



FEED MY SHEEP

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Jacob-Israel adopts the sons of Joseph

The Story of Joseph, Part 35

Jacob and his family have left Laban (his father-in-law, with whom he had been in business) and were back in Canaanland at a place called Luz. There, God appeared to Jacob and changed his name to Israel. In commemoration of the event, Jacob-Israel then anointed a stone pillar and called the name of the place Bethel (house of God), confirming the name he had given the same place 21 years prior when he had the “stairway to heaven” dream-vision.

Genesis 35:16 **And they journeyed from Bethel; and there was but a little way to come to Ephrath: and Rachel travailed, and she had hard labour.**

Rachel died in giving birth to Benjamin. We will close this seeming detour at this point and rejoin the story of the life of Joseph in Genesis 48. So all of those events from so long ago have now replayed like a DVD movie in the mind of Jacob-Israel as he now approaches his passing. But he knows that before he does, he needs to officially convey his blessings to succeeding generations. Speaking to Prime Minister Joseph, Jacob solemnly declares...

Genesis 48:5 **And now thy two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, which were born unto thee in the land of Egypt before I came unto thee into Egypt, are mine; as Reuben and Simeon, they shall be mine.**

There are several noteworthy things here. First, notice that Jacob mentions Ephraim’s name first, even though he was younger than Manasseh. This evidently went over the head of Joseph. He did not perceive the importance of that remark, at least not at that time.

Secondly, this is an official adoption. Jacob says the two sons born to you in Egypt before I got here are mine; *as Reuben and Simeon*, they are mine. In other

words, Jacob is not merely moving Joseph to the front of the line, and placing him ahead of and displacing Reuben alone.

He is taking Ephraim and Manasseh and giving them each status as a *separate* son, displacing the two oldest sons, Reuben and Simeon. Ephraim becomes a separate tribal head and Manasseh becomes a separate tribal head in the clan of Jacob.

Third, obviously Jacob is the leader of his family clan. All the other sons, their wives, the grandkids, servants, every one else is already under his authority as leader of the clan. But Ephraim and Manasseh were born outside his authority in the land of Egypt. By this ceremony, Jacob is making them full partners in the family business, as it were...but actually, not equal partners.

Traditionally, the eldest son of a clan would get a double portion, and had the responsibility to take care of the parents in their declining years, and after their passing, he would lead the clan. Not so in this case. Joseph has long been the clan leader-designate, and thus the double portion is Joseph’s via Ephraim and Manasseh.

And remarkably, even though we know that Ephraim the younger is chosen by the Spirit of God through Jacob’s crossed hands to be greater; as we will see shortly, it is Manasseh the elder who ends up getting the double portion in the land inheritance in Canaan land. The fourth point which will be made about verse 5 needs to be coupled with the next verse.

6 **And thy issue, which thou begettest after them, shall be thine, *and* shall be called after the name of their brethren in their inheritance.**

To me, this is a hint that Joseph may have had other sons. You see, in verse 5 Jacob made it a point to refer to Ephraim and Manasseh as sons born to Joseph *before Jacob arrived in Egypt*.

In the KJV, verse 6 sounds as though there's a possibility of Joseph having more sons. But this is nearly 17 years now since Jacob has been in Egypt. Other translations, including Young's Literal, render it in the past tense. For example, the New American Standard says "any offspring that have been born after them shall be yours."

In other words, Jacob says I am adopting these two as the firstborn. The other sons shall be considered yours and they will inherit under Ephraim or Manasseh as their "father." Even though other sons of Joseph might be brothers to Ephraim and Manasseh, Ephraim and Manasseh had been upgraded. They had been bumped up a generation to serve with their uncles, Joseph's brothers, on the same level as them. Therefore, they were to act as "fathers" to their own younger brothers.

That having been said, I will tell you now that the Scripture makes no mention of any other sons of Joseph, although as we have just seen, it is very strongly implied. It might be similar to the case of Dinah. She is the only daughter of Jacob mentioned by name, but we do know that Jacob had other daughters. We will see in future readings from Jasher whether or not any other sons of Joseph are mentioned. Jacob now continues his preamble by reminiscing about the death of his beloved Rachel.

7 And as for me, when I came from Padan, Rachel died by me in the land of Canaan in the way, when yet *there was* but a little way to come unto Ephrath: and I buried her there in the way of Ephrath; the same is Bethlehem.

8 And Israel beheld Joseph's sons, and said, Who *are* these?

Remember now, that Jacob is probably what we today would call legally blind. That is, he was perhaps not totally blind, but he certainly would not qualify to get a drivers' license. He could perhaps make out fuzzy shapes and forms but no clarity of features was possible any longer for him.

And here he had just been telling Joseph that he was going to adopt Ephraim and Manasseh as his firstborn. He had not yet embraced them and so we know that his decision to adopt them was not from some sudden emotional excitement upon seeing his grandsons and thus decided to bless them with this

extraordinary blessing. No, this was a Holy Spirit-led and divinely guided event, destined to reverberate down the long corridors of the centuries and, I believe, to come to full fruition in our day.

9 And Joseph said unto his father, They *are* my sons, whom God hath given me in this *place*. And he said, Bring them, I pray thee, unto me, and I will bless them.

10 Now the eyes of Israel were dim for age, so *that he could not see*. And he brought them near unto him; and he kissed them, and embraced them.

11 And Israel said unto Joseph, I had not thought to see thy face: and, lo, God hath shewed me also thy seed.

From this point forward, there are momentous events to discuss, events which will "reverberate down the long corridors of the centuries" as I explain how those blessings have played out since the time of Jacob's blessing which occurred approximately seventeen hundred years before the birth of Jesus. And to properly set the stage, I should repeat these verses before going forward.

Genesis 48:1 And it came to pass after these things, that *one* told Joseph, Behold, thy father *is* sick: and he took with him his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim.

2 And *one* told Jacob, and said, Behold, thy son Joseph cometh unto thee: and Israel strengthened himself, and sat upon the bed.

3 And Jacob said unto Joseph, God Almighty appeared unto me at Luz in the land of Canaan, and blessed me,

Several of the preceding issues of FMS were expounding on this "flashback" in the mind of Jacob to his two encounters with God at that place formerly called Luz. And do we remember still what the word *Luz* means? It means an almond tree, and because the almond is shaped like the human eye, its root word means "to awake"...and we discussed that in terms of resurrection. But Jacob had renamed the place from Luz to Bethel.

4 And [God] said unto me, Behold, I will make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, and I will make of thee a multitude of people; and will give this land to thy seed after thee *for* an everlasting possession.

And now here are Jacob's actual words as he formally and officially adopts Joseph's two sons as his own sons.

5 And now thy two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, which were born unto thee in the land of Egypt before I came unto thee into Egypt, are mine; as Reuben and Simeon, they shall be mine.

6 And thy issue, which thou begettest after them, shall be thine, and shall be called after the name of their brethren in their inheritance.

It is likely that Joseph had other children born to him besides Ephraim and Manasseh; and if so, then Jacob is stating that he is only adopting Ephraim and Manasseh as his firstborn. Any other sons of Joseph would be placed *under* Ephraim or Manasseh and be considered as part of their tribes. How many sons did Jacob have *before* this adoption ceremony? Twelve.

As we now see, the two boys take the place of their father Joseph, so that Jacob-Israel now has 13 sons. This is no small occurrence. Is it just a coincidence that the greatest nation in the history of the world began with 13 colonies, and that the number 13 appears a multitude of times in connection with the founding of the United States of America?

We carry the book, *Our Great Seal*, which demonstrates the connections with ancient Israel. See page 4. Jacob continues speaking to Joseph.

7 And as for me, when I came from Padan, Rachel died by me in the land of Canaan in the way, when yet *there was* but a little way to come unto Ephrath: and I buried her there in the way of Ephrath; the same is Bethlehem.

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9 And Joseph said unto his father, They *are* my sons, whom God hath given me in this *place*. And he said, Bring them, I pray thee, unto me, and I will bless them.

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This same scene is described in a little book called *The Day When I Chose Israel* by E. Paul Jones. It begins by quoting the title portion from a verse in ...

Ezekiel 20:5 ... In the day when I chose Israel,

“ ‘The day’ was about 1700 B. C. The place: Egypt, province of Goshen, in old Jacob’s dwelling. Jacob bears the name of Israel, given him by Christ. Jacob is old and feeble. The couch on which he lies will be his death bed. His son, Joseph, the Prime Min-

ister of Egypt, enters and strides over to Israel’s bedside. Two small boys have come with Joseph. They hang back.

Joseph: ‘We came as quickly as we could, father.’ (he kneels)

Israel: ‘I knew you would come. God has brought all my family to this place and to this time. I am dying. There is little time left and I have much to say. Who is with you?’

Joseph: ‘My sons, Manasseh and Ephraim.’

Israel: ‘Bring them here beside me and I will bless them.’ Joseph obeys and he and his two little sons kneel together.”

Every time I have heard or read the story of the adoption of the sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, from Sunday School material and children’s books to numerous books and articles, even those in the Christian Israel Kingdom movement, the two sons of Joseph are always portrayed as little children, perhaps five and six years old. I would suspect that this notion comes from reading ...

Genesis 48:12 And Joseph brought them out from between his knees, and he bowed himself with his face to the earth.

The Hebrew word there translated *between* is *eem*, but the lexicons do not give *between* as one of its meanings. It actually means *beside* or *against* his knees. In my visualization of this scene, Jacob is sitting up on the edge of his bed. Joseph comes in and pulls up a chair to be seated right in front of him. At some point, Joseph’s sons come up and stand on either side of him, right *beside* him, perhaps their legs even touching—in other words, *against* Joseph’s knees. So it would have better read: Joseph brought them from *beside* his knees.

After all, from the Genesis account alone, it is clear that both boys had been born in Egypt before Jacob arrived, and Jacob lived another 17 years after he came to Egypt. Plus, if we take the Jasher account as reliable, you recall how when before Joseph revealed himself to his brothers, how he and Judah were arguing, and Joseph had to tell Manasseh to go over and give Judah the “Star Trek Vulcan collarbone pinch grip”—as I call it—then we can assume that Manasseh might have been as much as ten years old at *that* time, so that would make the boys around 27 years of age as Jacob adopts them as his own first born. So let’s get that picture of two little kindergartners out of our minds, shall we?

Now the official words of adoption have just been spoken and Jacob now prepares to bless them and to pass on to them the birthright blessing. This idea of the birthright is so critical to a proper understanding of both the Bible and all of subsequent history that we should give some background and explain the significance of this blessing.

The average Christian certainly knows that Jesus came as the Messiah, as the king of Israel—king of the Jews in their terminology—but they usually have no conception of the birthright and its concomitant blessings. (To be continued.)

Since this issue deals in part with the Joseph, his sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, and their birth in Egypt, I would offer to you some articles on my website which I have found in old books and have posted for the edification of readers everywhere. On my website, <StoneKingdom.org> hover on the tab "Articles," then in the drop down menu click on "Bible Study Articles," It takes you to a host of essays, but you will find of particular interest, "The Romance of Joseph and Asenath." Plus, there are also some essays concerning the early migrations of Israelites from Egypt before the exodus who were probably the founders of ancient Greece and Troy, and another essay on the early migrations of the tribe of Dan. ... Good stuff. I hope you will take the time to peruse and/or download them. Note: If you do not have a computer, please understand that we do not have the time to download and print them out and send them to you; ask a friend or use your local library.

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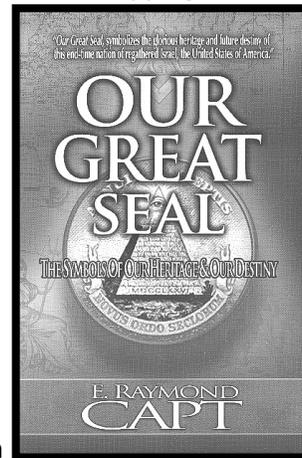
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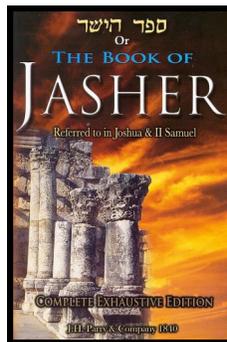
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