

THE PRODIGAL SONS

Part three

"Despite all the dust, it looks like her father is riding on ahead of our sons!" Abe exclaimed.

"Supposing those *are* women in the cart and that is their father!" Michael pointed out.

"I don't recognize him," Abe said. "Do you?"

"Too far yet, brother," Michael said. "Let him get closer. He does seem a little familiar to me. Oh Yahweh, be praised!"

"You recognize him, don't you?"

"If that is the person," Michael said in awe, "then we are witnessing another blessing from God!"

"What do you mean?" Abe asked.

"How do you think I was able to return home?" Michael asked in return.

"When you took off with the family fortunes?" Abe teased.

"Yes!" Michael said excitedly. "That man's father brought me to the turn off leading to our property. I was too embarrassed to have them bring me home in person. I think they knew it and understood. I didn't find out until later that his father and our father were like brothers."

"So our son could be marrying into their family," Abe suggested.

"Only if one of our sons *are* marrying into his family," Michael said, and suggested, "Or they are accompanying our sons home!"

"What do you mean?" Abe asked.

"They may be only traveling together for safety," Michael suggested. "Or, maybe they are coming to visit us...me? He had only one son, Eliud, the last I saw them."

"Michael," Eliud called out as he approached them.

"Eliud?" Michael returned.

"It has been years!" he said. "And I see you are in better circumstances!"

"Eliud, God be Praised!" Michael called out. "You haven't aged a year!"

"Ha! I see your disposition has improved, too" Eliud exclaimed. "Greetings from our family!"

"Eliud, this is my brother Abraham, Son of Micah," Michael introduced Abe officially.

"Adonai, Be Praised!" Abe said in return. "Welcome to our home! I know you will be blessing us with your presence, you and your family!"

"Blessings upon you and your family too! Our fathers were like brothers," Eliud cried out. "And now we are twice blessed! First we were blessed by your sons and now upon hearing your greeting!"

"I hope our sons have carried our names well," Abe asked, working towards the big question.

"They have indeed!" Eliud returned, almost knowing what Abe was hinting at. "They have smitten my daughters, and now I have to accompany them all the way here just so I can have peace of mind, and my wife has joined me on our journey."

By now Abe is dancing in the road again, singing a welcoming song.

"You must meet Abe's wonderful spouse, Miriam!" Michael continued the welcoming for his brother. "Do tell us, what brings you all the way here from home?" Michael asks, unable to contain himself also. "Certainly not to just accompany our sons."

"Business," Eliud teased.

Abe stopped dancing, "Business...is that all?"

"Oh, no!" Eliud answered emphatically. "We have come to visit the wonderful sons of Micah. We needed to verify the stories of your sons, Joshua and Michael, to see if your names truly deserve to be added to the list of our ancestors, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob," he said laughing.

"My sons have never told an untruth in their lives," Abe teased back. "But this may take you days to verify. We better kill the fatted calf."

"Several fatted calves," Michael added.

"Your father visited us once, after things had settled down here," Eliud said.

"He said it was a chance encounter, since your family is always traveling on business," Michael said.

"Actually, travel is a way of life for us," Eliud emphasized, "like our ancestors Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Unlike the other tribes, we Rechabites were never given land."

"Neither were the Levites," Michael said, recalling.

"They were never given land as a tribe," Eliud countered, "but they were given land in specific cities set aside for the Levites, like Nob, and designated cities of sanctuary and other selected cities in the Northern Kingdom."

"Oh," Michael said. "I didn't realize that."

"Jeremiah 35," Eliud quoted. "The reason why I share this information about our family is that we are almost certain that your father was also of the tribe of Rechab."

"A fallen away Recabite?" Abe asked.

"Possibly, since there is the possibility of our family becoming united by blood, we had to be certain, as much as possible!"

"That would explain my brother's urge to travel," Abe teased.

"Actually," Michael added, "we both have that urge to "be on the road", any road."

"We will have to look into the possibility of making your dreams come true," Eliud teased again.

Walking back hand in hand, the three men continued to banter back and forth along the road as they approached the house.

"Here is Miriam, my wife," said Abe. "If you leave here thin, it is your own fault. Miriam! We have guests. Come and greet them."

After the greetings and introductions were through, Eliud finally puts forth the reason for their visit. "Your sons have smitten my daughters, so we have come to see for ourselves the parents of these wonderful men. The seed does not fall far from the tree."

"We have complete confidence in them to represent us, even to the Holy City, Jerusalem," Miriam said. "Besides, I knew you were coming, and even now food is prepared!"

"Now how could you know that?" Abe was truly surprised. "Our sons were simply going on a business trip."

"I know my sons and a woman's intuition," she said. "Besides, when I found out you had given them too much money, they would eventually conclude one thing, they were supposed to find wives."

"Miriam is never wrong," Abe said proudly and lovingly. "I have learned to listen to her over the years."

"And that is the success of a happy marriage!" Eliud added. "We have come a long way and have quite a way to go. You may know that we are Rechabites, and our families have always traded in goods. We have never settled down since the time of our forefathers, and have tried to be faithful to Abraham's way of life as a nomad. Even now we are on our way to Egypt to trade."

"Egypt?" Michael and Abe asked at the same time.

"You must need some rest then," Miriam interrupted. "You must also bless us with your presence and stories as long as you can, and even after you have run out of stories," she teased. "What is ours is yours."

"Your sons are truly blessed," Eliud said. "I knew as soon as they talked about you, they could only be the grandsons of Micah?! And now we have witnessed for ourselves. We are truly among the children of Yahweh!"

"How many daughters do you have?" Miriam asked anxiously.

"Seven," Eliud answered. "But two of them are twins, and they are the ones smitten by your sons. Their names are Rebecca and Rachel. Of the seven, they are the ones that will concern you and your future."

"Twins?" Abe said to himself. "And *both* have eyes for our sons?"

"Yes! Joshua is enchanted with Rebecca, and Rachel has fallen for your other son Michael." Eliud explained. "So I guess *smitten* goes both ways!" he laughed.

"You are on your way to Egypt?" Michael asked, but he was interrupted by the sons who have just arrived.