

# Contents

---

*List of Figures* ix

---

*Preface* x

---

*Introduction* 4

---

1

2

*The Creation and Its  
Aftermath*

---

- 2.1 Introduction 10
- 2.2 The Creation of the World 11
- 2.3 The Question of Free Will 12
- 2.4 The Imposition of  
Constraints 14
- 2.5 Eve's Temptation by the  
Serpent 21
- 2.6 Eve's Offer to Adam 24
- 2.7 The Punishment of Adam and  
Eve 28
- 2.8 Conclusions 33

3

*The Meaning of Faith*

---

- 3.1 Introduction 36
- 3.2 Abraham's Sacrifice 37
- 3.3 Jephthah's Sacrifice 45
- 3.4 Other Interpretations and  
Conclusions 51

4

*Family Conflict*

---

- 4.1 Introduction 54
- 4.2 Cain and Abel 55

## 5

- 4.3 Jacob and Esau 59
- 4.4 Joseph and His Brothers 66
- 4.5 Conclusions 76

---

### *Protracted Conflict*

---

- 5.1 Introduction 78
- 5.2 Enter Moses 80
- 5.3 God the Agent  
Provocateur 82
- 5.4 The Main Event 86
- 5.5 A New Challenge 89
- 5.6 Dissension in the Ranks 94
- 5.7 More Dissension, More  
Retribution 98
- 5.8 Conclusions 103

## 6

---

### *Just Agreements and Wise Arbitration*

---

- 6.1 Introduction 106
- 6.2 Rahab and the Spies 107
- 6.3 Joshua's Deception by the  
Gibeonites 113
- 6.4 Solomon's Wisdom 118
- 6.5 Conclusions 123

## 7

---

### *Royal Conflict*

---

- 7.1 Introduction 126
- 7.2 Saul's Tenuous Position 127
- 7.3 Conflict with David 132
- 7.4 Esther's Intercession 139
- 7.5 Conclusions 146

## 8

*Conflict Between the  
Sexes*

---

- 8.1 Introduction 148  
8.2 A Love Triangle: Nabal,  
Abigail, and David 149  
8.3 Samson's Revenge 153  
8.4 The Cashiering of Queen  
Vashti 160  
8.5 Conclusions 163

## 9

*Theory, Evidence, and  
Findings*

---

- 9.1 Evaluation of the Theory 166  
9.2 Evaluation of the Evidence 169  
9.3 Concluding Remarks on  
God 173

*Notes* 178

---

*General Index* 184

---

*Index of Biblical  
Passages* 192

---

## List of Figures

---

- 2.1 Outcome matrix for constraint game 15
- 2.2 Game tree for constraint game 16
- 2.3 Payoff matrix for constraint game 19
- 2.4 Outcome matrix for temptation game 23
- 2.5 Payoff matrix for temptation game 24
- 2.6 Outcome matrix for sharing game 26
- 2.7 Payoff matrix for sharing game 28
- 2.8 Game tree for punishment game 31
- 3.1 Outcome matrix for Abraham's sacrifice 39
- 3.2 Payoff matrices for Abraham's sacrifice 40
- 3.3 Payoff matrices for Jephthah's sacrifice: show-of-faith interpretation of God's preferences 47
- 3.4 Payoff matrices for Jephthah's sacrifice: vindictive interpretation of God's preferences 50
- 4.1 Game tree of Cain's murder of Abel 60
- 4.2 Outcome matrix of birthright game 62
- 4.3 Payoff matrix of birthright game 63
- 4.4 Game tree of Joseph's threat 71
- 4.5 Game tree of Joseph's offer to free brothers 75
- 5.1 Payoff matrix to God in one-person game with Pharaoh 89
- 5.2 Outcome matrix in pursuit game 91
- 5.3 Payoff matrix in pursuit game 92
- 5.4 Game tree of dissension at Mount Sinai 97
- 6.1 Outcome matrix of Rahab's game 109
- 6.2 Rahab's game revised 110
- 6.3 Game tree of Joshua's deception by the Gibeonites 115
- 6.4 Outcome matrix of Solomon's game 121
- 6.5 Payoff matrix of Solomon's game 122
- 7.1 Outcome matrix for flight of David 135
- 7.2 Payoff matrix for flight of David 136
- 7.3 Game tree of Saul-David confrontation at cave 138
- 7.4 Outcome matrix of Esther's intercession 141
- 8.1 Game tree of David and Abigail plot 151
- 8.2 Outcome matrix of Samson's harassment 158
- 8.3 Payoff matrix of Samson's harassment 158
- 8.4 Outcome matrix of Vashti's disobedience 162
- 8.5 Payoff matrix of Vashti's disobedience 164