

# Women of the Bible

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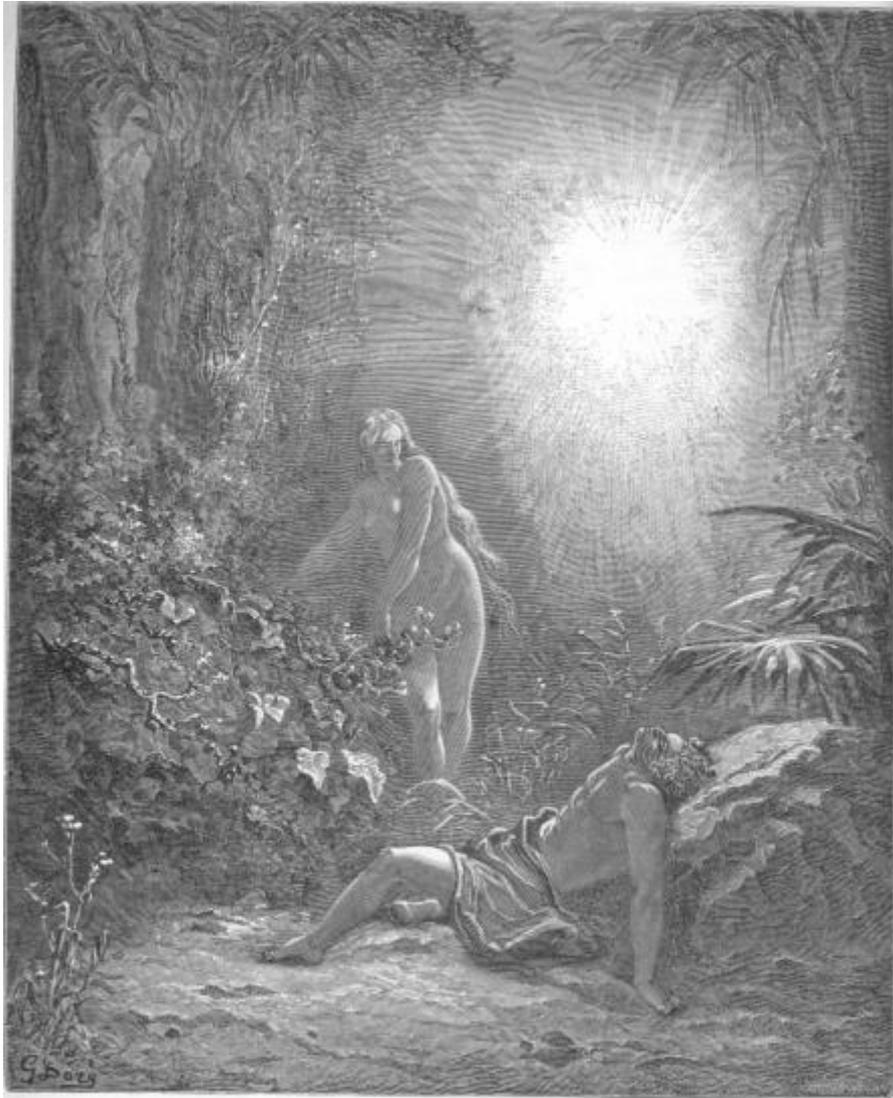




# The First Woman... Lilith?

- In Jewish folklore, from the 8th–10th century *Alphabet of Ben Sira* onwards, Lilith becomes Adam's first wife, who was created at the same time and from the same earth as Adam. This contrasts with Eve, who was created from one of Adam's ribs.
- Lilith left Adam after she refused to become subservient to him and then would not return to the Garden of Eden after she mated with archangel Samael. The resulting Lilith legend is still commonly used as source material in modern Western culture, literature, occultism, fantasy, and horror.





THE FORMATION OF EVE

She shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man . . . (Genesis 2: 23) (2: 24)

# Eve, The Woman of Unique Distinction

- First (?) woman to live upon the earth
- First woman to be called a wife
- The most beautiful woman the world has known
- First and only woman born without sin
- First on earth to be assailed by Satan (?)
- World's first dressmaker
- First mother to have a son who was a murderer
- First to receive the divine prophecy of the Cross (Genesis 3:15)

“Imagine, that a young woman marries a young man whose father is the president of a large company. After the marriage the father makes the son a vice-president and gives him a large salary, but because he has no work experience, the father gives him no responsibilities. Every week, the young man draws a large check, but he has nothing to do. His wife soon realizes that she is not married to a man, but a boy, and that as long as her husband stays at his father’s firm, he will always be a boy. So she forces him to quit his job, give up his security, go to another city, and start out on his own. That, is the reason Eve ate from the tree.”

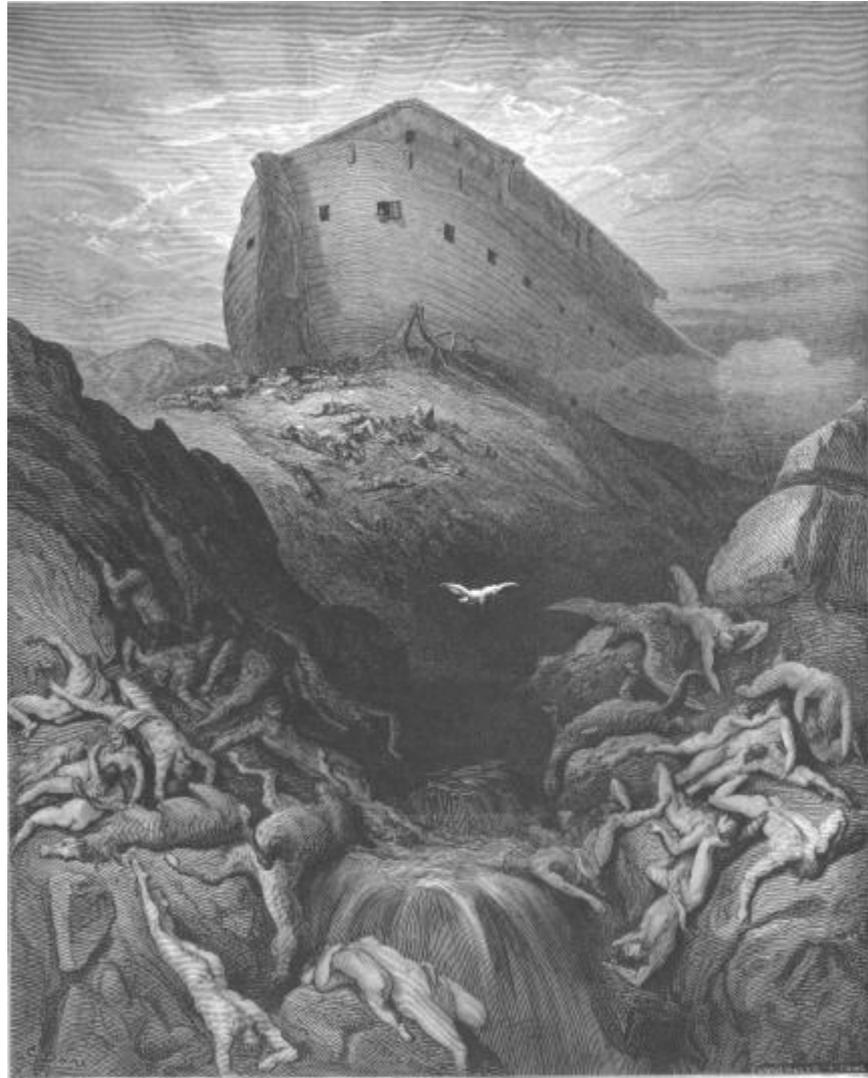
— Shlomo Bardin, as quoted in *Jewish Literacy*

Adam: Wheresoever she  
was, *there* was Eden.

--Mark Twain

# No Origins, No Names

- Cain's wife?
- Seth's daughters?
- Enos's daughters?
- Cainan's daughters?
- Mahaleel's daughters?
- Jared's daughters?
- Enoch's daughters?
- Methuselah's daughters?
- Lamech's daughters?
- Daughters of Men?



THE DOVE SENT FORTH FROM THE ARK

And the dove came in to him in the evening; and lo, in her mouth was an olive leaf pluckt off; so Noah knew that the waters were abated from off the earth...

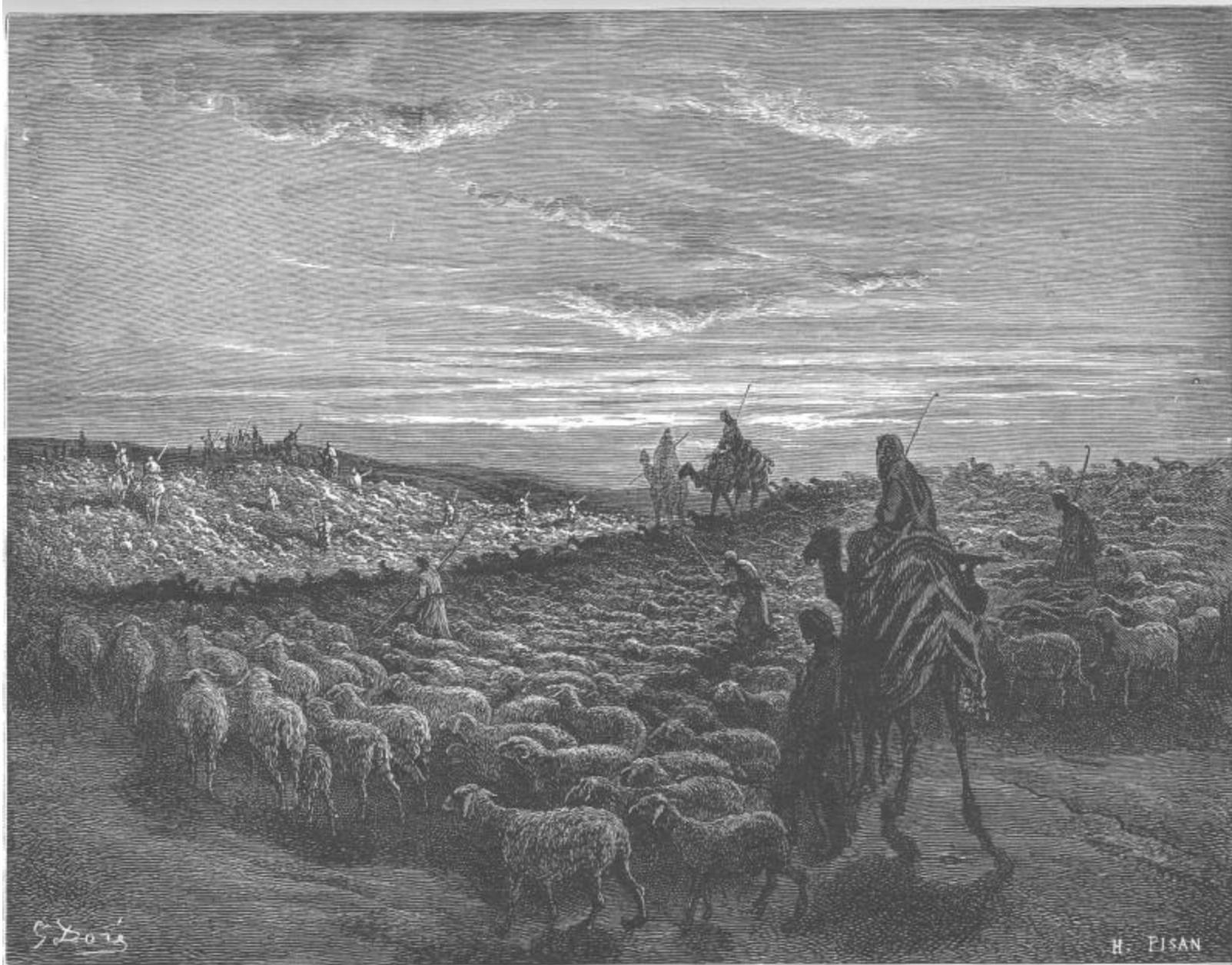
(Genesis 8: 11) (313)

# Noah's Wife

- Rabbinic Tradition Naamah
- Islamic Tradition Amzurah
- *Book of Jubilees* Emzara
- Also Haykel, Nemzar, Noyemzar, Noyanzar, or Norea

# The Story of Noah's Wife in 3 episodes

1. A test of faith—God's command to build the Ark (or my husband is off his rocker, what do I tell the neighbors?)
2. A test of courage—The Flood (or all my neighbors just drown)
3. A test of endurance—The flood subsides (or who's going to clean up this mess?)



#### ABRAHAM JOURNEYING INTO THE LAND OF CANAAN

Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great...  
(Genesis 12: 1-2)

# Sarah, Who Became Mother of Nations

- First 'Hebrew' woman
- Those pesky Pharaohs...
- Gives Hagar to Abraham to spare him embarrassment
- renamed by God (sacramental name)
- Laughs at God and gets away with it
- Gives birth at ninety; husband takes Isaac to Moriah to sacrifice as burnt offering



THE EXPULSION OF ISHMAEL AND HIS MOTHER

And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and took bread, and a bottle of water, and gave it unto Hagar... and the child, and sent her away... (Genesis 21: 14) { 21- }

# Hagar, Who Lost a Bottle but Found a Well

- Egyptian slave of Abraham's household
- Sarah's Folly, Hagar's suffering
- Flees, but God orders her return to her mistress and she obeys; bears Ishmael
- 14 or so years of awkwardness
- Isaac is born and Hagar and Ishmael are cast out with one water skin
- When the water skin is out, Hagar calls out to God, who provides a well
- Mother of Arab Nations



#### THE FLIGHT OF LOT

Then the Lord rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven...his [Lot's] wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt... (Genesis 19: 24, 26) (10 - )

# Lot's Wife

- NaCl
- When God says, “don’t look back,” don’t look back
- Used specifically by Jesus as a cautionary tale

# Lot's Daughters

- Offered up to angry mob by their father in the name of hospitality
- Civilization as they know it destroyed in rain of sulfur and fire
- Mother turned to pillar of salt
- Decide to get dad drunk and repopulate the earth via incest

THE BEST WAY TO RUIN A PROTEST...



IS TO JOIN IT BADLY...





ELIEZER AND REBEKAH

And the damsel was very fair to look upon...and she went down to the well, and filled her pitcher... (Genesis 24:16) (24:15)

# Rebekah, Whose Favoritism Brought Sorrow

- First epic love story?
- First mother of twins
- Chicanery! Has Jacob dupe Isaac; sends Jacob to Laban to protect him from Esau (and get married, have 12 kids, and found the nation of Israel)



ISAAC BLESSING JACOB

And Jacob went near unto Isaac his father; and he felt him, and said, The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau . . . (Genesis 27: 22) (27: 27)

# Deborah, A Nursemaid

- Rebekah's nurse
- Not dismissed even when no longer needed
- Mourned as family, 'buried beneath Bethel under an oak tree whose name Jacob called Allon-bachuth (Oak of Weeping)'



JACOB KEEPING LABAN'S FLOCKS

And Jacob served seven years for Rachel; and they seemed unto him but a few days, for the love he had to her. . . (Genesis 29: 20)

# Leah, the “Tender Eyed”

- Aka, the ugly sister
- Father foists her on the man there to marry her sister Rachel
- Mother of six sons (six of the twelve tribes of Israel) Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issazchar, Zebulun, and daughter Dinah

# Rachel, A Woman of Romance and Tragedy

- Naturally beautiful
- Boy falls in love with her, works for her father for seven years so dad can pull a bait-and-switch; waits seven more years
- Barren, until she wasn't
- Steals her father's household idols
- First woman mentioned to die in childbirth
- Mother of Joseph and Benjamin

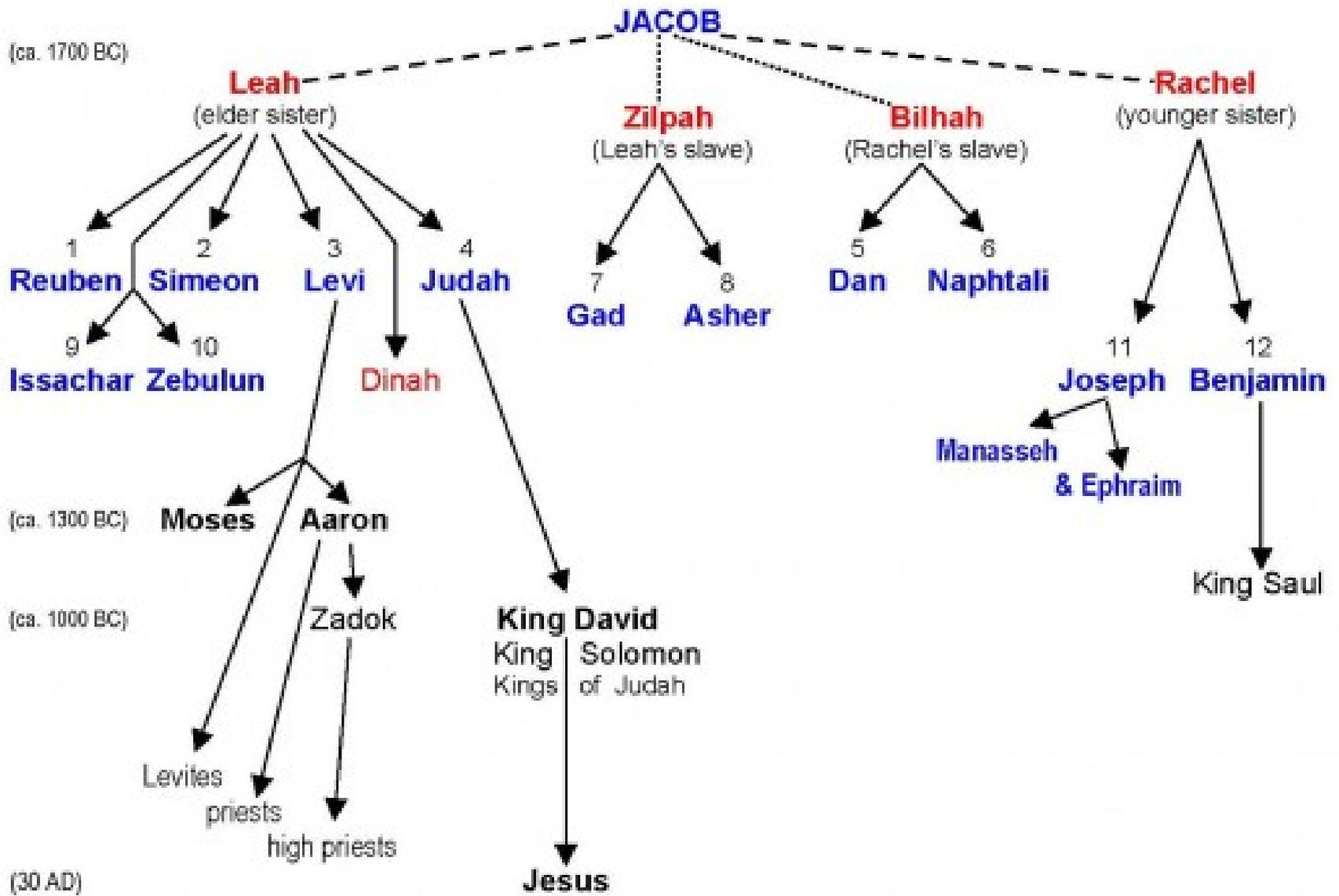
# Bilhah, Handmaid of Rachel

- Mother of Dan and Naphtali
- Reuben guilty of incest with Bilhah and deprived of birthright

# Zilpah, Handmaid of Leah

- Mother of Gad and Asher

# Sons of Jacob / Tribes of Israel



# Dinah, Whose Sightseeing Had Fatal Results

- Went to town
- Caught the eye of Prince Shechem, son of Hamor, who, “took her, lay with her, and defiled her”  
Genesis 34:2
- Shechem offers marriage, reparations to her father (sufficient according to Hebrew law)
- Jacob and sons agree on condition that Shechemites men be circumcised
- Simeon and Levi wait three days and slay all the men including Shechem