

Day 19 Gen 42.6 – 45.15

42.6 This shapes up to be one of the most tense and dramatic stories of all time; Joseph's estranged brothers come looking for food, unaware that Joseph is the one dispensing the famine relief!

42.7 Joseph disguises his recognition of his brothers, and deals harshly with them accusing them of spying.

42.13 The brothers, in their defence, let out that their father and youngest brother are at home. Reuben is angry with them, and says this is payback time for what they did to Joseph.(v.22)

42.16 Joseph insists that to prove they are telling the truth, they have to bring Benjamin. In the meantime, one of them will stay in Egypt as a hostage until the truth is proven. He then holds them under arrest for three days.

42.24 Joseph, understanding them in their dismay, turns away and weeps at what he sees and hears. But he has Simeon bound and imprisoned. The other brothers are sent away with food, but also with their money in their sacks!

42.28 When they find the money of one of them in the sack on the way home, they are gobsmacked. 'What is God doing to us?' they ask.

42.29 When they get home, they tell Jacob all that has happened and then they find they all have their money in their sack. Jacob is distraught – he has now lost Joseph and Simeon, and they are telling him Benjamin has to go with them. He refuses, even though Reuben says his sons will be hostage and liable to death if Benjamin does not return. (v37)

43.1ff The food runs out, Israel tells the boys to go to Egypt, but they can't without Benjamin. 'Why did you have to tell them you had a brother?' says Jacob. He eventually relents, and sends them with gifts for Joseph and the returned money, as well as Benjamin.

43.16ff Joseph throws a dinner for his brothers – they are afraid that they have been summoned to his house, and think they are about to be punished for their assumed theft.

43.23 But Joseph's butler tells them not to fear, God gave them their money back!

43.29, 30 Joseph comes face to face with his closest brother, born of their dead mother. He tries to hold it together, but he has to rush out and weep, because his guts are wrenched (literally in Heb *nekhamru rechamaiv* נכמרו רחמיו) over seeing his brother again.

43.31 Joseph regains his composure and orders food for them. But Joseph sits with the other Egyptians, as they are not permitted to eat with the Jews.

43.32 However, they are all seated in correct birth order, which amazes the brothers. Benjamin gets a vast portion compared to the others.

44.1ff Once again, the men are sent away with full sacks and their money back. But this time, Joseph has another surprise up his sleeve, putting his personal cup in Benjamin's sack!

44.4 The steward then chases them and accuses them of stealing Joseph's property, which they deny has happened.

44.12 They are beside themselves when Benjamin is found with the cup on him, and they return to Joseph to sort out the terrible situation.

44.18 Judah, in response to Joseph's feigned anger, pleads for the sake of his aged father for mercy for Benjamin, whose arrest would end in killing the old man.

44.33 Judah offers himself as a slave to Joseph to save Benjamin.

45.1 Joseph cannot bear it any longer and sends everyone else out, and reveals to them his true identity.

45.2 Joseph bawls so loud, the whole house hears him!

45.3 The brothers are stunned into silence, not able to take in what Joseph is saying.

45.4 Joseph sees God's hand in their cruelty, to send him ahead to prepare for their salvation from the famine.

45.8 Joseph has become like a father to Pharaoh, so much does he depend on his administration.

45.10 Joseph invites the family to come and live in Goshen, to the east of Egypt.

45.14, 15 Joseph can now embrace his lost brother and all his brothers; the wonderful reconciliation is achieved.

Day 20 Gen 45.16 – 47.28

Pharaoh honours Joseph by inviting his family to come and live in Egypt, and to 'eat of the fat of the land' (Heb *חֵלֶב הָאָרֶץ* *chelev ha-arets*, the same root as the word for milk, *chalav*.)

45.20 Don't even bother about bringing belongings with you, he says, because everything you need is here in Egypt.

He sends the brothers back loaded down with good things from Egypt.

45.26 The good news nearly causes Israel a heart attack, but then he is revived by this news, and just wants to see his lost son again.

46.1 Jacob stops at his forefathers' place of worship at Be'er Sheba, the well of the vow, and God speaks to him. In 46.2, interestingly comes this double call which is to get one's attention, and God calls him by his old, pre-encounter name, 'Jacob, Jacob!'. He is not to be afraid to go to Egypt; God's purpose is through this to establish the nation of Israel, and then after four hundred years to rescue them from their slavery at the hands of the Egyptians.

Perhaps God takes them to Egypt, also, to be in the initially benign shadow of an established nation. Scratching a living out of the desert may not be the best conditions for fruitfulness and growth. So God puts them into a host culture where they will learn many skills and crafts, particularly about living and prospering in a hostile environment. The Egyptians had already developed a system of irrigation, and the famine relief action is a wise and caring plan for national survival. Only later does Egypt become the oppressor from which God has to save them.

46.4 In the original text, God comforts Jacob with the words, 'Joseph will lay his hands upon your eyes.' This means that Joseph will be with him at the moment of his death to close his eyes as part of the preparation for burial, a tender promise to this old man.

46.6 And so they move to Egypt, taking their property with them, despite Pharaoh's suggestion they could leave it all behind. The genealogy follows of all those who went down with them, including at verse 10 the first mention of Saul (Heb שַׂאֲוֹל *Sha'ul*) as a Hebrew name in Scripture, son of Simeon and a Canaanite wife. (Although it is the same name as of one of the rulers of Edom given in Gen 36.37.)

Also, in v.11, the three sons of Levi, Gershon, Kohath and Merari, whose names will be given to the divisions of the priesthood descending from their fathers, the Gershonites, Kohathites and Merarites. (see Numbers 4)

46.12 Here is the continuing family tree of the Lord Jesus Christ, with Judah's son Perez (or Pharez) being mentioned, and his son Hezron, through whom the descent continues.

46.20 In among the listing is Potiphera, Joseph's wife, daughter of the priest of On, undoubtedly a noblewoman.

46.27 The total of those of Jacob's family in Egypt was now seventy people – quite a clan from Jacob's fatherhood!

46.29 Son and father are re-united, and they weep 'a good while' (Heb עֹד *od*) or continually, in each other's embrace.

46.31-34 There is a puzzle in this short coaching session by Joseph of his brothers. The sheep was considered an unclean animal by the Egyptians, even though the ram was a symbol associated with the gods. Wool was seen as impure, and priests were not allowed to wear it as it was the product of a live animal, while linen was from flax, a vegetable.

It's been suggested that the disdain for sheep came from the hatred of a dynasty of 'shepherd kings' the Hyksos, in Egypt, who had recently been expelled from the throne after a dynasty of oppressive rule. However, there is another school of thought which identifies the Hyksos with the Hebrew settlers, who had such influence in Egyptian politics for centuries.

Whatever the answer to this, Joseph advises his brothers to be diplomatic and present themselves as cattlemen rather than as shepherds.

47.1ff Here, when Pharaoh realises that the Hebrews are good with livestock, he puts them in charge of his cattle. They are given land in Egypt, and settle there.

47.9 There is an interesting exchange between Pharaoh and Jacob. Jacob is asked his age, and he complains that his lifespan is shorter than his forefathers' (even though he is now 130 years old!) He also blesses Pharaoh, which is a firstfruit of the promise of all nations being blessed by the descendants of Abraham.

47.13ff The famine is so severe, that the people end up in feudal serfdom to Pharaoh, through Joseph's administration. He provides them with seed, but rules that a fifth of the crop will be tax to Pharaoh. It is just possible that the shepherd-kings theory of an oppressive dynasty comes from this terrible time in Egypt's history.

47.27,28 The Israelites prosper however and acquire property, and Jacob lives another seventeen years, to the age of 147.

Day 21 Gen 47.29 – 50.26 (around BC1805)

47.29 On his deathbed, Jacob-Israel requires Joseph to vow to him to be the executor of his last will to be buried back in the cave of Machpelah in Hebron, with Abraham and Isaac his forefathers. The formula he uses for the holding of Joseph to the vow is worth noting. First, he appeals to the favour of his son (Heb **יְחִי** *chen*), then he asks him to place his hand on his testicles, as Abraham did with Eliezer his steward when he took a vow in Gen.24.2. Then, because of the vow, he says to Joseph *do hesed and emet* (Heb **וְעָשִׂיתָ לִּי חֶסֶד וְאֱמֶת**) to me, that is 'fulfil the obligation to your vow and act in complete truth and integrity towards me.' So much is tied up in these small words, and they occur again and again, together and apart in the Scriptures, we must note how they are used in such situations.

47.30 Joseph responds he will do as his father has asked.

48.1ff In his hours of *extreme*, Joseph takes his sons Manasseh and Ephraim to Jacob for a blessing.

48.3 Jacob recalls the appearance to him of *El-Shaddai* (Heb **אֱלֹהֵי שָׁדַי**) at Bethel-Luz, and his blessing of the promise to his offspring, which God is fulfilling.

48.5 Jacob adopts Ephraim and Manasseh as his own sons, giving them the same rights alongside Reuben and Simeon, his two eldest children. The other children of Joseph will be Joseph's, but these two are to be Israel's sons as well, hence the mention of them in the ensuing story in the lists of the sons, and the distribution of the land.

48.7 The old man still recalls the love of his life, his Rachel who died at Bethlehem.

48.8 Jacob's blindness has means that he has not seen the two sons actually come with Joseph. He calls them now for blessing, and he kisses and embraces them, saying he had not expected to see even Joseph again, let alone his sons.

48.12 Joseph brings his sons forward, and bows before his dying father.

48.13,14 Still capable of a deft move, Jacob crosses his hands over and lays his right hand on the younger and his left on the older.

48.15 The text says that Jacob blessed Joseph; in the context, he is laying his hands on Ephraim and Manasseh as he speaks. He recalls God's care of him and his fathers, the God, he says, who *shepherded* or *pastured* him (Heb *הָאֱלֹהִים־הִרְעָה אֹתִי* *ha-elohim ha-ro'eh oti*)

48.16 He then speaks of the angel who redeemed him from all evil (Heb *הַמַּלְאָךְ הַגֹּאֵל אֹתִי מִכָּל־רָע* *ha-mal'ach ha-go'el oti mikkol ra'*) which must refer to the encounter with God at Peniel, where he wrestled the man. (Gen 32.24ff) This is a very noteworthy reference by Jacob as to what he saw happening in that moment. This messenger (for Hebrew, like Greek uses the word *messenger* or *ambassador* for angel) is redemptive to Jacob; his life is changed, his name is changed by that night at Jabbok, the power of evil is broken in him.

It could well be affirmed that this Angel of the Lord was an early appearance of the Son of God, particularly given the life-changing nature of his intervention.

'Let my name be named upon them' – Jacob is reaffirming his adoption of them into his own sons, and he also ties them in to the patriarchs, Abraham and Isaac.

48.17ff Joseph sees what his father has done with hands, and takes it as an evil omen. This is not the way it should be done, the right hand should be on the head of the elder, Manasseh. But Jacob is listening to God, and acting prophetically. He knows God can change the traditions and, just as Jacob overtook his brother Esau, so Ephraim will be a greater people-group than Manasseh's clan. We need to be listening for the Spirit of God even when our traditions are at stake.

48.20 Both the sons would become a future word of blessing in Israel, being invoked as a blessing of fruitfulness to people.

48.21 Lastly, Jacob bequeaths to Joseph a piece of land back in Canaan which he seems to have taken by force from the Amorites.

49.1,2 Now Jacob gather the rest of his sons, to tell them what will happen ‘in the rest of their days’ (Heb בְּאַחַר יְמֵי הַיָּמִים *be’acharim ha-yamim*)

49.3,4 Reuben, the firstborn, although he is eldest and has that dignity, will not keep that honour, because he is as frothy as water (possibly a reference to his being driven by lust) which led him to sleep with Bilhah his father’s concubine in Gen. 35.22. For this, says 1 Chron 5.1, the firstborn’s blessing passed to Ephraim and Manasseh.

49.5-7 Simeon and Levi get a rough deal here from their father for their violence against the Shechemites in Gen.34.25ff, in avenging the rape of their sister Dinah. They do not receive any words of encouragement in this passage, rather, their anger is cursed, although Levi will go on to be the priestly tribe!

49.8 Jacob’s blessing to Judah starts with a wordplay on his name; he was called Judah as a taunt by his mother of his aunt. But Jacob says, ‘he will be praised’ by his brothers. Through him, of course, will descend the family tree of Jesus Christ.

49.9 Judah is likened to a lion, hence the term ‘lion of Judah’, and in v.10, he will hold the place of rule, ‘until he to whom it belongs shall come.’ (Heb שִׁלּוֹה *Shiloh*) The great Kings David and Solomon will come from his family line, as well as the King of Kings, Jesus.

49.13 Zebulun is prophesied as being the one who will live beside the sea, at Sidon. Although his actual lands did not stretch that far, the tribe would have been enriched by the nearby sea-trade in neighbouring Asher’s territory.

49.14 Issachar is seen as a hard-working beast of burden.

49.15 Dan, again a play on his name, will be a judge in Israel, but also a serpent biting the heels. (v.16)

49.19 Another wordplay, Gad meaning a troop, will be overcome by troops, but will triumph.

49.20 Asher will enjoy the fat of the land.

49.21 Naphtali will leap like a deer.

49.22 Understandably, Joseph gets the longest blessing, referring to his ill-treatment at the hands of his brothers, but the blessing of God through the forefathers is upon him.

49.24 There is a description here of God as ‘the shepherd, the stone of Israel’ (Heb רֹעֵה אֶבֶן יִשְׂרָאֵל *ro’eh ‘even Yisra’el*) a beautiful title given to Him by Jacob in blessing Joseph.

49.25 An amazing breadth of blessing for Joseph here – the blessing of the God of his father Jacob, of El-shaddai, the blessing of the heaven above, the deep below, the breast and womb. The word for breast is *Shad* (Heb שָׁד) linked to the title *El-Shaddai*.

49.27 Benjamin, the wolf, from whom will descend Gideon.

49.29-31 Jacob now charges his sons to fulfil his intention to be buried in the cave of Machpelah at Hebron, his family burial place.

49.32 Jacob dies at the age of 147.

50.2 Joseph has his father embalmed (mummified?) which takes six weeks.

50.3 A further month is taken in the mourning process.

50.4 ff A great cortege takes Jacob's body back to Canaan. When the Canaanites see it, they assume they are all Egyptians, and name the place Abel-Mizraim (mourning of Egypt) in v.11.

50.13 Jacob is buried in the cave as he wished.

50.14 ff The death of a parent is often in the ancient world the signal for old scores to be settled, seen especially later in the era of the kings. The sons of Israel now fear delayed retribution from Joseph.

50.16 So they send Joseph a message saying that their father asked Joseph's forgiveness for his brothers' actions. (Whether Jacob actually said this remains to be seen.)

50.17 When Joseph sees the brothers' fear of him, he is upset and weeps.

50.18 Joseph glorifies God in the midst of his hardships; **what they meant for evil, God has reckoned as good**; God has rewoven the tapestry of events to lead to a positive outcome. This is such a key understanding in the whole story we are following. God is never outsmarted or outwitted when it comes to evil. He can reconfigure the outcomes of evil into good. Actually, God has used this to rescue them all.

50.21 So Joseph nourishes them and provides for them. He is a wonderful type of the coming Saviour, whose suffering leads to redemption for the world.

50.22 Joseph lives to 110, and sees his grandchildren, the children of Manassah's son Machir.

50.24 Joseph reminds his brothers that God does not intend for them to remain in Egypt, but that he will fulfil his promise to bring them back to Canaan.

50.25 Joseph will be a sign of this restoration; they are to carry his bones back with them when they leave Egypt for Israel. And so he dies, and is embalmed (literally, *spiced*), which most probably means the Egyptian mummification process, given his position.

Thus ends the first book of *Torah*; God has brought his people into a position where He will need to do something to bring them out of the riches of Egypt and into the land of promise. But He will wait for that time, in the great story.

Day 22 Ex 1.1 – 4.31 & 6.14-27 (Moses born around BC1500)

Around four centuries have passed since the migration of Israel to Egypt. In that time, it is unclear what has happened to change the outlook of the Egyptians to the Hebrews to one of animosity. It is possible that this was the period of the *Shepherd-Kings*, (Hyksos) whom the Egyptians came to hate for their oppression. There could be a clue to this at the end of Genesis, when all of Egypt is indentured to Pharaoh, and the sons of Israel may have been seen as greatly implicated in that, so that with their overthrow, the Jews also become a hated people, and they in turn become slaves of the new regime. This is largely guesswork, but might offer some explanation.

God has openly declared his intention to bring Israel out of Egypt, as part of the covenant to Abraham (Gen.15.13) but something would need to happen to take them from the place of wealth which they had to a place of wanting as a nation to leave Egypt. This is the theme of Exodus, God's rescue of His chosen nation *en masse*, so that they become the type of God's salvation and ability to intervene in the sad affairs of broken mankind.

1.1 As with all first five books of the Bible, called *Torah* or the Books of Moses, the Hebrew name is taken from the opening words of the book, Hence, in Hebrew, Exodus is named *Shemot* (Heb שְׁמוֹת) meaning 'names', from the words 'these are the names of the sons of Israel.'

1.7 The Jews fulfilled for their part God's command to be fruitful and multiply, as with Jacob's family.

1.11 The tables are turned here; as the Egyptians were made slaves to Pharaoh through Joseph's administration, (Gen.47.18) now the Jews are enslaved to build treasure cities for the Pharaoh 'who did not know Joseph.'

1.15ff The Hebrew midwives, Shiphrah and Puah, disobey Pharaoh's command to murder the male children, and are blessed with family. However, the Jews life becomes even harder with the command to throw the male babies to the crocodiles or drown them.

2.1ff God's plan in the adoption of Moses by Pharaoh's daughter means that he has one who is schooled in the ways of the Egyptians, of the Pharaonic household, one who would know the language, the protocols, and would himself have been regarded as a prince of Egypt.

We are introduced to some facts about Moses here – he is a Levite (the clan about which Jacob had not had a good word to say! Cf Gen. 49.5-7) and has a sister, whose name we learn later is Miriam (Heb מִרְיָם *Mir-yam*, wave of the sea, the Hebrew name by which later the mother of Jesus would be called, which we call Mary)

2.6 The daughter of Pharaoh has compassion on the baby in the basket on the river. Hebrew has different words for pity or compassion; here the word is *tachmol*, (Heb תַּחְמוֹל 'she felt pity' from the root חָמַל *chamal* to be gentle. According to Gesenius, the lexicographer, the word survived into Greek *hamalos*.) The word is found elsewhere in a sense of 'to spare' (1 Sam 15.3 &15) so here we can say that the princess knows that this is a Hebrew boy, but decides to rescue him. In that sense, Moses himself becomes a picture of what God will do for Israel.

2.7 Through the quick-wittedness of Miriam, Moses is returned to his mother to be his paid nanny! Thus he also learns the ways of his own people, alongside those of the royal household.

2.10 Moses is given the name *Mosheh* (Heb מֹשֶׁה a present participle of *mashah*, Heb מָשַׁח , to pull out, rescue) Gesenius suggests this was also an Egyptian derivation from the words in their language for Water and deliverance. It is unlikely that this is the name he was known by to the Egyptian court, so perhaps Miriam helped give the princess a Hebrew name for her brother, or this was the princess's personal name for him. Either way, his name carries that sense of rescue within it, being 'rescued.'

2.11 A defining moment in Moses life, he boils over seeing a fellow Jew being beaten by an Egyptian, and kills the overseer. When he sees a fight between two Jews going on, they reveal that his murder is known, and Moses, fearing the consequences, flees east to Midian , beyond the Gulf of Aqaba, possibly to the descendants of Esau, the Edomites who inhabit the north of that area, near today's Eilat in Israel.

2.16 In a scene reminiscent of the patriarchs, Moses intervenes at a well where some young women are being harassed by the shepherd-boys. The young women bring him home, to their father Reuel (whose name is Semitic, Heb רְעוּאֵל *reu-El*) whose name means, *See, God!* He is the priest of Midian, and it appears that Moses identifies them enough as of his own people to take a wife, Zipporah. (Later, Reuel is referred to as Jethro in the story.) They have a son Gershom, meaning *alien there*.

2.23ff. With the death of the old Pharaoh, the Israelites cry out under their burden – they need a rescuer. God now acts according to his vow to the patriarchs to put in train one of the most amazing accounts of rescue in history.

3.1 Moses ends up tending the sheep of his father-in-law, Jethro (also called Reuel).

3.2 The angel of the Lord appears to Moses, in fire, but not a consuming fire. Moses himself would appear to burn later after his encounter with God. Here it is the bush that burns.

3.6 The Lord identifies Himself to Moses as the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of the covenant.

3.8 God's purpose is to deliver them and to bring them into the land of the Canaanites, the land dripping with milk and honey.

3.10 The Lord reveals that He is about to send Moses to Pharaoh, but Moses objects; 'Who am I to be sent to Pharaoh?'. Of course, Moses is an ideal choice, as he has grown up in the household of Pharaoh, but he now begins to present all kinds of excuses.

3. 14 The Lord reveals His name to Moses as I AM THAT I AM – there is something about the very being of God that is tied up in existence itself. The holy name of God which cannot be spoken in Hebrew (Heb יהוה YHWH) also has connotations of being within it. This is not God who is past or future, but ever present.

3.15 He also links His name to those of the Patriarchs.

3.16ff Moses will lead the people out of slavery.

4.1-9 Despite signs and wonders, Moses is still hesitant to respond to God's call.

4.10 Moses says he has a stammer, and cannot speak eloquently.

4.14 The Lord is angry with him and will not let him off the hook; Aaron his brother will be his spokesman, therefore.

4.18 Moses relents, and bids goodbye to Jethro and takes his wife and family back to Egypt.

4.22 God reveals something of the ultimate sanction that He will bring upon Egypt, the firstborn for the firstborn – God calls Israel here his eldest son. If Pharaoh will not let him go, Egypt will forfeit their firstborn.

4.24 God almost kills Moses, deflected only by Zipporah's swift action in circumcising Gershom their son. There is a powerful lesson here about the power of the covenant which Moses is being sent under.

4.27ff God calls Aaron to meet Moses; he returns, and the people believe him initially.

6.14 Here is a genealogy of the sons of Israel, descending to Aaron and Moses.

6.20 We find that Moses and Aaron's father, Amram, married his aunt, Jochebed, and that he lived to 137 years old.

6.23 Aaron's wife was named Elisheba, the same as Zechariah's wife in Luke 1.

Day 23 Exod. 5.1- 6.13, & 7.1 – 8.32

5.1ff Moses, with Aaron as his spokesman, goes to Pharaoh representing the Israelites. They ask to go and sacrifice to God, but Pharaoh refuses on the grounds that it will disturb his works programme.

5.6ff As a result of this plea, Pharaoh makes the task of brickmaking even harder for the Hebrew slaves, and this leads them to complain to Moses and Aaron that rather than deliver them, they have made their lives worse.(v.21)

5.22 Moses accuses God of doing evil to the people of Israel. We have to beware of second-guessing God in his processes; Jesus shows us that hard ways can lead to great deliverance.

6.1-8 God reminds His people through Moses of the covenant, which He has to fulfil to them.

6.9 But the people are so discouraged, they won't listen.

6.10-13 God sends Moses to Pharaoh, but Moses says, if the Israelites won't listen, how will Pharaoh. Nevertheless, God commands them to go again.

7.1 This is a powerful statement. Moses is the direct voice of God to Pharaoh, and Aaron is Moses' prophet. (Heb נָבִיא *Navi*), that is one who speaks on behalf of God.

7.3 They mustn't look for concessions from Pharaoh, because he is going to resist all through this.

7.7 We see that Aaron is an older brother to Moses by three years.

7.9ff Moses and Aaron now begin a titanic battle with Pharaoh and his magicians. The first sign, a rod turned into a snake, is just immediately reproduced by the Egyptians, which must have been a shock for Moses!

7.12 However, Aaron's snake eats the other snakes!

7.15 Now Moses is go to the Nile, the great river of Egypt, which itself was regarded as a god.

7.16 Moses speaks in the name of the LORD God of the Hebrews (Heb יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי הָעִבְרִים *Adonai Elohey Ha-Ivrim*) the first time this title has been invoked.

7.17 The LORD turns the Nile to blood, and everything in it dies. This would be a terrible blow to Egypt, which relied so much on the water for irrigation. (see v.24)

7.20 But the Egyptian magicians can do the same, and Pharaoh is unmoved.

8.1ff The plague on the river is followed by frogs, lice and flies. Each time Pharaoh says he will let them go, but doesn't. His magicians also copy the signs by their spells. This is a real battle.

8.25 Pharaoh tries to compromise by getting the Israelites to sacrifice in Egypt, but since the Israelites will be sacrificing sheep, which are seen as unclean by the Egyptians, they have to go away. But Pharaoh still hardens his heart.

Day 24 Ex 9.1 – 11.10

9.1-7 A raging cattle disease kills the Egyptians' livestock, while sparing the Israelite, but Pharaoh still will not budge.

9.8-12 Boils or sores break out on the skin of the Egyptians when Moses scatters ashes into the wind, but still Pharaoh will not let them go.

9.11 Note here that the sores also afflict the magicians, who up until now have been able to match the signs.

9.13ff Now the Lord sends enormous, deadly hailstones.

9.20.21 Some of the Egyptians are getting the idea that when God speaks they had better listen, and they remove their cattle from harm. Those who don't listen face the loss.

9.26 But no hail on Israel's land in Goshen.

9.28 Pharaoh pleads for it to stop, and says he will let them go.

9.30 Moses says that Pharaoh will not let them go, nevertheless he calls it off. The flax and barley are ruined, but there is mercy in that the wheat crop is not destroyed.

9.35 Just as Moses said, Pharaoh says no go.

10.2 The signs God is doing are not just for Pharaoh's sake, but also provide a sign of the power of God to the coming generations.

10.3 A plague of locusts comes, which will finish off what the hail didn't get.

10.7 Pharaoh's courtiers now begin to take Pharaoh to task for not letting the Hebrews go. They tell him to let the men only go.

10.10 Pharaoh accuses Moses of being up to no good, wanting to take the whole of Israel with him.

10.16, 17. Pharaoh begs forgiveness, but is not repentant, because he wants the terrible locust infestation to cease. Here is a picture of the sinner remorseful but not intent on real change in his heart. (v.20)

10.21 Now follows a particularly terrifying sign – darkness so thick the Hebrew says it can be touched. (Heb וַיִּמָּשְׁךְ אֶת־יָדָם וַיִּשְׁׁשׁוּ ve'yamash choshekh) For three days they grope around while the Hebrews still have light in Goshen.

10.24 Pharaoh budes a little; they can go as families, but have to leave their herds. No way, says Moses. They might be needed for sacrifice.

10.28, 29 Here is an ominous interchange. Pharaoh dismissed Moses, and says he will never see him again. Moses agrees, they will not meet face to face again.

11.1 The story is moving toward its terrible climax. God says that this time, the Israelites will be released. First, though, they are to ask gifts of their neighbours.

11.3 The people are so in awe of Moses that they gladly pile things on the Israelites.

11.4 -6 Moses announces to the king that the firstborn of Egypt are all to die at the Lord's hand.

11.7 The Hebrews will be completely protected.

11.8-10 Moses storms out of the presence of Pharaoh; the terrible dénouement is upon them.

It is worth noting that even miracles do not result in the change of heart needed for a man to recognise God. They are signs, but do not save.

Day 25 Ex. 12.1- 13.16

This passage is a mixture of story and instruction; this is because the people of Israel are not only going to experience the miracle of Passover, but they are going to remember it in perpetuity as the sign of God's most awesome deliverance in the Old Testament of His people. They are going to ritualize their story, so that each Passover, all Jews will live again the actions of God in setting them free from their slavery and oppression.

For this reason, Passover is the most sacred of all Jewish feasts, and the one which points most clearly to Jesus the Messiah's coming as the Passover lamb whose blood would cause God to 'pass over' His people in saving grace.

12.1 The Hebrew Biblical calendar begins with the month of Nisan, around the Gregorian month of March or April. It was a lunar calendar, governed by the moon. The Hebrew word for month is taken from the word in Hebrew for new (Heb חֹדֶשׁ *chodesh* from חָדַשׁ *chadash*, new) because each *moon-th* started with a *new moon*.

This was a departure from the Egyptian solar calendar, where days were calculated by sunrise to sundown. As in Genesis 1, the Jewish calendar starts with evening, so a day is governed first by which stage the moon is at.

There can be some confusion, however, because although Nisan is the first month, it is not the new year, which occurs on the first day of the seventh month, Tishri, and is called *Rosh HaShanah* (literally, Head of the year, Heb ראש השנה) In the same way in our

calendar, different dates start different kinds of years. So with us, although January is the start of the calendar year, September is the start of the academic year, August the start of the school year and April the start of the tax year. So it's not so strange.

For Jews, 1 Nisan was the start of the year for calculating the reign of kings, and the years of the calendar, while 1 Tishri, Rosh HaShanah was the new year for people, making a new start, marked by a special Sabbath and the sound of trumpets. (Lev 23.24, called also Yom Zikaron, the day for Remembrance.)

Passover itself was to be celebrated, then in the first month of the calendar year. On the tenth day a lamb was to be chosen, and this would be slaughtered on the evening of the fourteenth day, going into the fifteenth, which was the night of the full moon. All of the lamb was to be eaten, and some of the blood to be daubed on the doorposts. The lamb was to be eaten with bitter herbs and bread made without yeast. They were to be ready also to leave the land, with their travelling clothes on.

12.14 This is instituted as an annual feast of remembrance, and then is followed by the 'days of unleavened bread' or days of *matzot* (Heb מַצּוֹת) , seven days where all yeast and fermented food is forbidden. Jews still go to great lengths to clean all yeast and fermented products out of their homes in the days before Passover, which to the Jews is known as *Pesach* (Heb פֶּסַח)

12.21 The instructions are put into action, and the door lintels are marked with blood from the lamb which each household would eat.

12.26 'When your children ask...' - the story of Passover is told when the youngest at the table asks 'Why is this night different to all other nights?' – *Mah nishtanah ha-laila hazeh?*

12.29 As foretold, the Lord strikes down all of the firstborn of Egypt at midnight (the Hebrew word means halfway through the night)

12.31 The Hebrews are now to move out, in the midst of the horror of their slavemasters, wailing over their loss. Pharaoh now dismisses them and all their property.

12.33 The Egyptians were anxious to drive out the Jews, for fear they would all end up dead.

12.35, 36 They even asked the Egyptians for gifts to get rid of them, which they were more than willing to give, leaving the Egyptians much reduced!

12.37 Six hundred thousand men, not counting women and children, went out, plus others who chose to join them rather than stay in Egypt , the 'mixed multitude.'

12.40 It had been four hundred and thirty years since Jacob and his family moved to Egypt. God was now fulfilling his promise to Abraham that they would return as a whole nation to Canaan, even though it would be a generation before they arrived.

12.43 The Passover is only to be eaten by circumcised Jews, because it is meal of the covenant, and circumcision is the sign of covenant. If strangers or slaves are to participate, they must be circumcised.

13.1 God calls for the firstborn of Israel, whom He has saved from destruction, to be sanctified to Him. This is to be celebrated in the month of Aviv (Heb אָבִיב) which is a word meaning green, and is linked to the barley, which at this time will be green enough to be cooked, but not harvested. This is an alternative name for the month of Nisan.

13.5 The Lord's intention is to bring them to Canaan, back to the land He promised to Abraham.

This is followed up by a reminder of the command to eat unleavened bread, or *matzot* for the seven days following Passover.

13.12 The firstborn of all creatures was to be holy to the Lord because of the deliverance God performed.

In the Jewish calendar, the day before Passover, Nisan 14, is observed by firstborn children as a fast to commemorate this fact. (Called *ta'anit bechorim*. Heb תַּאֲנִית בְּכוֹרִים , the fast of the firstborn.)

13.15 Although the firstborn of the flocks and herds are sacrificed, the firstborn humans are redeemed, that is, they are replaced by a sacrifice to the Lord.