



FEED MY SHEEP

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Christ Will Appear to “Benjamin” First!

The Story of Joseph, Part 21

In our last issue, we found the sons of Jacob-Israel now back in Egypt, this time bringing Benjamin with them in obedience to the express command of Joseph, the ruler of Egypt. None of the brothers yet recognize him as their own brother. Upon their arrival Joseph commanded that they were to dine with him at noon.

Genesis 43:33 And they sat before him, the firstborn according to his birthright, and the youngest according to his youth: and the men marvelled one at another.

34 And he took *and sent* messes unto them from before him: but Benjamin’s mess was five times so much as any of theirs. And they drank, and were merry with him.

We saw in verse 32 that it was the custom in Egypt that Egyptians segregated themselves from non-Egyptians when they ate meals. One reason may have been that the Egyptians worshiped the cow, the ox and certain other animals, and thus they would not eat them. Incidentally, the heathen people of India still consider the cow as sacred, and so do you now see that the term “holy cow!” must have originated as a reference to these heathen religions?

Personally, I don’t think there is anything wrong with using such an exclamation. It does not mean that I worship cows. As a matter of fact, I like cows. I *eat* cows! ...just like our Hebrew forefathers have done for millennia. In a similar manner, one could trace the origin of the expression “holy mackerel!” to the fact that the Roman Catholic church had for centuries forbid the eating of meat on Friday and so it became traditional to eat fish on Friday.

If we picture the scene in Joseph’s dining room, we have three tables: One for the Egyptian officials or staff members who may have been invited to join them. One

table was for the Hebrew brothers. Then there was a separate table for Joseph, with all the food spread out upon it. This table was undoubtedly up on a raised platform, in front of Joseph’s throne.

Another custom in the ancient eastern world was that the guests’ portions were served to them from the host’s table. Thus Joseph sent a “mess” to Benjamin which was *five* times the portion sent to the other brothers.

Just a quick comment here on that word “mess.” After our monthly fellowship meetings in Atlanta and east Tennessee, we usually go to a place for a meal and that place is called a *cafeteria*, right? Back when I was in the Catholic seminary, the dining hall was called the “*refectory*.” I have never heard that word since. Later, when I was in the Air Force, and in all the military services, the big place where they eat is called what? ...The mess hall.

One more thing about verse 34. As I was preparing this lecture, as often happens, I am compelled to look up certain words, and yet most other words I feel no particular leading to look them up in the Greek or Hebrew lexicons. But in verse 34 where it says “And they drank, and were merry with him,” I looked up the word “merry”, and I was frankly surprised. It is the Hebrew word H7937 שָׁכַר *shakar* {shaw-kar’} which means 1) to be or become drunk or drunken, be intoxicated 1a) And in the (Qal) form of the verb, which is what it is here in this verse, it means to become drunken. I have to assume that the King James translators were trying to be delicate here, or else trying *not* to have the Word of God say that Joseph and the boys were getting tanked. In fact, this word is translated properly as drunken, drunk, or filled with drink 17 times and only in this one instance is it trans-

lated “were merry.” Moreover, all of a dozen other modern translations that I consulted do the same thing, avoiding anything that *they* decided might impugn the character of Joseph. But if we grant that the word should have been translated “were drunken” does it necessarily say that *Joseph* was getting loaded with them? I don’t think so. It could merely be saying that the brothers were drinking and getting intoxicated “with Joseph,” meaning, in his presence. We will leave that hanging for the moment.

Genesis 44:1 And he commanded the steward of his house, saying, Fill the men’s sacks with food, as much as they can carry, and put every man’s money in his sack’s mouth.

We see that the story in Genesis jumps from the dinner where Benjamin received a **five-fold greater portion**, to where Joseph commands the sacks to be loaded with grain and to once again restore the brothers’ money in their sacks. Now let’s turn to the narrative in Jasher to fill in some intriguing and exciting details.

Jasher 53:11 And Joseph had a cup from which he drank, and it was of silver beautifully inlaid with onyx stones and bdellium, and Joseph struck the cup in the sight of his brethren whilst they were sitting to eat with him.

12 And Joseph said unto the men, I know by this cup that Reuben the first born, Simeon and Levi and Judah, Issachar and Zebulun are children from one mother, seat yourselves to eat according to your births.

Bible students know that this account in Jasher accords perfectly with the exact birth order of these brothers.

13 And he also placed the others according to their births, and he said, I know that this your youngest brother has no brother, and I, like him, have no brother, he shall therefore sit down to eat with me.

In reference to Genesis 43, verse 33, you now understand why these brothers were marveling at Joseph. Suffice it to say that, despite Jacob’s insult in the letter, about how if this ruler of Egypt were so wise, how did he not know that these men were not spies; the brothers are now overwhelmingly impressed with the knowledge of this ruler.

14 And Benjamin went up before Joseph and sat upon the throne, and the men beheld the acts of Joseph, and they were astonished at them;

Well, you can imagine so! Here is this ruler of Egypt and he has just invited their youngest brother,

Benjamin, to come “sit with me in my throne!” Wouldn’t you have been in awe and wonder and perhaps really questioning in your mind just what is going on here? This act of Joseph is therefore very reminiscent of the words of Christ when he said in...

Revelation 3:21 To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.

Does this not fit Joseph as a type of Christ? Joseph grants to the overcomers to sit with him in his throne. Therefore, whom then does Benjamin represent? The overcomers! Both Joseph and Benjamin represent overcomers, and that is why Jesus said in that verse in Revelation even as I also overcame. And so as the apostles (except Judas) were from the tribe of Benjamin, then it makes even more sense when Jesus said to them in Matthew 19....

Matthew 19:28 And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

These Benjamite apostles and disciples constituted the very beginning of the church in the New Testament. They were the leaders, and they were the *first* parts of the body of Christ to be called into action. If you picture the body of Christ, we have Jesus as the head. If we have a normal birth from a woman’s womb, what part of the body is born first? The head, of course! So 2,000 years ago, Jesus, the Head, was born. And what part of the body would be born next? What part of the body supports the head? The neck. Consider then that as Moses was prophesying over the children of Israel in Deuteronomy 33, he gave specific prophecies about each of the tribes. Notice in verse 12 what is foretold about the tribe of Benjamin.

Deuteronomy 33:12 And of Benjamin he said, The beloved of the LORD [literally, YWHW] shall dwell in safety by him; and the LORD shall cover him all the day long, and he shall dwell between his shoulders.

Between his shoulders. To whom is the word “his” referring? It would seem that it is referring to Yahweh, do you agree? Because Yahweh is the nearest antecedent. There is no other antecedent in that whole verse! Therefore it is prophesying that Benjamin’s place in the body of Yahweh, which is the body of Christ, is between the shoulders. What part of your body is between your shoulders? The neck! And so immediately after Christ, the Head of the body, as-

cended into the heavenly realm, the neck came to birth, and began ministering to the rest of the body of Christians as they came to birth. And how did corporate Benjamin minister to them? It tells us in...

Ephesians 4:11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

Count them: five functions, a five-fold ministry to the church. That is why Benjamin was given a blessing of food five times greater than the rest of the brothers. But was it so that Benjamin could keep it to himself? No! It was as it says in the next verse...

12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

Isn't that a marvelous and beautiful prophetic picture given us in the Bible and in Jasher? In Joseph's dining hall, Benjamin has now *ascended* to sit next to his brother Joseph, and remember, Benjamin himself is unaware that this great ruler of Egypt is his very own brother.

Clearly, Joseph ruling Egypt is a type of Jesus ruling the world. **Is this possibly also prophetic in that many Christian overcomers will "come up hither" to be seated in places of authority, ruling with Christ, and for a brief time, they will still not know that they are indeed the physical descendants of Israel and the brothers of Christ Jesus after the flesh? ... as well as after the Spirit?** And if that will be the case, then according to the story in Jasher, it will not remain that way except for a very brief time. Listen now as I continue in Jasher.

Jasher 53:14 And Benjamin went up before Joseph and sat upon the throne, and the men beheld the acts of Joseph, and they were astonished at them; and the men ate and drank at that time with Joseph, and he then gave presents unto them, and Joseph gave one gift unto Benjamin, and Manasseh and Ephraim saw the acts of their father, and they also gave presents unto him, and Osnath gave him one present, and they were five presents in the hand of Benjamin.

Well, let's see: one from Joseph, one from Osnath, his wife, one from Manasseh and one from Ephraim. I count four. Yet it says there were five in Benjamin's hand. So I am open to suggestions as to where the fifth present came from. (Perhaps either Ephraim or Manasseh—but not both of them—gave two to Benjamin.) The text simply gives no further information. What is Joseph doing here? He brings Benjamin up to sit with him in the throne. He gives him presents and

gives him five times as much food as the other brothers. By showing preference for Benjamin, *Joseph is testing his brothers... to see if they will be jealous of Benjamin as they had been jealous of him those many years ago.* Quite a good test, isn't it?

15 And Joseph brought them out wine to drink, and they would not drink, and they said, From the day on which Joseph was lost we have not drunk wine, nor eaten any delicacies.

Wow! Can you imagine the emotional energy whirling around in that room!? These men are here eating with the king of Egypt and he offers them wine. It would not be polite to refuse, unless you have a very good reason, and they do. Their refusal to drink wine is their way of *remembrance* for their long-lost brother, and it brings with it their own painful remorse for their actions. This is reminiscent of the last supper scene where after they had broke bread, Jesus told them to do this in remembrance of him, their brother of the tribe of Judah. Then He takes the cup of wine and tells the Benjamite apostles:

Matthew 26:28 For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

29 But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.

That would be *new wine*, then, wouldn't it? And elsewhere in the Scriptures, Jesus told them that you cannot put new wine in old wineskins. ...Symbolizing that we need to have our new "wineskins," our new resurrection bodies to contain the new wine, which is the fullness of the Holy Spirit. Since Joseph symbolizes Christ ruling the world at His second appearing, then we would expect the "new wine" to be flowing freely then, wouldn't we? Listen now to the Jasher account.

Jasher 53:16 And Joseph swore unto them, and he pressed them hard, and they drank plentifully with him on that day [cf. Matt. 26:29 above], and Joseph afterward turned to his brother Benjamin to speak with him, and Benjamin was still sitting upon the throne before Joseph.

I think we must understand that this dining hall was a fairly large room and that the tables of the three groups were sufficiently separated from each other so that one could have a private conversation with his neighbor and no one at the next table could hear it.

17 And Joseph said unto him, Hast thou begotten

any children? and he said, Thy servant has ten sons, and these are their names, Bela, Becher, Ashbal, Gera, Naaman, Achi, Rosh, Mupim, Chupim, and Ord, and I called their names after my brother whom I have not seen.

18 And he ordered them to bring before him his map of the stars, whereby Joseph knew all the times, and Joseph said unto Benjamin, I have heard that the Hebrews are acquainted with all wisdom, dost thou know anything of this?

19 And Benjamin said, Thy servant is knowing also in all the wisdom which my father taught me, and Joseph said unto Benjamin, Look now at this instrument and understand where thy brother Joseph is in Egypt, who you said went down to Egypt.

20 And Benjamin beheld that instrument with the map of the stars of heaven, and he was wise and looked therein to know where his brother was, and Benjamin divided the whole land of Egypt into four divisions, and he found that he who was sitting upon the throne before him was his brother Joseph, and Benjamin wondered greatly, and when Joseph saw that his brother Benjamin was so much astonished, he said unto Benjamin, What hast thou seen, and why art thou astonished?

21 And Benjamin said unto Joseph, I can see by this that Joseph my brother sitteth here with me upon the throne, and Joseph said unto him, I am Joseph thy brother, reveal not this thing unto thy brethren; behold I will send thee with them when they go away, and I will command them to be brought back again into the city, and I will take thee away from them.

Once again we see the pattern: Christ is revealed to Benjamin first. We saw this was fulfilled by the faith in Christ on the part of the Benjamites of Galilee. Therefore, as we saw that it was so at Christ's first coming, can we expect that it will also be so at His second appearing? Will Christ at His second coming reveal himself first to spiritual Benjamin? The overcomers? Joseph continues confiding his plan to Benjamin. (We will withhold comment on that for now.)

Jasher 53:22 And if they dare their lives and fight for thee, then shall I know that they have repented of what they did unto me, and I will make myself known to them, and if they forsake thee when I take thee, then shalt thou remain with me, and I will wrangle with them, and they shall go away, and I will not become known to them.

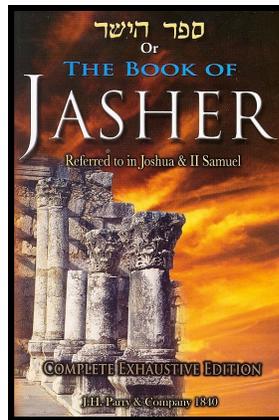
23 At that time Joseph commanded his officer to fill their sacks with food, and to put each man's money into his sack, and to put the cup in the sack of Benjamin, and to give them provision for the road, and they did so unto them.

And now we are caught up in Jasher with the story as given in Genesis, so let us return there and continue. We come now to the execution phase of Joseph's final test of his brothers. Stay tuned!

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We will come back to comment on that after the corresponding passage in Jasher.

34 And he took *and sent* messes unto them from before him: but Benjamin's mess was five times so much as any of theirs. And they drank, and were merry with him.

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