



# The MBPC Texter

... get into scripture – an ancient form of text messaging

Issue 11

Lectionary Year C

Wednesday, March 13, 2019



Sunday, March 17, 2019

2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in Lent

<p>☆</p> <p><b>Old Testament Reading</b>  <b>Genesis 15: 1-12, 17-18</b> (sermon text)  <i>God's Covenant with Abram</i></p>	<p>✝</p> <p><b>Gospel Reading</b>  <b>Luke 13: 31-35</b>  <i>The Lament over Jerusalem</i></p>
--	--

☆ Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18 ☆

*(Verses 1-12)* After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, “Do not be afraid, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great.” But Abram said, “O Lord GOD, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?” And Abram said, “You have given me no offspring, and so a slave born in my house is to be my heir.” But the word of the LORD came to him, “This man shall not be your heir.” He brought him outside and said, “Look toward heaven and count the stars, if you are able to count them.” Then he said to him, “So shall your descendants be,” And he believed the LORD; and the LORD reckoned it to him as righteousness.

Then, he said to him, “I am the LORD who brought you from Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to possess.” But he said, “O Lord GOD, how am I to know that I shall possess it?” He said to him, “Bring me a heifer three years old, a female goat three years old, a ram three years old, a turtledove, and a young pigeon.” He brought him all these and cut them in two, laying each half over against the other; but he did not cut the birds in two. And when birds of prey came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away.

As the sun was going down a deep sleep fell upon Abram, and a deep and

terrifying darkness descended on him.

*(Verses 17-18)* When the sun had gone down and it was dark, a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch passed between these pieces. On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, “To your descendants I give this land from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates...”

✠ Luke 13:31-35 ✠

At that very hour some Pharisees came and said to him, “Get away from here, for Herod wants to kill you.” He said to them, “Go and tell that fox for me, ‘Listen, I am casting out demons and performing cures today and tomorrow, and on the third day I finish my work. Yet today, tomorrow, and the next day I must be on my way, because it is impossible for a prophet to be killed outside of Jerusalem.’ Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! See, your house is left to you. And I tell you, you will not see me until the time comes when you say, ‘Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.’ ”

Read more...

-  [An Introduction to Genesis](#)
-  [Herod’s Temple and the Temple Mount](#)



An Introduction to Genesis

Genesis derives its name from the Greek meaning “book of the origin,” and the 50 chapters in this first book of the Old Testament interpret origins of the cosmos, humankind, and the Israelite ancestors. The origins of the cosmos and humankind are recounted in the primeval narratives, chapters 1-11, and the stories of the Israelite ancestors are told in the patriarchal narratives of chapters 12-50. The stories in Genesis were originally passed down orally. Then, three main written sources were edited together to form the book. Editors were not concerned about duplicating particular episodes, but rather, valued preservation of differing traditions.



### PRIMEVAL STORIES OF GENESIS

<p><b>Two Stories of Creation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• God creates the heavens and earth in 6 days and rests on the 7<sup>th</sup> day. God creates humankind, man and woman in the image of God (Chapter 1).</li> <li>• The LORD created man from the dust of the ground and created woman from one of the man's ribs (Chapter 2). The man and woman, Adam and Eve, live in the Garden of Eden.</li> </ul>	Ch. 1-2
<p><b>The First Sin and Its Punishment:</b> The serpent entices Adam and Eve to eat forbidden fruit from the tree of knowledge of good and evil.</p>	Ch. 3
<p><b>Cain Murders Abel</b> Adam and Eve have two sons and one of them kills the other.</p>	Ch.4
<p><b>Story of Noah and the Flood:</b> God saw the wickedness of humankind on the earth and made a plan for a flood covering all of the land. But, because God found Noah to be a righteous man, God spared Noah and his family. God instructed, "Build a large boat, an ark." To preserve animal species, Noah took pairs of all kinds of animals and birds. The flood waters subsided after 40 days. Noah, his family, and the animals embarked, and Noah built an altar to worship God. God then promised never destroy the earth and its creatures again and showed Noah a rainbow in the sky as a sign of this promise.</p>	Ch. 6-10
<p><b>The Tower of Babel:</b> In the times of Noah and his family, the whole earth had one language. Then, people said, "Come let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens." In response, the LORD confused the peoples' language so that they would not understand one another.</p>	Ch 11

### GENESIS STORIES OF THE ISRAELITE ANCESTORS

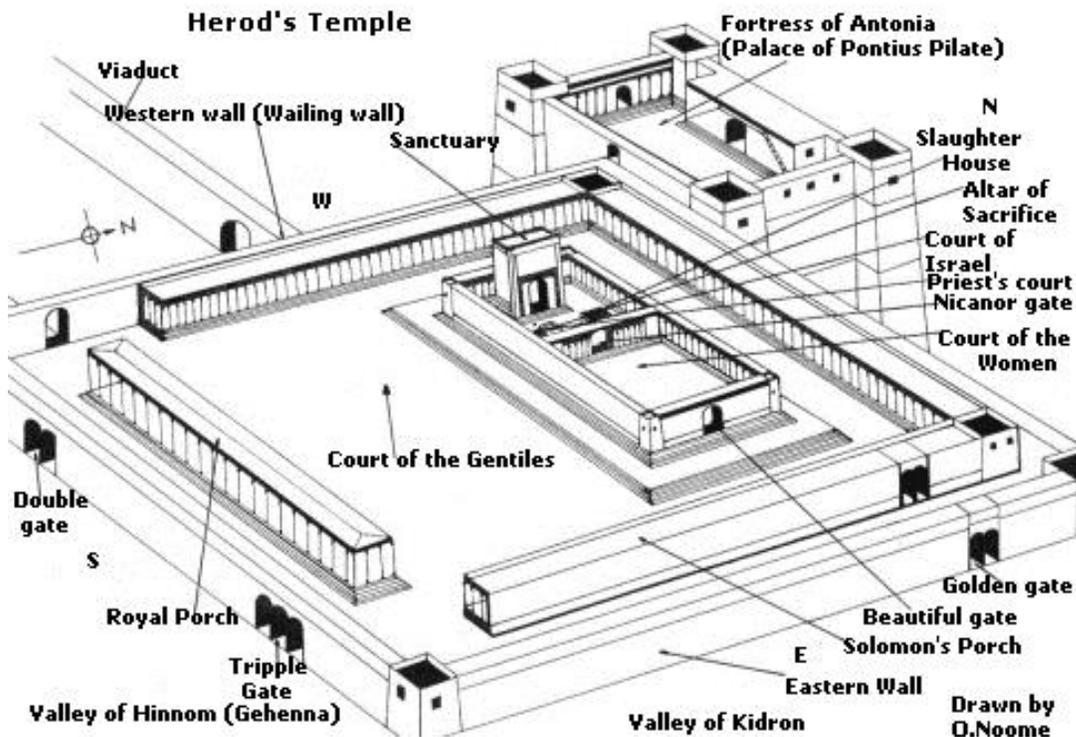
<p><b>God's Covenant with Abram (Abraham) and Sarai (Sarah)</b> The story of God's call to Abram/Abraham begins the enduring relationship between God and the Israelites, which is the overarching theme for the entire Old Testament. God tells Abram, "If you leave your home and journey to the land that I will show you, then I will give you the land and make your descendants a great nation." Later, God changed their names to Abraham and Sarah when he renewed the covenant by giving the couple a son, whom they name Isaac.</p>	Ch. 12 -23
<p><b>Isaac and Rebekah</b> Abraham sends one of his servants back to Haran, the home of his kinfolk, to find a wife for Isaac. Rebekah agrees to go to Canaan with the servant and marry Isaac. Isaac and Rebekah have twin sons – Jacob and Esau. Even though Esau is firstborn, Rebekah and Jacob trick Isaac into giving Jacob the blessing intended for the first son. Jacob must leave home to escape Esau's fury.</p>	Ch. 24-27
<p><b>Jacob/Israel, His Wives, and Children</b> After leaving his parents and brother in Beer-sheba, Jacob also returned to the ancestral home of Haran to find a wife. After working for Laban 7 years, Jacob married Laban's daughter Leah, and then, 7 years later he married Laban's younger daughter Rachel. Jacob left Haran and took his family to Bethel. One night on the way to Bethel, Jacob wrestled with an angel until</p>	Ch 28-36

<p>daybreak. “Because you have striven with God and with humans,” said the angel. You shall no longer be called Jacob but Israel.” Among Jacob’s children were 12 sons: Reuben; Simeon; Levi; Judah; Issachar; Zebulun; Dan; Naphtali; Gad; Asher; Joseph; and Benjamin. Thus, it will be through Jacob/Israel’s lineage that God’s covenant with Abraham will be fulfilled and the “children of Israel” will become a great nation.</p>	
<p><b>The Story of Joseph</b> Jacob’s 11<sup>th</sup> son, Joseph, is disliked by his brothers because he is his father’s favorite and a tattle-tale. He also told his brothers about dreams of his own greatness. The brothers plot against him and sell him to a caravan of traders headed for Egypt and tell their father he was killed by a wild animal. After experiencing slavery and prison in Egypt, Joseph is called to the Pharaoh’s palace to interpret his dreams and later rises to power. Pharaoh says to Joseph, “Because the spirit of God resides in you, I will give you command over my people.” Many years have passed and Joseph’s brothers, back in Canaan, do not know what has happened to him. When they go to Egypt and ask Joseph, the Pharaoh’s chief administrator, for grain. They do not recognize him but he knows them. On a second visit, Joseph reveals himself to his brothers.</p>	<p>Ch. 37-44</p>
<p><b>The Children of Israel Move to Egypt</b> Upon the invitation of Joseph and Pharaoh, Jacob/Israel and his entire family move to Egypt and settle in Goshen, located to the east of the Nile River delta. The future generations of Israelites remain in Egypt and organize themselves in tribes named after Jacob’s and Joseph’s sons. The events described in the book of Exodus take place several hundred years later after the Israelites have become numerous and powerful.</p>	<p>Ch. 45-50</p>



Herod’s Temple and the Temple Mount

During the entire lifetime of Jesus and beyond, Palestine was under Roman control. Even so, the Romans delegated authority to governors and rulers from the Herodian family until about 50 A.D. Herod I or Herod the Great was designated by the Roman Senate as “King of the Jews” and was king at the time of Jesus’ birth. The story of the massacre of the Bethlehem children (Matthew 2:16-18) is true to Herod’s character for he killed many of his own relatives due to fear of conspiracy. One way Herod demonstrated his total loyalty to Rome was through his numerous building projects. A jewel-in-the-crown of Herod’s constructions was his rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem on a grandiose scale. In addition to returning the Temple to its former glory, Herod the Great created the Temple Mount by extending Mount Zion’s natural plateau and enclosing the area with four massive retaining walls. The drawing here helps us to visualize the Temple Mount, which served as the location for Jewish national life at the time of Jesus.



Now think of the interaction between Jesus and the Pharisees described in Luke 13:31-35 as taking place either in the Temple or around it. It was Herod Antipas, son of Herod the Great, whom Jesus refers to disparagingly as “a fox.” Jesus reminds this gathering of current Temple leaders that past leaders had killed prophets such as Zechariah (Jeremiah 26:20-23) and Uriah (2<sup>nd</sup> Chronicles 24:20-22) after the prophets accused the leaders of not following God’s commandments. Then, Jesus laments the Pharisees’ unwillingness to accept his new interpretations of the law, thus foreshadowing his own crucifixion at their hands.

After Jesus’ Resurrection and Ascension, the Jerusalem Temple remained at the religious center. When a large crowd gathered here for the Festival of Pentecost all were filled with the Holy Spirit and were empowered for spreading the good news about Jesus Christ (Acts 2). The stoning of Stephen (Acts 7) probably took place on this site as well. Conflicts about following God’s commandments continued here between those who had accepted Jesus as the promised messiah and those who had not. However, all considered themselves Jews and worshiped in the Temple. These connections were severed when, in 70 A.D., Roman legions destroyed the Temple and burned Jerusalem. The Temple was never rebuilt and its destruction marked the final break between Judaism and Christianity.

The photo below shows a modern view of the Temple Mount with the west wall to the left and the south wall at the bottom. This large plaza atop Mt. Zion is currently dominated by 3 monumental structures. The gold dome in the center is the Dome of the Rock, built in 691-92 A.D. in the location of the original temple. The al-Aqsa Mosque is the large domed structure to the south, and the Dome of the Chain is the smaller structure just to the east. For over a thousand years, the Temple Mount has been a holy site for Christianity, Islam, and Judaism alike.

