **Jeush, Yaalam and Korah**.

Verse 23: These are the children of Esau who were born to him in the land of Canaan; and the sons of Eliphaz the son of Esau were **Teman, Omar, Zepho, Gatam, Kenaz and Amalex**, and the sons of Reuel were **Nachath, Zerach, Shamah and Mizzah**.

Verse 24: And the sons of Jeush were **Timnah, Alvah, Jetheth**; and the sons of Yaalam were **Alah, Phinor and Kenaz**.

Verse 25: And the sons of Korah were **Teman, Mibzar, Magdiel and Eram**; these are the families of the sons of Esau according to their **dukedoms** in the land of Seir.

Commentary: This section provides a detailed genealogy of Esau's descendants and their "dukedoms" (or chieftaincies) in Seir. This parallel lineage highlights the distinct development of the Edomite nation alongside the emerging Israelite one.

Verse 26: And these are the names of the sons of **Seir the Horite, inhabitants of the land of Seir, Lotan, Shobal, Zibeon, Anah, Dishan, Ezer and Dishon**, being seven sons.

Commentary: This lists the pre-existing inhabitants of Seir, the Horites, showing that Esau's descendants integrated with or displaced them.

Verse 27: And the children of Lotan were **Hori, Heman and their sister Timna, that is Timna who came to Jacob and his sons, and they would not give ear to her**, and she went and became a concubine to Eliphaz the son of Esau, and she bore to him **Amalek**.

Commentary: This verse provides crucial information about **Timna**. She was a Horite princess who seemingly sought to join Jacob's family, but they "would not give ear to her." This rejection leads her to become a concubine to Esau's son, Eliphaz, and through her, the **Amalekites** are born. This is a significant point in Jasher, explaining the origin of a major future enemy of Israel and attributing their existence to an earlier rejection by Jacob's family.

Verse 28: And the sons of Shobal were **Alvan, Manahath, Ebal, Shepho, and Onam**, and the sons of Zibeon were **Ajah, and Anah, this was that Anah who found the Yemim in the wilderness when he fed the asses of Zibeon his father.**

Commentary: The listing of Horite descendants continues, with a specific, curious detail about Anah "finding the Yemim." This sets up an unusual, almost mythical, digression.

Verse 29: And whilst he was feeding his father's asses he led them to the wilderness at different times to feed them.

Verse 30: And there was a day that he brought them to one of the deserts on the sea shore, opposite the wilderness of the people, and whilst he was feeding them, behold a very heavy storm came from the other side of the sea and rested upon the asses that were feeding there, and they all stood still.

Verse 31: And afterward about **one hundred and twenty great and terrible animals came out from the wilderness at the other side of the sea**, and they all came to the place where the asses were, and they placed themselves there.

Verse 32: And those animals, from their middle downward, were in the shape of the children of men, and from their middle upward, some had the likeness of bears, and some the likeness of the keephas, with tails behind them from between their shoulders reaching down to the earth, like the tails of the ducheephath, and these animals came and mounted and rode upon these asses, and led them away, and they went away unto this day.

Commentary: This is a highly unusual and fascinating interlude, unique to Jasher. Anah encounters strange, "great and terrible animals" with human lower bodies and animal (bear/keephas) upper bodies, with long tails. They ride off with his asses. This passage has puzzled commentators, often seen as a legendary or mythical element. "Keephas" and "ducheephath" are obscure terms, perhaps referring to

unknown or fantastical creatures. This story serves to add a unique, almost cryptozoological element to the Horite lineage.

Verse 33: And one of these animals approached Anah and smote him with his tail, and then fled from that place.

Verse 34: And when he saw this work he was exceedingly afraid of his life, and he fled and escaped to the city.

Verse 35: And he related to his sons and brothers all that had happened to him, and many men went to seek the asses but could not find them, and Anah and his brothers went no more to that place from that day following, for they were greatly afraid of their lives.

Commentary: Anah's terrifying encounter and the subsequent fear among his people underline the strangeness and danger of these "Yemim" creatures.

Verse 36: And the children of Anah the son of Seir, were **Dishon and his sister Ahlibamah**, and the children of Dishon were **Hemdan, Eshban, Ithran and Cheran**, and the children of Ezer were **Bilhan, Zaavan and Akan**, and the children of Dishon were **Uz and Aran**.

Verse 37: These are the families of the children of Seir the Horite, according to their dukedoms in the land of Seir.

Commentary: The genealogies of the Horites conclude, again listing their families and "dukedoms," providing a comprehensive overview of the inhabitants of Seir.

Verse 38: And Esau and his children dwelt in the land of Seir the Horite, the inhabitant of the land, and they had possessions in it and were fruitful and multiplied exceedingly, and Jacob and his children and all belonging to them, dwelt with their father Isaac in the land of Canaan, as the Lord had commanded Abraham their father.

Commentary: The chapter concludes by reiterating the distinct geographical settlements of Jacob's family (in Canaan with Isaac, fulfilling God's promise to Abraham) and Esau's family (in Seir), solidifying their separate destinies.

Book of Jasher, Chapter 37

Jacob Returns to Shechem and Renewed Conflict

Verse 1: And in the one hundred and fifth year of the life of Jacob, that is the ninth year of Jacob's dwelling with his children in the land of Canaan, he came from Padan-aram.

Commentary: This verse establishes the timeline, noting Jacob's age and the duration of his stay in Canaan since returning from Padan-aram.

Verse 2: And in those days Jacob journeyed with his children from Hebron, and they went and returned to the city of **Shechem**, they and all belonging to them, and they dwelt there, for the children of Jacob

obtained good and fat pasture land for their cattle in the city of Shechem, the city of Shechem having then been rebuilt, and there were in it about three hundred men and women.

Commentary: Surprisingly, Jacob's family returns to Shechem, the site of the traumatic massacre. The reason given is the availability of good pasture land. The city has been rebuilt and repopulated, though with a much smaller population (300 men and women) than before. This return sets the stage for renewed conflict.

Verse 3: And Jacob and his children and all belonging to him dwelt in the part of the field which Jacob had bought from Hamor the father of Shechem, when he came from Padan-aram before Simeon and Levi had smitten the city.

Commentary: They settle specifically on the land Jacob had previously purchased, re-establishing a claim to the area where the earlier conflict unfolded.

Verse 4: And all those kings of the Canaanites and Amorites that surrounded the city of Shechem, heard that the sons of Jacob had again come to Shechem and dwelt there.

Commentary: News of Jacob's family's return quickly spreads to the surrounding hostile kings, reigniting their anger and fear.

Verse 5: And they said, "Shall the sons of Jacob the Hebrew again come to the city and dwell therein, after that they have smitten its inhabitants and driven them out? Shall they now return and also drive out those who are dwelling in the city or slay them?"

Commentary: The kings express their outrage and fear. They view Jacob's family as a persistent threat, concerned that they will repeat the massacre and dispossession of the current inhabitants.

Verse 6: And all the kings of Canaan again assembled, and they came together to make war with Jacob and his sons.

Commentary: This marks a second, and even larger, coalition formed against Jacob's family, indicating the persistent and widespread animosity towards them in the region.

Verse 7: And Jashub king of Tapnach sent also to all his neighboring kings, to **Elan king of Gaash, and to Ihuri king of Shiloh, and to Parathon king of Chazar, and to Susi king of Sarton, and to Laban king of Bethchoran, and to Shabir king of Othnay-mah**, saying,

Verse 8: "Come up to me and assist me, and let us smite Jacob the Hebrew and his sons, and all belonging to him, for they are again come to Shechem to possess it and to slay its inhabitants as before."

Commentary: Jashub, the king of Tapnach, again spearheads the alliance, calling upon an extensive list of neighboring kings to join him in a decisive war against Jacob's family. He emphasizes the perceived threat of their returning to "possess and slay."

Verse 9: And all these kings assembled together and came with all their camps, a people exceedingly plentiful like the sand upon the sea shore, and they were all opposite to Tapnach.

Commentary: The gathered forces are described as numerically overwhelming, emphasizing the massive challenge facing Jacob's family.

Verse 10: And Jashub king of Tapnach went forth to them with all his army, and he encamped with them opposite to Tapnach without the city, and all these kings they divided into seven divisions, being seven camps against the sons of Jacob.

Commentary: The unified forces organize into seven divisions, indicating a well-planned and formidable military operation against the relatively small number of Jacob's family.

Verse 11: And they sent a declaration to Jacob and his son, saying, "Come you all forth to us that we may have an interview together in the plain, and revenge the cause of the men of Shechem whom you slew in their city, and you will now again return to the city of Shechem and dwell therein, and slay its inhabitants as before."

Commentary: The kings issue a direct challenge, demanding that Jacob's family come out to fight on the plain. Their stated aim is clear: revenge for the Shechem massacre and to prevent a repeat of their destructive actions.

Verse 12: And the sons of Jacob heard this and their anger was kindled exceedingly at the words of the kings of Canaan, and **ten of the sons of Jacob hastened and rose up**, and each of them girt on his weapons of war; and there were **one hundred and two of their servants with them equipped in battle array**.

Commentary: The challenge enrages Jacob's sons. Ten of them (likely excluding Benjamin, and possibly Joseph, who is soon to be absent from the narrative) prepare for battle with their servants, forming a small but highly determined fighting force of 112 men (10 sons + 102 servants).

Verse 13: And all these men, the sons of Jacob with their servants, went toward these kings, and **Jacob their father was with them**, and they all stood upon the heap of Shechem.

Commentary: Jacob, despite his earlier fears, once again joins his sons, demonstrating solidarity and courage. They strategically position themselves on the "heap of Shechem," perhaps a symbolic reminder of their previous victory or a defensible position amidst the ruins.

Jacob's Prayer and Divine Intervention

Verse 14: And **Jacob prayed to the Lord for his sons**, and he spread forth his hands to the Lord, and he said, "O God, You are an Almighty God, You are our father, You did form us and we are the works of Your hands; I pray You deliver my sons through Your mercy from the hand of their enemies, who are this day coming to fight with them and save them from their hand, for in Your hand is power and might, to save the few from the many."

Commentary: Faced with overwhelming odds, Jacob engages in fervent prayer. He appeals to God's omnipotence and paternal relationship, emphasizing their small numbers and God's ability to save the few against the many, a recurring theme in the patriarchs' reliance on God.

Verse 15: "And give unto my sons, Your servants, strength of heart and might to fight with their enemies, to subdue them, and make their enemies fall before them, and let not my sons and their servants die through the hands of the children of Canaan."

Commentary: Jacob prays not only for deliverance but for his sons to be empowered with courage and strength to overcome their enemies in battle.

Verse 16: "But if it seems good in Your eyes to take away the lives of my sons and their servants, take them in Your great mercy through the hands of Your ministers, that they may not perish this day by the hands of the kings of the Amorites."

Commentary: This is a remarkable and poignant plea. Jacob, in his desperation, offers a last resort: if his sons are to die, he asks that they be taken by divine means (through God's "ministers" or angels) rather than by the hands of their mortal enemies, reflecting a desire for a more dignified and less humiliating end.

Verse 17: And when Jacob ceased praying to the Lord the **earth shook from its place, and the sun darkened**, and all these kings were terrified and a great consternation seized them.

Commentary: God immediately answers Jacob's prayer with a dramatic display of cosmic power: an earthquake and solar eclipse. These terrifying phenomena demonstrate God's direct intervention and cause widespread panic among the enemy kings.

Verse 18: And the Lord hearkened to the prayer of Jacob, and the Lord impressed the hearts of all the kings and their hosts with the **terror and awe of the sons of Jacob**.

Commentary: The direct result of divine intervention: God instills supernatural terror in the hearts of the enemy, making them fear Jacob's sons even before the battle begins.

Verse 19: For the Lord caused them to hear the **voice of chariots, and the voice of mighty horses from the sons of Jacob, and the voice of a great army accompanying them**.

Commentary: This is a crucial detail of the divine illusion. God creates phantom sounds of a massive, formidable army, complete with chariots and horses, emanating from Jacob's small force. This spectral army is designed to further terrify and confuse the enemy, making them believe Jacob's family has an unseen, powerful host.

Verse 20: And these kings were seized with great terror at the sons of Jacob, and whilst they were standing in their quarters, behold the sons of Jacob advanced upon them, with one hundred and twelve men, with a great and tremendous shouting.

Commentary: The illusion works. The kings are already terrified, and then Jacob's real (though small) force advances with a mighty war cry, compounding their fear.

Verse 21: And when the kings saw the sons of Jacob advancing toward them, they were still more panic-struck, and they were inclined to retreat from before the sons of Jacob as at first, and not to fight with them.

Commentary: The kings are on the verge of repeating their previous retreat due to fear.

Verse 22: But they did not retreat, saying, "It would be a disgrace to us thus twice to retreat from before the Hebrews."

Commentary: Despite their terror, the kings overcome their impulse to flee due to **shame**. The desire to avoid being publicly humiliated by the "Hebrews" a second time forces them to stand their ground. This sets the stage for battle.

Verse 23: And the sons of Jacob came near and advanced against all these kings and their armies, and they saw, and behold it was a very mighty people, numerous as the sand of the sea.

Commentary: Jacob's sons approach the formidable enemy, recognizing their overwhelming numbers, but they do not falter.

Verse 24: And the sons of Jacob called to the Lord and said, "Help us O Lord, help us and answer us, for we trust in You, and let us not die by the hands of these uncircumcised men, who this day have come against us."

Commentary: The sons themselves offer a battle prayer, reiterating their reliance on God and asking for deliverance from their uncircumcised enemies.

Verse 25: And the sons of Jacob girt on their weapons of war, and they took in their hands each man his shield and his javelin, and they approached to battle.

Commentary: They prepare for physical combat, ready to fight despite the odds.

Judah's Valiance and the First Victory

Verse 26: And **Judah, the son of Jacob, ran first before his brethren, and ten of his servants with him**, and he went toward these kings.

Commentary: Judah, previously a strong voice for action and faith, demonstrates remarkable courage and leadership by charging ahead of his brothers, accompanied by his personal servants. This reinforces his emerging role as a leader.

Verse 27: And **Jashub, king of Tapnach, also came forth first with his army before Judah**, and Judah saw Jashub and his army coming toward him, and Judah's wrath was kindled, and his anger burned within him, and he approached to battle in which Judah ventured his life.

Commentary: Jashub, the main instigator of the coalition, confronts Judah directly. Judah's anger is ignited, indicating a personal and passionate resolve to fight, risking his own life in the process.

Verse 28: And Jashub and all his army were advancing toward Judah, and he was riding upon a very strong and powerful horse, and Jashub was a very valiant man, and **covered with iron and brass from head to foot**.

Commentary: Jashub is depicted as a formidable opponent: a strong, armored warrior on horseback, indicating his prowess and the difficulty of the challenge.

Verse 29: And whilst he was upon the horse, he **shot arrows with both hands from before and behind**, as was his manner in all his battles, and he never missed the place to which he aimed his arrows.

Commentary: Jashub's archery skills are highlighted, demonstrating his extraordinary combat ability, making him an even more dangerous adversary. This is a specific, unique skill mentioned.

Verse 30: And when Jashub came to fight with Judah, and was darting many arrows against Judah, the Lord bound the hand of Jashub, and **all the arrows that he shot rebounded upon his own men**.

Commentary: Another clear instance of **divine intervention**. God supernaturally incapacitates Jashub's skill, turning his deadly arrows against his own army. This is a powerful and direct answer to Jacob and his sons' prayers.

Verse 31: And notwithstanding this, Jashub kept advancing toward Judah, to challenge him with the arrows, but the distance between them was about thirty cubits, and when Judah saw Jashub darting forth his arrows against him, he ran to him with his wrath-excited might.

Commentary: Jashub, despite his arrows turning against him, stubbornly continues to advance. Judah, filled with righteous anger and strength, closes the distance for a direct confrontation.

Verse 32: And Judah took up a large stone from the ground, and its weight was **sixty shekels**, and Judah ran toward Jashub, and with the stone struck him on his shield, that Jashub was stunned with the blow, and fell off from his horse to the ground.

Commentary: Judah's strength is emphasized. He throws a massive stone (approx. 1.5-2 lbs) with such force that it shatters Jashub's shield and knocks him off his horse, demonstrating immense power.

Verse 33: And the shield burst asunder out of the hand of Jashub, and through the force of the blow sprang to the distance of about fifteen cubits, and the shield fell before the second camp.

Commentary: The force of Judah's blow is further illustrated by the shield flying a considerable distance, an impossible feat without divine aid.

Verse 34: And the kings that came with Jashub saw at a distance the strength of Judah, the son of Jacob, and what he had done to Jashub, and they were terribly afraid of Judah.

Commentary: Witnessing Judah's incredible feat terrifies the other kings, sowing fear in the enemy ranks.

Verse 35: And they assembled near Jashub's camp, seeing his confusion, and Judah drew his sword and smote forty-two men of the camp of Jashub, and the whole of Jashub's camp fled before Judah, and no man stood against him, and they left Jashub and fled from him, and Jashub was still prostrate upon the ground.

Commentary: Judah quickly capitalizes on the fear and confusion, killing many of Jashub's men, who flee in panic, leaving their king behind.

Verse 36: And Jashub seeing that all the men of his camp had fled from him, hastened and rose up with terror against Judah, and stood upon his legs opposite Judah.

Commentary: Jashub, abandoned and desperate, rises to engage Judah in single combat.

Verse 37: And Jashub had a single combat with Judah, placing shield toward shield, and Jashub's men all fled, for they were greatly afraid of Judah.

Commentary: The focus shifts to a climactic one-on-one duel, with the rest of Jashub's men having fled.

Verse 38: And Jashub took his spear in his hand to strike Judah upon his head, but Judah had quickly placed his shield to his head against Jashub's spear, so that the shield of Judah received the blow from Jashub's spear, and the shield was split in two.

Commentary: Jashub, despite his earlier incapacitation, remains a formidable warrior, capable of splitting Judah's shield. This highlights the danger Judah faces.

Verse 39: And when Judah saw that his shield was split, he hastily drew his sword and smote Jashub at his ankles, and cut off his feet that Jashub fell upon the ground, and the spear fell from his hand.

Commentary: Judah's quick thinking and decisive action. He targets Jashub's unprotected ankles, an intelligent tactical move against an armored opponent, bringing him down.

Verse 40: And Judah hastily picked up Jashub's spear, with which he severed his head and cast it next to his feet.

Commentary: Judah completes the kill with Jashub's own weapon, decapitating him. This gruesome detail emphasizes the severity of the victory and the fate of the enemy king.

Verse 41: And when the sons of Jacob saw what Judah had done to Jashub, they all ran into the ranks of the other kings, and the sons of Jacob fought with the army of Jashub, and the armies of all the kings that were there.

Commentary: Judah's decisive victory galvanizes his brothers. Seeing their leader's success, they charge into the remaining enemy ranks.

Verse 42: And the sons of Jacob caused **fifteen thousand of their men to fall**, and they smote them as if smiting at gourds, and the rest fled for their lives.

Commentary: The sheer scale of the slaughter is immense, given Jacob's small force (112 men). The phrase "smiting at gourds" suggests ease and overwhelming force, clearly implying divine empowerment. Fifteen thousand killed is a monumental number for such a small fighting force.

Verse 43: And Judah was still standing by the body of Jashub, and stripped Jashub of his coat of mail.

Commentary: Judah, after the kill, takes the spoils of war, specifically Jashub's valuable armor, a symbol of victory and personal triumph.

Verse 44: And Judah also took off the iron and brass that was about Jashub, and behold nine men of the captains of Jashub came along to fight against Judah.

Commentary: As Judah is stripping the body, a small group of Jashub's captains, perhaps rallied or seeking revenge, approach him.

Verse 45: And Judah hastened and took up a stone from the ground, and with it smote one of them upon the head, and his skull was fractured, and the body also fell from the horse to the ground.

Commentary: Judah again demonstrates his incredible strength and resourcefulness, using a stone to instantly kill another opponent.

Verse 46: And the eight captains that remained, seeing the strength of Judah, were greatly afraid and they fled, and Judah with his ten men pursued them, and they overtook them and slew them.

Commentary: Judah's power is so fearsome that the remaining captains flee, only to be pursued and killed by Judah and his servants, leaving no one from this group alive.

Verse 47: And the sons of Jacob were still smiting the armies of the kings, and they slew many of them, but those kings daringly kept their stand with their captains, and did not retreat from their places, and they exclaimed against those of their armies that fled from before the sons of Jacob, but none would listen to them, for they were afraid of their lives lest they should die.

Commentary: While Judah is engaged, the other sons of Jacob continue to inflict heavy casualties. The remaining kings try to rally their fleeing armies, but the fear instilled by the Hebrews is too strong. This sets up further individual confrontations.

Verse 48: And all the sons of Jacob, after having smitten the armies of the kings, returned and came before Judah, and Judah was still slaying the eight captains of Jashub, and stripping off their garments.

Commentary: The brothers regroup around Judah, having completed their initial assault on the armies, emphasizing Judah's leadership and central role in the victory.

Verse 49: And Levi saw Elon, king of Gaash, advancing toward him, with his fourteen captains to smite him, but Levi did not know it for certain.

Commentary: Levi spots another king, Elon, and his captains approaching him, setting up Levi's own heroic encounter.

Verse 50: And Elon with his captains approached nearer, and Levi looked back and saw that battle was given him in the rear, and Levi ran with twelve of his servants, and they went and slew Elon and his captains with the edge of the sword.

Commentary: Levi, like Judah, engages the enemy king and his personal guard. With his servants, he slays Elon and all his captains. This confirms Levi's prowess in battle, alongside Simeon, demonstrating the martial strength of Jacob's sons.

Book of Jasher, Chapter 38

The Battle Continues: Defeating the Remaining Kings

Verse 1: And **Ihuri king of Shiloh** came up to assist Elon, and he approached Jacob, when **Jacob drew his bow that was in his hand and with an arrow struck Ihuri which caused his death**.

Commentary: As the battle rages, another king, Ihuri, steps forward. Surprisingly, it is **Jacob himself**, not one of his warrior sons, who strikes him down with a bow and arrow. This highlights Jacob's own combat prowess, fulfilling his prayer from the previous chapter that he might be empowered to fight. It also shows a patriarch taking direct action to protect his family.

Verse 2: And when Ihuri king of Shiloh was dead, the four remaining kings fled from their station with the rest of the captains, and they endeavored to retreat, saying, "We have no more strength with the Hebrews after their having killed the three kings and their captains who were more powerful than we are."

Commentary: The death of a third king (Jashub, Elon, and now Ihuri) utterly demoralizes the remaining Canaanite leaders. They explicitly acknowledge the superior power of the "Hebrews" and their own weakness, opting for retreat. Their fear is palpable.

Verse 3: And when the sons of Jacob saw that the remaining kings had removed from their station, they pursued them, and Jacob also came from the heap of Shechem from the place where he was standing, and they went after the kings and they approached them with their servants.

Commentary: Jacob and his sons relentlessly pursue the fleeing kings, pressing their advantage.

Verse 4: And the kings and the captains with the rest of their armies, seeing that the sons of Jacob approached them, were afraid of their lives and fled till they reached the city of **Chazar**.

Commentary: The pursuit continues to the fortified city of Chazar, indicating a determined flight by the enemy and a relentless chase by Jacob's family.

Verse 5: And the sons of Jacob pursued them to the gate of the city of Chazar, and they smote a great smiting amongst the kings and their armies, about **four thousand men**, and whilst they were smiting the army of the kings, Jacob was occupied with his bow confining himself to smiting the kings, and he slew them all.

Commentary: The pursuit results in further heavy casualties (4,000 men). Significantly, **Jacob continues to actively participate**, using his bow to specifically target and kill the remaining kings. This solidifies Jacob's role as an active warrior, not just a worried father.

Verse 6: And he slew **Parathon king of Chazar at the gate of the city of Chazar, and he afterward smote Susi king of Sarton, and Laban king of Bethchorin, and Shabir king of Machnaymah**, and he slew them all with arrows, an arrow to each of them, and they died.

Commentary: Jacob personally dispatches all the remaining enemy kings with precision archery, an arrow for each. This confirms the complete victory over the leadership of the Canaanite coalition.

Verse 7: And the sons of Jacob seeing that all the kings were dead and that they were broken up and retreating, continued to carry on the battle with the armies of the kings opposite the gate of Chazar, and they still smote about four hundred of their men.

Commentary: Even after the kings are dead, Jacob's sons continue to rout the leaderless armies, inflicting further casualties.

Verse 8: And **three men of the servants of Jacob fell in that battle**, and when Judah saw that three of his servants had died, it grieved him greatly, and his anger burned within him against the Amorites.

Commentary: This is a crucial detail: Jacob's family suffers its first casualties in these battles, albeit only three servants. Judah's grief and renewed anger underscore the cost of the conflict and his personal investment in it.

The Attack on Chazar

Verse 9: And all the men that remained of the armies of the kings were greatly afraid of their lives, and they ran and broke the gate of the walls of the city of Chazar, and they all entered the city for safety.

Commentary: The surviving enemy soldiers desperately seek refuge within Chazar's walls, demonstrating their abject fear.

Verse 10: And they concealed themselves in the midst of the city of Chazar, for the city of Chazar was very large and extensive, and when all these armies had entered the city, the sons of Jacob ran after them to the city.

Commentary: The enemy attempts to hide in the large city, but Jacob's sons are in relentless pursuit.

Verse 11: And four mighty men, experienced in battle, went forth from the city and stood against the entrance of the city, with drawn swords and spears in their hands, and they placed themselves opposite the sons of Jacob, and would not suffer them to enter the city.

Commentary: A small, determined group of elite warriors from Chazar makes a desperate stand to prevent the sons of Jacob from entering the city, acting as a final line of defense.

Verse 12: And **Naphtali ran and came between them and with his sword smote two of them, and cut off their heads at one stroke**.

Commentary: Naphtali, displaying incredible speed and strength, swiftly decapitates two of these formidable defenders in a single blow, demonstrating his own exceptional combat ability.

Verse 13: And he turned to the other two, and behold they had fled, and he pursued them, overtook them, smote them and slew them.

Commentary: Naphtali's continued prowess leads to the complete elimination of this small defensive force.

Verse 14: And the sons of Jacob came to the city and saw, and behold there was another wall to the city, and they sought for the gate of the wall and could not find it, and **Judah sprang upon the top of the wall, and Simeon and Levi followed him, and they all three descended from the wall into the city**.

Commentary: Chazar has an inner wall, indicating strong fortifications. Undeterred by the lack of a visible gate, Judah, Simeon, and Levi display remarkable agility and strength by **leaping over the wall** to gain entry, highlighting their extraordinary physical capabilities. This is reminiscent of their penetration of Shechem.

Verse 15: And **Simeon and Levi slew all the men who ran for safety into the city, and also the inhabitants of the city with their wives and little ones, they slew with the edge of the sword**, and the cries of the city ascended up to heaven.

Commentary: Once inside, Simeon and Levi engage in another ruthless massacre, extending to **all the inhabitants, including women and children**. This echoes the brutality at Shechem and reinforces their zealous, unsparing approach to their enemies. The "cries ascended up to heaven" emphasizes the horror of the event.

Verse 16: And Dan and Naphtali sprang upon the wall to see what caused the noise of lamentation, for the sons of Jacob felt anxious about their brothers, and they heard the inhabitants of the city speaking with weeping and supplications, saying, "Take all that we possess in the city and go away, only do not put us to death."

Commentary: Other brothers, hearing the sounds of slaughter, follow. They overhear the desperate pleas of the inhabitants offering all their possessions for their lives, but this plea is evidently ignored by Simeon and Levi.

Verse 17: And when Judah, Simeon, and Levi had ceased smiting the inhabitants of the city, they ascended the wall and called to Dan and Naphtali, who were upon the wall, and to the rest of their brothers, and Simeon and Levi informed them of the entrance into the city, and all the sons of Jacob came to fetch the spoil.

Commentary: After the killing is complete, the remaining brothers join to take the spoils, indicating their complicity in the outcome.

Verse 18: And the sons of Jacob took the spoil of the city of Chazar, the flocks and herds, and the property, and they took all that could be captured, and went away that day from the city.

Commentary: Chazar is thoroughly plundered, further enriching Jacob's family.

The Attack on Sarton

Verse 19: And on the next day the sons of Jacob went to **Sarton**, for they heard that the men of Sarton who had remained in the city were assembling to fight with them for having slain their king, and Sarton was a very high and fortified city, and it had a deep rampart surrounding the city.

Commentary: The sons of Jacob immediately move on to the next city, Sarton, whose king they had slain. Sarton is described as extremely well-fortified, posing a new challenge.

Verse 20: And the pillar of the rampart was about **fifty cubits** and its breadth **forty cubits**, and there was no place for a man to enter the city on account of the rampart, and the sons of Jacob saw the rampart of the city, and they sought an entrance in it but could not find it.

Commentary: The rampart's immense size (a "pillar" or height of 50 cubits, or about 75 feet, and a breadth of 40 cubits, or about 60 feet) highlights the city's impregnable defenses, making direct entry seemingly impossible.

Verse 21: For the entrance to the city was at the rear, and every man that wished to come into the city came by that road and went around the whole city, and he afterwards entered the city.

Commentary: The city's entrance is cunningly hidden or difficult to access, further frustrating an assault.

Verse 22: And the sons of Jacob seeing they could not find the way into the city, their anger was kindled greatly, and the inhabitants of the city seeing that the sons of Jacob were coming to them were greatly afraid of them, for they had heard of their strength and what they had done to Chazar.

Commentary: The sons' anger is ignited by the challenge of the fortifications. The inhabitants of Sarton are terrified due to the reputation of Jacob's sons from the Chazar massacre.

Verse 23: And the inhabitants of the city of Sarton could not go out toward the sons of Jacob after having assembled in the city to fight against them, lest they might thereby get into the city, but when they saw that they were coming toward them, they were greatly afraid of them, for they had heard of their strength and what they had done to Chazar.

Commentary: The defenders are paralyzed by fear. Although they gathered to fight, they are too terrified to leave the safety of their walls, fearing that doing so would allow Jacob's sons to enter the city.

Verse 24: So the inhabitants of Sarton speedily took away the bridge of the road of the city, from its place, before the sons of Jacob came, and they brought it into the city.

Commentary: The inhabitants quickly remove their only accessible entry point, further barricading themselves.

Verse 25: And the sons of Jacob came and sought the way into the city, and could not find it and the inhabitants of the city went up to the top of the wall, and saw, and behold the sons of Jacob were seeking an entrance into the city.

Verse 26: And the inhabitants of the city reproached the sons of Jacob from the top of the wall, and they cursed them, and the sons of Jacob heard the reproaches, and they were greatly incensed, and their anger burned within them.

Commentary: The inhabitants, feeling secure behind their defenses, resort to taunting and cursing Jacob's sons. This, however, proves to be a critical mistake, fueling the sons' anger and resolve.

Verse 27: And the sons of Jacob were provoked at them, and they all rose and sprang over the rampart with the force of their strength, and through their might passed the forty cubits' breadth of the rampart.

Commentary: This is another astonishing display of supernatural strength. The sons of Jacob, enraged by the taunts, literally **leap over the massive 40-cubit (60-foot) wide rampart**, demonstrating a superhuman feat. This shows their immense power, likely divinely enhanced, and their unstoppable determination.

Verse 28: And when they had passed the rampart they stood under the wall of the city, and they found all the gates of the city enclosed with iron doors.

Commentary: Having cleared the rampart, they face another formidable obstacle: reinforced iron gates.

Verse 29: And the sons of Jacob came near to break open the doors of the gates of the city, and the inhabitants did not let them, for from the top of the wall they were casting stones and arrows upon them.

Commentary: As they attempt to break down the gates, the defenders on the wall rain down projectiles, making entry difficult.

Verse 30: And when the sons of Jacob saw that the men of the city would not let them open the gates of the city, they sprang and ascended the top of the wall, and **Judah went up first to the east part of the city**.

Commentary: Faced with resistance at the gates, the sons again display superhuman climbing abilities, scaling the city walls directly. Judah once again leads the way, demonstrating his initiative and courage.

Verse 31: And Gad and Asher went up after him to the west corner of the city, and Simeon and Levi to the north, and Dan and Reuben to the south.

Commentary: The brothers coordinate their assault, scaling different sections of the wall simultaneously.

Verse 32: And the men who were on the top of the wall, the inhabitants of the city, seeing that the sons of Jacob were coming up to them, they all fled from the wall, descended into the city, and concealed themselves in the midst of the city.

Commentary: The sight of the sons of Jacob scaling the walls is enough to cause the defenders to abandon their posts and flee into the city.

Verse 33: And **Issachar and Naphtali that remained under the wall approached and broke the gates of the city**, and kindled a fire at the gates of the city, that the iron melted, and all the sons of Jacob came into the city, they and all their men, and they fought with the inhabitants of the city of Sarton, and smote them with the edge of the sword, and no man stood up before them.

Commentary: While others scaled the walls, Issachar and Naphtali (who might have been less athletic or tasked with this specific objective) manage to break down the iron gates, even melting them with fire, allowing the entire force to enter. The ensuing slaughter is total, with no one able to stand against them.

Verse 34: And about **two hundred men fled from the city**, and they all went and hid themselves in a certain tower in the city, and **Judah pursued them to the tower and he broke down the tower, which fell upon the men, and they all died**.

Commentary: Judah's incredible strength is showcased again. He pursues a large group of fleeing men into a tower and then **collapses the tower on them**, killing them all. This is a truly monumental feat of destruction, far beyond human capacity.

Verse 35: And the sons of Jacob went up the road of the roof of that tower, and they saw, and behold there was another strong and high tower at a distance in the city, and the top of it reached to heaven,

and the sons of Jacob hastened and descended, and went with all their men to that tower, and found it filled with about three hundred men, women and little ones.

Commentary: Another large, imposing tower, described hyperbolically as reaching "to heaven," serves as a final refuge for another group, including women and children.

Verse 36: And the sons of Jacob smote a great smiting amongst those men in the tower and they ran away and fled from them.

Commentary: The killing continues within the tower, but some manage to escape.

Verse 37: And **Simeon and Levi pursued them**, when twelve mighty and valiant men came out to them from the place where they had concealed themselves.

Commentary: Simeon and Levi, known for their fierceness, pursue the fleeing group. They encounter a new, unexpected challenge: twelve "mighty and valiant men" emerge to face them.

Verse 38: And those twelve men maintained a strong battle against Simeon and Levi, and **Simeon and Levi could not prevail over them**, and those valiant men broke the shields of Simeon and Levi, and one of them struck at Levi's head with his sword, when Levi hastily placed his hand to his head, for he was afraid of the sword, and the sword struck Levi's hand, and it wanted but little to the hand of Levi being cut off.

Commentary: This is a crucial moment. Unlike previous encounters, Simeon and Levi are explicitly stated as **unable to prevail** against these twelve elite warriors. They are wounded, their shields broken, and Levi narrowly avoids losing his hand. This shows there are limits to their individual power, or perhaps these are uniquely powerful individuals themselves.

Verse 39: And Levi seized the sword of the valiant man in his hand, and took it forcibly from the man, and with it he struck at the head of the powerful man, and he severed his head.

Commentary: Levi, despite being wounded, manages to disarm and kill one of his attackers, a moment of personal triumph and resilience.

Verse 40: And eleven men approached to fight with Levi, for they saw that one of them was killed, and the sons of Jacob fought, but the sons of Jacob could not prevail over them, for those men were very powerful.

Commentary: The struggle continues. Even with other "sons of Jacob" (likely including those who had been with Simeon and Levi), they are still unable to overcome the remaining eleven. The strength of these twelve men is truly exceptional.

Verse 41: And the sons of Jacob seeing that they could not prevail over them, **Simeon gave a loud and tremendous shriek**, and the eleven powerful men were stunned at the voice of Simeon's shrieking.

Commentary: Faced with this unprecedented resistance, Simeon unleashes a **supernatural "shriek"** that physically stuns his opponents. This is an explicit example of the unusual powers attributed to the sons of Jacob in Jasher, beyond mere human strength.

Verse 42: And Judah at a distance knew the voice of Simeon's shouting, and Naphtali and Judah ran with their shields to Simeon and Levi, and found them fighting with those powerful men, unable to prevail over them as their shields were broken.

Commentary: Judah and Naphtali, recognizing Simeon's distress call, rush to their aid, confirming the dire situation of Simeon and Levi and their broken shields.

Verse 43: And Naphtali saw that the shields of Simeon and Levi were broken, and he took two shields from his servants and brought them to Simeon and Levi.

Commentary: Naphtali provides vital equipment, allowing Simeon and Levi to continue fighting effectively.

Verse 44: And Simeon, Levi and Judah on that day fought all three against the eleven mighty men until the time of sunset, but they could not prevail over them.

Commentary: Even with the combined strength of Simeon, Levi, and Judah, they are unable to defeat these eleven warriors, fighting for an extended period ("until sunset"). This group of eleven (originally twelve) is presented as uniquely powerful, demonstrating a higher tier of combatants than previously encountered.

Verse 45: And this was told unto Jacob, and he was sorely grieved, and he prayed unto the Lord, and he and **Naphtali his son went against these mighty men**.

Commentary: News of this stalemate reaches Jacob. He is grieved by the challenge his sons face and again resorts to prayer. Notably, **Naphtali is mentioned as accompanying Jacob**, suggesting his specific prowess or role in this situation.

Verse 46: And **Jacob approached and drew his bow, and came nigh unto the mighty men, and slew three of their men with the bow**, and the remaining eight turned back, and behold, the war waged against them in the front and rear, and they were greatly afraid of their lives, and could not stand before the sons of Jacob, and they fled from before them.

Commentary: Jacob, with his bow, once again demonstrates his deadly accuracy, killing three more of these elite warriors. This breaks the stalemate. The remaining eight are caught between Jacob's force and the other sons, forcing them to flee due to fear.

Verse 47: And in their flight they met Dan and Asher coming toward them, and they suddenly fell upon them, and fought with them, and slew two of them, and Judah and his brothers pursued them, and smote the remainder of them, and slew them.

Commentary: The remaining powerful warriors are eventually overwhelmed and killed by the combined efforts of Dan, Asher, Judah, and the other brothers. This demonstrates the unified strength of Jacob's family when working together.

Verse 48: And all the sons of Jacob returned and walked about the city, searching if they could find any men, and they found about twenty young men in a cave in the city, and Gad and Asher smote them all, and Dan and Naphtali lighted upon the rest of the men who had fled and escaped from the second tower, and they smote them all.

Commentary: The methodical cleansing of the city continues, ensuring no male survivors. Different pairs of brothers are noted as carrying out these final kills.

Verse 49: And the sons of Jacob smote all the inhabitants of the city of Sarton, but the women and little ones they left in the city and did not slay them.

Commentary: As with Shechem and Chazar, the male inhabitants of Sarton are systematically killed, but the women and children are spared, presumably to be taken as captives/servants.

Verse 50: And all the inhabitants of the city of Sarton were powerful men, one of them would pursue a thousand, and two of them would not flee from ten thousand of the rest of men.

Commentary: This verse highly exaggerates the prowess of the men of Sarton, describing them with almost mythical strength and bravery. This serves to emphasize the even greater, almost supernatural, power of Jacob's sons, who were able to overcome such formidable opponents.

Verse 51: And the sons of Jacob slew all the inhabitants of the city of Sarton with the edge of the sword, that no man stood up against them, and they left the women in the city.

Commentary: Despite the incredible strength attributed to the Sartonites, Jacob's sons completely eradicate them, reinforcing their divine backing and unstoppable force.

Verse 52: And the sons of Jacob took all the spoil of the city, and captured what they desired, and they took flocks and herds and property from the city, and the sons of Jacob did unto Sarton and its inhabitants as they had done to Chazar and its inhabitants, and they turned and went away.

Commentary: The city is thoroughly plundered, and the narrative explicitly states that Sarton suffered the same fate as Chazar, establishing a consistent pattern of conquest and destruction.

Book of Jasher, Chapter 39

The Battle for Tapnach and Arbelan

Verse 1: And when the sons of Jacob went from the city of Sarton, they had gone about two hundred cubits when they met the inhabitants of **Tapnach** coming toward them, for they went out to fight with them, because they had smitten the king of Tapnach and all his men.

Commentary: Immediately after conquering Sarton, Jacob's sons encounter another group: the remaining inhabitants of Tapnach, seeking revenge for their slain king and people.

Verse 2: So all that remained in the city of Tapnach came out to fight with the sons of Jacob, and they thought to retake from them the booty and the spoil which they had captured from Chazar and Sarton.

Commentary: The Tapnachites are not only seeking vengeance but also attempting to reclaim the spoils taken from the previously conquered cities. This provides a clear motive for their engagement.

Verse 3: And the rest of the men of Tapnach fought with the sons of Jacob in that place, and the sons of Jacob smote them, and they fled before them, and they pursued them to the city of **Arbelan**, and they all fell before the sons of Jacob.

Commentary: The fight with the Tapnachites is brief and decisive. They are quickly defeated and pursued to the city of Arbelan, where they are all killed. This shows the continued overwhelming force of Jacob's sons.

Verse 4: And the sons of Jacob returned and came to Tapnach, to take away the spoil of Tapnach, and when they came to Tapnach they heard that the people of Arbelan had gone out to meet them to save the spoil of their brethren, and the sons of Jacob left ten of their men in Tapnach to plunder the city, and they went out toward the people of Arbelan.

Commentary: The sons of Jacob delegate the plundering of Tapnach and move to confront the people of Arbelan, who are attempting to defend the spoils of the fallen cities.

Verse 5: And the men of Arbelan went out with their wives to fight with the sons of Jacob, for their wives were experienced in battle, and they went out, about four hundred men and women.

Commentary: This is a notable detail: the Arbelanites include **women experienced in battle**, highlighting a unique aspect of their fighting force. This suggests a desperate and unified resistance.

Verse 6: And all the sons of Jacob shouted with a loud voice, and they all ran toward the inhabitants of Arbelan, and with a great and tremendous voice.

Commentary: Jacob's sons employ their characteristic battle cry, a tactic designed to instill fear.

Verse 7: And the inhabitants of Arbelan heard the noise of the shouting of the sons of Jacob, and their roaring like the noise of lions and like the roaring of the sea and its waves.

Commentary: The effect of the war cry is described vividly, equating their roar to that of lions and a stormy sea, emphasizing the terrifying sound that strikes fear into their enemies.

Verse 8: And fear and terror possessed their hearts on account of the sons of Jacob, and they were terribly afraid of them, and they retreated and fled before them into the city, and the sons of Jacob pursued them to the gate of the city, and they came upon them in the city.

Commentary: Despite their preparation, the Arbelanites are overwhelmed by fear and retreat into their city, with Jacob's sons in hot pursuit.

Verse 9: And the sons of Jacob fought with them in the city, and all their women were engaged in slinging against the sons of Jacob, and the combat was very severe amongst them the whole of that day till evening.

Commentary: The battle within Arbelan is described as "very severe" and lasting "the whole of that day till evening." The women's participation with slings suggests a determined and prolonged resistance, unlike the swift victories in previous cities. This indicates a more challenging engagement.

Verse 10: And the sons of Jacob could not prevail over them, and the sons of Jacob had almost perished in that battle, and the sons of Jacob cried unto the Lord and greatly gained strength toward

evening, and the sons of Jacob smote all the inhabitants of Arbelan by the edge of the sword, men, women and little ones.

Commentary: This is a critical admission: the sons of Jacob **"could not prevail over them"** and **"had almost perished"**. This marks the most difficult battle yet, requiring them to cry out to the Lord for help. God's intervention, granting them "greatly gained strength," allows them to finally overcome the fierce resistance and slaughter all inhabitants, including women and children. This highlights their dependence on divine aid even in their impressive power.

Verse 11: And also the remainder of the people who had fled from Sarton, the sons of Jacob smote them in Arbelan, and the sons of Jacob did unto Arbelan and Tapnach as they had done to Chazar and Sarton, and when the women saw that all the men were dead, they went upon the roofs of the city and smote the sons of Jacob by showering down stones like rain.

Commentary: The survivors from Sarton are also eliminated in Arbelan. The women of Arbelan, even after the men are dead, continue to resist by raining down stones from the rooftops, demonstrating extraordinary ferocity and desperation.

Verse 12: And the sons of Jacob hastened and came into the city and seized all the women and smote them with the edge of the sword, and the sons of Jacob captured all the spoil and booty, flocks and herds and cattle.

Commentary: The women's final resistance is met with a brutal end; they are also killed. The city is then thoroughly plundered.

Verse 13: And the sons of Jacob did unto Machnaymah as they had done to Tapnach, to Chazar and to Shiloh, and they turned from there and went away.

Commentary: This verse summarizes another victory against Machnaymah, stating it suffered the same fate as the other conquered cities.

The Battle for Gaash: A Formidable Challenge

Verse 14: And on the fifth day the sons of Jacob heard that the people of **Gaash** had gathered against them to battle, because they had slain their king and their captains, for there had been fourteen captains in the city of Gaash, and the sons of Jacob had slain them all in the first battle.

Commentary: The narrative shifts to Gaash, a city whose king and fourteen captains were slain earlier. The remaining inhabitants have gathered for battle, indicating a strong desire for revenge and a formidable new challenge.

Verse 15: And the sons of Jacob that day girt on their weapons of war, and they marched to battle against the inhabitants of Gaash, and in Gaash there was a strong and mighty people of the people of the Amorites, and Gaash was the **strongest and best fortified city of all the cities of the Amorites**, and it had **three walls**.

Commentary: Gaash is explicitly described as the most powerful and heavily fortified city among the Amorites, possessing a formidable defense of **three walls**. This sets up the most challenging battle yet for Jacob's sons, emphasizing the difficulty they face.

Verse 16: And the sons of Jacob came to Gaash and they found the gates of the city locked, and about five hundred men standing at the top of the outer-most wall, and a people numerous as the sand upon the sea shore were in ambush for the sons of Jacob from without the city at the rear thereof.

Commentary: Gaash's defenses are multi-layered: locked gates, defenders on the walls, and a massive ambush force waiting outside the city. This tactical setup reveals a prepared and intelligent enemy.

Verse 17: And the sons of Jacob approached to open the gates of the city, and whilst they were drawing nigh, behold those who were in ambush at the rear of the city came forth from their places and surrounded the sons of Jacob.

Commentary: The ambush is sprung, effectively trapping Jacob's sons between two enemy forces.

Verse 18: And the sons of Jacob were enclosed between the people of Gaash, and the battle was both to their front and rear, and all the men that were upon the wall, were casting from the wall upon them, arrows and stones.

Commentary: Jacob's sons are caught in a pincer movement, facing attacks from both sides and missiles from above. This is a genuinely precarious situation.

Verse 19: And **Judah, seeing that the men of Gaash were getting too heavy for them, gave a most piercing and tremendous shriek** and all the men of Gaash were terrified at the voice of Judah's cry, and men fell from the wall at his powerful shriek, and all those that were from without and within the city were greatly afraid of their lives.

Commentary: When the situation becomes "too heavy," Judah, like Simeon in the previous chapter, unleashes a supernatural "piercing and tremendous shriek." This sound instills such terror that men physically fall from the wall and both the ambush force and the internal defenders are paralyzed by fear. This is a direct divine intervention through Judah's voice.

Verse 20: And the sons of Jacob still came nigh to break the doors of the city, when the men of Gaash threw stones and arrows upon them from the top of the wall, and made them flee from the gate.

Commentary: Despite the fear, the defenders on the wall manage to drive back the sons of Jacob from the gate with a barrage of projectiles, showing that the battle is still very much a struggle.

Verse 21: And the sons of Jacob returned against the men of Gaash who were with them from without the city, and they smote them terribly, as striking against gourds, and they could not stand against the sons of Jacob, for fright and terror had seized them at the shriek of Judah.

Commentary: Jacob's sons turn their attention to the external ambush force, which, already terrified by Judah's shriek, is easily decimated.

Verse 22: And the sons of Jacob slew all those men who were without the city, and the sons of Jacob still drew nigh to effect an entrance into the city, and to fight under the city walls, but they could not for all the inhabitants of Gaash who remained in the city had surrounded the walls of Gaash in every direction, so that the sons of Jacob were unable to approach the city to fight with them.

Commentary: Having eliminated the ambush force, the sons of Jacob try to breach the walls again, but the city's remaining inhabitants form a dense defensive perimeter along the walls, making it impossible for Jacob's sons to get close enough to fight effectively from below.

Verse 23: And the sons of Jacob came nigh to one corner to fight under the wall, the inhabitants of Gaash threw arrows and stones upon them like showers of rain, and they fled from under the wall.

Commentary: Any attempt to approach the walls is met with an overwhelming barrage, forcing Jacob's sons to retreat.

Verse 24: And the people of Gaash who were upon the wall, seeing that the sons of Jacob could not prevail over them from under the wall, reproached the sons of Jacob in these words, saying,

Verse 25: "What is the matter with you in the battle that you cannot prevail? Can you then do unto the mighty city of Gaash and its inhabitants as you did to the cities of the Amorites that were not so powerful? Surely to those weak ones amongst us you did those things, and slew them in the entrance of the city, for they had no strength when they were terrified at the sound of your shouting."

Verse 26: "And will you now then be able to fight in this place? Surely here you will all die, and we will avenge the cause of those cities that you have laid waste."

Commentary: The inhabitants of Gaash, seeing their tactical advantage, begin to taunt and mock Jacob's sons, accusing them of only being strong against weaker cities and predicting their demise. This is a critical turning point, aiming to break the morale of Jacob's forces.

Verse 27: And the inhabitants of Gaash greatly reproached the sons of Jacob and reviled them with their gods, and continued to cast arrows and stones upon them from the wall.

Commentary: The taunts escalate to religious reviling, further enraging the sons of Jacob. The missile attack continues.

Verse 28: And **Judah and his brothers heard the words of the inhabitants of Gaash and their anger was greatly roused**, and **Judah was jealous of his God in this matter**, and he called out and said, "O Lord, help, send help to us and our brothers."

Commentary: The insults, especially those directed at their God, ignite a powerful, righteous anger in Judah. His "jealousy for his God" becomes a driving force, and he cries out for divine help, seeing this as a direct challenge to God's honor.

Verse 29: And he ran at a distance with all his might, with his drawn sword in his hand, and he sprang from the earth and by dint of his strength, **mounted the wall, and his sword fell from his hand**.

Commentary: In an astonishing display of superhuman agility and strength (likely divinely empowered due to his prayer and "jealousy"), Judah **leaps onto the wall**. However, in the process, he drops his sword, leaving him momentarily unarmed.

Verse 30: And Judah shouted upon the wall, and all the men that were upon the wall were terrified, and some of them fell from the wall into the city and died, and those who were yet upon the wall, when they saw Judah's strength, they were greatly afraid and fled for their lives into the city for safety.

Commentary: Judah's shout on the wall, combined with the sheer audacity of his feat, immediately terrifies the defenders, causing some to fall to their deaths and others to flee.

Verse 31: And some were emboldened to fight with Judah upon the wall, and they came nigh to slay him when they saw there was no sword in Judah's hand, and they thought of casting him from the wall to his brothers, and twenty men of the city came up to assist them, and they surrounded Judah and they all shouted over him, and approached him with drawn swords, and they terrified Judah, and Judah cried out to his brothers from the wall.

Commentary: A group of defenders, seeing Judah unarmed, are emboldened to attack him, intending to throw him from the wall. They outnumber him greatly and surround him, terrifying him. Judah cries out for help from his brothers.

Verse 32: And Jacob and his sons drew the bow from under the wall, and smote three of the men that were upon the top of the wall, and Judah continued to cry and he exclaimed, "O Lord help us, O Lord deliver us," and he cried out with a loud voice upon the wall, and the cry was heard at a great distance.

Commentary: From below, Jacob and his sons provide covering fire, killing three of Judah's attackers. Judah's desperate cries to God and his brothers are heard far and wide.

Verse 33: And after this cry he again repeated to shout, and all the men who surrounded Judah on the top of the wall were terrified, and they each threw his sword from his hand at the sound of Judah's shouting and his tremor, and fled.

Commentary: Judah unleashes another powerful, possibly supernatural, shout and tremor, causing his attackers to drop their swords and flee in sheer terror, again demonstrating a divine intervention through his voice.

Verse 34: And Judah took the swords which had fallen from their hands, and Judah fought with them and slew twenty of their men upon the wall.

Commentary: Judah quickly arms himself with the discarded swords and then turns the tables, slaying twenty more men on the wall, showing his continued prowess and the dramatic shift in momentum.

Verse 35: And about eighty men and women still ascended the wall from the city and they all surrounded Judah, and the Lord impressed the fear of Judah in their hearts, that they were unable to approach him.

Commentary: More defenders, including women, come to fight Judah, but God again instills fear, preventing them from even approaching him despite their numbers.

Verse 36: And Jacob and all who were with him drew the bow from under the wall, and they slew ten men upon the wall, and they fell below the wall, before Jacob and his sons.

Commentary: Jacob and his men continue to provide support from below, thinning the enemy ranks on the wall.

Verse 37: And the people upon the wall seeing that twenty of their men had fallen, they still ran toward Judah with drawn swords, but they could not approach him for they were greatly terrified at Judah's strength.

Commentary: The defenders are trapped between their fear and their desperate need to stop Judah. They try to attack but are paralyzed by terror.

Verse 38: And one of their mighty men whose name was **Arud** approached to strike Judah upon the head with his sword, when Judah hastily put his shield to his head, and the sword hit the shield, and it was split in two.

Commentary: A powerful warrior named Arud specifically targets Judah, managing to split Judah's shield. This indicates Arud's exceptional strength and the continued danger Judah faces.

Verse 39: And this mighty man after he had struck Judah ran for his life, at the fear of Judah, and his feet slipped upon the wall and he fell amongst the sons of Jacob who were below the wall, and the sons of Jacob smote him and slew him.

Commentary: Arud, despite his strength, is terrified by Judah and in his flight, accidentally falls from the wall to his death at the hands of the other sons. This is a dramatic and ironic end for a strong opponent.

Verse 40: And Judah's head pained him from the blow of the powerful man, and Judah had nearly died from it.

Commentary: This detail reminds the reader that even with divine assistance, Judah is not invulnerable and suffers severe, potentially fatal, injuries.

Verse 41: And Judah cried out upon the wall owing to the pain produced by the blow, when **Dan heard him, and his anger burned within him, and he also rose up and went at a distance and ran and sprang from the earth and mounted the wall with his wrath-excited strength**.

Commentary: Judah's cry of pain spurs Dan into action. Dan, enraged, replicates Judah's superhuman feat of leaping onto the wall, demonstrating his own immense power.

Verse 42: And when Dan came upon the wall near unto Judah all the men upon the wall fled, who had stood against Judah, and they went up to the second wall, and they threw arrows and stones upon Dan and Judah from the second wall, and endeavored to drive them from the wall.

Commentary: The appearance of a second powerful son on the wall causes the remaining defenders to retreat to the second, inner wall, from which they continue to shower projectiles.

Verse 43: And the arrows and stones struck Dan and Judah, and they had nearly been killed upon the wall, and wherever Dan and Judah fled from the wall, they were attacked with arrows and stones from the second wall.

Commentary: Dan and Judah are now severely pressed by the continuous barrage from the second wall, indicating the persistent and effective defense of Gaash. They are again in grave danger.

Verse 44: And Jacob and his sons were still at the entrance of the city below the first wall, and they were not able to draw their bow against the inhabitants of the city, as they could not be seen by them, being upon the second wall.

Commentary: The other sons are unable to provide support due to the design of the fortifications, leaving Dan and Judah exposed.

Verse 45: And Dan and Judah when they could no longer bear the stones and arrows that fell upon them from the second wall, they both **sprang upon the second wall** near the people of the city, and when the people of the city who were upon the second wall saw that Dan and Judah had come to them upon the second wall, they all cried out and descended below between the walls.

Commentary: In another incredible feat, Dan and Judah, unable to withstand the attack, **leap onto the second wall**. This unprecedented breach causes the defenders to abandon their post in utter panic and flee into the city's inner sections.

Verse 46: And Jacob and his sons heard the noise of the shouting from the people of the city, and they were still at the entrance of the city, and they were anxious about Dan and Judah who were not seen by them, they being upon the second wall.

Commentary: The sounds of chaos from within the city alert the other sons to their brothers' progress, but their anxiety remains because they can't see them.

Verse 47: And **Naphtali went up with his wrath-excited might and sprang upon the first wall** to see what caused the noise of shouting which they had heard in the city, and Issachar and Zebulun drew nigh to break the doors of the city, and they opened the gates of the city and came into the city.

Commentary: Naphtali, also displaying superhuman agility, scales the first wall to assess the situation. Simultaneously, Issachar and Zebulun manage to finally breach the city gates, allowing the rest of the force to enter.

Verse 48: And Naphtali leaped from the first wall to the second, and came to assist his brothers, and the inhabitants of Gaash who were upon the wall, seeing that Naphtali was the third who had come up to assist his brothers, they all fled and descended into the city, and Jacob and all his sons and all their young men came into the city to them.

Commentary: Naphtali joins Judah and Dan on the second wall, leading to the complete abandonment of the walls by the remaining defenders. Jacob and the entire force now enter the city.

Verse 49: And Judah and Dan and Naphtali descended from the wall into the city and pursued the inhabitants of the city, and Simeon and Levi were from without the city and knew not that the gate was opened, and they went up from there to the wall and came down to their brothers into the city.

Commentary: All the sons of Jacob are now inside the city, systematically pursuing the fleeing inhabitants.

Verse 50: And the inhabitants of the city had all descended into the city, and the sons of Jacob came to them in different directions, and the battle waged against them from the front and the rear, and the sons of Jacob smote them terribly, and slew about **twenty thousand of them men and women**, not one of them could stand up against the sons of Jacob.

Commentary: The entire population of Gaash is trapped within the city. Jacob's sons, attacking from all sides, inflict a massive slaughter of 20,000 men and women. The sheer scale of this indicates a full, divinely-assisted massacre.

Verse 51: And the blood flowed plentifully in the city, and it was like a brook of water, and the blood flowed like a brook to the outer part of the city, and reached the desert of Bethchorin.

Commentary: This is a graphic and hyperbolical description of the massacre. The blood flows in such abundance that it resembles a "brook of water" and even reaches a distant desert, emphasizing the immense scale of the slaughter.

Verse 52: And the people of Bethchorin saw at a distance the blood flowing from the city of Gaash, and about seventy men from amongst them ran to see the blood, and they came to the place where the blood was.

Commentary: The flowing blood serves as a visible, horrifying sign of the destruction, drawing the attention of people from a neighboring city, Bethchorin.

Verse 53: And they followed the track of the blood and came to the wall of the city of Gaash, and they saw the blood issue from the city, and they heard the voice of crying from the inhabitants of Gaash, for it ascended unto heaven, and the blood was continuing to flow abundantly like a brook of water.

Commentary: The Bethchorin scouts confirm the horror, seeing the blood gushing from the city and hearing the desperate cries.

Verse 54: And all the sons of Jacob were still smiting the inhabitants of Gaash, and were engaged in slaying them till evening, about twenty thousand men and women, and the people of Chorin said, "Surely this is the work of the Hebrews, for they are still carrying on war in all the cities of the Amorites."

Commentary: The massacre continues till evening. The Bethchorin people correctly identify the perpetrators and their relentless campaign against the Amorites.

Verse 55: And those people hastened and ran to Bethchorin, and each took his weapons of war, and they cried out to all the inhabitants of Bethchorin, who also girt on their weapons of war to go and fight with the sons of Jacob.

Commentary: The sight of the carnage at Gaash mobilizes Bethchorin for battle, setting up the next confrontation.

Verse 56: And when the sons of Jacob had done smiting the inhabitants of Gaash, they walked about the city to strip all the slain, and coming in the innermost part of the city and farther on they met three very powerful men, and there was no sword in their hand.

Commentary: As the sons are plundering, they encounter three more "very powerful men," unarmed, indicating they are either survivors or an elite guard.

Verse 57: And the sons of Jacob came up to the place where they were, and the powerful men ran away, and one of them had taken Zebulun, who he saw was a young lad and of short stature, and with his might dashed him to the ground.

Commentary: One of these powerful men captures Zebulun, highlighting his vulnerability due to his youth and stature, and dashes him to the ground. This shows the lingering threat even in a "conquered" city.

Verse 58: And **Jacob ran to him with his sword and Jacob smote him below his loins with the sword, and cut him in two, and the body fell upon Zebulun**.

Commentary: Jacob, ever the protector, immediately intervenes, fatally cutting the powerful man in half with a sword. This brutal act again showcases Jacob's active and decisive role in the fighting.

Verse 59: And the second one approached and seized Jacob to fell him to the ground, and Jacob turned to him and shouted to him, whilst Simeon and Levi ran and smote him on the hips with the sword and felled him to the ground.

Commentary: Another powerful man attacks Jacob, but Simeon and Levi quickly assist, bringing him down.

Verse 60: And the powerful man rose up from the ground with wrath-excited might, and Judah came to him before he had gained his footing, and struck him upon the head with the sword, and his head was split and he died.

Commentary: The second powerful man, remarkably resilient, rises again, but Judah swiftly finishes him off with a blow to the head.

Verse 61: And the third powerful man, seeing that his companions were killed, ran from before the sons of Jacob, and the sons of Jacob pursued him in the city; and whilst the powerful man was fleeing he found one of the swords of the inhabitants of the city, and he picked it up and turned to the sons of Jacob and fought them with that sword.

Commentary: The last powerful man, now armed, turns to fight, demonstrating his courage and desperation.

Verse 62: And the powerful man ran to Judah to strike him upon the head with the sword, and there was no shield in the hand of Judah; and whilst he was aiming to strike him, **Naphtali hastily took his shield and put it to Judah's head, and the sword of the powerful man hit the shield of Naphtali and Judah escaped the sword**.

Commentary: Judah is again in peril, but Naphtali swiftly intervenes, shielding Judah with his own body and absorbing the blow, saving Judah's life. This highlights the brothers' cooperation and mutual protection.

Verse 63: And Simeon and Levi ran upon the powerful man with their swords and struck at him forcibly with their swords, and the two swords entered the body of the powerful man and divided it in two, length-wise.

Commentary: Simeon and Levi, with their combined force, deliver a final, exceptionally violent blow, literally splitting the powerful man in half. This is a recurring motif of extreme force.

Verse 64: And the sons of Jacob smote the three mighty men at that time, together with all the inhabitants of Gaash, and the day was about to decline.

Commentary: The three elite warriors are finally defeated, concluding the conquest of Gaash as the day ends.

Verse 65: And the sons of Jacob walked about Gaash and took all the spoil of the city, even the **little ones and women they did not suffer to live**, and the sons of Jacob did unto Gaash as they had done to Sarton and Shiloh.

Commentary: This verse contains a chilling detail: unlike in Sarton, where women and children were spared, here, in Gaash, **none are spared, "even the little ones and women they did not suffer to live."** This is an escalation of the brutality, making the massacre of Gaash total and complete. The chapter explicitly states they did "unto Gaash as they had done to Sarton and Shiloh," possibly meaning the complete eradication, including women and children in all those cases, or perhaps this is an additional detail for Gaash only. It reinforces the extreme violence and divine backing of their campaign.

Book of Jasher, Chapter 40

The Battle for Bethchorin and Its Aftermath

Verse 1: And the sons of Jacob led away all the spoil of Gaash, and went out of the city by night.

Commentary: After the brutal conquest of Gaash, Jacob's sons leave the devastated city under the cover of night, bringing with them the immense spoils.

Verse 2: They were going out marching toward the castle of Bethchorin, and the inhabitants of Bethchorin were going to the castle to meet them, and on that night the sons of Jacob fought with the inhabitants of Bethchorin, in the castle of Bethchorin.

Commentary: As they march towards Bethchorin, they immediately encounter its inhabitants, who have already mobilized, having witnessed the horrors at Gaash. A battle quickly ensues in the darkness at the castle.

Verse 3: And all the inhabitants of Bethchorin were mighty men, one of them would not flee from before a thousand men, and they fought on that night upon the castle, and their shouts were heard on that night from afar, and the earth quaked at their shouting.

Commentary: The men of Bethchorin are described as exceptionally mighty, similar to the exaggerated prowess of the Sartonites. Their battle shouts are so powerful they cause the earth to quake, indicating a formidable and terrifying enemy.

Verse 4: And all the sons of Jacob were afraid of those men, as they were not accustomed to fight in the dark, and they were greatly confounded, and the sons of Jacob cried unto the Lord, saying, "Give help to us O Lord, deliver us that we may not die by the hands of these uncircumcised men."

Commentary: This is a crucial moment. For the first time, the sons of Jacob are explicitly stated to be **"afraid"** and "greatly confounded." The darkness and the immense power of the Bethchorinites present a unique challenge they are "not accustomed to." They once again cry out to the Lord for divine intervention, admitting their vulnerability.

Verse 5: And the Lord hearkened to the voice of the sons of Jacob, and the Lord caused great terror and confusion to seize the people of Bethchorin, and they fought amongst themselves the one with the other in the darkness of night, and smote each other in great numbers.

Commentary: God answers their prayer by sending a **spirit of terror and confusion** among the Bethchorinites, causing them to descend into **friendly fire**, fighting and killing each other in the darkness. This is a clear instance of divine intervention turning the tide without direct physical action from Jacob's sons.

Verse 6: And the sons of Jacob, knowing that the Lord had brought a spirit of perverseness amongst those men, and that they fought each man with his neighbor, went forth from among the bands of the people of Bethchorin and went as far as the descent of the castle of Bethchorin, and farther, and they tarried there securely with their young men on that night.

Commentary: Recognizing God's hand in the chaos, Jacob's sons wisely withdraw from the internal conflict, allowing the Bethchorinites to decimate themselves. They secure a safe position to observe the divine judgment unfold.

Verse 7: And the people of Bethchorin fought the whole night, one man with his brother, and the other with his neighbor, and they cried out in every direction upon the castle, and their cry was heard at a distance, and the whole earth shook at their voice, for they were powerful above all the people of the earth.

Commentary: The self-destruction of Bethchorin lasts all night, with their powerful shouts and the earth-shaking effects still emphasizing their inherent strength, even as they turn it against themselves. This heightens the impact of God's intervention.

Verse 8: And all the inhabitants of the cities of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Hivites and all the kings of Canaan, and also those who were on the other side of the Jordan, heard the noise of the shouting on that night.

Commentary: The widespread sound of the conflict at Bethchorin (even the self-inflicted one) serves as a terrifying message to all the surrounding peoples and kings, reaching even across the Jordan.

Verse 9: And they said, "Surely these are the battles of the Hebrews who are fighting against the seven cities, who came nigh unto them; and who can stand against those Hebrews?"

Commentary: The distant observers correctly attribute the commotion to the "Hebrews" and their campaign, concluding that no one can stand against them, reinforcing the growing fear of Jacob's family.

Verse 10: And all the inhabitants of the cities of the Canaanites, and all those who were on the other side of the Jordan, were greatly afraid of the sons of Jacob, for they said, "Behold the same will be done to us as was done to those cities, for who can stand against their mighty strength?"

Commentary: The fear becomes widespread and profound. The surrounding nations anticipate the same devastating fate as the conquered cities, recognizing the unstoppable "mighty strength" of Jacob's sons.

Verse 11: And the cries of the Chorinites were very great on that night, and continued to increase; and they smote each other till morning, and numbers of them were killed.

Commentary: The internal slaughter continues throughout the night, with immense casualties.

Verse 12: And the morning appeared, and all the sons of Jacob rose up at daybreak and went up to the castle, and they smote those who remained of the Chorinites in a terrible manner, and they were all killed in the castle.

Commentary: At daybreak, Jacob's sons return to finish off any remaining survivors in the castle, ensuring the complete annihilation of the Bethchorinites within the stronghold.

Verse 13: And the sixth day appeared, and all the inhabitants of Canaan saw at a distance all the people of Bethchorin lying dead in the castle of Bethchorin, and strewed about as the carcasses of lambs and goats.

Commentary: The sight of the massive number of dead bodies, "strewed about as the carcasses of lambs and goats," serves as a grim testament to the overwhelming destructive power associated with Jacob's family. This visual evidence further terrorizes the neighboring lands.

Verse 14: And the sons of Jacob led all the spoil which they had captured from Gaash and went to Bethchorin, and they found the city full of people like the sand of the sea, and they fought with them, and the sons of Jacob smote them there till evening time.

Commentary: Jacob's sons then proceed to attack the city of Bethchorin itself, which is still densely populated. The battle lasts until evening, suggesting another significant, prolonged conflict.

Verse 15: And the sons of Jacob did unto Bethchorin as they had done to Gaash and Tapnach, and as they had done to Chazar, to Sarton and to Shiloh.

Commentary: This verse serves as a grim summary: Bethchorin suffers the same devastating fate as the previous cities, implying a total destruction and possibly the slaughter of all inhabitants, including women and children, as in Gaash.

Verse 16: And the sons of Jacob took with them the spoil of Bethchorin and all the spoil of the cities, and on that day they went home to **Shechem**.

Commentary: After accumulating vast amounts of plunder from all the conquered cities, Jacob's sons finally return to their dwelling place in Shechem.

The Kings Seek Peace

Verse 17: And the sons of Jacob came home to the city of Shechem, and they remained without the city, and they then rested there from the war, and tarried there all night.

Commentary: They do not immediately enter the city, choosing to rest outside, perhaps for security or a symbolic separation from the place of previous conflict.

Verse 18: And all their servants together with all the spoil that they had taken from the cities, they left without the city, and they did not enter the city, for they said, "Peradventure there may be yet more fighting against us, and they may come to besiege us in Shechem."

Commentary: Their caution and strategic thinking are evident; they remain outside the city walls, guarding their vast spoils, anticipating potential further attacks or sieges.

Verse 19: And Jacob and his sons and their servants remained on that night and the next day in the portion of the field which Jacob had purchased from Hamor for five shekels, and all that they had captured was with them.

Commentary: They remain on the very land Jacob had originally bought, symbolizing their re-established presence and claim to the area, now backed by overwhelming military power.

Verse 20: And all the booty which the sons of Jacob had captured, was in the portion of the field, immense as the sand upon the sea shore.

Commentary: The sheer quantity of the accumulated spoil is emphasized, illustrating the massive wealth gained from their conquests.

Verse 21: And the inhabitants of the land observed them from afar, and all the inhabitants of the land were afraid of the sons of Jacob who had done this thing, for no king from the days of old had ever done the like.

Commentary: The widespread terror of Jacob's sons is absolute. Their unprecedented string of victories and the total destruction they wrought have no historical parallel, making them uniquely feared throughout the land.

Verse 22: And the seven kings of the Canaanites resolved to make peace with the sons of Jacob, for they were greatly afraid of their lives, on account of the sons of Jacob.

Commentary: The surviving Canaanite kings, recognizing the unstoppable force of Jacob's sons, prioritize their own survival and decide to seek peace. This demonstrates the success of Jacob's sons' campaign in intimidating their enemies.

Verse 23: And on that day, being the seventh day, **Japhia king of Hebron** sent secretly to the king of Ai, and to the king of Gibeon, and to the king of Shalem, and to the king of Adulam, and to the king of Lachish, and to the king of Chazar, and to all the Canaanitish kings who were under their subjection, saying,

Commentary: Japhia, king of Hebron, takes the lead in organizing this peace initiative, contacting other influential Canaanite kings and their vassals. This indicates Hebron's prominence and Japhia's diplomatic role.

Verse 24: "Go up with me, and come to me that we may go to the sons of Jacob, and I will make peace with them, and form a treaty with them, lest all your lands be destroyed by the swords of the sons of Jacob, as they did to Shechem and the cities around it, as you have heard and seen."

Commentary: Japhia's motivation is clearly fear. He warns the other kings that their lands will suffer the same fate as the destroyed cities unless they make peace.

Verse 25: "And when you come to me, do not come with many men, but let every king bring his three head captains, and every captain bring three of his officers."

Commentary: Japhia advises a small, non-threatening delegation, emphasizing that this is a diplomatic mission, not a show of force. This is a sign of their true intentions for peace.

Verse 26: "And come all of you to Hebron, and we will go together to the sons of Jacob, and supplicate them that they shall form a treaty of peace with us."

Commentary: The plan is to gather in Hebron and then approach Jacob's sons as supplicants, hoping to secure a peace treaty.

Verse 27: And all those kings did as the king of Hebron had sent to them, for they were all under his counsel and command, and all the kings of Canaan assembled to go to the sons of Jacob, to make peace with them; and the sons of Jacob returned and went to the portion of the field that was in Shechem, for they did not put confidence in the kings of the land.

Commentary: The kings comply, highlighting Hebron's authority. However, Jacob's sons, still wary, return to their fortified position in the field, not fully trusting the Canaanites' intentions.

Verse 28: And the sons of Jacob returned and remained in the portion of the field ten days, and no one came to make war with them.

Commentary: They remain cautious for ten days, testing the sincerity of the peace overtures.

Verse 29: And when the sons of Jacob saw that there was no appearance of war, they all assembled and went to the city of Shechem, and the sons of Jacob remained in Shechem.

Commentary: Finally, convinced that the immediate threat has passed, they settle into Shechem.

Verse 30: And at the expiration of forty days, all the kings of the Amorites assembled from all their places and came to Hebron, to Japhia, king of Hebron.

Commentary: Forty days pass, indicating a significant period for diplomatic efforts, as the kings fully gather in Hebron.

Verse 31: And the number of kings that came to Hebron, to make peace with the sons of Jacob, was **twenty-one kings**, and the number of captains that came with them was sixty-nine, and their men were one hundred and eighty-nine, and all these kings and their men rested by Mount Hebron.

Commentary: This provides a precise count of the large delegation of kings, captains, and their accompanying men, emphasizing the importance of this peace mission.

Verse 32: And the king of Hebron went out with his three captains and nine men, and these kings resolved to go to the sons of Jacob to make peace.

Verse 33: And they said unto the king of Hebron, "Go thou before us with thy men, and speak for us unto the sons of Jacob, and we will come after thee and confirm thy words," and the king of Hebron did so.

Commentary: The kings choose Japhia to be their chief negotiator, underscoring his leadership and their collective desire for peace.

Verse 34: And the sons of Jacob heard that all the kings of Canaan had gathered together and rested in Hebron, and the sons of Jacob sent **four of their servants as spies**, saying, "Go and spy these kings, and search and examine their men whether they are few or many, and if they are but few in number, number them all and come back."

Commentary: Despite the peace overtures, Jacob's sons remain highly suspicious and send spies to verify the enemy's intentions, reflecting their strategic caution and distrust.

Verse 35: And the servants of Jacob went secretly to these kings, and did as the sons of Jacob had commanded them, and on that day they came back to the sons of Jacob, and said unto them, "We came unto those kings, and they are but few in number, and we numbered them all, and behold, they were two hundred and eighty-eight, kings and men."

Commentary: The spies confirm the relatively small, non-threatening size of the delegation, alleviating some of the sons' immediate fears.

Verse 36: And the sons of Jacob said, "They are but few in number, therefore we will not all go out to them;" and in the morning the sons of Jacob rose up and chose sixty two of their men, and ten of the sons of Jacob went with them; and they girt on their weapons of war, for they said, "They are coming to make war with us," for they knew not that they were coming to make peace with them.

Commentary: Despite the spy report, the sons of Jacob remain wary. They prepare a smaller armed escort, still expecting a potential military confrontation, not fully believing the peace intentions.

Verse 37: And the sons of Jacob went with their servants to the gate of Shechem, toward those kings, and their father Jacob was with them.

Commentary: Jacob, as head of the family, accompanies his sons to meet the delegation, signifying the gravity of the encounter.

Verse 38: And when they had come forth, behold, the king of Hebron and his three captains and nine men with him were coming along the road against the sons of Jacob, and the sons of Jacob lifted up their eyes, and saw at a distance Japhia, king of Hebron, with his captains, coming toward them, and the sons of Jacob took their stand at the place of the gate of Shechem, and did not proceed.

Commentary: Jacob's sons maintain a defensive posture at the gate, observing the approaching delegation cautiously.

Verse 39: And the king of Hebron continued to advance, he and his captains, until he came nigh to the sons of Jacob, and he and his captains bowed down to them to the ground, and the king of Hebron sat with his captains before Jacob and his sons.

Commentary: The formal act of **bowing down to the ground** by the King of Hebron and his captains is a significant gesture of submission and respect, signaling their earnest desire for peace.

Verse 40: And the sons of Jacob said unto him, "What has befallen thee, O king of Hebron? why hast thou come to us this day? what dost thou require from us?" and the king of Hebron said unto Jacob, "I beseech thee my lord, all the kings of the Canaanites have this day come to make peace with you."

Commentary: Jacob's sons, still skeptical, demand an explanation. Japhia immediately states their purpose: to make peace.

Verse 41: And the sons of Jacob heard the words of the king of Hebron, and they would not consent to his proposals, for the sons of Jacob had no faith in him, for they imagined that the king of Hebron had spoken deceitfully to them.

Commentary: The sons of Jacob, having endured so much conflict, remain deeply distrustful, suspecting a trap or deception.

Verse 42: And the king of Hebron knew from the words of the sons of Jacob, that they did not believe his words, and the king of Hebron approached nearer to Jacob, and said unto him, "I beseech thee, my lord, to be assured that all these kings have come to you on peaceable terms, for they have not come with all their men, neither did they bring their weapons of war with them, for they have come to seek peace from my lord and his sons."

Commentary: Japhia perceives their distrust and reiterates the sincerity of their intentions, highlighting the lack of a large armed escort and the absence of weapons, which are common signs of peaceful diplomacy.

Verse 43: And the sons of Jacob answered the king of Hebron, saying, "Send thou to all these kings, and if thou speakest truth unto us, let them each come singly before us, and if they come unto us unarmed, we shall then know that they seek peace from us."

Commentary: Jacob's sons demand further proof of sincerity: that each king approach them individually and unarmed. This provides maximum security for Jacob's family and emphasizes the kings' supplicant status.

Verse 44: And Japhia, king of Hebron, sent one of his men to the kings, and they all came before the sons of Jacob, and bowed down to them to the ground, and these kings sat before Jacob and his sons, and they spoke unto them, saying,

Verse 45: "We have heard all that you did unto the kings of the Amorites with your sword and exceedingly mighty arm, so that no man could stand up before you, and we were afraid of you for the sake of our lives, lest it should befall us as it did to them."

Commentary: The kings comply, performing the symbolic bowing again. They explicitly state their fear of Jacob's sons' overwhelming power and the desire to avoid the same destruction. This is an admission of complete defeat and submission.

Verse 46: "So we have come unto you to form a treaty of peace between us, and now therefore contract with us a covenant of peace and truth, that you will not meddle with us, inasmuch as we have not meddled with you."

Commentary: They formalize their request for a peace treaty, promising non-aggression in return for the same.

Verse 47: And the sons of Jacob knew that they had really come to seek peace from them, and the sons of Jacob listened to them, and formed a covenant with them.

Commentary: Convinced by the clear evidence of submission and fear, Jacob's sons finally accept the peace terms and establish a covenant.

Verse 48: And the sons of Jacob swore unto them that they would not meddle with them, and all the kings of the Canaanites swore also to them, and the sons of Jacob made them **tributary from that day forward**.

Commentary: A formal oath of peace is exchanged. Crucially, Jacob's sons impose tribute, establishing their dominance and effectively turning the Canaanite kings into vassals, a significant political outcome of their military campaign.

Verse 49: And after this all the captains of these kings came with their men before Jacob, with presents in their hands for Jacob and his sons, and they bowed down to him to the ground.

Commentary: The captains also pay homage and bring gifts, further solidifying the new power dynamic.

Verse 50: And these kings then urged the sons of Jacob and begged of them to return all the spoil they had captured from the seven cities of the Amorites, and the sons of Jacob did so, and they returned all that they had captured, the women, the little ones, the cattle and all the spoil which they had taken, and they sent them off, and they went away each to his city.

Commentary: In a surprising act of mercy or diplomacy, the kings successfully plead for the return of the captured women, children, cattle, and spoil from the "seven cities of the Amorites." This is a significant concession by Jacob's sons, perhaps to secure a lasting peace or as a show of their magnanimity in victory. This contrasts sharply with the explicit killing of women and children in Gaash in the prior chapter, suggesting either a specific exception for Gaash was not included in this general spoil or a change in policy for securing tribute.

Verse 51: And all these kings again bowed down to the sons of Jacob, and they sent or brought them many gifts in those days, and the sons of Jacob sent off these kings and their men, and they went peaceably away from them to their cities, and the sons of Jacob also returned to their home, to Shechem.

Commentary: The peace is cemented with further gifts and formal departure, marking the successful conclusion of the campaign and the establishment of a new regional order.

Verse 52: And there was peace from that day forward between the sons of Jacob and the kings of the Canaanites, until the children of Israel came to inherit the land of Canaan.

Commentary: The chapter concludes with a summary statement: a lasting peace is established, which endures until the later conquest of Canaan by the Israelites under Joshua. This highlights the profound and long-term impact of the sons of Jacob's actions.

This chapter marks the culmination of Jacob's sons' military campaign, shifting from brutal conquest to established dominance and peace.

Book of Jasher, Chapter 41

Jacob's Family Settles in Hebron, Joseph's Troubles Begin

Verse 1: Around the start of the new year, Jacob's sons moved from **Shechem** to **Hebron** to be with their father, Isaac. They lived there, but their flocks and herds grazed daily in Shechem because the pasture was good and rich there at the time. Jacob, his sons, and their entire household lived in the **valley of Hebron**.

Commentary: The family has settled down after their recent conflicts. They've moved closer to Jacob's father, Isaac, in Hebron, emphasizing family ties. However, their economic activity, especially grazing their large herds, still ties them to Shechem, suggesting a continued, albeit distant, presence in that area.

Verse 2: It was around that time, in that year—the 106th year of Jacob's life and the tenth year after he returned from Padan-aram—that **Leah, Jacob's wife, died**. She was fifty-one years old when she passed away in Hebron.

Commentary: This verse notes a significant family event: the death of Leah, Jacob's first wife and the mother of many of his sons. The mention of Jacob's age and the time since his return from Padan-aram (Haran) helps place this event within the family's timeline.

Verse 3: Jacob and his sons buried her in the **cave in the field of Machpelah**, near Hebron, which Abraham had purchased from the Hittites as a family burial plot.

Commentary: Leah is laid to rest in the ancestral burial cave, connecting her to Abraham and reinforcing the family's claim to that land as a spiritual and physical inheritance.

Verse 4: Jacob's sons continued to live with their father in the valley of Hebron, and all the people of the land knew about their great strength and their fame spread everywhere.

Commentary: The reputation of Jacob's sons as formidable warriors, established through their recent conquests, precedes them and is known throughout the region, likely contributing to the peace mentioned in the previous chapter.

Verse 5: Joseph, Jacob's son, and his brother **Benjamin**, Rachel's sons, were still young back then and didn't join their brothers in the battles against all the Amorite cities.

Commentary: This verse highlights a crucial detail: Joseph and Benjamin, being the youngest, were not involved in the violent campaigns that established their brothers' fearsome reputation. This sets them apart from the older, more hardened sons.

Verse 6: When Joseph saw how strong and powerful his brothers were, he praised them. But then he thought he was greater than them and bragged about himself. And **Jacob, his father, loved him more than any of his other sons** because he was born to him in his old age. Because of his great love for Joseph, Jacob made him a **coat of many colors**.

Commentary: This verse introduces the core conflict. Joseph acknowledges his brothers' strength but immediately elevates himself above them. This is compounded by Jacob's clear favoritism for Joseph, expressed through the special "coat of many colors" – a garment that signifies special status or inheritance. This favoritism, combined with Joseph's youthful arrogance, lays the groundwork for extreme sibling rivalry.

Verse 7: When Joseph saw that his father loved him more than his brothers, he kept acting superior to them and even brought bad reports about them to his father.

Commentary: Joseph's behavior escalates. His perception of favoritism fuels his arrogance, leading him to actively undermine his brothers by telling negative stories about them to Jacob. This would undoubtedly infuriate his older siblings.

Verse 8: Jacob's sons saw all of Joseph's behavior toward them, and how their father loved him more than any of them, so they **hated him** and couldn't even speak kindly to him.

Commentary: The brothers' resentment festers into deep hatred. Joseph's actions, combined with Jacob's favoritism, create an unbearable tension, making normal communication impossible.

Verse 9: Joseph was seventeen years old and still inflating his own importance, constantly thinking he was better than his brothers.

Commentary: At seventeen, Joseph is old enough to understand the implications of his actions, yet his youthful pride and ambition persist. This reinforces his role in the escalating family drama.

Verse 10: At that time, he had a dream. He went to his brothers and told them, "I had a dream, and in it, we were all tying up bundles of grain in the field. My bundle stood up, and then your bundles gathered around it and bowed down to it."

Commentary: This is Joseph's first prophetic dream. It clearly depicts his future dominance over his brothers, which he foolishly shares, further fueling their animosity. The imagery of sheaves bowing down is unmistakable.

Verse 11: His brothers answered him, "What does that dream mean? Do you really think you're going to rule over us?"

Commentary: The brothers immediately grasp the dream's meaning and react with anger and disbelief at Joseph's perceived arrogance.

Verse 12: He still went and told the dream to his father Jacob, and Jacob kissed Joseph when he heard these words from his mouth, and Jacob blessed Joseph.

Commentary: Jacob's reaction to the dream further solidifies his favoritism. Instead of rebuking Joseph's bragging, he blesses and kisses him, reinforcing Joseph's belief in his own special destiny and deepening his brothers' resentment.

Verse 13: When Jacob's sons saw that their father had blessed Joseph, kissed him, and loved him so much, their **jealousy and hatred for him grew even stronger**.

Commentary: Jacob's continued favoritism, especially in light of the provocative dream, intensifies the brothers' negative emotions, setting the stage for future conflict.

Verse 14: After this, Joseph had another dream and told it to his father in front of his brothers. Joseph said to his father and brothers, "Look, I had another dream! The sun, the moon, and eleven stars bowed down to me."

Commentary: Joseph's second dream is even more direct, depicting not only his brothers (the eleven stars) but also his father (the sun) and mother (the moon) bowing to him. His retelling it in front of everyone shows a profound lack of wisdom or an overwhelming sense of self-importance.

Verse 15: His father heard Joseph's words and his dream, and seeing that his brothers hated Joseph because of this, Jacob therefore rebuked Joseph in front of his brothers, saying, "What does this dream mean, and why are you acting so superior in front of your older brothers?"

Commentary: This time, Jacob issues a mild rebuke, perhaps realizing the extreme animosity his favoritism and Joseph's boasting are causing. However, it seems to be more for the sake of the brothers' feelings than a genuine reprimand of Joseph's dreams.

Verse 16: "Do you imagine that I, your mother, and your eleven brothers will actually come and bow down to you, that you speak these things?"

Commentary: Jacob's rhetorical question highlights the perceived absurdity of the dream from a patriarchal perspective, though he later "reserved the dreams in his heart."

Verse 17: His brothers were even more jealous of him because of his words and dreams, and they continued to hate him. Jacob, however, kept the dreams in his heart.

Commentary: The brothers' hatred deepens, while Jacob, despite his outward rebuke, secretly ponders the meaning of the dreams, suggesting he senses a deeper, possibly divine, significance.

Joseph is Sent to His Brothers, and Betrayed

Verse 18: One day, Jacob's sons went to feed their father's flock in Shechem, as they were still shepherds at that time. While they were feeding the flock in Shechem that day, they stayed out late, past the usual time for bringing the cattle in, and they hadn't returned.

Commentary: This mundane event – the sons staying out late with the flocks – creates the context for Joseph's fateful journey.

Verse 19: Jacob saw that his sons were delayed in Shechem, and he thought to himself, "Maybe the people of Shechem have risen up to fight them, which is why they're delayed today."

Commentary: Jacob's immediate concern is for his sons' safety, specifically remembering the violent past with Shechem. This highlights the ongoing danger in the land.

Verse 20: So Jacob called his son Joseph and told him, "Your brothers are feeding the flock in Shechem today, and they haven't come back yet. Go now and see where they are, and bring me back news about your brothers' well-being and the flock's well-being."

Commentary: Jacob, out of concern, sends Joseph, his favored son, on a mission to check on his brothers. This seemingly simple request puts Joseph directly in harm's way.

Verse 21: Jacob sent his son Joseph from the valley of Hebron, and Joseph went to Shechem looking for his brothers but couldn't find them. Joseph searched the field near Shechem to see where his brothers had gone, but he got lost in the wilderness and didn't know which way to go.

Commentary: Joseph's journey is fraught with difficulty; he gets lost, underscoring his youth and inexperience in contrast to his older, more rugged brothers.

Verse 22: An **angel of the Lord** found him wandering on the road toward the field. Joseph said to the angel, "I'm looking for my brothers; have you heard where they are feeding their flock?" The angel of the Lord said to Joseph, "I saw your brothers feeding here, and I heard them say they would go to feed in **Dothan**."

Commentary: This is a direct divine intervention. An angel guides Joseph, demonstrating God's hand in orchestrating the events, even seemingly negative ones, to fulfill Joseph's dreams. Dothan is located north of Shechem.

Verse 23: Joseph listened to the angel of the Lord and went to his brothers in Dothan, and he found them there feeding the flock.

Commentary: Joseph, obedient to the angel's instruction, finally locates his brothers.

Verse 24: Joseph started to approach his brothers, but before he even got close, they had already decided to kill him.

Commentary: The brothers' deep-seated hatred is evident; they plot murder the moment they see him, revealing the extreme level of their animosity.

Verse 25: And **Simeon** said to his brothers, "Look, the **'man of dreams'** is coming to us today! Now, let's kill him and throw him into one of the pits in the wilderness. When his father asks about him, we'll say a wild animal devoured him."

Commentary: Simeon, often depicted as hot-headed and violent, initiates the murderous plan, mocking Joseph with the sarcastic title "man of dreams." The deception they plan mirrors Jacob's own deception regarding the bloody coat (Genesis 37:32).

Verse 26: Reuben heard his brothers' words about Joseph and said to them, "You shouldn't do this! How could we face our father Jacob? Just throw him into this pit to die there, but don't lay a hand on him to shed his blood." Reuben said this in order to rescue him from their grasp and bring him back to his father.

Commentary: Reuben, as the eldest, tries to dissuade his brothers from murder. His intention is not necessarily to save Joseph's life outright but to prevent direct bloodshed and later rescue him, showing a sliver of conscience and loyalty to Jacob.

Verse 27: When Joseph came to his brothers and sat down with them, they jumped on him, grabbed him, threw him to the ground, and ripped off the coat of many colors he was wearing.

Commentary: The brothers act on their hatred, violently seizing Joseph and stripping him of the symbol of his father's favoritism, a clear act of degradation and defiance.

Verse 28: They took him and threw him into a pit. In that pit, there was no water, but there were **snakes and scorpions**. Joseph was afraid of the snakes and scorpions in the pit. But Joseph cried out loudly, and the **Lord hid the snakes and scorpions in the sides of the pit, and they did no harm to Joseph**.

Commentary: This is a terrifying detail not found in the biblical account. The pit is filled with dangerous creatures, adding to Joseph's immediate terror. However, a **direct divine intervention** occurs: God protects Joseph by making the venomous creatures hide, emphasizing God's watch over him even in his darkest moment.

Verse 29: Joseph called out from the pit to his brothers, "What have I done to you? How have I sinned? Why don't you fear the Lord concerning me? Am I not your own flesh and blood? Isn't Jacob your father and my father? Why are you doing this to me today? How will you ever be able to face our father Jacob?"

Commentary: Joseph's desperate plea appeals to their shared family ties, their conscience, and their fear of God, highlighting the profound betrayal.

Verse 30: He kept crying out and calling to his brothers from the pit, saying, "Oh, Judah, Simeon, and Levi, my brothers, lift me out of this dark place you've put me in! Have mercy on me today, you children of the Lord, sons of Jacob my father! If I have sinned against you, aren't you the sons of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob? If they saw an orphan, they had compassion on him; if someone was hungry, they gave him bread to eat; if someone was thirsty, they gave him water to drink; if someone was naked, they clothed him!

Commentary: Joseph continues his desperate pleas, specifically addressing Judah, Simeon, and Levi (perhaps remembering their past ruthless actions at Shechem). He appeals to their heritage, reminding them of their forefathers' compassion and righteousness, contrasting it with their current cruelty.

Verse 31: "So how can you withhold your pity from your own brother, for I am your flesh and blood? And even if I have sinned against you, surely you'll do this for our father's sake!"

Commentary: Joseph's final appeal emphasizes their familial bond and their duty to their father, hoping to prick their conscience.

Verse 32: Joseph spoke these words from the pit, but his brothers couldn't listen to him or pay attention to his words. Joseph continued crying and weeping in the pit.

Commentary: The brothers are hardened against his cries, demonstrating the depth of their hatred and their determination to see their plan through.

Verse 33: And Joseph said, "Oh, if only my father knew today what my brothers have done to me, and the words they've spoken to me today!"

Commentary: Joseph's lament reveals his ultimate fear: his father's ignorance of their betrayal, and his hope that Jacob would intervene if he knew the truth.

Verse 34: All his brothers heard his cries and weeping in the pit, but they went and moved away from the pit so they wouldn't hear Joseph's cries and weeping.

Commentary: The brothers actively distance themselves from Joseph's suffering, a final act of cruelty to silence their conscience and reinforce their cold indifference.

This chapter vividly details the events leading to Joseph's betrayal, building on the initial tensions and culminating in his abandonment in the pit.

Book of Jasher, Chapter 42

The Brothers' Decision and Joseph's First Sale

Verse 1: The brothers went and sat down a good distance away, about as far as an archer could shoot. They sat there to eat and decide what to do with Joseph: should they kill him, or bring him back to their father?

Commentary: After throwing Joseph into the pit, the brothers distance themselves from his cries. Their deliberation shows a struggle between their intense hatred and some lingering moral considerations, though killing him is still on the table.

Verse 2: While they were discussing this, they looked up and saw a group of **Ishmaelites** approaching from a distance, traveling on the road from Gilead toward Egypt.

Commentary: The arrival of the Ishmaelite traders is a pivotal moment, presenting an unexpected alternative to their murderous plot. This is a chance occurrence that will change everything.

Verse 3: And **Judah** said to them, "What do we gain if we kill our brother? Maybe God will hold us accountable for his death. So here's my idea for what we should do with him: Look, there's this group of Ishmaelites heading to Egypt."

Commentary: Judah, often depicted as a leader and pragmatist, steps in. He offers a practical solution that avoids direct bloodshed, perhaps motivated by a fear of divine judgment or the difficulty of explaining a murder to Jacob. His suggestion is to sell Joseph rather than kill him.

Verse 4: "So, let's go ahead and sell him to them. That way, we won't have his blood on our hands, and they'll take him with them, and he'll simply disappear among the people of that land. We won't have to kill him ourselves." This idea pleased his brothers, and they agreed to Judah's suggestion.

Commentary: Judah's proposal appeals to the brothers, offering a way to get rid of Joseph without the direct guilt of murder. It's a morally compromised solution, but one they readily accept.

Verse 5: While they were talking about this, and before the Ishmaelites reached them, **seven Midianite traders** happened to pass by. They were thirsty, and when they looked up, they saw the pit where Joseph was trapped. They looked closer and saw that all kinds of birds were circling above it.

Commentary: This verse introduces another group of traders, the Midianites, who arrive before the Ishmaelites. The detail about birds circling the pit might have been a sign of distress or an unusual sight that drew their attention. This further complicates the narrative of Joseph's sale in different versions of the story.

Verse 6: These Midianites ran to the pit, thinking it contained water. When they got there, they heard Joseph crying and weeping inside. They looked down and saw a handsome and well-built young man.

Commentary: The Midianites are drawn to the pit by the expectation of water, but instead discover Joseph. Their observation of his "comely appearance" becomes significant later.

Verse 7: They called out to him and asked, "Who are you? Who brought you here, and who put you in this pit in the wilderness?" Then they all helped Joseph out of the pit, took him, and continued on their journey, passing by his brothers.

Commentary: The Midianites rescue Joseph from the pit, acting out of what appears to be curiosity or perhaps a degree of compassion. They then immediately proceed on their way, passing the very brothers who had thrown him in.

Verse 8: Joseph's brothers then confronted them, saying, "Why are you doing this? Why are you taking our servant from us and leaving? We put this young man in the pit because he rebelled against us, and now you come and pull him out and take him away. Give us our servant back!"

Commentary: The brothers, seeing their plan complicated, quickly invent a story to reclaim Joseph, calling him their "servant" who "rebelled." This is a clear attempt to assert ownership and control over the situation.

Verse 9: The Midianites replied to Jacob's sons, "Is this truly your servant, or does he work for you? Perhaps you are all his servants, because he is more handsome and well-built than any of you. Why are you all lying to us?"

Commentary: The Midianites are astute. They see Joseph's superior appearance and question the brothers' claim, implying that Joseph seems more like a master than a servant. This verbal exchange highlights the Midianites' skepticism and also Joseph's innate noble bearing.

Verse 10: "So, we won't listen to your words or pay attention to you. We found the young man in the pit in the wilderness, and we took him. We're going on our way."

Commentary: The Midianites refuse to return Joseph, asserting their right to him since they "found" him.

Verse 11: All of Jacob's sons approached them and confronted them, saying, "Give us back our servant, or why do you all want to die by the sword?" The Midianites shouted back at them, drew their swords, and prepared to fight Jacob's sons.

Commentary: The tension escalates to a confrontation. The brothers threaten violence, and the Midianites respond in kind, ready for a fight.

Verse 12: And behold, **Simeon** stood up from his seat against them, leaped to the ground, drew his sword, and approached the Midianites. He let out a terrifying shout that was heard from a distance, and the **earth shook from Simeon's shouting**.

Commentary: Simeon, known for his ferocity (recall Shechem), unleashes a fearsome, possibly supernatural, shout that once again causes the earth to tremble and strikes terror into his opponents. This is a display of the unique, divinely-assisted power of Jacob's sons.

Verse 13: The Midianites were terrified by Simeon and the sound of his shouting. They fell on their faces, completely overwhelmed with fear.

Commentary: Simeon's power is absolute; the Midianites are paralyzed by terror.

Verse 14: Simeon said to them, "Indeed, I am Simeon, the son of Jacob the Hebrew, who, along with only my brother, destroyed the city of Shechem and the cities of the Amorites. May God do even more to me if, even if all your Midianite brethren and all the kings of Canaan were to come with you, they could not fight against me."

Commentary: Simeon explicitly boasts of his past exploits, using the destruction of Shechem as a terrifying example of his might. He claims invincibility, even against a combined force of Midianites and Canaanite kings, attributing his power to God.

Verse 15: "Now, give us back the young man you've taken, or I will feed your flesh to the birds of the sky and the beasts of the earth."

Commentary: Simeon's threat is gruesome and uncompromising, leaving no doubt about the consequences of refusal.

Verse 16: The Midianites were even more afraid of Simeon. They approached Jacob's sons with terror, fright, and pitiful words, saying,

Verse 17: "Surely you said that the young man is your servant and that he rebelled against you, and that's why you put him in the pit. What do you do with a servant who rebels against his master? Now, please sell him to us, and we'll give you whatever you ask for him." The Lord was pleased for this to happen so that Jacob's sons would not kill their brother.

Commentary: Overwhelmed by fear, the Midianites shift their plea from demanding to offering to buy Joseph. This exchange highlights the Midianites' understanding of slavery and rebellion. Crucially, the text explicitly states that **God's will** was for Joseph to be sold, not killed, ensuring his survival despite his brothers' intentions.

Verse 18: The Midianites saw that Joseph was handsome and well-built; they wanted him badly and were eager to buy him from his brothers.

Commentary: Joseph's physical appearance plays a role in the Midianites' desire to purchase him, hinting at his value as a slave.

Verse 19: Jacob's sons listened to the Midianites and **sold their brother Joseph to them for twenty pieces of silver**. Their brother Reuben was not with them at this time. The Midianites took Joseph and continued their journey toward Gilead.

Commentary: The sale is made, aligning with the biblical account's price. The absence of Reuben (who had intended to rescue Joseph) is significant, explaining why his plan failed. The Midianites now possess Joseph.

Joseph's Second Sale and Journey to Egypt

Verse 20: As they were traveling, the Midianites began to regret what they had done in buying the young man. One said to the other, "What have we done, taking this handsome and well-built youth from the Hebrews?"

Commentary: The Midianites quickly experience buyer's remorse, possibly fearing the implications of their purchase.

Verse 21: "Perhaps this youth was stolen from the land of the Hebrews, and why then did we do this? If he's searched for and found in our possession, we could die because of him."

Verse 22: "Surely, strong and powerful men sold him to us—you saw the strength of one of them today! Perhaps they stole him from his land with their might and power, and that's why they sold him to us for the small price we paid."

Commentary: Their fear stems from the possibility that Joseph was stolen by the intimidating brothers, and that they could face severe consequences if caught with stolen property. They realize the brothers' power and the low price they paid might indicate a shady origin.

Verse 23: While they were discussing this, they looked up and saw the original group of Ishmaelites, whom Jacob's sons had seen earlier, approaching them. The Midianites said to each other, "Let's sell this youth to the Ishmaelites who are coming toward us. We'll get back the little we paid for him, and we'll be rid of this trouble."

Commentary: The return of the Ishmaelites provides a convenient solution to their predicament. They decide to cut their losses and offload Joseph.

Verse 24: And they did so. They met the Ishmaelites, and the Midianites sold Joseph to the Ishmaelites for the **twenty pieces of silver** they had originally paid for him to his brothers.

Commentary: Joseph is sold for the second time, for the same amount. This emphasizes his status as merchandise and the Midianites' desire to simply break even and be rid of him.

Verse 25: The Midianites continued on their way to Gilead, and the Ishmaelites took Joseph, put him on one of their camels, and began leading him to **Egypt**.

Commentary: Joseph's journey now truly begins, taking him far from his homeland and family, setting the stage for the next phase of his life.

Verse 26: Joseph heard that the Ishmaelites were heading to Egypt, and he wept and lamented bitterly at the thought of being so far removed from the land of Canaan and his father. He cried intensely while riding on the camel. One of their men noticed him and made him get down from the camel and walk on foot. Despite this, Joseph continued to cry and weep, saying, "Oh my father, my father!"

Commentary: Joseph's deep sorrow and despair are evident. He mourns his separation from his home and father. The cruel treatment by the Ishmaelites, forcing him to walk while grieving, adds to his suffering.

Verse 27: One of the Ishmaelites got up and hit Joseph on the cheek, but he still kept weeping. Joseph became exhausted on the road and couldn't keep going because of his deep distress. They all hit him and tormented him on the road, trying to make him stop crying.

Commentary: The Ishmaelites react to Joseph's weeping with further abuse, trying to suppress his emotional pain through physical punishment.

Verse 28: And the Lord saw Joseph's hardship and his distress. So the **Lord brought down darkness and confusion upon those men**, and the hand of everyone who struck him became **withered**.

Commentary: A new divine intervention occurs. God sees Joseph's suffering and directly punishes his tormentors with darkness, confusion, and withered hands. This shows God's continued protection and justice for Joseph.

Verse 29: They said to each other, "What has God done to us on the road?" They didn't know that this happened to them because of Joseph. The men continued on their journey and passed along the road where **Rachel was buried near Ephrath**.

Commentary: The Ishmaelites are bewildered by the divine plague, unaware of its cause. They then pass by Rachel's grave, a significant moment for Joseph, connecting his present suffering with his deceased mother.

Joseph at Rachel's Grave

Verse 30: Joseph reached his mother's grave. He hurried and ran to his mother's grave, fell upon it, and wept.

Commentary: This is a deeply emotional scene. Joseph, in his profound despair, seeks solace at his mother's burial place, expressing his grief and sense of utter abandonment.

Verse 31: Joseph cried out loudly on his mother's grave, saying, "Oh my mother, my mother, you who gave birth to me! Wake up now, rise and see your son, how he has been sold as a slave, with no one to pity him!"

Commentary: His cry is a poignant plea to his deceased mother, asking her to witness his suffering and lamenting his fate as a slave with no one to show him compassion.

Verse 32: "Oh, rise and see your son, weep with me because of my troubles, and see the heart of my brothers."

Commentary: He expresses a desire for her to share his grief and witness the cruelty of his brothers.

Verse 33: "Wake up, my mother, wake up! Awake from your sleep for my sake, and direct your battles against my brothers! Oh, how they stripped me of my coat and sold me twice as a slave, and separated me from my father, and there is no one to pity me!"

Commentary: Joseph's plea becomes more intense, almost a call for vengeance or justice from his mother against his brothers. He highlights the indignity of being stripped of his coat and sold twice, and the pain of separation from Jacob.

Verse 34: "Rise and lay your case against them before God, and see whom God will justify in judgment, and whom he will condemn."

Commentary: He calls upon his mother to intercede on his behalf before God, asking for divine justice to be meted out.

Verse 35: "Rise, oh my mother, rise, awake from your sleep and see my father, how his soul is with me today, and comfort him and ease his heart."

Commentary: He shifts his concern to his father, recognizing Jacob's likely grief and appealing to his mother to comfort him.

Verse 36: Joseph continued to speak these words, crying aloud and weeping bitterly upon his mother's grave. He stopped speaking, and from the bitterness of his heart, he became as still as a stone upon the grave.

Commentary: His overwhelming grief renders him motionless, highlighting the depth of his despair.

Verse 37: Then Joseph heard a **voice speaking to him from beneath the ground**, which answered him with bitterness of heart, and with a voice of weeping and praying, saying these words:

Verse 38: "My son, my son Joseph, I have heard the sound of your weeping and the sound of your lamentation. I have seen your tears. I know your troubles, my son, and it grieves me for your sake, and abundant grief is added to my grief."

Commentary: In a miraculous and deeply emotional moment, Joseph hears his mother, Rachel, speaking from her grave. Her words confirm she has heard and seen his suffering, adding her own grief to his. This extraordinary event reaffirms the spiritual connection and divine awareness of his plight.

Verse 39: "Now therefore, my son, Joseph my son, **hope in the Lord, and wait for Him and do not fear, for the Lord is with you; He will deliver you from all trouble**."

Commentary: Rachel's message is one of comfort and prophecy: an assurance that God is with him and will deliver him from his troubles. This provides divine reassurance and a glimpse into Joseph's future.

Verse 40: "Rise, my son, go down to Egypt with your masters, and do not fear, for the Lord is with you, my son." She continued to speak similar words to Joseph, and then she was silent.

Commentary: Rachel instructs Joseph to proceed to Egypt, reinforcing the idea that this is part of God's plan. Her words are a source of strength and guidance.

Verse 41: Joseph heard this and wondered greatly. He continued to weep. After this, one of the Ishmaelites saw him crying and weeping on the grave, and his anger was kindled against him. He drove him away from there, hitting him and cursing him.

Commentary: Despite the miraculous comfort, Joseph's visible grief reignites the Ishmaelite's anger, leading to further abuse.

Verse 42: Joseph said to the men, "May I find favor in your sight to take me back to my father's house, and he will give you great riches."

Commentary: In a desperate attempt, Joseph tries to buy his freedom, offering to have his father pay a ransom.

Verse 43: They answered him, saying, "Aren't you a slave, and where is your father? If you had a father, you wouldn't have been sold twice as a slave for such a small price." Their anger was still roused against him, and they continued to hit and punish him. Joseph wept bitterly.

Commentary: The Ishmaelites mock Joseph's plea, questioning his status and dismissing his claim of a wealthy father, continuing their abuse.

Verse 44: And the Lord saw Joseph's affliction. The Lord again **struck these men and disciplined them, and the Lord caused darkness to envelop them upon the earth, and lightning flashed and thunder roared, and the earth shook at the sound of the thunder and the mighty wind**. The men were terrified and didn't know where to go.

Commentary: God intervenes again, with an even more dramatic display of power. A severe storm with darkness, lightning, thunder, and an earthquake terrifies the Ishmaelites, directly punishing them for their cruelty to Joseph.

Verse 45: The beasts and camels stood still, refusing to move. They tried to lead them, but they wouldn't go; they hit them, but the animals simply crouched on the ground. The men said to each other, "What has God done to us? What are our wrongdoings, and what are our sins that this has happened to us?"

Commentary: The storm's effect extends to the animals, completely disrupting their journey. The Ishmaelites recognize the divine judgment but are unsure of its cause.

Verse 46: One of them answered and said, "Perhaps this has happened to us today because of the sin of mistreating this slave. So, let's earnestly beg him to forgive us, and then we'll know for whose sake this evil has befallen us. If God has compassion on us, then we'll know that all this comes to us because of the sin of afflicting this slave."

Commentary: One of the Ishmaelites correctly deduces that Joseph is the cause of their troubles, suggesting they seek his forgiveness. This shows a growing understanding that Joseph is divinely protected.

Verse 47: And the men did so. They pleaded with Joseph and pressed him to forgive them. They said, "We have sinned against the Lord and against you. Now, please ask your God to remove this deadly affliction from us, for we have sinned against Him."

Commentary: The Ishmaelites' plea is direct and contrite, acknowledging their sin against both Joseph and God. They recognize Joseph's unique connection to a powerful deity.

Verse 48: And Joseph did as they asked. The Lord listened to Joseph, and the Lord removed the plague He had inflicted upon those men because of Joseph. The beasts got up from the ground, and they led them, and they continued on their way. The raging storm subsided, and the earth became calm. The men proceeded on their journey to go down to Egypt, and the men knew that this evil had befallen them because of Joseph.

Commentary: Joseph's prayer (intercession) is immediately answered, demonstrating his favor with God. The storm ceases, and their journey can resume, solidifying the Ishmaelites' conviction that Joseph is divinely protected and the cause of their recent troubles.

Verse 49: They said to each other, "Look, we know that this evil happened to us because we mistreated him. Now, why should we bring this death upon ourselves? Let's discuss what to do with this slave."

Commentary: The Ishmaelites, now fully convinced of Joseph's divine protection, are extremely cautious. They want to avoid further harm and reconsider what to do with him.

Verse 50: One answered and said, "Surely he told us to bring him back to his father. So, let's take him back, and we'll go to the place he tells us, and we'll take the price we paid for him from his family, and then we'll leave."

Commentary: One suggests returning Joseph to his father for a ransom, seeing it as a safer and more profitable option given his protected status.

Verse 51: But another answered and said, "That's a very good idea, but we can't do that because the way is too far for us, and we can't stray from our route."

Commentary: The logistics of a return journey are deemed too difficult, highlighting the distance to Canaan and their commitment to their trade route.

Verse 52: Then another replied, "Here's the plan we should follow, and we won't deviate from it: Look, we're heading to Egypt today. When we arrive in Egypt, we'll sell him there for a high price, and we'll be free from this trouble."

Commentary: The final decision is to sell Joseph in Egypt, hoping to get a good price and completely rid themselves of the potentially troublesome, divinely protected slave. This sets up Joseph's arrival in Egypt and his next phase of life.

Verse 53: This plan pleased the men, and they acted on it. They continued their journey to Egypt with Joseph.

Commentary: The Ishmaelites continue their journey to Egypt, taking Joseph with them. This sets the stage for the next chapter of Joseph's story, where he will face new challenges and continue on the path towards fulfilling his prophetic dreams.

This chapter details the dramatic turn in Joseph's life, from being abandoned in a pit to being sold into slavery and experiencing divine protection and guidance along the way. It sets the stage for his eventual rise in Egypt.

Book of Jasher, Chapter 43

The Brothers' Guilt and Deception

Verse 1: After Jacob's sons sold their brother Joseph to the Midianites, their consciences bothered them, and they regretted their actions. They looked for him to bring him back but couldn't find him.

Commentary: Immediately after the sale, a sense of guilt and remorse sets in among the brothers. They realize the severity of what they've done and try to undo it, but it's too late.

Verse 2: Reuben returned to the pit where Joseph had been put, intending to pull him out and bring him back to his father. Reuben stood by the pit, but heard no sound. He called out, "Joseph! Joseph!" but no one answered or said a word.

Commentary: Reuben's plan to rescue Joseph (mentioned in the previous chapter) is now put into action, but it fails because Joseph has already been sold and removed from the pit. This highlights Reuben's slightly better moral standing compared to his brothers.

Verse 3: Reuben said, "Joseph must have died from fright, or a snake killed him." Reuben went down into the pit, searched for Joseph, but couldn't find him, so he climbed back out.

Commentary: Reuben, unaware of the sale, assumes the worst. His descent into the pit emphasizes his effort to retrieve Joseph, and his despair when he finds the pit empty.

Verse 4: Reuben tore his clothes in grief and exclaimed, "The boy isn't there! How can I ever explain this to my father if he's dead?" He went to his brothers and found them grieving over Joseph, discussing how to explain his disappearance to their father. Reuben said to them, "I went to the pit, and Joseph wasn't there! What will we tell our father? He's going to hold *me* responsible for the boy!"

Commentary: Reuben's distress is immense, foreshadowing Jacob's later grief. He fears Jacob's reaction and the heavy responsibility he will bear as the eldest son. The brothers are already consumed with the problem of how to cover up their crime.

Verse 5: His brothers answered him, "We did such-and-such, and then our consciences bothered us about it. Now we're sitting here trying to figure out a story to tell our father."

Commentary: The brothers admit their actions and their regret, confirming that their initial attempt to find Joseph was driven by remorse, not just the fear of being caught.

Verse 6: Reuben said to them, "What have you done to bring our father's gray hairs down to the grave in sorrow? This is a terrible thing you've done."

Commentary: Reuben, understanding the depth of Jacob's love for Joseph, condemns their actions, knowing the immense sorrow it will bring upon their elderly father.

Verse 7: Reuben sat with them, and they all stood up and **swore an oath** to each other not to tell Jacob about this. They all said, "The person who tells this to our father or his household, or who reports this to anyone in the land, we will all rise up against him and kill him with a sword."

Commentary: To ensure their secret is kept, the brothers take a solemn, terrifying oath, threatening death to anyone who breaks their silence. This pact seals their conspiracy and adds another layer of guilt and fear among them.

Verse 8: Jacob's sons feared each other in this matter, from the youngest to the oldest, and no one spoke a word. They kept the secret hidden in their hearts.

Commentary: The oath effectively silences them, creating a bond of complicity and fear among them.

Verse 9: Afterward, they sat down to come up with a story to tell their father Jacob about everything that had happened.

Commentary: They shift from planning the crime to planning the cover-up, focusing on creating a plausible lie for Jacob.

Verse 10: And **Issachar** said to them, "Here's an idea for you, if it seems good to you: Take Joseph's coat, tear it, and kill a young goat and dip the coat in its blood."

Commentary: Issachar provides the crucial detail for their deception, a plan that effectively mimics a wild animal attack, a common and believable tragedy in that time.

Verse 11: "Send it to our father, and when he sees it, he'll say a wild animal devoured him. So, tear his coat, and look, his blood will be on it. By doing this, we'll be free from our father's complaints."

Commentary: Issachar's plan is cunning and designed to exploit Jacob's deepest fears while absolving them of direct blame. The blood-stained, torn coat would be undeniable proof to Jacob.

Verse 12: Issachar's advice pleased them, and they listened to him and did what Issachar had advised.

Commentary: The brothers unanimously accept the plan, demonstrating their collective will to deceive their father.

Verse 13: They quickly took Joseph's coat and tore it. They killed a young goat and dipped the coat in its blood, then trampled it in the dust. They sent the coat to their father Jacob by the hand of **Naphtali**, and instructed him to say these words:

Commentary: The gruesome details of preparing the fake evidence are described, emphasizing the cold calculation behind their deception. Naphtali is chosen to deliver the grim news, possibly because he was less involved in the initial scheme or seemed more innocent.

Verse 14: "We had gathered the cattle and were coming along the road to Shechem and beyond, when we found this coat on the road in the wilderness, stained with blood and dust. Now, please, see if it's your son's coat or not."

Commentary: The message is designed to be indirect but devastating. It puts the burden of identification on Jacob, making him draw the painful conclusion himself.

Verse 15: Naphtali went and came to his father, gave him the coat, and repeated all the words his brothers had commanded him.

Commentary: Naphtali carries out his grim task, delivering the fabricated evidence.

Verse 16: Jacob saw Joseph's coat, and he recognized it. He fell face down to the ground and became still as a stone. Afterward, he stood up and cried out with a loud, weeping voice, saying, "**It is the coat of my son Joseph!**"

Commentary: Jacob's immediate reaction is one of profound shock and grief, symbolized by his falling motionless. The recognition of the coat, a symbol of his favoritism, brings the full weight of the tragedy upon him.

Verse 17: Jacob quickly sent one of his servants to his sons, who went to them and found them coming along the road with the flock.

Commentary: Jacob seeks immediate confirmation from his sons, even in his distress.

Verse 18: Jacob's sons came to their father around evening. Their clothes were torn, and dust was on their heads, and they found their father crying out and weeping loudly.

Commentary: The brothers arrive, feigning distress (torn clothes, dust on heads) to match Jacob's grief, completing their elaborate deception.

Verse 19: And Jacob said to his sons, "Tell me truly, what terrible thing have you suddenly brought upon me today?" They answered their father Jacob, saying, "We were coming along today after the flock had been gathered, and we reached the city of Shechem by the road in the wilderness. We found this coat, covered in blood, on the ground. We recognized it and sent it to you to see if you could identify it."

Commentary: The brothers stick to their fabricated story, maintaining a façade of innocence and concern.

Verse 20: Jacob heard his sons' words and cried out loudly. He said, "It is my son's coat! A wild animal has devoured him! Joseph has been torn to pieces! I sent him today to check on your well-being and the well-being of the flocks, and to bring me news from you. He went as I commanded him, and this has happened to him today, while I thought my son was with you!"

Commentary: Jacob's grief is overwhelming. He draws the painful conclusion the brothers intended, blaming a wild animal and expressing immense self-reproach for sending Joseph.

Verse 21: And Jacob's sons answered and said, "He didn't come to us, nor have we seen him from the time we left you until now."

Commentary: They maintain their deception, denying any knowledge of Joseph's arrival or fate.

Verse 22: When Jacob heard their words, he cried out aloud again. He stood up and tore his clothes, put on sackcloth, and wept bitterly. He mourned and raised his voice in weeping, exclaiming these words:

Commentary: Jacob's grief reaches its peak. His actions—tearing clothes, wearing sackcloth, and loud lamentation—are traditional signs of profound mourning.

Verse 23: "Joseph, my son! Oh, my son Joseph! I sent you today to check on your brothers' well-being, and behold, you've been torn to pieces! This has happened to my son because of my own hand!"

Commentary: Jacob's lament is deeply personal. He blames himself for Joseph's death, believing his decision to send Joseph led to this tragedy.

Verse 24: "I grieve for you, Joseph my son, I grieve for you! How sweet you were to me during life, and now how exceedingly bitter is your death to me!"

Commentary: He expresses the stark contrast between the joy Joseph brought him in life and the overwhelming bitterness of his presumed death.

Verse 25: "Oh, that I had died in your place, Joseph my son, for I grieve terribly for you, my son, oh my son, my son! Joseph my son, where are you, and where have you been dragged? Wake up, wake up from your place, and come and see my grief for you, oh my son Joseph!"

Commentary: Jacob expresses a wish to have died instead of Joseph, a common expression of profound parental grief. He desperately calls out to Joseph, wishing he could see his father's sorrow.

Verse 26: "Come now and count the tears gushing from my eyes down my cheeks, and bring them up before the Lord, that His anger may turn from me."

Commentary: He sees his tears as a desperate offering, hoping his intense sorrow will appease God's anger, implying he feels this tragedy is a divine punishment for his own sins.

Verse 27: "Oh Joseph my son, how did you fall? By the hand of one by whom no one had fallen from the beginning of the world until this day! For you have been put to death by the brutal attack of an enemy, inflicted with cruelty. But surely I know that this has happened to you on account of the multitude of my sins."

Commentary: Jacob's lament becomes a theological reflection. He perceives Joseph's death as uniquely cruel and connects it directly to his own "multitude of sins," believing it to be a divine consequence.

Verse 28: "Wake up now and see how bitter my trouble is for you, my son, even though I didn't raise you, nor shape you, nor give you breath and soul. But it was God who formed you and built your bones and covered them with flesh, and breathed into your nostrils the breath of life, and then He gave you to me."

Commentary: Jacob acknowledges God as the true Creator of Joseph, emphasizing that his life was a divine gift, now tragically taken away.

Verse 29: "Now truly, God who gave you to me, He has taken you from me, and such has befallen you."

Commentary: He attributes Joseph's presumed death to God's will, a common response in the face of inexplicable tragedy.

Verse 30: Jacob continued to speak such words about Joseph, and he wept bitterly. He fell to the ground and became still.

Commentary: Jacob's grief is so overwhelming that he collapses into a state of silent, profound despair.

Verse 31: All of Jacob's sons, seeing their father's distress, regretted what they had done, and they also wept bitterly.

Commentary: The sight of their father's extreme suffering finally breaks through the brothers' hardened hearts, causing them to truly regret their actions and weep with genuine remorse, though they still maintain their deception.

Verse 32: Judah stood up and lifted his father's head from the ground, placing it on his lap. He wiped his father's tears from his cheeks, and Judah wept an exceedingly great weeping while his father's head lay on his lap, still as a stone.

Commentary: Judah, previously the one who suggested selling Joseph, now shows deep compassion and remorse, taking on the role of comforter. His own weeping is described as "exceedingly great," indicating genuine sorrow.

Verse 33: Jacob's sons saw their father's trouble, and they raised their voices and continued to weep, but Jacob remained lying on the ground, still as a stone.

Commentary: Even the collective weeping of his sons cannot rouse Jacob from his catatonic state of grief.

Verse 34: All his sons, his servants, and his servants' children stood around him to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted.

Commentary: Jacob's refusal to be comforted is a powerful biblical motif, signifying profound and unyielding sorrow.

Verse 35: The entire household of Jacob mourned a great mourning for Joseph and for their father's distress. The news reached **Isaac, Abraham's son, Jacob's father**, and he and his whole household wept bitterly for Joseph. He left his home in Hebron with his men and came to comfort his son Jacob, but Jacob refused to be comforted.

Commentary: The mourning spreads throughout Jacob's extended family, even reaching his elderly father Isaac, who also grieves deeply. Isaac's attempt to comfort Jacob, and Jacob's continued refusal, emphasizes the intensity of his sorrow.

Jacob's Quest for Joseph's Remains

Verse 36: After this, Jacob rose up from the ground, his tears still streaming down his cheeks. He said to his sons, "Get up, take your swords and your bows, and go out into the field. Search for my son's body and bring it to me so I can bury it."

Commentary: Driven by his grief, Jacob shifts from passive mourning to a desperate quest for Joseph's remains, hoping to find closure through burial.

Verse 37: "Also, please search among the wild animals and hunt them. Whatever comes before you first, capture it and bring it to me. Perhaps the Lord will pity my affliction today and present to you the animal that tore my son to pieces, and bring it to me, and I will avenge my son's cause."

Commentary: Jacob's grief turns to a desire for vengeance against the perceived killer. He believes God might reveal the guilty animal, allowing him to exact justice for Joseph.

Verse 38: And his sons did as their father had commanded them. They woke up early in the morning, each taking his sword and bow, and went out into the field to hunt animals.

Commentary: The brothers reluctantly comply, perpetuating their deception even as they hunt, knowing the true fate of Joseph.

Verse 39: Jacob was still crying loudly, weeping, walking back and forth in the house, and wringing his hands, saying, "Joseph my son, Joseph my son!"

Commentary: Jacob's continued, agonizing lament highlights his relentless grief, despite the passage of time.

Verse 40: Jacob's sons went into the wilderness to capture animals, and behold, a **wolf** came toward them. They caught it and brought it to their father. They said to him, "This is the first one we found, and we've brought him to you as you commanded. We couldn't find your son's body."

Commentary: The brothers bring a wolf, perhaps the first animal they encountered, presenting it as the possible culprit. They maintain the lie about not finding Joseph's body.

Verse 41: Jacob took the animal from his sons' hands. He cried out with a loud, weeping voice, holding the animal, and spoke with a bitter heart to the beast, "Why did you devour my son Joseph? And how did you have no fear of the God of the earth, or of my sorrow for my son Joseph?"

Commentary: In a highly dramatic and unusual turn, Jacob addresses the captured wolf directly, pouring out his grief and anger, personifying the animal as the agent of his sorrow.

Verse 42: "And you devoured my son for no reason, because he committed no violence, and you thereby made me culpable on his account. Therefore, God will punish those who persecute the innocent."

Commentary: Jacob accuses the wolf of unjust violence and implies that the wolf's act somehow makes him (Jacob) culpable, perhaps for sending Joseph into danger. He invokes God's justice against those who harm the innocent.

Verse 43: And the **Lord opened the mouth of the beast to comfort Jacob with its words**, and it answered Jacob and spoke these words to him:

Commentary: This is a miraculous event: God enables the wolf to speak, directly responding to Jacob's lament. This is a unique occurrence in Jasher, underscoring God's compassion for Jacob's profound sorrow and the truth about Joseph's fate.

Verse 44: "As God lives who created us on earth, and as your soul lives, my lord, I did not see your son, nor did I tear him to pieces! In fact, I came from a distant land also seeking my own son, who left me today, and I don't know if he's alive or dead."

Commentary: The wolf speaks, denying guilt and astonishingly, revealing its own parallel sorrow of a lost child. This serves to both comfort Jacob by denying his son's gruesome death by that particular wolf and to subtly hint that Joseph isn't dead at all, but merely "lost" like its own cub.

Verse 45: "I came into the field today to look for my son, and your sons found me, seized me, and increased my grief, and have brought me before you today. I have now told you everything."

Commentary: The wolf explains its presence, further emphasizing its innocence and its own suffering due to Jacob's sons' actions.

Verse 46: "And now, therefore, O son of man, I am in your hands. Do to me today as you see fit. But by the life of God who created me, I did not see your son, nor did I tear him to pieces, nor has human flesh entered my mouth all the days of my life."

Commentary: The wolf concludes with a powerful oath, reiterating its innocence and its natural aversion to human flesh, thereby debunking the brothers' fabricated story.

Verse 47: When Jacob heard the words of the beast, he was greatly astonished. He let go of the animal, and it went its way.

Commentary: Jacob is profoundly affected by the miracle. The wolf's testimony, combined with the obvious supernatural event, likely plants a seed of doubt about the circumstances of Joseph's "death."

Verse 48: Jacob was still crying loudly and weeping for Joseph day after day, and he mourned for his son for many days.

Commentary: Despite the miraculous revelation from the wolf, Jacob's grief for Joseph persists. While he might now doubt the "torn by a beast" story, he still believes Joseph is gone, continuing his deep mourning.

This chapter is a powerful depiction of grief, deception, and divine intervention. It highlights the depth of Jacob's sorrow and the brothers' struggle with their guilt, while subtly reassuring the reader that Joseph is, in fact, alive.

Book of Jasher, Chapter 44

Joseph's Arrival in Egypt and Sale to Potiphar

Verse 1: The Ishmaelite traders who had bought Joseph from the Midianites (who had bought him from his brothers) traveled to Egypt with Joseph. When they reached the border of Egypt and were getting close, they met four men from the family of **Medan, Abraham's son**, who were leaving Egypt on a journey.

Commentary: This verse tracks Joseph's journey. It's important to note the re-sale of Joseph (Ishmaelites from Midianites), which further emphasizes his status as property. The encounter with the descendants of Medan, another son of Abraham, highlights the interconnectedness of these ancient family lines.

Verse 2: The Ishmaelites asked them, "Do you want to buy this slave from us?" They replied, "Hand him over." So they gave Joseph to them. The Medanim looked at him and saw he was a very handsome youth, and they bought him for **twenty shekels**.

Commentary: Joseph is sold *again*, this time for the same price he was originally sold for. This suggests that the Medanim saw his value, but the repeated transaction underscores his commodification.

Verse 3: The Ishmaelites continued their journey to Egypt, and the Medanim also returned to Egypt that day. The Medanim said to each other, "We've heard that **Potiphar**, an officer of Pharaoh and captain of the guard, is looking for a good servant to work directly for him and to manage his household and all his possessions."

Commentary: The Medanim have an immediate plan for Joseph. They know of Potiphar, a high-ranking official, who is looking for a trustworthy servant. This sets the stage for Joseph's placement in a powerful Egyptian household.

Verse 4: "So let's go sell him to him for whatever price we want, if he's able to give us what we ask for him."

Commentary: They see an opportunity to make a profit and believe Joseph's qualities will fetch a good price.

Verse 5: These Medanim went to Potiphar's house and told him, "We heard you're looking for a good servant to work for you. Look, we have a servant who will please you, if you can give us the price we want, and we'll sell him to you."

Commentary: The Medanim present Joseph as a valuable commodity, confidently promoting his potential.

Verse 6: Potiphar said, "Bring him before me, and I'll see him. If he pleases me, I'll give you what you ask for him."

Commentary: Potiphar agrees to an interview, indicating his authority and his careful consideration of a new servant.

Verse 7: The Medanim went and brought Joseph and presented him to Potiphar. Potiphar saw him and was exceedingly pleased with him. Potiphar asked them, "Tell me what you want for this young man?"

Commentary: Joseph's striking appearance continues to be a factor, instantly impressing Potiphar.

Verse 8: They said, "**Four hundred pieces of silver** we want for him." Potiphar replied, "I'll give it to you if you bring me the record of his sale to you and tell me his story, because he might be stolen. This youth is neither a slave nor the son of a slave; I can see in him the appearance of a noble and handsome person."

Commentary: The price is significantly higher than Joseph's previous sales, indicating his perceived value. Potiphar is astute; he suspects Joseph might not be a common slave because of his distinguished appearance, showing a remarkable intuition about Joseph's true background. He wants proof of a legitimate sale.

Verse 9: The Medanim went and brought him the Ishmaelites who had sold Joseph to them, and they confirmed, "He is a slave, and we sold him to them."

Commentary: The Ishmaelites, presumably without knowing the Medanim's fear of a "stolen" slave, simply confirm their earlier transaction. This likely satisfies Potiphar's legal requirement for proof of sale.

Verse 10: Potiphar heard the Ishmaelites' words and gave the silver to the Medanim. The Medanim took the silver and went on their way, and the Ishmaelites also returned home.

Commentary: The complex chain of sales is complete. Joseph is now legally Potiphar's property.

Joseph's Rise in Potiphar's Household

Verse 11: Potiphar took Joseph and brought him to his house to serve him. Joseph found favor in Potiphar's sight, and Potiphar placed confidence in him. He made him **overseer over his house**, and everything he owned he handed over to Joseph.

Commentary: Joseph's natural abilities, wisdom, and likely the "divine favor" that often accompanies him lead to his rapid promotion. He quickly becomes Potiphar's trusted manager, highlighting his administrative skills and integrity.

Verse 12: And the **Lord was with Joseph, and he became a prosperous man**, and the Lord blessed the house of Potiphar because of Joseph.

Commentary: This is a key theological statement. Joseph's success is directly attributed to God's presence. Furthermore, God's blessing extends to Potiphar's entire household *because of Joseph*, demonstrating the positive impact of a righteous person.

Verse 13: Potiphar left everything he had in Joseph's care, and Joseph was responsible for all the comings and goings. Everything in Potiphar's house was managed according to Joseph's wishes.

Commentary: Joseph's authority is absolute within the household, showcasing Potiphar's complete trust in him. He runs everything, reinforcing his exceptional abilities.

Verse 14: Joseph was eighteen years old, a youth with beautiful eyes and a handsome appearance, and there was no one like him in all the land of Egypt.

Commentary: Joseph's attractiveness is re-emphasized, foreshadowing the troubles that will arise from it. He is noted as uniquely handsome in all of Egypt.

Potiphar's Wife, Zelicah, and Her Advances

Verse 15: At that time, while he was in his master's house, going in and out and serving his master, **Zelicah, his master's wife**, looked at Joseph. She saw that he was a handsome and well-built youth.

Commentary: The stage is set for the classic temptation narrative. Zelicah's attraction is immediate and strong, fueled by Joseph's remarkable appearance.

Verse 16: She desired his beauty in her heart, and her soul became fixated on Joseph. She tried to entice him day after day, and Zelicah tried to persuade Joseph daily, but Joseph did not even look at his master's wife.

Commentary: Zelicah's desire quickly turns into an obsession. Joseph, however, maintains his integrity, refusing to even make eye contact, highlighting his discipline and moral resolve.

Verse 17: Zelicah said to him, "How handsome are your looks and your form! Truly, I've looked at all the slaves, and I haven't seen a slave as beautiful as you are." And Joseph said to her, "Surely, He who created me in my mother's womb created all mankind."

Commentary: Zelicah openly compliments Joseph's physical appearance, attempting to flatter him. Joseph's reply is humble and deflects the compliment by attributing creation to God, reminding her of their shared humanity and God's sovereignty.

Verse 18: She said to him, "How beautiful are your eyes, with which you've charmed all the people of Egypt, men and women!" And he said to her, "How beautiful they are while we are alive, but if you were to see them in the grave, you would surely turn away from them."

Commentary: Zelicah focuses on his captivating eyes. Joseph responds with a sobering reminder of mortality, emphasizing the fleeting nature of physical beauty and perhaps subtly rebuking her earthly desires.

Verse 19: And she said to him, "How beautiful and pleasing are all your words! Please, take the harp that is in the house and play it with your hands, and let us hear your words."

Commentary: Zelicah shifts her approach, trying to engage him through his talents and conversation. She's desperate to spend time with him.

Verse 20: And he said to her, "How beautiful and pleasing are my words when I speak the praise of my God and His glory!" And she said to him, "How very beautiful is the hair of your head! Look, there's a golden comb in the house; please take it and style your hair."

Commentary: Joseph consistently redirects her flattery toward God, showing his spiritual focus. Zelicah's persistence, even down to his hair, shows her growing desperation.

Verse 21: And he said to her, "How long will you speak these words? Stop saying these things to me, and get up and attend to your household duties."

Commentary: Joseph finally gives a direct command, attempting to shut down her advances and remind her of her responsibilities.

Verse 22: And she said to him, "There's no one else in my house, and there's nothing to attend to but your words and your desires." Yet despite all this, she could not bring Joseph to her, nor did he even look at her; instead, he kept his eyes downcast toward the ground.

Commentary: Zelicah openly admits her preoccupation with him, claiming there are no other duties. Joseph's continued refusal and avoidance of eye contact underscore his firm resolve and integrity.

Verse 23: Zelicah desired in her heart that Joseph would lie with her. And when Joseph was sitting in the house doing his work, Zelicah came and sat before him, enticing him daily with her conversation to lie with her or even to look at her, but Joseph would not listen to her.

Commentary: The narrative reinforces Zelicah's persistent advances and Joseph's unwavering resistance.

Verse 24: And she said to him, "If you won't do as I say, I will punish you with death and put an iron yoke on you."

Commentary: Zelicah resorts to threats, demonstrating her power as Potiphar's wife and her willingness to use it to force Joseph.

Verse 25: And Joseph said to her, "Surely God, who created man, loosens the chains of prisoners, and it is He who will deliver me from your prison and from your judgment."

Commentary: Joseph's faith remains steadfast. He trusts in God's power to deliver him, even from Zelicah's threats of imprisonment and death.

Verse 26: When she could not overpower him or persuade him, and her desire was still fixed upon him, her longing made her fall into a severe sickness.

Commentary: Zelicah's unfulfilled desire manifests as a physical illness, indicating the intensity of her emotional distress and obsession.

Verse 27: All the women of Egypt came to visit her, and they said to her, "Why are you in this declining state? You lack nothing! Surely your husband is a great and esteemed prince in the king's eyes. Should you lack anything your heart desires?"

Commentary: The other women are perplexed by her illness, assuming her high status means she should be content.

Verse 28: Zelicah answered them, saying, "Today it will be revealed to you where this illness you see in me comes from." She ordered her maidservants to prepare food for all the women, and she made a banquet for them, and all the women ate in Zelicah's house.

Commentary: Zelicah orchestrates a dramatic reveal, intending to demonstrate the overwhelming power of Joseph's beauty.

Verse 29: She gave them knives to peel citrons (a type of citrus fruit) to eat, and she ordered that Joseph be dressed in expensive clothes and presented before them. Joseph appeared before their eyes, and all the women looked at Joseph and could not take their eyes off him. They all **cut their hands with the knives** they were holding, and all the citrons in their hands were filled with blood.

Commentary: This is a famous, extra-biblical detail found in Jasher and other Jewish traditions. Joseph's beauty is so astounding that it causes the women to become completely mesmerized, cutting themselves without realizing it. This serves as a powerful visual metaphor for his captivating charm and Zelicah's justification for her obsession.

Verse 30: They didn't even realize what they had done, but continued to look at Joseph's beauty, unable to turn their eyes away from him.

Commentary: Their trance-like state emphasizes the extraordinary effect of Joseph's appearance.

Verse 31: Zelicah saw what they had done, and she said to them, "What is this you've done? Look, I gave you citrons to eat, and you've all cut your hands!"

Commentary: Zelicah uses this moment to prove her point, highlighting their distraction.

Verse 32: All the women looked at their hands, and behold, they were full of blood, and their blood flowed onto their clothes. They said to her, "This slave in your house has completely captivated us! We couldn't turn our eyes away from him because of his beauty."

Commentary: The women confirm Zelicah's experience, validating her extreme reaction to Joseph.

Verse 33: And she said to them, "Surely this happened to you the moment you looked at him, and you couldn't control yourselves! How then can I refrain when he is constantly in my house, and I see him day after day going in and out of my house? How can I keep from wasting away or even dying because of this?"

Commentary: Zelicah uses their shared experience to justify her obsession, arguing that her constant exposure to Joseph's beauty makes it impossible for her to resist.

Verse 34: And they said to her, "Those words are true, for who can see this beautiful form in the house and resist him? And isn't he your slave and servant in your house? Why don't you tell him what's in your heart, and let your soul perish because of this matter?"

Commentary: The women, now understanding her plight, surprisingly encourage her to pursue Joseph, suggesting that given his status as a slave, she should simply take what she wants.

Verse 35: And she said to them, "I am daily trying to persuade him, and he won't agree to my wishes. I've promised him everything good, and yet I've received no response from him. Therefore, I'm wasting away, as you see."

Commentary: Zelicah reveals her failed attempts and Joseph's unwavering refusal, despite her offers.

Verse 36: And Zelicah became very ill because of her desire for Joseph; she was desperately lovesick for him. All the people in Potiphar's house and her husband knew nothing of this matter—that Zelicah was ill because of her love for Joseph.

Commentary: Her illness becomes more severe, but her secret remains hidden from Potiphar and the household.

Verse 37: And all the people of her house asked her, "Why are you ill and declining, when you lack nothing?" And she said to them, "I don't know what this is that's increasing upon me daily."

Commentary: She continues to hide the true reason for her illness from her household.

Verse 38: All the women and her friends came daily to see her and spoke with her, and she said to them, "This can only be because of my love for Joseph." And they said to her, "Entice him and seize him secretly; perhaps he will listen to you, and you can avoid this death."

Commentary: Her friends offer more direct, illicit advice, encouraging her to take advantage of Joseph secretly, urging her to act on her desires.

Verse 39: And Zelicah became worse from her love for Joseph, and she continued to decline until she barely had strength to stand.

Commentary: Her lovesickness intensifies, weakening her physically.

The Attempted Seduction and False Accusation

Verse 40: One day, Joseph was doing his master's work in the house, and Zelicah came secretly and suddenly fell upon him. Joseph resisted her, and he was stronger than she was, and he pushed her down to the ground.

Commentary: Zelicah makes a direct physical advance on Joseph, but he is stronger and pushes her away, demonstrating his moral and physical resistance.

Verse 41: Zelicah wept because of the desire of her heart for him, and she begged him with weeping, her tears flowing down her cheeks. She spoke to him with a pleading voice and bitterness of soul, saying,

Verse 42: "Have you ever heard, seen, or known of a woman as beautiful as I am, or better than me, who speaks to you daily, falls into decline because of love for you, bestows all this honor upon you, and still you won't listen to my voice?"

Commentary: Zelicah shifts from force to emotional manipulation, playing on her beauty, status, and suffering to try and make Joseph yield.

Verse 43: "And if it's because of fear of your master, lest he punish you, as the king lives, no harm will come to you from your master because of this. So please, listen to me, and agree for the sake of the honor I've shown you, and save me from this death! Why should I die for your sake?" And she stopped speaking.

Commentary: She tries to assuage any fear Joseph might have of Potiphar, even swearing by the king's life. She continues to portray herself as a victim, demanding that he save her from her lovesickness.

Verse 44: Joseph answered her, saying, "Stay away from me, and leave this matter to my master. Look, my master doesn't know what I have in the house, for all that belongs to him he has given into my hand. How then can I do these things in my master's house?"

Commentary: Joseph maintains his firm stance, emphasizing his loyalty and the trust Potiphar has placed in him. He highlights the violation of trust that would occur.

Verse 45: "For he has also greatly honored me in his house, and he has made me overseer over his house, and he has exalted me, and there is no one greater in this house than I am. My master has withheld nothing from me, except you, who are his wife. How then can you speak these words to me, and how can I do this great evil and sin against God and against your husband?"

Commentary: Joseph clearly articulates his moral and religious objections. He states that committing adultery would be a betrayal of Potiphar's trust and a direct sin against **God**. This is a powerful declaration of his integrity and fear of the Lord.

Verse 46: "Now, therefore, stay away from me, and speak no more such words as these, for I will not listen to your words." But Zelicah would not listen to Joseph when he spoke these words to her; instead, she daily enticed him to listen to her.

Commentary: Joseph's refusal is absolute. However, Zelicah remains relentless, showing her unyielding obsession.

Verse 47: After this, the **Nile River (referred to as the "brook of Egypt" or "Sihor") rose and flooded its banks**. All the inhabitants of Egypt, including the king and princes, went out with tambourines and dances, for it was a great celebration and a holiday at the time of the river's inundation, and they went there to rejoice all day.

Commentary: This provides the setting for the climax of the temptation. The annual flooding of the Nile was a time of great celebration, ensuring that the household would be empty.

Verse 48: When the Egyptians went out to the river to celebrate, as was their custom, all the people of Potiphar's house went with them. But Zelicah would not go with them, saying, "I am indisposed." She remained alone in the house, with no other person with her.

Commentary: Zelicah feigns illness to ensure she is alone with Joseph, setting up the opportunity she craves.

Verse 49: She got up and went to her private room (temple) in the house, dressed herself in royal garments, and placed precious onyx stones, inlaid with silver and gold, upon her head. She beautified her face and skin with all sorts of women's purifying liquids and perfumed the room and the house with cassia and frankincense. She spread myrrh and aloes, and then sat in the entrance of the room, in the hallway through which Joseph passed to do his work. And behold, Joseph came from the field and entered the house to do his master's work.

Commentary: Zelicah makes an elaborate attempt to seduce Joseph, using her finest attire, perfumes, and strategic positioning to maximize her allure.

Verse 50: He came to the place he had to pass through and saw all that Zelicah had done, and he turned back.

Commentary: Joseph immediately recognizes her intentions from her elaborate preparations and tries to avoid the confrontation.

Verse 51: Zelicah saw Joseph turning back from her and called out to him, saying, "What's wrong, Joseph? Come to your work! Look, I'll make room for you until you pass to your seat."

Commentary: She calls him back, feigning innocence and attempting to draw him in.

Verse 52: Joseph returned and came to the house, passed to his usual seat, and sat down to do his master's work as usual. But behold, Zelicah came to him and stood before him in royal garments, and the scent from her clothes spread far and wide.

Commentary: Joseph resumes his duties, trying to ignore her, but Zelicah directly confronts him, her alluring presence emphasized by her clothing and perfume.

Verse 53: She quickly grabbed hold of Joseph and his clothes and said to him, "As the king lives, if you don't do what I ask, you will die today!" She quickly stretched forth her other hand and drew a sword from beneath her garments, placing it on Joseph's neck. She said, "Get up and do what I ask, or else you die today!"

Commentary: Zelicah escalates to extreme measures, physically accosting Joseph and threatening him with a literal sword, demonstrating her desperate and dangerous obsession. This detail is not in the biblical account, making her aggression even more pronounced.

Verse 54: Joseph was afraid of her when she did this. He rose up to flee from her, and she grabbed the front of his garment. In the terror of his flight, the garment Zelicah seized was torn, and Joseph left the garment in Zelicah's hand, and he fled and got out, because he was afraid.

Commentary: Joseph's fear is of the sword and of sinning. He chooses flight over compromise, leaving his garment behind as evidence of his struggle and escape. This torn garment becomes crucial evidence.

Verse 55: When Zelicah saw that Joseph's garment was torn, and that he had left it in her hand and fled, she was afraid for her life, lest the report should spread about her. So she got up and acted cunningly, taking off the clothes she was wearing and putting on other garments.

Commentary: Realizing the implication of the torn garment, Zelicah quickly devises a plan to turn the situation against Joseph to protect herself. Her swift change of clothes suggests forethought and a calculated move.

Verse 56: She took Joseph's garment and laid it beside her. Then she went and sat in the place where she had sat during her "illness," before the people of her house had gone to the river. She called a young boy who was in the house and ordered him to call the other household members to her.

Commentary: She carefully stages the scene, presenting herself as a victim, and summons the household.

Verse 57: When she saw them, she said to them with a loud voice and lamentation, "See what a Hebrew your master has brought to me in the house, for he came today to lie with me!"

Commentary: Zelicah immediately launches into her false accusation, portraying Joseph as the aggressor.

Verse 58: "For when you had gone out, he came to the house, and seeing that there was no one in the house, he came to me and grabbed hold of me, intending to lie with me."

Verse 59: "And I seized his garment and tore it and cried out against him with a loud voice. When I raised my voice, he was afraid for his life and left his garment before me and fled."

Commentary: She fabricates a detailed story that twists the events, using the torn garment as "proof" of Joseph's aggression and her struggle.

Verse 60: The people of her house said nothing, but their anger was very much kindled against Joseph. They went to his master and told him the words of her trickery.

Commentary: The household staff are enraged by the accusation against Joseph and immediately report it to Potiphar, believing Zelicah's story.

Verse 61: Potiphar came home enraged, and his wife cried out to him, saying, "What is this thing you have done to me by bringing a Hebrew servant into my house? For he came to me today to toy with me; this is what he did to me today!"

Commentary: Potiphar returns furious. Zelicah repeats her false accusation directly to him, adding emotional force to her lie.

Joseph's Trial and Imprisonment

Verse 62: Potiphar heard his wife's words, and he ordered Joseph to be punished with severe beatings, and they did so to him.

Commentary: Potiphar, believing his wife, immediately orders a brutal punishment for Joseph without a proper investigation.

Verse 63: While they were beating him, Joseph cried out loudly, and he lifted up his eyes to heaven and said, "O Lord God, You know that I am innocent of all these things, and why should I die today through falsehood, by the hand of these uncircumcised wicked men whom You know?"

Commentary: Joseph appeals directly to God, affirming his innocence and trusting in divine justice. He acknowledges God's knowledge of the truth and questions why he should suffer for a lie at the hands of those who don't follow God.

Verse 64: While Potiphar's men were beating Joseph, he continued to cry out and weep. There was a **child there, eleven months old**, and the **Lord opened the mouth of the child**, and he spoke these words before Potiphar's men who were beating Joseph, saying,

Verse 65: "What do you want from this man, and why are you doing this evil to him? My mother speaks falsely and utters lies; this is how it really happened!"

Commentary: This is another astonishing and unique divine intervention from Jasher. A baby miraculously speaks, testifying to Joseph's innocence and his mother's lies. This public revelation provides irrefutable proof of Joseph's purity.

Verse 66: And the child told them accurately everything that happened, and he revealed all of Zelicah's words to Joseph day after day.

Commentary: The child's detailed testimony confirms Joseph's account and exposes the extent of Zelicah's relentless harassment.

Verse 67: All the men heard the child's words and were greatly astonished by them. The child then stopped speaking and became silent.

Commentary: The miraculous testimony leaves everyone stunned and validates Joseph's innocence.

Verse 68: Potiphar was very much ashamed by his son's words, and he commanded his men not to beat Joseph anymore, and the men stopped beating Joseph.

Commentary: The direct, divine intervention shames Potiphar, who realizes his error and stops the beating.

Verse 69: Potiphar took Joseph and ordered him to be brought to justice before the priests, who were judges belonging to the king, in order to judge him concerning this affair.

Commentary: Although shamed, Potiphar still takes the matter to a formal judicial process, seeking a legal resolution. The "priests" acting as judges highlights the intertwining of religious and legal authority in ancient Egypt.

Verse 70: Potiphar and Joseph came before the priests who were the king's judges, and he said to them, "Please decide what judgment is due to a servant, for he has done this."

Commentary: Potiphar presents the case, still framing Joseph as the guilty party, though likely with less conviction after the child's testimony.

Verse 71: And the priests said to Joseph, "Why did you do this thing to your master?" And Joseph answered them, saying, "Not so, my lords, this is how the matter truly happened." And Potiphar said to Joseph, "Surely I entrusted all that belonged to me into your hands, and I withheld nothing from you but my wife, and how could you do this evil?"

Commentary: The priests question Joseph, and Potiphar reiterates his trust in Joseph, emphasizing the severity of the alleged betrayal.

Verse 72: Joseph answered, saying, "Not so, my lord. As the Lord lives, and as your soul lives, my lord, the word you heard from your wife is untrue, for this is how the affair truly happened today."

Commentary: Joseph strongly denies the accusation, appealing to God and to Potiphar's life as a solemn oath to the truth.

Verse 73: "A year has passed since I have been in your house. Have you seen any wrongdoing in me, or anything that would cause you to demand my life?"

Commentary: Joseph highlights his consistent good conduct and loyalty, challenging the accusation based on his proven character.

Verse 74: And the priests said to Potiphar, "Please send for Joseph's torn garment, and let them bring it before us so we can see the tear in it. If the tear is in the front of the garment, then his face must have been opposite to her, and she must have grabbed him to come to her. In that case, your wife acted with deceit in all that she has said."

Commentary: The judges use forensic reasoning, applying a crucial test: the location of the tear on the garment. This demonstrates their legal wisdom and provides a method to determine the truth.

Verse 75: And they brought Joseph's garment before the priests who were judges, and they saw that the tear was indeed in the front of Joseph's garment. All the judging priests knew that she had pressed him. They said, "The judgment of death is not due to this slave, for he has done nothing. But his judgment is that he be placed in the prison house because of the accusation that has gone forth against your wife through him."

Commentary: The evidence proves Joseph's innocence and Zelicah's guilt. However, to save face for Potiphar and prevent a scandal involving his wife, Joseph is still imprisoned, but not executed. This is a pragmatic decision by the judges to maintain order and the appearance of justice, even if it means an innocent man suffers.

Verse 76: Potiphar heard their words and placed him in the prison house, the place where the king's prisoners are confined. Joseph was in the house of confinement for **twelve years**.

Commentary: Joseph is sent to prison, where he will spend a significant portion of his life. The duration of "twelve years" is a specific detail from Jasher, emphasizing the length of his suffering.

Verse 77: Despite this, his master's wife did not give up on him. She did not stop speaking to him day after day, trying to get him to listen to her. At the end of three months, Zelicah continued to go to Joseph in the prison house day by day, enticing him to listen to her. Zelicah said to Joseph, "How long will you stay in this house? Listen to me now, and I will get you out of this house."

Commentary: Zelicah's obsession persists even after Joseph's imprisonment. Her continued visits to the prison show her relentless pursuit and her willingness to use her influence to free him if he complies.

Verse 78: And Joseph answered her, saying, "It is better for me to remain in this house than to listen to your words and sin against God." And she said to him, "If you will not do what I wish, I will pluck out your eyes, add chains to your feet, and deliver you into the hands of those you don't know."

Commentary: Joseph's moral integrity remains unshakeable. He prioritizes obedience to God over freedom and comfort. Zelicah, frustrated, resorts to more cruel threats.

Verse 79: And Joseph answered her and said, "Behold, the God of the whole earth is able to deliver me from all that you can do to me, for He opens the eyes of the blind, and frees those who are bound, and protects all strangers who are unfamiliar with the land."

Commentary: Joseph again expresses profound faith in God's power to protect him from any harm, reminding her of God's ability to perform miracles and deliver the oppressed.

Verse 80: When Zelicah was unable to persuade Joseph to listen to her, she stopped going to entice him. And Joseph remained confined in the prison house. And **Jacob, Joseph's father, and all his brothers in the land of Canaan still mourned and wept in those days on account of Joseph**, for Jacob refused to be comforted for his son Joseph, and Jacob cried aloud, and wept and mourned all those days.

Commentary: Zelicah finally gives up, but Joseph remains imprisoned. The final lines bring the narrative back to Jacob, emphasizing his continued, inconsolable grief, linking Joseph's suffering in Egypt to his father's enduring sorrow in Canaan. This highlights the prolonged nature of Joseph's separation and the emotional toll on his family.

This chapter vividly portrays Joseph's resilience, faith, and moral strength in the face of relentless temptation and injustice. It also sets the stage for his time in prison, which will prove to be another pivotal period in his journey.

Book of Jasher, Chapter 45

The Marriages and Families of Jacob's Sons

Verse 1: At that time, in the same year that Joseph was taken down to Egypt after his brothers had sold him, **Reuben**, Jacob's son, went to Timnah and married **Eliuram**, the daughter of Avi the Canaanite. He had relations with her.

Commentary: This chapter shifts focus from Joseph's narrative to the personal lives and marriages of his brothers in Canaan. It provides a detailed account of their offspring, expanding on the brief genealogies found in the biblical text. Reuben's marriage to a Canaanite woman is noted.

Verse 2: Eliuram, Reuben's wife, conceived and gave birth to four sons: **Hanoch, Palu, Chetzron, and Carmi**. His brother **Simeon** then married his sister **Dinah**, and she bore him five sons: **Memuel, Yamin, Ohad, Jachin, and Zochar**.

Commentary: This verse records the first children of Reuben and Simeon. The mention of Simeon marrying Dinah is a significant departure from the biblical narrative (Genesis does not record Dinah marrying at all, let alone her brother), highlighting the distinct traditions found in Jasher. It's an unusual detail that underscores the differences between Jasher and the canonical text.

Verse 3: Afterward, Simeon also had relations with **Bunah, the Canaanite woman**, who was the same Bunah Simeon had captured from the city of Shechem. Bunah served Dinah, and Simeon had relations with her, and she bore him **Saul**.

Commentary: This verse adds another son to Simeon's lineage, born to a Canaanite captive, Bunah, from the very city Simeon and Levi had destroyed. This further complicates Simeon's family dynamic and perhaps shows a continuation of his aggressive character through his actions.

Verse 4: And **Judah** went at that time to Adullam. He met a man from Adullam named **Hirah**. Judah saw there the daughter of a Canaanite man, whose name was **Aliyath, daughter of Shua**. He married her and had relations with her, and Aliyath bore Judah three sons: **Er, Onan, and Shiloh**.

Commentary: Judah's story closely parallels the biblical account in Genesis 38. His marriage to a Canaanite woman and the birth of his three sons are key details that will lead to significant events later in the chapter.

Verse 5: Levi and Issachar went to the land of the east. They married daughters of **Jobab, son of Yoktan, son of Eber**. Jobab had two daughters: the older was named **Adinah**, and the younger was **Aridah**.

Commentary: This verse details the marriages of Levi and Issachar, connecting them to a broader Abrahamic lineage through Eber, providing more specific background for their wives.

Verse 6: Levi married Adinah, and Issachar married Aridah. They came to the land of Canaan, to their father's house. Adinah bore Levi three sons: **Gershon, Kehath, and Merari**.

Commentary: The continuation of Levi's line is important for the later priesthood.

Verse 7: Aridah bore Issachar four sons: **Tola, Puvah, Job, and Shomron**. And **Dan** went to the land of Moab and married **Aphlaleth, the daughter of Chamudan the Moabite**. He brought her to the land of Canaan.

Commentary: Issachar's and Dan's families are established, with Dan marrying a Moabite woman.

Verse 8: Aphlaleth was barren and had no children. But God later remembered Aphlaleth, Dan's wife, and she conceived and bore a son, and she named him **Chushim**.

Commentary: This highlights divine intervention in a barren marriage, ensuring Dan's lineage continues, similar to other instances of divine remembrance in the biblical narrative.

Verse 9: And **Gad and Naphtali** went to Haran and married the daughters of **Amuram, son of Uz, son of Nahor**, from there.

Commentary: Gad and Naphtali marry into a family connected to Abraham's brother Nahor, bringing them back into the broader family tree.

Verse 10: These were the names of Amuram's daughters: the older was **Merimah**, and the younger was **Uzith**. Naphtali married Merimah, and Gad married Uzith. They brought them to the land of Canaan, to their father's house.

Commentary: The specific names of their wives are provided.

Verse 11: Merimah bore Naphtali four sons: **Yachzeel, Guni, Jazer, and Shalem**. Uzith bore Gad seven sons: **Zephion, Chagi, Shuni, Ezbon, Eri, Arodi, and Arali**.

Commentary: The extensive progeny of Gad is noted.

Verse 12: And **Asher** went forth and married **Adon, the daughter of Aphlal, son of Hadad, son of Ishmael**. He brought her to the land of Canaan.

Commentary: Asher marries into the Ishmaelite lineage, highlighting further intermarriage between Jacob's family and other descendants of Abraham.

Verse 13: Adon, Asher's wife, died in those days, and she had no children. After Adon's death, Asher went to the other side of the river and married **Hadurah, the daughter of Abimael, son of Eber, son of Shem**.

Commentary: Asher's first wife dies childless. His second marriage connects him to an even older lineage through Eber and Shem.

Verse 14: The young woman was beautiful and sensible. She had previously been the wife of **Malkiel, son of Elam, son of Shem**.

Commentary: Hadurah is described as both beautiful and wise, and a widow with a child.

Verse 15: Hadurah bore a daughter to Malkiel, and he named her **Serach**. Malkiel died after this, and Hadurah went and remained in her father's house.

Commentary: Serach's unique lineage is established, being the daughter of Hadurah and her previous husband. Serach is a notable figure in some Jewish traditions, often considered to be immortal or to have lived an exceptionally long life.

Verse 16: After the death of Asher's first wife, he went and married Hadurah and brought her to the land of Canaan. He also brought her daughter Serach with them; she was three years old, and the girl was brought up in Jacob's house.

Commentary: Serach's integration into Jacob's household is explicitly stated, emphasizing her unique role within the family structure.

Verse 17: The girl was beautiful, and she followed the holy ways of Jacob's children; she lacked nothing, and the Lord gave her wisdom and understanding.

Commentary: Serach is portrayed as a virtuous and wise young woman, further highlighting her significance within the narrative.

Verse 18: And Hadurah, Asher's wife, conceived and bore him four sons: **Yimnah, Yishvah, Yishvi, and Beriah**.

Commentary: The children born to Asher and Hadurah are listed.

Verse 19: And **Zebulun** went to Midian and married **Merishah, the daughter of Molad, son of Abida, son of Midian**. He brought her to the land of Canaan.

Commentary: Zebulun marries a Midianite woman, further showing the diverse marriage patterns among Jacob's sons.

Verse 20: And Merushah bore Zebulun three sons: **Sered, Elon, and Yachleel**.

Commentary: Zebulun's children are listed.

Verse 21: And Jacob sent to **Aram, son of Zoba, son of Terah**, and took **Mechalia, Aram's daughter**, for his son **Benjamin**. She came to the land of Canaan to Jacob's house. Benjamin was **ten years old** when he married Mechalia, Aram's daughter.

Commentary: This is a striking detail. Benjamin, Jacob's youngest and Joseph's full brother, is married at an incredibly young age (10 years old), which is not typical in biblical narratives or ancient customs for consummation, suggesting perhaps an engagement or formal betrothal rather than immediate cohabitation. The connection to Terah (Abraham's father) is also noted.

Verse 22: Mechalia conceived and bore Benjamin five sons: **Bela, Becher, Ashbel, Gera, and Naaman**. Benjamin afterward married **Aribath, the daughter of Shomron, son of Abraham**, in addition to his first wife. He was **eighteen years old** at that time. Aribath bore Benjamin five sons: **Achi, Vosh, Mupim, Chupim, and Ord**.

Commentary: Benjamin has a second wife and a large number of children, contributing significantly to the family's growth. The detail that he was 18 when he took his second wife suggests that the first marriage at 10 was perhaps a betrothal that was only consummated later.

The Story of Judah and Tamar

Verse 23: In those days, **Judah** went to the house of Shem and took **Tamar, the daughter of Elam, son of Shem**, as a wife for his firstborn, **Er**.

Commentary: This begins the famous and controversial story of Judah and Tamar, which is also found in Genesis 38. Tamar is identified here as a descendant of Shem, giving her a more noble lineage.

Verse 24: Er had relations with his wife Tamar, and she became his wife. But when he had relations with her, he **spilled his seed outside**, and his act was evil in the sight of the Lord, and the Lord struck him dead.

Commentary: Er's sin and divine punishment are described, consistent with the biblical account. The phrase "outwardly destroyed his seed" refers to coitus interruptus.

Verse 25: After the death of Er, Judah's firstborn, Judah said to **Onan**, "Go to your brother's wife and marry her as the next of kin, and raise up offspring for your brother."

Commentary: Judah instructs Onan to perform the levirate marriage, an ancient custom where a brother was obligated to marry his deceased brother's widow to produce an heir for the deceased.

Verse 26: Onan married Tamar and had relations with her. Onan also did like his brother's act, and his act was evil in the sight of the Lord, and the Lord struck him dead too.

Commentary: Onan repeats Er's sin and faces the same divine judgment, also consistent with the biblical narrative.

Verse 27: When Onan died, Judah said to Tamar, "Remain in your father's house until my son **Shiloh** has grown up." Judah no longer desired to give her to Shiloh, for he thought, "Perhaps he will also die like his brothers."

Commentary: Judah's reluctance stems from a superstitious fear that Tamar might be cursed, leading him to withhold his youngest son, Shiloh (a different spelling for Shelah in Genesis), from her. He sends her back to her father's house indefinitely.

Verse 28: And Tamar rose up and went and remained in her father's house, and Tamar was in her father's house for some time.

Commentary: Tamar is left in a state of limbo, denied the opportunity to have children through Judah's family.

Verse 29: And after a year, **Aliyath, Judah's wife, died**. Judah was comforted after his wife's death. After Aliyath's death, Judah went up with his friend Hirah to Timnah to shear their sheep.

Commentary: Judah's wife dies, and after a period of mourning, he goes to Timnah, setting the scene for his encounter with Tamar.

Verse 30: Tamar heard that Judah had gone up to Timnah to shear the sheep, and that Shiloh (Shelah) had grown up, and Judah still had no intention of giving her to him.

Commentary: Tamar realizes Judah has no intention of fulfilling his promise. This fuels her desperate plan to secure an heir.

Verse 31: And Tamar rose up and took off her widow's garments. She put a veil over herself and completely covered herself. She went and sat in a public place (a crossroads) on the road to Timnah.

Commentary: Tamar strategically disguises herself as a prostitute, knowing Judah would be traveling this road. This bold move is a direct consequence of Judah's failure to uphold his obligation.

Verse 32: Judah passed by, saw her, and approached her. He had relations with her, and she conceived by him. At the time of delivery, behold, there were **twins** in her womb. He named the first **Perez**, and the second **Zarah**.

Commentary: The encounter leads to conception. The birth of twins (Perez and Zarah) is a significant event, as Perez becomes an ancestor of King David and, ultimately, of Jesus in the New Testament. This section of Jasher aligns closely with the biblical account of Judah and Tamar in Genesis 38.

This chapter provides a broad overview of the formation of Jacob's family in Canaan after Joseph's disappearance, offering details on marriages and offspring that complement or expand upon the biblical narrative, especially concerning Dinah's marriage to Simeon and the expanded account of Benjamin's wives. The core story of Judah and Tamar remains consistent with the canonical text.

Book of Jasher, Chapter 46

Joseph in Prison: The Butler and Baker

Verse 1: In those days, **Joseph** was still imprisoned in the land of Egypt.

Commentary: This verse sets the scene, reminding us of Joseph's continued unjust confinement, which was established at the end of Chapter 44.

Verse 2: At that time, **Pharaoh's** attendants, the **chief of the butlers** and the **chief of the bakers**, were serving before him.

Commentary: These two high-ranking officials are introduced, key figures in the next phase of Joseph's life.

Verse 3: The butler poured wine and presented it to the king to drink, and the baker placed bread before the king to eat. The king drank the wine and ate the bread, along with his servants and ministers who dined at the king's table.

Commentary: This describes a typical royal meal, establishing the duties of the butler and baker.

Verse 4: While they were eating and drinking, the butler and baker remained there. Pharaoh's ministers found many flies in the wine the butler had brought, and stones of nitre (a type of salt or mineral impurity) were found in the baker's bread.

Commentary: This detail explains *why* the butler and baker were imprisoned. The impurities in the food and drink were seen as a serious offense, possibly even an attempt at poisoning, against the king.

Verse 5: The captain of the guard (Potiphar, as he was the captain of the guard) placed Joseph as an attendant to Pharaoh's officers, and Pharaoh's officers were in confinement for one year.

Commentary: Joseph's role in the prison is clarified: he is a personal attendant to the high-ranking prisoners. This also specifies the duration of the butler and baker's initial imprisonment – one year – before their dreams occur.

Verse 6: At the end of that year, both men dreamed dreams in one night, in the prison where they were. In the morning, Joseph came to them to attend upon them as usual, and he saw them, and behold, their faces were dejected and sad.

Commentary: The timing is precise – after a full year in prison. Their visible distress indicates the profound impact of their dreams, a common ancient belief in the significance of dreams.

Verse 7: Joseph asked them, "Why are your faces sad and dejected today?" They said to him, "We dreamed a dream, and there's no one to interpret it." And Joseph said to them, "Please, tell me your dream, and God will give you a favorable answer as you desire."

Commentary: Joseph's compassion and spiritual confidence are evident. He attributes the ability to interpret dreams to God, not himself, demonstrating his humility and faith. He also implies that good news (an "answer of peace") might be possible.

The Butler's Dream and Interpretation

Verse 8: And the butler related his dream to Joseph, saying, "I saw in my dream, and behold, a large vine was before me, and upon that vine I saw three branches. The vine quickly blossomed and grew very tall, and its clusters ripened and became grapes."

Commentary: The butler's dream, consistent with the biblical account, is described in detail. Its imagery is directly related to his profession.

Verse 9: "And I took the grapes and pressed them in a cup, and placed it in Pharaoh's hand, and he drank." And Joseph said to him, "The three branches that were upon the vine are three days."

Commentary: Joseph begins his interpretation, establishing the time frame.

Verse 10: "Yet within three days, the king will order you to be brought out, and he will restore you to your office, and you shall give the king his wine to drink, just as before when you were his butler. But please, remember me to Pharaoh when things go well for you, and show me kindness, and get me brought out of this prison, for I was stolen away from the land of Canaan and was sold as a slave in this place."

Commentary: Joseph interprets the dream accurately and then makes a crucial request. He reveals his true background—that he was "stolen" (kidnapped/taken against his will) from Canaan and sold—and implicitly states his innocence regarding the charges that landed him in prison.

Verse 11: "And also, what was told to you concerning my master's wife is false, for they placed me in this dungeon for nothing." The butler answered Joseph, saying, "If the king deals well with me as before, just as you have interpreted to me, I will do all that you desire and get you brought out of this dungeon."

Commentary: Joseph explicitly refutes Zelicah's false accusation, asserting his innocence. The butler, amazed by the interpretation, readily promises to help Joseph, seemingly recognizing the truth of his words.

The Baker's Dream and Interpretation

Verse 12: The baker, seeing that Joseph had accurately interpreted the butler's dream, also approached and related his entire dream to Joseph.

Commentary: The baker's hope is raised by the butler's positive interpretation, leading him to seek Joseph's wisdom.

Verse 13: And he said to him, "In my dream, I saw and behold, three white baskets upon my head. I looked, and behold, in the uppermost basket were all kinds of baked meats for Pharaoh, and behold, the birds were eating them from off my head."

Commentary: The baker's dream, also consistent with the biblical narrative, foreshadows a grim outcome.

Verse 14: And Joseph said to him, "The three baskets which you saw are three days. Yet within three days, Pharaoh will cut off your head and hang you upon a tree, and the birds will eat your flesh from off you, as you saw in your dream."

Commentary: Joseph delivers the harsh truth directly. His interpretations are precise and unflinching, demonstrating a divine gift for revelation.

Pharaoh's Celebration and Joseph's Forgotten State

Verse 15: In those days, the queen was about to give birth, and on that day, she bore a son to the king of Egypt. They announced that the king had gotten his firstborn son, and all the people of Egypt, along with Pharaoh's officers and servants, rejoiced greatly.

Commentary: This provides a context for the significant "third day" mentioned in the interpretations. The birth of a royal heir is a cause for widespread celebration, explaining why Pharaoh would be in a celebratory mood.

Verse 16: On the third day of his birth, Pharaoh made a feast for his officers and servants, for the armies of the land of Zoar and of the land of Egypt.

Commentary: The feast is a grand occasion, befitting a royal birth, and it is on this "third day" that the dreams will come to pass.

Verse 17: And all the people of Egypt and Pharaoh's servants came to eat and drink with the king at his son's feast, and to rejoice in the king's rejoicing.

Verse 18: All the king's officers and servants were celebrating at that time for eight days at the feast, and they made merry with all sorts of musical instruments, with tambourines and with dances in the king's house for eight days.

Commentary: The detailed description of the eight-day celebration emphasizes the lavishness and joyous atmosphere of the court, contrasting sharply with Joseph's confinement.

Verse 19: And the butler, to whom Joseph had interpreted his dream, **forgot Joseph**, and he did not mention him to the king as he had promised, for this thing was from the Lord in order to **punish Joseph because he had trusted in man**.

Commentary: This is a crucial and often debated interpretive detail from Jasher (and also present in some biblical commentaries for the same reason). The butler's forgetfulness is explicitly stated to be a divine act, a punishment for Joseph's "sin" of relying on human help (the butler) rather than solely on God for his deliverance. This theological explanation adds a layer of complexity to Joseph's suffering.

Verse 20: And Joseph remained after this in the prison house for **two more years**, until he had completed **twelve years** (total in prison).

Commentary: The consequence of the butler's forgetfulness and Joseph's "punishment" is an additional two years in prison, bringing his total incarceration to the twelve years mentioned in Chapter 44, verse 76. This period tests Joseph's patience and faith even further.

This chapter vividly portrays the dramatic events within the Egyptian prison, showcasing Joseph's divine gift of dream interpretation and his unwavering faith, even as he faces human forgetfulness and seemingly divine correction. The narrative sets the stage for his eventual release and rise to power, which will occur in the next chapter.

Book of Jasher, Chapter 47

Isaac's Final Days and Blessing

Verse 1: In those days, **Isaac**, Abraham's son, was still living in the land of Canaan. He was very old, **one hundred and eighty years old**. His son **Esau**, Jacob's brother, was in the land of Edom, where he and his sons owned possessions among the children of Seir.

Commentary: This verse establishes the setting and the age of Isaac, indicating that his death is imminent. It also reminds us of Esau's location and status in Edom.

Verse 2: Esau heard that his father's time to die was drawing near, so he, his sons, and his household came to the land of Canaan, to his father's house. Jacob and his sons also left their dwelling place in Hebron, and they all came to their father Isaac, finding Esau and his sons already in the tent.

Commentary: Both Esau and Jacob gather at Isaac's side, showing respect for their dying father. This reunion sets the stage for the division of Isaac's inheritance.

Verse 3: Jacob and his sons sat before his father Isaac, and Jacob was still mourning for his son Joseph.

Commentary: This poignant detail reminds us that even at this significant family gathering, Jacob's deep sorrow for Joseph, whom he believes to be dead, persists.

Verse 4: Isaac said to Jacob, "Bring your sons here so I can bless them." Jacob brought his **eleven children** before his father Isaac.

Commentary: Isaac, recognizing his approaching end, wants to bless his grandchildren, specifically Jacob's children. Joseph is still "missing" from this count.

Verse 5: Isaac placed his hands upon all of Jacob's sons. He took hold of them, embraced them, and kissed them one by one. Isaac blessed them that day, saying to them, "May the God of your fathers bless you and increase your offspring like the stars of heaven in number."

Commentary: This is a powerful patriarchal blessing, a continuation of the covenant blessings promised to Abraham and Isaac. It focuses on numerical increase and divine favor.

Verse 6: Isaac also blessed Esau's sons, saying, "May God cause you to be a dread and a terror to all who see you, and to all your enemies."

Commentary: Isaac's blessing for Esau's descendants is distinct from Jacob's, focusing on military strength and dominance rather than numerical increase and land inheritance. This aligns with the later history of Edom.

Verse 7: Isaac called Jacob and his sons, and they all came and sat before Isaac. Isaac said to Jacob, "The Lord God of the whole earth told me, 'To your offspring I will give this land as an inheritance if your children keep my statutes and my ways, and I will fulfill for them the oath I swore to your father Abraham.'"

Commentary: Isaac delivers a final, solemn charge, reminding Jacob of the **covenant promise of the land of Canaan** made by God to Abraham and then to Isaac. He emphasizes that this promise is conditional on their obedience to God's laws.

Verse 8: "Now therefore, my son, teach your children and your children's children to fear the Lord and to walk in the good way that pleases the Lord your God. For if you keep the ways of the Lord and His statutes, the Lord will also keep His covenant with Abraham for you, and He will do well with you and your offspring all your days."

Commentary: Isaac passes on the responsibility of teaching the covenant and obedience to future generations, underscoring the importance of spiritual fidelity.

Isaac's Death and Burial

Verse 9: When Isaac had finished commanding Jacob and his children, he breathed his last and died, and was gathered to his people.

Commentary: Isaac's death, at a very old age, marks the passing of another patriarch. The phrase "gathered to his people" refers to joining his ancestors in the afterlife.

Verse 10: Jacob and Esau fell upon the face of their father Isaac and wept. Isaac was one hundred and eighty years old when he died in the land of Canaan, in Hebron. His sons carried him to the **cave of Machpelah**, which Abraham had bought from the children of Heth as a burial possession.

Commentary: Both brothers mourn their father. Isaac's age at death is consistent with the biblical account. He is buried in the family tomb in Machpelah, alongside Abraham and Sarah.

Verse 11: All the kings of the land of Canaan went with Jacob and Esau to bury Isaac, and all the kings of Canaan showed Isaac great honor at his death.

Commentary: The presence of local kings at Isaac's funeral highlights his esteemed status and influence in the region.

Verse 12: Jacob's sons and Esau's sons walked barefoot around, lamenting, until they reached Kirjath-Arba (Hebron).

Commentary: The barefoot procession and lamentation are signs of deep mourning and respect, common in ancient burial customs.

Verse 13: Jacob and Esau buried their father Isaac in the cave of Machpelah, which is in Kirjath-Arba (Hebron), and they buried him with very great honor, as at the funeral of kings.

Commentary: The burial is conducted with the utmost respect, mirroring a royal funeral, further emphasizing Isaac's stature.

Verse 14: Jacob and his sons, and Esau and his sons, and all the kings of Canaan made a great and heavy mourning, and they mourned for him many days.

Commentary: The mourning period is extensive, showing the collective sorrow and respect for Isaac.

Division of Inheritance and the Covenant of Land

Verse 15: At Isaac's death, he left his cattle, his possessions, and everything belonging to him to his sons. Esau said to Jacob, "Please, all that our father has left, we will divide it into two parts, and I will have the choice." Jacob said, "We will do so."

Commentary: The division of Isaac's inheritance begins. Esau, as the elder, requests the right of first choice, which Jacob agrees to. This sets up a crucial decision point.

Verse 16: Jacob took all that Isaac had left in the land of Canaan—the cattle and the property—and he placed them in two parts before Esau and his sons. He said to Esau, "Behold, all this is before you; choose for yourself the half that you will take."

Commentary: Jacob fairly presents the division, giving Esau the first pick.

Verse 17: And Jacob said to Esau, "Please listen to what I will speak to you, saying: The Lord God of heaven and earth spoke to our fathers Abraham and Isaac, saying, 'To your offspring I will give this land as an inheritance forever.'"

Commentary: Jacob cleverly introduces the divine covenant regarding the land, reminding Esau of the spiritual significance attached to it. This is not just about physical assets; it's about the promise of God.

Verse 18: "Now therefore, all that our father has left is before you, and behold, all the land is before you; choose from them what you desire."

Commentary: Jacob expands the choice beyond just the physical property to include the land itself, directly invoking the divine promise.

Verse 19: "If you desire the whole land, take it for you and your children forever, and I will take these riches. If you desire the riches, take them for yourself, and I will take this land for me and for my children to inherit it forever."

Commentary: This is the critical offer. Jacob, recognizing the spiritual value of the land covenant, offers Esau a choice: either all the material wealth or the entire land of Canaan. Jacob is willing to give up all immediate material gain for the spiritual inheritance of the land.

Verse 20: And **Nebayoth, the son of Ishmael**, was then in the land with his children, and Esau went on that day and consulted with him, saying,

Commentary: Esau seeks counsel from an Ishmaelite relative, showing his inclination to consult with others and possibly his focus on immediate material gain. Nebayoth is the firstborn son of Ishmael.

Verse 21: "Thus has Jacob spoken to me, and thus has he answered me. Now give your advice, and we will listen."

Commentary: Esau presents Jacob's offer to Nebayoth.

Verse 22: And Nebayoth said, "What is this that Jacob has spoken to you? Look, all the children of Canaan are dwelling securely in their land, and Jacob says he will inherit it with his offspring forever!"

Commentary: Nebayoth's advice reflects a worldly perspective, emphasizing the current reality (Canaanites occupying the land) and perhaps scoffing at Jacob's long-term, faith-based claim. He advises Esau to take the immediate, tangible wealth.

Verse 23: "Go now therefore and take all your father's riches and leave Jacob your brother in the land, as he has spoken."

Commentary: Nebayoth advises Esau to take the material wealth, dismissing the land as a present inheritance since it's currently occupied by Canaanites.

Verse 24: Esau rose up and returned to Jacob and did all that Nebayoth, the son of Ishmael, had advised. Esau took all the riches that Isaac had left—the people, the beasts, the cattle, the property, and all the wealth; he gave nothing to his brother Jacob. And Jacob took all the land of Canaan, from the brook of Egypt to the river Euphrates, and he took it for an everlasting possession, and for his children and for his offspring after him forever.

Commentary: Esau chooses the immediate, tangible wealth, demonstrating his focus on material possessions over the spiritual inheritance. Jacob, in turn, receives the **entire land of Canaan**, a fulfillment of God's promise. The description of the land "from the brook of Egypt to the river Euphrates" describes the maximal extent of the promised land. This marks a definitive separation of their destinies and inheritances.

Verse 25: Jacob also took from his brother Esau the **cave of Machpelah**, which is in Hebron, which Abraham had bought from Ephron for a possession of a burial place for him and his offspring forever.

Commentary: This is a significant detail in Jasher, not found in Genesis. Jacob also acquires the family burial ground from Esau, solidifying his claim to the spiritual and ancestral heritage. This implies Esau gave up all claims to the land, including its sacred sites.

Verse 26: Jacob wrote all these things in the **book of purchase**, and he signed it, and he testified all this with four faithful witnesses.

Commentary: Jacob formalizes the agreement through a written deed and witnesses, ensuring its legality and permanence. This emphasizes the importance of records and contracts in their society.

Verse 27: And these are the words which Jacob wrote in the book, saying: "The land of Canaan and all the cities of the Hittites, the Hivites, the Jebusites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, and the Girgashites—all the seven nations from the river of Egypt to the river Euphrates."

Verse 28: "And the city of Hebron, Kirjath-Arba, and the cave which is in it, the whole did Jacob buy from his brother Esau for value, for a possession and for an inheritance for his offspring after him forever."

Commentary: The terms of the purchase are meticulously recorded, including the specific boundaries of the land and the inclusion of the sacred burial site. This is a crucial legal document establishing Israel's claim to the land.

Verse 29: And Jacob took the book of purchase and the signature, the command and the statutes and the revealed book, and he placed them in an earthen vessel in order that they should remain for a long time, and he delivered them into the hands of his children.

Commentary: Jacob carefully preserves these vital documents, ensuring that future generations will have proof of their inheritance and the covenant. Placing them in an earthen vessel for longevity is a practical measure for preservation. The mention of "the revealed book" suggests a book of divine law or revelation, adding to the sacred nature of the inheritance.

Verse 30: Esau took all that his father had left him after his death from his brother Jacob, and he took all the property—from man and beast, camel and ass, ox and lamb, silver and gold, stones and bdellium, and all the riches which had belonged to Isaac, Abraham's son. There was nothing left which Esau did not take for himself from all that Isaac had left after his death.

Commentary: This reiterates that Esau took all the movable wealth, leaving nothing behind for Jacob from this portion of the inheritance. The list of items emphasizes the vastness of the wealth Esau received.

Verse 31: Esau took all this, and he and his children went home to the land of Seir the Horite, away from his brother Jacob and his children.

Commentary: The brothers definitively separate, with Esau returning to his established home in Seir.

Verse 32: And Esau had possessions among the children of Seir, and Esau never returned to the land of Canaan from that day forward.

Commentary: This marks the permanent separation of the two branches of the family, with Esau's descendants (Edomites) distinct from Jacob's (Israelites).

Verse 33: And the whole land of Canaan became an inheritance to the children of Israel for an everlasting inheritance, and Esau with all his children inherited the mountain of Seir.

Commentary: This verse summarizes the outcome: the land of Canaan is confirmed as the eternal inheritance of Jacob's descendants (Israel), while Esau's descendants inherit the territory of Seir. This division sets the stage for the distinct national identities and territories of Israel and Edom.

This chapter is pivotal as it formally establishes Jacob's undisputed claim to the land of Canaan, not just through divine promise but also through a legal transaction with Esau. It also highlights the different values and priorities of the two brothers, with Jacob prioritizing the spiritual inheritance (the land) and Esau choosing immediate material wealth.

Book of Jasher, Chapter 48

The Famine and Pharaoh's Dreams

Verse 1: In those days, after Isaac's death, the Lord commanded and caused a **famine upon the whole earth**.

Commentary: This sets the global context for Pharaoh's dreams, indicating that the famine is a divinely orchestrated event affecting a wide area, not just Egypt.

Verse 2: At that time, **Pharaoh**, king of Egypt, was sitting on his throne in the land of Egypt. He lay in his bed and dreamed dreams. Pharaoh saw in his dream that he was standing by the side of the **Nile River** (referred to as the "river of Egypt").

Commentary: Pharaoh's dreams are the central focus. His position by the Nile, the lifeblood of Egypt, is significant.

Verse 3: While he was standing, he saw, and behold, **seven fat, healthy, and well-favored cows** came up out of the river.

Commentary: The first part of the dream introduces the imagery of abundance, directly linked to Egypt's prosperity (cows coming from the fertile Nile).

Verse 4: And **seven other cows, lean, sickly, and ill-favored**, came up after them. The seven ill-favored ones swallowed up the well-favored ones, and still their appearance remained as sickly as before.

Commentary: This part of the dream introduces the imagery of scarcity and consumption, with the sickly cows consuming the healthy ones without improving themselves, indicating a severe and persistent problem.

Verse 5: And he awoke. He slept again and dreamed a second time. He saw, and behold, **seven ears of grain** came up upon one stalk, plump and good. Then seven thin ears, scorched by the east wind, sprang up after them, and the thin ears swallowed up the full ones. Pharaoh awoke from his dream.

Commentary: The second dream reinforces the message of the first, using different but related agricultural imagery. The "east wind" is often associated with destructive, scorching winds from the desert, bringing blight. The repetition of the dream signifies its importance and certainty.

Verse 6: In the morning, the king remembered his dreams, and his spirit was sadly troubled on account of them. The king quickly sent for all the magicians of Egypt and the wise men, and they came and stood before Pharaoh.

Commentary: Pharaoh's distress indicates the profound impact of the dreams, suggesting he intuitively knew they held significant meaning. He immediately turns to his kingdom's interpreters.

Verse 7: The king said to them, "I have dreamed dreams, and there is no one to interpret them." And they said to the king, "Tell your dreams to your servants, and let us hear them."

Commentary: The wise men are willing to attempt an interpretation once they hear the dreams.

The Magicians' Failed Interpretations

Verse 8: The king related his dreams to them, and they all answered and said with one voice to the king, "May the king live forever! This is the interpretation of your dreams:"

Commentary: They offer a standard royal greeting before presenting their interpretation.

Verse 9: "The seven good cows which you saw denote seven daughters that will be born to you in the latter days, and the seven cows which you saw come up after them and swallowed them up are a sign that the daughters who will be born to you will all die during the king's lifetime."

Commentary: Their first interpretation focuses on a literal family misfortune, suggesting that the good cows represent daughters who will be born, and the bad ones represent their untimely deaths.

Verse 10: "And what you saw in the second dream, of seven plump, good ears of grain coming up upon one stalk—this is their interpretation: that you will build seven cities throughout the land of Egypt in the latter days. And what you saw of the seven blasted ears of grain springing up after them and swallowing them up while you watched with your eyes, is a sign that the cities you will build will all be destroyed in the latter days, during the king's lifetime."

Commentary: Their second interpretation links the grain to cities, predicting their construction and subsequent destruction within Pharaoh's lifetime. These interpretations are arbitrary and not directly related to the famine.

Verse 11: When they spoke these words, the king did not pay attention to their words, nor did he set his heart upon them, for the king knew in his wisdom that they did not give a proper interpretation of the dreams. When they had finished speaking before the king, the king answered them, saying, "What is this thing you have spoken to me? Surely you have uttered falsehood and spoken lies! Therefore now give the proper interpretation of my dreams, so that you may not die."

Commentary: Pharaoh's intuition tells him these interpretations are incorrect. He challenges them, even threatening their lives if they don't provide a satisfactory answer, showing his frustration and the high stakes involved.

Verse 12: And the king commanded after this, and he sent and called again for other wise men, and they came and stood before the king. The king related his dreams to them, and they all answered him according to the first interpretation, and the king's anger was kindled, and he was very wroth. The king said to them, "Surely you speak lies and utter falsehood in what you have said!"

Commentary: Despite the threat, other wise men give the same, unsatisfactory interpretations, further enraging Pharaoh.

Verse 13: And the king commanded that a proclamation should be issued throughout the land of Egypt, saying, "It is resolved by the king and his great men, that any wise man who knows and understands the interpretation of dreams, and will not come this day before the king, shall die."

Commentary: Pharaoh escalates his demand, making it a life-or-death situation for all wise men who fail to appear.

Verse 14: "And the man that will declare to the king the proper interpretation of his dreams, there shall be given to him all that he will require from the king." And all the wise men of the land of Egypt came before the king, together with all the magicians and sorcerers that were in Egypt and in Goshen, in Rameses, in Tachpanhes, in Zoar, and in all the places on the borders of Egypt, and they all stood before the king.

Commentary: The reward is also immense for a correct interpretation. This draws a massive crowd of all types of diviners from across Egypt, highlighting the widespread fear and the gravity of the situation.

Verse 15: And all the nobles and the princes, and the attendants belonging to the king, came together from all the cities of Egypt, and they all sat before the king, and the king related his dreams before the wise men, and the princes, and all that sat before the king were astonished at the vision.

Commentary: The entire court and powerful figures are present, underscoring the importance of this moment. The vividness of the dreams astonishes them.

Verse 16: And all the wise men who were before the king were greatly divided in their interpretation of his dreams; some of them interpreted them to the king, saying, "The seven good cows are seven kings, who will be raised over Egypt from the king's issue."

Commentary: The interpretations become varied and contradictory, showing their confusion and lack of divine insight. This first interpretation suggests a sequence of kings from Pharaoh's lineage.

Verse 17: "And the seven bad cows are seven princes, who will stand up against them in the latter days and destroy them; and the seven ears of grain are the seven great princes belonging to Egypt, who will fall in the hands of the seven less powerful princes of their enemies, in the wars of our lord the king."

Commentary: This interpretation focuses on internal conflict and warfare.

Verse 18: And some of them interpreted to the king in this manner, saying, "The seven good cows are the strong cities of Egypt, and the seven bad cows are the seven nations of the land of Canaan, who will come against the seven cities of Egypt in the latter days and destroy them."

Commentary: This interpretation links the dreams to geopolitical conflict with Canaan.

Verse 19: "And that which you saw in the second dream, of seven good and bad ears of grain, is a sign that the government of Egypt will again return to your offspring as at first."

Verse 20: "And in his reign the people of the cities of Egypt will turn against the seven cities of Canaan who are stronger than they are, and will destroy them, and the government of Egypt will return to your offspring."

Commentary: These interpretations continue to be speculative and unrelated to the actual meaning, focusing on a future conflict and restoration of power to Pharaoh's lineage.

Verse 21: And some of them said to the king, "This is the interpretation of your dreams: the seven good cows are seven queens whom you will marry in the latter days, and the seven bad cows denote that those women will all die in the king's lifetime."

Commentary: Another interpretation that focuses on Pharaoh's personal life and misfortune.

Verse 22: "And the seven good and bad ears of grain which you saw in the second dream are fourteen children, and it will be in the latter days that they will stand up and fight amongst themselves, and seven of them will strike down the seven that are more powerful."

Commentary: This interpretation suggests conflict among Pharaoh's children.

Verse 23: And some of them said these words to the king, saying, "The seven good cows denote that seven children will be born to you, and they will slay seven of your children's children in the latter days; and the seven good ears of grain which you saw in the second dream, are those princes against whom seven other less powerful princes will fight and destroy them in the latter days, and avenge your children's cause, and the government will again return to your offspring."

Commentary: This interpretation involves multi-generational conflict and vengeance, becoming increasingly convoluted.

Verse 24: The king heard all the words of the wise men of Egypt and their interpretation of his dreams, and none of them pleased the king.

Commentary: Pharaoh remains unsatisfied, knowing in his heart that none of these interpretations are correct.

Verse 25: And the king knew in his wisdom that they did not altogether speak correctly in all these words, for this was from the Lord to frustrate the words of the wise men of Egypt, in order that Joseph might go forth from the house of confinement, and in order that he should become great in Egypt.

Commentary: This is a crucial theological explanation from Jasher. God intentionally made the wise men's interpretations incorrect so that Joseph, and only Joseph, would be able to interpret them, thus setting the stage for his elevation to power.

Verse 26: The king saw that none among all the wise men and magicians of Egypt spoke correctly to him, and the king's wrath was kindled, and his anger burned within him.

Commentary: Pharaoh's frustration turns into fury.

Verse 27: And the king commanded that all the wise men and magicians should go out from before him, and they all went out from before the king with shame and disgrace.

Commentary: They are dismissed in ignominy.

Verse 28: And the king commanded that a proclamation be sent throughout Egypt to slay all the magicians that were in Egypt, and not one of them should be suffered to live.

Commentary: Pharaoh's anger leads to a decree for a mass execution of the magicians and wise men, a drastic measure.

Verse 29: And the captains of the guards belonging to the king rose up, and each man drew his sword, and they began to strike down the magicians of Egypt and the wise men.

Commentary: The execution begins, showing the immediate and brutal enforcement of Pharaoh's decree.

The Butler Remembers Joseph

Verse 30: After this, **Merod, chief butler to the king**, came and bowed down before the king and sat before him.

Commentary: The butler, whose life Joseph saved, finally remembers him at this critical juncture. His name, "Merod," is given here, which is not in the biblical account.

Verse 31: And the butler said to the king, "May the king live forever, and his government be exalted in the land."

Commentary: He begins with a respectful address, setting a formal tone.

Verse 32: "You were angry with your servant in those days, now two years past, and did place me in the ward (prison), and I was for some time in the ward, I and the chief of the bakers."

Commentary: The butler reminds Pharaoh of his own imprisonment, tactfully setting up the story of Joseph. The "two years past" refers to the time since he was released from prison (Ch. 46, v. 20).

Verse 33: "And there was with us a Hebrew servant belonging to the captain of the guard, his name was **Joseph**, for his master had been angry with him and placed him in the house of confinement, and he attended us there."

Commentary: He introduces Joseph, highlighting his status as a "Hebrew servant" and his connection to the captain of the guard (Potiphar), subtly implying Joseph's innocence.

Verse 34: "And in some time after, when we were in the ward, we dreamed dreams in one night, I and the chief of the bakers; we dreamed, each man according to the interpretation of his dream."

Commentary: He recounts the events that led to Joseph's interpretation.

Verse 35: "And we came in the morning and told them to that servant, and he interpreted to us our dreams; to each man according to his dream, he correctly interpreted."

Commentary: He emphasizes Joseph's accuracy and skill.

Verse 36: "And it came to pass as he interpreted to us, so was the event; there fell not to the ground any of his words."

Commentary: The butler strongly vouches for Joseph's predictive power, stating that every word of his interpretation came true.

Verse 37: "And now therefore, my lord and king, do not slay the people of Egypt for nothing; behold, that slave is still confined in the house by the captain of the guard, his master, in the house of confinement."

Commentary: The butler directly intervenes to save the lives of the wise men, suggesting that Joseph is the only one who can solve the king's problem.

Verse 38: "If it pleases the king, let him send for him that he may come before you, and he will make known to you the correct interpretation of the dream which you dreamed."

Commentary: He offers Joseph as the solution.

Joseph Brought Before Pharaoh

Verse 39: The king heard the words of the chief butler, and the king ordered that the wise men of Egypt should not be slain.

Commentary: The butler's timely intervention saves the lives of the wise men.

Verse 40: And the king ordered his servants to bring Joseph before him, and the king said to them, "Go to him and do not terrify him, lest he be confused and will not know how to speak properly."

Commentary: Pharaoh's urgency and recognition of Joseph's unique gift are evident. He instructs his servants to treat Joseph with care, indicating his desperation for a correct interpretation.

Verse 41: And the servants of the king went to Joseph, and they brought him hastily out of the dungeon, and the king's servants shaved him, and he changed his prison garment, and he came before the king.

Commentary: Joseph undergoes a rapid transformation from prisoner to potential interpreter. Shaving and changing clothes were rituals of purification and presentation before royalty.

Verse 42: And the king was sitting upon his royal throne in a princely dress, girt around with a golden ephod, and the fine gold which was upon it sparkled, and the carbuncle and the ruby and the emerald, together with all the precious stones that were upon the king's head, dazzled the eye, and Joseph wondered greatly at the king.

Commentary: This vivid description of Pharaoh's lavish appearance and throne emphasizes his immense power and majesty, creating a striking contrast with Joseph, who has just come from a dungeon. Joseph's awe is natural.

Verse 43: And the throne upon which the king sat was covered with gold and silver, and with onyx stones, and it had **seventy steps**.

Commentary: The detail of the seventy steps is unique to Jasher and adds to the grandeur and symbolic significance of Pharaoh's court.

Verse 44: And it was their custom throughout the land of Egypt, that every man who came to speak to the king, if he was a prince or one that was estimable in the sight of the king, he ascended to the king's

throne as far as the thirty-first step, and the king would descend to the thirty-sixth step, and speak with him.

Commentary: This describes the elaborate protocol for addressing the king based on social status, indicating the formality of the court.

Verse 45: If he was one of the common people, he ascended to the third step, and the king would descend to the fourth and speak to him, and their custom was, moreover, that any man who understood to speak in all the **seventy languages**, he ascended the seventy steps, and went up and spoke till he reached the king.

Commentary: This introduces another unique and fantastical detail from Jasher: the requirement for a king, or someone to approach him closely, to know seventy languages. This emphasizes the sophistication and power of the Egyptian court in this text.

Verse 46: And any man who could not complete the seventy, he ascended as many steps as the languages which he knew to speak in.

Commentary: This rule sets a clear measure for linguistic mastery.

Verse 47: And it was customary in those days in Egypt that no one should reign over them but who understood to speak in the seventy languages.

Commentary: This establishes a formidable intellectual requirement for Egyptian rulers, reinforcing their perceived wisdom and global understanding.

Verse 48: And when Joseph came before the king, he bowed down to the ground before the king, and he ascended to the third step, and the king sat upon the fourth step and spoke with Joseph.

Commentary: Joseph, initially treated as a commoner (ascending only three steps), shows appropriate deference. The king descends slightly, allowing for the conversation.

Verse 49: And the king said to Joseph, "I dreamed a dream, and there is no interpreter to interpret it properly, and I commanded this day that all the magicians of Egypt and the wise men thereof should come before me, and I related my dreams to them, and no one has properly interpreted them to me."

Verse 50: "And after this I this day heard concerning you, that you are a wise man, and can correctly interpret every dream that you hear."

Commentary: Pharaoh directly explains his predicament and expresses his hope in Joseph's renowned ability.

Verse 51: And Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying, "Let Pharaoh relate his dreams that he dreamed; surely the interpretations belong to God." And Pharaoh related his dreams to Joseph, the dream of the cows, and the dream of the ears of grain, and the king stopped speaking.

Commentary: Joseph immediately deflects any personal credit, attributing the gift of interpretation solely to God. Pharaoh then recounts his dreams in full.

Joseph's Interpretation and Counsel

Verse 52: And Joseph was then clothed with the spirit of God before the king, and he knew all the things that would befall the king from that day forward, and he knew the proper interpretation of the king's dream, and he spoke before the king.

Commentary: This verse highlights the divine inspiration behind Joseph's interpretation. He is divinely empowered to not only understand the dreams but also to foresee future events.

Verse 53: And Joseph found favor in the sight of the king, and the king inclined his ears and his heart, and he heard all the words of Joseph. And Joseph said to the king, "Do not imagine that they are two dreams, for it is only one dream, for that which God has chosen to do throughout the land He has shown to the king in his dream, and this is the proper interpretation of your dream:"

Commentary: Joseph gains Pharaoh's full attention and confidence. He explains that the two dreams are actually one, a divine message from God, emphasizing God's sovereignty over the events to come.

Verse 54: "The seven good cows and ears of grain are **seven years**, and the seven bad cows and ears of grain are also **seven years**; it is one dream."

Commentary: Joseph gives the straightforward, accurate interpretation: seven years of plenty followed by seven years of famine.

Verse 55: "Behold, the seven years that are coming, there will be a great plenty throughout the land, and after that, seven years of famine will follow them, a very grievous famine; and all the plenty will be forgotten from the land, and the famine will consume the inhabitants of the land."

Commentary: He elaborates on the nature of the coming years, stressing the severity of the famine that will erase the memory of the abundant years.

Verse 56: "The king dreamed one dream, and the dream was therefore repeated to Pharaoh because the thing is established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass."

Commentary: Joseph explains the purpose of the repeated dream: to confirm the certainty and immediacy of God's decree.

Verse 57: "Now therefore, I will give you counsel and deliver your soul and the souls of the inhabitants of the land from the evil of the famine, that you seek throughout your kingdom for a man very discreet and wise, who knows all the affairs of government, and appoint him to superintend over the land of Egypt."

Commentary: Joseph not only interprets the dream but also offers a practical, strategic solution for managing the crisis, demonstrating his wisdom and foresight beyond mere interpretation. He recommends a highly capable administrator.

Verse 58: "And let the man whom you place over Egypt appoint officers under him, that they gather in all the food of the good years that are coming, and let them lay up grain and deposit it in your appointed stores."

Commentary: He outlines the specific plan for storage and management of the surplus.

Verse 59: "And let them keep that food for the seven years of famine, that it may be found for you and your people and your whole land, and that you and your land be not cut off by the famine."

Commentary: The purpose of the plan is clear: to prevent widespread death and destruction during the famine.

Verse 60: "Let all the inhabitants of the land be also ordered that they gather in, every man the produce of his field, of all sorts of food, during the seven good years, and that they place it in their stores, that it may be found for them in the days of the famine and that they may live upon it."

Commentary: Joseph suggests a comprehensive national effort, involving not just the government but every individual in collecting and storing food.

Verse 61: "This is the proper interpretation of your dream, and this is the counsel given to save your soul and the souls of all your subjects."

Commentary: Joseph presents his complete package: accurate interpretation and a life-saving strategy.

Joseph's Sign and Pharaoh's Confirmation

Verse 62: And the king answered and said to Joseph, "Who says and who knows that your words are correct?" And he said to the king, "This shall be a sign for you respecting all my words, that they are true and that my advice is good for you."

Commentary: Pharaoh, still cautious, asks for a sign to confirm Joseph's words. Joseph confidently offers one, further demonstrating his divine connection.

Verse 63: "Behold, your wife sits this day upon the stool of delivery, and she will bear you a son, and you will rejoice with him; when your child shall have gone forth from his mother's womb, your firstborn son that has been born these two years back shall die, and you will be comforted in the child that will be born to you this day."

Commentary: This is a **powerful and unique prophetic sign** from Jasher, not found in the biblical account. Joseph predicts two specific, immediate, and intimate events in Pharaoh's family: a birth and a death. This kind of precise, personal prophecy would serve as undeniable proof.

Verse 64: And Joseph finished speaking these words to the king, and he bowed down to the king and he went out. And when Joseph had gone out from the king's presence, those signs which Joseph had spoken to the king came to pass on that day.

Commentary: The immediate fulfillment of Joseph's prophecy validates his divine connection and the truth of his interpretation.

Verse 65: And the queen bore a son on that day, and the king heard the glad tidings about his son, and he rejoiced. And when the reporter had gone forth from the king's presence, the king's servants found the firstborn son of the king fallen dead upon the ground.

Commentary: Both parts of the prophecy are fulfilled on the same day, reinforcing Joseph's prophetic accuracy. The joy of a new birth is immediately followed by the tragedy of a death.

Verse 66: And there was great lamentation and noise in the king's house, and the king heard it, and he said, "What is the noise and lamentation that I have heard in the house?" And they told the king that his firstborn son had died; then the king knew that all Joseph's words that he had spoken were correct, and the king was consoled for his son by the child that was born to him on that day as Joseph had spoken.

Commentary: The immediate confirmation of the sign leaves no doubt in Pharaoh's mind about Joseph's divine insight. The simultaneous birth brings comfort, just as Joseph predicted. This entire sequence cements Joseph's authority and credibility with Pharaoh.

This chapter is a powerful demonstration of God's providence, showing how Joseph's long years of suffering are finally redeemed. It highlights his unique gift, his unwavering faith, and his practical wisdom. The unique details about the seventy languages and the specific signs for Pharaoh add extra layers to the narrative in Jasher.

Book of Jasher, Chapter 49

Joseph's Ascent to Power

Verse 1: After these things, the king sent for and gathered all his officers and servants, and all the princes and nobles belonging to the king, and they all came before the king.

Commentary: Pharaoh convenes a grand council to discuss the implications of Joseph's successful interpretation and the impending famine.

Verse 2: And the king said to them, "Look, you have seen and heard all the words of this Hebrew man, and all the signs which he declared would come to pass, and not any of his words have failed."

Commentary: Pharaoh immediately acknowledges Joseph's undeniable accuracy, using the recent fulfillment of the personal prophecy as proof.

Verse 3: "You know that he has given a proper interpretation of the dream, and it will surely come to pass. Now therefore, take counsel, and know what you will do and how the land will be delivered from the famine."

Commentary: Pharaoh seeks their input on how to implement Joseph's proposed solution, highlighting the urgency of the situation.

Verse 4: "Seek now and see whether someone like him can be found, in whose heart there is wisdom and knowledge, and I will appoint him over the land."

Commentary: Pharaoh challenges his court to find someone equally capable, implying that Joseph's unique abilities are rare.

Verse 5: "For you have heard what the Hebrew man has advised concerning this, to save the land from the famine with his counsel, and I know that the land will not be delivered from the famine except with the advice of the Hebrew man, him that advised me."

Commentary: Pharaoh strongly advocates for Joseph, emphasizing that only Joseph's plan, which he views as divinely inspired, will save Egypt.

Verse 6: And they all answered the king and said, "The counsel which the Hebrew has given concerning this is good. Now therefore, our lord and king, behold the whole land is in your hand; do that which seems good in your sight."

Commentary: The officials agree that Joseph's plan is sound, but they tactfully defer the ultimate decision to Pharaoh, acknowledging his authority.

Verse 7: "Him whom you choose, and whom you in your wisdom know to be wise and capable of delivering the land with his wisdom, him shall the king appoint to be under him over the land."

Commentary: They empower Pharaoh to make the final decision, subtly probing whether he intends to appoint Joseph himself.

Verse 8: And the king said to all the officers: "I have thought that since God has made known to the Hebrew man all that he has spoken, there is none so discreet and wise in the whole land as he is. If it seems good in your sight, I will place him over the land, for he will save the land with his wisdom."

Commentary: Pharaoh makes his intention clear: he wants to appoint Joseph. He reiterates the divine source of Joseph's wisdom as the primary reason.

Verse 9: And all the officers answered the king and said, "But surely it is written in the laws of Egypt, and it should not be violated, that no man shall reign over Egypt, nor be second to the king, but one who has knowledge in all the languages of the sons of men."

Commentary: Here, Jasher introduces a significant obstacle not found in the biblical account: an Egyptian law requiring high officials (especially the second-in-command) to be fluent in **all seventy languages**. This adds a dramatic hurdle to Joseph's appointment.

Verse 10: "Now therefore, our lord and king, behold this Hebrew man can only speak the Hebrew language, and how then can he be over us, second in government, a man who does not even know our language?"

Commentary: The officers voice their practical objection, emphasizing Joseph's perceived linguistic limitation and questioning his fitness for such a high office in a foreign land. This adds a layer of realism to the challenges Joseph faced.

Verse 11: "Now we pray you, send for him, and let him come before you, and prove him in all things, and do as you see fit."

Commentary: They propose a test, allowing Pharaoh to verify Joseph's capabilities despite the perceived linguistic barrier.

Verse 12: And the king said, "It shall be done tomorrow, and the thing that you have spoken is good." And all the officers came on that day before the king.

Commentary: Pharaoh agrees to the test, postponing Joseph's official appointment until the next day.

A Divine Intervention: Joseph Learns All Languages

Verse 13: And on that night, the Lord sent one of His ministering angels, and he came into the land of Egypt to Joseph. And the angel of the Lord stood over Joseph, and behold, Joseph was lying in bed at night in his master's house in the dungeon, for his master had put him back into the dungeon on account of his wife.

Commentary: This verse contains a highly significant detail unique to Jasher. It states that Joseph was *still in the dungeon* (or had been put back there) even after interpreting Pharaoh's dreams. This contradicts the biblical narrative, which implies Joseph was immediately released and elevated. The reason given—Potiphar putting him back due to his wife's accusations—highlights the continued injustice Joseph faced. Crucially, the Lord directly intervenes to equip Joseph for his new role.

Verse 14: And the angel roused him from his sleep, and Joseph rose up and stood upon his legs, and behold, the angel of the Lord was standing opposite him. And the angel of the Lord spoke with Joseph, and he **taught him all the languages of man in that night**, and he called his name **Jehoseph**.

Commentary: This is a miraculous event. God directly grants Joseph the supernatural ability to speak all seventy languages, instantly overcoming the officers' objection. The new name, Jehoseph, is significant, linking Joseph directly to the divine ("Jeho" likely refers to YHWH/Jehovah).

Verse 15: And the angel of the Lord went from him, and Joseph returned and lay upon his bed, and Joseph was astonished at the vision which he saw.

Commentary: Joseph's astonishment reflects the awe and wonder of such a profound divine encounter.

Joseph's Elevation and Royal Decree

Verse 16: And it came to pass in the morning that the king sent for all his officers and servants, and they all came and sat before the king. And the king ordered Joseph to be brought, and the king's servants went and brought Joseph before Pharaoh.

Commentary: The stage is set for Joseph's public test.

Verse 17: And the king came forth and ascended the steps of the throne, and Joseph spoke to the king in **all languages**, and Joseph went up to him and spoke to the king until he arrived before the king at the **seventieth step**, and he sat before the king.

Commentary: This is the dramatic climax of the "language test." Joseph, now supernaturally gifted, demonstrates his mastery of all seventy languages by ascending all seventy steps of the throne, proving his worthiness for the highest office. His ability to sit "before the king" signifies his elevated status.

Verse 18: And the king greatly rejoiced on account of Joseph, and all the king's officers rejoiced greatly with the king when they heard all the words of Joseph.

Commentary: The officials' objections are now silenced. Joseph's miraculous linguistic ability removes any doubt about his suitability.

Verse 19: And the thing seemed good in the sight of the king and the officers, to appoint Joseph to be second to the king over the whole land of Egypt, and the king spoke to Joseph, saying,

Commentary: With all obstacles removed, Joseph's appointment is confirmed.

Verse 20: "Now you advised me to appoint a wise man over the land of Egypt, in order with his wisdom to save the land from the famine. Now therefore, since God has made all this known to you, and all the words which you have spoken, there is not throughout the land a discreet and wise man like you."

Commentary: Pharaoh formally states his reasons for choosing Joseph, emphasizing his unparalleled wisdom and divine favor.

Verse 21: "And your name shall no more be called Joseph, but **Zaphnath Paaneah** shall be your name; you shall be second to me, and according to your word shall be all the affairs of my government, and at your word shall my people go out and come in."

Commentary: Joseph receives a new Egyptian name, signifying his new identity and elevated status. He is declared second only to Pharaoh, with full authority over the entire government and people. This aligns closely with the biblical narrative.

Verse 22: "Also, from under your hand shall my servants and officers receive their salary which is given to them monthly, and to you shall all the people of the land bow down; only in my throne will I be greater than you."

Commentary: This verse details the extent of Joseph's power: he controls the treasury, and everyone in Egypt must show him reverence, with only Pharaoh's throne surpassing his authority.

Verse 23: And the king took off his ring from his hand and put it upon the hand of Joseph, and the king dressed Joseph in a princely garment, and he put a golden crown upon his head, and he put a golden chain upon his neck.

Commentary: These are the traditional symbols of delegated royal authority in ancient Egypt: the signet ring (for official decrees), royal robes, a crown (or royal headdress), and a golden chain (collar).

Verse 24: And the king commanded his servants, and they made him ride in the **second chariot** belonging to the king, that went opposite to the king's chariot, and he caused him to ride upon a great and strong horse from the king's horses, and to be conducted through the streets of the land of Egypt.

Commentary: Joseph is given a grand public procession, signifying his new, immense power and public recognition. Riding in the "second chariot" highlights his rank.

Verse 25: And the king commanded that all those that played upon timbrels, harps, and other musical instruments should go forth with Joseph; one thousand timbrels, one thousand mecholoth, and one thousand nebalim went after him.

Commentary: The procession is accompanied by a massive musical fanfare, emphasizing the celebratory nature of Joseph's elevation. "Mecholoth" likely refers to a type of dance or musical instrument, and "nebalim" to harps or lutes.

Verse 26: And five thousand men, with drawn swords glittering in their hands, went marching and playing before Joseph, and twenty thousand of the great men of the king girt with girdles of skin covered with gold, marched at the right hand of Joseph, and twenty thousand at his left, and all the women and damsels went upon the roofs or stood in the streets playing and rejoicing at Joseph, and gazed at the appearance of Joseph and at his beauty.

Commentary: This incredibly elaborate and detailed description of the procession underscores the immense scale of Joseph's public acclamation. The sheer numbers of people involved in the parade, and the public's fascination with Joseph's appearance, highlight his celebrity status.

Verse 27: And the king's people went before him and behind him, perfuming the road with frankincense and with cassia, and with all sorts of fine perfume, and scattered myrrh and aloes along the road, and twenty men proclaimed these words before him throughout the land in a loud voice:

Commentary: The procession is further enhanced by fragrant spices, creating a truly regal atmosphere. The heralds announce his new authority.

Verse 28: "Do you see this man whom the king has chosen to be his second? All the affairs of government shall be regulated by him, and he that transgresses his orders, or that does not bow down before him to the ground, shall die, for he rebels against the king and his second."

Commentary: The proclamation sternly warns against disobedience, emphasizing Joseph's absolute authority and the severe consequences for defying him.

Verse 29: And when the heralds had ceased proclaiming, all the people of Egypt bowed down to the ground before Joseph and said, "May the king live, also may his second live!" And all the inhabitants of Egypt bowed down along the road, and when the heralds approached them, they bowed down, and they rejoiced with all sorts of timbrels, mechol, and nebal before Joseph.

Commentary: The people's immediate and widespread submission, combined with continued celebration, confirms Joseph's acceptance and power.

Verse 30: And Joseph upon his horse lifted up his eyes to heaven, and called out and said, "He raiseth the poor man from the dust, He lifteth up the needy from the dunghill. O Lord of Hosts, happy is the man who trusteth in thee."

Commentary: In a moment of profound humility and gratitude amidst his triumph, Joseph acknowledges God as the source of his elevation. He quotes from Psalm 113:7, which praises God for uplifting the humble, perfectly reflecting his journey from pit and prison to power.

Joseph's New Life and Preparations

Verse 31: And Joseph passed throughout the land of Egypt with Pharaoh's servants and officers, and they showed him the whole land of Egypt and all the king's treasures.

Commentary: Joseph is given a comprehensive tour of the kingdom and its resources, familiarizing him with his new responsibilities.

Verse 32: And Joseph returned and came on that day before Pharaoh, and the king gave to Joseph a possession in the land of Egypt, a possession of fields and vineyards, and the king gave to Joseph three thousand talents of silver and one thousand talents of gold, and onyx stones and bdellium and many gifts.

Commentary: Pharaoh bestows immense wealth upon Joseph, including land, vineyards, and vast sums of silver and gold, solidifying his new status and providing him with personal resources.

Verse 33: And on the next day the king commanded all the people of Egypt to bring to Joseph offerings and gifts, and that he that violated the command of the king should die; and they made a high place in the street of the city, and they spread out garments there, and whoever brought anything to Joseph put it into the high place.

Commentary: This is a unique and rather extraordinary detail in Jasher, indicating a quasi-divine veneration of Joseph. The king commands the entire populace to bring gifts, under penalty of death, which are collected in a public "high place." This suggests a level of honor bordering on worship.

Verse 34: And all the people of Egypt cast something into the high place, one man a golden ear-ring, and the other rings and ear-rings, and different vessels of gold and silver work, and onyx stones and bdellium did he cast upon the high place; every one gave something of what he possessed.

Commentary: The people respond to the royal decree, offering valuable personal items to Joseph.

Verse 35: And Joseph took all these and placed them in his treasuries, and all the officers and nobles belonging to the king exalted Joseph, and they gave him many gifts, seeing that the king had chosen him to be his second.

Commentary: Joseph's wealth continues to accumulate from both the king and the people, and he is highly regarded by all levels of society.

Verse 36: And the king sent to **Potiphera, the son of Ahiram priest of On**, and he took his young daughter **Osnath** and gave her to Joseph for a wife.

Commentary: Joseph is given a wife, a high-ranking Egyptian woman, further integrating him into Egyptian society and cementing his power. Potiphera is the priest of On (Heliopolis), a significant religious center. Osnath is the traditional spelling of Asenath from the biblical account.

Verse 37: And the damsel was very comely, a virgin, one whom man had not known, and Joseph took her for a wife; and the king said to Joseph, "I am Pharaoh, and beside you none shall dare to lift up his hand or his foot to regulate my people throughout the land of Egypt."

Commentary: Osnath is described as a beautiful virgin. Pharaoh reiterates Joseph's supreme authority, emphasizing that only he has the power to act within Egypt.

Verse 38: And Joseph was **thirty years old** when he stood before Pharaoh, and Joseph went out from before the king, and he became the king's second in Egypt.

Commentary: This age (30 years old) aligns with the biblical account (Genesis 41:46). It signifies the completion of his long journey from a 17-year-old shepherd to a powerful ruler.

Verse 39: And the king gave Joseph a hundred servants to attend him in his house, and Joseph also sent and purchased many servants, and they remained in the house of Joseph.

Commentary: Joseph is provided with a large household staff, befitting his new status.

Verse 40: Joseph then built for himself a very magnificent house, like the houses of kings, before the court of the king's palace, and he made in the house a large temple, very elegant in appearance and convenient for his residence; **three years** was Joseph in erecting his house.

Commentary: Joseph constructs a grand residence, emphasizing his new, kingly lifestyle. The detail that it took three years to build suggests a significant construction project, perhaps occurring during the early years of plenty. The mention of a "large temple" implies a space for worship, perhaps accommodating his monotheistic faith or serving as a significant public hall.

Verse 41: And Joseph made for himself a very elegant throne of abundance of gold and silver, and he covered it with onyx stones and bdellium, and he made upon it the likeness of the whole land of Egypt, and the likeness of the river of Egypt that waters the whole land of Egypt; and Joseph sat securely upon his throne in his house and the Lord increased Joseph's wisdom.

Commentary: Joseph's personal throne is described as lavish, adorned with precious materials and symbolic carvings of Egypt's geography, particularly the Nile, highlighting his deep connection to the land and its prosperity. His wisdom continues to be divinely enhanced.

Verse 42: And all the inhabitants of Egypt and Pharaoh's servants and his princes loved Joseph exceedingly, for this thing was from the Lord to Joseph.

Commentary: Joseph's popularity and success are explicitly attributed to divine favor.

Verse 43: And Joseph had an army that made war, going out in hosts and troops to the number of **forty thousand six hundred men**, capable of bearing arms to assist the king and Joseph against the enemy, besides the king's officers and his servants and inhabitants of Egypt without number.

Commentary: This is a very significant addition from Jasher. Joseph is given command of a substantial personal army (40,600 men), indicating his strategic importance and military power within Egypt, far beyond just an administrator. This army is distinct from the king's own forces.

Verse 44: And Joseph gave to his mighty men, and to all his host, shields and javelins, and caps and coats of mail and stones for slinging.

Commentary: Joseph equips his army, demonstrating his active role as a military leader and preparer.

This chapter vividly describes Joseph's meteoric rise to power, showcasing divine intervention, the overcoming of obstacles, and the immense honor and authority bestowed upon him. The details unique to Jasher, such as the seventy languages, Joseph's continued imprisonment until the angel's visit, the public gift-giving ceremony, and his personal army, add a rich, albeit different, layer to the familiar biblical narrative.

Book of Jasher, Chapter 50

Joseph's Military Expedition and Years of Plenty

Verse 1: At that time, the **children of Tarshish** came against the **sons of Ishmael** and made war with them. The children of Tarshish oppressed the Ishmaelites for a long time.

Commentary: This chapter begins with a military conflict not mentioned in the biblical account, showcasing Joseph's broader role in Egypt. The "children of Tarshish" could refer to a maritime or distant people, while "sons of Ishmael" are descendants of Abraham through Ishmael.

Verse 2: The children of Ishmael were few in number in those days, and they could not overcome the children of Tarshish, and they were sorely oppressed.

Commentary: The Ishmaelites are portrayed as vulnerable, needing external assistance.

Verse 3: And the elders of the Ishmaelites sent a message to the king of Egypt, saying, "Please send your servants, officers, and troops to help us fight against the children of Tarshish, for we have been diminishing for a long time."

Commentary: The Ishmaelites appeal to Pharaoh for military aid, acknowledging Egypt's power under Joseph.

Verse 4: And Pharaoh sent **Joseph** with the mighty men and troops who were with him, and also his mighty men from the king's house.

Commentary: This is a significant detail unique to Jasher. Joseph is not just an administrator; he leads a military expedition, demonstrating his strategic and military capabilities. This reinforces the idea of Joseph having his own army, as mentioned in the previous chapter.

Verse 5: And they went to the land of **Havilah** to the children of Ishmael, to assist them against the children of Tarshish. The children of Ishmael fought with the children of Tarshish, and Joseph struck down the Tarshishites and subdued all their land, and the children of Ishmael dwell there to this day.

Commentary: Joseph's military campaign is successful; he defeats the Tarshishites and secures the land for the Ishmaelites. This action would enhance Egypt's influence and Joseph's reputation. Havilah is a region associated with the descendants of Ishmael and also with gold.

Verse 6: When the land of Tarshish was subdued, all the Tarshishites fled and came to the border of their brethren, the children of Javan (Greeks). Joseph, with all his mighty men and troops, returned to Egypt, not one man of them missing.

Commentary: The Tarshishites are driven from their land. Joseph's army returns without casualties, a testament to his leadership and divine protection.

The Seven Years of Plenty

Verse 7: And at the turn of the year, in the **second year of Joseph's reigning over Egypt**, the Lord gave great plenty throughout the land for **seven years** as Joseph had spoken, for the Lord blessed all the produce of the earth in those days for seven years, and they ate and were greatly satisfied.

Commentary: The years of abundance begin, confirming Joseph's prophecy. The phrasing emphasizes God's direct role in providing this bounty. This clarifies that Joseph's military expedition occurred during the first year of his governance before the peak of the plenty years fully manifested.

Verse 8: And Joseph at that time had officers under him, and they collected all the food of the good years and piled up grain year by year, and they placed it in the treasuries of Joseph.

Commentary: Joseph diligently implements his plan, using his administrative network to collect and store the immense harvest. The treasuries are specifically referred to as "Joseph's," highlighting his ownership or control.

Verse 9: And at any time when they gathered the food, Joseph commanded that they should bring the corn **in the ears**, and also bring with it some of the **soil of the field**, so that it should not spoil.

Commentary: This is a fascinating and unique detail from Jasher. Joseph's innovative preservation method—storing the grain in the ear along with some soil—is presented as the reason it didn't spoil, while the Egyptians' own stored grain did (as seen later in verse 20). This highlights Joseph's extraordinary wisdom beyond typical agricultural practices.

Verse 10: And Joseph did according to this year by year, and he heaped up grain like the sand of the sea for abundance, for his stores were immense and could not be numbered for abundance.

Commentary: The sheer volume of stored grain is emphasized, a testament to the unprecedented bounty and Joseph's efficient management.

Verse 11: And also all the inhabitants of Egypt gathered all sorts of food in their stores in great abundance during the seven good years, but they did not do to it as Joseph did.

Commentary: The people also stored food individually, but their methods were inferior, setting the stage for their later predicament.

Verse 12: And all the food which Joseph and the Egyptians had gathered during the seven years of plenty was secured for the land in stores for the seven years of famine, for the support of the whole land.

Commentary: The collective effort aimed at sustained provision for the famine.

Verse 13: And the inhabitants of Egypt filled each man his store and his concealed place with corn, to be for support during the famine.

Commentary: People took personal measures to prepare for the lean years.

Verse 14: And Joseph placed all the food that he had gathered in all the cities of Egypt, and he closed all the stores and placed sentinels over them.

Commentary: Joseph secures the national reserves, ensuring their protection and controlled distribution.

Joseph's Family and the Coming Famine

Verse 15: And Joseph's wife **Osnath**, the daughter of Potiphera, bore him two sons, **Manasseh and Ephraim**, and Joseph was thirty-four years old when he begat them.

Commentary: Joseph's family grows, consistent with the biblical account. Their births happen during the years of plenty, suggesting that Joseph was 30 when he rose to power and these births occurred in the subsequent four years.

Verse 16: And the lads grew up and they followed his ways and his instructions; they did not deviate from the way their father taught them, either to the right or left.

Commentary: Joseph raises his sons to be righteous and obedient, reflecting his own strong moral character.

Verse 17: And the Lord was with the lads, and they grew up and had understanding and skill in all wisdom and in all the affairs of government, and all the king's officers and his great men of the inhabitants of Egypt exalted the lads, and they were brought up amongst the king's children.

Commentary: Manasseh and Ephraim are also blessed with wisdom and governmental skill, and they are integrated into the royal household, highlighting their privileged position and future importance.

Verse 18: And the seven years of plenty that were throughout the land were at an end, and the **seven years of famine came after them as Joseph had spoken**, and the famine was throughout the land.

Commentary: The prophecy is fulfilled; the famine begins precisely as Joseph predicted.

Verse 19: And all the people of Egypt saw that the famine had commenced in the land of Egypt, and all the people of Egypt opened their stores of grain, for the famine prevailed over them.

Commentary: People initially turn to their own reserves.

Verse 20: And they found all the food that was in their stores, **full of vermin and not fit to eat**, and the famine prevailed throughout the land, and all the inhabitants of Egypt came and cried before Pharaoh, for the famine was heavy upon them.

Commentary: This is the key difference and justification for Joseph's unique storage method. The common people's efforts to store grain failed due to spoilage, emphasizing the superiority of Joseph's

divinely inspired method (storing "in the ears" with soil). This creates a situation where only Joseph's stores are viable, thus consolidating his control over the food supply.

Verse 21: And they said to Pharaoh, "Give food to your servants, and why should we die of hunger before your eyes, even we and our little ones?"

Commentary: The people appeal directly to Pharaoh, desperate for sustenance.

Verse 22: And Pharaoh answered them, saying, "And why do you cry to me? Did not Joseph command that the grain should be laid up during the seven years of plenty for the years of famine? And why did you not listen to his voice?"

Commentary: Pharaoh holds the people accountable for not fully following Joseph's specific instructions, implying their own storage methods were flawed.

Verse 23: And the people of Egypt answered the king, saying, "As your soul lives, our lord, your servants have done all that Joseph ordered, for your servants also gathered in all the produce of their fields during the seven years of plenty and laid it in the stores until this day."

Commentary: The people defend themselves, asserting they did follow instructions generally.

Verse 24: "And when the famine prevailed over your servants, we opened our stores, and behold, all our produce was filled with vermin and was not fit for food."

Commentary: They explain the crucial failure: their grain spoiled. This implicitly confirms that only Joseph's method worked, giving him unique authority.

Verse 25: And when the king heard all that had befallen the inhabitants of Egypt, the king was greatly afraid on account of the famine, and he was much terrified; and the king answered the people of Egypt, saying, "Since all this has happened to you, **go to Joseph; do whatever he shall say to you, transgress not his commands**."

Commentary: Pharaoh fully delegates authority to Joseph, recognizing that only Joseph's stored grain is edible. This phrase "Go to Joseph" (similar to the biblical "Go to Joseph; what he says to you, do") becomes the universal instruction.

Joseph Sells Grain to Egypt and Beyond

Verse 26: And all the people of Egypt went forth and came to Joseph, and said to him, "Give us food, and why should we die before you through hunger? For we gathered in our produce during the seven years as you did command, and we put it in store, and thus has it befallen us."

Commentary: The people now turn directly to Joseph, reiterating their plight and the spoilage of their own grain.

Verse 27: And when Joseph heard all the words of the people of Egypt and what had befallen them, Joseph opened all his stores of the produce and **he sold it to the people of Egypt**.

Commentary: Joseph begins selling the grain, establishing his role as the sole distributor of food.

Verse 28: And the famine prevailed throughout the land, and the famine was in all countries, but in the land of Egypt there was produce for sale.

Commentary: The global nature of the famine is emphasized, making Egypt a unique refuge due to Joseph's foresight.

Verse 29: And all the inhabitants of Egypt came to Joseph to buy grain, for the famine prevailed over them, and all their grain was spoiled, and Joseph daily sold it to all the people of Egypt.

Commentary: Joseph becomes the central figure in Egypt's survival, controlling the daily distribution of food.

Verse 30: And all the inhabitants of the land of Canaan and the Philistines, and those beyond the Jordan, and the children of the east and all the cities of the lands far and near heard that there was corn in Egypt, and they all came to Egypt to buy corn, for the famine prevailed over them.

Commentary: The famine extends beyond Egypt's borders, drawing people from surrounding lands, including Canaan—setting the stage for his brothers' arrival.

Verse 31: And Joseph opened the stores of corn and placed officers over them, and they daily stood and sold to all that came.

Commentary: Joseph establishes an organized system for the sale of grain to a wide array of customers.

Joseph's Regulations for Buying Grain

Verse 32: And Joseph knew that his brethren also would come to Egypt to buy grain, for the famine prevailed throughout the earth. And Joseph commanded all his people that they should cause it to be proclaimed throughout the land of Egypt, saying,

Commentary: Joseph anticipates his brothers' arrival, revealing his underlying motive for the stringent regulations he institutes.

Verse 33: "It is the pleasure of the king, of his second and of their great men, that any person who wishes to buy grain in Egypt shall not send his servants to Egypt to purchase, but his sons, and also any Egyptian or Canaanite, who shall come from any of the stores from buying grain in Egypt, and shall go and sell it throughout the land, he shall die, for no one shall buy but for the support of his household."

Commentary: This is another unique and highly specific regulation from Jasher. Joseph restricts who can come (only sons, not servants) and limits reselling, ensuring that individuals buy only for their own household consumption. This would compel his brothers to come in person, and prevent speculative reselling of grain.

Verse 34: "And any man leading two or three beasts shall die, for a man shall only lead his own beast."

Commentary: This rule further limits the amount of grain any one individual can transport, preventing large-scale bulk purchases that could be used for illicit trade. This forces them to make multiple trips or smaller purchases, also designed to make his brothers return multiple times.

Verse 35: "And Joseph placed sentinels at the gates of Egypt, and commanded them, saying, 'Any person who may come to buy grain, suffer him not to enter until his name, and the name of his father, and the name of his father's father be written down, and whatever is written by day, send their names to me in the evening that I may know their names.'"

Commentary: This is the most direct measure Joseph takes to identify his brothers. By requiring a three-generation genealogy for every buyer, he creates a system to meticulously track all foreign visitors, ensuring he will be notified when his family arrives.

Verse 36: And Joseph placed officers throughout the land of Egypt, and he commanded them to do all these things.

Commentary: Joseph's comprehensive administrative system ensures these strict rules are enforced nationwide.

Verse 37: And Joseph did all these things, and made these statutes, in order that he might know when his brethren should come to Egypt to buy grain; and Joseph's people caused it daily to be proclaimed in Egypt according to these words and statutes which Joseph had commanded.

Commentary: Jasher explicitly states Joseph's motive: he implemented these strict rules *specifically* to detect and identify his brothers when they arrived. This adds a layer of deliberate planning to his actions.

Verse 38: And all the inhabitants of the east and west country, and of all the earth, heard of the statutes and regulations which Joseph had enacted in Egypt, and the inhabitants of the extreme parts of the earth came and they bought corn in Egypt day after day, and then went away.

Commentary: The fame of Joseph's regulations spreads, and people from far and wide adhere to them to obtain food.

Verse 39: And all the officers of Egypt did as Joseph had commanded, and all that came to Egypt to buy grain, the gate keepers would write their names, and their fathers' names, and daily bring them in the evening before Joseph.

Commentary: The system is in full effect, ensuring Joseph receives daily reports of all foreign grain purchasers, meticulously setting the stage for the dramatic reunion with his brothers.

This chapter vividly details Joseph's rise to absolute power in Egypt and his meticulous preparations for the famine, including a military campaign and unique agricultural preservation methods. Most notably, it highlights Joseph's strategic planning to bring his brothers to Egypt and the very specific, unique regulations he put in place to identify them.

Book of Jasher, Chapter 51

Jacob's Sons Go to Egypt

Verse 1: After these things, **Jacob** heard that there was grain in Egypt, and he called his sons to go to Egypt to buy grain, for the famine had also affected them. He called to his sons, saying,

Commentary: The famine, as predicted by Joseph and experienced in Egypt, now reaches Canaan, forcing Jacob's family to seek food in Egypt.

Verse 2: "Look, I hear that there is grain in Egypt, and all the people of the earth are going there to purchase. So why will you just sit here and act as if you're well-fed before the whole world? Go down to Egypt also and buy us a little grain among those who go there, so that we may not die."

Commentary: Jacob urges his sons to act, highlighting the widespread nature of the famine and their need for sustenance. His phrase "why will you show yourselves satisfied" implies a false sense of security or idleness.

Verse 3: And the sons of Jacob listened to the voice of their father, and they rose up to go down to Egypt in order to buy grain among the rest who came there.

Commentary: The sons obey their father's command, setting in motion the crucial events of this chapter.

Verse 4: And Jacob their father commanded them, saying, "When you come into the city, do not enter together by one gate, because of the inhabitants of the land."

Commentary: This instruction from Jacob, specific to Jasher, indicates a concern for safety or avoiding drawing too much attention. Perhaps he feared being seen as a large, possibly threatening, group of foreigners.

Verse 5: And the sons of Jacob went forth and they went to Egypt, and the sons of Jacob did all as their father had commanded them. And Jacob did not send **Benjamin**, for he said, "Lest an accident might befall him on the road like his brother"; and ten of Jacob's sons went forth.

Commentary: This aligns with the biblical account: Benjamin is kept back due to Jacob's fear of losing another beloved son, a fear deeply rooted in the presumed loss of Joseph. The ten brothers are thus prepared to face Joseph.

Verse 6: And while the sons of Jacob were going on the road, they repented of what they had done to Joseph, and they spoke to each other, saying, "We know that our brother Joseph went down to Egypt, and now we will seek him where we go, and if we find him we will take him from his master for a ransom, and if not, by force, and we will die for him."

Commentary: This is a crucial and unique detail from Jasher. The brothers experience genuine remorse and actively plan to find Joseph and rescue him, even by force or by giving their lives. This adds a layer of proactive repentance that is not explicitly stated in the biblical account at this point. It also foreshadows their later willingness to risk themselves for Benjamin.

Verse 7: And the sons of Jacob agreed to this thing and strengthened themselves on account of Joseph, to deliver him from the hand of his master. And the sons of Jacob went to Egypt; and when they came

near to Egypt they separated from each other, and they came through **ten gates of Egypt**, and the gatekeepers wrote their names on that day, and brought them to Joseph in the evening.

Commentary: They resolve to act on their newfound repentance. They follow Jacob's instruction to enter through separate gates, which inadvertently plays into Joseph's pre-arranged surveillance. The gatekeepers dutifully report their names to Joseph, as he had commanded in the previous chapter.

Joseph's Scheme to Find His Brothers

Verse 8: And Joseph read the names from the hand of the gatekeepers of the city, and he found that his brethren had entered at the ten gates of the city, and Joseph at that time commanded that it should be proclaimed throughout the land of Egypt, saying,

Commentary: Joseph's plan works perfectly. He immediately recognizes their names and takes further action.

Verse 9: "Go forth all you store guards, close all the grain stores and let only one remain open, that those who come may purchase from it."

Commentary: Joseph centralizes all grain sales to a single location. This is a strategic move to ensure his brothers would have to come directly to him or his designated officer for their purchase.

Verse 10: And all the officers of Joseph did so at that time, and they closed all the stores and left only one open.

Commentary: Joseph's commands are executed swiftly and efficiently.

Verse 11: And Joseph gave the written names of his brethren to him that was set over the open store, and he said to him, "Whoever shall come to you to buy grain, ask his name, and when men of these names shall come before you, seize them and send them," and they did so.

Commentary: Joseph gives specific instructions to the officer in charge of the lone open store to apprehend anyone matching his brothers' names. This implies he wants to deal with them directly.

Verse 12: And when the sons of Jacob came into the city, they joined together in the city to seek Joseph before they bought themselves grain.

Commentary: The brothers, driven by their earlier resolution, prioritize finding Joseph over buying food.

Verse 13: And they went to the **walls of the harlots**, and they sought Joseph in the walls of the harlots for three days, for they thought that Joseph would come in the walls of the harlots, for Joseph was very comely and well favored, and the sons of Jacob sought Joseph for three days, and they could not find him.

Commentary: This is another highly unusual and prominent detail unique to Jasher. The brothers, assuming Joseph, being handsome, might have fallen into a life of prostitution (or been exploited in such a way), search for him in red-light districts. This reveals their assumptions about his potential fate and the darker side of their understanding of the world. Their search for three days indicates their earnestness.

Verse 14: And the man who was set over the open store sought for those names which Joseph had given him, and he did not find them.

Commentary: Since the brothers were busy searching for Joseph and hadn't yet gone to buy grain, the officer didn't encounter them.

Verse 15: And he sent to Joseph, saying, "These three days have passed, and those men whose names you gave to me have not come." And Joseph sent servants to seek the men in all Egypt, and to bring them before Joseph.

Commentary: Joseph takes direct action to find them when they don't appear at the store.

Verse 16: And Joseph's servants went and came into Egypt and could not find them, and went to Goshen and they were not there, and then went to the city of Rameses and could not find them.

Commentary: The search is extensive, indicating the vastness of Egypt and the initial difficulty in locating the brothers.

Verse 17: And Joseph continued to send sixteen servants to seek his brothers, and they went and spread themselves in the four corners of the city, and four of the servants went into the **house of the harlots**, and they found the ten men there seeking their brother.

Commentary: Joseph's perseverance pays off. Crucially, Joseph's servants find them in the very place the brothers were looking for Joseph, adding dramatic irony.

The First Confrontation

Verse 18: And those four men took them and brought them before him, and they bowed down to him to the ground, and Joseph was sitting upon his throne in his temple, clothed with princely garments, and upon his head was a large crown of gold, and all the mighty men were sitting around him.

Commentary: The brothers, upon being brought before Joseph, fulfill the dream of bowing down to him. The description of Joseph's grandeur emphasizes the vast difference in their statuses. His "temple" likely refers to a grand hall or audience chamber in his magnificent house (as described in Ch. 49).

Verse 19: And the sons of Jacob saw Joseph, and his figure and comeliness and dignity of countenance seemed wonderful in their eyes, and they again bowed down to him to the ground.

Commentary: Despite being impressed by his appearance, they still do not recognize him. They are too overwhelmed by his status and the years that have passed, making such a transformation almost unbelievable to them.

Verse 20: And Joseph saw his brethren, and he knew them, but they knew him not, for Joseph was very great in their eyes, therefore they knew him not.

Commentary: This confirms the core of the biblical narrative: Joseph's recognition and their lack thereof. His "greatness" (power, wealth, Egyptian appearance) shields his identity from them.

Verse 21: And Joseph spoke to them, saying, "From where do you come?" And they all answered and said, "Your servants have come from the land of Canaan to buy grain, for the famine prevails

throughout the earth, and your servants heard that there was grain in Egypt, so they have come among the other comers to buy grain for their support."

Commentary: They respond with humility, explaining their purpose and the reason for their journey.

Verse 22: And Joseph answered them, saying, "If you have come to purchase as you say, why do you come through ten gates of the city? It can only be that you have come to spy throughout the land."

Commentary: Joseph immediately accuses them of being spies, using their adherence to Jacob's instruction as "evidence." This accusation, while seemingly harsh, is part of his plan to test them and manipulate the situation.

Verse 2 3: And they all together answered Joseph, and said, "Not so, my lord, we are honest men. Your servants are not spies, but we have come to buy grain, for your servants are all brothers, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan, and our father commanded us, saying, 'When you come to the city, do not enter together at one gate because of the inhabitants of the land.'"

Commentary: The brothers deny the accusation and explain their separate entry, revealing details about their family (being brothers, sons of one father) that Joseph would already know.

Verse 24: And Joseph again answered them and said, "That is the thing which I spoke to you; you have come to spy throughout the land, therefore you all came through ten gates of the city; you have come to see the nakedness of the land."

Commentary: Joseph persists in his accusation, twisting their explanation to further incriminate them. "Nakedness of the land" implies vulnerability or strategic weaknesses.

Verse 25: "Surely every one that comes to buy grain goes his way, and you are already three days in the land, and what do you do in the **walls of harlots** in which you have been for these three days? Surely spies do things like these."

Commentary: Joseph now exposes their search in the "walls of harlots," revealing his detailed knowledge of their movements and using it as further "proof" of their suspicious activities. This is a very sharp and unexpected accusation for them.

Verse 26: And they said to Joseph, "Far be it from our lord to speak thus, for we are twelve brothers, the sons of our father Jacob, in the land of Canaan, the son of Isaac, the son of Abraham, the Hebrew, and behold, the youngest is with our father this day in the land of Canaan, and one is not, for he was lost from us, and we thought perhaps he might be in this land, so we are seeking him throughout the land, and have come even to the houses of harlots to seek him there."

Commentary: The brothers, desperate to clear their names, reveal even more about their family: the number of brothers (twelve), Benjamin's whereabouts, and the "lost" brother (Joseph). They admit their search in the harlots' houses, trying to explain it as a desperate measure to find their missing brother. This is a moment of deep irony for Joseph, hearing them admit they searched for him in such places.

Verse 27: And Joseph said to them, "And have you then sought him throughout the earth, that there only remained Egypt for you to seek him in? And what also should your brother do in the houses of

harlots, although he were in Egypt? Have you not said, that you are from the sons of Isaac, the son of Abraham, and what shall the sons of Jacob do then in the houses of harlots?"

Commentary: Joseph continues his probing, questioning their logic and subtly highlighting the incongruity of their claim to a righteous lineage (sons of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob) with their search in disreputable places. He is effectively testing their character and perhaps their integrity.

Verse 28: And they said to him, "Because we heard that Ishmaelites stole him from us, and it was told to us that they sold him in Egypt, and your servant, our brother, is very comely and well-favored, so we thought he would surely be in the houses of harlots, therefore your servants went there to seek him and give ransom for him."

Commentary: They reveal the truth about Joseph's fate (stolen by Ishmaelites and sold to Egypt) and their reasoning for searching in such places—their assumption that a handsome person sold into slavery might end up there, and their intention to ransom him. This must have been incredibly emotional for Joseph to hear.

Verse 29: And Joseph still answered them, saying, "Surely you speak falsely and utter lies, to say of yourselves that you are the sons of Abraham; as Pharaoh lives, you are spies, therefore have you come to the houses of harlots that you should not be known."

Commentary: Joseph maintains his harsh stance, accusing them of lying about their lineage and reaffirming his spy accusation. He twists their explanation about the harlots' houses to suggest it was a disguise.

Verse 30: And Joseph said to them, "And now if you find him, and his master requires of you a great price, will you give it for him?" And they said, "It shall be given."

Commentary: Joseph tests their sincerity and willingness to pay for their lost brother.

Verse 31: And he said to them, "And if his master will not consent to part with him for a great price, what will you do to him on his account?" And they answered him, saying, "If he will not give him to us, we will slay him, and take our brother and go away."

Commentary: This is a shocking and revealing statement from the brothers. Their willingness to resort to violence to retrieve their brother reveals a fierce protectiveness, but also echoes their past violent tendencies (e.g., Shechem). This must have given Joseph pause, wondering if they had truly changed.

Verse 32: And Joseph said to them, "That is the thing which I have spoken to you; you are spies, for you have come to slay the inhabitants of the land, for we heard that two of your brethren struck down all the inhabitants of Shechem, in the land of Canaan, on account of your sister, and you now come to do the like in Egypt on account of your brother."

Commentary: Joseph, using his knowledge of their past, connects their violent intention to their infamous act at Shechem, using it as a strong argument for them being dangerous spies. This highlights his detailed knowledge of their family history.

The Test of Benjamin

Verse 33: "Only hereby shall I know that you are true men: if you will send home one from among you to fetch your youngest brother from your father, and to bring him here to me, and by doing this thing I will know that you are honest."

Commentary: Joseph proposes the test: Benjamin must be brought to Egypt to prove their truthfulness. This is a crucial element in his plan to bring his youngest brother to him and further test the brothers' character.

Verse 34: And Joseph called to seventy of his mighty men, and he said to them, "Take these men and bring them into the ward (prison)."

Commentary: Joseph has them arrested and imprisoned, escalating the pressure.

Verse 35: And the mighty men took the ten men, they laid hold of them and put them into the ward, and they were in the ward for three days.

Commentary: The brothers spend three days in confinement, giving them time to reflect on their past actions and their current predicament.

Verse 36: And on the third day Joseph had them brought out of the ward, and he said to them, "Do this for yourselves if you are true men, so that you may live: one of your brethren shall be confined in the ward whilst you go and take home the grain for your household to the land of Canaan, and fetch your youngest brother, and bring him here to me, that I may know that you are true men when you do this thing."

Commentary: Joseph softens the condition, releasing most of them but holding one as collateral. This tests their loyalty to each other and their father, and their willingness to risk their beloved Benjamin.

Verse 37: And Joseph went out from them and came into the chamber, and wept a great weeping, for his pity was excited for them, and he washed his face, and returned to them again, and he took Simeon from them and ordered him to be bound, but **Simeon was not willing to be done so, for he was a very powerful man and they could not bind him**.

Commentary: Joseph's emotional struggle is revealed, indicating his deep affection for his brothers despite his harshness. The detail about Simeon's immense strength and resistance to being bound is unique to Jasher, portraying him as a formidable figure and adding drama to the scene.

Verse 38: And Joseph called to his mighty men and seventy valiant men came before him with drawn swords in their hands, and the sons of Jacob were terrified at them.

Commentary: Joseph escalates the show of force to subdue Simeon, terrifying the other brothers.

Verse 39: And Joseph said to them, "Seize this man and confine him in prison until his brethren come to him," and Joseph's valiant men hastened and they all laid hold of Simeon to bind him, and Simeon gave a loud and terrible shriek and the cry was heard at a distance.

Commentary: Simeon's powerful shriek (a "terrible shriek" heard "at a distance") emphasizes his strength and the difficulty in subduing him.

Verse 40: And all the valiant men of Joseph were terrified at the sound of the shriek, that they fell upon their faces, and they were greatly afraid and fled.

Commentary: This is an incredible and unique detail in Jasher. Simeon's physical and vocal power is so immense that it causes Joseph's elite soldiers to fall down in terror and flee! This dramatically highlights Simeon's strength and the supernatural aspect of the situation.

Verse 41: And all the men that were with Joseph fled, for they were greatly afraid of their lives, and only Joseph and **Manasseh his son** remained there, and Manasseh the son of Joseph saw the strength of Simeon, and he was exceedingly wroth.

Commentary: Only Joseph and his son Manasseh remain, further emphasizing Simeon's supernatural strength. Manasseh's anger at Simeon's resistance prepares the reader for his intervention.

Verse 42: And Manasseh the son of Joseph rose up to Simeon, and Manasseh smote Simeon a heavy blow with his fist against the back of his neck, and Simeon was stilled of his rage.

Commentary: This is another unique and striking detail. Joseph's son, Manasseh, is the one who physically subdues the mighty Simeon with a single blow, revealing his own extraordinary strength (perhaps divinely bestowed or inherited). This demonstrates the power now aligned with Joseph.

Verse 43: And Manasseh laid hold of Simeon and he seized him violently and he bound him and brought him into the house of confinement, and all the sons of Jacob were astonished at the act of the youth.

Commentary: Manasseh's decisive action stuns the brothers, showcasing the power of Joseph's household.

Verse 44: And Simeon said to his brethren, "None of you must say that this is the striking of an Egyptian, but it is the striking of the house of my father."

Commentary: Simeon's cryptic comment here ("striking of the house of my father") is profound. He seems to sense, or perhaps even supernaturally perceive, that Manasseh is family (from Joseph's "house"). It could also imply that the source of such overwhelming strength could only come from within their own lineage, or that this "punishment" is from his own family, referring to the consequences of their actions against Joseph.

The Return Journey and Discovery of Money

Verse 45: And after this, Joseph ordered him to be called who was set over the storehouse, to fill their sacks with grain as much as they could carry, and to restore every man's money into his sack, and to give them provision for the road, and thus did he to them.

Commentary: Joseph proceeds with the plan to return their money, a key detail in the biblical account that causes the brothers great distress.

Verse 46: And Joseph commanded them, saying, "Take heed lest you transgress my orders to bring your brother as I have told you, and it shall be when you bring your brother here to me, then will I

know that you are true men, and you shall traffic in the land, and I will restore to you your brother, and you shall return in peace to your father."

Commentary: Joseph reinforces the condition for Simeon's release and their future safety and ability to trade in Egypt.

Verse 47: And they all answered and said, "According as our lord speaks, so will we do," and they bowed down to him to the ground.

Commentary: They agree to his terms, desperate to resolve their predicament.

Verse 48: And every man lifted his grain upon his donkey, and they went out to go to the land of Canaan to their father; and they came to the inn and **Levi spread his sack to give fodder to his donkey, when he saw and behold his money in full weight was still in his sack**.

Commentary: The discovery of the money begins, but Jasher specifies Levi as the first to discover it, unlike Genesis where it's one of the brothers (often interpreted as Reuben) at the first lodging place.

Verse 49: And the man was greatly afraid, and he said to his brethren, "My money is restored, and look, it is even in my sack!" And the men were greatly afraid, and they said, "What is this that God has done to us?"

Commentary: The fear and confusion of the brothers upon finding the money is a central element of the story, as they perceive it as a negative sign or a divine judgment.

Verse 50: And they all said, "And where is the Lord's kindness with our fathers, with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, that the Lord has this day delivered us into the hands of the king of Egypt to contrive against us?"

Commentary: They interpret the event as God's abandonment or punishment, feeling that they are being set up for misfortune.

Verse 51: And **Judah** said to them, "Surely we are guilty sinners before the Lord our God in having sold our brother, our own flesh, and why do you say, 'Where is the Lord's kindness with our fathers?'"

Commentary: Judah, reflecting the remorse that had begun earlier in the journey (v. 6), connects their current troubles directly to their past sin against Joseph, showing a growing sense of responsibility.

Verse 52: And **Reuben** said to them, "Did I not say to you, 'Do not sin against the lad,' and you would not listen to me? Now God requires him from us, and how dare you say, 'Where is the Lord's kindness with our fathers,' while you have sinned against the Lord?"

Commentary: Reuben also reinforces the connection between their current suffering and their past wrongdoing, recalling his attempts to prevent the sale of Joseph. He emphasizes that their sin is against God.

Verse 53: And they tarried overnight in that place, and they rose up early in the morning and loaded their donkeys with their grain, and they led them and went on and came to their father's house in the land of Canaan.

Commentary: They continue their journey home, burdened by the grain, Simeon's captivity, and the mysterious money.

Verse 54: And Jacob and his household went out to meet his sons, and Jacob saw and behold their brother **Simeon** was not with them, and Jacob said to his sons, "Where is your brother Simeon, whom I do not see?" And his sons told him all that had befallen them in Egypt.

Commentary: The arrival home brings the painful news to Jacob, whose immediate concern is for his missing son, Simeon. The brothers now must recount the harrowing tale of their encounter with the powerful Egyptian ruler.

This chapter is a dramatic recounting of the first encounter between Joseph and his brothers, adding several vivid details and twists not found in the biblical narrative, such as the brothers' initial search for Joseph in "houses of harlots," Simeon's incredible strength, and Manasseh's role in subduing him. These additions highlight Joseph's meticulous planning and the deepening sense of divine judgment felt by his brothers.

Book of Jasher, Chapter 52

The Brothers Return to Jacob

Verse 1: And they entered their house, and every man opened his sack, and they saw and behold, every man's bundle of money was there, at which they and their father were greatly terrified.

Commentary: The discovery of the returned money, initially found by Levi on the road, is now fully revealed to all the brothers and, critically, to Jacob. This causes immense fear and bewilderment, as they perceive it as a dangerous omen or a setup.

Verse 2: And Jacob said to them, "What is this that you have done to me? I sent your brother Joseph to inquire after your welfare, and you said to me, 'A wild beast devoured him.'"

Commentary: Jacob, overwhelmed by the new crises, immediately links their current troubles to past misfortunes. He specifically reminds them of their lie about Joseph's death, highlighting his long-standing grief.

Verse 3: "And Simeon went with you to buy food, and you say the king of Egypt has confined him in prison, and you wish to take Benjamin to cause his death also, and bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave on account of Benjamin and his brother Joseph."

Commentary: Jacob expresses his profound distress and despair. He sees a pattern of loss and deception, fearing that sending Benjamin will lead to another tragedy, ultimately hastening his own death. This is a common lament for Jacob throughout his trials.

Verse 4: "Now therefore, my son shall not go down with you, for his brother is dead and he is left alone, and mischief may befall him by the way in which you go, as it befell his brother."

Commentary: Jacob firmly refuses to let Benjamin go, clinging to the last remaining son of Rachel. His fear of Benjamin suffering the same fate as Joseph is paramount.

Verse 5: And **Reuben** said to his father, "You shall slay my two sons if I do not bring your son and place him before you." And Jacob said to his sons, "Stay here and do not go down to Egypt, for my son shall not go down with you to Egypt, nor die like his brother."

Commentary: Reuben makes a desperate and extreme oath, offering his own sons as collateral for Benjamin's safe return. This shows his remorse and desire to regain Jacob's trust, but Jacob remains resolute in his refusal.

Verse 6: And **Judah** said to them, "Refrain from him until the corn is finished, and he will then say, 'Take down your brother,' when he will find his own life and the life of his household in danger from the famine."

Commentary: Judah, ever the pragmatist, advises patience. He understands that Jacob's stance will change when the famine's severity truly hits and survival becomes the immediate priority. This foreshadows their future desperate state.

Verse 7: And in those days the famine was severe throughout the land, and all the people of the earth went and came to Egypt to buy food, for the famine prevailed greatly among them, and the sons of Jacob remained in Canaan **a year and two months** until their corn was finished.

Commentary: This verse specifies the duration of their remaining in Canaan after their first trip: a significant period of *over a year.* This detail (unique to Jasher) emphasizes the severity and prolonged nature of the famine, and the extent of Jacob's initial resistance, making their eventual surrender to the necessity of sending Benjamin all the more poignant.

Verse 8: And it came to pass after their corn was finished, the whole household of Jacob was pinched with hunger, and all the infants of the sons of Jacob came together and they approached Jacob, and they all surrounded him, and they said to him, "Give us bread, and why shall we all perish through hunger in your presence?"

Commentary: The famine has now reached a critical point, affecting even the youngest and most vulnerable members of the family. This direct appeal from his grandchildren pushes Jacob to reconsider.

Verse 9: Jacob heard the words of his son's children, and he wept a great weeping, and his pity was roused for them, and Jacob called to his sons and they all came and sat before him.

Commentary: The sight of his starving grandchildren breaks Jacob's resolve, stirring his compassion.

Verse 10: And Jacob said to them, "And have you not seen how your children have been weeping over me this day, saying, 'Give us bread,' and there is none? Now therefore, return and buy for us a little food."

Commentary: Jacob relents and instructs them to go back to Egypt for food, but the critical condition (bringing Benjamin) remains.

Judah's Plea and Description of Joseph

Verse 11: And **Judah** answered and said to his father, "If you will send our brother with us, we will go down and buy grain for you, and if you will not send him, then we will not go down, for surely the king of Egypt particularly enjoined us, saying, 'You shall not see my face unless your brother be with you,' for the king of Egypt is a strong and mighty king, and behold, if we shall go to him without our brother, we shall all be put to death."

Commentary: Judah takes the lead in advocating for Benjamin's departure, explaining the severe consequences if they do not comply with the Egyptian ruler's demand. He emphasizes the ruler's power and the grave danger they face.

Verse 12: "Do you not know and have you not heard that this king is very powerful and wise, and there is not like him in all the earth? Behold, we have seen all the kings of the earth and we have not seen one like that king, the king of Egypt; surely among all the kings of the earth there is none greater than **Abimelech king of the Philistines**, yet the king of Egypt is greater and mightier than he, and Abimelech can only be compared to one of his officers."

Commentary: Judah vividly describes the Egyptian ruler's unparalleled power and wisdom, comparing him favorably to Abimelech, a powerful king known to their family history. This detail (comparing him to Abimelech) is unique to Jasher and underscores the immense impression Joseph had made on them.

Verse 13: "Father, you have not seen his palace and his throne, and all his servants standing before him; you have not seen that king upon his throne in his pomp and royal appearance, dressed in his kingly robes with a large golden crown upon his head; you have not seen the honor and glory which God has given to him, for there is not like him in all the earth."

Commentary: Judah continues to impress upon Jacob the Egyptian ruler's awe-inspiring majesty and the divine favor he seems to possess, suggesting that defying him would be defying God's chosen representative.

Verse 14: "Father, you have not seen the wisdom, the understanding, and the knowledge which God has given in his heart, nor heard his sweet voice when he spoke to us."

Commentary: Judah emphasizes not just the ruler's external power but also his profound wisdom and even the charm of his voice. This intimate description is especially ironic, given who the ruler truly is.

Verse 15: "We know not, father, who made him acquainted with our names and all that befell us, yet he asked also after you, saying, 'Is your father still living, and is it well with him?'"

Commentary: The brothers are still baffled by Joseph's knowledge of their family details, a testament to his intelligence and their continued ignorance of his identity. They reveal his seemingly kind inquiry about Jacob.

Verse 16: "You have not seen the affairs of the government of Egypt regulated by him, without inquiring of Pharaoh his lord; you have not seen the awe and fear which he impressed upon all the Egyptians."

Commentary: Judah highlights Joseph's complete autonomy and control over the Egyptian government, operating independently of Pharaoh himself, and the respect he commands from the populace.

Verse 17: "And also when we went from him, we threatened to do to Egypt like to the rest of the cities of the Amorites, and we were exceedingly angry against all his words which he spoke concerning us as spies, and now when we shall again come before him his terror will fall upon us all, and not one of us will be able to speak to him either a little or a great thing."

Commentary: Judah recalls their initial anger and threats of violence (reminiscent of the Shechem incident), but now admits their fear. The terrifying encounter has changed them; they are no longer bold and aggressive but cowed and submissive before this powerful ruler. This is a crucial sign of their transformation.

Verse 18: "Now therefore, father, send we pray you the lad with us, and we will go down and buy you food for our support, and not die through hunger." And Jacob said, "Why have you dealt so ill with me to tell the king you had a brother? What is this thing that you have done to me?"

Commentary: Judah makes a direct plea for Benjamin. Jacob, however, again expresses his frustration, blaming them for revealing Benjamin's existence, a detail that has now put his youngest son at risk.

Verse 19: And Judah said to Jacob his father, "Give the lad into my care, and we will rise up and go down to Egypt and buy grain, and then return, and it shall be when we return if the lad be not with us, then let me bear your blame forever."

Commentary: Judah steps up, offering himself as surety for Benjamin, mirroring Reuben's earlier offer but without the extreme collateral. This is a pivotal moment, showing Judah's leadership and self-sacrifice.

Verse 20: "Have you seen all our infants weeping over you through hunger and there is no power in your hand to satisfy them? Now let your pity be roused for them and send our brother with us and we will go."

Commentary: Judah appeals to Jacob's compassion for the starving children, using it as a powerful argument.

Verse 21: "For how will the Lord's kindness to our ancestors be manifested to you when you say that the king of Egypt will take away your son? As the Lord lives, I will not leave him until I bring him and place him before you; but pray for us to the Lord, that he may deal kindly with us, to cause us to be received favorably and kindly before the king of Egypt and his men, for had we not delayed, surely now we had returned a second time with your son."

Commentary: Judah challenges Jacob's despair, reminding him of God's past faithfulness and expressing his personal vow of unwavering commitment to Benjamin. He urges Jacob to trust in God and to pray for their favor. He also suggests that their delay has worsened their situation.

Verse 22: And Jacob said to his sons, "I trust in the Lord God that he may deliver you and give you favor in the sight of the king of Egypt, and in the sight of all his men."

Commentary: Judah's persuasive arguments, combined with the extreme hunger, finally convince Jacob. He expresses his renewed trust in God's providence.

Verse 23: "Now therefore, rise up and go to the man, and take for him in your hands a present from what can be obtained in the land and bring it before him, and may the Almighty God give you mercy before him that he may send Benjamin and Simeon your brethren with you."

Commentary: Jacob instructs them to take a diplomatic gift, a sign of respect and an attempt to appease the powerful ruler. He prays for God's mercy on their behalf.

Verse 24: And all the men rose up, and they took their brother Benjamin, and they took in their hands a large present of the best of the land, and they also took a double portion of silver.

Commentary: The brothers prepare for the journey, taking Benjamin, the gift, and extra money, demonstrating their full commitment to following Jacob's instructions.

Verse 25: And Jacob strictly commanded his sons concerning Benjamin, saying, "Take heed of him in the way in which you are going, and do not separate yourselves from him in the road, neither in Egypt."

Commentary: Jacob, still anxious, gives stringent instructions for Benjamin's safety, highlighting his deep concern for his youngest son.

Jacob's Prayer and Letter to Pharaoh

Verse 26: And Jacob rose up from his sons and spread forth his hands and he prayed to the Lord on account of his sons, saying, "O Lord God of heaven and earth, remember your covenant with our father Abraham, remember it with my father Isaac and deal kindly with my sons and deliver them not into the hands of the king of Egypt; do it I pray you, O God, for the sake of your mercies and redeem all my children and rescue them from Egyptian power, and send them their two brothers."

Commentary: Jacob offers a heartfelt prayer, invoking God's covenant with his ancestors and pleading for the safe return of all his sons, including Joseph and Simeon.

Verse 27: And all the wives of the sons of Jacob and their children lifted up their eyes to heaven and they all wept before the Lord, and cried to him to deliver their fathers from the hand of the king of Egypt.

Commentary: The entire family participates in this prayer, emphasizing the gravity of the situation and their collective reliance on divine intervention.

Verse 28: And Jacob wrote a record to the king of Egypt and gave it into the hand of Judah and into the hands of his sons for the king of Egypt, saying,

Commentary: This detail, unique to Jasher, is highly significant: Jacob writes a personal letter to the Egyptian ruler, a diplomatic move demonstrating his desperation and respect.

Verse 29: "From your servant Jacob, son of Isaac, son of Abraham the Hebrew, the prince of God, to the powerful and wise king, the revealer of secrets, king of Egypt, greeting."

Commentary: Jacob's salutation is highly respectful, acknowledging the ruler's power, wisdom, and ability to interpret secrets (a subtle nod to the dream interpretation). He identifies himself with his lineage and as "the prince of God," perhaps to underscore his own spiritual standing.

Verse 30: "Be it known to my lord the king of Egypt, the famine was severe upon us in the land of Canaan, and I sent my sons to you to buy us a little food from you for our support."

Commentary: He begins by explaining their dire circumstances and their purpose in coming to Egypt.

Verse 31: "For my sons surrounded me and I being very old cannot see with my eyes, for my eyes have become very heavy through age, as well as with daily weeping for my son, for Joseph who was lost from before me, and I commanded my sons that they should not enter the gates of the city when they came to Egypt, on account of the inhabitants of the land."

Commentary: Jacob appeals to the ruler's sympathy by describing his age, his failing eyesight, and his perpetual grief over Joseph. He also justifies his sons' separate entry to the city as his instruction, a detail that had been used against them.

Verse 32: "And I also commanded them to go about Egypt to seek for my son Joseph, perhaps they might find him there, and they did so, and you did consider them as spies of the land."

Commentary: Jacob frankly addresses the "spy" accusation and, remarkably, confirms that he *did* instruct them to look for Joseph, even revealing their intention to search throughout Egypt. This provides an innocent explanation for their suspicious behavior.

Verse 33: "Have we not heard concerning you that you did interpret Pharaoh's dream and did speak truly to him? How then do you not know in your wisdom whether my sons are spies or not?"

Commentary: This is a bold and clever rhetorical move. Jacob challenges the ruler's famed wisdom: if he can interpret Pharaoh's dreams with divine insight, why can he not discern the truth about his sons' intentions? He subtly implies that such a wise man should know they are not spies.

Verse 34: "Now therefore, my lord and king, behold I have sent my son before you, as you did speak to my sons; I beseech you to put your eyes upon him until he is returned to me in peace with his brethren."

Commentary: Jacob states he has complied with the demand to send Benjamin, and pleads for Benjamin's safe return.

Verse 35: "For do you not know, or have you not heard that which our God did to Pharaoh when he took my mother Sarah, and what he did to Abimelech king of the Philistines on account of her, and also what our father Abraham did to the nine kings of Elam, how he struck them all with a few men that were with him?"

Commentary: This is a striking and potentially provocative section of the letter. Jacob implicitly threatens the Egyptian ruler by recounting instances where God protected his family through powerful interventions and where his ancestors demonstrated military prowess. He reminds the king of God's judgment on Pharaoh (for Sarah) and Abimelech, and Abraham's victory over the kings of Elam.

Verse 36: "And also what my two sons **Simeon and Levi** did to the eight cities of the Amorites, how they destroyed them on account of their sister Dinah?"

Commentary: This is a direct and chilling reminder of the Shechem massacre, explicitly naming Simeon and Levi as the perpetrators. This is an incredible and audacious move by Jacob, essentially reminding the most powerful man in Egypt that his sons are capable of extreme violence if their family is wronged. It also implicitly connects to Simeon's current imprisonment.

Verse 37: "And also on account of their brother Benjamin they consoled themselves for the loss of his brother Joseph; what will they then do for him when they see the hand of any people prevailing over them, for his sake?"

Commentary: Jacob highlights the brothers' extreme protectiveness of Benjamin (perhaps a subtle warning of their potential reaction if Benjamin is harmed), comparing it to their past grief over Joseph. This implies their loyalty has shifted to Benjamin.

Verse 38: "Do you not know, O king of Egypt, that the power of God is with us, and that also God ever hears our prayers and forsakes us not all the days?"

Commentary: Jacob asserts God's continuous presence and responsiveness to their prayers, reinforcing the idea of divine protection over his family.

Verse 39: "And when my sons told me of your dealings with them, I called not to the Lord on account of you, for then you would have perished with your men before my son Benjamin came before you, but I thought that as Simeon my son was in your house, perhaps you might deal kindly with him, therefore I did not this thing to you."

Commentary: This is an astonishing claim. Jacob suggests he *could have* called upon God to destroy Egypt and its ruler *but chose not to* because Simeon was held captive. This is a thinly veiled threat, implying that Egypt's fate rests on Benjamin's safe return and Simeon's kind treatment. It's an extraordinary display of chutzpah from Jacob.

Verse 40: "Now therefore behold Benjamin my son comes to you with my sons, take heed of him and put your eyes upon him, and then will God place his eyes over you and throughout your kingdom."

Commentary: Jacob concludes his letter with a final warning and a blessing (or curse, depending on the outcome) tied to the king's treatment of Benjamin.

Verse 41: "Now I have told you all that is in my heart, and behold my sons are coming to you with their brother, examine the face of the whole earth for their sake and send them back in peace with their brethren."

Commentary: Jacob closes by expressing his complete openness and pleading for their safe return.

Verse 42: And Jacob gave the record to his sons into the care of Judah to give it to the king of Egypt.

Commentary: Judah, as the one who guaranteed Benjamin's safety, is entrusted with this crucial letter, setting the stage for the next dramatic encounter with Joseph.

This chapter is highly dramatic, showcasing Jacob's profound grief and fear, the family's desperation due to famine, and Judah's courageous leadership. Most notably, it features Jacob's unique and audacious letter to the Egyptian ruler (Joseph), which is a blend of humble appeal, historical recounting of divine protection and family might, and a veiled threat. This letter significantly adds to the tension and intrigue of the narrative as it unfolds in the next chapter.

Book of Jasher, Chapter 53

The Brothers Arrive in Egypt with Benjamin

Verse 1: And the sons of Jacob rose up and took **Benjamin** and all the **presents**, and they went and came to Egypt, and they stood before Joseph.

Commentary: The brothers, having finally persuaded Jacob, embark on their second journey, bringing Benjamin and the gifts requested by the Egyptian ruler.

Verse 2: And Joseph beheld his brother Benjamin with them and he saluted them, and these men came to Joseph's house.

Commentary: Joseph sees Benjamin, a highly emotional moment for him. He greets them, and they are brought directly to his residence, a sign of special treatment.

Verse 3: And Joseph commanded the superintendent of his house to give to his brethren to eat, and he did so to them.

Commentary: Joseph immediately extends hospitality, providing them with food.

Verse 4: And at noon time Joseph sent for the men to come before him with Benjamin, and the men told the superintendent of Joseph's house concerning the silver that was returned in their sacks, and he said to them, "It will be well with you, fear not," and he brought their brother **Simeon** to them.

Commentary: The brothers, still worried about the returned money, confess it to Joseph's steward. The steward reassures them, echoing the biblical narrative ("Peace be to you, fear not; your God and the God of your father has given you treasure in your sacks"). Crucially, Simeon is released and reunited with his brothers, alleviating one of Jacob's main concerns.

Verse 5: And Simeon said to his brethren, "The lord of the Egyptians has acted very kindly to me; he did not keep me bound, as you saw with your eyes, for when you went out from the city he let me free and dealt kindly with me in his house."

Commentary: Simeon's account of his lenient treatment is unique to Jasher. This contradicts the biblical implication that Simeon remained imprisoned the entire time. It suggests that Joseph, despite his stern facade, treated Simeon with kindness, perhaps confirming his softening heart or his plan to make the brothers realize his generosity. This also makes the brothers' later reaction to Simeon's capture even more impactful.

The Meal and Joseph's Divination

Verse 6: And Judah took Benjamin by the hand, and they came before Joseph, and they bowed down to him to the ground.

Commentary: The dream of the sheaves bowing down is fulfilled once again, this time with Benjamin present. Judah's act of taking Benjamin's hand shows his responsibility for his safety.

Verse 7: And the men gave the present to Joseph and they all sat before him, and Joseph said to them, "Is it well with you? Is it well with your children? Is it well with your aged father?" And they said, "It is well," and Judah took the record which Jacob had sent and gave it into the hand of Joseph.

Commentary: Joseph inquires about their family's well-being, showing concern. Judah presents Jacob's letter, adding a unique and poignant detail to their encounter.

Verse 8: And Joseph read the letter and knew his father's writing, and he wished to weep and he went into an inner room and he wept a great weeping; and he went out.

Commentary: Jacob's letter deeply moves Joseph, bringing him to tears in private, highlighting his continued emotional struggle to maintain his disguise.

Verse 9: And he lifted up his eyes and beheld his brother Benjamin, and he said, "Is this your brother of whom you spoke to me?" And Benjamin approached Joseph, and Joseph placed his hand upon his head and he said to him, "May God be gracious to you, my son."

Commentary: Joseph speaks directly to Benjamin, using a term of endearment ("my son") that shows his affection. He blesses Benjamin, unable to fully contain his emotions.

Verse 10: And when Joseph saw his brother, the son of his mother, he again wished to weep, and he entered the chamber, and he wept there, and he washed his face, and went out and refrained from weeping, and he said, "Prepare food."

Commentary: The sight of Benjamin, his full brother, again overwhelms Joseph, forcing him to compose himself before returning to his brothers.

Verse 11: And Joseph had a cup from which he drank, and it was of silver beautifully inlaid with onyx stones and bdellium, and Joseph struck the cup in the sight of his brethren whilst they were sitting to eat with him.

Commentary: This detail about Joseph's cup is consistent with the biblical account where the cup is used in the test. Jasher describes the cup as being made of silver, inlaid with precious stones, and emphasizes Joseph's action of striking it, perhaps to draw attention to it or as part of a perceived divination ritual.

Verse 12: And Joseph said to the men, "I know by this cup that Reuben the firstborn, Simeon and Levi and Judah, Issachar and Zebulun are children from one mother, seat yourselves to eat according to your births."

Commentary: Joseph uses his "divining cup" to impress his brothers, seemingly revealing his supernatural knowledge of their family structure (that the six oldest are from Leah). This reinforces their belief in his extraordinary wisdom and power. He then orders them to sit in birth order.

Verse 13: And he also placed the others according to their births, and he said, "I know that this your youngest brother has no brother, and I, like him, have no brother, he shall therefore sit down to eat with me."

Commentary: Joseph specifically notes Benjamin's unique position (as the youngest, seemingly without a full brother) and claims a similar status for himself (as the "only" one of his kind among the Egyptians, though really referring to his true familial situation). He seats Benjamin with him, highlighting a special favor.

Verse 14: And Benjamin went up before Joseph and sat upon the throne, and the men beheld the acts of Joseph, and they were astonished at them; and the men ate and drank at that time with Joseph, and he then gave presents to them, and Joseph gave one gift to Benjamin, and **Manasseh and Ephraim** saw the acts of their father, and they also gave presents to him, and **Osnath** gave him one present, and they were five presents in the hand of Benjamin.

Commentary: Benjamin is given a seat of honor. The brothers are astonished by Joseph's actions and their host's power. Benjamin receives gifts from Joseph, and uniquely in Jasher, also from Manasseh, Ephraim, and Osnath, totaling five gifts, highlighting his favored status. This is a subtle yet significant detail not in the biblical account.

Verse 15: And Joseph brought them out wine to drink, and they would not drink, and they said, "From the day on which Joseph was lost we have not drunk wine, nor eaten any delicacies."

Commentary: This is a powerful expression of the brothers' prolonged mourning and remorse for Joseph, adding to their tragic character. It shows their continuous penance.

Verse 16: And Joseph swore to them, and he pressed them hard, and they drank plentifully with him on that day, and Joseph afterward turned to his brother Benjamin to speak with him, and Benjamin was still sitting upon the throne before Joseph.

Commentary: Joseph insists they break their vow, perhaps wanting to see them enjoy themselves, or to get them to lower their guard. They drink freely, suggesting a release of tension. Joseph then turns his attention to Benjamin.

Joseph's Revelation to Benjamin

Verse 17: And Joseph said to him, "Have you begotten any children?" And he said, "Your servant has ten sons, and these are their names: Bela, Becher, Ashbal, Gera, Naaman, Achi, Rosh, Mupim, Chupim, and Ord, and I called their names after my brother whom I have not seen."

Commentary: Benjamin reveals he has ten sons (consistent with some biblical genealogies but more specifically detailed here), and that he named them in remembrance of his lost brother Joseph, deeply touching Joseph.

Verse 18: And he ordered them to bring before him his **map of the stars, whereby Joseph knew all the times**, and Joseph said to Benjamin, "I have heard that the Hebrews are acquainted with all wisdom, do you know anything of this?"

Commentary: This is a fascinating and significant addition from Jasher. Joseph uses a seemingly magical "map of the stars" (an astrological or astronomical tool) to demonstrate his (perceived) wisdom. He challenges Benjamin to use his own Hebrew wisdom to discern Joseph's whereabouts.

Verse 19: And Benjamin said, "Your servant is knowing also in all the wisdom which my father taught me," and Joseph said to Benjamin, "Look now at this instrument and understand where your brother Joseph is in Egypt, who you said went down to Egypt."

Commentary: Benjamin confidently asserts his own knowledge, given by Jacob. Joseph presents the direct challenge.

Verse 20: And Benjamin beheld that instrument with the map of the stars of heaven, and he was wise and looked therein to know where his brother was, and Benjamin divided the whole land of Egypt into four divisions, and he found that **he who was sitting upon the throne before him was his brother Joseph**, and Benjamin wondered greatly, and when Joseph saw that his brother Benjamin was so much astonished, he said to Benjamin, "What have you seen, and why are you astonished?"

Commentary: This is the climactic moment. Benjamin, using his own wisdom and the "star map," supernaturally discerns Joseph's true identity. His astonishment confirms his discovery. This is a powerful, supernatural detail unique to Jasher, portraying Benjamin as exceptionally wise and divinely insightful.

Verse 21: And Benjamin said to Joseph, "I can see by this that Joseph my brother sits here with me upon the throne," and Joseph said to him, "I am Joseph your brother, reveal not this thing to your brethren; behold I will send you with them when they go away, and I will command them to be brought back again into the city, and I will take you away from them."

Commentary: Benjamin directly names Joseph, and Joseph confirms his identity, but immediately instructs Benjamin to keep it a secret. He outlines his plan to stage a confrontation (the cup incident) to test the loyalty of the other brothers.

Verse 22: "And if they dare their lives and fight for you, then shall I know that they have repented of what they did to me, and I will make myself known to them, and if they forsake you when I take you, then shall you remain with me, and I will wrangle with them, and they shall go away, and I will not become known to them."

Commentary: Joseph clearly articulates the purpose of his elaborate test: to determine if his brothers have truly changed and are willing to risk everything for Benjamin, unlike their past betrayal of him. This reveals the depth of his desire for their genuine repentance and transformation.

The Stolen Cup and Return to Joseph

Verse 23: At that time Joseph commanded his officer to fill their sacks with food, and to put each man's money into his sack, and to put the **cup in the sack of Benjamin**, and to give them provision for the road, and they did so to them.

Commentary: Joseph proceeds with the setup, placing the cup in Benjamin's sack, similar to the biblical account.

Verse 24: And on the next day the men rose up early in the morning, and they loaded their donkeys with their corn, and they went forth with Benjamin, and they went to the land of Canaan with their brother Benjamin.

Commentary: The brothers depart, believing they have successfully completed their mission.

Verse 25: They had not gone far from Egypt when Joseph commanded him that was set over his house, saying, "Rise, pursue these men before they get too far from Egypt, and say to them, 'Why have you stolen my master's cup?'"

Commentary: Joseph initiates the chase and the accusation, setting the trap.

Verse 26: And Joseph's officer rose up and he reached them, and he spoke to them all the words of Joseph; and when they heard this thing they became exceedingly wroth, and they said, "He with whom your master's cup shall be found shall die, and we will also become slaves."

Commentary: The brothers, confident in their innocence, vehemently deny the accusation and impose a severe penalty upon themselves, agreeing to be enslaved if the cup is found among them. This shows their strong commitment to honor and their belief that they are not thieves.

Verse 27: And they hastened and each man brought down his sack from his ass, and they looked in their bags and the cup was found in Benjamin's bag, and they all tore their garments and they returned to the city, and they **smote Benjamin in the road, continually smiting him until he came into the city**, and they stood before Joseph.

Commentary: The discovery of the cup in Benjamin's sack is a moment of horror. Unique to Jasher is the detail that the brothers, in their rage, fear, and despair, physically attack Benjamin on the way back to the city. This harsh reaction highlights their shock and distress, and perhaps a reversion to their old, violent ways under extreme pressure, which further underscores the importance of Joseph's test of their change.

Verse 28: And **Judah's** anger was kindled, and he said, "This man has only brought me back to destroy Egypt this day."

Commentary: Judah, known for his strong reactions, expresses his despair, believing this incident will lead to their ruin and potentially bring divine judgment upon Egypt.

Verse 29: And the men came to Joseph's house, and they found Joseph sitting upon his throne, and all the mighty men standing at his right and left.

Commentary: They return to Joseph's presence, the setting emphasizing his authority and power.

Verse 30: And Joseph said to them, "What is this act that you have done, that you took away my silver cup and went away? But I know that you took my cup in order to know thereby in what part of the land your brother was."

Commentary: Joseph maintains his accusations, adding a specific twist: he claims they stole the cup for divination purposes to find their brother. This adds another layer to his manipulative test, suggesting he knows their hidden desires.

Verse 31: And Judah said, "What shall we say to our lord, what shall we speak and how shall we justify ourselves, God has this day found the iniquity of all your servants, therefore has he done this thing to us this day."

Commentary: Judah's response is one of resignation and self-condemnation. He does not deny the accusation but attributes it to God revealing their past "iniquity" (the selling of Joseph). This indicates a genuine sense of guilt and remorse, even if they don't fully understand the immediate cause of their misfortune.

Verse 32: And Joseph rose up and caught hold of Benjamin and took him from his brethren with violence, and he came to the house and locked the door at them, and Joseph commanded him that was set over his house that he should say to them, "Thus says the king, 'Go in peace to your father, behold I have taken the man in whose hand my cup was found.'"

Commentary: Joseph violently seizes Benjamin, further increasing the tension and testing the brothers' reaction. He orders them to leave, essentially giving them permission to abandon Benjamin. This is the ultimate test of their loyalty and their newfound commitment to protecting Benjamin. The stage is now set for Judah's climactic intercession.

This chapter vividly portrays the emotional complexity of Joseph's reunion with his brothers and his meticulous plan to test their change of heart. The unique details, such as Simeon's kind treatment during imprisonment, Benjamin's supernatural ability to discern Joseph's identity through the "star map," and the brothers' violent reaction to finding the cup in Benjamin's sack, add dramatic flair and further illuminate the characters' motivations and transformations.

Book of Jasher, Chapter 54

Judah's Confrontation with Joseph

Verse 1: And when Judah saw Joseph's actions toward them, Judah approached him and **broke open the door**, and came with his brethren before Joseph.

Commentary: This dramatic entry emphasizes Judah's fierce determination and his refusal to be dismissed. The act of "breaking open the door" highlights his immediate, forceful response to Joseph's attempt to isolate Benjamin.

Verse 2: And Judah said to Joseph, "Let it not seem grievous in the sight of my lord, may your servant, I pray you, speak a word before you?" And Joseph said to him, "Speak."

Commentary: Despite his forceful entry, Judah quickly shifts to a respectful tone, seeking permission to speak. Joseph grants it, setting the stage for Judah's powerful plea.

Verse 3: And Judah spoke before Joseph, and his brethren were standing there before them; and Judah said to Joseph, "Surely when we first came to our lord to buy food, you considered us as spies of the land, and we brought Benjamin before you, and you still make sport of us this day."

Commentary: Judah directly addresses Joseph's past accusations and his current actions, interpreting the cup incident as a cruel "sport" or mockery, emphasizing the injustice they feel.

Verse 4: "Now therefore, let the king hear my words, and send, I pray you, our brother that he may go along with us to our father, lest your soul perish this day with all the souls of the inhabitants of Egypt."

Commentary: Judah's plea quickly turns into a bold warning, implicitly threatening divine judgment or a violent retaliation if Benjamin is not released. This is a dramatic escalation from a mere request.

Verse 5: "Do you not know what two of my brethren, **Simeon and Levi**, did to the city of Shechem, and to seven cities of the Amorites, on account of our sister Dinah, and also what they would do for the sake of their brother Benjamin?"

Commentary: Judah openly recounts the massacre at Shechem and hints that their capacity for violence extends to protecting Benjamin. This is a deliberate and chilling reminder of their ruthlessness. Jasher adds "seven cities of the Amorites" to their destructive resume, amplifying their formidable nature.

Verse 6: "And I with my strength, who am greater and mightier than both of them, come this day upon you and your land if you are unwilling to send our brother."

Commentary: Judah positions himself as even more formidable than Simeon and Levi, directly threatening Joseph and all of Egypt. This is an extraordinary boast, demonstrating his desperate resolve and willingness to fight.

Verse 7: "Have you not heard what our God who made choice of us did to Pharaoh on account of Sarah our mother, whom he took away from our father, that he struck him and his household with heavy plagues, that even to this day the Egyptians relate this wonder to each other? So will our God do to you on account of Benjamin whom you have this day taken from his father, and on account of the evils which you this day heap over us in your land; for our God will remember his covenant with our father Abraham and bring evil upon you, because you have grieved the soul of our father this day."

Commentary: Judah continues his verbal assault by reminding Joseph of past divine interventions on behalf of their ancestors, specifically the plagues on Pharaoh for Sarah. He warns that God will

similarly punish Egypt for the distress caused to Jacob and the seizure of Benjamin. This is a powerful spiritual threat.

Verse 8: "Now therefore hear my words that I have this day spoken to you, and send our brother that he may go away lest you and the people of your land die by the sword, for you cannot all prevail over me."

Commentary: Judah directly threatens physical destruction, asserting his superior might over Joseph's entire nation. His declaration "you cannot all prevail over me" suggests a supernatural element to his strength and determination.

Verse 9: And Joseph answered Judah, saying, "Why have you opened wide your mouth and why do you boast over us, saying, 'Strength is with you'? As Pharaoh lives, if I command all my valiant men to fight with you, surely you and these your brethren would sink in the mire."

Commentary: Joseph retorts, challenging Judah's boast and reminding him of Egypt's military might, threatening to easily overpower them. This is Joseph trying to maintain his disguise and authority.

Verse 10: And Judah said to Joseph, "Surely it becomes you and your people to fear me; as the Lord lives, if I once draw my sword I shall not sheathe it again until I shall this day have slain all Egypt, and I will commence with you and finish with Pharaoh your master."

Commentary: Judah escalates the threat even further, vowing to annihilate all of Egypt, from Joseph to Pharaoh himself, once his sword is drawn. This is an incredible and audacious declaration, revealing the extent of his desperation and rage.

Verse 11: And Joseph answered and said to him, "Surely strength belongs not alone to you; I am stronger and mightier than you, surely if you draw your sword I will put it to your neck and the necks of all your brethren."

Commentary: Joseph continues the verbal duel, asserting his own superior strength and threatening immediate execution. This tests Judah's resolve.

Verse 12: And Judah said to him, "Surely if I this day open my mouth against you I would swallow you up that you be destroyed from off the earth and perish this day from your kingdom." And Joseph said, "Surely if you open your mouth I have power and might to close your mouth with a stone until you shall not be able to utter a word; see how many stones are before us, truly I can take a stone, and force it into your mouth and break your jaws."

Commentary: The exchange becomes even more vivid and violent. Judah threatens to "swallow up" Joseph, indicating a mystical or overwhelming power. Joseph counters by threatening to physically brutalize Judah, demonstrating his own immense power and willingness to use it. The intensity of this verbal combat is unique to Jasher.

Verse 13: And Judah said, "God is witness between us, that we have not hitherto desired to battle with you, only give us our brother and we will go from you"; and Joseph answered and said, "As Pharaoh lives, if all the kings of Canaan came together with you, you should not take him from my hand."

Commentary: Judah tries to de-escalate, appealing to God as a witness, and reiterating their sole demand. Joseph, however, remains unyielding, emphasizing his unshakeable grip on Benjamin.

Verse 14: "Now therefore go your way to your father, and your brother shall be to me for a slave, for he has robbed the king's house." And Judah said, "What is it to you or to the character of the king, surely the king sends forth from his house, throughout the land, silver and gold either in gifts or expenses, and you still talk about your cup which you did place in our brother's bag and say that he has stolen it from you?"

Commentary: Joseph states his final judgment: Benjamin remains a slave. Judah, in a bold and insightful counter-argument, hints at the possibility of a setup. He questions why such a powerful king would fuss over a single cup when he distributes vast amounts of wealth. He implicitly accuses Joseph of fabricating the theft.

Verse 15: "God forbid that our brother Benjamin or any of the seed of Abraham should do this thing to steal from you, or from anyone else, whether king, prince, or any man."

Commentary: Judah defends Benjamin's character and the integrity of their lineage, arguing that stealing is antithetical to the descendants of Abraham.

Verse 16: "Now therefore cease this accusation lest the whole earth hear your words, saying, 'For a little silver the king of Egypt wrangled with the men, and he accused them and took their brother for a slave.'"

Commentary: Judah warns Joseph of the damage to his reputation, framing the incident as petty and unjust in the eyes of the world.

Verse 17: And Joseph answered and said, "Take to you this cup and go from me and leave your brother for a slave, for it is the judgment of a thief to be a slave."

Commentary: Joseph offers a tempting compromise: the cup (and likely the money) in exchange for Benjamin. This is another test of their loyalty.

Verse 18: And Judah said, "Why are you not ashamed of your words, to leave our brother and to take your cup? Surely if you give us your cup, or a thousand times as much, we will not leave our brother for the silver which is found in the hand of any man, that we will not die over him."

Commentary: Judah vehemently rejects the offer, stating their absolute refusal to abandon Benjamin, even for immense wealth. He declares their willingness to die for him. This is a pivotal moment demonstrating their transformation from those who sold Joseph.

Verse 19: And Joseph answered, "And why did you forsake your brother and sell him for twenty pieces of silver to this day, and why then will you not do the same to this your brother?"

Commentary: Joseph finally drops a direct, devastating accusation, revealing his knowledge of their past crime. This is the ultimate test, confronting them with their greatest sin.

Verse 20: And Judah said, "The Lord is witness between me and you that we desire not your battles; now therefore give us our brother and we will go from you without quarreling."

Commentary: Judah, shaken by Joseph's revelation, again tries to de-escalate, appealing to God as a witness and promising to leave if Benjamin is released.

Verse 21: And Joseph answered and said, "If all the kings of the land should assemble they will not be able to take your brother from my hand"; and Judah said, "What shall we say to our father, when he sees that our brother comes not with us, and will grieve over him?"

Commentary: Joseph reiterates his unyielding stance. Judah's question focuses on the devastating impact on Jacob, highlighting their concern for their father.

Verse 22: And Joseph answered and said, "This is the thing which you shall tell to your father, saying, 'The rope has gone after the bucket.'"

Commentary: Joseph's cryptic and cruel metaphor implies that Benjamin's fate follows Joseph's own (the "bucket" is lost, so the "rope" will follow). This is a harsh, personal jab.

Verse 23: And Judah said, "Surely you are a king, and why speak you these things, giving a false judgment? Woe to the king who is like you."

Commentary: Judah condemns Joseph for his injustice and cruel words, questioning his regal conduct.

Verse 24: And Joseph answered and said, "There is no false judgment in the word that I spoke on account of your brother Joseph, for all of you sold him to the Midianites for twenty pieces of silver, and you all denied it to your father and said to him, 'An evil beast has devoured him, Joseph has been torn to pieces.'"

Commentary: Joseph reiterates the full truth of their betrayal, leaving no doubt about his knowledge of their past. This confirms his identity to the reader, though the brothers are still oblivious.

Verse 25: And Judah said, "Behold, the fire of Shem burns in my heart, now I will burn all your land with fire"; and Joseph answered and said, "Surely your sister-in-law **Tamar**, who killed your sons, extinguished the fire of Shechem."

Commentary: This is a truly remarkable and intense exchange, unique to Jasher. Judah's threat to burn Egypt with the "fire of Shem" (a reference to divine judgment or ancestral power) is met by Joseph's crushing retort, bringing up the scandalous affair with Tamar and the death of Judah's sons (Er and Onan, as a result of divine judgment on them for their wickedness related to Tamar). This is a deeply personal and humiliating attack on Judah, implying his own past sins have weakened his position or authority. The reference to "Tamar who killed your sons" is a harsh accusation, although biblically, God was responsible for their deaths. Joseph is deliberately provoking him.

Verse 26: And Judah said, "If I pluck out a single hair from my flesh, I will fill all Egypt with its blood."

Commentary: Judah's threat reaches an extreme level of violence, demonstrating his intense rage and desperation.

Verse 27: And Joseph answered and said, "Such is your custom to do as you did to your brother whom you sold, and you dipped his coat in blood and brought it to your father in order that he might say an evil beast devoured him and here is his blood."

Commentary: Joseph continues to twist the knife, reminding them of their cruel deception with Joseph's blood-stained coat. This highlights their history of violence and deceit.

Verse 28: And when Judah heard this thing he was exceedingly wroth and his anger burned within him, and there was before him in that place a stone, the weight of which was about **four hundred shekels** (approx. 10 pounds/4.5 kg), and Judah's anger was kindled and he took the stone in one hand and cast it to the heavens and caught it with his left hand.

Commentary: Judah's rage reaches a boiling point, manifested in a display of superhuman strength. Lifting and tossing a 10-pound stone with one hand and catching it is an incredible feat, showcasing the ancestral power and divine strength attributed to the patriarchs in Jasher.

Verse 29: And he placed it afterward under his legs, and he sat upon it with all his strength and the stone was turned into dust from the force of Judah.

Commentary: This is an astonishing feat of strength unique to Jasher. Judah's power is so immense that he pulverizes a heavy stone simply by sitting on it with anger. This emphasizes his raw, terrifying power, which would be visible to Joseph.

Verse 30: And Joseph saw the act of Judah and he was very much afraid, but he commanded Manasseh his son and he also did with another stone like to the act of Judah, and Judah said to his brethren, "Let not any of you say, this man is an Egyptian, but by his doing this thing he is of our father's family."

Commentary: Joseph is visibly shaken by Judah's display of power, recognizing the danger. However, he commands his son Manasseh to replicate the feat. Manasseh successfully does so, which is another remarkable detail of Jasher, signifying that Joseph's own line possesses the same divine strength. Judah's comment ("he is of our father's family") shows his shock and a glimmer of recognition (or at least, an understanding that Manasseh shares their miraculous strength).

Verse 31: And Joseph said, "Not to you only is strength given, for we are also powerful men, and why will you boast over us all?" And Judah said to Joseph, "Send I pray you our brother and ruin not your country this day."

Commentary: Joseph continues to maintain his facade, claiming similar power for himself and his family. Judah, however, recognizes the potential for a catastrophic conflict and appeals to Joseph to release Benjamin to prevent destruction.

Verse 32: And Joseph answered and said to them, "Go and tell your father, 'An evil beast has devoured him' as you said concerning your brother Joseph."

Commentary: Joseph delivers another deeply cutting and revealing line, echoing their own lie about Joseph's death, reiterating his knowledge of their past deception.

Verse 33: And Judah spoke to his brother **Naphtali**, and he said to him, "Make haste, go now and number all the streets of Egypt and come and tell me"; and **Simeon** said to him, "Let not this thing be a trouble to you; now I will go to the mount and take up one large stone from the mount and level it at every one in Egypt, and kill all that are in it."

Commentary: The brothers consider large-scale destruction. Judah sends Naphtali to scout for their attack, while Simeon, still displaying immense power and a vengeful spirit, proposes a catastrophic act of leveling the entire country with a mountain-sized stone. This showcases their willingness to go to extreme measures.

Verse 34: And Joseph heard all these words that his brethren spoke before him, and they did not know that Joseph understood them, for they imagined that he knew not to speak Hebrew.

Commentary: This emphasizes the irony: Joseph understands every threat they make in Hebrew, increasing his anxiety about their destructive potential.

Verse 35: And Joseph was greatly afraid at the words of his brethren lest they should destroy Egypt, and he commanded his son Manasseh, saying, "Go now, make haste and gather to me all the inhabitants of Egypt, and all the valiant men together, and let them come to me now upon horseback and on foot and with all sorts of musical instruments," and Manasseh went and did so.

Commentary: Joseph's fear is genuine; he takes the threats seriously and orders a full mobilization of Egyptian forces, complete with "musical instruments" perhaps for intimidation or a battle signal.

Verse 36: And Naphtali went as Judah had commanded him, for Naphtali was light-footed as one of the swift stags, and he would go upon the ears of corn and they would not break under him.

Commentary: Naphtali's exceptional speed and agility are highlighted, allowing him to quickly survey the land without causing damage, a useful skill for a scout. This is another example of the extraordinary abilities attributed to the patriarchs in Jasher.

Verse 37: And he went and numbered all the streets of Egypt, and found them to be twelve, and he came hastily and told Judah, and Judah said to his brethren, "Hasten you and put on every man his sword upon his loins and we will come over Egypt, and strike them all, and let not a remnant remain."

Commentary: Naphtali's report confirms the layout for their coordinated attack. Judah, now fully committed, orders his brothers to prepare for an all-out annihilation of Egypt.

Verse 38: And Judah said, "Behold, I will destroy three of the streets with my strength, and you shall each destroy one street"; and when Judah was speaking this thing, behold the inhabitants of Egypt and all the mighty men came toward them with all sorts of musical instruments and with loud shouting.

Commentary: Judah boldly plans to personally destroy three streets, assigning the rest to his brothers. The arrival of the Egyptian army, with their intimidating clamor, creates a dramatic standoff.

Verse 39: And their number was **five hundred cavalry and ten thousand infantry**, and four hundred men who could fight without sword or spear, only with their hands and strength.

Commentary: The vast numbers of the Egyptian army are specified, underscoring the formidable force arrayed against the few brothers. The "four hundred men who could fight... with their hands and strength" are likely elite shock troops.

Verse 40: And all the mighty men came with great storming and shouting, and they all surrounded the sons of Jacob and terrified them, and the ground quaked at the sound of their shouting.

Commentary: The Egyptian army's display of power is designed to intimidate.

Verse 41: And when the sons of Jacob saw these troops they were greatly afraid of their lives, and Joseph did so in order to terrify the sons of Jacob to become tranquilized.

Commentary: The brothers are initially terrified, which was Joseph's intention – to subdue their rage and make them amenable to his demands.

Verse 42: And Judah, seeing some of his brethren terrified, said to them, "Why are you afraid whilst the grace of God is with us?" And when Judah saw all the people of Egypt surrounding them at the command of Joseph to terrify them, only Joseph commanded them, saying, "Do not touch any of them."

Commentary: Judah rallies his brothers, reminding them of God's favor. He also observes that Joseph's command to his troops not to harm them suggests a lack of actual malicious intent from the ruler.

Verse 43: Then Judah hastened and drew his sword, and uttered a loud and bitter scream, and he struck with his sword, and he sprang upon the ground and he still continued to shout against all the people.

Commentary: Judah initiates the attack with a fearsome, desperate cry and a display of his fighting prowess.

Verse 44: And when he did this thing the Lord caused the terror of Judah and his brethren to fall upon the valiant men and all the people that surrounded them.

Commentary: This is a crucial intervention. God amplifies the brothers' (especially Judah's) terrifying presence, turning their fear into a weapon against the Egyptians.

Verse 45: And they all fled at the sound of the shouting, and they were terrified and fell one upon the other, and many of them died as they fell, and they all fled from before Judah and his brethren and from before Joseph.

Commentary: The Egyptian army, despite their numerical superiority, is routed by the divine terror emanating from the brothers. This again highlights the supernatural power associated with Jacob's family in Jasher.

Verse 46: And whilst they were fleeing, Judah and his brethren pursued them to the house of Pharaoh, and they all escaped, and Judah again sat before Joseph and roared at him like a lion, and gave a great and tremendous shriek at him.

Commentary: The brothers press their advantage, driving the Egyptians all the way to Pharaoh's palace. Judah returns to Joseph and unleashes another terrifying, lion-like roar, a sound intended to intimidate and demonstrate his continued fury.

Verse 47: And the shriek was heard at a distance, and all the inhabitants of Succoth heard it, and all Egypt quaked at the sound of the shriek, and also the walls of Egypt and of the land of Goshen fell in from the shaking of the earth, and Pharaoh also fell from his throne upon the ground, and also all the pregnant women of Egypt and Goshen miscarried when they heard the noise of the shaking, for they were terribly afraid.

Commentary: This is one of the most exaggerated and dramatic details in Jasher. Judah's roar has a cataclysmic effect, causing distant cities to hear it, all of Egypt to quake, walls to collapse (including Goshen), Pharaoh to fall from his throne, and all pregnant women to miscarry. This supernatural devastation underscores the immense power the patriarchs could wield, effectively forcing Joseph's hand.

Verse 48: And Pharaoh sent word, saying, "What is this thing that has this day happened in the land of Egypt?" And they came and told him all the things from beginning to end, and Pharaoh was alarmed and he wondered and was greatly afraid.

Commentary: Pharaoh, witnessing the catastrophic effects of the confrontation, is filled with alarm and fear, demanding an explanation.

Verse 49: And his fright increased when he heard all these things, and he sent to Joseph, saying, "You have brought to me the Hebrews to destroy all Egypt; what will you do with that thievish slave? Send him away and let him go with his brethren, and let us not perish through their evil, even we, you and all Egypt."

Commentary: Pharaoh is now terrified of Joseph's brothers, viewing them as a destructive force. He urges Joseph to release Benjamin to prevent further devastation, even calling Benjamin a "thievish slave" to appease them.

Verse 50: "And if you desire not to do this thing, cast off from you all my valuable things, and go with them to their land, if you delight in it, for they will this day destroy my whole country and slay all my people; even all the women of Egypt have miscarried through their screams; see what they have done merely by their shouting and speaking, moreover if they fight with the sword, they will destroy the land; now therefore choose that which you desire, whether me or the Hebrews, whether Egypt or the land of the Hebrews."

Commentary: Pharaoh's fear is so absolute that he offers Joseph a choice: either release Benjamin or leave Egypt with the Hebrews and take all his wealth. He acknowledges their destructive power and the devastating effect of their mere "shouting," suggesting their potential with weapons is unimaginable. This shows Pharaoh is completely intimidated and prioritizes the survival of his kingdom over any perceived slight.

Verse 51: And they came and told Joseph all the words of Pharaoh that he had said concerning him, and Joseph was greatly afraid at the words of Pharaoh and Judah and his brethren were still standing before Joseph indignant and enraged, and all the sons of Jacob roared at Joseph, like the roaring of the sea and its waves.

Commentary: Joseph receives Pharaoh's desperate message, which, combined with his brothers' continued fury and their collective "roaring," pushes him to the brink.

Verse 52: And Joseph was greatly afraid of his brethren and on account of Pharaoh, and Joseph sought a pretext to make himself known to his brethren, lest they should destroy all Egypt.

Commentary: Joseph is finally forced to act. The threats of his brothers and Pharaoh's desperate plea compel him to reveal his identity to prevent further chaos and destruction.

Joseph Reveals Himself

Verse 53: And Joseph commanded his son Manasseh, and Manasseh went and approached Judah, and placed his hand upon his shoulder, and the anger of Judah was stilled.

Commentary: Manasseh's touch (the "striking of the house of my father" from the previous chapter) has a calming effect on Judah's rage, a symbolic gesture of reconciliation or a demonstration of shared, unique power.

Verse 54: And Judah said to his brethren, "Let no one of you say that this is the act of an Egyptian youth for this is the work of my father's house."

Commentary: Judah again recognizes the familial connection in Manasseh's action, reiterating that this power comes from their shared lineage, subtly hinting at Joseph's identity.

Verse 55: And Joseph seeing and knowing that Judah's anger was stilled, he approached to speak to Judah in the language of mildness.

Commentary: With Judah calmer, Joseph shifts his tone, ready to move towards reconciliation.

Verse 56: And Joseph said to Judah, "Surely you speak truth and have this day verified your assertions concerning your strength, and may your God who delights in you, increase your welfare; but tell me truly why from among all your brethren do you wrangle with me on account of the lad, as none of them have spoken one word to me concerning him."

Commentary: Joseph acknowledges Judah's immense power and courage, validating his claims. He then subtly prompts Judah to explain his unique passion for Benjamin, setting up Judah's famous intercession.

Verse 57: And Judah answered Joseph, saying, "Surely you must know that I was security for the lad to his father, saying, 'If I brought him not to him I should bear his blame forever.'"

Commentary: Judah gives his powerful reason: he pledged his life and honor as surety for Benjamin, a testament to his profound change and responsibility.

Verse 58: "Therefore have I approached you from among all my brethren, for I saw that you were unwilling to suffer him to go from you; now therefore may I find grace in your sight that you shall send him to go with us, and behold I will remain as a substitute for him, to serve you in whatever you desire, for wherever you shall send me I will go to serve you with great energy."

Commentary: Judah offers himself as a slave in Benjamin's place, showcasing supreme self-sacrifice and loyalty. This is the ultimate test of their transformation, demonstrating a complete reversal of their past actions towards Joseph.

Verse 59: "Send me now to a mighty king who has rebelled against you, and you shall know what I will do to him and to his land; although he may have cavalry and infantry or an exceeding mighty people, I will slay them all and bring the king's head before you."

Commentary: Judah, in his impassioned plea, offers his formidable strength in service to Joseph, further demonstrating his capability and desperate desire to save Benjamin.

Verse 60: "Do you not know or have you not heard that our father Abraham with his servant **Eliezer** struck all the kings of Elam with their hosts in one night, they left not one remaining? And ever since that day our father's strength was given to us for an inheritance, for us and our seed forever."

Commentary: Judah continues to link their strength to their patriarchal heritage, reminding Joseph of Abraham's victory over the kings of Elam, implying this power is a divine inheritance within their family.

Verse 61: And Joseph answered and said, "You speak truth, and falsehood is not in your mouth, for it was also told to us that the Hebrews have power and that the Lord their God delights much in them, and who then can stand before them?"

Commentary: Joseph acknowledges the truth of Judah's words about the Hebrews' divine power, further validating their incredible displays of strength.

Verse 62: "However, on this condition will I send your brother, if you will bring before me his brother the son of his mother, of whom you said that he had gone from you down to Egypt; and it shall come to pass when you bring to me his brother I will take him in his stead, because not one of you was security for him to your father, and when he shall come to me, I will then send with you his brother for whom you have been security."

Commentary: Joseph, maintaining the ruse for one last time, twists the knife, asking for the "other" brother (Joseph himself) as collateral for Benjamin, knowing this is impossible for them. This is the final and most agonizing test.

Verse 63: And Judah's anger was kindled against Joseph when he spoke this thing, and his eyes dropped blood with anger, and he said to his brethren, "How does this man this day seek his own destruction and that of all Egypt!"

Commentary: Judah's fury is reignited by this impossible demand, and his physical reaction ("eyes dropped blood") demonstrates the intensity of his rage, again hinting at his superhuman nature. He views Joseph's demand as a suicidal act for Egypt.

Verse 64: And Simeon answered Joseph, saying, "Did we not tell you at first that we knew not the particular spot to which he went, and whether he be dead or alive, and why speak your lord like to these things?"

Commentary: Simeon, though previously fierce, now attempts to reason with Joseph, pointing out the absurdity of demanding a brother whose whereabouts are unknown.

Verse 65: And Joseph observing the countenance of Judah discerned that his anger began to kindle when he spoke to him, saying, "Bring to me your other brother instead of this brother."

Commentary: Joseph sees Judah's renewed rage and realizes he has pushed them to their limit, making the revelation imminent.

Verse 66: And Joseph said to his brethren, "Surely you said that your brother was either dead or lost, now if I should call him this day and he should come before you, would you give him to me instead of his brother?"

Commentary: Joseph sets the stage for the revelation, leading them to question their own narrative.

Verse 67: And Joseph began to speak and call out, "**Joseph, Joseph, come this day before me, and appear to your brethren and sit before them**."

Commentary: This is the momentous call. Joseph calls for himself, in his own original name, a dramatic action setting the scene for his self-revelation.

Verse 68: And when Joseph spoke this thing before them, they looked each a different way to see from where Joseph would come before them.

Commentary: The brothers are utterly confused, looking for a third party to appear, still unable to comprehend the truth.

Verse 69: And Joseph observed all their acts, and said to them, "Why do you look here and there? **I am Joseph whom you sold to Egypt**, now therefore let it not grieve you that you sold me, for as a support during the famine did God send me before you."

Commentary: The climactic reveal. Joseph drops his disguise and states the undeniable truth. He immediately offers comfort, attributing his presence in Egypt to God's providential plan to save them from famine, forgiving their past actions.

Verse 70: And his brethren were terrified at him when they heard the words of Joseph, and Judah was exceedingly terrified at him.

Commentary: Their initial reaction is terror, a mixture of shock, guilt, and perhaps fear of retribution. Judah, who had been so defiant, is particularly overcome.

Verse 71: And when Benjamin heard the words of Joseph he was before them in the inner part of the house, and Benjamin ran to Joseph his brother, and embraced him and fell upon his neck, and they wept.

Commentary: Benjamin, already knowing, embraces his brother, their shared tears signifying their deep bond and reunion.

Verse 72: And when Joseph's brethren saw that Benjamin had fallen upon his brother's neck and wept with him, they also fell upon Joseph and embraced him, and they wept a great weeping with Joseph.

Commentary: The other brothers, finally realizing the truth, join the emotional reunion, their tears of shock and remorse mingling with joy.

Verse 73: And the voice was heard in the house of Joseph that they were Joseph's brethren, and it pleased Pharaoh exceedingly, for he was afraid of them lest they should destroy Egypt.

Commentary: The joyous (and loud) reunion is heard throughout Joseph's house and brings relief to Pharaoh, who was still terrified of their destructive potential.

Verse 74: And Pharaoh sent his servants to Joseph to congratulate him concerning his brethren who had come to him, and all the captains of the armies and troops that were in Egypt came to rejoice with Joseph, and all Egypt rejoiced greatly about Joseph's brethren.

Commentary: The news brings widespread celebration, signifying the immense respect and fear Joseph and his family now command in Egypt.

Verse 75: And Pharaoh sent his servants to Joseph, saying, "Tell your brethren to fetch all belonging to them and let them come to me, and I will place them in the best part of the land of Egypt," and they did so.

Commentary: Pharaoh extends a generous invitation to Jacob's entire family to settle in Egypt, offering them the best land, fulfilling Joseph's plan.

Gifts and Departure

Verse 76: And Joseph commanded him that was set over his house to bring out to his brethren gifts and garments, and he brought out to them many garments being robes of royalty and many gifts, and Joseph divided them among his brethren.

Commentary: Joseph begins bestowing lavish gifts, signifying their restored status and reconciliation.

Verse 77: And he gave to each of his brethren a change of garments of gold and silver, and three hundred pieces of silver, and Joseph commanded them all to be dressed in these garments, and to be brought before Pharaoh.

Commentary: The gifts are substantial, including royal attire, and they are presented to Pharaoh, showcasing the family's new elevated position.

Verse 78: And Pharaoh seeing that all Joseph's brethren were valiant men, and of beautiful appearance, he greatly rejoiced.

Commentary: Pharaoh is pleased by their strong and impressive appearance, reinforcing their value to his kingdom.

Verse 79: And they afterward went out from the presence of Pharaoh to go to the land of Canaan, to their father, and their brother Benjamin was with them.

Commentary: The brothers are now ready to return to Jacob with the joyous news and Benjamin.

Verse 80: And Joseph rose up and gave to them **eleven chariots from Pharaoh**, and Joseph gave to them his chariot, upon which he rode on the day of his being crowned in Egypt, to fetch his father to Egypt; and Joseph sent to all his brothers' children, garments according to their numbers, and a hundred pieces of silver to each of them, and he also sent garments to the wives of his brethren from the garments of the king's wives, and he sent them.

Commentary: The scale of Joseph's generosity is massive. He provides eleven chariots from Pharaoh and his own royal chariot for Jacob's journey, emphasizing the honor and speed desired for their father's arrival. Gifts extend to his nephews and nieces and his sisters-in-law, from Pharaoh's own wives' attire.

Verse 81: And he gave to each of his brethren ten men to go with them to the land of Canaan to serve them, to serve their children and all belonging to them in coming to Egypt.

Commentary: Each brother receives ten servants, highlighting their new status and ensuring comfortable travel for the entire family.

Verse 82: And Joseph sent by the hand of his brother Benjamin ten suits of garments for his ten sons, a portion above the rest of the children of the sons of Jacob.

Commentary: Benjamin's sons receive special, extra gifts, signifying Benjamin's unique closeness to Joseph.

Verse 83: And he sent to each fifty pieces of silver, and ten chariots on the account of Pharaoh, and he sent to his father ten asses laden with all the luxuries of Egypt, and ten she-asses laden with corn and bread and nourishment for his father, and to all that were with him as provisions for the road.

Commentary: More detailed lists of provisions for the journey back, ensuring Jacob's comfort and showing the vastness of Joseph's resources.

Verse 84: And he sent to his sister **Dinah** garments of silver and gold, and frankincense and myrrh, and aloes and women's ornaments in great plenty, and he sent the same from the wives of Pharaoh to the wives of Benjamin.

Commentary: Joseph remembers his sister Dinah specifically, sending her lavish gifts. This is a compassionate gesture given her traumatic past. Benjamin's wives also receive similar gifts from Pharaoh's wives, demonstrating a high level of royal favor.

Verse 85: And he gave to all his brethren, also to their wives, all sorts of onyx stones and bdellium, and from all the valuable things among the great people of Egypt, nothing of all the costly things was left but what Joseph sent of to his father's household.

Commentary: This is an almost hyperbolic statement, indicating the extraordinary wealth Joseph showered upon his family, leaving virtually no precious items in Egypt un-gifted.

Verse 86: And he sent his brethren away, and they went, and he sent his brother Benjamin with them.

Commentary: The brothers depart, their mission accomplished beyond imagination.

The Return to Jacob

Verse 87: And Joseph went out with them to accompany them on the road to the borders of Egypt, and he commanded them concerning his father and his household, to come to Egypt.

Commentary: Joseph personally escorts them, emphasizing the importance of their reunion and the family's relocation.

Verse 88: And he said to them, "Do not quarrel on the road, for this thing was from the Lord to keep a great people from starvation, for there will be yet five years of famine in the land."

Commentary: Joseph reminds them to avoid conflict, attributing their difficult journey to divine providence. He also reiterates the remaining years of famine, underscoring the necessity of their move.

Verse 89: And he commanded them, saying, "When you come to the land of Canaan, do not come suddenly before my father in this affair, but act in your wisdom."

Commentary: Joseph wisely instructs them to break the news gently to Jacob, anticipating the shock and potential disbelief of their aged father.

Verse 90: And Joseph ceased to command them, and he turned and went back to Egypt, and the sons of Jacob went to the land of Canaan with joy and cheerfulness to their father Jacob.

Commentary: Joseph returns, and the brothers continue their journey, now filled with immense joy.

Verse 91: And they came to the borders of the land, and they said to each other, "What shall we do in this matter before our father, for if we come suddenly to him and tell him the matter, he will be greatly alarmed at our words and will not believe us."

Commentary: They ponder how to deliver the incredible news, heeding Joseph's advice to approach Jacob gently.

Verse 92: And they went along until they came near to their houses, and they found **Serah, the daughter of Asher**, going forth to meet them, and the damsel was very good and subtle, and knew how to play upon the harp.

Commentary: This is a famous and beloved detail unique to Jasher (also found in some midrashic traditions). Serah, Jacob's granddaughter, is introduced as a wise and talented musician, chosen for her delicate mission.

Verse 93: And they called to her and she came before them, and she kissed them, and they took her and gave to her a harp, saying, "Go now before our father, and sit before him, and strike upon the harp, and speak these words."

Commentary: The brothers enlist Serah's help, providing her with a harp and specific words to convey the news in a gentle, musical way.

Verse 94: And they commanded her to go to their house, and she took the harp and hastened before them, and she came and sat near Jacob.

Commentary: Serah dutifully executes the plan.

Verse 95: And she played well and sang, and uttered in the sweetness of her words, "**Joseph my uncle is living, and he rules throughout the land of Egypt, and is not dead**."

Commentary: The joyous and long-awaited news is delivered through song, in a subtle and beautiful manner, carefully chosen to prevent Jacob from being overwhelmed.

Verse 96: And she continued to repeat and utter these words, and Jacob heard her words and they were agreeable to him.

Commentary: The repetition allows the unbelievable news to slowly sink in.

Verse 97: He listened whilst she repeated them twice and thrice, and joy entered the heart of Jacob at the sweetness of her words, and the spirit of God was upon him, and he knew all her words to be true.

Commentary: Jacob's heart is finally filled with joy, and through a divine revelation (the "spirit of God was upon him"), he fully comprehends and believes the incredible truth.

Verse 98: And Jacob blessed Serah when she spoke these words before him, and he said to her, "My daughter, may death never prevail over you, for you have revived my spirit; only speak yet before me as you have spoken, for you have gladdened me with all your words."

Commentary: Jacob, overwhelmed with happiness, blesses Serah with immortality (or a very long life), a profound blessing for her role in restoring his spirit.

Verse 99: And she continued to sing these words, and Jacob listened and it pleased him, and he rejoiced, and the spirit of God was upon him.

Commentary: The joy continues to wash over Jacob, strengthened by the divine affirmation.

Verse 100: Whilst he was yet speaking with her, behold his sons came to him with horses and chariots and royal garments and servants running before them.

Commentary: The physical evidence of Joseph's wealth and status arrives, confirming Serah's song.

Verse 101: And Jacob rose up to meet them, and saw his sons dressed in royal garments and he saw all the treasures that Joseph had sent to them.

Commentary: The visual confirmation of their changed circumstances reinforces the truth.

Verse 102: And they said to him, "Be informed that our brother Joseph is living, and it is he who rules throughout the land of Egypt, and it is he who spoke to us as we told you."

Commentary: The brothers finally deliver the full message verbally.

Verse 103: And Jacob heard all the words of his sons, and his heart palpitated at their words, for he could not believe them until he saw all that Joseph had given them and what he had sent him, and all the signs which Joseph had spoken to them.

Commentary: Jacob's initial disbelief gives way to conviction as he sees the tangible proof and remembers the "signs" (e.g., Joseph's knowledge of their family, the specific demands).

Verse 104: And they opened out before him, and showed him all that Joseph had sent, they gave to each what Joseph had sent him, and he knew that they had spoken the truth, and he rejoiced exceedingly on account of his son.

Commentary: The display of gifts cements the reality for Jacob, leading to immense joy.

Verse 105: And Jacob said, "It is enough for me that my son Joseph is still living, I will go and see him before I die."

Commentary: Jacob's long-held grief is replaced by an urgent desire to reunite with Joseph.

Verse 106: And his sons told him all that had befallen them, and Jacob said, "I will go down to Egypt to see my son and his offspring."

Commentary: The full narrative of their Egyptian adventures is shared, solidifying Jacob's decision to travel to Egypt.

Verse 107: And Jacob rose up and put on the garments which Joseph had sent him, and after he had washed, and shaved his hair, he put upon his head the turban which Joseph had sent him.

Commentary: Jacob symbolically sheds his mourning and poverty by donning the luxurious gifts from Joseph, preparing himself for the joyful reunion.

Verse 108: And all the people of Jacob's house and their wives put on the garments which Joseph had sent to them, and they greatly rejoiced at Joseph that he was still living and that he was ruling in Egypt.

Commentary: The entire family celebrates, sharing in the good fortune.

Verse 109: And all the inhabitants of Canaan heard of this thing, and they came and rejoiced much with Jacob that he was still living.

Commentary: The news spreads, and the broader community celebrates with Jacob, highlighting his significance.

Verse 110: And Jacob made a feast for them for three days, and all the kings of Canaan and nobles of the land ate and drank and rejoiced in the house of Jacob.

Commentary: Jacob hosts a grand celebration, attended by regional royalty, marking the end of his sorrow and the beginning of a new, prosperous era for his family.

This chapter is a whirlwind of intense emotions, from Judah's furious defiance and Jacob's despair to the overwhelming joy of reunion. The unique details about Judah's supernatural strength, Simeon's threat, Benjamin's discernment of Joseph's identity, Serah's musical revelation, and Jacob's audacious letter to Pharaoh significantly embellish the biblical narrative, highlighting the patriarchal family's divine power and the dramatic nature of their journey.

Book of Jasher, Chapter 55

Jacob Decides to Go to Egypt

Verse 1: And it came to pass after this that Jacob said, "I will go and see my son in Egypt and will then come back to the land of Canaan of which God had spoken to Abraham, for I cannot leave the land of my birthplace."

Commentary: Despite the overwhelming joy of Joseph's revelation, Jacob initially plans only a visit to Egypt, intending to return to Canaan. He feels a strong attachment to the Promised Land, where his ancestors were born and where God made His covenant.

Verse 2: Behold, the word of the Lord came to him, saying, "Go down to Egypt with all your household and remain there; fear not to go down to Egypt, for I will there make you a great nation."

Commentary: God intervenes directly, instructing Jacob to settle permanently in Egypt and explicitly reassuring him. God reiterates the promise made to Abraham and Isaac: that Jacob's descendants will

become a great nation, and this will happen in Egypt. This divine command overrides Jacob's earlier reservation.

Verse 3: And Jacob said within himself, "I will go and see my son whether the fear of his God is yet in his heart amidst all the inhabitants of Egypt."

Commentary: Before fully committing, Jacob reveals a lingering concern. He wonders if Joseph, having lived for so long and achieved such high status in pagan Egypt, has maintained his faith and devotion to God. This shows Jacob's deep spiritual concern for his beloved son.

Verse 4: And the Lord said to Jacob, "Fear not about Joseph, for he still retains his integrity to serve me, as will seem good in your sight," and Jacob rejoiced exceedingly concerning his son.

Commentary: God directly addresses Jacob's specific concern, reassuring him that Joseph has remained faithful despite his surroundings. This divine affirmation removes Jacob's last hesitation, leading to profound joy.

Verse 5: At that time Jacob commanded his sons and household to go to Egypt according to the word of the Lord to him, and Jacob rose up with his sons and all his household, and he went out from the land of Canaan from **Beersheba**, with joy and gladness of heart, and they went to the land of Egypt.

Commentary: Jacob, now fully convinced and joyful, gathers his entire family. Their departure from Beersheba is significant, as it was a place of divine encounters for both Abraham and Isaac. This journey is undertaken with immense happiness, a stark contrast to their earlier journeys of fear and sorrow.

Arrival in Egypt and Joseph's Welcome

Verse 6: And it came to pass when they came near Egypt, Jacob sent **Judah** before him to Joseph that he might show him a situation in Egypt, and Judah did according to the word of his father, and he hastened and ran and came to Joseph, and they assigned for them a place in the land of **Goshen** for all his household, and Judah returned and came along the road to his father.

Commentary: Joseph's earlier instruction to come to Goshen is confirmed. Judah, demonstrating his continued leadership and reliability, is sent ahead to coordinate the family's settlement. Goshen, known for its fertile pasturelands, is chosen as the ideal place for the pastoral family.

Verse 7: And Joseph harnessed the chariot, and he assembled all his mighty men and his servants and all the officers of Egypt in order to go and meet his father Jacob, and Joseph's mandate was proclaimed in Egypt, saying, "All that do not go to meet Jacob shall die."

Commentary: Joseph orchestrates an incredibly grand and public welcome for his father. The threat of death for non-compliance highlights his immense authority and his desire to show utmost honor to Jacob and his family. This is a significant addition by Jasher, emphasizing the scale of Joseph's power and influence.

Verse 8: And on the next day Joseph went forth with all Egypt, a great and mighty host, all dressed in garments of fine linen and purple and with instruments of silver and gold and with their instruments of war with them.

Commentary: The procession is described as a vast, magnificent army, adorned in luxurious clothing and equipped with both musical instruments and weapons. This portrays the immense spectacle and power that accompanied Joseph to meet his father.

Verse 9: And they all went to meet Jacob with all sorts of musical instruments, with drums and timbrels, strewing myrrh and aloes all along the road, and they all went after this fashion, and the earth shook at their shouting.

Commentary: The welcoming ceremony is highly elaborate, filled with music, aromatic spices, and a massive, enthusiastic crowd whose shouts literally make the earth tremble. This underscores the scale of the event and the excitement surrounding Jacob's arrival.

Verse 10: And all the women of Egypt went upon the roofs of Egypt and upon the walls to meet Jacob, and upon the head of Joseph was Pharaoh's regal crown, for Pharaoh had sent it to him to put on at the time of his going to meet his father.

Commentary: The public spectacle extends to the women of Egypt, who climb rooftops and walls to witness the event. Joseph wears Pharaoh's own crown, a powerful symbol of his supreme authority and the immense honor bestowed upon Jacob. This detail (Pharaoh sending his crown) is unique to Jasher.

Verse 11: And when Joseph came within fifty cubits (about 75 feet) of his father, he alighted from the chariot and he walked toward his father, and when all the officers of Egypt and her nobles saw that Joseph had gone on foot toward his father, they also alighted and walked on foot toward Jacob.

Commentary: Joseph shows profound respect by dismounting his chariot and approaching Jacob on foot. His officers follow suit, recognizing and mirroring the deference shown by the second most powerful man in Egypt.

Verse 12: And when Jacob approached the camp of Joseph, Jacob observed the camp that was coming toward him with Joseph, and it gratified him and Jacob was astonished at it.

Commentary: Jacob, seeing the grand procession, is deeply pleased and utterly astonished by the display of his son's glory and power.

Verse 13: And Jacob said to Judah, "Who is that man whom I see in the camp of Egypt dressed in kingly robes with a very red garment upon him and a royal crown upon his head, who has alighted from his chariot and is coming toward us?" And Judah answered his father, saying, "He is your son Joseph the king"; and Jacob rejoiced in seeing the glory of his son.

Commentary: Jacob, due to his age or the dazzling spectacle, initially doesn't recognize Joseph and asks Judah. Judah's direct answer ("He is your son Joseph the king") brings Jacob immense joy at witnessing his son's incredible status.

Verse 14: And Joseph came near to his father and he bowed to his father, and all the men of the camp bowed to the ground with him before Jacob.

Commentary: Joseph, despite his royal status, humbly bows to his father. His entire entourage follows suit, showing ultimate respect for Jacob.

Verse 15: And behold, Jacob ran and hastened to his son Joseph and fell upon his neck and kissed him, and they wept, and Joseph also embraced his father and kissed him, and they wept and all the people of Egypt wept with them.

Commentary: This is the deeply emotional culmination of years of separation and grief. Jacob eagerly rushes to Joseph, and they share a tearful embrace. The detail that "all the people of Egypt wept with them" underscores the universal joy and catharsis of this moment.

Verse 16: And Jacob said to Joseph, "Now I will die cheerfully after I have seen your face, that you are still living and with glory."

Commentary: Jacob's famous words, expressing his contentment and readiness to die now that his greatest desire has been fulfilled.

Verse 17: And the sons of Jacob and their wives and their children and their servants, and all the household of Jacob wept exceedingly with Joseph, and they kissed him and wept greatly with him.

Commentary: The emotional reunion extends to the entire family, all sharing in the powerful moment.

Verse 18: And Joseph and all his people returned afterward home to Egypt, and Jacob and his sons and all the children of his household came with Joseph to Egypt, and Joseph placed them in the best part of Egypt, in the land of Goshen.

Commentary: The entire family moves to Goshen, as planned, signifying their new life in Egypt.

Settlement in Goshen and Pharaoh's Approval

Verse 19: And Joseph said to his father and to his brethren, "I will go up and tell Pharaoh, saying, 'My brethren and my father's household and all belonging to them have come to me, and behold they are in the land of Goshen.'"

Commentary: Joseph prepares to inform Pharaoh, strategically placing his family in Goshen.

Verse 20: And Joseph did so and took from his brethren **Reuben, Issachar, Zebulun and his brother Benjamin** and he placed them before Pharaoh.

Commentary: Joseph selects specific brothers to present to Pharaoh. The inclusion of Reuben (the firstborn) and Benjamin (the favored youngest, who was the reason for the whole journey) makes sense. Issachar and Zebulun are also chosen, perhaps due to their suitability or as representatives of Leah's younger sons.

Verse 21: And Joseph spoke to Pharaoh, saying, "My brethren and my father's household and all belonging to them, together with their flocks and cattle have come to me from the land of Canaan, to sojourn in Egypt; for the famine was severe upon them."

Commentary: Joseph presents his family's arrival as a temporary "sojourn" due to the famine, which is accurate given their initial intent, though God had instructed Jacob to remain.

Verse 22: And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Place your father and brethren in the best part of the land, withhold not from them all that is good, and cause them to eat of the fat of the land."

Commentary: Pharaoh, grateful for Joseph's service and perhaps still wary of the family's potential power (from Judah's earlier display), gives a generous directive: to settle them in the most fertile area.

Verse 23: And Joseph answered, saying, "Behold, I have stationed them in the land of Goshen, for they are shepherds, therefore let them remain in Goshen to feed their flocks apart from the Egyptians."

Commentary: Joseph shrewdly suggests Goshen, emphasizing their pastoral occupation which was considered "an abomination" to Egyptians, thus ensuring they would remain separate and avoid cultural assimilation or conflict.

Verse 24: And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Do with your brethren all that they shall say to you"; and the sons of Jacob bowed down to Pharaoh, and they went forth from him in peace, and Joseph afterward brought his father before Pharaoh.

Commentary: Pharaoh gives Joseph full authority regarding his family. The selected brothers bow respectfully. Joseph then brings Jacob to meet Pharaoh.

Verse 25: And Jacob came and bowed down to Pharaoh, and Jacob blessed Pharaoh, and he then went out; and Jacob and all his sons, and all his household dwelt in the land of Goshen.

Commentary: Jacob, in a display of respect, bows to Pharaoh. As a patriarch, he then blesses the ruler, a significant spiritual act. The family is now officially settled in Goshen.

Life in Egypt and Joseph's Administration

Verse 26: In the second year, that is in the **hundred and thirtieth year of the life of Jacob**, Joseph maintained his father and his brethren, and all his father's household, with bread according to their little ones, all the days of the famine; they lacked nothing.

Commentary: This verse pinpoints the year of Jacob's arrival. Joseph generously provides for his entire family throughout the remainder of the famine, ensuring they have everything they need.

Verse 27: And Joseph gave to them the best part of the whole land; the best of Egypt had they all the days of Joseph; and Joseph also gave to them and to the whole of his father's household, clothes and garments year by year; and the sons of Jacob remained securely in Egypt all the days of their brother.

Commentary: The family enjoys continuous prosperity and security under Joseph's protection and provision, receiving the best land and annual clothing.

Verse 28: And Jacob always ate at Joseph's table, Jacob and his sons did not leave Joseph's table day or night, besides what Jacob's children consumed in their houses.

Commentary: This is a striking detail, unique to Jasher, indicating an unusually intimate and constant fellowship between Jacob, his sons, and Joseph, suggesting almost communal living at Joseph's palace. This highlights Joseph's deep devotion to his father and brothers after their reconciliation.

Verse 29: And all Egypt ate bread during the days of the famine from the house of Joseph, for all the Egyptians sold all belonging to them on account of the famine.

Commentary: Joseph's central role as the provider for the entire nation during the famine is reiterated. The Egyptians, facing starvation, sell all their possessions to obtain food from Joseph.

Verse 30: And Joseph purchased all the lands and fields of Egypt for bread on the account of Pharaoh, and Joseph supplied all Egypt with bread all the days of the famine, and Joseph collected all the silver and gold that came to him for the corn which they bought throughout the land, and he accumulated much gold and silver, besides an immense quantity of onyx stones, bdellium and valuable garments which they brought to Joseph from every part of the land when their money was spent.

Commentary: Joseph systematically acquires all the land of Egypt for Pharaoh in exchange for food. He also amasses immense wealth in gold, silver, precious stones, and luxurious goods, demonstrating his shrewd economic management during the crisis.

Verse 31: And Joseph took all the silver and gold that came into his hand, about **seventy-two talents of gold and silver**, and also onyx stones and bdellium in great abundance, and Joseph went and concealed them in four parts, and he concealed one part in the wilderness near the **Red Sea**, and one part by the river **Perath** (Euphrates), and the third and fourth part he concealed in the desert opposite to the wilderness of **Persia and Media**.

Commentary: This is a fascinating and speculative detail unique to Jasher. It describes Joseph secretly stashing enormous quantities of wealth (72 talents being a colossal sum) in four different, distant locations, possibly for future use, security, or as a hidden legacy. The locations mentioned (Red Sea, Euphrates, Persia, Media) point to far-reaching geopolitical interests or foresight.

Verse 32: And he took part of the gold and silver that was left, and gave it to all his brothers and to all his father's household, and to all the women of his father's household, and the rest he brought to the house of Pharaoh, about **twenty talents of gold and silver**.

Commentary: Joseph generously distributes a portion of this immense wealth to his family, and the remaining (still vast) amount he hands over to Pharaoh. This shows his continued loyalty to Pharaoh while also ensuring his family's prosperity.

Verse 33: And the days of the famine ceased after that in the land, and they sowed and reaped in the whole land, and they obtained their usual quantity year by year; they lacked nothing.

Commentary: The famine ends, and agricultural productivity returns to normal, demonstrating the success of Joseph's long-term plan.

Verse 34: And Joseph dwelt securely in Egypt, and the whole land was under his advice, and his father and all his brethren dwelt in the land of Goshen and took possession of it.

Commentary: Joseph remains the de facto ruler of Egypt, and his family is firmly established in Goshen, prospering and possessing the land.

Verse 35: And Joseph was very aged, advanced in days, and his two sons, **Ephraim and Manasseh**, remained constantly in the house of Jacob, together with the children of the sons of Jacob their brethren, to learn the ways of the Lord and his law.

Commentary: This is a beautiful and important detail from Jasher. Joseph, despite his high office, ensures his sons are deeply rooted in their Hebrew heritage by having them live with Jacob and learn "the ways of the Lord and his law." This highlights Joseph's commitment to their spiritual upbringing and demonstrates his integrity, fulfilling Jacob's earlier concern (verse 3).

Verse 36: And Jacob and his sons dwelt in the land of Egypt in the land of Goshen, and they took possession in it, and they were fruitful and multiplied in it.

Commentary: The family thrives in Goshen, fulfilling God's promise to make them a great nation, laying the groundwork for their future growth in Egypt.

This chapter details the glorious arrival of Jacob and his family in Egypt, highlighting Joseph's immense power and generosity, God's direct guidance to Jacob, and the family's happy settlement in Goshen. The unique details about Joseph's grand welcome, Judah's advance role, and especially the detailed account of Joseph's wealth management and his spiritual guidance for his sons (Manasseh and Ephraim learning from Jacob) add rich layers to the biblical narrative.

Book of Jasher, Chapter 56

Jacob's Last Days and Instructions

Verse 1: And Jacob lived in the land of Egypt **seventeen years**, and the days of Jacob, and the years of his life were a **hundred and forty-seven years**.

Commentary: This verse notes the length of Jacob's life in Egypt and his total age. Seventeen years is a symbolic number, being the age at which Joseph was sold. This period of Jacob's life is marked by peace and reunion.

Verse 2: At that time Jacob was attacked with that illness of which he died and he sent and called for his son Joseph from Egypt, and Joseph his son came from Egypt and Joseph came to his father.

Commentary: Jacob falls ill, indicating his approaching death. He immediately sends for Joseph, showing the deep bond and Joseph's prominence in his final moments.

Verse 3: And Jacob said to Joseph and to his sons, "Behold, I die, and the God of your ancestors will visit you, and bring you back to the land, which the Lord swore to give to you and to your children after you, now therefore when I am dead, bury me in the cave which is in **Machpelah in Hebron** in the land of Canaan, near my ancestors."

Commentary: Jacob's dying words include a prophecy of God's future deliverance of his descendants from Egypt and their return to the Promised Land. His final wish is to be buried with his family in the Cave of Machpelah, emphasizing his desire to rest in the land promised by God, rather than in Egypt.

Verse 4: And Jacob made his sons swear to bury him in Machpelah, in Hebron, and his sons swore to him concerning this thing.

Commentary: Jacob exacts a solemn oath from his sons, ensuring his burial wishes are honored.

Verse 5: And he commanded them, saying, "Serve the Lord your God, for he who delivered your fathers will also deliver you from all trouble."

Commentary: Beyond the burial instruction, Jacob imparts a spiritual command: to faithfully serve God. He reminds them of God's past faithfulness and promises future deliverance if they obey.

Verse 6: And Jacob said, "Call all your children to me," and all the children of Jacob's sons came and sat before him, and Jacob blessed them, and he said to them, "The Lord God of your fathers shall grant you a thousand times as much and bless you, and may he give you the blessing of your father Abraham"; and all the children of Jacob's sons went forth on that day after he had blessed them.

Commentary: Jacob first blesses his grandchildren, demonstrating the importance of the next generation and the continuation of the covenant. He bestows the **Abrahamic blessing** upon them, ensuring the divine promise extends to them.

Verse 7: And on the next day Jacob again called for his sons, and they all assembled and came to him and sat before him, and Jacob on that day blessed his sons before his death, each man did he bless according to his blessing; behold it is written in the book of the law of the Lord appertaining to Israel.

Commentary: The following day, Jacob delivers individual blessings to each of his twelve sons, outlining their future roles and destinies. The reference to it being "written in the book of the law of the Lord" (referring to Genesis 49) emphasizes the prophetic and enduring nature of these blessings.

Verse 8: And Jacob said to **Judah**, "I know my son that you are a mighty man for your brethren; reign over them, and your sons shall reign over their sons forever."

Commentary: Jacob specifically addresses Judah, acknowledging his strength and leadership (as seen in the previous chapter) and prophesying that the royal line will come from him. This solidifies Judah's prominent role among the brothers.

Verse 9: "Only teach your sons the bow and all the weapons of war, in order that they may fight the battles of their brother who will rule over his enemies."

Commentary: Jacob gives Judah practical military advice, instructing him to train his descendants in warfare. This suggests that Judah's leadership will involve military might, protecting the future ruler (likely referring to the Messiah or the line of David).

Verse 10: And Jacob again commanded his sons on that day, saying, "Behold, I shall be this day gathered to my people; carry me up from Egypt, and bury me in the cave of Machpelah as I have commanded you."

Commentary: Jacob reiterates his burial instructions, emphasizing the immediate urgency of his approaching death.

Verse 11: "However, take heed, I pray you, that none of your sons carry me, only yourselves, and this is the manner you shall do to me, when you carry my body to go with it to the land of Canaan to bury me,"

Commentary: Jacob gives precise instructions for his funeral procession, specifying that only his direct sons are to carry his bier, highlighting the honor and filial duty involved.

Verse 12: "**Judah, Issachar and Zebulun shall carry my bier at the eastern side; Reuben, Simeon and Gad at the south, Ephraim, Manasseh and Benjamin at the west, Dan, Asher and Naphtali at the north**."

Commentary: This verse gives a highly specific and symbolic arrangement for the pallbearers, associating each group of brothers with a specific direction. This foreshadows the tribes' future encampment around the Tabernacle in the wilderness, maintaining an orderly and honorable procession.

Verse 13: "Let not Levi carry with you, for he and his sons will carry the ark of the covenant of the Lord with the Israelites in the camp, neither let Joseph my son carry, for as a king so let his glory be; however, Ephraim and Manasseh shall be in their stead."

Commentary: Jacob excludes Levi from carrying the bier because his descendants are designated for the sacred duty of carrying the Ark of the Covenant. Joseph is also excluded, but out of honor, as his royal status prevents him from performing such a laborious task. His sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, fill in for him, reinforcing their adoption into the tribes.

Verse 14: "Thus shall you do to me when you carry me away; do not neglect anything of all that I command you; and it shall come to pass when you do this to me, that the Lord will remember you favorably and your children after you forever."

Commentary: Jacob stresses the importance of following his instructions precisely, promising divine favor and blessing for their obedience.

Verse 15: "And you my sons, honor each his brother and his relative, and command your children and your children's children after you to serve the Lord God of your ancestors all the days."

Commentary: Jacob's final ethical and spiritual exhortation: promote family unity and faithfully serve God across generations.

Verse 16: "In order that you may prolong your days in the land, you and your children and your children's children forever, when you do what is good and upright in the sight of the Lord your God, to go in all his ways."

Commentary: He ties their future prosperity and long-term dwelling in the land to their continued obedience to God's laws, emphasizing the covenantal relationship.

Verse 17: "And you, Joseph my son, forgive, I pray you, the wrongs of your brethren and all their misdeeds in the injury that they heaped upon you, for God intended it for your and your children's benefit."

Commentary: Jacob specifically addresses Joseph, urging him to fully forgive his brothers. He reinforces Joseph's own understanding that God providentially used their evil for a greater good.

Verse 18: "And O my son, leave not your brethren to the inhabitants of Egypt, neither hurt their feelings, for behold I consign them to the hand of God and in your hand to guard them from the Egyptians"; and the sons of Jacob answered their father, saying, "O, our father, all that you have commanded us, so will we do; may God only be with us."

Commentary: Jacob expresses concern for his sons' welfare in Egypt after his death, entrusting their care to Joseph and God. The brothers pledge their obedience, acknowledging their reliance on divine aid.

Verse 19: And Jacob said to his sons, "So may God be with you when you keep all his ways; turn not from his ways either to the right or the left in performing what is good and upright in his sight."

Commentary: Jacob again stresses the importance of adherence to God's path, emphasizing righteousness and straight living.

Verse 20: "For I know that many and grievous troubles will befall you in the latter days in the land, yes, your children and children's children, only serve the Lord and he will save you from all trouble."

Commentary: Jacob, through prophetic insight, warns of future hardships for his descendants in Egypt but offers a clear path to deliverance through faithful service to God.

Verse 21: "And it shall come to pass when you shall go after God to serve him and will teach your children after you, and your children's children, to know the Lord, then will the Lord raise up to you and your children a servant from among your children, and the Lord will deliver you through his hand from all affliction, and bring you out of Egypt and bring you back to the land of your fathers to inherit it securely."

Commentary: This is a clear prophecy of **Moses** and the Exodus. Jacob foresees a future leader who will deliver his descendants from Egyptian bondage and lead them back to Canaan, connecting their faithfulness to this divine intervention.

Verse 22: And Jacob ceased commanding his sons, and he drew his feet into the bed, he died and was gathered to his people.

Commentary: Jacob's final words are spoken, and he peacefully passes away, "gathered to his people" – a euphemism for joining his ancestors in the afterlife.

Mourning and Embalming

Verse 23: And Joseph fell upon his father and he cried out and wept over him and he kissed him, and he called out in a bitter voice, and he said, "O my father, my father."

Commentary: Joseph's grief is overwhelming and profound, expressed through public weeping and lamentation, a testament to his deep love for his father.

Verse 24: And his sons' wives and all his household came and fell upon Jacob, and they wept over him, and cried in a very loud voice concerning Jacob.

Commentary: The entire family joins in the deep mourning, a collective outpouring of grief.

Verse 25: And all the sons of Jacob rose up together, and they tore their garments, and they all put sackcloth upon their loins, and they fell upon their faces, and they cast dust upon their heads toward the heavens.

Commentary: The traditional signs of deep Jewish mourning are observed: tearing clothes, wearing sackcloth, falling prostrate, and casting dust on their heads. This indicates intense sorrow and humility before God.

Verse 26: And the thing was told to **Osnath** Joseph's wife, and she rose up and put on a sack and she with all the Egyptian women with her came and mourned and wept for Jacob.

Commentary: Joseph's Egyptian wife, Osnath, also participates in the mourning, bringing other Egyptian women with her, showing the widespread respect for Jacob even among non-Israelites.

Verse 27: And also all the people of Egypt who knew Jacob came all on that day when they heard this thing, and all Egypt wept for many days.

Commentary: Jacob's death is mourned by a significant portion of the Egyptian populace, demonstrating his influence and the high regard in which he was held due to Joseph's status.

Verse 28: And also from the land of Canaan did the women come to Egypt when they heard that Jacob was dead, and they wept for him in Egypt for **seventy days**.

Commentary: The mourning for Jacob is extensive, attracting people even from Canaan. The seventy-day period aligns with the embalming period mentioned in Genesis.

Verse 29: And it came to pass after this that Joseph commanded his servants the doctors to embalm his father with myrrh and frankincense and all manner of incense and perfume, and the doctors embalmed Jacob as Joseph had commanded them.

Commentary: Joseph, utilizing Egyptian customs, instructs the embalmers to preserve Jacob's body with precious spices, ensuring it remains intact for the journey to Canaan.

Verse 30: And all the people of Egypt and the elders and all the inhabitants of the land of Goshen wept and mourned over Jacob, and all his sons and the children of his household lamented and mourned over their father Jacob many days.

Commentary: The mourning period continues, involving both Egyptians and Jacob's family, highlighting the widespread impact of his death.

The Grand Funeral Procession

Verse 31: And after the days of his weeping had passed away, at the end of seventy days, Joseph said to Pharaoh, "I will go up and bury my father in the land of Canaan as he made me swear, and then I will return."

Commentary: After the official mourning and embalming period, Joseph seeks Pharaoh's permission to fulfill his oath and bury Jacob in Canaan.

Verse 32: And Pharaoh sent Joseph, saying, "Go up and bury your father as he said, and as he made you swear"; and Joseph rose up with all his brethren to go to the land of Canaan to bury their father Jacob as he had commanded them.

Commentary: Pharaoh readily grants permission, demonstrating his respect for Joseph and his awareness of the importance of the oath.

Verse 33: And Pharaoh commanded that it should be proclaimed throughout Egypt, saying, "Whoever goes not up with Joseph and his brethren to the land of Canaan to bury Jacob, shall die."

Commentary: This is a powerful and unique detail in Jasher. Pharaoh enforces attendance at Jacob's funeral with a decree punishable by death, transforming it into a national tribute. This reinforces the extraordinary honor given to Jacob and Joseph.

Verse 34: And all Egypt heard of Pharaoh's proclamation, and they all rose up together, and all the servants of Pharaoh, and the elders of his house, and all the elders of the land of Egypt went up with Joseph, and all the officers and nobles of Pharaoh went up as the servants of Joseph, and they went to bury Jacob in the land of Canaan.

Commentary: The funeral procession becomes a massive, state-sponsored event, with a huge retinue of Egyptian officials, nobles, and servants accompanying Joseph and his brothers. This is a display of unparalleled honor for a foreign patriarch.

Verse 35: And the sons of Jacob carried the bier upon which he lay; according to all that their father commanded them, so did his sons to him.

Commentary: Jacob's sons meticulously follow his specific instructions for carrying his body, demonstrating their obedience and reverence.

Verse 36: And the bier was of pure gold, and it was inlaid round about with onyx stones and bdellium; and the covering of the bier was gold woven work, joined with threads, and over them were hooks of onyx stones and bdellium.

Commentary: The description of the bier is incredibly elaborate and luxurious, made of solid gold and adorned with precious stones. This emphasizes the royal treatment and immense wealth involved in Jacob's burial.

Verse 37: And Joseph placed upon the head of his father Jacob a large golden crown, and he put a golden scepter in his hand, and they surrounded the bier as was the custom of kings during their lives.

Commentary: Joseph elevates Jacob to royal status even in death, crowning him and placing a scepter in his hand. The procession mimics that of a living king, signifying the profound respect and honor bestowed upon Jacob.

Verse 38: And all the troops of Egypt went before him in this array, at first all the mighty men of Pharaoh, and the mighty men of Joseph, and after them the rest of the inhabitants of Egypt, and they were all girded with swords and equipped with coats of mail, and the trappings of war were upon them.

Commentary: The funeral procession is led by a powerful military escort, fully armed and armored, demonstrating the security and prestige accompanying Jacob's final journey.

Verse 39: And all the weepers and mourners went at a distance opposite to the bier, going and weeping and lamenting, and the rest of the people went after the bier.

Commentary: The professional mourners and other participants are organized in a specific procession, maintaining order and solemnity.

Verse 40: And Joseph and his household went together near the bier barefooted and weeping, and the rest of Joseph's servants went around him; each man had his ornaments upon him, and they were all armed with their weapons of war.

Commentary: Joseph and his immediate family walk barefoot as a sign of deep mourning and humility, contrasting with the armed and adorned guards around them.

Verse 41: And fifty of Jacob's servants went in front of the bier, and they strewed along the road myrrh and aloes, and all manner of perfume, and all the sons of Jacob that carried the bier walked upon the perfumery, and the servants of Jacob went before them strewing the perfume along the road.

Commentary: The path is paved with precious spices, symbolizing the honor and sanctity of Jacob's passage. This is another extravagant detail, showing the ultimate respect given to him.

Verse 42: And Joseph went up with a heavy camp, and they did after this manner every day until they reached the land of Canaan, and they came to the **threshing floor of Atad**, which was on the other side of Jordan, and they mourned an exceeding great and heavy mourning in that place.

Commentary: The procession is immense and slow, maintaining its elaborate ritual until they reach the designated mourning spot, the threshing floor of Atad. The mourning there is described as exceptionally profound.

Verse 43: And all the **kings of Canaan** heard of this thing and they all went forth, each man from his house, **thirty-one kings of Canaan**, and they all came with their men to mourn and weep over Jacob.

Commentary: The funeral draws an incredible attendance of 31 Canaanite kings and their armies, a testament to Jacob's widespread reputation and the influence of Joseph. This gathering of kings is unique to Jasher.

Verse 44: And all these kings beheld Jacob's bier, and behold Joseph's crown was upon it, and they also put their crowns upon the bier, and encircled it with crowns.

Commentary: In a stunning display of respect, the Canaanite kings place their own crowns upon Jacob's bier, honoring him as a king or patriarch above all of them. This is an unparalleled scene.

Verse 45: And all these kings made in that place a great and heavy mourning with the sons of Jacob and Egypt over Jacob, for all the kings of Canaan knew the valor of Jacob and his sons.

Commentary: The Canaanite kings join in the mourning, indicating their deep respect for Jacob's character and the known power ("valor") of his sons.

Confrontation with Esau and Burial

Verse 46: And the report reached **Esau**, saying, "Jacob died in Egypt, and his sons and all Egypt are conveying him to the land of Canaan to bury him."

Commentary: News of Jacob's death reaches Esau, who still resides in Mount Seir.

Verse 47: And Esau heard this thing, and he was dwelling in mount Seir, and he rose up with his sons and all his people and all his household, a people exceedingly great, and they came to mourn and weep over Jacob.

Commentary: Esau and his large entourage also come to mourn Jacob, suggesting a degree of reconciliation or at least respect, despite their past conflicts.

Verse 48: And it came to pass, when Esau came he mourned for his brother Jacob, and all Egypt and all Canaan again rose up and mourned a great mourning with Esau over Jacob in that place.

Commentary: Esau's arrival triggers another outpouring of collective grief from the vast assembly.

Verse 49: And Joseph and his brethren brought their father Jacob from that place, and they went to Hebron to bury Jacob in the cave by his fathers.

Commentary: The procession continues its journey to the final resting place.

Verse 50: And they came to **Kiriath-arba**, to the cave, and as they came Esau stood with his sons against Joseph and his brethren as a hindrance in the cave, saying, "Jacob shall not be buried therein, for it belongs to us and to our father."

Commentary: At the very entrance to the Cave of Machpelah, a dramatic and unexpected confrontation occurs: Esau and his sons attempt to prevent Jacob's burial, claiming ownership of the cave. This ignites an old family dispute.

Verse 51: And Joseph and his brethren heard the words of Esau's sons, and they were exceedingly wroth, and Joseph approached to Esau, saying, "What is this thing which they have spoken? Surely my father Jacob bought it from you for great riches after the death of Isaac, now twenty-five years ago, and also all the land of Canaan he bought from you and from your sons, and your seed after you."

Commentary: Joseph and his brothers are enraged. Joseph directly confronts Esau, reminding him of Jacob's purchase of the burial plot from him, as well as the entire land of Canaan, emphasizing the legality of Jacob's claim and the long-standing agreement. This is a unique detail from Jasher, as the Bible only mentions Abraham buying the cave. Jasher expands it to Jacob buying the whole land from Esau.

Verse 52: "And Jacob bought it for his sons and his seed after him for an inheritance forever, and why speak you these things this day?"

Commentary: Joseph underscores that the purchase was intended as a permanent inheritance for Jacob's descendants.

Verse 53: And Esau answered, saying, "You speak falsely and utter lies, for I sold not anything belonging to me in all this land, as you say, neither did my brother Jacob buy anything belonging to me in this land."

Commentary: Esau, in a blatant act of deceit, denies the sale, aiming to exploit Joseph's presumed ignorance of past transactions.

Verse 54: And Esau spoke these things in order to deceive Joseph with his words, for Esau knew that Joseph was not present in those days when Esau sold all belonging to him in the land of Canaan to Jacob.

Commentary: The narrator explicitly states Esau's malicious intent to deceive Joseph, knowing Joseph was absent during the initial transaction.

Verse 55: And Joseph said to Esau, "Surely my father inserted these things with you in the record of purchase, and testified the record with witnesses, and behold it is with us in Egypt."

Commentary: Joseph asserts that documentation of the sale exists and is currently in Egypt, calling Esau's bluff.

Verse 56: And Esau answered, saying to him, "Bring the record, all that you will find in the record, so will we do."

Commentary: Esau confidently (or foolishly) agrees to abide by the evidence, believing the records won't be produced quickly.

Verse 57: And Joseph called to **Naphtali** his brother, and he said, "Hasten quickly, stay not, and run, I pray you, to Egypt and bring all the records; the record of the purchase, the sealed record and the open record, and also all the first records in which all the transactions of the birthright are written, fetch you."

Commentary: Joseph sends Naphtali, known for his speed, to retrieve all relevant legal documents from Egypt, including those pertaining to the sale of the birthright, confirming the deep historical basis of their claims.

Verse 58: "And you shall bring them to us here, that we may know from them all the words of Esau and his sons which they spoke this day."

Commentary: Joseph intends to publicly expose Esau's deceit with documented proof.

Verse 59: And Naphtali hearkened to the voice of Joseph and he hastened and ran to go down to Egypt, and Naphtali was lighter on foot than any of the stags that were upon the wilderness, for he would go upon ears of corn without crushing them.

Commentary: Naphtali's incredible speed is again highlighted, emphasizing his unique ability to perform this urgent task with supernatural swiftness.

Verse 60: And when Esau saw that Naphtali had gone to fetch the records, he and his sons increased their resistance against the cave, and Esau and all his people rose up against Joseph and his brethren to battle.

Commentary: Realizing his deception is about to be exposed, Esau resorts to violence, escalating the conflict and initiating a battle to forcibly prevent the burial.

Verse 61: And all the sons of Jacob and the people of Egypt fought with Esau and his men, and the sons of Esau and his people were struck before the sons of Jacob, and the sons of Jacob slew of Esau's people **forty men**.

Commentary: A battle ensues, with Jacob's sons and their Egyptian allies fighting against Esau and his forces. Esau's side suffers casualties, with forty of his men slain, demonstrating the fighting prowess of Jacob's sons.

Verse 62: And **Chushim the son of Dan**, the son of Jacob, was at that time with Jacob's sons, but he was about a hundred cubits (about 150 feet) distant from the place of battle, for he remained with the children of Jacob's sons by Jacob's bier to guard it.

Commentary: This verse introduces Chushim, Dan's son, and sets up his pivotal role. His distance from the battle is noted, as he is protecting the bier.

Verse 63: And Chushim was **dumb and deaf**, still he understood the voice of consternation among men.

Commentary: Chushim's disability (deaf and mute) makes his later action even more remarkable. Despite his limitations, he perceives the commotion and violence.

Verse 64: And he asked, saying, "Why do you not bury the dead, and what is this great consternation?" And they answered him the words of Esau and his sons; and he ran to Esau in the midst of the battle, and he slew Esau with a sword, and he cut off his head, and it sprang to a distance, and Esau fell among the people of the battle.

Commentary: This is the dramatic climax of the burial scene. Chushim, upon learning of Esau's interference (despite his deafness, he understands), acts decisively and violently. He rushes into the battle and decapitates Esau, the severed head dramatically leaping away. This swift and decisive act ends the conflict. The death of Esau at the hands of a descendant of Jacob is a powerful resolution to their long-standing animosity.

Verse 65: And when Chushim did this thing the sons of Jacob prevailed over the sons of Esau, and the sons of Jacob buried their father Jacob by force in the cave, and the sons of Esau beheld it.

Commentary: Esau's death signals the decisive victory for Jacob's sons. They then forcefully proceed with the burial, despite the presence of Esau's remaining sons, asserting their right to the burial plot.

Verse 66: And Jacob was buried in Hebron, in the cave of Machpelah which Abraham had bought from the sons of Heth for the possession of a burial place, and he was buried in very costly garments.

Commentary: Jacob is finally laid to rest in the ancestral tomb, confirming the fulfillment of his dying wish and the patriarchal tradition. The detail of "costly garments" reinforces the high honor of his burial.

Verse 67: And no king had such honor paid him as Joseph paid to his father at his death, for he buried him with great honor like to the burial of kings.

Commentary: The narrator emphasizes that Jacob's funeral was unprecedented in its magnificence, even for a king, underscoring Joseph's immense devotion and power.

Verse 68: And Joseph and his brethren made a mourning of seven days for their father.

Commentary: The immediate family observes a traditional seven-day mourning period, known as "shiva" in Jewish tradition.

This chapter masterfully describes Jacob's death, his final blessings and prophecies, and the grand funeral procession. It adds significant, dramatic details to the biblical account, such as the specified pallbearer arrangement, Pharaoh's death threat for non-attendance, the gathering of 31 Canaanite kings, and most notably, the violent confrontation with Esau and his sons at the burial site, culminating in Chushim's swift and decisive act of killing Esau. These elements heighten the narrative's tension and illustrate the profound respect accorded to Jacob.

Book of Jasher, Chapter 57

The Aftermath of Jacob's Burial and a New Conflict

Verse 1: And it was after this that the sons of Esau waged war with the sons of Jacob, and the sons of Esau fought with the sons of Jacob in Hebron, and Esau was still lying dead, and not buried.

Commentary: The conflict at Jacob's burial site immediately escalates. Even with Esau's unburied body present, his sons, fueled by rage over their father's death and the disputed inheritance, initiate a full-blown war against Jacob's sons. This shows deep-seated animosity.

Verse 2: And the battle was heavy between them, and the sons of Esau were defeated before the sons of Jacob, and the sons of Jacob slew eighty men from Esau's side, and not one of Jacob's sons' people died; and Joseph was victorious over all the people of Esau's sons, and he captured **Zepho**, the son of

Eliphaz, the son of Esau, and fifty of his men, and he bound them with iron chains, and gave them to his servants to bring them to Egypt.

Commentary: Jacob's sons decisively win the battle, inflicting heavy casualties on Esau's forces without suffering any losses themselves. Joseph's leadership is highlighted as he captures key figures, including Zepho, Esau's grandson. This act of taking captives and sending them to Egypt foreshadows future events and demonstrates Joseph's firm resolve.

Verse 3: And it came to pass when the sons of Jacob had captured Zepho and his people, all those that remained from Esau's household were greatly afraid for their lives, fearing they would also be captured, and they all fled with Eliphaz the son of Esau and his people, taking Esau's body with them, and they went on their road to **Mount Seir**.

Commentary: The remaining forces of Esau's family are terrified and retreat, prioritizing their lives and taking Esau's body to prevent further desecration or capture. Their flight to Mount Seir marks a strategic withdrawal to their homeland.

Verse 4: And they came to Mount Seir and they buried Esau in Seir, but they had not brought his head with them to Seir, for it was buried in that place where the battle had been in Hebron.

Commentary: Esau is finally buried in Mount Seir, but the grim detail is added that his head, severed by Chushim in the previous chapter, was left behind and buried separately at the battlefield in Hebron. This serves as a stark reminder of his violent end and the complete victory of Jacob's sons.

Verse 5: And it came to pass when the sons of Esau had fled from the sons of Jacob, the sons of Jacob pursued them to the borders of Seir, but they did not kill a single man from among them when they pursued them, for Esau's body which they carried with them excited their confusion, so they fled and the sons of Jacob turned back from them and came up to the place where their brethren were in Hebron, and they remained there on that day, and on the next day until they rested from the battle.

Commentary: Jacob's sons pursue their fleeing enemies but mercifully do not continue to slaughter them. The presence of Esau's body among the fleeing group seems to cause enough disorder and demoralization that further killing isn't necessary. They then return to Hebron to rest after the intense battle.

Revenge and a Second Major Conflict

Verse 6: And it came to pass on the third day they assembled all the **sons of Seir the Horite**, and they assembled all the **children of the east**, a multitude of people like the sand of the sea, and they went and came down to Egypt to fight with Joseph and his brethren, in order to deliver their brethren.

Commentary: The conflict escalates dramatically. The remaining family of Esau, now allied with the powerful Horites of Seir and "children of the east" (likely various Arabian tribes), form a massive army. Their objective is to rescue their captured kin (Zepho and his men) and likely seek revenge, indicating a desire to confront Joseph and the Israelites directly in Egypt.

Verse 7: And Joseph and all the sons of Jacob heard that the sons of Esau and the children of the east had come upon them to battle in order to deliver their brethren.

Commentary: Joseph and his brothers are informed of the approaching massive army, signaling an imminent large-scale confrontation.

Verse 8: And Joseph and his brethren and the strong men of Egypt went forth and fought in the city of **Rameses**, and Joseph and his brethren dealt out a tremendous blow amongst the sons of Esau and the children of the east.

Commentary: The battle takes place in or near Rameses, an Egyptian city. Joseph, his brothers, and Egyptian soldiers form a formidable force. They inflict a devastating defeat on their enemies, emphasizing the power of Joseph and the Egyptian army.

Verse 9: And they slew six hundred thousand men among them, and they slew among them all the mighty men of the children of Seir the Horite; there were only a few of them left, and they slew also a great many of the children of the east, and of the children of Esau; and Eliphaz the son of Esau, and the children of the east all fled before Joseph and his brethren.

Commentary: This verse describes an almost unbelievably massive slaughter—six hundred thousand men. While ancient casualty numbers are often exaggerated for emphasis, it underscores a catastrophic defeat for the coalition. The Horites are nearly wiped out, and Esau's remaining family and the Eastern tribes are decimated and forced to flee, with Eliphaz among them.

Verse 10: And Joseph and his brethren pursued them until they came to **Succoth**, and they yet slew thirty more men in Succoth, and the rest escaped and they fled each to his city.

Commentary: The pursuit continues, and more casualties are inflicted during the chase, further solidifying the victory. The survivors scatter back to their homelands.

Verse 11: And Joseph and his brethren and the mighty men of Egypt turned back from them with joy and cheerfulness of heart, for they had defeated all their enemies.

Commentary: Joseph and his allies return victorious, filled with joy and satisfaction at having decisively defeated their enemies.

Verse 12: And Zepho the son of Eliphaz and his men were still slaves in Egypt to the sons of Jacob, and their pains increased.

Commentary: The captured men, including Zepho, remain enslaved in Egypt. Their condition worsens, highlighting the harsh reality of their captivity.

Internal Strife Among Esau's Descendants

Verse 13: And when the sons of Esau and the sons of Seir returned to their land, the sons of Seir saw that they had all fallen into the hands of the sons of Jacob, and the people of Egypt, on account of the battle of the sons of Esau.

Commentary: After the humiliating defeat, the Horites of Seir realize the heavy cost of their alliance with Esau's sons, having been nearly wiped out because of them.

Verse 14: And the sons of Seir said to the sons of Esau, "You have seen and therefore you know that this war was on your account, and not one mighty man or an expert in war remains."

Commentary: The Horites of Seir confront Esau's sons, blaming them for the devastating war and the loss of their fighting men.

Verse 15: "Now therefore go forth from our land, go from us to the land of Canaan to the land of the dwelling of your fathers; why should your children inherit the possessions of our children in latter days?"

Commentary: The sons of Seir demand that Esau's descendants leave their territory and return to Canaan, where their ancestors (Abraham and Isaac) had lived. They fear that allowing them to stay would eventually lead to Esau's descendants inheriting their land.

Verse 16: And the children of Esau would not listen to the children of Seir, and the children of Seir considered to make war with them.

Commentary: Esau's descendants refuse to leave, leading to a new internal conflict as the Horites consider going to war against their former allies.

Verse 17: And the children of Esau sent secretly to **Angeas king of Africa**, the same is **Dinhabah**, saying,

Commentary: Esau's descendants, realizing they might be outmatched, secretly seek external military aid from a powerful king in Africa (Dinhabah). This shows their strategic thinking and reliance on foreign alliances.

Verse 18: "Send to us some of your men and let them come to us, and we will fight together with the children of Seir the Horite, for they have resolved to fight with us to drive us away from the land."

Commentary: They appeal for troops to fight against the Horites, emphasizing that the Horites intend to expel them from the land they now occupy.

Verse 19: And Angeas king of Dinhabah did so, for he was in those days friendly to the children of Esau, and Angeas sent five hundred valiant infantry to the children of Esau, and eight hundred cavalry.

Commentary: King Angeas, who has an existing friendly relationship with Esau's descendants, agrees and sends a significant military force, including both foot soldiers and cavalry.

Verse 20: And the children of Seir sent to the children of the east and to the children of Midian, saying, "You have seen what the children of Esau have done to us, on whose account we are almost all destroyed, in their battle with the sons of Jacob."

Commentary: The Horites of Seir also seek allies, reminding the Eastern tribes and Midianites of the heavy losses they suffered previously because of Esau's family.

Verse 21: "Now therefore come to us and assist us, and we will fight them together, and we will drive them from the land and be avenged of the cause of our brethren who died for their sakes in their battle with their brethren the sons of Jacob."

Commentary: They appeal for assistance to expel Esau's descendants and avenge their fallen kin. This highlights the ongoing cycle of revenge and territorial dispute.

Verse 22: And all the children of the east listened to the children of Seir, and they came to them about eight hundred men with drawn swords, and the children of Esau fought with the children of Seir at that time in the **wilderness of Paran**.

Commentary: The Eastern tribes respond, sending their own armed forces. The battle takes place in the Wilderness of Paran, a significant desert region.

Verse 23: And the children of Seir prevailed then over the sons of Esau, and the children of Seir slew on that day of the children of Esau in that battle about two hundred men of the people of Angeas king of Dinhabah.

Commentary: In this initial clash, the Horites of Seir win, inflicting casualties even on Angeas's mercenary troops.

Verse 24: And on the second day the children of Esau came again to fight a second time with the children of Seir, and the battle was severe upon the children of Esau this second time, and it troubled them greatly on account of the children of Seir.

Commentary: The battle continues for a second day, and Esau's descendants are once again struggling, facing significant challenges from the Horites.

Verse 25: And when the children of Esau saw that the children of Seir were more powerful than they were, some men of the children of Esau turned and assisted the children of Seir their enemies.

Commentary: In a shocking twist, some of Esau's own men switch sides and join their enemies, the Horites, due to the perceived greater strength of the Horites. This demonstrates a lack of loyalty or internal division.

Verse 26: And there fell yet of the people of the children of Esau in the second battle fifty-eight men of the people at Angeas king of Dinhabah.

Commentary: More casualties among the mercenary troops hired by Esau's descendants.

Verse 27: And on the third day the children of Esau heard that some of their brethren had turned from them to fight against them in the second battle; and the children of Esau mourned when they heard this thing.

Commentary: Esau's remaining forces learn of the betrayal by their own kin, leading to dismay and mourning within their ranks.

Verse 28: And they said, "What shall we do to our brethren who turned from us to assist the children of Seir our enemies?" And the children of Esau again sent to Angeas king of Dinhabah, saying,

Commentary: They grapple with the internal treachery and decide to seek more foreign aid from Angeas.

Verse 29: "Send to us again other men that with them we may fight with the children of Seir, for they have already twice been stronger than we were."

Commentary: They admit their weakness to Angeas and request additional reinforcements after having been defeated twice.

Verse 30: And Angeas again sent to the children of Esau about six hundred valiant men, and they came to assist the children of Esau.

Commentary: Angeas continues to support Esau's descendants, sending another contingent of troops.

Verse 31: And in ten days' time the children of Esau again waged war with the children of Seir in the wilderness of Paran, and the battle was very severe upon the children of Seir, and the children of Esau prevailed at this time over the children of Seir, and the children of Seir were defeated before the children of Esau, and the children of Esau slew about two thousand men from them.

Commentary: After a ten-day respite, the third battle takes place. With the additional reinforcements, Esau's descendants finally gain the upper hand, inflicting a devastating defeat on the Horites, killing two thousand.

Verse 32: And all the mighty men of the children of Seir died in this battle, and there only remained their young children that were left in their cities.

Commentary: The Horite warriors are completely annihilated, leaving only the young and defenseless in their cities. This marks the total conquest of the Horites by Esau's descendants.

Verse 33: And all Midian and the children of the east took themselves to flight from the battle, and they left the children of Seir and fled when they saw that the battle was severe upon them, and the children of Esau pursued all the children of the east until they reached their land.

Commentary: The allied forces of Midian and the Eastern tribes abandon the Horites when the tide turns, fleeing for their lives. Esau's descendants pursue them relentlessly.

Verse 34: And the children of Esau slew yet about two hundred and fifty more men from them and from the people of the children of Esau there fell in that battle about thirty men, but this evil came upon them through their brethren turning from them to assist the children of Seir the Horite, and the children of Esau again heard of the evil doings of their brethren, and they again mourned on account of this thing.

Commentary: The pursuit continues to inflict more casualties on the fleeing allies. Esau's descendants also suffer some losses, which they attribute to the betrayal of their own kin, leading to renewed mourning over the internal strife.

Esau's Descendants Conquer Seir and Establish a Kingdom

Verse 35: And it came to pass after the battle, the children of Esau turned back and came home to Seir, and the children of Esau slew those who had remained in the land of the children of Seir; they slew also their wives and little ones, they left not a soul alive except fifty young lads and damsels whom they suffered to live, and the children of Esau did not put them to death, and the lads became their slaves, and the damsels they took for wives.

Commentary: After securing victory, Esau's descendants return to Seir and carry out a brutal conquest, exterminating almost all the remaining Horites, including women and children. A small number of young people are spared to be enslaved and taken as wives, establishing their dominance over the land.

Verse 36: And the children of Esau dwelt in Seir in the place of the children of Seir, and they inherited their land and took possession of it.

Commentary: Esau's descendants fully take over the land of Seir, displacing the Horites and establishing themselves as the new inhabitants.

Verse 37: And the children of Esau took all belonging in the land to the children of Seir, also their flocks, their bullocks and their goods, and all belonging to the children of Seir, did the children of Esau take, and the children of Esau dwelt in Seir in the place of the children of Seir to this day, and the children of Esau divided the land into divisions to the five sons of Esau, according to their families.

Commentary: They seize all the wealth and possessions of the Horites. The land is then formally divided among Esau's five sons, solidifying their permanent settlement and rule over Seir.

Verse 38: And it came to pass in those days, that the children of Esau resolved to crown a king over them in the land of which they became possessed. And they said to each other, "Not so, for he shall reign over us in our land, and we shall be under his counsel and he shall fight our battles, against our enemies," and they did so.

Commentary: Having established their new territory, Esau's descendants decide to establish a monarchy. They discuss the purpose of a king: to rule them, provide counsel, and lead them in battle.

Verse 39: And all the children of Esau swore, saying, "That none of their brethren should ever reign over them, but a strange man who is not of their brethren, for the souls of all the children of Esau were embittered every man against his son, brother and friend, on account of the evil they sustained from their brethren when they fought with the children of Seir."

Commentary: Due to the recent treachery and internal divisions witnessed during the war with the Horites (where some of their own kin turned against them), Esau's descendants make a solemn oath. They vow never to have a king from their own family because the bitterness and distrust among them are too deep. They explicitly seek an outsider to rule.

Verse 40: Therefore the sons of Esau swore, saying, "From that day forward they would not choose a king from their brethren, but one from a strange land to this day."

Commentary: This verse reiterates the lasting impact of their oath, explaining why their future kings would always be foreigners, a direct consequence of the internal strife and betrayal they experienced.

Verse 41: And there was a man there from the people of Angeas king of Dinhabah; his name was **Bela the son of Beor**, who was a very valiant man, beautiful and handsome and wise in all wisdom, and a man of sense and counsel; and there was none of the people of Angeas like him.

Commentary: A suitable candidate for king emerges: Bela, a highly skilled and respected man from King Angeas's people. His impressive qualities make him an ideal choice.

Verse 42: And all the children of Esau took him and anointed him and they crowned him for a king, and they bowed down to him, and they said to him, "May the king live, may the king live."

Commentary: Esau's descendants formally install Bela as their king through anointing and coronation, showing their submission and loyalty to this chosen outsider.

Verse 43: And they spread out the sheet, and they brought him each man earrings of gold and silver or rings or bracelets, and they made him very rich in silver and in gold, in onyx stones and bdellium, and they made him a royal throne, and they placed a regal crown upon his head, and they built a palace for him and he dwelt therein, and he became king over all the children of Esau.

Commentary: They lavish Bela with gifts and wealth, build him a palace, and provide him with all the symbols of royalty. This extensive detail highlights the establishment of a new Edomite monarchy under an external ruler.

Verse 44: And the people of Angeas took their hire for their battle from the children of Esau, and they went and returned at that time to their master in Dinhabah.

Commentary: The mercenary troops from Angeas are paid for their service and return home, having fulfilled their part in establishing the new regime.

Verse 45: And Bela reigned over the children of Esau **thirty years**, and the children of Esau dwelt in the land instead of the children of Seir, and they dwelt securely in their stead to this day.

Commentary: Bela's reign is established for 30 years, signifying a period of stability for Esau's descendants in their newly acquired territory, now securely replacing the Horites.

This chapter depicts a continuation of the conflict following Jacob's burial, with Esau's descendants seeking vengeance and ultimately conquering the land of Seir from the Horites. It details fierce battles, a striking betrayal within Esau's own family, and the subsequent decision by Esau's descendants to reject an internal ruler in favor of an external king, leading to the coronation of Bela. This narrative highlights themes of territorial conquest, internal conflict, and the formation of a new monarchy.

Book of Jasher, Chapter 58

Joseph's Continued Rule and a New Pharaoh

Verse 1: And it came to pass in the thirty-second year after the Israelites came to Egypt, which was the seventy-first year of Joseph's life, that year the Pharaoh king of Egypt died, and **Magron** his son became king in his place.

Commentary: This verse sets the timeline, indicating that a significant amount of time has passed since Jacob's family arrived in Egypt. It marks a transition in Egyptian leadership with the death of the Pharaoh who knew and favored Joseph, and the ascension of his son, Magron.

Verse 2: And Pharaoh commanded Joseph before his death to be like a father to his son, Magron, and that Magron should follow Joseph's guidance and advice.

Commentary: The dying Pharaoh, recognizing Joseph's wisdom and effectiveness, explicitly entrusts his son to Joseph's care. This is a remarkable testament to Joseph's influence and the trust placed in him by the previous ruler.

Verse 3: And all Egypt agreed to this arrangement, that Joseph should be king over them, for all the Egyptians still loved Joseph as before, only Magron the son of Pharaoh sat on his father's throne, and he became king in those days in his father's place.

Commentary: The Egyptian people's devotion to Joseph is so strong that they would have preferred him as king. While Magron formally takes the throne, Joseph maintains effective control and authority, signaling a potential for future tension.

Verse 4: Magron was forty-one years old when he began to reign, and he reigned for forty years in Egypt, and all Egypt called his name Pharaoh after his father's name, as it was their custom to do in Egypt for every king that reigned over them.

Commentary: This verse gives details about the new Pharaoh, including his age and the length of his reign. It also explains the Egyptian custom of calling all kings "Pharaoh," which clarifies why the Bible often uses this title without specific names.

Verse 5: And it came to pass when Pharaoh (Magron) reigned in his father's place, he placed the laws of Egypt and all the government affairs in Joseph's hand, as his father had commanded him.

Commentary: The new Pharaoh indeed follows his father's dying wish, officially delegating immense power and responsibility to Joseph. This confirms Joseph's continued role as the true power behind the throne.

Verse 6: And Joseph became king over Egypt, for he oversaw all Egypt, and all Egypt was under his care and under his counsel, for all Egypt favored Joseph after the death of the previous Pharaoh, and they loved him exceedingly to reign over them.

Commentary: Joseph effectively functions as the reigning monarch, with full control over the nation. The Egyptian people's affection for him is unwavering, reinforcing his de facto authority.

Verse 7: But there were some people among them who didn't like him, saying, "No stranger shall reign over us"; still the entire government of Egypt in those days fell upon Joseph after the death of Pharaoh, he being the one in charge, doing as he pleased throughout the land without anyone interfering.

Commentary: While Joseph was widely loved, a xenophobic sentiment emerges among some Egyptians, opposing a foreigner in such a powerful position. However, this opposition is clearly minor, as Joseph's authority remains unchallenged and absolute. This foreshadows later tensions.

Verse 8: And all Egypt was under Joseph's care, and Joseph made war with all his surrounding enemies, and he subdued them; also all the land and all the **Philistines**, as far as the borders of Canaan, Joseph subdued, and they were all under his power and they gave a yearly tax to Joseph.

Commentary: Joseph's power extends beyond Egypt's borders. He engages in successful military campaigns, subjugating neighboring regions, including the Philistines. This shows him building an Egyptian empire and collecting tribute, expanding the nation's influence.

Verse 9: And Pharaoh king of Egypt sat upon his throne in his father's place, but he was under Joseph's control and counsel, as he was at first under his father's control.

Commentary: This verse reiterates the dynamic: Pharaoh is the figurehead, but Joseph holds the real power, just as the previous Pharaoh had desired.

Verse 10: Neither did he reign but only in the land of Egypt, under Joseph's counsel, but Joseph reigned over the whole country at that time, from Egypt to the great river **Perath** (Euphrates).

Commentary: The scope of Joseph's dominion is further clarified. Pharaoh rules only within Egypt, while Joseph's influence spans a vast empire reaching all the way to the Euphrates River, an impressive achievement for an Egyptian minister.

Verse 11: And Joseph was successful in all his ways, and the Lord was with him, and the Lord gave Joseph additional wisdom, and honor, and glory, and love toward him in the hearts of the Egyptians and throughout the land, and Joseph reigned over the whole country **forty years**.

Commentary: Joseph's long and successful reign is attributed to God's continued favor, granting him exceptional wisdom, honor, and the affection of the people. His forty-year rule highlights his sustained influence.

Verse 12: And all the countries of the Philistines and Canaan and **Zidon**, and on the other side of Jordan, brought presents to Joseph all his days, and the whole country was in Joseph's hand, and they brought to him a yearly tribute as it was regulated, for Joseph had fought against all his surrounding enemies and subdued them, and the whole country was in Joseph's hand, and Joseph sat securely upon his throne in Egypt.

Commentary: This reinforces the extent of Joseph's empire. Many surrounding nations were conquered and paid regular tribute, ensuring Egypt's prosperity and Joseph's secure position as the undisputed power.

Verse 13: And also all his brethren the sons of Jacob dwelt securely in the land, all the days of Joseph, and they were fruitful and multiplied exceedingly in the land, and they served the Lord all their days, as their father Jacob had commanded them.

Commentary: Under Joseph's protection, the Israelite family thrives and grows exponentially, fulfilling God's promise. They also remain faithful to God, adhering to Jacob's final instructions.

Renewed Conflict with Esau's Descendants

Verse 14: And it came to pass at the end of many days and years, when the children of Esau were dwelling quietly in their land with Bela their king, that the children of Esau were fruitful and multiplied in the land, and they resolved to go and fight with the sons of Jacob and all Egypt, and to deliver their brother **Zepho**, the son of Eliphaz, and his men, for they were yet in those days slaves to Joseph.

Commentary: After a period of peace, Esau's descendants, now numerous and powerful in their own land under King Bela, decide to reignite hostilities. Their primary motivation is to free Zepho and his men, who are still enslaved in Egypt, demonstrating a continued sense of familial loyalty and a desire for revenge.

Verse 15: And the children of Esau sent to all the children of the east, and they made peace with them, and all the children of the east came to them to go with the children of Esau to Egypt to battle.

Commentary: Esau's descendants strategically form an alliance with the Eastern tribes, putting aside past conflicts (from the previous chapter) to unite against a common enemy: Joseph and Egypt.

Verse 16: And there came also to them some of the people of **Angeas, king of Dinhabah**, and they also sent to the **children of Ishmael** and they also came to them.

Commentary: The alliance grows even stronger, including mercenaries from Angeas and the Ishmaelites, indicating a broad coalition against Egypt.

Verse 17: And all this people assembled and came to **Seir** to assist the children of Esau in their battle, and this camp was very large and heavy with people, numerous as the sand of the sea, about **eight hundred thousand men**, infantry and cavalry, and all these troops went down to Egypt to fight with the sons of Jacob, and they encamped by **Rameses**.

Commentary: The allied army is described as incredibly massive—800,000 men, both foot soldiers and cavalry—a truly formidable force. They gather in Seir (Edom) before marching on Egypt and setting up camp near Rameses, the staging ground for the previous battle.

Verse 18: And Joseph went forth with his brethren with the mighty men of Egypt, about **six hundred men**, and they fought with them in the land of Rameses; and the sons of Jacob at that time again fought with the children of Esau, in the fiftieth year of the sons of Jacob going down to Egypt, that is the thirtieth year of the reign of Bela over the children of Esau in Seir.

Commentary: This verse provides more precise dating for the conflict and a seemingly small number for Joseph's forces (600 men, though this likely refers to a select group of elite fighters, not the entire Egyptian army). Despite the numerical disadvantage, Joseph and his brothers once again confront Esau's descendants.

Verse 19: And the Lord gave all the mighty men of Esau and the children of the east into the hand of Joseph and his brethren, and the people of the children of Esau and the children of the east were defeated before Joseph.

Commentary: The narrative clearly states that God grants victory to Joseph and his brothers, emphasizing divine intervention in the outcome of the battle.

Verse 20: And of the people of Esau and the children of the east that were slain, there fell before the sons of Jacob about **two hundred thousand men**, and their king **Bela the son of Beor** fell with them in the battle, and when the children of Esau saw that their king had fallen in battle and was dead, their hands became weak in the combat.

Commentary: A devastating defeat for the invaders: 200,000 casualties and the death of King Bela. His fall demoralizes Esau's forces, crippling their will to fight.

Verse 21: And Joseph and his brethren and all Egypt were still striking the people of the house of Esau, and all Esau's people were afraid of the sons of Jacob and fled from before them.

Commentary: The pursuit continues, and Esau's descendants are overwhelmed by fear and flee.

Verse 22: And Joseph and his brethren and all Egypt pursued them a day's journey, and they slew yet about three hundred more men from them, continuing to strike them on the road; and they afterward turned back from them.

Commentary: The pursuit is relentless for a full day, inflicting further casualties before Joseph's forces turn back.

Verse 23: And Joseph and all his brethren returned to Egypt, not one man was missing from them, but of the Egyptians there fell twelve men.

Commentary: This is a truly remarkable detail: Joseph's forces suffered no Israelite casualties, and only twelve Egyptians died. This highlights the overwhelming superiority and divine protection enjoyed by Joseph and the sons of Jacob in this battle.

Verse 24: And when Joseph returned to Egypt he ordered Zepho and his men to be additionally bound, and they bound them in irons and they increased their grief.

Commentary: Joseph punishes Zepho and his men for their kin's renewed aggression by tightening their bonds and increasing their suffering, showing the consequences of their rebellion.

Verse 25: And all the people of the children of Esau, and the children of the east, returned in shame each to his city, for all the mighty men that were with them had fallen in battle.

Commentary: The defeated invaders return home utterly disgraced, having lost their most capable warriors.

New King in Edom and Lingering Hatred

Verse 26: And when the children of Esau saw that their king had died in battle they hastened and took a man from the people of the children of the east; his name was **Jobab the son of Zarach**, from the land of **Botzrah**, and they caused him to reign over them instead of Bela their king.

Commentary: Following Bela's death, Esau's descendants quickly appoint a new king. In keeping with their oath from the previous chapter (not to choose a king from their own brethren), they select Jobab, another outsider, from an Eastern land.

Verse 27: And Jobab sat upon the throne of Bela as king in his place, and Jobab reigned in Edom over all the children of Esau **ten years**, and the children of Esau went no more to fight with the sons of Jacob from that day forward, for the sons of Esau knew the valor of the sons of Jacob, and they were greatly afraid of them.

Commentary: Jobab reigns for ten years. Significantly, this crushing defeat finally ends Esau's descendants' attempts to fight Jacob's sons. They recognize the Israelites' power and are too afraid to challenge them directly again.

Verse 28: But from that day forward the children of Esau hated the sons of Jacob, and the hatred and enmity were very strong between them all the days, to this day.

Commentary: Despite the cessation of open warfare, the underlying animosity between Esau's descendants (Edomites) and Jacob's descendants (Israelites) intensifies. This verse emphasizes the enduring nature of their hatred, lasting "to this day" (the time of Jasher's writing), reflecting the historical animosity between Edom and Israel in later periods.

Verse 29: And it came to pass after this, at the end of ten years, Jobab, the son of Zarach, from Botzrah, died, and the children of Esau took a man whose name was **Chusham**, from the land of **Teman**, and they made him king over them instead of Jobab, and Chusham reigned in Edom over all the children of Esau for twenty years.

Commentary: Another king of Edom dies, and again, following their vow, an outsider (Chusham from Teman) is chosen to rule. This continues the pattern of Edomite kingship being held by non-descendants of Esau.

Verse 30: And Joseph, king of Egypt, and his brethren, and all the children of Israel dwelt securely in Egypt in those days, together with all the children of Joseph and his brethren, having no hindrance or evil accident and the land of Egypt was at that time at rest from war in the days of Joseph and his brethren.

Commentary: This verse concludes the chapter by emphasizing the peace and security enjoyed by Joseph and the Israelites in Egypt. The major conflicts with Esau's descendants are over, and the land of Egypt experiences a period of stability, largely due to Joseph's strong leadership and divine favor.

This chapter details the continued prosperity and power of Joseph in Egypt under a new Pharaoh, as well as a significant renewed war with the descendants of Esau. It highlights the vast scale of the battles, the decisive victory of Joseph and his forces, and the long-lasting hatred that developed between the two families. The chapter also provides interesting historical details about the Edomite monarchy, including their unique practice of choosing foreign kings due to internal family strife.

Book of Jasher, Chapter 59

The Family of Jacob in Egypt

Verse 1: And these are the names of the sons of Israel who lived in Egypt, who had come with Jacob; all the sons of Jacob came to Egypt, every man with his household.

Commentary: This verse serves as a roll call, beginning a detailed listing of Jacob's (Israel's) descendants who immigrated to Egypt, establishing the foundational lineage for the future nation.

Verse 2: The children of Leah were **Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun**, and their sister **Dinah**.

Commentary: This lists the six sons and one daughter born to Jacob through his first wife, Leah.

Verse 3: And the sons of Rachel were **Joseph and Benjamin**.

Commentary: This lists the two sons born to Jacob through his beloved wife, Rachel.

Verse 4: And the sons of Zilpah, the handmaid of Leah, were **Gad and Asher**.

Commentary: This lists the two sons born to Jacob through Leah's maidservant, Zilpah.

Verse 5: And the sons of Bilhah, the handmaid of Rachel, were **Dan and Naphtali**.

Commentary: This lists the two sons born to Jacob through Rachel's maidservant, Bilhah.

Verse 6: And these were their offspring that were born to them in the land of Canaan, before they came to Egypt with their father Jacob.

Commentary: This verse transitions to listing Jacob's grandchildren, specifying that these individuals were already born before the family's move to Egypt.

Verse 7: The sons of Reuben were **Chanoch, Pallu, Chetzron, and Carmi**.

Commentary: These are Reuben's four sons.

Verse 8: And the sons of Simeon were **Jemuel, Jamin, Ohad, Jachin, Zochar, and Saul**, the son of the Canaanitish woman.

Commentary: These are Simeon's six sons, with a notable mention that Saul's mother was a Canaanite woman, highlighting early intermarriage.

Verse 9: And the children of Levi were **Gershon, Kehath, and Merari**, and their sister **Jochebed**, who was born to them as they were going down to Egypt.

Commentary: These are Levi's three sons and one daughter. The mention of Jochebed's birth during the journey to Egypt is a significant detail, as she would later become the mother of Moses.

Verse 10: And the sons of Judah were **Er, Onan, Shelah, Perez, and Zarach**.

Commentary: These are Judah's five sons.

Verse 11: And Er and Onan died in the land of Canaan; and the sons of Perez were **Chezron and Chamul**.

Commentary: This clarifies that Judah's first two sons had already died in Canaan, and then lists the two sons of Perez, who would carry on Judah's lineage.

Verse 12: And the sons of Issachar were **Tola, Puvah, Job, and Shomron**.

Commentary: These are Issachar's four sons.

Verse 13: And the sons of Zebulun were **Sered, Elon, and Jachleel**, and the son of Dan was **Chushim**.

Commentary: These are Zebulun's three sons, and then Dan's single son is listed.

Verse 14: And the sons of Naphtali were **Jachzeel, Guni, Jetzer, and Shilam**.

Commentary: These are Naphtali's four sons.

Verse 15: And the sons of Gad were **Ziphion, Chaggi, Shuni, Ezbon, Eri, Arodi, and Areli**.

Commentary: These are Gad's seven sons.

Verse 16: And the children of Asher were **Jimnah, Jishvah, Jishvi, Beriah**, and their sister **Serach**; and the sons of Beriah were **Cheber and Malchiel**.

Commentary: These are Asher's four sons and one daughter, and then the two sons of Beriah. Serach is a notable figure in later Jewish tradition.

Verse 17: And the sons of Benjamin were **Bela, Becher, Ashbel, Gera, Naaman, Achi, Rosh, Mupim, Chupim, and Ord**.

Commentary: These are Benjamin's ten sons, a relatively large number compared to some of his brothers.

Verse 18: And the sons of Joseph, that were born to him in Egypt, were **Manasseh and Ephraim**.

Commentary: These are Joseph's two sons, born in Egypt, who were adopted by Jacob and would become full tribes of Israel.

Verse 19: And all the souls that went forth from the loins of Jacob, were **seventy souls**; these are they who came with Jacob their father to Egypt to dwell there: and Joseph and all his brethren dwelt securely in Egypt, and they ate of the best of Egypt all the days of the life of Joseph.

Commentary: This verse summarizes the total number of individuals in Jacob's immediate family who came to Egypt, stating it as seventy, a significant number in biblical narratives. It also reiterates their secure and prosperous living conditions under Joseph's protection.

Verse 20: And Joseph lived in the land of Egypt **ninety-three years**, and Joseph reigned over all Egypt **eighty years**.

Commentary: This verse provides Joseph's total years in Egypt and the incredibly long duration of his effective rule as vizier. This highlights the prolonged period of stability and prosperity that his administration brought.

Joseph's Death and Final Wishes

Verse 21: And when the days of Joseph drew near that he should die, he sent and called for his brethren and all his father's household, and they all came together and sat before him.

Commentary: As Joseph approaches his death, he gathers his entire family, similar to how Jacob gathered his sons, indicating the weight and importance of his final words.

Verse 22: And Joseph said to his brethren and to the whole of his father's household, "Behold, I die, and God will surely visit you and bring you up from this land to the land which he swore to your fathers to give to them."

Commentary: Joseph, like his father, prophesies the future Exodus. He reassures his family that God will remember His covenant and eventually lead them out of Egypt and back to the Promised Land. This maintains the hope and focus on Canaan.

Verse 23: "And it shall be when God shall visit you to bring you up from here to the land of your fathers, then bring up my bones with you from here."

Commentary: Joseph makes a specific dying request: that his bones be carried out of Egypt when they leave. This mirrors Jacob's request and signifies his belief in the promise of the land and his desire to rest with his ancestors, rather than remain in a foreign land, even if it was the place of his glory.

Verse 24: And Joseph made the sons of Israel swear for their descendants after them, saying, "God will surely visit you and you shall bring up my bones with you from here."

Commentary: Joseph formalizes his request into a binding oath for future generations, ensuring its fulfillment. This oath would be remembered and honored centuries later by Moses.

Verse 25: And it came to pass after this that Joseph died in that year, the seventy-first year of the Israelites going down to Egypt.

Commentary: This verse records Joseph's death and provides a different chronological marker than previously stated. There is a slight discrepancy here with verse 1, which states Jacob lived for 17 years in Egypt, and Joseph being 71 when Pharaoh died (meaning Jacob had been in Egypt for 32 years). This verse indicates Joseph dies in the 71st year of the *Israelites going down to Egypt*, which would mean Joseph lived another 39 years after Pharaoh's death. This is likely a scribal or narrative difference within Jasher or a different chronological perspective.

Verse 26: And Joseph was **one hundred and ten years old** when he died in the land of Egypt, and all his brethren and all his servants rose up and they embalmed Joseph, as was their custom, and his brethren and all Egypt mourned over him for seventy days.

Commentary: Joseph's age at death is specified (110 years), a significant lifespan. His body is embalmed according to Egyptian custom, and a long period of mourning (70 days) is observed by both his family and the entire nation of Egypt, underscoring his immense importance and the respect he commanded.

Verse 27: And they put Joseph in a coffin filled with spices and all sorts of perfume, and they buried him by the side of the river, that is **Sihor**, and his sons and all his brethren, and the whole of his father's household made a seven days' mourning for him.

Commentary: Joseph is placed in an elaborate coffin and buried by the "river Sihor" (likely the Nile). While his body remains in Egypt temporarily, the specific burial location is noted. His immediate family observes an additional seven days of deep mourning.

Verse 28: And it came to pass after the death of Joseph, all the Egyptians began in those days to rule over the children of Israel, and Pharaoh, king of Egypt, who reigned in his father's stead, took all the laws of Egypt and conducted the whole government of Egypt under his counsel, and he reigned securely over his people.

Commentary: This verse marks a significant turning point, signaling the end of the Israelites' favored status. With Joseph, their protector and advocate, gone, the Egyptians (likely the same Pharaoh Magron from earlier, or perhaps his successor) begin to assert full authority, effectively starting the period of oppression, foreshadowing the enslavement to come. This also implies that Pharaoh now governs independently, no longer under Joseph's extensive guidance.

This chapter serves as a detailed genealogical record of Jacob's family in Egypt, confirming the seventy souls who entered the land. More significantly, it chronicles Joseph's peaceful and impactful rule until his death at 110. His dying prophecy and solemn oath regarding his bones foretell the Exodus. The chapter concludes with the ominous shift in power dynamics after Joseph's death, setting the stage for the enslavement of the Israelites in Egypt.

Book of Jasher, Chapter 60

Zepho's Escape and Attempts to Incite War

Verse 1: And when the year came around, being the seventy-second year after the Israelites had come to Egypt, and after Joseph's death, **Zepho**, the son of **Eliphaz**, the son of Esau, escaped from Egypt with his men and left.

Commentary: This verse sets the scene shortly after Joseph's death. It highlights the escape of Zepho, a prominent descendant of Esau, who was captured and enslaved by Joseph in previous chapters. His escape is a critical event, as he will become a catalyst for future conflicts.

Verse 2: And he came to **Africa**, which is **Dinhabah**, to **Angeas**, king of Africa, and Angeas received them with great honor, and he made Zepho the captain of his army.

Commentary: Zepho seeks refuge with King Angeas in Africa (identified as Dinhabah, a place often associated with Edomite kings in biblical lists). Angeas not only welcomes Zepho but quickly recognizes his abilities by making him a high-ranking military leader, showing Zepho's immediate influence and potential.

Verse 3: And Zepho found favor in the sight of Angeas and in the sight of his people, and Zepho was captain of the army for Angeas king of Africa for many days.

Commentary: Zepho's charisma and skill allow him to gain significant respect and power within Angeas's kingdom. He holds this influential military position for a considerable time.

Verse 4: And Zepho tried to convince Angeas king of Africa to gather all his army to go and fight with the Egyptians and with the sons of Jacob, and to get revenge for his relatives.

Commentary: Driven by a desire for revenge and to free his still-enslaved kin (from the previous chapter), Zepho attempts to persuade King Angeas to launch a war against Egypt and Jacob's descendants. This demonstrates Zepho's persistent hostility towards the Israelites.

Verse 5: But Angeas would not listen to Zepho to do this thing, for Angeas knew the strength of the sons of Jacob, and what they had done to his army in their warfare with the children of Esau.

Commentary: Angeas, unlike Zepho, is more pragmatic. He remembers the devastating defeats his forces suffered in previous wars against Joseph and the sons of Jacob, making him hesitant to engage in another costly conflict. This shows Joseph's past military prowess had a lasting deterrent effect.

Verse 6: And Zepho was in those days very important to Angeas and to all his people, and he continually tried to convince them to make war against Egypt, but they refused.

Commentary: Despite Zepho's high standing and repeated attempts, Angeas and his people consistently refuse to engage in a new war with Egypt, showing their wisdom in avoiding a confrontation they likely couldn't win.

A Dispute Over a Woman Leads to War in Chittim

Verse 7: And it came to pass in those days there was in the land of **Chittim** (often associated with Cyprus or the broader Mediterranean world, including parts of Italy) a man in the city of **Puzimna**, whose name was **Uzu**, and he became shamefully worshiped as a god by the children of Chittim, and the man died and had no son, only one daughter whose name was **Jania**.

Commentary: The narrative shifts to an entirely new setting, the land of Chittim. It introduces Uzu, who was deified, indicating a pagan culture. His death leaves him with only a daughter, Jania, setting up a new plotline.

Verse 8: And the young woman was exceedingly beautiful, graceful, and intelligent; there was no one like her for beauty and wisdom throughout the land.

Commentary: Jania is described as exceptionally gifted in both appearance and intellect, making her a highly desirable match.

Verse 9: And the people of Angeas king of Africa saw her and they came and praised her to him, and Angeas sent to the children of Chittim, and he requested to take her for himself as a wife, and the people of Chittim consented to give her to him as a wife.

Commentary: Angeas hears about Jania's beauty and immediately seeks her hand in marriage, and the people of Chittim agree, perhaps viewing it as a politically advantageous alliance.

Verse 10: And when Angeas's messengers were leaving the land of Chittim to begin their journey, behold the messengers of **Turnus king of Bibentu** also came to Chittim, for Turnus king of Bibentu also sent his messengers to request Jania for him, to take for himself as a wife, for all his men had also praised her to him, therefore he sent all his servants to her.

Commentary: Just as Angeas's plan is in motion, a rival king, Turnus of Bibentu, also sends messengers to claim Jania. This creates an immediate conflict over the same woman, a classic trigger for war in ancient narratives.

Verse 11: And the servants of Turnus came to Chittim, and they asked for Jania, to be taken to Turnus their king as a wife.

Commentary: Turnus's envoys formally present their king's request for Jania.

Verse 12: And the people of Chittim said to them, "We cannot give her, because Angeas king of Africa desired her to take her as a wife before you came, and we agreed to give her to him, and now therefore we cannot do this thing to take the girl away from Angeas in order to give her to Turnus."

Commentary: The people of Chittim explain their predicament: they are already committed to Angeas due to his prior request, and they cannot honor Turnus's request without breaking their word.

Verse 13: "For we are greatly afraid of Angeas lest he come in battle against us and destroy us, and Turnus your master will not be able to deliver us from his hand."

Commentary: The Chittim people express their fear of Angeas's power. They prioritize avoiding his wrath, believing Turnus cannot protect them from him, which highlights Angeas's reputation as a formidable military leader.

Verse 14: And when the messengers of Turnus heard all the words of the children of Chittim, they turned back to their master and told him all the words of the children of Chittim.

Commentary: Turnus's messengers report back the refusal and the reasons behind it, setting the stage for his response.

Verse 15: And the children of Chittim sent a formal message to Angeas, saying, "Behold, Turnus has sent for Jania to take her for himself as a wife, and this is how we answered him; and we heard that he has gathered his entire army to go to war against you, and he intends to pass by the road of **Sardunia** to fight against your brother **Lucus**, and after that he will come to fight against you."

Commentary: The people of Chittim proactively inform Angeas of Turnus's actions and intentions, hoping to secure their alliance and protection. They reveal Turnus's battle plan: attacking Angeas's brother, Lucus (King of Sardunia), first, then Angeas himself.

Verse 16: And Angeas heard the words of the children of Chittim which they sent to him in the report, and his anger was kindled and he rose up and assembled his whole army and came through the islands of the sea, the road to Sardunia, to his brother Lucus king of Sardunia.

Commentary: Angeas reacts with fury upon hearing of Turnus's aggressive plans. He immediately mobilizes his forces and sets out to meet his brother, Lucus, in Sardunia, preparing for war.

Verse 17: And **Niblos**, the son of Lucus, heard that his uncle Angeas was coming, and he went out to meet him with a large army, and he kissed him and embraced him, and Niblos said to Angeas, "When you ask my father about his welfare, when I go with you to fight with Turnus, ask of him to make me captain of his army," and Angeas did so, and he came to his brother and his brother came to meet him, and he asked him about his welfare.

Commentary: Lucus's son, Niblos, intercepts Angeas. He demonstrates loyalty and respect but also a clear ambition for military command. Angeas agrees to endorse Niblos's request to his father.

Verse 18: And Angeas asked his brother Lucus about his welfare, and to make his son Niblos captain of his army, and Lucus did so, and Angeas and his brother Lucus rose up and they went toward Turnus to battle, and there was with them a great army and a strong force.

Commentary: Lucus honors Angeas's request and appoints Niblos. The two brothers, with their combined forces, now proceed to confront Turnus, prepared for a major battle.

The War and Its Aftermath

Verse 19: And he came in ships, and they came into the province of **Ashtorash**, and behold Turnus came toward them, for he went forth to Sardunia, and intended to destroy it and afterward to pass on from there to Angeas to fight with him.

Commentary: Angeas and Lucus's forces arrive by sea. Turnus, meanwhile, is already advancing on Sardunia, confirming the intelligence received by Angeas.

Verse 20: And Angeas and Lucus his brother met Turnus in the **valley of Canopia**, and the battle was strong and mighty between them in that place.

Commentary: The two armies clash in the Valley of Canopia, resulting in a fierce and significant battle.

Verse 21: And the battle was severe upon Lucus king of Sardunia, and all his army fell, and Niblos his son fell also in that battle.

Commentary: Despite the combined forces, Lucus's army is completely routed, and his son, Niblos, is killed in battle. This is a significant setback for Angeas's side and a personal tragedy for Lucus.

Verse 22: And his uncle Angeas commanded his servants and they made a golden coffin for Niblos and they put him into it, and Angeas again waged battle toward Turnus, and Angeas was stronger than he, and he slew him, and he struck all his people with the edge of the sword, and Angeas avenged the cause of Niblos his brother's son and the cause of the army of his brother Lucus.

Commentary: Angeas deeply mourns Niblos's death, honoring him with a golden coffin. He then, fueled by vengeance, renews the attack. His superior strength leads to Turnus's defeat and death, and his entire army is destroyed. Angeas successfully avenges his nephew and brother's army.

Verse 23: And when Turnus died, the hands of those that survived the battle became weak, and they fled from before Angeas and Lucus his brother.

Commentary: With their king dead, the remaining forces of Turnus lose morale and flee in disarray.

Verse 24: And Angeas and his brother Lucus pursued them to the highway, which is between **Alphanu and Romah**, and they slew the whole army of Turnus with the edge of the sword.

Commentary: Angeas and Lucus pursue the fleeing enemy relentlessly, completely annihilating Turnus's army, leaving no survivors. This emphasizes the brutal nature of warfare in this period. The mention of Alphanu and Romah (potentially pointing to early Roman settlements) is an interesting geographical detail.

Verse 25: And Lucus king of Sardunia commanded his servants that they should make a coffin of brass, and that they should place therein the body of his son Niblos, and they buried him in that place.

Commentary: Lucus, having retrieved his son's body, provides him with a solemn burial in a brass coffin at the battlefield.

Verse 26: And they built upon it a high tower there upon the highway, and they called its name after the name of Niblos to this day, and they also buried Turnus king of Bibentu there in that place with Niblos.

Commentary: A memorial tower is built for Niblos, giving his name to the site for a long time. Interestingly, Turnus, his killer, is also buried there, suggesting a shared, albeit antagonistic, memorial.

Verse 27: And behold upon the highway between Alphanu and Romah the grave of Niblos is on one side and the grave of Turnus on the other, and a pavement between them to this day.

Commentary: This verse serves as a literary device to make the story more tangible, asserting that the burial sites of Niblos and Turnus, separated by a paved road, were still visible at the time Jasher was written, suggesting a lasting historical mark of this conflict.

Verse 28: And when Niblos was buried, Lucus his father returned with his army to his land Sardunia, and Angeas his brother king of Africa went with his people to the city of **Bibentu**, that is the city of Turnus.

Commentary: After the burials, the victorious kings return to their respective territories. Angeas, having defeated Turnus, advances on Turnus's capital city, Bibentu.

Verse 29: And the inhabitants of Bibentu heard of his fame and they were greatly afraid of him, and they went forth to meet him with weeping and supplication, and the inhabitants of Bibentu begged Angeas not to slay them nor destroy their city; and he did so, for Bibentu was in those days reckoned as one of the cities of the children of Chittim; therefore he did not destroy the city.

Commentary: The people of Bibentu, terrified by Angeas's reputation for destruction, surrender peacefully and plead for mercy. Angeas spares the city because it is considered part of Chittim, suggesting he had no quarrel with them, only with Turnus.

Verse 30: But from that day forward the troops of the king of Africa would go to Chittim to raid and plunder it, and whenever they went, Zepho the captain of the army of Angeas would go with them.

Commentary: While Bibentu is spared, Angeas's troops begin to regularly raid and plunder the broader region of Chittim. Zepho, now a prominent military leader, is always involved in these expeditions, maintaining his role as a commander and strategist.

Verse 31: And it was after this that Angeas turned with his army and they came to the city of Puzimna, and Angeas took thence Jania the daughter of Uzu for a wife and brought her to his city in Africa.

Commentary: Having secured his victory and established his dominance, Angeas finally claims the prize that started the war: Jania. He takes her as his wife, bringing the conflict's initiating cause to a resolution.

This chapter takes us away from the Israelites' narrative to focus on the exploits of **Zepho**, the son of Esau. It details his escape, rise to power in Africa, and his attempts to incite war against Egypt. The main body of the chapter then describes a significant war that erupts over a woman, Jania, between King Angeas (Zepho's patron) and King Turnus. The conflict results in heavy casualties, the death of both Niblos and Turnus, and ultimately Angeas's victory and the plundering of the region, with Zepho playing a key role in these military actions. The chapter provides fascinating geographical details and demonstrates the intertwined nature of various ancient peoples, even as far as Africa and the Mediterranean.

Book of Jasher, Chapter 61

Pharaoh's New Palace and the Deaths of Jacob's Sons

Verse 1: And it came to pass at that time Pharaoh king of Egypt commanded all his people to make for him a strong palace in Egypt.

Commentary: After Joseph's death, the new Pharaoh (likely Magron) solidifies his reign by commissioning a grand and powerful palace, perhaps as a symbol of his unchallenged authority, now that Joseph is no longer guiding all affairs of state.

Verse 2: And he also commanded the sons of Jacob to assist the Egyptians in the building, and the Egyptians made a beautiful and elegant palace for a royal dwelling, and he lived there and he renewed his government and he reigned securely.

Commentary: This is a crucial turning point. Pharaoh compels the Israelites to participate in forced labor for his building projects. This marks the beginning of their subjugation and oppression, a stark contrast to their favored status under Joseph. The Pharaoh, now in full control, establishes his secure rule.

Verse 3: And **Zebulun**, the son of Jacob, died in that year, that is the seventy-second year of the Israelites coming down to Egypt, and Zebulun died a hundred and fourteen years old, and was put into a coffin and given into the hands of his children.

Commentary: This verse records the death of Zebulun, one of Jacob's sons, at 114 years old. The mention of his body being placed in a coffin and given to his children indicates the preservation of bodies for eventual burial in Canaan, echoing Joseph's earlier command. This death further diminishes the generation that knew Joseph.

Verse 4: And in the seventy-fifth year died his brother **Simeon**, he was a hundred and twenty years old at his death, and he was also put into a coffin and given into the hands of his children.

Commentary: Three years later, Simeon, another of Jacob's sons, dies at the age of 120. The repeated detail of placing them in coffins highlights the Israelites' hope of eventually returning to Canaan. The passing of these patriarchs signifies the fading of the direct generation that shared Jacob's experience.

Zepho's Persistent Efforts and Balaam's Prophecy

Verse 5: And **Zepho**, the son of **Eliphaz**, the son of Esau, captain of the army for **Angeas** king of **Dinhabah**, was still daily trying to convince Angeas to prepare for battle to fight with the sons of Jacob in Egypt, and Angeas was unwilling to do this thing, for his servants had related to him all the might of the sons of Jacob, what they had done to them in their battle with the children of Esau.

Commentary: Zepho, still holding a powerful military position, continues his relentless campaign to persuade Angeas to attack the Israelites in Egypt. However, Angeas remains cautious, having learned from previous devastating defeats at the hands of Jacob's sons. This emphasizes the lasting impression of the Israelites' military strength.

Verse 6: And Zepho was in those days daily trying to convince Angeas to fight with the sons of Jacob in those days.

Commentary: This reiterates Zepho's strong desire for revenge and his continuous efforts to instigate war, highlighting his stubborn determination.

Verse 7: And after some time Angeas listened to the words of Zepho and agreed to him to fight with the sons of Jacob in Egypt, and Angeas got all his people ready, a people numerous as the sand on the seashore, and he decided to go to Egypt to battle.

Commentary: Despite his initial reluctance, Angeas eventually gives in to Zepho's persistent urging. He mobilizes a colossal army, described as "numerous as the sand," demonstrating a significant commitment to this new war against Egypt and the Israelites.

Verse 8: And among the servants of Angeas was a youth fifteen years old, **Balaam the son of Beor** was his name and the youth was very wise and understood the art of witchcraft.

Commentary: This verse introduces a crucial new character: Balaam. Even at 15, he's depicted as exceptionally wise and skilled in "witchcraft" or divination. This foreshadows his significant role in later biblical narratives as a prophet-for-hire.

Verse 9: And Angeas said to Balaam, "Please, use your witchcraft for us, so we may know who will win in this battle to which we are now going."

Commentary: Angeas, before committing his vast army, seeks a supernatural prediction of the battle's outcome from Balaam. This shows a reliance on divination and an attempt to ensure victory or avoid defeat.

Verse 10: And Balaam ordered that they should bring him wax, and he made therefrom the likeness of chariots and horsemen representing the army of Angeas and the army of Egypt, and he put them in the specially prepared waters that he had for that purpose, and he took in his hand the branches of myrtle trees, and he exercised his cunning, and he joined them over the water, and there appeared to him in the water the resembling images of the armies of Angeas falling before the resembling images of the Egyptians and the sons of Jacob.

Commentary: Balaam performs a magical ritual using wax figures and water. His divination clearly shows Angeas's forces being defeated by the Egyptians and the sons of Jacob, predicting a loss. This ritualistic detail provides insight into ancient divination practices.

Verse 11: And Balaam told this thing to Angeas, and Angeas despaired and did not arm himself to go down to Egypt to battle, and he remained in his city.

Commentary: Balaam's grim prophecy immediately discourages Angeas. He cancels the military expedition, choosing to remain safe in his city rather than face certain defeat, demonstrating the powerful influence of such omens.

Zepho's New Role in Chittim and the Legend of the Monster

Verse 12: And when Zepho the son of Eliphaz saw that Angeas had given up on going forth to battle with the Egyptians, Zepho fled from Angeas from Africa, and he went and came to **Chittim**.

Commentary: Zepho, frustrated by Angeas's change of heart and still driven by his desire for vengeance against the Israelites, leaves Africa and heads to Chittim, the region previously involved in the dispute over Jania. His continuous movement underscores his restless and determined nature.

Verse 13: And all the people of Chittim received him with great honor, and they hired him to fight their battles all the days, and Zepho became exceedingly rich in those days, and the troops of the king of Africa still spread themselves in those days, and the children of Chittim assembled and went to **Mount Cuptizia** on account of the troops of Angeas king of Africa, who were advancing upon them.

Commentary: Zepho is once again welcomed and immediately given a military role, becoming wealthy in the process. This verse also shows ongoing conflict, with Angeas's troops still raiding Chittim, forcing the locals to gather at Mount Cuptizia for defense.

Verse 14: And it was one day that Zepho lost a young heifer, and he went to seek it, and he heard it lowing around the mountain.

Commentary: This mundane event sets the stage for a heroic deed that will further elevate Zepho's status among the people of Chittim.

Verse 15: And Zepho went and he saw and behold there was a large cave at the bottom of the mountain, and there was a great stone there at the entrance of the cave, and Zepho split the stone and he came into the cave and he looked and behold, a large animal was devouring the ox; from the middle upward it resembled a man, and from the middle downward it resembled an animal, and Zepho rose up against the animal and slew it with his swords.

Commentary: Zepho encounters and slays a monstrous creature that is half-man, half-beast, reminiscent of mythological creatures. This act establishes him as a hero, showcasing his strength and bravery. This legend likely served to solidify his reputation and leadership among the Chittim people.

Verse 16: And the inhabitants of Chittim heard of this thing, and they rejoiced exceedingly, and they said, "What shall we do to this man who has slain this animal that devoured our cattle?"

Commentary: The people of Chittim are overjoyed by Zepho's feat, as this monster had been a menace to their livestock. They immediately consider how to reward such a great benefactor.

Verse 17: And they all assembled to dedicate one day in the year to him, and they called the name thereof **Zepho** after his name, and they brought to him drink offerings year after year on that day, and they brought to him gifts.

Commentary: The people of Chittim show their immense gratitude by establishing an annual holiday in Zepho's honor, complete with offerings and gifts, essentially deifying him or treating him as a heroic ancestor. This further cements his position and influence.

Jania's Illness and Angeas's Monumental Project

Verse 18: At that time **Jania** the daughter of **Uzu**, wife of king Angeas, became ill, and her illness was heavily felt by Angeas and his officers, and Angeas said to his wise men, "What shall I do for Jania and how shall I heal her from her illness?" And his wise men said to him, "Because the air of our country is not like the air of the land of Chittim, and our water is not like their water, therefore from this has the queen become ill."

Commentary: The narrative shifts back to Angeas and Jania. Jania falls ill, and Angeas consults his advisors. They diagnose her illness as being caused by the change in environment (air and water) from her homeland, Chittim. This highlights ancient beliefs about health and environment.

Verse 19: "For through the change of air and water she became ill, and also because in her country she drank only the water which came from **Purmah**, which her ancestors had brought up with bridges."

Commentary: The diagnosis is further refined, pinpointing specific water from "Purmah" in Chittim as being essential for Jania's health. The mention of her ancestors building bridges to bring this water suggests a historically significant, perhaps unique, water source.

Verse 20: And Angeas commanded his servants, and they brought to him in vessels the waters of Purmah belonging to Chittim, and they weighed those waters with all the waters of the land of Africa, and they found those waters lighter than the waters of Africa.

Commentary: Angeas orders a scientific test, comparing the water from Purmah to local African water. The discovery that Purmah water is "lighter" suggests a perceived purity or difference that was believed to be beneficial. This shows a practical, albeit ancient, approach to problem-solving.

Verse 21: And Angeas saw this thing, and he commanded all his officers to assemble the stonecutters in thousands and tens of thousands, and they cut stone without number, and the builders came and they built an exceedingly strong bridge, and they conveyed the spring of water from the land of Chittim to Africa, and those waters were for Jania the queen and for all her concerns, to drink from and to bake, wash and bathe therewith, and also to water therewith all seed from which food can be obtained, and all fruit of the ground.

Commentary: In an astonishing display of power and devotion, Angeas undertakes a colossal engineering feat: building an incredibly strong bridge or aqueduct to transport water from Chittim all the way to Africa. This project, involving tens of thousands of workers and countless stones, is for Jania's health and general use, showing the immense resources a king could command.

Verse 22: And the king commanded that they should bring of the soil of Chittim in large ships, and they also brought stones to build therewith, and the builders built palaces for Jania the queen, and the queen became healed of her illness.

Commentary: To further replicate Jania's homeland, Angeas orders the transportation of soil and stones from Chittim to build special palaces for her in Africa. This extreme measure, combined with the water, results in Jania's recovery, reinforcing the belief in the importance of her native environment.

Zepho Becomes King of Chittim

Verse 23: And at the revolution of the year the troops of Africa continued coming to the land of Chittim to plunder as usual, and Zepho son of Eliphaz heard their report, and he gave orders concerning them and he fought with them, and they fled before him, and he delivered the land of Chittim from them.

Commentary: Angeas's troops continue their annual raids on Chittim, but now Zepho, having become a hero and leader in Chittim, actively defends the land against his former patron's forces. He defeats them, freeing Chittim from their plundering, a significant turn of events.

Verse 24: And the children of Chittim saw the valor of Zepho, and the children of Chittim resolved and they made Zepho king over them, and he became king over them, and while he reigned they went to conquer the children of **Tubal**, and all the surrounding islands.

Commentary: Recognizing Zepho's immense valor and his protection, the people of Chittim respond by making him their king. Under his leadership, they immediately embark on military conquests, extending their dominion over Tubal and nearby islands.

Verse 25: And their king Zepho went at their head and they made war with Tubal and the islands, and they subdued them, and when they returned from the battle they renewed his government for him, and they built for him a very large palace for his royal dwelling and seat, and they made a large throne for him, and Zepho reigned over the whole land of Chittim and over the land of **Italia** fifty years.

Commentary: Zepho leads his new kingdom to military victories, expanding their territory. Upon their return, his kingship is reaffirmed, and he is provided with a magnificent palace and throne, symbolizing his established rule. The most striking detail is that Zepho reigns over "the whole land of Chittim and over the land of **Italia** for fifty years." This is a monumental claim, identifying Zepho, Esau's grandson, as an early king of Italy, suggesting a legendary foundation for the Roman people (often linked to the descendants of Esau/Edom in some traditions). This verse offers a highly significant connection for the Book of Jasher.

This chapter shows the continued oppression of the Israelites in Egypt following Joseph's death. It also further develops the story of Zepho, who, after failing to incite war against Egypt, becomes a hero and then king in Chittim, leading his new kingdom to conquer other lands, including Italia. The introduction of the young Balaam and his prophetic abilities, along with the extravagant measures Angeas takes to heal Jania, adds rich details to this non-Israelite focused narrative. The chapter's conclusion, establishing Zepho as a long-reigning king of Chittim and Italia, is a particularly striking element within the Book of Jasher.

Book of Jasher, Chapter 62

The Passing of Jacob's Sons

Verse 1: In that year, being the seventy-ninth year of the Israelites going down to Egypt, **Reuben**, the son of Jacob, died in the land of Egypt; Reuben was a hundred and twenty-five years old when he died, and they put him into a coffin, and he was given into the hands of his children.

Commentary: This verse continues the grim reality of the passing of Jacob's generation. Reuben, the eldest son, dies at a ripe old age. The detail of placing him in a coffin and giving him to his children

suggests the practice of preserving bodies, likely for eventual transport back to Canaan, consistent with the promise made to Joseph.

Verse 2: And in the eightieth year died his brother **Dan**; he was a hundred and twenty years old at his death, and he was also put into a coffin and given into the hands of his children.

Commentary: The deaths continue, with Dan dying the following year. The pattern of recording their age, death in Egypt, coffining, and handing over to their children is repeated, emphasizing the Israelites' intention to eventually return to the Promised Land.

Verse 3: And in that year died **Chusham** king of **Edom**, and after him reigned **Hadad the son of Bedad**, for thirty-five years; and in the eighty-first year died **Issachar**, the son of Jacob, in Egypt, and Issachar was a hundred and twenty-two years old at his death, and he was put into a coffin in Egypt, and given into the hands of his children.

Commentary: This verse interweaves the Edomite royal succession with the deaths of Jacob's sons. Chusham, an earlier king of Edom (mentioned in chapter 58), dies and is replaced by Hadad. This shows the ongoing history and stability of the Edomite kingdom. Then, another of Jacob's sons, Issachar, passes away.

Verse 4: And in the eighty-second year died **Asher** his brother, he was a hundred and twenty-three years old at his death, and he was placed in a coffin in Egypt, and given into the hands of his children.

Commentary: The steady succession of deaths among Jacob's sons continues with Asher. The long lifespans are characteristic of this ancient period as described in the Book of Jasher.

Verse 5: And in the eighty-third year died **Gad**, he was a hundred and twenty-five years old at his death, and he was put into a coffin in Egypt, and given into the hands of his children.

Commentary: Gad's death marks another significant loss for the Israelite family. The consistent practice of "coffining" them reinforces the idea of preserving their bodies for eventual reburial in Canaan.

Edomite Expansion and Betrayal

Verse 6: And it came to pass in the eighty-fourth year, that is the fiftieth year of the reign of **Hadad, son of Bedad**, king of Edom, that Hadad assembled all the children of Esau, and he got his whole army in readiness, about **four hundred thousand men**, and he directed his way to the land of **Moab**, and he went to fight with Moab and to make them tributary to him.

Commentary: The focus shifts back to the Edomites and their new king, Hadad. After fifty years of reigning, he mobilizes a massive army (400,000 men) to conquer Moab, aiming to make them a vassal state and collect tribute. This demonstrates the expansionist ambitions of Edom.

Verse 7: And the children of Moab heard this thing, and they were very much afraid, and they sent to the children of **Midian** to assist them in fighting with Hadad, son of Bedad, king of Edom.

Commentary: Moab, fearing Edom's power, seeks an alliance with Midian for military assistance, showing the political landscape and alliances of the region.

Verse 8: And Hadad came to the land of Moab, and Moab and the children of Midian went out to meet him, and they placed themselves in battle array against him in the field of Moab.

Commentary: The armies clash in the Moabite plains, setting the stage for a major battle.

Verse 9: And Hadad fought with Moab, and there fell of the children of Moab and the children of Midian many slain ones, about **two hundred thousand men**.

Commentary: The battle is fierce, resulting in a staggering 200,000 casualties among the combined Moabite and Midianite forces. This highlights the scale of warfare depicted in Jasher.

Verse 10: And the battle was very severe upon Moab, and when the children of Moab saw that the battle was sore upon them, they weakened their hands and turned their backs, and left the children of Midian to carry on the battle.

Commentary: This is a crucial moment of betrayal. Moab's forces, facing overwhelming defeat, abandon their Midianite allies, revealing their self-preservation instincts over loyalty.

Verse 11: And the children of Midian knew not the intentions of Moab, but they strengthened themselves in battle and fought with Hadad and all his host, and all Midian fell before him.

Commentary: Unaware of Moab's desertion, the Midianites fight valiantly, but they are ultimately overwhelmed and completely destroyed by Hadad's army. This emphasizes the tragic outcome of their loyalty.

Verse 12: And Hadad struck all Midian with a heavy blow, and he slew them with the edge of the sword, he left none remaining of those who came to assist Moab.

Commentary: Hadad's victory is absolute; he utterly annihilates the Midianite forces who had come to help Moab.

Verse 13: And when all the children of Midian had perished in battle, and the children of Moab had escaped, Hadad made all Moab at that time tributary to him, and they became under his hand, and they gave a yearly tax as it was ordered, and Hadad turned and went back to his land.

Commentary: With Midian wiped out, Hadad easily subjugates Moab, forcing them to pay annual tribute. Edom's power is thus expanded, and Hadad returns home victorious.

Midian's Vengeance and Renewed Conflict

Verse 14: And at the revolution of the year, when the rest of the people of Midian that were in the land heard that all their brethren had fallen in battle with Hadad for the sake of Moab, because the children of Moab had turned their backs in battle and left Midian to fight, then five of the princes of Midian resolved with the rest of their brethren who remained in their land, to fight with Moab to avenge the cause of their brethren.

Commentary: The surviving Midianites, upon learning of the betrayal and annihilation of their kin, are enraged. Five of their princes lead the decision to wage war against Moab, seeking revenge for their abandoned brethren. This demonstrates a strong sense of tribal honor and vengeance.

Verse 15: And the children of Midian sent to all their brethren the children of the east, and all their brethren, all the children of **Keturah** came to assist Midian to fight with Moab.

Commentary: Midian seeks a powerful alliance, calling upon the "children of the east" and specifically "the children of Keturah" (Abraham's later wife), indicating a broad coalition of Arabian tribes.

Verse 16: And the children of Moab heard this thing, and they were greatly afraid that all the children of the east had assembled together against them for battle, and they the children of Moab sent a formal message to the land of Edom to Hadad the son of Bedad, saying,

Commentary: Moab, now facing a formidable coalition seeking revenge, is terrified. They appeal to their new overlord, Hadad of Edom, for protection, highlighting their vulnerable position.

Verse 17: "Come now to us and assist us and we will strike Midian, for they all assembled together and have come against us with all their brethren the children of the east to battle, to avenge the cause of Midian that fell in battle."

Commentary: Moab explicitly requests Hadad's intervention to protect them from Midian's vengeance.

Verse 18: And Hadad, son of Bedad, king of Edom, went forth with his whole army and went to the land of Moab to fight with Midian, and Midian and the children of the east fought with Moab in the field of Moab, and the battle was very fierce between them.

Commentary: Hadad, upholding his new role as Moab's protector, leads his army to defend them. Another massive battle ensues between Edom/Moab and Midian/Eastern tribes.

Verse 19: And Hadad struck all the children of Midian and the children of the east with the edge of the sword, and Hadad at that time delivered Moab from the hand of Midian, and those that remained of Midian and of the children of the east fled before Hadad and his army, and Hadad pursued them to their land, and struck them with a very heavy slaughter, and the slain fell in the road.

Commentary: Hadad proves victorious again, utterly defeating Midian and their allies. He relentlessly pursues and slaughters the fleeing enemies, securing Moab's safety.

Verse 20: And Hadad delivered Moab from the hand of Midian, for all the children of Midian had fallen by the edge of the sword, and Hadad turned and went back to his land.

Commentary: Hadad ensures Midian is completely neutralized as a threat to Moab, returning to Edom after another successful campaign.

Verse 21: And from that day forth, the children of Midian hated the children of Moab, because they had fallen in battle for their sake, and there was a great and mighty enmity between them all the days.

Commentary: This verse explains the deep and lasting animosity between Midian and Moab, stemming from Moab's betrayal and Midian's immense losses in the previous battles. This historical grudge will continue for a long time.

Verse 22: And all that were found of Midian on the roads of the land of Moab perished by the sword of Moab, and all that were found of Moab on the roads of the land of Midian, perished by the sword of Midian; thus did Midian to Moab and Moab to Midian for many days.

Commentary: The hatred translates into ongoing, brutal skirmishes and killings whenever members of one group are found in the other's territory. This illustrates a state of constant, low-level warfare and retribution.

More Deaths Among Jacob's Sons and Zepho's Continuing Exploits

Verse 23: And it came to pass at that time that **Judah**, the son of Jacob, died in Egypt, in the eighty-sixth year of Jacob's going down to Egypt, and Judah was a hundred and twenty-nine years old at his death, and they embalmed him and put him into a coffin, and he was given into the hands of his children.

Commentary: Another significant patriarch, Judah, dies. The detailed description of his death, embalming, and coffining reinforces the consistent practice for Jacob's sons, alluding to their future return to the Promised Land.

Verse 24: And in the eighty-ninth year died **Naphtali**, he was a hundred and thirty-two years old, and he was put into a coffin and given into the hands of his children.

Commentary: The oldest of Jacob's sons, Naphtali, passes away at a very advanced age, further diminishing the original generation that came to Egypt.

Verse 25: And it came to pass in the ninety-first year of the Israelites going down to Egypt, that is in the thirtieth year of the reign of **Zepho** the son of Eliphaz, the son of Esau, over the children of **Chittim**, the children of Africa came upon the children of Chittim to plunder them as usual, but they had not come upon them for these thirteen years.

Commentary: The timeline shifts back to Zepho's reign in Chittim/Italia. After a thirteen-year break, the African forces (presumably Angeas's troops, perhaps without his direct command) resume their plundering raids on Chittim. This establishes a renewed conflict.

Verse 26: And they came to them in that year, and Zepho the son of Eliphaz went out to them with some of his men and struck them desperately, and the troops of Africa fled from before Zepho and the slain fell before him, and Zepho and his men pursued them, going on and striking them until they were near to Africa.

Commentary: Zepho, now a powerful king, personally leads his forces to repel the invaders. He decisively defeats the African troops, pursuing them with heavy casualties all the way back to their homeland, demonstrating his formidable military prowess.

Verse 27: And Angeas king of Africa heard the thing which Zepho had done, and it vexed him exceedingly, and Angeas was afraid of Zepho all the days.

Commentary: King Angeas, Zepho's former patron, is greatly disturbed and intimidated by Zepho's decisive victory against his forces. This establishes Zepho as a rival power and shows that Angeas now fears him, a significant reversal of their previous relationship.

This chapter chronicles the continued deaths of Jacob's sons in Egypt, emphasizing the long lifespans of the patriarchs and the practice of preserving their bodies. It also details a significant period of conflict between the Edomites (under King Hadad) and the Moabites and Midianites, highlighting a major betrayal that leads to lasting animosity between Midian and Moab. Finally, the chapter returns to Zepho's story, showing his strong leadership as king of Chittim (Italia) as he decisively defeats his former patron's forces, cementing his power and making Angeas fear him.

Book of Jasher, Chapter 63

The Death of Levi and the Beginning of Israelite Oppression

Verse 1: And in the ninety-third year **Levi**, the son of Jacob, died in Egypt, and Levi was a hundred and thirty-seven years old when he died, and they put him into a coffin and he was given into the hands of his children.

Commentary: The last of Jacob's original twelve sons, Levi, passes away. His death at 137 years old signifies the end of the first generation of Israelites who came to Egypt. The consistent detail of placing him in a coffin and giving him to his children reinforces the hope and expectation of eventually returning to Canaan.

Verse 2: And it came to pass after the death of Levi, when all Egypt saw that the sons of Jacob, the brethren of Joseph, were dead, all the Egyptians began to **afflict the children of Jacob**, and to make their lives miserable from that day until the day they left Egypt, and they took from their hands all the vineyards and fields which Joseph had given to them, and all the elegant houses in which the people of Israel lived, and all the best parts of Egypt—the Egyptians took all from the sons of Jacob in those days.

Commentary: This is a pivotal and tragic turning point. With Joseph's generation entirely gone, the Egyptians no longer feel obligated to honor the past. They begin to systematically oppress the Israelites, seizing their property, including the fertile lands and good homes Joseph had granted them. This marks the beginning of the "bitter servitude" that will define the Israelites' time in Egypt.

Verse 3: And the control of all Egypt became more severe in those days against the children of Israel, and the Egyptians harmed the Israelites until the children of Israel were tired of their lives because of the Egyptians.

Commentary: The oppression intensifies. The Egyptians' treatment becomes so harsh and pervasive that the Israelites are utterly exhausted and find their lives unbearable. This paints a grim picture of their rapidly deteriorating conditions.

Verse 4: And it came to pass in those days, in the hundred and second year of Israel's going down to Egypt, that **Pharaoh king of Egypt died**, and **Melol** his son reigned in his stead, and all the mighty men of Egypt and all that generation which knew Joseph and his brethren died in those days.

Commentary: Another significant shift in leadership occurs with the death of the reigning Pharaoh (likely Magron). His son, Melol, takes the throne. Crucially, this verse also notes the death of the *entire generation* of Egyptians who remembered Joseph and his brothers, effectively removing any lingering goodwill or memory of the Israelites' past contributions.

Verse 5: And another generation rose up in their stead, which had not known the sons of Jacob and all the good which they had done to them, and all their might in Egypt.

Commentary: This verse directly states the cause of the intensified oppression: a new generation of Egyptians who had no personal knowledge or memory of Joseph's immense contributions to Egypt's prosperity. This lack of historical context allows them to view the growing Israelite population purely as a threat or a resource to exploit.

Verse 6: Therefore all Egypt began from that day forth to make the lives of the sons of Jacob miserable, and to afflict them with all manner of hard labor, because they had not known their ancestors who had delivered them in the days of the famine.

Commentary: This verse explicitly links the lack of historical knowledge with the systematic increase in the Israelites' suffering. The new generation, ignorant of Joseph's salvation of Egypt during the famine, sees no reason to treat the Israelites with kindness, leading to severe forced labor.

Verse 7: And this was also from the Lord, for the children of Israel, to benefit them in their later days, in order that all the children of Israel might know the Lord their God.

Commentary: Despite the intense suffering, the narrative introduces a theological explanation: God allowed this oppression. The suffering was not arbitrary but served a divine purpose—to ultimately benefit the Israelites by turning them back to Him and strengthening their relationship with "the Lord their God."

Verse 8: And in order to know the signs and mighty wonders which the Lord would do in Egypt on account of his people Israel, in order that the children of Israel might fear the Lord God of their ancestors, and walk in all his ways, they and their descendants after them all the days.

Commentary: This verse further elaborates on God's purpose. The impending signs and wonders (the plagues) are meant to reveal God's power and faithfulness, instilling fear (reverence) for Him in the Israelites and guiding them and future generations to follow His ways. The oppression becomes a divine tool to prepare them for their deliverance and a deeper covenant with God.

Verse 9: Melol was twenty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned ninety-four years, and all Egypt called his name Pharaoh after the name of his father, as it was their custom to do to every king who reigned over them in Egypt.

Commentary: This verse provides details about the new Pharaoh, Melol: his age at ascension and the incredibly long duration of his reign (94 years). This long reign means that the oppression of the Israelites will be a sustained and defining feature of their time in Egypt.

Zepho's Continuing Wars with Angeas

Verse 10: At that time all the troops of **Angeas** king of Africa went forth to spread along the land of **Chittim** as usual for plunder.

Commentary: The narrative shifts back to the ongoing conflict between Angeas's African forces and the land of Chittim (now under King Zepho). Angeas's troops continue their habitual plundering raids.

Verse 11: And **Zepho** the son of **Eliphaz**, the son of Esau, heard their report, and he went forth to meet them with his army, and he fought them there on the road.

Commentary: Zepho, now the king of Chittim, proactively confronts the invaders. He is no longer just defending but aggressively engaging them on their path.

Verse 12: And Zepho struck the troops of the king of Africa with the edge of the sword, and left none remaining of them, and not even one returned to his master in Africa.

Commentary: Zepho achieves a devastating victory, completely annihilating Angeas's forces. This "no survivors" outcome highlights Zepho's military prowess and the ruthlessness of the warfare.

Verse 13: And Angeas heard of this which Zepho the son of Eliphaz had done to all his troops, that he had destroyed them, and Angeas assembled all his troops, all the men of the land of Africa, a people numerous like the sand by the seashore.

Commentary: Angeas is utterly shocked by the complete destruction of his army. Enraged and humiliated, he mobilizes an even larger, all-encompassing force, described with hyperbole as "numerous like the sand," indicating his determination to retaliate against Zepho.

Verse 14: And Angeas sent to **Lucus** his brother, saying, "Come to me with all your men and help me to strike Zepho and all the children of Chittim who have destroyed my men," and Lucus came with his whole army, a very great force, to assist Angeas his brother to fight with Zepho and the children of Chittim.

Commentary: Angeas calls upon his brother Lucus (from the previous chapter) and his formidable army for aid, forming a powerful alliance against Zepho. This signifies the gravity of the threat Zepho now poses.

Verse 15: And Zepho and the children of Chittim heard this thing, and they were greatly afraid and a great terror fell upon their hearts.

Commentary: The news of this massive combined army instills deep fear and panic in Zepho and his people. They realize the immense danger they face.

Verse 16: And Zepho also sent a letter to the land of Edom to **Hadad the son of Bedad** king of Edom and to all the children of Esau, saying,

Commentary: In his desperation, Zepho turns to his own kin, the Edomites, appealing to King Hadad for military support against the overwhelming African forces.

Verse 17: "I have heard that Angeas king of Africa is coming to us with his brother for battle against us, and we are greatly afraid of him, for his army is very great, particularly as he comes against us with his brother and his army likewise."

Commentary: Zepho's message conveys his deep fear, emphasizing the combined strength of Angeas and Lucus's armies as the reason for his terror.

Verse 18: "Now therefore come you also up with me and help me, and we will fight together against Angeas and his brother Lucus, and you will save us out of their hands, but if not, know you that we shall all die."

Commentary: Zepho issues a desperate plea, framing the situation as a life-or-death struggle, implying that failure to join him will result in their collective annihilation.

Verse 19: And the children of Esau sent a letter to the children of Chittim and to Zepho their king, saying, "We cannot fight against Angeas and his people for a covenant of peace has been between us these many years, from the days of **Bela the first king**, and from the days of **Joseph the son of Jacob king of Egypt**, with whom we fought on the other side of Jordan when he buried his father."

Commentary: The Edomites refuse Zepho's plea. Their reason is significant: they cite a long-standing peace treaty with Angeas, dating back to the time of their first king, Bela, and crucially, they also mention a past conflict *with Joseph* when he buried Jacob. This subtly connects Zepho's personal desire for revenge against the Israelites with his failed alliance request.

Verse 20: And when Zepho heard the words of his brethren the children of Esau he refrained from them, and Zepho was greatly afraid of Angeas.

Commentary: Zepho receives the rejection from his kin. This makes his situation even more precarious, increasing his fear of the approaching Angeas and Lucus.

Verse 21: And Angeas and Lucus his brother arrayed all their forces, about **eight hundred thousand men**, against the children of Chittim.

Commentary: The combined African armies, now a staggering 800,000 strong, prepare for battle against Zepho and Chittim. This is an immense, almost unbelievable, military force.

Zepho's Prayer and Divine Intervention

Verse 22: And all the children of Chittim said to Zepho, "Pray for us to the God of your ancestors, perhaps he may deliver us from the hand of Angeas and his army, for we have heard that he is a great God and that he delivers all who trust in him."

Commentary: In their extreme desperation, the people of Chittim, who are presumably pagans, appeal to Zepho to pray to the God of *his* ancestors (the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob). This indicates they have heard of the God of Israel and His power, showing a glimmer of faith or recognition of His might in a time of crisis. This is a remarkable request coming from non-Israelites.

Verse 23: And Zepho heard their words, and Zepho sought the Lord and he said,

Commentary: Zepho, despite his complex history and association with pagan cultures, genuinely turns to the God of his ancestors in prayer. This is a moment of spiritual significance for him.

Verse 24: "O Lord God of Abraham and Isaac my ancestors, this day I know that you are a true God, and all the gods of the nations are worthless and useless."

Commentary: Zepho's prayer is a powerful declaration of monotheism and a renunciation of idolatry. He explicitly acknowledges the God of Abraham and Isaac as the "true God" and dismisses all other gods as "worthless and useless." This is a profound conversion experience or moment of recognition for a descendant of Esau.

Verse 25: "Remember now this day to me your covenant with Abraham our father, which our ancestors related to us, and deal graciously with me this day for the sake of Abraham and Isaac our fathers, and save me and the children of Chittim from the hand of the king of Africa who comes against us for battle."

Commentary: Zepho appeals to God's covenant with Abraham and Isaac, showing his knowledge of this foundational promise. He asks for deliverance not just for himself but for the people of Chittim, demonstrating his responsibility as their king. His plea is rooted in the merit of his ancestors.

Verse 26: And the Lord listened to the voice of Zepho, and he had regard for him on account of Abraham and Isaac, and the Lord delivered Zepho and the children of Chittim from the hand of Angeas and his people.

Commentary: God hears Zepho's prayer. The deliverance is explicitly attributed to God's remembrance of His covenant with Abraham and Isaac, emphasizing divine faithfulness to His promises, even through the lineage of Esau. This is a powerful demonstration of God's sovereignty.

Verse 27: And Zepho fought Angeas king of Africa and all his people on that day, and the Lord gave all the people of Angeas into the hands of the children of Chittim.

Commentary: The battle takes place, and the outcome is clearly stated: God grants victory to Zepho and the children of Chittim, decisively turning the tide against the seemingly invincible African forces.

Verse 28: And the battle was severe upon Angeas, and Zepho struck all the men of Angeas and Lucus his brother with the edge of the sword, and there fell from them until the evening of that day about **four hundred thousand men**.

Commentary: The battle is brutal, and Zepho inflicts massive casualties on Angeas and Lucus's combined armies, killing approximately 400,000 men. This is another staggering number, emphasizing the scale of the victory and the destruction inflicted.

Verse 29: And when Angeas saw that all his men perished, he sent a letter to all the inhabitants of Africa to come to him, to assist him in the battle, and he wrote in the letter, saying, "All who are found in Africa, let them come to me from ten years old and upward; let them all come to me, and behold if he comes not he shall die, and all that he has, with his whole household, the king will take."

Commentary: Facing complete annihilation, Angeas resorts to a desperate and tyrannical measure: a forced conscription of every male from ten years old and up, under threat of death and confiscation of all property. This shows his absolute desperation and willingness to sacrifice his entire population.

Verse 30: And all the rest of the inhabitants of Africa were terrified at the words of Angeas, and there went out of the city about **three hundred thousand men and boys**, from ten years upward, and they came to Angeas.

Commentary: The threat works, and 300,000 additional men and boys, driven by fear, join Angeas's dwindling forces, demonstrating the king's extreme power and the people's terror.

Verse 31: And at the end of ten days Angeas renewed the battle against Zepho and the children of Chittim, and the battle was very great and strong between them.

Commentary: After replenishing his forces, Angeas launches a second, equally fierce battle against Zepho, showing his persistent determination despite the previous defeat.

Verse 32: And from the army of Angeas and Lucus, Zepho sent many of the wounded to his hands, about **two thousand men**, and **Sosiphtar** the captain of the army of Angeas fell in that battle.

Commentary: Zepho inflicts further heavy losses, including 2,000 wounded, and critically, Angeas's chief military commander, Sosiphtar, is killed. This is a severe blow to Angeas's military leadership.

Verse 33: And when Sosiphtar had fallen, the African troops turned their backs to flee, and they fled, and Angeas and Lucus his brother were with them.

Commentary: The death of their commander breaks the morale of the African forces, leading to a general rout and flight, with Angeas and Lucus themselves retreating.

Verse 34: And Zepho and the children of Chittim pursued them, and they struck them still heavily on the road, about two hundred men, and they pursued **Azdrubal** the son of Angeas who had fled with his father, and they struck twenty of his men on the road, and Azdrubal escaped from the children of Chittim, and they did not slay him.

Commentary: Zepho's forces continue their pursuit, inflicting more casualties. They specifically target Angeas's son, Azdrubal, but he manages to escape, leaving open the possibility of future encounters.

Verse 35: And Angeas and Lucus his brother fled with the rest of their men, and they escaped and came into Africa with terror and consternation, and Angeas feared all the days lest Zepho the son of Eliphaz should go to war with him.

Commentary: Angeas and Lucus escape to Africa in complete disarray, utterly defeated and living in constant fear of Zepho. This marks a definitive end to Angeas's aggressive designs on Chittim and establishes Zepho as a dominant regional power, a remarkable ascendancy for a former slave.

This chapter details the unfortunate turning point in the Israelite story: the death of Levi, the last of Jacob's sons, marks the full onset of severe oppression under a new Pharaoh. The narrative emphasizes that this suffering was part of God's plan to draw His people closer to Him and prepare them for future wonders. Simultaneously, the chapter follows Zepho's incredible rise. After being abandoned by his Edomite kin, he demonstrates unwavering faith in the God of Abraham and Isaac, leading to a decisive divine intervention that grants him a stunning victory over the formidable African armies. This solidifies Zepho's rule as king of Chittim (Italia) and leaves Angeas in perpetual fear.

Book of Jasher, Chapter 64

Balaam Joins Zepho, and Zepho's Hubris

Verse 1: And **Balaam the son of Beor** was at that time with **Angeas** in the battle, and when he saw that **Zepho** was winning against Angeas, he fled from there and came to **Chittim**.

Commentary: Balaam, the diviner introduced in the previous chapter, wisely switches sides once it's clear Angeas is losing. He recognizes Zepho's rising power and seeks refuge with the victor, demonstrating his opportunistic nature.

Verse 2: And Zepho and the children of Chittim received him with great honor, for Zepho knew Balaam's wisdom, and Zepho gave to Balaam many gifts and he remained with him.

Commentary: Zepho, recognizing Balaam's reputation for wisdom and divination (even though his earlier prophecy for Angeas was negative), welcomes him with open arms and rewards him, securing Balaam's loyalty. This further elevates Balaam's standing.

Verse 3: And when Zepho had returned from the war, he commanded all the children of Chittim who had gone into battle with him to be counted, and behold not one was missing.

Commentary: Zepho orders a headcount after his victory, and astonishingly, not a single one of his soldiers is missing. This is a truly miraculous outcome, highlighting the divine protection he received during the battle (as seen in the previous chapter's prayer).

Verse 4: And Zepho rejoiced at this thing, and he renewed his kingdom, and he made a feast for all his subjects.

Commentary: Zepho celebrates his extraordinary victory and renewed reign with a grand feast, a common practice for victorious kings.

Verse 5: But Zepho remembered not the Lord and considered not that the Lord had helped him in battle, and that he had delivered him and his people from the hand of the king of Africa, but still walked in the ways of the children of Chittim and the wicked children of Esau, to serve other gods which his brethren the children of Esau had taught him; it is therefore said, "From the wicked goes forth wickedness."

Commentary: This is a crucial theological commentary within Jasher. Despite directly experiencing God's miraculous intervention in the previous chapter (Zepho's prayer and subsequent victory), Zepho quickly forgets the Lord. He reverts to the pagan practices of the Chittim and the "wicked children of Esau," serving other gods. The proverb "From the wicked goes forth wickedness" highlights this spiritual regression and moral decline, foreshadowing negative consequences for his actions.

Verse 6: And Zepho reigned over all the children of Chittim securely, but knew not the Lord who had delivered him and all his people from the hand of the king of Africa; and the troops of Africa came no more to Chittim to plunder as usual, for they knew of the power of Zepho who had struck them all with the edge of the sword, so Angeas was afraid of Zepho the son of Eliphaz, and of the children of Chittim all the days.

Commentary: Zepho enjoys a secure reign and permanent freedom from Angeas's raids, due to the devastating defeat he inflicted. Angeas remains in perpetual fear of Zepho. However, Zepho's security is contrasted with his spiritual blindness, as he fails to acknowledge the true source of his deliverance.

Zepho's Plan to Attack Egypt and Gather Allies

Verse 7: At that time when Zepho had returned from the war, and when Zepho had seen how he prevailed over all the people of Africa and had struck them in battle with the edge of the sword, then Zepho decided with the children of Chittim, to go to Egypt to fight with the sons of Jacob and with Pharaoh king of Egypt.

Commentary: Emboldened by his recent victories and perhaps a sense of invincible power (which is presented as his downfall for forgetting God), Zepho sets his sights on a new target: Egypt and the Israelites. His desire for vengeance, which Angeas had previously resisted, is now his own driving force.

Verse 8: For Zepho heard that the mighty men of Egypt were dead and that Joseph and his brethren the sons of Jacob were dead, and that all their children the children of Israel remained in Egypt.

Commentary: Zepho's decision is based on intelligence: he knows that the powerful generation of Egyptians and Israelites who defeated his kin in the past are now dead. This strategic assessment suggests he believes the timing is right for a successful invasion.

Verse 9: And Zepho considered to go to fight against them and all Egypt, to avenge the cause of his brethren the children of Esau, whom Joseph with his brethren and all Egypt had struck in the land of Canaan, when they went up to bury Jacob in Hebron.

Commentary: Zepho's primary motivation is explicit: revenge. He seeks to avenge the defeat of Esau's descendants, particularly the one suffered at the burial of Jacob. This demonstrates the deep-seated, generational animosity between the lines of Esau and Jacob.

Verse 10: And Zepho sent messengers to **Hadad, son of Bedad**, king of **Edom**, and to all his brethren the children of Esau, saying,

Commentary: Zepho reaches out to his Edomite kin, including their king Hadad, to form a powerful alliance for this new invasion.

Verse 11: "Did you not say that you would not fight against the king of Africa for he is a member of your covenant? Behold I fought with him and struck him and all his people."

Commentary: Zepho, perhaps with a touch of "I told you so," reminds the Edomites of their previous refusal to join him against Angeas, emphasizing his own success where they had been cautious. This is a subtle dig and a persuasive argument for them to join him this time.

Verse 12: "Now therefore I have decided to fight against Egypt and the children of Jacob who are there, and I will be revenged of them for what Joseph, his brethren and ancestors did to us in the land of Canaan when they went up to bury their father in Hebron."

Commentary: Zepho states his clear objective: revenge against Egypt and the Israelites for past grievances related to Jacob's burial. This reiterates the historical animosity between the two lineages.

Verse 13: "Now then if you are willing to come to me to assist me in fighting against them and Egypt, then shall we avenge the cause of our brethren."

Commentary: He presents a direct invitation for the Edomites to join him, offering them a chance to participate in the long-desired revenge.

Verse 14: And the children of Esau listened to the words of Zepho, and the children of Esau gathered themselves together, a very great people, and they went to assist Zepho and the children of Chittim in battle.

Commentary: This time, the Edomites agree! They mobilize a large force to join Zepho, indicating that the appeal for revenge against Jacob's descendants was strong enough to overcome their previous caution.

Verse 15: And Zepho sent to all the children of the east and to all the children of Ishmael with words like these, and they gathered themselves and came to the assistance of Zepho and the children of Chittim in the war upon Egypt.

Commentary: Zepho expands his alliance, bringing in the "children of the east" and the Ishmaelites. This forms a massive coalition, similar to the one that attacked Joseph earlier, demonstrating a united front of Abraham's non-Israelite descendants against Jacob's line.

The Grand Alliance Against Egypt and Israel

Verse 16: And all these kings, the king of Edom and the children of the east, and all the children of Ishmael, and Zepho the king of Chittim went forth and arrayed all their hosts in **Hebron**.

Commentary: The vast allied army gathers and organizes its forces in Hebron, a significant location as it is Jacob's burial place and a symbolic site for the animosity between the families.

Verse 17: And the camp was very heavy, extending in length a distance of **three days' journey**, a people numerous as the sand upon the seashore which cannot be counted.

Commentary: The sheer size of this invading army is hyperbolically described as immense, stretching for three days' journey and uncountable, emphasizing the overwhelming threat they pose to Egypt and the Israelites.

Verse 18: And all these kings and their hosts went down and came against all Egypt in battle, and encamped together in the **valley of Pathros**.

Commentary: The massive coalition advances into Egypt and sets up camp in the Valley of Pathros, preparing for a decisive confrontation.

Verse 19: And all Egypt heard their report, and they also gathered themselves together, all the people of the land of Egypt, and of all the cities belonging to Egypt, about **three hundred thousand men**.

Commentary: Egypt mobilizes its own substantial army, around 300,000 men, to defend against this invasion, showing the scale of the impending conflict.

Verse 20: And the men of Egypt sent also to the children of Israel who were in those days in the land of **Goshen**, to come to them in order to go and fight with these kings.

Commentary: The Egyptians, despite their oppression of the Israelites, recognize their potential military value and call upon them for assistance in this crucial battle. This is a moment where the oppressors ironically need the oppressed.

Verse 21: And the men of Israel assembled and were about **one hundred and fifty men**, and they went into battle to assist the Egyptians.

Commentary: This is a striking detail: only 150 Israelite men respond to the call, a tiny force compared to the massive armies involved. This emphasizes their vulnerability and perhaps their reluctance to fight for their oppressors.

Verse 22: And the men of Israel and of Egypt went forth, about three hundred thousand men and one hundred and fifty men, and they went toward these kings to battle, and they placed themselves from without the land of Goshen opposite Pathros.

Commentary: The combined Egyptian and Israelite forces move to confront the invaders, positioning themselves strategically near Goshen.

Verse 23: And the Egyptians believed not in Israel to go with them in their camps together for battle, for all the Egyptians said, "Perhaps the children of Israel will deliver us into the hand of the children of Esau and Ishmael, for they are their brethren."

Commentary: Despite calling for their help, the Egyptians deeply distrust the Israelites. They fear a betrayal, believing the Israelites might switch sides to their "brethren" (the descendants of Esau and Ishmael), revealing the racial and ethnic tensions.

Verse 24: And all the Egyptians said to the children of Israel, "Remain you here together in your stand and we will go and fight against the children of Esau and Ishmael, and if these kings should prevail over us, then come you altogether upon them and assist us," and the children of Israel did so.

Commentary: Due to their distrust, the Egyptians separate the Israelite force, keeping them in reserve. This decision will have significant consequences later, highlighting the Egyptians' misjudgment.

Verse 25: And Zepho the son of Eliphaz the son of Esau king of Chittim, and Hadad the son of Bedad king of Edom, and all their camps, and all the children of the east, and children of Ishmael, a people numerous as sand, encamped together in the valley of Pathros opposite **Tachpanches**.

Commentary: The invading forces, led by Zepho and Hadad, are precisely located in the valley, ready for battle.

Verse 26: And Balaam the son of Beor the Syrian was there in the camp of Zepho, for he came with the children of Chittim to the battle, and Balaam was a man highly honored in the eyes of Zepho and his men.

Commentary: Balaam is present with Zepho's army, confirming his loyalty and his high status within Zepho's court.

Verse 27: And Zepho said to Balaam, "Try by divination for us that we may know who will prevail in the battle, we or the Egyptians."

Commentary: Zepho, despite his earlier spiritual regression, still relies on Balaam's divination, seeking a prediction of victory, mirroring Angeas's earlier actions.

Verse 28: And Balaam rose up and tried the art of divination, and he was skillful in the knowledge of it, but he was confused and the work was destroyed in his hand.

Commentary: Balaam attempts his divination, and though he's skilled, he fails. His magical working is corrupted or ineffective, suggesting divine interference against his attempts to predict an outcome unfavorable to God's people.

Verse 29: And he tried it again but it did not succeed, and Balaam despaired of it and left it and did not complete it, for this was from the Lord, in order to cause Zepho and his people to fall into the hand of the children of Israel, who had trusted in the Lord, the God of their ancestors, in their war.

Commentary: Balaam's repeated failures and despair are explicitly attributed to God. This divine intervention prevents Zepho from gaining an advantage and sets up the scenario for the Israelites' unexpected victory, emphasizing that God fights for those who trust Him, even if they are few.

The Battle and the Israelites' Unexpected Victory

Verse 30: And Zepho and Hadad put their forces in battle array, and all the Egyptians went alone against them, about three hundred thousand men, and not one man of Israel was with them.

Commentary: The battle begins. The Egyptian army, 300,000 strong, faces the massive allied invasion force alone, as the Israelites are held in reserve due to Egyptian distrust.

Verse 31: And all the Egyptians fought with these kings opposite Pathros and Tachpanches, and the battle was severe against the Egyptians.

Commentary: The fight is fierce, but the Egyptians are clearly losing, struggling against the larger allied force.

Verse 32: And the kings were stronger than the Egyptians in that battle, and about **one hundred and eighty men of Egypt fell on that day**, and about thirty men of the forces of the kings, and all the men of Egypt fled from before the kings, so the children of Esau and Ishmael pursued the Egyptians, continuing to strike them to the place where was the camp of the children of Israel.

Commentary: The allied kings quickly gain the upper hand. The Egyptians suffer significant casualties (180,000, though some translations say 180,000, and the actual Hebrew for 180 is "mea veshmonim" which means 180) and are routed. The pursuing allied forces drive them back towards the Israelite camp.

Verse 33: And all the Egyptians cried to the children of Israel, saying, "Hasten to us and assist us and save us from the hand of Esau, Ishmael and the children of Chittim."

Commentary: In their desperate retreat, the Egyptians, who had distrusted and separated the Israelites, now plead for their help against their pursuing "brethren."

Verse 34: And the hundred and fifty men of the children of Israel ran from their station to the camps of these kings, and the children of Israel cried to the Lord their God to deliver them.

Commentary: The tiny Israelite contingent, only 150 men, responds. Crucially, before engaging, they cry out to the Lord for deliverance, demonstrating their reliance on God despite their small numbers and the overwhelming odds.

Verse 35: And the Lord listened to Israel, and the Lord gave all the men of the kings into their hand, and the children of Israel fought against these kings, and the children of Israel struck about **four thousand of the kings' men**.

Commentary: God answers the Israelites' prayer! He grants them victory, enabling this tiny force of 150 men to miraculously defeat a significant portion of the massive allied army, striking down 4,000 of the enemy. This is a clear demonstration of divine intervention.

Verse 36: And the Lord threw a great panic in the camp of the kings, so that the fear of the children of Israel fell upon them.

Commentary: God actively intervenes by causing mass panic among the enemy forces. The fear of the small Israelite contingent spreads, leading to their disarray.

Verse 37: And all the hosts of the kings fled from before the children of Israel and the children of Israel pursued them continuing to strike them to the borders of the land of **Cush**.

Commentary: The entire allied army, despite their overwhelming numbers, flees in terror from the Israelites. The Israelites pursue them relentlessly, inflicting casualties all the way to the borders of Cush (Ethiopia/Sudan).

Verse 38: And the children of Israel slew of them on the road yet **two thousand men**, and of the children of Israel not one fell.

Commentary: During the pursuit, the Israelites kill another 2,000 of the enemy. Astonishingly, not a single Israelite falls in this battle, reinforcing the miraculous nature of God's protection and victory.

Verse 39: And when the Egyptians saw that the children of Israel had fought with such few men with the kings, and that the battle was so very severe against them,

Commentary: The Egyptians witness the incredible feat of the 150 Israelites defeating the kings' armies, a battle where the Egyptians themselves had been routed. This changes their perception of the Israelites.

Verse 40: All the Egyptians were greatly afraid of their lives on account of the strong battle, and all Egypt fled, every man hiding himself from the arrayed forces, and they hid themselves in the road, and they left the Israelites to fight.

Commentary: Instead of joining the fight, the Egyptians, terrified by the intensity of the battle and perhaps by the power demonstrated by the Israelites, completely desert the field, hiding themselves and leaving the small Israelite force to fight alone. This is another act of cowardice and abandonment by their oppressors.

Verse 41: And the children of Israel inflicted a terrible blow upon the kings' men, and they returned from them after they had driven them to the border of the land of Cush.

Commentary: The Israelites, though abandoned, continue their devastating attack on the retreating allied forces, driving them far away.

Israelite Retribution and Egyptian Fear

Verse 42: And all Israel knew the thing which the men of Egypt had done to them, that they had fled from them in battle, and had left them to fight alone.

Commentary: The Israelites are fully aware of the Egyptians' abandonment during the battle, and it deeply affects them.

Verse 43: So the children of Israel also acted with cunning, and as the children of Israel returned from battle, they found some of the Egyptians in the road and struck them there.

Commentary: The Israelites, having been abandoned by the Egyptians, enact a form of cunning retribution. They turn their anger and victorious power on their Egyptian "allies" who deserted them.

Verse 44: And whilst they slew them, they said to them these words:

Commentary: The Israelites verbally confront the Egyptians they are attacking, explaining their justification.

Verse 45: "Why did you go from us and leave us, being a few people, to fight against these kings who had a great people to strike us, that you might thereby deliver your own souls?"

Commentary: They challenge the Egyptians' cowardice and selfishness, questioning why they abandoned a small group to face an overwhelming enemy, seeking only to save themselves.

Verse 46: And of some which the Israelites met on the road, they the children of Israel spoke to each other, saying, "Strike, strike, for he is an Ishmaelite, or an Edomite, or from the children of Chittim," and they stood over him and slew him, and they knew that he was an Egyptian.

Commentary: This verse depicts a cruel and deceptive act of revenge. The Israelites feign confusion, pretending to mistake the Egyptians for their actual enemies (Ishmaelites, Edomites, Chittim), while knowing full well they are Egyptians. This cunning allows them to exact vengeance without openly violating their role as "allies."

Verse 47: And the children of Israel did these things cunningly against the Egyptians, because they had deserted them in battle and had fled from them.

Commentary: The text explicitly justifies the Israelites' actions as a cunning reprisal for the Egyptians' desertion, highlighting the deep resentment festering under the oppression.

Verse 48: And the children of Israel slew of the men of Egypt on the road in this manner, about **two hundred men**.

Commentary: The Israelites kill approximately 200 Egyptians during their "cunning" retribution. This is a relatively small number compared to the casualties of the main battle but significant as an act of internal reprisal.

Verse 49: And all the men of Egypt saw the evil which the children of Israel had done to them, so all Egypt feared greatly the children of Israel, for they had seen their great power, and that not one man of them had fallen.

Commentary: The Egyptians, witnessing the Israelites' power and their own casual slaughter, are now filled with fear of the Israelites, not just the invading armies. Their previous contempt turns into genuine terror, recognizing the Israelites' divine backing and military prowess, especially since they suffered no casualties themselves. This explains why Pharaoh would later fear them more.

Verse 50: So all the children of Israel returned with joy on their road to Goshen, and the rest of Egypt returned each man to his place.

Commentary: The Israelites return victorious and joyful to their land of Goshen, having proven their strength and exacted a measure of retribution. The remaining Egyptians, humbled, return to their homes.

This chapter details a powerful and pivotal moment in the Book of Jasher. It begins with Zepho's spiritual decline after his victory but then launches into a major war orchestrated by Zepho against Egypt and the Israelites, fueled by his desire for revenge. The chapter highlights the Egyptians' distrust of the Israelites, leading to their strategic isolation. However, through divine intervention, the tiny Israelite force achieves a miraculous victory against overwhelming odds, while the Egyptians flee. The chapter concludes with the Israelites' cunning and violent retribution against their abandoning Egyptian "allies," leading to the Egyptians' deep fear of the Israelites—a crucial precursor to the events of the Exodus.

Book of Jasher, Chapter 65

Egyptian Counsel on How to Oppress Israel

Verse 1: And it came to pass after these things, that all the advisors of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and all the elders of Egypt gathered and came before the king and bowed down to the ground, and they sat before him.

Commentary: Following the humiliating defeat of the Egyptian army and the Israelites' unexpected power in the previous chapter, Pharaoh's top advisors and elders assemble for a crucial strategy meeting. Their deference (bowing down) shows the king's absolute authority.

Verse 2: And the advisors and elders of Egypt spoke to the king, saying,

Commentary: The elders address Pharaoh directly, indicating the urgency and gravity of the situation.

Verse 3: "Behold the people of the children of Israel are greater and mightier than we are, and you know all the evil which they did to us on the road when we returned from battle."

Commentary: The advisors acknowledge the stark reality: the Israelites, despite being oppressed, have proven themselves superior in strength. They highlight the recent act of retribution against the retreating Egyptians, emphasizing the "evil" (from the Egyptian perspective) the Israelites inflicted. This sets a tone of fear and resentment.

Verse 4: "And you have also seen their strong power, for this power belongs to them from their fathers, for but a few men stood up against a people numerous as the sand, and struck them with the edge of the sword, and of themselves not one has fallen, so that if they had been numerous they would then have utterly destroyed them."

Commentary: They further emphasize the Israelites' incredible strength, attributing it to their ancestors (likely referencing the earlier deeds of Joseph and other patriarchs, and implicitly, God's backing). The fact that a tiny Israelite force defeated a massive army without losing a single man terrifies the Egyptians. They conclude that if the Israelites were larger, they would have completely annihilated the Egyptians, highlighting the perceived existential threat.

Verse 5: "Now therefore give us counsel what to do with them, until we gradually destroy them from amongst us, lest they become too numerous for us in the land."

Commentary: The core problem is presented: the Israelites are too numerous and too powerful. The elders ask for a strategy, not for immediate annihilation, but for a gradual weakening and destruction, indicating their long-term fear of the Israelites overwhelming them.

Verse 6: "For if the children of Israel should increase in the land, they will become an obstacle to us, and if any war should happen to take place, they with their great strength will join our enemy against us, and fight against us, destroy us from the land and go away from it."

Commentary: They articulate their specific fears: the Israelites will become a hindrance, a potential internal enemy. In case of war, they worry the Israelites' strength will be turned *against* Egypt, leading to Egypt's destruction and the Israelites' departure. This fear is a direct result of the recent battle where the Israelites demonstrated their power and acted independently.

Verse 7: So the king answered the elders of Egypt and said to them, "This is the plan advised against Israel, from which we will not depart."

Commentary: Pharaoh agrees with the severity of the situation and outlines his cunning strategy, indicating his firm resolve.

Verse 8: "Behold in the land are **Pithom** and **Rameses**, cities unfortified against battle, it behooves you and us to build them, and to fortify them."

Commentary: Pharaoh identifies two existing cities, Pithom and Rameses, that need fortification. This will be the cover story for their scheme, providing a seemingly legitimate public works project.

Verse 9: "Now therefore go you also and act cunningly toward them, and proclaim a voice in Egypt and in **Goshen** at the command of the king, saying,"

Commentary: Pharaoh's plan is based on deception ("act cunningly"). He instructs his officials to make a public announcement that will lure the Israelites into forced labor.

Verse 10: "All you men of Egypt, Goshen, Pathros and all their inhabitants! The king has commanded us to build Pithom and Rameses, and to fortify them for battle; whoever among you from all Egypt, from the children of Israel and from all the inhabitants of the cities, are willing to build with us, shall each have his wages given to him daily at the king's order; so go you first and do cunningly, and gather yourselves and come to Pithom and Rameses to build."

Commentary: The public announcement appears benevolent: a call for volunteers for a royal building project, promising daily wages to all, including the Israelites. This is the bait in the trap, designed to get them to willingly start the work.

Verse 11: "And whilst you are building, cause a proclamation of this kind to be made throughout Egypt every day at the command of the king."

Commentary: The public, deceptive recruitment will be continuous, reinforcing the idea of a voluntary, paid project.

Verse 12: "And when some of the children of Israel shall come to build with you, you shall give them their wages daily for a few days."

Commentary: The initial phase of the deception: the Egyptians are to actually pay the Israelites for a short period to build trust and commitment.

Verse 13: "And after they shall have built with you for their daily hire, drag yourselves away from them daily one by one in secret, and then you shall rise up and become their task-masters and officers, and you shall leave them afterward to build without wages, and should they refuse, then force them with all your might to build."

Commentary: This is the heart of the cunning plan: once the Israelites are committed, the Egyptians will gradually and secretly withdraw from the labor. Then, they will assume roles as overseers, forcing the Israelites to continue the work without pay, using violence if necessary. This outlines the transition from deceptive invitation to outright slavery.

Verse 14: "And if you do this it will be well with us to strengthen our land against the children of Israel, for on account of the fatigue of the building and the work, the children of Israel will decrease, because you will deprive them from their wives day by day."

Commentary: Pharaoh reveals the chilling purpose behind this scheme: to weaken the Israelites. The extreme physical labor is intended to reduce their numbers, and the mention of depriving them from their wives implies the work will be so exhaustive they will be unable to procreate, thus naturally decreasing their population. This is a genocidal intent.

The Implementation of the Egyptian Plot

Verse 15: And all the elders of Egypt heard the counsel of the king, and the counsel seemed good in their eyes and in the eyes of the servants of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of all Egypt, and they did according to the word of the king.

Commentary: The Egyptians fully endorse this cruel and deceptive plan, indicating their widespread fear and animosity towards the Israelites.

Verse 16: And all the servants went away from the king, and they caused a proclamation to be made in all Egypt, in **Tachpanches** and in Goshen, and in all the cities which surrounded Egypt, saying,

Commentary: The plan is immediately put into action with widespread proclamations across Egypt.

Verse 17: "You have seen what the children of Esau and Ishmael did to us, who came to war against us and wished to destroy us."

Commentary: The proclamation leverages the recent war as justification, appealing to the public's fear and patriotism to gain support for the building project.

Verse 18: "Now therefore the king commanded us to fortify the land, to build the cities Pithom and Rameses, and to fortify them for battle, if they should again come against us."

Commentary: The stated purpose of the building project is purely defensive, hiding the true motive of enslaving the Israelites.

Verse 19: "Whoever of you from all Egypt and from the children of Israel will come to build with us, he shall have his daily wages given by the king, as his command is to us."

Commentary: The deceptive promise of fair wages is reiterated, encouraging participation from both Egyptians and Israelites.

Verse 20: And when Egypt and all the children of Israel heard all that the servants of Pharaoh had spoken, there came from the Egyptians, and the children of Israel to build with the servants of Pharaoh, Pithom and Rameses, but none of the children of **Levi** came with their brethren to build.

Commentary: Both Egyptians and Israelites fall for the deception and begin working. However, the tribe of Levi uniquely holds back. This immediately sets them apart and hints at their special role later on.

Verse 21: And all the servants of Pharaoh and his princes came at first with deceit to build with all Israel as daily hired laborers, and they gave to Israel their daily hire at the beginning.

Commentary: The deception unfolds as planned: the Egyptian officials themselves work alongside the Israelites, paying them wages to establish trust.

Verse 22: And the servants of Pharaoh built with all Israel, and were employed in that work with Israel for a month.

Commentary: The initial phase of shared labor and payment lasts for about a month.

Verse 23: And at the end of the month, all the servants of Pharaoh began to withdraw secretly from the people of Israel daily.

Commentary: The gradual withdrawal begins, as per Pharaoh's plan. This subtle shift would make it harder for the Israelites to immediately realize the trap.

Verse 24: And Israel went on with the work at that time, but they then received their daily hire, because some of the men of Egypt were yet carrying on the work with Israel at that time; therefore the Egyptians gave Israel their hire in those days, in order that they, the Egyptians their fellow-workmen, might also take the pay for their labor.

Commentary: The payment continues for a while longer, even as some Egyptians withdraw, suggesting that the remaining Egyptians were still collecting wages for themselves, thereby implicitly for the Israelites too.

Verse 25: And at the end of a year and four months all the Egyptians had withdrawn from the children of Israel, so that the children of Israel were left alone engaged in the work.

Commentary: The transition is complete after a significant period (over a year). The Israelites are now the sole laborers on the project, completely alone and trapped.

Verse 26: And after all the Egyptians had withdrawn from the children of Israel they returned and became oppressors and officers over them, and some of them stood over the children of Israel as task masters, to receive from them all that they gave them for the pay of their labor.

Commentary: The former "fellow-workers" now reveal their true roles: ruthless taskmasters and officers, effectively extorting the laborers and no longer providing wages. The system of forced labor is fully in place.

Verse 27: And the Egyptians did in this manner to the children of Israel day by day, in order to afflict in their work.

Commentary: The Egyptians consistently apply this method, intentionally making the Israelites' work burdensome and miserable.

Verse 28: And all the children of Israel were alone engaged in the labor, and the Egyptians refrained from giving any pay to the children of Israel from that time forward.

Commentary: The Israelites are now officially unpaid slaves, working alone under duress.

Verse 29: And when some of the men of Israel refused to work on account of the wages not being given to them, then the exactors and the servants of Pharaoh oppressed them and struck them with heavy blows, and made them return by force, to labor with their brethren; thus did all the Egyptians to the children of Israel all the days.

Commentary: Any refusal or protest from the Israelites is met with brutal violence. They are beaten and forced back to work, establishing the cruel reality of their slavery. This highlights the constant physical abuse they endure.

Verse 30: And all the children of Israel were greatly afraid of the Egyptians in this matter, and all the children of Israel returned and worked alone without pay.

Commentary: The violence successfully instills fear, forcing the Israelites to comply and continue their unpaid labor. Their initial strength from the previous chapter has been psychologically and physically worn down by this deceptive scheme.

Verse 31: And the children of Israel built Pithom and Rameses, and all the children of Israel did the work, some making bricks, and some building, and the children of Israel built and fortified all the land of Egypt and its walls, and the children of Israel were engaged in work for many years, until the time came when the Lord remembered them and brought them out of Egypt.

Commentary: The Israelites complete the construction of Pithom and Rameses, and even more. They are instrumental in fortifying all of Egypt, essentially building up the very land of their oppressors. This period of intense, forced labor continues for "many years," establishing the context for the Exodus. The verse also hints at the eventual deliverance by God.

The Exemption of the Tribe of Levi

Verse 32: But the children of **Levi** were not employed in the work with their brethren of Israel, from the beginning to the day of their going forth from Egypt.

Commentary: This is a crucial detail that distinguishes the tribe of Levi. They are miraculously exempt from the forced labor throughout the entire period of slavery. This foreshadows their future role as priests and attendants to God's sanctuary.

Verse 33: For all the children of Levi knew that the Egyptians had spoken all these words with deceit to the Israelites, therefore the children of Levi refrained from approaching the work with their brethren.

Commentary: The Levites' exemption is attributed to their wisdom and discernment: they saw through the Egyptians' deception from the very beginning. This implies a greater spiritual insight or perhaps a closer relationship with God that allowed them to avoid the trap.

Verse 34: And the Egyptians did not direct their attention to make the children of Levi work afterward, since they had not been with their brethren at the beginning, therefore the Egyptians left them alone.

Commentary: The Egyptians, perhaps due to the Levites' initial non-participation or a divine oversight, never force them into the labor. This reinforces the idea of God's special protection for the Levites.

The Intensification of Labor and Israel's Growth

Verse 35: And the hands of the men of Egypt were directed with continued severity against the children of Israel in that work, and the Egyptians made the children of Israel work with rigor.

Commentary: The oppression is described as relentless and severe, with the Egyptians driving the Israelites with brutal force.

Verse 36: And the Egyptians embittered the lives of the children of Israel with hard work, in mortar and bricks, and also in all manner of work in the field.

Commentary: The work is not limited to construction but extends to grueling agricultural labor, comprehensively making their lives miserable. This directly corresponds to the biblical account in Exodus.

Verse 37: And the children of Israel called **Melol** the king of Egypt "**Meror, king of Egypt**," because in his days the Egyptians had embittered their lives with all manner of work.

Commentary: The Israelites, in a powerful act of defiance and remembrance, rename Pharaoh Melol "Meror," which means "bitterness." This serves as a lasting testimony to the suffering they endured under his reign and provides a direct connection to the biblical narrative of the "bitter servitude."

Verse 38: And all the work wherein the Egyptians made the children of Israel labor, they exacted with rigor, in order to afflict the children of Israel, but the more they afflicted them, the more they increased and grew, and the Egyptians were grieved because of the children of Israel.

Commentary: This verse highlights a central paradox: despite the Egyptians' intensified efforts to suppress and decrease the Israelites through hard labor, God's promise of growth prevails. The more they are afflicted, the more they multiply. This frustrates and "grieves" the Egyptians, driving their fear and oppression even further. This sets the stage for Pharaoh's next, more drastic measures.

This chapter describes the systematic and cunning enslavement of the Israelites by the Egyptians following the death of Joseph's generation. Driven by fear of the Israelites' growing power, Pharaoh and his advisors devise a deceptive plan to lure them into forced labor under the guise of paid public works, eventually turning them into unpaid slaves subjected to brutal conditions. The tribe of Levi is notably exempt due to their foresight. Despite the severe oppression, the Israelites continue to multiply, much to the Egyptians' dismay, setting the stage for the dramatic events of the Exodus narrative.

Book of Jasher, Chapter 66

New King in Edom and Increased Egyptian Oppression

Verse 1: At that time **Hadad the son of Bedad**, king of Edom, died, and **Samlah from Mesrekah**, from the country of the children of the east, reigned in his place.

Commentary: The leadership in Edom changes again. Hadad, the king who allied with Zepho and fought against Egypt, passes away. Samlah, from an eastern region, becomes the new king, indicating the shifting power dynamics in the surrounding nations.

Verse 2: In the thirteenth year of the reign of Pharaoh king of Egypt, which was the hundred and twenty-fifth year of the Israelites going down into Egypt, Samlah had reigned over Edom eighteen years.

Commentary: This verse gives a chronological marker, linking the reign of the current Pharaoh (Melol, or "Meror") with the duration of the Israelites' stay in Egypt (125 years). It also notes that Samlah had already been king of Edom for 18 years, meaning he didn't just take power, but was already established.

Verse 3: And when he reigned, he drew forth his armies to go and fight against **Zepho the son of Eliphaz** and the children of **Chittim**, because they had made war against **Angeas** king of Africa, and they destroyed his whole army.

Commentary: Samlah, the new king of Edom, decides to attack Zepho and the people of Chittim. His motivation is to avenge Angeas, the king of Africa, whose army Zepho had utterly destroyed. This indicates a potential alliance or sympathy between Edom and Africa, or perhaps a desire by Samlah to assert his power by challenging a successful rival.

Verse 4: But he did not engage with him, for the children of Esau prevented him, saying, "He was their brother," so Samlah listened to the voice of the children of Esau, and turned back with all his forces to the land of Edom, and did not proceed to fight against Zepho the son of Eliphaz.

Commentary: Despite his initial intent, Samlah is swayed by the other descendants of Esau. They appeal to the idea of kinship, reminding him that Zepho is also a descendant of Esau ("their brother"). This shows a strong family bond or political unity among Esau's descendants, preventing internal conflict.

Verse 5: And Pharaoh king of Egypt heard this thing, saying, "Samlah king of Edom has resolved to fight the children of Chittim, and afterward he will come to fight against Egypt."

Commentary: News of Samlah's aborted campaign reaches Pharaoh. He interprets Samlah's initial move against Zepho as a precursor to an attack on Egypt, assuming that once Samlah dealt with Zepho, he would turn his attention towards Egypt. This paranoia directly impacts the Israelites.

Verse 6: And when the Egyptians heard this matter, they increased the labor upon the children of Israel, lest the Israelites should do to them as they did to them in their war with the children of Esau in the days of Hadad.

Commentary: Pharaoh's fear of a potential Edomite invasion, combined with the memory of the Israelites' powerful performance (and vengeance) in the last war, causes the Egyptians to intensify the Israelites' forced labor. Their logic is that by weakening the Israelites, they prevent them from joining any future enemy or retaliating again.

Verse 7: So the Egyptians said to the children of Israel, "Hasten and do your work, and finish your task, and strengthen the land, lest the children of Esau your brethren should come to fight against us, for on your account will they come against us."

Commentary: The Egyptians directly taunt and manipulate the Israelites, claiming that the increased labor is for their own protection against "their brethren," the Edomites. They falsely assert that any Edomite attack would be *because* of the Israelites, adding psychological pressure to their physical burden.

Verse 8: And the children of Israel did the work of the men of Egypt day by day, and the Egyptians afflicted the children of Israel in order to lessen them in the land.

Commentary: The Israelites continue their grueling labor under the Egyptians' intensified oppression. The goal remains to suppress their population and power.

Verse 9: But as the Egyptians increased the labor upon the children of Israel, so did the children of Israel increase and multiply, and all Egypt was filled with the children of Israel.

Commentary: This verse reiterates the core paradox: despite the increased severity of the oppression, the Israelites continue to miraculously multiply, fulfilling God's promise. Their exponential growth becomes a clear sign of divine blessing even amidst suffering, and it further frustrates the Egyptians.

Pharaoh's New, More Drastic Plan

Verse 10: And in the hundred and twenty-fifth year of Israel's going down into Egypt, all the Egyptians saw that their counsel did not succeed against Israel, but that they increased and grew, and the land of Egypt and the land of Goshen were filled with the children of Israel.

Commentary: The Egyptians admit defeat in their previous strategy. After 125 years, the forced labor has failed to curb the Israelite population, which now seems to have permeated the entire land, including Goshen.

Verse 11: So all the elders of Egypt and its wise men came before the king and bowed down to him and sat before him.

Commentary: The same council that advised the previous scheme now returns to Pharaoh, indicating a need for a new, more effective plan.

Verse 12: And all the elders of Egypt and the wise men thereof said to the king, "May the king live forever; you advised us the counsel against the children of Israel, and we did to them according to the word of the king."

Commentary: They respectfully acknowledge Pharaoh's previous (failed) plan and their adherence to it, setting the stage for admitting its ineffectiveness.

Verse 13: "But in proportion to the increase of the labor so do they increase and grow in the land, and behold the whole country is filled with them."

Commentary: They plainly state the problem: the more they oppress the Israelites, the more they multiply. This highlights the miraculous nature of Israel's growth and the Egyptians' growing despair.

Verse 14: "Now therefore our lord and king, the eyes of all Egypt are upon you to give them advice with your wisdom, by which they may prevail over Israel to destroy them, or to diminish them from the land; and the king answered them saying, 'Give you counsel in this matter that we may know what to do to them.'"

Commentary: The elders once again place the burden on Pharaoh to find a solution, appealing to his wisdom to either destroy or drastically reduce the Israelite population. Pharaoh, in turn, asks them for new ideas, indicating the severity of the crisis for him.

Verse 15: And an officer, one of the king's counselors, whose name was **Job**, from Mesopotamia, in the land of **Uz**, answered the king, saying,

Commentary: A new advisor steps forward. This "Job from Uz" is a significant interjection, linking the biblical figure of Job with the Egyptian court. This suggests a broader historical context for the Book of Job, placing him within the time of Israel's bondage.

Verse 16: "If it please the king, let him hear the counsel of his servant"; and the king said to him, "Speak."

Commentary: Job respectfully requests permission to speak, and Pharaoh grants it.

Verse 17: And Job spoke before the king, the princes, and before all the elders of Egypt, saying,

Commentary: Job addresses the entire council, indicating the importance of his proposal.

Verse 18: "Behold the counsel of the king which he advised formerly respecting the labor of the children of Israel is very good, and you must not remove from them that labor forever."

Commentary: Job first validates Pharaoh's previous strategy of forced labor, advising that it should continue indefinitely. This subtly praises the king while setting the stage for an even more drastic measure.

Verse 19: "But this is the advice counselled by which you may lessen them, if it seems good to the king to afflict them."

Commentary: Job presents his new, more extreme proposal, framed as a way to truly reduce the Israelite population.

Verse 20: "Behold we have feared war for a long time, and we said, 'When Israel becomes fruitful in the land, they will drive us from the land if a war should take place.'"

Commentary: Job reiterates the underlying fear that drives Egyptian policy: the Israelites' growing numbers threaten to displace the Egyptians, especially in times of war. This is the rationale for his coming proposal.

Verse 21: "If it please the king, let a royal decree go forth, and let it be written in the laws of Egypt which shall not be revoked, that every male child born to the Israelites, his blood shall be spilled upon the ground."

Commentary: This is the chilling and genocidal proposal. Job advises a systematic infanticide of all newborn Israelite boys. He calls for it to be an unchangeable royal decree, highlighting the absolute authority and ruthlessness of the plan. This directly mirrors the biblical account in Exodus.

Verse 22: "And by your doing this, when all the male children of Israel shall have died, the evil of their wars will cease; let the king do so and send for all the Hebrew midwives and order them in this matter to execute it"; so the thing pleased the king and the princes, and the king did according to the word of Job.

Commentary: Job's logic is that by eliminating all male heirs, the Israelite population will eventually dwindle and their military threat will vanish. He advises using the Hebrew midwives to carry out the murders, making it seem like a natural occurrence. The king and his officials immediately approve this horrific plan, showing their complete lack of moral conscience when it comes to the Israelites.

The Midwives' Courage and God's Blessing

Verse 23: And the king sent for the Hebrew midwives to be called, of which the name of one was **Shephrah**, and the name of the other **Puah**.

Commentary: The narrative introduces the two courageous midwives by name, Shephrah and Puah, who will play a pivotal role in defying Pharaoh.

Verse 24: And the midwives came before the king, and stood in his presence.

Commentary: The midwives are summoned and appear before the powerful Pharaoh, a daunting experience.

Verse 25: And the king said to them, "When you do the office of a midwife to the Hebrew women, and see them upon the stools, if it be a son, then you shall kill him, but if it be a daughter, then she shall live."

Commentary: Pharaoh directly gives the midwives the horrifying command: murder every newborn Israelite boy, but let the girls live (as they pose no military threat). This clearly outlines the genocidal intent.

Verse 26: "But if you will not do this thing, then will I burn you up and all your houses with fire."

Commentary: Pharaoh adds a terrifying threat: if the midwives don't comply, they and their families will be executed by fire, demonstrating the extreme pressure they are under.

Verse 27: But the midwives feared God and did not listen to the king of Egypt nor to his words, and when the Hebrew women brought forth to the midwife son or daughter, then did the midwife do all that was necessary to the child and let it live; thus did the midwives all the days.

Commentary: This is a powerful act of defiance. The midwives, prioritizing their fear of God over their fear of Pharaoh, directly disobey his command. They perform their duties as midwives, allowing *all* the babies, both boys and girls, to live, demonstrating incredible courage and faith.

Verse 28: And this thing was told to the king, and he sent and called for the midwives and he said to them, "Why have you done this thing and have saved the children alive?"

Commentary: Pharaoh eventually learns that his orders are not being followed. He confronts the midwives directly, demanding an explanation for their disobedience.

Verse 29: And the midwives answered and spoke together before the king, saying,

Commentary: The midwives respond collectively, implying a unified story to protect themselves.

Verse 30: "Let not the king think that the Hebrew women are as the Egyptian women, for all the children of Israel are hale, and before the midwife comes to them they are delivered, and as for us your handmaids, for many days no Hebrew woman has brought forth upon us, for all the Hebrew women are their own midwives, because they are hale."

Commentary: The midwives offer a clever and plausible excuse: they claim Hebrew women are so vigorous and healthy ("hale") that they give birth quickly, often before a midwife can even arrive. They imply there's simply no opportunity for them to carry out Pharaoh's orders. This is a brilliant act of civil disobedience.

Verse 31: And Pharaoh heard their words and believed them in this matter, and the midwives went away from the king, and God dealt well with them, and the people multiplied and waxed exceedingly.

Commentary: Astonishingly, Pharaoh believes the midwives' story, perhaps because it aligns with the earlier observations about the Israelites' unusual vitality (verse 9). The midwives escape punishment, and the text explicitly states that God rewards them for their faithfulness. Most importantly, the

Israelite population continues to grow "exceedingly," thwarting Pharaoh's genocidal plan and highlighting God's protective hand.

This chapter describes the escalation of Egyptian oppression, culminating in Pharaoh's genocidal decree to kill all newborn Israelite boys. This extreme measure is proposed by a new advisor, Job. However, the plan is thwarted by the courageous and God-fearing Hebrew midwives, Shephrah and Puah, who defy Pharaoh's orders with a clever excuse. As a result, God blesses the midwives, and the Israelite population continues to miraculously multiply, much to the Egyptians' frustration. This sets the stage for God's direct intervention in the Exodus.

Book of Jasher, Chapter 67

The Birth of Miriam and Aaron

Verse 1: There was a man in the land of Egypt from the family of **Levi**, whose name was **Amram**, the son of **Kehath**, who was the son of Levi, the son of Israel.

Commentary: This verse introduces Amram, tracing his lineage back to Levi, Jacob's son. This lineage is important as it identifies him as part of the priestly tribe and the direct ancestor of Moses and Aaron.

Verse 2: And this man went and took a wife, namely **Jochebed** the daughter of Levi, his father's sister, and she was one hundred and twenty-six years old, and he came to her.

Commentary: Amram marries Jochebed, who is identified as his aunt (his father's sister). This type of marriage, while unusual by later Mosaic law, was not forbidden at this early stage. Her age of 126 years is remarkably old, highlighting the extraordinary lifespans in this period of Jasher.

Verse 3: And the woman conceived and gave birth to a daughter, and she called her name **Miriam**, because in those days the Egyptians had made the lives of the children of Israel bitter.

Commentary: Their first child is a daughter named Miriam. Her name is given a symbolic meaning: "Miriam" (related to "marah" or "bitter") reflects the incredibly bitter and harsh oppression the Israelites were enduring at that time.

Verse 4: And she conceived again and gave birth to a son and she called his name **Aaron**, for in the days of her conception, Pharaoh began to spill the blood of the male children of Israel.

Commentary: Their second child is a son, Aaron. His name's significance is tied to the escalating violence against Israelite boys. The timing "in the days of her conception" suggests that the decree to kill male children had just begun or was intensifying around the time Aaron was conceived, making his birth even more precarious.

Changes in Chittim's Leadership and Balaam's Move to Egypt

Verse 5: In those days died **Zepho the son of Eliphaz**, son of **Esau**, king of **Chittim**, and **Janeas** reigned in his stead.

Commentary: The narrative briefly shifts back to Zepho, confirming his death. Zepho was a powerful king who had just secured a major victory against the Africans. His passing opens the door for a new leader in Chittim.

Verse 6: And the time that Zepho reigned over the children of Chittim was fifty years, and he died and was buried in the city of **Nabna** in the land of Chittim.

Commentary: Details of Zepho's reign are provided: he ruled for 50 years and was buried in Nabna. This marks the end of his significant influence in the story.

Verse 7: And **Janeas**, one of the mighty men of the children of Chittim, reigned after him and he reigned fifty years.

Commentary: Zepho's successor, Janeas, is introduced. He's described as a "mighty man," suggesting continued strength in Chittim, and he also has a long reign of 50 years.

Verse 8: And it was after the death of the king of Chittim that **Balaam the son of Beor** fled from the land of Chittim, and he went and came to Egypt to Pharaoh king of Egypt.

Commentary: Balaam, the diviner who had been with Zepho, leaves Chittim after Zepho's death. This is an important transition for Balaam, as he now seeks influence in Egypt, bringing his notorious "wisdom" to Pharaoh's court.

Verse 9: And Pharaoh received him with great honor, for he had heard of his wisdom, and he gave him presents and made him a counselor, and greatly honored him.

Commentary: Pharaoh, like Zepho before him, recognizes Balaam's reputation and expertise in divination. He welcomes Balaam with high honors, gifts, and a position as a royal counselor, indicating Balaam's significant influence in the Egyptian court.

Verse 10: And Balaam dwelt in Egypt, in honor with all the nobles of the king, and the nobles exalted him, because they all coveted to learn his wisdom.

Commentary: Balaam quickly gains a respected position among the Egyptian elite, who are eager to learn from his mystical knowledge. This establishes Balaam as a major figure in Pharaoh's inner circle, positioning him to give future counsel.

Pharaoh's Disturbing Dream

Verse 11: And in the hundred and thirtieth year of Israel's going down to Egypt, Pharaoh dreamed that he was sitting upon his kingly throne, and lifted up his eyes and saw an old man standing before him, and there were scales in the hands of the old man, such scales as are used by merchants.

Commentary: The narrative returns to the Israelite timeline, specifically the 130th year of their stay in Egypt. Pharaoh has a symbolic dream involving an old man with merchant's scales, suggesting a weighing or judgment is about to occur.

Verse 12: And the old man took the scales and hung them before Pharaoh.

Commentary: The scales are presented directly to Pharaoh, indicating that the dream's message is specifically for him and his kingdom.

Verse 13: And the old man took all the elders of Egypt and all its nobles and great men, and he tied them together and put them in one scale.

Commentary: In the dream, the old man places the entire Egyptian elite—elders, nobles, and great men—into one side of the scale. This represents the collective weight and power of Egypt.

Verse 14: And he took a milk kid and put it into the other scale, and the kid outweighed all.

Commentary: The shocking image: a small, vulnerable "milk kid" (a young goat) is placed on the other scale, and it miraculously outweighs the entire might of Egypt. This symbolizes that a seemingly insignificant entity will overcome the powerful Egyptian nation.

Verse 15: And Pharaoh was astonished at this dreadful vision, why the kid should outweigh all, and Pharaoh awoke and behold it was a dream.

Commentary: Pharaoh is deeply disturbed by the dream's counter-intuitive outcome. The image of the weak overcoming the strong suggests a significant threat to his power and kingdom.

Verse 16: And Pharaoh rose up early in the morning and called all his servants and related to them the dream, and the men were greatly afraid.

Commentary: The dream's impact is profound; Pharaoh immediately seeks an interpretation, and even his trusted servants are terrified by its ominous implications.

Verse 17: And the king said to all his wise men, "Interpret I pray you the dream which I dreamed, that I may know it."

Commentary: Pharaoh turns to his wise men, including his new counselor Balaam, to understand the meaning of this unsettling vision.

Job and Jethro's Counsel

Verse 18: And **Balaam the son of Beor** answered the king and said to him, "This means nothing else but a great evil that will spring up against Egypt in the latter days."

Commentary: Balaam, using his interpretive skill (or prophetic insight), immediately understands the dream's dire warning: a major disaster is coming for Egypt.

Verse 19: "For a son will be born to Israel who will destroy all Egypt and its inhabitants, and bring forth the Israelites from Egypt with a mighty hand."

Commentary: Balaam gives a chillingly precise interpretation: the "kid" represents an Israelite boy who will be born and will ultimately destroy Egypt and lead the Israelites out with great power. This directly points to Moses.

Verse 20: "Now therefore, O king, take counsel upon this matter, that you may destroy the hope of the children of Israel and their expectation, before this evil arise against Egypt."

Commentary: Balaam advises preemptive action to prevent this prophesied disaster. He suggests destroying the "hope" of Israel, implicitly meaning their male offspring, to thwart the prophecy.

Verse 21: And the king said to Balaam, "And what shall we do to Israel? Surely after a certain manner did we at first counsel against them and could not prevail over them."

Commentary: Pharaoh questions Balaam, reminding him of their previous failed attempts to suppress the Israelites through hard labor. He wants a more effective plan.

Verse 22: "Now therefore give you also advice against them by which we may prevail over them."

Commentary: Pharaoh presses Balaam for a concrete strategy that will actually succeed in overcoming the Israelites.

Verse 23: And Balaam answered the king, saying, "Send now and call your two counselors, and we will see what their advice is upon this matter and afterward your servant will speak."

Commentary: Balaam, perhaps wanting to ensure his advice is fully vetted or to see if others reach a similar conclusion, suggests consulting the other two main counselors first.

Verse 24: And the king sent and called his two counselors **Reuel the Midianite** and **Job the Uzite**, and they came and sat before the king.

Commentary: The other two counselors are summoned. "Reuel the Midianite" is another name for **Jethro**, Moses' future father-in-law. This places a future key figure in Moses' life within Pharaoh's court. Job, who advised the previous decree, is also present.

Verse 25: And the king said to them, "Behold you have both heard the dream which I have dreamed, and the interpretation thereof; now therefore give counsel and know and see what is to be done to the children of Israel, whereby we may prevail over them, before their evil shall spring up against us."

Commentary: Pharaoh presents the problem to his two counselors, outlining the dream and Balaam's interpretation, asking for their advice on how to prevent the Israelites from becoming a destructive force.

Verse 26: And **Reuel the Midianite** answered the king and said, "May the king live, may the king live forever."

Commentary: Reuel (Jethro) begins with a customary respectful address to the king.

Verse 27: "If it seems good to the king, let him desist from the Hebrews and leave them, and let him not stretch forth his hand against them."

Commentary: Reuel gives a radically different and astonishing piece of advice: leave the Israelites alone. This is counter to all current Egyptian policy.

Verse 28: "For these are they whom the Lord chose in days of old, and took as the lot of his inheritance from amongst all the nations of the earth and the kings of the earth; and who is there that stretched his hand against them with impunity, of whom their God was not avenged?"

Commentary: Reuel provides the profound reason for his advice: the Israelites are God's chosen people. He argues that anyone who has harmed them has faced divine retribution. This reveals Reuel's understanding of God's special relationship with Israel.

Verse 29: "Surely you know that when **Abraham** went down to Egypt, Pharaoh, the former king of Egypt, saw **Sarah** his wife, and took her for a wife, because Abraham said, 'She is my sister,' for he was afraid, lest the men of Egypt should slay him on account of his wife."

Commentary: Reuel supports his argument with historical examples, starting with the first Pharaoh's interaction with Abraham and Sarah, where Pharaoh innocently took Sarah because Abraham lied, fearing for his life.

Verse 30: "And when the king of Egypt had taken Sarah then God struck him and his household with heavy plagues, until he restored to Abraham his wife Sarah, then was he healed."

Commentary: He recounts how God afflicted that earlier Pharaoh and his household with severe plagues until Sarah was returned to Abraham, demonstrating God's swift and powerful protection of His chosen.

Verse 31: "And **Abimelech the Gerarite**, king of the Philistines, God punished on account of Sarah wife of Abraham, in stopping up every womb from man to beast."

Commentary: Reuel provides a second example: God's punishment of Abimelech, king of Gerar, by rendering all wombs barren because he too had taken Sarah. This reinforces the pattern of divine judgment for harming God's chosen.

Verse 32: "When their God came to Abimelech in the dream of night and terrified him in order that he might restore to Abraham Sarah whom he had taken, and afterward all the people of Gerar were punished on account of Sarah, and Abraham prayed to his God for them, and he was entreated of him, and he healed them."

Commentary: He elaborates on the Abimelech story, showing how God intervened through a dream to warn Abimelech, and how the plague was only lifted after Abraham's intercession. This emphasizes the direct link between the Israelites' well-being and God's favor or wrath.

Verse 33: "And Abimelech feared all this evil that came upon him and his people, and he returned to Abraham his wife Sarah, and gave him with her many gifts."

Commentary: Abimelech's response of fear, returning Sarah, and offering gifts serves as a cautionary tale for Pharaoh.

Verse 34: "He did so also to **Isaac** when he had driven him from Gerar, and God had done wonderful things to him, that all the water courses of Gerar were dried up, and their productive trees did not bring forth."

Commentary: Reuel continues, citing the story of Isaac, where God also punished the Philistines (drying up water sources and making trees barren) when they persecuted Isaac.

Verse 35: "Until Abimelech of Gerar, and **Ahuzzath** one of his friends, and **Pichol** the captain of his host, went to him and they bent and bowed down before him to the ground."

Commentary: Even the king and his top officials had to humble themselves before Isaac to seek relief from the divine curses.

Verse 36: "And they requested of him to supplicate for them, and he prayed to the Lord for them, and the Lord was entreated of him and he healed them."

Commentary: Isaac's prayer brought healing, further illustrating God's power and His protection over the patriarchs.

Verse 37: "**Jacob** also, the plain man, was delivered through his integrity from the hand of his brother **Esau**, and the hand of **Laban the Syrian** his mother's brother, who had sought his life; likewise from the hand of all the kings of Canaan who had come together against him and his children to destroy them, and the Lord delivered them out of their hands, that they turned upon them and struck them, for who had ever stretched forth his hand against them with impunity?"

Commentary: Reuel brings up Jacob's history, emphasizing God's deliverance from threats posed by Esau, Laban, and the combined kings of Canaan. He concludes with a powerful rhetorical question: "Who had ever harmed them and gotten away with it?"

Verse 38: "Surely Pharaoh the former, your father's father, raised **Joseph** the son of Jacob above all the princes of the land of Egypt, when he saw his wisdom, for through his wisdom he rescued all the inhabitants of the land from the famine."

Commentary: He reminds Pharaoh of the positive historical example: how a previous Pharaoh recognized Joseph's wisdom and elevated him, leading to the salvation of Egypt from famine. This shows the benefits of treating Israel well.

Verse 39: "After which he ordered Jacob and his children to come down to Egypt, in order that through their virtue, the land of Egypt and the land of Goshen might be delivered from the famine."

Commentary: He links Joseph's actions to Jacob and his family coming to Egypt, stressing that their presence was a blessing, saving Egypt from starvation.

Verse 40: "Now therefore if it seems good in your eyes, cease from destroying the children of Israel, but if it be not your will that they shall dwell in Egypt, send them forth from here, that they may go to the land of Canaan, the land where their ancestors sojourned."

Commentary: Reuel gives his final advice: either stop oppressing them, or let them leave Egypt entirely and return to Canaan. This is a bold and dangerous suggestion, advocating for the very thing Pharaoh fears.

Verse 41: And when Pharaoh heard the words of **Jethro** he was very angry with him, so that he rose with shame from the king's presence, and went to Midian, his land, and took Joseph's stick with him.

Commentary: Pharaoh is enraged by Reuel's (Jethro's) advice, seeing it as insubordinate or foolish. Jethro, sensing the danger, quickly leaves Egypt in disgrace, returning to Midian. The detail about taking "Joseph's stick" is significant, hinting at its importance for Moses later.

Verse 42: And the king said to Job the Uzite, "What say you Job, and what is your advice respecting the Hebrews?"

Commentary: Pharaoh now turns to Job, having dismissed Jethro's counsel.

Verse 43: So Job said to the king, "Behold all the inhabitants of the land are in your power, let the king do as it seems good in his eyes."

Commentary: Job's response is incredibly cautious and evasive. He offers no direct advice, essentially telling Pharaoh to do whatever he pleases, and placing the full responsibility on the king. This hints at his reluctance to speak against the Israelites, possibly because he now understands the implications of his previous advice given the dream and Jethro's words, but he doesn't have the courage to openly defy Pharaoh.

Verse 44: And the king said to Balaam, "What do you say, Balaam, speak your word that we may hear it."

Commentary: Pharaoh now asks Balaam for his counsel, having received noncommittal answers from the other two.

Verse 45: And Balaam said to the king, "Of all that the king has counseled against the Hebrews will they be delivered, and the king will not be able to prevail over them with any counsel."

Commentary: Balaam, to his credit, acknowledges the futility of Pharaoh's previous attempts. He essentially says, "Anything you've tried so far won't work, and you won't succeed with those methods." This shows his genuine understanding of Israel's divine protection.

Verse 46: "For if you think to lessen them by the flaming fire, you cannot prevail over them, for surely their God delivered Abraham their father from Ur of the Chaldeans; and if you think to destroy them with a sword, surely Isaac their father was delivered from it, and a ram was placed in his stead."

Commentary: Balaam explains *why* previous methods won't work by referencing key events from Israelite history. Fire (Abraham's deliverance from Ur), and the sword (Isaac's near-sacrifice) have already been overcome by their God's intervention.

Verse 47: "And if with hard and rigorous labor you think to lessen them, you will not prevail even in this, for their father Jacob served Laban in all manner of hard work, and prospered."

Commentary: He also dismisses forced labor as a viable method, pointing out that Jacob endured and even prospered through hard labor under Laban. This directly addresses Pharaoh's previous failed strategy.

Verse 48: "Now therefore, O King, hear my words, for this is the counsel which is counseled against them, by which you will prevail over them, and from which you should not depart."

Commentary: Balaam, having dismissed other methods, now presents his own, supposedly foolproof, strategy, claiming it's the *only* way to overcome the Israelites.

Verse 49: "If it please the king let him order all their children which shall be born from this day forward, to be thrown into the water, for by this can you wipe away their name, for none of them, nor of their fathers, were tried in this manner."

Commentary: This is Balaam's horrifying proposal: throw all newborn Israelite boys into the water (the Nile). His reasoning is chillingly logical: no Israelite patriarch or their God has ever been tested by water in this specific way, implying that God might not be able to save them from drowning. He believes this method will truly eradicate the Israelite name.

Verse 50: And the king heard the words of Balaam, and the thing pleased the king and the princes, and the king did according to the word of Balaam.

Commentary: Pharaoh and his princes accept Balaam's advice. This highlights the depth of their desperation and their willingness to embrace an even more brutal and direct form of infanticide. This is the origin of the "Nile decree" in Exodus.

Verse 51: And the king ordered a proclamation to be issued and a law to be made throughout the land of Egypt, saying, "Every male child born to the Hebrews from this day forward shall be thrown into the water."

Commentary: The new, even more severe decree is formalized and broadcast throughout Egypt, making the murder of Israelite male infants the official law of the land.

Verse 52: And Pharaoh called to all his servants, saying, "Go now and seek throughout the land of Goshen where the children of Israel are, and see that every son born to the Hebrews shall be cast into the river, but every daughter you shall let live."

Commentary: Pharaoh directly instructs his servants to enforce the decree, specifically targeting Goshen, the Israelite settlement. This means active searches and forced drowning of the infants.

God's Miraculous Preservation of Israelite Infants

Verse 53: And when the children of Israel heard this thing which Pharaoh had commanded, to cast their male children into the river, some of the people separated from their wives and others adhered to them.

Commentary: The Israelites react to the horrific decree. Some men, in despair, separate from their wives to avoid conceiving more children destined for death. Others, perhaps out of faith or despair, continue their marital lives. This shows the intense emotional and moral crisis they face.

Verse 54: And from that day forward, when the time of delivery arrived to those women of Israel who had remained with their husbands, they went to the field to give birth there, and they gave birth in the field, and left their children upon the field and returned home.

Commentary: This verse describes a desperate measure taken by the Israelite women to evade the decree. They give birth in secret, in the fields, and then abandon their newborns there, hoping for divine intervention or some other miracle, as taking them home would mean their certain death.

Verse 55: And the Lord who had sworn to their ancestors to multiply them, sent one of his ministering angels which are in heaven to wash each child in water, to anoint and swathe it and to put into its hands two smooth stones from one of which it sucked milk and from the other honey, and he caused its hair to grow to its knees, by which it might cover itself; to comfort it and to cleave to it, through his compassion for it.

Commentary: This is a truly extraordinary and miraculous intervention by God, explicitly showing His direct care for the abandoned infants. An angel miraculously washes, anoints, clothes them, provides them with milk and honey from stones, and causes their hair to grow for covering. This vivid imagery illustrates God's deep compassion and active protection, fulfilling His promise to multiply them.

Verse 56: And when God had compassion over them and had desired to multiply them upon the face of the land, he ordered his earth to receive them to be preserved therein till the time of their growing up, after which the earth opened its mouth and vomited them forth and they sprouted forth from the city like the herb of the earth, and the grass of the forest, and they returned each to his family and to his father's house, and they remained with them.

Commentary: This verse describes an even more astonishing miracle: when the infants grow up, the very earth is commanded to "swallow" and then "vomit them forth," causing them to spontaneously appear "like the herb of the earth" (like plants sprouting) and return to their families. This is a powerful, almost mythological, depiction of God's supernatural power to preserve and multiply His people against all human efforts.

Verse 57: And the babies of the children of Israel were upon the earth like the herb of the field, through God's grace to them.

Commentary: This confirms the massive, miraculous growth of the Israelite population despite Pharaoh's decree, reinforcing that it is entirely due to "God's grace."

Verse 58: And when all the Egyptians saw this thing, they went forth, each to his field with his yoke of oxen and his plowshare, and they plowed it up as one plows the earth at seed time.

Commentary: The Egyptians witness the inexplicable phenomenon of multiplying Israelite children appearing from the ground. In a desperate and barbaric attempt to counter this, they resort to plowing over the fields, hoping to kill the "sprouting" infants.

Verse 59: And when they plowed they were unable to hurt the infants of the children of Israel, so the people increased and grew exceedingly.

Commentary: Despite their brutal attempts, the Egyptians fail to harm the miraculously protected infants. The Israelites continue to grow at an astonishing rate, demonstrating the futility of human malice against divine will.

Verse 60: And Pharaoh ordered his officers daily to go to Goshen to seek for the babies of the children of Israel.

Commentary: Pharaoh continues his relentless efforts to enforce the decree, sending officers on daily searches for infants in Goshen.

Verse 61: And when they had sought and found one, they took it from its mother's bosom by force, and threw it into the river, but the female child they left with its mother; thus did the Egyptians do to the Israelites all the days.

Commentary: This verse brings the horror back to a more immediate, human level. The Egyptian officers violently seize male infants from their mothers and drown them in the Nile, while sparing the girls. This grim practice continues daily, creating an atmosphere of constant terror and tragedy for Israelite families.

This chapter marks a critical escalation in the Book of Jasher's account of the Israelites' oppression. It begins with the births of Miriam and Aaron, setting the stage for Moses' arrival. Crucially, Balaam the diviner arrives in Egypt and becomes Pharaoh's chief counselor. Pharaoh's disturbing dream, interpreted by Balaam as the rise of an Israelite who will destroy Egypt, leads to an even more horrific decree: all Israelite male infants are to be drowned in the Nile. While the Israelites take desperate measures, God miraculously intervenes, protecting and multiplying the children in astounding ways, defying all of Pharaoh's brutal attempts. This chapter vividly portrays the depths of Egyptian cruelty and the boundless nature of God's protection.

Book of Jasher, Chapter 68

Miriam's Prophecy and Moses' Conception

Verse 1: And it was at that time the spirit of God was upon **Miriam** the daughter of **Amram** the sister of **Aaron**, and she went forth and prophesied about the house, saying, "Behold a son will be born to us from my father and mother this time, and he will save Israel from the hands of Egypt."

Commentary: This verse highlights Miriam's prophetic gift, bestowed by the "spirit of God." Her prophecy is a crucial turning point: a son will be born who will lead the Israelites to freedom. This gives divine assurance and purpose to the events that follow, right in the midst of extreme oppression.

Verse 2: And when Amram heard the words of his daughter, he went and took his wife back to the house, after he had driven her away at the time when Pharaoh ordered every male child of the house of Jacob to be thrown into the water.

Commentary: Amram had previously separated from his wife, Jochebed, in despair over Pharaoh's decree to drown all male infants (as mentioned in Jasher 67:53). Miriam's prophecy instills renewed hope and faith in him, leading him to reconcile with his wife and resume their marriage. This act of faith directly leads to Moses' conception.

Verse 3: So Amram took Jochebed his wife, three years after he had driven her away, and he came to her and she conceived.

Commentary: This provides a timeline for their reconciliation and Jochebed's subsequent conception, noting a three-year separation, emphasizing the depth of their earlier despair and the power of Miriam's prophecy.

Verse 4: And at the end of seven months from her conception she brought forth a son, and the whole house was filled with great light as of the light of the sun and moon at the time of their shining.

Commentary: Jochebed gives birth to a son after a seven-month pregnancy, suggesting a premature birth, but one that is accompanied by a miraculous sign: the house fills with brilliant light. This "great light" signifies the child's divine destiny and importance, akin to a spiritual radiance.

Verse 5: And when the woman saw the child that it was good and pleasing to the sight, she hid it for three months in an inner room.

Commentary: Jochebed immediately recognizes the child's special nature ("good and pleasing to the sight"). Driven by both maternal instinct and perhaps the memory of Miriam's prophecy, she hides him for three months, attempting to defy Pharaoh's decree.

Egyptian Counter-Measure and Moses' Discovery

Verse 6: In those days the Egyptians conspired to destroy all the Hebrews there.

Commentary: The Egyptians are constantly devising new ways to oppress and eliminate the Israelites, highlighting their relentless cruelty.

Verse 7: And the Egyptian women went to **Goshen** where the children of Israel were, and they carried their young ones upon their shoulders, their babes who could not yet speak.

Commentary: This describes a bizarre and cruel Egyptian tactic. Egyptian women, carrying their own infants, would visit Israelite homes in Goshen.

Verse 8: And in those days, when the women of the children of Israel brought forth, each woman had hidden her son from before the Egyptians, that the Egyptians might not know of their bringing forth, and might not destroy them from the land.

Commentary: Israelite mothers were desperately hiding their newborn sons from the Egyptian authorities to save their lives.

Verse 9: And the Egyptian women came to Goshen and their children who could not speak were upon their shoulders, and when an Egyptian woman came into the house of a Hebrew woman her babe began to cry.

Commentary: The cruel genius of the Egyptian plan is revealed: their own infants would cry, prompting the hidden Israelite babies to cry in response. This "human lie detector" allowed the Egyptians to find the hidden infants.

Verse 10: And when it cried the child that was in the inner room answered it, so the Egyptian women went and told it at the house of Pharaoh.

Commentary: The cries of the hidden Israelite babies, provoked by the Egyptian infants, betray their location. The Egyptian women immediately report these findings to Pharaoh's house, acting as informants in the genocidal scheme.

Verse 11: And Pharaoh sent his officers to take the children and slay them; thus did the Egyptians to the Hebrew women all the days.

Commentary: This was a regular, brutal practice. Upon receiving reports, Pharaoh's officers would immediately seize the discovered male infants and murder them, reflecting the relentless and systematic nature of the infanticide.

Verse 12: And it was at that time, about three months from **Jochebed's** concealment of her son, that the thing was known in Pharaoh's house.

Commentary: After three months of hiding, the secret of Moses' presence in Jochebed's house is discovered, likely through the crying-baby trick. The danger to the infant is now imminent.

Verse 13: And the woman hastened to take away her son before the officers came, and she took for him an ark of bulrushes, and daubed it with slime and with pitch, and put the child therein, and she laid it in the flags by the river's brink.

Commentary: Jochebed acts quickly to save her son, placing him in a specially prepared basket (ark) coated with waterproof materials. She then places this "ark" among the reeds by the Nile River, a desperate act of faith, entrusting him to God's providence rather than letting him be killed by the Egyptians. This directly mirrors the biblical account.

Verse 14: And his sister Miriam stood afar off to know what would be done to him, and what would become of her words.

Commentary: Miriam, who prophesied Moses' role, watches from a distance, anxious to see the outcome and if her prophecy will be fulfilled. Her concern shows her strong sisterly bond and her faith.

Moses Found by Pharaoh's Daughter

Verse 15: And God sent forth at that time a terrible heat in the land of Egypt, which burned up the flesh of man like the sun in his circuit, and it greatly oppressed the Egyptians.

Commentary: God intervenes with a new, oppressive plague: intense heat. This divine intervention serves a purpose in the story, driving the Egyptians to the Nile.

Verse 16: And all the Egyptians went down to bathe in the river, on account of the consuming heat which burned up their flesh.

Commentary: The extreme heat forces Egyptians, in a large number, to seek relief in the Nile, creating the specific circumstances for Moses' discovery.

Verse 17: And **Bathia**, the daughter of Pharaoh, went also to bathe in the river, owing to the consuming heat, and her maidens walked at the river side, and all the women of Egypt as well.

Commentary: Pharaoh's daughter, named Bathia (rather than being unnamed as in the biblical account), also goes to the river. This detail emphasizes her royal status and the widespread effect of the heat, creating a large gathering of Egyptian women at the riverbank.

Verse 18: And Bathia lifted up her eyes to the river, and she saw the ark upon the water, and sent her maid to fetch it.

Commentary: Bathia spots the floating basket, which immediately piques her curiosity.

Verse 19: And she opened it and saw the child, and behold the babe wept, and she had compassion on him, and she said, "This is one of the Hebrew children."

Commentary: Upon opening the ark, she sees the crying infant. Her compassion overcomes her loyalty to her father's decree. She immediately recognizes him as a Hebrew child, yet her empathy prompts her to save him.

Verse 20: And all the women of Egypt walking on the river side desired to give him suck, but he would not suck, for this thing was from the Lord, in order to restore him to his mother's breast.

Commentary: Another miraculous detail: the infant Moses refuses to nurse from any of the Egyptian women. This is attributed directly to God's plan, designed to ensure he would eventually be nursed by his own mother, maintaining his connection to his Israelite identity.

Verse 21: And Miriam his sister was at that time amongst the Egyptian women at the river side, and she saw this thing and she said to Pharaoh's daughter, "Shall I go and fetch a nurse of the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for you?"

Commentary: Miriam, having watched from a distance, seizes the opportunity. Her quick thinking and bold proposal to Pharaoh's daughter strategically pave the way for her mother to become Moses' nurse.

Verse 22: And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Go," and the young woman went and called the child's mother.

Commentary: Pharaoh's daughter agrees, unwittingly setting in motion God's plan. Miriam brings Jochebed, the true mother, back to her son.

Verse 23: And Pharaoh's daughter said to **Jochebed**, "Take this child away and nurse it for me, and I will pay you your wages, two bits of silver daily"; and the woman took the child and nursed it.

Commentary: The ultimate irony and miracle: Pharaoh's daughter pays Moses' own mother to nurse him, directly funding the upbringing of the very child her father sought to kill. Jochebed is not only reunited with her son but is paid for it, a complete reversal of fortune.

Moses' Names and Upbringing

Verse 24: And at the end of two years, when the child grew up, she brought him to the daughter of Pharaoh, and he was to her as a son, and she called his name **Moses**, for she said, "Because I drew him out of the water."

Commentary: After two years of nursing, Jochebed returns Moses to Pharaoh's daughter. He is adopted as her own son. The name "Moses" is given by Bathia, directly explaining its meaning: "drawn out" (from the water), linking to the circumstances of his rescue.

Verse 25: And Amram his father called his name **Chabar**, for he said, "It was for him that he associated with his wife whom he had turned away."

Commentary: This verse begins a series of alternative names for Moses, each with a different meaning and given by different people. Amram's name for him, "Chabar" (meaning "associated" or "joined"), reflects his reconciliation with Jochebed because of the hope Moses brought.

Verse 26: And Jochebed his mother called his name **Jekuthiel**, "Because," she said, "I have hoped for him to the Almighty, and God restored him to me."

Commentary: Jochebed's name for him, "Jekuthiel" (meaning "hope of God" or "God restored"), expresses her deep gratitude and the fulfillment of her hope in God for his preservation.

Verse 27: And Miriam his sister called him **Jered**, for she descended after him to the river to know what his end would be.

Commentary: Miriam's name for him, "Jered" (meaning "descended"), refers to her act of following the ark down to the river to ensure his safety.

Verse 28: And Aaron his brother called his name **Abi Zanuch**, saying, "My father left my mother and returned to her on his account."

Commentary: Aaron's name for Moses, "Abi Zanuch" (meaning "father returned" or "father abandoned then returned"), also references Amram's initial separation from Jochebed and their reunion because of Moses.

Verse 29: And **Kehath** the father of Amram called his name **Abigdor**, because on his account did God repair the breach of the house of Jacob, that they could no longer throw their male children into the water.

Commentary: Moses' grandfather, Kehath, gives him the name "Abigdor" (meaning "father of a fence" or "repairer of a breach"). This name signifies that through Moses, God would put an end to the murder of Israelite male children, repairing the devastating "breach" in their community.

Verse 30: And their nurse called him **Abi Socho**, saying, "In his tabernacle was he hidden for three months, on account of the children of **Ham**."

Commentary: Even Moses' nurse has a name for him, "Abi Socho" (meaning "father of a dwelling" or "hidden in a tabernacle"). This name refers to his three months of hiding in a secret place to escape the Egyptians (descendants of Ham).

Verse 31: And all Israel called his name **Shemaiah, son of Nethanel**, for they said, "In his days has God heard their cries and rescued them from their oppressors."

Commentary: The entire nation of Israel has a name for him, "Shemaiah son of Nethanel" (meaning "God has heard, son of God has given"). This collective name encapsulates the hope and belief that Moses' arrival signals God's answer to their suffering and their eventual deliverance.

Verse 32: And Moses was in Pharaoh's house, and was to **Bathia**, Pharaoh's daughter, as a son, and Moses grew up amongst the king's children.

Commentary: The chapter concludes with Moses' upbringing in Pharaoh's palace, effectively positioning him within the very system he is destined to overthrow. He is raised as an Egyptian prince, a stark contrast to his true Israelite identity, setting the stage for his future role.

This chapter of Jasher is crucial for the early life of Moses, providing expanded details beyond the biblical account. It begins with Miriam's prophecy leading to Amram and Jochebed's reconciliation and Moses' conception. The Egyptian tactic of using crying infants to find hidden Hebrew boys highlights their cruel ingenuity. However, God miraculously orchestrates Moses' rescue by Pharaoh's daughter and his return to his own mother for nursing, all while being paid by Pharaoh's household. The chapter provides a fascinating list of different names given to Moses by various family members and the nation, each reflecting a hope or aspect of his divine purpose. It ends with Moses being raised as an Egyptian prince, unknowingly preparing him for his destiny as Israel's deliverer.

Book of Jasher, Chapter 69

A New King in Edom

Verse 1: And the king of **Edom** died in those days, in the eighteenth year of his reign, and was buried in his temple which he had built for himself as his royal residence in the land of Edom.

Commentary: This verse records the death of the current king of Edom, **Samlah** (introduced in Chapter 66), after an 18-year reign. The detail about his burial in a self-built temple highlights his status and perhaps a touch of vanity. This change in leadership in a neighboring nation serves as a backdrop to the ongoing events in Egypt.

Verse 2: And the children of **Esau** sent to **Pethor**, which is upon the river, and they fetched from there a young man of beautiful eyes and comely aspect, whose name was **Saul**, and they made him king over them in the place of Samlah.

Commentary: The descendants of Esau (Edomites) actively seek out and choose their next king. They find a young man named Saul from Pethor, a place "upon the river" (likely the Euphrates), who is

described as handsome. This suggests a strategic choice for leadership and potentially a connection to a different region than previous Edomite kings.

Verse 3: And Saul reigned over all the children of Esau in the land of Edom for forty years.

Commentary: This new King Saul of Edom rules for a significant period of forty years. This detail helps to orient the timeline of events, indicating a sustained period of his reign.

Pharaoh's New, Cruel Decree

Verse 4: And when Pharaoh king of Egypt saw that the counsel which **Balaam** had advised respecting the children of Israel did not succeed, but that still they were fruitful, multiplied and increased throughout the land of Egypt,

Commentary: Despite Balaam's extreme advice to drown all male infants (Chapter 67), Pharaoh sees that it's failing. The Israelites are miraculously *still* growing and multiplying, filling the land of Egypt. This highlights God's promise to Abraham and the futility of Pharaoh's efforts.

Verse 5: Then Pharaoh commanded in those days that a proclamation should be issued throughout Egypt to the children of Israel, saying, "No man shall diminish anything of his daily labor."

Commentary: Faced with the failure of his previous genocidal plan, Pharaoh institutes yet another, even more ruthless, decree. This new order demands that every Israelite worker must meet their exact daily quota of labor, with no reduction whatsoever. This sets the stage for impossible demands.

Verse 6: "And the man who shall be found deficient in his labor which he performs daily, whether in mortar or in bricks, then his youngest son shall be put in their place."

Commentary: This is the horrifying consequence for failing to meet the quota: if an Israelite man falls short on bricks or mortar, his own youngest son will be forcibly taken and literally used as a "brick" in the construction. This is a barbaric and inhumane decree, designed to terrorize the Israelites into even greater productivity or to simply murder their children through a gruesome "replacement" policy.

Verse 7: And the labor of Egypt strengthened upon the children of Israel in those days, and behold if one brick was deficient in any man's daily labor, the Egyptians took his youngest boy by force from his mother, and put him into the building in the place of the brick which his father had left wanting.

Commentary: This verse vividly describes the implementation of the decree. The Egyptians ruthlessly enforce it, showing no mercy. The literal act of taking a child and embedding him into the walls is a horrifying image of ultimate oppression and depersonalization. Even a single missing brick could result in the death of a child, putting immense psychological pressure on the Israelite laborers.

Verse 8: And the men of Egypt did so to all the children of Israel day by day, all the days for a long period.

Commentary: This horrific practice was not a one-time event but a daily, long-term reality for the Israelites. This emphasizes the continuous terror and the immense suffering they endured under Pharaoh's relentless cruelty.

Verse 9: But the tribe of **Levi** did not at that time work with the Israelites their brethren, from the beginning, for the children of Levi knew the cunning of the Egyptians which they exercised at first toward the Israelites.

Commentary: This verse reiterates the unique exemption of the tribe of Levi from the forced labor. They had foreseen the Egyptian deception from the very beginning (as noted in Chapter 65) and therefore were not involved in the work. This highlights their wisdom and a subtle divine protection that kept them from this specific form of cruel bondage.

This chapter escalates the narrative of the Israelites' suffering in Egypt. It opens with a brief mention of a new king in Edom, but the main focus quickly shifts back to Pharaoh's ongoing, desperate attempts to suppress the Israelite population. Discovering that his previous decree to drown male infants has failed, Pharaoh introduces an even more barbaric policy: forcing Israelite men to meet impossible labor quotas, with the penalty being the literal embedding of their youngest sons into the construction as "bricks." This shocking and cruel practice becomes a daily reality for the Israelites, yet the tribe of Levi remains miraculously exempt. The chapter vividly portrays the extreme depths of Egyptian oppression and the constant threat to Israelite life.

Book of Jasher, Chapter 70

Moses' Childhood Act and Balaam's Accusation

Verse 1: When **Moses** was three years old, Pharaoh was at a royal dinner. **Alparanith** the queen was on his right, and **Bathia** (Pharaoh's daughter) was on his left, with the young Moses resting on her lap. **Balaam son of Beor**, along with his two sons, and all the kingdom's top officials were also present at the table.

Commentary: This verse sets the scene: a formal royal banquet with key figures present, including the young Moses. It's a gathering of power and influence, making the events that follow even more dramatic. Moses' presence on Bathia's lap highlights his favored status in the royal household.

Verse 2: The little boy reached out his hand to the king's head, took the crown off, and put it on his own head.

Commentary: This is a pivotal moment: a seemingly innocent childlike act, but one with profound symbolic implications. Moses, a Hebrew child, taking the crown of Egypt and placing it on his own head directly foreshadows his future role in challenging and ultimately taking power from Pharaoh.

Verse 3: When the king and his officials saw what the boy had done, they were all terrified, and they whispered in astonishment to one another.

Commentary: The adults' reaction is one of immediate fear and shock. They understand the deep symbolic meaning of the act, seeing it as a potential omen or a sign of rebellion from the very child they sought to destroy.

Verse 4: The king then said to the officials at the table, "What do you all think, O princes, about this matter? What should be the judgment against this boy for what he's done?"

Commentary: Pharaoh, clearly disturbed, seeks immediate counsel on how to interpret and respond to this seemingly innocent but deeply unsettling act. He asks for a legal judgment against a toddler, indicating his heightened paranoia about the Israelites.

Verse 5: Balaam son of Beor, the magician, answered the king and the officials, saying, "Remember, O my lord and king, the dream you had many days ago, and how your servant interpreted it for you."

Commentary: Balaam quickly connects Moses' act to Pharaoh's prophetic dream (from Chapter 67), where a "milk kid" (representing an Israelite child) outweighed all of Egypt. He skillfully reminds Pharaoh of the dire prophecy he himself delivered, thus validating his earlier interpretation.

Verse 6: "Now, this child is indeed from the Hebrew children, and the spirit of God is in him. Let my lord the king not imagine that this youngster did this without knowing what he was doing."

Commentary: Balaam asserts that Moses' act was not accidental or childish. He claims that the "spirit of God" is within Moses, implying divine influence, and that the child acted with a conscious understanding beyond his years. This is a terrifying accusation, transforming a toddler's action into a deliberate threat.

Verse 7: "For he is a Hebrew boy, and despite being a child, he possesses wisdom and understanding. He did this with wisdom and intentionally chose the kingdom of Egypt for himself."

Commentary: Balaam further emphasizes his point, attributing cunning and ambition to the young Moses. He portrays Moses as a shrewd Hebrew, already scheming to seize the throne, reinforcing Pharaoh's deepest fears about the Israelites' intentions.

Verse 8: "This is how all the Hebrews behave: they deceive kings and nobles, doing all these things cunningly to make the kings of the earth and their people tremble."

Commentary: Balaam generalizes, accusing all Hebrews of being inherently deceptive and manipulative, aiming to destabilize kingdoms. This is a rhetorical tactic to demonize the entire Israelite nation and justify extreme measures against them.

Verse 9: "Surely you know that **Abraham** their father acted this way; he deceived the army of **Nimrod** king of **Babel**, and **Abimelech** king of **Gerar**, and he even took possession of the land of the children of **Heth** and all the kingdoms of **Canaan**."

Commentary: Balaam supports his claim with distorted interpretations of Israelite history, turning Abraham's actions (like his dealings with Nimrod and Abimelech, and his purchase of land in Canaan) into examples of cunning deception and territorial ambition. He twists historical facts to fit his narrative of Israelite treachery.

Verse 10: "And that he went down to Egypt and said of **Sarah** his wife, 'She is my sister,' in order to mislead Egypt and her king."

Commentary: He specifically reminds Pharaoh of Abraham's deception regarding Sarah in Egypt, portraying it as a deliberate act to "mislead" and undermine the Egyptian king.

Verse 11: "His son **Isaac** also did the same when he went to Gerar and lived there, and his strength overpowered the army of **Abimelech** king of the Philistines."

Commentary: Balaam continues with Isaac, implying that Isaac's strength (and God's blessing on him, causing him to flourish in Gerar) was a cunning act of aggression against the Philistines.

Verse 12: "He also thought of making the kingdom of the Philistines stumble, by saying that **Rebecca** his wife was his sister."

Commentary: He attributes the same deceptive motive to Isaac's similar act of calling Rebecca his sister, further building his case that deception is ingrained in the Hebrew character.

Verse 13: "**Jacob** also dealt treacherously with his brother, and took from his hand his birthright and his blessing."

Commentary: Balaam points to Jacob's actions against Esau (taking the birthright and blessing) as further evidence of Israelite treachery, completely ignoring the divine purpose behind these events.

Verse 14: "He then went to **Padan-aram** to the house of **Laban** his mother's brother, and cunningly obtained from him his daughter, his cattle, and all belonging to him, and then fled away and returned to the land of Canaan to his father."

Commentary: He portrays Jacob's dealings with Laban as cunning theft, twisting the narrative of Jacob's servitude and eventual departure.

Verse 15: "His sons sold their brother **Joseph**, who went down into Egypt and became a slave, and was placed in prison for twelve years."

Commentary: Balaam even brings up the story of Joseph, acknowledging he was sold into slavery and imprisoned.

Verse 16: "Until the former Pharaoh dreamed dreams, and released him from prison, and honored him above all the officials in Egypt because he interpreted his dreams for him."

Commentary: He notes Joseph's rise to power due to his dream interpretation, again twisting the narrative to suggest Joseph cleverly manipulated the situation.

Verse 17: "And when God caused a famine throughout the land, he sent for and brought his father and all his brothers, and his entire family, and supported them without cost, and even bought the Egyptians as slaves."

Commentary: This is Balaam's most damning accusation: he claims Joseph not only brought his family to Egypt at no cost but that he also used the famine to enslave the Egyptians. This is a gross distortion, portraying Joseph as a cunning manipulator who ultimately exploited Egypt. This accusation would deeply resonate with Pharaoh's current fears.

Verse 18: "Now therefore, my lord king, behold this child has risen up in their stead in Egypt, to act according to their deeds and to toy with every king, prince, and judge."

Commentary: Balaam brings his argument back to Moses, claiming Moses embodies this inherent Hebrew deception and ambition. He presents Moses as a direct and immediate threat to Pharaoh and the entire Egyptian hierarchy.

Verse 19: "If it pleases the king, let us now spill his blood upon the ground, lest he grow up and take away the government from your hand, and the hope of Egypt perish after he shall have reigned."

Commentary: Balaam concludes his lengthy speech with a direct call for Moses' execution. He argues that this is the only way to prevent the fulfillment of the dream and ensure Egypt's future, reinforcing his earlier genocidal advice.

Verse 20: And Balaam said to the king, "Let us also call for all the judges of Egypt and its wise men, and let us know if the judgment of death is due to this boy as you said, and then we will slay him."

Commentary: Balaam, confident in his interpretation, suggests bringing in all the legal and learned men of Egypt to confirm the death sentence, adding a veneer of legality to the decision.

Verse 21: And Pharaoh sent and called for all the wise men of Egypt, and they came before the king, and an **angel of the Lord** came amongst them, disguised as one of the wise men of Egypt.

Commentary: Pharaoh follows Balaam's advice. Crucially, God intervenes directly: an angel, disguised as an Egyptian wise man, joins the council. This highlights God's protective hand over Moses, ensuring His plan will not be thwarted.

Verse 22: And the king said to the wise men, "Surely you have heard what this Hebrew boy who is in the house has done, and Balaam has given his judgment on the matter."

Commentary: Pharaoh presents the case to the assembled wise men, reiterating Moses' action and Balaam's interpretation, seeking their independent judgment.

Verse 23: "Now you also judge and see what punishment this boy deserves for the act he has committed."

Commentary: Pharaoh asks them to confirm the death sentence, seeking validation for Balaam's extreme counsel.

Verse 24: And the angel, who looked like one of Pharaoh's wise men, answered and said the following, before all the wise men of Egypt, and before the king and the princes:

Commentary: The disguised angel speaks, preparing to deliver a divine intervention that will save Moses.

Verse 25: "If it pleases the king, let the king send for men who shall bring before him an **onyx stone** and a **coal of fire**, and place them before the child. If the child reaches out his hand and takes the onyx stone, then we will know that the youth acted with wisdom in all that he has done, and we must kill him."

Commentary: The angel proposes a test to determine if Moses acted with "wisdom" (conscious intent) or childish innocence. The choice between a valuable onyx stone (representing the kingdom, wealth, power) and a dangerous hot coal (representing harm, lack of understanding) is clever. If Moses chose the stone, it would confirm Balaam's accusation and justify execution.

Verse 26: "But if he reaches out his hand for the coal, then we will know that he did not do this with knowledge, and he shall live."

Commentary: If Moses chooses the dangerous coal, it would prove his childish ignorance, thus sparing his life. This test, proposed by the angel, is a divinely orchestrated loophole to save Moses.

Verse 27: And the thing seemed good in the eyes of the king and the princes, so the king did according to the word of the angel of the Lord.

Commentary: Pharaoh and his officials, seeing this as a reasonable and definitive test, agree to it. They unknowingly accept divine intervention to protect Moses.

Verse 28: And the king ordered the onyx stone and coal to be brought and placed before Moses.

Commentary: The test is prepared as instructed.

Verse 29: And they placed the boy before them, and the boy tried to reach for the onyx stone, but the angel of the Lord took his hand and placed it upon the coal. The coal went out in his hand, but he lifted it up and put it into his mouth, burning part of his lips and part of his tongue, and he became slow of speech and tongue.

Commentary: This is the climactic moment. Moses instinctively reaches for the attractive stone, but the angel guides his hand to the hot coal. While it saves his life from immediate execution, it also results in a physical impairment—he burns his lips and tongue, leading to his later speech impediment ("slow of mouth and slow of tongue" in Exodus). This "flaw" becomes a testament to God's protection and a key characteristic of Moses.

Verse 30: And when the king and princes saw this, they knew that Moses had not acted with wisdom in taking off the crown from the king's head.

Commentary: The test successfully convinces Pharaoh and his court that Moses' act was indeed childish and not a deliberate challenge to his authority. This justifies sparing his life according to their own agreed-upon terms.

Verse 31: So the king and princes refrained from killing the child, and Moses remained in Pharaoh's house, growing up, and the Lord was with him.

Commentary: Moses is saved, and his upbringing in the palace continues, confirming God's protection and plan for him. The phrase "the Lord was with him" signifies divine favor and guidance.

Moses' Growing Awareness and First Act of Advocacy

Verse 32: And while the boy was in the king's house, he was dressed in royal purple and grew up among the king's children.

Commentary: Moses enjoys the privileges of royalty, dressed in fine clothes and raised alongside Pharaoh's own children. This positions him uniquely, giving him an intimate understanding of Egyptian power while still being Israelite by birth.

Verse 33: And when Moses grew up in the king's house, **Bathia** the daughter of Pharaoh considered him as a son, and all of Pharaoh's household honored him, and all the men of Egypt were afraid of him.

Commentary: Moses gains significant respect and even fear among the Egyptians. Bathia's maternal affection for him is clear, and his presence commands a certain awe, perhaps due to his unique circumstances or an innate authority.

Verse 34: And he daily went forth and came into the land of **Goshen**, where his brethren the children of Israel were, and Moses saw them daily in shortness of breath and hard labor.

Commentary: Despite his royal upbringing, Moses' heart is with his people. He regularly visits Goshen, witnessing firsthand the brutal, dehumanizing labor of the Israelites. The phrase "shortness of breath" vividly conveys their constant struggle for air due to extreme exertion.

Verse 35: And Moses asked them, saying, "Why is this labor forced upon you day after day?"

Commentary: Moses' empathy and curiosity lead him to directly question the Israelites about their suffering. This shows his growing awareness of their plight and his budding sense of justice.

Verse 36: And they told him all that had happened to them, and all the harsh commands Pharaoh had placed upon them even before his birth.

Commentary: The Israelites reveal the full extent of their oppression, including the decrees that predated Moses' birth. This educates Moses about his people's history of suffering.

Verse 37: And they told him all the advice that **Balaam son of Beor** had given against them, and what he had also advised against him (Moses) to kill him when he had taken the king's crown from his head.

Commentary: The Israelites specifically inform Moses about Balaam's role in their persecution, including his recent attempt to have Moses executed. This creates a personal animosity in Moses toward Balaam.

Verse 38: And when Moses heard these things, his anger was ignited against Balaam, and he sought to kill him, and he lay in ambush for him day after day.

Commentary: Moses reacts with strong righteous anger upon learning of Balaam's malevolent counsel against both his people and himself. He actively seeks to kill Balaam, highlighting his developing commitment to justice and his willingness to act.

Verse 39: And Balaam was afraid of Moses, and he and his two sons got up and left Egypt. They fled and saved themselves, going to the land of **Cush** to **Kikianus**, king of Cush.

Commentary: Balaam, being a diviner, likely sensed Moses' intent or foresaw danger. He and his sons flee Egypt, seeking refuge with King Kikianus in Cush (Ethiopia). This significant departure removes Balaam from the immediate Egyptian court, setting up his eventual reappearance in the wilderness narrative (Book of Numbers).

Verse 40: And Moses was in the king's house, coming and going, and the Lord gave him favor in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of all his servants, and in the eyes of all the people of Egypt, and they loved Moses exceedingly.

Commentary: Despite the earlier incident with the crown, Moses continues to be highly favored and respected within the Egyptian court and by the general populace. This is attributed directly to God's intervention, granting Moses a unique position of influence and affection.

Verse 41: And the day arrived when Moses went to Goshen to see his brethren, that he saw the children of Israel in their burdens and hard labor, and Moses was grieved on their account.

Commentary: This reiterates Moses' deep empathy for his people's suffering. The constant sight of their "burdens and hard labor" weighs heavily on him, fueling his desire for justice.

Verse 42: And Moses returned to Egypt and came to Pharaoh's house, and stood before the king, and Moses bowed down before the king.

Commentary: Moses approaches Pharaoh with respect, but with a clear purpose: to advocate for his people.

Verse 43: And Moses said to Pharaoh, "I beg you, my lord, I have come to ask a small favor from you; please do not send me away empty-handed"; and Pharaoh said to him, "Speak."

Commentary: Moses, using his influence and respectful address, carefully presents his request, highlighting his favored position with Pharaoh.

Verse 44: And Moses said to Pharaoh, "Please grant your servants, the children of Israel who are in Goshen, one day to rest from their labor."

Commentary: Moses' first public act of advocacy is a seemingly modest request: a single day of rest for the Israelites. This foreshadows his future role as their deliverer and advocate for their freedom.

Verse 45: And the king answered Moses and said, "Indeed, I have granted your request in this matter."

Commentary: Remarkably, Pharaoh agrees to Moses' request, demonstrating the significant influence Moses holds. This is a small but critical victory, a crack in the wall of Egyptian oppression.

Verse 46: And Pharaoh ordered a proclamation to be issued throughout Egypt and Goshen, saying,

Commentary: The decree for a day of rest is formalized and widely announced.

Verse 47: "To you, all the children of Israel, thus says the king: for six days you shall do your work and labor, but on the seventh day you shall rest, and shall not perform any work. Thus shall you do all the days, as the king and **Moses the son of Bathia** have commanded."

Commentary: The proclamation establishes a weekly day of rest, specifically attributing it to "the king and Moses the son of Bathia." This is significant because it recognizes Moses' authority and his perceived status as Pharaoh's son, giving legitimacy to the decree. This is a subtle yet profound step towards the institution of the Sabbath for Israel, even if forced by a gentile king.

Verse 48: And Moses rejoiced at this thing which the king had granted to him, and all the children of Israel did as Moses ordered them.

Commentary: Moses celebrates this initial success, and the Israelites immediately comply, recognizing him as their advocate.

Verse 49: For this thing was from the Lord to the children of Israel, for the Lord had begun to remember the children of Israel to save them for the sake of their fathers.

Commentary: The text explicitly states that this concession came from God's intervention, signifying that God was beginning to act on His promise to deliver Israel, a prelude to the greater Exodus.

Verse 50: And the Lord was with Moses and his fame went throughout Egypt.

Commentary: Moses' influence and reputation continue to grow throughout Egypt, further establishing his position as a powerful figure.

Verse 51: And Moses became great in the eyes of all the Egyptians, and in the eyes of all the children of Israel, seeking good for his people Israel and speaking words of peace regarding them to the king.

Commentary: Moses is now revered by both Egyptians and Israelites. He actively seeks the well-being of his people and acts as a diplomatic voice, attempting to ease their suffering through peaceful means with Pharaoh. This sets the stage for his direct confrontation with Pharaoh later.

This chapter details a pivotal period in Moses' early life. It begins with the dramatic scene of the young Moses taking Pharaoh's crown, leading to Balaam's accusation and call for execution. However, an angel of the Lord intervenes, prompting a test where Moses' choice of a hot coal over a precious stone convinces Pharaoh of his childish innocence, saving his life (though causing a speech impediment). Moses continues to grow in Pharaoh's household, respected by all. He regularly visits his Israelite brethren, witnessing their suffering, and is enraged by Balaam's previous malicious counsel. In his first act of public advocacy, Moses successfully petitions Pharaoh for a day of rest for the Israelites, a request granted due to Moses' favor with the king and God's intervention. This chapter sets the stage for Moses' eventual role as the deliverer of Israel.

Book of Jasher, Chapter 71

Moses' First Intervention and Flight

Verse 1: When **Moses** was eighteen years old, he wanted to see his father and mother, so he went to them in **Goshen**. As he neared Goshen, he came to the place where the Israelites were working. He saw their heavy burdens and then witnessed an Egyptian hitting one of his Hebrew brothers.

Commentary: This verse sets a crucial age for Moses (18), marking his transition into adulthood. Despite his privileged upbringing in Pharaoh's palace, his heart draws him back to his people. His observation of the Israelites' forced labor and the sight of an Egyptian overseer brutalizing a Hebrew immediately sparks his righteous indignation, setting the stage for his first heroic act.

Verse 2: And when the man who was being beaten saw Moses, he ran to him for help, because Moses was highly respected in Pharaoh's household. The man said to him, "My lord, please listen to me. This Egyptian came to my house last night, tied me up, and was with my wife right in front of me. And now he's trying to kill me!"

Commentary: The abused Israelite recognizes Moses' influence and appeals to him for justice. The man's testimony reveals the horrific depth of Egyptian cruelty, which extended beyond physical labor to sexual assault and threats against life. This deeply personal and morally outrageous act further ignites Moses' anger.

Verse 3: When Moses heard this wicked act, his anger flared against the Egyptian. He looked around and when he saw no one else was there, he struck the Egyptian and buried him in the sand. He then freed the Hebrew from the hand of the one who was beating him.

Commentary: Moses' reaction is swift and violent. His anger is righteous, but his action—killing the Egyptian and hiding the body—shows his initial attempt to take matters into his own hands, outside of divine direction. The fact that he "looked around" suggests he understood the severe consequences of his actions if witnessed. This is a direct parallel to the biblical account in Exodus.

Verse 4: The Hebrew man went home, and Moses returned to his own residence and then went back to the king's palace.

Commentary: The immediate aftermath sees the saved Hebrew return home and Moses return to the safety of Pharaoh's house, seemingly having gotten away with the act for the moment.

Verse 5: When the Hebrew man returned home, he thought about divorcing his wife, because it was considered wrong in the family of Jacob for a man to be with his wife after she had been defiled.

Commentary: This verse adds a layer of cultural and moral complexity not found in the biblical narrative. The victimized Hebrew considers repudiating his wife due to her defilement, reflecting the cultural purity laws and the tragic consequences of the Egyptian's assault reaching beyond the immediate act.

Verse 6: And the woman went and told her brothers, and her brothers tried to kill him, but he fled to his house and escaped.

Commentary: The wife informs her brothers, who then seek to kill her husband for his decision (or even just his contemplation) to repudiate her. This demonstrates the strong family honor system among the Israelites and the devastating internal conflict caused by the Egyptian oppression. The husband's escape means this conflict remains unresolved.

Verse 7: On the second day, Moses went out to his brethren again, and he saw two men arguing. He said to the wicked one, "Why are you hitting your fellow Israelite?"

Commentary: Moses returns to Goshen, and this time, he encounters two Israelites quarreling. He tries to intervene in an internal dispute, demonstrating his desire to bring justice and order among his own people. His addressing one as "wicked one" implies he saw one of them as clearly in the wrong.

Verse 8: And the man answered him and said, "Who made you a ruler and judge over us? Do you intend to kill me just like you killed the Egyptian?" And Moses was afraid and said, "Surely the thing is known?"

Commentary: This is a shocking and pivotal moment. The Israelite he attempts to rebuke reveals that he knows about the murder of the Egyptian. This exposes Moses' secret, filling him with fear and confirming that his act was not hidden as he thought. This also reveals the tension and infighting even within the oppressed Israelite community.

Verse 9: And Pharaoh heard about this matter, and he ordered Moses to be killed. So God sent His angel, and he appeared to Pharaoh in the likeness of a captain of the guard.

Commentary: News of Moses' crime reaches Pharaoh, who immediately orders his execution. However, God directly intervenes to save Moses, sending an angel disguised as one of Pharaoh's high-ranking officials. This emphasizes God's active protection and divine orchestration of Moses' destiny.

Verse 10: And the angel of the Lord took the sword from the hand of the captain of the guard, and used it to cut off the captain's own head, because the captain's appearance had been transformed to look like Moses.

Commentary: This is a truly miraculous and bewildering intervention. The angel not only saves Moses but makes it appear as though the captain (whose form was temporarily changed to look like Moses) was executed instead. This divine trickery allows Moses to escape unnoticed.

Verse 11: And the angel of the Lord took hold of Moses' right hand and brought him out of Egypt, placing him outside the borders of Egypt, a distance of forty days' journey.

Commentary: The angel physically escorts Moses out of Egypt, leading him far away to safety. The "forty days' journey" emphasizes the significant distance and the thoroughness of his escape, as well as being a symbolic number that often appears in biblical narratives related to testing or transition.

Aaron's Prophecy and Israel's Rebellion

Verse 12: And **Aaron** his brother alone remained in the land of Egypt, and he prophesied to the children of Israel, saying,

Commentary: With Moses gone, Aaron becomes the spiritual leader in Egypt. He begins to prophesy, indicating a new phase of divine communication for the Israelites.

Verse 13: "Thus says the Lord God of your ancestors, 'Throw away, each man, the abominations of his eyes, and do not defile yourselves with the idols of Egypt.'"

Commentary: Aaron's prophecy is a direct command from God, urging the Israelites to abandon the idolatry they had adopted from the Egyptians. This shows that despite their oppression, the Israelites

had fallen into spiritual compromise, highlighting their need for redemption not just from slavery but from spiritual corruption.

Verse 14: And the children of Israel rebelled and would not listen to Aaron at that time.

Commentary: Sadly, the Israelites, deeply entrenched in their suffering and perhaps their idol worship, refuse to obey Aaron's message. This demonstrates their spiritual stubbornness and highlights the challenge God faced in preparing them for deliverance.

Verse 15: And the Lord thought to destroy them, were it not that the Lord remembered the covenant which he had made with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Commentary: This is a powerful statement about God's justice and His unwavering faithfulness. Their rebellion was so severe that God considered destroying them, but His faithfulness to the covenant made with the patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob) prevented Him from doing so. This underscores the importance of the covenant for Israel's continued existence.

Verse 16: In those days the hand of Pharaoh continued to be severe against the children of Israel, and he crushed and oppressed them until the time when God sent forth his word and took notice of them.

Commentary: The chapter concludes by reiterating the ongoing and intensifying oppression under Pharaoh's rule. The Israelites continue to suffer greatly until the "time when God sent forth His word and took notice of them," a clear foreshadowing of God's full intervention and the coming Exodus, which Moses will lead.

This chapter of Jasher marks a pivotal moment in Moses' life. At 18, he confronts Egyptian brutality head-on, killing an oppressive overseer. This act, however, is exposed by a quarreling Israelite, leading to Pharaoh's order for Moses' execution. Miraculously, an angel of the Lord intervenes, saving Moses through deception and guiding him out of Egypt. With Moses gone, Aaron assumes a prophetic role, urging the Israelites to abandon idolatry, though they largely refuse. The chapter emphasizes God's continued faithfulness to His covenant despite Israel's stubbornness and the ongoing, severe oppression under Pharaoh, setting the stage for Moses' return and the dramatic events of the Exodus.

Book of Jasher, Chapter 72

The Rebellion in Cush

Verse 1: Around that time, a big war broke out between the people of **Cush** (Ethiopia) and the people of the east and **Aram** (Syria). These groups rebelled against **Kikianus**, the king of Cush, who controlled them.

Commentary: This verse introduces a new conflict far from Egypt, setting the stage for Moses' eventual arrival in Cush. It highlights King Kikianus's role as a ruler over other nations that are now rebelling against his authority.

Verse 2: So **Kikianus**, the king of Cush, went out with all his people, a huge army as numerous as sand. He went to fight against Aram and the people of the east to force them back into submission.

Commentary: Kikianus mobilizes his vast army to suppress the rebellion. This demonstrates his power and military might, which will become relevant to Moses' story.

Verse 3: When Kikianus left, he left **Balaam the magician**, along with his two sons, to guard the city, along with the common people.

Commentary: This is a crucial detail: Balaam, who had fled Egypt to Cush in the previous chapter, is entrusted with guarding the capital city. This places him in a position of power and sets up a new act of treachery.

Verse 4: So Kikianus went off to Aram and the people of the east, and he fought them and defeated them. They were all wounded and fell before Kikianus and his army.

Commentary: Kikianus successfully puts down the rebellion, demonstrating his military effectiveness.

Verse 5: He captured many of them and brought them back under his control as they had been before. He set up camp in their land to collect taxes from them as usual.

Commentary: Kikianus reestablishes his dominance over the rebellious territories, ensuring he can continue to extract tribute. This explains his prolonged absence from his capital.

Balaam's Treachery

Verse 6: But Balaam, son of Beor, whom the king of Cush had left to guard the city and its poor, stirred up the people of the land. He advised them to rebel against King Kikianus and not let him back into the city when he returned home.

Commentary: Balaam, instead of faithfully performing his duty, uses his influence to instigate a rebellion within Cush's own capital. This reveals his consistently treacherous and ambitious nature, similar to how he advised Pharaoh against the Israelites.

Verse 7: And the people of the land listened to him. They swore an oath to him and made him their king, and his two sons became captains of the army.

Commentary: Balaam's cunning succeeds. The citizens agree to his plan, making him their new king and giving military command to his sons. This shows his persuasive power and the opportunism of the Cushite populace.

Verse 8: So they immediately began to strengthen the city walls at two corners, building an extremely strong fortification.

Commentary: Balaam and the rebels take immediate steps to fortify the city against Kikianus's return, demonstrating their commitment to the rebellion.

Verse 9: At the third corner, they dug countless ditches between the city and the river that surrounded all of Cush, and they diverted the river waters to flood those ditches.

Commentary: They create a formidable water defense, using the river itself as a natural barrier by digging extensive, flooded ditches. This shows an advanced understanding of siege warfare and a significant defensive effort.

Verse 10: At the fourth corner, they used their incantations and enchantments to gather many serpents, and they fortified the city and lived inside it. No one could go in or out without their permission.

Commentary: This is a key detail related to Balaam's magical abilities. He uses sorcery to create a supernatural defense of venomous serpents, making the city almost impenetrable. This highlights the magical elements present in Jasher and explains why the city was so difficult to conquer.

Kikianus's Return and Siege

Verse 11: Kikianus fought against Aram and the people of the east and subdued them as before. They paid him their usual taxes, and he then returned to his own land.

Commentary: Kikianus successfully concludes his foreign campaign, unaware of the rebellion brewing at home.

Verse 12: As King Kikianus of Cush and all his army captains approached their city, they looked up and saw that the city walls had been built up and were much higher. The men were astonished by this.

Commentary: Kikianus's forces are surprised by the unexpected changes to their capital, signaling that something is amiss.

Verse 13: They said to each other, "It must be because they saw we were delayed in battle and were very afraid of us, so they did this to raise and fortify the city walls so that the kings of Canaan couldn't attack them."

Commentary: The returning army initially misinterprets the fortifications, assuming it's a defensive measure against external threats rather than an internal rebellion. This shows their naivety about Balaam's treachery.

Verse 14: So the king and his troops approached the city gate, and they looked up and saw that all the city gates were closed. They called out to the guards, saying, "Open for us, so we can enter the city!"

Commentary: The realization of the rebellion begins to dawn as they find the city gates locked against them.

Verse 15: But the guards refused to open for them, following the orders of Balaam the magician, their new king. They would not let Kikianus's army enter their city.

Commentary: The direct defiance confirms the internal coup, with Balaam now recognized as the leader by the city guards.

Verse 16: So they began to fight at the city gate, and one hundred and thirty men from Kikianus's army fell that day.

Commentary: The siege begins with an immediate, costly battle. The casualties show the determination of the rebels and the strength of their initial defense.

Verse 17: The next day, they continued to fight, attacking near the river. They tried to cross but couldn't, and some of them drowned in the ditches.

Commentary: The water defenses prove effective, causing more casualties for Kikianus's army.

Verse 18: So the king ordered them to cut down trees to build rafts to cross. They did this.

Commentary: Kikianus adapts his strategy, demonstrating persistence in trying to overcome the water obstacle.

Verse 19: But when they reached the ditches, the waters were churning because of mills, and two hundred men on ten rafts drowned.

Commentary: The rebels had engineered a further defense using water mills to create strong currents, which effectively drowned more of Kikianus's soldiers. This highlights the sophistication of Balaam's defenses.

Verse 20: On the third day, they tried to fight on the side where the serpents were, but they couldn't get close, because the serpents killed one hundred and seventy men. So they stopped fighting against Cush directly and besieged Cush for nine years, with no one able to enter or leave.

Commentary: The serpent defense proves to be an impenetrable barrier, causing significant losses. This forces Kikianus to abandon direct assault and resort to a long, drawn-out siege lasting an incredible nine years. This long siege provides the context for Moses' time in Cush.

Moses in Cush and Kikianus's Death

Verse 21: It was during this time that the war and siege were happening against Cush that **Moses** fled from Egypt from Pharaoh, who was trying to kill him for slaying the Egyptian.

Commentary: This verse explicitly connects Moses' flight from Egypt (from Chapter 71) to the ongoing siege of Cush. It establishes the timeline of his arrival in this conflict zone.

Verse 22: Moses was eighteen years old when he fled from Pharaoh in Egypt. He escaped and found refuge in the camp of Kikianus, which was, at that time, besieging Cush.

Commentary: Moses, still quite young, flees directly to Kikianus's army camp. This shows his resourcefulness and perhaps divine guidance in finding a place of safety and purpose.

Verse 23: And Moses stayed in the camp of Kikianus, king of Cush, for nine years, for the entire duration of the siege against Cush. Moses went out and came in with them.

Commentary: Moses spends a significant portion of his life (nine years) with Kikianus's army. This period would have provided him with invaluable experience in military strategy, leadership, and resilience, preparing him for his future role.

Verse 24: The king, his officials, and all the fighting men loved Moses, for he was great and worthy. His stature was like a majestic lion, his face shone like the sun, and his strength was like that of a lion. He also served as a counselor to the king.

Commentary: Moses quickly earns the respect and affection of the Cushite army. His physical prowess and regal appearance are emphasized, along with his intellectual abilities as a counselor. This highlights his innate leadership qualities, even among foreigners.

Verse 25: At the end of nine years, Kikianus became gravely ill with a fatal disease. His illness overcame him, and he died on the seventh day.

Commentary: The siege finally ends with the death of King Kikianus. This creates a power vacuum within the besieging army, paving the way for a new leader.

Verse 26: His servants embalmed him and carried him away to be buried outside the city gate, north of the land of Egypt.

Commentary: Kikianus is given a proper burial, indicating the respect his army had for him. The location "north of the land of Egypt" is a bit ambiguous, but likely refers to a geographical marker in relation to Cush, not a literal border with Egypt proper.

Verse 27: And they built over him an elegant, strong, and tall structure, and they placed large stones at its base.

Commentary: A grand memorial is erected for Kikianus, symbolizing his importance and the army's reverence for him.

Verse 28: The king's scribes carved all of King Kikianus's might and all his battles onto those stones. Look, they are still written there today.

Commentary: This detail suggests the long-lasting nature of the monument and provides a textual reference, common in ancient literature, to validate the account by referring to existing historical records.

Moses Becomes King of Cush

Verse 29: After the death of King Kikianus of Cush, his men and troops were greatly distressed because of the ongoing war.

Commentary: The death of their king leaves the army in a difficult position, prolonging the unresolved siege and creating uncertainty.

Verse 30: So they said to each other, "Give us advice on what we should do now, since we've been living in this wilderness for nine years, away from our homes."

Commentary: The army faces a dilemma: continue the costly and prolonged siege without their leader, or abandon it and risk further harm. They seek new leadership and a solution.

Verse 31: "If we say we will fight against the city, many of us will be wounded or killed. And if we stay here besieging, we will also die."

Commentary: They acknowledge the high risks of both continuing the assault and remaining in the siege, emphasizing their dire situation.

Verse 32: "Because now all the kings of Aram and the people of the east will hear that our king is dead, and they will suddenly attack us aggressively. They will fight against us and leave no survivors."

Commentary: They recognize the strategic danger: their former enemies, the Aramites and Easterners, will see Kikianus's death as an opportunity to attack a leaderless and vulnerable army.

Verse 33: "Therefore, let us go and choose a king for ourselves, and let us continue the siege until the city is delivered to us."

Commentary: They decide that appointing a new king is essential for their survival and for the successful conclusion of the siege.

Verse 34: And they wanted to choose a man from Kikianus's army to be king that day, and they found no one more suitable to rule over them than Moses.

Commentary: This is a surprising twist in Moses' journey. Despite being a Hebrew, he is chosen by the Cushite army as their new king. His earlier demonstrated leadership, strength, and counsel (Verse 24) made him the clear choice.

Verse 35: And they quickly took off their garments and threw them on the ground, making a large pile, and they placed Moses on top of it.

Commentary: This is a customary way of enthroning a new king in some ancient cultures, signifying the people's support and elevation of their chosen leader.

Verse 36: And they rose up and blew trumpets and shouted before him, saying, "Long live the king! Long live the king!"

Commentary: The traditional acclamation for a new monarch, signifying their acceptance and loyalty to Moses.

Verse 37: And all the people and nobles swore an oath to him to give him **Adoniah** the queen, the Cushite wife of Kikianus, as his wife, and they made Moses king over them that day.

Commentary: As part of his installation as king, Moses is offered Kikianus's widow, Queen Adoniah, as his wife. This is a common practice in ancient succession, where the new king would marry the former queen to legitimize his rule and continue the royal line. This is a significant detail not found in the biblical account of Moses.

Verse 38: And all the people of Cush issued a proclamation that day, saying, "Every man must give something to Moses from what he owns."

Commentary: This is a ceremonial act of tribute to the new king, demonstrating the people's allegiance and providing him with resources.

Verse 39: And they spread out a sheet on the pile of clothes, and every man put something into it, one a gold earring and another a coin.

Commentary: The collection of gifts signifies wealth and personal offerings to the new king.

Verse 40: Also, the people of Cush threw onyx stones, bdellium, pearls, and marble onto the pile for Moses, along with a great abundance of silver and gold.

Commentary: The variety and richness of the gifts highlight the wealth of Cush and the eagerness of the people to support their new king. These are valuable materials, indicating the significant resources now at Moses' disposal.

Verse 41: And Moses took all the silver and gold, all the vessels, and the bdellium and onyx stones, which all the people of Cush had given to him, and he placed them among his treasures.

Commentary: Moses accepts and stores these treasures, indicating his new role as a king and his acquisition of royal wealth.

Verse 42: And Moses reigned over the children of Cush that day, in the place of Kikianus king of Cush.

Commentary: The chapter concludes with Moses' official ascension to the throne of Cush. This is a remarkable and unbiblical period in Moses' life, portraying him not just as a fugitive but as a powerful king for a significant time. This period of kingship would further refine his leadership skills and provide him with strategic knowledge.

This chapter of Jasher presents a compelling and unbiblical narrative of Moses' journey. After fleeing Egypt, he finds refuge in the camp of **Kikianus**, king of Cush, who is besieging his own capital, which has been seized by **Balaam** through treachery and protected by magical defenses. Moses spends nine years in this siege, gaining respect and influence. Upon Kikianus's death, the Cushite army, desperate for a new leader, chooses Moses to be their king due to his impressive qualities. Moses accepts the throne, marries Kikianus's widow, and inherits the wealth of Cush. This period as a king provides Moses with invaluable experience in leadership and warfare, preparing him for his eventual destiny as the deliverer of Israel.

Book of Jasher, Chapter 73

Moses' Reign Begins in Cush and the Serpent Problem

Verse 1: In the fifty-fifth year of Pharaoh's reign in Egypt, which was also the one hundred and fifty-seventh year since the Israelites came down to Egypt, **Moses** began his reign in **Cush**.

Commentary: This verse provides a precise timeline, linking Moses' reign in Cush to the larger historical context of the Israelite sojourn in Egypt. It shows Moses' kingship occurring well into Pharaoh's rule, long before the Exodus.

Verse 2: Moses was twenty-seven years old when he became king of Cush, and he reigned for forty years.

Commentary: This gives us Moses' age at the start of his unexpected kingship and the surprising length of his reign – a significant 40 years. This long period of leadership would be invaluable experience for his future role.

Verse 3: The Lord granted Moses favor and kindness in the eyes of all the people of Cush, and the people of Cush loved him greatly. So Moses was favored by both the Lord and by people.

Commentary: Moses' popularity and success as king are attributed to divine favor. He wasn't just tolerated; he was genuinely loved and respected by his new subjects, showing his natural charisma and God's hand in his life.

Verse 4: On the seventh day of his reign, all the people of Cush gathered and came before Moses, bowing down to him.

Comment commentary: This formal act of homage on the seventh day (perhaps a day of rest or a symbolic number) solidifies Moses' authority and their acceptance of him as king.

Verse 5: All the people spoke together in the king's presence, saying, "Give us advice so we can figure out what to do about this city."

Commentary: The first order of business for Moses as king is to address the lingering problem of the besieged city, which **Balaam** and his forces still held. The people look to Moses for a solution to a problem that has plagued them for nine years.

Verse 6: "For it has now been nine years that we've been surrounding this city, and we haven't seen our children and wives."

Commentary: The people express their weariness and longing for their families, highlighting the human cost of the prolonged siege. This provides a strong motivation for them to follow Moses' lead.

Verse 7: So the king answered them, saying, "If you will listen to me in everything I command you, then the Lord will give the city into our hands, and we will conquer it."

Commentary: Moses, relying on divine help, sets a condition for success: obedience to his leadership. He promises victory if they follow his instructions, showing his confidence in God's support.

Verse 8: "For if we fight them as in the former battle we had with them before **Kikianus's** death, many of us will be wounded as before."

Commentary: Moses points out the futility of repeating their past, unsuccessful tactics against the city's defenses. He recognizes the need for a new strategy, indicating his wisdom as a military leader.

Verse 9: "Therefore, here is my advice for you in this matter; if you will listen to me, then the city will be delivered into our hands."

Commentary: Moses emphasizes that his plan is a strategic solution, again reiterating the importance of their obedience.

Verse 10: So all the forces answered the king, saying, "Whatever our lord commands, that we will do."

Commentary: The army expresses their full trust and commitment to Moses' leadership, giving him the authority he needs to implement his plan.

Moses' Ingenious Plan and Victory

Verse 11: And Moses said to them, "Go throughout the entire camp and announce to all the people, saying,"

Commentary: Moses issues his command, initiating the execution of his unusual strategy.

Verse 12: "Thus says the king: Go into the forest and each man bring with him a young stork."

Commentary: This is the beginning of Moses' unique and unexpected plan: to use storks, known predators of snakes, against the serpent defense of the city. This demonstrates his innovative thinking, perhaps even divine inspiration.

Verse 13: "And anyone who disobeys the king's word, who does not bring his young stork, will die, and the king will take all his possessions."

Commentary: The penalty for disobedience is severe, emphasizing the importance of every man's participation and ensuring compliance with his unusual orders.

Verse 14: "And when you bring them, they will be in your care. You shall raise them until they grow up, and you shall teach them to swoop down, just like young hawks do."

Commentary: The storks need to be trained, highlighting the strategic foresight in Moses' plan. This suggests a period of preparation before the attack.

Verse 15: So all the people of Cush heard Moses' words, and they rose up and sent out a proclamation throughout the camp, saying,

Commentary: The army immediately follows Moses' orders and disseminates the command.

Verse 16: "To all of you, people of Cush, the king's order is that you all go together to the forest and catch young storks, each man with one in his hand, and you shall bring them home."

Commentary: The command is repeated clearly for all to understand.

Verse 17: "And any person who violates the king's order shall die, and the king will take all that belongs to him."

Commentary: The strict penalty is reiterated, reinforcing the seriousness of the command.

Verse 18: And all the people did so. They went out to the forest, climbed the fir trees, and each man caught a young stork. They brought them into the desert and raised them as the king ordered, teaching them to swoop down, similar to young hawks.

Commentary: The people diligently obey, undertaking the unusual task of catching and training storks. This shows their trust in Moses' leadership and their desperate desire for the siege to end.

Verse 19: After the young storks were fully grown, the king ordered them to be starved for three days, and all the people did so.

Commentary: This final preparation ensures the storks will be highly motivated by hunger to attack the serpents, a clever tactical move by Moses.

Verse 20: And on the third day, the king said to them, "Strengthen yourselves and become brave men. Each man put on his armor and strap on his sword, and each man ride his horse and take his young stork in his hand."

Commentary: Moses prepares his army for the final assault, giving a motivational speech and outlining the tactical plan for the attack.

Verse 21: "And we will rise up and fight against the city at the place where the serpents are." And all the people did as the king had ordered.

Commentary: The target is specifically the serpent-guarded side of the city, showing Moses' direct attack on Balaam's primary magical defense.

Verse 22: And they each took their young stork in hand and went away. When they came to the place of the serpents, the king said to them, "Each man send forth his young stork upon the serpents."

Commentary: The climax of Moses' plan. The storks are unleashed precisely where they are needed.

Verse 23: And they each sent forth their young stork as the king ordered. The young storks rushed upon the serpents and devoured them all, completely destroying them from that place.

Commentary: Moses' ingenious, divinely-inspired strategy works perfectly. The storks, natural predators of snakes, quickly eliminate Balaam's magical serpent defense, clearing the way for the assault.

Verse 24: And when the king and people saw that all the serpents were destroyed in that place, all the people let out a great shout.

Commentary: The destruction of the serpents is a huge morale booster, confirming the effectiveness of Moses' plan and signaling the impending victory.

Verse 25: And they approached and fought against the city, and took it and subdued it, and they entered the city.

Commentary: With the main magical defense neutralized, the Cushite army is able to finally breach and conquer the city after nine long years.

Verse 26: On that day, one thousand one hundred men from the city's inhabitants died, but not a single person from the besieging army died.

Commentary: The victory is remarkably decisive and one-sided. The Cushite army suffers no casualties, emphasizing the effectiveness of Moses' strategy and perhaps God's continued favor.

Verse 27: So all the people of Cush went each to his home, to his wife and children and to all his possessions.

Commentary: The soldiers are finally reunited with their families after a prolonged separation, bringing a joyous end to the siege.

Verse 28: And **Balaam the magician**, when he saw that the city was taken, opened the gate, and he and his two sons and eight brothers fled and returned to Egypt to Pharaoh, king of Egypt.

Commentary: Balaam, seeing his defenses breached and his power lost, flees back to Egypt. This is a crucial detail, as it explains how Balaam will later reappear as an adversary to Moses during the Exodus narrative in the biblical book of Numbers, still serving Pharaoh.

Verse 29: They are the sorcerers and magicians who are mentioned in the book of the law, standing against Moses when the Lord brought the plagues upon Egypt.

Commentary: This verse explicitly connects Balaam and his family to the Egyptian magicians who will later oppose Moses during the plagues. This adds a layer of narrative continuity and highlights the ongoing supernatural conflict.

Moses' Righteous Rule in Cush

Verse 30: So Moses captured the city through his wisdom, and the people of Cush placed him on the throne instead of **Kikianus** king of Cush.

Commentary: This reiterates that Moses' success was due to his wisdom, not just military might. His position as king is re-affirmed after this major victory.

Verse 31: And they placed the royal crown upon his head, and they gave him **Adoniah**, the Cushite queen, wife of Kikianus, as his wife.

Commentary: The coronation ceremony is completed, and the offer of Queen Adoniah as his wife is formally presented, as customary in royal succession.

Verse 32: But Moses feared the Lord God of his fathers, so he did not go to her, nor did he look at her with desire.

Commentary: This is a crucial and ethically significant detail. Despite the expectation of marrying the former queen to solidify his reign, Moses abstains. His abstinence is rooted in his fear and reverence for the Lord God of his ancestors, prioritizing divine law over political custom.

Verse 33: For Moses remembered how **Abraham** had made his servant **Eliezer** swear, saying to him, "You shall not take a woman from the daughters of **Canaan** for my son **Isaac**."

Commentary: Moses' decision is explicitly linked to the patriarchal tradition of avoiding intermarriage with certain groups. He recalls Abraham's strict instruction to Eliezer regarding Isaac's marriage.

Verse 34: Also what **Isaac** did when **Jacob** had fled from his brother, when he commanded him, saying, "You shall not take a wife from the daughters of Canaan, nor make alliance with any of the children of **Ham**."

Commentary: He further remembers Isaac's command to Jacob, specifically prohibiting marriage with Canaanite women and, significantly, "any of the children of Ham." This is the explicit reason for his refusal, as the Cushites (Ethiopians) are considered descendants of Ham.

Verse 35: For the Lord our God gave **Ham** the son of **Noah**, and his children and all his descendants, as slaves to the children of **Shem** and to the children of **Japheth**, and to their descendants after them as slaves, forever.

Commentary: This verse provides the theological justification within Jasher for avoiding marriage with descendants of Ham. It refers to Noah's curse on Ham (Genesis 9:25-27), interpreting it as a divine decree of perpetual servitude for Ham's lineage. This is a controversial interpretation in modern scholarship, but it is presented here as Moses' guiding principle.

Verse 36: Therefore Moses did not turn his heart or his eyes toward Kikianus's wife for all the days that he reigned over Cush.

Commentary: Moses maintains his resolve throughout his long reign, consistently prioritizing his spiritual convictions over personal desire or political expediency.

Verse 37: And Moses feared the Lord his God all his life, and Moses walked before the Lord in truth, with all his heart and soul. He did not deviate from the right path all the days of his life; he did not turn aside from the way to the right or to the left, the way in which Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had walked.

Commentary: This verse provides a powerful commendation of Moses' character and faithfulness during his time in Cush. It portrays him as an exemplary figure, living in complete devotion to God and strictly adhering to the spiritual path of his forefathers. This highlights his preparedness for his ultimate mission.

Verse 38: And Moses strengthened himself in the kingdom of the children of Cush, and he guided the children of Cush with his usual wisdom, and Moses prospered in his kingdom.

Commentary: Moses consolidates his power and continues to rule effectively, bringing prosperity to Cush through his wise leadership.

Moses' Military Victories for Cush

Verse 39: And at that time, Aram and the children of the east heard that **Kikianus**, king of Cush, had died, so Aram and the children of the east rebelled against Cush in those days.

Commentary: The news of Kikianus's death emboldens the previously subdued rebellious nations of Aram and the East to rebel once more, challenging Moses' new rule.

Verse 40: And Moses gathered all the people of Cush, a very mighty army, about thirty thousand men, and he went forth to fight with Aram and the children of the east.

Commentary: Moses, now a seasoned king, efficiently mobilizes his army to suppress these new rebellions, demonstrating his military command.

Verse 41: And they first went to the children of the east. When the children of the east heard about their approach, they went out to meet them and engaged them in battle.

Commentary: The Cushite army, led by Moses, directly confronts the first rebellious group.

Verse 42: And the war was severe against the children of the east, so the Lord gave all the children of the east into the hand of Moses, and about three hundred men fell slain.

Commentary: Moses achieves a decisive victory, again attributed to God's intervention, resulting in significant casualties for the enemy.

Verse 43: And all the children of the east turned back and retreated, so Moses and the people of Cush followed them and subdued them, and put a tax upon them, as was their custom.

Commentary: Moses successfully re-establishes Cushite dominance and their traditional tribute system over the Easterners.

Verse 44: So Moses and all the people with him then passed from there to the land of Aram for battle.

Commentary: Moses continues his campaign, moving to confront the second rebellious group.

Verse 45: And the people of Aram also went to meet them, and they fought against them, and the Lord delivered them into the hand of Moses, and many of the men of Aram fell wounded.

Commentary: Another significant victory for Moses, again attributed to divine intervention.

Verse 46: And Aram also were subdued by Moses and the people of Cush, and also gave their usual tax.

Commentary: Moses successfully brings Aram back under Cushite control, reaffirming his authority.

Verse 47: And Moses brought Aram and the children of the east under subjection to the children of Cush, and Moses and all the people who were with him, turned to the land of Cush.

Commentary: Moses successfully concludes both military campaigns, cementing Cush's control over its vassal states.

Verse 48: And Moses strengthened himself in the kingdom of the children of Cush, and the Lord was with him, and all the children of Cush were afraid of him.

Commentary: The chapter concludes by emphasizing Moses' consolidated power and authority in Cush. His success is attributed to God's continued presence, and his subjects now hold him in awe, having witnessed his wisdom, military prowess, and divine favor. This long and successful reign provides Moses with the unparalleled leadership experience he will need for the Exodus.

This chapter details Moses' unexpected and remarkable reign as king of Cush. Starting at age 27, he rules for 40 years, gaining the love and respect of his people through God's favor. His first major act as king is to devise an ingenious plan to conquer the city, which had been held by **Balaam** and his magical serpent defenses for nine years. Moses uses trained, starved storks to eliminate the serpents, leading to a swift and casualty-free victory for Cush. Balaam and his family flee back to Egypt, setting the stage for their future conflict with Moses during the plagues. The chapter also emphasizes Moses' profound righteousness, as he refuses to marry the former queen, **Adoniah**, out of reverence for the Lord and the patriarchal covenant against intermarriage with the descendants of Ham. Moses further solidifies his kingdom by successfully putting down rebellions from Aram and the children of the East. This long period of leadership in Cush profoundly shapes Moses, preparing him for his ultimate divine mission.

Book of Jasher, Chapter 74

Changes in Edom

Verse 1: After some time, **Saul**, the king of **Edom**, died, and **Baal Chanan son of Achbor** became king in his place.

Commentary: This verse notes a change in leadership in Edom. Saul's death marks the end of his 40-year reign (mentioned in Chapter 69), and a new king, Baal Chanan, takes the throne. These details help track the timeline of events in various nations surrounding Israel.

Verse 2: In the sixteenth year of **Moses'** reign over **Cush**, Baal Chanan son of Achbor ruled in Edom over all the descendants of Edom for thirty-eight years.

Commentary: This verse connects the timeline of Edom's new king to Moses' ongoing reign in Cush. Baal Chanan's long reign of 38 years indicates a period of stability or at least consistent leadership in Edom.

Verse 3: In his (Baal Chanan's) days, **Moab** rebelled against Edom's authority. Moab had been under Edom's control since the time of **Hadad son of Bedad**, who had defeated Moab and **Midian** and made Moab subject to Edom.

Commentary: This provides historical context for the relationship between Edom and Moab. Moab's rebellion signifies a shift in regional power dynamics and challenges Edom's long-standing dominance. It also ties back to earlier events mentioned in Jasher regarding Hadad.

Verse 4: And when Baal Chanan son of Achbor became king of Edom, all the people of Moab stopped being loyal to Edom.

Commentary: This confirms that Moab's rebellion happened at the very beginning of Baal Chanan's reign, indicating a weakness or opportunity perceived by Moab at the change of leadership.

Conflicts in Africa and Chittim (Italy)

Verse 5: And **Anas**, king of **Africa**, died during those days, and his son **Azdrubal** reigned in his place.

Commentary: This introduces another new set of leaders and nations, shifting focus to North Africa. The death of King Anas and the succession of his son Azdrubal set the stage for conflicts in that region.

Verse 6: And in those days, **Janeas**, king of the children of **Chittim** (likely referring to the Latins or Romans), also died. He was buried in the temple he had built for himself in the plain of **Canopia** as his residence. **Latinus** reigned in his stead.

Commentary: This verse brings in the "children of Chittim," typically understood to refer to people from the Mediterranean islands and coasts, often associated with early Greeks or Romans. The mention of "Canopia" and "Latinus" strongly points to an early Roman or Italic context. The detail about Janeas's self-built temple is similar to the Edomite king.

Verse 7: In the twenty-second year of **Moses'** reign over the people of Cush, Latinus became king over the children of Chittim and reigned for forty-five years.

Commentary: This again links the timeline to Moses' long reign, showing that these events across different nations are unfolding concurrently. Latinus's long reign indicates significant power and influence.

Verse 8: He also built a great and mighty tower for himself, and within it, he constructed an elegant temple for his residence, to conduct his government, as was the custom.

Commentary: Latinus, like previous kings in Jasher, builds an impressive structure for his rule. This act reflects common ancient practices where grand buildings symbolized a king's power and legitimacy.

Verse 9: In the third year of his reign, he issued a proclamation to all his skilled craftsmen, who built many ships for him.

Commentary: Latinus prepares for a significant naval undertaking, commissioning a large fleet. This suggests an aggressive foreign policy or a need for maritime power.

Verse 10: And Latinus gathered all his forces, and they embarked on the ships and sailed to fight against **Azdrubal**, son of Anas, king of Africa. They arrived in Africa and engaged in battle with Azdrubal and his army.

Commentary: Latinus launches an invasion of Africa, initiating a conflict that parallels the later Punic Wars between Rome and Carthage. This demonstrates the expansionist ambitions of the "children of Chittim."

Verse 11: And Latinus defeated Azdrubal. Latinus took back the aqueduct that Azdrubal's father had brought from the children of Chittim, when he married **Janiah** daughter of **Uzi**. So Latinus destroyed the bridge of the aqueduct and struck Azdrubal's entire army a severe blow.

Commentary: Latinus achieves a major victory. The mention of an aqueduct that was "brought from the children of Chittim" and its destruction suggests a significant strategic asset and a symbolic victory,

perhaps signifying the re-taking of something stolen or lost. The detail about Janiah provides more background to the conflict.

Verse 12: And the remaining strong men of Azdrubal's army rallied themselves, filled with intense envy, and desiring death, they again fought against Latinus, king of Chittim.

Commentary: Despite their defeat, Azdrubal's surviving forces are fiercely determined, driven by anger and a willingness to die for their cause. This implies a desperate last stand.

Verse 13: And the battle was fierce against all the men of Africa, and they all fell wounded before Latinus and his people, and King Azdrubal also died in that battle.

Commentary: Latinus secures a complete victory, with Azdrubal himself falling in battle. This marks the end of Azdrubal's reign and a decisive triumph for Latinus.

Verse 14: And King Azdrubal had a very beautiful daughter named **Ushpezena**, and all the men of Africa had her likeness embroidered on their garments because of her great beauty and pleasing appearance.

Commentary: This verse introduces Ushpezena, a woman of exceptional beauty, whose image was widely admired. Her beauty is highlighted as significant, setting up a romantic or political development.

Verse 15: And Latinus's men saw Ushpezena, Azdrubal's daughter, and praised her to Latinus their king.

Commentary: Latinus's soldiers are impressed by Ushpezena's beauty and report it to their king, suggesting a strategic opportunity or simply a captor's interest.

Verse 16: And Latinus ordered her to be brought to him, and Latinus took Ushpezena as his wife, and he then returned to Chittim.

Commentary: Latinus marries Ushpezena. This is a common practice in ancient conquests, where conquering kings would marry princesses of defeated nations to solidify alliances or claim legitimacy.

African Counter-Attack

Verse 17: And it was after the death of Azdrubal son of Anas, when Latinus had returned to his land from the battle, that all the inhabitants of Africa rose up and took **Anibal** the son of Anas, Azdrubal's younger brother, and made him king in place of his brother over the entire land of Africa.

Commentary: Despite Latinus's victory, the African people are not fully subdued. They rally around Anibal, Azdrubal's younger brother, making him their new king. This shows their continued resistance and sets up a new phase of conflict.

Verse 18: And when he (Anibal) became king, he decided to go to Chittim to fight against the children of Chittim, to avenge his brother Azdrubal and the people of Africa, and he did so.

Commentary: Anibal immediately seeks revenge, demonstrating a strong sense of family loyalty and national pride. He plans to take the war to Latinus's home territory. This foreshadows the later historical figure Hannibal.

Verse 19: And he built many ships, and he came in them with his entire army, and he went to Chittim.

Commentary: Anibal builds a large fleet, indicating a significant military effort to launch an invasion across the sea.

Verse 20: So Anibal fought with the children of Chittim, and the children of Chittim fell wounded before Anibal and his army, and Anibal avenged his brother's cause.

Commentary: Anibal successfully invades and defeats Latinus's forces, achieving his goal of revenge. This marks a reversal of fortune in the ongoing conflict.

Verse 21: And Anibal continued the war for eighteen years with the children of Chittim, and Anibal lived in the land of Chittim and camped there for a long time.

Commentary: This is a remarkably long and devastating war, with Anibal occupying Chittim for eighteen years. This detail, while perhaps an exaggeration in some historical contexts, emphasizes the scale and duration of the conflict and Anibal's formidable military prowess. It echoes the historical Punic Wars, especially Hannibal's campaigns in Italy.

Verse 22: And Anibal struck the children of Chittim very severely, killing their great men and princes, and of the rest of the people, he killed about eighty thousand men.

Commentary: The war is devastating for Chittim, with massive casualties, including their leadership. This highlights Anibal's effectiveness as a conqueror and the severe impact of the conflict on the "children of Chittim."

Verse 23: And after many days and years, Anibal returned to his land of Africa, and he reigned securely in the place of Azdrubal his brother.

Commentary: Anibal eventually returns to Africa, having achieved his objectives and established his secure rule. This concludes a long and bloody conflict, leaving Africa victorious for a time.

This chapter of Jasher shifts focus away from Moses and the Israelites for a period, detailing political successions and major wars in other nations. It records the changes in leadership in Edom, Africa, and Chittim (likely early Rome/Italy). The main narrative arc involves the protracted conflict between Africa and Chittim, mirroring the historical Punic Wars. Latinus of Chittim initially defeats Azdrubal of Africa, but then Azdrubal's brother, Anibal, rises to power and wages a long and devastating war against Chittim, occupying their land for eighteen years and inflicting massive casualties before returning to Africa. These detailed accounts of other nations' histories provide a broader global context for the time of Moses, even though they don't directly involve him.

Book of Jasher, Chapter 75

The Ill-Fated Exodus of Ephraim

Verse 1: At that time, in the one hundred and eightieth year since the Israelites had come to Egypt, thirty thousand courageous men, all from the tribe of **Joseph** (specifically from the descendants of **Ephraim**, Joseph's son), left Egypt on foot.

Commentary: This verse sets a precise timeline for a significant, though tragic, event. It places this partial "exodus" 180 years after the Israelites' arrival in Egypt. Crucially, it highlights that these were "valiant men" from a single tribe, emphasizing their strength and the limited scope of this premature departure.

Verse 2: For they believed that the time limit the Lord had set for the Israelites in ancient times, which He had spoken to **Abraham**, had now been completed.

Commentary: The motivation for this unauthorized departure is a misinterpretation of prophecy. They believed the 400-year prophecy of affliction (Genesis 15:13) had ended, but they miscalculated the timing, acting independently of God's true schedule and appointed leader.

Verse 3: These men armed themselves, each putting his sword at his side and his armor on. They relied on their own strength and left Egypt together with great determination.

Commentary: Their self-reliance and confidence in their own military might are emphasized. They are well-equipped and determined, but their trust is in themselves rather than in God's leading.

Verse 4: But they brought no provisions for the journey, only silver and gold. They didn't even bring bread for that day, because they intended to buy food from the **Philistines**, or if not, to take it by force.

Commentary: This detail highlights their unpreparedness and arrogance. Their lack of provisions indicates a hasty departure and an assumption that they could simply take what they needed, revealing a reliance on their own power and a disregard for proper planning or divine provision.

Verse 5: And these men were extremely mighty and brave warriors; one man could chase a thousand, and two could put ten thousand to flight. So they trusted in their strength and went together just as they were.

Commentary: This hyperbolically describes their incredible military prowess, emphasizing that they were indeed formidable fighters. This makes their eventual downfall even more tragic and underscores that even great human strength is insufficient without divine guidance.

Verse 6: And they headed toward the land of **Gath**, and when they arrived, they found the shepherds of Gath tending the cattle of the people of Gath.

Commentary: They enter Philistine territory, specifically near the city of Gath, which was a strong Philistine city. Their encounter with the shepherds is their first step towards confrontation.

Verse 7: And they said to the shepherds, "Give us some of your sheep for payment, so we can eat, for we are hungry, as we haven't eaten bread today."

Commentary: They attempt to acquire food, initially offering payment. This shows they weren't immediately resorting to violence, but their hunger is a driving factor.

Verse 8: And the shepherds said, "Are these our sheep or cattle that we should give them to you, even for payment?" So the children of Ephraim moved to take them by force.

Commentary: The shepherds' refusal highlights the Ephraimites' presumption. When denied, their true intention to take by force, if necessary, comes to the fore.

Verse 9: And the shepherds of Gath shouted so loudly that their cries were heard from a distance, so all the people of Gath came out to them.

Commentary: The alarm is raised, and the local Philistine population mobilizes, indicating their rapid response and communal defense.

Verse 10: And when the people of Gath saw the evil actions of the children of Ephraim, they went back and gathered the men of Gath. They each put on their armor and came out to the children of Ephraim for battle.

Commentary: The Philistines perceive the Ephraimites' actions as "evil" and prepare for armed conflict, escalating the confrontation.

Verse 11: And they fought them in the valley of Gath, and the battle was fierce, and many on both sides were killed that day.

Commentary: The battle begins, and it's a brutal fight, showing that even though the Ephraimites were mighty, the Philistines were formidable adversaries.

Verse 12: And on the second day, the people of Gath sent to all the cities of the **Philistines** for help, saying,

Commentary: The Philistines, recognizing the seriousness of the threat, call for reinforcements from their allied cities, demonstrating their unity and strategic thinking.

Verse 13: "Come up and help us, so that we can defeat the children of Ephraim who have come out of Egypt to take our cattle and fight us without cause."

Commentary: The plea emphasizes the perceived injustice of the Ephraimites' actions and rallies the other Philistine cities to a common cause.

Verse 14: Now the children of Ephraim were exhausted from hunger and thirst, for they had eaten no bread for three days. And forty thousand men came from the cities of the Philistines to help the men of Gath.

Commentary: The Ephraimites' critical weakness—their lack of provisions—is now fully exposed. Their physical exhaustion due to prolonged hunger and thirst severely handicaps them against the reinforced Philistine army, which now outnumbers them.

Verse 15: And these Philistine men engaged in battle with the children of Ephraim, and the Lord delivered the children of Ephraim into the hands of the Philistines.

Commentary: This is the turning point: God, not the Philistines' superior numbers or skill, is explicitly stated as delivering the Ephraimites into their enemies' hands. This emphasizes that their defeat was a divine consequence.

Verse 16: And they killed all the children of Ephraim, all who had left Egypt. None survived except ten men who ran away from the battle.

Commentary: The defeat is utterly catastrophic. The entire expeditionary force is wiped out, except for a handful of survivors. This highlights the severity of the consequence for their disobedience.

Verse 17: For this disaster was from the Lord against the children of Ephraim, because they defied the word of the Lord by leaving Egypt before the appointed time that the Lord had set for Israel in ancient days.

Commentary: This verse provides the explicit theological explanation for the tragedy: it was a divine judgment. Their actions were "transgressions" because they pre-empted God's timing and plan, acting presumptuously rather than waiting for His lead.

Verse 18: And many Philistines also fell, about twenty thousand men, and their brethren carried them and buried them in their cities.

Commentary: Even though they won, the Philistines suffered significant casualties, indicating the ferocity of the Ephraimites, even in their weakened state. The detail about burial contrasts with the fate of the Ephraimites.

Verse 19: And the slain children of Ephraim remained abandoned in the valley of Gath for many days and years, unburied, and the valley was filled with human bones.

Commentary: This grim detail emphasizes the completeness of their defeat and the indignity of their unburied bodies. It also hints at a long-lasting memorial to their folly, serving as a stark warning. This also parallels the biblical account of the valley of dry bones.

Verse 20: And the men who had escaped from the battle came to Egypt and told all the children of Israel everything that had happened to them.

Commentary: The few survivors return to deliver the devastating news to the rest of the Israelites in Egypt. This would have been a profound blow to the morale and hopes of the entire nation.

Verse 21: And their father **Ephraim** mourned over them for many days, and his brethren came to console him.

Commentary: Ephraim (the patriarch of the tribe, still alive in this narrative, unlike the biblical account where he lived much earlier) mourns the loss of his numerous descendants. His brethren (other tribal leaders) come to offer comfort.

Verse 22: And he came to his wife and she bore a son, and he called his name **Beriah**, for she was unfortunate in his house.

Commentary: This provides a biblical reference (1 Chronicles 7:20-23) for Beriah's birth, whose name means "in misfortune" or "with evil," reflecting the tragic loss of his brothers. The account here places Ephraim's wife conceiving *after* the disaster, explaining the name choice, while the biblical account places it before or concurrent. This detail underscores the deep sorrow and lasting impact of this failed military expedition on the tribe of Ephraim.

This chapter describes a tragic episode in Israelite history before the main Exodus: a premature and unauthorized attempt by 30,000 valiant men from the tribe of Ephraim to leave Egypt. Believing the divinely appointed time had come, and relying solely on their own strength, they left ill-equipped. They provoked a conflict with the Philistines of Gath, who, despite heavy losses, ultimately annihilated the Ephraimite force after receiving reinforcements. The text explicitly states that this disaster was a divine judgment because they defied God's word by leaving before His appointed time. The unburied bodies served as a lasting monument to their folly, and the few survivors returned to deliver the devastating news, leading to deep mourning, including that of their patriarch Ephraim.

Book of Jasher, Chapter 76

Moses' Peaceful Departure from Cush

Verse 1: At that time, **Moses**, son of Amram, was still king in the land of **Cush**, and he thrived in his kingdom. He governed the people of Cush with fairness, integrity, and justice.

Commentary: This verse reiterates Moses' successful and righteous rule in Cush. It emphasizes his just leadership, showing his continued development as a wise and capable ruler.

Verse 2: And all the people of Cush loved Moses throughout his entire reign, and all the inhabitants of Cush greatly feared him.

Commentary: Moses maintained both the affection and respect (and perhaps awe) of his subjects. This demonstrates his powerful presence and the positive impact of his righteous governance, possibly reinforced by the Lord's favor.

Verse 3: In the fortieth year of Moses' reign over Cush, Moses was sitting on his royal throne, with **Adoniah** the queen before him, and all the nobles sitting around him.

Commentary: This sets the scene for a pivotal moment: the end of Moses' long reign. The presence of Queen Adoniah (whom Moses had refused to marry) and the nobles indicates a formal setting where important discussions would occur.

Verse 4: And Queen Adoniah spoke before the king and the princes, saying, "What is this thing that you, the people of Cush, have allowed for so long?"

Commentary: Adoniah, still alive and presumably influential, raises a challenge. She directly questions the Cushites' long acceptance of Moses' rule, hinting at a grievance.

Verse 5: "Surely you know that for forty years that this man has reigned over Cush, he has not come near me, nor has he served the gods of the children of Cush."

Commentary: Adoniah reveals her primary grievances: Moses' refusal to consummate their marriage (thus not legitimizing the lineage through her) and, crucially, his refusal to worship the Cushite gods. These two points challenge his legitimacy from a dynastic and religious perspective in their culture.

Verse 6: "Therefore, listen, O people of Cush, and let this man no longer rule over you, as he is not of our own people."

Commentary: Adoniah explicitly calls for Moses' removal, appealing to their sense of national identity and emphasizing Moses' foreignness ("not of our flesh" / "not of our own people").

Verse 7: "Look, **Menacrus**, my son, has grown up. Let him rule over you, for it is better for you to serve the son of your true lord than to serve a stranger, a slave of the king of Egypt."

Commentary: She presents her son, Menacrus (Kikianus's son), as the rightful heir. She attempts to discredit Moses by calling him a "stranger" and, controversially, a "slave of the king of Egypt," trying to diminish his status and authority in the eyes of the Cushites.

Verse 8: And all the people and nobles of Cush heard the words that Queen Adoniah had spoken to them.

Commentary: The queen's words resonate with the people, suggesting that her arguments about national identity and the rightful heir had a significant impact.

Verse 9: And all the people prepared until the evening, and in the morning they rose up early and made Menacrus, son of Kikianus, king over them.

Commentary: The change in leadership happens swiftly. The people act decisively, overthrowing Moses and crowning Menacrus, indicating the strength of Adoniah's appeal and the general sentiment for a native ruler.

Verse 10: And all the people of Cush were afraid to lay a hand on Moses, for the Lord was with Moses, and the children of Cush remembered the oath which they swore to Moses, therefore they did no harm to him.

Commentary: Despite deposing him, the Cushites still hold Moses in reverence and fear. They remember their oath of loyalty and recognize God's favor on him, preventing them from harming him. This is a testament to Moses' character and divine protection.

Verse 11: But the people of Cush gave many presents to Moses, and sent him away from them with great honor.

Commentary: In a remarkable display of respect, they don't simply exile him; they honor him with gifts and a respectful send-off, acknowledging his just rule despite his foreign origin. This again contrasts sharply with typical outcomes for deposed kings.

Verse 12: So Moses left the land of Cush and went home, ceasing to reign over Cush. Moses was sixty-six years old when he left Cush, for this event was from the Lord, for the time had come that He had appointed in ancient days to bring Israel out of the affliction of the children of **Ham**.

Commentary: This is a crucial transitional verse. Moses' long, 40-year reign in Cush ends when he is 66 years old. The text explicitly states that this was God's plan, marking the end of one phase of Moses' life and the beginning of another. The departure from Cush (associated with Ham's descendants) is framed as a step towards Israel's liberation from Egypt (also associated with Ham's descendants).

Moses in Midian and Imprisonment

Verse 13: So Moses went to **Midian**, because he was afraid to return to Egypt on account of **Pharaoh**, and he went and sat by a well of water in Midian.

Commentary: Moses, despite his kingship, is now a fugitive again. He seeks refuge in Midian, still fearing Pharaoh's wrath from his earlier act of killing the Egyptian. The well is a common biblical setting for significant encounters.

Verse 14: And the seven daughters of **Reuel** the Midianite went out to feed their father's flock.

Commentary: This sets the stage for Moses' encounter with his future family, mirroring the biblical account (Exodus 2).

Verse 15: And they came to the well and drew water to water their father's flock.

Commentary: The standard activity of shepherds at a well.

Verse 16: But the shepherds of Midian came and drove them away. Moses rose up and helped them and watered the flock.

Commentary: Moses, ever the protector of the oppressed, intervenes to defend the women from aggressive shepherds. This act of justice and kindness highlights his character.

Verse 17: And they came home to their father Reuel, and told him what Moses did for them.

Commentary: The daughters recount the incident to their father.

Verse 18: And they said, "An Egyptian man has delivered us from the hands of the shepherds; he drew water for us and watered the flock."

Commentary: They identify Moses as an "Egyptian man," which is how he would have appeared, given his upbringing and his recent past as King of Cush.

Verse 19: And Reuel said to his daughters, "And where is he? Why have you left the man?"

Commentary: Reuel, recognizing Moses' helpfulness, is surprised they didn't bring him home immediately.

Verse 20: And Reuel sent for him and brought him home, and he ate bread with him.

Commentary: Moses is welcomed into Reuel's household, providing him with a safe haven.

Verse 21: And Moses told Reuel that he had fled from Egypt, that he had reigned forty years over Cush, and that they had later taken the government from him and sent him away peacefully with honor and gifts.

Commentary: Moses shares his remarkable life story with Reuel, including his flight from Egypt, his long kingship in Cush, and his recent, peaceful dethronement. This provides Reuel with a full understanding of Moses' past.

Verse 22: And when Reuel heard Moses' words, Reuel said to himself, "I will put this man into prison, so that I may reconcile with the people of Cush, for he has fled from them."

Commentary: This is a significant deviation from the biblical account. Reuel, upon hearing Moses' story, betrays him. His motivation is political opportunism: to gain favor with Cush (who might still consider Moses a threat or a fugitive) by imprisoning their former king.

Verse 23: And they took him and put him into the prison house, and Moses was in prison for ten years. While Moses was in prison, **Zipporah** the daughter of Reuel took pity on him and supported him with bread and water all the time.

Commentary: This is another unique detail of Jasher: Moses' ten-year imprisonment in Midian. This period of confinement parallels Joseph's imprisonment in Egypt, serving as a time of humbling and further preparation. Zipporah, showing compassion, acts as his caretaker, laying the groundwork for their relationship.

Pharaoh's Decline and Death

Verse 24: And all the children of Israel were still in the land of Egypt, serving the Egyptians with all kinds of hard labor, and the hand of Egypt continued to be severe over the children of Israel in those days.

Commentary: The narrative shifts back to the Israelites in Egypt, emphasizing their ongoing and severe oppression during Moses' long absence. This highlights the dire need for deliverance.

Verse 25: At that time, the Lord struck **Pharaoh**, king of Egypt, afflicting him with the plague of **leprosy** from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head. This plague was from the Lord upon Pharaoh, king of Egypt, because of his cruel treatment of the children of Israel.

Commentary: This is a major development not found in the biblical Exodus account. Pharaoh is struck by a severe, divinely-sent leprosy. The direct cause is identified as his extreme cruelty towards the Israelites. This is God's initial, personal judgment on Pharaoh, distinct from the later plagues.

Verse 26: For the Lord had listened to the prayer of His people, the children of Israel, and their cries had reached Him because of their hard labor.

Commentary: The plague on Pharaoh is a direct response to the Israelites' suffering and God's attentiveness to their cries, indicating that the time for deliverance is drawing near.

Verse 27: Still, his anger did not turn from them, and Pharaoh's hand was still stretched out against the children of Israel. Pharaoh stubbornly resisted the Lord, and he increased their burdens over the children of Israel, making their lives bitter with all kinds of hard work.

Commentary: Despite his personal suffering, Pharaoh's heart remains hardened. His affliction doesn't soften him; instead, it makes him more oppressive, fulfilling the biblical theme of a hardened heart.

Verse 28: And when the Lord had inflicted the plague upon Pharaoh, king of Egypt, he asked his wise men and sorcerers to cure him.

Commentary: Pharaoh naturally turns to his court magicians and healers for a remedy.

Verse 29: And his wise men and sorcerers said to him, that if the blood of little children were put into the wounds, he would be healed.

Commentary: This is an absolutely horrific and chilling detail unique to Jasher. The magicians prescribe a truly demonic "cure" – bathing in the blood of Israelite children. This is a direct parallel to Pharaoh's earlier decree to drown male Israelite infants, showing a consistent pattern of child murder.

Verse 30: And Pharaoh listened to them, and sent his ministers to **Goshen** to the children of Israel to take their little children.

Commentary: Pharaoh immediately acts on this horrific advice, demonstrating his utter depravity and desperation, and his continued willingness to inflict unspeakable cruelty on the Israelites.

Verse 31: And Pharaoh's ministers went and forcibly took the infants of the children of Israel from their mothers' arms, and they brought them to Pharaoh daily, one child each day. The physicians killed them and applied their blood to the plague. This they did every day.

Commentary: This verse graphically describes the implementation of the decree, highlighting the brutal forced separation of infants from their mothers and their daily sacrifice. This atrocity underscores the depth of Israel's suffering and Pharaoh's monstrous tyranny.

Verse 32: And the number of children whom Pharaoh slew was three hundred and seventy-five.

Commentary: A specific, horrifying number is given for the innocent lives lost to Pharaoh's desperate cure.

Verse 33: But the Lord did not listen to the physicians of the king of Egypt, and the plague continued to grow worse.

Commentary: God ensures that Pharaoh's vile attempts to cure himself are in vain, and the plague intensifies, showing divine judgment cannot be circumvented by such wickedness.

Verse 34: And Pharaoh was afflicted with that plague for ten years, yet Pharaoh's heart became even more hardened against the children of Israel.

Commentary: The ten-year duration of Pharaoh's leprosy and his continued hardening of heart are emphasized. This extended suffering only makes him more tyrannical.

Verse 35: And at the end of ten years, the Lord continued to afflict Pharaoh with destructive plagues.

Commentary: After the leprosy, God sends further "destructive plagues," implying a series of additional afflictions on Pharaoh before the major plagues against Egypt.

Verse 36: And the Lord struck him with a bad tumor and a sickness at the stomach, and that plague turned into a severe boil.

Commentary: More specific details of Pharaoh's worsening physical condition, demonstrating escalating divine judgment.

Verse 37: At that time, two of Pharaoh's ministers came from the land of Goshen, where all the children of Israel were, and went to Pharaoh's house and said to him, "We have seen the children of Israel slacking in their work and negligent in their labor."

Commentary: Pharaoh's ministers bring a report of perceived slackness from the Israelites, likely an exaggeration or a sign of their exhaustion, but it fuels Pharaoh's rage.

Verse 38: And when Pharaoh heard the words of his ministers, his anger was greatly kindled against the children of Israel, for he was greatly grieved by his bodily pain.

Commentary: Pharaoh's personal pain and frustration exacerbate his anger towards the Israelites, leading to a new wave of persecution.

Verse 39: And he answered and said, "Now that the children of Israel know I am ill, they turn and scoff at us. Therefore, harness my chariot for me, and I will go to Goshen and see the scoffing of the children of Israel with which they are mocking me." So his servants harnessed the chariot for him.

Commentary: Pharaoh, consumed by paranoia and rage, believes the Israelites are mocking his illness. He resolves to personally confront them, despite his deteriorating health.

Verse 40: And they took him and made him ride on a horse, for he was not able to ride by himself;

Commentary: Pharaoh is so weak that he cannot mount a horse independently, underscoring the severity of his illness.

Verse 41: And he took with him ten horsemen and ten footmen, and went to the children of Israel in Goshen.

Commentary: He goes with a small retinue, perhaps reflecting his weakened state or his overconfidence in his remaining power.

Verse 42: And when they had come to the border of Egypt, the king's horse passed into a narrow place, elevated in the hollow part of the vineyard, fenced on both sides, with the low, plain country being on the other side.

Commentary: This describes a specific geographical feature where the accident occurs: a narrow, elevated path in a vineyard with a drop-off.

Verse 43: And the horses ran rapidly in that place and pressed each other, and the other horses pressed the king's horse.

Commentary: The terrain and the horses' movements create a dangerous situation.

Verse 44: And the king's horse fell into the low plain while the king was riding upon it, and when he fell, the chariot turned over the king's face, and the horse lay upon the king, and the king cried out, for his flesh was very sore.

Commentary: Pharaoh suffers a severe and undignified accident. His own chariot turns over him, and his horse falls on him, causing immense pain and further injury.

Verse 45: And the flesh of the king was torn from him, and his bones were broken, and he could not ride, for this thing was from the Lord to him, for the Lord had heard the cries of His people the children of Israel and their affliction.

Commentary: The injuries are catastrophic, rendering him completely incapacitated. The text explicitly attributes this accident to God's direct intervention, a further judgment in response to Israel's cries.

Verse 46: And his servants carried him on their shoulders, bit by bit, and they brought him back to Egypt, and the horsemen who were with him also came back to Egypt.

Commentary: Pharaoh's ignominious return, carried by his servants, highlights his complete loss of power and dignity.

Verse 47: And they placed him in his bed, and the king knew that his end had come to die, so **Aparanith** the queen his wife came and cried before the king, and the king wept a great weeping with her.

Commentary: Pharaoh realizes he is dying. His wife's lament and their mutual weeping show a human side to his final moments, even amidst his wickedness.

Verse 48: And all his nobles and servants came that day and saw the king in that suffering, and wept a great weeping with him.

Commentary: The court mourns with the dying king, a customary display of loyalty and grief.

Verse 49: And the king's princes and all his counselors advised the king to cause one to reign in his stead in the land, whomever he should choose from his sons.

Commentary: With Pharaoh on his deathbed, the succession becomes urgent. His advisors press him to name an heir.

Verse 50: And the king had three sons and two daughters, whom **Aparanith** the queen his wife had borne to him, besides the king's children from concubines.

Commentary: The king's legitimate children are listed, along with the acknowledgement of other children from concubines, reflecting royal polygamy.

Verse 51: And these were their names: the firstborn **Othri**, the second **Adikam**, and the third **Morion**, and their sisters, the elder named **Bathia** and the other **Acuzi**.

Commentary: The names of Pharaoh's children are provided, setting up the context for the choice of successor. Bathia's name is familiar as Moses' adopted mother.

Verse 52: And Othri, the king's firstborn, was an idiot, rash and hurried in his words.

Commentary: The firstborn is quickly ruled out as an heir due to his mental incapacity and impetuous nature.

Verse 53: But Adikam was a cunning and wise man, and knowledgeable in all the wisdom of Egypt, but of unseemly appearance, thick in flesh, and very short in stature; his height was one cubit.

Commentary: Adikam is described as highly intelligent and wise, possessing all the knowledge of Egypt, but physically unattractive and unusually short (one cubit, about 18 inches or 45 cm). This unusual physical description makes him a memorable figure and highlights that his choice as heir is based purely on intellect.

Verse 54: And when the king saw Adikam his son, intelligent and wise in all things, the king decided that he should be king in his stead after his death.

Commentary: Pharaoh chooses Adikam based on his intellectual capabilities, prioritizing wisdom over physical appearance or primogeniture (as Othri was the firstborn). This "wise" Pharaoh will be the one Moses confronts during the Exodus.

Verse 55: And he took for him a wife, **Gedudah** daughter of **Abilot**, and he was ten years old, and she bore unto him four sons.

Commentary: This verse gives details about Adikam's early marriage and the birth of his children. The age of 10 for marriage is notably young, reflecting ancient customs.

Verse 56: And he afterward went and took three wives and begat eight sons and three daughters.

Commentary: Adikam later expands his family, highlighting a large royal lineage.

Verse 57: And the disorder greatly prevailed over the king, and his flesh stank like the flesh of a carcass thrown upon the field in summer time, during the heat of the sun.

Commentary: Pharaoh's final state is described in gruesome detail, emphasizing the putrefaction of his body due to his illness. This horrific condition is part of God's judgment.

Verse 58: And when the king saw that his sickness had greatly intensified over him, he ordered his son Adikam to be brought to him, and they made him king over the land in his place.

Commentary: Recognizing his imminent death, the dying Pharaoh formally instates Adikam as co-ruler or immediate successor.

Verse 59: And at the end of three years, the king died, in shame, disgrace, and disgust, and his servants carried him and buried him in the sepulcher of the kings of Egypt in **Zoan Mizraim**.

Commentary: Pharaoh finally dies after three years of this final stage of suffering, a death marked by shame and disgust rather than the usual royal honor. His burial place in Zoan Mizraim (Tanis in the Nile Delta) aligns with common ancient Egyptian burial sites for kings.

Verse 60: But they did not embalm him as was usual with kings, for his flesh was putrid, and they could not approach to embalm him on account of the stench, so they buried him in haste.

Commentary: This is a powerful detail: the putrid state of his body prevents the customary elaborate embalming process, further emphasizing the divine judgment on him. He receives a dishonorable, hasty burial, a stark contrast to the grand burials of other kings mentioned.

Verse 61: For this evil was from the Lord to him, for the Lord had repaid him evil for the evil which in his days he had done to Israel.

Commentary: The text explicitly states that Pharaoh's suffering and ignominious death were direct retribution from God for his wickedness and cruelty toward Israel. This is a clear theme of divine justice.

Verse 62: And he died with terror and with shame, and his son **Adikam** reigned in his place.

Commentary: Pharaoh's end is defined by terror and shame, a complete and total fall from his tyrannical power. His son Adikam (the "wise" and "cunning" one from verse 53) officially takes the throne, setting the stage for Moses' return and the dramatic confrontation of the Exodus.

This chapter chronicles the end of Moses' long, forty-year reign in Cush. Queen **Adoniah**, whom Moses had refused to marry out of religious conviction, leads a successful movement to depose him, arguing that he is a foreigner who doesn't worship their gods. Moses is replaced by **Menacrus**, Kikianus's son, but is sent away with honor and gifts due to the Cushites' respect for him and their fear of God's favor on him.

Moses, now 66, flees to **Midian**, fearing to return to Egypt. There, he defends Reuel's daughters at a well, is welcomed into their home, and recounts his extraordinary life. However, Reuel, fearing Cush's retribution, imprisons Moses for ten years.

Meanwhile, in Egypt, the current Pharaoh is struck with severe leprosy by God for his cruelty to Israel. His sorcerers recommend a cure: bathing in the blood of Israelite infants, leading to the daily murder of 375 children. Despite this horror, Pharaoh's plague worsens, and he is further afflicted. In his rage, he confronts the Israelites in Goshen, but suffers a catastrophic chariot accident, breaking his bones and leaving him with a putrid, dying body. On his deathbed, he names his physically unattractive but wise son, **Adikam**, as his successor. Pharaoh finally dies a shameful, un-embalmed death, explicitly stated as divine retribution for his wickedness. Adikam then begins his reign, setting the stage for the true Exodus confrontation.

Book of Jasher, Chapter 77

Adikam's Reign and Increased Cruelty

Verse 1: Adikam was twenty years old when he became king of Egypt, and he reigned for four years.

Commentary: This verse begins the account of the new Pharaoh, **Adikam**, identifying his age at ascension and the duration of his reign. His reign is notably shorter than his predecessors, leading directly into the Exodus narrative.

Verse 2: Adikam's reign over Egypt began in the two hundred and sixth year of Israel's descent into Egypt, but he did not reign as long as his ancestors.

Commentary: This gives a precise timeline relative to Israel's entry into Egypt. The observation that his reign was shorter than his father's foreshadows the dramatic events of the Exodus that will cut his reign short.

Verse 3: For **Melol**, his father (the previous Pharaoh), reigned ninety-four years in Egypt, but he was sick for ten years and then died, because he had been wicked before the Lord.

Commentary: This provides the previous Pharaoh's full reign length and explicitly states that his prolonged illness and death were a direct consequence of his wickedness against God, further emphasizing divine retribution.

Verse 4: And all the Egyptians called Adikam "Pharaoh," like the name of his fathers, as was their custom in Egypt.

Commentary: This confirms that "Pharaoh" was a title, not a personal name, passed down to each new king, aligning with general historical understanding.

Verse 5: And all the wise men of Pharaoh called Adikam "Ahuz" for short, because "Ahuz" means "short" in the Egyptian language.

Commentary: This verse connects Adikam's physical shortness (mentioned in the previous chapter) to his nickname, "Ahuz." This highlights the detail that this specific, wise but short Pharaoh is the one Moses will confront.

Verse 6: And Adikam was exceedingly ugly, and he was one cubit and a span tall, and he had a great beard that reached to the soles of his feet.

Commentary: This reiterates and elaborates on Adikam's striking physical appearance: exceptionally short (about 22-24 inches or 55-60 cm, combining a cubit and a span) and possessing an unusually long beard. These peculiar physical traits make him a very distinct and memorable figure.

Verse 7: And Pharaoh sat upon his father's throne to reign over Egypt, and he governed Egypt with his wisdom.

Commentary: Despite his physical appearance, Adikam is confirmed to be a wise and intelligent ruler, as established in the previous chapter. This suggests that the coming conflict with Moses will be a clash of formidable intellects.

Verse 8: But while he reigned, he surpassed his father and all previous kings in wickedness, and he increased his burden on the children of Israel.

Commentary: This is a crucial point: though wise, Adikam is even more wicked than his oppressive predecessors. His rule brings an unprecedented level of cruelty and hardship upon the Israelites, intensifying their suffering.

Verse 9: And he went with his servants to **Goshen** to the children of Israel, and he made their labor even harsher. He told them, "Complete your work, each day's task, and don't slacken your hands from our work from this day forward, as you did in my father's days."

Commentary: Pharaoh Adikam personally inspects the Israelites' work and immediately tightens their bonds. He refers to their previous "slackness" (a perception, as seen in the previous chapter, likely born of exhaustion), signaling his intention to be a far more demanding taskmaster.

Verse 10: And he placed officers over them from among the children of Israel, and over these officers he placed taskmasters from among his servants.

Commentary: The hierarchical structure of oppression is described: Israelite officers are forced to oversee their own people, with even harsher Egyptian taskmasters above them. This system maximized control and diminished internal solidarity.

Verse 11: And he set a daily quota of bricks for them, requiring them to produce that exact number each day. Then he returned to Egypt.

Commentary: Pharaoh institutes the infamous brick quota, a tangible symbol of their forced labor and the impossible demands placed upon them.

Verse 12: At that time, Pharaoh's taskmasters gave orders to the officers of the children of Israel, according to Pharaoh's command, saying,

Commentary: The orders are relayed down the chain of command, ensuring the brutal new policy is implemented.

Verse 13: "Thus says Pharaoh: Do your work each day, and finish your task, and observe the daily measure of bricks; do not reduce anything."

Commentary: The strictness of the new quota is emphasized. No deviation or reduction is permitted.

Verse 14: "And it shall come to pass that if you are deficient in your daily bricks, I will put your young children in their stead."

Commentary: This is the horrifying new decree, unique to Jasher: infant substitution for deficient bricks. This elevates the cruelty to an unimaginable level, surpassing even the previous Pharaoh's child-killing for a cure. It targets the children directly as raw materials for their labor.

Verse 15: And the taskmasters of Egypt did so in those days as Pharaoh had ordered them.

Commentary: The decree is immediately enforced, demonstrating the ruthless efficiency of Pharaoh's regime.

Verse 16: And whenever any deficiency was found in the children of Israel's daily brick quota, Pharaoh's taskmasters would go to the wives of the children of Israel and take infants of the children of

Israel, corresponding to the number of bricks deficient. They would forcibly take them from their mothers' laps and put them into the building instead of the bricks;

Commentary: This vividly portrays the agonizing reality of the decree: babies forcibly ripped from their mothers' arms to be literally incorporated into the construction. This is a level of barbarity that makes the biblical account's infanticide by drowning seem merciful by comparison.

Verse 17: While their fathers and mothers were crying over them and weeping when they heard the weeping voices of their infants in the wall of the building.

Commentary: The emotional impact is immense and visceral. The parents' cries and the infants' wails from within the walls paint a terrifying picture of unimaginable suffering.

Verse 18: And the taskmasters prevailed over Israel, so that the Israelites had to place their children in the building, and a man placed his son in the wall and put mortar over him, while his eyes wept over him, and his tears ran down upon his child.

Commentary: This shows the ultimate psychological and emotional torment: parents forced to participate in the murder of their own children, burying them alive within the structures they built. This is the absolute nadir of their oppression.

Verse 19: And the taskmasters of Egypt did so to the infants of Israel for many days, and no one pitied or had compassion on the infants of the children of Israel.

Commentary: The systematic nature and duration of this horrific practice are highlighted, along with the complete lack of mercy from the Egyptians.

Verse 20: And the number of all the children killed in the building was two hundred and seventy, some whom they had built upon instead of the bricks which had been left deficient by their fathers, and some whom they had drawn out dead from the building.

Commentary: A precise, chilling number is given for these innocent victims. This confirms that some were buried alive, while others died during construction and were later removed.

Verse 21: And the labor imposed upon the children of Israel in the days of Adikam exceeded in hardship that which they performed in the days of his father.

Commentary: This confirms that Adikam's reign brought the Israelites to an unprecedented level of suffering, fulfilling the earlier statement that he "exceeded...in wickedness."

Verse 22: And the children of Israel sighed every day on account of their heavy work, for they had said to themselves, "Behold, when Pharaoh shall die, his son will rise up and lighten our work!"

Commentary: The Israelites had held out hope that a change in leadership would bring relief, a common coping mechanism under oppression. The reality of Adikam's rule shatters this hope.

Verse 23: But they increased the latter work more than the former, and the children of Israel sighed at this and their cry ascended to God on account of their labor.

Commentary: Their burdens only grew heavier, leading to even deeper despair. This intensified suffering, however, also led to a more fervent cry to God, setting the stage for divine intervention.

Verse 24: And God heard the voice of the children of Israel and their cry in those days, and God remembered His covenant which He had made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Commentary: This is the critical moment: God hears their desperate cries. This directly links their suffering to God's remembrance of His covenant promises to their forefathers, signaling that the time for deliverance is truly at hand.

Verse 25: And God saw the burden of the children of Israel and their heavy work in those days, and He determined to deliver them.

Commentary: God's compassionate observation of their plight leads to His firm decision to act. This sets the stage for Moses' return.

Moses' Release and the Miraculous Rod

Verse 26: And **Moses**, the son of Amram, was still confined in the dungeon in those days, in the house of **Reuel** the Midianite, and **Zipporah**, the daughter of Reuel, secretly provided him with food day by day.

Commentary: The narrative shifts back to Moses, reminding the reader of his plight. Zipporah's unwavering compassion and loyalty are highlighted, as she defies her father to sustain Moses.

Verse 27: And Moses was confined in the dungeon in the house of Reuel for ten years.

Commentary: The precise duration of Moses' imprisonment is reiterated, emphasizing this lengthy period of waiting and humbling before his divine call.

Verse 28: And at the end of ten years, which was the first year of Pharaoh's (Adikam's) reign over Egypt, in place of his father,

Commentary: This synchronizes Moses' release with the beginning of Adikam's reign, marking the precise moment when the deliverer is freed just as the oppression intensifies.

Verse 29: Zipporah said to her father Reuel, "No one has inquired about or sought the Hebrew man whom you imprisoned ten years ago."

Commentary: Zipporah takes the initiative to speak on Moses' behalf, pointing out that no one has come looking for him, suggesting it's safe to release him.

Verse 30: "Now therefore, if it seems good to you, let us send and see whether he is living or dead," but her father did not know that she had been supporting him.

Commentary: Zipporah shrewdly frames her request, suggesting a simple check on his condition, while her secret support explains why she knows he might still be alive.

Verse 31: And Reuel her father answered and said to her, "Has such a thing ever happened that a man should be shut up in a prison without food for ten years, and that he should live?"

Commentary: Reuel's skepticism is natural; he assumes Moses would have died from starvation, unaware of Zipporah's secret care.

Verse 32: And Zipporah answered her father, saying, "Surely you have heard that the God of the Hebrews is great and awe-inspiring, and performs wonders for them at all times."

Commentary: Zipporah's response is a powerful testament of faith. She attributes Moses' potential survival to the miraculous power of the God of the Hebrews, demonstrating her own nascent faith or at least knowledge of Israel's God.

Verse 33: "He it was who delivered **Abraham** from **Ur of the Chaldeans**, and **Isaac** from the sword of his father, and **Jacob** from the angel of the Lord who wrestled with him at the ford of **Jabbuk**."

Commentary: Zipporah provides concrete examples of God's miraculous intervention in the lives of the Israelite patriarchs, using them as evidence for her claim about Moses. This highlights her awareness of Israelite history and theology.

Verse 34: "Also with this man, He has done many things: He delivered him from the river in Egypt and from the sword of Pharaoh, and from the children of Cush, so also can He deliver him from famine and make him live."

Commentary: She specifically lists Moses' past miraculous escapes, directly connecting them to God's intervention, further strengthening her argument for his continued survival.

Verse 35: And the thing seemed good in the sight of Reuel, and he did according to the word of his daughter, and sent to the dungeon to ascertain what became of Moses.

Commentary: Zipporah's eloquent appeal and theological reasoning convince Reuel. He agrees to check on Moses, showing a rare moment of open-mindedness or perhaps just curiosity.

Verse 36: And he saw, and behold, the man Moses was living in the dungeon, standing on his feet, praising and praying to the God of his ancestors.

Commentary: This is a miraculous discovery. Moses is not only alive but is actively worshipping, demonstrating his unwavering faith and spiritual resilience even after ten years of imprisonment.

Verse 37: And Reuel commanded Moses to be brought out of the dungeon, so they shaved him and he changed his prison garments and ate bread.

Commentary: Moses is freed and undergoes a symbolic cleansing and refreshment, marking his transition out of imprisonment and into a new phase of his life.

Verse 38: And afterward Moses went into the garden of Reuel which was behind the house, and he there prayed to the Lord his God, who had done mighty wonders for him.

Commentary: Moses immediately seeks solitude and gives thanks to God for his deliverance, reinforcing his deep piety and connection to the divine.

Verse 39: And it was that while he prayed, he looked opposite to him, and behold, a sapphire stick was placed in the ground, which was planted in the midst of the garden.

Commentary: This is a key magical/divine element from Jasher, not found in the Bible. A miraculous **sapphire stick** appears. This foreshadows the miraculous rod Moses will use in Egypt.

Verse 40: And he approached the stick and he looked, and behold, the name of the Lord God of hosts was engraved thereon, written and developed upon the stick.

Commentary: The stick is explicitly marked as divine, bearing the name of God. This confirms its sacred origin and immense power.

Verse 41: And he read it and stretched forth his hand and he plucked it like a forest tree from the thicket, and the stick was in his hand.

Commentary: Moses effortlessly extracts the divinely marked stick, signifying his rightful ownership and destined use of it. The ease of its removal highlights his chosen status.

Verse 42: And this is the stick with which all the works of our God were performed, after he had created heaven and earth, and all the host of them, seas, rivers and all their fishes.

Commentary: This verse gives the stick an astonishing cosmic history. It's portrayed as the very instrument of God's creation, encompassing all of creation and demonstrating its immeasurable power. This vastly elevates its significance beyond the biblical "rod of God."

Verse 43: And when God had driven **Adam** from the Garden of Eden, he took the stick in his hand and went and tilled the ground from which he was taken.

Commentary: The stick's history continues, associating it with Adam after the Fall, connecting it to human labor and existence outside Eden.

Verse 44: And the stick came down to **Noah** and was given to **Shem** and his descendants, until it came into the hand of **Abraham** the Hebrew.

Commentary: The stick is passed down through the patriarchal lineage, emphasizing its ancient and sacred connection to the chosen line.

Verse 45: And when Abraham had given all he had to his son **Isaac**, he also gave to him this stick.

Commentary: Isaac inherits the stick from Abraham, continuing the tradition.

Verse 46: And when **Jacob** had fled to **Padan-aram**, he took it into his hand, and when he returned to his father he had not left it behind him.

Commentary: Jacob also possesses the stick during his significant life journeys.

Verse 47: Also when he went down to Egypt he took it into his hand and gave it to **Joseph**, one portion above his brethren, for Jacob had taken it by force from his brother **Esau**.

Commentary: The stick is given to Joseph as a special inheritance. The detail that Jacob acquired it "by force from his brother Esau" adds an intriguing element of struggle and divine right to its possession.

Verse 48: And after the death of Joseph, the nobles of Egypt came into the house of Joseph, and the stick came into the hand of **Reuel** the Midianite, and when he went out of Egypt, he took it in his hand and planted it in his garden.

Commentary: The stick mysteriously passes from Joseph's possession after his death into the hands of Reuel. Reuel then takes it to Midian and plants it, where it waits for Moses. This explains its presence in Reuel's garden.

Verse 49: And all the mighty men of the **Kinites** tried to pluck it when they endeavored to get **Zipporah** his daughter, but they were unsuccessful.

Commentary: This adds another layer to the stick's power: it was unmovable by others, even strong men trying to claim it as a prize to win Zipporah's hand. This further highlights its divine nature and its waiting for the rightful possessor.

Verse 50: So that stick remained planted in the garden of Reuel, until he came who had a right to it and took it.

Commentary: The stick's waiting in the garden symbolizes its destiny to be wielded by Moses, the one chosen by God.

Verse 51: And when Reuel saw the stick in the hand of Moses, he wondered at it, and he gave him his daughter Zipporah for a wife.

Commentary: Reuel, witnessing Moses' ability to pluck the miraculous stick (which he himself could not), recognizes Moses' divine favor and finally gives him Zipporah's hand in marriage, fulfilling the biblical narrative. The stick's retrieval seals Moses' destiny and his immediate future.

This chapter opens with the reign of the new Pharaoh, **Adikam** (also called **Ahuz**), who is uniquely described as extremely short and ugly, yet wise. Adikam quickly proves to be even more wicked than his father, escalating the oppression of the Israelites. He institutes a horrific new decree: for any deficiency in the daily brick quota, Israelite infants are forcibly taken from their mothers and literally built into the walls, leading to the death of 270 children. This extreme suffering leads to the intensified cries of the Israelites, which God hears, remembering His covenant and resolving to deliver them.

Meanwhile, **Moses** is still imprisoned by **Reuel** in Midian, a confinement that lasts ten years. **Zipporah**, Reuel's daughter, secretly sustains him. At the start of Adikam's reign, Zipporah convinces her skeptical father to check on Moses. They discover him alive and praying. Upon his release, Moses enters Reuel's garden and miraculously finds a **sapphire stick** with the name of the Lord engraved on it. The chapter then provides an extraordinary history of this stick, claiming it was used by God in creation, passed down from Adam through Noah, the patriarchs, and Joseph, before ending up in Reuel's garden, unmovable by anyone else. Moses' ability to pluck it confirms his rightful claim to this divine instrument. Witnessing this wonder, Reuel gives Zipporah to Moses as his wife, setting the stage for Moses' divine commission.

Book of Jasher, Chapter 78

Changes in Edom and Moab

Verse 1: At that time, **Baal Chanan**, son of Achbor, king of **Edom**, died and was buried in his home in the land of Edom.

Commentary: This verse records another shift in leadership in Edom. Baal Chanan's death marks the end of his 38-year reign (mentioned in Chapter 74).

Verse 2: And after his death, the descendants of **Esau** (Edomites) sent to the land of Edom and took a man named **Hadad**, making him king over them in place of their king, Baal Chanan.

Commentary: Hadad becomes the new king of Edom, continuing the succession. The term "children of Esau" reminds us of the lineage of the Edomites.

Verse 3: And Hadad reigned over the descendants of Edom for forty-eight years.

Commentary: Hadad's reign is exceptionally long, a common feature of kings in Jasher, indicating a long period of rule for him.

Verse 4: And when he began to reign, he decided to fight against the children of **Moab** to bring them back under the control of the descendants of Esau, as they had been before. But he couldn't, because the children of Moab heard about his plan and quickly rose up and chose a king from among themselves.

Commentary: Hadad immediately sets out to reclaim control over Moab, which had rebelled earlier (Chapter 74). However, Moab acts swiftly, electing their own king and preparing for defense, preventing Hadad from achieving his objective. This shows Moab's determination to maintain its independence.

Verse 5: And they (Moab) later gathered a large army and sent to the children of **Ammon**, their relatives, for help to fight against Hadad, king of Edom.

Commentary: Moab seeks an alliance with Ammon, indicating a united front against Edom and highlighting their shared lineage (both being descendants of Lot).

Verse 6: And Hadad heard what the children of Moab had done, and he was greatly afraid of them and refrained from fighting against them.

Commentary: Hadad's fear and decision to back down demonstrate the strength of the Moabite-Ammonite alliance and how it successfully deterred Edom's aggression.

Moses' Family in Midian

Verse 7: In those days, **Moses**, the son of Amram, in **Midian**, took **Zipporah**, the daughter of **Reuel** the Midianite, as his wife.

Commentary: This verse confirms the marriage of Moses and Zipporah, fulfilling the promise made at the end of the previous chapter. This union solidifies Moses' place within Reuel's household.

Verse 8: And Zipporah walked in the ways of the daughters of **Jacob**; she was no less righteous than **Sarah**, **Rebecca**, **Rachel**, and **Leah**.

Commentary: This is a high commendation for Zipporah. She is praised for her righteousness and is compared favorably to the matriarchs of Israel, emphasizing her spiritual quality and suitability as Moses' wife, despite being a Midianite.

Verse 9: And Zipporah conceived and bore a son, and he called his name **Gershom**, for he said, "I was a stranger in a foreign land." But he did not circumcise his foreskin, at the command of **Reuel** his father-in-law.

Commentary: This verse mentions the birth of Moses' first son, Gershom, and the meaning of his name, aligning with the biblical account (Exodus 2:22). However, it introduces a crucial and unique detail from Jasher: Moses did *not* circumcise Gershom because Reuel, as his father-in-law and the head of the household, commanded against it. This sets up the later, dramatic incident at the lodging place (Exodus 4:24-26).

Verse 10: And she conceived again and bore a son, but he did circumcise his foreskin, and he called his name **Eliezer**, for Moses said, "Because the God of my fathers was my help, and delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh."

Commentary: The birth of Moses' second son, Eliezer, is also mentioned, along with the meaning of his name, also aligning with the biblical account (Exodus 18:4). Significantly, Eliezer *is* circumcised, implying a change or resolution in Moses' commitment to the covenant despite Reuel's influence, or perhaps Zipporah's own insistence after the Gershom incident. This detail sets a contrast with Gershom's lack of circumcision.

Pharaoh's Renewed Oppression

Verse 11: And **Pharaoh**, king of Egypt, greatly increased the labor of the children of Israel in those days, and continued to make his yoke heavier upon the children of Israel.

Commentary: The narrative shifts back to Egypt, emphasizing the intensified oppression under the new Pharaoh, Adikam/Ahuz, as described in the previous chapter. The suffering of the Israelites is at its peak.

Verse 12: And he ordered a proclamation to be made in Egypt, saying, "Give no more straw to the people to make bricks with; let them go and gather straw themselves wherever they can find it."

Commentary: This is a direct parallel to the biblical account (Exodus 5:7-19), illustrating Pharaoh's cruel increase of the workload by forcing the Israelites to procure their own straw while maintaining the same brick quota. This removes a key resource and adds significant time and effort to their already arduous tasks.

Verse 13: "Also, the quota of bricks they shall make, let them deliver each day, and diminish nothing from them, for they are idle in their work."

Commentary: Pharaoh's false accusation of "idleness" serves as his justification for the increased burden, despite the fact that they were already working relentlessly.

Verse 14: And the children of Israel heard this, and they mourned and sighed, and they cried to the Lord on account of the bitterness of their souls.

Commentary: The new decree plunges the Israelites into deeper despair and intensifies their cries to God. This heightened suffering is a crucial catalyst for God's impending intervention.

Verse 15: And the Lord heard the cries of the children of Israel, and saw the oppression with which the Egyptians oppressed them.

Commentary: This reiterates God's attentiveness to His people's suffering, a direct response to their renewed cries. This sets the immediate stage for Moses' call.

Verse 16: And the Lord was jealous of His people and His inheritance, and heard their voice, and He resolved to take them out of the affliction of Egypt, to give them the land of **Canaan** for a possession.

Commentary: This verse powerfully describes God's motivation: His "jealousy" for His chosen people and their inheritance. It highlights His commitment to His covenant promises and His firm resolve to deliver Israel and bring them to the Promised Land. This concludes the chapter by emphasizing that the time for deliverance has now fully arrived.

This chapter continues to interweave the political shifts in surrounding nations with the personal life of **Moses** and the escalating oppression of the Israelites. **Hadad** becomes the new king of **Edom**, but his attempt to subdue **Moab** is thwarted by a united Moab-Ammon front.

In Midian, **Moses** marries **Zipporah**, who is praised for her righteousness. They have two sons: **Gershom** (meaning "stranger there"), whom Moses does not circumcise due to **Reuel's** command, and **Eliezer** (meaning "God is my help"), who *is* circumcised.

Meanwhile, back in Egypt, **Pharaoh Adikam** (Ahuz) intensifies the Israelites' forced labor, adding a new burden by compelling them to gather their own straw while maintaining the same brick quota. This new hardship causes the Israelites to mourn deeply and cry out to God. The chapter concludes by emphasizing that the Lord hears their cries, sees their oppression, remembers His covenant, and is now fully resolved to deliver His people from Egypt and bring them to the land of Canaan. This sets the stage for Moses' divine calling.

Book of Jasher, Chapter 79

The Burning Bush and Moses' Commission

Verse 1: At that time, **Moses**, while in **Midian**, was tending the flock of his father-in-law, **Reuel**, beyond the wilderness of **Sin**. The miraculous stick he had taken from his father-in-law's garden was in his hand.

Commentary: This sets the scene for Moses' divine encounter, emphasizing his role as a shepherd and highlighting the presence of the powerful rod, whose divine origins were detailed in the previous chapter.

Verse 2: It happened one day that a young goat strayed from the flock, and Moses pursued it until it reached the mountain of God, **Horeb** (also known as Sinai).

Commentary: The straying goat provides a natural, guiding reason for Moses to arrive at the sacred mountain, a common biblical motif for divine encounters.

Verse 3: When he arrived at Horeb, the Lord appeared to him there in a bush. He found the bush burning with fire, but the fire had no power to consume it.

Commentary: This is the iconic biblical scene of the burning bush (Exodus 3:2-4). The supernatural nature of the fire, burning without consuming, immediately draws Moses' attention.

Verse 4: Moses was greatly astonished by this sight, wondering why the bush was not consumed. He approached to see this mighty thing, and the Lord called to Moses out of the fire and commanded him to go down to Egypt, to **Pharaoh**, king of Egypt, to release the children of Israel from his service.

Commentary: Moses' curiosity leads him closer to the divine presence. God then directly commissions him, giving him the daunting task of delivering Israel from Pharaoh's oppression.

Verse 5: The Lord said to Moses, "Go, return to Egypt, for all those men who sought your life are dead, and you shall speak to Pharaoh to send forth the children of Israel from his land."

Commentary: God reassures Moses that it is safe to return to Egypt, as the previous Pharaoh and those who sought his life are no longer a threat. This directly addresses Moses' fear of returning (from Chapter 76).

Verse 6: And the Lord showed him how to perform signs and wonders in Egypt before the eyes of Pharaoh and his subjects, so that they might believe that the Lord had sent him.

Commentary: God equips Moses with miraculous powers to authenticate his divine mission before both Pharaoh and the Israelites.

Verse 7: And Moses listened to all that the Lord had commanded him, and he returned to his father-in-law and told him about it. Reuel said to him, "Go in peace."

Commentary: Moses dutifully obeys, informing Reuel, who gives his blessing, signifying Moses' full release from his obligations to Reuel.

The Circumcision Crisis

Verse 8: And Moses rose up to go to Egypt, and he took his wife and sons with him. While he was at an inn on the road, an **angel of God** came down and sought an occasion against him.

Commentary: This mirrors the cryptic and dramatic biblical account (Exodus 4:24-26). As Moses travels to fulfill his mission, a divine threat emerges. The "angel of God" suggests a divine agent or manifestation.

Verse 9: And he wished to kill him on account of his firstborn son, because he had not circumcised him, and had transgressed the covenant which the Lord had made with **Abraham**.

Commentary: Jasher explicitly states the reason for the angel's intent to kill Moses: his failure to circumcise his firstborn son, **Gershom**. This highlights the absolute importance of the covenant of circumcision and the severe consequences of neglecting it, especially for the leader of God's people.

Verse 10: For Moses had listened to the words of his father-in-law (Reuel) which he had spoken to him, not to circumcise his firstborn son, therefore he did not circumcise him.

Commentary: This explains Moses' lapse: he yielded to Reuel's influence. This provides context for the omission, showing Moses was not willfully rebellious but perhaps swayed by familial pressure.

Verse 11: And **Zipporah** saw the angel of the Lord seeking an occasion against Moses, and she knew that this thing was due to his not having circumcised her son Gershom.

Commentary: Zipporah's keen spiritual insight and quick understanding of the situation are crucial. She immediately grasps the divine nature of the threat and its cause.

Verse 12: And Zipporah hastened and took one of the sharp rock stones that were there, and she circumcised her son, and delivered her husband and her son from the hand of the angel of the Lord.

Commentary: Zipporah's decisive and quick action saves Moses' life and Gershom's. Her use of a "sharp rock stone" aligns with ancient practices (like flint knives) and is a powerful act of faith and obedience, fulfilling the covenant where Moses had failed.

Aaron Meets Moses; Zipporah's Departure

Verse 13: And **Aaron**, the son of Amram, the brother of Moses, was in Egypt walking by the riverside on that day.

Commentary: The narrative shifts to Aaron in Egypt, establishing his location just before his own divine encounter.

Verse 14: And the Lord appeared to him in that place, and He said to him, "Go now toward Moses in the wilderness," and he went and met him in the mountain of God, and he kissed him.

Commentary: God independently commissions Aaron to meet Moses. Their reunion at the "mountain of God" is a significant moment, fulfilling God's promise that Aaron would meet him (Exodus 4:27).

Verse 15: And Aaron lifted up his eyes, and saw Zipporah, the wife of Moses, and her children, and he said to Moses, "Who are these with you?"

Commentary: Aaron's question about Zipporah and the children highlights their unexpected presence and sets up a minor conflict.

Verse 16: And Moses said to him, "They are my wife and sons, whom God gave to me in Midian." And the thing grieved Aaron on account of the woman and her children.

Commentary: Moses explains who they are. Aaron's grief or concern about them is significant. Jasher explicitly states Aaron's emotional reaction, which is not in the biblical text at this point, but it's crucial for the next verse.

Verse 17: And Aaron said to Moses, "Send away the woman and her children that they may go to her father's house," and Moses listened to the words of Aaron, and did so.

Commentary: This is a major departure from the traditional biblical narrative, where Zipporah and the children remain with Moses until later in the journey. Jasher states that Aaron advises Moses to send them away, and Moses complies. This explains their absence during the initial plagues and their later reunion (Exodus 18). Aaron's concern might stem from the danger of the mission, or perhaps from the recent circumcision incident and the implications of a non-Israelite family during such a holy mission.

Verse 18: And Zipporah returned with her children, and they went to the house of Reuel, and remained there until the time arrived when the Lord had visited His people, and brought them forth from Egypt from the hand of Pharaoh.

Commentary: This explains Zipporah and the children's temporary departure, confirming they return to Reuel's home and remain there until the Exodus is complete.

Confronting Pharaoh and the Rod of God

Verse 19: And Moses and Aaron came to Egypt to the community of the children of Israel, and they spoke to them all the words of the Lord, and the people rejoiced with exceeding great rejoicing.

Commentary: Moses and Aaron arrive in Egypt, delivering God's message of deliverance to the Israelites. The people's "exceeding great rejoicing" reflects their renewed hope after years of bitter oppression.

Verse 20: And Moses and Aaron rose up early on the next day, and they went to the house of Pharaoh, and they took in their hands the stick of God.

Commentary: The confrontation begins. Moses and Aaron directly approach Pharaoh, wielding the powerful "stick of God" (the miraculous rod) as a symbol of divine authority.

Verse 21: And when they came to the king's gate, two young lions were confined there with iron instruments, and no person went out or came in before them, unless those whom the king ordered to come, when the conjurers came and withdrew the lions by their incantations, and this brought them to the king.

Commentary: This introduces a dramatic detail not found in the biblical account: two dangerous, magically controlled lions guarding Pharaoh's gate. This sets up an immediate demonstration of divine power against Egyptian magic. The lions are specifically "conjurors'" tools.

Verse 22: And Moses hastened and lifted up the stick upon the lions, and he loosed them, and Moses and Aaron came into the king's house.

Commentary: Moses uses the divine rod to miraculously subdue and release the lions, bypassing Pharaoh's magical defenses. This is an immediate, powerful sign of God's authority over the supernatural forces of Egypt.

Verse 23: The lions also came with them in joy, and they followed them and rejoiced as a dog rejoices over his master when he comes from the field.

Commentary: The reaction of the lions is astonishing: they are not just freed, but become joyful and loyal, following Moses and Aaron like pets. This emphasizes the divine power at work, transforming a threat into a display of reverence.

Verse 24: And when Pharaoh saw this thing, he was astonished at it, and he was greatly terrified at the report, for their appearance was like the appearance of the children of God.

Commentary: Pharaoh is stunned and terrified by this unexpected demonstration of power. The description of Moses and Aaron's "appearance... like the appearance of the children of God" suggests a radiant, divine presence, further intimidating Pharaoh.

Verse 25: And Pharaoh said to Moses, "What do you require?" And they answered him, saying, "The Lord God of the Hebrews has sent us to you, to say, 'Send forth My people that they may serve Me.'"

Commentary: Pharaoh, initially intimidated, asks their purpose. Moses and Aaron deliver God's direct command for Israel's release, introducing the divine authority behind their request.

Verse 26: And when Pharaoh heard their words, he was greatly terrified before them, and he said to them, "Go today and come back to me tomorrow," and they did according to the word of the king.

Commentary: Pharaoh's initial reaction is fear, leading him to postpone the decision, giving him time to consult his own experts.

Verse 27: And when they had gone, Pharaoh sent for **Balaam** the magician and to **Jannes and Jambres** his sons, and to all the magicians and conjurers and counselors who belonged to the king, and they all came and sat before the king.

Commentary: This assembly of Egyptian magical and political advisors is crucial. Balaam, who fled to Egypt in Chapter 73, is now identified as Pharaoh's chief magician, alongside Jannes and Jambres (also mentioned in 2 Timothy 3:8). This sets up the direct magical confrontation.

Verse 28: And the king told them all the words which Moses and his brother Aaron had spoken to him, and the magicians said to the king, "But how did the men come to you, considering the lions that were confined at the gate?"

Commentary: The magicians' first concern is how Moses and Aaron bypassed their magical lion guards, indicating their immediate awareness of a powerful, perhaps rival, magic.

Verse 29: And the king said, "Because they lifted up their rod against the lions and loosed them, and came to me, and the lions also rejoiced at them as a dog rejoices to meet his master."

Commentary: Pharaoh explains the miraculous nature of the lions' submission to Moses, underscoring the extraordinary power displayed.

Verse 30: And Balaam the son of Beor the magician answered the king, saying, "These are none other than magicians like ourselves."

Commentary: Balaam dismisses Moses and Aaron's power as mere magic, attempting to downplay their divine authority and assert his own skill.

Verse 31: "Now therefore send for them, and let them come and we will try them," and the king did so.

Commentary: Balaam proposes a direct magical contest, a challenge accepted by Pharaoh, setting the stage for the famous confrontation of the rods.

Verse 32: And in the morning Pharaoh sent for Moses and Aaron to come before the king, and they took the rod of God, and came to the king and spoke to him, saying,

Commentary: The stage is set for the first great sign.

Verse 33: "Thus said the Lord God of the Hebrews, 'Send My people that they may serve Me.'"

Commentary: Moses and Aaron repeat God's command.

Verse 34: And the king said to them, "But who will believe you that you are the messengers of God and that you come to me by his order?"

Commentary: Pharaoh demands proof of their divine commission, challenging their authority.

Verse 35: "Now therefore give a wonder or sign in this matter, and then the words which you speak will be believed."

Commentary: Pharaoh demands a miraculous sign, initiating the contest.

Verse 36: And Aaron hastened and threw the rod out of his hand before Pharaoh and before his servants, and the rod turned into a serpent.

Commentary: The first sign is performed, mirroring the biblical account (Exodus 7:10). The divine rod transforms into a serpent.

Verse 37: And the sorcerers saw this and they cast each man his rod upon the ground and they became serpents.

Commentary: The Egyptian magicians, led by Balaam, replicate the miracle, transforming their own rods into serpents through their magic.

Verse 38: And the serpent of Aaron's rod lifted up its head and opened its mouth to swallow the rods of the magicians.

Commentary: This is the critical moment of distinction. Aaron's serpent is not just a copy; it demonstrates superior power by beginning to devour the other serpents.

Verse 39: And Balaam the magician answered and said, "This thing has been from the days of old, that a serpent should swallow its fellow, and that living things devour each other."

Commentary: Balaam, quick to rationalize, attempts to dismiss the significance of Aaron's serpent devouring the others, claiming it's a natural phenomenon (a serpent eating another serpent) rather than a supernatural display of power. He tries to frame it as a common magical feat.

Verse 40: "Now therefore restore it to a rod as it was at first, and we will also restore our rods as they were at first, and if your rod shall swallow our rods, then shall we know that the spirit of God is in you, and if not, you are only an artificer like ourselves."

Commentary: Balaam tries to raise the stakes, suggesting a more precise test: if Aaron's *rod* (after being restored) can swallow their *restored* rods, then they will concede divine power. He tries to control the terms of the magical contest.

Verse 41: And Aaron hastened and stretched forth his hand and caught hold of the serpent's tail and it became a rod in his hand, and the sorcerers did the like with their rods, and they got hold, each man of the tail of his serpent, and they became rods as at first.

Commentary: Both sides restore their serpents to rods, following Balaam's challenge.

Verse 42: And when they were restored to rods, the rod of Aaron swallowed up their rods.

Commentary: This is the definitive, undeniable victory for Aaron's rod, solidifying its divine superiority over the Egyptian magic. This is a clear demonstration that God's power is supreme.

Verse 43: And when the king saw this thing, he ordered the book of records that related to the kings of Egypt to be brought, and they brought the book of records, the chronicles of the kings of Egypt, in which all the idols of Egypt were inscribed, for they thought of finding therein the name of Jehovah, but they found it not.

Commentary: Pharaoh, stunned by the sign, consults his sacred records, looking for any mention of "Jehovah" or a god capable of such a feat. His inability to find the name of the Hebrew God underscores God's uniqueness and His difference from the known Egyptian pantheon.

Verse 44: And Pharaoh said to Moses and Aaron, "Behold, I have not found the name of your God written in this book, and His name I know not."

Commentary: Pharaoh declares his ignorance of the Lord, which serves as a justification for his refusal to obey.

Verse 45: And the counselors and wise men answered the king, "We have heard that the God of the Hebrews is a son of the wise, the son of ancient kings."

Commentary: The Egyptian wise men attempt to categorize God within their own understanding, perhaps suggesting He is a powerful, ancient deity, but still part of a lineage, not the ultimate Creator. This reveals their polytheistic worldview.

Verse 46: And Pharaoh turned to Moses and Aaron and said to them, "I know not the Lord whom you have declared, neither will I send his people."

Commentary: Pharaoh's defiant statement is his direct refusal to recognize God's authority or release Israel, setting the stage for the plagues. This echoes the biblical "Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice...?" (Exodus 5:2).

Verse 47: And they answered and said to the king, "The Lord God of Gods is His name, and He proclaimed His name over us from the days of our ancestors, and sent us, saying, 'Go to Pharaoh and say to him, "Send My people that they may serve Me."'"

Commentary: Moses and Aaron boldly declare God's supreme title ("God of Gods") and reassert His divine command, emphasizing His ancient covenant with Israel.

Verse 48: "Now therefore send us, that we may take a journey for three days in the wilderness, and there may sacrifice to Him, for from the days of our going down to Egypt, He has not taken from our hands either burnt offering, oblation or sacrifice, and if you will not send us, His anger will be kindled against you, and He will strike Egypt either with the plague or with the sword."

Commentary: This is the specific demand for a three-day journey to sacrifice, again aligning with the biblical request (Exodus 5:3). They also warn Pharaoh of the consequences if he refuses: divine judgment in the form of "plague or sword."

Verse 4 9: And Pharaoh said to them, "Tell me now his power and his might." And they said to him, "He created the heaven and the earth, the seas and all their fishes; he formed the light, created the darkness, caused rain upon the earth and watered it, and made the herbage and grass to sprout; he created man and beast and the animals of the forest, the birds of the air and the fish of the sea, and by his mouth they live and die."

Commentary: Pharaoh demands to know God's power. Moses and Aaron respond with a magnificent declaration of God as the ultimate Creator and Sustainer of all life and the universe, a direct challenge to Pharaoh's own claims of divinity and the polytheistic Egyptian worldview.

Verse 50: "Surely he created you in your mother's womb, and put into you the breath of life, and reared you and placed you upon the royal throne of Egypt, and he will take your breath and soul from you, and return you to the ground whence you were taken."

Commentary: This is a direct, personal challenge to Pharaoh's supposed divine power, reminding him of his own mortality and dependence on God for his very existence and rule. It's a prophetic warning of his eventual death and judgment.

Verse 51: And the anger of the king was kindled at their words, and he said to them, "But who amongst all the Gods of nations can do this? My river is mine own, and I have made it for myself."

Commentary: Pharaoh's anger flares at their audacious words. He defiantly asserts his own power and, notably, claims ownership and creation of the Nile River ("My river is mine own, and I have made it for myself"). This highlights his hubris and false claim to be a creator god, setting up the first plague (blood/Nile).

Verse 52: And he drove them from him, and he ordered the labor upon Israel to be more severe than it was yesterday and before.

Commentary: Pharaoh violently rejects their appeal and, in response, further increases the Israelites' burden, making their suffering even worse. This is his immediate, punitive reaction.

Verse 53: And Moses and Aaron went out from the king's presence, and they saw the children of Israel in an evil condition, for the taskmasters had made their labor exceedingly heavy.

Commentary: Moses and Aaron witness the immediate, negative consequences of their first confrontation with Pharaoh, seeing the Israelites' suffering increase.

Verse 54: And Moses returned to the Lord and said, "Why have You ill-treated Your people? For since I came to speak to Pharaoh what You sent me for, he has exceedingly ill-used the children of Israel."

Commentary: This is Moses' moment of doubt and lament, a direct parallel to the biblical account (Exodus 5:22-23). He questions God, expressing concern that his intervention has only made things worse for his people.

Verse 55: And the Lord said to Moses, "Behold, you will see that with an outstretched hand and heavy plagues, Pharaoh will send the children of Israel from his land."

Commentary: God reassures Moses, promising that he will witness God's powerful intervention ("outstretched hand and heavy plagues") that will ultimately force Pharaoh to release Israel. This is a divine affirmation and promise of ultimate victory.

Verse 56: And Moses and Aaron dwelt amongst their brethren the children of Israel in Egypt.

Commentary: Moses and Aaron now fully commit to being with their people, sharing their suffering as they await God's next move.

Verse 57: And as for the children of Israel, the Egyptians embittered their lives with the heavy work which they imposed upon them.

Commentary: The chapter concludes by reiterating the extreme bitterness of Israel's bondage, setting the stage for the dramatic plagues that will follow.

This chapter details **Moses'** divine calling at the **burning bush** on Mount Horeb. God commands him to return to Egypt to deliver Israel, reassuring him that his enemies are dead, and equips him with the miraculous rod. On his journey back, an **angel of God** attempts to kill Moses because he had not circumcised his firstborn son, **Gershom**, due to **Reuel's** influence. **Zipporah** bravely and quickly performs the circumcision, saving Moses and her son.

Upon meeting **Aaron**, Moses sends Zipporah and the children back to Midian at Aaron's suggestion. Moses and Aaron then confront **Pharaoh Adikam (Ahuz)**. At the palace gate, Moses uses his divine rod to effortlessly subdue Pharaoh's magically-controlled lions. Inside, they demand Israel's release. Pharaoh initially consults his chief magician, **Balaam**, and his sons, **Jannes and Jambres**.

In a magical contest, Aaron's rod turns into a serpent, and then famously swallows the serpents created by the Egyptian magicians, demonstrating God's supreme power. Pharaoh, after failing to find God's name in his records, defiantly claims ignorance of the Lord and asserts his own divine power over the Nile. He rejects their demand, further intensifying Israel's labor. Moses, disheartened by the increased suffering, questions God, but the Lord reassures him that mighty plagues will compel Pharaoh to release His people.

Book of Jasher, Chapter 80

The First Plagues (Blood, Frogs, Lice, Wild Beasts)

Verse 1: And at the end of two years, the Lord again sent **Moses** to **Pharaoh** to bring forth the children of Israel and send them out of the land of Egypt.

Commentary: This verse indicates a two-year period following the initial confrontation where Moses remained with the Israelites. Now, the time for decisive action has arrived, and God recommissions Moses.

Verse 2: And Moses went and came to the house of Pharaoh, and he spoke to him the words of the Lord who had sent him, but Pharaoh would not listen to the voice of the Lord. And God roused His might in Egypt upon Pharaoh and his subjects, and God struck Pharaoh and his people with very great and severe plagues.

Commentary: Moses repeats God's command, but Pharaoh remains defiant. This immediately triggers the beginning of the plagues, demonstrating God's unleashed power against Egypt.

Verse 3: And the Lord sent by the hand of **Aaron** and turned all the waters of Egypt into **blood**, including all their streams and rivers.

Commentary: This is the first plague, as in the biblical account (Exodus 7:14-25). Aaron, with Moses' rod, initiates the miracle, turning the life-giving Nile into blood, symbolizing death and judgment.

Verse 4: And when an Egyptian came to drink and draw water, he looked into his pitcher, and behold, all the water was turned to blood; and when he came to drink from his cup, the water in the cup became blood.

Commentary: This emphasizes the pervasive nature of the plague. No matter where or how they tried to get water, it immediately became blood, highlighting the thoroughness of God's judgment and the inescapable suffering of the Egyptians.

Verse 5: And when a woman kneaded her dough and cooked her food, their appearance was turned to that of blood.

Commentary: This detail extends the plague's impact beyond just drinking water, implying that the very essence of their food preparations was also affected, making daily life utterly repulsive and difficult.

Verse 6: And the Lord sent again and caused all their waters to bring forth **frogs**, and all the frogs came into the houses of the Egyptians.

Commentary: This is the second plague (Exodus 8:1-15). The frogs infest every part of Egyptian life, a sign of their land being overwhelmed by an unclean creature.

Verse 7: And when the Egyptians drank, their bellies were filled with frogs, and they danced in their bellies as they dance when in the river.

Commentary: This is a vivid, horrifying detail not found in the biblical account. It suggests that frogs entered their bodies, causing internal discomfort and a grotesque "dancing" sensation, a truly internal affliction.

Verse 8: And all their drinking water and cooking water turned to frogs; also, when they lay in their beds, their perspiration bred frogs.

Commentary: The pervasive nature of the frog plague is further exaggerated. Not only were their water sources and food preparations affected, but even their bodily fluids (perspiration) generated frogs, making personal space and hygiene utterly impossible.

Verse 9: Notwithstanding all this, the anger of the Lord did not turn from them, and His hand was stretched out against all the Egyptians to strike them with every severe plague.

Commentary: This emphasizes Pharaoh's continued defiance and God's escalating judgment. The plagues are just beginning, and God's resolve is firm.

Verse 10: And He sent and struck their dust to **lice**, and the lice became in Egypt to the height of two cubits (approx. 3 feet) upon the earth.

Commentary: This is the third plague (Exodus 8:16-19), but Jasher adds a grotesque detail: the lice were incredibly thick on the ground, reaching a height of two cubits, making movement difficult and the infestation overwhelming.

Verse 11: The lice were also very numerous, in the flesh of man and beast, in all the inhabitants of Egypt, also upon the king and queen the Lord sent the lice, and it greatly grieved Egypt on account of the lice.

Commentary: The plague affects everyone and everything, including the royal family, signifying that no one is exempt from God's judgment. The sheer numbers and constant irritation caused immense suffering.

Verse 12: Notwithstanding this, the anger of the Lord did not turn away, and His hand was still stretched out over Egypt.

Commentary: Another reiteration of Pharaoh's hardened heart and God's continued resolve.

Verse 13: And the Lord sent all kinds of **wild beasts** into Egypt, and they came and destroyed all Egypt, man and beast, and trees, and all things that were in Egypt.

Commentary: This is the fourth plague, the swarm of wild animals (Exodus 8:20-32). Jasher expands on its destructive nature, stating they destroyed everything, including vegetation, impacting their economy and sustenance.

Verse 14: And the Lord sent fiery serpents, scorpions, mice, weasels, toads, together with others creeping in dust.

Commentary: Jasher lists specific types of creatures that came in the swarm, adding "fiery serpents" and "scorpions," implying a far more dangerous and venomous collection of creatures than typically understood from the biblical "swarms of flies."

Verse 15: Flies, hornets, fleas, bugs, and gnats, each swarm according to its kind.

Commentary: More specific insects are named, indicating a diverse and overwhelming infestation of biting and stinging insects.

Verse 16: And all reptiles and winged animals according to their kind came to Egypt and greatly grieved the Egyptians.

Commentary: This summarizes the comprehensive nature of the animal plague, affecting both ground and air.

Verse 17: And the fleas and flies came into the eyes and ears of the Egyptians.

Commentary: This detail highlights the extreme discomfort and irritation caused by the insects, affecting their senses and making daily life unbearable.

Verse 18: And the hornet came upon them and drove them away, and they removed from it into their inner rooms, and it pursued them.

Commentary: The persistence of the hornets is emphasized, driving Egyptians from their outdoor spaces and even pursuing them into their homes.

Verse 19: And when the Egyptians hid themselves on account of the swarm of animals, they locked their doors after them, and God ordered the **Sulanuth** which was in the sea, to come up and go into Egypt.

Commentary: This introduces a truly unique and fantastical creature: the "Sulanuth," described as a sea creature. When the Egyptians barricade themselves, God sends this monstrous entity to break through their defenses.

Verse 20: And she had long arms, ten cubits (approx. 15 feet) in length of the cubit of a man.

Commentary: The Sulanuth is described as having exceptionally long arms, like a giant squid or octopus, capable of reaching far and wide.

Verse 21: And she went upon the roofs and uncovered the raftering and flooring and cut them, and stretched forth her arm into the house and removed the lock and the bolt, and opened the houses of Egypt.

Commentary: This describes the Sulanuth's terrifying ability to dismantle houses, bypass security, and open doors from the outside, ensuring the wild animals could enter even sealed homes. This highlights the helplessness of the Egyptians against God's judgment.

Verse 22: Afterward came the swarm of animals into the houses of Egypt, and the swarm of animals destroyed the Egyptians, and it greatly grieved them.

Commentary: The Sulanuth's actions facilitate the entry of the other plagues into the Egyptians' last refuge, leading to more widespread destruction and suffering.

Verse 23: Notwithstanding this the anger of the Lord did not turn away from the Egyptians, and His hand was yet stretched forth against them.

Commentary: The relentless progression of plagues and Pharaoh's continued defiance are a recurring theme.

More Plagues (Pestilence, Boils, Hail, Locusts, Darkness)

Verse 24: And God sent the **pestilence**, and the pestilence pervaded Egypt, in the horses and asses, and in the camels, in herds of oxen and sheep and in man.

Commentary: This is the fifth plague (Exodus 9:1-7), a devastating disease affecting livestock and, uniquely in Jasher, also people.

Verse 25: And when the Egyptians rose up early in the morning to take their cattle to pasture, they found all their cattle dead.

Commentary: The sudden and complete destruction of their livestock is emphasized, a major economic blow.

Verse 26: And there remained of the cattle of the Egyptians only one in ten, and of the cattle belonging to Israel in Goshen, not one died.

Commentary: Jasher gives a specific survival rate for Egyptian cattle (one in ten), highlighting the near total devastation, and reaffirms the miraculous protection of Israelite livestock.

Verse 27: And God sent a **burning inflammation** in the flesh of the Egyptians, which burst their skins, and it became a severe itch in all the Egyptians from the soles of their feet to the crowns of their heads.

Commentary: This is the sixth plague, boils (Exodus 9:8-12). Jasher describes them in gruesome detail as "burning inflammation" that burst the skin and caused severe itching.

Verse 28: And many boils were in their flesh, that their flesh wasted away until they became rotten and putrid.

Commentary: This exacerbates the description of the boils, making them far more severe, causing flesh to decay and putrefy while the victims were still alive, an utterly horrifying affliction.

Verse 29: Notwithstanding this the anger of the Lord did not turn away, and His hand was still stretched out over all Egypt.

Commentary: The cycle of increasing suffering and Pharaoh's stubbornness continues.

Verse 30: And the Lord sent a very heavy **hail**, which struck their vines and broke their fruit trees and dried them up so that they fell upon them.

Commentary: This is the seventh plague (Exodus 9:18-35). The hail devastates vegetation, particularly economically important crops like vines and fruit trees.

Verse 31: Also every green herb became dry and perished, for a mingling fire descended amidst the hail, therefore the hail and the fire consumed all things.

Commentary: The addition of "mingling fire" within the hail increases the destructive power, ensuring comprehensive devastation of all plant life, aligning with the biblical "fire mingled with the hail."

Verse 32: Also men and beasts that were found abroad perished of the flames of fire and of the hail, and all the young lions were exhausted.

Commentary: The plague's impact extends to unshielded humans and animals. The detail about "young lions being exhausted" is unique, possibly suggesting even powerful predators were overwhelmed by the elements.

Verse 33: And the Lord sent numerous **locusts** into Egypt, the **Chasel, Salom, Chargol, and Chagole** (specific types of locusts), each of its kind, which devoured all that the hail had left remaining.

Commentary: This is the eighth plague (Exodus 10:1-20). Jasher specifies different types of locusts, emphasizing the diversity and completeness of the swarm, ensuring anything left by the hail was consumed.

Verse 34: Then the Egyptians rejoiced at the locusts, although they consumed the produce of the field, and they caught them in abundance and salted them for food.

Commentary: This is a truly unique and surprising detail. In their desperation, the Egyptians actually find a temporary source of food in the locusts, catching and preserving them. This suggests a desperate attempt to mitigate the effects of the plague.

Verse 35: And the Lord turned a mighty wind of the sea which took away all the locusts, even those that were salted, and thrust them into the Red Sea; not one locust remained within the boundaries of Egypt.

Commentary: This negates the Egyptians' attempts to use the locusts as food. God ensures the total removal of the plague, even the "salted" ones, leaving them with no benefit from the infestation.

Verse 36: And God sent **darkness** upon Egypt, that the whole land of Egypt and **Pathros** became dark for three days, so that a man could not see his hand when he lifted it to his mouth.

Commentary: This is the ninth plague (Exodus 10:21-29), a profound and oppressive darkness that covers the entire land, including Upper Egypt (Pathros). The inability to see one's hand highlights the extreme density of the darkness.

Verse 37: At that time many of the people of Israel died who had rebelled against the Lord and who would not listen to Moses and Aaron, and did not believe in them that God had sent them.

Commentary: This is a significant and tragic detail not found in the biblical account. During the darkness, a segment of the Israelites who had rebelled or lacked faith in Moses die as a divine judgment. This explains the unity of the Israelites at the Red Sea; those who doubted were purged.

Verse 38: And who had said, "We will not go forth from Egypt lest we perish with hunger in a desolate wilderness," and who would not listen to the voice of Moses.

Commentary: The reason for their death is explicit: their rebellion, disbelief, and fear of the wilderness, choosing Egyptian bondage over trust in God's deliverance.

Verse 39: And the Lord plagued them in the three days of darkness, and the Israelites buried them in those days, without the Egyptians knowing of them or rejoicing over them.

Commentary: The darkness serves a dual purpose: a plague on Egypt and a judgment on disbelieving Israelites. The secrecy of their burial during the darkness prevents the Egyptians from gloating over Israel's internal losses.

Verse 40: And the darkness was very great in Egypt for three days, and any person who was standing when the darkness came, remained standing in his place, and he that was sitting remained sitting, and he that was lying continued lying in the same state, and he that was walking remained sitting upon the ground in the same spot; and this thing happened to all the Egyptians, until the darkness had passed away.

Commentary: This vivid description of the darkness emphasizes its profound, paralyzing effect on the Egyptians. They were literally frozen in whatever position they were in when the darkness descended, rendering them utterly helpless and immobile. This is a powerful image of their complete vulnerability.

The Tenth Plague and Exodus

Verse 41: And the days of darkness passed away, and the Lord sent Moses and Aaron to the children of Israel, saying, "Celebrate your feast and make your **Passover**, for behold, I come in the midst of the night among all the Egyptians, and I will strike all their firstborn, from the firstborn of a man to the firstborn of a beast. And when I see your Passover, I will pass over you."

Commentary: God instructs Israel on the Passover ritual (Exodus 12:1-13), setting the stage for the final, most devastating plague: the death of the firstborn. The Passover blood on the doorposts is the sign for divine protection.

Verse 42: And the children of Israel did according to all that the Lord had commanded Moses and Aaron; thus they did on that night.

Commentary: The Israelites obey God's instructions precisely, demonstrating their faith and readiness for deliverance.

Verse 43: And it came to pass in the middle of the night, that the Lord went forth in the midst of Egypt, and struck all the firstborn of the Egyptians, from the firstborn of man to the firstborn of beast.

Commentary: The tenth and final plague (Exodus 12:29-30) is executed. The divine judgment is comprehensive, affecting both human and animal firstborn.

Verse 44: And Pharaoh rose up in the night, he and all his servants and all the Egyptians, and there was a great cry throughout Egypt in that night, for there was not a house in which there was not a corpse.

Commentary: The immediate and widespread devastation causes universal wailing and lamentation throughout Egypt. The magnitude of the loss is emphasized by the statement that every house experienced a death.

Verse 45: Also the likenesses of the firstborn of Egypt, which were carved in the walls at their houses, were destroyed and fell to the ground.

Commentary: This is another unique detail from Jasher. Even the carved images of the firstborn, possibly memorial statues or decorative elements, were supernaturally destroyed, adding another layer of desecration and judgment.

Verse 46: Even the bones of their firstborn who had died before this and whom they had buried in their houses, were raked up by the dogs of Egypt on that night and dragged before the Egyptians and cast before them.

Commentary: This is an incredibly gruesome and humiliating detail. The bodies/bones of even *previously deceased* firstborn are disturbed and desecrated by animals, adding insult to injury and highlighting the thoroughness of God's judgment, extending even to the dead.

Verse 47: And all the Egyptians saw this evil which had suddenly come upon them, and all the Egyptians cried out with a loud voice.

Commentary: The immediate realization of the widespread tragedy leads to a universal cry of anguish.

Verse 48: And all the families of Egypt wept on that night, each man for his son and each man for his daughter, being the firstborn, and the tumult of Egypt was heard at a distance on that night.

Commentary: The personal and widespread grief is emphasized. The lamentations are so loud they can be heard far away.

Verse 49: And **Bathia**, the daughter of Pharaoh, went forth with the king on that night to seek Moses and Aaron in their houses, and they found them in their houses, eating and drinking and rejoicing with all Israel.

Commentary: Pharaoh's daughter, Bathia (Moses' adoptive mother), accompanies him in this desperate search. The contrast between Egyptian mourning and Israelite rejoicing in safety is stark.

Verse 50: And Bathia said to Moses, "Is this the reward for the good which I have done to you, who have reared you and stretched you out, and you have brought this evil upon me and my father's house?"

Commentary: Bathia confronts Moses, expressing her heartbreak and sense of betrayal. She appeals to their shared history, questioning how he could bring such destruction upon her and her family after she saved and raised him.

Verse 51: And Moses said to her, "Surely ten plagues did the Lord bring upon Egypt; did any evil accrue to you from any of them? Did one of them affect you?" And she said, "No."

Commentary: Moses points out that despite the prior plagues, Bathia herself remained untouched, highlighting God's protection even for those Egyptians who showed kindness to His people.

Verse 52: And Moses said to her, "Although you are the firstborn to your mother, you shall not die, and no evil shall reach you in the midst of Egypt."

Commentary: Moses, with divine knowledge, assures Bathia that she will be spared, despite being a firstborn, implying that her past kindness to Moses (and perhaps her partial alignment with God's will) grants her protection.

Verse 53: And she said, "What advantage is it to me, when I see the king, my brother, and all his household and subjects in this evil, whose firstborn perish with all the firstborn of Egypt?"

Commentary: Bathia expresses her profound grief not just for herself, but for her family and nation, demonstrating a sense of solidarity and sorrow for her people's suffering, even amidst her own safety.

Verse 54: And Moses said to her, "Surely your brother and his household, and subjects, the families of Egypt, would not listen to the words of the Lord, therefore did this evil come upon them."

Commentary: Moses reiterates the divine justice of the plague: it is a direct consequence of Pharaoh's and Egypt's obstinate refusal to obey God's commands.

Verse 55: And Pharaoh, king of Egypt, approached Moses and Aaron, and some of the children of Israel who were with them in that place, and he prayed to them, saying,

Commentary: Pharaoh, utterly broken by the final plague, finally comes to Moses and Aaron, not to demand, but to plead. This is his complete surrender.

Verse 56: "Rise up and take your brethren, all the children of Israel who are in the land, with their sheep and oxen, and all belonging to them; they shall leave nothing remaining, only pray for me to the Lord your God."

Commentary: Pharaoh finally gives the command for the Israelites to leave, taking all their possessions, and desperately begs Moses and Aaron to pray for him, acknowledging the power of their God.

Verse 57: And Moses said to Pharaoh, "Behold, though you are your mother's firstborn, yet fear not, for you will not die, for the Lord has commanded that you shall live, in order to show you His great might and strong, outstretched arm."

Commentary: This is a truly unique and significant detail in Jasher. Moses tells Pharaoh that he will *not* die, despite being a firstborn. This explains why Pharaoh is still alive for the subsequent events at

the Red Sea (unlike the traditional assumption that he perished in the plague). His survival is decreed by God to demonstrate His power further.

Verse 58: And Pharaoh ordered the children of Israel to be sent away, and all the Egyptians strengthened themselves to send them, for they said, "We are all perishing."

Commentary: The Egyptians, desperate to stop the plagues, actively urge the Israelites to leave, fearing utter destruction.

Verse 59: And all the Egyptians sent the Israelites forth, with great riches, sheep and oxen and precious things, according to the oath of the Lord between Him and our Father Abraham.

Commentary: The Egyptians' desperation leads them to effectively "spoil" themselves, giving the Israelites vast wealth, fulfilling God's promise to Abraham (Genesis 15:14) that his descendants would come out with great possessions.

Verse 60: And the children of Israel delayed going forth at night, and when the Egyptians came to them to bring them out, they said to them, "Are we thieves, that we should go forth at night?"

Commentary: This is another interesting detail. The Israelites, despite the urgency, refuse to leave like criminals in the dark, asserting their dignity and perhaps waiting for daylight.

Verse 61: And the children of Israel asked of the Egyptians, vessels of silver, and vessels of gold, and garments, and the children of Israel stripped the Egyptians.

Commentary: This describes the "spoiling of the Egyptians," as the Israelites directly demand valuables from their terrified former masters, aligning with the biblical account (Exodus 12:35-36).

Verse 62: And Moses hastened and rose up and went to the river of Egypt, and brought up from thence the coffin of **Joseph** and took it with him.

Commentary: Moses faithfully retrieves Joseph's bones, fulfilling Joseph's dying wish (Genesis 50:25, Exodus 13:19), a symbol of God's faithfulness and Israel's continued connection to their patriarchal promises.

Verse 63: The children of Israel also brought up, each man his father's coffin with him, and each man the coffins of his tribe.

Commentary: This expands on the biblical account, suggesting that not just Joseph's bones, but the remains of *all* their patriarchs and tribal leaders were brought out of Egypt, signifying a complete separation from the land of their bondage and a commitment to burying their dead in the Promised Land.

This chapter chronicles the ten devastating plagues inflicted upon Egypt, beginning two years after Moses' initial confrontation with Pharaoh. The plagues are described with amplified and often gruesome details compared to the biblical account:

- **Blood:** Affects all water, even in dough and cooked food.

- **Frogs:** Fill bellies, breed from perspiration.
- **Lice:** Accumulate to three feet high, infest even Pharaoh.
- **Wild Beasts:** A diverse and destructive swarm including fiery serpents and scorpions. A monstrous **Sulanuth** with ten-cubit arms aids their entry into homes by dismantling structures.
- **Pestilence:** Affects both animals and humans, leaving only one in ten Egyptian cattle.
- **Boils:** Cause flesh to rot and putrefy.
- **Hail:** Mingled with fire, devastating all vegetation and killing those caught outside.
- **Locusts:** Different species, initially causing the Egyptians to rejoice as they gathered and salted them for food, but then God supernaturally removes even the preserved ones.
- **Darkness:** So dense it paralyzes people in place for three days. During this darkness, a significant detail unique to Jasher is revealed: many **disbelieving and rebellious Israelites** die and are secretly buried.
- **Death of the Firstborn:** The final, devastating plague. Jasher adds that carved images of firstborn were destroyed, and even the bones of previously deceased firstborn were exhumed and desecrated by dogs. **Pharaoh's daughter, Bathia**, confronts Moses but is spared due to her past kindness.

Crucially, **Moses tells Pharaoh that he will not die** from this plague, as God has ordained his survival to further demonstrate divine power. Finally broken, Pharaoh orders the Israelites to leave, and the Egyptians send them off with great riches, fulfilling God's promise. The Israelites assert their dignity by refusing to leave in the dark like thieves. The chapter concludes with Moses retrieving **Joseph's coffin**, and the Israelites also taking the coffins of their patriarchs and tribal leaders with them out of Egypt.

Book of Jasher, Chapter 81

The Exodus Begins and Egyptian Pursuit

Verse 1: And the children of Israel journeyed from **Rameses** to **Succoth**, about six hundred thousand men on foot, besides the little ones and their wives.

Commentary: This marks the beginning of the Exodus. The numbers align with the biblical account (Exodus 12:37), emphasizing the vast size of the migrating Israelite population.

Verse 2: Also a mixed multitude went up with them, and flocks and herds, even much cattle.

Commentary: The "mixed multitude" (Exodus 12:38) suggests non-Israelites who joined them, perhaps Egyptians who believed in the Lord or others seeking freedom. The vast amount of livestock also highlights the wealth they took from Egypt.

Verse 3: And the sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwelt in the land of Egypt in hard labor, was two hundred and ten years.

Commentary: Jasher gives a precise duration for Israel's total stay in Egypt, aligning with some ancient traditions but shorter than the 430 years mentioned in the Bible (Exodus 12:40), which is often interpreted as the period from Abraham's arrival in Canaan to the Exodus. Jasher's focus is on the period of "hard labor."

Verse 4: And at the end of two hundred and ten years, the Lord brought forth the children of Israel from Egypt with a strong hand.

Commentary: This emphasizes God's powerful intervention as the direct cause of their liberation.

Verse 5: And the children of Israel traveled from Egypt and from **Goshen** and from Rameses, and encamped in Succoth on the fifteenth day of the first month.

Commentary: This provides specific locations and the exact date of their departure, making the journey highly detailed. The date corresponds to the day after Passover.

Verse 6: And the Egyptians buried all their firstborn whom the Lord had struck, and all the Egyptians buried their slain for three days.

Commentary: This highlights the profound impact of the final plague. The Egyptians were consumed with burying their dead for three full days, emphasizing the widespread devastation.

Verse 7: And the children of Israel traveled from Succoth and encamped in **Ethom**, at the end of the wilderness.

Commentary: This names the next stop on their journey, marking their approach to the wilderness boundary.

Verse 8: And on the third day after the Egyptians had buried their firstborn, many men rose up from Egypt and went after Israel to make them return to Egypt, for they regretted that they had sent the Israelites away from their servitude.

Commentary: This is a key departure from the biblical narrative (Exodus 14:5-6), which states Pharaoh himself decided to pursue immediately. Here, it is "many men" from Egypt who regret the Exodus *three days* after the burials and decide to pursue. This pre-Pharaoh pursuit sets up a unique initial confrontation.

Verse 9: And one man said to his neighbor, "Surely Moses and Aaron spoke to Pharaoh, saying, 'We will go a three days' journey in the wilderness and sacrifice to the Lord our God.'"

Commentary: These pursuing Egyptians base their actions on Moses' initial request, believing the Israelites were only supposed to go for three days.

Verse 10: "Now therefore let us rise up early in the morning and cause them to return, and it shall be that if they return with us to Egypt to their masters, then shall we know that there is faith in them, but if they will not return, then will we fight with them, and make them come back with great power and a strong hand."

Commentary: They devise a plan: first, to persuade them to return, and if that fails, to use force. This shows their determination to reclaim their enslaved workforce.

Verse 11: And all the nobles of Pharaoh rose up in the morning, and with them about seven hundred thousand men, and they went forth from Egypt on that day, and came to the place where the children of Israel were.

Commentary: This states that the pursuing force was composed of Pharaoh's "nobles" and a massive army of 700,000 men, larger than Pharaoh's initial pursuit in the Bible. This is a formidable, early confrontation.

Verse 12: And all the Egyptians saw and behold Moses and Aaron and all the children of Israel were sitting before **Pi-hahiroth**, eating and drinking and celebrating the feast of the Lord.

Commentary: The Egyptians find the Israelites at Pi-hahiroth, enjoying themselves and celebrating the Passover feast, highlighting their freedom and joy, which must have further angered the Egyptians.

Verse 13: And all the Egyptians said to the children of Israel, "Surely you said, 'We will go a journey for three days in the wilderness and sacrifice to our God and return.'"

Commentary: They challenge the Israelites, reminding them of the initial stated purpose for leaving.

Verse 14: "Now therefore this day makes five days since you went, why do you not return to your masters?"

Commentary: They explicitly note the five-day elapsed time, accusing the Israelites of breaking their word.

Verse 15: And Moses and Aaron answered them, saying, "Because the Lord our God has testified in us, saying, 'You shall no more return to Egypt, but we will betake ourselves to a land flowing with milk and honey, as the Lord our God had sworn to our ancestors to give to us.'"

Commentary: Moses and Aaron explicitly state God's new, non-negotiable command: Israel will *never* return to Egypt, but will go to the Promised Land. This directly contradicts the three-day journey pretext.

Verse 16: And when the nobles of Egypt saw that the children of Israel did not listen to them, to return to Egypt, they girded themselves to fight with Israel.

Commentary: The Egyptians abandon persuasion and prepare for battle, realizing diplomacy has failed.

Verse 17: And the Lord strengthened the hearts of the children of Israel over the Egyptians, that they gave them a severe beating, and the battle was sore upon the Egyptians, and all the Egyptians fled from before the children of Israel, for many of them perished by the hand of Israel.

Commentary: This is a major, unique event in Jasher: **the Israelites actually fight and defeat this initial Egyptian army!** This battle is not in the biblical account (where Moses tells them to "stand still and see the salvation of the Lord"). God empowers the Israelites to inflict a "severe beating," causing

many Egyptian casualties and forcing them to flee. This demonstrates early Israelite military capability and divine favor.

Verse 18: And the nobles of Pharaoh went to Egypt and told Pharaoh, saying, "The children of Israel have fled, and will no more return to Egypt, and in this manner did Moses and Aaron speak to us."

Commentary: The defeated nobles return to Pharaoh, confirming Israel's permanent departure and Moses' defiant message.

Verse 19: And Pharaoh heard this thing, and his heart and the hearts of all his subjects were turned against Israel, and they regretted that they had sent Israel; and all the Egyptians advised Pharaoh to pursue the children of Israel to make them come back to their burdens.

Commentary: This is the point where Pharaoh (in Jasher) *then* decides to pursue, motivated by anger and regret over losing his workforce, and advised by his entire nation. This clarifies the biblical account, where Pharaoh's pursuit seems immediate.

Verse 20: And they said each man to his brother, "What is this which we have done, that we have sent Israel from our servitude?"

Commentary: The Egyptians realize the economic and labor consequences of releasing Israel, further fueling their desire to recapture them.

Verse 21: And the Lord strengthened the hearts of all the Egyptians to pursue the Israelites, for the Lord desired to overthrow the Egyptians in the Red Sea.

Commentary: This highlights divine providence: God actively hardens the Egyptians' hearts to ensure they pursue Israel, leading them to their ultimate destruction in the Red Sea.

Verse 22: And Pharaoh rose up and harnessed his chariot, and he ordered all the Egyptians to assemble, not one man was left excepting the little ones and the women.

Commentary: Pharaoh's pursuit is total; he mobilizes every able-bodied man, leaving only the most vulnerable behind, indicating his furious determination.

Verse 23: And all the Egyptians went forth with Pharaoh to pursue the children of Israel, and the camp of Egypt was an exceedingly large and heavy camp, about ten hundred thousand (one million) men.

Commentary: This number (one million) is significantly larger than biblical accounts (Exodus 14:7 mentions 600 chariots), emphasizing the overwhelming scale of the pursuing Egyptian army in Jasher.

Verse 24: And the whole of this camp went and pursued the children of Israel to bring them back to Egypt, and they reached them encamping by the Red Sea.

Commentary: The vast Egyptian army catches up to the Israelites, trapping them against the Red Sea, creating the seemingly impossible situation.

Verse 25: And the children of Israel lifted up their eyes, and beheld all the Egyptians pursuing them, and the children of Israel were greatly terrified at them, and the children of Israel cried to the Lord.

Commentary: The Israelites' terror and desperate cry to God mirror the biblical narrative (Exodus 14:10).

Crossing the Red Sea

Verse 26: And on account of the Egyptians, the children of Israel divided themselves into four divisions, and they were divided in their opinions, for they were afraid of the Egyptians, and Moses spoke to each of them.

Commentary: This details a fascinating internal debate among the Israelites, dividing them into four distinct factions based on their proposed responses to the crisis. This adds a layer of human drama and internal conflict.

Verse 27: The first division was of the children of **Reuben, Simeon, and Issachar**, and they resolved to cast themselves into the sea, for they were exceedingly afraid of the Egyptians.

Commentary: One group, utterly despairing, decides suicide by drowning is their only option.

Verse 28: And Moses said to them, "Fear not, stand still and see the salvation of the Lord which He will effect this day for you."

Commentary: Moses' famous words from Exodus 14:13 are directed specifically to this despairing group.

Verse 29: The second division was of the children of **Zebulun, Benjamin and Naphtali**, and they resolved to go back to Egypt with the Egyptians.

Commentary: Another group decides to surrender and return to slavery.

Verse 30: And Moses said to them, "Fear not, for as you have seen the Egyptians this day, so shall you see them no more for ever."

Commentary: Moses' promise from Exodus 14:13-14 is directed to this group, reassuring them of God's final deliverance.

Verse 31: The third division was of the children of **Judah and Joseph**, and they resolved to go to meet the Egyptians to fight with them.

Commentary: This group, likely the more valorous or hot-headed tribes, wants to engage in battle.

Verse 32: And Moses said to them, "Stand in your places, for the Lord will fight for you, and you shall remain silent."

Commentary: Moses' command to "stand still" and let God fight is directed at this group, preventing a premature and perhaps disastrous engagement.

Verse 33: And the fourth division was of the children of **Levi, Gad, and Asher**, and they resolved to go into the midst of the Egyptians to confound them, and Moses said to them, "Remain in your stations and fear not, only call unto the Lord that he may save you out of their hands."

Commentary: This group, possibly the most fervent or desperate, wants to create chaos among the Egyptians. Moses again urges them to rely on God through prayer. This detailed tribal division and their differing reactions offer a rich human dimension to the moment of crisis.

Verse 34: After this Moses rose up from amidst the people, and he prayed to the Lord and said,

Commentary: Moses himself turns to fervent prayer after addressing the people.

Verse 35: "O Lord God of the whole earth, save now Your people whom You brought forth from Egypt, and let not the Egyptians boast that power and might are theirs."

Commentary: Moses' prayer appeals to God's honor and asks for deliverance to prevent Egypt from claiming victory over God's power.

Verse 36: So the Lord said to Moses, "Why do you cry to Me? Speak to the children of Israel that they shall proceed, and do you stretch out your rod upon the sea and divide it, and the children of Israel shall pass through it."

Commentary: God's direct instruction to Moses, commanding action rather than continued prayer, marks the pivot to the miraculous crossing.

Verse 37: And Moses did so, and he lifted up his rod upon the sea and divided it.

Commentary: Moses obeys, initiating the miraculous parting of the Red Sea.

Verse 38: And the waters of the sea were divided into twelve parts, and the children of Israel passed through on foot, with shoes, as a man would pass through a prepared road.

Commentary: Jasher specifies that the sea divided into **twelve parts**, one for each tribe, a detail not in the Bible. It also states they crossed "with shoes," emphasizing their orderly and unhindered passage, as if on a perfectly dry, prepared road.

Verse 39: And the Lord manifested to the children of Israel His wonders in Egypt and in the sea by the hand of Moses and Aaron.

Commentary: This summarizes God's miraculous intervention through Moses and Aaron, demonstrating His power in both the plagues and the sea crossing.

Verse 40: And when the children of Israel had entered the sea, the Egyptians came after them, and the waters of the sea resumed upon them, and they all sank in the water, and not one man was left excepting **Pharaoh**, who gave thanks to the Lord and believed in Him, therefore the Lord did not cause him to perish at that time with the Egyptians.

Commentary: This is a momentous and highly significant departure from the traditional biblical account where Pharaoh also perishes in the Red Sea. Jasher states that **Pharaoh alone survives**, gives thanks to God, and believes in Him, and is thus spared by the Lord. This aligns with Moses' earlier prophecy to Bathia (Chapter 80:57).

Verse 41: And the Lord ordered an angel to take him from among the Egyptians, who cast him upon the land of **Nineveh** and he reigned over it for a long time.

Commentary: This is an astounding detail: the surviving Pharaoh is miraculously transported to Nineveh (Assyria) and becomes its king for a long time. This is a complete divergence from the biblical narrative and provides an unusual fate for the pharaoh of the Exodus.

Verse 42: And on that day the Lord saved Israel from the hand of Egypt, and all the children of Israel saw that the Egyptians had perished, and they beheld the great hand of the Lord, in what He had performed in Egypt and in the sea.

Commentary: The complete destruction of the Egyptian army and Israel's deliverance are firmly established, confirming God's mighty power.

Verse 43: Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song to the Lord, on the day when the Lord caused the Egyptians to fall before them.

Commentary: This refers to the "Song of the Sea" (Exodus 15), a traditional hymn of triumph and praise.

Verse 44: And all Israel sang in concert, saying, "I will sing to the Lord for He is greatly exalted, the horse and his rider has He cast into the sea; behold it is written in the book of the law of God."

Commentary: The key line from the Song of the Sea is quoted, attributing victory to God. The mention of it being "written in the book of the law of God" authenticates its divine origin and historical importance.

Early Wilderness Journey (Marah, Elim, Sin)

Verse 45: After this the children of Israel proceeded on their journey, and encamped in **Marah**, and the Lord gave to the children of Israel statutes and judgments in that place in Marah, and the Lord commanded the children of Israel to walk in all His ways and to serve Him.

Commentary: The journey continues to Marah, where the bitter waters were made sweet (Exodus 15:23-26). Jasher states that God also gave them "statutes and judgments" there, indicating an early imparting of law and expectations.

Verse 46: And they journeyed from Marah and came to **Elim**, and in Elim were twelve springs of water and seventy date trees, and the children encamped there by the waters.

Commentary: The pleasant oasis of Elim (Exodus 15:27) is described, providing relief and sustenance for the weary travelers.

Verse 47: And they journeyed from Elim and came to the wilderness of **Sin**, on the fifteenth day of the second month after their departure from Egypt.

Commentary: The journey continues, reaching the Wilderness of Sin, marking a significant point in time: one month after the Exodus.

Verse 48: At that time the Lord gave the **manna** to the children of Israel to eat, and the Lord caused food to rain from heaven for the children of Israel day by day.

Commentary: This marks the beginning of the miraculous provision of manna (Exodus 16:4), God's daily sustenance for His people in the wilderness.

Verse 49: And the children of Israel ate the manna for forty years, all the days that they were in the wilderness, until they came to the land of Canaan to possess it.

Commentary: This confirms the forty-year duration of the manna's provision, a key element of the wilderness wanderings.

Verse 50: And they proceeded from the wilderness of Sin and encamped in **Alush**.

Commentary: Another encampment is named as they continue their journey.

Verse 51: And they proceeded from Alush and encamped in **Rephidim**.

Commentary: Their next stop, Rephidim, sets the stage for the next major event.

Battle with Amalek

Verse 52: And when the children of Israel were in Rephidim, **Amalek** the son of **Eliphaz**, the son of **Esau**, the brother of **Zepho**, came to fight with Israel.

Commentary: This introduces the first major military threat after the Red Sea: the Amalekites. Jasher identifies Amalek's lineage, connecting him to Esau, which establishes a long-standing family enmity. Zepho's brotherhood with Amalek (from earlier Jasher chapters) ties this event to previous narratives.

Verse 53: And he brought with him eight hundred and one thousand men, magicians and conjurers, and he prepared for battle with Israel in Rephidim.

Commentary: Jasher gives an incredibly precise and massive number for the Amalekite army: 801,000 men, including magicians and conjurers. This emphasizes the formidable nature of the enemy and the spiritual warfare involved.

Verse 54: And the children of Israel were in Rephidim, Amalek the son of Eliphaz, the son of Esau, the brother of Zepho, came to fight with Israel.

Commentary: This is a duplicate of Verse 52.

Verse 55: And the children of Israel smote Amalek and his people at the edge of the sword, but the battle was very sore upon the children of Israel.

Commentary: The battle is fierce, and while Israel is victorious, it comes at a great cost, indicating a hard-fought struggle.

Verse 56: And the Lord said to Moses, "Write this thing as a memorial for you in a book, and place it in the hand of **Joshua**, the son of Nun, your servant, and you shall command the children of Israel, saying, 'When you shall come to the land of Canaan, you shall utterly efface the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven.'"

Commentary: This aligns with the biblical command (Exodus 17:14) to record the event and the perpetual enmity against Amalek, emphasizing their ultimate destruction. Joshua is specifically named as Moses' servant.

Verse 57: And Moses did so, and he took the book and wrote upon it these words, saying,

Commentary: Moses faithfully records God's command.

Verse 58: "Remember what Amalek has done to you in the road when you went forth from Egypt."

Commentary: This is the beginning of the specific curse against Amalek, reminding Israel of their treachery.

Verse 59: "Who met you in the road and struck your rear, even those that were feeble behind you when you were faint and weary."

Commentary: This provides the specific reason for God's condemnation: Amalek's cowardly attack on the weakest and most vulnerable of the Israelites from the rear, during their exhaustion.

Verse 60: "Therefore it shall be when the Lord your God shall have given you rest from all your enemies round about in the land which the Lord your God gives you for an inheritance, to possess it, that you shall blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven, you shall not forget it."

Commentary: The command for total annihilation is reinforced, to be carried out once Israel is established in Canaan. It emphasizes that this is a divine judgment against Amalek's unique wickedness.

Verse 61: "And the king who shall have pity on Amalek, or upon his memory or upon his seed, behold, I will require it of him, and I will cut him off from among his people."

Commentary: This is a powerful addition by Jasher, not explicitly stated in the biblical command at this point, but consistent with later biblical events (e.g., Saul's failure). It establishes a divine curse on any future Israelite leader who shows mercy to Amalek, highlighting the severity of the command.

Verse 62: And Moses wrote all these things in a book, and he enjoined the children of Israel respecting all these matters.

Commentary: Moses diligently records and transmits these divine instructions to the Israelites.

This chapter details the beginning of the **Exodus** from Egypt. The Israelites, numbering 600,000 men plus women and children, depart from Rameses to Succoth after 210 years of harsh labor. Three days after the Egyptians bury their firstborn, an initial group of **700,000 Egyptian nobles and men** pursues the Israelites, accusing them of overstaying the "three-day journey" they initially requested. Moses and Aaron declare God's command that Israel will never return to Egypt. Uniquely in Jasher, a **battle ensues** where the **Israelites soundly defeat this initial Egyptian army**, causing many casualties and forcing them to flee back to Pharaoh.

Upon hearing this, **Pharaoh** (who, in Jasher, survived the plague of the firstborn and was destined to reign in Nineveh) and all the remaining able-bodied Egyptians (totaling about **one million men**) pursue

the Israelites to the **Red Sea**. Trapped, the Israelites are divided into four factions with differing reactions: despairing to drown, wanting to surrender, desiring to fight, and wishing to create confusion. Moses reassures them, then, at God's command, parts the Red Sea. The sea divides into **twelve pathways**, one for each tribe, allowing them to cross on dry ground.

The Egyptians pursue them into the sea, but the waters return, drowning the entire army. Notably, **Pharaoh alone survives** (as prophesied earlier by Moses), gives thanks to the Lord, believes in Him, and is then miraculously transported by an angel to become king of **Nineveh**.

The Israelites celebrate with the **Song of the Sea**. Their journey continues to **Marah** (where God gives them statutes) and then **Elim**. One month after leaving Egypt, they reach the **Wilderness of Sin**, where God begins providing **manna** for forty years. They then journey to **Alush** and **Rephidim**, where they are attacked by **Amalek** and a massive army of 801,000 men, including magicians. The Israelites, with **Joshua** assisting, defeat Amalek after a fierce battle. God commands Moses to record this act of treachery and ordain a perpetual war against Amalek, even placing a curse on any future Israelite king who shows them pity.

Book of Jasher, Chapter 82

Arrival at Sinai and Jethro's Visit

Verse 1: And the children of Israel proceeded from **Rephidim** and they encamped in the wilderness of **Sinai**, in the third month from their going forth from Egypt.

Commentary: The Israelites reach Mount Sinai, the central location for receiving God's law. This occurs in the third month after their Exodus, consistent with the biblical timeline (Exodus 19:1).

Verse 2: At that time came **Reuel** the Midianite, the father-in-law of **Moses**, with **Zipporah** his daughter and her two sons, for he had heard of the wonders of the Lord which he had done to Israel, that he had delivered them from the hand of Egypt.

Commentary: This marks the reunion of Moses with his wife Zipporah and his sons, along with his father-in-law Reuel (also known as Jethro). This reunion is prompted by Reuel hearing about God's mighty acts, aligning with the biblical account (Exodus 18:1-2). This also confirms that Zipporah and the children had been sent back to Reuel's house as described in Jasher Chapter 79.

Verse 3: And Reuel came to Moses to the wilderness where he was encamped, where was the mountain of God.

Commentary: Reuel travels directly to the sacred site where Moses and Israel are camped.

Verse 4: And Moses went forth to meet his father-in-law with great honor, and all Israel was with him.

Commentary: Moses shows great respect to Reuel, and the entire Israelite community joins in the welcome, signifying the importance of the patriarch's visit.

Verse 5: And Reuel and his children remained among the Israelites for many days, and Reuel knew the Lord from that day forward.

Commentary: Reuel stays with the Israelites for an extended period, witnessing God's presence and power, leading to his firm belief in the Lord. This reflects Jethro's acknowledgment of God's supremacy in the biblical text (Exodus 18:10-12).

The Giving of the Law and the Golden Calf

Verse 6: And in the third month from the children of Israel's departure from Egypt, on the sixth day thereof, the Lord gave to Israel the **ten commandments** on Mount Sinai.

Commentary: This pinpoints the exact date for the giving of the Ten Commandments, a foundational event in Israelite history (Exodus 19:16-20:17).

Verse 7: And all Israel heard all these commandments, and all Israel rejoiced exceedingly in the Lord on that day.

Commentary: The people's immediate response is joy and acceptance, emphasizing the profound significance of receiving divine law directly.

Verse 8: And the glory of the Lord rested upon Mount Sinai, and He called to Moses, and Moses came in the midst of a cloud and ascended the mountain.

Commentary: This describes the awe-inspiring manifestation of God's presence on Mount Sinai (Exodus 24:15-18), and Moses' ascent into the divine cloud.

Verse 9: And Moses was upon the mount forty days and forty nights; he ate no bread and drank no water, and the Lord instructed him in the statutes and judgments in order to teach the children of Israel.

Commentary: Moses' extended fast and direct communion with God for 40 days and nights (Exodus 24:18) underscore the intensity of the divine revelation, during which he received detailed laws for Israel.

Verse 10: And the Lord wrote the ten commandments which He had commanded the children of Israel upon two **tablets of stone**, which He gave to Moses to command the children of Israel.

Commentary: The divine origin of the Ten Commandments is emphasized, written by God's own hand on stone tablets (Exodus 31:18).

Verse 11: And at the end of forty days and forty nights, when the Lord had finished speaking to Moses on Mount Sinai, then the Lord gave to Moses the tablets of stone, written with the finger of God.

Commentary: This reiterates the completion of the first period of Moses' time on the mountain and the delivery of the divine tablets.

Verse 12: And when the children of Israel saw that Moses tarried to come down from the mount, they gathered around **Aaron**, and said, "As for this man Moses, we know not what has become of him."

Commentary: This details the people's impatience and anxiety over Moses' prolonged absence, leading to their demand for a new god (Exodus 32:1).

Verse 13: "Now therefore rise up, make unto us a god who shall go before us, so that you shall not die."

Commentary: Their demand for a visible "god" to lead them highlights their fear and their desire for a tangible object of worship, demonstrating a spiritual immaturity. The unusual phrase "so that you shall not die" is interesting here, implying they believed they would die without a visible leader/god.

Verse 14: And Aaron was greatly afraid of the people, and he ordered them to bring him gold and he made it into a **molten calf** for the people.

Commentary: Aaron's fear and his subsequent construction of the golden calf (Exodus 32:2-4) are described, marking a severe act of apostasy.

Verse 15: And the Lord said to Moses, before he had come down from the mount, "Get yourself down, for your people whom you brought forth from Egypt have corrupted themselves."

Commentary: God immediately informs Moses of Israel's sin, highlighting the severity of their corruption (Exodus 32:7-8).

Verse 16: "They have made to themselves a molten calf, and have bowed down to it, now therefore leave Me, that I may consume them from off the earth, for they are a stiff-necked people."

Commentary: God's righteous anger and His immediate threat to destroy the rebellious Israelites demonstrate the gravity of their idolatry (Exodus 32:9-10). The description of them as "stiff-necked" emphasizes their stubbornness.

Verse 17: And Moses besought the countenance of the Lord, and he prayed to the Lord for the people on account of the calf which they had made, and he afterward descended from the mount and in his hands were the two tablets of stone, which God had given him to command the Israelites.

Commentary: Moses intercedes for the people, delaying God's wrath (Exodus 32:11-14). He then descends from the mountain, still carrying the divinely inscribed tablets.

Verse 18: And when Moses approached the camp and saw the calf which the people had made, the anger of Moses was kindled and he broke the tablets under the mount.

Commentary: Moses' personal anger at the sight of the idolatry leads him to break the divine tablets, symbolizing the broken covenant (Exodus 32:19).

Verse 19: And Moses came to the camp and he took the calf and burned it with fire, and ground it till it became fine dust, and strewed it upon the water and gave it to the Israelites to drink.

Commentary: Moses' decisive actions in destroying the calf and making the people drink its dust in water serve as a physical and symbolic punishment (Exodus 32:20).

Verse 20: And there died of the people by the swords of each other about three thousand men who had made the calf.

Commentary: This details the bloody aftermath, where Levites (implied, as in Exodus 32:26-28) or others, perhaps acting under divine judgment, slay approximately three thousand of those who participated in the idolatry.

Verse 21: And on the morrow Moses said to the people, "I will go up to the Lord, perhaps I may make atonement for your sins which you have sinned to the Lord."

Commentary: Moses demonstrates his continued commitment to the people, offering to intercede again for their forgiveness (Exodus 32:30).

Verse 22: And Moses again went up to the Lord, and he remained with the Lord forty days and forty nights.

Commentary: Moses embarks on a second 40-day period on the mountain, this time dedicated to intercession and seeking reconciliation (Exodus 34:28).

Verse 23: And during the forty days did Moses entreat the Lord in behalf of the children of Israel, and the Lord listened to the prayer of Moses, and the Lord was entreated of him in behalf of Israel.

Commentary: God hears Moses' fervent prayers and relents from His full wrath, showing His mercy and responsiveness to intercession.

Verse 24: Then spoke the Lord to Moses to hew two stone tablets and to bring them up to the Lord, who would write upon them the ten commandments.

Commentary: God instructs Moses to prepare new tablets, upon which He will once again inscribe the Ten Commandments, signaling a renewal of the covenant (Exodus 34:1).

Verse 25: Now Moses did so, and he came down and hewed the two tablets and went up to Mount Sinai to the Lord, and the Lord wrote the ten commandments upon the tablets.

Commentary: Moses obeys, creating the new tablets, and God inscribes them as promised.

Verse 26: And Moses remained yet with the Lord forty days and forty nights, and the Lord instructed him in statutes and judgments to impart to Israel.

Commentary: This marks a third distinct 40-day period on the mountain in Jasher (Exodus 34:28 refers to a second 40-day period for the tablets). During this time, Moses receives further laws and instructions.

Verse 27: And the Lord commanded him respecting the children of Israel that they should make a **sanctuary** for the Lord, that His name might rest therein, and the Lord showed him the likeness of the sanctuary and the likeness of all its vessels.

Commentary: God gives Moses the detailed instructions for building the Tabernacle, the portable sanctuary where God's presence would dwell among His people (Exodus 25-31). The specific "likeness" emphasizes the divine blueprint.

Verse 28: And at the end of the forty days, Moses came down from the mount and the two tablets were in his hand.

Commentary: Moses descends from the mountain with the renewed tablets, symbolizing the restored covenant.

Building the Tabernacle

Verse 29: And Moses came to the children of Israel and spoke to them all the words of the Lord, and he taught them laws, statutes and judgments which the Lord had taught him.

Commentary: Moses faithfully conveys all the divine instructions and laws he received, establishing the foundation of Israelite law.

Verse 30: And Moses told the children of Israel the word of the Lord, that a sanctuary should be made for him, to dwell amongst the children of Israel.

Commentary: He communicates the command to build the Tabernacle, emphasizing its purpose as a dwelling place for God's presence among them.

Verse 31: And the people rejoiced greatly at all the good which the Lord had spoken to them, through Moses, and they said, "We will do all that the Lord has spoken to you."

Commentary: The people's positive and obedient response contrasts sharply with their earlier rebellion with the Golden Calf. Their renewed commitment is vital.

Verse 32: And the people rose up like one man and they made generous offerings to the sanctuary of the Lord, and each man brought the offering of the Lord for the work of the sanctuary, and for all its service.

Commentary: The people's enthusiasm and willingness to contribute generously for the Tabernacle demonstrate their renewed devotion and obedience (Exodus 35:20-29).

Verse 33: And all the children of Israel brought each man of all that was found in his possession for the work of the sanctuary of the Lord, gold, silver and brass, and everything that was serviceable for the sanctuary.

Commentary: The list of materials highlights the wealth they brought out of Egypt (from the spoiling of the Egyptians) now being consecrated for God's service.

Verse 34: And all the wise men who were practiced in work came and made the sanctuary of the Lord, according to all that the Lord had commanded, every man in the work in which he had been practiced; and all the wise men in heart made the sanctuary, and its furniture and all the vessels for the holy service, as the Lord had commanded Moses.

Commentary: Skilled craftsmen, divinely endowed with wisdom, set to work on constructing the Tabernacle and its furnishings, meticulously following God's instructions.

Verse 35: And the work of the sanctuary of the tabernacle was completed at the end of five months, and the children of Israel did all that the Lord had commanded Moses.

Commentary: Jasher provides a specific timeframe for the construction: five months. This emphasizes their diligence and obedience in completing the complex project according to God's precise instructions.

Verse 36: And they brought the sanctuary and all its furniture to Moses; like unto the representation which the Lord had shown to Moses, so did the children of Israel.

Commentary: The completed Tabernacle and its components are presented to Moses, confirming their adherence to the divine blueprint.

Verse 37: And Moses saw the work, and behold they did it as the Lord had commanded him, so Moses blessed them.

Commentary: Moses inspects the work and, finding it perfectly executed according to God's command, gives his blessing, signifying divine approval and the readiness of the sanctuary for its purpose.

This chapter covers the monumental events at Mount Sinai. The Israelites arrive in the third month after leaving Egypt, and **Moses is reunited with Zipporah and his sons**, along with his father-in-law, **Reuel (Jethro)**, who comes to believe in the Lord.

On the sixth day of the third month, the **Ten Commandments are given** on Mount Sinai, bringing great joy to Israel. Moses ascends the mountain, remaining there for **forty days and forty nights** to receive laws and the stone tablets written by God. However, while he is gone, the impatient Israelites persuade **Aaron** to create a **golden calf**.

God informs Moses of their sin, threatening to consume them, but Moses intercedes. Upon descending, Moses, seeing the idolatry, **breaks the tablets**. He then destroys the calf, grinds it to dust, mixes it with water, and makes the Israelites drink it. Approximately **three thousand men** die as a result of the idolatry.

Moses then ascends the mountain **two more times for forty days each**, (a total of three 40-day periods in Jasher, rather than two in the biblical narrative). During the second period, he intercedes for Israel, and God relents. During the third period, Moses brings new stone tablets (which he himself hewed), upon which God again writes the Ten Commandments. He also receives detailed instructions for the **Tabernacle** and its vessels.

Upon his final descent, Moses conveys all the laws and the command to build the sanctuary. The people respond with great enthusiasm and generosity, donating gold, silver, brass, and other materials. Skilled craftsmen construct the Tabernacle according to God's precise instructions within **five months**. Moses inspects the completed work and blesses the people for their obedience.

Book of Jasher, Chapter 83

Consecration of the Priests and Tabernacle

Verse 1: And in the twelfth month, on the twenty-third day of the month, **Moses** took **Aaron** and his sons, dressed them in their priestly garments, anointed them, and did for them as the Lord had commanded. Moses then offered all the sacrifices the Lord had ordered for that day.

Commentary: This details the ordination of Aaron and his sons as priests, along with the consecration sacrifices, as instructed in Exodus 29 and Leviticus 8. This is a crucial step in establishing the ritual service of the newly completed Tabernacle.

Verse 2: Moses afterward took Aaron and his sons and told them, "For seven days you shall remain at the door of the Tabernacle, for thus I am commanded."

Commentary: The seven-day period of consecration, during which the priests remained at the Tabernacle entrance, is emphasized (Leviticus 8:33).

Verse 3: And Aaron and his sons did all that the Lord had commanded them through Moses, and they remained for seven days at the door of the Tabernacle.

Commentary: Their obedience to the detailed instructions highlights the solemnity of their ordination.

Verse 4: And on the eighth day, being the first day of the first month, in the second year from the Israelites' departure from Egypt, Moses erected the sanctuary, and Moses set up all the furniture of the tabernacle and all the furniture of the sanctuary, and he did all that the Lord had commanded him.

Commentary: The Tabernacle is formally set up and dedicated on the first day of the first month of the second year after the Exodus (Exodus 40:1-2). This marks the completion of the physical structure and its readiness for worship.

Verse 5: And Moses called to Aaron and his sons, and they brought the burnt offering and the sin offering for themselves and the children of Israel, as the Lord had commanded Moses.

Commentary: The first offerings are made by the newly consecrated priests for themselves and for the nation, inaugurating the sacrificial system.

Verse 6: On that day the two sons of Aaron, **Nadab and Abihu**, took strange fire and brought it before the Lord, which He had not commanded them. And a fire went forth from before the Lord, and consumed them, and they died before the Lord on that day.

Commentary: This recounts the tragic and immediate judgment upon Nadab and Abihu for offering "strange fire" (Leviticus 10:1-2). Their sin underscores the strictness required in approaching God and adhering to His specific commands, especially concerning sacred service.

Verse 7: Then on the day when Moses had completed to erect the sanctuary, the princes of the children of Israel began to bring their offerings before the Lord for the dedication of the altar.

Commentary: Following the initial priestly sacrifices and the incident with Nadab and Abihu, the tribal leaders begin their special dedication offerings.

Verse 8: And they brought up their offerings each prince for one day, a prince each day for twelve days.

Commentary: The detailed account of the dedication offerings (Numbers 7) is summarized, with each of the twelve tribal princes bringing their distinct offering on successive days.

Verse 9: And all the offerings which they brought, each man in his day, one silver charger weighing one hundred and thirty shekels, one silver bowl of seventy shekels after the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour, mingled with oil for a meat offering.

Commentary: This describes the specific items and their weights for the grain offering.

Verse 10: One spoon, weighing ten shekels of gold, full of incense.

Commentary: The golden spoon with incense is noted.

Verse 11: One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year for a burnt offering.

Commentary: The animals for the burnt offering are listed.

Verse 12: And one kid of the goats for a sin offering.

Commentary: The animal for the sin offering is listed.

Verse 13: And for a sacrifice of peace offering, two oxen, five rams, five he-goats, five lambs of a year old.

Commentary: The animals for the peace offering are listed, emphasizing the communal aspect of this sacrifice.

Verse 14: Thus did the twelve princes of Israel day by day, each man in his day.

Commentary: This reaffirms the orderly, twelve-day dedication period.

Verse 15: And it was after this, on the thirteenth day of the month, that Moses commanded the children of Israel to observe the **Passover**.

Commentary: The timing of the second Passover (Numbers 9:1-5) is noted, occurring shortly after the Tabernacle's dedication, reinforcing the continuity of God's covenant and their deliverance.

Verse 16: And the children of Israel kept the Passover in its season on the fourteenth day of the month, as the Lord had commanded Moses, so did the children of Israel.

Commentary: The Israelites obediently observe the Passover in its proper time.

The Census and Further Journeying

Verse 17: And in the second month, on the first day thereof, the Lord spoke unto Moses, saying,

Commentary: The narrative shifts to the second month of the second year, setting the stage for the census.

Verse 18: "Number the heads of all the males of the children of Israel from twenty years old and upward, you and your brother Aaron and the twelve princes of Israel."

Commentary: God commands the first census of the Israelite fighting men (Numbers 1:2-3), vital for organizing the nation and preparing for their journey to Canaan.

Verse 19: And Moses did so, and Aaron came with the twelve princes of Israel, and they numbered the children of Israel in the wilderness of Sinai.

Commentary: The census is duly carried out.

Verse 20: And the numbers of the children of Israel by the houses of their fathers, from twenty years old and upward, were six hundred and three thousand, five hundred and fifty.

Commentary: This number matches the biblical total for the fighting men (Numbers 1:46).

Verse 21: But the children of Levi were not numbered among their brethren the children of Israel.

Commentary: This aligns with the biblical instruction (Numbers 1:49) that the Levites were set apart for Tabernacle service and not included in the military census.

Verse 22: And the number of all the males of the children of Israel from one month old and upward, was twenty-two thousand, two hundred and seventy-three.

Commentary: This census, distinct from the military one, includes all males from one month old, but its purpose isn't specified in this verse (it's typically for the redemption of the firstborn in Numbers 3).

Verse 23: And the number of the children of Levi from one month old and above, was twenty-two thousand.

Commentary: This number for the Levites also aligns with the biblical text (Numbers 3:39).

Verse 24: And Moses placed the priests and the Levites each man to his service and to his burden to serve the sanctuary of the tabernacle, as the Lord had commanded Moses.

Commentary: Moses organizes the Levites and priests according to their specific duties in Tabernacle service, ensuring order and proper worship.

Verse 25: And on the twentieth day of the month, the cloud was taken away from the tabernacle of testimony.

Commentary: The lifting of the cloud (Numbers 10:11-12) signals God's command for the Israelites to break camp and resume their journey.

Verse 26: At that time the children of Israel continued their journey from the wilderness of Sinai, and they took a journey of three days, and the cloud rested upon the wilderness of **Paran**; there the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, for they had provoked the Lord in asking him for meat, that they might eat.

Commentary: They move from Sinai to the Wilderness of Paran. This immediately leads to a new instance of rebellion: complaining about their diet and lusting for meat (Numbers 11:4-6). This shows their quick return to complaining after all the blessings.

Verse 27: And the Lord listened to their voice, and gave them meat which they ate for one month.

Commentary: God provides the meat (quails), fulfilling their desire, but also indicating the judgment to come.

Verse 28: But after this the anger of the Lord was kindled against them, and He struck them with a great slaughter, and they were buried there in that place.

Commentary: The fulfillment of their lust leads to a divine plague and a "great slaughter" (Numbers 11:33), punishing their complaining and greed.

Verse 29: And the children of Israel called that place **Kebroth Hattaavah** (graves of craving), because there they buried the people that lusted for flesh.

Commentary: The place name itself serves as a memorial to their sin and God's judgment, as in the Bible (Numbers 11:34).

Verse 30: And they departed from Kebroth Hattaavah and pitched in **Hazeroth**, which is in the wilderness of Paran.

Commentary: Their journey continues to Hazeroth.

Verse 31: And whilst the children of Israel were in Hazeroth, the anger of the Lord was kindled against **Miriam** on account of Moses, and she became leprous, white as snow.

Commentary: This describes the incident where Miriam and Aaron speak against Moses' marriage to a Cushite woman (Numbers 12:1-10). Miriam is punished with leprosy.

Verse 32: And she was confined without the camp for seven days, until she had been received again after her leprosy.

Commentary: Miriam's temporary exclusion from the camp and eventual healing align with the biblical account (Numbers 12:14-15).

Verse 33: The children of Israel afterward departed from Hazeroth, and pitched in the end of the wilderness of Paran.

Commentary: The journey proceeds further into the Wilderness of Paran, setting up the next major event.

The Spies and Rebellion at Kadesh

Verse 34: At that time, the Lord spoke to Moses to send twelve men from the children of Israel, one man to a tribe, to go and explore the land of **Canaan**.

Commentary: God commands the sending of the twelve spies (Numbers 13:1-2), a pivotal moment that will determine the immediate future of the Israelites.

Verse 35: And Moses sent the twelve men, and they came to the land of Canaan to search and examine it, and they explored the whole land from the wilderness of Sin to **Rechob** as you come to **Chamoth**.

Commentary: The spies thoroughly explore the Promised Land, from south to north, as instructed.

Verse 36: And at the end of forty days they came to Moses and Aaron, and they brought him word as it was in their hearts, and ten of the men brought up an evil report to the children of Israel, of the land which they had explored, saying, "It is better for us to return to Egypt than to go to this land, a land that consumes its inhabitants."

Commentary: The spies return after forty days, and ten of them deliver a disheartening, fearful report, undermining the people's faith and advocating a return to Egypt (Numbers 13:25-33). They falsely claim the land "consumes its inhabitants."

Verse 37: But **Joshua** the son of Nun, and **Caleb** the son of Jephuneh, who were of those that explored the land, said, "The land is exceedingly good."

Commentary: Joshua and Caleb courageously give a positive report, expressing faith in God's ability to give them the land (Numbers 14:6-9).

Verse 38: "If the Lord delight in us, then He will bring us to this land and give it to us, for it is a land flowing with milk and honey."

Commentary: Their faith is expressed, reiterating God's promise of a fertile land.

Verse 39: But the children of Israel would not listen to them, and they listened to the words of the ten men who had brought up an evil report of the land.

Commentary: The people choose to believe the fearful report over the faithful one, a critical act of rebellion against God.

Verse 40: And the Lord heard the murmurings of the children of Israel and He was angry and swore, saying,

Commentary: God's anger is ignited by their lack of faith and rebellion (Numbers 14:26-35).

Verse 41: "Surely not one man of this wicked generation shall see the land from twenty years old and upward, excepting **Caleb** the son of Jephuneh and **Joshua** the son of Nun."

Commentary: This is God's severe judgment: the entire generation of adult Israelites who showed unbelief (except for Joshua and Caleb) will die in the wilderness and not enter the Promised Land.

Verse 42: "But surely this wicked generation shall perish in this wilderness, and their children shall come to the land and they shall possess it; so the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and He made them wander in the wilderness for forty years until the end of that wicked generation, because they did not follow the Lord."

Commentary: The forty-year wilderness wandering is decreed, one year for each day the spies explored the land, a direct punishment for their disobedience and lack of faith. Only the next generation will inherit the land.

Verse 43: And the people dwelt in the wilderness of Paran a long time, and they afterward proceeded to the wilderness by the way of the Red Sea.

Commentary: The long period of wandering in the wilderness begins, as they are prevented from directly entering Canaan.

This chapter covers significant events after the Exodus, primarily at **Mount Sinai** and then during the subsequent journey into the wilderness.

It begins with the **consecration of Aaron and his sons** as priests, following a seven-day period. On the eighth day, the **Tabernacle is formally erected** and dedicated, with various offerings being made. Tragically, **Aaron's two sons, Nadab and Abihu, are consumed by divine fire** for offering "strange fire" that was not commanded by God. Following this, the twelve tribal princes bring their dedication offerings for the altar over a twelve-day period.

Moses then commands the second **Passover** to be observed, which the Israelites faithfully keep. A **census** is conducted of all Israelite males aged twenty and upward, totaling 603,550, excluding the Levites. The Levites are also numbered separately and assigned their Tabernacle duties.

The cloud guiding Israel then lifts, signaling their departure from Sinai. After a three-day journey, they reach the **Wilderness of Paran**. Here, the people complain and **lust for meat**, prompting God to send quails, but also to strike many of them with a severe plague at **Kebroth Hattaavah** (Graves of Craving).

Their journey continues to **Hazeroth**, where **Miriam** speaks against Moses and is temporarily afflicted with **leprosy** by God. After her healing, they move further into the wilderness of Paran.

The chapter culminates with God's command to send **twelve spies** to explore the land of Canaan. After forty days, ten of the spies return with a fearful, negative report, leading the Israelites to rebel and desire to return to Egypt. Only **Joshua and Caleb** give a faithful, positive report. As a result of the people's unbelief and murmuring, God pronounces judgment: the entire generation of Israelites **twenty years old and upward (except Joshua and Caleb)** will **perish in the wilderness**, and their children will inherit the Promised Land after **forty years of wandering**.

Book of Jasher, Chapter 84

Korah's Rebellion and Wilderness Wandering

Verse 1: At that time, **Korah** the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, took many men from the children of Israel, and they rose up and quarreled with **Moses**, **Aaron**, and the whole congregation.

Commentary: This introduces the rebellion of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram (Numbers 16), a major challenge to Moses and Aaron's leadership and God's ordained authority. Korah's lineage from Levi is specified, highlighting his prominent position.

Verse 2: And the Lord was angry with them, and the earth opened its mouth, and swallowed them up, with their houses and all belonging to them, and all the men belonging to Korah.

Commentary: The swift and dramatic divine judgment on Korah and his followers (Numbers 16:31-33) is recounted, where the earth miraculously swallows them alive, emphasizing God's direct intervention against rebellion.

Verse 3: And after this, God made the people go around by the way of **Mount Seir** for a long time.

Commentary: This marks a period of the prolonged wilderness wandering, specifically around the territory of Edom (Mount Seir), as they were not yet permitted to enter the Promised Land directly.

Verse 4: At that time the Lord said to Moses, "Do not provoke a war against the children of **Esau**, for I will not give to you anything belonging to them, as much as the sole of the foot could tread upon, for I have given Mount Seir for an inheritance to Esau."

Commentary: God's command to respect the territory of Edom (Deuteronomy 2:4-5) is stated. This highlights God's sovereignty in allocating lands to other nations, even while Israel awaited their own inheritance.

Verse 5: Therefore did the children of Esau fight against the children of Seir in former times, and the Lord had delivered the children of Seir into the hands of the children of Esau, and destroyed them from before them, and the children of Esau dwelt in their stead unto this day.

Commentary: This provides a historical note, explaining that the Edomites (descendants of Esau) had already conquered and displaced the original inhabitants of Mount Seir, the Horites (children of Seir), with God's help. This historical context reinforces why Israel was not to engage them.

Verse 6: Therefore the Lord said to the children of Israel, "Fight not against the children of Esau your brethren, for nothing in their land belongs to you, but you may buy food of them for money and eat it, and you may buy water of them for money and drink it."

Commentary: The command to avoid conflict is reiterated, along with instructions for peaceful commerce, emphasizing their familial connection ("your brethren") despite their differing destinies.

Verse 7: And the children of Israel did according to the word of the Lord.

Commentary: The Israelites obey this specific command, demonstrating their adherence to God's will regarding Edom.

Verse 8: And the children of Israel went about the wilderness, going round by the way of Mount Sinai for a long time, and touched not the children of Esau, and they continued in that district for nineteen years.

Commentary: This specifies a significant period of their wandering – nineteen years spent circling near Mount Sinai, avoiding conflict with Edom. This period falls within the broader 40-year wandering.

Verse 9: At that time died **Latinus** king of the children of **Chittim**, in the forty-fifth year of his reign, which is the fourteenth year of the children of Israel's departure from Egypt.

Commentary: This verse introduces an external historical event, the death of a king of the Chittim (often associated with Cyprus or the Mediterranean islands/peoples), placing it in the fourteenth year of the Exodus. This is an example of Jasher's attempts to weave in broader historical contexts.

Verse 10: And they buried him in his place which he had built for himself in the land of Chittim, and **Abimnas** reigned in his place for thirty-eight years.

Commentary: The succession of the Chittim king is noted, another detail of contemporary events outside Israel's immediate camp.

Verse 11: And the children of Israel passed the boundary of the children of Esau in those days, at the end of nineteen years, and they came and passed the road of the wilderness of Moab.

Commentary: After the specific nineteen-year period near Edom, the Israelites finally move on, passing through the territory leading to Moab.

Verse 12: And the Lord said to Moses, "Besiege not **Moab**, and do not fight against them, for I will give you nothing of their land."

Commentary: Similar to Edom, God commands Israel not to attack Moab (Deuteronomy 2:9), again asserting His sovereignty over their land.

Verse 13: And the children of Israel passed the road of the wilderness of Moab for nineteen years, and they did not fight against them.

Commentary: This indicates another extended period (nineteen years) of peaceful coexistence and wandering around Moab's territory. This implies a 38-year period of wandering in the wilderness since the spy incident.

Sihon, King of the Amorites

Verse 14: And in the thirty-sixth year of the children of Israel's departing from Egypt, the Lord struck the heart of **Sihon**, king of the **Amorites**, and he waged war, and went forth to fight against the children of Moab.

Commentary: This specifies the year (36th of the Exodus) and describes God's direct intervention in motivating Sihon to attack Moab. This sets the stage for Israel to conquer Sihon's territory, which was not originally part of their designated path.

Verse 15: And Sihon sent messengers to **Beor** the son of Janeas, the son of **Balaam**, counselor to the king of Egypt, and to **Balaam** his son, to curse Moab, in order that it might be delivered into the hand of Sihon.

Commentary: This is a highly interesting and unique detail from Jasher. It introduces **two Balaams**: an older Balaam (Beor, son of Janeas, son of Balaam) who was a counselor to the *king of Egypt*, and *his son*, also named Balaam. Sihon seeks their magical services to curse Moab. This adds a complex lineage and a prior connection of Balaam's family to Egypt.

Verse 16: And the messengers went and brought Beor the son of Janeas, and Balaam his son, from **Pethor** in Mesopotamia, so Beor and Balaam his son came to the city of Sihon and they cursed Moab and their king in the presence of Sihon king of the Amorites.

Commentary: The "two Balaams" are brought from Mesopotamia and successfully perform their curse against Moab for Sihon, aiding his victory.

Verse 17: So Sihon went out with his whole army, and he went to Moab and fought against them, and he subdued them, and the Lord delivered them into his hands, and Sihon slew the king of Moab.

Commentary: Sihon's victory over Moab is complete, a divine act to set up his later confrontation with Israel.

Verse 18: And Sihon took all the cities of Moab in the battle; he also took **Heshbon** from them, for Heshbon was one of the cities of Moab, and Sihon placed his princes and his nobles in Heshbon, and Heshbon belonged to Sihon in those days.

Commentary: Sihon conquers a significant part of Moabite territory, including the strategic city of Heshbon (Numbers 21:26). This is important because Heshbon will become a key Israelite conquest.

Verse 19: Therefore the parable speakers Beor and Balaam his son uttered these words, saying, "Come unto Heshbon, the city of Sihon will be built and established."

Commentary: This quotes a "parable" or saying that was likely famous at the time, referencing Sihon's victory and the establishment of Heshbon as his stronghold.

Verse 20: "Woe unto you Moab! you are lost, O people of **Chemosh**! behold it is written upon the book of the law of God."

Commentary: This is a declaration of woe against Moab, tying their fate to their god Chemosh (Numbers 21:29). The unusual reference to it being "written upon the book of the law of God" suggests this saying or a similar prophecy might have been known within Israelite tradition.

Verse 21: And when Sihon had conquered Moab, he placed guards in the cities which he had taken from Moab, and a considerable number of the children of Moab fell in battle into the hand of Sihon, and he made a great capture of them, sons and daughters, and he slew their king; so Sihon turned back to his own land.

Commentary: Sihon solidifies his control over the conquered Moabite territory, taking captives and returning victorious.

Verse 22: And Sihon gave numerous presents of silver and gold to Beor and Balaam his son, and he dismissed them, and they went to Mesopotamia to their home and country.

Commentary: The "two Balaams" are richly rewarded and return home, setting the stage for the well-known Balaam incident later when the Moabites (now under new leadership) seek his services against Israel.

Miriam's Death and Aaron's Death

Verse 23: At that time all the children of Israel passed from the road of the wilderness of Moab, and returned and surrounded the wilderness of Edom.

Commentary: After the events with Sihon and Moab, Israel adjusts its route, once again engaging with the Edomite border.

Verse 24: So the whole congregation came to the wilderness of **Sin** in the first month of the fortieth year from their departure from Egypt, and the children of Israel dwelt there in **Kadesh**, of the wilderness of Sin, and **Miriam died there and she was buried there**.

Commentary: This marks a significant milestone: the fortieth year of the Exodus. They arrive at Kadesh (Numbers 20:1), and Miriam, Moses' sister, dies and is buried there. This signals the approaching end of the wilderness generation.

Verse 25: At that time Moses sent messengers to **Hadad** king of Edom, saying, "Thus says your brother Israel, 'Let me pass, I pray you, through your land; we will not pass through field or vineyard, we will not drink the water of the well; we will walk in the king's road.'"

Commentary: Moses sends a respectful request to the king of Edom for passage, promising to adhere to strict rules and use only public roads (Numbers 20:14-17). The king of Edom is named "Hadad" in Jasher.

Verse 26: And Edom said to him, "You shall not pass through my country," and Edom went forth to meet the children of Israel with a mighty people.

Commentary: Edom refuses passage and mobilizes a strong force to block Israel, demonstrating their hostility.

Verse 27: And the children of Esau refused to let the children of Israel pass through their land, so the Israelites removed from them and fought not against them.

Commentary: Despite the provocation, Israel obeys God's earlier command not to fight Edom.

Verse 28: For before this the Lord had commanded the children of Israel, saying, "You shall not fight against the children of Esau," therefore the Israelites removed from them and did not fight against them.

Commentary: The divine command is reiterated as the reason for Israel's peaceful withdrawal, even when faced with hostility.

Verse 29: So the children of Israel departed from Kadesh, and all the people came to **Mount Hor**.

Commentary: Their journey takes them from Kadesh to Mount Hor, the location of Aaron's death.

Verse 30: At that time the Lord said to Moses, "Tell your brother **Aaron** that he shall die there, for he shall not come to the land which I have given to the children of Israel."

Commentary: God informs Moses of Aaron's impending death, explaining that Aaron, like Moses, will not enter the Promised Land due to their disobedience at the waters of Meribah (Numbers 20:12, 24).

Verse 31: And Aaron went up, at the command of the Lord, to Mount Hor, in the fortieth year, in the fifth month, in the first day of the month.

Commentary: The precise timing of Aaron's death is given (Numbers 33:38), highlighting its prophetic fulfillment and the nearing end of the wilderness generation.

Verse 32: And Aaron was **one hundred and twenty-three years old** when he died in Mount Hor.

Commentary: Aaron's age at death is specified, consistent with the biblical record (Numbers 33:39).

Chapter 84 of the Book of Jasher details several key events during Israel's long **wilderness wandering**.

It begins with **Korah's rebellion** against Moses and Aaron, which God swiftly judges by causing the earth to open and **swallow Korah and his followers** and their households alive.

After this, God directs Israel to avoid conflict with the **children of Esau (Edomites)** and the **Moabites**, as He had granted those lands to them. The Israelites peacefully circle these territories for extended periods – **nineteen years** around Edom and another **nineteen years** around Moab. During this time, the death of **King Latinus of Chittim** is noted.

In the **thirty-sixth year** of the Exodus, God prompts **Sihon, king of the Amorites**, to attack Moab. Uniquely, Jasher states Sihon enlists two individuals named **Balaam**: an older **Beor (son of Janeas, son of Balaam)**, who was a counselor to the king of Egypt, and **Balaam his son**. These "Balaams" curse Moab, leading to Sihon's decisive victory, where he conquers much of Moabite territory, including **Heshbon**, and kills the king of Moab. The "two Balaams" are rewarded and return to Mesopotamia.

Towards the end of the forty-year wandering, the Israelites return to **Kadesh** in the fortieth year, where **Miriam, Moses' sister, dies and is buried**. Moses sends messengers to **King Hadad of Edom** to request peaceful passage, but Edom refuses and blocks their way. Remembering God's command not to fight Edom, the Israelites turn away.

Finally, the chapter recounts **Aaron's death** on **Mount Hor**. God instructs Moses that Aaron will die there and not enter the Promised Land. Aaron ascends the mountain at God's command in the fortieth year, at the age of **123**, and dies.

Book of Jasher, Chapter 85

Victory Over Arad and Sihon

Verse 1: And **King Arad** the Canaanite, who lived in the south, heard that the Israelites had come by the way of the spies, and he prepared his forces to fight against the Israelites.

Commentary: This describes the first direct conflict in Canaanite territory. King Arad, knowing of Israel's presence from the spies' earlier journey, takes preemptive action to attack.

Verse 2: And the children of Israel were greatly afraid of him, for he had a great and powerful army, so the children of Israel resolved to return to Egypt.

Commentary: Despite being on the cusp of the Promised Land, the Israelites again succumb to fear and entertain the idea of returning to Egypt, mirroring their earlier lack of faith after the spies' report.

Verse 3: And the children of Israel turned back about the distance of three days' journey to **Maserath Beni Jaakon**, for they were greatly afraid on account of King Arad.

Commentary: Their fear causes them to retreat three days' journey, indicating a significant and fearful turning away from their intended path. Maserath Beni Jaakon (Beeroth Bene Jaakan in the Bible) is a wilderness location they had previously visited.

Verse 4: And the children of Israel would not get back to their places, so they remained in Beni Jaakon for thirty days.

Commentary: They halt their retreat at this location for a month, suggesting a period of indecision and continued fear.

Verse 5: And when the children of **Levi** saw that the children of Israel would not turn back, they were jealous for the sake of the Lord, and they rose up and fought against the Israelites their brethren, and slew of them a great body, and forced them to turn back to their place, **Mount Hor**.

Commentary: This is a dramatic and unique detail in Jasher. It describes the Levites acting as zealous enforcers of God's will, violently forcing the rebellious Israelites to turn back towards their proper path near Mount Hor, presumably to resume their journey toward the Promised Land. This highlights the Levites' dedication and God's intolerance for continued rebellion.

Verse 6: And when they returned, King Arad was still preparing his army for battle against the Israelites.

Commentary: Despite the internal conflict and retreat, the external threat from King Arad persists.

Verse 7: And Israel vowed a vow, saying, "If You will deliver this people into my hand, then I will utterly destroy their cities."

Commentary: The Israelites, perhaps emboldened or chastened, make a vow to God, promising complete destruction of the Canaanite cities if granted victory (Numbers 21:2). This shows a renewed, albeit conditional, commitment.

Verse 8: And the Lord listened to the voice of Israel, and He delivered the Canaanites into their hand, and He utterly destroyed them and their cities, and He called the name of the place **Hormah**.

Commentary: God accepts their vow and grants them victory. The complete destruction of Arad's cities and the renaming of the place to Hormah ("destruction" or "devotion to utter destruction") aligns with the biblical account (Numbers 21:3).

Verse 9: And the children of Israel journeyed from Mount Hor and pitched in **Oboth**, and they journeyed from Oboth and they pitched at **Ije-abarim**, in the border of **Moab**.

Commentary: Their journey continues from the site of Aaron's death (Mount Hor) to Oboth and then to Ije-abarim, bringing them to the border of Moab (Numbers 21:10-11).

Verse 10: And the children of Israel sent to Moab, saying, "Let us pass now through your land into our place," but the children of Moab would not allow the children of Israel to pass through their land, for the children of Moab were greatly afraid lest the children of Israel should do to them as **Sihon king of the Amorites** had done to them, who had taken their land and had slain many of them.

Commentary: Israel requests peaceful passage through Moab. Moab refuses due to fear, specifically because of Sihon's recent conquest of their territory (as detailed in the previous chapter), highlighting the regional impact of Sihon's actions.

Verse 11: Therefore Moab would not allow the Israelites to pass through his land, and the Lord commanded the children of Israel, saying, "That they should not fight against Moab," so the Israelites removed from Moab.

Commentary: God again restrains Israel from fighting Moab, respecting their inherited territory, forcing Israel to bypass them (Deuteronomy 2:9).

Verse 12: And the children of Israel journeyed from the border of Moab, and they came to the other side of **Arnon**, the border of Moab, between Moab and the Amorites, and they pitched in the border of **Sihon, king of the Amorites**, in the wilderness of **Kedemoth**.

Commentary: Israel maneuvers around Moab, reaching the Arnon River, which formed the boundary between Moab and the Amorite kingdom of Sihon. This positions them for the next major confrontation (Numbers 21:13).

Verse 13: And the children of Israel sent messengers to Sihon, king of the Amorites, saying,

Commentary: Moses attempts peaceful negotiation with Sihon.

Verse 14: "Let us pass through your land, we will not turn into the fields or into the vineyards, we will go along by the king's highway until we shall have passed your border," but Sihon would not allow the Israelites to pass.

Commentary: The terms of passage are similar to those offered to Edom, promising minimal impact. Sihon, however, defiantly refuses, a divinely orchestrated refusal (Deuteronomy 2:30).

Verse 15: So Sihon collected all the people of the Amorites and went forth into the wilderness to meet the children of Israel, and he fought against Israel in **Jahaz**.

Commentary: Sihon, instead of granting passage, gathers his forces and attacks Israel, initiating the conflict (Numbers 21:23).

Verse 16: And the Lord delivered Sihon king of the Amorites into the hand of the children of Israel, and Israel struck all the people of Sihon with the edge of the sword and **avenged the cause of Moab**.

Commentary: God grants Israel victory over Sihon. The detail that Israel "avenged the cause of Moab" is a unique interpretation by Jasher, suggesting a divine justice where Israel inadvertently punished Sihon for his earlier conquest of Moab.

Verse 17: And the children of Israel took possession of the land of Sihon from **Arnon** to **Jabbok**, to the children of Ammon, and they took all the spoil of the cities.

Commentary: Israel conquers and possesses Sihon's territory, extending from the Arnon to the Jabbok River, bordering Ammon (Numbers 21:24). This is their first significant territorial acquisition.

Verse 18: And Israel took all these cities, and Israel dwelt in all the cities of the Amorites.

Commentary: The newly conquered territory is occupied by the Israelites.

Verse 19: And all the children of Israel resolved to fight against the children of **Ammon**, to take their land also.

Commentary: Following their success against Sihon, the Israelites consider further conquest against Ammon.

Verse 20: So the Lord said to the children of Israel, "Do not besiege the children of Ammon, neither stir up battle against them, for I will give nothing to you of their land," and the children of Israel listened to the word of the Lord, and did not fight against the children of Ammon.

Commentary: God intervenes again, forbidding Israel from attacking Ammon, as their land was also divinely allotted (Deuteronomy 2:19). Israel obeys.

Victory Over Og, King of Bashan

Verse 21: And the children of Israel turned and went up by the way of **Bashan** to the land of **Og, king of Bashan**, and Og the king of Bashan went out to meet the Israelites in battle, and he had with him many valiant men, and a very strong force from the people of the Amorites.

Commentary: Israel turns north to confront Og, another Amorite king, ruling Bashan (Numbers 21:33). Og, renowned for his size and strength, attacks with a powerful army.

Verse 22: And Og king of Bashan was a very powerful man, but **Naaron** his son was exceedingly powerful, even stronger than he was.

Commentary: Jasher introduces Og's son, Naaron, stating he was even stronger than his formidable father. This detail adds to the perceived threat.

Verse 23: And Og said in his heart, "Behold now, the whole camp of Israel takes up a space of three **parsa** (about 9-12 miles), now will I strike them at once without sword or spear."

Commentary: Og, in his arrogance and immense strength, boasts of destroying the entire Israelite camp with a single blow. A "parsa" is an ancient unit of distance, typically 3 or 4 miles.

Verse 24: And Og went up **Mount Jahaz**, and took therefrom one large stone, the length of which was three parsa, and he placed it on his head, and resolved to throw it upon the camp of the children of Israel, to strike all the Israelites with that stone.

Commentary: This is a truly astounding and unique detail from Jasher: Og, a giant, attempts to single-handedly destroy the Israelite camp by carrying a massive stone (3 parsa long!) on his head to drop on them. This vividly portrays his immense stature and the supernatural nature of the coming battle.

Verse 25: And the angel of the Lord came and pierced the stone upon the head of Og, and the stone fell upon the neck of Og that Og fell to the earth on account of the weight of the stone upon his neck.

Commentary: A divine intervention directly thwarts Og's monstrous plan. An angel causes the stone to fall on Og himself, incapacitating him.

Verse 26: At that time the Lord said to the children of Israel, "Be not afraid of him, for I have given him and all his people and all his land into your hand, and you shall do to him as you did to Sihon."

Commentary: God reassures Israel and commands them to destroy Og and conquer his land, just as they did with Sihon (Numbers 21:34).

Verse 27: And Moses went down to him with a small number of the children of Israel, and Moses struck Og with a stick at the ankles of his feet and slew him.

Commentary: Another unique and remarkable detail: Moses, not Joshua or the main army, personally kills the giant Og with a mere stick, striking him at his ankles. This emphasizes Moses' divine power and perhaps Og's vulnerability despite his size. The biblical account simply states "they defeated him" (Numbers 21:35).

Verse 28: The children of Israel afterward pursued the children of Og and all his people, and they beat and destroyed them till there was no remnant left of them.

Commentary: Following Og's demise, Israel completely defeats his army, leaving no survivors.

Verse 29: Moses afterward sent some of the children of Israel to spy out **Jaazer**, for Jaazer was a very famous city.

Commentary: Moses sends spies to reconnoiter Jaazer, another significant Amorite city east of the Jordan.

Verse 30: And the spies went to Jaazer and explored it, and the spies trusted in the Lord, and they fought against the men of Jaazer.

Commentary: Unlike the earlier spies, these spies demonstrate faith and directly engage the enemy, indicating a positive shift in Israel's mindset.

Verse 31: And these men took Jaazer and its villages, and the Lord delivered them into their hand, and they drove out the Amorites who had been there.

Commentary: Jaazer is successfully conquered, completing the conquest of the Amorite lands.

Verse 32: And the children of Israel took the land of the two kings of the Amorites, **sixty cities** which were on the other side of Jordan, from the brook of **Arnon** unto **Mount Hermon**.

Commentary: This summarizes Israel's total conquest of the Transjordan region, encompassing 60 cities from the Arnon River north to Mount Hermon, territory previously held by Sihon and Og (Deuteronomy 3:8-10).

Moab's Fear and Balak's Call to Balaam

Verse 33: And the children of Israel journeyed and came into the plain of **Moab** which is on this side of Jordan, by **Jericho**.

Commentary: Israel now camps on the plains of Moab, just across the Jordan River from Jericho, positioning themselves for the entry into Canaan (Numbers 22:1).

Verse 34: And the children of Moab heard all the evil which the children of Israel had done to the two kings of the Amorites, to Sihon and Og, so all the men of Moab were greatly afraid of the Israelites.

Commentary: The Moabites are terrified by Israel's overwhelming victories over Sihon and Og, recognizing the threat to themselves.

Verse 35: And the elders of Moab said, "Behold the two kings of the Amorites, Sihon and Og, who were more powerful than all the kings of the earth, could not stand against the children of Israel, how then can we stand before them?"

Commentary: The Moabite elders acknowledge the superior power of Sihon and Og, and therefore their own likely inability to resist Israel by conventional means.

Verse 36: "Surely they sent us a message before now to pass through our land on their way, and we would not allow them, now they will turn upon us with their heavy swords and destroy us"; and Moab was distressed on account of the children of Israel, and they were greatly afraid of them, and they consulted together what was to be done to the children of Israel.

Commentary: The Moabites recall their earlier refusal to grant Israel passage and fear retribution. Their distress leads them to seek counsel on how to deal with the formidable Israelite presence.

Verse 37: And the elders of Moab resolved and took one of their men, **Balak** the son of Zippor the Moabite, and made him king over them at that time, and Balak was a very wise man.

Commentary: In their panic, the Moabites appoint Balak as their king, indicating a desperate measure to find strong leadership. Jasher calls him "a very wise man."

Verse 38: And the elders of Moab rose up and sent to the children of **Midian** to make peace with them, for a great battle and enmity had been in those days between Moab and Midian, from the days of **Hadad** the son of Bedad king of Edom, who struck Midian in the field of Moab, unto these days.

Commentary: Recognizing the shared threat, Moab seeks an alliance with Midian, despite a long-standing historical enmity between them, dating back to a conflict with an Edomite king. This detail provides additional historical context for the alliance.

Verse 39: And the children of Moab sent to the children of Midian, and they made peace with them, and the elders of Midian came to the land of Moab to make peace in behalf of the children of Midian.

Commentary: The alliance is successfully forged, uniting the two nations against the common threat.

Verse 40: And the elders of Moab consulted with the elders of Midian what to do in order to save their lives from Israel.

Commentary: The two allied groups strategize on how to counter the Israelite threat.

Verse 41: And all the children of Moab said to the elders of Midian, "Now therefore the children of Israel lick up all that are around us, as the ox licks up the grass of the field, for thus did they do to the two kings of the Amorites who are stronger than we are."

Commentary: The Moabites use a vivid metaphor to describe Israel's overwhelming power, comparing them to an ox devouring everything in its path, emphasizing Israel's complete destruction of Sihon and Og.

Verse 42: And the elders of Midian said to Moab, "We have heard that at the time when Sihon king of the Amorites fought against you, when he prevailed over you and took your land, he had sent to **Beor** the son of Janeas and to **Balaam** his son from Mesopotamia, and they came and cursed you; therefore did the hand of Sihon prevail over you, that he took your land."

Commentary: The Midianite elders bring up the previous chapter's unique detail about the "two Balaams." They attribute Sihon's victory over Moab to the curses invoked by **Beor and Balaam his son**, suggesting that a similar magical intervention is needed against Israel. This directly connects the earlier victory over Moab to the current solution.

Verse 43: "Now therefore send you also to Balaam his son, for he still remains in his land, and give him his hire, that he may come and curse all the people of whom you are afraid"; so the elders of Moab heard this thing, and it pleased them to send to Balaam the son of Beor.

Commentary: The Midianites advise sending for **Balaam the son of Beor** (the younger Balaam), believing his curses were effective before. This sets up the famous Balaam narrative (Numbers 22-24).

Verse 44: So Balak the son of Zippor king of Moab sent messengers to Balaam, saying,

Commentary: King Balak takes the advice and sends for Balaam.

Verse 45: "Behold there is a people come out from Egypt, behold they cover the face of the earth, and they abide over against me."

Commentary: Balak describes the overwhelming number of Israelites, emphasizing their vast presence and threat.

Verse 46: "Now therefore come and curse this people for me, for they are too mighty for me, perhaps I shall prevail to fight against them, and drive them out, for I heard that he whom you bless is blessed, and whom you curse is cursed."

Commentary: Balak explains his desperate need for Balaam's curse to weaken Israel and enable him to defeat them, acknowledging Balaam's reputation as a powerful diviner whose blessings and curses were effective.

Verse 47: So the messengers of Balak went to Balaam and brought Balaam to curse the people to fight against Moab.

Commentary: The messengers successfully bring Balaam, despite God's initial prohibition in the biblical account. Jasher omits Balaam's initial refusal and the subsequent journey with the donkey speaking.

Verse 48: And Balaam came to Balak to curse Israel, and the Lord said to Balaam, "Curse not this people for it is blessed."

Commentary: God directly intervenes and instructs Balaam not to curse Israel, as they are a blessed people (Numbers 22:12).

Verse 49: And Balak urged Balaam day by day to curse Israel, but Balaam listened not to Balak on account of the word of the Lord which He had spoken to Balaam.

Commentary: Balak persistently tries to persuade Balaam, but Balaam is compelled by God's word to speak only what God puts in his mouth, aligning with the biblical narrative (Numbers 23-24).

Verse 50: And when Balak saw that Balaam would not accede to his wish, he rose up and went home, and Balaam also returned to his land and he went from there to **Midian**.

Commentary: Balak, frustrated, dismisses Balaam. Balaam then returns home but subsequently goes to Midian, foreshadowing his later involvement with the Midianites.

The Sin at Peor

Verse 51: And the children of Israel journeyed from the plain of Moab, and pitched by **Jordan** from **Beth-jesimoth** even unto **Abel-shittim**, at the end of the plains of Moab.

Commentary: The Israelites move to their final encampment before crossing the Jordan, specifically Abel-shittim, on the plains of Moab (Numbers 25:1).

Verse 52: And when the children of Israel abode in the plain of **Shittim**, they began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab.

Commentary: This describes the disastrous incident at Peor, where Israel engages in sexual immorality and idolatry with Moabite women (Numbers 25:1).

Verse 53: And the children of Israel approached Moab, and the children of Moab pitched their tents opposite to the camp of the children of Israel.

Commentary: The close proximity of the two camps facilitates the interaction and temptation.

Verse 54: And the children of Moab were afraid of the children of Israel, and the children of Moab took all their daughters and their wives of beautiful aspect and comely appearance, and dressed them in gold and silver and costly garments.

Commentary: This details Moab's calculated strategy: using their attractive women, adorned to entice, as a means of weakening Israel. This is a deliberate seduction.

Verse 55: And the children of Moab seated those women at the door of their tents, in order that the children of Israel might see them and turn to them, and not fight against Moab.

Commentary: The Moabites strategically position their women to draw the Israelites in, aiming to corrupt them and neutralize the military threat.

Verse 56: And all the children of Moab did this thing to the children of Israel, and every man placed his wife and daughter at the door of his tent, and all the children of Israel saw the act of the children of Moab, and the children of Israel turned to the daughters of Moab and coveted them, and they went to them.

Commentary: The strategy works. The Israelites are tempted, "covet" the women, and approach them, initiating the moral downfall.

Verse 57: And it came to pass that when a Hebrew came to the door of the tent of Moab, and saw a daughter of Moab and desired her in his heart, and spoke with her at the door of the tent that which he desired, whilst they were speaking together the men of the tent would come out and speak to the Hebrew like unto these words:

Commentary: This provides a detailed scenario of the seduction, showing the Moabite men actively involved in inviting the Israelites in.

Verse 58: "Surely you know that we are brethren, we are all the descendants of **Lot** and the descendants of **Abraham** his brother, therefore why will you not remain with us, and therefore why will you not eat our bread and our sacrifice?"

Commentary: The Moabites appeal to a shared ancestry (Lot and Abraham) to establish a false sense of kinship and encourage participation in their pagan feasts, including sacrifices to their gods. This highlights the intertwined spiritual and physical idolatry.

Verse 59: And when the children of Moab had thus overwhelmed him with their speeches, and enticed him by their flattering words, they seated him in the tent and cooked and sacrificed for him, and he ate of their sacrifice and of their bread.

Commentary: The Israelites are lured into the tents, partake in the forbidden sacrifices and food, fully committing to the idolatry.

Verse 60: They then gave him wine and he drank and became intoxicated, and they placed before him a beautiful damsel, and he did with her as he liked, for he knew not what he was doing, as he had drunk plentifully of wine.

Commentary: Alcohol is introduced as a further means of seduction and moral compromise, leading to sexual immorality. The man is described as so intoxicated that he is unaware of his actions.

Verse 61: Thus did the children of Moab to Israel in that place, in the plain of Shittim, and the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel on account of this matter, and He sent a **pestilence** amongst them, and there died of the Israelites **twenty-four thousand men**.

Commentary: God's anger erupts, and a plague strikes Israel, resulting in a death toll of 24,000, aligning with the biblical account (Numbers 25:9).

Verse 62: Now there was a man of the children of Simeon whose name was **Zimri**, the son of Salu, who connected himself with the Midianite **Cosbi**, the daughter of Zur, king of Midian, in the sight of all the children of Israel.

Commentary: This highlights the audacious public sin of Zimri and Cosbi, particularly egregious as it occurred openly and involved a Midianite princess, signifying a direct challenge to God's holiness (Numbers 25:6-8).

Verse 63: And **Phineas** the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, saw this wicked thing which Zimri had done, and he took a spear and rose up and went after them, and pierced them both and slew them, and the pestilence ceased from the children of Israel.

Commentary: Phinehas' zealous act of righteous judgment, killing Zimri and Cosbi, is recounted. His decisive action ends the plague and is credited with turning away God's wrath (Numbers 25:7-8).

Chapter 85 of the Book of Jasher recounts a series of battles and significant events as the Israelites approach the Promised Land.

It begins with **King Arad** of Canaan attacking Israel. Due to fear, the Israelites retreat for three days. Uniquely, the **Levites rise up and forcibly turn the fearful Israelites back** towards Mount Hor. After this, Israel makes a vow, and God grants them victory over Arad, leading to the utter destruction of his cities and the naming of the place **Hormah**.

The Israelites then journey toward Moab. They request passage, but the **Moabites refuse** out of fear of what Israel did to Sihon. God commands Israel not to fight Moab, so they bypass them and move towards the Amorite territory.

Moses sends messengers to **Sihon, king of the Amorites**, requesting peaceful passage, but Sihon refuses and attacks. God delivers Sihon into Israel's hand, and they **defeat him and conquer all his land** from Arnon to Jabbok, even "avenging the cause of Moab" (a unique detail in Jasher). Israel then considers attacking Ammon, but God again forbids it.

Next, Israel turns toward **Og, king of Bashan**. Jasher provides a vivid and unique account of Og's immense power, stating his son, **Naaron**, was even stronger. Og attempts to destroy the entire Israelite

camp by single-handedly carrying a **giant stone (three parsa long)** to drop on them. However, an **angel of the Lord intervenes**, causing the stone to fall on Og's neck, incapacitating him. Moses then personally **kills Og with a stick, striking his ankles**. Israel then utterly destroys Og's army and conquers his sixty cities, taking possession of the entire Transjordan region from Arnon to Mount Hermon.

Finally, the Israelites encamp on the **plains of Moab**, across the Jordan from Jericho. The Moabites, terrified by Israel's victories, ally with **Midian**. The Midianite elders advise Balak, the newly appointed king of Moab, to send for **Balaam** (the son of Beor, the second Balaam mentioned in Jasher) to curse Israel, recalling his effectiveness against Moab. Balak sends for Balaam, who, despite Balak's urgings, is supernaturally prevented by God from cursing Israel. Balaam returns home.

The chapter concludes with the devastating **Sin at Peor**. The Moabites strategically send their adorned women to entice the Israelites. Jasher details how the Moabite men encourage the Israelites into their tents, appealing to shared ancestry (Lot and Abraham), offering them food and pagan sacrifices, and intoxicating them with wine, leading to sexual immorality. God's anger burns, sending a **pestilence** that kills **24,000 Israelites**. The plague ceases only when **Phinehas**, Aaron's grandson, zealously skewers **Zimri**, a Simeonite prince, and **Cosbi**, a Midianite princess, in the act of public sin.

Book of Jasher, Chapter 86

The Second Census

Verse 1: At that time, after the plague, the Lord said to **Moses** and to **Eleazar** the son of Aaron the priest, saying,

Commentary: This sets the scene immediately after the devastating plague at Peor (Numbers 25), indicating a new phase for Israel under Eleazar's leadership as high priest, following Aaron's death.

Verse 2: "Number the heads of the whole community of the children of Israel, from twenty years old and upward, all that went forth in the army."

Commentary: God commands a second census of the fighting men (Numbers 26:2). This census is crucial for understanding the new generation and preparing for the conquest of Canaan.

Verse 3: And Moses and Eleazar numbered the children of Israel after their families, and the number of all Israel was **seven hundred thousand, seven hundred and thirty**.

Commentary: This is a notable difference from the biblical account, which records 601,730 fighting men (Numbers 26:51). Jasher presents a higher number for this second census.

Verse 4: And the number of the children of Levi, from one month old and upward, was **twenty-three thousand**, and among these there was not a man of those numbered by Moses and Aaron in the wilderness of Sinai.

Commentary: The Levite census number (Numbers 26:62) is consistent with the Bible. The emphasis that "not a man" from the previous census was left alive (except for Caleb and Joshua, as explained in the next verse) highlights the generational shift.

Verse 5: For the Lord had told them that they would die in the wilderness, so they all died, and not one had been left of them excepting **Caleb** the son of Jephunneh, and **Joshua** the son of Nun.

Commentary: This verse explicitly states the fulfillment of God's judgment from the Kadesh incident: the entire adult generation (20 years and older) who rebelled died in the wilderness, with only Caleb and Joshua surviving to enter the Promised Land.

Vengeance Against Midian

Verse 6: And it was after this that the Lord said to Moses, "Say unto the children of Israel to avenge upon **Midian** the cause of their brethren the children of Israel."

Commentary: God commands Israel to take vengeance on Midian (Numbers 31:1-2). This is a direct consequence of Midian's role in seducing Israel into idolatry and immorality at Peor, often seen as following Balaam's counsel to Balak (Numbers 31:16).

Verse 7: And Moses did so, and the children of Israel chose from among them **twelve thousand men**, being one thousand to a tribe, and they went to Midian.

Commentary: Moses organizes the punitive expedition, sending a representative force of 1,000 men from each of the twelve tribes.

Verse 8: And the children of Israel warred against Midian, and they slew every male, also the **five princes of Midian**, and **Balaam the son of Beor** did they slay with the sword.

Commentary: The Israelites execute God's judgment against Midian, killing all adult males, including their five princes (Numbers 31:7-8). Crucially, **Balaam is also killed by the sword**, directly linking his death to the conflict with Midian, emphasizing his responsibility for the sin at Peor (Numbers 31:8, 16).

Verse 9: And the children of Israel took the wives of Midian captive, with their little ones and their cattle, and all belonging to them.

Commentary: They take the women, children, and livestock as plunder.

Verse 10: And they took all the spoil and all the prey, and they brought it to Moses and to Eleazar to the plains of Moab.

Commentary: The victorious army returns with the immense spoils of war.

Verse 11: And Moses and Eleazar and all the princes of the congregation went forth to meet them with joy.

Commentary: The leaders welcome the returning army, pleased with the successful execution of God's command.

Verse 12: And they divided all the spoil of Midian, and the children of Israel had been avenged upon Midian for the cause of their brethren the children of Israel.

Commentary: The spoils are distributed (Numbers 31:25-47), concluding the act of divine vengeance against Midian for their role in Israel's sin at Peor.

Chapter 86 of the Book of Jasher focuses on two significant events as Israel prepares to enter Canaan: the **second census** and the **vengeance against Midian**.

After the plague at Peor, God commands Moses and Eleazar to conduct a **census** of all Israelite males twenty years and older who were fit for military service. The chapter records their number as **700,730**, which is higher than the biblical figure. The Levites are also numbered separately at 23,000. It is explicitly stated that **not a single man** from the generation previously counted at Sinai survived to this point, except for **Caleb and Joshua**, fulfilling God's judgment for their earlier rebellion.

Next, the Lord commands Israel to take **vengeance against Midian** for their role in enticing Israel into idolatry and immorality. Moses dispatches a force of **twelve thousand men**, a thousand from each tribe. The Israelites successfully wage war against Midian, **killing every male**, including the five Midianite princes. Significantly, **Balaam the son of Beor is also slain by the sword** during this conflict, linking his death directly to the retribution for the sin at Peor. The Israelites take captive the Midianite women and children, along with their livestock and possessions, bringing immense spoil back to the plains of Moab, where it is divided among the people.

Book of Jasher, Chapter 87

Joshua's Appointment

Verse 1: At that time the Lord said to Moses, "Behold, your days are approaching an end. Take now **Joshua** the son of Nun, your servant, and place him in the Tabernacle, and I will command him." And Moses did so.

Commentary: This marks the beginning of the transition of leadership from Moses to Joshua (Deuteronomy 31:14-15, 23). God directly instructs Moses to bring Joshua into the Tabernacle, the place of divine encounter, for his formal appointment.

Verse 2: And the Lord appeared in the Tabernacle in a pillar of cloud, and the pillar of cloud stood at the entrance of the Tabernacle.

Commentary: The visible manifestation of God's presence, the pillar of cloud, appears at the Tabernacle entrance, signifying the divine sanction of Joshua's appointment.

Verse 3: And the Lord commanded Joshua the son of Nun and said unto him, "Be strong and courageous, for you shall bring the children of Israel to the land which I swore to give them, and I will be with you."

Commentary: God directly addresses Joshua, giving him a charge similar to what Moses often received: to be strong and courageous. He confirms Joshua's role in leading Israel into the Promised Land and assures him of His divine presence (Deuteronomy 31:23).

Verse 4: And Moses said to Joshua, "Be strong and courageous, for you will make the children of Israel inherit the land, and the Lord will be with you; He will not leave you nor forsake you, be not afraid nor disheartened."

Commentary: Moses then publicly reiterates God's charge to Joshua, encouraging him and assuring him of God's unwavering support, mirroring Moses' own commission from God (Deuteronomy 31:7-8). This public affirmation strengthens Joshua's authority before the people.

Moses' Final Instructions and Death

Verse 5: And Moses called to all the children of Israel and said to them, "You have seen all the good which the Lord your God has done for you in the wilderness."

Commentary: Moses delivers his farewell address, reminding the people of God's faithfulness and provision throughout their wilderness journey.

Verse 6: "Now therefore observe all the words of this law, and walk in the way of the Lord your God, turn not from the way which the Lord has commanded you, either to the right or to the left."

Commentary: Moses gives a final, crucial exhortation for the Israelites to faithfully obey God's entire law, emphasizing steadfast adherence to His commands.

Verse 7: And Moses taught the children of Israel statutes and judgments and laws to do in the land as the Lord had commanded him.

Commentary: Moses reviews and teaches the laws that are to govern their lives in the Promised Land, ensuring they are prepared for the covenant relationship and its requirements.

Verse 8: And he taught them the way of the Lord and his laws; behold they are written upon the **book of the law of God** which he gave to the children of Israel by the hand of Moses.

Commentary: This verse points to the compilation of the laws into a written "book of the law," which Moses authored, serving as a lasting covenant document (Deuteronomy 31:24-26).

Verse 9: And Moses finished commanding the children of Israel, and the Lord said to him, saying, "Go up to the **Mount Abarim** and die there, and be gathered unto your people as Aaron your brother was gathered."

Commentary: After completing his mission of preparing Israel, God gives Moses his final command: to ascend Mount Abarim (specifically Mount Nebo within that range, as in Deuteronomy 32:49-50) and die, being reunited with his ancestors. This signifies the end of his earthly pilgrimage.

Verse 10: And Moses went up as the Lord had commanded him, and he died there in the land of Moab by the order of the Lord, in the fortieth year from the Israelites going forth from the land of Egypt.

Commentary: Moses' obedient ascent and death are recorded, marking the end of the forty years of wandering and the conclusion of an era. His death is explicitly "by the order of the Lord."

Verse 11: And the children of Israel wept for Moses in the plains of Moab for **thirty days**, and the days of weeping and mourning for Moses were completed.

Commentary: The Israelites observe a thirty-day period of mourning for Moses (Deuteronomy 34:8), demonstrating their profound grief and respect for their great leader. This concludes the era of Moses' direct leadership.

Chapter 87 of the Book of Jasher details the final acts of Moses and the transition of leadership to Joshua.

It begins with God commanding Moses to bring **Joshua** to the **Tabernacle** for his official appointment as the new leader. The Lord appears in a **pillar of cloud** and directly instructs Joshua to "be strong and courageous" as he will lead Israel into the Promised Land, promising His presence with him. Moses then publicly reiterates this charge to Joshua, further encouraging him and assuring him of God's unwavering support.

Moses then delivers his **final address to the children of Israel**, reminding them of God's goodness and urging them to faithfully observe all the words of God's law, which he has taught and which are written in the "book of the law of God."

After completing these commands, the Lord instructs Moses to ascend **Mount Abarim (specifically Mount Nebo)** to die, where he will be "gathered unto his people" like his brother Aaron. Moses obeys, dying in the land of Moab in the fortieth year of the Exodus, as commanded by the Lord.

Finally, the children of Israel mourn for Moses in the plains of Moab for **thirty days**, marking the completion of his long and impactful leadership.

Book of Jasher, Chapter 88

Joshua's Commission and Crossing the Jordan

Verse 1: And it was after the death of **Moses** that the Lord said to **Joshua** the son of Nun, saying,

Commentary: This chapter immediately follows Moses' death, establishing Joshua as the new leader, ready to take on the monumental task of conquering Canaan.

Verse 2: "Rise up and pass the **Jordan** to the land which I have given to the children of Israel, and you shall make the children of Israel inherit the land."

Commentary: God gives Joshua the direct command to cross the Jordan River and begin the conquest of the Promised Land, emphasizing Israel's divine inheritance (Joshua 1:2).

Verse 3: "Every place upon which the sole of your feet shall tread shall belong to you, from the wilderness of Lebanon unto the great river, the river of **Perath** (Euphrates), shall be your boundary."

Commentary: God outlines the vast extent of the territory Israel is promised, from the wilderness to Lebanon, and all the way to the Euphrates River, an ideal and expansive boundary (Joshua 1:3-4).

Verse 4: "No man shall stand up against you all the days of your life; as I was with Moses, so will I be with you, only be strong and of good courage to observe all the law which Moses commanded you, turn not from the way either to the right or to the left, in order that you may prosper in all that you do."

Commentary: God promises Joshua His unwavering presence and success, contingent on his strict obedience to the Law of Moses. This powerful promise and instruction are central to Joshua's leadership (Joshua 1:5-9).

Verse 5: And Joshua commanded the officers of Israel, saying, "Pass through the camp and command the people, saying, 'Prepare for yourselves provisions, for in three days more you will pass the Jordan to possess the land.'"

Commentary: Joshua, immediately assuming his authority, instructs the officers to prepare the people for the river crossing within three days (Joshua 1:10-11).

Verse 6: And the officers of the children of Israel did so, and they commanded the people and they did all that Joshua had commanded.

Commentary: The people respond with obedience, demonstrating their acceptance of Joshua's leadership.

Verse 7: And Joshua sent two men to spy out the land of **Jericho**, and the men went and spied out Jericho.

Commentary: Joshua dispatches two spies to Jericho, just as Moses had done earlier with Canaan (Joshua 2:1), to gather intelligence for the first conquest.

Verse 8: And at the end of seven days they came to Joshua in the camp and said to him, "The Lord has delivered the whole land into our hand, and the inhabitants thereof are melted with fear because of us."

Commentary: The spies return with a positive report, confirming that the fear of Israel has already paralyzed the inhabitants of Jericho, indicating God's preparatory work (Joshua 2:23-24). The time frame of "seven days" for the spying mission is a specific detail from Jasher, not in the biblical text.

Verse 9: And it came to pass after that, that Joshua rose up in the morning and all Israel with him, and they journeyed from **Shittim**, and Joshua and all Israel with him passed the Jordan; and Joshua was **eighty-two years old** when he passed the Jordan with Israel.

Commentary: The crossing of the Jordan is described (Joshua 3:1, 14-17). Jasher specifies Joshua's age at this pivotal moment as 82 years old, a detail not found in the biblical account.

Verse 10: And the people went up from Jordan on the tenth day of the first month, and they encamped in **Gilgal** at the eastern corner of Jericho.

Commentary: The crossing date and their first encampment in Canaan, Gilgal, are noted (Joshua 4:19).

Verse 11: And the children of Israel kept the **Passover** in Gilgal, in the plains of Jericho, on the fourteenth day of the month, as it is written in the law of Moses.

Commentary: The first Passover in the Promised Land is observed, marking their renewed covenant commitment after entering Canaan (Joshua 5:10-11).

Verse 12: And the **manna ceased** at that time on the morrow of the Passover, and there was no more manna for the children of Israel, and they ate of the produce of the land of Canaan.

Commentary: The miraculous provision of manna ceases as Israel begins to eat the natural produce of the land (Joshua 5:12), symbolizing their transition from wilderness dependence to settled life.

The Fall of Jericho and Ai

Verse 13: And Jericho was entirely closed against the children of Israel, no one came out or went in.

Commentary: Jericho's defensive posture is described, highlighting its impregnability to conventional attack (Joshua 6:1).

Verse 14: And it was in the second month, on the first day of the month, that the Lord said to Joshua, "Rise up, behold I have given Jericho into your hand with all the people thereof; and all your fighting men shall go round the city, once each day, thus shall you do for six days."

Commentary: God gives Joshua the specific, unusual instructions for the conquest of Jericho (Joshua 6:2-3), emphasizing that the victory will be divine, not military.

Verse 15: "And the priests shall blow upon trumpets, and when you shall hear the sound of the trumpet, all the people shall give a great shouting, that the walls of the city shall fall down; all the people shall go up every man against his opponent."

Commentary: The method of conquest, involving a procession, trumpets, and a mighty shout to bring down the walls, is detailed (Joshua 6:4-5).

Verse 16: And Joshua did so according to all that the Lord had commanded him.

Commentary: Joshua's unwavering obedience is emphasized.

Verse 17: And on the seventh day they went round the city seven times, and the priests blew upon trumpets.

Commentary: The specific ritual of the seventh day, involving seven circuits, is noted (Joshua 6:15).

Verse 18: And at the seventh round, Joshua said to the people, "Shout, for the Lord has delivered the whole city into our hands."

Commentary: Joshua gives the command for the decisive shout.

Verse 19: "Only the city and all that it contains shall be accursed to the Lord, and keep yourselves from the accursed thing, lest you make the camp of Israel accursed and trouble it."

Commentary: The instruction for the "devoted thing" (herem) is given: Jericho and its inhabitants are utterly dedicated to destruction, with a strict warning against taking any forbidden spoil (Joshua 6:17-18).

Verse 20: "But all the silver and gold and brass and iron shall be consecrated to the Lord, they shall come into the treasury of the Lord."

Commentary: Specific exceptions are made for precious metals, which are to be dedicated to God's treasury (Joshua 6:19).

Verse 21: And the people blew upon trumpets and made a great shouting, and the walls of Jericho fell down, and all the people went up, every man straight before him, and they took the city and utterly destroyed all that was in it, both man and woman, young and old, ox and sheep and ass, with the edge of the sword.

Commentary: The miraculous fall of the walls and the complete destruction of Jericho's inhabitants and animals are described, fulfilling God's command (Joshua 6:20-21).

Verse 22: And they burned the whole city with fire; only the vessels of silver and gold, and brass and iron, they put into the treasury of the Lord.

Commentary: Jericho is consumed by fire, with only the specified metals being preserved for the Tabernacle treasury (Joshua 6:24).

Verse 23: And Joshua swore at that time, saying, "Cursed be the man who builds Jericho; he shall lay the foundation thereof in his first-born, and in his youngest son shall he set up the gates thereof."

Commentary: Joshua pronounces a prophetic curse on anyone who would rebuild Jericho (Joshua 6:26), linking the rebuilding with the loss of their eldest and youngest sons.

Verse 24: And **Achan** the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, son of Judah, dealt treacherously in the accursed thing, and he took of the accursed thing and hid it in the tent, and the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel.

Commentary: This introduces the sin of Achan, who disobeys God's command regarding the devoted things from Jericho (Joshua 7:1). His act brings God's wrath upon the entire community.

Verse 25: And it was after this when the children of Israel had returned from burning Jericho, Joshua sent men to spy out also **Ai**, and to fight against it.

Commentary: Following Jericho's destruction, Joshua targets the next city, Ai (Joshua 7:2).

Verse 26: And the men went up and spied out Ai, and they returned and said, "Let not all the people go up with you to Ai, only let about three thousand men go up and strike the city, for the men thereof are but few."

Commentary: The spies underestimate Ai, advising a small force, unaware of God's withdrawal due to Achan's sin (Joshua 7:3).

Verse 27: And Joshua did so, and there went up with him of the children of Israel about three thousand men, and they fought against the men of Ai.

Commentary: Joshua follows the spies' faulty advice.

Verse 28: And the battle was severe against Israel, and the men of Ai struck thirty-six men of Israel, and the children of Israel fled from before the men of Ai.

Commentary: Israel suffers a humiliating defeat, with 36 casualties, and retreats from Ai (Joshua 7:4-5), revealing God's displeasure.

Verse 29: And when Joshua saw this thing, he tore his garments and fell upon his face to the ground before the Lord, he, with the elders of Israel, and they put dust upon their heads.

Commentary: Joshua's profound distress and prayerful lament before God (Joshua 7:6) indicate his shock and search for answers regarding the unexpected defeat.

Verse 30: And Joshua said, "Why O Lord did You bring this people over the Jordan? What shall I say after the Israelites have turned their backs against their enemies?"

Commentary: Joshua questions God's purpose in bringing them across the Jordan only to suffer defeat, fearing the implications for their reputation and God's name (Joshua 7:7-8).

Verse 31: "Now therefore all the Canaanites, inhabitants of the land, will hear this thing, and surround us and cut off our name."

Commentary: Joshua expresses concern that this defeat will embolden the Canaanites to unite and destroy Israel (Joshua 7:9).

Verse 32: And the Lord said to Joshua, "Why do you fall upon your face? Rise, get you off, for the Israelites have sinned, and taken of the accursed thing; I will no more be with them unless they destroy the accursed thing from among them."

Commentary: God reveals the cause of their defeat: Achan's sin. He demands the removal of the accursed thing for His presence to return (Joshua 7:10-12).

Verse 33: And Joshua rose up and assembled the people, and brought the **Urim** by the order of the Lord, and the tribe of Judah was taken, and Achan the son of Carmi was taken.

Commentary: Joshua conducts a ceremonial inquiry using the Urim (or lots) to identify the culprit, first by tribe, then by clan, and finally by individual, leading to Achan's exposure (Joshua 7:16-18).

Verse 34: And Joshua said to Achan, "Tell me, my son, what have you done," and Achan said, "I saw among the spoil a goodly garment of Shinar and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of

fifty shekels weight; I coveted them and took them, and behold they are all hid in the earth in the midst of the tent."

Commentary: Achan confesses his sin, detailing the items he stole: a valuable robe from Shinar (Babylon), silver, and gold (Joshua 7:20-21).

Verse 35: And Joshua sent men who went and took them from the tent of Achan, and they brought them to Joshua.

Commentary: The stolen goods are retrieved, confirming Achan's confession.

Verse 36: And Joshua took Achan and these utensils, and his sons and daughters and all belonging to him, and they brought them into the **valley of Achor**.

Commentary: Achan, his family, and all his possessions are brought to the Valley of Achor (Trouble), signifying the corporate responsibility for his sin (Joshua 7:24).

Verse 37: And Joshua burned them there with fire, and all the Israelites stoned Achan with stones, and they raised over him a heap of stones, therefore did he call that place the valley of Achor, so the Lord's anger was appeased, and Joshua afterward came to the city and fought against it.

Commentary: Achan and his family (and possessions) are executed by stoning and burning, and a heap of stones marks the site. This act of judgment appeases God's anger, and Israel is now ready to resume the conquest (Joshua 7:25-26).

Verse 38: And the Lord said to Joshua, "Fear not, neither be you dismayed, behold I have given into your hand Ai, her king and her people, and you shall do unto them as you did to Jericho and her king, only the spoil thereof and the cattle thereof shall you take for a prey for yourselves; lay an ambush for the city behind it."

Commentary: God renews His assurance to Joshua, giving specific instructions for a new strategy against Ai, including permission to take spoil and setting an ambush (Joshua 8:1-2).

Verse 39: So Joshua did according to the word of the Lord, and he chose from among the sons of war thirty thousand valiant men, and he sent them, and they lay in ambush for the city.

Commentary: Joshua diligently follows God's new plan, deploying a large ambush force.

Verse 40: And he commanded them, saying, "When you shall see us, we will flee before them with cunning, and they will pursue us, you shall then rise out of the ambush and take the city," and they did so.

Commentary: The strategy for drawing the men of Ai out of the city is detailed (Joshua 8:4-7).

Verse 41: And Joshua fought, and the men of the city went out toward Israel, not knowing that they were lying in ambush for them behind the city.

Commentary: The trap is set, and the men of Ai fall for it.

Verse 42: And Joshua and all the Israelites feigned themselves wearied out before them, and they fled by the way of the wilderness with cunning.

Commentary: The feigned retreat draws the enemy further out.

Verse 43: And the men of Ai gathered all the people who were in the city to pursue the Israelites, and they went out and were drawn away from the city, not one remained, and they left the city open and pursued the Israelites.

Commentary: The entire fighting force of Ai is lured away, leaving their city vulnerable.

Verse 44: And those who were lying in ambush rose up out of their places, and hastened to come to the city and took it and set it on fire, and the men of Ai turned back, and behold the smoke of the city ascended to the skies, and they had no means of retreating either one way or the other.

Commentary: The ambush succeeds, Ai is captured and burned, and the men of Ai find themselves trapped between the Israelite forces (Joshua 8:19-21).

Verse 45: And all the men of Ai were in the midst of Israel, some on this side and some on that side, and they struck them so that not one of them remained.

Commentary: The complete annihilation of Ai's forces is described (Joshua 8:22-24).

Verse 46: And the children of Israel took **Melosh** king of Ai alive, and they brought him to Joshua, and Joshua hanged him on a tree and he died.

Commentary: Jasher names the king of Ai as "Melosh." The king is captured and executed by hanging (Joshua 8:29), a common practice for defeated rulers.

Verse 47: And the children of Israel returned to the city after having burned it, and they struck all those that were in it with the edge of the sword.

Commentary: The remaining inhabitants (non-combatants) are also destroyed.

Verse 48: And the number of those that had fallen of the men of Ai, both man and woman, was **twelve thousand**; only the cattle and the spoil of the city they took to themselves, according to the word of the Lord to Joshua.

Commentary: The total casualties at Ai are 12,000, and the Israelites are permitted to take the spoil, distinguishing this conquest from Jericho (Joshua 8:25-27).

The Gibeonite Deception and the Five Kings

Verse 49: And all the kings on this side Jordan, all the kings of Canaan, heard of the evil which the children of Israel had done to Jericho and to Ai, and they gathered themselves together to fight against Israel.

Commentary: The significant victories at Jericho and Ai alarm the other Canaanite kings, prompting them to form a formidable alliance against Israel (Joshua 9:1-2).

Verse 50: Only the inhabitants of **Gibeon** were greatly afraid of fighting against the Israelites lest they should perish, so they acted cunningly, and they came to Joshua and to all Israel, and said unto them, "We have come from a distant land, now therefore make a covenant with us."

Commentary: The Gibeonites, fearing destruction, resort to deception, pretending to be from a far-off land to secure a peace treaty with Israel (Joshua 9:3-6).

Verse 51: And the inhabitants of Gibeon over-reached the children of Israel, and the children of Israel made a covenant with them, and they made peace with them, and the princes of the congregation swore unto them, but afterward the children of Israel knew that they were neighbors to them and were dwelling among them.

Commentary: The Gibeonite deception works. The Israelite leaders, failing to consult God, enter into a covenant with them. The later discovery of the deception causes a dilemma (Joshua 9:15-16).

Verse 52: But the children of Israel slew them not; for they had sworn to them by the Lord, and they became hewers of wood and drawers of water.

Commentary: Despite the deception, Israel honors their oath made in the Lord's name. The Gibeonites are spared but assigned a perpetual servitude as "hewers of wood and drawers of water" (Joshua 9:18-21).

Verse 53: And Joshua said to them, "Why did you deceive me, to do this thing to us?" and they answered him, saying, "Because it was told to your servants all that you had done to all the kings of the Amorites, and we were greatly afraid of our lives, and we did this thing."

Commentary: Joshua confronts the Gibeonites, who explain their actions were driven by extreme fear of Israel's destructive power, particularly against the Amorite kings (Sihon and Og).

Verse 54: And Joshua appointed them on that day to hew wood and to draw water, and he divided them for slaves to all the tribes of Israel.

Commentary: Joshua formalizes their servitude, distributing them to serve all the tribes.

Verse 55: And when **Adonizedek** king of Jerusalem heard all that the children of Israel had done to Jericho and to Ai, he sent to **Hoham** king of Hebron and to **Piram** king of Jarmuth, and to **Japhia** king of Lachish and to **Debir** king of Eglon, saying,

Commentary: The Gibeonite alliance prompts a reaction from a coalition of five southern Amorite kings, led by Adoni-zedek of Jerusalem (Joshua 10:1-3).

Verse 56: "Come up to me and help me, that we may strike the children of Israel and the inhabitants of Gibeon who have made peace with the children of Israel."

Commentary: The kings aim to punish Gibeon for its defection and to confront Israel directly.

Verse 57: And they gathered themselves together and the five kings of the Amorites went up with all their camps, a mighty people numerous as the sand of the sea shore.

Commentary: The formidable size of the allied Amorite army is emphasized, comparing them to countless grains of sand.

Verse 58: And all these kings came and encamped before Gibeon, and they began to fight against the inhabitants of Gibeon, and all the men of Gibeon sent to Joshua, saying, "Come up quickly to us and help us, for all the kings of the Amorites have gathered together to fight against us."

Commentary: The Amorite kings attack Gibeon, prompting the Gibeonites to appeal to Joshua for help, based on their covenant (Joshua 10:4-6).

Verse 59: And Joshua and all the fighting people went up from Gilgal, and Joshua came suddenly to them, and struck these five kings with a great slaughter.

Commentary: Joshua immediately responds, leading a surprise attack against the allied kings (Joshua 10:7-10).

Verse 60: And the Lord confounded them before the children of Israel, who struck them with a terrible slaughter in Gibeon, and pursued them along the way that goes up to **Beth Horon** unto **Makkedah**, and they fled from before the children of Israel.

Commentary: God intervenes to throw the enemy into confusion, leading to a massive rout and pursuit.

Verse 61: And whilst they were fleeing, the Lord sent upon them **hailstones from heaven**, and more of them died by the hailstones, than by the slaughter of the children of Israel.

Commentary: A miraculous divine intervention: a severe hailstorm kills more of the fleeing enemies than Israel's swords (Joshua 10:11), highlighting God's direct involvement in the battle.

Verse 62: And the children of Israel pursued them, and they still struck them in the road, going on and striking them.

Commentary: The pursuit and slaughter continue relentlessly.

Verse 63: And when they were striking, the day was declining toward evening, and Joshua said in the sight of all the people, "Sun, stand you still upon Gibeon, and you moon in the valley of Ajalon, until the nation shall have avenged itself upon its enemies."

Commentary: As evening approaches and to ensure complete victory, Joshua commands the sun and moon to stand still, a profound act of faith and a unique miraculous event (Joshua 10:12).

Verse 64: And the Lord listened to the voice of Joshua, and the sun stood still in the midst of the heavens, and it stood still **six and thirty moments**, and the moon also stood still and hastened not to go down a whole day.

Commentary: God responds to Joshua's prayer, stopping the celestial bodies. Jasher uniquely quantifies the duration of the sun's stillness as "six and thirty moments." This detail adds specificity to the miraculous event.

Verse 65: And there was no day like that, before it or after it, that the Lord listened to the voice of a man, for the Lord fought for Israel.

Commentary: This verse emphasizes the unparalleled nature of this miracle, underscoring God's direct intervention and support for Israel, highlighting that He was truly fighting on their behalf (Joshua 10:14).

Chapter 88 of the Book of Jasher recounts the initial stages of the Israelite conquest of Canaan under **Joshua's** leadership.

It begins with God commissioning Joshua to lead Israel across the **Jordan** into the Promised Land, assuring him of victory and commanding strict obedience to the Law. Joshua, at **eighty-two years old** (a detail unique to Jasher), sends two spies to **Jericho**, who return with a report of the inhabitants' fear. Israel then crosses the Jordan, camps at **Gilgal**, observes the **Passover**, and the **manna ceases**.

The narrative moves to the miraculous fall of **Jericho**, where God gives specific instructions for its defeat. The walls collapse after seven days of marching and a great shout, and the city is utterly destroyed, with all spoil except precious metals consecrated to the Lord. Joshua pronounces a curse on anyone who rebuilds Jericho.

Next, Israel faces **Ai**. Due to **Achan's** sin of taking forbidden spoil from Jericho, Israel suffers a humiliating defeat. Joshua's lament prompts God to reveal Achan's transgression. Achan confesses, and he, his family, and his possessions are brought to the **Valley of Achor** and executed by stoning and burning, appeasing God's anger.

God then provides Joshua with a new strategy for Ai, involving an **ambush**. Joshua executes the plan, drawing the men of Ai out of their city with a feigned retreat. The ambush succeeds, Ai is captured and burned, and its king, **Melosh** (named in Jasher), is hanged. The city is utterly destroyed, though this time Israel is permitted to take the spoil.

The victories at Jericho and Ai alarm the other Canaanite kings, prompting them to form an alliance. However, the inhabitants of **Gibeon** cunningly deceive Israel, pretending to be from a distant land to secure a peace covenant. Israel falls for the trick, and though they later discover the deception, they honor their oath, making the Gibeonites "hewers of wood and drawers of water."

Finally, a coalition of **five Amorite kings**, led by **Adonizedek of Jerusalem**, attacks Gibeon for allying with Israel. Gibeon appeals to Joshua for help. Joshua launches a surprise attack, and God intervenes dramatically: He throws the enemy into confusion, sends **hailstones from heaven** that kill more than Israel's swords, and, at Joshua's command, causes the **sun to stand still over Gibeon and the moon over the Valley of Ajalon** for an extended period, allowing Israel to complete their victory. Jasher specifies the sun stood still for "thirty-six moments."

Book of Jasher, Chapter 89

Joshua's Song of Praise

Verse 1: Then Joshua spoke this song on the day that the Lord had given the Amorites into the hand of Joshua and the children of Israel, and he said in the sight of all Israel,

Commentary: This verse introduces a song of praise from Joshua, similar to other songs of victory in the biblical narrative (e.g., Exodus 15, Judges 5). It's a spontaneous outpouring of gratitude and worship after the major victory over the Amorite kings (from the previous chapter).

Verse 2: "You have done mighty things, O Lord, You have performed great deeds; who is like You? My lips shall sing to Your name."

Commentary: Joshua begins with direct adoration, acknowledging God's unique power and unparalleled deeds.

Verse 3: "My goodness and my fortress, my high tower, I will sing a new song unto You, with thanksgiving will I sing to You, You are the strength of my salvation."

Commentary: He personalizes his praise, describing God as his protector and the source of his strength and salvation. The "new song" signifies a fresh, profound experience of God's deliverance.

Verse 4: "All the kings of the earth shall praise You, the princes of the world shall sing to You, the children of Israel shall rejoice in Your salvation, they shall sing and praise Your power."

Commentary: Joshua envisions a universal recognition of God's power, not just by Israel but by all earthly rulers, emphasizing the global implications of God's actions.

Verse 5: "To You, O Lord, did we confide; we said You are our God, for You were our shelter and strong tower against our enemies."

Commentary: He reflects on Israel's trust in God, highlighting Him as their ultimate refuge and defense.

Verse 6: "To You we cried and were not ashamed, in You we trusted and were delivered; when we cried unto You, You did hear our voice, You did deliver our souls from the sword, You did show unto us Your grace, You did give unto us Your salvation, You did rejoice our hearts with Your strength."

Commentary: This section details the direct and positive outcome of their reliance on God: their prayers were heard, they were delivered from danger, shown grace, given salvation, and their hearts were filled with joy through His strength.

Verse 7: "You did go forth for our salvation, with Your arm You did redeem Your people; You did answer us from the heavens of Your holiness, You did save us from ten thousands of people."

Commentary: Joshua attributes the victory directly to God's intervention, describing His powerful arm redeeming Israel and answering them from heaven against overwhelming numbers.

Verse 8: "The sun and moon stood still in heaven, and You did stand in Your wrath against our oppressors and did command Your judgments over them."

Commentary: This verse specifically references the miracle from the previous chapter, where the sun and moon stood still, underscoring God's direct, supernatural involvement in the battle and His judgment against their enemies.

Verse 9: "All the princes of the earth stood up, the kings of the nations had gathered themselves together, they were not moved at Your presence, they desired Your battles."

Commentary: He acknowledges the formidable alliance of kings who dared to challenge God's people, portraying their defiance against God's presence.

Verse 10: "You did rise against them in Your anger, and did bring down Your wrath upon them; You did destroy them in Your anger, and cut them off in Your heart."

Commentary: Joshua vividly describes God's divine wrath unleashed upon these defiant enemies, leading to their utter destruction.

Verse 11: "Nations have been consumed with Your fury, kingdoms have declined because of Your wrath, You did wound kings in the day of Your anger."

Commentary: The song emphasizes the overwhelming and destructive power of God's anger against entire nations and their rulers.

Verse 12: "You did pour out Your fury upon them, Your wrathful anger took hold of them; You did turn their iniquity upon them, and did cut them off in their wickedness."

Commentary: This highlights that their destruction was a just consequence of their wickedness, implying a divine judgment against their evil.

Verse 13: "They did spread a trap, they fell therein, in the net they hid, their foot was caught."

Commentary: This could refer to their attempts to trap or ambush Israel, but ultimately falling into their own devices, or more broadly, their evil schemes backfiring.

Verse 14: "Your hand was ready for all Your enemies who said, 'Through their sword they possessed the land, through their arm they dwelt in the city'; You did fill their faces with shame, You did bring their horns down to the ground, You did terrify them in Your wrath, and did destroy them in Your anger."

Commentary: This verse addresses the arrogance of the enemies who boasted in their own military might ("their sword," "their arm"). Joshua proclaims that God shamed and humbled them, destroying their pride and power. "Horns" symbolize strength and authority.

Verse 15: "The earth trembled and shook at the sound of Your storm over them, You did not withhold their souls from death, and did bring down their lives to the grave."

Commentary: The cosmic impact of God's judgment is described, with the earth itself trembling, signifying the overwhelming nature of their demise.

Verse 16: "You did pursue them in Your storm, You did consume them in Your whirlwind, You did turn their rain into hail, they fell in deep pits so that they could not rise."

Commentary: This verse specifically recalls the hailstorm miracle (Chapter 88), painting a picture of relentless divine pursuit and destruction, leaving no escape for the enemies.

Verse 17: "Their carcasses were like rubbish cast out in the middle of the streets."

Commentary: A grim image of the complete and ignominious destruction of the enemy forces, their bodies left unburied.

Verse 18: "They were consumed and destroyed in Your anger, You did save Your people with Your might."

Commentary: A summary statement, contrasting the enemies' total destruction with God's mighty salvation of His people.

Verse 19: "Therefore our hearts rejoice in You, our souls exalt in Your salvation."

Commentary: The song returns to the theme of joyful praise, expressing the profound gratitude and exultation of the Israelites.

Verse 20: "Our tongues shall relate Your might, we will sing and praise Your wondrous works."

Commentary: A commitment to continually declare God's power and praise His miraculous deeds.

Verse 21: "For You did save us from our enemies, You did deliver us from those who rose up against us, You did destroy them from before us and depress them beneath our feet."

Commentary: A final declaration of victory, crediting God for total deliverance and subjugation of their enemies.

Verse 22: "Thus shall all Your enemies perish O Lord, and the wicked shall be like chaff driven by the wind, and Your beloved shall be like trees planted by the waters."

Commentary: The song concludes with a powerful prophetic statement, contrasting the certain destruction of God's enemies (like scattered chaff) with the flourishing stability of His faithful people (like well-watered trees).

Further Conquests and Northern Coalition

Verse 23: So Joshua and all Israel with him returned to the camp in **Gilgal**, after having struck all the kings, so that not a remnant was left of them.

Commentary: This marks the completion of the initial southern campaign, with Joshua and the army returning to their base camp at Gilgal.

Verse 24: And the five kings fled alone on foot from battle, and hid themselves in a cave, and Joshua sought for them in the field of battle, and did not find them.

Commentary: This refers to the specific incident from the previous chapter (Joshua 10:16), where the five Amorite kings sought refuge.

Verse 25: And it was afterward told to Joshua, saying, "The kings are found and behold they are hidden in a cave."

Commentary: The hiding place of the kings is discovered and reported to Joshua.

Verse 26: And Joshua said, "Appoint men to be at the mouth of the cave, to guard them, lest they take themselves away"; and the children of Israel did so.

Commentary: Joshua orders the cave to be guarded to prevent their escape (Joshua 10:18).

Verse 27: And Joshua called to all Israel and said to the officers of battle, "Place your feet upon the necks of these kings," and Joshua said, "So shall the Lord do to all your enemies."

Commentary: Joshua brings the kings out for a public display of dominance. The act of placing feet on their necks symbolizes complete subjugation and victory, often a ritual in ancient warfare (Joshua 10:24). Joshua uses this as a prophetic declaration for future victories.

Verse 28: And Joshua commanded afterward that they should slay the kings and cast them into the cave, and to put great stones at the mouth of the cave.

Commentary: The five kings are executed, and their bodies are sealed within the cave, a public and definitive end to their reign (Joshua 10:26-27).

Verse 29: And Joshua went afterward with all the people that were with him on that day to **Makkedah**, and he struck it with the edge of the sword.

Commentary: This begins a series of rapid conquests in the southern region (Joshua 10:28), moving from Makkedah, the site of the kings' death.

Verse 30: And he utterly destroyed the souls and all belonging to the city, and he did to the king and people thereof as he had done to Jericho.

Commentary: Makkedah is subjected to the "devoted thing" (herem), complete destruction like Jericho.

Verse 31: And he passed from there to **Libnah** and he fought against it, and the Lord delivered it into his hand, and Joshua struck it with the edge of the sword, and all the souls thereof, and he did to it and to the king thereof as he had done to Jericho.

Commentary: Libnah is conquered and destroyed in the same manner.

Verse 32: And from there he passed on to **Lachish** to fight against it, and **Horam king of Gaza** went up to assist the men of Lachish, and Joshua struck him and his people until there was none left to him.

Commentary: The conquest continues to Lachish (Joshua 10:31-32). Jasher adds the detail that "Horam king of Gaza" (named in the Bible as "Horam king of Gezer" - Joshua 10:33) came to assist Lachish and was also defeated.

Verse 33: And Joshua took Lachish and all the people thereof, and he did to it as he had done to Libnah.

Commentary: Lachish is conquered and destroyed like the previous cities.

Verse 34: And Joshua passed from there to **Eglon**, and he took that also, and he struck it and all the people thereof with the edge of the sword.

Commentary: Eglon falls next (Joshua 10:34).

Verse 35: And from there he passed to **Hebron** and fought against it and took it and utterly destroyed it, and he returned from there with all Israel to **Debir** and fought against it and struck it with the edge of the sword.

Commentary: Hebron is conquered (Joshua 10:36-37), followed by Debir (Joshua 10:38-39). The swiftness of these conquests is emphasized.

Verse 36: And he destroyed every soul in it, he left none remaining, and he did to it and the king thereof as he had done to Jericho.

Commentary: The complete annihilation policy is consistently applied to these cities.

Verse 37: And Joshua struck all the kings of the Amorites from **Kadesh-barnea** to **Azah** (Gaza), and he took their country at once, for the Lord had fought for Israel.

Commentary: This summarizes the extent of Joshua's southern campaign, covering a vast area. The emphasis is again on God's direct fighting on Israel's behalf.

Verse 38: And Joshua with all Israel came to the camp to Gilgal.

Commentary: The army returns to their base after successfully completing the southern campaign.

Northern Campaign and Jabin's Coalition

Verse 39: When at that time **Jabin king of Hazor** heard all that Joshua had done to the kings of the Amorites, Jabin sent to **Jobat king of Midian**, and to **Laban king of Shimron**, to **Jephal king of Achshaph**, and to all the kings of the Amorites, saying,

Commentary: The news of Israel's southern conquests prompts a powerful northern coalition, led by Jabin of Hazor (Joshua 11:1-2). Jasher identifies additional kings (Jobat of Midian, Laban of Shimron, Jephal of Achshaph) and specifically mentions "all the kings of the Amorites," implying a broader coalition than just the named kings in the biblical account.

Verse 40: "Come quickly to us and help us, that we may strike the children of Israel, before they come upon us and do unto us as they have done to the other kings of the Amorites."

Commentary: Jabin's call to arms is driven by fear and the desire to preempt Israel's further conquests.

Verse 41: And all these kings listened to the words of Jabin, king of Hazor, and they went forth with all their camps, **seventeen kings**, and their people were as numerous as the sand on the sea shore, together with horses and chariots innumerable, and they came and pitched together at the **waters of Merom**, and they were met together to fight against Israel.

Commentary: The coalition forms, featuring an immense number of kings (Jasher specifies "seventeen" vs. "many" in Joshua 11:4-5), an "innumerable" army, and a large force of horses and chariots (a significant threat in ancient warfare). They gather at the Waters of Merom.

Verse 42: And the Lord said to Joshua, "Fear them not, for tomorrow about this time I will deliver them up all slain before you, you shall hock their horses and burn their chariots with fire."

Commentary: God reassures Joshua despite the overwhelming odds, promising complete victory and giving specific instructions for neutralizing the enemy's chariots and horses (Joshua 11:6), which were a major military advantage for the Canaanites.

Verse 43: And Joshua with all the men of war came suddenly upon them and struck them, and they fell into their hands, for the Lord had delivered them into the hands of the children of Israel.

Commentary: Joshua executes a surprise attack, and God ensures their swift defeat.

Verse 44: So the children of Israel pursued all these kings with their camps, and struck them until there was none left of them, and Joshua did to them as the Lord had spoken to him.

Commentary: The complete rout and annihilation of the northern coalition are described, with Joshua faithfully carrying out God's commands.

Verse 45: And Joshua returned at that time to **Hazor** and struck it with the sword and destroyed every soul in it and burned it with fire, and from Hazor, Joshua passed to **Shimron** and struck it and utterly destroyed it.

Commentary: The conquest of the northern cities begins, starting with Hazor, the head of the coalition, which is completely destroyed by fire (Joshua 11:10-11). Shimron follows.

Verse 46: From there he passed to **Achshaph** and he did to it as he had done to Shimron.

Commentary: Achshaph is conquered and destroyed.

Verse 47: From there he passed to **Adullam** and he struck all the people in it, and he did to Adullam as he had done to Achshaph and to Shimron.

Commentary: Adullam is also conquered and destroyed, though this city is more commonly associated with the southern campaign in biblical accounts (Joshua 12:15). Jasher places it here.

Verse 48: And he passed from them to all the cities of the kings which he had struck, and he struck all the people that were left of them and he utterly destroyed them.

Commentary: A summary statement, emphasizing the thoroughness of the conquest and destruction of any remaining resistance.

Verse 49: Only their booty and cattle the Israelites took to themselves as a prey, but every human being they struck, they suffered not a soul to live.

Commentary: This reiterates the policy of *herem* for the people, while allowing for the taking of livestock and other goods as spoil in these northern conquests (Joshua 11:14), in contrast to Jericho.

Verse 50: As the Lord had commanded Moses so did Joshua and all Israel, they failed not in anything.

Commentary: This verse serves as a powerful affirmation of Israel's complete obedience to God's commands through Moses and Joshua, crediting their success to their faithfulness.

Verse 51: So Joshua and all the children of Israel struck the whole land of Canaan as the Lord had commanded them, and struck all their kings, being **thirty and one kings**, and the children of Israel took their whole country.

Commentary: This provides a grand summary of the entire conquest, stating that Joshua defeated 31 kings and took control of the entire land of Canaan west of the Jordan (Joshua 12:7-24).

Verse 52: Besides the kingdoms of Sihon and Og which are on the other side Jordan, of which Moses had struck many cities, and Moses gave them to the Reubenites and the Gadites and to half the tribe of Manasseh.

Commentary: This acknowledges the prior conquests by Moses in Transjordan, which were settled by the eastern tribes.

Verse 53: And Joshua struck all the kings that were on this side Jordan to the west, and gave them for an inheritance to the nine tribes and to the half tribe of Israel.

Commentary: This confirms that the conquered land west of the Jordan was designated for the remaining nine and a half tribes.

Verse 54: For **five years** did Joshua carry on the war with these kings, and he gave their cities to the Israelites, and the land became tranquil from battle throughout the cities of the Amorites and the Canaanites.

Commentary: Jasher concludes this chapter by stating that the major conquest lasted **five years**, a specific timeframe not given in the biblical book of Joshua, which generally portrays the conquests as a rapid series of events (Joshua 14:7 for Caleb's age suggests a slightly longer period). This brings the active period of major warfare to a close, leading to a period of "tranquility" or rest from battle.

Chapter 89 of the Book of Jasher provides a detailed account of the **completion of the Israelite conquest of Canaan**, beginning with a powerful **song of praise by Joshua** after the victory over the five Amorite kings.

The song, spanning many verses, magnifies the Lord for His mighty deeds, for delivering Israel from their enemies, for listening to their prayers, and especially for the **miracle of the sun and moon standing still**. Joshua attributes every victory to God's wrath against the wicked and His salvation for His people, concluding with a promise that God's enemies will perish like chaff, while His beloved will flourish.

Following the song, the chapter revisits the capture and **execution of the five Amorite kings** found hiding in the cave. Joshua performs a public display of dominance by having his officers place their feet on the kings' necks before they are slain and sealed in the cave.

The narrative then details Joshua's continued swift and thorough **conquest of southern Canaanite cities**, including **Makkedah, Libnah, Lachish** (where King Horam of Gaza tries to intervene and is defeated), **Eglon, Hebron, and Debir**. Each city and its inhabitants are utterly destroyed, with the same policy applied as to Jericho, emphasizing God's command.

The focus then shifts to the **northern campaign**. **King Jabin of Hazor** forms a massive coalition of **seventeen kings** (according to Jasher), with countless soldiers, horses, and chariots, gathering at the **Waters of Merom** to fight Israel. God reassures Joshua, promising victory and instructing him to disable the enemy's horses and chariots. Joshua executes a surprise attack, and the northern coalition is decisively defeated, with no survivors.

Joshua then proceeds to conquer and burn the key northern cities, including **Hazor, Shimron, Achshaph, and Adullam** (the latter placed here by Jasher). The policy of utter destruction for the people is consistently applied, while spoil and cattle are taken.

The chapter concludes with a grand summary: Joshua and all Israel completely conquered the land as God commanded, striking **thirty-one kings** on the west side of the Jordan. Jasher states that this main conquest lasted **five years**, after which the land entered a period of "tranquility from battle." This effectively marks the end of the major military campaigns of conquest.

Book of Jasher, Chapter 90

Edom and Chittim Conflict

Verse 1: At that time, in the fifth year after the children of Israel had crossed the Jordan, after the children of Israel had rested from their war with the Canaanites, great and severe battles arose between **Edom** and the children of **Chittim**; and the children of Chittim fought against Edom.

Commentary: This verse sets a specific timeline: five years after the Jordan crossing and after Israel's major wars, suggesting a period of relative peace for Israel. It introduces a new conflict between Edom and Chittim. "Chittim" is often identified with the inhabitants of Cyprus or a broader term for Mediterranean peoples, potentially Greeks or Romans, as used in later Jewish texts.

Verse 2: And **Abianus** king of Chittim went forth in that year, that is in the thirty-first year of his reign, and a great force with him of the mighty men of the children of Chittim, and he went to **Seir** to fight against the children of Esau.

Commentary: Jasher names the king of Chittim as Abianus and gives a precise regnal year. He leads a large army to Seir, the land of Edom, to attack the descendants of Esau.

Verse 3: And **Hadad** the king of Edom heard of his report, and he went forth to meet him with a heavy people and strong force, and engaged in battle with him in the field of Edom.

Commentary: King Hadad of Edom gathers his forces to defend against the invasion.

Verse 4: And the hand of Chittim prevailed over the children of Esau, and the children of Chittim slew of the children of Esau, **twenty-two thousand men**, and all the children of Esau fled from before them.

Commentary: Chittim decisively defeats Edom, inflicting heavy casualties and causing a rout.

Verse 5: And the children of Chittim pursued them and they reached Hadad king of Edom, who was running before them, and they caught him alive, and brought him to Abianus king of Chittim.

Commentary: The pursuit continues, and King Hadad is captured alive, highlighting the completeness of Chittim's victory.

Verse 6: And Abianus ordered him to be slain, and Hadad king of Edom died in the **forty-eighth year of his reign**.

Commentary: King Hadad is executed by Abianus. Jasher again provides a specific regnal year for Hadad.

Verse 7: And the children of Chittim continued their pursuit of Edom, and they struck them with a great slaughter and Edom became subject to the children of Chittim.

Commentary: The conquest is complete, and Edom is subjugated.

Verse 8: And the children of Chittim ruled over Edom, and Edom became under the hand of the children of Chittim and became **one kingdom** from that day.

Commentary: This is a significant claim by Jasher: Edom is fully absorbed into the Chittim kingdom, losing its independent sovereignty.

Verse 9: And from that time they could no more lift up their heads, and their kingdom became one with the children of Chittim.

Commentary: This reiterates the complete subjugation and loss of Edomite independence.

Verse 10: And Abianus placed officers in Edom and all the children of Edom became subject and tributary to Abianus, and Abianus turned back to his own land, Chittim.

Commentary: Abianus establishes administrative control over Edom, turning it into a tributary state, before returning home.

Verse 11: And when he returned, he renewed his government and built for himself a spacious and fortified palace for a royal residence, and reigned securely over the children of Chittim and over Edom.

Commentary: Abianus solidifies his rule, now overseeing an expanded kingdom.

Land Distribution and Joshua's Farewell

Verse 12: In those days, after the children of Israel had driven away all the Canaanites and the Amorites, Joshua was old and advanced in years.

Commentary: The narrative shifts back to Israel, noting Joshua's age after the completion of the major conquest campaigns. This sets the stage for the land distribution and his final instructions.

Verse 13: And the Lord said to Joshua, "You are old, advanced in life, and a great part of the land remains to be possessed."

Commentary: God acknowledges Joshua's age and the remaining task of fully possessing the land (Joshua 13:1). This implies that while the major military resistance was broken, much territory still needed to be settled and secured.

Verse 14: "Now therefore divide this land for an inheritance to the nine tribes and to the half tribe of Manasseh," and Joshua rose up and did as the Lord had spoken to him.

Commentary: God commands Joshua to proceed with the division of the land among the tribes, signifying the transition from conquest to settlement (Joshua 13:7).

Verse 15: And he divided the whole land to the tribes of Israel as an inheritance according to their divisions.

Commentary: Joshua carries out the land distribution, fulfilling his role.

Verse 16: But to the tribe of **Levi** he gave no inheritance, the offerings of the Lord are their inheritance as the Lord had spoken of them by the hand of Moses.

Commentary: The special status of the Levites is reaffirmed; they receive no territorial inheritance but are sustained by the Lord's offerings (Joshua 13:14, 33).

Verse 17: And Joshua gave **Mount Hebron** to **Caleb** the son of Jephunneh, one portion above his brethren, as the Lord had spoken through Moses.

Commentary: Caleb receives his promised inheritance of Hebron, a special reward for his faithfulness (Joshua 14:13-14).

Verse 18: Therefore Hebron became an inheritance to Caleb and his children unto this day.

Commentary: This highlights the enduring nature of Caleb's inheritance.

Verse 19: And Joshua divided the whole land by lots to all Israel for an inheritance, as the Lord had commanded him.

Commentary: The primary method of distribution, by lot, is mentioned, emphasizing divine oversight in the allocation of territory (Joshua 14:2).

Verse 20: And the children of Israel gave cities to the **Levites** from their own inheritance, and suburbs for their cattle, and property, as the Lord had commanded Moses so did the children of Israel, and they divided the land by lot whether great or small.

Commentary: The Levites receive cities and pasture lands scattered throughout the tribal territories, fulfilling God's earlier command (Joshua 21).

Verse 21: And they went to inherit the land according to their boundaries, and the children of Israel gave to **Joshua** the son of Nun an inheritance among them.

Commentary: The tribes settle in their allotted lands, and Joshua himself receives his portion.

Verse 22: By the word of the Lord did they give to him the city which he required, **Timnath-serach** in Mount Ephraim, and he built the city and dwelt therein.

Commentary: Joshua's personal inheritance, Timnath-serah (or Timnath-heres), is given to him as a special provision from God (Joshua 19:49-50). He builds and settles in it.

Verse 23: These are the inheritances which **Eleazar** the priest and Joshua the son of Nun and the heads of the fathers of the tribes portioned out to the children of Israel by lot in **Shiloh**, before the Lord, at the door of the Tabernacle, and they left off dividing the land.

Commentary: The process of land division is completed at Shiloh, the site of the Tabernacle (Joshua 19:51), signifying the fulfillment of a major phase of the conquest.

Verse 24: And the Lord gave the land to the Israelites, and they possessed it as the Lord had spoken to them, and as the Lord had sworn to their ancestors.

Commentary: This verse reaffirms God's faithfulness in fulfilling His covenant promise to provide the land to Israel.

Verse 25: And the Lord gave to the Israelites rest from all their enemies around them, and no man stood up against them, and the Lord delivered all their enemies into their hands, and not one thing failed of all the good which the Lord had spoken to the children of Israel, yes the Lord performed every thing.

Commentary: A powerful declaration of God's complete fulfillment of His promises, providing rest from war and ensuring victory over all enemies, emphasizing His absolute faithfulness (Joshua 21:44-45).

Verse 26: And Joshua called to all the children of Israel and he blessed them, and commanded them to serve the Lord, and he afterward sent them away, and they went each man to his city, and each man to his inheritance.

Commentary: Joshua gives a solemn farewell to the people, blessing them and exhorting them to serve the Lord, before dismissing them to their new homes (Joshua 22).

Verse 27: And the children of Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and the Lord gave them rest from all around them, and they dwelt securely in their cities.

Commentary: This verse emphasizes a period of faithful obedience and peace under Joshua's direct leadership (Joshua 24:31).

Continued Reign of Chittim Kings and Joshua's Final Charge

Verse 28: And it came to pass in those days, that Abianus king of Chittim died, in the **thirty-eighth year of his reign**, that is the seventh year of his reign over Edom, and they buried him in his place which he had built for himself, and **Latinus** reigned in his stead fifty years.

Commentary: The narrative returns to the kings of Chittim. Abianus dies, and his successor, Latinus, takes the throne, reigning for 50 years. This interweaves the history of other nations with Israel's.

Verse 29: And during his reign he brought forth an army, and he went and fought against the inhabitants of **Britannia** and **Kernania**, the children of Elisha son of Javan, and he prevailed over them and made them tributary.

Commentary: This is a highly anachronistic and geographically expansive detail unique to Jasher. Latinus is depicted conquering "Britannia and Kernania" (likely referring to parts of Britain and possibly Cornwall or a similar region), linking them to "Elisha son of Javan" (a biblical figure associated with Greek/Mediterranean peoples). This suggests a much wider sphere of influence for Chittim than usually understood from the biblical context.

Verse 30: He then heard that Edom had revolted from under the hand of Chittim, and Latinus went to them and struck them and subdued them, and placed them under the hand of the children of Chittim, and Edom became one kingdom with the children of Chittim all the days.

Commentary: Edom's attempted revolt is swiftly crushed by Latinus, reinforcing Chittim's dominion over them.

Verse 31: And for many years there was no king in Edom, and their government was with the children of Chittim and their king.

Commentary: This reinforces the long-term subjugation of Edom by Chittim, explaining the lack of independent Edomite kings during this period.

Verse 32: And it was in the **twenty-sixth year** after the children of Israel had passed the Jordan, that is the sixty-sixth year after the children of Israel had departed from Egypt, that Joshua was old, advanced in years, being **one hundred and eight years old** in those days.

Commentary: Jasher gives another specific timeline for Joshua's age and the period of rest. It calculates that Joshua was 108 years old when he delivered his second farewell address, and that 26 years had passed since the Jordan crossing (or 66 since the Exodus). This contrasts with the biblical account which states Joshua was 110 at his death and implies a shorter period between the crossing and his final address.

Verse 33: And Joshua called to all Israel, to their elders, their judges and officers, after the Lord had given to all the Israelites rest from all their enemies round about, and Joshua said to the elders of Israel, and to their judges, "Behold, I am old, advanced in years, and you have seen what the Lord has done to all the nations whom He has driven away from before you, for it is the Lord who has fought for you."

Commentary: This describes Joshua's second, more comprehensive farewell address (Joshua 23), gathering the nation's leaders and reminding them of God's powerful actions on their behalf.

Verse 34: "Now therefore strengthen yourselves to keep and to do all the words of the law of Moses, not to deviate from it to the right or to the left, and not to come among those nations who are left in the land; neither shall you make mention of the name of their gods, but you shall cleave to the Lord your God, as you have done to this day."

Commentary: Joshua delivers a solemn charge for absolute fidelity to God's Law, warning against assimilation with the remaining Canaanite populations and their idolatry (Joshua 23:6-8).

Verse 35: And Joshua greatly exhorted the children of Israel to serve the Lord all their days.

Commentary: His exhortation emphasizes lifelong commitment to God.

Verse 36: And all the Israelites said, "We will serve the Lord our God all our days, we and our children, and our children's children, and our seed forever."

Commentary: The people renew their covenant, pledging allegiance to God for generations (Joshua 24:16-18, 21, 24).

Verse 37: And Joshua made a covenant with the people on that day, and he sent away the children of Israel, and they went each man to his inheritance and to his city.

Commentary: The covenant is formalized, and the people return to their settled lives.

Burial of the Patriarchs and Deaths of Joshua and Eleazar

Verse 38: And it was in those days, when the children of Israel were dwelling securely in their cities, that they buried the **coffins of the tribes of their ancestors**, which they had brought up from Egypt, each man in the inheritance of his children, the twelve sons of Jacob did the children of Israel bury, each man in the possession of his children.

Commentary: This unique section in Jasher describes the burial of all twelve sons of Jacob (the patriarchs) in their respective tribal inheritances, fulfilling their ancient request. The biblical account only explicitly mentions Joseph's bones being buried (Joshua 24:32).

Verse 39: And these are the names of the cities wherein they buried the twelve sons of Jacob, whom the children of Israel had brought up from Egypt.

Commentary: Jasher provides a specific list of burial locations for each patriarch.

Verse 40: And they buried **Reuben and Gad** on this side Jordan, in **Romia**, which Moses had given to their children.

Commentary: Reuben and Gad are buried in Transjordan (Romia is not a recognized biblical site for their burial).

Verse 41: And **Simeon and Levi** they buried in the city **Mauda**, which he had given to the children of Simeon, and the suburb of the city was for the children of Levi.

Commentary: Simeon and Levi are buried in Mauda (also not a recognized biblical site for their burial).

Verse 42: And **Judah** they buried in the city of **Benjamin** opposite Bethlehem.

Commentary: Judah is buried in a Benjaminite city near Bethlehem.

Verse 43: And the bones of **Issachar and Zebulun** they buried in **Zidon**, in the portion which fell to their children.

Commentary: Issachar and Zebulun are buried in Sidon. Burying them in Sidon (a Phoenician city) is a significant departure from typical burial places within Israel's assigned territory.

Verse 44: And **Dan** was buried in the city of his children in **Eshtael**, and **Naphtali and Asher** they buried in **Kadesh-naphtali**, each man in his place which he had given to his children.

Commentary: Dan in Eshtael, and Naphtali and Asher in Kadesh-Naphtali, are more consistent with their tribal territories.

Verse 45: And the bones of **Joseph** they buried in **Shechem**, in the part of the field which Jacob had purchased from Hamor, and which became to Joseph for an inheritance.

Commentary: Joseph's burial in Shechem aligns perfectly with the biblical account (Joshua 24:32).

Verse 46: And they buried **Benjamin** in **Jerusalem** opposite the Jebusite, which was given to the children of Benjamin; the children of Israel buried their fathers each man in the city of his children.

Commentary: Benjamin is buried in Jerusalem, which was part of Benjamin's tribal inheritance, though still occupied by Jebusites at this time.

Verse 47: And at the end of **two years**, Joshua the son of Nun died, **one hundred and ten years old**, and the time which Joshua judged Israel was **twenty-eight years**, and Israel served the Lord all the days of his life.

Commentary: Jasher states Joshua died at 110 (consistent with Joshua 24:29) but gives a specific timeframe of "two years" after the events of verse 37/38, and a reign/judgeship of 28 years. This implies a detailed chronology beyond the biblical text. The statement that "Israel served the Lord all the days of his life" is a crucial summary (Joshua 24:31).

Verse 48: And the other affairs of Joshua and his battles and his reproofs with which he reproved Israel, and all which he had commanded them, and the names of the cities which the children of Israel possessed in his days, behold they are written in the book of the words of Joshua to the children of Israel, and in the **book of the wars of the Lord**, which Moses and Joshua and the children of Israel had written.

Commentary: This verse serves as a colophon, directing the reader to other historical sources for more details on Joshua's life and reign, including "the book of the words of Joshua" and "the book of the wars of the Lord" (a non-canonical book also mentioned in Numbers 21:14). It implies these were collaborative historical records.

Verse 49: And the children of Israel buried Joshua in the border of his inheritance, in **Timnath-serach**, which was given to him in Mount Ephraim.

Commentary: Joshua's burial place is specified, consistent with the biblical account (Joshua 24:30).

Verse 50: And **Eleazar** the son of Aaron died in those days, and they buried him in a hill belonging to **Phinehas** his son, which was given him in Mount Ephraim.

Commentary: The death and burial of Eleazar, the high priest, are also recorded, consistent with the biblical account (Joshua 24:33). His burial place is given as a hill belonging to his son Phinehas in Ephraim.

Chapter 90 of the Book of Jasher spans a significant period after Israel's initial conquest of Canaan, focusing on events both external and internal to Israel, culminating in the death of Joshua and Eleazar.

The chapter opens by describing a major conflict between **Edom** and the **Children of Chittim** (likely referring to a Mediterranean power, possibly Greeks or Romans, as broadly interpreted). **Abianus, king of Chittim**, invades Edom, defeats King Hadad in a massive battle, kills him, and completely **subjugates Edom**, effectively integrating it into the Chittim kingdom. His successor, **Latinus**, is later depicted as extending Chittim's rule over distant lands like **Britannia and Kernania** (a highly

anachronistic detail) and also re-subduing a revolting Edom, emphasizing Chittim's dominant position for many years.

The narrative then shifts back to Israel, where **Joshua is old and advanced in years**. God commands him to **divide the land** that remains to be possessed among the nine and a half tribes. This task is carried out, with the **Levites receiving no land inheritance** but cities and suburbs from other tribes, and **Caleb receiving Hebron**. Joshua himself is given **Timnath-serach** as his inheritance. The land division is completed at **Shiloh**, and the chapter emphasizes God's faithfulness in providing rest from all their enemies and fulfilling His promises.

Joshua then delivers a **final farewell address** to the Israelites, blessing them and strongly urging them to remain faithful to the Law of Moses and not to intermarry or adopt the practices of the remaining nations. The people pledge their allegiance to God for generations to come, and Joshua makes a covenant with them.

Uniquely, Jasher then recounts the **burial of all twelve patriarchs, the sons of Jacob**, whose remains were brought up from Egypt. Specific (and sometimes non-biblical) burial sites are named: Reuben and Gad in Romia (Transjordan), Simeon and Levi in Mauda, Judah near Bethlehem, Issachar and Zebulun in Sidon, Dan in Eshtael, Naphtali and Asher in Kadesh-Naphtali, Joseph in Shechem (consistent with the Bible), and Benjamin in Jerusalem.

The chapter concludes with the death of **Joshua** at **110 years old**, after judging Israel for **twenty-eight years**. It states that Israel served the Lord throughout his lifetime. The text refers to other books for further details of Joshua's reign. Finally, the death of **Eleazar**, the high priest, is also recorded, and he is buried in a hill belonging to his son, Phinehas, in Mount Ephraim.

Book of Jasher, Chapter 91

Post-Joshua Conquest Efforts

Verse 1: At that time, after the death of **Joshua**, the children of the **Canaanites** were still in the land, and the Israelites resolved to drive them out.

Commentary: This verse sets the scene immediately after Joshua's death, indicating that the conquest was not entirely complete and that remaining Canaanite populations still posed a challenge. The Israelites, as a new generation, decided to continue the work of driving them out (Judges 1:1).

Verse 2: And the children of Israel asked of the Lord, saying, "Who shall first go up for us to the Canaanites to fight against them?" And the Lord said, "**Judah** shall go up."

Commentary: In a pivotal moment, the Israelites consult God through divine inquiry (likely using the Urim and Thummim through the high priest). God designates the tribe of Judah to lead the charge, acknowledging their preeminence and strength (Judges 1:1-2).

Verse 3: And the children of Judah said to **Simeon**, "Go up with us into our lot, and we will fight against the Canaanites, and we likewise will go up with you, in your lot." So the children of Simeon went with the children of Judah.

Commentary: Judah, understanding the scope of the task, forms an alliance with the neighboring tribe of Simeon. Simeon's territory was within Judah's larger allotment, making their cooperation logical and necessary (Judges 1:3).

Verse 4: And the children of Judah went up and fought against the Canaanites, so the Lord delivered the Canaanites into the hands of the children of Judah, and they struck them in **Bezek**, **ten thousand men**.

Commentary: Judah and Simeon engage the Canaanites and achieve a significant victory, striking down 10,000 men in Bezek (Judges 1:4). This demonstrates God's continued support for their efforts.

Verse 5: And they fought with **Adoni-bezek** in Bezek, and he fled from before them, and they pursued him and caught him, and they took hold of him and cut off his thumbs and great toes.

Commentary: They confront Adoni-bezek, the king of Bezek. He is captured, and in a brutal act mirroring ancient warfare customs, his thumbs and big toes are cut off (Judges 1:5-6). This incapacitates him, preventing him from ever fighting or fleeing effectively again.

Verse 6: And Adoni-bezek said, "Seventy kings having their thumbs and great toes cut off, gathered their meat under my table; as I have done, so God has requited me." And they brought him to **Jerusalem** and he died there.

Commentary: Adoni-bezek's confession is profound: he acknowledges divine retribution, admitting that he inflicted this same mutilation on seventy other kings. This shows God's justice at work. His death in Jerusalem (which Judah would later attack, though not fully capture at this time) brings closure to his reign (Judges 1:7).

Verse 7: And the children of Simeon went with the children of Judah, and they struck the Canaanites with the edge of the sword.

Commentary: This reiterates the continued success of the joint operation against the Canaanites.

Verse 8: And the Lord was with the children of Judah, and they possessed the mountain, and the children of **Joseph** went up to **Bethel**, the same is **Luz**, and the Lord was with them.

Commentary: Judah's success is attributed to God's presence. The narrative then shifts to the tribe of Joseph (Ephraim and Manasseh), who also undertake a conquest, targeting Bethel (formerly called Luz), and are similarly blessed by God's presence (Judges 1:19, 22).

Verse 9: And the children of Joseph spied out Bethel, and the watchmen saw a man going forth from the city, and they caught him and said unto him, "Show us now the entrance of the city and we will show kindness to you."

Commentary: Similar to Joshua's strategy at Jericho, the tribe of Joseph employs espionage. They find a man leaving the city and offer him mercy in exchange for intelligence on how to enter (Judges 1:23-24).

Verse 10: And that man showed them the entrance of the city, and the children of Joseph came and struck the city with the edge of the sword.

Commentary: The strategy works, and Bethel is conquered through the man's help.

Verse 11: And the man with his family they sent away, and he went to the **Hittites** and he built a city, and he called the name thereof **Luz**. So all the Israelites dwelt in their cities, and the children of Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the **elders**, who had lengthened their days after Joshua, and saw the great work of the Lord, which he had performed for Israel.

Commentary: The informant and his family are spared. This man, perhaps a dispossessed Canaanite, travels to the Hittites and founds a new city, also named Luz, suggesting a continuity of place names even among displaced peoples (Judges 1:25-26). The verse then echoes the theme from the previous chapter, confirming Israel's faithfulness to God "all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders." This highlights a period of sustained obedience.

Verse 12: And the elders judged Israel after the death of Joshua for **seventeen years**.

Commentary: Jasher provides a specific duration for the period of the "elders" who lived beyond Joshua and maintained the nation's spiritual and judicial integrity: seventeen years. This bridges the gap between Joshua's direct leadership and the later, more tumultuous period of the Judges (Judges 2:7).

Verse 13: And all the elders also fought the battles of Israel against the Canaanites and the Lord drove the Canaanites from before the children of Israel, in order to place the Israelites in their land.

Commentary: This verse emphasizes that the elders continued the military efforts, with God's help, to secure the land for Israel.

Verse 14: And he accomplished all the words which he had spoken to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and the oath which he had sworn, to give to them and to their children, the land of the Canaanites.

Commentary: This is a strong affirmation of God's faithfulness to His covenant promises, highlighting that the possession of the land was the culmination of long-held divine pledges.

Verse 15: And the Lord gave to the children of Israel the whole land of Canaan, as he had sworn to their ancestors, and the Lord gave them rest from those around them, and the children of Israel dwelt securely in their cities.

Commentary: A final declaration of the fulfillment of the promise: Israel received the entire land and experienced a period of peace and security, thanks to God's intervention.

Verse 16: Blessed be the Lord forever, amen, and amen.

Commentary: A doxology, a closing expression of praise and affirmation, reinforcing the sanctity and truth of the narrative.

Verse 17: Strengthen yourselves, and let the hearts of all you that trust in the Lord be of good courage.

Commentary: This serves as a final exhortation, a call to continued faith and courage for those who trust in the Lord. It's a fitting moral and spiritual conclusion to the narrative of conquest and settlement.

Chapter 91 of the Book of Jasher provides a concluding summary of the **Israelite settlement in Canaan** after Joshua's death, emphasizing the continued effort to dispossess the Canaanites and God's faithfulness to His promises.

It begins with the Israelites, after Joshua's passing, deciding to resume the fight against the remaining Canaanites. They consult the Lord, who designates the tribe of **Judah** to lead. Judah allies with **Simeon**, and together they achieve a significant victory at **Bezek**, defeating the Canaanites and capturing their king, **Adoni-bezek**. The king famously confesses that his thumbs and great toes were cut off, a retribution for the same cruelty he inflicted on **seventy other kings**.

The narrative then shifts to the tribe of **Joseph** (Ephraim and Manasseh), who successfully conquer **Bethel** (formerly Luz) by sending spies. They spare an informant and his family, who then found a new city of Luz among the Hittites.

The chapter highlights that Israel served the Lord faithfully **"all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders"** who outlived him. Jasher specifies that these elders judged Israel for **seventeen years** after Joshua's death, continuing the work of driving out the Canaanites with God's help.

The text emphasizes that through these efforts, the Lord **accomplished all His promises** to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, granting Israel the entire land of Canaan and providing them with rest and security.

The chapter concludes with a **doxology**, praising the Lord, and a final exhortation for those who trust in God to be strong and courageous.

Notably, Chapter 91 also includes a unique passage detailing the **burial of all twelve sons of Jacob** (the patriarchs) in various locations across the land, a tradition not found explicitly in the biblical account for all of them.

This chapter effectively brings the Book of Jasher's historical narrative to a close, culminating the story of the Exodus and the conquest of the Promised Land, and emphasizing the period of faithfulness under Joshua and the elders.

📘 *Conclusion to the Book of Jasher*

From the Crawford Bible Commentary Series

The **Book of Jasher**, often referred to as *“The Upright Record”*, is a rich and detailed account of the early biblical patriarchs and the unfolding of God's covenant with mankind. Though not included in the traditional canon of Scripture, Jasher offers powerful insights that complement and expand the historical narrative found in Genesis, Exodus, Numbers, Joshua, and other books of the Bible. It provides a vivid, humanized account of ancient events—from Adam and Eve's creation and fall, to the flood in Noah’s day, the Tower of Babel, the lives of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph, and even Israel's bondage and deliverance from Egypt.

🔍 A Deeper Glimpse into Biblical History

The Book of Jasher enriches the reader’s understanding of the Bible by:

- **Filling in details** not recorded in Genesis and Exodus, especially concerning the childhood and struggles of key figures.
- **Highlighting the righteousness and courage** of men like Enoch, Noah, Abraham, and Moses.
- **Exposing the wickedness of ancient civilizations** and God's consistent pattern of judgment and mercy.
- **Expanding on well-known biblical events**, giving context to names, battles, journeys, and divine interventions.

🔑 Key Themes Revisited

1. **God's Sovereignty and Justice** – From the fall of man to the plagues of Egypt, Jasher emphasizes God's authority over nations and individuals.
2. **Faithfulness in a Corrupt World** – Figures like Noah, Abraham, and Joseph stand as shining examples of integrity in dark times.
3. **Covenant and Promise** – God's faithfulness to His word—whether in judgment or blessing—is evident throughout the narrative.
4. **Human Struggle and Redemption** – The Book of Jasher does not shy away from portraying mankind's failures, offering a realistic view of human nature and the need for divine intervention.

✝️ Foreshadowing the Messiah

Though the Book of Jasher predates the New Testament, it sets the stage for the coming of the **Messiah**:

- It speaks of **sacrifice**, **deliverance**, and **faith**, all of which find their ultimate fulfillment in Jesus Christ.
- It reminds us of the **pattern of a chosen seed**, from Adam to Abraham to Israel—a lineage that ultimately points to Christ (Luke 3:23–38).

📌 Final Reflections

The Book of Jasher invites us to remember the great acts of God and the lives of those who walked before us. It does not replace the Bible but **deepens our appreciation for the biblical record**. As with any historical book, it must be approached with discernment, comparing its accounts with the inspired Word of God.

Yet, in its pages, we see men and women facing choices, challenges, and divine calls—just like us. And through it all, God is faithful. He guides, corrects, judges, and redeems.

🙏 Application for Today

- **Walk uprightly** like the righteous men and women of old.
- **Trust God's promises**, even when they seem delayed.
- **Be bold in righteousness**, even when the world embraces wickedness.
- **Keep the record of your life clean**, as one who desires to be found in the Book of Life.

The Book of Jasher concludes, but its message lives on—reminding every generation that the God of Adam, Noah, Abraham, and Moses is still at work, still calling, and still writing history through those who walk uprightly before Him. Let us be among them.

Dr. Paul Crawford is more than just a Christian Author; His books are a source of inspiration and guidance on your spiritual journey. His books are created with a deep sense of faith and a desire to uplift and inspire all who read.