

JOSEPH AND ASENETH
FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT PSEUDEPIGRAPHA
APOCALYPTIC LITERATURE & TESTAMENTS, VOLUME 2

Chapter 1

And it happened in the first year of the seven years of plenty, in the second month, on the fifth of the month. Pharaoh sent Joseph out to drive around the whole land of Egypt. And Joseph came in the fourth month of the first year, on the eighteenth of the month, into the territory of Heliopolis (“City of the Sun”) and was gathering the grain of that region like the sand of the sea. And there was a man in that city, a satrap of Pharaoh, and this man was a chief of all the satraps and the noblemen of Pharaoh. And this man was exceedingly rich and prudent and gentle, and he was a counselor of Pharaoh, because he had understanding beyond all the noblemen of Pharaoh. And the name of that man was Pentephres, priest of Heliopolis.

And he had a daughter, a virgin of eighteen years, she was very tall and handsome and beautiful to look at beyond all virgins on the earth. And this girl had nothing similar to the virgins of the Egyptians, but she was in every respect similar to the daughters of the Hebrews; and she was tall as Sarah and handsome as Rebecca and beautiful as Rachel. And the name of that virgin was Aseneth.

And the fame of her beauty spread all over that land and to the ends of the inhabited world. And all the sons of the noblemen and the sons of the satraps and the sons of all kings, all of them young and powerful, asked for her hand in marriage, and there was much wrangling among them over Aseneth, and they made attempts to fight against each other because of her.

And Pharaoh's firstborn son heard about her and he kept entreating his father to give her to him for his wife. And his firstborn son said to Pharaoh, ‘Father, give me Aseneth, the daughter of Pentephres, the priest of Heliopolis, for my wife.’ And Pharaoh, his father, said to him, ‘Why do you seek a wife that is beneath you, and you are king of the whole land of Egypt? Behold, is not the daughter of the king of Moab, Joakim, betrothed to you, and she is a queen and exceedingly beautiful? Take this one for your wife.’

Chapter 2

And Aseneth was despising and scorning every man, and she was boastful and arrogant with everyone. And no man had ever seen her, because Pentephres had a tower adjoining his house, very big and high, and on top of this tower was an upper floor including ten chambers. And the first chamber was big and splendid, paved with purple stones, and its walls were faced with colored and precious stones, and the ceiling of that chamber was of gold.

And within that chamber gods of the Egyptians who were without number were fixed to the walls, even gods of gold and silver. And Aseneth worshiped them all and feared/reverenced them and performed sacrifices to them every day.

And the second chamber contained Aseneth's ornaments and chests, and there was much gold in it (the chamber) and silver and clothes interwoven with gold and chosen and costly stones and distinguished cloths and all the ornaments of her virginity. And the third chamber was Aseneth's storeroom, and in it were all the good things of the earth.

And seven virgins occupied the remaining seven chambers, each having one chamber, and these were waiting on Aseneth, and they were all of the same age, born in one night with Aseneth, and she loved them very much. And they were very beautiful, like the stars of heaven, and no man ever conversed with them, not even a male child.

And there were three windows to Aseneth's big chamber where her virginity was being fostered. And the one window, the first, was exceedingly big, looking east toward the court, and the second one was looking north toward the street where people passed by. And there was a golden bed standing in the chamber, a bed that looked toward the window looking east, and the bed was laid with gold-woven purple stuff, interwoven with violet, purple, and white. And in this bed Aseneth slept, alone; and a man or another woman never sat on it, only Aseneth alone.

And there was a large court surrounding the house, and a wall was around the court, very high, built from big square stones. And the court had four iron-plated gates, and eighteen powerful armed young men guarded each of these. And handsome trees of all sorts and all bearing fruit were planted within the court along the wall. And their fruit was ripe, for it was the time of

harvest.

And there was in the court, on the right hand, a spring of abundant living water, and below the spring was a big cistern receiving the water of that spring. From there a river ran right through the court and watered all the trees of that court.

Chapter 3

And it happened in the first year of the seven years of plenty, in the fourth month, on the eighteenth of the month; Joseph came into the territory of Heliopolis and was gathering the surplus grain of that region. And when he had come close to that city, Joseph sent twelve men ahead of him to Pentephres the priest, saying, I will lodge with you because it is the hour of noon and the time of lunch, and the heat of the sun is great, and I desire that I may refresh myself under the shadow of your house.

And Pentephres heard this, and rejoiced exceedingly with great joy and said, Blessed is the Lord, the God of Joseph, because my lord Joseph thought me worthy to come to us. And Pentephres called the steward of his house and said to him, 'Hurry and make my house ready and prepare a great dinner, because Joseph, the Powerful One of God, is coming to us today.'

And Aseneth heard that her father and mother had come from the field, which was their inheritance, and rejoiced and said, I will go and see my father and my mother because they have come from the field which is our inheritance. For it was the time of harvest.

And Aseneth hurried into the chamber, where her robes lay, and dressed in a white linen robe interwoven with violet and gold, and girded herself with a golden girdle and put bracelets on her hands and feet, and put golden buskins about her feet, and around her neck she put valuable ornaments and costly stones which hung around from all sides, and the names of the gods of the Egyptians were engraved everywhere on the bracelets and the stones, and the faces of all the idols were carved on them. And she put a tiara on her head and fastened a diadem around her temples, and covered her head with a veil.

Chapter 4

And she hurried and went down the stairs from the upper floor, and came to her father and mother and greeted them and kissed them. And Pentephres

and his wife rejoiced over her daughter Aseneth with great joy, because they saw her adorned like a bride of God. And they brought out all the good things which they had brought from the field which was their inheritance, and gave them to their daughter. And Aseneth rejoiced over all the good things, the fruit, and the grapes, and the dates, and the doves, and the pomegranates, and the figs, because they were all handsome and good to taste.

And Pentephres said to his daughter Aseneth, 'My child', And she said, 'Behold, here I am, my lord.' And he said to her, 'Sit down between us, and I will tell you what I have to say.'

And Aseneth sat between her father and mother. And Pentephres, her father, with his right hand grasped the right hand of his daughter and kissed it and said to her, 'My child Aseneth'. And she said, 'Behold, here I am, lord. Let my lord and my father speak up.'

And Pentephres, her father, said to her, Joseph the Powerful One of God is coming to us today. And he is chief of the whole land of Egypt, and the king Pharaoh appointed him king/ruler of the whole land, and he is giving grain to the whole land, and saving it from the oncoming famine. And Joseph is a man who worships God, and self-controlled, and a virgin like you today, and Joseph is also a man powerful in wisdom and experience, and the Spirit of God is upon him and the grace of the Lord is with him. Come, my child, and I will hand you over to him for his wife, and you will be a bride to him, and he will be your bridegroom for ever and ever.'

And when Aseneth heard these words from her father, plenty of red sweat poured over her face, and she became furious with great anger, and looked askance at her father with her eyes, and said, 'Why does my lord and my father speak words such as these, to hand me over, like a captive, to a man who is an alien, and a fugitive, and was sold as a slave? Is he not the shepherd's son from the land of Canaan, and he himself was caught in the act of sleeping with his mistress, and his master threw him into the prison of darkness; and Pharaoh brought him out of prison, because he interpreted his dream just like the older women of the Egyptians interpret dreams? No, but I will be married to the king's firstborn son, because he is king of the whole land of Egypt.'

Hearing this, Pentephres was ashamed to speak further to his daughter

Aseneth about Joseph, because she had answered him daringly and with boastfulness and anger.

Chapter 5

And a young man of Pentephres' servants rushed in and said, 'Behold, Joseph is standing before the doors of our court.' And Aseneth fled from her father's and mother's presence, when she heard them speak these words about Joseph, and went up into the upper floor and entered her chamber and stood by the large window, the one looking east, in order to see Joseph entering her father's house.

And Pentephres and his wife and his whole family went out to meet Joseph. And the gates of the court looking east were opened, and Joseph entered, standing on Pharaoh's second chariot, and four horses, white as snow and with golden bridles, were harnessed to it, and the entire chariot was manufactured from pure gold.

And Joseph was dressed in an exquisite white tunic, and the robe which he had thrown around him was purple, made of linen interwoven with gold, and a golden crown was on his head, and around the crown were twelve chosen stones, and on the top of the twelve stones were twelve golden rays. And a royal staff was in his left hand, and in his right hand he held outstretched an olive branch, and there was plenty of fruit on it, and in the fruits was a great wealth of oil.

And Joseph entered the court, and the gates of the court were closed, and every man and woman, if strange remained outside the court, because the guards of the gates drew tight and closed the doors, and all the strangers were closed out.

And Pentephres and his wife and his whole family, except their daughter Aseneth, went and prostrated themselves face down to the ground before Joseph. And Joseph descended from his chariot and greeted them with his right hand.

Chapter 6

And Aseneth saw Joseph on his chariot and was strongly cut to the heart, and her soul was crushed, and her knees were paralyzed, and her entire body trembled, and she was filled with great fear. And she sighed and said in her heart: 'What shall I do now, wretched that I am? Did I not speak

saying that Joseph is coming, the shepherd's son from the land of Canaan? And now, behold, the sun from heaven has come to us on its chariot and entered our house today, and shines in it like a light upon the earth. But I, foolish and daring, have despised him and spoken wicked words about him, and did not know that Joseph is a son of God.

For who among men on earth will generate such beauty, and what womb of a woman will give birth to such light? What a wretched and foolish girl I am, because I have spoken wicked words about him to my father. And now, where shall I go and hide from his face in order that Joseph, the son of God, does not see me because I have spoken wicked things about him?

And where shall I flee and hide, because every hiding place, he sees and nothing hidden escapes him, because of the great light that is inside him? And now be gracious on me, Lord, God of Joseph, because I have spoken wicked words against him in ignorance. And now, let my father give me to Joseph for a maidservant and slave, and I will serve him for ever and ever.'

Chapter 7

And Joseph entered the house of Pentephres and sat upon the throne. And they washed his feet and set a table before him by itself, because Joseph never ate with the Egyptians, for this was an abomination to him. And looking up with his eyes, Joseph saw Aseneth leaning through the window. and Joseph said to Pentephres and his whole family, 'Who is this woman who is standing in the upper floor by the window? Let her leave this house.' Because Joseph was afraid, saying, 'This one must not molest me, too.'

For all the wives and the daughters of the noblemen and the satraps of the whole land of Egypt used to molest him wanting to sleep with him, and all the wives and the daughters of the Egyptians, when they saw Joseph, suffered badly because of his beauty.

But Joseph despised them, and the messengers whom the women sent to him with gold and silver and valuable presents Joseph sent back with threats and insults, because Joseph said, I will not sin before the Lord God of my father Israel nor in the face of my father Jacob.

And the face of his father Jacob, Joseph always had before his eyes, and he remembered his father's commandments. For Jacob would say to his son Joseph and all his sons, 'My children, guard strongly against associating

with a strange woman, for association with her is destruction and corruption.'

Therefore Joseph said, 'Let this woman leave this house.' And Pentephres said to him, 'Lord, this one whom you have seen standing in the upper floor is not a strange woman, but she is our daughter, a virgin hating every man, and there is not any other man who has ever seen her except you alone today. And if you will, she will come and address you, because our daughter is like a sister to you.'

And Joseph rejoiced exceedingly with great joy because Pentephres had said, She is a virgin hating every man. And Joseph said by himself, If she is a virgin hating every man, this girl will certainly not molest me. And Joseph said to Pentephres and his whole family, 'If she is your daughter and a virgin, let her come, because she is a sister to me, and I love her from today as my sister.'

Chapter 8

And Aseneth's mother went up to the upper floor and brought her and stood her before Joseph. And Pentephres said to his daughter Aseneth, 'Greet your brother, because he, too, is a virgin like you today and hates every strange woman, as you, too, every strange man.'

And Aseneth said to Joseph, 'Be of good cheer, my lord, blessed by the Most High Lord.'

And Joseph said to Aseneth, 'May the Lord God who gives life to all things bless you.'

And Pentephres said to his daughter Aseneth, 'Go up and kiss your brother.'

And as Aseneth went up to kiss Joseph, Joseph stretched out his right hand and put it on her chest between her two breasts, and her breasts were already standing upright like handsome apples. And Joseph said, 'It is not fitting for a man who worships God, who will bless with his mouth the living God and eat blessed bread of life and drink a blessed cup of immortality and anoint himself with blessed ointment of incorruptibility to kiss a strange woman who will bless with her mouth dead and dumb idols and eat from their table bread of strangulation and drink from their libation a cup of insidiousness and anoint herself with ointment of destruction.'

But a man who worships God will kiss his mother and the sister who is born of his mother and the sister who is born of his clan and family and the wife who shares his bed, all of whom bless with their mouths the living God. Likewise, for a woman who worships God it is not fitting to kiss a strange man, because this is an abomination before the Lord God.'

And when Aseneth heard these words of Joseph, she was cut to the heart strongly and was distressed exceedingly and sighed, and she kept gazing at Joseph with her eyes open and her eyes were filled with tears. And Joseph saw her, and had mercy on her exceedingly, and was himself cut to the heart, because Joseph was meek and merciful and fearing God.

And he lifted up his right hand and put it upon her head and said: 'Lord God of my father Israel, the Most High, the Powerful One of Jacob, who gave life to all things and called them from the darkness to the light, and from the error to the truth, and from the death to the life, You, Lord, bless this virgin, and renew her by Your Spirit, and form her anew by Your hidden hand, and make her alive again by Your life, and let her eat Your bread of life, and drink Your cup of blessing, and number her among Your people that You have chosen before all things came into being, and let her enter Your rest which You have prepared for Your chosen ones, and live in Your eternal life for ever and ever.'

Chapter 9

And Aseneth rejoiced exceedingly with great joy over Joseph's blessing, and hurried and went into the upper floor by herself, and fell on her bed exhausted, because in her there was joy and distress and much fear and trembling and continuous sweating as she heard all these words of Joseph, which he had spoken to her in the name of the Most High God. And she wept with great and bitter weeping and repented of her infatuation with the gods whom she used to worship, and spurned all the idols, and waited for the evening to come. And Joseph ate and drank and told his servants, Harness the horses to the chariots, for, he said, 'I will go away and drive around the whole land.'

And Pentephres said to Joseph, 'Let my lord lodge here today, and tomorrow you will go out on your way.' And Joseph said, 'No, but I will go out today, because this is the day on which God began to make all his creatures, and on the eighth day, when this day returns, I too will return to you and lodge here.'

Chapter 10

And Joseph went away on his way and Pentephres and his whole family went away to their estate. And Aseneth was left alone with the seven virgins, and she continued to be weighed down and weep until the sun set. And she ate no bread and drank no water. And the night fell, and all the people in the house slept, and she alone was awake and continued to brood and to weep; and she often struck her breast with her hand and kept being filled with great fear and trembled with heavy trembling.

And Aseneth rose from her bed and quietly went down the stairs from the upper floor and went to the gateway, and the woman gatekeeper was asleep with her children. And Aseneth hurried and took down from the window the skin which hung there for a curtain, and filled it with ashes from the fireplace, and carried it up into the upper floor, and put it on the floor. And she closed the door firmly and slipped the iron bolt across and sighed with great sighing and bitter weeping.

And the virgin who was her foster sister, whom Aseneth loved beyond all the virgins, heard her sighing and hurried and woke up the other six virgins. And they went to Aseneth's door and found the door closed. And they heard Aseneth's sighing and weeping and said to her, 'What have you, mistress, and why do you feel so sad, and what is it that is bothering you? Open the door to us, and we will see what you have.'

Aseneth did not open the door, but said to them from within, 'My head is stricken with heavy pain, and I am resting in my bed and I do not have the strength to rise and open the door to you, because I have grown weak in all my limbs. But go each of you in your chamber and rest and let me be quiet.'

So the virgins went away, each into her chamber. And Aseneth rose and opened the door quietly and went into her second chamber where the chests containing her ornaments were, and opened her coffer and took out a black and somber tunic. And this was her tunic of mourning when her younger brother died. In this Aseneth had dressed and mourned for her brother.

And she took her black tunic and carried it into her chamber and closed the door again firmly and slipped the bolt across.

And Aseneth hurried and put off her linen and gold woven royal robe and

dressed in the black tunic of mourning, and loosened her golden girdle and girded a rope around her, and put off the tiara from her head, and the diadem and the bracelets from her hands and feet, and put everything on the floor. And she took her chosen robe and the golden girdle and the headgear and the diadem, and threw everything through the window looking north to the poor.

And Aseneth hurried and took all her gods that were in her chamber, the ones of gold and silver who were without number, and ground them to pieces, and threw all the idols of the Egyptians through the window looking north from her upper floor to beggars and needy persons.

And Aseneth took her royal dinner and the fatlings and the fish and the flesh of the heifer and all the sacrifices of her gods and the vessels of their wine of libation and threw everything through the window looking north, and gave everything to the strange dogs. For Aseneth said to herself, By no means must my dogs eat from my dinner and from the sacrifice of the idols, but let the strange dogs eat those.

And after that Aseneth took the skin full of ashes and poured it on the floor and she took a piece of sackcloth and girded it around her waist. And she loosened the clasp of the hair of her head and sprinkled ashes upon her head. And she scattered the ashes on the floor and struck her breast often with both hands and wept bitterly, and fell upon the ashes and wept with great and bitter weeping all night with sighing and screaming until daybreak.

And Aseneth rose at daybreak and looked, and behold, there was much mud from her tears and from the ashes. And Aseneth fell again upon her face on the ashes till evening and until the setting of the sun. And this way Aseneth did for seven days, and she ate no bread and drank no water in those seven days of her humiliation.

And on the eighth day, behold, it was dawn and the birds were already singing and the dogs barking at people who were passing through, and Aseneth lifted her head just a little from the floor and the ashes on which she was lying, because she was exceedingly tired and could not control her limbs because of the want of food for the seven days. And she rose on her knees and put her hand on the floor and lifted herself up a little from the floor, and she was still bowing her head, and the hairs of her head were stretched out in strands from the load of ashes. And Aseneth clasped her

hands, finger against finger, and shook her head to and fro, and struck her breast continuously with her hands, and laid her head into her lap, and her face was flooded with her tears, and she sighed with great sighing, and pulled her hairs from her head, and sprinkled ashes on her head. And Aseneth was tired and had become discouraged and her strength had gone. And she turned upward to the wall and sat below the window looking east.

And she laid her head into her lap, clasping her fingers round her right knee, and her mouth was closed, and she had not opened it in the seven days and in the seven nights of her humiliation.

And she said in her heart without opening her mouth: What shall I do, miserable that I am, or where shall I go; with whom shall I take refuge, or what shall I speak, I the virgin and an orphan and desolate and abandoned and hated?

All people have come to hate me, and on top of those my father and my mother, because I, too, have come to hate their gods and have destroyed them, and caused them to be trampled underfoot by men. And therefore my father and my mother and my whole family have come to hate me and said, Aseneth is not our daughter because she destroyed our gods. And all people hate me, because I, too, have come to hate every man, and all who asked for my hand in marriage. And now, in the humiliation of mine, all have come to hate me, and gloat over this affliction of mine.

And the Lord, the God of the powerful Joseph, the Most High, hates all those who worship idols, because He is a jealous and terrible/fearful God toward all those who worship strange gods. Therefore He has come to hate me, too, because I worshiped dead and dumb idols, and blessed them, And ate from their sacrifices, and my mouth is defiled from their table, and I do not have the boldness to call on the Lord God of Heaven, the Most High, the Mighty One of the powerful Joseph, because my mouth is defiled from sacrifices of the idols

But I have heard many saying that the God of the Hebrews is a true God, and a living God, and a merciful God, and compassionate and long-suffering and full of pity and gentle, and does not count the sin of a humble person, nor expose the lawless deeds of an afflicted person at the time of his affliction.

Chapter 11

Therefore I will take courage too and turn to Him, and take refuge with Him, and confess all my sins to Him, and pour out my supplication before Him. Who knows, maybe He will see my humiliation and have mercy on me. Perhaps He will see this desolation of mine and have compassion on me, Or see my orphanage and protect me, because He is the father of orphans, and a protector of the persecuted, and of the afflicted a helper.

I will take courage and cry to Him.

And Aseneth rose from the wall where she was sitting and turned to the window looking east and straightened up on her knees and spread her hands out toward heaven. And she was afraid to open her mouth and to name the Name of God. And she turned again away to the wall and sat and struck her head and her breast with her hand often, and said in her heart without opening her mouth:

What a wretched woman I am, and an orphan and desolate, my mouth is defiled from the sacrifices of the idols and from the blessings of the gods of the Egyptians. And now, in these tears of mine and the ashes strewn around and the filth of my humiliation, how shall I open my mouth to the Most High, and how name His Awesome Holy Name, and be sure that the Lord will not be angry with me, because in the midst of my lawless deeds I have called on His Holy Name?

What shall I now do, wretched that I am? I will rather take courage and open my mouth to Him and invoke His Name. And if in fury the Lord strikes me He Himself will again heal me; and if He chastises me with His whips, He Himself will look again on me in His mercy; and if He is furious at me in my sins, He will again be reconciled with me and forgive me every sin. so I will take courage to open my mouth to Him.

And Aseneth rose again from the wall where she sat and straightened up on her knees and spread her hand eastward and looked with her eyes up toward heaven, and opened her mouth to God, and said:

Chapter 12

'Lord God of the ages, who created all things and gave life to them, who gave breath of life to Your whole creation, who brought the invisible/unseen things out into the light. Who made the things that are and the ones that

have an appearance from the non-appearing and non-being, who lifted up the heaven and founded it on a Firmament upon the back of the winds, who founded the earth upon the waters, who put big stones on the abyss of the water, and the stones will not be submerged, but they are like oak leaves floating on top of the water, and they are living stones and hear Your voice/Word, Lord, and keep Your Commandments which You have commanded to them, and never transgress Your ordinances, but are doing Your Will to the end. For You, Lord, spoke and they were brought to life, because Your Word, Lord, is life for all your creatures.

With you I take refuge, Lord, and to you I will shout, Lord, to you I will pour out my supplication, to you I will confess my sins, and to you I will reveal my lawless deeds. Spare me, Lord, because I have sinned much before you, I have committed lawlessness and irreverence and have said wicked and unspeakable things before You.

My mouth is defiled from the sacrifices of the idols and from the tables of the gods of the Egyptians. I have sinned, Lord, before you I have sinned much in ignorance, and have worshiped dead and dumb idols. And now I am not worthy to open my mouth to you, Lord. And I, Aseneth, daughter of Pentephres the priest, the virgin and queen, who was once proud and arrogant, and prospering in my riches beyond all people, am now an orphan, and desolate, and abandoned by all people.

With you I take refuge, Lord, and to You I bring my supplication, and to You I will shout. Rescue me before I am caught by my persecutors. For just as a little child who is afraid flees to his father, and the father, stretching out his hands, snatches him off the ground, and puts his arms around him by his breast, and the child clasps his hands around his father's neck, and regains his breath after his fear, and rests at his father's breast, the father, however, smiles at the confusion of his childish mind, likewise you too, Lord, stretch out your hands upon me as a child-loving father, and snatch me off the earth.

For behold, the wild old lion persecutes me, because he is the father of the gods of the Egyptians, and his children are the gods of the idol maniacs. And I have come to hate them, because they are the lion's children, and have thrown all of them from me and destroyed them. And the lion their father furiously persecutes me/tries to swallow me.

But you, Lord, rescue me from his hands, and from his mouth deliver me, lest he carry me off like a lion, and tear me up and throw me into the flame of the fire, and the fire will throw me into the hurricane, and the hurricane will wrap me up in darkness and throw me out into the deep of the sea, and the big sea monster who exists since eternity will swallow me, and I will be destroyed forever.

Rescue me, Lord, before all this comes upon me. Rescue me, Lord, the desolate and solitary, because my father and mother disowned me and said, Aseneth is not our daughter, because I have destroyed and ground to pieces their gods, and have come to hate them.

And I am now an orphan and desolate and I have no other hope except in you, Lord, and no other refuge except Your mercy, Lord, because You are the father of the orphans, and a protector of the persecuted and a helper of the afflicted. Have mercy upon me, Lord, and guard me, a virgin who is abandoned and an orphan, because you, Lord, are a sweet and good and gentle father.

What father is as sweet as you, Lord, and who is as quick in mercy as you, Lord, and who is as long-suffering toward our sins as you, Lord? For behold, all the gifts of my father Pentephres, which he gave me as an inheritance, are transient and obscure; but the gifts of your inheritance, Lord, are incorruptible and eternal.

Chapter 13

Be mindful, Lord, of my humiliation and have mercy upon me. Look at my orphanage and have compassion on the afflicted, for behold, I fled from everything and took refuge in you, Lord, the only friend to men. Behold, I left behind all the good things of the earth and took refuge in you, Lord, in this sackcloth and ashes, naked and an orphan and left all alone.

Behold, I put off my linen royal robe, interwoven with violet and gold, and dressed in a black mourning tunic. Behold, I loosened my golden girdle and threw it off me and girded a rope and sackcloth around myself. Behold, my tiara and my diadem I threw off my head, and have sprinkled ashes upon it.

Behold, the floor of my chamber, paved with colored and purple stones, which once used to be sprinkled with perfumes and wiped with bright linen cloths, is now sprinkled with my tears and was profaned having been

powdered with ashes. Behold, my Lord, from my tears and the ashes much mud has been formed in my chamber, as on a broad street.

Behold, Lord, my royal dinner and the cereals I gave to the strange dogs. And behold, seven days and seven nights I was fasting and ate no bread and drank no water, and my mouth has become dry as a drum, and my tongue as a horn, and my lips as a potsherd, and my face has fallen, and my eyes are burning in shame from my many tears, and my entire strength has left me.

Behold, now, all the gods whom I once used to worship in ignorance: I have now recognized that they were dumb and dead idols, and I have caused them to be trampled underfoot by men, and the thieves snatched those that were of silver and gold.

And with you I have taken refuge, O Lord my God. Yet You, rescue me from my many deeds of ignorance and pardon me, because I have sinned against you in ignorance, being a virgin, and have fallen in error unwittingly, and have spoken blasphemous words against my lord Joseph, because I did not know, the miserable one that I am, that he is Your son, as people told me that Joseph is the shepherd's son from the land of Canaan.

And I, the miserable one, had come to believe them and fallen into error. And I have despised him and spoken wicked words about him and did not know that he is Your son. For who among men will give birth to such beauty and such great wisdom and virtue and power, as owned by the all-beautiful Joseph?

Lord, I commit him to You, because I love him beyond my own soul. Preserve him in the wisdom of Your grace. And You, Lord, commit me to him for a maidservant and slave. And I will make his bed and wash his feet and wait on him and be a slave for him and serve him for ever and ever.

Chapter 14

And when Aseneth had ceased making confession to the Lord, behold, the Morning Star rose out of heaven in the east. And Aseneth saw it and rejoiced and said, So the Lord God listened to my prayer, because this star rose as a messenger and herald of the light of the Great Day. And Aseneth kept looking, and behold, close to the Morning Star, the heaven was torn apart and great and unutterable light appeared.

And Aseneth saw it and fell on her face on the ashes. And a man came to her from heaven and stood by Aseneth's head. And he called her and said, 'Aseneth, Aseneth'.

And she said, Who is he that calls me, because the door of my chamber is closed, and the tower is high, and how then did he come into my chamber?

And the man called her a second time and said, 'Aseneth, Aseneth'. And she said, 'Behold, here I am, Lord. Who are you, tell me.'

And the man said, 'I am the chief of the house of the Lord, and commander of the whole host of the Most High. Rise and stand on your feet, and I will tell you what I have to say.'

And Aseneth raised her head and saw, and behold, there was a man in every respect similar to Joseph, by the robe and the crown and the royal staff, except that his face was a burning torch, and hands and feet like iron shining forth from a fire, and sparks shot forth from his hands and feet.

And Aseneth saw it and fell on her face at his feet on the ground. And Aseneth was filled with great fear, and all of her limbs trembled. And the man said to her, Have courage and don't be afraid, but rise and stand on your feet, and I will tell you what I have to say.'

And Aseneth rose and stood on her feet. And the man said to her, 'Proceed unhindered into your second chamber and put off your black tunic of mourning, and the sackcloth put off your waist, and shake off those ashes from your head, and wash your face and your hands with living water, and dress in a new linen robe as yet untouched and distinguished and gird your waist with the new twin girdle of your virginity.

And come back to me, and I will tell you what I have to say.

And Aseneth hurried and went into her second chamber where the chests containing her linen robe, as yet untouched, were. And she undressed from the black tunic of mourning and put off the sackcloth from her waist, and dressed in her distinguished and as yet untouched linen robe and girded herself with the twin girdle of her virginity, one girdle around her waist, and another girdle upon her breast.

And she shook off the ashes from her head and washed her hands and her face with living water. And she took an as yet untouched and distinguished linen veil and covered her head.

Chapter 15

And she went to the man into her first chamber and stood before him. And the man said to her, 'Remove the veil from your head, and for what purpose did you do this? For you are a chaste virgin today, and your head is like that of a young man.' 1 Cor 10:3

And Aseneth removed the veil from her head. And the man said to her, 'Courage, Aseneth, chaste virgin. Behold, I have heard all the words of your confession and your prayer. Behold, I have also seen the humiliation and the affliction of the seven days of your want of food. Behold, from your tears and these ashes, plenty of mud has formed before your face.

Courage, Aseneth, chaste virgin. For behold, your name was written in the Book of the Living in heaven; in the beginning of the book, as the very first of all, your name was written by my finger, and it will not be erased forever. Behold, from today, you will be renewed and formed anew and made alive again, and you will eat blessed bread of life and drink a blessed cup of immortality, and anoint yourself with blessed ointment of incorruptibility.

Courage, Aseneth, chaste virgin. Behold, I have given you today to Joseph for a bride, and he himself will be your bridegroom for ever and ever. And your name shall no longer be called Aseneth, but your name shall be City of Refuge, because in you many nations will take refuge with the Lord God, the Most High, and under your wings many peoples trusting in the Lord God will be sheltered, and behind your walls will be guarded those who attach themselves to the Most High God in the name of Repentance.

For Repentance is in the heavens, an exceedingly beautiful and good daughter of the Most High. And she herself entreats the Most High God for you at all times and for all who repent in the Name of the Most High God, because He is the father of Repentance. And she herself is guardian of all virgins, and loves you very much, and is beseeching the Most High for at all times and for all who repent she has prepared a place of rest in the heavens. And she will renew all who repent, and wait on them herself for ever and ever.

And Repentance is exceedingly beautiful, a virgin pure and laughing always, and she is gentle and meek. And, therefore, the Most High Father loves her, and all the angels stand in awe of her. And I, too, love her exceedingly, because she is also my sister. And because she loves you virgins, I love you, too.

And behold, I am going away to Joseph and will tell him about you everything I have to say. And Joseph will come to you today, and see you, and rejoice over you, and love you, and he will be your bridegroom, and you will be a bride for him for ever and ever.

And now listen to me, Aseneth, chaste virgin, and dress in your wedding robe, the ancient and first robe which is laid up in your chamber since eternity, and put around you all your wedding ornaments, and adorn yourself as a good bride, and go meet Joseph. For behold, he himself is coming to you today, and he will see you and rejoice.'

And when the man had finished speaking these words, Aseneth rejoiced exceedingly with great joy about all these words and fell down at his feet and prostrated herself face down to the ground before him, and said to him, 'Blessed be the Lord your God the Most High who sent you out to rescue me from the darkness and to bring me up from the foundations of the abyss, and blessed be your name forever.

What is your name, Lord?; tell me in order that I may praise and glorify you for ever and ever. And the man said to her, Why do you seek this, my name, Aseneth? My name is in the heavens in the book of the Most High, written by the finger of God in the beginning of the book before all the others, because I am chief of the house of the Most High. And all names written in the book of the Most High are unspeakable, and man is not allowed to pronounce nor hear them in this world, because those names are exceedingly great and wonderful and laudable.

And Aseneth said, 'If I have found favor in your sight, Lord, and will know that you will do all your words that you have spoken to me, let your maidservant speak before you'. And the man said to her, 'Speak up'. And Aseneth stretched out her right hand and put it on his knees and said to him, I beg you, Lord, sit down a little on this bed, because this bed is pure and undefiled, and a man or woman never sat on it. And I will set a table before

you, and bring you bread and you will eat, and bring you from my storeroom old and good wine, the exhalation of which will go up till heaven, and you will drink from it. And after this you will go out on your way.'

And the man said to her, 'Hurry and bring it quickly'.

Chapter 16

And Aseneth hurried and set a new table before him and went to provide bread for him. And the man said to her, 'Bring me also a honeycomb'. And Aseneth stood still and was distressed, because she didn't have a honeycomb in her storeroom.

And the man said to her, 'Why do you stand still?' And Aseneth said, 'I will send a boy to the suburb, because the field which is our inheritance is close, and he will quickly bring you a honeycomb from there, and I will set it before you, Lord.'

And the man said to her, 'Proceed and enter your storeroom, and you will find a honeycomb lying upon the table. Pick it up and bring it here. And Aseneth said, 'Lord, a honeycomb is not in my storeroom'. And the man said, 'Proceed and you will find one.'

And Aseneth entered her storeroom and found a honeycomb lying on the table. And the comb was big and white as snow and full of honey. And that honey was like dew from heaven and its exhalation like breath of life. And Aseneth wondered and said in herself, Did then this comb come out of the man's mouth, because its exhalation is like the breath of this man's mouth?

And Aseneth took that comb and brought it to the man, and put it on the table which she had prepared before him. And the man said to her, 'How is it that you said that a honeycomb is not in my storeroom? And behold, you have brought a wonderful honeycomb.'

And Aseneth was afraid and said, Lord, I did not have a honeycomb in my storeroom at any time, but you spoke and it came into being. Surely this came out of your mouth, because its exhalation is like breath of your mouth.

And the man smiled at Aseneth's understanding and called her to himself, and stretched out his right hand, and grasped her head and shook her head with his right hand. And Aseneth was afraid of the man's hand, because

sparks shot forth from his hand as from bubbling red-hot iron. And Aseneth looked, gazing with her eyes at the man's hand.

And the man saw and smiled and said, 'Happy are you, Aseneth, because the ineffable mysteries of the Most High have been revealed to you, and happy are all who attach themselves to the Lord God in repentance, because they will eat from this comb. For this comb is full of the spirit of life. And the bees of the paradise of delight have made this from the dew of the roses of life that are in the paradise of God. And all the angels of God eat of it and all the chosen of God and all the children of the Most High, because this is a comb of life, and everyone who eats of it will not die for ever and ever.

And the man stretched out his right hand and broke a small portion off the comb, and he himself ate and what was left he put with his hand into Aseneth's mouth, and said to her, Eat. And she ate. And the man said to Aseneth, 'Behold, you have eaten bread of life, and drunk a cup of immortality, and been anointed with ointment of incorruptibility. Behold, from today your flesh will flourish like flowers of life from the ground of the Most High, and your bones will grow strong like the cedars of the paradise of delight of God, and untiring powers will embrace you, and your youth will not see old age, and your beauty will not fail for ever. And you shall be like a walled mother-city of all who take refuge with the Name of the Lord God, the king of the ages. And the man stretched out his right hand and touched the comb where he had broken off a portion, and it was restored and filled up, and at once it became whole as it was in the beginning.

And again the man stretched out his right hand and put his forefinger on the edge of the comb looking east and drew it over the edge looking west, and the way of his finger became like blood. And he stretched out his hand the second time and put his finger on the edge of the comb looking north and drew it over the edge looking south, and the way of his finger became like blood. And Aseneth stood at his left and watched everything that the men were doing. And the man said to the comb, Come. And the bees rose from the cells of that comb, and the cells were innumerable, ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands upon thousands.

And the bees were white as snow, and their wings like purple and like violet and like scarlet and like gold-woven linen cloaks, and golden diadems were on their heads, and they had sharp stings, and they would not injure anyone.

And all those bees encircled Aseneth from feet to head. And other bees were great and chosen like their queens, and they rose from the damaged part of the comb and encircled Aseneth's mouth, and made upon her mouth and her lips a comb similar to the comb which was lying before the man.

And all these bees ate of the comb which was on Aseneth's mouth. And the man said to the bees, 'Go off to your place'. And all the bees rose and flew and went away into heaven.

And those who wanted to injure Aseneth fell to the ground and died. And the man stretched out his staff over the dead bees and said to them, Rise you, too, and go away to your place. And the bees who had died rose and went into the court adjoining Aseneth's house and sought shelter on the fruit-bearing trees.

Chapter 17

And the man said to Aseneth, 'Have you seen this thing?' And she said, Yes, Lord, I have seen all these things.' And the man said to her, 'So will be all my words which I have spoken to you today.'

And the man for the third time stretched out his right hand, and touched the damaged part of the comb, and at once fire went up from the table and consumed the comb, but the table it did not injure. And much fragrance came forth from the burning of the comb, and filled the chamber. And Aseneth said to the man, 'Lord, with me are seven virgins ministering to me, fostered with me from my childhood, born with me in one night, and I love them as my sisters. I will call them and you will bless them as you have blessed me, too.'

And the man said, 'Call them'.

And Aseneth called the seven virgins and stood them before the man. And the man blessed them and said, May the Lord God the Most High bless you. And you shall be seven pillars of the City of Refuge, and all the fellow inhabitants of the chosen of that city will rest upon you for ever and ever.

And the man said to Aseneth, 'Put this table away'.

And Aseneth turned to put the table away, and at once the man went away out of her sight. And Aseneth saw something like a chariot of four horses

traveling into heaven toward the east. And the chariot was like a flame of fire, and the horses like lightning. And the man was standing on that chariot.

And Aseneth said, 'What a foolish and bold woman I am, because I have spoken with frankness and said that a man came into my chamber from heaven; and I did not know that a god came to me. And behold, now he is traveling back into heaven to his place.'

And she said in herself, Be gracious, Lord, to your servant, and spare your maidservant, because I have spoken boldly before you all my words in ignorance.

Chapter 18

And as Aseneth was still saying these things to herself, behold, a young man from Pentephres servant staff rushed in and said, Behold, Joseph the Powerful One of God is coming to us today. For a forerunner of his is standing at the gates of our court.

And Aseneth hurried and called her foster-father, the steward of her house, and said to him, 'Hurry and make the house ready and prepare a good dinner, because Joseph the Powerful One of God is coming to us today.'

And her foster-father saw her, and behold, her face had fallen from the affliction and the weeping and the fasting of the seven days, and he was distressed and wept, and he took her right hand and kissed it and said, 'What have you, my child, because your face has fallen so much?'

And Aseneth said to him, My head is stricken with heavy pain, and the sleep kept away from my eyes, and therefore my face has fallen. And her foster-father went away and prepared the house and the dinner. And Aseneth remembered the man from heaven and his commandment, and she hurried and entered her second chamber where the chests containing her ornaments were, and opened her big coffer and brought out her first robe, the one of wedding, like lightning in appearance, and dressed in it.

And she girded a golden and royal girdle around herself which was made of precious stones. And she put golden bracelets on her fingers and on her feet golden buskins, and precious ornaments she put around her neck in which innumerable costly and precious stones were fastened, and a golden crown she put on her head, and on that crown, in front on her brow, was a

big sapphire stone, and around the big stone were six costly stones; and with a veil she covered her head like a bride, and she took a scepter in her hand.

And Aseneth remembered the words of her foster-father, because he had said to her, 'Your face has fallen'. And she sighed and was much distressed and said, 'Woe is me, the humble, because my face has fallen. Joseph will see me and despise me'.

And she said to her foster-sister, Bring me pure water from the spring, and I will wash my face. And she brought her pure water from the spring and poured it into the basin. And Aseneth leaned over to wash her face and saw her face in the water; and it was like the sun and her eyes were like a rising Morning Star, and her cheeks like fields of the Most High, and on her cheeks there was red color like a son of Adam's blood, and her lips were like a rose of life coming out of its foliage, and her teeth like fighting men lined up for a fight and the hair of her head was like a vine in the paradise of God prospering in its fruits, and her neck like an all-variegated cypress, and her breasts were like the mountains of the Most High God.

And when Aseneth saw herself in the water, she was amazed at the sight and rejoiced with great joy, and did not wash her face, for she said, 'Perhaps I will wash off this great beauty.'

And her foster-father came to say to her, 'Everything is prepared as you have commanded'. And when he saw her he was alarmed and stood speechless for a long time, and was filled with great fear and fell at her feet and said, What is this, my mistress, and what is this great and wonderful beauty? At last the Lord God of heaven has chosen you as a bride for his firstborn son, Joseph.

Chapter 19

And while they were still speaking this way a boy came and said to Aseneth, 'Behold, Joseph is standing at the doors of our court.'

And Aseneth hurried and went down the stairs from the upper floor with the seven virgins to meet Joseph and stood in the entrance of the house. And Joseph entered the court and the gates were closed, and all strangers remained outside. And Aseneth went out of the entrance to meet Joseph, and Joseph saw her and was amazed at her beauty, and said to her, 'Who

are you? Quickly tell me’.

And she said to him, ‘I am your maidservant Aseneth, and all the idols I have thrown away from me and they were destroyed. And a man came to me from heaven today, and gave me bread of life and I ate, and a cup of blessing and I drank. And he said to me, ‘I have given you for a bride to Joseph today, and he himself will be your bridegroom forever and ever’. And he said to me, ‘Your name will no longer be called Aseneth, but your name will be called City of Refuge and the Lord God will reign as king over many nations for ever, because in you many nations will take refuge with the Lord God, the Most High.’

And the man said to me, ‘I will also go to Joseph and speak into his ears concerning you what I have to say.’ And now, you know, my Lord, whether that man has come to you and spoken to you concerning me.’

And Joseph said to Aseneth, ‘Blessed are you by the Most High God, and blessed is your name forever, because the Lord God founded your walls in the highest, and your walls are adamantine walls of life, because the children of the living God will dwell in your City of Refuge, and the Lord God will reign as king over them for ever and ever. For this man came to me today and spoke to me words such as these concerning you. And now, come to me, chaste virgin, and why do you stand far away from me?’

And Joseph stretched out his hands and called Aseneth by a wink of his eyes. And Aseneth also stretched out her hands and ran up to Joseph and fell on his breast. And Joseph put his arms around her, and Aseneth put hers around Joseph, and they kissed each other for a long time and both came to life in their spirit.

And Joseph kissed Aseneth and gave her 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 spirit of truth.

Chapter 20

And they embraced each other for a long time and interlocked their hands like bonds. And Aseneth said to Joseph, ‘Come, my Lord, and enter our house, because I have prepared our house and made a great dinner.

And she grasped his right hand and led him into her house and seated him

on Pentephres her father's throne. And she brought water to wash his feet. And Joseph said, 'Let one of the virgins come and wash my feet.' And Aseneth said to him, 'No, my Lord, because you are my lord from now on, and I am your maidservant. And why do you say that another virgin is to wash your feet? For your feet are my feet, and your hands are my hands, and your soul my soul, and your feet another woman will never wash.'

And she urged him and washed his feet. And Joseph looked at her hands, and they were like hands of life, and her fingers fine like the fingers of a fast-writing scribe. And after this Joseph grasped her right hand and kissed it and Aseneth kissed his head and sat at his right hand.

And her father and mother and his whole family came from the field which was their inheritance. And they saw Aseneth like the appearance of light, and her beauty was like heavenly beauty. And they saw her sitting with Joseph and dressed in a wedding garment. And they were amazed at her beauty and rejoiced and gave glory to God who gives life to the dead.

And after this they ate and drank and celebrated. And Pentephres said to Joseph, 'Tomorrow I will call all the noblemen and the satraps of the whole land of Egypt and give a marriage feast for you, and you will take my daughter Aseneth for your wife.'

And Joseph said, I will go tomorrow to Pharaoh the king, because he is like a father to me and appointed me chief of the whole land of Egypt, and I will speak about Aseneth into his ears, and he himself will give her to me for my wife. And Pentephres said to him, 'Go in peace'.

And Joseph stayed with Pentephres that day and he did not sleep with Aseneth, because Joseph said, 'It does not befit a man who worships God to sleep with his wife before the wedding. And Joseph rose at daybreak and went away to Pharaoh and said to him, Give me Aseneth, daughter of Pentephres, priest of Heliopolis, for my wife.

And Pharaoh rejoiced with great joy and said to Joseph, 'Behold, isn't this one betrothed to you since eternity? And she shall be your wife from now on and for ever and ever.

And Pharaoh sent and called Pentephres, and he came and brought Aseneth, and stood her before Pharaoh. And Pharaoh saw her and was

amazed at her beauty and said, 'May the Lord, the God of Joseph bless you, child, and let this beauty of yours remain for ever and ever, because justly the Lord, the God of Joseph, has chosen you as a bride for Joseph, because he is the firstborn Son of God. And you shall be called a daughter of the Most High and a bride of Joseph from now on and for ever.

And Pharaoh took Joseph and Aseneth and put golden crowns on their heads which had been in his house from the beginning and of old. And Pharaoh set Aseneth at Joseph's right side and put his hands on their heads, and his right hand was on Aseneth's head. And Pharaoh said, 'May the Lord God the Most High bless you and multiply you and magnify you and glorify you forever'.

And Pharaoh turned them around toward each other face to face and brought them mouth to mouth and joined them by their lips, and they kissed each other. And after this Pharaoh gave a marriage feast and a great dinner and a big banquet for seven days. And he called together all the chiefs of the land of Egypt and all the kings of the nations and proclaimed to the whole land of Egypt, saying, 'Every man who does any work during the seven days of Joseph's and Aseneth's wedding shall surely die.'

And it happened after this, Joseph went in to Aseneth, and Aseneth conceived from Joseph and gave birth to Manasseh and Ephraim, his brother, in Joseph's house.

“And Joseph called the name of the firstborn Manasseh: For God, said he, has made me forget all my toil, and all my father's house. And the name of the second he called Ephraim: For God has caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction.” Genesis 45:1-2

Chapter 21

And then Aseneth began to confess to the Lord God and gave thanks, praying, for all the good things of which she was deemed worthy by the Lord: 'I have sinned, Lord, I have sinned; before you I have sinned much, I Aseneth, daughter of Pentephres, priest of Heliopolis, who is an overseer of everything. I have sinned, Lord, I have sinned; before you I have sinned much, I was prospering in my father's house, and was a boastful and arrogant virgin.

I have sinned, Lord, I have sinned; before you I have sinned much, And have worshiped strange gods who were without number, and eaten bread from their sacrifices. I have sinned, Lord, I have sinned; before you I have sinned much, Bread of strangulation I have eaten, and a cup of insidiousness I have drunk from the table of death.

I have sinned, Lord, I have sinned; before you I have sinned much. And I did not know the Lord the God of Heaven, and I did not trust in the Most High God of life. I have sinned, Lord, I have sinned; before you I have sinned much. For I trusted in the richness of my glory and in my beauty, and I was boastful and arrogant.

I have sinned, Lord, I have sinned; before you I have sinned much. And I despised every man on earth, and there was no one who achieved anything before me. I have sinned, Lord, I have sinned; before you I have sinned much. And I had come to hate all who had asked my hand in marriage, and despised them and scorned them.

I have sinned, Lord, I have sinned; before you I have sinned much. And I spoke bold words in vanity and said, There is no prince on earth who may loosen the girdle of my virginity. I have sinned, Lord, I have sinned; before you I have sinned much. But will be the bride of the Great King's firstborn son.

I have sinned, Lord, I have sinned; before you I have sinned much, until Joseph the Powerful One of God came. He pulled me down from my dominating position and made me humble after my arrogance, and by his beauty he caught me, and by his wisdom he grasped me like a fish on a hook, and by his spirit, as by bait of life, he ensnared me, and by his power he confirmed me, and brought me to the God of the ages and to the chief of the house of the Most High, and gave me to eat bread of life, and to drink a cup of wisdom, and I became his bride for ever and ever.

Chapter 22

And it happened after this: The seven years of plenty passed and the seven years of famine began to come. And Jacob heard about Joseph his son, and Israel went to Egypt with his whole family, in the second year of the famine, in the second month, on the twenty-first of the month, and dwelt in the land of Goshen.

And Aseneth said to Joseph, I will go and see your father, because your father Israel is like a father to me and a god. And Joseph said to her, You shall go with me and see my father.

And Joseph and Aseneth went to the land of Goshen to Jacob. And Joseph's brothers met them and prostrated themselves face down to the ground before them. And they went in to Jacob. And Israel was sitting on his bed, and he was an old man in comfortable old age.

And Aseneth saw him and was amazed at his beauty, because Jacob was exceedingly beautiful to look at, and his old age was like the youth of a handsome young man, and his head was all white as snow, and the hairs of his head were all exceedingly close and thick like those of an Ethiopian, and his beard was white reaching down to his breast, and his eyes were flashing and darting flashes of lightning, and his sinews and his shoulders and his arms were like those of an angel, and his thighs and his calves and his feet like those of a giant. And Jacob was like a man who had wrestled with God.

And Aseneth saw him and was amazed, and prostrated herself before him face down to the ground. And Jacob said to Joseph, 'Is this my daughter-in-law, your wife? Blessed she will be by the Most High God.'

And Jacob called her to himself and blessed her and kissed her. And Aseneth stretched out her hands and grasped Jacob's neck and hung herself on her father's neck just like someone hangs on to his father's neck when he returns from fighting into his house, and she kissed him. And after this they ate and drank. And Joseph and Aseneth went back to their house.

And Simeon and Levi, Joseph's brethren, the sons of Leah, alone escorted them; but the sons of Zilpah and Bilhah, Leah's and Rachel's maidservants, did not escort them, because they envied them and were hostile against them. And Levi was on Aseneth's right side and Joseph on her left.

And Aseneth grasped Levi's hand. And Aseneth loved Levi exceedingly beyond all of Joseph's brethren, because he was one who attached himself to the Lord, and he was a prudent man and a prophet of the Most High and sharp-sighted with his eyes, and he used to see letters written in heaven by the finger of God and he knew the unspeakable mysteries of the Most High God and revealed them to Aseneth in secret, because he himself, Levi, would love Aseneth very much, and see her place of rest in the highest, and

her walls like adamantine eternal walls, and her foundations found upon the rock of the seventh heaven.

Chapter 23

And it happened while Joseph and Aseneth were passing by, Pharaoh's firstborn son saw them from the wall. And he saw Aseneth and was cut to the heart, and for some time he was heavily indignant and felt sick because of her beauty. And he said, Thus it shall not be.

And Pharaoh's son sent messengers and called to him Simeon and Levi. And the men came to him and stood before him. And Pharaoh's firstborn son said to them, 'I know today that you are powerful men beyond all men on the earth, and by these right hands of yours the city of the Shechemites has been overthrown, and by these two swords of yours thirty thousand fighting men were cut down.

And behold, today I will take you as companions for myself, and give you plenty of gold and silver, and servants and maids and houses and big estates as an inheritance. Only do this thing and show mercy on me, for I have been insulted very much by your brother Joseph, for he himself took Aseneth my envisaged wife who was betrothed to me from the beginning.

And now, come assist me, and we will make war on Joseph, your brother, and I will kill him with my sword and have Aseneth for my wife, and you will be to me brothers and faithful friends. However, do this thing. But if you are too cowardly to do this thing, and despise my purpose, behold, my sword is prepared against you.

And while he was saying this, he exposed his sword and showed it to them. But when the men, Simeon and Levi, heard these words, they were exceedingly cut to the heart, because Pharaoh's son had spoken to them in a tyrannical fashion. And Simeon was a daring and bold man, and he intended to lay his hand on the handle of his sword and draw it from its sheath and strike Pharaoh's son, because he had spoken defiant things to them.

And Levi saw the intention of his heart, because Levi was a prophet and he was sharp-sighted with both his mind and his eyes, and he used to read what is written in the heart of men. And Levi trod with his foot on Simeon's right foot and pressed it and thus signaled him to cease from his wrath.

And Levi said to Simeon quietly, Why are you furious with anger with this man? And we are men who worship God and it does not befit us to repay evil for evil.

And Levi said to Pharaoh's son with frankness, his face cheerful, and there was not the least bit of anger in him, but in meekness of heart he said to him, 'Why does our lord speak words such as these? And we are men who worship God and our father is a friend of the Most High God, and Joseph our brother is like the firstborn son of God.

And how could we do this wicked thing, and sin before our God and before our father Israel and before our brother Joseph? And now, listen to my words. It does not befit a man who worships God to injure anyone in any way. And if anyone wants to injure a man who worships God, that first-mentioned man who worships God does not succor him (the injurer), because a sword is not in his hands.

And you at least guard against speaking any longer about our brother Joseph words such as these. But if you insist on this wicked purpose of yours, behold, our swords are drawn in our right hands before you.

And Simeon and Levi drew their swords from their sheaths and said, 'Behold, have you seen these swords? With these two swords the Lord God punished the insult of the Shechemites by which they insulted the sons of Israel, because of our sister Dinah whom Shechem the son of Hamor had defiled.'

And the son of Pharaoh saw their swords drawn and was exceedingly afraid and trembled over his whole body, because their swords were flashing forth like a flame of fire, and the eyes of Pharaoh's son darkened, and he fell on his face on the ground beneath their feet. And Levi stretched out his right hand and grasped him and said to him, 'Rise and don't be afraid. Only guard against speaking any longer a wicked word about our brother Joseph.

And Simeon and Levi went away from the presence of Pharaoh's son.

Chapter 24

And the son of Pharaoh was full of fear and distress, because he was afraid of Joseph's brothers, Simeon and Levi, and he was still weighed down by

Aseneth's beauty and distressed with great overwhelming distress. And his servants said to him, 'Behold, the sons of Bilhah and the sons of Zilpah, Leah's and Rachel's maidservants, Jacob's wives, are hostile to Joseph and Aseneth and envy them and these will be in your power according to your will.'

And Pharaoh's son sent messengers and called them to himself. And they came to him at the first hour of the night and stood before him. And Pharaoh's son said to them, 'I have a word to say to you, because you are powerful men. And Dan and Gad, the elder brothers, said to him, 'Let our lord say to his servants what he wants to say, and your servants will listen, and we will do according to your will.'

And Pharaoh's son rejoiced exceedingly with great joy and said to his servants, 'Withdraw from me a little, because I have a confidential word to say to these men'. And they all withdrew. And Pharaoh's son lied to them and said, 'Behold, blessing and death are set before your face. Take now rather the blessing and not the death, because you are powerful men and will not die like women, but be brave and avenge yourself on your enemies.'

For I heard Joseph your brother saying to Pharaoh my father concerning you, 'Children of my father's maidservants are Dan and Gad and Naphtali and Asher, and they are not my brothers. And I will wait for my father's death and then I will blot them out from the earth and all their offspring lest they share the inheritance with us, because they are children of maidservants.'

And these men have sold me to the Ishmaelites, and I will repay them according to the whole insult of theirs which they committed against me wickedly. Only let my father die first.'

And Pharaoh, my father, commended him and said to him, 'Well you have spoken, child. Then, take from me men who are powerful in fighting and go out to meet them in accordance with what they did to you. And I will be a helper to you.'

And when the men heard the words of Pharaoh's son, they were exceedingly troubled and distressed and said to Pharaoh's son, 'We beg you, lord, help us.'

And Pharaoh's son said to them, 'I will be a helper to you if you hear my

words'. And the men said, 'Behold, we are your servants before you. Give us orders, and we will do according to your will.'

And Pharaoh's son said to them, 'I will kill my father Pharaoh this night, because Pharaoh, my father, is like a father to Joseph and said to him that he would help him against you. And you kill Joseph. And I will take Aseneth for a wife for myself, and you will be brothers to me and fellow heirs of all my things. However, do this thing'.

And Dan and Gad said to him, We are your servants today and will do everything which you have ordered us. And we have heard Joseph saying to Aseneth today, 'Go tomorrow to the field which is our inheritance, because it is the hour of the vintage'. And he gave as an escort to be with her six hundred men powerful in fighting and fifty forerunners. And now, listen to us, and we will speak to our lord.

And they spoke to him all their secret words and said, Give us men for war. And Pharaoh's son gave to the four brothers five hundred men each, and them he appointed their chiefs and commanders.

And Dan and Gad said to him, 'We are your servants today, and will do everything that you have ordered us. We will go by night and set up an ambush in the wadi and hide in the thicket of the reeds. And you take with you fifty bowmen on horses and go far ahead of us. And Aseneth will come and fall into our hands. And we will cut down the men who are with her. And Aseneth will flee ahead with her carriage and fall into your hands, and you will do to her as your soul desires. And after that we will kill Joseph as he is distressed over Aseneth and his children we will kill before his eyes'. And Pharaoh's son rejoiced when he heard these words. And he sent them out and two thousand fighting men with them.

And they came to the wadi and hid in the thicket of the reeds. And they split into four detachments. And there were sitting across the wadi, on the forward section as it were, on this side of the road and the other five hundred men each; likewise on this side of the wadi the rest were waiting, and they, too, were sitting in the thicket of the reeds, on this side of the road and the other five hundred men each. And between them the road was wide and spacious.

And Pharaoh's son rose in that night and went to the chamber of his father in order to kill his father with a sword. And his father's guards prevented him from going in to his father and said to him, 'What are your orders, lord?' And Pharaoh's son said to them, 'I want to see my father, because I am going out to harvest the vintage of my new-planted vineyard.'

And the guards said to him, 'Your father suffers from a headache and lay awake all night and now he is resting a little. And he said to us, 'Let no one come close to me, not even my firstborn son.'

And when he heard this, Pharaoh's son went away hurriedly and took with him fifty mounted bowmen and went away at their head, just as Dan and Gad had spoken to him. And the younger brothers, Naphtali and Asher, spoke to their older brothers, Dan and Gad, saying, 'Why do you once again act wickedly against our father Israel and against our brother Joseph? And him the Lord is guarding like an apple of the eye. Behold, have you not sold him once, and now he is king of the whole land of Egypt and savior and grain giver?

And now again, if you should attempt to act wickedly against him, he will cry to the Most High, and he will send fire from heaven, and it will consume you, and the angels of God will fight for him against you. And their older brothers, Dan and Gad, were angry at them and said, 'But shall we die like women? That would be absurd.' And they went out to meet Joseph and Aseneth.

Chapter 26

And Aseneth rose at daybreak and said to Joseph, I will go, just like you have said, to the field which is our inheritance. And my soul is anxious, because you are parting from me. And Joseph said to her, 'Have courage, and don't be afraid, but go because the Lord is with you and He Himself will guard you like an apple of the eye from every wicked deed.

For I, too, will go to my grain giving and will give bread to all men, and the whole land will surely not perish from the face of the Lord. And Aseneth went away on her way, and Joseph went away to his grain giving.

And Aseneth and the six hundred men with her came to the place of the wadi. And suddenly those who lay in ambush rushed out of their ambushes and joined battle with Aseneth's men, and cut them down with the edge of the sword, and they killed all her forerunners, but Aseneth fled ahead with

her carriage.

And Levi, the son of Leah, perceived all these things in his spirit as a prophet, and he declared the danger in which Aseneth was to his brothers, the sons of Leah. And each of them took his sword and put it on his thigh, and they took their shields and put them on their arms, and they took their spears in their right hands, and pursued after Aseneth in rapid course.

And Aseneth was fleeing ahead, and behold, Pharaoh's son and fifty horsemen with him met her. And Aseneth saw him and was afraid and troubled very much, and her whole body trembled. And she called on the Name of the Lord her God.

Chapter 27

And Benjamin sat at Aseneth's left hand in her carriage. And Benjamin was a boy of eighteen years, big and strong and powerful, and there was unspeakable beauty on him, and strength like that of a lion cub, and he revered the Lord exceedingly. And Benjamin leapt down from the carriage and took a round stone from the wadi and filled his hand and hurled the stone at Pharaoh's son and struck his left temple and wounded him with a heavy wound. And Pharaoh's son fell down from his horse on the ground, being half dead.

And Benjamin leapt and went up upon the rock, and said to Aseneth's charioteer, Give me stones from the wadi. And he gave him fifty stones. And Benjamin hurled the fifty stones and killed the fifty men who were with the son of Pharaoh. And all the stones penetrated their temples.

And the sons of Leah, Ruben and Simeon, Levi and Judah, Issachar and Zebulun, pursued after the men who had been lying in ambush for Aseneth and fell upon them unawares and cut them all down; the six men killed two thousand.

And their brothers, the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah, fled from their presence and said, 'We have been destroyed by our brothers, and Pharaoh's son has died by the hand of Benjamin the boy, and all who were with him have been destroyed by the one hand of the boy Benjamin. And now, come, let us kill Aseneth and Benjamin and flee into this thicket of reeds.

And they came toward Aseneth holding their swords drawn, full of blood.

And Aseneth saw them and was exceedingly afraid and said: 'Lord my God, who made me alive again and rescued me from the idols and the corruption of death, who said to me, Your soul will live for ever, rescue me from the hands of these wicked men. And the Lord God heard Aseneth's voice, and at once their swords fell from their hands on the ground and were reduced to ashes.

Chapter 28

And the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah saw this great thing and were exceedingly afraid and said, The Lord fights against us for Aseneth. And they fell on the face to the ground and prostrated themselves before Aseneth and said, Have mercy on us, your slaves, because you are our mistress and queen. And we have wickedly committed evil against you and against our brother Joseph; and the Lord repaid us according to our works.

And now we, your slaves, beg you, have mercy on us and rescue us from the hands of our brothers, because they arrived as avengers of the insult done to you, and their swords are against us. And we know that our brothers are men who worship God and do not repay anyone evil for evil. Anyway, be gracious to your slaves, mistress, before them.

And Aseneth said to them, Courage, and do not be afraid of your brothers, because they are men who worship God and reverence God and respect every man. But go into this thicket of reeds until I appease them concerning you and make their anger cease, because you acted in great boldness against them. Courage now, and do not be afraid. Besides, the Lord will judge between me and you.

And Dan and Gad and their brothers fled into the thicket of reeds. And behold, the sons of Leah came running like three-year-old stags against them.

And Aseneth descended from the carriage that gave her shelter and gave them her right hand with tears, and they, falling down, prostrated themselves on the ground before her, and wept in a loud voice; and they were seeking their brothers, the sons of their father's maidservants, in order to do away with them.

And Aseneth said to them, I beg you, spare your brothers and do not do them evil for evil, because the Lord protected me against them, and

shattered their swords, and they melted on the ground like wax from the presence of fire. And this is enough for them that the Lord fights against them for us.

And you, spare them because they are your brothers and your father, Israel's blood. And Simeon said to her, 'Why does our mistress speak good on behalf of her enemies? No, but let us cut them down with our swords, because they were first to plan evil against us and against our father, Israel and against our brother Joseph, this already twice, and against you, our mistress and queen, today.

And Aseneth stretched out her right hand and touched Simeon's beard and kissed him and said, 'By no means, brother, will you do evil for evil to your brother. To the Lord you will give the right to punish the insult done by them. For they are your brothers and your father, Israel's line, and they fled far from your presence. Anyway, grant them pardon.

And Levi went up to her and kissed her right hand and perceived that she wanted to save the men from their brother's anger so that they would not kill them. And they were nearby in the thicket of reeds. And Levi their brother perceived it and did not declare it to his brothers. For he was afraid that in their anger they might cut them down.

Chapter 29

And Pharaoh's son rose from the ground and sat up and spat blood from his mouth, because the blood from his temple ran down over his mouth. And Benjamin ran up to him and took his sword and drew it from its sheath, because Benjamin did not have a sword on his thigh, and set about to strike the breast of Pharaoh's son.

And Levi ran up to him and grasped his hand and said, 'By no means, brother, will you do this deed, because we are men who worship God and it does not befit a man who worships God to repay evil for evil nor to trample underfoot a fallen man nor to oppress his enemy till death. And now, put your sword back into its place, and come, help me, and we will heal him of his wound; and if he lives, he will be our friend after this, and his father Pharaoh will be like our father.

And Levi raised Pharaoh's son from the ground and washed the blood off his face and tied a bandage to his wound, and put him upon his horse, and

conducted him to his father Pharaoh, and described to him all these things. And Pharaoh rose from his throne and prostrated himself before Levi on the ground and blessed him.

And on the third day Pharaoh's son died from the wound of the stone of Benjamin, the boy. And Pharaoh mourned exceedingly for his firstborn son, and from the mourning he fell ill; and Pharaoh died at a hundred and nine years, and left his diadem to Joseph.

And Joseph reigned as king in Egypt for forty-eight years, and after this he gave the diadem to Pharaoh's younger offspring, who was at the breast when Pharaoh died. And Joseph was like a father to Pharaoh's younger son in the land of Egypt all the days of his life.

from The Book of Hosea, Chapter 1

'Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered; and it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said to them, You are not my people, there it shall be said to them, 'You are the children of the living God'. Then shall the children of Judah and the children of Israel be gathered together, and appoint themselves one head, and they shall come up out of the land: for great shall be the day of Jezreel.'