**MIDRASH I: Nimrod and the Birth of Abram**

Thousands of years ago, there was a cruel king named Nimrod.

In those days, people worshipped idols made of wood and stone. King Nimrod built many temples to the gods and idols of his lands. He offered sacrifices to them, and so did his people. King Nimrod was a man of great power and ambition, so he decided one day that he wanted to be a god himself. Then men would worship him also.

One night as Nimrod watched the stars he saw a great new star appear. He watched it travel across the sky, growing larger and larger until it seemed to swallow the four brightest stars. It shone over a certain house before it disappeared into the heavens. He wondered what this meant, so he asked his wise men. They answered, “The star stood above the house of Terah, a maker of idols. Last night a son was born to Terah’s wife. This boy will become so great that his fame will outshine that of the four greatest kings of our age.”

Nimrod became very angry when he heard this. He decided this new baby must be killed. He sent for Terah and said to him, “I want your baby son. I will give you one hundred pieces of gold for him.”

Terah became frightened about losing his son, Abram, because the word of the king was law.

He tried to explain to the king that he couldn’t sell him his son by telling him this story:

Terah said, “A wealthy man came to me yesterday and offered me a stable filled with oats and hay in return for my only horse. Shall I sell my horse for this great price?”

‘Stupid man, of what use is oats and hay without a horse?” replied the king.

Terah bowed his head and said, “What good is all the gold in the world to me if I have no son?”

Nimrod became so upset that he shouted, “Sell me your son, or both of you shall die.”

Terah saw that if he argued any longer Nimrod would become more angry, and he would kill his two older sons as well. He softly begged the king to wait three days, so that his wife could have time to accept the king’s harsh command. Nimrod agreed to this, and Terah sadly left.

Two days later, one of Terah’s slave women gave birth to a son, but he was born dead. Terah had an idea. Instead of taking his own son, he brought the dead baby to Nimrod and said, “My Lord, now I shall sell you my son, because he is dead.”

Meanwhile, Amatla, Terah’s wife, took Abram to a cave, high on a mountain, and hid him there. This is where Abram lived for several years.