



FEED MY SHEEP

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Jacob-Israel the King, Part 1

The Story of Joseph, Part 53

We have spent the past many issues expounding upon the blessings and prophecies of the patriarch Jacob as he lay on his deathbed. As regular readers know, we have been incorporating the expanded version of the life of Joseph from the book of Jasher. We have not read much from Jasher the past several studies, but that is only because Jasher does not expand upon the deathbed prophecies of Jacob. Instead, what it says in Jasher is this:

Jasher 56:7 ... behold it is written in the book of the law of the Lord ...

But now that we are finished with our examination of the prophetic blessings, we will find much supplemental material in Jasher once again. For readers new to FMS, you should know that some time back in this series, I gave an extensive disclaimer concerning our position on Jasher. To summarize briefly, it is that we do not place Jasher on a par with the Scripture.

We do not claim it is divinely inspired in the sense that the Bible is. What we do say is that we have yet to find anywhere where it contradicts the Bible—and I have read it cover-to-cover several times. The book of Jasher is, in my view, a cut above all the rest of the extra-biblical books because it seems to fill in and explain so many things that the Bible appears to give a condensed version. The book of Jasher is also referred to as source material twice in the Bible itself.

With that said, let us proceed to Genesis 49. Jacob has just finished speaking the prophetic blessing upon the youngest son, Benjamin. Verse 28 is then a sum-

mary verse.

KJV Genesis 49:28 All these *are* the twelve tribes of Israel: and this *is it* that their father spake unto them, and blessed them; every one according to his blessing he blessed them.

In the next four verses, we see Jacob giving precise instructions to his sons concerning his burial.

29 And he charged them, and said unto them, I am to be gathered unto my people: bury me with my fathers in the cave that *is* in the field of Ephron the Hittite,

30 In the cave that *is* in the field of Machpelah, which *is* before Mamre, in the land of Canaan, which Abraham bought with the field of Ephron the Hittite for a possession of a buryingplace.

31 There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife; there they buried Isaac and Rebekah his wife; and there I buried Leah.

32 The purchase of the field and of the cave that *is* therein *was* from the children of Heth.

33 And when Jacob had made an end of commanding his sons, he gathered up his feet into the bed, and yielded up the ghost, and was gathered unto his people.

Genesis 50:1 And Joseph fell upon his father's face, and wept upon him, and kissed him.

2 And Joseph commanded his servants the physicians to embalm his father: and the physicians embalmed Israel.

3 And forty days were fulfilled for him; for so are fulfilled the days of those which are embalmed: and the Egyptians mourned for him three-score and ten days.

Does this not seem like Jacob must have been considered a very important person, to have been mourned by the Egyptians for *70 days*? When our president dies or a chief justice of our Supreme Court dies, we have a national mourning period for them for—how long, isn't it *30 days*?

I keep thinking of that article which we referred to many issues ago where it was suggested that Jacob was indeed considered a king, and that ancient Crete was part of his domain, and that he was deified as the Chronos and Saturn of the ancient pagan Greek and Roman mythologies.

I don't know if that theory is true or not, but this kind of funeral and mourning certainly seems to fit. And we haven't seen anything yet of the scope of the funeral and mourning. Wait until we get into the details that Jasher provides. But let's continue with the story in Genesis first.

Genesis 50:4 And when the days of his mourning were past, Joseph spake unto the house of Pharaoh, saying, If now I have found grace in your eyes, speak, I pray you, in the ears of Pharaoh, saying,

5 My father made me swear, saying, Lo, I die: in my grave which I have digged for me in the land of Canaan, there shalt thou bury me. Now therefore let me go up, I pray thee, and bury my father, and I will come again.

6 And Pharaoh said, Go up, and bury thy father, according as he made thee swear.

7 And Joseph went up to bury his father: and with him went up all the servants of Pharaoh, the elders of his house, and all the elders of the land of Egypt,

Notice it says that both the elders of the house of Pharaoh and all the elders of the land of Egypt went up with Joseph. The elders in this case would mean all the high level officials in the capital as well as those in the various political subdivisions of Egypt. This was in fact nothing less than a state funeral!

Picture the enormous funeral held for President Ronald Reagan. It seemed like every president, prince

and potentate, past and present, was in attendance at Mr. Reagan's funeral. It sounds like a similar affair was held for the great Jacob-Israel.

Genesis 49:8 And all the house of Joseph, and his brethren, and his father's house: only their little ones, and their flocks, and their herds, they left in the land of Goshen.

9 And there went up with him both chariots and horsemen: and it was a very great company.

10 And they came to the threshingfloor of Atad, which is beyond Jordan, and there they mourned with a great and very sore lamentation: and he made a mourning for his father seven days.

11 And when the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites, saw the mourning in the floor of Atad, they said, This is a grievous mourning to the Egyptians: wherefore the name of it was called Abelmizraim, which is beyond Jordan.

12 And his sons did unto him according as he commanded them:

13 For his sons carried him into the land of Canaan, and buried him in the cave of the field of Machpelah, which Abraham bought with the field for a possession of a buryingplace of Ephron the Hittite, before Mamre.

And that is the end of the story of the burial of Jacob as given in Genesis. Now let me backtrack and fill in the details from the book of Jasher.

Jasher 56:10 And Jacob again commanded his sons on that day, saying, Behold I shall be this day gathered unto my people; carry me up from Egypt, and bury me in the cave of Machpelah as I have commanded you.

We see by this phrase (as I have commanded you) that Jacob did not wait until the absolute last minute before he died to give his sons the funeral instructions. He had obviously done that many years before. He was now repeating and refreshing their memories and perhaps adding some further instructions.

Jacob was 147 when he died. Joseph would have been about 57, and so the older brothers might have been certainly in their 60's and probably Reuben, Simeon and Levi might have been up in their 70's. Despite their age, Jacob tells them he wants them to act as pall-bearers. He doesn't want them to delegate the task to their sons. Then he goes on to even direct them on exactly who will carry what side or end of the

casket. We don't know how elaborate the coffin and bier of Jacob were, but it was probably not a simple pine box. In other words, it was probably quite heavy. If you have ever had the responsibility of being a pall-bearer, then you know that that is no easy task. Now see if these specific instructions on the placement of the sons around his coffin reminds you of anything. Jacob tells his sons...

Jasher 56:11 Howbeit take heed I pray you that none of your sons carry me, only yourselves, and this is the manner you shall do unto me, when you carry my body to go with it to the land of Canaan to bury me,

12 Judah, Issachar and Zebulun shall carry my bier at the eastern side; Reuben, Simeon and Gad at the south, Ephraim, Manasseh and Benjamin at the west, Dan, Asher and Naphtali at the north.

Does that remind anybody of anything in the Scripture? Yes, that is the very same order and the very same arrangement of the encampment of the tribes about 200 years later as they moved about the wilderness with the Tabernacle.

That is in Numbers, chapter 2. You can look it up. It is precisely the same pattern, right down to the special consideration of Joseph and Levi. Jacob tells the boys:

13 Let not Levi carry with you, for he and his sons will carry the ark of the covenant of the Lord with the Israelites in the camp, neither let Joseph my son carry, for as a king so let his glory be; howbeit, Ephraim and Manasseh shall be in their stead.

Thus, Jacob was led to prophesy symbolically by his own funeral procession the very manner in which his descendants would proceed around the wilderness. Is it not fitting? The parallel does not end with arrangement of the tribes, but the very fact that it was a funeral procession is a type and shadow in itself. Because a whole generation had to die in the wilderness because of unbelief. It was a corporate funeral procession which lasted 38 and a half years and then when they are finally told to go in and take the Promised Land, they had to cross over a river first...the Jordan river...which symbolizes...death! Do you see this three-fold prophetic parallel we have just outlined? Jacob continues with his instructions...

14 Thus shall you do unto me when you carry me

away; do not neglect any thing of all that I command you; and it shall come to pass when you do this unto me, that the Lord will remember you favorably and your children after you forever.

15 And you my sons, honor each his brother and his relative, and command your children and your children's children after you to serve the Lord God of your ancestors all the days.

16 In order that you may prolong your days in the land, you and your children and your children's children for ever, when you do what is good and upright in the sight of the Lord your God, to go in all his ways.

What Jacob has just commanded here is "love God" and "love your neighbor." And now he has a very specific request that he makes of his beloved Joseph.

17 And thou, Joseph my son, forgive I pray thee the prongs of thy brethren and all their misdeeds in the injury that they heaped upon thee, for God intended it for thine and thy children's benefit.

We know that in the account in Genesis, Joseph will do exactly as his father requested. We stopped just short of that in our reading in Genesis. Jacob continues with his request, not only that Joseph forgive them, but that he bless them by guarding and protecting them.

18 And O my son leave not thy brethren to the inhabitants of Egypt, neither hurt their feelings, for behold I consign them to the hand of God and in thy hand to guard them from the Egyptians; and the sons of Jacob answered their father saying, O, our father, all that thou hast commanded us, so will we do; may God only be with us.

Well, you can imagine how pleased the ten brothers of Joseph must have been to hear their father asking Joseph to forgive them. For the 17 years that they have been in Egypt, it has always been in the back of their minds, that after daddy dies, Joseph, as vizier of Egypt, will still have the power of life and death over them. And who knows, they wonder, he could be waiting all this time until daddy dies, and then carry out his revenge upon us. So they are relieved to hear their father pray Joseph to forgive them. (Of course, we believe he would have done so anyhow; that is Joseph's nature...Joseph the overcomer!)

Now Jacob goes on to tell them how important it is for them all to serve Yahweh, because in just a very few generations, they will be afflicted in Egypt, and Jacob prophesies that God will raise up a man who will lead them out of slavery.

Jasher 56:19 And Jacob said unto his sons, So may God be with you when you keep all his ways; turn not from his ways either to the right or the left in performing what is good and upright in his sight.

20 For I know that many and grievous troubles will befall you in the latter days in the land, yea your children and children's children, only serve the Lord and he will save you from all trouble.

21 And it shall come to pass when you shall go after God to serve him and will teach your children after you, and your children's children, to know the Lord, then will the Lord raise up unto you and your children a servant from amongst your children, and the Lord will deliver you through his hand from all affliction, and bring you out of Egypt and bring you back to the land of your fathers to inherit it securely.

22 And Jacob ceased commanding his sons, and he drew his feet into the bed, he died and was gathered to his people.

23 And Joseph fell upon his father and he cried out and wept over him and he kissed him, and he called out in a bitter voice, and he said, O my father, my father.

24 And his son's wives and all his household came and fell upon Jacob, and they wept over him, and cried in a very loud voice concerning Jacob.

25 And all the sons of Jacob rose up together, and they tore their garments, and they all put sackcloth upon their loins, and they fell upon their faces, and they cast dust upon their heads toward the heavens.

26 And the thing was told unto Osnath Joseph's wife, and she rose up and put on a sack and she with all the Egyptian women with her came and mourned and wept for Jacob.

27 And also all the people of Egypt who knew Jacob came all on that day when they heard this thing, and all Egypt wept for many days.

28 And also from the land of Canaan did the women come unto Egypt when they heard that Jacob was dead, and they wept for him in Egypt for seventy days.

29 And it came to pass after this that Joseph commanded his servants the doctors to embalm his father with myrrh and frankincense and all manner of incense and perfume, and the doctors embalmed Jacob as Joseph had commanded them.

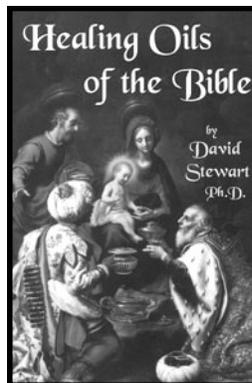
“with myrrh and frankincense”...I have recently learned that centuries ago the Arabs used myrrh for treating all sorts of skin conditions, from scaly skin, to wrinkles, to preserve the youthfulness and elasticity of the skin. It acts as a skin preservative. Therefore it would make sense to use it in embalming also. The *Essential Oils Desk Reference* (EODR) book says that myrrh is a powerful antioxidant, it is anti-tumoral, anti-inflammatory, antiviral, antiparasitic and works as an analgesic and as an anesthetic also.

As for frankincense, well, I have talked about it in my lectures several times over the years, but in ancient times, according to the EODR frankincense was “used to treat every conceivable ill known to man.” Of course, Dr. David Stewart discusses both these oils at length in his book *Healing Oils of the Bible*, which many of you have read and I hope are putting to good use. Frankincense was considered more valuable than gold in ancient times. So again, it appears that Jacob was being given a burial fit for a king.

(To be continued.)

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