



FEED MY SHEEP

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Judah Offers to Sacrifice Himself for Benjamin

The Story of Joseph, Part 22

If you have been following along in this series, then you know that we are doing something quite unusual—something I have heard of no one else ever doing—and that is to interlace the Bible story of Joseph with the greatly expanded version of the story of Joseph as given in the book of Jasher.

For the sake of new readers, I repeat briefly what we have stated numerous times: I do not put the book of Jasher on the same level as the Bible; i.e., wholly inspired and completely inerrant (in the originals). However, we do note that the book of Jasher is referenced in the Bible itself on two separate occasions (Joshua 10:13 & 2 Samuel 1:18).

Readers should also beware that there is a demonstrably false book of Jasher which circulates today. It has a date of 1829. (N.B. Going from memory, we have erroneously stated in some more recent issues of FMS, that it was 1828; it is in fact, 1829.) The version we promote is dated 1840. Years ago, I spent two issues of FMS contrasting and comparing the two versions. They are available for free downloading from our website. See FMS #23 & #24, October and November, 2000.

Our last several issues of FMS have brought us to the most poignant parts of the story of Joseph the Patriarch. Admittedly, these are parts of the story where my eyes begin to water and I get a lump in my throat—no matter how many times I have read the story—it almost always happens to me. And I know from our readers' notes to me that I am not the only one; in fact, it is quite common. What a powerful drama!

We left off last time with all the brothers dining with Joseph. Benjamin—Joseph's only full-brother, both being borne by Jacob's beloved wife, Rachel—was commanded to sit next to Joseph at a separate table

elevated above the others and at a distance from the tables of the other brothers so that they could not hear the ordinary conversation of Joseph with Benjamin. In a most peculiar way—in a manner scandalous to many sincere Christians today—Joseph reveals his identity to Benjamin. By means of studying star maps, Benjamin, under the instruction of Joseph, discerned that the man sitting on the throne next to him was his own lost brother Joseph!

Yes, the Zodiac is anathema to many precious Christian believers today, but for those who have a yearning to test and see if there is God's truth in the Zodiac, we make available the late Bible archeologist, E. Raymond Capt's magnificent treatise, *The Glory of the Stars: A Study of the Zodiac*. It is loaded with star maps and the commentary explains how the Gospel is written in the heavens! ...oh, and there is much more hinted at in that part of the story in Jasher, as well as its corresponding part in Genesis!

We had finished with Jasher's account of the dinner and then it was time for the men to head back home to Jacob in Canaanland, bearing more food for the famine-stricken family. As they departed, only Benjamin now knows the identity of Joseph as one and the same with the powerful ruler of Egypt! We now return to the account in the Bible.

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.

2 And put my cup, the silver cup, in the sack's mouth of the youngest, and his corn money. And he did according to the word that Joseph had spoken.

3 As soon as the morning was light, the men

were sent away, they and their asses.

We can imagine ourselves as part of the caravan of the brothers as they begin their journey back to Hebron. For once in a long time, all seems to be well. They had been the guests of the king of Egypt. They had enjoyed a feast with him. They had their brother Simeon back with them. And most important of all; Judah would be able to appear before his father Jacob with Benjamin by his side, and he could say: "See, father, I told you everything would work out alright."

And yet, as they crossed the border of Egypt and were well on their way, they felt it. It was deep within them. Something gnawed at them. Something just wasn't right. Why had that king of Egypt acted so strangely? Why had he accused them of being spies in the first place? Why did he show such special attention to Benjamin? Why had he showered him with five portions of food and those five gifts.

And why had the king ordered their money to be put back in their sacks a year ago? That's what must have happened, they thought, since the steward had assured them that he had indeed received their money the first time. No...there were just too many things that just didn't add up. And so while they were outwardly happy, they were inwardly troubled.

4 And when they were gone out of the city, and not yet far off, Joseph said unto his steward, Up, follow after the men; and when thou dost overtake them, say unto them, Wherefore have ye rewarded evil for good?

5 Is not this it in which my lord drinketh, and whereby indeed he divineth? ye have done evil in so doing.

6 And he overtook them, and he spake unto them these same words.

7 And they said unto him, Wherefore saith my lord these words? God forbid that thy servants should do according to this thing:

8 Behold, the money, which we found in our sacks' mouths, we brought again unto thee out of the land of Canaan: how then should we steal out of thy lord's house silver or gold?

9 With whomsoever of thy servants it be found, both let him die, and we also will be my lord's bondmen.

10 And he said, Now also let it be according unto your words: he with whom it is found shall be my servant; and ye shall be blameless.

11 Then they speedily took down every man his sack to the ground, and opened every man his sack.

12 And he searched, and began at the eldest, and left at the youngest: and the cup was found in

Benjamin's sack.

13 Then they rent their clothes, and laded every man his ass, and returned to the city.

14 And Judah and his brethren came to Joseph's house; for he was yet there: and they fell before him on the ground.

It seems that their inner sense of dread and doom had been correct. They had been so close to freedom. They knew they were innocent—at least they *thought* they were. As Joseph's aide had begun inspecting the sacks, beginning at the eldest, their hopes were buoyed as the aide did not find the cup.

Ten of the eleven were now vindicated as guiltless. So close! And then their hopes were dashed and their greatest fear realized. There it was, in Benjamin's sack! How could they protest their innocence now? They could not protest without accusing the king of Egypt of planting the evidence. Even if they had dared accuse the king, that would not gain their freedom. This disastrous turn-of-events is a blow which strikes them in the most tender spot, because here stands accused, the very son with whom they were charged with protecting at all costs.

What will they do? Surely, this once again brought to their minds that this was a judgment from God. For though they were being *unjustly* accused now, yet some two decades previously, they had escaped punishment when they were guilty. At this point, they feel all hope is lost and so they tear their clothes in a show of great distress and mourning. They prostrate themselves before Joseph.

15 And Joseph said unto them, What deed is this that ye have done? wot ye not that such a man as I can certainly divine?

16 And Judah said, What shall we say unto my lord? what shall we speak? or how shall we clear ourselves? God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants: behold, we *are* my lord's servants, both we, and *he* also with whom the cup is found.

There we have it! Judah steps forward as spokesman again and declares that God has discovered (uncovered) the sin of the brothers, and yet we can be sure that in Judah's mind, he is remembering their sin against Joseph. He is not referring to the cup in Benjamin's sack. And let us keep in mind throughout all this, that Benjamin was just as ignorant as his father was of the wicked deed his brothers had committed against Joseph. Judah now submits to the punishment God has obviously ordained for them. But Joseph surprises him.

17 And he said, God forbid that I should do so: but the man in whose hand the cup is found, he shall be my servant; and as for you, get you up in peace unto your father.

Judah's conscience was screaming within him. Oh, no! Now this king wants to let him and his nine brothers go free—they, the ones who are guilty—but to keep as a slave, Benjamin, the one who was innocent of harming Joseph. I cannot let this happen, thinks Judah.

18 Then Judah came near unto him, and said, Oh my lord, let thy servant, I pray thee, speak a word in my lord's ears, and let not thine anger burn against thy servant: for thou *art* even as Pharaoh.

19 My lord asked his servants, saying, Have ye a father, or a brother?

20 And we said unto my lord, We have a father, an old man, and a child of his old age, a little one; and his brother is dead, and he alone is left of his mother, and his father loveth him.

21 And thou saidst unto thy servants, Bring him down unto me, that I may set mine eyes upon him.

22 And we said unto my lord, The lad cannot leave his father: for *if* he should leave his father, *his father* would die.

23 And thou saidst unto thy servants, Except your youngest brother come down with you, ye shall see my face no more.

We must stop for a moment to share this thought with you. As we look at the analogy of the physical body once again, we are cognizant that the head is the command center, as it were, where all the other parts of the body report to on a regular basis—like maybe millions of times per second!??

In any event, everything passes up through the neck and into the brain. So analogously, unless Benjamin, the neck, is with them, the other tribes of Israel can have no communication with Joseph, the head. So it is just as Joseph had said, Unless Benjamin is with you, you will see my face no more! Judah continues pleading with Joseph.

24 And it came to pass when we came up unto thy servant my father, we told him the words of my lord.

25 And our father said, Go again, *and* buy us a little food.

26 And we said, We cannot go down: if our youngest brother be with us, then will we go down: for we may not see the man's face, except our

youngest brother *be* with us.

This is powerful, heart-wrenching drama! Judah relates to the powerful king, in effect, is beginning to confess all, beginning with all that had to be done in order for them to take Benjamin from Jacob's side to bring him to the king of Egypt.

27 And thy servant my father said unto us, Ye know that my wife bare me two sons:

28 And the one went out from me, and I said, Surely he is torn in pieces; and I saw him not since:

29 And if ye take this also from me, and mischief befall him, ye shall bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave.

30 Now therefore when I come to thy servant my father, and the lad *be* not with us; seeing that his life is bound up in the lad's life;

31 It shall come to pass, when he seeth that the lad *is* not *with us*, that he will die: and thy servants shall bring down the gray hairs of thy servant our father with sorrow to the grave.

32 For thy servant became surety for the lad unto my father, saying, If I bring him not unto thee, then I shall bear the blame to my father for ever.

33 Now therefore, I pray thee, let thy servant abide instead of the lad a bondman to my lord; and let the lad go up with his brethren.

34 For how shall I go up to my father, and the lad *be* not with me? lest peradventure I see the evil that shall come on my father.

This is a prolonged and exceedingly painful trial that Joseph has put his brothers through. Joseph had long ago forgiven them of that deed. But it is as the Scripture say of God, He wounds that He may heal. In other words, the brothers had to be brought very low, they had to be humbled to the point of complete helplessness—nothingness, if you will—so that their souls could be healed of the awful sin.

Now Joseph knows for certain that his brothers have repented. Here Judah shows such anguish and concern for both Jacob and for Benjamin that he offers himself in place of Benjamin. This is a great foreshadowing of the law of the kinsman-redeemer. And of course, it is the great scion (“branch”) of Judah, Jesus the Christ, who is the ultimate kinsman-redeemer of us all. If that doesn't make you want to shout “hallelujah,” then you haven't been paying attention!

Because the truth is, that each and every one of us who are counted among the sons and daughters of God is brought into a process of severe trials, but only so that we can come to a knowledge of the depth of our sins, that we may receive the love and mercy of

Jesus, the Greater Joseph, when He reveals Himself to us.

Dear reader, I want to ask you: Have you suffered severe trials? Perhaps you are presently suffering through a most painful time of testing, in matters of health, in matters of finances, in matters of wayward children, in matters of a difficult relationship with your spouse or other family members, in matters of employment. The methods of our Father are myriad, But rest in this knowledge, my dear friend. He wounds that He may heal. And the healing far outweighs the wounding. As the apostle Paul put it in

Romans 8:18 For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

And that glory will be revealed in its fullness when Jesus returns the second time as the Greater Joseph. And so as we are now at the point in the story where Joseph is about to reveal himself, oh how we anxiously await the return and the unveiling, the revealing of Joseph as the Christ! That is, Christ in His Joseph role! Even so, come Lord Jesus, come!

(To be continued.)

***The Glory of the Stars:
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by E. Raymond Capt

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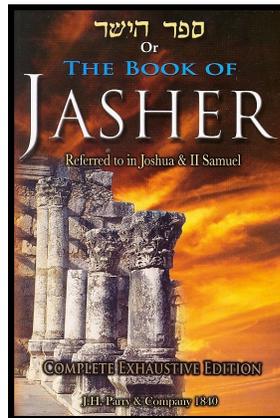
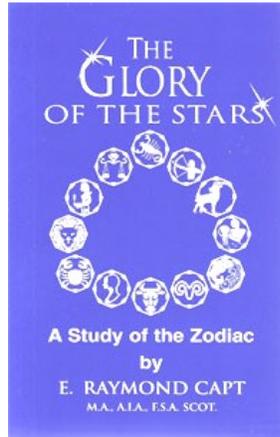
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