

FEED MY SHEEP

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Joseph Reveals Himself to his Brothers

The Story of Joseph, Part 26

We are studying the story of Joseph the Patriarch using the account in the book of Jasher to give us a much more complete picture of this most poignant drama. For new readers, we refer you to previous issues regarding our disclaimers about using the book of Jasher. As we pick up the story once again, we are coming to its very climax where Joseph reveals his identity to his brothers. At issue presently is the vizier's (Joseph's) demand that the brothers return home and leave Benjamin with him for "stealing" Joseph's "divining cup." Judah has been very bold in getting emotionally heated as he makes direct threats to Joseph about what destruction he (Judah) is capable of in Egypt.

For Joseph's part, this has all been a test of his brothers' character, to see if there has been a change since the many years before when they had sold him into slavery. The Jasher account related the mysterious "touch techniques" which Joseph's son, Manasseh, had applied to Judah, causing him to become calm enough now to listen to Joseph. Because we do not wish to interrupt the flow of this heart-tugging scene, this issue will be almost entirely the intertwining of the Jasher and Genesis accounts with scarce commentary.

Jasher 54:54 And Judah said unto his brethren, Let no one of you say that this is the act of an Egyptian youth for this is the work of my father's house.

55 And Joseph seeing and knowing that Judah's anger was stilled, he approached to speak unto Judah in the language of mildness.

And of course, Joseph is still speaking through an interpreter.

56 And Joseph said unto Judah, Surely you speak truth and have this day verified your assertions concerning your strength, and may your God who delighteth in you, increase your welfare; but tell me truly

why from amongst all thy brethren dost thou wrangle with me on account of the lad, as none of them have spoken one word to me concerning him.

57 And Judah answered Joseph, saying, Surely thou must know that I was security for the lad to his father, saying, If I brought him not unto him I should bear his blame forever.

58 Therefore have I approached thee from amongst all my brethren, for I saw that thou wast unwilling to suffer him to go from thee; now therefore may I find grace in thy sight that thou shalt send him to go with us, and behold I will remain as a substitute for him, to serve thee in whatever thou desirest, for wheresoever thou shalt send me I will go to serve thee with great energy.

And so now we see that we have come almost full circle to where Genesis picks up the story. Almost... there's still more here. Judah continues.

59 Send me now to a mighty king who has rebelled against thee, and thou shalt know what I will do unto him and unto his land; although he may have cavalry and infantry or an exceeding mighty people, I will slay them all and bring the king's head before thee.

After having just seen what Judah can do, I tend to believe Judah could do just what he said he could.

60 Dost thou not know or hast thou not heard that our father Abraham with his servant Eliezer smote all the kings of Elam with their hosts in one night, they left not one remaining? and ever since that day our father's strength was given unto us for an inheritance, for us and our seed forever.

61 And Joseph answered and said, You speak truth, and falsehood is not in your mouth, for it was

also told unto us that the Hebrews have power and that the Lord their God delighteth much in them, and who then can stand before them?

So it appears that Judah and Joseph are now able to speak peaceably, but Joseph has to press the issue one more time...and does he ever!

62 However, on this condition will I send your brother, if you will bring before me his brother the son of his mother, of whom you said that he had gone from you down to Egypt; and it shall come to pass when you bring unto me his brother I will take him in his stead, because not one of you was security for him to your father, and when he shall come unto me, I will then send with you his brother for whom you have been security.

Oh my heavens! What a dagger of a demand! Does not this account from Jasher have the ring of truth to it? As the saying goes these days, "You can't make this stuff up!"

63 And Judah's anger was kindled against Joseph when he spoke this thing, and his eyes dropped blood with anger, and he said unto his brethren, How doth this man this day seek his own destruction and that of all Egypt!

64 And Simeon answered Joseph, saying, Did we not tell thee at first that we knew not the particular spot to which he went, and whether he be dead or alive, and wherefore speaketh my lord like unto these things?

65 And Joseph observing the countenance of Judah discerned that his anger began to kindle when he spoke unto him, saying, Bring unto me your other brother instead of this brother.

66 And Joseph said unto his brethren, Surely you said that your brother was either dead or lost, now if I should call him this day and he should come before you, **would you give him unto me instead of his brother?**

Oh my, my! How could the brothers answer *that* question? If they had the chance to get Benjamin back by once again turning Joseph over to slavery in Egypt, would they do that? Evidently, they did not answer—which is to their credit—and so...

67 And Joseph began to speak and call out, Joseph, Joseph, come this day before me, and appear to thy brethren and sit before them.

68 And when Joseph spoke this thing before them, they looked each a different way to see from whence Joseph would come before them.

69 And Joseph observed all their acts, and said unto them, Why do you look here and there?....

And now we are back in the Genesis account:

Genesis 45:1 Then Joseph could not refrain himself before all them that stood by him; and he cried, Cause every man to go out from me. And there stood no man with him, while Joseph made himself known unto his brethren.

And so the guards have gone, the interpreter is gone. Only Joseph and his brothers remain.

Jasher 54:69 And Joseph observed all their acts, and said unto them, Why do you look here and there?...I am Joseph.... whom you sold to Egypt,now therefore let it not grieve you that you sold me, for as a support during the famine did God send me before you.

70 And his brethren were terrified at him when they heard the words of Joseph, and Judah was exceedingly terrified at him.

Genesis 45:2 And he [Joseph] wept aloud: and the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard.

3 And Joseph said unto his brethren, I am Joseph; doth my father yet live? And his brethren could not answer him; for they were troubled at his presence.

4 And Joseph said unto his brethren, Come near to me, I pray you. And they came near. And he said, I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt.

5 Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life.

6 For these two years hath the famine been in the land: and yet there are five years, in the which there shall neither be earing nor harvest.

7 And God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance.

8 So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God: and he hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt.

Alright, at this point, Benjamin is still hiding behind the curtain, as it were, listening to every word, but..

Jasher 54:70 And his brethren were terrified at him when they heard the words of Joseph, and Judah was exceedingly terrified at him.

71 And when Benjamin heard the words of Joseph he was before them in the inner part of the house, and Benjamin ran unto Joseph his brother, and embraced him and fell upon his neck, and they wept.

72 And when Joseph's brethren saw that Benjamin had fallen upon his brother's neck and wept with him, they also fell upon Joseph and embraced him, and they wept a great weeping with Joseph.

Genesis 45:9 Haste ye, and go up to my father, and say unto him, Thus saith thy son Joseph, God hath made me lord of all Egypt: come down unto me, tarry not:

10 And thou shalt dwell in the land of Goshen, and thou shalt be near unto me, thou, and thy children, and thy children's children, and thy flocks, and thy herds, and all that thou hast:

11 And there will I nourish thee; for yet *there are* five years of famine; lest thou, and thy household, and all that thou hast, come to poverty.

12 And, behold, your eyes see, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin, that *it is* my mouth that speaketh unto you.

13 And ye shall tell my father of all my glory in Egypt, and of all that ye have seen; and ye shall haste and bring down my father hither.

14 And he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck, and wept; and Benjamin wept upon his neck.

15 Moreover he kissed all his brethren, and wept upon them: and after that his brethren talked with him.

Only after they saw Benjamin embrace Joseph, did the other brothers feel safe enough to do the same. And then they could talk.

16 And the fame thereof was heard in Pharaoh's house, saying, Joseph's brethren are come: and it pleased Pharaoh well, and his servants.

Jasher 54:73 And the voice was heard in the house of Joseph that they were Joseph's brethren, and it pleased Pharaoh exceedingly, for he was afraid of them lest they should destroy Egypt.

74 And Pharaoh sent his servants unto Joseph to congratulate him concerning his brethren who had come to him, and all the captains of the armies and troops that were in Egypt came to rejoice with Joseph, and all Egypt rejoiced greatly about Joseph's brethren.

75 And Pharaoh sent his servants to Joseph, saying, Tell thy brethren to fetch all belonging to them and let them come unto me, and I will place them in the best part of the land of Egypt, and they did so.

Genesis 45:17 And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Say unto thy brethren, This do ye; lade your beasts, and go, get you unto the land of Canaan;

18 And take your father and your households, and come unto me: and I will give you the good of the land of Egypt, and ye shall eat the fat of the land.

19 Now thou art commanded, this do ye; take you wagons out of the land of Egypt for your little ones, and for your wives, and bring your father, and come.

20 Also regard not your stuff; for the good of all the land of Egypt *is* yours.

21 And the children of Israel did so: and Joseph gave them wagons, according to the commandment of Pharaoh, and gave them provision for the way.

22 To all of them he gave each man changes of raiment; but to Benjamin he gave three hundred pieces of silver, and five changes of raiment.

23 And to his father he sent after this *manner*; ten asses laden with the good things of Egypt, and ten she asses laden with corn and bread and meat for his father by the way.

24 So he sent his brethren away, and they departed: and he said unto them, See that ye fall not out by the way.

25 And they went up out of Egypt, and came into the land of Canaan unto Jacob their father,

26 And told him, saying, Joseph *is* yet alive, and he *is* governor over all the land of Egypt. And Jacob's heart fainted, for he believed them not.

27 And they told him all the words of Joseph, which he had said unto them: and when he saw the wagons which Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of Jacob their father revived:

28 And Israel said, *It is enough; Joseph my son is yet alive: I will go and see him before I die.*

Let's now back up to Egypt and give the extended version from Jasher.

Jasher 54:76 And Joseph commanded him that was set over his house to bring out to his brethren gifts and garments, and he brought out to them many garments being robes of royalty and many gifts, and Joseph divided them amongst his brethren.

77 And he gave unto each of his brethren a change of garments of gold and silver, and three hundred pieces of silver, and Joseph commanded them all to be dressed in these garments, and to be brought before Pharaoh.

78 And Pharaoh seeing that all Joseph's brethren were valiant men, and of beautiful appearance, he greatly rejoiced.

79 And they afterward went out from the presence of Pharaoh to go to the land of Canaan, to their father, and their brother Benjamin was with them.

80 And Joseph rose up and gave unto them eleven chariots from Pharaoh, and Joseph gave unto them his chariot, upon which he rode on the day of his being crowned in Egypt, to fetch his father to Egypt; and Joseph sent to all his brothers' children, garments according to their numbers, and a hundred pieces of sil-

ver to each of them, and he also sent garments to the wives of his brethren from the garments of the king’s wives, and he sent them.

81 And he gave unto each of his brethren ten men to go with them to the land of Canaan to serve them, to serve their children and all belonging to them in coming to Egypt.

82 And Joseph sent by the hand of his brother Benjamin ten suits of garments for his ten sons, a portion above the rest of the children of the sons of Jacob.

83 And he sent to each fifty pieces of silver, and ten chariots on the account of Pharaoh, and he sent to his father ten asses laden with all the luxuries of Egypt, and ten she asses laden with corn and bread and nourishment for his father, and to all that were with him as provisions for the road.

84 And he sent to his sister Dinah garments of silver and gold, and frankincense and myrrh, and aloes and women’s ornaments in great plenty, and he sent the same from the wives of Pharaoh to the wives of Benjamin.

85 And he gave unto all his brethren, also to their wives, all sorts of onyx stones and bdellium, and from all the valuable things amongst the great people of Egypt, nothing of all the costly things was left but what Joseph sent of to his father’s household.

86 And he sent his brethren away, and they went, and he sent his brother Benjamin with them.

87 And Joseph went out with them to accompany them on the road unto the borders of Egypt, and he commanded them concerning his father and his household, to come to Egypt.

88 And he said unto them, Do not quarrel on the road, for this thing was from the Lord to keep a great people from starvation, for there will be yet five years of famine in the land.

89 And he commanded them, saying, When you come unto the land of Canaan, do not come suddenly before my father in this affair, but act in your wisdom.

[Question to young people: why did Joseph instruct them not to come suddenly before their father Jacob with this news?]

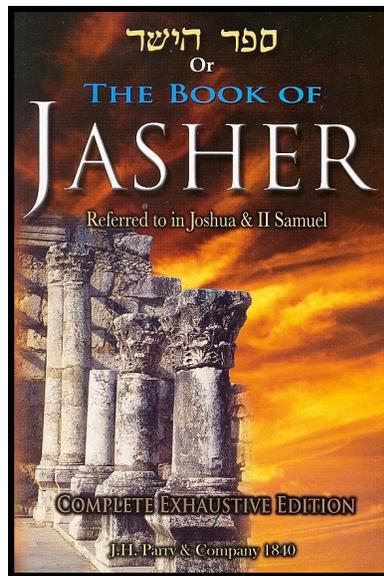
90 And Joseph ceased to command them, and he turned and went back to Egypt, and the sons of Jacob went to the land of Canaan with joy and cheerfulness to their father Jacob. (To be continued.)

The Book of Jasher

One of the most thrilling books I have ever

read—and re-read!” — JWB

Beautiful, full-color cover. 1840 edition. Do not be fooled by the bogus 1829 edition. 254 pgs. \$13 + \$4 shipping



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