Chapter Thirteen

Abraham’s Blessing and Prayer

Abraham’s Blessing to Jacob (19:26–29)

Following the births of Jacob and Esau, Abraham noticed that Isaac preferred Esau over his brother, while Abraham himself and Rebecca loved Jacob more (19:15–16, 19, 21, 31). After observing Esau’s behavior, Abraham decided that only Jacob would continue the covenant with the Lord, and that he would be chosen over Esau as the forefather of his special nation (ibid., 16–18). Abraham then blessed his grandson with a blessing that included a request from God to protect Jacob from the evil spirits in the world:

(19:26) Then he (Abraham) summoned Jacob into the presence of his mother Rebecca, kissed him, blessed him, and said: (27) “My dear son Jacob whom I myself love, may God bless you from above the firmament. May he give you all the blessings with which he blessed Adam, Enoch, Noah, and Shem. Everything that he said to me and everything that he promised to give me may he attach to you and your descendants until eternity—like the days of heaven above the earth. (28) May the spirits of Mastema not rule over you and your descendants to remove you from following the Lord who is your God from now and forever. (29) May the Lord God become your father and you his first-born son and people for all time. Go in peace, my son.”

Abraham’s blessing to Jacob was given in the general context of the covenant between God and Abraham’s offspring, and in the specific context of the election of Israel (Jacob) as opposed to other nations (Esau). Abraham appealed to God to prevent “the spirits of Mastema” from ruling over Jacob and his descendants, using terminology similar to that found in other passages in Jubilees that address the origin of evil. Abraham blessed Jacob that he should be God’s “first-born son” (v. 29). The motif of Israel as a first-born appears already in the Bible (Exod 4:22—“Thus says the Lord, Israel is my first-born son”), but its

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precise meaning is unclear. In *Jubilees*, this motif received a specific theological meaning: “And he chose the descendants of Jacob among [all of those whom I have seen. I have recorded them as my first-born son and have sanctified them for myself] for all the age(s) of eternity” (2:20 according to 4Q216 VII, 11–12; DJD 13, pp. 19–20).

As noted above, according to the creation story in the redactional layer (*Jub. 2*), Israel was chosen from the beginning of time to be God’s unique nation and his first-born son (so too in Moses’ prayer in *Jub.* 1:19–21 and the legal passage in *Jub.* 15:25–34). The connection between the creation of the world and the election of Jacob (Israel) forms the basis of the entire rewritten creation story in *Jubilees* 2: throughout the chapter, the rewriter counts the number of works created on each day (vv. 3, 4, 7, 11, 12, 14), for a total of twenty-two during the first week (v. 23). The number of works during the first week, at the end of which the holy and blessed Sabbath was observed, served the rewriter as a basis for comparison with the number of generations from the creation of the world. After twenty-two generations, a person (and a nation) will be chosen, and he too will be chosen and blessed, just like the Sabbath day (2:23–24a):

14 [23There were twenty-two heads of humanity]
15 from Adam until him; and twenty-two k[inds of work were made until the seventh day. The one is blessed and holy and the other is blessed]