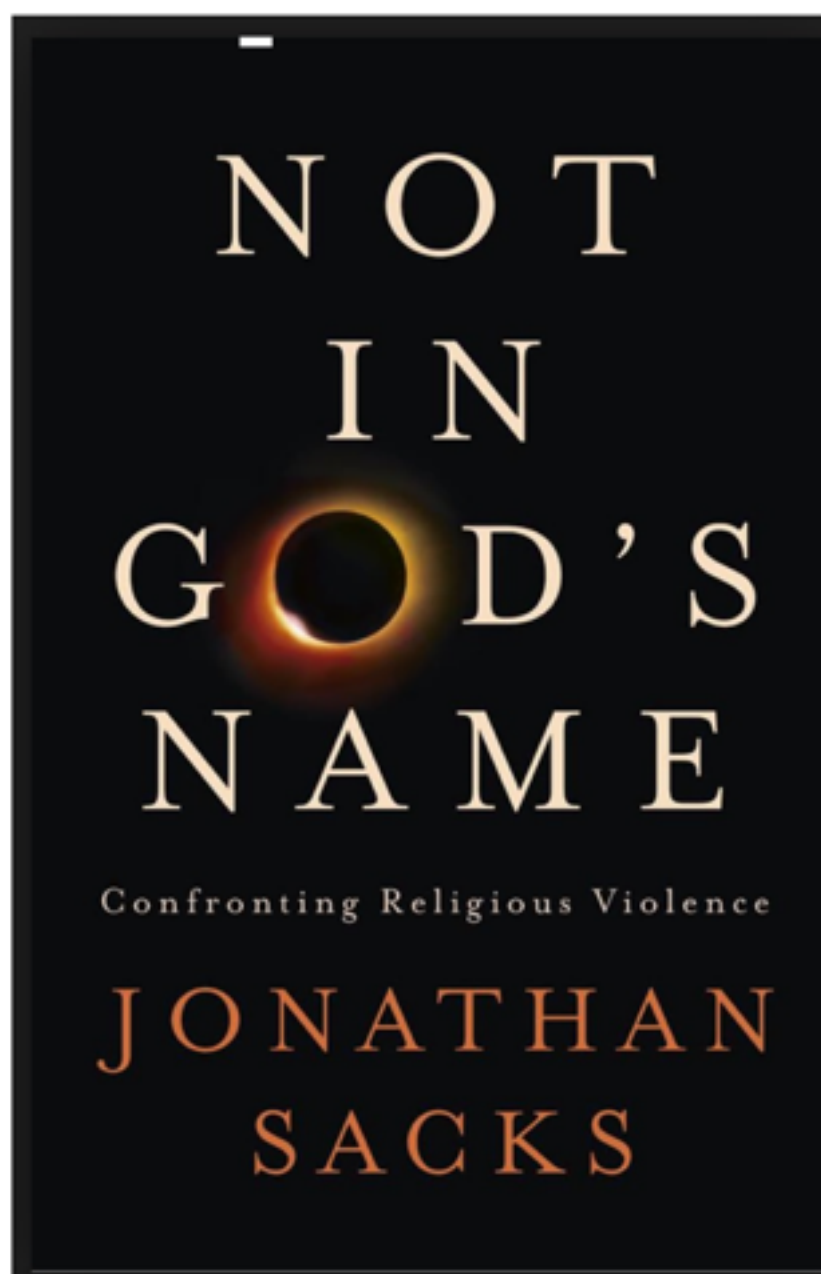


# NOT IN GOD'S NAME



ACTS  
WINTER 2018

St David's United Church  
Calgary



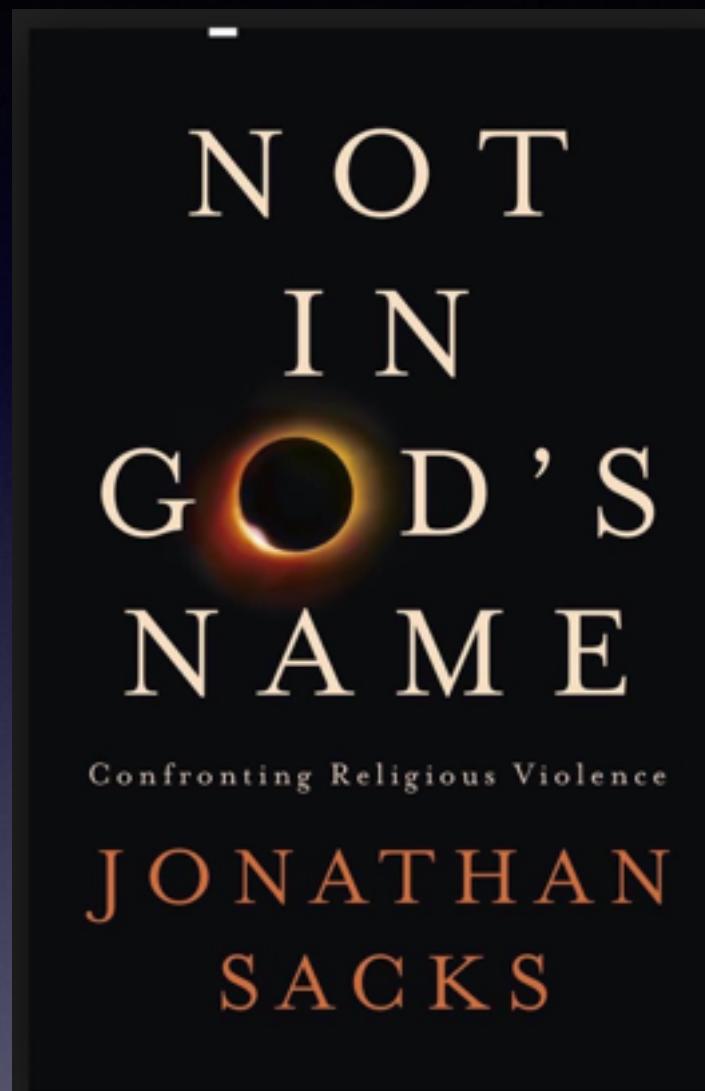
Holy Manners Book Study # 40

# Session #5

- House Keeping
- Opening: Sheryl

# Housekeeping

- Please feel free to raise questions as we go.
- March 26 and April 2: Guatemala
- LENTEN RETREAT - MT. ST. FRANCIS on Sunday, March 4th - 11:30 AM to 4:00 PM. The theme, led by retreat leader Susan Campbell is "Encountering a Sacred Intimacy With God"
- [SDUC.ca](http://SDUC.ca)



# Opening:

Sheryl Schoenthaler



# **SIBLINGS**

**CHAPTER 6: THE HALF BROTHERS**

**CHAPTER 7: WRESTLING WITH THE ANGEL**



MYTH





# THE NINE WORLDS



## NORDIC MYTHOLOGY

## CREATION STORY





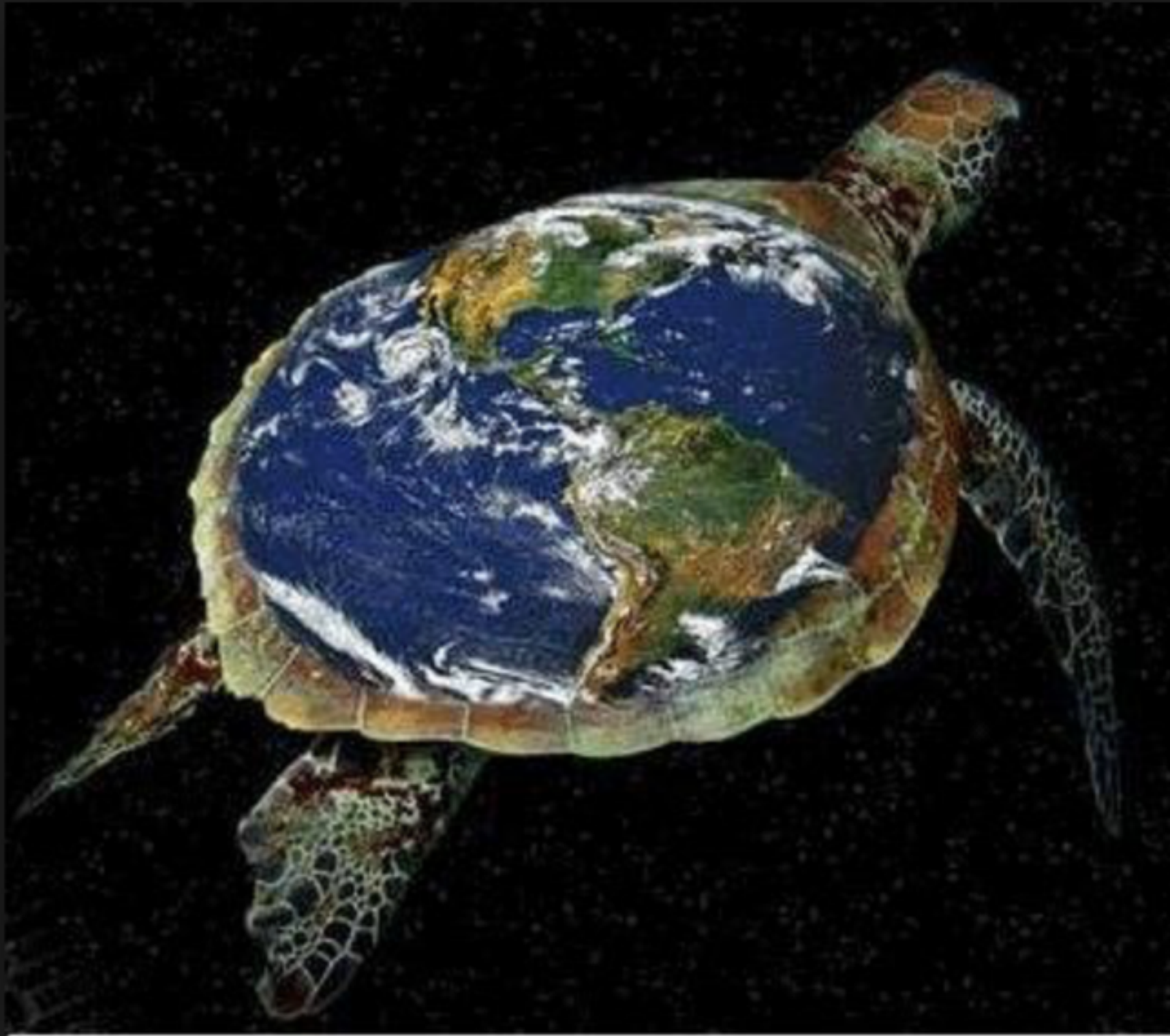
## Greek Creation Myth

The world began in Chaos, but from Chaos came the first of the living things: Erebus, the eldest. And with Erebus, darkness spread over the world.



# Zeus' revenge on mankind-Pandora

- Zeus called Hephaestus, the god of fire and a master blacksmith, and ordered him to shape a mortal being out of clay. When the figure was finished and brought to him, Zeus breathed life into it and called it woman. Then, Zeus assembled all the gods and asked them to give gifts to this woman-creature. They named her Pandora, which means the gift of all.



# NATIVE ABORIGINAL STORY OF CREATION



## A CREATION MYTH DEFINITION...

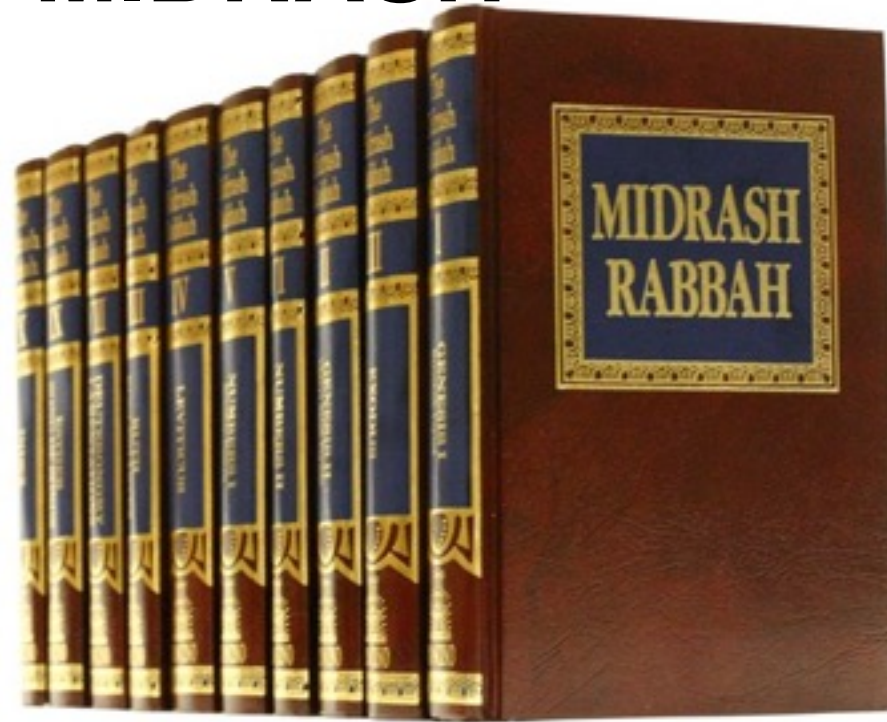
A people's belief about the world's beginnings is usually called a creation myth, mythology, story, or tale by other peoples. It should be noted, however, that to the people involved, these are not myths or stories. They are *real*, not in a linear, literal, scientific sense, but nevertheless real, and part of the authentic plurality of humankind's truths.

# MYTH...

- **A folklore genre consisting of narratives that are ostensibly historical, though often supernatural, explaining the origins of a cultural practice or natural phenomenon**
- **The word “myth” is derived from the Greek word “Mythos” (μῦθος) which simply means “story”**
- **A story to explain why something exists**



# MIDRASH



- honest, open, civil debate on important religious issues considered to be the best human way to arrive at truth.

- a genre of rabbinic literature which contains early interpretations and commentaries on the Written Torah and Oral Torah (spoken law and sermons) as well as non-legalistic rabbinic literature (aggadah) and occasionally Jewish religious laws (halakha)...

# midrash (con'd)

- **forms a running commentary on specific passages in the Hebrew Scripture (Tanakh)**
- **resolves problems in the interpretation of difficult passages of the text of the Hebrew Bible, using Rabbinic principles of hermeneutics and philology to align them with the religion and ethical values of religious teachers**



# MIDRASH

- **UNIVERSAL MYTHICAL THEMES COULD BE GIVEN PARTICULAR HEBREW RELIGIOUS MEANINGS**

**“What we have is a subversion of myth, a consistent frustration of narrative expectation.”**

**“Myth belongs to a universe bounded by nature. .. What counts in myth is strength, power, force. What makes myth tragic is its realization that nature ultimately defeats the strongest.”**





**“The Bible speaks  
in simple  
unambiguous  
speech.” page 140**

**Wayne: I would counter  
that the surface narrative  
is a myth but the deeper  
narrative in the scriptural  
story can become Hebrew  
biblical truth....**



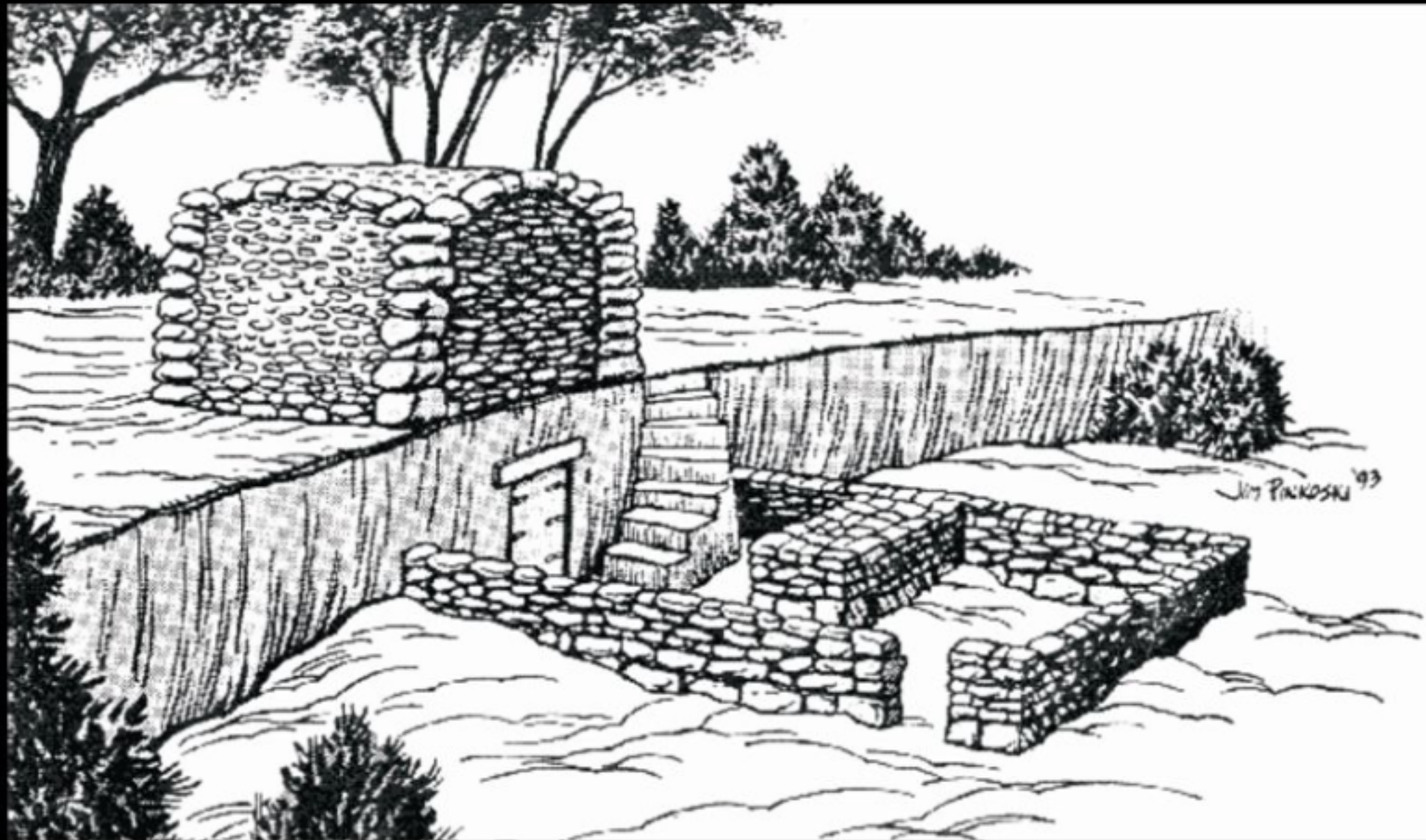
**... Sacks suggests that after Sarah's death, Abraham and Hagar are re-united.**

- This understanding is the result of intensive midrashic scrutiny of the biblical text.**
- The covenantal (not literal) history of the biblical text is the working out, through multiple interpretations, of biblical truth through time.**



# MIDRASH

- **It is inclusive, not divisive and helps to rebuild a relationship between the Hebrew and Arab/Islamic faith.**
- **The Hagar dimension of the story, through this interpretation, contains both problem and solution.**
- **A relational problem in Abraham's family is created, and a resolution is also provided.**



**Genesis 25:7-9** Altogether, Abraham lived a hundred and seventy-five years. Then Abraham breathed his last and died at a good old age, an old man and full of years; and he was gathered to his people. His sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah near Mamre.





**“Brothers can live together in peace.” p. 124**

## **A Biblical Truth Narrative**

- **The resulting meaning of the story is a positive response to the problem of sibling rivalry.**
- **Isaac and Ishmael are reconciled through Abraham after Sarah is no longer in the picture.**

# “Wrestling with the Angel” to follow



© Can Stock Photo



# **“Why I Am a Jew”**

[https://www.youtube.com/  
watch?v=CAbiFbpQP8o](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CAbiFbpQP8o)

# Chapter Seven: Wrestling with the Angel



**JACOB AND  
ESAU  
RECONCILED**



**“He took my  
birthright; now  
he has taken my  
blessing,” said  
Esau. p. 128**

**BUT JACOB’S  
SUPREMACY IN  
THIS ORDEAL WILL  
LAST ONLY IF HE  
DOESN’T MISUSE  
IT. p. 129**



Esau may have been deceived,  
but was God?

- **Hebrew midrash maintained that “Isaac, the father, loved Esau, the rejected son, even though the covenant with God would be continued by Jacob.”**
- **This is what it means to be a father.**

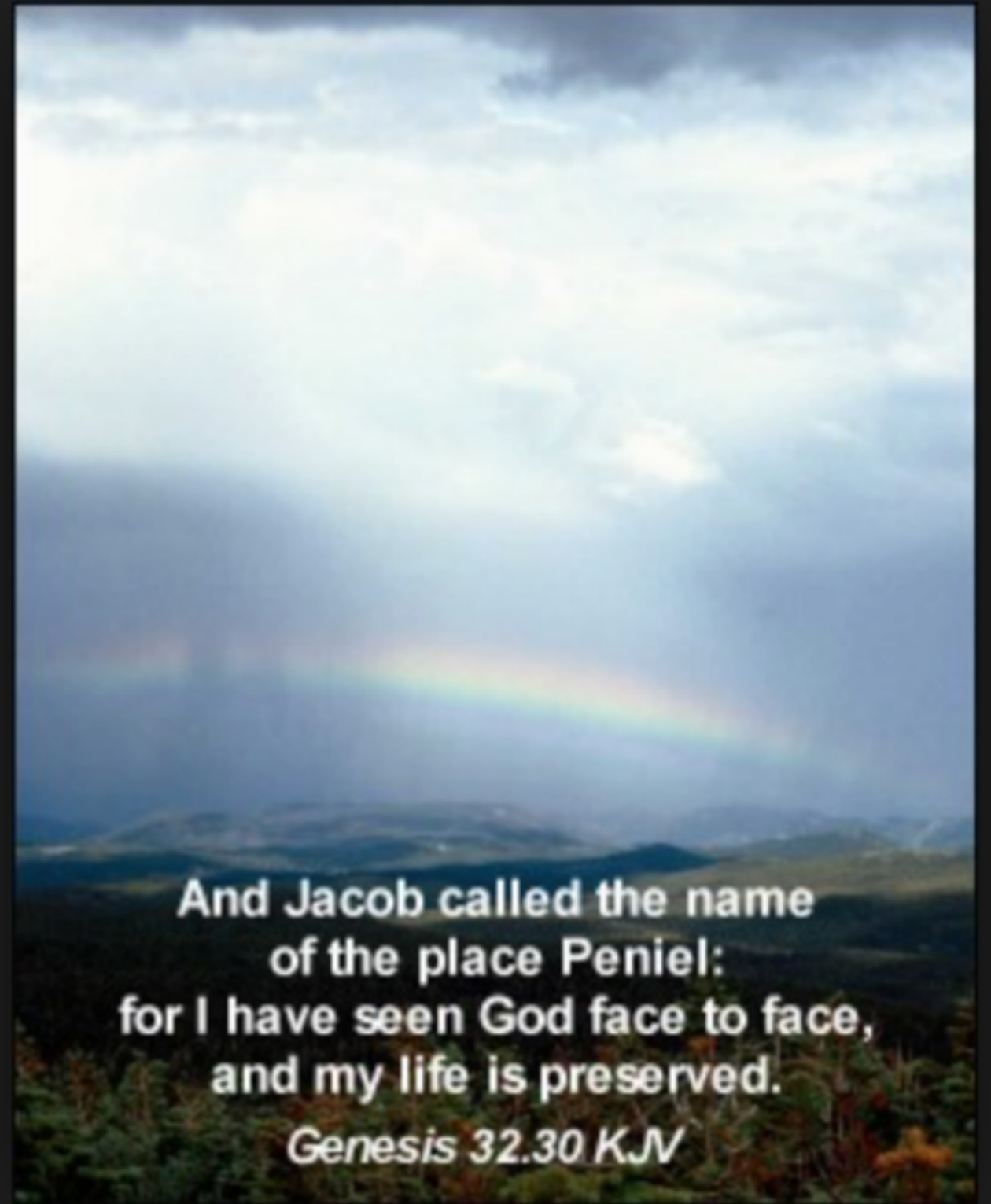


# Wrestling with the Angel

- **implies Jacob's battle with existential truth - the truth of who he really was. (p. 139)**
- **Jacob struggles with God and with the Angel - "You have striven with God and with man and have prevailed."  
Gen. 32:28**

# ISRAEL: JACOB'S NEW NAME

**ISRAEL: THE NAME  
OF THE NEW  
PEOPLE OF GOD...**  
“I have looked God  
in the eye and have  
not been destroyed.”





- **The nature of the two blessings from Isaac was also changed.**
- **Jacob returns the original blessing to Esau and new blessings result for both brothers. p. 138**
- **To be complete, we need no one else's blessings but our own....**

- **The benefits of a covenantal blessing for both brothers was sealed at Peniel and led to their reconciliation and a return to separate but renewed lives....**
- **Children and land were given to both, and possessions were no longer part of the blessing.**
- **Wealth and power are no longer part of the covenant - replaced by children and land**





# COVENANT BLESSING

The true  
covenantal  
blessing for  
both brothers.

# WRESTLING WITH THE ANGEL - reinterpreted...

- **Refutes the curse of sibling rivalry**
- **Becomes an image from the past that offers new hope for present and future.**
- **In the end, both brothers got what they needed, not what they wanted. Both brothers received the love of God for what each was, and not for being someone else.**



# THE BIBLE ENIGMA

- **THE CHOOSING OF JACOB DOES NOT MEAN THE REJECTION OF ESAU.**
- **ESAU IS NOT CHOSEN BUT NEITHER IS HE REJECTED.**
- **EACH ARE PRECIOUS IN THE EYES OF GOD**
- **SO FOR BOTH BROTHERS AND BOTH PEOPLES, WRESTLING WITH GOD MUST CONTINUE**

Expanding our **encounter with Sacks and his book**

Jonathan Sacks: “Not in God’s Name”

A Video Presentation

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oK3PK\\_qHkrs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oK3PK_qHkrs)

18:30 - 26:00



# JOAN'S CLOSING

# Next Week: Session #6

Opening: Frans Heynen

Reading Assignment: February 26th

II: SIBLINGS

Chapter 8: Role Reversal (pages 144-160)

Closing: Deb Charnuski



- Have a great week!
- See you on February 26th.