

Scripture Study



“In His Own Time, and in His Own Way”: Jacob’s Ascent to the Heavenly Temple

By [Jeffrey M. Bradshaw](#) · March 3, 2022

Cover image: Sébastien Bourdon (1616–1671): Jacob Buries the Idols under the Oak of Sichem.

Genesis 34: Violent Acts by Jacob’s Sons at Shechem

After Jacob’s only daughter Dinah was defiled by Shechem the Hivite, her father had tried to transform an ugly situation into something more honorable by consenting to a marriage, conditioned on the willingness of the men of the village to undergo circumcision (see

Genesis 34:1–24). But in contrast to Jacob's graciousness and desire to bless the people of Shechem, Simeon and Levi "were very wroth" (Genesis 34:7). Defying the formal agreement their father had made with the Shechemites, Simeon and Levi "took each man his sword, and came upon the city boldly, and slew all the males" (Genesis 34:25). Afterward, Jacob reproached them, saying "Ye have troubled me to make me to stink among the inhabitants of the land" (Genesis 34:30). The later benediction they received from their father was really a malediction — it addressed Simeon and Levi jointly with these words: "Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce; and their wrath, for it was cruel: I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel" (Genesis 49:7).[\[1\]](#)



Jacob's Travels in Canaan. Green line represents Jacob's itinerary. Red line represents Esau's itinerary.^[2]

Genesis 35:1-15: God Reveals the Need for Separation and Spiritual Repurification

35:1. *Arise, go up to Beth-el and dwell there: and make an altar unto God.* Curiously, though Jacob condemns the actions of his sons in no uncertain words, God Himself “is absent from the entire affair. ... When He finally does speak in the immediate sequel, right after the speech of [Jacob’s] sons, He neither approves nor disapproves of what either party has said. His remarks are addressed solely to Jacob”[\[3\]](#):

Arise, go up to Beth-el, and dwell there: and make there an altar unto God.

In the reading of Leon Kass, God’s command to “dwell there,” at Beth-el, seems to imply God’s tacit:[\[4\]](#)

displeasure with Jacob’s original decision to settle among the Canaanites, the deed that set in motion the whole chain of events. At the same time, he offers both Jacob and his sons a more profound answer to the “problem of harlotry.”

God commands Jacob to correct his plans and to change his place, physically and, by implication, spiritually. The command contains not only a reminder of God’s providence but also an implicit rebuke of Jacob’s previous decisions. Jacob, who had tried to settle permanently in the face of Shechem ... is told now to complete his journey. He must “rise” and “go up” from the Canaanites ... and return to Beth-el, “the House of God,” to the place where Abraham had built an altar and first called upon the name of the Lord, and where Jacob himself had dreamt his famous dream of the ladder, just before his departure into Paddam-Aram. ...

Like Abraham before him, Jacob promptly answers the call: he gets up and goes, retracing Abraham’s path from Shechem to Beth-El (and eventually also to Egypt). Jacob understands immediately that he has been called not just to

physical relocation but to spiritual repurification.

Hugh Nibley gives the following summary of the family's spiritual preparations:[\[5\]](#)

Jacob was instructed to resume operations on the site of the temple (Beth-el), settling there and making an altar to the God who had appeared to him and delivered him from the hand of Esau (see Genesis 35:1). He was to establish a holy society, a little Zion on the spot, instructing all his people to renounce the alien gods, wash themselves and change their garments (see Genesis 35:2). Then they were ready: "Let us arise and go up to the house of the Lord, and there I will make a sacrifice to the God who answered me in the day of my distress" (see Genesis 35:3). There seemed to be repetitions of this altar building and sacrificing, always for the same reason—at a place where God had appeared and saved Jacob; the same commandments are given to him as were to Adam and Abraham on like occasions (see Genesis 35:7, 9-12).

Significantly, Jewish tradition suggests that Jacob's resulting encounter with God simple repetition of his previous worship at Beth-el. In contrast to his previous earthly endowment where he received promises at the hands of an angel, Jacob's previous promises were confirmed or ratified[\[6\]](#) upon him personally by God Himself.[\[7\]](#) In this experience, Jacob's "name is changed to Israel for the second time"[\[8\]](#) and he is brought into the heavenly temple[\[9\]](#)

The king hath brought me into his chambers (Song of Solomon 1:4): This teaches us that the Holy One, blessed is He, will ultimately show Israel the treasures stored up on high, and the chambers of the firmament. Said R. Jacob: This may be learnt from our father Jacob, for when he said to him, "Arise, go up to Beth-el, and dwell there," this teaches us that the Holy One, blessed is He, showed him

one story above another, and showed him also the chambers of the supernal realms.

Genesis 35:6–15: Promises to Jacob Made Sure by Divine Confirmation at Beth-el

35:6. *So Jacob came to Luz.* Given Jacob's previous renaming of the sacred location to Beth-el (Genesis 28:19), the second appearance of the alternate place name of Luz in Genesis 35:6 is unexpected, as are the subsequent references to it in Genesis 48:3 and Joshua 18:13. These repeated mentions hint that the importance of "Luz" goes beyond its explicitly stated use as a remembrance of an older place name. In light of the pervasive temple themes throughout story of Jacob—themes that culminate in the present chapter—indulging in some speculation about that possibility might be forgiven. Specifically, remembering the symbolism of the embrace of Jacob and the heavenly messenger in Genesis 32, is it possible that resemblances between Jewish traditions about the symbolism of "Luz" and related Old Testament resurrection motifs to Hugh Nibley's descriptions of the words exchanged during the embrace of the creator god and the king at the veil in Egyptian ritual literature are not coincidental?

The symbolism of the resurrection and the sacred embrace come together in ancient ideas about the bone of resurrection, called the "luz" bone in Jewish tradition.^[10] Most scholars identify this bone with the "sacrum," a large triangular bone located just above the tailbone. The Latin term *os sacrum* (= sacred or holy bone) is a direct translation of the Greek *hieron osteon*.^[11] Being a large, dense bone, the sacrum resists decomposition more than other vertebrae.^[12] Thus, it was natural to see the sacrum as the starting point for resurrection.^[13] In Ezekiel's vision of the resurrection, revivication begins with the coming together of the dry bones. Afterward, the sinews, flesh, and skin are laid upon them, so they will be ready to receive the breath of life (Ezekiel 37:1–10). In the Ezekiel mural at *Dura Europos*, a drama that seems to have been re-enacted ritually by Jewish initiates, the breath of life

comes into the reassembled bodies through a combination of prophetic speech and sacred gestures.[\[14\]](#)

However, Ezekiel's version of the resurrection of the dry bones is recent history when compared with Egyptian fragments of the Osiris myth that go back thousands of years earlier. Echoing the symbolism of Jacob's embrace with the heavenly messenger in Genesis 32 and Joseph Smith's vision of a resurrection involving a series of handclasps and embraces with family members,[\[15\]](#) Hugh Nibley discusses "the sacred relic, the backbone of Osiris, ... the symbol of strength of endurance" that is raised to life in a divine embrace:
[\[16\]](#)

You have folded your arms around [Horus] so that his bones expand (with life);
... Horus recognizes his father in you," where the embrace puts life in the bones.

The fulness of the divine gifts are represented here as life (centered *ankh* glyph), endurance (*djed* glyph pictured within the *ankh*), and power (*was*-scepter glyphs at left and right), placed on a *neb* bowl (bottom glyph, signifying “all”). Birth house of the temple of Dendera, Roman Period.[\[17\]](#)

Of course, Nibley recognized that the language used in the Egyptian ritual varied over time, and that only “some of the actual words spoken through the partition”[\[18\]](#) are available in written form. However, what hints we are given indicate that these words are meant to express “‘all life, all endurance, and all power’[\[19\]](#) and, taken together, represent ‘the total fulness of divine gifts’[\[20\]](#) thought to describe the pharaoh in earlier times, but represented as the object of his search and the purpose of the [Egyptian temple] ceremonies in [later]

Ptolemaic times.”[\[21\]](#) Nibley gave the meaning of the three primary symbols that symbolized the words uttered in the final ritual embrace as follows:[\[22\]](#)

the three signs [of *ankh* (life), *djed* (endurance), and *was* (power)] that appear in the combination as the words of bestowal at the ritual embrace ... originally stood for the navel string [*ankh*], the backbone of Osiris [*djed*], and his priestly power [*was*-scepter].

All life (ankh). Nibley notes that the promise of “health” in the first Egyptian sign parallels the promises of Proverbs 3:8: “health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones,” while reminding us that portions of the book of Proverbs are “strongly reminiscent of the Egyptian Wisdom literature.”[\[23\]](#) While the eminent Bible translator Robert Alter finds the mention of the navel “as a focus of bodily well-being” to be “bizarre” and posits a scribal error as an explanation for its appearance,[\[24\]](#) Nibley’s recognition of the umbilical cord as an apt symbol of life in the Egyptian formula makes perfect sense. Thus, André Chouraqui is almost certainly closer to the mark when he translates the term in Proverbs 3:8 as “umbilicus”[\[25\]](#) rather than “navel.” As a parallel to the way the “umbilicus” provides liquid nourishment to the body, the Hebrew term translated as “marrow” (*shiqqui*) emphasizes the flow of “juice” to the skeleton. The substitution of the terms “tonic”[\[26\]](#) or “refreshment”[\[27\]](#) for “marrow” in English translation highlights the desired effect of healing and invigoration.

However, the book of Proverbs is not the only place in Jewish tradition where we find the bestowal of knowledge and power through ritual embraces that are reminiscent of Egyptian ceremonies. For example, Eugene Seach notes that within the Jewish pseudepigraphal book *Joseph and Aseneth*, the three gifts given to Aseneth in Egypt from Joseph, son of Jacob, as he kisses her three times[\[28\]](#) “correspond to the three ‘tokens’ (*ankh*, *djed*, and *was*) bestowed in the Egyptian form of the Sacred Embrace,” which Seach takes as being

“obviously patterned after the Embracing Cherubim in the [Jerusalem] Temple.”[\[29\]](#)

Isis and the pharaoh raise the Djed pillar, representing the backbone of Osiris and a symbol of his resurrection.

West wall of the Osiris Hall, Seti I temple at Abydos, Egypt.

All endurance (djed). The Egyptian glyph connoting endurance or stability[\[30\]](#)

goes back to Old Kingdom times with the chief Memphite god of creation, Ptah, who was himself termed the 'Noble *Djed*.' ... By the beginning of the New Kingdom, the *djed* was widely used as a symbol of Osiris and seems to have been regarded as representative of that deity's backbone. ...

The royal ritual of "Raising the *djedi* pillar" was performed as a culminating act in the rituals of the deceased king and at the new king's jubilee festival. By means of ropes and with the assistance of priests, the king erected a large *djed* pillar in a symbolic act which may have represented both the rebirth of the deceased monarch and the establishment of stability for his own reign and for the cosmos itself.

Of course, as ritual symbols are translated across different times and cultures, they may sometimes change form while retaining similar general connotations. For example, the ancient rod and coil, used as tools for architectural measurement and figuratively employed by the creator god in the layout out of the cosmos, served as symbols of divinely authorized power.^[31] However, because the rod and the ring correspond in their broad architectural functions to the newer technology of the square and compass,^[32] it becomes possible to adapt ritual to substitute these later symbols for the older ones—keeping ritual intelligible for moderns without discarding its essential elements.

Similarly, while the *djed*, a symbol for the enduring strength of the backbone, made sense in ancient Egyptian culture, references to the "backbone" was rare in biblical culture, appearing only once in the Old Testament (Leviticus 3:9, possibly referring only to the sacrum rather than to the entire spine). Instead, the loins were generally considered to be the "seat of physical strength"^[33] (see, for example, Nahum 2:1) and might be considered a better analogue for the symbolism of the Egyptian *djed*. The Hebrew and Greek terms for loins refer to the body's midsection (Exodus 28:42; 2 Kings 1:8; Isaiah 11:5; Jeremiah 13:1;

Matthew 3:4) and to gird one's loins was to fortify oneself for travel or battle (Exodus 12:11; 1 Kings 18:46; 2 Kings 9:1). Figuratively speaking, the loins signified preparation generally (Luke 12:35; Ephesians 6:14; 1 Peter 1:13). They also symbolized procreative powers (Genesis 35:11; 1 Kings 8:19; Acts 2:30; Hebrew 7:5, 10).

In addition to loins, the related Hebrew term for "sinews" the powerful tendons that bound the bones together (Ezekiel 37:6; Job 10:11), was sacred as the seat of life itself.^[34] Thus, Jacob's injury in the sinew of his thigh joint, located in the area of his loins and imposed by his heavenly opponent (Genesis 32:25), seems a fitting punishment for the hubris he exhibited in his almost superhuman feat of wrestling all night with an angel. Whether we envision his injury as a painful punch to the gut or groin,^[35] or as an awful wrenching of the tendons that held his leg to his hip, it was a blow that not only halted his steps but also was said in Jewish tradition to have rendered him (temporarily) unfit to serve as a high priest.^[36] But perhaps the most important impact of the injury was its spur as a source of reflection for Jacob—and for each of us as we age and become less-abled. "A man who limps is slowed down, made conscious of his gait, mindful that his plans cannot fully succeed because the perishable body does not simply execute what reason and will command."^[37]

All power (*was-scepter*). The Egyptian glyph of the *was-scepter*^[38]

is used with the connotation of "power" and "dominion." ... From early times the *was* scepter is shown carried by deities as a sign of their power.

Though Jacob had "passed over Jordan" on his way to Haran with only his staff (Genesis 32:10), his return to Beth-el seems to have endowed him with a scepter.

Genesis 35:10: *thy name shalt not be called any more Jacob, but Israel shall be thy name:*

and he called his name Israel. At last, the previous promise of God's definitive conferral of the new name of Israel is fulfilled. Kass comments:[\[39\]](#)

Here God himself effects the change of name, in broad daylight and in the Promised Land, ratifying the renaming (or perhaps fulfilling a prophecy of such renaming) offered in early dawn and in trans-Jordan by Jacob's nocturnal adversary. Last time, successful in wrestling, Jacob was renamed by his nameless opponent for his past deeds: for having struggled with God and with men, and for having prevailed. This time there is no explanation of the new name and no mention of struggling: the meaning of "Israel" is presumably amplified by the blessing that follows, a blessing that looks to the future (in light of the past promises to Abraham and Isaac).

Genesis 35:11–12: *And God said unto him ... nations shall be of thee ... and to thy seed after thee will I give the land.* Following the name and blessings confirmed on Jacob himself, he receives the sure promise of God that these same blessings will be given to his posterity forever.

Nibley's citation of the Egyptian "endowment" rites provides a fitting summary of Jacob's experience:[\[40\]](#)

"Thou hast strength on earth. Mayest thou be exalted in thy posterity" (*lit.* those who come after thee)." To this the person responds: "O my posterity! Living souls ... who came out of me to take on the flesh of Atum!"

Summarizing the concluding words of God's blessing to Jacob, now veritably Israel, in verses 11–12, Kass writes:[\[41\]](#)

As Nahum Sarna points out, this grand blessing fulfills the patriarchal prayer

offered by Isaac (Genesis 28:3–4) when he pronounces the full Abrahamic blessing on Jacob as he is leaving for Haran. It also echoes fittingly the divine promises made by God to Abraham at the time of *his* renaming and the establishment of the covenant (Genesis 17), promises about progeny and about the land. Unlike Jacob's wrestling opponent, God freely identifies Himself to Israel by name as *El Shaddai* (compare Genesis 17:1; 28:3), and blesses him with fertility and increase (compare Genesis 17:2, 6), the paternity of nations (compare Genesis 17:4, 5, 6), and kingly descendants (compare Genesis 17:6; Saul will come from the tribe of Benjamin, David from Judah). And with a specific reference to His earlier covenantal promises to Jacob's ancestors, God now gives to Jacob (Israel) the land He had given to Abraham and Isaac, now to him and, in the future, to his seed (compare Genesis 17:8). This theophany and this blessing represent the peak of Jacob's relationship to God; Jacob now as Israel, now returned to the Promised Land, is firmly established in God's grace, having earned his place as a patriarch within the covenant. The birthright and the all-important covenantal blessing are now rightly his; we have it on the highest authority.

Endnotes

[1] As with Reuben, Simeon's tribe dwindled. Levi's descendants were later honored with the priesthood. Unlike the other tribes, they received no inheritance in the land, but were "scattered" among the cities of Israel in order to perform their service among the various tribes.

[2] Thomas V. Brisco, *Holman Bible Atlas: A Complete Guide to the Expansive Geography of Biblical History*. Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 1998, 48.

[3] Kass, Leon R. *The Beginning of Wisdom: Reading Genesis*. New York City, NY: Free Press, Simon and Schuster, 2003, 500.

[4] Kass, *Beginning of Wisdom*, 500–01.

[5] Nibley, Hugh W. "On the Sacred and the Symbolic." In *Eloquent Witness: Nibley on Himself, Others, and the Temple*, edited by Stephen D. Ricks. *The Collected Works of Hugh Nibley* 17, 340-419. Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book, 2008, 385.

[6] Neusner, Jacob, ed. *Genesis Rabbah: The Judaic Commentary to the Book of Genesis, A New American Translation*. 3 vols. Vol. 3: Parashiyot Sixty-Eight through One Hundred on Genesis 28:10 to 50:26. *Brown Judaic Studies 106*, ed. Jacob Neusner. Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1985, Genesis 35:10, Parashah 82:2:5, pp. 166–67; Zlotowitz, *Bereishis*, 2:1510n11. Critical scholars tend to see the two instances of the name change as reflecting different sources, but the two interpretive solutions are not 100% mutually exclusive and neither explanation fully exhausts the richness of the data.

[7] Sarna, Nahum M., ed. *Genesis. The JPS Torah Commentary*, ed. Nahum M. Sarna. Philadelphia, PA: The Jewish Publication Society, 1989, 241–42n9–10.

[8] Sarna, *Genesis*, 241n9–10.

[9] Kasher, Menachem Mendel. *Encyclopedia of Biblical Interpretation: A Millennial Anthology*. 9 vols. Translated by Harry Freedman. Monsey, NY: American Biblical Encyclopedia Society, 1957, citing Shir ha-Shirim Zuta 1:4, vol. 4 p. 186, Anthology 3.

[10] The term "luz" in Hebrew means "nut" or "almond" and the name of the bone may have come from the idea that it is hard, like a nut.

[11] Sugar, Oscar. "How the sacrum got its name." *The Journal of the American Medical*

Association 257, no. 15 (1987): 2061–63. <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/article-abstract/365627> (accessed February 28, 2022), 2061.

[12] See, for example, Freedman, H., and Maurice Simon, eds. 1939. *Midrash Rabbah* 3rd ed. 10 vols. London, England: Soncino Press, 1983, Ecclesiastes 12:5:1, p. 301.

[13] Wolski, Nathan, ed. *The Zohar, Pritzker Edition*. Vol. 10. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2016, Midrash Ha-Ne'lam, Va-Yera 1:113a, pp. 347-48: “the body [is] held captive in the grave and decomposed in the dust, of which nothing remains aside from a spoonful of decayed matter from which the whole body will be rebuilt.” Sugar notes: “The first Biblical intimation that a single bone might be *the* bone needed for resurrection is in Psalms 343:[20]: ‘He watches over all the bones; one of them shall not be broken’” (Sugar, “How the sacrum,” 2062).

For a brief summary of selected Jewish traditions, see Sugar, “How the sacrum,” 2062. Regarding Islamic traditions, see Ojumah, Naomi, and Marios Loukas. “The intriguing history of the term ‘sacrum’.” *The Spine Scholar* 2, no. 1 (2018): 17–18. <https://doi.org/10.26632/ss.6.2018.2.1>. (accessed February 28, 2022), 18.

[14] Bradshaw, Jeffrey M. “The Ezekiel Mural at Dura Europos: A tangible witness of Philo’s Jewish mysteries?” *BYU Studies* 49, no. 1 (2010): 4-49. <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/byusq/vol49/iss1/2/>. See, especially pp. 25–26.

[15] In what Elder Willard Richards called “the sweetest sermon from Joseph he ever heard in his life” (Rhoda Richards Diary, April 16, 1843, cited in Smith, Joseph, Jr., Andrew F. Ehat, and Lyndon W. Cook. *The Words of Joseph Smith: The Contemporary Accounts of the Nauvoo Discourses of the Prophet Joseph*. Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Religious Studies Center, 1980. <https://rsc.byu.edu/book/words-joseph-smith> (accessed August 21,

2020), 199), the Prophet described his vision (Smith, Joseph, Jr., Andrew H. Hedges, Alex D. Smith, and Richard Lloyd Anderson. *Journals: December 1841-April 1843. The Joseph Smith Papers, Journals 2*, ed. Dean C. Jessee, Ronald K. Esplin and Richard Lyman Bushman. Salt Lake City, UT: The Church Historian's Press, 2011, April 16, 1843, 360):

So plain was the vision I actually saw men, before they had ascended from the tomb, as though they were getting up slowly. They took each other *by the hand*, and it was, "My father and my son, my mother and my daughter, my brother and my sister." And when the voice calls for the dead to arise, suppose I am laid by the side of my father, what would be the first joy of my heart? Where is my father, my mother my sister? They are by my side. *I embrace them*, and they me.

[16] Nibley, Hugh W. 1975. *The Message of the Joseph Smith Papyri: An Egyptian Endowment*. 2nd ed. *Collected Works of Hugh Nibley* 16. Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book, 2005, 455, citing Pyramid Text 357 at 585.

[17] Published in Wilkinson, Richard H. 1992. *Reading Egyptian Art: A Hieroglyphic Guide to Ancient Egyptian Painting and Sculpture*. London, England: Thames and Hudson, 2006, 180. See Robins, Gay. *The Art of Ancient Egypt*. Revised ed. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008, 221 for a photograph of the inner coffin of Irthoreru from the twenty-sixth dynasty that features a similar group decorating the front of its pedestal.

[18] Nibley, *Message*, 453.

[19] Brunner, Hellmutt. "Review of *Untersuchungen zu den ägyptischen Tempelreliefs der griechisch-römischen Zeit*, by Erich Winter." *Archiv für Orientforschung* 23 (1970): 118–20. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41637330>. (accessed February 27, 2022), 120: «Alles Leben, alle Dauer, alle Gewalt». This idea was represented visually by the grouping of

ankh, djed, and was glyphs placed on *neb* baskets or bowls, with the *neb* sign meaning “all” (Wilkinson, Richard H. 1992. *Reading Egyptian Art: A Hieroglyphic Guide to Ancient Egyptian Painting and Sculpture*. London, England: Thames and Hudson, 2006, 181, 199).

[20] Brunner, “Review,” 119: «die ganze Fülle der Charismata Pharaos».

[21] Nibley, *Message*, 453,

[22] Nibley, *Message*, 456.

[23] For example, as early as 1924, Adolf Erman pointed out substantial parallels between the Egyptian “Instruction of Amenemope” and Proverbs 22:17–24:22 (Erman, Adolf. “Eine ägyptische Quelle der ‘Sprüche Salomos.’ Mit zwei Tafeln.” *Sonderabdruck der Sitzungsberichte der Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften. Philosophisch-historische Klasse. Berlin, Germany: Verlag der Akademie der Wissenschaften. In Kommission bei Walter de Gruyter u. Co.* 15 (1924): 86–93, plates 6–7).

For a translation of the “Instruction of Amenemope” see, for example, Lichtheim, Miriam, ed. 1973-1980. *Ancient Egyptian Literature: A Book of Readings*. 3 vols. Berkeley, CA: The University of California Press, 2006, The Instruction of Amenemope, 2:146–163. Lichtheim observes, “ever since Adolf Erman pointed [out these parallels] there has been a consensus among scholars on a literary relationship, although some scholars have tried to interpret it in reverse by claiming priority for the Hebrew text, or have proposed to derive both works from a lost Semitic original” (Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, 2:147). But this hypothesis of reverse dependence or common derivation seems unlikely (Murphy, Roland. *The Tree of Life: An Exploration of Biblical Wisdom Literature. The Anchor Bible Reference Library*, ed. David Noel Freedman. New York City, NY: Doubleday, 1990, 24).

[24] Alter, Robert, ed. *The Hebrew Bible: A Translation with Commentary*. New York City,

NY: W. W. Norton, 2019, 3:360n8:

The Masoretic Text reads *shorekha*, “your navel,” which sounds bizarre, the navel not being known as a focus of bodily well being. The Septuagint evidently used a Hebrew text that read, far more probably, *she'eirka*, “your flesh” [Greek *sōmati sou*] and it seems likely that the medial *aleph* was inadvertently dropped in scribal transmission.

[25] Chouraqui, André, ed. *La Bible*. Paris, France: Desclée de Brouwer, 2003.
<https://nachouraqui.tripod.com/id91.htm>. (accessed November 10, 2021), 1238.

[26] Berlin, Adele, and Marc Zvi Brettler, eds. *The Jewish Study Bible, Featuring the Jewish Publication Society TANAKH Translation*. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 2004, Proverbs 3:8, p. 1453.

[27] Attridge, Harold W., Wayne A. Meeks, Jouette M. Bassler, Werner E. Lemke, Susan Niditch, and Eileen M. Schuller, eds. *The HarperCollins Study Bible, Fully Revised and Updated* Revised ed. New York City, NY: HarperOne, 2006, Proverbs 3:8, p. 855.

[28] Burchard, C. “Joseph and Aseneth.” In *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, edited by James H. Charlesworth. Vol. 2, 177-247. Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Company, 1983, 19:10–11, p. 233: And Joseph kissed Aseneth and gave her the spirit of life, and he kissed her the second time and gave her spirit of wisdom, and he kissed her the third time and gave her the spirit of truth.” Though Burchard recognizes the ritual aspect of these verses in Jewish and early Christian sources (p. 233-34, note m), he fails to recognize the stronger parallel Egyptian ritual.

[29] Seach, John Eugene. *Ancient Texts and Mormonism: Discovering the Roots of the Eternal Gospel in Ancient Israel and the Primitive Church*. 2nd Revised and Enlarged ed. Salt Lake City, UT: n. p., 1995, 858 and 858n642.

[30] Wilkinson, *Reading Egyptian Art*, 165.

[31] See Bradshaw, Jeffrey M., and Ronan J. Head. "The investiture panel at Mari and rituals of divine kingship in the ancient Near East." *Studies in the Bible and Antiquity* 4 (2012): 1-42. <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/sba/vol4/iss1/1/> , 34–39.

[32] See Bradshaw, Jeffrey M. "Standing in the Holy Place: Ancient and modern reverberations of an enigmatic New Testament prophecy." In *Ancient Temple Worship: Proceedings of the Expound Symposium, 14 May 2011*, edited by Matthew B. Brown, Jeffrey M. Bradshaw, Stephen D. Ricks and John S. Thompson. Temple on Mount Zion 1, 71-142. Orem and Salt Lake City, UT: The Interpreter Foundation and Eborn Books, 2014. Reprint, *Interpreter: A Journal of Latter-day Saint Faith and Scholarship* 37, 163–236, <https://journal.interpreterfoundation.org/standing-in-the-holy-place-ancient-and-modern-reverberations-of-an-enigmatic-new-testament-prophecy/>.
<https://journal.interpreterfoundation.org/standing-in-the-holy-place-ancient-and-modern-reverberations-of-an-enigmatic-new-testament-prophecy/> , 90–92.

Bradshaw, Jeffrey M. *Creation, Fall, and the Story of Adam and Eve*. 2014 Updated ed. In *God's Image and Likeness* 1. Salt Lake City, UT: Eborn Books, 2014. <https://archive.org/download/140123IGIL12014ReadingS>, 217, 571–74, 654–57.

[33] Loins. (2003). In C. Brand, C. Draper, A. England, S. Bond, E. R. Clendenen, & T. C. Butler (Eds.), *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (p. 1045). Holman Bible Publishers.

[34] Banwell, B. O. (1996). Sinew. In D. R. W. Wood, I. H. Marshall, A. R. Millard, J. I. Packer, & D. J. Wiseman (Eds.), *New Bible dictionary* (3rd ed., p. 1109). InterVarsity Press.

[35] Kass, *Beginning of Wisdom*, 457–58:

Some think the blow landed to the acetabulum, the hollow to the outer side of the hipbone into which the head of the thighbone fits, ball in socket; surely, dislocation or even strain of the hip joint could produce the subsequent limp. But the word translated "thigh," *yarekh*, comes from a root that means "to be soft," hence "thigh" because of its fleshy softness; but it also means "loins," and is a euphemism for the genitalia. Very likely, the man grabbed Jacob in the groin.

By touching Jacob in the loins, the man, metaphorically speaking, lays hold of Jacob's progeny. [The same is true in an oath sworn by placing a hand under the thigh (*yarekh*), done by Abraham's servant when he was sent to find a wife for Isaac (Genesis 24:2) (Kass, 458n7).]

Compare Wolski, Nathan, ed. *The Zohar, Pritzker Edition*. Vol. 10. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2016, Midrash Ha-Ne'lam, ZH 14d, p. 130n437: "Although Jacob defeats his nocturnal adversary, he is wounded in his hip or thigh, interpreted here as a sign that his progeny (i.e., those who emerge from his thigh [loins]) will be subjugated to Esau." See also Midrash Ha-Ne'lam, ZH 24a, p. 274. See also Anderson, John E. *Jacob and the Divine Trickster: A Theology of Deception and YHWH's Fidelity to the Ancestral Promise in the Jacob Cycle*. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2011, 157–58.

[36] Schwartz, Howard. *Tree of Souls: The Mythology of Judaism*. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 2004, section 467, p. 362:

One of the halachic requirements to serve as High Priest was to have no physical imperfections. Since Jacob had set up altars and made offerings to God [Genesis 28:18], he had in essence taken on the role of a priest, before the appearance of Aaron, brother of Moses, whom the Bible represents as the first High Priest. According to the *Halakhah*, Jacob's wound would have made him unable to serve as priest. Thus, in this version of the

myth, Jacob is healed, and can thus continue his priestly role [at Beth-el (Genesis 35:6–7)].

[37] Kass, *Beginning of Wisdom*, 463.

[38] Wilkinson, Richard H. 1992. *Reading Egyptian Art: A Hieroglyphic Guide to Ancient Egyptian Painting and Sculpture*. London, England: Thames and Hudson, 2006, 181.

[39] Kass, *Beginning of Wisdom*, 503.

[40] Nibley, *Message*, 452–53, citing Erik Hornung's translation of the Egyptia Amduat, seventh hour.

[41] Kass, *Beginning of Wisdom*, 503.

INSPIRATION FOR LIVING A LATTER-DAY SAINT LIFE

Daily news, articles, videos and podcasts sent straight to your inbox.

Name

First Name

Last Name

Email *

I agree and consent to Meridian Magazine's privacy policy.

CAPTCHA



I'm not a robot

reCAPTCHA
Privacy - Terms

Submit